



Fall 2020 Student Survey Report | October 2020

KEY FINDINGS

- The pace of courses in Module A was a prevalent theme in the survey responses. When asked about the pace of their courses, students rated their courses as “too fast” or “much too fast” more than half of the time. This was also a concern that students frequently cited when asked to describe the aspect of their courses that is causing them the most problems. Many students cited issues such as being unable to think deeply about the course material and being unable to complete assignments due to the fast pace of the course.
- When asked about pedagogical practices employed by faculty, nearly all students reported that their instructors engaged in practices such as providing clear, concise instructions, focusing on core materials and concepts, and presenting Lyceum materials in an easy to use format. There were no significant differences based on mode of instruction.
- Whether in in-person, hybrid, or remote courses, students frequently reported that it was easy to access assistance from faculty and faculty office hours. The one resource that stood out somewhat as being more difficult to access was assistance from other students. Students in fully online courses reported lower levels of ease, on average, in accessing assistance from other students, tutoring assistance, and writing assistance.
- Students frequently reported using outdoor areas for socializing, dining, and studying. Many noted the looming cold weather and how that will limit their options.

BACKGROUND

On September 29, 2020, Bates students were invited to respond to a survey about their experience during Module A of the Fall 2020 term. One set of questions focused on the students' academic experiences and asked students to provide feedback for each of the courses in which they were enrolled during Module A. The second set of questions addressed broader aspects of student life, including study spaces, social experiences, and dining.

There were 494 student responses, yielding a response rate of 26.3%. Responses were counted if a student advanced beyond the first page of the survey. Ninety percent of respondents indicated that they were taking courses at Bates, with 79.4% living in an on-campus residence and 11.1% living in an



off-campus residence. The remaining respondents were studying remotely, with 5.7% of respondents living in the United States and 3.8% of respondents living outside of the United States. These percentages were representative of the overall student body this fall.

First-year students were slightly underrepresented relative to their share of the overall student body (21.4% of respondents versus 25.6% of students). The other three classes were well represented with sophomores representing 26.6% of respondents (compared to 23.9% of the student body), juniors representing 26.0% (compared to 25.1%), and seniors representing 26.0% (compared to 25.4%).

Regarding gender identify, 62.5% of respondents identified as female, 35.4% identified as male, 0.7% identified as transgender or gender queer, and 1.1% declined to indicate their gender identity. Consistent with many other surveys in higher education, this is an overrepresentation of female-identified students (50.7% of the student body) and an underrepresentation of male-identified students (49.3% of the student body).

Regarding race and ethnicity, 87.0% of respondents provided information about their racial/ethnic identity. Of the remaining 13.0% of respondents, 2.6% declined to state their racial/ethnic identities and 10.3% were partial responses that did not reach this section of the survey. Comparisons based on race and ethnicity focus on those students who provided data, but they also check to see if there are meaningful differences related to the non-response group. The list below shows how the profile of survey respondents compares to the overall student body at Bates this fall. Among the survey respondents, White students were overrepresented and International students were underrepresented. Black students and Multiracial students were also slightly underrepresented.

- American Indian or Alaska Native (0.5% of respondents, 0.2% of the student body)
- Asian (5.1%, 4.9%)
- Black or African American (4.7%, 5.7%)
- Hispanic (7.2%, 7.1%)
- International (5.8%, 7.9%)
- White (71.6% 67.5%)
- Multirace (4.7%, 6.3%)
- Other/Unknown (0.5%, 0.4%)

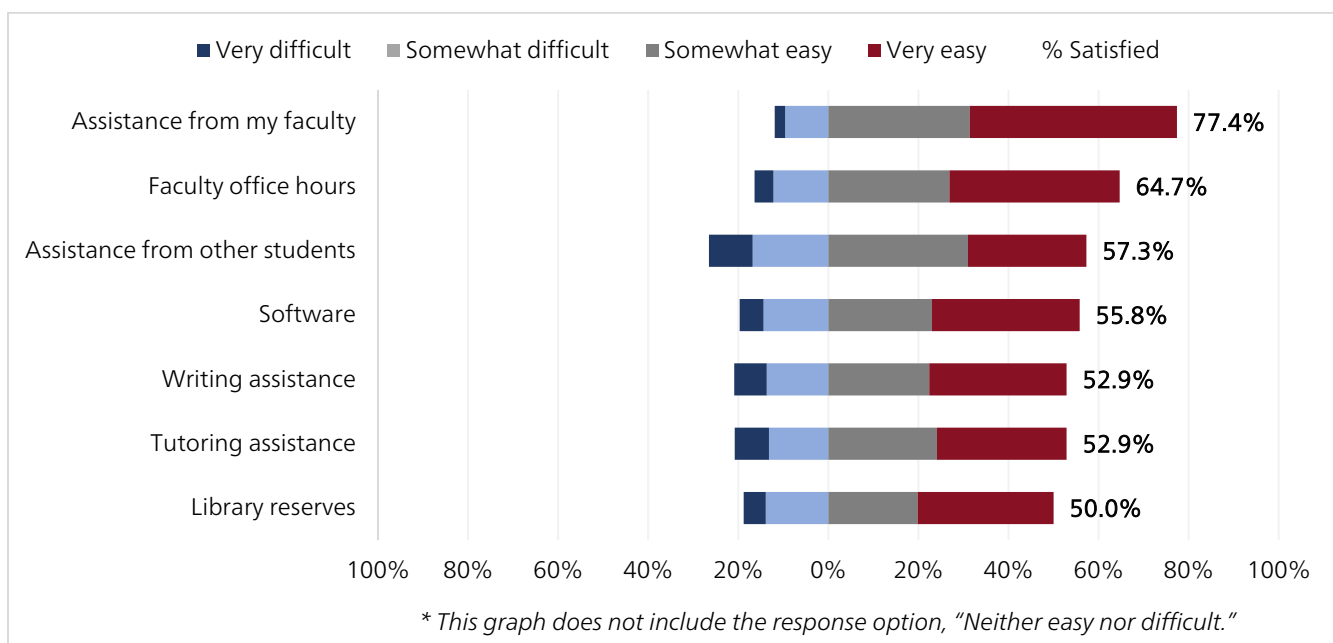


MODULE A COURSE EXPERIENCE

When asked how many courses they were taking in Module A, students most frequently indicated that they were taking two courses (79.4%), while 15.2% of respondents reported that they were taking three courses and 5.2% were taking one course. Students were asked to respond to a set of items about each course that they were taking. These items included questions about utilization of learning resources, pedagogical practices employed by the instructor, the rigor and pace of the course, and open-ended items about the best aspects and problems faced. The survey did not ask students to identify the course or the instructor. Students submitted 973 responses about their course experiences. This section of the report summarizes the results of these 973 responses. Course modes were fairly evenly distributed among in-person (34.9%), fully online (29.8%), and hybrid/mixed mode (35.3%).

For each course, students were asked to rate how easy or difficult it was to access various learning resources. Students most frequently reported that it was easy to access assistance from faculty (77.4%) and faculty office hours (64.7%). For most of the resources, if students did not report that they were easy to access, they tended to indicate that they were “neither easy nor difficult” to access, suggesting that they did not attempt to access these resources. The one resource that stood out somewhat as being more difficult to access was assistance from other students (26.5% reported this being difficult).

Figure 1. Ease of Accessing Learning Resources

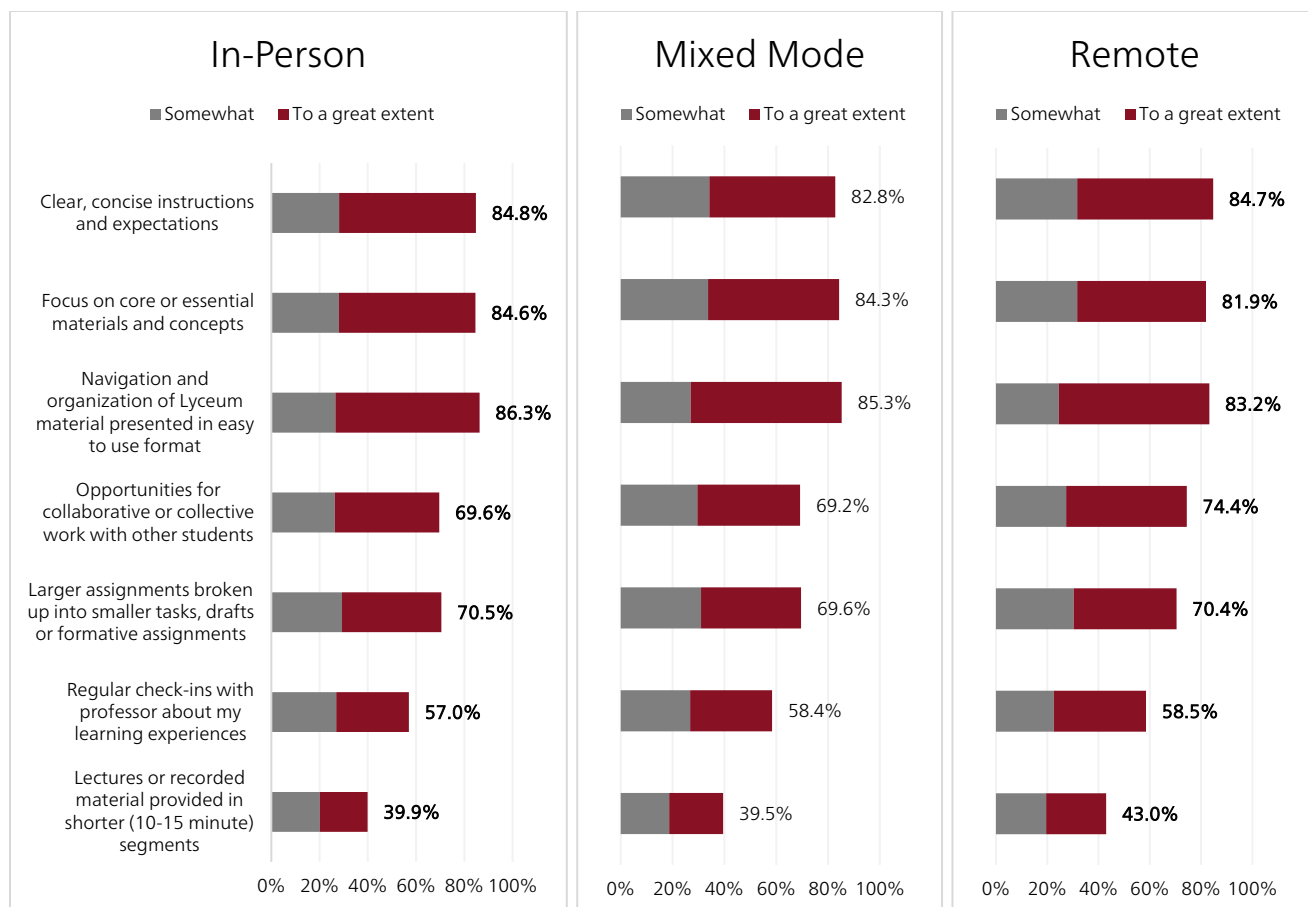




There were several significant group differences. Students in fully online courses reported lower levels of ease, on average, in accessing assistance from other students, tutoring assistance, and writing assistance, compared to students in in-person courses. There were no significant differences between groups regarding the ease with which they accessed assistance from faculty or faculty office hours. Regarding demographics, there were a couple of significant differences. Female-identified students reported that, on average, they more easily accessed assistance from faculty. Domestic BIPOC students indicated that they more easily accessed faculty office hours significantly more easily, on average, than White and International students.

When asked about pedagogical practices employed by instructors, nearly all students reported that their instructors engaged in practices such as providing clear, concise instructions (96.2%), focusing on core materials and concepts (95.7%), and presenting Lyceum materials in an easy to use format (94.7%) at least “a little bit.” There were no significant differences based on mode of instruction.

Figure 2. Pedagogical Practices by Mode of Instruction





The survey included two questions asking students to rate the academic rigor and pace of the course. A majority of responses indicated that students found the pace of the curriculum to be too fast (35.2% “too fast” and 18.6% “much too fast”). Many students reported that the pace of their course was “appropriate” (43.7%), but very few found it to be too slow (2.0% “too slow” and 0.5% “much too slow”). Regarding academic rigor, most students reported that the course had “appropriate level of rigor” (62.8%). About a third of responses indicated that the course was too rigorous (24.1% “too rigorous” and 8.4% “much too rigorous”) and about five percent responded that the course was too easy (4.0% “too easy” and 0.7% “much too easy”). First-year students were the class least likely to respond that their course was too rigorous or too fast. The percentage of Seniors reporting that their courses were too rigorous was notably higher than the percentages for other classes.

For each course, students were asked two open-ended questions. First, students were asked to indicate the best aspect of their course. In total, 353 students provided responses for 663 courses. Respondents most frequently identified content and intellectual learning as the best aspect of their course (N = 223). Examples of these comments include the interesting topics covered in the course, relevance to current issues, and the opportunity to learn new material. This theme was identified by 45% of first-year students, 27% of sophomores, and 33% of juniors and seniors. This was a frequent response among both BIPOC students (26%) and White students (36%). The second most frequent response was that the professor was the best aspect of the course (N = 159). Students often pointed to the accessibility and responsiveness of faculty (N = 53) and noted that their instructor cares about students (N = 43). The third most frequent response was the pedagogy (N = 106), including engaging activities and the use of multiple approaches to teaching. An aspect of pedagogy that students frequently highlighted was class discussions (N = 59) in both in-person and remote settings. See Appendix A for a full list of the major themes that emerged.

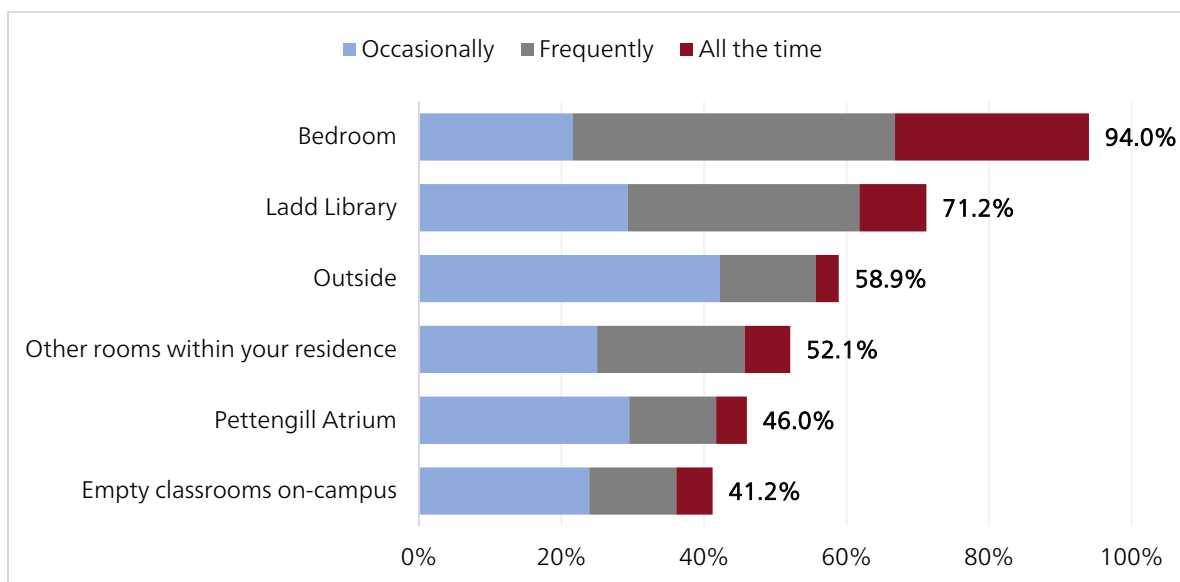
The second open-ended question asked students to indicate the aspect of their course that is causing them the most problems. Confirming the results of the survey items about rigor and pace, the most frequent responses to this open-ended question were the pace of the course (N = 333) and the workload (N = 207). Many students cited issues such as being unable to think deeply about the course material and being unable to complete assignments. These concerns were frequent for both students at Bates and those studying remotely. Another oft-cited problem was challenges related to remote learning and technology (N = 107). This, too, was an issue both for students at Bates and for those studying remotely. See Appendix B for the complete set of themes.



MODULE A GENERAL EXPERIENCE

The survey included several questions about students’ general experience at Bates during Module A of the Fall 2020 term. These included items about study spaces, student engagement, transportation, and dining. Figure 3 depicts the frequency of usage of various study spaces on campus. This question was asked only to students on campus and not to those studying remotely. Nearly all respondents indicated that they work at least occasionally in their bedroom (94.0%) and more than a quarter of students reported that they study in their bedroom “all the time” (27.2%). The second most frequently used study space was Ladd Library (71.2%). More than half of respondents indicated that they study outside at least “occasionally” (58.9%).

Figure 3. Study Spaces

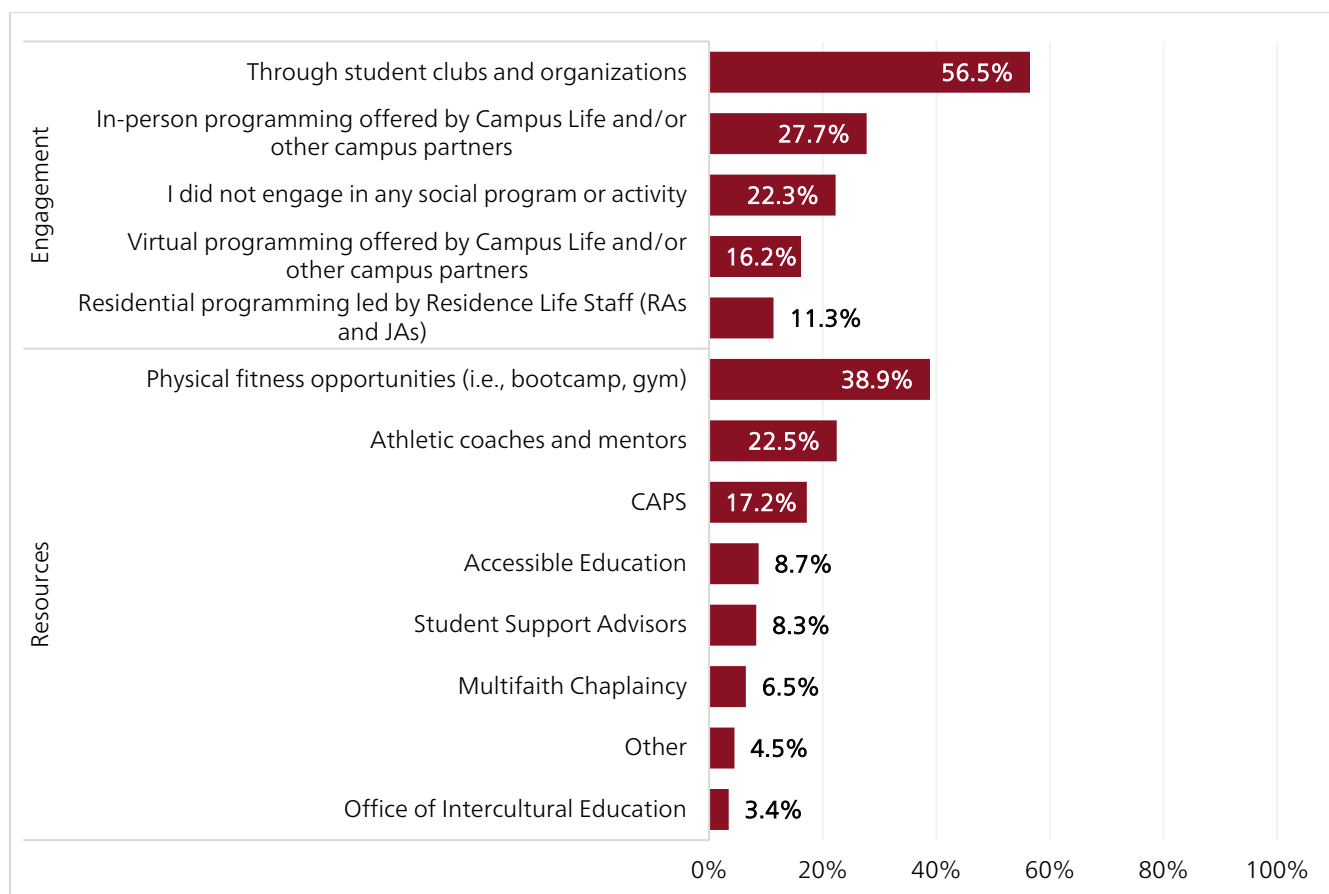


When asked to select the ways in which they have engaged in campus life this fall, students most frequently indicated that they have engaged in student clubs and organizations (56.5%). Students more frequently reported that they engaged in in-person programming offered by Campus Life and/or other campus partners (27.7%) than they engaged in virtual programming offered by these same groups (16.2%). Nearly a quarter of respondents replied that they did not engage in any social program or activity (22.3%). There was an inverse relationship between class year and engagement: first-year (9.5% did not engage in any social program or activity), sophomore (22.9%), junior (27.0%), and senior (37.4%). Also of note was that 14 students wrote in athletic participation as a way that they have engaged in campus life this fall. Figure 4 on the next page summarizes responses about student engagement.



Also depicted in Figure 4 is students' self-reported utilization of campus resources. The resource that students most frequently reported that they used was physical fitness opportunities (38.9%). Athletics coaches and mentors (22.5%) and CAPS (17.2%) were the next most frequent responses. Differences in resource utilization based on class year and demographic characteristics tended to be small. The only difference of note was that female-identified students were more likely to indicate that they used CAPS compared to male-identified students.

Figure 4. Student Engagement

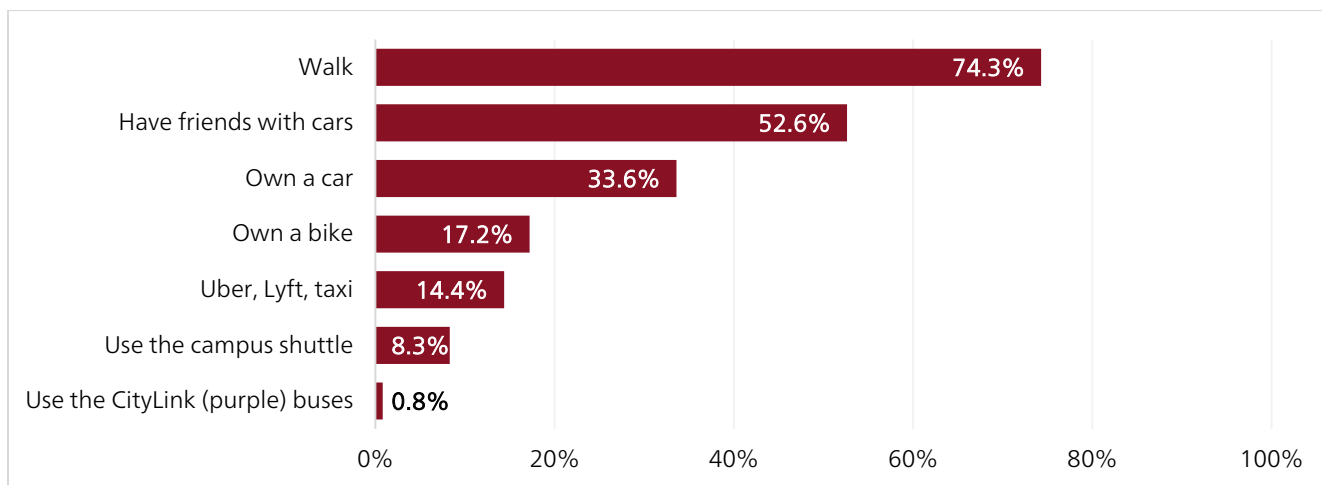


The survey asked students to select all of the transportation options available to them. The percentages displayed in Figure 5 below are based on a denominator of 494, the full set of respondents. Walking (74.3%) was the most frequent transportation option, followed by having friends with cars (52.6%) and owning a car (33.6%). Of note, upperclass students were far more likely to own a car; there was a direct, positive relationship between class year and owning a car (14.7% of



first-years versus 57.4% of seniors). Car ownership among White students was much greater than it was for BIPOC students (42.5% and 18.9%, respectively). BIPOC students were more likely than White students to use the campus shuttle (22.1% and 7.1%, respectively) and an Uber/Lyft/taxi (25.3% and 14.7%, respectively). Students who wrote in “other” options almost exclusively identified their skateboard (N = 7) as a mode of transportation, though two students pointed out that concerns about COVID have influenced their use of public transportation.

Figure 5. Transportation Options



When asked where they typically eat lunch and dinner, students most frequently responded that they eat outside with friends (54.3%). Seniors differed from other classes on this item; they were more likely than other classes to eat in their residences and/or to eat alone. There were a few notable differences based on demographics. Female-identified students were more likely to report that they eat outside with friends, while male-identified students tended to eat with friends in their residences. BIPOC students were more likely than White students to indicate that they eat alone and in their residence (27.3% and 15.3%, respectively).

Table 1. Typical Location for Lunch and Dinner

Response	First-year	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Total
With friends outside	58.9%	62.0%	61.6%	34.3%	54.3%
With friends in our residence	17.8%	13.9%	23.2%	31.4%	21.5%
Alone and in my residence	15.6%	17.6%	10.1%	24.5%	17.0%
Other	2.2%	3.7%	5.1%	6.9%	4.5%
Alone and outside	5.6%	2.8%	0.0%	2.9%	2.8%



The survey also asked students to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: “The lack of access to campus kitchens impacts my ability to meet my cultural or religious eating requirements.” Most students (52.8%) indicated that this was not applicable to them. Of those who did provide responses, close to half agreed with the statement (18.6% strongly agreed and 25.5% agreed). In total, there were 83 students who agreed that the lack of access to campus kitchens impacts their ability to meet cultural or religious eating requirements. Agreement with this statement was more prevalent among BIPOC students (63.0%, compared to 38.4% of White students).

Acknowledging that the pandemic is impacting everyone’s social life, the survey asked students to describe how they are building community under these current conditions. There were 316 students who provided responses and some students commented on more than one topic. Unfortunately, there were 48 respondents who replied that they were not building community. These responses were most prevalent among seniors, male-identified students, and students taking three courses. There were also 47 students who reported that they were not building community, but that they were able to maintain pre-existing friendships. Among those who were building community, the most frequent responses were community-building in residences (N = 77), through clubs, athletics or other campus activities (N = 55), and by having meals outside (N = 45). First-year students were more likely than other classes to respond that they were building community in the residence halls and through clubs, athletics, or other campus activities. Appendix C includes the complete analysis of the responses.

Finally, in an open-ended item, the survey invited students to comment on any other issues impacting their lives that had not been previously addressed in the survey. The most frequent response was dissatisfaction with the college’s COVID-19 guidelines (N = 61). Comments encompassed the restrictiveness of the guidelines, inconsistent enforcement, and non-compliance of fellow students. There were 31 students who requested the ability to spend time in campus residences other than their own. The second most common theme was concern with student mental health issues (N = 51). Another prevalent theme that was not addressed elsewhere in the survey was concerns about the impending colder weather (N = 44). Students were worried about the decreasing options for outdoor activities, such as socializing and eating, as winter approaches. See Appendix D for the full set of themes.

**APPENDIX A: BEST ASPECTS OF COURSE***What is the best aspect of your course?*

353 students responded to this item. Students were asked to respond separately for each course. 244 students provided responses for two courses, 58 students - one course, 39 students - three courses. 663 total responses.

- 223 *content and intellectual learning* (interesting topic, relevant to current issues, learning new material).
 - BIPOC identified students (32%) White identified students (35%) International identified students (28%) "Decline to state" race/ethnicity identity (29%)
 - First-years (45%) Sophomores (27%) Juniors & Seniors (33%)
- 159 *professor*
 - 53 accessibility and responsiveness of instructors (professor, tutors).
 - One course (12%) two courses (7%) three courses (9%)
 - First-years (11%) Sophomores (7%) Juniors (6%) Seniors (10%)
 - BIPOC identified students (23%) White identified students (24%) International identified students (28%) "Decline to state" race/ethnicity identity (29%)
 - 43 professor cares about students.
- 106 *pedagogy* (engaging activities, use multiple approaches/modes).
 - First-years (22%) Sophomores (18%) Juniors (15%) Seniors (11%)
 - One course (24%) two courses (17%) three courses (11%)
 - Living Outside the US (5%) Inside the US (16%)
 - 59 class discussions (remote and in-person)
 - 31 organization, structure or clarity of course structure
- 96 *in-person learning* opportunities.
 - One course (29%) two courses (13%) three courses (17%)
 - BIPOC identified students (16%) White identified students (13%) International identified students (14%) Did not respond to race/identity item (23%)
- 85 *collaboration with peers*.
 - Female identified (16%) Male identified (7%)
- 76 *online/remote learning* opportunities.
 - One course (18%) two courses (11%) three courses (12%)
 - BIPOC identified students (13%) White identified students (11%) International identified students (17%)
- 13 *hybrid*: combining in-person and online elements.

**APPENDIX B: ASPECTS OF COURSE CAUSING STUDENTS THE MOST PROBLEMS***What aspect of your course is causing you the most problems?*

379 students responded to this item. Students were asked to respond separately for each course. 249 students responded for two courses, 91 students - one course, 26 students - three courses. 667 total responses.

- 333 *pace* of course is too fast (unable to recall or think deeply about material, too much work in too short time, unable to complete assignments).
 - On-campus housing (53%) Off-campus: Lewiston area (41%) Off-campus: Other US (42%) Off-campus: Outside US (36%)
 - BIPOC identified students (51%) White identified students (49%) International identified students (59%) "Decline to state" race/ethnicity identity (59%) Did not respond to race/identity item (55%)
 - Female identified (47%) Male identified (54%) Did not respond to gender identity item (59%)
- 207 *workload* is too heavy, especially for time available to complete work.
 - First-years (31%) Sophomores (26%) Juniors (33%) Seniors (35%)
 - BIPOC identified students (30%) White identified students (32%) International identified students (31%) "Decline to state" race/ethnicity identity (23%) Did not respond to race/identity item (28%)
 - On-campus housing (30%) Off-campus: Lewiston area (36%) Off-campus: Other US (37%) Off-campus: Outside US (23%)
 - One course (36%) two courses (29%) three courses (39%)
- 107 challenges with remote learning and *technology/online components* (both from in-person and remote students).
 - First-years (8%) Sophomores (19%) Juniors (21%) Seniors (16%)
 - BIPOC identified students (16%) White identified students (17%) International identified students (24%)
 - Living in Lewiston area (on or off campus) (15%) Living off campus (US and outside US) (31%)
- 77 dissatisfaction with *pedagogy* (such as lectures not engaging or too long).
 - First-years (10%) Sophomores (12%) Juniors (15%) Seniors (7%)
 - BIPOC identified students (13%) White identified students (12%) Did not respond to race/identity item (21%)



- Living in Lewiston area (on or off campus) (11%) Living off campus (US and outside US) (17%)
- 51 dissatisfaction with organization of course
- 40 need more support and/or better communication from professor
- 36 improve or increase collective peer/group work
- 15 course is *less rigorous* (less content, unable to process at deeper level).

**APPENDIX C: BUILDING COMMUNITY**

The pandemic is impacting everyone's social life. How are you building your community under these current conditions?

316 Students Responded to this Item

- 48 respondents commented that they were *not expanding or building their community*.
 - First-years (5%) Sophomores (11%) Juniors (17%) Seniors (25%)
 - BIPOC identified students (11%) White identified students (16%) International identified students (15%)
 - Female identified students (8%) Male identified students (27%)
 - One course (6%) two courses (15%) three courses (21%)
- 47 respondents said they were *only able to maintain pre-existing friendships*.

Most commonly noted spaces or activities in which respondents indicated that they were building community:

- 77 with other students in their *residence* (FYC, house, dorm, etc.).
 - First-years (47%) Sophomores (20%) Juniors (18%) Seniors (18%)
 - On-campus housing (27%) Off-campus: Lewiston area (29%)
- 55 through *clubs, athletics or other campus activities*.
 - First-years (30%) Sophomores (9%) Juniors (18%) Seniors (16%)
 - BIPOC identified students (11%) White identified students (21%)
 - Female identified (22%) Male identified (9%)
 - On-campus housing (18%) Off-campus: Lewiston area (14%) Off-campus: Other US (19%) Off-campus: Outside US (13%)
- 45 during *meals* outside.
 - First-years (9%) Sophomores (19%) Juniors (17%) Seniors (11%)
 - On-campus housing (16%) Off-campus: Lewiston area (11%)
- 34 while meeting friends outside.
- 29 through online communication (texting, Facetime, Zoom).
- 28 during various outdoor activities (hikes, visiting Maine locations, etc.).
- 15 in academic classes.



APPENDIX D: OTHER ISSUES IMPACTING THE LIVES OF STUDENTS

Please feel free to comment on any issues impacting your life as a student that we haven't addressed in this survey in the space provided below.

182 Students Responded to this Item

- 61 expressed dissatisfaction or concern with on-campus COVID-19 *guidelines* (such as non-compliance, too restrictive, not consistently enforced).
 - First-years (31%) Sophomores (29%) Juniors (43%) Seniors (31%)
 - BIPOC identified students (16%) White identified students (40%)
 - On-campus residence (39%) Off campus: Lewiston area (21%)
- 31 requested the ability to *spend time in campus residences* other than their own.
- 51 shared concerns with existing and growing *student mental health* issues.
 - First-years (31%) Sophomores (33%) Juniors (18%) Seniors (31%)
 - On-campus residence (32%) Off campus: Lewiston area (8%)
- 46 referred to the *modular learning* structure: 2 comments related to positive experiences; 44 comments related to dissatisfaction (such as fast pace, workload, effect on STEM courses).
 - First-years (7%) Sophomores (38%) Juniors (29%) Seniors (22%)
- 44 concerns about decreasing options for outdoor activities (socializing, eating) in *colder weather*.
- 41 dissatisfaction with *dining* (logistics of where to eat, food selection, no access to kitchens).
 - BIPOC identified students (28%) White identified students (22%)