

# CAWG SNAPSHOT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES JUNIOR/SENIOR PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY

University of Maryland

2015 – Issue 2, April

This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot reports findings on junior and senior students' experiences with diversity on UMD's campus. The data included represent results from the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS), an annual survey administered by the CAWG Assessing Campus Experiences Subgroup (ACES). Respondents complete the survey during the spring semester in Professional Writing courses. For the UMSS 2014, out of 2,679 juniors and seniors enrolled in Professional Writing, 1,895 (71%) completed the survey. Of the respondents, 52% were White; 16% were Asian; 13% were Black or African American; 9% were Hispanic; 4% were Two or More Races; 3% were Foreign; 3% were Unknown; and <1% were classified as Other, including American Indian and Hawaiian. Additionally, 53% were male and 47% were female. The demographic breakdown of respondents is representative of the university as a whole. The data below represent only the responses of survey respondents, not all UMD students; therefore, use caution when generalizing. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Unless otherwise indicated, diversity refers to racial/ethnic diversity.

## Diversity before coming to UMD

How would you compare the racial/ethnic composition of UMD with the following?



Neighborhood where you grew up

UMD is less diverse	UMD is about the same	UMD is more diverse	N
10%	27%	63%	1891



High school from which you graduated

12%	31%	58%	1890
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How would you compare the race/ethnicity of the friends you have made at UMD to those you had before?



Friends you had before coming to UMD

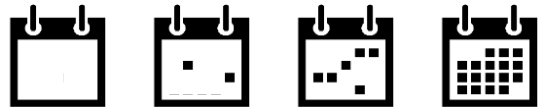
Friends at UMD are less diverse	Friends at UMD are about the same	Friends at UMD are more diverse	N
10%	51%	39%	1888

- Sixty-three percent of respondents reported that UMD is more diverse than the neighborhood where they grew up. Analysis by race indicated that more White students than expected (71%) said that UMD is more diverse than the neighborhood where they grew up. Fewer Black or African American (52%), Asian (49%), and Hispanic (41%) students than expected said that UMD is more diverse than the neighborhood where they grew up. The same trend held true for the high school from which they graduated. **Note: See Demographic Differences Explained on page 3 for a description of "more than expected" and "fewer than expected."**

**Question to consider:** How might individuals' definitions of diversity affect their perceptions of the diversity around them? Would an individual consider a predominately Hispanic high school diverse?



# Frequency of interactions



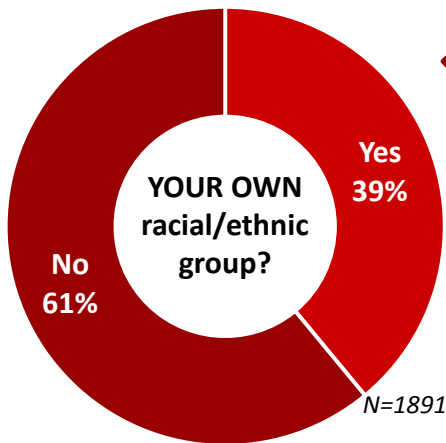
	Never / almost never	Occasionally	Weekly	Daily	N
How often do you interact IN CLASS with people of a race/ethnicity different than yours?	2%	15%	23%	59%	1883
How often do you interact OUTSIDE OF CLASS with people of a race/ethnicity different than yours?	4%	15%	22%	58%	1881

- Interactions with those of a different race/ethnicity were reported as happening at similar frequencies whether they occur inside or outside of the classroom.

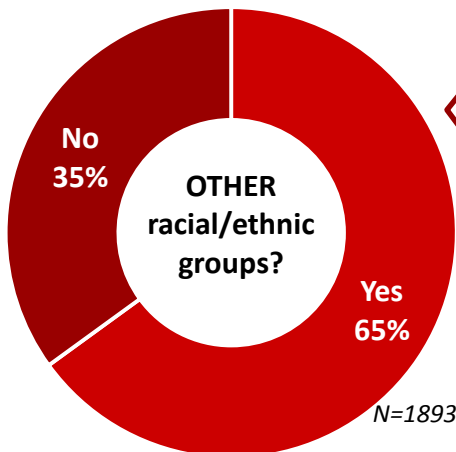
**Question to consider:** How might respondents have interpreted “interact” in this question? Does saying “hi” to someone count or does it mean they had deep conversations?



## Have you had at least one class at UMD that was pivotal in increasing your understanding of:



Analyses by race indicate that 66% of Black or African American students reported having had at least one class at UMD that was pivotal in increasing their understanding of their OWN racial/ethnic group, whereas 32% of White respondents reported the same.



Analyses by race yielded no statistically significant difference in the ways respondents answered.

**Questions to consider:**

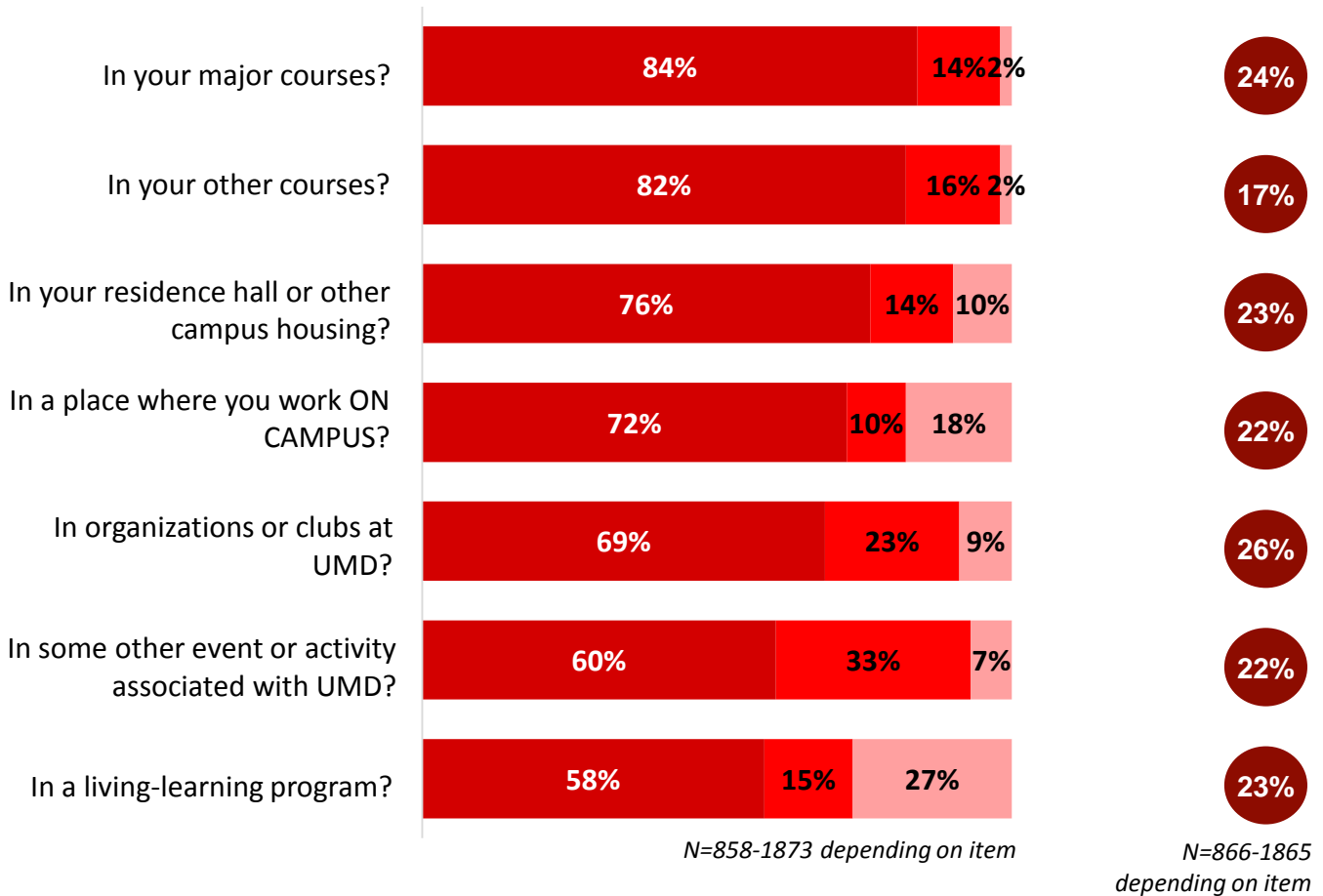
- Respondents in this survey participated in the CORE requirements, which required only one diversity class, while students today participate in Gen Ed requirements, which requires two. How might students participating in the new curriculum answer differently? Will these requirements increase student experience with diversity beyond simple exposure? If so, how?
- What can we do to increase the impact of courses at UMD so student experience with diversity in the classroom goes beyond simple exposure?



**While at UMD, how often have you interacted with people of a race/ethnicity different from yours:**

**% who indicated the experience caused them to think about new perspectives and points of view in a significant way**

■ Weekly or Daily ■ Occasionally ■ Never / Almost Never



*Note: Respondents had the option to select N/A for residence hall, on-campus work, and living-learning program and those responses were excluded from analysis.*

- More than four out of five respondents interact weekly or daily with people of a different race/ethnicity in their major courses (84%) or in other courses (82%).
- For all situations, approximately one-quarter or less of students found the experiences cause them to think about new perspectives and points of view in a significant way.

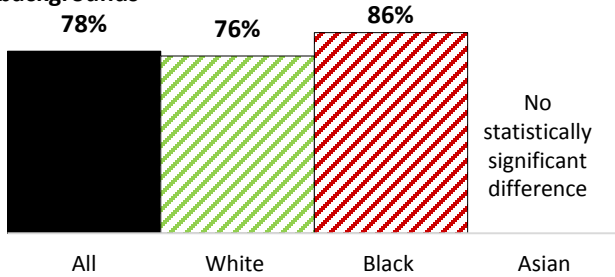
**Demographic differences explained**

*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.*

### Since coming to UMD, how often have you done the following?

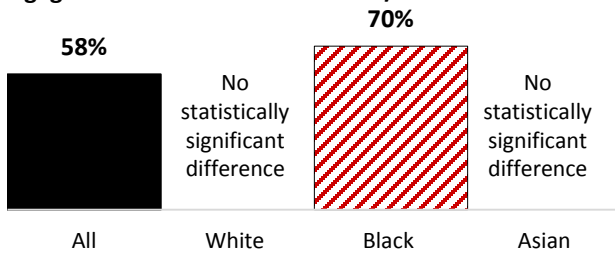
■ Sometimes or frequently

#### Made efforts to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds



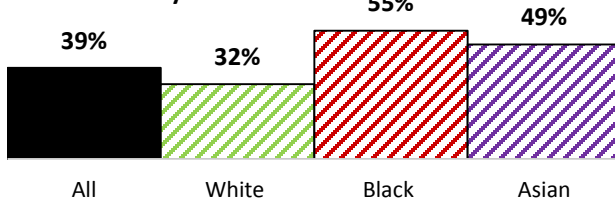
- Approximately three out of four respondents (78%) have made an effort to get to know individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Approximately one-third of respondents sometimes or frequently participate in an organization that promotes cultural diversity (39%) and/or events sponsored by groups reflecting their own (34%) or a cultural heritage other than their own (32%).

#### Engaged in discussions about racial/ethnic issues in class



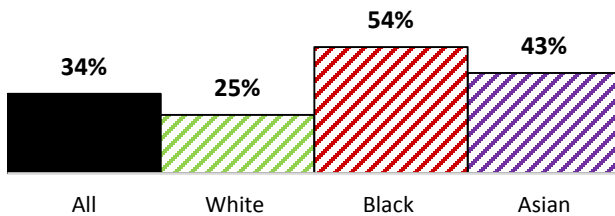
- Analyses by race indicate that more Black/African American and Asian respondents than expected participated and fewer White respondents than expected participated.
- Analyses by race indicate different participation practices.

#### Actively participated in an organization that promotes cultural diversity



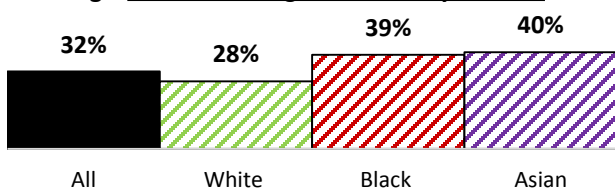
- Across all categories, Black or African American respondents were more likely than expected to engage and White respondents were less likely.
- More Asian respondents than expected engaged in organizations that promote cultural diversity, activities sponsored by groups reflecting their own cultural heritage, and activities sponsored by groups reflecting other cultural heritages.
- White students were less engaged than their peers with the exception of engaging in discussions about racial/ethnic issues in class.

#### Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflection your own cultural heritage



*Note: Analyses were conducted for Hispanic respondents but yielded no statistically significant differences.*

#### Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting a cultural heritage other than your own



#### Questions to consider:

- How can we inspire student interest in these activities?
- Are students making conscious decisions not to participate? Or is there another reason, such as that they're already in a routine or they just don't have time?

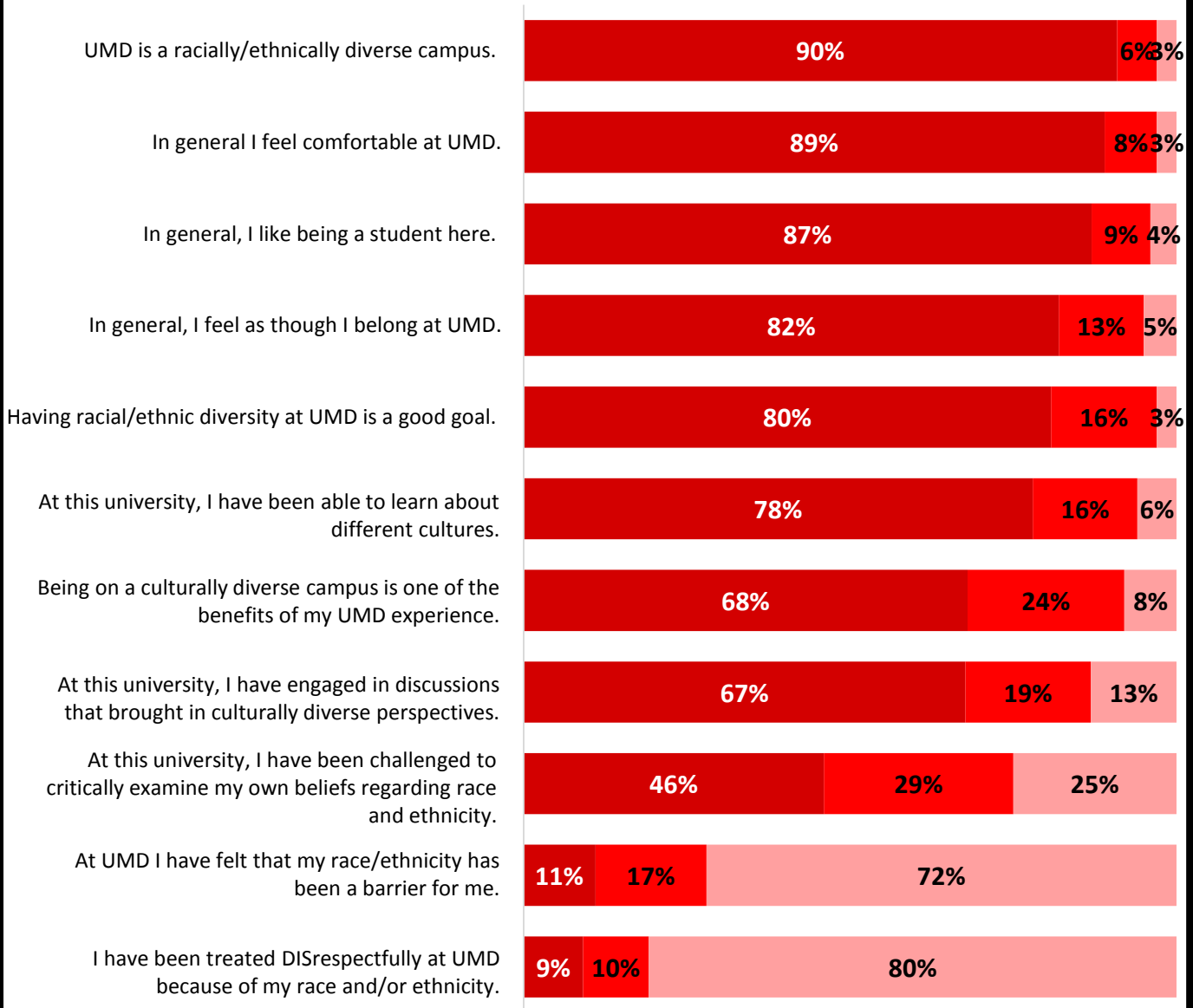


# Perceptions of campus climate for diversity

All respondents

(See the following page for analyses of this question by race.)

■ Agree or Strongly Agree    
 ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree    
 ■ Disagree or Strongly Disagree



*N=1879–1891, depending on item*

- Eighty percent (80%) of respondents agree that having racial/ethnic diversity at UMD is a good goal. A lower percentage (68%) agree that being on a culturally diverse campus is one of the benefits of their UMD experience.
- Although three-quarters (78%) of respondents indicate that they have learned about different cultures at UMD and two-thirds (67%) have engaged in discussions that brought in culturally diverse perspectives, less than half (46%) have been challenged to critically examine their own beliefs regarding race and ethnicity.

## Respondents by race

The “all respondents” column lists the percentage of all respondents who selected that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement. The percentages under the “Race in comparison to all other races” heading are the percentage of respondents of that race who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement. Where the “---” image appears indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the way respondents of that race answered in comparison to respondents of different races.

	All respondents	Race in comparison to all other races			
		White	Black or African American	Asian	Hispanic
UMD is a racially/ethnically diverse campus.	90%	95%	75%	---	84%
In general, I feel comfortable at UMD.	89%	91%	84%	---	---
In general, I like being a student here.	87%	---	---	---	---
In general, I feel as though I belong at UMD.	82%	85%	76%	77%	---
Having racial/ethnic diversity at UMD is a good goal.	80%	76%	94%	86%	---
At this university, I have been able to learn about different cultures.	78%	---	---	---	---
Being on a culturally diverse campus is one of the benefits of my UMD experience.	68%	---	---	78%	---
At this university, I have engaged in discussions that brought in culturally diverse perspectives.	67%	---	79%	---	---
At this university, I have been challenged to critically examine my own beliefs regarding race and ethnicity.	46%	42%	61%	---	---
At UMD, I have felt that my race/ethnicity has been a barrier for me.	11%	7%	23%	---	---
I have been treated DISrespectfully at UMD because of my race and/or ethnicity.	9%	5%	23%	---	---

- Respondents generally felt a sense of belonging on campus but further analyses by race revealed that not all students felt the same level of inclusion.
  - Nine percent (9%) of all respondents report having been treated disrespectfully at UMD because of their race and/or ethnicity. However, one-quarter (23%) of Black or African American respondents reported this, compared to 5% of White respondents.
  - Eleven percent (11%) of all respondents report having felt that their race/ethnicity has been at barrier for them at UMD. However, one-quarter (23%) of Black or African American respondents reported that compared to 7% of White respondents.

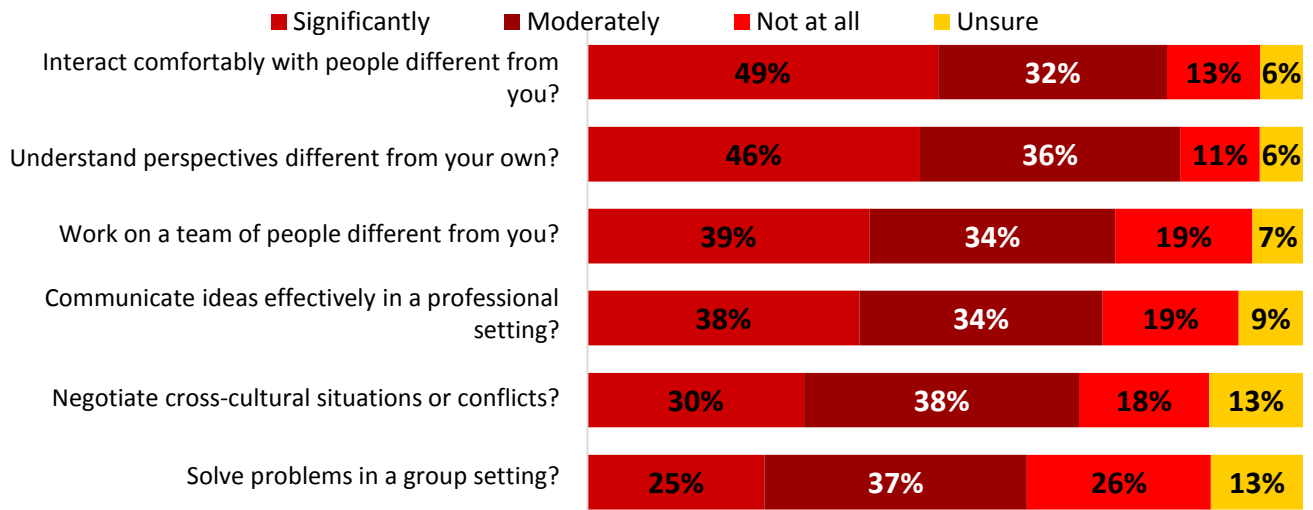
### Question to consider:

What student experiences are behind these findings?



# Cultural competencies

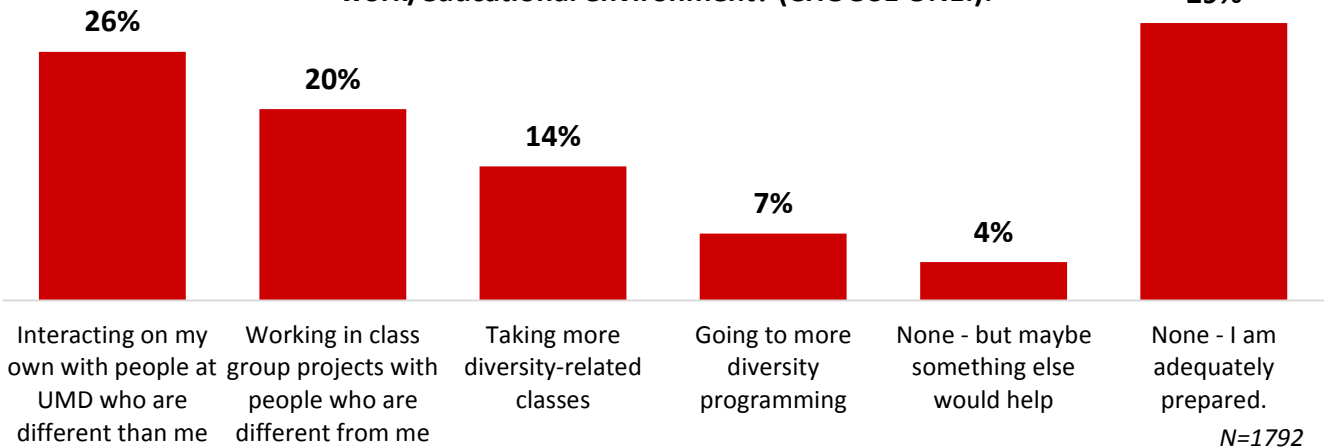
**To what degree does your experience with people who are racially/ethnically different from you at UMD contribute to your ability to:**



*N=1875-1880 depending on item*

- For all topics, fewer than 50% of all students report that experience with people who are racially or ethnically different from them at UMD contributes “significantly” to their abilities. However, further analyses by race indicate that Black or African American students report benefitting from these experiences more than White students. No other statistically significant racial/ethnic differences were found.

**Which of the following do you think will best prepare you to succeed in a racially/ethnically diverse work/educational environment? (CHOOSE ONE.):**



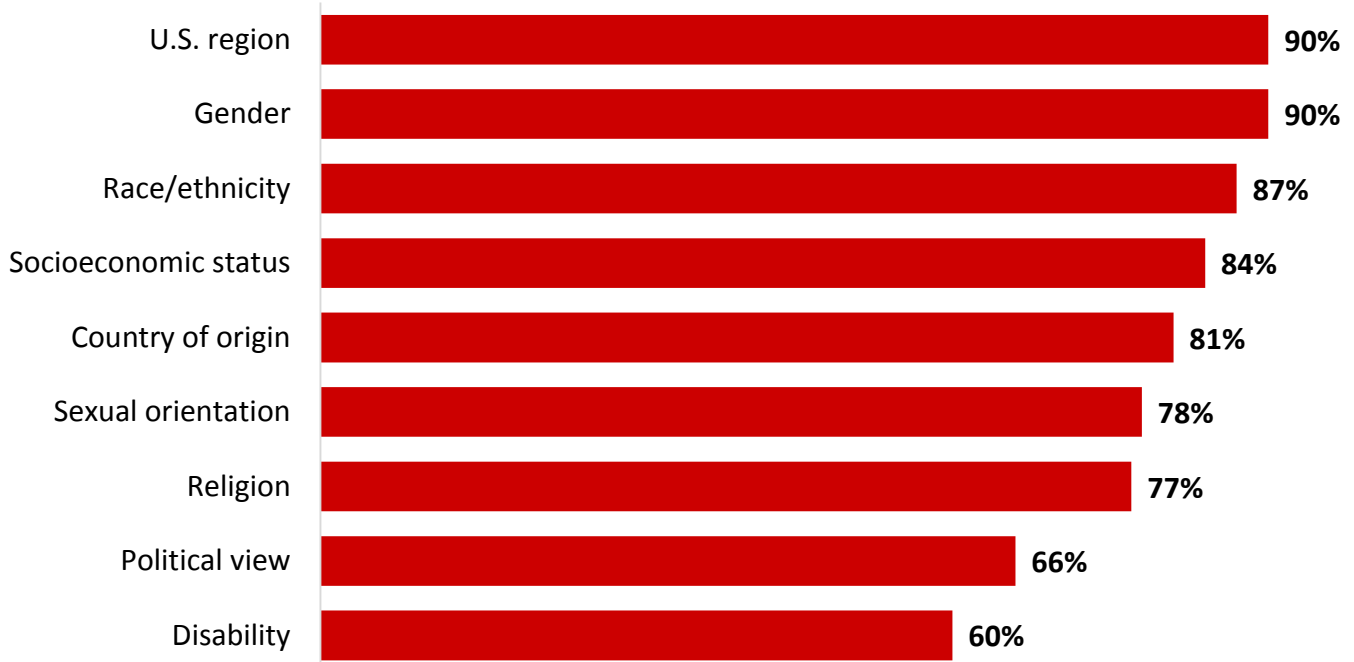
*N=1792*

- More than half of students report that they are confident in their individual ability to prepare to succeed in a racially/ethnically diverse environment – either that they are adequately prepared (29%) or that they could interact on their own with people at UMD who are different than them (26%).
- On the other hand, approximately 40% say that could happen in a university-organized space through group projects (20%), diversity-related classes (14%), or diversity programming (7%).
- Further analyses reveal that more White respondents (33%) than expected reported that they were already adequately prepared.

## Interactions with others

For this question, we expanded the definition of diversity to incorporate other aspects of diversity.

**Students reported being very confident in their ability to interact effectively with people different from them with respect to:**



*N=1816-1862 depending on item*

- More than 4 out of 5 respondents are very confident in their ability to interact across gender, US region, racial/ethnic, socioeconomic status, and country of origin lines.
- Analyses by race indicate that White students are more confident than expected in their ability to interact effectively with people different from them in all cases except for country of origin, where there is no statistically significant difference. There were no other statistically significant differences by race.

### Questions to consider:

- Some of these differences are often visible (gender) while some are often invisible (political view). How might that affect student answers?
- How does exposure or familiarity to these differences affect student answers?
- How will confidence paired with situational context affect students' abilities to interact effectively with people different than themselves once they leave UMD?



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](http://www.umd.edu/cawg).