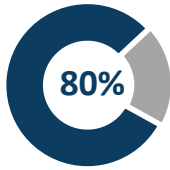




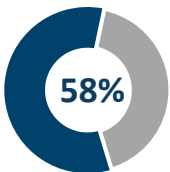
Over the summer, all incoming first-year students are asked to complete the homegrown Macalester First-Year Survey (98% response rate). One question asks for open-ended responses to the following: **“Please tell us what a successful experience at Mac would look like for you.”** Responses to this question from incoming 2024 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



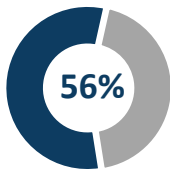
80% of first-year students said a successful Macalester experience would include **building relationships/connections** and **finding community/support** among students, faculty, and staff at Mac.

Gain Knowledge & Academic Success



58% of first-year students said a successful Macalester career would include **academic success, taking engaging classes,** and **gaining knowledge** broadly and in a field.

Find Vocation, Purpose, Career Experience



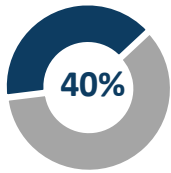
56% of first-year students said a successful Macalester career would include **finding and pursuing their purpose and interests** and **career development opportunities**

Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Building friendships, relationships, connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The most important thing to me in my life are my friendships so a big part of a successful college experience is the formation of long lasting friendships and community</i> <i>I also want to leave college with friends for life</i> <i>I want to make new connections and friends. I also want to learn more about others lives and different cultures because I feel like I'm in a bit of a bubble at my high school/town.</i>
Finding community / support systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Finding the community in which I feel supported and to which I can give back</i> <i>A successful college experience is one where I feel at home in a community of teachers, classmates, and friends who encourage me as I encourage them. Build strong connections</i>
Academic success / good grades / engaging classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I want to be able to get good grades and study the subjects that are interesting to me</i> <i>To me, a successful experience at Mac would be about finding disciplines that I'm excited to learn about and explore, but while also having a good GPA for graduate school</i>
Gain Knowledge broadly and in my field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A successful experience would be becoming completely competent and knowledgeable about my field, with real world experience to support me</i> <i>To me, a successful college experience would be one where I am able to learn in depth and access research/ professional opportunities that would not be available to me without the help of an institution of higher education. I also want to be inspired by my classes.</i>
Preparing for after Mac / career-development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I want to set myself up for a successful future doing something I love, with the needed work experiences and internships</i> <i>It looks like feeling prepared for job opportunities and working in the real world</i>
Finding & Pursuing my purpose / passion / interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I also hope to learn deeply about the areas of study that I'm interested in and seeing how they apply to the real world so I'm able use that knowledge in my life and my occupation.</i> <i>With the variety of classes at Mac and the focus on interdisciplinary education, I am hoping to find ways in which my passions across fields can work together to help me make an impact or do something I love.</i>



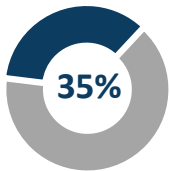
“Please tell us what a successful experience at Mac would look like for you.” (continued...)

Personal Development, Growth



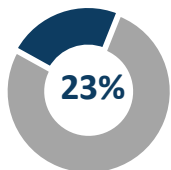
Growing, meeting people from different backgrounds and encountering new experiences is an important aspect of a successful Macalester experience for 40% of first-year students

Participate, Engage Community & Make an Impact



35% 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"> I also wish to have a fulfilling experience filled with exploration and self-discovery Every day, I aim to improve and integrate my personal and athletic growth with my academic achievements.
Discover other cultures / Interact with people from different backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving myself and getting to know other people who have different experiences from me are two of the most significant matters to me A successful experience for me at Mac would involve fully diving into and exploring a variety of cultures and experiencing the world, through study away opportunities, research, internships, etc. Ideally, I will come out of Mac having proficiency in one or two more languages, having learned more about the world, and having gained knowledge through connections with those different from me and solidarity in those similar to me
Find, enjoy, succeed in extracurriculars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful experience at Mac would involve lots of engagement with campus activities and clubs and especially other students. I hope to be able to balance academics, athletics, dance, and all the opportunities I want to do!
Make an Impact or feel empowered to do it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would like to leave Macalester believing that I am prepared to make valuable contributions to my community. I'm planning to participate in leadership roles for several extracurriculars both to demonstrate leadership and to develop friendly relationships with my peers.
Engage Community (on and off campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be a significant community builder/member and engage with everyone in Mac's small community A good college experience for me is one where I can connect with the local community and get to know the community I live in
Have fun / Enjoy / Make memories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lastly, I hope to enjoy myself and partake in my passions and interests. I also want to be successful socially, creating bonds and memories that will stay with me for the rest of my life. For me a successful experience at Mac would be having the most fun years of my life
Maintaining balance / mental health / be comfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staying on top of everything while enjoying it all and making memories. Another important aspect would be time management and creating a healthy balance between my responsibilities.



First-Year Students’ Concerns about Mac Experience

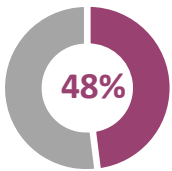
Over the summer, all incoming first-year students are asked to complete the homegrown Macalester First-Year Survey (98% response rate). One question asks for open-ended responses to the following: **“As you start your Mac experience, what are your biggest concerns or worries?”** Responses to this question from incoming 2024 first-year students have been content analyzed by theme and are summarized below.

Relationships & Social Life



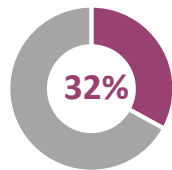
50% of first-year students report that **finding friends in the Mac community** and **having a healthy social life** is a worry for them, as is **dorm life**.

Academics & Keeping Up, Workload, Not staying on track



Meeting college-level academic expectations, keeping up with the workload at Mac, and getting the classes/requirements needed to stay on track concern 48% of first-year students

Adapting to College, Adapting to USA, Culture Shock, Navigating a PWI, Winter



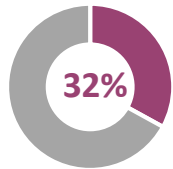
32% of first-year students said a big concern is **adapting and adjusting**. Whether that be to being away from home, to a new country, to an English-speaking environment, to MN winters, or a predominantly white institution (PWI)

Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Social Life / Finding Friends or community / Fitting in / living with roommates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My biggest concern is mostly social. It takes a longer time than average for me to become friends with people, so I'm a little worried about finding a new friend group.</i> • <i>My biggest concern is not finding my people</i> • <i>My biggest concern for now is about feeling free and supported in expressing my identity as a Palestinian.</i> • <i>As a Jewish student, I currently face a lot of stress over the Israel-Palestine situation, rising rates of antisemitism and how my views on the issue shape my interpersonal relationships</i>
Being able to keep up academically / being able to meet college-level academic expectations / workload / getting the classes I need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My biggest concern is not succeeding academically in my classes, and feeling like an imposter.</i> • <i>My largest concern is that I will not meet all of the distribution requirements and be unable to graduate, or that I will not be able to take all the required courses to earn my B.S. degree in Chemistry and/or Mathematics.</i> • <i>struggling with the course load and homework/assessments</i> • <i>I'm worried about balancing schoolwork, especially on a more independent study-format. I am not sure what my workload is going to look like, and I'm afraid of jumping in too deep.</i> • <i>That I will quickly lose all academic skill without the structure of highschool, or that my general anxiety about new things will keep me from enjoying myself.</i>
Adapting to new culture / language / environment / Predominantly White Institution (PWI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I would be afraid that I may be unable to engage well with others in the community because of my concern about discrimination based on ethnicity.</i> • <i>as a non-native English speaker, I'm afraid of being excluded because of my language skills. I fear that people might not pay attention to me or be considerate in avoiding slang when they speak.</i>
Cold Minnesota Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adapting to life in the US, surviving Minnesota's winter</i> • <i>living in the snow.... literally how do you do that??</i>
Homesickness / Lack of Family Support/ Living on one's own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My biggest concern would be that I have to study in a country that is situated so far from home. I wish to find a sense of home in the Macalester community,</i> • <i>My biggest concerns at Mac is trying to adjust to the new environment and being away from home by myself for the first time.</i>



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

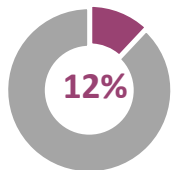
Being Overwhelmed, Maintaining Balance & Wellness, Time Management



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.

Balancing everything / Time Management / Being overwhelmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My biggest concern is just adjusting to the college life and balancing school work and social activities while getting enough sleep</i> • <i>I'm also worried about being able to maintain a healthy balance between school, work, extracurriculars, and social life.</i>
Stress / mental and physical health / finding care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adjusting to an entirely new environment while maintaining physical and mental health.</i> • <i>falling behind because of mental health issues.</i> • <i>Finding a new therapist in MN</i>

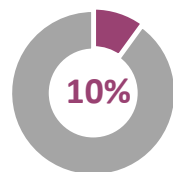
Finding my path, major, vocation



12% of first-year students are worried about **not finding/following their career path and/or passion**

Finding Vocation / picking the right major / knowing what I want to pursue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I worry that I won't be able to find activities and subjects I am truly interested in, or because I have too many interests I won't be able to know which ones to focus on.</i> • <i>I'm having a really hard time figuring out the best path to take.</i> • <i>If my major will make me money and allow me to be successful</i> • <i>finding a major that both interests me and has a bright outlook in job market</i>
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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"> • <i>Not being able to pay for tuition as costs increase and being a financial burden for my family</i> • <i>Finances and future job opportunities.</i> • <i>managing my finances</i> • <i>My biggest concerns are probably being able to pay for tuition and other expenses</i> • <i>A bit of financial worries given the high cost of living in the US and transportation cost (but really grateful for the financial aid!!!)</i>
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