



Taking Stock: First-Year, On Campus Students (FA15-FA20)

The Taking Stock (TS) program seeks to better understand students' first year experiences, further their opportunities for success, and improve first-year retention. TS uses survey data to promote meaningful conversations between on campus undergraduates and their Resident Advisors (RAs). These interactions provide early feedback and help to inform and create a support network for each student. Taking Stock data could be further leveraged to inform support structures early in students' first year at CSU across a wider variety of offices at CSU. A [previous report](#) in Fall 2018 found positive associations between constructs developed from a factor analysis and student success.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of survey results over time among first year, on-campus respondents. Results are also discussed by structurally underserved identities (first generation, Pell recipient, racially minoritized status), and by duplicated race/ethnicity.¹

Summary

Among students overall, percent agreement has decreased over time for each factor. It is unclear if this change reflects a true decrease in these areas, or is influenced by changes in the survey process. It is also important to note that the Taking Stock survey has significant overlap with the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), which may contribute to survey fatigue, particularly among structurally underrepresented populations.

Of particular note is the significant decrease in social adjustment across all student groups between FA19 and FA20, which is likely connected to COVID-19. No differences are observed between structurally underserved populations and students overall across constructs with the exception of financial concerns; these data suggest that institutional structures (rather than students' commitment to their education) play a significant role in the observed differences in graduation rates among underserved populations. Given the higher level of financial concerns among structurally underserved populations, a potential strategy could be to identify those students with high financial concerns who did not complete a FAFSA, and direct them to do so.

Students' confidence in test taking ability decreased over time. Also of note is students' drop in confidence in their ability to locate academic resources between FA19 and FA20. First gen and racially minoritized students reported lower levels of confidence across academic skills and abilities compared to continuing gen and non-RM students over time; Pell students reported lower confidence in math and time management, and test taking ability over time. Students with low confidence in these areas might benefit from enrollment in foundational courses with faculty who are experienced in growth mindset pedagogy. Targeted outreach from TILT could also be beneficial, given the range of workshops and services offered in these topic areas.

Students were more likely to report missing an assignment, particularly in FA20 compared to FA19; students with structurally underserved identities were more likely to report this behavior compared to non-structurally underserved identities. However, all populations also reported spending significantly more time on coursework

¹ Duplicated race/ethnicity means that students are represented across all of their identities. For example, if a student identifies as Latinx and Black, they are included in both categories.

in FA20 compared to FA19. These anomalies are likely connected to the pandemic and significant changes in students' living and learning environment.

Students were less likely to be employed and seek employment over time. The proportion of students who reported working off-campus has increased, while the proportion working on-campus has decreased over time. However, the majority of students would still prefer working on campus or working both on and off campus. Structurally underserved students were more likely to be employed or report seeking employment; those who were already employed reported working more hours compared to non-structurally underserved students. These results could be useful to campus employers as well as the Career Center in tailoring communications and recruitment for job opportunities.

Personal struggles, adjustment to CSU, and missing friends and family increased over time for students overall; these items were cited as current or potential roadblocks to success. RM, Pell, and FG students were more likely to cite personal struggles, paying for college, and family issues compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students. They also reported lower levels of academic adjustment to campus, feeling less comfortable being themselves, and less valued at CSU. While about half of respondents overall reported engaging in self-care (establishing healthy sleep habits and exercising regularly), levels were significantly lower among underserved populations. These are newer items and it will be important to monitor trends over time.

In general, students reported a high level of uncertainty around recognizing and reporting incidents of bias, indicating a need for more training in this area. Pell, FG, and RM students felt less supported in their identities at CSU, and less supported from students and staff compared to non-Pell, continuing gen, and non-RM students. These data mirror data that are collected on the National Survey of Student Engagement and both underscore the importance of CSU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives on campus.

The proportion of students who met with their RA to discuss survey results dropped significantly in FA20 compared to previous years. This was consistently high across other years, with minimal differences by identity. In FA20, underrepresented identities were significantly less likely to have RA conversations. These decreases in RA conversations are likely connected to the pandemic, but it is important to note the decrease is more pronounced among students with structurally underserved identities.

The Taking Stock survey has significant overlap with the NSSE survey, which may contribute to survey fatigue, particularly among structurally underrepresented populations.

Methodology

The Taking Stock program sends an online survey to all new first-year and transfer students at CSU. Students complete the survey during the fourth week of the semester and are encouraged to reflect on their experiences during the first few weeks at CSU. Table 1 displays demographics of first-year, on campus students who took the survey in addition to the response rate.

Table 1. Taking Stock Demographics for First-Year, On Campus Respondents (FA15-FA20)

	Survey Term											
	FA15		FA16		FA17		FA18		FA19		FA20	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Total Responses	100.0%	4202	100.0%	4390	100.0%	4374	100.0%	4434	100.0%	4477	100.0%	3479
Response Rate	92.0%		91.0%		91.0%		88.0%		86.0%		80.0%	
Female	55.1%	2315	58.1%	2552	56.0%	2448	56.6%	2508	58.7%	2626	61.9%	2152
Resident	69.0%	2901	67.0%	2943	66.6%	2911	61.5%	2729	63.5%	2842	64.1%	2229
First Gen	26.1%	1096	22.7%	995	22.3%	974	22.2%	985	23.5%	1051	20.9%	726
RM	22.2%	932	25.5%	1120	27.9%	1220	28.5%	1262	29.0%	1298	28.8%	1001
Pell Recipient	20.2%	850	20.9%	915	21.9%	960	20.9%	925	21.0%	940	18.5%	643
Hispanic/Latinx	13.3%	558	15.1%	664	17.2%	753	17.3%	766	17.4%	779	16.7%	580
Native Amer	1.7%	73	2.2%	98	2.8%	124	3.3%	145	3.8%	172	4.3%	150
Black	3.8%	160	4.8%	210	4.4%	194	4.4%	197	4.7%	211	3.8%	133
White	85.1%	3577	87.0%	3820	88.7%	3880	89.5%	3968	89.8%	4022	90.0%	3131
International	1.8%	74	1.5%	68	0.0%	0	1.4%	60	1.0%	47	0.4%	14
Asian/Hawaiian	5.6%	237	6.4%	281	6.5%	285	7.2%	318	7.7%	343	7.8%	271

In general, the proportion of students who responded to the survey is high; however, this has decreased over the last four administrations. The response rate was lowest in FA20, but this is most likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Averaged across terms, over half of respondents are female, and about two-thirds are residents. About one in four are first generation and racially minoritized, and one in five are Pell recipients. By duplicated race/ethnicity, about 16% are Hispanic/Latinx, 3% are Native American, 4% are Black, 88% are white, 1% are international, and about 7% are Asian or Hawaiian. Overall, respondent demographics accurately represent the survey’s intended population; however, both first gen and Pell recipient representation is slightly lower in FA20 compared to previous administrations.

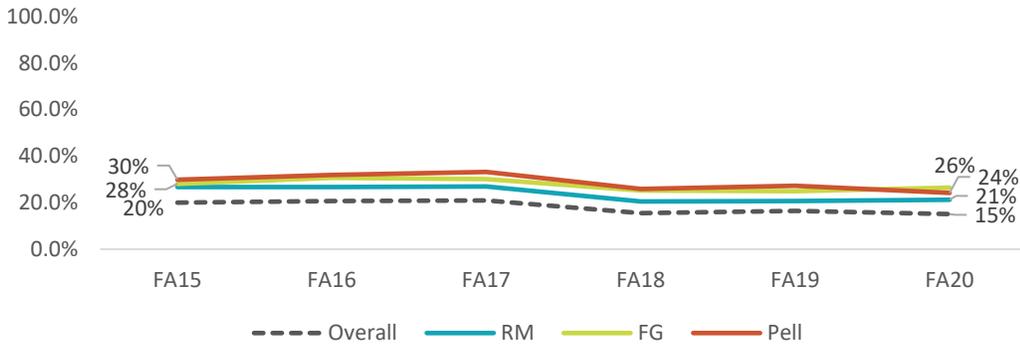
One of the features of the survey is that it groups items around themes known as constructs. While the items that have been asked in the survey have changed over time, six constructs have been relatively consistent: financial concerns, commitment to stay, determination to succeed, state of mind, social adjustment and homesickness. Each construct score represents the overall average of item responses, and all items are measured on a 7-point Likert agreement scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 7=Strongly Agree). Only those students who answered all questions in the construct receive a construct score.

Constructs Over Time

This section shows the overall average percent agreement for each construct over time. Percent agreement for racially minoritized, first gen, and Pell recipients is also included.

Figure 1 displays the average percent agreement for financial concerns by identity over time. Items in this construct assess the extent to which college expenses are a burden to students and their families and their ability to be successful at CSU. A total of five items make up this construct.

Figure 1. Financial Concerns Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20



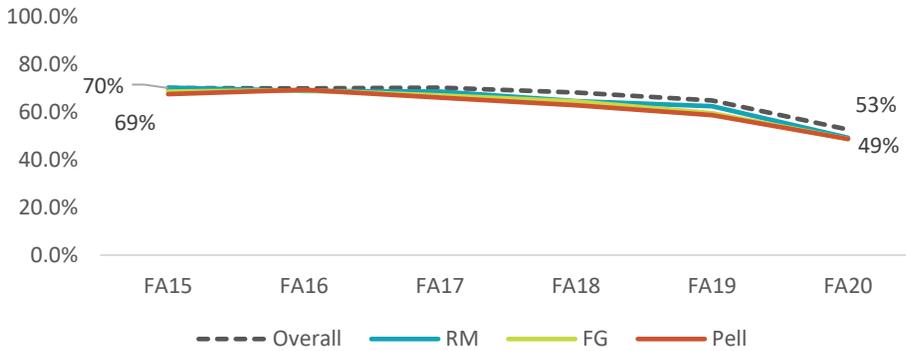
Financial concerns have decreased by about 5 percentage points (PP) from FA15 to FA20 among respondents overall. The proportion of students who agreed/strongly agreed that ‘College expenses are causing a strain on my family’ decreased by almost 10 PP over time, from 26% in FA15 to 17% in FA20, contributing to the overall decrease. Other items that contributed to the overall decrease include ‘I often feel worried about paying for college’ (30% to 26%) and ‘I have concerns about my ability to pay for my college education through graduation’ (28% to 21%). This is consistent with a decrease in the proportion of students who indicated [financial concerns](#) as a potential roadblock to success later in the survey.

Generally, financial concerns have decreased over time; however, students with structurally underserved attributes have a higher percent agreement compared to the overall rate each year. In FA20, first gen students reported the highest average percent agreement at 26%, followed by Pell students at 24%, and RM students at 21%. Each of these identity groups reported statistically higher percent agreement compared to students without that identity between FA18 and FA20. One action CSU could take from these data is to identify the students that indicated they have financial concerns and check if those students completed the FAFSA. Any of the students with concerns that have not applied for aid could be directed to complete the application.

Average percent agreement has increased since FA18 for students who identify as Black and/or Native American by 6-7 PP for each identity. Black-identified students reported 29% average percent agreement and Native American-identified students reported a 27% average percent agreement for financial concerns, which is more than 10 PP higher than the overall average.

Figure 2 displays average percent agreement for social adjustment by identity over time. This construct is comprised of five items that assess connection with peers and feelings of belonging to the CSU community.

Figure 2. Social Adjustment Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20



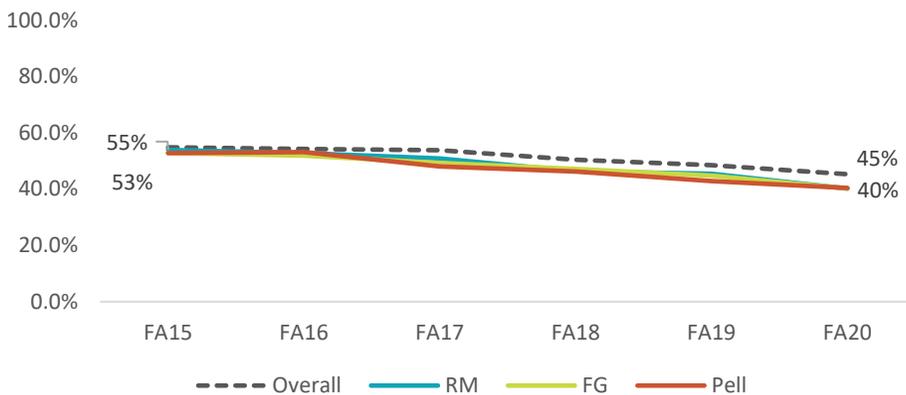
Social adjustment average percent agreement remained relatively consistent between FA15 and FA18, with about 70% agreement overall. In FA19, percent agreement decreased by about 3 PP compared to previous years and decreased by 12 PP from FA19 to FA20. This significant change in FA20 is most likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. From FA19 to FA20, students were about 17 PP less likely to agree that CSU is meeting their expectations socially, 10 PP less likely to agree that they are adjusting well socially, 15 PP less likely to agree they have been able to make friends with other students, and 14 PP less likely to agree that they have been able to connect with others who share common interests.

Among students with underrepresented identities, percent agreement was consistent between FA15 and FA16, and declined across time. Similar to students overall, average percent agreement decreased significantly in FA20 compared to FA19; decreasing by 13 PP among RM students, 11 PP among FG, and 10 PP among Pell recipients. Racially minoritized, Pell, and first gen students reported significantly lower percent agreement each year (FA18-FA20) compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students.

Average percent agreement decreased by 15 PP for each duplicated race/ethnic identity between FA18 and FA20. In FA20, Black identified students had the lowest average percent agreement of any identity at 43.2%, which is almost 10 PP lower than the overall average.

Figure 3 displays average percent agreement over time for state of mind. Four items make up this construct and assess students’ ability to cope with stress, stay positive when faced with challenges, and their overall emotional health.

Figure 3. State of Mind Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20



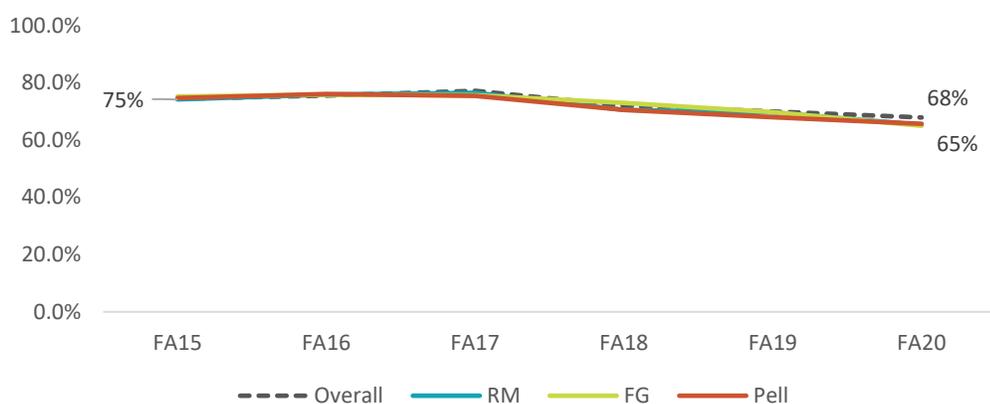
Among respondents overall, state of mind percent agreement was consistent between FA15 and FA17 at about 54%, and decreased each year to about 45% by FA20. Most notably, the proportion of students who agreed or strongly agreed ‘I am emotionally healthy’ decreased from 66% in FA15 to 49% in FA20 (17 PP), and ‘I am generally optimistic, even when things are difficult’ decreased from 63% in FA15 to 54% in FA20 (9 PP).

First gen, RM, and Pell recipients also reported a similar decline in percent agreement over time; in FA20, each identity was about 5 PP lower compared to the overall average. Percent agreement is statistically lower for first gen, RM, and Pell compared to continuing gen, non-RM, and non-Pell across years (FA18-FA20).

Percent agreement also decreased over time by duplicated race/ethnic identities, particularly for students who identify as Hispanic/Latinx (8 PP) and international students (13 PP). Please note that the headcount for international students is low in FA20 (N=13), and rates should be interpreted with caution. In FA20, Latinx, Native American, Black, and Asian/Hawaiian-identified students’ percent agreement was about 5 PP below the overall average.

Figure 4 displays average percent agreement over time for determined to succeed. Seven items make up this construct, and measure students’ resilience to failure, planning when challenges arise, and confidence in their ability achieve academic goals.

Figure 4. Determined to Succeed Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20



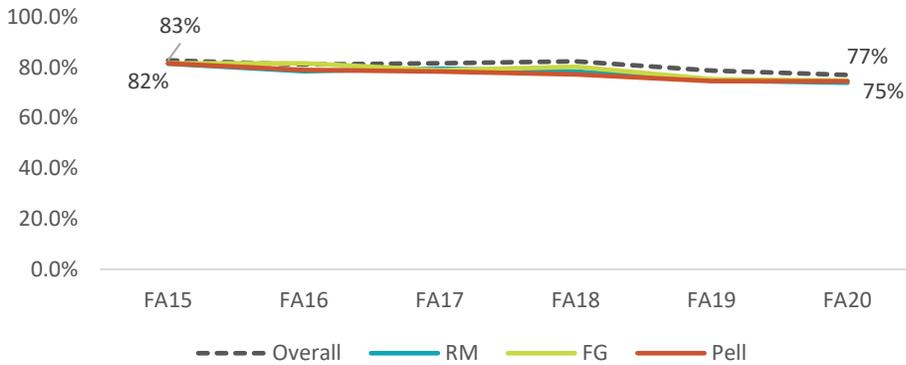
Average percent agreement for ‘determined to succeed’ was about 75% from FA15 to FA17, and decreased across the remaining terms to 68% in FA20. Percent agreement for each item within the construct decreased over time, most notably, ‘No matter what obstacles are placed before me, I am confident in my abilities to succeed’ (73% to 62%), ‘By working hard I can almost always achieve my goals’ (79% to 70%), and ‘I feel I can handle most things that come my way’ (77% to 70%). Percent agreement for these items decreased gradually over time.

Structurally underserved students follow a similar pattern, in that average percent agreement was consistent between FA15 and FA17, and declined over time. Minimal differences are observed between Pell, first gen, and racially minoritized students and students without these identities. This finding is similar to NSSE in that structurally underserved students report similar levels of engagement. Survey data continually show that structurally underserved students are similarly engaged, motivated, and determined to succeed at CSU. These data suggest that institutional structures (rather than students’ commitment to their education) play a significant role in observed differences in graduation rates among underserved populations.

Average percent agreement decreased over time by duplicated race ethnicity; most notably among students who identify as international (10 PP), Black (7 PP), Hispanic/Latinx (6 PP), and Asian/Hawaiian (5 PP).

Figure 5 displays average percent agreement for commitment to stay. This construct is made up of six items that measure students’ intentions to return to CSU in the spring, complete their degree at CSU, confidence in their choice to attend CSU, and willingness to recommend CSU as a good school. There is considerable overlap with these questions and the NSSE.

Figure 5. Commitment to Stay Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20

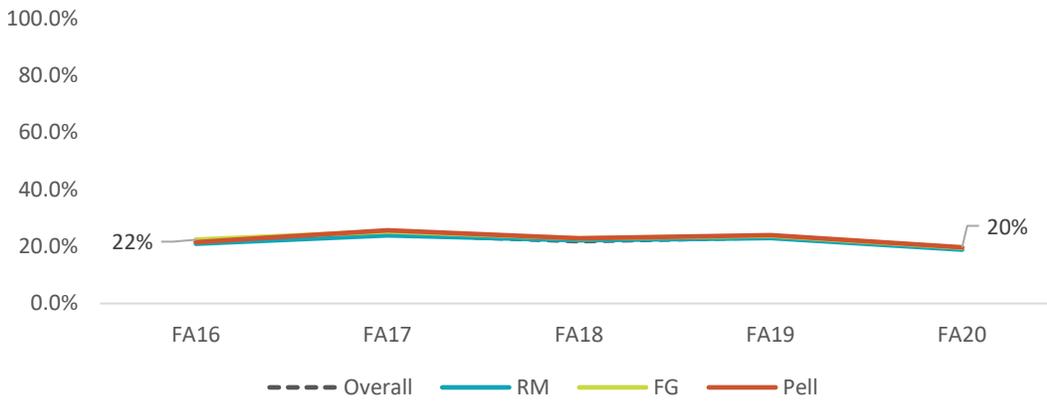


Commitment to stay was consistent at about 83% from FA15 to FA18, decreasing in FA19 and FA20 to 77%. Percent agreement for almost all items decreased gradually over time. The largest decrease is observed for the item ‘I am confident that attending college was the best decision for me’, which decreased by 10 PP between FA15 and FA20.

Structurally underserved students reported similar levels of agreement compared to students overall each year; minimal differences are observed between Pell, first gen, and RM students and non-structurally underserved students. These data demonstrate that commitment to stay is equivalent across populations, and thus do not explain graduation gaps by structurally underserved identities. Percent agreement decreased over time by duplicated race/ethnic identity, particularly among students who identify as Native American (10 PP). In FA20, students who identified as Black had the lowest percent agreement at 68%, 9 PP lower than the overall average.

Figure 6 displays average percent agreement for the ‘homesickness’ construct over time. Three items make up this construct, and measure students’ difficulty with being away from home, family, friends, and/or significant other.

Figure 6. Homesickness Average Percent Agreement, FA15-FA20



Average percent agreement for homesickness has fluctuated slightly over time, between about 20% and 24%. As for changes in individual items, the proportion of students who agreed/strongly agreed that ‘It is hard being away from home, family, significant other, and/or friends’ decreased by 5 PP between FA19 and FA20; ‘I feel homesick’ decreased by 5 PP during the same time. RAs can use this information in their conversations with residents to suggest how they can meaningfully engage with their community while maintaining existing relationships.

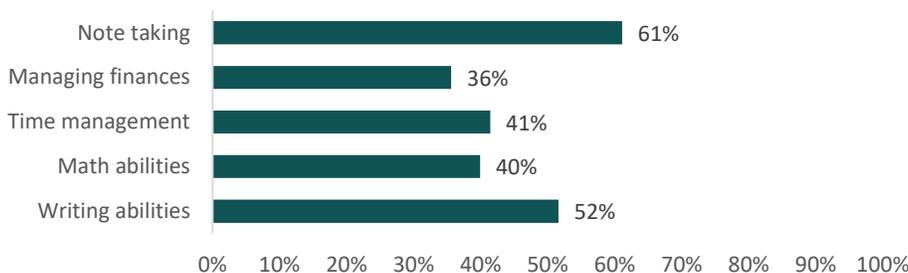
Homesickness did not vary by structurally underserved identities. By duplicated race/ethnic identity, homesickness decreased for all identities with the exception of Native American students, for whom percent agreement increased by about 6 PP over time, and international students, who increased by 27 PP.

Skills and Abilities

This section focuses on students’ confidence across seven skills and abilities, including writing abilities, math abilities, time management, managing their finances, locating academic resources, note taking ability, and test taking ability. These areas fit within TILT’s (The Institute for Learning and Teaching) services; students who report low confidence in these areas could be targeted for outreach and support.

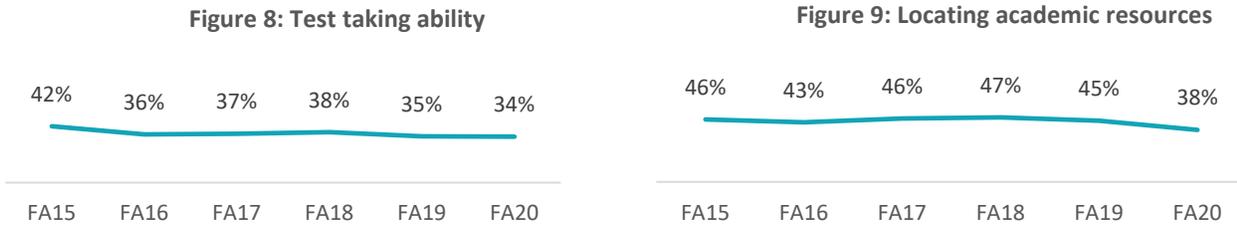
The response scale for items in this section is on a 5-point Likert scale (1=not at all; 5=extremely). The top two response choices are combined to represent the proportion of respondents who reported feeling very or extremely confident. Figure 7 displays confidence for writing, math, time management, managing finances, and note taking, averaged over time.

Figure 7: Skills and Abilities Average Confidence Over Time (FA15-FA20)



Confidence in each of these areas has remained relatively consistent over time, with writing abilities at 52%, math abilities at 40%, time management at 41%, managing finances at 36%, and note taking at 61%. A [recent report](#) indicated a positive association between successfully completing math and/or composition in the first year and second fall persistence. Students with low confidence in these areas might benefit from enrollment in foundational courses with faculty that are experienced in growth mindset pedagogy.

Figures 8 and 9 display changes over time for test taking ability and locating academic resources.



Confidence in test-taking ability has decreased significantly over time, from about 42% in FA15 to 34% in FA20 (8 PP). Confidence in locating academic resources was relatively stable at about 45% between FA15 and FA19 and decreased significantly to 38%, a 7 PP decrease compared to previous years. TILT could also be a source of outreach and support for students struggling in these areas.

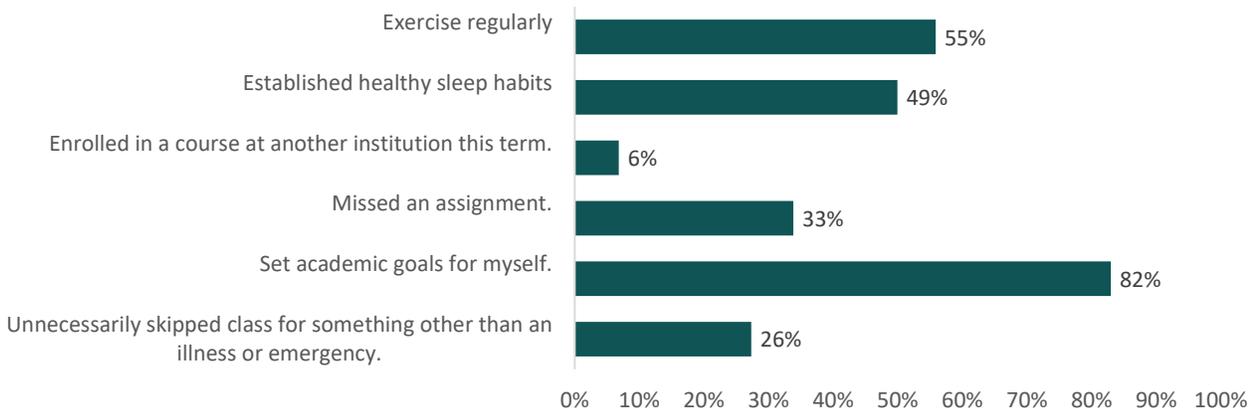
Among structurally underserved identities, both Pell and first gen students reported lower confidence in math abilities, time management, and test taking ability by at least 5 PP across years (FA18-FA20) compared to non-Pell and continuing gen students. Racially minoritized students also reported lower confidence in these areas, as well as writing abilities, managing finances, and note taking ability by an average of 5 PP or more compared to non-RM students across years.

By duplicated race/ethnicity, Latinx and Black-identified students reported higher confidence in writing abilities over time by 5 PP, Black-identified students reported higher confidence in time management (10 PP), and Native American students reported higher confidence in test taking ability (4 PP). Asian/Hawaiian, International, Native American, and Latinx students reported lower confidence in math abilities by at least 6 PP across time. Similar to the trend among students overall, most identities reported lower confidence in locating academic resources, particularly between FA19 and FA20, and Latinx, Black, and Asian/Hawaiian-identified students reported lower confidence in test taking ability over time by at least 6 PP. Latinx, Native American, Black, and international students also reported lower confidence in managing their finances by at least 7 PP over time.

Behaviors Already Engaged In

This section details which behaviors students had already engaged in by the time they completed the Taking Stock survey related to academic and wellness behaviors. Students were instructed to check all that apply. Items include missing an assignment, skipping class for something other than an illness or emergency, setting academic goals, enrolling in a course at another institution, establishing healthy sleep habits, and exercising regularly. Figure 10 displays the overall proportion of students who selected these behaviors, averaged across years.

Figure 10: Behaviors Already Engaged In, FA15-FA20



Setting academic goals (82%), establishing healthy sleep habits (49%), and enrolling in a course at another institution (6%) remained relatively stable over time. While consistent in previous years, notable changes occurred in FA20 for missing an assignment and unnecessarily skipping class. The proportion of students who reported missing an assignment increased from 32% in FA19 to 47% in FA20 (15 PP), and the proportion who reported skipping class decreased across this time period, from 26% in FA19 to 18% in FA20 (8 PP). The proportion of students who reported exercising regularly also decreased from 58% to 50% in FA20 compared to FA19.

Racially minoritized students were more likely to report missing an assignment (5-9 PP) compared to non-RM students. This gap was largest in FA20, with 45% of RM students reporting missing an assignment compared to 54% of non-RM students. First gen and Pell students were more likely to miss an assignment compared to continuing gen and non-Pell students in FA19 and FA20 by 5 PP or more, but similar across other years. Academic goal setting does not differ by RM, Pell, or first gen status, with about 80% of all students reporting this behavior. RM, first gen, and Pell students were significantly less likely to establish healthy sleep habits and exercise regularly compared to non-RM, continuing gen, and non-Pell students in both FA19 and FA20. In FA20, RM students were 10 PP less likely to have established healthy sleep habits compared to non-RM; first gen and RM students were 8-9 PP less likely to exercise regularly compared to continuing gen and non-RM students.

Patterns are similar to students overall for responses by duplicated race/ethnicity, in that missing an assignment increased for each identity over time, while unnecessarily skipping class decreased. Setting academic goals also decreased over time by about 5 PP for each identity, with the exception of international students, for whom this behavior decreased by more than 20 PP. However, it is important to note that rates will be volatile due to the low headcount for international students in FA20 (N=14).

Employment Status

This section describes behaviors and preferences related to employment, both on and off campus. These results could be useful to campus employers as well as the Career Center in tailoring communications and recruitment for job opportunities, and these data overlap with data collected by NSSE.

Overall, the proportion of students who reported employment has decreased over time, from 18% in FA16 to 13% in FA20. The proportion of students who were unemployed, but seeking employment also decreased, from about 41% to 37% in the same time period. The proportion of students who were unemployed and not seeking

employment increased by about 10 PP, from 41% to 51%. The NSSE 2016 and 2019 data also demonstrate a downward trend in the proportion of respondents who reported working on campus.

Where students work has also shifted over time. Fewer students reported working on campus; this proportion decreased from 40% in FA18 to 34% in FA19, and decreased to 21% in FA20 due to the pandemic and reduced availability of on-campus employment opportunities. The proportion who reported working off campus increased by 6 PP between FA18 and FA19 (57% to 63%), and increased significantly in FA20 to 77%. A small proportion of respondents reported working both on and off campus (about 3%) across years. In general, students who were seeking employment preferred to work on campus, followed by both on and off campus, with smallest proportion wanting to work off campus only. These proportions shifted over time, in that the proportion of students wanting to work on campus decreased by about 10 PP between FA19 and FA20, while the proportion of students wanting to work both on and off campus increased by about 10 PP during this time.

Overall, structurally underserved students who work tend to work more hours per week compared to non-underserved identities; this trend has increased over time. In FA20, 40% of Pell recipients, 34% of first gen, and 30% of RM students reported working 15 or more hours per week, compared to 25% of students overall.

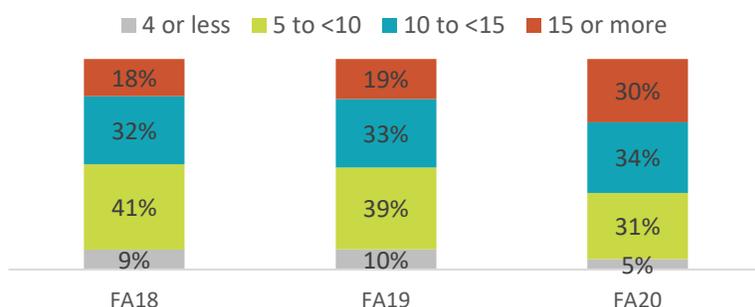
The proportion of students by duplicated race/ethnicity who reported being employed decreased for each group over time, while the proportion seeking employment increased for each identity with the exception of international students. Decreases in employment were most significant for Native American students (12 PP) and Black-identified students (10 PP). Overall, students with racially minoritized identities reported working a higher number of hours per week compared to white-identified students.

Time Spent on Coursework

Starting in FA18, students were asked to report how many hours per week, on average, they spent on coursework. Options include 4 or less, 5 to less than 10, 10 to less than 15, 15 to less than 21, and 21 or more. The NSSE survey also asks students about time spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, etc.) and time spent on reading and writing assignments.

Figure 11 displays average hours per week spent on coursework averaged over time (FA18-FA20).

Figure 11: Average Hours per Week Spent on Coursework (FA18-FA20)



In FA18 and FA19, about 40% of students spent 5 to <10 hours per week, about one-third spent 10 to 14, and about one in five students spent 15 or more hours. These proportions shifted in FA20, in that more students reported spending 15 or more hours (11 PP). The NSSE results show a slight shift towards studying more (which is probably reflective of the timing difference between surveys); about 20% reported spending 6 to 10 hours, 22% spent 11 to 15 hours, and 50% reported spending 15 or more hours.

In general, students with structurally underserved identities spent a similar amount of time on coursework compared to non-structurally underserved students. Like students overall, the proportion of students who spent more than 15 hours per week increased by 10 PP or more for each underserved identity between FA19 and FA20, which may be influenced by COVID-19 and changing coursework demands.

Current or Potential Graduation Roadblocks

This section asks students to select roadblocks that they are either currently experiencing, or that they anticipate might prevent them from graduating.

Most notably, the proportion of students who identified ‘personal struggles’ as a roadblock increased significantly over time, from 18% in FA15 to 33% in FA20. The proportion who identified ‘adjustment to CSU’ also increased in that time frame, from 12% to 21%. Students also cited missing friends and family back home as a frequent reason (about 1 in 5 in FA15); this proportion had increased by 10 PP in FA19 (this question was not asked in FA20). Consistent with the ‘Financial Concerns’ overall construct agreement, the proportion of students who cited ‘paying for college’ as a roadblock decreased by 4 PP over time.

Racially minoritized students were more likely to cite personal struggles (6 PP) and being worried about their major (4 PP or more) in recent years compared to non-RM students; they reported the remaining roadblocks at a similar rate. First gen and Pell students were at least 6 PP more likely to cite personal struggles, and about 8 PP more likely to cite family issues consistently across time in comparison to continuing gen and non-Pell students. RM students were 1.5 times more likely to cite paying for college as a roadblock compared to non-RM students; Pell and first gen students were twice as likely to cite this compared to non-Pell and first gen students.

By duplicated race/ethnicity, personal struggles have increased for Latinx students, Native American, and Asian/Hawaiian identified students, and concerns about paying for college has increased among Asian/Hawaiian identified students. Adjustment to CSU increased across all identities with the exception of international students; this increase is largest over time for Native American students (8 PP) and Black students (7 PP).

Resources

The survey included a large list of topics students could indicate which, if any, they would like to learn more about. This may present an opportunity for outreach from service offices and programs like the Women and Gender Advocacy Center (WGAC), the Counseling Center, or Rams Against Hunger.

Overall, across all survey terms, students were most interested in learning more about several high-impact practices like study abroad and internships, as well as work-related topics (e.g., job opportunities/work study, Career Center). In more recent years (FA18 and later), interest in campus/student clubs/organizations and service-learning opportunities/community service/volunteering have increased while interest in study-related skills (e.g., writing skills, textbook reading, computer skills, general study skills, math skills) have decreased. The NSSE survey also asks students about their current engagement in, and future plans around high-impact practices. In SP19, 62% of first-year respondents reported participating in at least one high-impact practice, and 16% had participated in two or more.

RM, Pell, and first gen students were significantly more likely to be interested in study-related skills compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students. Across each of these identities, students were most likely to

want information about job opportunities and work study. Again, this could be an opportunity for targeted outreach by Financial Aid.

When asked if they would like information about several campus resources (e.g., Women and Gender Advocacy Center, PRIDE Resource Center, Rams Against Hunger, Resources for Disabled Students), about half of students selected 'none or the above.' Of the students who would like more information, the most commonly cited resource included Psychological and Counseling Services (about 18%). About 1 in 10 wanted more information about Women and Gender Advocacy Center (WGAC) and the PRIDE Resource Center.

FG, Pell, and RM students were more likely to want more information about Rams Against Hunger, Counseling Services, and the WGAC compared to students without those identities.

Transitions, Challenges, and Supports

This section provides information about students' academic and social adjustment to college life. NSSE's supplemental module 'First Year Experiences and Senior Transitions' also asks questions about students' academic transition. In general, NSSE results indicated that first-year students were likely to stay positive when faced with challenges, while about half of students reported having difficulty learning course material. Difficulty with coursework in the Taking Stock survey is an academic early warning indicator, and students receive outreach from the Collaborative for Student Achievement.

Figure 12: Academic Transition

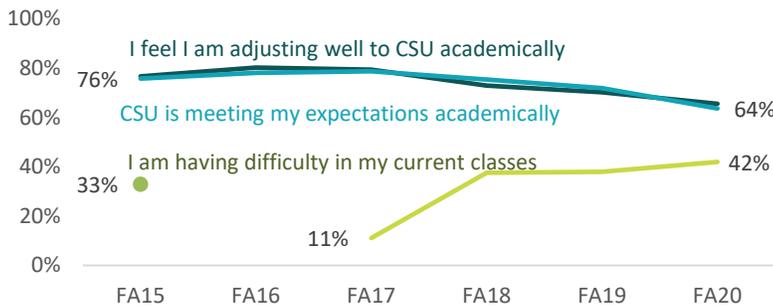


Figure 12 displays the proportion of students who agreed to statements related to academic transition across time. Both academic adjustment to CSU and academic expectations decreased significantly over time by about 12 PP. The proportion of students reporting difficulty in their classes also increased significantly over time, from 33% in FA15 to 42% in FA20 (this question was asked using yes/no response options in FA16, and not included here due to scaling differences).

Figure 13 displays the proportion of students who agreed to statements related to social adjustment, averaged across terms since these items have remained stable over time. About 1 in 5 students reported feeling like everyone was having an easier time adjusting to college, 2 in 3 agreed they felt at home, and 4 in 5 agreed they had been able to adjust to living on campus. In FA20, two new questions were added (nearly identical questions are also asked on the NSSE); 3 in 4 students agreed that they felt comfortable being themselves at CSU, and 3 in 5 reported feeling valued.

Fig. 13: Social Adjustment, FA15-FA20

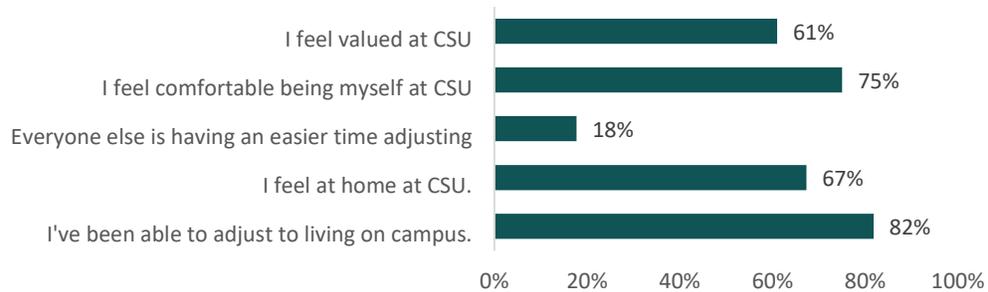
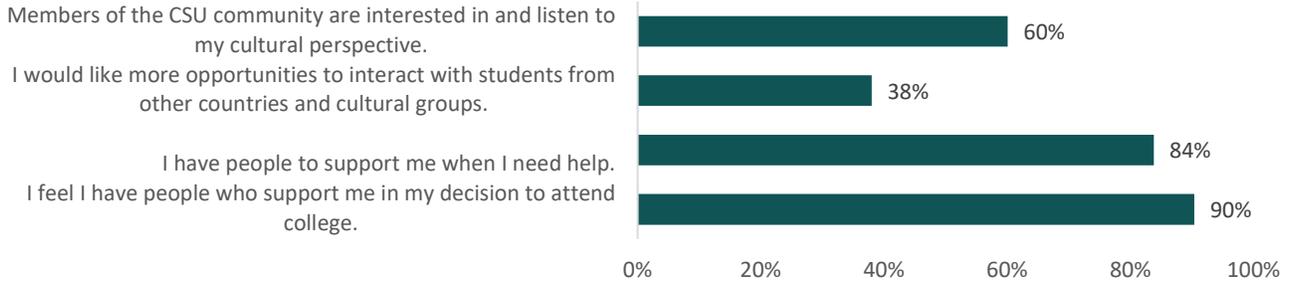


Figure 14 displays percent agreement to statements related to supportive relationships, averaged across terms.

Fig. 14: Supportive Relationships, FA15-FA20



The proportion of students who felt supported in their decision to attend college remained stable over time at about 90%. The proportion who felt they had people to support them when they needed help was stable between FA15 and FA17 at about 85%, and declined by 7 PP by FA20. Similarly, the proportion of students who felt that members of the CSU community were interested in their cultural perspective was stable at about 63% between FA16 and FA18, and declined over FA19 and FA20 by about 6 PP. The proportion of students who agreed that they would like more opportunities to interact with other students from other cultural groups and countries was stable at about 35% across time, then increased in FA20 by 10 PP.

Overall, family concerns were low, and remained low across time. About 5% of students agreed that their concerns about family made it difficult to be at CSU, and about 3% agreed that family obligations interfered with their ability to focus on academics.

About 65% of students reported that CSU was their first choice when applying to colleges; this has not changed over time. Between 21% and about 25% of students reported being the primary person who manages their college finances over time.

RM, first gen, and Pell students were 5-6 PP less likely to feel they were adjusting academically to CSU and feel valued at CSU, and 7-9 PP less comfortable being themselves compared to students with non-structurally underserved identities. They were also more likely to want additional opportunities to interact with students from other countries and cultural groups (6-10 PP), and significantly more likely to be the primary person who manages their college finances compared to non-underserved identities (28 PP more likely among first gen, 16 PP among RM, and 37 PP among Pell students).

These trends also hold by duplicated race/ethnicity. In general, Black-identified students were the least likely to feel at home, comfortable being themselves, and valued by CSU. Latinx, Native American, and Black-identified students were much more likely to report being the primary person who manages their college finances by 15 PP or more compared to White, international, and Asian/Hawaiian students.

Expectations Versus Actual Experiences

This section explores respondents’ perceptions of academic and social experiences, compared to their actual experiences after arriving on campus. Experiences include time spent attending class, homework/studying outside of class, challenging classes, how well their high school prepared them for college, time spent with their roommate, and the campus being welcoming of people of their background and experiences.

Over time, the proportion of students who felt their actual experiences exceeded their expectations around time spent in class, homework/studying, challenging classes, and a welcoming campus decreased over time.

Students were also less likely to feel that their high school prepared them for college. Expectations around time spent with their roommate fluctuated over time; dropping in FA18 and FA19 and increasing by 6 PP in FA20 compared to FA19 (22% vs. 16%).

Overall, expectations versus actual experiences differ minimally across structurally underserved identities. By duplicated race/ethnicity, international students indicated that their high school preparation and time spent with their roommate exceeded their expectations, more so than any other identity across time.

RA Conversations

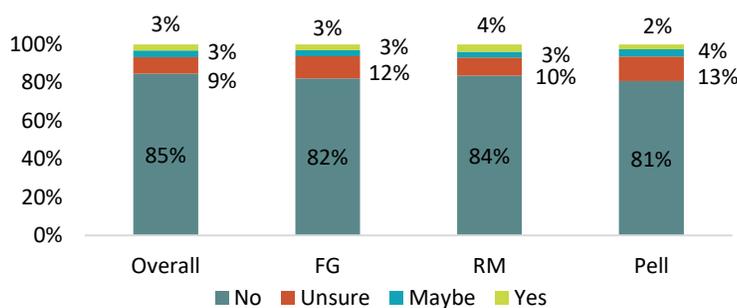
The primary purpose of the Taking Stock survey is to facilitate conversations between resident assistants (RAs) and residents, in an effort to improve students' experiences and ease their social and academic transition. The proportion of students who met with their RA increased each year from FA15 to FA19 (80% to 91%), and then dropped to 72% in FA20, most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend is also observed across all structurally underserved identities, and race/ethnicities. While RA meetings generally occurred at a similar level across RM, first gen, and Pell status between FA18 and FA19, these students were significantly less likely to have completed a meeting with their RA in FA20 compared to non-RM, continuing gen, and non-Pell students.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In FA20, items were added to better understand students' experiences with bias, self-efficacy in making positive changes related to the campus culture, and feelings of support across a number of identities (racial/ethnic identity, gender, economic background, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and disability status). Questions related to identity support were modeled after NSSE items from the Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity supplemental module, administered in SP19. Results are similar in that structurally underserved students reported feeling less supported across their identities in both surveys.

Figure 15 displays responses to witnessing an incident of bias against another member of the CSU community since the start of the fall semester, either on or off campus, by population of interest.

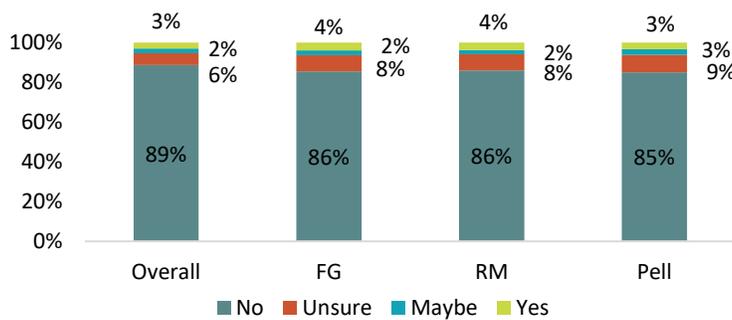
Figure 15: Witnessing an Incident of Bias by Population, FA20



The proportion of students who responded 'Yes' to witnessing an incident of bias is about 3% overall as well as for Pell recipients and first gen students, and about 4% for students who identify as RM. By racial/ethnic identity, Latinx and Native American-identified students were the most likely to report witnessing an incident (4.2%).

Figure 16 displays responses to experiencing an incident of bias, either on or off campus since the start of the fall semester, by population of interest.

Figure 16: Experiencing an Incident of Bias by Population, FA20



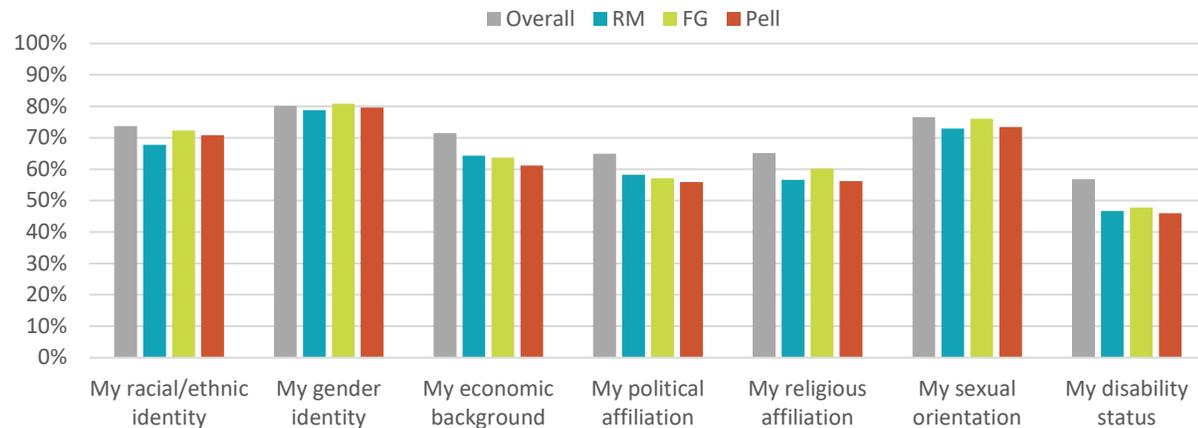
The proportion of students who reported personally experiencing an incident of bias is also 3% for students overall. This is slightly higher among RM students (4%), specifically among Hispanic/Latinx students (5%), and first gen students (4%). A noticeable proportion of students indicated they were unsure, or that they maybe had witnessed or experienced an incident. This pattern was also observed by structurally underserved identities.

In terms of self-efficacy in making positive changes to the campus culture, 83% of students agreed that ‘Everyone has a role to play in creating a campus community that welcomes and affirms all identities’, and 81% agreed that ‘I have the ability to make positive changes on our campus to ensure that all identities feel welcomed and affirmed’. Students were less likely to agree that ‘my individual actions have the potential to shape the campus culture in a positive way’ at 74%. Racially minoritized, Pell, and first gen students reported similar levels of agreement across items compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students.

About 2 in 5 students agreed that they knew how to report an incident of bias at CSU, slightly more than half agreed that they were comfortable reporting an incident (56%), and about 1 in 3 agreed that they were confident they could recognize and incident of bias. These findings suggest a need for training to address students’ knowledge gap and increase their comfort level in reporting.

Figure 17 displays the proportion of students who agreed/strongly agreed that they felt supported across a range of identities.

Figure 17: Identity Support by Population (% Agree/Strongly Agree, FA20)



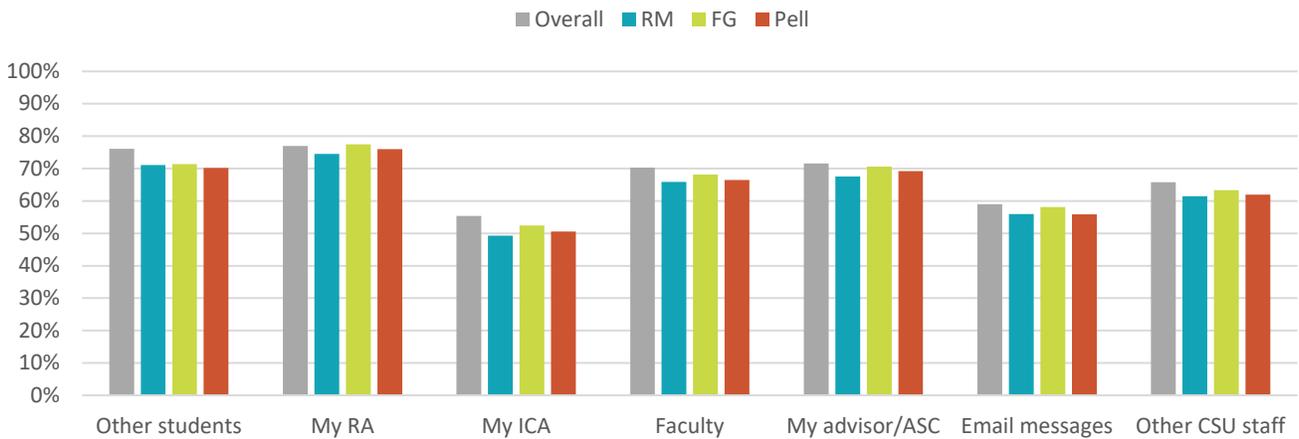
About 74% of students overall agreed/strongly agreed that they felt supported in their racial/ethnic identity, compared to 68% of RM students (6 PP), 71% of Pell students (3 PP), and 72% of first gen students (2 PP). Students reported a similar level of support for their gender identity (80%) across identities. For economic background, compared to students overall (72%), students with structurally underserved identities reported lower levels of agreement by 8 PP among RM students, 11 PP among Pell recipients, and 7 PP among first gen students.

Political affiliation and religious affiliation also display a similar pattern, in that overall agreement is about 65%, and each subgroup reported a lower percent agreement by 5-9 PP. RM, first gen, and Pell students reported significantly lower levels of support compared to non-RM, continuing gen, and non-Pell students for both items.

For sexual orientation, about 77% of students overall agreed that they felt supported in their identity. RM and limited income were about 3 PP lower and FG students were similar; however, each identity felt less supported compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students. About 57% of students overall felt supported around their disability status; RM, Pell, and FG were each about 10 PP lower, and reported lower levels of agreement compared to their counterparts.

Students were also asked if they felt supported in their identities by various members of the CSU community, including students, staff, and messages from the President’s office. Figure 18 displays the proportion who agreed/strongly agreed by population.

Figure 18: Identity Support by Other Members of the CSU Community (% Agree/Strongly Agree, FA20)



Students overall felt most supported by their RA (77%) followed by other students (76%). RM, Pell, and first gen students also reported the highest level of support from their RA compared to any other option, and differed minimally compared to students overall. In terms of support from other students, RM, Pell, and first gen students each reported around 71% agreement, which was significantly lower compared to non-RM, non-Pell, and continuing gen students. Support from Inclusive Community Assistants was about 55% for students overall; each group reported a lower level of agreement in comparison, particularly RM students (49%, 6 PP lower).

About 70% of students overall agreed they felt supported by faculty; percent agreement is about 3-4 PP lower for RM and Pell students, and about 2 PP lower for FG. About 72% of students agreed that they felt supported by their ASC/academic advisor; each subgroup was about 2-4 PP lower. About 59% of students felt supported by emails from the President; agreement was about 3 PP lower for RM and Pell students, and 1 PP lower for FG. About 66% of students overall felt supported by other CSU staff, compared to about 62-63% of RM, Pell, and FG students. RM students reported feeling significantly less supported by each of these supports compared to non-RM; first gen students reported a similar level of support, and Pell students reported a lower level of support from faculty and other CSU staff.

Conclusions

The Taking Stock survey provides an early snapshot of students' behaviors and adjustment to CSU. These data are used to inform RA conversations to connect students to resources, flag those who might be struggling academically or socially for further outreach by professional staff, and identify educational opportunities within the residence halls. Results are also used in TRiO grant reporting and are available as an additional data source for other programs seeking grant funding. Additionally, these data could be further leveraged to conduct targeted outreach efforts. For example, Financial Aid could reach out to students with significant financial concerns who haven't completed the FAFSA; the Career Center could notify students seeking employment about job opportunities; TILT could invite students to workshops around study skills and time management. A primary question about further leveraging the Taking Stock data is around what areas on campus "own" the responsibility to utilize results, and if this effort is the best use of staff resources.

The Taking Stock survey overlaps with other surveys like NSSE across many of the survey questions. An important finding that can be triangulated across surveys is that structurally underserved students report being equally engaged in and committed to their educational experience. These data suggest that institutional structures play a significant role in observed graduation gaps. The overlap across surveys may contribute to survey fatigue, particularly among structurally underrepresented populations. Loss of student confidence in CSU's commitment to supporting them is a bigger implication of asking similar questions in multiple surveys, especially if students perceive no action is being taken on the survey results. Campus entities who conduct first-year surveys should consider collaborating to reduce duplication and share results across departments.

There are some differences in the FA20 results compared to prior years that are most likely due to the pandemic. The survey response rate was generally high (86-90%) in previous administrations, but dropped to 80% in FA20. The proportion of students who met with their RA to discuss results was also consistently high across previous terms (80-90%), and did not differ by structurally underserved identity. In FA20, only about 70% of students met with their RA, and students with structurally underserved identities were significantly less likely to do so.

Social adjustment declined significantly across all groups in FA20, which is most likely related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and fewer opportunities for students to connect with one another. Other changes from FA19 to FA20 that are likely influenced by the pandemic include the increase in students missing an assignment, yet spending significantly more time on coursework, as well as decreases in regular exercise, ability to locate academic resources, CSU meeting students' academic expectations, and the drop in on-campus employment and increase in off-campus employment.