Covid-19 Student Impact Survey
Metropolitan State University of Denver
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Introduction

This report provides data to better understand the impact covid-19 has had on the student experience, student's perception of online learning, student's response to university communication, likelihood of future enrollment, and the financial impact students may be experiencing.

Data Details

The survey was open for 18 days from April 23 – May 10, 2020 and collected 1,720 responses. Responses were solicited through The Runner (the student newsletter) and via an announcement on Blackboard.

The survey was anonymous and only collected identifying information if the student opted to share their Name, Email, and 900#, for follow-up by the CARE Team.

Respondents that self-identified as graduating this semester, a total of 123, were removed from the data set for this report in order to better inform decisions that will impact students as they continue enrollment.

Total responses analyzed: **1,597**

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Section A: Balance, environment, and well-being

Q1. Who are you currently spending stay-at-home orders with? (Select all that apply)
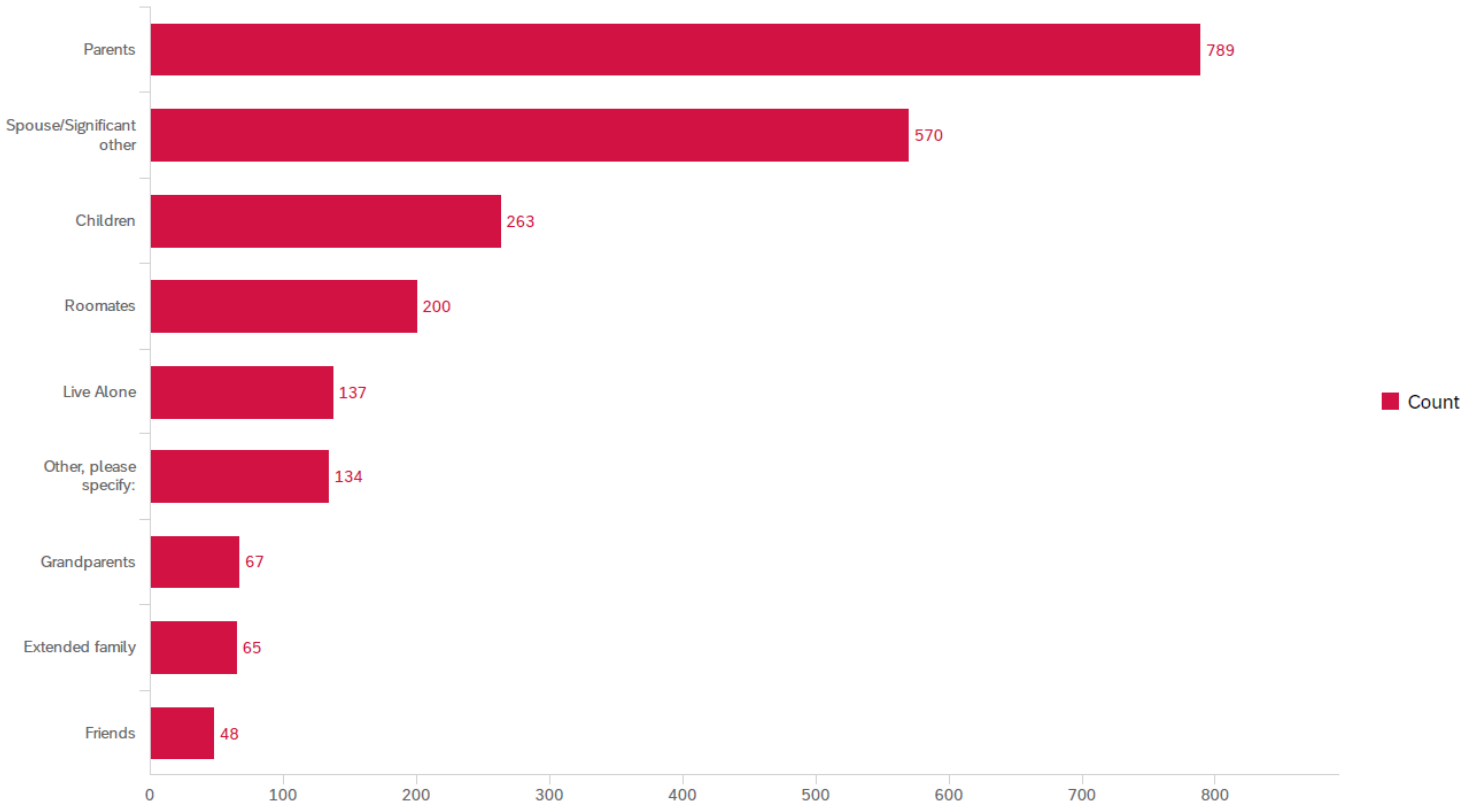
Of the 134 open-ended responses, about half of respondents stated they were spending stay-at-home orders with anywhere from 1 to 10 siblings.

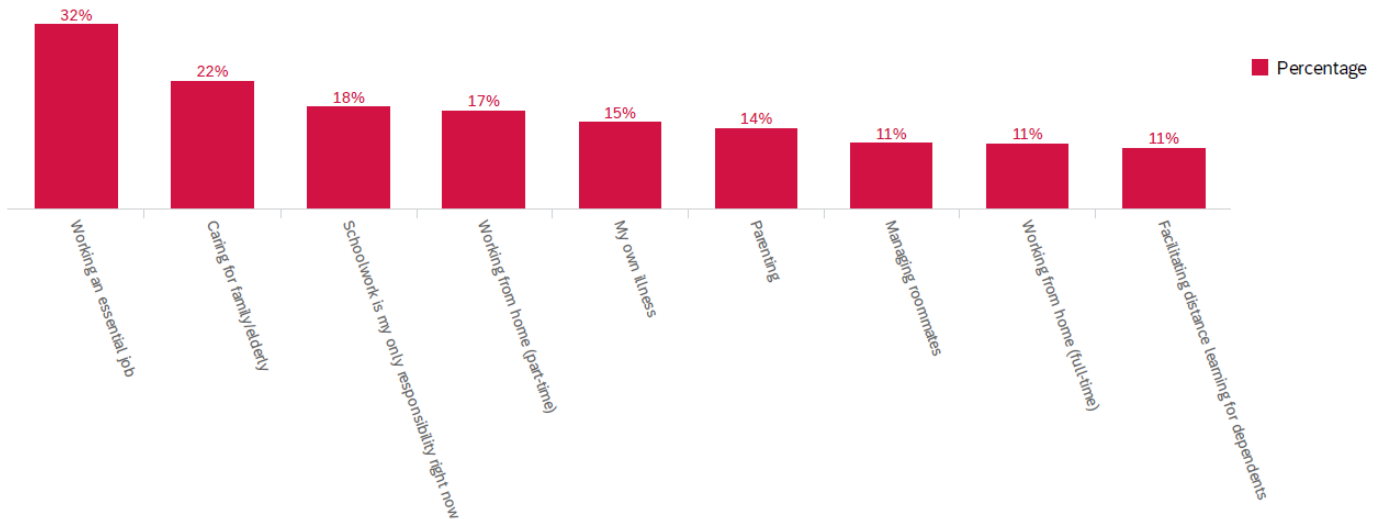2 students stated they were not following the stay-at home orders.

Q2. In addition to schoolwork, what else are you trying to balance/manage during this pandemic? (Select all that apply)

In addition to the options above, 261 respondents selected "other". Respondents are not just balancing one thing. Majority of students are having to prioritize schoolwork with family, health, and work (or lack of it). Students are experiencing life events like moving, pregnancy, and weddings (cancelled) while others are volunteering their time at local food banks and crisis lines.

A small number of respondents stated that they are being directly impacted by Covid-19 and experiencing grief and loss of life while others are in quarantine themselves or caring for others who have tested positive.

"My wife is a nurse and contracted covid-19."

"I got covid and so did 17 people in my department at work."

"I have tested for COVID-19 positive and staying home almost four weeks now without work.

The most reoccurring responses are listed below:

<u>**Mental Health: Stress, depression, anxiety,**</u>

"I don't normally stress out easily, but now I am afraid, depressed, and feeling as I am having a heavy load to deal with"

"I started seeing a therapist/mental health counselor from Metro recently to help me cope with everything that is going on. I'm having a tough time at the moment."

"My mental health"

"Anxiety and ADHD"

"Depression and anxiety"

"…and fear [and] anxiety around contracting COVID".

Unemployment, Job Loss, Finances

"Figuring out how I will financially survive long-term since I was furloughed"

"Both my parents being unemployed"

"Trying to find a new job. lost mine due to covid."

"I was forced to shut my store down due to COVID, I have not worked in 6 weeks"

"Durring this pandemeic im trying to figure out how to pay for rent when i dont have any money".

Physical Health

"Asthma, and allergies…"

"I also currently have a broken ankle"

"With all elective surgeries cancelled I'm having to nurse a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and partial tearing of the meniscus ligament"

"Health issues that have occurred shortly after the start of the stay-at-home orders".

Family

"helping my parents out as they are in the high-risk category and need me to pick up more responsibility"

"making sure my parents are taking precaution measures seriously, especially because they are turning 60 and 61 years old this year.
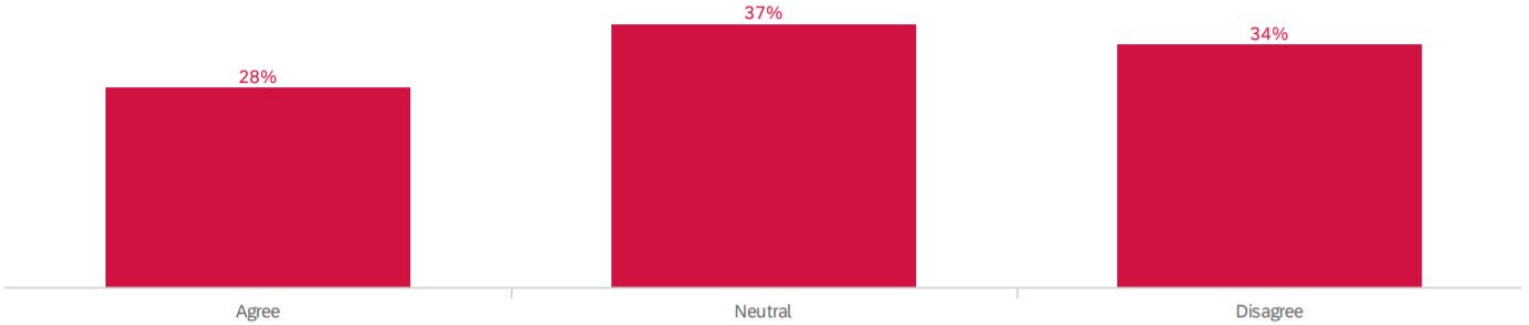
"helping younger siblings with schoolwork."

The following question utilized the Ryff scale for psychological well-being, specifically on environmental mastery (Ryff, 1995).

Q3. How much do you agree with each of the following statements? (Agree, Neutral, Disagree)
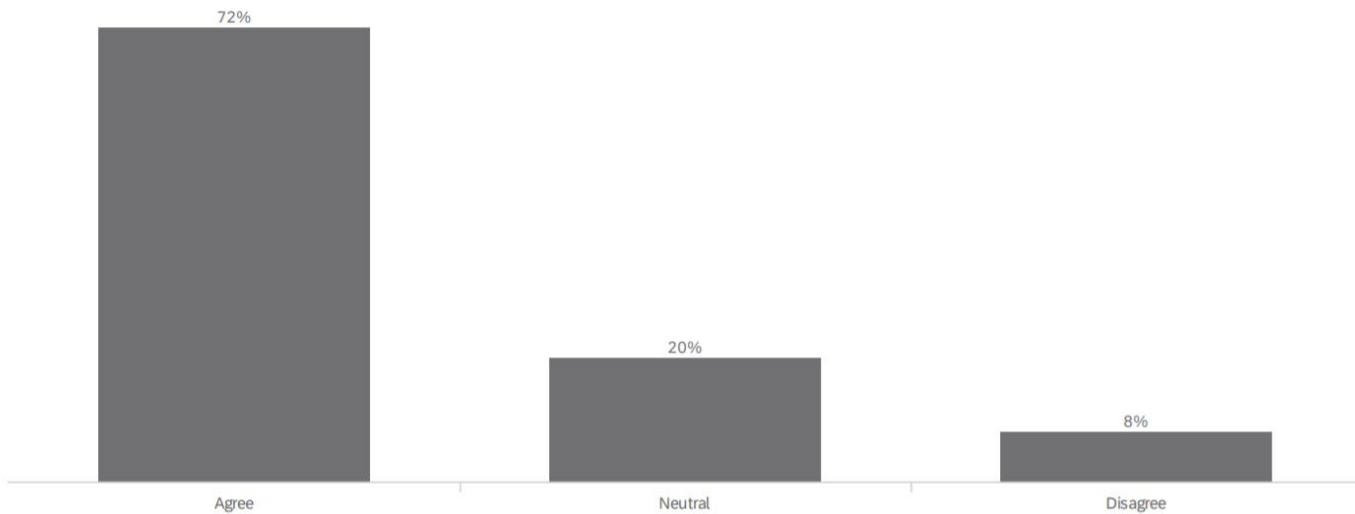
I am able to juggle my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.

I have been able to create study space for myself that is to my liking.

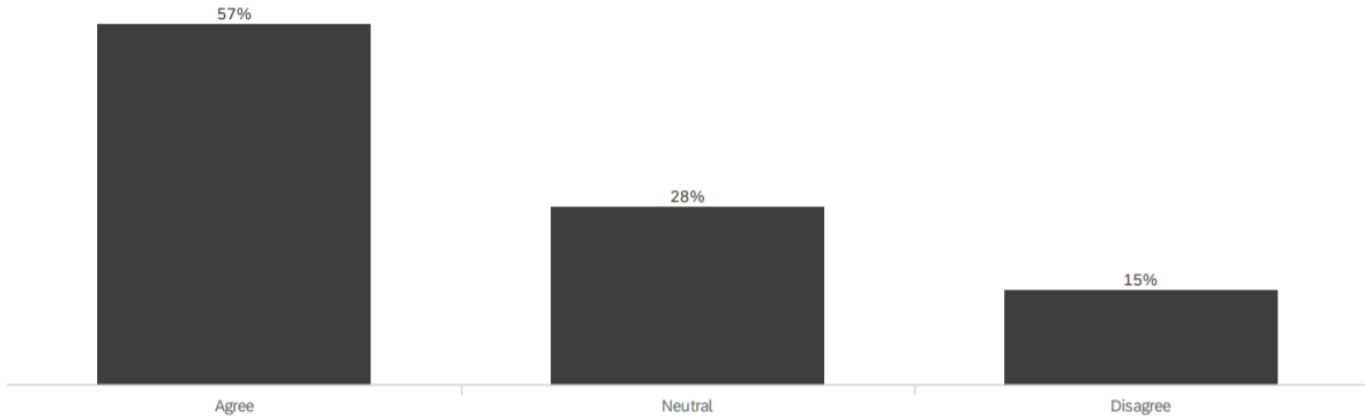I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.

Q3 continued

<u>I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.</u>
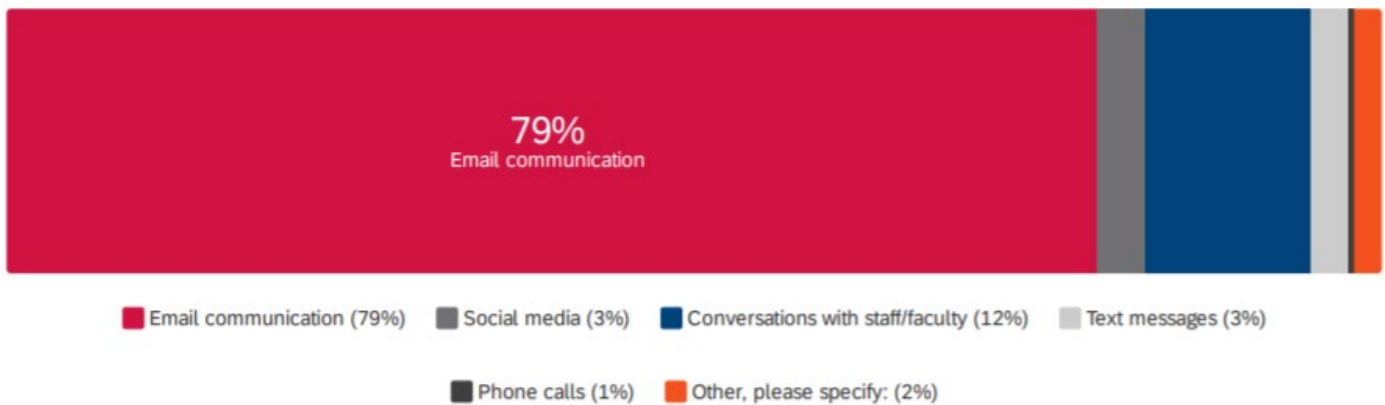
Section B: University communication and resources

Q4. How do you feel about university-related communications?

Answer	%
I feel in the know and am receiving the right amount of communications.	61.05%
I have questions that have not been answered and would benefit from more university-related communications.	24.18%
I feel overwhelmed with the amount of communications and am receiving too much of the same information.	14.77%
Total	100%

Q5. Of the list provided, what source of information from MSU Denver has been the MOST helpful in keeping you up-to-date on university-related changes as a result of COVID-19?

79%
Email communication

Email communication (79%)   Social media (3%)   Conversations with staff/faculty (12%)   Text messages (3%)

Phone calls (1%)   Other, please specify: (2%)

Of the 2% respondents (32 total students) that selected "Other", 50% reiterated communication from faculty/staff:

"My professor has been my main source of contact about university-related changes due to COVID-19."

13 students said that none of the sources of information were helpful and 5 students acknowledged Blackboard and the Student Hub as the most helpful for them.

Q6. Would you like to hear more from any of the following areas about current services and resources? Choose no more than 3

Top choices, in order of most selected, from a list of nine resource areas: *Financial assistance, academic advising, academic support, mental health.*

Q7. To what extent, if any, are you concerned about the following: (Not concerned at all, Moderately concerned, Very concerned)
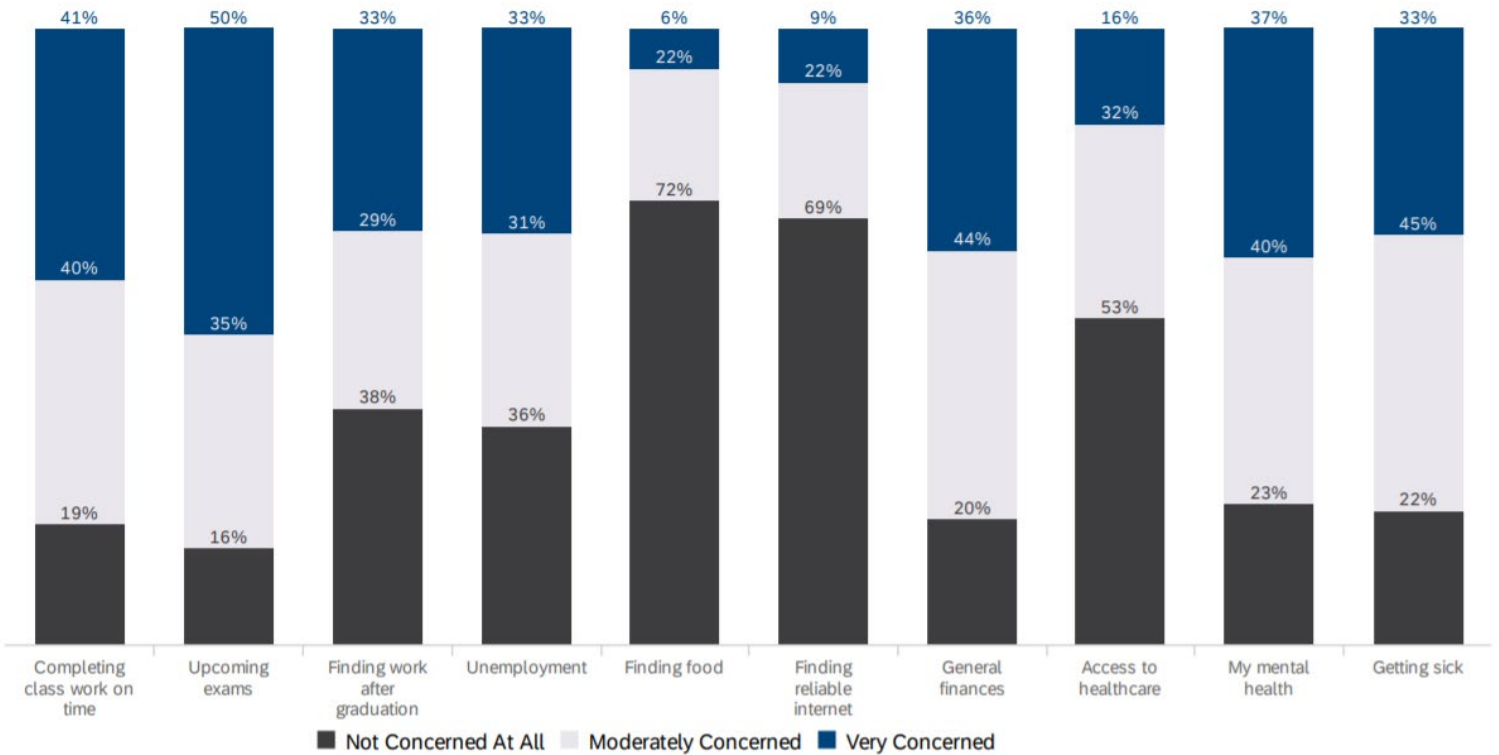
From left to right:
Completing class work on time
Upcoming exams
Finding work after graduation
Unemployment
Finding food
Finding reliable internet
General finances
Access to healthcare
My mental health
Getting sick

Section C: Financial Impact

Q8. Please indicate if you, someone who supports you, or someone you support, have experienced any of the following as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic:
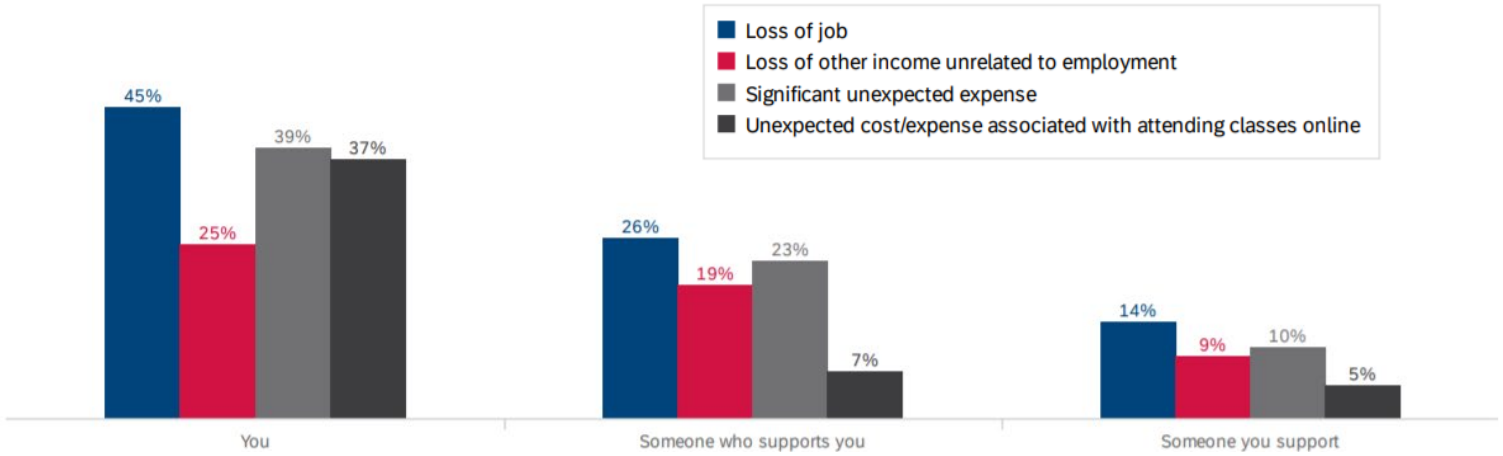
Legend:
- Loss of job
- Loss of other income unrelated to employment
- Significant unexpected expense
- Unexpected cost/expense associated with attending classes online

You
- 45%
- 25%
- 39%
- 37%

Someone who supports you
- 26%
- 19%
- 23%
- 7%

Someone you support
- 14%
- 9%
- 10%
- 5%

Section D: Transition to online learning

Q9. Of the following, please select whether it has been easy, difficult, or neither, using these to complete your coursework completely online.
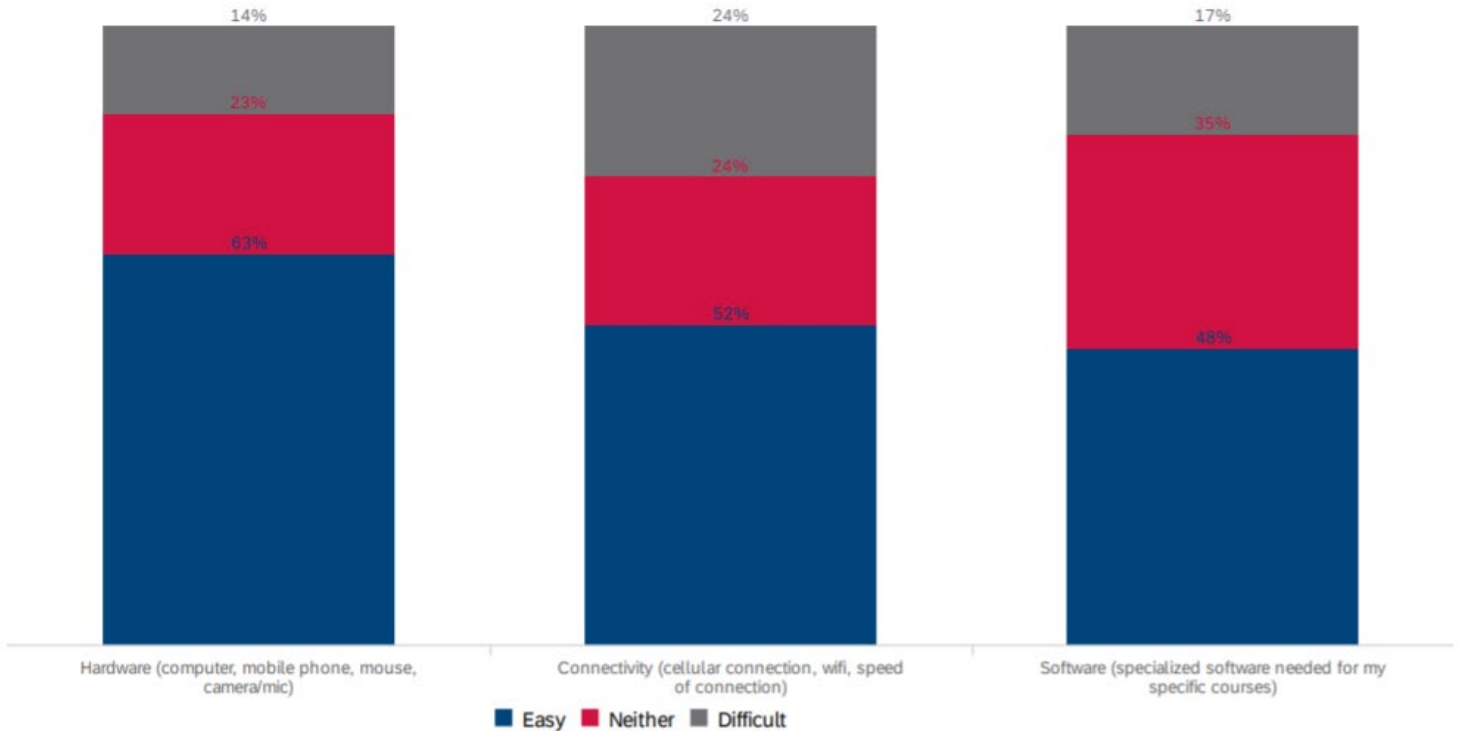
If a respondent chose difficult in any of the areas above, they were asked this follow-up question:

Q9a - To help us better understand the challenges you are experiencing please let us know the difficulties you are having with hardware, connectivity, and/or software.

Many of the issues students communicated were directly connected to access to reliable internet and connectivity to the internet as a whole.

Speed:

    "bad connection, slow connection"

    "Wifi being slow"

    "Extremely slow internet"

    "Slow wifi"

    "Slow or freezes"

"I am in a very rural part of New Mexico. The bandwidth and connection is offered by one tower and that is NOT cutting it for what I need to stream and download."

Reliability:

"A lot of the time my laptop will disconnect and reconnect to the internet randomly or a certain web page will not load but others will."

"currently, my internet drops and goes out at random times, resulting in me missing meetings/deadlines"

"Home internet is very spotty and cuts out a lot"

Issues with shared internet – overload of available resources:

"Based on all the people who are on the internet at a given time in my household, it is very difficult to be fully connected to the internet. Most of the time I do my work when everyone is done with their day of work."

"Due to increased use, we're having issues with internet outages frequently"

"I have a large household and I have no control over wifi or how strong our connection is and I get nervous during tests on online lectures that my connection just goes out and I get told its my problem by my professors."

" I have a large family with 8 k12 students at home doing distance learning. We have to stagger the learning time online because our WiFi is too slow otherwise."

Software concerns directly related to issues with software or the overwhelming amount of software they were being asked to juggle.

Issues with software:

"Blackboard glitches when I have to participate in discussions. As a result my entire response was deleted and I had to do it all over again. It wouldn't have been an issue, but the length requirement of the response was long and it was frustrating to have to start over. Also, Blackboard lags when I'm taking timed tests and I have to wait longer than usual for the answer to say it has been saved."

"Chemsketch is tricky!"

"My teacher began using proctorU for exams. Though I think this is a good idea to manage cheating the program is the not best program so at times my laptop does not like to connect to it even if their contact support says things are all good"

"Zoom/teams meetings are time consuming and glitchy to get into and stay connected"

Juggling multiple software programs:

"Each teacher is using a minimum of 3 different ways of running a class. So if i am in 4 classes(not a lot) thats 12 different ways to navigate my classes. Only one out of the 3 use blackboard. I have no idea what my grades are. etc..."

"every class is doing classes on a different software it hard it keep track of all of it so far there is Yula, Zoom, Discord, Microsoft Teams, as well as all of the different software my classes made me download for labs Multisim, matlab, Inssider. its a lot to juggle."

"I am having a lot of trouble using all the different apps and chat services. Why can't it just be uniform across my classes? I'm not at all angry, and appreciate all the work the faculty has put into trying to maintain normalcy, but I'm frustrated by the pace at which I am expected to completely adjust to a format of learning that I went out of my way to avoid."

A major concern that students shared related to outdated hardware.

"I have a very old computer that struggles with a lot of the software that we've had to use as a result of having to move online and that shuts down frequently during online calls and work, and I don't have the money to buy a new one during this pandemic."

"I have an older computer that often overheats after about 3 hours of continuous use, so trying to use it all day does not go well sometimes."

"I have an older computer, and ofter during online lecture sessions my screen would freeze. I would miss valuable information and have to watch it when it got posted as a video."

"My computer is old and keeps losing connection."

"My laptop is old--too old to update anything. Finding more and more instances where websites have stopped supporting my browser which I can longer update. My laptop also has missing keys and freezes."

Lastly, a few other concerns that students communicated were that they themselves were not tech savvy:

"I am tech-illiterate"

"I'm not tech savvy and my professors are not helpful with overall tech issues I have."

"I am not tech savvy and do not know how to work completely online."

Q10. How many software programs are you currently using to complete your coursework?

How many software programs are you currently using to complete your coursework?	Percentage
0-1	16.78%
2-3	51.51%
3-4	19.38%
4-5	7.05%
5+	5.27%
Total	100%

Q11. How do you feel about completing courses online?

32%

39%

29%
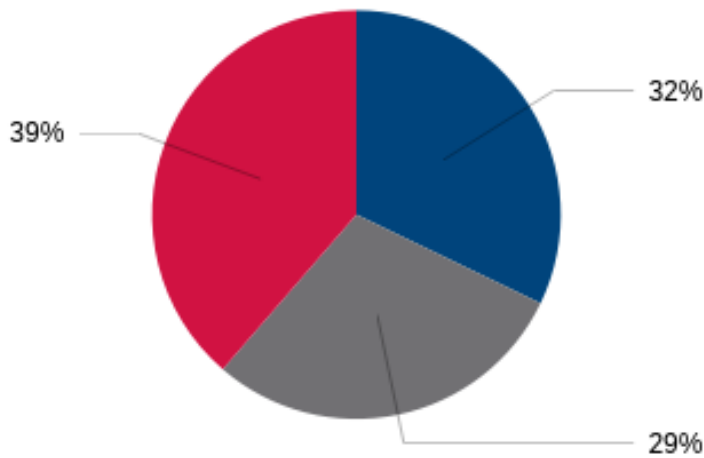
■ I am eager to use this new technology as a learning tool.

■ I am nervous about taking a course outside the traditional classroom environment.

■ I am not happy at all with this online learning environment.

If a respondent chose nervous or unhappy in the previous question, they were asked this follow-up question:

Q11a. In your own words, please explain why you are nervous or unhappy about completing courses online. Additionally, share your thoughts on how the experience can be improved. (OPEN-ENDED)

> *"Being forced online was hard for me to transition because I do not have a place at home for me to completely fall into the mindset of working on school work and as a result I could not find motivation for it. I was also greatly disadvantaged by the wildly different ways my professors decided to switch online, as well as irritated by their lack of computer skills. On one hand I had a class switch to zoom for meetings, another class had a weekly google test to fill out, and one teacher I haven't heard from since the lock down began. I feel like if it were more uniform I might have had an easier time trying to fall into a schedule."*

Respondents acknowledge the impact the covid-19 response has had on higher education and share that moving to an online learning environment has been difficult for them for many reasons.

> *"…this shift to online was an obvious necessity…I am unhappy with the online courses because I don't feel that an online "environment" is conducive to learning…The environment of a classroom, the energy of the people in it, the routine of attending regular class sessions, the relationships developed with professors and peers, and lively class-discussions comprise only a short list of the essential components of education that simply cannot be emulated in any setting other then the campus setting.*

Primarily, students know how best they learn and they have a strong preference for a traditional classroom setting that provides an opportunity for face-to-face discourse and rapid response to questions. The combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning in a physical classroom is missing for students.

> *"For most of my classes, it has been great. However, they are much more time consuming. I find that I learn more for some of my classes in person since my particular major is hands on."*

> *"I really enjoy in-person conversation. I purposefully choose professors that I find engaging and fun –it's a bummer not to be able to interact with them."*

> *"I waited many years to go back to school so I could experience the learning in person. It's impossible to replicate the interaction and organic nature of in class learning. I'm more comfortable communicating with my professors and classmates in person than online. It has been hugely disappointing to not be able to learn in person."*

> *"Personally I know I learn best in person with an instructor in a lecture style setting. I also know I am much better at time management when I am not at home so being forced to stay at home has been effecting my schoolwork."*

Finding the online learning environment foreign also highlighted for students their lack of tech-savviness leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and often causing students to spend more time on their coursework navigating unfamiliar territory. Overall, students lived experience is that online learning is harder. A lack of uniformity across faculty's choice of teaching platform was also overwhelming for students.

> *"Every teacher does it extremely different…Some teachers still don't even use the platform so it is difficult to know how I am doing in the class."*

> *"Having all professors use one single program may also be helpful, because signing in to different platforms for lectures, submitting homework, and to assist office hours is a bit hectic."*

Students were very transparent in acknowledging that they lack motivation, self-discipline, focus, and drive to continue their courses online. Respondents purposely chose traditional classroom courses as a way of providing accountability to the course and now that structure has been removed.

> *"I feel like it is harder to learn and to stay focus."*

> *"I feel that if I don't have a set schedule for where I have to be and when I wont get any work done. Not having a set schedule makes me procrastinate."*

> *"Routines are really hard. With in person classes you have a schedule and have to balance time and work. Without in person classes I have a hard time getting in a routine and focusing on school work."*

> *"it requires a self discipline time management skill set that I am still developing"*

Additionally, respondents shared the loss of connectivity they are having to their peers, faculty, staff, and the physical campus. The Auraria campus provided the readily available support services that students needed and provided a safe space to learn.

> *"Classroom experience creates a community and helps me be fully engaged to the learning material. I am also able to reach out to professors instantly when I am unsure about a lecture material."*

> *"I heavily rely on and utilize campus and their resources to be able to keep up my grades, study areas, printers, etc. Having to compete 18 credits on internet that drops, a full house, and an environment that does not promote what I need to work efficiently has been really hard to stay motivated or even care for school."*

> *"Online takes the connectivity out of the classroom, and am unable to seek guidance directly after a class, because waiting on emails isn't efficient."*

Many students communicated the lack of adaptability for certain courses that needed to be taught face-to-face and there was a clear distinction between courses that were prepared to be distance education courses versus those that only recently, given the circumstances, converted to online learning. Often, the inconsistent transition to the online learning environment highlighted for students the lack of knowledge faculty may have with technology and was also translated as a lack of effort on the part of faculty. Lack of effort was characterized by an absence of communication, an increase of busy work, and lack of support.

> *"Some classes aren't meant for online and some professors are incapable of using a computer…not a good mix"*

> *"Because learning online is harder, I am upset that the professors have not been any more lenient and in one class. have given us more work and has become harder with the situations."*

> *"Certain professors do not seem equipped to handle remote teaching."*

> *"its clear that a lot of the professors are not prepare to teach an online class therefore there is a big lack of communication between student and professor"*

"Performance and music are quite difficult to do online. Each teacher is handling things as best as they can but each teacher is having a completely different approach and it is quite hard to follow."

Overall, students prefer face-to-face instruction. A common sentiment repeated by respondents was "I'm not learning…".

"well…I don't think I am able to learn over the internet, simply."

"the actual educational experience is sub-par, I'm just getting a grade and a degree, not learning"

"I don't feel I'm obtaining the education that I'm paying for."

"I don't' feel like I'm learning anything."

"I don't actually feel like I'm learning…"

Q12. Please share the good strategies your professors are implementing to create a supportive online community. (OPEN-ENDED)

Communication

"Great open communication with up to date information"

"Constant email communication via school email and Blackboard. I know it hasn't been easy on them either transitioning to strictly online, but I feel my professors have implemented a pure open door of communication."

Flexibility

"Being flexible with deadlines"

"Being more flexible on assignment"

Discussion boards

"Discussion boards once a week to mimic in-class discussion"

"Discussion, videos of themselves"

Empathy

"A lot of my professors are emailing me personally and that makes me feel safe and important."

"Be there for students, be empathetic to what they are going through in life, listen. All the faculty I have known and had in my schoolin, bar 1, have been great."

Consistency

"Doing their best to keep things as normal as possible by holding online lectures/work spaces"

"A steady and consistent schedule."

Availability

"Available for phone calls and recorded lectures."

"Being available to talk and tutor. Giving feedback on homework."

Synchronous

"Classes at the normal time allowing students to ask questions in class instantly."
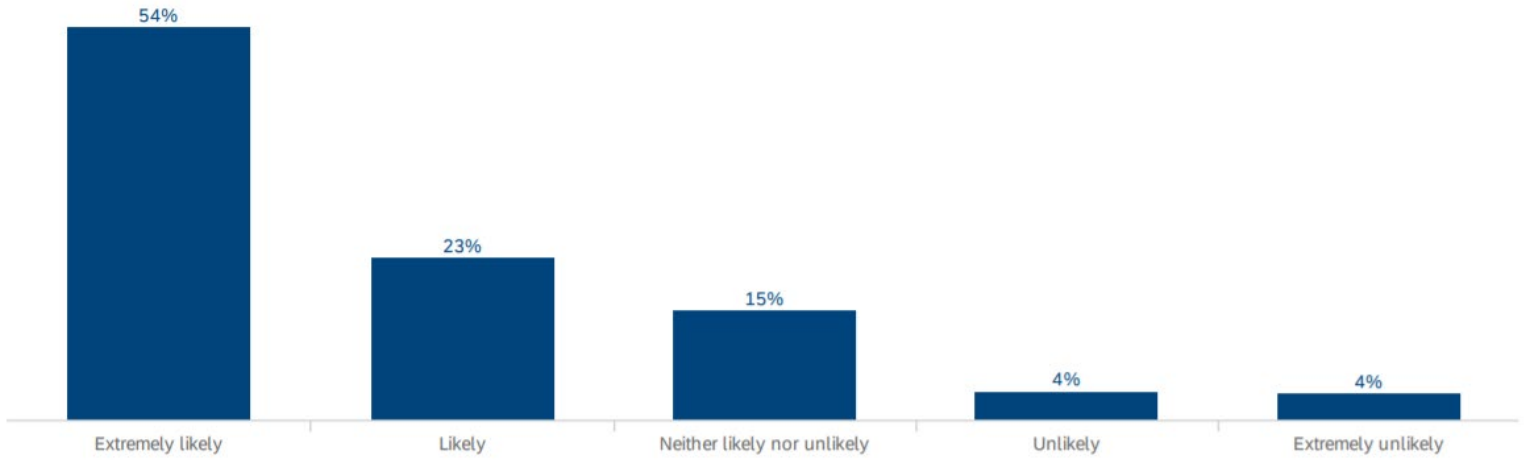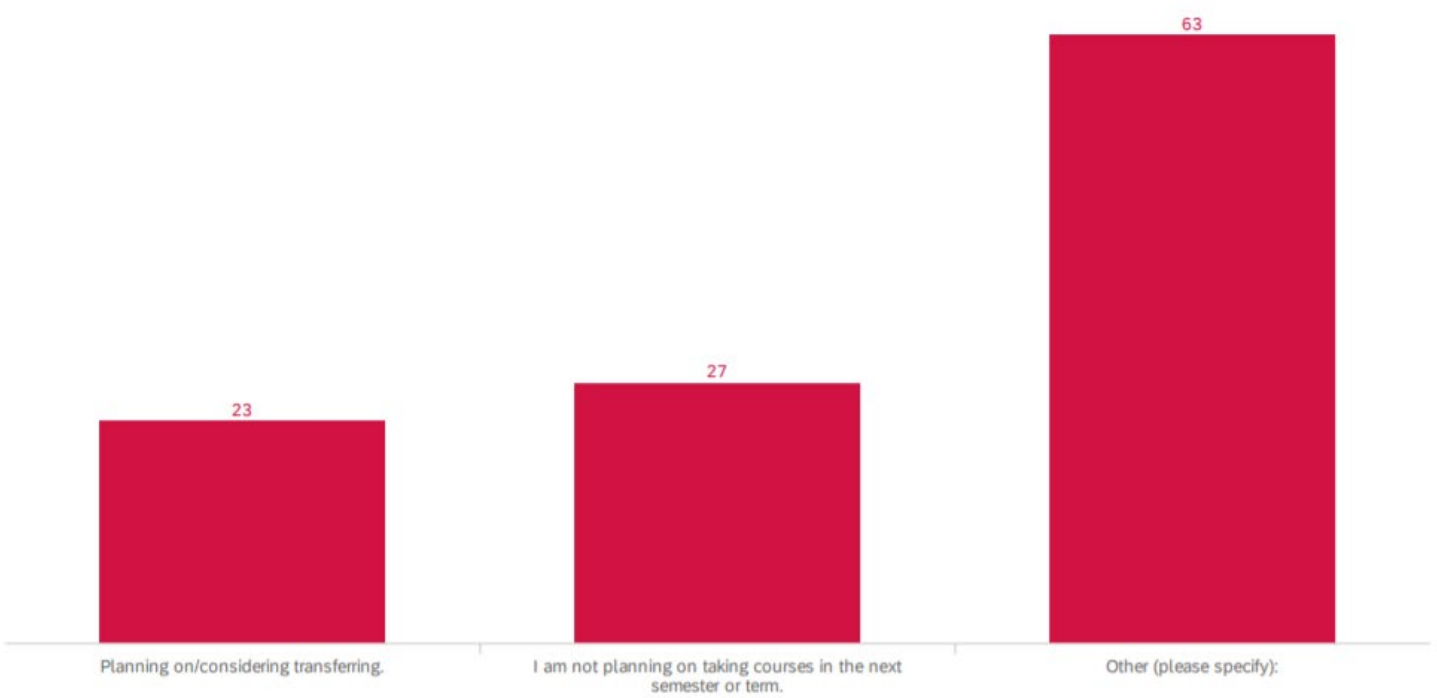
Section E: Intent to enroll

Q13. How likely are you to register for classes at MSU Denver for the Fall 2020 semester?

	54%	23%	15%	4%	4%
	Extremely likely	Likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely

If a respondent chose unlikely or extremely unlikely in the previous question they were asked this follow-up question:

Q13b. Please select the statement below that best describes why you are unlikely to register for classes at MSU Denver in the upcoming fall semester or term.

23	27	63
Planning on/considering transferring.	I am not planning on taking courses in the next semester or term.	Other (please specify):

63 open-ended responses were analyzed if a respondent selected "other".

Top 3 reasons for not enrolling:

1. **Dislike of online learning:**

"I want to continue I just don't want to continue in an online environment. I do not learn very well if I have to teach myself."

2. **Finances:**

"I lost my full time job and I have to focus on immediate income before I can even consider registering for school especially when I pay out of pocket.

3. **Safety**

"I'll wait to register when it is safe to return to campus."

Q14. Is there additional information that you would like to share that would better help us understand your general situation that you were not asked about above? (OPEN-ENDED)

612 open-ended responses are currently being analyzed.