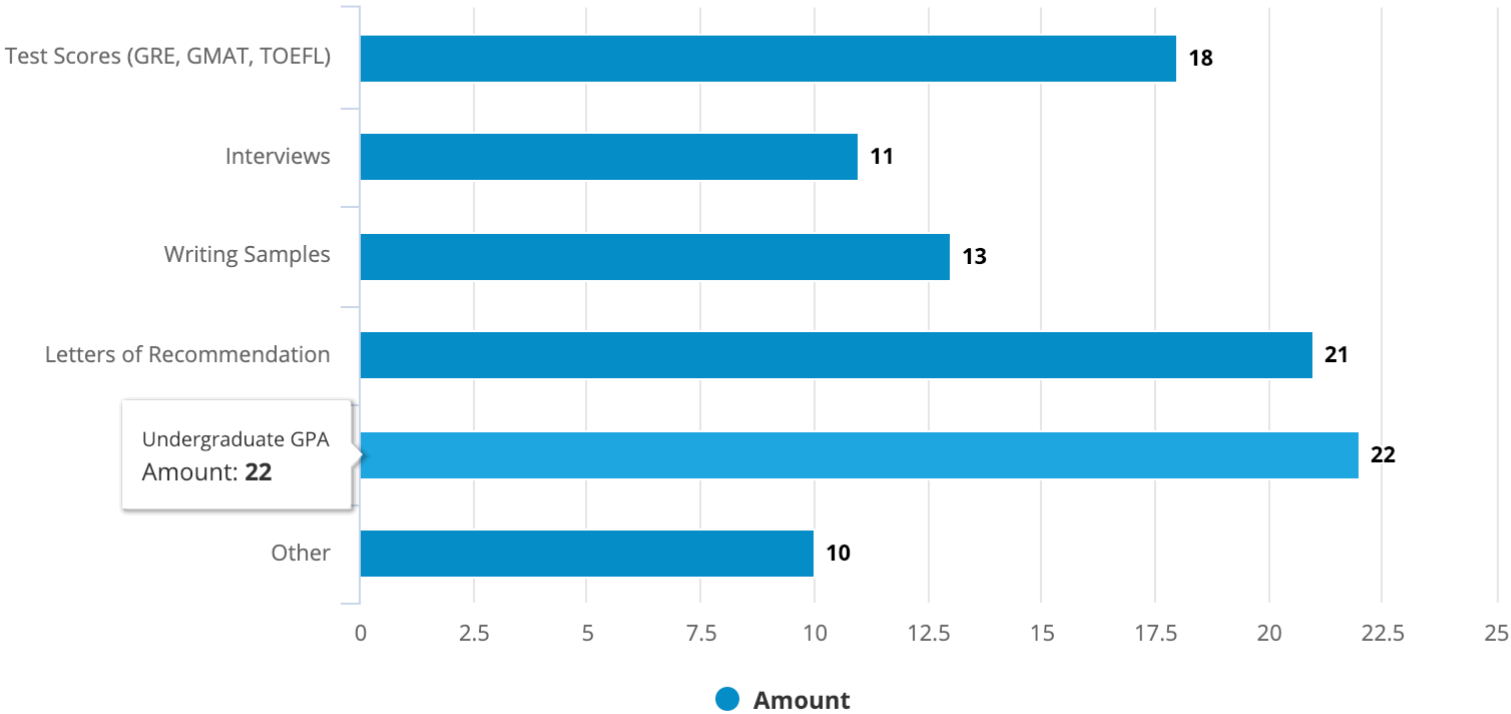# Graduate Council
Admissions and Enrollment

Cyndee Gruden

Interim Dean, College of Graduate Studies

02/05/2019
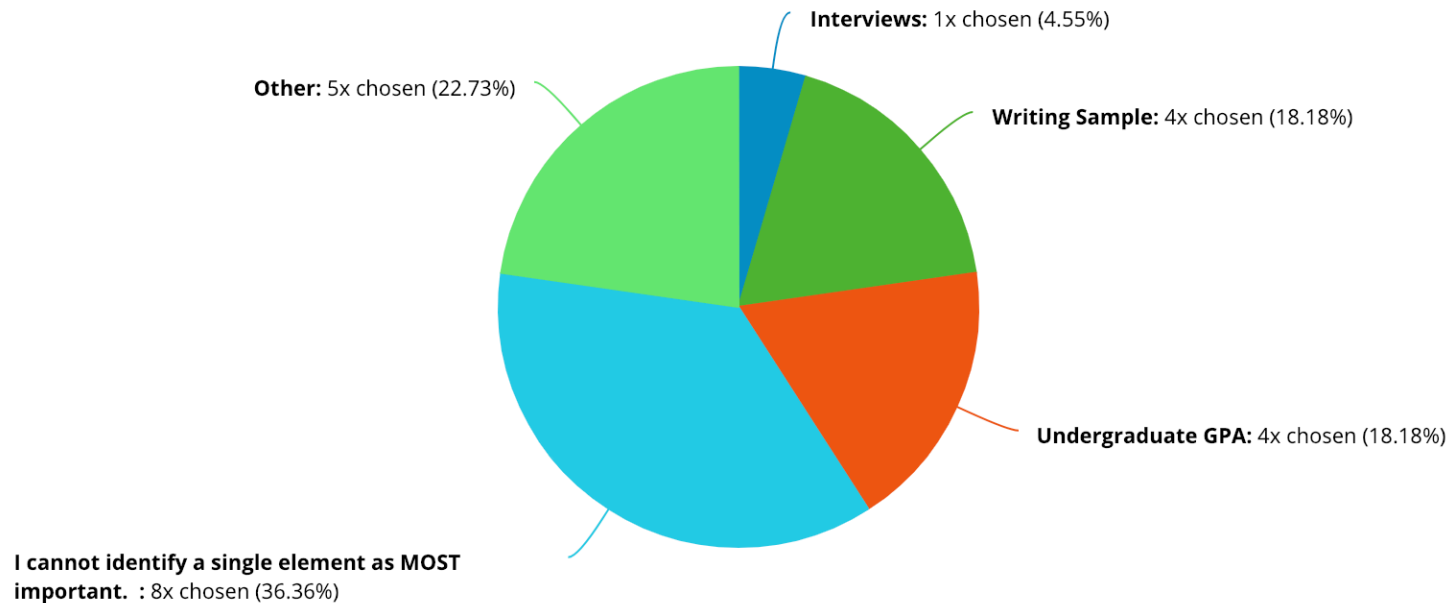
ADMISSIONS: Which of these elements does your graduate program include in admissions decisions?

Number of responses: 22

Element	Amount
Test Scores (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL)	18
Interviews	11
Writing Samples	13
Letters of Recommendation	21
Undergraduate GPA	22
Other	10

Undergraduate GPA
Amount: 22

● **Amount**

ADMISSIONS: Which of the following is the most important element to consider in admitting students to your graduate program?

Number of responses: 22

Interviews: 1x chosen (4.55%)

Other: 5x chosen (22.73%)

Writing Sample: 4x chosen (18.18%)

Undergraduate GPA: 4x chosen (18.18%)
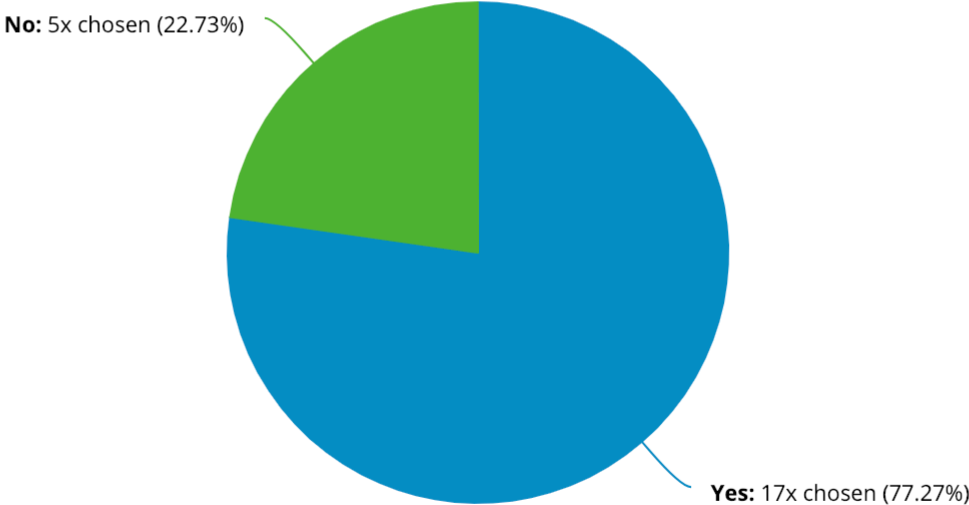
I cannot identify a single element as MOST important. : 8x chosen (36.36%)

Please provide examples of other.

ADMISSIONS: The timeline and relevant deadlines of our graduate admissions process are published online and communicated effectively to applicants.
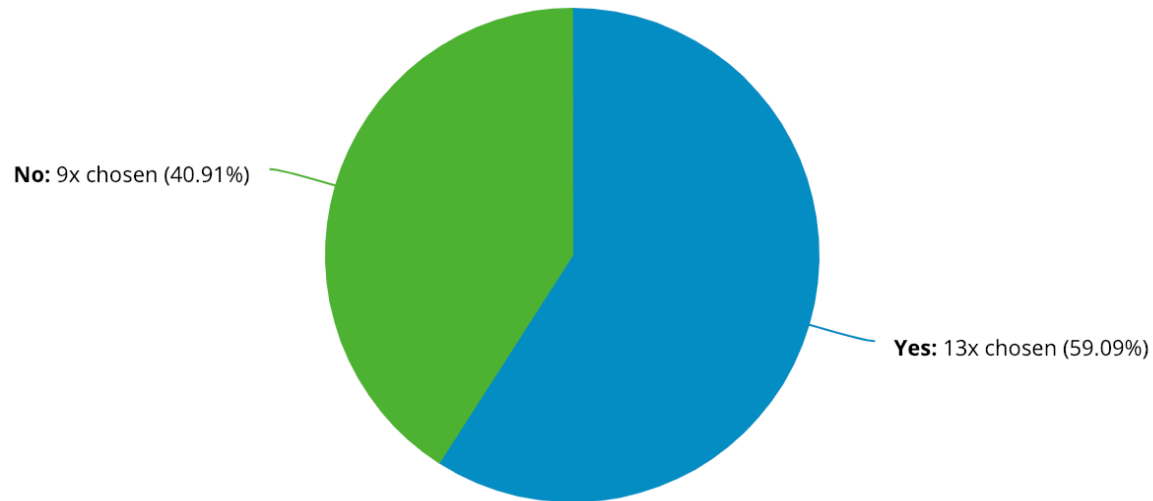
Number of responses: 22

No: 5x chosen (22.73%)

Yes: 17x chosen (77.27%)

This is very important. Each program is unique.

ADMISSIONS: Our graduate program is currently working toward developing an improved admissions process.

Number of responses: 22

No: 9x chosen (40.91%)

Yes: 13x chosen (59.09%)

If so, what is the motivation?

admissions process.

Number of responses: 14

Text answers:

I likely would have picked don't know if given the option. But we have rolling admissions and respond quickly to applications. I don't think we can improve.

Better communication on website about the admission process, when offers are made, when funding offered. Would be great to be able to tell them about the documents that are coming from COGS and when. More integrated communications would be helpful so departments know ongoing status and meaning of the admission indicators.

Each program director is tasked with reviewing the admissions procedures for their program; the Chairs are asked to review the procedures and to work with the program directors to ensure the timely consideration of each applicant.

Applications in the past have been reviewed by a faculty committee that meets once a month, now we have streamlined the process to have ongoing review by adviser, direct and then Associate Dean Academic Affairs

We have a good process but are continuously trying to inprove

COMLS Dean would like a more holistic and cohesive approach to admissions for all graduate programs in COMLS

Increasing the number of programs we reach through communications; casting a wider net (not just sending to chairs, but to other important positions; working harder to identify local applicants

We started conducting Skype interviews with promising Ph.D. program applicants. Additionally, our College is planning to offer special fellowships to outstanding applicants. These fellowships (which are similar to those that many of the top universities are already offering to their best applicants) will be in the form of a single-time cash award the students receive upon joining our program. Unlike the University Fellowships currently offered by COGS, receiving this honor will not require the students to submit an additional application.

Actually, it's more of a focus on improving recruiting, particularly

The biggest problem in our process is the inability of faculty to see the application in real time and the communication with College of graduate studies. So as a first step, we are going to ask the College of graduate studies to simplify their process and make it easier and transparent to faculty and students to work with.

The admission committee will have broader faculty involvement. We are considering introducing new minimum requirements for test scores and GPA, as well as other internal, departmental rules.

adding video responses in lieu of interviews

While we generally have a very detailed and comprehensive admissions process, we are constantly reviewing and improving. One aspect of particular interest is identifying those soft skills/social-emotional factors that contribute to success/failure.

Admissions - Summary for Discussion:

- Holistic Process
- Letters?
- Interviews
- Metrics
  - Eliminate/Add GRE?
- Process Streamlining
  - In program processes
  - COGS processes
  - Collaborative processes with COGS

Resources:

Handbook from CGS on holistic reviews for admissions (2016)

https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_HolisticReview_final_web.pdf

CGS Master's Admissions document (2018)

https://cgsnet.org/publication-pdf/5396 CGS_Masters_Web_Final.pdf

GRE Scores not a predictor for graduate success (2019)

http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/1/eaat7550/tab-pdf

GRE Scores eliminated from some admissions at top schools

https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2017/08/updated-biomedical-phd-program-major-research-university-drops-gre-requirement?r3f_986=https://www.google.com/

The most helpful thing that COGS currently does to assist our admissions process is

Number of responses: 18

Text answers:

Helps students get materials submitted.

I don't know is a better answer to the previous question. Responding to funding requests/tuition waivers is the most helpful thing.

Send incomplete applicant information.

The inital processing of the applicant's application.

Let us know when students haven't registered

Process and summarize application materials

handle paperwork for international students visa

Offering teaching assistantships

COGS admissions analysts are rapid in responding to graduate director questions on COGS policies and requests to defer applications and admission decisions.

The improved on-line admissions coordination.

Simplify your process and make it easier and transparent to faculty and students to work with.

prompt processing, credentials verification, dealing with visa-related issues and communicating with applicants on the various requirements, maintaining the applicants database

Assisting applicants in submitting all their materials such as transcripts

Database management

collect all the materials and send out one link to review

Receiving applications - notifying us when they're complete

ENROLLMENT: Our graduate program communicates directly with NEW and continuing students to remind them to enroll in classes.
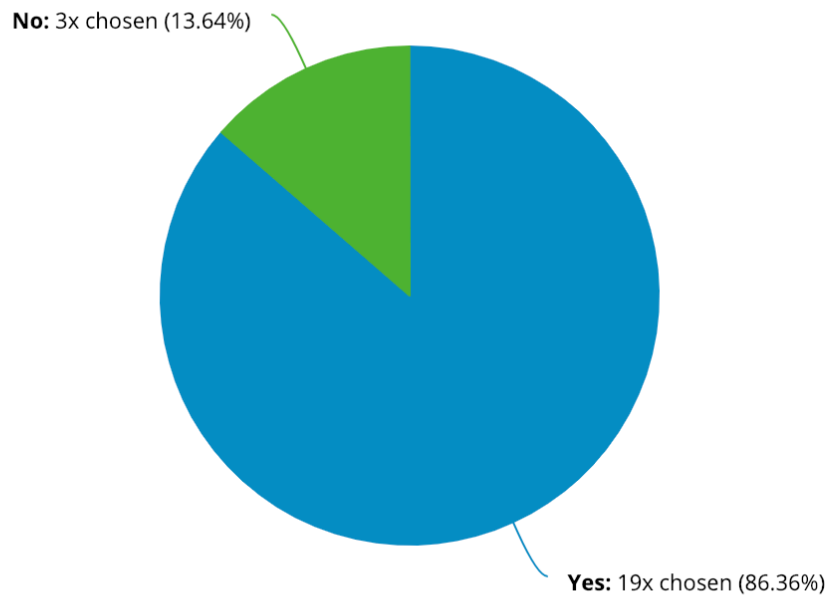
Number of responses: 22

No: 3x chosen (13.64%)

Yes: 19x chosen (86.36%)
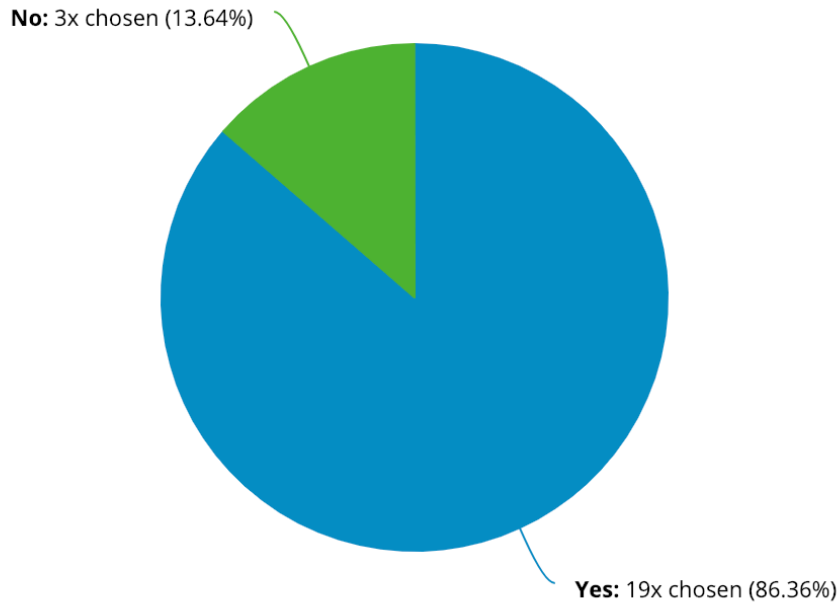
We need to know so we can coordinate (not duplicate) efforts.

ENROLLMENT: Our graduate program provides direct advising to our students before graduate enrollment begins.
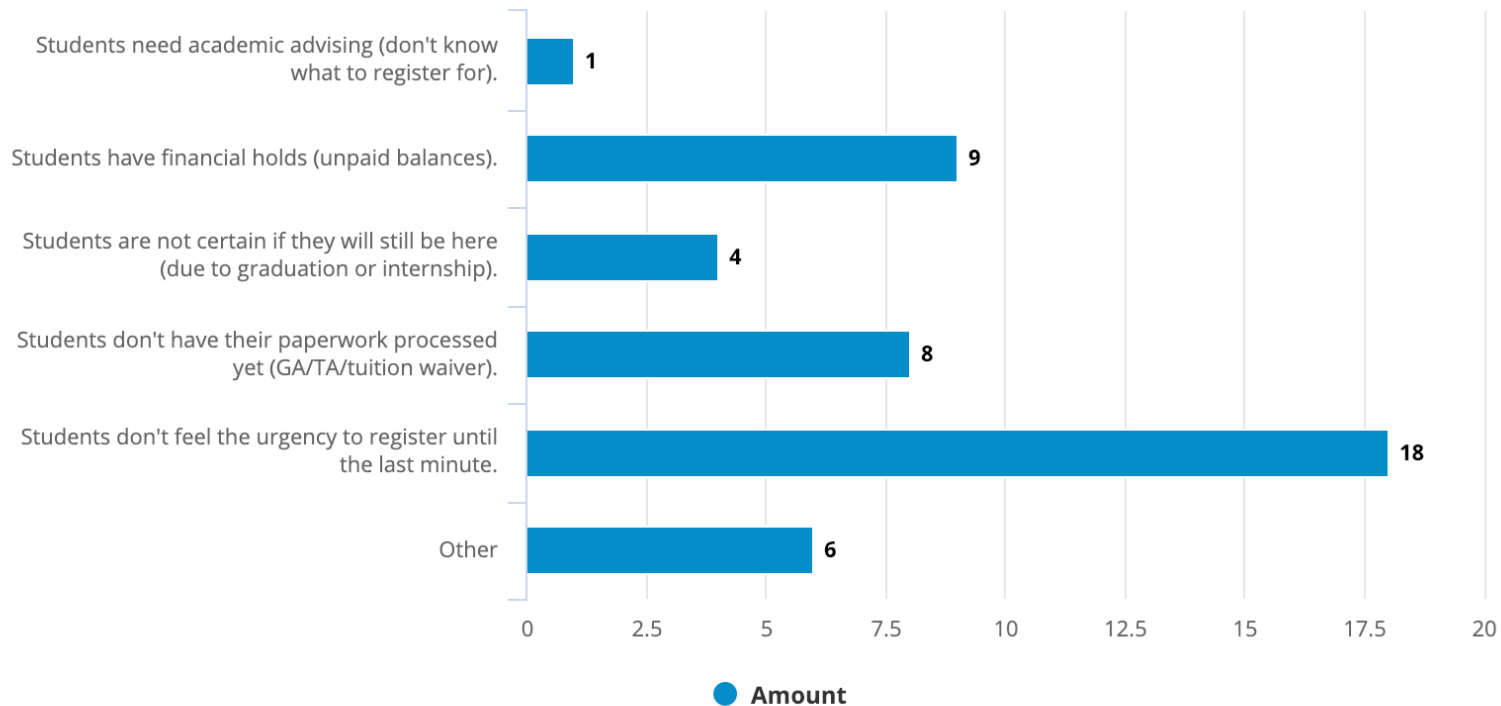
Number of responses: 22

No: 3x chosen (13.64%)

Yes: 19x chosen (86.36%)

Is this process OK as is?

ENROLLMENT: The most significant barriers to enrolling CONTINUING graduate students in a timely manner include:

Number of responses: 22

Barrier	Amount
Students need academic advising (don't know what to register for).	1
Students have financial holds (unpaid balances).	9
Students are not certain if they will still be here (due to graduation or internship).	4
Students don't have their paperwork processed yet (GA/TA/tuition waiver).	8
Students don't feel the urgency to register until the last minute.	18
Other	6

● **Amount**

How do we create a sense of urgency?

CONTINUING graduate student enrollment would be improved by:

Number of responses: 13

Text answers:

Faster processing of scholarships and loans. Better messaging to students about the importance of enrolling.

COGS distributing enrollees each semester, new and continued, to program directors. That way Program Directors have a complete list of who to reach out to. Many of us do not have that access.

We don't know how to fix procrastination.

Text reminders?

If the administration wants students to registers sooner, set an earlier deadline...but post the fees to their account at a later date.

Faculty in program

reminding students of dates that late fees will be charged

New and continuing graduate student enrollment could be improved if initial reminders for graduate students to register would be sent by COGS or college graduate office staff. Relying on individual faculty graduate director advisors to send these reminders sometimes delays such communication, since these faculty members either have pressing deadlines that sometimes end up taking priority (e.g., research proposals, paper submission, or conference travel). Further, requiring faculty graduate directors to regularly spend time on such emails (which require no disciplinary knowledge and can be sent by staff) seems to me to not be in alignment with our University's strategic plan as it: (1) needlessly reduces the time and energy faculty have to devote to their research and teaching; and (2) by spending graduate director time on such tasks, makes it more difficult for graduate directors -- who balance their administrative duties with demanding research and teaching responsibilities -- to devote mental bandwidth to making real improvements to their programs. The same comment applies to fielding the copious inquiries from prospective graduate students (most of which are general enough to be answered by a staff person outside of individual academic units). In summary, the centralizing most of such email communication with current and prospective graduate students on their registration and/or application would both make this communication more effective and improve utilization of UT's human resources.

Sticks and carrots?

Provide the student with an incentive to enroll early. For example- if they register early, you will guaranty you will charge them for fees at a later time without late penalty.

more reminders from all possible units (department, college, COGS), combined with clear deadlines and, perhaps, stronger penalties; requiring faculty advisor involvement and sending reminders to the faculty as well
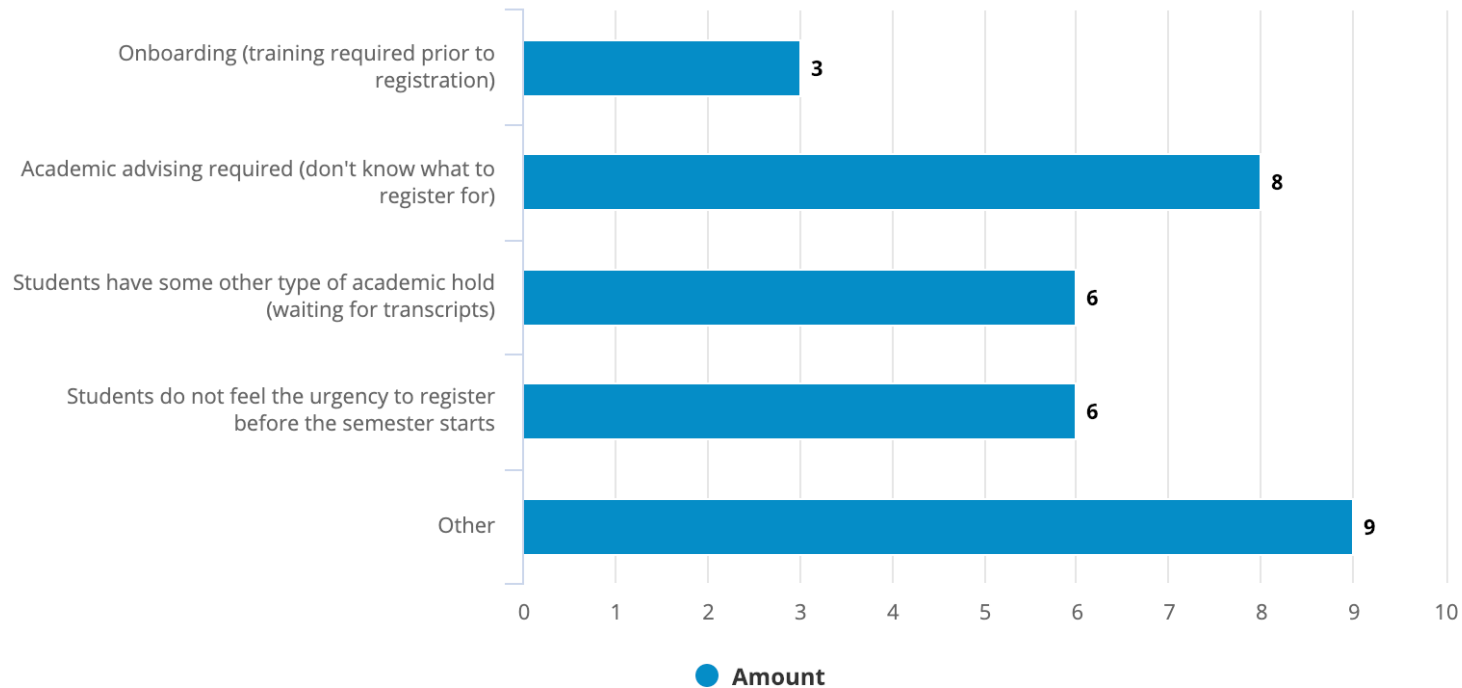
Motivating the students to register & sorting the GA/TA detials

Setting late registration deadline earlier.

ENROLLMENT: The most significant barriers to enrolling NEW graduate students during the open enrollment period include:

Number of responses: 20

Category	Amount
Onboarding (training required prior to registration)	3
Academic advising required (don't know what to register for)	8
Students have some other type of academic hold (waiting for transcripts)	6
Students do not feel the urgency to register before the semester starts	6
Other	9

● **Amount**

Please provide examples of others.

NEW graduate student enrollment could be improved by:

Number of responses: 12

Text answers:

Getting students applications completed earlier.

COGS distributing enrollees each semester, new and continued, to program directors. That way Program Directors have a complete list of who to reach out to. Many of us do not have that access.

I think we would have to fix external processes that are beyond our control.

Don't know.

No suggestion here...

Please see comment on continuing students.

Increased funding

Make it easy and student and faculty centered.

not sure much that much can be done...

They straggle in a visa's are secured. Then they need advising often on short notice. Some type of advising clearing house would help.

Earlier/better recruitment and admission

Academic advising of to students before they arrive.

Enrollment - Summary for Discussion

- Our enrollment profile is not representative of other institutions (later cycle).

- If we can move up enrollment of students who have no apparent challenges, we can attempt to assist remaining students.

- How do outside forces influence the enrollment cycle of our new students?

Any Additional Discussion ?