



SPECIAL REPORT: VOCARE TRENDS OVER TIME, 2016-2019

The Office of Assessment and Research (OAR)

Introduction

This report outlines the results of a set of Vocare (a Latin word meaning “to call”) survey questions which are meant to measure students’ confidence across different vocation-related skills and abilities. These survey questions were asked to four groups of students: the entering class of 2016-17, the exiting class of 2016-17, the entering class of 2017-18, and the entering class of 2018-19. The entering classes of 2016-17 and 2017-18 were asked these questions at two time points: once when they entered Holy Cross, and once at the end of their first year at Holy Cross. The response rates by survey where these questions were asked are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rates by Survey

Academic Year	Survey Name	N Students Invited	N Students Responded	Response Rate
2016-17	Entering First Year Survey (Beginning of First Year)	768	738	96%
2016-17	Montserrat Survey (End of First Year)	750	672	90%
2016-17	Senior Survey (End of Senior Year)	670	623	93%
2017-18	Entering First Year Survey (Beginning of First Year)	815	755	93%
2017-18	Montserrat Survey (End of First Year)	820	739	90%
2018-19	Montserrat Survey (End of First Year)	854	749	88%

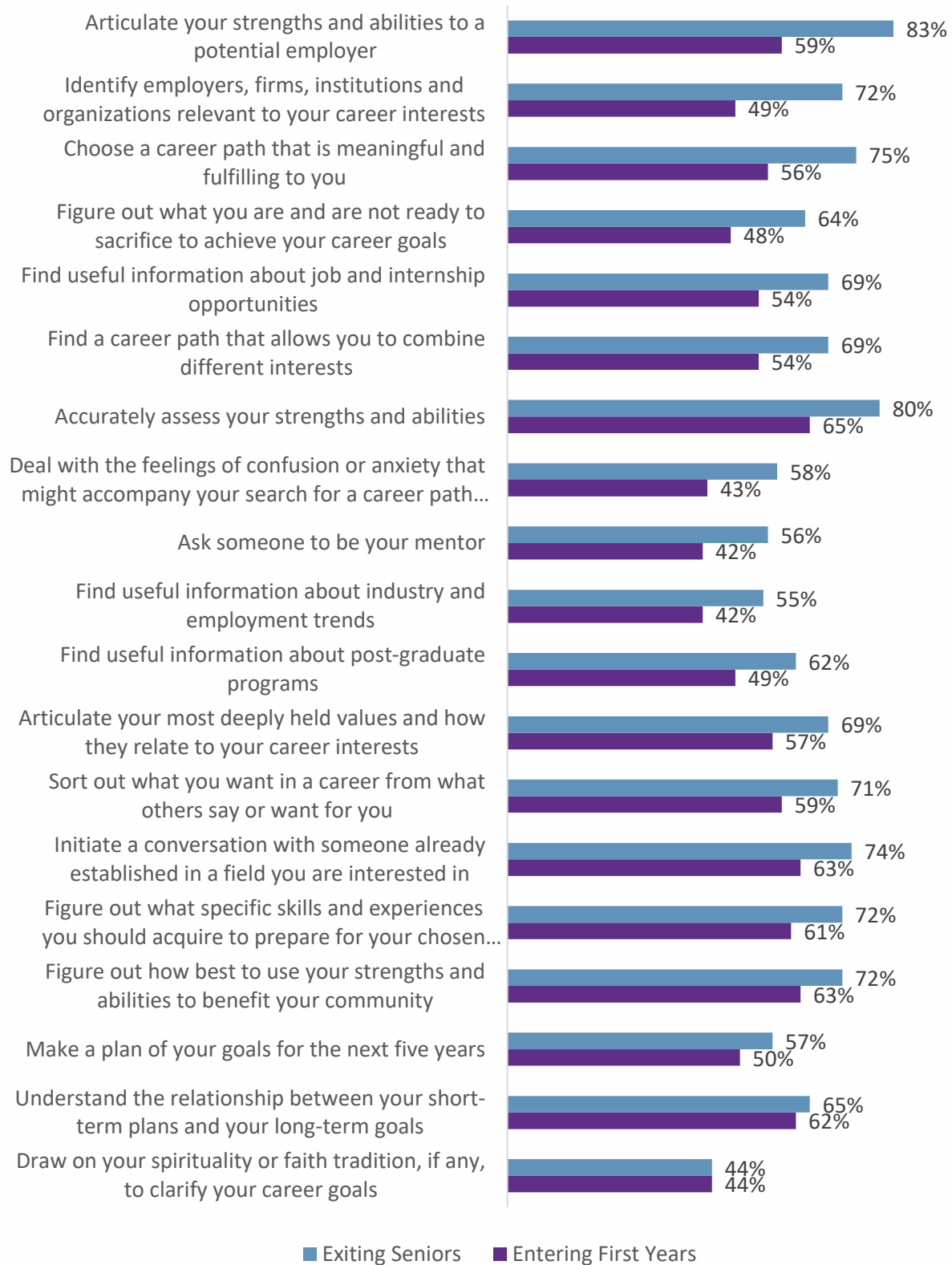
This report is divided into four sections. The first section compares how the responses of the entering class of 2016-17 compared to the exiting class of 2016-17. The second section looks at how the responses of the entering class of 2016-17 and 2017-18 changed over the course of their first year at Holy Cross. The third section looks at how three cohorts of first year students have responded to these questions at the end of their first year. The final section is an appendix that contains frequency tables of all students’ responses to each item.

Comparing the Entering Class of 2016-17 to the Exiting Class of 2016-17

In academic year 2016-17, there were 19 Vocare questions total that were asked to entering first year students and exiting senior students. Respondents could choose the following answer options from a 5-point Likert-scale: No confidence at all, Little confidence, Moderate confidence, Much confidence, and Complete confidence.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of entering and exiting students who chose at least **Much Confidence** for each of the 19 Vocare questions. The graph is sorted such that the Vocare question with the largest difference between the entering and exiting students’ percentages is at the top, and the question with the smallest difference between the entering and existing students’ percentages is at the bottom.

Figure 1: Percentage of Entering v. Exiting Students Rating Themselves as having at least Much Confidence Across Different Vocare Questions, Sorted Descending by Difference between Percentages



There are three key takeaways from this visualization. The first is that, for every question exiting seniors rated their confidence higher or equal to the entering first year students. One interpretation of this finding is that exiting seniors are developing their confidence in these skills over time at Holy Cross. The second takeaway is that the Vocare questions with the largest difference between entering and exiting students' confidence are articulating strengths to potential employers, and identifying employers relevant to the students' career interests. The third take away is what entering first years and exiting seniors seem most and least confident in. Entering first year students appear to be most confident in their ability to accurately assess their strengths and abilities, while they appear to be least confident in their asking someone to be their mentor and finding useful information about industry and employment trends. Exiting seniors, on the other hand, appear to be most confident in articulating their strengths to potential employers. They seem to be least confident in drawing on their spirituality and/or faith tradition to clarify their career goals.

Comparing Responses from Beginning of First Year to End of First Year

After comparing the entering first year class to the exiting senior class, we looked longitudinally at how the responses of two entering classes changed from the beginning of their first year to the end of their first year. However, only a condensed version of 10 of the total 19 Vocare set of questions was asked at the end of students' first year. Respondents could choose answer options from a 5-point Likert scale that included: No confidence at all, Little confidence, Moderate confidence, Much confidence, and Complete confidence.

For these analyses, we defined growth as an increase over time in the total percentage of students in a given class year who reported having either Much confidence or Complete confidence in a skill. Figure 2 shows the percentage of students who rated themselves as having at least much confidence across the 10 different Vocare skills and how their responses changed over the first year. The left side of the figure shows the 2016-17 cohort, whereas the right side of the figure shows the 2017-18 cohort.

One finding from this graph is that the slopes of the lines for the 2017-18 cohort are larger than the slopes for the 2016-17 cohort. This suggests that the 2017-18 has reported more growth in their confidence across the skills over their first year at Holy Cross compared to the 2016-17 cohort. Additionally, all of the lines for the 2017-18 cohort show increases over time, whereas for the 2016-17 cohort, some show increases, while others show decreases.

It appears from this visual analysis that both cohorts rated themselves highest in their confidence in accurately assessing their own strengths and abilities, as well as sorting out what they want in their careers from what others say or want for them. Conversely, it appears that both cohorts rated themselves the lowest in their confidence in asking someone to be their mentor, making plans for their goals for the next five years, and figuring out what they are willing to sacrifice in order to achieve their goals.

Figure 2: Percentage of Students Rating Themselves as having at least Much Confidence Across Different Vocare Skills Over Time

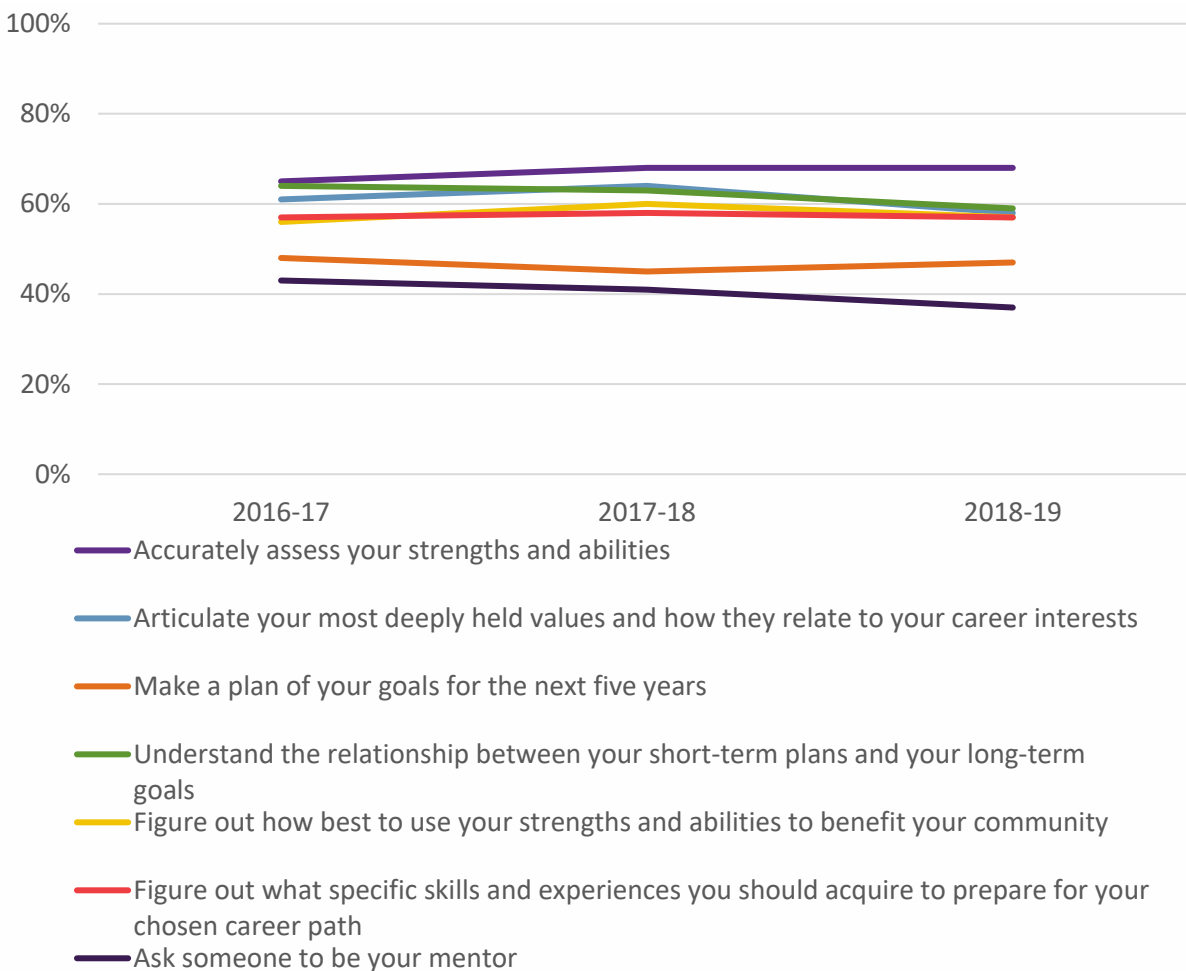


Comparing Responses of End of First Year Students Over Time

Finally, 7 of the total 19 Vocare questions were asked to three cohorts of students at the end of their first year. Respondents could choose answer options from a 5-point Likert scale that included: No confidence at all, Little confidence, Moderate confidence, Much confidence, and Complete confidence.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of each cohort of students who answered that they had either Much confidence or Complete confidence across the seven skills. As shown, across the three cohorts of students, there responses were fairly consistent over time. Two exceptions might be 1) students' confidence in asking someone to be their mentors, which has steadily decreased over time, and 2) students' confidence in accurately assessing their strengths and abilities, which has steadily increased over time. Interestingly, it appears that the order of the items in terms of the percentage of students who indicated that they had at least Much confidence in that skill has remained constant over time. In other words, students over time always seem most confident in accurately assessment their strengths and abilities, and least confident in asking someone to be their mentor.

Figure 3: Percentage of Students Rating Themselves as having at least Much Confidence Across Different Vocare Skills Across Three Cohorts



Appendix: Question by Question Breakdown of Vocare Questions Data

Questions Asked at the Beginning of Students' First Year, End of Students' First Year, and End of Students' Senior Year

Q1. Accurately assess your strengths and abilities

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	0	0%	17	2%	241	33%	369	50%	108	15%
2017-18	0	0%	24	3%	319	42%	328	44%	81	11%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	1	0%	12	3%	143	31%	224	49%	75	16%
2017-18	2	0%	15	2%	218	30%	380	52%	117	16%
2018-19	3	0%	23	3%	216	29%	370	50%	130	18%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	2	0%	6	1%	116	19%	324	52%	174	28%

Q2. Choose a Career Path that is meaningful and fulfilling to you

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	11	1%	93	13%	223	30%	254	35%	153	21%
2017-18	19	3%	107	14%	236	32%	251	34%	133	18%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	9	2%	29	6%	139	31%	199	44%	76	17%
2017-18	11	2%	68	9%	224	31%	295	40%	131	18%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	23	4%	128	21%	290	47%	176	28%

Q3. Sort out what you want in a career from what others say or want for you

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	8	1%	58	8%	234	32%	286	39%	146	20%
2017-18	14	2%	93	12%	243	32%	239	32%	162	22%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	30	7%	147	32%	186	41%	86	19%
2017-18	7	1%	53	7%	205	28%	310	42%	156	21%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	5	1%	32	5%	145	23%	268	43%	172	28%

Q4. Articulate your most deeply held values and how they relate to your career interests

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	5	1%	69	9%	242	33%	286	39%	133	18%
2017-18	8	1%	91	12%	275	37%	272	36%	103	14%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	5	1%	31	7%	145	32%	175	39%	98	22%
2017-18	4	1%	55	8%	200	27%	303	41%	171	23%
2018-19	4	1%	44	6%	262	35%	279	38%	151	20%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	4	1%	34	5%	154	25%	256	41%	173	28%

Q5. Make a plan of your goals for the next five years

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	21	3%	88	12%	256	35%	231	31%	140	19%
2017-18	13	2%	150	20%	273	36%	218	29%	97	13%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	14	3%	57	13%	163	36%	141	31%	79	17%
2017-18	23	3%	117	16%	259	35%	223	30%	113	15%
2018-19	26	4%	117	16%	248	34%	219	30%	129	17%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	21	3%	61	10%	186	30%	214	34%	141	23%

Q6. Understand the relationship between your short-term plans and your long-term goals

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	3	0%	34	5%	242	33%	307	42%	150	20%
2017-18	6	1%	54	7%	296	40%	289	39%	104	14%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	3	1%	28	6%	133	29%	194	43%	98	21%
2017-18	6	1%	45	6%	222	30%	325	44%	137	19%
2018-19	9	1%	56	8%	241	33%	301	41%	132	18%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	5	1%	38	6%	174	28%	258	41%	147	24%

Q7. Figure out how best to use your strengths and abilities to benefit your community

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	2	0%	30	4%	236	32%	333	45%	133	18%
2017-18	4	1%	29	4%	322	43%	311	41%	86	11%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	4	1%	34	7%	162	36%	174	38%	82	18%
2017-18	9	1%	48	7%	235	32%	314	43%	125	17%
2018-19	7	1%	53	7%	258	35%	283	38%	139	19%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	21	3%	147	24%	291	47%	157	25%

Q8. Figure out what you are and are not ready to sacrifice to achieve your career goals

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	13	2%	89	12%	279	38%	258	35%	95	13%
2017-18	9	1%	85	11%	321	43%	248	33%	85	11%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	5	1%	53	12%	183	40%	150	33%	63	14%
2017-18	10	1%	84	12%	245	34%	270	37%	121	17%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	11	2%	38	6%	177	28%	272	44%	124	20%

Q9. Figure out what specific skills and experiences you should acquire to prepare for your chosen career path

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	47	6%	239	33%	319	44%	122	17%
2017-18	1	0%	56	7%	287	38%	324	43%	83	11%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	37	8%	151	33%	188	41%	72	16%
2017-18	5	1%	59	8%	247	34%	295	40%	129	18%
2018-19	14	2%	73	10%	230	31%	303	41%	119	16%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	15	2%	149	24%	307	49%	146	23%

Q10. Ask someone to be your mentor

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	13	2%	106	14%	305	41%	214	29%	99	13%
2017-18	19	3%	161	22%	272	36%	212	28%	84	11%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	21	5%	96	21%	139	31%	113	25%	80	18%
2017-18	36	5%	149	20%	238	33%	192	26%	112	15%
2018-19	44	6%	157	21%	258	35%	170	23%	106	14%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	21	3%	91	15%	160	26%	221	35%	130	21%

Q11. Articulate your strengths and abilities to a potential employer

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	3	0%	52	7%	244	33%	315	43%	121	16%
2017-18	1	0%	52	7%	259	34%	332	44%	107	14%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	3	0%	5	1%	98	16%	324	52%	192	31%

Q12. Find a career path that allows you to combine different interests

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	7	1%	83	11%	246	34%	267	36%	129	18%
2017-18	11	1%	106	14%	288	38%	236	32%	108	14%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	4	1%	31	5%	158	25%	287	46%	142	23%

Q13. Deal with the feelings of confusion or anxiety that might accompany your search for a career path that suits you

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	14	2%	95	13%	312	43%	231	32%	80	11%
2017-18	11	1%	127	17%	341	45%	212	28%	60	8%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	8	1%	57	9%	194	31%	258	41%	105	17%

Q14. Draw on your spirituality or faith tradition, if any, to clarify your career goals

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	41	6%	103	14%	265	36%	197	27%	128	17%
2017-18	59	8%	161	21%	288	38%	163	22%	78	10%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2018-19	49	7%	133	20%	207	30%	185	27%	105	15%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	50	8%	87	14%	208	33%	181	29%	95	15%

Q15. Identify employers, firms, institutions and organizations relevant to your career interests

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	17	2%	104	14%	254	35%	228	31%	131	18%
2017-18	17	2%	117	16%	258	34%	256	34%	102	14%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	37	6%	136	22%	290	47%	154	25%

Q16. Find useful information about job and internship opportunities

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	2	0%	85	12%	252	34%	284	39%	114	15%
2017-18	8	1%	85	11%	279	37%	286	38%	93	12%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2018-19	20	3%	77	10%	234	32%	266	36%	141	19%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	8	1%	26	4%	161	26%	285	46%	141	23%

Q17. Find useful information about post-graduate programs

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	7	1%	98	13%	270	37%	242	33%	119	16%
2017-18	11	1%	103	14%	276	37%	261	35%	100	13%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	12	2%	43	7%	180	29%	264	42%	124	20%

Q18. Find useful information about industry and employment trends

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	9	1%	137	19%	276	38%	224	30%	90	12%
2017-18	13	2%	139	19%	290	39%	233	31%	76	10%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	21	3%	57	9%	201	32%	230	37%	114	18%

Q19. Initiate a conversation with someone already established in a field you are interested in

	First Year Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	10	1%	55	7%	201	27%	298	40%	173	23%
2017-18	7	1%	75	10%	219	29%	296	39%	154	21%

	Montserrat Survey									
	No confidence at all		Little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2018-19	20	3%	74	10%	211	29%	257	35%	178	24%

	Senior Survey									
	No confidence at all		Very little confidence		Moderate confidence		Much confidence		Complete confidence	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2016-17	6	1%	27	4%	130	21%	243	39%	214	35%