# Preparing for the Class of 2030

**Anticipating the Learning and Mental-Health Needs of Future Students**

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

# Preparing for the Class of 2030:
## Anticipating the Learning and Mental-Health Needs of Future Students

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A s colleges plan for the enrollees of the future, they are prepared to deliver high-tech hybrid options for learning. A vast majority of them are also ready to offer the students in the Class of 2030 high-quality virtual courses taught by faculty members well versed in the use of classroom technology, according to a survey of college officials conducted in the fall by *The Chronicle* and underwritten by Zoom.

Seven in 10 college administrators surveyed say instructors at their institutions are at least somewhat prepared to teach high-quality virtual courses, with an equal number saying that their institution is ready to support students who learn online. Even more of them (79 percent) say instructors are at least somewhat ready to use classroom technology in their lessons.

By offering students such virtual options, institutions will be more likely to meet the demands of the tech-connected Generation Z, according to survey respondents. More than nine in 10 say that student applicants of the future will prefer a mix of learning options — both in-person and virtual. Nearly as many (85 percent) say that a college's technology portfolio and its ability to offer online learning support will be a moderate or strong consideration for those students as they look to select an institution.

## How prepared do you think instructors on your campus are to teach high-quality virtual courses?*

■ Very unprepared  ■ Somewhat unprepared  ■ Somewhat prepared  ■ Very prepared
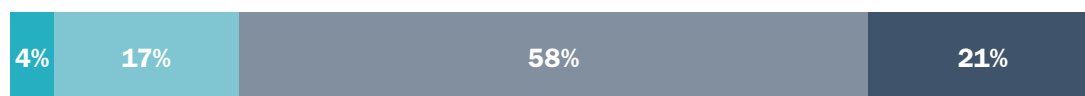
| 5% | 24% | 59% | 11% |
|----|-----|-----|-----|

## How prepared do you think instructors on your campus are to use technology in the classroom?

■ Very unprepared  ■ Somewhat unprepared  ■ Somewhat prepared  ■ Very prepared
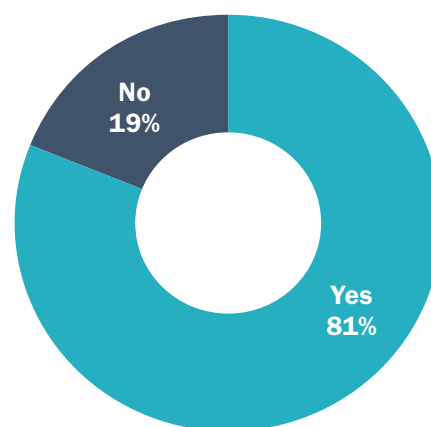
| 4% | 17% | 58% | 21% |
|----|-----|-----|-----|

*Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

The survey also asked administrators to assess how ready their institutions are to deal with students who have suffered learning loss during the pandemic, offer them mental-health and career services, and handle ongoing controversies surrounding racism and free speech on campus.

The results reflect a belief that traditional-age students slated to enter their college years in 2026, most of whom are high-school freshmen today, will require many more support services and will be more focused on careers than were students of previous generations.

Students entering an institution will evince some level of learning loss during the pandemic years, according to around eight in 10 respondents — especially in math (90 percent) and science (67 percent). One third of the respondents who anticipate learning loss in future learners say students will have suffered a considerable amount of it by the time they get to college, while the other two-thirds say they will be somewhat affected. More than half — 55 percent — say their institution is poised to offer some level of help to students who have missed out on learning opportunities or have not been offered enough of them during the pandemic.

## Are you expecting to see evidence of learning loss in students throughout the next few years?



No
19%

Yes
81%

## To what extent do you think you will see learning loss in students throughout the next few years?*

**Great extent**

33%

**Some extent**

67%
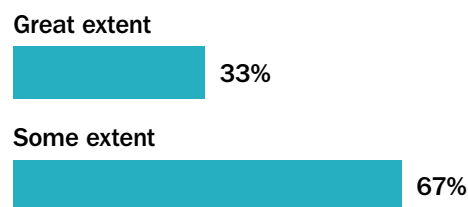
\* Only those who think they will see a learning loss in students throughout the next few years were presented this question.

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

## How concerned are you about your future students' mental health?*
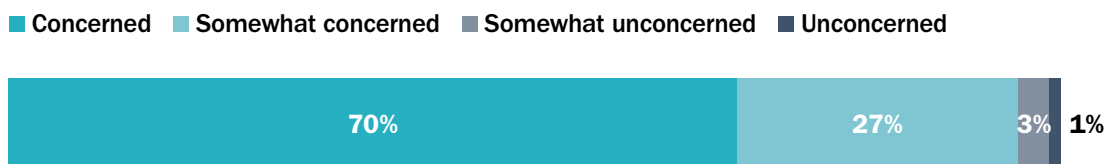
■ Concerned　■ Somewhat concerned　■ Somewhat unconcerned　■ Unconcerned

| 70% | 27% | 3% | 1% |

*Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

Mental health remains a major concern for institutions. Nearly all respondents (97 percent) report concern for the mental well-being of future students. Two-thirds say their institution has at least some level of preparedness for meeting those students' mental-health needs. About four in 10 of respondents' institutions are planning to hire more staff to support students generally; among that group, three in four are planning to take on more mental-health staff.

According to the respondents, most of their institutions are seeking to create a campus with more opportunities for personal connections among students, and two-thirds are also redesigning their career-services operations in response to student and parent concerns about post-college careers and an economic return on their investment in education.

Finally, the survey also found that colleges remain concerned about free-speech and racial issues on campus — but responses vary from increasing resources for affinity groups to making changes in curricular and co-curricular offerings. Meanwhile, about half of the colleges will not be changing their free-speech policies.

> Institutions are seeking to create a campus with more opportunities for personal connections among students.

A total of 437 college officials from two-year and four-year institutions, a nearly even mix of private and public ones, answered the online survey from *The Chronicle* in October and November. More than half (54 percent) are either department heads or directors. Nearly three quarters (71 percent) work at institutions where most students are under the age of 23.

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Forward-looking colleges have a lot to consider. There's a looming "enrollment cliff" that will make it harder to find college-ready high-school graduates, as well as ongoing budget and labor issues, more pressure to assert the value of a higher education to a public that is increasingly skeptical, and the need to expand technological capabilities to teach in a variety of ways.

At the center of all that is the student. As many institutions have made lifelong learners and adults returning to college more of a focus in recruiting, most still must rely on reaching traditional-age students, 18 to 24, who make up nearly 70 percent of the current college population, to fill their dorms and classroom seats.

Though the young students of tomorrow might prove harder to find, it is imperative that institutions anticipate the needs of those who do end up on their rolls so they can succeed, academically and otherwise.

For the members of the Class of 2030, most of whom will enter college upon graduating high school in 2026, the level of need could be staggering. Faced with a pandemic that locked down many K-12 schools and forced instruction virtual, students have seen severe interruptions in learning.

Black and Hispanic students and those who attend schools in high-poverty areas have been the slowest to recover from learning losses they suffered during the first two years of the pandemic, according to a recent study by NWEA, a learning assessment group. What's more, middle-school students, many of whom will be hard on the heels of the collegiate class of 2030, are lagging further. Colleges may have to offer remedial classes and support to get them up to speed.

"The oldest students we studied (eighth-graders in fall 2022) have experienced minimal improvements in math and reading and the estimated timeline to full recovery for these students still falls past the end of high school," the report notes.

Virtual learning itself has come under scrutiny — and at a time when many institutions continue to respond to student demands for more flexible learning options and overall connectivity. Many more institutions than before are expanding the use of their learning-management systems and increasing the numbers of online courses.

Yet, connecting to learning systems is still a challenge for many students, particularly those in rural and low-income areas. More than one-third of college students say they struggled to find an internet connection that met their academic needs, according to a report from Educause.

> It is imperative that institutions anticipate the needs of those who do end up on their rolls so they can succeed, academically and otherwise.

As some educators and researchers have worked to understand the depth of the learning-loss crisis among the nation's 55 million public- and private-school students, remote learning itself has come under scrutiny. One study found that students who learned mostly online scored 14 percentage points lower in math and six percentage points lower in reading when compared with students who learned mostly in person during the pandemic.

College students who attend fully-online classes are more likely to suffer more mental-health issues than those who don't, something institutions should be aware of as they design tomorrow's courses and support systems, says a new Harvard-based study.

Concerns about student mental health were mushrooming before Covid-19 arrived, but they have grown exponentially since. Several studies note that 44 percent to 85 percent of college students have reported increased anxiety or depression during the pandemic. Students with mental-health concerns are less likely to enroll in college and twice as likely to leave an institution without graduating, according to the Healthy Minds Network.

In the near future, colleges may deal with incoming students whose brains aged at a much faster rate during the pandemic years, affecting teenagers' ability to manage their lives and increasing their risks of addiction, anxiety, and depression. Four years from now, many institutions will also be welcoming students who, at a very young age, lost a caregiver, parent, or other relative who has died or suffered long-term effects from Covid-19. Colleges must make plans for how to help such students, experts say.

As institutions think strategically about revamping student services, they will be confronted with how best to use their resources: Should they attempt to hire more mental-health counselors, who are increasingly hard to recruit as the overall demand for them has grown? Will they rely more on telehealth services or outsourcing? Will they instead intensify their focus on making their campuses safer and more welcoming over all?

Besides making sure students have the emotional and mental wherewithal to stay in college, institutions will be asked to do more to prepare them for when they graduate.

More than half of employers in the United States are struggling to fill positions. And around 50 million jobs will require at least some college education, according to a Carnegie Corporation of New York report.

Successful institutions will seize the opportunity to help students identify career paths early in their college experience — helping them succeed once they graduate while burnishing their value propositions, experts say.

> ## College students who attend fully-online classes are more likely to suffer more mental-health issues than those who don't.

Ongoing controversies about racial inequities and free speech on campus are likely to continue, if not escalate, forecasters warn. Today's college students worry that campus speech is less secure than in previous years, according to a report by the Knight Foundation and Ipsos, a multinational market-research company. The confidence Black college students have in being able to speak freely sharply declined in the past two years. According to the report, a growing number of Black students favor a more protective campus environment.

# Providing a Mix of Learning Methods

A strong majority — 91 percent — of survey respondents say that the Class of 2030's students will prefer hybrid learning to other types. Only 1 percent say students would prefer an all-virtual experience.

"That's the big takeaway of the survey for me," says Bryan Alexander, a futurist and an adjunct professor of learning and design at Georgetown University. "There's a strong recognition that mixed-learning modalities are the future."

Only 8 percent say that students would prefer a program made up entirely of face-to-face learning. "That's a really low number, and surprising," Alexander adds. "The response by colleges during the pandemic revealed to everybody that what the Europeans call digitalization works."

A majority (85 percent) also say that a college's tech capabilities will be at least a moderate consideration for tomorrow's student applicants, as will an institution's support for online learning. Seven in 10 administrators say their institution is ready to support students who learn online.

Many colleges are already making a strong move to strengthen virtual education and support, Alexander says.

"We've been seeing a push in regard to teaching and learning support in the virtual realm, including the development of more centers and the hiring of more course designers," he says. "Enrollment declines are helping to drive that. Public colleges now see the value in investing in the quality of their online courses."

The survey reflects a belief in the faculty's ability to teach high-quality courses online. Seven in 10 say that instructors at their institution are at least somewhat ready to do so, while 79 percent believe instructors are ready to use technology in the classroom.

But even the most forward-looking digital strategies will present colleges with some steep challenges in improving online courses, adding more of them, and developing classroom tech that is engaging and easy to use.

"It can be hard to do, financially," says Jared Tippets, vice president for student affairs at Southern Utah University. Donors tend to prefer brick-and-mortar buildings, like cancer centers and libraries, which allow them to attach their names. "Donors don't see tech as sexy. But it's important that we work to improve what we do online, as more and more people question the value of the traditional college experience."

The intricacies of course design are still being figured out, he adds. When the Utah Legislature asked state institutions in 2021 to develop more online courses to help students meet their general-education requirements, Southern Utah put together a "game-ified" physics course designed to keep students' attention. "But when students looked at it, they saw something that looked like the old Oregon Trail game, and not the full graphics of Fortnite," Tippets says, adding that the state's push for better digital courses has since been

## What type of classes do you think student applicants in the next few years will prefer?

| 91% A mix of in-person and virtual/online | 8% All in person | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 1% All virtual |
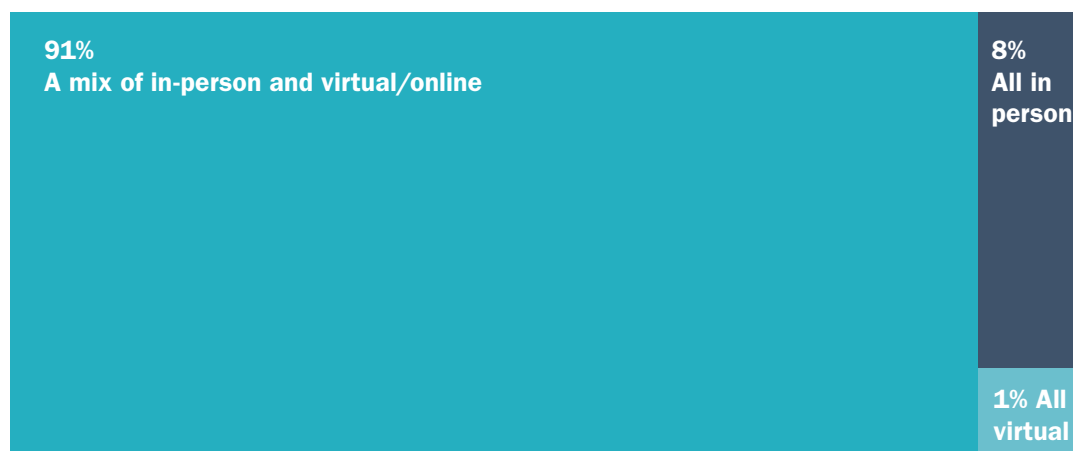
Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

**How much of a consideration do you think your college's technology will be to student applicants in the next few years?**

■ Strong Consideration  ■ Moderate Consideration  ■ Minor Consideration  ■ Not a Consideration at All

| 45% | 40% | 14% | 1% |
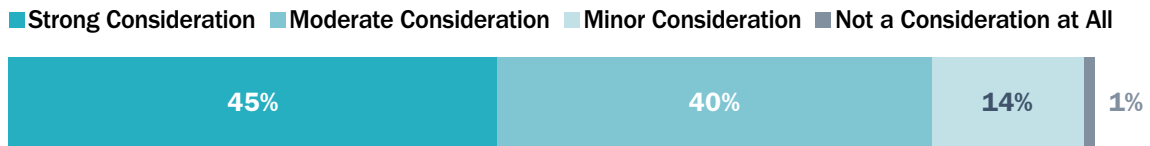
**How much of a consideration do you think your college's support for online learning will be to student applicants in the next few years?***

■ Strong Consideration  ■ Moderate Consideration  ■ Minor Consideration  ■ Not a Consideration at All

| 46% | 39% | 14% | 2% |

*Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

scrapped. "Colleges haven't pivoted all the way to high-quality virtual courses yet."
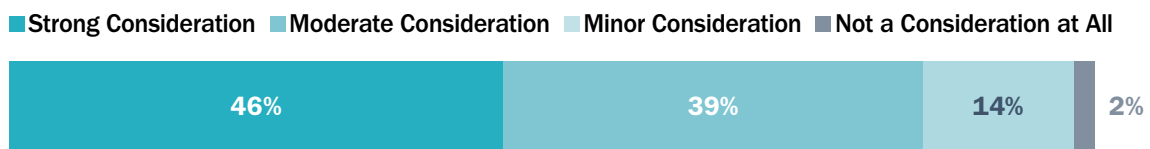
Faculty members represent another challenge. Exhausted after the emergency transition to remote learning that they helped make happen early during the pandemic, instructors may be less enthusiastic to learn more about course design or use technology creatively and engagingly as they teach class. They may instead revert back to the old "normal."

"Colleges are built on the face-to-face model. There's an overestimation of how well we currently teach effectively using technology," says Joshua Smith, former dean of education at Loyola University Maryland and a visiting professor at National Chengchi University, in Taiwan. "Students are interested in that face-to-face environment. Our administrators have put a lot of energy into creating that experience."

Administrators who work in online education also see a reluctance by colleges to increase their digital offerings — and argue there is a ways to go before they can say

that online courses are high quality across the board and that instructors are on top of the technology.

"Colleges look at their online operations and think, 'We can't become Arizona State.' I call it 'the Michael Crow Effect,'" says Evie Cummings, senior assistant provost and director of the University of Florida's digital-learning site, UF Online. "A lot of them want to have online programs but they don't want them to get too big. There's still some antipathy."

Digital teaching goals will become even more focused on gaining and keeping students' attention.

"You see so many students who can't go a minute without looking at their phones," says Tom Ellett, chief experience officer at Quinnipiac University. "Colleges will need to get students to the internet quicker and offer them more bandwidth so they can watch complex lessons and create things together. We'll be evolving more toward tools that engage them."

# Dealing With Covid-Era Learning Loss

Higher-education leaders, staffers, and students weren't the only ones asked to make a huge change in learning and teaching styles during the first phase of the pandemic. Most students in kindergarten through 12th grade were forced to take their classes online while their schools were locked down, with many continuing to take all their classes online for up to two years.

Too often, the results have been subpar. Learning losses in the 2020-21 school year alone resulted in rates that were 14 percentage points lower for students taught virtually in math and six points lower in reading when compared with those taught mostly in person, according to a working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research.
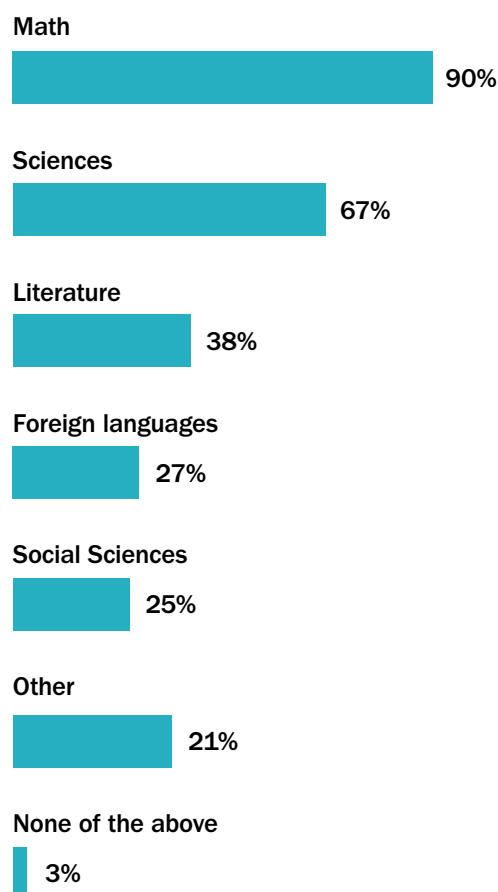
College officials who responded to the *Chronicle* survey say that students from the Class of 2030, who were in middle school during that period, will need the most college-level remedial work in math (90 percent) and sciences (67 percent), while literature (38 percent), foreign languages (27 percent), and social sciences (25 percent) received less support. Over all, more than 80 percent say they expect to see evidence of learning loss in future students. Of that group one third say they expect to see "a great extent" of learning loss.

"Those numbers make sense," says Alexander, from Georgetown. "People can find ways to read or write on their own. Science and math are tougher. And the need for STEM students who can fill jobs that move people to the middle class is paramount. There's a real need for institutions to focus on those areas."

While 81 percent say they expect to see students who have missed out on learning, only 55 percent say their institution is at least somewhat prepared to help students whose studies suffered as a result of the pandemic. (Only 8 percent are "very prepared.")

"What you sometimes see is that about half of students might need remedial work, but your institution might only have room for 100 of them," says Tippets, from Southern Utah. "A significant number of

## In what subjects do you think students will need the most remedial work?
(Select all that apply)

**Math**
90%

**Sciences**
67%

**Literature**
38%

**Foreign languages**
27%

**Social Sciences**
25%

**Other**
21%

**None of the above**
3%

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

## How prepared is your institution to help students who have suffered learning loss during the pandemic?

■ Very unprepared  ■ Somewhat unprepared  ■ Somewhat prepared  ■ Very prepared

| 9% | 36% | 47% | 8% |

*Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.
Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

colleges are unprepared for what's coming, from what I'm seeing."

Ramping up support services will become key for student-success efforts, says Amelia Parnell, vice president for research and policy at NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, a professional-membership group.

"Colleges will be moving faster from prediction to prescription, putting data to work to move students into situations that offer real support, such as stronger academic advising, more personalized advising, and one-on-one coaching," Parnell says.

Of the 41 percent of institutions that are planning to hire more staff members, seven in 10 will be bringing on more academic advisers, according to the survey — second only to workers in mental-health services (75 percent), Parnell notes. While only 38 percent of respondents say their institution will use predictive analytics to help students succeed, Parnell says colleges may instead be putting more resources toward services that have proved to work. "That's a sign that we're moving more toward solutions," says Parnell.

Colleges are most focused on tutoring (92 percent), peer supplemental-learning instruction (59 percent), and summer-bridge classes (44 percent) to help remedial students and others navigate their coursework successfully.

Some observers say that higher education should not accept any responsibility for learning loss. Instead, the sector should work with the students it receives in future classes by offering additional services.

"Higher ed would be wise to deflect that one," says Smith, now a professor of education at Loyola University Maryland. "Once you tell students to come to your institution, then it's on us to figure out what they need in order to learn. The

learning-loss narrative exists to beat up on teachers and reduce education to a few measurable aspects."

But others say that learning loss presents a challenge that only postsecondary institutions can handle. "If not higher ed, then who?" says Tippets. "We're the ones society counts on to transform lives."

## What services is your college developing to help students succeed academically?
(Select all that apply)

**Tutoring**
92%

**Peer supplemental learning instruction**
59%

**Summer bridge classes**
44%

**Predictive analytics**
38%

**New learning management systems**
32%

**Other**
10%

**None of the above**
5%

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

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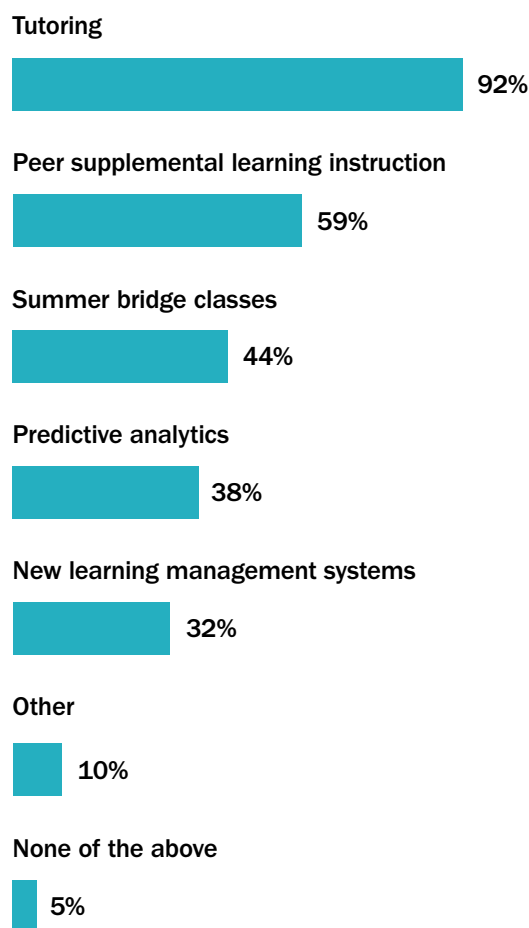
# Focusing on Mental-Health and Career Services

**T**he need for campus mental-health services exploded in the years prior to Covid-19, doubling from 2009 to 2019. But the isolation and anxiety surrounding the pandemic has turned a troubling phenomenon into a full-blown crisis, with 60 percent of college students meeting the criteria for at least one mental-health problem.

Institutions have no choice but to deliver more help to students. Those who suffer emotionally or mentally are less likely to keep up with their studies, presenting colleges with major retention issues. At the same time, colleges are under increasing legal pressure to accommodate students diagnosed with mental-health issues so they can continue their education.

By the time students get to college, many may have already had one or more mental-health problems. As society's view of mental illness has become less stigmatized, more students feel free to seek help on campus, experts say, straining resources.

*The Chronicle* survey reflects college administrators' worries over the mental health of students, including the ones to come. Nearly all (97 percent) say they are at least somewhat concerned, and more than half say their institution is increasing student wellness services (60 percent) and the availability of in-person counseling services (59 percent) to help deal with the crisis. Slightly more than half (53 percent) are providing referrals to local counselors.

## What is your college doing to prepare to provide support for your students' mental health?
(Select all that apply)

**Increased wellness services, i.e., meditation/yoga classes, preventive health screenings, diet/exercise programs**
60%

**Increased availabillity of in-person counseling services**
59%

**Providing references to local counselors**
53%

**Hired more on-site therapists**
38%

**Hiring peer advisers**
25%

**Investing in therapeutic digital apps**
23%

**Providing more flexible learning and living options for greater neurodiversity in students**
18%

**Expanded mental-health time for students**
10%

**Other**
8%

**None of the above**
6%

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

Yet, despite the high level of concern, only two in three institutions are ready to meet the mental-health needs of future students. And a minority of institutions — 41 percent — are planning to hire more general student-support staff.

"Colleges are running into the same problems they're having with IT staff," says Alexander, from Georgetown. "Counselors can make more money out in the private sector. The situation calls for some creative solutions."

Only 23 percent of respondents say that their institution plans to invest in therapeutic digital apps. "I'd expect to see more interest in the future in creating those apps," Alexander says. "There's a robust field there that offers support and quality."

[Students from underrepresented groups suffer more often from mental-health problems](#) — something colleges should continue to prepare for before the Class of 2030 arrives, experts say.

"Federal legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, forced society to prepare many more K-12 students living in poverty for colleges, including many who were the first in their families to attend college," says Michael Gerard Mason, interim dean of African American affairs at the University of Virginia. "Students from marginalized groups often have difficulty navigating systems, finding the time to track down resources, and finding peer groups in ways that students whose family members have had a history of attending college do not. This adds to the stress for these students."

Virginia, like many other institutions, offers students several free telehealth sessions per academic year, adds Mason, who is also a staff psychotherapist there. "But they don't solve the problem, either, because many students insist on face-to-face encounters with counselors who are people of color. There's no way we can provide all that on demand, particularly during Covid," he says.

To get more help to more students during the pandemic, the university formed Project RISE, which combines trained peer counselors with a streamlined mental-health referral process. A dozen or more institutions across the nation have started similar programs, Mason says, which can offer a sense of belonging to students who may not be part of a campus majority group.

To get students more help and to make them feel as though their mental health is a campus priority, colleges are also beginning to work to create more connections between students and advisers, says Parnell, from NASPA.

"Reforming academic advising from being about more than offering course suggestions into something more holistic is becoming more of a popular idea," adds Tippets, from Southern Utah. "But advisers need to undergo extensive training just to become more comfortable with having those kinds of conversations with students."

Another method of linking students to services — training faculty members to "triage" students who might need help — has emerged. "It's all about developing care

## How prepared is your institution to meet the mental-health needs of your future students?

■ Very unprepared  ■ Somewhat unprepared  ■ Somewhat prepared  ■ Very prepared

| 7% | 26% | 56% | 11% |
|---|---|---|---|

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

networks where we can direct students to the services they need," says Paul Dosal, senior vice president for student success at the University of Central Florida. "We'll never be able to staff up enough to reach everyone with counselors, but we can coordinate services better to reach more students with a variety of services."

Mental-health services aren't the only kind students need more of. As anxieties over job prospects and the cost of college have grown, so have students' and parents' desires for institutions to prepare young adults for careers. More than eight in 10 college freshmen say they attend college to get good jobs.

Two-thirds of the college officials surveyed say their institution is redesigning its career-services offerings. Most are collaborating with local work-force partners (76 percent), creating more experiential-learning opportunities (67 percent), or embedding career education into the curriculum (58 percent). Of the 41 percent who say their institution will hire more staff over all, nearly half (46 percent) say they will be hiring more career counselors.

While experts say those things are important, other measures — such as creating an official list of student experiences and credentials that supersedes a typical transcript, or expanding programs that help students choose career-minded majors earlier in their college years — might be more useful to tomorrow's student.
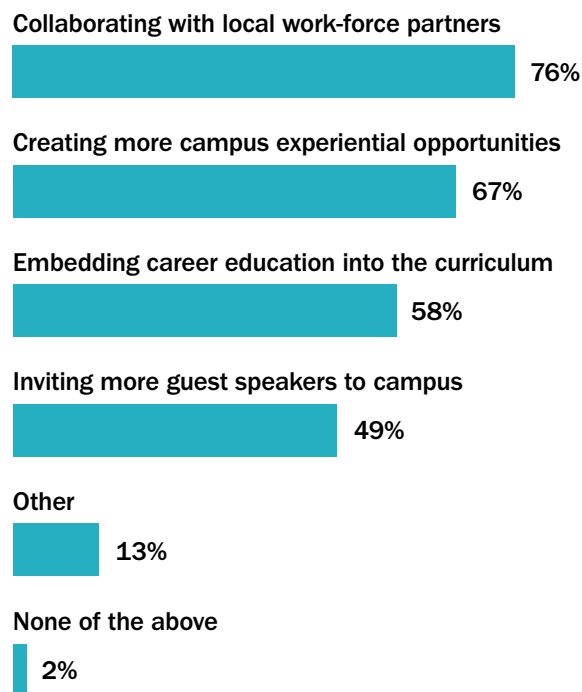
"We also need to push the idea of vocation more than career," says Smith, from Loyola University Maryland. "I recently heard that many people have eight different 401(k) plans by the time they retire. Students will likely have many jobs in their lifetimes. We need to prepare them for that kind of life."

"Gen Z sees the purpose of college as job prep more than any generation before," Tippets adds. "Institutions that can meet that demand in the next 10 years will be big winners."

## Given that more than 80 percent of students say they come to college to get a good job, is your college redesigning career services to better serve their needs?



No 34%

Yes 66%
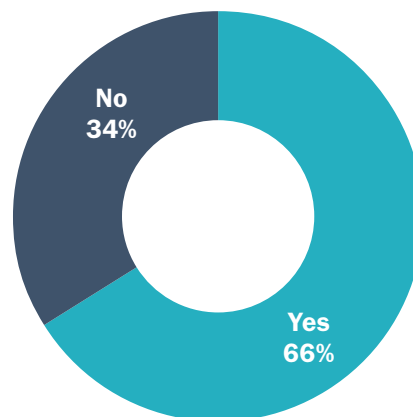
## In what areas is your college planning to hire more staff to support students?
(Select all that apply)*

**Collaborating with local work-force partners**
76%

**Creating more campus experiential opportunities**
67%

**Embedding career education into the curriculum**
58%

**Inviting more guest speakers to campus**
49%

**Other**
13%

**None of the above**
2%

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.
* Only those at a college redesigning career services to better serve student needs were presented this question.

# Maintaining a Connected and Safe Campus

Campus lockdowns left many students feeling alienated from their peers and professors. They desire personal connections, studies have shown, and now that face-to-face learning has returned, institutions are working to help them develop those bonds.

Most colleges are offering special activities (71 percent) that give students opportunities to get to know one another. Others are repurposing campus spaces for informal get-togethers (47 percent) or adding options for students to work closely with faculty members (42 percent).



Surveys have shown that students crave personal connection – with their peers and their professors. That became especially apparent during pandemic lockdowns. What, if anything, is your institution doing to encourage these connections? (Select all that apply)

**We are offering special activities that encourage new students to bond with one another**
71%

**We are revising campus spaces to encourage more informal gatherings**
47%

**We have added curricular options aimed at helping students collaborate with each other and / or faculty members**
42%

**We have created intentional living and learning communities**
40%

**We have provided incentives (money for snacks, etc.) for faculty members to meet informally with students**
12%

**Other**
5%

**We are doing nothing to encourage these connections**
10%

But colleges looking to keep students connected must also keep in mind that they increasingly come from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. From 1976 to 2016, the share of Hispanic college students grew from 4 percent to 18 percent, and the share of Black students increased from 10 percent to 14 percent, according to the National Center on Biotechnology Information. Asian American enrollment also increased more than threefold within that time.

> ## The class of 2030 will likely be more multicultural than today's student body and will have lived through a continuing national racial reckoning during its youth.

The class of 2030 will likely be more multicultural than today's student body and will have lived through a continuing national racial reckoning during its youth.

Colleges are planning several ways to help students from underrepresented groups adjust to campus life. More than half of institutions (55 percent) are planning to increase resources for campus affinity groups. A lesser number is making changes to co-curricular offerings (44 percent) or their curricula (40 percent). Nearly a quarter of those surveyed say that a racial reckoning is either not affecting their planning (14 percent) or that they are doing no planning (9 percent).

Colleges ignore the issue at their own peril, some experts say.

"There's a growing mismatch between who the faculty is likely to be and who the students of the future will be, as this

## The student applicants of the next few years will have witnessed an unprecedented national racial reckoning during their formative years. How is that affecting your planning?
(Select all that apply)

**We are increasing resources for affinity groups**
55%

**We are making changes to our co-curricular offerings**
44%

**We are making changes to our curricula**
40%

**We are changing our admissions criteria and support for historically underserved student populations**
18%

**It is not affecting our planning**
14%

**Other**
9%

**None of the above**
9%

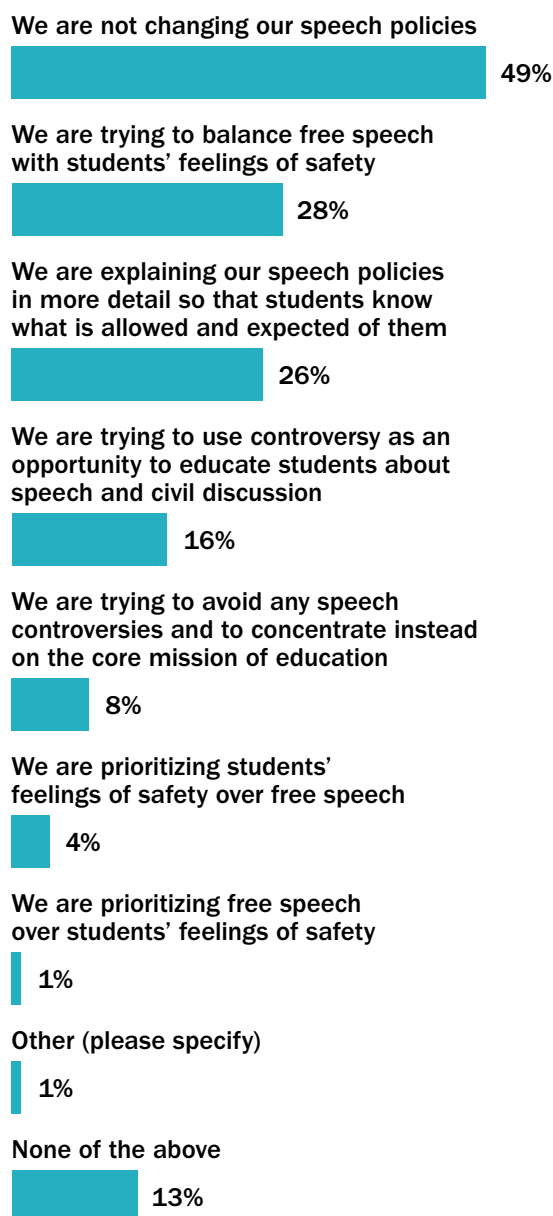Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

demographic shift on campus takes place," says Smith, from Loyola University Maryland. "So, colleges will need to deal with this racial moment as it becomes even more prominent. The issue won't go away on its own."

That concern extends to campus free speech, he adds. Among underrepresented groups, Black students in particular feel that their free-speech rights are much less protected in the current campus environment. Many Asian students attending U.S. institutions fear reprisals if they speak freely. Campus conservatives also have expressed reputational fears about speaking up in class, according to a report from the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression.

> ## "Colleges will need to deal with this racial moment as it becomes even more prominent. The issue won't go away on its own."

About half of institutions are not looking to change their free-speech policies, the survey shows. A significant number (28 percent) are working to balance speech issues with student concerns about safety. About a quarter are working to explain their speech policies more completely and clearly to students. And 16 percent are using free-speech controversies to educate students about the issue.

## Campus speech has been a topic of controversy. What, if any, changes are you making to your speech policies?
(Select all that apply)

**We are not changing our speech policies**
49%

**We are trying to balance free speech with students' feelings of safety**
28%

**We are explaining our speech policies in more detail so that students know what is allowed and expected of them**
26%

**We are trying to use controversy as an opportunity to educate students about speech and civil discussion**
16%

**We are trying to avoid any speech controversies and to concentrate instead on the core mission of education**
8%

**We are prioritizing students' feelings of safety over free speech**
4%

**We are prioritizing free speech over students' feelings of safety**
1%

**Other (please specify)**
1%

**None of the above**
13%

Source: *Chronicle* survey of 437 college officials.

Higher-education institutions are overwhelmingly poised to offer the class of 2030 a hybrid arrangement of face-to-face teaching and online courses, according to *The Chronicle's* survey of college officials. Instructors are seen as capable of teaching high-quality virtual courses, as well as using technology in the classroom. Most institutions are prepared to support their students' efforts to learn online.

As colleges continue to ramp up their technology to meet the demands of this rising group of students, they are also making plans for how to deal with pandemic-era learning loss and a growing need for mental-health interventions.

**The students of the class of 2030 have experienced historic educational disruption and social turmoil at a vulnerable age.**

Colleges are developing services to help tomorrow's students succeed in the classroom, especially via tutoring and peer supplemental learning instruction, and help them deal with potential mental-health issues by increasing wellness services and the availability of in-person counseling.

Despite citing a need for more services, the survey shows that most institutions are not planning to hire more student-services staff.

To create a better-connected and more racially and socially equitable campus, colleges are increasing resources

earmarked for campus affinity groups and are offering more activities to encourage students to bond with one another. At the same time, most are redesigning their career-services operations to help students get more job experience and exposure.

About half of institutions will maintain their current standards on campus free speech.

The students of the class of 2030 have experienced historic educational disruption and social turmoil at a vulnerable age, and the impact of those experiences will continue to linger. Higher-education institutions will need to prepare carefully and thoroughly to help them succeed.

## METHODOLOGY

*The Chronicle* contacted a sampling of college administrators by email and asked them to answer a series of questions about their institution's preparations for the class of 2030; 437 responded, between October 24 and November 10, 2022.

Most (71 percent) are employed at institutions that work primarily with students age 18 to 22. Nearly all respondents (99 percent) work full time — 44 percent at public four-year institutions, 42 percent at a private college, and 14 percent at two-year community colleges.

The largest job title represented is "director," at 37 percent. Seventeen percent identify themselves as department heads; 13 percent as deans; 10 percent as assistant, associate, or vice deans; 7 percent as vice presidents; 5 percent as assistant, associate, or vice provosts; and 4 percent each as presidents or provosts.

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