

## Summer Melt - Institutional Definitions and Pathways

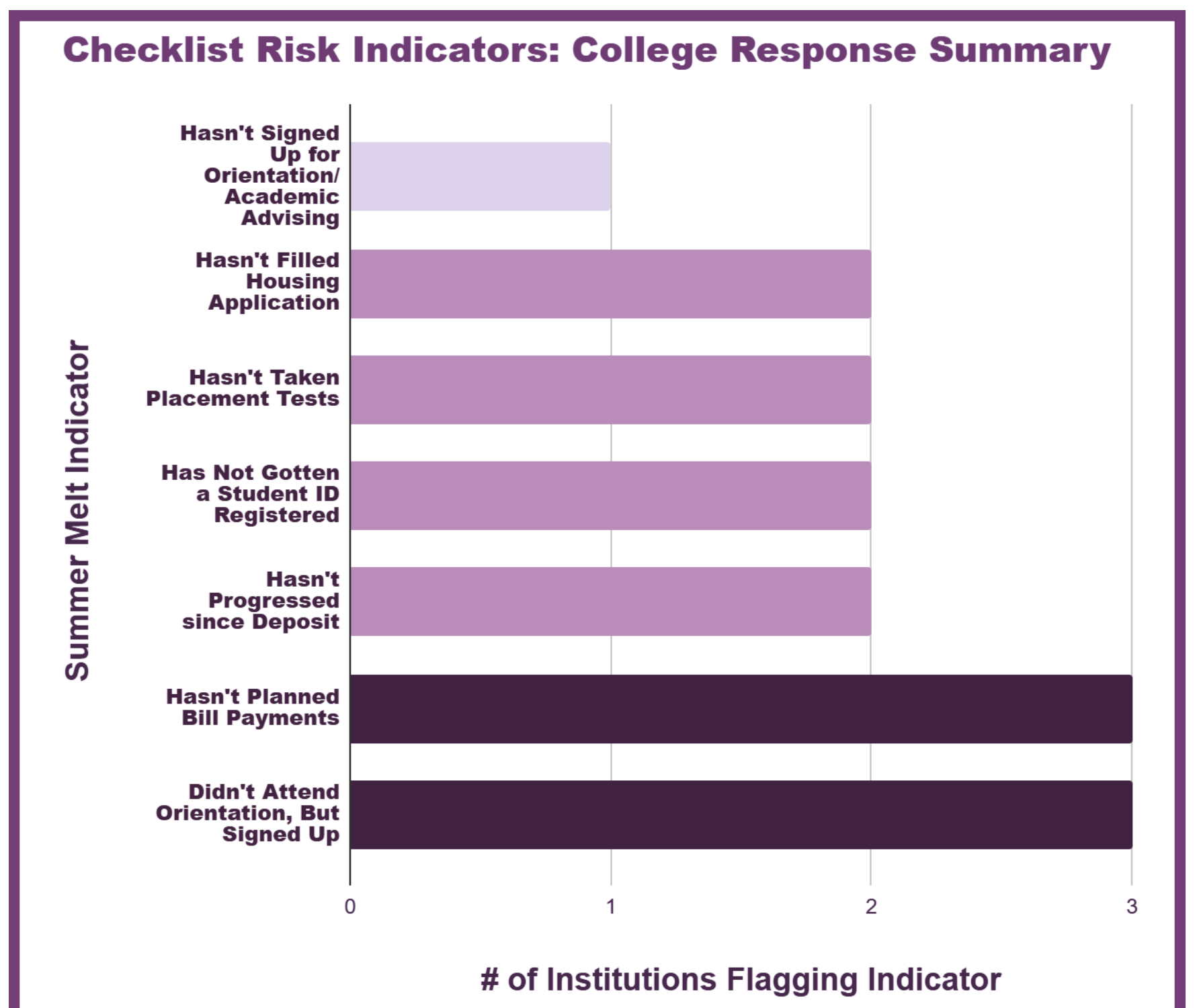
- In many cases, it is easiest to define what is NOT summer melt, like students who formally defer enrollment or students who do not demonstrate verified intent to enroll (a deposit, for example).
- Some of the best ways to reduce summer melt are to increase cross-departmental communication, create checklists that both the student and college onboarding staff can track, and to find the best communication strategies for students that are missing onboarding tasks.

### Summer Melt:

When a high school graduate demonstrates verified intent to enroll in a postsecondary institution but does not matriculate by a defined cutoff date (such as the first day of classes).

### Melt Prevention in Practice: A Case Study from the University of Pennsylvania

- UPenn's high school summer programs exemplify how institutions prevent melt through technology and human judgment. Jim Ramey at UPenn uses Slate to monitor student progress through post-deposit enrollment checkpoints. Ramey reads them as behavioral signals: students who stop engaging with checklist items after paying their deposit are flagged as high risk for melt and contacted directly.
- UPenn's experience illustrates the systemic constraints that limit even well-resourced institutions. Key issues include:
  - **Data disconnections:** Multiple disconnected Slate usages across UPenn's schools result in no centralized view of a student's status.
  - **Effective melt prevention is labor-intensive:** Ramey's most successful strategies (personally verifying bills, manually emailing students) rely on individual action that cannot scale easily across all institutions.
  - **Checklist completion is only accurate with human verification:** Students frequently submit incorrect documents, meaning automated completion indicators must be audited by staff.



### CASE Meeting in Philadelphia

- CASE is a "collective impact initiative focused on college access and success for Philadelphia students," in which our partners at PHENND serve as the co-chairs for the On Track to College Graduation Action Team
- The meeting gave us critical insight into the importance of highly communicative, cross-departmental work that is necessary for colleges/universities looking to implement anti-melt strategies.



### Future Work

- Further investigation into the summer melt practices of colleges and universities in the Philly region (or further!), which could lead to practical data analytics that identify what works best to reduce summer melt.
- Encouraging better relationships between high school counselors and college recruiters/onboarding teams that would best reduce summer melt and ease high school students' transition into college.