

Students of Color Feel Less Academically and Emotionally Prepared For College

Students of color feel less prepared, both emotionally and academically, than their peers during their first term at college. A national online poll among second semester first year college freshman found that these students feel more overwhelmed and less in control during their first term than their peers. There are positive signs that students of color are refraining from drug and alcohol use, but data show that obstacles remain to these students feeling emotionally prepared for their first term and comfortable seeking help within the college setting.



Emotional and Academic Preparedness



- Caucasian students are more likely than African American and Hispanic students to say they feel more academically prepared than their peers during their first term of college (Caucasian 50% vs. African American 36% and Hispanic 39%).
- Caucasian students also are more likely than African American students to feel more emotionally prepared than their peers (35% vs. 23%).

Perception and Environment

Caucasian students are more apt to report positive feelings regarding their first term in college.

During their first term students:

- Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic



Rate their overall experience as good or excellent
62% vs. 48%



Feeling in control most or all of the time
36% & 36% vs. 21%



Reported feeling overwhelmed most or all of the time
51% vs. 40%



Reported feeling angry most or all of the time
14% vs. 8%

- African American students are more likely than Caucasian students to say that college is not living up to their expectations (57% vs. 46%).
- African American and Hispanic students are more likely than Caucasian students to say that it seems like everyone has college figured out but them (52% and 49% vs. 41%).



African American students are also more likely than Caucasian and Hispanic students to say they seriously considered transferring during their first term (41% vs. 23% and 21%).

Help-Seeking

Caucasian students are two or more times as likely as African American and/or Hispanic students to say they have ever been diagnosed with or treated for the following conditions.



Anxiety
27% vs.
12%
and 17%



Depression
25% vs.
16%
and 18%



ADHD
13% vs.
5%
and 6%



Self-harm
11% vs.
5%



Bipolar disorder
5% vs.
1%

■ Caucasian
■ African American
■ Hispanic

African American students are more likely than Caucasian students to say they tend to keep their feelings about the difficulty of college to themselves (75% vs. 61%).

African American students are more likely than Caucasian and Hispanic students to turn to a religious figure for support during their first term of college (18% vs. 8% and 5%).

Substance Abuse

Though many students report facing pressures to use drugs or alcohol during their first term of college, it appears that students of color are less likely to succumb to such pressures.

- African American students are less likely than Caucasian students to say they feel more pressure to drink alcohol now that they are in college (13% vs. 23%), and that drinking alcohol is a normal part of the college experience (28% vs. 35%).
- African American students are less likely than Caucasian students to regularly consume alcohol (16% vs. 26%) and less likely to report regularly consuming illegal drugs (0% vs. 3%) during their first term.



The survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll, the JED Foundation, Partnership for Drug Free Kids and The Jordan Porco Foundation between March 25 and April 17, 2015 among 1,502 students who met the following criteria: 17-20 years old, graduated from high school, currently attends a 2-year or 4-year college in the U.S., currently a first year student/freshman in their second term, and currently attending at least some of their college classes in-person. Data are weighted where necessary by age within gender, race/ethnicity, and region to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

*Instances where comparisons between groups were not statistically significant were omitted from the results above.
**The term "Hispanic" was used for consistency with the survey questionnaire.



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