

# **NSSE 2004**

## **Student Characteristics and Factors Affecting Retention & Persistence**



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# What is NSSE?

## *National Survey of Student Engagement*

- Survey that assesses the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development
- Supported by grants from Lumina Foundation for Education and The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Co-sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning



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# What Good Educational Practices\* Does NSSE Try to Measure?

- Student-faculty contact
- Active learning
- Prompt feedback
- Time on task
- High expectations
- Cooperation among students
- Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning

**\* “Seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987)**

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## UMass Boston Has NSSE 2004 Comparative Statistics Reported for Several Groups

- **The All NSSE Group**
  - 473 Institutions
  - 85,635 Respondents
- **All Doctoral Intensive University NSSE 2004 Participants**
  - 40 Institutions
  - 9254 Respondents
- **An Urban Consortium**
  - 23 Institutions
  - 4,269 Respondents

# The 2004 Urban Consortium

<b>Boise State University</b>	<b>University of Colorado at Denver</b>
<b>Columbia College Chicago *</b>	<b>University of Massachusetts Boston</b>
<b>DePaul University *</b>	<b>University of Missouri-Kansas City</b>
<b>Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus *</b>	<b>University of Missouri-St Louis</b>
<b>Mercy College-Main Campus (NY) *</b>	<b>University of Nebraska at Omaha</b>
<b>The Metropolitan State College of Denver</b>	<b>University of North Carolina at Charlotte</b>
<b>Northeastern Illinois University</b>	<b>University of Southern Maine-Portland</b>
<b>Pace University *</b>	<b>University of Tennessee-Chattanooga</b>
<b>Purdue University Calumet</b>	<b>University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee</b>
<b>Southern Illinois University Edwardsville</b>	<b>Washburn University</b>
<b>University of Akron</b>	<b>Wayne State University</b>
<b>University of Colorado at Colorado Springs</b>	

**\* Private Institution**

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## **214 UMass Boston Students Responded To NSSE 2004.**

- **131 Seniors**
- **83 First Year Students**
  - **We can identify these students, and we have accessed institutional data on them.**
- **The UMass Boston response rate was 31%.**
- **The average national response rate was 42%**

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# Student Selection Parameters

- **First Year Students** are students who were enrolled at UMass Boston during the fall semester 2003 and were expected to begin the spring 2004 semester with fewer than 30 accumulated credits
- **Seniors** are students who were enrolled at UMass Boston during the fall semester 2003, and were expected to begin the spring 2004 semester with more than 95 accumulated credits
- **NSSE** takes a random sample of 350 of each group from a data set we send them that includes all traditional, CCDE, full time, or part time students who were enrolled in fall 2004 and meet the credit criteria

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# **UMass Boston NSSE 2004**

## **Selected Results**

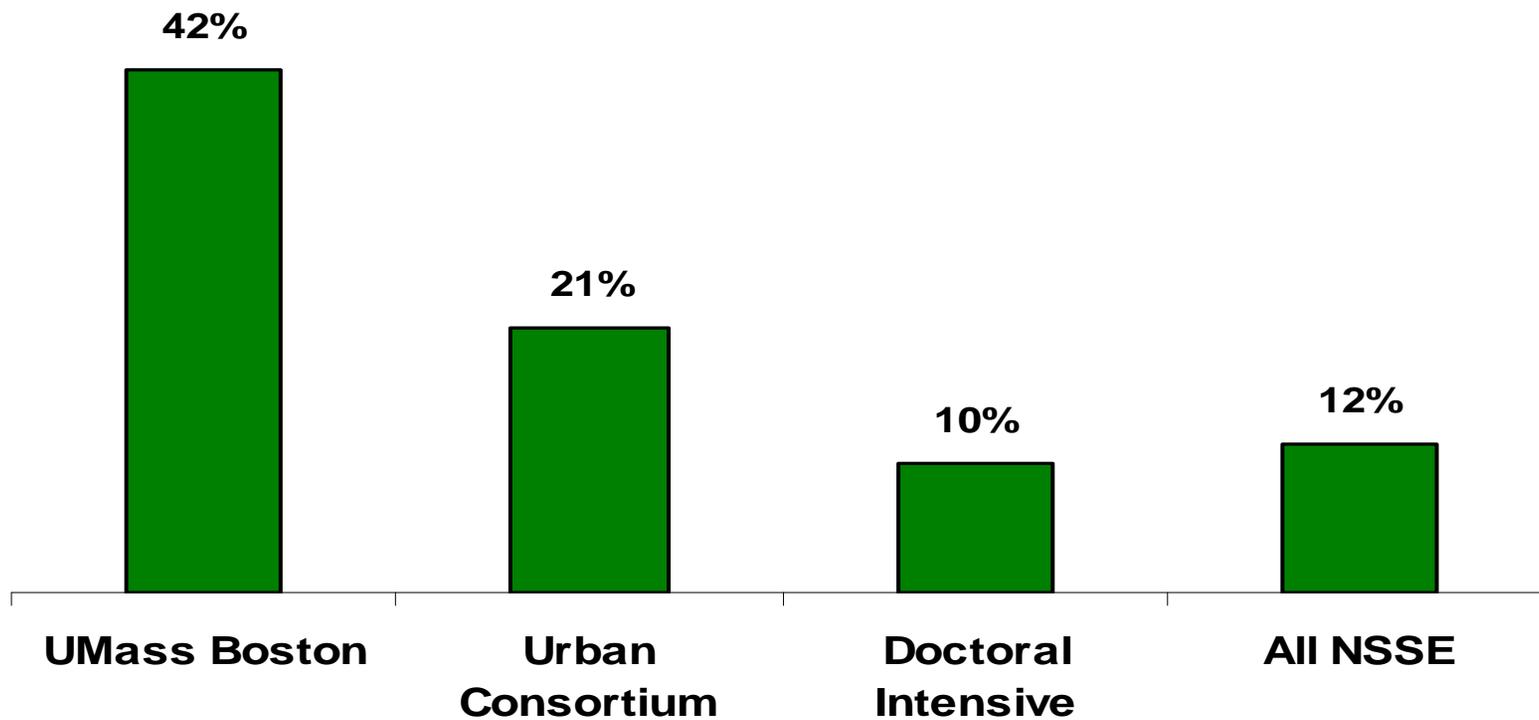


### **Focusing on:**

- 1) Student Background Characteristics**
- 2) Factors that May Affect Retention**

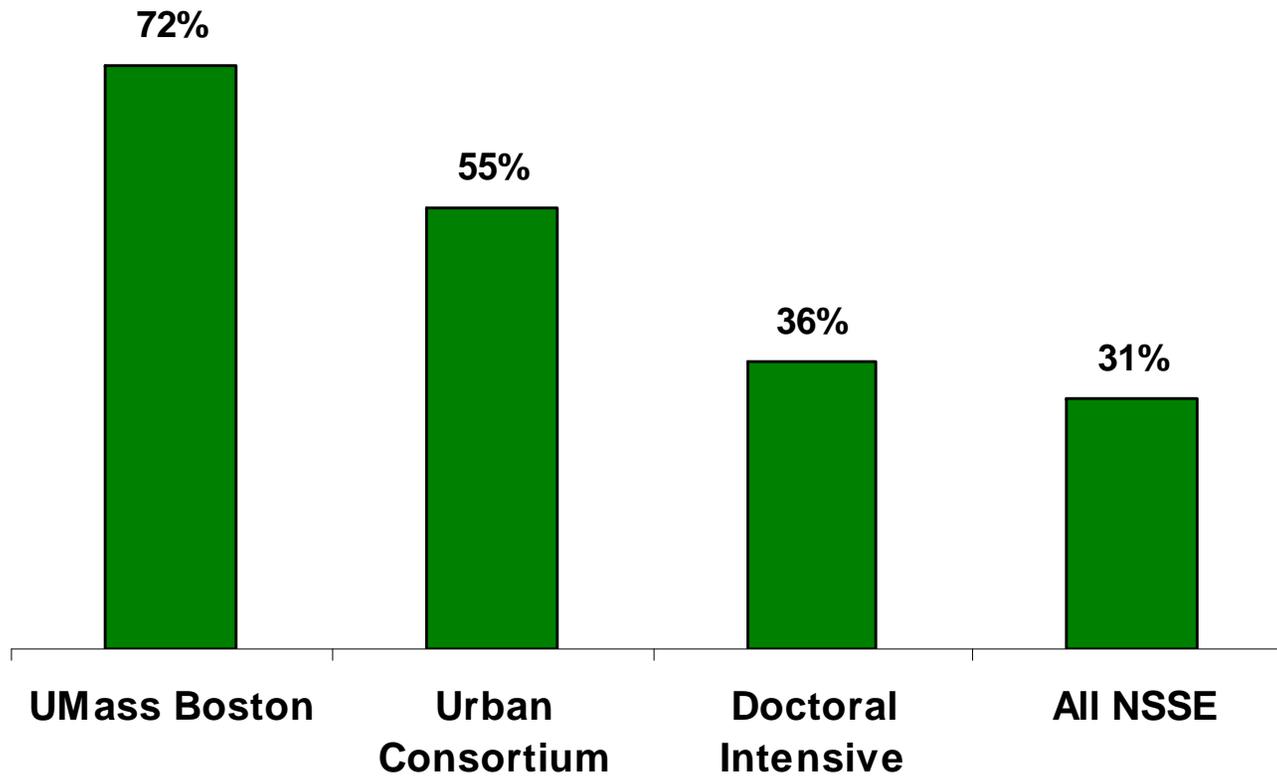
UMass Boston First Year respondents tended to be older than their colleagues in the comparison groups.

**Percent of First Year Students Reporting That They Are Age 20 or Older**



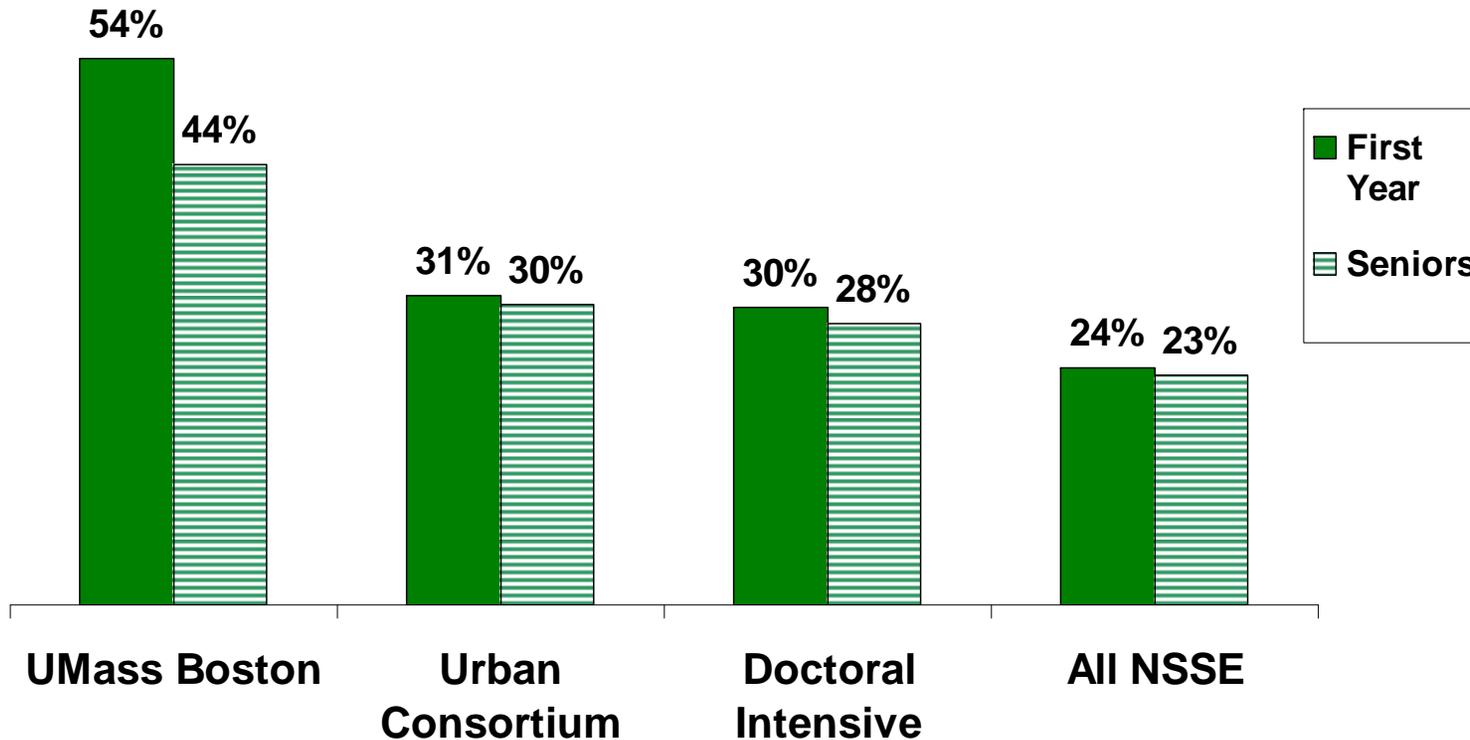
This is also true of seniors.

**Percent of Senior Respondents Reporting That They Are Age 24 or Older**



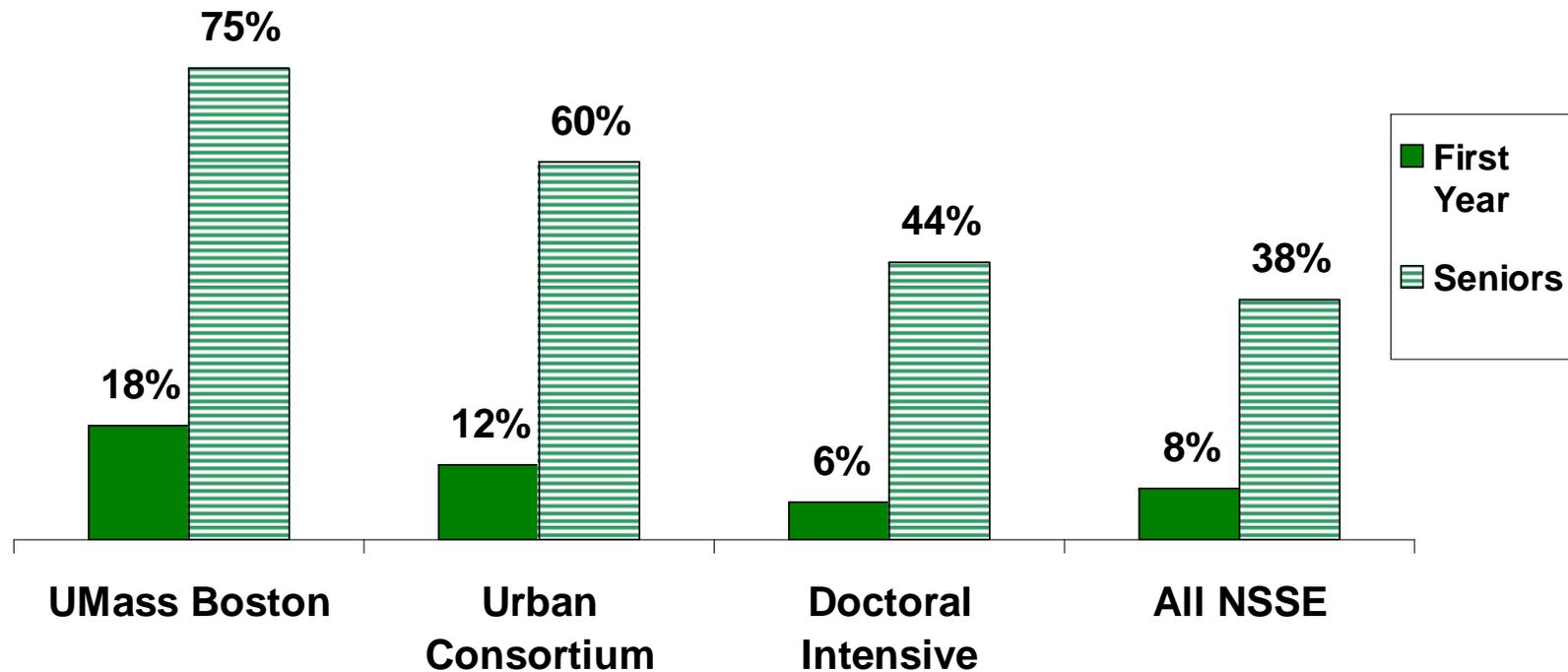
UMass Boston respondents were more racially/ethnically diverse than were the comparison groups.

**Percent of Respondents Selecting Race/Ethnicity of African American/Black, Am. Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Other, or Multi-racial**



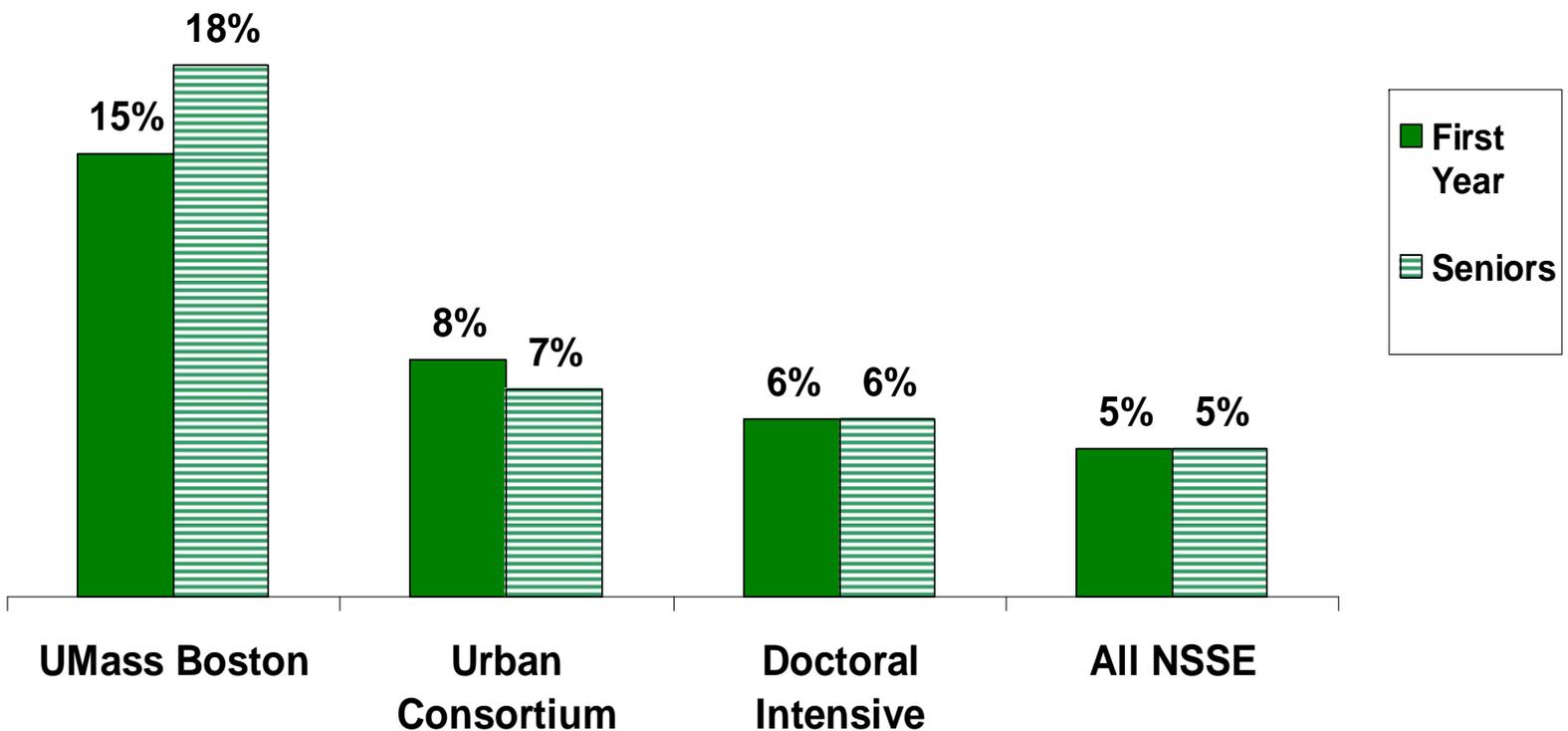
UMass Boston respondents were more likely to have come here from other colleges.

**Percentage of Respondents Reporting That They Began College at a Different Institution**



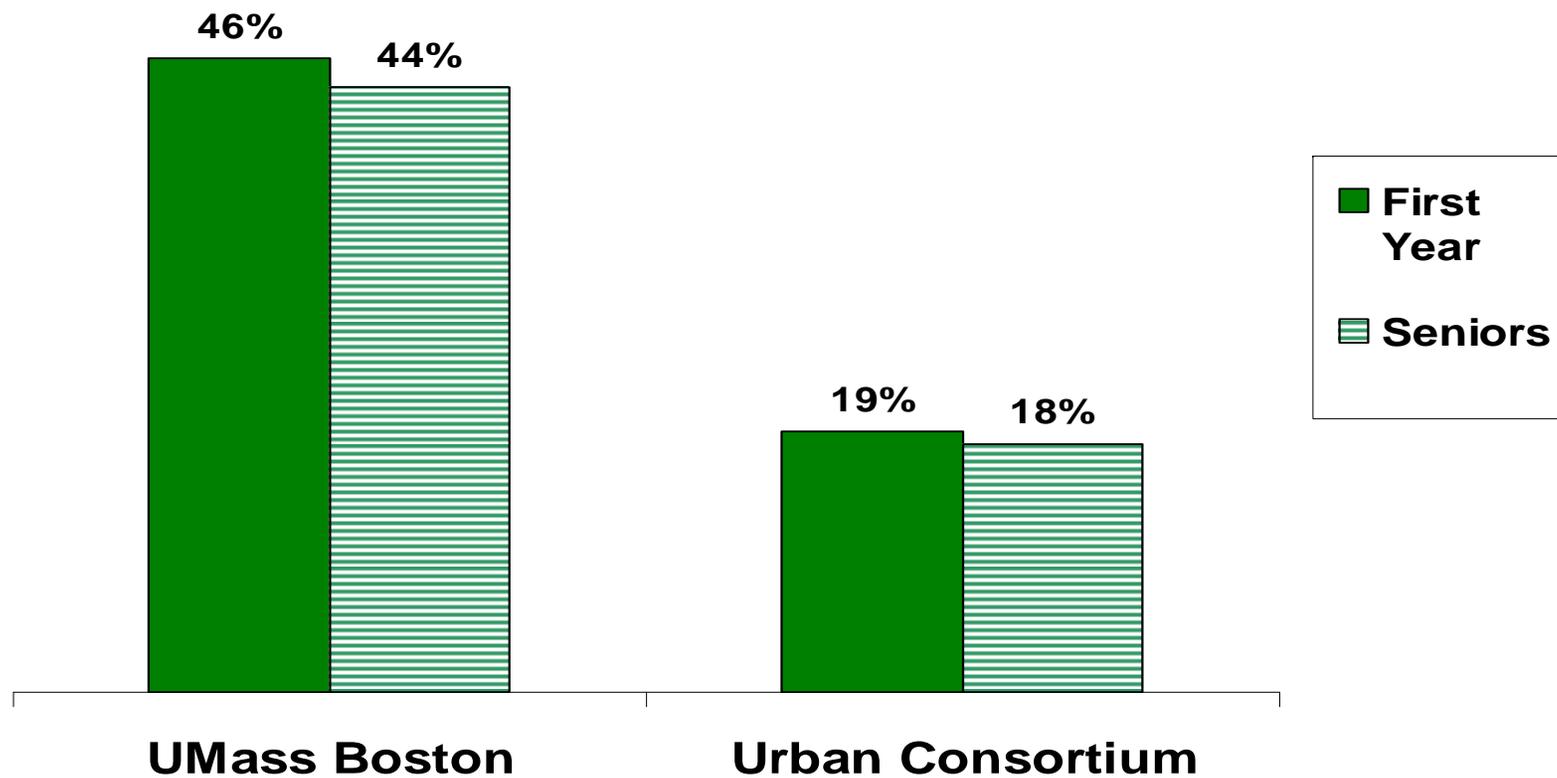
UMass Boston respondents were also more likely to have come here from other countries. (UMass Boston records indicate that 30% of the respondents are citizens of countries other than the U.S.)

**Percentage of Respondents Who Report Being International Students or Foreign Nationals**



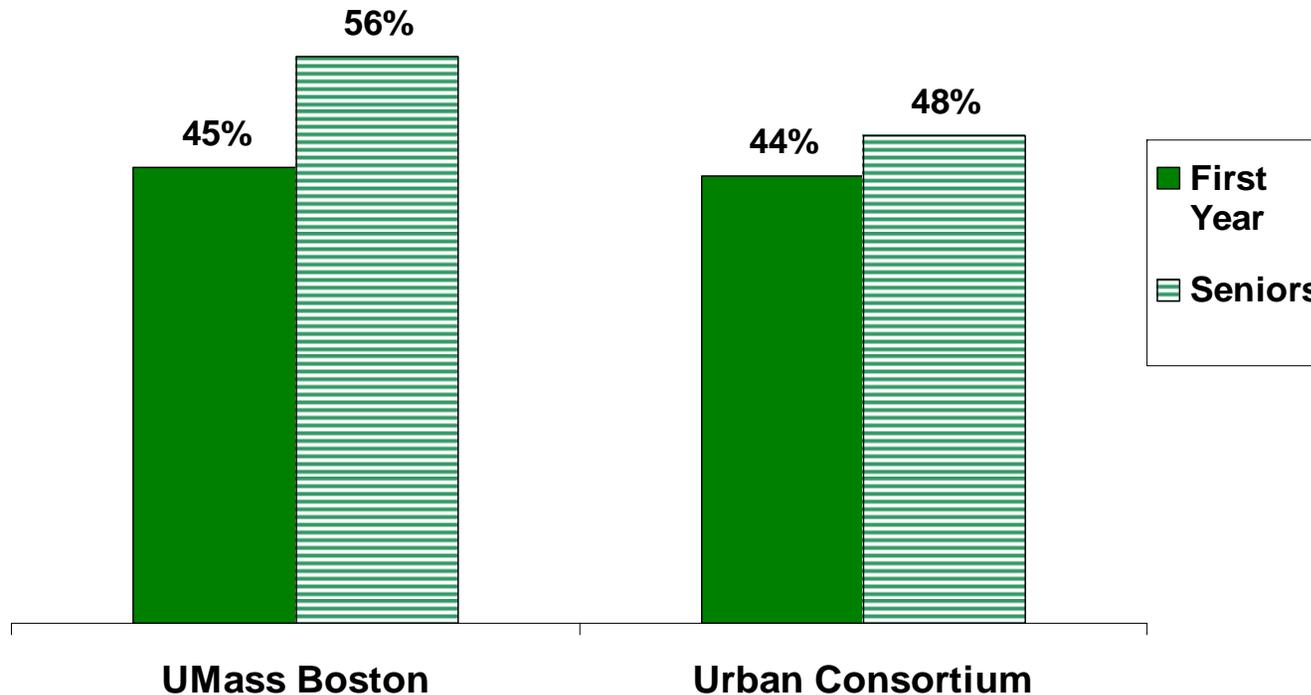
They were also more likely to speak a language other than English at home or with family.

**Percent of Respondents Reporting that They Speak a Language Other than English at Home or with Family**



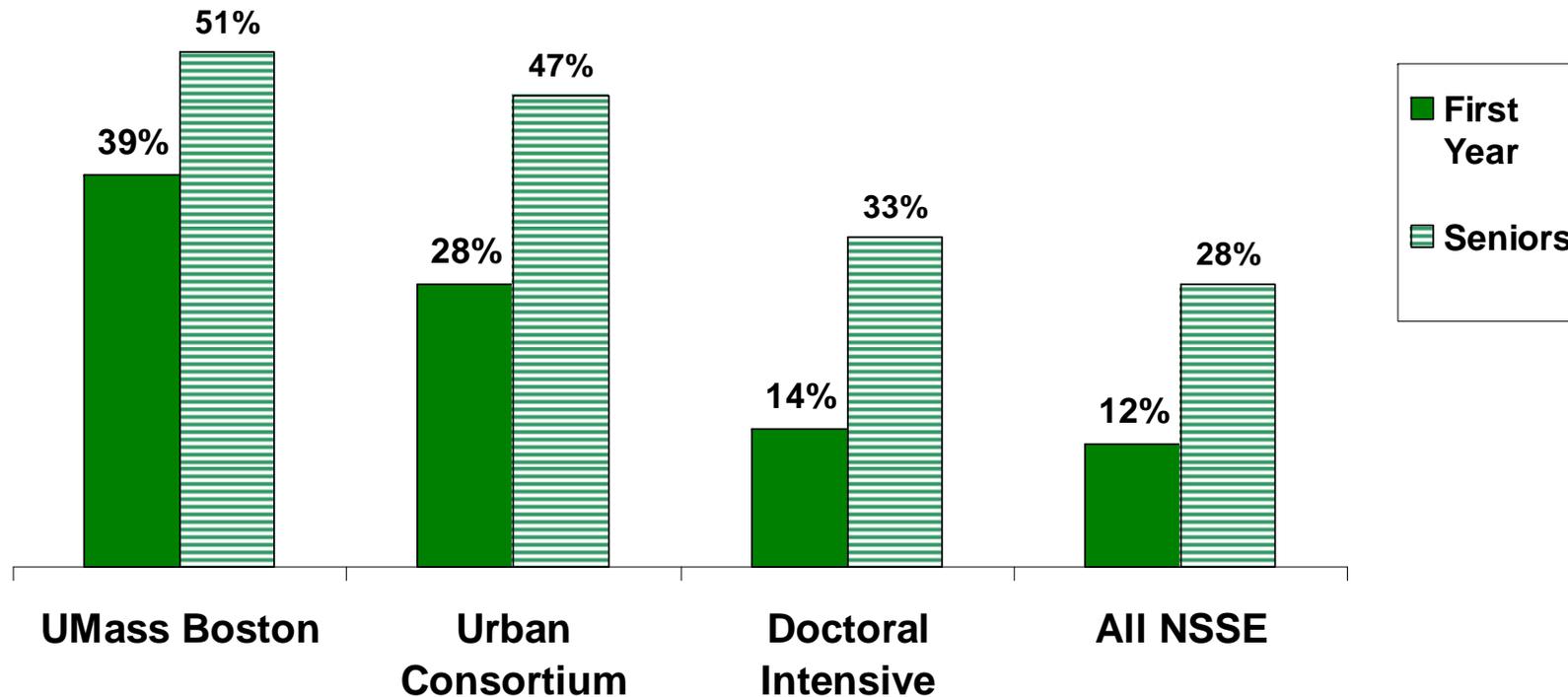
UMass Boston respondents reported similar levels of family income as their colleagues at the other Urban institutions. (The U.S. Census Bureau reports 2001-2003 average median family income as \$52,084 for Massachusetts and \$43,527 for the U.S. as a whole.)

**Percent of Respondents Reporting Current Annual Family Incomes of Less Than \$25,000**



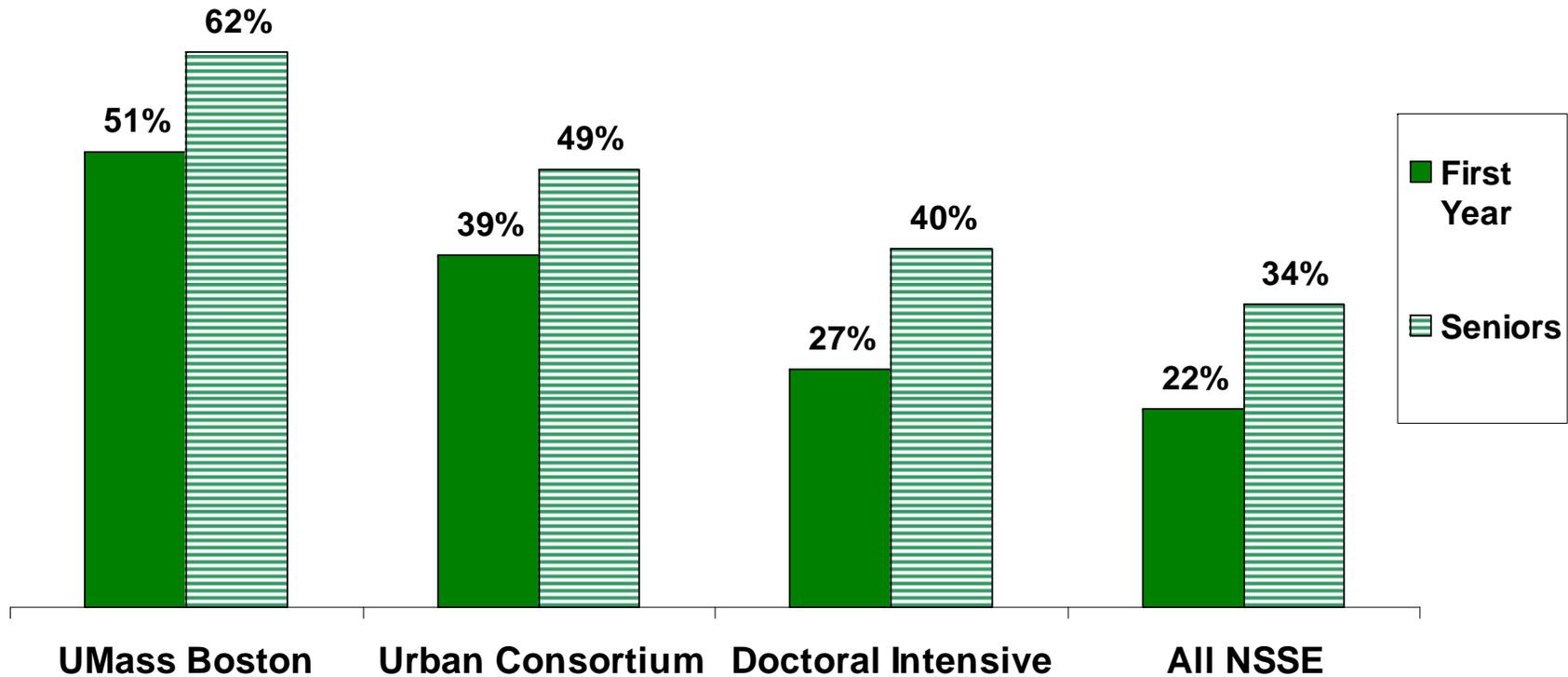
UMass Boston respondents reported working more hours off campus each week than did their counterparts.

**Percent Of Respondents Reporting Working More Than 20 Hours Per Week Off Campus**



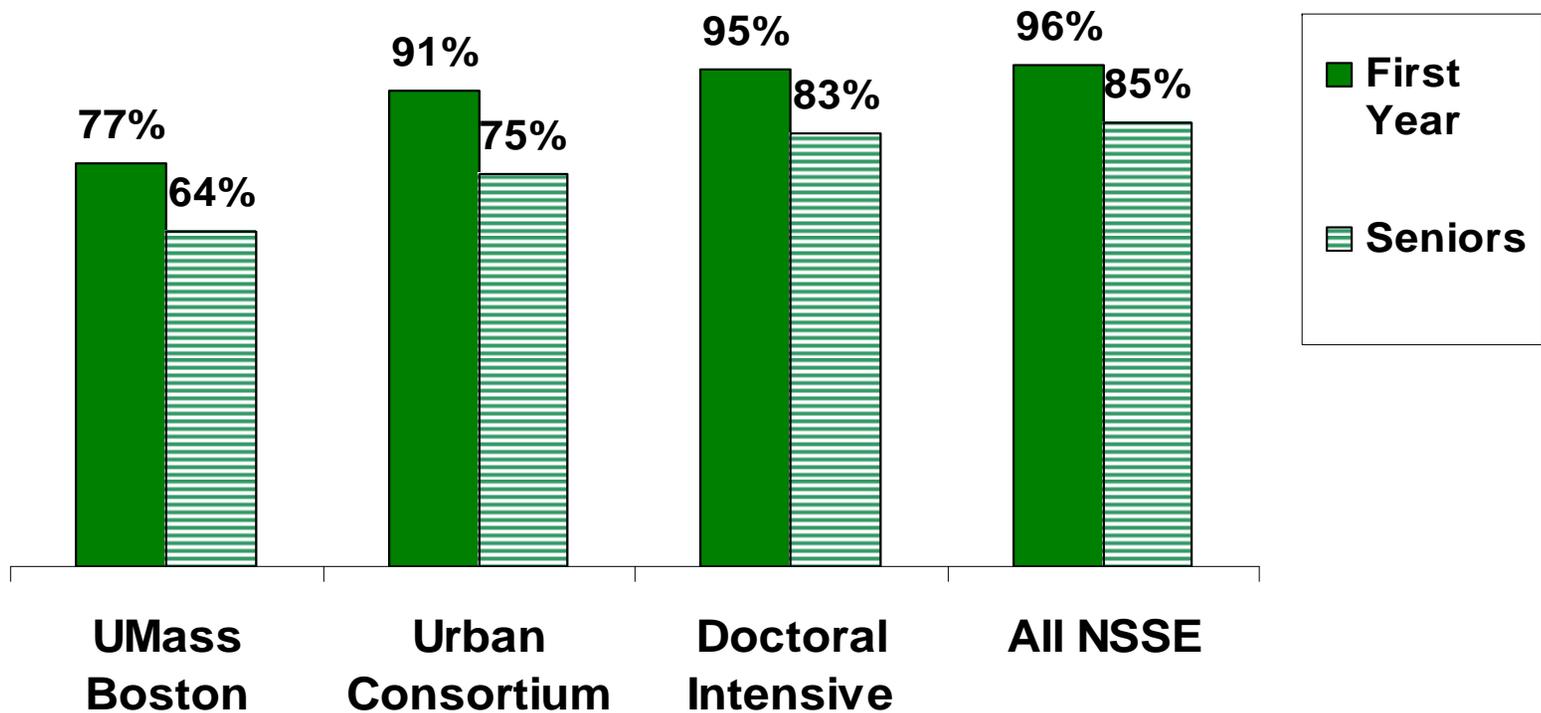
More UMass Boston respondents reported spending some time caring for dependents.

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Spending Some Time Each Week Caring for Dependents



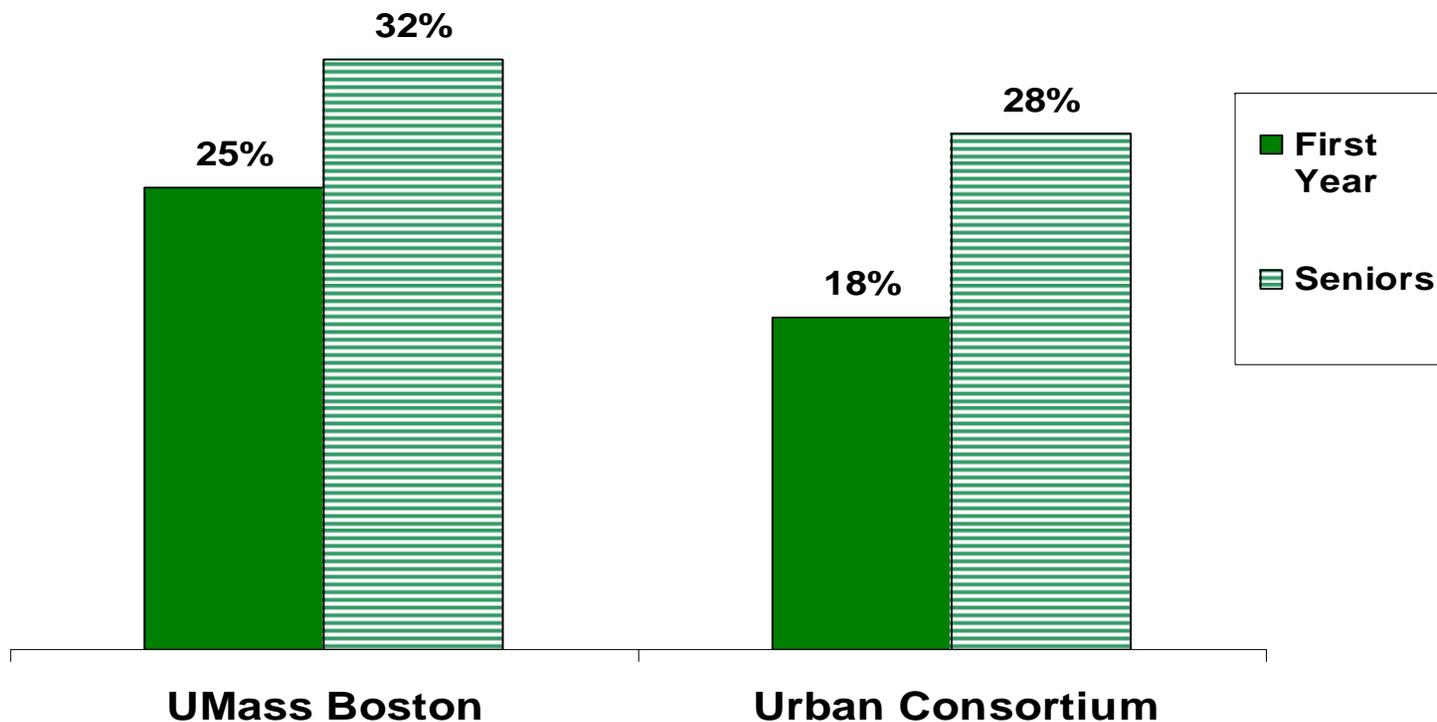
UMass Boston respondents were less likely to attend school full time.

### Percent of Respondents Who Report Attending School Full Time



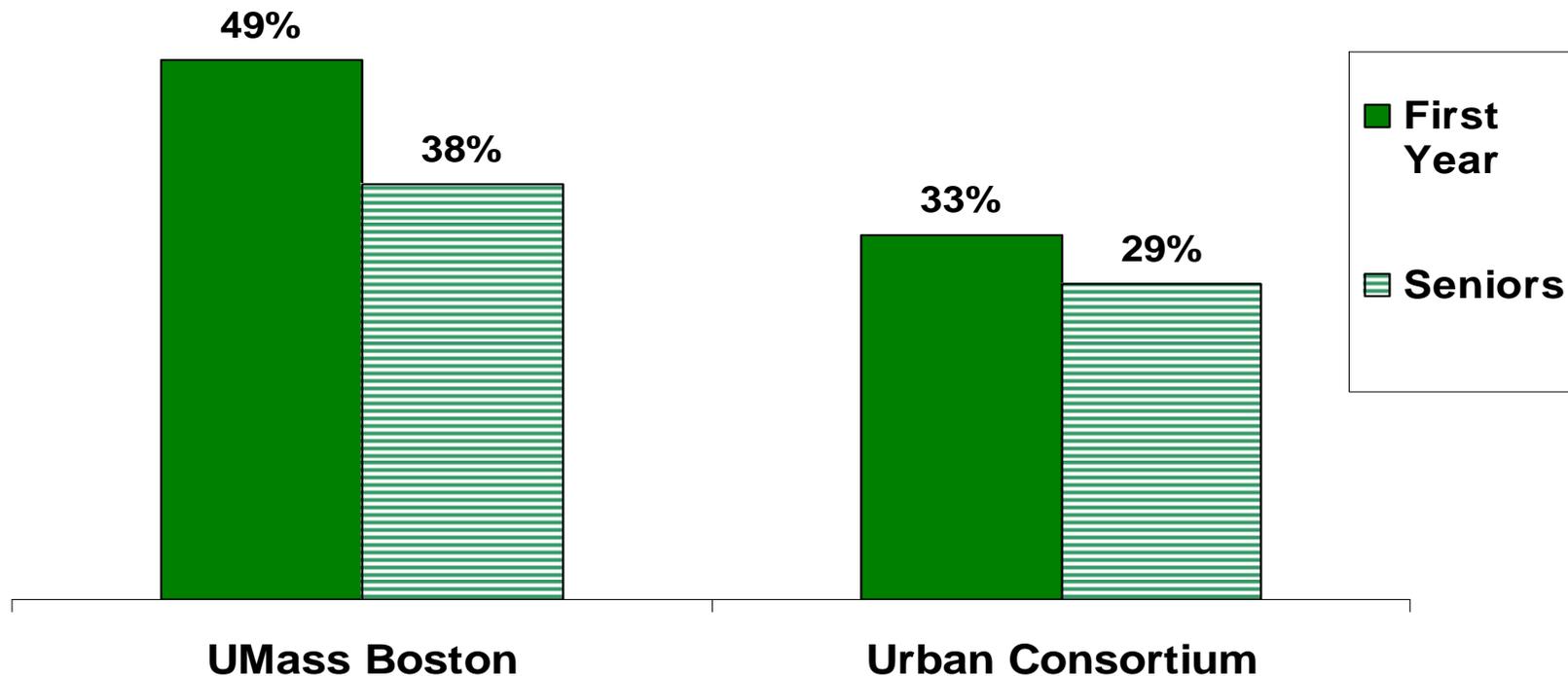
Many UMass Boston respondents expect that their undergraduate education will be delayed by work or family responsibilities.

**Percent of Respondents Stating That It Is "Somewhat Likely" or "Very Likely" That Work or Family Commitments Will Delay Them In Completing Their Undergraduate Education**



Almost half of the First Year respondents expect that their undergraduate education will be delayed by financial problems.

**Percent of Respondents Stating That It Is Somewhat Likely or Very Likely That Financial Problems Will Delay Them In Completing Their Undergraduate Education**



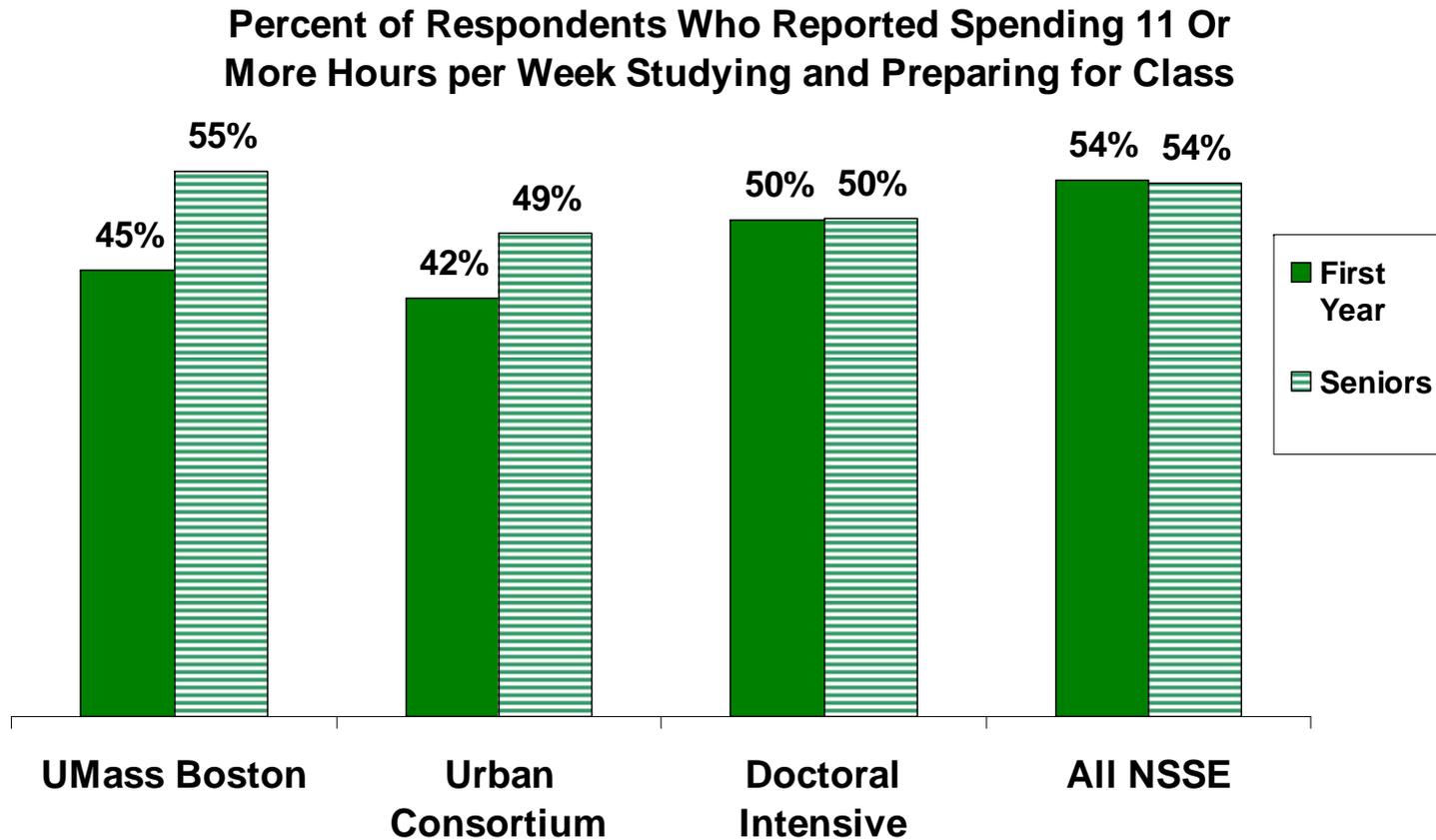
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## **According to Retention Literature, Academic Integration is Positively Related to Retention**

While many UMass Boston students reported behavior that indicated that they were academically involved/integrated when they were in class, this integration doesn't seem to carry over outside of class. Our students focus on what they may perceive as the “nuts and bolts” of academic life; they study and are prepared when they show up for class, and they participate actively in class. It seems to be activities that could be characterized as “fringe”, but are nonetheless important to developing a sense of integration, that may suffer from the students' time constraints.

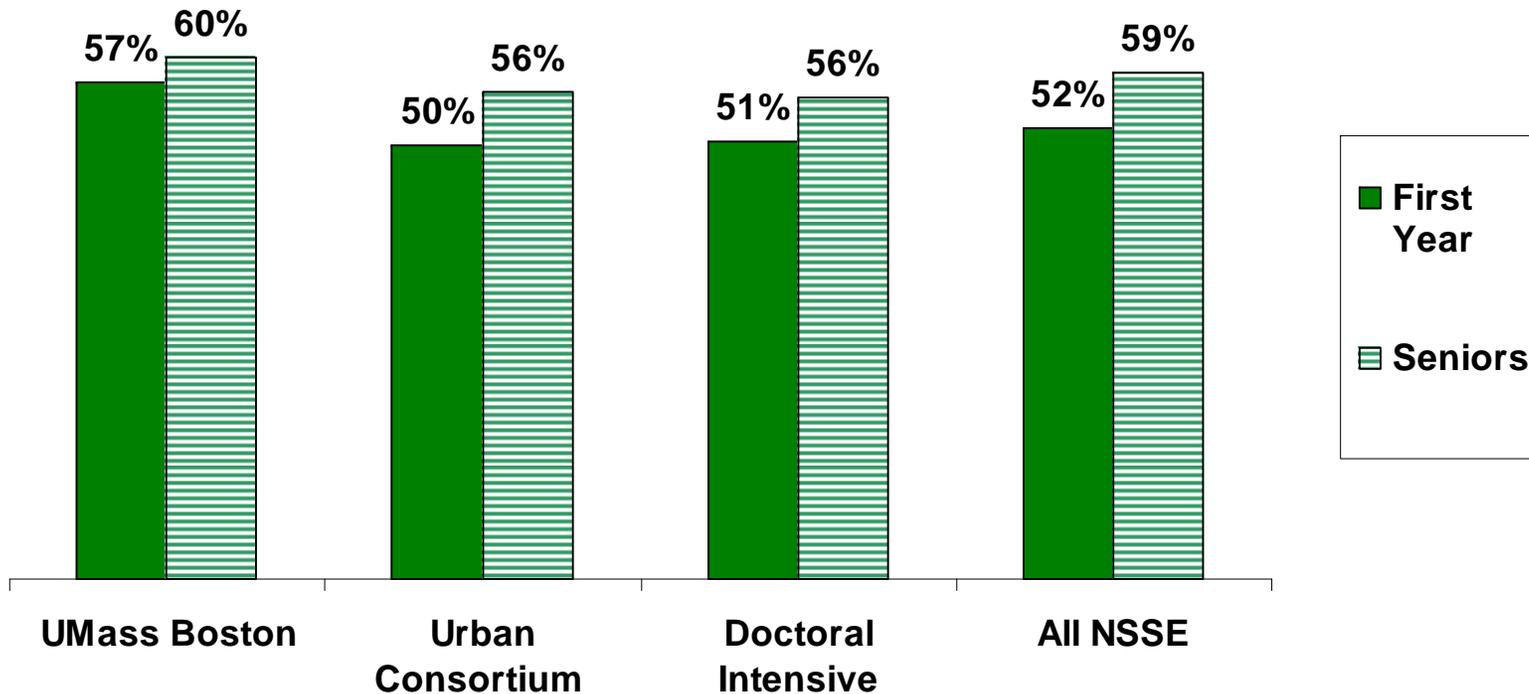
**The following sections will focus on differences between UMass Boston and other Doctoral Intensive first year students, although results for seniors and the comparison groups will also be reported.**

Both UMass Boston First Year and Seniors respondents reported spending about as much time studying as their colleagues in the comparison groups, except that first year respondents trailed the National group.



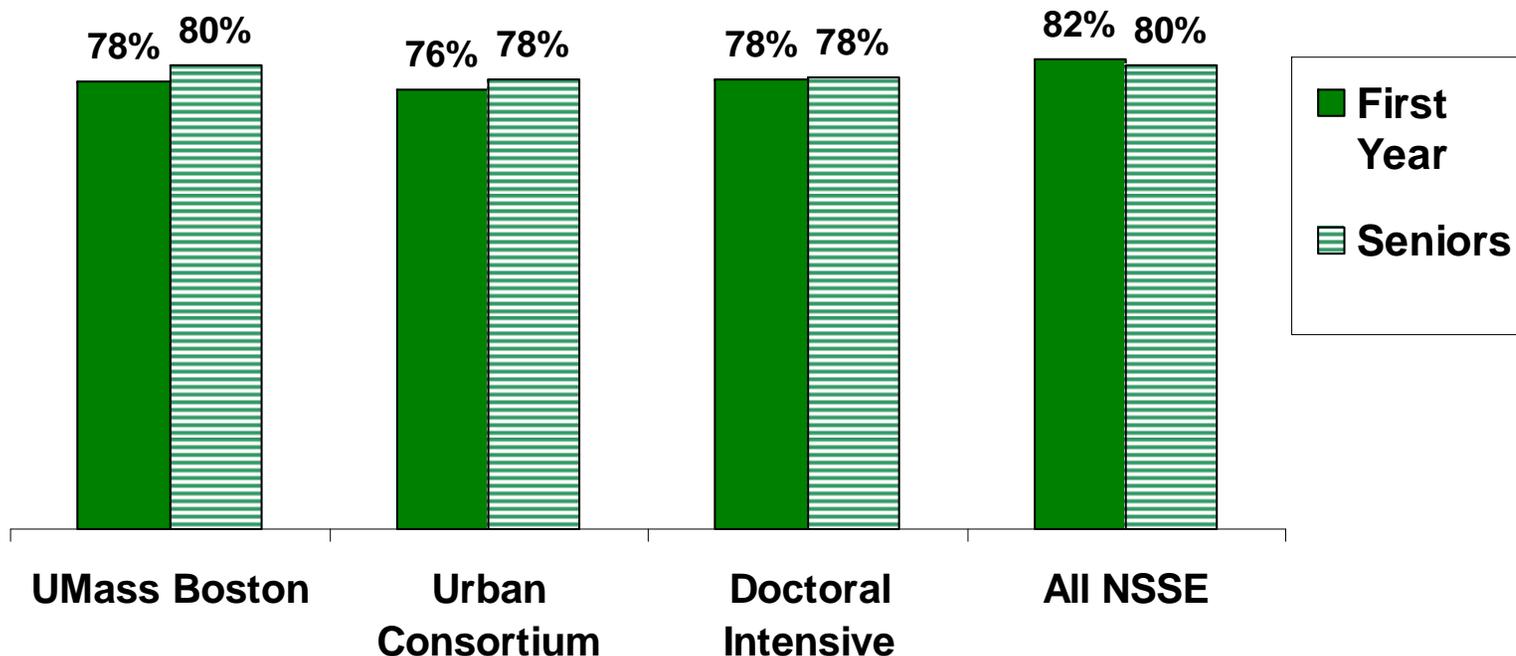
Many UMass Boston respondents reported that they often worked harder than they thought they could.

**Percent of Respondents Who "Often" or "Very Often" Worked Harder Than They Thought They Could to Meet an Instructor's Standards Or Expectations**



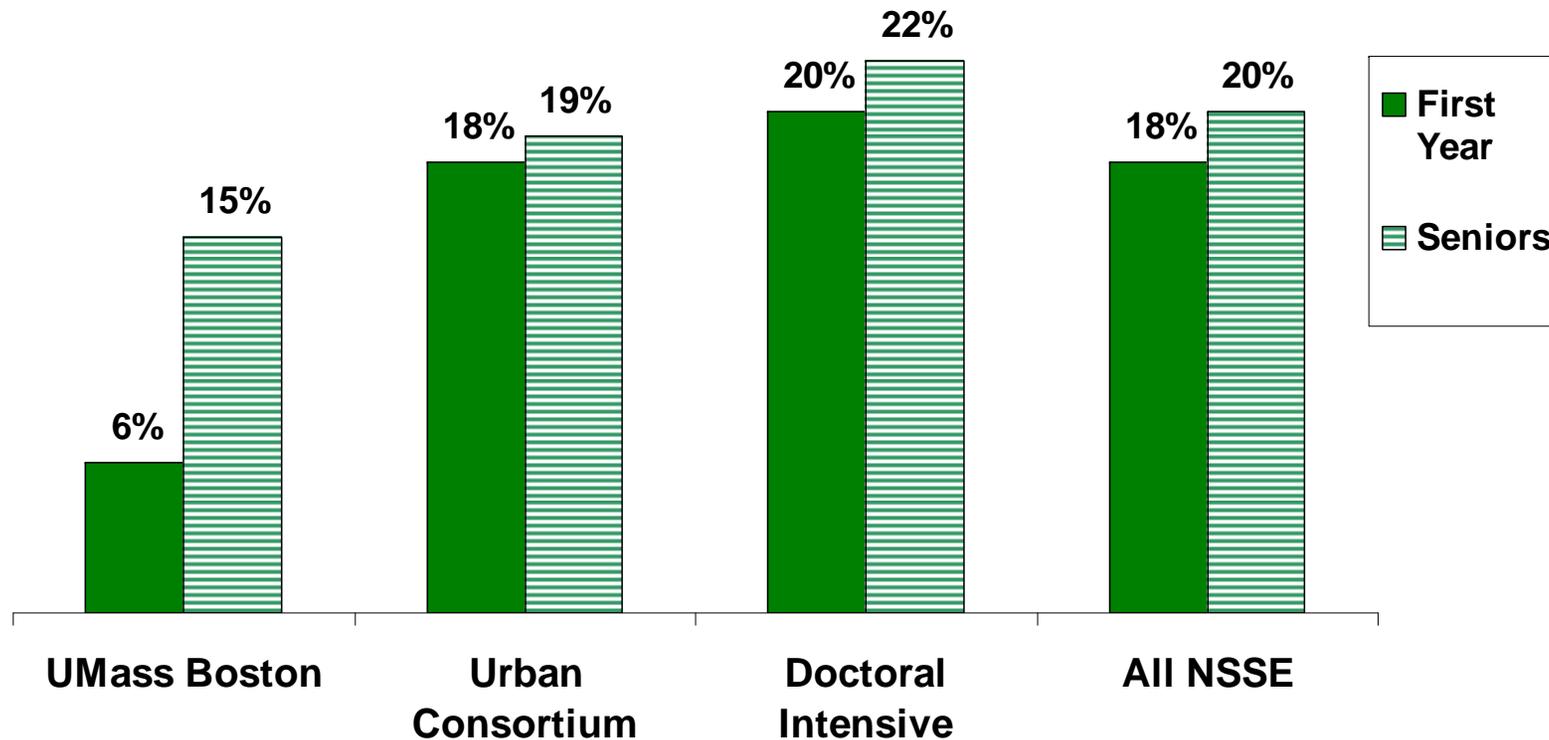
Both groups of UMass Boston respondents were as likely as their colleagues to report that their school emphasized studying and academic work.

**Percent Of Respondents Who Report That Their Institutions Emphasize Spending Significant Amounts Of Time On Studying And Academic Work**



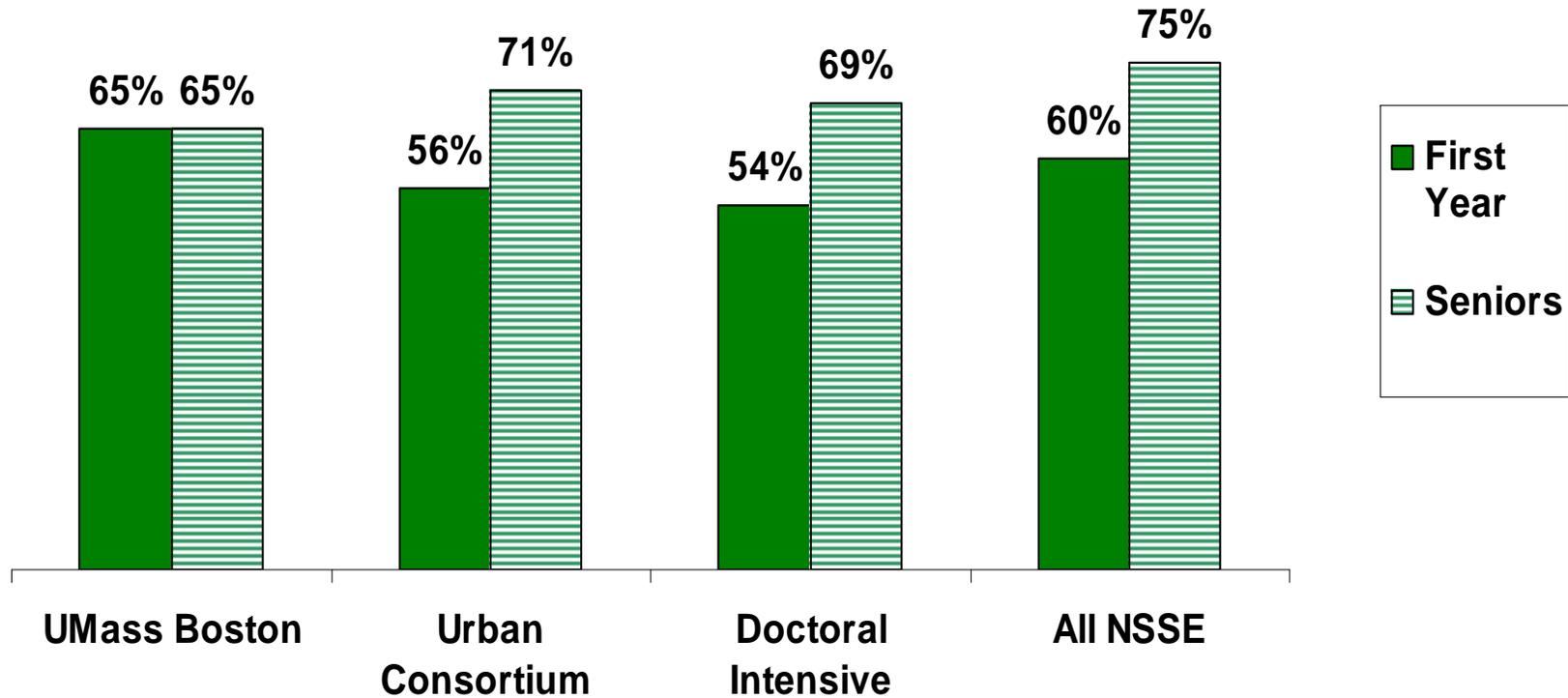
UMass Boston respondents responded to that expectation and came to class unprepared less often than their colleagues in any of the comparison groups.

**Percentage of Respondents Who Reported That They Came To Class Without Completing Reading Or Assignments "Often" Or "Very Often"**



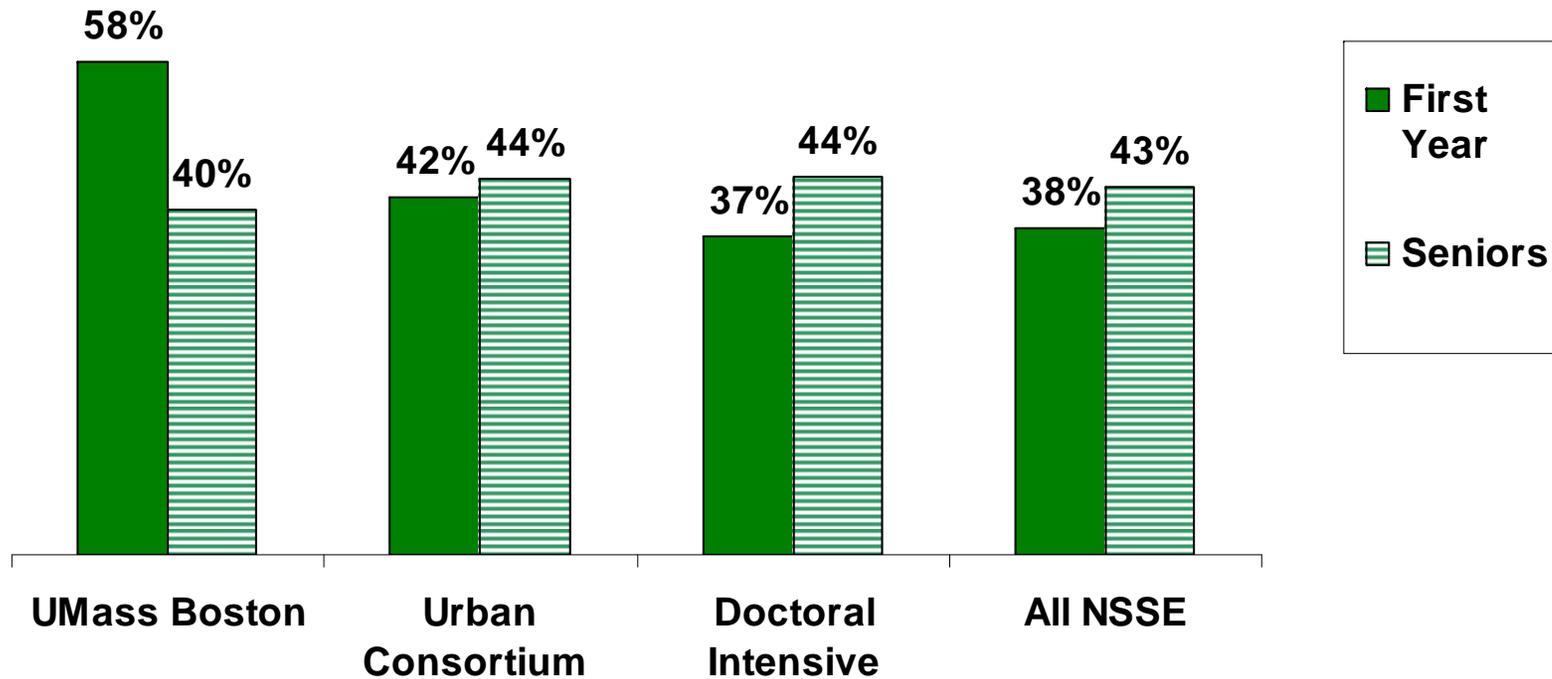
UMass Boston First Year respondents asked more questions in class than did their colleagues in the comparison groups.

Percent of Respondents Who Reported Asking Questions In Class "Often" Or "Very Often"



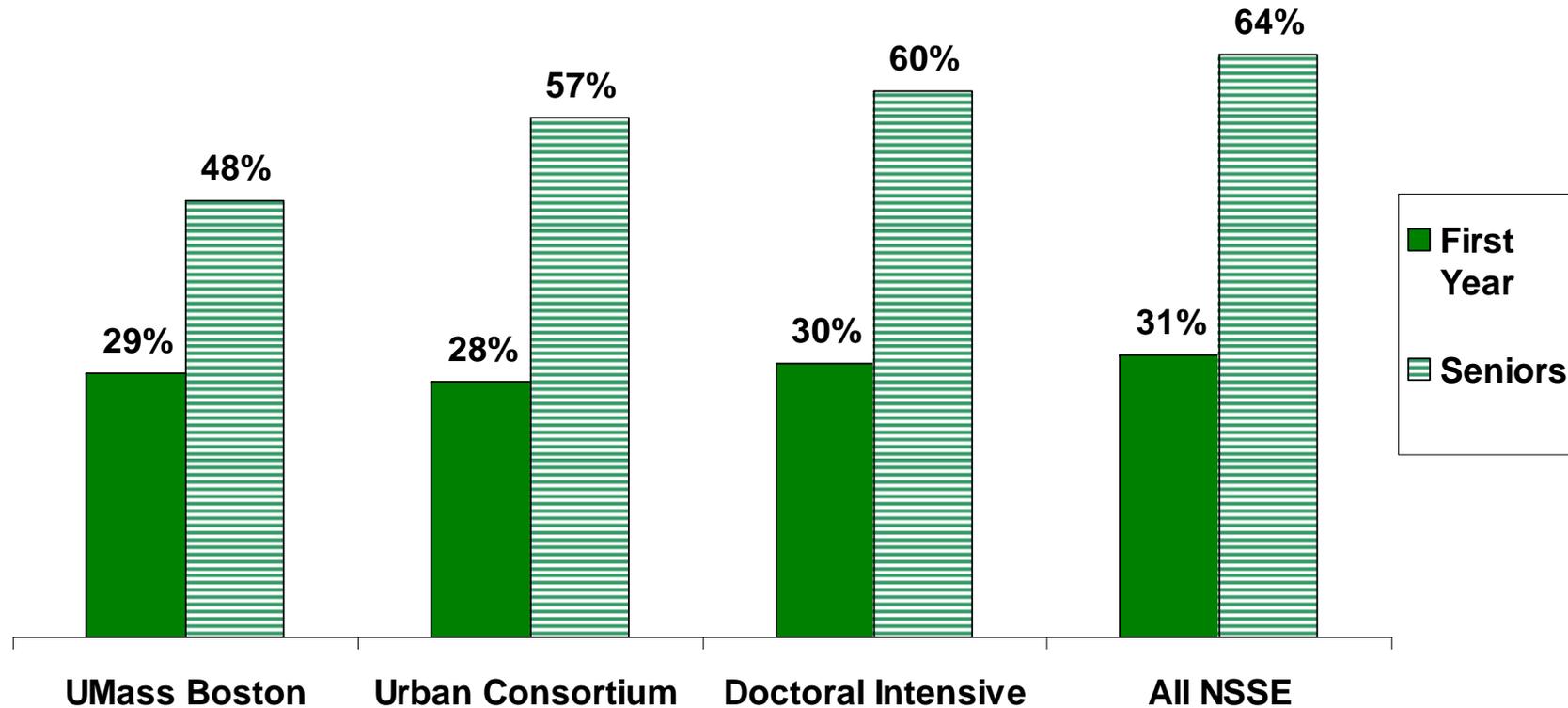
UMass Boston First Year respondents worked on projects with other students during class more often than their colleagues in any comparison group. The mean for Seniors is comparable to those of the other Groups.

**Percent Of Respondents Who Report Working With Other Students On Projects During Class "Often" Or "Very Often"**



UMass Boston First Year respondents were about as likely to make frequent class presentations as their colleagues in any comparison group. The mean for Seniors trailed those of the other groups.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Making A Presentation in Class "Often" or "Very Often"



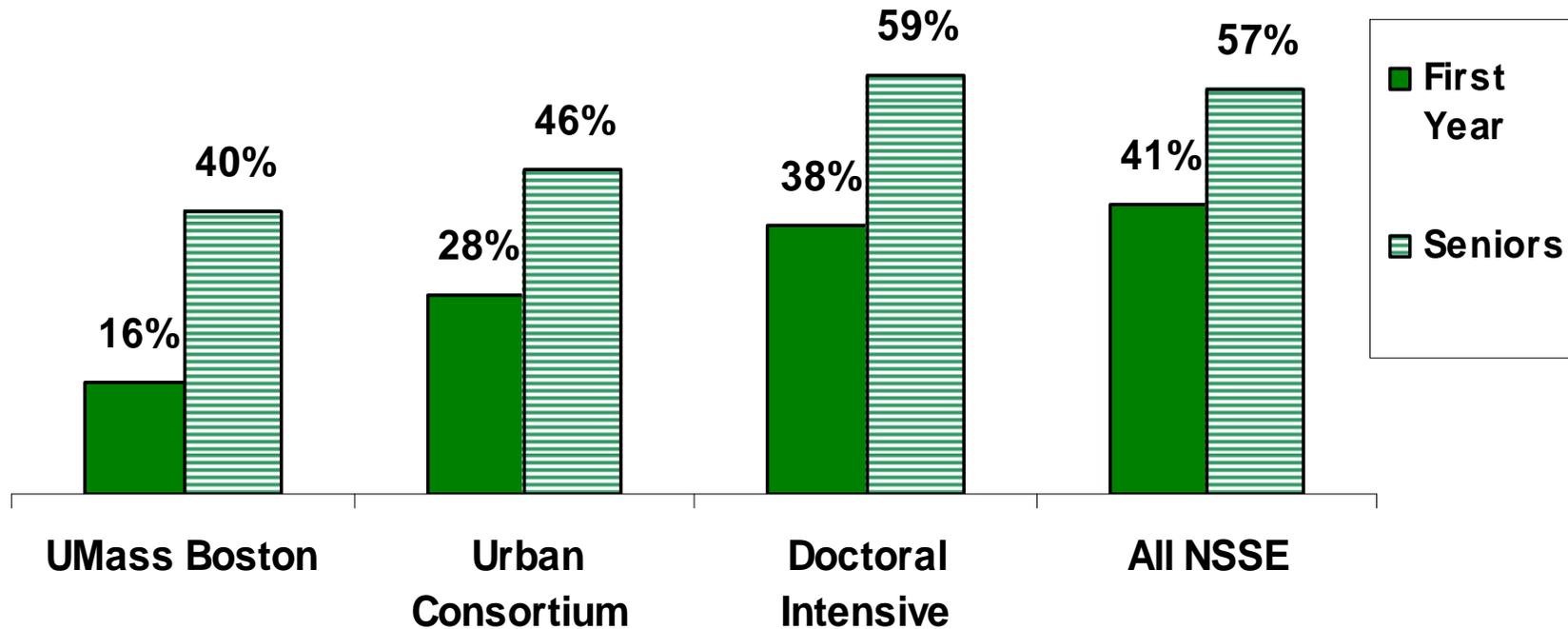
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**As we saw in the student background section, UMass Boston students have significant outside responsibilities, such as working for pay off campus and caring for dependents.**

**While this doesn't seem to affect study time or in class activities, it may have an effect on the time they have available for some other activities outside of regular school hours. In the following pages we see that differences in responses to questions about out of class activities are particularly pronounced for first year students.**

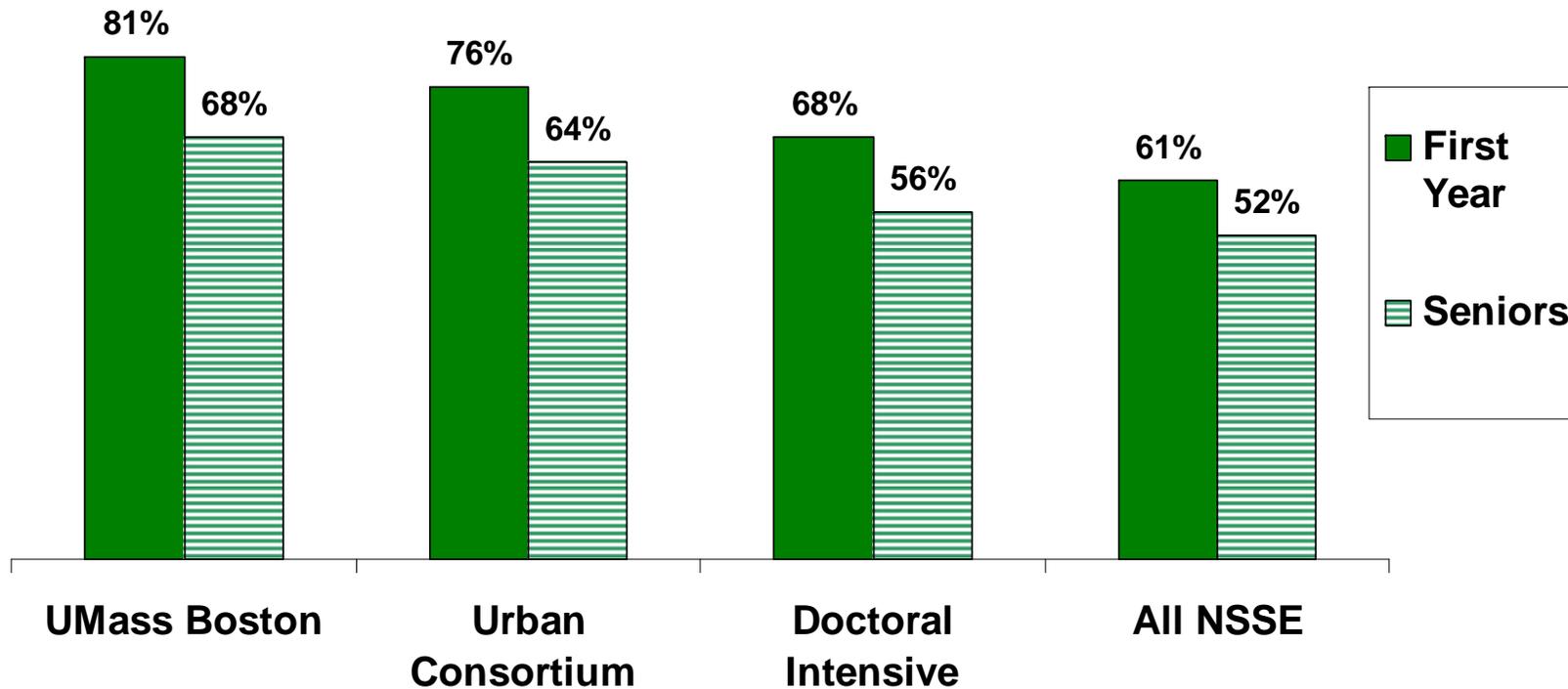
UMass Boston First Year and Senior respondents spend much less time working with other students outside of class than do their colleagues in any comparison group.

**Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Working With Other Students Outside of Class to Prepare Class Projects "Often" or "Very Often"**



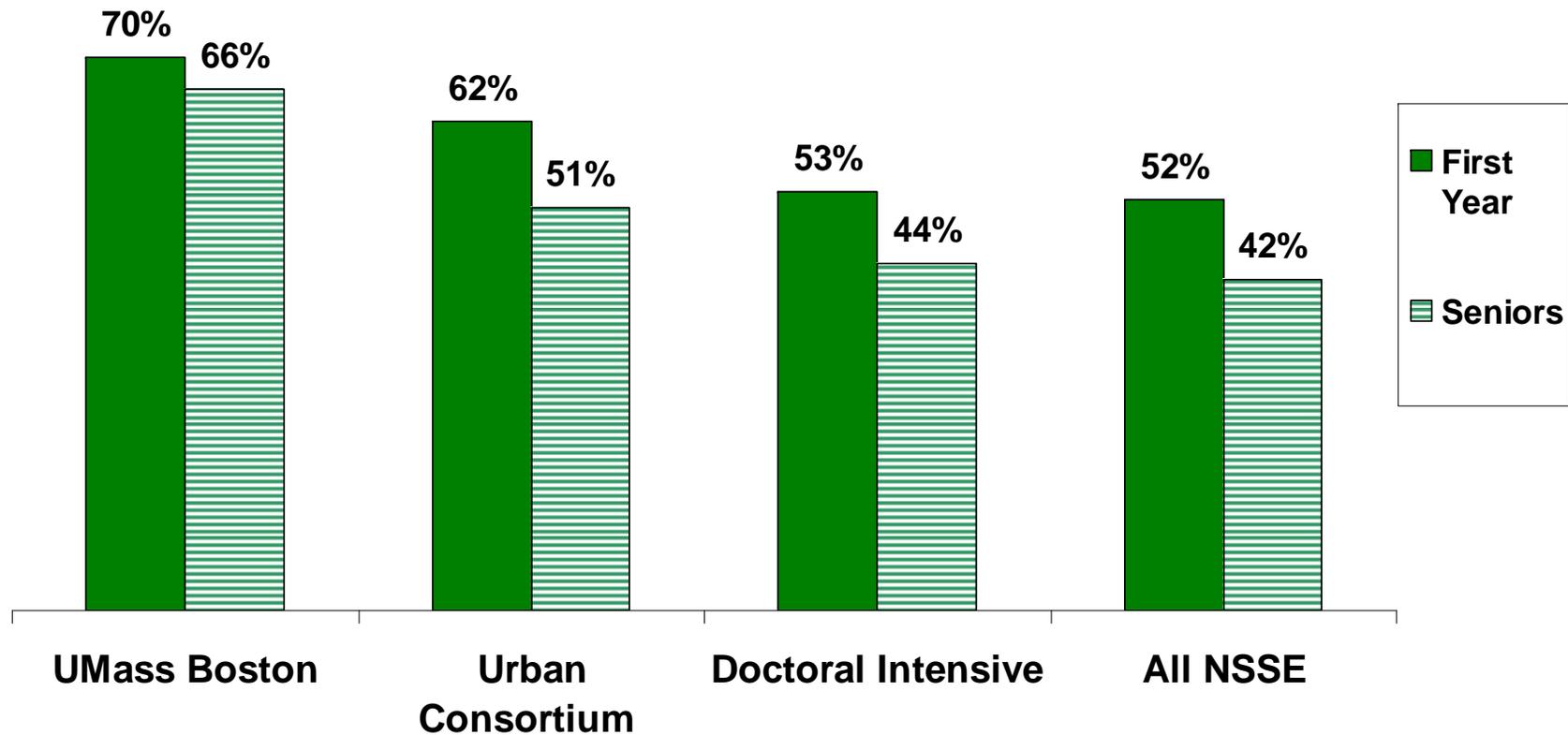
UMass Boston First Year and Senior respondents were more likely to have never participated in a community based project as part of course work than were their colleagues at the other Doctoral Intensives or in the National group.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported that They "Never" Participated in a Community Based Project As Part of a Regular Course



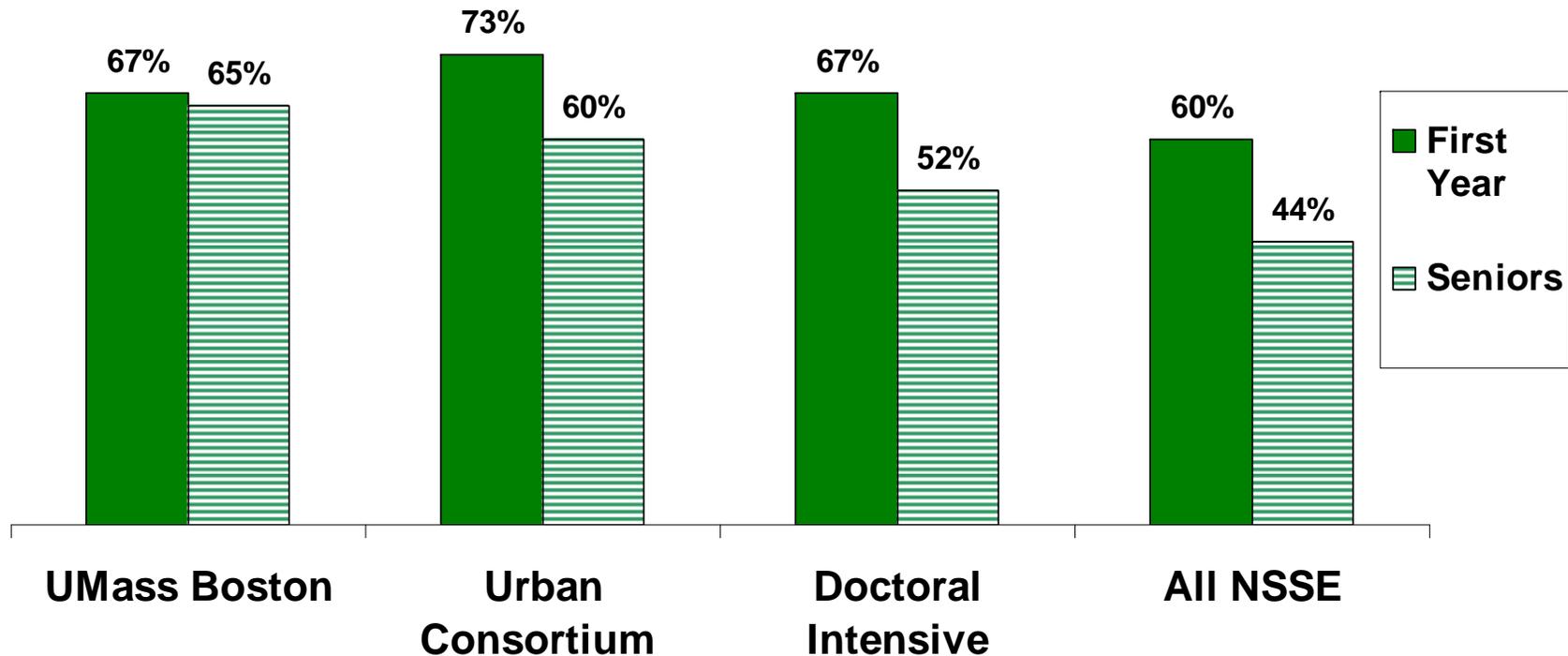
UMass Boston First Year and Senior respondents were the least likely to have tutored or taught other students for pay or voluntarily.

Percentage of Seniors Who Reported That They "Never" Tutored or Taught Other Students



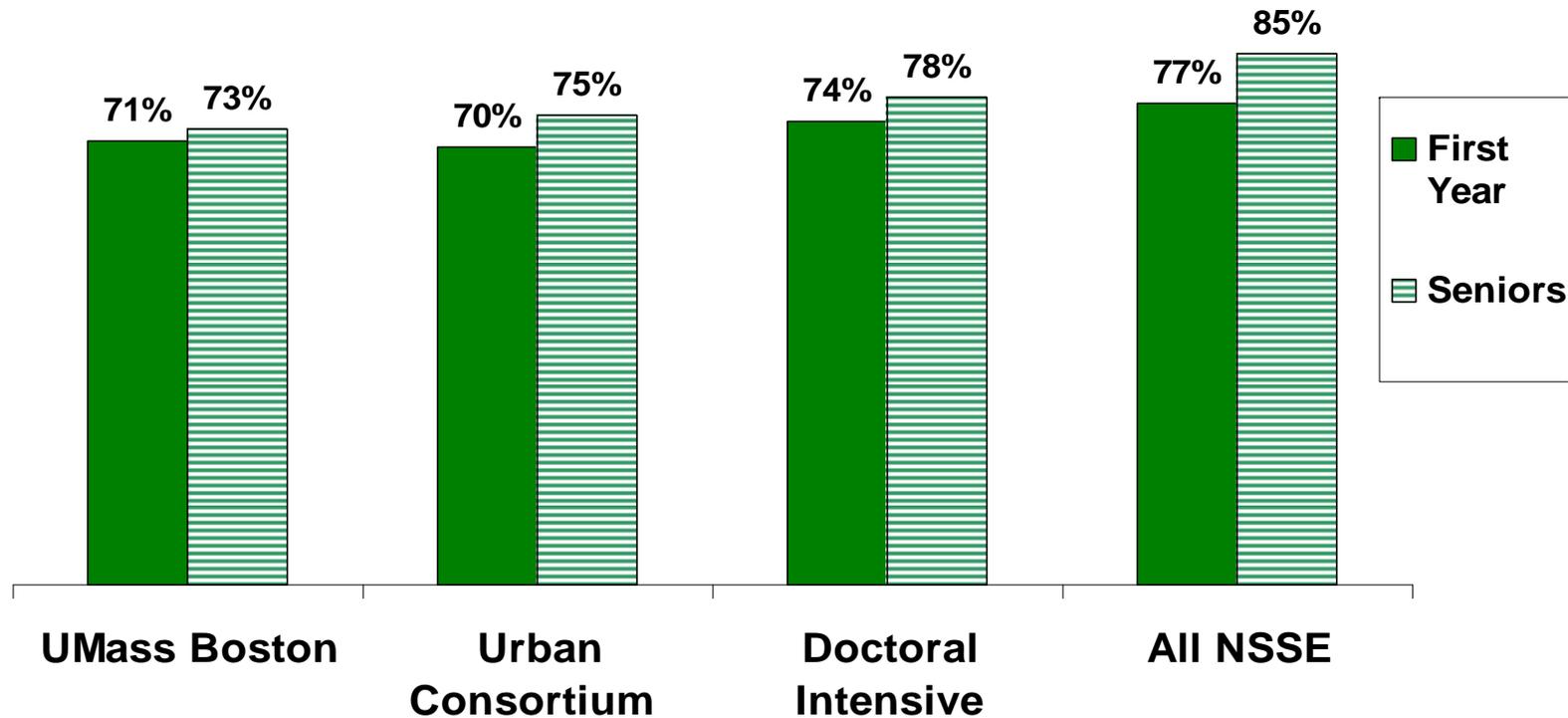
UMass Boston Senior respondents were less likely than their Doctoral Intensive or National counterparts to have worked with faculty on activities other than coursework. First Year respondents were about as likely, which was an improvement over NSSE 2002.

**Percentage of Respondents Who Reported "Never" Working With Faculty Members on Activities Other than Coursework**



UMass Boston Senior respondents were significantly less likely to have talked with a faculty member about career plans than were Seniors in the Doctoral Intensive or National groups. First Year respondents were similar to the comparison groups.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported That They Had Ever Talked about Career Plans with a Faculty Member or Advisor



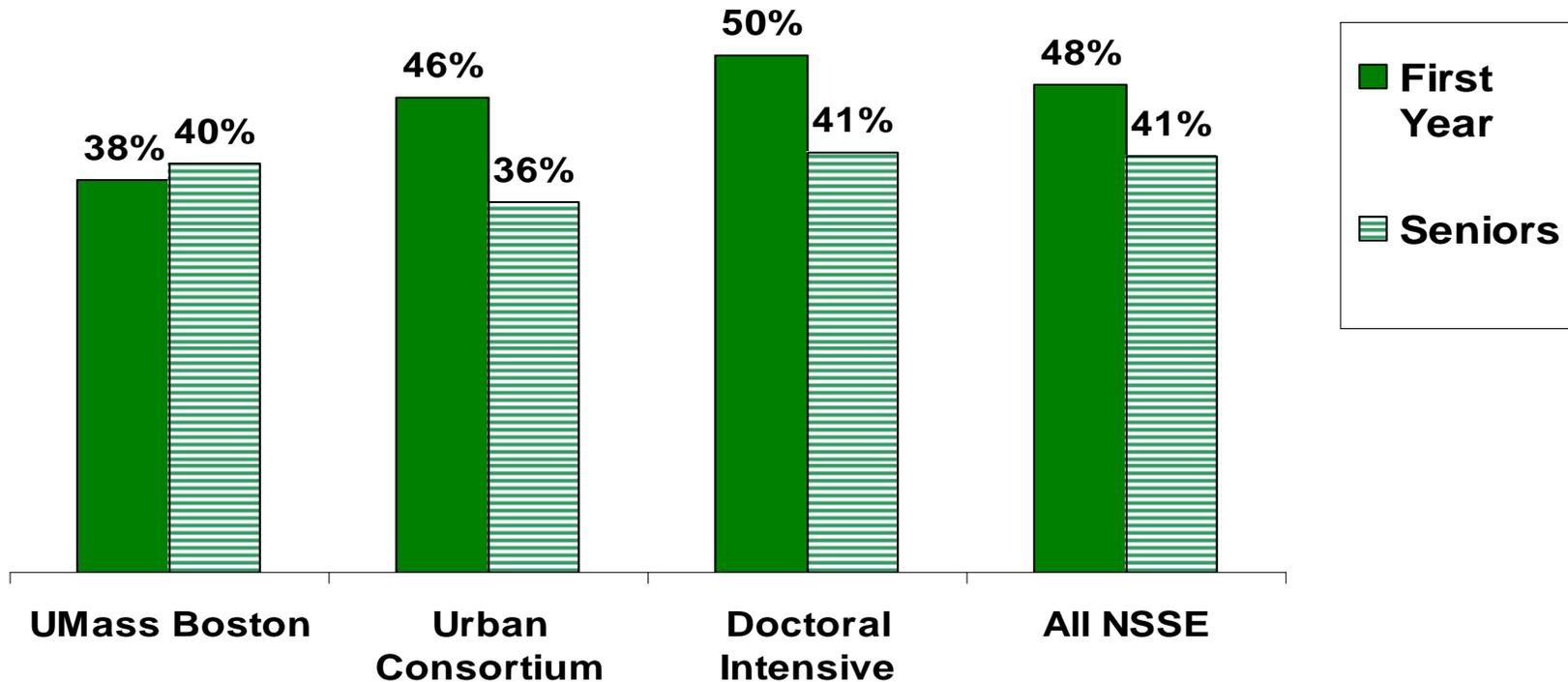
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## **According to Retention Literature, Social Integration Is Also Positively Related to Retention**

The mean responses to several questions that might indicate social integration were significantly lower for UMass Boston first year students than for first year students at the other doctoral intensive universities.

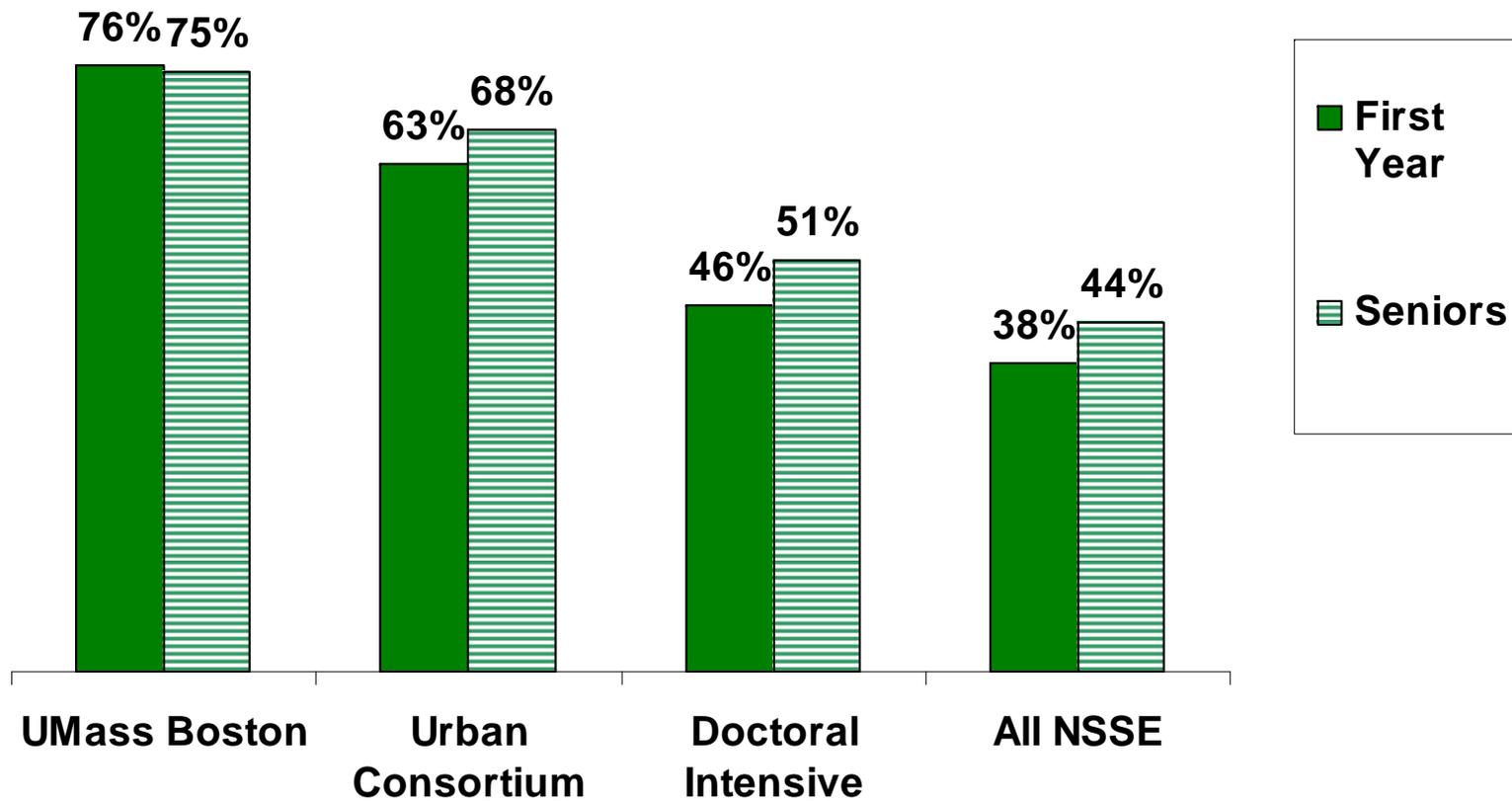
UMass Boston First Year respondents spent significantly less time relaxing and socializing than other First Year respondents. Seniors were similar to the comparison groups.

**Percent of Respondents Who Reported Spending More Than 10 Hours per Week Relaxing and Socializing**



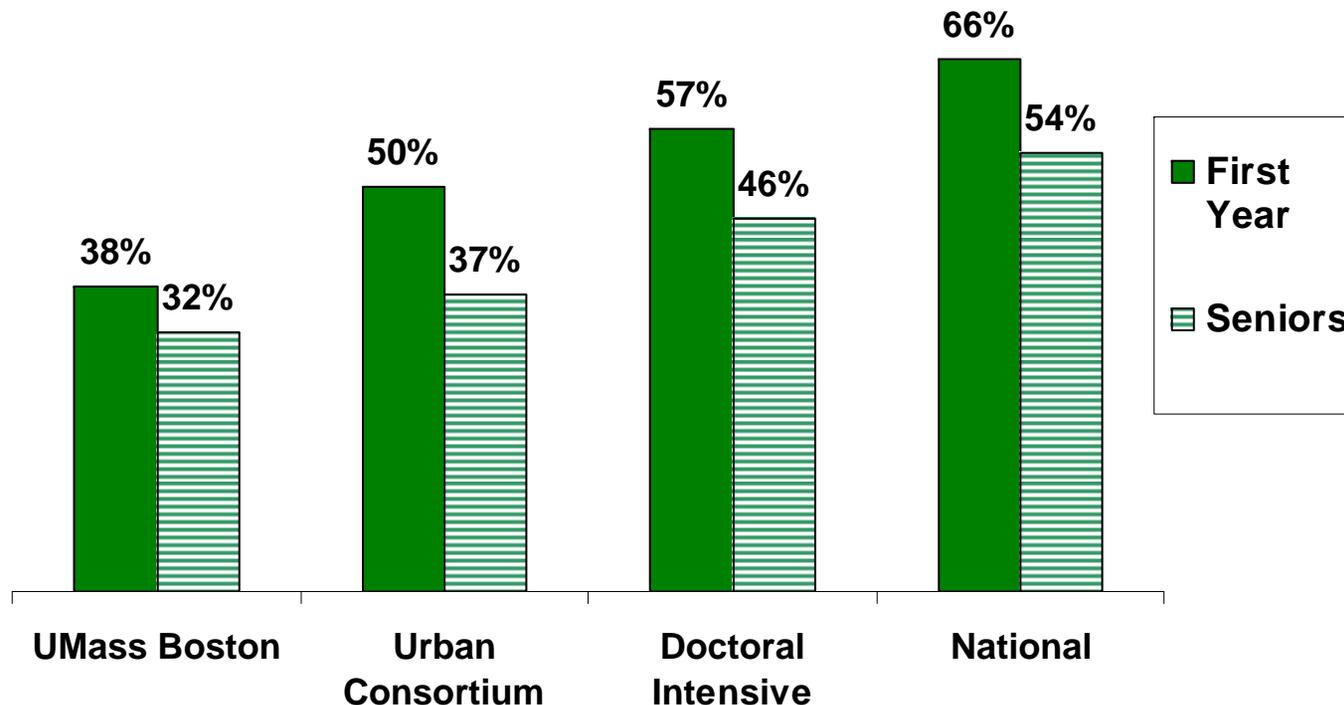
UMass Boston respondents were the least likely to spend any time in co-curricular activities.

**Percent of Respondents Who Reported Spending No Time Participating In Co-curricular Activities**  
(Student Organizations or Government, Intramural Sports, etc.)



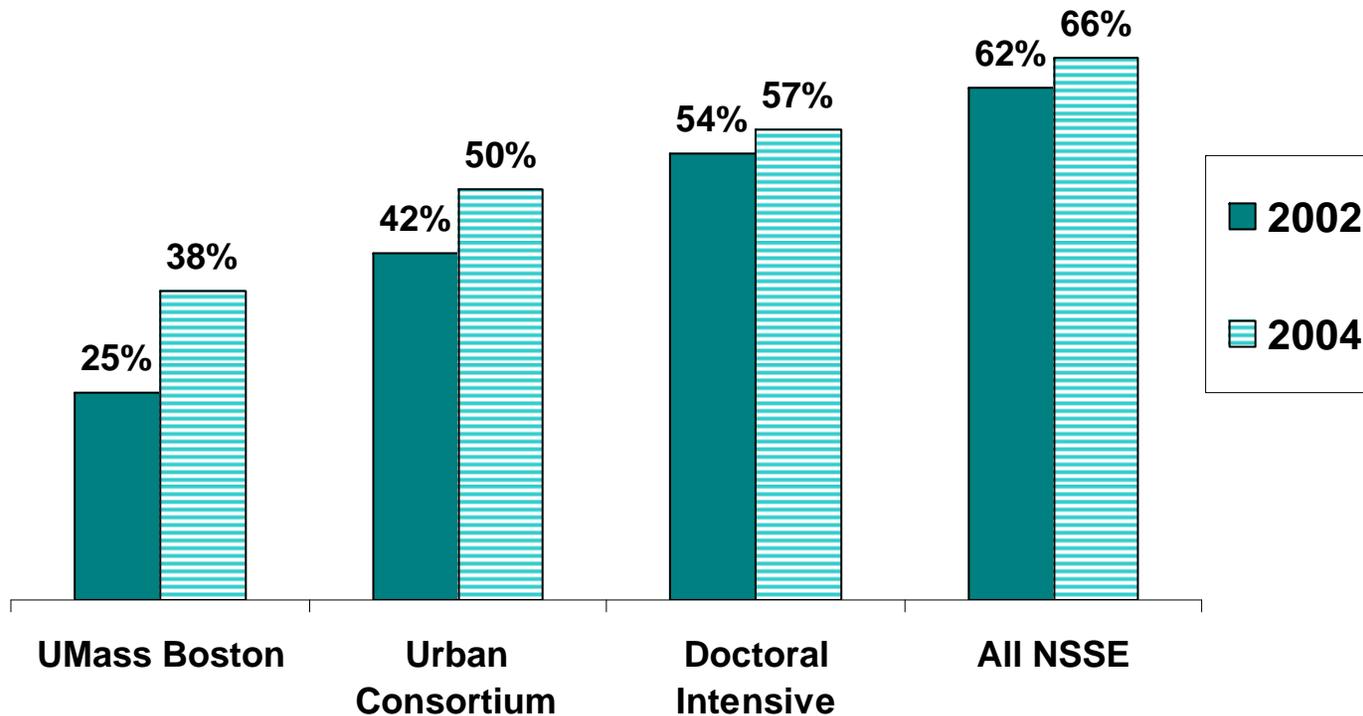
UMass Boston respondents were significantly less likely to report that their institution emphasized attending campus events than were their colleagues in any of the comparison groups.

**Percent of Respondents Who Reported that Their Institution Emphasized Attending Campus Events and Activities "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much"**



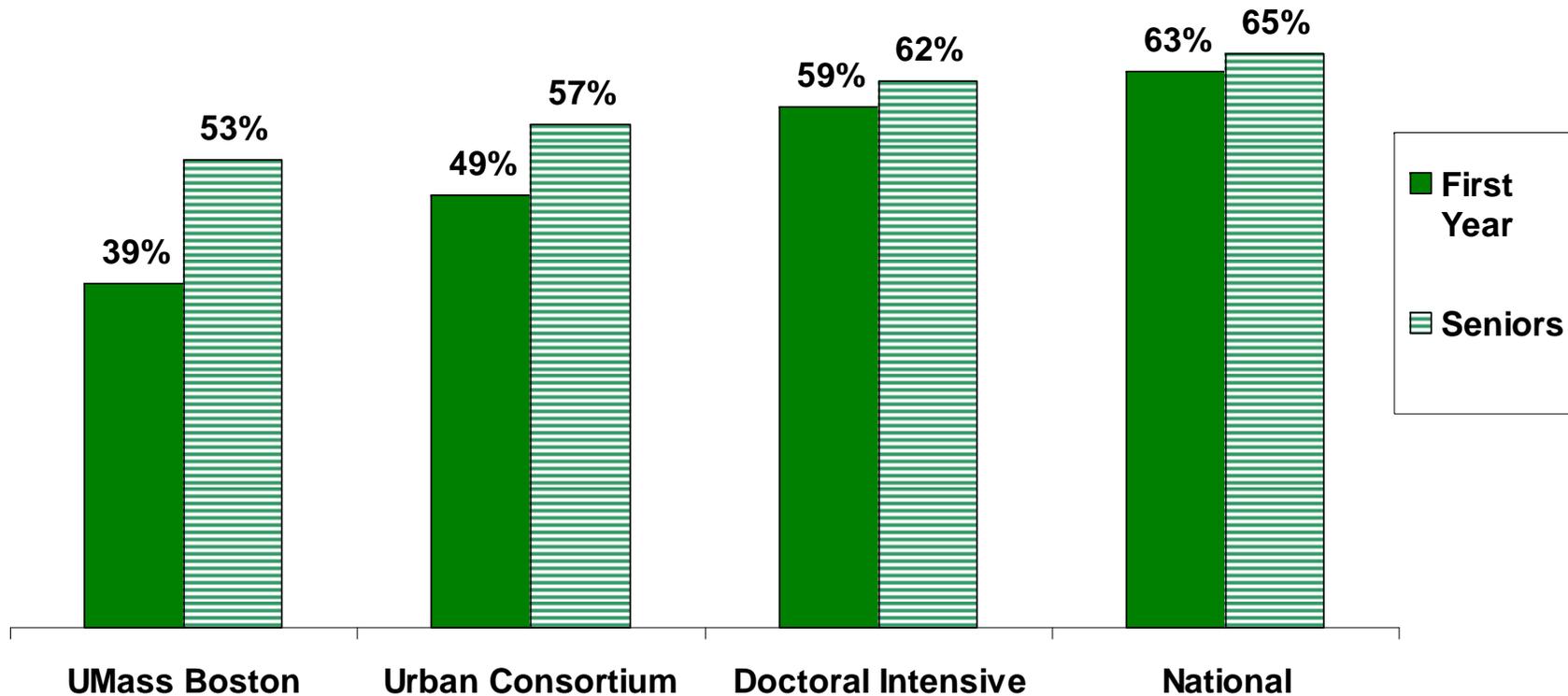
However, while all of the groups improved their ratings over NSSE 2002 somewhat, UMass Boston First Year respondents reported the highest rates of improvement on this question from NSSE 2002 to NSSE 2004.

2002 to 2004 Comparison of Percent of First Year Respondents Reporting Emphasis on Attending Campus Events As "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much"



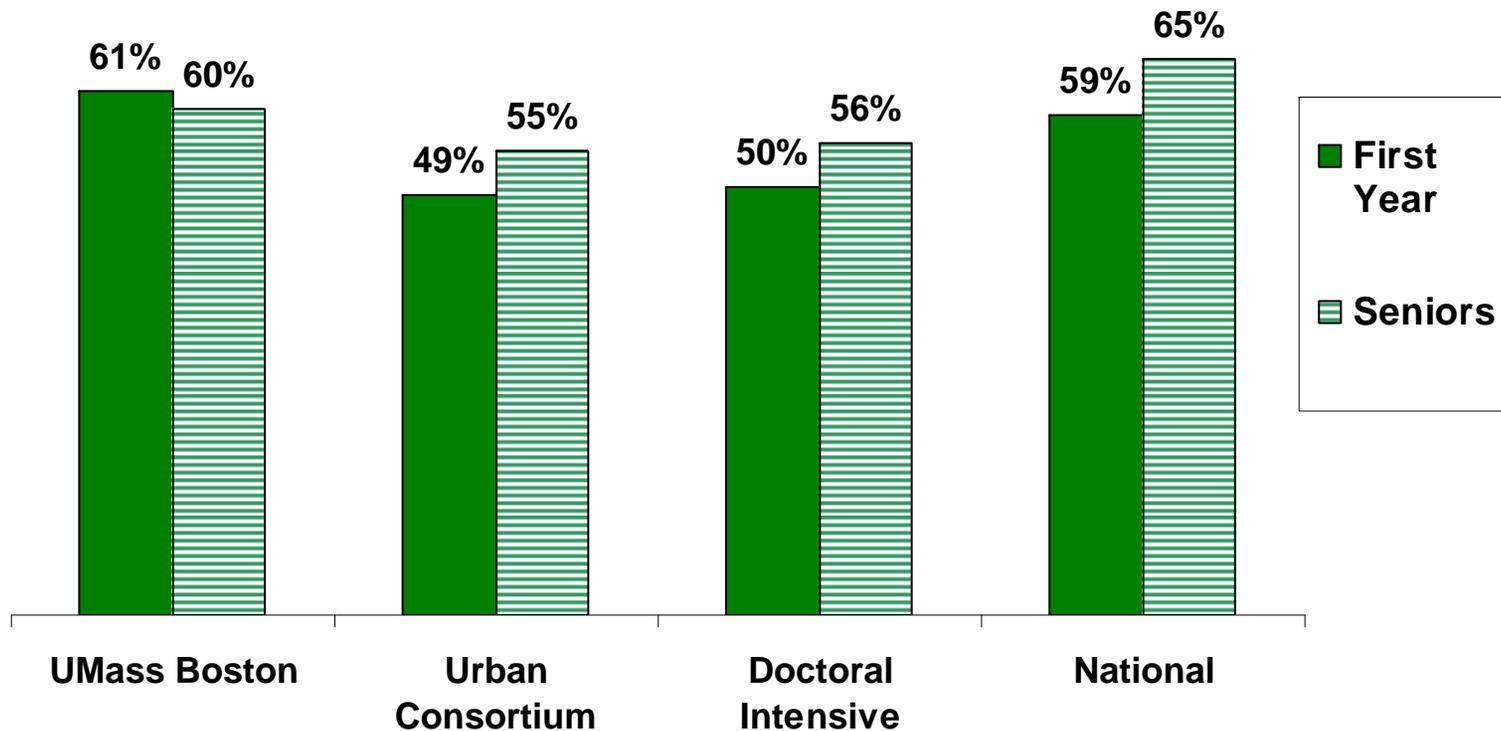
UMass Boston respondents rated their relationships with other students significantly lower than their colleagues in the Doctoral Intensive or National comparison groups.

Percentage of Respondents Rating Their Relationships With Other Students as a 6 or 7 on a 7 Point Scale



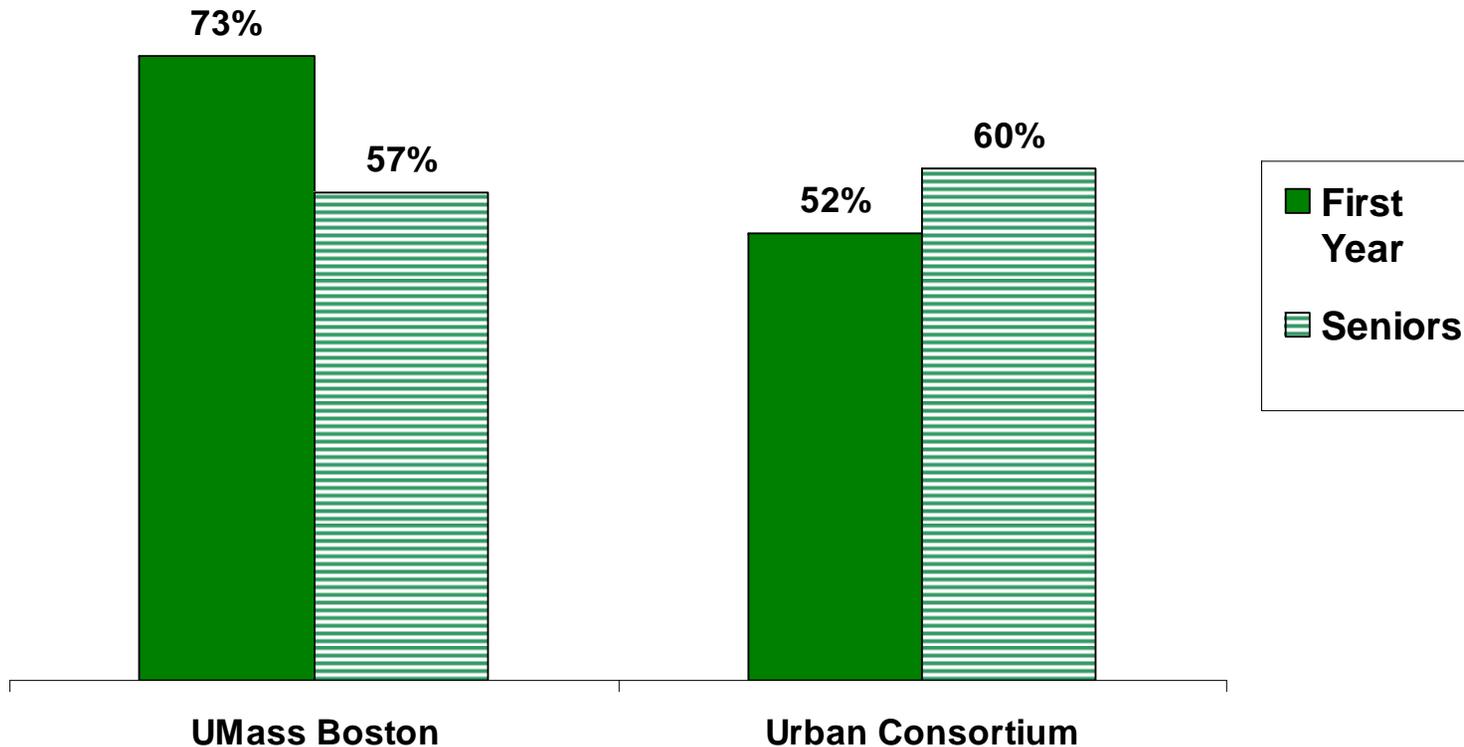
However, First Year respondents rated their relationships with faculty higher than the Urban Consortium or Doctoral Intensives. Seniors were about the same as those in the comparison groups.

**Percentage of Respondents Rating Their Relationships With Faculty as a 6 or 7 on a 7 Point Scale**



UMass Boston First Year Respondents reported spending significantly less time on campus outside of class than did UMass Boston Seniors or other respondents in the Urban Consortium.

Percent of Respondents Reporting Spending 5 Hours or Less On Campus Each Week Outside of Class Time



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## Conclusions

- **UMass Boston students differ from their colleagues on a number of background measures.**
- **Several of the background characteristics seem to involve stresses that may impose time constraints on UMass Boston students that limit their participation in activities outside of class time or aside from directly preparing for class. This may adversely impact their ability to become academically and socially integrated into the life of the university, and therefore may adversely affect retention and persistence.**