Chapter 2  Undergraduate Students: Admissions & Enrollment

Goals
Establishing optimal admissions and enrollment levels is a complex process influenced by many factors. A central priority for the University is access; its goal is to enable qualified students to attend regardless of socioeconomic background. For a number of years, the U-M has provided financial aid packages that meet full cost of attendance to admitted students from Michigan with need (see Chapter 3). The University also seeks to enhance the student learning experience by decreasing the student-faculty ratio through faculty growth, encouraging participation in international programs, supporting academic multicultural initiatives, keeping pace with instructional technology and facilities, and intensifying undergraduate action-based learning opportunities (see Chapter 9).

Overview
In this chapter, we provide indicators that detail the application, admission and enrollment trends for new freshman and undergraduate transfer students, and describe our students in terms of academic preparation and geographic origins. (Diversity data is found in Chapter 7.)

Student interest in the University continues to grow. Freshman application numbers have nearly doubled since 2004, with recent growth due in part to adoption of the Common Application. As a highly selective institution, U-M offers admission to fewer than half of those who apply. The size of the enrolling freshman cohort has hovered near 6,000 for the past five years, which met or exceeded annual targets.

Undergraduate students who enroll in the U-M have excellent grade point averages and standardized test scores. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions describes U-M students as “bright and inquisitive, coming from a diverse range of backgrounds, and driven to succeed.” These students are attracted to the University of Michigan for numerous reasons, including the institution’s reputation, the quality of the faculty and academic programs, and the campus atmosphere.¹

The U-M offers 250 academic programs for undergraduates, opportunities for international study, more than 1,400 student clubs, 27 NCAA Division I teams, and fine arts offerings by and for students and professionals, all of which help earn the institution high marks from the U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges guide, QS World University Rankings, and Kiplinger’s Personal Investing Best Values in Public Colleges, among others (see Chapter 12). As the top-ranked public university for research funding, U-M offers students many hands-on research opportunities. The cosmopolitan campus community and college town atmosphere make it one of the most interesting places to live in the country.

The University actively pursues students from the state of Michigan, the nation and around the globe. In fall 2015, undergraduate students on campus came from 82 of 83 Michigan counties, all 50 states, and 89 countries. Fifty-nine percent of currently enrolled undergraduates are in-state students. The diverse origins, backgrounds and experiences found in every entering class contribute to the varied interests and characteristics of the student body.

For More Information
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Enrollment and Degree Reports, Office of the Registrar

Charts in Chapter 2

U-M freshman applications have been increasing steadily since 2004, while enrollment has remained relatively constant.

2.1 Applications, Admission Offers, and Enrollment for New Freshman and Undergraduate Transfer Students, Fall 2005-15.

Over the last decade, freshman application totals for the University of Michigan have trended upward – other than for the Fall 2004 admissions period – and have been influenced by several events.

Foremost was the resolution in 2003 of two lawsuits\(^2\) filed in 1997 contesting the University’s admissions practices that took race and ethnicity into account when evaluating applicants. After several years of litigation in federal court, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the suits in June 2003, finding that although “diversity is a compelling state interest that can justify the consideration of race as a plus factor in university admissions, the automatic distribution of…points to students from underrepresented minority groups is not narrowly tailored to achieve this purpose.”\(^3\)

Following the Supreme Court decision, the University developed a new undergraduate application and revised its review procedures, beginning with applicants seeking admission for Fall 2004.

The new application required three separate essays from all applicants where previously students needed to submit one essay on a topic of their choosing. The number of applicants rose fairly slowly for a few years. For Fall 2011, applicants jumped, largely attributed to the adoption of the Common Application, which makes it simpler for students to include Michigan on the list of institutions they want to consider.

Fall enrollment of new freshman students remained largely at or above target range of 5,500 to 6,500, from a low enrollment of 5,399 in 2006 to an all-time high of 6,505 in 2014.

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The trend in selectivity rates is mainly influenced by changes in application numbers.

2.2.1 Selectivity Rates for New Freshman and Undergraduate Transfer Students, Fall 2005-15.

Selectivity is the ratio of admission offers to total applications (and one important indicator of the quality of students who ultimately attend the institution). Yield is the ratio of enrollment numbers to admission offers.

The U-M sets annual targets for entering freshman students. The class-size target and a prediction of how many offers will be accepted influence the number of admission offers made. Tuning the admissions selectivity to produce the desired enrollment levels is something of an art, informed by data and experience.

In chart 2.2.1, a lower percentage indicates greater selectivity (fewer admission offers made relative to the total number of applications). In chart 2.2.2, a lower percentage indicates lower yield (fewer enrollments relative to the total number of admission offers). Yield is lower for out-of-state students (dotted green curve) compared to in-state students (dotted red curve) due to the relatively greater competition the University faces for out-of-state students and the significantly higher cost of tuition.
The academic preparation of freshman students entering the U-M, already high, is improving, as indicated by the grade point averages and standardized test scores of the Fall 2014 freshman class compared to their 2004 counterparts.

2.3.1 GPA and Standardized Test Scores of New Freshman Students, Fall 2004 and Fall 2014.

The data on new U-M freshman students confirms that students enrolling in the U-M have experienced a high level of academic success in high school. Furthermore, the level of academic achievement of new freshman students has increased, as indicated by comparing percentile rankings of high school grade point averages (GPA) and standardized test scores of the Fall 2004 and 2014 freshman classes.

The University of Michigan calculates a GPA on a 4.0 scale from the official high school transcript after eliminating any weighting from the applicant’s high school. In 2004, the GPA was calculated based on academic subjects only in grades 9 to 11. In 2014, the GPA was calculated for all subjects taken in grades 9 to 11.

U-M applicants must submit a score for the SAT or the ACT (and some submit scores for both tests). SAT results reported for Fall 2004 freshmen combine the Verbal and Math scores.

For the Fall 2014 freshman students, the reported scores combine those from the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT.

At present, fewer students submit SAT scores and more submit ACT scores compared to 10 years ago. For Fall 2014, fewer than half of new freshman students submitted an SAT score, while 75 percent of them submitted an ACT score. Presumably, fewer U-M in-state freshman students choose to take the SAT since the State of Michigan now administers the ACT to all 11th grade students in public schools at no charge.

A grade point average was not recorded in admissions data for every newly enrolled freshman.
U-M freshman scores on the Math and Reading sections of the SAT fall near the middle of range of SAT scores for freshman students at peer universities.

### 2.3.2 SAT Math and Critical Reading Scores (25th to 75th Percentiles) for New Freshman Students at U-M and Peer Institutions

**SOURCE:** Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The universities chosen for comparison are those that the U-M considers as academic peer institutions. The schools have been ordered by the sum of the 75th percentile SAT Critical Reading and Math scores for the institution’s fall 2014 new freshman students (the most recent year for which data is available for U-M peer institutions). Each institution’s full-time freshman enrollment for fall 2014 is in parentheses after the school name. Although only about one-third of current U-M freshman students submit SAT scores (while 75% submit ACT scores), the SAT score is the only measure available for many of these peer institutions.

A list of the “official” peers used for comparison on this page is found in Appendix A.
New U-M freshman scores on the Math section of the SAT are higher than those of freshman students at other Big Ten public institutions; scores in the Reading section are second behind the University of Illinois.

2.3.3 SAT Math and Critical Reading Scores (25th to 75th Percentiles) for New Freshman Students at Public Big Ten Universities, Fall 2014.

- **Michigan State U** (8,055)
- **Pennsylvania State U** (8,813)
- **Indiana U** (7,718)
- **Ohio State U** (7,079)
- **Rutgers U** (6,412)
- **Purdue U** (6,569)
- **U Iowa** (4,666)
- **U Nebraska** (4,652)
- **U Wisconsin** (6,264)
- **U Maryland** (4,155)
- **U Minnesota** (5,530)
- **U Illinois** (6,937)

**Michigan** (6,505)

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The school list is ordered by the sum of the 75th percentile SAT Math and Critical Reading scores for the institution’s fall 2014 new full-time freshman students. Each institution’s full-time new freshman enrollment for fall 2014 is in parentheses after the school name.
Undergraduate degree-seeking transfer students enter with slightly higher grade point averages today than 10 years ago.

2.3.4 Average College GPA of New Undergraduate Transfer Students, Fall 2004 and Fall 2014.

2.3.5 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students by Class Level at Entry, Fall 2005 and Fall 2015.

SOURCE: U-M Student Data Sets.

About 90 percent of new transfer students for Fall 2015 entered with sophomore or junior academic standing.

6 A grade point average was not recorded in admissions data for every undergraduate transfer student.
About five percent of new U-M freshman students are first-generation enrollees in college.

2.4 First-Generation Undergraduate Freshman Students at U-M and Very Selective Public and Private Research Universities for Selected Years.

A first-generation undergraduate student is someone whose parents have previously not attended college at any level. Therefore, first-generation students approach higher education without the benefit of directly informed parental guidance. This presents unique challenges to both the student and to the institution.

First-generation students frequently are at a disadvantage with respect to knowledge about college: how to apply, how to pay for it, what the college experience is like, what to expect from it, and the long-term benefits that college provides.

Prospective first-generation students who aspire to college frequently have substantial financial need; however, they lack information about available resources and are unfamiliar with the complexities of the financial aid application process. First-generation students also tend to be loan-averse and resistant to perceived financial risk for many reasons, such as family history around debt and borrowing, cultural practices that stigmatize indebtedness, lack of access to financial institutions, and impact of immigration status and language on the borrowing process.

Academic preparation can constitute another challenge, because K–12 school systems typically available to first-generation college students less frequently offer a full array of college-preparatory programs.

The University of Michigan has a relatively low proportion of first-generation undergraduate students compared to similar public and private universities.

The University of Michigan is committed to actively recruit and encourage prospective first-generation students; to inform them of available financial aid resources and provide financial aid based on demonstrated financial need; and, once enrolled, to provide appropriate academic and cultural support that will help ensure first-generation student success at U-M.

SOURCE: U-M Student Data Sets, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study\(^7\) (institution categories based on Carnegie classification).
Total undergraduate enrollment has risen from 25,467 in 2005 to 28,312 in 2015, an 11 percent increase.

2.5.1 Total Undergraduate and New Freshman Student Enrollment, Fall 2005-15.


Total undergraduate enrollment has increased over the last decade due to growth in most freshman classes and an increase in transfer student admissions. Data presented includes a headcount of full-time and part-time students.
Twelve U-M Schools and Colleges administer undergraduate degree programs, which enrolled 28,312 students for Fall 2015.

2.5.2 Undergraduate Student Fall Enrollment Headcount by School and College, 2011-15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/College</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taubman College of Architecture &amp; Urban Planning</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny W. Stamps School of Art &amp; Design</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen M. Ross School of Business</td>
<td>1,213</td>
<td>1,333</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>1,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Dentistry (Dental Hygiene)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Education</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>5,603</td>
<td>5,757</td>
<td>5,950</td>
<td>6,024</td>
<td>6,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Information</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Kinesiology</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Literature, Science &amp; the Arts</td>
<td>17,082</td>
<td>17,399</td>
<td>17,372</td>
<td>17,307</td>
<td>16,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Music, Theatre &amp; Dance</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Nursing</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Pharmacy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Art and Design and School of Music,</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Theatre and Dance Joint Program
| Grand Total, Undergraduate Students                | 27,407| 27,979| 28,283| 28,395| 28,312|

SOURCE: U-M Student Data Sets, Office of the Registrar.

The School of Information first enrolled students in a new undergraduate program in Fall 2014. The Medical School first enrolled students in a new undergraduate program in Fall 2015. The Stamps School of Art & Design and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance first enrolled students in a joint undergraduate program in Fall 2012.

Students who newly enroll in the College of Pharmacy Pharm. D. program who do not hold a bachelor’s degree upon enrollment are counted as undergraduate students; new Pharm. D. students with a bachelor’s degree are counted as graduate-professional students.
Thirteen U-M Schools and Colleges administer undergraduate degree programs, which enrolled 28,312 students for Fall 2015.

**2.5.3 Undergraduate Student Fall Enrollment 10-Year Trend by School and College, 2005-15.**

The following students are not included in this chart because their programs are new and enrollment is still very low: School of Information undergraduate program that started Fall 2014; a Medical School program that started Fall 2015; the Stamps School of Art & Design and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance joint undergraduate program that started Fall 2012. Students who do not hold a bachelor’s degree upon enrollment in the College of Pharmacy Pharm. D. program are counted as undergraduate students; new Pharm. D. students with a bachelor’s degree are counted as graduate-professional students.

**SOURCE:** U-M Student Data Sets, Office of the Registrar.
About three-fifths of U-M undergraduate students are from the state of Michigan.

**2.6.1 Geographic Origin of Undergraduate Students by Headcount and Percent, Fall 2005-15.**

A student’s geographic origin is defined according to the address used in the application for admission. The geographic origin of a student is similar, but not identical, to residency status, which is used to determine tuition to be paid.

The distribution of in-state and out-of-state students among undergraduates is partially dependent on the size of each high school graduating class in Michigan, which is on the decline. In 2008, the number of Michigan public high school graduates peaked at 109,542⁸. By 2020, the total number of public high school graduates has been projected to drop to 94,000⁹, about 14 percent below the 2008 peak.

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⁸ Cohort Graduation and Dropout Reports, [Center for Educational Performance and Information](https://www.michigan.gov/), Michigan.gov.

Michigan enrolls a somewhat higher fraction of out-of-state/international new freshman students compared to many of its public university peers.

### 2.6.2 Geographic Origin of New Freshman Students, U-M and Public Big Ten and Peer Institutions[^10], by Percent, Fall 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>In-state %</th>
<th>Out-of-state %</th>
<th>International %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U Iowa</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue U</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Michigan</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn State U</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana U</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Wisconsin</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Minnesota</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Virginia</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Washington</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC-Berkeley</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State U</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Illinois</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State U</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Maryland</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U Nebraska</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U North Carolina</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers U</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

IPEDS collects geographic origin data only for new freshman students.

[^10]: A list of the “official” public peers used for comparison on this page is found in Appendix A.
The majority of in-state undergraduate students are from Southeastern Michigan.

2.6.3 U-M Ann Arbor Campus Undergraduate Student Enrollment from the State of Michigan by County, Fall 2015.

After Michigan, the states of New York, Illinois and California are home to the largest number of U-M undergraduate students.

2.6.4 U-M Ann Arbor Campus Undergraduate Student Enrollment by State, Fall 2015.

SOURCE: U-M Office of the Registrar