



CAMPUS
ASSESSMENT
WORKING GROUP

Juniors and Seniors' Engagement on Campus and Modality Preferences

October 2022

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subcommittee. The 2022 University of Maryland Student Survey (UMSS22) was administered online from February 28 to March 21, 2022 to juniors and seniors enrolled in Professional Writing courses. This report looks at two questions: 1) How have students transitioned back to a more traditional on-campus experience in the 2021-2022 academic year? and 2) What modalities do students prefer to use for different types of activities and appointments?

In Spring 2022, 1,241 students took the survey (33% of students enrolled in these courses).¹ The survey was administered soon after UMD lifted its on-campus mask mandate. When possible, we compare these results to those of junior and senior respondents from a campus-wide survey administered in November 2021 -- the first semester in which classes were mostly in-person again. While respondents to these two surveys differed -- the UMSS22 was administered in Professional Writing Courses, while the Fall 2021 survey was open to all students and administered outside of class -- comparison of the two provides insights into students' experiences and evolving perspectives during the 2021-22 academic year. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Compared to Fall 2021, more respondents found it easy to attend and participate in in-person classes, yet many respondents continued to report difficulty with other aspects of their academic experience.

- In Spring 2022, almost half of respondents said it was very or somewhat difficult to study effectively (46%) or maintain motivation for their coursework (49%; see Figure 1 below). Thirty-seven percent said it was very or somewhat difficult to maintain their academic performance and 46% said it was difficult to manage their course- and campus-related responsibilities.
- In Spring 2022, 34% of respondents said it was very or somewhat difficult to participate in in-person social activities on campus.
- More respondents said it was easy to attend in-person classes (66% on the UMSS22 vs. 42% in Fall 2021) and participate in their classes (54% in Spring 2022 vs. 44% in Fall 2021).
- Similar percentages of respondents said other aspects of their academic experience were somewhat or very easy. For example, 26% of respondents in Fall 2021 said it was easy to study effectively, compared to 32% in Spring 2022.

¹ The distribution of respondents by race/ethnicity and gender was similar to that of the UMD population. University records reflect current reporting guidelines for gender (male/female).

Responses to items about ease or difficulty of campus activities, Fall 2021 & Spring 2022



Figure 1. Distribution of responses to items about ease or difficulty of activities (Fall 2021 Student Experience Survey and UMSS22).

Questions to Consider

- How can UMD best serve students when almost half of respondents say it is difficult to focus on academics?
- What types of in-person social activities did students find it easier or more difficult to engage in?
- What connection might exist between instructors offering more flexibility in their coursework and students feeling more (or less) motivated in their coursework?

Respondents who found it easier to engage in campus activities in person versus online had different demographic profiles.

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. This semester:

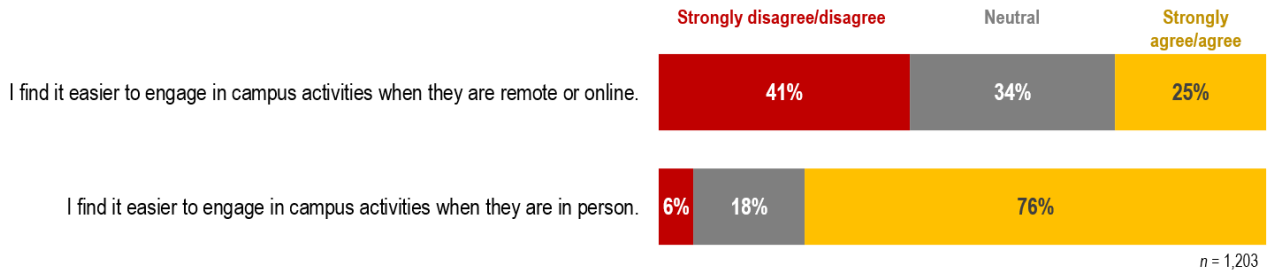


Figure 2. Distribution of responses to items about engagement in campus activities (UMSS22).

- Three-quarters of respondents (76%) agreed it was easier to engage in campus activities when they are in person, and a quarter agreed it was easier to engage in activities when they are online.
- There were some demographic differences between students who agreed that it was easier to engage in person and those who agreed it was easier to engage online (see table below). The demographics listed below include differences of 10 percentage points or more. For example, among respondents who agreed it was easier to participate in activities in person, 19% were first-generation college students, compared to 29% of respondents who agreed it was easier to engage in activities online.

Among the 76% of respondents who agreed it was easier to engage in activities <u>in person</u> :	Among the 25% of respondents who agreed it was easier to engage in activities <u>online</u> :
19% were first-generation	29% were first-generation students
50% were female	62% were female
50% were male	38% were male
31% enrolled as new transfers	41% enrolled as new transfers
38% enrolled at UMD during the pandemic	48% enrolled at UMD during the pandemic
28% said they had childcare responsibilities on another survey question	41% said they had childcare responsibilities on another survey question

Figure 3. Characteristics of respondents who found it easier to engage in campus activities in person and online (UMSS22).

Respondents want flexibility in how they engage in campus activities and appointments.

When participating in activities & appointments that can be offered both in-person & online/virtual, what is your preference?

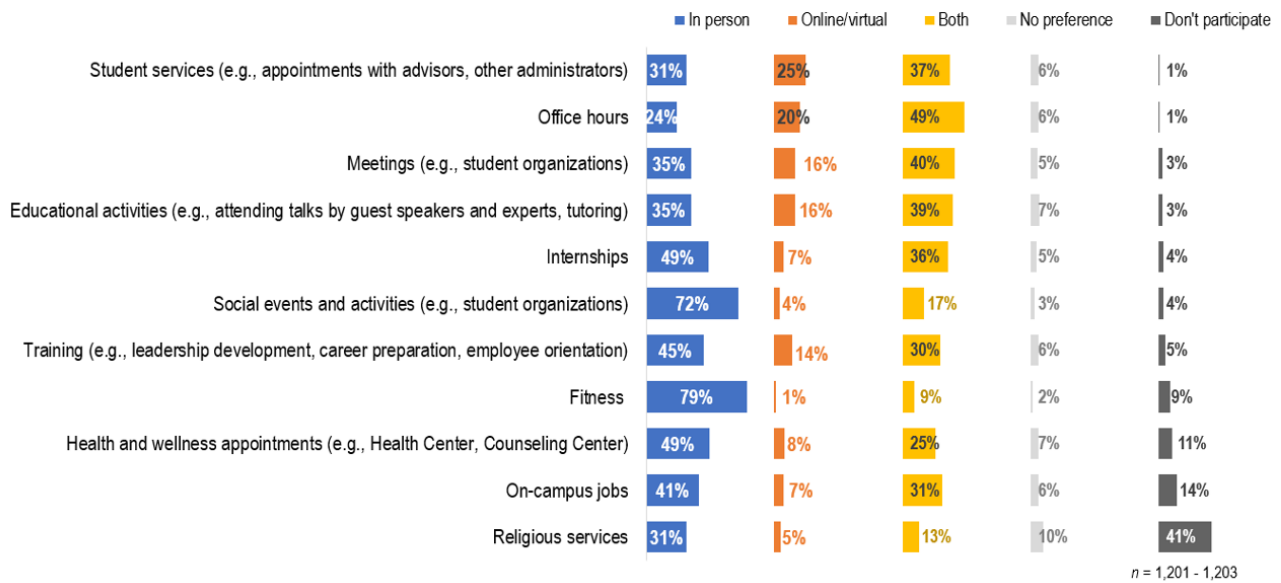


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to items about modality preferences for activities and appointments (UMSS22).

- When asked about specific activities, there was variation in respondents' modality preferences.
- Thirty-one percent of respondents said they wanted student services to be in-person, a quarter preferred that they be online, and 37% said they wanted these services to be both online and in-person.
- There are two activities that the majority of students preferred to be in person: social events and activities (72%) and fitness activities (79%).
- Almost half of respondents (49%) said they preferred office hours to be both online and in person.
- For internships and jobs, about one-third preferred that they be both in person and online; 41% preferred on-campus jobs to be in person and 49% said they preferred internships to be in person.

Questions to Consider

- What do students think of when they read the phrase "campus activities"? Seventy-six percent of respondents said activities are easier in person, but when asked about specific activities and appointments, there's more variation.
- What factors, outside of the pandemic, might have influenced students' responses to this survey and what factors might influence their participation in campus activities?
- What is your experience with changes in modality offerings and student engagement? For campus services that have been offered online, has use increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Compared to Fall 2021, more respondents want activities and appointments to be available both in-person and online.

Percent of respondents who said they prefer activities to be both in-person and online, Fall 2021 & Spring 2022

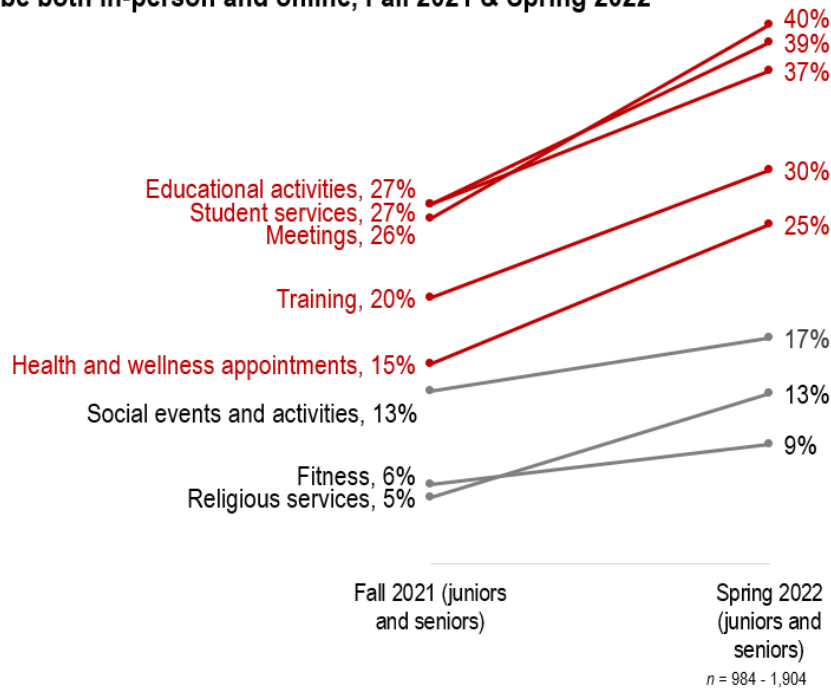


Figure 5. Distribution of responses to items about modality preferences for activities and appointments (Fall 2021 Student Experience Survey and UMSS22).

- For many activities, the percent of respondents who wanted activities to be both in-person and online was higher in Spring 2022 than in Fall 2021.
- The percent of respondents who preferred both modalities in Spring 2022 was 10 percentage points higher or more than in Fall 2021 for educational activities, student services, meetings, trainings, and health and wellness appointments.

Conclusion

These data show the diversity of juniors and seniors’ experiences during the Spring 2022 semester and how students’ perceptions changed from Fall 2021. Respondents continued to face challenges with academic engagement, even after campus resumed primarily in-person classes and activities. Three-fourths of respondents generally preferred engaging in in-person activities, while a quarter preferred engaging online. Respondents who found it easier to engage in campus activities in person and online had some different demographic characteristics, suggesting there may not be a “one-size-fits-all” approach to offering activities and appointments to students. In addition, when asked about specific activities, respondents wanted flexibility in how they engage with campus services and activities. These data can help inform plans for how UMD continues to evolve to meet students’ needs.

This report was written by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) ACES subgroup: Julie Kromkowski, Chair, Division of Administration Office of the VP; Frank Alexander Rojas, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (IRPA); Danielle Glazer, IRPA; Robert E. Crane, College of Arts & Humanities; Scott Moses, Department of English; Ronald Zeigler, Nyumburu Cultural Center; Alice Szczepaniak, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences - Economics; Sharon Ousman, Career Center; Alan Socha, IRPA. For more information, to view past reports, or to join a CAWG subgroup, visit <http://ter.ps/CAWG>.