

# 2018 WholeRen White Paper

## on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences



**WholeRen Group Research Center**

May 2018

## About WholeRen Education

WholeRen Group, LLC was established in 2010. WholeRen is a multinational, professional education company which seeks to create and promote Sino-U.S. educational opportunities. We integrate a range of educational services from middle school, high school and college application assistance to academic emergency services, transfer assistance, on-going academic counseling, immersion classrooms, landing services, executive education programs, winter/summer camps, career planning and more. WholeRen is the nation's first international student educational organization to achieve certification from the American International Recruitment Council (AIRC). We have been invited to interview with mainstream media such as CCTV, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal. We are among the most knowledgeable professionals regarding American and Chinese academic cultural differences and have a dedicated research team that pays close attention to the long-term development of students. The WholeRen Group Research Center devotes itself to research analysis on Chinese international students in America and to providing accurate consultations based on first-hand data. If you are interested in learning more about WholeRen, we invite you to visit our website: <http://www.wholeregroup.com>.

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## Abstract

In the last decade, the number of Chinese students studying abroad has gradually increased to over 600,000 by 2017. In 2018, the United States remained the first choice for Chinese students looking to study abroad. There are more international students from China studying at U.S. universities than international students from any other country. Although many international students wish to study in America, it can be a difficult journey. In accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, the WholeRen Group Research Center analyzed data compiled from 5,631 dismissed Chinese international students who studied in the U.S. from 2013-2018. 1,000 cases were then randomly selected from March 2017 to March 2018 to develop this report. The 2018 White Paper on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences (“2018 White Paper”) is the latest continuation of our 2014-2017 annual White Paper reports.

The 2018 edition of the White Paper investigates students who were dismissed from U.S. schools, analyzes why they were dismissed, and looks at changes and trends which lead to their dismissals. In addition, the 2018 edition follows up on the current status of students who had been dismissed between 2016 to 2017 and compares data to the previous years. The 2018 White Paper was able to address two important issues: academic dishonesty and mental health issues. The goal is to help students realize the potential risks academic dishonesty as well as the importance of maintaining a healthy psychological condition while in the United States. The 2018 White Paper provides valuable data to international students, universities, governments, industry professionals, host families, and anyone else involved with Sino-U.S. educational exchange.

The data from the past year shows that poor academic performance and academic dishonesty are still the two primary reasons for Chinese student expulsion. The proportion of students who were dismissed due to poor academic performance decreased from 51.03% in the previous year to 41.24%, and the number of students who were dismissed because of academic dishonesty has increased from 33.47% in the previous year to 35.72% in 2018. Compared to last year, the number of students who have returned to China after being dismissed has increased. Although there is some variation, the overall trends did not appear to have significant changes from previous years. The 2018 White Paper provides a detailed analysis of changes mentioned above.

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## PART 1 BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Overview of Chinese Students in America

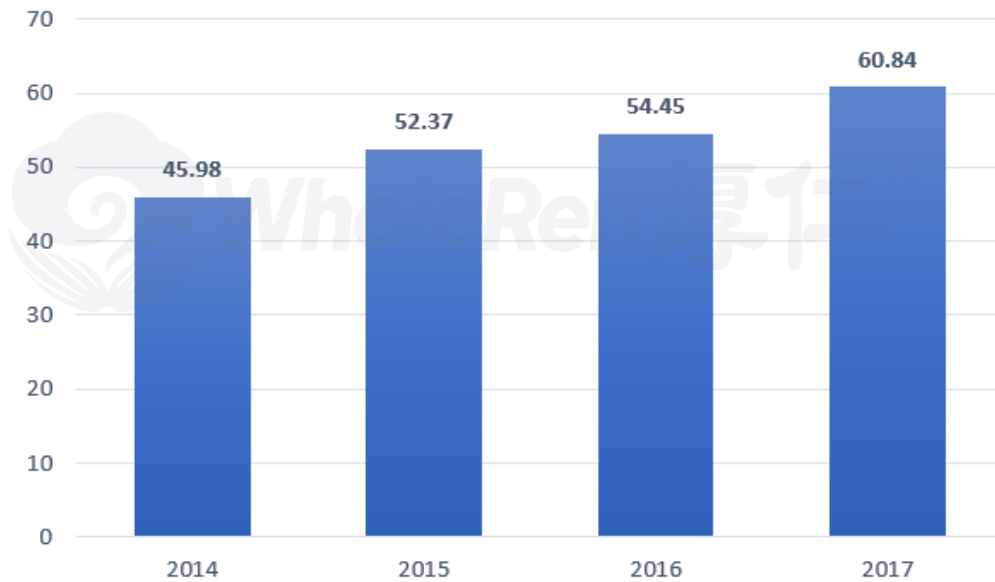


Figure 1-1: 2014-2017 The Number of Chinese Students Studying Abroad (Unit: 10,000)

The number of Chinese students studying abroad has gradually increased over the last decade and continues to rise. According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, the total number of Chinese students studying abroad in 2017 was 608,400, an increase of 11.74% from 2016 (Figure 1-1). China remains the country with the largest number of students studying abroad. In addition, the number of Chinese students studying abroad at their own expense has reached 541,300, which is 88.97% of China's international students.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zhong, J. (2018, March 30). "2017 Chu Guo Liu Xue, Hui Guo Fu Wu Gui Mo Shuang Zeng Zhang". In *Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China*. Retrieved from [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/gzdt\\_gzdt/s5987/201803/t20180329\\_331771.html?from=timeline&isappinstal led=0](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201803/t20180329_331771.html?from=timeline&isappinstal led=0)

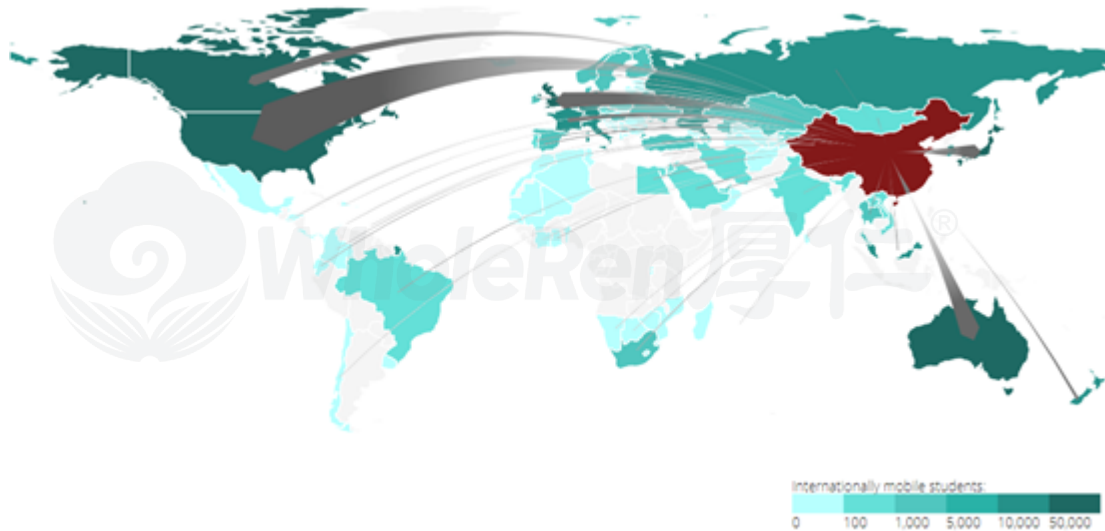


Figure 1-2: The Number of Chinese Students Studying in Each Country

As shown in Figure 1-2, Chinese students continue to flock to the United States; with a growing number of Chinese international students each year, the United States remains the foremost destination for Chinese students looking to study abroad.<sup>2</sup>

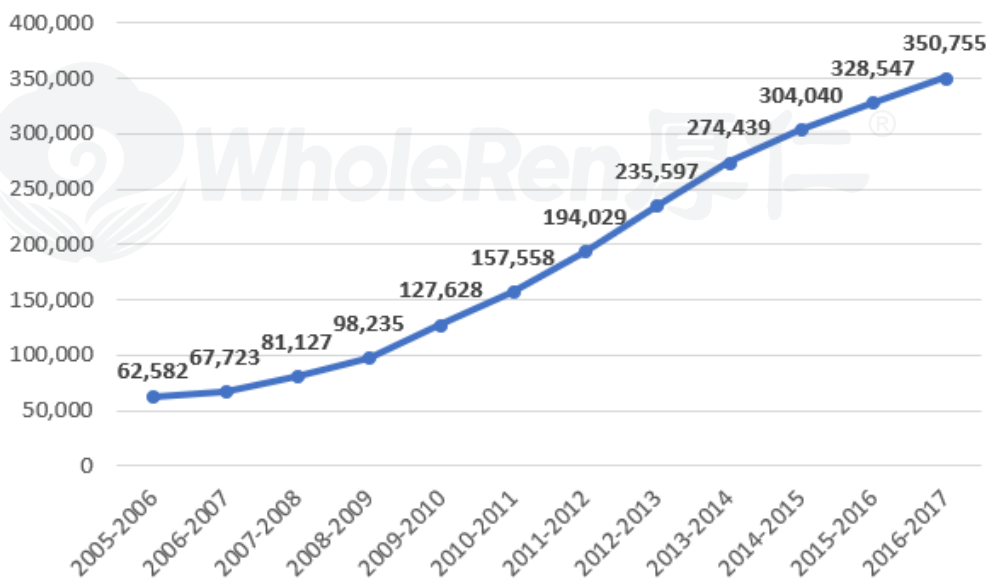


Figure 1-3: The Number of Chinese Students Studying in the U.S.

As indicated in Figure 1-3, from 2005 to 2017, the number of international Chinese students attending schools in the U.S. increased every year from 62,582 in 2005 to 350,755 in

<sup>2</sup> Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students. (n.d.). In *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from UNESCO Institute For Statistics.

2017.<sup>3</sup> In 2017, the number of international Chinese students in the U.S. increased by 6.76% from the previous year, an increase of approximately 22,000.

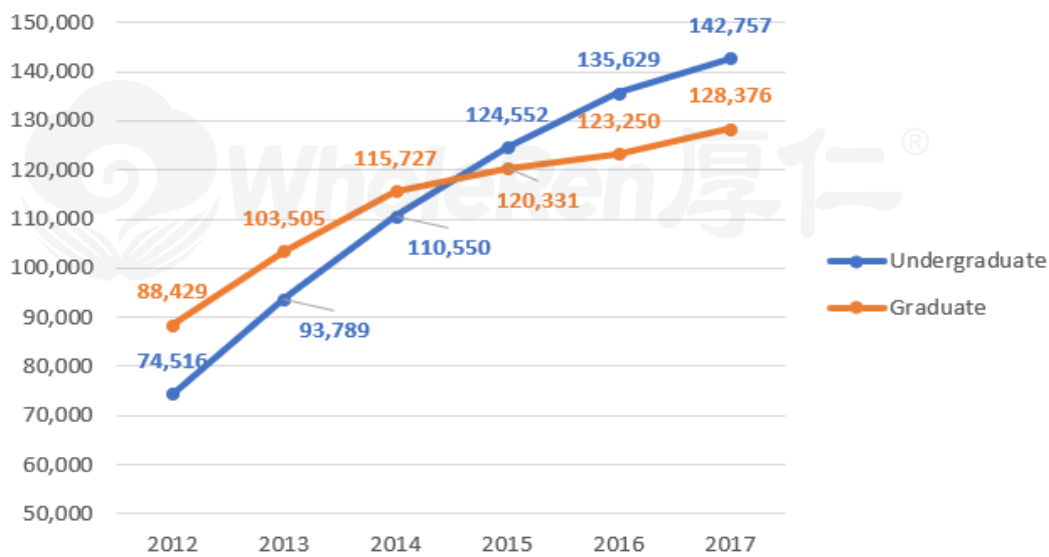


Figure 1-4: The Number of Chinese Undergraduate and Graduate Students Studying in the U.S.

Figure 1-4 indicates that the number of international Chinese students attending both undergraduate and graduate programs in the U.S. has increased every year.<sup>4</sup> Since 2015, the number of international Chinese students studying in the United States at the undergraduate level has exceeded those at the graduate level. In 2017, there were 142,000 international Chinese undergraduate students and 128,000 international Chinese graduate students in the U.S. The increase in graduate students from 2016 to 2017 is larger than that of the previous year. In the past year, the increase of undergraduate students was less than it was in the previous year, but still saw a greater increase than the number of graduate students did.

## 1.2 Research Intent

The number of Chinese students studying abroad continues to grow and has also brought to light several of their shortcomings, including not being well-prepared to study and live in the U.S., a lack of independence and a host of other challenges. All of these shortcomings result in consequences for Chinese students such as academic probation, suspension, and even dismissal. In recent years, academic dishonesty has been a more and more common problem for Chinese students when it comes to completing their degrees. In addition, when students

<sup>3</sup> Institute of International Education. (2017). "Place of Origin." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from

<https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>

<sup>4</sup> Institute of International Education. (2017). "Open Doors Fact Sheet: China." *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from

<https://p.widencdn.net/ymtzur/Open-Doors-2017-Country-Sheets-China>

are faced with the high stress of studying, mental health consequence may in turn affect academic performance and engagement.

The 2018 WholeRen White Paper on Dismissal Issues of Chinese Students in the United States stresses that a number of Chinese students can be considered a “vulnerable student group” due to the difficulty of developing independence as well as adapting to America’s culture and education system when studying abroad at a young age. This is particularly true for students from Eastern cultures like China, who are raised in interdependent contexts. When students are suddenly made to live far away from their families and a familiar environment, it is very likely that the pressure they face will have a negative impact on their academic performance or even lead to behavioral misconduct which, in turn, may lead to warnings or even suspension. Once disciplinary action has been taken against them, these Chinese international students will be at an even higher risk of misconduct or expulsion if they cannot get help.

The WholeRen Group Research Center carefully monitors Chinese students who have been dismissed from schools and we have collected and analyzed data from 2014 to 2018 regarding the causes for dismissal, individual situations, and further development of these students. One of the main things we focus on is whether or not students who were dismissed are able to continue and complete their studies in the U.S. By analyzing the data, we hope to help students get back on track academically and avoid additional setbacks from previous dismissals.



## **PART 2 DATA ANALYSIS ON STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN DISMISSED**

### **2.1 Data Collection**

All the data in the “2018 White Paper on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences” is from WholeRen Group’s proprietary database. WholeRen Group was the first professional educational organization in the United States to provide second-chance opportunities for international students who had been dismissed. As such, this dataset is compiled by America’s only organization with an expertise in high-risk international students and takes a comprehensive look at international students who were forced to leave their schools. In the following sections, "we/us" will refer to the WholeRen Group Research Center.

Following the 2014-2017 editions of the White Paper, we further examined the age, duration of stay, school location, academic performance, school ranking, and other relevant pieces of information for students who had been dismissed in order to determine the root causes of dismissal. We aim to compile data over the years so that we might acquire a deeper understanding of high-risk international students and the challenges they face.

From 2013 to March 2018, WholeRen Group compiled the cases of 5,631 students affected who were identified as “high-risk” students for having received a dismissal from their school. Of these cases, 5,192 had complete data and were usable samples (this represents 92.20% of the data). 1,000 cases were randomly selected from usable samples between March 2017 and March 2018 for the data provided in the 2018 White Paper. In addition, 1000 cases were randomly selected from usable samples to analyze the current status of students who had been dismissed between March 2016 and March 2017.

In accordance with the scientific method, WholeRen meticulously collects and refines its data. The sample data shown below has been derived from specific cases in WholeRen Group’s database.

[Sample Data Example]

When collecting the data, we first obtained student M’s basic personal information and academic information to produce the profile below:

Full Name: M

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: XX/XX/1998

Age at Time of Discipline: 19

School Level at Time of Discipline: Undergraduate

Major: Physics

Disciplining School: University of AA

Rank of the Disciplining School: 97

Disciplining School's Type: Public

Disciplining School's Location: NY

GPA at Time of Discipline: 1.6

Year Disciplined: 2017

Grade at Time of Discipline: Second Year Undergraduate

Length of Stay in America at Time of Discipline: 2 Years

Reason for Discipline: Poor Academic Performance

Reason for Low GPA: Poor Study Habits

[Analysis Process]

By analyzing the selected samples from WholeRen Group's database, we aim to:

1. Conduct a simple factor analysis on each student's information
2. Classify and analyze the specific reasons why a student was dismissed
3. Compare and compile historical data and analyze growing trends
4. Put forth a summary of the characteristics of the most vulnerable and high-risk academic demographics among Chinese students
5. Analyze the current trend and highlight root causes for dismissal

## 2.2 Basic Personal Data Analysis

The 2018 White Paper takes a look at the age of the student at the time of dismissal, length of their stay in America, current degree, reasons of dismissal, status of their I-20 and subsequent development after being dismissed in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of students who were dismissed.

### 2.2.1 Age and Gender Distribution of Dismissed Students

This year, we started by looking at the age and gender of dismissed students. We found that the number of dismissed students in the range of 18-22 years old increased the most over the past year, from 65.38% to 78.30%.

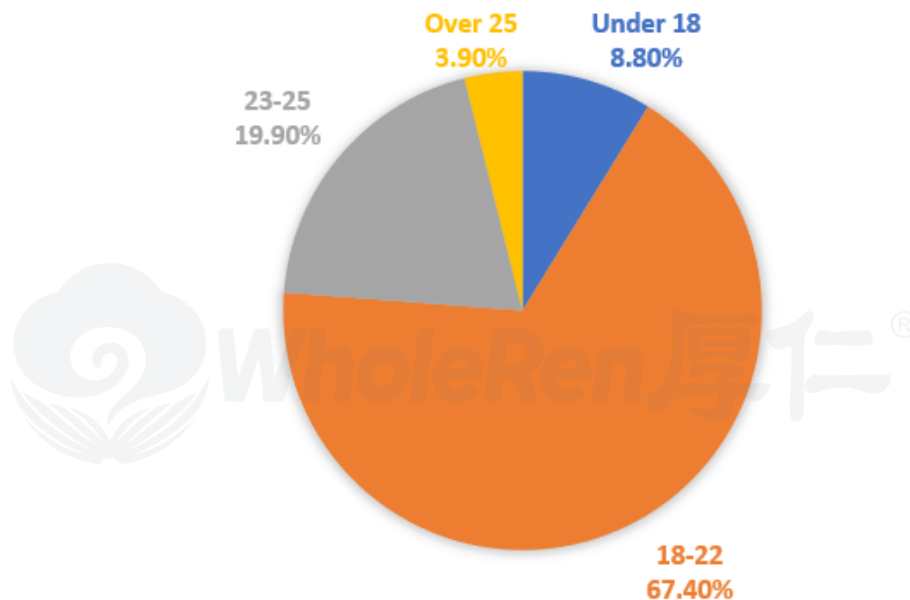


Figure 2-1: 2014-2018 Age Distribution of Dismissed Students

As indicated by Figure 2-1, of the students who were dismissed from 2014-2018, 8.80% were under 18 years old, 67.40% were 18-22 years old, 19.90% were 23-25 years old, and 3.90% were 25 years old or older. Among these categories, the majority fell into the 18-22 year age range, whereas those over 25 years of age were the minority, indicating a low chance of older students being dismissed.

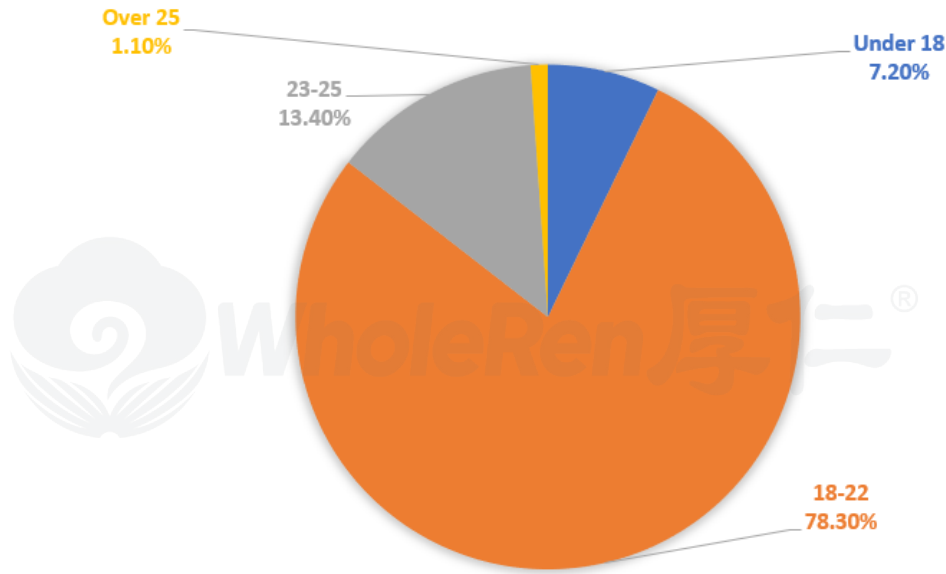


Figure 2-2: 2018 Age Distribution of Dismissed Students

In Figure 2-2, we compared the age groups of the students who have been dismissed in 2018. 7.20% were under 18 years old, 78.30% were 18-22 years old, 13.40% were 23-25 years old, and 1.10% were 25 years old or older. The percentage of dismissed students in the 18-22 age range for 2018 is more than the percentage from 2014 to 2018.

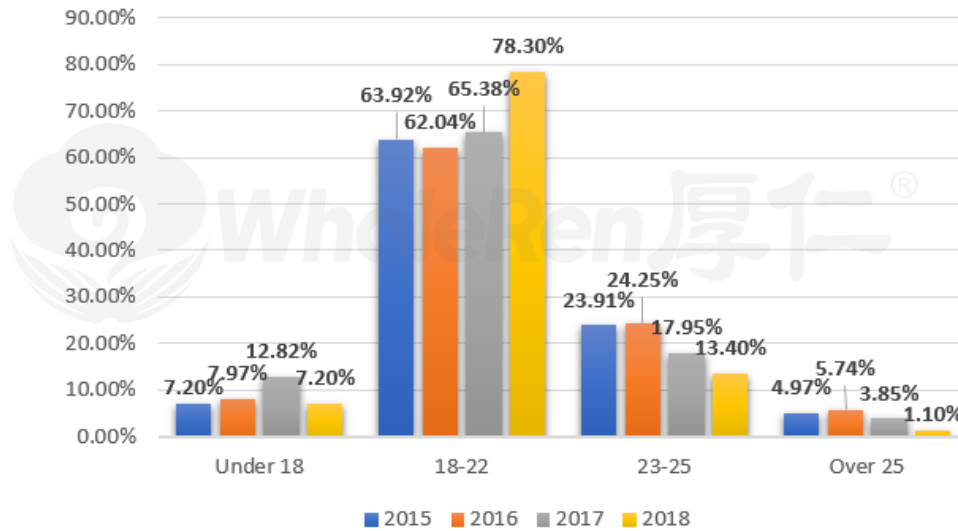


Figure 2-3: 2015-2018 Comparison of Age Distribution for Dismissed Students

In Figure 2-3, we compared the age distribution of students who had been dismissed from 2015 to 2018. The percentage of students under the age of 18 who were dismissed continued to increase for three consecutive years until 2018 at which point it saw nearly a 5.50% decrease from the previous year. The percentage of dismissed students between 18-22 years old showed some fluctuation in the first three years and increased significantly to 78.30% in

2018. In contrast to 18-22 year olds, 23-25 year olds and those over 25 both saw decreases in their percentages to 13.40% and 1.10%, respectively.

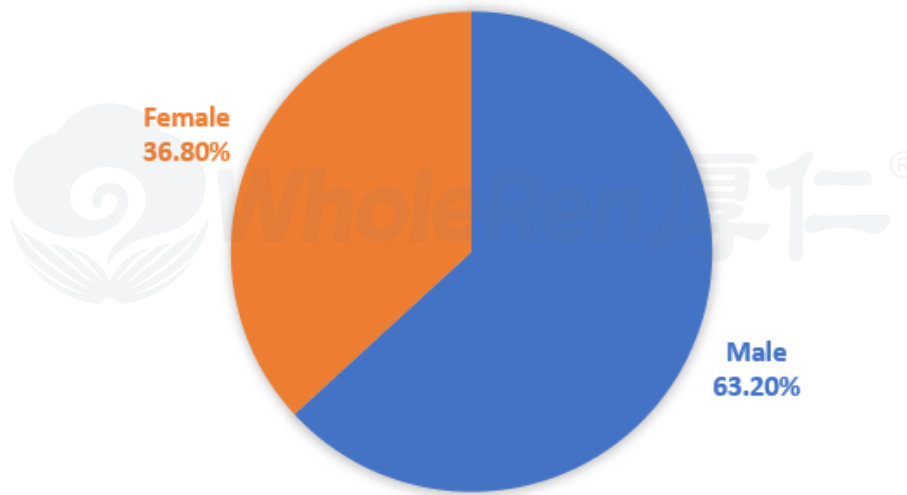


Figure 2-4: 2018 Distribution of Gender for Dismissed Students

We also analyzed the distribution of gender for dismissed students. The proportion of male students exceeds female students. As can be seen from Figure 2-4, 63.20% of dismissed students were male while 36.80% were female. This clearly shows that male students make up the majority of dismissed students, equally approximately two thirds of all dismissed students sampled.

### 2.2.2 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

The majority of international students (72.10%) who have been dismissed from 2014 to 2018 were studying at the undergraduate level. The percentage of high school and undergraduate dismissals are increasing each year, while the percentage of graduate dismissals has been continuously decreasing. In 2018, we included the number of students pursuing associate degree as part of the undergraduate student numbers. This made sense given that most community colleges have two-year programs and the courses they offer are equivalent to standard courses at a university. As seen in the graph below, the percentage of students who were dismissed at the undergraduate level far surpasses the number students who were dismissed at other academic levels.

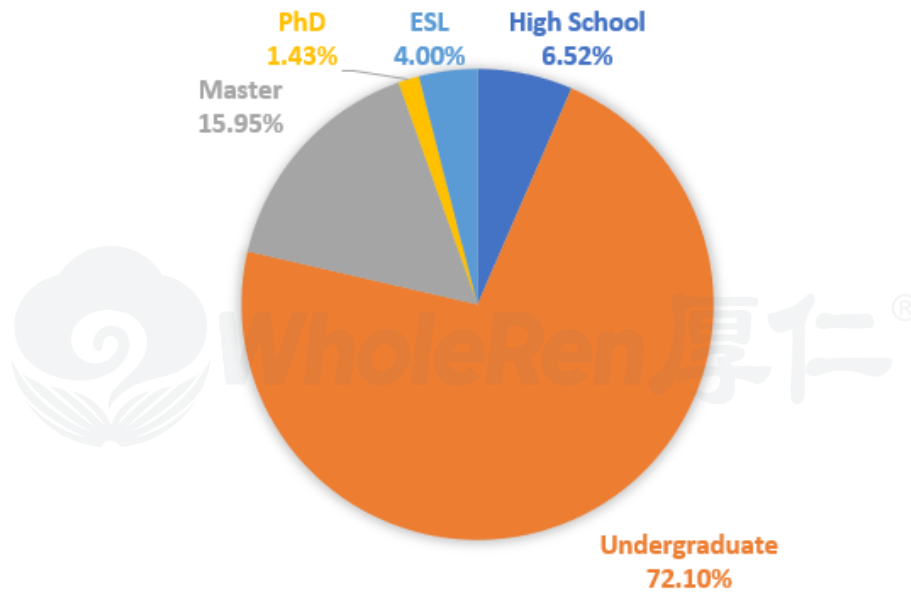


Figure 2-5: 2014-2018 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

Figure 2-5 shows that the majority of international students (72.10%) who have been dismissed in the past four years were studying at the undergraduate level. Students pursuing a master's degree account for 15.95% of dismissed students, meaning that dismissed college students account for approximately 90% of all dismissed international students. 1.43% of dismissed students were PhD students, 4.00% attended language schools, and 6.52% were studying at the high school level and below.

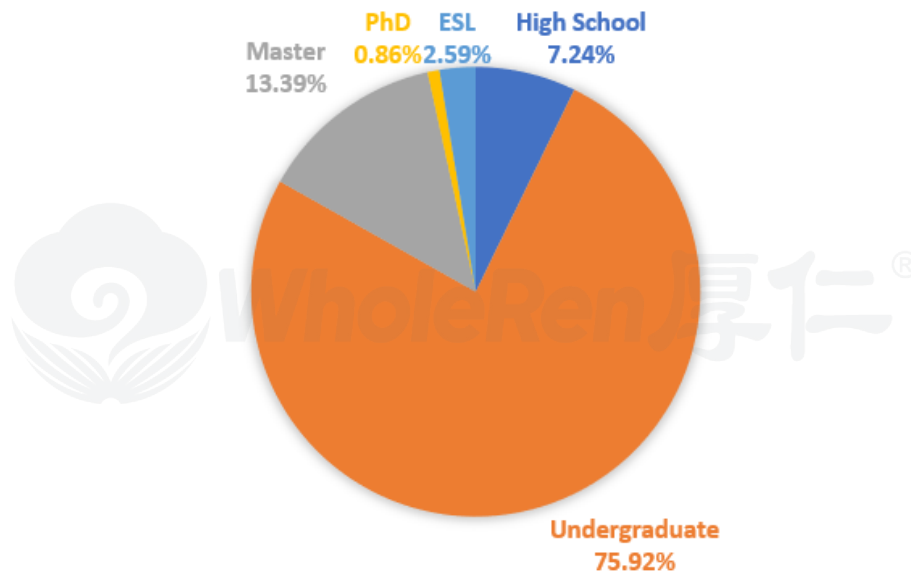


Figure 2-6: 2018 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

As can be seen from Figure 2-6, the percentage of undergraduates who have been dismissed in 2018 is 75.92%, while the percentage of graduate students who have been dismissed is

13.39% and the percentage of dismissed PhD students is less than 1.00%. In 2018, undergraduate students remain the majority of students being dismissed.

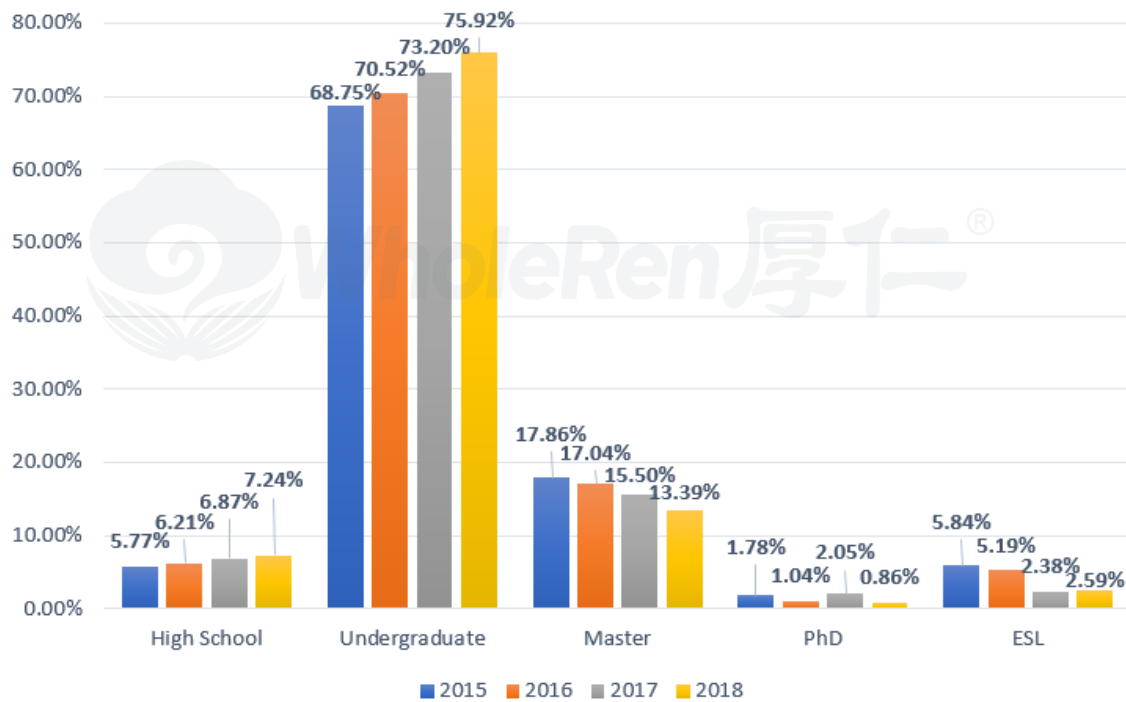


Figure 2-7: 2015-2018 Comparison on Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

As can be seen from Figure 2-7, the proportion of high school students and undergraduate students who have been dismissed has increased each year from 2015 to 2018. Over the past year, the percentage of dismissed high school students increased from 6.87% to 7.24%, while the percentage of dismissed undergraduate students increased from 73.20% to 75.92%. The percentage of graduate students who were dismissed dropped from 15.50% to 13.39% over the past year. The percentage of dismissed PhD students also saw a drop from 2.05% in 2017 to 0.86% in 2018. The percentage of dismissed students in language programs has not had significant change over the years and is currently around 2.59%.

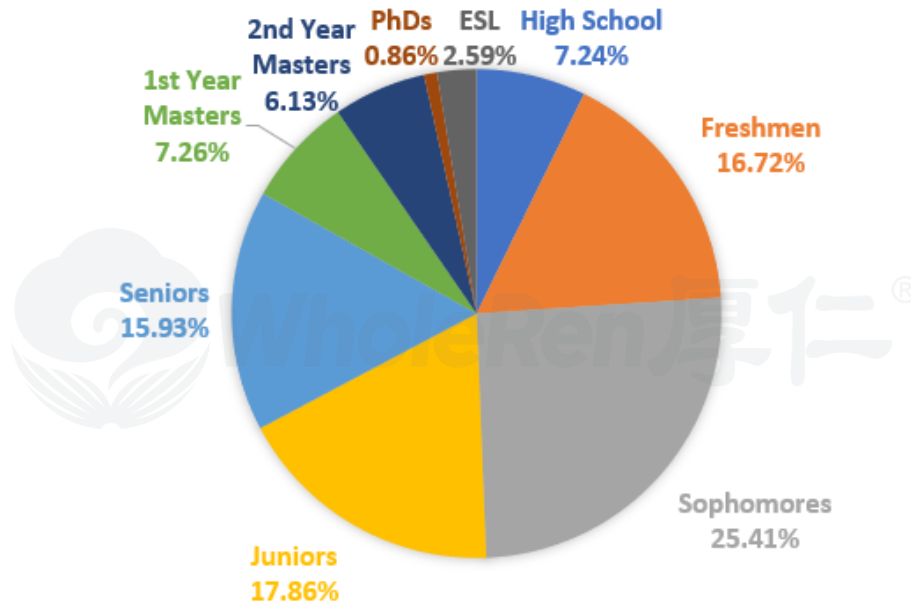


Figure 2-8: 2018 Distribution on Year of Each Academic Level

This year, we also noted the specific grade level of students at the time of their dismissal. Sophomores are generally at a higher risk of being dismissed than other grades with 25.41% of dismissed students being at the sophomore level. PhD students, in contrast to undergraduate students, generally have a lower risk of being dismissed with PhD student dismissals accounting for only 0.86% of all dismissed students in the sample last year. Undergraduate students account for the majority of dismissed students at 75.92% of all dismissals last year.

### 2.2.3 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed

As shown in Figure 2-9, we analyzed the rankings (U.S. News & World Report) of the schools from which students were dismissed in the past five years and found that 35.88% of students were dismissed from top 50 universities, 39.31% were dismissed from schools ranking in the 51-100 range, and 25.81% were dismissed from schools ranked beyond 100.



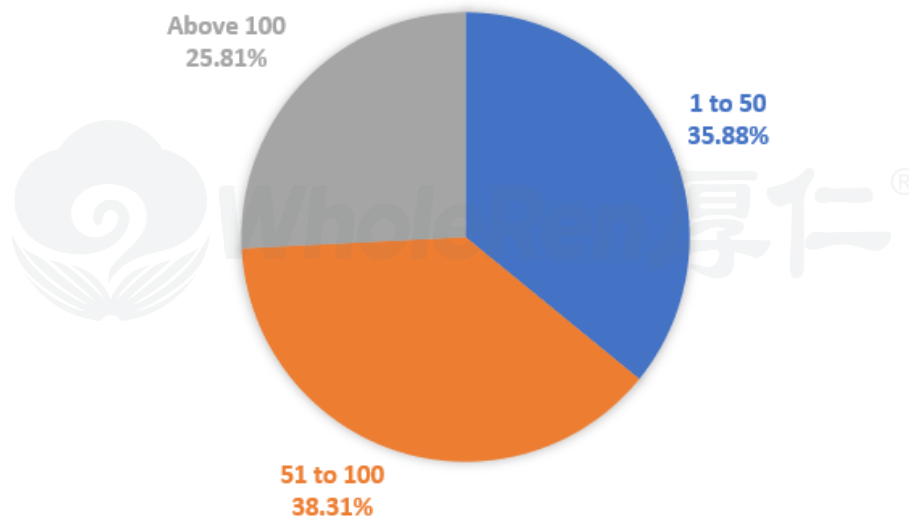


Figure 2-9: 2014-2018 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed

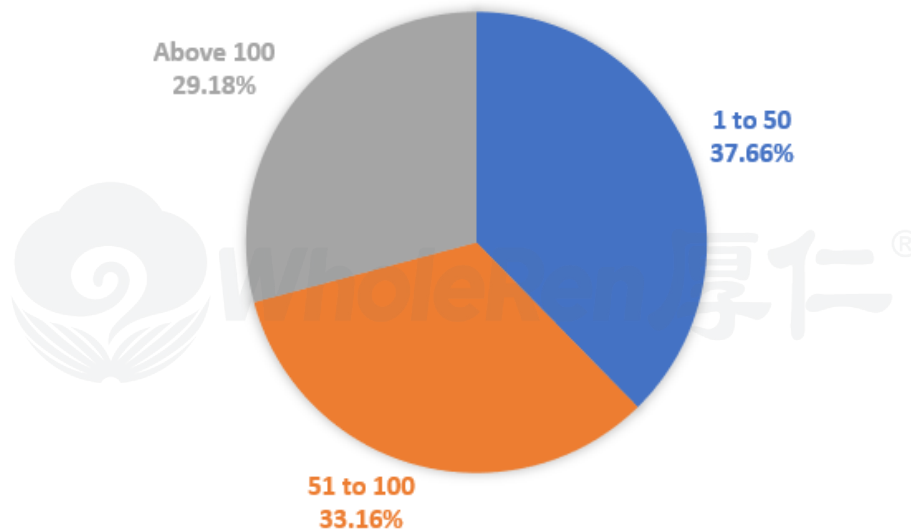


Figure 2-10: 2018 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed

As seen by the 2018 data (Figure 2-9), the plurality of dismissed students came from top 50 universities. 37.66% of dismissed students came from top 50 universities, 33.16% of dismissed students came from schools ranking in the 51-100 range, and 29.18% of dismissed students came from schools ranked beyond the top 100. In total, 70.83% dismissed students were from universities ranking in the top 100.

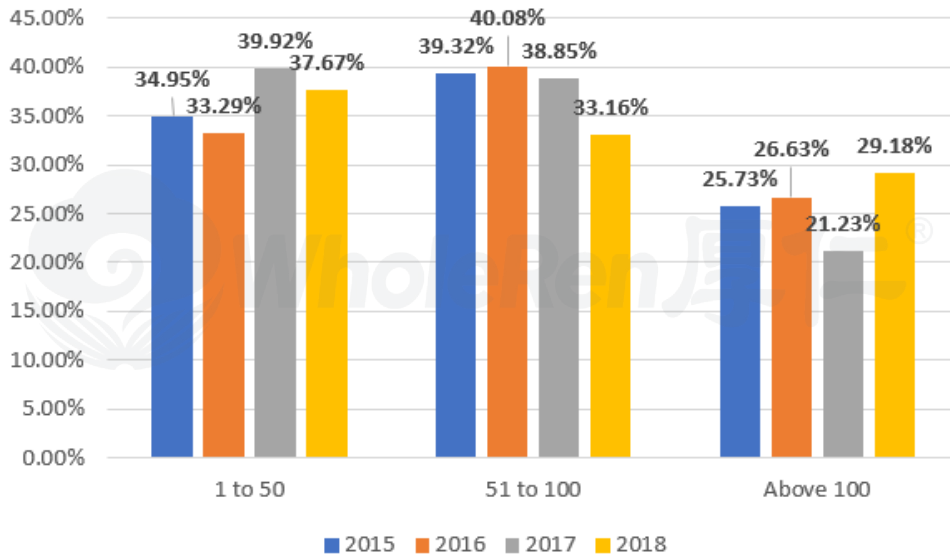


Figure 2-11: 2015-2018 Comparison on Distribution of the Rank of Schools

Looking at the past four years' data, the proportion of students dismissed by schools ranked in the top 100 decreased to from 78.77% in 2017 to 70.83% in 2018 (Figure 2-11). The percentage of students dismissed by schools outside of the top 100 increased nearly 8% over the past year.

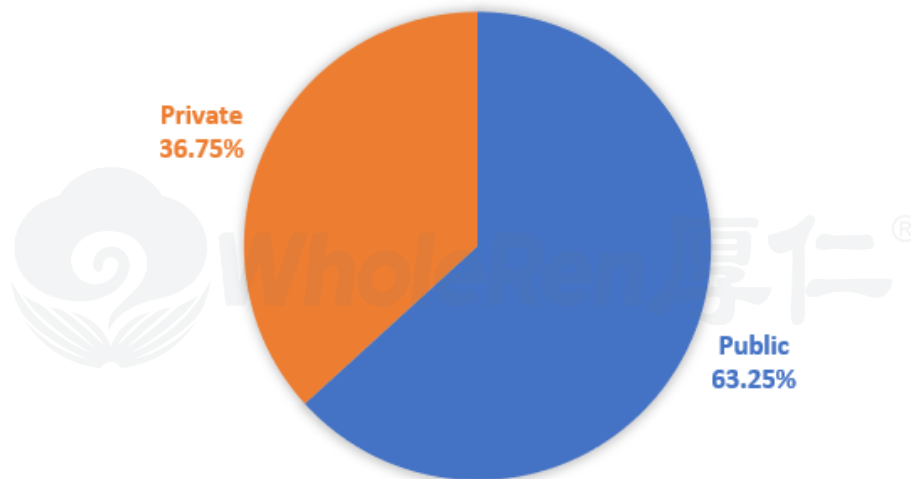


Figure 2-12: 2018 Distribution of School Types Where Students were Dismissed

We also organized data of dismissed students with regard to school type as shown in Figure 2-12. We found that of the students who were dismissed, 63.25% of them were from public schools and 36.75% of them were from private schools.

## 2.2.4 Location of Student Dismissals

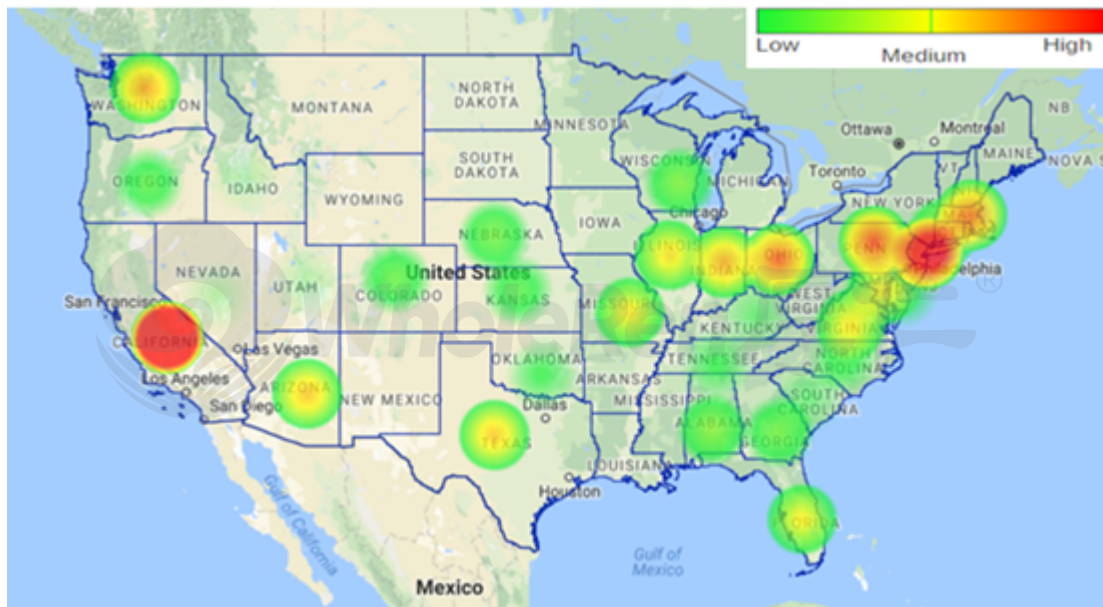


Figure 2-13: Location of Student Dismissals (Data from March 2017 to March 2018)

By looking at the map above (Figure 2-13), we can see that dismissals happened frequently along the western coast in California, Oregon and Washington - most prominently in Los Angeles, California. In addition, a number of cases also occurred in eastern areas such as Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania as well as the Great Lakes region (including Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, etc.). The areas with the most serious cases are often economically developed, Chinese immigrant centers, and also popular destinations for Chinese students studying in America. In addition, the universities in these areas tend to be ranked higher than those in other locations.

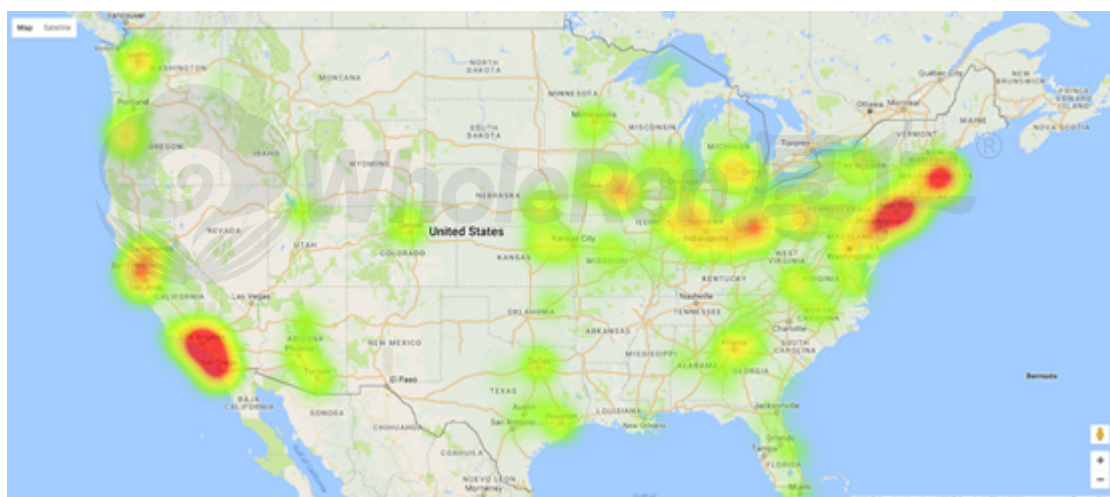


Figure 2-14: Location of Student Dismissals (Data from March 2016 to March 2017)

Compared to the 2017 data, we found that in addition to a spread along the east and west coast, students nowadays are moving towards other states such as Arizona, Texas and Florida, resulting a wider distribution of locations where students were dismissed.

### 2.3 Analysis of Reasons for Student Dismissal

By analyzing the 1,000 students who sought help from WholeRen Group from March 2017 to March 2018 regarding their dismissals, we are able to take a closer look at the reasons behind student dismissal, including poor academic performance, academic dishonesty, behavioral misconduct, attendance issues, incomplete understanding of academic policies, health issues and others.

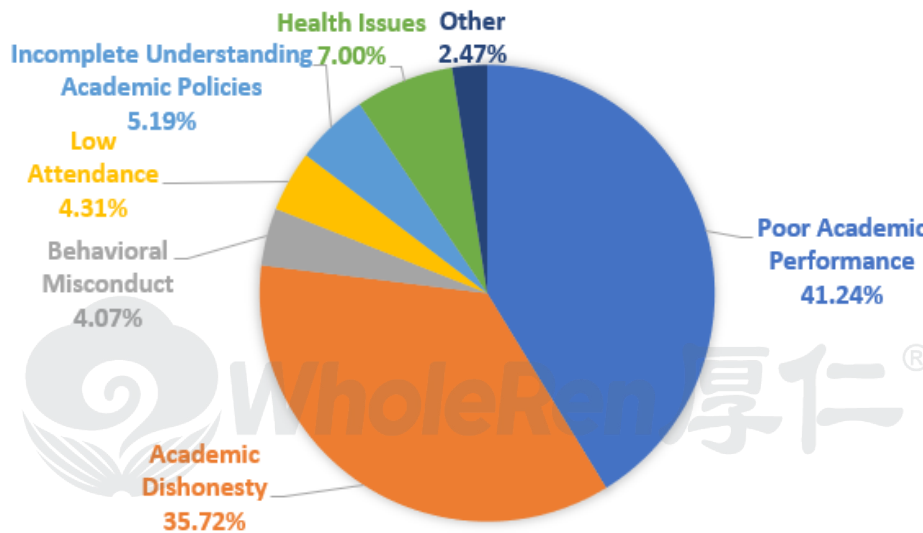


Figure 2-15: 2018 Distributions of Reasons for Student Dismissal

Figure 2-15 indicates that poor academic performance and academic dishonesty were the two major reasons why students were dismissed in 2018 and account for 41.24% and 35.72% of dismissals respectively. Other reasons students face dismissal include: behavioral misconduct (4.07%), attendance issues (4.31%), incomplete understanding of academic policies (5.19%), health issues (7.00%), and other less-common reasons (2.47%). The seven reasons listed above will be addressed individually below in more detail.

#### *Poor Academic Performance*

41.24% of students were dismissed because of poor academic performance, making it the most common reason Chinese international students are dismissed. Poor academic performance indicates that the student's GPA is lower than the minimum requirement at their school. American colleges and universities generally stipulate that undergraduates cannot

have a total GPA of under 2.0 and graduate students cannot have a GPA of under 3.0. Typically, the first time a student appears to have a low GPA, the school will give the student an academic warning or probation. If academic performance does not improve or if the student has low GPA for consecutive semesters, the school will suspend or even dismiss the student.

### ***Academic Dishonesty***

American colleges and universities pay special attention to academic integrity. It is an integral and inflexible component. However, academic dishonesty remains the second most common reason why Chinese students are dismissed, accounting for 35.72% of dismissed international students in the past year. The most common behaviors categorized as academic dishonesty include: cheating on tests, taking exams on behalf of someone else, plagiarism, incorrect citations, application material fraud, and falsifying grades. Academic dishonesty can be divided into intentional behavior and unintentional behavior. Intentional academic dishonesty most commonly manifests itself in the form of willingly cheating on homework or tests in order to pass a class. In recent years, taking exams or completing homework on behalf of someone else has become its own industry as many students are willing to pay for this kind of service. Unintentional academic dishonesty often occurs due to a lack of understanding with regard to the culture of academic integrity in the United States. Examples of this include incorrect citations when writing papers, not knowing the rules of online exams, being generally unfamiliar with habits regarding academic integrity, and not following the academic code of conduct.

### ***Behavioral Misconduct***

Chinese students who were dismissed due to behavioral misconduct account for 4.07% of dismissed students over the past year. Students who fall into this category violate school regulations or U.S. laws by: bullying, fighting, engaging in violent behavior, drinking underage, driving under the influence, smoking marijuana, and/or racially discriminating. In America, if a student threatens public security, it is highly probable that, in addition to facing dismissal, the student will be subject to a judicial trial and repatriation.

### ***Attendance Issues***

Attendance is also a factor which can lead to student dismissal. 4.31% of Chinese international students who were dismissed last year were dismissed because of low attendance. For younger students, living alone in the United States means a lack of regulation from their parents, likely for the first time in their lives. This sudden "freedom" can easily result in slacking off and not attending class as scheduled. The primary reasons international students face low attendance include: becoming addicted to video games, laziness, and unreasonable leaves of absence. In addition, because class attendance is usually included in the total grade for students, if a student is regularly absent from class, they are likely to fail as a result. Low attendance can also have other negative effects on international students, such as making it

more difficult to get through customs. If academic attendance is low, U.S. customs may have reason to suspect that the student may have ulterior motives for coming to the United States and be unwilling to leave.

### ***Incomplete Understanding of Academic Policies***

Chinese international students who were dismissed over the past year due to an incomplete understanding of academic policies accounted for 5.19% of all Chinese international students dismissed last year. Such students generally encountered problems including not registering in time, not enrolling in required courses, and not taking enough credits. These are avoidable problems which unfortunately still occur due to a student's lack of understanding of school policies. American colleges and universities usually have orientations at the beginning of the academic year, which gives the school a chance to outline some of its general rules and policies. However, many Chinese international students cannot fully understand the content due to the language barrier, and they may miss or ignore important information. Some students do not even attend orientation, putting them at a much greater risk of not understanding the school's system and violating its rules.

### ***Health Issues***

International students face a great deal of pressure while studying in the United States which has even led some to develop mental health issues that affected their study, and occasionally led to their eventual dismissal. Mental health issues account for 7.00% of Chinese international students dismissed last year. For students living in a foreign country, cultural differences can cause students to encounter difficulties with studying, living, and socializing. Learning to adjust to a new culture and balance pressure and commitments from both school and social life is essential. If students are unable to cope, it will lead to physical and psychological discomfort. The challenge of trying to do many things all at once such as graduating, finishing homework, overcoming language barriers, making friends, adjusting to an American diet, and dealing with changes in one's family and environment creates a great deal of pressure on Chinese international students. Students who suffer mental health issues need to seek methods to achieve a better work-life balance but due to cultural stigmas, may be very unlikely to do so.

### ***Other Issues***

Other less common reasons such as visa concerns, financial issues, and "pay-to-stay" schemes account for 2.47% of students dismissed last year. Chinese students studying and working in the United States must hold a valid I-20 form. Once the student has been suspended or dismissed from school, the I-20 form will be invalidated. Even if their U.S. visa is still valid, the student no longer retains legal status as an international student. Some students "pay-to-stay" in the United States which typically involved fake universities that offer F-1 status to paying customers but do not actually enroll students. If discovered by United States

Citizenship and Immigration Services, these students will lose their legal status in the United States, and need to prepare for immediate departure.

## 2.4 Four-year Comparison on the Reasons for Dismissal

In comparison with the data from each year (2015 to 2018), some changes can be seen below:

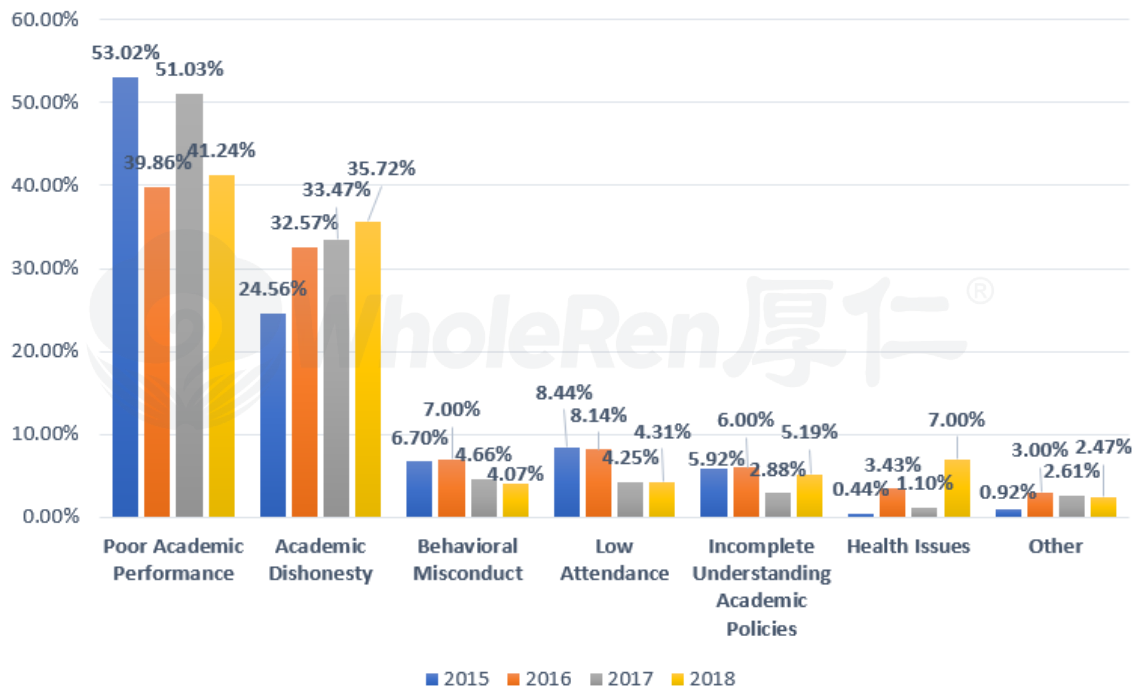


Figure 2-16: 2015-2018 Comparison on the Reasons for Dismissal

The proportion of students who were dismissed because of poor academic performance dropped from 51.03% in 2017 to 41.24% in 2018. Although the percentage of students dismissed due to poor academic performance decreased significantly, it remains the most common cause for dismissal across each of the four years.

The percentage of students facing dismissal due to mental health issues has been increasing, rising from 1.10% to 7.00% from 2017 to 2018. For last year's students, it has become the third most common reason for dismissal. We will provide more detailed analysis later in this paper.

The proportion of students who have been dismissed due to behavioral misconduct has decreased since 2016, going from 7.00% to 4.07%. The proportion of students who have been dismissed due to low attendance had been declining each year until last year when it increased from 4.25% in 2017 to 4.31% in 2018. The proportion of students dismissed due to incomplete understanding of academic policies increased from 2.88% in 2017 to 5.19% in 2018.



## PART 3 CURRENT STATUS OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DISMISSED

This year, we followed up on the status of students who had been dismissed last year and whose data were analyzed in the 2017 White Paper. This group of 1,000 students had all received help from WholeRen between March 2016 and March 2017. One year later, the WholeRen Group Research Center conducted a follow-up survey, and the results have been compiled and analyzed alongside previous years' results.

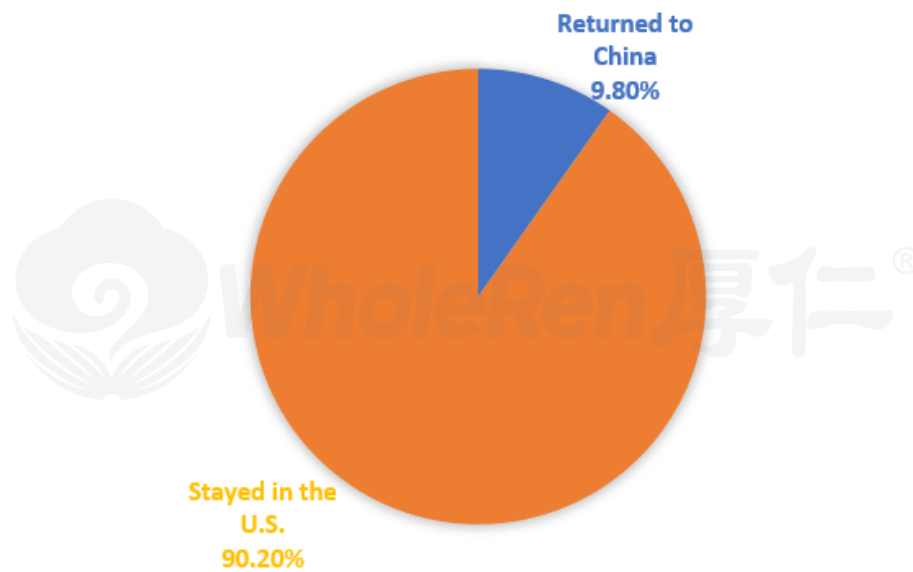


Figure 3-1: 2018 Status of students who had been dismissed between March 2016 and March 2017

Figure 3-1 shows the proportion of students who chose to return to China or stay in the U.S. after being dismissed last year. In 2018, 90.20% of the students who had been dismissed chose to stay in United States to continue their studies, while 9.80% of students elected to return to China after being dismissed.



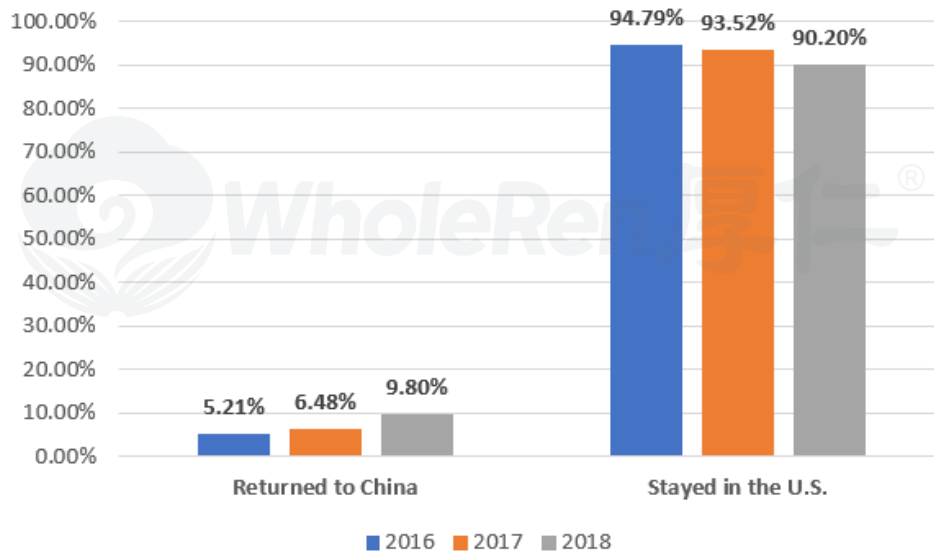


Figure 3-2: 2016-2018 Current Status of Dismissed Students

As shown in Figure 3-2, in contrast to the 2016 and 2017 data, the proportion of students choosing to return to China has increased from 5.21% in 2016 to 9.80% in 2018. This is partially due to the increased difficulties in obtaining or renewing the student visas as enforced by United States government. This year, there has been an increase in the number of students who have overstayed, been removed from the United States, and participated in "pay-to-stay" schemes. The primary reason for students encountering these issues was often a lack of knowledge about American education and legal systems. These offenses would then be entered onto the students' academic records, and as a result, make it more difficult for them to obtain or renew their student visas, leaving them with no choice but to stay in China or study in another country after leaving the U.S.

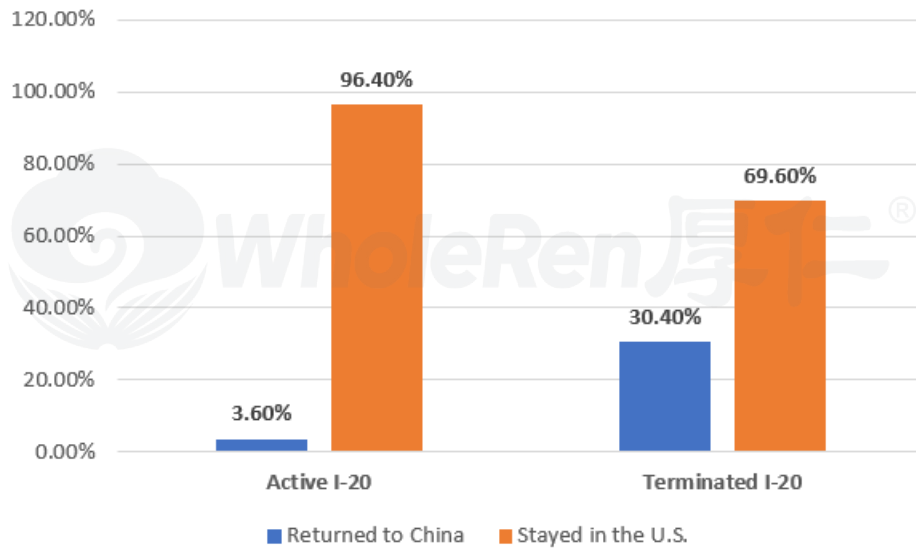


Figure 3-3: 2018 status of students dismissed in 2017 and their I-20 status at time of dismissal

In the 2018 White Paper, we examined how I-20 status influenced students' likelihood of being able to remain in the U.S. by checking in on students who had been dismissed from March 2016 to March 2017. As shown in Figure 3-2, 96.40% of students who had an active I-20 were able to stay in United States to continue their studies while only 69.60% of students who had a terminated I-20 were able to stay in United States. Therefore, students who have been dismissed need to seek help as soon as possible and before their I-20 expires in order to maximize their chances of staying in the U.S. The chance of staying in United States decreased by approximately 25% with a terminated I-20.

## PART 4 CONCLUSION

There are more international students from China than from any other country studying in the United States with over 600,000 recorded in 2017. However, many students still encounter a number of obstacles when it comes to studying abroad. The 2018 White Paper compiles and analyzes five years of data on Chinese international students who were dismissed from 2014-2018 and brings to light several important trends in student dismissal.

American universities have always maintained strict academic policies, and if international students cannot adapt to this environment, it is highly likely that they will encounter difficulties. To avoid facing dismissal, Chinese students need to understand the rules and regulations of American universities, especially with regard to academic integrity. Otherwise, they risk violating their university's code of conduct and even U.S. laws.

After being dismissed, students need to pay special attention to their legal status in the United States. Dismissed students should seek help as early as possible in order to increase their chances of being able to remain in the United States to study. It can be very tempting for international students to seek out "pay-to-stay" schools or illegal institutions to maintain their legal status. If students need work or internships, they must confirm with the school's international student office, and avoid any illegal work. Otherwise, the student will develop a permanent record which will negatively impact their chances for future study in the United States.

Even if students are dismissed, with timely support they can still have the chance to return to their academic track. American universities are generally willing to provide students with a second chance. Therefore, as long as students change their attitudes for the better and are willing to learn, they will generally have the opportunity to return to school to continue their studies.

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## APPENDIX

### Extended Research 1: Dismissal Due to Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty has become the second largest reason for Chinese students to be dismissed, with 35.72% of all dismissals in 2018 being due to academic dishonesty. Over the past few years, the percentage of students dismissed for academic dishonesty has increased. As indicated in Figure 4-1, in 2018, nearly 50% of Chinese students who were dismissed last year for academic dishonesty were dismissed from top 50 universities.

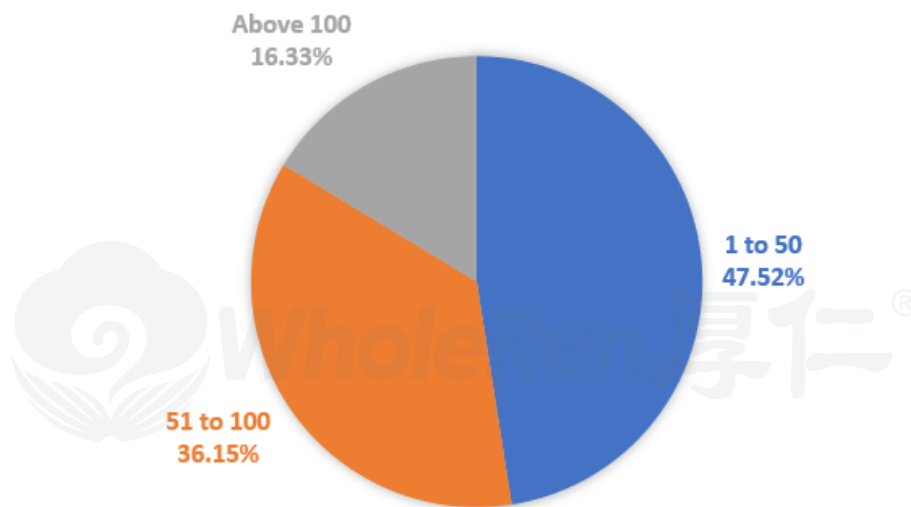


Figure 4-1: 2018 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed Due to Academic Integrity

#### Common Causes of Academic Dishonesty

Academic honesty is one of the most important characteristics of the education across the world. Freshmen at universities in the United States are expected to fully understand the institution's student code of conduct at matriculation. It states the importance of being academically honest and emphasizes the severity of cheating, plagiarism, and assistance from others. It also outlines how academic misconduct will be punished based on the circumstance with warnings, suspensions, or even dismissal.

1. Copying and assisting others in copying

Copying and assisting others in copying is a common cheating behavior. During a closed book exam, looking up answers, copying answers from others, or giving/receiving assistance is not allowed. Even during open book exams, looking up answers outside of the proscribed reference materials is considered as cheating. The same rule applies to homework - copying from others or from internet are both considered cheating.

## 2. Plagiarism

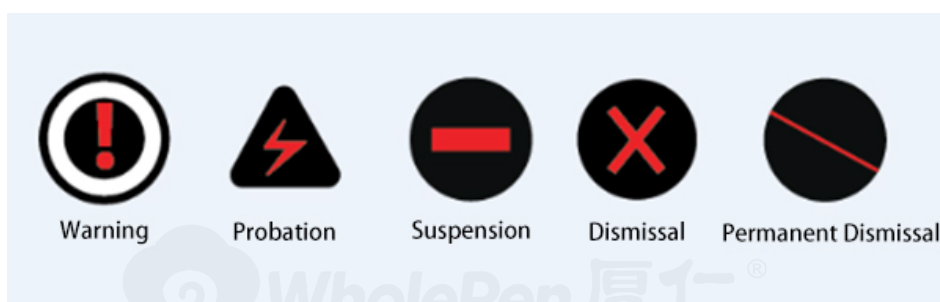
Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's information, language, or writing, when done without proper acknowledgment of the original source.<sup>5</sup> Plagiarism is illegal if it infringes on an author's intellectual property rights, including copyright or trademarks, and often leads severe consequence for the offender. Students who plagiarize can receive a warning, have a grade removed, or even be dismissed as a consequence.

## 3. Taking exams or homework on behalf of someone else

In the past few years, more and more Chinese students have chosen to study abroad, but not all of them are able to face the challenges of living and studying in a foreign environment. Language barrier, lack of cultural knowledge, and loneliness while studying abroad become the primary obstacles international students face. In order to overcome these difficulties and finish their degree, some students choose to take shortcuts by paying others to take exams or finish homework on their behalf.

## 4. Application material fraud

In recent years, there have been many cases where international students have used false TOEFL or IELTS scores for their school applications. Dishonesty during the application process can manifest itself in a number of ways from the submission of fraudulent materials to hiding aspects of one's academic record and not being completely forthright during entrance interviews. Submitting fraudulent application materials or being dishonest in any way during the application procedure is unfair to other students and is in direct violation of school policy.



<sup>5</sup> Bailey, J (2005, October 6). "Copyright Infringement, Plagiarism and Fair Use." *Plagiarism Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2005/10/06/copyright-infringement-plagiarism-and-fair-use/>

At schools in United States, the sanctions that can be imposed for academic dishonesty include: warnings, probations, suspensions, dismissal, and permanent dismissal.

## Extended Research 2: Dismissal Due to Mental Health Issues

The percentage of students who had been dismissed due to academic performance exacerbated by health issues increased dramatically from 1.10% in 2017 to 7.00% in 2018 (see previously Figure 2-16). These health problems can be divided into two main categories – physical health and mental health. Students who were not in good physical health had a higher probability of failing at school - struggling to concentrate and getting good grades. Despite the undeniable impact physical health can have on academic performance, in recent years, mental health has become the more dominant of the two health issues affecting academic performance.

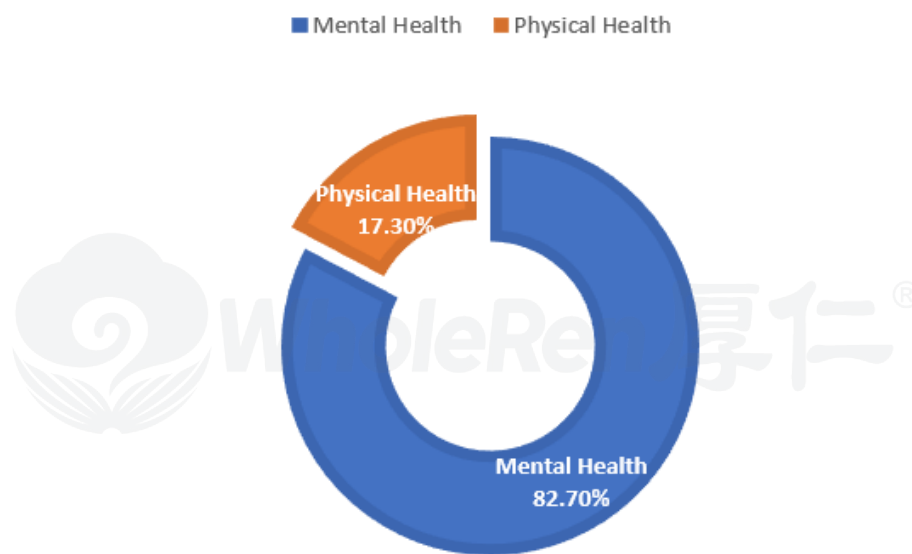


Figure 4-2 The distribution of students who had been dismissed due to health problems in 2018

Mental health problems not only affect students' academic performance, but also their social lives and can be devastating for their families. In recent years, turning to suicide has become all too common for international students with mental health problems, and more and more attention has been paid to the topic of students' mental health. As shown in Figure 4-2, out of all of the students who had been dismissed due to health conditions in 2018, 82.70% of them were dismissed for academic reasons rooted in mental health related problems while only 17.30% were dismissed due to the influence of physical health problems. Unfortunately, Chinese cultural stigma surrounding mental health issues often leads to students not seeking timely support to manage their developing symptoms.



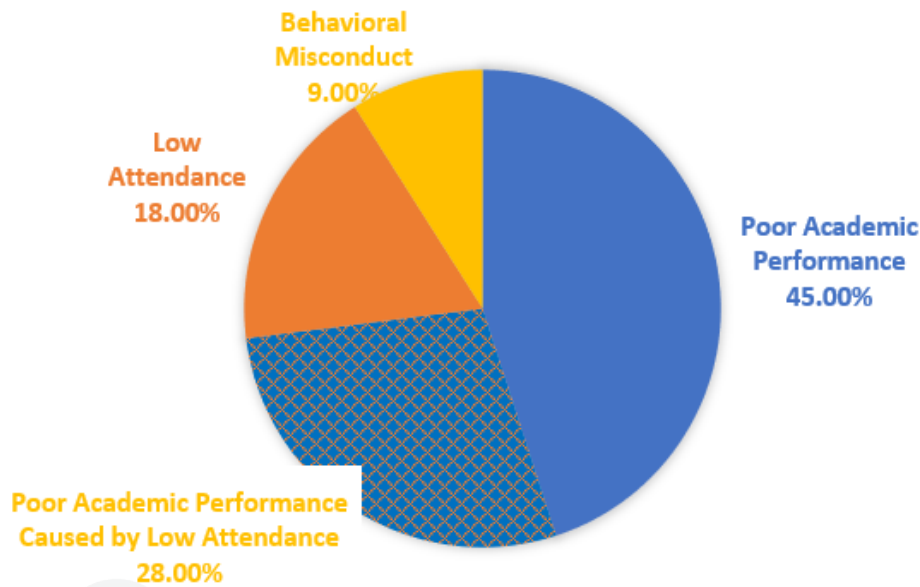


Figure 4-3 Academic issues caused by mental health conditions

#### The effect of mental health issues on academic development

Mental health problems can often result in depression, jealousy, over sensitivity, low self-esteem, irritability, anxiety, self-mutilation and a host of other symptoms. Any of these symptoms can have a negative impact on students' daily life and academic performance.

With the sudden change of language, culture, and environment that comes with studying in a foreign country, international students who first come to United States often experience difficulties in understanding classes, making friends, and adapting to the new environment. As a result, they may feel frustrated, especially those who are used to performing well academically, as they may not have learned how to face and manage failure. New students tend to only interact with other international Chinese students, refuse to communicate with professors and parents, and resist others' help. If such behavior continues, it is inevitable that the student's academic performance will continue to decline. In certain circumstances, the psychological change of living and studying in a new country can turn into unhealthy mental problems such as depression, low self-esteem, and increased irritability. Stress from the family is another reason mental health problems can manifest. Common cause includes high expectations, too much attention on academic performance, and a lack of care for students' mental health and daily life. Without understanding and support from their parents, students may lose interest in studying and their academic performance will be adversely impacted.

As shown in Figure 4-3, 73.00% of students having poor academic performance is due to a mental health problem. Of the 73%, 45.00% were directly caused by mental health problems and 28.00% were the result of low attendance due to mental health problems. In addition, 18.00% of students with mental health problems were dismissed due to low attendance that resulted from their mental health issues. Many students with mental health problems choose

to escape classes so they can avoid communication with professors and students. The last 9.00% of students who were dismissed due to mental health issues were ultimately dismissed because of improper behavior resulting from their mental conditions. These students exhibited poor self-control, becoming irritable when faced with challenges and breaking school policies.

When international students feel frustrated, lonely, and helpless, it is important to seek help from parents, friends, and classmates. This can help to relieve the student's stress and create a healthy psychological environment.

## **DISMISSAL CASES DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

### **Case One:**

#### **Poor academic performance due to mental health problems**

Student L studied at a university in China for two years and had excellent academic standing before successfully transferring to a university in New York. However, because of the difficulties faced in adapting to the new environment, he did not have the same academic success he was used to. Student L never worried about his learning ability in the past and was always treated as a role model for his friends and classmates. He could not come to terms with the fact that he was no longer an outstanding student and this resulted in his becoming very depressed. He distanced himself from others and stopped communicating or meeting with others outside of class. He was afraid of telling his friends and family about his suffering grades, and still believed he could improve his academic performance without help. Unfortunately, his GPA in the second semester was still lower than 2.0 and he was dismissed from the school.

### **Case Two:**

#### **Inappropriate behavior due to mental health problem**

Student C was a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in the United States. Since childhood, he struggled with the gap between his family's high expectations for him and the extent to which they differ from reality. The resulting disappointment became a major problem for Student C's mental health. He became afraid of being alone and increasingly worried about someone else hurting him. One day he was staying by himself at his apartment when he heard the sound of someone coming in. His roommate had returned, but he had thought it was a thief breaking into the apartment. In order to protect himself against the supposed thief, he attacked his roommate, severely injuring him. The incident was reported to his graduate school and student C received a notice of dismissal as a result. He was then forced to undergo psychological treatment. He gradually recovered from his mental health issues and, after a period of treatment, was successfully admitted to another university in the U.S. to continue his studies.

## **TURNING THINGS AROUND AFTER DISMISSAL**

### **Case One:**

#### **Admitted by top 50 university after dismissal due to misconduct**

Student W first studied at a university close to rank 100 in United States and had a GPA of 3.0. During an argument, he attacked his girlfriend and was dismissed by the university. With the help of one of our professional academic consultants, he quickly transferred to a new college so that he could continue studying in United States. Student W was performing well at his new school and hoped that his academic performance would be enough to allow him to transfer to a better university. During the following year, we laid out a plan and worked with student W to further improve his academic performance. Eventually, student W achieved outstanding academic performance with a GPA of 3.6 and was admitted to a top 50 university.

### **Case Two:**

#### **Admitted by top 40 university after being dismissed twice due to low GPA**

Student D had difficulty adapting to the change of environment when he came to United States and struggled to focus on studying. He had a very low GPA of 2.0 and was suspended for a low GPA in his freshman year. Afterwards, student D improved his academic performance and was readmitted to continue his studying at his original school. However, he was not able to maintain satisfactory academic performance in college and was dismissed due to low GPA. After thorough discussion with student D about his situation, we designed a detailed and personalized academic plan for him. The plan was so effective that his GPA improved above 3.8 at the new college. This laid the foundation for his successful transfer in the future. Student D went on to be accepted to several universities which had a higher ranking than his initial university.

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