Students of Color Feel Less Academically and Emotionally Prepared For College

A majority of US college students feel unprepared for their first year, and wish they were entering college more emotionally and academically ready. A deeper demographic analysis uncovered that students of color feel more overwhelmed and less comfortable seeking help within the college setting than their peers. The analysis also shows that students of color are less likely to engage in drug and alcohol use.

Emotional and Academic Preparedness

- White students are more likely than Black and Latinx students to say they feel more academically prepared than their peers during their first term of college (White 50% vs. Black 36% and Latinx 39%).
- White students also are more likely than Black students to feel more emotionally prepared than their peers (35% vs. 23%).

Perception and Environment

- Black students are more likely than White students to say that college is not living up to their expectations (57% vs. 46%).
- Black and Latinx students are more likely than White students to say that it seems like everyone has college figured out but them (52% and 49% vs. 41%).

Help-Seeking

- Black students are also more likely than White and Latinx students to say they seriously considered transferring during their first term (41% vs. 23% and 21%).

Substance Abuse

- Black students are more likely than White students to say they tend to keep their feelings about the difficulty of college to themselves (75% vs. 61%).

The survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll, the JED Foundation, Partnership for Drug Free Kids and The Jordan Porco Foundation between March 25 and April 17, 2015 among 1,502 students who met the following criteria: 17-20 years old, graduated from high school, currently attends a 2-year or 4-year college in the U.S., currently a first year student/freshman in their second term, and currently attending at least some of their college classes in-person. Data are weighted where necessary by age within gender, race/ethnicity, and region to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

*Instances where comparisons between groups were not statistically significant were omitted from the results above.