Reflecting on Students’ Past & Expectations for the Future

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Narratives about Today’s New Students

- The Dumbest Generation
- Academically Adrift
- Flying without a Helicopter
- "Doing School"
- Paying for the Party
- The Feel-Good Curriculum
- The Shallows

Google search results for "today's college students":
- Today's Student - Lumina Foundation
- Understanding today's traditional college student - Sheridan College
- Why Are Today's College Students So Emotionally Fragile...
Expectations

What students expect based on their best understanding of the past.
What Do We Need to Know?

- Demographics
- Academic background
- Learning strategies
- Interactions with other students & teachers
- Expected academic perseverance
- Expected academic & social challenges
- Self-reported attitudes about preparation
- Expected academic difficulty
- Importance placed on campus environment
Ideas for Practice

Thing we can react to but can’t change – demographics, economy, etc.

**Things we can influence** – HS curriculum, guidance counselors and other ‘gatekeepers,’ institutional culture, etc.

**Things we can control** – curriculum, when students register, number of withdrawals, recognizing affective and cognitive learning, tapping into B+ and lower grade students’ motivation, etc.
What Do We Need to Know?

- Demographics
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See handout for background information about the survey
Finding 1. Students expect to spend more time on academic preparation in college than they did in their last year of high school.

Changes in Time Allocation in High School and Expectations in College, by Hours per Week

*(College Expectations Hour Range – High School Hour Range)*

- Preparing for class
- Working for pay
- Participating in co-curricular activities
- Relaxing/Socializing

-50% -40% -30% -20% -10% 0% 10% 20% 30%

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21+
Finding 2. Students expect college to be more challenging and requiring more preparation and work.
Finding 3. Students generally feel academically prepared for college. However, there are significant differences between A- or higher and B+ or lower students.

Perceived Academic Preparation
(% Responding 5 or 6 on a six-point scale from "not at all prepared" [1] to "very prepared" [6])

- Working effectively with others: 74% (A- or higher) vs. 81% (B+ or lower)
- Thinking critically & effectively: 62% (A- or higher) vs. 70% (B+ or lower)
- Writing clearly & effectively: 59% (A- or higher) vs. 69% (B+ or lower)
- Learn effectively on your own: 57% (A- or higher) vs. 69% (B+ or lower)
- Speaking clearly & effectively: 59% (A- or higher) vs. 64% (B+ or lower)
- Using computers & info tech: 58% (A- or higher) vs. 57% (B+ or lower)
- Analyze numerical & statistical info: 48% (A- or higher) vs. 57% (B+ or lower)
Finding 3. Students generally feel academically prepared for college. However, there are significant differences between A- or higher and B+ or lower students.

Student Certainty About Persistence in the Face of Academic Adversity

(% Responding 5 or 6 on a six-point scale from "not at all certain" [1] to "very certain" [6])

- Finish something when encountering challenges: 72% (B+ or lower) vs. 68% (A- or higher)
- Ask faculty for help when struggling: 68% (B+ or lower) vs. 66% (A- or higher)
- Stay positive even after poor performance: 64% (B+ or lower) vs. 60% (A- or higher)
- Find addtl info when course material isn't understood: 65% (B+ or lower) vs. 65% (A- or higher)
- Participate in course discussions: 42% (B+ or lower) vs. 35% (A- or higher)
- Study when there are other interesting things to do: 51% (B+ or lower) vs. 42% (A- or higher)
Finding 3. Students generally feel academically prepared for college. However, there are significant differences between A- or higher and B+ or lower students.

**Importance of Campus Environment**

(\% Responding 5 or 6 on a six-point scale from "not important" [1] to "very important" [6])

- **Challenging academic experience**
  - B+ or lower: 43\%
  - A- or higher: 53\%

- **Help managing non-academic responsibilities**
  - B+ or lower: 55\%
  - A- or higher: 57\%

- **Opportunities to interact with people from different backgrounds**
  - B+ or lower: 60\%
  - A- or higher: 64\%

- **Learning support services (writing, tutoring, etc.)**
  - B+ or lower: 65\%
  - A- or higher: 72\%

- **Opportunities to be involved socially**
  - B+ or lower: 66\%
  - A- or higher: 75\%

- **Opportunities to attend campus events & activities**
  - B+ or lower: 67\%
  - A- or higher: 77\%

- **Support to succeed academically**
  - B+ or lower: 60\%
  - A- or higher: 64\%
Finding 4. Students expect to struggle with managing time. Students also expect a collaborative and more diverse environment in college.

Expected Academic Difficulties During First Year of College
(% Responding 5 or 6 on a six-point scale from "not at all difficult" [1] to "very difficult" [6])

- Managing time: 47% B+ or lower, 39% A- or higher
- Paying college expenses: 42% B+ or lower, 43% A- or higher
- Getting help with schoolwork: 7% B+ or lower, 7% A- or higher
- Learning course material: 27% B+ or lower, 28% A- or higher
- Making new friends: 5% B+ or lower, 8% A- or higher
- Interacting with faculty: 6% B+ or lower, 6% A- or higher
Finding 4. Students expect to struggle with managing time. Students also expect a collaborative and more diverse environment in college.

**Student Expectations for Collaborative Learning with Faculty and Other students**

(% Responding 'often' and 'very often')

- Talk about career plans with faculty: 62%
- Discuss academic performance with faculty: 57%
- Discuss course topics with faculty outside of class: 52%
- Work with faculty members on non-course activities: 51%
- Prepare for exams with other students: 83%
- Work with other students on course projects: 80%
- Ask another student to help understand course material: 67%
- Explain course material to one or more students: 56%
Finding 4. Students expect to struggle with managing time. Students also expect a collaborative and more diverse environment in college.

Student Expectations for Diverse Interactions
(% Responding 'often' and 'very often')

- Discussions with people from a different economic background: 86%
- Discussions with people of a different race or ethnicity: 86%
- Discussions with people with different political views: 82%
- Discussions with people from a different religious background: 81%
- Tried to better understand someone else's views: 70%
- Examined strengths or weaknesses of your own views: 62%
- Included diverse perspectives in HS course discussions or assignments: 63%
New first-year students are confident about their academic ability. They expect college to be more challenging and require more work than high school. They also expect opportunities to engage with faculty and other students and to be involved in social and co-curricular events on campus. They are somewhat more apprehensive about managing their time and avoiding distractions. In most cases, over half of students report levels feeling prepared, overcoming general challenges, and overcoming difficulties.

New first-year students with grades of B+ and below, however, express more apprehension in terms of their academic ability and engaging with others on campus. These students express lower feelings of preparation in writing and analyzing numerical information, and learning on their own. Socially, these students are less confident in terms of participating in course discussions, managing their time, and being involved socially.

There were little differences by first-generation status, other than they expect to interact with faculty less than other students and expressed slightly less more expectation to encounter difficulty paying for college.
Future Research

Looking at the data by race/ethnicity, gender, and other categories.

Complimenting the survey with qualitative data

Longitudinal cohort tracking

Linking BCSSE 15 to NSSE 16 as a follow up to expectations

Momentum indicators

Mapping BCSSE and NSSE results

Others?