Topical Module:
First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

This module includes a set of items only for first-year students and a set only for seniors, with questions adapted from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, respectively. The first-year items focus on academic perseverance, help-seeking behaviors, and institutional commitment, while the senior items explore post-graduation plans, links between the academic major and future plans, and confidence in skill development.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES

1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

   a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do
   b. Found additional information for course assignments when you didn’t understand the material
   c. Participated in course discussions, even when you didn’t feel like it
   d. Asked instructors for help when you struggled with course assignments
   e. Finished something you had started when you encountered challenges
   f. Stayed positive, even when you did poorly on a test or assignment

2. During the current school year, how difficult have the following been for you?

   a. Learning course material
   b. Managing your time
   c. Getting help with school work
   d. Interacting with faculty

3. During the current academic year, about how many times did you seek any assistance with coursework?

   - Never
   - 1 or 2 times
   - 3 or 4 times
   - 5 or 6 times
   - 7 or 8 times
   - 9 or more times

4. If you did seek help with coursework during the current academic year, which of the following was your primary source of help?

   - Not applicable—I did not seek help with coursework during the current academic year.
   - Friend(s) or other student(s)
   - Family member(s)
   - Faculty member(s)
   - Academic advisor(s)
   - Learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
   - Other persons or offices

5. How important is it to you that you graduate from this institution?

   a. Not important
   b. Not very important
   c. Somewhat important
   d. Very important
   e. Extremely important

6a. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?

   a. Yes
   b. No

   [only if “Yes”]

6b. Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)

   - To improve my career prospects
   - Due to unsatisfactory academic progress or performance
   - Financial reasons
   - To obtain a better quality education
   - Personal reasons (family, health, etc.)
   - Another reason, please specify:__________________________
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SENIOR TRANSITIONS

1a. After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?
   - Full-time employment
   - Part-time employment
   - Graduate or professional school
   - Military service
   - Service or volunteer activity (e.g., AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America)
   - Internship (paid or unpaid)
   - Travel or gap year
   - No plans at this time
   - Other, please specify: ____________________________

   [only if “Full-time employment” or “Part-time employment” are selected]

1b. Do you already have a job for after graduation?
   - No
   - Yes, I will start a new job
   - Yes, I will continue in my current job

2. To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?
   - Very much
   - Quite a bit
   - Some
   - Very little

3. Do you intend to work eventually in a field related to your major(s)?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

4. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker someday?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

5. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

6. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?

   a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information
   b. Creative thinking and problem solving
   c. Research skills
   d. Clear writing
   e. Persuasive speaking
   f. Technological skills
   g. Financial and business management skills
   h. Entrepreneurial skills
   i. Leadership skills
   j. Networking and relationship building

   Very much | Quite a bit | Some | Very little
   0         | 0          | 0    | 0          

7. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?

   a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming
   b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty
   c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem
   d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions

   Very much | Quite a bit | Some | Very little
   0         | 0          | 0    | 0          

8. Is there anything your institution could have done better to prepare you for your career or further education? Please describe. (5,000 character limit)