



CAMPUS
ASSESSMENT
WORKING GROUP

**Transfer Students at the University of
Maryland**

September 2005

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
2	Letter from Scott A. Wolpert, Associate Dean. UGST
3	Summary
6	Background for the report
7	Demographics of UM transfer-ins
8	Initial expectations and concerns
9	Bouncers
11	Financial issues
13	Academic quality
14	Learning outcomes
16	Educational aspirations
17	Issues about majors
18	Career issues
19	Connections to campus: participation and obstacles
22	Completion rates
22	Reasons why students leave during a semester
25	Limitations of this report
26	Next steps
	Appendices
27	I. Background of the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG)
27	II. Sources of the data used in this report



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
and Dean for Undergraduate Studies

Room 2130, Mitchell Building
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.405.9354 TEL 301.314.9896 FAX
www.ugst.umd.edu

August 1, 2005

Dear Associate Vice President Robert Waters,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief on the recent work of the Office of Undergraduate Studies (UGST) and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions (UA) towards facilitating smooth transition and academic success for transfer students. The efforts include improvements that will benefit all students and improvements specifically for transfer students.

Perhaps foremost, the **Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Policy** will serve all our students by providing information and templates for students to develop semester-plans to graduation. Students planning for transfer will be able to plan and map out their coursework before coming to campus. Also, the new Admissions portal website will provide all prospective students information tailored to their individual interests.

Finding information on our programs around campus is a particular challenge for students planning on transferring. UGST and UA have worked together to develop the Limited Enrollment website <http://www.lep.umd.edu/> which now contains in one place complete admissions requirements for the LEP programs. UA has also worked to provide at a single website a complete list of majors available. The list includes links and cross-references. For information on programs, UGST has also been working to promote campus support of ARTSYS <http://artweb.usmd.edu/>. In the recent year the UM pages on ARTSYS received over 350,000 "hits" from Maryland community college students. For many students ARTSYS is the "first place to look." This past spring and summer, UGST and UA worked closely with a host of offices on campus to develop the Transfer Student FAQ website <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/transfer/>. Transfer students can now in one place have basic questions answered and find out "which office to call" for follow-up. We expect the website to be popular with many students.

UA and UGST are taking a number of steps towards recruiting academically talented transfer students. In the past year the number of Transfer Academic Excellence Scholarships for Maryland community college transfer students was increased from three to twelve. This coming fall UA will organize the first "open house for academically talented transfer students." The open house will be the counterpart of the program for freshman. Over the past year UGST and UA have worked together to coordinate with the new Honors Academy at Prince George's Community College, see http://www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/honors/academy_story.htm.

Steps are also being taken related to the transfer process. In the late spring and early summer transfer counselors from local Maryland community colleges visited campus and participated in an Orientation. The transfer counselors learned about our campus and provided feedback on our Orientations. We are now implementing recommendations from the counselors. One recommendation concerns the deadline for transfer application. For summer 2006 the deadline will be June 1st instead of July 1st. The overall plan is to move the transfer timeline "back one month" and to have transfer students register earlier. And finally the Office of Institutional Research and Planning is involved in a cooperative data-project with local community colleges to track academic success in our 300-400 level courses. Course-performance data provides an important step towards understanding and analyzing academic progress.

We are looking forward to successful transfer at Maryland.

Sincerely,
Scott A. Wolpert
Associate Dean, UGST

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to bring together in one report relatively recent largely self-reported data on transfer issues, from various data sources. Sometimes more than one data source has been used to respond to the same issue. Each source is identified and a description can be found in the Appendix.

The classification “transfer student” in this report relies on the definition of both Undergraduate Admissions and the Transfer Credit Center at the University of Maryland: students who have a high school diploma and have completed at least 12 semester hours or quarterly hours during a regular term (excluding summer school) at a regionally accredited college or university. Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate credits are not considered factors in this definition.

It is hoped that this report will increase the amount and level of information about this large and heterogeneous subset of the undergraduate student body – transfer students at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Initial expectations and concerns. Concerns reported by the majority of new transfer students regardless of institution type included the academic requirements outside their major (50%), course availability (84%), and developing a course schedule that met their other obligations (71%). Transfers from 4 year institutions (76%) were significantly more likely than those from 2 year institutions (56%) to be concerned about the transferability of their courses completed at other institutions.

“Bouncers”. Transfer respondents who indicated they had transferred more than one time are for the purpose of this report considered to be bouncers. With few exceptions, bouncers were remarkably similar to non-bouncers in their expectations and attitudes at transfer student orientation. However, bouncers were more likely than non-bouncers to have transferred to UM in a spring semester, and to be concerned about transferability of courses completed elsewhere. Bouncers were less likely than non-bouncers to feel a strong connection with UM at the time of orientation.

Financial issues and concerns. Transfer students appear to have a more difficult time than direct admits meeting the expenses of a college degree. For both direct admits and transfer students, parents or other relatives are a major source of funding among upper level students. However, the proportion of direct admits who report that their family and/or scholarships are a major source of funding is significantly higher than for transfer students - particularly transfers from 2 year institutions. On the other hand, the proportion of transfers from 2 year institutions who are depending on a student loan is significantly higher than for direct admits.

Two-thirds of upper level transfer-ins reported having an off-campus job, with 2 year transfers most likely not only to be working off campus, but to be working more than 20 hours a week.

Only one-third of upper level direct admits reported they had an off-campus job; of those, ten percent worked more than 20 hours.

Academic quality. Persistent assumptions regarding the academic competency and/or the adequacy of the academic preparation of transfers have contributed to the stereotype of all transfer students as second rate students. Analyses by entry status of the academic performance of degree-seeking undergraduates at College Park who were sophomores or juniors in the spring of 2004 show that the transfer students as a group do not appear to be performing as well as the direct admits. When viewed by entry status, however, for both class levels, the 4-year transfers had significantly higher S'04 semester GPAs than did the 2-year transfers, perhaps reflecting different experiences in adjusting to UM depending on the previous institution. Although fewer in number, the UM system transfers appeared similar to the other 4-year transfers.

Learning outcomes. Upper level respondents were asked to assess their perceived level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to an undergraduate education. The self-perceptions of skills and abilities of transfers from 4-year institutions were more similar to those of direct admits than to those of transfers from 2-year institutions. Respondents' rankings - based on proportions for each skill/ability self-rated as "strong" were fairly similar across entry type, with the learning outcomes categorized as those pertaining to critical analysis and reasoning ranked in the top ten strongest abilities for all entry types.

Educational aspirations. Educational aspirations of upper level transfers from 4-year institutions most resembled those of upper level direct admits, although a slightly larger proportion of direct admits were undecided about their education aspirations. While over 60% of transfers from 2-year institutions reported they were aspiring to a degree beyond the bachelor's degree, they were more likely than students in the other entry statuses to plan to end their formal education with a baccalaureate degree.

Issues about majors. Interest in the subject matter was reported by both direct admits and transfers as what mattered most when considering a major. This was followed by the potential to lead to a good job. Nearly 90% of these respondents - who were at or beyond junior standing - reported they were in the major of their choice, regardless of entry status. Just over 70% of those in their major of choice - regardless of entry status - reported that their major "very much" fit their personal interests.

Career issues. About 60% of upper level transfers either were still considering career possibilities or had not yet begun to think about a future career area. One way to explore careers is to participate in an internship. More than 1 in 4 - regardless of entry status - were not sure how or where to find an internship.

Connections to campus. The vast majority of both direct admit and transfer upper level respondents acknowledged the importance of feeling connected to the campus community, and, to a lesser extent, reported satisfaction with feeling connected. However, this was truer for

direct admits than for transfer students. Four of the five most frequently identified obstacles to participation, regardless of entry status, involved a conflict with another obligation. The fifth involved not being well-informed of activities on campus. Among respondents who were not as socially involved as they wanted to be, transfer students were significantly more likely than direct admits to identify off campus employment as an obstacle to social engagement. Half of the upper level transfer respondents from 2 year institutions lived in their family home, a fact that has implications on their development of personal autonomy and independence as well as on the impact of family obligations on their time and attention. Further, over one-third of transfer students reported their daily commute to campus took over 30 minutes.

Completion rates. The graduation rate of fall 2002 transfers with fewer than 45 transferred credits (34%) was significantly lower than for those who had transferred between 45-60 credits (53%) or those with more than 60 transfer credits (55%). It is an encouraging sign that 40% of those with fewer than 45 transfer credits were still registered in Spring 2005. What is less encouraging, however, is that regardless of the number of credits transferred in fall 2002, over 1 in 4 transfer students were neither registered nor graduated by the end of Spring 2005.

Reasons why students leave during a semester. The proportion of respondents leaving UM during a semester who reported the grades they were anticipating or receiving contributed to their decision to withdraw was significantly higher for direct admits (74%) than for transfer students (51%). On the other hand 40% of transfers as opposed to 33% of direct admits indicated financial concerns contributed to their decision to leave during the semester. Among students who left during a semester, direct admits were significantly more likely than transfers to indicate the following were obstacles to their academic success: mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, or depression; feeling burnt out; poor time management skills; routinely missing class; poor study habits; disinterest in their course work; and the lack of clear career goals. Transfers were more likely than direct admits to indicate that a lack of fit between work and class schedules was an obstacle to academic success.

BACKGROUND FOR THE REPORT

Students transfer from one institution of higher education to another for a number of different reasons, most common among them to lower their overall tuition expenses, to graduate from a more prestigious institution than they might have been admitted to directly out of high school, and to test their ability to succeed in higher education first at the community college level. Recent focus groups conducted by another sub-group of the Campus Assessment Working Group have revealed additional reasons - a desire to be closer to home and family, academic opportunities, dissatisfaction with their previous location, and desirable school characteristics, as grounds for their transfer to UMCP. (Source: Transfer Student Experience Project.)

As is true of institutions across the nation, many policies that impact new transfer students -- such as articulation agreements with community colleges, the movement of credits between institutions, the agenda and timing of new transfer student orientation, the timing of new transfers' registration for courses, the availability to new transfers of on-campus housing and of financial aid -- have been in place for years, often developed at different times; often they don't fit well together. An important part of assessing the impact on new transfer students of a university's policies is hearing the perceptions of transfer students themselves about the direct and indirect impact of such policies on their experiences at their new institution.

The Office of Institutional Planning and Research (OIRP) maintains a data warehouse with institutional data from other offices, such as Personnel, Admissions, the Registrar, the Bursar, and Student Financial Aid. The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) has as its mission helping to establish a culture of evidence that can be used to support the goal of data-based decision-making at every level of the UM campus. As such, it collects and maintains a wealth of survey data from various subgroups of under-graduates on this campus. The purpose of this report is to bring together in one report relatively recent largely self-reported data on transfer issues, from various data sources, enhanced, at times, by institutional data. It is hoped that this report will increase the amount and level of information about this large and heterogeneous subset of the undergraduate student body – transfer students at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Definitions

The classification “transfer student” in this report relies on the definition of both Undergraduate Admissions and the Transfer Credit Center at the University of Maryland: students who have a high school diploma and have completed at least 12 semester hours or quarterly hours during a regular term (excluding summer school) at a regionally accredited college or university. Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate credits are not considered factors in this definition. Comparisons by entry status have been made where relevant and possible. Students admitted as first-time degree-seeking freshmen are referred to as direct admits; those transferring from two-year institutions are referred to as 2-year transfers; those from four-year institutions, as 4-year transfers.

As mentioned above, the report relies on data from a variety of sources. Sometimes more than one data source has been used to respond to the same issue. All tables make reference to the data source. A description of the different sources used in this report appears in Appendix II.

Note: any mention of statistical significance indicates that a relevant statistical hypothesis test was used to determine differences among groups of students.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF UM TRANSFER-INS

For the past few years, over half of the students transferring to the University of Maryland were at the sophomore level. The next largest class level of new transfer-ins was junior level, followed by freshman level. The number of senior level transfer-ins is small because to earn a baccalaureate degree from the University of Maryland, a minimum of 30 credits must be taken in residence. See Table 1.

Table 1. Class level of new transfers

	Fall 2002		Fall 2003		Fall 2004	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Freshmen	368	19	399	20	366	20
Sophomores	1035	53	1083	54	959	52
Juniors	502	25	474	24	479	26
Seniors	66	3	49	2	35	2
Total	1971		2005		1839	

Source: OIRP

An analysis of the demographics of the Fall 2004 incoming full-time degree-seeking cohort of transfer students shows that:

58% transferred from a 2-year institution
 33% transferred from a 4 year institution
 10% transferred from a UM system institution

68% were Maryland residents
 17% were out of state
 15% were from countries other than continental United States

49% were men
 51% were women

78% were under age 23 (as of June 2005)

- true for 81% of women
- true for 76% of men

Table 2 shows the distribution of race-citizenship and sex among the Fall 2004 transfer cohort, by the type of institution transferred from.

Table 2. Race-citizenship and Sex: Percentage Distribution, Fall 2004

	Percent of 2-yr. transfers	Percent of 4-yr. transfers	Percent of UM system transfers	Percent all transfers
Race-Citizenship				
White:US	51.6	58.6	50.7	54.9
Black	12.5	15.0	18.0	13.6
“Unknown”: US	11.1	9.9	9.3	11.4
Asian:US	11.4	7.7	13.3	11.3
Hispanic:US	7.3	4.8	3.3	6.5
International	5.4	3.8	5.3	5.8
American Indian	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.6
Sex				
Women	50.2	56.2	42.7	52.3
Men	49.8	43.8	57.3	47.7

Sources: Transfers – UM data warehouse; All undergraduates – OIRP

INITIAL EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS

A quarter of a century ago, the literature suggested that community college transfer students, when compared with direct admits, self-reported as having relatively lower self-confidence socially and academically, lower academic ability and motivation, and lower aspirations to education beyond the baccalaureate degree. Much of the continuing stereotype of a generic transfer student is related to these old data. Newer data do not reflect these older data.

New transfer students who attended orientation sessions at UM between Spring semester 2000 and Fall semester 2001 completed the Transfer Student Survey (TSS) that was designed to obtain information about their expectations and concerns concerning UM, their past experiences, and their assessment of their academic preparation for UM. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents came from a 2 year institution and 43% from another 4 year institution. For 76% of the respondents, the transfer to UM was the first institution they had transferred to. For 85%, UM was their first choice of transfer institution when they decided to transfer.

There were no differences by institution type in the proportion of new transfers who were concerned about the academic requirements outside their major (50% overall) or about course availability (84% overall), or with developing a course schedule that met their other obligations (71% overall). On the other hand, transfers from 4 year institutions were significantly more likely (72%) than those from 2 year institutions (56%) to be concerned about the transferability of their courses completed at another institution.

Overall, 88% of the respondents felt they were adequately prepared for the academic demands at UM. About half were concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment. This did not differ significantly by institution type; nor did the proportions who felt adequately prepared for the demands related to writing (75% overall) and math (57% overall) they would have in their coursework. However, transfers from 2 year institutions were significantly more likely (46%) than those from 4 year institutions (36%) to consider seeking study skills training at UM. See Table 3.

Table 3. Academic preparation issues, sorted in descending order by percent

Percent who agreed/strongly agreed that:	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
I feel adequately prepared for the academic demands at UM	87	89
I feel adequately prepared for the writing demands that I will have in my coursework	74	77
I feel adequately prepared for the math demands that I will have in my coursework	57	56
I am concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment	51	47
I would consider seeking study skills training at UM	46	36
I expect to have a hard time adjusting to the academic work of UM	21	13

Source: TSS

There were significant differences, based on type of institution being transferred from, on what transfer respondents would most likely have done if they had not been accepted to UM. However, regardless of institution type, the vast majority of transfers wanted to continue their education, either at their former institution or at yet another institution. Fewer than 5% reported they would get a job if they hadn't been accepted to UM. See Table 4.

Table 4. Plans if not accepted by UM

“If you were not accepted to UM what would you most likely have done?”	Percent of 2-yr. transfers	Percent of 4-yr. transfers
Percent who said that they would:		
Continue to take classes at my former institution	21	44
Transfer to another institution	58	40
Reapply to UM	18	13
Get a job	4	3

Source: TSS

“BOUNCERS”

It is becoming increasingly evident that the student transfer process is not always the one-way linear pattern often assumed. The literature has noted sufficient evidence of increasingly complex patterns of student attendance to have caused terms such as bouncers, swirling, and double-dipping to be used to describe these non-linear patterns of transfer. (See, for example, A. C. McCormick, Swirling and double-dipping: New patterns of student attendance and their

implications for higher education, *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 121, Spring 2003, p. 13-24.)

New transfers taking the Transfer Student Survey during transfer orientation in Spring 2000, Fall 2000, Spring 2001 or Fall 2001 were asked how many times they had transferred between colleges or universities, including the transfer to UM. For the purpose of this report those who indicated they had transferred more than one time are considered to be bouncers. Survey responses of bouncers (n=593, 24%) and non-bouncers (n=1862, 76%) were analyzed to see if there existed any significant differences in the concerns and interests between the two subgroups.

In general, bouncers were remarkably similar to non-bouncers. However, bouncers were significantly more likely than non-bouncers to have transferred to UM in a spring semester and to be concerned about transferability of courses completed elsewhere. Bouncers were significantly less likely than non-bouncers to have felt a strong connection with UM at the time of orientation. See Table 5.

Table 5. Transfer student “bouncers” compared with non-bouncers

	Percent of Non-bouncers	Percent of Bouncers
In state	79	79
Entered UM in the spring semester	34	41
Strongly agree/Agree that they are concerned about:		
ability to finance their college education	51	52
developing a course schedule that meets other obligations	70	72
course availability	83	86
transferability of courses completed elsewhere	60	71
Strongly agree/Agree that they would be interested in:		
working with a faculty member on a research project	58	63
joining campus organizations	68	61
interacting with faculty outside of class	64	63
Felt a strong sense of connection with UM	55	46
UM was first choice, at time of transfer decision	86	84
Father earned at least a bachelors degree	56	54
Mother earned at least a bachelors degree	48	43

Source: TSS

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Traditionally, transfer students don't qualify for the same amount or type of financial aid as direct admits. Further, transfer students may have already incurred some debt from the costs of attending their previous institution. Institutional records can shed light both on the number of students who receive financial aid, and on the amount of their unmet need. Self-reported data can flesh out the picture.

Financial difficulties

According to self-report from upper level students, transfer students have a more difficult time than direct admits meeting the expenses of a college degree. Data suggest that approximately one in four transfer students – regardless of institution type - find it very difficult to cover tuition and the costs of books and supplies, as opposed to about 15% of direct admits. See Table 6.

Table 6. Financial difficulties

Percent who said it has been “very difficult” to cover:	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
tuition	13	27	26
books and supplies	16	24	24
personal expenses	13	18	17
rent/food	15	18	17
transportation	8	10	9

Source: UMSS'03

Major sources of funding

For both direct admits and transfer students, parents or other relatives are a major source of funding among upper level students. However, the proportion of direct admits who report that their family is a major source of funding is significantly higher (75%) than for transfer students, particularly transfers from 2 year institutions (49%). This is true as well of the proportions relying on scholarship money, although the overall percent doing so is far lower than the overall percent relying for funds from parents/ relatives. On the other hand, the proportion depending on a student loan is significantly lower for direct admits (31%) and for 4-year transfers (26%) than for transfers from 2 year institutions (46%). See Table 7.

Table 7. Major sources of funding

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Parents/relatives	75	49	66
Scholarship(s)	32	15	13
Educational grant(s)	20	30	14
Current job	14	30	32
Summer employment	22	30	30
Student loan(s)	31	46	26
Bank loan(s)	6	5	6
Personal credit card(s)	5	13	4

Source:UMSS'03

Employment

There is no systematic way in place to ascertain the number of students – direct admits or transfer-ins – who work off campus during a given semester, or the number of hours employed for those who are employed off campus. Self-report, as captured by questionnaire responses, is helpful in the effort to understand the financial picture of direct admits and transfer-ins.

Slightly over one-third of direct admits reported they have an off-campus job. Ten percent worked more than 20 hours. In contrast, slightly less than two-thirds of transfer-ins have an off-campus job, with 2 year transfers most likely not only to be working off campus, but to be working more than 20 hours a week. See Table 8.

Table 8. Off campus employment

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
None	62	31	39
Up to 20 hours per week	28	37	38
Over 20 hours per week	10	32	22

Source: UMSS'03

Major reasons for employment

Regardless of entry type, “personal expenses” was the most identified major reason among upper level respondents for working while in school. This is distinct from earning extra spending money. Transfer-ins were significantly more likely than direct admits to be working to pay for college expenses. See Table 9.

Table 9. Major reasons for employment (of those who were employed)

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Pay for college expenses	27	54	41
Personal expenses	75	83	82
Contribute to family income	4	21	16
Earn extra spending money	59	48	53
Gain general work experience	44	32	41
Gain work experience related to future career	35	28	28

Source: UMSS'03

ACADEMIC QUALITY

It can be misleading to compare the GPAs of direct admits with those of transfer students, for many reasons, among which is that the diversity in length of time at UM is much greater for transfers than for direct admits. Direct admits are further away from their initial semesters than transfers.

Table 10 summarizes the academic performance for those with Sophomore and Junior status as of Spring 2004, regardless of when they matriculated. "Direct admits" here are those with an entry status of "Freshman." Transfers whose semester of matriculation was either Spring 2004 or the winter-mester just before Spring 2004 were excluded from the analyses for Table 10.

The transfer students do not appear to be performing as well as the direct admits. However, for both class levels, the 4-year transfers have significantly higher semester GPAs than do the 2-year transfers, and lower percents ending the Spring 2005 with some academic action. This perhaps reflects different experiences in adjusting to UM depending on the previous institution. Although fewer in number, the UM system transfers appear similar to the other 4-year transfers.

Persistent assumptions regarding the academic competency and/or the adequacy of the academic preparation of transfers have contributed to the stereotype of all transfer students as second rate students. The figures in Table 10 suggest that to consider transfer students as a single category and not by type of institution transferred from blurs some issues.

Table 10. Academic Quality Indicators for Sophomores and Juniors in Spring 2004

	Direct admits ^a	2-yr transfers	4-yr transfers	UM system transfers	All transfers combined
Class Standing:^b Sophomore					
Number	3735	285	281	80	646
Spring 2004 semester GPA:					
at the 75%-tile	3.56	3.00	3.19	3.11	3.00
at the median	3.14	2.31	2.69	2.57	2.50
at the 25%-tile	2.62	1.67	2.00	2.00	1.84
Academic Action:					
None	96.0%	76.5%	80.8%	82.5%	79.1%
Probation	2.8%	11.6%	11.4%	8.8%	11.1%
Dismissal	1.3%	11.9%	7.8%	8.8%	9.8%
Class Standing: Junior					
Number	3759	1083	538	147	1768
Spring 2004 semester GPA:					
at the 75%-tile	3.65	3.25	3.46	3.31	3.31
at the median	3.20	2.70	3.00	2.80	2.77
at the 25%-tile	2.71	2.17	2.40	2.20	2.25
Academic Action:					
None	98.0%	86.8%	94.1%	91.2%	89.4%
Probation	0.9%	7.0%	2.6%	4.8%	5.5%
Dismissal	1.1%	6.2%	3.4%	4.1%	5.2%

Source: Data Warehouse

^a Direct admits consists of those with Entry Status "Freshman."^b Class standing as of Spring 2004

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order to assess the progress with which the University is meeting its goal of elevating the quality of undergraduate education, upper level respondents were asked to assess their level of competence in 19 skills/abilities considered critical to an undergraduate education. These 19 skills/abilities can be categorized in one of five categories:

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

Table 11 shows the percents of those who rated a given ability as "strong" (as opposed to "adequate" or "weak"). It also shows the top ten rankings (1= highest proportion) by entry type, based on the percent who rated an ability as strong.

Table 11. Nineteen Skills and Abilities: student self-assessment as “Strong”

Skill/Ability	Type ^a	Direct admits		2-yr. transfers		4-yr. transfers	
		% Strong	Rank	% Strong	Rank	% Strong	Rank
Using electronic information resources (e.g., Internet, databases, e-journals)	TC	72%	1	69%	1	63%	3
Seeing relationships, similarities and differences among ideas	CAR	67%	2	59%	2	67%	2
Applying what you learn to other situations	CAR	66%	3	58%	3	73%	1
Using information responsibly	IL	62%	4	49%	6	59%	5
Revising your thinking based on new information	CAR	58%	5.5	51%	5	50%	8
Listening effectively	WOC	58%	5.5	43%	8	56%	6
Interpreting graphs, tables, and/or formulas correctly	SQR	57%	7	42%	9	45%	10
Finding information that you need	IL	55%	8.5	47%	7	53%	7
Understanding diverse cultural, political and intellectual views	CAR	55%	8.5	52%	4	60%	4
Using quantitative methods to solve problems	SQR	46%	10	32%		34%	
Evaluating the reliability of information	IL	45%		32%		46%	9
Presenting a persuasive argument	WOC	44%		29%		32%	
Recognizing appropriate uses of mathematical and statistical methods	SQR	43%		32%		25%	
Writing effectively	WOC	42%		31%		41%	
Speaking effectively	WOC	40%		36%	10	40%	
Producing visual displays of information	TC	40%		31%		38%	
Using a spreadsheet to perform data analyses	TC	33%		25%		20%	
Understanding various research designs and approaches	SQR	33%		24%		26%	
Framing a research question	IL	31%		24%		38%	

^aType of Skill/Ability:

- CAR: Critical Analysis & Reasoning
- IL: Information Literacy
- SQR: Scientific & Quantitative Reasoning
- TC: Technical Competence
- WOC: Written & Oral Communication

Source: UMSS 2004

Among the respondents represented by Table 11, 814 were direct admits, 171 were transfers from a two-year institution, and 94 were transfers from a four-year institution.

The percents in Table 11 suggest that persistent assumptions regarding lower academic competency and/or the inadequate academic preparation of transfer students more accurately describe the self-perceptions of transfers from 2-year institutions than those from 4-year institutions.

Respondents' rankings were fairly similar across entry type, with the learning outcomes pertaining to critical analysis and reasoning ranked in the top ten strongest abilities by all entry types.

When viewing Table 11, it is important to take these self-ratings for what they are – measures of perceived ability – and not as assessments of actual competency. Respondents may provide an inflated ability rating if they do not want to admit true feelings of inadequacy for that skill. In attempts to reduce such inaccuracies, the directions of the UMSS'04 informed students that their responses will be treated as confidential, and only summarized results will be reported to campus departments and/or staff. An overestimate of abilities may also result when respondents perceive their skills as adequate for their situation, even though their ability may actually be limited in circumstances that require higher levels of functioning.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Self-reports from new first-time freshmen (e.g., the Counseling Center's University New Student Census, CAWG's Beginning Students Survey) concerning the highest degree planned consistently show that the majority plan to earn a degree beyond the bachelor's degree. Similar knowledge of the degree aspirations of upper level students may be less familiar. Table 12 shows the self-reported degree aspirations of upper level students in the Spring of 2003, by entry type. Aspirations of upper level transfers from 4-year institutions most resembled those of upper level direct admits. Transfers from two-year institutions were most likely entry type to plan to end their formal education with a bachelor's degree (20%), although over 60% planned to earn a degree beyond the bachelors degree.

Table 12. Highest degree planned

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Undecided	19	16	15
Bachelors	12	20	11
Masters	40	38	41
Doctoral or related	29	25	32

Source: UMSS'03

ISSUES ABOUT MAJORS

In the Spring of 2004 the University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS) devoted several questions to issues related to students' area of concentration. Reviewing the responses of these upper level respondents allows us to identify several issues they presented related to majors.

"What mattered most to you when considering a major?"

The response to the question "What mattered most to you when considering a major" most frequently selected by both transfers and direct admits- was "interest in the subject." This was followed by "potential to lead to a good job."

Upper level respondents in the major of their choice

Nearly 90% of these respondents - who were at or beyond junior standing - reported they were in the major of their choice, regardless of entry status. Table 13 reflects the responses only of those respondents who reported that they were in their major of choice. Among them, about half of the direct admits and two-year transfers reported they had never officially changed their major, while that was true for 38% of transfers from 4 year institutions. It should be noted that over 70% of those in their major of choice – regardless of entry status - reported that their major "very much" fit their personal interests.

Table 13. Issues about major among those in their major of choice

	Percent of direct admits N=722	Percent of 2 yr. transfers N=142	Percent of 4 yr. transfers N=81
How many times have you officially changed your major?			
Never	49	50	38
Once	40	32	46
More than once	11	18	16
Felt their major fit their personal interests "very much"	74	72	73
Had more than one major	19	13	10
Planned to have more than one major	6	16	14

Source: UMSS'04

Approximately one-quarter of those who were in the major of their choice reported they either had or planned to have more than one major. Interest in the subject matter was the main reason given for doing so or planning to do so, followed by the desire to make themselves more marketable to potential employers, and to build skills for their intended career.

Upper level respondents not in the major of their choice

Those students who reported that they were not in their major of choice were asked why not. The most frequent response for direct admits was “too late in my collegiate career to change to my first choice.” Among transfers the most frequent response was that their first choice of major was a limited enrollment program (LEP). The number of respondents who indicated that their first choice of major was an LEP and they were not in it is low, as can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14. Limited Enrollment Plan Issues, among those not in major of choice

If your first choice was an LEP and you are not in it, which is <u>most</u> true:	Number of direct admits	Number of 2 yr. transfers	Number of 4 yr. transfers
I was not admitted initially and am working toward being admitted	4	3	1
I was not admitted initially and am no longer pursuing admission	10	10	4
I decided after getting to UM to pursue LEP; am working toward being admitted	4	1	1
I developed an interest in an LEP after getting to UM but am not now pursuing it	11	1	3
I was in the LEP but was required to leave	4	3	0
Total counts	33	18	9

Source: UMSS'04

CAREER ISSUES

Upper level students in Professional Writing courses were asked about their status regarding their future career. Regardless of entry status, about 38% of respondents had either known since high school what their future career would be, or had decided on a career area after considering various possibilities; about 56% were still considering possibilities; and about 5% had not yet begun to think about a future career area.

One way to explore careers is to participate in an internship. Direct admits (31%) were much more likely than either 2 year transfers (13%) or 4 year transfers (18%) to have participated in an internship. Table 15 describes some of the reasons for not having participated in an internship. Fewer than 5% overall said they had no interest in participating in an internship. It should be noted that more than 1 in 4 – regardless of entry status – were not sure how or where to find an internship.

Table 15. Barriers to participation in an internship

The following prevented participation in an internship:	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2-yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
<i>“Check all that apply”</i>			
I have to concentrate on my grades	34	29	30
I have to work when not studying or in class	22	36	30
I have lots of extra-curricular activities that leave little time	18	7	13
I have no interest in participating in an internship	5	3	4
I haven't found an internship that appeals to me	24	18	17
I'm not sure how/where to find an internship	26	29	27
“Other” reason(s)	18	14	16

Source: UMSS'04

CONNECTIONS TO CAMPUS: participation and obstacles

When a college graduate thinks about the “typical” college experience, a strong connection to campus is usually a part of it. Whether it involves membership in a fraternity or sorority or in a campus club or organization, attendance at the school’s athletic or at cultural activities, or engaging in an academic society, the typical notion of college life involves being engaged outside the classroom.

Such a “typical” experience, however, is often difficult to achieve these days. Work, family responsibilities, onerous commutes, social anxiety, and other obstacles can make it difficult truly to feel a connection to the institution. The university starts early to foster these connections, beginning with summer orientation, where groups of students learn about the campus and register for their classes together. In the first semester, many of these same students engage in further orientation activities through small one-credit classes. Again, the purpose is to help students feel a part of the institution.

This scenario is designed for students who matriculate in the Fall semester of their freshman year, usually directly out of high school. For transfer students, there is often a much more limited orientation to campus - or no real orientation at all. In addition, the formal and informal networks that direct admits create from the time they enter college often have already been established when transfer students arrive. Breaking in to these systems can often be a challenge.

As such, it is important to begin to get a picture of the transfer student’s experience with connecting to campus, and how it differs from that of direct admits. Self-reported data from upper level students, analyzed by entry status, reveal patterns of interest. The nature of these patterns is presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Connections to campus

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
It's important to feel connected to the campus community	93	83	86
They're satisfied with feeling connected to the campus community	85	77	77

Source: UMSS'03

The vast majority of both direct admits and transfers acknowledged the importance of feeling connected to the campus community, and, to a lesser extent, reported satisfaction with feeling connected. However, this was truer for direct admits than for transfer students.

Contributors to feeling connected to campus

In Spring 2004, upper level respondents were asked to what extent each of several factors helped them feel connected to the UM campus. Nearly 80% of direct admits and nearly 60% of transfers reported that "activities on campus" contributed to feeling connected. Table 17 gives an idea of what type of activities on campus they reported they were most likely to participate in. In almost every case, direct admits were most likely and 2 year transfers were least likely to report participation in a given activity.

Table 17. Participation in campus activities

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Intercollegiate athletics (as athlete or fan)	76	52	58
Academic/departmental/major group	68	52	63
Other student group or organization	61	44	52
Intramural/club sports	48	20	37
Campus ethnic or cultural organization	23	15	15
Campus religious group	25	12	15
Greek organization	24	9	12

Source: UMSS'04

Obstacles to participation

At least part of transfer students' lower degree of connection to the campus can be explained by their responses to a question about factors that prevented their participation in campus activities. Four of the most frequently identified obstacles to participation, regardless of entry status, involved conflicts with other obligations, such as off-campus activities, work responsibilities, and classes. Overall, 70% reported not being well-informed of activities on campus. Nearly half (47%) of the 2 year transfers said their family responsibilities were an obstacle to participation.

Table 18. Obstacles to participation

<i>“Check all that apply”</i>	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Involved in activities off campus	64	80	73
Work responsibilities conflict	70	78	78
Events/meetings not scheduled at convenient times for you	69	74	71
Classes conflict	72	71	72
Not well-informed of activities on campus	70	70	74
Available activities are not interesting to me	62	58	64
Live too far away to come back for events	23	55	41
Your family responsibilities	29	47	24
Don't feel safe on campus	24	33	25
Don't want to be involved	38	28	40
Don't feel welcome	18	16	23

Source: UMSS'04

Social involvement and housing issues

Integration into the campus community has customarily been seen as a critical component of student development. On a large campus such as UM, there are many sub-communities, among them residence halls. Living on campus or in housing affiliated with the campus has traditionally been considered beneficial for students.

There is a large discrepancy between the proportion of upper level direct admits and upper level transfer students who live on campus, in Courtyard or Commons housing, or in Greek housing. In the spring of 2003, nearly two-thirds of our upper level respondents who had entered the university as direct admits lived in University affiliated housing, while 17% of 4 year transfers and only 6% of 2 year transfers did so.

It is important to note that, as seen in Table 19, half of the transfers from 2 year institutions lived in their family home, a fact that has implications on their development of personal autonomy and independence as well as on the impact of family obligations on their time and attention.

Table 19. Current residence

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of 2 yr. transfers	Percent of 4 yr. transfers
Residence hall, Commons, Courtyard, Greek housing	65	6	17
Family's home	11	51	26
Other off-campus housing	24	42	57

Source: UMSS'03

Over one-third (36%) of transfer students reported their daily commute to campus took over 30 minutes - time taken away from studies or the opportunity for co-curricular participation, both of which are important aspects of integration in the intellectual and social life of the university. Just over one quarter (26%) of the spring 2003 respondents reported that their commute was somewhat or very likely to get in the way of their completing their degree.

COMPLETION RATES

Status in Fall 2004 of new transfers in Fall 2002

One of the common assumptions concerning transfer students has been that they are less apt than direct admits to complete their degrees. Given the heterogeneity of credit levels of a new cohort of full-time degree-seeking transfer students, as compared to a cohort of first-time full-time degree-seeking freshmen, this assumption has not been simple to prove or disprove.

Table 20 is based on data from the cohort of first-time full-time degree-seeking students who transferred to UM in the Fall of 2002. Because transfer students bring with them differing numbers of acceptable credits, we divided the cohort into three groups based on the number of credits transferred at the time of their matriculation at UM, and then analyzed their enrollment status as of the end of Spring 2005 - six semesters after their transfer to UM. Forty-six percent had transferred fewer than 45 credits; 34% had transferred between 45 – 60 credits; and 20% had transferred more than 60 credits.

As one might expect, the graduation rate of transfers with fewer than 45 transferred credits (34%) was significantly lower than for those who had transferred between 45-60 credits (53%) or those with more than 60 transferred credits (55%). It is an encouraging sign that 40% of those with fewer than 45 transferred credits were still registered in the Spring of 2005. What is less encouraging, however, is the percent of transfers who regardless of the number of their transfer credits in the Fall of 2002, who were neither registered nor graduated by the end of Spring 2005.

Table 20. Enrollment status as of end of Spring 2005 of new Fall 2002 transfer-ins

	Number of transferred credits		
	Fewer than 45	45-60	More than 60
Graduated	34%	53%	55%
Registered	40%	19%	14%
Not registered	26%	28%	31%

Source: UM data warehouse

REASONS WHY STUDENTS LEAVE DURING A SEMESTER

Students who withdraw during a semester are an important subset of the student body. In order to increase our understanding of the reasons behind undergraduate students' decision to depart from the university during the semester, departing students are asked to complete the Withdrawal Survey. This is a locally crafted questionnaire based on the common themes

identified in the attrition literature as being related to student departure. These themes include academic field of study, perceived barriers to academic success, financial concerns, employment issues, fulfillment of math requirement for graduation, family crisis or personal emergency, and anticipated or received grades.

Table 21, based on withdrawal surveys from Fall '03, Spring '04, and Fall '04, shows the proportion of students withdrawing during a semester who felt that a given reason contributed to their decision. Because there were no statistically significant differences in responses between transfer students based on type of institution transferred from, the table compares direct admits with transfer students.

The proportion of students who reported the grades they were anticipating or receiving contributed to their decision to withdraw was significantly higher for direct admits (74%) than for transfer students (51%). More confirming of a commonly held belief is the difference in the proportion of transfers (40%) as opposed to direct admits (33%) who indicated that financial concerns contributed to their decision to leave during the semester, although the difference, though statistically significant, is not as large as might be expected. See Table 21.

Table 21. Reasons for leaving during a semester, by entry status

“Check all that apply”	Percent of direct admits	Percent of transfers
Grades you were anticipating or receiving	74	51
Financial concerns	33	40
Family obligations	56	62
Issues about major	33	30
The absence of someone with whom you felt you could "really talk"	20	19
Math requirement (of those who hadn't yet satisfied it)	22	22

Source: Withdrawal Surveys, Fall '03, Spring '04, and Fall '04

Social involvement issues among student s who withdraw from UM during a semester

One of the topics addressed in the Withdrawal Survey is social involvement, and, of those who were not as socially involved on campus as they wanted, what the perceived obstacles were. Half of the students who withdrew from UM during a semester between Fall 2003 and Fall 2004 indicated they were not as involved as they wanted to be, and there were no differences by entry type in the proportion who so indicated. However, among those who were not as socially involved as they wanted to be, there were significant differences in their perception of what got in the way of on-campus social involvement. Transfer students – from both two- year (55%) and four-year (51%) institutions- were significantly more likely than direct admits (38%) to identify off campus employment as an obstacle to social engagement. On the other hand, direct admits (50%) were significantly more likely than transfers (31% for two-year transfers and 38% for four-year transfers) to report that their feeling of being isolated from or unconnected with others on campus got in the way of becoming socially involved on campus.

Withdrawing students were asked which in a list of common barriers to academic success, if any, were true for them during the time leading up to their departure from UM. Table 22 shows the proportion of direct admits and transfers who perceived a given common barrier as true for them. Again, transfer types were collapsed into one category because there were no statistically significant differences between them.

Direct admits were significantly more likely than transfers to indicate the following barriers: mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, or depression, or feeling burnt out; illness; poor time management skills; routinely missing class; poor study habits; disinterest in their course work; and the lack of clear career goals. On the other hand, transfers were more likely than direct admits to indicate a lack of fit between work and class schedules as an obstacle to academic success. See Table 22.

Table 22. Withdrawing students' perceived barriers to academic success

<i>"Check all that apply"</i>	Percent of direct admits	Percent of transfers
Felt a lot of stress, anxiety, depression	70	53
Felt burnt out	46	36
Had poor time management skills	40	19
Routinely missed class	40	20
Illness	36	24
Not interested in my course work	32	19
Poor study habits	32	14
Lacked clear career goals	28	17
Work/ class schedules didn't mesh	23	30

Source: Withdrawal Surveys, Fall '03, Spring '04, and Fall '04

Primary reason behind their reason to leave

Withdrawing students typically indicated that more than one issue contributed to their decision to leave UM during a semester. In order to get a better idea of the power of these issues in their thinking, students were asked what the primary reason was behind their decision to withdraw. Direct admits were more likely than transfers to indicate mental health issues, and transfers were more likely than transfers to indicate financial/employment issues, as their primary reason. See Table 23.

Table 23. Primary reason behind the decision to leave

	Percent of direct admits	Percent of transfers
Financial and/or employment issues	13	22
Health issues	16	16
Family issues	12	16
Personal issues	13	14
Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, burnout	17	8
Grades	10	6
Issues with major	9	6
Institutional issues	3	6
Lack of effort, focus, direction	5	4
Other	2	2

Source: Withdrawal Surveys, Fall '03, Spring '04, and Fall '04

At the time of withdrawal, the vast majority of students - regardless of entry status - reported they planned to return to UM to complete their baccalaureate degree (83%). As can be seen in Table 24, an analysis of the students who both withdrew from UM during the Fall 2003 semester and reported on the Withdrawal Survey that they planned to graduate from UM shows that only about one-third registered for Fall 2004, with little difference between direct admits and transfers. However, the proportion of direct admits who were registered or graduated dropped from 36% in Fall '04 to 25% in Spring '05, while that of transfers rose slightly from 34% in Fall '04 to 36% in Spring '05.

Among students who withdrew during the Spring 2004 semester and who reported that they planned to graduate from UM, 46% of direct admits and 36% of transfers registered for Fall 2004. The proportion of each entry status group who registered or graduated by the end of the Spring 2005 semester dropped only slightly. See Table 24.

Table 24. Registration/graduation rates of respondents who withdrew during F'03 or S'04

Registered or graduated in:	Withdrew during Fall 2003		Withdrew during Spring 2004	
	Direct admits	Transfers	Direct Admits	Transfers
Fall 2004	36%	34%	46%	36%
Spring 2005	25%	36%	43%	32%

Source: Withdrawal Surveys, Fall '03; Data Warehouse

LIMITATIONS OF THIS REPORT

It is important to note that in order to connect students' responses to their entry status (i.e., direct admit, 2-year transfer, 4-year transfer) their UID or UMID was needed. Respondents were asked to include either their UID or their UMID. Despite assuring respondents that no individual results would be reported, a notable proportion of respondents opted not to provide

an ID number with their survey. As a result, these respondents could not be classified by entry status, and their responses were excluded from comparison data analyses.

This report relies largely on self-report data as a way to flesh out the profiles of transfer students provided by institutional records and focus groups. Although self-report 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. Respondents can overestimate or underestimate their abilities or concerns when self-report is the data collection method utilized.

Knowledge about the learning outcomes of students is becoming an institutional imperative. However, because it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the abilities of transfer students as compared to direct admits based on the limited self-report data in this report, further investigation into similar ability ratings may be cause for future research. Supplementing the self-report data with institutional records may further reveal trends or patterns in the skills and abilities of transfer students as compared to direct admits.

NEXT STEPS

Best practices' at other 4 year institutions

The transfer student phenomenon is an important part of higher education, generally benefiting both the transferring student and the institution being transferred to (in terms of enrollment management goals). Since it is a national phenomenon, perhaps we can gather ideas from the best practices of other four year institutions. (See, for example, *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 121, Spring 2003.)

- One credit courses available to students of all credit levels on personal finances, financial management strategies
- Increase students' awareness of the long-term costs of counterproductive choices such as attending college part-time and working full-time, attending college fulltime and working fulltime
- Advising workshops that include both academic and financial aid advisors
- Institutional funding policies that integrate institutional support, tuition, and financial aid for transfer students
- Improved, easily accessible, and made-known online resources for information helpful to transfer students
- The systematic collection- and use - of data to monitor the transfer student experience

APPENDICES

I. BACKGROUND OF THE CAMPUS ASSESSMENT WORKING GROUP (CAWG)

The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) was formed in 1996 because at that time the university lacked a campus-wide system for coordinating the collection, analysis, and utilization of customer-driven data. CAWG took as its mission helping to establish a culture of evidence that could be used to support the goal of data-based decision-making at every level of the UM campus.

One of the subgroups of CAWG is the Retention subgroup. Its mission is to delve behind numbers to try to determine factors that are related to undergraduate student success and those that seem to contribute to student departure before having earned the baccalaureate degree. While the other subgroups of CAWG collect their own data, the Retention subgroup typically uses existing data from a variety of sources. The members of the CAWG Retention subgroup who worked on the project reflected by this report are:

Michelle Appel, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Sarah Bauder, Office of Student Financial Aid
John Bowman, Division of letters and Sciences
Daniel A. Cronin, Department of Communication
Chip Denman, Office of Information Technology
Patricia Hunt, Chair, Counseling Center, Student Affairs
Jonathan Kandell, Counseling Center
Jessica Mislevy, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Sean Simone, Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Robert E. Waters, Academic Affairs and Provost

II. SOURCES OF DATA USED IN THIS REPORT

Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP)

Online profiles
Data warehouse

The Transfer Student Experience Project

The Beginnings subgroup of CAWG conducted a project focused on the experiences of transfer students at UMCP. After inviting a random sample of transfer students, 36 self-selected participants attended a series of four focus groups. Students were asked to comment on a variety of transition issues. These topics included, but were not limited to, housing, social issues, credit transfer, advising, and academic transition. A report of findings will be available during the Fall 2005 semester. Interested parties should seek additional information or an online version of the report from the CAWG website (<http://www.oirp.umd.edu/CAWG/>).

Transfer Student Survey (TSS)

The Transfer Student Survey was given to new transfer students at their orientation, in Spring 2000 through Fall 2001. A total of 2468 new transfer-ins completed the questionnaire.

Type of school transferred from	Number	Percent
2 year college	1412	57
4 year college or university	1056	43
Total	2468	

University of Maryland Student Survey (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. The UMSS is 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. With each iteration of the questionnaire, some items are maintained while new items are considered, in order to reflect campus interests and needs.

In Spring 2003, students returned 1669 usable surveys, all but 445 of which had U-IDs for access to institutional records. In Spring 2004, students returned 1657 usable surveys, all but 541 of which had U-IDs for access to institutional records. The table below shows the entry status of the respondents who gave a valid U-ID.

Year of survey	Direct admits	2 yr. Transfers	4 yr. Transfers	Transfers from UM campus	Total
Spring 2003	805 (66%)	258 (21%)	120 (10%)	41 (3%)	1224
Spring 2004	814 (73%)	171 (15%)	94 (8%)	37 (3%)	1116

The Withdrawal Survey

Students who withdraw during a semester are asked to complete a withdrawal survey as part of the withdrawal process. A total of 725 usable surveys were collected during the Fall 2003, Spring 2004, and Fall 2004 semesters. Withdrawing graduate students or non-degree-seekers, students who withdrew immediately before or after a semester, and those who were academically dismissed were not included in this report.

	Direct admits	2 yr. Transfers	4 yr. Transfers	Transfers from UM campus	Total
Number	367	230	98	30	725
Percent	51%	32%	14%	4%	