



# CAWG SNAPSHOT OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

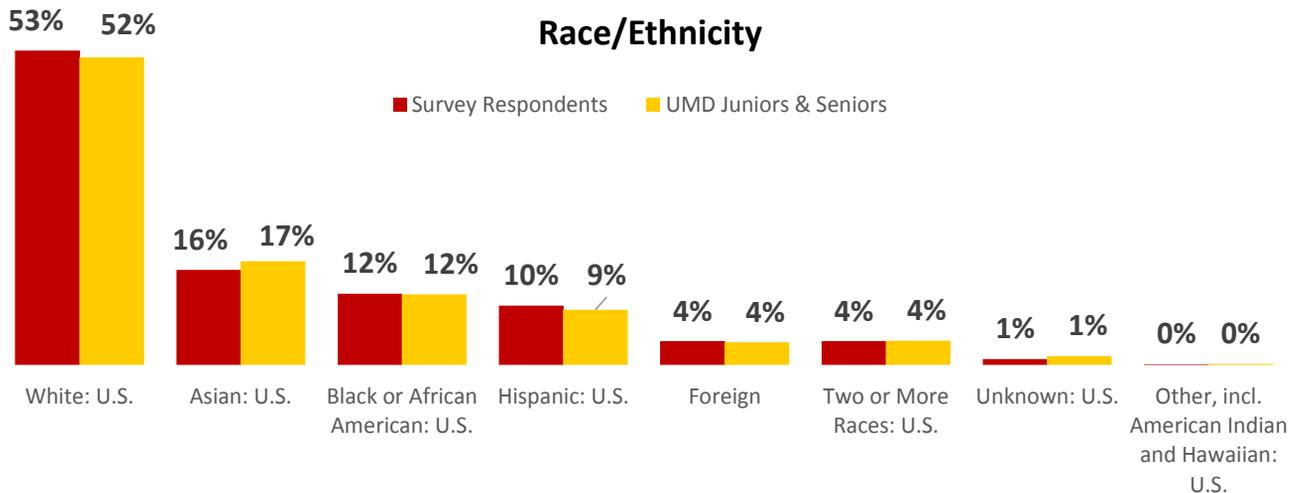
University of Maryland

2016– Issue 4, November

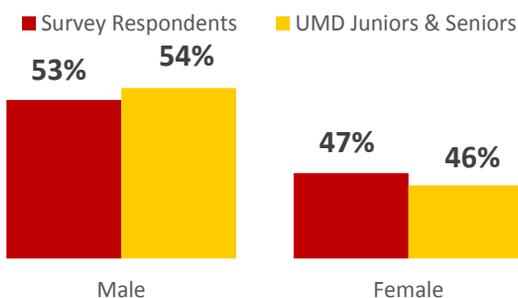
This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot reports findings on junior and senior students' perceptions of civic engagement. The data represent results from the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS), an annual survey administered by the CAWG Assessing Campus Experiences Subgroup (ACES). Respondents completed the survey during the 2016 spring semester in Professional Writing courses.



### Race/Ethnicity



### Gender



A total of 1,775 (54%) of the 3,268 juniors and seniors enrolled in Professional Writing courses during the spring 2016 semester completed the survey. The demographic breakdown of respondents is representative of all junior and seniors. The data in this snapshot 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.

## Context

This is not the first time ACES has considered these questions. In 2008, a survey was administered to upper-division undergraduate students to measure their perceptions in a variety of areas including students' experiences with civic engagement. Respondents were provided a list of 18 activities and asked whether or not they had done each of them within the current academic year. Respondents were more likely to report engaging in community service activities than political and advocacy efforts to address root causes and systemic issues. The report is available at: [www.irpa.umd.edu/CAWG/Reports/2008/umss08\\_report.pdf](http://www.irpa.umd.edu/CAWG/Reports/2008/umss08_report.pdf).

ACES's survey of juniors and seniors is part of a larger UMD commitment to educating its undergraduate students in the values of living civically engaged lives. The goals in the strategic plan for the University of Maryland (updated July 2016) state:

“In addition to mastery of discipline-specific knowledge, an education at the University of Maryland engages students in social, ethical, and cultural concerns; stimulates their intellectual curiosity; prepares them for civic responsibility; and develops creative and critical reasoning skills that will serve them through a lifetime of inquiry, productivity and leadership. As a land-grant institution, UMD is committed to putting knowledge into action for social and economic benefit, as well as preparing workforce-ready graduates.”

A copy of the 2016 Strategic Plan Update is available at :  
[www.provost.umd.edu/sp15/2016StrategicPlanUpdateFinal.pdf](http://www.provost.umd.edu/sp15/2016StrategicPlanUpdateFinal.pdf).

## Do Good Initiative

UMD leadership values student engagement. On September 27, 2016 President Loh announced the launch of a campus-wide “Do Good” initiative, and the creation of a Do Good Institute. UMD will become the nation's first Do Good campus, the goal of which is to “Transform Idealism into Impact.” He explained:

“This initiative aims to educate and inspire a Do Good generation of students to apply their education, skills, and values to make an impact on the great societal challenges of our time — such as poverty, health inequity, injustice, food and water security, and climate change. It is rooted in our land-grant mission of putting knowledge into practice for social and economic betterment.”

In his email to the university community, President Loh noted:

“A Do Good campus will serve a growing student interest. The Higher Education Research Institute recently reported a fifty-year high in the percentage of students today who say that helping others is a “very important” priority.”

Learn more at [www.dogood.umd.edu](http://www.dogood.umd.edu).

## LCSL Information

Leadership & Community Service-Learning (LCSL) is a unit within the Adele H. Stamp Student Union Center for Campus Life. LCSL engages students in leadership development and service-learning opportunities that foster transformative learning and social change. The LCSL allowed ACES to use questions from a survey instrument they administer to their student participants, specifically, questions related to LCSL’s civic engagement learning outcomes:

**Know:** Gain knowledge of civic issues, social structures, and systems.

**Be:** Recognize one’s responsibility to participate in one’s own community and the broader society.

**Do:** Practice social responsibility and create effective change.

## Measuring Civic Engagement

### In the last academic year, I ...

*n = 1,759-1,766, depending on item*

■ Never ■ Once ■ Sometimes ■ Often



\* These questions came from the LCSL instrument.

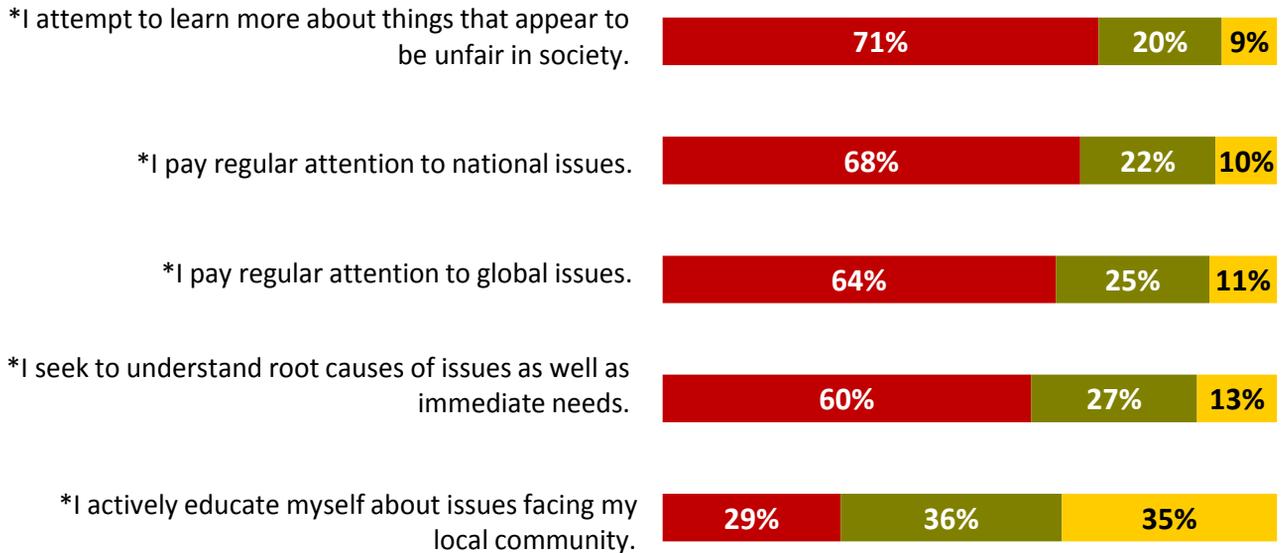
- From these results, activities that required more personal actions such as performing community service had a lower number of respondents saying they had done the activity at least once.

## Know

### Gain knowledge of civic issues, social structures, and systems

*n = 1,768-1,770, depending on item.*

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



\* These questions came from the LCSL instrument.

#### Question to consider

The first four bars in the chart above shows that 60% to 71% of respondents reported that they are actively gaining knowledge of issues. In contrast, 29% of respondents indicated that they actively educate themselves about issues facing their local community. Is this percentage lower because “actively educate myself” is a higher bar than attempting to learn or paying regular attention, or is it that students are less locally engaged?



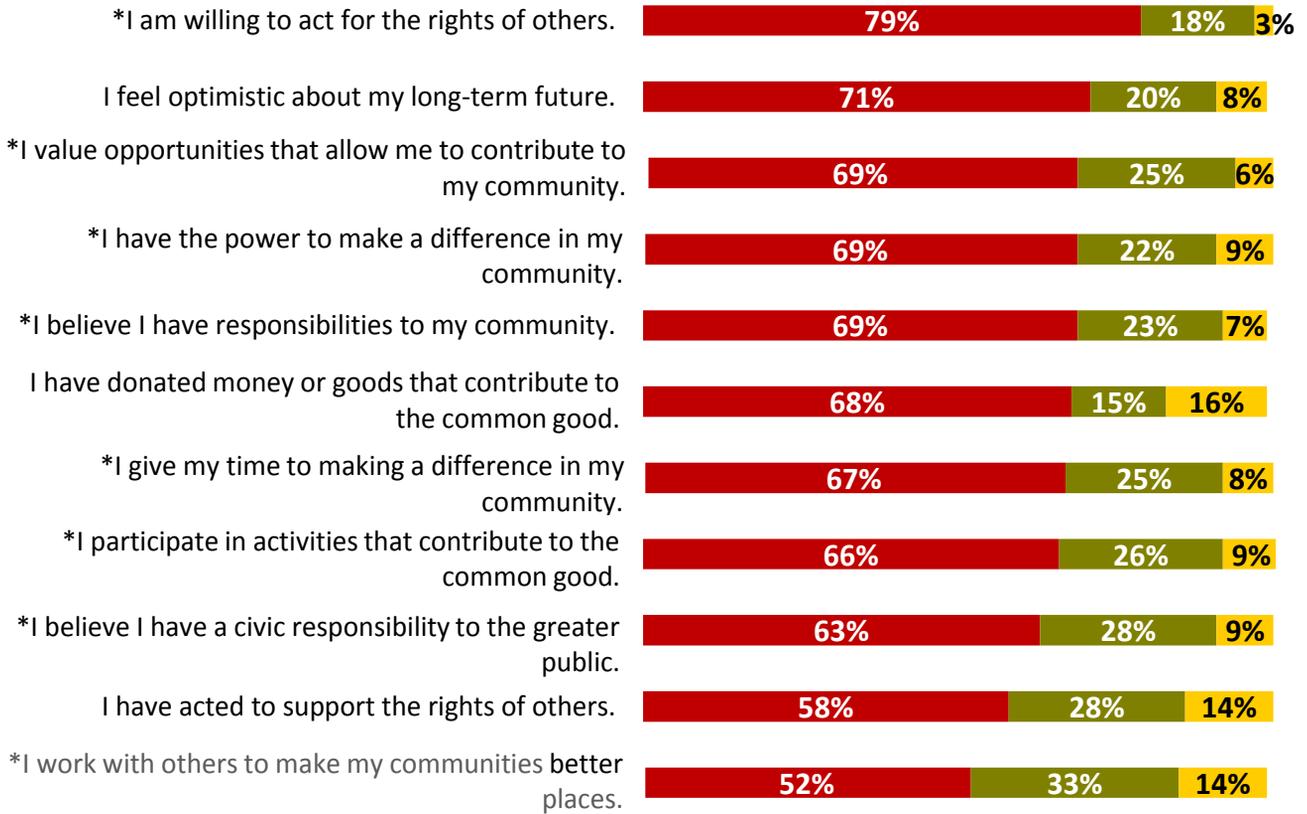
The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) regularly gathers and exchanges information about UMD student and alumni experiences. The group is charged with developing a campus "Culture of Evidence" in which data and assessment can inform campus decision making. Its three subgroups focus on freshman experiences, 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).

# Be

## Recognize one’s responsibility to participate in one’s own community and the broader society

*n = 1,765-1,769, depending on item*

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



\* These questions came from the LCSL instrument

- More than 50% of respondents agreed with these statements. This indicates that respondents are recognizing responsibility to participate in their community and the broader society.
- Seventy-nine percent of respondents are willing to act for the right of others, more than the 65% reported they actively learning about issues in the table on page four.

### Question to consider

More than two-thirds of respondents believe that they have the power to make a difference in their community. Thirty-one percent do not agree that they have the power to make a difference in the community. What can UMD do to empower these students?

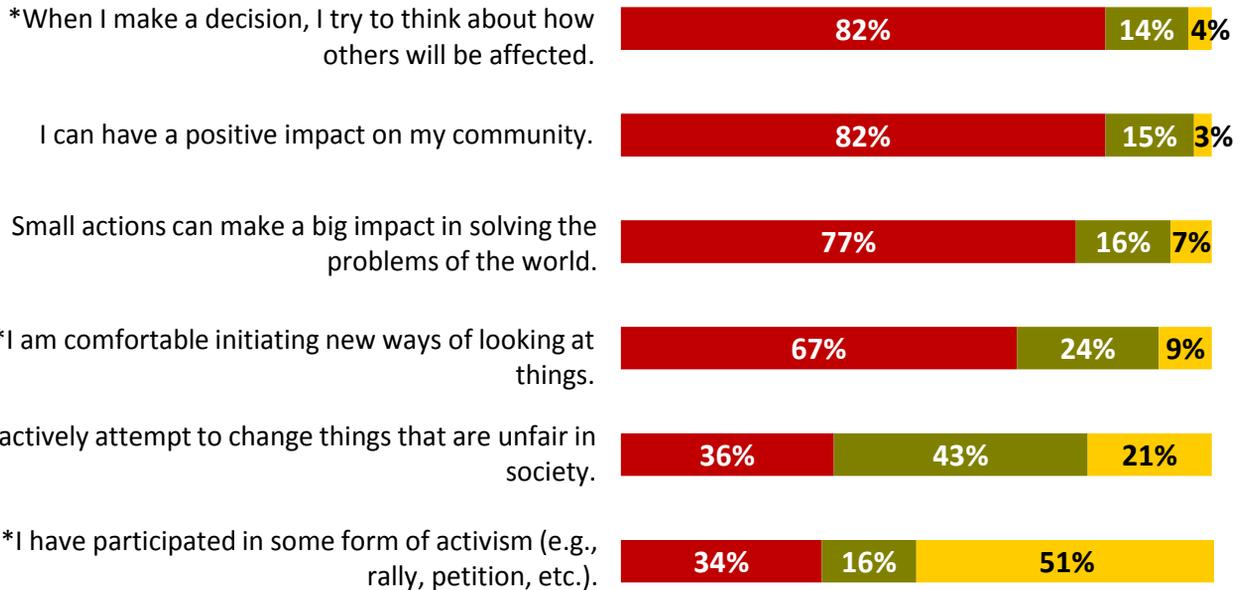


# Do

## Practice social responsibility and create effective change

*n = 1,760-1,766, depending on item*

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



*\* These questions came from the LCSL instrument*

• **Be**, recognizing one’s responsibility to participate in one’s own community and the broader society, implies obligation. Therefore the results for **Do**, above, should correspond with **Be**, because if one feels obligated to do something, they might be inclined to act. However, the results above do not lend support to this relationship. For example, 79% of respondents (**Be**) say they are willing to act for the rights of others, while 36% (**Do**) actively attempt to change things that are unfair in society.

### Question to consider

How can UMD move more students who believe they should take action that promotes civic engagement?

