



GRAD STUDENT SURVEY

Fall 2020

Sampling of General Results



Grad School Deans, GSA,
Division of Student Affairs

- Many years since a grad student survey has been undertaken
- Motivated by persistent student concerns voiced to GSA and action item from Fall 2019 Grad School Mental Wellness Symposium
- What can we learn about student concerns in midst of COVID pandemic, to inform better practices in Spring, 2021?
- Grad School leadership, GSA leadership worked together to formulate survey topics and questions – many based on Student Affairs undergraduate survey completed in earlier fall
- Expert guidance and facilitation by Dr. Kimberly Miller, Director for Assessment, Research and Strategic Priorities, Student Affairs
 - *Professional design and implementation of survey*
 - *Incentives for student participation*
 - *Administration of the survey*
 - *Analysis and reporting out of results*



- Survey contained 14 questions, with additional sub-questions
- Survey was sent to all enrolled graduate students (~ 2,600)
- Questions divided among three thematic blocks:
 - Block 1 Student Wellbeing*
 - Block 2 Campus Knowledge, Sense of Belonging/Community*
 - Block 3 Academic Experience*
- 23% response rate (n=602 students), 99% completed the survey
- Survey Demographics:
 - 35% GAs, 24% International Students (32% unspecified)
 - 93% main campus, 7% Shady Grove
 - 44% White, 27% Asian, 12% Black/African American, 6% Hispanic, 3% 2+ races, 9% unspecified
 - 72% 22-34; 20% 35-49; 6% 50-64; 2% 65+



QUESTION 1 FACETS OF OVERALL WELLBEING

WELLBEING STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I eat fruits or vegetables daily	36.2%	32.1%	16.3%	7.3%	5.6%	2.3%
	68%					
I get at least 7 hours a sleep a night	23.6%	29.6%	18.3%	12.5%	9.0%	6.8%
	53%					
I get at least 30 min of moderate physical activity 5x a week	23.8%	19.4%	19.4%	9.1%	17.8%	10.5%
	43%					
I have financial security	25.1%	32.1%	22.8%	7.5%	6.5%	5.8%
	57%					
I have food security	46.7%	38.5%	8.1%	3.3%	1.7%	1.2%
	85%					
I live in a safe environment	52.5%	37.9%	7.0%	1.2%	0.5%	0.8%
	90%					

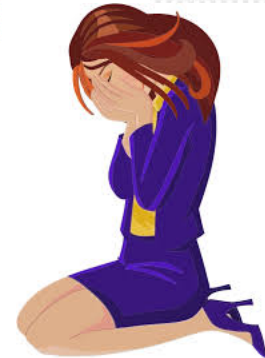


- Food safety and safe environment are highest scoring; exercise is lowest

QUESTION 2 ARE YOU BOTHERED BY FEELING DOWN, DEPRESSED, HOPELESS?

OCCURRENCE	PERCENTAGE
I have not been bothered at all	30.1%
Several days in the past two weeks	46.0%
More than half the days in the past two weeks	13.6%
Nearly every day	10.1%

- About 1/4 of students report no issue
- Three quarters of our students face intermittent or regular gloomy feelings



QUESTION 3 HAVE YOU HAD LITTLE INTEREST OR PLEASURE IN DOING THINGS?

OCCURRENCE	PERCENTAGE
I have not been bothered at all	36.9%
Several days in the past two weeks	44.2%
More than half the days in the past two weeks	10.6%
Nearly every day	7.8%



- Proportion of impacted students similar for depressing thoughts

QUESTION 4 HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AFFECTED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

CHALLENGES	N/A	Experienced But No Impact	Received Lower Exam Grade	Received Lower Course Grade	Received "I" Or Dropped Class	Significant Disruption To Thesis Or Dissertation	
Anxiety	22.6%	46.2%	13.1%	3.7%	2.2%	11.3%	30%
Caregiving Role	60.6%	25.9%	4.8%	2.0%	1.0%	4.8%	13%
Bereavement	80.9%	11.8%	1.5%	1.5%	0.8%	2.3%	6%
Depression	43.5%	33.2%	7.5%	3.8%	1.2%	9.8%	22%
Finances	58.3%	31.6%	3.7%	2.0%	0.8%	2.8%	9%
Stress	10.8%	55.5%	13.1%	4.8%	1.8%	13.1%	33%
Serious/Chronic Illness	79.9%	12.3%	2.7%	1.0%	1.2%	2.2%	7%
Work	41.2%	41.2%	7.8%	3.0%	1.3%	5.0%	17%



- The main impediments were Stress (#1), Anxiety (#2), Depression (#3)
- The top impacts were lower exam grades, disruption to thesis/dissertation

QUESTION 5 HAVE YOU CONSIDERED DROPPING OUT DUE TO FINANCIAL REASONS?

OCCURRENCE	PERCENTAGE
Never	67.6%
Seldom	14.1%
Sometimes	11.1%
Often	3.8%
Very Often	3.3%



- Some good news – for less than 20% of grad students, dropping out is not a consideration (*but is this number still too high?*)
- Respondents who reported “often, very often” were directed to Deans Halverson and Garrido for follow-up (n=43)

QUESTION 7 Are You Aware Of The Following Information?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| ▪ Regular COVID testing on campus | 74% |
| ▪ Loaner laptops available through library | 36% |
| ▪ MyUMBC – permission card to come on campus | 34% |
| ▪ Parking garage WIFI | 21% |
| ▪ WIFI hot spots in UC | 14% |

QUESTION 8 | I Feel A Sense Of Belonging To UMBC

- Strongly Agree 22%
 - **Agree** 33%
 - Slightly Agree 26%
 - Slightly Disagree 7%
 - Disagree 8%
 - Strongly Disagree 4%
- } **81%**



QUESTION 9 | See Myself As Part of the UMBC Community

▪ Strongly Agree	21%	} 79%
▪ Agree	28%	
▪ Slightly Agree	30%	
▪ Slightly Disagree	8%	
▪ Disagree	9%	
▪ Strongly Disagree	5%	

QUESTION 10A Grad Student-Academic Advisor Relationship

- Strongly Agree/Agree that advisor is accessible & approachable – **81%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that advisor has been responsive to needs – **83%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that advisor has provided effective guidance & support – **78%**

QUESTION 10B TA-Supervisor Relationship

- Strongly Agree/Agree that supervisor is accessible & approachable – **90%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that supervisor has been responsive to needs– **88%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that supervisor has provided effective guidance & support – **79%**
- Strongly Agree /Agree that contract work hours are not exceeded on average per week – **79%**

QUESTION 10C RA-Lab/Studio Mentor Relationship

- Strongly Agree/Agree that mentor is accessible & approachable – **87%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that mentor has been responsive to needs– **85%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that mentor has provided effective guidance & support – **85%**
- Strongly Agree /Agree that mentor supports professional growth outside lab/studio – **79%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that mentor supports work-life balance – **79%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that contract work hours are not exceeded on average per week – **69%**

QUESTION 11 All GAs – Contractual Support During COVID

- Strongly Agree/Agree that GA is supported during transition to remote work – **80%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that GA has required supplies to perform duties – **83%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that GA can access supervisor/mentor in timely manner – **85%**
- Strongly Agree /Agree that GA has clearly articulated position duties/expectations – **78%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that GA receives annual feedback on performance – **73%**
- Strongly Agree/Agree that contract work hours are not exceeded on average per week – **72%**

QUESTION 11A All GAs – If Exceeding Contractual Hours, Why?

N = 37 respondents (out of 211, or 18%)

- 30% stated do not feel pressured; prefer to work more hours
- 19% stated felt pressured by culture or attitude of the program
- 8% stated felt pressure from supervisor/mentor
- 8% stated felt pressure by someone other than supervisor/mentor
- 8% stated given more tasks per week than can be accomplished
- 5% stated a need to catch up on work after COVID caused delays or lost time
- 3% stated COVID makes every process take twice as long
- 8% misc reasons (hard to classify)

QUESTION 12 Have Restricted UMBC Operations (Due To COVID) Negatively Impacted Academic Progress?

- NO **63%**
- YES 37%

QUESTION 12A Academic Progress Delays By Category

<u>Type of Work</u>	<u>2 Terms</u>	<u>1 Term</u>	<u>None</u>
Thesis	22%	35%	35%
Research	28%	45%	15%
Dissertation	25%	37%	24%
Coursework	12%	29%	51%
Degree	20%	30%	51%



QUESTION 12B What Kind Of Ongoing Technical Challenges To Progress? (For Those Who Noted Adverse Impacts)

<u>Technology</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Unreliable Internet	40%
Unreliable Computer	24%
Unreliable Headset, Mic	22%
Other	14%



Other (Top): Unreliable work area/home distractions; difficulty with UMBC virtual desktop, access to SAS/SPSS; no access to printer; no access to research equipment; difficulty learning online

QUESTION 12C Has Restricted Access To Lab/Studio Negatively Impacted Academic Progress?

- NO **58%**
- YES 42%

QUESTION 13 International Students: Identify Challenges You Are Facing

N = 146 students

Connecting to students	51%
Immigration issues	51%
COVID anxiety	50%
Access to employment opportunities	38%
Connecting with UMBC faculty	33%
Concerns for family located abroad	32%
Access to campus services	32%
Connecting with UMBC staff	25%
Access to UMBC transportation services	23%
Access to healthcare	18%
Access to mental healthcare	16%
Remote access issues outside US	14%
Remote access issues within US	12%
Access to off-campus housing	4%



QUESTION 14 How Can We Continue To Support You At UMBC? (Sampling)

“Relaxing grade penalties for assignments”

“Extending deadlines for academics”

“Please ask faculty to be more understanding/flexible w/ deadlines or workload if possible”

“More time to finish incomplete courses”

“There’s a huge disconnect b/t UMBC’s policies & what certain professors are doing”

“Faculty refuse to hold regular office hours, not show up in online courses, assign far too much or difficult coursework, give lectures that do not match the assigned work”

“Create a way for all of the assigned trainings to have all their information and appropriate links, expected durations, and deadlines all listed in the same place?”

“Set communications timelines with a response time in 24 or 48 hours”

“Please change to a P/F grading”

“Some professors need training w/ how to make BB an interactive site b/t classmates”

“More online materials”

“Make it clear that it is our choice to come back to campus when we feel safe, and not b/c our mentors say we have to”

QUESTION 14 How Can We Continue To Support You At UMBC? (Sampling)

“House the grad students so that we can be quarantined and continue researching. Other countries don’t do this. Don’t kick grad students out!”

“I would benefit most from a sense of community. As a first year I never know what’s going on – I feel like I’m figuring a lot of it out on my own”

“More online mental health resources”

“I don’t feel a sense of belonging”

“Establish a method of expressing grievances to GA supervisors and faculty”

“Please lift more restrictions to research facilities”

“Personal development workshops like for creating good routines and habits”

“Diversity includes older students w/ jobs/families/etc. It seems that diversity initiatives only focus on color and gender”

- Comprehensive reports on Blocks 2 and 3
- Other ways to slice/dice the data i.e.
 - by international vs. domestic students
 - by gender
 - by nationality
 - by student age
- Share these results with other stakeholders, receive feedback
- Share results with all grad students
- Translate findings into remedial actions
- Follow-up wellness survey in Spring, 2021

