



Wellness Assessment 2020-2021:

Examining Students'
Wellness and Sense of
Belonging during the
COVID-19 Pandemic

Center for the Study of Student Life

February 2021



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

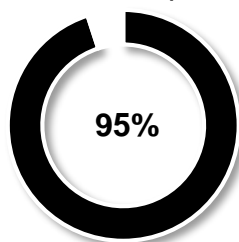
OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

KEY FINDINGS

Prevention and Stress Related to COVID-19

- About 25% of all students reported experiencing daily stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Even though over 95% of all students reported that they know how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, more than 50% of undergraduate students and more than 60% of graduate/professional students reported that they are worried about contracting COVID-19.

I know how to prevent the spread of COVID-19



Sense of Belonging to Ohio State

- Graduate/professional students had a slightly higher overall sense of belonging score at 2.80, while undergraduate students had an overall sense of belonging score of 2.75 (higher scores equal a greater sense of belonging, with 4 being the highest). Sense of belonging assessed on this survey, in October 2020, was lower, on average, than students surveyed in January 2020.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Student Wellness

Data illustrate the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has positively and negatively affected students' wellness.

Positive Outcomes

- 35% of undergraduate and 24% of graduate/professional students report that they have found new creative outlets for their self-expressions.
- 32% of undergraduate and 20% of graduate/professional students report being more engaged in their academic schoolwork.
- 30% of undergraduate and 24% of graduate/professional students report their exercise habits have improved since the beginning of the pandemic.

Challenges

- 28% of undergraduate and 26% of graduate/professional students report that they are struggling financially due to the pandemic.
- 24% of undergraduate and 27% of graduate/professional students report that their alcohol intake has increased since the start of the pandemic.
- 61% of undergraduate and 65% of graduate/professional students report that they are concerned about their future career plans.
- The majority of students (82% of undergraduate and 80% of graduate/professional students) agreed that the COVID-19 policies have made it difficult to interact with peers.

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio State University Office of Student Life's Student Wellness Center uses a holistic wellness model that includes nine key dimensions of wellness: career, creative, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual.

The Wellness Assessment was designed to measure these nine dimensions of wellness in order to give students a better understanding of their own wellness and provide them with resources that they can utilize at Ohio State to improve their wellness. The Wellness Assessment is open year-round to all students. Additionally, in October 2020, the survey was emailed to a random sample of 5,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. From the random sample, 810 students responded for a 16.2% response rate. An additional 1,881 students self-selected into participating in the survey via the advertised Qualtrics link over the course of the month.

To better understand students' holistic wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic, new items were added to the instrument for this administration. These new items assess a range of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Items about the COVID-19 pandemic that fall within each of the nine dimensions of wellness were also added. A scale to measure students' sense of belonging at Ohio State was added to the instrument for this administration as well. This report documents students' sense of belonging and attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic during October 2020.

METHODOLOGY

Attitudes and knowledge items related to the COVID-19 pandemic were measured using Likert scales; students indicated their level of agreement with various statements on a 5-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. When asked about behaviors, students reported the frequency of the occurrence, also on a 5-point scale from 'never' to 'always'.

The items within the sense of belonging scale were scored on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' as 1 to 'strongly agree' as 4. An overall sense of belonging score ranging from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most positive, was calculated by averaging together students' responses to five out of the six sense of belonging items. The item, 'I participate in Ohio State traditions', is excluded from the overall sense of belonging score. Students had to have answered all other five items to be given an overall sense of belonging score.

Hover-text was included in the survey to provide students with operational definitions of several wellness terms. To review all answer options for each item by educational level, as well as the hover-text definitions, please see the Appendix.

FINDINGS

ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO COVID-19

The figures within this section compare undergraduate students' responses and graduate/professional students' responses to items assessing a range of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, students' responses to these items were fairly similar, regardless of educational level.

Figure 1. On average, how often do you feel stressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

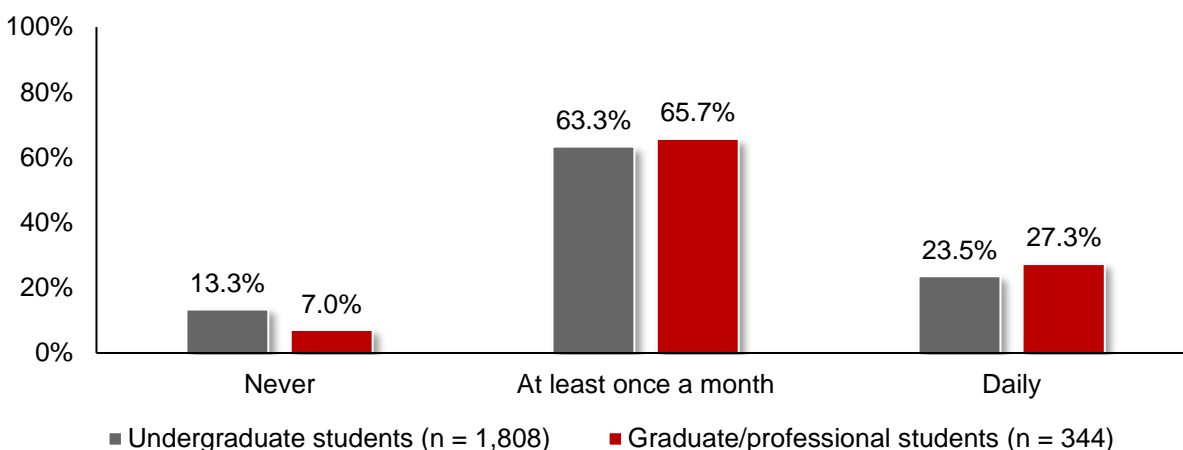


Figure 2. Percentage of students who 'always' or 'often' engage in the following behaviors by educational level

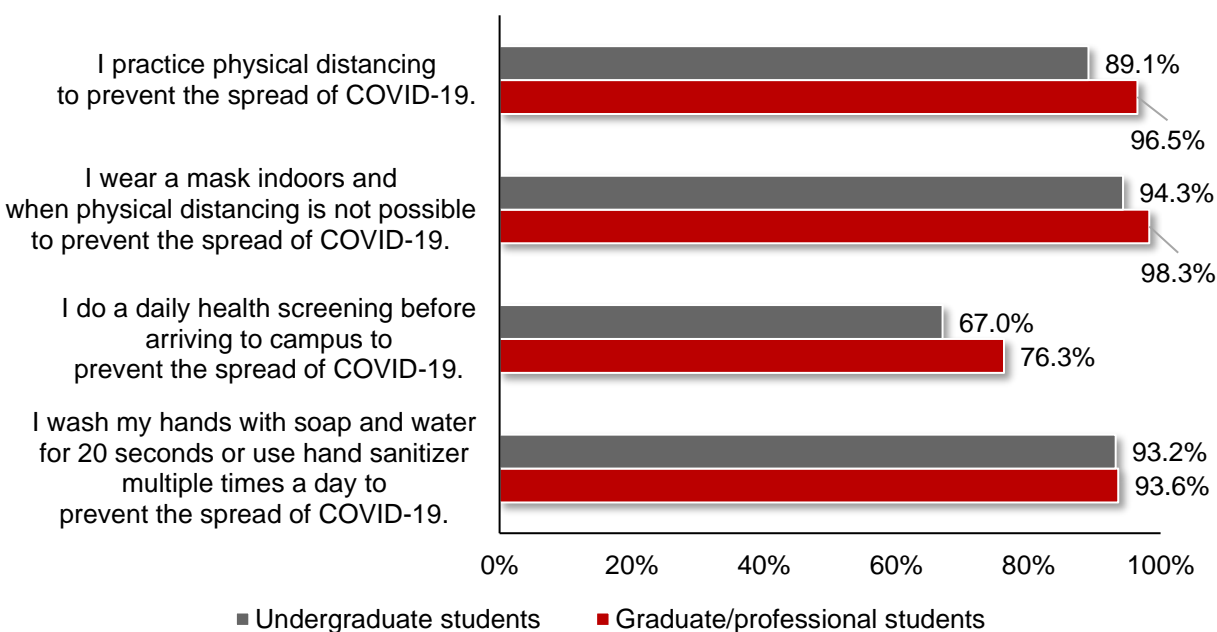
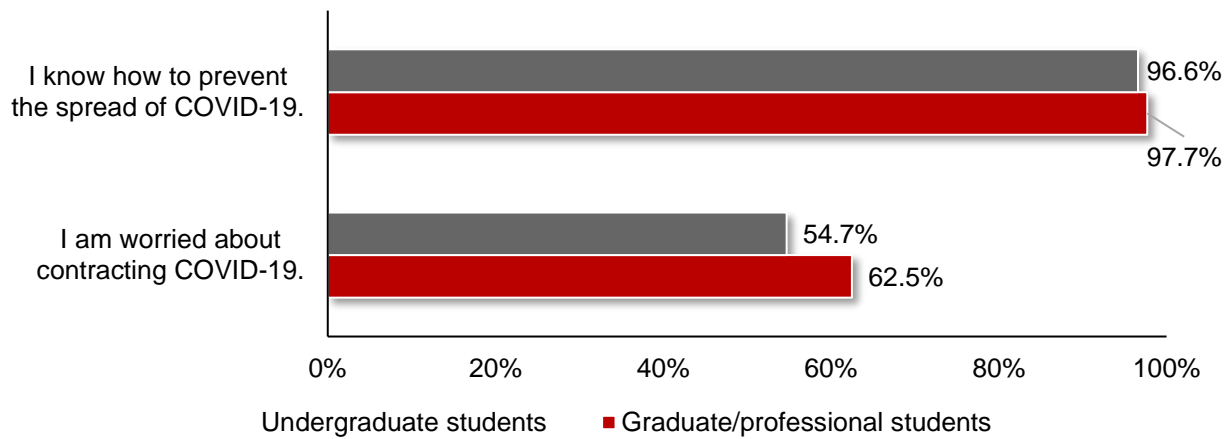


Figure 3. Percentage of students who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the following statements by educational level



COVID-19 ITEMS WITHIN THE NINE DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

The figures within this section compare undergraduate students' responses and graduate/professional students' responses to items about the COVID-19 pandemic within each of the nine dimensions of wellness. Students' responses to these items were fairly similar overall, regardless of educational level. For item responses by each response category, please see Appendix.

Figure 4. Percentage of students who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the following statements by educational level

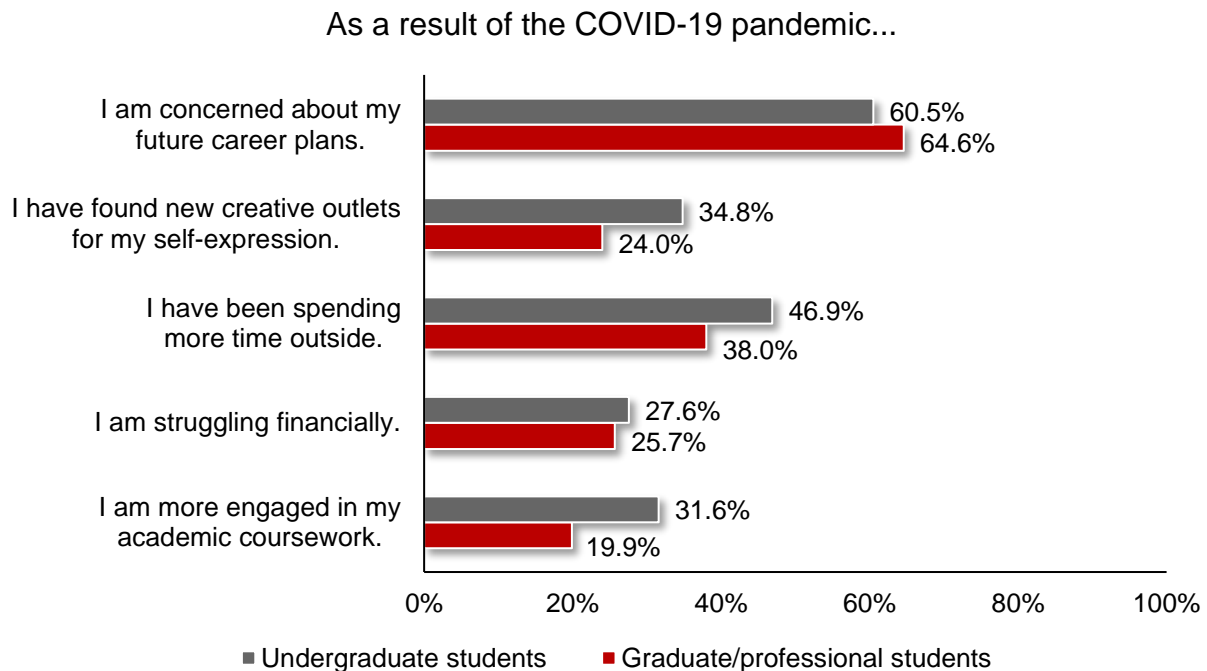
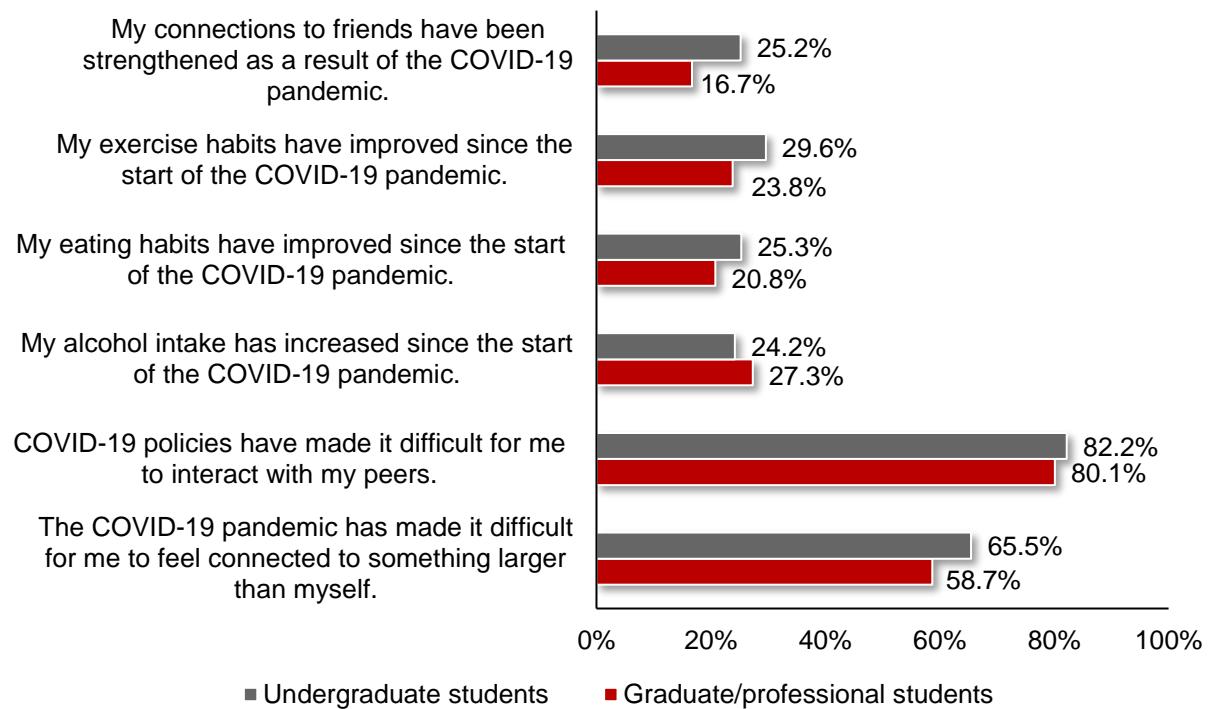


Figure 5. Percentage of students who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the following statements by educational level



SENSE OF BELONGING TO OHIO STATE

The figures within this section compare undergraduate students' responses and graduate/professional students' responses to items used to measure students' sense of belonging at Ohio State as well as students' overall sense of belonging score in January 2020 to October 2020. The overall sense of belonging score ranges from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most positive.

Figure 6. Percentage of students who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the following statements by educational level

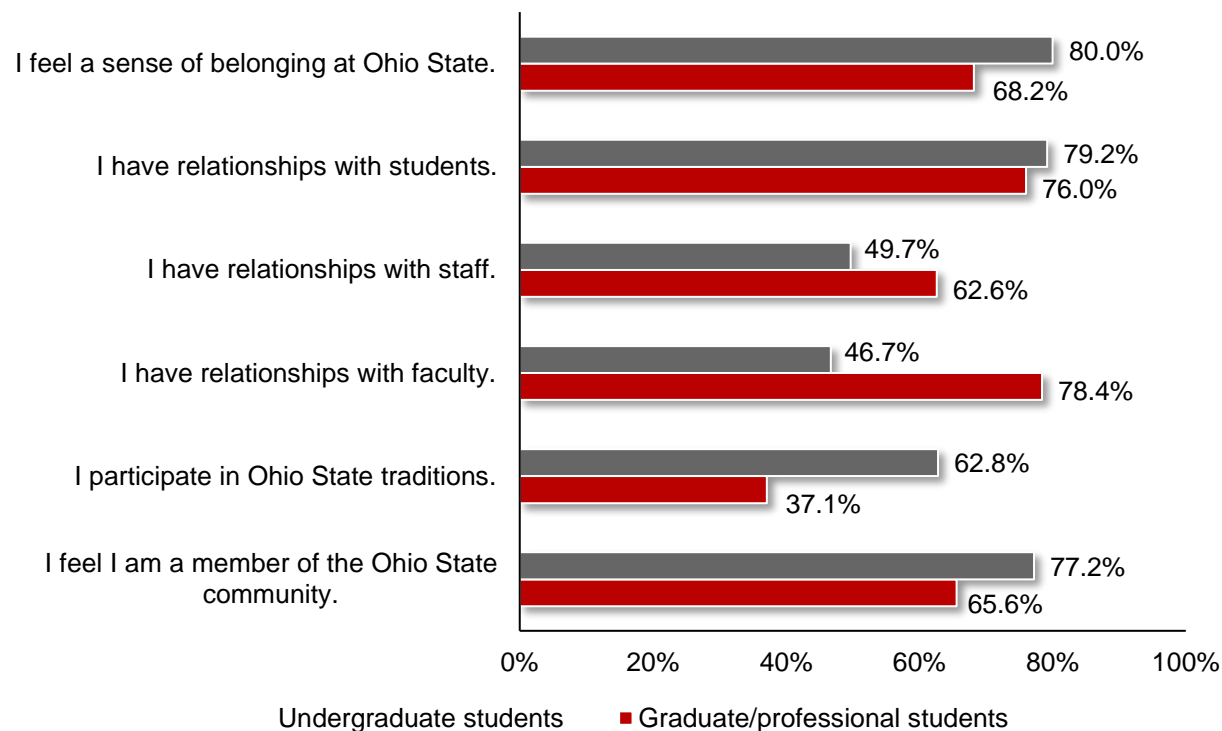
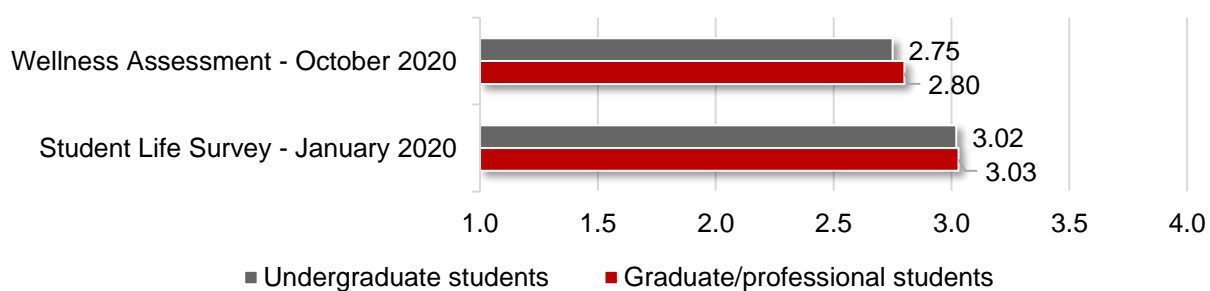


Figure 7. Overall sense of belonging score by educational level



CONCLUSION

This report documents students' sense of belonging and attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic during October 2020. Overall, undergraduate and graduate/professional students at Ohio State responded fairly similarly to items assessing a range of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to items about the COVID-19 pandemic within each of the nine dimensions of wellness. About 25% of all students reported experiencing daily stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 95% of all students reported that they know how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Yet over half of both undergraduate and graduate/professional students reported that they are worried about contracting COVID-19.

Students' overall sense of belonging at Ohio State did vary by educational level. Graduate/professional students had a slightly higher overall sense of belonging score at 2.80, while undergraduate students had an overall sense of belonging score of 2.75. Additionally, 60% of graduate/professional students reported having relationships with staff, while less than half of undergraduate students reported having relationships with staff. And over 75% graduate/professional students reported having relationships with faculty, compared to less than half of undergraduate students. However, 80% of undergraduate students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging at Ohio State, while only 68.2% of graduate/professional students agreed or strongly agreed.

APPENDIX

ALL ITEM RESPONSES: ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO COVID-19

The table below includes all answer options by educational level for each item assessing a range of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/ Professional Students
On average, how often do you feel stressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?	(n = 1,808)	(n = 344)
Never	13.3%	7.0%
Once a month	12.9%	13.4%
Every other week	11.4%	10.2%
Once a week	19.1%	18.6%
More than once a week	19.9%	23.6%
Daily	23.5%	27.3%
I practice <u>physical distancing</u> to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ¹	(n = 1,809)	(n = 343)
Never	0.6%	0.3%
Rarely	1.1%	0.6%
Sometimes	9.2%	2.6%
Often	41.2%	39.7%
Always	47.9%	56.9%
I wear a mask indoors and when <u>physical distancing</u> is not possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ¹	(n = 1,809)	(n = 343)
Never	0.3%	0.3%
Rarely	0.9%	0.3%
Sometimes	4.5%	1.2%
Often	20.0%	15.7%
Always	74.4%	82.5%
I do a <u>daily health screening</u> before arriving to campus to prevent the spread of COVID-19. ²	(n = 1,807)	(n = 337)
Never	8.4%	11.3%
Rarely	8.5%	3.9%
Sometimes	16.1%	8.6%
Often	23.5%	15.1%
Always	43.5%	61.1%

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/Professional Students
I wash my hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer multiple times a day to prevent the spread of COVID-19.	(n = 1,810)	(n = 343)
Never	0.3%	0.3%
Rarely	1.5%	1.2%
Sometimes	5.0%	5.0%
Often	21.2%	21.0%
Always	72.0%	72.6%
I know how to prevent the spread of COVID-19.	(n = 1,803)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	0.3%	0.6%
Disagree	0.6%	0.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.5%	1.8%
Agree	35.8%	35.8%
Strongly Agree	60.8%	61.9%
I am worried about contracting COVID-19.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	11.4%	5.6%
Disagree	15.5%	12.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.5%	19.7%
Agree	34.9%	39.3%
Strongly Agree	19.8%	23.2%

¹ When students placed their cursor on 'physical distancing', the following definition was presented to them: "Maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others in any public space — indoor or outdoor — wherever possible".

² When students placed their cursor on 'daily health screening', the following definition was presented to them: "Monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19, which include the following: A fever of 100.4°F or higher; Respiratory symptoms, such as dry cough or shortness of breath; Sore throat; Headache; Body ache; Chills; Loss of taste or smell".

ALL ITEM RESPONSES: COVID-19 ITEMS WITHIN THE NINE DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

The table below includes all answer options by educational level for each item related to the COVID-19 pandemic within the nine dimensions of wellness.

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/ Professional Students
<i>Future Career Aspect Item</i>		
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am concerned about my future career plans.	(n = 1,806)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	4.4%	5.3%
Disagree	17.9%	14.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17.2%	15.2%
Agree	35.9%	40.4%
Strongly Agree	24.6%	24.3%
<i>Present Career Aspect Item</i>		
Which of the following best describes your employment situation?	(n = 1,810)	(n = 342)
I have a job on-campus	13.8%	46.5%
I have a job off-campus	35.5%	21.4%
I have job both on-campus and off-campus	4.7%	5.3%
I would like to have a job, but I can't find one	6.9%	1.8%
I do not have a job	39.2%	25.2%
<i>Creative Dimension Item</i>		
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have found new creative outlets for my self-expression.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	7.7%	11.4%
Disagree	30.1%	38.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.4%	26.0%
Agree	29.8%	19.3%
Strongly Agree	5.0%	4.7%
<i>Emotional Dimension Item</i>		
My connections to friends have been strengthened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.	(n = 1,804)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	17.4%	23.2%
Disagree	26.9%	30.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	30.5%	29.9%
Agree	17.5%	12.3%
Strongly Agree	7.7%	4.4%

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/Professional Students
<i>Environmental Dimension Item</i>		
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been spending more time outside.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	10.1%	14.0%
Disagree	25.5%	29.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17.5%	18.7%
Agree	35.1%	26.0%
Strongly Agree	11.9%	12.0%
<i>Financial Dimension Item</i>		
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am struggling financially.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	13.0%	13.7%
Disagree	35.1%	35.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24.3%	25.2%
Agree	18.8%	17.8%
Strongly Agree	8.8%	7.9%
<i>Intellectual Dimension Item</i>		
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am more engaged in my academic coursework.	(n = 1,806)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	21.3%	17.8%
Disagree	24.3%	31.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.8%	30.7%
Agree	25.1%	15.5%
Strongly Agree	6.5%	4.4%
<i>Broad Physical Aspect Items</i>		
My exercise habits have improved since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	21.1%	26.7%
Disagree	27.9%	28.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.4%	21.1%
Agree	19.0%	12.6%
Strongly Agree	10.6%	11.1%
My eating habits have improved since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.	(n = 1,801)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	17.5%	17.9%
Disagree	29.7%	28.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.5%	32.8%
Agree	18.4%	12.3%
Strongly Agree	6.9%	8.5%

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/Professional Students
<i>Risky Physical Aspect Item</i>		
My alcohol intake has increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.	(n = 1,804)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	33.7%	33.7%
Disagree	21.4%	23.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.8%	15.5%
Agree	17.6%	20.8%
Strongly Agree	6.5%	6.5%
<i>Social Dimension Item</i>		
COVID-19 policies have made it difficult for me to interact with my peers.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	1.9%	1.2%
Disagree	6.5%	5.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.4%	13.5%
Agree	40.4%	44.6%
Strongly Agree	41.8%	35.5%
<i>Spiritual Dimension Item</i>		
The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for me to feel connected to something larger than myself.	(n = 1,805)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	4.2%	4.7%
Disagree	11.4%	14.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.8%	22.0%
Agree	34.4%	35.8%
Strongly Agree	31.1%	22.9%

ALL ITEM RESPONSES: SENSE OF BELONGING TO OHIO STATE

The table below includes all answer options by educational level for each item used to measure students' sense of belonging at Ohio State.

<i>Sense of Belonging Items</i>	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/Professional Students
I feel a sense of belonging at Ohio State.	(n = 1,808)	(n = 343)
Strongly Disagree	4.0%	4.7%
Disagree	15.9%	27.1%
Agree	58.8%	55.4%
Strongly Agree	21.2%	12.8%

	2020 Undergraduate Students	2020 Graduate/Professional Students
I have relationships with students.	(n = 1,810)	(n = 341)
Strongly Disagree	5.3%	3.5%
Disagree	15.5%	20.5%
Agree	55.0%	53.7%
Strongly Agree	24.2%	22.3%
I have relationships with staff.	(n = 1,810)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	10.7%	5.0%
Disagree	39.6%	32.5%
Agree	42.6%	51.5%
Strongly Agree	7.1%	11.1%
I have relationships with faculty.	(n = 1,809)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	11.0%	2.1%
Disagree	42.3%	19.6%
Agree	40.0%	62.0%
Strongly Agree	6.7%	16.4%
I participate in Ohio State traditions. ³	(n = 1,812)	(n = 342)
Strongly Disagree	7.7%	21.1%
Disagree	29.5%	41.8%
Agree	48.3%	29.8%
Strongly Agree	14.5%	7.3%
I feel I am a member of the Ohio State community.	(n = 1,810)	(n = 343)
Strongly Disagree	5.0%	8.2%
Disagree	17.9%	26.2%
Agree	57.5%	53.9%
Strongly Agree	19.7%	11.7%
<i>Overall Sense of Belonging Score⁴</i>	(n = 1,803) 2.75	(n = 341) 2.80
<i>For reference: Overall Sense of Belonging Score from the January 2020 Student Life Survey</i>	(n = 1,048) 3.02	(n = 152) 3.03

³ This item is excluded from the overall sense of belonging score.

⁴ The overall sense of belonging score ranges from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most positive. Students had to have answered all five items to be given an overall sense of belonging score.