

2019 WholeRen White Paper on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences



WholeRen Group Research Center

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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: <https://www.wholeregroup.com>.

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Abstract

In the last decade, the number of Chinese students studying abroad has gradually increased to over 660,000 by 2018.¹ In 2019, the United States continues to be 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 the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) standards, the WholeRen Group Research Center analyzed data compiled from 7,086 dismissed Chinese international students who studied in the U.S. from 2013-2019 and received WholeRen's services. 1,000 cases were then randomly selected from March 2018 to March 2019 to develop this report. The 2019 White Paper on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences ("2019 White Paper") is the latest addition to our annual White Paper reports from 2014-2018.

The 2019 edition of the White Paper investigates Chinese international 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 2019 edition follows up on the current status of students who had been dismissed between 2017 and 2018 and compares the data to previous years. The 2019 White Paper was able to address two important issues: Dismissal Due to Submitting Falsified Documents and Second Academic Dismissal. The goal is to examine the serious consequences of academic dishonesty on students' academic careers and discuss how to avoid an academic crisis while in the United States. The 2019 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 international student dismissal. The proportion of students who were dismissed due to poor academic performance decreased from 41.24% in the previous year to 37.11%, and the percentage of students who were dismissed because of academic dishonesty has increased from 35.72% in the previous year to 41.45% in 2019. In 2019, the number of students who have been dismissed due to academic dishonesty exceeds the number of students who have been dismissed due to poor academic performance for the first time since we began analyzing data in 2015. Academic dishonesty is now the number one reason for international Chinese international student dismissal. In addition, the number of students who elect to return to China rather than seeking transfer to another U.S. institution after being dismissed continues to increase. The 2019 White Paper provides a detailed analysis of the changes mentioned above.

¹ Zhong, J. (2019, March 27). "2018 Wo Guo Chu Guo Liu Xue Ren Yuan Qing Kuang Tong Ji". In Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201903/t20190327_375704.html

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Part 1 Background Overview

1.1 Overview of Chinese Students in America



Figure 1-1: 2014-2018 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 2018 was approximately 662,100, an increase of 8.83% from 2017 (Figure 1-1).²

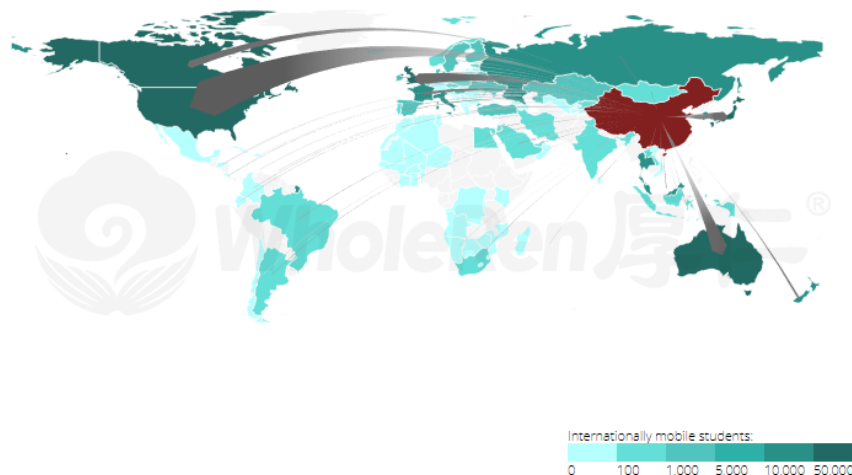


Figure 1-2: The Number of Chinese International Students Studying in Each Country

As shown in Figure 1-2, according to the latest data provided by UNESCO, 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.³ China remains the country with the largest number of students studying abroad.

² Zhong, J. (2019, March 27). "2018 Wo Guo Chu Guo Liu Xue Ren Yuan Qing Kuang Tong Ji". In Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/201903/t20190327_375704.html

³ Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students. (n.d.). In United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved May 1, 2019, from UNESCO Institute For Statistics.

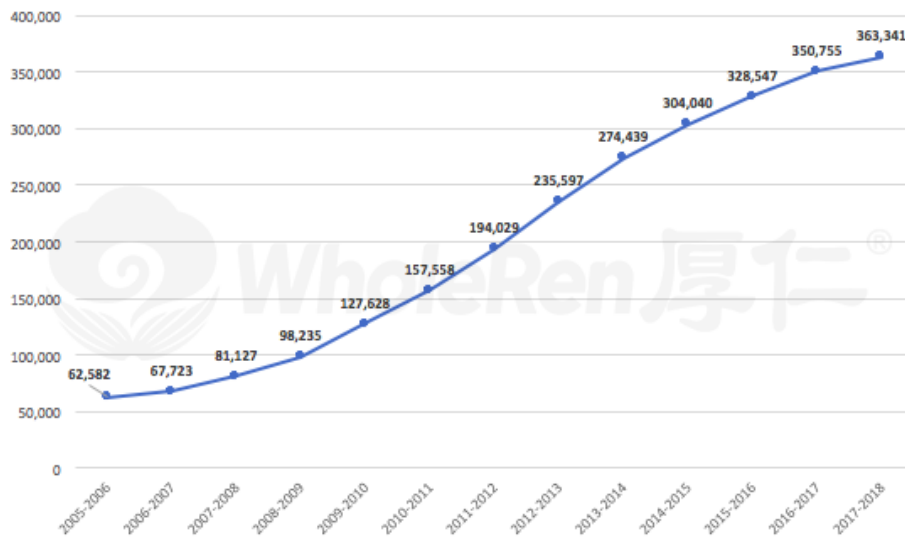


Figure 1-3: The Number of Chinese International Students Studying in the U.S.

As indicated in Figure 1-3, from 2005 to 2018, the number of Chinese international students attending schools in the U.S. increased every year from 62,582 in 2005 to 363,341 in 2018. In 2018, the number of Chinese international students in the U.S. increased by 12,586 from the previous year, but the growth rate seems to have slowed down slightly.⁴

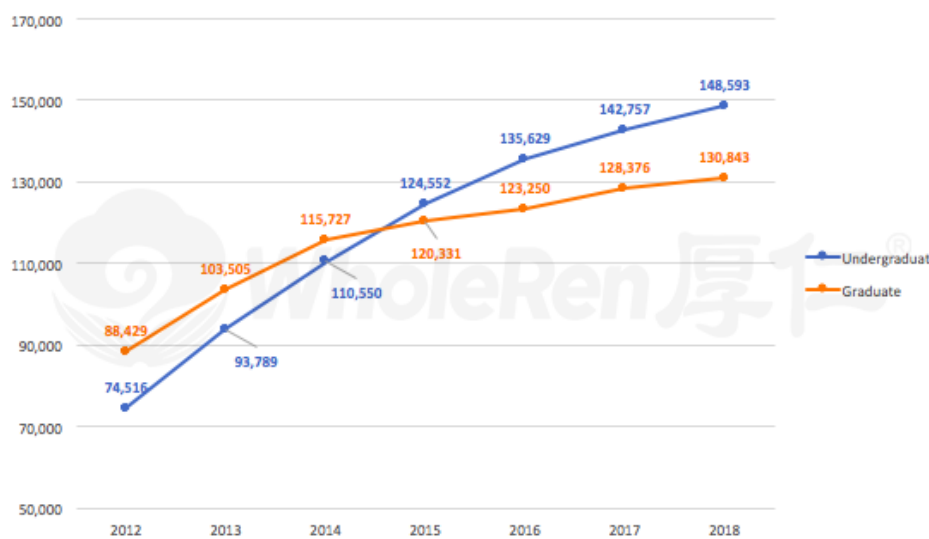


Figure 1-4: The Number of Chinese Undergraduate and Graduate Students Studying in the U.S.

Figure 1-4 indicates that the number of Chinese international students attending both undergraduate and graduate programs in the U.S. has increased every year although since 2014, the growth of Chinese international students studying in the United States at the graduate level has slowed down. In 2015, the number of students at the undergraduate level began to exceed those at the graduate level. In 2018, there were over 148,000 international Chinese undergraduate students and 130,000 international Chinese graduate students in the U.S. In the past year, the increase of undergraduate students was significantly more than the number of graduate students studying in the U.S.⁵

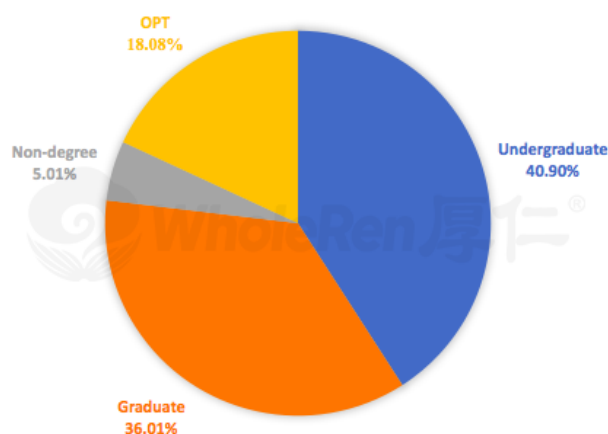


Figure 1-5: 2018 Academic Level Distribution of Chinese International Students Studying in the U.S.

Looking at the data from 2018, the majority of Chinese international students in the U.S. are undergraduate students and comprise 40.9% of all Chinese international students in the U.S. Graduate students are the second largest group at 36.01% and 5.01% are studying in non-degree programs including language programs and certificate programs. 18.08% of students are participating in OPT programs with temporary employment.⁶

1.2 Research Intent

The number of Chinese international students studying abroad has gradually increased over the last decade and China remains the country with the largest number of students studying abroad. However, despite being eager to study abroad, recent years have shown several of the challenges common to many Chinese international students such as a lack of independence and critical knowledge for studying abroad prior to arriving in the U.S. If left unchecked, these issues can result in serious consequences such as academic probation, suspension, and even dismissal. In recent years, academic dishonesty has been a more and more common problem for Chinese students and a significant obstacle when it comes to completing their degrees.

In addition, based on our data from the White Paper in the last few years, mental health is becoming one of the growing causes for Chinese international student academic difficulties. When students are simultaneously faced with an unfamiliar environment and high academic pressure, mental health can begin to affect academic performance and engagement. If not properly addressed, students who suffer from mental health problems may not be able to focus on studying and become more likely to miss classes; these behaviors then may lead to suspension or expulsion.

⁴ Institute of International Education. (2018). "Data by Region Fact Sheets." Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-and-Infographics/Data-by-Region-Fact-Sheets>

⁵ Institute of International Education. (2018). "Place of Origin." Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>

⁶ Institute of International Education. (2018). "Place of Origin." Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>

The 2019 WholeRen White Paper on Chinese International Student Dismissal and Consequences continues on the analysis of Chinese international students studying in the United States that previous White Papers began. During our research, we found that the one reason for Chinese international student dismissal in the U.S. was due to difficulties in adapting to the new environment. When students move to the U.S., they live far away from their families, come to a completely new environment with a different culture and education system, and 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 international students who have been dismissed from school and we have collected and analyzed data from 2014 to 2019 regarding the causes for dismissal, individual student situations, and further development of these students after dismissal. One of our main focuses is whether or not students who were dismissed are able to continue studying and complete their course of study in the U.S. By using the results from our data, we hope to help students get back on track academically and avoid any additional setbacks that may be caused by previous dismissals.

Part 2 Data Analysis On Students Who Have Been Dismissed

2.1 Data Collection

All of the data below in the “2019 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 international students who have previously been dismissed and takes a comprehensive look at why they were forced to leave their schools. In the following sections, "we/us" will refer to the WholeRen Group Research Center.

Following the 2014-2018 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 2019, WholeRen Group compiled the cases of 7,086 Chinese international students who were dismissed. Of these cases, 6,528 had complete data and were considered as usable samples (this represents 92.13% of the data). Of all of these useable cases, there were 1,336 cases which occurred from March of 2018 to March of 2019 and 1,000 of them were randomly selected for the data provided in the 2019 White Paper. In addition, another 1000 cases were selected from 1,024 usable samples between March 2017 and March 2018 to analyze the current status of students who had been dismissed between March 2017 and March 2018.

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 W’s basic personal information and academic information to produce the profile below:

Full Name: W	Dismissed School’s Type: Public
Gender: Male	Dismissed School’s Location: NJ
Date of Birth: XX/XX/1998	GPA at Time of Dismissed: 1.2
Age at Time of Dismissed: 20	Year Dismissed: 2018
School Level at Time of Dismissed: Undergraduate	Grade at Time of Dismissed: Second year undergraduate
Major: Finance	Length of Stay in America Prior to Being Dismissed: 2 Years
Dismissed School: University of AA	Reason for Dismissed: Poor academic performance
Rank of the Dismissed School: 56	Reason for Low GPA: Poor study habits, video game addiction

[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 current trends and highlight root causes for dismissal

2.2 Personal Data Analysis

The 2019 White Paper takes a look at the age of students at the time of dismissal, length of their stay in America, degree being pursued, and reasons for dismissal in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of what kind of students 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. As shown in Figure 2-1, of the students who were dismissed from 2014 to 2019, 7.52% were under 18 years old, 66.23% were 18-22 years old, 19.83% were 23-25 years old, and 6.42% were 25 years old or older. Looking at the data, more than 50% of the students who were dismissed fell into the 18-22 year age range, whereas those over 25 years of age were the minority, indicating a low chance for older students to be dismissed.

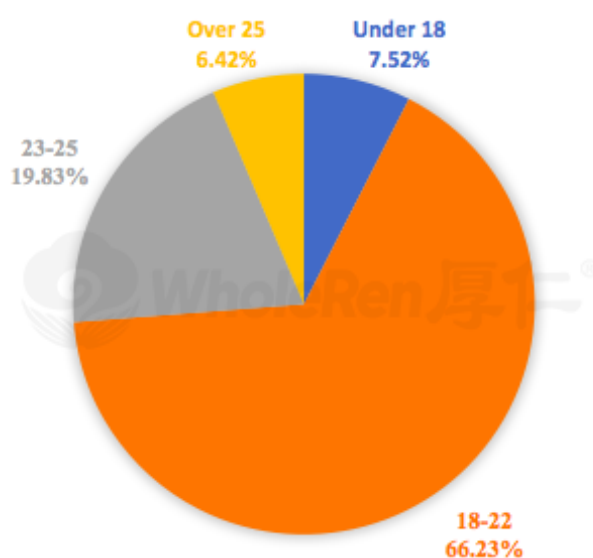


Figure 2-1: 2014-2019 Age Distribution of Dismissed Students

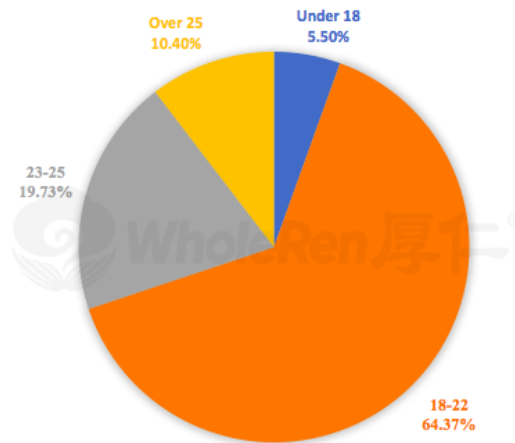


Figure 2-2: 2019 Age Distribution of Dismissed Students

In Figure 2-2, we compared the ages of the students who were dismissed in 2019. 5.50% were under 18 years old, 64.37% were 18-22 years old, 19.73% were 23-25 years old, and 10.40% were above 25 years old. The age distribution of dismissed students in 2019 is following the overall trend from the last six years. It shows that the students who have been dismissed in the age range of 18 to 22 continue to be the largest group of dismissed students, however, the total percentage of dismissed students in the 18-22 age range has slightly decreased recently. The age group from 23-25 is approximately the same as it has been over the last six years while the age group above 25 dramatically increased in 2019 compared to the previous years.

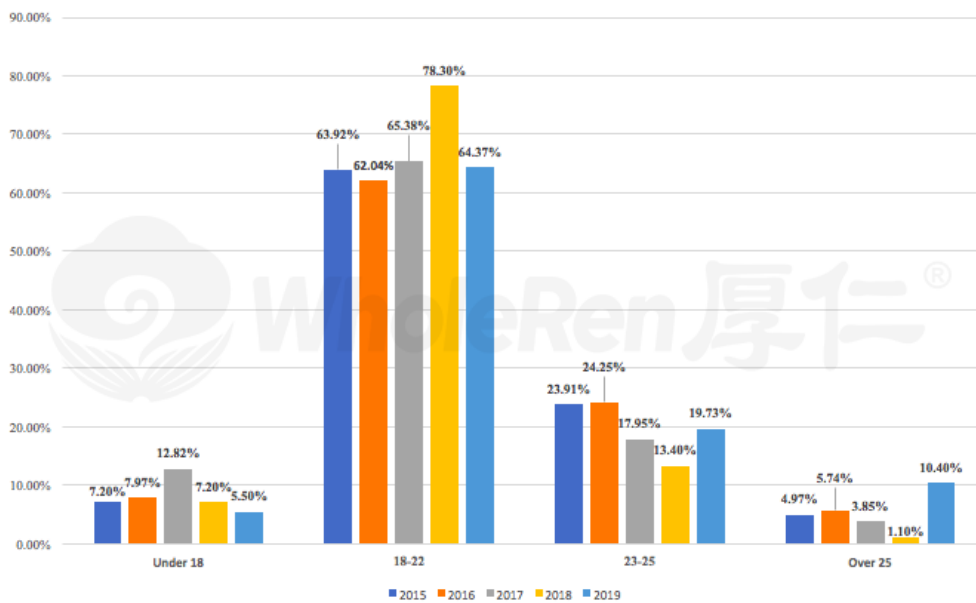


Figure 2-3: 2015-2019 Comparison of Age Distribution for Dismissed Students

In Figure 2-3, we compared the age distribution of students who had been dismissed from 2015 to 2019. The percentage of students under the age of 18 who were dismissed reached its peak in 2017 and then decreased to its lowest point of 5.50% in 2019. The percentage of dismissed students between 18-22 years old showed some fluctuation over the five years, most noticeably in 2018 when it reached its peak of 78.30%. In contrast to 18-22 year olds, 23-25 year olds and those over 25 both saw decreases in their percentages since 2016 but significant increases in 2019 to 19.73% and 10.40%, respectively.

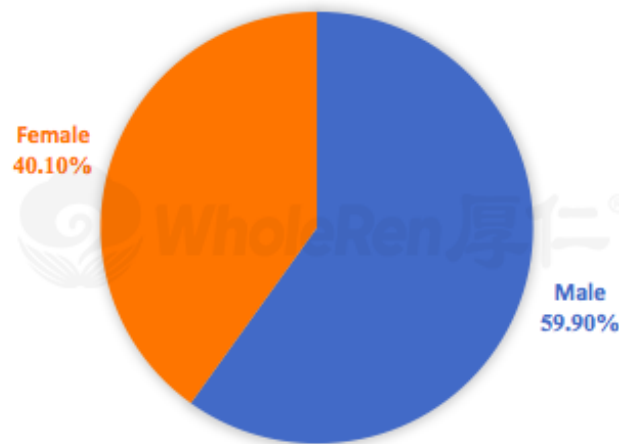


Figure 2-4: 2014-2019 Distribution of Gender for Dismissed Students

We also analyzed the distribution of gender for dismissed students. As can be seen from Figure 2-4, from 2014 to 2019, 59.90% of dismissed students were male while 40.10% were female. This clearly shows that the proportion of dismissed male students exceeds female students.



Figure 2-5: 2019 Distribution of Gender for Dismissed Students

In 2019, as shown in Figure 2-5, 59.06% of dismissed students were male while 40.94% were female. This is in line with the historical trends as male students still make up the majority of dismissed students.

2.2.2 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

In this section, the academic level of students at time of dismissal was analyzed in order to observe which group of students are most likely to be dismissed.

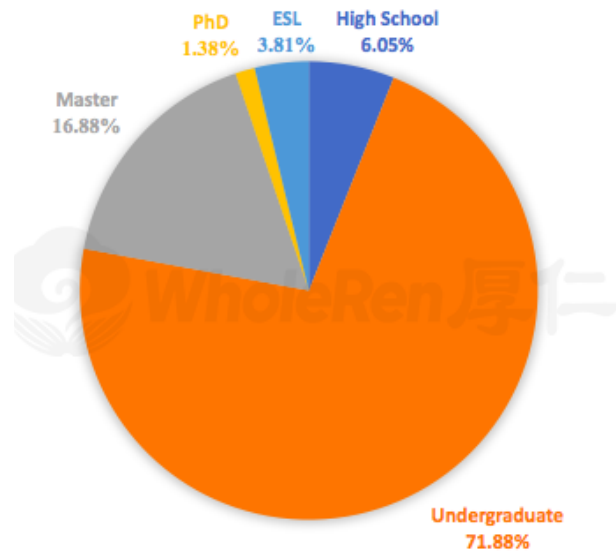


Figure 2-6: 2014-2019 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

Figure 2-6 shows that the majority of international students (71.88%) who have been dismissed in the past six years were studying at the undergraduate level. Students pursuing a master's degree account for 16.88% of dismissed students. Thus, masters and undergraduate level students comprise 90% of our dismissed international student sample. 1.38% of dismissed students were PhD students, 3.81% attended language schools, and 6.05% were studying at the high school level and below.

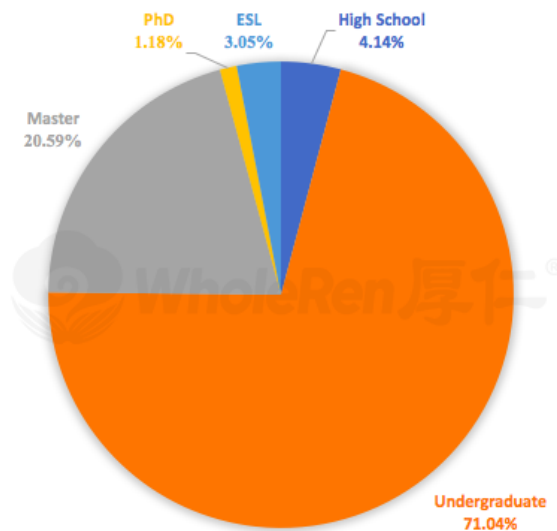


Figure 2-7: 2019 Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

As can be seen from Figure 2-7, 71.04% of students in our sample who were dismissed in 2019 were dismissed at the undergraduate level, while 20.59% were at the graduate level and 1.18% at the doctorate level. Undergraduate students remain the majority of dismissed Chinese international students.

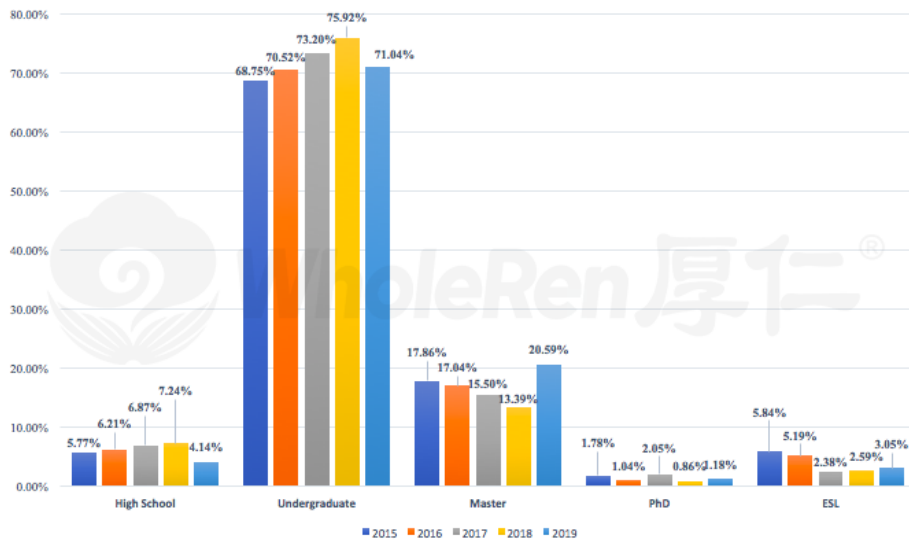


Figure 2-8: 2015-2019 Comparison on Distribution of Academic Level at Time of Dismissal

Figure 2-8 further compares the distribution of academic level at the time of dismissal from 2015 to 2019. The proportion of undergraduate students who have been dismissed is still the highest out of all measured groups but has slightly decreased from its peak of 75.92% in 2018 down to 71.04% in 2019. Over the past year, the percentage of dismissed high school students decreased from 7.24% to 4.14% which is its lowest recorded value. In addition, the percentage of graduate students who were dismissed increased from 13.39% to 20.59%, nearly doubling the number from the previous year. The percentage of dismissed PhD students also saw an increase, going from 0.86% in 2018 to 1.18% in 2019. The percentage of dismissed students in language programs gradually increased over the last two years since its drop to 2.38% in 2017 and is currently sitting at 3.05%.

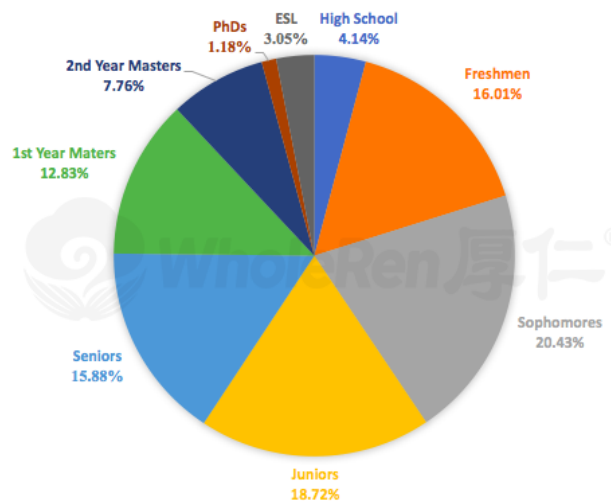


Figure 2-9: 2019 Grade at Time of Dismissal

This year, we noted the specific grade level of students at the time of their dismissal. As highlighted in Figure 2-9, the majority of students who have been dismissed are undergraduate students, in particular, sophomore and the second largest group is first-year master students which account for 12.83% of dismissed Chinese international students in 2019. PhD students, in contrast to undergraduate students, generally have a lower risk of being dismissed with PhD student dismissals accounting for only 1.18% of all dismissed students in the sample. For undergraduate students, sophomores and juniors are generally at a higher risk of being dismissed, accounting for 20.43% and 18.72% of dismissed students, respectively. These numbers are almost 16 and 14 times more than PhD students, respectively.

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

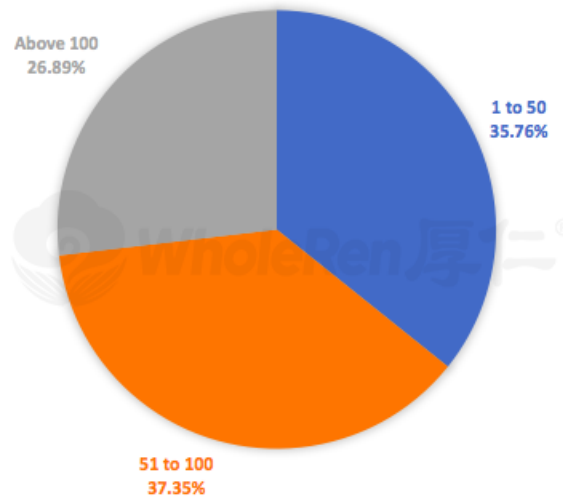


Figure 2-10: 2014-2019 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed

We analyzed the rankings (U.S. News & World Report) of the schools from which students were dismissed in the past six years and the results are shown in Figure 2-10. We found 35.76% of dismissed students were dismissed from top 50 universities, 37.35% were dismissed from schools ranking in the 51-100 range, and 26.89% were dismissed from schools ranked above 100. Student dismissals from schools ranked in the 51-100 range are slightly more common than others.

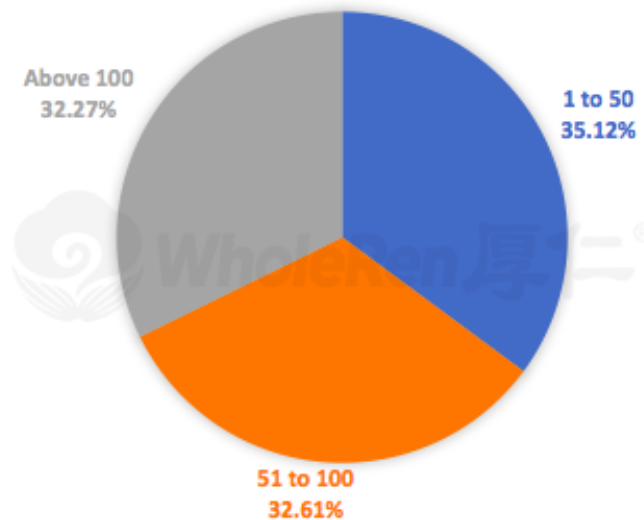


Figure 2-11: 2019 Distribution of the Rank of Schools from which Students were Dismissed

For 2019, dismissed students from the top 100 universities represent two thirds of the students who have been dismissed. Students from the top 100 universities more likely to be dismissed, as indicated in Figure 2-11. 35.12% of dismissed students came from top 50 universities. In 2019, 32.61% of dismissed students came from schools ranked in the 51-100 range and 32.27% of dismissed students came from schools ranked beyond the top 100. This year, the dismissal rates for students in schools ranked 51 and above is nearly the same as the percentage of dismissed students from the top 50 universities.

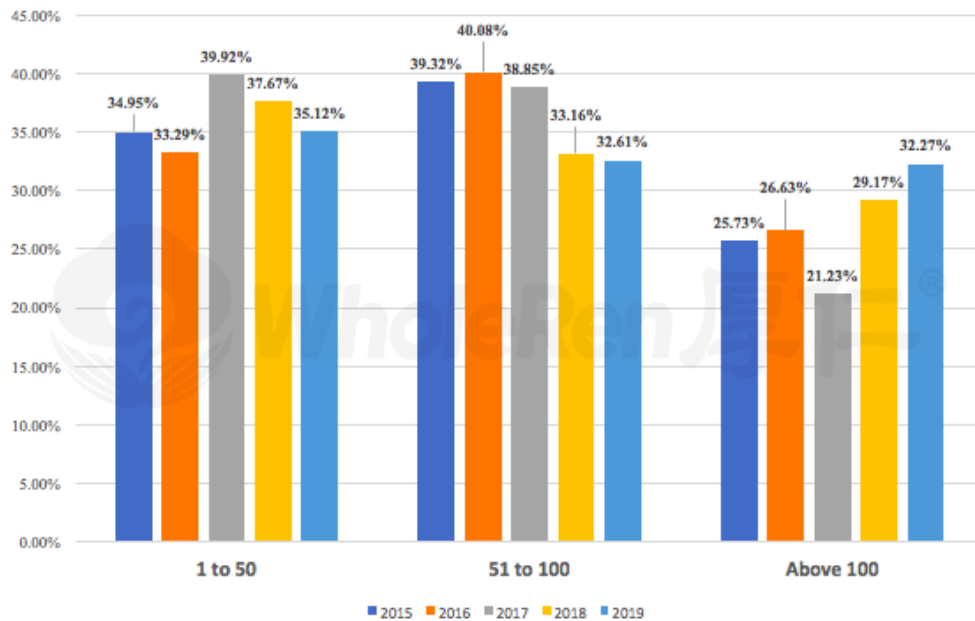


Figure 2-12: 2015-2019 Comparison on Distribution of the Rank of Schools

Reviewing the past five years' data, the proportion of students dismissed by schools ranked in the top 100 decreased from 70.83% in 2018 to 67.73% in 2019 (Figure 2-12) but is still higher than the percentage of students dismissed by schools outside of the top 100.

2.2.4 Location of Student Dismissals

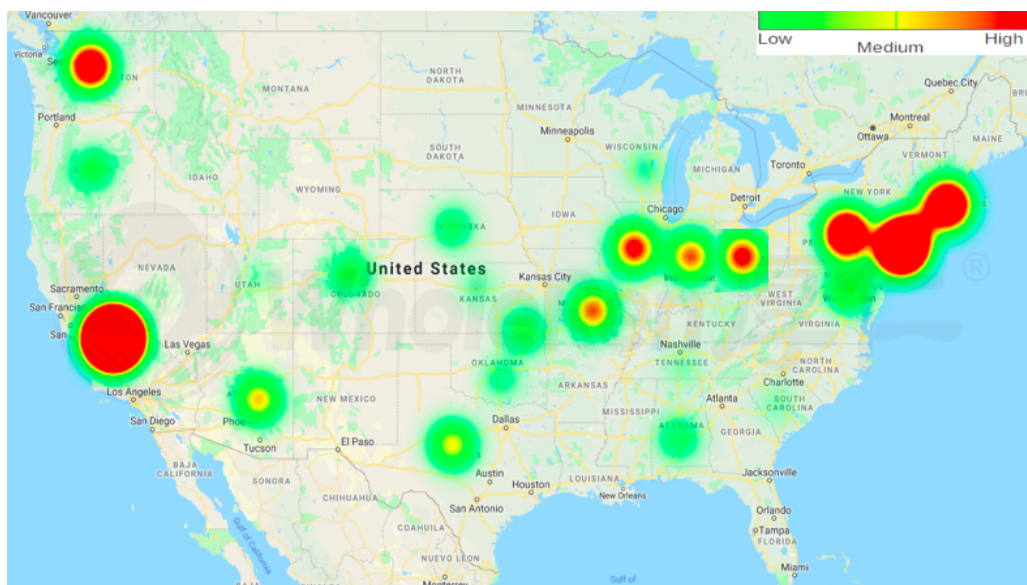


Figure 2-13: Location of Student Dismissals (Data from March 2018 to March 2019)

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.

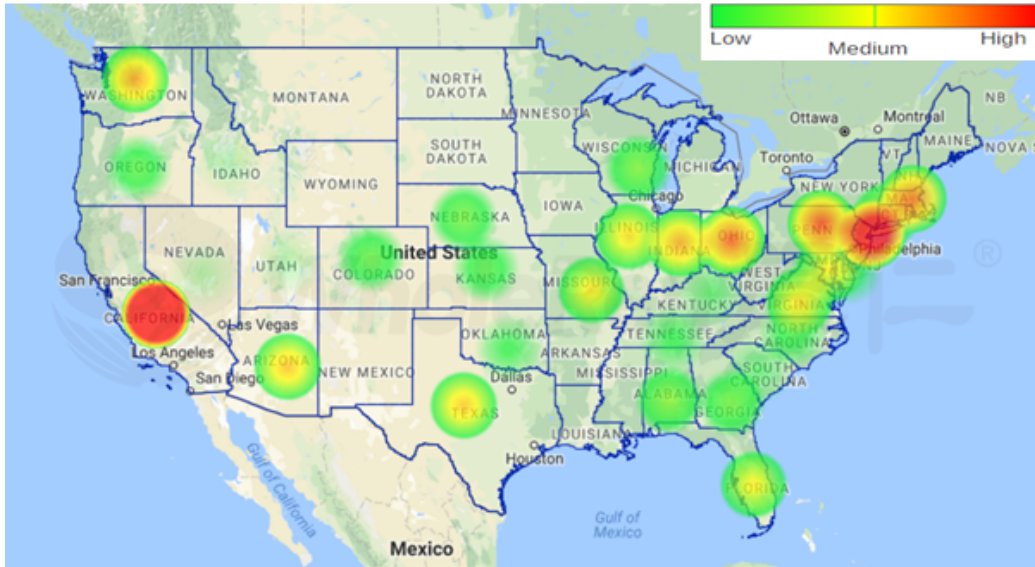


Figure 2-14: Location of Student Dismissals (Data from March 2017 to March 2018)

Compared to the 2018 data, in 2019 we found that, in addition to a continued increase in the number of students who have been dismissed, more and more students from areas such as Washington, Arizona and the Great Lakes region have been dismissed.

2.3 Analysis of Reasons for Student Dismissal

By analyzing the data from 1,000 students who sought help from WholeRen Group regarding their dismissals between March 2018 and March 2019, 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, and health issues among others.

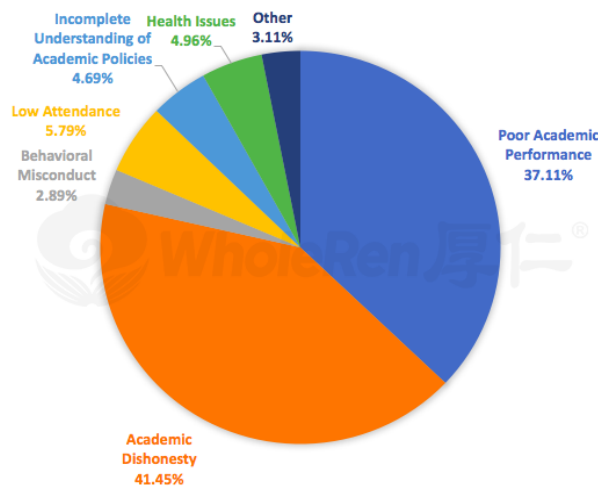


Figure 2-15: 2019 Distribution of Reasons for Student Dismissal

Academic Dishonesty

In 2019, academic dishonesty is the most common reason why Chinese international students have been dismissed, accounting for 41.45% of dismissed Chinese international students this year. The most common behaviors categorized as academic dishonesty include: cheating on tests, taking exams on behalf of someone else, impersonation, plagiarism, incorrect citations, application material fraud, and falsifying grades. This year, falsifying doctors' notes and application material fraud occurred a number of times and will be discussed in detail in the following case studies. 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 school's academic code of conduct.

Poor Academic Performance

37.11% of our dismissed student sample were dismissed because of poor academic performance (defined as when a student's GPA is lower than the minimum requirement at the student's 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 below 3.0. More often than not, the first time a student has 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 a low GPA for consecutive semesters, the school will suspend or even dismiss the student.

Behavioral Misconduct

Chinese international students who were dismissed due to behavioral misconduct account for 2.89% of dismissed students from 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. 5.79% 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 report for their low attendance include: becoming addicted to video games and laziness. Class attendance is an important factor for students' academic performance. In some programs such as language program, low attendance can directly result in academic dismissal. Low attendance can also have other negative impacts for international students, such as making it more difficult to get through customs after a suspension or dismissal. If academic attendance and progress is irregular, U.S. customs may have reason to suspect that the student may have ulterior motives for coming to the United States.

Incomplete Understanding of Academic Policies

Chinese international students who were dismissed due to an incomplete understanding of academic policies accounted for 4.69% of all dismissed Chinese international students in our sample last year. These students generally encountered problems such as 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 give 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 studies, and occasionally led to their eventual dismissal. Mental health issues were cited by 4.96% of Chinese international students dismissed last year as the primary cause for their dismissal. For students living in a foreign country, cultural differences can cause them 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, are very unlikely to do so.

Other Issues

Other less common reasons such as visa concerns, financial issues, and "pay-to-stay" schemes account for 3.11% of dismissed Chinese international students from last year. Chinese international 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 a student's U.S. visa is still valid, the student no longer retains their legal status as an international student. Some students "pay-to-stay" in the United States, which typically involves the use of 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 Five-year Comparison on Reasons for Dismissal

Looking at the data from each year (2015 to 2019), several changes can be seen below:

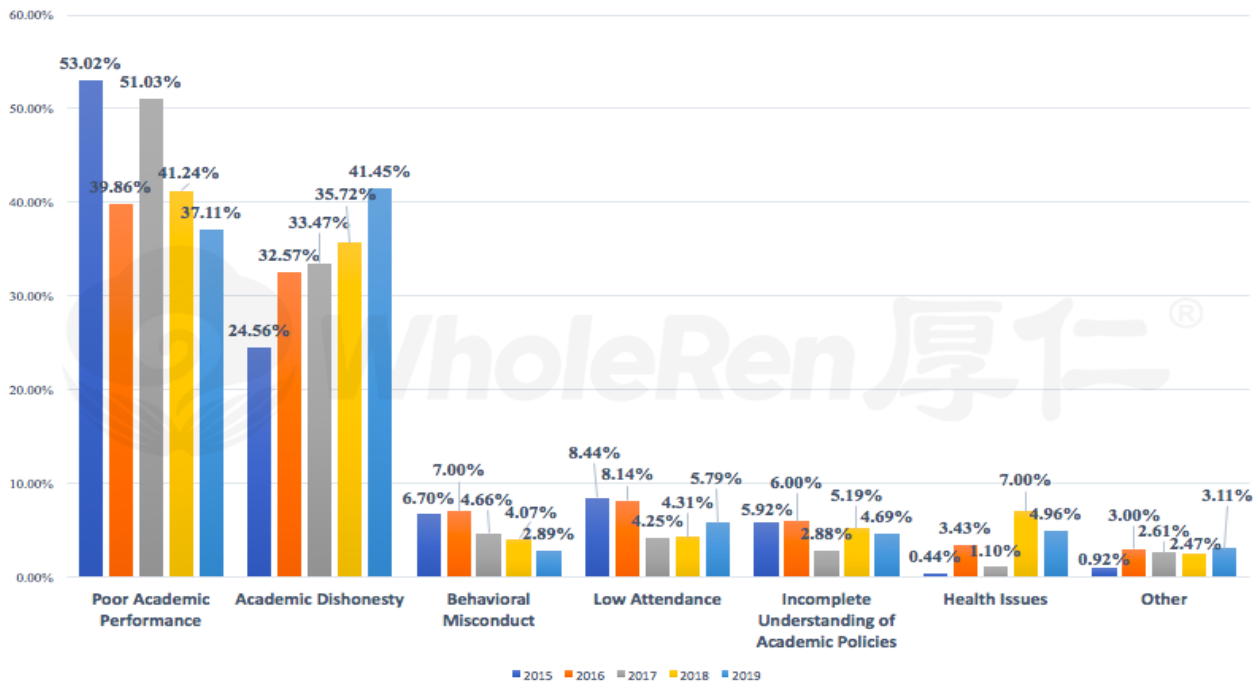


Figure 2-16: 2015-2019 Comparison on the Reasons for Dismissal

The proportion of students who were dismissed because of poor academic performance dropped from 41.24% in 2018 to 37.11% in 2019. Compared to 2018, poor academic performance is no longer the most common reason for dismissal. In comparison, the percentage of students dismissed due to academic dishonesty has steadily increased, going from 35.72% in 2018 to 41.45% in 2019. After four years of continual growth, it has become the most common cause for Chinese international student dismissal in the U.S.

The proportion of students who have been dismissed due to behavioral misconduct has decreased since 2016, dropping from 7.00% to 2.89%. The proportion of students who have been dismissed due to low attendance had been declining between 2015 and 2017 but started to increase again as of 2018, going up from 4.31% to 5.79%. The proportion of students dismissed due to incomplete understanding of academic policies decreased from 5.19% in 2018 to 4.69% in 2019.

Part 3 Current Status of Previously Dismissed Students

Since 2015, we have followed up on the status of students who have been dismissed and whose data were analyzed in each White Paper. The group of 1,000 students who received follow-up analysis and whose data is recorded below had all received help from WholeRen between March 2017 and March 2018. 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.

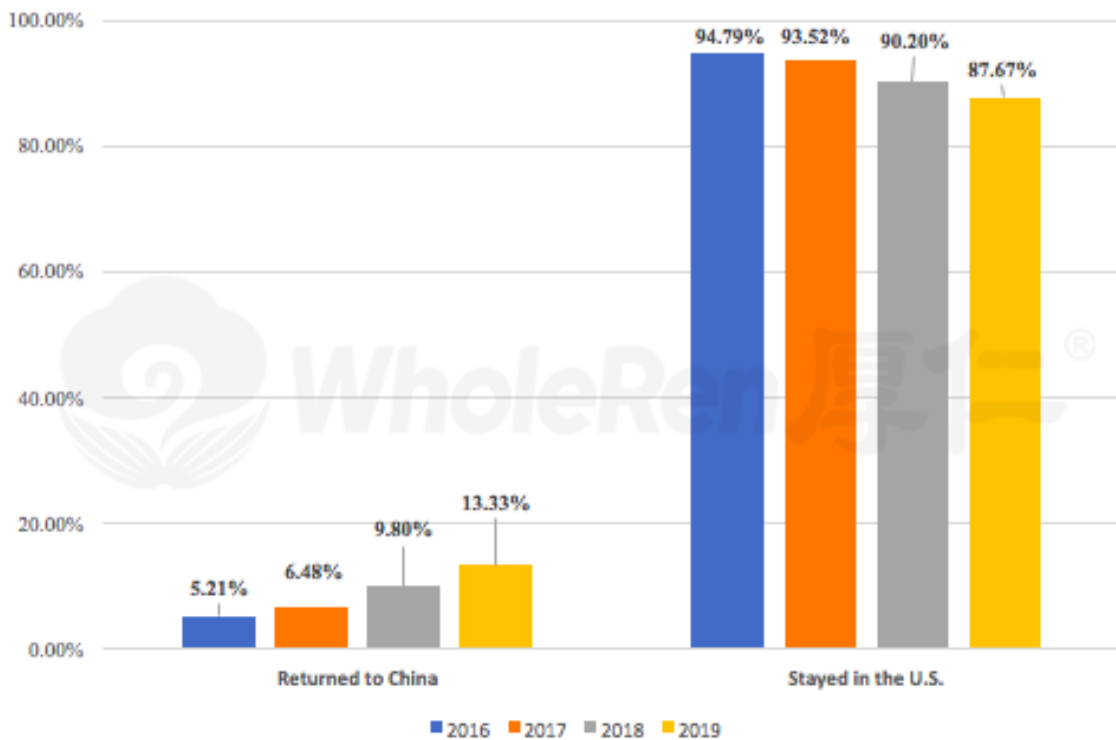


Figure 3-1: 2016-2019 Status of Students One Year After Dismissal

Figure 3-1 shows that the proportion of international students who chose to return to China instead of stay in the U.S. after being dismissed has continuously increased over the last four years, from 5.21% in 2016 to 13.33% in 2019. This is partially due to the increased difficulties in obtaining or renewing student visas as enforced by the 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 the American education and legal systems. These offenses are then logged in 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 abroad in another country after leaving the U.S. While there has been an increased number of students who elected to return to China after being dismissed, the majority of the students who have been dismissed took steps to continue studying in the United States, which typically meant quickly transferring to a different institution.

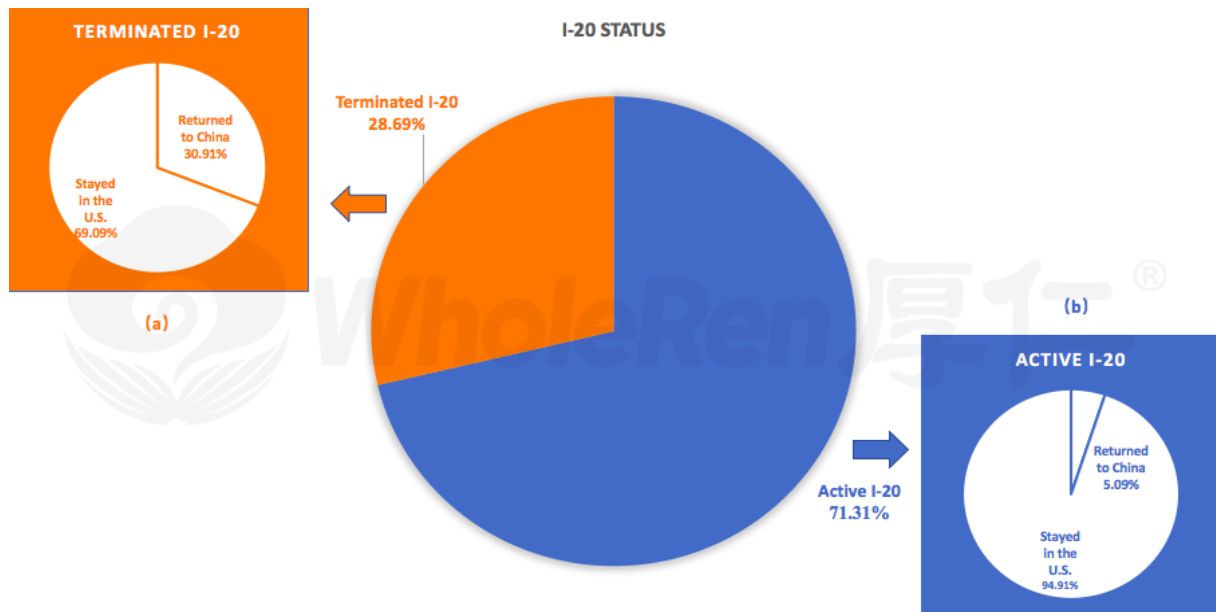


Figure 3-2: I-20 Status at the Time of Dismissal
 Figure 3.2a: Terminated I-20 Students' Academic Decisions
 Figure 3.2b: Active I-20 Students' Academic Decisions

Of the students in our sample who contacted us during the past year, the percentage of those who had a valid I-20 when they reached out is 71.31%, over two thirds of the total number of students. Among those students with a valid I-20, only 5.09% elected to return to China or move to another country to continue their studies. Conversely, of the students who did not have a valid I-20 at the time of contacting us, 69.09% were able to transfer to another university or be readmitted to their original school so that they could return to the United States to continue their studies. 30.91% of them had to return to China or move to another country to continue their studies. This speaks to the importance of having a valid I-20 when addressing options post dismissal as it ensures a better chance of being able to stay in the United States.

Part 4 Conclusion

In summary, there are more international students from China than from any other country studying in the United States with over 360,000 recorded in 2018. Many students still encounter a number of obstacles when it comes to studying abroad. The 2019 White Paper compiled and analyzed data on Chinese international students who were dismissed from U.S. schools between 2014-2019 and brought to light several important trends in student dismissal. Academic dishonesty and poor academic performance remain the largest causes of dismissal after examining our findings.

By analyzing trends of Chinese international student dismissal over the last six years, we found that the number of students dismissed due to academic dishonesty has increased over the last year, leading it to exceed the number of students dismissed due to poor academic performance. American universities have always maintained strict academic policies, it is therefore likely that international students who have not taken the time to familiarize themselves with such policies will encounter difficulties staying and studying in the U.S. To avoid facing dismissal, Chinese international students need to understand the rules and regulations of American universities, especially with regard to academic integrity and plagiarism. Otherwise, they risk violating their institution's code of conduct and even U.S. laws.

By analyzing how the validity of a student's I-20 at the time of dismissal impacted their subsequent academic development, it is clear that students need to pay special attention to their legal status in the United States after being dismissed, and make sure that their I-20 is still valid. 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 help them maintain their legal status in the U.S. Illegal work authorization will also result in the termination of an I-20. If students need work or internships, they must confirm with the school's international student office, and avoid any taking on 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 and apply for admission to universities in the United States. Therefore, it is imperative that students see their dismissal as an opportunity to grow and learn if they desire to return to their academic studies in the U.S. Our work has found that if students do not fully understand the consequences of their actions, they are more likely to fail again if offered a second chance to study at another U.S. institution.

The development of this white paper benefited significantly from the input and support provided by the outstanding staff in the WholeRen Group Research Center and WholeRen Group. In particular, we thank Sa Guo, Yanan Zhang, Wendong Li, and Bingjie Shi for their contributions and insights which greatly improved this manuscript. We are also grateful to Christopher Schmidt and June Chu for their comments and edits.

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Appendix

Extended Research 1: Dismissal Due to Submitting Falsified Documents

Academic dishonesty has become the most common reason for Chinese international students to be dismissed, with 41.45% 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 discussed in Part 2, in 2018, we saw an increased number of Chinese international students who were dismissed due to submitting falsified documents to the school, in particular, submitting fake doctors' notes in order to apply for leaves of absence.

Looking at those students who were dismissed for providing false doctors' notes, we learned that most of them reported initially being ill. However, instead of requesting a legitimate note from a doctor, they contacted people who would forge a doctor's note and submitted the false notes to their schools. If this falsified note was accepted as legitimate one time, some students would do this repeatedly, even using it as an excuse to escape classes and exams. However, as a student's sick notes increased, faculty suspicion arose, leading to the student being caught for academic dishonesty and severe sanctions.

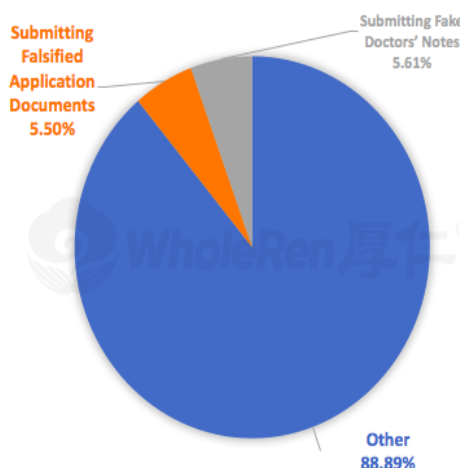


Figure 4-1: 2019 Proportion of Students Submitting Falsified Documents to Faculty

In 2019, our data showed that academic dishonesty has become the main reason why Chinese international students are dismissed in the U.S. Over the past few years, the proportion of students dismissed for cheating or plagiarism was much higher than other forms of academic dishonesty. In 2019, the percentage of Chinese international students who were dismissed for submitting falsified documents increased to over 10%, 5.50% of which was for falsifying application materials and 5.61% of which was for submitting fake doctors' notes in order to apply for leaves of absence.

In addition to falsifying doctors' notes, another academically dishonest behavior that happened frequently among the 2018-2019 sample was falsifying application documents. Dishonesty during the application process can manifest itself in a number of ways from the submission of fraudulent materials/transcripts to hiding aspects of one's academic record, not being completely forthright during entrance interviews, submitting an application essay written by someone else, or submitting fake standardized testing scores. Dishonesty in any way during the application procedure is unfair to other students and is in direct violation of school policy. Even if falsified application materials were submitted by the student's agent/educational consultant, it becomes a serious problem for the student's academic career and can lead to dismissal once discovered (at any point during the student's academic career).

In addition, forging a professor's signature of authorization and submitting false documents are the kinds of academically dishonest behaviors that regularly occur during the application process.

The Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

The sanctions that U.S. schools can impose for academic dishonesty may vary but generally include: warnings, probations, suspensions, dismissal, and expulsion; our research has found that schools vary in terms of how they define and issue each sanction.

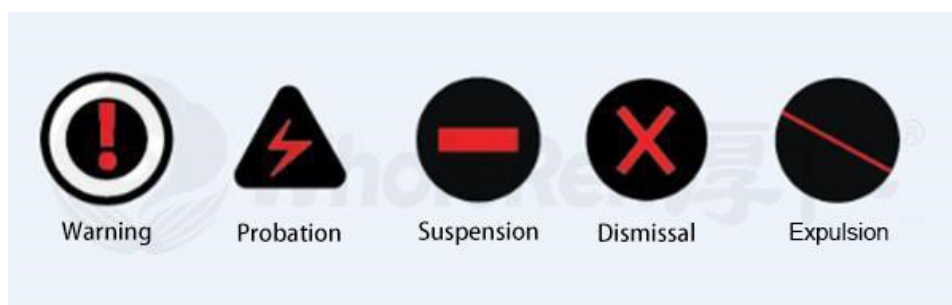


Figure 4-2: Sanctions of Academic Dishonesty

Warning: Typically this is given when the behavior is not serious enough to severely impact the school or other students. A warning is typically presented in an oral or written format.

Probation: When a student's behavior has caused significant negative consequences for the school and other students, but because it is the first offense, the school will typically inform the student in writing, detailing the school's code of conduct and how the student's behavior violated the code. The student will be allowed to continue studying but will be placed under academic probation. The time and duration of academic probation will be decided by an academic committee. During the academic probation period, if the student violates the code of conduct again, a more serious sanction will be imposed, including suspension or dismissal.

Suspension: When the behavior is severe or it is the second offense, the school will issue a suspension, informing the student in writing and detailing the academic code of conduct as well as how the student's behavior violated the code. In addition, the student will be suspended and forced to leave the school for a period of time. After the suspension period, the student can apply to return to their studies at the suspending institution depending on school policies.

Dismissal: Some institutions have an additional sanction level before expelling a student, falling into the dismissal category. Under certain circumstances, especially for repeated violation of a school's code of conduct, the school will inform the student in writing that the student is being dismissed and must leave campus. Dismissal is more serious than suspension but a student may still have a chance to return.

Expulsion: Under certain circumstances, especially for repeated violation of a school's code of conduct which has resulted in a serious impact on the school and its students, the school will inform the student in writing that the student is being dismissed and must leave campus permanently and will not allowed to be readmission.

Whenever an international student receives an official sanction due to academic dishonesty, it generally causes them to be less likely to graduate on time, if at all. Additionally, it becomes more difficult to obtain a student visa, making the prospect of future studies in the U.S. more difficult.

Extended Research 2: Second Academic Dismissal

By looking at the data from 2019, we found that students who were dismissed for a second time were dismissed sooner the second time than they were the first time. A student's second dismissal is typically due to poor academic performance or academic dishonesty.

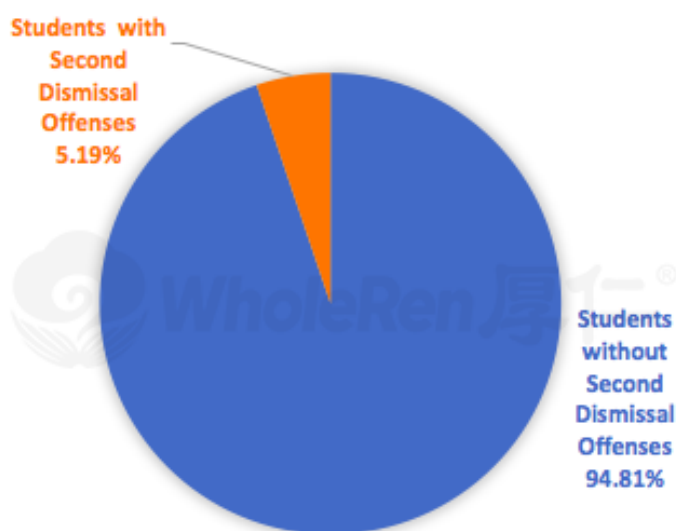


Figure 4-3 Students with Second Dismissal Offenses

As indicated in Figure 4-3, 5.19% of students violated the code of conduct at their school after having been previously dismissed for similar violations while 94.81% of students learned from past mistakes and did not violate their school's code of conduct after being dismissed. Therefore, the majority of students who were dismissed once were able to learn, develop an honest attitude, and improve their academic performance. However, a small portion of students did not correct their behavior and faced dismissal for a second time.

Student-Reported Reasons for Second Academic Dismissal

After being dismissed for the first time, most students were able to get back on the right track with the help from WholeRen and their school. However, there were still a few students who did not learn from their mistakes. Based on the data we gathered, there are several reported causes for being dismissed a second time that students cited most frequently:

1. Poor language skills. The student is not able to fully understand the instruction given in class and needs extra time to finish class assignments. As courses become more difficult and in-depth over the year, the student struggles to keep up and their GPA falls below the minimum requirement to stay in good academic standing.
2. Lack of academic guidance. In general, Chinese students are often hesitant to communicate with teachers and professors even though they are facing academic challenges. Without their guidance, the students may not know how best to improve their academic performance or effectively manage their time.
3. Not utilizing the school's resources. In order to help students do well, schools usually provide various resources to their students such as teaching assistants, writing centers and academic advisors. Chinese international students, however, are hesitant to reach out to those resources and more likely to neglect their importance.

4. Academic dishonesty. After being dismissed and successfully returning to school, not all students have learned the importance of obeying their school's code of conduct. They may not think that academic dishonesty is a serious issue or not believe the school would dismiss them for such a violation. As a result, they break the school's code of conduct again and end up wasting the opportunity to study at a university.
5. Lack of self-discipline. Some students lack self-discipline, an issue which can easily be influenced for the worse by their peers. For example, students have reported staying up late with friends rather than studying before exams.
6. Other issues. Health-related or family-related problems can also lead to poor academic performance after the first dismissal.

How to Avoid Second Academic Violations

Every student is full of hope for the future when they first decide to study abroad. However, many students will run into a situation where their academic performance is impacted by their learning ability, study habits, attitude, or self-control. American universities are not unreasonable in their dismissals. As long as a student can learn from past mistakes and improve academically, there is a good chance the student will be able to graduate with a degree, even after having been previously dismissed.

In order to avoid additional academic violations, the first thing that a student needs to do is to remain calm and come to terms with the situation. Students who are unable to come to terms with their situation have occasionally threatened professors in an attempt to get them to revoke their sanctions or acted out in other ways that violated their school's code of conduct, eventually resulting in their dismissal.

Secondly, students should focus on learning the school's regulations and rules and find out the reasons behind their academic sanctions. If a student was dismissed due to poor academic performance, then potential remedies include seeking help from professors, instructors, and outside academic consultants to improve GPA, design an effective learning plan, and learn new study habits. It is imperative that a student dismissed for reasons such as academic dishonesty, inappropriate behavior, or poor attendance, take responsibility for the mistake and be careful not to fall into the same habits in the future.

Support from parents is critical for Chinese international students, especially for students who have been dismissed. Parents play a key role in helping students get back on track with their academics after an incident. However, care must be taken in how a student's parents respond to a dismissal in order to ensure that it has a positive effect. When handled carefully, support from parents can help a student recover from a stressful situation, provide encouragement to continue studying and not give up, and be a positive influence on the student's future academic career.

Last but not least, in addition to seeking help from advisors on campus, consulting with accredited educational institutions is always a good choice. Academic consultants will help students who have been dismissed in a number of areas including studying, future planning, reflecting on changes in behavior, applying to schools and adapting to the environment. All of these areas are critically important to help students get back on track for their desired academic career.

Dismissal Cases due to Academic Dishonesty

Case One: Dismissal Due to Submitting Falsified Application Documents

Student A studied at a tier one university in China and had decent academic standing when applying for graduate study in the United States. While consulting with an application agent, the student was told that he would be guaranteed acceptance into a top-10 university in the United States if he chose to work with the agent. As a result, the student hired the agent to help him with his applications, providing all necessary application information. The student, much to his surprise, did receive admission to Columbia University, however, he was dismissed after only one month of accepting admission. It turned out that the agent he had been working with had falsified both of his TOEFL test scores and his undergraduate transcript from China in order to get him admitted. Even though the student was not directly involved in the application process, he was still dismissed for the inclusion of false documents in his application.

Case Two: Dismissal Due to Second Instance of Cheating

Student B was a sophomore at the University of California. He was caught for cheating during his first year and, for this first offense, received a probation. He did not take the probation seriously since he was still permitted to continue his studies. Unsurprisingly, he violated the academic code of conduct for the second time, this time during finals in his second year. Due to it being his second offense, he was expelled. Although he was able to continue his studies at another school, a note of expulsion is permanently on his educational record.

Turning Things Around After Dismissal

Case One: Admitted to Ohio State University after being dismissed due to low GPA

Student C initially studied at a university ranked near 100 in the U.S. During his first year, he struggled to focus on studying and had trouble finishing assignments on time. As a result, he earned a GPA of 1.8 in his first semester and was suspended for a low GPA. With the help of WholeRen's professional academic consultants, his study habits began to change and he chose more fitting classes for his academic ability. In addition, he also received tutoring support in his native language from WholeRen's expert tutoring staff. Afterwards, he successfully raised his GPA to 3.6. By the end of his junior year, he had received admission letters from three top-ranking universities including OSU.

Case Two: Getting back on Track After Dismissal due to Cheating

Student D is an undergraduate at a university in New York. He was dismissed due to plagiarism and using a cellphone during exams. After an in-depth discussion with student D about his situation, we analyzed the root causes of his academic performance issues and provided advice for his future academic career. During the conversation, he admitted his mistakes and resolved to do better. With WholeRen's support, he transferred to another school to continue his studies. WholeRen designed a detailed and personalized academic plan for him. The plan was so effective that his GPA rose above 3.8 at his new college. This laid the foundation for his successful transfer to a top 30 university, a school which had a higher ranking than his initial university.



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