



CAMPUS
ASSESSMENT
WORKING GROUP

*University of Maryland Student Survey
2005 Report*

**By members of the
Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)
Assessment of Campus Experiences Subgroup**

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENT SURVEY 2005 REPORT

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 3 |
| CAMPUS ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP..... | 5 |
| BACKGROUND ON THE UMSS | 6 |
| Methodology | 6 |
| The survey..... | 6 |
| Survey respondents | 6 |
| FINDINGS | 7 |
| Academic advising..... | 7 |
| Internship participation | 9 |
| Learning outcomes..... | 9 |
| Diversity in and beyond the classroom..... | 12 |
| Financial issues | 14 |
| Information technology issues | 15 |
| Attitudes about UM..... | 16 |
| USING THE UMSS DATA..... | 17 |
| APPENDIX..... | 18 |

Tables and Figures

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 1 | Active participation as an advisee | 7 |
| Table 2 | Assessment of advising | 8 |
| Table 3 | Current and past advising | 8 |
| Table 4 | Internship participation and barriers to participation | 9 |
| Table 5 | Self-rated skills and abilities | 10 |
| Table 6 | Selected differences in learning outcomes by entry type | 11 |
| Table 7 | Diversity at UM compared to pre-matriculation to UM | 12 |
| Table 8 | Diversity-related behaviors since coming to the University | 13 |
| Table 9 | Diversity-related behaviors encouraged by UM classes | 13 |
| Table 10 | Pivotal class | 14 |
| Table 11 | Degree of comfort with diversity | 14 |
| Table 12 | Students' major sources of funding for college education | 15 |
| Table 13 | Experience with information technology resources | 15 |
| Table 14 | Attitudes about UM | 16 |
| Table 15 | Residency status and perceived UM value | 17 |

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENT SURVEY

2005 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year, the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) administers the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) to juniors and seniors enrolled in the Professional Writing program. The purpose of the UMSS is to gather data on upper division undergraduate students' experiences at and perceptions of the University of Maryland. The information derived from the UMSS can help us to gain insight into students' experiences in important aspects of their undergraduate education, identify institutional strengths, and assist in planning and prioritizing efforts to better serve our students.

The most recent version of the UMSS, hereafter referred to as the UMSS '05, was administered in the spring semester of 2005. Of the students enrolled in Professional Writing courses during the spring semester, 1787 completed the survey.

The following were the areas of focus for UMSS '05:

Academic advising

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about aspects of the advising experience. On the whole, the responses to the advising questions were fairly positive. More than half of the sample agreed that they were pleased with advising overall. In addition, around two-thirds of respondents agreed that they received accurate information and sound guidance, and were helped to outline choices to graduate in a reasonable amount of time. When taking into account the relatively large proportion of students who marked "neutral," generally less than 20% indicated dissatisfaction. The questions for which less favorable ratings of advising were reported related to being shown concern as an individual. The majority of respondents indicated they preferred to obtain academic advising assistance in person, either with a scheduled appointment or as a walk-in, as opposed to phone, email, or online assistance.

Internship participation

There are many reasons for students to participate in an internship as undergraduates, among them personal, academic, professional, and, sometimes, financial. Only 5% reported they had no interest in participating in an internship. Twenty-one percent of the respondents, the majority of whom were seniors, reported they had already participated in an internship. The most frequently identified reason for not yet having participated in an internship was academic, followed by financial constraints. Over one in five reported they were not sure how or where to find an internship.

Learning outcomes

Questions on learning outcomes were included on the UMSS'05 as a part of the ongoing process of assessing the University's progress towards its goal of elevating the quality of undergraduate education. Respondents were asked to assess their perceived level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to undergraduate education, and to indicate the extent to which they thought their UM experience directly affected each of those skills/abilities. In general, students were inclined to perceive their abilities as relatively strong for critical analysis and reasoning skills. Although a lower percent of students indicated "strong" competence in "writing effectively," it had the *highest* proportion of students indicating that UM had directly affected their skills in this area quite a bit. Skills typically useful for doing research tended to receive smaller proportions of "strong" and "UM affected quite a bit". Several differences in self-ratings of abilities emerged when responses were compared across gender. Females marked "strong" far less often than males for the four scientific and quantitative reasoning skills, which may be a function of the students' college of major. Foreign students and Asian students of U.S. citizenship tended to rate their skills for written and oral communication as

“strong” less often than other respondents. White students from the U.S. were least likely to rate their ability to understand diverse cultural, political and intellectual views as “strong.”

Diversity in and beyond the classroom

With the exception of Hispanic students, most students reported that they perceive UM to be more diverse than both the neighborhood in which they grew up and the high school from which they graduated. These students also reported that their friends at UM are more diverse than those they had before coming here. Since coming to the University, respondents indicated they were far less likely to participate in university-sponsored or organized diversity-related events or activities than they were to engage in more spontaneous diversity-related behaviors. One-third of the respondents reported that they had at least one class at UM that was pivotal in increasing their understanding of their own racial identity; 60% had at least one class that increased their understanding of other racial/ethnic groups. White students, followed by African American students, were most likely to report that as a result of their experience at UM they were more comfortable in their interactions with people different from them.

Financial issues

Close to 70% of respondents reported being employed during the academic year. Forty-three percent of the respondents were employed off campus only; 17% were employed on campus only; and 8% were employed both on and off campus. Transfer students from two-year institutions reported that they were working at higher rates than students directly admitted to UM. When asked about funding for a college education, only half of two-year transfers cited their parent/relatives as a major source of funding, as compared to over three-fourths of direct admits. Two-year transfers referred to their current job as a major source of funding more often than direct admits or four-year transfers.

Information technology

Students were asked about their experience with information technology resources during the current academic year. Respondents indicated high levels of use of campus Information Technology (IT) resources, and those who used IT resources generally reported that their needs were met. Nearly 80% made use of the OIT Help Desk during the academic year. By a wide margin, students indicated that they preferred to call for assistance, compared to walk-in or use the Help Desk Web site.

Attitudes about UM

The University of Maryland is always interested in knowing students’ attitudes about various aspects of the institution. Three-quarters of the sample reported they would be able to afford to enroll next semester, and two-thirds said that they would recommend UM to their family and friends. A smaller proportion of two-year transfers agreed that they would be able to afford to enroll next semester. Out-of-state residents considered the cost of UM less reasonable than in-state students. Overall, more than half of the students considered UM a good value for the money, and around two-thirds reported they would enroll here again if they had to do it all over.

Using the UMSS data

The UMSS ‘05 data provide information about upper division students’ perceptions on a variety of issues including academic advising, learning skills and abilities, and involvement in undergraduate enrichment programs. While not all the data may be relevant to your unit or department, we encourage you to use those elements that are. Some suggestions for use of the data include:

- Review and discuss findings with colleagues.
- Clarify the data with focus groups.
- Allow data to help inform resource allocation.
- Determine areas for further analysis.

CAMPUS ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP

The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) was created in 1996 and is currently chaired by Robert E. Waters, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Special Assistant to the President. CAWG is dedicated to building a culture of evidence at the University of Maryland. One way of accomplishing this task is by administering large-scale surveys to cross-sections of undergraduates on a regular basis, thereby gathering evidence regarding the student experience from multiple perspectives. CAWG presently consists of four subgroups covering various aspects of the student experience. The members of the CAWG subgroup – ACES, or Assessing the Campus Experience Subgroup - who worked on the project reflected by this report are:

Adrienne Hamcke Wicker (Chair), Stamp Student Union & Campus Programs
Chip Denman, Office of Information Technology
Kathleen Dean, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Irma Dillon, University Libraries
Wallace Eddy, Campus Recreation Center
Pat Hunt, Counseling Center & Student Affairs
Julie Kromkowski, Facilities Management
Sharon La Voy, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Jessica Mislevy, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Jason Pontius, Stamp Student Union & Campus Programs
Erin Rooney-Eckel, The President's Promise Initiative
Sean Simone, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Rebecca Thomas, Gemstone Program
Audran Ward, Arts and Humanities Student Affairs
Martha Baer Wilmes, College Park Scholars
Terry Zacker, Stamp Student Union and Campus Programs

More information about CAWG is available on the website: www.umd.edu/cawg or from:

Sharon La Voy
Associate Director
Office of Institutional Research and Planning
1101 Mitchell Building
slavoy@umd.edu
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
301.405.3828

BACKGROUND ON THE UMSS

The University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) was initially developed in 1998 by the Assessment of Campus Experiences Subgroup of the Campus Assessment Working Group as a tool for understanding the attitudes and experiences of upper level undergraduates at UM. This year (2005) marks the fifth time the UMSS has been given. With each edition of the survey, some items are repeated, and new items are created to reflect campus interests and needs.

Methodology

The UMSS'05 was administered in the spring semester to students enrolled in Professional Writing courses. These courses were selected to administer the survey for two primary reasons. First, these students reflect the University's diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, academic performance and entry status. Second, they are upper division undergraduates with several years of experience on campus, and are therefore most able to comment from personal experience. Professional Writing courses enroll students who have earned 56 or more credits and who are meeting a writing requirement of their respective colleges. Instructors in the Professional Writing courses were given the surveys, along with written instructions to read to their students during class the week before spring break. The Professional Writing Program was given incentives for their instructors' efforts. Students returned 1787 usable surveys.

The survey

The UMSS'05 measures upper division undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences in a variety of areas. In this survey, students were asked about issues regarding their academic advising, their experiences with diversity in and beyond the classroom, internship participation, financial factors, information technology issues, and their attitudes about UM. In addition, they were asked to rate themselves on 19 abilities or learning outcomes, and to indicate the extent to which they felt their UM experience directly affected these abilities/learning outcomes. A copy of the survey can be found in the appendix to this report.

Survey respondents

There were 1787 students enrolled in the Professional Writing program in Spring 2005 who completed the UMSS'05. These comprise what is referred to in this report as the "Entire Sample." Of those, 1287 (72%) gave their student ID, thereby enabling access to their institutional demographic information.

Among the sub-set who gave their ID:

Race-citizenship (Percent)

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| African American/Black: U.S. | 10 |
| Asian: U.S. | 14 |
| Hispanic: U.S. | 6 |
| White: U.S. | 61 |
| Foreign | 3 |
| Unknown: U.S. | 5 |

Sex (Percent)

| | |
|-------|----|
| Women | 49 |
| Men | 51 |

Class level (Percent)

| | |
|---------|----|
| Juniors | 26 |
| Seniors | 73 |

Entry status (Percent)

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Direct Admits | 67 |
| 4-Year Transfers | 14 |
| 2-Year Transfers | 18 |

Note: The race/ethnicity descriptors included in the race/citizenship variable are from institutional data. The number of American Indian respondents was too small (<1%) to be included in analyses and discussions by race/citizenship.

The descriptor "4-Year Transfer" refers to students transferring to UM from another four-year institution, and "2-Year Transfer" refers to students transferring to UM from two-year institutions. The label "Direct Admits" designates those students directly admitted to the University of Maryland, College Park as first-time, full-time freshmen. All analyses discussed in this report were based on the entire respondent sample of 1787, and referred to by the term Entire Sample, unless the analysis was related to a demographic (i.e., race/citizenship, sex, class level, or entry status).

FINDINGS

Academic advising

In 1999, the Board of Regents identified six directives on academic advising in a report entitled "Undergraduate Academic Advising Report." The Provost's Commission on Academic Advising has worked to respond to the Regents' directives since their first meeting in 2001. As a part of this initiative, the Commission's Evaluation Subcommittee tailored a series of questions for the UMSS about students' advising experiences in order to help assess the advising program at UM. To get a better understanding of issues related to undergraduates' academic advising experiences, the UMSS'05 asked respondents to rate their own participation in the advising process, preferences for types of advising, and their satisfaction with their advising experience at UM.

From an academic advising perspective, it is important for students to see themselves as active participants in the advising process. Students can show initiative by, for example, preparing ahead of time for their appointments, becoming aware of the prerequisites and requirements of their majors, and being aware of the university's academic policies and regulations. Table 1 shows the percents of respondents who reported "Always" and "Sometimes" on a three-point scale to a series of behaviors associated with well-prepared advisees.

Table 1. Active participation as an advisee – Entire sample

| Since entering UM... | Percent "always" | Percent "sometimes" |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| I pay attention to required prerequisites as I develop a course schedule. | 84 | 15 |
| I have sought information about requirements needed to complete my major. | 82 | 18 |
| I know how to prepare a schedule that fulfills my academic requirements. | 81 | 18 |
| I am knowledgeable about the requirements I need to fulfill to graduate on time. | 73 | 25 |
| I consult campus resources (e.g., schedule of classes, undergraduate catalog, Testudo) for information on university policies and regulations. | 66 | 29 |
| I understand academic policies and procedures. | 58 | 40 |
| I am aware of registration dates and related deadlines (e.g., drop/add, last day to withdraw). | 57 | 39 |
| I have taken the initiative to contact an advisor at least once a semester. | 56 | 38 |
| I have prepared for advising in advance by bringing questions and materials to discuss. | 49 | 42 |
| I know where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems. | 45 | 48 |

The majority of respondents indicated their most preferred method to obtain academic advising assistance was assistance in person, either with a scheduled appointment (49%) or as a walk-in (34%). Other methods of obtaining academic advising assistance, including e-mail exchange, telephone conversation, questions submitted on a web form, and self-help at a website, were each selected infrequently.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about aspects of the advising experience. On the whole, the responses to the advising questions were more positive than much of the anecdotal evidence might suggest. More than half of the sample (59%) agreed that they were pleased with advising overall. In addition, around two-thirds of respondents agreed that they received accurate information and sound guidance, and were helped to outline choices to graduate in a reasonable amount of time. When taking into account the relatively large proportion of students who marked "neutral," generally less than 20% indicated dissatisfaction.

The questions for which less favorable ratings of advising were reported related to being shown concern as an individual. With current interest in the President's Promise Initiative, it is interesting to note that only one in three respondents felt advisors helped them explore department and University opportunities. Along the same

lines, just over one third of the sample felt advisors taught them how to find information about campus resources. These findings suggest that students might benefit from learning about campus resources and opportunities if the advising structure allowed for it. Table 2 reflects the percent, sorted in descending order, of students indicating agreement or strong agreement to the advising-related statements.

Table 2. Assessment of advising – Entire sample

| | Percent “agree” or “strongly agree” |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| I have been able to obtain an advising appointment within a week. | 72 |
| Academic advisors have provided me with accurate information. | 67 |
| Academic advisors have helped me outline choices that would allow me to graduate in a reasonable amount of time. | 66 |
| Academic advisors have provided me with sound guidance. | 60 |
| I am pleased with the academic advising I have received. | 59 |
| Academic advisors have helped me figure out where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems. | 59 * |
| Academic advisors have spent sufficient advising time with me. | 59 |
| Academic advisors have helped me find answers to my questions about departmental policies and procedures. | 59 |
| Academic advisors have shown concern for me as an individual. | 52 |
| Academic advisors have helped me find answers to my questions about University policies and procedures. | 52 |
| When I have not been able to schedule an appointment with an advisor, I have received advising assistance via email, telephone and/or web page. | 49 * |
| Academic advisors have taught me how to find information about campus resources (Learning Assistance, career programs, counseling). | 38 |
| Academic advisors have helped me to explore departmental and University opportunities (e.g., research, scholarships, study abroad) that are available to undergraduate students. | 33 |

* response of “not applicable” excluded from the analysis

For those students who provided a valid student ID with their survey, comparisons across entry status were able to be made on the advising questions. Satisfaction responses across entry status were similar, especially for direct admits and 4-Year transfers, and in some cases, slightly higher for transfers from two-year institutions. For example, 67% of two-year transfers were pleased with advising overall, as compared to 59% of students directly admitted to the University. Similarly, 68% of two-year transfers felt they were provided with sound guidance, as opposed to only 60% of direct admits. These findings may be better explained in the future through the examination of expectations for advising of direct admits and transfer students.

Three questions asked on the UMSS’00 were repeated on the UMSS’05. Students’ ratings of advising have become more favorable over time. Table 3 shows the responses for the comparable advising questions.

Table 3. Current and past advising – Entire sample

| | UMSS 2000 N=1389 | UMSS 2005 N=1787 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Percent “agree” or “strongly agree” | |
| Academic advisors have provided me with sound guidance.* | 47 | 60 |
| I am pleased with the academic advising I have received.* | 48 | 59 |
| Advisors have shown concern for me as an individual.* | 45 | 52 |

* Wording reflects the items found on the UMSS’05. Minor variations in the item wording are found on the UMSS’00.

Internship participation

There are many reasons for students to participate in an internship as undergraduates, among them personal, academic, professional, and, sometimes, financial. Internships provide students with the ability to expand their education beyond the classroom and work towards their career goals. Increasingly, employers seek out students with hands-on experience in the working world. Only 5% of the sample reported they had no interest in participating in an internship. Twenty-one percent of the respondents, the majority of whom were seniors, reported they had already participated in an internship. As can be seen in Table 4, the most frequently identified reason for not yet having participated in an internship was academic (34%), followed by financial constraints (23%). Over one in five (22%) reported they were not sure how or where to find an internship. Respondents could check more than one reason for not having yet participated in an internship.

Table 4. Internship participation and barriers to participation – Entire sample

| | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| I have participated in an internship while at UM | 21 |
| If you have <u>not yet</u> participated in an internship while at UM, which of the following prevented you from doing so? | |
| <i>“Check all that apply”</i> | |
| Academics: I have to concentrate on my grades. | 34 |
| Financial constraints: I have to work when not studying or in class. | 23 |
| Not sure how/where to find an internship. | 22 |
| I haven't found an internship that appeals to me. | 21 |
| Other. | 16 |
| I have lots of extra-curricular activities that leave little time for an internship. | 14 |
| I have no interest in participating in an internship. | 5 |

These findings are almost identical to those from the UMSS'04 which included the same set of questions about internships. As the University moves ahead in its efforts to promote internship opportunities, these data can help to identify some of the major constraints students see as preventing their participation, and may suggest possible strategies for the institution to encourage greater participation in internships. Recognizing that financial constraints (needing to work) are seen as an impediment to internship participation, consideration might be given to increasing the availability and awareness of paid internships.

Learning outcomes

Questions on learning outcomes were included on the UMSS'05 as a part of the ongoing process of assessing the University's progress towards its goal of elevating the quality of undergraduate education. Respondents were asked to assess their perceived level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to undergraduate education, and to indicate the extent to which they thought their UM experience directly affected each of those skills/abilities. Responses were measured along three-point and four-point scales, respectively. These 19 skills/abilities can be classified into one of five learning outcomes categories:

- Written and oral communication (WOC)
- Critical analysis and reasoning (CAR)
- Information literacy (IL)
- Technical competence (TC)
- Scientific and quantitative reasoning (SQR)

Examining the relative order of these self-ratings is one way to provide insight into the areas in which students believe they have the most expertise, and in which they feel that the University has helped them enhance their skills the most. Table 5 shows the list of 19 skills/abilities ordered by the percent who indicated that their UM experience had affected their skill/ability “quite a bit.” For example, “writing effectively” was ranked first, having the highest percent (46%) who indicated that UM had directly affected that skill/ability. The table also

shows the corresponding percent and ranking based on the percent who rated themselves as “strong” on a given ability.

Table 5. Self-rated skills and abilities – Entire sample

| Rank | UM affected “quite a bit” | Skill/Ability <i>Sorted by rank of “UM affected quite a bit”</i> | “strong” level of competence | Rank |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------|
| 1 | 46% | Writing effectively (WOC) | 43% | 13 |
| 2 | 43% | Using electronic information resources (e.g., Internet, databases, e-journals) (TC) | 70% | 1 |
| 3 | 35% | Presenting a persuasive argument (WOC) | 42% | 15 |
| 3 | 35% | Applying what you learn to other situations (CAR) | 67% | 2 |
| 3 | 35% | Finding information that you need (IL) | 55% | 7 |
| 6 | 33% | Seeing relationships, similarities, and differences among ideas (CAR) | 63% | 3 |
| 6 | 33% | Understanding diverse cultural, political, and intellectual views (CAR) | 51% | 9 |
| 8 | 31% | Using information responsibly (IL) | 61% | 4 |
| 8 | 31% | Using quantitative methods to solve problems (SQR) | 46% | 11 |
| 8 | 31% | Recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods (SQR) | 43% | 13 |
| 11 | 30% | Framing a research question (IL) | 33% | 19 |
| 12 | 29% | Speaking effectively (WOC) | 40% | 16 |
| 12 | 29% | Evaluating the reliability of information (IL) | 47% | 10 |
| 12 | 29% | Interpreting graphs, tables, and/or formulas correctly (SQR) | 56% | 6 |
| 12 | 29% | Understanding various research designs and approaches (SQR) | 34% | 18 |
| 16 | 28% | Revising your thinking based on new information (CAR) | 52% | 8 |
| 17 | 26% | Using a spreadsheet to perform data analysis (TC) | 38% | 17 |
| 18 | 22% | Listening effectively (WOC) | 60% | 5 |
| 19 | 20% | Producing visual displays of information (TC) | 44% | 12 |

Learning Outcomes Category:
 CAR: Critical Analysis and Reasoning
 IL: Information Literacy
 SQR: Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
 TC: Technical Competence
 WOC: Written and Oral Communication

Students reported “strong” competence for the four critical analysis and reasoning skills. Although a lower percent of students indicated “strong” competence in “writing effectively,” it had the *highest* proportion of students indicating that UM had directly affected their skills in this area “quite a bit.” Skills typically useful for doing research tended to receive smaller proportions of “strong” and “UM affected quite a bit.” Such skills spanning the learning outcomes categories include framing a research question, understanding various research

designs and approaches, recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods, and using a spreadsheet to perform data analysis.

The Skills and Abilities ratings from UMSS’05 respondents are almost identical to those of UMSS’04 respondents; this is true in terms of both rankings, the percent “strong” within a skill, and the extent to which UM directly affected the ability “quite a bit.” Looking back to self-ratings of abilities over the past five administrations of the UMSS (since 2000), the critical analysis and reasoning skills continually top the charts with many of the highest proportions of “strong” ratings.

Responses were compared across entry type for the students who provided a valid ID with their survey. Although the proportion of students marking “strong” remained fairly stable across entry type, transfer students on the whole rated themselves slightly lower in many of the skills and abilities. The most notable differences between students directly admitted to the University and those who transferred in were seen in two written and oral communication skills as well as in the four scientific and quantitative reasoning abilities, as shown in Table 6. This table raises some important questions regarding the academic preparation of transfer students and their confidence in some of their scholastic abilities.

Table 6. Selected differences in learning outcomes by entry status – Sub-set providing ID

| Skills and Abilities | Type | Entry status | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | | Direct Admits N = 819 | 4-Year Transfers N = 186 | 2-Year Transfers N = 234 | Entire Sample N=1787 |
| | | Percent self-rating as “strong” | | | |
| Interpreting graphs, tables, and/or formulas correctly | SQR | 60 | 43 | 48 | 56 |
| Using quantitative methods to solve problems | SQR | 50 | 35 | 36 | 46 |
| Writing effectively | WOC | 46 | 47 | 31 | 43 |
| Presenting a persuasive argument | WOC | 45 | 39 | 37 | 42 |
| Recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods | SQR | 45 | 35 | 36 | 42 |
| Understanding various research designs and approaches | SQR | 36 | 30 | 28 | 34 |

Several differences in self-ratings of abilities emerged when responses were compared across gender. Females marked “strong” far less often than males for the four scientific and quantitative reasoning skills. For example, 66% of males classified themselves as “strong” when it comes to interpreting graphs, tables, and/or formulas correctly, compared to only 45% of females. In addition, only one in three females (31%) felt their ability to recognize appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods was “strong,” as opposed to one in two males (51%).

Some of these gender differences may be a function of the students’ college of major. Higher ability ratings for the SQR skills were also seen for the colleges of CMPS, ENGR, BMGT, and CLFS. These four colleges together made up 44% of the students providing a valid ID, and are primarily male dominated (83%, 80%, 58%, and 43% respectively). The focus on the acquisition of mathematical skills is stronger in these colleges, which may help to explain some of the different ability ratings across the genders.

When responses were broken down by a combined race/citizenship variable, several differences of interest emerged. Not surprisingly, international students rated themselves lower on the written and oral communication skills. This pattern, however, also appeared to hold for Asians of U.S. citizenship. Their ratings of percent “strong” for writing effectively (30%), speaking effectively (26%), and presenting a persuasive argument (25%) were consistently around 15% lower than the overall WOC results presented in Table 6. The breakdown of responses by this race/citizenship variable also revealed that for the ability to understand diverse cultural, political and intellectual views, White U.S. respondents rated themselves as “strong” less often (48%) than other subgroups (65% African American/Black: U.S., 59% Hispanic: U.S., 53% Asian: U.S., 65% Foreign).

Diversity in and beyond the classroom

The University of Maryland is committed to enriching our multicultural environment and enhancing diversity education through classroom activities and co-curricular opportunities. To learn more about students' experiences before coming to UM, the UMSS'05 asked respondents to compare their perceptions of the diversity on campus with what they were used to prior to matriculation here. They were also asked to identify the degree of their participation in various structured and unstructured interactions with diversity since coming to UM along a four-point scale.

Compared with the neighborhood in which they grew up, UM was considered more diverse by all race/citizenship subgroups except Hispanic students, who were more likely than the other subgroups to report having grown up in very diverse neighborhoods.

Compared to the high school from which they graduated, UM was once again considered more diverse, again with the exception of Hispanic students who reported that their high schools were more diverse than UM.

Compared to the friends they had before coming to UM, with the exception of Hispanic students, over one-third of respondents in the other race/ethnic subgroups reported that their friends at UM are more diverse than those they had before coming here.

Table 7. Diversity at UM compared to pre-matriculation to UM – Sub-set providing ID

| | Race/citizenship | | | | Entire Sample |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| | Asian American: U.S. | African American: U.S. | Hispanic: U.S. | White: U.S. | |
| | Percent | | | | |
| Neighborhood where you grew up | | | | | |
| UM is less diverse | 9 | 19 | 25 | 7 | 12 |
| UM is about the same | 36 | 26 | 35 | 22 | 26 |
| UM is more diverse | 54 | 55 | 39 | 71 | 62 |
| High school that you graduated from | | | | | |
| UM is less diverse | 13 | 14 | 30 | 12 | 15 |
| UM is about the same | 32 | 36 | 41 | 27 | 30 |
| UM is more diverse | 55 | 50 | 30 | 61 | 55 |
| Friends you've made here vs. friends from before | | | | | |
| Friends at UM are less diverse | 12 | 18 | 18 | 9 | 12 |
| Friends at UM are about the same | 54 | 44 | 62 | 58 | 65 |
| Friends at UM are more diverse | 34 | 38 | 20 | 34 | 33 |

Respondents were far less likely to report participating in university-sponsored or organized diversity-related events or activities since coming to the University than they were to report engaging in more spontaneous diversity-related behaviors. These findings differed across race/citizenship subgroups, however. Table 8 shows the percents of each subgroup who responded “sometimes” or “frequently” to questions about participation in a list of diversity-related behaviors. White students were less likely to report having participated in organized diversity-related activities (e.g., joined diversity organizations, attended organized discussions, etc.) than were the other subgroups.

Table 8. Diversity-related behaviors since coming to the University – Sub-set providing ID

| | Race/ethnicity | | | | Entire Sample |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| | Asian American: U.S. | African American/ Black:U.S. | Hispanic: U.S. | White: U.S. | |
| Since coming to the University, how often have you done the following? | Percent “sometimes” or “frequently” | | | | |
| <i>Sorted in Ascending Order of Percent of Entire Sample</i> | | | | | |
| Attended organized campus discussions on racial/ethnic issues. | 20 | 34 | 16 | 11 | 18 |
| Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting a cultural heritage <u>other than</u> your own. | 33 | 35 | 29 | 22 | 27 |
| Actively participated in an organization reflecting your own cultural heritage. | 38 | 51 | 28 | 18 | 28 |
| Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting your own cultural heritage. | 42 | 64 | 29 | 21 | 32 |
| Actively participated in an organization that promotes cultural diversity. | 47 | 57 | 33 | 30 | 37 |
| Challenged others on racially/sexually derogatory remarks. | 40 | 42 | 54 | 45 | 44 |
| Lived with people from cultural backgrounds <u>different from</u> your own. | 57 | 55 | 52 | 59 | 57 |
| Had discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class. | 55 | 75 | 58 | 59 | 60 |
| Engaged in discussions about racial/ethnic issues in class. | 64 | 72 | 65 | 65 | 65 |
| Discussed topics related to race/ethnicity with friends whose race/ethnicity is <u>different from</u> yours. | 69 | 65 | 68 | 64 | 65 |
| Discussed topics related to race/ethnicity with friends whose race/ethnicity is <u>the same as</u> yours. | 72 | 88 | 64 | 76 | 75 |
| Made efforts to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds. | 79 | 75 | 74 | 76 | 76 |
| Dined or shared a meal with students from a racial/ethnic group <u>other than</u> your own. | 81 | 70 | 86 | 80 | 79 |
| Developed personal friendships with students whose race/ethnicity is <u>different from</u> yours. | 87 | 82 | 87 | 82 | 82 |
| Socialized with students from a racial/ethnic group <u>other than</u> your own. | 92 | 83 | 91 | 88 | 87 |

The classroom offers an important opportunity for fostering interactions with diverse students and provides a forum for discussing issues related to diversity. Table 9 shows the percent of respondents who reported that at least one of their classes - either in or outside their major - had encouraged the given activity. A positive sign that the University’s mission regarding diversity is being carried out is the high percent of students who reported that they had encouragement in any of their classes.

Table 9 Diversity-related behaviors encouraged by UM classes – Entire sample

| How many UM class(es) [either in or not in your major] have encouraged you to: | Percent “some” or “most” |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Engage in discussions that bring in multiple perspectives. | 97 |
| Interact with students from racial or ethnic backgrounds different from theirs. | 94 |
| Work in small, ethnically diverse groups with other students. | 88 |
| Critically examine their own beliefs regarding race and ethnicity. | 80 |

One-third of the respondents reported that they had at least one class at UM that was pivotal in increasing their understanding of their own racial identity; 60% had at least one that increased their understanding of other racial/ethnic groups. These findings varied by race/citizenship subgroup, as can be seen in Table 10.

Forty-two percent of the U.S. Hispanic students and 64% of the U.S. African American/Black students – the two groups that most reported being used to diversity before matriculating at UM – said their understanding of their own racial identity had increased as a result of their experience in at least one class.

Table 10. Pivotal class – Sub-set providing ID

| | Race/citizenship | | | | Entire Sample |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| | Asian American: U.S. | African American/Black: U.S. | Hispanic: U.S. | White: U.S. | |
| Have you had at least one class that was pivotal in increasing your understanding of... | Percent “yes” | | | | |
| other racial/ethnic groups? | 67 | 54 | 60 | 60 | 59 |
| your own racial identity? | 40 | 64 | 42 | 25 | 33 |

White, followed by African American/Black, students of U.S. citizenship were most likely to report that as a result of their experience at UM they were more comfortable in their interactions with people different from them. Hispanic students – who reported the most diversity experience prior to coming to the University – were the most likely to report their degree of comfort interacting with people different from them had not changed much as a result of their experience at UM.

Table 11. Degree of comfort with diversity – Sub-set providing ID

| | Race/ethnicity | | | | Entire Sample |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| | Asian American: U.S. | African American/Black: U.S. | Hispanic: U.S. | White: U.S. | |
| As a result of your experience at UM, how comfortable are you interacting with people different than you? | Percent | | | | |
| More comfortable | 34 | 38 | 28 | 40 | 36 |
| About the same | 62 | 56 | 71 | 58 | 61 |
| Less comfortable | 4 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

Financial issues

The rise in the costs of education has been steady both nationally and at UM. In order to increase the University’s awareness both of the amount of undergraduate student employment on and off campus, and of students’ major sources of funding for their college education, questions about financial issues and employment were included in the UMSS’05.

Close to 70% of upper level students reported being employed during the academic year. Forty-three percent of the respondents were employed off campus only; 17% were employed on campus only; and 8% were employed both on and off campus. Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported they were not employed during the current academic year

When responses were compared across entry type, the most striking departures from the overall findings emerged for transfers from two-year institutions: 75% of these students reported working off-campus – and

only 22% said they were not working at all. It is important to note that only a small proportion of two-year transfers (3%) were working on campus. This fact may inhibit feelings of connection to campus for these students, as is often discussed in the transfer literature.

Sources of funding for college differed across entry status. As can be seen in Table 12, just over half of two-year transfers reported that their parents were a major source of funding, as opposed to over 70% of direct admits and four-year transfers. Instead, two-year transfers cited their current job as a major source of funding (29%) more than any other entry group. In addition, two-year transfers were slightly more likely to report having student loans. Transfers – particularly 2-year transfers – were more likely than direct admits to report that personal credit cards were a major source of their education funding. Unlike student loans, payment of credit card debt cannot be put off until after graduation.

Table 12. Students’ major sources of funding for college education – Sub-set providing ID

| | Entry Status | | | Entire Sample |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Direct admits | 2 yr. transfers | 4 yr. transfers | |
| Sorted by percent of entire sample | | | | |
| | Percent | | | |
| Parents/relatives | 77 | 51 | 72 | 70 |
| Student loans (Perkins, GSL/Stafford, etc.) | 31 | 39 | 33 | 33 |
| Scholarships (private, federal, school, etc.) | 27 | 15 | 15 | 23 |
| Educational grants (Pell, SEOG, private, etc.) | 17 | 29 | 20 | 21 |
| Summer employment | 15 | 27 | 20 | 18 |
| Current job (including work/study) | 10 | 29 | 19 | 16 |
| Bank loan(s) | 8 | 9 | 11 | 9 |
| Personal credit card(s) | 3 | 10 | 7 | 5 |

Information technology issues

Students were asked about their experience with information technology resources during the current academic year. Respondents indicated high levels of use of campus Information Technology (IT) resources. The IT resources referenced on the survey included: assistance with viruses and computer security; general purpose computing labs; assistance with using software packages; multi-media hardware/software; assistance with using University systems; WAM/Glue account for personal web pages, etc.; computing resources specialized for their major; wireless networking, networking in the residence halls; technology in the classroom; and online resources for coursework. Those who reported using IT resources generally reported that their needs were well met as well. Table 13, however, indicates that there is substantial room for improvement in meeting students’ needs. For example, a large percent (61%) said that they needed assistance with computer viruses and security, and only 49% felt that this assistance had mostly met their needs.

Table 13. Experience with information technology resources – Entire sample

| Campus information technology resources | Percent who have used resource | Among users, percent reporting that the resource met all or most of their needs |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online resources for coursework | 83 | 66 |
| General purpose computing labs | 77 | 61 |
| Campus wireless network | 55 | 55 |

Nearly 80% of the UMSS’05 sample made use of the OIT Help Desk during the academic year. By a wide margin, students indicated that they preferred to call for assistance (56%) compared to walk-in (23%) or use the Help Desk Web site (21%).

Attitudes about UM

The University of Maryland is always interested in knowing students' attitudes about various aspects of the institution. The UMSS'05 asked respondents attitudinal questions about the financial aspects of attending UM and about the value of attending UM, giving them five response options ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

Table 14 is sorted in descending order by the percent in the Entire Sample. Three-quarters reported they would be able to afford to enroll next semester, and two-thirds said that they would recommend UM to their family and friends. More than half of students consider UM a good value for the money, and around two-thirds would enroll here again if they had to do it all over.

A smaller proportion of two-year transfers agreed that they would be able to afford to enroll next semester (63%). As seen previously in this report, financial issues seem most salient for transfers from two-year institutions. Additionally, two-thirds of two-year transfers cited concern over their ability to finance their college education, as compared to only 46% of those directly admitted to the University and 48% of transfers from other four-year institutions. Despite the financial concerns of two-year transfers, they were the most likely to agree that if they had it to do over, they would enroll here again.

Table 14. Attitudes about UM – Sub-set providing ID

| | Entry Status | | | Entire Sample |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Direct admit | 4-year transfer | 2-year transfer | |
| Sorted in descending order by percent of Entire Sample | | | | |
| I'll be able to afford to enroll next semester. | 81 | 73 | 63 | 75 |
| I would recommend UM to my family and friends. | 69 | 66 | 64 | 66 |
| All in all, if I had it to do over, I would enroll here again. | 66 | 60 | 68 | 62 |
| The University of Maryland is a good value for my money. | 58 | 54 | 54 | 54 |
| I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education. | 46 | 48 | 66 | 50 |
| The cost of attending this university is reasonable. | 28 | 27 | 25 | 27 |

The percents seen in Table 14 are almost identical to those from the UMSS'04, which included the same set of attitude questions about UM. Data from the UMSS'00, however, reveal that 37% of respondents felt that the cost of attending the University was reasonable at that time, as opposed to the current 27%. These findings are not too surprising, given that the full-time tuition has increased 44% for in-state students and 55% for out-of-state residents from the 1999 to 2004 school years, not correcting for inflation. Nevertheless, the proportion of students who said they will be able to afford to enroll next semester remained relatively stable.

When responses were compared between Maryland residents and out-of-state residents, striking differences can be seen in the students' perceptions of UM cost and value. At the time of this survey, the Fall 2004-Spring 2005 tuition for an in-state resident was \$6,759, 60% less than the \$17,433 out-of-state cost, which may help to explain these findings. Out-of-state students did not seem to be more concerned about their ability to finance their education or enroll the following semester. See Table 15.

Table 15. Residency status and perceived UM value – Sub-set providing ID

| | Residency Status | | Entire Sample |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| | In-State N=967 | Out-of-State N=319 | |
| | Percent “agree” or “strongly agree” | | |
| The University of Maryland is a good value for my money. | 60 | 47 | 54 |
| The cost of attending this university is reasonable. | 31 | 15 | 27 |
| I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education. | 49 | 52 | 50 |
| I’ll be able to afford to enroll next semester. | 76 | 78 | 75 |

USING THE UMSS DATA

The UMSS ‘05 data provide information about upper division students’ perceptions on a variety of issues including academic advising, learning skills and abilities, and involvement in undergraduate enrichment programs. While not all the data may be relevant to your unit or department, we encourage you to use those elements that are. Some suggestions for use of the data include:

Review and discuss findings with colleagues. Share this report with others in your college, department or office in order to inform them of current findings about the experiences of UM juniors and seniors who participated in this study. Discuss how these findings fit with your perceptions of the upper division student experience.

Clarify the data with focus groups. Engage students in small discussion groups to gain further information about topics of interest to your department.

Allow data to help inform resource allocation. Data can be used to help guide decisions about how to prioritize use of funds to meet students’ needs and concerns.

Determine areas for further analysis. CAWG can assist departments, units, and colleges by providing data or conducting relevant subgroup analyses.

2005 University of Maryland Student Survey

The University of Maryland (UM) needs your help to obtain the best possible information about your experience here. Your honest and thoughtful responses are very important and very much appreciated. In accordance with UM policy, your responses are treated as confidential.

Summarized group results will be reported to campus departments and/or staff to help plan and provide better services to students. In addition, your responses may be used for research papers.

Please fill in the bubbles for each answer entirely.

Thank you for your time.

Since entering UM...

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| | never |
| | sometimes |
| | always |
- I have taken the initiative to contact an advisor at least once a semester.
 - I have prepared for advising in advance by bringing questions and materials to discuss.
 - I pay attention to required prerequisites as I develop a course schedule.
 - I know where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems.
 - I consult campus resources (e.g., schedule of classes, undergraduate catalog, Testudo) for information on University policies and regulations.
 - I have sought information about requirements needed to complete my major.
 - I know how to prepare a schedule that fulfills my academic requirements.
 - I understand academic policies and procedures.
 - I am knowledgeable about the requirements I need to fulfill to graduate on time.
 - I am aware of registration dates and related deadlines (e.g., drop/add, last day to withdraw).

- | | |
|--|-----|
| | No |
| | Yes |
- I am comfortable using Testudo to review my transcript.
 - I am comfortable utilizing Testudo to check information on transfer courses.
 - I believe I will graduate in the amount of time that is reasonable given my academic choices.
 - I know about departmental and University opportunities (e.g., research, scholarships, study abroad) that are available to students.

In what UM college have you received most of your academic advising? (choose one)

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> AGNR | <input type="radio"/> BMGT | <input type="radio"/> EDUC | <input type="radio"/> JOUR |
| <input type="radio"/> ARCH | <input type="radio"/> BSOS | <input type="radio"/> ENGR | <input type="radio"/> LFSC |
| <input type="radio"/> ARHU | <input type="radio"/> CMPS | <input type="radio"/> HLHP | <input type="radio"/> LTSC |

Please answer the following questions based on your advising experiences IN THE COLLEGE YOU SELECTED ABOVE:

(Please note that not applicable is a valid response for 2 questions.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| | not applicable |
| | strongly disagree |
| | disagree |
| | neutral |
| | agree |
| | strongly agree |

- I am pleased with the academic advising I have received.
- I have been able to obtain an advising appointment within a week.
- When I have not been able to schedule an appointment with an advisor, I have received advising assistance via email, telephone and/or web page.

Academic advisors have ...

- helped me to figure out where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems.
- provided me with sound guidance.
- shown concern for me as an individual.
- taught me how to find information about campus resources (Learning Assistance, career programs, counseling).
- provided me with accurate information.

Academic advisors have ...

- spent sufficient advising time with me.
- helped me find answers to my questions about departmental policies and procedures.
- helped me find answers to my questions about University policies and procedures.
- helped me outline academic choices that would allow me to graduate in a reasonable amount of time.
- helped me to explore departmental and University opportunities (e.g., research, scholarships, study abroad) that are available to undergraduate students.

What is your most preferred method of obtaining academic advising assistance? (choose one)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Scheduled appointment | <input type="radio"/> E-mail exchange |
| <input type="radio"/> Walk-in assistance | <input type="radio"/> Submit a question on a web form |
| <input type="radio"/> Telephone conversation | <input type="radio"/> Self-help at a website |



