

# Comparisons of Undergraduate Experience between First-Year Stopouts and Persisting Students



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# Quotes from the University of California Stopouts Survey

1. “I believe one of the major reasons why [I left UC xxx] was I didn’t feel **belonging** to my previous school...”
2. “I dropped out in 2008 as the recession made it difficult to **work part time** and also attend college.”
3. “I dropped out of UC xxx because my financial aid got messed up. I was **too poor to do anything else** about, and I already was **working a job**...”
4. “I dropped out due to **financial difficulties**.”
5. “I dropped out of UC xxx three times, was **homeless** before dropping out the last time.”
6. “The reason I left UC xxx was because the **advisors were very unhelpful** to me...” “There were **too many students and not enough professors**.”
7. “My **father passed away** 11 days before my last quarter.”
8. “The reason I dropped out of college was due to being overwhelmed and it has taken me years to work through that **depression**. So it really was a multitude of reasons instead of just a singular cause.”

## Research purpose and questions

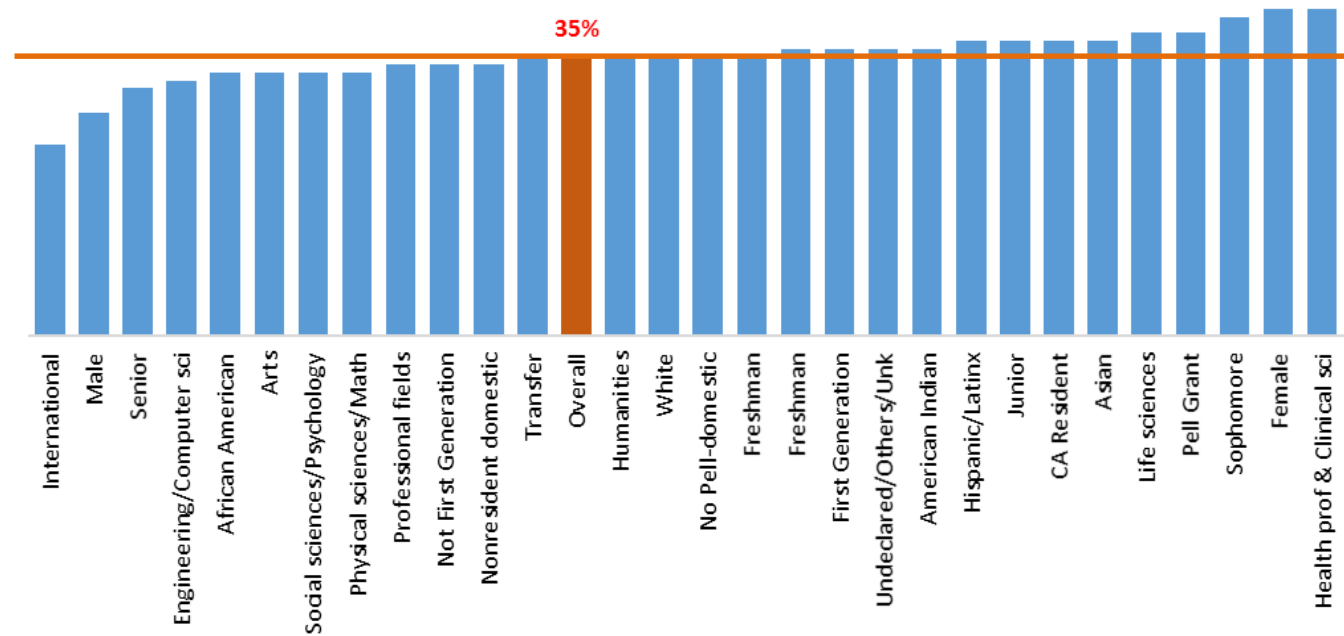
This study compares student experience between the first-year persisting students and stopouts based on the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) data.

1. Is there any significant difference in student experience between the first-year stopouts and persisting students?
2. How much can student experience predict the first year persistence?

# The University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)

- The University of California administers UCUES to all undergraduate student once every other year.
- The response rates range from 33% to 41% from 2006 to 2020.
- The response rate varies slightly across student characteristics.
- Respondents are fairly representative of population.

Response  
rates by  
student  
characteristics  
for the 2020  
UCUES

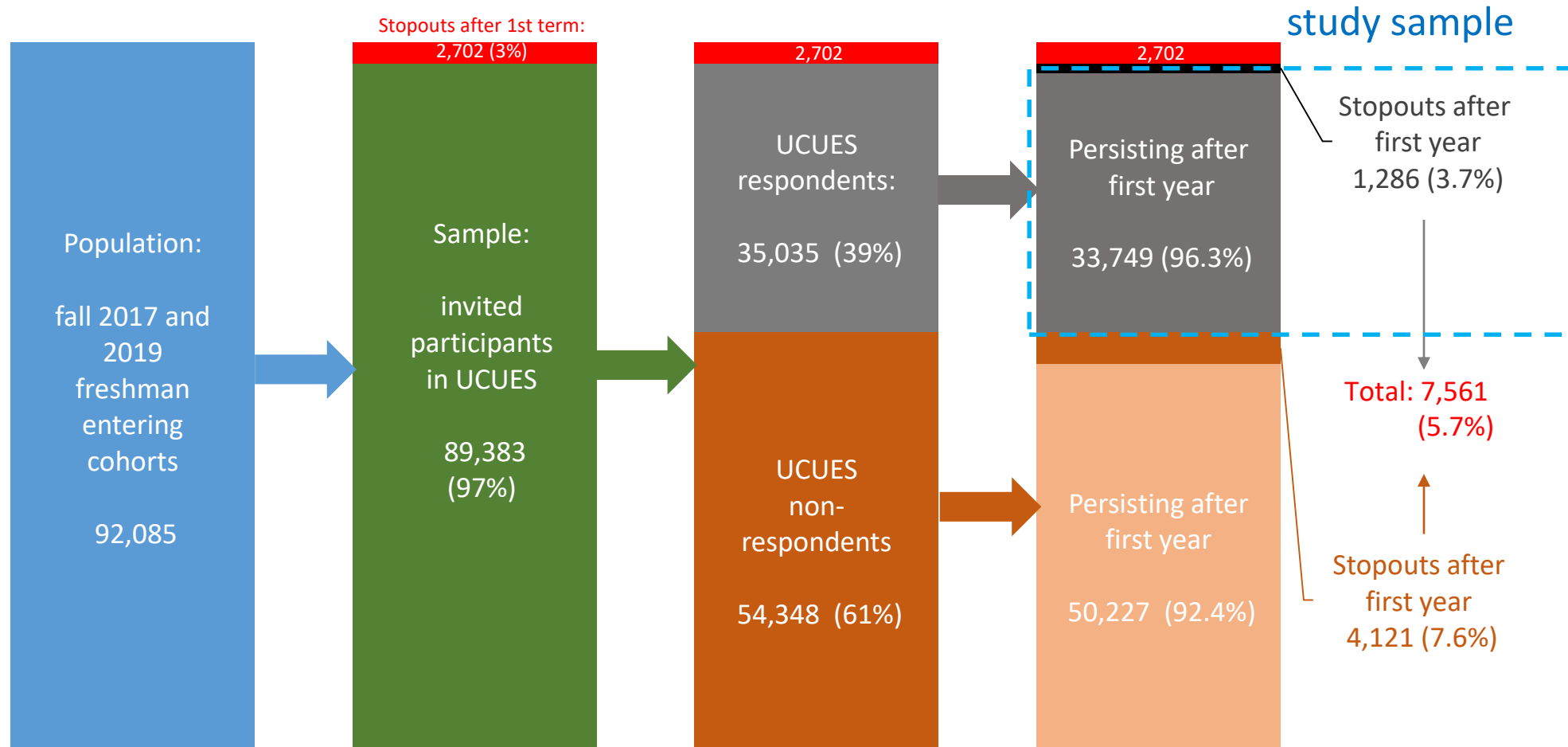


# Student experience topics in UCUES

1. Academic satisfaction
2. Academic engagement
3. Belonging
4. Financial concerns
5. Perception on campus climate
6. Paid employment hours
7. Student development
8. Basic needs
9. Major evaluation
10. Obstacles
11. Career plan
12. Background
13. ...

Topics included in this study

# Study population and sample



# Level of academic satisfaction

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your campus experiences/education?

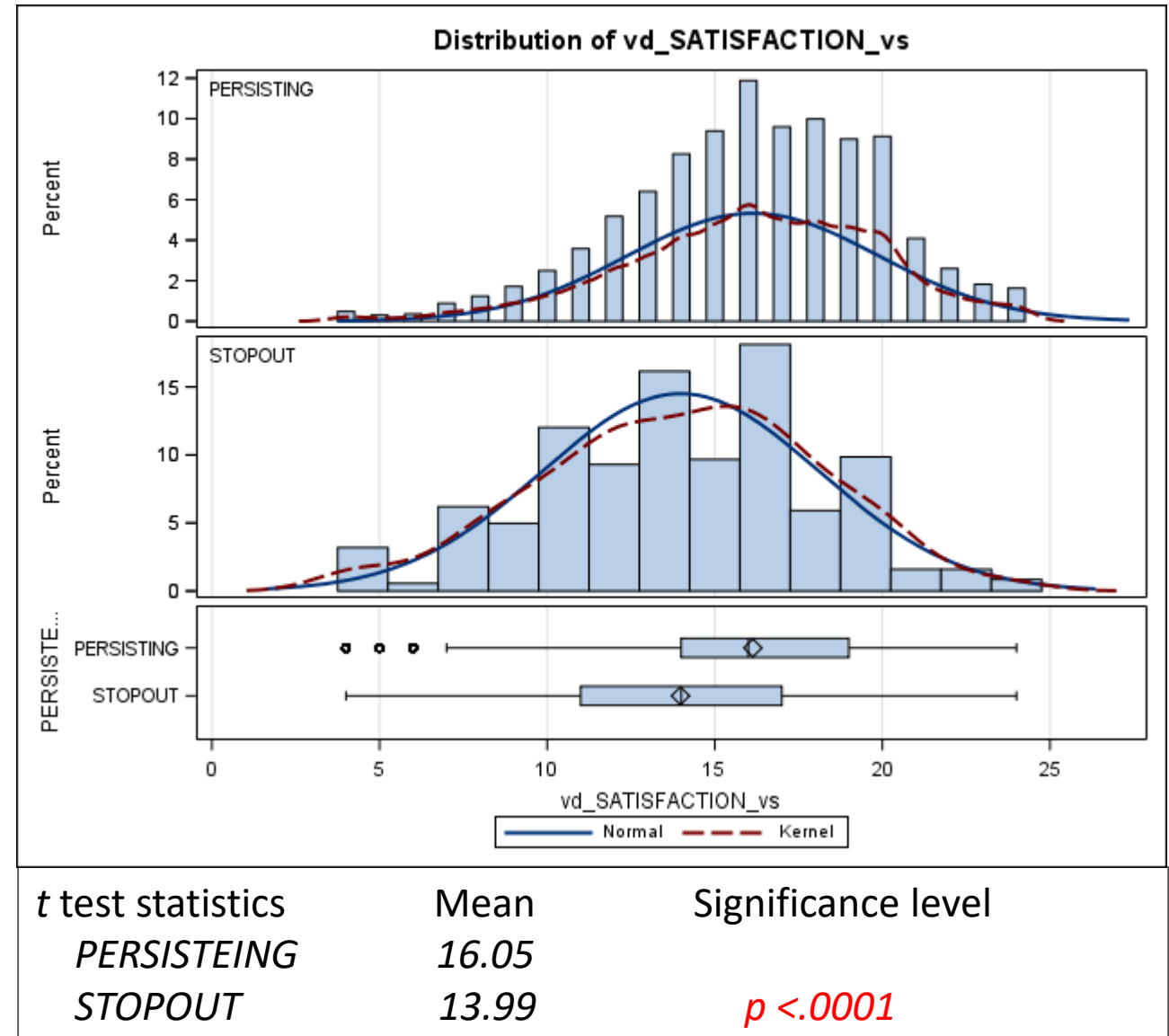
1. Overall academic experience
2. Overall social experience
3. Value of your education for the price you're paying
4. UC GPA

## Response scale (numeric value):

Very dissatisfied (1); Dissatisfied (2);  
Somewhat dissatisfied (3); Somewhat  
satisfied (4); Satisfied (5); Very satisfied (6)

**Total score:** sum of values on all four items,  
ranging from 4 (very dissatisfied, vd) – 24 (very  
satisfied, vs)

**Cronbach Coefficient Alpha:** 0.76



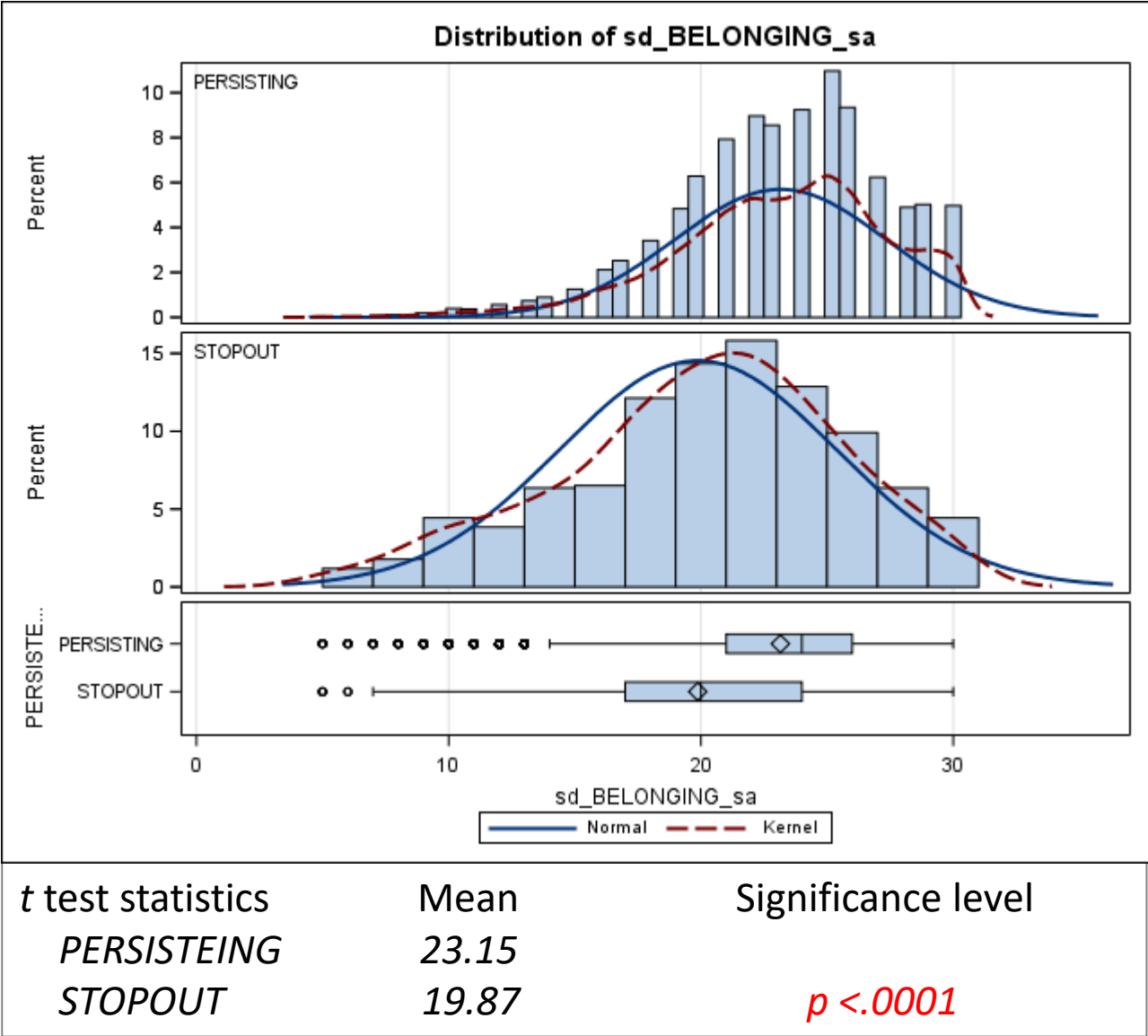
# Sense of belonging

- Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.
- 1. I feel that I belong at this campus.
  - 2. I feel valued as an individual on this campus.
  - 3. Knowing what I know now I would still choose to enroll at this University.
  - 4. At UC, I have been excluded from study groups because of my group membership (reversed)
  - 5. I am proud to be a student at this campus.

**Response scale (numeric value):**  
Strongly disagreed (1); Disagreed (2);  
Somewhat disagreed (3); Somewhat agreed (4); Agreed (5); Strongly agreed (6)

**Total score:** sum of values on five items, ranging from 5 (strongly disagreed, sd) – 30 (strongly agreed, sa)

**Cronbach Coefficient Alpha:** 0.79





# Perception of campus climate

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

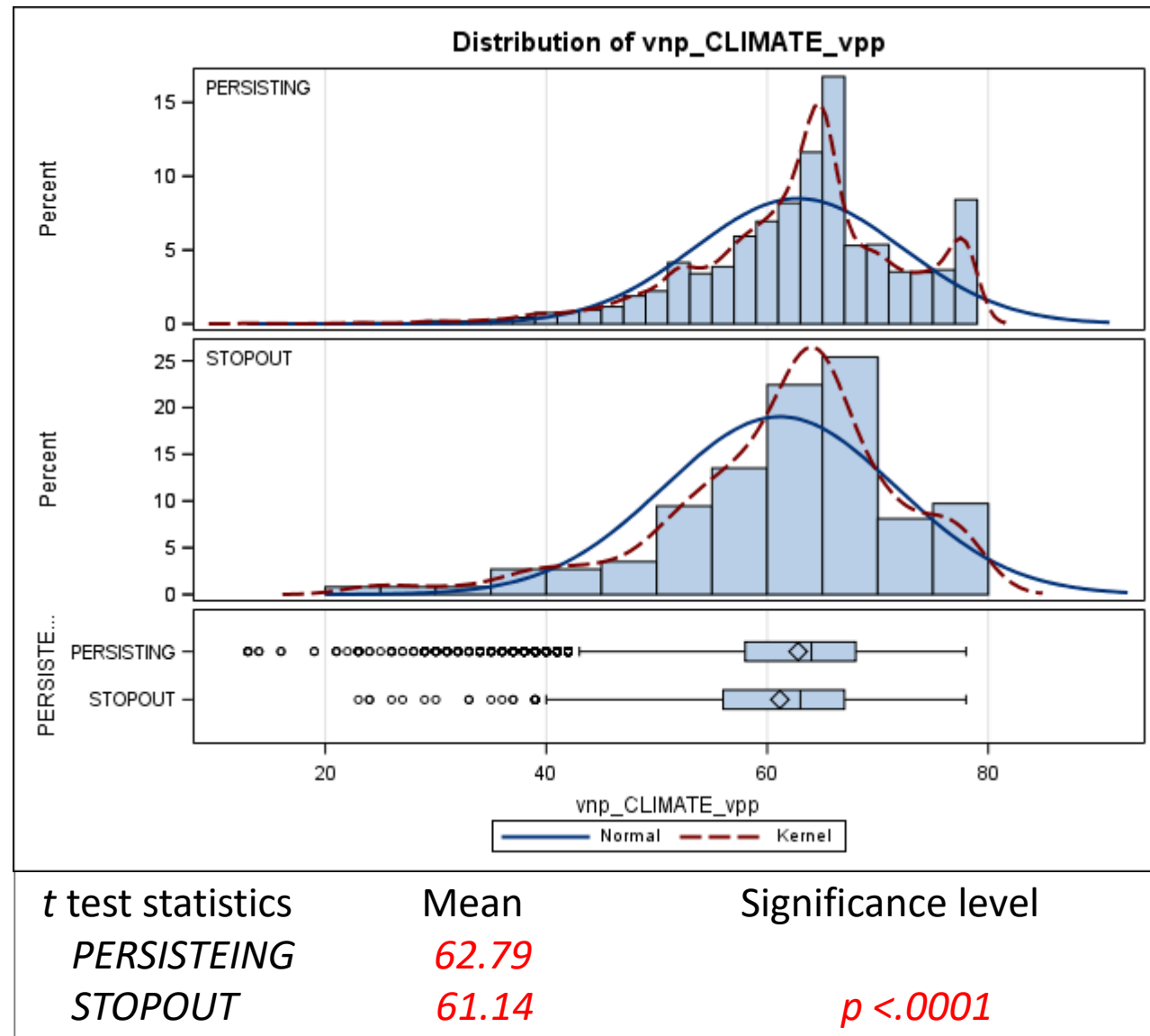
1. My campus is a welcoming campus.
- 2-4. I feel comfortable with the climate for diversity and inclusiveness at UC/my class/my major.
- 5-12. Students of my socio-economic/political beliefs/race/ethnicity... are respected.
13. My campus is a safe and secure campus.

**Response scale (numeric value):**

1. Strongly disagreed (1)
2. Disagreed (2)
3. Somewhat disagreed (3)
4. Somewhat agreed (4)
5. Agreed (5)
6. Strongly disagreed (6)

**Total score:** sum of values on five items, ranging from 13 (very negative perception, vnp) – 78 (very positive perception, vpp)

**Cronbach Coefficient Alpha:** 0.93



# Academic engagement

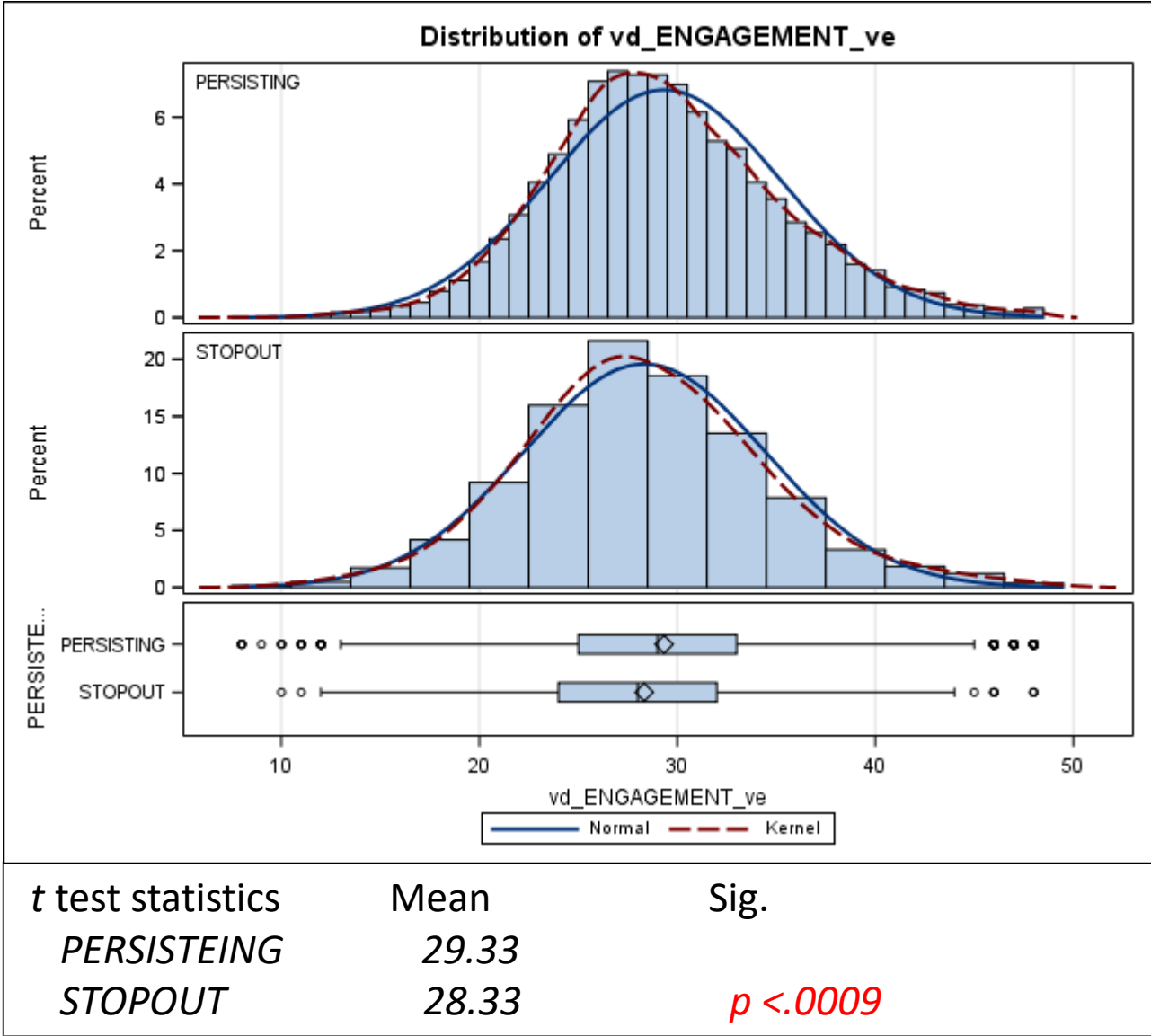
During this academic year, how often have you done each of the following?

1. contributed to a class discussion
2. brought up ideas or concepts from different course during class discussions
3. asked an insightful question in class
4. Found a course so interesting that you did more work that was required
5. communicated with the instructor outside of class
6. made a class presentation
7. came to class unprepared (reversed order)
8. skipped class (reversed order)
9. turned a course assignment late (reversed order)
10. came to class without completing assigned readings (reversed order)

**Response scale (assigned numeric value):**  
 Never(1); Rarely(2); Occasionally(3); Somewhat often(4); Often(5); Very often(6)

**Total score:** sum of values on 10 items, ranging from 10 (very disengaged, vd) – 60 (very engaged, ve)

**Cronbach Coefficient Alpha:** 0.73



# Paid employment

During this academic year, how many hours do you spend in a typical week on the following activities?

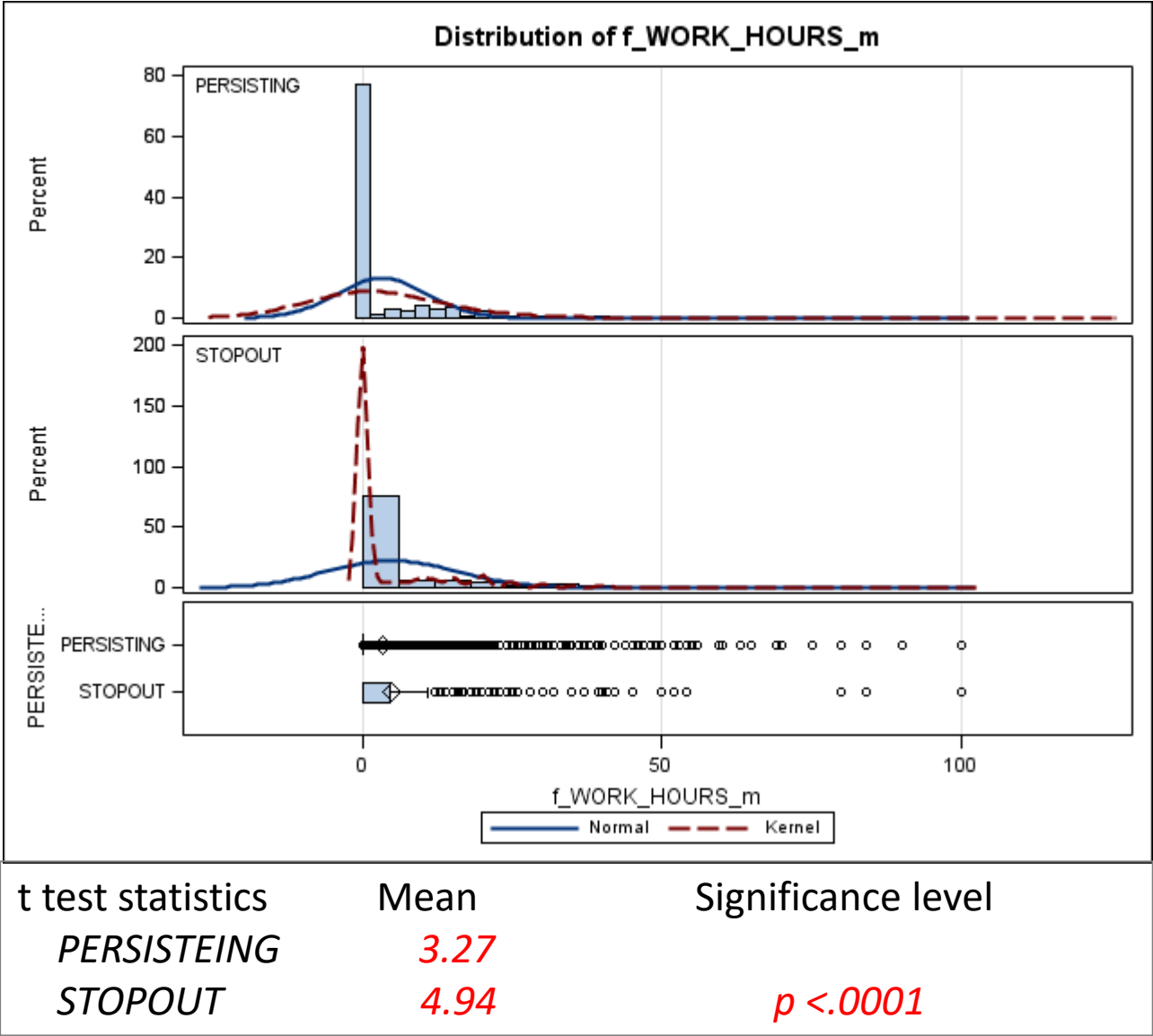
## Work hours

- 1. Paid employment (including internships) on campus
- 2. Paid employment (including internships) off campus

## Response scale

Numeric

**Total WORK HOURS:** sum of Item 1 and Item 2



# Financial concerns

## Survey questions

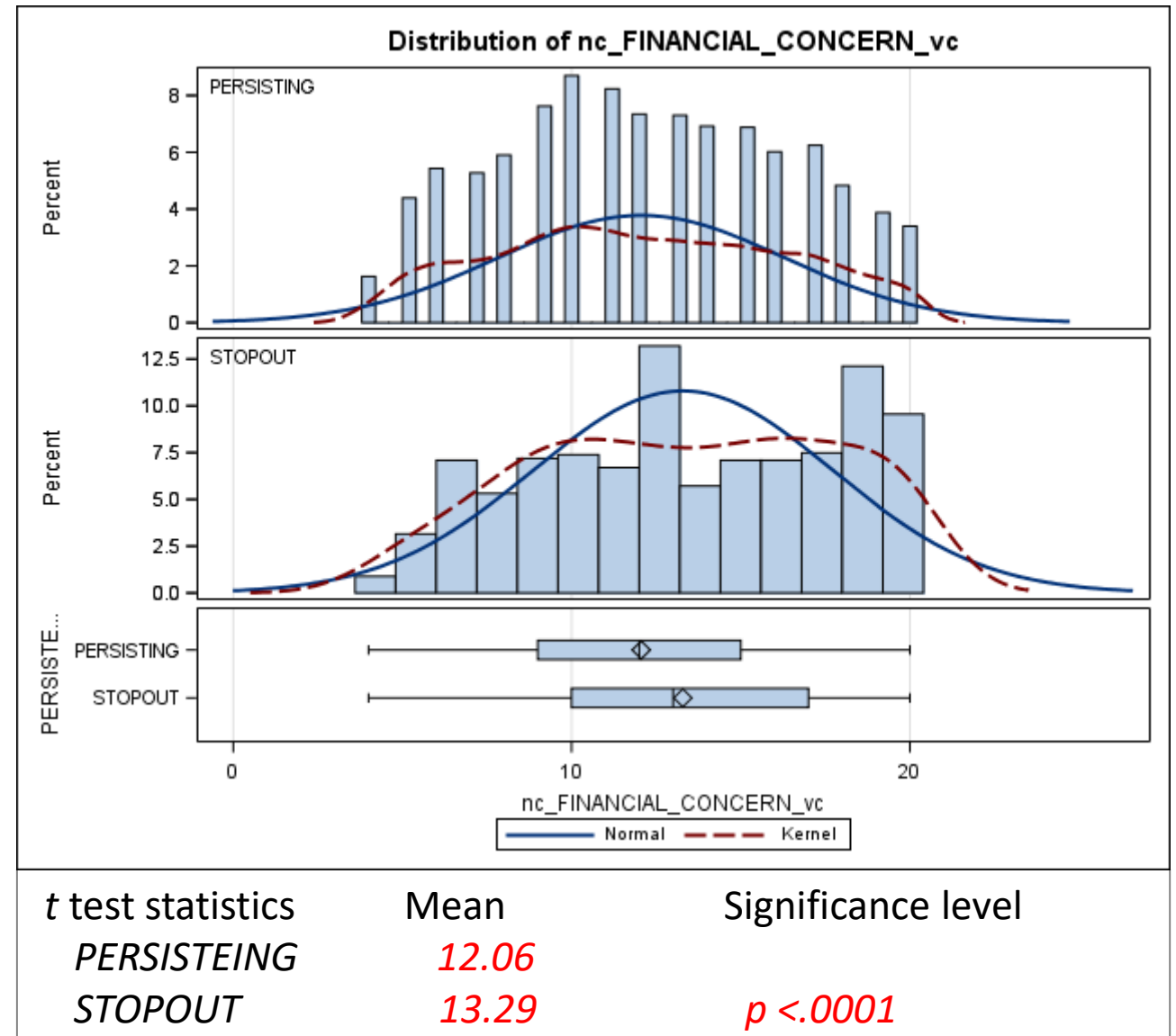
1. Total cost of attending is manageable (how much do you agree) (reversed order)
2. Worried about my debt and financial circumstances
3. How concerned HAVE YOU BEEN about paying for your undergraduate education up to now?
4. How concerned are you about paying for your undergraduate education NEXT YEAR?

## Response scale (numeric value):

1. Strongly disagreed (6); Never(1); No concerned (1)
2. Disagree (5); Rarely(2); Somewhat disagree (4);
3. Somewhat disagree (4); Occasionally(3)
4. Somewhat agree (3); Somewhat often(4); somewhat concerned (2)
5. Agree (2); Often(5); Concerned (3);
6. Strongly agree (1) Very often(6) ; Very concerned (4);

**Total score:** sum of values on five items, ranging from 4 (not concerned, nc) – 20 (very concerned, vc)

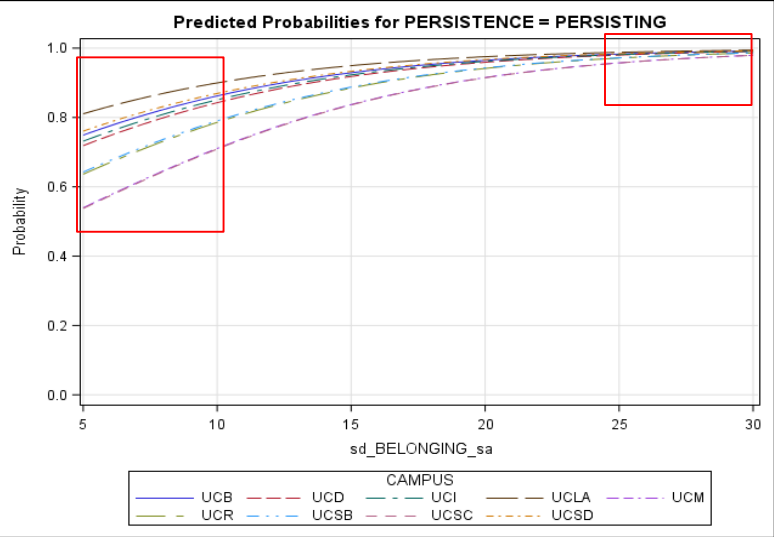
**Cronbach Coefficient Alpha:** 0.81



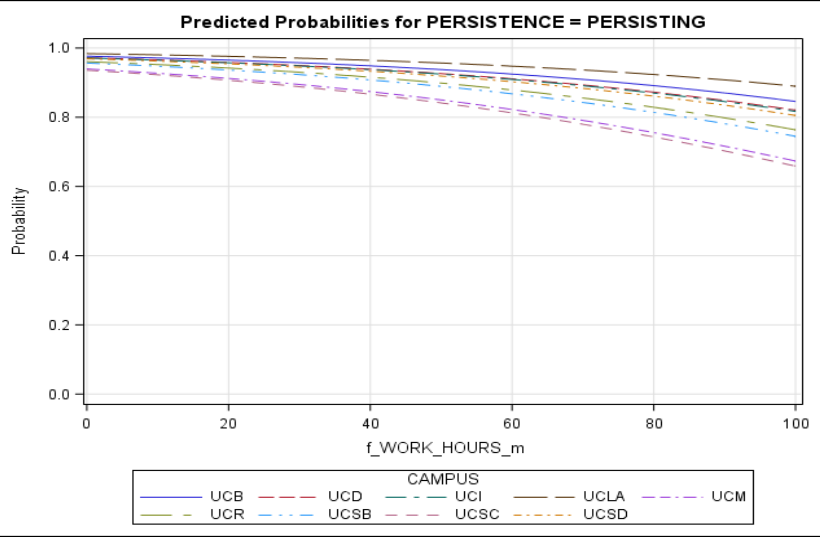
# Predicted probabilities for persistence by experience factor at each campus

Predicted by

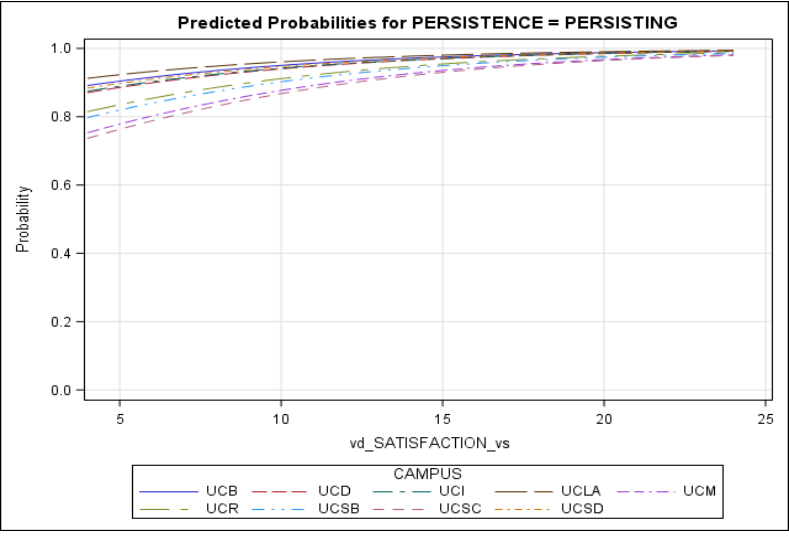
sense of belonging



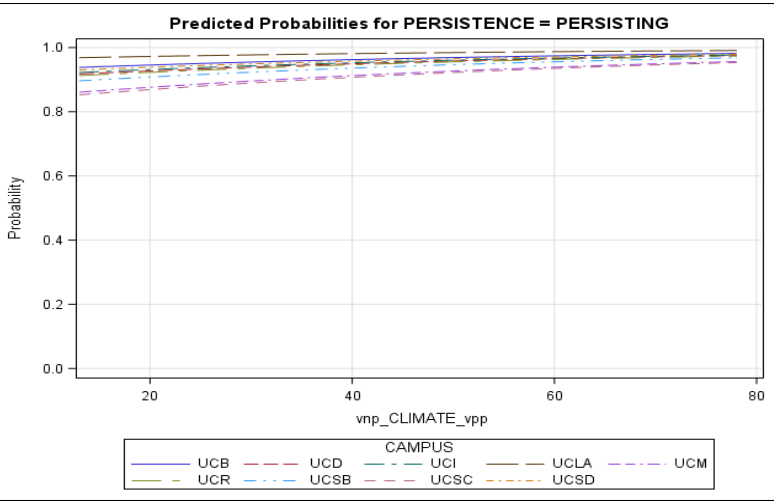
paid employment hours



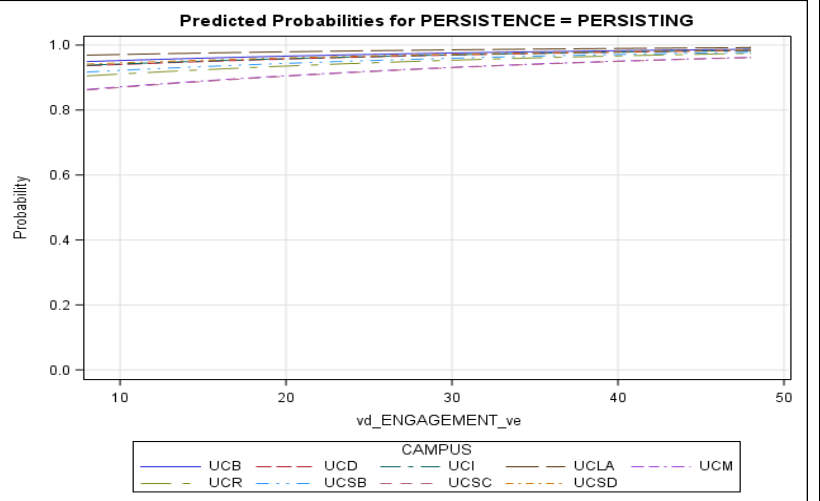
level of satisfaction



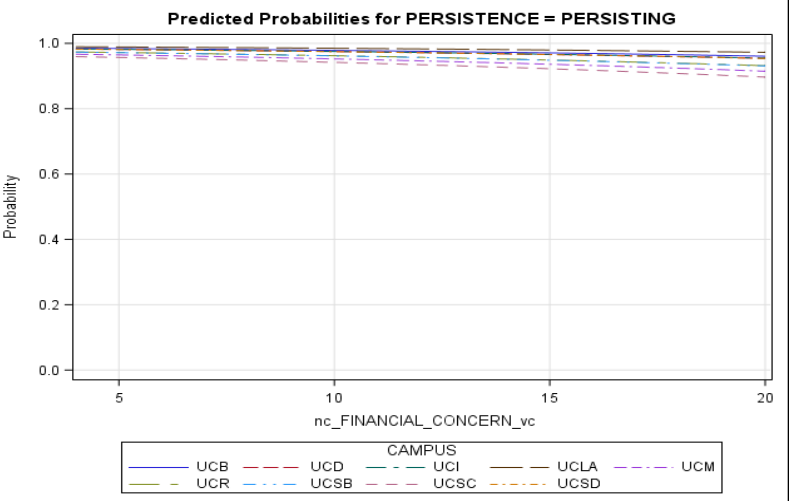
perception of campus climate



academic engagement



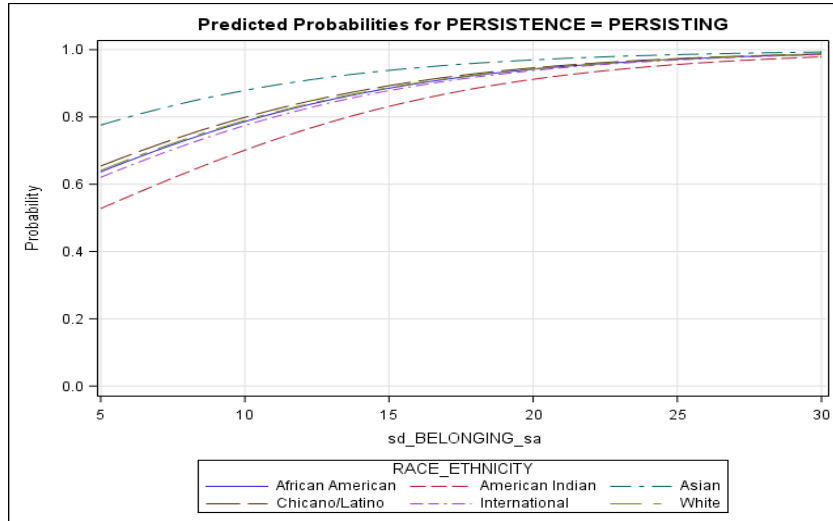
financial concerns



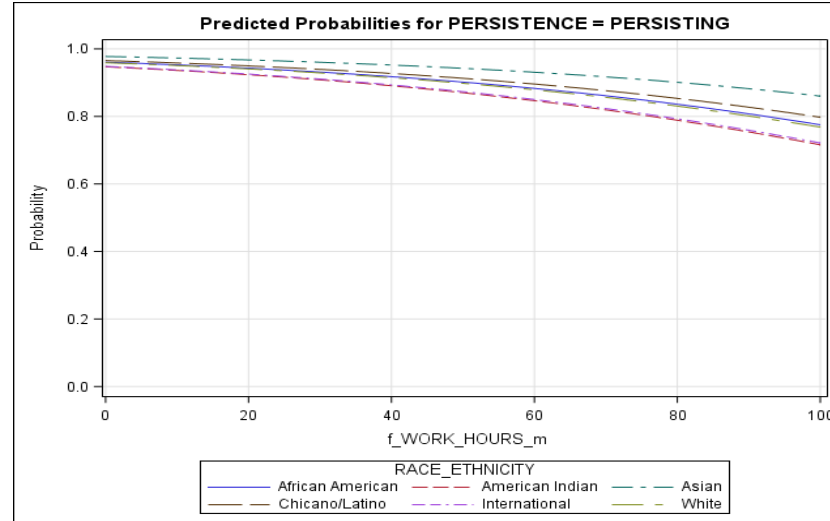
# Predicted probabilities for persistence by experience factor

Predicted by

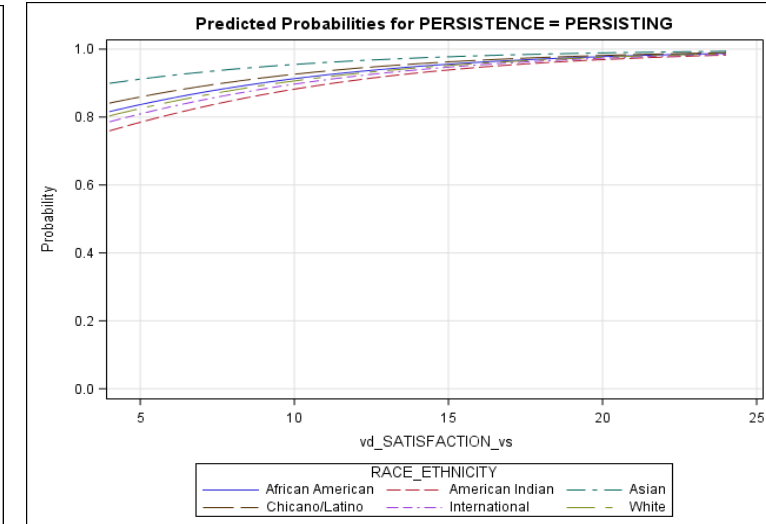
sense of belonging



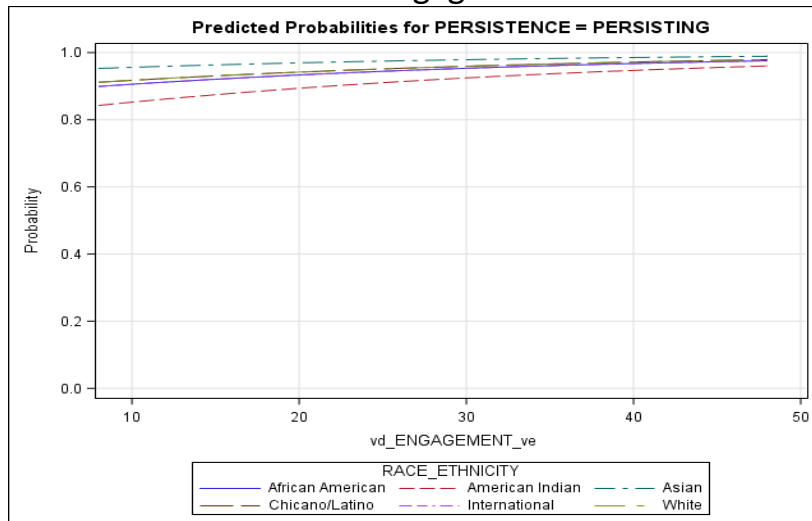
paid employment hours



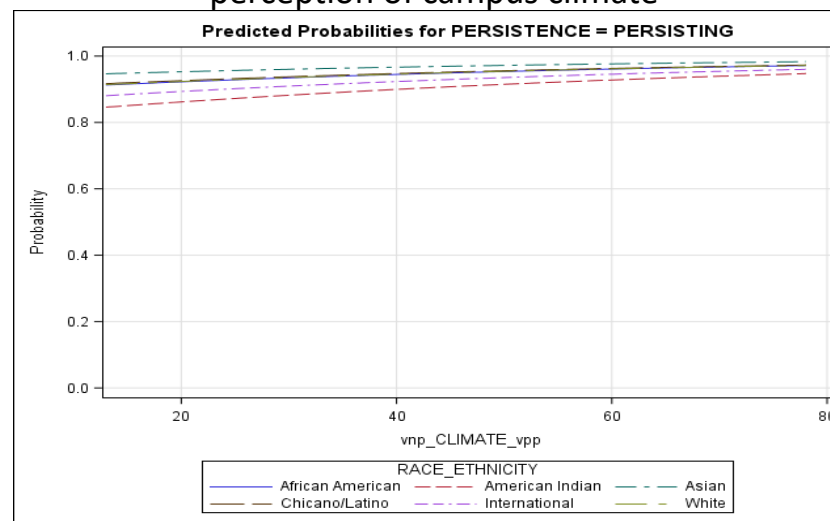
level of satisfaction



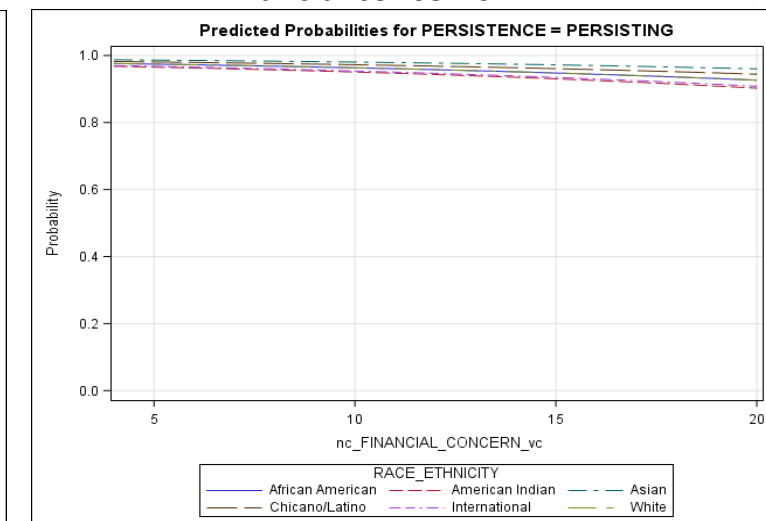
academic engagement



perception of campus climate



financial concerns



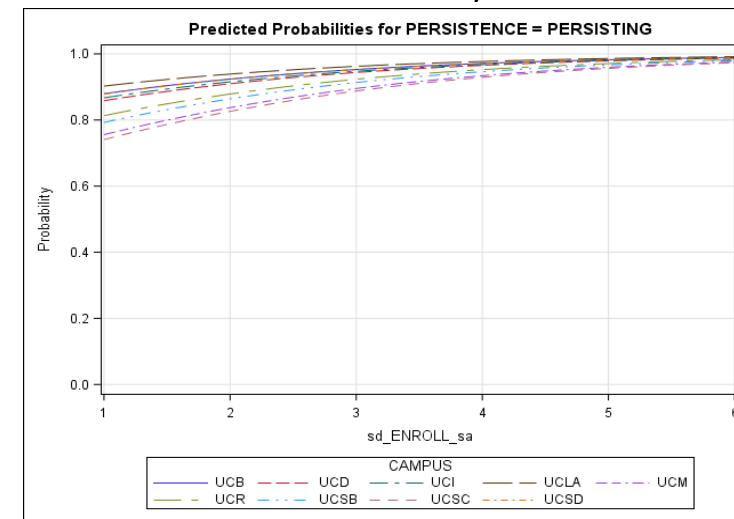
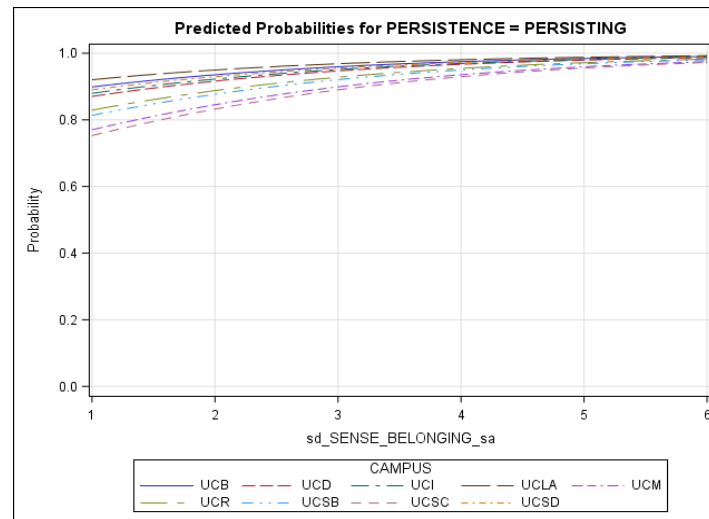
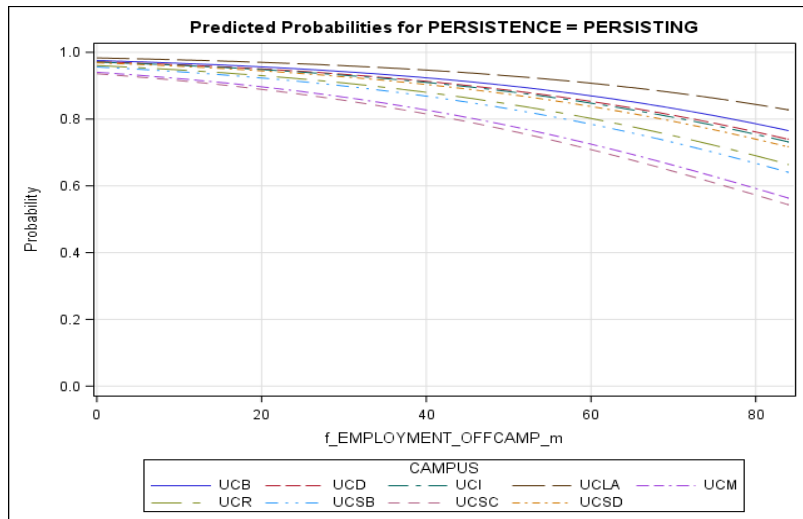
# Predicted probabilities for persistence by top single items at each campus

## Predicted by

hours spent on paid employment off campus per week

I feel that I belong at this campus

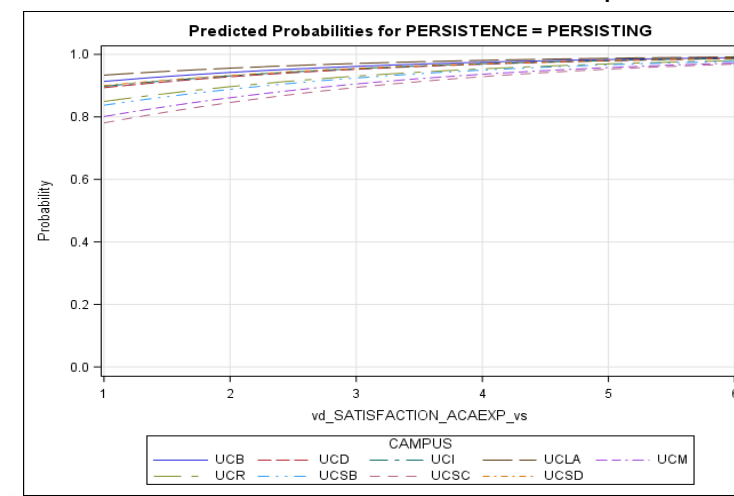
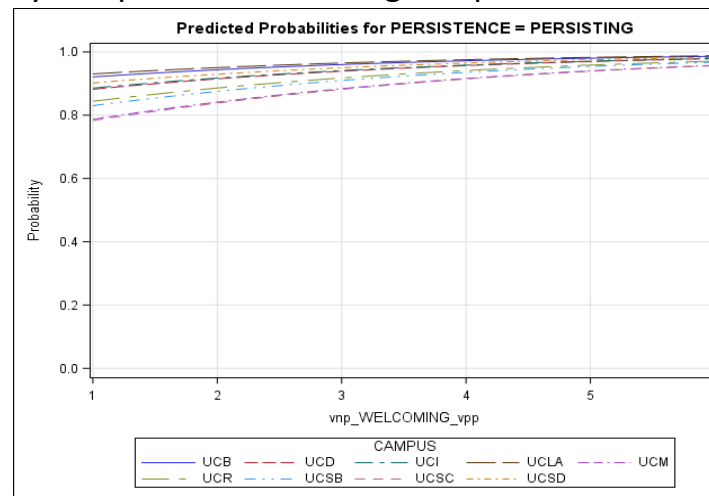
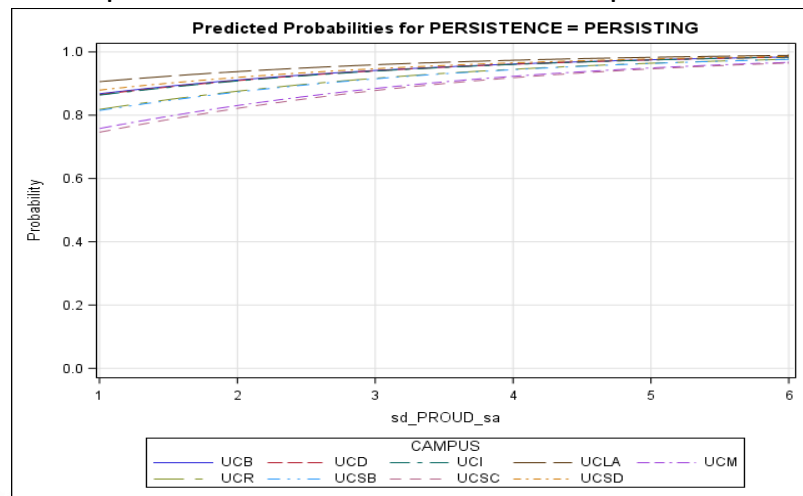
Knowing what I know now, I would still choose to enroll at this University



I am proud to be a student at this campus

My campus is a welcoming campus

Satisfaction with overall academic experience



# Summary...

1. There is a significant difference of the first year experience between stopouts and persisting students. Stopouts were significantly less satisfied with their experience, spent more time working on a paid employment job outside the campus, less felt they belonged at the campus, and more concerned about their financial situation than persisting students.
2. Level of satisfaction with academic experience, sense of belonging, paid employment hours, campus climate, and academic engagement are strong predictors of persistence on all campuses and for all racial/ethnic groups.
3. NEXT STEPS FOR CAMPUSES TO DO:
  - 1) Foster a sense of belonging on campus.
  - 2) Change campus climate, so everyone feels deeply welcomed, inclusive, and respected.
  - 3) Help students solve financial problems, so they can focus on study.
  - 4) Inspire student engagement
  - 5) Satisfy their academic needs and interest.



# Thanks! Questions?



Explore the UC story through data at the UC Information Center!

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter>