



Bates College Remote Learning: Student Feedback

On April 21, 2020 a survey about remote learning was sent to 1,805 active Bates College students (continuing, first year and transfer) who were on-campus during Winter 2020 semester.

Number of Students Responding to at least one survey item = 1,141 (63% response rate)

Response rates by demographic identification groups:

- Students from Higher Income Families (n=796): 66%; Students from Lower Income Families (n=224): 55%
- Students identified as First Generation to College (n=120): 55%; Students identified as Continuing Generation to College (n=1,021): 64%
- White-identified Students (n=873): 65%; Students of Color (n=259): 57%
- Female-identified Students (n=632): 70%; Male-identified Students (n=509): 57%

SCALE ITEMS

- 9% of students' households included someone dealing with COVID-19 health/medical issues.
- 35% of students in the lowest income families were responsible for daily care of elder/child compared to 7% of full-pay students. 14% of all students were working outside the home.
- 72% of students were not using any academic support services after the transition.
- Over 1/3 of students reported either a "minor" or "major" issue with internet connection or bandwidth, with lower income students reporting issues at the highest levels.
- Students reported higher levels than faculty of "extensively" engaging in independent work and timed assignments or exams. Faculty reported higher levels than students of "extensively" engaging in active learning and collaborative or group work.
- Students reported higher levels than faculty of "extensively" using social media, Google Docs, Sheets or Drive as well as Lyceum. Faculty reported higher levels than students of "extensively" using PowerPoint and specialty software.
- Over 80% of students reported difficulty with motivation/desire and focusing/paying attention. Almost half of students had difficulty find time to accomplish coursework due to other responsibilities. 18% reported course meetings or activity times conflicted with the meetings/activities of other courses. One third of students had difficulty finding time to participate in synchronous classes, with highest levels reported among Students of Color and students identified as First Generation to College.
- 25% of students said their course workload increased after transition to remote; 45% of students said their course workload decreased.
- Students identified as First Generation to College (22%) or Students of Color (17%) were much more likely to indicate that they felt they adapted "very poorly" to remote learning than students identified as Continuing Generation to College (9%) or White-identified Students (8%).
- 26% of students indicated that they adapted "well" or "very well." 58% of related faculty ratings indicated students adapted "well" or "very well."

**OPEN-RESPONSE ITEMS**

Note: In aggregate, majority populations will dominate aggregate themes. With this survey, the majority of students who responded to each of the three open-response items were full-pay (57-59%) and/or White-identified (78-81%) and/or Continuing Generation to College (90-91%).

Themes:

- Appreciated regular interaction and responsive communication, such as *“weekly check-ins.”*
- Increase live interaction (phone calls, live chat or video).
 - Among students whose families were full-pay, synchronous interaction was preferred and helpful. Students with EFC in the lowest quartile identified multiple barriers to accessing synchronous learning opportunities even though they wanted to engage in this way.
- Appreciated decreased workload and increased flexibility.
- More consistency in the structure and format of courses and clear, regularly-updated expectations about assignments, due dates, and grading policies.
 - Students identified as being from families in the lowest EFC quartile and students identified as First Generation to College emphasized the importance of transparent expectations, noting their appreciation that faculty *“focused less on grades and more on the quality of work.”*
- Focus on core ideas and assignments: *“Professors need to get at the ‘so what’ during these times a bit more.”*
- Avoid email overload.
- Students didn’t like remote learning and preferred to return to campus in the coming fall semester. There were 36 students (14% of responses) who indicated that they may not enroll if remote learning was the approach offered in the fall. 75% of these enrollment comments were made by students from families of higher income.
- More collaboration, collective tasks or group work environments such as *“virtual study groups”* or office hour conference calls where *“I can just sit and do work with you there”* to avoid *“academic isolation.”*
- More adaptation: *“Don’t try to do the same thing in a different situation.”*
- Students should be more involved in the decision-making process for fall planning.

“Somehow, we have to find a way to bring Bates to students across the world, not just the things we learn in the classroom while we’re there.”