

NEW STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

Fall 2018



Center for Institutional
Effectiveness

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Highlights

- The New Student Survey was administered to 2,888 students who were attending higher education for the first time at Bergen Community College in the Fall 2018 semester.
- The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to the students' Bergen and personal email addresses. Five hundred and twenty-five students responded to this invitation for a response rate of 18%.
- Respondents indicated that, in general, the following reasons were very important when deciding to attend college: "to be able to get a job/a better job" (89%), "to learn more about things that interest me" (83%), and "to get training for a specific career" (82%).
- Respondents indicated that the following reasons were very important to them when deciding to attend Bergen specifically: "affordability of tuition" (80%), "overall reputation of Bergen" (58%), and "academic reputation of my chosen major" (57%).
- The majority of respondents registered for classes more than one week before the start of the semester (84%) and took part in either an online orientation (47%) or an on-campus orientation (28%).
- When asked about applying for financial assistance, 39% said they applied three or more months before classes began and 30% said they did not apply for financial assistance. Forty-five percent of respondents indicated family sources were the main source they were using to pay for Bergen and 39% said financial aid, which they would not need to repay, was their main source.
- The services that were most used by respondents during their first week at Bergen were the Library/Learning Resource Center (75%) and academic advising (50%). Sixty percent of students have not used but intend to use transfer advisement and 58% intend to use career counseling.
- The majority of respondents (84%) planned to take classes again at Bergen in Spring 2019 and plan to complete their certificate or degree at Bergen within 1-2 years (59%). Thirty-one percent of respondents indicated the highest academic degree they intend to obtain is a Bachelor's and 28% intend to obtain a Master's.

Introduction

Colleges use entrance surveys to learn more about new students. Inspired by the work of other colleges, Institutional Research created its own New Student Survey. The purpose of the survey was to better understand the educational journey of our new students. Questions were framed around five themes: College Perceptions, College Preparation, Early College Experience, Future Plans, and High School Student Experience. In October 2018, an invitation to participate in the first online New Student Survey was emailed to the Bergen and personal email addresses of 2,888 *first-time-to-higher-education* students. The survey was open from October 11th, 2018 to November 3rd, 2018 and four \$10 Amazon gift cards were offered as incentives. The survey included twenty-four questions. There were 525 total unduplicated responses (18% response rate). Additionally, contact information for potential focus groups was collected. Appendix A lists the questions asked in the survey.

College Perceptions

Reasons for Attending College

When asked “In deciding to attend college generally, how important were each of the following reasons to you?” 89% of respondents said a very important reason they decided to attend college was to be able to get a job or a better job. This was followed by respondents saying “to learn more about things that interest me” (83%). Twenty-one other reasons were specified and are listed in the respondents’ exact words below.

Table 1: In deciding to attend college generally, how important were each of the following reasons to you?

Importance of Reasons	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total Respondents
To be able to get a job/a better job	463 (89%)	50 (10%)	10 (2%)	523
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	412 (79%)	96 (18%)	14 (3%)	522
To be able to make more money	414 (70%)	93 (18%)	14 (3%)	521
To learn more about things that interest me	433 (83%)	84 (16%)	6 (1%)	523
To get training for a specific career	428 (82%)	83 (16%)	11 (2%)	522
To please my family	222 (43%)	190 (37%)	108 (21%)	520

Other Reasons
1. I have a dream
2. I want to go to veterinary school.
3. I want to learn more knowledge.
4. Less fees
5. Making myself happy by obtaining this education which many people can't have.
6. My family is the motivation, but I attend college on my own accord in appreciation for education.
7. Networking
8. Please myself
9. Stubborn dream is most important.
10. To feel more accomplished
11. To gain higher education, for better self value
12. To gain the experience and connections
13. To inspire others
14. To learn English language and to evaluate my degree
15. To learn more
16. To network and gain connections through staff and students
17. To please myself
18. To provide for the future generations of my family, and my own future family, because as of now we struggle to obtain certain aspects of life.
19. To pursue my dreams
20. To switch my career after I moved to the states
21. To transfer to a 4 year school

Reasons for Attending Bergen Community College

The students were asked the specific reasons they decided to attend Bergen Community College. Eighty percent of respondents said a very important reason was the cost of tuition. Two other very important reasons indicated were overall reputation of Bergen (58%) and academic reputation of their chosen major (57%). Thirteen other reasons were specified and are listed in the respondents' exact words below.

Table 2: In deciding to attend Bergen Community College specifically, how important were each of the following reasons to you?

Importance of Reasons	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Total Respondents
Academic reputation of my chosen major	295 (57%)	160 (31%)	66 (13%)	521
Academic facilities (classrooms, library, labs, etc.)	290 (56%)	186 (36%)	43 (8%)	519
Price of tuition	415 (80%)	85 (16%)	21 (4%)	521
My family wanted me to come to Bergen	101 (19%)	145 (28%)	275 (53%)	521
My friends/relatives were attending Bergen	66 (13%)	138 (27%)	316 (61%)	520
A high school counselor/teacher advised me to come to Bergen	97 (19%)	119 (23%)	301 (58%)	517
I did not get into my first choice college	54 (10%)	74 (14%)	390 (75%)	518
I wanted to attend a school close to my home	263 (51%)	144 (28%)	112 (22%)	519
Overall reputation of Bergen	303 (58%)	151 (29%)	65 (13%)	519

Other Reasons
1. Awesome school
2. Bergen has a large parking lot.
3. Doing 2 years community, then transferring
4. Great reputation overall
5. I wanted to attend a school close to my job
6. I was part of the high school dual enrollment program, so I saw this as a great opportunity to get a head start to my career.
7. My job was will to pay tuition
8. Other colleges were just too expensive
9. Reputation of professors
10. Subsidized college was the best choice for me financially, and realistically at my age starting a college career.
11. The courses of study available for my major were very important
12. The tutoring center and student help made available to me.
13. To understand new methods of learning

College Preparations

Registering for Courses

When asked when they registered for courses for their first semester at Bergen, 84% of respondents indicated they had registered more than one week before classes began. Thirteen percent had registered during the week before classes began.

Table 3: When did you register for your courses for your first semester at Bergen?

Response	# (%)
After the first week of classes	8 (2%)
During the first week of classes	10 (2%)
During the week before classes began	64 (13%)
More than one week before classes began	425 (84%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	<i>507</i>

Applying for Financial Assistance

When asked when they first applied for financial assistance, 39% of respondents indicated they had applied three or more months before classes began. Thirty percent had not applied for financial assistance. Nineteen percent had applied 1 to 2 months before classes began.

Table 4: When did you first apply for financial assistance?

Response	# (%)
3 or more months before classes began	198 (39%)
1 to 2 months before classes began	94 (19%)
Less than 1 month before classes began	47 (9%)
After classes began	17 (3%)
I did not apply for financial assistance	149 (30%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	<i>505</i>

Participating in Orientation

When asked about their participation in orientation, 47% of respondents indicated they took part in online orientation and 28% attended an on-campus orientation. Fourteen percent of respondent were unable to participate due to scheduling or other issues and 11% were not aware of a college orientation.

Table 5: The following statements are about Bergen's orientation for new students. Please mark all that apply.

Response	# (%)
I attended an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes	140 (28%)
I took part in an online orientation prior to the beginning of classes	239 (47%)
I was not aware of a college orientation	56 (11%)
I was unable to participate in orientation due to scheduling or other issues	69 (14%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	<i>504</i>

Sources for Paying Tuition

The respondents were asked: “Which of the following sources are you using to pay for your first semester at Bergen?” Forty-five percent of respondents said family sources were their main source and 39% said aid that will not need to be repaid was their main source. Aid that will need to be repaid was not a source for 64% of respondents. Other sources that were specified are listed in the table below.

Table 6: Which of the following sources are you using to pay for your first semester at Bergen?

Sources	Main Source	A Source	Not A Source	Total Respondents
Family sources (parents, relatives, spouses, partners, etc.)	207 (45%)	112 (24%)	146 (31%)	465
My own sources (savings from work, work-study, other income, etc.)	124 (26%)	156 (33%)	194 (41%)	474
Aid which I will not need to repay (grants, scholarships, military funding, employer reimbursement, etc.)	186 (39%)	82 (17%)	212 (44%)	480
Aid which I will need to repay (loans, etc.)	94 (20%)	74 (16%)	296 (64%)	464

Other Sources
1. Aid which I will need to graduate
2. Bergen STARS program
3. FAFSA
4. I want to work on how can I get scholarships
5. I’m trying my best to see what other scholarships are available to me at the time being.
6. Im a high school student attending Bergen so I just needed to pay upfront
7. Nj Stars for my tuition, and my own money for the fees
8. On a side note, still have fees from the allegedly “free” summer intensive program that has caused me to have an outstanding balance on my account for \$351, addresses this within the first week of attending and the problem still has not been resolved as of yet.
9. School District
10. There needs to be more info for grants. I found it hard when looking on the website.

Early College Experience

Experiences During Start of College

The respondents were asked: “During the first few weeks of your college career, about how often have you done the following?” Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they often/very often became excited by a class and 66% often/very often participated in class discussions. Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated they never/rarely did not submit an assignment and 83% indicated they never/rarely submitted assignments late or came to class without completing readings or assignments. An answer of ‘sometimes’ was not included in this table.

Table 7: During the first few weeks of your college career, about how often have you done the following?

Experiences	Often/Very Often	Never/Rarely	Total Respondents
Became excited by a class	306 (67%)	36 (8%)	342
Participated in class discussions	302 (66%)	36 (8%)	338
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with teachers outside of class	158 (34%)	179 (39%)	337
Submitted assignments late	25 (5%)	384 (83%)	409
Did not submit an assignment	17 (4%)	419 (91%)	436
Came to class without completing readings or assignments	34 (7%)	379 (83%)	413
Discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor	115 (25%)	214 (57%)	329
Asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to class	173 (38%)	151 (33%)	324
Received prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	251 (55%)	96 (21%)	347
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class	183 (40%)	155 (34%)	338
Skipped class	16 (3%)	428 (93%)	444

Sources of Information

When asked about their main source of information for student support areas, 29% of respondents indicated Bergen staff members. Another 29% indicated that the Bergen website/self-service portal was their main source of information for choosing courses. Twenty-two percent said friends, family or other students were their main source of information for academic goal-setting and 19% did not seek this information. Bergen staff members were the main source of information for graduation requirements for 29% of respondents and the Bergen website/self-service portal was the main source for another 24%. Friends, family or other students were the main source of information for choosing a program of study (20%). Twenty percent did not seek this information. Friends, family or other students were the main source of information for choosing a program of study (25%). Twenty-five percent did not seek this information.

Table 8: What has been your main source of information for each of the following student support areas since enrolling at Bergen?

Information Sought	Main Source of Information					
	Bergen staff members	Bergen website/self-service portal	Friends, family or other students	Instructors	Other	Did not seek this information
Choosing courses	132 (29%)	130 (29%)	70 (15%)	83 (18%)	24 (5%)	15 (3%)
Academic goal-setting	73 (16%)	63 (14%)	101 (22%)	87 (19%)	42 (9%)	88 (19%)
Graduation requirements	132 (29%)	107 (24%)	37 (8%)	71 (16%)	22 (5%)	86 (19%)
Choosing a program of study	83 (18%)	69 (15%)	92 (20%)	41 (9%)	77 (17%)	90 (20%)
Financial aid	92 (20%)	63 (14%)	116 (25%)	34 (7%)	35 (8%)	115 (25%)
Other academic requirements and procedures	121 (27%)	107 (24%)	54 (12%)	55 (12%)	38 (8%)	78 (24%)

Usage of Services

The respondents were asked about their usage of services at Bergen during their first few weeks. The Library/Learning Resource Center was the service that was most used by respondents (75%) followed by academic advising (50%) and IT/Help Desk (48%). Sixty-percent of respondents have not used but plan to use transfer advisement and 58% have not used but plan to use career counseling. Thirty-four percent of respondents were not aware of Student Conduct or One-Stop. Thirty-two percent of respondents were not aware of the Child Development Center and 30% of respondents were not aware of the Financial Literacy Center or the Food Pantry.

Table 9: Have you used the following Bergen services?

Service	Have used service	Have not used and plan to	Have not used and do not plan to	Were not aware of service	Total Respondents
Library/Learning Resource Center	339 (75%)	83 (18%)	23 (5%)	8 (2%)	453
Services for students with disabilities	44 (10%)	26 (6%)	313 (69%)	72 (16%)	455
Tutoring services	83 (18%)	245 (54%)	94 (21%)	30 (7%)	452
Academic advising	229 (50%)	163 (36%)	34 (7%)	28 (6%)	454
Personal counseling	69 (15%)	178 (39%)	136 (30%)	72 (16%)	455
Transfer advisement	42 (9%)	271 (60%)	81 (18%)	60 (13%)	454
Career counseling	48 (11%)	265 (58%)	64 (14%)	76 (17%)	453
Job placement assistance	10 (2%)	242 (53%)	88 (19%)	114 (25%)	454
Student Conduct	28 (6%)	124 (27%)	145 (32%)	155 (34%)	452
Financial Literacy Center	50 (11%)	152 (33%)	115 (25%)	139 (30%)	456
Food Pantry	87 (19%)	90 (20%)	143 (31%)	134 (30%)	454
One-Stop	151 (33%)	70 (16%)	76 (17%)	154 (34%)	451
Child Development Center	14 (3%)	66 (15%)	226 (50%)	145 (32%)	451
IT/Help Desk	220 (48%)	104 (23%)	93 (20%)	39 (9%)	456

Bergen E-mail Use

The respondents were asked: “How often do you check your Bergen email?” Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated they checked in every day and 23% checked it a few times per week.

Table 10: How often do you check your Bergen email?

Frequency	# (%)
Every day	286 (54%)
A few times a week	123 (23%)
About once a week	27 (5%)
A few times a month	11 (2%)
Once a month	5 (1%)
Less than once a month	5 (1%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>457</i>

Perceptions During Start of College

Respondents were asked about their perceptions during their first few weeks at Bergen. Sixty-three percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement “At least one instructor learned my name” and 61% strongly agreed they “have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college.” Fifty-two percent of respondents agreed that the very first time they came to Bergen they felt welcomed. Thirty-two percent of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement “The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance” and 33% strongly disagreed with the statement “All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college.”

Table 11: Thinking about your first few weeks at Bergen, what is your level of agreement with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total Respondents
The very first time I came to this college I felt welcomed	178 (39%)	236 (52%)	34 (7%)	8 (2%)	456
The instructors at this college want me to succeed	228 (50%)	215 (47%)	13 (3%)	2 (<1%)	458
The College's processes (Registration, Financial Aid, etc.) were clearly explained to me	135 (30%)	196 (43%)	92 (20%)	33 (7%)	456
The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	109 (24%)	198 (44%)	113 (25%)	33 (7%)	453
All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	152 (33%)	217 (47%)	14 (3%)	152 (33%)	457
I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	222 (49%)	193 (42%)	36 (8%)	5 (1%)	456
At least one instructor learned my name	286 (63%)	132 (29%)	30 (7%)	8 (2%)	456
I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college	280 (61%)	163 (36%)	11 (2%)	3 (1%)	457
I feel like my commitments in and out of school are manageable	203 (45%)	215 (47%)	30 (7%)	8 (2%)	456
I feel confident navigating the College's campus	184 (40%)	212 (46%)	47 (10%)	13 (3%)	456
All the courses I needed to take during my first semester were available at a time convenient for me	186 (41%)	190 (42%)	65 (14%)	15 (3%)	456

Future Plans

Returning to Bergen

When asked when they plan on taking classes at Bergen again, 84% said next semester, 7% were uncertain and 5% accomplished their goal during the Fall semester and would not be returning.

Table 12: When do you plan to take classes at Bergen again?

Statement	# (%)
I will accomplish my goal(s) during this semester and will not be returning	24 (5%)
Next semester	373 (84%)
Not next semester, but within the next year	12 (3%)
I have no plans to return	4 (1%)
Uncertain	29 (7%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	442

Graduating from Bergen

When asked when they plan on completing their certificate or degree at Bergen, 59% indicated within one to two years and 18% indicated in more than two years.

Table 13: When do you plan to complete your certificate/degree at Bergen?

Statement	# (%)
I have no plans to complete a certificate/degree at Bergen	29 (7%)
Next semester	16 (4%)
Not next semester, but within 1 year	18 (4%)
1-2 years	259 (59%)
2+ years	78 (18%)
Uncertain	41 (9%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	441

Educational Goals

When asked what the highest academic degree they intend to obtain is, 31% of respondents indicated a Bachelor's, 28% indicated a Master's and 20% indicated an Associate.

Table 14: What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?

Degree	# (%)
None	15 (3%)
Certificate/Certificate of Achievement	14 (3%)
Associate (A.A. or equivalent)	87 (20%)
Bachelor's (B.A., B.S., B.D., etc.)	136 (31%)
Master's (M.A., M.S., M.B.A., etc.)	124 (28%)
M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., etc. (Medical)	15 (3%)
Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)	45 (10%)
Other	8 (2%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	444

High School Student Experience

High School Grades

Respondents were asked about their overall grades in high school. Forty-seven percent said they received mostly B's, 36% said mostly A's and 16% said mostly C's.

Table 15: Overall, what were your high school grades like?

Grades	# (%)
Mostly A's	154 (36%)
Mostly B's	200 (47%)
Mostly C's	69 (16%)
Mostly D's	5 (1%)
Mostly F's	1 (<1%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	429

Experiences During High School

The respondents were asked: "During your high school career, about how often did you do the following?" Sixty-three percent of respondents said they often/very often participated in class discussions and 59% said they often/very often received prompt written or oral feedback from an instructor on their performance. Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated they never/rarely did not submit an assignment and 59% indicated they never/rarely came to class without completing readings or assignments. An answer of 'sometimes' was not included in this table.

Table 16: During your high school career, about how often did you do the following?

Experiences	Often/Very Often	Never/Rarely	Total Respondents
Became excited by a class	199 (46%)	88 (21%)	287
Participated in class discussions	271 (63%)	58 (14%)	329
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with teachers outside of class	195 (46%)	111 (26%)	306
Submitted assignments late	64 (15%)	238 (56%)	302
Did not submit an assignment	61 (14%)	288 (67%)	349
Came to class without completing readings or assignments	78 (18%)	251 (59%)	329
Discussed an assignment or grade with an instructor	195 (46%)	77 (18%)	272
Asked for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to class	226 (53%)	79 (19%)	305
Received prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	250 (59%)	59 (14%)	309
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class	199 (47%)	106 (25%)	305
Skipped class	39 (9%)	339 (79%)	378

High School Graduation

When asked what year they graduated high school or earned a GED, 63% of respondents indicated they did in 2018 and 19% in 2014 or earlier. *Note:* Eight respondents indicated graduating in upcoming years (2019 or 2020) and have been included in this analysis due to the inability to determine whether these students were dually enrolled in high school and college at the time of the survey.

Table 17: When did you graduate high school or earn your GED?

Grades	# (%)
2014 or earlier	75 (19%)
2015	6 (2%)
2016	17 (4%)
2017	40 (10%)
2018	246 (63%)
2019	2 (1%)
2020	6 (2%)
<i>Total respondents</i>	392

Demographic Information

Self-Reported

Gender	# (%)
Female	240 (56%)
Male	186 (43%)
Non-Binary	1 (<1%)
Transgender	1 (<1%)
Unknown/unreported	97 (18%)
Race/ethnicity	# (%)
Hispanic	134 (26%)
White	133 (25%)
Unknown	100 (19%)
Asian	71(14%)
2 or more races	45 (9%)
Black/African American	28 (5%)
Other	11 (2%)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2 (<1%)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (<1%)
Employment Status in Fall 2018	# (%)
Worked for pay part-time (35 or less hours a week)	197 (46%)
Did not work for pay	167 (39%)
Worked for pay full-time (35 or more hours a week)	63 (15%)
Top 10 Programs of Study in Fall 2018	# (%)
Professional Studies	46 (11%)
Not a program ¹	46 (11%)
Undecided ²	36 (9%)
Criminal Justice	25 (6%)
Business Administration	24 (6%)
Biology	23 (6%)
Computer Science	22 (5%)
Psychology	18 (4%)
Engineering Science	15 (4%)
Nursing	15 (4%)

¹ 'Not a program' meaning the respondents indicated programs that don't exist at Bergen such as "Associate in Science", "Science", "taking prerequisites for a health profession program", etc.

² Undecided is not a program that exists at Bergen. When these respondents' programs were reviewed on Colleague, 83% were in AS.PS.GEN. These students, in combination with the 46 students who correctly identified as being in AS.PS.GEN, brings the total respondents who were in AS.PS.GEN up to 75 (14% of all survey respondents).

Reasons for Choosing Program of Study

Response	# (%)
Interest/passion	143 (38%)
Dream/ desired profession	79 (21%)
Other ³	40 (11%)
Not sure/none chosen	31 (8%)
To obtain/further skills	24 (6%)
Transferability	24 (6%)
Preparing for another program	16 (4%)
Variety of opportunities available	15 (4%)

Administrative Data

Age	# (%)
17 or under	40 (8%)
18-21	357 (69%)
22-25	50 (11%)
26-29	28 (5%)
30+	40 (8%)
Enrollment Status	# (%)
Full-time	422 (82%)
Part-time	93 (18%)
County Residency	# (%)
Bergen County resident	387 (78%)
Out of county resident	110 (22%)

³ Other reasons included: already practicing in field, to improve job opportunities, profitability of career, and program reputation

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. Please enter your seven-digit student ID, provided to you in the email.
2. In deciding to attend college generally, how important were each of the following reasons to you?
3. In deciding to attend Bergen Community College specifically, how important were each of the following reasons to you?
4. When did you register for your courses for your first semester at Bergen?
5. Which of the following sources are you using to pay for your first semester at Bergen?
6. When did you first apply for financial assistance?
7. The following statements are about Bergen's orientation for new students. Please mark all that apply.
8. During the first few weeks of your college career, about how often have you done the following?
9. What has been your main source of information for each of the following student support areas since enrolling at Bergen?
10. Have you used the following Bergen services?
11. Bergen.edu email is the official communication method of Bergen Community College. How often do you check your Bergen.edu email account?
12. Thinking about your first few weeks at Bergen, what is your level of agreement with the following statements?
13. When do you plan to take classes at Bergen again?
14. When do you plan to complete your certificate/degree at Bergen?
15. What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?
16. Overall, what were your high school grades like?
17. During your high school career, about how often did you do the following?
18. When did you graduate high school or earn your GED?
19. What is your gender?
20. What is your race/ethnicity? (Please mark all that apply)
21. Do you currently work for pay?
22. What is your program of study at Bergen?
23. Why did you choose your current program of study?
24. If you wish to participate in a focus group expanding on this survey, please leave your name and email below.