

Statistical Portrait of HMoob American College Students in Wisconsin:

Descriptive Demographic Findings from the College Paj Ntaub Survey of University of Wisconsin Students



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Background and Executive Summary

The College Paj Ntaub research team is a collective of HMoob American student activists, allies, and scholars at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW–Madison) and the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh (UW–Oshkosh). Our study – “Our HMoob American College Paj Ntaub” – is an ongoing mixed-methods participatory action research (PAR) project that examines the college experiences of HMoob American students in Wisconsin and across the University of Wisconsin (UW) System. The study began in 2018 through a partnership between a student organization at UW–Madison called the HMoob American Studies Committee (HMASC) and educational researchers at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. We title our study “Our HMoob American College Paj Ntaub” as a metaphorical portrayal of the traditional HMoob art form “paj ntaub,” which literally translates to English as “flower cloth,” and refers to the cultural expression of decorating cloth with embroidery, batik, and appliqué. Contemporary paj ntaub artisans engage in this practice to preserve and share HMoob cultural traditions, modes of knowledges, and ways of being. Our study pays homage to this artistic tradition by creating community and sharing stories of the lives of HMoob American college students.

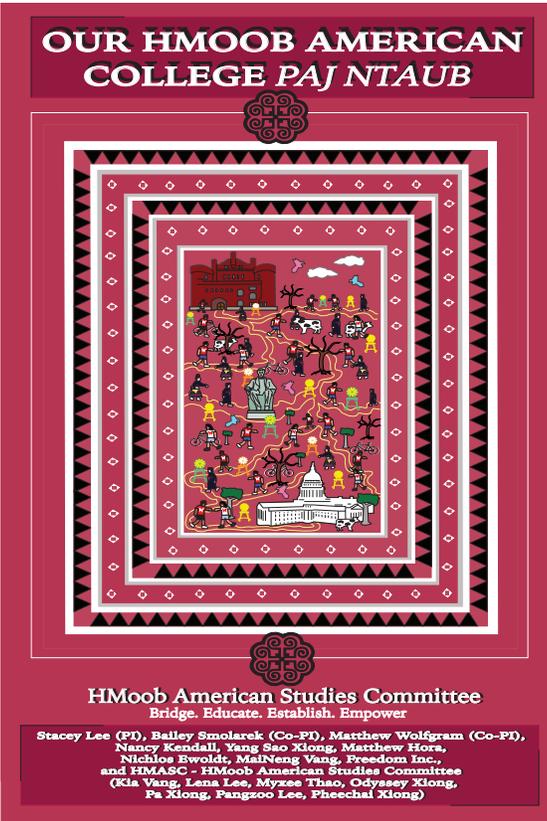


Image 1: Poster created by artist Paulina Eguino for the 2019 Grand Challenges Grant competition

In 2022, after receiving a National Science Foundation Racial Equity Grant (#2201693), the College Paj Ntaub team expanded our qualitative study focused on the experiences of students at UW–Madison to a mixed-methods study examining the experiences of HMoob undergraduate students throughout the Universities of Wisconsin. This report provides the descriptive statistics we were able to capture through a survey administered to 40% (n=669) of the HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate student population in the 2022-2023 academic year. These statistics showcase the diversity found within the HMoob student population, highlight the social and educational needs of this group, and demonstrate the importance of disaggregating student data and examining the enrollment and demographic trends of historically underrepresented groups.

Key findings are:

1. Most HMoob students are first-generation college students (60%) and are experiencing financial concern or hardship (70%).
2. Approximately 11% of HMoob students in our sample identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual and 1.3% identified as transgender or non-binary.
3. HMoob students have a much lower disability identification rate and reporting rate compared to the general student population.
4. Most HMoob students in our sample (59%) practice traditional HMoob religion, which has significant implications for excused absences and religious accommodations.
5. In our multiple regression analysis of variables that impact students' sense of campus belonging, we found participation in HMoob Studies and being involved in academic life have positive impacts, while experiencing or witnessing a racist and/or discriminatory campus climate have negative impacts.



Image 2. Photograph of the College Paj Ntaub team (2024)

Demographic Data on HMoob American Students from the Universities of Wisconsin

The HMoob first resettled in the United States as refugees in 1975 after the conclusion of the Vietnam War and related conflicts in Southeast Asia and continued to arrive in waves to the United States until 2006. As of 2020, the HMoob population in the United States was approximately 335,000¹ and in Wisconsin was 62,000².

While we know HMoob people attended Universities of Wisconsin colleges³ before 2009, it was not until that year that all schools began to offer the ethnic option of “Hmong” under the umbrella term “Asian American” on enrollment documents. Therefore, we do not have reliable demographic data on HMoob college students in Wisconsin before 2009.

In 2019, shortly after beginning the College Paj Ntaub study, our team was the first to analyze and report on the demographic data collected by the Universities of Wisconsin (see HMoob American Undergraduate Students at University of Wisconsin’s 4-Year Comprehensive College, 2019). Through this analysis we found the following key findings:

- Each year from 2009-2018, an average of 2,220 HMoob Americans were enrolled as undergraduate students in one of Wisconsin’s 13 4-year comprehensive public colleges (1.7% of the total amount of students enrolled in that period)
- UW-Milwaukee enrolled the majority of HMoob American undergraduate students, from 2009-2018, followed by UW-Madison, UW-Oshkosh, and UW-Eau Claire
- Most (≈92%) HMoob American undergraduate students were from Wisconsin
- Most (≈80%) HMoob American undergraduate students were the first in their families to go to college
- Most (≈80%) HMoob American undergraduate students were Federal Pell Grant recipients

1 https://www.hmongstudiesjournal.org/uploads/4/5/8/7/4587788/pfeifer_hsj_26_1_.pdf

2 https://cdn.apl.wisc.edu/publications/hmong_chartbook_2020.pdf

3 <https://reckoning.wisc.edu/the-early-years/index.html#:~:text=Song%20Kue%20is%20the%20first,opportunity%20to%20pursue%20higher%20education>



Image 3. Photo of the “Los Tsev (Home): Cia Siab (Hope) in Wisconsin” traveling exhibit at the Wisconsin Historical Society (April 2025)

Current Demographic Data

Table 1. below expands on our previous report and provides key demographic data regarding HMoob American students in Universities of Wisconsin colleges from 2018-2024⁴. Some notable aspects of this data are:

1. HMoob students make up 70% of the Southeast Asian student population, only 1.2% of the total Universities of Wisconsin undergraduate population, and about 7% of the total undergraduate student of color population.
2. The female to male student ratio for the general population is comparable to the HMoob student population; approximately 55% female and 45% male.
3. The percentage of HMoob students who are Pell Grant recipients (approximately 68% of the all degree-seeking HMoob undergraduate students) is considerably higher than the percentage of total students who receive Pell Grants (approximately 24% of the total eligible undergraduate students).
4. HMoob student enrollment has decreased at all UW campuses except for UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-La Crosse, UW-Green Bay, and UW-Whitewater.
5. Approximately two-thirds of all incoming HMoob first-year students are first-generation⁵ college students compared to one-third of the general student population.

⁴ We offer our sincere gratitude to the University of Wisconsin System for providing us this data and a special thanks to Ting-Hsuan Hung for working with us. All publicly available data can be viewed at <https://www.wisconsin.edu/accountability/access/>.

⁵ Defined as parents did not attend college.

Table 1: Key HMoob American Student Demographic Data from the UW System Colleges

Measure	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Headcount enrollment of undergraduate students	171,636	167,688	164,766	162,980	160,782	162,531	164,436
Headcount enrollment of domestic undergraduate students of color	28,323 (17%)	28,561 (17%)	29,377 (18%)	29,773 (18%)	30,629 (19%)	32,936 (20%)	35,167 (21%)
Headcount enrollment of female undergraduate students	92,568 (54%)	91,263 (54%)	90,852 (55%)	90,502 (55%)	89,201 (55%)	89,817 (55%)	90,924 (55%)
Total eligible undergraduate students receiving Pell Grants	39,783 (27%)	38,253 (26%)	35,409 (25%)	32,851 (24%)	31,576 (23%)	30,265 (22%)	31,555 (23%)
Headcount enrollment of Southeast Asian undergraduate students	3,094	3,013	3,041	2,829	2,806	2,848	3,010
Headcount enrollment of HMoob undergraduate students	2,209	2,175	2,140	1,983	1,926	N/A	N/A
Headcount enrollment of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students	2,140	2,080	2,036	1,904	1,718	1,695	1,773
Pell Grant Status of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students	1,584 (74%)	1,503 (72%)	1,409 (69%)	1,253 (66%)	1,088 (63%)	1,106 (65%)	N/A

*Total headcount enrollment of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students by Institution
(Ordered Largest to Smallest by total general student population)*

Measure	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Madison	291	313	348	383	375	391	409
Milwaukee	582	553	540	477	389	389	458
Eau Claire	206	193	165	140	137	143	137
Green Bay	130	142	165	156	155	159	183
La Crosse	93	89	83	91	87	78	88
Oshkosh	289	283	270	251	218	199	192
Parkside	17	16	16	11	11	7	12
Platteville	43	25	29	24	21	14	14
River Falls	82	78	69	53	50	44	35
Stevens Point	153	154	136	118	106	108	108
Stout	182	179	154	134	112	101	89
Superior	2	6	3	3	3	<5	<5
Whitewater	70	49	58	63	54	54	57

<i>Age of Total headcount enrollment of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students</i>							
24 & Younger	1,823	1,781	1,725	1,629	1,470	1,464	1,547
25 & Older	317	298	311	275	248	231	226
<i>First-Generation Status of Total headcount enrollment of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students</i>							
Incoming Students who are First Gen	385 (73%)	365 (68%)	315 (67%)	322 (69%)	292 (71%)	295 (66%)	324 (67%)
Incoming Students who are Non-First Gen	136	164	153	142	118	148	159
<i>Year in School of Total headcount enrollment of HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students</i>							
Freshman	508	517	475	456	437	459	469
Sophomore	465	451	483	400	379	338	394
Junior	473	455	437	448	367	391	385
Senior	694	657	641	600	535	507	525



Image 4. "Divided," 2024, Edward Txoov Xiong, Embroidery, beads, and reverse applique on cotton

Our Survey

As part of our mixed-methods study examining the college experiences of HMoob students in Wisconsin, we administered a survey to HMoob undergraduate students in the Universities of Wisconsin through Qualtrics. Inclusion criteria included self-identifying as HMoob and currently enrolled as a degree-seeking undergraduate student in one of the 13 UW colleges. To recruit participants for the survey, eleven of the 13 universities ⁶ in the UW Systems (UW-Eau Claire, UW-Green Bay, UW-La Crosse, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Platteville, UW-River Falls, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Stout, and UW-Whitewater) provided email lists of Hmong-identified students (n=1651).

In April 2023, an initial recruitment email with a consent form and link to the survey was sent to this list; followed by two follow-up reminder emails at 1-week intervals. The survey was open for one month. A total of 669 participants completed the survey, a 40.5% response rate that represents almost 39% of all HMoob degree-seeking undergraduate students who were enrolled that Fall (n=1718). Survey completers received a \$15 digital gift card as compensation for their participation and those who attended one of the four qualitative interview sites (Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, and Eau Claire) were also invited to participate in an interview about their experiences in college. Survey data was examined for the correlational relationships among HMoob students' demographic, institutional, and sociocultural factors along with their sense of belonging, STEM identity, STEM persistence, and career aspirations. The descriptive statistics found in this report were analyzed using STATA 18 and visualized with SPSS. Regression analyses also tested bivariate and multivariate associations among variables.

The following sections 1) provide a comparison table between our sample and the university demographic statistics, 2) highlight intersectional aspects of HMoob student identity including LGBTQ+ identity, disability status, financial status, and religious identification and practices, and 3) provide trends in students' academic experiences. These data provide a richer understanding of the diversity found within the HMoob student population and point out ways we can better support this unique group of students.

⁶ UW-Parkside and UW-Superior were not included in our survey administration because of their low HMoob student enrollment numbers.

Table 2: Comparison table between HMoob-identified Student Data from the UW System (Fall 2022) and our survey (administered April 2023)		
Measure	UW System (% of UW System)	Our Survey (% of our survey)
Number of HMoob students	1,718 (N = 1718)	669 (n = 669)
<i>Year in School⁷</i>		
Freshman/First Year	437 (≈25.4%)	164 (≈24.5%)
Sophomore/Second Year	379 (≈22.1%)	150 (≈22.4%)
Junior/Third Year	367 (≈21.4%)	144 (≈21.5%)
Senior/Fourth Year	535 (≈31.1%)	145 (≈21.6%)
Fifth Year and Beyond	Not Tracked	66 (≈9.87%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	940 (≈54.7%)	433 (≈64.7%)
Male	778 (≈45.3%)	227 (≈33.9%)
Non-binary	Not Tracked	9 (≈1.35%)
<i>Age</i>		
24 & Younger	1,470 (≈85.6%)	610 (≈91.2%)
25 & Older	248 (≈14.4%)	59 (≈8.81%)

While our survey sample is generally representative of the larger HMoob student population, we want to highlight a few key differences. First, it is important to note that we do not provide an institutional comparison (i.e. comparing UW colleges) because the sample size is too small to do so. Second, we would like to point out that our sample population is skewed more female (65%) compared to the total HMoob population (55%). This could be explained through many reasons, including that studies have consistently shown women are more likely to participate in surveys than men. Our survey also shows slightly over one percent of our sample identified as non-binary; this is significant because institutional channels do not currently provide an option for students to identify their gender identity outside of the dominant male-female binaries even though many students embody gender identities outside of the cis-hetero categories. Our survey sample is also proportionate to the UW System HMoob student in terms of year in school. The most significant divergence in portion is percentage of senior/fourth year students, in which our survey also offers the additional option of senior/fifth year student. Lastly, our survey sample is commensurate with the UW System student total population in terms of age proportion as most degree-seeking undergraduate students are under 25 years of age.

⁷ We use the language of “Year in School” as opposed to grade level in order to highlight the timelines different individuals may take as well as forefront the unique burdens of going to school beyond four years



Image 5. Panelists at “Queer HMoob Storying Other Worlds” (2025); Chundou Her, Steven Yang, Doua Kha, Zon Moua, and Kong Pheng Pha

Intersectional Aspects of HMoob Student population

In addition to gathering baseline demographic characteristics, our survey also asked questions about participants’ intersectional identities including sexuality, disability status, decade of family arrival in the U.S., financial concern, employment, family engagement, and religious identification. The following tables provide the results of these findings along with a brief explanation of their significance.

Table 3: Sexual Identity (% of survey), n=669	
Straight/Heterosexual	569 (≈ 85.1%)
LGBTQ+	76 (≈ 11.4%)
- Bisexual	49 (≈7.32%)
- Gay	11 (≈1.64%)
- Pansexual	6 (≈0.897%)
- Lesbian	3 (≈0.448%)
- Queer	2 (≈0.299%)
- Demisexual	1 (≈0.149%)
- Questioning	1 (≈0.149%)
- Asexual	1 (≈0.149%)
- Pansexual & Asexual	1 (≈0.149%)
- Pansexual/Queer	1 (≈0.149%)
Prefer not to answer	20 (≈2.99%)
No response	4 (≈0.598%)

A person’s sexual identity has considerable impact on how they experience life. While HMoob are often stereotyped as “hyperheterosexual”⁸ within dominant U.S. culture, our data further supports the intersectional diversity of HMoob students’ sexual and gender identities. This is meaningful to help cultivate more comprehensive and culturally responsive support measures for HMoob students as well as ensure that queer-friendly spaces are also both racially and ethnically inclusive.

We recognize that a person’s identity is a core component of how they internally and comparably understand themselves, the people around them, and various social and political positionalities. This data displays the intersectional gender and sexual identity diversity within our sample. Moreover, it creates space to understand how the lives of people with multiple identities may foster unique temporalities, epistemologies, or college experiences. These particular stories and data points of intersectionality are important because it leaves room for nuance within HMoob student experiences as well as creates opportunities for queer HMoob students to disrupt normative frameworks of time, space, and belonging.

Table 4: Disability Status (% of survey), n=669	
Yes	35 (≈5.23%)
No	615 (≈91.9%)
Did not answer	19 (≈2.84%)
<i>Receive Disability Services or Accommodations</i>	
Yes	12 (≈1.79%)
No	23 (≈3.44%)

HMoob students in our sample self-reported disabilities at a much lower rate than the general student population. According to the UW “Services for Students with Disabilities” annual report, 10% of all UW students had a registered disability in 2024-2025.⁹ Less than 2% of our sample reported having a registered disability and approximately 5% identified as being a person with a “disability or other chronic condition.” There is already strong evidence showing Asian Americans, as a group, have lower disability reporting than other ethnic or racial groups.¹⁰ A variety of disabilities were reported, with mental health, physical related disability, and neurodivergence being our highest reported areas. Additionally, 16 respondents identified themselves as multiply disabled. Our survey evidence further demonstrates the need to offer additional disability support for Asian American students general and HMoob students specifically.

8 Pha, K. P. (2025). Queering the Hmong Diaspora: Racial Subjectivity and the Myth of Hyperheterosexuality. University of Washington Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/ji.34457017>

9 https://www.wisconsin.edu/disability-resources/wp-content/uploads/sites/373/2025/11/UW_2024-2025_DisabilityServices_AnnualReport.pdf

10 <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60>

Table 5: Financial Need (% of survey), n=669	
<i>Level of Financial Concern</i>	
Not all concerned	49 (≈7.32%)
Slightly concerned	146 (≈21.8%)
Somewhat concerned	153 (≈22.9%)
Moderately concerned	181 (≈27.1%)
Extremely concerned	140 (≈20.9%)
<i>First Generation Status¹¹</i>	
Yes	407 (≈60.8%)
No	196 (≈29.3%)
No response	66 (≈9.90%)
<i>Housing Insecurity</i>	
Reported experiencing housing insecurity while in college	202 (≈30.2%)
<i>Food Insecurity</i>	
Reported experiencing food insecurity while in college	156 (≈23.3%)
<i>Employment (Average Hours worked per week)</i>	
Not employed during school year	215 (≈32.1%)
Employed during school year	454 (≈67.8%)
1-5	22 (≈3.29%)
5-10	92 (≈13.7%)
11-15	111 (≈16.5%)
16-20	111 (≈16.5%)
21-30	73 (≈10.9%)
31-40	10 (≈1.50%)
40 or More	35 (5.23%)

HMoob students in our sample are predominantly first-generation college students, experience high levels of financial concern including housing and food insecurity, and are usually employed during the school year. Over half of our sample worked an average of at least 11 hours/week or more while also in school. Our data concerning the financial precarity of HMoob students is alarming and warrants further investigation and intervention, including how basic needs support services can be better provided for HMoob student populations.

¹¹ First Generation Status is defined here as parents having a two-year degree or less.

Table 6: Family Engagement Measures (% of survey), n=669	
<i>Receives Financial Help from Family during school year</i>	
Never	128 (≈19.1%)
Rarely	135 (≈20.2%)
Occasionally	171 (≈25.6%)
Often	107 (≈16.0%)
Very Often	128 (≈19.1%)
<i>Provides Financial Help to Family during school year</i>	
Never	97 (≈14.5%)
Rarely	147 (≈22.0%)
Occasionally	181 (≈27.1%)
Often	126 (≈18.8%)
Very Often	118 (≈17.6%)
<i>Receives Emotional Support or Care from Family during school year</i>	
Never	241 (≈36.0%)
Rarely	182 (≈27.2%)
Occasionally	158 (≈23.6%)
Often	58 (≈8.67%)
Very Often	30 (≈4.48%)
<i>Provides Emotional Support or Care to Family during school year</i>	
Never	59 (≈8.81%)
Rarely	111 (≈16.6%)
Occasionally	201 (≈30.0%)
Often	169 (≈25.3%)
Very Often	129 (≈19.3%)

The participants in our survey indicated varying levels of family engagement. While there are a significant number of students who never receive financial help or emotional support/care from family during the school year, the majority of students receive some financial and emotional support, ranging from rarely to very often. Concomitantly, students provide financial and emotional support and care to their family very often throughout the school year. This finding indicates that HMoob students are providing care to their families as much as they are receiving care. The frequency of HMoob students providing financial resources to their families during college is quite high, with n=181 (≈27.1%) stating “Occasionally,” n=126 (≈18.8%) stating “Often,” and n=118 (≈17.6%) stating “very often,” which is a common pattern for students of color who come from financial disadvantaged families (and uncommon from their White advantaged peers).¹² Further investigation is warranted to determine the effects of students providing financial and emotional support to family on their education, as well as how

¹² Wiggins, Y., Harrington, B., & Gerstel, N. (2023). Families and financial support: Comparing Black and Asian American college students. *Sociological Perspectives*, 66(3), 543-564.

family financial and emotional support positively impacts their ability to complete their degrees.

Table 7: Transfer Students (% of survey), n=669	
Identified as Transfer Student	239 (≈35.7%)
<i>Transferred from where...</i>	
Four-year college or university	71 (≈10.6%)
Two-year community or technical college	138 (≈20.6%)
Multiple transfer	30 (≈4.5%)
<i>Thoughts of stopping education at current university and transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons?</i>	
None	176 (≈26.3%)
A little	164 (≈24.5%)
Some	150 (≈22.4%)
A moderate amount	114 (≈17.0%)
Very much	65 (≈9.72%)

Approximately 35% of HMoob students in our sample identified as a transfer student with most coming from a two-year community or technical college. Additionally, most students in our sample at least gave some thoughts on stopping their education at the current university. This data relates to other issues we found in our study regarding HMoob students not feeling as though they belonged in Wisconsin colleges and warrants further inquiry to better understand the transfer and retention patterns of HMoob college students.

Table 8: Decades of Arrival Earliest to Latest (% of survey), n=669	
More than 43 years ago (i.e., before 1980)	129 (≈19.3%)
33-42 years ago (i.e., 1980s)	254 (≈37.9%)
23-32 years ago (i.e., 1990s)	171 (≈25.6%)
13-22 years ago (i.e., 2000s)	112 (≈16.7%)
Within the last 12 years (i.e., since 2010s)	3 (≈0.448%)

HMoob refugees resettled in the United States following the conclusion of the secret war (also known as the Laotian Civil War) in three major waves: 1) the first wave took place in the late 1970s immediately following the end of the U.S. proxy war in Laos in which the majority of HMoob refugees were directly associated with General Vang Pao, the HMoob military leader who was aligned with U.S. militarism during the Vietnam War; 2) the second wave was the largest period of HMoob refugee resettlement in the U.S., and took place during the 1980s-1990s when HMoob were fleeing persecution in Laos to refugee camps in Thailand and arrived in the U.S. following the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980; 3) the third wave of HMoob refugees arrived from Thailand's Wat Tham Krabok camp in the early 2000s. Our sample numbers indicate that the majority of HMoob college students come from families who arrived to the U.S. during

the second wave; this is unsurprising given that this was the largest group of refugees. Likewise, families who have been in the U.S. longer have had more time to establish themselves, cultivate social and cultural networks, and acquire financial capital – all things that make attending college more possible. It is worth noting the diversity of family arrival numbers and to further support students from refugee families; especially those who have arrived more recently.

Table 9: Religious Identification and Time Commitments (% of survey), n = 669	
<i>Religious Upbringing</i>	
Christianity/Kev cai tshiab	183 (≈27.3%)
Shamanism/Animism/Kev cai qub (Coj dab qhuas)	398 (≈59.4%)
Christianity/Kev cai tshiab & Shamanism/Animism/Kev cai qub (Coj dab qhuas)	61 (≈9.12%)
I did not grow up with a religious tradition	11 (≈1.64%)
Other	3 (≈0.448%)
<i>Estimated Time Spent on Religion During the Past Month by Religion Growing Up (% of our survey)</i>	
Christianity/Kev cai tshiab	
1-10 hours	84 (≈12.6%)
11-20 hours	13 (≈1.94%)
31-40 hours	1 (≈0.149%)
40 or more hours	9 (≈1.35%)
Not engaged in spiritual or religious practices	77 (≈11.5%)
Shamanism/Animism/Kev cai qub (Coj dab qhuas)	
1-10 hours	144 (≈21.5%)
11-20 hours	37 (≈5.53%)
21-30 hours	15 (≈2.24%)
31-40 hours	8 (≈1.20%)
40 or more hours	11 (≈1.64%)
Not engaged in spiritual or religious practices	187 (≈27.9%)
Christianity/Kev cai tshiab & Shamanism/Animism/Kev cai qub (Coj dab qhuas)	
1-10 hours	17 (≈2.54%)
11-20 hours	6 (≈0.897%)
21-30 hours	1 (≈0.149%)
Not engaged in spiritual or religious practices	37 (≈5.53%)
Other	
31-40 hours	1 (≈0.149%)
Not engaged in spiritual or religious practices	2 (≈0.299%)

Well over half of our sample (59%) identified as growing up with traditional HMoob religion. This is significant because there is a lack of awareness of HMoob religious practices, in addition to a lack of formal and institutional recognition of minoritized religions, which may make it challenging for HMoob students to secure appropriate religious accommodations. Moreover, our data indicate that HMoob students who engage in the traditional HMoob “way”¹³ have greater time commitments than their Christian peers. This means that faculty and staff need to be aware that traditional HMoob spiritual practices may be more periodic but also more time intensive and do not usually follow a set schedule or calendar which may cause students to require longer and/or unexpected absences.

Table 10: Common Majors and Areas of Study (% of survey), n=669	
By Discipline	
Arts and Humanities	87 (≈13.0%)
Biological & Life Sciences	81 (≈12.1%)
Business	64 (≈9.57%)
Finance	76 (≈11.4%)
Education	26 (≈3.89%)
Engineering	39 (≈5.83%)
Health Professions	106 (≈15.8%)
Math and Computer Science	49 (≈7.32%)
Physical Science	1 (≈0.15%)
Social Science	94 (≈14.1%)
Other Discipline	15 (≈2.24%)
Undecided	31 (≈4.63%)
STEM v Non-STEM	
STEM	307 (≈45.9%)
Non-STEM	362 (≈54.1%)
Gender of STEM	
Female	232
Male	134
Non-binary	4
Area of STEM by Gender	
Physical Science/Engineering/Math & Computer Science	
Female	18
Male	70
Non-binary	1

¹³ Borja, M. (2023). Follow the New Way: American Refugee Resettlement Policy and Hmong Religious Change. Harvard University Press.

Biology & Life Science/Health/Social Sciences	
Female	214
Male	18
Non-binary	3

HMoob students are engaged in a variety of major disciplines. However, health disciplines have the highest percentage of student major enrollment (15.8%). The gender ratio within STEM majors skews female, however the male enrollment is higher within physical sciences, whereas the female enrollment is higher within biological sciences.

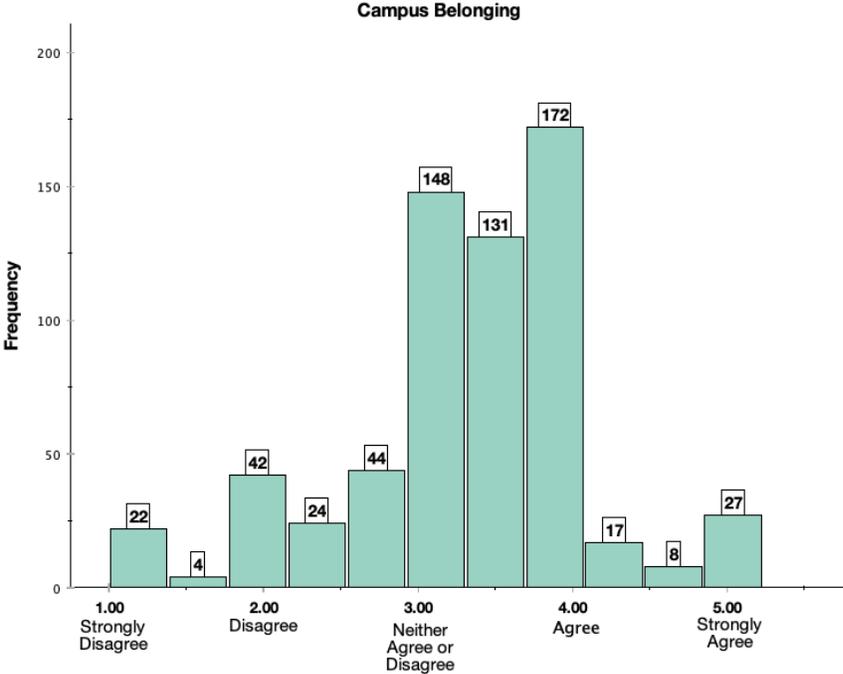


Image 6. College Paj Ntaub team members at the 2025 Educational Policy Studies Conference; Matt Wolfgram, Edward Xiong, Susan Vang, Bailey Smolarek, Kong Pheng Pha, and Chundou Her.

Factors Impacting Campus Belonging

We asked survey respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements regarding their sense of belonging on their college campus. The following graph provides the participants mean responses.

- I see myself as part of the campus community
- I feel that I am a member of the campus community
- I feel a sense of belonging to the campus community

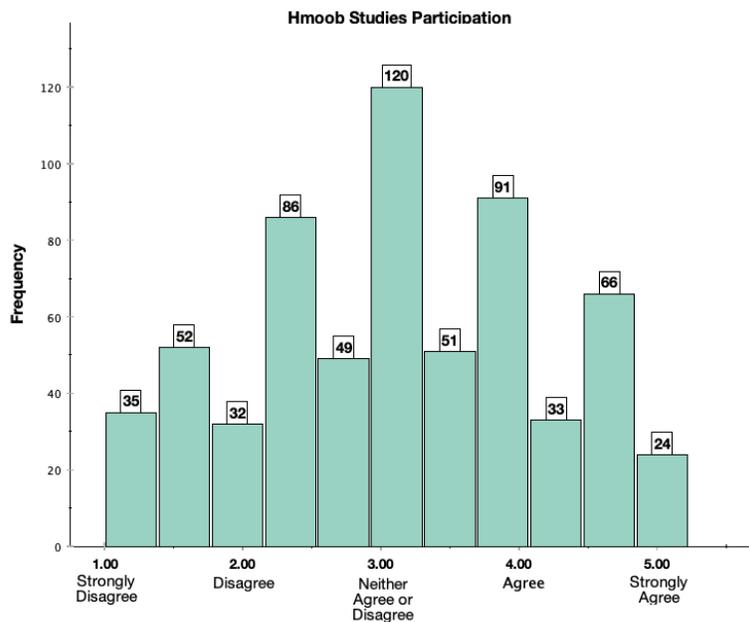


Scale 1-5 Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree; Construct measures (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.90$)

HMoob Studies Participation

We asked survey respondents a series of questions regarding their participation in HMoob Studies courses on their campus; they indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements:

- Hmong Studies and other courses about the history and culture of my community are offered and promoted at my university
- I have participated in Hmong Studies courses or other courses where I have learned about the history and culture of my ethnic community
- I have learned and benefited personally from participating in Hmong Studies or other courses where I have had the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of my ethnic community
- I have been encouraged by peers, faculty, or advisors to take Hmong Studies courses or other courses where I could learn about the history and culture of my ethnic community

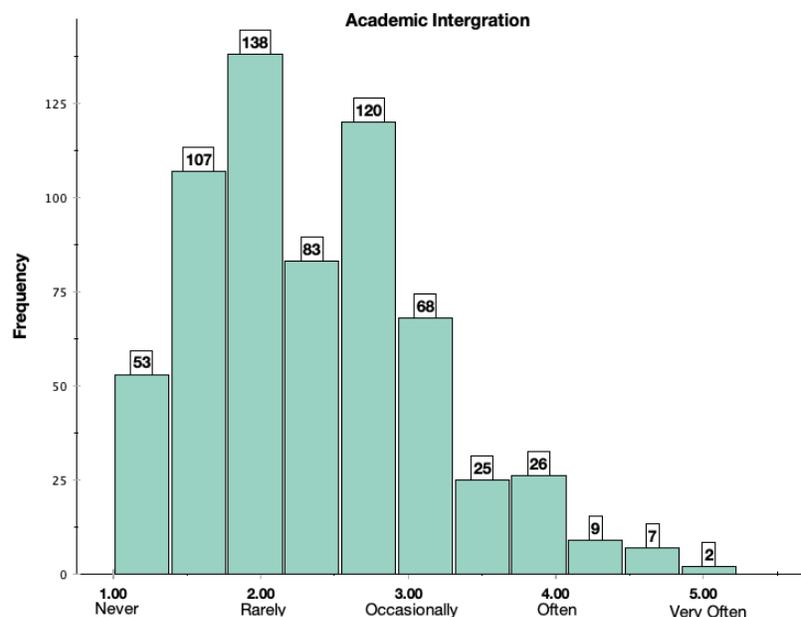


Scale 1-5 Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree; Construct measures (Cronbach $\alpha = .79$)

Academic Integration

All survey respondents, excluding those who were “undecided,” were asked to think about either their current major or intended major and indicate how often they had done the following:

- Talked with faculty about academic matters outside of class for my major
- Met with an academic advisor to discuss my major
- Participated in study groups for classes related to my major
- Met with a career advisor to explore career opportunities related to my major
- Hung out in campus spaces associated with my major
- Participated in a student organization or club related to my major
- Participated in a research or community engagement experience related to my major

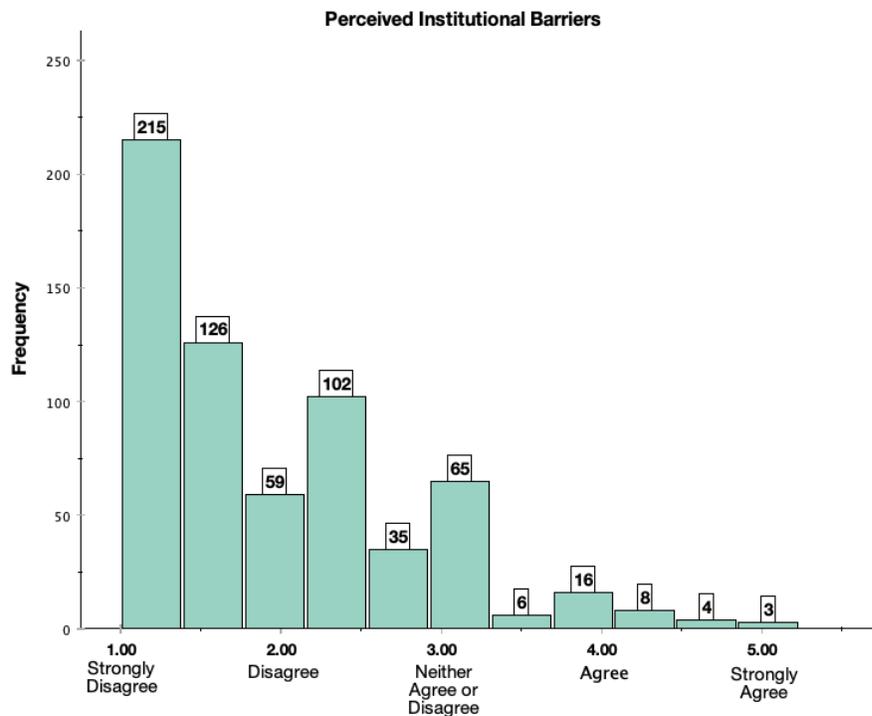


Scale 1-5 Never-Very Often; Construct measures (Cronbach $\alpha = .81$)

Perceived Institutional Barriers/Campus Climate Experiences

We asked survey respondents to indicate how often they experienced the following statements regarding discriminatory incidents they had experienced or witnessed on their campus:

- I have observed discriminatory words, behaviors, or gestures directed at minority students at this institution
- I feel there is a general atmosphere of prejudice among students
- I have encountered racism while attending this institution
- I have heard negative words about people of my own race or ethnicity while attending classes

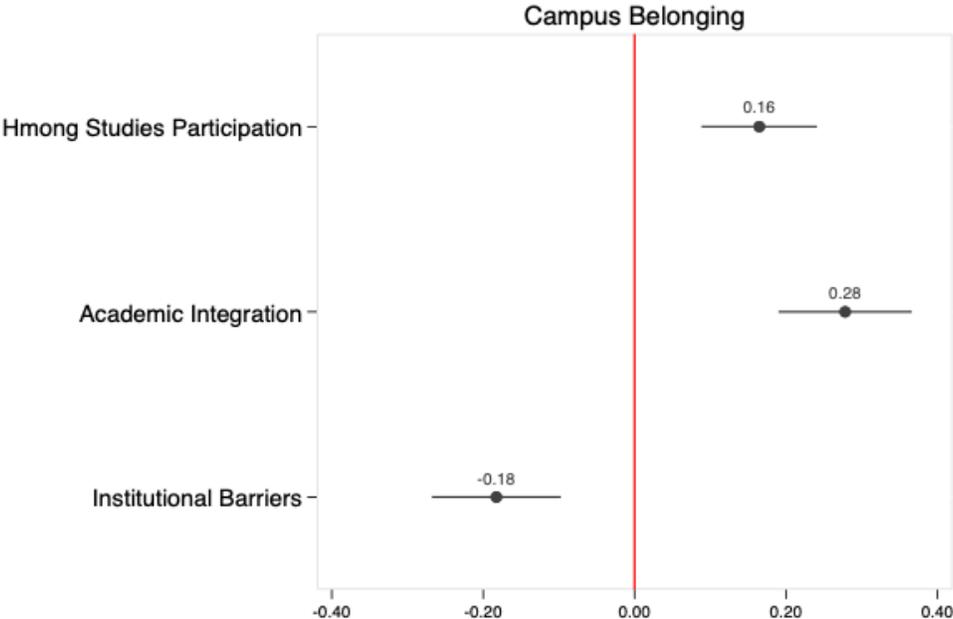


Scale 1-5 Never-Very Often; Construct measures (Cronbach $\alpha = .87$)

Findings: Factors Impacting Campus Belonging

Our survey results indicate 1) a correlation between participating in HMoob Studies and having a higher campus belonging measure, 2) a correlation between having higher academic integration and higher campus belonging, and 3) a correlation between experiencing institutional barriers and having a lower campus belonging measure.

This means that students feel like they belong on campus more when they participate in HMoob Studies courses and/or experience greater integration into the academic spaces associated with their major. Additionally, students are less likely to feel like they belong on campus when they experience racist and/or discriminatory campus climates.



Our findings strongly support the integration of HMoob Studies, as well as other ethnic studies, to support Students of Color. Likewise, our findings also demonstrate the importance of student support programs, strong relationships with faculty and staff, and opportunities to cultivate an academic community as key to student success. Finally, our findings also showcase the potential harms a racist and/or discriminatory campus climate can have on students' sense of belonging and subsequently their academic success.

HMoob Studies in the Universities of Wisconsin

Faculty, staff, students, and community members have been developing HMoob studies within the Universities of Wisconsin over the last two decades. Many HMoob studies programs and courses emerged during times of contention, such as racist incidents on campuses that targeted HMoob students. These moments also presented opportunities for UW campuses to hire HMoob studies faculty and scholars to teach courses in HMoob history, refugee migration, language, and contemporary politics and experiences in order to foster more democratic learning environments.

Since at least 2005, academic certificate and emphasis programs in HMoob and HMoob American studies have emerged at UW-Eau Claire, UW-Oshkosh, UW-La Crosse, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Madison. These programs have transformed the educational landscape across the UW system by formalizing and integrating HMoob studies as part of Asian American studies, critical race and ethnic studies, anthropology, history, sociology, and educational studies programs and departments.

HMoob Studies courses have grown throughout the Universities of Wisconsin in the past two decades in areas of history, politics, culture, language, study abroad, and community-based internships. Below is a current list of HMoob Language and Studies courses currently offered at UW colleges.

UW-Eau Claire: Critical Hmong Studies Certificate Program (12 cr)

- HMNG 101 Beginning Hmong I (4 cr)
 - HMNG 102 Beginning Hmong II (4 cr)
 - HMNG 130 Hmong American Experiences in the U.S. (3 cr)
 - HMNG 341 Critical Hmong Studies Domestic Travel Seminar (1-3 cr)
 - HMNG 342 Critical Hmong Studies International Travel Seminar (1-3 cr)
 - HMNG 365 Intersectionality: Critical Approaches to Identity and Injustice (3 cr)
 - HMNG 391 Special Topics in Critical Hmong Studies (3 cr)
-

UW-Oshkosh: Hmong Studies Certificate Program (12 cr)

- ANTHRO 103 Intro to Hmong Studies (3 cr)
 - HMONG ST 215 Global and Local in Hmong Studies (3 cr)
 - HMONG ST 230 Memory and Trauma (3 cr)
 - HMONG ST 309 Theorizing in Hmong Studies (3 cr)
 - EL/SEC ED 353 Hmong language, culture, and learning (3 cr)
 - HMONG ST 300 Special Topic (3 cr)
-

UW-Madison: Asian American Studies - HMoob American Studies emphasis (6 credits), Hmong language through LCA and CSEAS

- ASIAN AM 170 Hmong American Experiences in the United States (3 cr)
 - ASIAN AM 240 Hmong and Refugee Texts (3 cr)
 - ASIAN AM 240 Hmong Refugee History (3 cr)
 - ASIAN AM 246 Southeast Asian Refugees of the "Cold" War (3 cr)
 - ASIAN AM 441 Hmong American Social Movements in the 20th and 21st Centuries (3 cr)
 - ASIAN AM 540 Southeast Asian Memory and Trauma (3 cr)
 - LCA 307 First Semester Hmong language
 - LCA 308 Second Semester Hmong language
 - LCA 407 Third Semester Hmong language
 - LCA 408 Fourth Semester Hmong language
 - LCA 507 Fifth Semester Hmong language
 - LCA 508 Sixth Semester Hmong language
-

UW-Milwaukee: Hmong Diaspora Studies Certificate Program (18 credits)

- HMONG 105 First-Semester Hmong (3 cr)
- HMONG 107 First Semester Hmong Literacy (3 cr)
- HMONG 108 Second-Semester Hmong Literacy (3 cr)
- HMONG 192/3 First-Year Seminar (special topic freshman) (3 cr)
- HMONG 199 Independent Study (3 cr)
- HMONG 207 Third-Semester Hmong Literacy (3 cr)
- HMONG 208 Fourth-Semester Hmong Literacy (3 cr)

- HMONG 265 Hmong Americans: History, culture, and Contemporary Life (3 cr)
-

UW-Whitewater: No official program, only courses

- HMONG 141 Beginning Hmong I (4 cr)
 - HMONG 142 Beginning Hmong II (4 cr)
 - ASIANAM/HIST 308 Hmong Americans: Historical and contemporary issues (3 cr)
-

UW-La Crosse: Hmong and Hmong American Studies Certificate within Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

- RGS/ANT 362 Hmong Americans (3 cr)
 - ANT 196 Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology
 - ANT 215 Refugees, Displaced Persons and Transnational Communities
 - ANT 351 Peoples and Cultures of Southeast Asia
 - CST 337 Communication and Race
 - HIS 316 The Vietnam War Era
 - HIS 382 Imperialism in Asia and the Pacific
 - HMG 204 Hmong Heritage Language: Intermediate
 - HMG 304 Hmong Heritage Language: Advanced
 - RGS 350 Asian American Studies in Race, Gender, and Sexuality
 - TSL 345 Intercultural Interactions
-

UW-Green Bay: No official program, only courses

- HMONG 101 Introduction to the Hmong Language I. (4 Cr)
 - HMONG 102 Introduction to Hmong Language II (4 Cr)
 - HMONG 200 Introduction to Hmong Culture (3 Cr)
 - HMONG 250 Hmong Community Research (3 Cr)
 - HMONG 298 Independent Study (1-4 Cr)
 - HMONG 497 Internship (1-12 Cr)
 - HMONG 498 Independent Study (1-4 Cr)
-

UW-Stout: No official program, only courses

- HMON101 Elementary Hmong I (4 cr)
 - SOC 396 The Hmong and Other Minorities in Thailand (3 cr)
 - SOC 350 Sociology of Hmong Culture (1 cr) [Study Abroad]
-

UW-Stevens Point

- Hmong Language courses through World Language Program
 - HMNG 101 First Year Hmong
 - HMNG 102 First Year Hmong
 - Hmong Engagement Certificate- one-time program in 2025
 - Exploring Hmong History
 - Hmong Culture and Religion
 - Cultural Considerations
 - Empowering Hmong Community
-



Image 7. Dr. Choua Xiong with the batik she created at the 2024 Social Justice Retreat art workshop.

Recommendations

1. Continued and increased academic support programs for HMoob students.
2. Financial and mental health supports for HMoob students.
3. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to better support HMoob students.
4. Revised religious excused absence policies to explicitly include HMoob religious and spiritual practices.
5. Increased support and partnership with HMoob Studies courses and faculty.
6. Opportunities for collaborations with K-12 schools to teach HMoob Studies as part of Act 266.¹⁴
7. Increased disability awareness programs and policies to educate students on their accommodation rights.
8. Professional development opportunities for disability support staff to create more culturally responsive practices for working with HMoob students
9. Actively supporting a more inclusive, anti-racist campus climate.
10. Support for cross-campus collaborations and partnerships to connect and support HMoob students across the Universities of Wisconsin.

¹⁴ The Wisconsin state legislation requiring K-12 schools to teach HMoob Studies and Asian American Studies <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/related/acts/266>



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