CAWG Snapshot of Student Experiences

First-Year Students' Campus Communication Preferences

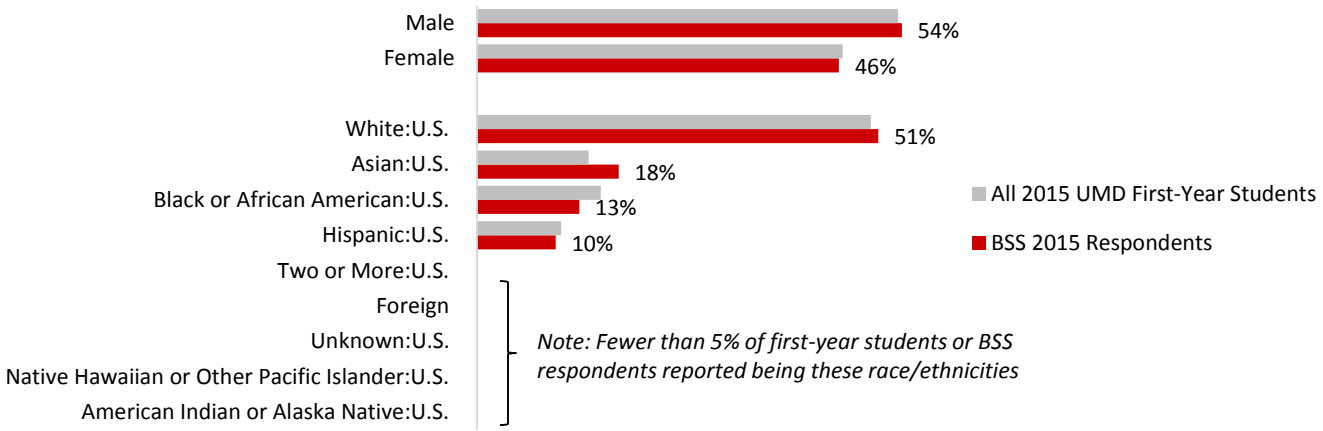
University of Maryland

2016 – Issue 5, 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.



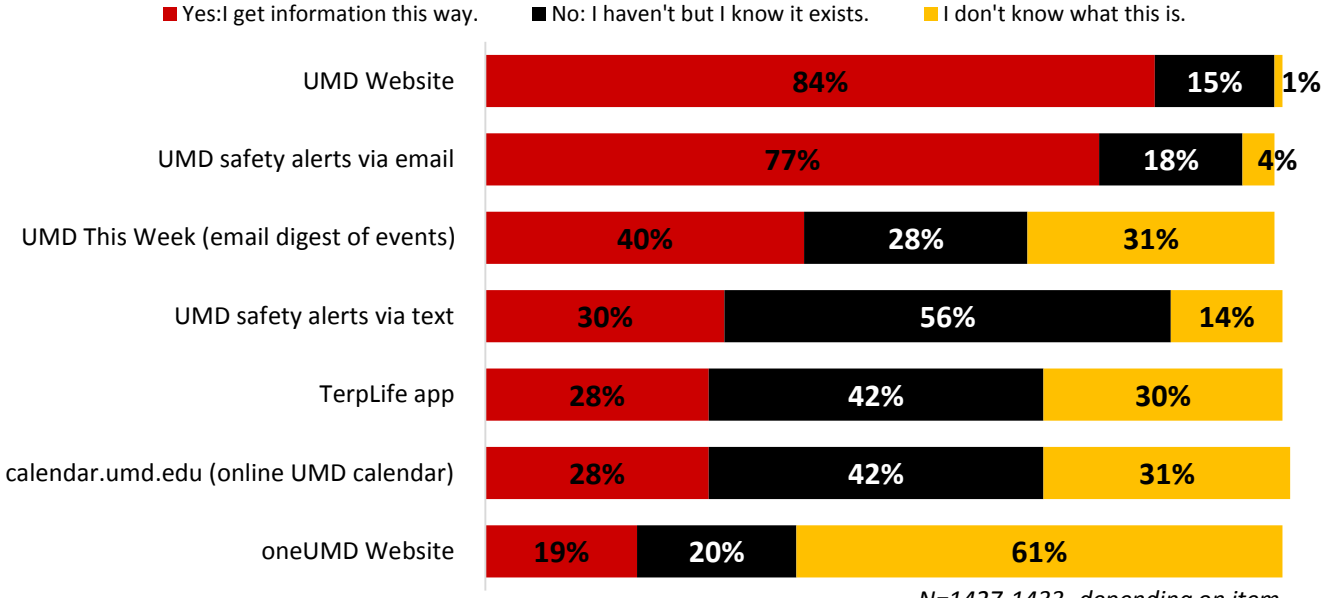
Communication Preferences

For communications from UMD offices SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED TO YOU, what is your TOP preference for contact?

Email	Text message	Mobile app	Phone call	Postal mail	Other
87%	**9%**	**1%**	**1%**	**1%**	**<1%**

N=1433

Have you used any of the following options to obtain official UMD campus-wide information?



N=1427-1433, depending on item

- Respondents tend to receive emergency alerts via email (77%) more than via texts (30%).
- More than half of respondents (56%) are aware that they can get safety alerts via text but do not receive them that way.
- Nearly one-third of respondents do not know what UMD This Week (31%), the TerpLife app (30%), or calendar.umd.edu (31%) are and nearly two-thirds do not know about oneUMD (61%).

Select your TOP social media preference to receive campus-wide information.

Facebook	Twitter	None	Instagram	Snapchat
46%	**29%**	**10%**	**7%**	**6%**

Other	YouTube	Vine*	LinkedIn	Pinterest
2%	**1%**	**<1%**	**<1%**	**<1%**

**Note: Vine was discontinued since students took this survey.*

N=1379

Questions to consider

- Why do students prefer to receive emergency alerts via email (77%) rather than via text (30%)?
- How might the purpose of the content (social vs. official university business) impact students' social media preferences?

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.