



Catalyst for  
Continuous Improvement



## ACADEMICS: FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS, SELF-EFFICACY, AND STUDY BEHAVIORS

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## ACADEMICS: FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS, SELF-EFFICACY, AND STUDY BEHAVIORS

### Summary

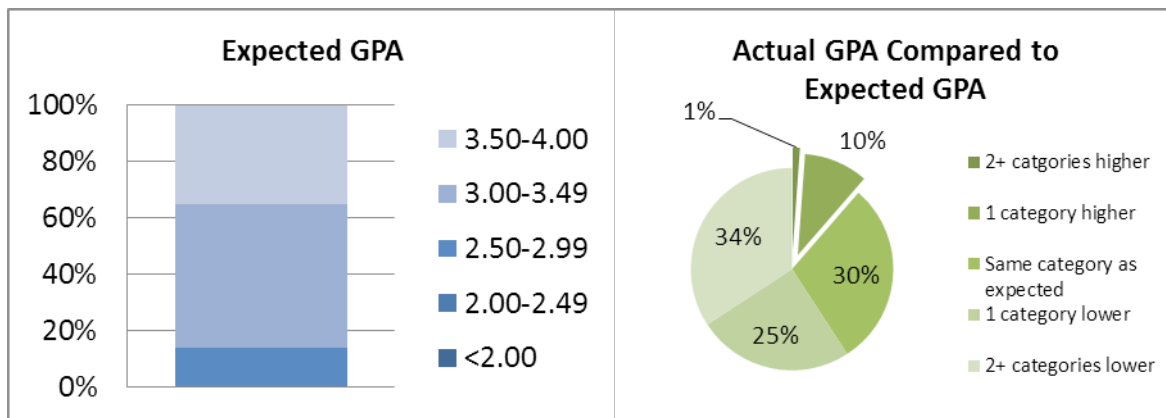
MAP-Works® explores a variety of academic issues, including expectations, self-efficacy, and study behaviors. Students are optimistic in terms of expectations – they are confident in their abilities and expect to earn high grades. They also report good study skills and behaviors. Yet, their academic performance does not match their expectations. Academic performance is linked with class attendance early in the semester. Overall, faculty, staff and students can focus on a number of important academic issues that are highlighted in MAP-Works®.

### Take-Away

- Respondents expected to earn high grades their first semester, and most overestimated what they would actually earn.
- Respondents were confident about their ability to do well in college.
- Most respondents reported good study skills and behaviors.
- Class attendance early in the semester was linked to grade point average.

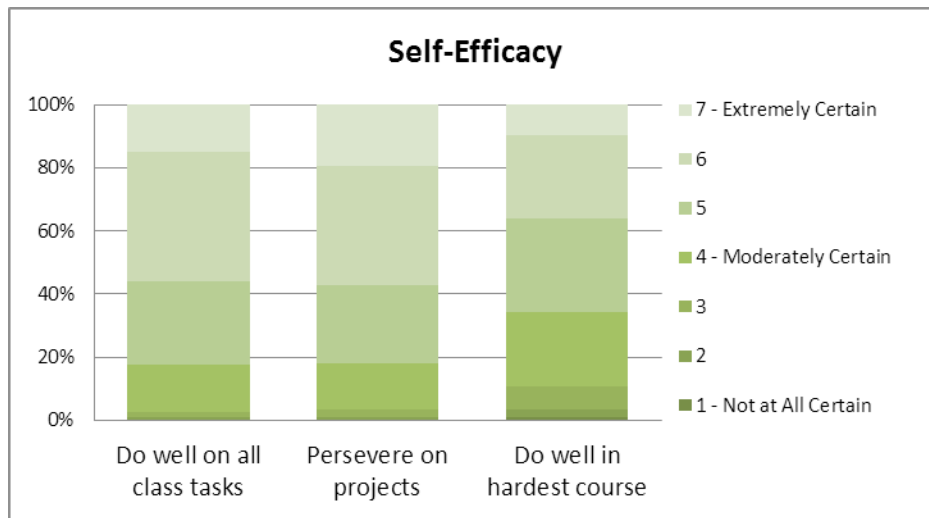
#### 1. Most students expect higher grades than they actually earn their first semester.

More than eight out of ten respondents indicated they expected to earn a grade point average of at least a 3.00 their first semester. But, only 50% earned it. Although less than 3% of respondents expected a GPA below 2.50, about 30% earned it. Only 11% of respondents earned a GPA in a category higher than the category they expected. One third of respondents earned a GPA two categories lower than they expected.



**2. Students are confident about their ability to do well in college.**

Students were asked three questions about their academic self-efficacy. Eight out of ten respondents indicated they were more than moderately certain they could do well on all class tasks. Similarly, 82% reported they were more than moderately certain they could persevere on projects even when there were challenges. Regarding their hardest course, 24% of respondents were moderately certain and 66% were more than moderately certain they could do well.



**3. Most students report having good study skills.**

Nine out of ten respondents indicated they turned in required homework, and three-fourths reported they took good notes in class. More than half indicated they spent sufficient study time to earn good grades. Forty-seven percent reported they worked on large projects well in advance of the due date.

To what degree are you the kind of person who:	Respondents
Turns in required homework	90%
Takes good notes in class	76%
Records your assignments and tests in a calendar	61%
Spends sufficient study time to earn good grades	56%
Studies in a place where you can avoid distractions	51%
Works on large projects well in advance of the due date	47%
* Chose 6 or 7 on a 7-point Likert scale (1: "Not at all" to 7: "Always")	

#### 4. **Class attendance early in the semester is related to academic performance.**

The MAP-Works<sup>®</sup> Transition survey, typically given in early September, asks students about their class attendance. Six out of ten respondents indicated they had attended all of their classes, one-fourth indicated they had missed one class, and 15% indicated they had missed a few classes. The mean grade point averages for the three groups were 3.03 for those who had attended all classes, 2.62 for those who had missed one class, and 2.11 for those who had missed a few classes.

Class Attendance	% of Respondents	Mean GPA
Attend all	61%	3.03
Missed one	24%	2.62
Missed a few	15%	2.11
Miss frequently or most of the time	<1%	1.32

#### **Conclusion**

Overall, these results highlight academic expectations, behaviors, and outcomes for first-year students. Many students will not earn the grades they expect despite high confidence in their own skills and abilities. Class attendance may be an early sign of academic performance.

**Note:** The information in this research note comes from the 2010-11 MAP-Works<sup>®</sup> Student Success and Retention Project. In 2010, approximately 85 institutions participated in the MAP-Works<sup>®</sup> Fall Transition Survey. The survey is typically administered in the early weeks of the fall term. More than 135,000 students were surveyed in Fall 2010 and the overall response rate was 74.6%. In addition, more than 60 institutions provided grade point average and persistence information.

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For additional information about the MAP-Works program, please contact Educational Benchmarking at [Info@map-works.com](mailto:Info@map-works.com).