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Methodology:

The Great Dane Welcome survey was administered from October 15th – October 29th through web survey and in person. The survey was sent via email to 3,864 freshman and new transfer students. In addition, the survey was administered in person to 310 students by visiting courses with majority freshman enrollment. Forty-two invitations were sent to Writing and Critical Inquiry, Advanced Literature and Freshman Seminar faculty members inviting them to participate in the administering of the survey. Of those invited, twenty-one faculty allowed members of the Division of Student Affairs to visit the classroom to administer the survey using iPad and iPod devices.

Once again, the survey was shortened in an attempt to improve the survey response rate and to allow for a deeper analysis of the data. This year the instrument was shortened from 48 questions to 26 questions. Only one new question was added.

By cutting the survey questions and administering the survey in person, we were successful in increasing the response rate. This year our response rate his 30%, a 7 point increase from last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Contacted</td>
<td>3911</td>
<td>4024</td>
<td>4193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responded</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>1262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>21.86%</td>
<td>22.79%</td>
<td>30.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion %</td>
<td>78.71%</td>
<td>84.84%</td>
<td>96.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions on Survey</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. However, we did see a 3.6% increase in male respondents this year. There was also a representative breakdown of freshman and transfer respondents. This year, we saw a 3% increase in transfer respondents from last year.
Sense of Belonging and Student Wellness Questions

Sense of Belonging Questions:
As in previous instruments, the first questions were dedicated to the general attitude of students at the University at Albany. Instead of asking six questions, this year we only asked two – did students feel part of the campus community and whether students had met someone who shared an aspect of their identity that is important to them.

There was a 6.9 point increase in students who either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt part of the campus community compared to last year and almost an 8 point increase since we began collecting data. Similarly, there was a 5 point increase in students reporting that they had met someone who shared their identity from last year and a 7 point increase since 2015.

Student Wellness Questions:
In this year’s instrument we asked the same four questions as last year, which have provided us with the most useful information in the past.

This year, we saw a general increase in students responding that they felt homesick, lonely, nervous or stressed and that difficulties were piling up compared to last year’s respondents. However, this slight increase on all but the nervous or stressed question is reflective of the numbers students reported on the 2015 instruments.

Most important to note are the differences in students reporting feeling nervous or stressed. Compared to last year, 52.% of students reporting feeling nervous or stressed, a three year high and 7.1% more than last year. The data reported on this question is statistically significant.
Sense of Belonging Questions

SENSE OF BELONGING

- I feel part of the campus community
  - 2015: 62%
  - 2016: 63%
  - 2017: 68.70%

- I have met someone who shared aspects of my identity
  - 2015: 65%
  - 2016: 65%
  - 2017: 67%

71.95%
Student Wellness Questions

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homesick</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous or Stressed</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties Piling Up</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have 85 questions from 2015, 48 questions from 2016, and 26 question from 2017. Plus another roughly 32 additional variables from the student data file and additional resources. So a total of 191 variables means that there are:

18,145

Pairwise Combinations
Academic Questions:

As we had in 2016, we shortened the academic questions from four questions, to two questions. The first academic question 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 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 although most students report they are managing academics well, there is still a proportion of students finding that their classes are more difficult than they anticipated and are receiving grades that are lower than they anticipated. In fact, students this year are finding classes to be less difficult but their grades are lower than expected as compared to last year’s students.

Furthermore, we see that transfer students are more likely than freshmen students to report that their classes are more difficult than expected. However, transfer students were less likely to report that their grades were lower than they expected than freshmen.
Academic Questions

Q3: The classes I am currently taking have been:

- More difficult than I expected
- About what I expected
- Less difficult than I expected

Fall 2017:
- 26.7% (More difficult than I expected)
- 61.9% (About what I expected)
- 11.4% (Less difficult than I expected)

Fall 2016:
- 28.1% (More difficult than I expected)
- 61.6% (About what I expected)
- 10.2% (Less difficult than I expected)

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

- Higher than I expected
- About what I expected
- Lower than I expected
- Not applicable

Fall 2017:
- 10% (Higher than I expected)
- 51.9% (About what I expected)
- 35.6% (Lower than I expected)
- 2.6% (Not applicable)

Fall 2016:
- 8.6% (Higher than I expected)
- 54.3% (About what I expected)
- 31.7% (Lower than I expected)
- 5.5% (Not applicable)
Academic Questions (Freshman and Transfer)

Q3: The classes I am currently taking have been:

- More difficult than I expected
- Less difficult than I expected
- About what I expected

Q4: The grades I have received in my courses so far have been:

- Higher than I expected
- Lower than I expected
- About what I expected
- Not Applicable
Students seriously considering leaving the university

In the 2016 survey, we added two questions that 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.” Students who had indicated that they had seriously considered leaving the institution were asked to indicate why they had considered leaving. The results for these two questions are presented in the subsequent two slides.

As we will note later in the report, these two questions, in addition to asking students whether it was important to graduate from the University at Albany have proven to be important questions in predicting first-to-second year retention.

This year, 24.6% of the survey respondents indicated they had seriously considered leaving the institution, resulting in a 4.6% increase from last year. However, it is important to note that this year’s overall respondents answering this question increased from 789 to 1,245. Additionally, our findings are below the national average of institutions who participate in the NSSE survey and First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions module.
During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?

Frequencies:
Yes: 302 Respondents
No: 927 Respondents

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

Hereafter referred to as:
Indicated: Leaving
and
Indicated: Not Leaving
For the second straight year, students who indicated that they seriously considered leaving selected “Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)” and “Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)” as the top two reasons for considering to leave the institution. However, there was a decrease in the percentage of students selecting those options, as it is indicated in the subsequent slide.

Furthermore, 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? (if Yes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Leaving</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Personal Reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.)</td>
<td>43.23%</td>
<td>53.05%</td>
<td>-9.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Financial concerns (costs or financial aid)</td>
<td>36.30%</td>
<td>37.80%</td>
<td>-1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Campus climate, location, or culture</td>
<td>32.34%</td>
<td>29.27%</td>
<td>3.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Other academic issues (major not offered, course availability, advising, credit transfer, etc.)</td>
<td>24.42%</td>
<td>18.29%</td>
<td>6.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 To change your career options (transfer to another school or program, military service, etc.)</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
<td>20.73%</td>
<td>2.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Too much emphasis on partying</td>
<td>21.46%</td>
<td>22.56%</td>
<td>-1.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Relations with other students</td>
<td>21.12%</td>
<td>15.85%</td>
<td>5.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Difficulty managing demands of school and work</td>
<td>20.46%</td>
<td>16.46%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun</td>
<td>19.47%</td>
<td>14.63%</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Academics are too difficult</td>
<td>14.85%</td>
<td>7.93%</td>
<td>6.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Another reason (Please Specify)</td>
<td>12.21%</td>
<td>14.02%</td>
<td>-1.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Relations with faculty and staff</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
<td>8.54%</td>
<td>-0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Unsafe or hostile environment</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
<td>6.71%</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Academics are too easy</td>
<td>5.94%</td>
<td>5.94%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wellness Questions

Q10: Nervous or Stressed

Q11: Difficulties Piling Up

Q8: Homesick

Q9: Lonely

Q11: Difficulties Piling Up

Never  Almost never  Sometimes  Fairly often  Very often
Financial Questions

Q5: I understand the process of obtaining financial aid

Q6: I know where to get help if I am confused about my student account

Q7: I am having financial difficulties that may impact my ability to attend college
Students seriously considering leaving the University

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. 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:

This year, we only asked two questions regarding the experience of on-campus students. Respondents were asked to agree with the statements “I feel accepted by other students in my living area” and “I am satisfied with my on-campus living experience” We found those students who have considered leaving have different patterns of response when asked about their on-campus living experiences. Overall, they are less likely feel accepted by other students in their living area 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

Have Seriously Considered Leaving
Have Not Seriously Considered Leaving

HS GPA

0.02
0.04
0.06
0.08

0
80 85 90 95 100

Student Affairs
reimagining THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE
Q3: The classes I am currently taking have been:

- More difficult than I expected: 36.1%
- Less difficult than I expected: 13.9%
- About what I expected: 50%
- Not Applicable: 23.1%

Q4: The grades I have received in my courses so far have been:

- Higher than I expected: 9.6%
- Lower than I expected: 47.7%
- About what I expected: 40.4%
- Not Applicable: 2.3%
Residential Life Questions

Q18: I feel accepted by other students in my living area

Q19: I am satisfied with my on-campus living experience
Q16: Are you as involved in campus activities as you would like to be?

- 60.7% indicated they would like to be involved in more campus activities.
- 35.2% indicated they are content with their level of involvement.
- 4.0% indicated they would like to be involved in fewer campus activities.

- 60.3% indicated they are not leaving.
- 36.8% indicated they are not leaving.
- 2.8% indicated they are leaving.

Legend:
- Purple: I would like to be involved in more campus activities
- Yellow: I am content with my level of involvement in campus activities
- Gray: I would like to be involved in fewer campus activities
NSSE Module Questions:

Once again, we asked students whether it was important for them to graduate from the University at Albany. The question was also modeled after a question from the First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions NSSE module. This question specifically 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 302 students that have seriously considered leaving, 147 students selected a 6 on the scale (49.2%) and 33 students (11%) selected a 5 on the scale. Therefore, 180 students who have seriously considered leaving the institution (60%) indicated that it was important for them to graduate from the University.
On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution? (Percent)
On a scale of 1 to 6, how important is it to you that you graduate from this institution? (Frequency)
New Question: Student Choice

This year we added one new question to the survey to measure whether the University at Albany was a student’s first choice. Specifically, we asked students “At the time of admission, the University at Albany was your: first choice, second choice, third choice or fourth choice.” The majority of respondents reported that the University at Albany was their first choice. Furthermore, 86% of students reported the University at Albany to be in their top two choices.

Q15: At the time of admission, the University at Albany was your:

- First Choice: 55%
- Second Choice: 31.3%
- Third Choice: 7.6%
- Fourth Choice: 6.1%
Early predictors of first-to-second year retention

Our analysis has found that specific questions may help predict first-to-second year retention. In the fall 2016 iteration of the survey, two questions were added modeled after questions included in the First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions module of the National Survey of Student Engagement (hereafter: NSSE). These questions were: “During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?” 1.) Yes or 2.) No. and “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.”

In the fall of 2017, we were able to examine whether the responses to these questions were correlated with a student’s persistence at the University.

Our major findings show:
• Students that indicated that they had seriously considered leaving the institution in the fall of 2016 were less likely to be enrolled at the University by the fall of 2017.
• Students that indicated that graduating from the University at Albany was very important to them (by scoring higher on the 6 point scale) were much more likely to be retained.

It is important to note that even when we control for known predictors of retention, these findings remain statistically significant. These predictors include: high school GPA, financial aid information, EAB risk scores, and demographic information.

After adding these variables to the model, the conclusion remains the same: Those that have seriously considered leaving by October of their first semester are less likely to be retained and those that places higher levels of importance of graduating from UAlbany are more likely to stay.
Targeted Outreach and Data Sharing

**Targeted Outreach:**
Students who indicated they wanted to be more involved were sent “Involvement Emails” that provided specific engagement opportunities for the rest of the semester.

Students who indicated they were lonely, homesick, or nervous or stressed were also sent an email that provided information on support resources.

**Sharing the Data:**
Information and data has been provided to Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness, Academic Advising, and Student Engagement (Undergraduate Education).

A full report will be sent to faculty members who participated in administering the survey.

The full report will also be shared with the Provost’s office.
Moving Forward

In order to continue our work in capturing the student experience and perfecting the 6-week survey instrument, we will look to:

• Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness continue to be tremendous partners in administering the instrument and analyzing the data. We continue to work with the office to pull additional data and variables into the analysis. Currently, we are working together to add additional variables for a more in-depth analysis of the survey participants. This includes high school academic data, financial data, PERMA score (if applicable), and EAB risk score.

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

• 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 Office of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning would like to thank Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness for their continued partnership on this project. Particularly, we would like to thank Eric Walsh for his constant feedback and support with data analysis.
The following slides include a comparison of the demographic characteristics of respondents for the question: “have you seriously considered leaving the institution?”. 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 Financial Questions. Additionally, please find slides that report how students responded to gender and sexual identity questions that were added at the end of the survey.

For additional analysis and information about the survey, please contact the Office of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning at Saassess@Albany.edu
Detailed Demographic Breakdown

Indicated: Leaving
- American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic: 8.3%
- Asian, non-Hispanic: 16.5%
- Black or African American, non-Hispanic: 5.6%
- Hispanic/Latino: 3.6%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic: 2.7%
- Non-Resident Alien: 2.7%
- Race and ethnicity unknown: 4.4%
- Two or more races, non-Hispanic: 2.8%
- White, non-Hispanic: 16.2%

Indicated: Not Leaving
- American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic: 8.1%
- Asian, non-Hispanic: 16.4%
- Black or African American, non-Hispanic: 0.3%
- Hispanic/Latino: 4.4%
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic: 2.7%
- Non-Resident Alien: 2.8%
- Race and ethnicity unknown: 18.8%
- Two or more races, non-Hispanic: 16.4%
- White, non-Hispanic: 8.1%
Breakdown of Majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Leaving</th>
<th>Not Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC-INT</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO-INTBS</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS-INT</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRJ-INT</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY-INT</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Indicated: Leaving)

(Indicated: Not Leaving)
Financial Questions (disaggregated)

Q5: I understand the process for obtaining financial aid

Q6: I know where to get help if I am confused about my student account

Q7: I am having financial difficulties that may impact my ability to attend college

- Not applicable
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
Sexual Identity Responses

- Asexual/Bisexual/Gay or Lesbian/Heterosexual/Straight/Queer/Pansexual/Other: 0.1%
- Asexual/Heterosexual/Straight: 0.6%
- Asexual/Other: 0.1%
- Asexual/Pansexual: 0.1%
- Asexual/Queer/Other: 0.1%
- Bisexual: 7.5%
- Bisexual/Heterosexual/Straight: 0.6%
- Bisexual/Pansexual: 0.3%
- Gay or Lesbian: 2.2%
- Heterosexual/Straight: 79.1%
- Heterosexual/Straight/Pansexual: 0.1%
- Heterosexual/Straight/Queer: 0.1%
- Other: 1.2%
- Pansexual: 1.9%
- Queer: 0.3%
- Queer/Pansexual: 0.1%
Gender Identity

Gender Identity Responses

- Woman: 63.4%
- Trans woman/Trans man/Genderqueer/Other: 63.4%
- Trans man: 34.3%
- Other: 0.6%
- Genderqueer: 0.2%
- Man/Trans man/Genderqueer/Other: 0.1%
- Man/Trans man: 0.1%
- Trans woman: 0.1%
- Trans woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Man/Other: 0.1%
- Man/Trans woman: 0.1%
- Agender/Woman: 0.1%
- Agender/Woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Agender: 0.2%
- Man/Trans woman/Genderqueer/Other: 0.1%
- Man/Trans woman: 0.1%
- Man/Other: 0.1%
- Trans man: 0.3%
- Trans woman: 0.2%
- Trans man/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Other: 0.4%
- Agender/Man/Woman: 0.1%
- Agender/Man/Woman/Trans man/Trans woman/Genderqueer/Other: 0.1%
- Agender/Man/Woman/Trans man: 0.1%
- Agender/Man/Woman/Trans woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Agender/Man/Woman: 0.1%
- Agender/Man: 0.1%
- Agender: 0.2%
- Man/Agender/Woman: 0.1%
- Man/Agender/Woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Man/Agender: 0.1%
- Man/Agender/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Man: 0.1%
- Man/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Agender/Woman: 0.1%
- Woman/Agender/Woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Agender: 0.1%
- Woman/Agender/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Man: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Trans man: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Trans woman/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Trans woman: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Man: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Other: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Trans woman/Genderqueer/Other: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Trans woman: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Other: 0.1%
- Woman/Man/Genderqueer: 0.1%
- Woman/Man: 0.1%