



**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2021:**  
**What Students Are Saying About Their UMass Dartmouth Experience**  
*Comparisons with Peer Institutions, Carnegie Class Institutions, and UMassD Participants*  
*from the 2017 NSSE Administration*

**Overview:**

At UMass Dartmouth, 413 first-year (FY) students and 264 senior (SR) students participated in the Spring 2021 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (i.e., an overall response rate of 23%). This report is a comparison of select responses on NSSE from the 677 student participants at UMass Dartmouth (UMassD) to the responses of students from UMass Dartmouth's peer institutions (Peer)<sup>1</sup>, members of UMass Dartmouth's Carnegie class (Carnegie), and from the 395 UMassD student participants from the 2017 NSSE administration (UMassD NSSE 2017). NSSE is organized into four engagement themes: Academic Challenge; Learning with peers; Experience with Faculty; Campus Environment; and a group of high-impact practices (note: only select survey items are grouped into a theme). Ten engagement indicators (EIs) are organized within the four engagement themes.

The NSSE items highlighted in this report are those discussed in the *NSSE 2021 Pocket Guide* for UMass Dartmouth. This report follows the structure of the *Pocket Guide* and, as such, is organized loosely around the four engagement themes. Some of the survey items displayed under a particular theme relate to the theme but are not specifically grouped under it by NSSE (note: survey items grouped under a particular theme are tagged as "TH"). Mean scores for each of the ten EIs, which are computed on a 60-point scale, are also shown grouped under their respective themes. Additionally, the report displays the 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017 UMassD response data for these items to facilitate longitudinal comparisons.

**Key Findings:**

The ten NSSE items that exhibited the largest response differences (i.e., 8 or more percentage points) for UMass Dartmouth and members of its peer group reflected the following:

- *More students indicate involvement in a culminating senior experience:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience was 56%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 44% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Students estimate they are expected to complete longer writing assignments at UMass Dartmouth:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth estimated they are expected to complete on average of 87 pages on writing assignments; the corresponding estimation for UMass Dartmouth peers on the average number of pages on writing assignments was 75 pages (a difference of 12 pages).
- *More students help each other understand course material:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who "frequently"<sup>3</sup> explained course material to one or more students was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 31% (a difference of 11 percentage points).
- *More students include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who "frequently"<sup>3</sup> include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments was 51%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 41% (a difference of 10 percentage points).

- *Students spend more time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 50%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 41% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Students spend more time having discussions with people who have different political views:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> had discussions with people with different political views was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 46% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *More Students indicated UMass Dartmouth emphasizes the use of support services:* The percentage of FY students at UMass Dartmouth who reported that UMassD “substantially”<sup>5</sup> emphasized the use of learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) was 64%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth's peers was 55% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicate their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup>:* The percentage of SR students who rated their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup> was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 65% (a difference of 10 percentage points).
- *Fewer students reached conclusions based upon their own analysis of numerical information...:* The percentage of SR students reporting they “frequently”<sup>3</sup> reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.) was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 55% (a difference of 9 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicated their courses included community based service learning projects:* The percentage of SR students indicated that “at least some”<sup>6</sup> of their courses at UMass Dartmouth included a community-based service learning project was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth’s peers was 47% (a difference of 8 percentage points).

### **Key Findings from 2021 UMassD Students Compared to 2017:**

The fifteen NSSE items that exhibited the largest response differences (i.e., 8 or more percentage points) for 2021 UMass Dartmouth students compared to UMass Dartmouth students in 2017 reflected the following:

- *More students indicate their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup>:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 who rated their quality of interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup> was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 40% (a difference of 15 percentage points).
- *More students include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments was 51%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 43% (a difference of 8 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicate involvement in practical, real-world experiences through internships or field experiences:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who had participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement by the spring of their senior year was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 58% (a difference of 19 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD Students help each other understand course materials:* The percentage of SR students at UMass Dartmouth in 2021 who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> explained course material to one or more students was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 60% (a difference of 18 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students indicate they frequently gave course presentations:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they “frequently”<sup>3</sup> gave course presentations

was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 61% (a difference of 15 percentage points).

- *Students spend less time having discussions with people from different economic backgrounds:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> had discussions with people from different economic backgrounds was 63%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 77% (a difference of 14 percentage points).
- *Fewer students indicated UMassD emphasizes the use of support services:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that UMassD “substantially”<sup>5</sup> emphasized the use of learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) was 64%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students from 2017 was 77% (a difference of 13 percentage points).
- *Fewer students reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information...:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 from UMass Dartmouth reporting they “frequently”<sup>3</sup> reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.) was 46%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 58% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *UMassD FY Students spend less time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 42%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 54% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Students spend less time having discussions with people with different political views:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> had discussions with people with different political views was 55%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 67% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students work together to prepare for exams:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they “frequently”<sup>3</sup> prepared for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students was 39%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 51% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students are working research projects with faculty members:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member was 18%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 30% (a difference of 12 percentage points).
- *UMassD SR Students spend less time working with their peers on projects and assignments:* The percentage of SR students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> worked with other students on course projects or assignments was 50%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth SR students in 2017 was 61% (a difference of 11 percentage points).
- *Fewer UMassD students reported that instructors gave prompt and detailed feedback:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who reported that instructors “substantially”<sup>5</sup> gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments was 49%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 59% (a difference of 10 percentage points).
- *Students spend less time having discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity:* The percentage of FY students in 2021 at UMass Dartmouth who “frequently”<sup>3</sup> had discussions with people of a different race or ethnicity was 65%; the corresponding percentage for UMass Dartmouth FY students in 2017 was 73% (a difference of 8 percentage points).

**Engagement Theme: Academic Challenge**

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
<b>Mean EI Score: Higher-Order Learning</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	36.9	36.6	37.4	37.1	<b>+0.3</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	38.2	37.5	39.4	38.8	<b>+0.7</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Reflective &amp; Integrative Learning</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	33.4	32.9	34.7	32.9	<b>+0.5</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	34.8	35.7	37.4	36.4	<b>-0.9</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Learning Strategies</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	36.5	36.5	37.5	37.6	<b>0.0</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	37.1	37.0	37.9	35.4	<b>+0.1</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Quantitative Reasoning</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	28.0	28.1	28.0	26.4	<b>-0.1</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	28.8	28.8	30.1	29.7	<b>0.0</b>
<b>How much time do students spend studying each week?</b>					
<i>Average hours per week FY students spend preparing for class...</i>	16	16	15	14	<b>0%</b>
<i>Average hours per week SR students spend preparing for class...</i>	16	16	16	16	<b>0%</b>
<b>Do courses challenge students to do their best?</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that their courses “highly” challenged them to do their best work<sup>2</sup>...</i>	43	43	45	39	<b>0%</b>
<b>How much writing is expected?</b>					
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to FY students...</i>	49	50	51	53	<b>-1</b>
<i>Average estimated number of pages of writing assigned to SR students...</i>	87	75	75	86	<b>+12</b>
<b>How much reading is expected?</b>					
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week FY students spend on assigned reading...</i>	3	3	3	6	<b>0%</b>
<i>Average estimated number of hours per week SR students spend on assigned reading...</i>	3	3	3	8	<b>0%</b>
<b>How often do students make course presentations?</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations<sup>3</sup>...</i>	21	27	29	26	<b>-6%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” gave course presentations<sup>3</sup>...</i>	46	46	49	61	<b>0%</b>
<b>Do class discussions and assignments include the perspectives of diverse groups of people? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments<sup>3</sup>...</i>	51	41	51	43	<b>+10%</b>
<b>Are students expected to use numbers or statistics throughout their coursework? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who “frequently” used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue<sup>3</sup>...</i>	37	38	40	34	<b>-1%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who “frequently” reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information<sup>3</sup>...</i>	46	55	55	58	<b>-9%</b>

**Engagement Theme: Learning with Peers**

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
<b>Mean EI Score: Collaborative Learning</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	27.6	30.0	29.2	32.3	<b>-2.4</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	26.4	39.1	38.3	32.5	<b>-12.7</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Discussions with Diverse Others</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	35.6	39.0	37.1	39.3	<b>-3.4</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	36.0	39.1	38.3	38.9	<b>-3.1</b>
<b>How often do students work together on class projects and assignments? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments<sup>3</sup>...</i>	42	37	37	54	<b>+5%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” worked with their peers on course projects and assignments<sup>3</sup>...</i>	50	41	39	61	<b>+9%</b>
<b>Do students help each other learn? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” explained course material to one or more students<sup>3</sup>...</i>	42	31	29	60	<b>+11%</b>
<b>How often do students work together to prepare for exams? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students<sup>3</sup>...</i>	39	34	36	51	<b>+5%</b>
<b>How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different backgrounds? (TH)</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people with different political views<sup>3</sup>...</i>	55	46	49	67	<b>+9%</b>
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different economic background<sup>3</sup>...</i>	63	57	59	77	<b>+6%</b>
<i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity<sup>3</sup>...</i>	65	63	66	73	<b>+2%</b>

<b>Engagement Theme: Experiences with Faculty</b>					
<b>NSSE Item</b>	<b>UMassD</b>	<b>Peer</b>	<b>Carnegie</b>	<b>UMassD NSSE 2017</b>	<b>UMassD -Peer</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Student-Faculty Interaction</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	18.1	18.4	19.5	19.2	<b>-0.3</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	21.3	20.5	22.7	23.5	<b>+0.8</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Effective Teaching Practices</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	35.4	36.2	37.0	37.2	<b>-0.8</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	37.3	37.3	38.5	39.5	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Are faculty members accessible and supportive?<sup>7</sup></b> <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as “high”<sup>4</sup>...</i>	41	46	48	37	<b>-5%</b>
<b>How often do students talk with faculty members about their career plans? (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty<sup>3</sup>...</i>	24	17	14	30	<b>+7%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they “frequently” discussed career plans with faculty<sup>3</sup>...</i>	38	41	36	43	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Do faculty members clearly explain course goals and requirements? (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who said instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements “quite a bit” or “very much”...</i>	69	64	64	72	<b>+5%</b>
<b>Do students receive prompt and detailed feedback? (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments<sup>5</sup>...</i>	49	47	44	59	<b>+2%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that instructors “substantially” gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments<sup>5</sup>...</i>	61	66	61	67	<b>-5%</b>
<b>How often do students talk with faculty members outside class about what they are learning? (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they “frequently” discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class<sup>3</sup>...</i>	21	21	19	21	<b>0%</b>
<b>How many students work on research projects with faculty?</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	4	7	4	1	<b>-3%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who reported that they worked on a research project with a faculty member...</i>	18	22	22	30	<b>-4%</b>

**Engagement Theme: Campus Environment**

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD -Peer</u>
<b>Mean EI Score: Quality of Interactions</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	39.6	41.7	41.8	38.8	<b>-2.1</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	40.5	41.2	42.0	38.9	<b>-0.7</b>
<b>Mean EI Score: Supportive Environment</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	30.1	33.1	33.4	33.0	<b>-3.0</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	27.4	29.4	31.3	29.1	<b>-2.0</b>
<b>Are students encouraged to use learning support services (tutors, writing center)? (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who said the institution “substantially” emphasized the use of learning support services<sup>5</sup>...</i>	64	55	55	77	<b>+9%</b>
<b>How satisfied are students with academic advising?<sup>7</sup> (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup> ...</i>	48	46	43	48	<b>+2%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who rated the quality of their interactions with academic advisors as “high”<sup>4</sup> ...</i>	55	65	60	40	<b>-10%</b>
<b>How well do students get along with each other?<sup>7</sup> (TH)</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who rated the quality of their interactions with their peers as “high”<sup>4</sup> ...</i>	45	40	41	41	<b>+5%</b>

### High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

<u>NSSE Item</u>	<u>UMassD</u>	<u>Peer</u>	<u>Carnegie</u>	<u>UMassD NSSE 2017</u>	<u>UMassD- Peer</u>
<b>Participated in at least one HIP</b>					
<i>FY Students</i>	47	52	53	51	<b>-5.0%</b>
<i>SR Students</i>	84	82	84	91	<b>+2.0%</b>
<b>What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who participated in a learning community during their first year...</i>	7	5	1	4	<b>+2%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience...</i>	56	44	43	58	<b>+12%</b>
<b>How many students study in other countries?</b>					
<i>Percentage of SR students who have studied abroad...</i>	5	8	12	11	<b>-3%</b>
<b>How many students get practical, real-world experience through internships or field experiences?</b>					
<i>Percentage of SR students who participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement by spring of their senior year...</i>	39	47	46	58	<b>-8%</b>
<b>How many courses include community-based service-learning projects?</b>					
<i>Percentage of FY students who said that "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service-learning project<sup>6</sup>...</i>	44	45	47	48	<b>-1%</b>
<i>Percentage of SR students who said that "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service-learning project<sup>6</sup>...</i>	55	51	59	65	<b>+4%</b>

					Satisfaction			
	2008	2011	2014	2017	2021			
NSSE Item	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	UMassD	Peer	Carnegie	UMassD-Peer
<b>Would students choose the same institution again?</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i>  <i>Percentage of SR students who “definitely” or “probably” would attend this institution if they started over again...</i>	72	75	71	76	82	83	84	-1%
	79	68	72	67	74	80	81	-6%
<b>How satisfied are students with their educational experience?</b> <i>Percentage of FY students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i>  <i>Percentage of SR students who rated their entire educational experience at this institution as “excellent” or “good”...</i>	77	75	78	67	72	79	82	-7%
	87	76	79	72	82	79	84	+3%

**Notes:**

- Members of UMass Dartmouth’s peer institutions (i.e., comparative and aspirant peers that participate in the 2020 and/or 2021 NSSE) included Binghamton University (State University of New York) (Binghamton, NY); Cleveland State University (Cleveland, OH); Marshall University (Huntington, WV); University of Idaho (Moscow, ID)\*; The University of Texas at Dallas (Richardson, TX); University of North Dakota (Grand Forks, ND); University of South Dakota (Vermillion, SD); University of Southern Maine (Portland, ME); and Wichita State University (Wichita, KS)\*
- "Highly" emphasis is defined by is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Not at all” and 7 is “Very much.”
- "Frequently" is defined by combining the responses to values of "Very often" and "Often."
- "High" is defined by combining response values of "6" and "7" on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Poor” and 7 is “Excellent.”
- "Substantially" is defined by combining the responses to values of “Very much” and “Quite a bit.”
- “At least some” is defined by combining the responses to values of “Some,” “Most,” and “All.”
- Percentages shown were calculated by NSSE on all responses, including response choice of “Not Applicable.”

**Data source:** National Survey of Student Engagement 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, & 2021.