2025 Kickstart Survey
Becoming a cougar: First year student experiences

In Fall 2025, CSUSM administered the "Kickstart" Survey to new incoming students to better understand students' decision-making process to attend CSUSM, what their enrollment experience was like, and their expectations about the upcoming college journey.

Before CSUSM

*Based on the number of first-year students who responded to the survey

- Top reasons for selecting CSUSM…
  - **52%** say that the location of the university is near home
  - **50%** say that the major they're interested in is offered
  - **44%** say that CSUSM is affordable

- Students' ranking of CSUSM…
  - **49%** 1st choice institution
  - **32%** 2nd choice institution
  - **12%** 3rd choice institution
  - **7%** 4th choice institution or more

- Most helpful sources of information when choosing to attend CSUSM…
  - **61%** of students selected Campus visits
  - **32%** of students selected Friend(s)
  - **31%** of students selected High school counselor or teacher
  - **30%** of students selected Parents/ guardians
  - **29%** of students selected New student orientation

Getting started

*Based on the number of first-year students who responded to the survey

- The application experience…
  *Excellent/Good response options combined
  - **94%** reported that they had a positive* experience applying to CSUSM

- Experience becoming a CSUSM student…
  *Excellent/Good response options combined
  - **81%** reported that they had a positive* experience becoming a CSUSM student

Looking ahead…

*Based on the number of first-year students who responded to the survey

- CSUSM involvement plans…
  *Very likely & Likely response options were combined
  - **66%** indicated that they would likely* participate in an internship
  - **65%** indicated that they would likely* seek academic support
  - **64%** indicated that they would likely* participate in student organizations and/or clubs

- Expected graduation time…
  - **89%** of students say they expect to graduate in 4 years or less

- Most important planned outcomes…
  - **67%** Getting a well-paying job
  - **66%** Finding a fulfilling career path
  - **48%** Growing and developing personally
  - **34%** Interacting and connecting with others
  - **25%** Building and growing a professional network

The Kickstart Survey was administered from August 25 to September 15, 2025 with a response rate of 42.8% (n=1,166) for first-year students.

Questions? Contact survey@csusm.edu