Great Dane Welcome Survey

2016 Six Week Experience Survey Report
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Methodology:

The survey was sent to 4,024 incoming students (Freshman and Transfer)

917 students responded to the survey for a 23% response rate.

84.84% completion rate which is an increase from last year (778 students completed the entire survey, 105 more than the 2015 Great Dane Welcome Survey).

The survey was shortened from 85 questions in 2015 to 48 questions in 2016. Some questions were deleted, while others were replaced with new questions.

Survey Demographics:

In general, the sample obtained was reasonably reflective of the population of first year students on a variety of demographic characteristics including race, ethnicity, and admit type. The one notable exception was sex. Similar to surveys conducted in previous years, males were highly underrepresented in the sample.

There was a representative breakdown of freshman and transfer respondents.

It is important to note that questions were added this year that allowed students to identify their gender and sexual orientation.
DEMOGRAPHICS

Sample

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Population Contacted

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<tr>
<td>50.7</td>
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</table>

DEMOGRAPHICS

Sample

Test

Sample

Test

American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic
Asian, non-Hispanic
Black or African American, non-Hispanic
Hispanic/Latino
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic
Non-Resident Alien
Race and ethnicity unknown
Two or more races, non-Hispanic
White, non-Hispanic
Attitude and Wellness Questions

Attitude Questions:

Both in the 2015 and 2016 instruments, the first six questions asked students to rate their agreement on a set of attitude questions. The six questions were also asked on the Orientation survey that was distributed to all students attended either Freshman or Transfer Orientation.

This year, there was a slight increase in students who either agreed or strongly agreed with the attitude questions compared to last year.

There was a 3% increase in students agreeing that UAlbany was a good fit for them from last year. Additionally, there was a 2% increase in students reporting feeling excited about attending UAlbany, understanding how Career and Professional Development can help them with career questions, and meeting someone who shares their identity.

Wellness Questions:

In this year’s instrument we cut down questions in the wellness section to four. These four questions provided us with the most useful information last year.

This year, respondents reported feeling less homesick, lonely, and nervous or stressed compared to last year’s respondents. Most important to note are the differences in students reporting feeling nervous or stressed and lonely. Compared to last year, 6% less students reported feeling nervous or stressed and 3% less students reported feeling lonely.
Q1: In general, I am excited about attending UAlbany.

Q2: I feel like UAlbany is a good fit for me.

Q3: I understand how Career and Professional Development can help me with my career questions.

Q4: I am confident that I will do well academically at UAlbany.

Q5: I have met someone who shares aspects of my identity that are important to me.

Q6: I feel part of the UAlbany campus community.
Student Wellness Questions

- Homesick: 21% (2015) vs. 19% (2016)
- Lonely: 28% (2015) vs. 23% (2016)
- Nervous or stressed: 49% (2015) vs. 43% (2016)
- Difficulties: 16% (2015) vs. 15% (2016)
We have 85 questions from 2015. Plus an additional 48 questions from 2016. Plus another roughly 32 additional variables from the student data file and additional resources. So a total of 165 variables means that there are:

13,530 Pairwise Combinations
Academic Questions:

The questions in the 2015 instrument were effective, but responses were often skewed with an overwhelming majority of respondents selecting agree or strongly agree. Since the response options were presented in the same order to each respondent it is not clear whether this was the result of response acquiescence, question wording, or if this is a true reflection of attitudes.

As a result, this year we included two additional academic questions. The first academic question added to the survey was, “The classes I am currently taking have been: 1.) more difficult than I expected 2.) less difficult than I expected 3.) about what I expected.” The second question added was “The grades I have received in my courses so far have been: 1.) higher than I expected 2.) lower than I expected 3.) about what I expected. 4.) N/A.”

For both of these questions, response options were presented in a random order. The results presented in the subsequent slides demonstrate that despite the fact that most students are confident that they will do well academically at the University at Albany, a much larger proportion of students are finding that their classes are more difficult than they anticipated and are receiving grades that are lower than they anticipated.

Furthermore, we see that transfer students are more likely that freshmen students to report that their classes are more difficult than expected and that their grades are lower than they expected.
Q4: I am confident that I will do well academically at UAlbany.

Q7: The classes I am currently taking have been:

Q8: The grades I have received in my courses so far have been:
Academic Questions (FRS and TRN)

Q4: I am confident that I will do well academically at UAlbany.

Q7: The classes I am currently taking have been:

Q8: The grades I have received in my courses so far have been:
Students seriously considering leaving the university

NSSE Module Questions:

In addition to the new academic questions that were added to the 2016 survey, questions were added that were aimed at gauging whether a student had ever thought about leaving the University. Questions 41 and 42 were modeled after questions that are included in the First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions module of the National Survey of Student Engagement (hereafter: NSSE).

The first question asked respondents “During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution? 1.) Yes 2.) No.” Question 42 then asked students who had indicated that they had seriously considered leaving the institution to why they had considered leaving. The results for these two questions are presented in the subsequent two slides.

Top Reasons:

Of the students who indicated that they seriously considered leaving, the most frequently selected reason was “Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.).” The second most frequently selected reason was “Financial concerns (costs or financial aid).”

When we examine the wellness questions, we see that there are distinctly different patterns of response for those who indicated that they had seriously considered leaving the University compared to those who have not considered leaving. Those who have seriously considered leaving are much more likely to report that they are homesick, lonely, nervous or stressed, or that difficulties are piling up so high that they cannot overcome them.

When we examine the financial questions asked on the survey, there is also a difference between the two groups, but it is much less pronounced. Students that have seriously considered leaving are more likely to agree with the statement, “I am having financial difficulties that may impact my ability to attend college.” Overall though, the similarity between the two groups may indicate that financial hardship may be more accurately captured using a different measure.
During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?

**Frequencies:**
- Yes: 164 Respondents
- No: 625 Respondents

**Question adopted from the NSSE Module:**
First Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

Hereafter referred to as:
- Indicated: Leaving
- Indicated: Not Leaving
Q41: During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution? (if Yes)

Q 42: Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Campus climate, location, or culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Too much emphasis on partying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Difficulty managing demands of school and work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Relations with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Another Reason (Please Specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Relations with faculty and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Academics are too difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Unsafe or hostile environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Academics are too easy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wellness Questions

Q15: Homesick

- Indicated: Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 28.7%
  - Sometimes: 35.3%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 36.0%

- Not Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 54.2%
  - Sometimes: 31.4%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 14.4%

Q16: Lonely

- Indicated: Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 20.1%
  - Sometimes: 34.1%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 45.7%

- Not Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 49.8%
  - Sometimes: 32.7%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 17.5%

Q17: Nervous or Stressed

- Indicated: Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 11.0%
  - Sometimes: 28.0%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 61.0%

- Not Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 19.4%
  - Sometimes: 42.1%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 38.5%

Q18: Difficulties Piling Up

- Indicated: Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 44.5%
  - Sometimes: 26.2%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 29.3%

- Not Leaving
  - Never/Almost never: 68.0%
  - Sometimes: 20.9%
  - Fairly often/Very often: 11.2%
Financial Questions

Q12: I understand the process for obtaining financial aid

Q13: I know where to get help if I am confused about my student account

Q14: I am having financial difficulties that may impact my ability to attend college
Additional Patterns of Response:

Academic Questions:

While respondents are much less likely to cite academic reasons as the reason they have considered leaving the institution, we still have reason to believe that those who have considered leaving and those who have not considered leaving may be having different academic experiences. Those who have considered leaving tend to have lower high school GPAs and are less confident about their ability to do well academically. They are also more likely to express that their classes have been more difficult than expected and that their grades have been lower than they expected.

Residential Life Questions:

Those who have considered leaving also have different patterns of response when asked about their on campus living experiences. Overall, they are less likely to trust other students in their living area and feel accepted by other students in their living area. They are also less likely to express that they feel a part of the University community and less likely to express that they are satisfied with their living experience.

Student Involvement Questions:

One area where we see little if any differences between the two groups of respondents is for questions regarding student involvement. For both groups, a majority of respondents (roughly 60%) indicate that they would like to be involved in more activities on campus.
High School GPA

Have Seriously Considered Leaving
Have Not Seriously Considered Leaving

High School GPA

Have Seriously Considered Leaving
Have Not Seriously Considered Leaving
**Academic Questions**

Q4: I am confident that I will do well academically at UAlbany.

Q7: The classes I am currently taking have been:

Q8: The grades I have received in my courses so far have been:
Residential Life Questions

Q29: I trust other students in my living area.

Q30: I feel accepted by other students in my living area.

Q31: By living on campus, I feel more a part of the University community.

Q32: I am satisfied with my on-campus living experience.
I involvement Questions

Q23: In your opinion, how involved have you been outside the classroom since the beginning of the semester?

- Not Involved at all
- Not very involved
- Somewhat Involved
- Very Involved

Q25: Are you as involved in campus activities as you would like to be?

- Would like to be involved in more
- Content with my level of involvement
- Would like to be involved in fewer
The Importance of Graduating

NSSE Module Questions:

In addition to Question 41 and 42, Question 43 was also modeled after a question from the *First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions NSSE* module. This question asked students “On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?” with 1 being “not important” and 6 being “very important.”

As one might expect, those who have not considered leaving are more likely to express that graduating from the University is very important and those who have seriously considered leaving are less likely to report that it is very important.

With that said, a sizeable proportion of those who have seriously considered leaving still express that it is very important that they graduate from the University. Of the 164 students that have seriously considered leaving, 75 students selected a 6 on the scale (45.7%).
Question 43: On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution? (Percent)
Question 43: On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?
In order to continue our work in capturing the student experience and perfecting the 6-week survey instrument, we will look to:

• Gather additional data and work with Institutional Research to enhance the analysis.

• Explore ways of targeting respondents that are not captured using our current approach.

• Shorten the survey further to increase response and completion rates.

• Refine the instrument and determine which questions provide us with the clearest insight into the student experience.

• Work with Student Affairs units and other departments on campus to further disaggregate the data.
The following slides include a comparison of the demographic characteristics of respondents for question 41. The comparison includes information on race and ethnicity, sex, admit type, and intended major.

Previous slides often collapsed response categories to the various questions. As a result this appendix also includes the full breakdown of responses to the Wellness Questions, Financial Questions, and Residential Life Questions.

For additional analysis and information about the survey, please contact either Doug Sweet (dsweet@Albany.edu) or Eric Walsh (ewalsh@Albany.edu) in the Office of Student Learning and Assessment in the Division of Student Affairs.
Question 41: Demographic Breakdown

- **Asian, non-Hispanic**: 41.5%
- **Black or African American, non-Hispanic**: 4.3%
- **Hispanic/Latino**: 3.0%
- **Non-Resident Alien**: 3.7%
- **Race and ethnicity unknown**: 18.9%
- **Two or more races, non-Hispanic**: 14.6%
- **White, non-Hispanic**: 14.0%

- **F**: 68.9%
- **M**: 31.1%

- **FRS**: 72.6%
- **TRN**: 27.4%
Question 41: Detailed Demographic Breakdown

- **American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic**
- **Asian, non-Hispanic**
- **Black or African American, non-Hispanic**
- **Hispanic/Latino**
- **Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic**
- **Non-Resident Alien**
- **Race and ethnicity unknown**
- **Two or more races, non-Hispanic**
- **White, non-Hispanic**

**Facing Page:**

- **Gender Distribution:**
  - **Male:** 68.9%
  - **Female:** 31.1%

- **Race/Ethnicity Distribution:**
  - **White, non-Hispanic:** 72.6%
  - **Not White, non-Hispanic:** 67.3%

**Tracing:**

- **Not Leaving:**
  - **Male:** 65.9%
  - **Female:** 34.1%

- **Leaving:**
  - **Male:** 72.6%
  - **Female:** 27.4%
Question 41: Breakdown of Majors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Percent Leaving</th>
<th>Percent Not Leaving</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>PSY-INT</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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Other: 29.9% leaving, 25.2% not leaving.
Number of Reasons Indicated
(Question 42)
Wellness Questions (disaggregated)

Q15: Homesick

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<tr>
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<th>Indicated: Not Leaving</th>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly often</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>9</td>
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Q16: Lonely

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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Very often</td>
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Q17: Nervous or Stressed

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<td>Very often</td>
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Q18: Difficulties Piling Up

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<th>Indicated: Not Leaving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly often</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12: I understand the process for obtaining financial aid

Q13: I know where to get help if I am confused about my student account

Q14: I am having financial difficulties that may impact my ability to attend college
Residential Life Questions (disaggregated)

Q29: I trust other students in my living area.

Q30: I feel accepted by other students in my living area.

Q31: By living on campus, I feel more a part of the University community.

Q32: I am satisfied with my on-campus living experience.
Question 43: On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?

- All Respondents: Frequency
  - 1 - Not Important: 568
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6 - Very Important

- All Respondents: Percentage
  - 1 - Not Important: 72.6
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6 - Very Important