2013 Noel-Levitz Research Report

The Attitudes of Second-Year College Students

Exploring the mindsets behind the "sophomore slump"

In response to the growing call to increase college completion rates, many campus officials have turned their attention to the "sophomore slump"—a term that broadly defines the somewhat-common and lackluster performance of a substantial portion of second-year college students.

To examine this issue, this report looks beyond test scores and grade point averages at a range of "non-cognitive" attitudes that influence second-year students' motivation, engagement, persistence, and college completion. The report is **based on student survey responses** drawn from a sizable sample of second-year students at four-year and two-year institutions nationwide in 2012.

Among the findings:

· Only three-quarters of the second-year student respondents from four-year private and public institutions were able to affirm that they "felt energized" by the ideas they were learning in most of their courses;

· Only two-thirds of the respondents from two-year public institutions were able to affirm the statement, "I have many friends and feel at home here";

· Respondents across institution types reported relatively low satisfaction in areas such as their frequency of communication with academic advisors and the availability of work experiences associated with students' career interests;

· Only a slight majority of respondents across institution types indicated they had the financial resources they needed to finish college. Yet, on the upside, similar percentages of students indicated they were receptive to financial guidance;

· Approximately half of respondents from four-year institutions—led by female students—wanted help with finding a tutor for one or more courses, while fewer than one-third of these students (male and female combined) reported receiving tutoring assistance in year one; and

· Nine percent of respondents from four-year private institutions, 14 percent of respondents from four-year public institutions, and 56 percent of respondents from two-year public institutions reported that they were either undecided about continuing their enrollment or planned to transfer to another institution.

What are the implications for second-year student success and college completion?

For a brief reflection on the findings and some recommendations for second-year student success and college completion initiatives, please see page 7 (Appendix A).

![Noel-Levitz logo]

This study examines a range of attitudes and attributes held by second-year students that may affect their perseverance and success in college.

Highlights

Appendix/Complete findings

Findings color key

4-year private institutions	4-year public institutions	2-year public institutions

See more student attitudes online

www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport

— 2013 National Freshman Attitudes Report

— 2013 Freshman Attitudes Report for Two-Year Colleges

— 2008-2012 National Freshman Attitude Reports with findings by students' age, race/ethnicity, and gender

www.noellevitz.com/MidYearReport

— 2012 Report: The Attitudes and Needs of Freshmen at Mid-Year

The source of data

The second-year student data in this report were collected by a student survey administered to 3,870 second-year college students at 28 colleges and universities nationwide in 2012. The 68-item survey examined a broad range of motivational perspectives that influence student success.
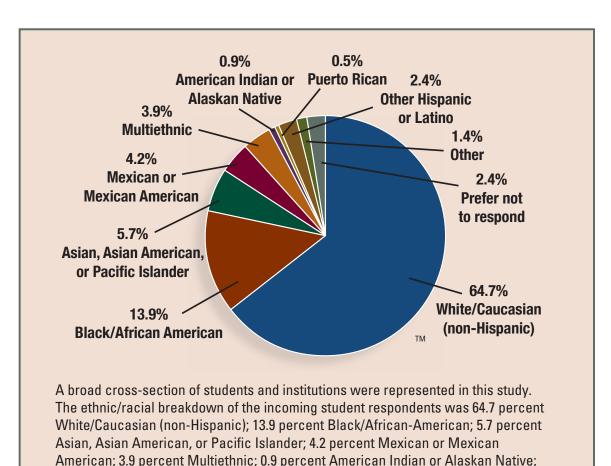
The majority of the 3,870 student respondents were enrolled at four-year private and public institutions, though two-year public colleges were also represented. A majority of the respondents (66.5 percent) were female. The respondents completed the survey near the beginning of their second year of college or near the end of their first year using an electronic survey.

The 68-item survey instrument was the Second-Year Student Assessment™ (SYSA), part of the Retention Management System *Plus*™ from Noel-Levitz. This motivational, early-alert assessment identifies self-reported attitudes, motivations, needs, and interests, as well as barriers to persistence and opportunities for supporting students as they transition to the second year of college.

For more information on the survey instrument and Noel-Levitz attitudinal assessments, please see page 20.

A broad cross-section of students and institutions were represented in this study. The ethnic/racial breakdown of the incoming student respondents was 64.7 percent White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic); 13.9 percent Black/African-American; 5.7 percent Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander; 4.2 percent Mexican or Mexican American; 3.9 percent Multiethnic; 0.9 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native; 0.5 percent Puerto Rican; 2.4 percent "Other Hispanic or Latino;" 1.4 percent "Other;" and 2.4 percent preferred not to respond. For more details, please see the information above and in the Appendix on pages 16-18.

"Non-cognitive," attitudinal measures of second-year students

Overall, only 77 percent of the second-year students in this study agreed with the statement, "I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes," as shown in Table 1 in the far right-hand column. In addition, only 75 percent of students overall agreed with the statement, "I have many friends and feel at home here," and only 59 percent of students overall agreed with the statement, "I have the financial resources that I need to finish college." Notice the differences by gender and institution type.

Table 1: Selected second-year student attitudes that influence student success and persistence (percentages indicate students in agreement with each statement)

Selected survey items/ Highlights from the findings	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL percentages
I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes.	75.0%	74.4%	85.9%	74.3%	77.8%	76.6%
I have many friends and feel at home here.	79.0%	72.6%	67.0%	77.3%	73.4%	74.7%
I have the financial resources that I need to finish college.	61.5%	58.0%	55.3%	62.9%	57.3%	59.2%

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Signs of slumping: Approximately one-quarter of second-year students at four-year institutions (the inverse of the percentages shown) were *un*able to affirm that they were energized by their classes or that they felt at home at their institutions. In addition, only a slight majority of respondents across institution types, led by male students, indicated they had the financial resources they needed to finish college.

Students' commitment to studying increases in their second year

This study also found that nearly three-quarters of the second-year student respondents overall, 73 percent, agreed with the statement, "I think I will need to study more than I did last year." For breakdowns of this finding by institution type and gender, please see Appendix B (page 17).
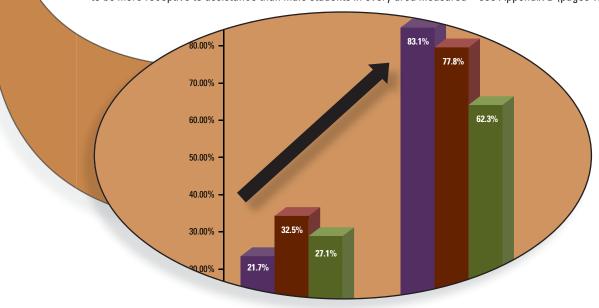
Second-year students' receptivity to assistance

How can colleges and universities help more of their second-year students persist and complete their programs? Highlights from the findings shown below indicate that many second-year students are orienting themselves toward these end goals but would like more assistance from their institutions in several ways to help them attain their aspirations.

Table 2: Selected examples showing second-year students' receptivity to assistance from their institution in key areas vs. their previous usage of the assistance (percentages indicate students in agreement with each statement)

Selected survey items/Highlights from the findings	Students at 4-year private institutions			Students at 4-year public institutions			Students at 2-year public institutions		
	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)
Figure out the impact of grades on my desired major.	61.6%	30.9%	30.8%	62.4%	44.2%	18.2%	54.7%	33.1%	21.6%
Identify work experiences or internships related to my major.	83.1%	21.7%	61.4%	77.8%	32.5%	45.3%	62.3%	27.1%	35.2%
Find tutors in one or more of my courses.	46.8%	28.1%	18.6%	56.4%	39.4%	17.0%	38.0%	18.9%	19.2%

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With a forward-looking perspective and their futures in mind, many second-year students wanted to receive information on how their grades were affecting their majors and were interested in gaining work experiences related to their major—an area that showed considerable dissatisfaction (see next page). In addition, many students expressed interest in tutoring/academic support to help them achieve their academic and career goals. Note that female students tended to be more receptive to assistance than male students in every area measured—see Appendix B (pages 13 and 14).

Second-year students who reported they previously received help — 21.7%, 32.5%, 27.1%

Second-year students who would like to receive help going forward — 83.1%, 77.8%, 62.3%

Second-year students' levels of satisfaction (institutional impressions)

Findings on second-year student satisfaction are highlighted below and detailed in the Appendix on page 15. The ratings of satisfaction cover a variety of areas that are known to be important to college student retention and completion.

As with the rest of this report, institutions whose students participated in this study received campus-specific aggregate findings and individual student reports in order to better understand their students' experiences. For more information, please see page 20.
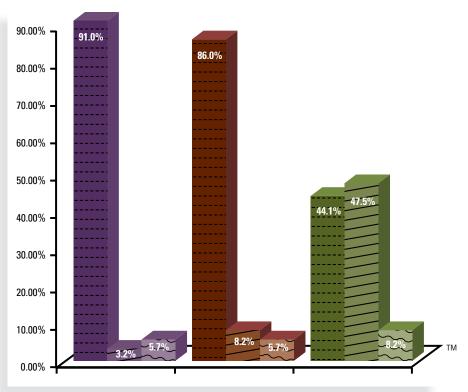
Table 3: Second-year students' satisfaction—highlights from the findings (figures indicate the mean satisfaction levels with each statement on a seven-point scale: 1=low satisfaction; 7=high satisfaction)

Selected survey items/ Highlights from the findings	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL mean
Degree of academic challenge in my classes here	5.74	5.75	5.89	5.70	5.80	5.77
My overall experience as a student at this institution	5.73	5.73	5.95	5.78	5.76	5.76
Availability of service learning, internships, and/or other work experiences associated with my career interests	4.98	5.11	4.88	5.00	5.01	5.01
Frequency of communication with my academic advisor	4.92	4.81	5.12	4.92	4.91	4.91

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Satisfaction readings for second-year students indicate their current impression of the institution and satisfaction with their college experience.

Second-year students' college completion plans

When asked about their plans for college completion, nine percent of respondents from four-year private institutions, 14 percent of respondents from four-year public institutions, and 56 percent of respondents from two-year public institutions reported they either planned to transfer to another institution or were undecided about their plans.

I plan to complete my degree or program at this college or university

I plan to transfer to another college or university to complete my degree

I am undecided about my plans at this time

Appendix A: Reflections and actions to consider

A shift toward using non-cognitive data in college completion planning is building momentum in academia, as evidenced by recent articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other media.[1] How might you use this data to focus your initiatives for student success and retention? The following are some suggestions and comments from Noel-Levitz on how institutions of higher learning may want to approach their second-year students differently in light of the findings in this report.

1. **Collect non-cognitive data from your students to help guide second-year student retention planning**

   The second year of college is frequently described as a critical period of transition, adjustment, and potential confusion for students who often leave the safety and security of a very structured and supportive first-year program. To understand your students' issues more clearly, and to develop a relevant sophomore retention strategy, assess the attitudes and motivations of your second-year students, including how receptive these students are to institutional resources in specific areas, including academic assistance, advising, career planning, finances, and personal support.

   Aggregate findings of this type can guide the development of second-year programming, helping to prioritize academic support services, student success interventions, and other campus responses. The aggregate findings can also serve to engage faculty, administrators, and student success professionals in discussions of the changing needs of these students, and how your campus can best serve them.

2. **Develop a more holistic view of each second-year student**

   Second-year students are often given much less attention than first-year students, and assumed to have successfully transitioned to college. Yet, the data show that, both as a cohort and individually, sophomore student needs and experiences are distinctive. By developing a more nuanced and holistic view of each student, advisors can pinpoint which students need help, which students want help, and the services/interventions most likely to support the student's academic, career, and personal goals. In this way, advisors can determine the unique pathway forward for each individual student in order to facilitate his or her goal attainment.

3. **Dig into the issues and create strategies to address them**

   As the findings suggest, many second-year students are searching for purpose and meaning in the selection of a major, new friendships, a career of interest, and financial solutions for their educational and living expenses and debt. While the majority of students have identified the need to study harder, seek tutoring, and complete their educational programs, the data also show areas of frustration. Specifically, students report lower levels of satisfaction with financial assistance, interaction with academic advisors, and with the availability of relevant service learning/internship opportunities.

   We encourage readers to spend time reviewing the data in Part B of the Appendix for additional findings and to then create specific ways to address second-year student concerns. For example, for a substantial portion of the respondents, the findings show great receptivity to career support alongside limited numbers of students who "feel energized" by their coursework. Are there ways to

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[1.] Gonzalez, J. (2012). Better gauges of college readiness may be key to improving graduation rates. Washington, DC: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 31, 2012.

make a stronger connection on your campus between coursework and careers? Also, for students who are undecided about their college completion plans, are there more ways to reach out to them prior to the summer break?

4. **Identify differences among student populations**
   To target interventions to students, it can be helpful to assess and distinguish specific student issues by major, for undecided vs. decided students, for male vs. female students, and other groups in order to develop customized strategies. For example, groups of students who are intellectually stimulated by their major and career choice may require different interventions than those feeling academic pressure from classes with upper-level students and uncertainty about a career focus. Similarly, outreach to those who have selected a major but are thinking about changing it may need to be more focused on the achievement of prerequisites and discussions of alternative majors and careers, while conversations with those still exploring majors may be more focused on aligning interests and aptitudes with career opportunities.

5. **Blend non-cognitive factors with metrics such as usage of campus services**
   This report includes data showing second-year students' usage of campus services in year one and their desire to use or continue to use those services in their current year. These data paint a powerful picture of changing student needs and provide insight on the timing and need for offering specific services. Receptive students can be personally contacted, and online resources can be reviewed to be sure relevant material is readily available for students who desire self-service options. In addition, an individual student's campus service usage can be correlated with additional "milestone" metrics such as the student's GPA or credits earned to assist with identifying productive pathways to college completion.[2]

6. **Update the institutional strategic plan with strategies for second-year students**
   Increasingly, campuses are putting programs for second-year students into their strategic plan, recognizing this population needs attention from a variety of different services and staff on campus, not a single area. Hence, second-year strategies for student success are being viewed as a campuswide responsibility and a continuation of services from the first year. To achieve the larger goal of increasing college completion rates, these strategies appear in the strategic plan alongside strategies and action plans for improving term-to-term persistence and return rates for year one, sometimes with follow-up strategies all the way through to graduation.

Many more implications can be identified using the data in this report. For further information or discussion, consider arranging a complimentary telephone consultation with one of our retention consultants (see page 20).

[2.] Culver, Tim (2013). Student success and relationship planning models: Part two. Noel-Levitz blog, April 24, 2013. Retrieved from: http://blog.noellevitz.com/2013/04/24/student-success-relationship-planning-models-part/.
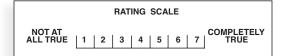
Appendix B: Complete findings

Contents

Complete findings of this study appear in this section as follows.
Note: All findings are provided separately by institution type, gender, and overall.

Table I: Non-cognitive, attitudinal measures of second-year students

Twenty-seven second-year student attitudes that were captured from the 3,870 respondents are shown in the table below.

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL percentages
Academic confidence						
I am able to grasp complicated ideas.	92.0%	85.3%	88.0%	90.1%	88.3%	88.9%
During an exam, I'm able to concentrate and keep my thoughts well organized.	82.4%	74.2%	75.1%	**80.6%**	**76.9%**	78.2%
I have a good memory of the information that my instructors present in class.	82.0%	78.4%	80.2%	81.5%	79.7%	80.3%
I am good at figuring out what material is most important for an exam.	77.1%	69.3%	76.4%	74.4%	74.0%	74.1%
Commitment to college						
I am strongly dedicated to finishing college–no matter what obstacles get in the way.	95.0%	93.6%	94.6%	93.3%	95.0%	94.4%
I am quite confident that my decision to go to college was right for me.	92.9%	91.0%	95.2%	91.1%	93.3%	92.6%
Of all the things I could do at this point in my life, going to college is definitely the most satisfying.	87.7%	85.7%	87.0%	85.2%	87.6%	86.8%
The total college experience is very rewarding.	86.6%	85.7%	89.7%	86.7%	86.7%	86.7%

RATING SCALE

NOT AT ALL TRUE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | COMPLETELY TRUE

For the items in Table I, agreement was defined as the aggregated number of students who selected a rating of 5, 6, or 7.

Table I continued...

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL percentages
Engaged learning						
I feel as though I'm learning things in my classes that are worthwhile to me as a person.	82.5%	81.9%	91.1%	**81.4%**	**84.8%**	83.7%
I can usually find ways of applying what I'm learning in class to something else in my life.	81.0%	83.2%	88.4%	**80.0%**	**84.5%**	83.0%
I find myself thinking about what I'm learning in class even when I'm not in class.	78.0%	76.3%	85.3%	**75.1%**	**80.3%**	78.6%
I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes.	75.0%	74.4%	85.9%	**74.3%**	**77.8%**	76.6%
Leadership						
Most people have a lot of trust in my judgment and opinions.	91.5%	87.6%	89.9%	87.4%	91.0%	89.8%
Many people consider me an effective leader and look to me for direction.	79.7%	78.8%	81.8%	77.7%	80.8%	79.7%
When I'm in a group, others often turn to me as the group's leader.	70.0%	69.8%	70.7%	68.3%	70.8%	70.0%
Over the years, I have frequently been selected as a spokesperson or group leader.	64.7%	59.2%	58.8%	**58.9%**	**63.1%**	61.7%
Transition						
I feel comfortable with the changes in life style that occur in college.	86.0%	85.3%	82.4%	85.7%	84.8%	85.1%
It has been easy for me to adapt to my college living arrangements.	84.4%	82.8%	79.6%	84.9%	82.0%	83.0%
I feel good about the way I have adapted to the college social environment.	82.1%	80.5%	76.1%	80.9%	80.3%	80.5%
I have many friends and feel at home here.	79.0%	72.6%	67.0%	**77.3%**	**73.4%**	74.7%
It has been easy for me to make friends in college.	77.8%	74.4%	61.3%	**76.9%**	**72.3%**	73.9%
Family support						
My family respects my judgment on most decisions.	89.5%	85.0%	88.1%	86.5%	88.1%	87.6%
I have always felt that the rest of my family was firmly behind me.	88.7%	83.3%	81.9%	85.3%	85.7%	85.6%
My family and I understand each other's point of view.	83.7%	78.2%	82.6%	81.4%	81.6%	81.5%
I feel comfortable discussing important issues with my family.	83.3%	82.3%	87.2%	81.7%	84.5%	83.5%
Financial security						
I have the financial resources that I need to finish college.	61.5%	58.0%	55.3%	**62.9%**	**57.3%**	59.2%
I don't have any financial problems that will interfere with my studies.	55.1%	50.1%	53.2%	**56.4%**	**51.2%**	53.0%

Note: Statistical significance on the differences by gender was assessed via t-tests on the means. **Bold** values identify items with significant t-test results. Additional analysis via Cohen's d showed negligible effect size.

Table II: Second-year students' receptivity to assistance by *institution type*

The following table measures students' receptivity to the assistance at the time of completing the survey (A); students who reported they had previously received the assistance (B); and the difference between the two measures (A-B).

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions			Students at 4-year public institutions			Students at 2-year public institutions		
	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)
Receptivity to academic assistance									
Find tutors in one or more of my courses.	46.8%	28.1%	18.6%	56.4%	39.4%	17.0%	38.0%	18.9%	19.2%
Get help with study skills (time management, taking notes, concentrating, exam skills, etc.).	32.8%	18.8%	14.0%	46.0%	41.6%	4.4%	41.8%	22.5%	19.3%
Receptivity to advising									
Figure out the impact of my grades on my desired major.	61.6%	30.9%	30.8%	62.4%	44.2%	18.2%	54.7%	33.1%	21.6%
Prepare a written academic plan for graduation.	57.7%	27.8%	29.9%	57.9%	40.5%	17.4%	55.0%	25.4%	29.6%
Select an academic program or major.	47.9%	60.8%	-12.9%	39.5%	64.7%	-25.2%	40.4%	54.0%	-13.6%
Discuss transfer questions and issues.	20.3%	16.5%	3.8%	31.5%	24.5%	7.0%	61.5%	33.0%	28.5%
Receptivity to career planning									
Identify work experiences or internships related to my major.	83.1%	21.7%	61.4%	77.8%	32.5%	45.3%	62.3%	27.1%	35.2%
Define goals suited to my major or career interest(s).	68.8%	33.9%	34.9%	65.9%	46.4%	19.6%	57.2%	36.8%	20.4%
Explore advantages and disadvantages of my career choice.	67.7%	25.6%	42.1%	67.4%	39.4%	28.0%	53.6%	34.1%	19.5%

I would like to receive assistance this year.			I received assistance last year.	
YES	NO		YES	NO
○	○	**Find tutors in one or more of my courses.**	○	○

A simple yes/no rating scale was used for the items in Table II, as shown in this example.

Table II continued...

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions			Students at 4-year public institutions			Students at 2-year public institutions		
	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)
Receptivity to assistance with finances									
Discuss options for financing my education.	46.9%	22.4%	24.5%	57.9%	38.5%	19.4%	57.4%	36.8%	20.6%
Find better ways to manage my personal finances, including loans, work, and credit cards.	37.8%	12.7%	25.1%	51.2%	28.1%	23.1%	42.0%	18.5%	23.5%
Find ways to balance the demands of school with work.	36.2%	15.2%	21.1%	48.5%	30.1%	18.4%	40.6%	23.5%	17.1%
Receptivity to personal support and counseling									
Find ways to deal with emotional tensions that are bothering me.	24.6%	13.9%	10.7%	28.6%	17.3%	11.2%	31.1%	16.2%	14.9%
Discuss difficulties in my personal relationships and social life.	21.7%	15.4%	6.3%	27.0%	19.6%	7.4%	23.1%	14.3%	8.9%
Receive help with family issues that are distracting to me.	14.5%	10.0%	4.5%	22.5%	13.8%	8.7%	20.6%	11.6%	9.0%

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Table III: Second-year students' receptivity to assistance by *gender and overall*

The table below continues examining second-year students' receptivity to assistance, except with a shift in focus to male students vs. female students and to the overall percentages for respondents in this study.

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Male students			Female students			Overall percentages		
	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)
Receptivity to academic assistance									
Find tutors in one or more of my courses.	45.5%	29.4%	16.0%	50.6%	31.5%	19.2%	48.9%	30.8%	18.1%
Get help with study skills (time management, taking notes, concentrating, exam skills, etc.).	37.2%	29.9%	7.3%	40.2%	26.8%	13.3%	39.2%	27.9%	11.3%
Receptivity to advising									
Figure out the impact of my grades on my desired major.	57.9%	37.9%	20.0%	62.2%	35.3%	26.9%	60.8%	36.2%	24.6%
Prepare a written academic plan for graduation.	50.4%	30.2%	20.2%	60.8%	33.0%	27.8%	57.3%	32.1%	25.2%
Select an academic program or major.	41.8%	61.0%	-19.2%	44.5%	61.2%	-16.8%	43.6%	61.2%	-17.6%
Discuss transfer questions and issues.	29.2%	20.9%	8.3%	32.2%	22.8%	9.4%	31.2%	22.1%	9.0%
Receptivity to career planning									
Identify work experiences or internships related to my major.	74.3%	27.2%	47.1%	79.5%	26.3%	53.2%	77.8%	26.6%	51.2%
Explore advantages and disadvantages of my career choice.	63.3%	33.8%	29.5%	66.3%	31.2%	35.1%	65.3%	32.1%	33.2%
Define goals suited to my major or career interest(s).	61.2%	39.1%	22.1%	68.2%	38.9%	29.3%	65.8%	39.0%	26.9%

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Male students			Female students			Overall percentages		
	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)	Students who would like to receive help going forward (A)	Students who reported they previously received help (B)	Difference (A-B)
Receptivity to assistance with finances									
Discuss options for financing my education.	47.8%	27.7%	20.0%	55.1%	32.2%	23.0%	52.7%	30.7%	22.0%
Find better ways to manage my personal finances, including loans, work, and credit cards.	39.1%	19.2%	20.0%	45.6%	19.4%	26.2%	43.4%	19.3%	24.1%
Find ways to balance the demands of school with work.	38.1%	21.3%	16.7%	43.2%	22.4%	20.8%	41.5%	22.0%	19.5%
Receptivity to personal support and counseling									
Find ways to deal with emotional tensions that are bothering me.	21.3%	13.9%	7.4%	30.1%	16.3%	13.7%	27.1%	15.5%	11.6%
Discuss difficulties in my personal relationships and social life.	20.3%	14.6%	5.7%	25.7%	17.9%	7.8%	23.9%	16.8%	7.1%
Receive help with family issues that are distracting to me.	14.2%	10.2%	4.0%	20.6%	12.4%	8.2%	18.4%	11.6%	6.8%

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Table IV: Second-year student satisfaction (institutional impressions)

This table shows the mean satisfaction scores of student respondents to 13 survey items using the seven-point rating scale shown below.

Percent of second-year students in agreement (2012)

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL mean
Degree of academic challenge in my classes here	5.74	5.75	5.89	5.70	5.80	5.77
My overall experience as a student at this institution	5.73	5.73	5.95	5.78	5.76	5.76
Level of interaction with other students	5.62	5.51	5.31	5.55	5.52	5.53
Social life (both on and off campus)	5.61	5.52	5.23	5.51	5.52	5.52
Sense of belonging to the college community	5.47	5.46	5.28	5.43	5.43	5.43
Variety of majors available here	5.37	5.59	5.58	5.53	5.47	5.49
Frequency of interactions with my instructors	5.22	5.11	5.78	5.23	5.29	5.27
Leadership opportunities in student government and other organizations	5.20	5.27	4.96	5.18	5.19	5.19
Variety of courses available in my (desired) major	5.16	5.47	5.46	5.36	5.31	5.32
Opportunities to get involved in activities and events associated with my (desired) major	5.15	5.38	5.02	5.23	5.21	5.21
Availability of service learning, internships, and/or other work experiences associated with my career interests	4.98	5.11	4.88	5.00	5.01	5.01
Frequency of communication with my academic advisor	4.92	4.81	5.12	4.92	4.91	4.91
Adequacy of financial assistance available to me	4.56	5.04	5.20	4.90	4.81	4.84

```
                    RATING SCALE

VERY                                          VERY
DISSATISFIED   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |   SATISFIED
```

The figures shown in Table IV are the mean responses to this seven-point scale.

Table V: Respondent demographics, enrollment status, and enrollment plans

When reviewing this section, keep in mind that respondents completed the survey used in this study near the beginning of their second year or near the end of their first year.

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL
Number of respondents	1,807	1,432	631	1,298	2,572	3,870
Percent of respondents	46.7%	37.0%	16.3%	33.5%	66.5%	
Racial/ethnic origin						
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.6%	1.1%	1.4%	0.5%	1.1%	0.9%
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	7.1%	5.9%	1.1%	7.1%	5.0%	5.7%
Black/African-American	3.8%	32.1%	1.7%	13.4%	14.2%	13.9%
White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	75.3%	45.4%	77.8%	64.1%	64.9%	64.7%
Mexican or Mexican American	2.8%	4.3%	7.9%	5.1%	3.7%	4.2%
Puerto Rican	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%
Other Hispanic or Latino	1.9%	2.0%	5.1%	1.8%	2.7%	2.4%
Multiethnic	4.2%	4.6%	1.6%	3.6%	4.1%	3.9%
Other	1.1%	1.7%	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.4%
Prefer not to respond	2.8%	2.5%	1.3%	2.2%	2.6%	2.4%
Time expecting to spend at work during the term in which the survey was completed						
0 (I do not work)	44.9%	42.2%	26.6%	44.9%	38.9%	40.9%
1 to 10 hours per week	25.5%	16.6%	14.6%	19.4%	20.9%	20.4%
11 to 20 hours per week	19.1%	21.2%	16.8%	18.4%	20.0%	19.5%
21 to 30 hours per week	6.8%	11.5%	12.0%	8.3%	9.9%	9.4%
31 to 40 hours per week	3.0%	6.0%	14.7%	4.6%	6.7%	6.0%
Over 40 hours per week	0.8%	2.7%	15.2%	4.3%	3.6%	3.8%
Current GPA						
3.5 – 4.0	50.4%	22.9%	48.2%	32.6%	43.5%	39.9%
2.5 – 3.49	45.7%	55.2%	42.9%	53.6%	46.3%	48.7%
1.5 – 2.49	3.6%	19.3%	8.2%	12.5%	9.0%	10.2%
1.0 – 1.49	0.2%	2.0%	0.5%	1.1%	0.8%	0.9%
Less than 1.0	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Description of current college enrollment status						
I enrolled here with no previous college credits.	52.7%	52.8%	36.3%	52.3%	49.0%	50.1%
I enrolled here with dual-enrollment credits earned while in high school.	33.8%	30.7%	19.8%	28.4%	31.4%	30.4%
I transferred here from a community college.	4.3%	6.1%	11.4%	5.2%	6.6%	6.1%
I transferred here from a four-year college or university.	3.9%	3.1%	9.7%	4.7%	4.5%	4.6%
Other	5.2%	7.3%	22.8%	9.5%	8.5%	8.8%

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Table V continued...

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL percentages
Total number of college credit hours earned at current institution and at other institutions						
0 – 15 credits	13.1%	14.2%	11.7%	14.3%	12.8%	13.3%
16 – 30 credits	15.3%	31.4%	13.6%	21.2%	20.9%	21.0%
31 – 45 credits	44.4%	34.4%	26.9%	38.1%	37.7%	37.8%
46 – 60 credits	19.7%	12.4%	20.8%	16.3%	17.6%	17.2%
More than 60 credits	7.5%	7.7%	26.9%	10.2%	11.0%	10.7%
Number of classes enrolled in at other institutions during the term in which the survey was completed						
None	89.6%	78.8%	74.6%	82.8%	83.3%	83.2%
1 class	0.6%	1.5%	3.6%	0.9%	1.7%	1.4%
2 classes	0.4%	1.2%	4.8%	1.1%	1.6%	1.4%
3 classes	0.6%	1.0%	3.0%	0.8%	1.3%	1.1%
More than 3 classes	8.9%	17.5%	13.9%	14.4%	12.1%	12.9%
Study plans						
I don't think I will need to study as much as I did last year.	1.3%	0.7%	1.9%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
I think I will need to study about the same amount as I did last year.	27.1%	21.0%	34.7%	25.1%	26.6%	26.1%
I think I will need to study more than I did last year.	71.6%	78.3%	63.4%	73.7%	72.2%	72.7%
Current decision on the selection of a major or program						
I plan to continue with the major or program I have selected.	76.7%	76.0%	80.3%	75.4%	77.9%	77.1%
I have selected a major or program, but I'm thinking about changing it.	7.9%	12.1%	8.2%	10.0%	9.3%	9.5%
I'm actively engaged in the process of selecting a major or program.	12.5%	8.2%	3.6%	9.9%	9.3%	9.5%
I have some potential major or programs in mind, but haven't explored them yet.	2.5%	2.9%	4.9%	3.3%	3.0%	3.1%
I have not thought seriously about a major or program at this point.	0.3%	0.7%	2.9%	1.3%	0.7%	0.9%
Highest degree planned						
1-year certificate	0.0%	0.3%	1.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%
2-year certificate or associate degree	0.8%	1.4%	18.1%	3.6%	3.9%	3.8%
4-year college degree (bachelor's)	23.9%	40.3%	40.7%	33.7%	32.2%	32.7%
Master's degree	37.4%	32.4%	25.8%	33.7%	33.6%	33.6%
Professional degree (medicine, dentistry, law, Ph.D., or other similar degrees)	37.5%	24.5%	13.0%	27.3%	29.4%	28.7%
Other	0.5%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%	0.7%	0.9%

Table V continued...

All survey items	Students at 4-year private institutions	Students at 4-year public institutions	Students at 2-year public institutions	Male students	Female students	OVERALL percentages
Current college or program completion plan						
I plan to complete my degree or program at this college or university.	91.0%	86.0%	44.1%	81.9%	81.3%	81.5%
I plan to transfer to another college or university to complete my degree.	3.2%	8.2%	47.5%	11.6%	12.7%	12.3%
College is not right for me at this time, and I do not plan to continue.	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%
I am undecided about my plans at this time.	5.7%	5.7%	8.2%	6.2%	6.0%	6.1%

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Visit www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport to download these additional reports that may be of interest:

Visit www.noellevitz.com/MidYearReport to download this additional report:

Questions? Want additional information?

If you have questions about this report, or if you would like to discuss how an attitudinal student survey can support student success and persistence on your campus, please contact Noel-Levitz at 1-800-876-1117 or ContactUs@noellevitz.com. Additionally, see the description below to learn more about how the early-alert assessments of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System *Plus*™ (RMS *Plus*) help campuses focus early individual interventions with at-risk students.

About Noel-Levitz and the early-alert survey instrument used in this study

Noel-Levitz has served the higher education community for 40 years. Campus leaders turn to Noel-Levitz for consultation and resources for student recruitment, student retention, marketing, and strategic enrollment planning. More than 2,800 colleges and universities throughout North America have used Noel-Levitz services.

The data in this report are drawn from Noel-Levitz's 68-item, Second-Year Student Assessment (SYSA), part of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System *Plus*. Student respondents (including transfer students) complete this survey near the beginning of the second year of college or near the end of their first year. Immediately upon the survey's completion, findings are reported electronically to the respondents' college or university for early and ongoing identification of student needs.

Two companion surveys to the SYSA are also available. The College Student Inventory (CSI) is the original survey in the series. It alerts campuses to the needs of incoming first-year students. In addition, the Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA) identifies changes in first-year students' attitudes and motivation at the mid-point of the first year.

Using the findings of these surveys, educators are able to engage students in timely conversations and to proactively connect students with key services that make a difference. To see sample copies of these assessments, please visit www.noellevitz.com/RMS*Plus*.

How to cite this report

Noel-Levitz (2013). *The Attitudes of Second-Year College Students.* Coralville, Iowa: Author. Retrieved from www.noellevitz.com/SecondYearAttitudes.

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