

# SOCIAL TRANSITION TO UMD

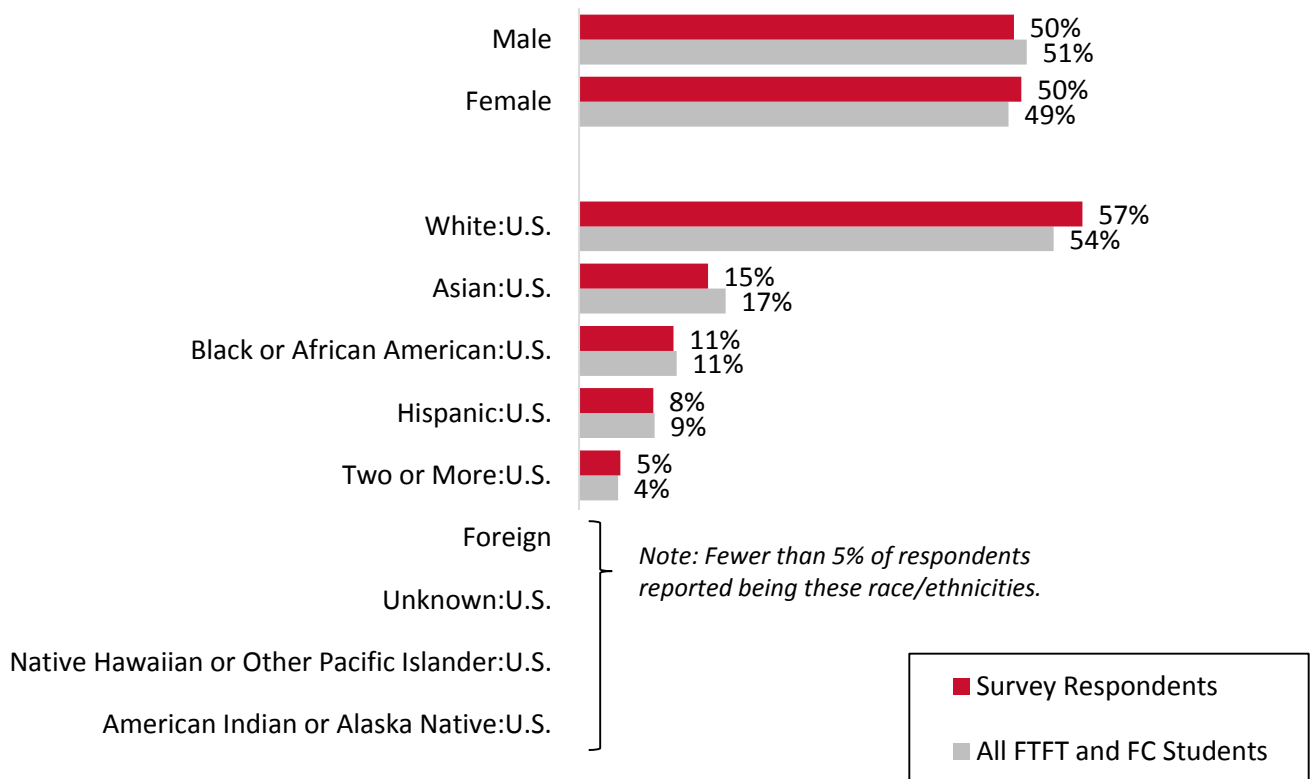
University of Maryland

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This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot by the Beginnings subgroup reports findings on students’ responses to questions about their social transition to UMD. The data included represent results from the Beginning Student Survey (BSS), an annual survey administered by the CAWG Beginnings subgroup. Both first-time, full-time students and Freshmen Connection students completed the paper survey approximately 8-10 weeks into the Fall 2016 semester during courses such as ENGL 101, UNIV 100, Honors 100, and Freshmen Connection 100.

## Respondent Demographics

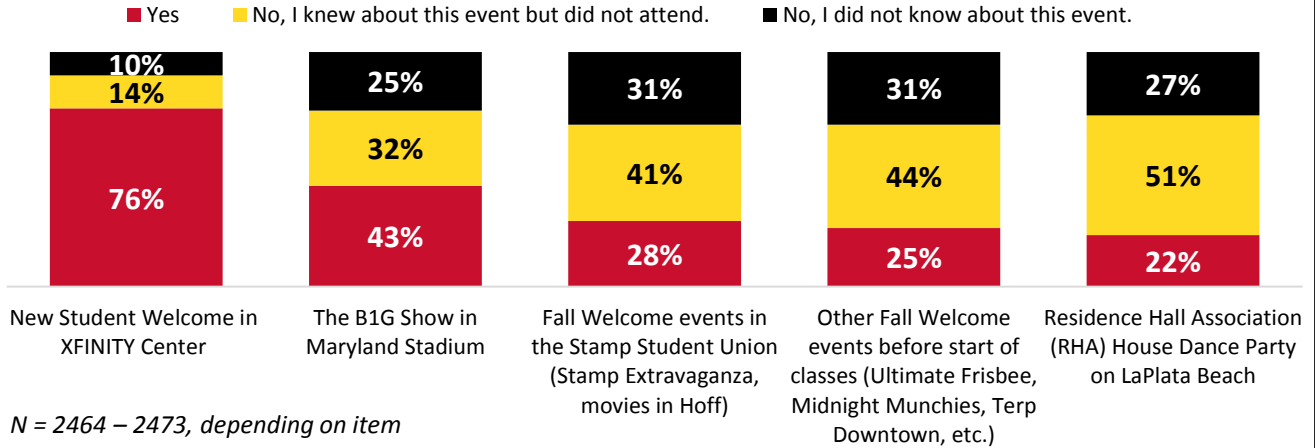
For the 2016 BSS, 2485 of the 5685 (44%) first-time full-time [FTFT] and Freshmen Connection [FC] students took the survey. Of the respondents, 1800 were FTFT and 685 were FC. Demographic percentages of survey respondents are displayed below in red alongside a comparison to the demographic breakdown of all UMD FC and FTFT students in gray. 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 self-reported responses of survey respondents, not all UMD first-year students; therefore, use caution when generalizing. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



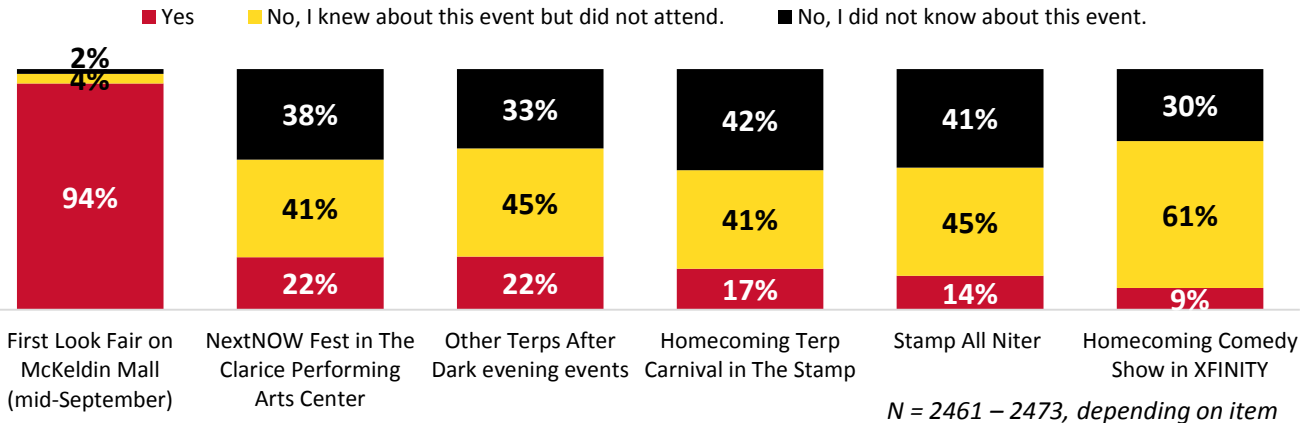
# Events targeted at helping student transition

Did you attend these FALL WELCOME activities (most occurred the four days BEFORE classes started) or TERPS AFTER DARK activities (which occurred during evenings of the first six weeks of class)?

These five events were part of Fall Welcome activities offered during the four days before classes started.



These events occurred after the start of classes. The First Look Fair was a two-day event, and the remaining Terps After Dark activities were offered during Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings during the first six weeks of class.



- Almost all respondents (94%) attended the First Look Fair, which happened over two days on McKeldin Mall. The New Student Welcome was another popular event as 76% of respondents attended. However, far fewer respondents reported attending other events.
- In all cases, more than half of respondents reported knowing about or attending the events.

**Question to consider:** How can UMD best market events to students and get them more involved?

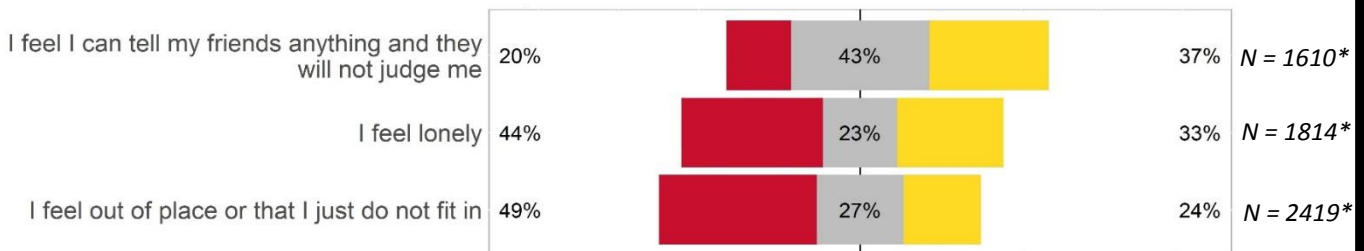
# Connection

Social transition is easier for students who feel connected. CAWG explores various facets of this idea including social connection, engagement in activities, Terp identity, and dealing with challenges.

## Social

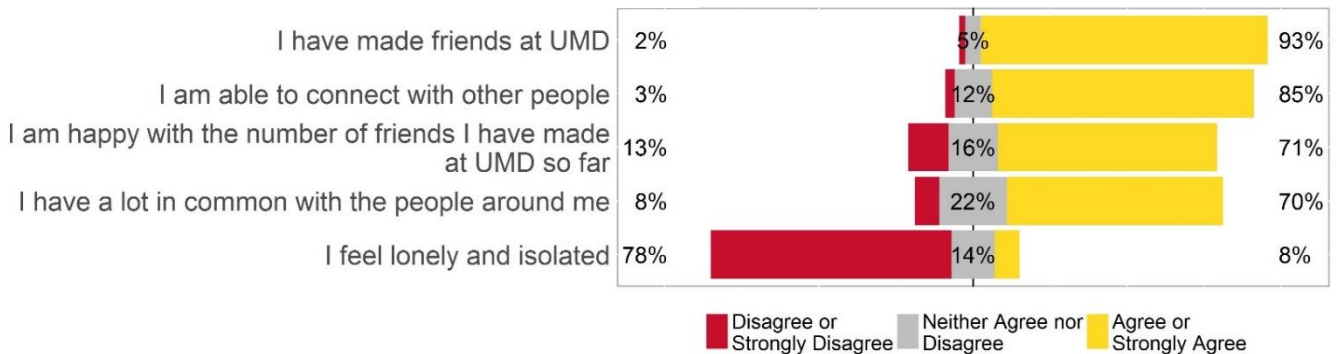


How often do you typically feel this way in a day now compared to your last year in high school?



\*Note: Students had the option of selecting “Never felt this way.” Respondents who selected that option were removed from analysis for that particular question.

Legend: ■ Felt this way more in high school ■ Same ■ Feel this way more in college



N = 2468 – 2482, depending on item

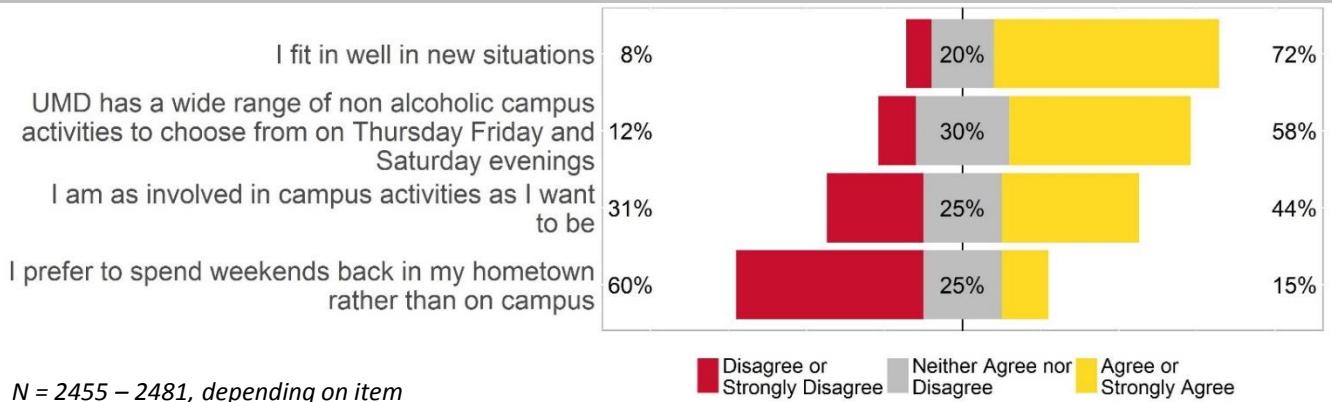
- Of students who have felt out of place or that they just did not fit in, 49% say they felt that way more in high school than they do in college.
- Though 93% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have made friends at UMD, only 37% feel that they feel they can tell their friends anything without judgement more at UMD than they did in high school.

### Questions to consider:

- What are indicators of student loneliness and isolation and what can UMD do to reach out to the 8% of respondents who feel that way?
- How connected should we expect first-year students to feel after 8 weeks?



## Engagement in Activities



- About the same percentage of respondents reported they disagree that UMD has a wide range of non-alcoholic campus activities to choose from on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings (12%) as the percentage who prefer to spend weekends back in their hometown rather than on campus (15%).
- Almost one-third of respondents (31%) are not as involved as they want to be.

**Question to consider:** Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents report that they are as involved in campus activities as they want to be 8-10 weeks into their first semester. What can UMD do to engage students immediately without overwhelming them?



## Dealing with Challenges



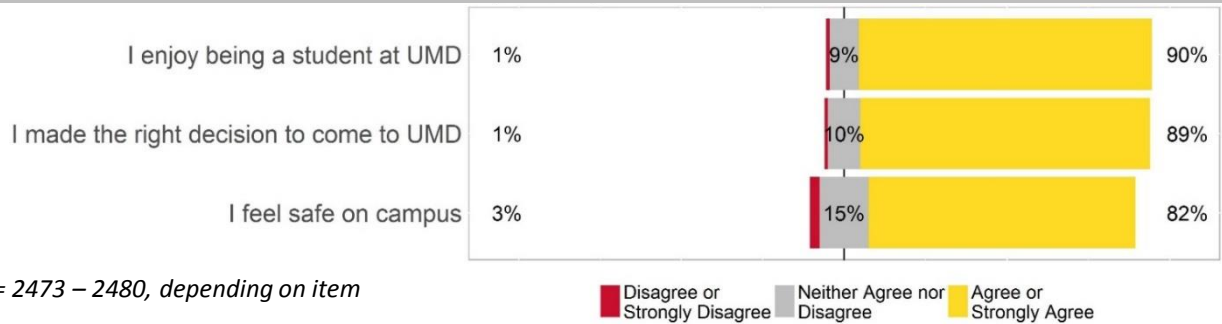
- Students are confident in their ability to deal with challenges, as more than three quarters agree or strongly agree with each of the statements in this section.
- While most students report having the ability and resources to respond to challenges, a small percentage disagreed with these items. Specifically, 1 in 10 disagreed they had a support network of people they knew before coming to campus to talk to if something was bothering them.

**Questions to consider:**

- Are those 5% of students who are not willing to ask for help not asking because they do not know someone on campus to seek out?
- What successful strategies has UMD used to connect students to support resources?



## Terp / UMD identity



N = 2473 – 2480, depending on item

- Generally, students are content at UMD as approximately 9 out of 10 reported that they enjoy being a student at UMD (91%), and made the right decision to come to UMD (89%).

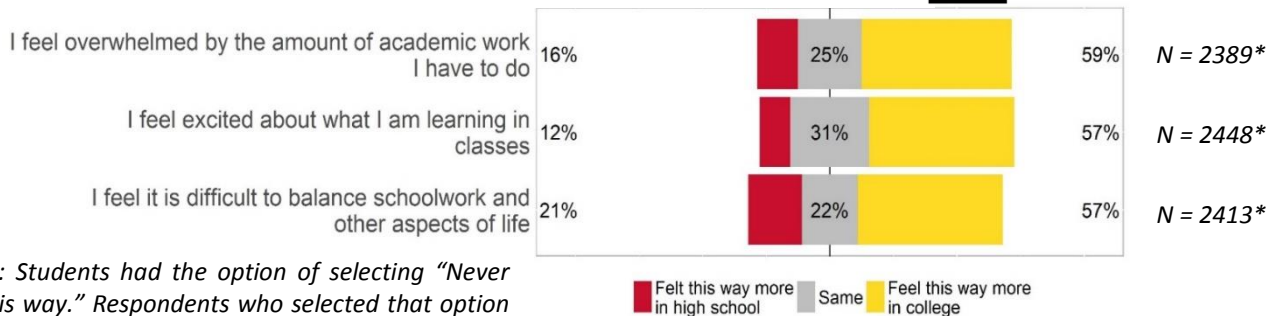
**Question to consider:** Only 3% of respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that they feel safe on campus. How far does a feeling of safety extend into the off-campus environment?



## Academic comparisons between high school and UMD



How often do you typically feel this way in a day now compared to your last year in high school?



\*Note: Students had the option of selecting “Never felt this way.” Respondents who selected that option were removed from analysis for this question.

- More than half feel more overwhelmed by the amount of academic work they have to do now (59%). However, while respondents feel it is difficult to balance schoolwork and life more so than in high school (56%), nearly the same amount (57%) still feel excited about what they are learning in class.

### Beginnings subgroup members

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 Alan Socha, IRPA



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).