

## 2006 Health and Wellness Survey Interesting Findings

In February 2006, Rackham sent a survey to a group of 5,000 randomly-selected graduate and professional school students. The survey questions covered several different aspects of health and wellness. Over 1,000 students responded to the survey, which has helped us greatly in developing programs to meet the needs of our students. Below are some interesting findings from the survey.

Students were able to skip questions on the survey, so the total respondents on each question is noted.

### Physical Wellness

- Overall, about 87% of respondents (of 1000 total respondents) identify themselves to be in good health or identify themselves as very healthy.
- Most students (about 59% of 1001 respondents) said that they were moderately or very satisfied with their current level of physical activity.
- Of those students who exercise on a weekly basis, 44% (of 1003 total respondents) exercise on their own, rather than going to a UM recreational building (i.e., CCRB, IMSB), going to a non-UM facility, or playing on an organized sports team.
- More than half of survey respondents noted that they were concerned with eating unhealthy foods or eating too much (58% of 996 and 54% of 991 respondents, respectively).

### Health Insurance

- Ninety-two percent of respondents (of 1003 total respondents) have health insurance, but 20% of respondents (of 1002 total respondents) have not had health insurance at some point in graduate school. For those who did not have insurance at some point during graduate school, most cited the cost of premiums as the reason they were not insured (73% of 199 total respondents).
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents (of 989 total respondents) feel that their current health plan meets their needs. For those whose plan did not meet their needs, expensive premiums, expensive co-pays, limits on services, and desired services that were not covered were the most frequently chosen problems.
- When asked to rank the benefits that should be included in a health insurance plan, 63% of respondents (of 826 total respondents) ranked primary care visits including pediatrician visits as the first priority. Thirty-four percent (235 of 700 total respondents) ranked inpatient hospitalizations as their first priority and 22% (64 of 296 total respondents) ranked vaccinations as their first priority.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents (of 820 total respondents) ranked prescription drugs including mental health drugs as their second highest priority.
- Overall, about 75% of respondents (of 986 total respondents) ranked primary care visits including pediatrician visits in the top three most important benefits to be included in a health insurance program. Sixty-five percent ranked prescription drugs including mental health drugs in the top three, and 49% ranked inpatient hospitalizations in the top three.

## Health Care/Use of Services

- Timely access to a physician was the most cited barrier to seeking appropriate medical care when needed (35 % of 954 total respondents).
- When asked where to go if one had a medical problem, most students reported that they would go to University Health Service (UHS) or urgent care at the University (58% of 1001 total respondents).

## Stress

- Eighty-six percent of respondents (837 of 972 total respondents) reported moderate or high levels of daily stress. Academic/job demands, financial difficulties, family demands or problems, and the relationship between a student and his or her advisor were cited as the frequent stressors. Ninety-three percent of students reported experiencing stress occasionally or frequently from academic/job demands.
- Most students reported experiencing difficulty getting started on studies and/or work (75% of 966 total respondents) trouble focusing on studies and/or work (74% of 966 total respondents) mood swings (67% of 966 total respondents), eating too much or too little (60% of 962 total respondents), stomachaches/headaches (57% of 965 total respondents), and trouble sleeping (56% of 967 total respondents) occasionally or frequently during the past year.
- Students were asked an open-ended question about what kinds of activities help them to relieve stress. The responses were coded and categorized. Of the 915 total responses to this question, there were 651 references to physical activity, 270 references to social activities, 213 references to hobbies, and 205 references to media use (e.g., TV, radio, video games).

## Mental Health and Access to Services

- Less than 14% of students (133 of 963 total respondents) have used Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) in the past year. Even fewer students used a counselor or psychiatrist that was referred by a health professional or a counselor/psychiatrist they found on their own.
- Twenty-one percent of 1003 total respondents to the survey reported being diagnosed with or using medication for a variety of mental or behavioral health issue or for substance abuse during the time the respondent was in graduate school. The most commonly diagnosed conditions were depression and anxiety.

## Religion/Spirituality/Philosophical Beliefs

- Over half of respondents (58% of 961 total respondents) said that religious/spiritual/philosophical beliefs were moderately or very important to their daily life.
- One quarter of respondents (of 958 total respondents) regularly attend religious services or discussion groups with a focus on morals/ethics or spirituality.
- More than half of respondents (451 of 864 total respondents) reported that they were not able to find through the university or the community the sort of religious, spiritual, or philosophical services or related groups in which they would like to participate.

## Social Connections

- More than 83% of students receive social support from family not on campus (799 of 959 total respondents) and friends not on campus (797 of 959 total respondents). Over three quarters received support from other graduate students in their department and over two thirds received support from friends on campus.
- For 57% of international student respondents (of 138 total international student respondents), having the opportunity to meet a variety of people from differing programs at UM is an important part of their graduate experience, and an additional 29% find it enjoyable but not essential. Forty-two percent of domestic student respondents (of 796 total domestic student respondents) felt this is important and another 45% just enjoyable.
- Forty-one percent of domestic student respondents (of 796 total domestic student respondents) said that they frequently make time to socialize with others in non-academic contexts; 23% of international student respondents (of 138 total international student respondents) do. Ten percent of domestic student respondents (of 796 total domestic student respondents) reported rarely making time to socialize with others in non-academic contexts, 29% of international student respondents (of 138 total international student respondents) rarely do so.
- Fifty-nine percent of international student respondents (of 138 total international student responses) receive support from their faculty advisor, 46% of domestic student respondents (of 795 total domestic student respondents) reported receiving support from their faculty advisor.
- Sixty-six percent of international student respondents (of 138 total international student respondents) receive support from other graduate students in their department, but 79% of domestic student respondents (of 795 total domestic student respondents) receive support from other graduate students in their department.

## Intellectual Wellness

- About 83% of respondents (of 957 total respondents) are moderately or very satisfied with their experience as a graduate student.
- About 84% of respondents (of 956 total respondents) have been occasionally or frequently overwhelmed by the intellectual demands of their program.
- About 77% of respondents (of 958 total respondents) felt it was moderately or very important to attend cultural events and engage in intellectual pursuits outside the realm of academic obligations.
- Sixty-five percent of respondents (of 951 total respondents) feel moderately or very much a part of an academic community within their department.

## Vocational/Career Issues

- Sixty percent of respondents (of 927 total respondents) said that making a career decisions and/or pursuing a successful job search is moderately or very difficult for them.
- Twenty-two percent of respondents (of 926 total respondents) ranked balancing family and work life as the most important criteria in their search for employment following graduate school.
- The most often used career-related service was through the respondent's school/college and department. The Career Center has been used by 250 students responding to the survey.
- Although 628 of survey respondents identified themselves as female, only 66 students had used services at the Center for the Education of Women (CEW).
- Twenty-one percent of respondents (of 872 total respondents) are afraid that they are not competitive in the job market.
- More than half of respondents interested in obtaining professional development opportunities would like assistance in conference presentations (390 of 645 total respondents) and grant writing (368 of 645 total respondents).

## Contact

If you have questions or would like more information please contact Natalie Bartolacci at (734) 647-2640.