

March 2017

# Factors Affecting Student Graduation Rates

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## Recommended Citation

Luse, Kaleb, "Factors Affecting Student Graduation Rates" (2017). *Research in the Capitol*. 12.  
<http://scholarworks.uni.edu/rcapitol/2017/all/12>

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# ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS: DETERMINING FACTORS AFFECTING COLLEGE GRADUATION RATES

## RESULTS

- High School GPA, students perception of their organizational skills and ability to pay, and whether a student is a first generation student are statistically significant when determining the likelihood of graduating.
- Students who are not first generation students have about 1.4 times the odds of graduating as their first generation counterparts.
- A 1 unit increase in a given student's GPA increases the odds of that student graduating by a factor of almost 5.



## QUESTION

What factors make a student more or less likely to graduate from college?

## BACKGROUND

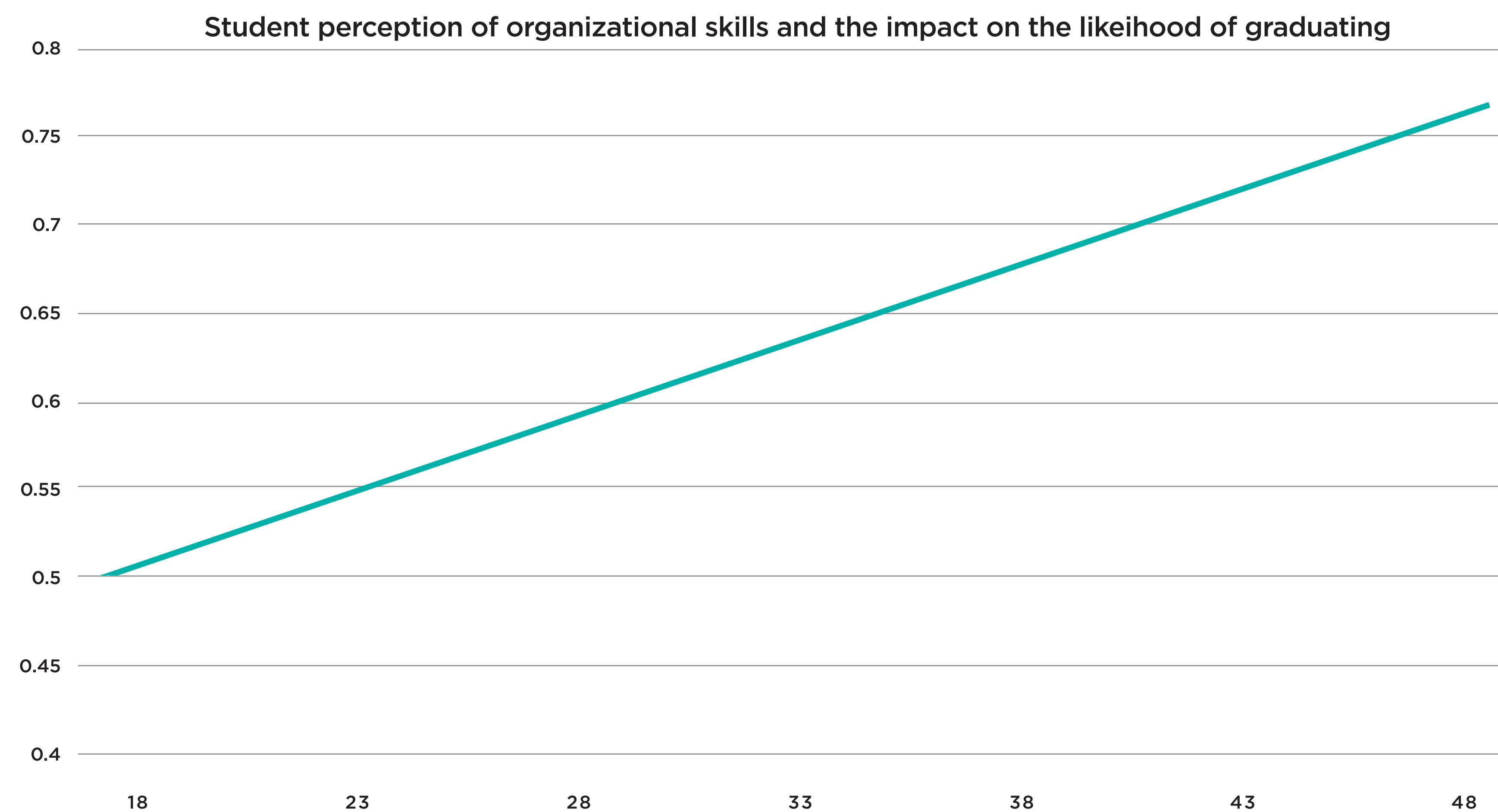
- United States government has become increasingly interested with graduation rates.<sup>1</sup>
- High school GPA is the best single predictor of whether a student will graduate.<sup>2</sup>
- SAT/ACT scores have also been shown to be significant in predicting whether a student will graduate.<sup>3</sup>
- Merit-based scholarships have positive relation to the likelihood a student will graduate but need-based scholarships have a negative effect.<sup>4</sup>

## SURVEY & METHODS

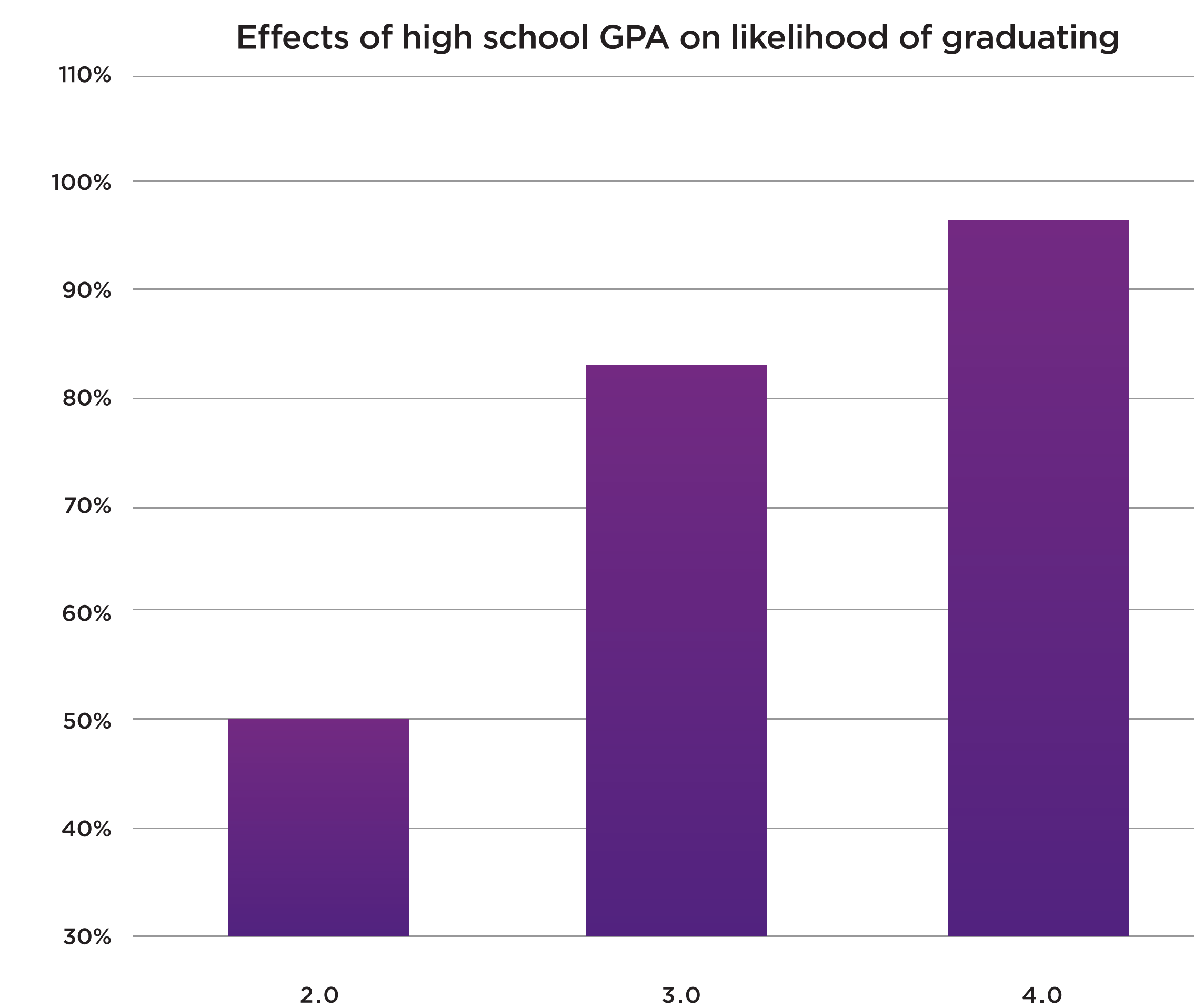
- MapWorks survey given to 1900 incoming freshman
- Data obtained from a University in the Midwest
- Results obtained using a logit regression with robust standard errors
- Other tests ran to test for the presence of multicollinearity

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Spellings, M. (2006). *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*. Jessup: Education Publications Center.  
<sup>2</sup> Astin, A. W. (1993). *What Matters in College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.  
<sup>3</sup> Zhang, G., Anderson, T., Ohland, M., & Thorndyke, B. (2004). Identifying Factors Influencing Engineering Student Graduation: A Longitudinal and Cross Institutional Study. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 313 - 320.  
<sup>4</sup> Astin, A. W. (1975). *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



**Do students perceptions affect their ability to graduate college?**



## CONCLUSIONS

- High School GPA still the single best predictor of a student likelihood of graduating.
- First generation students are less likely to graduate, likely due to less resources
- Students who are confident in organizational skills like managing time are more likely to graduate
- Students perceptions on their ability to pay has an impact on whether they will graduate or not