

## 10 Thought-Provoking Comments by First-Generation College Students from the 2014 UMay survey

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“The single, most important thing that UM could do to create a better undergraduate experience would be to hire more mentors (peer, academic, etc.). With more mentors, more students would be reached and relationships would be more personal. Had I been encouraged more I would have known more about campus and participated more. Sometimes you just need someone to guide you and answer your questions about all aspects of college.”

“It is the extracurricular activities that are so expensive. It is hard to enjoy myself sometimes because I don't have the money to do the clubs or groups I want to do on top of paying for tuition.”

“Do more to help smooth the transition from high school to college, educationally and socially. For students who came from places where education and need for study habits was lacking, college was rough transition and my lack of educational success and isolation led me to become depressed my first year. Since then every year at the university has been better but programs to help could've been useful.”

“I find that professors think I'm wasting my time by working in a job that is not research. They ask me why I work at all... Could we try to remind them that not everyone has the best lot in life? These assumptions are super alienating. I'm already aware that I'm different from other students because I have to spend so much time working, because I have to be really careful with my money. “

“It's not just the cost of attending the University of Michigan. It's the cost of living in Ann Arbor that's extremely high and even when you have your tuition paid off something always seems to pop up that you don't have the money to pay for.”

“Raise more awareness about class and economic differences amongst students. As a first-generation college student from a working-class family, I often feel like I'm in the minority. Students from a higher economic bracket often can't seem to wrap their heads around the fact that not everyone is as well-off as they are.”

“I have experienced many occasions where I need help and know I need help, but I cannot get it. That is the hardest thing for someone to deal with when they put time in, study continuously, and work hard at understanding the material.”

“Make research opportunities and internship possibilities more available. Such as more forums, emails, meetings, or one common website to search. I often feel the pressure to find these opportunities, but as a first generation college student, I don't have the connections or knowledge to make these happen.”

“I'm from a suburb of Detroit that couldn't have cared less that I excelled, that I made it to a University. My parents question if I should go to college at all. I am not the strongest student here for a variety of reasons. For example, I feel like it takes me two or three times as long as my peers to grasp some concepts. U-M should reach out to students like me and help.”

“Constantly being worried about how I am going to pay for my college tuition and for books takes a good portion of my focus away from school. I have to work through the week on campus and occasionally off campus on the weekends in order to have the money I need from school. The ‘estimated family contribution’ from FAFSA is not contributed by my family, it all comes from my own paid work.”