

NSSE 2008

Student Characteristics and Factors Affecting Retention & Persistence



Prepared by:

**The Office of Institutional
Research and Policy Studies**

Jennifer Brown, Director

Kevin B. Murphy, Associate Director

UMass Boston Has NSSE 2008 Comparative Statistics for Three Groups

- **All Public 4-Year NSSE Institutions**
 - 298 Institutions
 - 105,407 Respondents
- **All Doctoral Research NSSE Universities**
 - 28 Institutions
 - 9,438 Respondents
- **An Urban Consortium**
 - 22 Institutions
 - 6,103 Respondents

The 2008 Urban Consortium

Bellevue University*

Boise State University

Colorado State University-Pueblo

CUNY Herbert H. Lehman College

DePaul University*

Florida International University

Mercy College*

Metropolitan State College of Denver

New Jersey City University

Norfolk State University

Northeastern Illinois University

Pace University*

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

SUNY-Buffalo State College

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

University of Baltimore

University of Colorado Denver

University of Nebraska at Omaha

University of Washington Tacoma

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Wichita State University

Wright State University

* Private Institution

502 UMass Boston Students Responded To NSSE 2008.

- **312 Seniors**
- **190 First Year Students**
 - **This is more than twice as many responses as we have received in previous NSSE administrations.**
 - **We can identify these students, and we have accessed institutional data on them.**
- **The UMass Boston response rate was 15% using Web only data collection**
- **The Urban Consortium rate was 24%**
- **The Doctoral/Research rate was 29%**
- **The All Public 4-Year rate was 30%**

Student Selection Parameters

- **First Year Students** are students who were enrolled at UMass Boston during the fall 2007 semester and were expected to begin the spring 2008 semester with fewer than 30 accumulated credits
- **Seniors** are students who were enrolled at UMass Boston during the fall 2007 semester, and were expected to begin the spring 2008 semester with more than 95 accumulated credits
- Using WEB only data collection, all UMass Boston first year students and seniors were surveyed

UMass Boston NSSE 2008

Selected Results

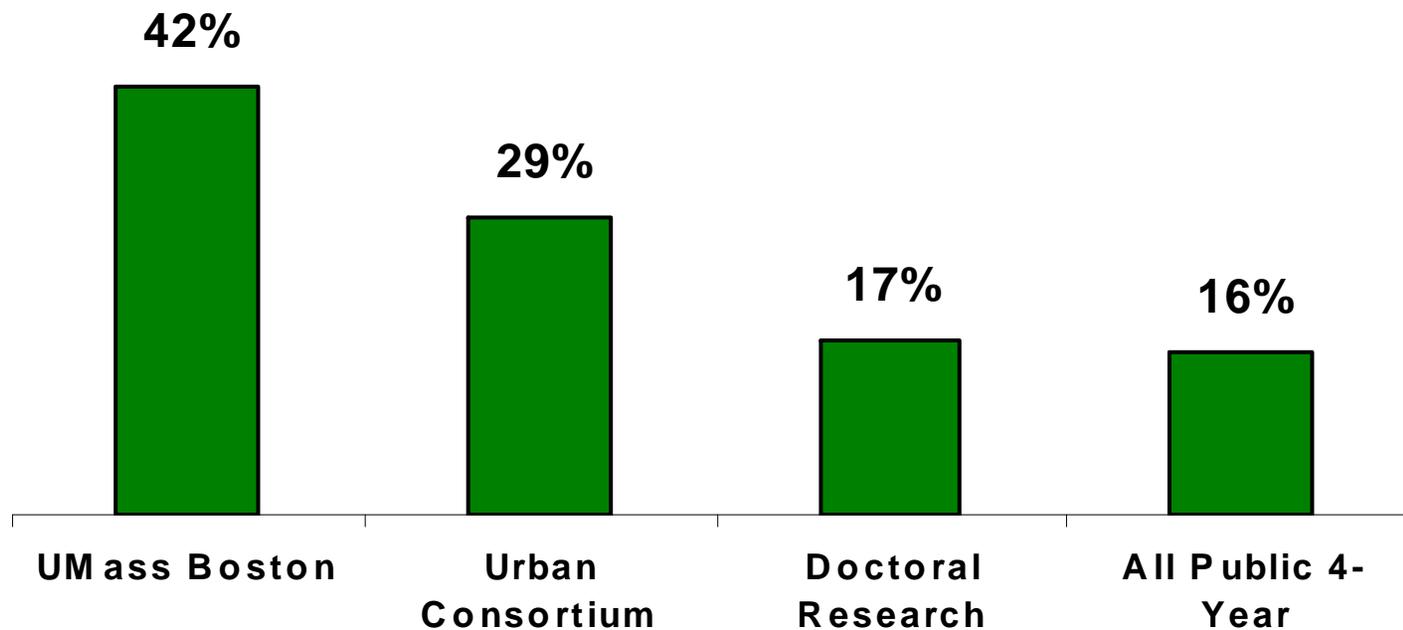


Focusing on:

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

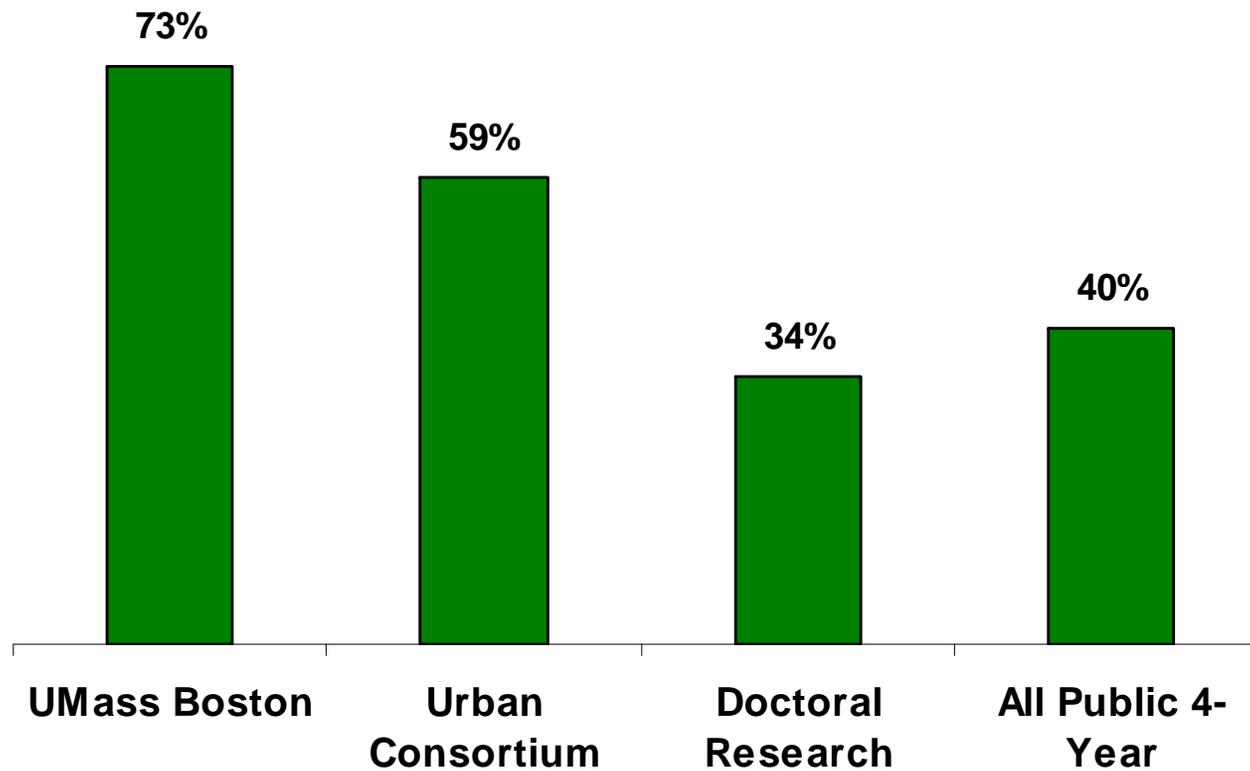
UMass Boston First Year respondents tended to be older than their colleagues in the comparison groups.

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



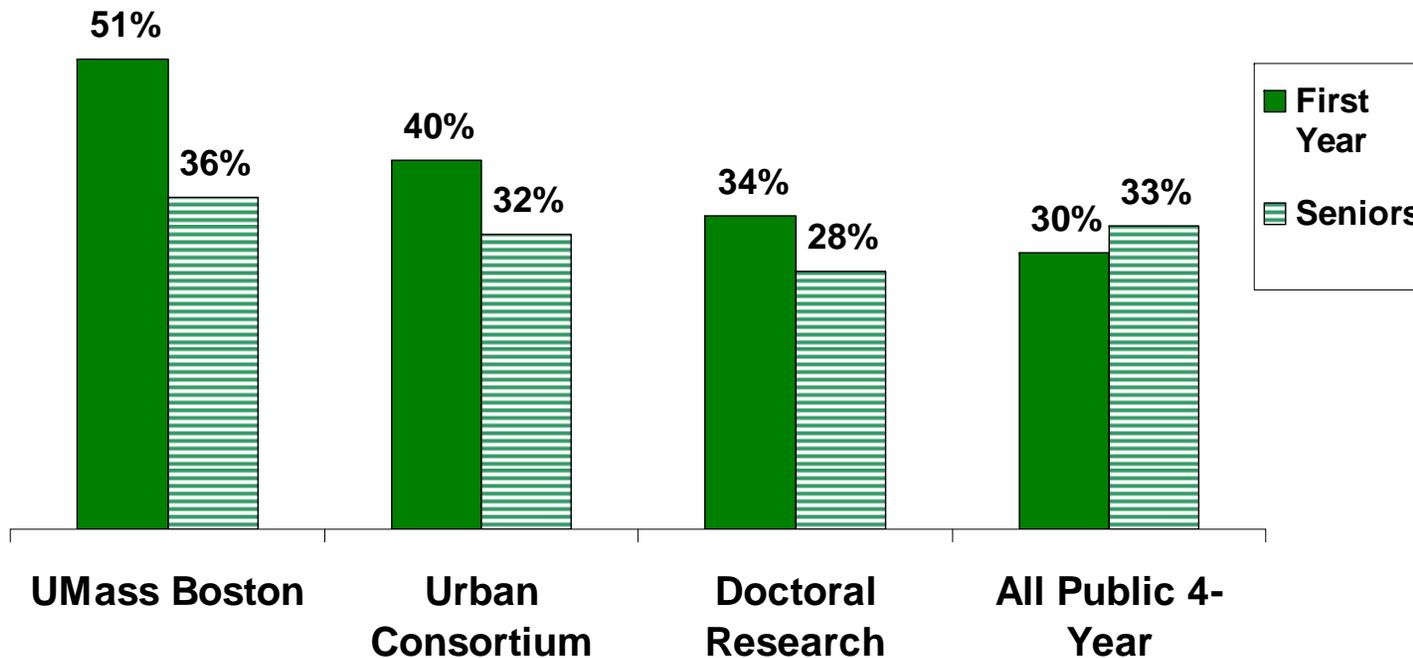
This is also true of seniors.

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



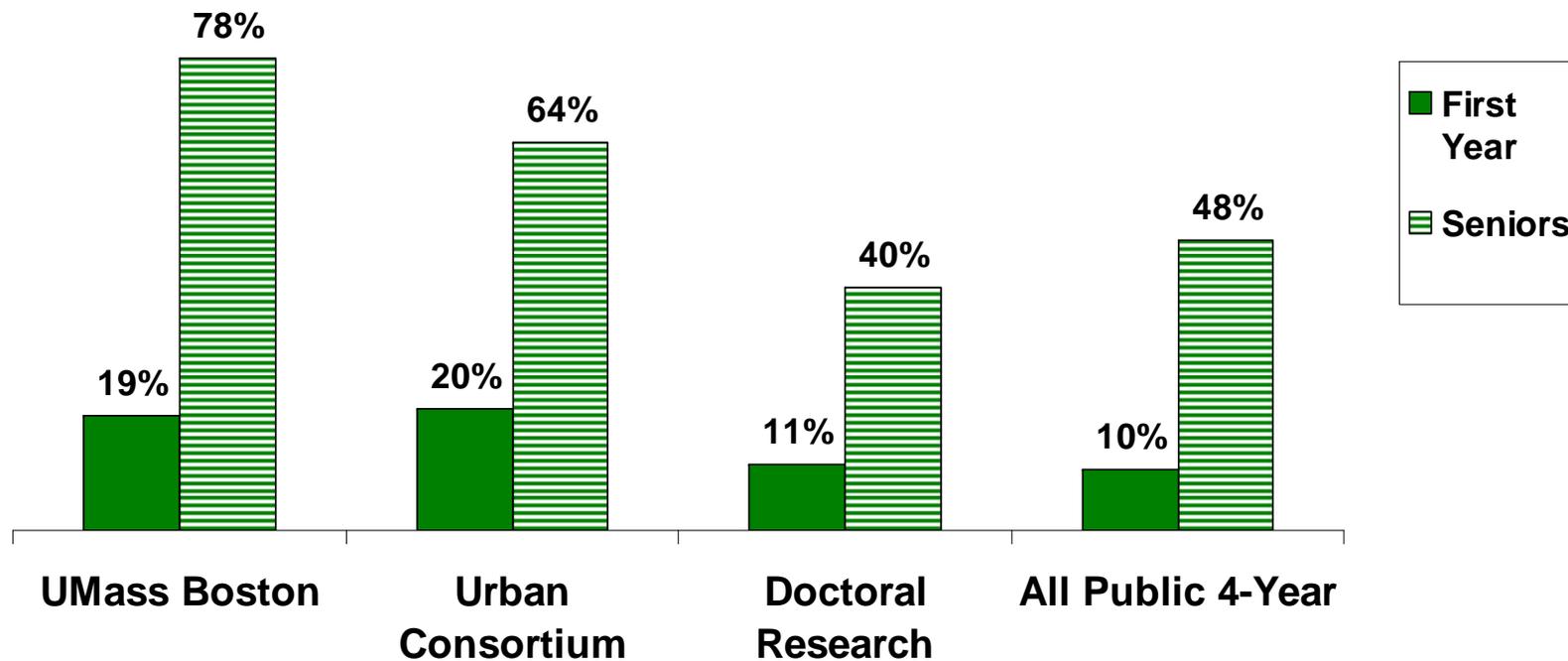
UMass Boston First Year students were more racially/ethnically diverse than were the comparison groups. 7% of UMass Boston First Year students and 11% of Seniors did not respond to the question.

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



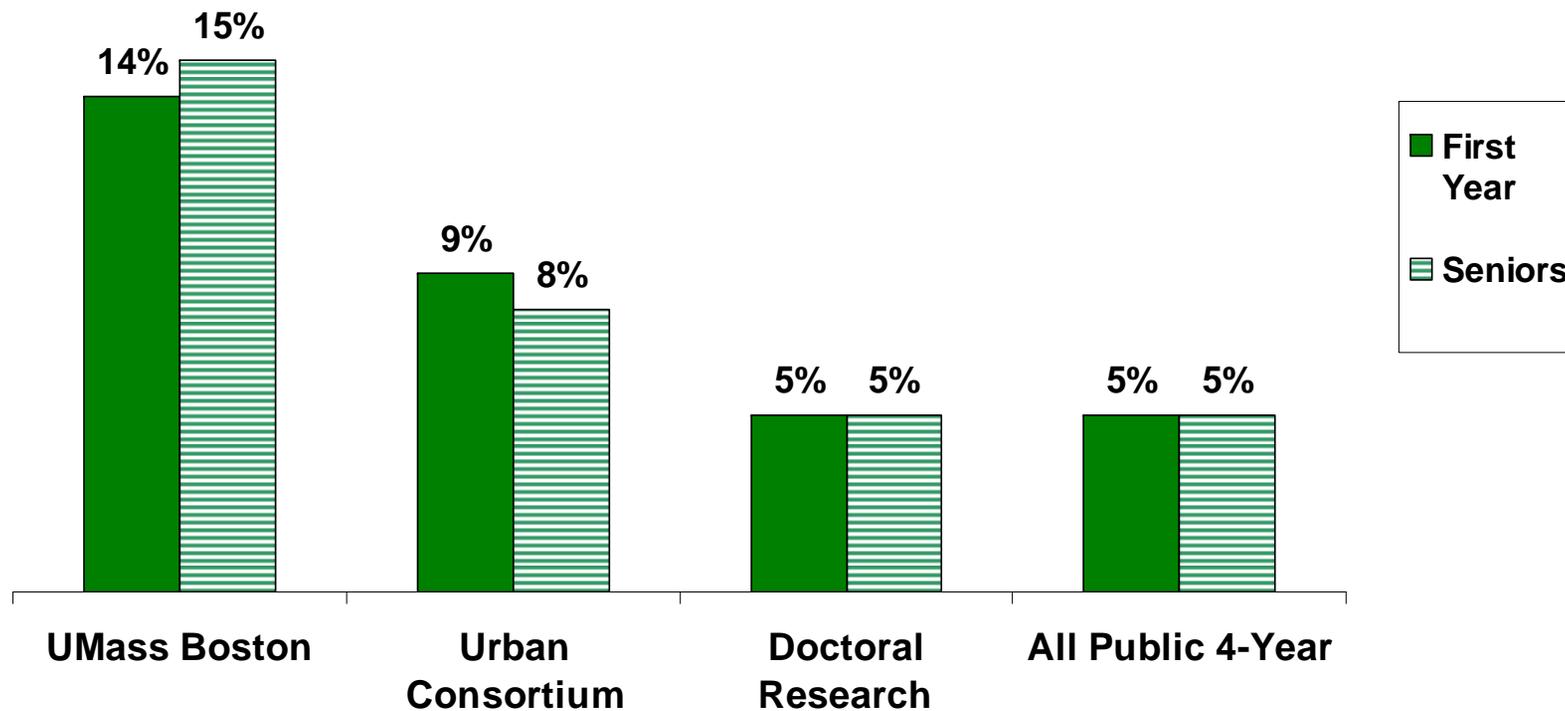
UMass Boston respondents were more likely to be transfer students.

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



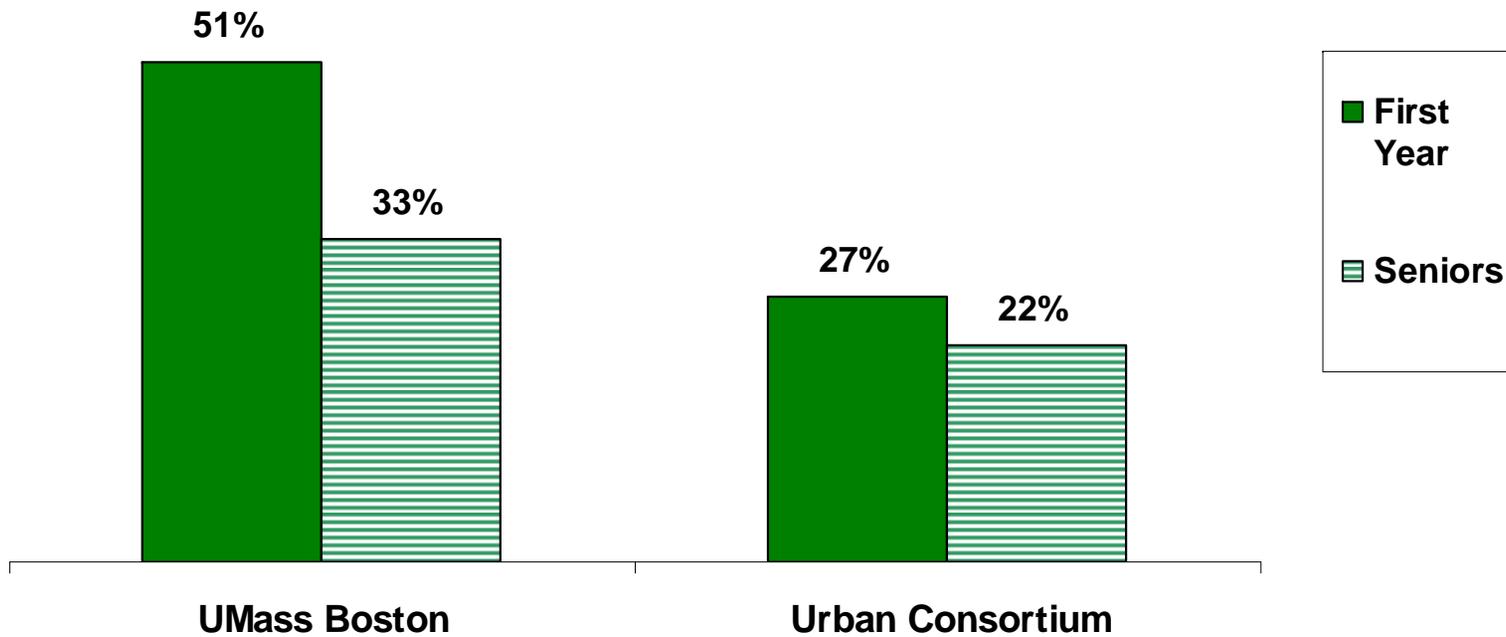
UMass Boston respondents were also more likely to have come here from other countries. (UMass Boston records indicate that 22% of the respondents are citizens of countries other than the U.S.)

Percentage of Respondents Who Report Being International Students or Foreign Nationals

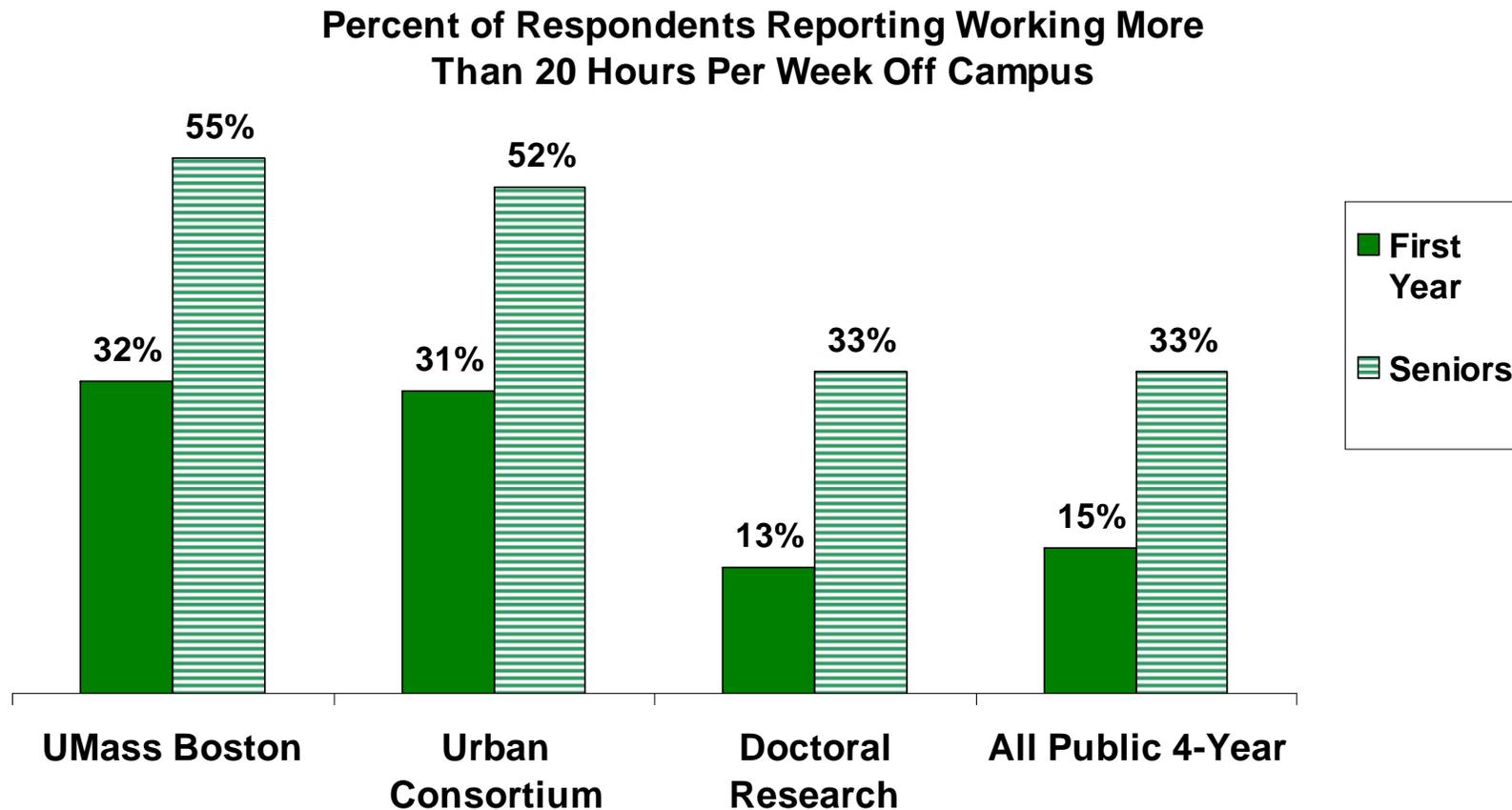


They were also more likely to speak a language other than English at home or with family.

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

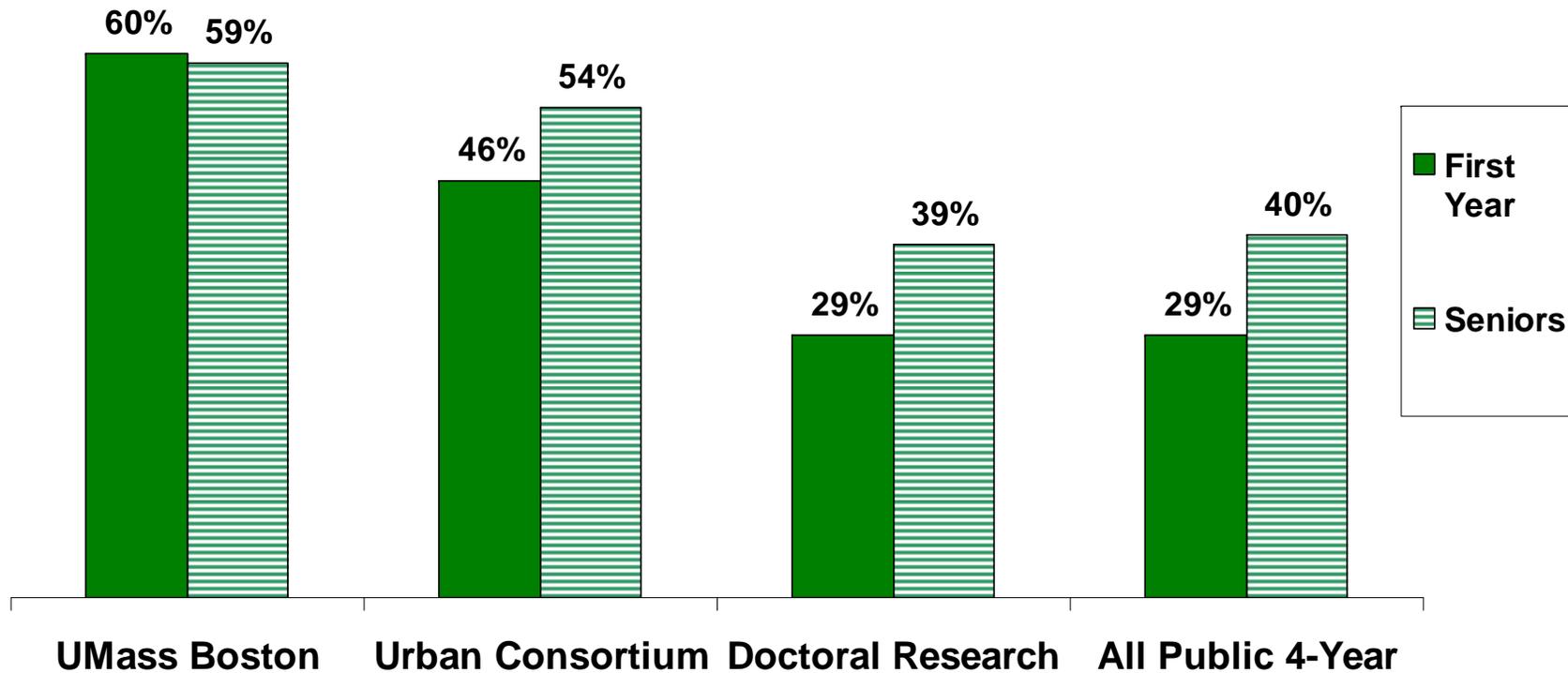


UMass Boston respondents reported working more hours off campus each week than did their non-urban counterparts.

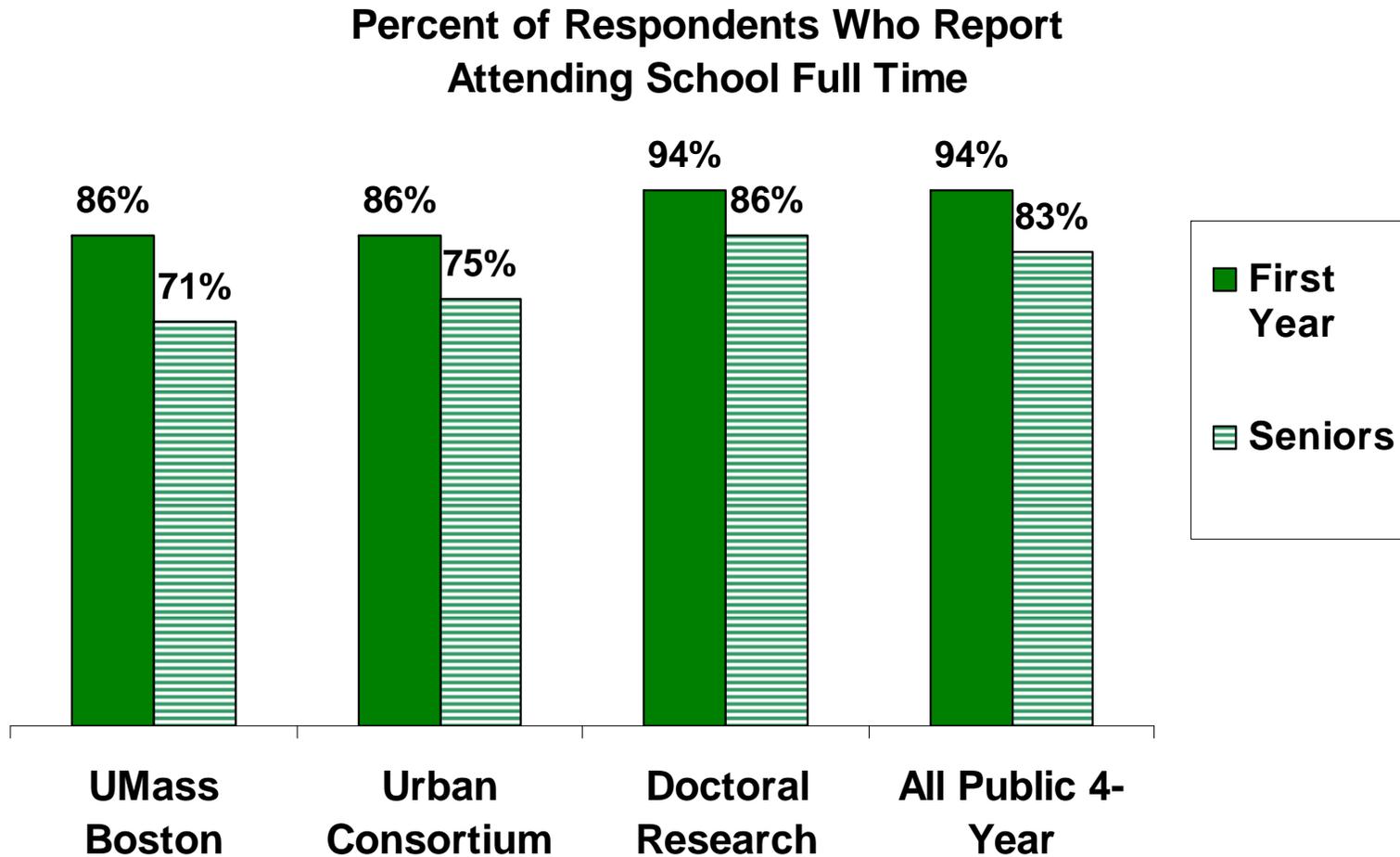


More UMass Boston respondents reported spending some time caring for dependents.

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

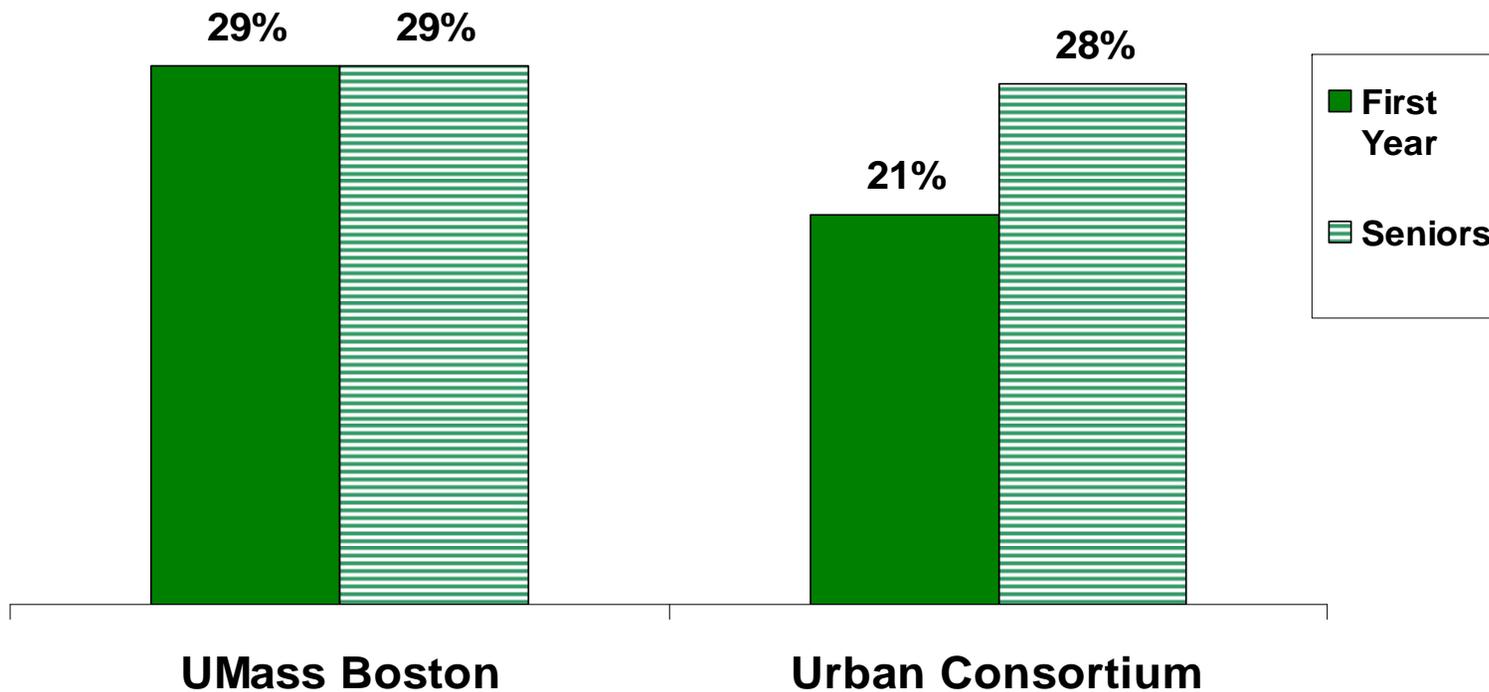


UMass Boston respondents were slightly less likely than their non-urban counterparts to attend school full time.



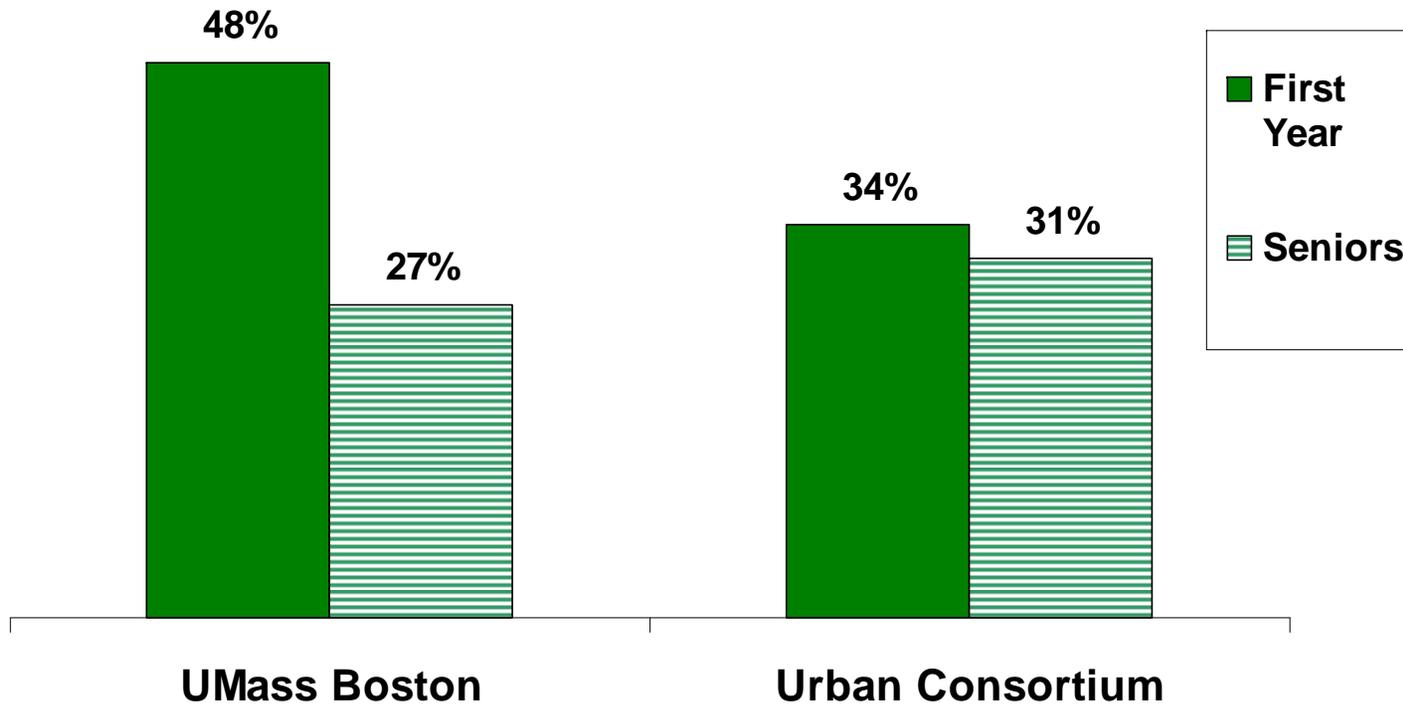
Many UMass Boston respondents expect that their undergraduate education will be delayed by work or family responsibilities.

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



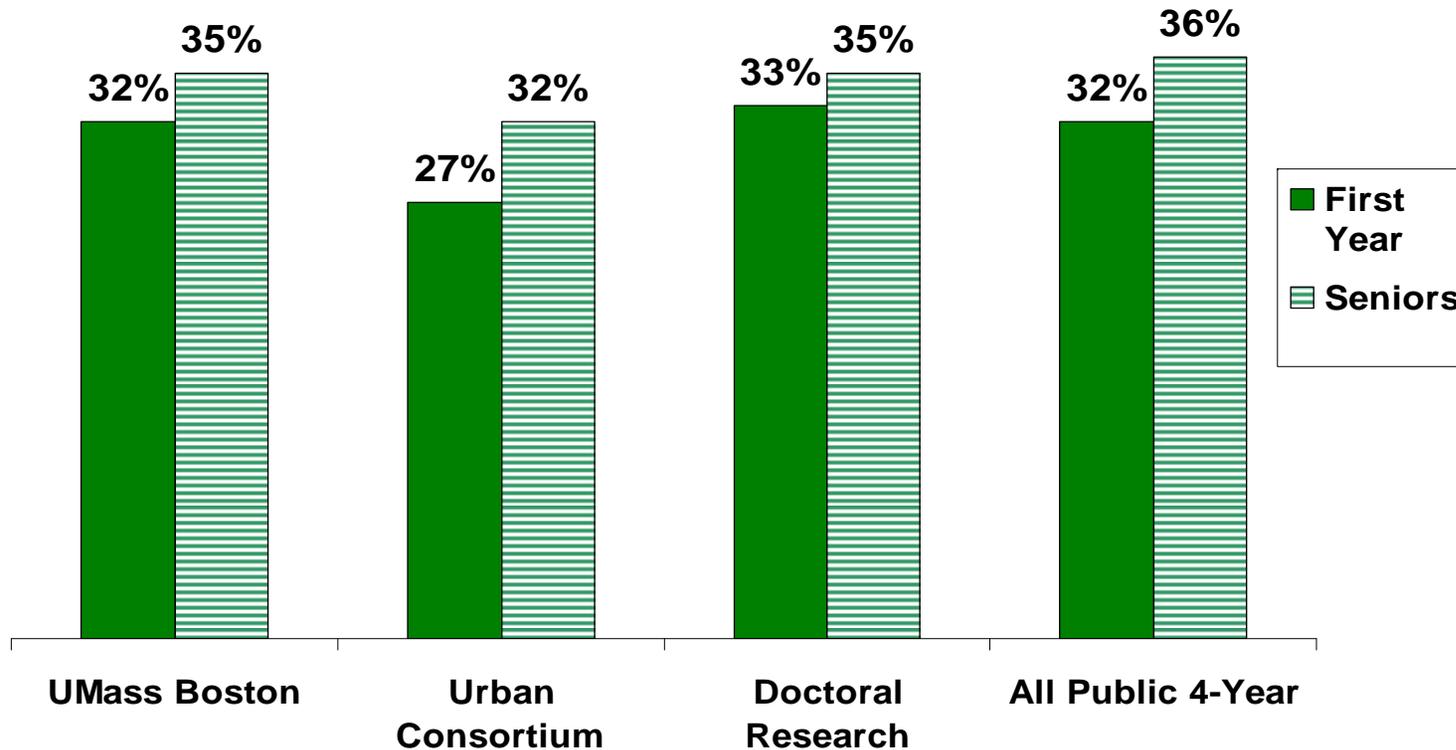
Almost half of the First Year respondents expect that their undergraduate education will be delayed by financial problems.

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

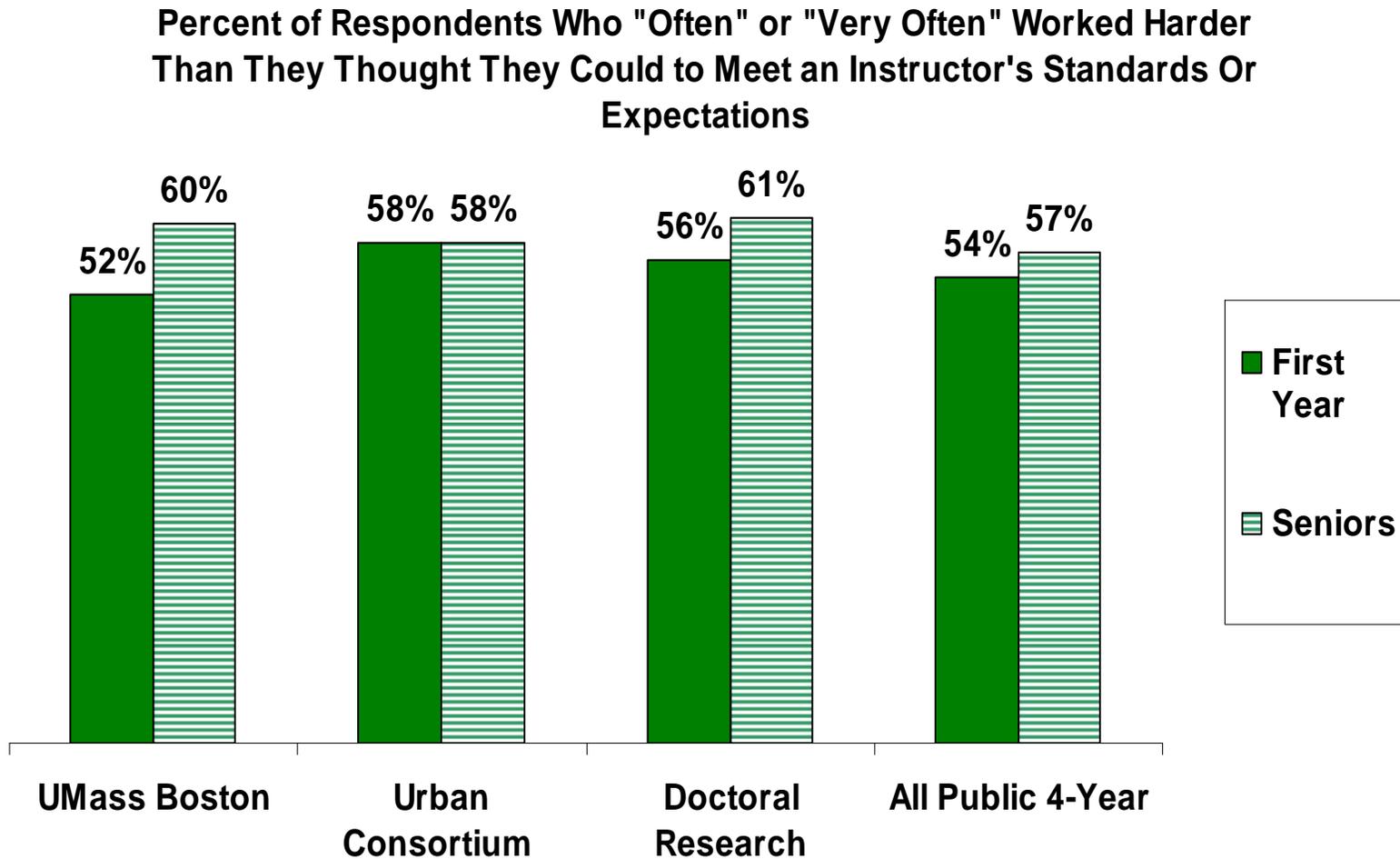


Both UMass Boston First Year and Seniors respondents reported spending about as much time studying as their colleagues in the comparison groups. *In 2004, only 18% of first year students reported spending 16 or more hours a week studying***.**

Percent Of Respondents who Reported Spending 16 Or More Hours Per Week Studying And Preparing For Class

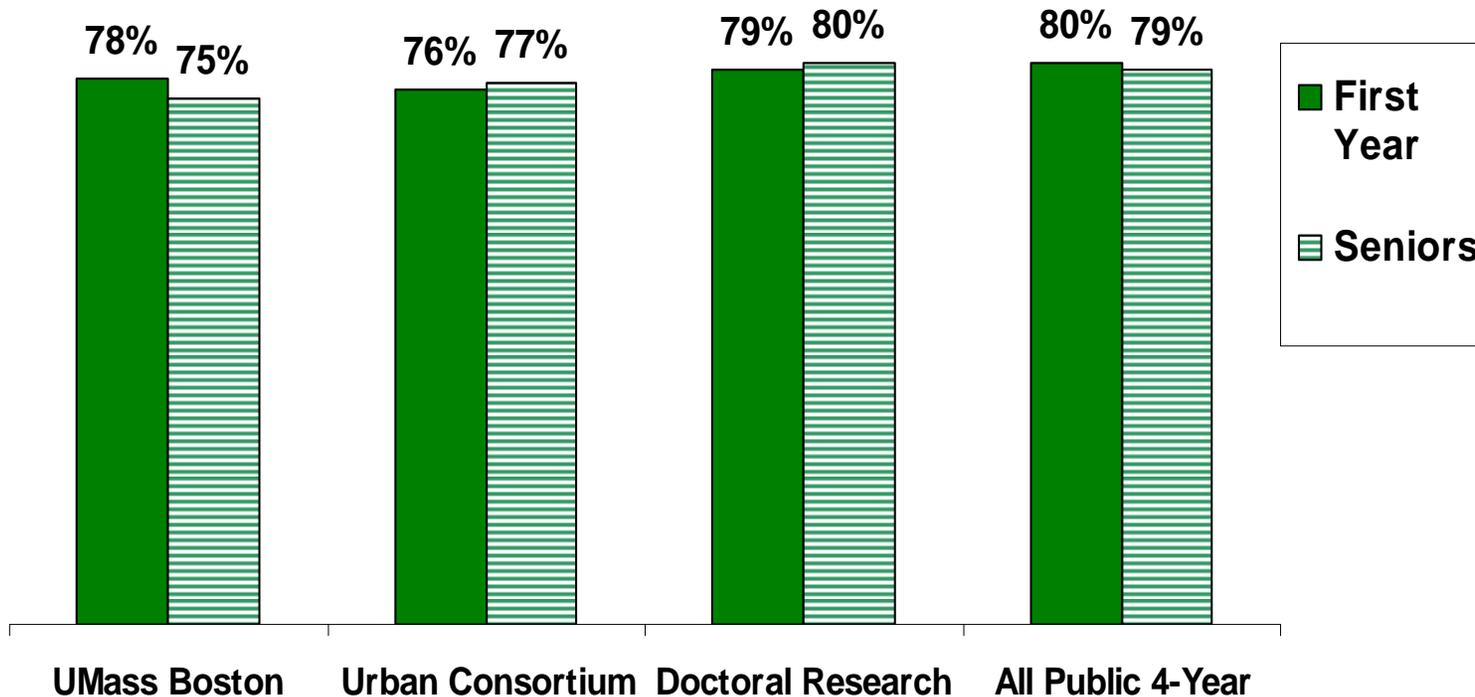


Many UMass Boston respondents reported that they often worked harder than they thought they could.



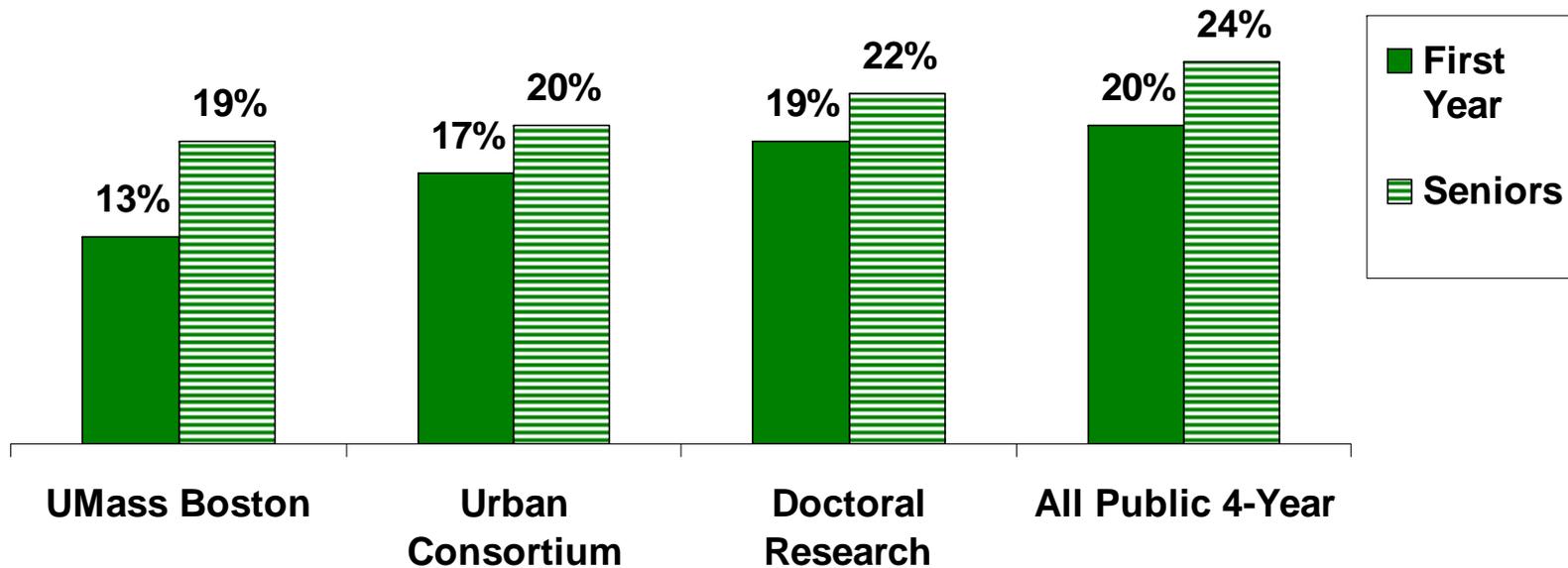
Both groups of UMass Boston respondents were as likely as their colleagues to report that their school emphasized studying and academic work.

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



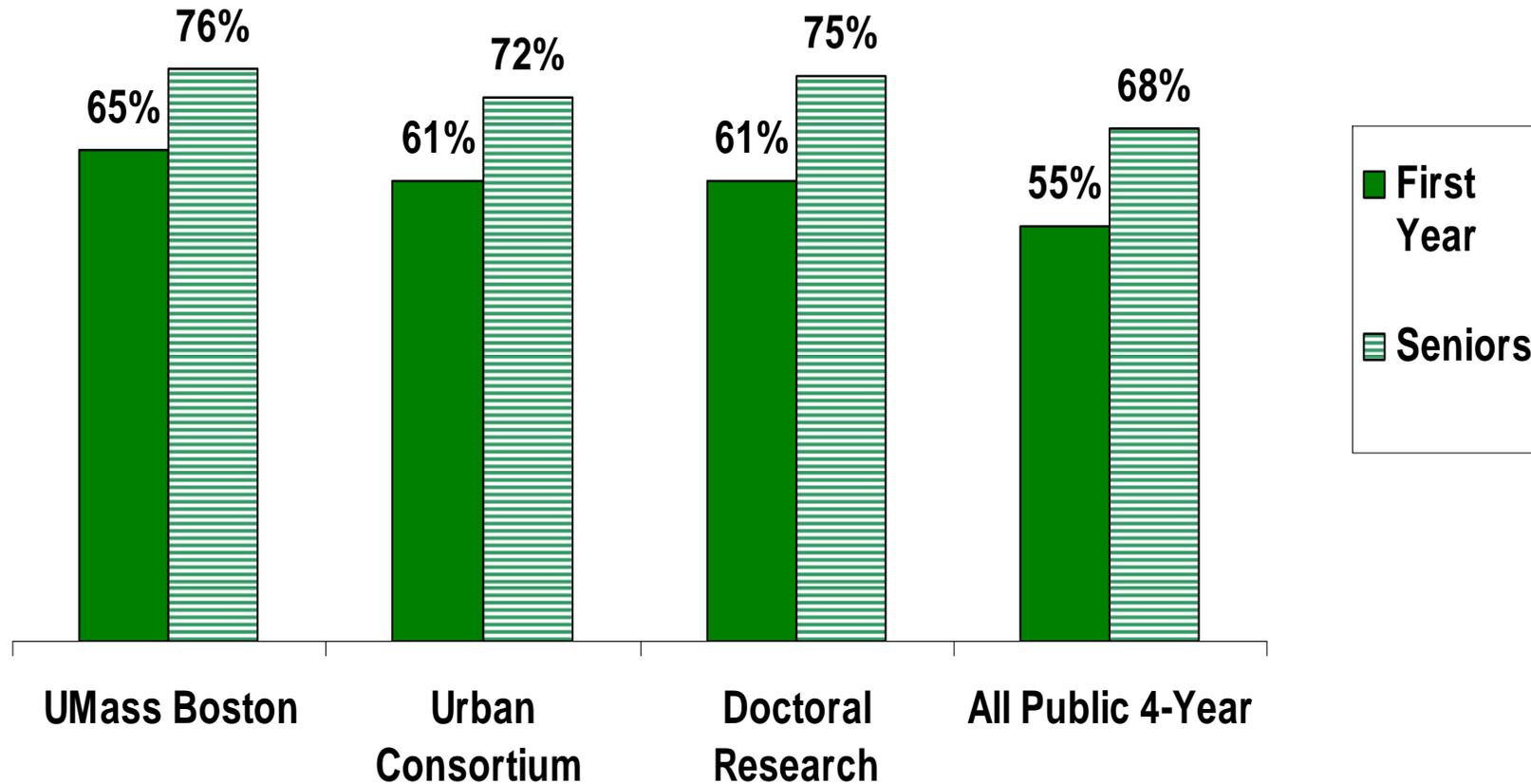
UMass Boston students responded to that emphasis and came to class unprepared less often than their colleagues in the non-urban comparison groups.

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



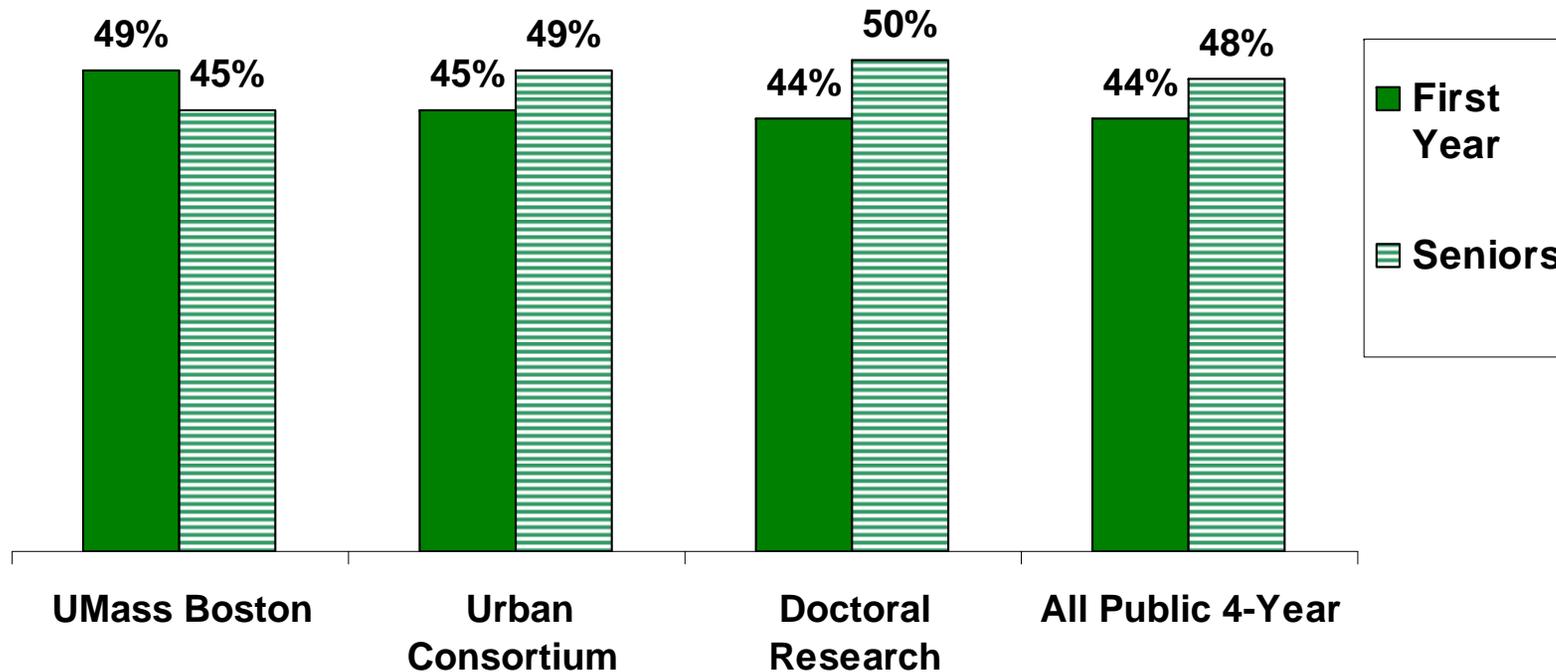
UMass Boston respondents were active class participants.

Percent of Respondents Who Reported Asking Questions Or Contributing in Class "Often" or "Very Often"



UMass Boston respondents worked on projects with other students during class about as often as their colleagues in the comparison groups.

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



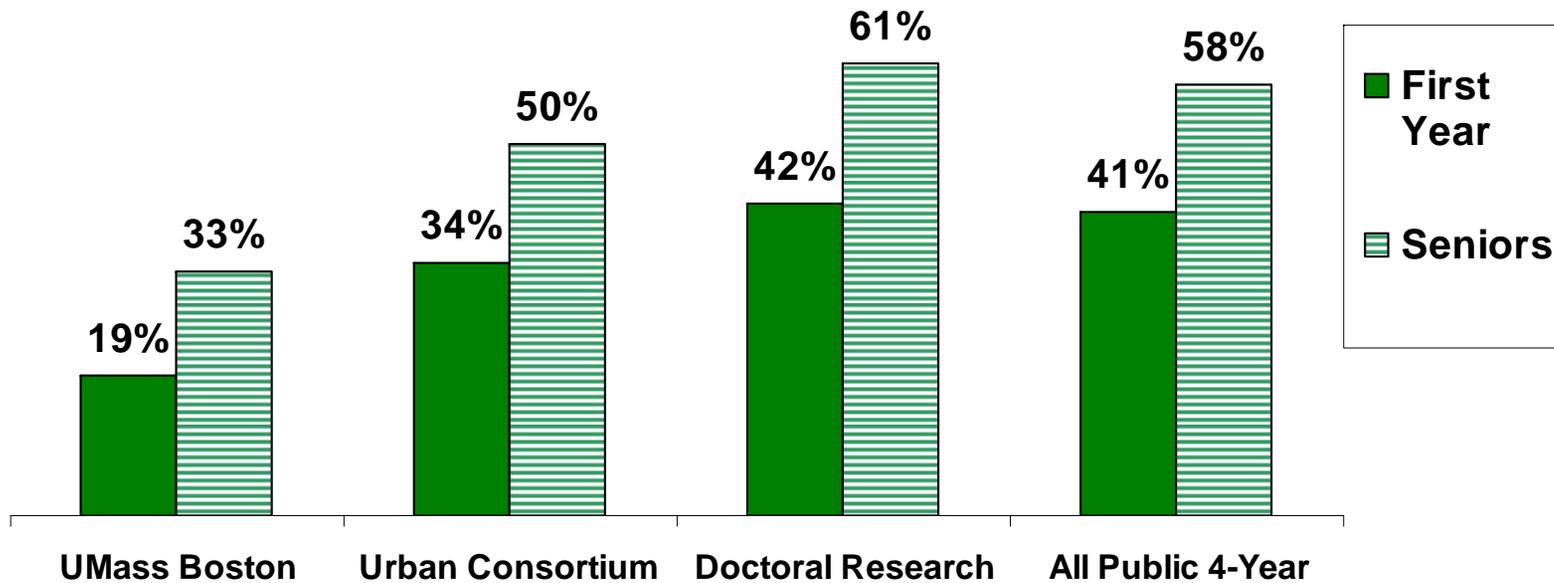
As we saw in the student background section, UMass Boston students have significant outside responsibilities, such as working for pay off campus and caring for dependents.

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 outside of regular school hours that may suffer from the students’ time constraints.

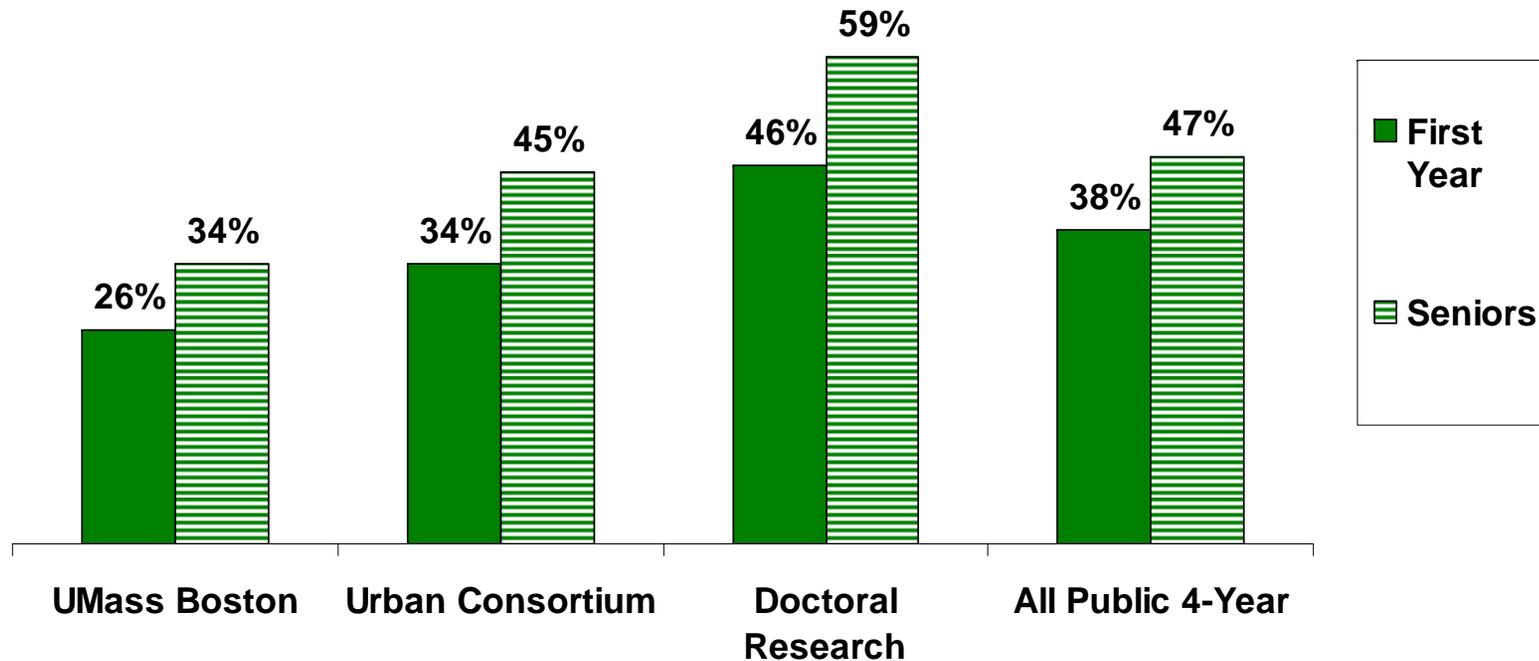
UMass Boston respondents were significantly less likely to work on projects with other students out of class than any of the comparison groups.

Percent of Respondents Who Report Working With Other Students on Projects Outside of Class "Often" or "Very Often"



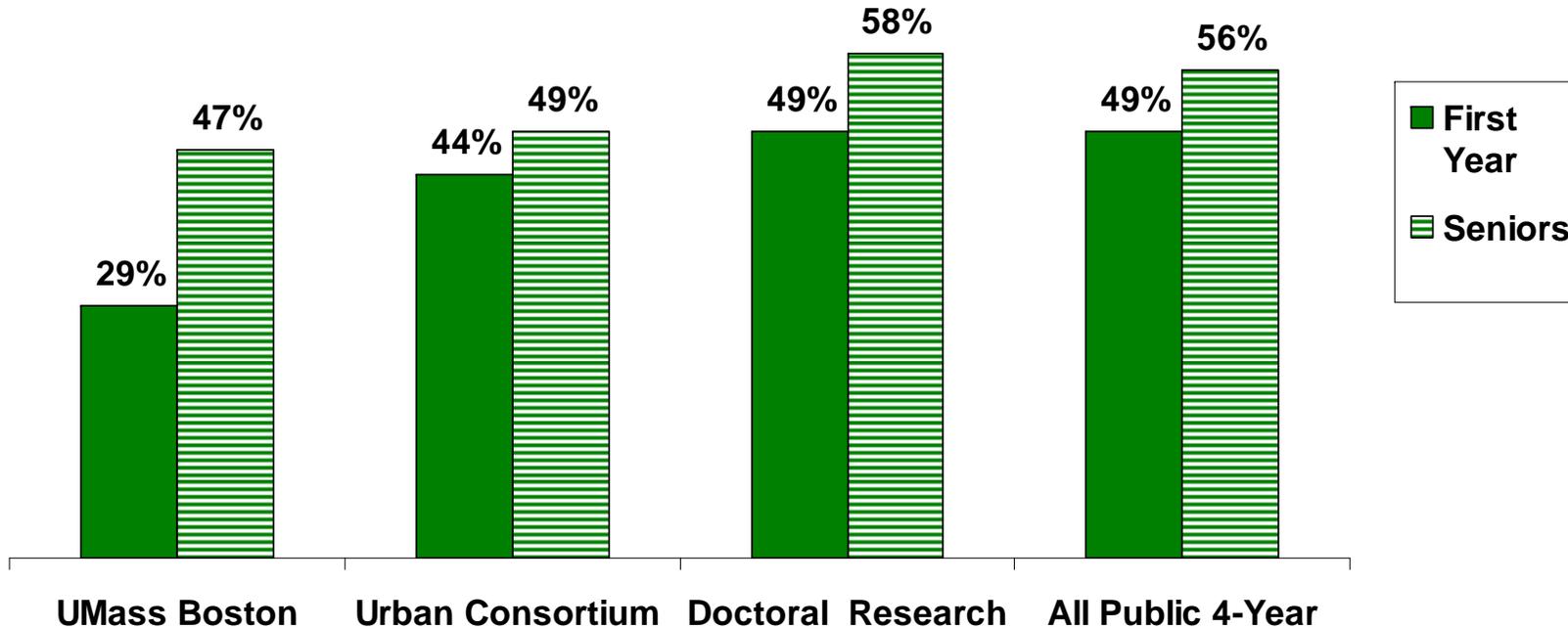
UMass Boston First Year and Senior respondents were less likely to have ever participated in a community based project as part of course work than were their colleagues in the comparison groups.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported that They Had Ever Participated in a Community Based Project as Part of a Regular Course



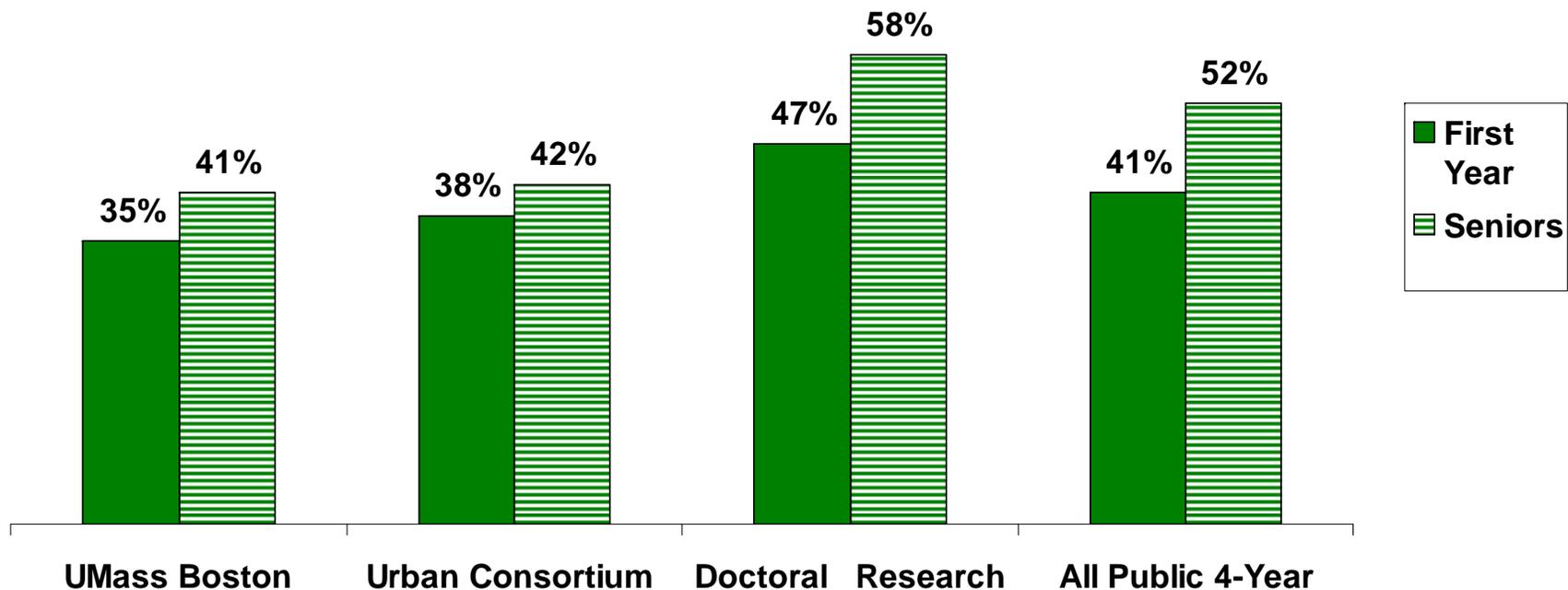
UMass Boston First Year respondents were less likely to have ever tutored or taught other students for pay or voluntarily. Seniors were similar to the Urban Consortium.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported That They Had Tutored or Taught Other Students



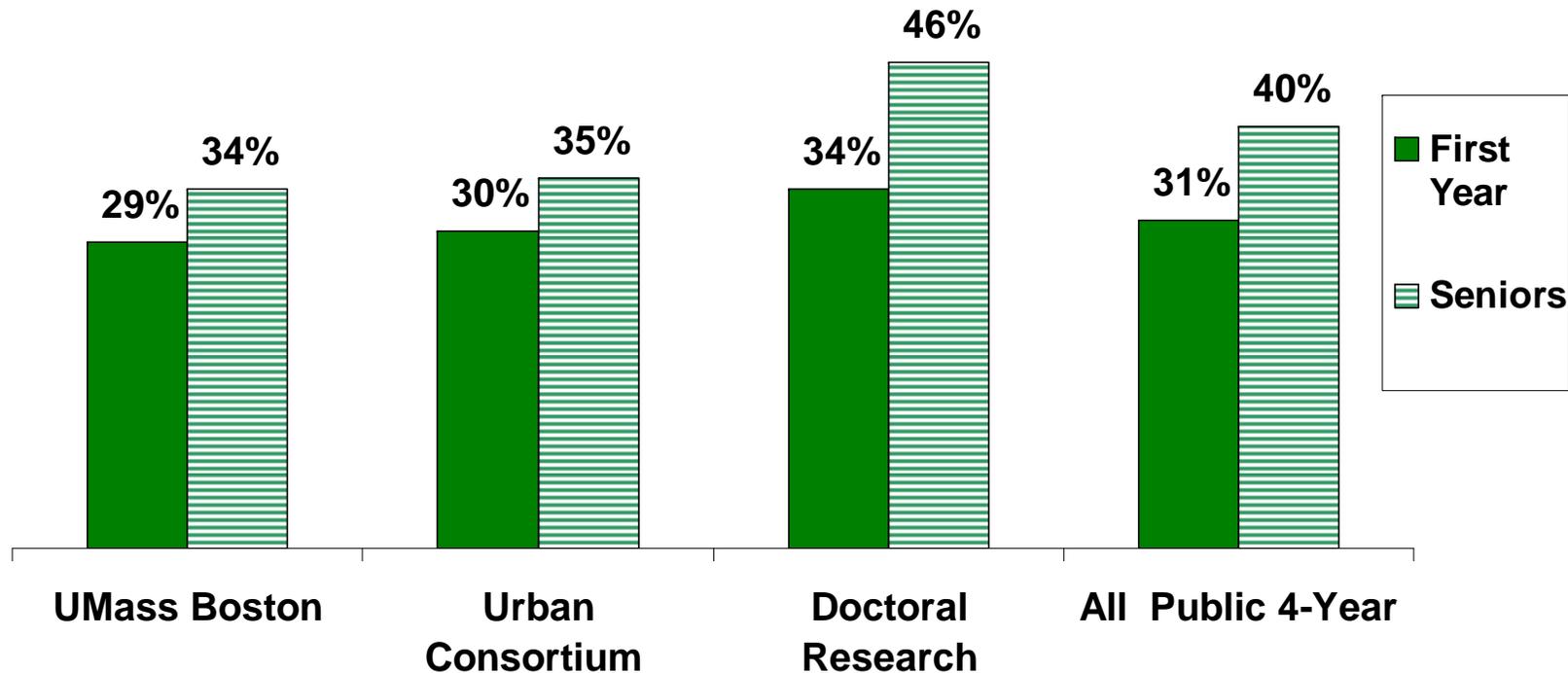
UMass Boston respondents were less likely than their Carnegie Peers or the All Public 4-Year group to have worked with faculty on activities other than coursework.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Ever 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 Research or Public 4-Year groups. First Year respondents were similar to the comparison groups.

Percentage of Respondents Who Reported That They Had "Often" or "Very Often" Talked About Career Plans with a Faculty Member or Advisor

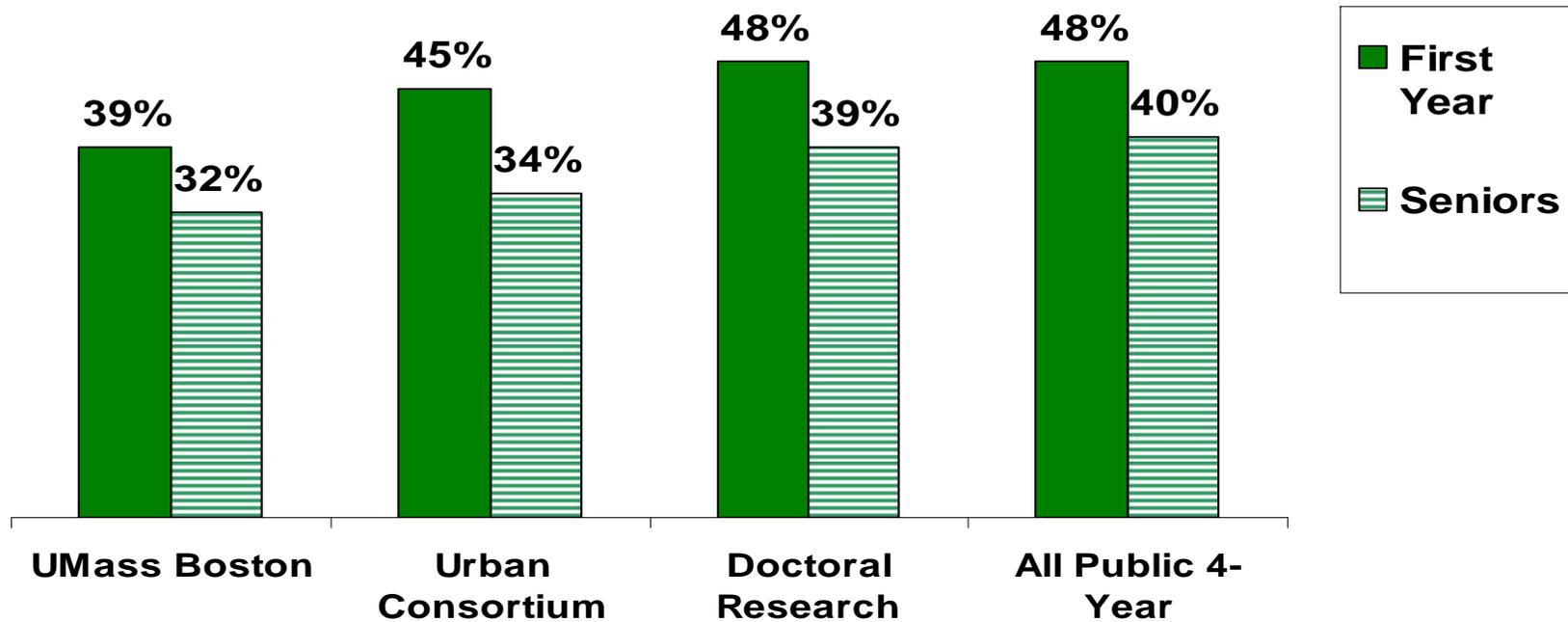


According to Retention Literature, Social Integration Is Also Positively Related to Retention

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.

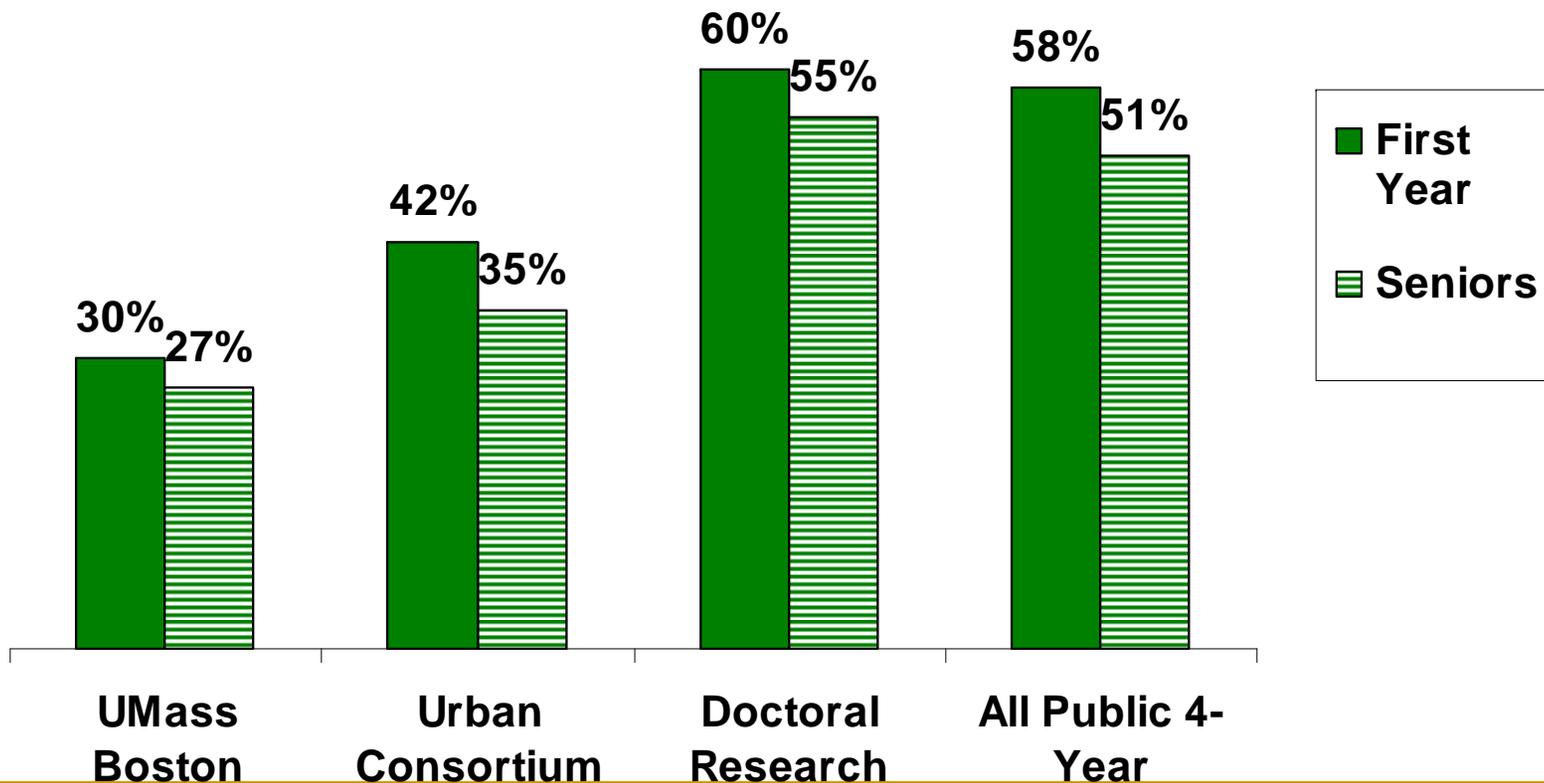
UMass Boston respondents tended to report spending less time relaxing and socializing than their colleagues in the comparison groups.

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



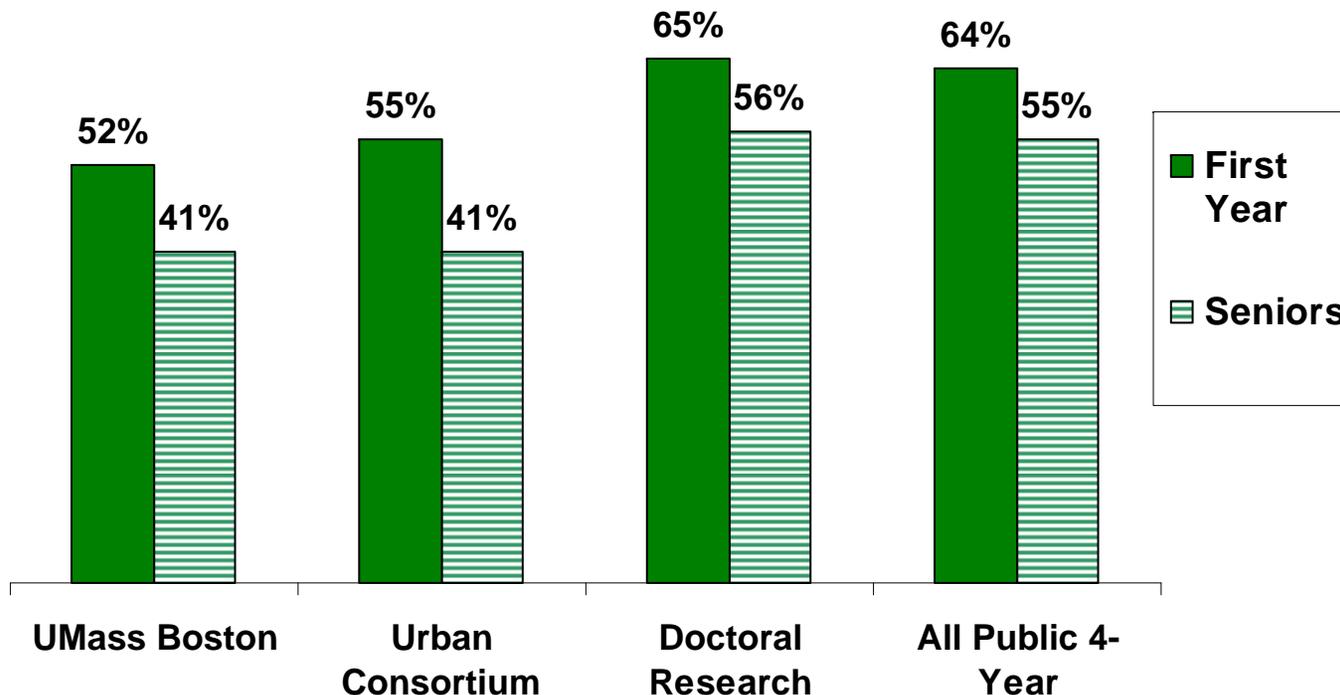
UMass Boston respondents were the least likely to have spent any time in co-curricular activities.

Percent of Respondents Who Reported Spending Some Time Participating In Co-curricular Activities
(Student Organizations or Government, Intramural Sports, etc.)



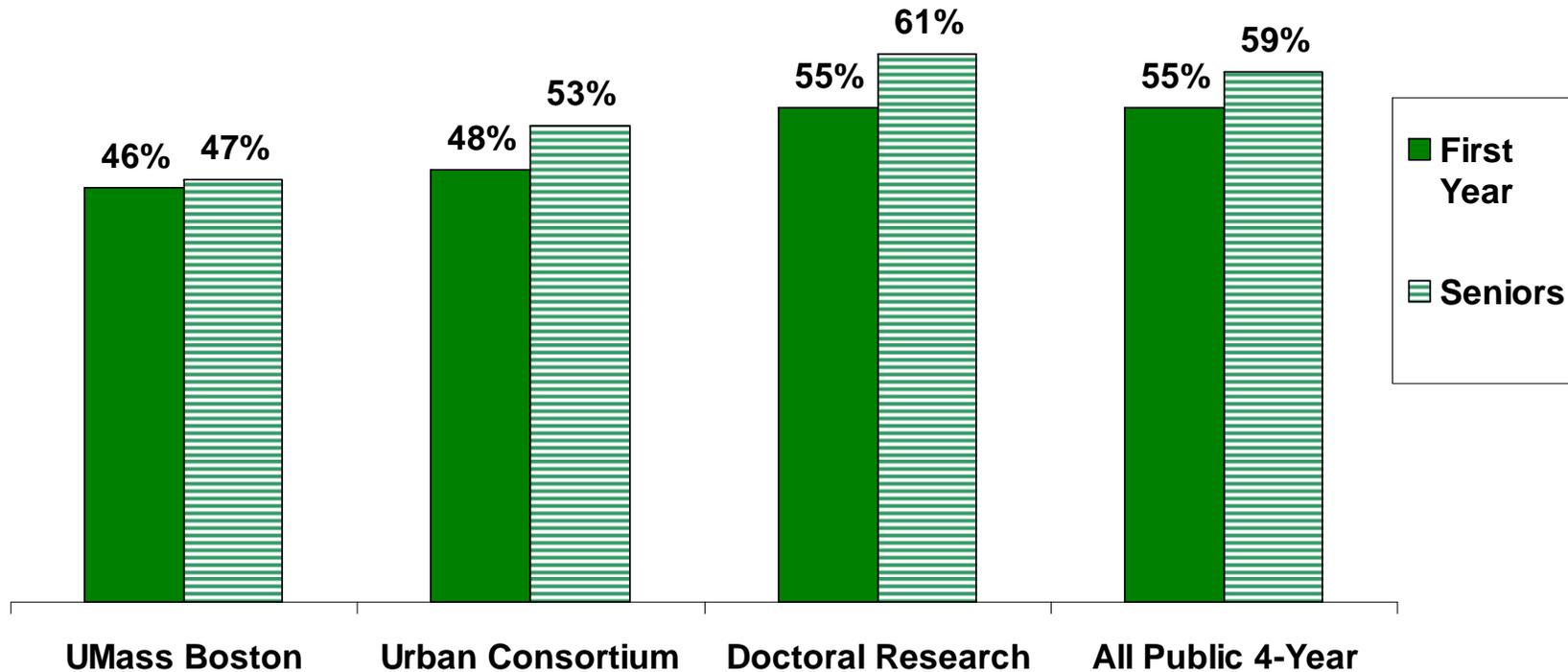
UMass Boston respondents were significantly less likely to report that their institution emphasized attending campus events than were their colleagues in the non-Urban comparison groups. First Year students improved from 25% and Seniors improved from 26% in 2002.

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



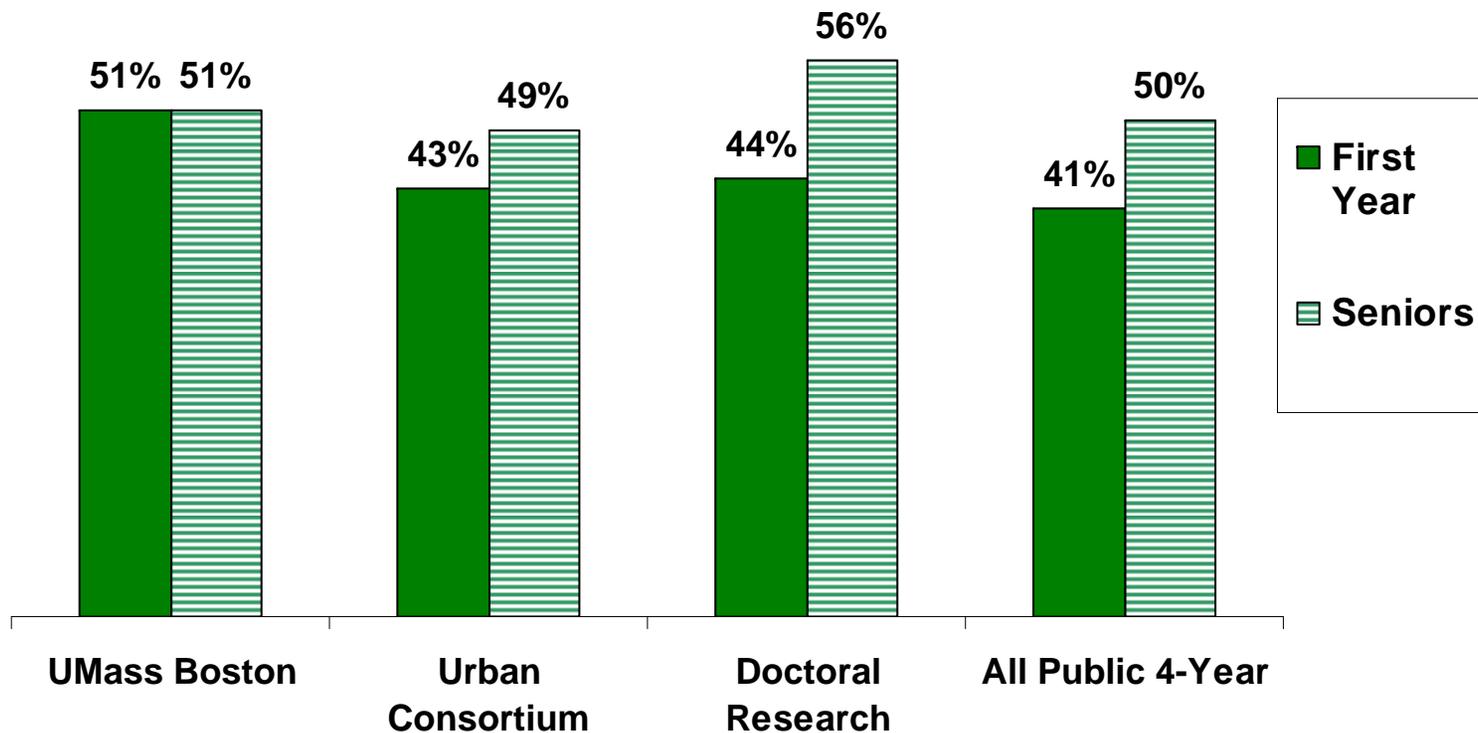
UMass Boston respondents rated their relationships with other students significantly lower than their colleagues in the Doctoral Research or All Public 4-Year comparison groups.

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



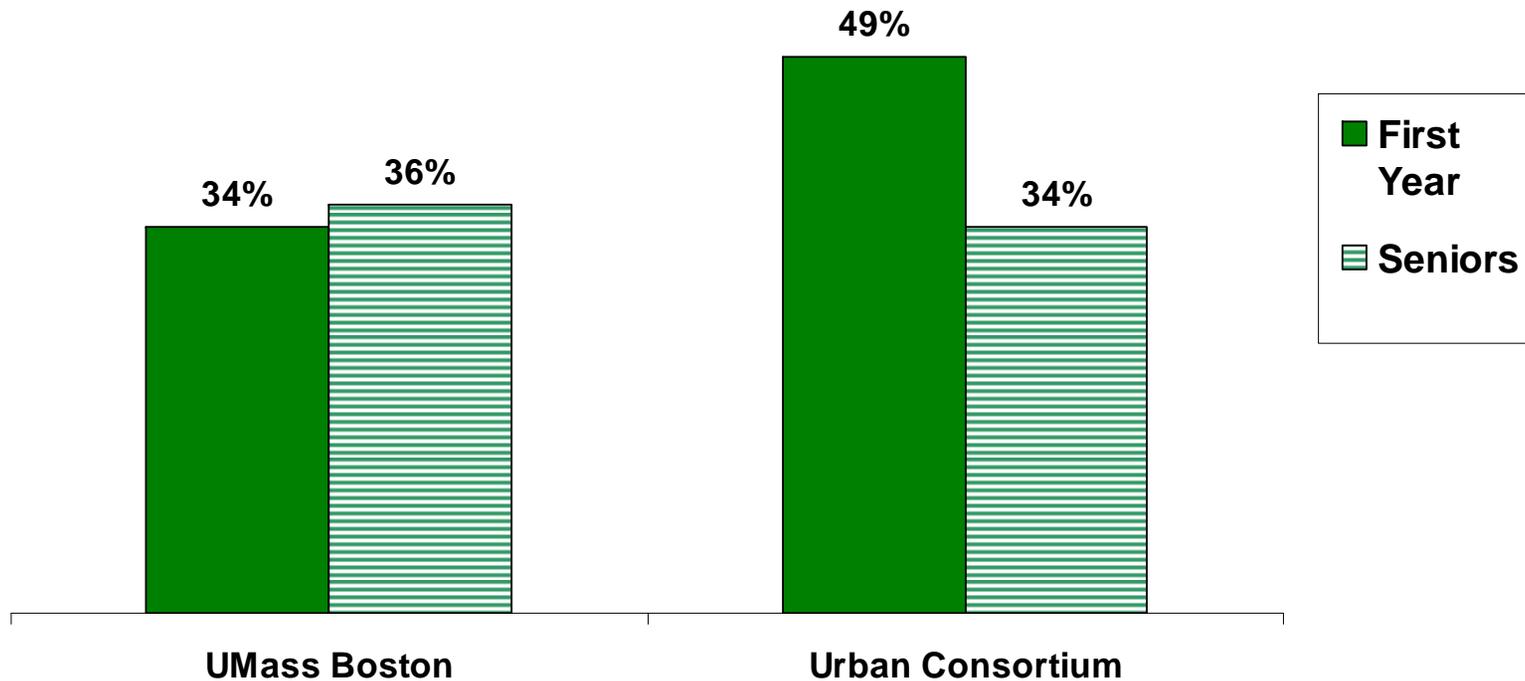
However, First Year respondents rated their relationships with faculty higher than their colleagues, and Seniors rated them about the same as Seniors in the comparison groups.

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 First Year respondents in the Urban Consortium.

Percent of Respondents Reporting Spending More Than 5 Hours on Campus Each Week Outside of Class Time



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 may limit**
 - **Their participation in academic activities outside of class time**
 - **Their participation in co-curricular activities**
 - **Their participation in other enriching educational experiences**
 - **Their ability to form close relationships with classmates**
- **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.**