

## 2023 Northwestern Survey of New Students

The 2023 Northwestern Survey of New Students was administered to all incoming first-year undergraduate students. The invitation email was sent on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Three reminder emails were sent before the survey closed on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the day before the start of Wildcat Welcome.

The survey received 1,073 responses for an overall response rate of 51%. Female students had a higher response rate (52%) than males. For race/ethnicity the response rate was highest for White, Non-Hispanic students (55%) and lowest for Black/African-American students (44%). First Generation students responded at the same rate as Continuing Generation students (51%).

The table below shows the sex and race/ethnicity composition of survey respondents relative to the entire entering class. Comparing the percentages shows that the survey results are generally representative of the entire class. Females, specifically White, Non-Hispanic Females, are slightly overrepresented in the survey results while Males, specifically International Males, are slightly underrepresented in the survey results.

Federal Race/Ethnicity Category	M		F	
	Entering Class	Survey Respondents	Entering Class	Survey Respondents
American Indian/Native American	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%	11%	12%	11%
Black/African-American	3%	3%	5%	5%
Hispanic	7%	7%	10%	11%
Native Hawaiian/Oth Pac Island	0%	0%	0%	0%
International	5%	4%	5%	5%
Not Applicable	2%	1%	2%	2%
Two or More Races	4%	4%	5%	5%
White, Non-Hispanic	14%	14%	15%	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>56%</b>

This Survey of New Students asks students about their academic interests, expectations for college, high school activities, background, academic preparation, college search process, finances, and post-graduation plans. Below are overall results for selected questions with sub-group results described where notable.

The complete survey results from this year and past years are available to be viewed [here](#).

### Expectations for College

The survey started by asking students to rate the importance of Northwestern providing various experiences to them. Overall, the most important experience was ‘Opportunities to discover and pursue your intellectual passion,’ which was considered ‘Essential’ by 79% of respondents. A majority of respondents also rated three other experiences as ‘Essential’: ‘Opportunities to develop skills valuable in

the workforce' (68%), 'Skills for lifelong learning,' (63%), and 'Deep expertise in a specific discipline or area of study' (59%). For the item 'Contact with individuals whose backgrounds are different from your own' 76% of respondents rated this as 'Essential' (33%) or 'Very important' (43%) with Black/African-American (48%/40%) and Hispanic (40%/42%) students rating it highest.

Students were asked to rate their interest level for various activities. Two activities stood out as having the most interest: 'Joining a student club or organization' (84% 'Very interested') and 'Having an internship' (80%). Two other activities were also rated as 'Very important' by a majority of respondents: 'Studying abroad' (55%) and 'Working with a professor on a research project' (54%). Several other activities with higher levels of interest amongst subgroups were: 'Getting a job to help pay for college expenses' was rated 'Very important' by 53% of Hispanic students and 51% of Black/African-American students at the high end and 37% for White, Non-Hispanic students at the low end and 'Having a leadership role in student government, a club, organization, or team' was rated 'Very important' by 52% of International students.

Overall, 19% of students indicated they are 'Very confident' in their choice of major. The highest percentage by school is 34% for Bienen students with SoC (29%) and Education & Social Policy (25%) also having higher percentages. Overall, 6% of students rated their confidence in their choice of major as 'Not confident at all.' These percentages were similar across schools except for Bienen and SESP, with neither having any students respond as such.

### **Preparedness for College**

Less than 20% of incoming students indicated they felt 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (15%) or 'Get along socially' (19%) at Northwestern. About half of respondents rated themselves as 'Quite well prepared' for each item (50% to 'Succeed academically' and 47% to 'Get along socially'). Male students rated their level of preparedness a little higher than female students with 20% 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (compared to 11% for females) and 23% 'Very well prepared' to 'Get along socially' (compared to 16% of females). For race/ethnicity, White students had the highest percentage 'Very well prepared' for both 'Succeed academically' (20%) and 'Get along socially' (25%). Black/African-American and Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest percentage 'Very well prepared' to 'Succeed academically' (10%) and Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest percentage 'Very well prepared' to 'Get along socially' (12%).

### **Choosing a College**

Overall, 69% of respondents rated Northwestern as their 'First choice' among colleges they applied to. Only 7% rated Northwestern as 'Less than third choice.' White students had the highest percentage (74%) 'First choice' by race/ethnic group with Black/African-American having the lowest percentage (56%) selecting 'First choice.' By school, SESP students had the highest percentage (81%) rating Northwestern 'First choice' (78%) while SoC had the lowest percentage (64%).

### **Paying for College**

Overall, most respondents have minimal concerns about their family's ability to pay for their college education with 39% rating their level of concern as 'A little' and 36% as 'Not at all.' Ten percent of respondents indicated 'A great deal' of concern.' Hispanic and International students reported the highest level of concern ('A great deal' of concern (13%)) by race/ethnicity subgroup.

## **After College**

A majority (57%) of incoming students indicated they 'intend to pursue a graduate or professional degree' in the future. Only 4% said 'No' and the remainder reported 'Not sure yet.' Female students said 'Yes' at a slightly higher rate than male students (58% to 56%). International students had the highest 'Yes' percentages (70%) by race/ethnicity. White students had the lowest 'Yes' percentages (52%). First Generation students reported 'Yes' at the same rate as Continuing Generation students (57%).

## **High School and Stress**

A plurality (50%) of incoming students attended a traditional public high school. The rate of attending a traditional public high school for students was highest for Asian/Pacific Islander (61%) and lowest for Hispanic (48%) students. For International students 41% attended a 'Private – independent non-residential' high school.

Looking at students' feelings during their last year of high school, most students were able to 'Find a balance between schoolwork and other aspects of their lives' with 18% responding 'Very often' and 44% responding 'Often' to that question. Despite these results, half of students 'felt overwhelmed by all they had to do' with 19% responding 'Very often' and another 31% responding 'Often' to that question. The percentages were much higher for females (25% 'Very often' and 36% 'Often'). There were many students reporting they 'feel overwhelming anxiety' with 12% responding 'Very Often' and 16% responding 'Often.' Again, the rates were higher for females (16% 'Very often' and 22% 'Often').

## **Your Background**

Responding to the question, 'While at Northwestern, what are the chances you will do the following?' almost half of students reported 'Very good chance' (16%) or 'Some chance' (30%) of 'Seeking psychological services and accommodations.' The percentages are noticeably higher for females (21% 'Very good chance' and 35% 'Some chance').

## **Local Questions- Decision to Attend Northwestern**

The biggest influences in student decisions to attend Northwestern were: 'Northwestern has a very good academic reputation' (rated as 'Very important' by 87% of respondents), 'Northwestern graduates get good jobs' (76%), 'National and global university rankings (63%), and 'A visit to campus' (55%). Looking at sub-groups, 'Northwestern graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools' was rated as 'Very important' by 58% of Black/African-American students, 52% of Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 51% of International students. 'The cost of attending Northwestern' was 'Very important' for 52% of Black/African-American students. For International students, 'My high school counselor advised me to attend Northwestern' was rated as 'Very important' by 28% of students. For First Generation students, 57% rated 'Northwestern graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools' as 'Very important' and 60% rated 'The cost of attending Northwestern' as 'Very important.'

## **Additional Results**

This report covered selected questions from the survey. The complete instrument included over one hundred question about these topics and more. The full results from all years of the survey can be found [here](#). Please contact [ir@northwestern.edu](mailto:ir@northwestern.edu) if you have any questions about the survey or are interested in additional analysis of the results.