

2018 Foundations of Learning Assessment Report

DRAKE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This report summarizes 2015-2018 results of the Foundations of Learning Assessment (FLA). Incoming students complete the FLA during Welcome Weekend to provide information about their learning experiences prior to coming to Drake as well as their expectations for their experiences at the institution. The instrument also asks students about ways they plan to engage at Drake.

Highlights from the 2018 FLA Report

There are three areas in 2018 FLA where incoming students provided higher ratings of skills compared to prior years including: “Communicate effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds,” “Apply understanding of ethical issues when developing solutions,” and “Understand the ethical issues related to the use and misuse of information.”

Recommendation: Students’ ratings in these areas may be shaped by current climate. Readers might consider how student interactions in these areas connect to broader contexts, and what are the implications for the ways we engage students (see p. 2)

Additionally, there are multiple items in Table 1 where students have historically low ratings. These include the way students ‘analyze differences between industrialized and developing areas of the world’, how they ‘understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events’, and their ‘knowledge in how to participate effectively in the democratic process’.

Recommendation: It seems appropriate to review the language for these items and to consider alignment with newly passed student learning outcomes developed by Faculty Senate. This effort should consider if the instrument aligns with areas of focus and that the language in these items remains useful in determining students’ skills (see p. 2).

Students rated their skills slightly lower in the ability to ‘execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question’ and the ability to ‘create or interpret fine art’.

Recommendation: These are two skill areas, with historically lower skill ratings; align with recent Drake Curriculum Analysis Committee assessment efforts – Quantitative Literacy and Artistic Expression. Findings from these assessment efforts might provide context for recommendations related to these skill areas (see p. 2).

Incoming students anticipate engaging with faculty during office hours, through study groups, and on research/create projects (see pg. 4)

Recommendation: After a review of this information, the reader might consider the following questions:

- How do these items represent the actual engagement opportunities that are available? For example, should study groups be included if there are minimal structured opportunities for this type of engagement?
- Are faculty members aware of incoming student expectations?
- For cases where student behaviors lag their early expectations, what response is appropriate (e.g., education, strategies to encourage student engagement, limiting response bias in question)?

In other skill areas, incoming students expressed somewhat lower confidence in their ability to succeed at Drake or to excel in their major. (Table 4, pg. 4)

Recommendation: Since other research indicates that academic self-efficacy correlates with retention, what are ways to meet student support needs?

Table 8 (p.4) provides an overview of skills related to resiliency. New incoming students expressed somewhat higher levels of stress and the ability to deal with stressful situations.

Recommendation: Research indicates that resiliency correlates with retention, what are ways to meet student support needs?

New in the 2018 FLA Report

The 2018 FLA report includes a subset of information that looks at a comparison of 1st generation to non-1st generation incoming students. Figures 10- 15 give an overview of these results. (p.7-8) The 2018 incoming 1st generations cohort reported lower agreement in areas of academic self-efficacy and campus engagement compared to non-1st generation students.. Similarly, 1st generation students reported slightly lower agreement in areas of academic engagement and resiliency. Development of programs for 1st generation students should consider these results to identify specific support needs and programmatic interventions.

Student Relative Strengths and Weaknesses

Table 1. 2015-2018 FLA Responses to Skill Areas, Previous 3-year average and 2018 Results, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

Based on your experiences in high school and other education venues prior to attending Drake, how strong do you believe your skills are in these areas?	Previous 3-year average	2018	Change
Articulate a vision of my own values, ethics, or core beliefs	76%	75%	-2%
Ability to read carefully	80%	84%	+4%
Understand the perspectives & experiences of people who are different than you	74%	78%	+2%
Ability to integrate skills and knowledge from different sources and experiences	73%	72%	-1%
Construct reasoned arguments	74%	75%	+1%
Evaluate reasoned arguments	74%	74%	-
Communicate effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds	63%	71%	+8%
Apply understanding of ethical issues when developing solutions	64%	68%	+4%
Understand the ethical issues related to the use & misuse of information	66%	71%	+5%
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information	66%	65%	-1%
Employ evidence effectively in writing	66%	70%	+4%
Execute appropriate mathematical operations for a given question	56%	53%	-3%
Analyze differences between industrialized and developing areas of the world	52%	52%	-
Understand the historical, political, and social connections of past events	54%	54%	-
Ability to use educational experiences to analyze civic and global issues	52%	55%	+3%
Knowledge in how to participate effectively in the democratic process	51%	51%	-
Read and understand scientific writings written for an informed lay audience	42%	43%	+1%
Create or interpret fine art (ex. painting, sculpture, music, theatre)	32%	31%	-1%

Student- Faculty Interaction

Table 2. 2015-2018 FLA Responses to Faculty Interaction, Previous 3-year average and 2018 Results, Ranked by Percent

I hope to interact with Drake faculty outside the classroom in the following ways:	Previous 3-year average	2018	Change
By visiting them during office hours	86%	89%	+3%
Through study groups for courses they teach	80%	83%	+3%
On a research or creative project	75%	74%	-1%
As advisors to my student organizations	62%	63%	+1%
In social settings	48%	51%	+3%

Engagement and Student Experience

Table 3. 2016-2018 FLA Responses to Academic Engagement, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

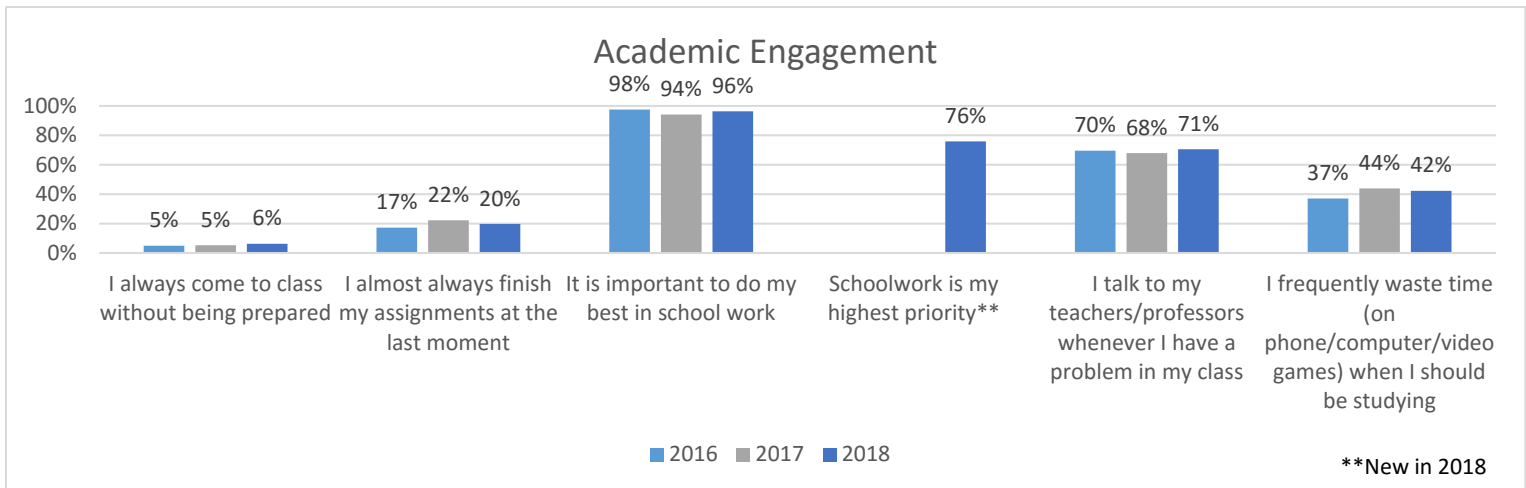


Table 4. 2016-2018 FLA Responses to Academic Self-Efficacy, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

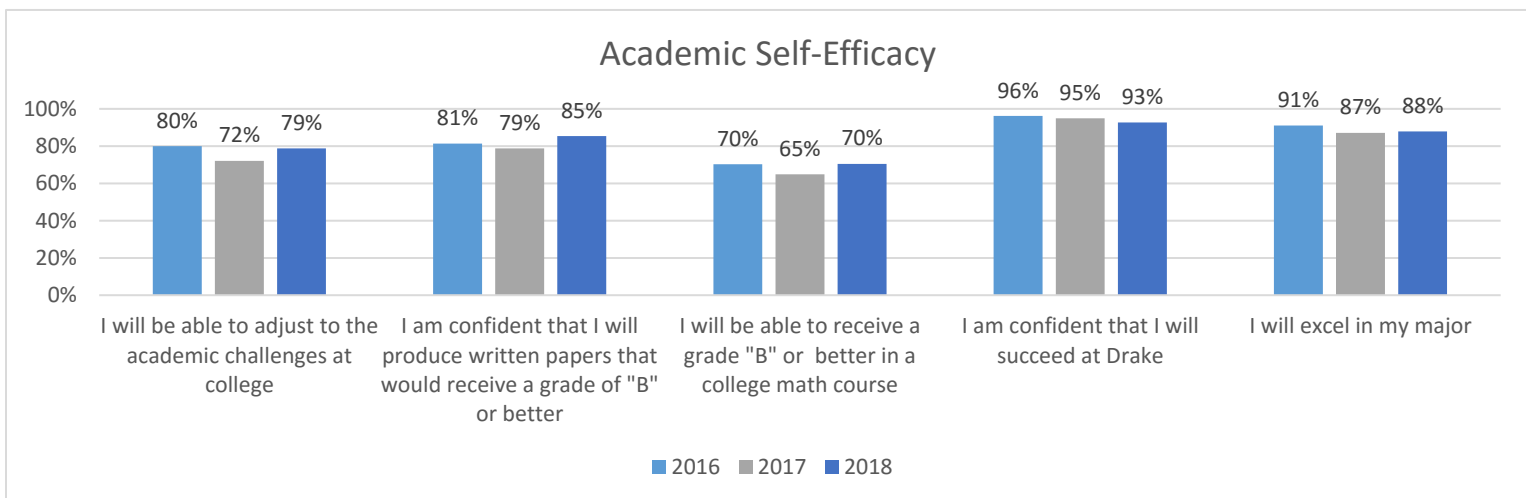


Table 5. 2016-2018 FLA Responses to Campus Engagement, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

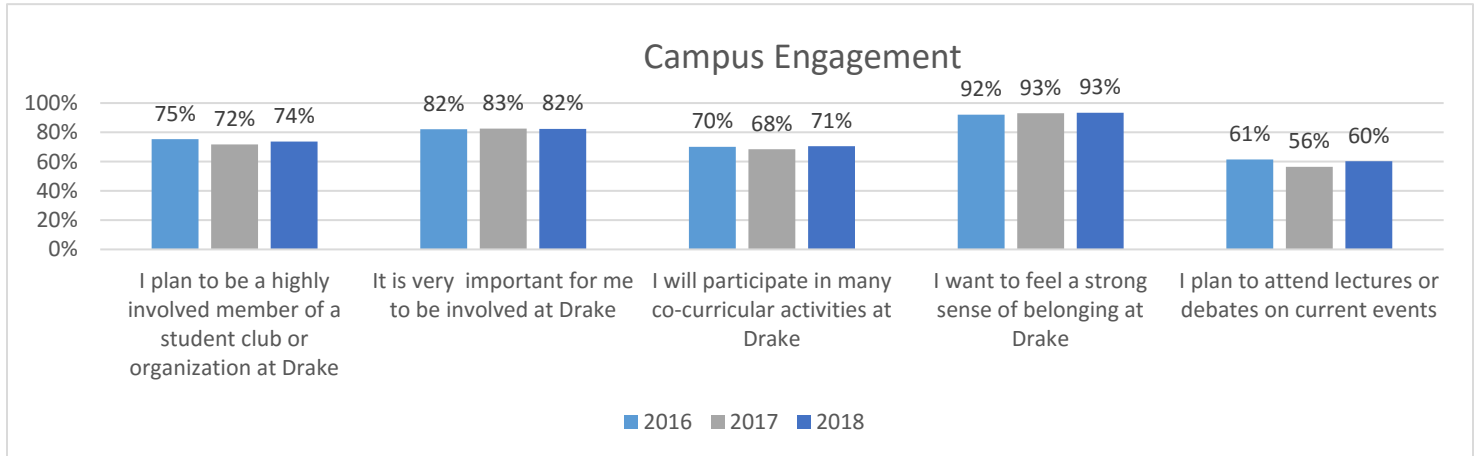


Table 6. 2016-2018 FLA Responses to Social Comfort, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

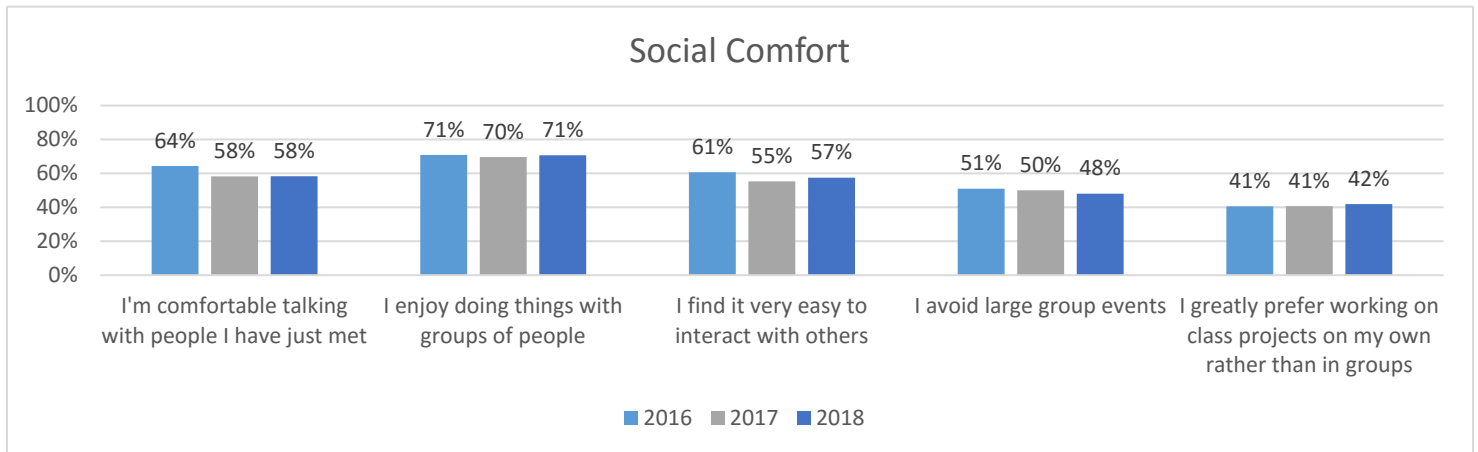


Table 7. 2016-2018 FLA Responses in the area of Educational Commitment, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

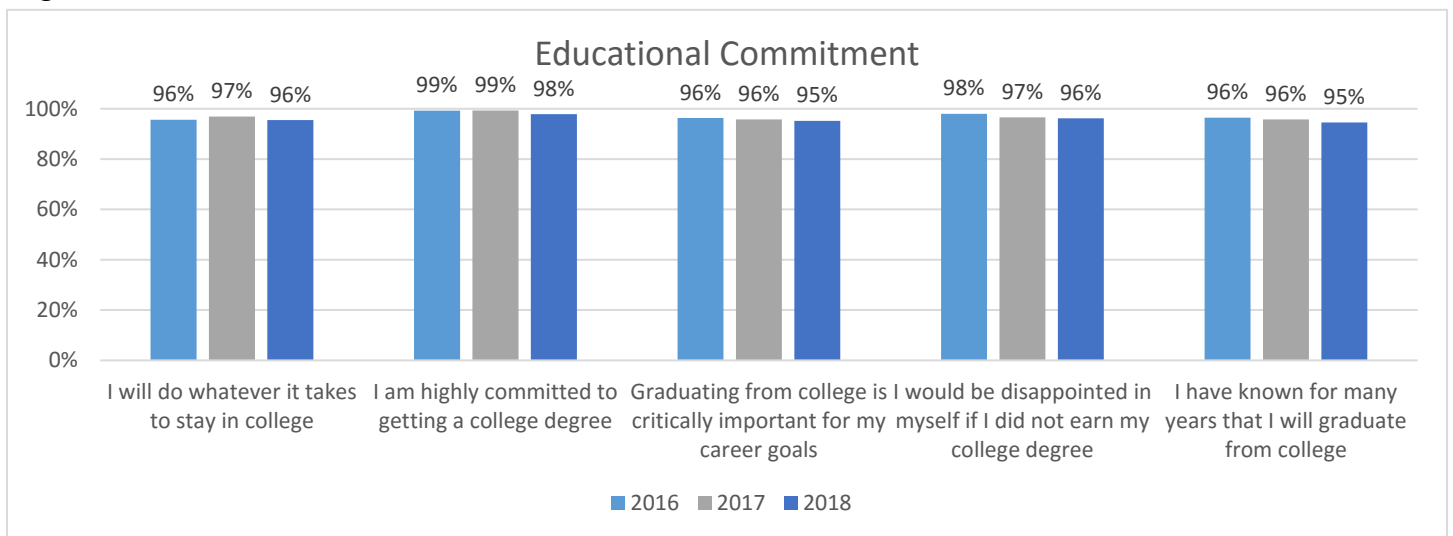
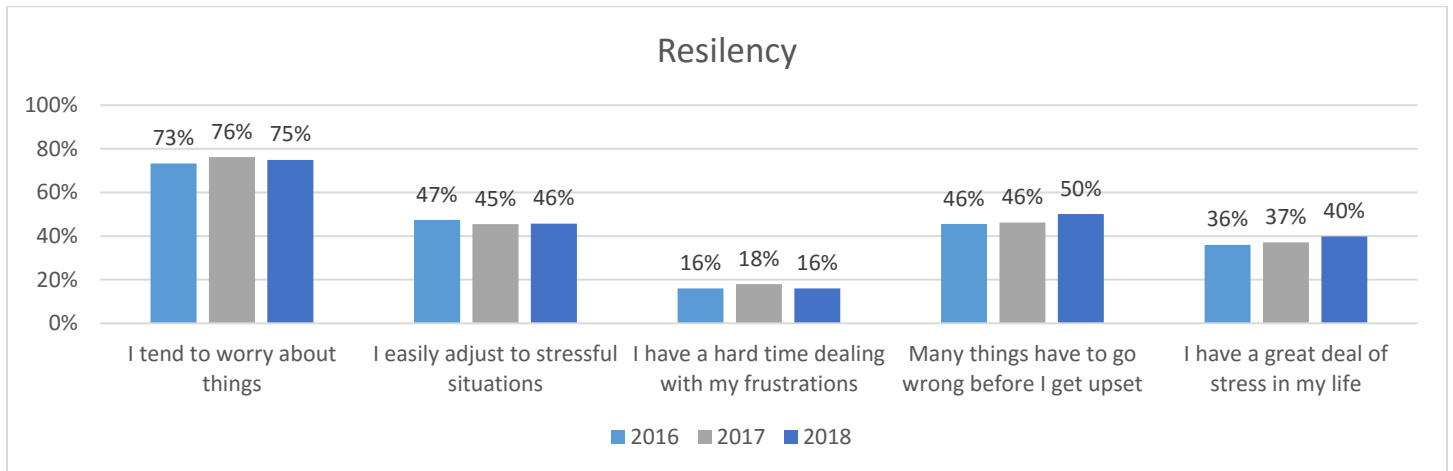


Table 8. 2016-2018 FLA Responses in the area of Resiliency, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”



Student Interest Areas

Table 9. 2015-2018 FLA Responses on Interest/Plan Areas, Previous 3-year average and 2018 Results, Ranked by Percent "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

To what extent do you agree with the follow statements:	Previous 3-year average	2018	Change
I plan to take a course that has a service learning component/experience.	59%	59%	-
I plan to take courses that enhance my perspective on international issues.	66%	69%	+3%
I plan to take courses that enhance my perspective on diverse issues in the U.S.	69%	69%	-
I plan to study abroad while enrolled at Drake.	64%	65%	+1%
I plan to study a language other than my native language at Drake.	36%	37%	+1%

1st Generation/ Non-1st Generation Comparison

Figures 10 – 15 provide a visual of the comparison of 1st generation to non-1st generation incoming students. Responses ranked by “Strongly Agree”/”Agree”

Figure 10. 2018 FLA Responses to Academic Engagement, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

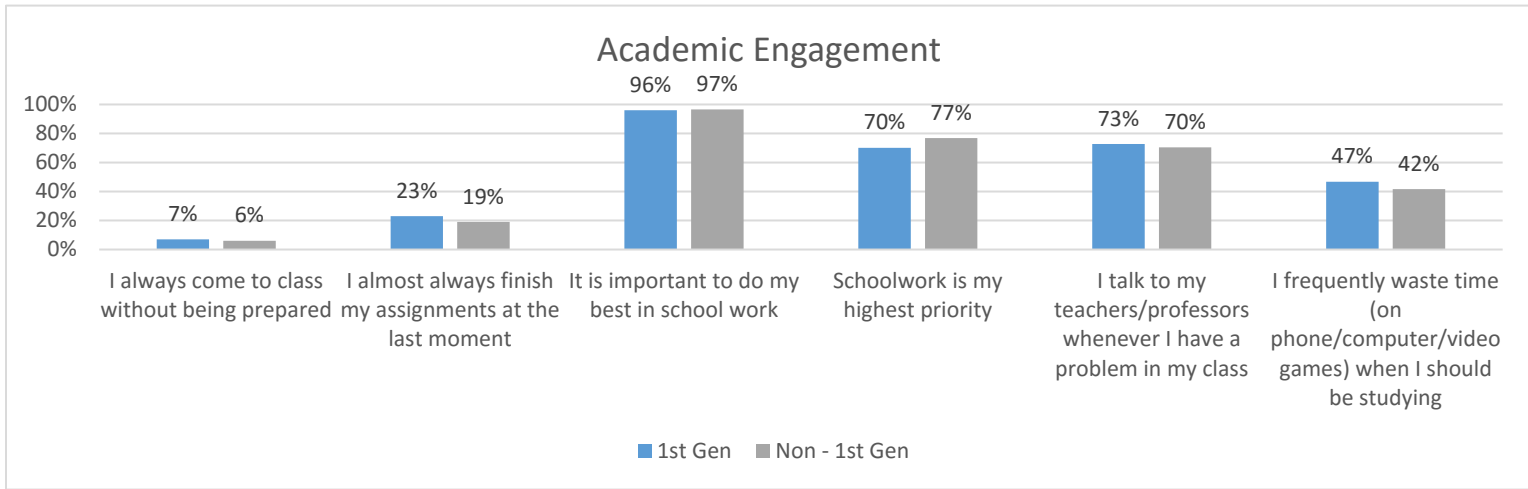


Figure 11. 2018 FLA Responses in the area of Academic Self-Efficacy, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

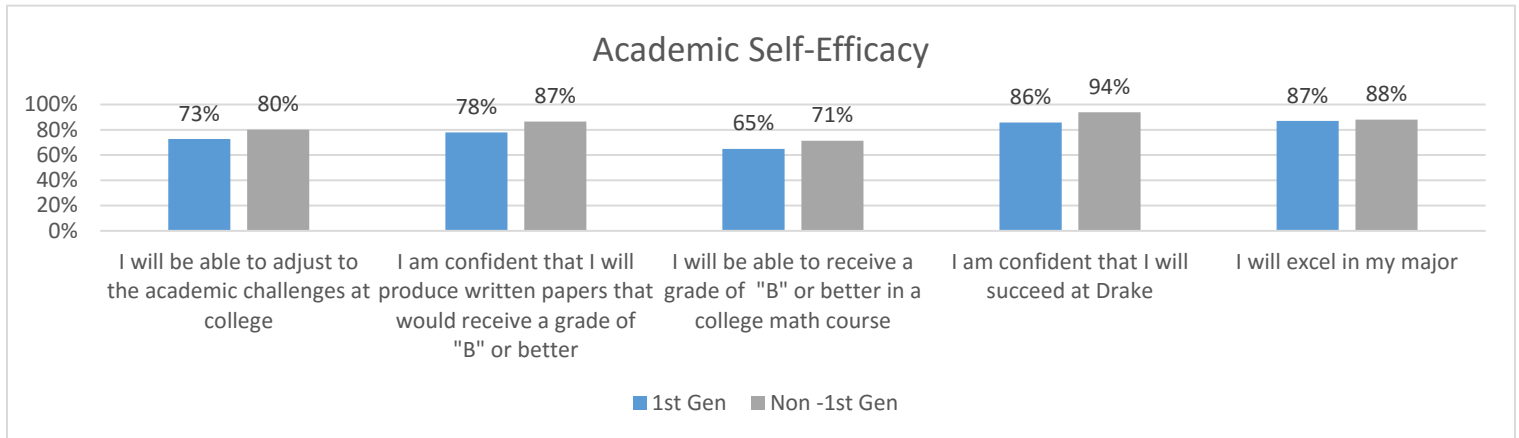


Figure 12. 2018 FLA Responses in the area of Educational Commitment, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

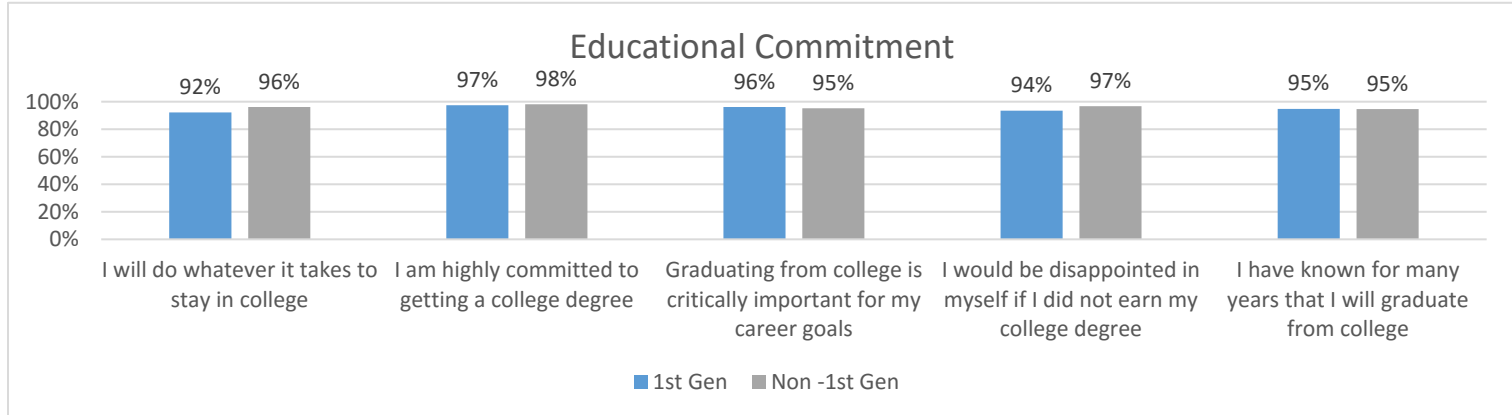


Figure 14. 2018 FLA Responses to Campus Engagement, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

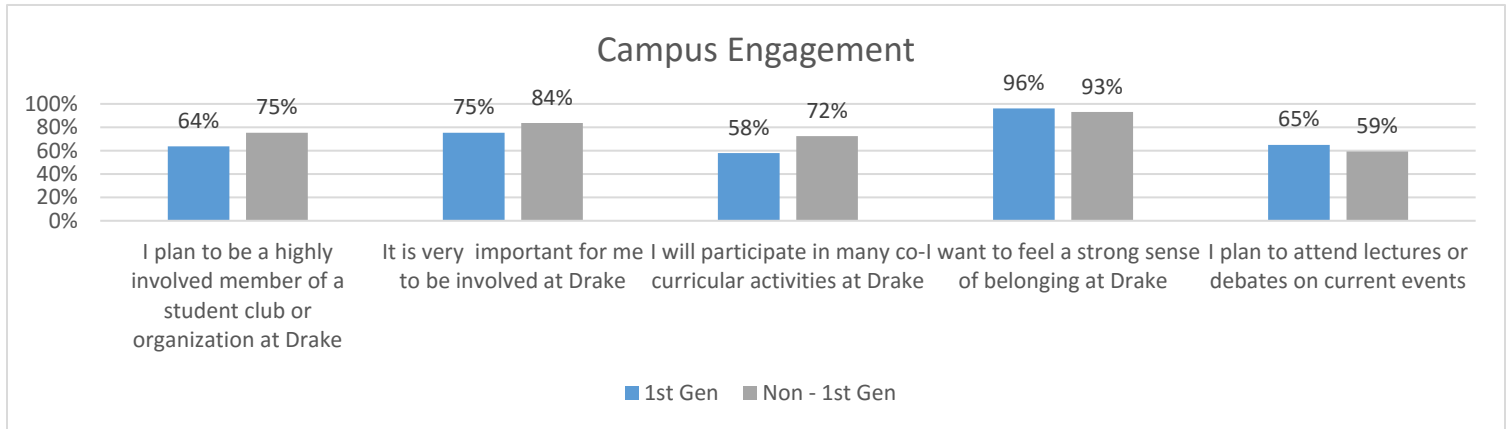


Figure 13. 2018 FLA Responses to Social Comfort, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

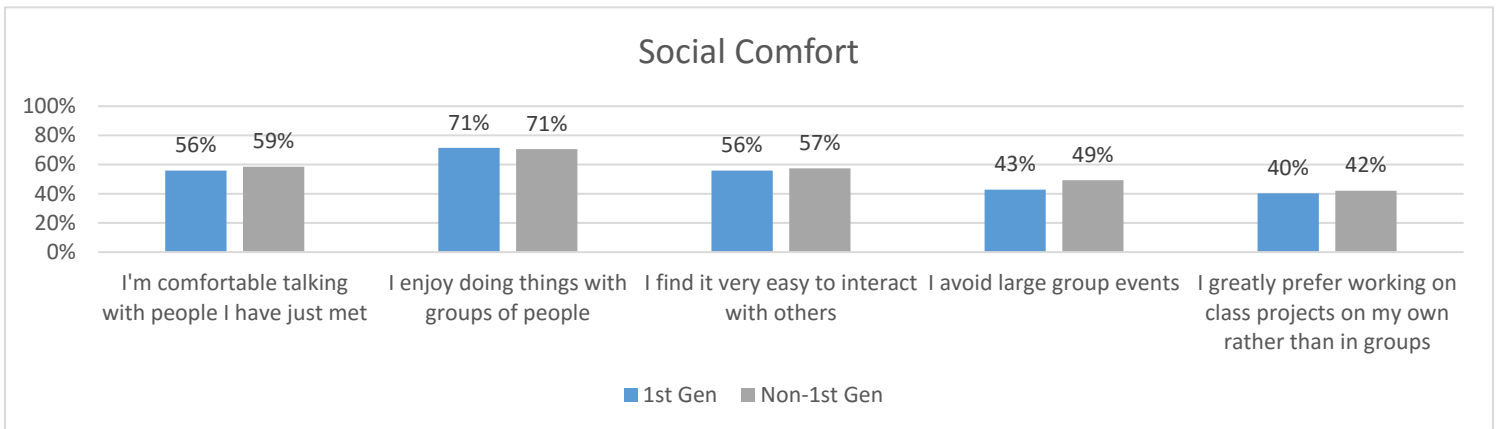


Figure 15. 2018 FLA Responses in the area of Resiliency, Ranked by “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”

