Chapter 4  Undergraduate Student Success

Goals
The University of Michigan prepares its students to become leaders in the 21st century. The U-M’s academic and extra-curricular programs have been developed and implemented so that each student can complete a meaningful degree program in a reasonable time frame, and thereby advance his or her career and personal goals.

Overview
The University takes a number of steps to facilitate students’ timely progression to degree completion. This includes providing sufficient course offerings, excellent advising and mentoring, as well as ensuring that in-state students who demonstrate financial need receive sufficient financial aid. Out-of-state students also benefit from these resources, including access to financial assistance.

Each U-M undergraduate school or college has developed initiatives to help students who face impediments to their success that jeopardize completion of a degree. The academic units monitor student performance in key courses and require additional academic advising for students in poor academic standing. In addition, all students may take advantage of academic support services and programs, such as departmental tutoring, study skills workshops, mentoring, and programs offered by the Sweetland Writing Center and the Science Learning Center.

In this chapter, we present data on graduation rates for freshmen and transfer cohorts, data on U-M undergraduates who subsequently enroll in a graduate program, and indicators of senior student satisfaction with the University.

More than three-quarters of Michigan undergraduate students complete their first degree within four years of enrolling as freshmen. After six years, that figure is about 90 percent. University of Michigan students’ six-year completion rates are now about 12 percentage points higher than the average of public Association of American Universities (AAU) member institutions, nearly equal to the average of AAU privates.

Undergraduates who transfer to the U-M complete their degree programs at high rates as well. Between 85 and 90 percent of transfer students graduate within four to six years after enrollment.

U-M undergraduates are surveyed during their senior year and report very positive opinions of the University as a whole and of their individual academic programs. Ninety percent of seniors surveyed say that if they had it to do over, they would attend the University of Michigan again.

Lastly, about half of all undergraduates continue their academic careers by enrolling in graduate or professional school within four years of completing a degree at the U-M.

In addition to graduate school or employment, University of Michigan students are increasingly interested in becoming entrepreneurs, with a growing number of students launching business ventures before graduation.

For more information
Additional data on undergraduate demographics can be found in Chapter 2 on admissions and enrollment and in Chapter 7 on diversity. Information about undergraduate costs and financial aid is in Chapter 3.

Most Popular Undergraduate Degrees, 2015-16
- Economics (7% of graduating class)
- Business (7%)
- Psychology (6%)
- Biopsychology, Cognition & Neuroscience (5%)
- Computer Science (4%)

Charts in Chapter 4
4.2 Proportion of U-M Baccalaureate Recipients Enrolled in a Graduate, Professional, or Other Program at a Four-Year College within Four Years of Graduation, Class of 2008-09.
4.3.1 Responses of U-M Seniors to Survey Questions about Satisfaction with their Educational Experiences.
4.3.2 Responses of U-M Seniors to Survey Questions about Satisfaction with Academics, Course Availability and Advising.
U-M graduation rates are far higher than the average rates for AAU public universities and comparable to the average 6-year rates for AAU private universities.

4.1 Graduation Rates for U-M and AAU Public and Private Universities¹, Freshmen Cohorts Starting Fall 2001-11.

This chart shows the fractions of new freshmen cohorts that have graduated with a bachelor’s degree in four, five and six years. The bottom axis represents the year each freshmen cohort started college. Comparative data from Association of American Universities (AAU) institutions¹ is displayed for 2001 through 2008 cohorts (which includes the most recent data available from IPEDS); additional U-M data is displayed for 2009 to 2011.

Graduation rates for U-M undergraduate students have generally increased over the time period shown. The trends are not as smooth as the AAU Publics and Privates because calculating the averages removes individual variation from the trends.

¹ A list of public and private Association of American Universities (AAU) member institutions is found in Appendix A.
About half of U-M students who received a bachelor’s degree also enrolled in a graduate or professional school within four years of graduation.

4.2 Proportion of U-M Baccalaureate Recipients Enrolled in a Graduate, Professional, or Other Program at a Four-Year College within Four Years of Graduation, Class of 2008-09.

Source: National Student Clearinghouse.

Many U-M students who graduate with baccalaureate degrees continue their educations in graduate or professional school programs, or in other post-bachelor’s degree education.

The percentage at the top of each column is the sum of the percentages of U-M bachelor’s graduates in the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) database who graduated from the U-M who then enrolled at the U-M and other schools. The “N” below each column is the total number of students in the NSC cohort and the undergraduate school or college that granted these students degrees in 2008-09.
Seniors have expressed a high level of satisfaction with their U-M education on several measures.

4.3.1 Responses of U-M Seniors to Survey Questions about Satisfaction with their Educational Experiences.

A: If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution?

B: How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at the U-M?

C: How would you rate the academic quality of the U-M in general?

D: How would you rate the academic quality of your major program?

SOURCE: National Survey of Student Engagement.

The National Survey of Student Engagement is one of several higher education surveys administered by the Center for Postsecondary Research in the Indiana University School of Education. Although the survey is administered annually, the U-M only participates in selected years.
Seniors have expressed a high level of satisfaction with their U-M academic experience over several measures.

4.3.2 Responses of U-M Seniors to Survey Questions about Satisfaction with Academics, Course Availability, and Advising, 2009-11, 2013.

SOURCE: University of Michigan Asks You (UMAY) undergraduate survey.

UMAY (University of Michigan Asks You) is a survey administered to all undergraduates at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. The survey is used to learn about undergraduate student experiences, from satisfaction with the academic and extra-curricular activities, to the students’ assessment of the campus climate. UMAY is the U-M designation for the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey, managed by a set of AAU institutions and located at the Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California–Berkeley. The UMAY survey was not conducted on the U-M campus in 2012.