



# Class of 2021 Quick Facts

## Demographic background of First Years<sup>1</sup>

- 77% indicate their average grade in high school was an A or A+
- 62% are more than 500 miles away from their permanent home
- 28% took 10 or more AP courses; but 14% say AP courses were not offered at their HS
- 8% applied only to Mudd; 29% applied to 11 or more colleges
- 59% say Mudd was their first choice, but...
  - 7% say there is some or very good chance they will transfer to another college before graduating
  - 6% say there is some or a very good chance they will take a leave of absence from Mudd
- 9% report English is not their primary language
- 67% describe their political views as far left or liberal; 21% as middle of the road; 7% as conservative or far right
- 32% indicate there is a very good chance they will get a job to help pay for college expenses
- Respondents indicate their probable majors are: Engineering (40%); Computer Science (17%); Physics (8%); Undecided (7%); Biology (4%); Chemistry (2%); and Joint Bio and Chem (1%), but...
  - 57% indicate there is some or a very good chance they will change their major
  - 65% indicate there is some or a very good chance they will change their career choice

## What do First Years think are the “very important” reasons to go to college?

- 90% indicate to learn more about things that interest me
- 88% indicate to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas
- 74% indicate the ability to get a better job
- 59% indicate to make more money
- 56% indicate to get training for a specific career
- 53% indicate to make me a more cultured person
- 46% indicate to prepare for graduate or professional school
- 12% indicate to please my family

## First Years are confident about their academic abilities:

- 55% place themselves in the highest 10% for academic ability
- 34% place themselves in the highest 10% for mathematical ability
- 30% place themselves in the highest 10% for “drive to achieve”
- 21% place themselves in the highest 10% for self-confidence (intellectual)

## ...and with specific science skills....

- 76% are absolutely or very confident they can see connections between different areas of science and mathematics
- 71% are absolutely or very confident they can understand scientific concepts
- 64% are absolutely or very confident they can ask relevant questions
- 62% are absolutely or very confident they can identify what is known and not known about a problem
- 57% are absolutely or very confident they can explain the results of a study

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Preliminary data from the 2017 CIRP Freshman Survey results fall 2017. n = 217.  
Harvey Mudd College, Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

- 54% are absolutely or very confident that they can use technical skills (use tools, instruments, and/or techniques)
- 50% are absolutely or very confident they can integrate results from multiple studies
- 46% are absolutely or very confident they can determine how to collect the appropriate data
- 44% are absolutely or very confident they can use scientific literature to guide research
- 41% are absolutely or very confident they can generate a research question

**...but less so with other areas associated with success in college and beyond:**

- 25% report that openness to having my own views challenged is a major strength
- 25% report that the ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues is a major strength
- 19% report ability to manage time effectively is a major strength
- 18% place themselves in the highest 10% for leadership abilities
- 18% place themselves in the top 10% for understanding of others
- 16% place themselves in the top 10% for writing ability
- 10% place themselves in the highest 10% for self-confidence (social)

**First years have varied levels of comfort and experience as active and collaborative learners:**

- 58% indicate there is a very good chance they will communicate regularly with their professors
- 53% report they frequently studied with other students (in HS)
- 42% indicate there is a very good chance they will work on a professor's research project
- 32% report they frequently tutored another student (in HS)
- 25% report they frequently asked a teacher for advice after class (in HS)

**First Year students are forthcoming about their mental and physical health considerations:**

- 50% report there is some or a very good chance they will seek personal counseling
- 32% report they frequently felt anxious (in HS)
- 29% report they frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do (in HS)
- 11% report they frequently felt depressed (in HS)
- 9% report frequently drinking wine or liquor; 7% report frequently drinking beer (in HS)

**First Years have expectations for a diverse college environment...**

- 75% report they frequently socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group during the past year
- 58% indicate improving their understanding of other countries and cultures is a very important/essential personal goal
- 44% report that their ability to work cooperatively with diverse people is a major strength
- 22% report there is a very good chance they will study abroad

**...and enjoy a developing sense of belonging to the scientific community.**

- 41% strongly agreed that they feel like they belong in the field of science
- 36% strongly agreed that they derive a great personal satisfaction from working on a team that is doing an important research
- 25% strongly agreed that they have a strong sense of belonging to a community of scientists
- 24% strongly agreed that they think of themselves as a scientist