WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

KEY FINDINGS:

FALL 2020 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES SURVEY

Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement

Office of the Provost

Office of the Vice Chancellor For Student Affairs

CONTENTS

The Fall 2020 Undergraduate Student Needs and Experiences Survey was a collaboration among staff from the Provost's Office, the Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement (DDEEA), and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. The aim of the survey was to gather data on both student needs and their experiences during the fall 2020 semester, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey contained questions on student experiences in the academic and co-curricular realms as well as recommendations to improve student experiences. In addition, students were asked about current needs, and they were given an opportunity to request contact from a staff member to discuss campus resources and support mechanisms.

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Survey results offered a glimpse into the overall academic experience of students who responded to the survey.

- 56% of students reported *most* or *all of* their courses were going well. An additional 19% of students reported about *half of* their courses were going well, while 25% of students reported *some* (20%) or *none of* (5%) their courses were going well.
- Less than half of new students were confident in their success at UW-Madison at the time of the survey. This is a marked decrease from previous years findings from the annual fall Wisconsin Welcome Assessment.
- Approximately 40% of students reported that they were satisfied with their overall academic experience for fall 2020, compared to 46% for spring 2020.
- Approximately 59% of students reported their fall course workload was **less manageable** than their spring course workload, 32% said their workload was about the same, and 9% said it was **more manageable** than spring.
- 95% of students planned to enroll for the spring 2021 semester. The majority of students who did not plan to return indicated they were graduating.

PRACTICES THAT SUPPORTED LEARNING

Students consistently shared that their remote learning experience was improved when courses were purposely designed to be delivered remotely, instructors made appropriate use of technology resources, and instructors offered ways to engage with course content in a meaningful manner. Students expressed gratitude for instructors who were empathetic, flexible, and understanding of different communication types and supportive of students during remote learning. Students reported that they felt more supported in their learning when instructors were available and offered extended office hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPRING 2021 INSTRUCTION

Many of the effective practices mentioned above are also reflected in student recommendations to improve courses for spring. Students expressed a strong need for consistent course design and structure for spring courses. In addition, workload concerns coupled with instructors not fully understanding the time commitments associated with in-class and out of class remote instruction were a consistent refrain, and students hope to see improvement in spring 2021. In addition, students expressed a need for more in-person instruction for spring 2021. Students also requested more recorded lectures, asynchronous resources, and more peer engagement and community interaction in the synchronous components for remote spring courses. Students reiterated the need for well-structured, organized remote content.

COURSE MODALITY PREFERENCES

Overall, students were divided on their modality preferences for remote and face-to-face learning as well as synchronous and asynchronous learning.

- 44% of students preferred *most* or *all* of their spring courses be remote and 41% preferred *most* or *all* of their courses be face-to-face. An additional 15% of students preferred *an equal number of* remote and face-to-face courses.
- 47% of students reported synchronous learning worked better for them and 50% selected asynchronous. An additional 3% of students reported they had not experienced both learning modes and thus could not choose one or the other.

STUDENT NEEDS

Students reported on their current needs, and five areas emerged as the most common needs. While many students appear to have their essential needs met, some students indicated they were unable to obtain food at times.

- When asked about current needs, nearly half (47%) of students reported needing academic or career advising. Additional needs included mental health services (24%), financial assistance (21%), Tutoring assistance (17%), and assistance with physical well-being (15%). Less than 10% of students reported requiring assistance with the other needs. In some cases, minority and marginalized students were more likely to report needs.
- About 17% of students reported that they were unable to obtain sufficient food at least sometimes in the fall 2020 semester. It is unclear if the inability to obtain food was solely related to financial constraints or if transportation or other factors posed barriers.
  - Domestic Targeted Minority (24%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (17%)
  - Lives in Madison (18%) vs Outside Madison (10%)
  - University Residence Hall (20%) vs Lives Elsewhere (16%)

CAMPUS COMMUNICATIONS

Students had clear preferences on mode of communication (email), and some students wanted more frequent communication from the University.

- 95% of students preferred receiving university communications through emails.
- About a quarter of students felt university communications were *not frequent enough*, while close to 70% felt they were *about the right amount*.
- Students' preferred communication modes differed across demographics and characteristics.
- 40% of students said they knew *a little* or *not at all* about campus programs and service, and close to half felt the same way about emergency resources.

BELONGING AND CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

Students reported on their sense of connection and engagement in co-curricular activities.

- Close to 70% of student felt there were campus resources they could go to for help, and about 60% felt comfortable seeking help from campus staff or discussing personal issues with them.
- About 65% of students felt *a little* or *not at all* connected to their peers or members of their community on campus.
- There were some differences in perceptions of campus support networks and social connection across student demographics and characteristics.
- Students identified peer connection and community building opportunities, student organizations, clubs, mental health activities, and wellness activities as ways to stay engaged. However, preferences on how to access these co-curricular activities varied, with some indicating a stronger preference for face-to-face interactions, while others felt more comfortable engaging remotely.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

SPONSORS AND WORKING GROUP

The Fall 2020 Undergraduate Student Needs and Experiences Survey was a collaboration among staff from the Provost's Office, the Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement (DDEEA), and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, led by Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, John Zumbrunnen. Project team members included Megan Schmid (Office of the Provost), Ning Sun (Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs), Mary Thompson (Office of the Provost), and James Yonker (Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement), with additional contributions from Torsheika Maddox (Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement) and Chris Verhaeghe (Student Affairs).

SURVEY AIMS AND STRUCTURE

The aim of the survey was to gather data on both student needs and their experiences during the fall 2020 semester, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey contained questions on the following topics:

- Overall academic experience and satisfaction
- Modality preference for spring for course components under an enrollment of 50
- Internet access, computing equipment, study space
- Current needs
- Housing
- Food security
- Disability accommodations
- Sense of belonging
- Co-curricular engagement
- College transition for first year students
- Communication preferences
- Demographic questions

A copy of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

SURVEY RELEASE AND COMMUNICATION

The survey was fielded from October 27 through November 10. A pre-invitation email was sent on October 26, and the initial email invitation was sent on October 27. Three follow-up reminders were sent via email. The undergraduate survey team coordinated with a representative from the graduate survey team and information on both surveys was posted on the COVID-19 Response webpage. The survey was also promoted through social media in collaboration with communications staff from University Communications, Student Affairs, DDEEA, and the Provost's Office. Notifications about the survey were posted in Canvas and in MyUW. An additional follow up email was sent by Cheryl Gittens, Interim Deputy Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, to students in DDEEA programs in an attempt to increase the response rates among students who are Black, Indigenous and people of color.

STUDENT OUTREACH

Students had the option at the end of the survey to request that a campus representative contact them to help connect them with campus resources: 249 (5%) students chose this option. Efforts to contact students began on October 28, and staff reached out to all students who requested contact. The outreach effort included staff from the following units:

- Advising units in all undergraduate schools/colleges
- Cross College Advising Service
- Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement
- Dean of Students Office
- Gender and Sexuality Campus Center

- International Student Services
- McBurney Disability Resource Center
- Multicultural Student Center
- Office of Student Financial Aid
- University Housing
- University Recreation and Wellbeing
- University Veteran Services

COMMUNICATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

This report includes new data on qualitative findings and presents previously reported quantitative findings. Data were reported in phases to make initial findings available as soon as possible. The first release of data in mid-November included basic descriptive statistics for all questions overall and by school/college, including frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation. In early December, data were released for each quantitative question analyzed by the demographics and characteristics below. The third release of data also occurred in December and included population sample characteristics for each school/college and an analysis of each quantitative question for each school/college by the following demographics and characteristics:

- School/College
- Gender, gender identity, sexual orientation
- International student status and race/ethnicity
- Disability status
- Veteran status
- Age
- Pell recipient status
- First-generation college
- Course load (full-time, part-time)
- In-person course components
- Transfer student status
- Residency for domestic students (in state, out of state)
- Housing
- Academic level and year
- DDEEA Program Participation

DATA AND METHODS

POPULATION, RESPONSE RATES, AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

All undergraduate students enrolled in the fall 2020 semester for course credit (n=31,473) were invited to participate in the survey: 5,328 students completed the survey, a 17% response rate. The demographic characteristics of the survey participants were similar to the overall UW-Madison undergraduate student population, although there were somewhat lower response rates from racial and ethnic minorities and targeted minority students and somewhat higher response rates from women. See **Appendix B** for population characteristics, response rates, and additional sample characteristics.

MEASURES

Some student characteristics were obtained directly from official academic records, while others were obtained from self-reported survey questions. For some identity-related student characteristics—such as gender, transgender, LGBTQ+, and race/ethnic category status—the self-reported responses for analysis were used rather than those in the official academic records. These characteristics are marked below with an asterisk (*).

ACADEMIC RECORD

- Age
- Sex*
- Race/Ethnic category*
- First-generation college status
- Pell recipient status
- Residence for tuition
- Living in a University Residence Hall
- School/College
- Academic level by credits
- Academic load
- Admission type
- In-person group instruction

SURVEY SELF-REPORT

- Gender*
- Transgender*
- LGBTQ+*
- Race/Ethnic category*
- Disability
- Veteran status

QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Most survey questions offered multi-point response scales (e.g., Not at all, A little, Somewhat, Very, Extremely). For statistical analyses, scales like these were treated as interval level data to calculate a difference in mean scores (t-test).

Statistical significance is a measure of how confident we are that a real difference exists—distinguishing signal from noise. The ability to identify differences as significant depends on the size of the difference, the amount of variation in the responses, and the sample size. Smaller units will likely have fewer differences that are significant because they have fewer responses.

Statistical significance (i.e., statistical precision, $p < 0.05$) is a common first step in determining what differences between groups are, and are not, meaningful. However, in large samples, even small differences may be statistically significant but

not substantively meaningful. In these situations, it is also common to consider measures of effect size. Effect sizes are a way of calculating the magnitude of a relationship distinct from statistical significance.

For this report, a group difference was considered meaningful only if it satisfied two conditions: (a) the difference in mean scores was statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ and (b) the Cohen's d effect size was at least 0.20. Cohen's d shows the difference in averages between two groups in terms of standard deviations.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

Our qualitative team coded each question into high level themes that were then reviewed and confirmed independently by a second team member. Each overarching theme was validated and then coded into sub-theme/nodes based on key attributes. Key attributes were linked to core findings within a sub-themed node, and quotes were verified and shared to discern if they were representative. Some themes were recoded and verified if the quotes encompassed more than one overarching theme or highlighted something new within a node or sub-theme.

TERMINOLOGY

The key terms and definitions below were provided in the survey and are used in the same manner in this report.

Remote means taking a course online or virtually.

Face-to-face means taking a course while you are in the same physical space as the instructor and students.

Online and remote courses often include **synchronous sessions**, in which the students and instructor meet together live and at the same time for lectures or discussions using Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, or a similar tool, and **asynchronous sessions** where the instructor records a video or audio lecture, and students can watch it at any time.

FINDINGS

Survey results are divided into sections according to the grouping of survey questions.

For quantitative questions, the text describes the overall findings and notes differences between groups that are both statistically significant and large enough to be meaningful. A comprehensive set of tables for each analysis variable by student characteristics is contained in **Appendix C**. Meaningful differences are indicated by grey-shaded boxes in the detailed tables.

For qualitative questions, a summary is provided for each question, and more detailed summaries are provided for each theme. In addition, themes and coding counts within each theme/node are provided. Representative quotations are included for select subthemes. Full qualitative reports are contained in **Appendix D**.

As with all survey research, there are a few things to keep in mind when reading this report. First, the results presented in this report reflect the attitudes and experiences of survey respondents, which may not represent those who did not complete the survey.

Second, the number of respondents for a particular question may be small depending on the size of the group. It is important to interpret small numbers with caution. Breakdowns by student characteristics were not always possible because of small numbers of participants. If a category had fewer than 10 individuals, data for that breakdown were suppressed and the tables display an "S."

Third, differences across groups may be the result of real differences in experiences, different aspects or different perceptions of the same experience, or differing expectations. For example, something that occurs once a week may be perceived as often to one respondent but rarely to another.

Fourth, individuals have many facets to their identity and vary in their configuration of characteristics. This report presents data by major student characteristics that were able to be obtained either through administrative records or survey questions. Other important student characteristics may impact their experience but were not available for this analysis.

This section focuses on the proportion of courses going well, overall satisfaction with the academic experience, and course workload.

COURSES GOING WELL

● 56% of students reported *most* or *all of* their courses were going well. An additional 19% of students reported about *half of* their courses were going well, while 25% of students reported *some* or *none of* their courses were going well.

● Some groups were **less likely** to report *most* or *all of* their courses were going well:

▪ Non-binary students	35%
▪ African American students	43%
▪ Students who did not indicate their race/ethnicity	45%
▪ Students with a disability	40%
▪ Veterans	31%
▪ Students with junior standing	46%

Number of Courses Going Well

None	Some	About half	Most	All
5%	20%	20%	42%	13%

● Some groups were **more likely** to report *most* or *all of* their courses were going well:

▪ First-year freshmen	69%
▪ Students living in University Residence Halls	71%
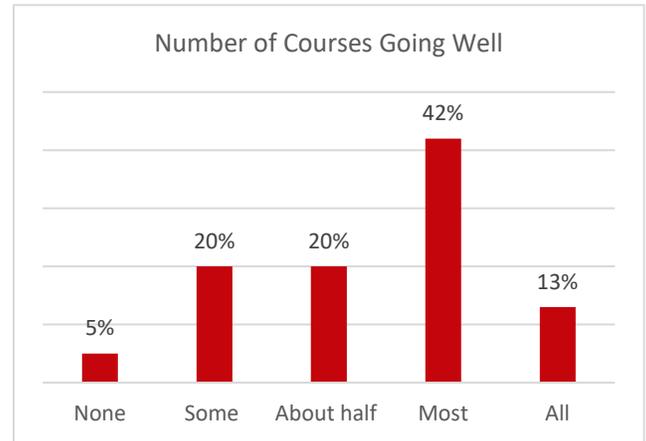
SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

● Approximately 40% of students reported that they were satisfied with their overall academic experience for fall 2020, down from 46% for spring 2020.

● Some groups were **less likely** to report they were satisfied:

▪ Non-binary students	34%
▪ Students who did not report their race/ethnicity	27%
▪ Students with a disability	34%
▪ Veterans	23%
▪ Students with junior standing	31%

● Some groups were **more likely** to report they were satisfied:

▪ Students living outside Madison	47%
▪ Students living in University Residence Halls	55%
▪ International students	46%
▪ First-Year freshmen	55%

COURSE WORKLOAD

Approximately 59% of students reported their fall course workload was **less manageable** than their spring course workload. About 32% of students said their workload was about the same, and 9% said it was **more manageable** than spring. There were few differences across student demographics and characteristics, although part-time students were more likely to report their fall course workload was more manageable than spring compared to full-time students (21% vs 9%).

A theme on workload emerged from the qualitative question on how courses could be improved for the spring 2021 semester. Students attributed additional stress to the significant increase in workload for remote learning compared to

traditional face-to-face classes. An increase in assignments, readings, required discussions, live and recorded lectures, and supplemental material all contributed to an overall increase in time commitment beyond the manageable workload.

- *Force the instructors to adhere to the specified schedule. **We should not be given homework, an exam, and a normal lecture on the same day** because in a normal in person class, we would not be given all of that in one day.*
- *Please stop over-scheduling us! I have signed up for a 50-minute lecture and then the videos are around 70 minutes and they talk so fast I have to pause it constantly so I end up **spending 2.5 hours on something that was not even supposed to last an hour**…*

This section addresses ways students interacted with their courses and compares course characteristics for courses that are going well and not going well.

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

Students engaged in courses in a wide variety of ways in the 7 days prior to completing the survey.

- Remote test or quiz   95%
- Live online discussion   92%
- Pre-recorded video 20 or more min.   88%
- Live online lecture   83%
- Discussion board   77%
- Pre-recorded video less than 20 min.   67%
- Group project or assignment   53%
- Lab course or clinical experience   36%
- In person lecture   16%
- In person discussion   14%
- Studio course   5%

There were very few differences in types of engagement across student demographics with no significant differences for most student groups. However, there were differences for first-year freshmen, international students, students with senior standing, transfer students, part-time students, and international students.

COURSES GOING WELL VS. COURSES NOT GOING WELL

- Not surprisingly, students reported all of the following things were happening more frequently in courses that were going well compared to courses that were not going well:
  - Course well organized
  - Instructor provides clear expectations
  - Instructor communicates regularly
  - Assignments support your learning
  - There are ways for you to interact with your peers
  - You feel supported in the technology used in the course

In a course that is going well / not going well, how often...

(Legend: ■ Course going well   ■ Course not going well)
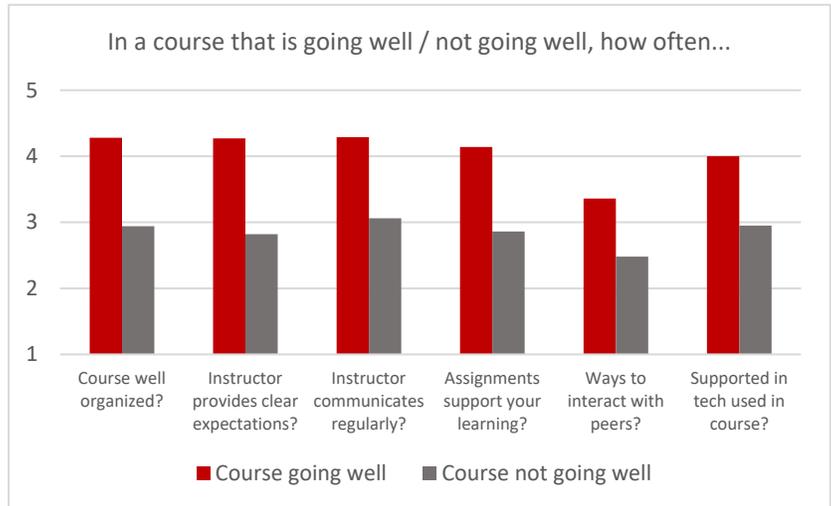
- Courses going well:
  - There were few differences across student groups.
  - Students who did not report a race/ethnicity indicated assignments supported their learning **less often** and they felt supported **less often** in the technology used in the course.
  - First-year freshmen and students living in University Residence Halls reported assignments supported their learning **more often** and they felt supported **more often** in the technology used in the course.

- Courses not going well:
  - There were few differences across student groups.
  - Students with a disability felt supported **less often** in the course technology.
  - Students living in Madison reported courses were well-organized **less often**.

- Students who did not report a race/ethnicity indicated that assignments supported their learning **<u>less often</u>** compared to students who reported their race/ethnicity.
- Domestic Asian students reported course expectations were clear **<u>more often</u>**.
- International students reported course expectations were clear **<u>more often</u>** and there were **<u>more frequent</u>** ways to interact with peers.
- First-year freshmen and students living in University Residence Halls reported **<u>more frequent</u>** occurrences of all the factors above except interactions with peers occurred at a similar rate compared to non-first-year freshmen.

COURSE MODALITY PREFERENCE

This section addresses course modality at the time of the survey and student modality preferences for the spring 2021 semester.

MODALITY AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY

At the time of the survey, nearly all students (98%) said that *all* or *most of* their courses were remote. About 2% of students said their courses were *equally split* between remote and face-to-face, and less than 1% said all or most of their courses were face-to-face.

SPRING 2021: REMOTE VS. FACE-TO-FACE

Overall, students were split on their modality preferences for spring 2021 courses with sections less than 50 students, with 44% of students preferring *most* or *all* of their spring courses be remote and 41% of students preferring *most* or *all* of their courses be face-to-face. An additional 15% of students preferred *an equal number of* remote and face-to-face courses. Put in another way, 74% of students wanted *at least some* face-to-face courses for spring 2021.

Some groups reported stronger preference for remote courses, including LGBTQ, international, domestic minority, domestic targeted minority, students with a disability, students 25 years or older, Pell recipients, first-generation college, part-time, and transfer.

SPRING 2021: SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYCHRONOUS

Similarly, students were split on whether synchronous or asynchronous learning modes worked better for them in remote courses, with 47% of students selecting synchronous learning and 50% selecting asynchronous. An additional 3% of students reported they had not experienced both learning modes and thus could not choose one or the other.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS ON MODALITY PREFERENCES

Qualitative data offered additional insights into student modality preferences. There were 3,688 students who responded to the qualitative question about how courses could be improved for the spring 2021 semester (see **Appendix D**), and 490 student responses addressed course delivery and design; asynchronous delivery and synchronous delivery were sub-themes within the course delivery and design theme. The desire for increased structure, engaging material, and the ability to ask questions in lectures guided students to request synchronous course delivery. Students that requested asynchronous delivery desired more flexible schedules and felt technology glitches often prevented quality synchronous course delivery.

- *Some of my professors have been great about **meeting synchronously or at least checking in individually to see how their students are actually doing, not just in the class, but overall during this time**. This is extremely helpful because it shows that they actually care if you are doing well or not.*
- *Asynchronous lectures (this makes it more **manageable for students of all schedules**)*
- *… Synchronous lectures are often very mentally draining and are often done poorly because of **technical difficulties**.*
- *I believe that all classes that are online should still be synchronous. Asynchronous, pre-recorded lectures are impersonal, **difficult to be engaged in**, and **make it more complicated to ask question***
- *Please require instructors to record lectures if they have students that live **in a different time zone and can't attend synchronous lecture**.*

This section summarizes results from three qualitative questions that asked students to reflect on what supported their fall learning, what experiences they had with remote testing/quizzing, and what students believed would improve their spring 2021 courses. These questions are listed below along with a breakdown of the themes and coding counts within each theme/node. A full qualitative report is contained in **Appendix D**.

- **Question: What are some specific things your instructors have done to <u>support your learning</u> this semester?**
  - Theme 1: Course Organization and Design (1398)
  - Theme 2: Empathy and Understanding (355)
  - Theme 3: Building Community and Engagement (1536)
  - Theme 4: Office Hours and Individual Meetings (621)
  - Theme 5: Flexibility and Support (825)

- **Question: Is there anything about your experience with remote testing or quizzing that you would like to share with us?**
  - Theme 1: Honorlock (1654)
  - Theme 2: Overall Test Design (587)
  - Theme 3: Remote Testing Concerns (711)
  - Theme 4: No or None (502)

- **Question: How can instructors best improve courses for the Spring 2021 semester?**
  - Theme 1: Course Delivery and Design (490)
  - Theme 2: Course Structure and Content (1188)
  - Theme 3: Testing and Grading Concerns (489)
  - Theme 4: Workload (648)
  - Theme 5: Instructor Interaction and Support (415)
  - Theme 6: Peer Interaction (274)
  - Theme 7: Modality (845)
  - Theme 8: General Campus Services and Administration Requests (184)

INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING (4,735 RESPONSES)

Students consistently shared that their remote learning experience was improved when courses were purposely designed to be delivered remotely, instructors made appropriate use of technology resources, and instructors offered ways to engage with course content in a meaningful manner. Students expressed gratitude for instructors who were empathetic, flexible, and understanding of different communication types and supportive of students during remote learning. Students reported that they felt more supported in their learning when instructors were available and offered extended office hours.

THEME 1: COURSE ORGANIZATION AND DESIGN

This theme encapsulates resources, communication, schedule, structure, and overarching organization of courses as well as revamping assessments to meet the new course design features that work best for students' learning needs in a remote semester. Students spoke to wanting more resources, routine structure and clear and concise communication about what to expect during the semester on a regular basis. Students also highlighted the need to support learning through meaningful and engaging course work.

Schedule
- *Create an **accessible calendar with all the due dates of assignments, exams and homework**. This is absolutely crucial I believe for remote learning.*

Structure

- *Leaned into the online aspect and **Created small groups** that you could ask questions increate meaningful assignments to support lecture material.*

THEME 2: EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

Many students spoke to the need for instructors to show empathy around technology glitches, deadlines, and other aspects of the course. Students appreciated seeing the human side of instructors who reached out, checked in on them personally, and offered flexible solutions when needed.

Technology
- *Being understanding that **technical difficulties during lecture is a real problem** and they have to **upload it for us**—a MUST*

Flexibility
- *Been **flexible when I went through a mental health rough patch** and got really behind, they helped me through it and never made me feel like I did not belong.*

THEME 3: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT

This theme highlights students' need to have support from and engagement with their instructors and peers. This support and engagement helped students learn, study, and support one another with assignments, projects, understanding, and discussion around key topics.

Group/Peer Support
- ***Small break out rooms are nice in zoom call discussions because then I get to interact with other students** and feel more comfortable voicing a misunderstanding.*

THEME 4: OFFICE HOURS AND MEETINGS

While office hours are not new to campus, the role of meeting and having one-on-one time with a TA/Instructor took on more importance and meaning during remote learning. Students referred to needing more office hours and attending office hours and study sessions as a component of a successful learning experience in the remote learning environment. Instructors who extended office hours and/or added more virtual office hours and study rooms were seen as more responsive and supportive.

Virtual and Supportive
- *Virtual office hours, **responding to emails in a prompt manner**, reminders during synchronous lectures of upcoming due dates, sending weekly emails on the week's expectations*

Proactive Outreach
- *Some of my professors have been great about **meeting synchronously or at least checking in individually to see how their students are actually doing, not just in the class, but overall during this time**. This is extremely helpful because it shows that they actually care if you are doing well or not.*

THEME 5: FLEXIBILITY/SUPPORT

This theme highlights the needs of students who found the semester overwhelming for a variety of reasons. For example, some students found meeting the usual deadlines and assignment dates was more challenging in the remote environment. Instructors who were able to add flexibility around deadlines, support changes to the syllabus and clearly communicate these changes were viewed as more responsive to student needs.

Expectations/Deadlines
- *When I have connectivity issues, my Professors and TA's have been **flexible with assignment deadlines, allowing for me to submit my best quality work rather than rushing to finish** an assignment and running the risk of receiving a lower grade just to submit it by the deadline.*

Extensions/Changes

- *Instructors are flexible with and sensitive to changing conditions. **They ask how they can do things better as they understand that they're learning as well. They come up with alternative teaching methods as the semester progresses.***

EXPERIENCES WITH REMOTE TESTING OR QUIZZING (3,454 RESPONSES)

THEME 1: HONORLOCK

This theme highlights several issues that are recurring concerns surrounding Honorlock including: privacy, anxiety, stress, additional cost, technology, and broadband. Racial bias was noted in the data set by two students, and both quotes are included here because of the need to center the voices of students of color. While racial bias is an important theme, it is not a prominent theme that emerged from the data.

Privacy
- *I was asked to use a **Chrome browser extension called Honorlock** for a remote test, and I do not feel comfortable using that program. **The program has a history of privacy and data breaches**, and uses a lot of personal information. I do not believe the UW Madison courses should force students to use this program for remote testing.*

Race and Bias (all responses that addressed this topic are included here)
- *Honorlock should not be used again. **It is an incredible invasion of privacy and is also lowkey racist because it fails to recognize my face (I have a dark skin tone) unless I have a blinding light directly pointing at me. I've been kicked out of exams because of this very thing happening.***
- *Honorlock is terrible and sometimes **my face doesn't get recognized due to my darker skin tone***

Anxiety and Stress
- *I've watched my **roommates have massive panic attacks while trying to use Honorlock. Students with hyper vigilant tendencies and performance anxiety are being harmed both mentally and academically** by this technology. I'm grateful that my own professors have chosen not to use it for their own moral reasonings but if classes in the future choose to use it, it will be **a major barrier to my learning.***

Technology and Broadband
- *None of my classes have used Honorlock but I would be nervous if they did because my **wifi is not super stable and I would be afraid to get kicked out of my test***

THEME 2: OVERALL TEST DESIGN

This theme encompasses both barriers and supports students faced in regard to remote testing and quizzing. Students shared examples of optimized customization, frequent low-stakes exams, open-note exam needs, exam windows, and time limits. Students also reported that increased difficulty/workload hindered their ability to be assessed fairly.

Frequent, Low-Stakes Exams
- *I feel like **it is less intimidating** and I usually **have extra time to do my quizzes and most of them are open note**.*

Exam Windows/Time Limits
- *Professors should be more accommodating of the fact that not everyone has a quiet space to take exams. It would be **helpful to be more flexible with the timeframe the exams are offered in***

Increased Difficulty/Workload
- *I found that professor are trying so hard to make unique questions so we can't use internet/cheat, but these questions are often confusing and not directly asking us about what have been taught*

THEME 3: REMOTE TESTING CONCERNS

This theme highlights concerns about remote testing across all exam types. Students faced challenges surrounding a lack of access to quiet space and a general lack of accommodations, including disability accommodations. In addition, students were concerned that their peers were cheating and creating an unfair testing environment.

Access to Quiet Spaces

- *Professors should be more accommodating of the fact that not everyone has a quiet space to take exams. It would be **helpful to be more flexible with the timeframe the exams are offered in***

Lack of Accommodations Support
- *I like that some classes don't use Honorlock because **I already have accommodations for my extreme anxiety and being filmed while taking an assessment that is already super anxiety inducing** makes it very difficult for me to focus on my assessment*

Cheating
- ***It kills me that Chegg sets the curves that every honest student has to compete with this year.***

THEME 4: NO OR NONE

This theme highlighted the 502 respondents that stated that they had nothing to share about their remote learning experiences. This theme was added because no open-ended questions required a response. Our team found this response unique compared to the other open-ended text questions where this did not occur. The survey team did not know what to make of this response, but due to the large sample size this finding was included for consideration.

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE COURSES FOR SPRING 2021 (3,866 RESPONSES)

THEME 1: COURSE DELIVERY AND DESIGN

This theme highlights the methods by which students engaged remotely. Students were split on their preferences for synchronous delivery over asynchronous delivery. The desire for increased structure, engaging material, and the ability to ask questions in lectures guided students to request synchronous course delivery. Students that requested asynchronous delivery desired more flexible schedules and felt technology glitches often prevented quality synchronous course delivery. Appropriate access and use of technology also played a large part in student satisfaction. Students felt instructor knowledge, available resources, and the platforms used for delivery were key supports to their remote learning.

Asynchronous Delivery
- *Asynchronous lectures (this makes it more **manageable for students of all schedules**)*
- *… Synchronous lectures are often very mentally draining and are often done poorly because of **technical difficulties**.*

Synchronous Delivery
- *I believe that all classes that are online should still be synchronous. Asynchronous, pre-recorded lectures are impersonal, **difficult to be engaged in**, and **make it more complicated to ask questions***

Recorded Synchronous Delivery
- *Please require instructors to record lectures if they have students that live **in a different time zone and can't attend synchronous lecture.***

Technology
- *The amount of **different platforms needed for some classes is overwhelming***

THEME 2: COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This theme captures students' need for clear expectations, clear communication, structure, and overarching organization of course material. Students spoke to wanting more resources, routine in their remote courses, and clear and concise communication about what to expect during the semester as well as what is required of them. Engagement is also highlighted in this section as students look to fuel their learning through engaging discussions and interactive lecture content.

Structured/Clear Expectations/Organized
- ***MAKE A STANDARD FORMAT FOR CANVAS** - it is EXHAUSTING trying to figure out where a professor puts their syllabus and then all the assignments being spread out and scattered in random places makes it more difficult than it needs to be to get work done*

Clear Communication

- *It is soooo helpful when instructors send out a **weekly checklist with everything that's due**. Yes its students job to stay on top of things but learning about assignments simply because there is a due date for them on canvas is overwhelming and unclear*

Course Content
- *Allow us to **see feedback from assessments**, not merely a grade. It is hard to improve or adapt my learning styles when I only see a grade.*

Engagement
- ***Weekly interaction is very important to keep up with what we are learning** and **diversify the teaching format** because recorded lectures aren't as effective.*
- *… In summary, **I believe more engagement, more active thinking, more community building is essential for improving the quality of courses for next semester.***

THEME 3: TESTING AND GRADING CONCERNS

This theme centers around the challenges students face with remote testing and grading. Within this theme, students asked for more flexible grading standards that took into account current challenges with the remote environment. Additional sub-nodes included Honorlock and the strong negative emotions students exhibit in relation to remote proctoring, as well as requests to return to the option for Pass/Fail grading. The discussion of Honorlock is further broken down into concerns around privacy, technical difficulties, anxiety, and stress.

General Discontent
- ***24 hour open exam periods**, more supplemental material/resources, breaks*
- *Flipped classrooms with workshop time, **more small exams instead of one high stakes one**. Online learning is difficult and our test **taking environment is unpredictable**. Should have multiple opportunities for grading…*

Honorlock
- *Get rid of Honorlock. Online learning environments are stressful enough already, and **Honorlock's invasion of** privacy is extremely anxiety inducing for most students.*

Pass/Fail
- *Pass fail - **this semester is no different than last semester**. If anything, it's worse.*

THEME 4: WORKLOAD

See Academic Experiences section, starting on page 10.

THEME 5: INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION AND SUPPORT

Many students spoke to the need for instructors to show empathy and understanding around technology glitches, mental health challenges, and flexibility in remote learning. Although instructor/TA support has always been a necessity, students found themselves needing increased support regarding extensions, empathy, check-ins, and flexible solutions throughout their remote learning experiences.

General Instructor Interaction
- *Make sure all professors and TAs know that **they need to be available to help students** over zoom or email because some aren't as dedicated as others*

Understanding and Empathy
- ***More understanding and empathy towards student that deal with mental health.** mental health awareness in classes, especially when understanding that having everything remotely is difficult for a lot of students…*

THEME 6: PEER INTERACTION

This theme highlights students' need to feel like they have the support from and engagement with their instructors and peers. This support and engagement helped students learn, study, and support one another with assignments. Students spoke to needing more peer interaction outside of class as well.

General Peer Connections

● *There has to be **more peer interaction**. It's so hard to not only stay motivated, but to understand the material when there isn't anyone to bounce ideas off or work with. Some of the most effective ways of learning come from interacting with peers, and with this online structure, there is almost no way of doing that.*

THEME 7: COURSE MODALITY

See the Course Modality Preferences section, starting on page 14.

THEME 8: CAMPUS SERVICES AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION REQUESTS

This theme centers around campus services and administrative requests. Students asked for additional COVID testing, increased access to libraries and campus facilities, more study spaces, and increased technology services. Students also requested lower tuition, increased communication from university leadership, and consistent modality decisions.

General Campus Services and Administration Requests

● ***Have clear expectations for courses and do not shift partway through.*** *Do not force students to come back to campus, just for them to be sent home a few weeks later. This was not helpful for students or professors and was frankly not conducive to a good learning environment.*

LIVING CONDITIONS AND CURRENT NEEDS

This section includes findings about resources students needed for coursework as well current student needs.

RESOURCES FOR COURSEWORK

- This semester, how often have you had reliable _____?
  - Internet access for your coursework
  - Computing equipment for your coursework
  - Access to study or workspace

- Response categories were: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) most of the time, and (5) always. **Results below show the percentage of respondents that indicated (4) most of the time or (5) always.**

Internet Access	Computing Equipment	Study or Workspace
89%	93%	67%

Most respondents reported having reliable internet access and computing equipment at least most of the time. About 2 out of 3 students reported having reliable access to study or workspace most of the time or always.

There were few differences in access to these resources by student characteristics. The few differences that existed were:

- **Internet Access**
  - International (81%) vs Domestic (90%)
  - Domestic Targeted Minority (84%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (91%)

- **Computing Equipment**
  - Students with a Disability (89%) vs Students without a Disability (93%)
  - Lives Elsewhere (92%) vs University Residence Hall (96%)
  - Continuing (92%) vs First-Year Freshman (96%)

- **Study or Workspace**
  - Students with a Disability (55%) vs Students without a Disability (68%)
  - Lives in Madison (65%) vs Outside Madison (76%)
  - Lives Elsewhere (64%) vs University Residence Hall (77%)
  - Continuing (63%) vs First-Year Freshman (77%)

FOCUS ON FOOD

- This semester, how often have you been UNABLE to obtain sufficient food?
  - Never   58%
  - Rarely   25%
  - Sometimes   11%
  - Very often   4%
  - Extremely often   3%

Unable to obtain sufficient food

- About 17% of students reported that they were unable to obtain sufficient food at least sometimes in the fall 2020 semester.
  - Domestic Targeted Minority (24%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (17%)
  - Lives in Madison (18%) vs Outside Madison (10%)
  - University Residence Hall (20%) vs Lives Elsewhere (16%)
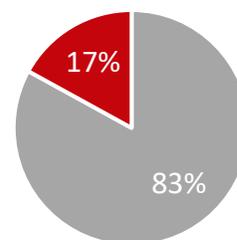
Never/Rarely
Sometimes/Very often/Extremely often

CURRENT NEEDS

- Do you currently require assistance with any of the following? (Yes/No)

- Nearly half (47%) of students reported needing **academic or career advising**. About 1 in 4 (24%) students reported needing **mental health services** and 1 in 5 (21%) reported needing **financial assistance**. 17% of students reported needing **tutoring assistance** and 15% reported needing assistance with **physical well-being**. Less than 10% of students reported requiring assistance with the other needs.

- In some cases, minority and marginalized students were more likely to report needs.

NEEDS	%YES
Academic/Career Advising	47%
Mental Health Services	24%
Financial Assistance	21%
Tutoring Assistance	17%
Physical Well-Being	15%
Housing Assistance	6%
Healthcare Assistance	5%
Travel Assistance	4%
Food Assistance	4%
Childcare Assistance	<1%

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS BREAKDOWN BY NEED (TOP 5)

Academic/Career Advising

- International (58%) vs Domestic (45%)
- Transfer (57%) vs Non-Transfer (46%)

Mental Health Services

- Non-Binary (66%) vs Women (45%) vs Men (15%)
- Transgender (63%) vs Cisgender (23%)
- LGBTQ (48%) vs Non-LGBTQ (20%)
- Students with a Disability (48%) vs Students without a Disability (21%)
- 25+ Years (34%) vs 18-24 Years (23%) vs Under 18 (12%)
- Pell Recipient (33%) vs Non-Recipient (22%)
- Part-Time (33%) vs Full-Time (23%)
- Lives Elsewhere (26%) vs Lives in University Residence Hall (16%)
- Continuing Student (26%) vs First-Year Freshman (17%)

Financial Assistance

- Non-Binary (40%) vs Women (24%) vs Men (16%)
- LGBTQ (29%) vs Non-LGBTQ (20%)
- Domestic (22%) vs International (13%)
- Domestic Student of Color (31%) vs Domestic White Student (20%)
- Domestic Targeted Minority (40%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (20%)
- Students with a Disability (30%) vs Students without a Disability (21%)
- 25+ Years (36%) vs 18-24 Years (21%) or Under 18 (23%)
- Pell Recipient (47%) vs Non-Recipient (17%)
- First-Generation College (33%) vs Non-First-Generation College (19%)
- Transfer (30%) vs Non-Transfer (21%)

Tutoring Assistance

- Non-Binary (32%) vs Women (18%) or Men (16%)
- Domestic Student of Color (26%) vs Domestic White Student (15%)
- Domestic Targeted Minority (30%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (15%)
- Students with a Disability (25%) vs Students without a Disability (17%)
- Transfer (27%) vs Non-Transfer (17%)

Physical Well-Being

- LGBTQ (24%) vs Non-LGBTQ (13%)
- Domestic Targeted Minority (22%) vs Domestic White, Non-Targeted Minority (14%)
- Students with a Disability (28%) vs Students without a Disability (13%)
- Pell Recipient (21%) vs Non-Recipient (13%)
- Lives Elsewhere (17%) vs Lives in University Residence Hall (8%)
- Continuing Student (17%) vs First-Year Freshman (9%)

This section addresses findings of survey questions that explored student perceived effectiveness of university communications and their preferred communication modes.

COMMUNICATION CONTENT

- Approximately 42% of students reported that communications from UW-Madison were *very* or *extremely* timely and clear, and 30% felt the same way about the helpfulness of the communications. Close to 40% of students found that communications were *somewhat* timely, clear, and helpful. 20% reported that communications were *not at all* or *a little* timely or clear, and 32% felt so about their helpfulness.

- While 68% of students expressed that they received *about the right amount* of university communications, 24% felt they were *not frequent enough*, and 7% rated *too frequent*.

- There were few differences across student demographics and characteristics:
  - Some groups rated university communications **more negatively**:
    - Non-binary students
    - Students from the LGBTQ+ community
    - Students who did not report their race/ethnicity
    - Students with a disability
    - Students living in Madison

  - Some groups rated university communications **more positively**:
    - International students
    - Students living in University Residence Halls
    - First-year freshmen

University Communications

Freqency of Communications
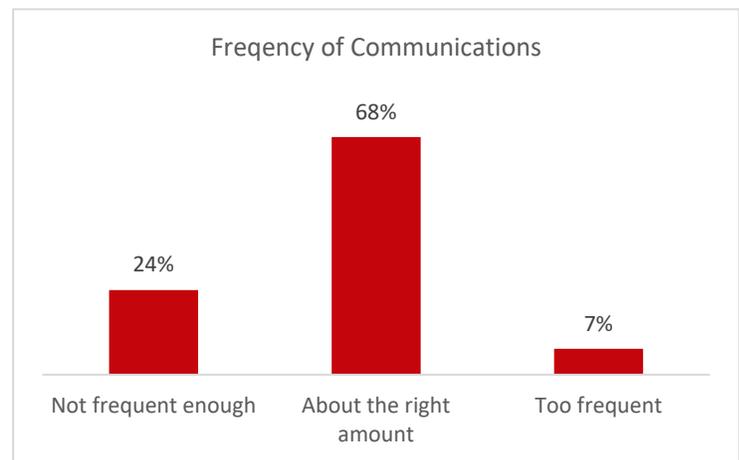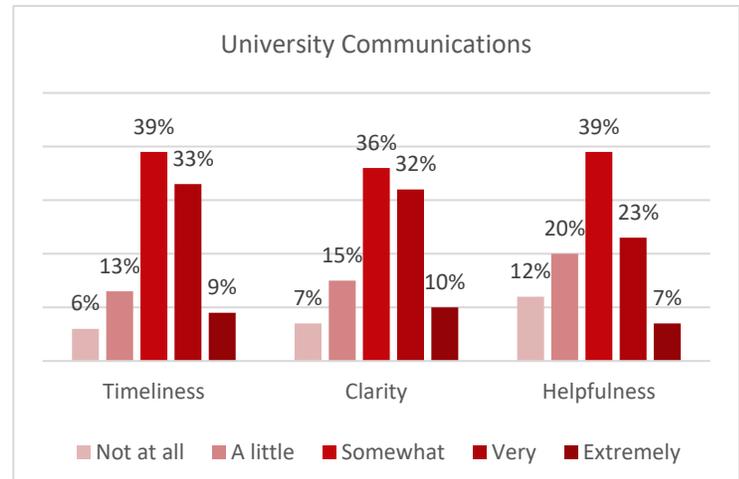
COMMUNICATION MODES

- Students' most preferred ways to receive university communications were emails (95%), UW-Madison websites (51%), and social media (50%), followed by text messages (39%), newsletters (28%), and others (3% [e.g., Canvas, instructor announcements, and University Residence Hall bulletin boards]).

- There were some differences in preferred communication modes across student demographics and characteristics:
  - Female students were **more likely** to prefer receiving communications through **social media**.

  - Some groups were **less likely** to prefer receiving communications through **social media**:
    - Male students
    - Non-binary students
    - Students from the LGBTQ+ community
    - Students who did not report their race/ethnicity
    - Students who are 25 years old or older
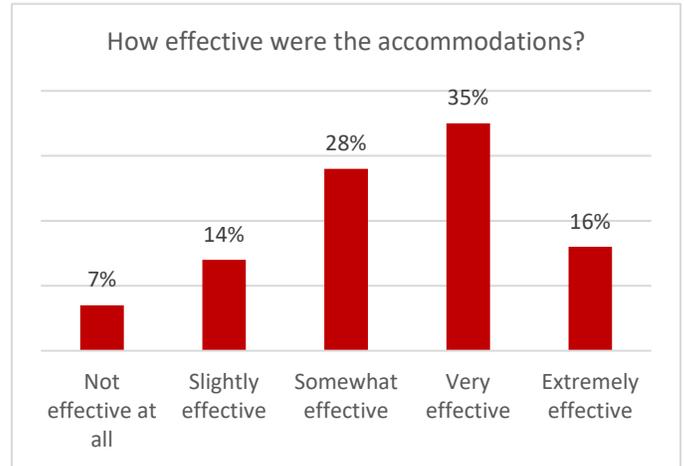   - Veteran students

24

- Part-time students

- Some groups were **<u>more likely</u>** to prefer receiving communications through **<u>UW-Madison websites</u>**:
  - International students
  - Transfer students
  - Students living outside of Madison

- Some groups were **<u>more likely</u>** to prefer receiving communications through **<u>newsletters</u>**:
  - International students
  - Transfer students
  - Students living outside of Madison
  - First-year freshmen

- Some groups were **<u>more likely</u>** to prefer receiving communications through **<u>text messages</u>**:
  - First-year freshmen
  - Students living in University Residence Halls

- Some groups were **<u>less likely</u>** to prefer receiving communications through **<u>emails</u>**:
  - Targeted minority students
  - Students who did not report their race/ethnicity

This section focuses on student experiences with disability accommodations.

USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

- Approximately 7% of students (358 students) reported that they requested an instructional accommodation for their disability in the fall 2020 semester.

- Among the students who requested an instructional accommodation, 51% reported that the accommodations made for them were *very* or *extremely* effective. About 28% felt the accommodations were *somewhat* effective, while 21% felt they were *slightly* or *not effective at all*.

- There was no significant difference across demographics in student experience with disability accommodations, with one exception: students living in the Madison area reported their accommodations to be less effective than students living outside of Madison.

How effective were the accommodations?

Response	Percentage
Not effective at all	7%
Slightly effective	14%
Somewhat effective	28%
Very effective	35%
Extremely effective	16%

HOW COULD THESE ACCOMMODATIONS HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE?

A total of 108 students provided feedback about ways in which they thought instructional accommodations could be made more effective (see **Appendix D: Disability Accommodations** for a full report with student quotes included for each theme). Three themes that emerged from the responses included accommodation requests and needs, instructor support, and use of Honorlock.

THEME 1: ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS AND NEEDS

Thirty-four students reported difficulty getting appropriate accommodations. Students also suggested reassessing accommodation needs given the current situation.

- *My issue is that I haven't always received my exam accommodations, even though I've asked my instructors and sent out my McBurney visa. It causes me more stress and anxiety.*
- *I … feel that there are new accommodations that should be made in light of the new mode of instruction.*

THEME 2: INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT

Forty students suggested improving instructor support to better facilitate accommodations. This included promoting better understanding of student needs and accommodations, offering flexible solutions when needed, and communicating clear and reasonable expectations.

Better understanding of student needs and accommodations
- *… I think it would have been helpful to have the professors understand the added stress my disability adds to my life in terms of the pandemic and how everything is constantly changing. I did not feel as if most of them understood the difficulties I was facing, especially the class where we had an online proctoring service for exams.*

Flexibility
- *… [Accommodations] could be more effective for me, personally, by having more follow ups and conversations [with my instructors] about what is working and what is not working.*
- *Provide more alternate options for completing the assignment.*

Clear and reasonable expectations

- *Work with students to come up with clear guidelines of what is expected, many of my professors just ask me what I need in general which many times is uncertain. I would have appreciated a conversation that was structured around suggested guidelines rather than the vague and unclear statements I received.*

THEME 3: USE OF HONORLOCK

Twenty-five students expressed concerns about the use of Honorlock.
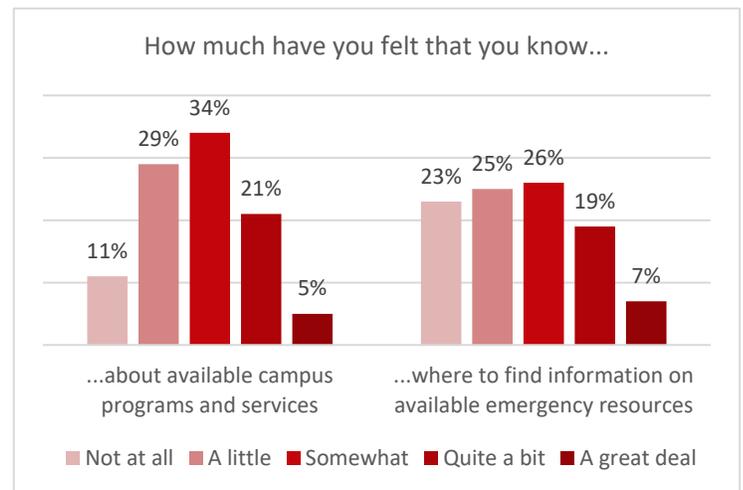
- *Most of my accommodations are exam specific, and it is made extremely difficult to use them during exams. All of them require me to use a phone, leave the room, or another activity that is flagged as cheating. I have to announce what I am doing before doing it, which takes time away from my exam and causes me anxiety while testing. Honorlock simply does not work with accommodations.*

This section highlights findings related to students' sense of belonging, measured by perceptions of campus support resources and social support. Additionally, students provided feedback about co-curricular opportunities that might help them connect with the campus community.

AWARENESS OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Approximately 26% of students reported that they knew about campus programs and services or where to find information on emergency resources *quite a bit* or *a great deal*. About a third indicated that they *somewhat* knew about campus programs and service, while a quarter felt so about emergency resources. It is worth noting that 40% of students said they knew *a little* or *not at all* about campus programs and service, and close to half felt so about emergency resources.

- There were no differences in awareness of campus resources across student demographics and characteristics with one exception: International students reported higher awareness of campus resources than domestic students.

How much have you felt that you know...

...about available campus programs and services: 11% Not at all, 29% A little, 34% Somewhat, 21% Quite a bit, 5% A great deal

...where to find information on available emergency resources: 23% Not at all, 25% A little, 26% Somewhat, 19% Quite a bit, 7% A great deal

Legend: Not at all, A little, Somewhat, Quite a bit, A great deal

PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPUS SUPPORT NETWORKS

- 35% of students felt *quite a bit* or *a great deal* that there were campus resources they could go to for help. 32% selected *somewhat*, and 36% *a little* or *not at all*.

- About 30% of students felt *quite a bit* or *a great deal* comfortable seeking help from campus staff or discussing personal issues with them. Around a quarter selected *somewhat*, and 45% *a little* or *not at all*.

- There were few differences in perceptions of campus support networks across student demographics and characteristics:
  - International students had overall **more positive** perceptions about campus support networks compared to domestic students.

How much have you felt that...

...there are campus resources you can go to for help: 9% Not at all, 25% A little, 32% Somewhat, 26% Quite a bit, 9% A great deal

...you are comfortable seeking help from campus staff: 19% Not at all, 26% A little, 27% Somewhat, 20% Quite a bit, 9% A great deal

...there are staff with whom you can discuss personal issues: 22% Not at all, 24% A little, 24% Somewhat, 22% Quite a bit, 9% A great deal

Legend: Not at all, A little, Somewhat, Quite a bit, A great deal

  - First-year freshmen and students living in University Residence Halls felt **more strongly** that there were campus resources to go to for help.

  - Students who did not report a race/ethnicity felt **less strongly** that there were campus resources to go to for help or there were staff with whom to discuss personal issues.

  - Some groups felt **less comfortable** seeking help from campus staff: non-binary students, LGBTQ+ students, students with a disability, and students living in Madison.
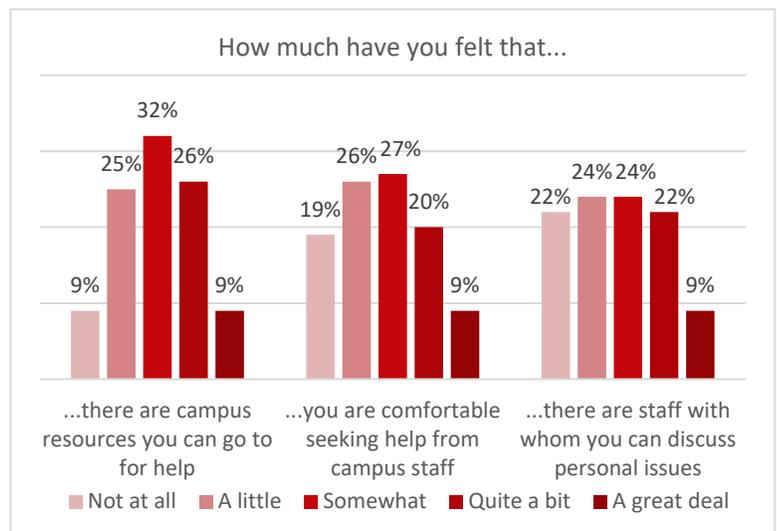
SOCIAL CONNECTION AND SUPPORT

- A little over 10% of students felt that they were *very* or *extremely* connected to their peers or members of their community on campus. 23% felt *somewhat* connected, and about 65% felt *a little* or *not at all* connected.

- A quarter of students felt *very* or *extremely* supported by their peers. 28% felt *somewhat* supported, and almost half felt *a little* or *not at all* supported.

- About one third of students felt *very* or *extremely* supported by their instructors, another third felt *somewhat* supported, and the remaining third felt *a little* or *not at all* supported.

How connected have you felt to…
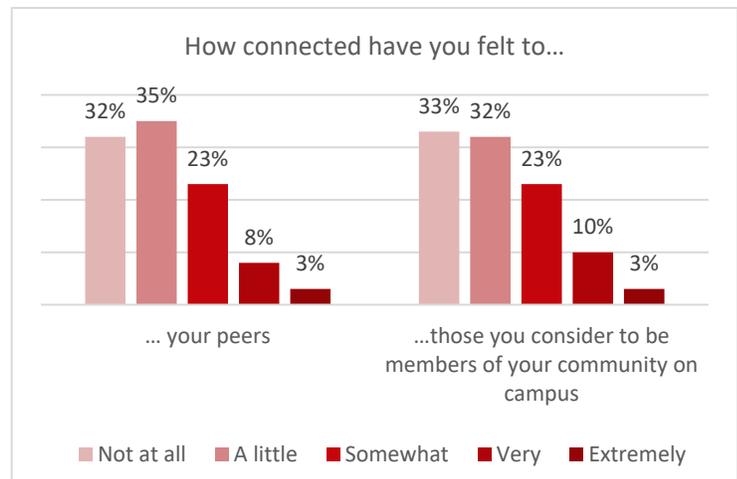
- 15% of students felt *very* or *extremely* supported by the UW-Madison administration, while close to 60% felt *a little* or *not at all* supported, and the remaining 28% felt *somewhat* supported.

- There were few differences in social connection and support across student demographics and characteristics:
  - International students, students living in University Residence Halls, and first-year freshmen reported higher measures on most of the social connection and support items[1].

  - Some groups felt **less connected** to their **peers**:
    - Students with a disability
    - Part-time students

  - Some groups felt **less connected** to **members of their communities** on campus:
    - Students who did not report their race/ethnicity
    - Students with a disability
    - Students who are 25 years old or older
    - Part-time students
    - Transfer students

How supported have you felt by…

  - Some groups felt **less supported** by their **peers**:
    - Students who did not report their race/ethnicity
    - Students with a disability
    - Transfer students

  - Students living in Madison felt **less supported** by their **instructors**.

  - Some groups felt **less supported** by **the UW-Madison administration**:
    - Non-binary students
    - Students from the LGBTQ+ community
    - Students with a disability
    - Student living in Madison

  - Transfer students felt **more supported** by the **UW-Madison administration.**

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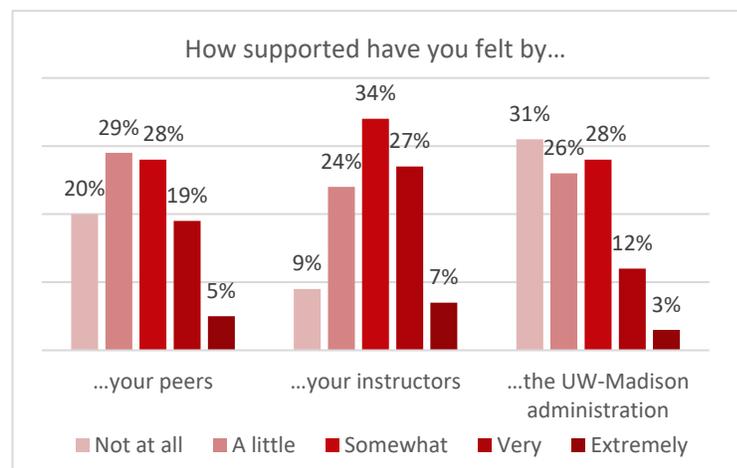
[1] There was no statistically significant difference for the instructor support item based on University Residence Halls residency status and the peer support item based on first-year freshmen status.

CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

An open-ended question was included in the survey asking ways in which students might like to connect with the campus community. A total of 1052 students provided feedback (see **Appendix D: Co-Curricular Engagement** for a full report with student quotes included for each theme).

Students identified peer connection and community building opportunities, student organizations, clubs, mental health, and wellness activities, as well as internship and volunteer opportunities as preferred ways to stay engaged. Preferences on how to access these co-curricular activities varied, with some indicating a stronger preference for face-to-face interactions, while others felt more comfortable engaging remotely. Additionally, participants' feedback helped reveal opportunities for tailoring communication in ways that promote students' familiarity with campus resources. Lastly, increased access to campus spaces was also suggested.

HOW TO ACCESS CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

THEME 1: FACE-TO-FACE VS. REMOTE ACTIVITIES

Regardless of the types of co-curricular engagement activities that were suggested, student preferences for how to access these activities varied. About 340 participants commented that they preferred face-to-face activities. These students perceived virtual platforms as inadequate venues for building relationships and forming community. About 120 other students expressed that they felt more comfortable engaging remotely, due to safety concerns stemming from COVID-19.

Face-to-face activities with safety measures in place
- *I need in person activities. Meeting people for the first time in a new place over zoom isn't cutting it. I will wear my mask, practice social distancing, and respect campus policies.*

Virtual format not ideal for co-curricular activities
- *Online Zoom sessions are so impersonal and are NOT an effective way to foster a supportive community and strong connections.*
- *This is tricky. I am an active student here on campus in terms of student orgs and on campus employment. The trouble I have with this is that it's all online. I've stopped attending student orgs that I would normally go to because it feels physically painful to sit and look at my screen like I'm in class for another hour a week. So as much as peer support groups sound great, the nature of having all activities being virtual doesn't make it sound helpful.*

Remote activities
- *Until effective procedures are put into place AND enforced by UW staff, I will not risk my health to connect with the campus community. Using a virtual platform only reinforces the new normal.*

COVID related safety concerns
- *I really think that there is no true way to connect with the campus community during COVID, and that is a situation that I am somewhat okay with. I would rather be isolated for a little bit longer and then be able to access a community than not isolate and risk getting COVID.*

THEME 2: RAISE AWARENESS OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Students were generally satisfied with the variety of resources available on campus, but they wanted more information on how to access resources and ways to stay connected.

Improve communication
- *Just making it much clearer about what buildings and resources are open and available. I don't feel we're missing anything. I just think that many people including myself don't know what's available in terms of study spaces, cafes, unions, health services, etc.*
- *Provide email sign-ups from different resources so students can sign-up for the needs that they want. This would be very helpful.*

Consider additional student outreach efforts

- *We know there are resources but the directive is always to reach out. It feels like we're here for you... if you ask, but otherwise figure it out. People going through crises or mental health issues are not in the mental place to take this initiative.*

THEME 3: CAMPUS SPACES

Students expressed a desire for more campus facilities and safe spaces that could be used for studying, hosting events and activities, working out, and socializing.

- *I feel like more study spaces are needed. I feel like I am having a hard time study at home since my roommates are having different schedules as I do. This often stops me from completing my lecture videos and having a quiet place for my discussion.*
- *I feel like a lack of safe spaces for students to meet up is partially why COVID continues to spread on campus, because they are meeting their social needs in unsafe ways.*

TYPES OF CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED

THEME 1: PEER CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Close to 230 participants expressed a need for connection with their peers. Some suggested a role for the university in facilitating opportunities for connection.

Connecting with others on campus is extremely difficult as it is on a large campus but with COVID it is even worse. I only connect with my close friends and no one else and I am not sure how there could be new groups that are still safe with the COVID issue. Somehow there needs to be a group that helps decrease isolation and loneliness because people, especially students who are dealing with the pressure of university courses, need a community and relationships to help them cope with the stresses of their lives.

Affinity groups based on interest and identity
- *There should be more support for disabled students, including discussion and community spaces that aren't just related to navigating health and mental health, but disabled activist and cultural spaces.*
- *Maybe students from the same country outside the United States who are doing remote learning could connect with*

Community for first-year students
- *It's hard because as a freshman, you can't really meet people and have real connection with the online format.*

Community for students live off campus
- *It would be interesting to connect with other students who don't live in the Madison area. Because I don't live in the Madison area and it can be hard to connect and feel like I'm still in college if I'm living at home and have other things going on.*

Connecting with peers to form study and discussion groups
- *Student led study groups in classes would be helpful, since it's easiest to connect with peers in class and that possibility to meet new people and make friends in classes has pretty much been eliminated by online classes.*

THEME 2: STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

186 participants expressed interests in participating in student organizations, with preferences about online and face-to-face participation varying. Students also expressed a desire for more information about these opportunities.

More information about student organizations
- *I would like to join many student organizations. However, they're not well advertised enough.*
- *If there were more opportunities for student organizations to reach out and provide information aside from the one-time club fair, that would be nice.*

THEME 3: CLUBS

84 students expressed a desire to become involved in clubs and asked for more information about these opportunities.

Improve communication

- *I really would like to join a club, but I find it difficult to find information on clubs.*
- *I would love to receive more newsletter(email) about clubs. I also hope the clubs are online.*

THEME 4: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

220 participants provided input that related to mental health and wellbeing. These participants expressed concerns about the impact of the current situation on their mental health and wellbeing. Some students suggested the use of support groups, processing spaces, counseling, workout spaces and sessions, as well as activities that are relaxing and fun.

Support groups and processing spaces

Support groups and process spaces would allow students to build communities, share experiences, and better cope with some of the challenges they faced.

- *I think peer support groups would be a good idea because we would be able to connect with other students who are going through similar struggles as us.*
- *A health and wellness support group could meet somewhere to discuss feelings and connect with each other... It is more important than ever to support students emotionally, mentally, and physically.*

Improve access to mental health resources

Students expressed a need for additional mental health services and resources.

- *Resources for mental health services at UHS need to be more accessible. I've had numerous discussions with undergraduates from all grade levels who expressed concern regarding scheduling appointments and seeking help from professionals at UHS. They do not feel supported. I have reconsidered even seeking mental health services from UHS given these concerns despite feeling the need to meet with a professional.*

University Recreation and Welling (RecWell)

Students suggested providing greater access to RecWell facilities and activities.

- *Opening up the basketball courts for individual use.*
- *I really feel like more … group fitness classes should be allowed. Maybe use smaller groups, like up to 10 people can sign up for the in-person practice/lesson.*

Relaxing and fun activities

Participants commented that providing activities that are relaxing and fun could be beneficial. Some recommendations included intramural sports, game and movie nights, yoga, meditation, and outdoor activities.

- *One thing I've really been struggling with is getting out and being active as all my class are remote and being in a gym doesn't really sit well with me right now. Maybe if there were fun, group, outdoor activities that would be nice!*
- *Make some sort of community engagement event that is like bi-weekly. I get super bored and lonely looking at a computer 12 hours a day. Can we create some sort of giant Madison Trivia night or game night? Also, would like to note BadgerSpill has been an awesome resource this semester.*

THEME 5: INTERNSHIP AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Twenty-one participants expressed interest in additional internship and volunteer opportunities.

- *As a student in the school of Human ecology. I would like more career fairs and internship opportunities for the community nonprofit leadership major. I will be graduating soon and would like greater opportunities for summer internships to strengthen my resume.*
- *I am probably not the only one who is concerned about getting experience or volunteer experience in their field… I am very anxious that I do not have nearly enough volunteer hours as I had hoped.*

This section includes findings related to the transition experience for students new to UW-Madison, as well as students' enrollment plans for spring 2021.

- Less than half of the new students were confident in their success at UW-Madison at the time of the survey. This is a marked decrease from previous findings from the annual fall Wisconsin Welcome Assessment.

- The following groups reported less confidence: students of color, LGBTQ+ students, students with a disability, Pell eligible students, and transfer students.

- Students reporting less confidence had the following themes:

How confident are you about your overall success at UW-Madison

Very or Extremely Confident 45%

Less than Somewhat Confident 55%

THEME 1: ACADEMIC RIGOR

Students expressed concern with the difficulty of their classes in the remote environment. In addition, they felt unprepared for their next course due to lack of understanding the material despite receiving high letter grades.

THEME 2: MEETING OTHERS

Students shared it was difficult to meet new people in a remote environment. Many students were concerned because they were unable to develop study groups and other support networks. In addition, students felt they were unable to connect with campus staff and programs.

Previous Years Responses

Year	Value
2015	4.03
2016	4.03
2017	4.06
2018	4.14
2019	4.13
2020	3.31

THEME 3: LEARNING REMOTELY

New students had significant challenges learning in a remote format, which impacted their confidence as college students.

THEME 4: FEELING DRAINED

Many new students shared the impact that fall semester had on their overall wellbeing. Some students reported not knowing what resources are available to help them be successful both in and out of the classroom.

ENROLLMENT HISTORY AND FUTURE ENROLLMENT

This section contains findings on students' plans regarding spring 2021 enrollment.

- 95% of students planned to enroll at UW-Madison Spring 2021.

- 5% of students did not plan to enroll at UW-Madison in Spring 2021, and they listed the following reasons:
  - Graduating Fall 2020 (64%)
  - Taking time off (21%)
  - Transferring elsewhere (3%)
  - Other (11%)
    - Participating in Co-op, internship, or military service
    - Dislike remote learning
    - Undecided
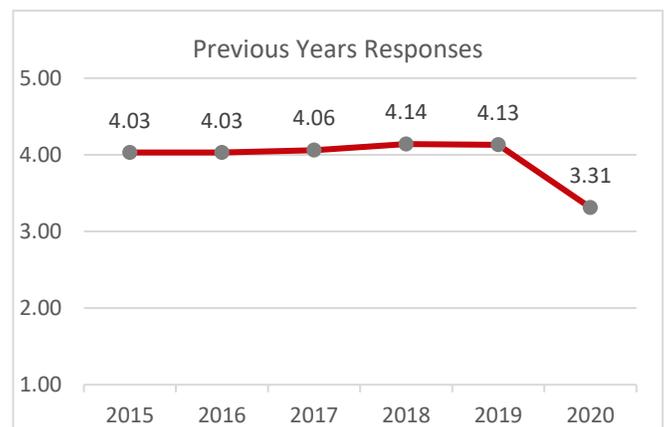
This section includes data about where students lived at the time of the survey and where they intended to live after the Thanksgiving break.

The table below shows where students were currently living and the percent of students planning to live in each type of situation in the future.

- Over 3 out of 4 students (78%) lived in the Madison area at the time of the survey, 8% split their time between the Madison area and somewhere else, 9% lived outside the Madison area, and 6% lived outside the United States.

- Among students that lived in the Madison area at the time of the survey, about half (49%) intended to continue living in the Madison area after Thanksgiving break, 24% intended to split their time between Madison area and somewhere else, and 27% intended to live outside the Madison area.

After Thanksgiving Break / Currently	In Madison	Split	Outside Madison	Outside USA	Total
In Madison	49%	24%	27%	1%	78%
Split	10%	41%	49%	<1%	8%
Outside Madison	2%	2%	96%	<1%	9%
Outside USA	--	--	--	100%	6%
Total	39%	22%	33%	6%	100%

- For students splitting their time, 41% planned to continue splitting their time and about half (49%) intended to live outside of the Madison area after break; 10% planned to live in the Madison area.

- Nearly all students that lived outside of the Madison area at the time of survey (96%) planned to continue living outside of the Madison area.

- There were not many substantial differences in living location by student characteristics. However:
  - Transgender and LGBTQ+ students were more likely to plan to live in the Madison area in the future (60% vs 38% and 49% vs 37%, respectively).
  - International students were much more likely to live outside the USA (57% vs <1%) and continue to do so (61% vs 1%)
  - Students of color were more likely to live outside the Madison area (18% vs 8%)

- About 23% of students lived in a University Residence Hall at the time of survey, almost entirely freshmen and new students.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Separate file.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND RESPONSE RATES

Separate file.

APPENDIX C: DETAILED DATA TABLES BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Separate file.

APPENDIX D: FULL QUALITATIVE REPORTS

Separate file.