

**Research Brief:**  
**MAP-Works Freshmen Spring Transition Survey**  
**2012 vs. 2013 Results**

Prepared by the Office of Student Success

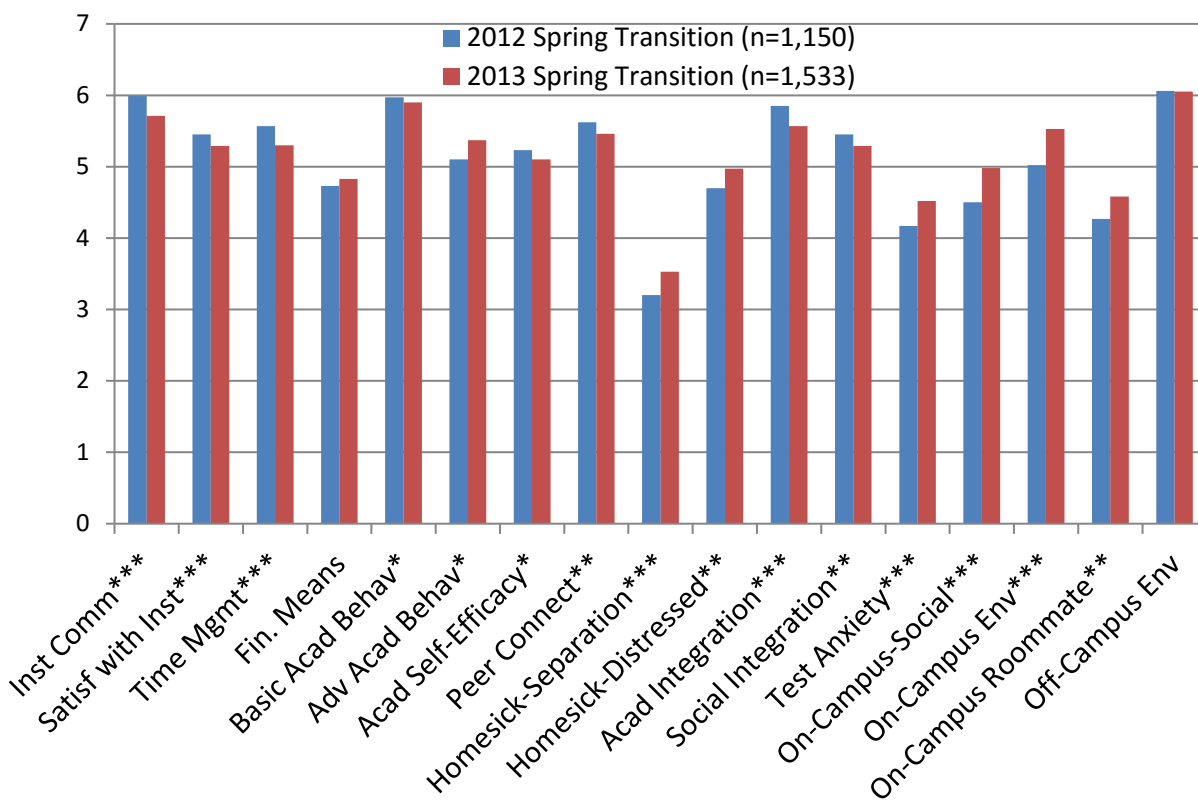
**Overview**



ISU utilizes MAP-Works, a tool for early identification of undergraduate students at potential risk for poor academic performance or leaving the institution. At week three each spring, ISU implements the Freshmen *Spring Transition Survey*, a tool that explores risk factors that the research suggests can be predictors of academic struggle and institutional departure. All freshmen were surveyed in January 2012 and January 2013, with return rates of 46% and 58% respectively.

**MAP-Works Factor Comparisons: Spring 2012 and 2013**

Figure 1 below presents the results of the analysis for the 17 factors included in the survey.



*Figure 1. MAP-Works Factor Results*

*Note: \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001.*

Mean differences for 15 of the 17 factors were significant. Of those differences, rating averages were significantly higher in Spring 2013 for 7 of the scales, Advanced Academic Behaviors, both Homesickness scales, Test Anxiety, and all three on-campus living scales for those students that live on campus. These findings suggest that students have fewer concerns in these regards than last spring's freshmen given that higher scores on the 7-point scale were linked to more positive

ratings for each item (*note*: homesickness and test anxiety were reverse coded; hence, higher ratings meant having less concerns in these areas).

Significant mean declines were found for Institutional Commitment, Satisfaction with the Institution, Time Management, Basic Academic Behaviors, Academic Self-Efficacy, Peer Connections, Academic and Social Integration. No differences were identified for Financial Means and the Off-Campus Environment for those that live off-campus.

### **Map-Works High-Risk Result Comparisons: Spring 2012 and 2013**

Using the results from the Map-Works Spring Transition survey, as well as institutional data provided through BANNER and other sources, Map-Works gives each student an overall risk factor for dropping out that ranges from High Risk (red) to Low Risk (green). The comparison results of students in the High Risk category from spring 2012 and 2013 are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Proportion of High Risk Students as of Early February 2012 and 2013*

	Freshmen Completing Spring Transition Survey
High Risk 2012	25.9% (298 students)
High Risk 2013	6.5% (99 students)

The results indicated that there has been a noted drop in the proportion of students in the high risk category. There are currently 199 fewer students in the high risk category at this point in the spring term who completed the survey versus how many there were at this point last spring term.

### **Discussion**

The findings suggest both possible concern and cautious optimism for fall retention, the major annual milestone data point tracked through the Strategic Plan. By way of possible concern, 8 of the 17 factors saw significant declines. Although it is perhaps not surprising to see these factors decline as students develop a more realistic perspective on what college requires, these indicators nonetheless bear watching, and actively considering, in various retention and success initiatives.

In regards to cautious optimism, the residential experience appears to be perceived more positively by students, an important finding given the large number of freshmen that live on campus. Homesickness also declined, likely impacted by the substantial programming efforts on this subject in the halls. The most promising indicator, however, is the substantial drop in the number of students classified as at high risk, potentially aided by the increase in the number of students that were dismissed this fall with GPAs below .85, yet with a fall to spring retention rate that held essentially even with last year (82.8% vs. 82.9%).

It is important to point out, though, that these analyses report mean and category differences. There are students experiencing challenge in any one of these factor areas and 99 students currently categorized as at high risk of dropout. One way this is being addressed is via a new CRM initiative that is launching to alert advisors to connect with their high risk students, a mechanism designed to further enhance the use of the MAP-Works tool for such intervention. Academic Peer Advocates are also working closely with Residential Life central staff with targeted programming in areas of noted need from the survey results.