# Lessons worth keeping: How are students feeling as COVID-19 continues to influence their UMD experience?

## Students feel more engaged with UMD in Fall 2021 than in Fall 2020 both socially and academically.

Compared to Fall 2020, students reported feeling more connected to campus and more engaged in their classes. This was especially true for undergraduates, where the proportion of students who agreed with these statements rose by 10 percentage points or more. With the return to in-person instruction, students also had more opportunities to get to know their classmates -- for example, 71% of undergraduates said they had adequate opportunities to interact with their peers in Fall 2021, a jump from 25% in Fall 2020.

More students agreed that they felt engaged and connected to campus in Fall 2021 than in Fall 2020.

|  | Undergraduate | Graduate |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall 2020 | Fall 2021 | Fall 2020 | Fall 2021 |
| My instructors create a welcoming environment conducive to learning. | 60% | 75% | 82% | 84% |
| I find it easy to think of myself as a UMD student. | 54% | 73% | 57% | 61% |
| My instructors keep me engaged in my courses. | 30% | 59% | 62% | 77% |
| I frequently connect with members of the university community for non-academic purposes.  | 35% | 44% | 24% | 29% |

## More graduate students had a positive and engaged academic experience in Fall 2021…

74% of undergraduate students felt engaged in courses, while 84% of graduate students felt engaged in their courses. 71% of undergraduate students and 81% of graduate students had a somewhat positive or positive academic experience.

## …but fewer felt connected to the UMD community compared to undergraduates.

55% of graduates and 60% of undergraduates feel like they belong at UMD. 31% of graduates and 42% of undergraduates feel a strong sense of connection to the UMD community.

## Most students said they’ve developed resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and over half said they were doing well physically and mentally.

This was the case for both undergraduates and graduate students. 85% said that they improved their ability to manage pandemic-related challenges since Spring 2020, 67% agreed they are doing well physically, and 55% agreed they are doing well psychologically.

“It has been a challenge to go back to in person after being online for a year. I have had to rethink the way I study, and I am much busier so I need to be more on top of my work. I do enjoy being in person better though!”

 -Undergraduate (representative of 219 comments)

## However, not all students feel equally engaged.

First generation college students and students with caregiving responsibilities reported struggling more with in-person engagement. Half of first-generation students and caregivers felt they belong at UMD, compared to 62% of their peers. Black/African American and Hispanic students reported feeling less connected to the UMD community, as well.

First generation college students and caregivers found it more difficult to participate in in-person activities.

|  | Not First Generation | First Generation | Non-caregivers | Caregivers |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Maintaining motivation for my coursework. | 58% | 66% | 53% | 57% |
| Maintaining my academic performance. | 48% | 62% | 43% | 52% |
| Participating in in-person social activities. | 34% | 50% | 34% | 50% |
| Attending in person classes.  | 35% | 47% | 31% | 48% |

Fewer **Black** and **Hispanic** students felt like they belong at UMD. 57% of Asian students felt like they belong, 61% of White students felt like they belong, while 48% of Black and 52% of Hispanic students felt like they belong.

## The pandemic continues to impact some students’ access to basic needs.

Fewer respondents said the pandemic negatively impacted their mental and physical health in Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2020. However, similar percentages continue to report struggling with access to basic needs. Over 20% said COVID-19 impacted their access to mental health and medical care. 70 students said they were without housing at some point in the last year.

19% (410 students) said the pandemic impacted their access to food, and 15% (330 students) said it impacted their access to housing.

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Survey administration and reporting conducted by teams within the Division of IT (Academic Technology Experience), Division of Student Affairs, Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment, and the Teaching Learning Transformation Center

Want to learn more? See the full report at: <https://provost.umd.edu/covid-survey-results>