

What Michigan Does Well: Views from Alumni

In 2009, the University of Michigan conducted a survey of several cohorts of young alumni who had graduated from the University in the previous decade. Among other questions, alumni were asked, “What do you think U-M does particularly well?”

Over 1,700 alumni provided a response to this question. Many alumni wrote short and succinct responses, but others provided longer answers that described multiple and interrelated areas of strength. Some of the most common themes that emerged included:

- Academics
- Diversity
- Breadth of Opportunity
- Research
- Prestige
- School Spirit & Community

Selected alumni comments that focus on one or more of the first three of these themes (Academics, Diversity, Breadth of Opportunity) are shared below.

Academics:

Alumni had a great deal to say about Michigan’s strength in academics. Alumni felt Michigan offered unparalleled academic resources. The University provided challenge, rigor, and an intellectual, inquisitive environment that was excellent preparation for life after graduation. Alumni lauded the University for attracting great faculty and maintaining research excellence.

Exposes students to faculty, courses, and students who have an open, ambitious, and intellectually-seeking minds.

Developing and enhancing analytical, presentation, communication and technology skills. Expectation of excellence and professionalism. Instills discipline and time management through heavy workload, rigorous curriculum and instructors and multiple projects.

I think that the University is able to offer an impressively diverse curriculum that you would not find at many schools. You are really able to tailor your interests within a field of study to focus, or to keep your curriculum very broad and encompass several lines of study.

Allowing students to utilize the tremendous resources - faculty are always open to students interested in conducting research.

I think the University is excellent at attracting some of the best faculty in the nation, nay the world, and the University does so in a wide variety of fields, no less. To be sure, whereas at most institutions either breadth is sacrificed for depth (or depth for breadth, for that matter), at Michigan neither is sacrificed. And the students flourish for it. I know I did.

I believe the liberal education at UM is very strong. Its multi-discipline and complete university package (i.e., liberal education, engineering, business, law, medicine, etc.) expose the students a diverse school of thought, which is very healthy.

You are surrounded with research and new innovations. That environment of higher learning encourages you to develop new projects of your own and conduct your own research.

Great faculty, high academic standards, no easy As -- and also fosters a pride in the excellence of our school.

It offers a wide variety of classes that meet almost any interest that a student may have, providing an excellent liberal arts education and high quality scientific education.

high levels of access to incredible minds. approachability of faculty is cultivated

Adapts to the changing times and makes sure it is in the forefront of new technologies, policies, research.

Use its research to add to its reputation/relevance to today's society.

Challenges students to push themselves academically, makes students think for themselves, and presents a diverse, intellectual environment.

Diversity:

Many alumni applauded U-M's ability to bring people together from various backgrounds and intellectual interests. This created a vibrant, diverse, multicultural environment that alumni found broadening.

Exposes you to so many different people and ideas. Gets you out of your bubble and makes you never want to get in one again for the rest of your life.

It provides for one of the most diverse educational settings you will find anywhere in the world. I am prepared for life when dealing with people of other backgrounds, cultures, and values.

UM is good at bringing together students of many different backgrounds: from poor to rich, domestic and international.

Bring together the best and brightest from an incredibly diverse range of backgrounds. There is something for everyone at U-M. Not only is there something for everyone, but there are others who are passionate about it.

I think more than any other place I've been, the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor create a welcoming place of diverse cultures, opinions, backgrounds and anything else, and allow people to work together. I've lived all over the United States since graduating, mostly in college towns and I have yet to see such a like minded understanding of working together.

Breadth of Opportunity:

The University's size is its strength. Many comments marveled at the sheer number of opportunities provided by the University, and believe that students are assured of excellence regardless of where on campus their interests lead them. Alumni cited an atmosphere of "anything is possible" and "something for everyone." U-M also provides students with a chance to have a comprehensive undergraduate experience with a balance of academic, co-curricular, and social opportunities. Alumni valued the "Work hard, play hard" ethos they perceived on campus.

A great all-around residential student experience. Opportunities abound to balance work, academics, and interests in an environment that promotes such behavior.

I think the University of Michigan does a very good job of creating opportunities. It always seemed like it was possible--in general--to do whatever I wanted: there were structures in place that could include whatever I wanted to do, study, etc.

At Michigan, there is definitely something for everyone - in terms of coursework, extracurricular activities, events, and social life. I think that's why there is such a high level of school spirit and pride to be a UM student.

Provides the opportunity for a truly well-rounded education, including artistic and scientific scholarly achievement, cultural understanding, communication and community-building, athletics, and social and civic responsibility.

While Michigan is a large school from afar with what feels like unlimited opportunities, it feels like a collection of small school within each of the majors. In my opinion, it's the best of both worlds.

Gives students the opportunity to own their own college experience. You can get as involved as you would like on campus. If you like the sciences you can get involved in programs such as UROP, if you like to volunteer you can participate in those groups - you can simply just go to class or experience several groups that reach beyond the Ann Arbor campus.

Balance the big college experience (sports, greek life, extra curricular activities) found at many state schools with the intellectual rigors of an Ivy League school.