



UNIVERSITY of
ALASKA ANCHORAGE.

UAA GRADUATE EXIT SURVEY RESULTS

Fall 2023

Fall 2023 Graduate Exit Survey

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Fall 2023 Graduate Exit Survey

Administrative Summary

About the Graduate Exit Survey

In support of UAA Mission Fulfillment Indicator 3, a Graduate Exit Survey was administered in Fall 2023. Anticipated Fall 2023 graduates (as of November 27th) were asked to complete a short, mixed methods survey addressing their perspectives on four topics; core competency preparation, sense of engagement, student support services, and post-graduation plans. Significant incentives were offered through a drawing to those students who completed the survey by December 17th, 2023. Invitations to participate were sent via email to a total of 470 individuals with reminders to non-completers at 4-, 6-, 10-, and 12-days post launch. The survey had an overall participation rate of 32% (or a total of 152 completed surveys), the results of which are discussed below.

Respondent Profiles

Review of the demographics of the Fall 2023 graduating class compared to the demographics of the respondents finds an overall good balance in all major degree levels. Graduate Certificate and Bachelor's degree recipients were slightly overrepresented in the response pool while Master's, Associate, and Undergraduate/OEC groups were slightly underrepresented.

Level	Type	Breakdown of Fall 2023 Graduates by Level	Breakdown of Fall 2023 Respondents by Level
Graduate		7.45%	7.24%
	Certificate (Graduate)	0.85%	1.32%
	Masters	6.60%	5.92%
Undergraduate		92.55%	92.76%
	Associate	29.36%	26.97%
	Bachelor's	54.26%	62.50%
	Certificate/OEC (Undergrad)	8.94%	3.29%
Based on first degree in the application file at time of extraction Multiple degree earners were surveyed only once			

College	Breakdown of Fall 2023 Graduates by College	Breakdown of Fall 2023 Respondents by College
UAA College of Health	35.32%	38.82%
UAA College of Arts & Sciences	30.64%	25.00%
UAA College of Business & Public Policy	12.77%	15.79%
UAA College of Engineering	8.51%	9.21%
UAA Community & Technical College	11.06%	8.55%
UAA School of Education	1.70%	2.63%

As reported in BANNER

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As with degree level review, College participation was also well balanced between the composition of the graduating class and the respondents. Colleges of Health, Business & Public Policy, and Engineering were all slightly overrepresented with the remaining slightly underrepresented.

Executive Summary

While only the first iteration of this new survey, the data indicate several key findings. First, this graduating cohort are reporting that they feel well prepared to apply each of the core learning competencies in their life as a UAA graduate. Second, this cohort also responded that they felt both welcomed and included while studying at UAA. Also of note, the overall data show that students feel both welcomed and included in roughly equal measure. Finally, the volume and breadth of positive comments from students demonstrate that students recognize and appreciate UAA's commitment to their success.

With respect to learning support services, the responding students indicated a variety of responses relating to awareness of the selected student services. This issue is discussed in greater detail under next steps at the end of this report. The design of the survey did provide for data to be collected on both use of the selected services and satisfaction with those support services. When asked how well each service met their needs the majority of respondents all indicated that the individual services either "met" or "exceeded" their needs.

When asked about post-graduation goals and how prepared students feel for their specific next steps, respondents indicated that UAA has helped prepare them for post-graduation success. Almost half of respondents (43.9%) indicated they plan to look for a new job or promotional opportunity, and 32.6% of students indicated that they plan to continue their education. Over half of the respondents indicated that they felt very or extremely well prepared for their chosen goal.

The students' strong sense of preparedness combined with the high mean scores from the core competency section suggests that UAA is meeting its mission of providing transformative educational opportunities and is contributing to the immediate needs of Alaska and its workforce.

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Core Competency Preparation

Each respondent was randomly asked about their sense of preparation in a single core competency. The primary purpose of this question was to both numerically score their feelings about preparation as well as to solicit qualitative feedback from those who felt “very well” or “extremely well” about what UAA did well to help them prepare for that particular competency. For those individuals who responded, “not well at all” or “slightly well,” a different prompt was used to gather feedback on what UAA could do to improve.

Respondents indicated a high level of feeling prepared on a 5-point Likert scale (1-5 with 1 being “not well at all” and 5 being “extremely well”). The highest mean score returned was Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility with a mean of 4.0; followed by Effective Communication, mean 3.9; Creative and Critical Thinking, mean 3.8; and Intercultural Fluency, mean 3.2. The qualitative component of each question supports the numerical score in response volume as the students who indicated a higher level of preparedness provided more comments and in greater depth than those students who reported a lower sense of preparedness.

Core Competency <i>Feeling prepared</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
Effective Communication	3.9	0.8
Creative and Critical Thinking	3.8	0.9
Intercultural Fluency	3.2	1.1
Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility	4.0	0.9

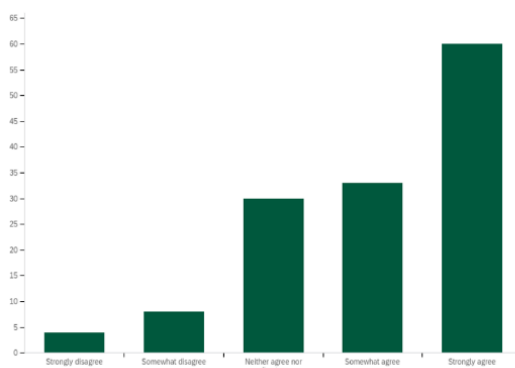
Sense of Engagement

Each respondent was asked about their perspectives on feeling welcomed and feeling included. Similar to the prior sections, each respondent was presented with two separate statements about UAA making them feel welcome and UAA making them feel included. Each respondent was presented with a 5-point response scale (1-5 with 1 being “Strongly disagree” and 5 being “Strongly agree”). Following each of those questions, prompts were presented for respondents to provide narrative feedback. Respondents with high levels of agreement were prompted on what UAA did well in each of these two categories, while respondents with lower levels of agreement were prompted on what UAA could do to improve.

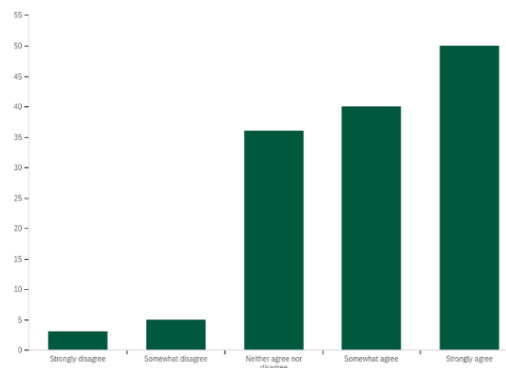
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Overall, 68.8% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that UAA made them feel welcome. When asked about feeling included, 67.2% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that UAA had made them feel included. From a narrative perspective, students provided both rich and deep examples supporting these scores ranging from broad program examples to numerous faculty, staff, and offices who had all played a part in making them feel both welcome and included.

UAA made me feel welcomed



UAA made me feel included



Student Support

Student support was designed as a cascading question about four selected student support services; tutoring through the learning commons, disability support services, library reference/information services, and internships through the career center. The first part of the question focused on whether the student was encouraged to use a particular support service, with the word “encourage” being used as a proxy for “awareness”. Then, based on the student’s response to the first part of the question, the second prompt focused on those services that students indicated they were encouraged to use and asked about frequency of use. The third part of the survey question then inquired about satisfaction and how well each support service that was used either “occasionally” or “frequently” met their needs.



Student Support Services	Encouraged to use the service	I did not know about service	Used occasionally or frequently	Met or Exceeded my needs
Tutoring through the Learning Commons	71.7%	28.3%	41.8%	96.6%
Disability Support Services (DSS)	74.3%	25.7%	21.3%	70.3%
Library Reference/Information Services	90.9%	9.1%	82.6%	82.4%

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Internships through Career Services	52.6%	47.4%	19.3%	75.0%
Averages	72.4%	27.6%	41.3%	81.1%

As will be discussed in the final section of this report, there is a potential design issue with this survey as it relates to the use of “encouragement” as a proxy for awareness. With 72% of students on average reporting that they were encouraged to use the selected services, but only 41% reporting occasionally or frequent use, it is unclear if students were “aware” of the various services and choose not to use them or if efforts to “encourage” students to use services were unsuccessful. As the overall question was designed in a cascade fashion, the second and third steps still provide useful data as to usage and most importantly, about satisfaction on the selected services.

In terms of satisfaction in the selected services from individuals who did frequent them, respondents indicated high (81% on average) satisfaction with the support services listed in the survey.

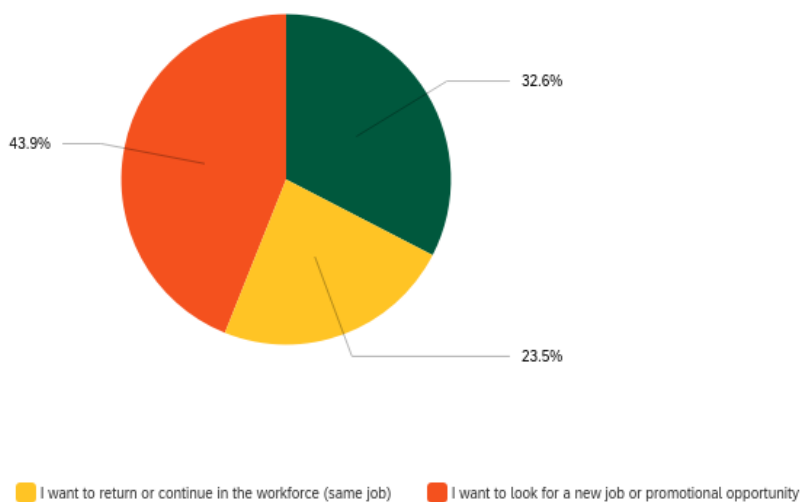
As a qualitative follow-up to how well the various support services met their needs, students who responded with “met” or “exceeded” were asked to provide examples of what UAA did well. Correspondingly, students who responded with “did not meet” or “partially met” were prompted to provide ways UAA could have improved. The numerous positive comments focused on specific programs and services are discussed below and the comments from students who had ideas on how to improve were extremely limited in number (3 total) and in scope of content.

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Post-Graduation Plans

The final group of questions addressed the respondents' plans for next steps after graduation and included two items. The first item was about their plan for post-graduation. The second item asked how well UAA prepared them for their chosen path after graduation. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide a narrative response to their sense of preparedness for post-graduation, with students who responded "very well" or "extremely well" being asked what UAA did well. Students who responded "not well at all" or "slightly well" were asked what UAA could have done to improve.

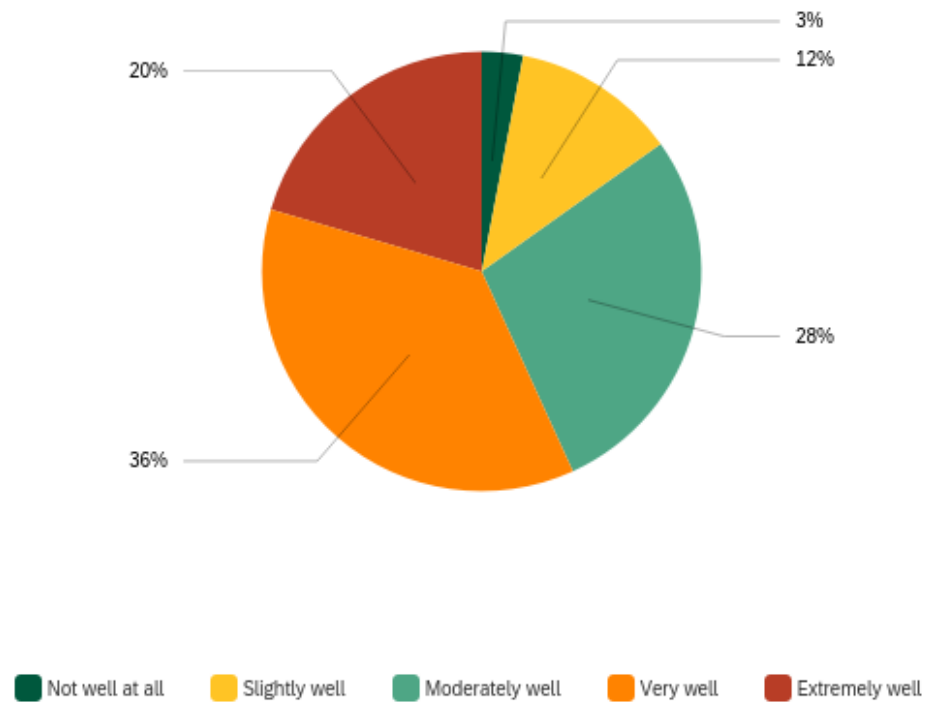
The majority of the Fall 2023 cohort (43.9%) indicated that they would seek a new job or promotional opportunity following graduation. As the workforce development institution for Alaska, this is an important finding for UAA.



The next largest group of the respondents (32.6%) plans to continue their education, and the remainder (23.5%) indicated that they planned to return or continue in the workforce in their same job.

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More than half (56.9%) of students responding indicated that they felt either very well prepared (36.4%) or extremely well prepared (20.5%) to take their selected next steps after graduating from UAA. While 15.1% of respondents indicated that they felt either “not well” or “slightly well” prepared for their next steps, it is encouraging that so many students expressed confidence in their preparation and readiness to join, return, or promote within the workforce or continue on in their education.



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Narrative Response Overview

The survey was designed to prompt and capture narrative responses alongside a participant's scored value to leading questions. Each section contained at least 1 Likert-based item contextually specific to that section. Following that scaled item, respondents who indicated the two lowest scores were presented with a "what could UAA have done better/to improve" type of prompt. For balance, respondents who provided a score in the top two categories were provided a "what was something that UAA did well" type of prompt. For the sake of privacy and anonymity, the redacted narrative responses are restricted to Cabinet level review. However, the counts of both positive-sentiment (green) and improvement-sentiment (red) responses are provided below.

Topic	Prompt	Total Responses
Core Competencies	What is something UAA did well to help prepare you in effective communication in your life moving forward?	19
Core Competencies	What could UAA have done better to help you develop your effective communication skills?	0
Core Competencies	What is something UAA did well to help prepare you to apply creative and critical thinking in your life moving forward?	14
Core Competencies	What could UAA have done better to help you develop your creative and critical thinking skills?	1
Core Competencies	What is something UAA did well to help prepare you to apply intercultural fluency in your life moving forward?	10
Core Competencies	What could UAA have done better to help you develop your intercultural fluency skills?	3
Core Competencies	What is something UAA did well to help prepare you to apply personal, professional, and community responsibility in your life moving forward?	16
Core Competencies	What could UAA have done better to help you develop your personal, professional, and community responsibility skills?	1
Sense of Engagement	In what ways did UAA make you feel welcome?	59
Sense of Engagement	How could UAA improve in making students feel welcome?	11
Sense of Engagement	In what ways did UAA make you feel included?	58
Sense of Engagement	How could UAA improve in making students feel included?	7
Student Support	What was something UAA did well? <i>(regarding the services they used)</i>	50
Student Support	How could UAA have improved? <i>(regarding the services they used)</i>	3
Post-Graduation Plans	What is something that you feel UAA did well to help you with your next step? <i>(relating to their chosen next step)</i>	46
Post-Graduation Plans	What is something that you feel UAA could have improved in helping you with your next step? <i>(relating to their chosen next step)</i>	11

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While the volume of responses is not indicative of a trend or theme, the content of those comments clearly indicates that students have high praise for and satisfaction with their UAA experience. As with many open-ended response items, there were some inflammatory remarks, with 5 of the 32 negative comments received focused on topics unrelated to the survey. While a full thematic analysis was not performed on the comments, the general tone and overwhelming volume of positive comments (272 in total) indicates that UAA provides students with numerous academic and programmatic opportunities to broaden their exposure and engagement with varying cultural perspectives, that creative and critical thinking is integrated into coursework on many levels, and that faculty were individually and as a group identified as providing opportunities to demonstrate skills learned. There is some minor noted indication for additional real-world examples or interaction. Faculty interaction was noted as providing supportive efforts in helping students grow personally, professionally, and in their communities.

While the sense of engagement area received the majority of comments relating to how UAA could improve, two issues seemed to arise within those “improvement” narratives. The first being frustration with the university not being “great” for commuter students. The other being issues with changes in advising. The vast majority and overall tone of the positive comments show that policies, programs, clubs, and support services all help make students feel welcome. Feelings of inclusion were also generally very positive with students highlighting the following as contributing to a sense of inclusion: communication with faculty, teacher feedback, Seawolf Tracks, faculty mentoring, student clubs, and catering to numerous cultures.

Student support services also received high praise in the positive comments. With 18% of the total comments received relating directly to student support services, the library, tutoring services, access to services for students learning off-campus, and ease of use for resources in disability support services all had several examples of high satisfaction, sense of support, and generally positive feedback within the narrative responses.

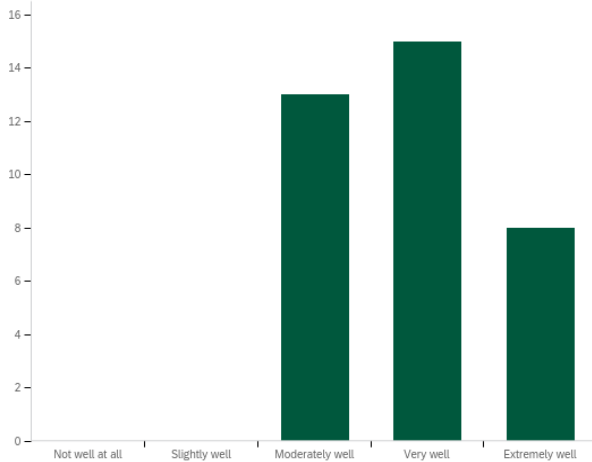
Finally, the feedback from students regarding what UAA did well to help them with their next steps aided in understanding the full breadth of support services that students found beneficial. For example, faculty preparation for class and in the materials provided, helping students prepare for the “real world” through academic coursework, the variety of academic offerings, instructors of upper-division courses, advisors, career preparation support, and others at UAA were all called out as key points and individuals in the positive response group. For improvement, there is an emergent trend in students wanting more real-world experiences alongside their academic preparation.

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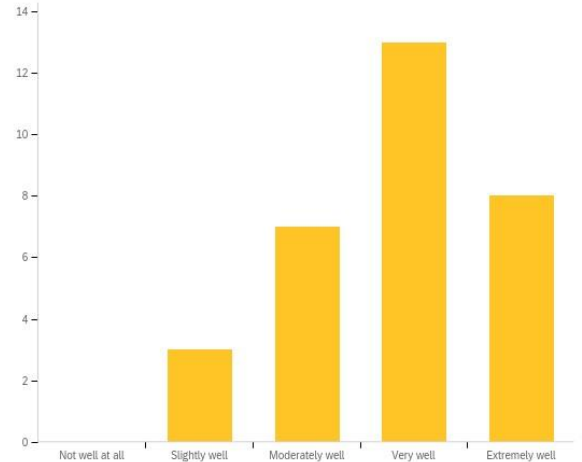
Data Summaries

Core Competencies

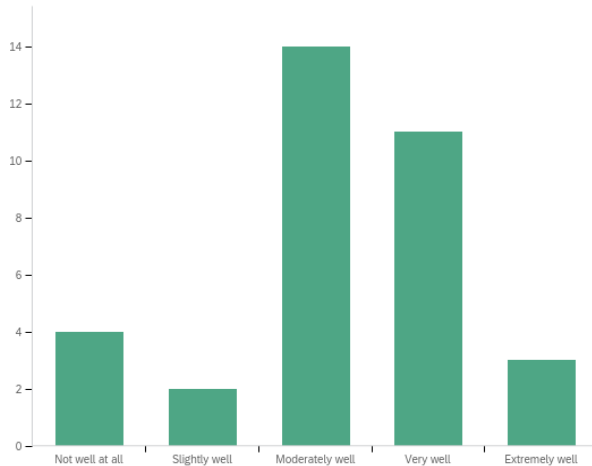
Effective Communication



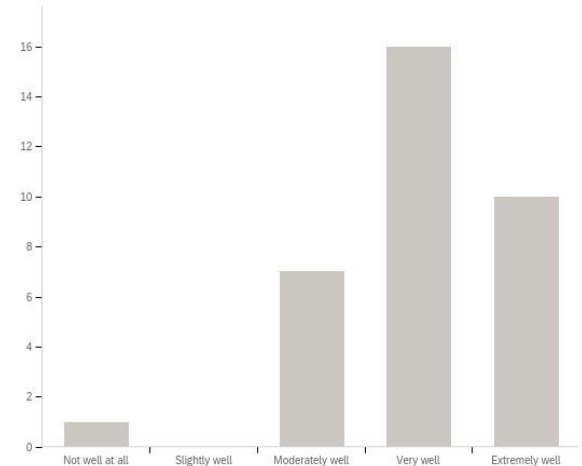
Creative and Critical Thinking



Intercultural Fluency



Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility



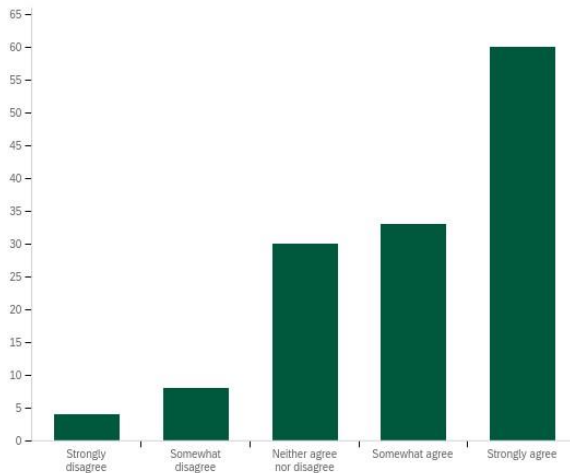
Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Count
How well do you feel you can apply <u>effective communication</u> in your life now as a UAA graduate?	3.9	0.8	36
How well do you feel you can apply <u>creative and critical thinking</u> in your life now as a UAA graduate?	3.8	0.9	31
How well do you feel you can apply <u>intercultural fluency</u> in your life now as a UAA graduate?	3.2	1.1	34
How well do you feel you can apply <u>personal, professional, and community responsibility</u> skills in your life now as a UAA graduate?	4.0	0.9	34

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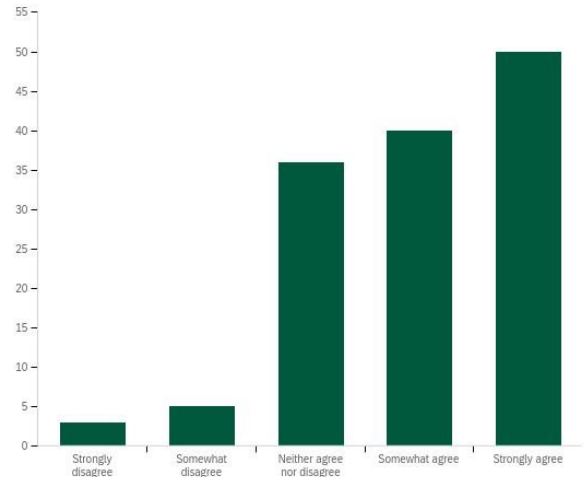
Sense of Engagement

UAA made me feel welcomed and included

UAA made me feel welcomed



UAA made me feel included



	UAA made me feel welcomed Percent Responding	UAA made me feel included Percent Responding
Strongly agree	44.4%	37.3%
Somewhat agree	24.4%	29.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	22.2%	26.9%
Somewhat disagree	5.9%	3.7%
Strongly disagree	3.0%	2.2%

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Student Support Services

Step 1: Which of the following learning support services were you encouraged to use?

Question	I was encouraged to use this service (check all that apply)	I did not know about this service
Tutoring though the Learning Commons	71.7%	28.3%
Disability Support Services (DSS)	74.3%	25.7%
Library Reference/Information Services	90.9%	9.1%
Internships through Career Services	52.6%	47.4%



Step 2: Of the services you said you were encouraged to use, how often did you use that service?

Question	I didn't use this service	I occasionally used this service (in some semesters)	Frequently (nearly or every semester)
Tutoring though the Learning Commons	58.2%	40.7%	1.1%
Disability Support Services (DSS)	78.8%	8.8%	12.5%
Library Reference/Information Services	17.4%	52.3%	30.3%
Internships through Career Services	80.7%	15.8%	3.5%



Step 3: For the services you used, how well did they meet your needs?

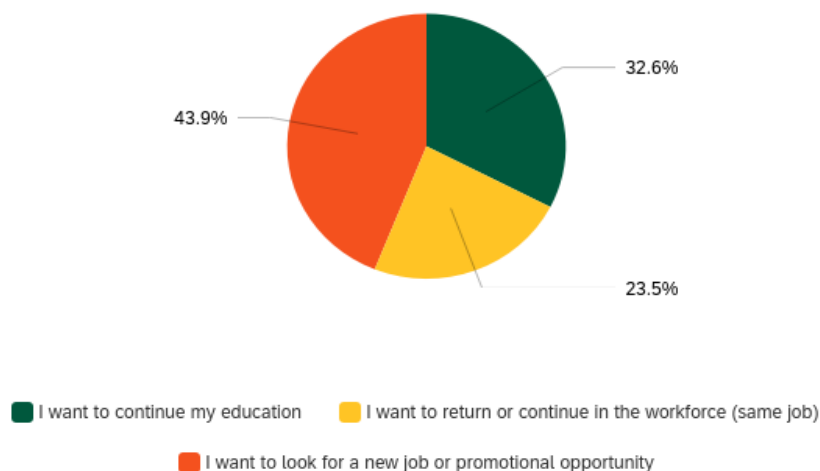
Question	Did not meet	Partially met	Met my needs	Exceeded my needs
Library Reference/Information Services	0.0%	3.3%	73.3%	23.3%
Tutoring though the Learning Commons	8.1%	21.6%	59.5%	10.8%
Disability Support Services (DSS)	5.9%	11.8%	47.1%	35.3%
Internships through Career Services	16.7%	8.3%	41.7%	33.3%

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Post-Graduation Plans

What do you think your next steps are after graduation?

aggregate of all choices



How well do you feel UAA prepared you for your step?	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
I want to return or continue in the workforce (same job)	3.2%	22.6%	25.8%	38.7%	9.7%
I want to look for a new job or promotional opportunity	3.4%	13.8%	31.0%	32.8%	19.0%
I want to continue my education	2.3%	2.3%	25.6%	39.5%	30.2%
Aggregated Scores (all options)	3.0%	12.1%	28.0%	36.4%	20.5%

Next Steps

The Fall 2023 Graduate Exit Survey was successful and collected a significant amount of information on the progress UAA has made in preparing its students. As with any first-run survey, there are items to consider from a design and refinement perspective. There are two things to consider moving forward. The first has to do with the use of the word “encouraged.” This word might have put the emphasis on the wrong thing. The intent of the survey is to understand students’ knowledge and use of selected student support services. Following internal discussions at UAA, the use of “encouragement” as a proxy for “awareness” may not be the best approach. Future surveys should consider that encouragement is an active term indicating measurable efforts to connect students with various services. Awareness is more of a latent construct, or unmeasurable factor about an individual student’s understanding of services. Knowledge of can be asked simply as “did you know about a certain service” and then follow-up with their usage and satisfaction, using the same cascading question format.

The second item to consider involves contextualizing the two different kinds of internships at UAA; those for academic credit and managed through the colleges, and nonacademic

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internships, managed through the career center. As this is an institutional level survey, the survey question related to internships should be refined to focus on internships through the career center in future graduate exit surveys.