

Patriot Success Survey Results Overview 2019

Survey Overview

The purpose of the Patriot Success Survey, distributed to all degree-seeking Mason undergraduate students enrolled each fall, is to identify, develop, implement, and assess student-level interventions that will increase engagement, retention, and timely degree completion among George Mason University undergraduate students. Survey content includes questions focused on actionable areas for intervention, overall Mason experience, and demographic information not available elsewhere. This information can be used to gauge the student experience, identify and address areas for improvement including providing additional student support, and plan for the future.

This report discusses survey administration, key findings, and interventions delivered leveraging the survey results. Detailed survey results are available on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning's website (<https://ira.gmu.edu/survey-results-and-reports/patriot-success-survey/>). Questions about the Patriot Success Survey, this report, or the use of its findings can be directed to University Life Assessment and Planning (ula@gmu.edu).

Administration

The Patriot Success Survey is administered via Baseline to all US-based undergraduate degree-seeking students including online learners, ADVANCE students studying at Mason, and Mason Korea students currently in Fairfax. INTO Mason students and Mason Korea students studying at the Korea campus are not invited to participate in the survey.

Survey administration runs for two weeks each fall. The Fall 2019 survey consisted of 36 core survey items plus 11 student self-reported demographic items and two validity questions (see Appendix A for the survey instrument). It launched on September 22 and remained open through October 6 with three reminders sent to non-respondents. Patriot Success Survey items are designed to help identify areas where students may benefit from additional support and helps identify offices and resources on campus to support their success. Specific questions about intent to return to Mason, sense of belonging, financial concerns, and involvement interests are used to inform direct outreach from relevant offices on campus. In addition to direct outreach based on individual responses to specific questions, we compare survey responses over time to see changes in students' experiences at Mason. Some questions are used to develop new programs and deliver better services to meet the needs of Mason students.

In Fall 2019, we distributed the survey to 25,982 eligible students. Of the eligible students invited to participate in the 2019 survey, 6,762 responded, yielding an overall survey response rate of 26%. Respondents included 3,037 New students (46% response rate), 3,725 Returning students (19%), and 41 Online students (18%).

Key Findings

For most questions that assessed students' sense of belonging and community at Mason, a large percentage of respondents indicated their agreement that these statements reflected their feelings.

- 47% strongly agreed or agreed that they feel a connection to their peers at Mason (Q1).

Students also reported generally feeling safe in regards to housing, food, and physical security on campus, as well as in their ability to meet expected college and life expenses.

- 85% indicated that it was "often true" or "very often true" that they felt safe on the Mason campus (Q9).
- 83% indicated that it was "often true" or "very often true" that they had enough access to food (Q10).
- 92% indicated that it was "often true" or "very often true" that they had a steady place to live (Q11).

They also described being engaged in both academic and non-academic activities on and off campus.

- 45% strongly agreed or agreed that they were involved in Mason activities outside of the classroom (Q14).

Overall, students indicated that faculty were paramount to helping them succeed at Mason, which on the whole they expected to.

- 85% percent of students knew how to contact an academic advisor or success coach (Q29).
- Over half (54%) of them had met with their advisor at least once in the past year (Q30). These coaches were all highly rated. Approximately half of students reported experiencing no significant difficulty in any of their courses (Q27).

Of given professions, most students were interested in medicine (12%) or legal professions (10%)(Q33). Students also conveyed great interest in receiving more information about exploring their career options (59%), internship opportunities (60%), and financial aid and/or scholarships (52%)(Q34).

The overall Mason experience was rated positively, with approximately 65% of students rating their experience with the university as either "good" or "very good" (Q20).

Interventions and Project Outcomes

Following the survey administration period, professional and student staff conducted outreach to students based on their response to specific questions. Intervention efforts assisted students with on and off campus resources to continue their education at Mason.

Patriot Success Survey 2019

Welcome to Patriot Success: Mason's Undergraduate Student Success Survey. This survey is designed to connect you with people and resources to support your continued success in college.

Consent: Information provided by you or about you will be used to enhance your ability to succeed in college. Your participation is voluntary. Selected University faculty, staff, and peer advisors may have access to your information on a need-to-know basis for purposes of identifying issues and providing support. You may be contacted by Mason faculty, staff, or peer advisors related to your survey responses. Information will be used to enhance our understanding of the factors that contribute to student success at Mason.

[QUESTION] Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and I consent to participate in this survey.

- Agree (Take me to the survey) [branch to question 1] (Finish Page Option 1)
- Disagree (I do not want to take the survey and understand I will not be eligible for prizes) [branch to the end] (Finish Page Option 2)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

#		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I feel a connection to my peers at Mason.						
2.	I am proud to be a Mason student.						
3.	I feel like a part of the Mason community.						
4.	I feel like I belong on this campus.						
5.	People on this campus care about my success.						
6.	I feel good about what I want to study at Mason.						
7.	Getting a college degree is important to me.						

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

8.	I believe I will maintain at least a 3.0 GPA at Mason.						
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Please indicate how often each of the following statements are true for you:

#		Very Often True	Often True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True
9.	I feel safe on the Mason campus.					
10.	I have enough access to food.					
11.	I have a steady place to live.					

#		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12.	I am confident I will be able to pay for my tuition, fees, and daily expenses this semester.						
13.	I strive to get the best grades.						
14.	I am involved in Mason activities outside of the classroom.						
15.	Getting a degree from Mason is important to me.						
16.	Faculty support is important to my success at Mason.						
17.	Respond as "disagree" if						

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

	you are reading this question.						
18.	I will be academically successful at Mason.						
19.	I am involved in activities outside the Mason community.						

20. Overall, how would you rate your experience at Mason?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

21. Do you intend to return to Mason next semester (Spring 2020)?

- Yes
- Yes, but I will be studying abroad or completing an internship
- No, I am an ADVANCE student, not currently enrolled at Mason
- No, I will be graduating
- No, but I plan to return to Mason later
- No, I am transferring to another institution
- No, I am leaving Mason permanently
- Unsure

22. How many years do you expect it will take you to earn your bachelor's degree?

- Less than 4 years
- 4 years
- 4 1/2 years
- 5 years
- 5 1/2 years
- 6 years
- More than 6 years

23. What current life factors would keep you from graduating on your intended timeline? (select all that apply.)

- Financial limitations
- Family obligations
- Work obligations
- Completing a double major or minor

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

- Taking 12 credit hours or less one or more semesters
- Taking additional courses of interest not related to my major
- Changing my major
- Transferring to another institution
- Availability of courses required to complete my major
- Other: [Textbox]
- Not Applicable: I can't think of a reason that I wouldn't graduate on my intended timeline.

24. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- I am not employed
- I am employed on-campus
- I am employed off-campus
- I am employed both on-campus and off-campus
- I am a homemaker/stay-at-home parent/stay-at-home caretaker

25. In an average week, how many hours do you spend working for pay?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-30
- More than 30

26. Did you apply for financial aid (i.e., federal loans/private loans/scholarships or grants) for this academic year (2019- 2020)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

27. Are you currently having difficulty in any of your academic courses?

- No
- Yes, in one course
- Yes, in two courses
- Yes, in three courses
- Yes, in four or more courses

28. Please identify the course in which you are having the most difficulty (e.g., English 101, Math 106).

(Note: Write NONE if not applicable).

[Open Textbox]

29. Do you know how to contact an academic advisor or success coach?

- Yes
- No

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

30. How many times did you meet with a Mason academic advisor or success coach last year (during the 2018-2019 year)?

- I did not attend Mason during the 2018-2019 academic year
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

31. I've used the following resources to review the courses I need to graduate (select all that apply):

- Degree Works (online degree audit available at patriotweb.gmu.edu)
- 4-year plans (online Patriot graduation maps available at 4yearplans.gmu.edu)
- Curriculum sheets (checklist of requirements available at advising.gmu.edu)
- My major's website
- College catalog (catalog.gmu.edu)
- Unsure
- None of the above

32. My Mason Academic Advisor or Success Coach is (select all that apply):

- Prompt in responding to my questions
- Available
- Respectful
- Willing to listen
- Knowledgeable in my major/area
- Knowledgeable about campus resources
- Helpful
- Communicates effectively
- None of the above
- I have not met my academic advisor or success coach

33. Are you interested in pursuing any of the following professions? (select all that apply.)

- PK-12 Teaching/Education
- College Teaching
- Legal professions
- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Podiatry
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physician Assistant
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Veterinary Medicine
- I'm not interested in any of these professions

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

34. I'm interested in receiving more information about: (select all that apply.)

- Exploring my career options
- Exploring my internship opportunities
- Exploring well-being opportunities at Mason
- Getting involved with clubs and organizations at Mason
- Financial aid and/or scholarships available to me
- Managing my personal finances
- Living off campus
- Developing better study habits and writing skills
- Study abroad opportunities
- Undergraduate research opportunities
- The Patriot Experience co-curricular program
- Mason Recreation (Facilities, Intramural/Club Sports, Outdoor Adventures, etc.)
- None of the above

35. If you are still reading these survey questions, please respond as "1"

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

36. Name the person at Mason who has helped you the most in your transition to college:

[Open Textbox]

37. Please indicate the extent to which your roommate relationship is currently a source of stress for you.

- Does not apply to me
- No stress
- Some stress
- High stress
- Extreme stress

38. How do you expect to use your degree to further your career plans after graduation

- I will use it to start my first professional job in my career field of interest
- I will use it to advance in a career field in which I have been working
- I am an experienced professional and will use it to change from my current career field to a new one
- Other (please specify): [textbox]

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

[INSTRUCTION] Your responses to these final questions are OPTIONAL as well as CONFIDENTIAL. They are intended to help us better understand the diversity of the Mason student body.

39. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (select all that apply)

- Asian or Asian Heritage
- Black or African Heritage
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native American, Indigenous, or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Unknown
- Not listed; I prefer to identify as (please specify) [textbox]
- I prefer not to respond

40. What best describes your living situation (select one)?

- I live on campus.
- I live off campus within walking distance to my primary campus.
- I live off campus within a 30-minute commute to my primary campus (on average).
- I live off campus with a greater-than-30-minute commute to my primary campus (on average).
- I am currently homeless and/or in transition.
- None of the above
- I prefer not to respond

41. With whom do you live during the school year? (select all that apply)

- No one; I live alone
- One or more other Mason students
- Roommate(s) who are not current Mason students
- My spouse or partner
- My child or children
- My parents
- Other relatives
- I prefer not to respond
- Not listed (please specify) [textbox]

42. Do you identify with the gender/sex you were assigned at birth? (single select)

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to respond

43. What is your gender identity? (select all that apply)

- Man
- Woman
- Outside the gender binary (please specify) [textbox]
- I prefer not to respond

Appendix A: Patriot Success Survey Instrument (2019)

44. What is your sexual and/or romantic orientation(s)? (select all that apply)

- Aromantic
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Questioning
- Straight (Heterosexual)
- Unknown or unsure
- Not listed (please specify) [textbox]
- I prefer not to respond

45. Of your parent(s) or primary caregiver(s), who completed the highest level of education in the United States? [textbox]

46. Please select the highest level of education that person completed (single select)

- Did not attend any school in the United States
- Did not finish high school
- High school diploma or G.E.D.
- Attended college but did not complete degree
- Associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- Doctoral or professional degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)
- Unknown or unsure
- I prefer not to respond

47. Were you ever in the foster care system?

- No, I have never been in the foster care system
- Yes, until I aged out of foster care
- Yes, but was adopted before I aged out of foster care
- Other (please specify): [textbox]
- I prefer not to respond

48. Are you the primary caregiver to a dependent child(ren) (under 25 years old)? (single select)

- Yes
- No

49. Are you the primary caregiver to a dependent adult(s) (25 years or older)? (single select)

- Yes
- No