



CAMPUS ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP

Juniors and Seniors' Well-Being in Spring 2022
October 2022

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subcommittee. The 2022 University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS22) was administered online from February 28 to March 21, 2022 to juniors and seniors enrolled in Professional Writing courses. This report summarizes findings on students' perceptions of their well-being in Spring 2022. This report looks at three questions: 1) Do students feel physically and psychologically safe at UMD? 2) Do students feel like the University supports them? 3) Are students able to balance their academic responsibilities with their responsibilities outside the classroom (e.g., childcare, family responsibilities, jobs outside of class)?

In March 2022, 1,241 students completed the survey (33% of all students enrolled in Professional Writing courses).<sup>1</sup> Thirty-nine percent of respondents enrolled at UMD after the COVID-19 pandemic started in Spring 2020. In two sections of this report, we compare their perceptions with the perceptions of respondents who enrolled before the pandemic (61% of respondents) and experienced a "traditional" college environment for some period of time. When applicable, we note differences between these two groups of 10 percentage points or more. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In general, respondents said they felt physically and psychologically safe. However, about one in four disagreed or felt neutral about whether they belong at UMD.

Distribution of Responses to Items about Engagement at UMD

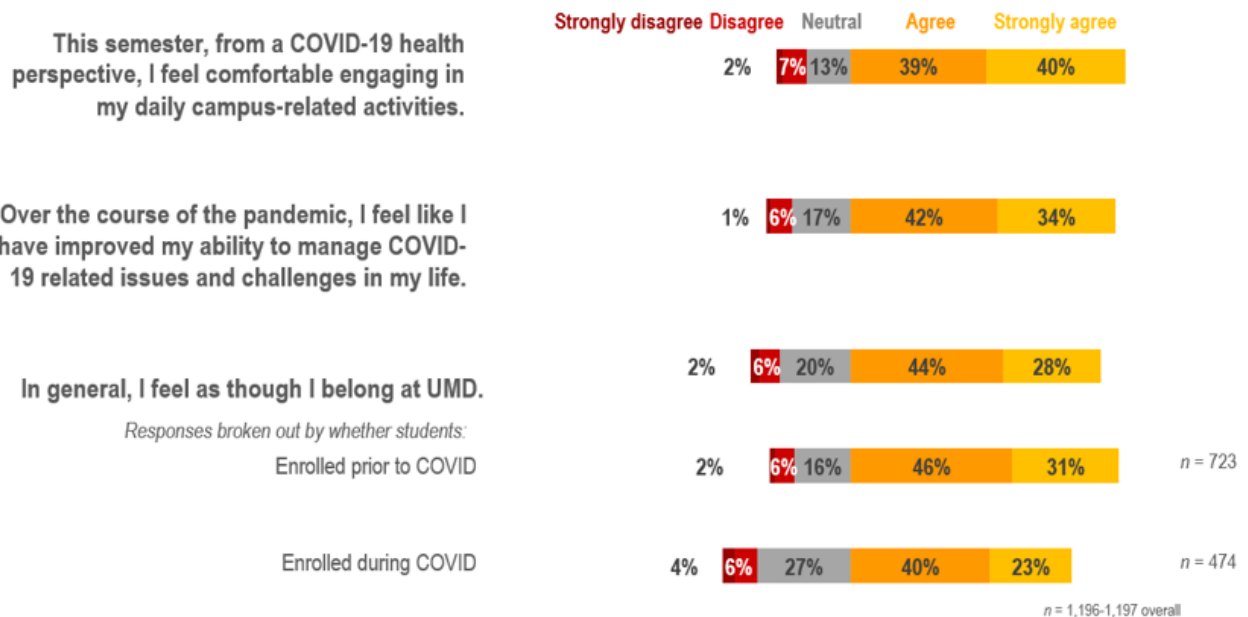


Figure 1. Responses to items about safety and belonging at UMD, UMSS22.

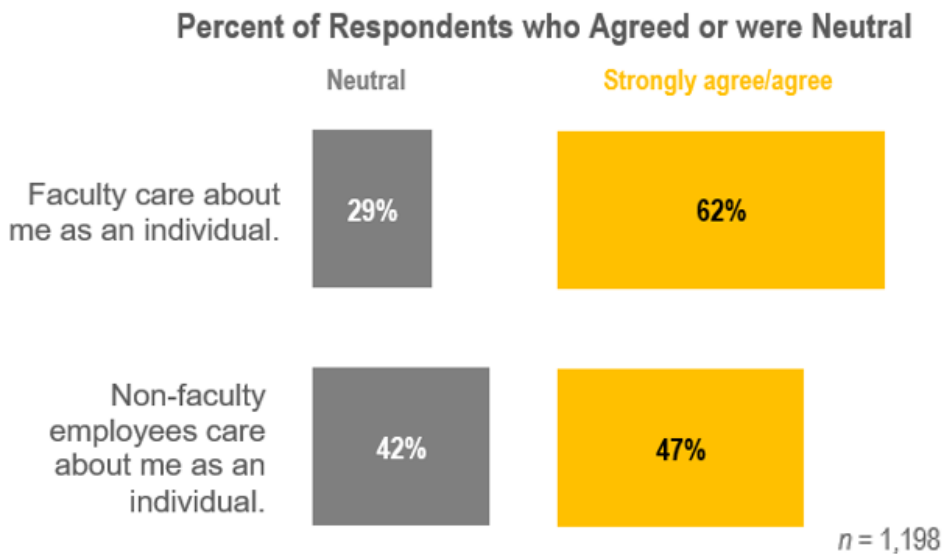
<sup>1</sup> The distribution of respondents by race/ethnicity and gender was similar to that of the UMD population. University records reflect current reporting guidelines for gender (male/female).

- More than three-fourths of respondents agreed they were comfortable engaging in daily activities from a COVID-19 perspective (79%) and that they improved their ability to manage challenges caused by the pandemic (76%).
- Seventy-two percent of respondents agreed they feel like they belong at UMD. However, 28% were neutral or disagreed.
- Sixty-three percent of respondents who enrolled at UMD during the pandemic agreed that they belong at UMD, compared to 77% of respondents who started at UMD before the pandemic.

**Questions to Consider**

- What do respondents mean by “improving their ability” to manage COVID-19-related issues and challenges in their daily lives?
- Overall, 20% of respondents said they were “neutral” about their sense of belonging at UMD. What factors might impact this choice of response?

**Half or more of respondents said that UMD employees cared about them as individuals.**



**Figure 2.** Responses to items about students’ connection to university employees, UMSS22.

- Sixty-two percent of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that faculty care about them as an individual, compared to 47% of respondents who agreed that non-faculty employees care about them.

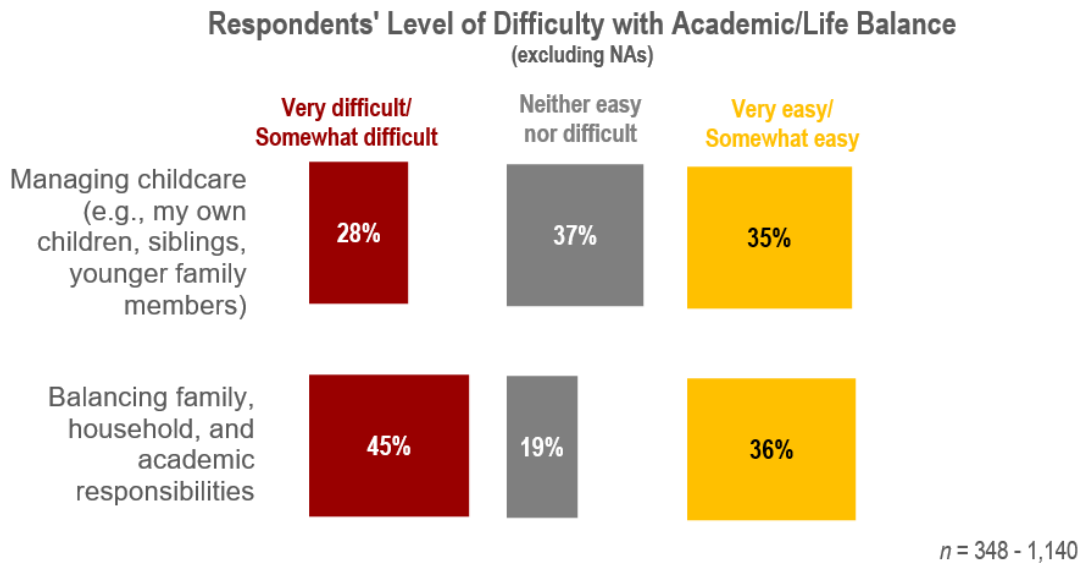
**Behind the Findings**

In a [Fall 2021 survey](#), 51% of first-year respondents agreed that faculty care about them as an individual. Sixty-two percent of junior and senior respondents agreed in Spring 2022.

### Questions to Consider

- Do respondents accurately differentiate between “faculty” and “non-faculty employees?”
  - Students taking this survey were mostly upper-class students who live off campus. Could this play a role in their connection and engagement with university employees?
  - What more can UMD do to increase students’ engagement with faculty and staff?
- Respectively, 29% and 42% of respondents stated they were “neutral” on whether UMD faculty and staff cared about them as an individual. What factors might impact this choice of response?

**Sizeable percentages of respondents said it was difficult to balance their academic responsibilities with life outside of the classroom.**



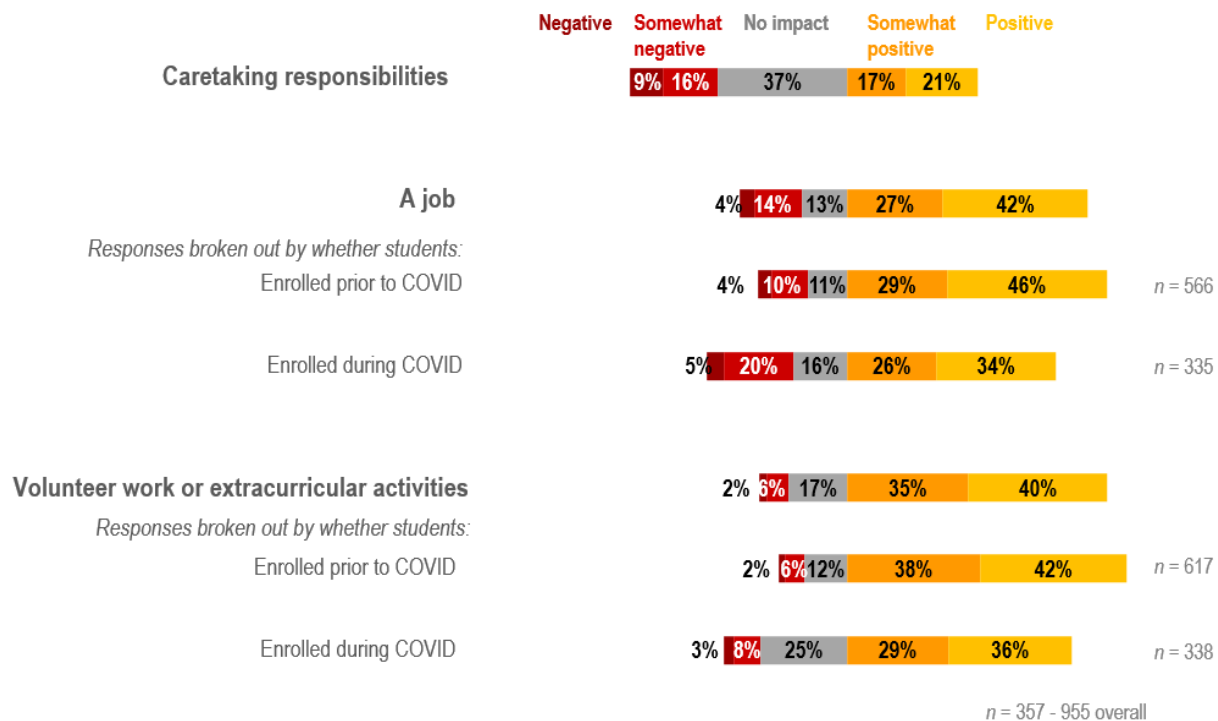
**Figure 3.** Responses to items about managing childcare and balancing family, household, and academic responsibilities, UMSS22.

- Almost half of respondents (45%) said it was difficult or very difficult to balance family, household, and academic responsibilities.
- Twenty-eight percent of respondents with childcare responsibilities said it was very difficult or somewhat difficult. A large percentage of respondents said it was neither easy nor difficult (37%).
- A similar question was asked to all undergraduates on campus-wide surveys in Fall 2020 and Fall 2021; in both semesters, about half of respondents with childcare responsibilities said managing childcare was very difficult or somewhat difficult. While the populations on these surveys differed slightly -- this survey was administered to juniors and seniors only; the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 surveys were open to all undergraduates -- it suggests many respondents with caretaking responsibilities still struggle with managing childcare.

### Questions to Consider

- Among family, household, and academic responsibilities, which specific responsibilities do students have and which do they find most difficult to balance?
- How can the university better support those students who have childcare responsibilities?

## Distribution of Responses to Items about Impact of Work-Life Experiences on Educational Experience



**Figure 4.** Responses to items about the impact of work-life experiences on students' educational experience, UMSS22.

- Thirty-eight percent of respondents said caretaking responsibilities had a somewhat positive or positive impact on their educational experience at UMD. Compared to other work-life factors, a higher percentage of respondents said caretaking responsibilities had a negative impact (25%).
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents said an internship or job had a positive impact on their educational experience at UMD, and a similar percent (75%) said volunteer work had a positive impact.
- We looked at differences in responses among respondents who enrolled at UMD before COVID and during COVID: A larger percent of respondents who enrolled at UMD before the pandemic said volunteer work and jobs had a positive impact than respondents who enrolled during COVID. When asked about caretaking responsibilities, the difference between these groups was smaller than 10 percentage points, so is not shown above.

### Questions to Consider

- What is it about having a job or internship that students find has a positive impact on their educational experience at UMD?

### Conclusion

The data presented here represent juniors and seniors' perceptions of an ever-changing university environment. Many respondents said they felt physically and psychologically safe and that they belonged at UMD, but many said they were stressed. Respondents who started at UMD before the pandemic reported having more positive work-life experiences, compared to respondents who enrolled during the pandemic. As part of our ongoing assessment, ACES will continue to gather data regarding juniors and seniors' perceptions in future surveys.

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subgroup: Julie Kromkowski, Chair, Division of Administration Office of the VP; Frank Alexander Rojas, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA); Danielle Glazer, IRPA; Robert E. Crane, College of Arts & Humanities; Scott Moses, Department of English; Ronald Zeigler, Nyumburu Cultural Center; Alice Szczepaniak, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences - Economics; Sharon Ousman, Career Center; Alan Socha, IRPA. For more information, to view past reports, or to join a CAWG subgroup, visit <http://iter.ps/CAWG>.