



Overview

We worked with a team of research professionals to conduct a **survey of approximately 400+ LGBTQ+ people from across the Upper Midwest** for our first ever SLAY (Study of LGBTQ+ Academic Yield) Survey. Our goal was to use data to better understand if and how queer folks are able to access higher education.



Barriers to Access

Cost is the top barrier cited by queer people who would like to enroll in postsecondary education but have been unable to do so. Time commitment was the second most common reason given. Lack of guidance in how to enroll in college or select an area of study is also an issue.



Sense of Belonging on Campus

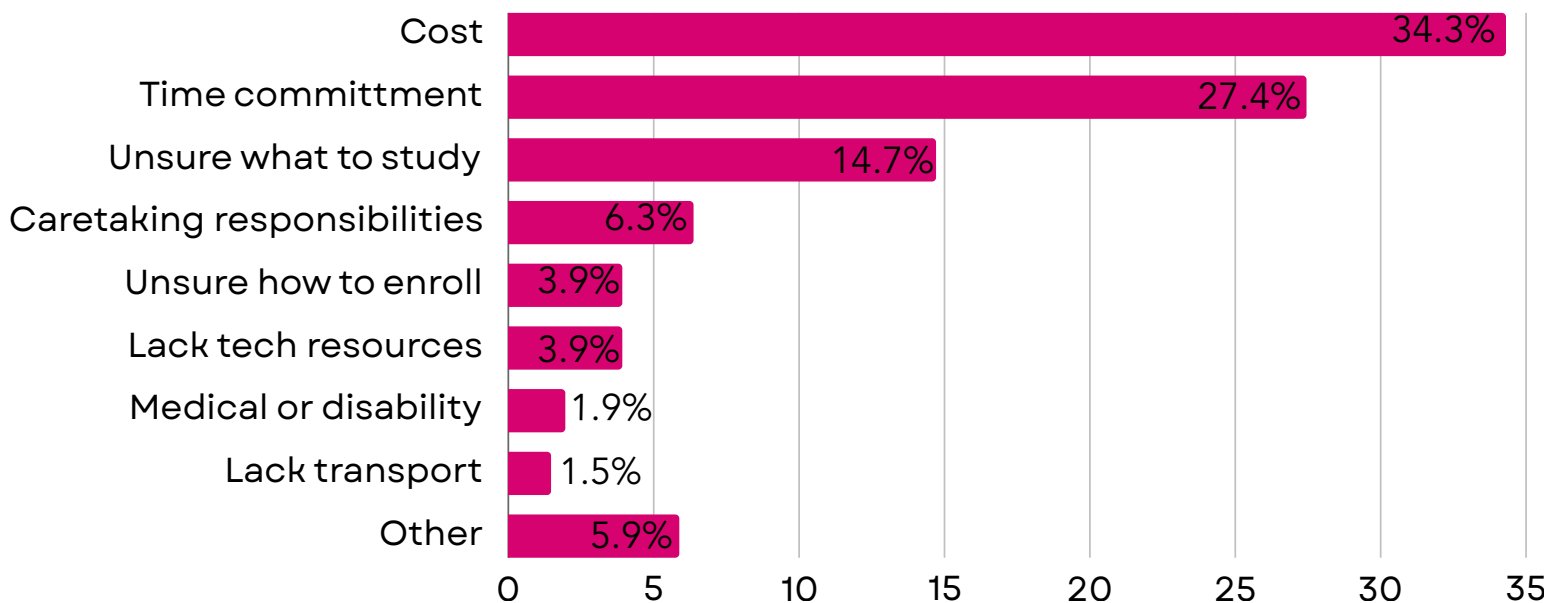
National surveys of college students have found that feeling a sense of belonging at their schools is a major factor in whether they complete their college educations. The SLAY Survey found that **BIPOC queer students reported a stronger sense of belonging on campus than their White queer peers.**



Student Debt Impact

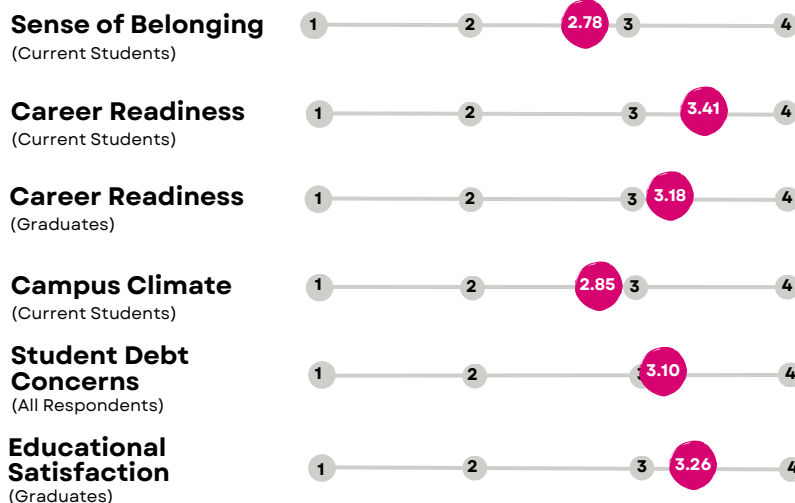
Queer people in the Upper Midwest reported an estimated **average student debt of \$39,123.** This translates to an average monthly payment of \$350. When asked on a scale of 1 - 4 how concerned they were about the impacts of student debt, the average score was 3.1. This indicates a high level of concern for both current students and queer folks who have completed their studies.

Barriers to Accessing Higher Education



Six big questions about queer people and higher education

The SLAY Survey focused on six major questions regarding queer people and higher education, including campus climate, sense of belonging, career readiness, debt concerns, and educational satisfaction. The mean responses for all queer respondents are shown at right. To view how responses differ for queer subpopulations, please view the full online SLAY report at pfundfoundation.org/SLAY.



Implications and recommendations

1. We need more scholarships for queer people in the region.
2. We need more queer-specific resources and guidance to help LGBTQ people navigate the high-stakes and confusing process of applying to college and choosing an area of study.
3. We need to cultivate campus climates where queer people feel safe and affirmed in their identities.
4. We need to invest in higher education as a public good across the region.