

# students review

The *Students Review* series is intended to aid prospective college students in their search by offering insiders' views of selected colleges and universities, as expressed by current undergraduates or recent graduates who have high academic ability. Note that the number of reviewers is small. Consider their personal perspectives as only one factor as you gather information and impressions from many sources.

Our reviewers include 28 alumni, who majored in anthropology (1), biochemistry (2), biomedical engineering (1), chemical engineering (2), chemistry (1), computer science (2), creative writing (2), English (2), history (3), international studies (1), linguistics (1), math (8), mechanical engineering (2), music performance (1), philosophy (2), physics (1), political science (1), Russian (1), and zoology (1). The number of majors exceeds 28 because several reviewers had double majors. Reviewers' comments appear within quotation marks.

## Quality of Academic Instruction for Undergraduates

One of the nation's top public universities, UM offers a wide range of undergraduate degrees and programs through its colleges of architecture; art & design; business; education; engineering; information; literature, science, & arts (LSA); music, theatre & dance; and nursing. Several reviewers were students in one of two special programs: the Honors Program, a selective program for the top 10% of students in LSA; and the Residential College (RC), which enrolls a total of 850 LSA students and was established to create a small-college environment within the university. Reviewers were very positive about the quality of undergraduate education at UM.

→ "Excellent. The sheer number of courses is amazing; if I went there for 20 years, I do not think I would run out of courses to take. UM is strong in almost every academic discipline, and the quality of instruction is usually quite high. Some of the introductory courses are, not surprisingly, enormous



(300-500 students). But lectures can be terrific, and much is also gained from discussion sections (approx. 20 students) led by graduate students. Professors tend to be extremely accessible; they make efforts to meet students individually, even outside of office hours. However, you have to take the initiative in seeking their help. I strongly recommend that freshmen take one of the first-year seminars, which are limited to 20 students and taught by a professor. They're a great way to get individual attention and get to know a professor well."

→ "The Honors Program gives students access to challenging classes and excellent instruction for the first two years. For me, one of the greatest benefits was the Honors housing; I was able to live and study with other dedicated students, many of whom were taking the same courses I was. Unfortunately, some of the upper-level, non-Honors classes are not as challenging as Honors 100-level courses."

→ "UM has many programs that offer smaller class sizes and more direct

interaction with professors. The Residential College (RC) is one, providing a small, core group of people with whom you work, live, and learn for two solid years. The RC specializes in a liberal arts curriculum and includes an intensive language-study program."

→ "Motivated students have many chances to do more advanced work. The Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), open to first- and second-year students in engineering and LSA, provides literally thousands of research opportunities with professors in seemingly every department. It also sponsors weekly seminars to help students enter research with guidance."

→ "Undergraduate studies are not what earned UM the reputation it has today. Therefore, the undergrad is not treated with the utmost concern, particularly in introductory courses. Beyond the lower-level courses, however, the quality of instruction is quite good. Professors are more eager to help in higher-level courses in their area of interest."

## Social Life

→ "Excellent quality of life! Ann Arbor is a fantastic, lovely college town—lots of coffee shops, bookstores to browse, always stuff going on. People are exceptionally friendly, by and large. The majority of Ann Arbor residents are affiliated with UM, whether as students, alumni, or employees, so there is an enormous amount of Wolverine pride floating around!"

→ "The UM campus is pretty much integrated into the city of Ann Arbor, so there is much to do within walking and biking distance. If you would rather have peace and quiet, there are dorms that are away from it all. You can choose from dorms, frats, apartments, and student co-operatives for housing. Greek life is pretty big but avoidable. And if you like sports, Michigan has many nationally-ranked teams. Students past and present come together to cheer on the Wolverines."

→ "The social life is as diverse and vibrant as one might expect from a university

of UM's size; with over 1,000 student organizations there's something for everyone and every interest. Once you find your niche, the university no longer seems large and scary. The political groups are especially varied, with both liberal and conservative organizations for most issues. I even managed to join one or two moderate ones. If you are interested in music, art, computers, sports, or just sitting around in coffee houses discussing philosophy, you will be able to find people who share your interest."

→ "Ann Arbor is a very cultural town. World-class orchestras, musicians, and theater companies regularly come to town. When the Vienna Philharmonic comes to the U.S. and plays in Ann Arbor for two evenings and in New York for three, that says a lot about the population and its values."

#### What Do You Like Best about UM?

→ "The freedom and resources to do what I wanted with my education. There are so many possibilities, and they're available to you from the very beginning. In my first year alone, I studied philosophy, history, Dante, global change, chemistry, genetics, anthropology, Plato, and geology, took oboe lessons at the music school, and spent the summer working at a biological field station."

→ "The range of courses offered. I took a course humorously called 'Dinosaurs and Other Failures.' Also, the people are very friendly. There is little cutthroat competition except in some of the pre-professional programs."

→ "The sense of pride—in UM's sports teams, academics, faculty and staff, and students. It is fantastic to be part of a community of people who feel so passionately about an institution."

→ "I love the fact that I have met so many people from such diverse backgrounds. My friends include political conservatives and progressives. Meeting such different people has prompted me to examine my own ideas and values."



COREY SEEWAN

**University of Michigan**  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109  
[www.umich.edu](http://www.umich.edu)

- 4-year coed state university
- Campus in a congenial college town
- Full-time undergraduate enrollment 2015-16: approximately 14,300 men; 14,000 women
- Special features: Honors Program, Residential College, numerous other specialized residential communities.

#### What Do You Like Least about UM?

→ "With over 28,000 undergraduates, it is very easy to feel like a number. I have not found the advising very helpful. You really have to know what you want and research the courses yourself (a delightful but time-consuming and somewhat daunting task)."

→ "Although UM is one of the top universities in the country, it doesn't quite have the 'name brand' appeal of an Ivy League school."

→ "Ann Arbor is basically *cold* for seven months of the year!"

→ "The colleges are extremely separate; it takes effort to socialize and connect with people outside of your college (or even sometimes major). And the sky is hoodie-gray for about three months a year, which can truly take the wind out of your sails."

#### Who Would Be Most Compatible with the Academic and Social Atmosphere at UM?

→ "Someone who will be responsible for his or her academic career. While

there are plenty of people willing to give you advice, nobody is going to stop you from taking classes that are too easy, too hard, or too narrow."

→ "Someone who is independent and confident enough to ask for help when needed. The professors here are not going to check up on you; they respect you as an adult. One does not have to love football to love it here."

#### If You Had It to Do Again, Would You Go to UM?

*All but one reviewer enthusiastically said yes.*

→ "I *wish* I had it to do over, so that I could attend UM again. My final choice was between UM and an Ivy. I decided that a bigger school would give me a wider range of opportunities and experiences. I was right. I'm sorry if I sound like I am writing a commercial for UM but I really love the place and would recommend it to almost anyone."

→ "Yes! There is so much to do and so many people to meet. There is an outlet for every facet of yourself that you wish to explore. And Ann Arbor is beautiful and offers millions of social and cultural opportunities. There's no other place I'd rather have gone."

→ "Hands down. Three years into college, I realized that although music was my passion, I wanted to study science, and I added a second major. UM's level of excellence across many fields made this an easy transition and gave me the flexibility to grow in a new direction—which, in fact, is the purpose of college."

→ "Probably, but I'm not without regrets. I would have liked a more close-knit intellectual community. I was on the verge of going to an Ivy but decided not to because it was so expensive. The financial considerations are great." ■

*Note: The reviewers quoted in the Students Review series are expressing their own views, which are not necessarily those of JHU or CTY.*