

# SNAPSHOT

CAWG

of  
Student Experiences

## Parental Involvement

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
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This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot is based on a survey conducted each fall. The Beginnings subgroup administers the Beginning Student Survey (BSS) to freshmen 8 weeks into their first semester courses, such as ENGL 101 and UNIV 100, among others. For the BSS09, out of 4202 first-time, full-time freshmen, 2100 (50%) completed the survey. Sixty-one percent of respondents were White; 19% were Asian/Pacific Islander; 9% were Black/African American; 6% were Hispanic; 4% were Unknown and less than 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native. The data below represent responses of survey respondents, not all Maryland freshman students; therefore, use caution when generalizing.

### Highlights:

- Over 85% of students agreed that their parents have emphasized the importance of obtaining a college degree and have communicated their expectations for their student's academic performance at UM.
- Nearly three-fourths of respondents reported that their parent(s)/guardian(s) would never contact a campus official to resolve a problem at college if the respondent did not ask them to.
- No differences were found by sex and no trends emerged by racial group; however, significant differences were found for first-generation college students.

## What Do Students Discuss with Their Parents?

Table 1

Since coming to UM, how often do you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) typically discuss:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Physical and emotional well-being	25%	56%	11%	8%
Academics	20%	69%	9%	2%
Social life	19%	61%	14%	6%
Involvement (e.g. organizations, sports, jobs, internships)	11%	57%	20%	11%
Future (e.g. career, graduate school, future planning)	6%	35%	46%	13%
Finances	3%	25%	43%	29%

Note: Some rows may not add to 100% due to rounding.

- Eighty to ninety percent of respondents reported discussing their academics, social life, and physical/emotional well-being with their parent(s)/guardian(s) weekly or daily.
- Over 60% of students discussed their involvement weekly or daily.
- Conversely, less than half of students discussed their finances and future with their parent(s)/guardian(s) weekly or daily.

## Significant Differences by Demographics \* (Table 1)

- ◆ **First-generation college students:** Although the majority of first-generation respondents reported speaking with their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a weekly or daily basis about all the topics listed in Table 1 except finances and future, a higher percentage than expected reported NEVER discussing any of these topics, except finances. Significantly more first-generation students than expected discussed their finances with their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a weekly (35%) or daily (6%) basis.
- ◆ **Sex:** While the overall percentage of respondents who reported speaking to their parents on a daily basis ranged from 3% for finances to 25% for physical/emotional well-being, significant differences by sex emerged. Female respondents were significantly more likely to discuss each topic, except finances, with their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a daily basis than their male counterparts.
- ◆ **Racial group:** Although there were no clear trends within the racial group analyses, the following significant differences emerged:
  - ◇ White respondents: Significantly fewer White students than expected reported NEVER discussing their involvement (7%), social life (3%), and physical/emotional well-being (6%) with their parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - ◇ Asian/Pacific Islander respondents: Significantly more Asian/Pacific Islander students than expected reported NEVER discussing their social life (12%) and physical/emotional well-being (14%) with their parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - ◇ Hispanic respondents: Significantly more Hispanic students than expected reported discussing their physical/emotional well-being (34%) and finances (9%) with their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a daily basis.
  - ◇ Black/African American respondents: Significantly more Black/African American students than expected reported discussing their future (12%) and finances (8%) with their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a daily basis.

### \*Demographic Differences Explained

Differences (tested with chi square analyses) are reported where the responses across the demographic categories (e.g., male and female) are significantly different than expected relative to the overall response pattern. For example, if 70% of all respondents agreed with a statement, we would expect 70% of both males and females to agree, if sex were not a factor. However, if we found a significant difference with only 65% of males agreeing, then we would report that "fewer males than expected" agreed with the item.

*The American Indian/Alaska Native racial/ethnic group is not included due to a small sample size that makes statistical analyses unreliable.*

### Questions to consider:

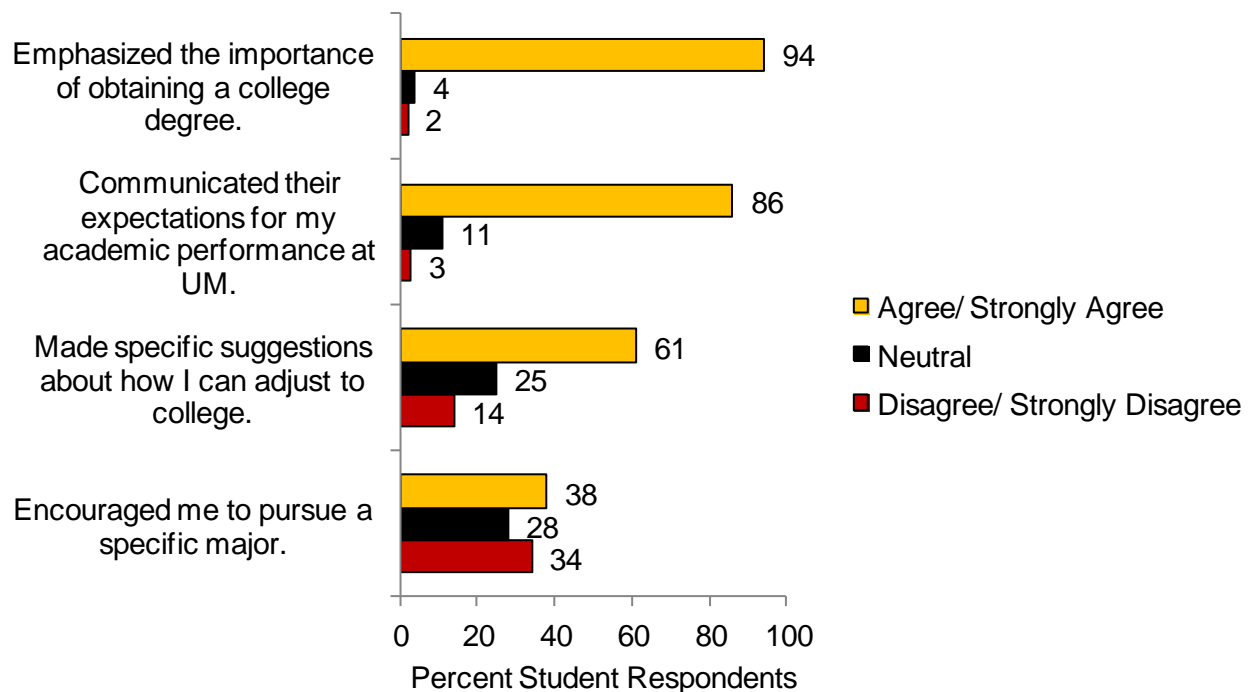
What might be the optimum frequency of conversations between students and their parents on these issues?  
Should the frequency vary depending on topic or context?

For additional information on differences by race and sex with regard to financial issues, refer to the 2011 CAWG Snapshot "Student Finances."

## What Are Parents Saying to Their Freshman Students About College?

Figure 1

### My parent(s)/guardian(s) have ...



- ◆ Most respondents agreed that their parent(s)/guardian(s) emphasized the importance of obtaining a degree and communicated expectations for academic performance.
- ◆ In contrast, only 38% of respondents agreed that their parent(s)/guardian(s) encouraged pursuit of a particular major.

### Significant Differences by Demographics\* (Figure 1)

- ◆ More Asian/Pacific Islander respondents (49%) than expected agreed that their parent(s)/guardian(s) encouraged them to pursue a specific major, whereas fewer White respondents (35%) than expected agreed.
- ◆ More Asian/Pacific Islander (20%) and Hispanic respondents (23%) than expected disagreed that their parent(s)/guardian(s) have made specific suggestions about how they can adjust to college.
- ◆ Across all four items in the table above, first-generation college students disagreed more than their peers that their parent(s)/guardian(s) have communicated specific suggestions regarding their academic endeavors.
- ◆ There were no significant differences on these items by sex.

#### Questions to consider:

How might the University support freshmen who are receiving too much pressure, or alternatively, too little guidance from their family regarding major choice?

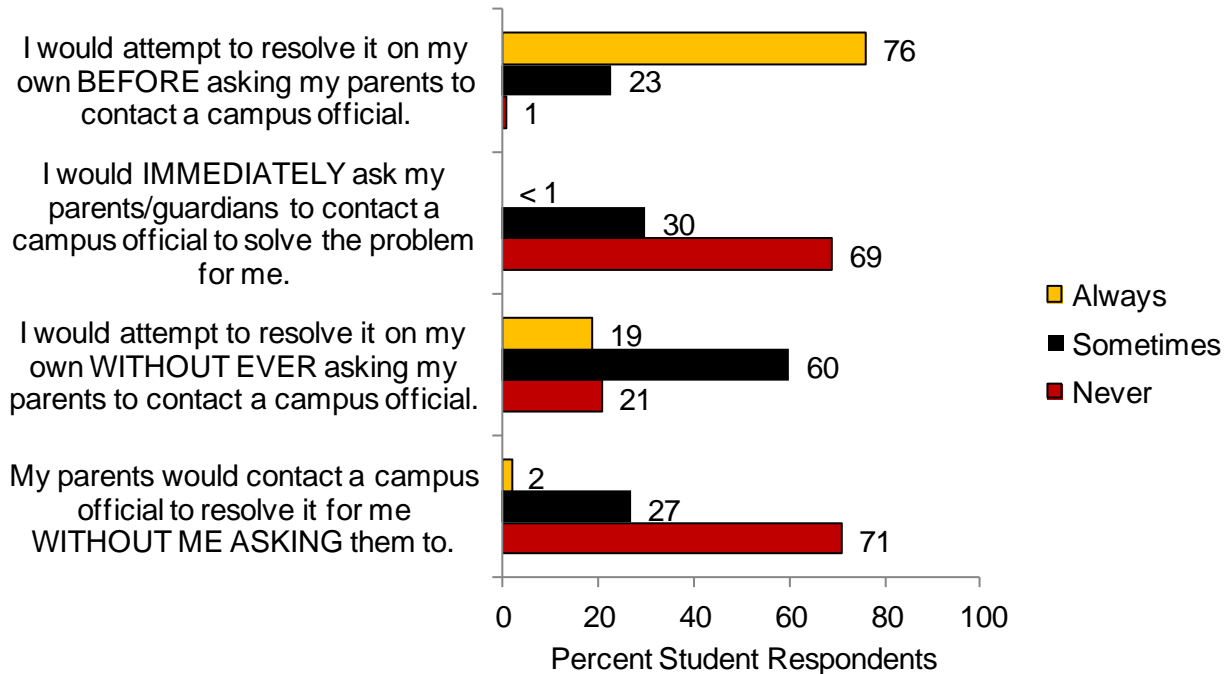
If first-generation college students receive fewer college-related messages from their parent(s)/guardian(s), do these students communicate with friends, university personnel, or other family members? What are the benefits of these conversations?

\*See page 2.

## What Do Students Do When They Have a Problem at College?

**Figure 2**

### If I have a problem at college ...



Note: These items appear exactly as above on the survey, including capitalization. Some items may not add to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ While 76% of respondents reported that they would always attempt to resolve a problem on their own BEFORE asking their parents to contact a campus official, only 19% of students reported that they would always attempt to resolve it on their own WITHOUT EVER asking their parents to contact a campus official.
- ◆ Almost a third of the students reported that they would, at least sometimes, IMMEDIATELY ask their parents/guardians to contact a campus official to solve their problem for them.
- ◆ Over a quarter reported that their parents would, at least sometimes, contact a campus official to resolve a problem WITHOUT the student asking.

#### Questions to consider:

Twenty-one percent of students never attempted to resolve a conflict WITHOUT EVER asking for their parents to contact a university official; what does this say about students' ability to resolve conflict autonomously?

Does this behavior change as students progress through their academic careers?

#### Recent Issues:

Student Behavior and Responsibility in the Classroom  
Student Finances

Campus Assessment Working Group  
(CAWG)  
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