

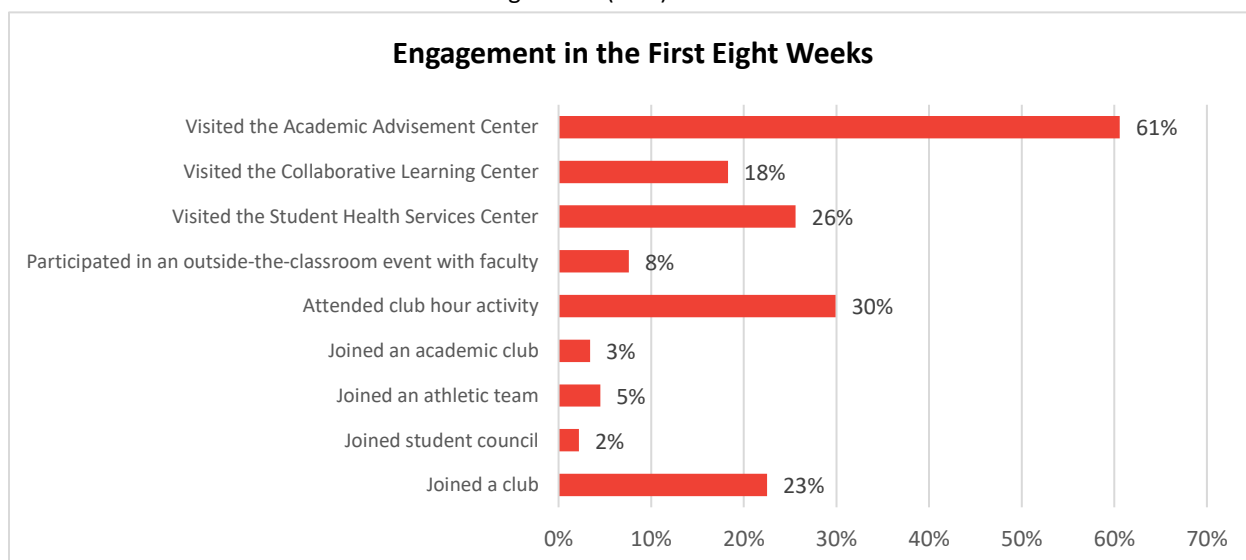
**Results of the First-time Freshmen Engagement Survey**

This month’s research brief highlights results of the new First Semester Freshmen Engagement Survey, administered to York College freshmen in order to measure their level of involvement, as well as their likelihood to stay with York College until their graduation. Out of 1,122 freshmen, 649 students answered at least some of the survey questions, resulting in a response rate of almost 58 percent. Items from this survey will be used as Key Performance Indicators, for purposes of monitoring progress on the College’s strategic plan.

**Levels of Engagement**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they have taken part in various extracurricular activities, including clubs, athletics, student council, and other campus activities.

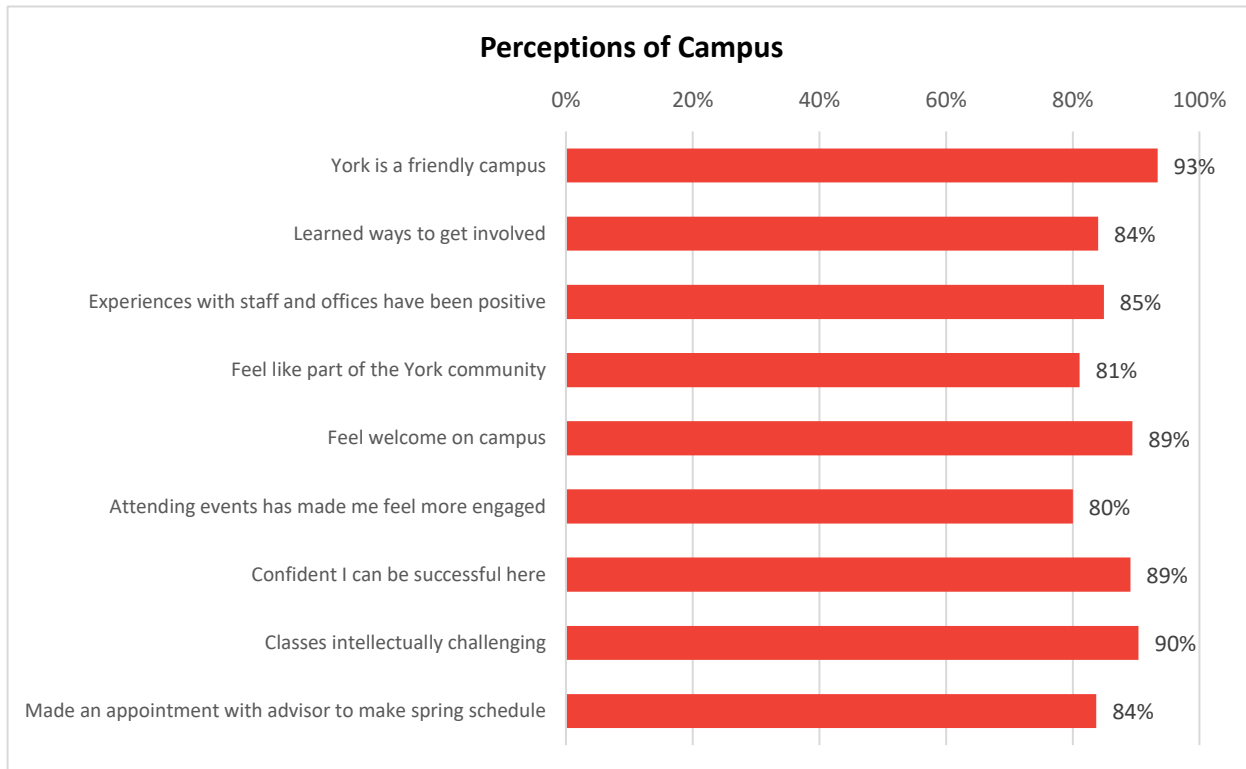
- Twenty-three percent of respondents joined a club of any kind, as opposed to 78 percent of respondents who did not join any club. Numbers for academic clubs were much lower, with only 3 percent of respondents joining an academic club. Athletic teams and student council saw similarly low numbers, with less than 5 percent of respondents joining.
- Eight percent of respondents participated in an outside-the-classroom event with a faculty member, while 38 percent of respondents visited a faculty member during office hours.
- Since the start of the semester, almost 84 percent of respondents made new friends and three percent have found a job on campus.
- The majority of respondents visited the Academic Advisement Center, with 61 percent of respondents claiming to have done so. Fewer respondents claimed to visit the Student Health Services Center (26%), and fewer still claimed to visit the Collaborative Learning Center (18%).



## Perceptions of York's Campus

Respondents were asked to gauge their levels of agreement with a number of statements related to York's campus.

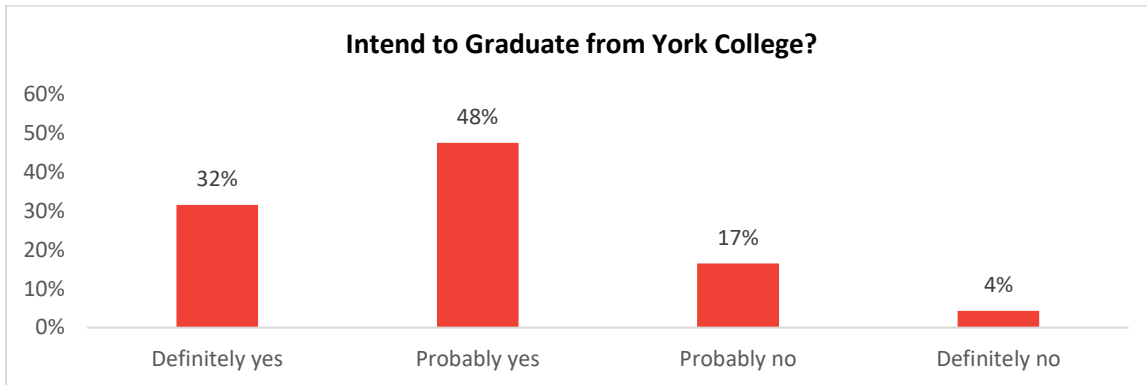
- The vast majority of respondents believe that York is a friendly campus, with 93 percent strongly agreeing/agreeing with that statement, while 89 percent feel welcome on campus. However, fewer (81%) respondents say that they feel like a part of the York community.
- Eighty percent also strongly agree/agree that attending a campus event made them feel more engaged, with 16 percent strongly agreeing.
- Eighty-four percent of respondents say that they have learned about ways to get involved on campus. The most common way respondents obtained information from the College was through email, with 67 percent of respondents saying that they obtained information through that medium. The next most common was word of mouth (40%), followed by the college website (34%), the Cardinal app (22%), flyers around campus (17%), social media (10%), and plasma screens (4%).
- Ninety percent of respondents strongly agree/agree that their classes are intellectually stimulating, while 89 percent believe that they can be successful at York. However, fewer respondents (84%) have made appointments with their advisors to make their spring schedule.
- Eighty-five percent of respondents rated experiences with staff and offices at York positively.



## Future Plans

- Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated some level of agreement that they definitely plan to return to York for the spring semester.

- Asked if they intend to graduate from York, 79 percent of respondents intend to do so (either definitely or probably). Interestingly, 32 “definitely” intend to graduate from York; coincidentally, York’s current six-year graduation rate is 30.2 percent (2012 cohort).



### Conclusions

These findings suggest that, while freshmen students may not be as engaged as they could be, clubs hour activities and clubs appear to be the most popular. The vast majority of students feel that York is a friendly campus, they feel welcome, and have positive experiences with staff and offices, although slightly fewer feel like part of the York community. While the vast majority find their classes intellectually satisfying and are confident they can be successful at York, some students have already decided they will leave York. Seven percent of respondents plan to leave after the first semester and almost 21 percent do not intend to graduate from York.

### Next Steps and Future Assessment Initiatives

- Compare the one-semester retention rate (fall 2019 to spring 2020) with results from this survey; i.e., compare the actual one-semester retention rate with the 93 percent identified in this survey.
- Administer this survey on an annual basis, monitoring trends over time.
- Consider asking students in spring 2020 if they plan to return in fall 2020 (one-year retention has been declining over time). Attempt to quantify students’ intentions before they leave at the end of the spring semester and identify a targeted strategy for outreach.
- The Strategic Planning Committee should identify the two or three items to be added to the strategic plan’s Key Performance Indicators.
- Consider increased targeted outreach to students throughout their first year to address the reasons why students are leaving York; do so in conjunction with a longitudinal study of these particular students to see patterns of enrollment, based upon survey findings.