



## “Home Away From Home”

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Nature of Study

This study was conducted for the Johnson & Wales University's Marketing Admissions Office to learn more about how their marketing efforts impacted the decisions of this year's first-year students. This survey was created based on findings from focus groups conducted in the spring semester, of 2024. The Johnson & Wales Admissions Marketing Office will use this information to better understand which specific factors most highly impact the decisions of first-year students to attend Johnson & Wales University. All of the information gathered from the survey will serve as a starting point for how Johnson & Wales can better the effectiveness of the marketing efforts set forth for incoming first-year students in the years to come.

Once the survey was released to the current first-year students, the main objective was to enhance our knowledge of how effective the current Admissions Marketing efforts are in capturing new students. We want to understand which of these efforts are the most effective, which need adjustments, and which parts of the JWU student experience may be worth drawing more attention to. For one example, feedback from the focus groups in the spring of 2024 held a strong positive reaction for the Providence city scene, as well as the relationships they've built with JWU faculty.

### Research Question / Hypothesis

The main objective of this survey is to answer our question, "Which of the Admissions Marketing efforts has the biggest influence on the first-year students' decision to attend JWU?" The questions asked by the survey were formulated based on feedback from the focus groups conducted in the spring semester, of 2024. We aimed to gain a better understanding of the factors that contributed to JWU becoming the home away from home for their college experience.

## Variables

With a population of about (insert number) first-year students, we hope to receive 350 responses for analysis, which is about (insert) of the entire first-year population. We have a few primary demographic factors at hand, and they are gender, residing on campus, and enrolled in a college of study. Using these factors, we hope to find a connection to the ultimate decision to attend JWU. We do have reason to believe that first-year students who fall under these factors attend/search for college for different reasons, and in turn, they have different experiences in college.

Johnson & Wales University has six different colleges: College of Arts & Science, College of Business, College of Engineering & Design, College of Food Innovation & Technology, College of Health & Wellness, College of Hospitality Management, and College of Professional Studies. Each of these colleges will be evaluated through the survey and represented in the data visualizations yielded.

Other variables that the team chose to include, and felt would add value to the study are involvement in sports/clubs/organizations, enrolled major, the importance of experiential education such as internships, DEE Programs and Study Abroad, ability to have pets on campus, industry experienced & credited faculty, dining options, Fridays off, and more variable attributing to the typical college experience.

## Value of Study

The value of this study is to provide insights to the Johnson & Wales Admissions Marketing department about which of their efforts are the most effective for first-year students as they build and maintain a relationship with the Johnson & Wales community. We must understand the perception of the school and the JWU experience. With the insights gathered from



this study, the office will be able to effectively make decisions to better the university's marketing efforts. Having primary as well as secondary data representing the students' voices, perceptions, and feelings may help boost the perception of the experience for students considering JWU as their new home away from home.

## Chapter 2: Secondary Data Research

### Source A: Focus Group Research

#### Focus group 1: Summary of Findings

##### **Ice Breaker: Highlights of JWU**

Participants found the fact that our school is smaller to be positive. Participants like the classes and labs that they do (Culinary and PA programs). Students also liked how interactive the learning is at JWU.

Lasted about 8 minutes and then moved on to dialogue questions.

##### **What prompted you to apply to JWU?**

Students found JWU from researching places where pets were allowed. Students found it important to be closer to home and liked the environment and restaurants around campus. Students valued being able to visit and talk to professors, who answered questions they had about the programs offered at JWU. One participant was a culinary major and favored the reputation JWU has as a culinary University. Students were drawn to JWU because of the programs offered and found on the campus website.

##### **What Form of Outreach did JWU reach out to you with first?**

One student said email was the most influential, one said the website caught their attention, one said social media, and one said teachers from high school and friends who attend the school.

**Was that outreach too early too late or just right?**

Students all agreed that they remember JWU to have the longest open application slots, and that applying was easy to do. One student claims she applied for early acceptance and was thrilled about the baking program which is the sole reason for continuing her education at JWU. All participants agreed that outreach was received at the correct time.

**What was most valuable to your decision-making?**

The website is easy to use and allows students to navigate campus virtually. The JWU Instagram sold students on the “vibe” of the school. All students agreed that the price of their education was something each considered greatly. The scholarships received in the emails were something that heavily influenced their decision-making process to attend JWU.

**Why did you choose JWU over other institutions?**

Students favored the area, and the engagement offered between professors and students. The Programs (PA and Culinary) drew students in. All students agreed that the scholarships were the main indicator of their decisions and fueled their commitment to JWU. Students were impressed with the scholarships offered to them for admittance to JWU and liked how they were able to potentially get more money by leveraging other offers by other Universities. All claim JWU gave them the most money and 1 mentioned the confetti with the Acceptance Letter made an impression and influenced her decision.

A conversation about aspects of JWU that were not favorable as it relates to Residential life and Providence was orchestrated by a moderator to build connection amongst participants

Duration: 20 Minutes

**How did you guys like the tours of campus offered if given the chance to take one?**

All Participants had the experience of going on a tour before attending JWU. One participant argued that the tour was “boring”. Two participants argued that the tours were “a lot all at once.” Participants discussed how the Ras on the tours and faculty they met on the tours were very friendly and it seemed like a welcoming environment.

**Focus Group 2: Summary of Findings**

**Ice Breaker: Highlights of being here at JWU**

Participants noted that they have enjoyed the community here at JWU, as well as making new friends. They also all like the distance from home whether it be close or far. Another positive was having Fridays off for extra time to get work or other things done in that time.

**What prompted you to apply to JWU?**

One participant mentioned being near the water was a major factor in their decision, as well as the high career placement. A few students had members of JWU come to their schools for demos and other college/career events. Two hospitality students both had applied as it was one of their top two choices when it came to hospitality colleges. A student from Ohio got a letter in the mail which was their first introduction to JWU and reason for applying.

**What form of outreach did JWU reach out with first?**

Participants all noted emailing to be a main form of outreach they remember first with many emails continuing through the admissions process. Another participant mentioned receiving many larger mail packages. One student said their first outreach from JWU was a career fair at their high school. When it came to the mail, participants felt that the flags were memorable to receive but not so practical to have. They felt like they would prefer receiving

t-shirts where they could wear them and represent the school in return. Del's lemonade packets were also very memorable.

**Was the outreach too early, too late, or just right?**

Several participants felt the timing of outreach was just right. One student said the outreach was too late as they started receiving packages in the mail after already applying. Another student also had not received outreach before applying as their high school encouraged applying to many schools and the application for JWU was free. Hearing back so early led the participant to forget about applications put into other schools.

**In the end, what made you choose JWU over other schools?**

A participant who is a culinary major said they liked that there are other majors here, compared to some culinary schools that do not have other majors. This allowed us to get to know people with different interests. Participants agreed that the scholarships they received upon applying were factors in their decision. Several participants agreed being either close to home or knowing people in the area were reasons for wanting to choose JWU. One participant was very influenced by having a car on campus and being near the water. Having a car also meant being able to drive to the water at any time. Another student was undecided on a major before coming into college and JWU offered a unique ability to take several classes in different areas while remaining on track to graduate. That same student is from Pennsylvania and had only heard of the school because of their Dad, their high school guidance counselor had never heard of JWU. All participants agreed having faculty mentors within their major has been very beneficial.

The conversation went off-topic for about 8 minutes.

**What have been your favorite experiences so far?**

A couple of participants mentioned meeting new people and being able to blossom having a new friend group have been top experiences so far. Another student brought up that joining clubs has been a great experience and is part of four clubs currently. From the culinary aspect, a couple of students agreed that Providence is a great place to experience new foods as the city has so much variety of restaurants here, and some are affordable to college students. All the food options also mean they do not grow tired of always going to one place. Participants have also enjoyed the walkability of the city, while also not feeling like they need to leave campus to do anything. They said they have fun sitting at Willies and Starbucks. Overall, participants enjoy all the opportunities they have had here and being able to try many new things and go to new places.

### Focus Group Overall Summary

In the two focus groups that we held, the participants of the focus groups were from a variety of majors, giving some interesting perspectives on their feelings towards their admissions processes. When initially asking what prompted participants to apply to Johnson & Wales, their major came into play, especially for culinary and hospitality majors. Another participant came in undecided, and the options for undecided majors here were very accommodating. All participants expressed some preference over the distance from home impacting their decision to apply, whether it be near or far.

Many participants noted email being the main and initial form of outreach. Social media, the school website, physical mail, and high school advisors or other references were additional forms of outreach that were mentioned. Ultimately most participants were contacted through email, but upon researching the university as a whole, had decided to commit. When it came to mail packages, many students all agreed that they would prefer receiving products that allowed

them to represent the school. This includes shirts, dog bandanas, and anything else that could be more outwardly displayed. Most participants felt the outreach came at a good time in their college searches, with a couple feeling like it was late based on the early application timing.

There is much to note about why students chose Johnson & Wales over other schools in the end. Everyone said scholarships were very influential in their decision making, being either the top or one of the top reasons as well as the length of time of the application window. A participant did note that the confetti falling in the acceptance letter with that number for a scholarship made that experience extra positive and influenced them. Other reasons for coming to Johnson & Wales that were mentioned include distances from home and having a car on campus as a first-year came up as being some reasons for their decision. Additionally, a high career outcome percentage and specific aspects of majors were important to participants as well. An example of this is the way the culinary program is compared to other schools, and that the school offers culinary and other majors so students can get to know other students with different interests.

From these findings, it is important to note that all or most participants found that their decision to attend Johnson and Wales was heavily based upon the information at their disposal as it regards the different programs and majors offered. Many participants found this information on the Johnson and Wales website, where most participants got the information given to them through this time. Participants found the website easy to use and yielded plenty of information about the University. Participants also mentioned the Johnson and Wales University social media page, mainly Instagram to help showcase campus living and recreational life.

## Source B: Demographic Information

Data that assisted with maintaining a strategy for gathering data came from the university's Providence Campus Fact Sheet. This sheet was most recently updated as of December 2023, meaning it is very representative of current numbers at the school. Here, it states that the current gender ratio is 63% female to 37% male (Providence Campus Fact Sheet). This information was useful to survey data collecting as we could keep our numbers roughly proportionate to represent the overall ratio. The other important data found here is the number of enrollments for each college. The colleges with the highest numbers in order are Food Innovation and Technology, Arts and Sciences, and Business (Providence Campus Fact Sheet). This is another important piece of data to keep in mind when gathering survey data representative of our campus.

### Source C: Prioritizing Location

We observed a strong response from both males as well as females that the Providence area was extremely or moderately important. With this information, we can conclude that the university should place importance on the location of the university, and further understand how heavily location affects the college decision. Based on information gathered from 2 focus groups in the spring semester of 2024, we understand that location matters to first-year students for different reasons, including staying close to home, desiring to be among the city scene, work-related concerns, accessibility to stores/food, etc. With this information, we can encourage the university to put high importance on covering all of these possibilities in their marketing pushes, to address any location concerns that first-year students may have, considering we saw strong reactions in the survey responses collected in the spring semester of 2024.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

## Method of Communication

Various methods of communication have been used to obtain analytics from first-year students. We have gathered information from focus groups, survey data, and even by talking to first-years on the street. It is important to have many different methods of obtaining information from the first years so we can get the most accurate results. We used survey data by reaching our demographic through their emails, which are checked quite regularly. Although our email received around 100 responses, this is not enough to get the most accurate data possible. Because of this, members of our team went to various spots around campus to reach out to first-years and encourage them to take part in our survey research. This method brought in most of our responses for our survey research method. Various professors were asked to share our survey with their first-year classes as well to ensure we were getting respondents from various backgrounds and biases.

## Sample Size

Our target sample size was 300 first-year students. We believe with this number of students we will be able to get accurate data that may apply to a broader perspective with the time given. This Sample Size can be divided further by what college these students are enrolled in. The chart below examines the college enrolled to the gender of respondents.

College	Male	Female	Third Binary	Other
Arts and Sciences	7	62	5	2
Business	39	40		



Food Innovation	22	42	2	1
Engineering and Design	10	13		
Health and Wellness	7	24		
Hospitality Management	15	28	1	

## Sampling Method

We wanted our sampling method to reflect the current demographic of students at the university. Being that Johnson and Wales University has a 62 to 38 percent split between females and males we wanted our data to reflect this proportion as well. Our sample consisted of a 54 to 46 percent split between women and men. Because we did include more of the female population percentage in our sample, it is more accurate to the data collected.

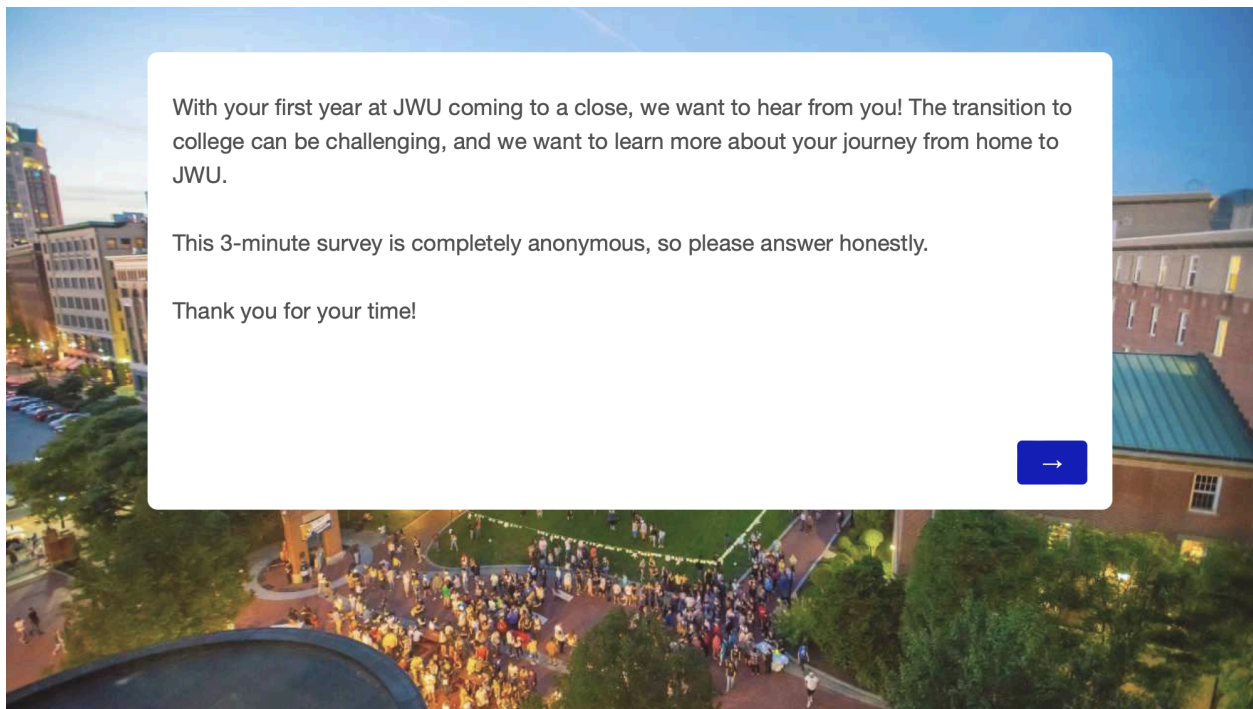
## Sampling Method

The sampling method chosen was purposive sampling. We chose to include a certain demographic that we believe applies to the university so that we can receive more accurate data at the university. We chose to reach out to all genders and received a larger number of female respondents, which made our analysis more accurate to the university's demographic. We included participants from all colleges as well to get a good variety of student responses, being that the University currently includes 6. We decided to use purposive sampling to ensure that our results would be accurate. With this method, the demographics we selected are directly correlated with our research efforts to help Admissions discover what works for students and what could be improved upon.

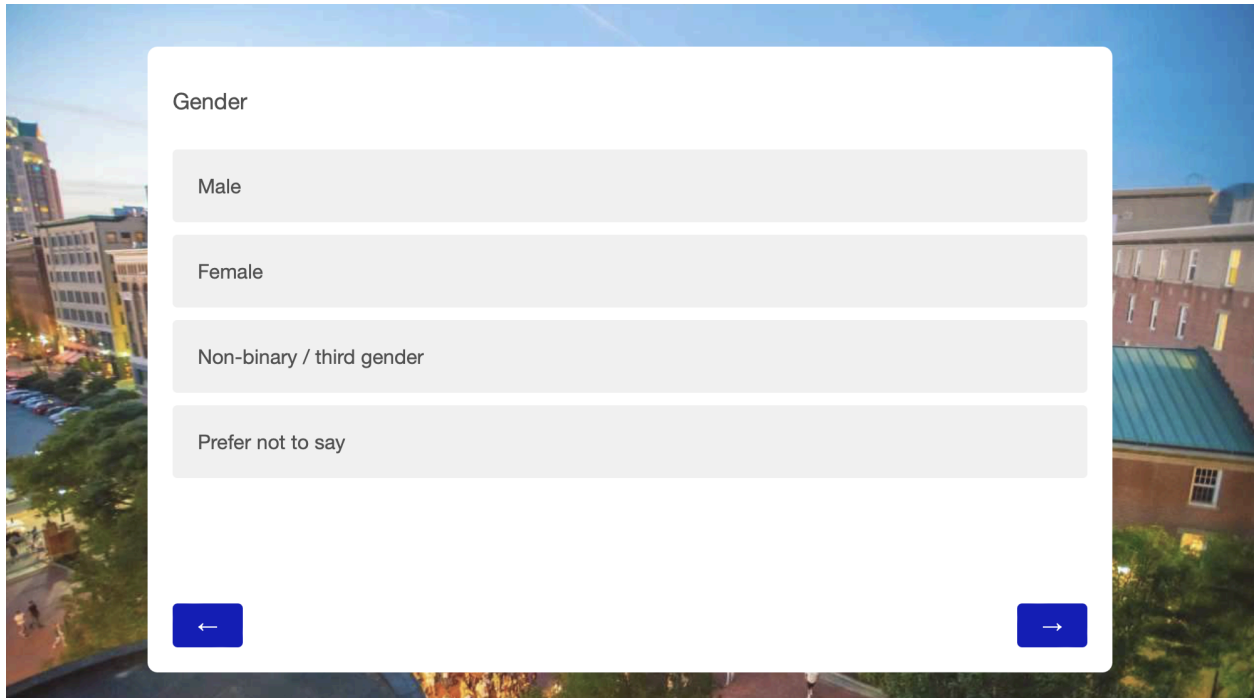
## Population Definition

The Population we are targeting is the first-year population living on harborside and downcity campuses, in Providence RI. Our data is continued through each of the 6 colleges offered at Johnson and Wales. Our intended sample size was 300 students broken down to at least 23 from each college.

## Copy of Survey



Q1 Gender



Gender

Male

Female


Non-binary / third gender

Prefer not to say

←

→

Q2 Which college are you enrolled in?



Which college are you enrolled in?

College of Arts & Sciences

College of Business

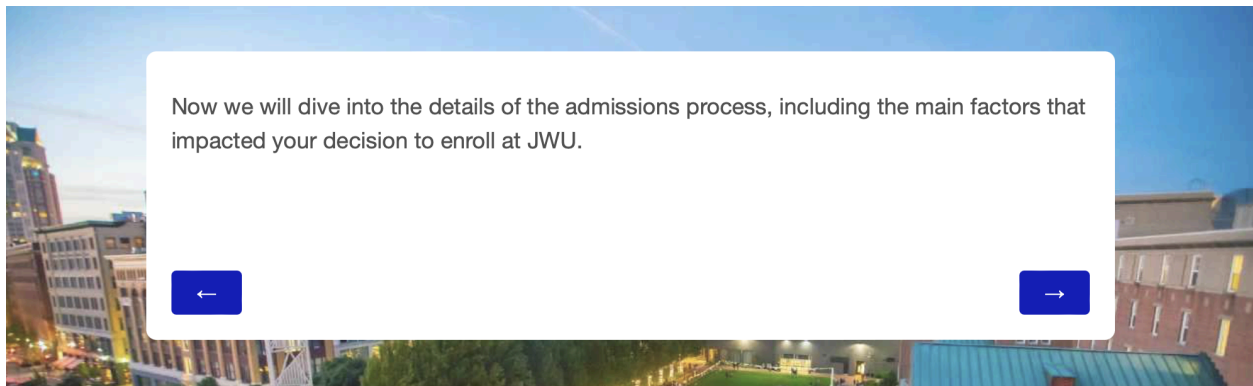
College of Food Innovation & Technology

College of Engineering & Design

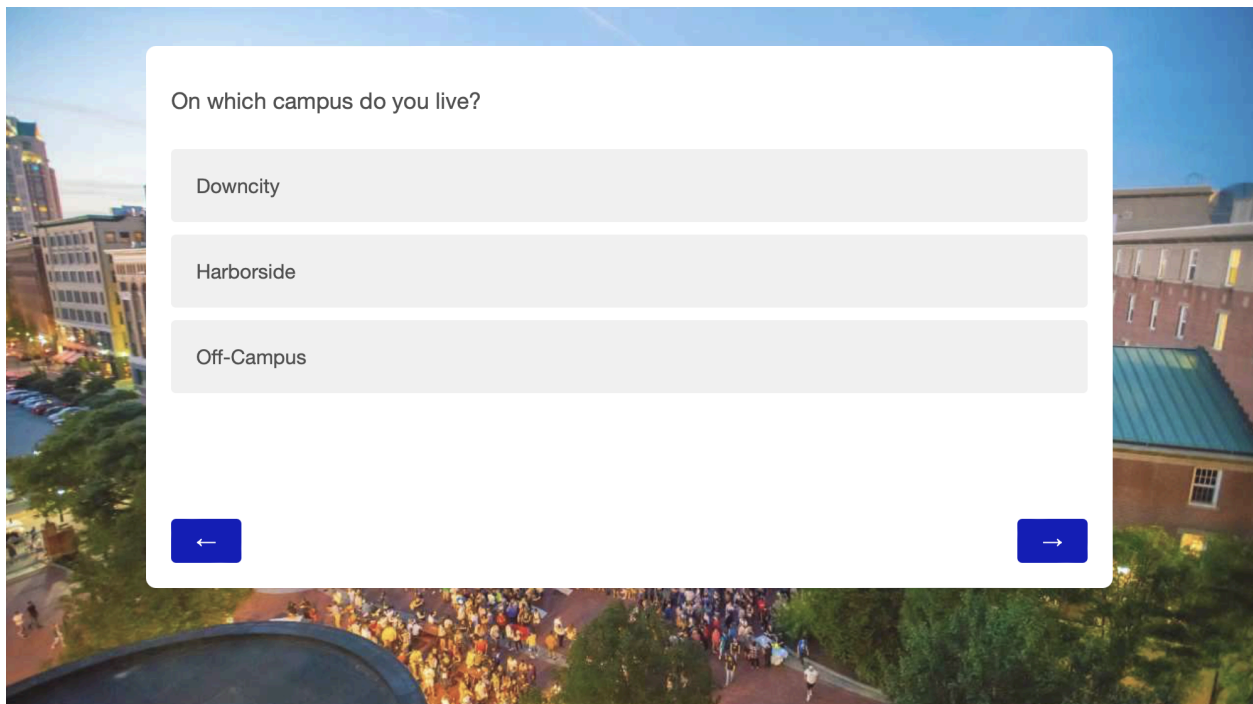
College of Health & Wellness

College of Hospitality Management

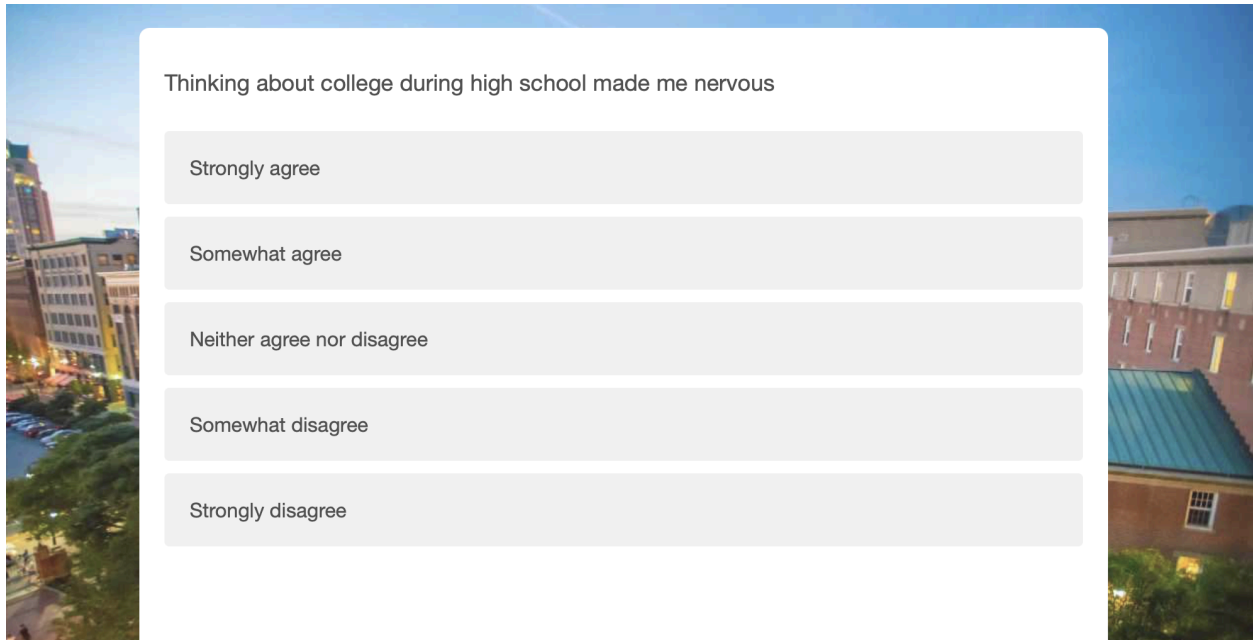
Now we will dive into the details of the admissions process, including the main factors that impacted your decision to enroll at JWU.



Q3 On which campus do you live?



Q4 Thinking about college during high school made me nervous



Thinking about college during high school made me nervous

Strongly agree

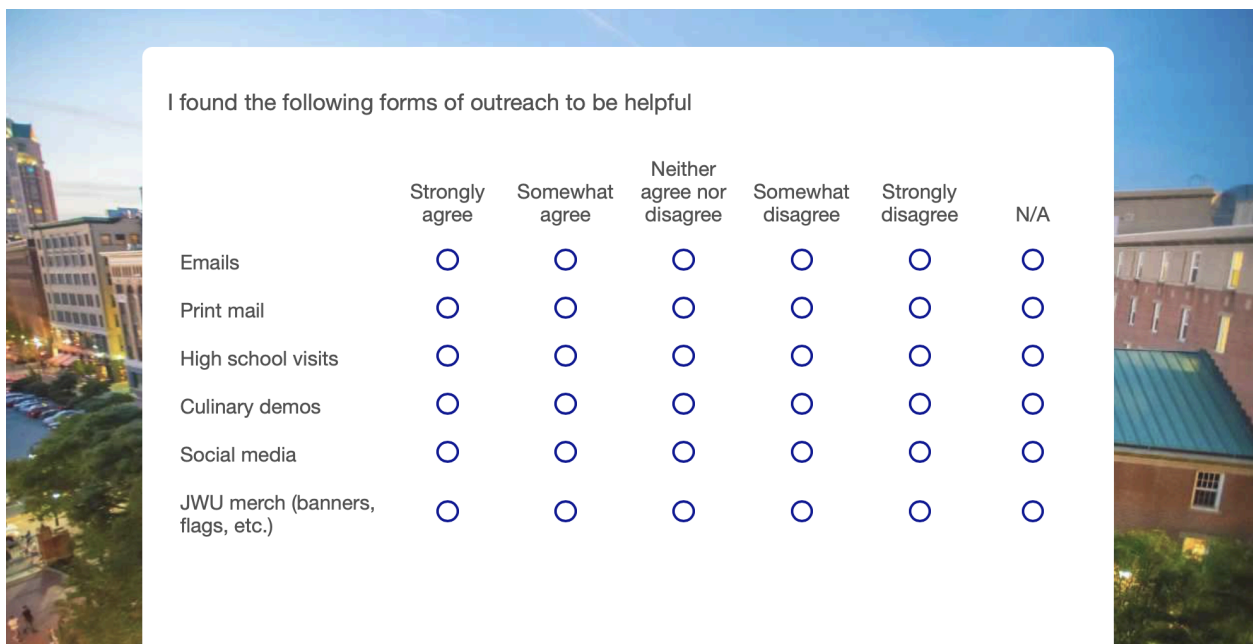
Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree


Q5 I found the following forms of outreach to be helpful



I found the following forms of outreach to be helpful

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Emails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Print mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school visits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culinary demos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
JWU merch (banners, flags, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

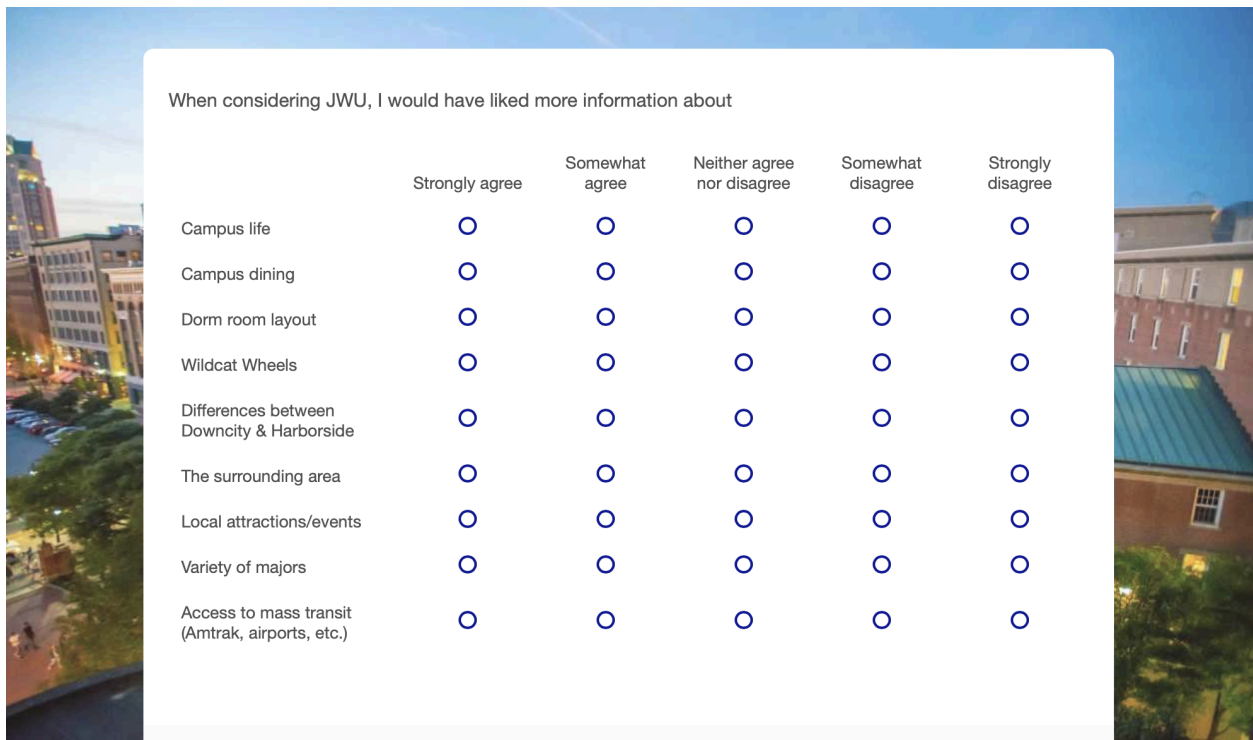
Q6 How important were the following in choosing JWU



How important were the following in choosing JWU

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Providence area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports/clubs/organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of majors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friend/family/faculty referral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small class size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity of student population	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiential Education (IE: Internships, DEE program, study abroad, labs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pets on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Industry experienced & credentialed faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No class on Fridays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On-campus dining options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about

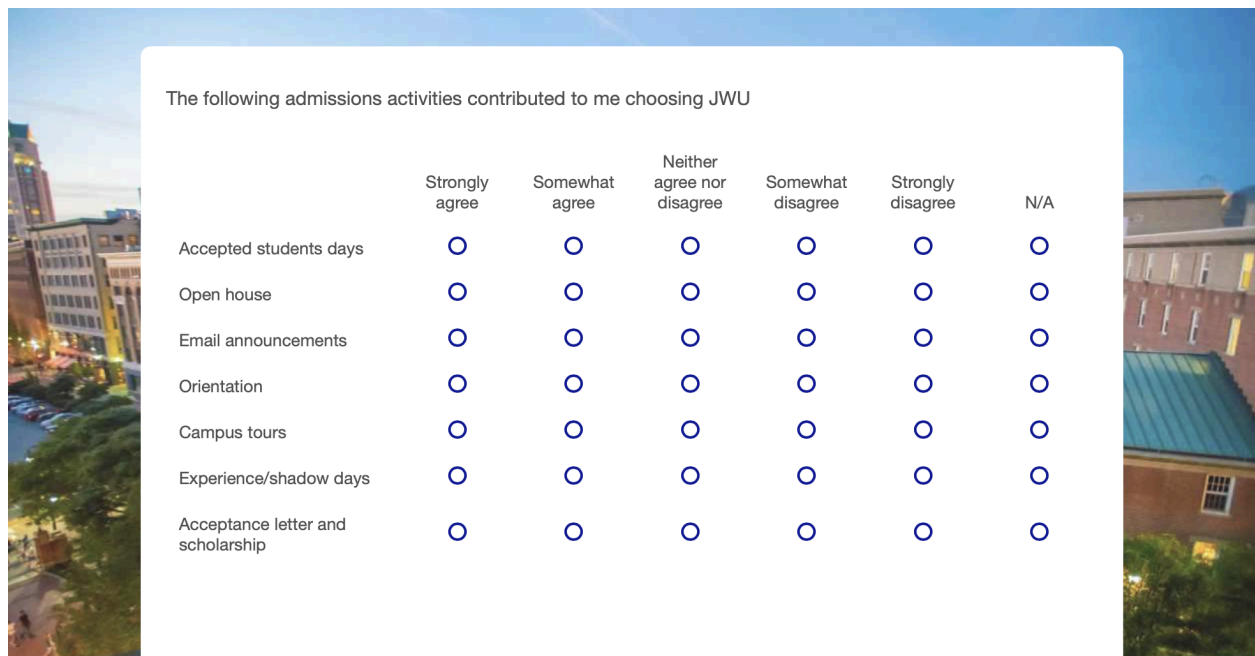


When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Campus life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus dining	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dorm room layout	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildcat Wheels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differences between Downcity & Harborside	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The surrounding area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local attractions/events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of majors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to mass transit (Amtrak, airports, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



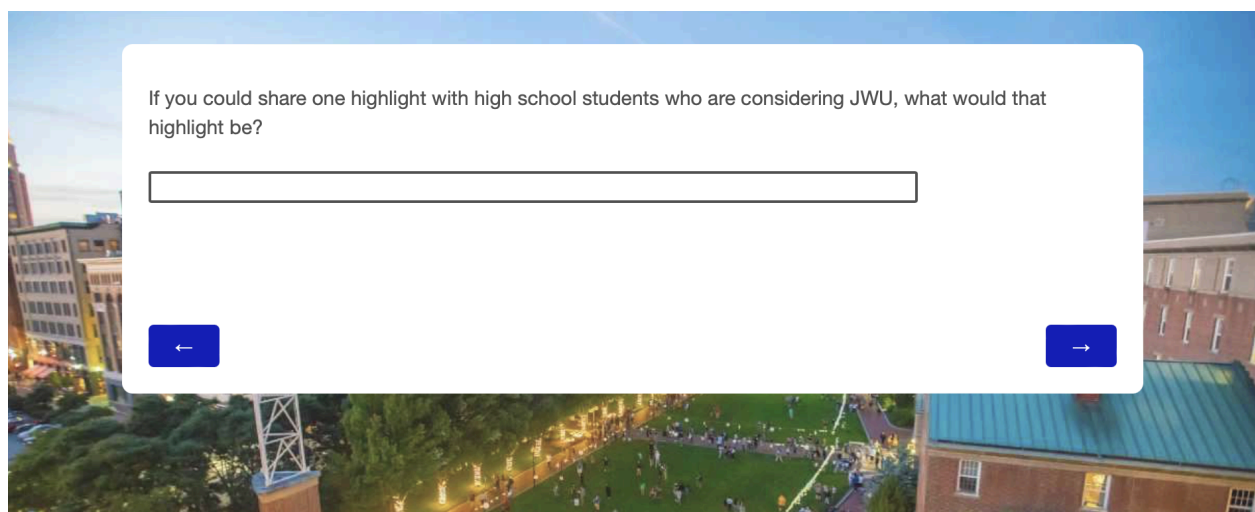
Q8 The following admissions activities contributed to me choosing JWU



The following admissions activities contributed to me choosing JWU

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Accepted students days	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email announcements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus tours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience/shadow days	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acceptance letter and scholarship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

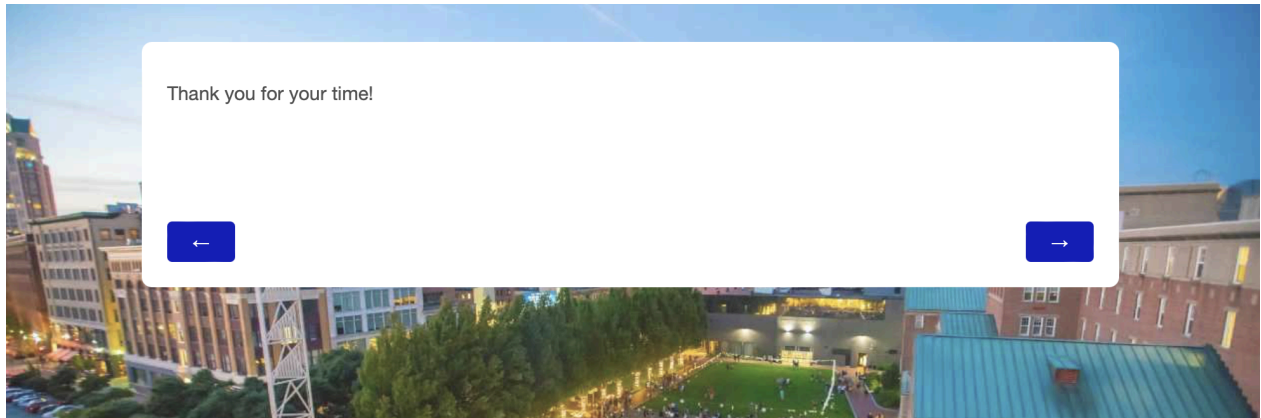
Q9 If you could share one highlight with high school students who are considering JWU, what would that highlight be?



If you could share one highlight with high school students who are considering JWU, what would that highlight be?

← →

Thank you for your time!



## Justification of Questions

### Q1 Gender

We decided to structure the survey with simple demographic questions that gradually engage the respondents as opposed to giving them deeper inquiries too soon to reduce the chance of deterring them from finishing the survey. This approach is often referred to as the “traffic cone” approach. Including gender as one of the demographic traits is crucial as we learned from the focus groups that there are aspects of college that differ between males and females. The concerns a female has when searching for a college may not be shared by their male counterparts and vice versa. Understanding where these differences lie can prove to be beneficial when prospecting by gender, as more efficient tactics can be applied. The same mindset is adopted for those who identify as non-binary or third gender. Their perspective is likely to differ from those who hold traditional gender roles and must ensure we not only recognize that but that we’re accounting for how their time at Johnson & Wales has treated them as well.

### Q2 Which college are you enrolled in?



The college you're enrolled in can play a role in you having different experiences than your peers who are enrolled in a different college. The students who are enrolled in the College of Business interact with completely different professors, faculty, and classwork than those who are in the College of Food Innovation & Technology. The students in culinary have 6-hour lab classes and typically live on the Harborside campus as that's where their labs are located. On the other hand, the business students primarily live in the Downcity area as that's where their classroom experiences are located. Between these two colleges alone, it's evident that there is a drastic difference between the academic and social journeys of the students enrolled in their respective colleges.

Q3 Which campus do you live on?

Most college first-year students all share a consolidated campus but Johnson & Wales offers two locations as living options for their students. There's the aforementioned Downcity campus which is integrated into the most urban area of Providence. They are in closer proximity to city events and restaurants compared to the students who reside on Harborside. On the Harborside campus, they have easier access to facilities such as the gymnasium and the Wildcat lounge. The dorm and dining setup is also different between the two campuses which is likely to impact their satisfaction with departments such as Residential Life and the dining facilities. Depending on their lifestyle they may find themselves having to move around between campuses to attend events, exercise, or go to class; all of which have a lasting effect on a student's journey.

Q4 Thinking about college during high school made me nervous

Throughout the discussions held in the focus groups, we found anxiety and uncertainty to be a common theme amongst the first-year students. Whether it was looking for the right

university, unsure of their career choice, or what life would be like on campus they expressed nervous feelings associated with the college decision-making process. This question helps give us a baseline for which majors might be experiencing anxiety on the highest level so then admissions can create a better sense of comfortability for those profiles of students.

Q5 I found the following forms of outreach to be helpful

One of the objectives of this research effort is to understand which types of outreach resonate most with prospective students or, in other words, which forms of outreach worked most effectively for the current first-year students to find interest in JWU. During the focus groups, we found that different students responded best to different forms of outreach so the inclusion of this question aims to discover which outreach may need improvement as well as which ones are already optimized.

Q6 How important were the following in choosing JWU

When searching for colleges, each student has various aspects that they're looking for out of a university, and that was reflected in the conducted focus groups. Students provided a multitude of factors that contributed to them choosing JWU that we felt should be evaluated and investigated further. JWU has responded to some student requests in recent years, such as allowing pets on campus. Incorporating this as an option allows us to gauge whether recent efforts are worth continuing, and what to consider in the future. Responses gathered from this question will essentially give admissions a range of options to leverage in their marketing efforts to communicate the university's value.

Q7 When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about

Throughout the focus groups, first-year students voiced a common sentiment that they felt uninformed or even misinformed about certain areas of university life. We found that having a level of confusion about said areas contributed to anxiety and struggle in the student's transition into their college careers. Discovering what these pain points are for students will allow admissions to better address what information students deem necessary upon entering JWU.

Q8 The following activities contributed to me choosing JWU

Dissimilar to question 6 about choosing JWU, this one attempts to understand how admissions activities specifically made an impact on committing to JWU. Answers to this question will be an opportunity for admissions to improve on their own designed activities and to what extent they impact a student's commitment to the school.

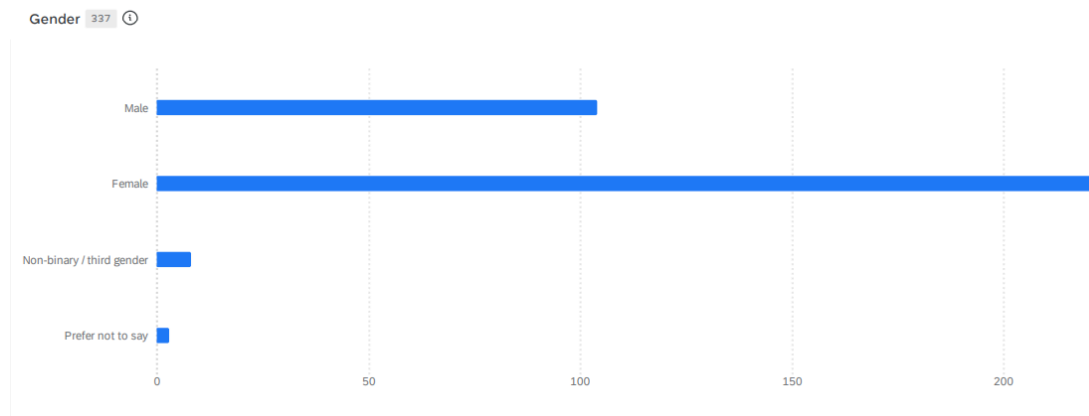
Q9 If you could talk to high school students who are considering where to go to college, what would be the one thing about Johnson & Wales University you would tell them?

Concluding the survey with an open-ended question allows for more specific feedback from students. When analyzing the responses to this question, we are searching for common themes amongst students so admissions marketing can leverage popular opinions to their advantage. This allows us to identify new problems worth exploring that we may not have been able to cover in the rest of the survey. Having less structure to the question and encouraging more open thoughts from respondents may provide us with key information that we may not have received otherwise.

## Chapter 4: Frequency Distribution

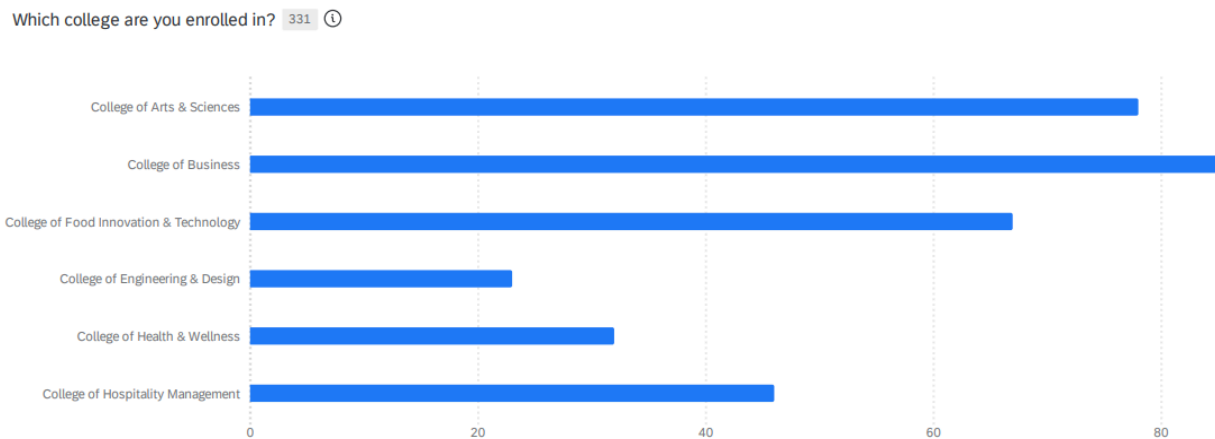
### Frequency Distributions

## Frequency Distribution #1



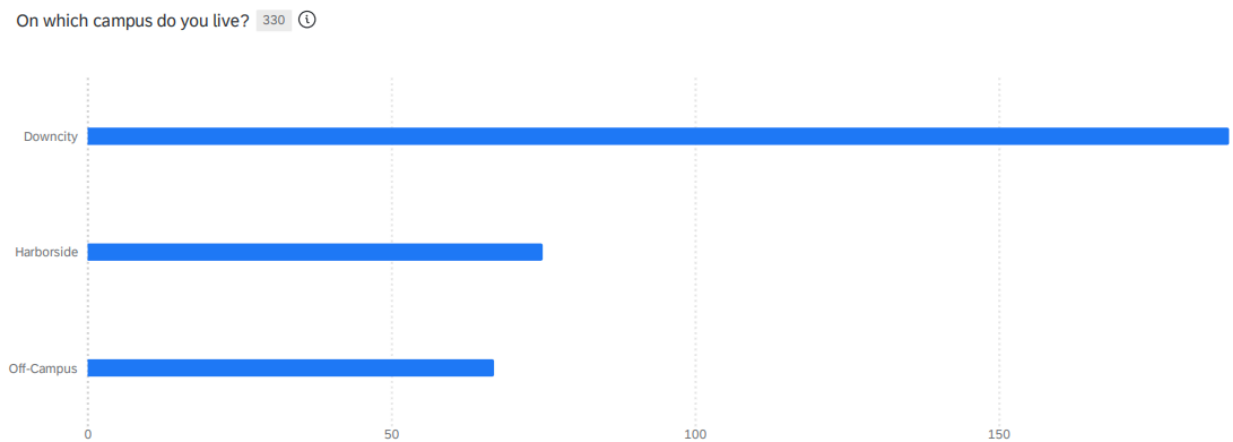
As shown in the frequency distribution above, there was a higher response rate for females than males, with almost 250 responses being female, and about 100 being male. Although our goal was to have closer to a 50/50 split, it is important to remember that there is about a 70/30 population of females to males that attend this university, so the response numbers reflect an already understood gender split. We were still able to find workable insights from all genders, from the responses we gathered.

## Frequency Distribution #2



As shown above, in Frequency Distribution #2, we were able to gain responses from all of the colleges that Johnson & Wales University has. From each of these colleges, we gathered responses from enough first-year students to create a relatively even spread. As shown, there were the most responses from the College of Arts & Sciences as well as the College of Business.

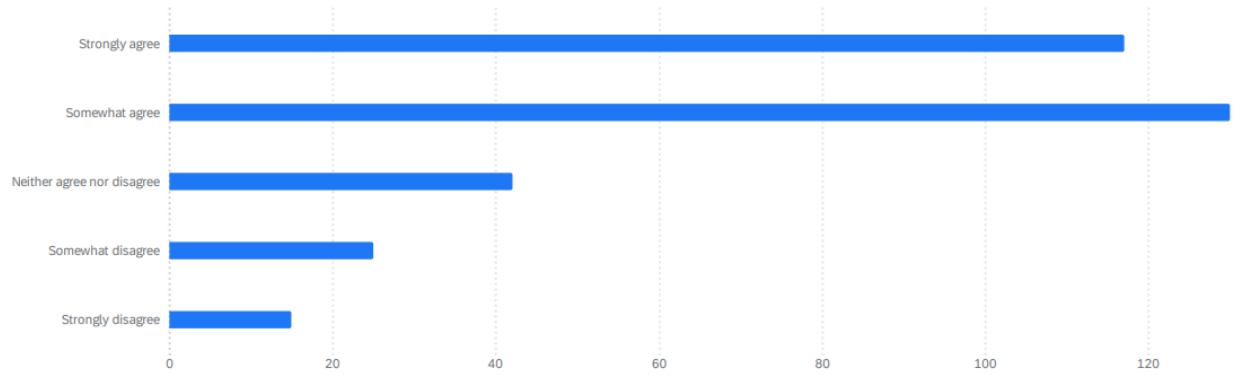
### Frequency Distribution #3



As shown above, in Frequency Distribution #3, we were able to gain access to responses from all of the types of living situations that first-year students are in. With Downcity making up about 200 of the responses, and Harborside & Off-campus living making up a little over 100 of the responses, we can make recommendations with all living situations considered.

### Frequency Distribution #4

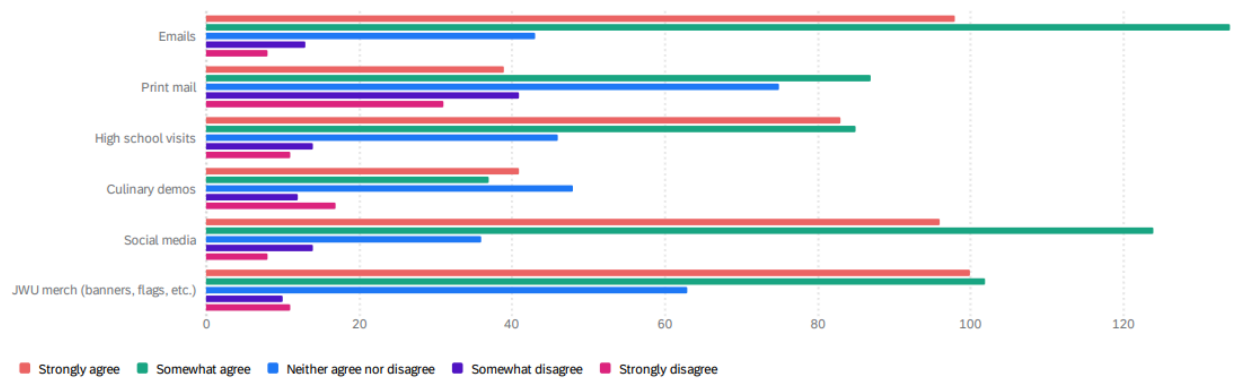
Thinking about college during high school made me nervous 329 ⓘ



When thinking about college during high school, the first-year students who were surveyed

Frequency Distribution #5

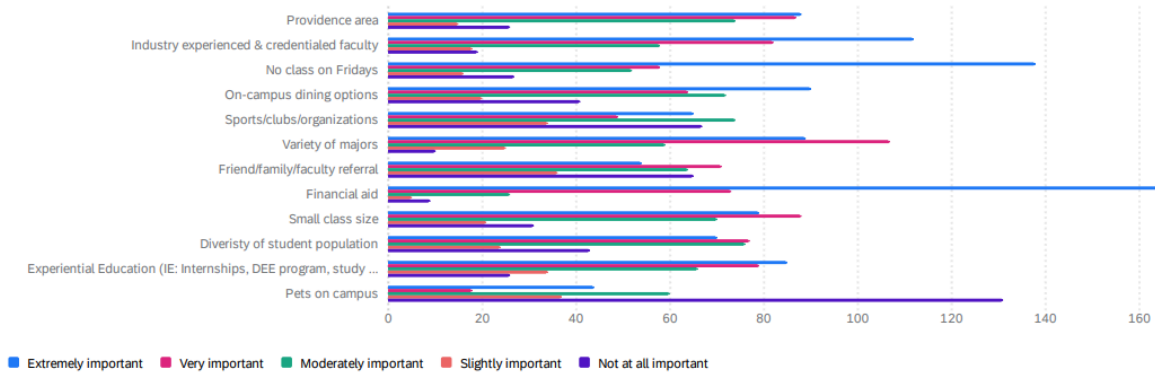
I found the following forms of outreach to be helpful 301 ⓘ



Needs description

Frequency Distribution #6

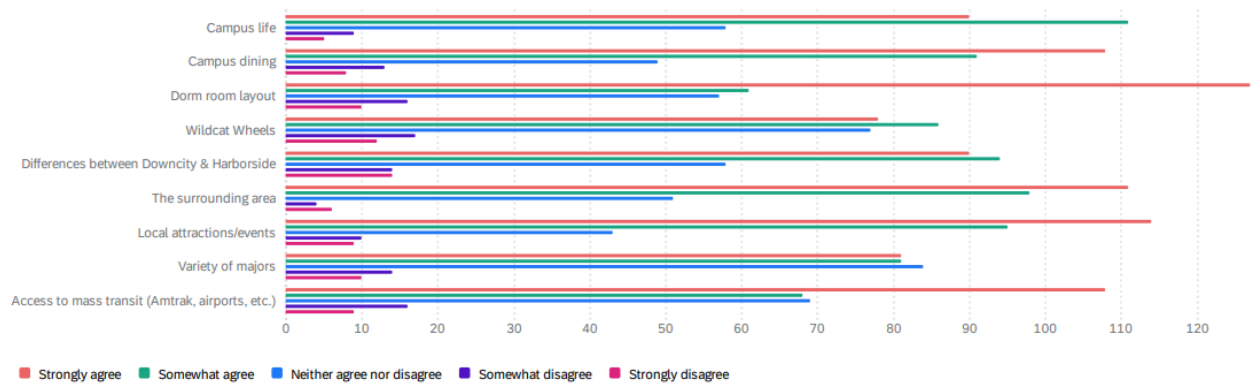
How important were the following in choosing JWU 291 ⓘ



## Needs description

## Frequency Distribution #7

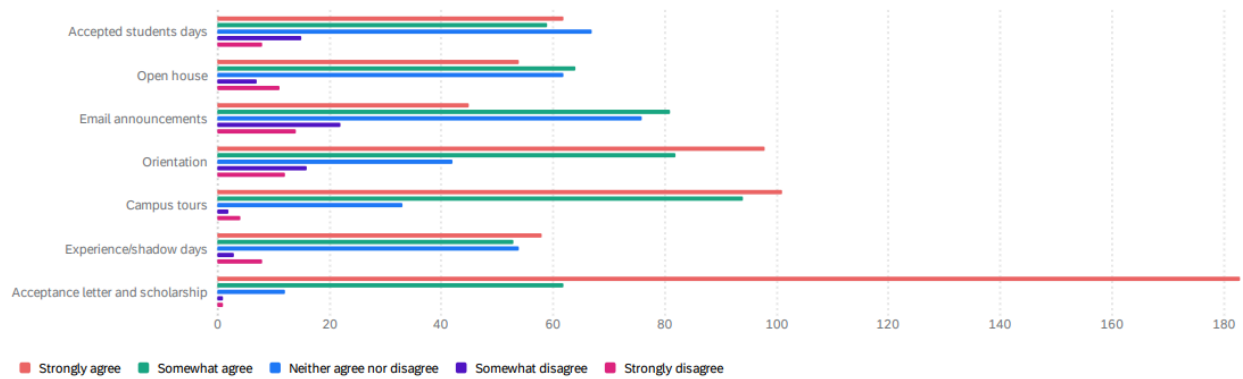
When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about 273 ⓘ



## Needs description

## Frequency Distribution #8

The following admissions activities contributed to me choosing JWU 263 ⓘ



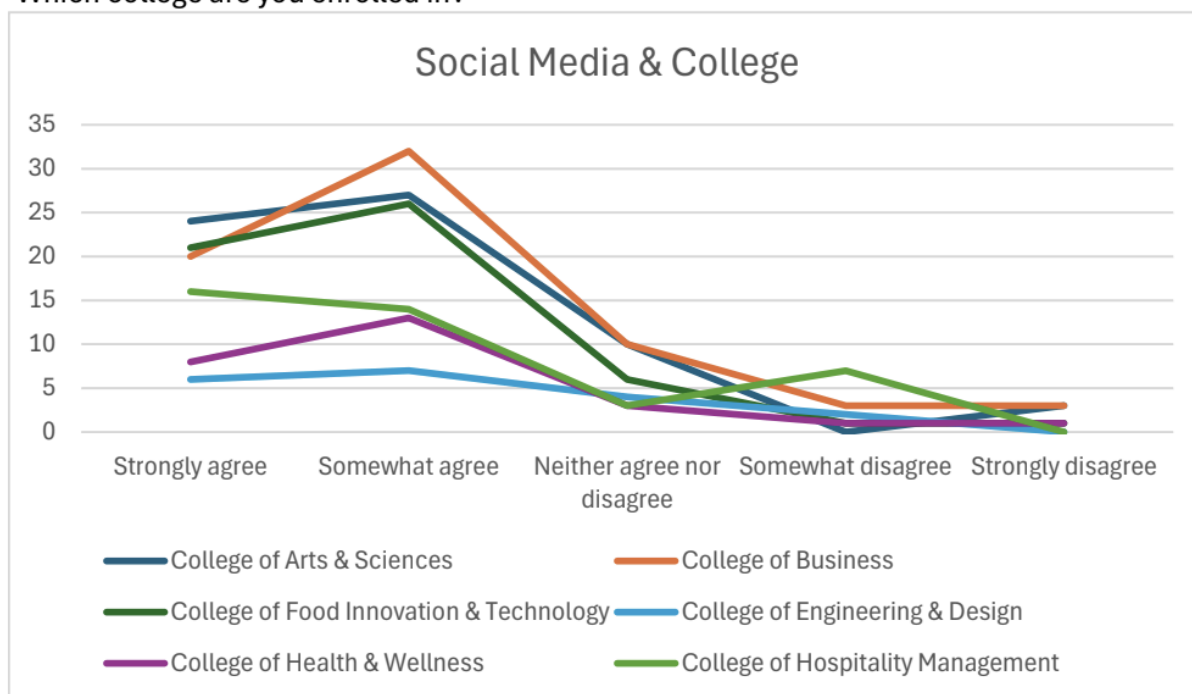
As shown by the frequency distribution above, we can tell that the acceptance letter and scholarship were picked as the most engaging admissions activities. Campus tours were also picked by responders as important as they relate to activities contributing to the decision to choose Johnson and Wales.

## Relationships / Cross Tabulations:

### Crosstab #1: Social Media & College



Which college are you enrolled in?

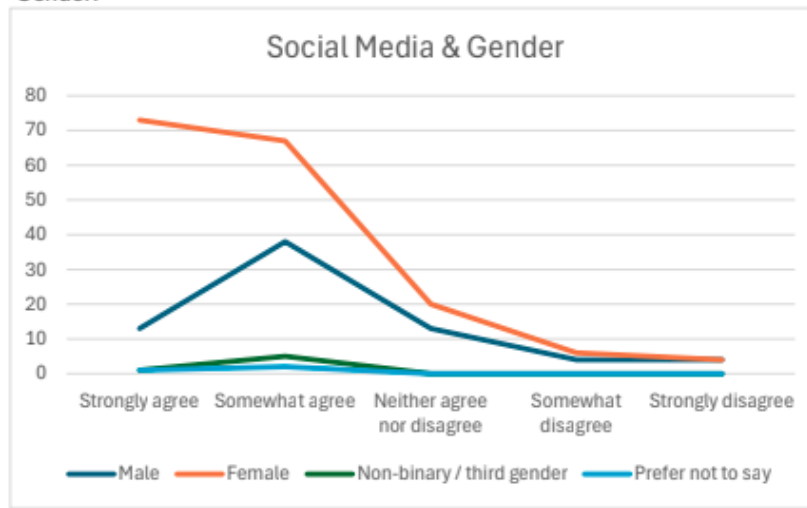


As shown above in crosstab #1, when thinking about social media, students from each of the different colleges felt as if they agreed that they liked the social media output from the university. With most of the colleges peaking somewhat agreement, social media is certainly a form of outreach that the first-year students found as positive.

Crosstab #2: Social Media & Gender

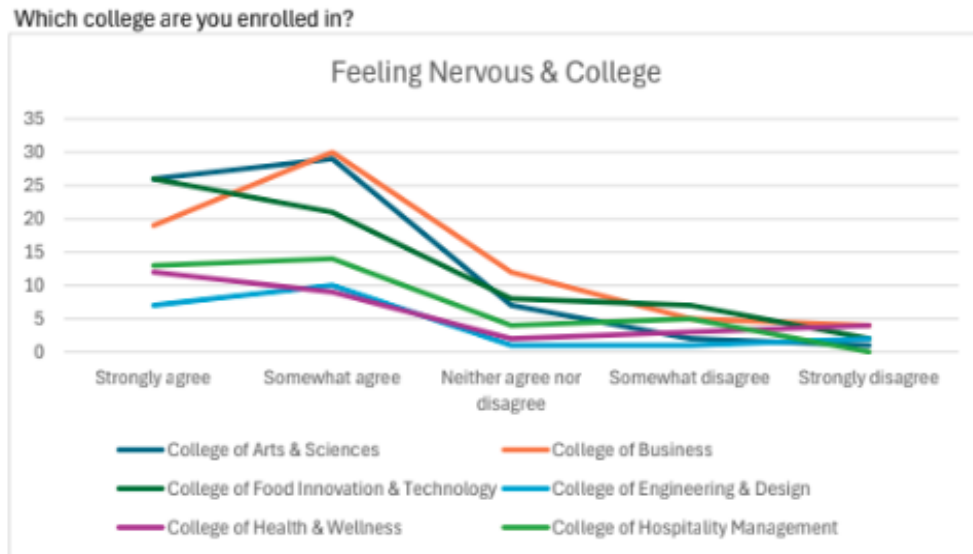
### I found the following forms of outreach to be helpful: Social media

Gender:



As shown above, in Crosstab #2, we observed a very strong response about social media. Based on this information, we can conclude that the females feel strongly that the JWU social media platforms were a helpful type of outreach, while the males still felt as though it was helpful, but did not feel quite as strongly in favor of the social media platforms as the females. With this information, we can conclude that the females like what is put out on social media by JWU, and the males do not care as much.

Crosstab #3: Feeling Nervous / College

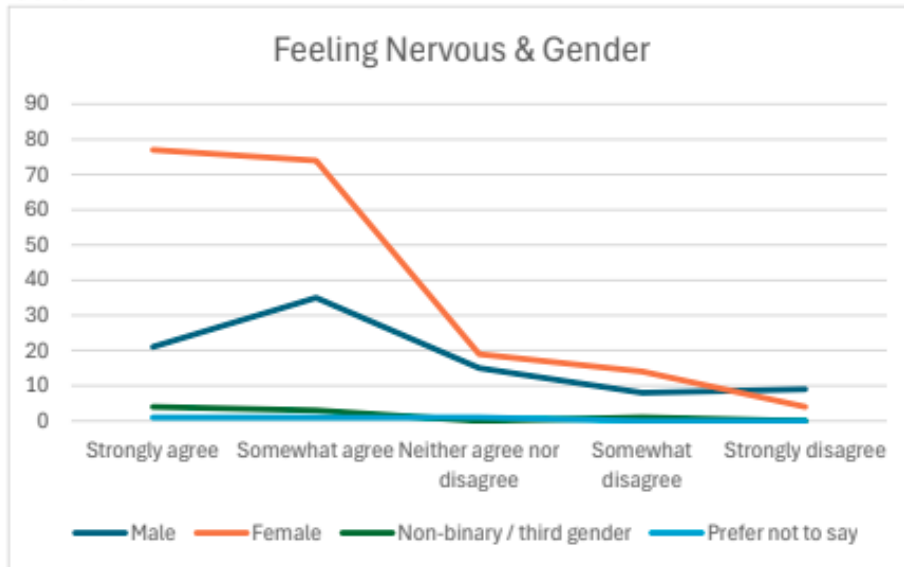


This chart shows the relationship between each college and the nervousness of students. As can be observed above in Crosstab #3, all of the first-year students within any college at Johnson & Wales University felt nervous from a ‘strongly agree’ or a ‘somewhat agree’ standpoint. It is particularly important to mention the strong response that can be seen within the College of Business. Of all the colleges, all first-year students have felt nervous however, we see the strongest response within the College of Business.

Crosstab #4: Feeling Nervous / Gender

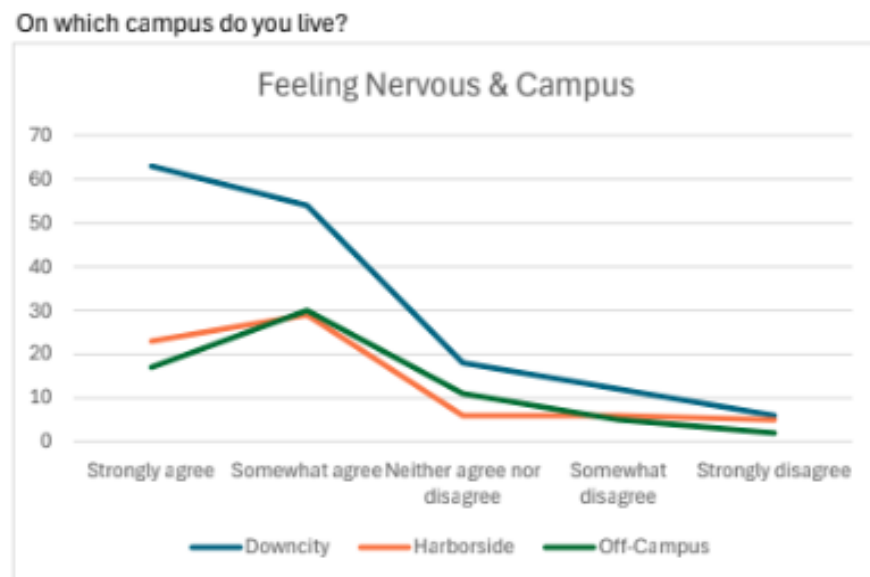
**Thinking about college during highschool made me nervous.**

Gender:



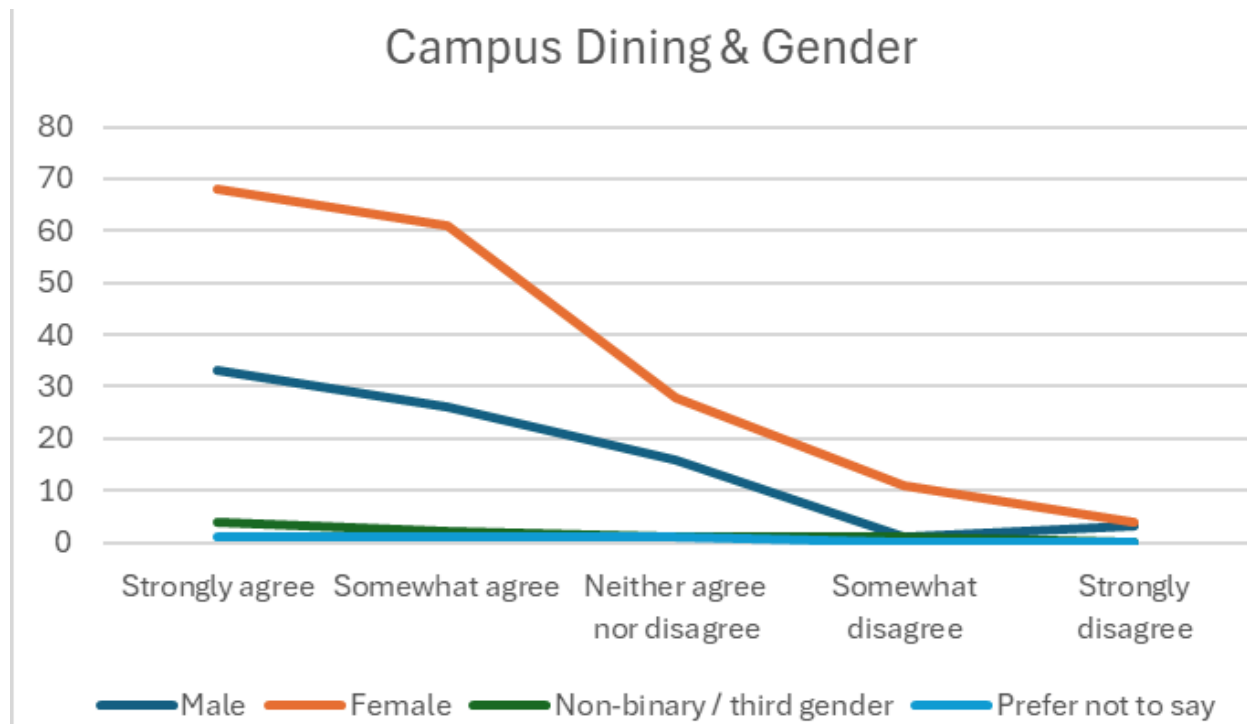
As can be seen in Crosstab #5 above, we observed a particularly strong response from females regarding feeling nervous thinking about college during high school. Further, we also observed a relatively strong response from the males to this as well. Therefore, we can conclude that the majority of first-year students felt nervous thinking about college during high school, with responses peaking at strongly agree, or somewhat agree for both genders.

#### Crosstab #5: Feeling Nervous / Campus



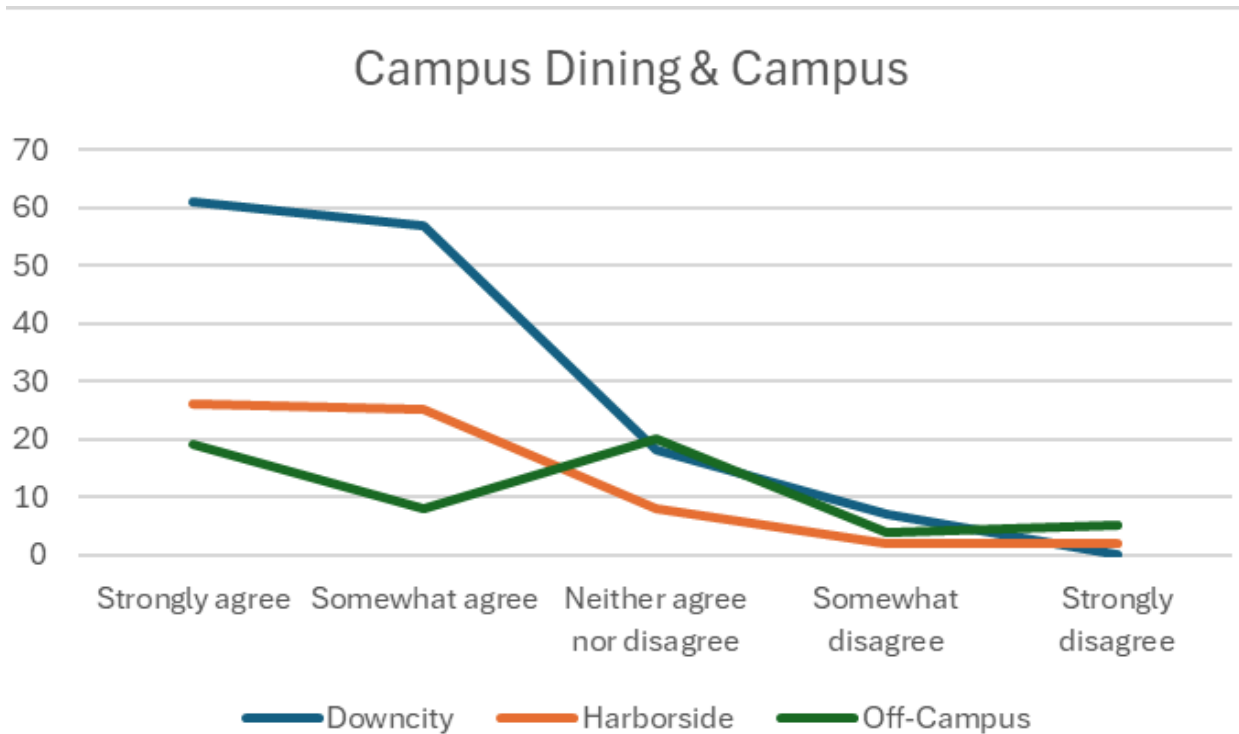
When looking at the feeling of nervousness broken up by campus, the data indicates above in Crosstab #4 that the vast majority of students who experienced feeling nervous when thinking about college during high school now live in the Downcity campus. It's relevant to note that while yes, most students felt nervous to some degree. However, there is a strong correlation between feeling nervous and living in Downcity, as the two greatest peaks in the data are shown in "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" for those who live in Downcity.

#### Crosstab #6: Campus Dining / Gender



As can be seen above in Crosstabulation #6, females showed a particularly strong reaction to wanting more information about campus dining. Makes also peaked at strongly agree, so it can be concluded that no matter the gender, most first-year students would like to see more information about campus dining and its options.

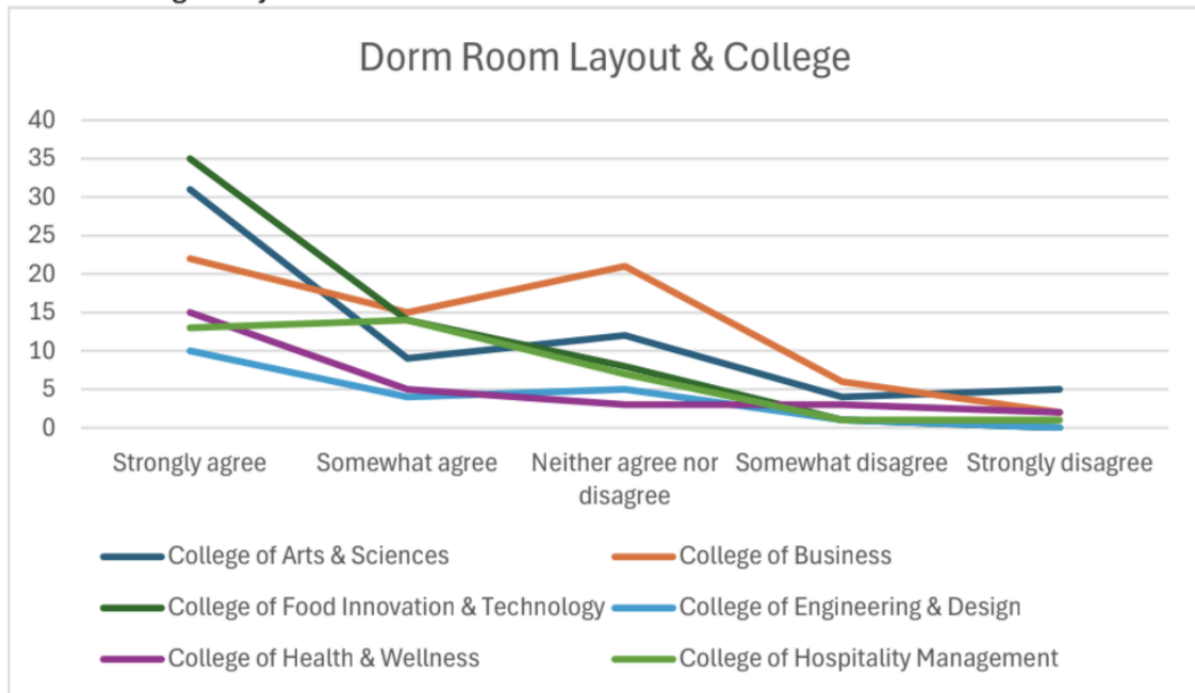
Crosstab #7: Campus Dining / Campus



When looking at campus dining in terms of students wanting more information about it before coming to JWU (broken up by campus), the data indicates above in Crosstab #7 that the vast majority of students agreed that they would have liked more information about it across all campuses. The greatest peaks in the data for both downcity and harborside students are shown in “strongly agree”, while off-campus students peaked at “neither agree nor disagree”, with “strongly agree” following close behind.

Crosstab #8: Dorm Room Layout / College

Which college are you enrolled in?

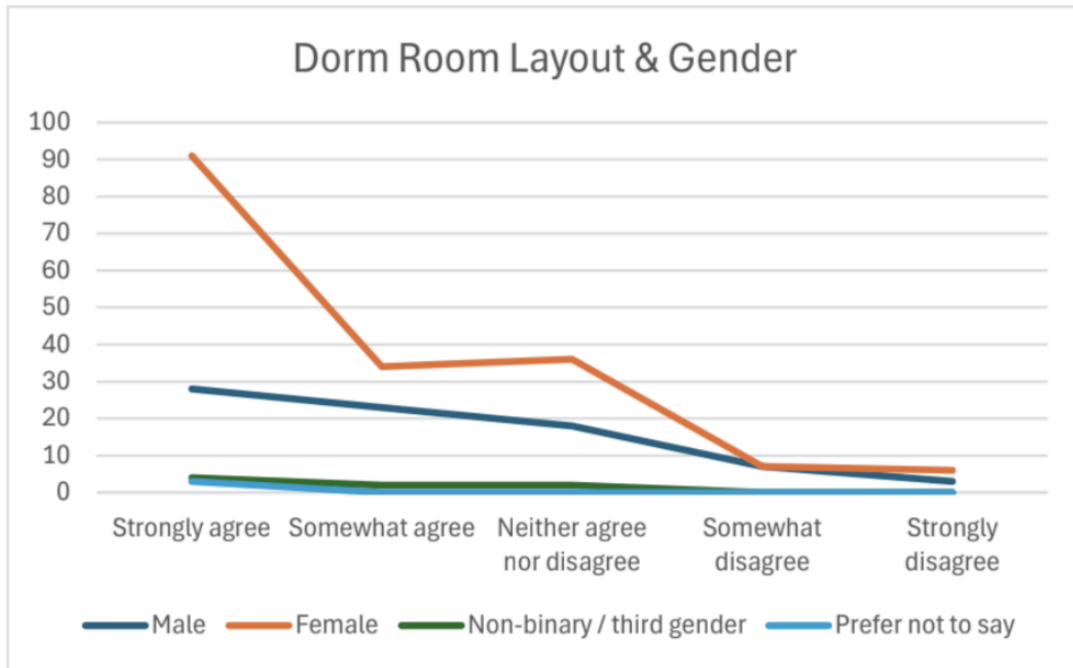


With dorm room layout in terms of students wanting more information about it before coming to JWU (broken up by college), the data indicates above in Crosstab #8 that the majority of students in the College of Arts & Sciences, Food Innovation & Technology, Health & Wellness, Business, and College of Engineering & Design all strongly agreed that they would have liked more information about dorm room layout before coming onto campus. Only one college, Hospitality Management, didn't peak at "strongly agree". Instead, they peaked at "somewhat agree". Nonetheless, all of the students in every college peaked at some level of agreement.

Crosstab #9: Dorm Room Layout / Gender



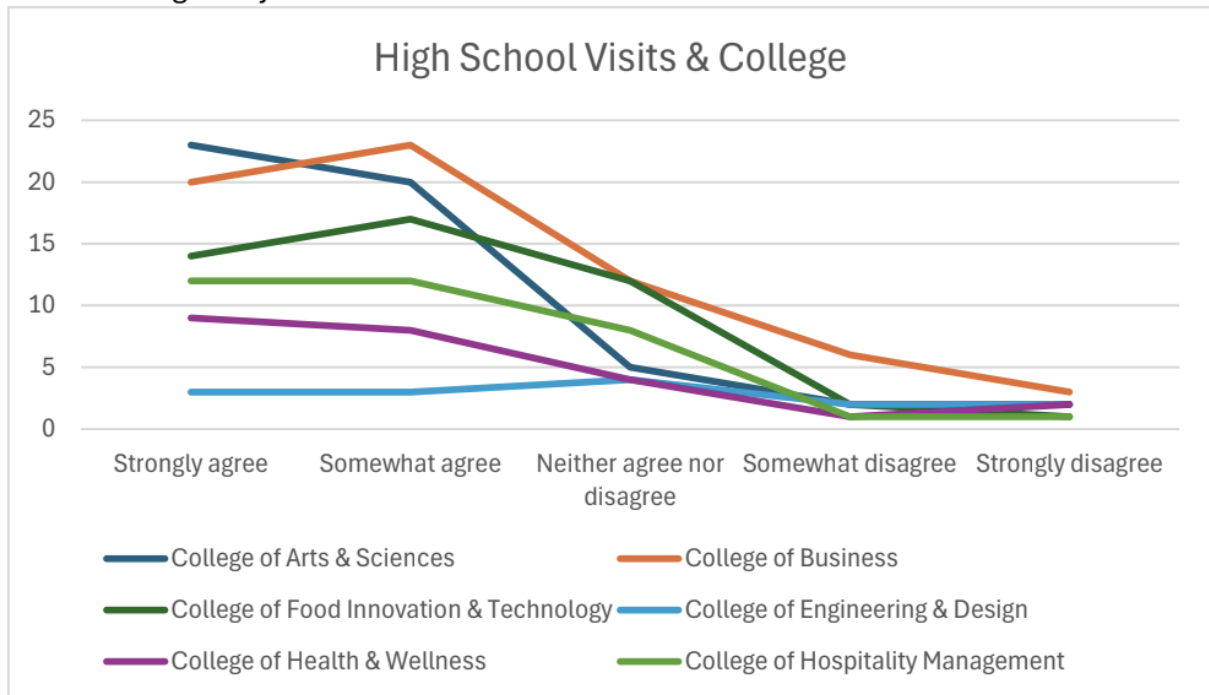
**When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about: Dorm room layout**  
Gender:



Needs description

Crosstab #10: Highschool Visits / College

Which college are you enrolled in?



Need description

## Summary of Cross-Tabulation Analysis:

### *Social Media*

Among the results of cross-tabulations #1 & #2, they provide great details about some key demographics of the respondents as a whole. These results stay consistent throughout the survey results regarding the preference for social media and college enrollment. For example in Crosstab #2, when identifying the importance of social media outreach based on gender, we can see that although all the responses are in agreement, the female responses have an increased level

of agreement than the rest. This tells us that the females are particularly enjoying the current social media outreach, and the males still enjoy it, but don't feel as strongly. Further, These results can be attributed to the natural student body of the university, as around 60% of the university's student body identifies as female. Thus makes sense why the results are skewed in the direction of the female response.

### *Nervousness*

Through cross-tabulations #3 and #4, we can see the questions and results are rather similar. Both questions are framed to understand the respondents' level of “nervousness” in their anticipation of college. The questions differ as one accesses gender and the other accesses their college of study. In terms of Crosstab #4, the data displayed in this crosstabulation examines the relationship between nervousness as it relates to college admissions and gender. We can see that females tended to have strong feelings of nervousness with the peak at strongly agreeing and then somewhat agreeing. The male population however seemed to somewhat agree with being nervous about the college decision-making process. In regards to Crosstab #3, the data shows that the “College of Health and Wellness” and the “College of Food Innovation and Technology” respondents showed an increased level of nervousness, as opposed to all the other majors surveyed that shared an equal level of nervousness.

When comparing Crosstab #5's results with the unanimous agreement of the other crosstabs regarding nervousness, there are some key findings. Crosstab #5, “On which campus do you live” when assessing the respondents on nervousness based on which campus they live, these results differ. Although Harborside and Off Campus respondents share a common agreement in nervousness, Downcity respondents show an increased level of agreement in being

nervous about campus living. This could be attributed to the campus location being in Downtown Providence and the negative assumptions that are attached to city life.

### *Campus Dining*

Among cross-tabulations #6 and #7, when asked “When considering JWU, I would have liked more information about Campus Dining, compared to gender and campus location. All respondents surveyed peaked at a strong agreement to want more information about Campus Dining.

### *Dorm Room Layout*

When asked about whether they would have liked more information about dorm room layout, both Cross tabulations #8 & #9 came in with either strong agreeance or somewhat agreement that they would have liked more insight into dorm room layout. Overall, across all genders and colleges, we observed this preference.

### *High School Visits*

In cross tabulation #10, although the majority of our respondents are located in the Downcity campus, The Downcity respondents peaked at strongly agree in terms of the importance of their high school visit. This unanimous agreement can be attributed to their campus visit influencing them to come and live in one of the Down City campus locations.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations**

### **Answer to the Research Question**

Throughout the semester, our investigation has effectively answered the question: “Which Admissions Marketing strategies exert the most significant influence on first-year students' decision to enroll at JWU?" The answer to this question is directly derived from survey responses as well as direct feedback given to us through focus group participants. According to

the collected data the most effective forms of outreach included social media platforms, emails, JWU merchandise, and high school visits.

## Conclusions

When it comes to factors that influenced first-year students to choose JWU, our research uncovered and confirmed the mediums of marketing that most resonated with those committing to JWU as well as provided information we can use to improve efficiency on outreach for future prospects. Our research uncovered the most effective forms of outreach were emails and social media, however, focus group participants stated doing their research about the University is what ultimately determined their decision. JWU's website was heavily used to obtain more information which was user-friendly and informative. Social media seemed to be more popular amongst the female population over the male, we would have to conduct further research to determine what factors may influence this. The 3rd most received form of outreach was merch, however, we noticed that the merch seemed to resonate more with females than it did with male respondents. This leads me to the next conclusion which is information participants would have liked more information about when considering JWU included surrounding area and local attractions/events, and tied for third is campus dining and dorm room layout. Campus dining and dorm room layout were also notable mentions in the focus groups. It's also important to note that regardless of gender and college all respondents were equally nervous when it came to thinking about college which

The following admission activities that contributed to their decision to choose JWU were the acceptance letter with confetti stating the scholarship, the confetti was most notable by focus group participants. Next up was campus tours and orientation. When it comes to the factors that

were most important when choosing JWU the top three factors were the financial aid, no class on Fridays, Industry experience & credentialed faculty.

Finding effective marketing tactics to appeal to incoming freshmen is a daunting task. Over sixteen weeks our research team collected data from current freshmen at Johnson & Wales to determine the marketing tactics that appealed to them while they were looking for colleges.

## Recommendations

Through our team's research, we have developed a list of recommendations for the Johnson & Wales Admissions team as they pertain to the data collected and shown in the frequency distributions and crosstabs above.

### Social Media/Email Outreach

The first major recommendation is that they shift their focus to the most effective forms of outreach. According to the collected data, the most effective forms of outreach, which played a major factor in students' decisions to enroll at JWU, were social media and emails. JWU's social media pages have been proven to be very popular amongst first-year students. Based on the cross-tabulation on question sixteen, the data shows the consistent popularity of social media amongst JWU first-years. The majority of female first-years strongly agreed that social media was a helpful form of outreach whereas male students primarily said that they somewhat agreed that social media was helpful. With this information in mind, it is recommended that social media posts should be constantly updated with pictures and videos of students on campus. They should remain transparent and organic in the sense that they show students what is going on on campus without it seeming staged or trying too hard. Further, there is a clear gap between the

preferences of social media content between males and females. The JWU admissions marketing department may consider shifting the focus to capture the currently missing male preferences & audiences; more research would be necessary to determine why social media posts resonate more with females than males.

Branching off of the most effective forms of outreach were emails. According to frequency distribution five, first-year students agreed that emails were an effective form of outreach. Emails are frequently sent out to students throughout their college careers with vital information regarding upcoming events, financial information, job opportunities, and much more. This makes it extremely important that students read the emails in full. A recommendation, which is made in consideration of the data as well as the focus groups, is that the emails be edited to remain short and concise. According to students, who participated in our first focus group, the informational emails sent out by the university are often “too long.” Because of this, students tend to not read the emails in full. By shortening the emails to provide only the necessary information, more students will read them.

### Nervousness on transition to college

The second recommendation that can be made to the JWU Admissions Marketing Office is to pay attention to the nervousness that first-year students experience when thinking about college in high school. Based on frequency distribution #4, we can observe that 240 out of 329 respondents to the question felt nervous about college in high school. Further, based on Crosstab #1, #2, and #3, we can observe that females, college of business students, and down-city students felt the most nervous about college when in high school. With this information, we can

recommend that the university shift some of its marketing efforts to address the strong reactions that we are observing among this year's first-year students.

### [Lack of Campus Dining Information](#)

The third recommendation that can be given to the JWU Admissions Marketing Office is to make campus dining information more accessible to incoming first-year students. Referring to frequency distribution #7, it is evident that the vast majority of first-year students would have liked more information about campus dining before coming to campus as evidenced by 259 out of 273 respondents answering that they felt this way; representing an outstanding total of 95% of incoming students. Moreover, based on Crosstabs #61 and #63, we can see that males, females, and students living on all campuses felt they would have liked more information regarding campus dining before coming to JWU. Using this analysis, we can recommend that the University should include campus dining in more of its marketing efforts to first-year students to address the want that this year's first-year students expressed.

### [JWU Link Accessibility/ Dorm Room Layout Information](#)

The fourth recommendation is regarding the overall accessibility of the JWULink to incoming first-years. JWULink is the primary source of university information and should be easy to navigate. One of the recurring requests, given to our team by the participants of both of our focus groups, is that they wished the JWULink was easier to navigate. It is often difficult to find desired information on the website. An example of this, discussed in focus group one was that participants wished there were detailed layouts of dorm rooms. Despite the beliefs of the participants, dorm room layouts are available on the JWULink, but they are difficult to find. By taking the time to revamp the university's website, we will not only help incoming first-years find the desired information needed to answer their questions but upperclassmen as well.



## High School Visits

The fifth recommendation, based on the data collected, is related to respondents' opinions on how high school visits played a role in their decision-making process. Concerning the campus students were currently residing on, they were asked how important high school visits were to the outreach from Johnson and Wales admissions. Based upon frequency distribution #5, and Cross Tabulation #6, students on the downcity campuses strongly agreed with the benefits high school visits had to offer. Students from the Colleges of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences strongly liked these visits the most. It is recommended from these results that there be an increase in the number of high school visits from Jwu to introduce prospective students to Johnson and Wales. Capitalizing these visits with information on our colleges of business and arts and sciences may be beneficial to these visits as well. The gender of respondents also agreed with the successful outreach of high school visitation. Because of the impact these visits had on respondents, increasing the amount of high school visits done by admissions is to be considered.

## Items That Did Not Grab Students' Attention

Our sixth and final recommendation is...

## Changes & Recommendations for Future Research

One of the major struggles that our research team faced was recruiting volunteers to complete our surveys and attend focus groups. To make our data viable and increase our range of responses, we were to meet a goal of three hundred responses from JWU students. Being that we wanted to collect responses from students living in Downcity and Harborside, we collected survey responses in teams around campus. This method gave us the desired number of responses, but it was not without difficulty. The majority of students were reluctant to fill out a survey. It

was not until we provided incentives, in the form of candy, that students became inclined to take the surveys. A similar conflict was faced with the focus groups our team conducted in February. Students were resistant to the idea of spending an evening answering questions about the admissions process at Johnson & Wales.

We found it was important to keep in mind that each one of the volunteers was ultimately asking themselves the question “What will I get out of this focus group?” or “What will I get out of filling out this survey.” Incentives, in the form of candy or JWU flex dollars, were proven successful in increasing student engagement; the hat that was raffled at the end of the focus group received good feedback from the participants. In addition to this, our team found that it was important to focus on maintaining momentum when it came to collecting data. With this project spanning over sixteen weeks, and only one meeting per week, there were times when our deadlines began to snowball.

In regards to our recommendation to mitigate nervousness within this transition to college, there is more to explore. Although we cannot diagnose why respondents felt an increased level of nervousness, in the future, we could better prepare ourselves to help understand this inherent feeling better. There is potential to explore more about this feeling, within the focus group and the survey. In future surveys, we should list various options that would make a first-year feel this level of nervousness. With these insights, we could better recommend strategies to mitigate this nervousness.

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