

The Truth About: Academics and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Pandemic Causes Academic Disruptions

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on college students, including on [enrollment patterns](#) and [mental health](#). Additionally, between [eight and nine percent](#) of students at both public institutions and independents had difficulty paying for food. These issues, combined with other disruptions brought by the pandemic, led to extensive student concerns about academics (**Figure 1**). Despite spending more [time on coursework](#), students found it difficult to [stay motivated](#) and make [satisfactory academic progress](#). Students who struggled academically prior to the pandemic were also most likely to [receive lower grades](#). These obstacles were often complicated by lack of access to technology; [a recent report](#) found that nearly one in five students in Ohio had inadequate technology for remote learning.

Colleges Strive to Minimize Pandemic's Effects

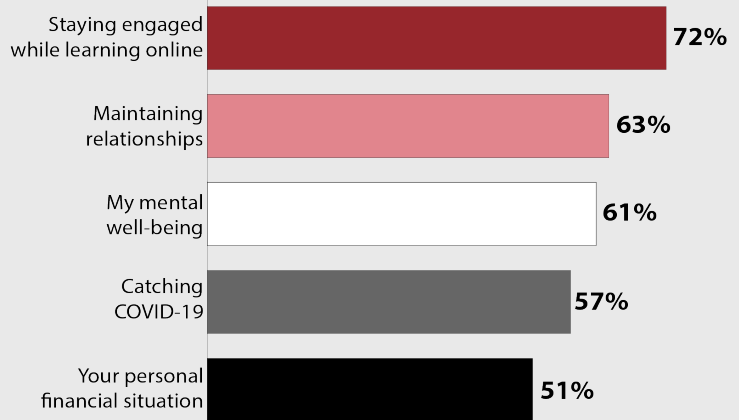
Colleges used a host of strategies to support students through the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Over [85 percent of colleges](#), including 92 percent of AICUO members, used a hybrid instructional model to provide many of the [benefits of in-person learning](#). Colleges also offered a variety of expanded technological and support services, such as [virtual advising](#) and [enhanced tutoring](#), that were used by [72 percent](#) of freshmen. Nationally, most students reported that their college provided helpful communication about a variety of topics, with independents leading in access to coursework and degree program progress (**Figure 2**). The CARES Act facilitated disbursements of over [\\$328 million](#) directly to college students experiencing a financial emergency, and many institutions provided [additional grant funding](#) directly to students. This demonstrates institutions' commitment to serving their students, specifically by ensuring students have access to services and support needed to graduate.

The Enduring Impact of COVID-19 on Students

Despite the [return to fully in-person instruction](#) this fall at Ohio institutions, the pandemic will have an ongoing [effect on college education](#). [A recent survey](#) found that nearly a quarter of high school students feel unprepared for postsecondary education; furthermore, 45 percent changed their college plans due to financial concerns. **Figure 3** illustrates that over half of freshmen felt more unprepared for college due to the pandemic. Institutions and policymakers must continue to collaborate to ensure that attainment in Ohio remains on [an upward trend](#).

Figure 1: Top Concerns Related to COVID-19

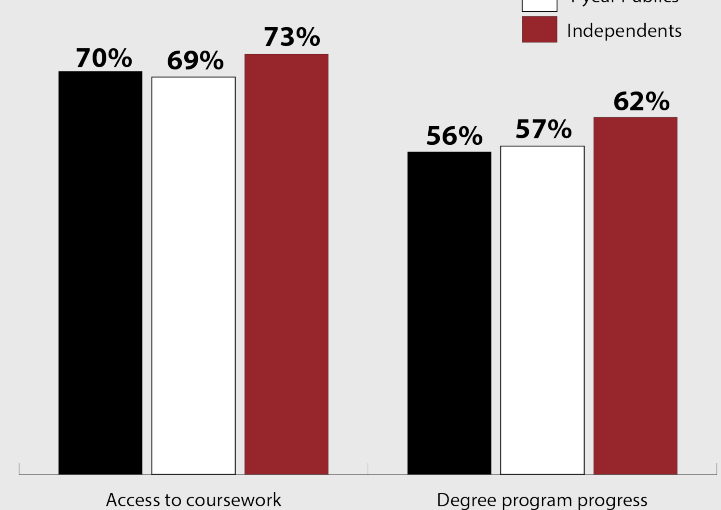
Percent of students who were concerned about a topic as related to COVID-19



Note: Only top five concerns are displayed. Students could select more than one option.
Source: College Pulse. (October 2020). Student wellness during COVID-19.

Figure 2: Colleges Provided Helpful Communication During Pandemic

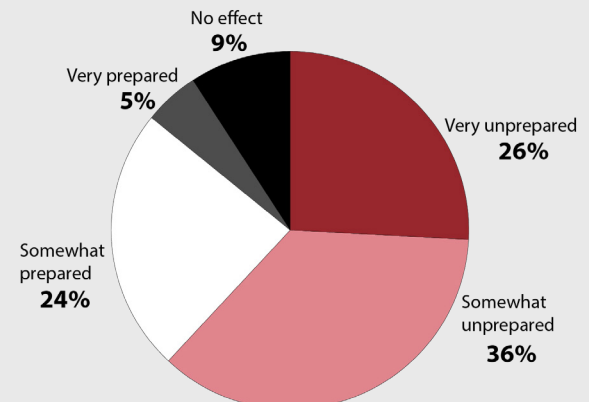
Percent of students who said their institution provided helpful information about how COVID-19 would impact the following:



Source: Institute of Education Sciences. (June 2021). First look at the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on Undergraduate Student Enrollment, Housing, and Finances (Preliminary Data). Table A-5.

Figure 3: College Preparedness After COVID-19

Percent of freshmen that felt prepared or unprepared for college due to COVID-19 changes



Source: College Pulse. (June 2021). Student success beyond COVID-19.