



CAMPUS
ASSESSMENT
WORKING GROUP

**University of Maryland Student Survey
2008 Report**

**By members of the
Campus Assessment Working Group
Assessing Campus Experiences Subgroup**

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Executive Summary

Every spring semester, the Assessing Campus Experiences Subgroup (ACES) administers the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) to juniors and seniors enrolled in the Professional Writing program. The purpose of the UMSS is to gather data on upper-division undergraduate students' experiences at and perceptions of the University of Maryland. The information derived from the UMSS can help UM to gain insight into upper-division students' experiences in important aspects of their undergraduate education, identify institutional strengths, and assist in planning and prioritizing efforts to better serve our students.

The most recent version of the UMSS, hereafter referred to as the UMSS 2008, was administered in Professional Writing classes in Spring 2008. Of the 2150 students enrolled in Professional Writing courses during that semester, 1407 (65%) completed the survey.

The following is a brief summary of the major areas of focus for the UMSS 2008.

Academic advising: Self-reported behaviors related to being an advisee as well as perceptions of behaviors of academic advisors were examined. Females were significantly more likely than males to report they always performed certain behaviors when preparing for an advising appointment. No advisee behavior differences were found by race-citizenship, but entry status and participation in special programs did produce significant differences in self-reported advisee behavior. Specifically, transfer students were more likely to report that they take the initiative to contact their advisor at least once a semester, while direct-admit students were more likely to report that they consult campus resources such as Testudo and the Schedule of Classes for information on University policies and regulations. Respondents enrolled in a special program were more likely to prepare a schedule that meets their academic requirements and were more likely to report that they are able to register for the classes they need to graduate on time while respondents not enrolled in special programs were more likely to report that they take the initiative to contact their advisor at least two weeks in advance of their registration date. Of the seven advisor behaviors examined, four showed significant differences between or among subgroups, including sex, race-citizenship, entry status, and enrollment in special programs. Finally, there were significant positive correlations between respondents' interest in attending UM if they had to do it over again and certain advisee and advisor behaviors.

Mentoring: Thirty-nine percent of students indicated they had at least one faculty or staff member who takes an active interest in their academic, personal, and/or professional development, while 48% responded they did not have such a person but wanted one. Males, Asian Americans and Foreign and transfer students were more likely to report not wanting a mentor. Forty-four percent of those who had a mentor indicated they connected with this person because they took a class from this person. Respondents were asked to select from a list of 13 roles a mentor could play in a respondent's life. Respondents were able to select as many of these roles as were appropriate for their experience with their mentor. Ninety-two percent of students with a mentor indicated that the mentor gave encouragement and support, 72% said that the mentor shared insider knowledge or experience within their career field, and 71% responded that the mentor helped them find resources at UM. Respondents did not always label the faculty or staff member who took an active interest in them as their mentor; 43% considered the faculty/staff person to be their mentor, 20% were not sure, and 37% said they did not consider this person to be their mentor.

Civic engagement: Students were asked whether or not they had participated in 18 civic engagement activities to gauge their level of involvement in community service, political engagement and advocacy, and "green" behaviors. Respondents reported they were more likely to engage in community service activities rather than political and advocacy efforts, with the top five activities for males and females being volunteering their time, performing community service, donating money to a cause, actively

participating in at least one cause, and signing an email or paper petition. Respondents were asked what incentives might encourage them to get involved in activities in which they are not participating. Incentives that would encourage them “a lot” tended to draw upon personal and intrinsic motivations. Those incentives that were reported less frequently were ones that rely on external structure and factors of convenience. Personal benefit to the respondent ranked near the bottom of incentives.

Diversity: This portion of the survey explored four dimensions of the diversity climate at UM and within society as a whole: UM climate for diversity, societal climate for diversity, discrimination, and diversity in future decisions. Analysis indicates the majority of respondents reported favorable perceptions of the diversity climate at UM but perceptions of the societal climate for diversity were not so favorable. Additionally, most respondents report that discrimination is tolerated at UM and within society. Responses also indicated that exposure to diversity prior to attending UM and engagement in diversity activities impact respondent perceptions of the campus and societal climate for diversity.

Background

The University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) was initially developed in 1998 by the Assessment of Campus Experiences Subgroup of the Campus Assessment Working Group as a tool for understanding the attitudes and experiences of upper-division undergraduate students at UM. The 2008 survey marks the eighth time the UMSS has been administered. With each edition of the survey, some items are repeated, and new items are created to reflect campus interests and needs.

Methodology

The UMSS 2008 was administered in the spring semester to students enrolled in Professional Writing courses. These courses were selected for administration for two primary reasons. First, students in these courses reflect the University's diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, academic performance and entry status. Second, they are upper-division undergraduates with several semesters of experience on campus, and are therefore most able to comment from personal experience. Professional Writing courses enroll students who have earned 56 or more credits and who are meeting a writing requirement of their respective colleges. Instructors in the Professional Writing courses were given the surveys, along with written instructions to read to their students during class the week before spring break. The Professional Writing Program was given incentives for their instructors' efforts.

Unless otherwise noted, summaries presented in this report are descriptive in nature and do not indicate that a relevant statistical hypothesis test was conducted.

The survey

The UMSS measures upper-division undergraduate students' perceptions of and experiences in a variety of areas. In this survey, students were asked about their experiences with academic advising, mentoring, civic engagement, and diversity in and beyond the classroom. A technology and file sharing usage section also appeared on the survey, and the Office of Information Technology will be completing a separate analysis and report on that data. The full survey appears in Appendix B.

Survey respondents

There were 2150 students enrolled in the Professional Writing program in Spring 2008. Of those, 1407 (65%) consented to take the survey and also provided their student UID number, thereby enabling access to their institutional demographic information.

Table 1 contains the demographic information of the UMSS 2008 respondents. Regarding entry status, the descriptor "4-Year Transfer" refers to students transferring to UM from another four-year institution or from within the UM system, and "2-Year Transfer" refers to students transferring to UM from two-year institutions. The label "Direct Admits" designates those students directly admitted to the University of Maryland as first-time, full-time freshmen. Students classified as "seniors" may or may not be graduating from UM at the conclusion of the current academic year; this label is based on the student's credits and last class standing. This report contains data for juniors and seniors only. Responses from sophomores, advanced special students, etc., have been excluded. American Indians were excluded from the analyses due to small group size. Students whose self-selected racial identification in institutional records was marked "unknown" were also excluded to enhance the interpretability of the results.

Table 1. Demographics of UMSS 2008 respondents: Self-report and institutional data combined

		Number	Percent
Race	American Indian	7	<1
	Black/African American	151	11
	Asian American	212	15
	Hispanic	80	6
	White	802	57
	Foreign	33	2
	Unknown	122	9
Sex	Female	653	46
	Male	754	54
Class Level	Junior	780	55
	Senior	627	45
Entry Status	Direct Admit	1045	74
	2-Year Transfer Admit	241	17
	4-Year Transfer Admit	121	9
Current Residence	Residence hall	265	19
	Commons/Courtyards	304	22
	Fraternity/Sorority house	62	4
	Family's home	242	17
	Other off-campus housing	523	38

Sources: UMSS 2008 and IRPA

Findings

This report covers the major focus areas of the UMSS 2008: academic advising, mentoring, civic engagement, and diversity in and beyond the classroom. References to the University's new Strategic Plan (April 11, 2008) are included where applicable to assist readers in applying the findings as they relate to the new initiatives and directions of the University.

Academic advising

A new institutional model for resource allocation will promote faculty excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring (Strategic Plan, p. 12).

The two components on which the quality of advising depend are the advisee and the advisor. Self-reported behaviors related to being an advisee were examined including analyses of differences by sex, race/citizenship, entry status, and whether respondents had been a participant in one of UM's special

programs (i.e., College Park Scholars, Gemstone, Inventis, Civicus, Beyond the Classroom, Global Communities, Hinman CEO, or Jimenez Porter Writers House).

Advisee behaviors

Eleven questions were asked on the UMSS 2008 which explored the degree to which respondents “Always,” “Sometimes,” or “Never” had performed a given behavior since entering UM. There were no significant sex differences on the following five self-reported advisee behaviors (overall percent “Always”):

- I am able to prepare a schedule that fulfills my academic requirements. (80%)
- I am able to register for the classes I need to graduate on time. (65%)
- I consult campus resources (e.g., schedule of classes, undergraduate catalog, Testudo) for information on University policies and regulations. (64%)
- I know where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems. (48%)
- I contact my college or department at least 2 weeks in advance of my registration date to schedule an advising appointment. (24%)

Female respondents were significantly more likely than males ($p < .05$) to report they “Always” performed behaviors involved in preparing for the advising appointment. Table 2 illustrates the differences by sex for these behaviors.

Table 2. Significant differences in student preparation for advising appointments by sex

Since entering UM...	Percent indicating “Always”:	
	Females	Males
I pay attention to required prerequisites as I develop a course schedule.	92	82
I have sought information about requirements needed to complete my major.	86	80
I am knowledgeable about the requirements I need to fulfill to graduate on time.	83	77
I am aware of registration dates and related deadlines (e.g., drop/add, last day to withdraw).	66	56
I have taken the initiative to contact an advisor at least once a semester.	62	48
I have prepared for advising in advance by bringing questions and materials to discuss.	58	44

Source: UMSS 2008

There were no significant differences by race-citizenship and only two by entry status. Students who entered UM as transfers were more likely than direct admit respondents to report they take the initiative to contact an advisor at least once a semester (transfer admits: 66% vs. direct admits: 58%). On the other hand, direct admit respondents were more likely than transfers to report they consult campus resources such as the schedule of classes, the undergraduate catalog, and Testudo for information on University policies and regulations (direct admits: 67% vs. transfers: 58%).

To explore if there were advisee behavioral differences between respondents who had participated in a special program (e.g., College Park Scholars, Gemstone, Inventis, Civicus, Beyond the Classroom, Global Communities, Hinman CEO, or Jimenez Porter Writers House) and those who had not, respondents were sorted into one group that had participated in a special program (Yes, N = 477) and a second group that had not participated in a special program (No, N = 930). There were two cases of significant differences in reported advisee behavior between the two groups. Respondents who had participated in a special program were significantly more likely to report that they were always:

- Able to prepare a schedule that fulfills their academic requirements (Yes: 85% vs. No: 78%)
- Able to register for classes they need to graduate on time (Yes: 71% vs. No: 62%)

Analyses were run to determine if there was a relationship between self-reported advisee behavior and a variable that asks, “All in all, if I had it to do over, I would enroll here again.” Respondents were significantly more likely to report they agreed to this statement if they self-reported having “Always” on the following advisee behaviors:

- They knew where to go to resolve academic or administrative problems;
- They were able to prepare a schedule that fulfills their academic prerequisites;
- They were able to register for the classes they need to graduate on time;
- They were knowledgeable about the requirements they need to fulfill to graduate on time.

Advisor behaviors

In addition to questions about their own advising behavior, respondents were asked to share their perception of seven advisor behaviors they experienced in the UM college/department in which they received most of their academic advising (see Table 3).

Table 3. Perceptions of academic advisors

Academic advisors have:	Percent indicating “Strongly agree”/“Agree”:
Helped me outline academic choices that would allow me to graduate in a reasonable amount of time.	73
Provided me with sound guidance.	72
Spent sufficient advising time with me.	67
If applicable, helped me find answers to my questions about departmental policies and procedures.	67
If applicable, helped me find answers to my questions about University policies and procedures.	62
Introduced departmental and University opportunities (e.g., research, scholarships, study abroad) that are available to undergraduate students.	40
Introduced information about campus resources (e.g., Learning Assistance, career programs, counseling).	38

Source: UMSS 2008

Four advisor behaviors showed significant differences between or among subgroups. Specifically, male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to report that their advisor spent sufficient advising time with them and introduced department and University opportunities to them. Students who had participated in a special program were significantly more likely than those who were not involved in a special program to report that their advisor introduced information about campus resources to them. Foreign respondents were significantly more likely than Black/African American, White, and Asian American students to report that their advisor introduced information about campus resources to them, and were significantly more likely than Black/African American, White, and Hispanic students to report that their advisor introduced departmental/University opportunities to them. Additionally, students who entered the University as transfer students were significantly more likely than students who entered the University as freshmen to report that their advisor provided them with sound guidance and introduced them to campus resources.

Interaction between advisee and advisor

There were significant positive correlations between “I have taken the initiative to contact an advisor at least once a semester” and the seven advisor behavior items, with the strongest correlation with “[My advisors have] spent sufficient advising time with me.”

There were also significant positive correlations between the item “All in all, if I had it to do over I would enroll here again” and the advisor behavior items, with the strongest correlation with “[My advisors have] helped me outline academic choices that would allow me to graduate in a reasonable amount of time.”

Mentoring

There has been much discussion on campus about the importance of mentoring for undergraduate students. The UMSS 2008 explored this by asking respondents if they had at least one faculty or staff member who takes an active interest in their academic, personal, and/or professional development. To gain a better understanding of the nature of this relationship, those who responded that they did have such a person were asked how they connected with this person, what roles this person played, and whether they consider this person a mentor.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents said they had “at least one faculty or staff member [who] takes an active interest in [their] academic, personal, and/or professional development.” Nearly half (48%) of the respondents said they did not have such a person and wanted one. Only 14% said they did not have such a person and didn’t want one. As shown in Table 4, there were some significant differences in responses based on demographics. For example, males were more likely than females to report they did not want someone to take an active interest. Asian Americans were less likely to report having such a person, and international students were more likely to respond that they did not want to have such a person. Students admitted to UM as transfers were more likely to indicate they did not want to have such a person, and transfers were less likely to report they had one. Respondents who had participated in a special program (i.e., College Park Scholars, Gemstone, Inventis, Civicus, Beyond the Classroom, Global Communities, Hinman CEO, or Jimenez Porter Writers House) were both more likely to report having such a person and less likely to report they did not want such a person. A higher percent of respondents who lived in their family’s home than expected reported that they did not want such a person, while those who lived in a residence hall were less likely to report they did not want such a person. Finally, 42% of senior respondents did not have a UM faculty or staff person who takes an active interest but would like to have such a person.

Table 4. Mentorship status by demographics

	Mentorship status		
	Yes 39%	No and wants one 48%	No and doesn't want one 14%
Row percents			
Sex			
Female	42	47	11
Male	36	48	16
Race/Citizenship *			
Black/African America	38	53	10
Asian American	30	57	13
Hispanic	39	47	14
White	41	45	14
Foreign	36	33	30
Entry Status			
Direct admit	41	47	12
Transfer admit	31	51	18
Special Program Participant			
Yes	45	45	10
No	36	49	16
Class in Spring 2008			
Junior	34	52	14
Senior	44	42	14
Residence in Spring 2008			
Residence hall	44	47	9
Commons/Courtyards	42	46	12
Fraternity/sorority house	37	56	7
Family home	36	43	21
Other off-campus housing	36	50	14

* Excludes Unknown and American Indians
Source: UMSS 2008

Respondents who indicated that they had at least one faculty or staff member who takes an active interest in their academic, personal, and/or professional development (N=538) were asked three additional questions.

Respondents were asked to select the response which best described how they connected with the person who takes an active interest in them. As shown in Table 5, the largest proportion of respondents (44%) made a connection with the UM faculty or staff member who takes an active interest in their development through a class. Fewer than 5% of respondents indicated a referral from others as the way they connected with a mentor.

Table 5. Forming connections with actively interested UM faculty or staff

Which of the following best describes how you connected with this person	Percent
I took a class from this person.	44
I was assigned to this person.	15
I met this person in a club /organization.	12
I sought out this person on my own.	11
I was referred to this person by a faculty/staff member.	4
I was referred to this person by another student.	2
I was referred to this person by someone else.	<1
Other	11

Source: UMSS 2008

Foreign (31%) and Black/African American (23%) students were significantly more likely than the other race-citizenship categories to have chosen “Other” ways of having connected to this person.

Respondents were asked to select from a list of 13 that described “What role does this person from UM play in your life?” As shown in Table 6, the highest percentage of respondents (92%) reported that this person helped them by providing encouragement and support.

Table 6. Helping roles of actively interested UM faculty and staff as perceived by junior and senior students

What roles does this person from UM play in your life? Do they help you:	Percent indicating “Yes”:
By giving you encouragement and support	92
Gain insider knowledge or experience in your career field	72
Find resources at UM	71
Connect with people important to your academic/career goals	69
Explore career/graduate school opportunities	69
By acting as a role model	60
With your internship or job search	56
Select your classes	47
With your physical and emotional well-being	44
By reviewing your resume	42
Choose a major	25
With your social life	24
With financial concerns	18

Source: UMSS 2008

A significantly lower percentage of male respondents (54% male respondents vs. 66% female respondents) reported that this person helped them by “acting as a role model” and with “physical and emotional well-being” (35% male respondents vs. 53% female respondents). There were no significant differences between male and female respondents on their reporting of this person helping them connect with people important to academic or career goals or helping them gain insider knowledge about careers.

A significantly lower percentage of respondents who had been or were currently in special programs reported being helped by this person with “physical and emotional well-being” (33% vs. 51% not in

special programs), “reviewing your resume” (36% vs. 45% not in special programs), “choosing a major” (17% vs. 30% not in special programs), and “with your social life” (17% vs. 28% not in special programs). There were no roles for which a higher percentage of respondents in special programs reported being helped.

A significantly higher percentage of Black/African American and Foreign respondents reported being helped by this person “with financial concerns” (40% and 33% respectively vs. 13% Asian-American students, 13% Hispanic students, and 16% White students). There were no other significant differences by race/citizenship.

The results showed no patterns of difference between roles fulfilled reported by juniors as compared to seniors.

Because of the many definitions of “mentor,” the 538 respondents who said they have at least one faculty or staff member who takes an active interest in their academic, personal, and/or professional development were asked if they considered this person to be their mentor. Fewer than half (43%) said they considered that person to be their mentor; 20% were not sure; and 37% said they did not consider this person to be their mentor.

Civic engagement

As colleges and universities revisit their mission of preparing students for their civic roles in society, increased attention has been given to students’ involvement in community service, political engagement, and commitment to environmentally sound practices. As noted in the Strategic Plan (April 11, 2008), the University of Maryland continues its commitment to preparing “*students to be engaged and self-realized citizens and leaders in a complex, democratic society*” (p. 4) and “*Enriching the undergraduate educational experience through internships in a wide range of organizations, international exchange programs, service-learning opportunities with area non-profits, and many other partnerships in which students’ horizons will be intellectually broadened while they contribute to the mission of the partnering organization*” (p. 21).

To learn more about the types of civic engagement activities in which UM students participate, respondents were provided a list of 18 activities and asked whether or not they had done each of them within the current academic year. Items were intended to gauge their level of involvement in community service, political engagement and advocacy, and “green” behaviors. Table 7 shows the activities ranked by percent of students responding “Yes” to each behavior.

Table 7: Participation in civic engagement activities

Within this academic year, have you done the following?	Percentage indicating "Yes":
<u>Above 75%:</u>	
Turned off a light to save energy	93*
Recycled or donated items you are done with	91*
Walked or taken public transportation when you could have driven	85*
Picked up trash someone left behind	84*
Bought recycled products	80*
<u>50 - 75%:</u>	
Volunteered your time	66
Donated money to a cause	56
Performed a community service activity	56
Actively participated in at least one cause	56
<u>Below 50%:</u>	
Signed an email or paper petition	49
Voted in an election	44
Displayed a button/ribbon/sign for a cause	36
Raised money for charity	34
Participated in a rally or march	19
Contacted an official to voice an opinion	18
Boycotted a product/service/company	18
Contacted the print or broadcast media to voice an opinion	8
Volunteered for a political candidate	8

Source: UMSS 2008

*These activities were excluded from further analysis

Consistent with national trends (CIRCLE, August 18, 2008, mobilize.org), respondents were more likely to report engaging in community service activities than political and advocacy efforts to address root causes and systemic issues.

More than 75% of students reported participating in each of the “green” behaviors. Recognizing that “within this academic year” is not a rigorous criterion for this category, these behaviors were removed from additional analysis. For all other items, relationships between civic engagement activities and various demographics were examined.

The top five activities for both males and females were: “volunteered your time,” “performed a community service,” “donated money to a cause,” “actively participated in at least one cause,” and “signed an email or paper petition.” In each case, females were more likely than males to report having participated in the activity.

The same activities were reported in the top five by all race/citizenship groups except that “voted in an election” ranked in the top five for Black/African American respondents, in lieu of “signed an email or paper petition.” The UMSS was administered shortly after the Maryland Presidential primary.

Direct-admit students and transfer-admit students reported these same activities, although a higher percentage of direct-admit students reported having done these activities than those admitted as transfers.

Looking at the data by residence, the four most frequently reported activities by each group were: “volunteered your time,” “performed a community service activity,” “donated money to a cause,” and “actively participated in at least one cause.” Those living in a fraternity/sorority reported these behaviors most frequently of all the residence groups, at a significantly higher percent than expected by chance. “Raised money for charity” also ranked in their top five behaviors, at a significantly higher percent. Although respondents living in “your family’s home” reported the same top four behaviors as other groups, their percent were the lowest of all groups and were significantly lower than expected.

The UMSS 2008 survey sought to gain a better understanding of what might motivate involvement in activities in which students had not previously engaged. Typically, focus has been placed on barriers to involvement.

Referring to the previous list of civic engagement activities, respondents were asked, “For activities you are NOT involved in, to what extent would the following incentives encourage you to get involved?” For each incentive respondents could indicate “A lot,” “Somewhat,” or “Not at all.” Incentives that encourage students to get involved are reported in Table 8, ranked by percentage reporting “A lot.”

Table 8: Incentives encouraging civic engagement

For activities you are NOT involve in, to what extent would the following incentives encourage you to get involved?	Percent indicating “A lot”:
It captures my interest.	73
It involves an issue that is important to me.	73
I know other people who are involved.	68
It is fun to participate.	65
I get personal satisfaction from it.	60
It is relevant to me and my life.	58
It doesn’t take much time.	54
My contribution makes a difference.	51
It is convenient to participate.	51
There are structured ways to participate.	38
Someone encourages me to participate.	34
There is something in it for me.	32
Someone else organizes the program.	26
UM organizes a program I can be part of.	21

Source: UMSS 2008

In general, the incentives that received the highest percent of respondents reporting it would encourage them “A lot” tended to reflect personal and intrinsic motivations. Incentives that were reported less frequently are those that rely on extrinsic factors. “There is something in it for me” ranked near the bottom of incentives.

Differences in responses to incentives were examined across sex, race/citizenship, entry status, and residence. The five most frequently reported incentives overall were also in the top five for all groups with the exception of respondents living in Commons/Courtyard, who reported “It is relevant to me and my life” slightly more frequently than “I get personal satisfaction from it.”

In contrast to these findings, national recommendations (CIRCLE, August 18, 2008, mobilize.org) suggest that colleges and universities need to create *more* opportunities for civic and political participation and opportunities and space for deliberation on public issues. The authors recommend that dialogues be diverse, authentic, and without political agenda. Perhaps opportunity for dialogue provides the conditions for students to find personal meaning and create connections with the issues.

Diversity in and beyond the classroom

One of the core values of the University is diversity and inclusiveness. As stated in the Strategic Plan, “*We are resolutely committed to fostering dialogue and collaboration among peoples of different backgrounds, orientations, and perspectives and ensuring the respectful treatment of all*” (April 11, 2008, p.4).

To better understand students’ perceptions of and experiences with diversity in and beyond the classroom, the UMSS 2008 included questions about race/ethnicity and perceptions of the climate at UM specifically and within society in general. For the second year in a row, ACES partnered with University of Maryland

faculty members in Industrial and Organizational Psychology to create items that examine the relationships between respondents' perceptions of the diversity climate at UM and its relationship to students' experiences and a variety of outcome measures. The UMSS 2008 items were specifically developed to examine the spillover effect from perceptions of UM for valuing diversity to perceptions of society's diversity climates. These items were designed to be utilized by faculty members in advanced statistical investigations and journal publications. This report presents only select findings.

Diversity climate

The UMSS 2008 items explored four dimensions of diversity climate at UM and within society as a whole: UM climate for diversity, societal climate for diversity, discrimination, and diversity in future decisions. The UM Climate for Diversity scale explores the perception that UM is supportive of diversity and respondents are treated fairly regardless of race or ethnic background. The Societal Climate for Diversity scale examines respondents' perceptions of American society's acceptance of and appreciation for diversity and cultural differences. The Discrimination scale measures perceptions of UM and society's tolerance for discrimination, along with the emotional impact of perceived discrimination. Finally, the Diversity in Future Decisions scale examines respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of diversity in their future selection of school and organizational environments. Respondents' answers to individual items relating to a given dimension were averaged to form scale scores ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 corresponds to least agreement and 5 corresponds to most agreement. Higher scores are associated with more agreement. Table 9 presents descriptive statistics for each scale. Although not presented here, the dimensionality of the UMSS 2008 diversity items was explored through a factor analysis. Additionally, the internal consistency or reliability of each scale was examined through Cronbach's alpha. All scales described in this report meet acceptable reliability standards.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for diversity climate scales

Diversity Climate Scales	N	Scale Mean	Standard Deviation
UM Climate for Diversity*	1363	3.77	.507
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This university has made a special effort to help racial and ethnic minority students feel like they "belong" on campus. • This university actively promotes appreciation for diversity through clubs and university-wide events. • Students are encouraged to discuss a range of ideas and to explore diverse perspectives in their courses. • The different perspectives that students from diverse background bring are valued at this university. • Students are treated fairly here regardless of their racial/ethnic background. • At this university, I have interacted with students from racial or ethnic backgrounds different from my own. • At this university, I have engaged in discussions that brought in culturally diverse perspectives. 			
Societal Climate for Diversity *	1378	2.74	.763
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people in American society understand and appreciate other cultures. • The perspectives of people from diverse backgrounds are valued in American society. • People are treated fairly in American society regardless of their racial/ethnic background. • American society fosters respect for cultural differences. • American society has made a special effort to help racial and ethnic minorities feel that they belong. 			
Discrimination *	1357	3.26	.640
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This university tolerates more discrimination than it should. • There is racial conflict at this university. • Discrimination is a problem at this university. • I get frustrated when I think about whether students are treated fairly here. • When I think about the racial conflict in this university, I feel upset/annoyed. • I experience negative emotions (i.e., sadness, anger, or frustration) when I learn about instances of discrimination at the university. • There is racial conflict in American society. • Discrimination is a problem in American society. • American society tolerates more discrimination than it should. 			
Diversity in Future Decisions *	1372	3.09	.886
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will seek out information about diversity in my future school/organization. • If I have options, I will choose a school/organization that is the most diverse. • Diversity will be one of the important considerations for me when choosing futures schools or employment. 			

* All items utilized a 5-point scale of agreement where 1 corresponds to least agreement and 5 corresponds to most agreement.
Source: UMSS 2008

The majority of respondents reported favorable perceptions of the diversity climate at the University. Respondents' perceptions of the societal climate for diversity were not as favorable, on average, as their perceptions of UM's climate. However, perceptions of the societal climate were moderately and positively correlated with perceptions of the UM climate ($p < .05$); as perception of the UM climate

increases, so did perception of the societal climate. Also, most respondents report that discrimination is tolerated at UM or within society. Discrimination produces negative emotions and emotional upset which is associated with higher discrimination scale scores.

Relationships between climate perceptions and respondents' background characteristics were examined. In terms of gender, the average ratings provided by males and females differed significantly across all four dimensions ($p < .05$). Females perceived the climate at UM to be more positive than males (3.81 females vs. 3.72 males), whereas they perceived the societal climate to be less positive than males (2.81 females vs. 2.66 males). On average, females also perceived there to be more discrimination and reported more negative emotions resulting from this discrimination than males (3.34 females vs. 3.20 males). Lastly, females indicated diversity will play a greater role when it comes to selecting organizational and educational environments than males (3.32 females vs. 2.89 males).

Table 10 presents respondents' climate perceptions by race/citizenship. Excluding respondents of unknown race/citizenship and American Indian respondents, the differences in the scale means across racial/citizenship groups were statistically significant ($p < .05$) for each of the four scales. The appropriate post hoc comparisons showed that ratings of the UM climate for diversity by Black/African American and Foreign respondents were significantly less positive than those of White and Hispanic respondents. Additionally, Asian respondents' ratings were significantly less positive than those of White respondents in terms of UM's climate. Black/African American respondents were also statistically significantly lower than Asian American, White, and Foreign respondents in their average ratings of the societal climate for diversity. Black/African American respondents perceive there to be more discrimination and report more negative emotions resulting from this discrimination than respondents in any of the other groups. Reported perceptions of discrimination are also greater for Asian American and Hispanic respondents than White respondents. Lastly, based on their ratings, White respondents appear to place less importance on the diversity of their future environments than respondents in any of the remaining racial/ethnic groups. Black/African American respondents also report diversity playing more of a role than Asian respondents.

Table 10. Perceptions of diversity climate by race/citizenship**

Diversity Climate Scales	Mean score:					
	Asian American	Black/African American	Foreign	Hispanic	White	Entire Sample
UM Climate for Diversity	3.68	3.62*	3.50*	3.85*	3.83*	3.77
Societal Climate for Diversity	2.75	2.35*	2.85	2.61	2.82	2.74
Discrimination	3.33*	3.66*	3.22	3.41*	3.16*	3.26
Diversity in Future Decisions	3.26*	3.77*	3.46*	3.47*	2.88*	3.09

*Significant differences illuminated in text above the table

**Excludes Unknown and American Indians

Source: UMSS 2008

Exposure to diversity

It was hypothesized that, in addition to an individual’s race, one’s exposure to diversity prior to attending college and since coming to UM would influence climate perceptions. In order to measure exposure to diversity prior to attending UM, the UMSS 2008 also asked respondents to compare the diversity at UM to that of their neighborhood, high school, and friends. Responses to these three items were averaged to form a Prior Exposure to Diversity scale. Higher scale scores indicate UM is more diverse than the respondents’ pre-college environment.

To gauge current engagement in diversity activities, respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they participated in an organization that promotes cultural diversity, engaged in discussions about racial/ethnic issues in class, and worked in ethnically diverse groups with other students in class within the last year. Again, responses to these four survey items were averaged to form an Engagement in Diversity Activities scale. Higher scale scores are associated with more frequent participation in diversity activities. Table 11 presents descriptive statistics for each scale.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for exposure to diversity scales

Exposure to Diversity Scales	N	Scale Mean	Standard Deviation
Prior exposure to diversity*	1386	3.77	1.059
How would you compare the racial/ethnic composition of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood where I grew up • My high school • My friends 			
Engagement in diversity activities (current engagement)**	1401	3.07	.903
Since coming to the University, how often have you done the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have participated in an organization that promotes cultural diversity. • I have engaged in discussions about racial/ethnic issues in class. • I have worked in small, ethnically diverse groups with other students in class. 			

* All items utilized a 5-point response scale where 1 corresponds to “UM is much less diverse” and 5 corresponds to “UM is much more diverse”

** All items utilized a 5-point response scale where 1 corresponds to “Never” and 5 corresponds to “Very Often”

Source: UMSS 2008

Diversity climate and exposure

The relationships between the perceptions of a diverse climate at UM and within the greater society and exposure to diversity were explored. Having less prior exposure to diversity is related to more positive perceptions of both the diversity climate at UM and the societal climate for diversity. Less prior exposure to diversity is related to perceptions that discrimination is less prevalent on campus and within society and/or less negative emotions in reaction to such discrimination. Lastly, those with less exposure to diversity report being less likely to consider diversity when making decisions about their future. While relatively weak, all of these correlations were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

In terms of current exposure, as engagement in diversity activities increases so does the respondents’ perceptions of UM’s climate for diversity. Again, this relationship was weak but statistically significant ($p < .05$). Engagement in diversity activities, however, is negatively – though weakly – correlated with the societal climate for diversity ($p < .05$). In other words, as frequency of participation increases,

perceptions of the UM climate increase while perceptions of the society climate decrease. Also, as prior exposure to diversity increases and current exposure to diversity increases, so does perceived discrimination and the negative emotions associated with perceived discrimination ($p < .05$); these relationships are weak and moderate, respectively. Lastly, a moderate, positive relationship ($p < .05$) was found between engagement in diversity activities and reports that diversity will play an important role in future decisions.

Limitations of the Report

This report relies on self-reported data. Although self-reported data can be informative, several limitations should be considered when interpreting results. Social desirability bias may result when an individual believes it is in his or her interest to exaggerate or conceal information that may be embarrassing or uncomfortable to divulge. In addition, respondents may overestimate or underestimate their abilities or concerns.

Using the Data

While not all the data may be relevant to your unit or department, we encourage you to use those elements that are. Some suggestions for use of the data include:

- ✓ Review and discuss findings with colleagues. Share this report with others in your college, department, or office in order to inform them of current findings about the experiences of UM juniors and seniors who participated in this study. Discuss how these findings confirm or refute your perceptions of the upper-division student experience.
- ✓ Clarify the data with focus groups. Engage students in small discussion groups to gain further information about topics of interest to your department.
- ✓ Allow data to help inform budget expenditures or cutbacks. Data can be used to help guide decisions about how to prioritize use of funds to meet students' needs and concerns.
- ✓ Determine areas for further analysis. CAWG can assist departments, units, and colleges by providing data or conducting relevant subgroup analyses.

Appendix A

Campus Assessment Working Group

The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) was created in 1996 and is currently chaired by Robert E. Waters, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Special Assistant to the President. CAWG is dedicated to building a culture of evidence at the University of Maryland. One way of accomplishing this task is by administering large-scale surveys to cross-sections of undergraduates on a regular basis, thereby gathering evidence regarding the student experience from multiple perspectives. CAWG presently consists of four subgroups covering various aspects of the student experience.

More information about CAWG is available on the website: www.umd.edu/cawg or from:

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