

2009-2010 UMFK Graduate Survey – Summary

- 77 students responded to the survey, 38% of the 204 students who graduated in 2009-.
- The largest group of respondents majored in education; the next largest group were the criminal justice and rural public safety majors
- The lowest Global Learning Outcome score was in Language Proficiency; the highest scores were given to having “knowledge to become a lifelong learner” and “knowledge to be a success”
- Graduates gave an overall mean rating of 4.4 (on a 5 point scale) to aspects of their General Learning Outcomes, and consistently ranked Global Learning Outcomes at a rating of “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”
- Students evaluating the UMFK Academic Environment gave particularly high ratings to class size and student/teacher ratio; poorly rated aspects of the Academic Environment were course variety, course availability, and the FYE course
- The library is the highest rated among Services and Programs; the library’s companion service, information technology, was also highly rated
- Noticeably lower ratings were given to “traditional” student services, such as student activities, residential life, organizations, and dining services.
- The lowest rated service and activity components comprised financial aspects: cost of attendance, financial aid, and billing
- Graduates in 2010 hold much the same opinion about learning outcomes as in 2007 and 2008; however, most items in the Academic Environment have displayed more variability
- Our graduates tell us that they have achieved our desired learning outcomes, and that the academic environment is good
- At the same time, they appear less satisfied with their experiences in areas critical to their success and satisfaction – faculty, advisors, housing, food service, extracurricular activities.

This report was prepared with the assistance of Spencer Jacoby and Walford Stewart, work study students in the IR office

2009-2010 UMFK Graduate Survey

This survey was designed to assess the overall experience of graduating students while they were at UMFK, along with their future plans, whether for further education or on the job market. The survey questionnaire was fielded by the Office of Institutional Research. Beginning in November 2009, all graduating students were asked to complete the questionnaire as part of their exit process. The survey began early so that December graduates could respond.

Analysis of 2009-2010 Results

Student Characteristics

77 students responded to the survey, 38% of the 204 students who graduated in December 2009 or May 2010. Of the respondents, 52% (n= 40) were female, 77% (n=59) were commuters, and 92% (n=71) were full time students. The demographic tables (below) summarize these and other basic characteristics of the respondents. Consistent with our overall student population, more than one-third of these graduates were over 25 years old, and almost 12% were 35 or older. As would be expected, the largest group of respondents majored in education (37.7%, n=29 overall); the next largest group were the criminal justice and rural public safety majors (19.5%, n=15 overall). Nearly all of these students were full time, and over three-quarters were commuters.

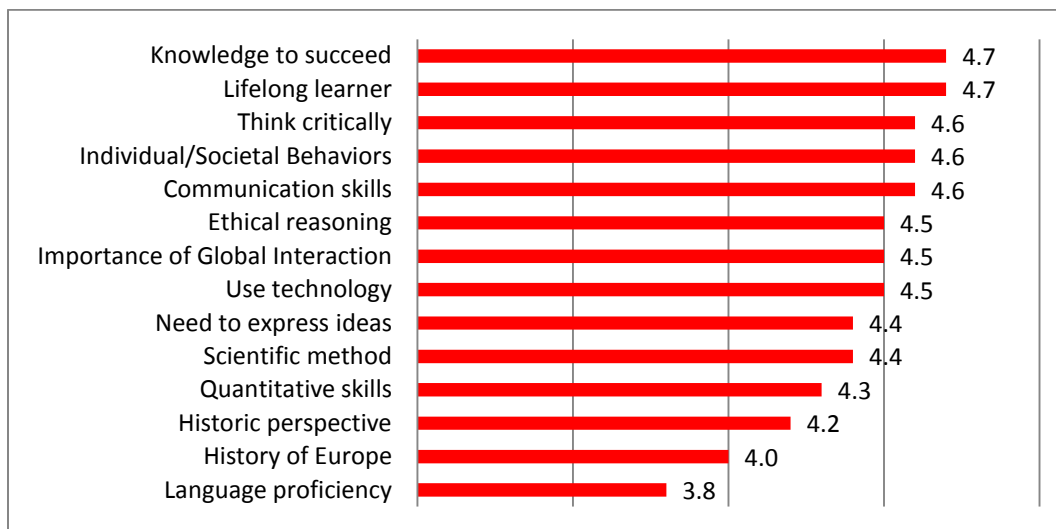
2009-2010 Graduation Survey - Demographics

Gender	Number	Percent	Enrollment Status	Number	Percent
Female	40	51.9%	Full Time	71	92.2%
Male	36	46.8%	Both	3	3.9%
Not Specified	1	1.3%	Part Time	2	2.6%
			Not Specified	1	1.3%
Age	Number	Percent	Housing Status	Number	Percent
Under 21	21	27.3%	Commuter	59	76.6%
22-25	30	39.0%	Both	4	5.2%
25-34	17	22.1%	Resident	13	16.9%
35-44	9	11.7%	Not Specified	1	1.3%
Major	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Behavioral Science	7	9.1%	Forestry	3	3.9%
Biology	1	1.3%	Nursing	1	1.3%
Business Management	8	10.4%	Rural Public Safety	5	6.5%
Criminal Justice	10	13.0%	Secondary Education	7	9.1%
Elementary Education	22	28.6%	Social Science	2	2.6%
English	2	2.6%	Not Specified	6	7.8%
Environmental Studies	2	2.6%			

Global Learning Outcomes

When asked to rate Global Learning outcomes, graduates gave high ratings across nearly the entire list, ranging from 4.4 to 4.5 (on a scale where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree). There were two notable exceptions: a markedly lower mean rating of 4.0 on their understanding of the history of Europe, and an extremely low mean score of 3.8 to their proficiency in a language other than English. This low scoring on language proficiency is not surprising – it was the only ability more than one respondent said they “strongly disagreed” they had gained. Overall, most graduates appear to be well pleased with their experience at UMFK; respondents gave an overall mean rating of 4.4 to aspects of their General Learning Outcomes, and consistently ranked Global Learning Outcomes at a rating of “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”, yielding relatively high average scores, as shown in Figure 1. However, it would seem that the more “general” the outcome (e.g., “I have gained the knowledge to be a successful professional”) the greater the agreement; the more “specific” the outcome (e.g., “I have a general understanding of historical perspectives”) the less the agreement.

Figure 1 – Ratings for Global Learning Outcomes

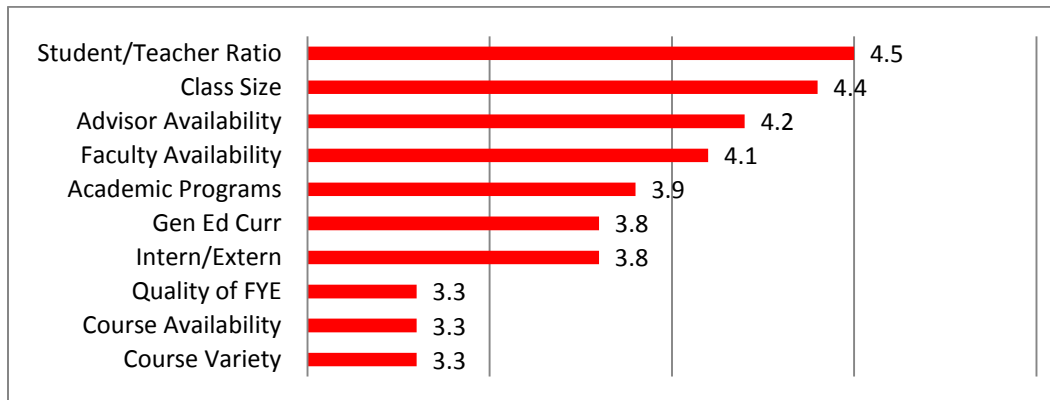


Academic Environment

Last year’s graduates were rather less satisfied with their Academic Environment. On a scale where 1=Unsatisfactory and 5=Excellent, respondents gave a mean rating of 3.9 to this aspect of their experience, and there were no questions which had a mean rating above 4.5. Students evaluating the UMFK Academic Environment gave particularly high ratings to class size (mean=4.4) and to student/teacher ratio (mean=4.5). Poorly rated aspects of the Academic Environment were course variety, course availability, and the FYE course

(all with a mean score of 3.5). In general it would seem students recognize the strengths and weaknesses that arise from our small size: classes are small and faculty are accessible, but variety is curtailed. These graduates would have been among the first students to take the FYE course, which may be a source of the low rating given to FYE.

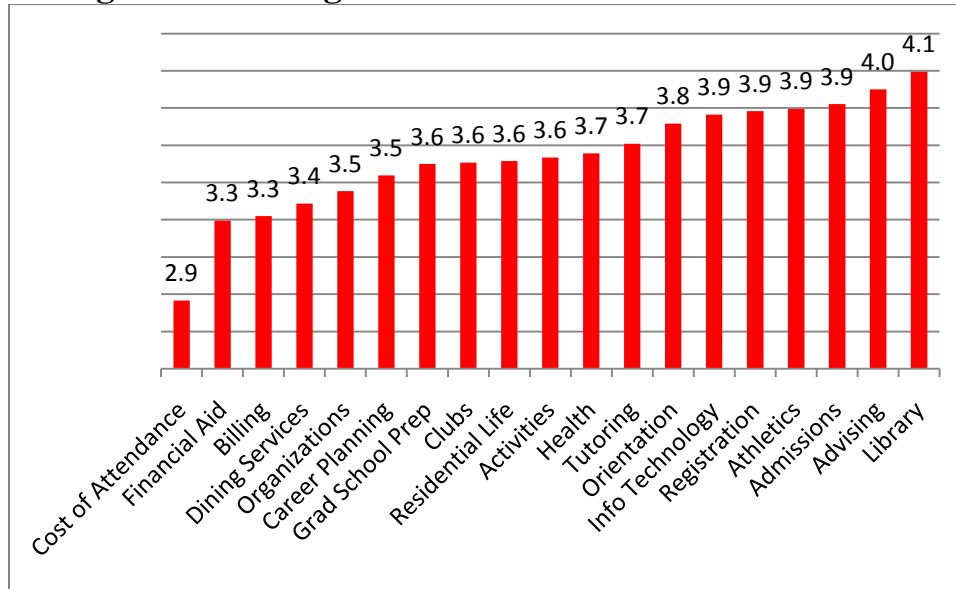
Figure 2 – Ratings for Academic Environment



Student Services and Activities

When rating individual School Programs, graduates gave an overall average score of 3.6, reflecting a pattern of ratings at or above 3.5 (again on a scale where 1=Unsatisfactory and 5=Excellent). The library is highest rated, with a mean score of 4.1; the library’s companion service, information technology, was also highly rated. Graduates also gave high ratings to those services they encounter as they begin their studies: advising, admissions, and registration. Probably reflecting recent successes, the athletics program was also highly rated. Noticeably lower ratings were given to the “traditional” student services. Student activities, residential life, and clubs all had a mean score of 3.6, slightly above organizations and dining services. Lowest rated service and activity components comprised financial aspects: cost of attendance (mean=2.9) and financial aid and billing (both with a mean of 3.3).

Figure 3 – Ratings for Student Services and Activities

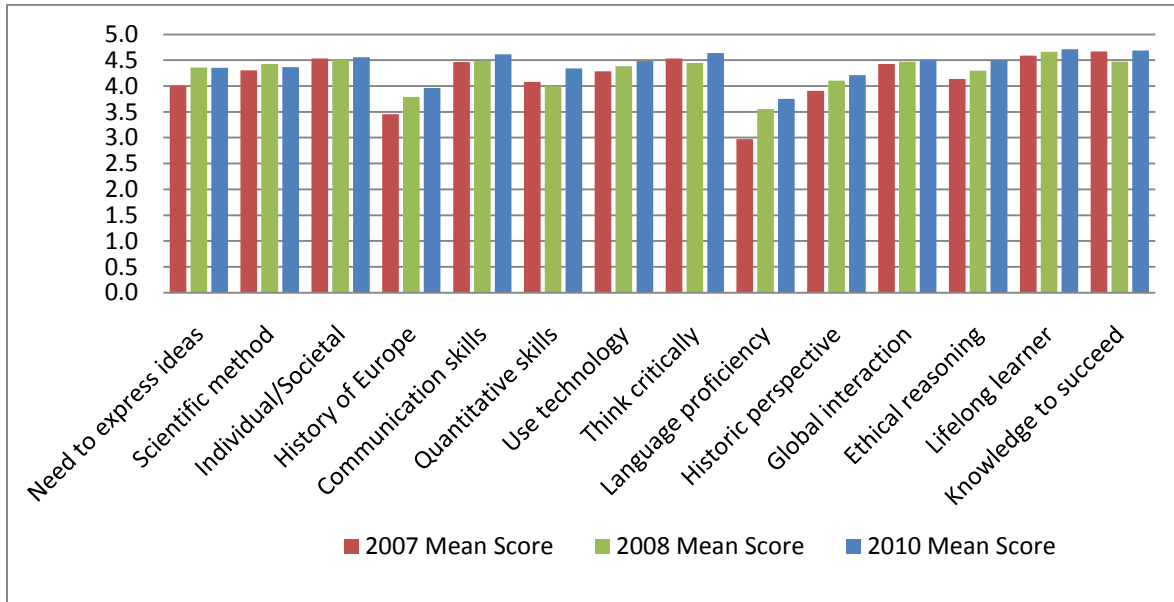


Comparison to Earlier Results

Graduates in 2010 hold much the same opinion about learning outcomes as in 2007 and 2008.

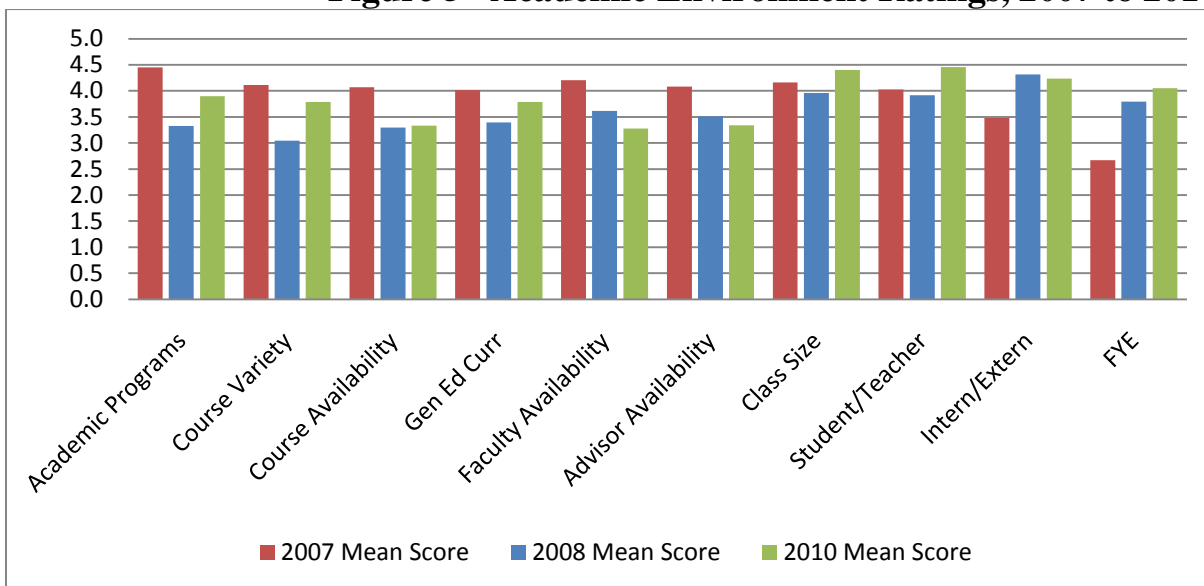
Surprisingly, the only significant change is in the two *lowest* rated areas. In 2007 graduates gave a mean score of 3.0 (1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree) to the statement about achieving proficiency in a language other than English. 2010 graduates had boosted this to a mean of 3.8, or roughly the distance from neutrality to agreement (though not yet strong agreement). Similarly, the mean score on understanding of European history rose from 3.5 in 2007 to 4.0 in 2010. From this evidence, then, we have continued a pattern of success in most of the desired global learning outcomes, and improved in the two that were lowest ranked initially.

Figure 4 –Global Learning Outcomes Ratings, 2007 to 2010



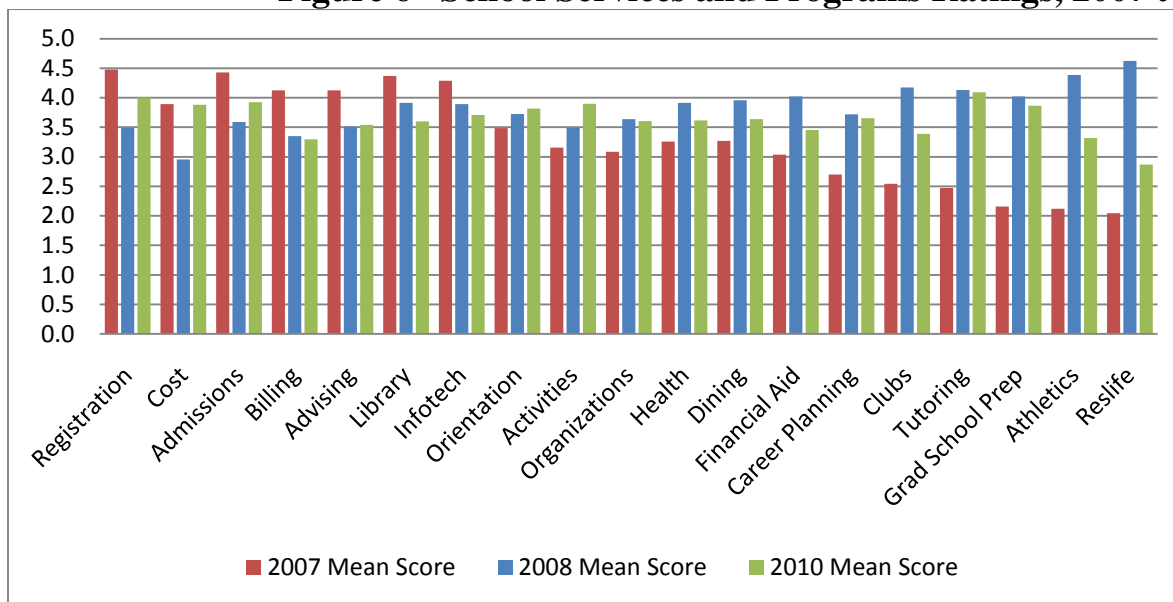
However, most items in the Academic Environment have displayed more variability in the three years of these surveys. As shown in Figure 5, significant drop offs (more than a full point on a 5 point scale) occurred from 2007 to 2008 in the areas of Academic Programs and Course Variety. Most other items had some drop off, ranging from .77 for Course Variety to .57 for Advisor Availability. Many of these same items recovered somewhat in 2010. Faculty and advisor availability continued to decline. Only the ratings for FYE have shown steady increases.

Figure 5 –Academic Environment Ratings, 2007 to 2010



An extremely curious pattern is shown by the ratings for School Programs. As can be seen in Figure 6, nearly all items rated low in 2007 had higher rating in 2008, and showed declines in 2010. Nearly all items rated high in 2007 had lower 2008 ratings. These ratings continued to fall in 2010, with the exception of Admissions, Cost, and Registration. These shifts are so pronounced that only one item (Orientation) had fairly equal ratings from one year to the next. Where last year there seemed to be a reversal of student attitudes, this year marks a return to declining evaluations of School Programs and Services.

Figure 6 –School Services and Programs Ratings, 2007 to 2010



Graduate Employment

Very few of our graduating students appear to have given thought to graduate school at the moment: only three indicated they had applied, and only two said they had enrolled. Our students also do not appear to give much thought to a career in the military: only four said they would be joining the armed services. When asked about their employment, many students said they were unemployed. This is likely due to the wording of the question – education students who had a job lined up for the fall would still answer “unemployed” if they did not have a job *at the time of the survey*. (This is a major flaw in the questionnaire design that will be addressed in the next version). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the majority of our students were employed (see Figure 7) although few worked full time. Most of the respondents provided the

name and location of their employer: few of these employers seem to be related to their major or intended career (see Figure 9, placed at the end to conserve space).

Figure 7 - Current Employment Status

Major	Unemployed	Employed Part Time	Employed Full Time
Behavioral Science	0	6 (100%)	0
Biology	0	1 (100%)	0
Business Management	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)
Criminal Justice	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)
Elementary Education	13 (59%)	7 (32%)	2 (9%)
English	0	2 (100%)	0
Environmental Studies	2 (100%)	0	0
Forest Technology	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0
Nursing	0	0	1 (100%)
Rural Public Safety	0	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
Secondary Education	6 (86%)	0	1 (14%)
Social Science	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0
TOTAL	28 (42%)	27 (40%)	12 (18%)

Our graduates' future plans agree with their major (see Figure 8), with one notable exception. Of the 53 students who told us their career plans, 19 are education students, all of whom intend to pursue teaching. What is interesting is that over 20% of the remaining students (7 of 34) also intend to pursue a teaching career, and only one of these students actually had a minor or a second major in education. Apparently, teaching is something that “rubs off” on our students at UMFK.

Figure 8 – Graduate’s Career Plans

Major	Intended Career	Frequency
Behavioral Science	Counseling	2
	Psychologist, Speech Pathologist	1
	Social Services	1
	Special Needs Teacher	1
Biology	Teaching	1
Business Management	Business	1
	Event Planner	1
	Financial Services/ Bank/ Self-Employment	1
	Human Resources	1
	Teaching	1
Criminal Justice /Rural Public Safety	Aircraft Maintenance	1
	Customs/ Border Patrol	5
	Emergency Disaster Management	1
	Law Enforcement	3
	Naval Officer	1
	Probation Officer	3
	Public Safety	1
Elementary /Secondary Education	Teaching	18
	Teaching/ Admin	1
English	Professor Of English And Composition	1
	Teaching	1
Environmental Studies	Environmental Scientist	1
	Teaching	1
Forest Technology	Forester	2
Nursing	Nursing	1
Social Science	Teaching	1

Conclusions

Our graduates do appear to regard UMFK highly, and to have gained from their time here. They also report that they leave with important skills and resources for their future. However, it seems that this is despite and not because of their experience here. They tell us that they have achieved our desired learning outcomes, and that the academic environment is pretty good. At the same time, they appear less satisfied with their

experiences in areas critical to their success and satisfaction – faculty, advisors, housing, food service, extracurricular activities . This year’s Graduation Survey offered further evidence that our students leave UMFK with the benefits of a positive *learning* experience, and in this sense is gratifying. It also suggests that the broader “college experience” is not as attractive as we would like it to be.

Figure 9 - Current Employment

Major	Current Employer	Frequency
Behavioral Science	Aroostook Home Health Services	1
	Mcdonalds Fort Kent	1
	Northern Maine General - Eagle Lake And Caribou	1
	UMFK Admissions	2
Biology	K-Mart	1
Business Management	Shop N Save	1
	St. Agatha Town Office	1
	UMFK	1
Criminal Justice	Daigle Oil Company	1
	Long Lake Sporting Club	1
	Shop N Save Madawaska	1
	St.John Valley Pharmacy	1
	UMFK Community Mentor	1
	USAF Bangor Air National Guard	1
	Vescom Security	1
Elementary Education	Fish River Rural Health	1
	Madawaska Middle School Basketball/ Softball Coach	1
	NMMC	1
	Northern Maine General	1
	Rosette's Restaurant	2
English	UMFK Student Success	1
	K-Mart	2
Forest Technology	Irving Woodlands Llc	1
Nursing	Restaurant- Aroostook County	1
Rural Public Safety	Aroostook Home Health Services	1
	Long Lake Sporting Club	1
	Shop N Save	1
	Will'S Construction	1
Social Science	Lonesome Pine Trails	1