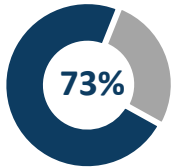




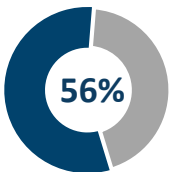
Over the summer, all incoming first-year students are asked to complete the homegrown Macalester First-Year Survey (92% response rate). One question asks for open-ended responses to the following: **“Please tell us what a successful experience at Mac would look like for you.”** Responses to this question from incoming 2023 first-year students have been content analyzed by theme. Theme frequencies and illustrative quotes are displayed below to help paint a picture of the multifaceted nature of incoming students’ perceptions of success.

## Relationships, Connections, & Community



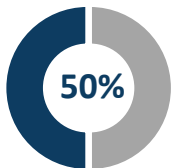
73% of first-year students said a successful Macalester experience would include **building relationships/connections** and **finding community/support** among students, faculty, and staff at Mac.

## Find Vocation, Purpose, Career Experience



56% of first-year students said a successful Macalester career would include **finding and pursuing their purpose and interests** and **career development opportunities**

## Gain Knowledge & Academic Success



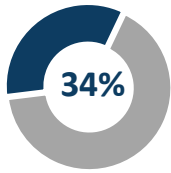
50% of first-year students said a successful Macalester career would include **academic success, taking engaging classes,** and **gaining knowledge** broadly and in a field.

Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Building friendships, relationships, connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I hope to form lasting relationships with my peers, colleagues, and professors.</i></li> <li><i>Making life-long friends</i></li> <li><i>I would love to find a core group of friends that I can hang out with and study with. I think that all the other stuff will become easier when I have people to share it with. I want to feel comfortable.</i></li> </ul>
Finding community / support systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I would like to build community and form connections that last and ‘find my people’</i></li> <li><i>Support from staff and faculty will be very helpful I believe. Making lasting connections with peers and faculty.</i></li> </ul>
Preparing for after Mac / career-development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>A successful experience would look like me graduating with a solid plan for the future regarding a job, stable income, and idea of what I want to continue to pursue in my life.</i></li> <li><i>Gaining practical experience with research and internships, and building connections with future employers.</i></li> </ul>
Finding & Pursuing my purpose / passion / interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I would like to cultivate and pursue my creative and intellectual interests on a personal and professional level</i></li> <li><i>I just want to feel fulfilled or like I have some sort of purpose.</i></li> </ul>
Academic success / good grades / engaging classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Working hard, getting good grades</i></li> <li><i>High academic standards to become the top of my class</i></li> <li><i>A successful college experience for me would be doing well in my classes and becoming prepared for life after college.</i></li> </ul>
Gain Knowledge broadly and in my field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I want to deepen my knowledge in many of the different subjects that I am curious about even though they do not qualify as career options.</i></li> <li><i>A successful college experience will expand my beliefs and knowledge of the world while also challenging me as a scholar.</i></li> </ul>



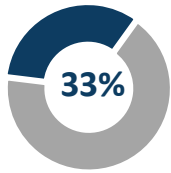
“Please tell us what a successful experience at Mac would look like for you.” (continued...)

## Personal Development, Growth



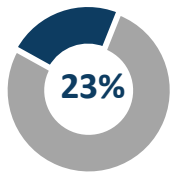
Growing, meeting people from different backgrounds and encountering new experiences is an important aspect of a successful Macalester experience for 34% of first-year students

## Engage Community & Make an Impact



33% of first-year students said a successful Macalester career would include participating in Mac’s clubs/teams/ extracurriculars, make an impact in the community, and engage communities on and off-campus.

## Maintain Balance & Have Fun!



Having a fun college experience and maintaining a good balance and stable mental health is an important aspect of a successful Macalester experience for 23% of first-year students

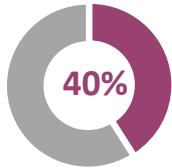
Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Stretching myself / growth / new experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to broaden my horizons and explore my different strengths while at Macalester. In doing so I hope to push myself into areas that will help me grow, even if I'm uncomfortable.</li> </ul>
Discover other cultures / Interact with people from different backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I also want to have success socially and meet people who I get along with, but who don't all necessarily have the same beliefs as me. Making friends from other countries is and always has been very important to me, because I believe interacting with people from different backgrounds and culture helps young people develop a more diverse worldview</li> </ul>
Find, enjoy, succeed in extracurriculars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to continue being involved in music and figure out if I want to double major/minor in it, or simply keep it as a hobby that I enjoy. I want to join ensembles to hone my skills and meet people who share my love of music</li> <li>I wish to achieve at a high level athletically during my time at Mac</li> </ul>
Make an Impact or feel empowered to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working towards anything that makes positive change in the world</li> <li>Also, promoting diversity and successfully teaching students to see through a globally minded lens.</li> <li>In this time, I would also commit myself to advocating and leading for social/political/economic change and equality in the country.</li> </ul>
Engage Community (on and off campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A successful experience at Macalester would involve me engage in internships in the Twin Cities and other service programs and communities, both on and off campus</li> </ul>
Have fun / Enjoy / Make memories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to maintain a good school/life balance. I want to make sure that college is challenging for me but also that it is an experience I enjoy.</li> <li>Make meaningful memories and connections in my campus life, and have fun!</li> </ul>
Maintaining balance / mental health / self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being able to balance my academics, track, and my social life well. Enjoying my time at Mac and keeping my mental health stable.</li> <li>I would be surrounded by a community of fun people who are accepting and understanding as well as hard working. I will be doing very well with my time management skills as well as in good mental health.</li> </ul>



# First-Year Students’ Concerns about Mac Experience

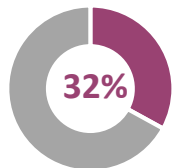
Over the summer, all incoming first-year students are asked to complete the homegrown Macalester First-Year Survey (92% response rate). One question asks for open-ended responses to the following: **“As you start your Mac experience, what are your biggest concerns or worries?”** Responses to this question from incoming 2023 first-year students have been content analyzed by theme and are summarized below.

## Relationships & Social Life



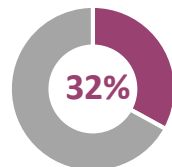
40% of first-year students report that **finding friends in the Mac community and having a healthy social life** is a worry for them.

## Adapting to College, Culture Shock, Navigating MN, Navigating a PWI



32% of first-year students said a big concern is **balancing all aspects of their lives and maintaining their mental and physical health** at Mac.

## Being Overwhelmed, Maintaining Balance & Wellness



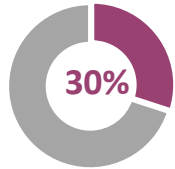
32% of first-year students said a big concern is **balancing all aspects of their lives and maintaining their mental and physical health** at Mac.

Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Social Life / Finding Friends or community / Fitting in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am mostly concerned about fitting in with a group of people that are most likely very different from the people I am used to</i></li> <li><i>I'm worried about my ability to socialize and balance that with my school work.</i></li> <li><i>I hope that I can make friends and I won't feel lonely and isolated.</i></li> <li><i>The biggest concern I have going into Mac is being able to manage my social life and academic life. Sometimes I'm very social but sometimes I'm not so it makes it hard to meet people. So meeting others and joining the community is a large concern for me.</i></li> </ul>
Adapting to new culture / language / environment / Predominantly White Institution (PWI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>My biggest concern is adapting to the culture of a new country and place.</i></li> <li><i>I am also a bit concerned about having a roommate. I'm used to having my own space where I can decompress alone, so it will be a big adjustment to live with another person.</i></li> <li><i>Overwhelmingly white population in St. Paul</i></li> </ul>
Cold Minnesota Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am not accustomed to the cold weather in Minnesota. Therefore, I am worried that I will get seasonal depression, and my mental health will go downhill.</i></li> <li><i>the weather is something that scares me</i></li> </ul>
Homesickness / Lack of Family Support/ Living on one's own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>My biggest concerns is mainly just the transition from living so far away from my home and family/friends</i></li> <li><i>I am very scared to be away from my family.</i></li> </ul>
Balancing everything / Time Management / Being overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I am most concerned about my time management.</i></li> <li><i>My biggest concern is my poor time management and the self-esteem issues/insecurity/shame that goes along with it (and it's hard to tell which came first)</i></li> <li><i>Not taking on too much because a lot of the new experiences will be super exciting so I have to make sure I'm able to say no.</i></li> </ul>
Stress / mental and physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I guess my biggest concern would be managing stress and these new struggles I'm having with anxiety while living so far away from home.</i></li> <li><i>getting overly stressed by responsibilities.</i></li> </ul>



“As you start your Mac experience, what are your biggest concerns or worries?” (continued...)

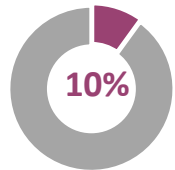
## Academics & Keeping Up



Meeting college-level academic expectations and **keeping up with the workload at Mac** are concerns for 30% of first-year students

Being able to keep up academically / being able to meet college-level academic expectations / workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am mostly scared of getting burnt out due to a heavy workload</li> <li>• potential struggles I may have in simply moving from basic high school classes to more difficult and demanding college courses.</li> <li>• I think my biggest concerns are academic related. I don't have good study skills because I didn't really had to study hard in high school, so I'm worried about adjusting to a higher course difficulty at college.</li> <li>• struggling to keep track of assignments, not doing well in classes, ending up in classes I don't enjoy and have to struggle through anyways.</li> <li>• I'm worried that I'm not up to scratch writing wise.</li> </ul>
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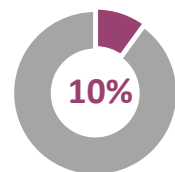
## Finding my path, major, vocation



10% of first-year students are worried about **not finding/following their career path and/or passion**

Finding Vocation / right major / knowing what I want to pursue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing a major that later on I wish I hadn't chosen. I know that nothing's truly a mistake in terms of what major/s I decide on but I don't want to realize I wasted a lot of money and should have taken a different route in terms of what career I end up going into.</li> <li>• Finally, my overall anxiety that I have about the future would be my biggest concern in the sense that my anxiety might cause me to freeze up.</li> <li>• Not being able to achieve how I imagined</li> <li>• I'm worried I will not be able to find a major/ career path.</li> </ul>
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## Finances, Student Debt



10% of first-year students are worried about **finances during college** and/or **student debt after college**

College expenses / living expenses / post-college debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I also worry about money and work while in college is advantageous or vice-versa.</li> <li>• Not being able to pay the rest of my remaining tuition cost and having lots of debt</li> <li>• I worry that my the financial situation at home might come between a lot of things while I'm away from home. I know that in the coming year our finances will be more of a struggle and it's stressful to try and think of how we will be able to afford certain things (ex. plane tickets home or any necessities) on top of tuition or supplies.</li> </ul>
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