

REASONS FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS SELECTED UMD

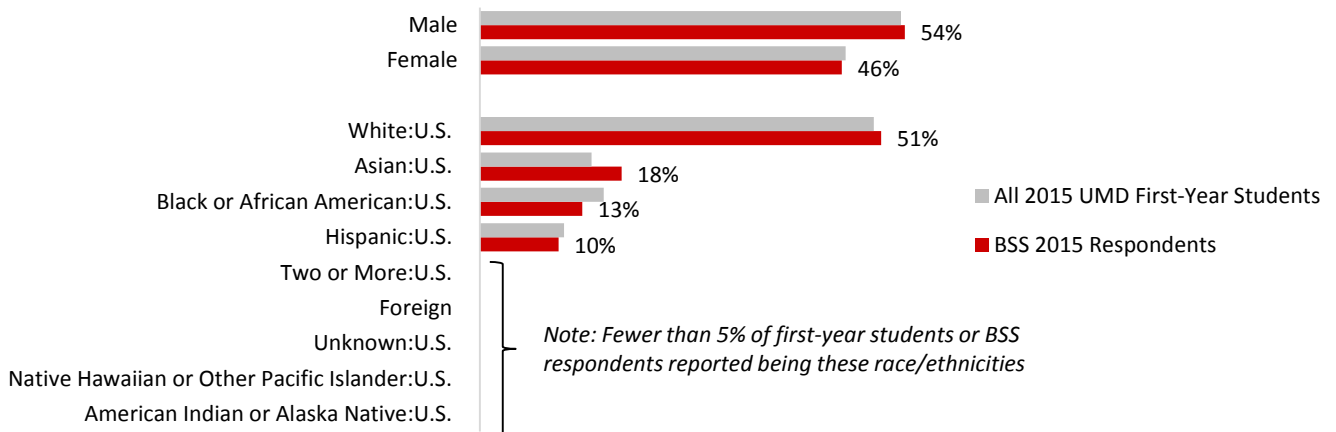
University of Maryland

2016 – Issue 6, December

This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot by the Beginnings subgroup reports findings on first-year students' responses to communication preferences. The data included represent results from the Beginning Student Survey (BSS), an annual survey administered by the CAWG Beginnings subgroup. First-year students complete the paper survey approximately 8-10 weeks into fall semester during courses such as ENGL 101 and UNIV 100.

Demographics

Respondent demographics: For the BSS 2015, out of 3,936 first-time full-time students, 1,449 (37%) completed the survey. Demographic percentages are displayed below in red alongside a comparison to the demographic breakdown of all UMD first-years. Students in all race/ethnicity categories except "foreign" are U.S. citizens. Demographic data were pulled from UMD databases, which align with mandated federal reporting guidelines. These guidelines set the race/ethnicity groups and binary sex classifications included here. The data in this report represent only the responses of survey respondents, not all UMD freshmen; therefore, use caution when generalizing. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Resources on time to degree and graduation rates

This snapshot focuses only on why students chose UMD. For those interested in data on how students advance through UMD and other universities, the following online resources are available.

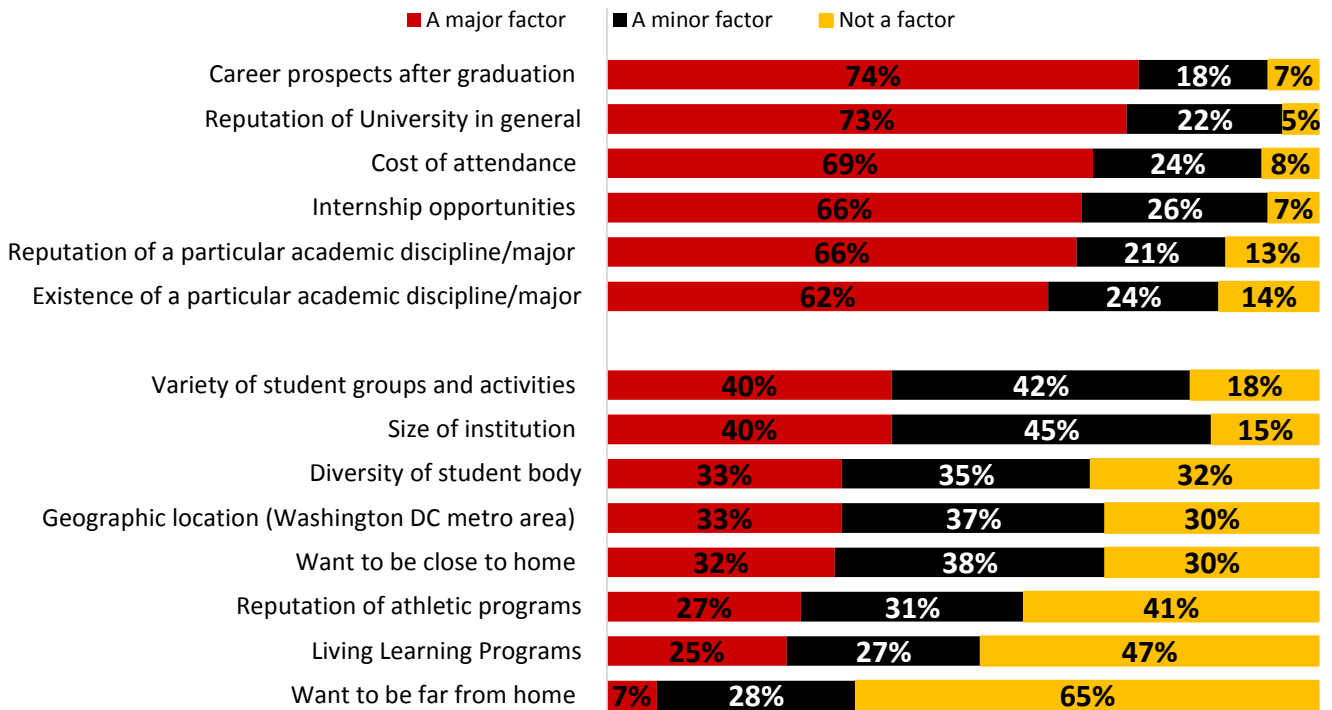
- **College Navigator:** <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- **National Student Clearinghouse:** <http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/>
- **Student Achievement Measure:** <http://studentachievementmeasure.org/>

Additionally, a past CAWG snapshot includes data comparing UMD first year students' and junior/senior students' perceptions about their perceived time to degree. It is available online at:

https://www.irpa.umd.edu/CAWG/Reports/2013/snapshot_jun13.pdf.

Important factors in deciding to enroll at UMD and college choice

How important were the following factors in enrolling at UMD?

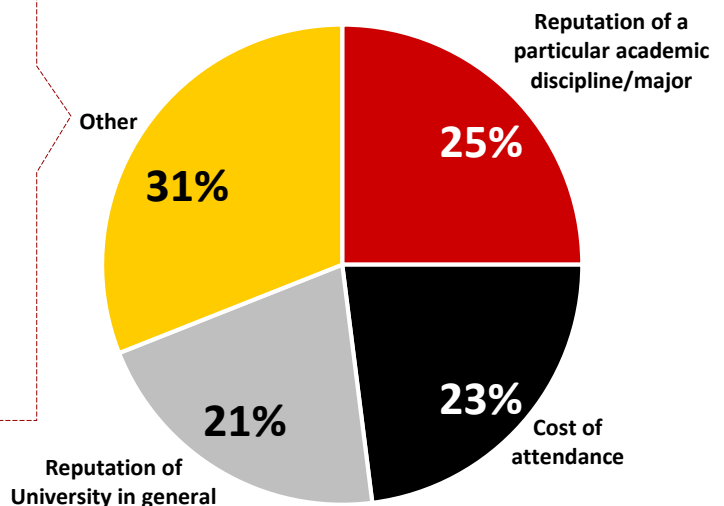


N=1,443 – 1,446, depending on item

Select your TOP reason for selecting UMD, as listed in the question above.

Other includes:

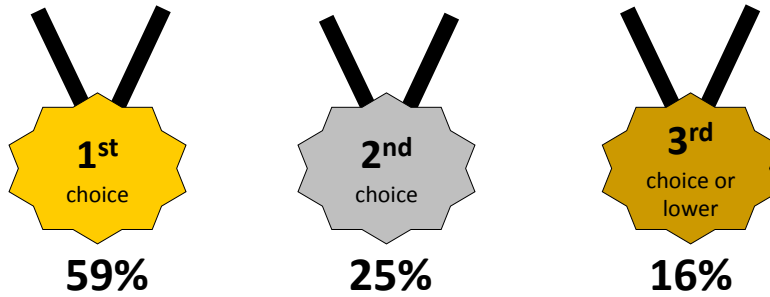
- Want to be close to home (5%)
- Career prospects after graduation (5%)
- Living Learning programs (4%)
- Existence of a particular academic discipline/major (4%)
- Geographic location (DC metro area) (4%)
- Reputation of athletic programs (3%)
- Diversity of student body (2%)
- Size of institution (2%)
- Variety of student groups and activities (1%)
- Internship opportunities (1%)
- Want to be far from home (<1%)



N=1,410

- Even though “career prospects after graduation” was the reason most often cited by respondents as a major factor (74%), only 5% cited it as the TOP reason they selected UMD. Similarly, while “internship opportunities” was cited by 66% of respondents as a major factor, only 1% cited it as the TOP reason they selected UMD.
- More than two-thirds of respondents indicated that one of the following was the TOP reason for selecting UMD: reputation of a particular academic discipline/major (25%), cost of attendance (23%), and reputation of University in general (21%).

When I entered this institution, it was my:



N=1,445

Comparing top factor in selecting UMD and college choice

The table below portrays the TOP reason for selecting UMD (see bottom of page 2) for students who reported that UMD was their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd or lower choice (see top of page 3). Only differences that are statistically significantly different from the total column were reported. For further explanation on the analysis, see “Comparisons explained” in the gray box at the bottom of the page.

	1 st choice	2 nd choice	3 rd choice or lower	Total
Reputation of a particular academic discipline / major	---	---	---	25%
Cost of attendance	16%	30%	41%	24%
Reputation of University in general	26%	16%	10%	21%
Other reason	34%	---	24%	31%

--- = No statistically significant difference

An interesting pattern emerges between students who chose UMD as their first choice versus those who didn't. If UMD was their first choice, fewer indicated cost as their top reason while a higher proportion selected either Other or reputation of the university. The reverse pattern is seen for those who indicated UMD was not their top choice.

Question to consider

How does the university best market to prospective students considering that 1 in 3 respondents who indicated UMD as their top choice listed a factor other than reputation or cost of attendance?



Comparisons 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.

College completion plans

At present, my general attitude towards the University of Maryland is:



Very positive
40%



Positive
46%



Neutral
11%



Negative
2%



Very negative
<1%

N=1,448

Even though UMD was the first choice for 59% of the students, 86% reported having a very positive or positive attitude towards UMD.

I plan to complete my bachelor's degree at:



The University of Maryland

93%



Don't know / not sure where

5%



Another school

3%

Such as one:

- that offers a degree not offered at UMD (1%)
- at which I'll feel more comfortable and be happier (1%)
- that has a more 'prestigious' academic reputation than UMD (<1%)
- that costs less (<1%)

N=1,441

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

I expect to receive my bachelor's degree:



7%



90%



2%



<1%



<1%

In fewer than 4 years

In 4 years

In 5 years

In more than 5 years

I may not finish.

N=1,449

Questions to consider

- What affect do current experiences have on students' general attitude toward UMD and how may this change over time?
- Though 90% of respondents reported expecting to graduate in four years, the four-year graduation rate for those who were first-time full-time students at UMD in Fall 2012 (the most recent cohort available as of Fall 2016) is 70%. How could UMD develop a comprehensive strategy to identify and support students at risk of not graduating?



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.