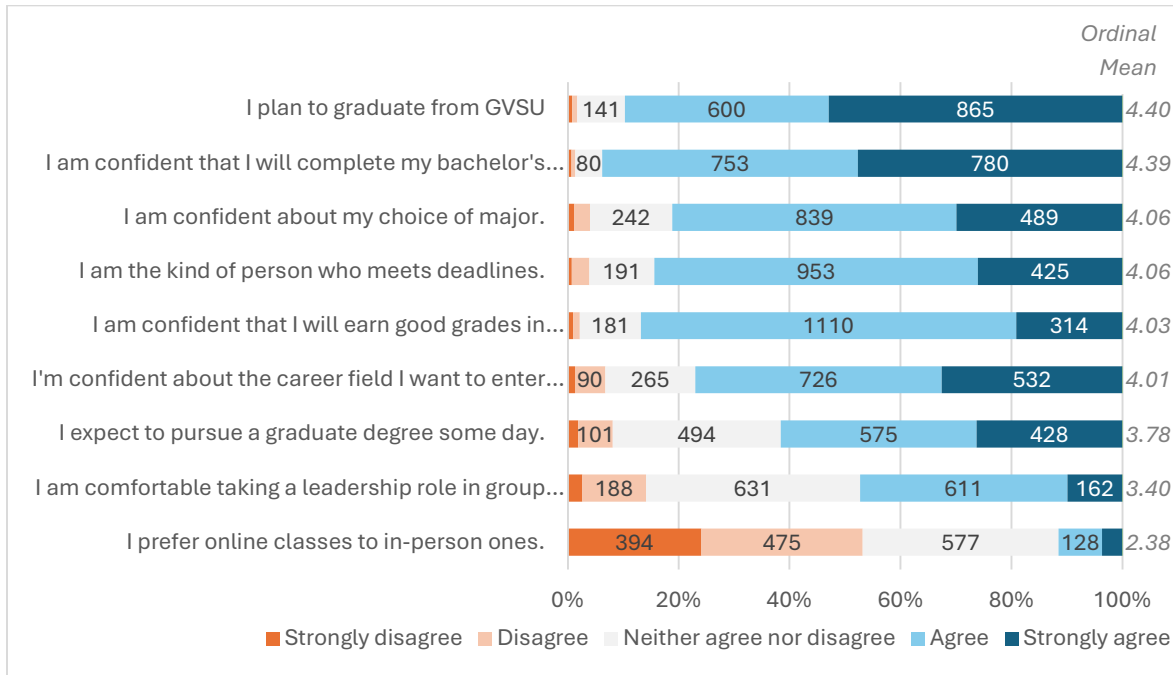


## Fall 2025 GVSU Entering Student Survey – Summary of responses

[Jun 2026 addenda -- Notes on associations with fall-to-winter retention and first-year GPA in magenta]

The survey was sent to registered FTIACs during Aug 18 – 24. Response rate: 1676 / 4360 = 38%.

### Question 1: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

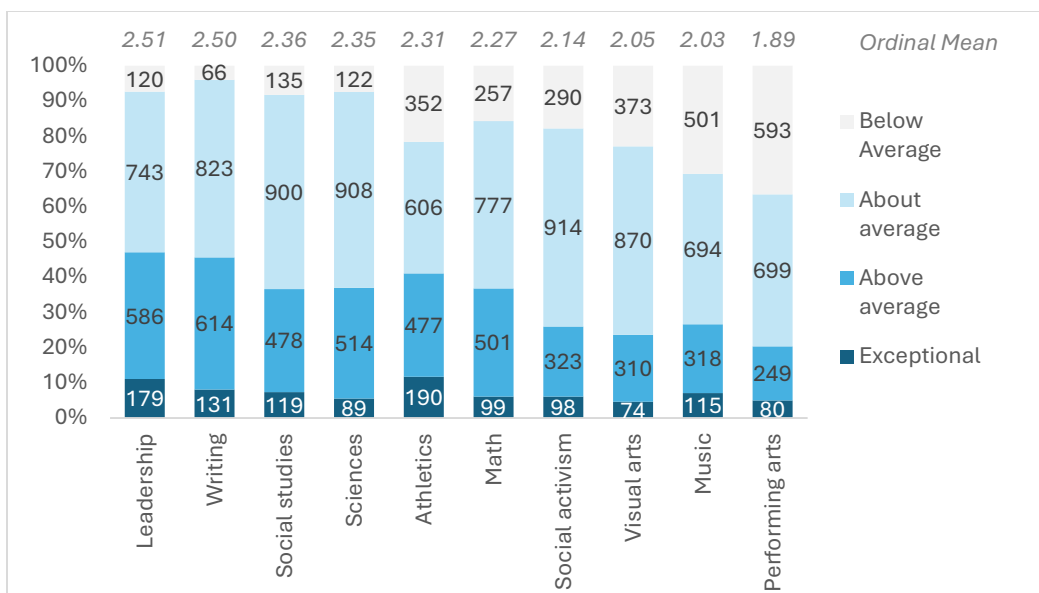


Greater agreement with the following was associated positively with fall-to-winter retention: “I plan to graduate from GVSU”; “I’m confident I’ll complete bachelor’s degree”. Agreement with “I’m the kind of person who meets deadlines” and “I’m confident that I’ll earn good grades” were each associated with higher first-year GPA.

Agreement with “I prefer online classes to in-person ones” was negatively associated with both retention and GPA.

Agreement with “I’m confident about my choice of major” was associated inversely with first year changes of major.

### Question 2: Please rate your achievements in the following types of courses or activities

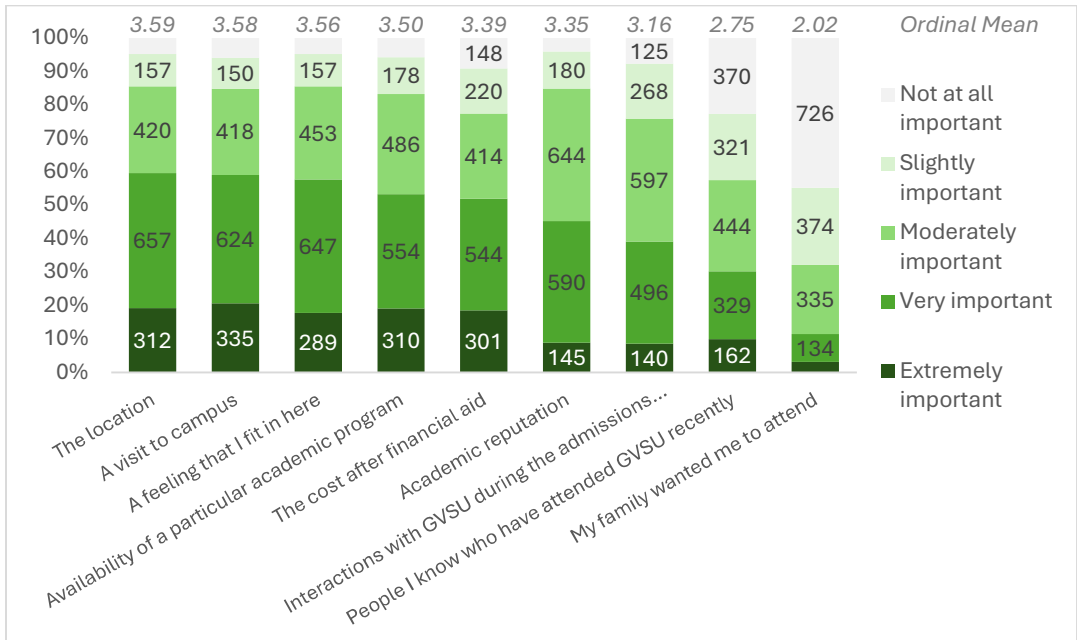


Students who wrote in categories for self-ratings listed “animal care”, “communication” (x2), “critical thinking”, “knitting”, “language”, “law enforcement”, “medical sciences”, “Minecraft”, “presenting”, “programming”, “projects”, “reading” (x2), “speech”, “sports”, & “web design”.

Self-reported level of accomplishments in math or social studies were positively associated with fall-to-winter retention. Reported accomplishments in writing and math were positively related to first-year GPA.

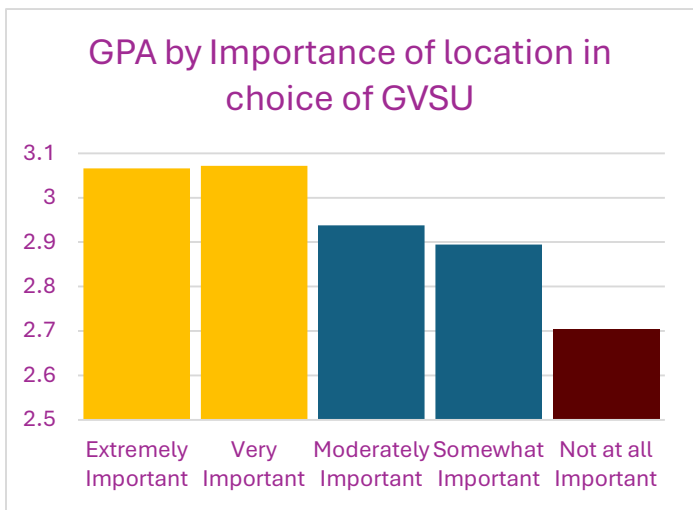
Self-reported “Exceptional” accomplishments in the following domains were associated with significantly lower first-year GPAs: Athletics, Performing arts, Social activism, Visual arts.

**Question 3: Please indicate how much the following factors contributed to your decision to attend GVSU**



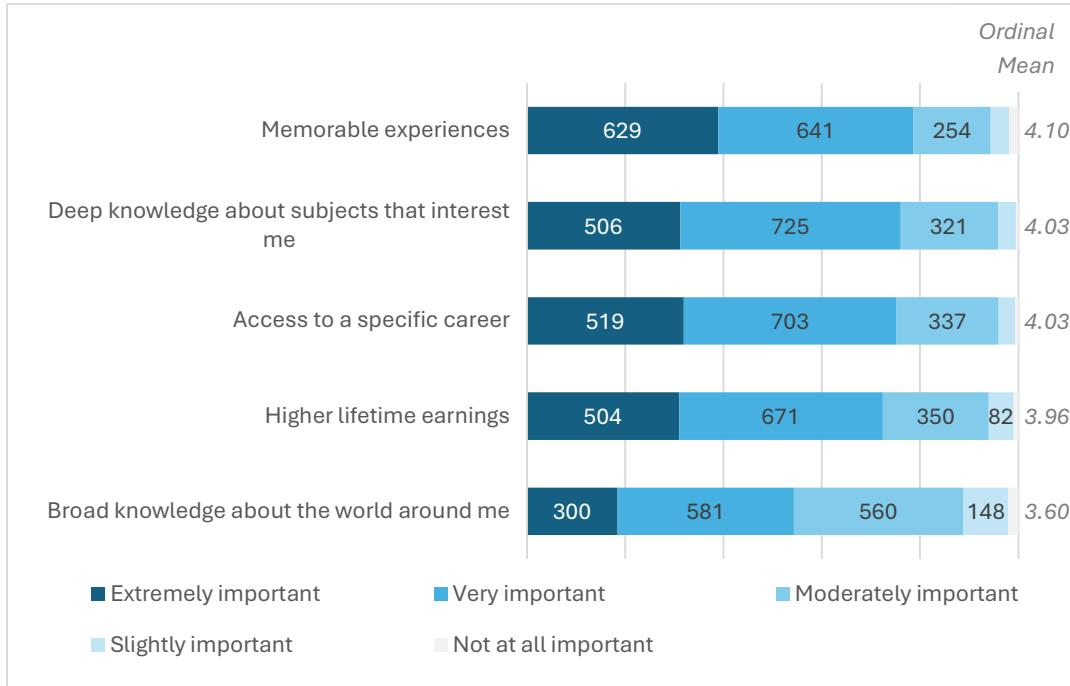
Students who wrote in factors listed [housing] (x7), [an athletic team] (x3), [parents are alumni] (x2), “all my friends wanted to go here”, “basketball camp”, “business opportunities”, “ease of credit transfer from GRCC”, “environment”, “family nearby”, “getting in to the competitive program”, “good cybersecurity program”, “mental health”, “my mom worked here”, “size”, “sports involvement for the student body”, “the prevalence of art”, “The Well”, and “undergraduate research opportunities”.

Students’ rating of the importance of location choosing GVSU is ordinaly related to GPA (differences between gold and red are statistically significant).



Students who rated academic reputation as “extremely important” earned significantly lower grades than those who indicated less importance for that factor. Similarly, rating the following as “extremely important” was associated with lower GPA than some of the lower importance ratings: Interactions during admission process; People I know who attended; My family wanted me to. First-year changes of major were inversely associated with the importance attributed to availability of a particular academic program.

**Question 4: Which of these outcomes of college are most important to you?**



The only write-in factors (each mentioned once and rated as “Extremely Important”) were “building a community for myself”, “internships/shadowing”, and “working in sports”.

None of these items was significantly related to fall-to-winter retention or first-year GPA.

**Question 5: What activities, communities, or support systems would help you feel a sense of belonging in college?** (open-ended responses summarized by ChatGPT)

Major Themes & Frequencies (*counts approximate, since many responses mention multiple themes*)

- Clubs & Student Organizations – 220+ mentions (general clubs, interest-based clubs, academic clubs, hobby clubs)
- Sports, Athletics & Intramurals – 160+ mentions (club sports, intramurals, casual sports, fitness, running, volleyball, soccer, basketball, track, etc.)
- Friends & Social Connections – 120+ mentions (making new friends, friend groups, supportive peers, roommates, people with similar interests)
- Faith-Based & Ministry Groups – 60+ mentions (Christian community, Bible study, Cru, church groups, worship, campus ministry, faith-based support)
- Academic Support (Tutoring, Mentorship, Advisors, Study Groups) – 60+ mentions (tutoring, mentoring, study groups, advisor check-ins, professor support, academic success systems)
- Greek Life (Sororities/Fraternities) – 35+ mentions (sorority rush, Greek organizations, social fraternity/sorority support)
- Music, Band, Choir, Performing Arts – 30+ mentions (marching band, choir, theatre, drama, public speaking, improv, performance groups)

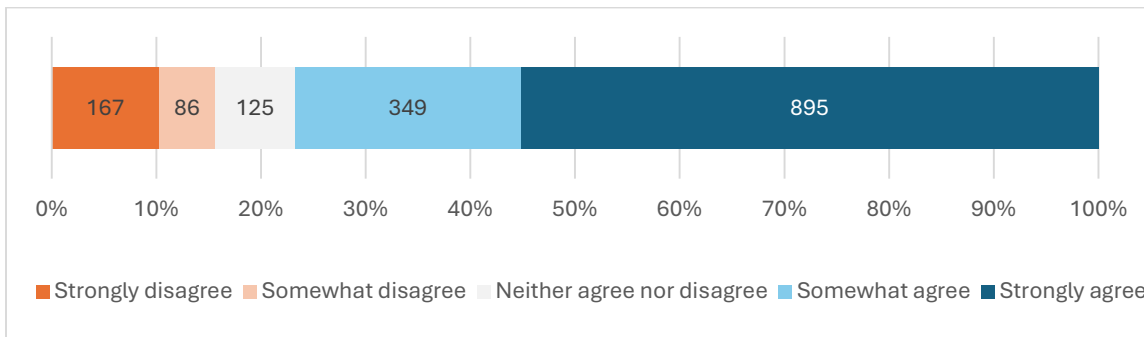
- Cultural & Identity-Based Communities – 30+ mentions  
(Black Excellence, Laker Familia, LGBTQ+ groups, Hispanic/Latino groups, cultural/heritage events, inclusivity clubs)
- Campus Events & Social Activities – 25+ mentions  
(Welcome Week, Laker Kickoff, student life events, game nights, social gatherings)
- Arts & Creative Activities – 20+ mentions  
(art clubs, photography, pottery, creative hobbies, film, crafts, design)
- Mental Health & Counseling Support – 10+ mentions  
(counseling services, mental health resources, emotional support)

**Overall Takeaways**

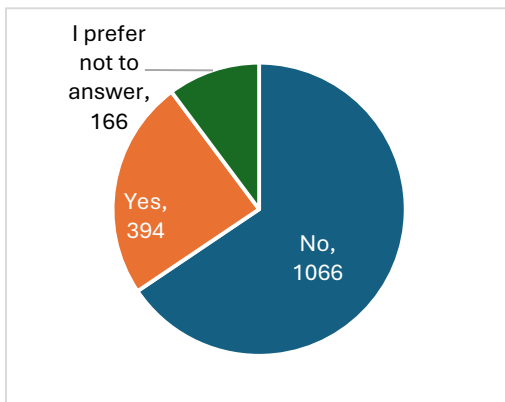
- The top three drivers of [anticipated] belonging are:
  1. Clubs/organizations (especially interest-based and major-specific)
  2. Sports/athletics (competitive and casual)
  3. Friendships and peer connections
- Faith-based communities and academic support systems are also highly valued.
- Many students want identity-affirming spaces (cultural, LGBTQ+, first-gen, etc.).
- A smaller but consistent group values arts/creative expression and mental health support.

**Question 6: I have a friend who is/will be attending GVSU this semester.**

77% of respondents agreed that they have a friend at GVSU.



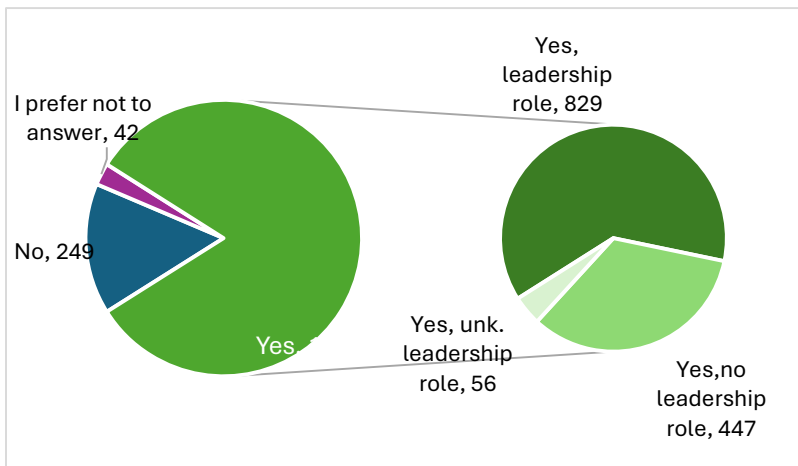
**Question 7: Do you plan to play any sports during college?**



	Varsity	Club	Intramural	Drop-in	Other
Volleyball	6	29	33	8	0
Soccer	3	26	33	8	1
Basketball	8	15	33	5	1
Track & cross country	30	21	3	2	1
Baseball or softball	4	10	9	0	0
Tennis	2	12	7	2	0
Swim, dive, water polo	1	16	2	1	2
Football, flag football	11	2	6	1	0
Cheer	11	4	0	0	3
Lacrosse	2	12	3	0	0
Pickleball	0	3	8	3	0
Golf	0	9	2	0	1
Dance	0	8	0	1	2
Wrestling	7	2	0	1	0

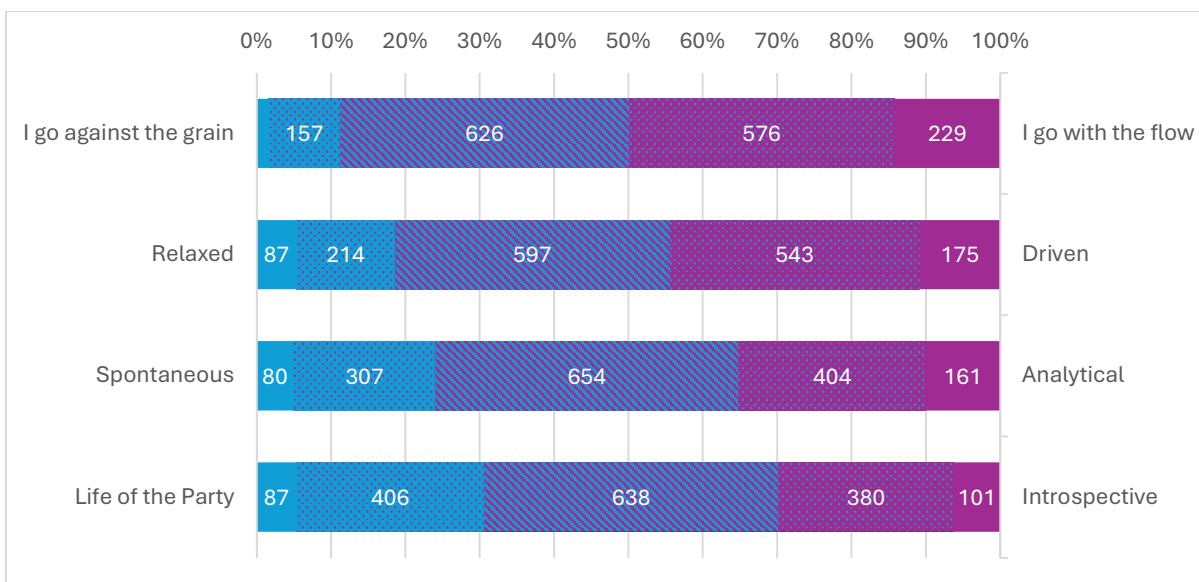
	Varsity	Club	Intramural	Drop-in	Other
Hockey	2	4	1	0	0
Crew / rowing	0	5	0	0	0
Bowling	1	3	0	0	0
Boxing	0	4	0	0	0
Dodgeball	0	3	1	0	0
Equestrian	0	2	0	1	1
Gymnastics	0	4	0	0	0
Marching band	0	1	0	0	2
Other	2	6	4	2	0
Unspecified	2	2	3	5	4

**Question 8: I was involved in clubs or organizations in high school.**



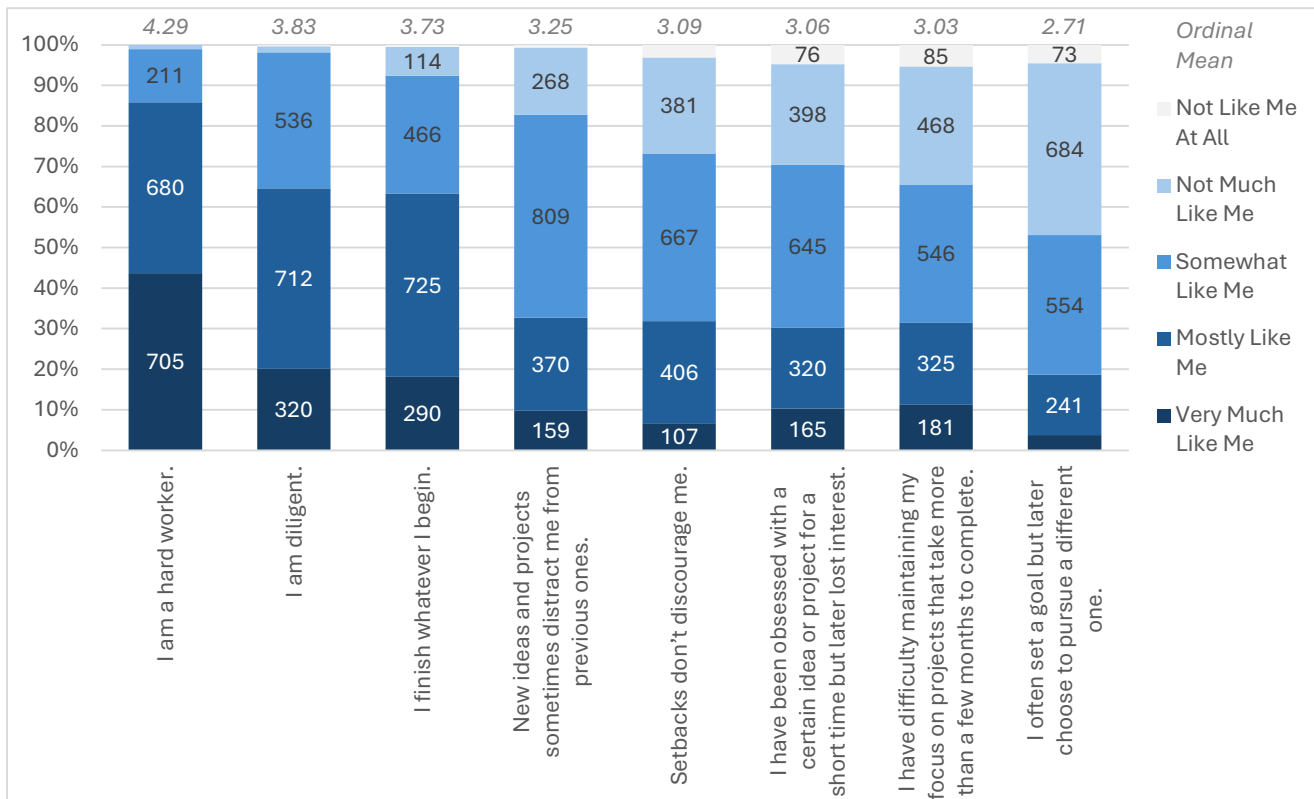
Students who responded “no” were less likely to be retained to the winter 2026 semester.

**Question 9: Please rate yourself on the following scales**

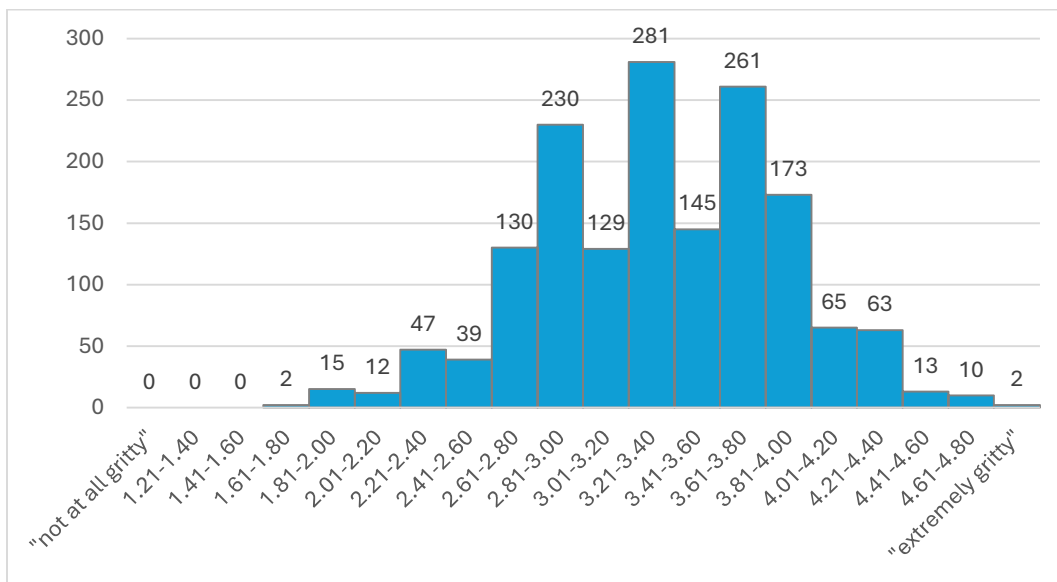


Greater self-identification with the following were associated with higher first-year GPAs: Introspective; Driven; Analytical; “I go with the flow”.

**Question 10: Please rate yourself on the following scales**

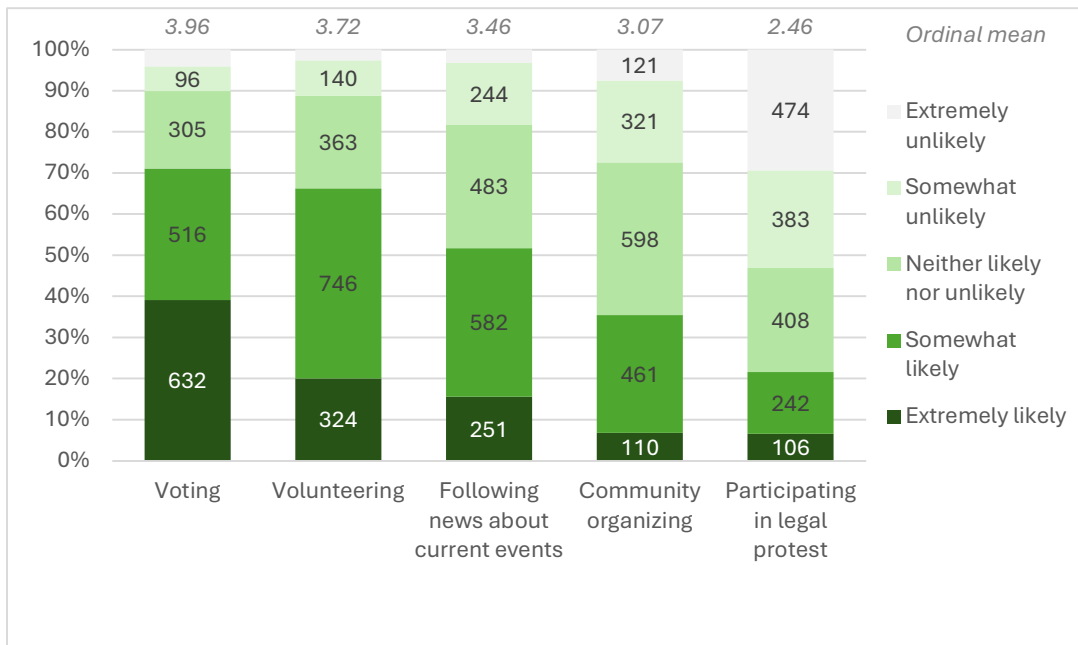


These 8 questions contribute to the Grit-S scale, which measures individuals' tendency to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals<sup>1</sup>. Following is the distribution of respondents' grit scores:



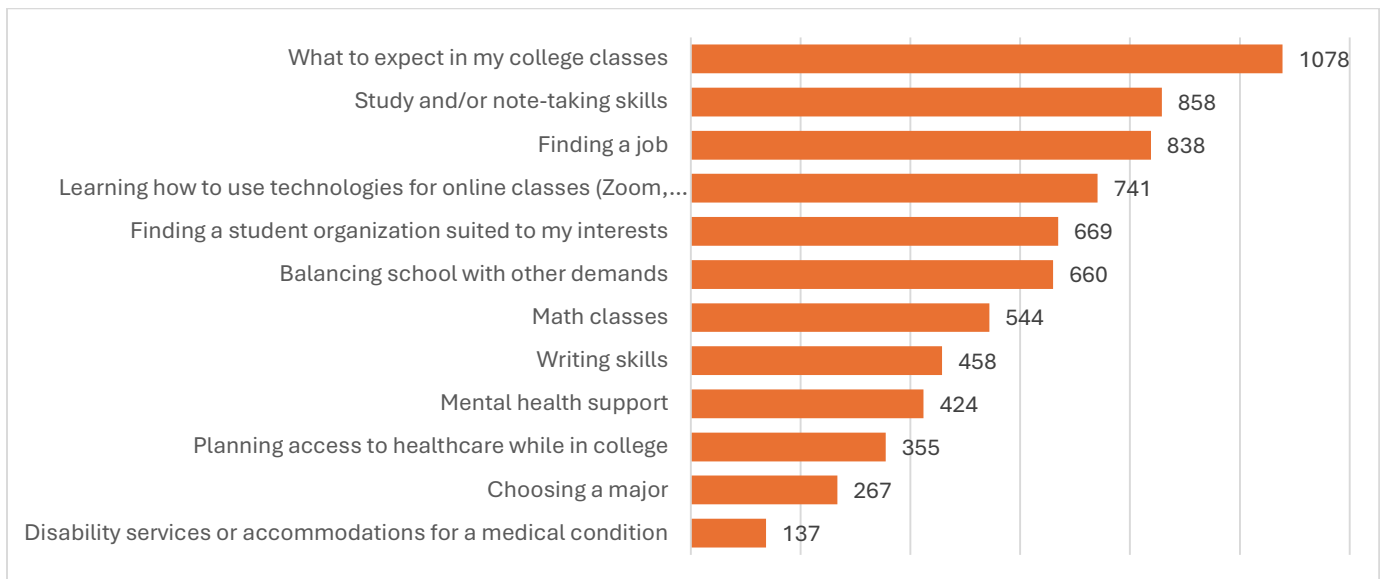
Higher grit scores are associated with higher fall-to-winter retention and higher average first-year GPAs.

**Question 11: How likely are you to participate in:**



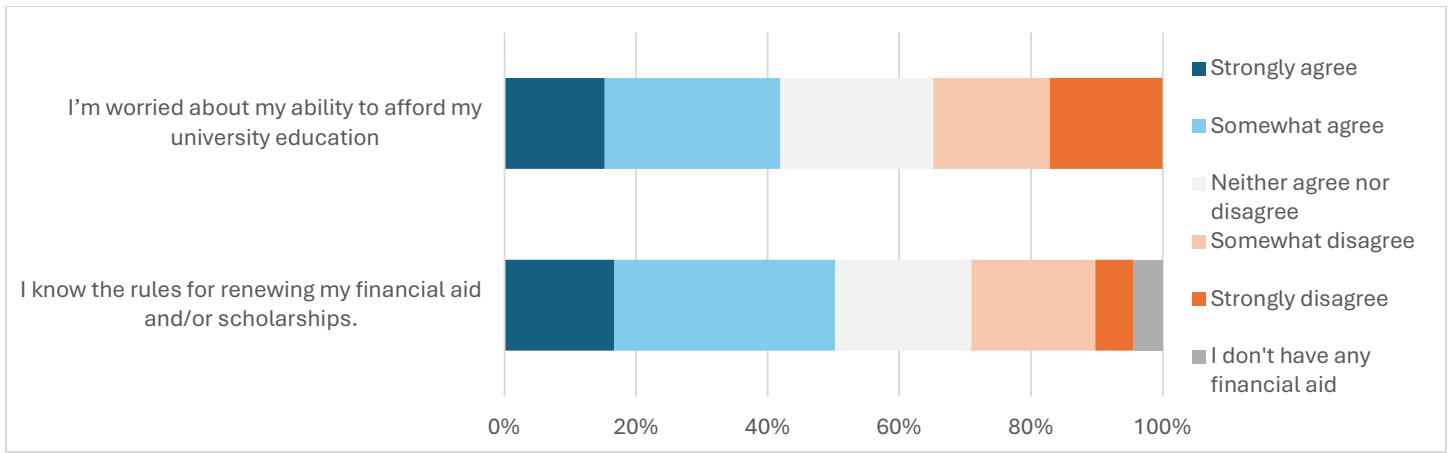
Very low reported likelihood of voting or volunteering was associated with low GPAs. Students who said they were either somewhat or extremely unlikely to participate in protest got above-average grades.

**Question 12: I would like help with / information about:**



All students who indicated a need in these items have received email feedback directing them to additional resources and indicating whom to contact for further help. Lists of the students have also been distributed to the pertinent GVSU offices.

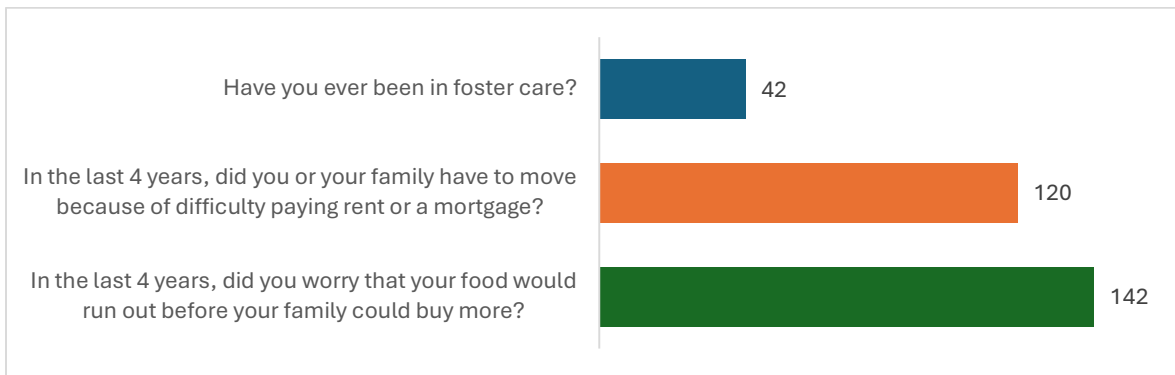
**Questions 13 & 14: Financial aid**



Students who indicated concern on either of these items have received a follow-up contact from the Office of Financial Aid.

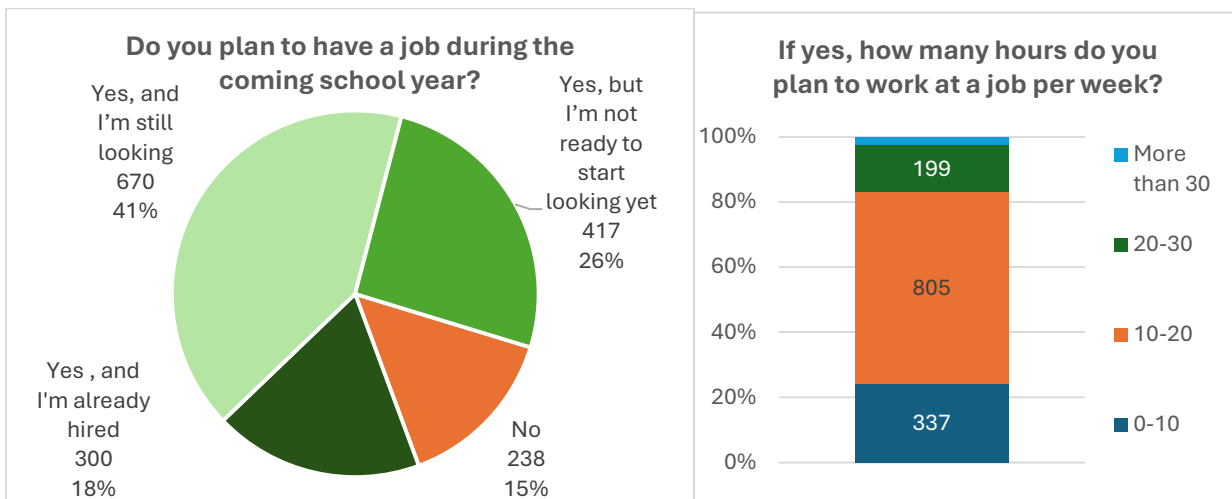
Students who indicated more concern about their financing had lower fall-to-winter retention rates and lower average GPAs than those who indicated less concern. Students who indicated that they had no financial aid had higher retention rates and first-year GPAs than other respondents.

**Questions 15-17: Foster care and food and housing insecurity**

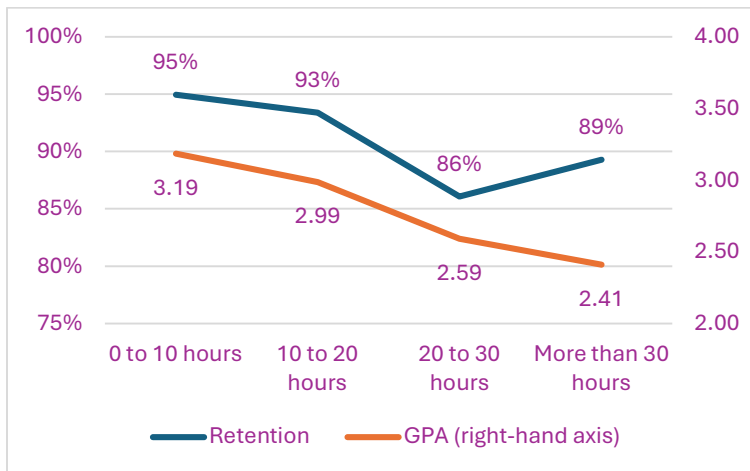


Former foster care students had lower retention rates than non-foster care students. Past housing insecurity was associated with lower GPAs. Students with recent food insecurity had lower retention rates and GPAs than other students. For each of these relationships, respondents who chose "I prefer not to respond" also experienced significantly less success than students who answered "no".

**Questions 18 & 19: Employment plans**



Students who selected “Yes, and I’m still looking” had significantly lower retention rates and GPAs than those who chose other responses. Among students who indicated an intent to work, both fall-to-winter retention and first-year GPA were negatively associated with students expected number of work hours.



### Relative importance of factors

The following factors contribute to a decision tree model predicting fall-to-winter retention, in order of descending influence:

- Q22 – “Do you plan to have a job during the coming school year?”
- Q9 – “Rate yourself... Relaxed – Driven”
- Q2 – “Rate your achievements ... Leadership”
- Q1 – “I plan to graduate from GVSU”
- Q15 -- “Have you ever been in foster care?”
- Q7 – “Do you plan to play any sports during college?”

The Grit-S scale (Q10) is the only significant factor in a multivariate model to predict first-year GPA. However, no survey responses explain a significant amount of variation if entering GPA is included in the model.

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<sup>i</sup> [Duckworth, A. L., & Quinn, P. D. \(2009\). Development and validation of the Short Grit Scale \(Grit-S\). Journal of Personality Assessment, 91, 166-174.](#)