

SAREO
Center for Education Policy
School of Education
UMass Amherst

PROJECT PULSE



Anti-Semitism Survey (F04-E)

On November 3, 9, 10 & 17, 2004, Project Pulse conducted a telephone survey of Jewish undergraduates in order to investigate their experiences with Anti-Semitic behaviors on campus and their perceptions regarding other issues pertaining to Jewish life on campus. The survey was sponsored by the Office of Jewish Affairs. Similar surveys sponsored by the Office of Human Relations were conducted in 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2000. This report compares students' responses to the 2004 survey to students' responses to the survey conducted in 2000. The report also communicates students' responses to two attitudinal items new to the 2004 survey instrument.

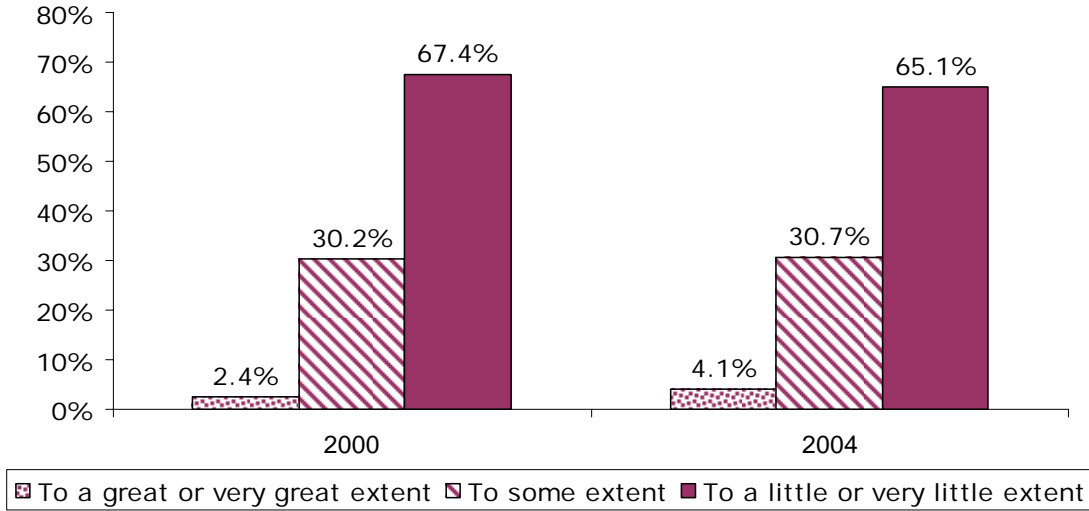
For the 2004 survey, Project Pulse interviewers attempted to contact 412 students with available phone numbers who had self-identified as Jewish according to the University's database (239 additional Jewish students did not have available phone numbers). Of these 412, 317 were successfully contacted and 246 (69.7%) agreed to be interviewed. Table 1 provides a demographic summary of survey participants in 2000 and 2004. It is important to note that in relation to 2000 participants, 2004 participants are more likely to be first-year students or sophomores, and are more likely to live on campus. SAREO researchers attribute this difference to a deficiency in the student database. In 2004, the University's student database was less likely to contain accurate phone numbers for juniors and seniors than for first-year students and sophomores. This is because majorities of juniors and seniors live off campus and the University depends on individual students to add their phone numbers to the student database. Unfortunately, this problem with the student database has a detrimental impact on Project Pulse's ability to conduct research. Because juniors and seniors are underrepresented among 2004 respondents, readers should interpret differences in responses between 2000 and 2004 with caution.

Table 1: Respondent Demographics, 2000 and 2004

	2000	2004
Respondents	n=388	n=246
Female	58.5%	54.9%
Male	41.5%	45.1%
First-year	29.4%	32.8%
Sophomore	25.3%	38.1%
Junior	19.3%	16.4%
Senior	26.0%	12.7%
Live On Campus	68.0%	90.2%

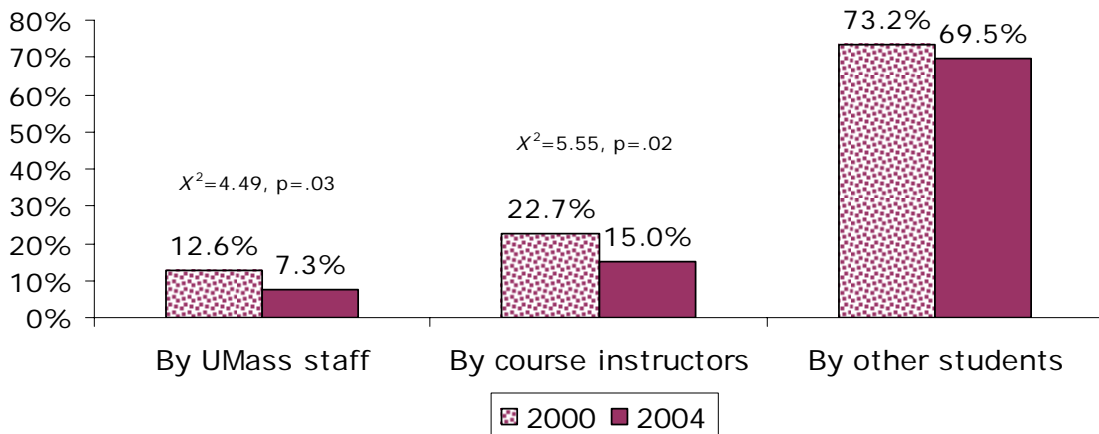
Participants in the 2004 survey were asked to what extent they think that anti-Semitism exists on the UMass campus. Over one-quarter of those surveyed feel that it exists "to a very little extent," but approximately one-third feel that it exists at least to some extent. Figure 1 shows that students' responses to this question were nearly identical in 2000.

Figure 1: Extent to which Jewish students think anti-Semitism exists on the UMass campus, 2000 and 2004 (no statistically significant difference between years)



The next battery of questions asked students whether they had personally experienced several different types of anti-Semitic behavior at UMass. Figure 2 shows that almost seventy percent (n=171) reported that they have experienced other students "stereotyping, making negative remarks about or telling jokes that 'put down' Jewish people." Substantially smaller proportions of respondents reported that they had experienced such behavior from staff or course instructors – and these proportions appear to be smaller than in 2000.

Figure 2: Proportion of Jewish students who have experienced stereotyping, negative remarks, or jokes that "put down" Jewish people, 2000 and 2004



Two-fifths (n=96) of survey respondents reported that they have observed anti-Semitic graffiti in residence halls or other campus buildings, slightly more than one-third (37.3%, n=91) have seen defaced Jewish activity posters, and 4.1% (n=10) have experienced deliberate defacing or vandalizing of their personal property (see Figure 3). Differences between 2000 and 2004 are not statistically significant.

Figure 3: Proportions of Jewish students who have experienced property-related anti-Semitic acts at UMass, 2000 and 2004

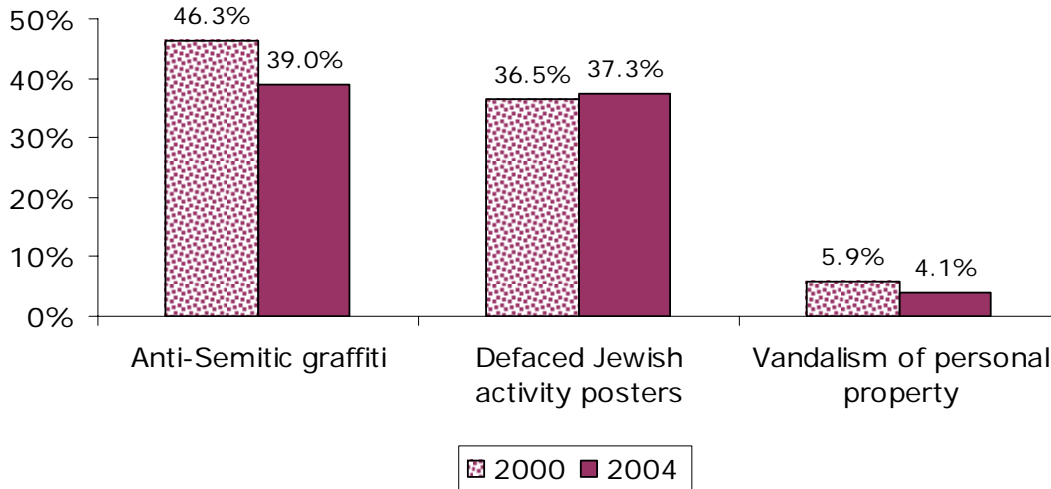
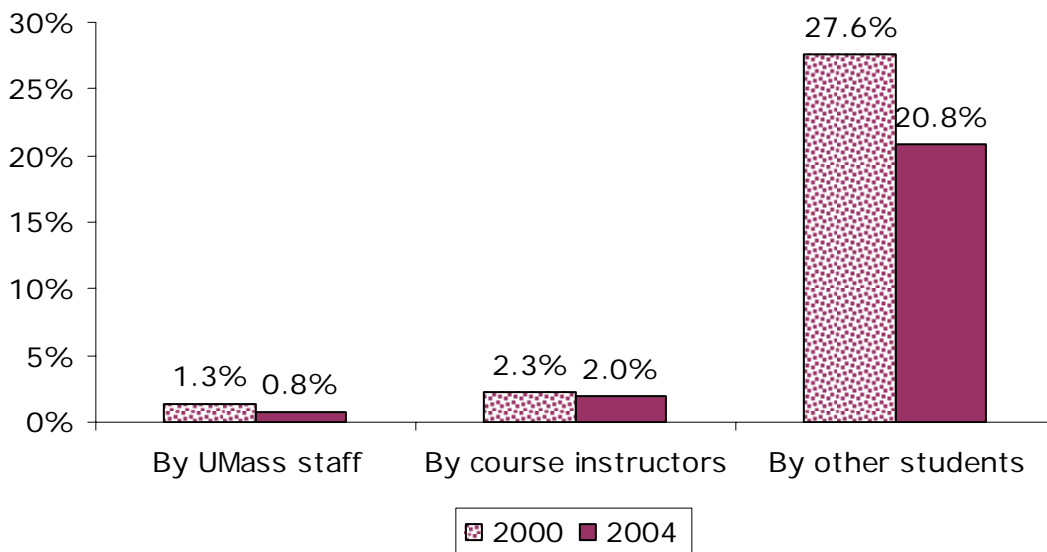


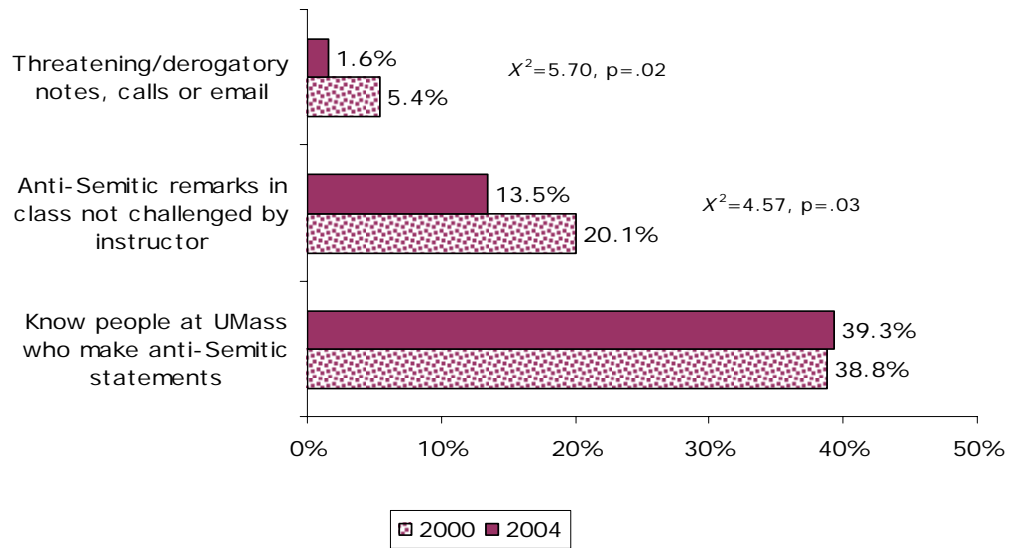
Figure 4 illustrates the proportions of Jewish students who reported that they had experienced anti-Semitic harassment from other UMass students, course instructors and staff members. As shown, one-fifth (n=51) reported that they have been harassed by other students, whereas much smaller proportions reported having been harassed by staff or course instructors. Differences between 2000 and 2004 are not statistically significant.

Figure 4: Proportions of Jewish students who have experienced anti-Semitic harassment at UMass, 2000 and 2004



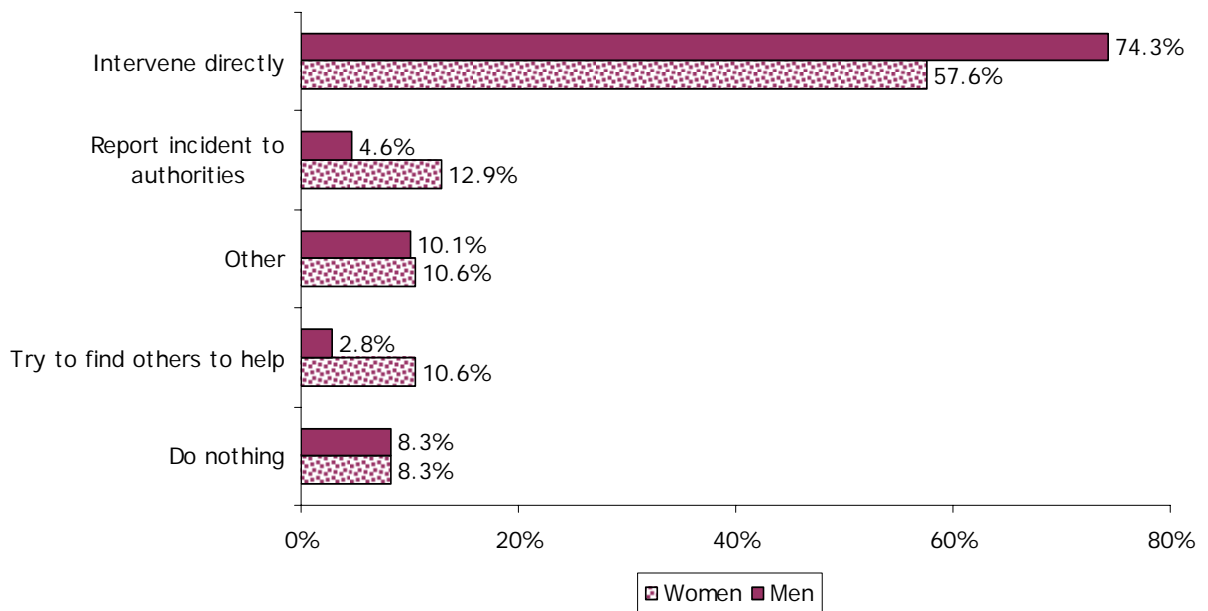
Four respondents (1.6%) reported that they had received threatening or derogatory notes, phone calls or Email, compared to three times that proportion in 2000. The proportion of students who reported hearing students make negative remarks about Jewish people in the classroom which were not challenged by the instructor also decreased - from 20.1% in 2000 to 13.5% in 2004. In contrast, the proportion of respondents who said they know people at UMass who make anti-Semitic statements remains unchanged, at 39.3%.

Figure 5: Proportions of Jewish students who have been exposed to anti-Semitic messages at UMass, 2000 and 2004



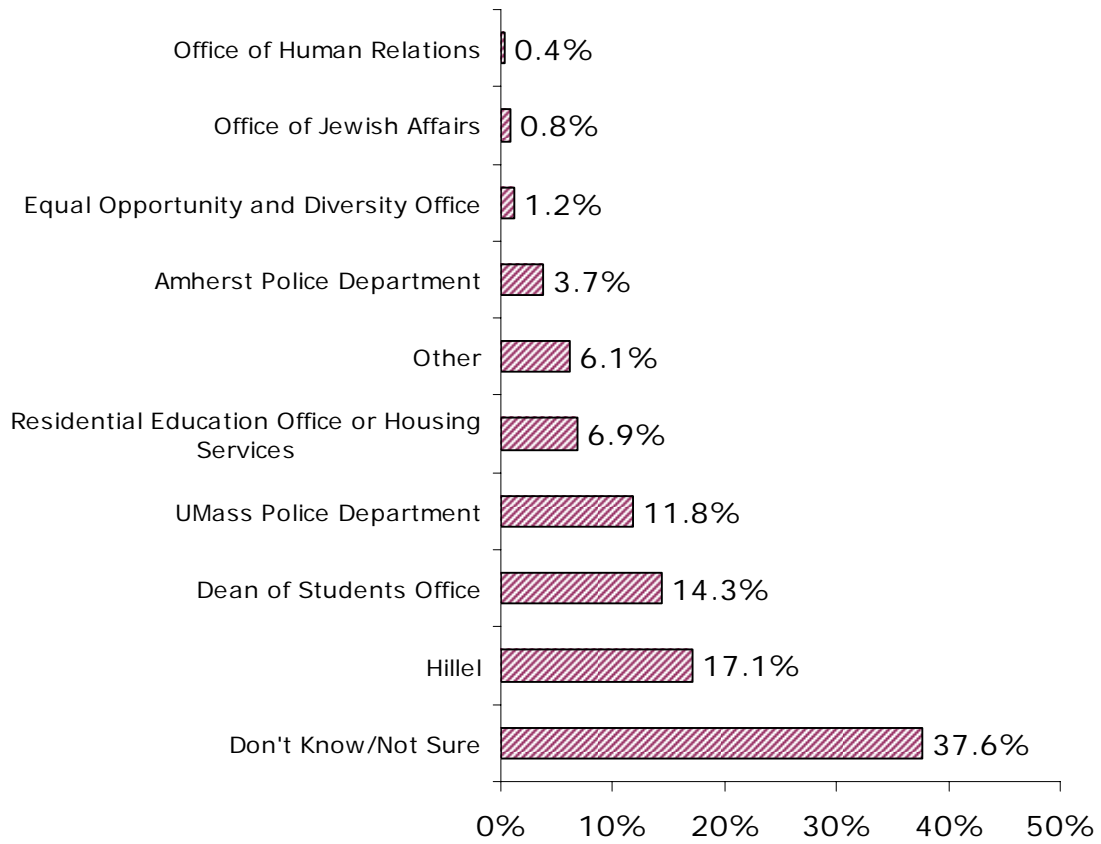
Students were asked how they thought they would respond to incidents of anti-Semitism. Figure 6 illustrates that men were more likely than women to say that they would intervene directly (74.3% v. 57.6%, $\chi^2=12.3, p=.02$) whereas women were more likely to say that they would report the incident to authorities (12.9% vs. 4.6%). These proportions were nearly identical in 2000.

Figure 6. How would you respond if you witnessed harassment?, by sex (2004 only)



Students were asked what office or agency they would be most likely to contact if they wanted to complain about anti-Semitic harassment on campus. In 2004, respondents were asked this question in open-ended fashion rather than being read a list of choices. Figure 7 shows that the response given by the largest proportion of students was "don't know" or "not sure." Hillel was the office named by the largest proportion of students, followed by the Dean of Students Office and UMass Police Department.

Figure 7: Office or agencies to which students are most likely to report anti-Semitic behavior, 2004 only



Students were asked, "How likely would you be to report an incident of anti-Semitic harassment if it happened to you?" Figure 8 illustrates that the proportion of students who responded "very likely" decreased from 2000. Likewise, the proportion who said "very unlikely" increased from 2000. Seventy percent (n=170) of respondents said they think that it is very or somewhat likely that others would come to their aid if they were experiencing such harassment on campus (no change from 2000).

Figure 8: Students' likelihood of reporting anti-Semitic harassment, 2000 and 2004

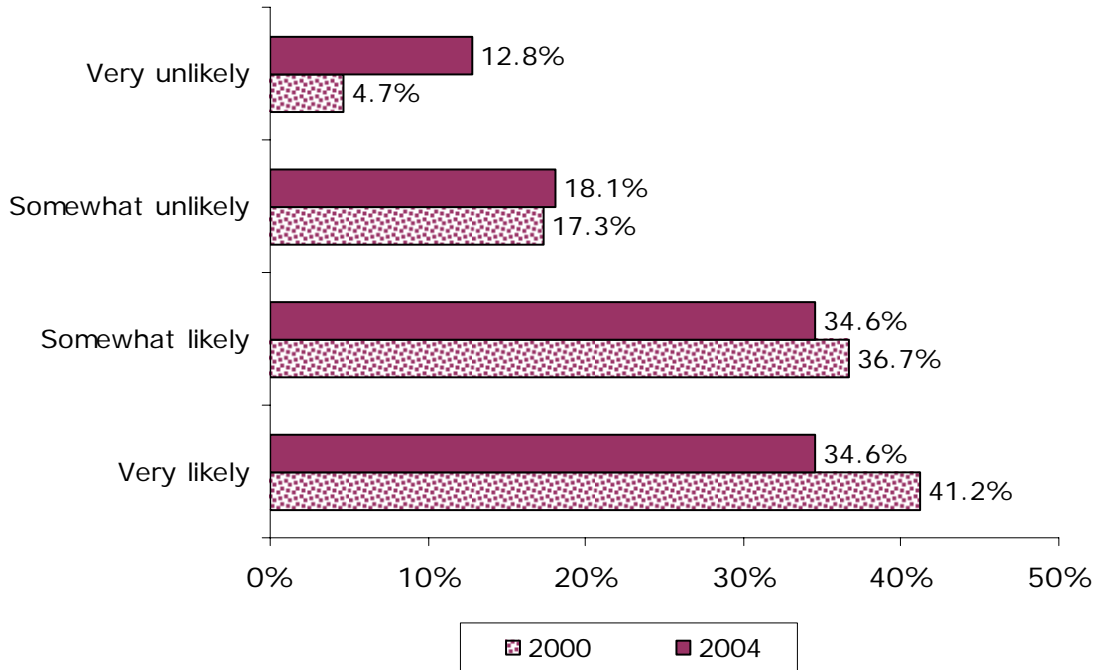
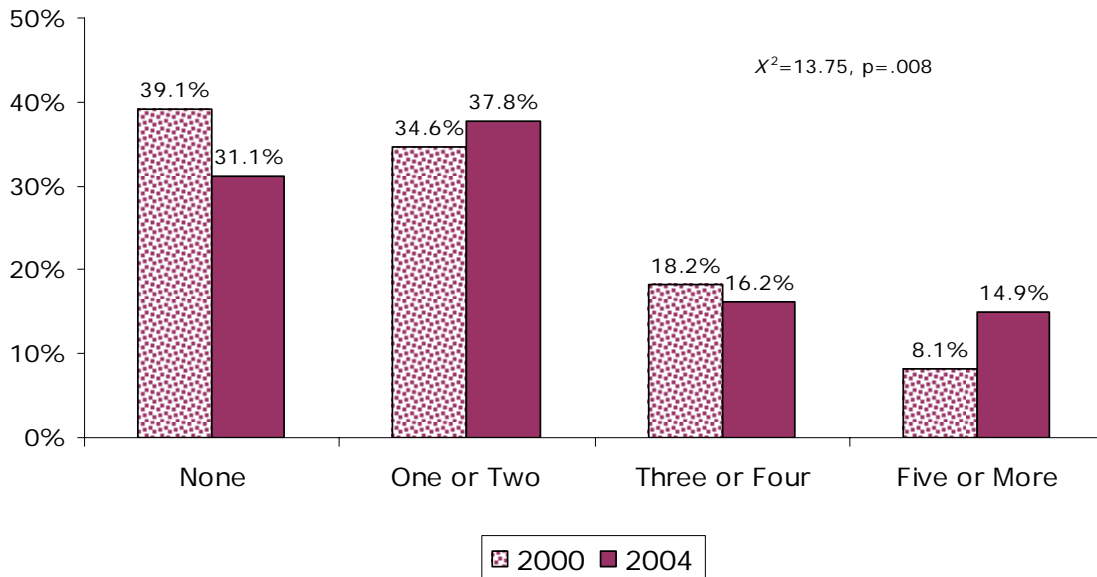


Figure 9 illustrates a decrease between 2000 and 2004 in the proportion of Jewish students who reported that none of their course instructors had addressed the issue of observing religious holidays.

Figure 9: Number of Jewish students' course instructors who addressed the issue of missing class or exams to observe religious holidays, 2000 and 2004



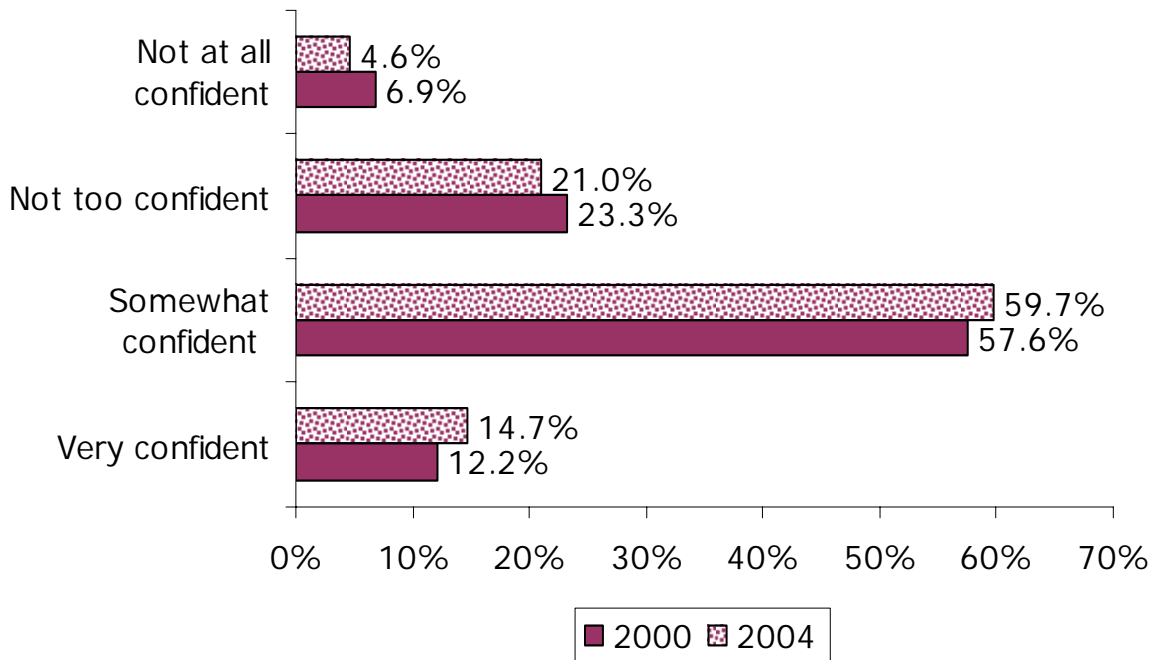
Students who indicated that they celebrate Jewish holidays (n=215) were asked if they had ever felt uncomfortable when informing an instructor that they would be missing class in order to observe a Jewish holiday. Eighteen percent said "yes" (no significant difference from 2000). When asked how difficult it has been for them to celebrate Jewish holidays at UMass, 5.6% (n=12) said "very difficult," whereas an additional 29.1% (n=62) said "somewhat difficult" (no difference from 2000).

Slightly more than two-fifths (42.9%, n=105) of 2004 respondents reported having taken a Judaic studies course, compared to 54.6% of 2000 respondents. This difference is statistically significant, but the difference is attributable to the lower proportion of seniors in the 2004 sample (seniors are most likely to report having taken a Judaic studies class – 64.5% of them have done so).

Students were more likely to report having discussed anti-Semitism with their friends outside of class (71.1%), than to report having discussed anti-Semitism in their classes (48.5%). These proportions were nearly identical in 2000.

The vast majority of Jewish students (93.8%) reported that they feel safe on campus at night (no change from 2000). Slightly more than seventy percent (73.1%, n=179) said they are aware that many forms of religious, racial and ethnic harassment are considered a violation of a person's civil rights and are punishable by fines and/or imprisonment (no change from 2000). However, less than half (41.8%, n=102) said they are aware that there are several formal and informal mechanisms for complaining about anti-Semitic harassment at UMass. This proportion decreased from 50.6% in 2000 ($X^2 = 4.69, p = .03$). Figure 10 shows that a relatively small proportion of Jewish students are "very confident" in the University's ability to respond effectively to incidents of anti-Semitic harassment; however, a much larger proportion are "somewhat confident" (no difference from 2000).

Figure 10: Students' confidence in the University's ability to respond effectively to specific incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, 2000 and 2004



New to the 2004 survey instrument were two items designed to investigate the extent to which Jewish students equate criticism of Israeli policy toward Palestine with anti-Semitism. As Figures 11 and 12 illustrate, students' responses to these two items were split along the agree/disagree continuum.

Figure 11: When people criticize Israel's policy toward the Palestinians, they are being anti-Semitic.

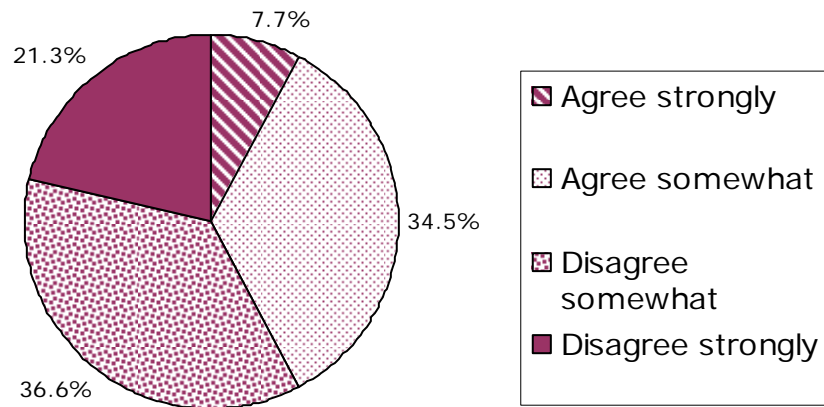


Figure 12: When a newspaper publishes editorials that criticize Israel's policy toward the Palestinians, the newspaper is being anti-Semitic.

