Factors Affecting Student Graduation Rates

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ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS: DETERMINING FACTORS AFFECTING COLLEGE GRADUATION RATES

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

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

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

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.

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

REFERENCES