



CAMPUS ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP

Sense of Belonging Among Juniors and Seniors January 2024

This report summarizes findings on juniors' and seniors' perceptions of what it means to be a Terp and their sense of connection to campus. This report answers three questions:

- 1. How satisfied are respondents with their experience at UMD?
2. What are respondents' sense of belonging at UMD?
3. Are there differences between groups of respondents based on demographic characteristics?
4. Has this changed over time, and if so, how?

As the University prioritizes investing in people and communities as part of its strategic plan, these survey results can help us understand how connected students feel to each other and to the UMD community.

About the University of Maryland Student Survey

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subcommittee. The 2023 University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS23) was administered online from March 6 to March 24, 2023 to juniors and seniors enrolled in Professional Writing courses. In March 2023, 1,119 students completed the survey (30% of all students enrolled in Professional Writing courses).1 When appropriate, the report includes longitudinal data from previous University of Maryland Student Surveys. The timeline below provides additional context regarding survey administration alongside COVID-19 pandemic protocols at UMD.

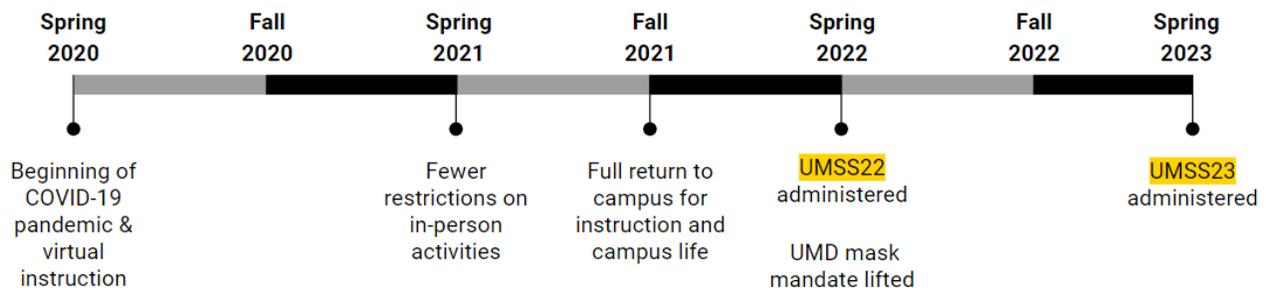


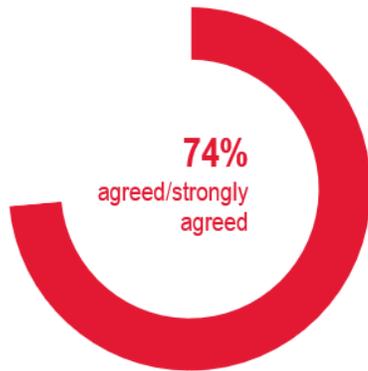
Figure 1. Timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic and survey administration, 2020-2023. Visualization adapted from the Academic Technology Experience Team in the Division of IT.

Almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that, if they had to do it over, they would enroll at UMD again, but only 59% agreed UMD is a good value for their money.

- Seventy-four percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would enroll at UMD again. This is consistent with the last time this question was asked in 2017 (75% agreed/strongly agreed).
• In 2017, 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that UMD is a good value for their money. In 2023, this percentage decreased to 59%.

1 Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. The distribution of respondents by race/ethnicity and gender was similar to that of the UMD population. White respondents were slightly overrepresented (46% of respondents vs 42% of juniors and seniors). Fifty-two percent of respondents were female, compared to 48% of all juniors and seniors; 48% of respondents were male, compared to 52% of the population. University records in Spring 2023 did not include a non-binary option.

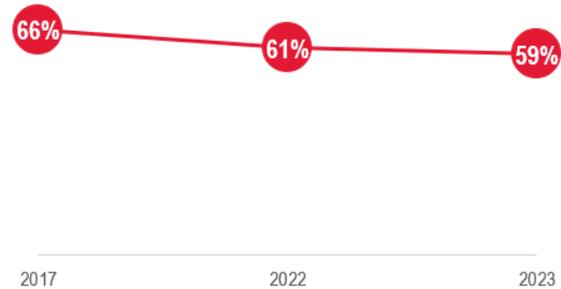
All in all, if I had to do it over, I would enroll here again.



n = 1,118

UMD is a good value for my money.

% agree/strongly agree



n = 1,117-1,674

Figure 2. Percent of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with the items, “All in all, if I had to do it over, I would enroll here again” (left), UMSS23, and “UMD is a good value for my money” (right), UMSS17, UMSS22, and UMSS23.

Questions to Consider

- How might these responses relate to other measures of student success and belonging?
- Why is agreement with the statement “UMD if a good value for my money” dropping over time? Is this due mostly to rising costs, or are students perceiving a drop in the return on their investment? What can UMD do to reduce costs and raise return on investment?

Behind the Findings

- According to the [2022 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report](#), 65% of respondents at four-year public institutions ($n = 44,090$) said they would probably or definitely enroll at their institution if they had to do it again. The report includes data from the 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 academic years.
- Factors that could impact respondents’ perspective of UMD being a “good value” might include the cost of tuition and career outcomes. For instance, the [cost of in-state tuition](#) rose about 17% since FY 2017, going from \$8,315 in FY 2017 to \$9,695 in FY 2023. The cost of out-of-state tuition rose about 26% since FY 2017 going from \$30,179 in FY 2017 to \$37,931 in FY 2023. Additionally, the [2022 University Career Center Graduation Survey Report](#) found that 96% of bachelor’s degree recipients were either employed or pursuing additional education within six months of graduating.

Responses to items about sense of belonging were similar in 2022 and 2023, though in both years, only around half of respondents agreed that non-faculty employees care about them as individuals.

- Similar percentages of respondents agreed that they felt like they belonged at UMD in 2022 (77%) and 2023 (78%).
- In 2023, 67% of respondents agreed that faculty care about them as an individual, but only 47% of respondents agreed with the same statement about non-faculty employees. The percentage of respondents who agreed that non-faculty employees care about them as an individual dropped from 55% in 2022 to 47% in 2023.

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following:

% agree/strongly agree

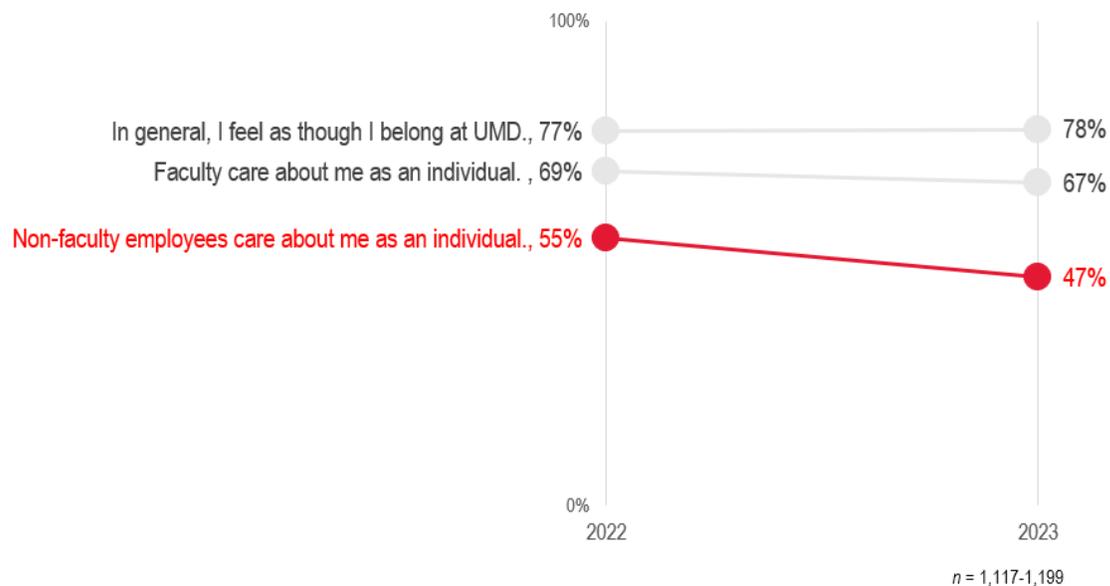


Figure 3. Percent of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with items about their well-being, UMSS22 and UMSS23.

Behind the Findings

- The question, “In general, I feel as though I belong at UMD” was also asked on the UMSS in 2014, 2015, and 2021. In 2014, 82% of respondents agreed with the statement; 81% agreed in 2015. In 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of respondents who agreed decreased to 72% (although the question was worded differently in 2021: “I belong at UMD.”)

When looking at questions about respondents’ sense of belonging, differences emerged between demographic groups. Respondents of color, first-generation status, and those who transferred to UMD all agreed less with feeling that they belong to UMD. Patterns were less consistent across other items.

Federal reporting racial/ethnic groups:

- Across most items, Black or African American respondents indicated less agreement than respondents from other racial/ethnic groups. For example:
 - About two-thirds (67%) of Black or African American respondents agreed they feel as though they belong at UMD, compared to 78% of respondents overall. The highest percentage of respondents agreeing was in the white group, with 84%.
 - Fewer Black or African American respondents agreed that faculty and non-faculty employees care about them as individuals, compared to the average.

Indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following:

% agree/strongly agree

	Asian (n = 234-235)	Black or African American (n = 132-134)	Hispanic/Latino (n = 126)	Two or More Races (n = 52-53)	White (n = 514-516)	All respondents (n = 1,116- 1,119)
In general, I feel as though I belong at UMD.	76%	67%	73%	77%	84%	78%
I feel physically safe on campus.	73%	76%	79%	85%	79%	77%
I feel good about the progress I am making in pursuit of my personal goals.	73%	70%	76%	62%	79%	75%
I feel psychologically safe on campus.	70%	65%	68%	73%	79%	74%
Faculty care about me as an individual.	67%	53%	64%	64%	70%	67%
If I run into problems here, I know someone on campus who'll listen to and help me.	66%	63%	63%	60%	69%	66%
Non-faculty employees care about me as an individual.	46%	38%	43%	43%	52%	47%

Figure 4. Percent of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with items about their well-being by federal reporting racial/ethnic group, UMSS23. Cells are colored based on the percent difference from “all students.” Red indicates the percentage of students who agreed with the item was lower than the percentage of all students who agreed with the item; blue indicates the percentage of students who agreed with the item was higher than the percentage of all students who agreed with the item. Darker colors indicate larger differences.

First-generation status:

- Sixty-eight percent of first-generation respondents agreed they feel they belong at UMD, compared to 81% of non-first-generation respondents.

Entry enrollment type:

- About 7 in 10 respondents (71%) who started at UMD as new transfer students agreed they feel they belong at UMD, compared to 81% of respondents who started as new freshmen or other new undergraduates.
- Sixty percent of respondents who enrolled at UMD as new transfer students agreed they know someone who'll listen to and help them if they run into problems, compared to 70% of respondents who started at UMD as new freshmen or new other undergraduates.

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following:

% agree/strongly agree

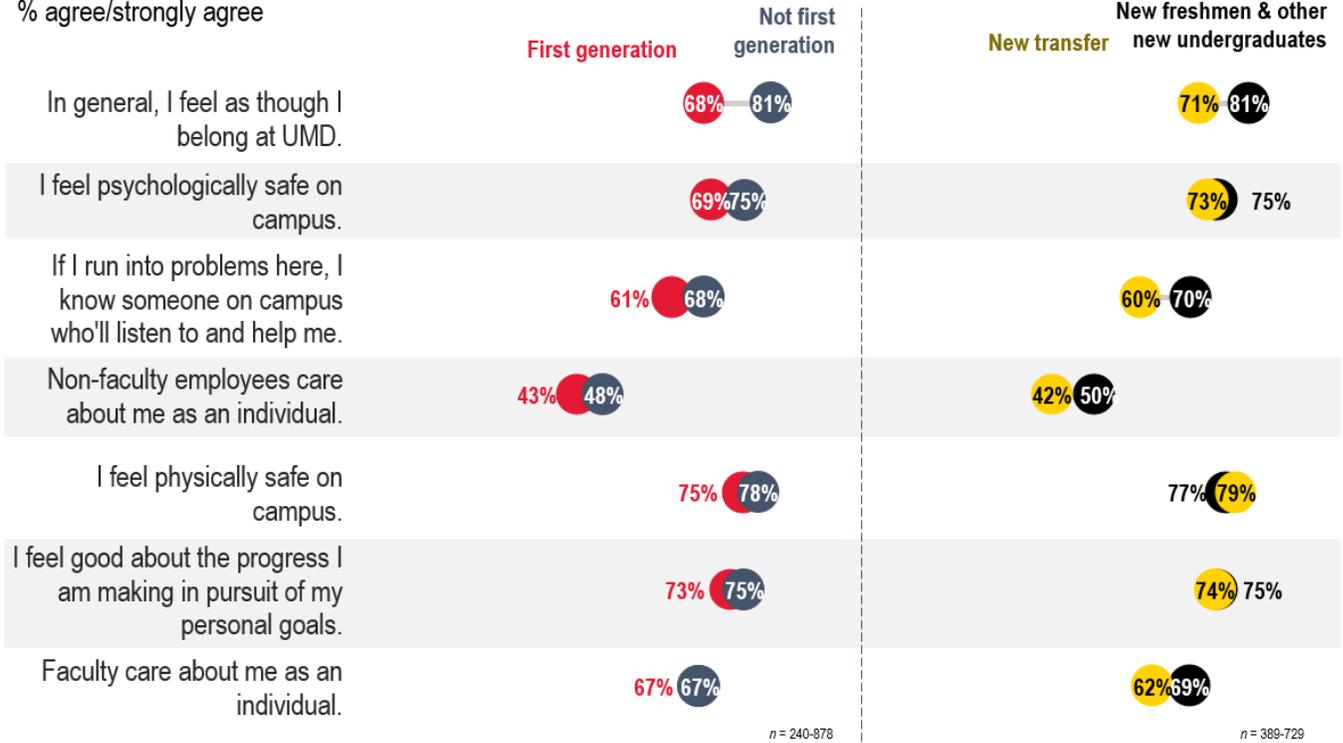


Figure 5. Percent of respondents who agreed/strongly with items about their well-being by first-generation status and entry enrollment status, UMSS23. New Freshmen and Other New Undergraduates are reported together.

When asked about their involvement in campus activities, a concerning percentage of respondents continue to struggle to engage in them.

- Forty-two percent of respondents said it was very or somewhat easy to participate in in-person social activities on campus in 2023. This is similar to responses on a Fall 2021 survey (44% said very/somewhat easy), despite the lift of pandemic-era restrictions to on-campus social activities (not visualized below).
- When asked whether they were as involved in campus activities as they wanted to be, there were differences among some demographic groups. Lower percentages of respondents agreed with the statement - those who had longer commutes; identified as Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino; identified as first-generation college students; and/or transferred to UMD.

I am as involved in campus activities as I want to be.
 % agree/strongly agree

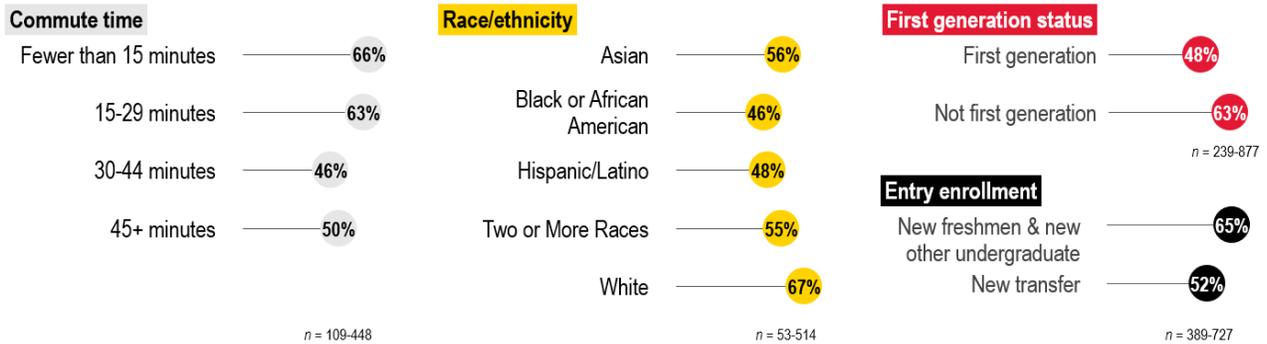


Figure 6. Percent of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with the question, “I am as involved in campus activities as I want to be” by responses to the question, “How many minutes does it typically take you to get from where you live to your first campus destination?” and other demographics, UMSS23.

Questions to Consider

- What factors might explain the differences in responses to the questions above between respondents of different demographic groups?
- The University had COVID-19 restrictions in place in 2021, but by Spring 2023, many of those restrictions were lifted. What might help explain why the percentage of respondents who agreed it was easy to participate in on-campus social activities has stayed consistent over time? How can we help students who want to be involved in campus life or student organizations?

Conclusion

These data represent juniors’ and seniors’ perceptions of their sense of belonging at UMD in Spring 2023. Seventy-eight percent of respondents agreed they feel like they belong at UMD, but the percentage varies across subgroups. As the University continues to implement its strategic plan and invest in people and communities, these findings may inform conversations about student resilience and how the University can help students feel connected to each other and to the institution and thrive in college.

About ACES

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subgroup: Robert E. Crane, College of Arts & Humanities; Jonathan Engelberg, Division of Information Technology; Danielle Glazer, Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA); Shannon Hayes Buenaflor, A. James Clark School of Engineering; Julie Kromkowski, Chair, Division of Administration Office of the VP; Scott Moses, Department of English; Chad Nazworth, Office of the Provost; Sharon Ousman, Career Center; Charlene Ploetz Savoy, College of Information Studies; Alan Socha, IRPA; Jess Wojton, IRPA; Ronald Zeigler, Nyumburu Cultural Center. For more information, to view past reports, or to join a CAWG subgroup, visit <http://ter.ps/CAWG>.