UNIVERSITY OfficeOF of theCALIFORNIA President

From Campus to Career: Assessing the Influence of Internship Participation on Post-Graduation Employment

SERU Symposium | October 23, 2025

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Purpose & Background

Purpose



Examine the **relationship** between participation in **internship** programs and **post-graduation employment** outcomes



Help students understand the importance of gaining internship experiences at college



Support institutions in providing opportunities and resources that help students develop the skills needed for career success through internship programs

Background

In 2015, Institutional Research at UCOP found:

• 40% of UC senior undergraduate students reported participating in internship programs.

After controlling demographic and academic factors, internship participants made...

\$2,000 more in **first year**, \$7,000 more in **first three years**, and \$20,000 more in **first six years**

We want to update our research with more robust data to understand how student internship participation affects post-graduation employment outcomes.



Data & Definitions

Data & Definitions

Internship participation data source

University of
California
Undergraduate
Experience Survey
(UCUES) from 2010
to 2024 with an
average response
rate of 33%

Employment outcomes data sources

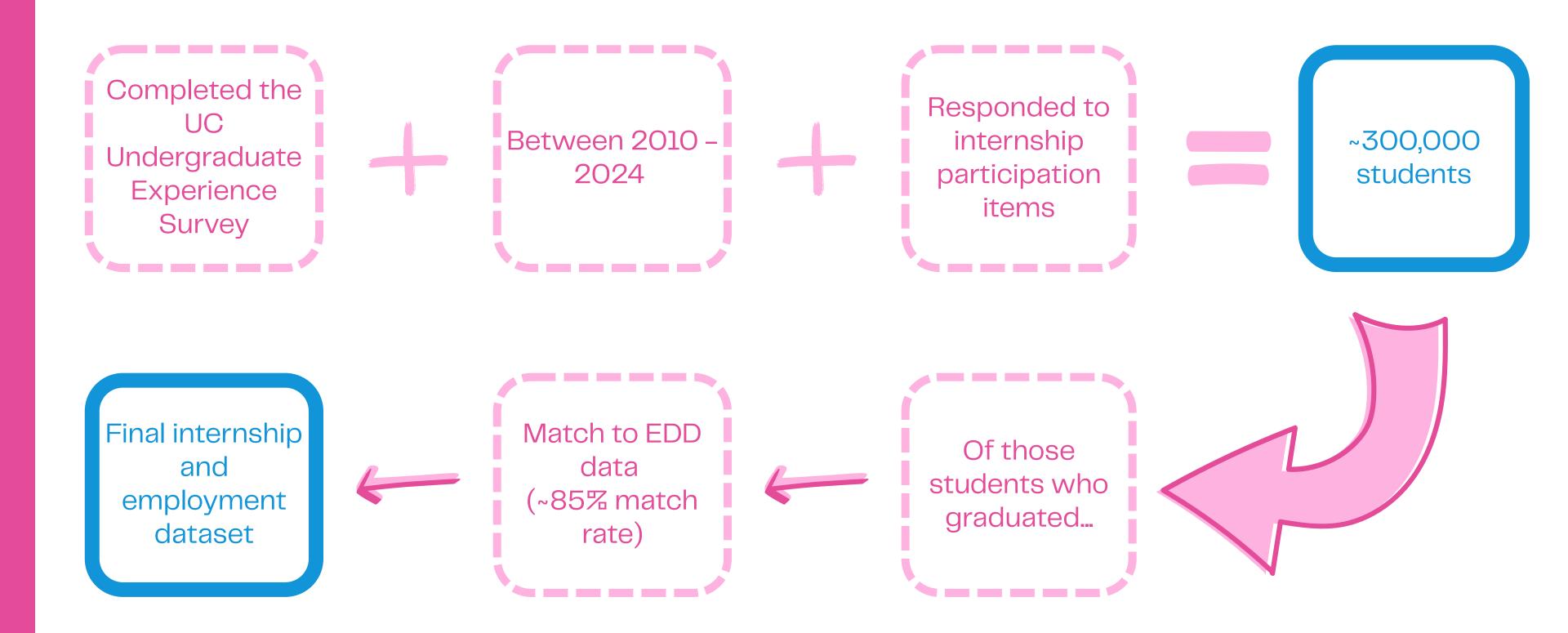
EDD (Employment Development Department in California)

- CA specific quarterly wages matched to UC alumni by SSN
- Covers ~70 percent of UC graduates per year back to 2000

Lightcast

- Self reported employment history from public platforms such as LinkedIn
- Periodic acquisition, covers 35–40 percent of UC graduates
- Disproportionate Engineering/CS representation

Our sample





Who completes internships?

Students with the highest internship participation rates are...



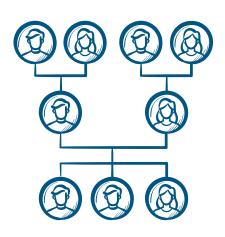
Admitted as first-year students



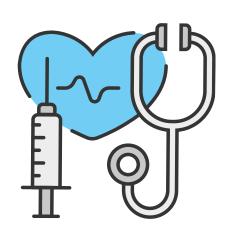
Attending UC
Davis or
Berkeley



Out-ofstate students



NOT firstgeneration students



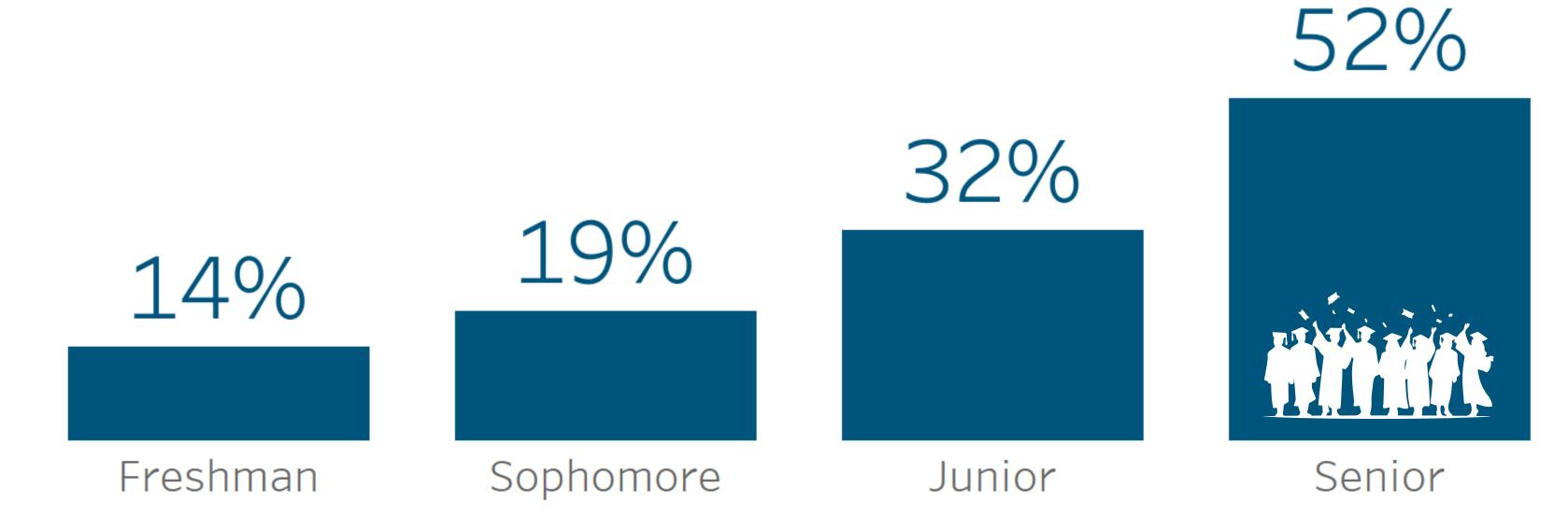
Pre-health students



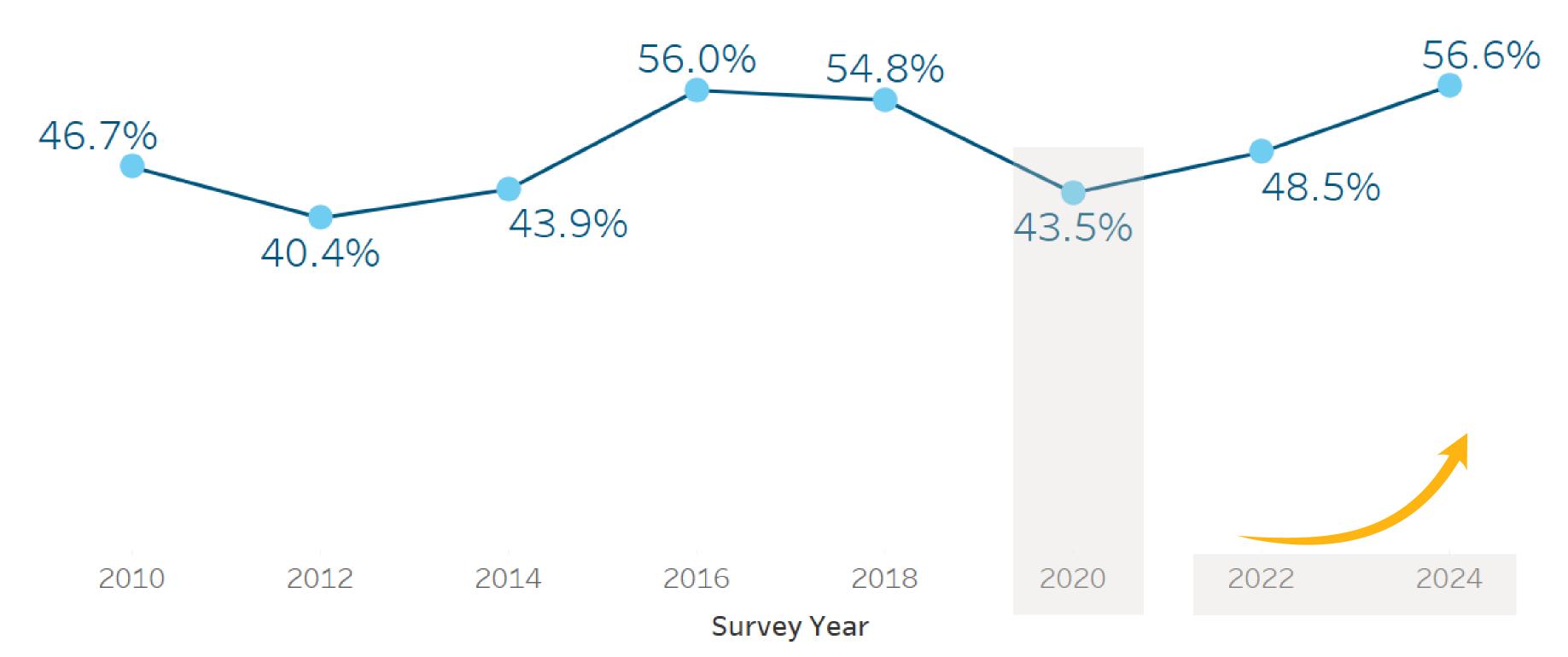
Female and non-binary students

Source: UCUES

Internship participation increases as students progress in their university studies.

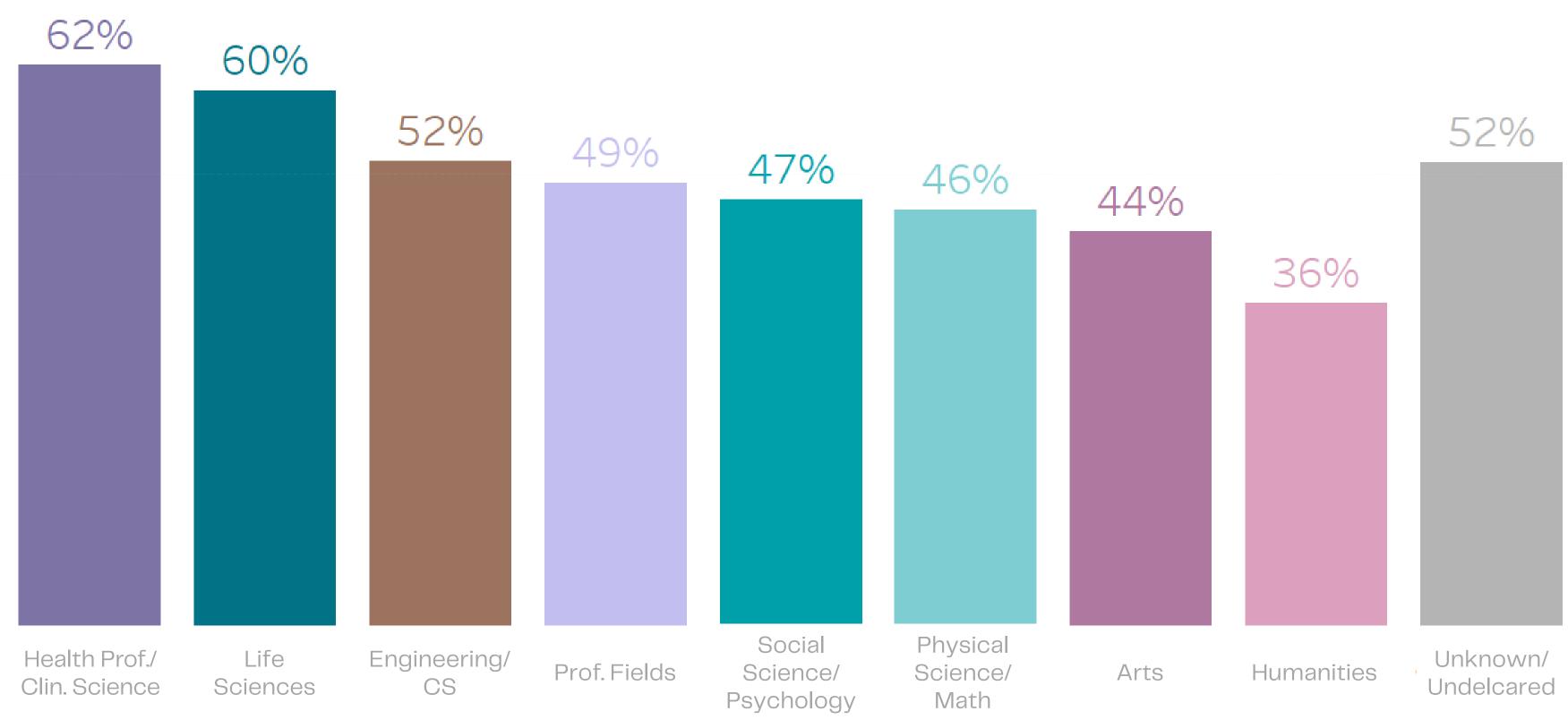


Internship participation has recovered post-pandemic



Source: UCUES

Pre-health & life science disciplines have the highest internship participation rates



Source: UCUES

Internship Experiences are Varied With Emphasis on Tech

Students report a wide range of internship experiences, with

CS related internships the most common

Internship Titles and Companies Before Graduation

Internships

Companies

Software Engineering Interns

University of C



Arista Networks

Project Management Interns

Source: Lightcast Alumni Pathways

Internship Experiences are Varied With Emphasis

on Tech

UC sponsors the most internship types, while Big tech internships are more concentrated in specific roles

UC and Big Tech Sponsored Internship Titles Before Graduation Internships Companies Research Interns Interns Student Interns Undergraduate Interns Marketing Interns Undergraduate Research Interns Nutrition Interns University of California Academic Interns Sustainability Interns Health Interns Graphic Design Interns Computer Science Interns Communications Interns International Peer Mentors Legislative Interns Big Tech Internships Software Engineering Interns Google Software Development Interns Amazon Meta Interns Finance Interns Microsoft. Production Engineering Interns Salesforce Office Interns Apple Software Interns LinkedIn Data Engineering Interns Tesla

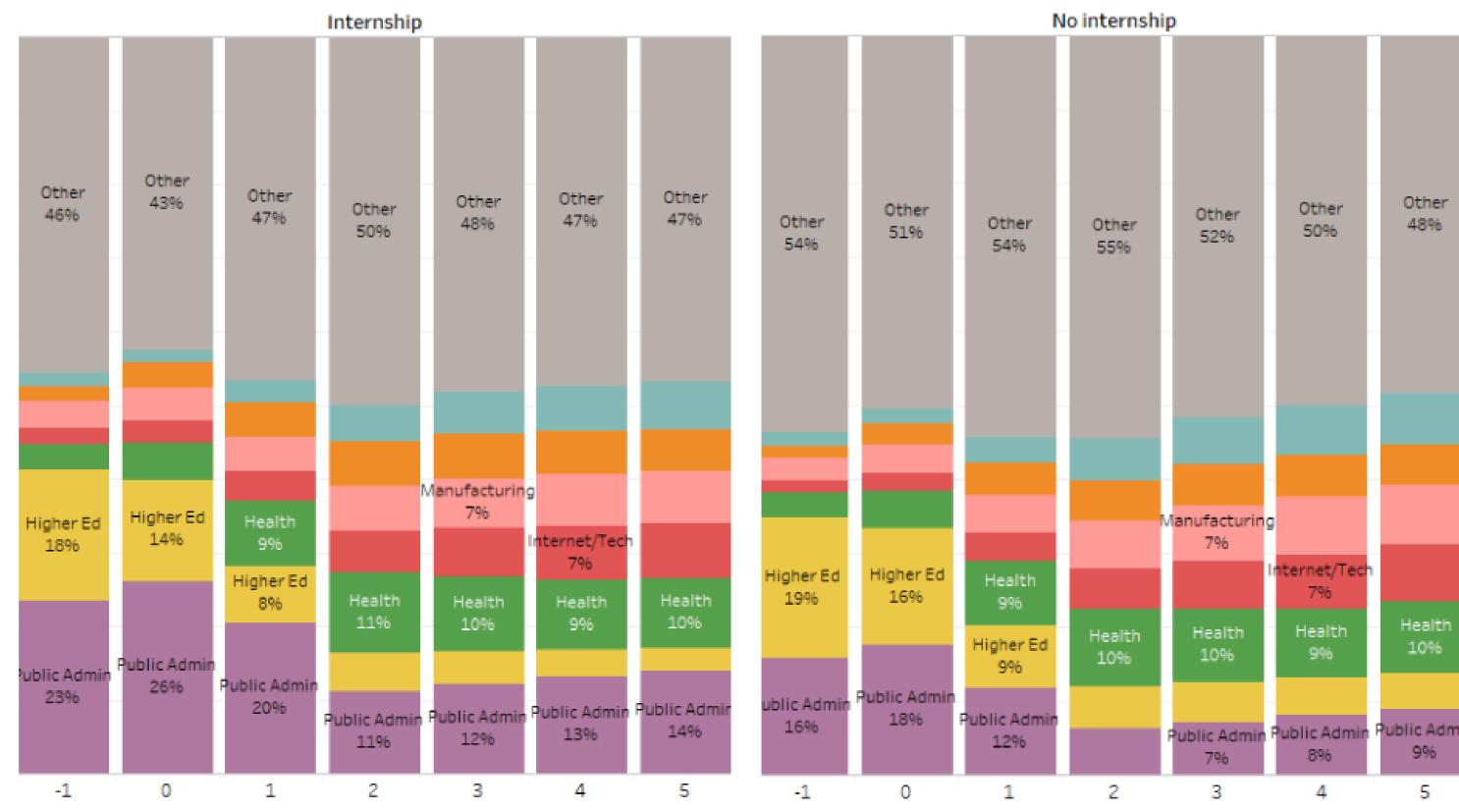
Source: Lightcast Alumni Pathways

"Stickiness" of Internships by Sector

CA Industry of Employment by Years After Graduation and Internship Status

Public sector
and higher
education are
the most
frequent sectors
providing
internships

Students who do public sector internships are more likely to remain employed in the public sector after graduation



Source: CA Employment Development Department Quarterly Wage Data



Post-graduate employment

Internships lead to a variety of related postgraduate jobs

Postgraduate jobs of Software Engineering Interns

Software Engineering Associates
Software Development Engineers

Software Engineering Interns

Software Developers

MTS Software Engineers

Data Scientists

Members of Technical Staff

Undergraduate Student Researchers

Solutions Engineers

Lead Software Engineers

Back End Software Engineers

Post graduate jobs of Engineering Internships

Mechanical Engineers

Software Engineers

Engineers

Mechanical Design Engineers

Manufacturing Engineers

Project Engineers

Process Engineers

Design Engineers

Systems Engineers

Undergraduate Student Researchers

Mechanical Engineering Associates

Mechanical Engineering Interns

Research and Development Engineers

Field Engineers

Engineering Assistants

Software Test Engineers

Graduate Teaching Assistants

Electrical Engineers

Teaching Assistants

Quality Engineers

Postgraduate jobs of General Internships

Software Engineers Legal Assistants Assurance Associates Administrative Assistants Audit Associates Designers Project Engineers Associates Account Executives Assurance Staff Research Assistants Paralegals Marketing Coordinators Analysts Engineers Tutors Office Assistants

Software Developers

Source: Lightcast Alumni Pathways

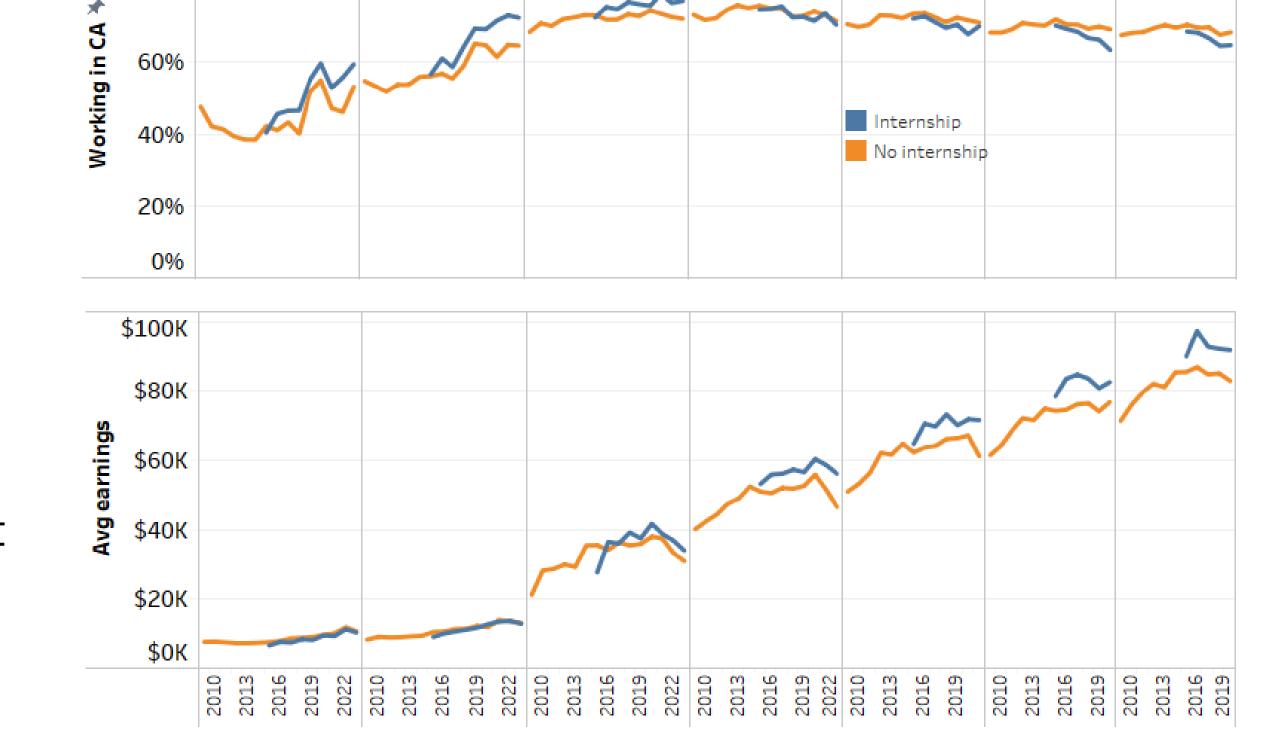
Postgraduation Employment Outcomes

100%

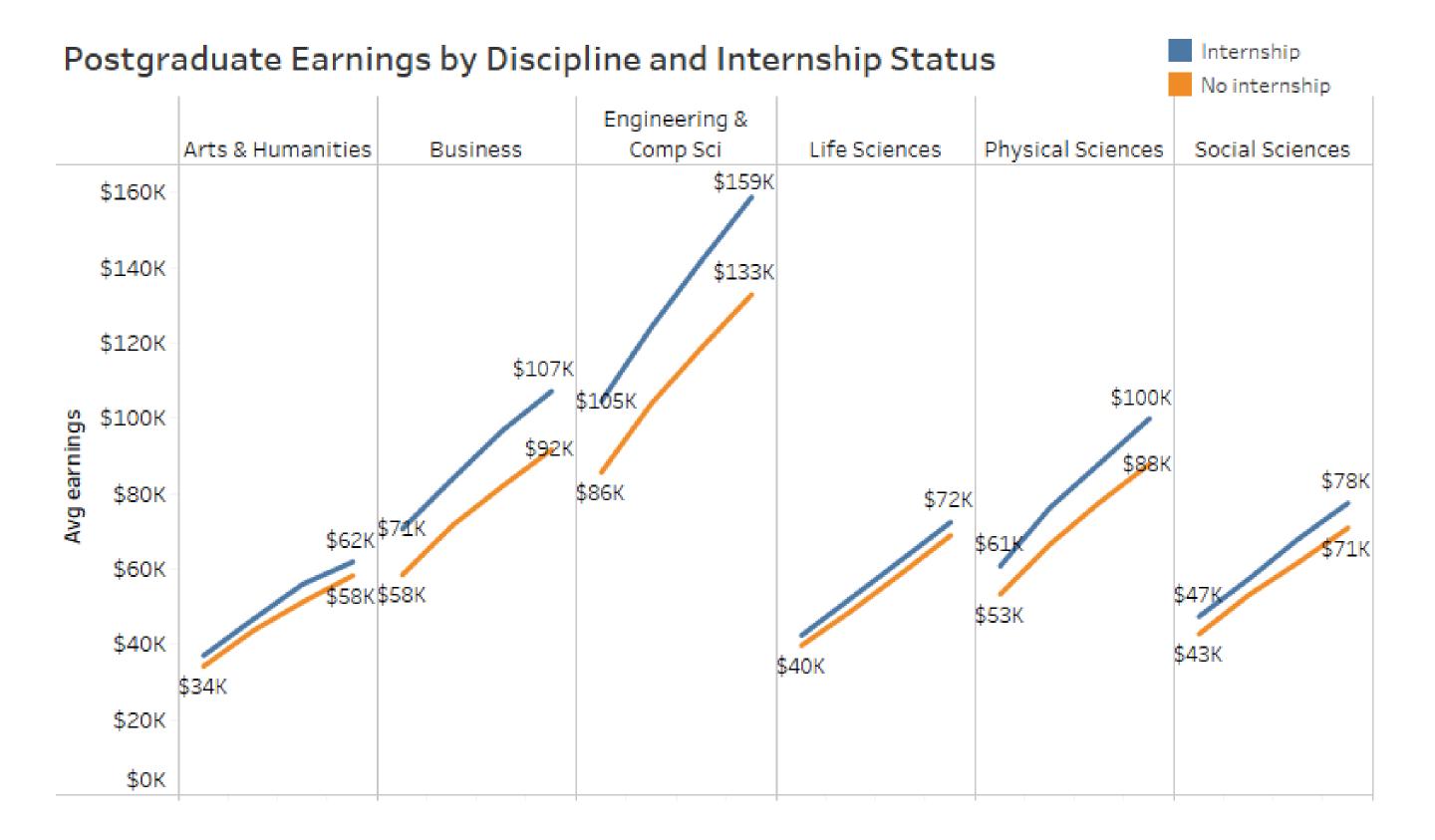
80%

Internship participants slightly less likely to be working in CA at 5 years after graduation (65 vs 68 percent)

Internship participants
earn 19 percent (\$9K)
more at two years after
graduation and 11 percent
more at 5 years after
graduation



Internship Participants Have Higher Postgraduate Earnings Trajectory



Biggest differential in Business and Engineering/
Computer Science

Does not account for graduate degrees, geographic location, or other variables that may affect earning potential.



What we know and what's next

Takeaways

Student participation in internships has grown since 2020

Are rising labor market demand for practical skills driving students to seek out-of-classroom experiences?

UC is the largest provider of internships, offering a wide range of opportunities

Do UC internships lead to different employment outcomes compared to non-UC internships?

Initial findings suggest internships support stronger post-graduate earnings and career alignment.

Further analysis is needed to account for selection bias and confounding variables.

Next Steps

01

Continue to build upon and improve data analysis and modeling.



02

Share results with UC leadership and stakeholders to inform decision making



03

Develop a public data dashboard to disseminate findings to support student learning.

