

SNAPSHOT

CAWG

of
Student ExperiencesPerceptions of
Mentoring at UM

This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot is based on two surveys: the Beginning Student Survey (BSS) 2009 and the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) 2008. The BSS is administered to freshmen 8 weeks into their first semester in courses such as ENGL 101 and UNIV 100, among others. For the BSS 09, out of 4072 first-time, full-time freshmen, 2100 (52%) completed the survey. The UMSS is administered in the spring semester to juniors and seniors in Professional Writing classes. For the UMSS 08, of 2150 students enrolled in Professional Writing, 1407 (65%) completed the survey. Use caution when generalizing.

Highlights:

- ◆ About half of respondents do not have a mentor, but would like one.
- ◆ About half of respondents believe mentorship will happen naturally; a fourth will seek it out.
- ◆ Freshmen want career advice; juniors/seniors receive holistic guidance.
- ◆ Over half of freshmen anticipate having multiple mentors at UM to meet their needs.

Most respondents want faculty/staff mentors; 1/3 have a mentor.

- ◆ About a third of both freshmen (34%) and junior/senior respondents (39%) indicated that they have a mentor.
- ◆ About half of both freshmen (56%) and juniors/senior respondents (48%) indicated they do not have a mentor, but want one.
- ◆ Few freshmen respondents (10%) and junior/senior respondents (14%) do not have a mentor and do not want one.
- ◆ Nearly half of freshmen respondents (48%) have a UM student who acts as a peer mentor.

CAWG defined a mentor as
 "...a UM faculty/staff member who takes an active interest in your academic, personal, and/or professional development."

Questions to consider:

- ⇒ How can UM better reach the half of respondents who do not have a mentor, but would like one?
- ⇒ There are similar percentages of freshmen and junior/senior respondents who have a mentor or would like one. What do you make of this finding?

Freshmen respondents want career advice. Junior and senior respondents receive holistic guidance.

Freshmen respondents were asked what roles they *would like* a faculty/staff mentor to play, and junior/senior respondents were asked what roles their faculty/staff mentors *had played* in their life.

Helping roles that mentors play: What freshmen want, what juniors and seniors receive.	% freshmen* WANT:	% juniors/ seniors** RECEIVE:
	Help from their mentors	
With their internship and/or job search process.	76	56
When exploring career/graduate school opportunities.	72	69
To gain insider knowledge or experience in their career field.	71	72
To find resources at UM.	69	71
To connect with people important to their academic/career goals.	67	69
To review their resume.	61	42
To select their classes.	61	47
By giving them encouragement and support.	58	92
To choose a major.	37	25
By acting as a role model.	35	60
With financial concerns.	23	18
With their physical and emotional well-being.	22	44
With your social life.	11	24
* "Ideally, what roles would you like a faculty/staff mentor from UM to play in your life? (choose all that apply)" (Source: BSS 09) ** "What roles does this person from UM play in your life? (choose all that apply)" (Source: UMSS 08)		

Of the top five desired mentor roles most selected by freshmen, juniors and seniors experience four in common:

- ◆ Explore career/graduate school opportunities.
- ◆ Gain insider knowledge in your career field.
- ◆ Find resources at UM.
- ◆ Connect with people important to your academic career goals.

Help with financial concerns and social life ranked at the bottom of the list of mentor roles for both freshmen and junior/senior respondents.

Yet, there was a contrast between what freshmen desire and what juniors and seniors experience from their mentors:

- ◆ **Freshmen respondents indicated a desire for more academic/job-related support** from their mentors, such as: Internship and/or job search process, by reviewing resumes, and selecting classes.
- ◆ **Junior/senior respondents indicated they received more support in their holistic development** such as: Giving encouragement and support, acting as a role model, helping with physical and emotional well-being, and with social life.

Questions to consider:

- ⇒ Freshmen, who are still transitioning to college, do not desire encouragement and support as much as juniors and seniors report receiving this support; why is this?
- ⇒ Juniors and seniors do not report receiving mentoring for the internship and job search process as much as freshmen desire this mentoring; why is this?

One mentor or multiple mentors?

Considering there are many roles that respondents expect mentors to play, CAWG wondered whether freshmen respondents expect one person or multiple people to meet these roles.

- ◆ 59% of freshmen respondents indicated they will have these roles met by multiple mentors at UM.
- ◆ 41% indicated they will have these roles met by one mentor.

Question to consider:

- ⇒ Is it more helpful to have a single person as a mentor guiding all parts of a student's experience? Is it realistic? Or would it be more helpful/realistic to encourage students to seek a few, more specialized mentors?

How did respondents meet their mentors?

- ◆ Most respondents met their mentors through a class (either academic or introductory) or by being assigned to a mentor. Few sought out this person on their own.
- ◆ Additionally, of all freshmen respondents who would like a mentor, just over half believe that they will meet this person naturally at some point while at UM, while about 1/4 indicate they will seek out a mentor.

Questions to consider:

- ⇒ Should more students seek out mentors? Is it UM's responsibility to create mentorship opportunities?
- ⇒ Does/should mentoring happen naturally in the course of the college experience?

Which of the following best describes how you connected with [your mentor]?	Freshmen %	Juniors/Seniors %
I was assigned this person.	30	15
I am taking an introduction to UM or study skills class from this person (e.g., EDCP 108, UNIV 100).	25	NA*
I am taking an academic class from this person (e.g. ENGL 101, Math 110).	18	44
I met this person in a club/organization.	8	12
I sought out this person on my own.	5	11
I was referred to this person.	3	6
Other	12	11
* UMSS 08 wording was slightly different than BSS 09 wording for this item		

For more information about mentoring and junior/senior respondents, see the UMSS 2008 report.

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Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)
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