Making Summer Pay Off:

Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) in Ohio

OACC Student Success Leadership Institute September 2019

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TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY

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MDRC is a non-profit, non-partisan social policy research organization dedicated to:

- Conducting large-scale, **rigorous evaluations to learn what works** to improve education and social policies.

- **Designing and strengthening programs** and policies using research findings and lessons

- Providing **evidence-based technical assistance** to schools, programs, and organizations.

Our Time Today

Now: EASE project recap and evaluation findings
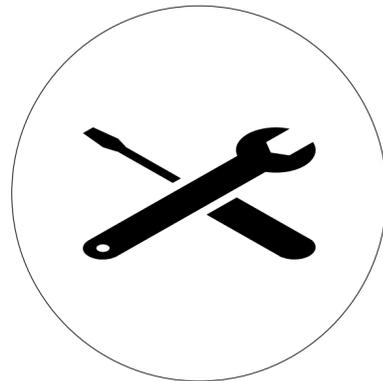
Later: Implementation Workshop (1:10 – 2 PM)
- Implementing the EASE strategies to increase summer 2020 enrollment
- Behavioral science insights for engagement and strategic communication

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Recap: What is the EASE project?

» Research study involving 10 Community Colleges in Ohio and OACC

» Increase the number of students who enroll in summer courses
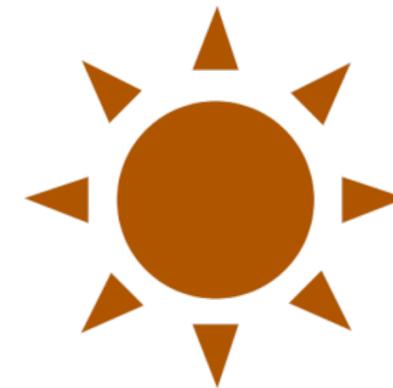
Why Encourage Summer Enrollment?

Research links summer enrollment to:

» persistence
» completion

Summer courses could:

» Bridge gap between spring and fall
» Mitigate loss of learning
» Accelerate time to completion
» Spread out "30 credits/ year" target

Recent state and federal policies:

» Third-Term OCOG (~2016)
» AND...

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» Reinstatement of Year-Round Pell Grants (2017-2018)

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IFAP

IFAP HOME

Publication Date: June 19, 2017

DCL ID: GEN-17-06

Subject: Implementation of Year-Round Pell Grants

Summary: This letter describes a change to the Federal Pell Grant Program that allows an eligible student to receive up to 150 percent of the student's Federal Pell Grant Scheduled Award for an award year beginning with the 2017–2018 award year.

Dear Colleague:

Section 401(b)(8) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as added by section 310 of the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2017 (Title III of Division H of P.L. 115-31, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017), allows a student to receive Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) funds for up to 150 percent of the student's Pell Grant Scheduled Award for an award year. This provision is effective beginning with the 2017–2018 award year.

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Despite these benefits, summer enrollment rates were low

Only ~ 20% of community college students in Ohio enroll during summers

A Behavioral Science Approach
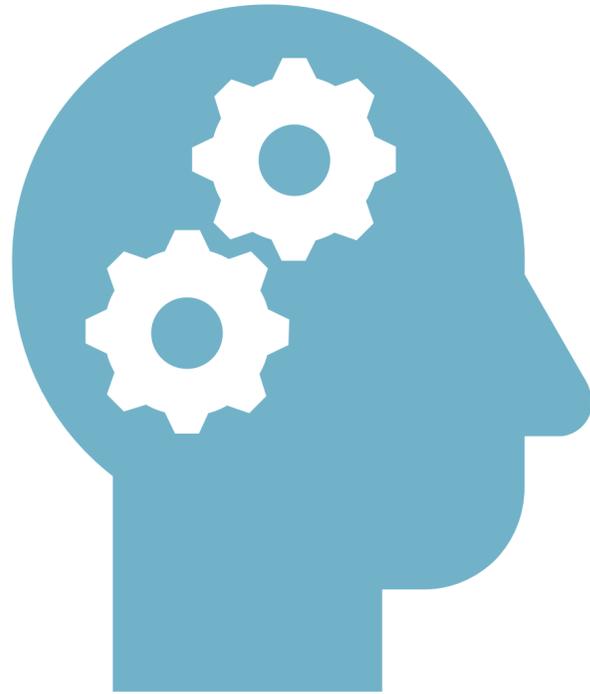
Focus on how people make decisions and behave

Provides insight into ways to help people achieve goals

Adaptable for different contexts

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Two Strategies to Encourage Additional Summer Enrollment:

INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Messaging

**Low cost
Sustainable
Easily scalable**

INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN & TUITION ASSISTANCE

Messaging +
Financial support

**Built on past studies
Inform state and federal
financial aid policies**

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Diagnose Barriers to Inform Campaign Content. One Barrier is:

Financial aid is **complex** – few students had the full picture about summer aid.

- **Lengthy letters** may confuse or cause students to ignore information

- **Hassles**, such as additional forms, may discourage students from enrolling

Students reported lack of financial aid as a barrier to summer enrollment.
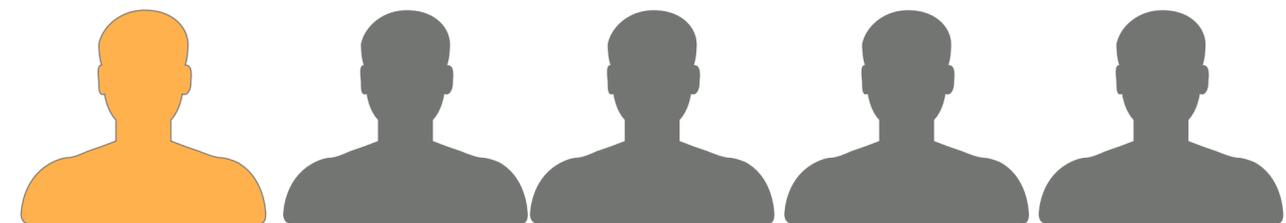
~80% of students had Pell remaining that could have been used to pay for summer courses but only ~**20%** were enrolling.

Attendance Rates

- Control: 10%
- Add recipient's name: 15%
- Add sender's name: 17%
- Add reciprocity messsage: 27%
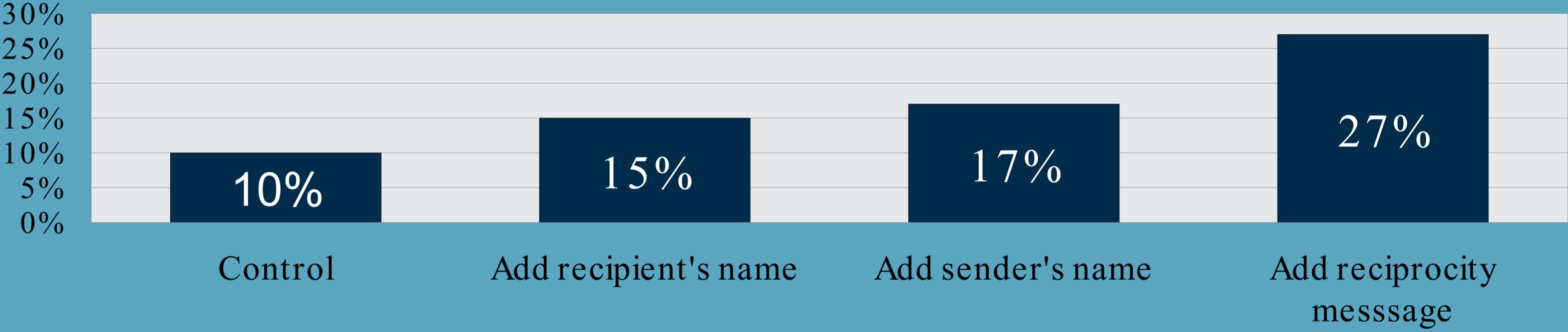
(The Behavioral Insights Team)

Control
8 new Picker Packer jobs are now available at Pro FS. Come to Bedford job centre on Monday 10 june between 10am and 4pm and ask for Sarah to find out more.

Recipient Name
Hi Elspeth. 8 new Picker Packer jobs are now available at Pro FS. Come to Bedford job centre on Monday 10 june between 10am and 4pm and ask for Sarah to find out more.

Sender's Name
Hi Elspeth. 8 new Picker Packer jobs are now available at Pro FS. Come to Bedford job centre on Monday 10 june between 10am and 4pm and ask for Sarah to find out more.
Michael

Reciprocity
Hi Elspeth. 8 new Picker Packer jobs are now available at Pro FS. Come to Bedford job centre on Monday 10 june between 10am and 4pm and ask for Sarah to find out more. I've booked you a place. Good luck. Michael

Incorporating Behavioral Insights

Personalize and simplify information delivery

Incorporate reciprocity

Dear Camielle,

I have good news! I took some time to review your financial aid package and want to make you sure you know that you have grants available for summer courses. Based on my review, you have up to **$480** from your Pell Grant (which you do not have to pay back) that you can use for summer courses!
.

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Incorporating Behavioral Insights
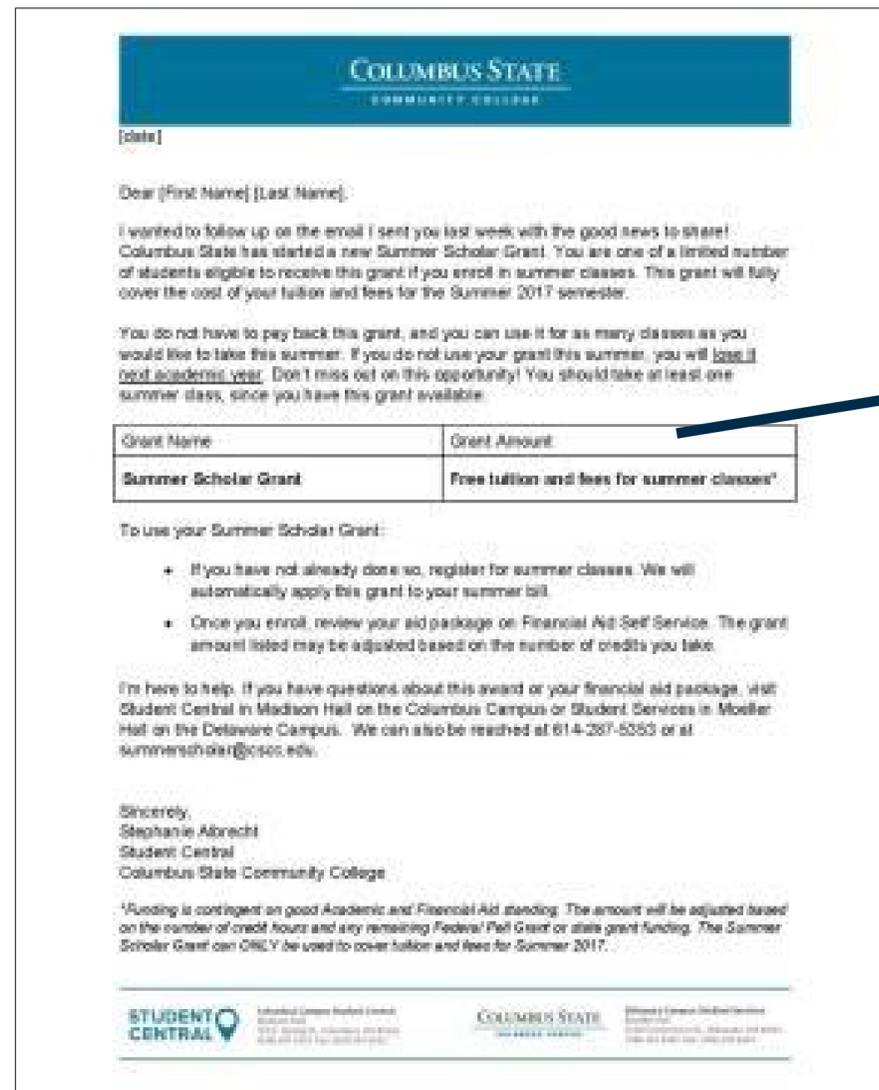
Grant Name	Grant Amount
Summer Scholar Grant	Free tuition and fees for summer classes*

- ✓ Provide gap funding for those in the tuition assistance group
- ✓ Leverage concept of mental accounting

Evaluating EASE with Rigorous Methods

INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN

6 e-mails, 2 letters, and 1 postcard

**Low cost
Sustainable
Easily scalable**

VS

INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN & TUITION ASSISTANCE
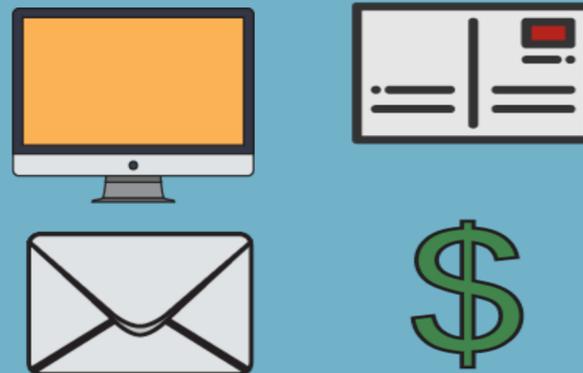
Messaging + Gap Tuition

**Built on past studies
Inform state and federal
financial aid policies**

VS

CONTROL
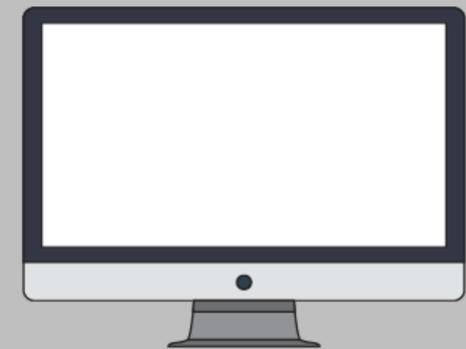
Colleges' standard messages about summer enrollment & aid

Partner Colleges – THANK YOU

- Columbus State Community College
- Marion Technical College
- Stark State College
- Southern State Community College
- Clark State Community College
- Lakeland Community College
- North Central State College
- Northwest State Community College
- Rio Grande Community College
- Sinclair Community College

2017 Cohort (Pre-Year Round Pell)

2018 Cohort (Post-Year Round Pell)

Total sample: 10, 668 students across both cohorts

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Increased Summer Enrollment & Credits Earned

Enrollment Rates
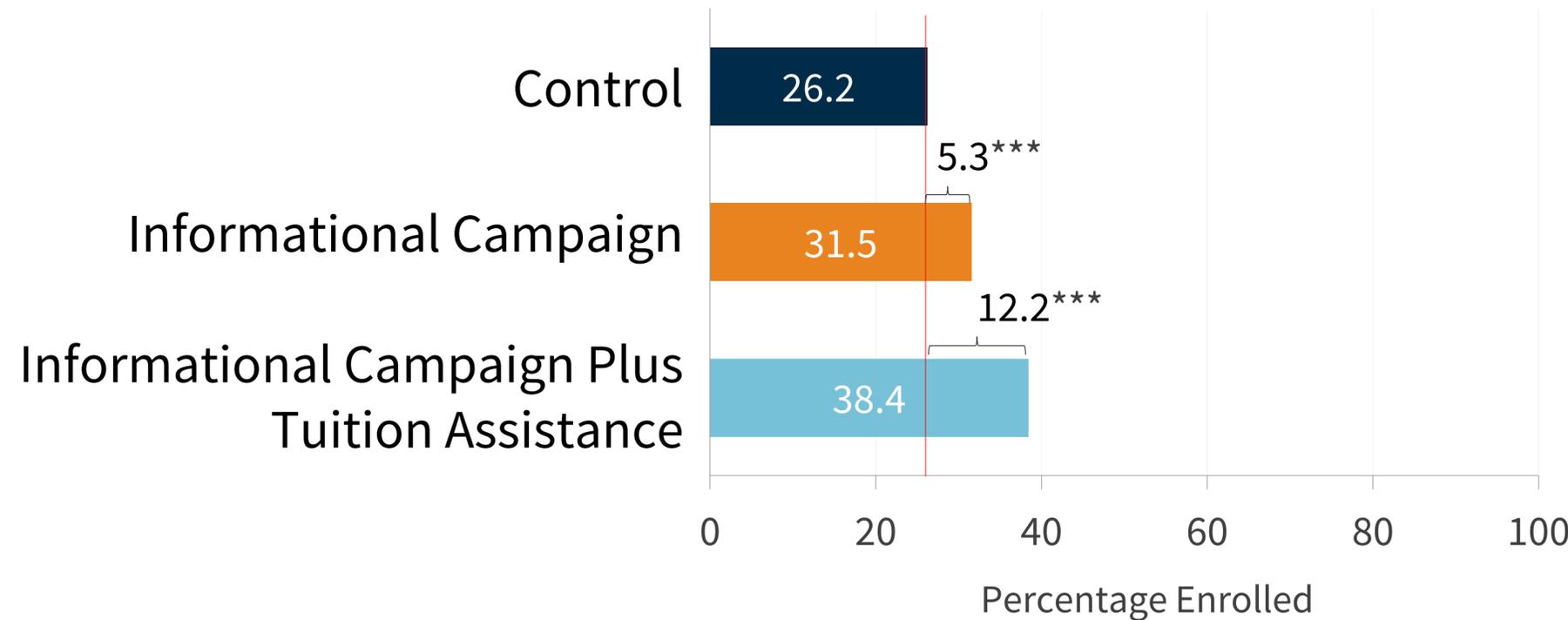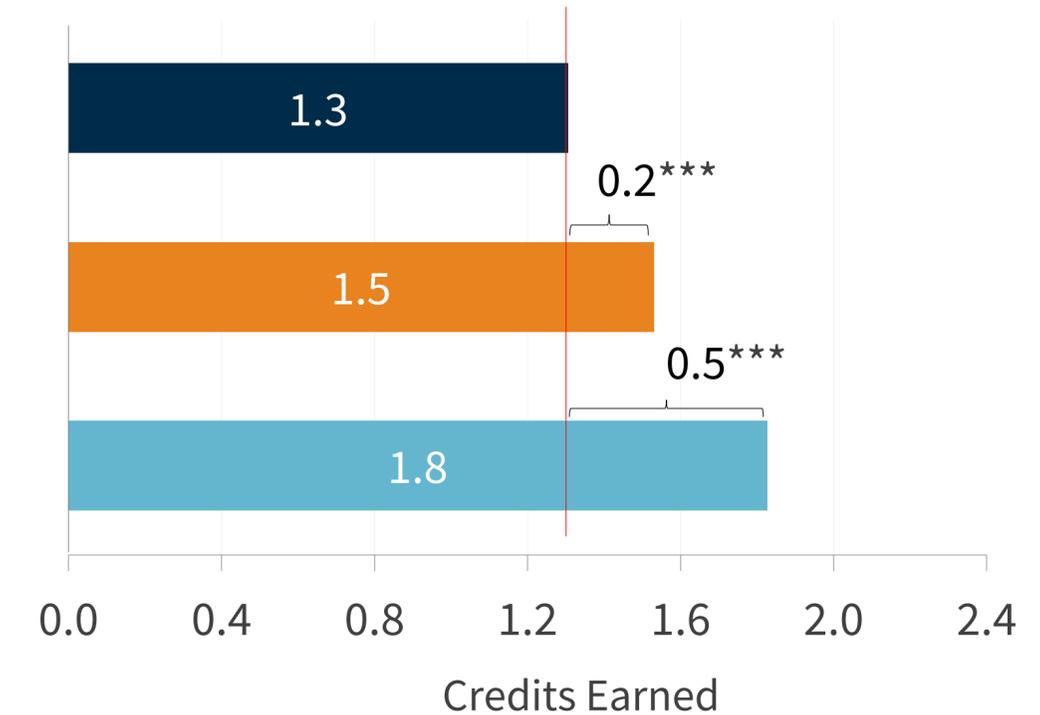
	Percentage Enrolled
Control	26.2
Informational Campaign	31.5
Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance	38.4

5.3*** (Informational Campaign)
12.2*** (Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance)

Credits Earned

	Credits Earned
Control	1.3
Informational Campaign	1.5
Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance	1.8

0.2*** (Informational Campaign)
0.5*** (Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance)

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No Effect on Fall Enrollment
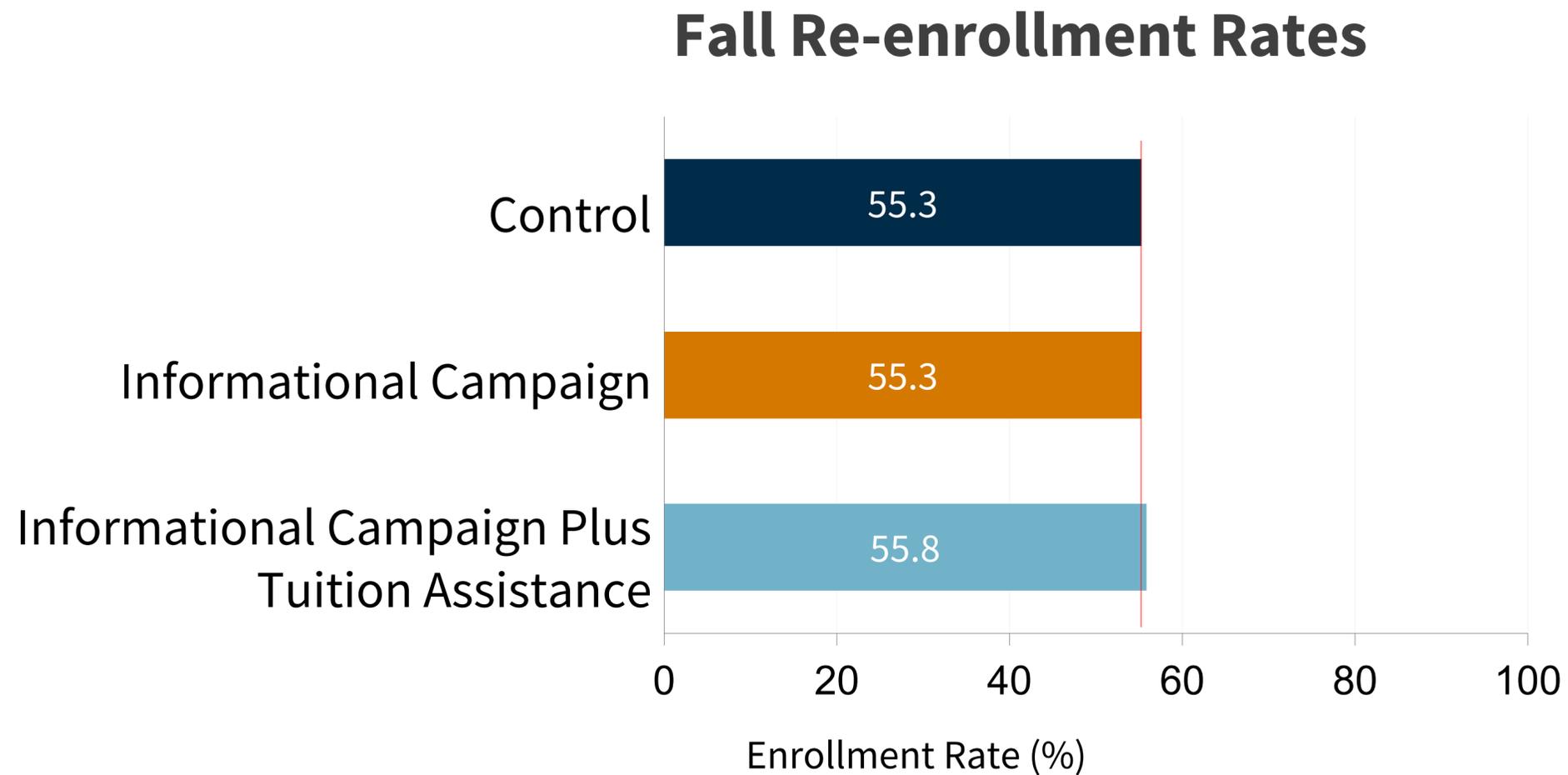
Fall Re-enrollment Rates

Group	Enrollment Rate (%)
Control	55.3
Informational Campaign	55.3
Informational Campaign Plus Tuition Assistance	55.8

Enrollment Rate (%)

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What are the Costs?

| INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN	INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN & TUITION ASSISTANCE
STAFF TIME	$44 PER STUDENT (average across 10 colleges for 2018 cohort that had access to Year-Round Pell) + STAFF TIME

Note: $4

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What is the increased revenue?

Calculating Increased Revenue:

Increased Credits **Attempted** Per Student	✕	Tuition/fees ($137 per credit on average)	=	Increased Tuition + Fee Revenue Per Student
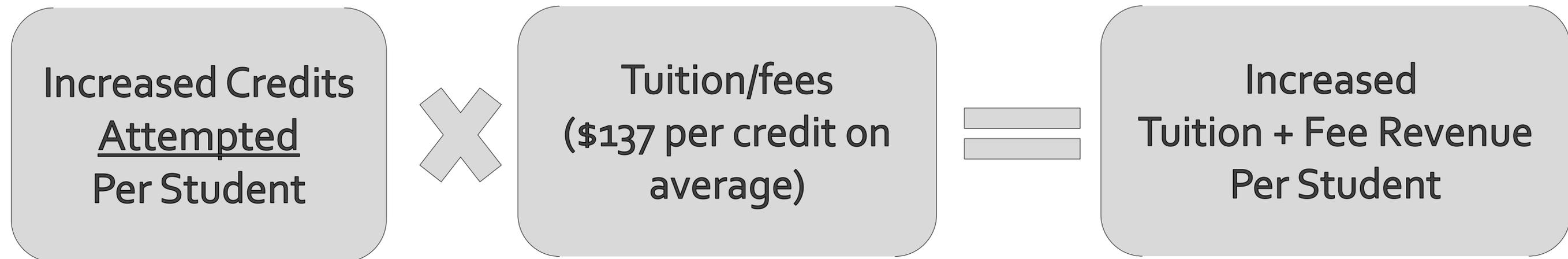
Both Increase Tuition Revenue

Informational Campaign only

$52 per student

Informational Campaign + Tuition Assistance

$92 per student

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What is the ROI (Net Revenue)?

Increased Revenue − Cost = Net Revenue
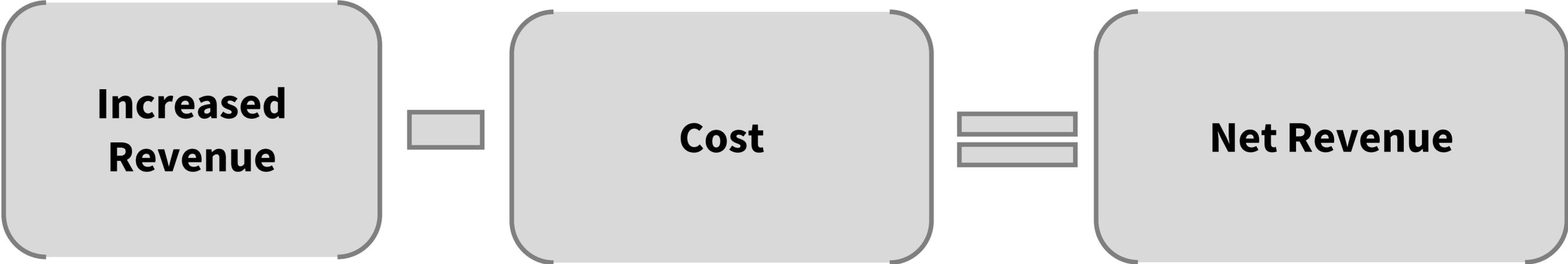
Both Have Similar, Positive Net Revenue

Informational Campaign only

| $52 per student | **–** | N/A | **=** | $52 per student |
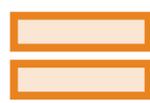
Informational Campaign + Tuition Assistance

| $92 per student | **–** | $44 per student | **=** | $48 per student |

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Both Strategies increase Pell Take-Up

**Average Summer Pell Disbursement in 2018
(With Year-Round Pell Available)**

Control group: $347

Informational campaign group: $416 ($69)

Informational campaign plus tuition assistance group: $447 ($100)

Average Pell Disbursement ($)

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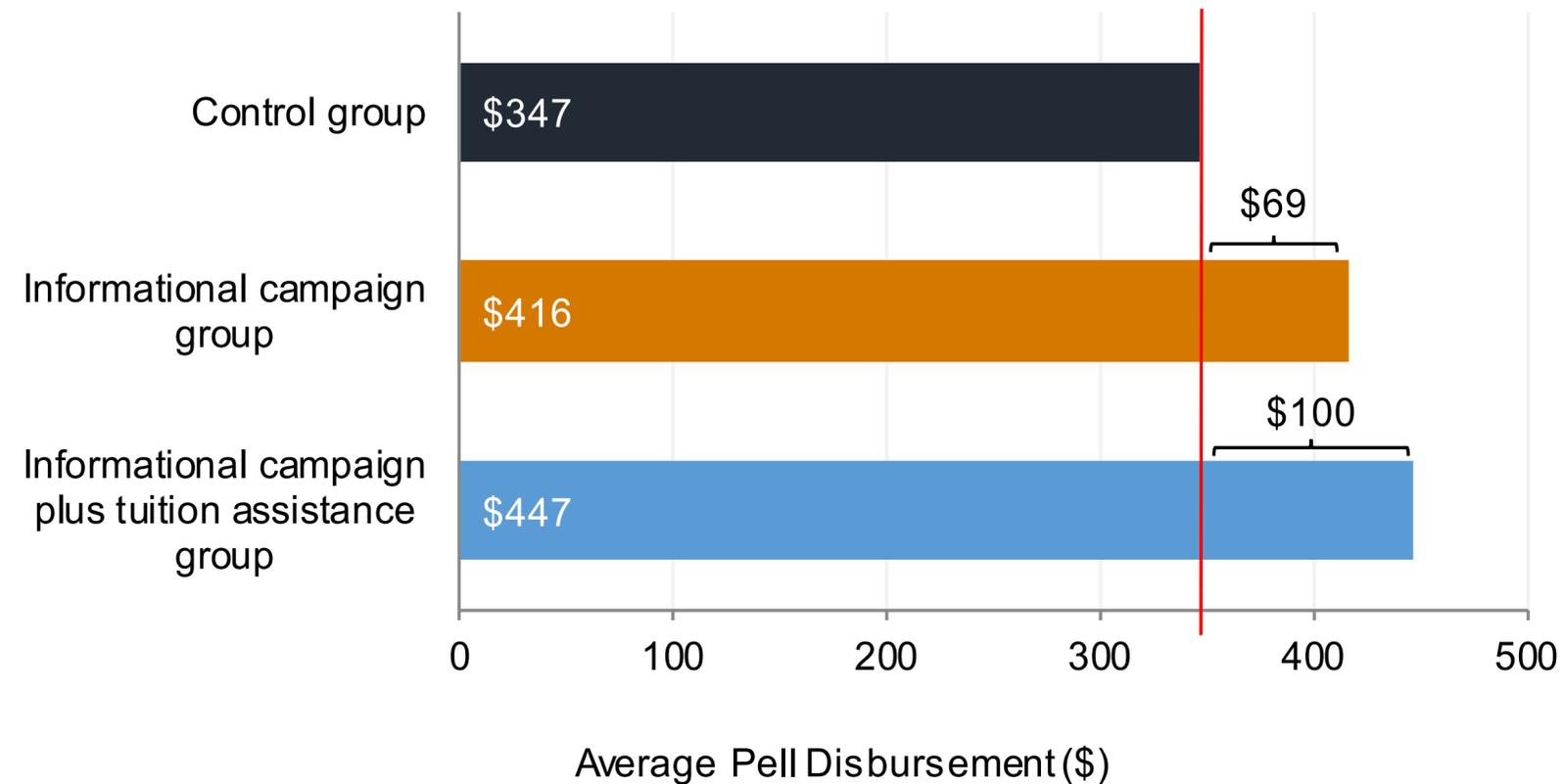
In Summary…

- **A well-designed behavioral messaging campaign can <u>cause</u> more students to enroll in summer courses**
  (When paired with an inexpensive tuition-waiver, effects are even larger.)

- **Both strategies help students earn credits, bringing them closer to degree completion**
  (and increase net revenue + Pell Grant take-up)
  (but don't expect big impacts on spring to fall retention)

- **Simple, cost-effective ways to boost student success at scale**
  (incorporate into student success strategy/completion plans)

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# Questions?

Contact:

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🐦 @CABS_MDRC

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