

FALL 2021 New Student Interest Form

Main Campus First-Year Students Results and Use of Data

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The New Student Interest Form's (NSIF) primary purpose is the collection of new student involvement and career interests, intended engagement experiences as an undergraduate, anticipated support needs, and intent to graduate. These data are useful for informing support strategies for new students transitioning to the University of Arizona.

In collaboration with campus partners, Assessment & Research led an initiative over the spring and summer of 2021 to revamp the existing form to meet campus needs and best support incoming students' transition. With the inclusion of the NSIF within the Next Steps Center, we saw a high response rate for incoming first-year students. Of the 8,270 main campus new first-year students enrolled as of fall census, 7,053 had completed the NSIF; this gives us a response rate of 85%. Due to the high response rate, the population of students who responded to the NSIF closely reflects the demographic characteristics of the overall main campus first-year cohort. The results below are those of main campus first-year students enrolled as of fall census date. Data for incoming transfer students and students in Arizona Online and Distance campuses are also available.

85%

Response rate for
Main campus new
first-year students

We connected with partners across campus to coordinate a plan for how these data could be used to tailor outreach and support to students based on their indicated interests and perceived support needs. Custom datasets were shared with campus collaborators who used the data to invite students to events or programs based on relevant interests; to communicate based on support needs; and create profiles to better understand their incoming class. Highlights of these strategies are shared in this report and may inform future utility of NSIF data.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Student Success &
Retention Innovation

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The results below reflect main campus first-year students enrolled as of fall census date. Data for incoming transfer students and students in Arizona Online and Distance campuses are also available upon request.

Plans for Degree Completion

The NSIF includes a section on students' plans to continue and graduate at Arizona, as well as their expectations about how long it will take to complete their degree. The vast majority of students who come to UA expect to graduate from here. Overall, new first year students (95%) intend to graduate with a UA bachelor's degree. Most of the remaining 5% are uncertain (n=358) about their plans for graduating from Arizona, with only 0.1% (n=8) indicating they do not plan to graduate. Among those uncertain, only 7% (n=25) report clear intentions of transferring to a different institution, but the majority remain uncertain about their plans for continuing at UA.

95%
Plan to graduate
from University
of Arizona

Students who do plan to graduate from Arizona have conventional expectations about their time to degree, with 93% of respondents anticipating four or fewer years. There is predictable variation by students' college, with many of the students who selected five years belonging to College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, where the bachelor's degree is a five-year plan.

Figure 1. How long do you expect it will take you to graduate?



Interests in Involvement and Engagement

The survey asked students two questions pertaining to what they hoped to experience at Arizona, one about involvement in their first-year, and the other related to engagement activities during their undergraduate career. Overall, new first-year students are most interested in on-campus employment opportunities and internships (see Table 1 below). Students have broad interests, however, with the majority of students selecting at least four areas in which they would like to be involved in their first year.

Table 1: Involvement Interests in First-Year	N Interested	% Interested
Internships	4,793	68%
Employment on Campus	3,988	57%
Academic Clubs	3,454	49%
Recreation Sports (Intramurals, Club Sports, eSports)	3,104	44%
Fraternity and Sorority Programs	2,722	39%
Leadership Programs	2,327	33%
Health and Wellness Programs	2,100	30%
Sustainability clubs and programs	1,222	17%
Cultural and Resource Centers	1,190	17%
Peer Mentoring Programs	988	14%
Residential Life Opportunities (Theme Communities, RA)	771	11%
Culturally focused clubs	754	11%
Student government	746	11%

Students were also given the option to name interests that were not included in our list, which revealed a great variety of areas where students are looking to connect and engage with their peers. The most popular responses involved music (marching band, acapella groups, choir, or other musical groups), the arts (performing arts, visual art, drama clubs, or dance) and religiously affiliated clubs. Beyond that, interests included areas ranging from robotics clubs, scuba diving, culinary skills, rodeo, and car clubs. These responses serve as a reminder of the diverse skills and curiosities our students are bringing to Arizona, and the opportunities to engage with those varied interests.

Table 2: Engagement Interests in Undergraduate Career	N Interested	% Interested
Internships	5,200	74%
Part-time employment	5,125	73%
Study abroad	3,247	46%
Volunteer or service learning	2,421	34%
Research/working on a project with local employer/organization	1,737	25%
Skill development programs (e.g. collaboration, functional skills)	1,710	24%
Research with a faculty member	1,659	24%
Student leadership	1,585	22%
Preceptorship/teaching assistant	854	12%
A significant class project (lasting at least one semester)	789	11%
Student teaching	547	8%
Co-ops	309	4%

The responses around student engagement opportunities, reported above in Table 2, again show internships and student employment as the most reported options for incoming first-year students, with nearly 75% selecting these options.

Career Interests

Table 3 below presents the career interests of fall 2021 main campus first-year respondents, with the top selections of health and bioscience careers (37%), and business and management (32%). While students could choose as many career fields as they wished, 56% of respondents only selected one option.

Table 3: Career Interests	N Interested	% Interested
Health & Biosciences	2,596	37%
Business & Management	2,227	32%
Engineering	1,051	15%
Arts & Design	936	13%
Law & Justice	935	13%
I do not know my career interests at this time	697	10%
Not Listed/Other	690	10%
Data & Technology	678	10%
Education & Social Services	671	10%
Environment & Resources	618	9%
Global Impact & Public Service	493	7%
Research & Academia	467	7%

Approximately 10% of the respondents selected that they do not yet know their career interests. These students are also more likely to be “uncertain” about their plans to graduate from Arizona, and to expect a high level of needed support with selecting a major (expected support needs are in Figure 3 below). Of the students who do not know their career interests, 59% expect to need “some” or “a lot” of support in the area of selecting a major, compared to 25% of students who are clearer about their career interests.

10%

Do not know career interests upon entering Arizona



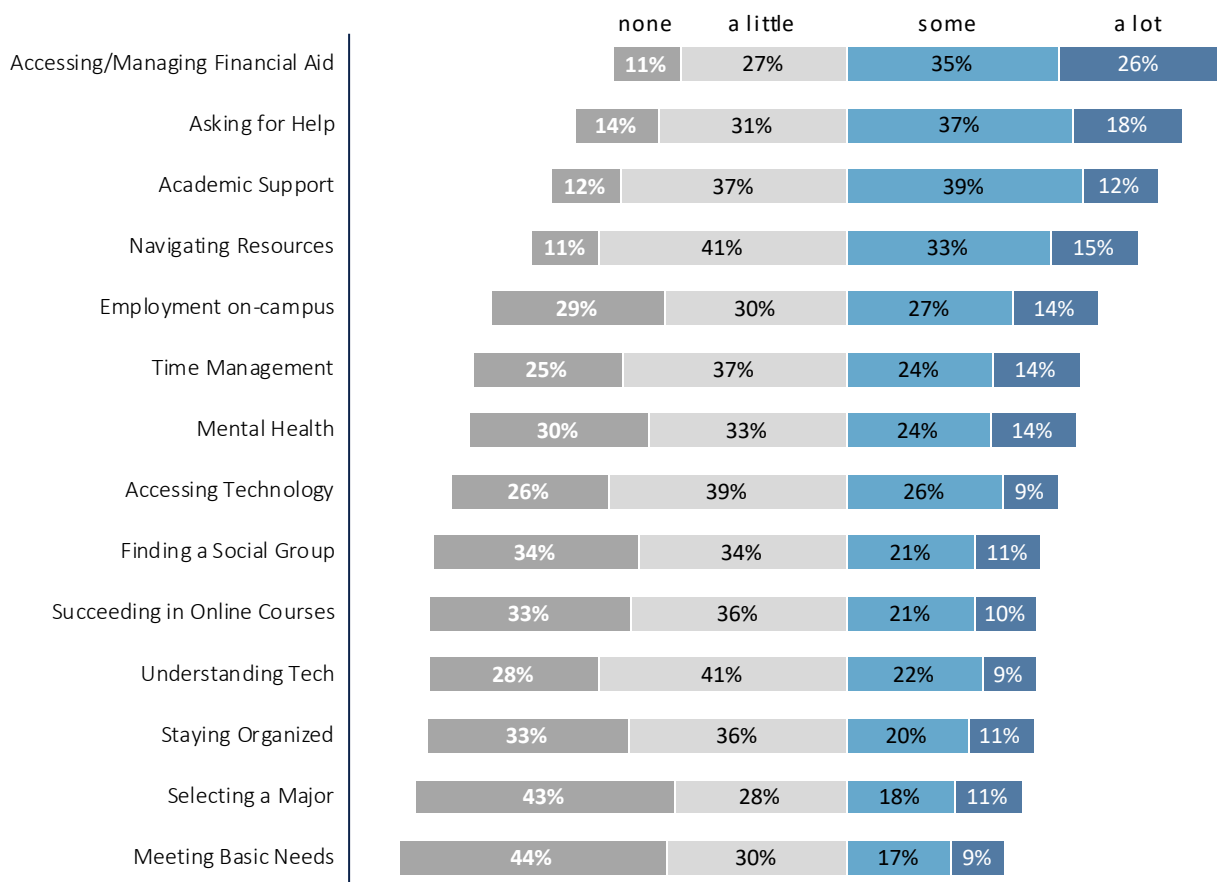
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Student Success &
Retention Innovation

Perceived Support Needs

In general, first-year students anticipated needing high levels of support; students indicated that they expected “some” or “a lot” of support in an average of 5.6 areas and 20% of respondents selected 10 or more areas of high expected support needs. While these responses may not directly mirror their eventual experience during their first year (some students may end up needing support that they didn’t expect, and vice versa), they do give us a glimpse into how confident students are feeling about these different areas.

Figure 3. How much support do you expect to need during your first year at the University of Arizona?



STRATEGIES FOR UTILIZING NSIF DATA

We connected with partners across campus to coordinate the use of NSIF data to tailor outreach and support to students based on their survey responses. As the above summary has shown, Arizona first-year students' interests and needs are significantly varied; NSIF responses allow us to better understand the cohort as whole while also targeting outreach and support to individual students. Campus partners, such as Fraternity and Sorority Programs, the VETS Center, the College of Agriculture and Life Science, and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, used the custom datasets to invite students to participate based on their stated interests. Others used the data to guide programming or planning of events based on relevant interests. Selected highlights of the creative and effective uses of NSIF data by Arizona departments are below.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CAREER SERVICES

In Student Engagement and Career Services, the NSIF data was incorporated into Handshake, the job board and career development platform, to add "labels" to student profiles. The SECD team created labels for specific NSIF responses that aligned to programming; for example, students who reported interest in part-time employment or who indicated needing support in this area could receive outreach around Wildcat Student Employment fair or other current opportunities on campus. Students' career interests were also incorporated into Handshake to align messaging and marketing of relevant events and fairs.

DIRECT STUDENT OUTREACH FROM SOS

SSRI Strategy Team has used the NSIF responses to the expected support needs question to do some norming and expectation-setting in regular messaging that goes out to students. For example, all new students received a D2L announcement including the statistic that "88% of students anticipated that they would need academic support during their first year" and linking to THINK TANK services. Additionally, the Communications & Outreach team has individually emailed students who indicated that they would need "a lot" of support in multiple key areas to ensure they had been able to access assistance. Students who responded to these emails still seeking support were directed to appropriate offices or resources.

THRIVE CENTER

Thrive Center's First Cats team focuses on providing peer mentoring, workshops, and community building for all first-generation students on campus. Using the NSIF data, the team reached out to over 350 incoming first-generation students interested in peer mentoring. These students were invited to participate in peer mentoring with a second-year student who would understand their unique experience as a first-generation student at Arizona. Students who responded received free biweekly mentoring meetings, academic and personal skills development, and group workshops that allow them to share and highlight the diverse knowledge they bring to Arizona. Additionally, Thrive Center staff created a profile of the incoming first-generation cohorts' interests and support needs, which is being used to plan workshops for the year.

NEXT STEPS

Fall 2021 is the first term for which the NSIF data were widely available for use by campus partners, and we are discussing possibilities for improving the process in the future. The current dataset will continue to be drawn upon throughout the year to support the transition of new first-year and transfer students across UA campuses. Additionally, the survey results for spring new students will be available at the beginning of the semester. We are also in early conversations with Trellis about how to incorporate this valuable data into our existing systems, making targeted outreach and student support a more seamless process. We invite you to contact us to discuss strategies on how NSIF data can be utilized to support student success within your respective colleges and departments.

For further information about the NSIF, contact:

Laura Andrews, Student Success and Retention Innovation (lauraka@email.arizona.edu)

Lucas Schalewski, Assessment & Research (schalewski@arizona.edu)

RESOURCE GUIDE: RESPONDING TO STUDENT SUPPORT NEEDS

Campus partners have used the New Student Interest Form data to inform support strategies for new students transitioning to the University of Arizona. Many students may not be aware of the available resources, or know how to access them. As a guide, below are some of the useful resources we can provide to students who may need support in these common areas.

Academic Support/Time Management/Staying Organized - **THINK TANK** offers peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and support with academic skills through workshops and coaching. The **Thrive Center** offers peer mentoring and workshops relating to academic skills, career preparation, wellness, and “adulting” life skills.

Financial Aid - **Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid** provides various resources to help students navigate financial aid, including a video library of how-tos.

Mental Health & Wellness - **CAPS (Counseling and Psych Services)** can help students access the care that they need, including individual counseling and support groups.

Finding a Social Group – Students may find a group in the **ASUA Club directory**, with over 400 listed.

Asking for Help - **SOS** is a central place where students can ask any question through text, email, or chat.

Meeting Basic Needs – For students who need support accessing food or other basic needs, they can be referred to **Dean of Students** or **Campus Pantry**.