

One-Year Follow-Up of Recent UMBC Bachelor's Degree Recipients Graduating Class of 2001

In Spring 2002, the Office of Institutional Research conducted a one-year follow-up survey of the Class of FY 2001 bachelor's recipients. The graduating Class of 2001 included 1,606 bachelor's degree recipients. There were two mailings of the survey, with a final response rate of 25% (the overall response rate for all public institutions statewide was 29%). This response rate is consistent with the last two alumni surveys administered (1999, 26% and 1997, 24%).

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Background Characteristics/Demographics

There were 389 respondents to the survey. Females (63%) and whites (60%) were somewhat over-represented in the response group (consistent with past surveys), as well as Arts and Humanities majors (23%). Science/Technology/Engineering majors were under-represented (40% of respondents versus 44% of all degree recipients; see Demographics Table.) Respondents had a higher cumulative GPA than did non-respondents (3.25-3.12). As expected, the majority of respondents (88%) were legal residents of Maryland when they first enrolled at UMBC, with 87% saying they remained in the state. Sixty percent of out-of-state students remained in Maryland after graduating (Tables 1, 2, 2a.).

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (60%) transferred to UMBC (59% of statewide respondents had transferred into their institution). Of those transferring, about 66% came from a Maryland community or junior college. Thirty-eight percent of transfer students self-reported earning their bachelor's degree in "four years or less" compared with 70% of non-transfers. Furthermore, transfers were more likely than non-transfers to take more than 6 years to graduate (19% vs. 2%) and were twice as likely as non-transfers to say it took longer to complete the degree than they had expected (40% vs. 17%). (Tables 3, 4a, & 4b.)

The top five reasons given by transfer students for taking longer to complete their degree were: "worked through college" (29%); "changed major" (17%); "other" (13%); "financial problems" (10%); and "problem getting into courses needed" (10%). The top five for non-transfer students were: "changed major" (24%); "other" (20%); "problem getting into courses needed" (15%); "worked through college" (15%); and, "became ill" (7%) (Table 4c.)

Future Educational Plans

Forty-four percent of all respondents ultimately plan to earn a graduate certificate or degree (32% statewide). Twenty-two percent indicated they planned to earn a Master's degree (24% statewide), 7% planned to earn a Professional degree (5% statewide), and 15% planned to earn a Doctorate (2% statewide). Plans for graduate degrees differ substantially for transfers and non-transfers. Transfers were more likely to make their ultimate goal a master's degree (57% vs. 37%), whereas non-transfers were more likely to plan to pursue a professional or doctoral degree (62% vs. 37%) (Tables 5, 5a.)

Forty-six percent of respondents had enrolled in school again within one year of their graduation from UMBC. Of those students who enrolled again, 66% were female and 57% were white. A greater percentage of Asian-American and International graduates tended to re-enroll than did white or African-American graduates. (Tables 6, 6a, & 6b.)

Thirty-seven percent of students indicated they were enrolled in either graduate or professional study. This is up slightly from the Class of 1999 high of 35% seeking a graduate degree within one-year of graduation. Similar to the Class of 1999 alumni survey, the majority (80%) said they were enrolled in either the same or related major. Social Science and Science/Engineering graduates were most likely to enroll again (51% and 48% respectively). Eighty-nine percent said they received either excellent or good preparation for graduate school from UMBC, matching the rating found in the 1999 survey, which was the highest rating from the last four alumni classes surveyed. (Tables 7, 8, 9, 9a, and 10.)

Post-Graduation Employment

Eighty-one percent of respondents were employed either full- or part-time, continuing the downward trend seen in the past alumni surveys (statewide it was 88% employed full- or part-time). Six percent of students said they were unemployed and seeking employment, and another 13% were unemployed and not seeking employment (Table 11). A higher percentage of females than males were employed part-time (13%-9%). (Table 11a.) Respondents indicated they were most likely to use a family/friend/faculty referral (37%), internet site (35%), newspaper want-ad (32%) or the UMBC job fair (27%) in their job search. (Table 12.)

The percentage of Class 2001 full-time employed respondents reporting annual salaries of \$50,000 or more (21%) was the highest yet for this survey (13% statewide). In comparison, Class of 1999 reported 14% had annual salaries of \$50,000 or more. Possible explanations for this increase may be inflation, better jobs secured by graduates, more graduates in higher-paying fields, etc. As in previous years, males were also likely to report higher salaries than female respondents. For example, 55% of males reported an annual salary of \$40,000 or more, compared to 45% of female respondents. Also, only 19% of males reported earning less than \$29,000 compared to 37% of women. Respondents with Arts & Humanities majors (52%) were more likely to earn less than \$29,000, while those with Science/Engineering majors (72%) were more

likely to earn \$40,000 or more. (Tables 13, 13a, and 13b.). Females make up 62% of Arts & Humanities majors but only 43% of Science/Engineering majors.

Among the respondents employed, most (78%) were working in Maryland, compared with only 58% of respondents from other state institutions saying the same thing. Respondents reported being employed in a wide range of occupations, with the largest categories being Information Systems (25%) and Teachers (13%) (Tables 14 and 15.). The corresponding statewide percentages were 12% and 13% respectively.

Continuing the upward trend seen in the past alumni surveys, 84% of respondents said their jobs were either somewhat or directly related to their majors (80% statewide). Most (69%) said a bachelor's degree was required to obtain their jobs/positions (66% statewide). (Tables 16, 17, & 18.)

Overall Assessment of UMBC

While at UMBC, 42% of respondents participated in internships. Nearly one-third (29%) participated in community service or volunteer work. The corresponding percentages participating in internships and community service/volunteer work for the Class of 1999 were 44% and 33% respectively. (Table 19.)

Overall, students felt that their UMBC education contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development. The strongest agreement was with the statements that "UMBC helped them acquire a broad general education", and "helped them learn to think critically and analytically". Weakest agreement was with the statements that "UMBC helped them fulfill their civic duty by voting in elections" and "set-up and maintain a personal computer". (Table 20.) These results mirror the responses from the survey of the Class of 1999.

A number of questions were asked about the extent to which UMBC education contributed to the acquisition of specific IT skills. It appears that access to computers for email and Internet purposes was most prevalent, contributing to the education of at least half of all undergraduates. Slightly less than a fourth (22%) of respondents felt their education contributed to being able to set-up and maintain a PC, 25% for connecting a computer to a network, 29% for using a spreadsheet, 32% for using a database system, etc. (Table 20.)

When asked about academic honesty, most (79%) respondents indicated that instructors informed them of their expectations. Eighty percent also said they thought UMBC students seldom, very seldom, or never plagiarized on written assignments, and 65% responded in those same categories when asked if students inappropriately shared work in group assignments. Most (80%) respondents also felt cheating took place infrequently. (Tables 22, 23, 23a, 23b.)

Over three-fourths of respondents (79%) said they would either definitely or probably attend UMBC again (83% statewide). This is a higher rating than any of the

last four surveys (78% for the Class of 1999). Of those saying they would definitely or probably attend UMBC again, Social Science and Science/Engineering majors were most likely to agree. Seventy percent said they would major in the same field again, with Science/Engineering majors being most likely to indicate so. This is slightly lower than the Class of 1999 (73%). (Tables 24, 24a, 25, 25a.)

Indicators Used For UMBC's Managing For Results (MFR) Reporting

A number of questions used in the one-year follow-up survey of UMBC bachelor's degree recipients serve as the basis of indicators for UMBC's state-mandated accountability document, Managing For Results (MFR), for example: the employment rate of UMBC graduates; their graduate school-going rate; and, the percent of graduates satisfied with both the UMBC education received for graduate/professional school and the education received for employment.

Looking across results from the last five surveys, while the employment rate for all graduates has been going down (from 87% for FY1996 graduates to 81% for FY2001 graduates), the graduate school-going rate has gotten better, from 35% for FY1996 graduates to 39% for FY2001 graduates. Concomitant with these are the trends in satisfaction levels reported by bachelor's recipients one year later. The percent of graduates satisfied with the education they received for employment has decreased from 93% to 89%, while satisfaction with the education for graduate/professional school has maintained itself at the 99% level reported by FY1996 graduates.

Summary

The graduates of the Class of 2001 obtained degrees in 26 different majors. Almost one-third (31%) said it took longer than they had expected to graduate, with the most common reason being that they worked while attending college. Within one year of graduation, 39% of respondents indicated they were seeking either a graduate degree or certificate, or a professional degree. Furthermore, 69% indicated they were working full-time within one-year of graduation.

In comparison to prior classes, the Class of 2001 continued the upward trends in the percentage of UMBC bachelor's degree recipients going on to graduate school and citing their UMBC preparation for such an endeavor as good or excellent. In terms of full-time employment, however, the percentage of the Class of 2001 working full-time (69%) is noticeably lower than the last four classes surveyed, each of which hovered around 75% being employed full-time. One possible explanation for this decrease is the combination of more bachelors' degree recipients going on to graduate school coupled with a more recent slowing economy.