“TAKE IT FROM ME”

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RECENT ALUMNI
REFLECTING ON THEIR UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

ADVISING CONFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION

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SNAPSHOT

CAWG

of

Student Experiences

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PRESENTATION AGENDA

Alumni Survey

2011 Alumni Survey

- Sample
- Items
- Results
- Analysis

Discussion
ALUMNI SURVEY BACKGROUND

- Conducted every 3 years
- Online
- Administered to all UMD Bachelors’ recipients 1 year after graduation
- Mandated by MHEC
- Additional items added by CAWG
ALUMNI SURVEY 2011

Response rate
- 14% of all undergraduate degree earners FY’10 (n=837)
- 73% First-time freshman
- 27% Transfer students

Comparability to 2010 grad population
- Female and white students over-represented
- Male and Asian students under-represented
2011 ALUMNI SURVEY CONTENT

Quantitative items
   MHEC
   CAWG

Qualitative items
   CAWG
ANALYSIS

Larger themes

Sub-themes

Reliability
Looking back at their undergraduate experience, responding alumni wished they had more opportunity to engage in:

- Mentoring
- Broad experiences
- Real-world skills
- Preparation for the future
ORGANIZATION OF RESULTS

Who  wanted more opportunity
What  type of experience
Why  it is important to be engaged in experiences
How  to engage in experiences
Challenges  associated with each experience
MENTORING

64% wished they had more opportunity to establish a mentoring relationship with a UM faculty/staff member
WHAT IS MENTORING

“[…] really delving into my interests and commitments and helping me discover what direction would best suit me.”
“I could have developed more of a rapport with the professors in my major. This could have really helped me in writing recommendations to grad school…”
“As far as relationships with faculty, I could have taken initiative to meet with professors, go to more office hours, and participate more in class.”
“I could have reached out to senior faculty members requesting their guidance and support. That being said, I wasn't sure if that was their role.”
Recent alumni wished they had more opportunity to:

- 54% Increase academic knowledge outside their major
- 46% Gain an understanding of global issues
- 31% Understand diverse perspectives
- 28% Work with others who are different than you
WHAT ARE BROAD EXPERIENCES

“...expose myself to other areas of interest.”

“...nothing compares to experiencing another culture for an extended period of time.”
HOW TO BROADEN YOUR EXPERIENCE

“I would have taken more classes outside of my major and looked for job experience/research experience earlier than I did.”

“I wish I had taken advantage of a study abroad semester. The courses that UMD offers are fantastic, but nothing compares to experiencing another culture for an extended period of time.”
CHALLENGES TO BROADENING YOUR EXPERIENCE

“I could have gotten involved in research as I became more familiar with the faculty and school. But as time went on and classes became more intense, time was limited with working to pay for college and still join clubs and activities.”
REAL-WORLD SKILLS

Recent alumni wished they had more opportunity to:

48% Develop your ability to speak effectively
46% Develop your leadership skills
41% Develop your ability to write effectively
40% Apply what you have learned to other situations
40% Present a persuasive argument
34% Revise your thinking based on new information
WHAT ARE REAL-WORLD SKILLS

“I could have focused [...] more on fine tuning my writing skills.”

“I wish I had taken more opportunities to practice public speaking.”
HOW TO BUILD REAL-WORLD SKILLS

“I wish that I had picked one of the student organizations to become more involved in and perhaps worked towards a leadership position in that organization so that I could have had more practice with that sort of thing going into the work place.”

“I could have gone to the Writing Center to develop my writing skills

“I could have taken a speech course as an elective on my own time.”
CHALLENGES TO REAL-WORLD SKILL BUILDING

“I was not aware of any options available in [my] program, and familiarizing oneself with the classes offered through [another] department seemed a little daunting.”
Recent alumni wished they had more opportunity to:

59% Prepare for your current educational or professional position

34% Develop a sense of professional ethics
“If I had taken the time to do an internship or work part-time at a job that was related, I might have a job related to my major now...”
“I, for example, never felt able to do an internship and did not have a strong faculty advisor relationship because I did not realize how [this] would influence grad school possibility for me.”
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

“I could have been more proactive in seeking these opportunities out and taking my future into my own hands and not trusting that the education I received, albeit a good one, was enough....”

“I would have tried looking for an internship with a sense of urgency early in college...”

“[I could have] taken more time to meet with [someone from] the career center and interact more with my professors.”
CHALLENGES TO PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

“I could have probably searched for more opportunities in research labs but I felt like I didn't know where to look.”

“Having a full-time job while being a full-time student in order to afford school in the first place resulted in a myopia about my college experience that I would not have time for internships, clubs, activities and other interests that would have helped me in finding a major-related career or put me on the path toward grad school.”
“It's important to be more forward thinking as a student. Most students are thinking in the short term, but many of these opportunities are going to benefit them for the rest of their lives. I should have thought more Big-Picture in choosing classes, extracurricular activities, or taking advantage of activities and events and networking that I never did.”
ALUMNI SURVEY
STUDENT SNAPSHOT

Accessible

- List of important experiences
- Resource for advising conversations

Organized by theme

Download PDF at www.umd.edu/cawg
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

• To what extent have these themes come up in conversations with students?
• What prompts advisees to raise these topics?
• How can we combat challenges students perceive and experience?
• How can insight from alumni help you to advise current students?
Quantitative snapshot and forum for a more comprehensive analysis of 2011 Alumni reflections

Roundtable Discussion with Recent Alumni for Current Undergraduates
The 2011 Alumni Survey Snapshots are available electronically at:

www.umd.edu/cawg