

IMSA Student Repopulation Survey

Summary of Findings

September 14-18, 2020

Executive Summary

In an effort to gather as much information and input as possible from all stakeholders, IMSA implemented a series of surveys regarding how to repopulate the IMSA community on campus. Thus, the purpose of the IMSA Student Repopulation Survey was to gather feedback from IMSA students on how they felt about various scenarios for the repopulation of the IMSA campus. In accordance with the May 20th Board of Trustees' decision, a return to campus would be possible when the entire State of Illinois meets the criteria for the "Restore Illinois" plan and there is treatment or a vaccine for COVID-19.

The IMSA Student Repopulation Survey was conducted from Monday, September 14, 2020 through Friday, September 18, 2020. There were a total of 508 responses to the survey. There were 651 students enrolled at IMSA during the survey period, which translates into a 78% response rate.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

- The large majority of students (74-88%) indicated that they would feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to campus with each of several requirements in place, including wearing masks, social distancing, and single room occupancy only, etc.
- Similarly, the large majority of students (77-84%) indicated that they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with each of the requirements in place.
- Although the ratings for the restrictions were lower than were those for the requirements, the majority of students (69-83%) indicated that that they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with each of several restrictions in place, including students not being permitted to leave campus, have external visitors, and eat in certain locations, etc.
- If all of the restrictions were in place, the large majority (85%) of students indicated they would be willing to return to and stay on campus. The length of how long students would be willing to stay ranged from one month (24%) to the entire semester (33%).
- Over nine out of ten students (94%) indicated they would be willing to get tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to campus.
- Similarly, 96% of students indicated that both students and employees should be tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to campus, while a minority indicated that neither students nor employees (2%) or employees only (2%) or students only (under 1%) should be tested.
- When students were asked what they saw as the greatest benefit for them to return to campus, the majority of students responded that social/emotional (44%) or academics (36%) was the greatest benefit.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

- Many students indicated that the most important consideration in repopulation was the health and safety of the IMSA community.
- Overall, a large number of students seem to agree with the direction of setting protocols.
- Many students mentioned that regular testing is key and agreed about wearing masks, monitoring the health of students, using hand sanitizer, cleaning, and even suggested having sanitation parties.
- Many students are interested in creating an IMSA bubble with everyone mandated to test negative before being allowed in.
- Numerous students surfaced the need to enforce compliance of the protocols and questioned how IMSA would go about this, recognizing that not all students may follow all of the restrictions.
- Many students commented in favor of being able to live with their roommate or quad and that they should be considered a household, no different than family.
- A smaller number of students' comments leaned negative with reference to the protocols as outlined, voicing that they are too restrictive.
- Many of these students voiced concerns about staff, including faculty, having exposure to the outside world and that staff, including faculty, would most likely be the source of an infection on campus.
- Several specifically commented about the boxed food, dietary restrictions not being met, and the inability to shop for these essentials.
- Many students indicated they have concerns about living without the social, emotional and academic support of their peers.
- Students offered up many suggestions with regard to how IMSA should repopulate campus, including the following: by geography, class, tier, or a mix to make repopulation equitable.

Next Steps

The survey findings are being utilized to inform the creation of IMSA's repopulation plan.

Demographic Information of Respondents

Students were asked to provide demographic information. (Please refer to the figures at the end of the document for complete breakdown of the demographic information.) Around 31% of the students indicated that they were a senior, 32% responded that they were a junior, and 38% indicated that they were a sophomore.

Students were asked to indicate in which of the 11 Restore Illinois regions their primary household is located. There were responses from all 11 regions, and the largest number of responses indicated their IMSA student's primary household was in the following regions: Region 8 West Suburban (25%), Region 2 North Central (20%), and Region 10 Suburban Cook (19%).

Slightly over half of the students responded that they were female (54%). When asked to provide their race/ethnicity, students answered as follows: 38% Asian, 34% White, 11% Hispanic, 9% Two or More Races, 8% Black, and under 1% American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Finally, just over a fifth (21%) of students indicated that they or a member of their household was at higher risk of complications from COVID-19.

Quantitative Findings

Students were asked to read a series of statements representing various requirements that will or may be mandatory when IMSA students return to campus. The requirements listed included the following: 1) Masks must be worn at all times (unless the student is in their room with their door closed or they are eating/drinking); 2) Social distancing will be strictly enforced; 3) Single room occupancy for all residence hall rooms; 4) It **may** be necessary for students to take some or all classes from their residence hall room; and 5) It **may** be necessary for certain student support services (advising, tutoring, etc.) to remain remote while students are on campus. For each requirement, students were asked rate the following: 1) how comfortable they would feel about returning to campus and 2) how likely they would be to return to campus.

- An overwhelming majority of students (74-88%) indicated that they would feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to campus with each of the requirements in place.
 - The requirement that received the highest rating was if certain student support services (advising, tutoring, etc.) remained remote – 88% of students indicated they would feel comfortable or very comfortable with that requirement in place.
 - The requirement that received the lowest rating was single room occupancy for all residence hall rooms – 74% of students indicated they would feel comfortable or very comfortable with that requirement in place.
- Similar to the comfort ratings, the large majority of students (77-84%) indicated that they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with each of the requirements in place.
 - The requirement that received the highest rating was masks must be worn at all times – 84% of students indicated they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with that requirement in place.

- Once again, the requirement that received the lowest rating was single room occupancy for all residence hall rooms – 77% of students indicated they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with that requirement in place.

Students were also asked to read a series of scenarios statements representing various restrictions that could be in place when IMSA students return to campus. The restrictions included that students MAY not be permitted to: 1) Leave campus, including visits home and non-essential medical/dental visits, until an established date (e.g., extended weekend); 2) Have external visitors on campus, with the exception of urgent matters; 3) Eat in usual locations or obtain food "buffet style" (e.g., food may be boxed and available for consumption within each student's residence hall room or other designated area); 4) Participate in local entertainment (e.g., walking trips, recreational shuttle trips, external sporting events); 5) Take non-essential shopping trips (e.g., groceries, personal care supplies); and 6) Participate in campus-sponsored activities involving other schools. For each restriction, students were asked rate how likely they would be to return to campus.

- Although the ratings for the restrictions were lower than were those for the above requirements, the majority of students (69-83%) indicated that that they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with each of the restrictions in place.
 - The restriction that received the highest rating was students not being permitted to have external visitors on campus, with the exception of urgent matters single room occupancy for all residence halls – 83% of students indicated they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with that restriction in place.
 - The requirement that received the lowest rating was students not being permitted to leave campus, including visits home and non-essential medical/dental visits, until an established date (e.g., extended weekend) – 69% of students indicated they would be likely or very likely to return to campus with that restriction in place.
 - The majority of students (71%) responded that be likely or very likely to return to campus if all of the restrictions were in place.
 - If all of the restrictions were in place, the large majority (85%) of students indicated they would be willing to return to and stay on campus. The length of how long students would be willing to stay ranged from one month (24%) to the entire semester (33%).

Students were overwhelmingly be willing to get a COVID-19 test and in favor of COVID-19 testing for all IMSA students and employees prior to a return to campus.

- Over nine out of ten students (94%) indicated they would be willing to get tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to campus.
- Similarly, 96% of students indicated that both students and employees should be tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to campus, while a minority indicated that neither students nor employees (2%) or employees only (2%) or students only (under 1%) should be tested.

When students were asked what they saw as the greatest benefit for them to return to campus, the majority of students responded that social/emotional or academics was the greatest benefit.

- Students endorsed the following factors as the greatest benefit: social/emotional (44%), academics (36%), college preparedness (4%), facility resources (3%), and other (13%).

Qualitative Findings

In addition to the quantitative survey questions, students were asked to respond to the following open-ended question: What factors/concerns do you think are the most important for IMSA to consider in the repopulation plan? Below are the themes from students' open-ended comments.

Safety First

Many students indicated that the most important consideration in repopulation was the health and safety of the IMSA community. Their comments state that it is simply too risky to return to campus. Several mentioned college campuses that have opened only to have students contract COVID-19. Many said they are not comfortable returning to campus; don't make us come back; don't let us come back until it is 100% safe to do so! One student clearly stated it this way: "How're you going to ensure that a campus of rowdy, cooped-up teens with no regard for potential consequences will adhere to guidelines? Don't say we're 'too smart for this.' No one is; teens are dumb."

A small number of students commented about vaccines, mostly along the vein of everyone should be vaccinated when and if a vaccine is produced. According to these students, IMSA should not return to campus until that time.

- Additional Comments Regarding Safety
 - "I think health should be the most important factor that should be considered. Currently, the number of cases in Illinois is significantly high and it is still not safe enough to go back to campus."
 - "I'm generally a huge fan of student participation in the administration of the school. Not in this circumstance. Stay firm on this; don't let anyone back unless it's 100% safe to do so. Don't trust us."
 - "Consider the daily new cases and deaths for COVID-19 in Illinois and nationwide. See the overall trends (increasing, decreasing case rate)."
 - "There are people who have underlying illnesses or their family members may have those illnesses. I don't think I can take such a big risk considering how bad the US is dealing with the virus."

Protocols – Positive-Leaning

More than half of student comments were related to the protocols that were outlined in the survey. Overall, a large number of students seem to agree with the direction of setting protocols. Many students mentioned that regular testing is key and about wearing masks, monitoring the health of students, using hand sanitizer, cleaning, and even suggested having sanitation parties.

Many students are interested in creating an IMSA bubble with everyone mandated to test negative before being allowed in. One student referenced that UIUC is using spit tube testing and requires students get tested twice a week and must be COVID-19 negative to enter the university building, providing students with freedom.

Many students provided ideas and/or support for how to work out logistics of shopping for food and essentials, quarantining sick students quickly to contain the virus.

- Comments Regarding Protocols
 - “Also going to the store could be monitored by the RC, such as we give them the list and money and they go for us. Then we can have sanitation parties.”
 - “Many colleges (Vanderbilt) have brought their students back by having a lot of strict guidelines and limitations which have been successful (except schools with poor planning). So, could IMSA do this? ”
 - “If we stay on campus for 6+ weeks, students should be allowed 1 grocery trip w/ covid test, or 4 students with dietary/allergy restrictions (or rc’s get food 4 wing paid by students & get covid test)”
 - “Effective testing methods are essential. If a bubble was created within the IMSA community and people did not leave, we can get to a point where nobody has COVID-19 within IMSA and therefore no risk.”

Numerous students surfaced the need to enforce compliance of the protocols and questioned how IMSA would go about this, recognizing that not all students may follow all of the restrictions.

- Comments Regarding Enforcement of Protocols
 - "A comprehensive manual of what to do in case of if a student gets covid and how to strictly enforce the restrictions stated above and strict punishment to student/faculty who doesn't follow them"
 - "Consider what happens when students don't follow mask or social distancing rules."
 - "What restrictions is IMSA going to put in place in order to stop contact and how strictly are those restrictions going to be? Also how are social spaces going to work, ex u bench and IMSA."

About Roommates

Many students commented in favor of being able to live with their roommate or quad and that they should be considered a household, no different than family. A number of students cited the CDC guidelines as evidence that they should be able to live with a roommate. One student stated, "I believe that on a residential campus two roommates are considered household and can return as per CDC recommendations."

- Additional Comments Regarding Roommates
 - “Under the tight restrictions as outlined, one asked to please justify the 1 person to a room policy.”
 - “I feel as though returning with our roommates and living together (considered as a household) would be a good idea.”
 - “I would urge administration to consider allowing roommates to stay together on campus, even if we can't fully have the social aspect of IMSA.”

- “How important it is for students to have roommates. I think roommates should be considered a household which follows the CDCs guidelines.”

Protocols – Negative-Leaning

A smaller number of students’ comments leaned negative with reference to the protocols as outlined, voicing that they are too restrictive. One student sums it up as follows, and many students voiced similar sentiments: “1. Even in the case that material of a course it slashed in half, it still feels 10x heavier than it would be on campus; 2. Social distancing is unrealistic (friends haven’t seen each other in months); and 3. I want to go back, but with all of the restrictions in place, it seems less and less worth the sacrifice.”

Many of these students voiced concerns about staff, including faculty, having exposure to the outside world and that staff, including faculty, would most likely be the source of an infection on campus. One student stated, “If all students were ‘trapped’ at IMSA, I would presume teachers would be allowed to come and go freely. I think that they need to take into account that a teacher may bring back the virus.”

Several specifically commented about the boxed food, dietary restrictions not being met, and the inability to shop for these essentials. According to one student, “If we can’t go to the store and you have to box up before we get it, then what does a student do if they’re still hungry? They can’t exactly go to Sodexo or go to the store to buy food.”

- Additional Negative-Leaning Comments Regarding Protocols
 - “IMSA must consider the safety guidelines, but also how on-campus with so many privileges taken away will affect the students. I would love to be on campus, but with the guidelines, it is hard.”
 - “In theory it seems like a good idea, but in execution I see it being rather pointless. Basically asking us to pack all of our stuff and leave home to do exactly what we are already doing at home.”
 - “Look, I live 6 hours from IMSA if I get to stay home instead of going to campus I would undoubtedly stay home. I’d rather live with my family and struggle slightly harder with school then stay at IMSA.”
 - “Boxed food at IMSA has been unsatisfactory for vegetarians in the past.”
 - “Boxed food will create a lot more waste then buffet-style food.”
 - “I eat a very special diet so I can stay at IMSA but I will need to receive deliveries of frozen meals from home weekly. Chef had a few prepared meals for me and I used those to supplement only.”

Students’ Social and Emotional Well-Being

Many students commented about the social, mental, emotional, as well as academic well-being. Overall, their comments surface the concerns they have about living without the social, emotional and academic support of their peers. One student stated, “I am very eager to live at IMSA as at home it is much harder for me to learn and it is hard emotionally as I spend most my time with academics. My mental health would be much better if I were at IMSA.”

- Additional Comments Regarding Students’ Social and Emotional Well-Being
 - “You should consider the mental well-being of the students over anything else. Many of us have been away from the only place we feel comfortable and accepted for months. We are emotionally exhausted.”

- "I know many students are struggling currently because they cannot get the help they need from teachers or other students for assignments. Mental health and motivation will increase on campus."

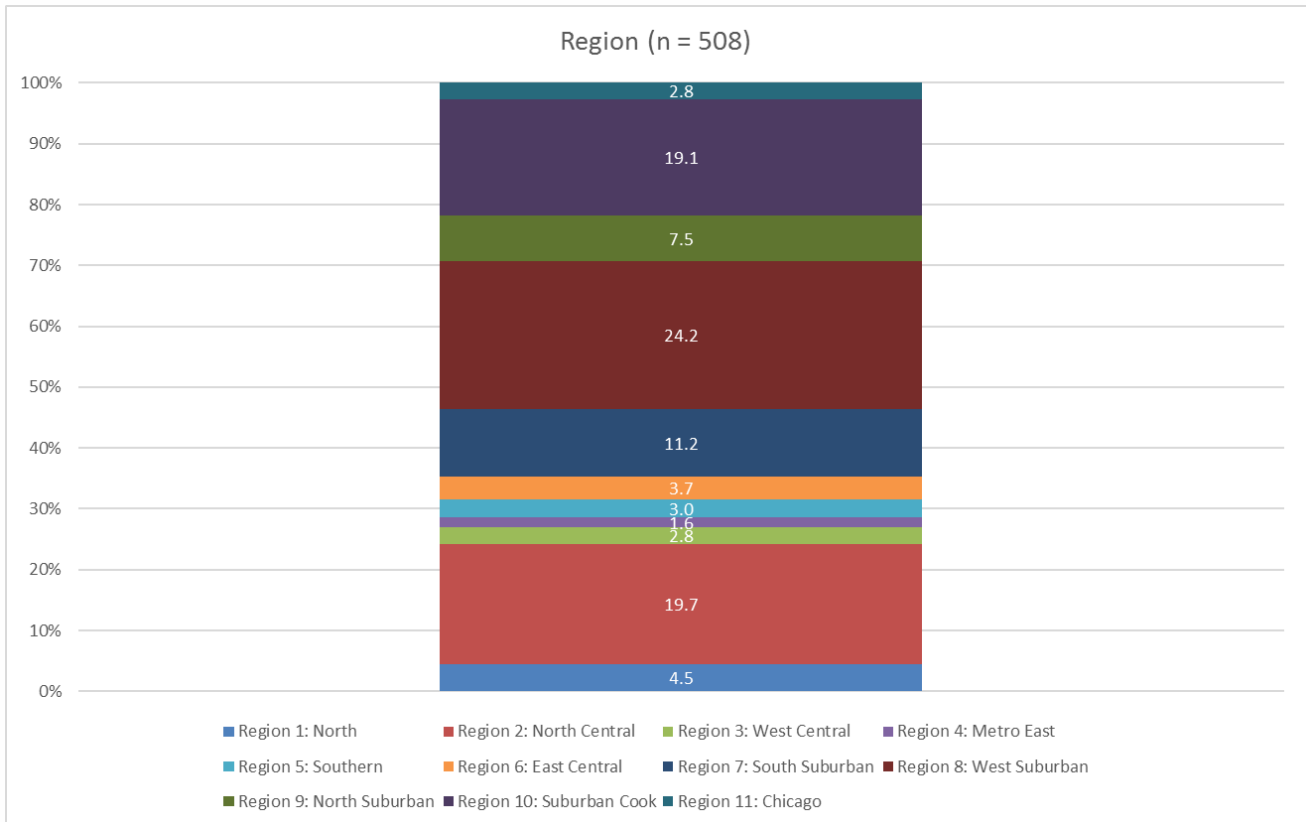
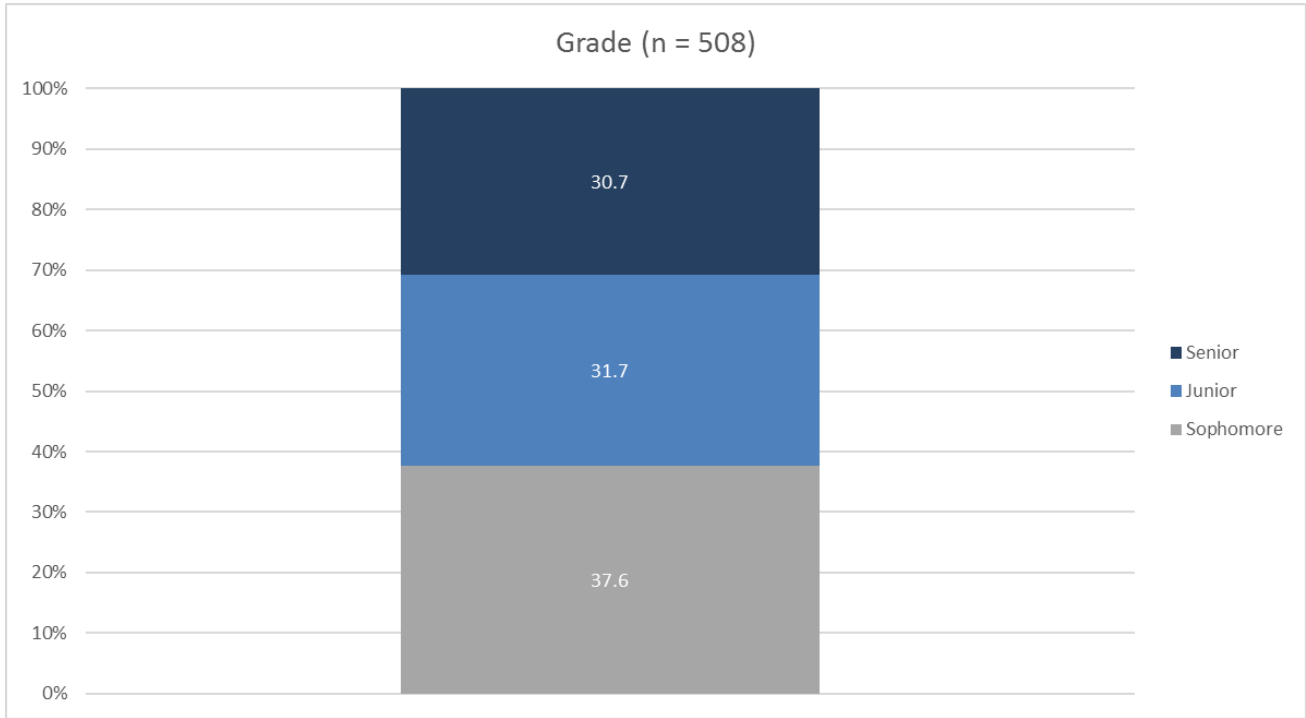
Repopulation Order/Method

Students offered up many suggestions with regard to how IMSA should repopulate campus, including the following: by geography, class, tier, or a mix to make repopulation equitable.

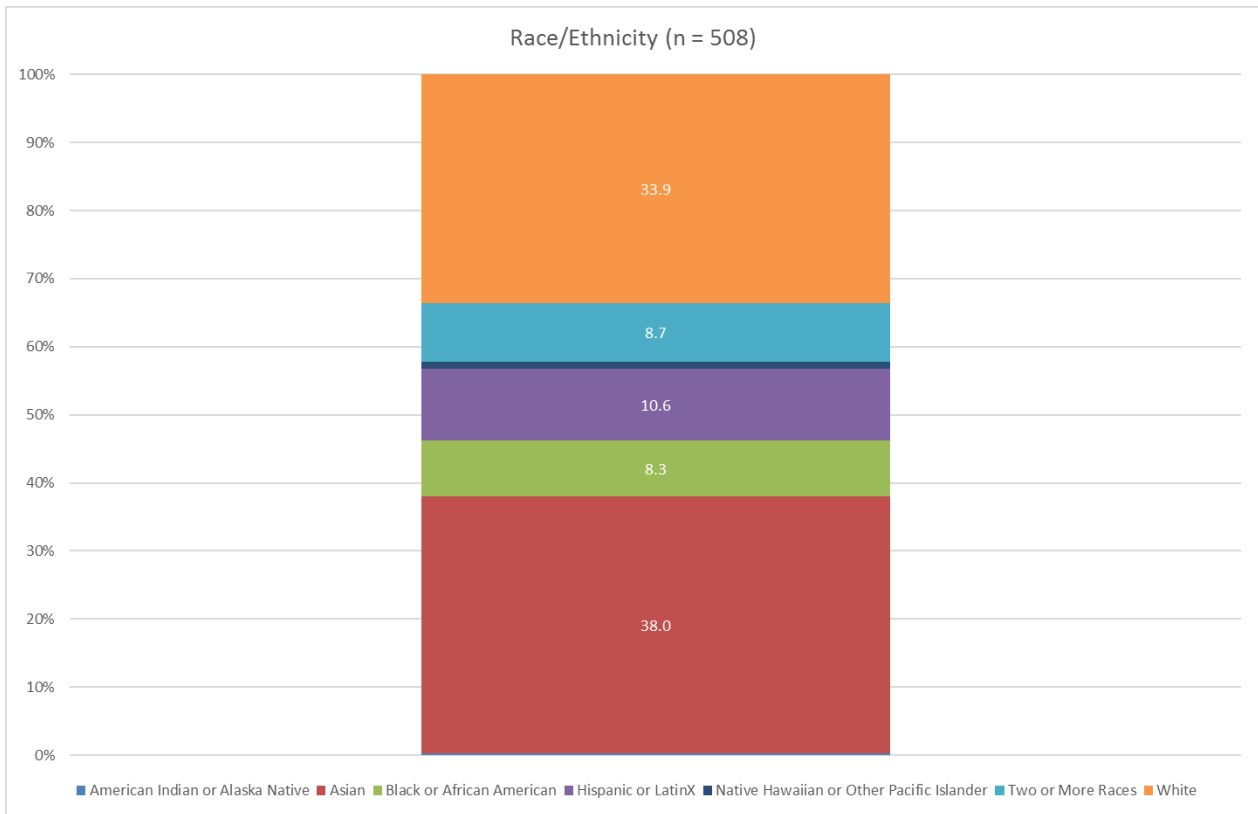
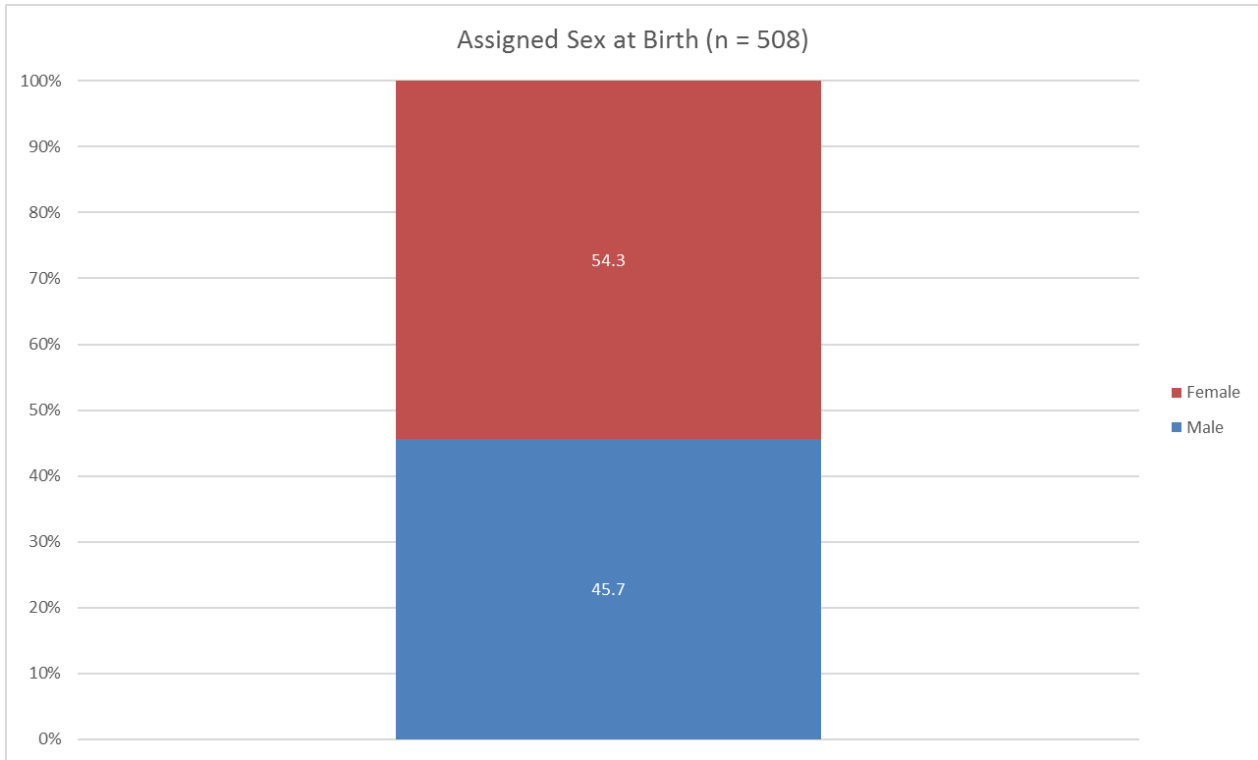
- Comments Regarding Repopulation Order/Method
 - By Class
 - "Class of 21 being on campus during the last part of the semester because of all of the senior events. Student leaders being on campus while sophomores are on campus."
 - "I think repopulating by grade level would keep numbers small and allow seniors time on campus with friends and the IMSA experience before graduation."
 - "Definitely making it equitable to some degree. For example, if you are limiting the amount of people who come back, it should be seniors only for example."
 - "I think seniors should be given priority to move back because it's their last year. Sophomores should be the last to move in because they can't thrive at campus without the support of upperclassmen"
 - "Instead of repopulating by roommates (which would hinder social bonds between friends), could we repopulate by grade levels? (ex. sophs go 1 month, juniors go, then seniors stay for graduation?)"
 - "Sophomores should get to socialize with their class more. I think that sophomores should return first. Seniors should only return for prom and graduation."
 - By Distance from School
 - "Allowing students who live 2+ hrs from campus to live there. Students who live close to IMSA can commute daily."
 - "I would say that it is incredibly important that people who live at a greater distance to IMSA and who are in higher classes (seniors coming first), should be given priority in repopulation."
 - By Tier
 - "I don't have Internet access and family resources, tier 1 and 2 students should go back first/have higher priority. Have roommates go back too. Lots of people look forward to living with their roommates."
 - By Sibling Students
 - "For students with siblings attending, to increase students able to live on campus at one given time, siblings should be placed in a room together."
 - Online Learning and Equity Concerns
 - "I don't believe it is equitable to have half of the campus return while the other half does not return. Since there are equity issues with e-learning, some students may not be able to benefit."
 - "There are many students struggling with online learning the decision of which students get to return to campus should be extensive."

Data Points of Interest

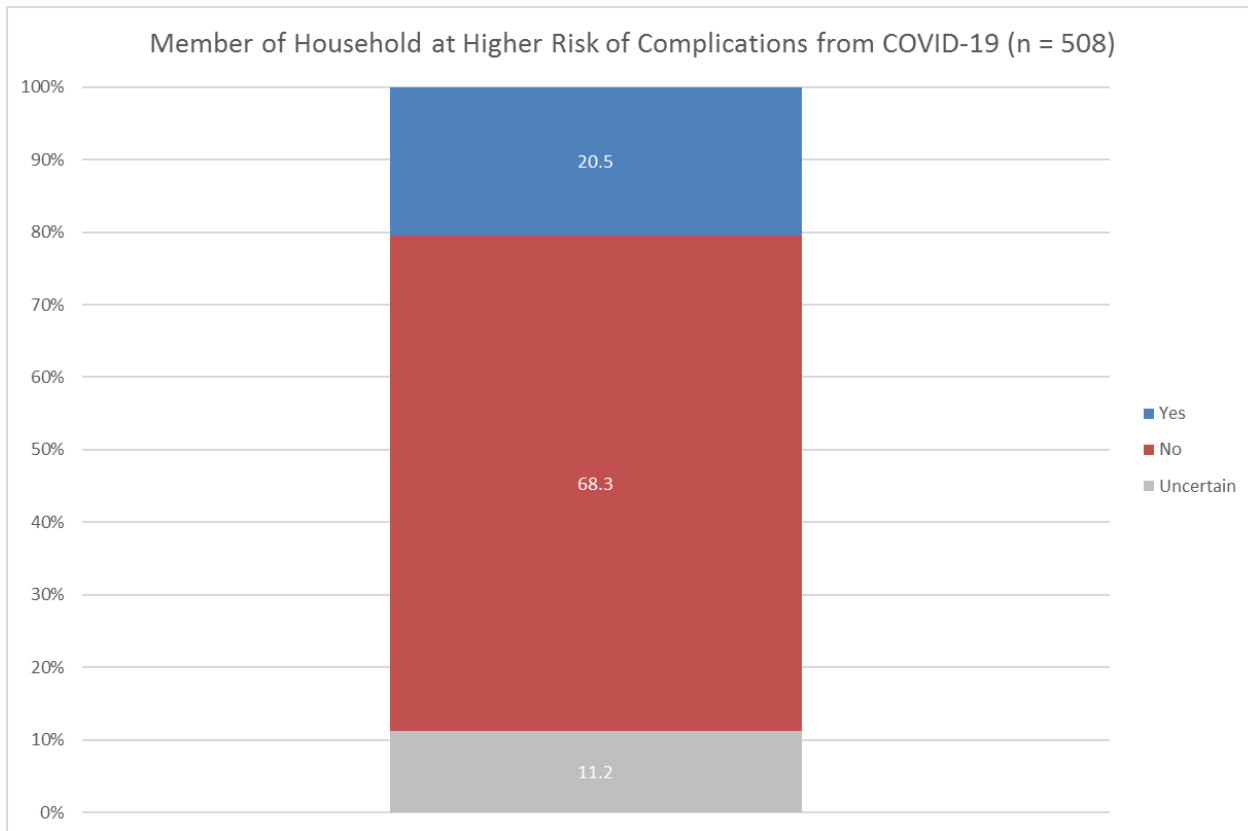
Demographic Information of Respondents



Demographic Information of Respondents (continued)

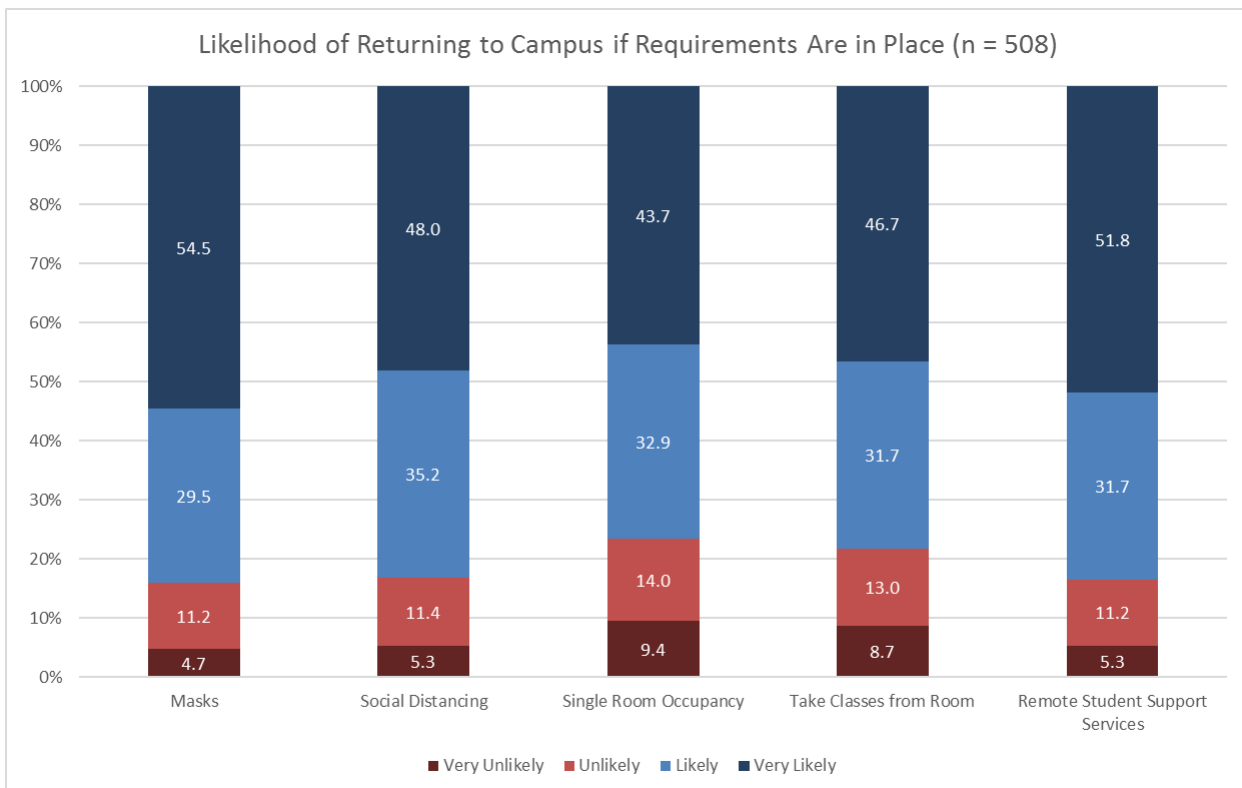
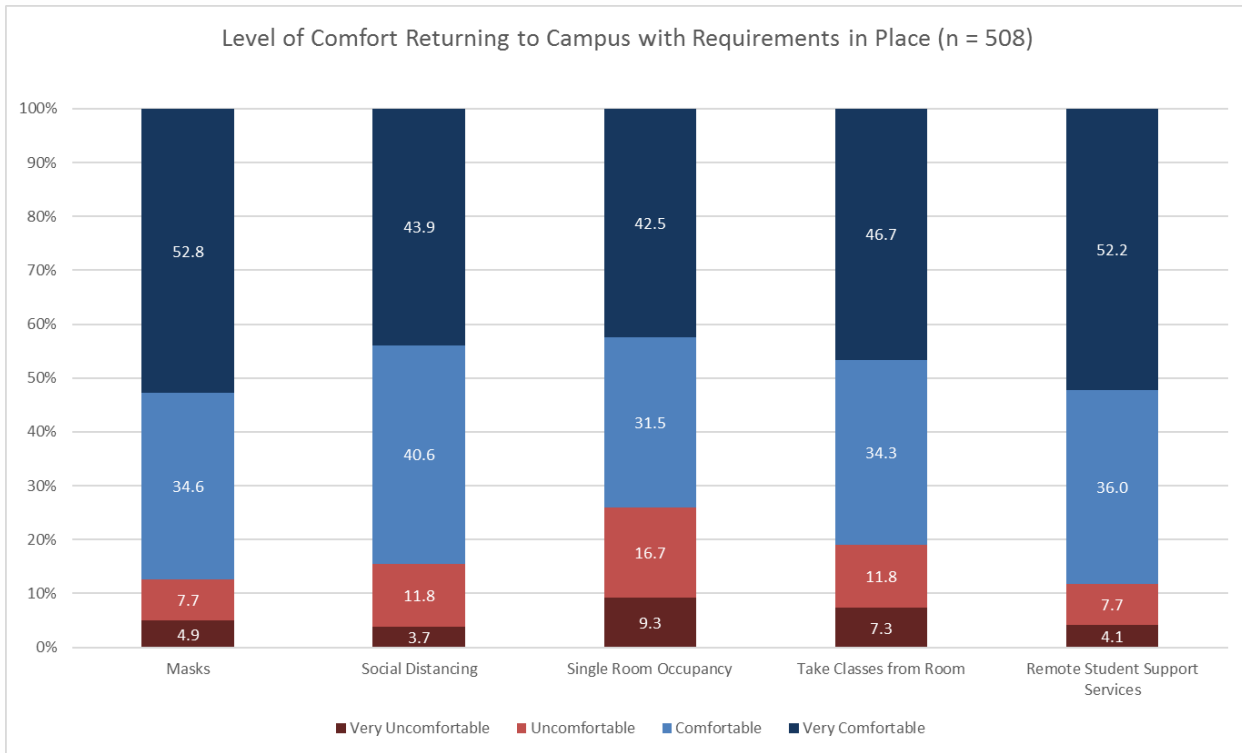


Demographic Information of Respondents (continued)



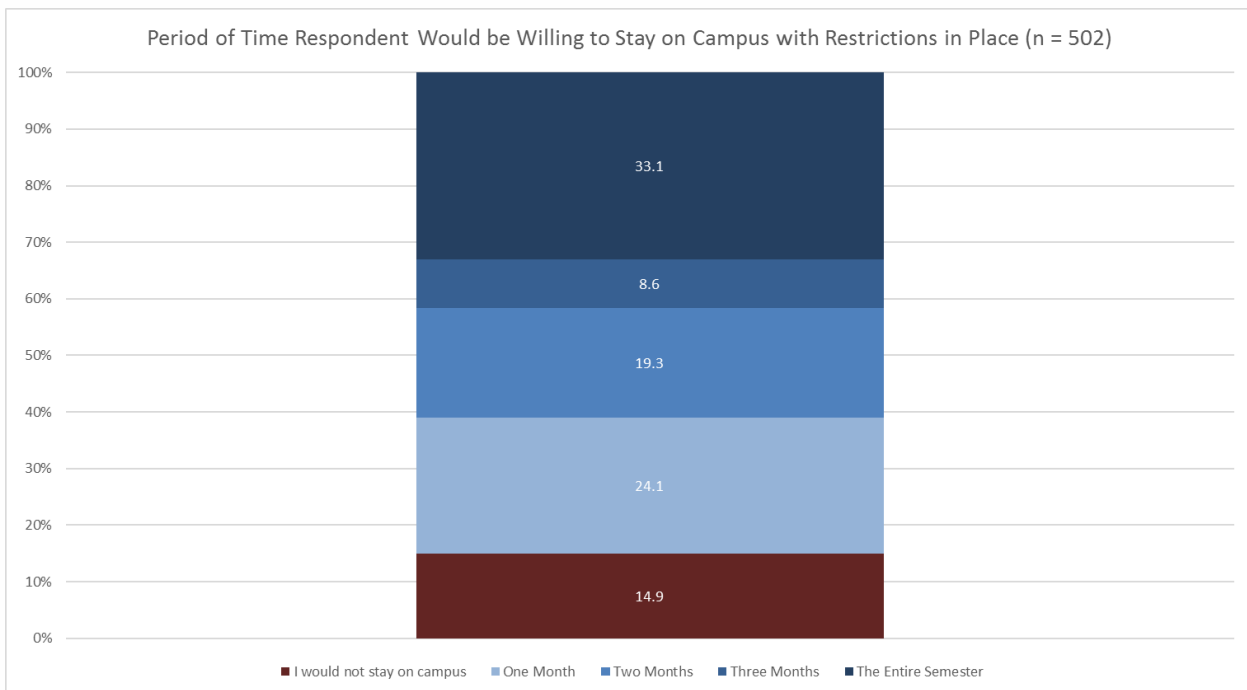
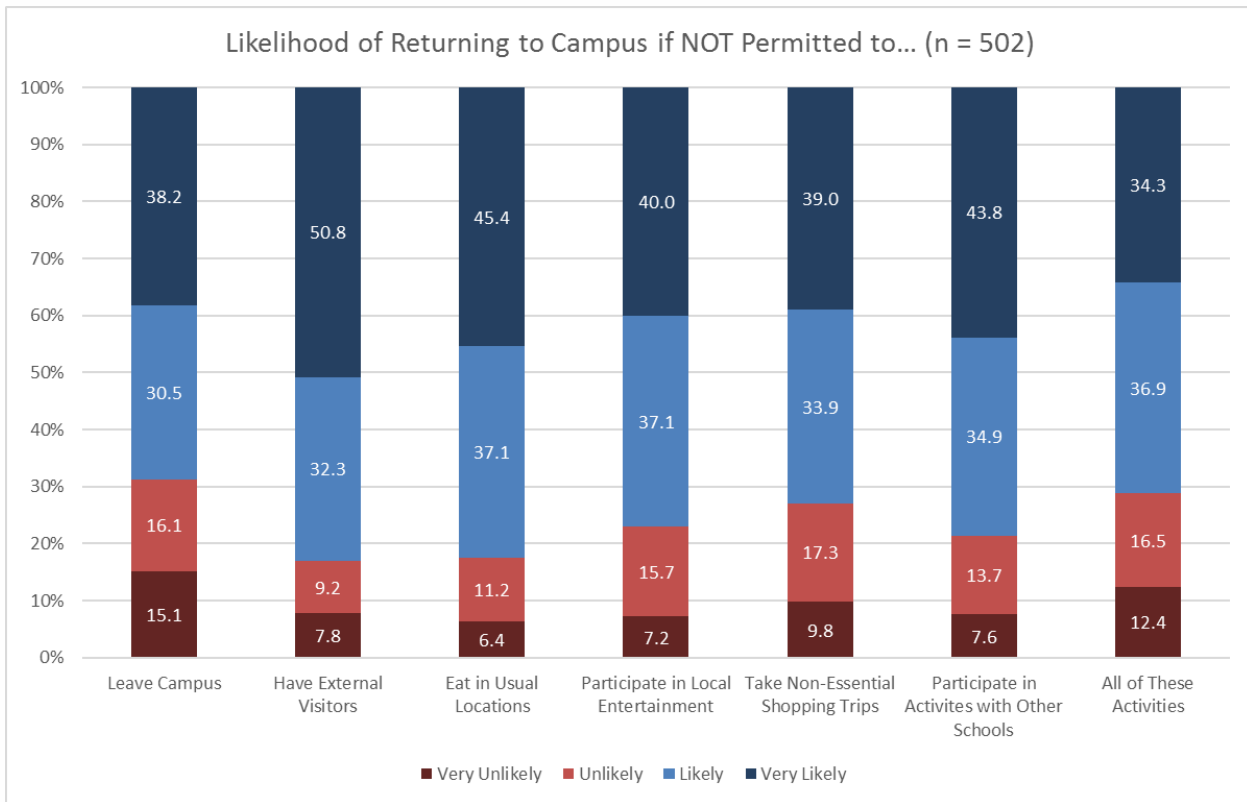
Data Points of Interest

Level of Comfort and Likelihood of Student's Return to Campus with Requirements in Place



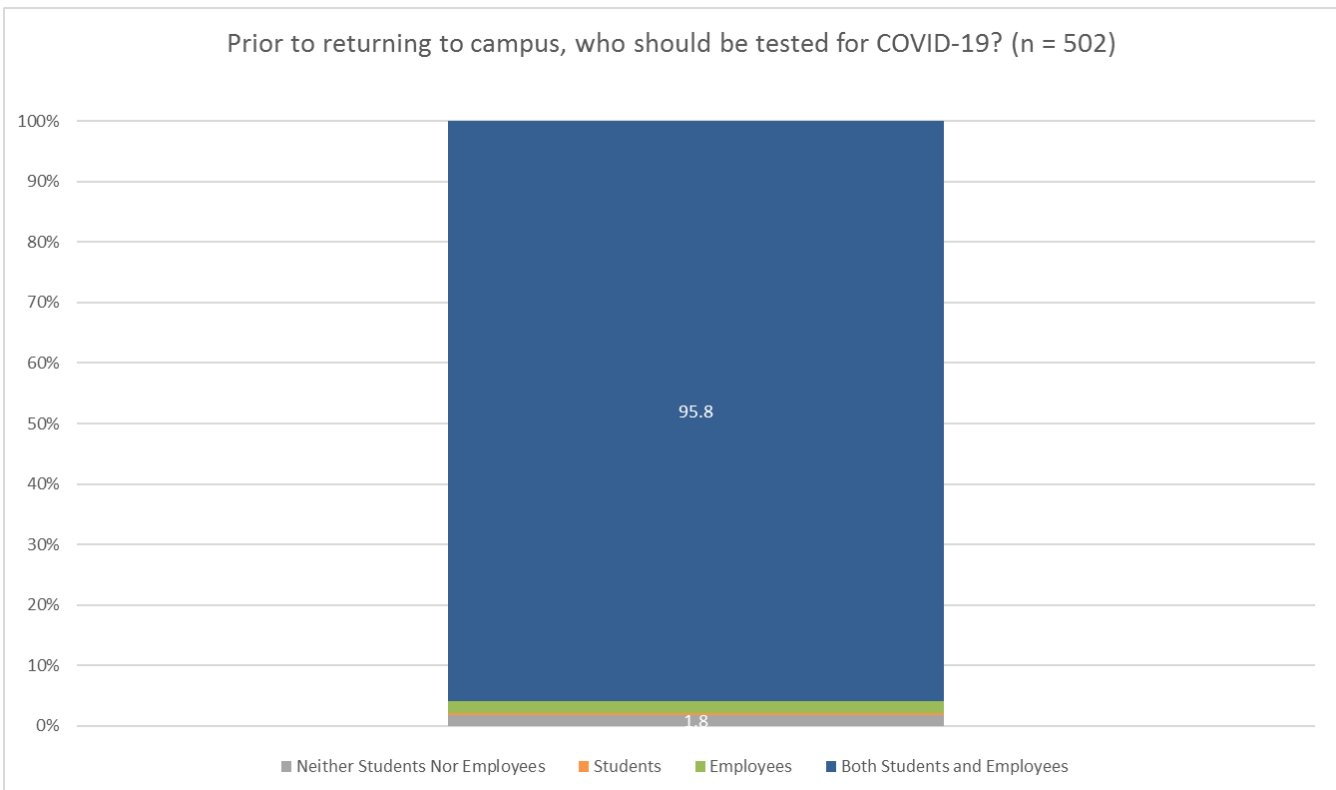
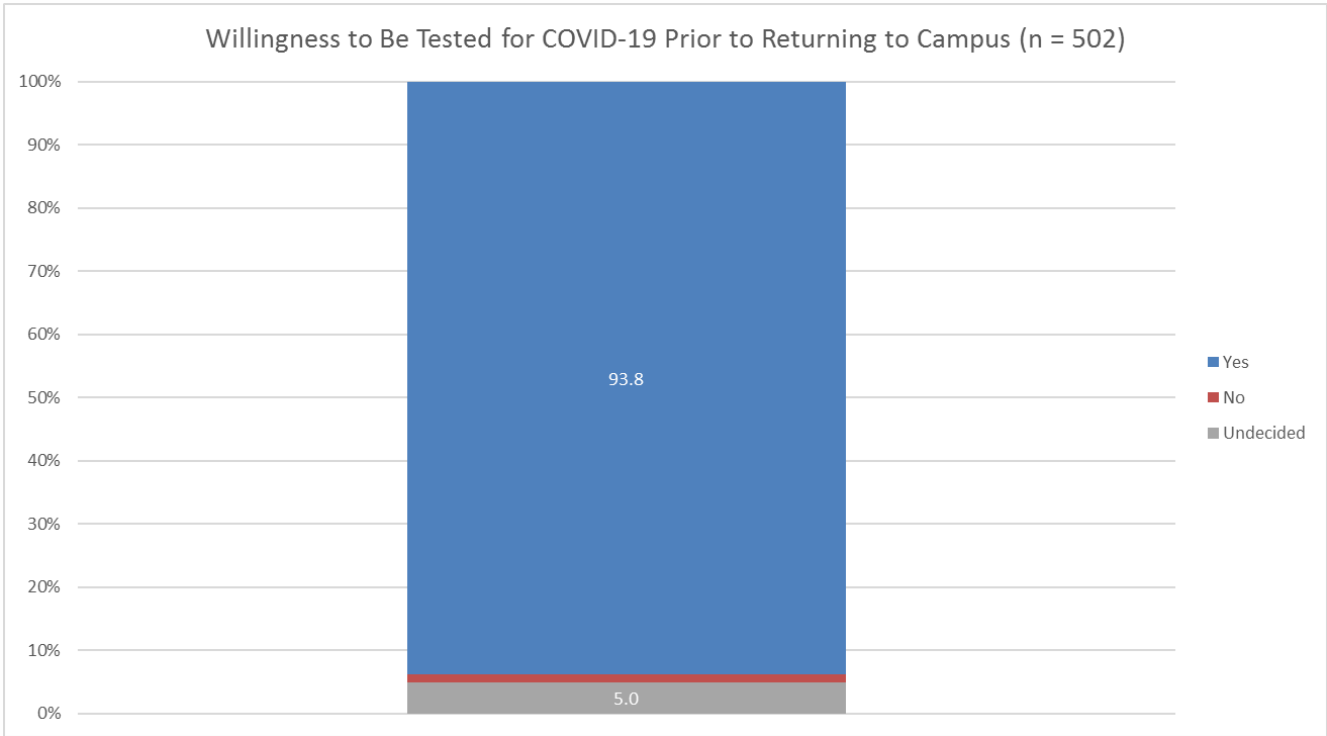
Data Points of Interest

Likelihood of Returning to Campus and Time Willing to Stay on Campus with Restrictions in Place



Data Points of Interest

Student Feedback on COVID-19 Testing Prior to Returning to Campus



Data Points of Interest

Greatest Benefit for Student to Return to Campus

