

moving forward...



UMass
Amherst

...looking back

An Alumni Survey of

The
Class
of

93

UMass Amherst: Moving Forward . . . Looking Back

Highlights of an Alumni Survey of the Class of 1993

- Most alumni from the class of '93 were gainfully and quickly employed: Seventy-six percent are employed full-time and an additional 11 percent are employed part-time. Of those employed full-time, the majority (61%) are in professional and managerial positions; the great majority (80%) acquired their jobs within six months of graduation.
- Many are pursuing additional education: Thirty-eight percent are pursuing full-time or part-time study. Of those enrolled in graduate programs, most (74%) are studying at their first-choice institution. Roughly two-thirds of those in school (69%) are also working full-time or part-time.
- The majority of alumni stay close to home: About two-thirds (64%) of those employed are working in Massachusetts, and of those currently enrolled in graduate programs, over 40% chose educational institutions within the state.
- Alumni are generally satisfied with the preparation they received for work and further education: Sixty-two percent of those employed full-time rate their preparation for the workplace as “good” or “excellent.” Of those in graduate school, 88% rate their preparation for further study as “good” or “excellent.”
- Alumni report overwhelming satisfaction with the quality of the academic experience at UMass: Ninety percent expressed satisfaction with the quality of instruction both in and outside the major, with the variety of courses offered, and with class size in advanced courses. In addition, more than 80% agree that the University had an “intellectual atmosphere” and that faculty were available outside of class.
- Nearly all report being satisfied with their overall UMass experience: Ninety-six percent report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with UMass in general. In addition, 95% say they would “probably” or “definitely” recommend UMass Amherst to a friend or family member.
- Despite these high levels of general satisfaction, alumni express concern regarding several aspects of their UMass experience. Their most common concerns involve the cost of attendance (39% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied), academic advising (46%), and the size of introductory classes (58%). In addition, alumni are critical of the adequacy of financial aid, the administration’s responsiveness to students’ needs, and certain aspects of the campus climate.

In their own words...

All quotations appearing in this report are taken from surveys completed by members of the class of 1993. An effort has been made to show a roughly representative sample of opinions.

“The University of Massachusetts at Amherst is a place where you can get a great education while having a great time. I have not met anyone who did not love UMass while they were there, and missed it when they left.”

“During my four years at UMass, I have always felt that UMass offered so many resources, both academically and socially, and that it was up to the student to take advantage of them.”

“Classes for introductory courses should be smaller to allow faculty/staff and students to be able to interact more inside and outside the classroom.”

Introduction

An institution's alumni are at once its best friends, its most perceptive critics, and its most tangible product. The University's success depends in large part on the extent to which we keep in touch with our alumni. "Keeping in touch" extends beyond the inevitable request for financial support, important as that help may be. As a public institution, we rely on public support of many kinds, and our alumni may be found as citizens and taxpayers in every corner of Massachusetts. It is our alumni who know us best, and perhaps most important, can tell us how good a job we did in meeting their needs as students.

This report provides information on how some recent graduates assess their UMass Amherst experience. The results reported here were collected as part of a joint effort of the four undergraduate campuses in the UMass system. Extensive questionnaires were sent to a sample consisting of half the members of the Class of 1993 roughly eighteen months after graduation. Just over fifty percent of those surveyed responded, and the 1081 completed questionnaires provide an excellent snapshot of the Class's activities, attitudes and opinions.

In reviewing these results, a few characteristics of the respondents should be kept in mind. First, these results reflect the experiences of those who actually graduated from the University. In general, 67% of those who enroll at UMass as first year students graduate. While this figure compares favorably to the graduation rates at other research universities, it does mean that the experiences and perceptions of the one third of first year students who do not graduate are not represented here. Indeed, these individuals responses might be quite different.

Second, while all the survey respondents graduated in the same year, they entered the university at different times, some as first-year students (75% of respondents) and some as transfer students (25% of respondents).

Finally, the responses of the 1993 graduates are particularly interesting because these alumni were enrolled at UMass during a period of dramatic change. They were admitted to the University during years of relative growth and prosperity for the campus and then, while enrolled, experienced the effects of severe budget cuts and tuition and fee increases. As a result, in many ways, they have seen both the best and the worst of times.

For more information regarding the sample and response frequencies, a technical report is available through the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment.

"I am fortunate that as an older student with a family, unable to attend a private college, I live in a state with such a high quality public university."

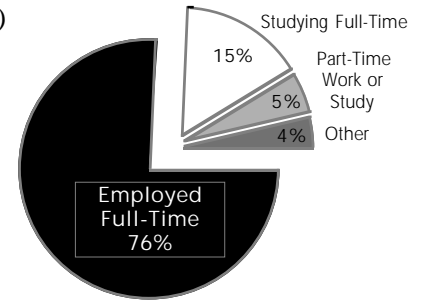
"I got everything out of UMass I put into it. With the exception of budget cuts and tuition increases, I found every aspect of my education satisfactory."

"Please remember the function of a state university system, providing a cost effective education to prepare people for the future."

"UMass was the best experience of my entire life! The classes I took, the knowledge I've gained, and the friends I made helped me learn a lot about myself and the world around me."

The World of Work

Most of the members of the Class of 1993 — more than three-quarters (76%) — entered the full-time workforce after graduation (and 16% also pursued additional education of some kind). Preparing students for rewarding and productive careers is a central element of the University’s mission. Moreover, the Commonwealth relies on the University to maintain a supply of highly skilled, broadly educated workers who can meet the challenges of a changing economy. We therefore begin with an examination of alumni in the workplace, focusing on the 76% employed full-time.



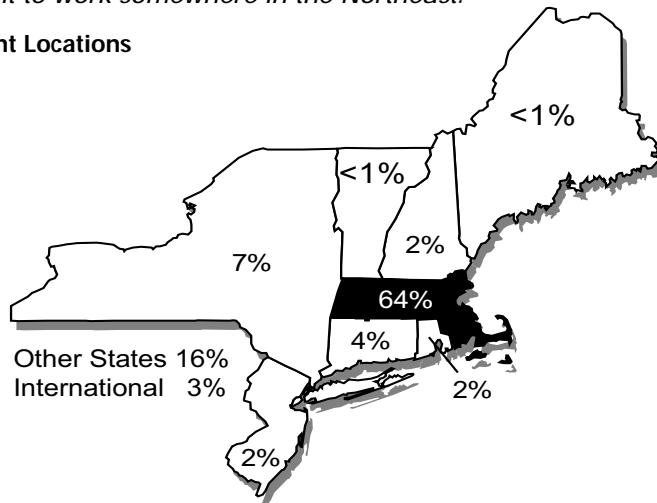
“More than receiving an education, UMass prepares its students for the real world.”

“Doing an internship was the best education I received at UMass. It should be mandatory for all students before graduating.”

For their first jobs after graduation, most alumni stayed close to home.

Nearly two-thirds of the members of the Class of 1993 working full-time found their jobs in Massachusetts. The great majority (81%) went to work somewhere in the Northeast.

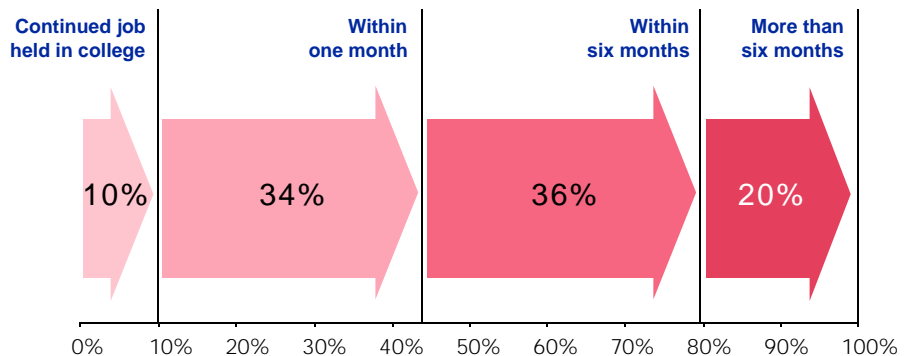
Employment Locations



Alumni met with relatively quick success in finding their first full-time job.

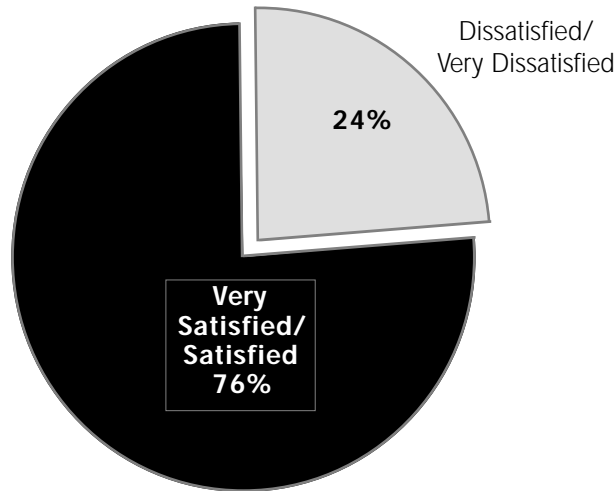
Within six months of graduation, 80% had secured their first position.

Time to First Job



Most alumni employed full-time are satisfied with their positions.

Satisfaction with Current Position



“The school prepared me for the ‘real world’ through living and social skills acquired while attending UMass at Amherst. Also, the classes in my major adequately prepared me for an entry level position in my field.”

Alumni are working in a wide array of fields.

Ten fields of work account for 71% of the full-time employees. The other 29% are scattered across more than 12 additional fields, including construction, manufacturing, the performing arts, and post-secondary education.

Most Popular Fields of Work

Finance	11.1%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	9.0%
Professional/Consulting (Other)	8.1%
Health & Medicine	6.9%
Education (K-12)	6.9%
Communication	6.2%
Hospitality	6.2%
Social Services	5.5%
Computer Sciences	5.4%
Engineering	5.4%
Other	29.3%
	100.0%

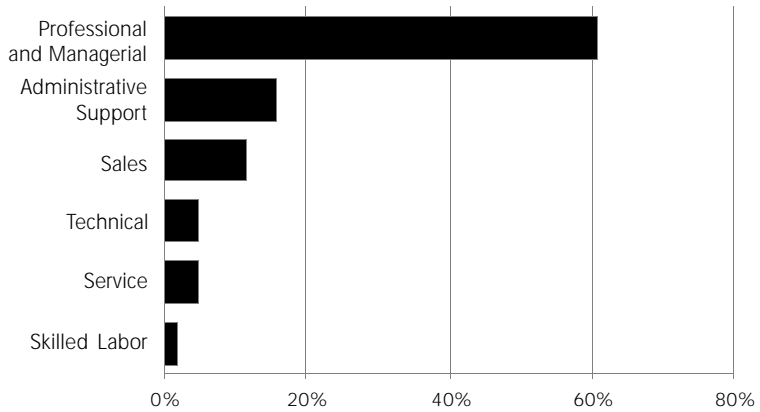
“When asked where I went to college, I am extremely proud to say that I am a graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. My education was spectacular.”

“My UMass experience was the best, because it made a professional out of me. I am an expert in what I do and I learned it all at UMass, not only through my coursework, but through extracurricular activities.”

The majority (61%) of alumni employed full-time are in managerial and professional occupations.

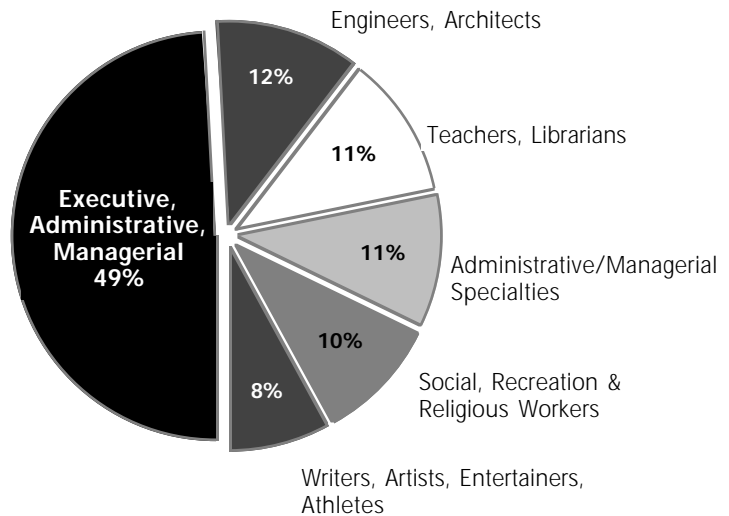
Most alumni secured positions consistent with college-level preparation.

Occupational Classifications



The 61% in professional and managerial jobs hold a wide variety of positions.

Job Categories within Professional and Managerial Occupational Classifications

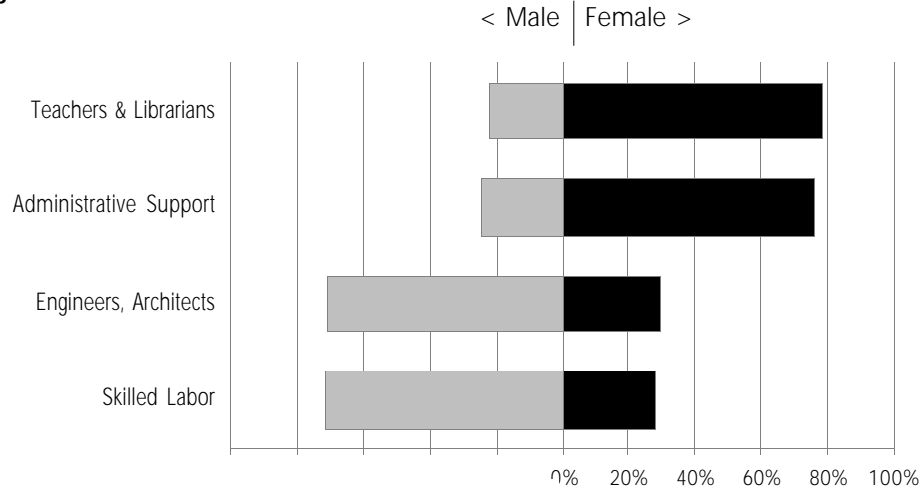


“There should be a greater effort among faculty members and career center employees to facilitate the transition between college and the professional workforce for graduating seniors.”

For some occupations, the representation of men and women varies significantly.

These results suggest that some occupations remain male or female-dominated.

Significant Gender Differences in Selected Occupations

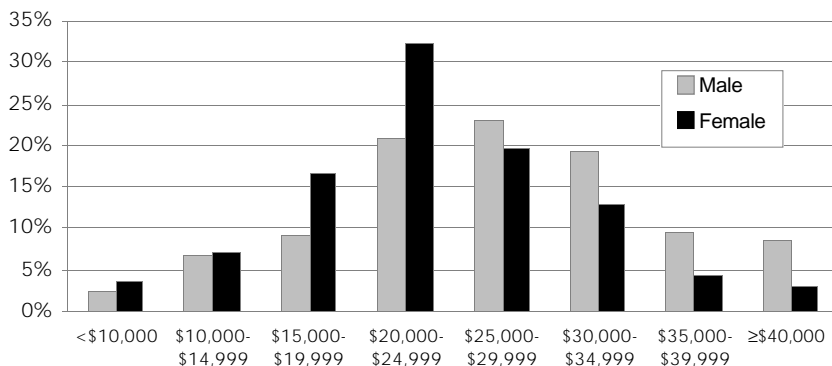


Note: Occupations showing no significant difference: Sales; Technical; Service; Writers, Artists, etc.; Social, Recreation and Religious Workers; Administrative & Managerial Specialties; and Executive, Administrative, and Managerial positions.

Alumni incomes vary widely; moreover, men tend to earn more than women.

These gender differences disappear, however, when the respondent's occupation is considered. This suggests that the income differences are the result of gender differences in occupations and not differential salaries within similar occupations.

Income Distribution by Gender



“The cost of higher education is far too high and as such there are many, including myself, who cannot afford to pursue Master’s and Doctoral level degrees. The job market is such that many of us cannot afford to pay back the loans we took out in order to attend college.”

“Put more emphasis on career planning, especially for liberal arts students.”

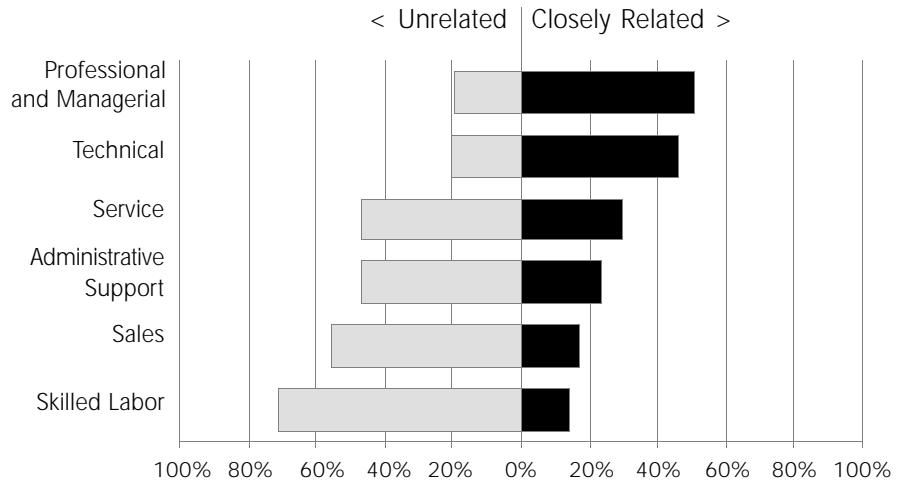
“Continue the general education requirements for all majors. I am currently in Port-au-Prince, Haiti as a UN peacekeeper. I use skills from my General Education here daily. French to talk to people, and entomology to keep down the insect population at my camp. You never know what skills you need in the future, so it is vital to have a broad base of experience.”

“I loved my social and educational experience at UMass. Unfortunately, it did not prepare me to assume a profession (not just a job) in these tight fiscal times. I think internships should be mandatory.”

Alumni in professional, managerial, and technical positions are most likely to view their jobs as “closely related” to their undergraduate majors.

This finding underscores the association of a college education with professional occupations.

Relationship Between Undergraduate Major and Current Occupation

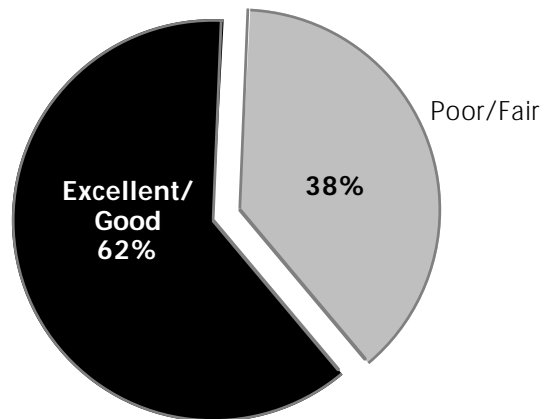


Note: “Somewhat Related” category not shown

The majority of alumni rate their preparation for the workplace positively.

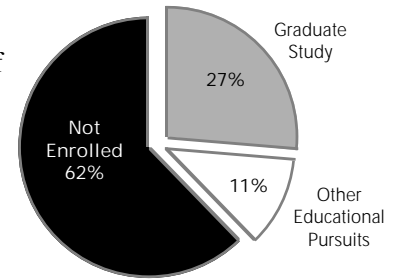
The number responding “fair” or “poor,” however, is cause for concern.

Rating of UMass Preparation for the Workplace



Continued Education

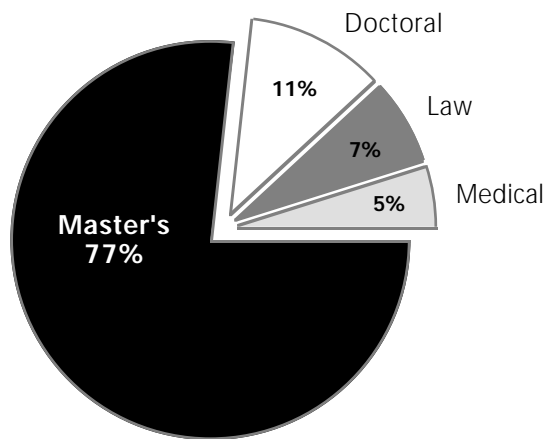
Another important aspect of the University's teaching mission is to help students prepare for further study. Thirty-eight percent are engaged in some form of further study, with most of these pursuing a graduate degree. In this section we examine the experiences of the 27% who are pursuing graduate education after receiving a UMass undergraduate degree.



The majority of graduate degree students were enrolled in programs at the master's level.

Master's degree programs represent more than 70 areas of study.

Type of Graduate Degrees



Alumni are pursuing graduate degrees in a wide variety of fields.

Field of Graduate Study

Education	18.5%
Business	12.2%
Health Related	11.8%
Social/Behavioral Sciences	11.8%
Law	10.3%
Engineering	9.7%
Humanities/Fine Arts	7.5%
Life Sciences	6.7%
Physical Sciences	4.3%
Other	7.2%
	<u>100.0%</u>

“My years at UMass were critical to my educational, social growth and maturation. I was well prepared for graduate school and life by UMass, and I would recommend UMass to family and friends, and have actually done so.”

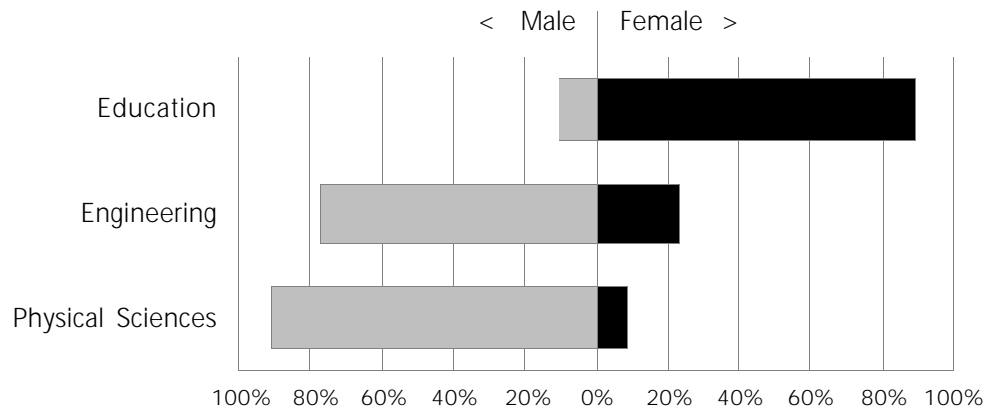
“UMass gave me a huge opportunity to expand my interests. If I had gone to another school, I would not be doing what I love. Thanks.”

“After completing a Master’s Degree program at Georgetown University, I can honestly say the education I received from UMass was superior. The faculty at UMass were concerned about me, my education and career goals. I would highly recommend UMass to anyone looking to attend college.”

In some areas of study, gender differences exist.

Much like the gender differences in occupations, these findings suggest that some traditional gender-based differences continue to exist.

Gender Differences in Fields of Study

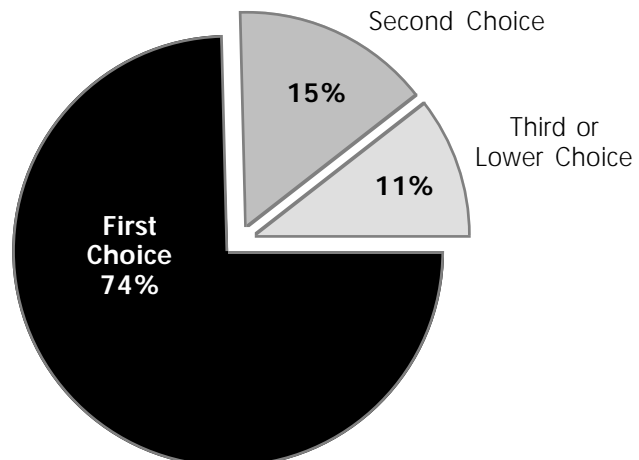


Note: Fields of study showing no significant difference: Business; Health Related; Social/Behavioral Sciences; Law; Humanities/Fine Arts; and Life Sciences.

Nearly three-quarters of those pursuing graduate degrees were accepted at their first choice institution.

Forty-five percent are enrolled at research universities.

Institution Preference



Alumni tend to stay in Massachusetts when pursuing further education.

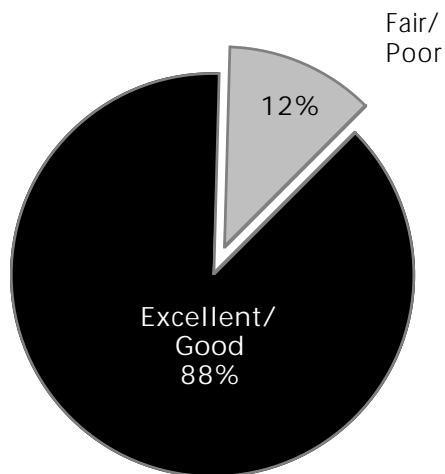
The eleven institutions accounting for the largest enrollments of alumni pursuing graduate degrees (41%) are all located in Massachusetts.

Top Eleven Institutions for Graduate or Professional Enrollment

UMass Amherst	13.5%
Boston University	5.0%
Boston College	3.4%
UMass Boston	2.9%
Bentley College	2.5%
Simmons College	2.5%
Suffolk University	2.5%
Northeastern University	2.1%
Western New England College	2.1%
UMass Worcester	2.1%
Bridgewater State College	2.1%
Other Institutions	59.3%
	<u>100.0%</u>

The members of the Class of 1993 are generally quite pleased with their preparation for graduate school.

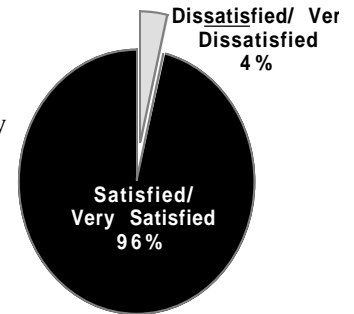
Rating of UMass Preparation for Graduate School



“UMass Amherst is an excellent school. It offers a lot of diversity along with academic and social opportunities. UMass definitely prepared me for graduate studies.”

Experiences at UMass

We asked the members of the Class of 1993 to look back on their experiences and answer a series of questions about their satisfaction with various aspects of campus life, including academic and student life issues. Nearly all reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their overall experience. This compares quite favorably with alumni survey results at other institutions.



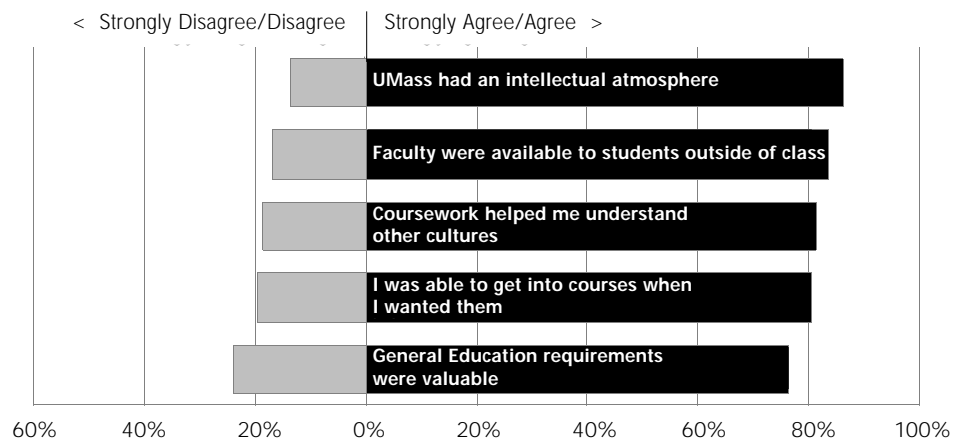
“The faculty, inside and outside of my field of study, were always willing to help me.”

“I appreciated the community feeling at the ‘real’ UMass, as well as the willingness of the faculty to work with me to finish my degree on time, despite having a baby in the middle of the semester.”

“Overall, UMass is a great school with a lot to offer. However, racism and fear for personal safety at night can sometimes overshadow the good things.”

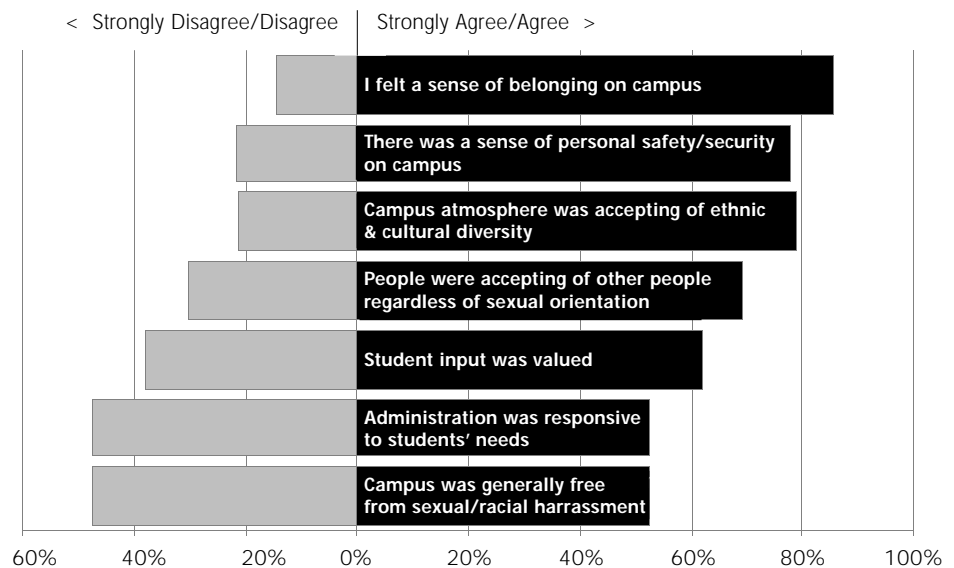
In general, alumni view their academic experiences at UMass positively.

Level of Agreement with Various Statements Regarding the Academic Experience



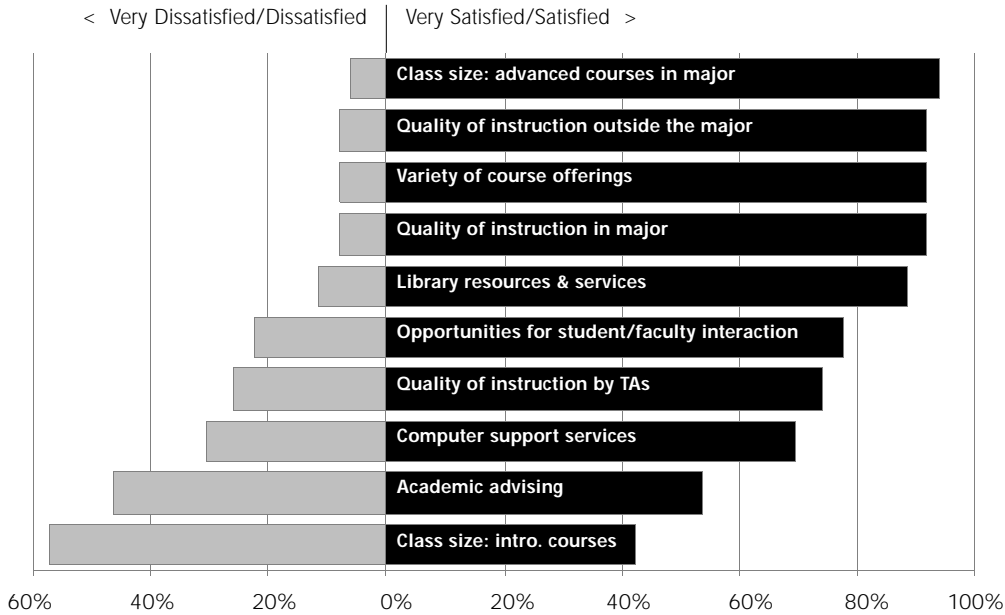
Perceptions of the campus climate vary.

Level of Agreement with Various Statements Regarding the Campus Climate



Satisfaction also varies, both in the academic area...

Satisfaction with Aspects of the Academic Experience

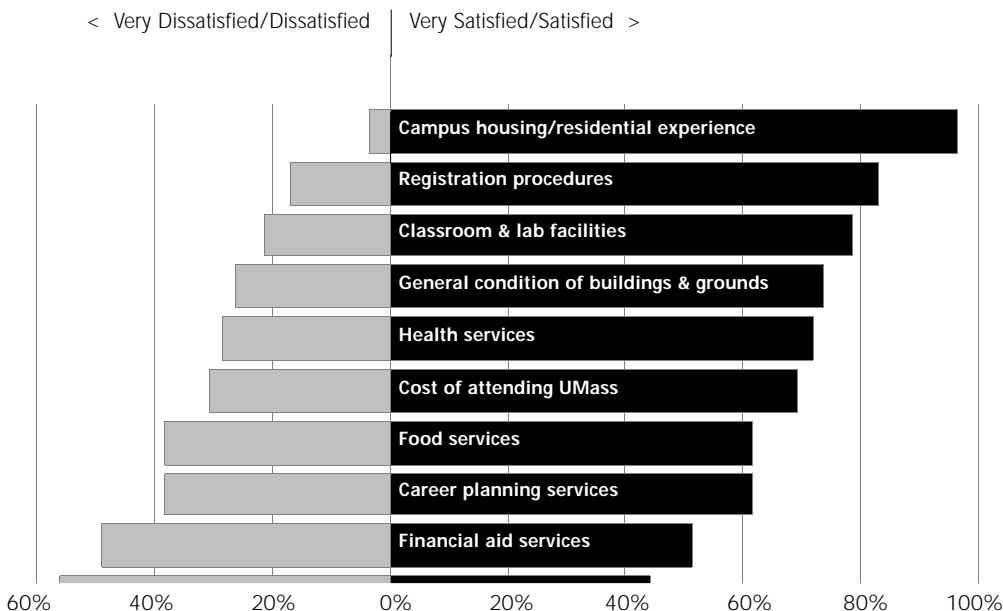


“Core classes need to be smaller. It is very overwhelming for new students, and many get lost in the shuffle and confusion of such a huge place.”

“While my faculty and TAs were good, the advising and guidance I received was not.”

...and in non-academic experiences.

Satisfaction with Non-Academic Aspects of UMass



“UMass is much like the world; huge, full of people, full of opportunity if you take advantage of it, devoid of opportunity if you don’t look for it.”

Financing Education

Meeting the cost of higher education is an important and difficult issue for many families. Alumni funded their educations in a number of ways. It should be kept in mind that these alumni were enrolled during a period of rapid and dramatic increases in student costs.

“Keep UMass accessible to all income levels.”

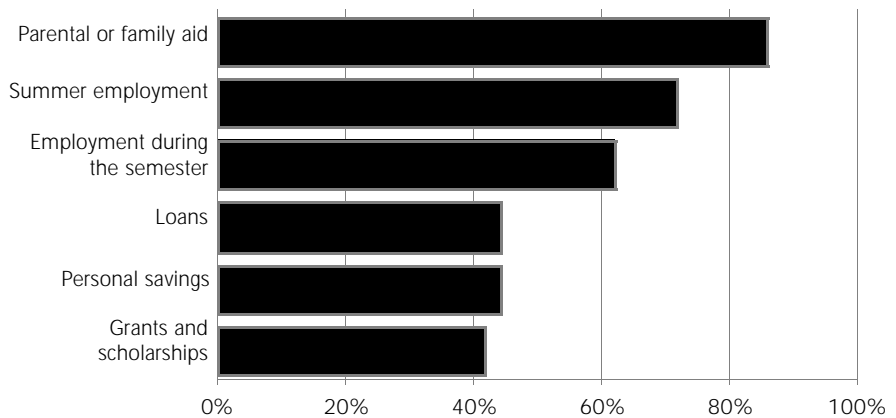
“Remember the students who neither qualify for loans, nor can afford tuition. It was a frustrating struggle for me and my parents putting me through school.”

“Thank you for the chance as an older student to fulfill my life time dream. My experience at UMass Amherst was worth all my savings and hard work. Again, thank you.”

“The cost of public education is beyond the needs of those who need it most. We are creating a society for people who are sinking into debt before age thirty.”

The most common sources of funding were family resources and student employment.

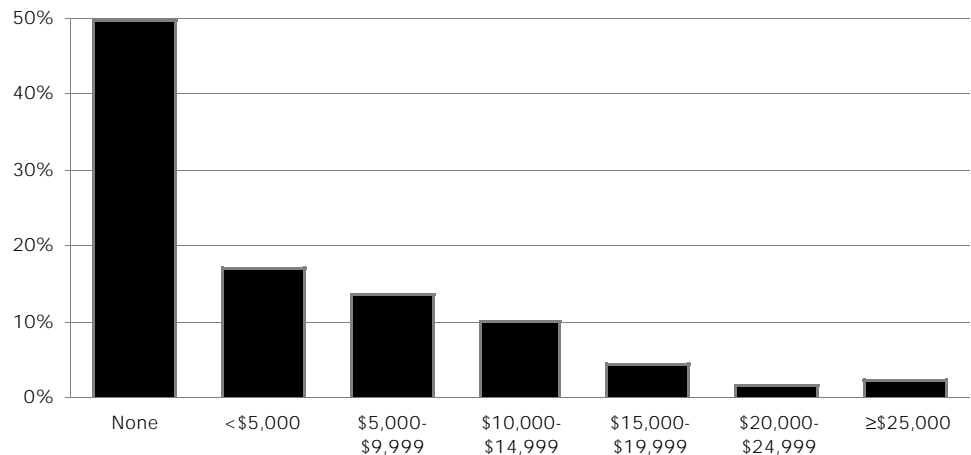
Percent of Alumni Using Each Financial Source



Educational debt varies substantially.

While 50 percent incurred no personal debt, 19 percent incurred debt of \$10,000 or more.

Amount of Debt Incurred

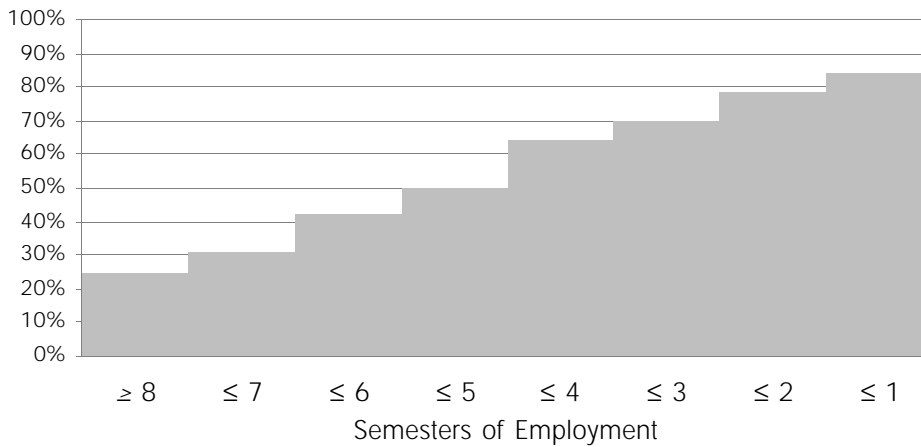


Note: Excludes parental or other family debt.

Most alumni worked while at UMass; one quarter worked for eight semesters or more.

This reinforces the finding that nearly two-thirds used employment during the semester to meet their educational costs.

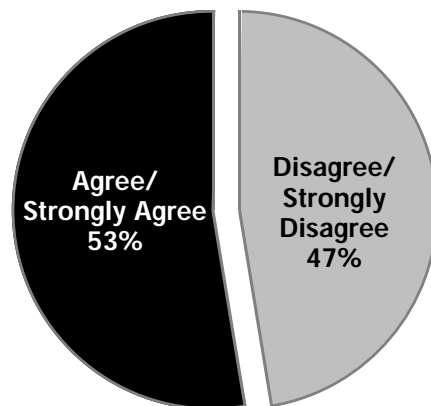
Percent of Alumni Working While in College by Number of Semesters Worked



Of those who applied for financial aid, only half felt that adequate aid was available.

Those critical of the adequacy of financial aid were also more likely to express dissatisfaction with financial aid services.

Level of Agreement that Financial Aid was Adequate



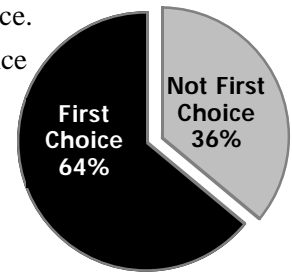
“A concern to think about is the growing trend in full-time students needing to work at least 20 hours to put themselves through school, and therefore not being able to participate in any enriching extra curricular activities and challenging educational opportunities.”

“Please try to keep higher education affordable! I was the first person in my family to ever graduate from a four year university, and I would not have been able to if it was not for the scholarships I received.”

“It is very important to keep the cost of a UMass education reasonable. Most of the people that I know who had to leave UMass had decent grades but could not afford to stay. That is a lot of potential wasted.”

Choosing UMass: Then and Now

The majority of respondents (64%), report that UMass was their first choice at entrance. We asked alumni to reflect on their feelings about UMass at entrance and on their experience compared to their expectations. We also asked them whether they would recommend the University to others.



“Although I was unsure about attending at first, my four years at UMass were very good. They were a huge growing experience.”

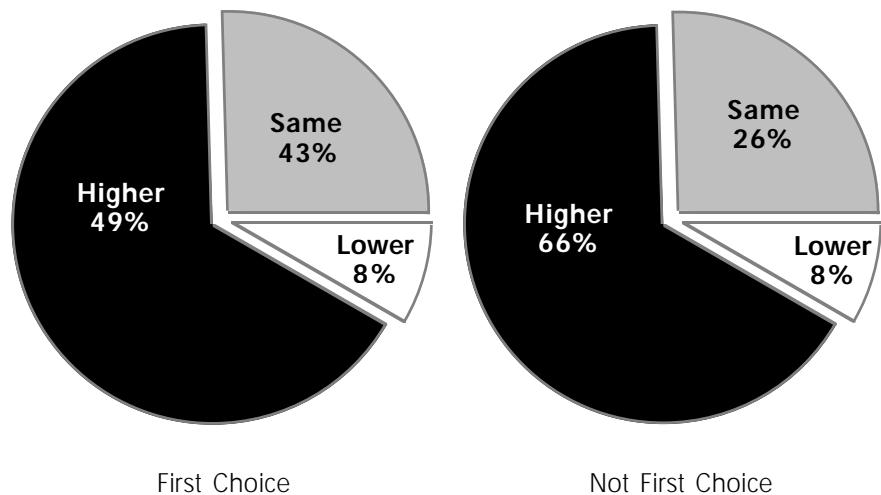
“I have three sons and I’d like them to all attend UMass.”

“My experiences at the university were extremely rewarding, and I would highly recommend UMass to anyone. Attending UMass was the best decision I could have made!”

Academic quality exceeded expectations.

The difference was greatest when UMass was not the first choice.

Quality of UMass Education Compared to Expectations by First or Not First Choice



Nearly all alumni would recommend UMass Amherst to a friend or family member.

Would Alumni Recommend UMass to a Friend or Family Member?

