



JOB PREPARATION

University of Maryland

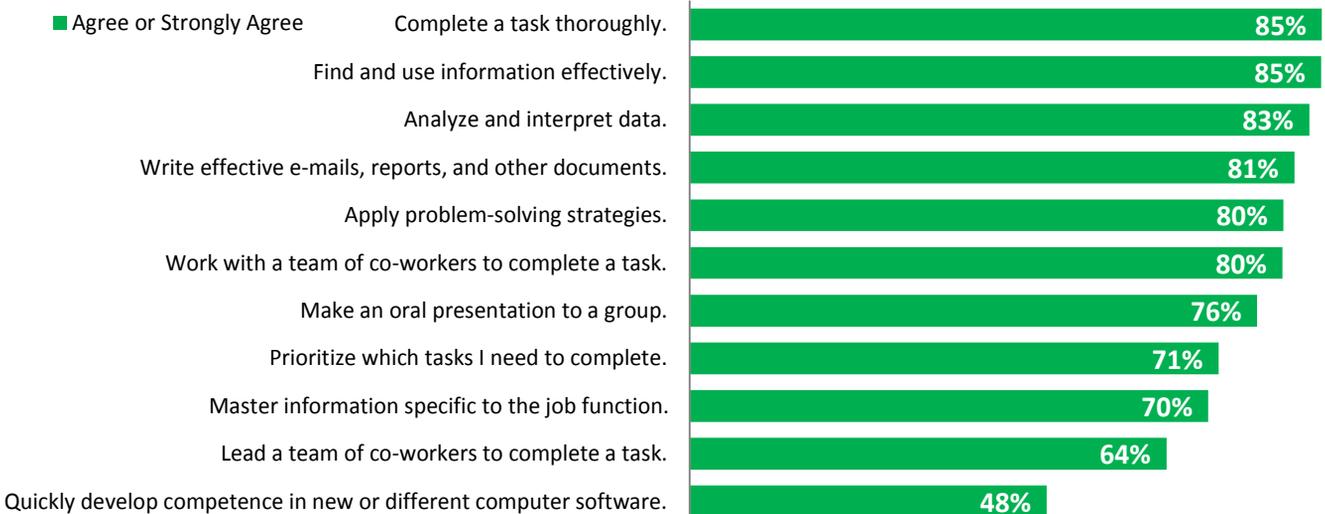
2014 – Issue 2, May

The University of Maryland is committed to preparing its students for the workforce and has implemented several initiatives to help meet this goal. To inform decision-making, the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) surveyed juniors/seniors during the 2011-2012 academic year regarding their confidence about their job search. CAWG explored factors influencing their confidence given and regardless of the economic situation as well as their opinions on whether or not UMD is preparing them to perform a variety of tasks in the workforce.

This Snapshot summarizes selected results from the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) 2012. The UMSS is administered in Professional Writing courses during the spring semester. We distributed 2,471 surveys; 1,844 (75%) respondents completed the survey. Though respondent demographics are very similar to those of the student population, the data included here represent responses of survey respondents, not all UMD students; use caution when generalizing. All demographic differences reported here are statistically significant. Please see page 2 for a more in-depth explanation of demographic differences.

Student Preparation for the Workforce

How well do students feel UMD is preparing them to do the following?



- Although **80%** of respondents felt confident that UMD was preparing them to work with a team of co-workers to complete a task, only **64%** felt confident that UMD was preparing them to lead such a team.
- Although **85%** of respondents agree that they can complete a task thoroughly, a smaller percentage (**71%**) agreed that UMD prepared them to prioritize which tasks they need to complete.
- According to *Job Outlook 2013*, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) reports that employers want to see the following competencies in new hires. **Three-quarters or more** of respondents agreed that UMD was preparing them to perform such tasks.

⇒ Complete a task thoroughly

⇒ Find and use information effectively

⇒ Analyze and interpret data

⇒ Write effective emails, reports, and other documents

⇒ Apply problem-solving strategies

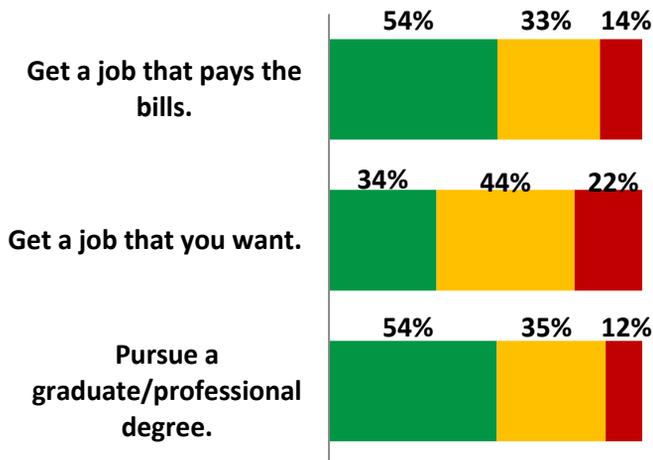
⇒ Work with a team of co-workers to complete a task

⇒ Make an oral presentation to a group

Student Confidence Regarding Job Prospects

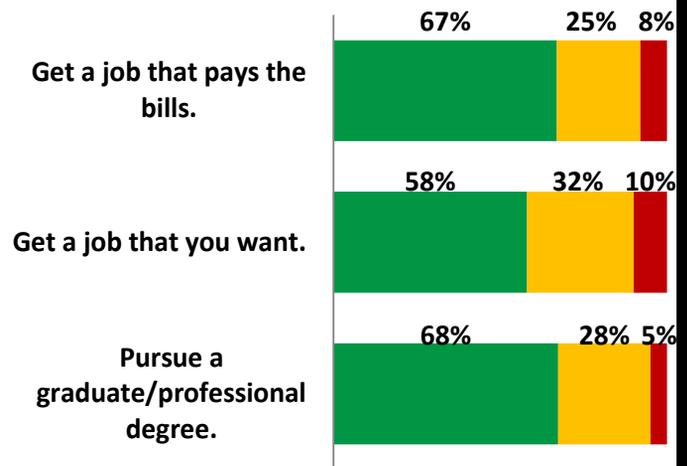
GIVEN the current economic situation, how confident are respondents that they will be able to:

■ Confident ■ Neutral ■ Not confident



REGARDLESS OF the economic situation, how confident are respondents that UMD would prepare them to:

■ Confident ■ Neutral ■ Not confident



- Regardless of the economic situation, **67%** of respondents feel confident that UMD prepared them for a job that pays the bills and fewer (**58%**) feel prepared for a job that they want. Those numbers fall when students consider today’s economy. Given the current economic situation, the number who are confident that they can get a job that pays the bills is **54%**, while only **34%** are confident they will get a job that they want.
- Respondents are also more likely to feel confident about their graduate/professional school preparation regardless of the economic situation than they are given the current economic situation.

Questions to Consider

- What is behind the finding that only two-thirds of respondents – regardless of the economic situation – are confident that UMD prepared them to get a job that pays the bills? Is it a relative lack of confidence felt by first-time job seekers, a gap in their education, or something else?
- How should students’ job search strategies change depending on the economic situation?
- What can we do to help students make links between their degree and an unclear career path?
- What could UMD do to help students feel most prepared to enter the workforce?



Demographic Differences Explained (Please see demographic differences reported on page 3.)

Differences (tested with chi square analyses) are reported where the responses across the demographic categories (e.g., male and female) are significantly different than expected relative to the overall response pattern. For example, if 70% of all respondents agreed with a statement, we would expect 70% of both males and females to agree, if sex were not a factor. However, if we found a significant difference with only 65% of males agreeing, then we would report that “fewer males than expected” agreed with the item. The American Indian/Native Hawaiian, Unknown, and Foreign racial/ethnic/citizenship groups were not included due to small sample sizes that make statistical analyses unreliable.

How Different Groups Perceive Their Confidence

Gender



- **Fifty-four percent** of respondents were male and **46%** were female.
- It appears men are more confident about their abilities to get a job but there was no statistically significant difference between men and women and their confidence in pursuing a graduate /professional degree.

Confidence given the current economic situation

	Men	Women
Get a job that pays the bills	61%	46%
Get a job that you want	38%	29%

Confidence regardless of the economic situation

	Men	Women
Prepared to get a job that pays the bills	71%	62%
Prepared to get a job that you want	60%	55%

First-Generation



- Students who self-reported as first-generation are those who indicated on their admissions application that none of their parents had completed at least a bachelor's degree.
- **Twenty-one percent** of respondents were in the first generation of their family to go to college, which is a representative sample of the overall student body.
- In both economic scenarios, first generation students were less likely to feel confident about their job and graduate school prospects.

Confidence given the current economic situation

	First gen college	Non-first gen college
Get a job that pays the bills	44%	57%
Get a job that you want	26%	37%
Pursue a grad/ professional degree	45%	56%

Confidence regardless of the economic situation

	First gen college	Non-first gen college
Prepared to get a job that pays the bills	59%	69%
Prepared to get a job that you want	53%	59%
Prepared to pursue a grad/professional degree	60%	70%

Race/Ethnicity



- **Fifty-eight percent** of respondents were White, **16%** Asian American, **10%** Black/African American, **7%** Hispanic, **3%** Foreign, **3%** Two or More Races, **2%** Unknown, **<1%** American Indian/Alaska Native, and **<1%** Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.
- Analyses of differences by race/ethnicity yielded minimal statistically significant differences: given the current economy, Asian American students were less confident and White students more confident regarding job prospects.



The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) regularly gathers and exchanges information about UMD student and alumni experiences. The group is charged with developing a campus "Culture of Evidence" in which data and assessment can inform campus decision making. Its three subgroups focus on freshman experiences, junior /senior student experiences, and retention and completion efforts. For more information, to view past reports, or to join a CAWG subgroup, please visit www.umd.edu/cawg.