

Fact sheet: University of California, Los Angeles

UCLA is a diverse academic community with multiple ongoing programs, research projects and initiatives related to food. Many of these work together under the umbrella of the Healthy Campus Initiative, envisioned and supported by philanthropists Jane and Terry Semel. The HCI was launched in 2013 to promote the health and wellness of students, faculty and staff, and to develop best practices that may help other communities with the same objectives.

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND FOOD SECURITY

- The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the UCLA–USC Center for Population and Health Disparities — among other centers — are actively involved in research and community projects to help improve food availability and security.
- The student-led Swipes for the Homeless program converts the value of the unused “meal swipes” from students’ prepaid meal cards to donate food to the needy. Recognized by the White House’s Champions of Change program, the initiative has expanded to seven chapters and has donated more than 330,000 pounds of food nationally.
- UCLA has adopted the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank; the UCLA Volunteer Center coordinates monthly visits by campus departments and organizes an annual food drive.

SUSTAINABILITY

- The campus’s main food providers — UCLA Dining Services, Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA) and UCLA Health System — are successfully working toward the goal of 20 percent sustainable-food purchases by 2020.
- The Bruin Plate dining hall recently received a best practices award in sustainable food service. Opened in 2013, Bruin Plate focuses on fresh, wholesome and nutritionally balanced options.
- The UCLA Institute of Environment and Sustainability conducts research to generate knowledge and offer solutions to global and regional sustainability problems.
- The Student Food Collective holds farmers markets in UCLA’s main plaza and manages a food-buying co-op.
- Multiple produce gardens on campus increase sustainability practices, provide more healthful options and serve as educational tools to facilitate healthy lifestyle choices by the campus and surrounding community.
- The UCLA Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden promotes plant diversity and ecologically sound practices.
- UCLA is exploring procurement partnerships to leverage buying power for sustainable foods.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- UCLA offers [food-related courses](#) to undergraduate and graduate students, and to continuing education students through UCLA Extension. A food-related academic minor is in development.
- UCLA faculty, students and staff collaborate with LAUSD food services and medical staff on research and programs to promote healthy eating for the school district’s 600,000 students.
- The UCLA Library has created resources to support food-related research. Among its active research projects are those assessing food culture and childhood obesity.
- Personal eating-behavior education is available on campus and online through multiple workshops, therapy groups and counseling opportunities. Examples: the AskDolores program helps undergraduate students create healthy meals at dining facilities, and a multidisciplinary clinic offered through the UCLA Fit for Health program aims to prevent and manage pediatric obesity.

- UCLA Health System has been making changes at its eateries, including elimination of fried foods, reduced salad bar prices through increased soda prices, and working toward zero waste to landfills
- ASUCLA is adjusting menus at multiple campus venues (for example, by adding vegetarian options).
- Campus vending machines are stocked with healthier snack options, and a graduate student research project showed no loss of revenue.
- Medicinal herb gardens have been planted outside Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center and Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA, serving as an educational tool.
- UCLA faculty teach classes and lead community forums that investigate, for example, literature and food studies, the science of food and weight bias.