

Student Wellbeing and Basic Needs at the University of California: Current Situation and Strategies for Improvement

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Student well-being questions in UC Undergraduate and Graduate Student Surveys (UCUES/UCGSES)

UCUES/UCGSES: The Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4)*

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

(0-Not at all, 1-several days, 2-More than half the days, 3-Nearly every day)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge | } | Total score ≥ 3 suggests anxiety |
| 2. Not being able to stop worrying | | |
| 3. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless | } | Total score ≥ 3 suggests depression |
| 4. Little interest or pleasure in doing things | | |

*Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B. W., Löwe, B. [An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: the PHQ-4](#). Psychosomatics 2009, 50 (6): 613-21.

Student well-being questions in UC Undergraduate and Graduate Student Surveys (UCUES/UCGSES)

UCUES: Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at [University Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access campus?

In 2018/
2020 UCUES

Q55. Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at UC [Campus Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access the campus?

- Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)
- Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)
- Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)
- Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder)
- Other disability or condition, please specify _____

Yes(1)	No(0)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In 2022/
2024 UCUES,
2021/2023
UCGSES

Q63 Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at [University Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access campus?

- I do not have any disabilities or conditions (RUCNODIS)
- Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition) (RUCPHYDIS)
- Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder) (RUCLRNDIS)
- Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury) (RUCNEURO)
- Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder) (RUCMENTHLTH)
- Chronic health condition (e.g., cancer, diabetes, arthritis, sickle cell anemia) (RUCCHRON)
- Other disability or condition; please specify: (RUCDISOTHER)
- Prefer not to answer (RUCDISNOTANS)

Student well-being questions in UC Undergraduate and Graduate Student Surveys (UCUES)

During this academic year, how often has each of the following been an obstacle to your schoolwork or academic success?

Item	Not at all (1)	Rarely (2)	Occasionally (3)	Frequently (4)	All the time (5)
Job responsibilities (e.g., paid employment) (AUCOBSTJOB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family responsibilities (AUCOBSTFAM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other responsibilities (e.g., athletics, clubs, internship) (AUCOBSTOTHER)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weak English skills (AUCOBSTENGL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weak math skills (AUCOBSTMATH)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inadequate study skills (e.g., knowing how to start, knowing how to get help, organizing material) (AUCOBSTSKILL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor study behaviors (e.g., wait until last minute, too much social time, too much web surfing) (AUCOBSTBEHAV)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor study environment (e.g., noisy roommate, poor Internet access, inadequate computer or software) (AUCOBSTENVR)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling depressed, stressed, or upset (AUCOBSTDEPRESS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical illness or condition (AUCOBSTILL)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Military deployment (AUCMILITARY)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going hungry, not having enough food (AUCHUNGER)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent access to housing, or homelessness (AUCHOUSING)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inability to concentrate on my work (AUCOBSTCONCT)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reluctance to ask for academic help when I need it (AUCOBSTHELP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please elaborate: (AUCOTHER)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

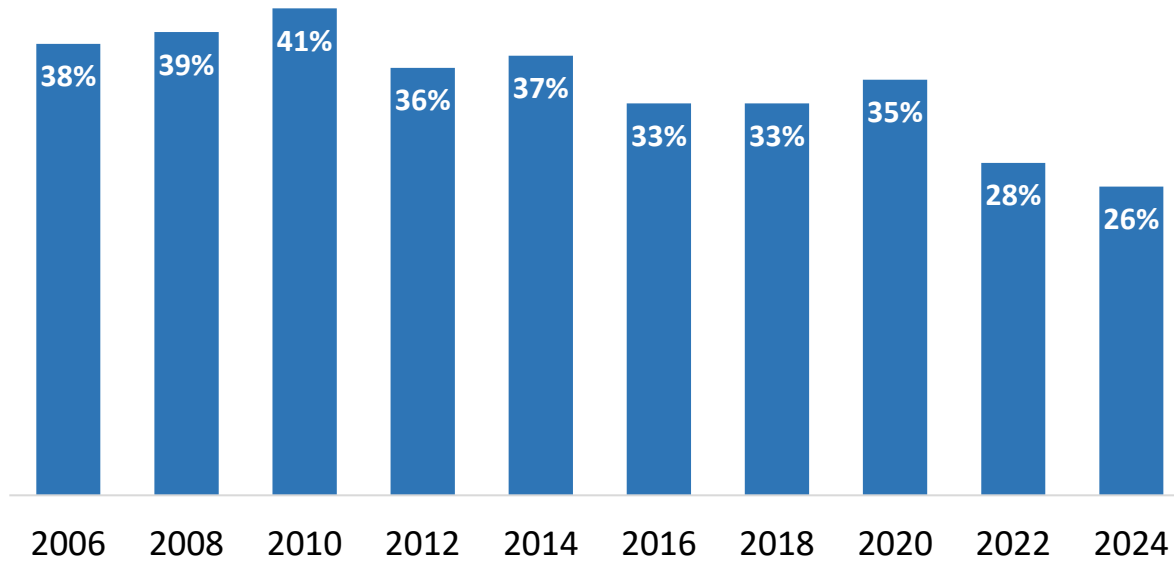
Student basic needs questions in UC Undergraduate and Graduate Student Surveys (UCUES/UCGSES)

Food insecurity*	Housing insecurity
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more.2. I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.3. Did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?4. Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?5. Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?6. You indicated that you had cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food. How often did this happen?	<p>In the last 12 months, have you ever lacked a safe, regular, and adequate nighttime place to stay and sleep for any of the following lengths of time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> No<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Fall academic term<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Winter academic term<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Winter break<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Spring academic term<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Spring break<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Summer when taking classes<input type="radio"/> Yes, during Summer when not taking classes<input type="radio"/> Yes, during other academic holidays<input type="radio"/> Yes, but cannot recall when it occurred

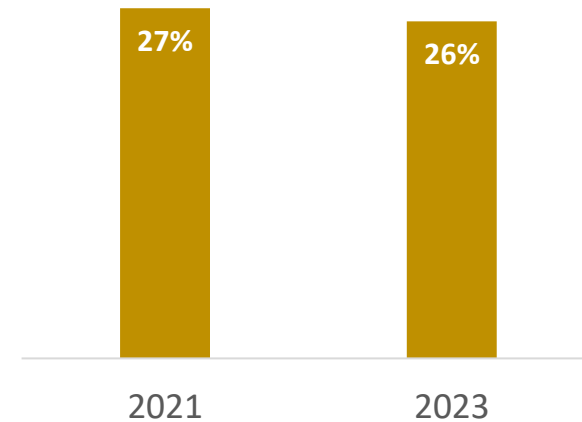
* The food insecurity module was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/8282/short2012.pdf>

UCUES and UCGSES Response rates*

UCUES



UCGSES

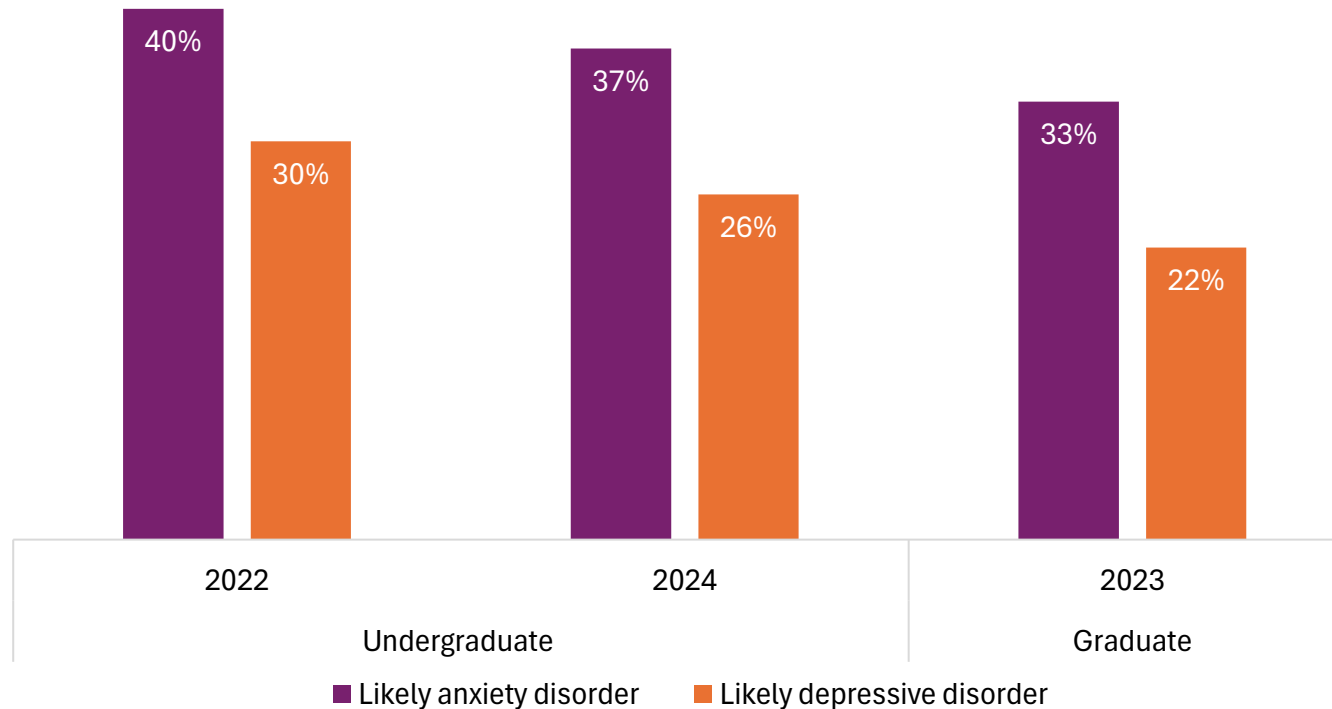


*Response rates vary across campuses and sub-populations, but respondents are fairly representative of population.

Student Mental Health

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

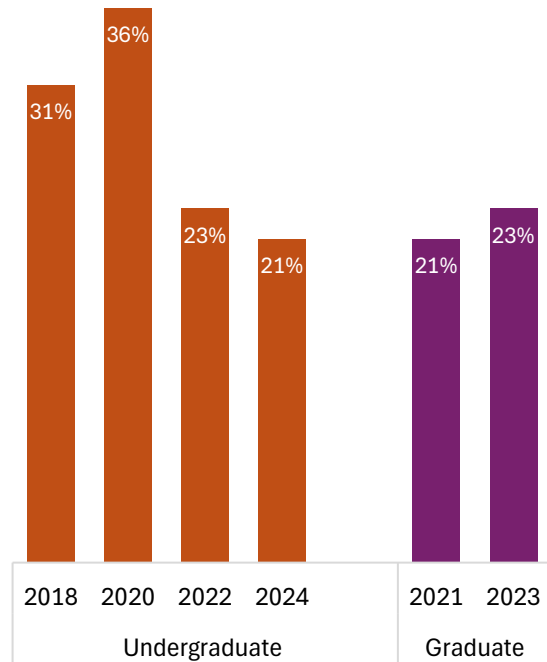
1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge
2. Not being able to stop worrying
3. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless
4. Little interest or pleasure in doing things



Student Mental Health

UCUES: Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at [University Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access campus?

- Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder).



In 2018/
2020
UCUES

In 2022/
2024
UCUES,
2021/
2023
UCGSES

Q55. Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at UC [Campus Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access the campus?

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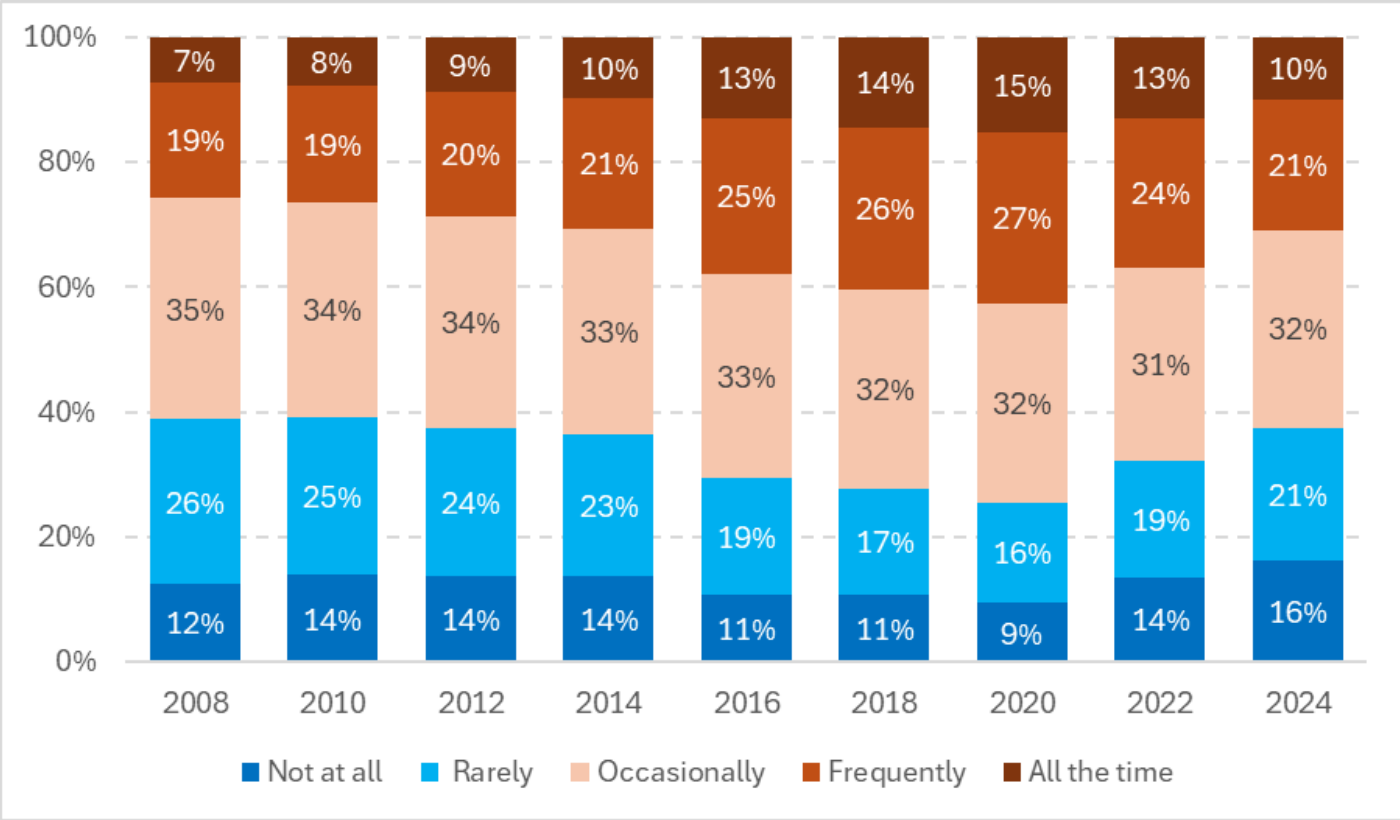
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Student Mental Health

During this academic year, how often has each of the following been an obstacle to your schoolwork or academic success?

- Feeling depressed, stressed, or upset

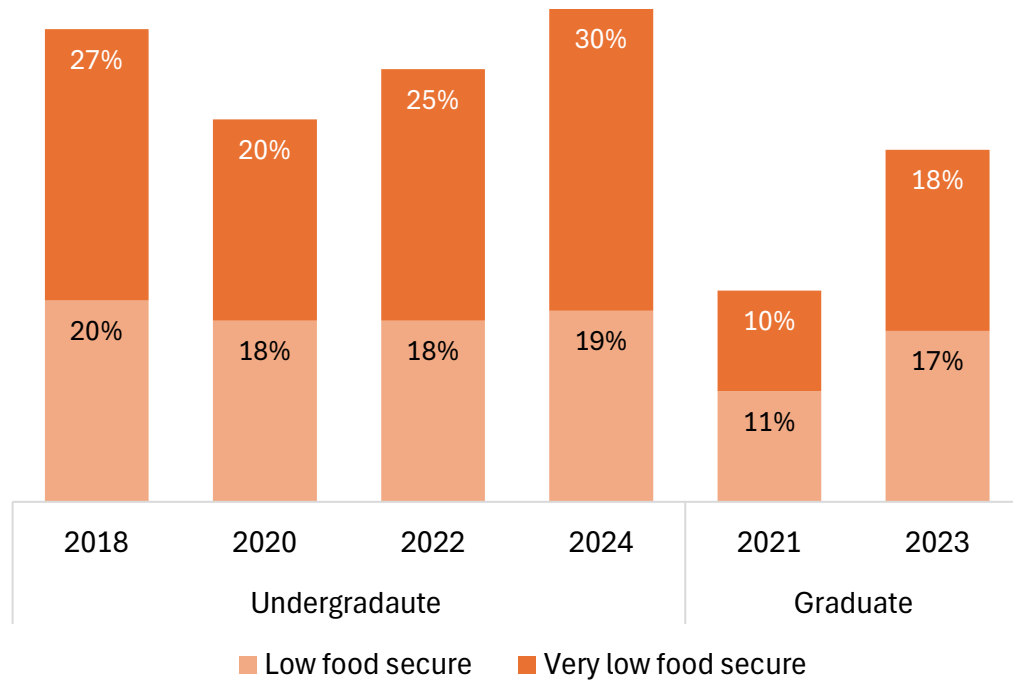


Among the obstacles included in the survey question, “Feeling depressed, stressed, or upset” is the significant obstacle to student schoolwork or academic success.

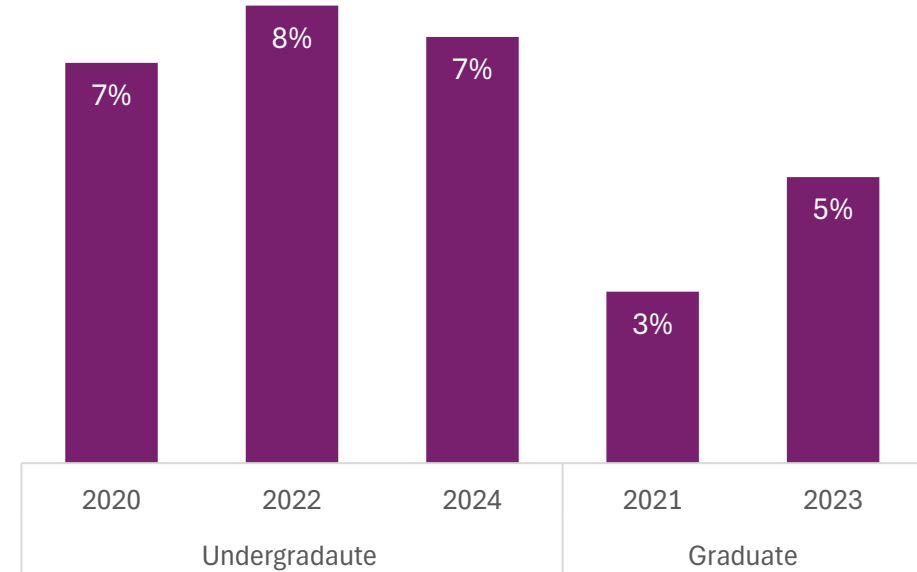
Students who at least occasionally felt depressed, stressed, or upset were significantly less likely to graduate on time than other students.

Basic Needs

Food insecure

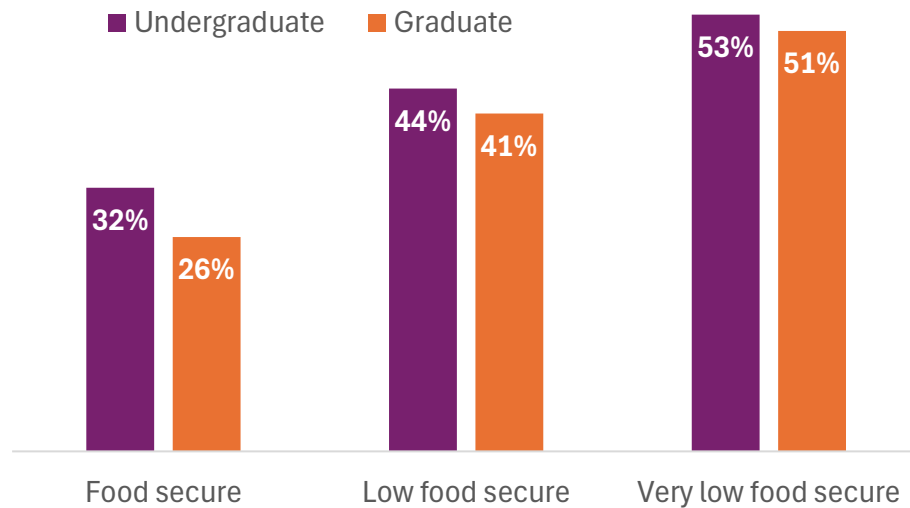


Housing insecure

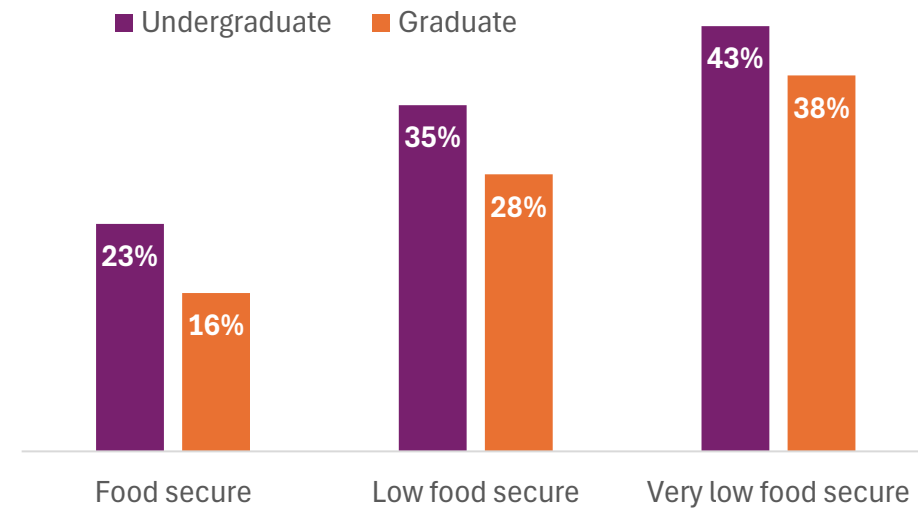


Students experiencing greater food insecurity are more likely to have an anxiety disorder and a depressive disorder

Food security and **anxiety disorder**

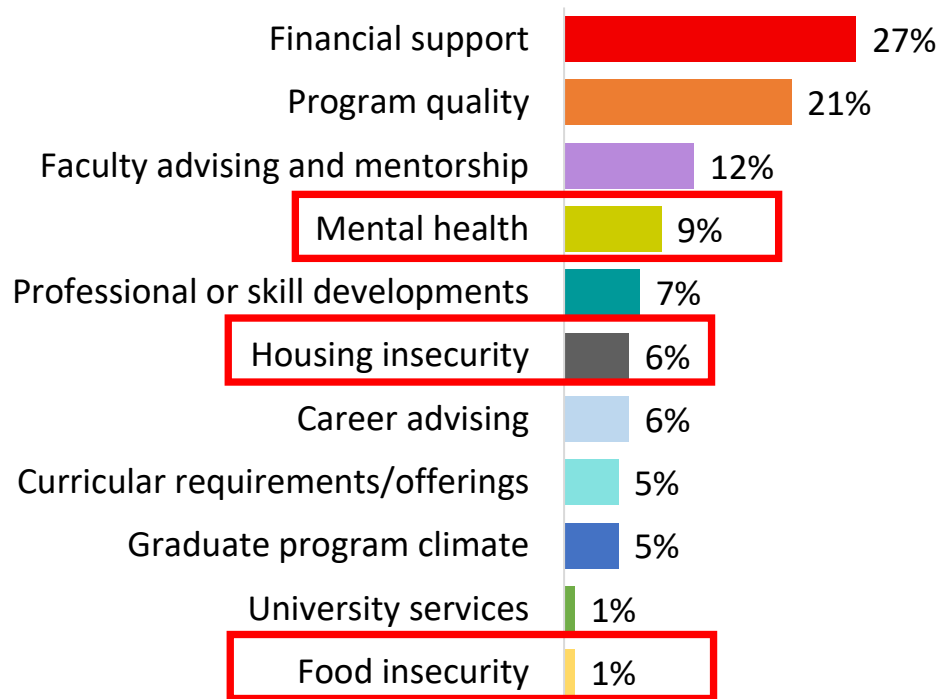


Food security and **depressive disorder**

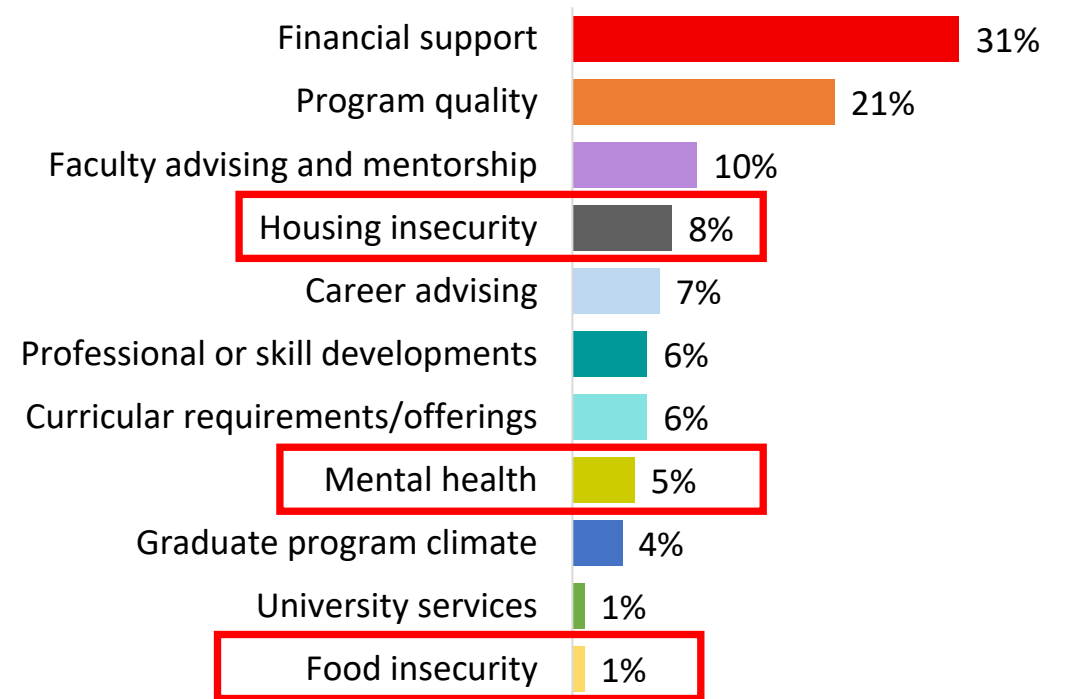


Top priorities identified by graduate and professional students

First priority 2021



First priority 2023



Who Are More Likely to Experience Mental Health Issues and Basic Needs Insecurity?

- Parenting students who live with children part time
- Nonbinary gender
- American Indian
- African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- First-generation college student
- Pell grant recipient/low income
- International (basic needs)
- Humanities
- Arts

Strategies for student mental health and basic needs improvement

- **Data collection, reporting, and analysis**

- Surveys, focus groups, basic needs services, administrative data, etc.
- Basic needs dashboard (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/student-basic-needs>)
- Student health and wellbeing dashboard (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/health-wellbeing-survey>)
- Annual report to the Regents on basic needs and progress towards basic needs goals
- Analytical support to the Systemwide Basic Needs Committee and Student Mental Health Oversight Committee for data driven strategies, budgeting, services, etc.

Strategies for student mental health and basic needs improvement

- **Funding and services**

- Increased mental health funding, including hiring more counselors, expanding crisis intervention services, etc.
- Five-year UC basic needs goals by 2025: reduce the proportion of students who reported to have experienced basic needs insecurity by 50 percent
- Creation of basic needs centers on all campuses, offering food pantries, meal vouchers, and assistance with housing and financial needs
- Increased investment in affordable housing for students
- Implemented systemwide campaigns to increase CalFresh enrollment among eligible students

Additional information about UC surveys

- [IRAP survey services website](#): IRAP's Survey Services can assist units across UCOP and the campuses that participate in UC systemwide surveys to UC students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This website provides information about all surveys IRAP administered in past 20 years and administers periodically now.
- [UCUES data dashboards](#): a landing page with a list of dashboards that present response counts and percentages for most survey questions
- [UCGSES data tables dashboard](#): a landing page with a list of dashboards that present response counts and percentages for most survey questions
- [Basic needs dashboard](#): results from undergraduate and graduate surveys on food and housing insecurity
- [UC Global Food Initiative](#): information about UC Global Food Initiative
- [Global Food Initiative: Food and Housing Security at the University of California](#)
- [Graduate and professional student advising at the University of California](#)
- [Graduate and professional students' financial support experience at the University of California](#)