

Results from the New Student Survey (2021)

UMaine Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
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The 2021 New Student Survey results are based on 1,457 new first-year students and 162 transfer students who completed the survey over the summer. These results reflect 65% of the UMaine population of new first-year students and 38% of transfer students in fall 2021. One should remain mindful of this when considering, or communicating, the figures reported below. Further, the number of respondents varies from item to item, which similarly should be kept in mind.

We begin with a presentation of the item-by-item results with first-year and transfer students reported independently (pp. 3-7). For ease of comparison and with space permitting, the two subgroups are presented side by side in each table. Only first-year student responses are presented for the item “As you think about beginning your college experience...” Finally, a separate analysis compares the in-state and out of state students mean scores on the factors used in choosing which college to attend.

But first, we share some things that caught our collective eye (first-year students only):

- UMaine is the first choice for 72% of these respondents.
- For 21% of respondents, the father’s educational attainment did not go beyond high school; for the mother’s, this is true for 16% of respondents.
- 43% of respondents feel “well prepared” or “very well prepared” for UMaine.
- 50% of these respondents plan to study 10 or fewer hours in the typical week, and 86% expect a first-year GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Respondents’ concerns as they anticipate their experience at UMaine (indicating it as “a concern” or “somewhat of a concern”):
 - Grades (80%)
 - Balancing my time among classes, studying, work, and leisure (79%)
 - Financial -- having enough spending money (73%)
 - Financial -- paying for school (71%)
 - Making sure I get the extra help I need in my classes (69%)

The least of respondents' concerns (indicating it as "not a concern"):

- Drugs and alcohol (83%)
 - My personal safety (72%)
 - COVID-19 outbreak on campus (71%)
 - Transportation (rides to the mall, getting home for break, etc.) (66%)
 - Size of classes (64%)
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- The five highest-rated factors influencing the decision to attend UMaine (on a scale of 1 to 5):
 - Parent/guardian's rating of UMaine (mean rating: 3.96)
 - Athletic/recreational opportunities (mean rating: 3.95)
 - Teacher's recommendations for UMaine (mean rating: 3.84)
 - Application process (mean rating: 3.84)
 - High school counselor's recommendation for UMaine (mean rating: 3.80)

 - The five lowest-rated factors influencing the decision to attend UMaine (again, on a scale of 1 to 5):
 - Undergraduate research opportunities (mean rating: 2.51)
 - Overall value (mean rating: 2.55)
 - Campus atmosphere (mean rating: 2.55)
 - Study abroad program (mean rating: 2.63)
 - Total cost (mean rating: 3.12)

 - The six schools that interested respondents most (other than UMaine), to which they had applied and had been accepted:
 - University of New Hampshire
 - University of Vermont
 - University of Southern Maine
 - Husson University
 - University of Rhode Island
 - University of New England

Item-By-Item Results

Mother's highest level of education?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Grammar school	3	0.2	0	0
Some high school	20	1.5	8	5.2
High school graduate	193	14.3	31	20.1
Postsecondary other than college	30	2.2	4	2.6
Some college	179	13.3	24	15.6
College degree	569	42.2	54	35.1
Some graduate school	17	1.3	1	0.6
Graduate degree	311	23.1	31	20.1
Don't know	25	1.9	1	0.6
Total	1347		154	
Nonrespondents	110		8	

Father's highest level of education?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Grammar school	6	.4	3	2
Some high school	30	2.2	5	3.3
High school graduate	240	17.9	39	25.8
Postsecondary other than college	42	3.1	5	3.3
Some college	174	12.9	18	11.9
College degree	489	36.4	44	29.1
Some graduate school	18	1.3	0	0
Graduate degree	269	20.0	32	21.2
Don't know	76	5.7	5	3.3
Total	1344		151	
Nonrespondents	113		11	

Other Siblings at College?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
I'm the first of my siblings to go to college	590	44.2	59	39.6
I have at least one sibling who has gone to college in the last four years	525	39.4	55	36.9
I have at least one sibling who has gone to college five or more years ago	86	6.4	19	12.8
I'm an only child	133	10.0	16	10.7
Total	1334		149	
Nonrespondents	123		13	

How well prepared do you feel for your academic courses at UMaine?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Very well prepared	90	6.7	13	8.7
Well prepared	482	36.0	79	52.7
Somewhat prepared	615	45.9	50	33.3
Underprepared	118	8.8	5	3.3
Not certain	35	2.6	3	2.0
Total	1340		150	
Nonrespondents	117		12	

During the coming year at UMaine, how much time do you expect to study during a typical week?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
5 hours or fewer	108	8.1	9	6.0
6 - 10 hours	559	42.1	70	47.0
11 - 15 hours	467	35.2	48	32.2
16 - 20 hours	156	11.7	14	9.4
21 hours or more	38	2.9	8	5.4
Total	1328		149	
Nonrespondents	129		13	

What do you expect your grade point average to be at the end of your first year at UMaine?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
3.00 or higher	1131	86.0	128	86.5
2.00 - 2.99	181	13.8	19	12.8
1.00- 1.99	3	0.2	0	0
Lower than 1.00	0	0	1	0.7
Total	1315		148	
Nonrespondents	142		15	

An aside: Do expectations agree with reality? The first-year respondents to the 2020 survey disclosed expectations not dissimilar to those reported on the item above: 86% expecting a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and 14% expecting a GPA between 2.00 and 2.99.

Actual end of first year grade point average

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
3.00 or higher	846	60.0	102	67.1
2.00 - 2.99	318	22.6	33	21.7
1.00- 1.99	165	11.3	11	7.2
Lower than 1.00	81	5.6	6	3.9
Total	1410		152	
Nonrespondents	47		10	

Is UMaine your first-choice school?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	934	71.5	101	69.2
No	374	28.5	45	30.8
Total	1310		146	
Nonrespondents	147		16	

Number of colleges applied to?

	First Year		Transfer	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
1	147	11.1	55	37.4
2	119	9.0	20	13.6
3	170	12.9	19	12.9
4	150	11.4	15	10.2
5	163	12.3	12	8.2
More than 5	572	43.3	26	17.7
Total	1321		147	
Nonrespondents	136		15	

As you think about beginning your college experience at UMaine, which of the following concerns do you have? (Only first-year Students)

	Not a concern	Somewhat of a concern	A concern	Total Respondents
Balancing your time among classes, studying, work and leisure	21.1%	51.5%	27.4%	1288
Grades	19.8%	52.9%	27.3%	1309
Finances -- paying for school	29.4%	47.0%	23.6%	1312
Finances -- having enough spending money	26.6%	49.9%	23.4%	1314
Your health (physical, emotional)	40.2%	40.0%	19.8%	1306
Making sure you get the extra help you need in your classes	31.2%	49.5%	19.3%	1302
Relationships with new friends	39.3%	41.8%	18.9%	1291
Finding your way around campus	34.1%	48.9%	17.0%	1290
Being away from friends	48.5%	37.8%	13.7%	1312
Instructor expectations	33.5%	53.1%	13.4%	1295
Romantic relationships	63.0%	25.0%	11.9%	1290
Residence hall life (roommate, noise, etc.)	52.0%	37.9%	10.1%	1282
Being away from family	53.7%	36.5%	9.8%	1310
Relationships with faculty	54.0%	37.7%	8.2%	1301
Transportation (rides off campus, getting home for breaks, etc.)	65.7%	27.0%	7.2%	1287
Size of your classes	63.8%	29.7%	6.6%	1295
COVID-19 outbreak on campus	71.3%	23.1%	5.6%	1282
Personal safety	71.7%	23.2%	5.2%	1277
Drugs and alcohol	83.2%	12.8%	4.0%	1293

Listed below are factors typically considered when choosing a college. Rate UMaine on each factor using a 5-point scale. (First-year Students)

	Mean Rating	<i>(Percent based on the number who rated the item)</i>					Total Respondents	<i>(Based on total N)</i> Not Applicable
		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent		
Parent/guardian's rating of UMaine	3.96	.2%	3.9%	24.9%	41.8%	29.1%	1273	5.7%
Athletic/recreational opportunities	3.95	.2%	2.5%	28.4%	39.9%	29.1%	1257	19.8%
Overall value	3.85	0%	2.0%	33.1%	43.2%	21.8%	1252	6.8%
Teacher's recommendations for UMaine	3.84	.3%	3.0%	30.5%	45.1%	21.1%	1261	21.7%
Application process	3.84	.5%	4.1%	32.2%	38.0%	25.3%	1258	.6%
High school counselor's recommendation for UMaine	3.80	.5%	4.7%	29.5%	44.4%	20.8%	1269	22.9%
Academic programs	3.79	.1%	2.8%	31.7%	48.8%	16.7%	1273	8.0%
Undergraduate research opportunities	3.78	0%	2.8%	35.2%	42.6%	19.4%	1246	25.8%
Campus activities	3.78	.2%	2.6%	36.1%	41.0%	20.1%	1256	22.9%
General reputation	3.77	.2%	4.7%	32.8%	42.9%	19.5%	1285	1.4%
Campus safety	3.74	.4%	4.9%	35.4%	38.5%	20.8%	1252	22.5%
Campus atmosphere	3.73	0%	5.3%	35.8%	39.3%	19.6%	1269	16.5%
Size	3.69	.2%	4.5%	38.3%	39.6%	17.3%	1276	3.3%
Commitment to sustainability (energy, local food, design)	3.69	.3%	5.8%	37.3%	37.6%	18.9%	1247	25.4%
Study Abroad Program	3.60	0%	5.5%	45.3%	32.4%	16.8%	1243	54.9%
Merit scholarships	3.59	1.8%	12.6%	33.7%	29.3%	22.6%	1253	9.4%
Honors program	3.58	1.6%	5.4%	40.3%	38.2%	14.4%	1251	45.6%
Student /faculty ratio	3.55	.3%	5.4%	46.1%	35.4%	12.8%	1246	25.6%
Email communications	3.53	2.1	12.3%	34.9%	32.1%	18.6%	1261	.3%
Transfer/AP credit availability	3.51	1.0	10.0%	42.5%	29.6%	17.0%	1250	30.2%
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	3.47	1.8%	10.3%	40.8%	33.0%	14.1%	1262	19.7%
Location	3.47	2.3	17.0%	33.4%	26.1%	21.3%	1279	1.9%
Website	3.44	6.0	13.4%	30.1%	31.9%	18.7%	1269	.9%
Financial aid package (grants, loans, Work Study)	3.35	2.8	19.9%	34.0%	25.6%	17.6%	1258	7.5%
Campus diversity	3.23	4.7	14.9%	45.3%	23.1%	12.0%	1236	23.0%
Total cost	3.12	3.4	28.0%	33.8%	22.2%	12.5%	1264	3.2%

Listed below are factors typically considered when choosing a college. Rate UMaine on each factor using a 5-point scale. (Transfer Students)

	Mean Rating	<i>(Percent based on the number who rated the item)</i>					Total Respondents	<i>(Based on total n)</i> Not Applicabl
		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent		
Overall value	3.85	0%	3.3%	33.1%	38.8%	24.8%	140	13.6%
Application process	3.84	1.5	7.4	25.7	36.8	28.7%	141	3.5
Academic programs	3.80	0%	2.4%	30.4%	52.0%	15.2%	143	12.6%
General reputation	3.78	0%	2.8%	32.2%	49.0%	16.1%	144	0.7%
Athletic/recreational opportunities	3.77	0%	5.6%	31.1%	44.4%	18.9%	140	35.7%
Campus atmosphere	3.77	0%	7.8%	32.4%	34.3%	25.5%	142	28.2%
Campus safety	3.75	0%	3.4%	34.1%	46.6%	15.9%	138	36.2%
Undergraduate research	3.73	0%	0%	43.0%	40.5%	16.5%	138	42.8%
Parent/guardian's rating of UMaine	3.72	1.0 %	3.8%	37.1%	38.1%	20.0%	140	25.0%
Commitment to sustainability (energy, local food, design)	3.68	0%	6.8%	38.6%	34.1%	20.5%	135	34.8%
Campus activities	3.67	1.2	2.4%	40.0%	41.2%	15.3%	141	39.7%
Size	3.66	0%	4.7%	40.9%	37.8%	16.5%	142	10.6%
Study Abroad Program	3.64	0%	2%	46.0%	38.0%	14.0%	139	64.0%
Teacher's recommendations for UMaine	3.61	0%	2.9%	46.4%	37.7%	13.0%	141	51.1%
Email communications	3.60	1.4	10.9%	31.2%	39.1%	17.4%	140	1.4%
High school counselor's recommendation for UMaine	3.59	0%	2.7%	47.9%	37.0%	12.3%	142	48.6%
Website	3.56	3.6	8.0%	35.8%	33.6%	19.0%	139	14.4%
Transfer/AP credit availability	3.53	5%	8.3%	36.7%	29.2%	20.8%	138	13.0%
Student /faculty ratio	3.49	0%	5.5%	50.5%	33.0%	11.0%	139	34.5%
Honors program	3.47	0%	1.8%	54.4%	38.6%	5.3%	140	59.3%
Location	3.44	1.5	17.6%	38.2%	21.4%	21.4%	142	7.7%
Merit scholarships	3.41	4.3	11.2%	40.5%	26.7%	17.2%	139	16.5%
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	3.33	0%	8.9%	56.7%	26.7%	7.8%	139	35.3%
Campus diversity	3.27	4.4	14.3%	40.7%	30.8%	9.9%	137	33.6%
Financial aid package (grants, Total cost	3.15	2.4	23.6%	39.8%	25.2%	8.9%	139	11.5%
	3.04	2.3	26.6%	43.0%	21.1%	7%	141	9.2%

Regarding the two tables above, bear in mind that the ranked mean ratings in the first column are each based on a scale of 1 to 5. Consequently, while it is true that, say, Total cost appears at the bottom of this table, the corresponding means (3.12 for first-year students and 3.04 for transfer students) are far from the bottom of the numerical scale on which it is based. In short, this factor is comparatively low to the other factors—not low in an absolute sense. ***Further, please take into consideration that COVID-19 impacted the format of spring and summer admissions activities: Admitted Student Days, New Student Orientation, and other spring and summer admissions activities were conducted remotely during 2020. This may have an impact on student ratings.***

The following two table present the means scores of these same factors by residency and type of admittance. The factors are sorted in descending order by the overall mean for each group. It is interesting to note that regardless of admission type, out of state students rated the factors more positively than in-state students on most factors. The exceptions included campus diversity and high school counselor’s recommendation for UMaine for first year students and campus diversity and total cost for transfer students.

First-Year

	In State		Out of State	
	Mean	n	Mean	n
Parent/guardian's rating of UMaine	3.88	631	4.04	570
Athletic/recreational opportunities	3.83	514	4.07	494
Overall value	3.73	602	3.97	565
Teacher's recommendations for UMaine	3.84	584	3.84	403
Application process	3.67	655	4.02	595
High school counselor's recommendation for UMaine	3.86	593	3.72	386
Academic programs	3.76	610	3.82	561
Undergraduate research opportunities	3.64	464	3.93	461
Campus activities	3.68	499	3.89	469
General reputation	3.65	668	3.89	599
Campus safety	3.56	517	3.95	453
Campus atmosphere	3.60	559	3.88	501
Size	3.55	642	3.85	592
Commitment to sustainability (energy, local food, design)	3.51	461	3.87	469
Study Abroad program	3.52	293	3.70	268
Merit scholarships	3.41	594	3.77	541
Honors program	3.46	361	3.73	319
Student /faculty ratio	3.35	483	3.77	444
Email communications	3.33	658	3.74	599
Transfer/AP credit availability	3.49	491	3.54	382
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	3.37	491	3.58	523
Location	3.31	657	3.65	598
Website	3.28	654	3.62	603
Financial aid package (grants, loans, Work Study)	3.17	610	3.55	554
Campus diversity	3.25	494	3.20	458
Total cost	3.08	643	3.17	580

Transfer

	In State		Out of State	
	Mean	n	Mean	n
Overall value	3.77	65	3.96	55
Application process	3.76	72	3.94	63
Academic programs	3.72	69	3.91	55
General reputation	3.64	76	3.95	66
Athletic/recreational opportunities	3.69	51	3.89	38
Campus atmosphere	3.56	59	4.07	42
Campus safety	3.49	51	4.14	36
Undergraduate research opportunities	3.55	49	4.07	29
Parent/guardian's rating of UMaine	3.60	58	3.89	46
Commitment to sustainability (energy, local food, design)	3.43	49	4.03	38
Campus activities	3.48	50	3.97	34
Size	3.54	71	3.84	55
Study Abroad program	3.48	29	3.90	20
Teacher's recommendations for UMaine	3.47	45	3.91	23
Email communications	3.58	73	3.64	64
High school counselor's recommendation for UMaine	3.56	50	3.68	22
Website	3.50	72	3.64	64
Transfer/AP credit availability	3.53	66	3.53	53
Student /faculty ratio	3.25	53	3.86	37
Honors program	3.46	35	3.50	22
Location	3.23	73	3.68	57
Merit scholarships	3.34	64	3.51	51
Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	3.28	50	3.41	39
Campus diversity	3.30	54	3.25	36
Financial aid package (grants, loans, Work Study)	3.19	69	3.09	53
Total cost	3.16	67	2.92	60

Students were asked to indicate which other schools they were interested in attending, had applied to and been accepted. Schools that had been identified by at least ten first-year students and at least two transfer students are presented in the tables below.

Other Schools of Interest (First-year)

UMaine New Students (<i>n</i>)	Comparison School of Interest
55	University of New Hampshire
49	University of Vermont
37	University of Southern Maine
27	Husson University
24	University of Rhode Island
23	University New England
22	University of Massachusetts Amherst
17	University of Maine Farmington
14	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
11	Rochester Institute of Technology
10	University of Connecticut
10	Wentworth Institute of Technology

Other Schools of Interest (Transfer)

UMaine Transfer Students (<i>n</i>)	Comparison School of Interest
3	Unity College
3	University of New Hampshire
2	Boston University
2	Roger Williams University
2	University of Maine Farmington
2	University of Southern Maine
2	University of Vermont