

The First Year of College: Challenging, Yet Encouraging

2021 YFCY



In Spring 2021, first-year students were balancing the stress associated with mental and physical health while adjusting to college and navigating faculty expectations. Despite these challenges, they developed a sense of belonging to the campus community and felt supported by college personnel. Students were also engaged in their communities and were hopeful about future opportunities.

During the global pandemic, first-year college students felt at least somewhat stressed about:



82%

Mental health



75%

Health of loved ones



63%

Physical health



63%

Others' adherence to social distancing guidelines while out in public

...While also reporting high levels of anxiety.



54%

Frequently felt anxious since entering college

Civic engagement levels fluctuated, likely due to the continuing effects of the pandemic and the presidential election...

27%

Demonstrated for a cause (e.g., boycott, rally, protest)



45%

Publicly communicated their opinion about a cause (e.g., blog, email, petition)

34%

Performed volunteer work

...And at least half of the respondents found it at least somewhat difficult to adjust to college academically.

50%

Had difficulty adjusting to the academic demands of college



61%

Had difficulty managing their time effectively

55%

Had difficulty developing effective study skills

The majority of students felt that they were part of the campus community...

82%

Agreed that faculty empowered them to learn

70%

Agreed that they see themselves as part of the campus community



69%

Agreed that at least one *faculty* member took interest in their development

68%

Agreed that at least one *staff* member took interest in their development

...And many maintained hopeful plans for the summer



77%

Planned on working for pay

42%

Planned on performing volunteer work

31%

Planned on participating in an internship

HERI

With insight from HERI's Your First College Year Survey, the most comprehensive tool addressing first-year programming and retention strategies, you'll be one step closer to helping your students adjust to campus life while providing the best environment for learning.

Survey Source: Your First College Year Survey 2021
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