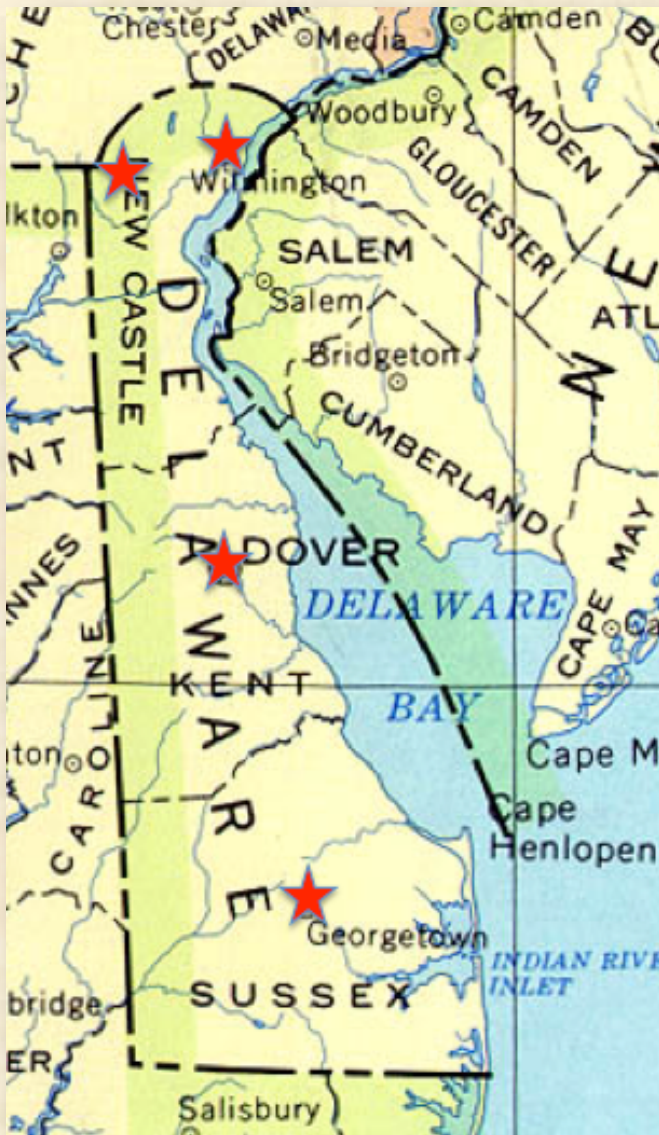


***The Importance of Place:
A pilot project comparing UD
students' experiences on the
Wilmington, Dover, Georgetown
and Newark campuses.***

Presentation to the
Center for the Study of Diversity
October 6, 2017

by
Dr. April Veness
Department of Geography
University of Delaware



TIMELINE:

Winter-Spring 2016 – meetings with Associate in Arts Program directors/advisors and Instructional Technology staff

Summer 2016 – presentation to AAP faculty and staff at their bi-annual meeting

Fall 2016 – recruitment of AAP research liaisons from all four campuses

Winter 2017 – orientation session for Geog445 and AAP liaisons on Newark campus

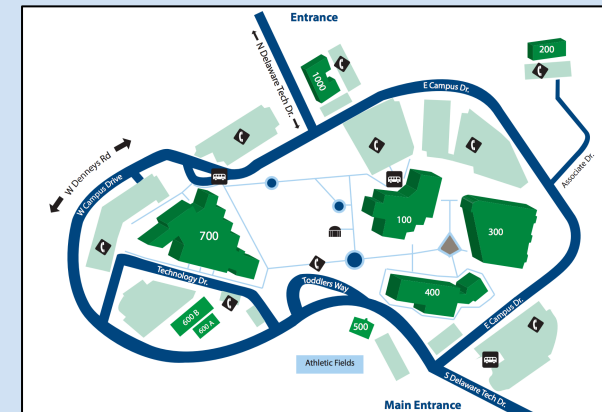
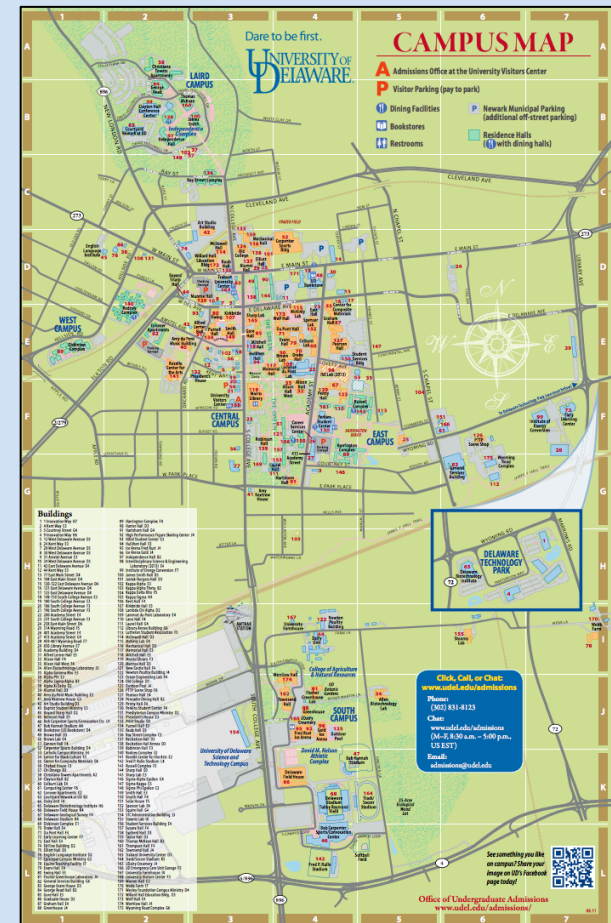
Spring 2017 – research collaboration between Geog445 and AAP students

Summer 2017 – presentation of findings from collaboration to AAP faculty and staff at their bi-annual meeting

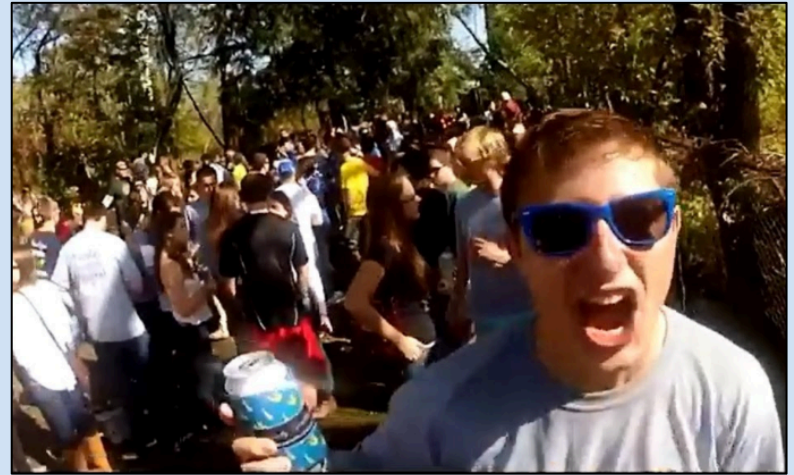
Fall 2017 – presentation of findings to Center for Study of Diversity

RECRUITMENT

Is the college experience for first and second year students on UD's four campuses the same?



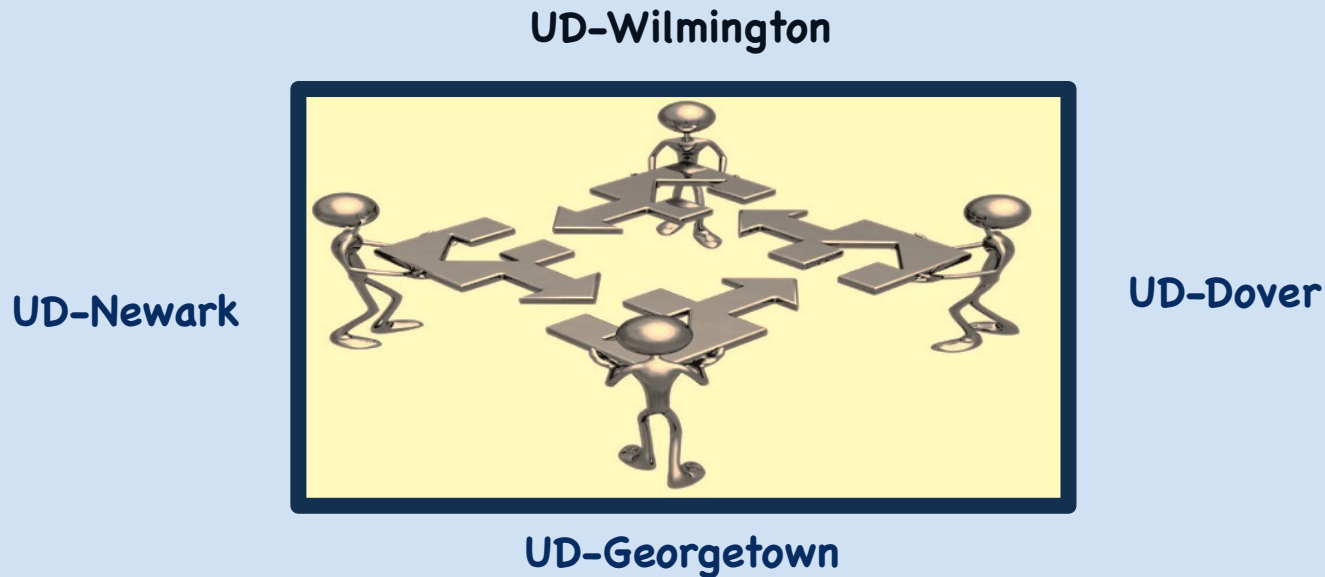
If there are differences in UD students' experiences
-- based on where students do their coursework and live --
what are those differences?



If there are campus-based differences in students' experiences, to what degree do these differences impact one's educational trajectory and career aspirations?



If these types of questions interest you, and you'd like to contribute information about your UD experience to this project, then we want to hear from you.



Apply to receive one credit of Independent Studies coursework in the spring semester, and be a *research liaison* to this project. A research liaison will work directly with professor Veness, her geography students and several former AAP students completing their bachelor's degrees on the Newark campus.

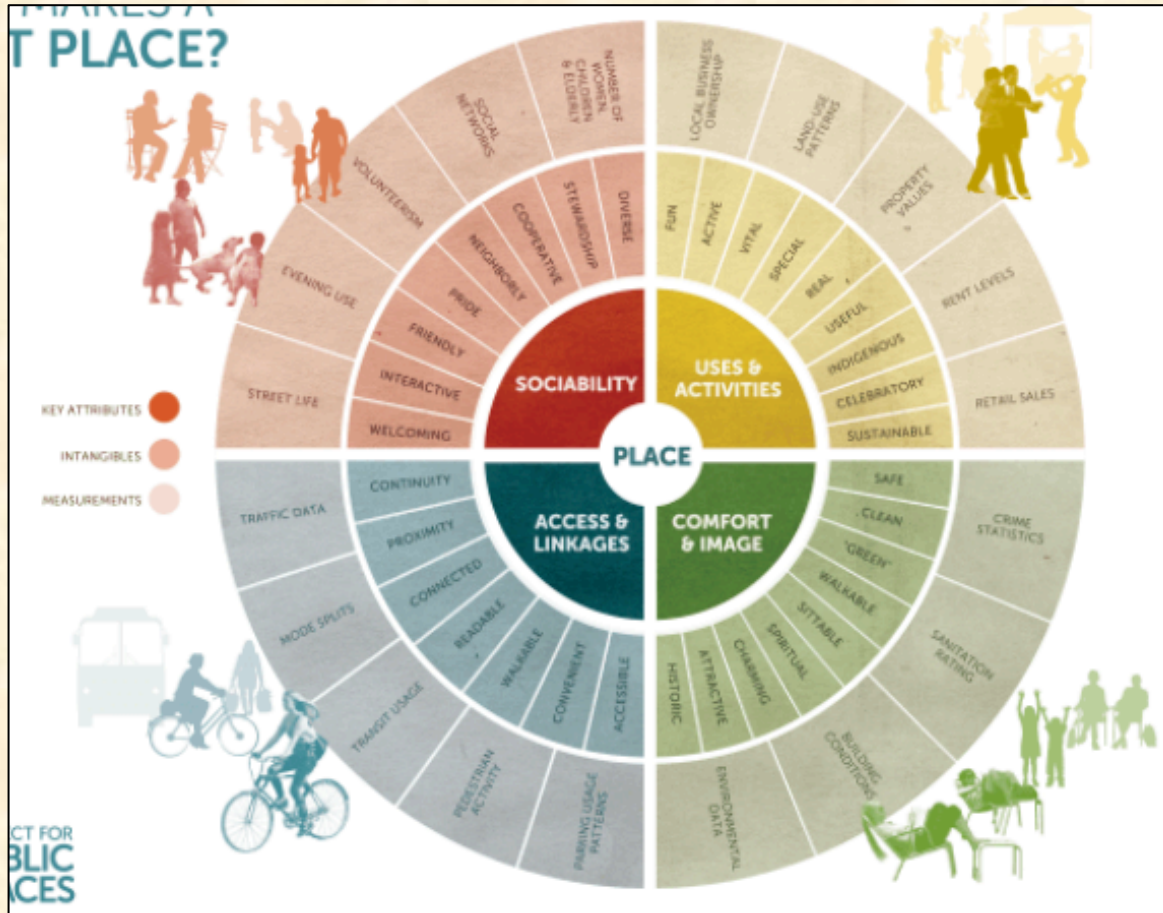
Together you will learn how research is conducted and how UD students' experience their college life on the four campuses.

Research Question:

How do the following factors collectively shape a UD student's college experience?

1. ***geographical location*** -- where the UD campus is located in the state of Delaware
2. ***physical setting*** -- or design/layout of outdoor and indoor campus spaces
3. ***social milieu*** -- or nature of demographics and interpersonal interactions
4. ***sense of place*** -- or intelligibility of spatial cues, sense of belonging

1. Selected findings from photo elicitation and field observations



What makes a great place?

Four key attributes:

- sociability
- uses and activities
- access and linkages
- comfort and image

Many intangibles:

- pride, cooperation,
- fun, realness, celebratory feeling
- readable, connected
- Sit-able, walk-able attractive, safe spaces

What is Place-making? - Project for Public Spaces, 2017.

https://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

Key elements of place that reinforce belonging:

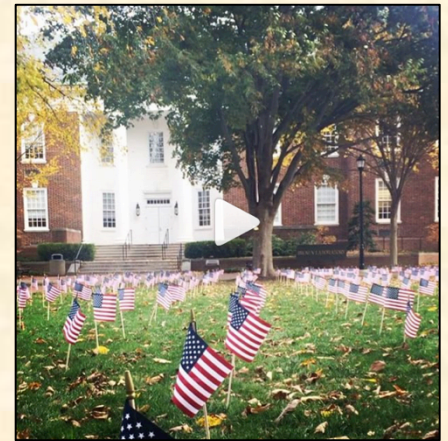
- Landscapes
- Relationships
- Storytelling
- Shared mission
- Brand

Rituals, ceremonies, seasonal events, and shared activities create belonging.

Brands augment experience, creating a sense of place where people thrive. It can create a feeling of hearth and home on campus. It can provide a grounding place for those who live on campus, or for commuters, a place to hang out in between events.

Use elements of geography, location, and key spaces to support the brand story.

Hayworth, 2015. *Compelling Branded Environments in Higher Education*, p.4.

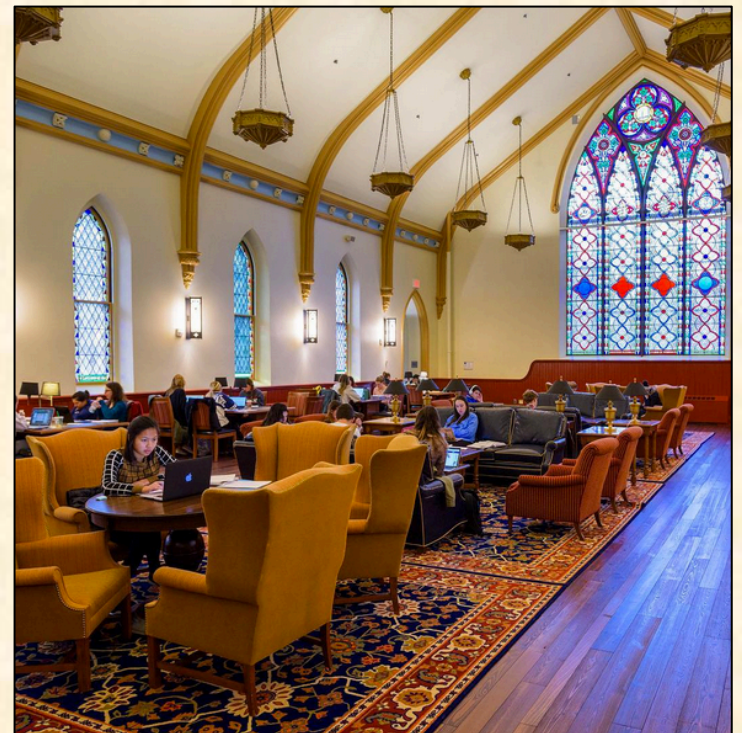


Colleges and universities should never underestimate the power of special, transformational, and even sacred spaces on their campuses.

From: Broussard, 2009, The Power of Place on Campus, Chronicle of Higher Education, 55(34): B12-13

There are four distinct types of sacred spaces:

1. ritual or ceremonial spaces
2. processional or exploring spaces
3. perspective-dominant spaces
4. refuge spaces



On AAP campuses, do UD students have productive place-making opportunities that enhance a sense of belonging?

Key elements of place that reinforce belonging:

- Landscape
- Relationships
- Storytelling
- Shared mission
- Brand

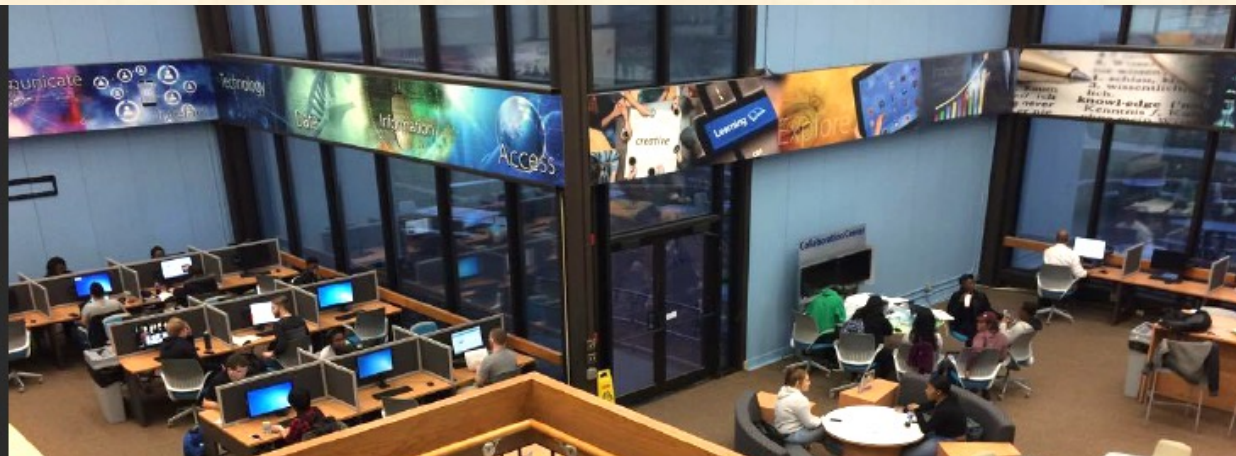


How feasible is it to gain the same sense of belonging if you are taking classes on a campus shared with students from another college?

What place-making actions can override elements of design that take away from belonging.

The DelTech Library

The library is fully open to AAP students to check out books, have a larger study area, or for just a quiet place to be in between classes.



The DelTech Cafe

The cafe is open most of the time during class hours and can be used to get lunch when you don't have the time to go off campus or as another study area.



The DelTech Gym

Dover AAP have full access to the gym and all of the equipment. Students come here when they have breaks in their schedules to workout by themselves or with friends.



Vending Machines

This is our vending machines/ study lounge. Most students come here in between classes to grab a quick snack if they do not have time to go to the cafeteria or off campus.



The Field

On nice days you can find AAP students here hanging out playing different sports together.



UD Teacher Alcove

Here is where you will find our professors during their office hours. They are always willing to spend extra time with students to help them better understand the material.



The Computer Lab

The computer lab is open to the AAP students anytime unless a class is in session. Here students can work on homework, check email, and print out papers.

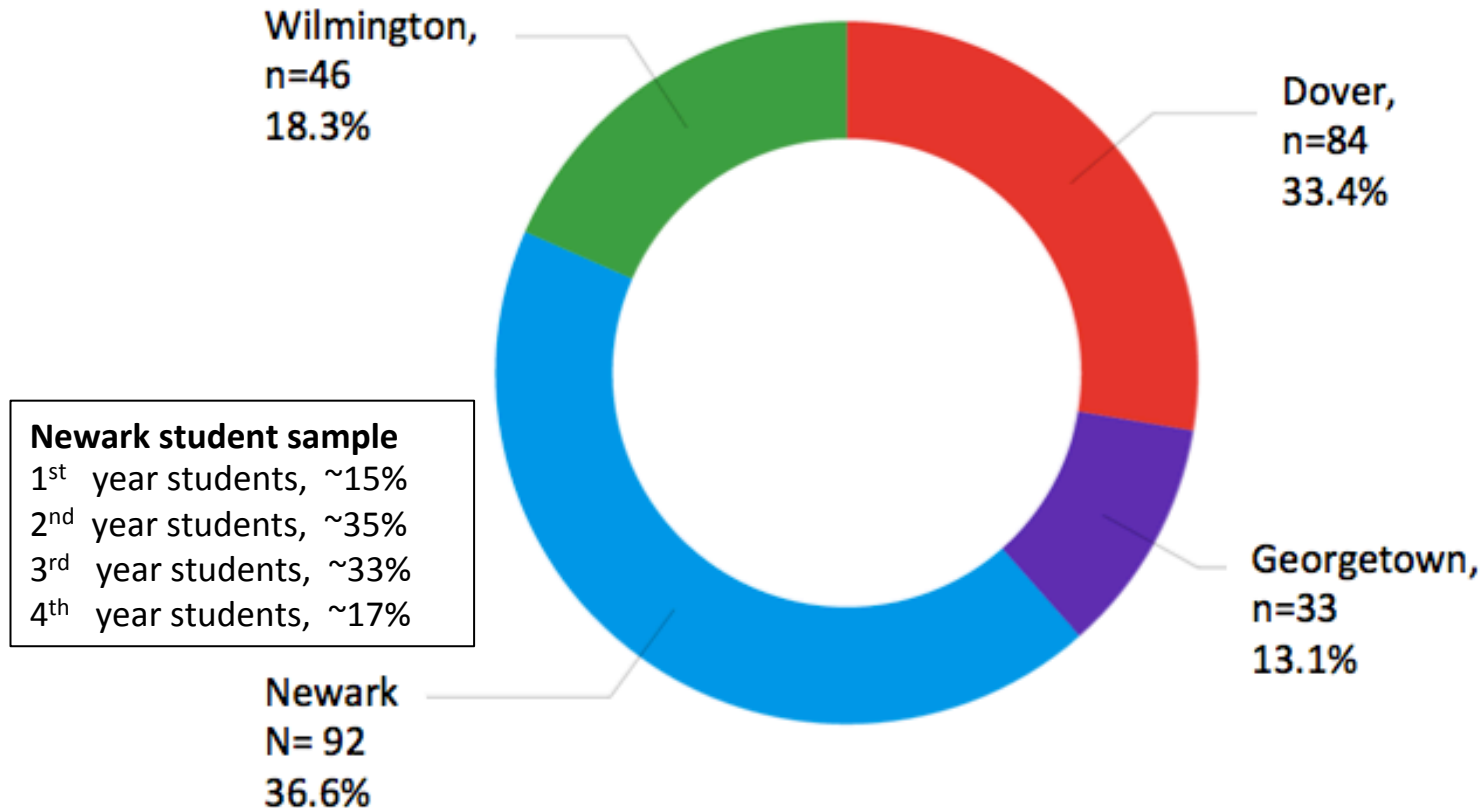


Mrs. Sandy

Mrs. Sandy is one of the first people you meet when attending classes on the Dover campus. She is available to help with information regarding anything about UD and she also helps with printing papers when you do not have your own printer. She gives us the information regarding events occurring on our campus and when Professors cancel classes.

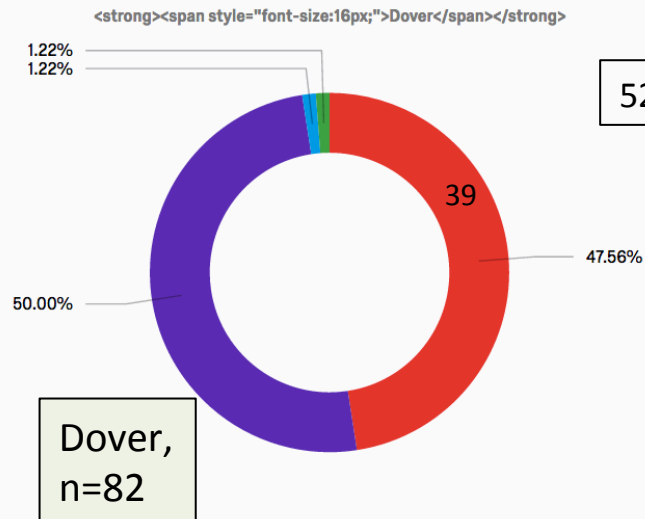


2. Selected findings from online survey – differences in makeup of student body

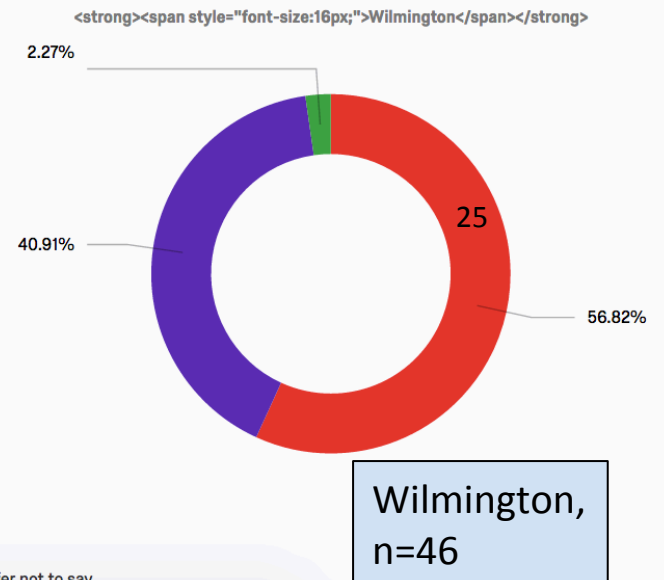
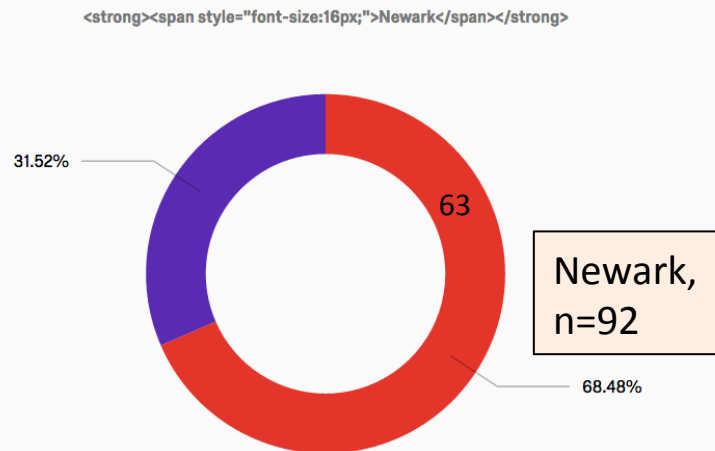
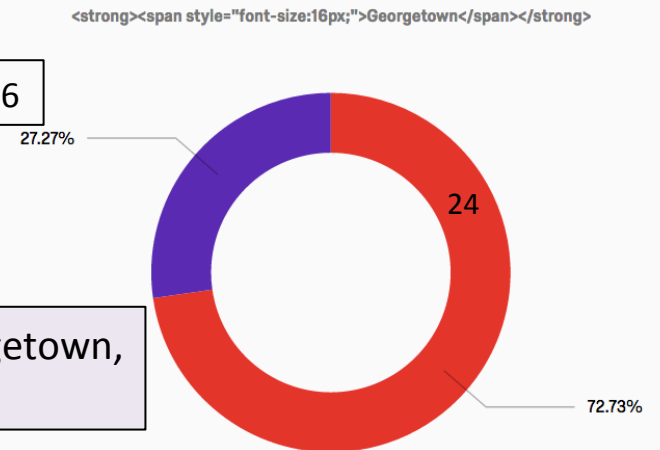


Survey Sample: 251 UD students

Gender of UD students in sample

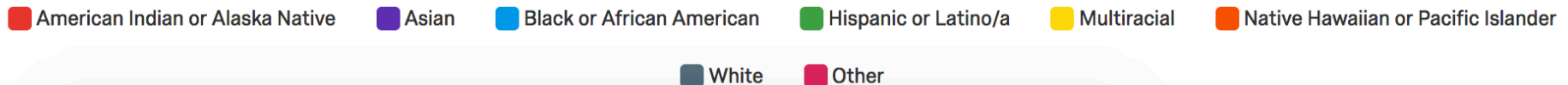
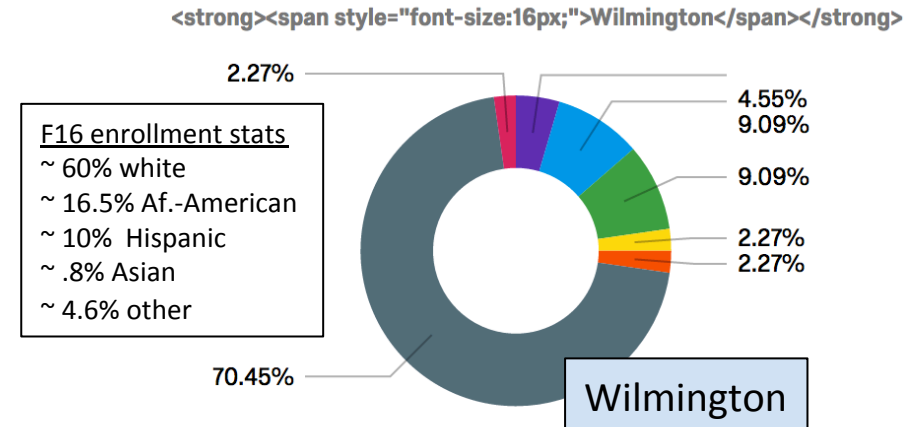
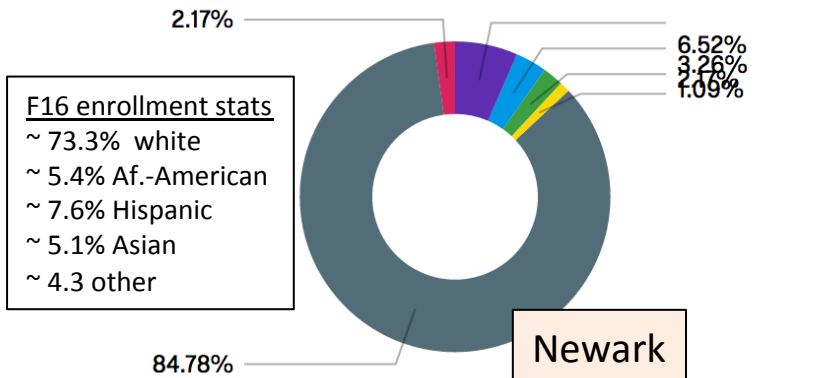
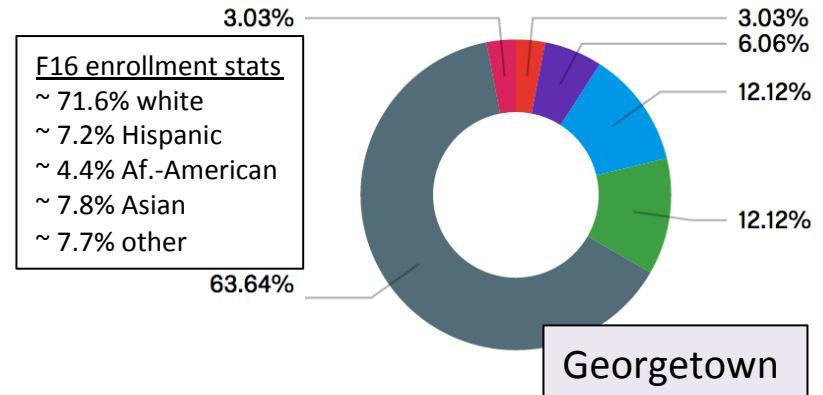
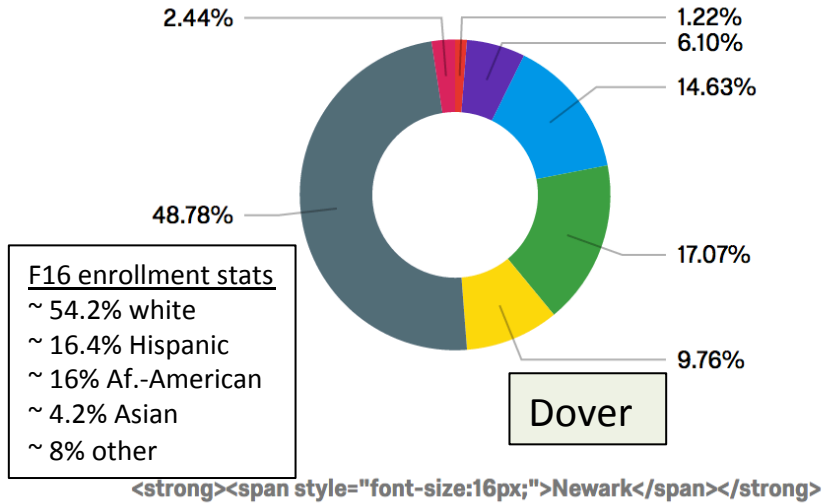


52% AAP students female F16

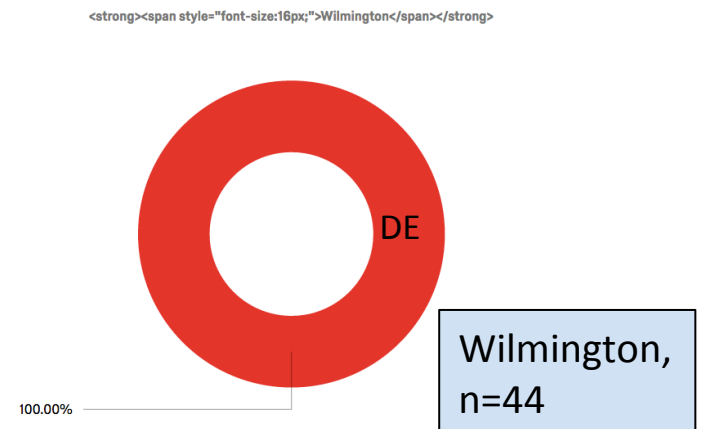
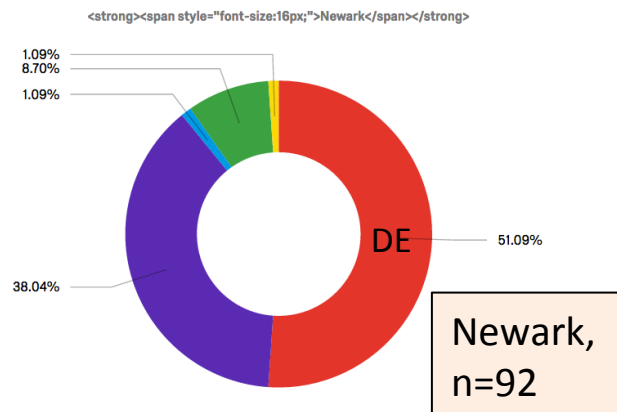
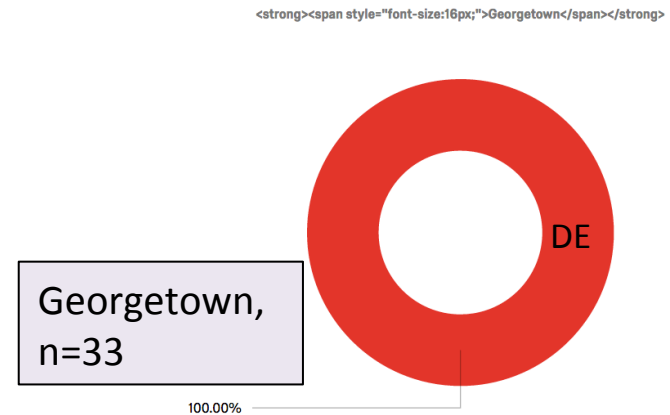
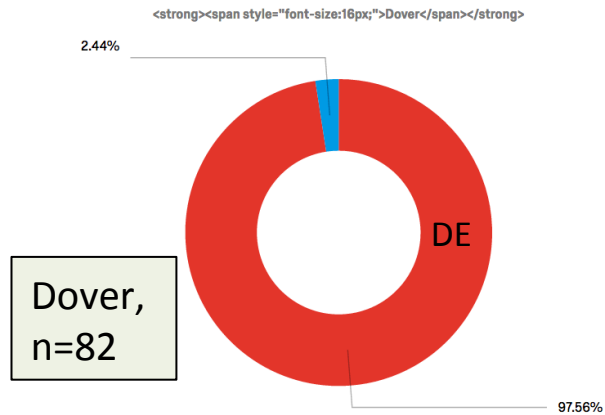


Female Male Non-Binary/Third Gender Prefer not to say

Ethnicity of UD students in the sample



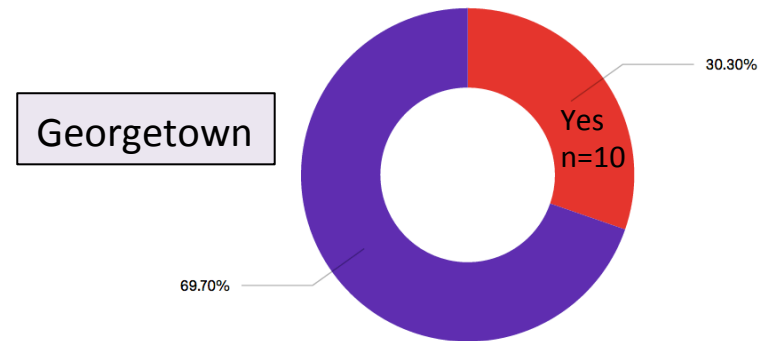
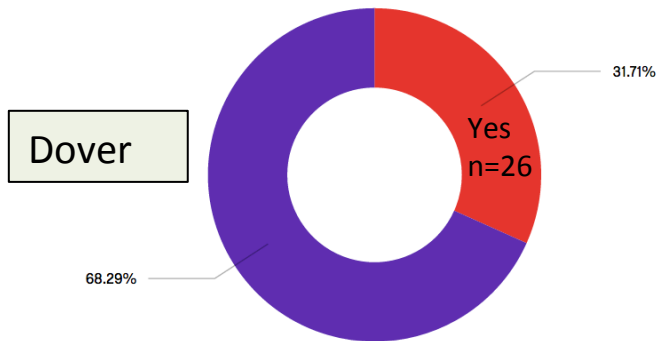
Legal residence of students in sample



Legend:

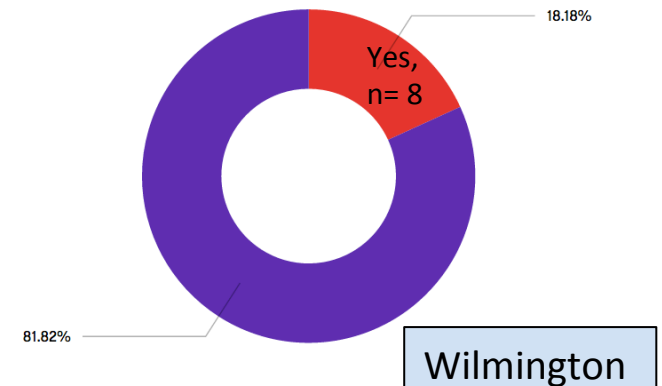
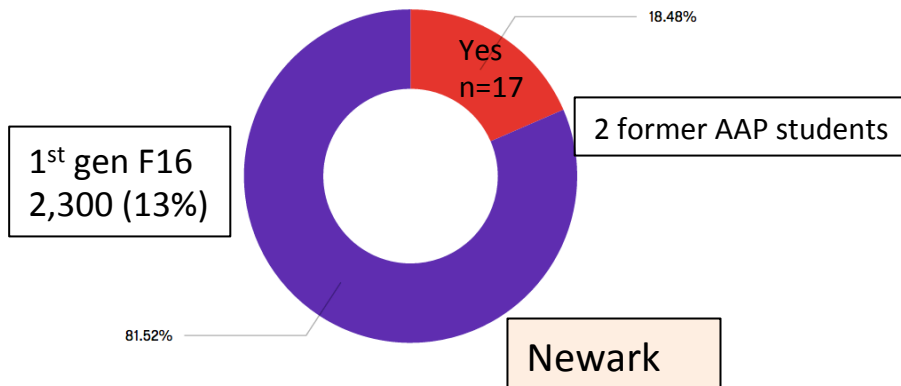
- Delaware
- Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland or New York
- Different country than the US.
- Another state in the eastern half of the US.
- State west of the Mississippi River.

Students in sample who are first generation



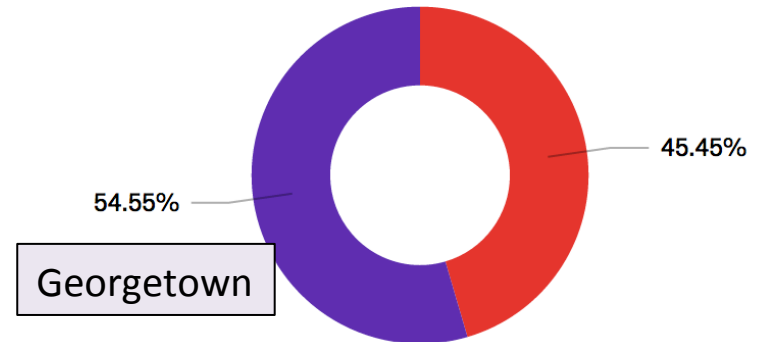
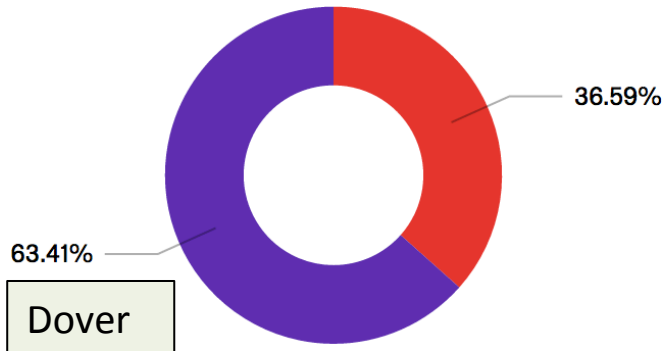
Newark

Wilmington



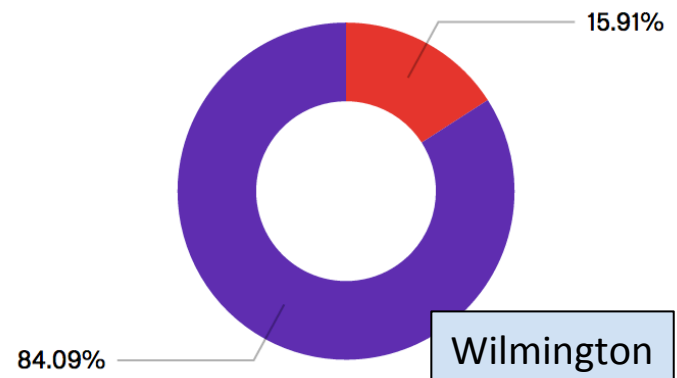
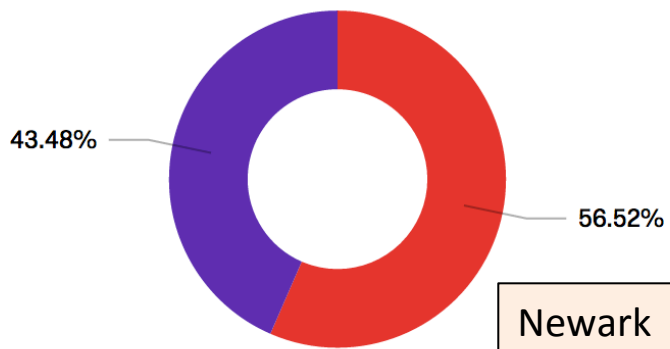
2. Selected findings from online survey – differences in college experience

Did you receive credits at UD for any coursework you did while in high school?

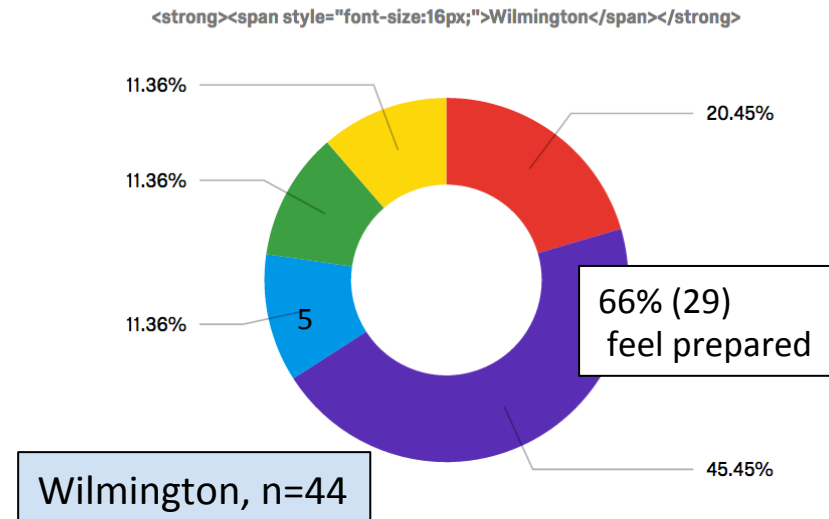
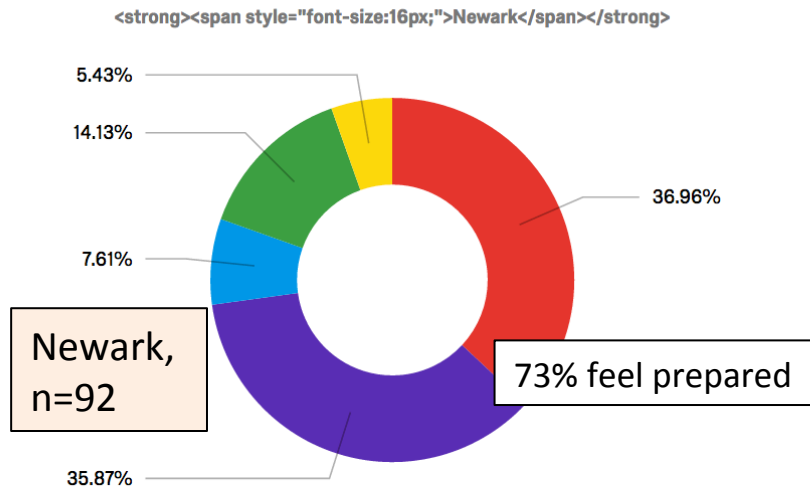
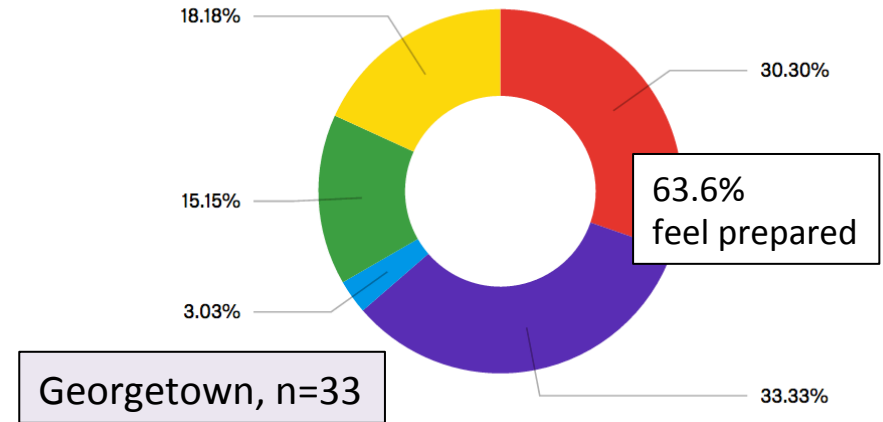
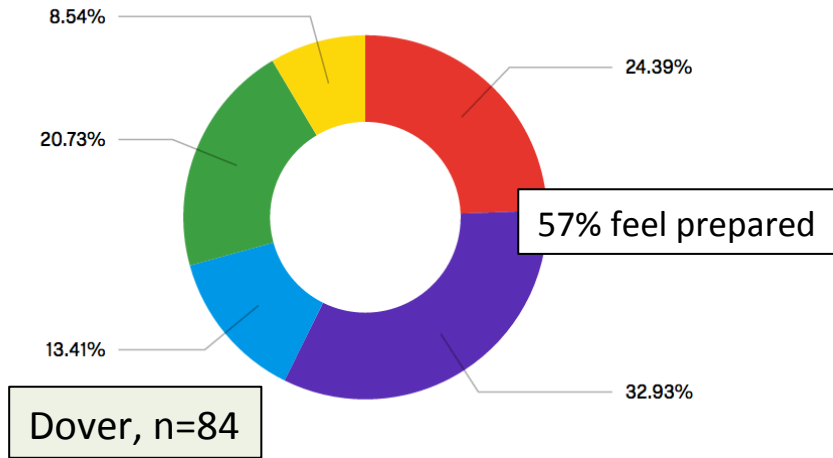


Newark

Wilmington

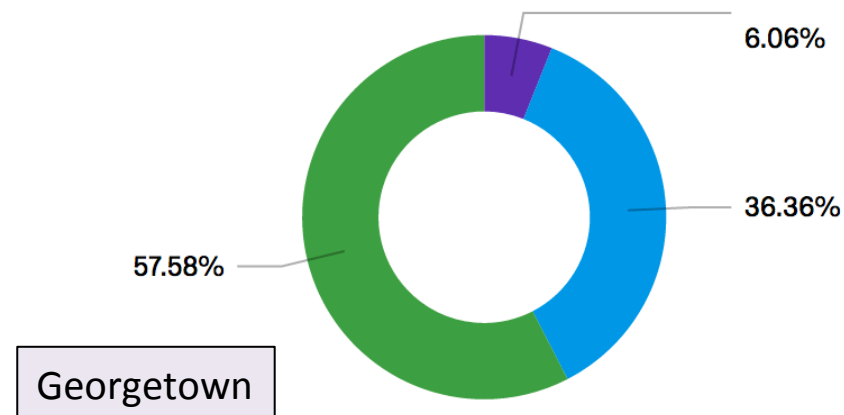
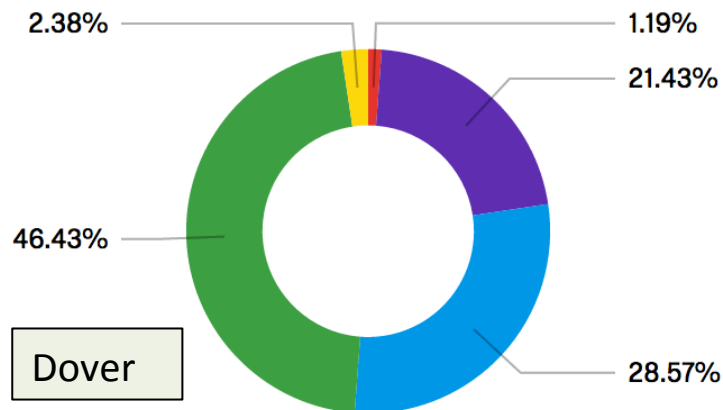


My HS prepared me well for the demands of UD coursework.

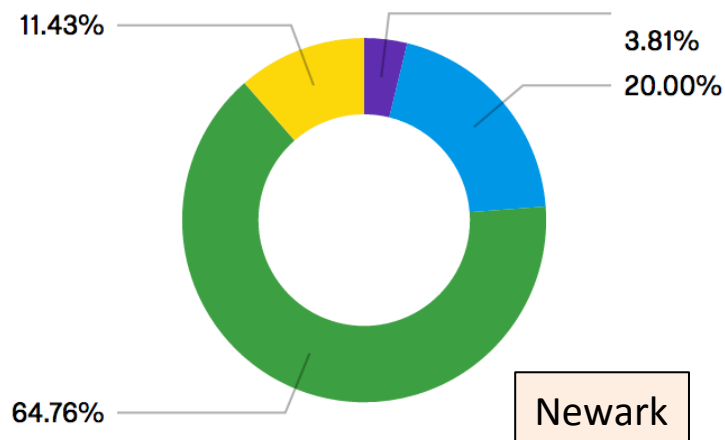


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree

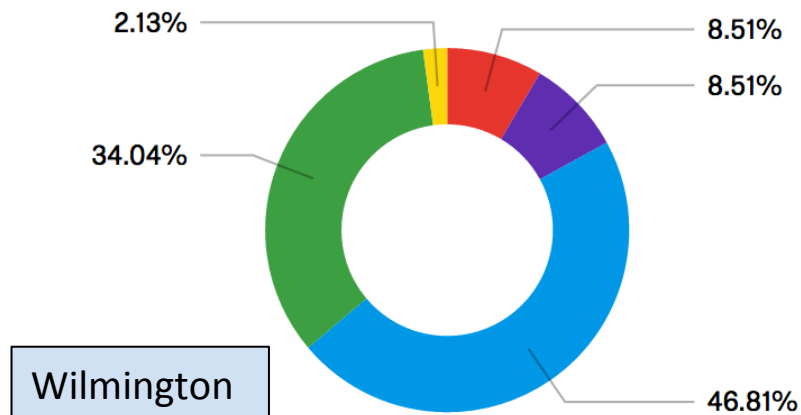
How would you rate the difficulty of the coursework you've had so far?



Newark

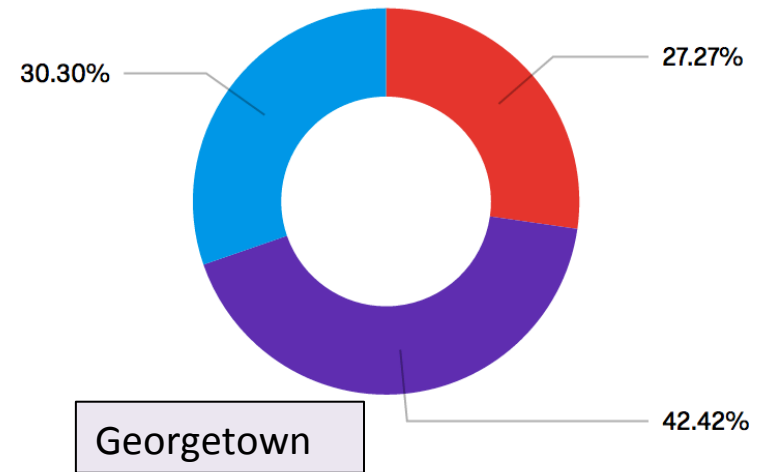
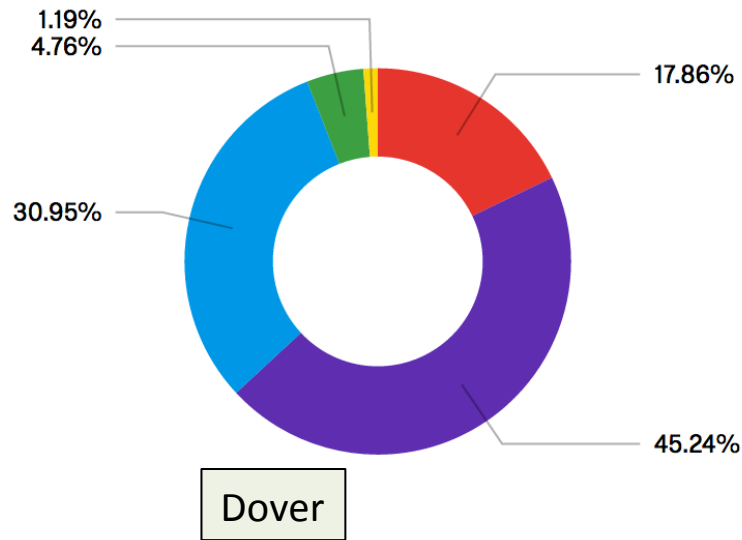


Wilmington

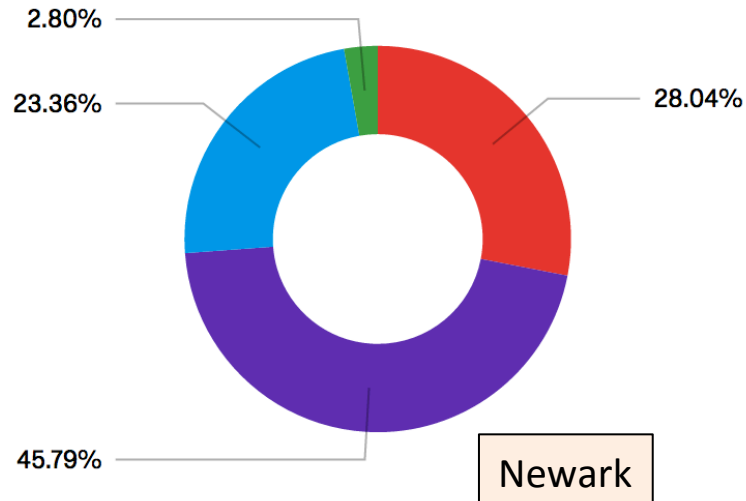


■ Very easy
 ■ Somewhat easy
 ■ Neither easy nor difficult
 ■ Somewhat difficult
 ■ Very difficult

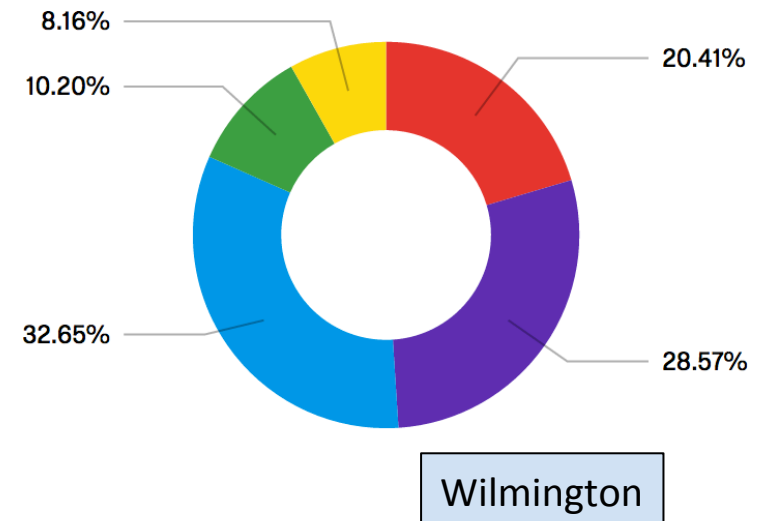
How would you rate the educational value of the coursework you've had so far?



Newark

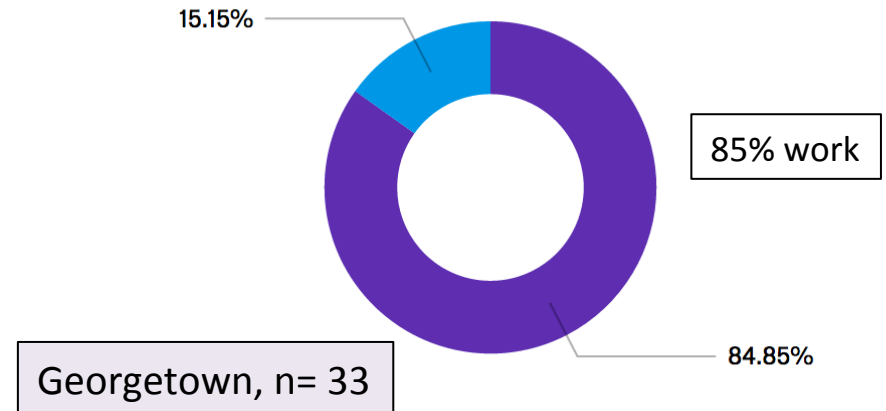
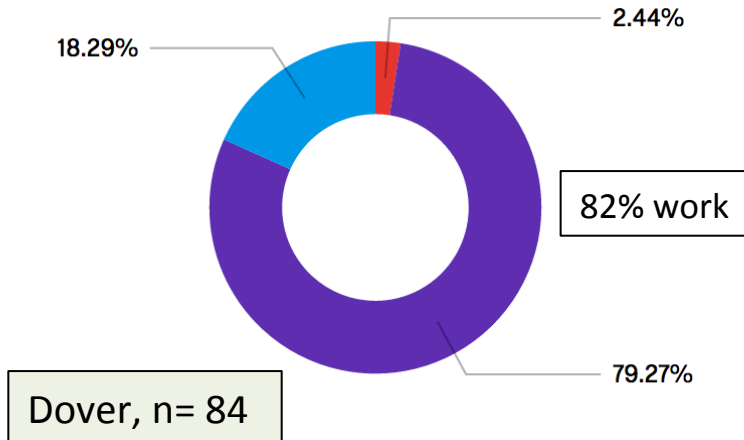


Wilmington



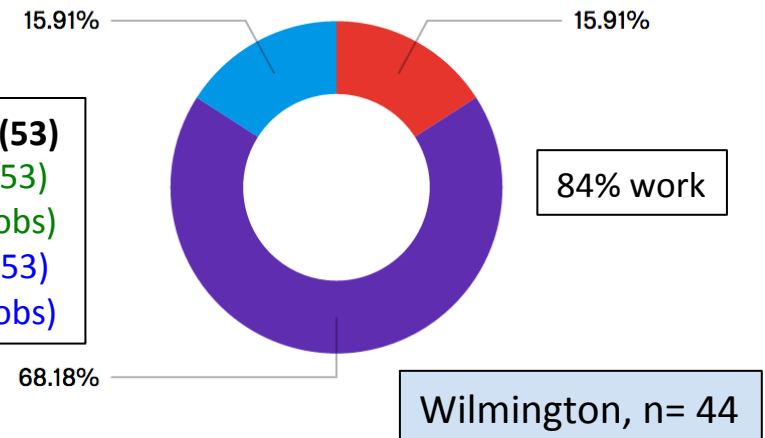
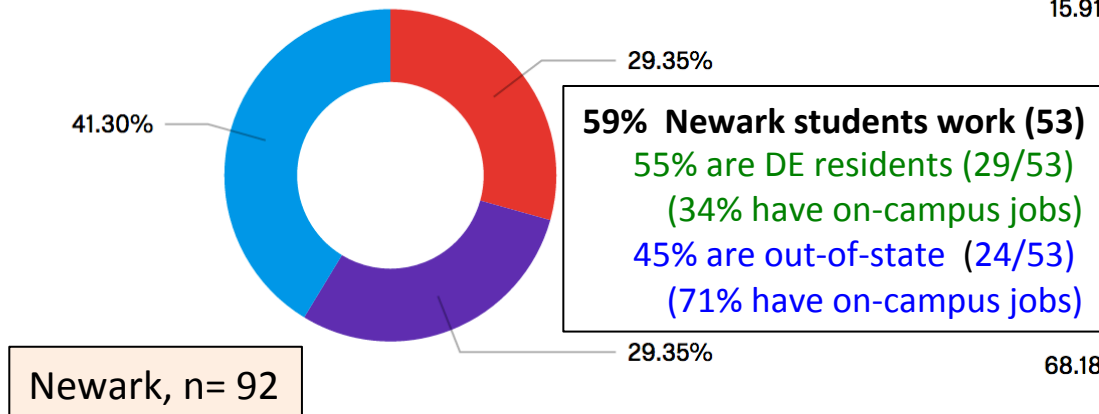
Excellent Very good Reasonably good Not very good Poor

Percentage of UD students who work



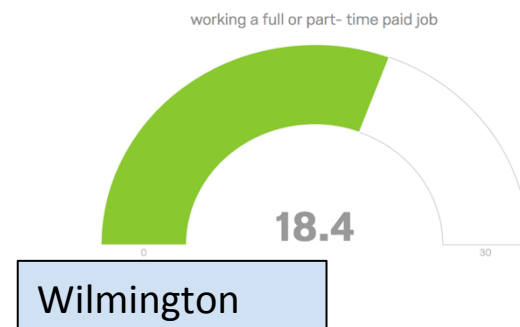
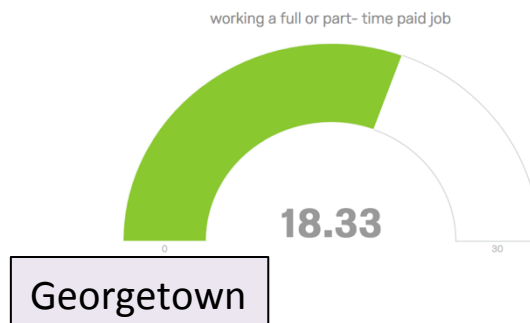
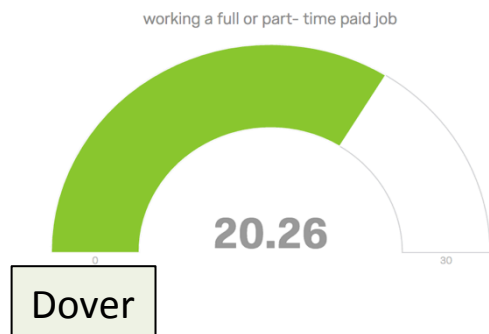
Newark

Wilmington



■ I have a job on campus
 ■ I have a job off campus
 ■ I do not have a job while I am taking classes.

Number of hours per week UD students engage in paid work



Newark



41% (38) of students sampled in Newark don't work while taking classes

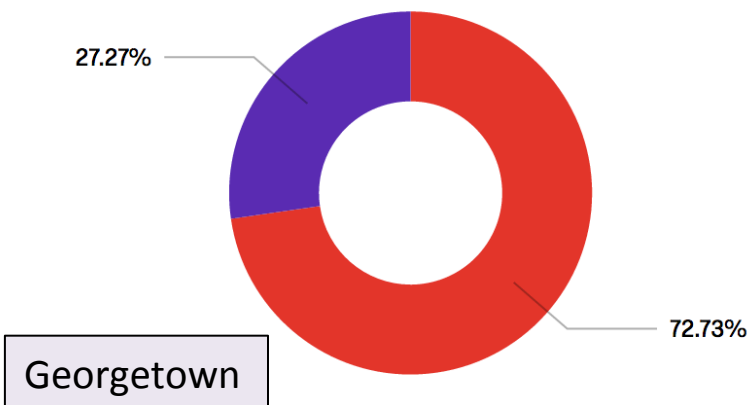
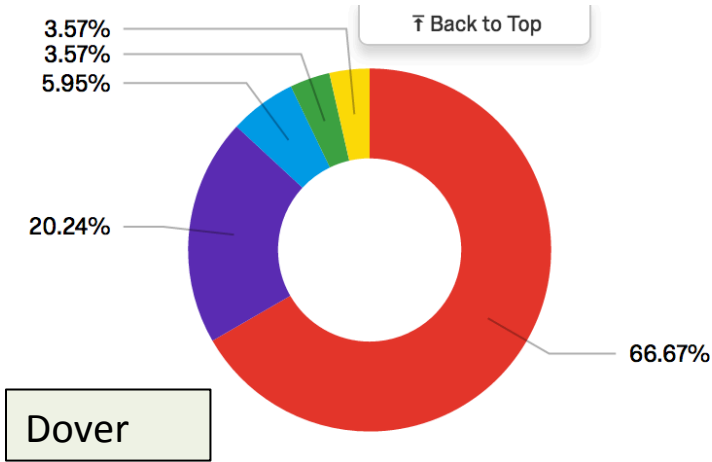
47% (18) of those 38 non-working students are Delaware residents.

28% (5) of those 18 non-working Delaware resident students pay for school with \$ from family. 72% pay for their schooling with loans, etc.

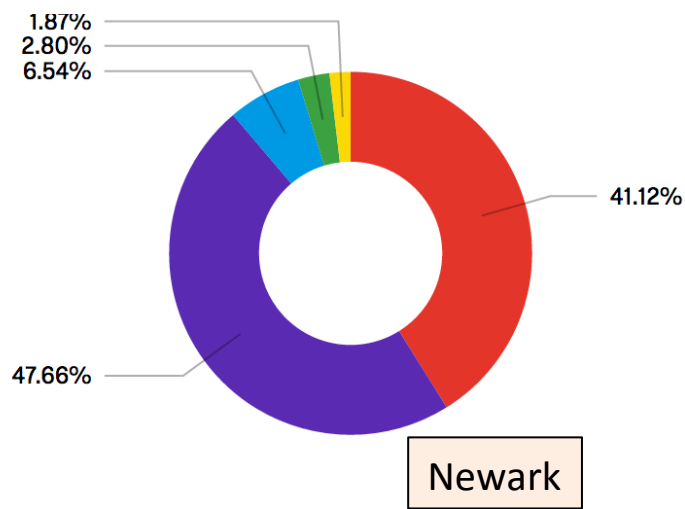
53% (20) of those 38 non-working students are out-of-state residents.

11 (55%) of those 20 non-working students from out-of-state pay for school with \$ from family. 45% of those non-working out-of-state students pay for their schooling with loans, etc.

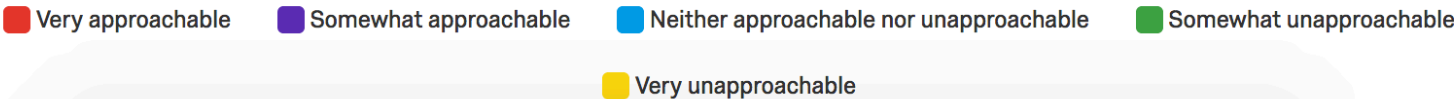
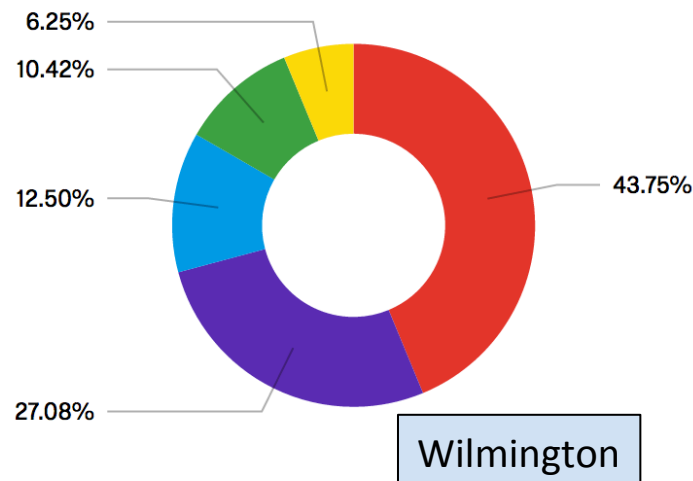
How would you rate the approachability of UD faculty and support staff you've met?



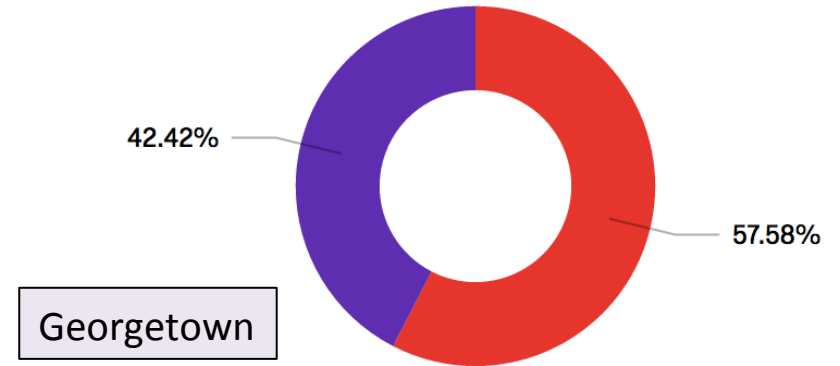
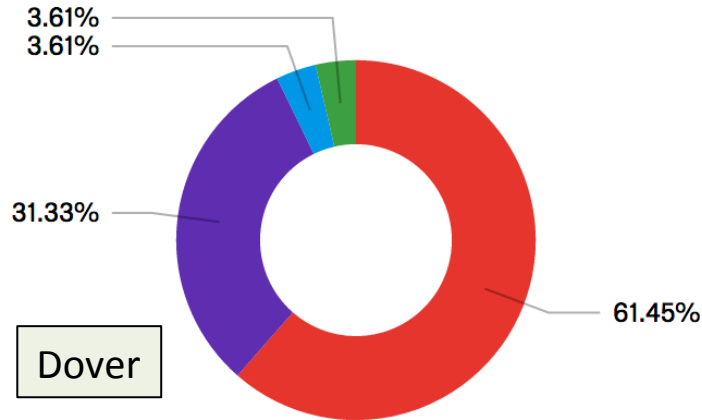
Newark



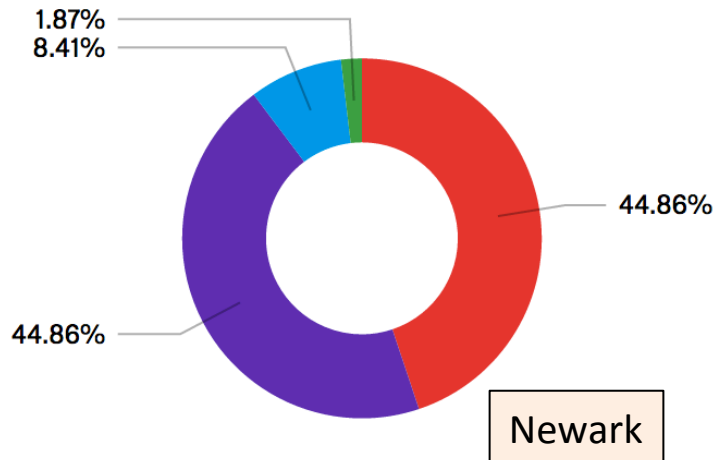
Wilmington



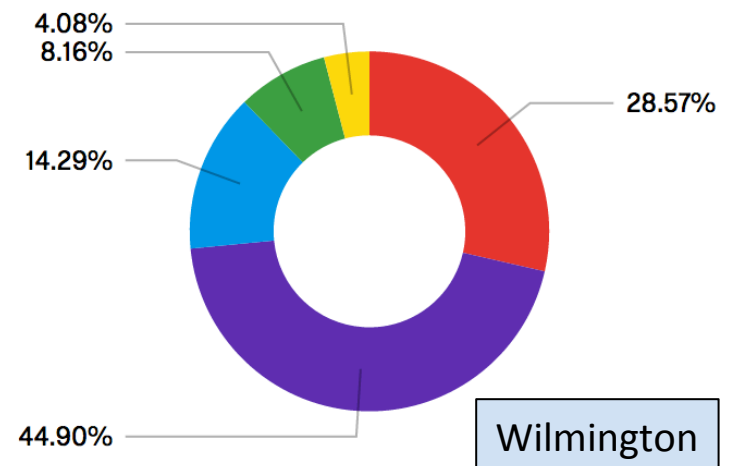
How would you rate the accessibility of UD faculty and support staff you've met?



Newark

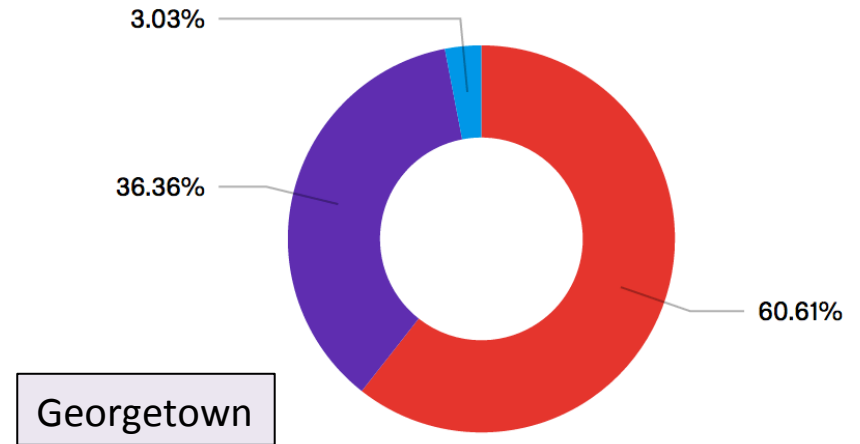
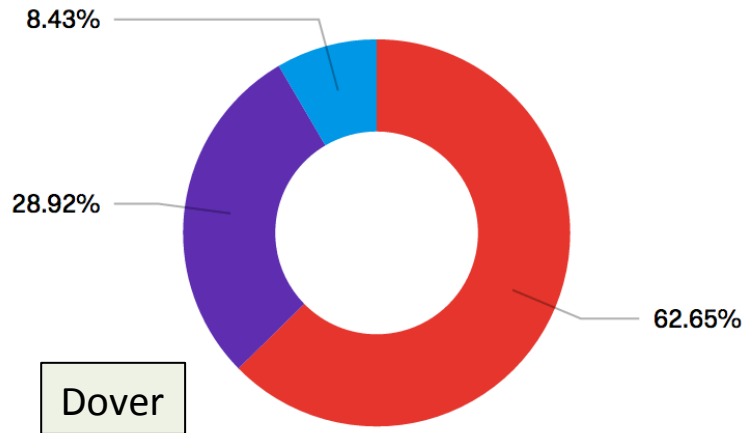


Wilmington

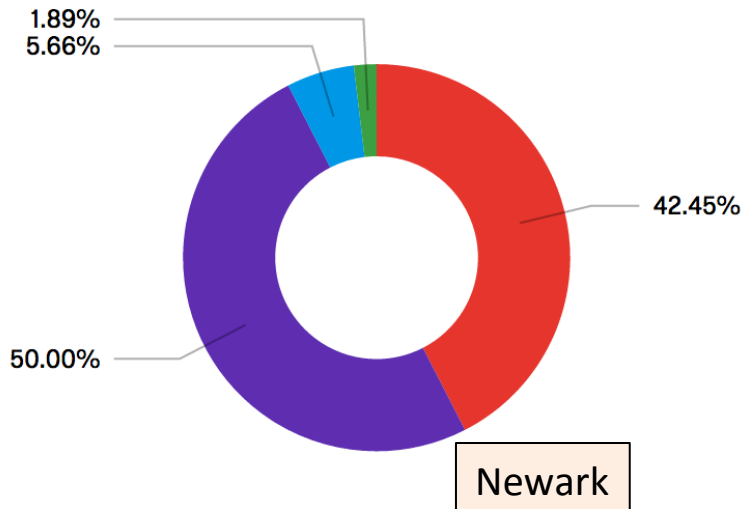


■ Very accessible
 ■ Somewhat accessible
 ■ Neither accessible nor inaccessible
 ■ Somewhat inaccessible
 ■ Very inaccessible

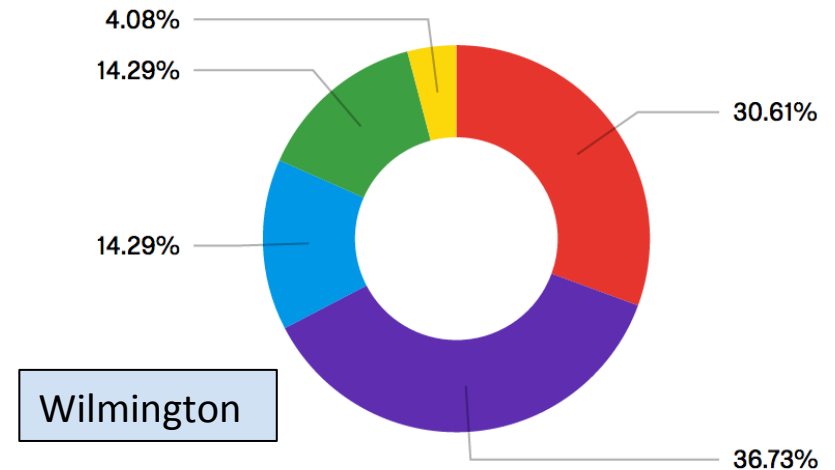
How would you rate the helpfulness of UD faculty and support staff you've met?



Newark

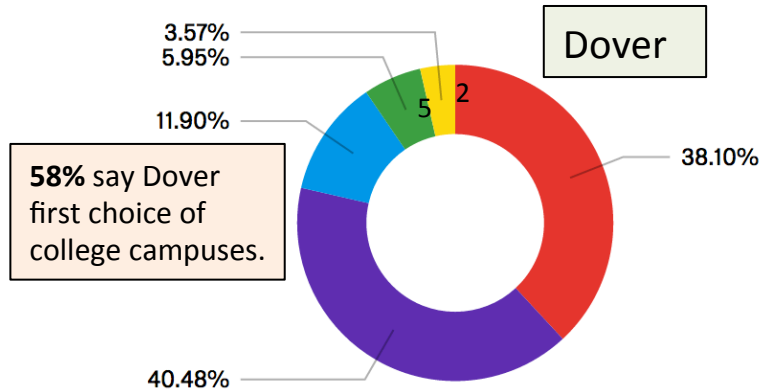


Wilmington

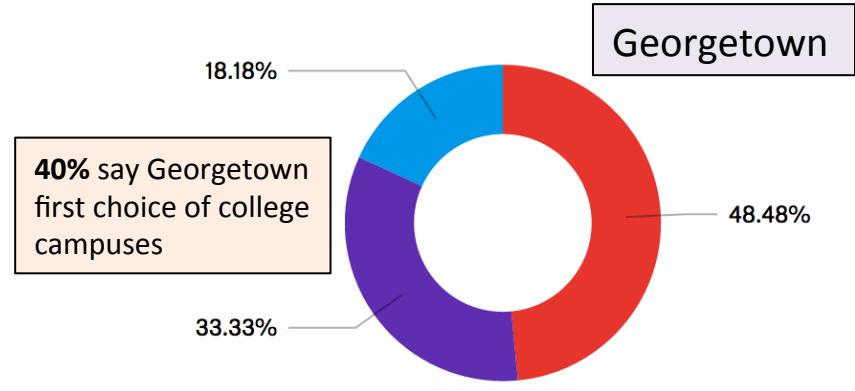


■ Very helpful
 ■ Somewhat helpful
 ■ Neither helpful nor unhelpful
 ■ Not helpful
 ■ Very unhelpful

How would you rate the overall pleasure you've experienced while a student on your campus?

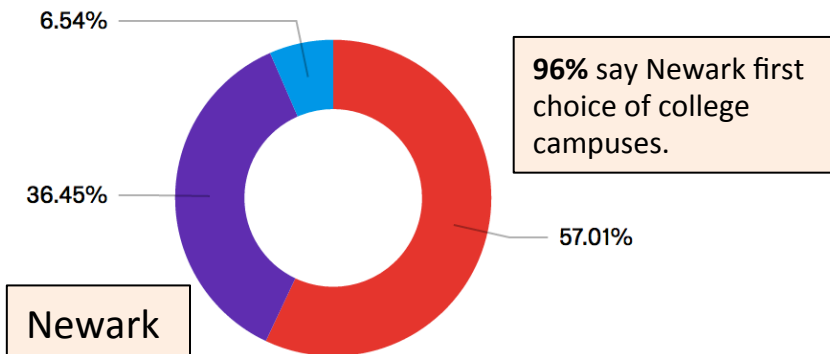


79% UD very/somewhat pleasurable



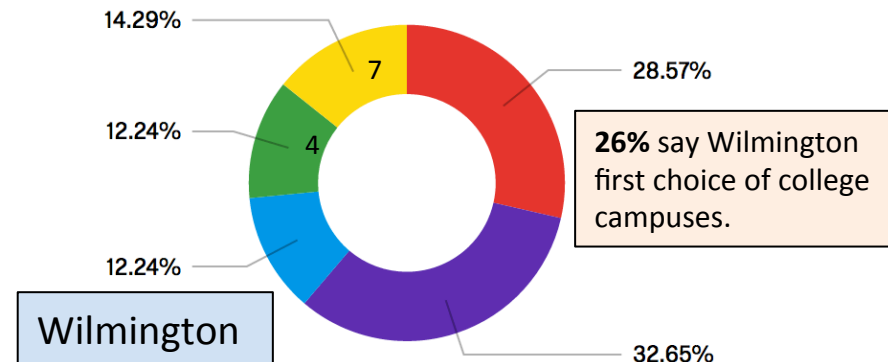
82% UD very/somewhat pleasurable

Newark

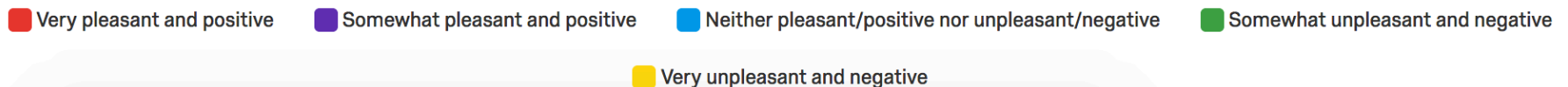


93% very/somewhat pleasurable

Wilmington



60% UD very/somewhat pleasurable



2. Selected findings from online survey – impact of geographical location on differences in college experience

UD Campus	I don't feel I am a recognized and valued part of the UD community.	When I am on campus taking classes I feel a bit confused and disconnected.	I am reluctant to say I am an Associate in Arts student?	When I am on campus I feel uncomfortable—I don't enjoy spending time here.
Newark	15%	15%	NA	8%
Wilmington	27%	47%	62%	56%
Dover	34%	32%	34%	45%
Georgetown	40%	18%	28%	58%

Distance decay:

The further the AAP campus is from Newark, the weaker the feeling of being recognized and valued (by UD-Newark)

Relative deprivation:

The closer the AAP campus is to Newark, the stronger the feeling of being deprived of connection and positive status (relative to UD-Newark).

Wilmington AAP students are more dissatisfied than other UD students. Why?

- Received no HS credit at UD and HS did not prepare them for college coursework
- Coursework in AAP too easy or, for a couple of them, too hard
- AAP faculty/staff unapproachable, unhelpful.
- Feel disconnected, unwelcomed, unvalued.
- Some proud to be UD, others not.

Possible explanations:

Location of the campus—urban, relative proximity to Newark means many students know what their Newark counterparts have and they don't have.

Layout of the campus—UDDC is an important focal point, but AAP offices and classrooms are spread over multiple sites with no easily identifiable/comfortable connections.

Physical design of campus space—exterior landscape is not welcoming, no green space, not branded; interior space offers few niches for ritual, refuge, or perspective, or exploration. UD branding is not even.

Negative feelings on campus—students are “biding time” (Veness: “doing time”?) until they can get to the promised land/Newark. Little camaraderie. W-AAP students have a social-spatial position that is both positive and negative, thus their status is riddled with contradiction and tension.

3. Selected findings from focus group sessions and interviews-- with current and former AAP students

a) Expectations don't match lived reality

Expectations

- **fun**—*like Hollywood depicts it*. Living on campus
- **freedom**—from imposed structures, less responsibility
- **friendships**—with lots of many students
- **lots of course choices/large classes**
- **academic challenge**
- **impersonal professors**
- **expanded horizons, opportunities**

Reality:

- *What I thought I'd get in college is not matching to what I'm experiencing as a UD experience.*
- *I thought I'd get as many classes as I wanted, feel connected; we don't get that.*
- *It's like 13th grade--comfy, like high school.*
- *I recognize friends from high school . No real social life.*

b) Complicated spatial arrangements & social interactions between UD & Del Tech.

DOVER:

- ***I feel isolated from UD students.***
- ***We want to stay in the area that is claimed by UD. But we avoid the library, and can't access other spaces.***
- ***If the environment was more welcoming then the likelihood of us staying longer (on campus) would increase.***
- ***The environment is not promoting UD, it's just Green and Del Tech.***

GEORGETOWN:

- ***No UD clubs and hard to get into Del Tech clubs.***
- ***Del Tech administration won't help AAP students with any UD course assignments. They always use phrase: "You are not part of Del Tech—use UD resources."***
- ***We have Del Tech ID, which is helpful for some things. But we don't feel welcomed by students and systems of Del Tech.***
- ***We are begrudgingly accepted by Del Tech. I feel like a hybrid student (UD/Del-Tech).***

WILMINGTON:

- ***This program isn't Del Tech and that's all that matters.*** I have friends in Del Tech and it's like "What is going on down there?" It's secondary high school (Af-Am).
- ***UD-AAP students might feel they are slightly superior/more intelligent than Del Tech students.*** "You're here, but you're not really a part of Del Tech," said a friend who goes to Del Tech and sees people in UD apparel (Af-Am).
- ***People feel it's necessary to maintain and reinforce student identity by wearing UD apparel,*** since sometimes the lines get blurred between DT and UD-AAP (Af-Am).
- ***Both UD-Newark and Del Tech students see us differently: damned if we do, damned if we don't.*** I don't feel like I belong in either environment (W).
- ***At first it was weird having UD classes in Del Tech space, but now it's just business.***
- ***We encounter a negative energy that UD doesn't recognize.*** For example, those pictures of UD's [main campus, that are on the walls in our buildings] are corny, weird. They are trying to make [AAP] something that it's not. [Other] people are trying to make AAP like Del Tech, so we are literally stuck in between. Need more AAP stuff (Af-Am).
- ***In the back of everyone's mind this isn't what we want;*** some people really wanted the college experience. But I already knew it was what it was... Hopefully it'll be better when I get there [Newark] (Af-Am).

Acknowledgements

UD-Newark students in GEOG445 and GEOG466

Zoe Callaway, John Cogan, Lauren Glinko, Katie Hewton, Holden Kata, Conner Lomis, Stephen McGuire, Briana McLean, Michael Pak, Trevor Poole, Jayme Soyak, Bryce Stevenosky, Katy Super, Shawn Webster, Mike Yao and Nathan Thayer, course TA.

UD-AAP students in GEOG266

Brent Beckett, Daniel Brace, Rigoberto Flores, Rebecca Fuzy, Mei Moore, Carlie Smythe, Kendall Smythe, Billy Swann, Caroline West.



UD's Center for the Study of Diversity
UD's Associate in Arts Program
UD's Instructional Technology Services

- *The 200+ AAP students who participated in the project.*
- *The ~100 Newark students who participated in the project.*