



CAMPUS
ASSESSMENT
WORKING GROUP

*University of Maryland Student Survey
2004 Report*

**By members of the
Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)
Assessment of Campus Experiences Subgroup**

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENT SURVEY 2004 REPORT

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	2
Campus Assessment Working Group	5
Background on the UMSS	6
Methodology	6
The survey	6
Survey respondents	6
Findings	6
Out-of-classroom involvement	6
Participation in campus organizations	6
Perceived barriers to participation in UM activities	7
Contributors to feeling connected to UM	7
Community service	8
Ratings of abilities/learning outcomes	8
Issues regarding academic major	11
Career issues	12
Career plans after graduation	13
Involvement with UM as an alumnus/a	13
Attitudes about UM	13
Using the UMSS data	14
Appendix	15

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Degree of Participation in Campus Groups or Organizations	7
Table 2. Perceived Barriers to Participation in Campus Activities	7
Table 3. Contributors to Feeling Connected to UM	8
Table 4. Self-rated Skills and Abilities	9
Table 5. Reasons for Wanting More Than One Major	11
Table 6. People with Whom Respondents Discussed Career Plans	12
Table 7. Career Exploration Activities Participated in	12
Table 8. What Prevented Having an Internship	13
Table 9. Type of Potential Involvement as Alumni	13
Table 10. Attitudes about UM	14
Figure 1. Self-rated Skills and Abilities	10

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENT SURVEY

2004 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every two years, the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) administers the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) to juniors and seniors. 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 us to: gain insight into 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 '04, was administered in Spring, 2004. Of the students enrolled in Professional Writing courses during the spring semester, 1657 completed the survey.

The following were the areas of focus for UMSS '04:

Out-of-classroom involvement

Participation in campus organizations: Not surprisingly, intercollegiate athletics – as athlete or fan – had the most participation, followed by academic/departmental/ major group which drew participation but not to the same extent.

Barriers to participation in UM activities: Work responsibilities and involvement in activities off campus were the two most frequently perceived barriers to participation in campus activities.

Contributors to feeling connected to UM: Friends are perceived as being most highly contributive to a feeling of connection to UM, followed by campus activities, and intercollegiate activities.

Community service: Overall, 46% of our respondents indicated that during academic year 2003-4 they had engaged in community service (e.g., volunteer work).

Ratings of abilities/learning outcomes

In order to assess the progress with which the University is meeting its goal of elevating the quality of undergraduate education, students were asked first to assess their level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to undergraduate education, and then to indicate the extent to which they thought their UM experience directly affected each of those skills/abilities. Three of the four skills/abilities ranked highest both in the percent of students who rated their skills/abilities as “strong” and in the percent of students who felt their UM experience directly affected the given skill/ability were categorized as “critical analysis and reasoning.”

The skills/abilities that respondents both felt weak in and were less likely to feel UM had directly affected included using a spreadsheet to perform data analysis, understanding various research designs and approaches, producing visual displays of information, and recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods – all skills typically useful for doing research in the 21st century.

Issues regarding academic major

Reasons for selection of major: Sixty-five percent said “interest in the subject” and 20% said “potential to lead to a good job” was the reason they selected their major.

Are they in their major of choice? The vast majority (88%) of our junior and senior respondents reported they were in their major of choice.

Limited Enrollment Programs: Twenty-seven percent of those not in their first choice of major said their first choice was a Limited Enrollment Program. Among those whose first choice was an LEP and who weren't in it, 43% said they were not admitted initially to an LEP and are no longer pursuing admission; 23% said they decided after getting to UM to pursue the LEP but are not working toward being admitted, while 12% developed their interest after getting to UM and are working toward being admitted. Similarly, 14% were not admitted initially and are working toward being admitted. Eight percent were in an LEP but were required to leave.

Changes in Major: Forty-seven percent of respondents had never changed their major; 39% had changed it one time; 14% had changed it two or more times.

More than one major: Seventy-three percent of respondents said they did not have more than one major and had no plans to; 17% said they had more than one major, and 10% said they didn't at the time but had plans to. Those who had more than one major or planned to were asked their reasons for wanting to do so. The majority identified interest in the subject matter (57%) as their reason for wanting more than one major. Just under half identified as a reason wanting to make themselves more marketable to potential employers (46%) and/or to build skills for their intended career (45%).

Career issues

Thoughts regarding their potential career. Forty percent of these juniors and seniors had decided on a career, 55% were still exploring career options, and 5% hadn't yet begun to think about a career.

Discussed career plans: Respondents were most likely to discuss their career plans with their parents or relatives and with their friends. Among UM personnel, they were most likely to discuss their career plans at least once with an academic advisor and/or a faculty member. Sixty-four percent said they had never discussed their career plans with a career counselor.

Internship issues: Twenty-seven percent our respondents had participated in an internship. In fact, that was the second most frequently participated in career exploration activity. Those who had not participated in an internship were asked to identify what prevented them from doing so. Only 3% said it was because they had no interest in participating in an internship. Eighteen percent said they weren't sure how/where to find an internship.

Non-participation in career exploration: Among those who had not participated in any career exploration activities, almost one third (31%) said that was because they did not know how or where to begin. Other reasons students did not participate in career exploration activities include that their class/job schedule hasn't allowed them the time to do so yet (18%), they had to focus on their academics (15%), or they had not been interested in doing so (18%).

Career plans after graduation: Forty-three percent planned to enter the job market after graduation, while 39% planned to go on to graduate/professional school. Ten percent were uncertain of their career plans. The remainder were going to have an internship, join the military, or do service/volunteer work.

Involvement with UM as an alumnus/a

Respondents were most likely to return to UM for athletic events (55%). Only 17% said they did not plan to be involved as an alum.

Attitudes about UM

While only 28% said they thought the cost of attending UM was reasonable, 73% said they would be able to afford to enroll next semester. Eighteen percent said they didn't think the University of Maryland is a good value for their money. Only 11% said they would not recommend UM to their family and friends, and 14% said if they had it to do over they would not enroll at UM again.

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. The members of the CAWG subgroup – ACES, or Assessing the Campus Experience Subgroup - who worked on the project reflected by this report are:

Adrienne Hamcke Wicker (Chair), Stamp Student Union
Kathleen Lis Dean, Institutional Research and Planning
Chip Denman, Office of Information Technology
Irma Dillon, University Libraries
Wallace Eddy, Campus Recreation Center
Pat Hunt, Counseling Center
Sharon La Voy, Institutional Research and Planning
Graziella Pagliarulo, Career Center
Jason Pontias, Campus Programs
Erin Rooney-Eckel, Engineering Student Affairs
Audran Ward, Arts and Humanities Student Affairs
Martha Wilmes, College Park Scholars
Terry Zacker, Stamp Student Union and Campus Programs

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

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BACKGROUND ON THE UMSS

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 level undergraduates at UM. 2004 is the fourth time the UMSS has been given. With each iteration, some items are maintained while new variables are considered, in order to reflect campus interests and needs.

Methodology

The UMSS'04 was administered in the spring semester to students enrolled in Professional Writing courses. These courses were selected to administer the survey for two primary reasons. First, these students reflect the University's diversity in terms of race/ethnicity, academic performance, and entry status. Second, they are upper division undergraduates with several years 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, as well as 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. Students returned 1657 surveys.

The Survey

The UMSS'04 measures upper division undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences in a variety of areas. In this survey, students were asked about their out-of-classroom involvement, including participation in campus organizations, barriers to participation in University of Maryland activities, contributors to feeling connected to UM, and community service. They were asked to rate themselves on 19 abilities or learning outcomes, and they were asked about issues regarding their academic major, their career development, and their career plans after graduation. Finally, they were asked about their potential involvement as a University of Maryland alum, and about their attitudes about the university.

Survey respondents

There were 1657 students enrolled in the Professional Writing program in Spring, 2004 who completed the UMSS'04. In order to limit the number of demographic questions on the survey, respondents' student identification numbers were requested, which could then be matched with institutional data. Of the 1657 respondents, 1161 (70%) gave a valid id number. The demographics of this sub-sample consisted of 48% women and 52% men. Sixty-one percent were Caucasian Americans, 9% Black/African Americans, 15% Asian Americans, 5% Hispanics, 6% American with race unknown, and 3% international students. Seventy-three percent entered the University as freshmen, 15% as transfers from a 2-year institution, 8% as transfers from a non-UM 4-year institution, and 3% transferred from another University of Maryland system campus. Seventy-four percent were juniors, and 26% were seniors.

The following analyses were based on the entire respondent sample of 1657.

FINDINGS

Out-of-classroom involvement

There is consistent evidence in the retention literature that involvement in out-of-classroom activities is a strong component both of student learning and of student retention. Therefore the UMSS'04 devoted an entire section to participation in and issues relating to out-of-classroom involvement.

Participation in campus organizations

Forty-eight percent of UMSS04 respondent indicated they were as involved in student groups and or organizations as they wanted to be, 25% were neutral, and 27% indicated they wanted to be more involved.

Table 1, sorted in ascending order by percent participated "not at all," shows the degree of participation of these juniors and seniors among the types of student groups and organizations. Not surprisingly, intercollegiate athletics – as athlete or fan – had the most participation, followed by academic/departmental/ major group, which drew participation but not to the same extent.

Table 1. Degree of Participation in Campus Groups or Organizations (row percents)

Campus groups or organizations	"Not at all"	"Some"	"Very much"
Intercollegiate athletics (as athlete or fan)	32	36	33
Academic/departmental/major group	34	48	18
Other student group or organization	44	41	15
Intramural/club sports	58	25	16
Campus religious group	77	16	7
Campus ethnic or cultural group	79	16	5
Greek organization	80	6	14

Perceived barriers to participation in campus activities

Students were asked what prevented them from participating in activities offered at UM. Table 2 shows perceived barriers to participation. The table is sorted in ascending order by the proportion of "Prevented not at all". Work responsibilities and involvement in activities off campus were the two most frequently perceived barriers to participation in campus activities. It is reassuring to note the high proportion that did not see as barriers to involvement feeling unsafe on campus or feeling unwelcome at events.

Table 2. Perceived Barriers to Participation in Campus Activities (row percents)

Campus groups or organizations	"Not at all" a barrier	"Somewhat" a barrier	"Very much" a barrier
Not well informed of activities on campus	27	57	15
Work responsibilities conflict	28	40	28
Classes conflict	28	58	14
Events/meetings are not scheduled at convenient times	30	56	15
Involved in activities off campus	34	43	24
Available activities are not interesting to me	36	56	7
Don't want to be involved	61	33	6
Live too far away to come back for events	66	19	14
Family responsibilities conflict	66	26	8
Don't feel safe on campus	71	24	5
Don't feel welcome at events	78	20	2

Contributors to feeling connected to UM

Students were asked what contributed to their feeling connected to the University of Maryland. Table 3, sorted in ascending order by the proportion who indicated "Contributed not at all" shows responses to this set of questions. Friends are perceived as being most highly contributive to a feeling of connection to UM, followed by campus activities, and intercollegiate activities. It is encouraging to see that only one-quarter of our respondents felt that faculty didn't contribute to a feeling of connection, since in past UMSS surveys, students highly rated the faculty's intellectual aspects but not their approachability.

Table 3. Contributors to Feeling Connected to UM (row percents)

Contributors to feeling connected to UM	Contributed “not at all”	Contributed “some”	Contributed “very much”
Friends	5	32	63
Activities on campus	19	62	18
Intercollegiate athletics	22	41	37
Major/department	23	53	25
Faculty	26	60	14
Living/learning community (if applicable)	31	49	20
On-campus job (if applicable)	35	36	30
UM’s national reputation	37	49	14
Other UM staff	44	49	7
Academic advisor	46	43	11
Resident Life (if applicable)	46	41	12

Community service

Overall, 46% of our respondents indicated that during academic year 2003-4 they had engaged in community service (e.g., volunteer work). Twenty-six percent did so with a Greek organization, 25% with another student organization, 25% with an organization not affiliated with UM. The remainder did so as a requirement for an academic course/program (9%), with a learning community (6%), with a campus-affiliated religious community (5%) or with a UM program such as America READS*America Counts (4%).

Ratings of skills and abilities

In order to assess the progress with which the University is meeting its goal of elevating the quality of undergraduate education, students were asked first to assess their level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to undergraduate education, and then to indicate the extent to which they thought their UM experience directly affected each of those skills/abilities. These 19 skills/abilities can be categorized in one of four categories:

- Written and oral communication
- Critical analysis and reasoning
- Technical competence
- Scientific and quantitative reasoning

As can be seen in Table 4, each skill/ability was given two ranks. The first rank was based on the percent of respondents who rated themselves as “strong” on a given ability. For example, “using electronic information resources” was ranked 1, based on the fact that that particular skill/ability had the highest percent (69 %) that rated themselves as “strong.” The second rank was based on the percent of respondents who indicated that their UM experience had affected their skill/ability “quite a bit.” For example, “writing effectively” was ranked 1, having the highest proportion (41%) who indicated that UM had directly affected that skill/ability.

Table 4. Self-rated Skills and Abilities

Nineteen Skills and Abilities sorted in ascending order by rank of percent “strong”	Percent “Strong”	Rank	Percent UM affected “quite a bit”	Rank
WOC Listening effectively	56	5	19	18
WOC Presenting a persuasive argument	40	12	31	6
WOC Writing effectively	39	13	41	1
WOC Speaking effectively	37	16	27	10
IL Using information responsibly	58	4	27	10
IL Finding information that you need	52	8.5	34	3
IL Evaluating the reliability of information	43	10	24	15.5
IL Framing a research question	30	19	27	10
TC Using electronic information resources (e.g., Internet, databases, e-journals)	69	1	40	2
TC Producing visual displays of information	38	14.5	17	19
TC Using a spreadsheet to perform data analyses	31	17.5	20	17
CAR Applying what you learn to other situations	64	2	33	4
CAR Seeing relationships, similarities and differences among ideas	63	3	29	7
CAR Revising your thinking based on new information	55	6	27	10
CAR Understanding diverse cultural, political and intellectual views	53	7	32	5
SQR Interpreting graphs, tables, and/or formulas correctly	52	8.5	25	13.5
SQR Using quantitative methods to solve problems	42	11	27	10
SQR Recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods	38	14.5	24	15.5
SQR Understanding various research designs and approaches	31	17.5	25	13.5

WOC: written and oral comm.. CAR: critical analysis and reasoning TC: technical competence IL: information literacy SQR: scientific & quantitative reasoning

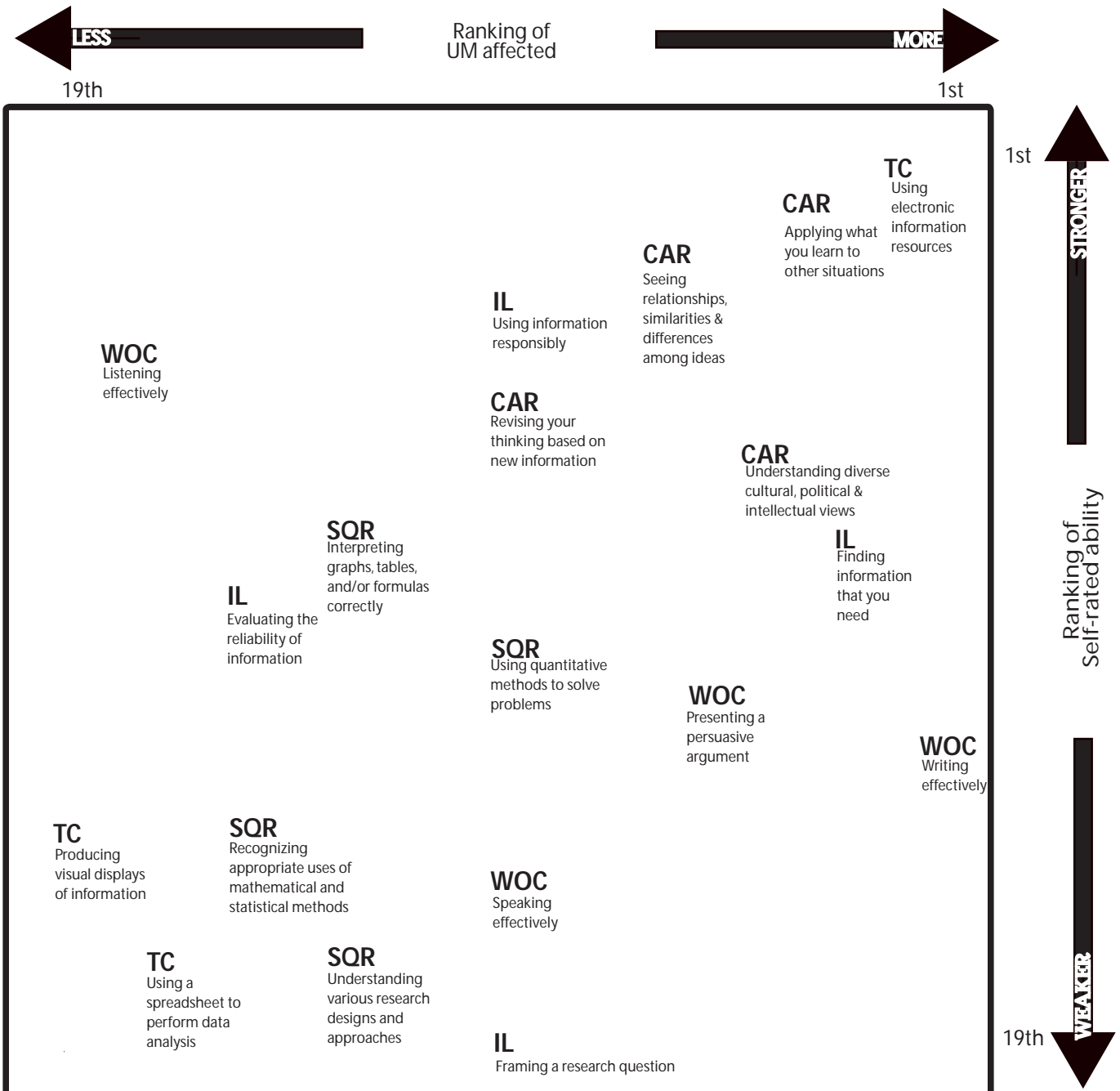
Figure 1, seen on the following page, was created to better enable the visualization of the relationships of the 19 skills/abilities in terms both of self-ratings of degree of strength, and of degree of impact of UM experience. The vertical axis of Figure 1 depicts the rank of each of the 19 skills/abilities in terms of percent who rated themselves as “strong.” The horizontal axis depicts the rank of each skill/ability in terms of the percent who indicated that their UM experience directly rated the given skill/ability “quite a bit.” In other words, the top half of the chart depicts the skills/abilities students were more likely to rate themselves as “strong” in, while the bottom half of the chart depicts those that students were more likely to rate themselves as “weak” in. Similarly, the left half of the chart depicts the skills/abilities students were more likely to report their UM experience affected “little” or “some”, while the right half depicts those that students were more likely to report their UM experience affected “quite a bit.”

Figure 1, in addition to the upper and lower halves, and the left and right halves, can be seen as having four quadrants. The upper right quadrant of the chart consists of those skills/abilities which had the largest proportion of "strong" and "UM affected quite a bit" ratings. The four skills/abilities categorized as “critical analysis and reasoning” are located in that quadrant. The lower left quadrant shows those skills/abilities with the smallest proportion of "strong" and "UM affected quite a bit" ratings. These include using a spreadsheet to perform data analysis, understanding various research designs and approaches, producing visual displays of information, and recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods – all skills typically useful for doing research in the 21st century.

Figure 1: Self-rated Skills and Abilities

Rank of Percent "strong" vs. Rank of Percent "UM affected quite a bit."
(1=highest percent; 19=lowest)

- CAR** Critical analysis and reasoning
- IL** Information literacy
- SQR** Scientific and quantitative reasoning
- TC** Technical competence
- WOC** Written and oral communication



Issues regarding academic major

Reasons for selection of major: Our respondents were asked what mattered *most* to them when considering a major. The majority (65%) said “interest in the subject” followed by “potential to lead to a good job” (20%) and then by “ability to get good grades (4%) and “family expectations” (3%).

Are they in their major of choice? The vast majority (88%) of our junior and senior respondents reported they were in their major of choice. Among those who were not, the most frequently identified reasons were that it was too late in their collegiate career to change to their first choice (30%); the requirements of their first choice were too difficult (22%); their perception that it would not lead to a good job/career (16%); and, their family did not think it was a good major/degree (6%).

Limited Enrollment Programs: Twenty-seven percent of those not in their first choice of major said their first choice was a Limited Enrollment Program. Among those whose first choice was an LEP and who weren’t in it, 43% said they were not admitted initially to an LEP and are no longer pursuing admission; 23% said they decided after getting to UM to pursue the LEP but are not working toward being admitted, while 12% developed their interest after getting to UM and are working toward being admitted. Similarly, 14% were not admitted initially and are working toward being admitted. Eight percent were in an LEP but were required to leave.

Major changes: Forty-seven percent of respondents had never changed their major; 39% had changed it one time; 14% had changed it two or more times. As might be expected, transfer students (18%) were slightly more likely than native students (12%) to have changed their major two or more times.

More than one major: Seventy-three percent of respondents said they did not have more than one major and had no plans to; 17% said they had more than one major, and 10% said they didn’t at the time but had plans to. Those who had more than one major or planned to were asked their reasons for wanting to do so. Table 5, sorted in descending order, shows the reasons for those who either had more than one major or planned to. Respondents could indicate more than one reason. The majority identified interest in the subject matter (57%) as their reason for wanting more than one major. Just under half identified as a reason wanting to make themselves more marketable to potential employers (46%) and/or to build skills for their intended career (45%).

Table 5. Reasons for Wanting More Than One Major

Reasons for wanting more than one major	Percent
Interest in the subject matter	57
Make myself more marketable to potential employers	46
Build skills for my intended career	45
The majors are closely aligned/significant course overlap	35
Be better prepared for graduate/professional school	29
Other (unspecified)	26
Can’t decide between the majors	8
UM doesn’t have the exact major/program I want	7

Fit between major(s) and personal interests: Two-thirds of our respondents said they felt their major(s) fit “very much” with their personal interests; another 28% said it did “somewhat.” Only 2% said “not at all” and 3% weren’t sure.

Fit between major(s) and career goals: Sixty percent felt the fit between their major(s) and their career goals fit “very much” while 25% said their major(s) fit “somewhat” and 4% said “not at all.” Eleven percent were not sure what their career goals were.

Career issues

Thoughts regarding their potential career. Forty percent of these juniors and seniors had decided on a career: 25% after having gone through a period of exploration and 15% having made the decision without first having explored options. Fifty-five percent were still exploring career options, and 5% hadn't yet begun to think about a career.

Discussed career plans: Respondents were most likely to discuss their career plans with their parents or relatives and with their friends. Table 6 shows the people with whom they discussed their plans, and the relative frequency of having done so. The table is sorted in ascending order by percent "Never." Among UM personnel, they were most likely to discuss their career plans at least once with an academic advisor and/or a faculty member. Sixty-four percent said they had never discussed their career plans with a career counselor.

Table 6. People with Whom Respondents Discussed Career Plans

Discussed career plans with:	Percent "Never"	Percent "Once or twice"	Percent "More than twice"
Parent/relative	2	11	86
Friend(s)	2	13	84
Someone at work	25	24	51
Academic advisor	34	42	25
A faculty member	39	42	19
A career counselor	64	28	9
Other UM staff	66	24	10
A resident assistant	88	8	3

The University of Maryland offers several different career exploration activities to its undergraduate students. Table 7 indicates, in descending order, the percent of respondents who participated in a given activity. The career fair is by far the career exploration activity most frequently participated in (42%).

Table 7. Career Exploration Activities Participated in

Career exploration activities	Percent participated
Career fair	42
Internship	27
Career decision-making class (EDCP108D)	12
Career counseling	12
Career workshop	10
Faculty-directed research project	10
Co-op	2
None	29

Internship issues: Table 7, above, indicates that 27% of our respondents had participated in an internship. In fact, that was the second most frequently participated in career exploration activity. Those who had not participated in an internship were asked to identify what prevented them from doing so. Table 8, sorted in descending order, indicates what respondents felt prevented them from having an internship. Respondents could identify more than one reason. Only 3% said it was because they had no interest in participating in an internship. Eighteen percent said they weren't sure how/where to find an internship.

Table 8. What Prevented Having an Internship

What prevented having an internship	Percent
Academics – I have to concentrate on my grades	23
Financial constraints – I have to work when not studying or in class	18
I have lots of extra-curricular activities that leave little time for an internship	10
Not sure how/where to find an internship	18
I haven't found an internship that appeals to me	15
I have no interest in participating in an internship	3

Non-participation in career exploration: Among those who had not participated in any career exploration activities, almost one third (31%) said that was because they did not know how or where to begin. Other reasons students did not participate in career exploration activities include that their class/job schedule hasn't allowed them the time to do so yet (18%), they had to focus on their academics (15%), or they had not been interested in doing so (18%).

When respondents were asked how well they thought UM provided the resources they need throughout their career planning process, 20% said “very well,” 63% said “somewhat” and 17% said “not at all.”

Career plans after graduation

Forty-three percent planned to enter the job market after graduation, while 39% planned to go on to graduate/professional school. Ten percent were uncertain of their career plans. The remainder were going to have an internship, join the military, or do service/volunteer work.

Involvement with UM as an alumnus/a

Respondents were asked about their plans to participate as an alum. Table 9 sorted in descending order, shows the proportion who thought they would be likely to do a particular action. Respondents were mostly likely to return to UM for athletic events (55%). Only 17% said they did not plan to be involved as an alum.

Table 9. Type of Potential Involvement as Alumni

Type of involvement	Percent
Return to UM for athletic events	55
Join the Alumni Association	30
Use UM services (Career Center, libraries, Campus Recreation Center)	27
No plans to be involved as an alum	17
Donate money to UM	14
Attend Maryland Day	14
Join the Terrapin Club	12
Attend alumni programs (sponsored trips, speakers)	11
Return to UM for cultural events	10
Participate in Homecoming	7
Volunteer time to UM (mentoring, fund-raising)	6

Attitudes about UM

The University of Maryland is always interested in knowing students' attitudes about various aspects of the institution. The UMSS04 asked respondents attitudinal questions about the financial aspects of attending UM and about the value of attending UM. Table 10 depicts their responses to each statement.

Table 10. Attitudes about UM.

	Percent Agreed/ Strongly agreed	Percent “Neutral”	Percent Disagreed/ Strongly disagreed
The University of Maryland is a good value for my money	53	29	18
I'm concerned about my ability to finance my college education	51	20	29
I'll be able to afford to enroll next semester	73	18	8
The cost of attending this university is reasonable	28	27	45
All in all, if I had it to do over, I would enroll here again	64	22	14
I would recommend UM to my family and friends	68	21	11

USING THE UMSS DATA

The UMSS '04 data provide information about upper division students' perceptions on a variety of issues including learning skills and abilities, and involvement in undergraduate enrichment programs. 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.

Look for the gaps between importance and satisfaction. Determine where students' expectations are not being met as a way to create an improvement agenda for your unit.

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.