



# A Conversation with First-Year Students who Left

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Access the comprehensive report

## BACKGROUND

- Approximately **1 in 5** first-year students leave San Francisco State University within their first-year.
- Of the 4,323 fall 2017 first-year students, a total of **939 did not** return for the start of their second year (22%).
- In this study, we were seeking to uncover *why* these 939 students left SF State.

## STUDY GOALS

- Identify common factors contributing to first-year students not retaining.
- Increase awareness of these factors.
- Address factors (as possible) to reduce the loss of our first-year students.

## METHODOLOGY

- A 12-item telephone survey was developed.
- Peer transition mentors were trained on data collection protocol & importance of tone of care.
- Students were called three times. A follow-up email was distributed to all non-responders.
- Data were successfully collected for **285** students- a **30%** response rate.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*"I didn't receive any scholarships and was really hoping that I could have received some to help me financially."*

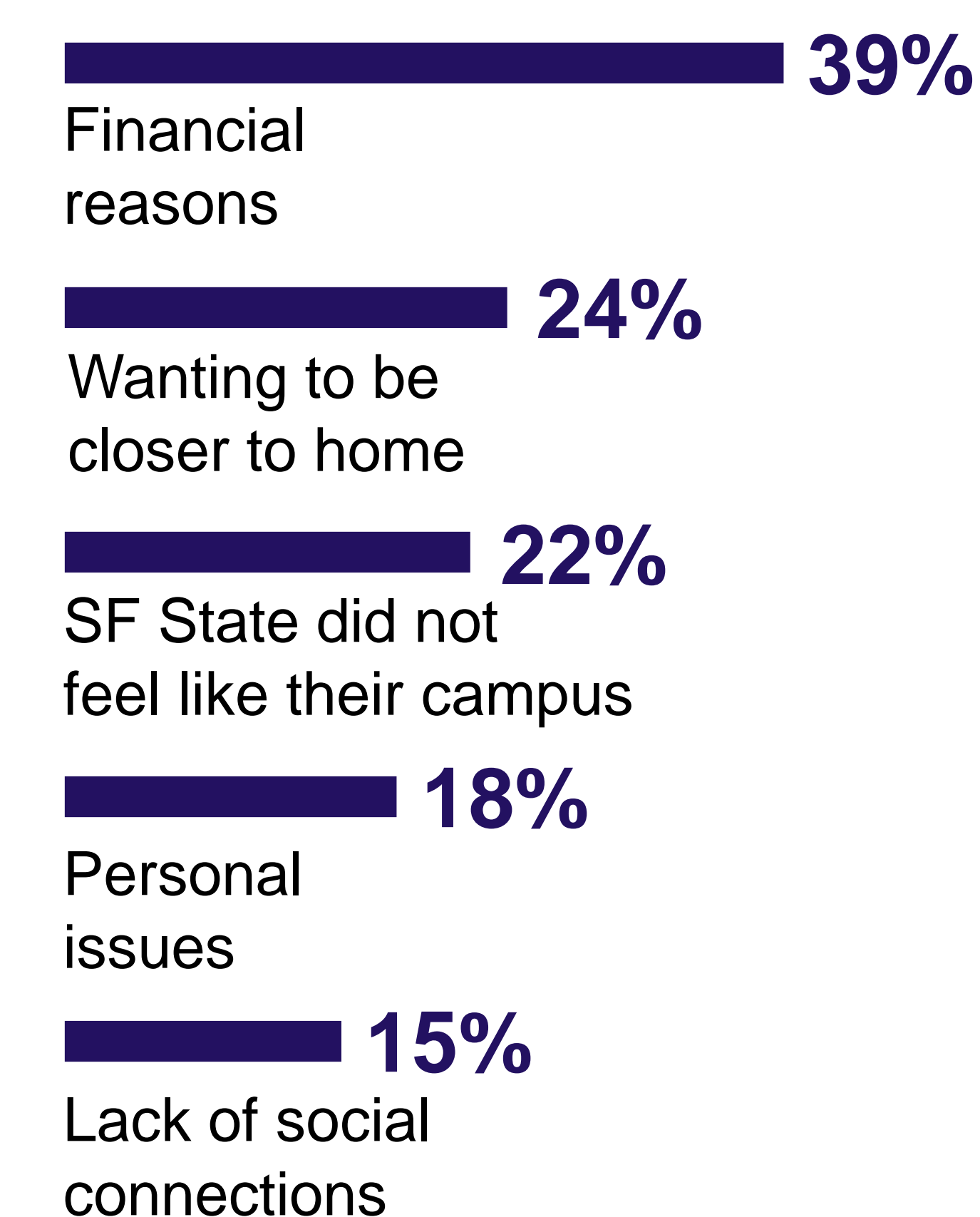
*"I was on the waitlist for housing and I did not have a plan to stay by the time classes started."*

*"I wish there was more unity on campus, and that people were more social."*

## KEY FINDINGS

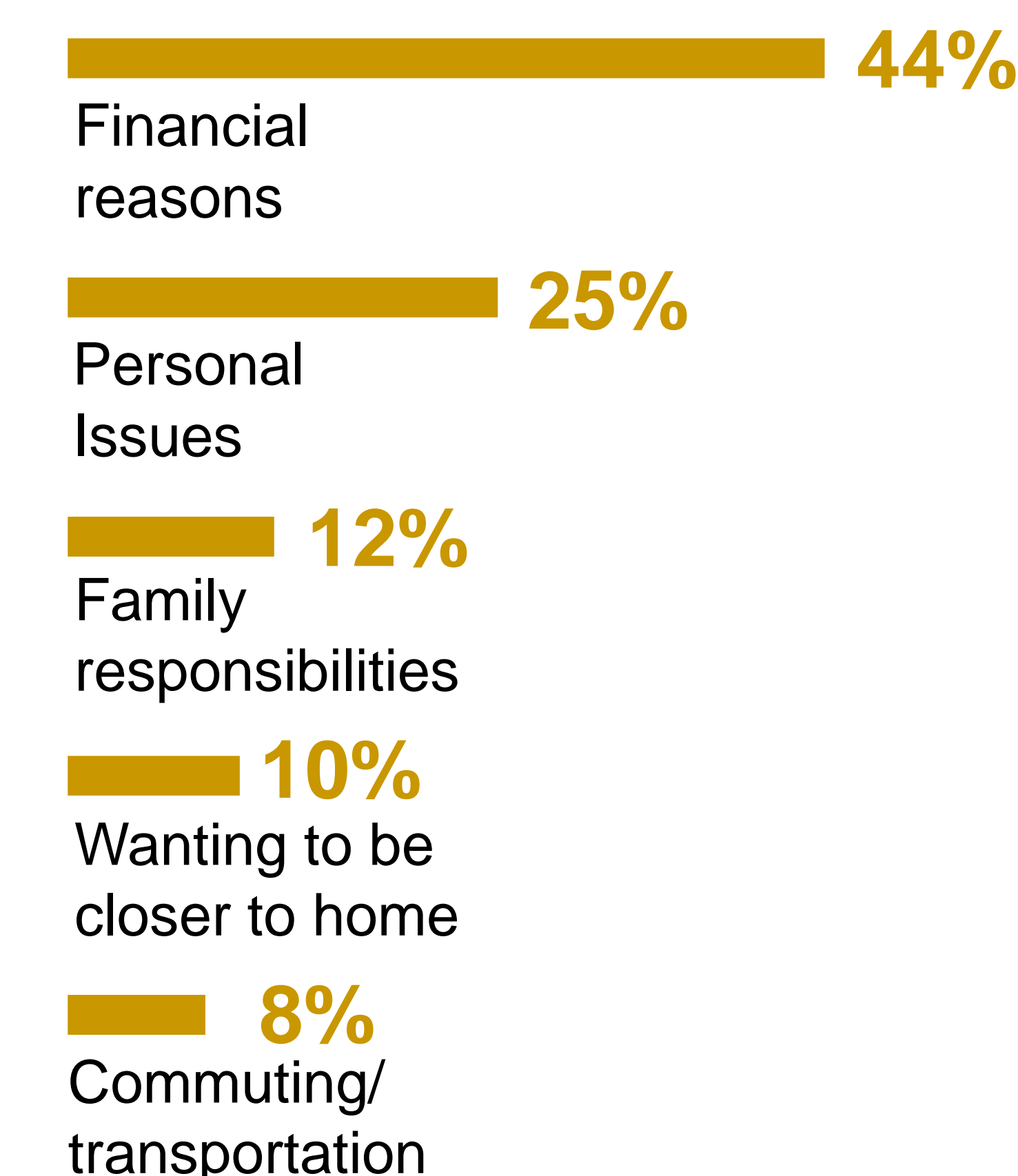
**55%** of students were **not** planning to return to SF State

Top reasons students indicated they were **not** planning to return to SF State:



**45%** of students **were** planning to return or were **undecided**

Top reasons students indicated they were **taking a break** from SF State:



Students reported on what SF State could have done differently that would have impacted their decision to leave or take a break. **Top themes** expressed were:

- Improve sense of belonging
- Class availability**
- Financial assistance**
- Increase outreach**
- Housing affordability**
- Housing issues

➔ Improve financial literacy through educational workshops & trainings.

➔ Explore innovative housing partnerships and first-year engagement opportunities.

➔ Create a first-year lounge to provide a space for studying, resting, and connecting with peers.