

# 2024 FIRST YEAR SURVEY

---

DATA BRIEF

ANALYTICS & DECISION SUPPORT  
OFFICE OF PLANNING, ANALYTICS & INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH



## First Year Student Survey (FYS)

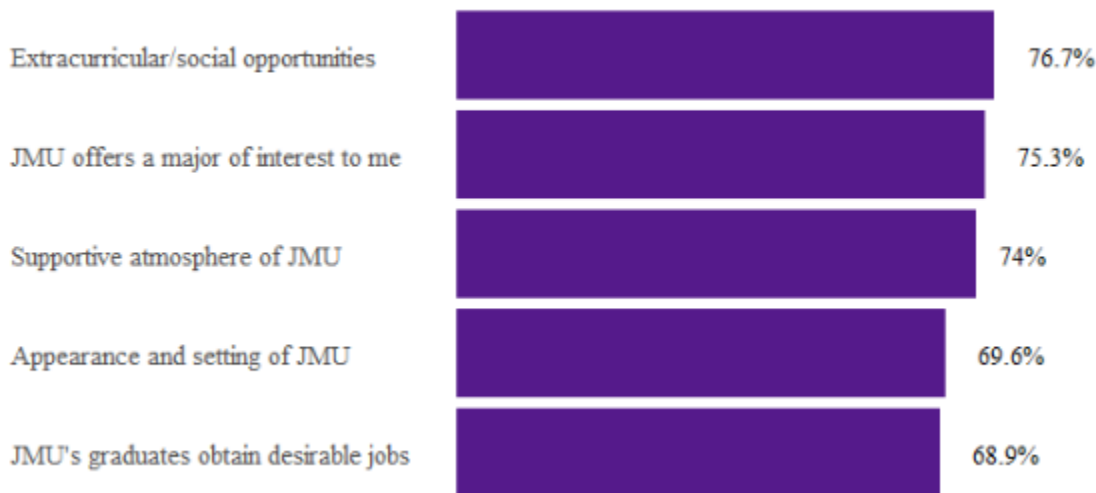
Student learning in higher education is complex and multidimensional, leading to academic, social, and personal development. To gain a better understanding of the incoming students and their needs, the Office of Planning, Analytics & Institutional Research (PAIR) administers the First Year Student Survey (FYS) to all incoming first-year, first-time students. Survey responses were gathered between March 2024 and August 2024. Students receive a link to complete the First Year Survey as part of the [OneBook](#) process through orientation. There were 4,938 responses (98.7% response rate<sup>1</sup>).

This brief provides summary data to a sample of questions from the FYS focusing on reasons for coming to JMU, sense of belonging, interest in high impact practices, preparation, and student characteristics. Survey dashboards on the PAIR website will be updated by November 2024.

## Preliminary Summary of Findings

- **Similar to previous years, 73% of respondents indicated JMU was their first choice of college. 94% indicated JMU was their first or second choice. Students are interested in JMU because of the extracurricular and social opportunities and campus atmosphere.**

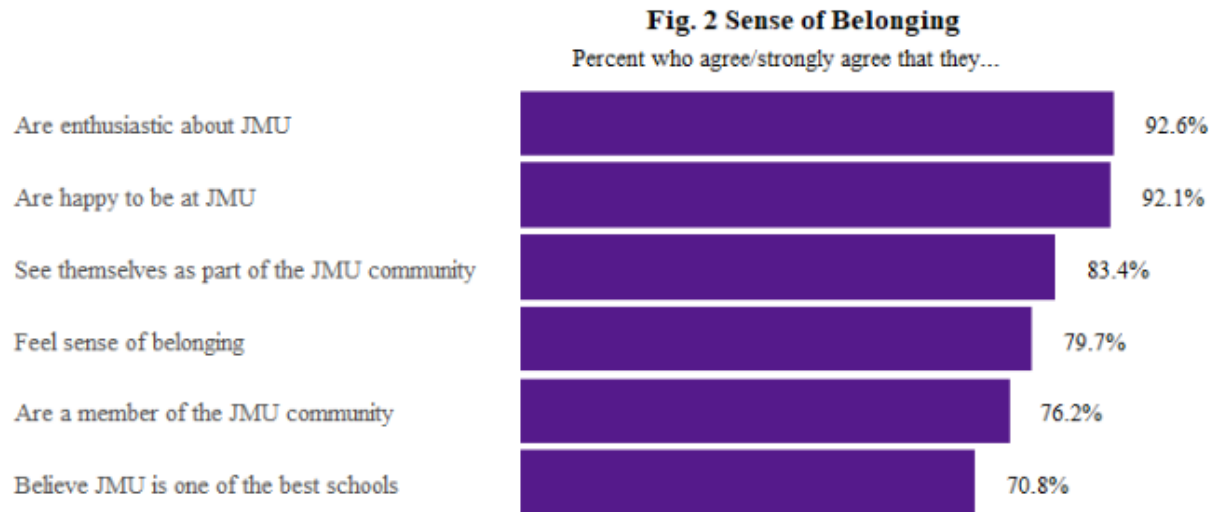
**Fig. 1 Top Reasons for Students Choosing JMU**



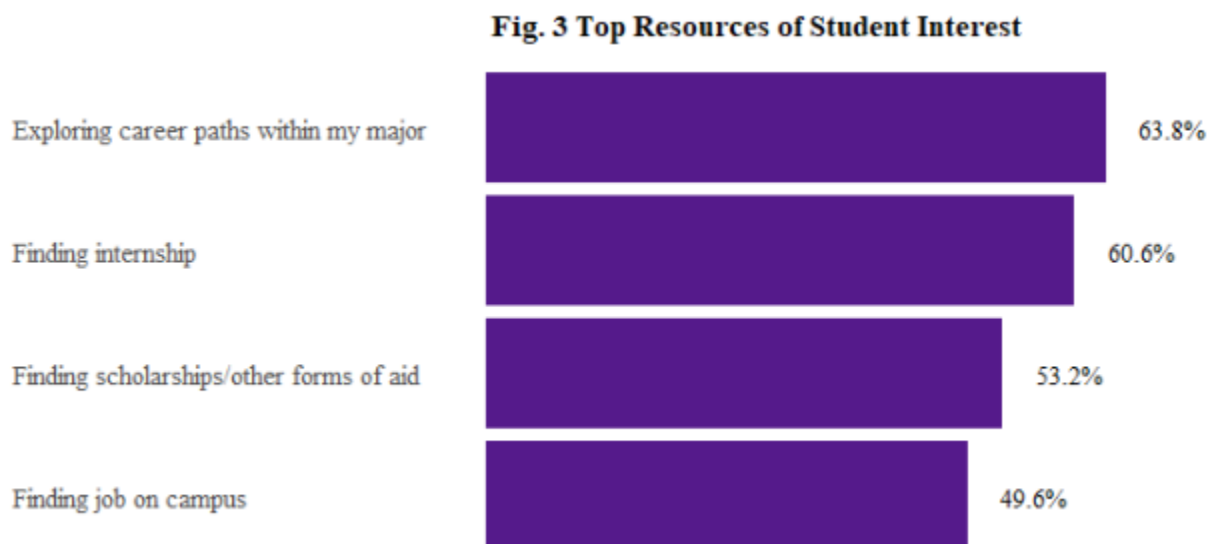
---

<sup>1</sup> This is calculated based on the number of enrolled students as of on-campus census, September 11, 2024. Enrollment numbers may have subsequently changed.

- Overall, students feel they belong at JMU.

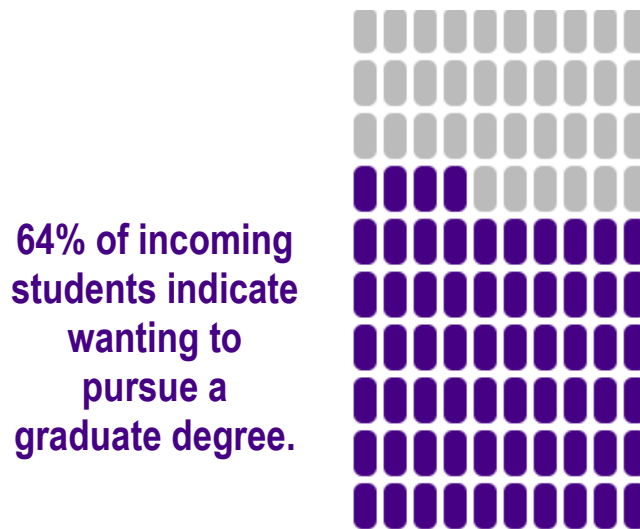


- The majority of incoming students indicated interest in accessing resources related to career planning and finding internships during their first year.



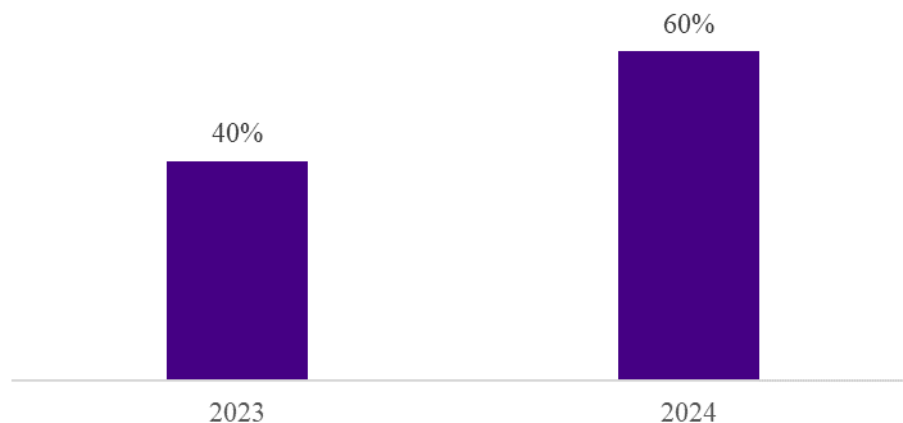
- Many students are interested in pursuing graduate, specialist or professional degrees after their undergraduate education.

**Fig. 4 Postgraduate Education Interest**



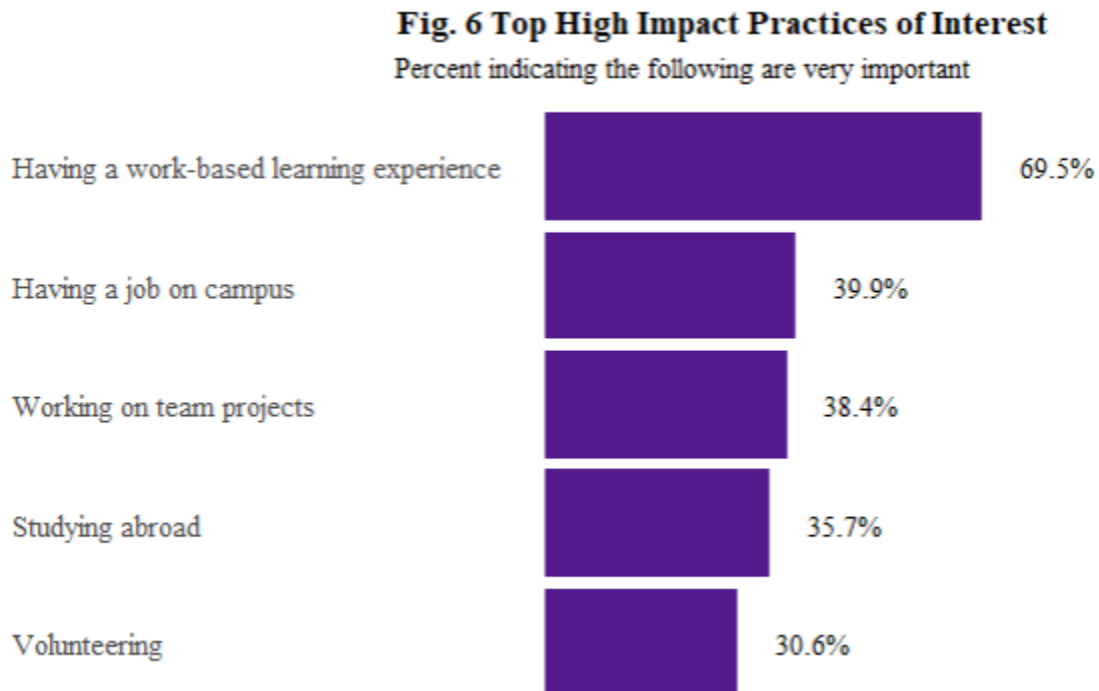
- Most students (60%) identify with a vocational philosophy of education. This is up from 2023, in which 40% of respondents indicated their views aligned with a vocational philosophy. The most common philosophy of education in 2023 was the social philosophy (40%), which was only endorsed by 10% of respondents in 2024.

**Fig. 5 Percent of Students Endorsing Vocational Philosophy of Education**



- **Vocational philosophy:** Education is primarily a preparation for an occupational future. Social, intellectual and extracurricular activities are less important.
- Social philosophy:** Extracurricular activities, group parties, athletics, social life, rewarding friendships and loyalty to college traditions are emphasized and are viewed as important and necessary for the cultivation of the well-rounded person.

internships, student teaching, etc.). Almost 40% of students are interested in finding a job on campus.<sup>2</sup>



### Coming Soon:

This brief provides a snapshot of responses to a few of the FYS questions. By November, the full dashboard suite will be updated on the PAIR website to address additional items on the FYS such as:

- Students' motivation for going to college
- Other universities students applied/were accepted to
- Student needs assessment
- Additional student characteristics

To see historical data from past years, visit: <https://www.jmu.edu/pair/ads/survey-research.shtml>  
For additional questions, please contact [pair@jmu.edu](mailto:pair@jmu.edu).

---

<sup>2</sup> These are preliminary data. Final data will be available in January 2025.