

Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement Survey Results Analysis

October 30, 2020

This analysis was produced by OPEIR in response to a specific data request. Results are not necessarily generalizable and attempts to use results outside the scope of this project should be avoided.

Introduction

UTC administered the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) for the Fall 2020. Results are disaggregated for three groups of students detailed in Figure 1 below. The small sample size for older students makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions from their data.

Figure 1: BCSSE Student Groups

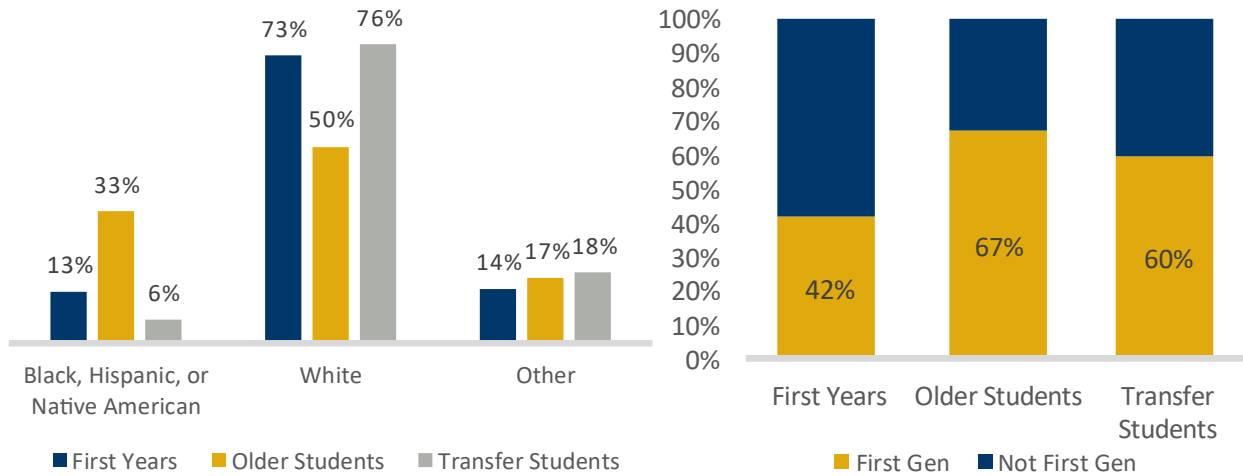
First Year Students	Older Students	Transfer Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recent high school graduates (2018 or later) who did not enroll in postsecondary or enrolled and expect to transfer 11 or fewer credits• n = 518	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents who graduated from high school in 2017 or earlier and did not enroll in postsecondary or enrolled and expect to transfer 11 or fewer credits• n = 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents who graduated from high school prior to 2020 and expect to transfer 12 or more credits• n=99

Demographics

First year and transfer respondents were majority female (71% and 63% respectively). Older student respondents were two-thirds male. Small proportions of first year and transfer students identified as a gender other than man or women (1% and 2% respectively).

Older students were more likely to identify as Black, Hispanic, or Native American (33%) than first year (13%) or transfer (6%) students. Although nationwide community college students are more racially and ethnically diverse than students at other types of higher education institutions, the greatest concentration of white students was among transfer respondents. First year students were the least likely student group to identify as first generation; majority of both older and transfer respondents identify as such as shown in Figure 2.

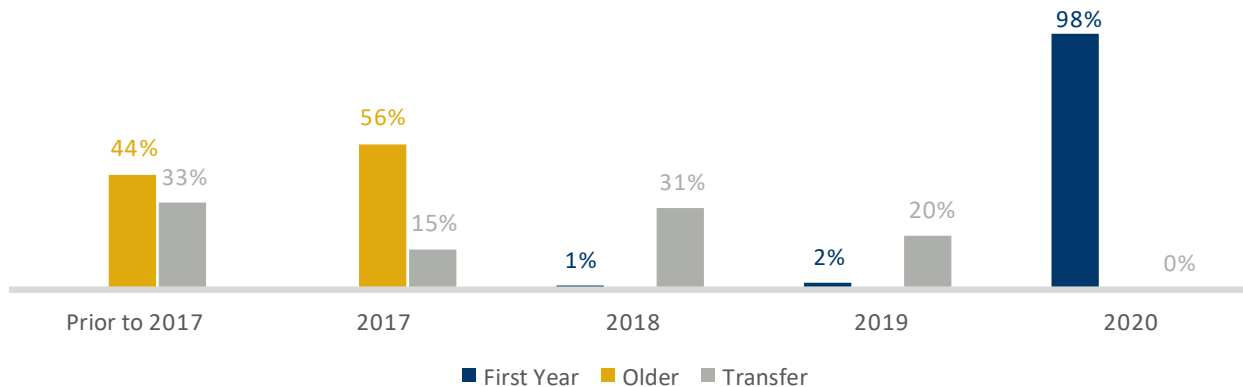
Figure 2: Race/Ethnicity and First-Generation Status



Pre-UTC Experiences

High School Graduation Year

Figure 3: High School Graduation Year

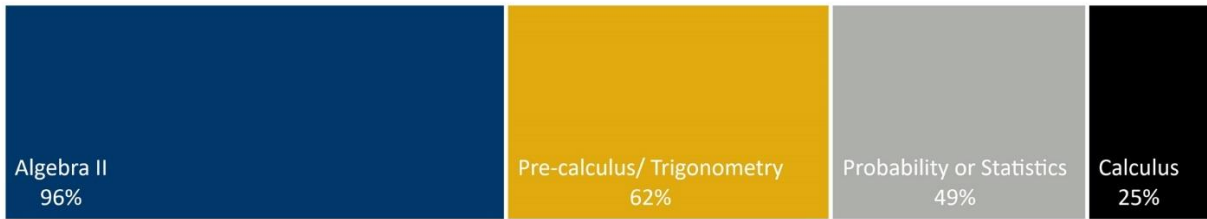


Based on the student group, students are asked differentiated questions about their pre-UTC experiences.

First Year Student High School Experiences

Within the survey population, 90% of first year students attended public high schools. 7% attended private high schools and 2% were homeschooled. Students primarily reported average high school grades in the B+ to A range. Figure 4 shows the proportions of first year students who earned a C or better in the following math classes.

Figure 4: High School Math Classes with a Grade of C or Better



The majority of first year respondents took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course or college or university course for credit in high school (68% and 62% respectively). International Baccalaureate (IB) participation was less robust with 6% of respondents participating. While 93% of students had written at least one high school paper of up to five pages, only 20% wrote a paper longer than 10 pages in high school.

Students were also asked about approximate hours spent on activities outside of school during their last year of high school. Table 1 summarizes responses. It is notable that almost three quarters (73%) of respondents spent 10 or fewer hours per week on schoolwork. Slightly less than half of respondents (43%) indicated they came to class without completing reading or assignments during their last year of high school.

Table 1: Time Spent During Average Week in Last Year of High School

Activity	Hours Spent in Typical Week				
	0	1-10	11-20	21-30	31+
Schoolwork	2%	73%	21%	3%	1%
Working for pay	27%	25%	29%	14%	5%
Extracurricular Activities	13%	47%	28%	8%	4%
Relaxing and Socializing	2%	55%	29%	8%	7%

Older Student Pre-UTC Experiences

Older students report that since graduating high school they have attended other colleges or universities (22%), worked full-time (56%) or part-time (63%), were a homemaker or stay at home spouse (13%) and volunteer (25%). Half of older students think it will take them four years or longer to complete a bachelor’s degree, while 38% expect three years and 13% expect two years.

Majority of older student respondents indicated that UTC’s location, the fact we offer their major, and family/personal relationships were very important factors in choosing our institution. Of respondents, 38% anticipate they will spend time caring for dependents this year.

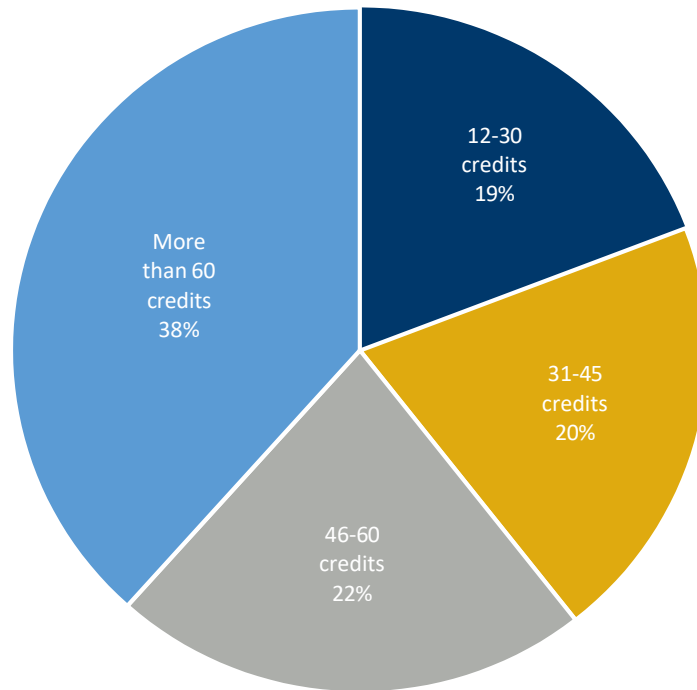
Transfer Student Pre-UTC Experience

In addition to attending another college or university, transfer students have also served in the military (2%), worked full-time (40%) or part-time (52%), were a homemaker or stay at home spouse (9%), and volunteer (18%). Most transfer students have attended community colleges (75%) but have also attended other four-year colleges and universities (40%) and vocational or technical school (4%). Students anticipate transferring different ranges of college credit to UTC as shown in Figure 5.

Students reported that most of their grades at other institutions attended were Cs (6%), Bs (50%) and As (44%). Two-thirds were most recently enrolled in 2020 and 22% were most recently enrolled in 2019. Students indicated several reasons why they are no longer enrolled at other institutions. Popular choices include that they completed a degree (53%), always planned on transferring (46%), the other institution was too expensive (12%), quality of academic programs (12%), and personal dissatisfaction (12%).

Majority of transfer students think it will take them two years to complete a bachelor’s degree (56%) but many students think it could take 3 years (30%) or 4 or more years (13%).

Figure 5: Expected Credit Transfer



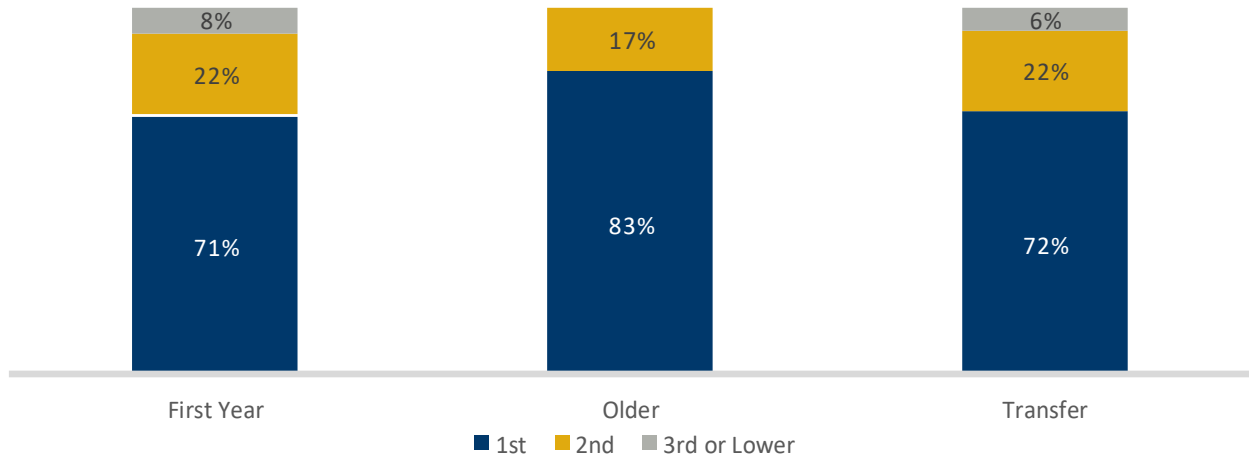
UTC Enrollment

Respondents across all student groups are overwhelmingly enrolled as full-time students (88% first year, 100% older, 88% transfers). Respondents also overwhelmingly say they know what they will major in (87% first year, 83% older, 96% transfer).

Enrollment by major group is consistent across the three student groups with one exception – health professions. While no older respondents and 9% of transfer respondents indicated this was their major, 27% of first year students said the same.

Most respondents said UTC was their first college choice, with those numbers being slightly higher for older students as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: UTC Rank as Preferred College

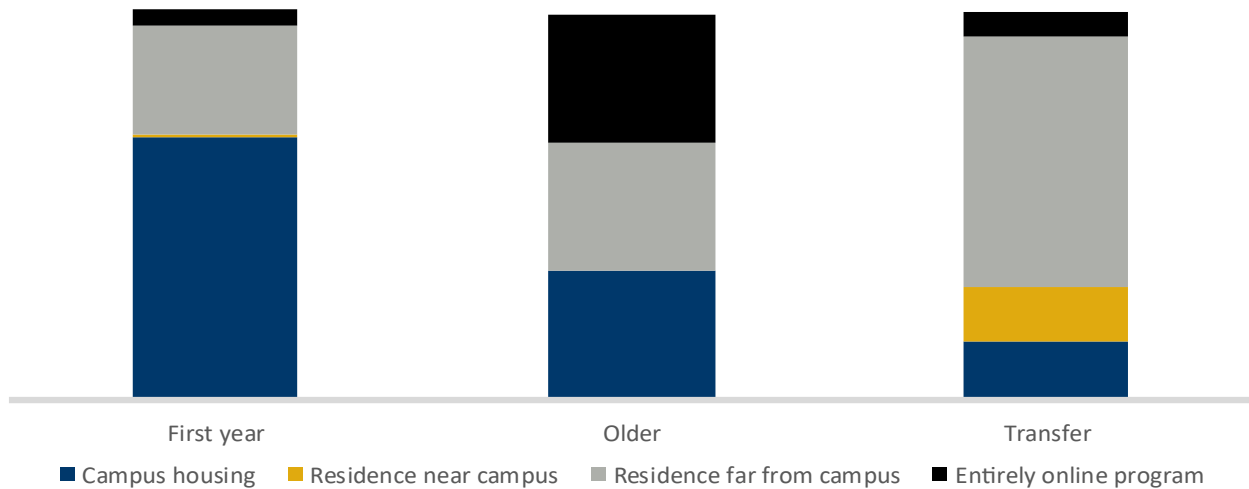


Social Engagement on Campus

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of first year respondents have at least one close friend who is also attending UTC. The opposite is true for older and transfer respondents, the majority of whom do not have close friends also attending (67% and 52% respectively).

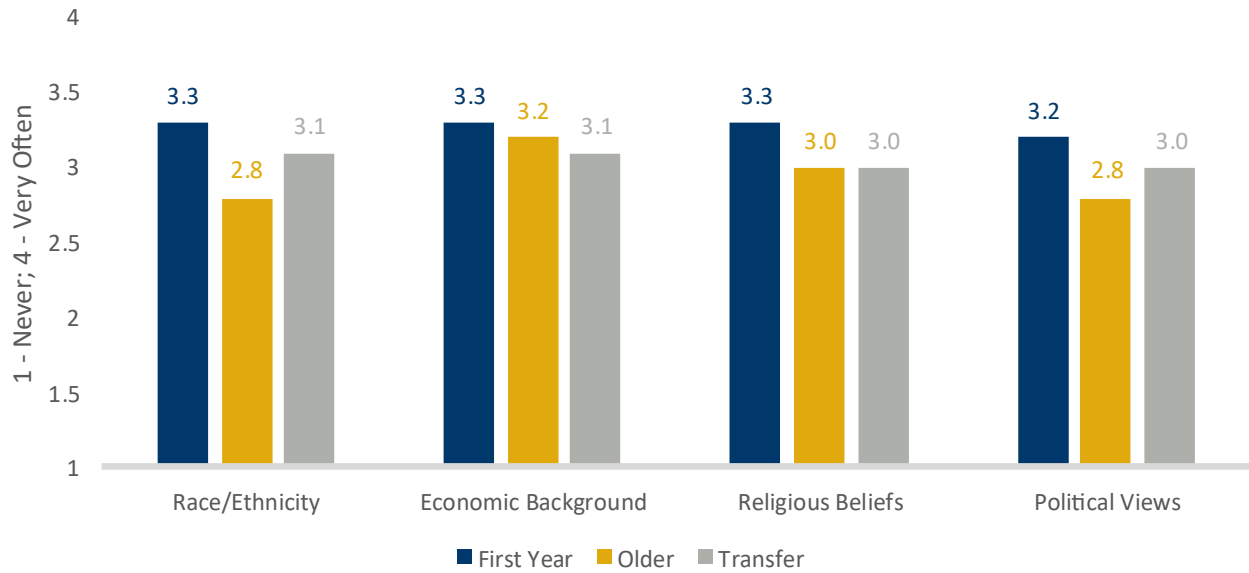
First year students are also more likely to report living on campus as shown in Figure 7. BCSSE language asks students to identify whether they live in an off-campus residence within walking distance of campus or further than walking distance of campus.

Figure 7: Housing for this School Year



Students were asked to rate how often they anticipate engaging in discussions with people who are different from themselves across multiple dimensions on a four-point scale with 1 being never and 4 being very often. First year student respondent mean scores were higher than scores of students from other groups. Older student respondents' mean scores on race/ethnicity and political views were the lowest.

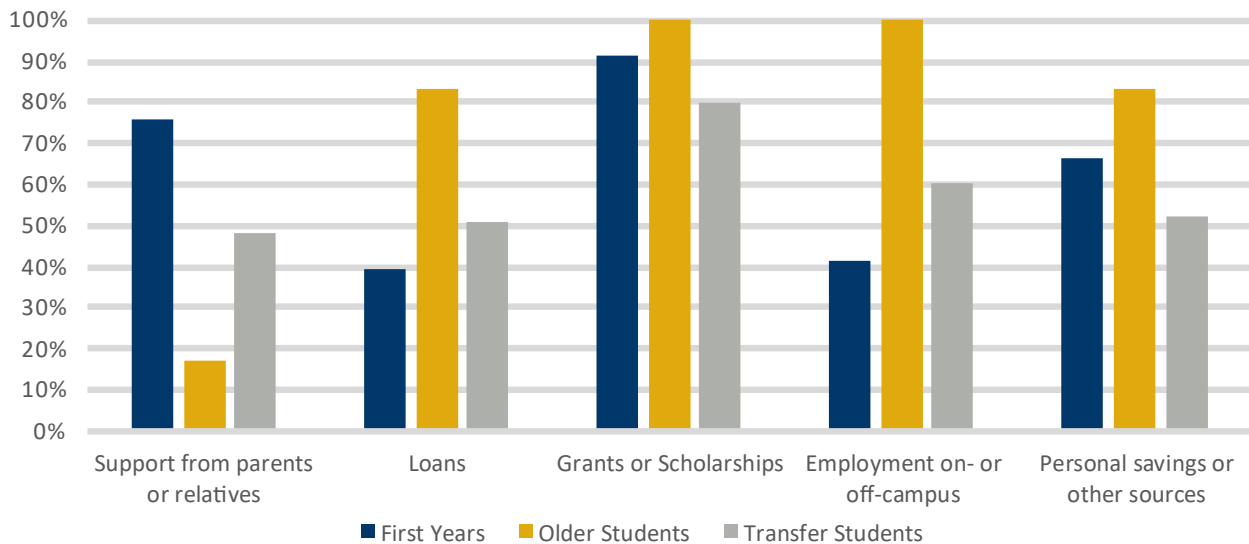
Figure 8: Mean Scores on Frequency of Interaction with People of Different Backgrounds



College Affordability and Employment

There are differences between student groups in the sources they anticipate using to pay for college over the next year as shown in Figure 9. First year students are much more likely to use support from family members while older students are more likely to rely on loans and employment.

Figure 9: Sources Students Anticipate Using to Pay for College



While 25% and 18% of first year and transfer student respondents respectively don't anticipate working at all this year, all older student respondents do. Almost one third (29%) of older students anticipate working 30 or more hours per week compared to a quarter of transfer students and just 4% of first year students.

Perhaps relatedly, older students are much more likely to report they anticipate feeling stress about

paying for college. On a 1-6 scale with six being “very difficult,” mean scores for older respondents are 5.8. In contrast, mean scores for first year and transfer students are 3.6 and 3.8 respectively.

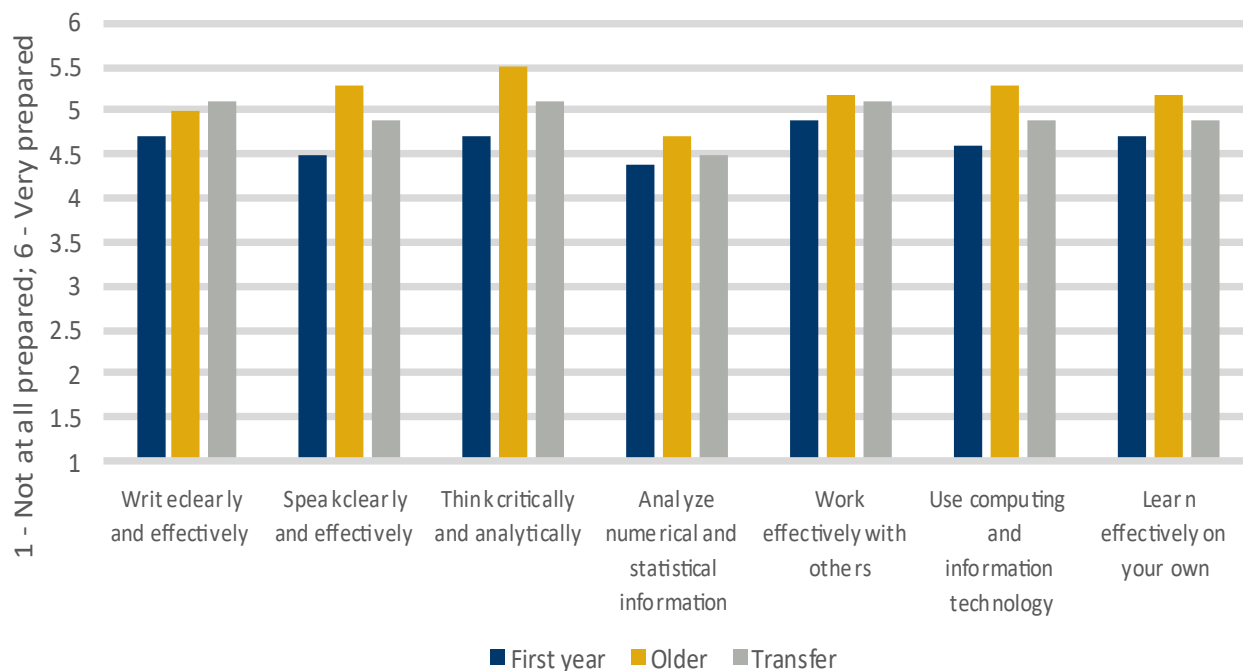
Older and transfer respondents are asked to rate how likely some aspects of life as a college student are to cause them stress. All older student respondents anticipate that paying for college will cause stress this year, and 75% anticipate that balancing school with other commitments will be stressful.

Almost two thirds (63%) anticipate feeling stress about not having enough money for basic needs. Just over half of transfer students (52%) anticipate stress about paying for college and 77% anticipate stress over balancing school and life. Forty two percent anticipate stress about not having enough money for basic needs.

Academic Preparation

Respondents were asked to rate their level of preparation to do specific types of academic work on a six-point scale with 1 being not at all prepared and 6 being very prepared. Results showing mean ratings for each group are in Figure 10. First year students report the lowest levels of preparation of all student types. Surprisingly, older students report higher levels of preparation despite limited postsecondary experience across all dimensions except writing. All student groups report the lowest levels of preparation for analyzing numerical and statistical information.

Figure 10: Mean Student Rating of Preparation for Types of Academic Work



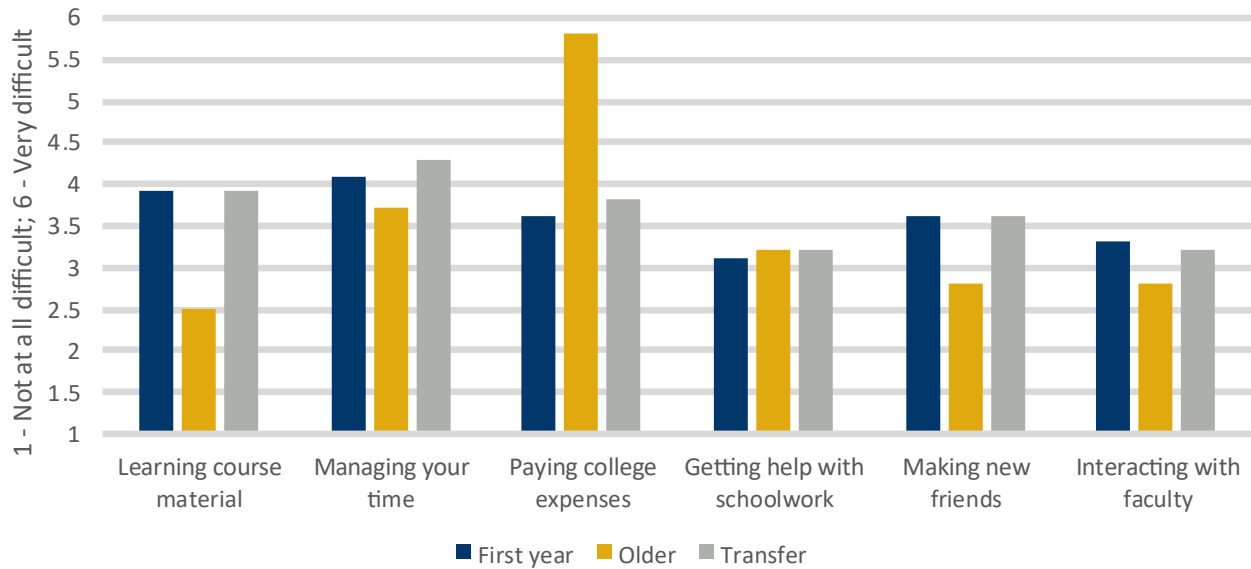
College Expectations

Anticipated Difficulties

Students were asked to rate how difficult they expected dimensions of life as a college student to be with one being not at all difficult and six being very difficult; mean ratings are shown in Figure 12. First

year and transfer respondents indicated that their anticipated areas of greatest difficulty would be time management and learning course material. Older respondents indicated the least difficult in learning course material and very high anticipated difficulty ratings paying for college as previously discussed.

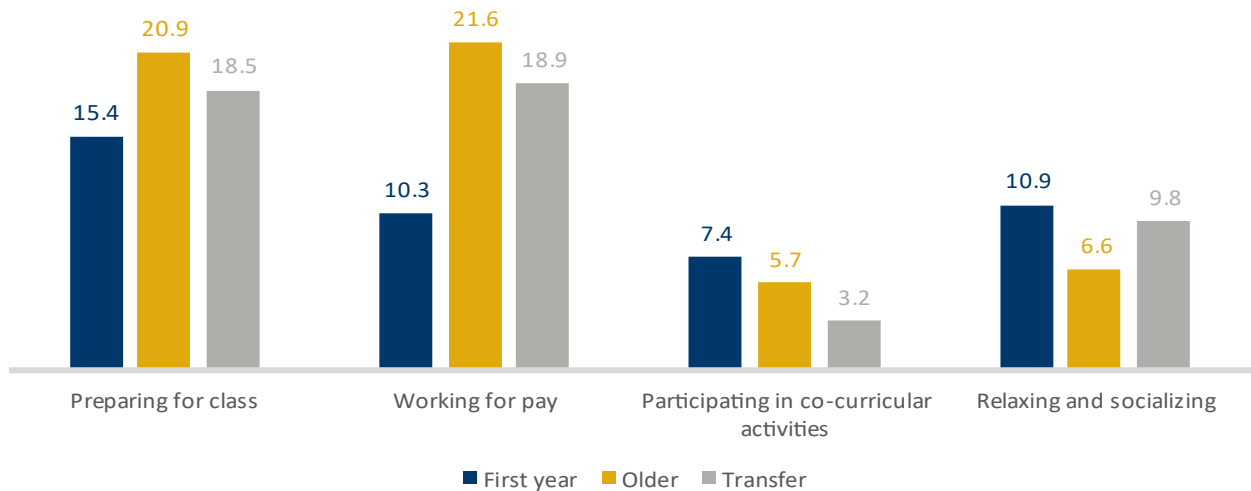
Figure 11: Mean Rating of Anticipated Difficulty for Dimensions of College Life



Expected Time Spent on Various Activities

Students were asked to indicate how many hours in a typical week they anticipate spending on various activities. Mean numbers of hours by student group are shown in Figure 13. First year students expect to spend the most time on preparing for class but estimate less time than older and transfer respondents. Older and transfer respondents both expect to spend more time working than on schoolwork, with very low time anticipated on co-curricular and social activities.

Figure 12: Mean Estimated Hours Per Week Spent by Activity



Anticipated Academic Performance

Anticipated Grades

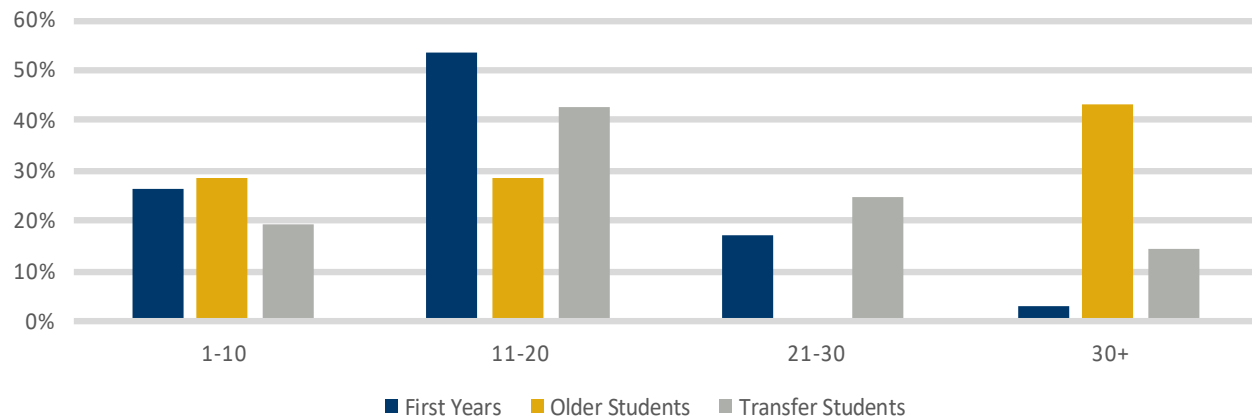
Students were asked about what they expect most of their grades to be; results are in Table 2. First year students expect to earn A grades at a slightly higher rate than other student groups.

Table 2: Anticipated Grades this Year

	Mostly Cs	Mostly Bs	Mostly As
First Years	0%	39%	61%
Older Students	0%	50%	50%
Transfer Students	1%	42%	56%

First years skew lower in terms of anticipated hours spent preparing for class per week than older or transfer students (below). Older (50%) and transfer (40%) students are more likely to be very certain they will finish something they have started when they encounter challenges than first years (36%). First year students are more likely to predict they will earn A grades (61%) than older (50%) or transfer (56%) students.

Figure 13: Time Studying and Anticipated Grades



Anticipated Degree Completion

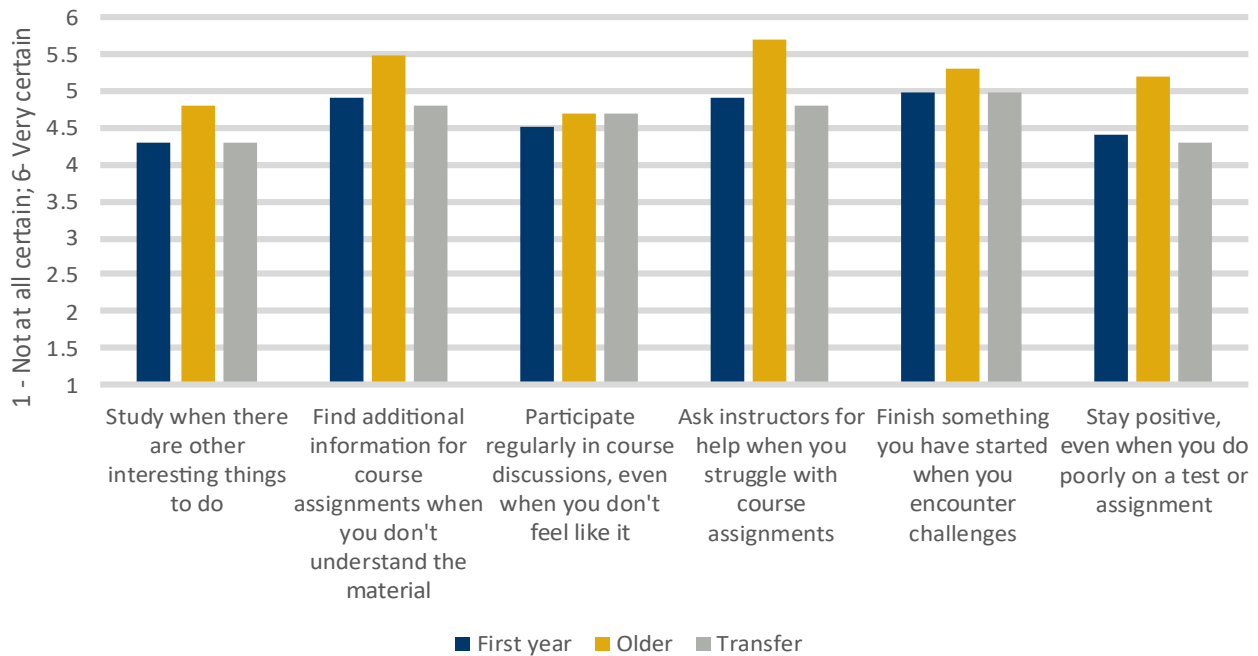
Majority of all student groups expect to graduate from UTC. Anticipated graduation from UTC is highest among transfer respondents (93%) followed by first year (91%) and older (83%) respondents.

Overcoming Setbacks and Asking for Help

Anticipated Academic Resilience

Students were asked to rate their certainty about whether they would engage in resilient academic behaviors with one being not at all certain and six being very certain. Results are shown in Figure 14. Older students were the most certain they would engage in these behaviors across the board. First year and transfer respondents were less certain they would study when there are other interesting things to do and remain positive when encountering a setback.

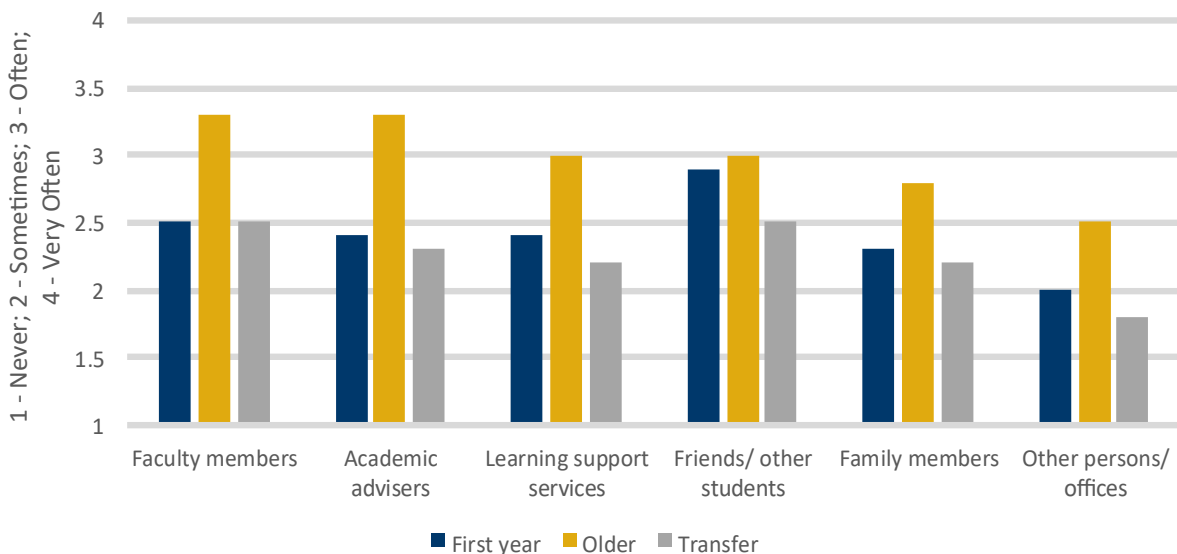
Figure 14: Mean Rating of Certainty of Performing Resilient Academic Behaviors



Anticipated Sources of Academic Help

Students were asked how often they expected to engage various people and offices for help with coursework. Students rated their anticipated engagement with one being never and four being very often. Results are shown in Figure 15. Older students are anticipating more intensive engagement, especially with faculty and academic advisers. First year students anticipate more intensive engagement with friends or other students.

Figure 15: Mean Anticipated Engagement with Sources of Academic Help



Importance of Dimensions of Institutional Support

Students were asked to rate the importance of certain types of assistance from UTC with one being not important and six being very important. All respondents value assistance succeeding academically, and a challenging academic experience is rated toward the lower end of all categories. Older students value opportunities for social involvement and campus activities and events, but rate academic support and learning support the highest. Transfer students also value opportunities to interact with students of different backgrounds.

Figure 16: Mean Importance of Ratings of Institutional Functions

