ALUMNI PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY
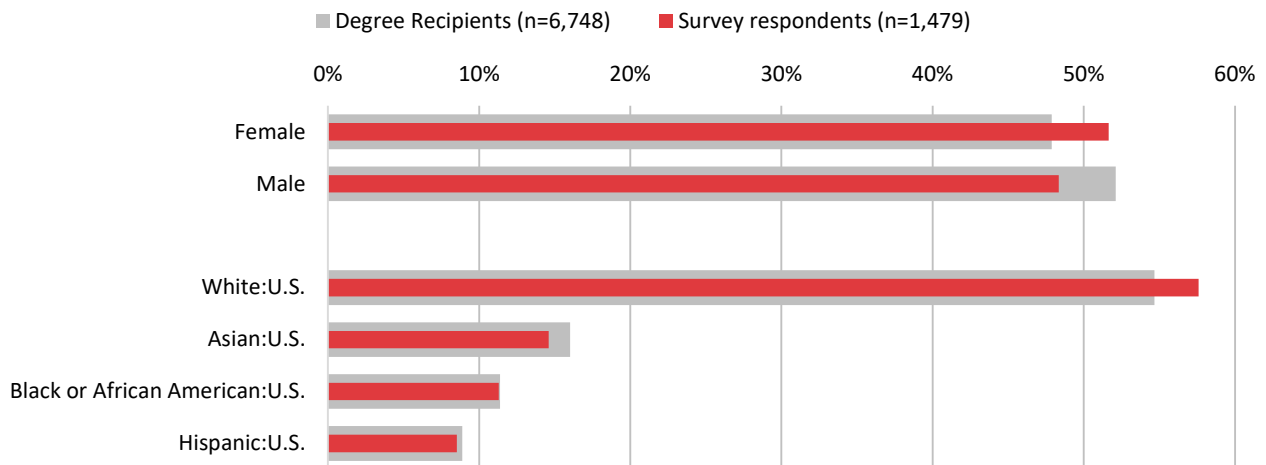
University of Maryland

This Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) Snapshot by the Retention & Completion (RetComp) subgroup reports findings on recent alumni responses to questions about their perceptions of diversity at the University of Maryland and their current job. The data included represent results from the Survey of 2016 Bachelor's Degree Recipients, mandated by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Invited participants earned baccalaureate degrees from July 2015 through June 2016. The survey was administered online by UMD in Summer 2017 to gather perceptions of alumni roughly one year out from graduation.

Surveys administered by CAWG subgroups are often expansive, and so the members of each group have the opportunity to probe responses in a variety of ways. The triannual alumni survey tells us a great deal about the perceptions of degree earners soon after their graduation. The RetComp subgroup has appended a small set of questions to those mandated by MHEC; among other topics, we have asked about campus climate, co-curricular experiences, and diversity.

Respondent Demographics

In the summer of 2017, the Survey of 2016 Bachelor's Degree Recipients was completed by 1,479 alumni of the 6,748 who earned their undergraduate degrees between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. The response rate for the survey was 22%. The chart above shows how sample and population demographics compare. Female respondents are slightly overrepresented in the response sample compared to the population. White U.S. students are overrepresented while Asian-American students are slightly underrepresented.
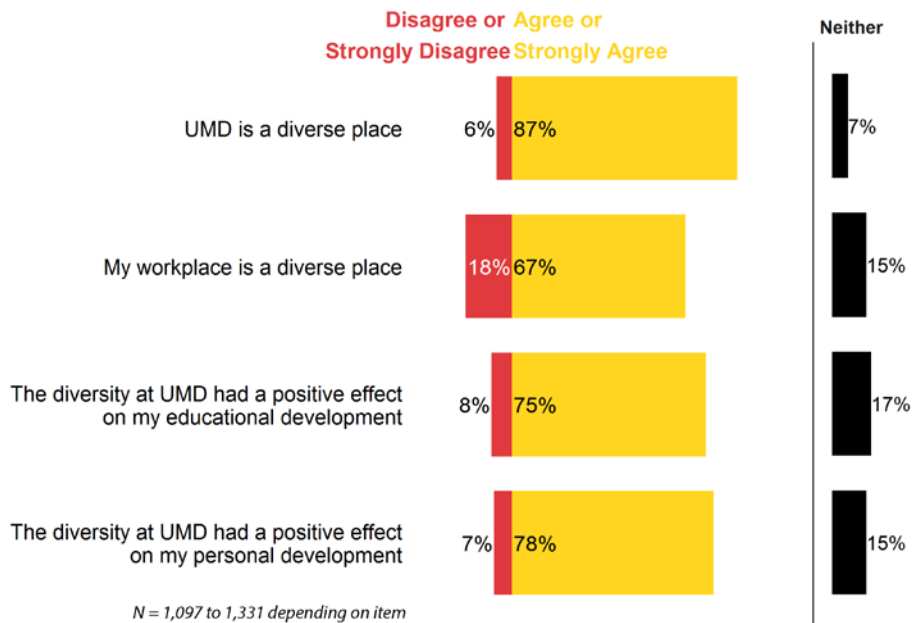
Demographic data were pulled from data originating with UMD applications. Fewer than 5% of respondents are of the following race/ethnicity categories: Two or More: U.S., Foreign, Unknown: U.S., American Indian or Alaska Native: U.S., and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: U.S. They are not included in the chart but may be included in other report analyses. Survey data in this report reflect the responses of alumni surveyed for the time period outlined and not all UMD alumni; therefore, use caution when generalizing. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Alumni Perceptions of Diversity at UMD and Their Workplace

Background

In spring 2014, following discussions with campus partners and the other CAWG subgroups, RetComp added diversity questions to the triannual survey of recent alumni to better understand diversity's role in students' undergraduate experience and post-baccalaureate lives. An implicit hypothesis was that learning across difference has both positive educational outcomes and contributes to better workplaces. We therefore asked about the relative diversity of the communities students were part of before, during, and after UMD. We also asked about the frequency and context of exchanges between people who are different and how those interactions sparked thinking about new perspectives. In 2017, we chose to repeat the following items.

UMD and Workplace Diversity

	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither
UMD is a diverse place	6%	87%	7%
My workplace is a diverse place	18%	67%	15%
The diversity at UMD had a positive effect on my educational development	8%	75%	17%
The diversity at UMD had a positive effect on my personal development	7%	78%	15%

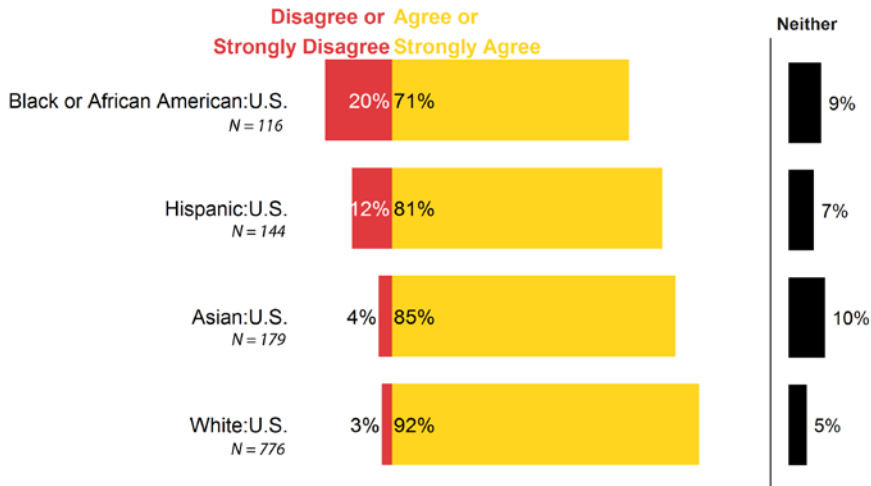*N = 1,097 to 1,331 depending on item*

Perceptions of workplace indicate less diversity than UMD. Three-quarters of respondents said diversity at UMD had a positive effect on their personal and educational development.

Note: The chart on this page includes all responses to these items including all race/ethnicity categories.
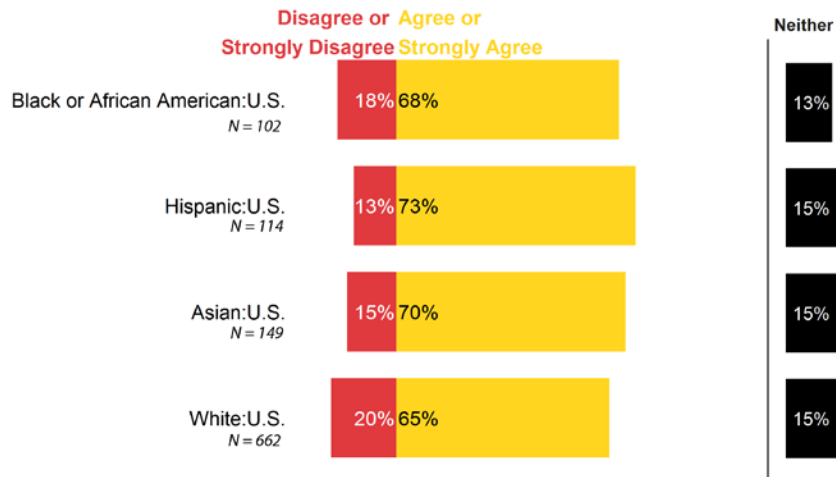
Alumni Perceptions of Diversity at UMD and Their Workplace

UMD is a diverse place

	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither
Black or African American:U.S. N = 116	20%	71%	9%
Hispanic:U.S. N = 144	12%	81%	7%
Asian:U.S. N = 179	4%	85%	10%
White:U.S. N = 776	3%	92%	5%

Perceptions of UMD diversity for Black or African American respondents differ statistically from the other groups.

My workplace is a diverse place

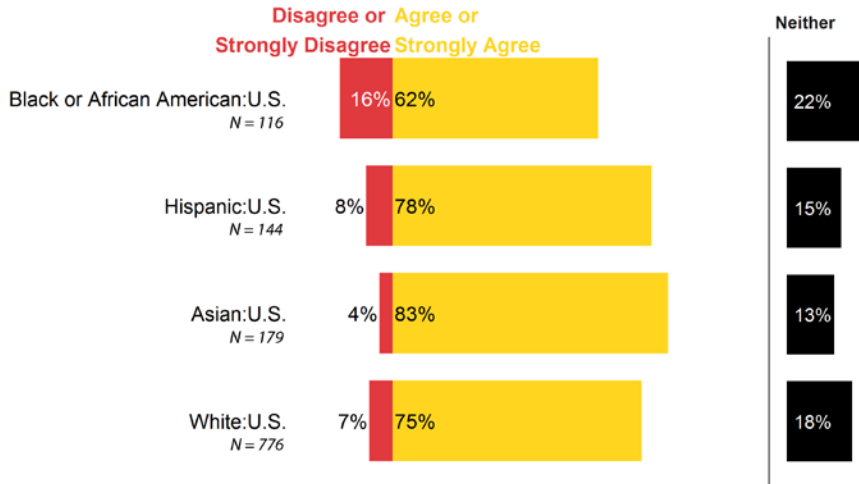|	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither
Black or African American:U.S. N = 102	18%	68%	13%
Hispanic:U.S. N = 114	13%	73%	15%
Asian:U.S. N = 149	15%	70%	15%
White:U.S. N = 662	20%	65%	15%

Perceptions of workplace generally indicate less diversity than UMD. In comparison to the above, perceptions of workplace diversity for Black or African American respondents are similar to their perceptions of UMD diversity.

Note: The question on workplace diversity appeared only for respondents who indicated they were employed. Fewer than 5% of respondents are of the following race/ethnicity categories not included here: Two or More: U.S., Foreign, Unknown: U.S., American Indian or Alaska Native: U.S., and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: U.S.
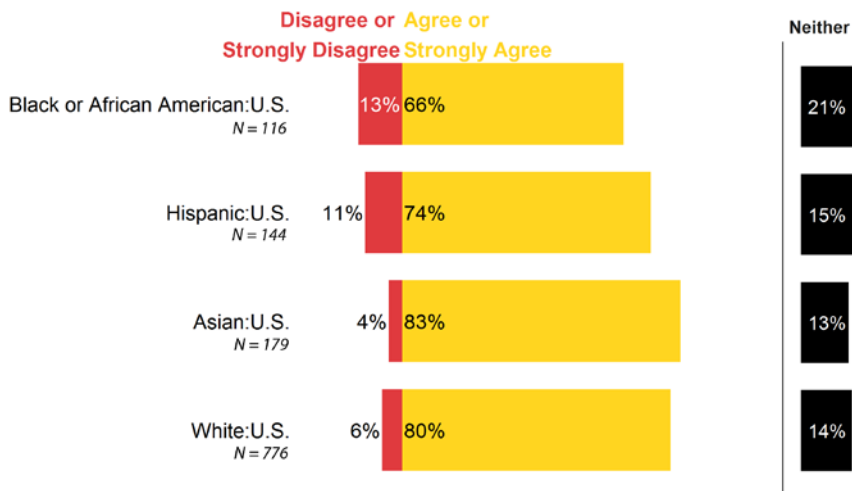
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The diversity at UMD had a positive effect on my <u>educational</u> development

	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither
Black or African American:U.S. N = 116	16%	62%	22%
Hispanic:U.S. N = 144	8%	78%	15%
Asian:U.S. N = 179	4%	83%	13%
White:U.S. N = 776	7%	75%	18%

Perceptions of the effect of UMD diversity on educational development for Black or African American respondents differ statistically from White and Asian respondents.

The diversity at UMD had a positive effect on my <u>personal</u> development

	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither
Black or African American:U.S. N = 116	13%	66%	21%
Hispanic:U.S. N = 144	11%	74%	15%
Asian:U.S. N = 179	4%	83%	13%
White:U.S. N = 776	6%	80%	14%

Perceptions of the effect of UMD diversity on personal development for Black or African American respondents differ statistically from White and Asian respondents.

Note: Fewer than 5% of respondents are of the following race/ethnicity categories, which is why they are not included here: Two or More: U.S., Foreign, Unknown: U.S., American Indian or Alaska Native: U.S., and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: U.S.

Alumni Perceptions of Diversity at UMD and Their Workplace

Questions to consider

We do not know to what extent acts of hate such as the murder of Lt. Richard Collins III impact respondents' perceptions as they complete surveys such as this one. It is not inconceivable that such tragic events negatively impact student perceptions of diversity and inclusion. What can the university do to prevent acts of hate and facilitate interaction, engagement, and inclusion?

There are many ways to define diversity. How do we better understand how our students are thinking about and defining diversity?

These results tell us something about perceived diversity and its impact on development. However, the results do not speak to inclusion. How does inclusivity impact student perceptions of diversity? How can the campus use these results to inform conversation about the relationship between diversity and inclusion?

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