

The Outcomes of a UMass Amherst Undergraduate Education: A Survey of Recent UMass Amherst Alumni

Web Survey Administered Fall 2013 to Classes of 2007 & 2008

In fall 2013, the University of Massachusetts Amherst conducted a survey of recent graduates (Classes of 2007 and 2008) as a part of a UMass President's Office initiative. The survey asked our alumni about the quality of their UMass Amherst experience as well as about their careers and volunteer activities after college.

Our recent UMass Amherst alumni look back positively on their experiences and educational preparation at the University. Many have stayed in Massachusetts, while just over a third have moved on to other parts of the United States as well as international destinations. In their further education, their work, and their volunteer activities, they are contributing to a wide range of public, non-profit, and for-profit sectors.

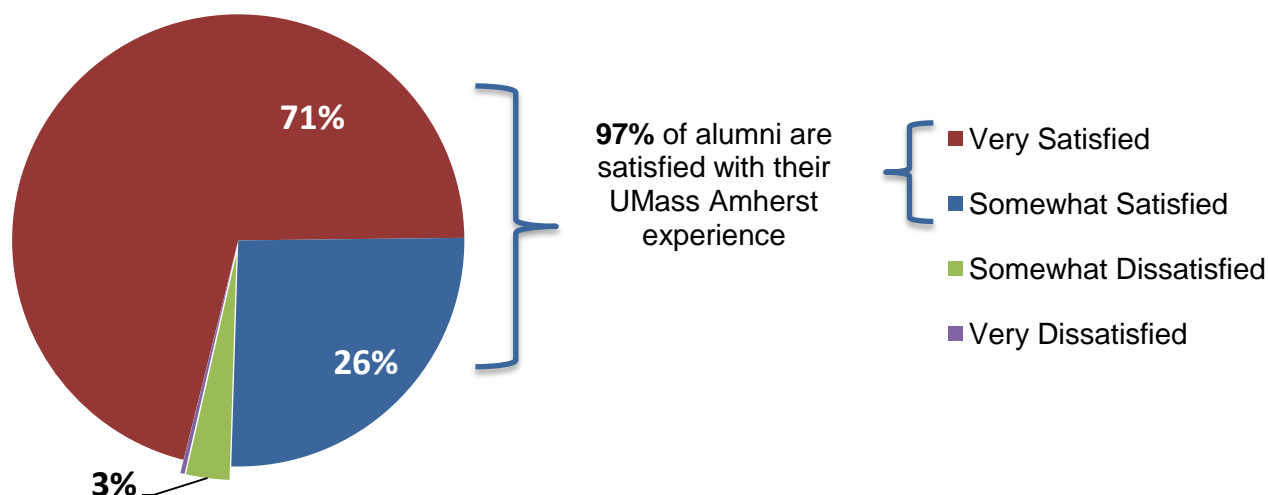
This report provides an overview of the survey findings as well as the survey methodology. The University of Massachusetts Amherst community is grateful to all the alums who participated in the survey, providing the University with important information about the quality of the education it offers as well as helpful suggestions about how to continue to enhance the UMass Amherst undergraduate experience.

Response Rate = 19.2% (773 of 4034 alumni with valid email addresses)

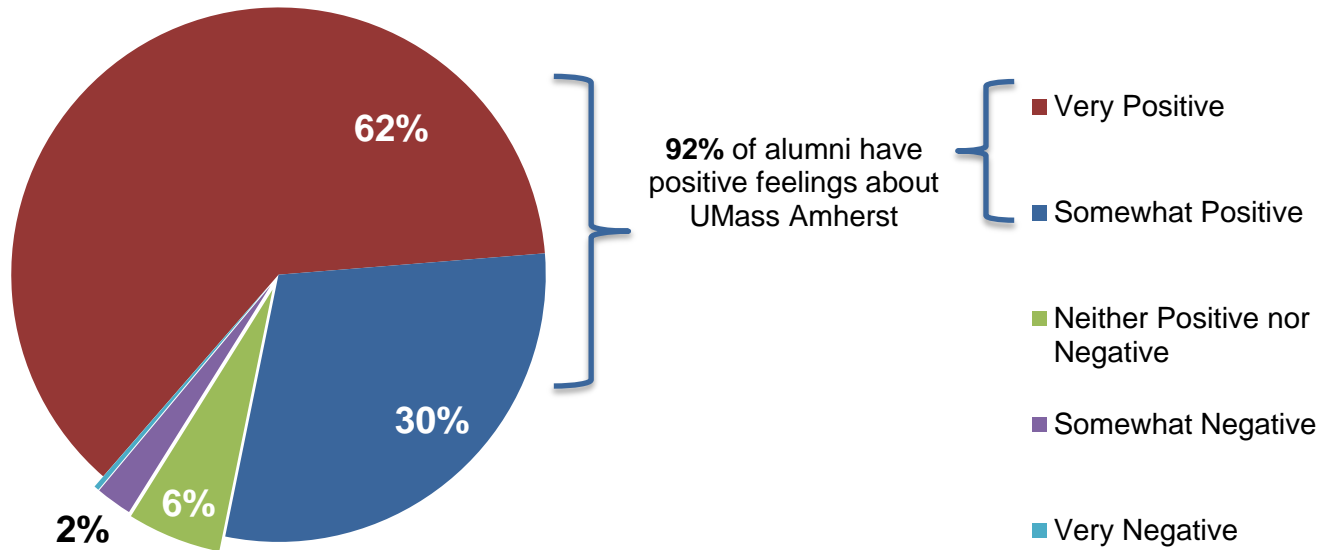
See the appendix for more information about the sample and survey methodology.

Recent UMass Alumni rate their UMass Amherst experience quite favorably. Over 90% are satisfied with their experiences and report positive feelings towards UMass.

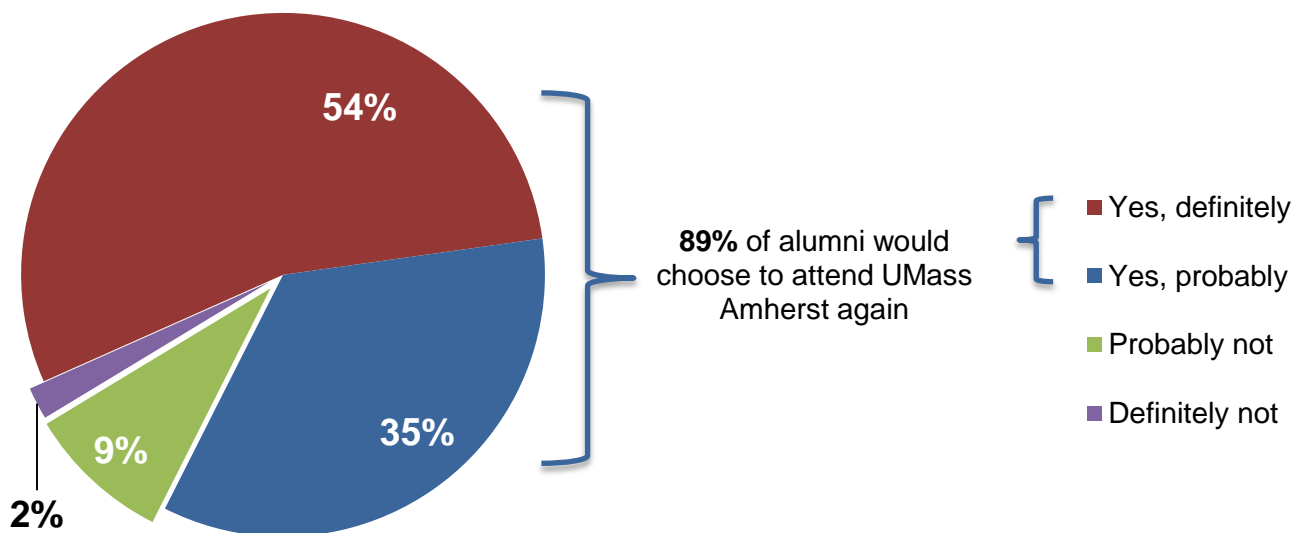
How satisfied are you with your UMass experience overall?



How would you describe your overall feelings toward UMass Amherst today?

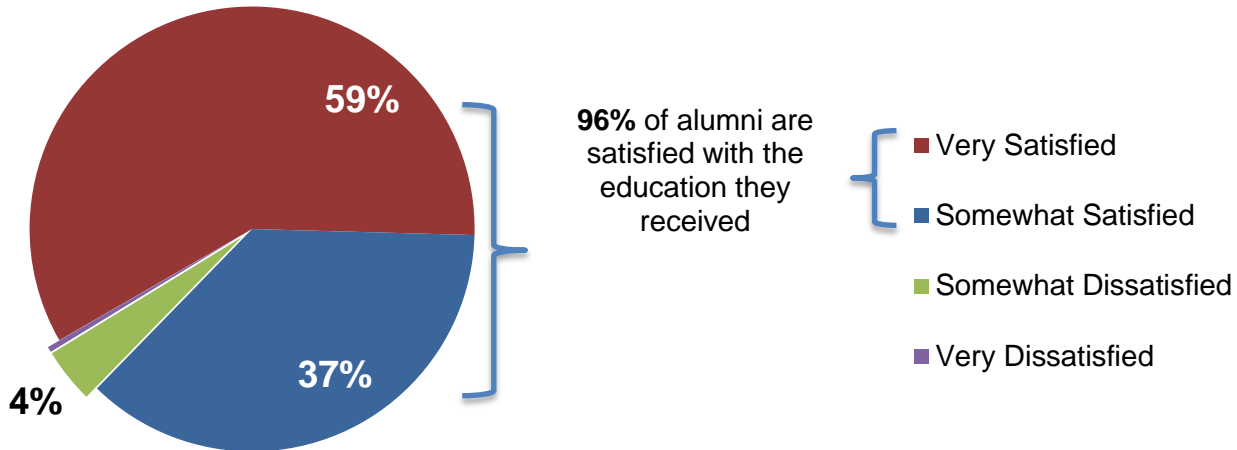


If you could relive your college experience, would you choose to attend UMass Amherst again?

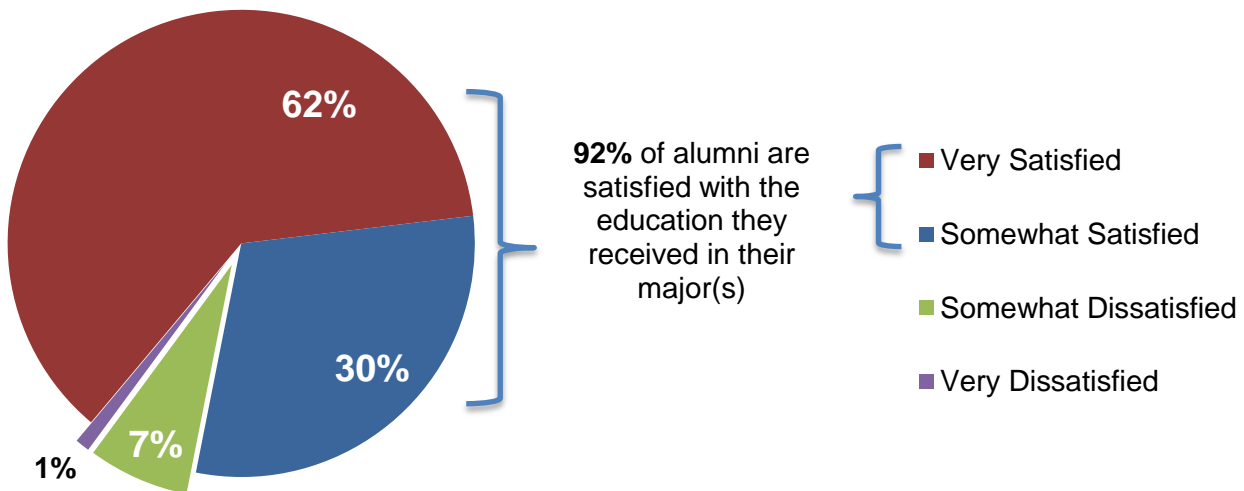


UMass alumni are also quite satisfied with the education they received as an undergraduate at the University.

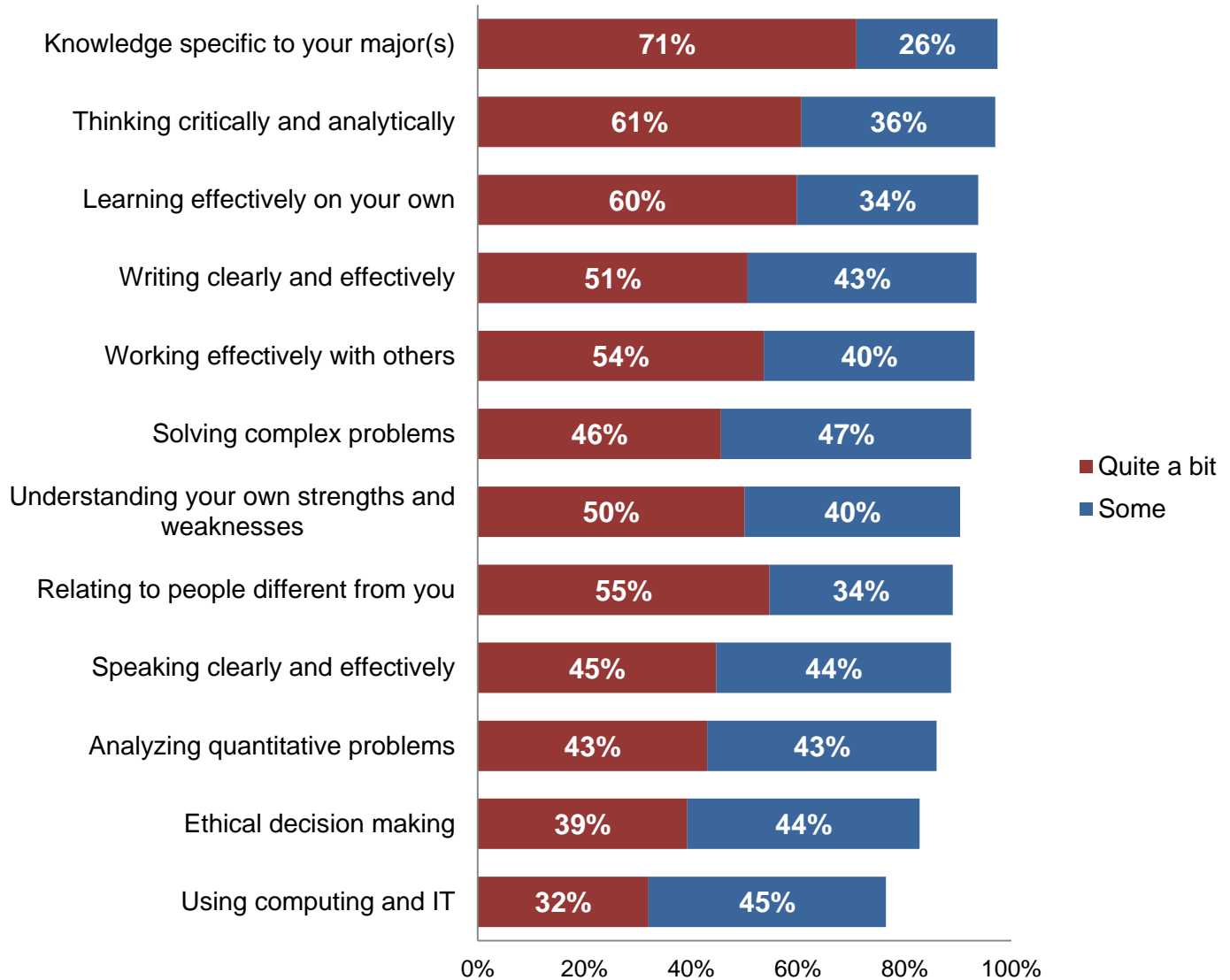
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of education you received at UMass Amherst as an undergraduate?



Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the education you received in your specific undergraduate major(s) at UMass Amherst?



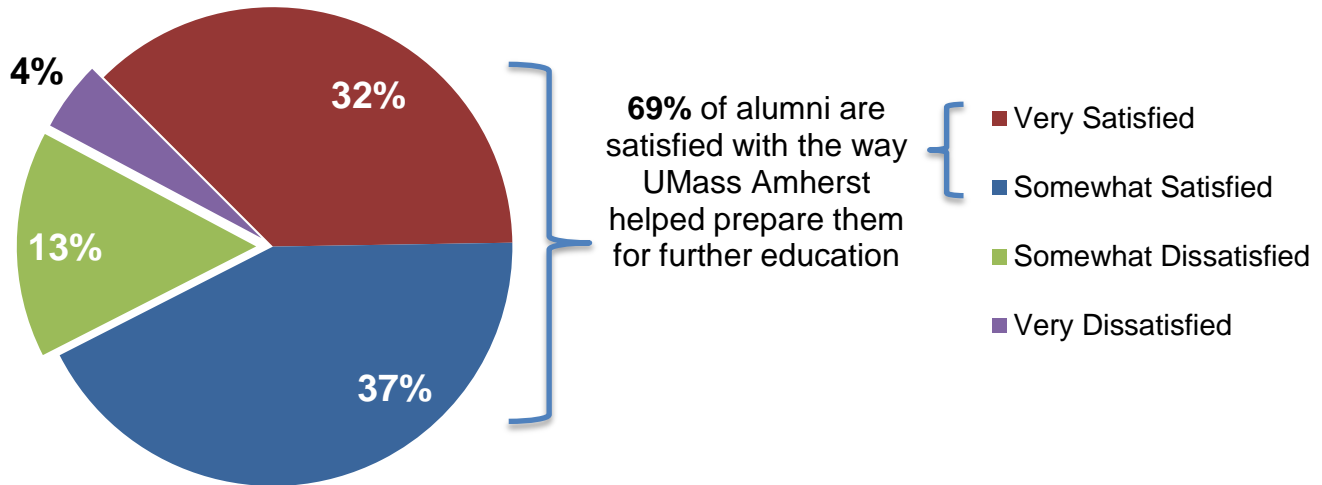
To what extent did your experience at UMass Amherst contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in each of these areas?



Note: Responses indicating “not much” not included in graph.

The majority of alumni are satisfied with the way UMass prepared them for further education.

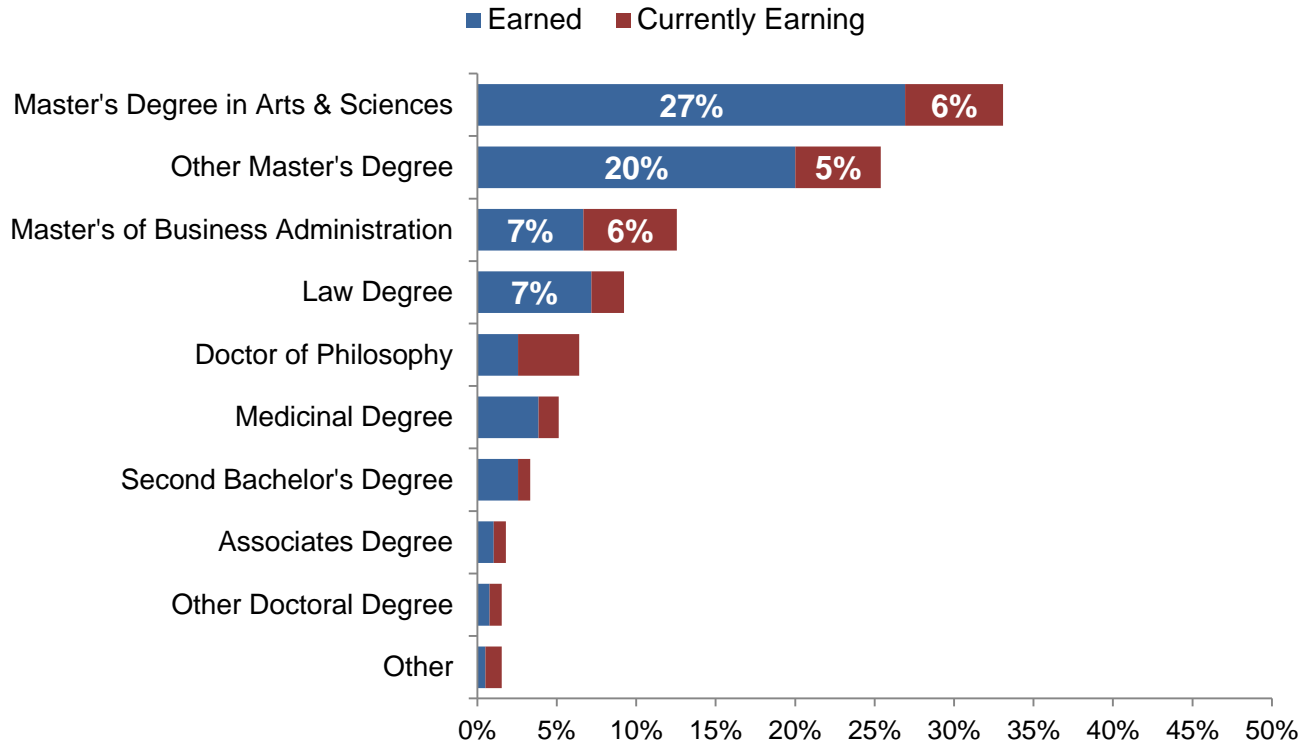
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way UMass Amherst helped prepare you for pursuing any further education?



Since graduating, 34% of recent undergraduate alumni have completed another degree program and 15% are currently enrolled in a degree program.

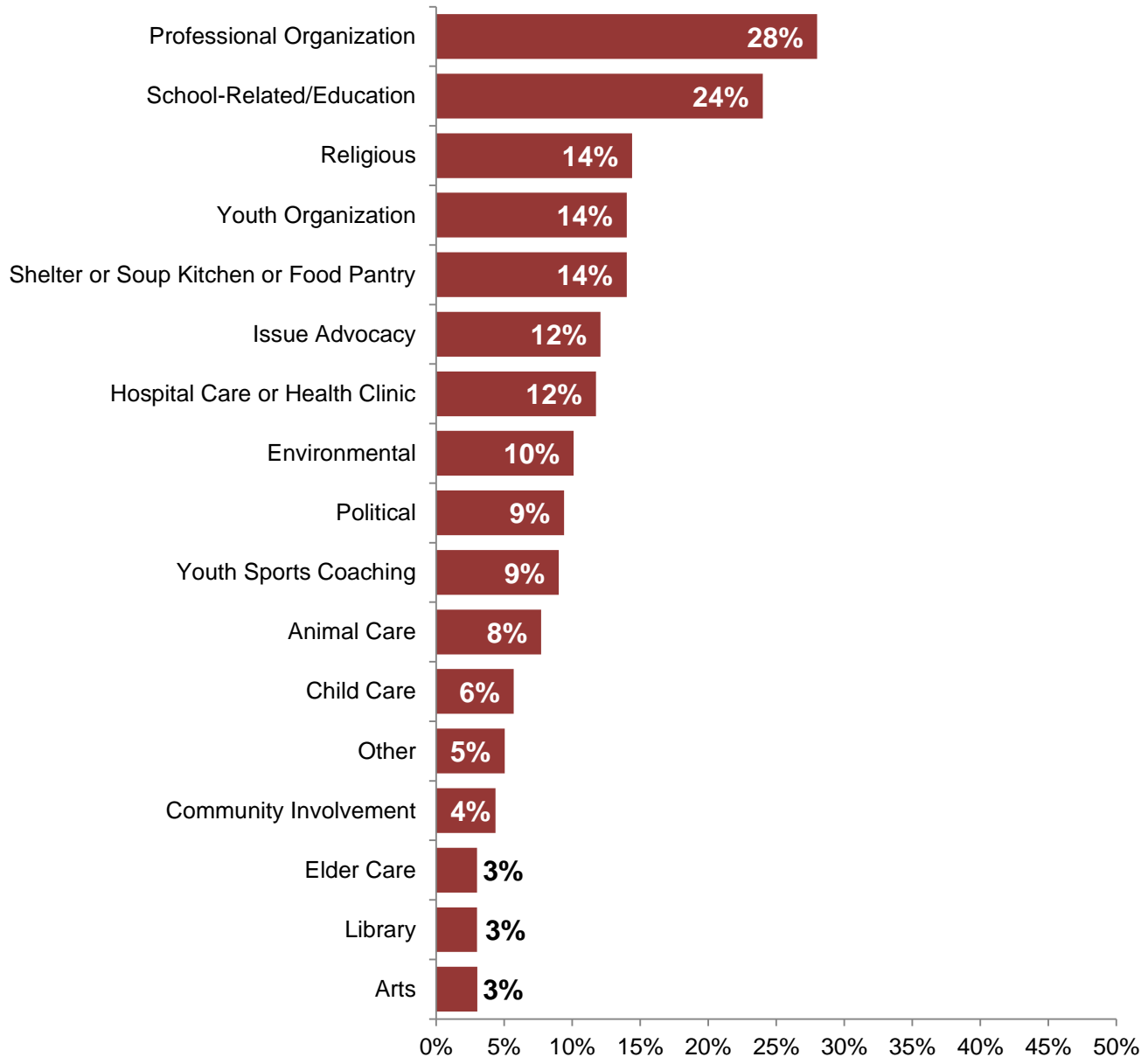
The largest proportion of UMass Amherst alumni is pursuing a Master's of Science or Arts.

Which of the following have you earned or are currently earning since graduating from the University?



Many (43%) recent alumni are involved in some kind of community service or volunteer activity. The kinds of activities that those who are involved (n=298) participate in are shown here:

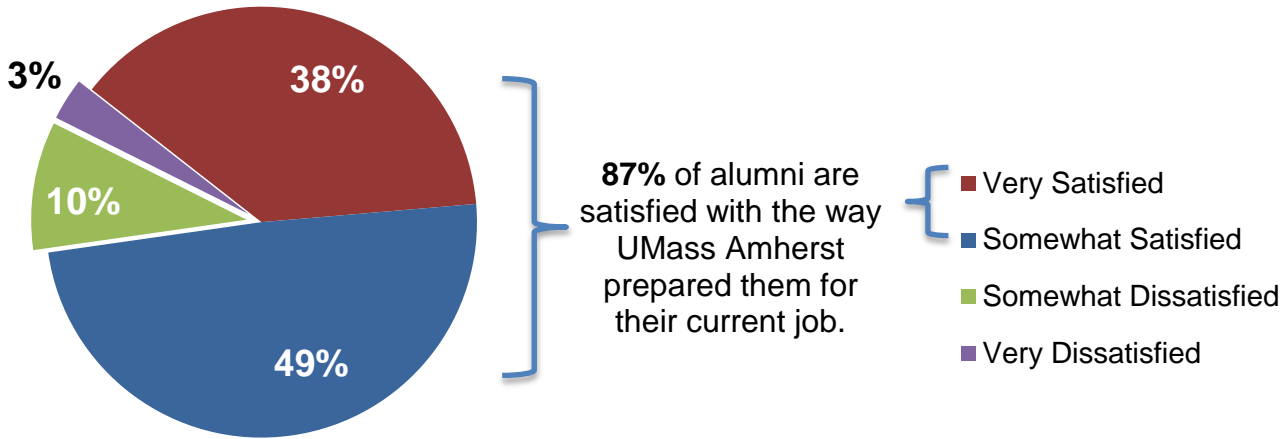
Alumni Community Service And Volunteer Activities



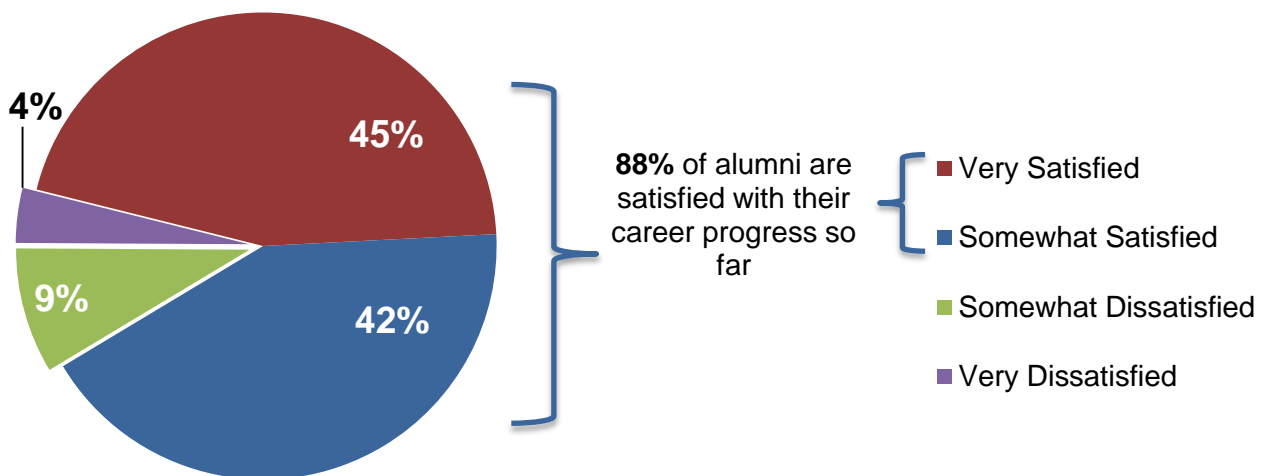
Note: Respondents could indicate their involvement in multiple categories, therefore the percentages add up to more than 100%.

UMass alumni are generally satisfied with both the way UMass prepared them for their career and their current career progress thus far.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way UMass Amherst helped prepare you for your current job?

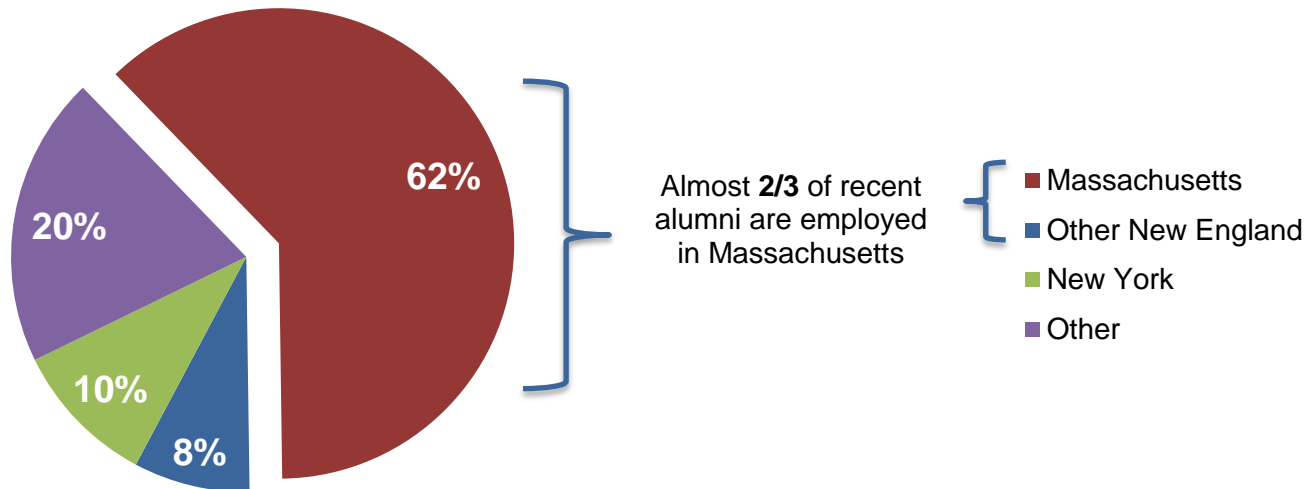


How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your career progress to date?

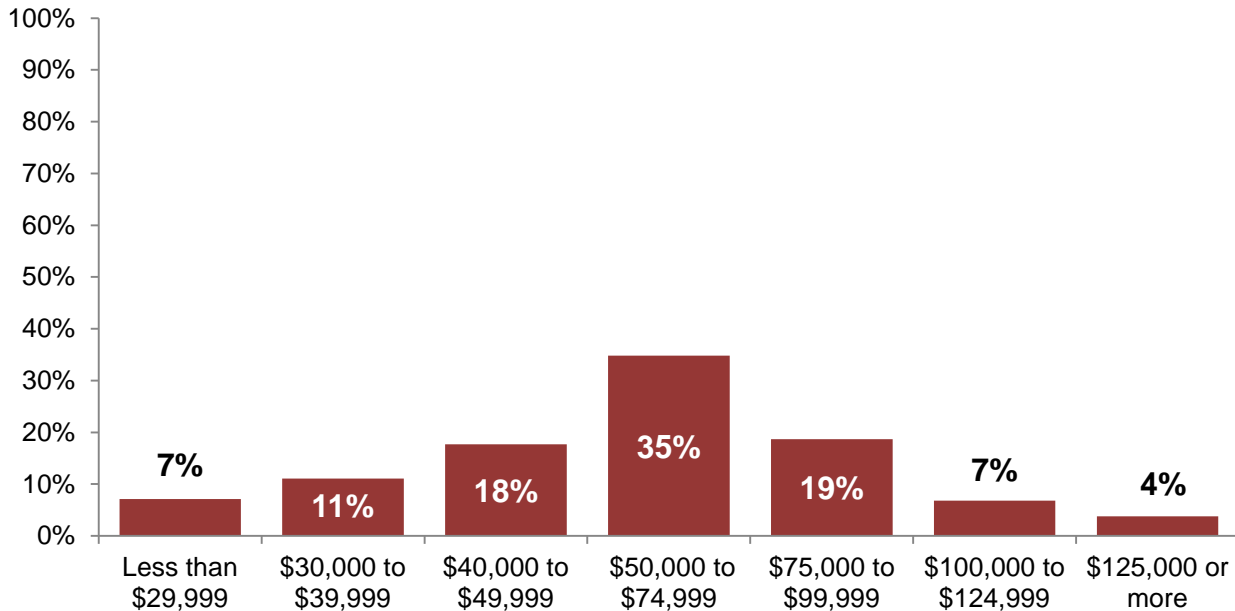


Two thirds of alumni currently live in Massachusetts and the largest proportion of recent alumni earns \$50,000 to \$75,000 .

In what state is your employer located?



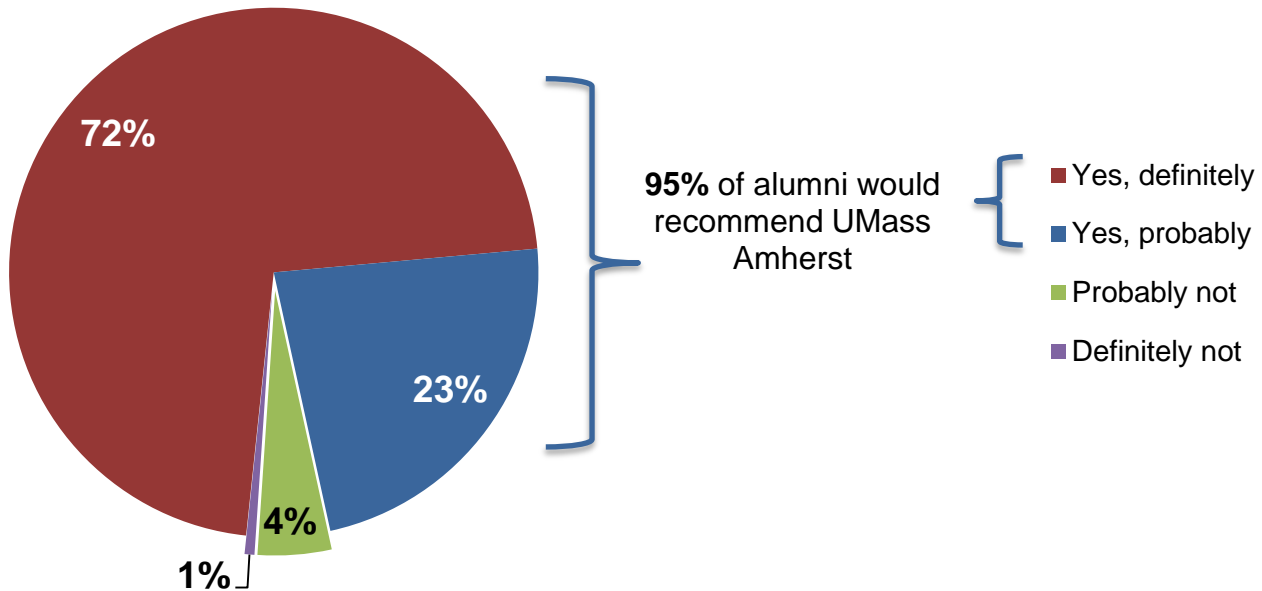
Alumni Annual Earnings (If Employed)



Note: 14.1% (n=95) of respondents did not respond to this question.

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

If asked, would you recommend UMass Amherst to a friend or family member?



Recent Alums...in their own words:

"I loved my times at UMass. I think of them often. I am grateful for the experiences I've had. Today, more than ever, I realize how much it has shaped me into the person I have become. I couldn't have asked for a better college to attend. UMass wasn't my first choice when I applied, but I am so happy I chose it. My life would probably be very different without it. Thank you so much for everything. I love UMass!"

"UMass is a beautiful campus! Every season in Amherst has its own beauty. The university is large, but as you determine your major you become a part of the colleges and programs, not just the university. I love that we had a wide variety of programs available and I think I was lucky to go to UMass because I had the opportunity to add a major after two years. I also love the variety of students. There is a place for everyone at UMass."

"UMass offers many opportunities for students to experience various cultures and participate in activities that they may not have had the chance to experience at a smaller college. Working as a high school guidance counselor in Massachusetts I have the opportunity to discuss UMass with many students and families, and I always explain that even though it's a large university, they design courses in a way that they don't feel as large. For example, offering discussion sections along with large lecture courses. I also share that if the students want to be just a number they can be, but that professors at UMass want to get to know their students and see them involved in campus activities so you really can make a name for yourself there. I think UMass prepared me extremely well for graduate school... it was definitely the right place for me and I can't say enough good things about this university!"

Appendix: UMass Amherst Recent Alumni Survey Methodology

In October 2013, UMass Amherst's Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA) conducted an Alumni Survey in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) that targeted the undergraduate classes of 2007 and 2008 (including Stockbridge alumni). The survey, which was developed collaboratively in-house in consultation with the UMass President's Office, included 44 fixed-response questions as well as several open-ended questions. The survey asked alumni to reflect on specific aspects of their educational experience at UMass Amherst, how connected they feel to the University, and how satisfied they are overall with their University experience. The survey also asked alumni to report on their current employment (e.g. occupational sector, job title, employer, employer's geographic location, specific skills used in their day-to-day work), any further education pursued subsequent to graduation (e.g. graduate degree, certificate program), and current volunteer activities. Open-ended items asked alumni to reflect on the "most favorable" and "least favorable" aspects of their undergraduate experience, providing insight about the types of experiences that remain salient in the minds of alumni several years post-graduation.

The online survey was administered by OAPA via Sensus Web 5.0, a survey software package housed on a University server. The survey invitation was sent to all Class of 2007 and Class of 2008 alumni for whom the UMass Amherst Alumni Association had an email address on file (n=4577). Consistent with survey research best practices, researchers sent as many as three reminder invitations to non-respondents. After adjusting for 544 alumni with non-working email addresses, the final response rate for the survey was 19.2% (n=773).

Given that the group of alumni with email addresses on record constituted only about one-half of all '07 and '08 graduates, researchers investigated the demographic representativeness of the group by comparing demographic characteristics of the survey population to those of alumni with no email address on record. Table 1 shows that the sampled and not-sampled groups match closely with regard to gender, school/college of major, honors status, and residency status at time of enrollment (i.e. in-state vs. out-of-state).

Table 1: Demographic Comparison of '07 and '08 Alumni by Survey Recipient Status

| | | Survey Recipients | | Non-Recipients | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| School/College* | | | | | |
| | Engineering | 216 | 4.7 | 212 | 5.1 |
| | Humanities & Fine Arts | 537 | 11.7 | 521 | 12.6 |
| | Management | 1030 | 22.5 | 749 | 18.1 |
| | Natural Resources & the Environment | 401 | 8.8 | 386 | 9.4 |
| | Natural Sciences | 372 | 8.1 | 371 | 9.0 |
| | Nursing | 155 | 3.4 | 218 | 5.3 |
| | Social & Behavioral Sciences | 1362 | 29.8 | 1264 | 30.6 |
| | Public Health | 157 | 3.4 | 201 | 4.9 |
| | Other | 347 | 7.6 | 206 | 5.0 |
| | Total | 4577 | 100.0 | 4128 | 100.0 |
| Gender | | | | | |
| | Female | 2317 | 50.6 | 2158 | 52.3 |
| | Male | 2248 | 49.1 | 1970 | 47.7 |
| | Missing | 12 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 4577 | 100.0 | 4128 | 100.0 |
| Residency | | | | | |
| | In-State | 3586 | 78.3 | 3387 | 82.0 |
| | Out-of-State | 988 | 21.6 | 741 | 18.0 |
| | Missing | 3 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Total | 4577 | 100.0 | 4128 | 100.0 |
| Honors Degree | | | | | |
| | Yes | 617 | 13.5 | 452 | 11.0 |
| | No | 3960 | 86.5 | 3676 | 89.0 |
| | Total | 4577 | 100.0 | 4128 | 100.0 |

* 2007-2008 School/College Organizational Structure

Although the low response rate for the survey was commensurate with those of recent alumni surveys conducted at other colleges and universities, researchers were concerned about the possibility of nonresponse bias among the sampled population. Table 2 compares survey sample participants and non-participants across six demographic characteristics, and shows that Honors alumni are overrepresented among survey participants.

Table 2: Demographic Comparison of Survey Participants and Non-Participants

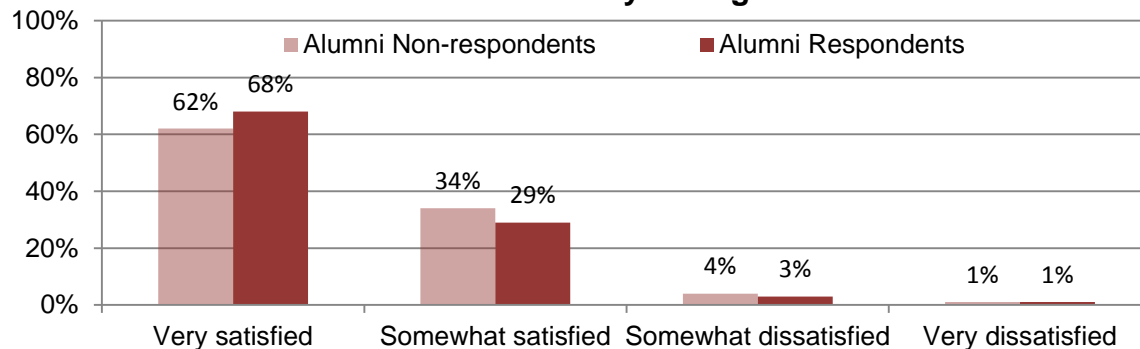
| | | Survey Participants | | Non-Participants | | Total | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| School/College | | | | | | | |
| | Engineering | 40 | 5.2 | 176 | 4.6 | 216 | 4.7 |
| | Humanities & Fine Arts | 104 | 13.5 | 433 | 11.4 | 537 | 11.7 |
| | Management | 193 | 25.0 | 837 | 22.0 | 1030 | 22.5 |
| | Natural Resources & the Environment | 56 | 7.2 | 345 | 9.1 | 401 | 8.8 |
| | Natural Sciences | 70 | 9.1 | 302 | 7.9 | 372 | 8.1 |
| | Nursing | 20 | 2.6 | 135 | 3.5 | 155 | 3.4 |
| | Social & Behavioral Sciences | 223 | 28.8 | 1139 | 29.9 | 1362 | 29.8 |
| | Public Health | 21 | 2.7 | 136 | 3.6 | 157 | 3.4 |
| | Other | 46 | 6.0 | 301 | 7.9 | 347 | 7.6 |
| | Total | 773 | 100.0 | 3804 | 100.0 | 4577 | 100.0 |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| | Female | 407 | 52.7 | 1910 | 50.2 | 2317 | 50.6 |
| | Male | 365 | 47.2 | 1883 | 49.5 | 2248 | 49.1 |
| | Missing | 1 | 0.1 | 11 | 0.3 | 12 | 0.3 |
| | Total | 773 | 100.0 | 3804 | 100.0 | 4577 | 100.0 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | | |
| | American Indian | 2 | 0.3 | 9 | 0.2 | 11 | 0.2 |
| | Asian | 43 | 5.5 | 331 | 8.7 | 374 | 8.2 |
| | Black | 22 | 2.8 | 157 | 4.1 | 179 | 3.9 |
| | Hispanic | 27 | 3.5 | 124 | 3.3 | 151 | 3.3 |
| | Multiple | 2 | 0.3 | 7 | 0.2 | 9 | 0.2 |
| | White | 592 | 76.6 | 2838 | 74.6 | 3430 | 75 |
| | Not reported | 85 | 11.0 | 338 | 8.9 | 423 | 9.2 |
| | Total | 773 | 100.0 | 3804 | 100.0 | 4577 | 100.0 |
| Residency | | | | | | | |
| | In-State | 592 | 76.6 | 2994 | 78.7 | 3586 | 78.3 |
| Citizenship | | | | | | | |
| | United States Citizen | 752 | 97.3 | 3634 | 95.5 | 4386 | 95.8 |
| Honors Degree | | | | | | | |
| | Yes | 166 | 21.5 | 451 | 11.9 | 617 | 13.5 |

* 2007-2008 School/College Organizational Structure

Demographic differences, however, are only one source of potential nonresponse bias. Another concern is whether respondents differ substantially from non-respondents in their overall UMass Amherst experience and their attitudes about their UMass Amherst experience. For example, are alumni survey respondents among those who were most positive about their experiences at UMass or, conversely those who are particularly unhappy about their experience? Either extreme would make the alumni survey results less valuable to the campus in understanding the judgments of UMass Amherst alumni overall. Researchers used graduating seniors' responses to the Senior Survey to test for potential bias in the alumni survey results by comparing the senior survey responses of alumni who completed the alumni survey with the senior survey responses of those alumni in our sample who did not complete the survey.

As graduating seniors, alumni survey respondents were slightly more likely to report being very satisfied with UMass overall and with their major, but the differences are relatively minor (see Graph 1 for Overall Satisfaction results).

Graph 1: Comparing Respondents & Non-Respondents Senior Survey Ratings



Furthermore, there were no substantial shifts in individuals' responses to the global satisfaction items between the senior survey and the alumni survey (in other words, satisfaction levels were fairly stable over time). The comparison of responses from the senior survey to the alumni survey give us additional confidence that the 2013 Alumni Survey responses provide a fair representation of recent alums views of UMass Amherst.