

The **Personal well-being** quadrant includes outcomes that demonstrate personal or individual value not defined in financial terms, such as expanded opportunities, job security, satisfaction with one’s career, and social networks. Learning outcomes such as 21st century skills, critical thinking, collaboration, written communication, and information literacy can promote well-being outcomes and improve decision making. All of these aspects affect life satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, and health. This brief recognizes that personal income is related to many of these aspects of personal well-being, however, studies show that once a “subsistence level” of income is met, education continues to correlate with well-being while income does not¹ ().

Job security & expanded opportunities

A primary goal of college and university education, in contrast to technical school education, is to empower students with a wide range of skills that are applicable to a variety of fields. These skills can enable degree earners to

pursue careers in different fields because they are not content specific. College education can therefore enhance job security.

UC Personal well-being value highlights:

- Job security increases with educational attainment (both pre- and post-COVID-19) and is highest for doctoral/professional degree earners.
- UC seniors reported increases in 21st century skills for work, life and citizenship; with the greatest gains in critical thinking, information literacy, oral communication skills, and the ability to understand international perspectives.
- UC seniors reported enhanced understand of differences/issues related to gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class from when they started UC.
- 60 percent of UC seniors reported increases in leadership skills from when they started UC.
- College degree earners are more likely to source of health information from written sources, rather than television or radio.
- College degree earners marry at higher rates, reported higher life satisfaction and more favorable health outcomes.

In January 2020, unemployment rates were almost twice as high for high school graduates also college graduates, 3.8 percent versus 2.0

¹ Camfield & Skevington (2008) On Subjective Well-being and Quality of Life.

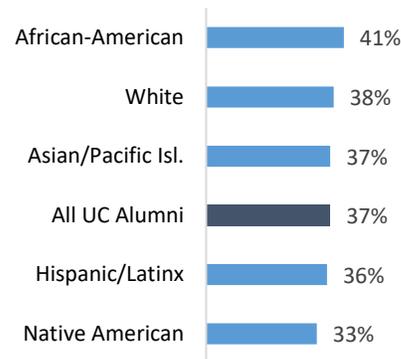
percent.² By June 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted this disparity, 12 percent of high school graduates were employed compared with 7 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or higher.³

A graduate degree provides even more job security than a bachelor's degree alone. Four percent of those with a professional degree or doctoral degree were unemployed compared with twelve percent of high school graduates and eight percent of bachelor's degree holders. Only one percent of professional/doctoral degree recipients were unemployed before the COVID-19 pandemic.

UC graduates are likely to pursue graduate degrees. 37 percent of UC undergraduates wish to pursue a graduate degree after graduation⁴. [Data](#) from the national student clearinghouse (NSC) show that UC undergraduate education prepares students to go to [graduate school and complete graduate degrees](#).

Almost 40 percent of UC undergraduate alumni earn graduate degrees within fifteen years of graduating UC⁵. The majority, 54 percent of graduate degree earners, complete a Master's degree, including academic and professional master's, sixteen percent complete a health science professional degree, eleven percent a law degree, and eleven percent complete an MBA. About eleven percent complete an academic doctorate.

Figure 1. Percentage of UC undergraduate alumni completing graduate degrees as of spring 2020, 2000-2012 Graduating Cohorts



UC African-American alumni are the most likely to complete a graduate degree (41 percent), followed by white (38 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander alumni (37 percent). Native American students are the least likely to complete a graduate degree (33 percent).

While the majority of UC undergraduates choose to enter the workforce directly without pursuing a graduate degree, a significant share continues on to graduate school to expand their knowledge and skillset toward a more specialized area of expertise. Given the academic qualifications and research experience required for admission to most graduate programs, this speaks to the quality of the educational preparation that UC provides.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2020) Unemployment rate 2.0 percent for college grads, 3.8 percent for high school grads in January 2020.

³ FRED Economic Data (2020), Unemployment rate by educational attainment and age, monthly, not seasonally adjusted: 25 years and over,

⁴ University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (2016) Data Tables

⁵ University of California (2018) Graduate Degree Aspirations and Outcomes of UC Students, https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/_files/UC-student-graduate-school-aspirations-outcomes.pdf

Job satisfaction

Nationally, college degree holders have slightly higher job satisfaction than high school graduates: 92 percent of those with a college degree or higher are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their jobs versus 87 percent of high school graduates.

UC does not have access to undergraduate alumni career satisfaction data, however these data exist for PhD alumni. UC PhD alumni reported high levels of job satisfaction: according to the 2017 Survey of Doctorate Recipients, 88 percent of UC PhD alumni reported that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their job (see figure 2). Job satisfaction increases as alumni progress further along in their careers. 92 percent⁶ reported that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their job compared to 84 percent of recent UC PhD alumni.

Job satisfaction for UC PhD alumni also varies by job sector. A greater proportion of UC PhD alumni working in the private sector (90 percent) reported that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their job compared to UC PhD alumni working in colleges and universities (86 percent). In addition, when compared to PhD alumni at other colleges and universities, UC PhD alumni reported similar levels of job satisfaction (see figure 3).

Figure 2. Job satisfaction of PhD alumni by institution type and graduation year, working in colleges and universities

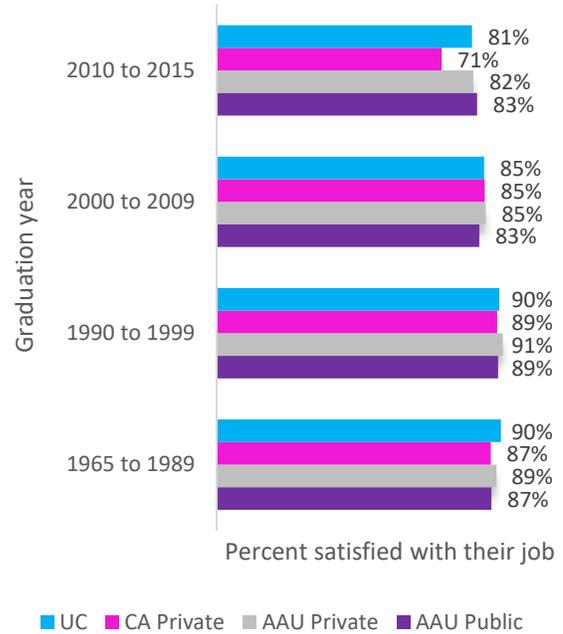
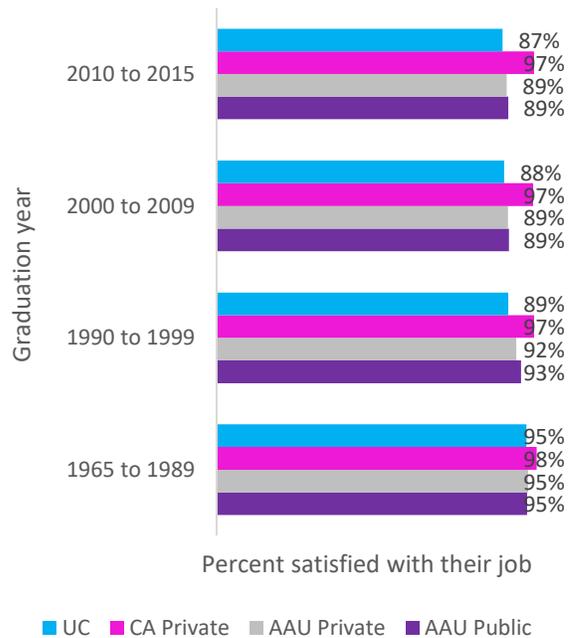


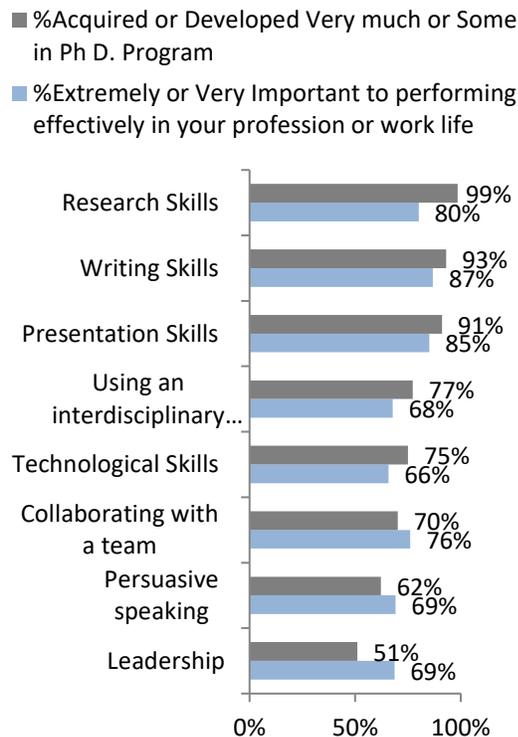
Figure 3. Job satisfaction and PhD alumni by institution type and graduation year, working in the private sector



⁶ Ph. D. Alumni who graduated between 1965 and 1999

In addition to job satisfaction, UC PhD alumni were also asked about the kinds of skills they acquired in their program at UC and how that aligned with workforce needs. Figure 4 shows that skills in research, writing, presentation, and technology were extremely or very important to performing effectively in the workplace and that UC prepared them very much or some in these areas. UC PhD alumni also said collaborating with a team, persuasive speaking, and leadership skills were important to performing effectively in the workplace, though their programs prepared them to a lesser extent in these skill areas. Data like these might be helpful for academic programs to understand areas that could be strengthened in curriculum planning.

Figure 4. UC PhD alumni skills alignment with workforce needs, University of California PhD Alumni Survey



Networking

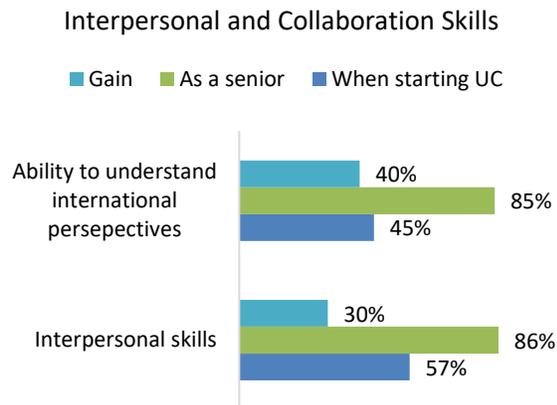
A 2016 LinkedIn [survey](#) showed 85 percent of all jobs are found through networking. In the UC PhD Alumni Survey, 60 percent of UC PhD alumni reported acquiring or developing networking and relationship building skills while at UC, and 70 percent reported this being extremely or very important to performing effectively in their work life and profession.

Interaction with coworkers while on the job may be related to educational attainment. According to the 2016 General Social Survey, when asked if coworkers took a personal interest in them, 90 percent of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher reported that this was true, versus 86 percent of high school graduates and 76 percent of those with less than a high school diploma.

Interpersonal skills & collaboration

UC seniors were asked about their perceived levels of interpersonal skill growth on UCUES. 86 percent of seniors rated their interpersonal skills as good, very good, or excellent compared with 57 percent when they started UC (see figure 5). Perceived gains in understanding international perspectives were even higher: seniors reported a 40 percentage point increase in developing these perspectives while at UC.

Figure 5. Percentage of UC seniors who rated interpersonal and collaboration skills as good, very good, or excellent, UCUES, 2018



When considering demographics, Latinx and first-generation students reported the greatest gains, followed by Pell grant recipients and Asian-American students, while African American and white students reported the lowest gain, but all were greater than 30 percentage point increases.

Additionally, 77 percent of UC PhD alumni reported acquiring skills to interact with other from different backgrounds while at UC, and 75 percent reported this being extremely or very important to performing effectively in their work.

Both enhanced interpersonal skills and understanding diverse perspectives can aid in collaboration. Collaboration is one of a group of 21st century skills⁷ that have been identified as essential for work, life, and citizenship.

Furthermore, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Senior College and

University Commission (WSCUC) advances 21st century skill development through its "Core Competencies" which include written and oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) also identifies written and oral communication, critical thinking, and information literacy as important skills for the workforce as well as the competencies of: leadership, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethics, and career management.

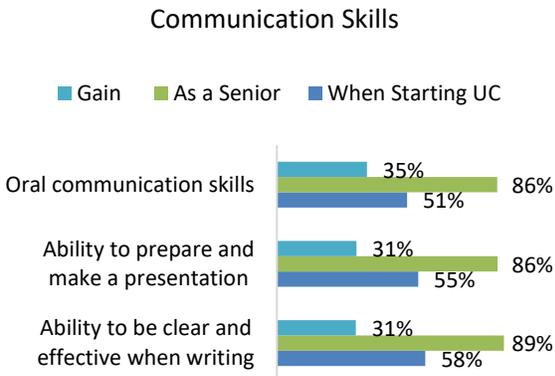
UCUES offers indirect measures of written and oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and leadership skills by asking about perceived gains in skill development. Seniors are asked about their perceived level of skill in each of these areas compared to when they started at UC. The next section discusses student-perceived gains in these 21st century skills.

Communication skills

UC seniors reported increases in communication skills over their time at UC (see figure 6). 86 percent of UC seniors reported their oral communication skills and ability to prepare and make a presentation were good, very good, or excellent compared with only 51 and 55 percent their freshman year, respectively.

⁷ Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21)

Figure 6. Percentage of UC seniors who rated communication skills as good, very good, or excellent, UCUES, 2018



Additionally, 89 percent of UC seniors reported their written communication skills were good, very good, or excellent compared with only 58 percent their freshman year.

Leadership, critical thinking and information literacy

Higher education advocates often cite leadership skills, critical thinking, and information literacy as some of the benefits to education beyond high school. Colleges may claim to offer experiences in which these skills can be cultivated or refined. Leadership skills are helpful to the individual as they can bring promotional opportunities or simply aid in navigating the world. Whereas critical thinking and information literacy enable one to evaluate information and use it to make personal decisions related to health and well-being, finances, and civic matters.

⁸ Birkenholz, R. J., & Schumacher, L. G. (1994). Leadership skills of college of agriculture graduates.

The next section shows UC student perceptions of leadership, critical thinking, and information literacy skills development.

Leadership skills

Leadership skills can be a source of self-worth and personal well-being in professional life. Undergraduate education is a crucial platform to nurture leadership skills. Co-curricular college activities, such as being part of a departmental club, social fraternities, sororities, student government, professional clubs, and organizations, were significant indicators of perceived leadership abilities⁸. Undergraduate students are often motivated to participate in a leadership learning community based on the need for achievement and the need for affiliation⁹.

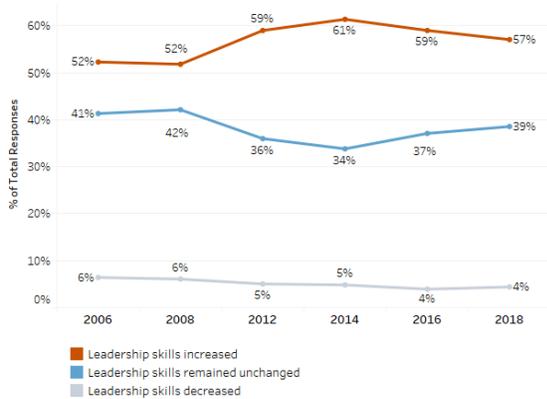
To understand how a UC degree contributes to developing leadership skills, responses to UCUES questions on leadership skills were analyzed. Respondents rated themselves on the scale: Very poor (1); Poor (2); Fair (3); Good (4); Very good (5); Excellent (6). When seniors reported their current leadership skills proficiency as higher than that when they started UC, it is treated as an increase in perceived leadership skills.

About 60 percent of UC undergraduate seniors reported an increase in their leadership skills while at UC. This trend saw a slight increase between 2008 to 2012 (see figure 7), potentially due to the revised curriculum and the expanded

⁹ Moore, L. L., Grabsch, D. K., & Rotter, C. (2010). Using achievement motivation theory to explain student participation in a residential leadership learning community.

spectrum of leadership development opportunities for UC undergraduate students.

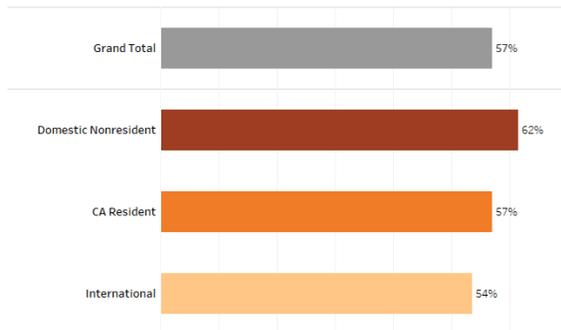
Figure 7. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, UCUES 2006 to 2018



By demographics

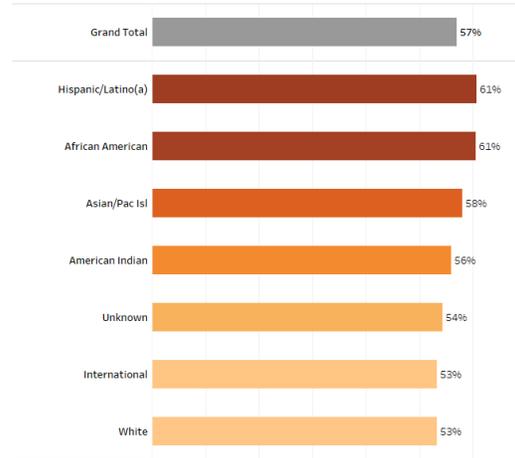
Domestic students were slightly more likely to report leadership increases compared to their international classmates.

Figure 8. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, by residency, UCUES 2018



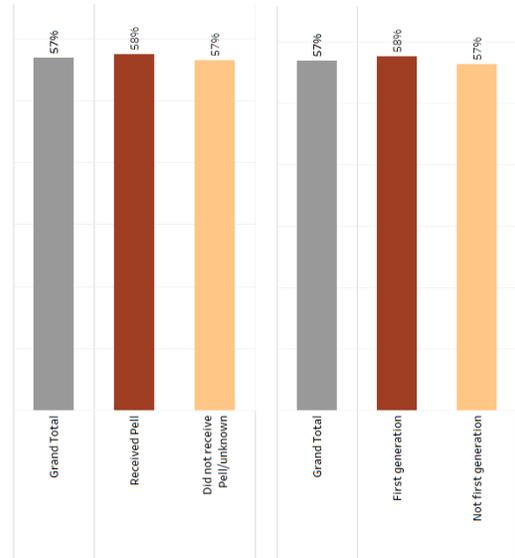
Students from underrepresented groups report greater gains in leadership skills from when they started at UC.

Figure 9. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, by race/ethnicity, UCUES 2018



Pell recipient and first-generation college students reported similar gains in leadership skills to their non-Pell and non-first-generation counterparts (58 versus 57 percent, respectively)

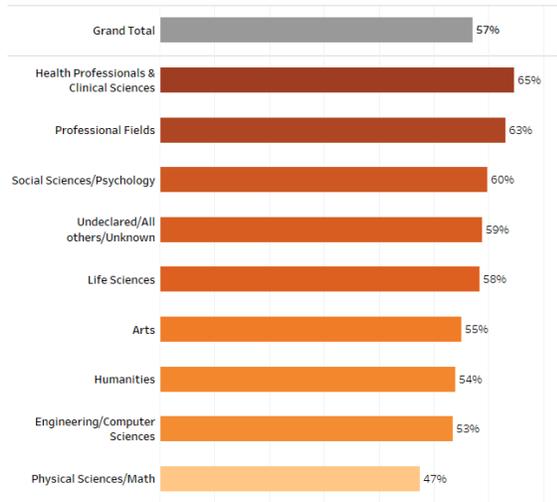
Figure 10. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, by Pell grant and first-generation status, UCUES 2018



By Program

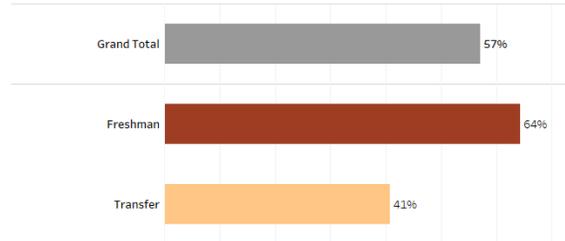
Students majoring in health/clinical sciences, professional fields, and social sciences reported more leadership skills increases. Whereas physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, and humanities majors show less frequent leadership skill increases.

Figure 11. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, by undergraduate discipline, UCUES 2018



More time spent with the UC educational experience equates to greater leadership skill gains: freshmen entrants are more likely to increase their leadership skills than transfer entrants.

Figure 12. Percentage of UC seniors who reported any increase in leadership skills, by entry type, UCUES, 2018



For all students who reported gains in leadership, over half (51 percent) participated in a research or creative project outside their regular course requirements, 48 percent worked as an officer in a student organization or club and learned what it means to be in a leadership role. About four out of every ten students participated in learning communities, while a third of them participated in service-learning or community-based learning experiences. These co-curricular experiences may be supporting UC student leadership experiences, in addition to classroom learning.

Figure 13. Co-curricular participation of seniors who reported increase in leadership skills, UCUES, 2018

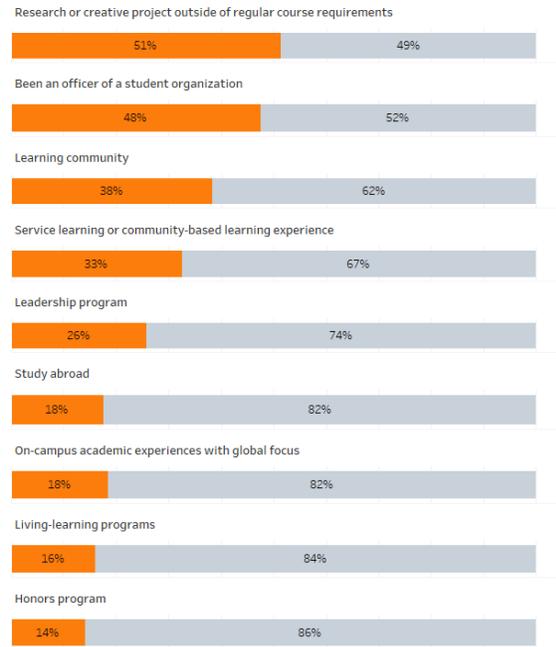
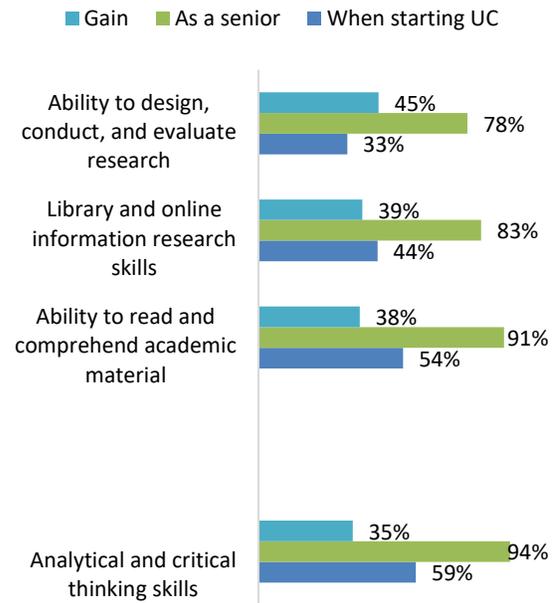


Figure 14. Percentage of UC seniors who rated critical thinking or information literacy skills as good, very good, or excellent, UCUES, 2018



Critical thinking, and information literacy

UC seniors reported significant gains in analytic and critical thinking while at UC; 94 percent of UC seniors reported their skills were good, very good, or excellent compared with only 59 percent during their freshman year¹⁰, a 35 percentage point difference.

UC seniors also reported significant increases in skills development of information literacy, particularly in the ability to design, conduct and evaluate research, a 45 percentage point difference for seniors reporting good, very good, or excellent compared with when they started UC. UC seniors also reported almost a 40 percentage point difference in the ability to comprehend and read academic material and to research information. All of these skills are important for information literacy and ultimately decision making.

When considering demographics, Latinx, Pell grant and first-generation students reported the greatest gains, followed by white, Asian-American and African-American students, who

¹⁰ University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (2018) Data Tables

reported the lowest gains in the ability to design, conduct and evaluate research, but all were greater than 33 percent point gains. Similarly, regarding the ability to research information online and in libraries, Latinx, Pell grant and first-generation students reported the greatest gains, followed by African-American, White and Asian-American students, reported the lowest gains, but all were greater than 30 percentage point gains.

Finally, regarding the ability to read and comprehend academic material, Latinx, Pell grant and first-generation students reported the greatest gains, followed by Asian-American, African-American and white students, who reported the lowest gains, but all were greater than 27 percentage point. The same pattern by race was found in the gains in analytic and critical thinking, but white students reported only a 21 percentage point gain compared to all other groups reporting at least a 30 percentage point gain in analytic and critical thinking skills.

The relationship of critical thinking and information literacy to health outcomes

Doyle (1992) defines an individual with information literacy as someone who:

- ▶ recognizes that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision making;
- ▶ recognizes the need for information;
- ▶ formulates questions based on information needs;
- ▶ identifies potential sources of information;

- ▶ develops successful search strategies;
- ▶ accesses sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies;
- ▶ evaluates information;
- ▶ organizes information for practical application.

Information literacy also has a relationship with life-long learning¹¹. Those with information literacy and life-long learning have been found to be better prepared for all kinds of changes and hardships their careers and personal lives may bring.

Information literacy and critical thinking help with decision making. For example, health literacy (information literacy related to health information) is defined by the U.S. Health Resources & Service administration as “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”¹² Studies have found that health literacy increases with education level and income. Sources of information to aid in decision making also vary by health literacy level and education levels.

This study found:

- ▶ Adults with below basic health literacy were less likely to get information about health issues from written sources, including newspapers, magazines, books or brochures, and the internet than adults with basic,

¹¹ Solmaz (2017) Relationship between Lifelong Learning Levels and Information Literacy in Teacher Candidates, Universal Journal of Educational Research 5(6)

intermediate, or proficient health literacy.

- ▶ A higher percentage of adults with below basic and basic health literacy received more information about health issues from radio and television than adults with intermediate and proficient health literacy.
- ▶ With each increasing level of health literacy, a higher percentage of adults got information about health issues from family members, friends, or coworkers.

Health Outcomes

Aside from skills and identity development, some evidence relates educational attainment to a lifestyle which could lead to better health. For example, one in five of high school graduates smoke daily, compared to one in twenty bachelor’s degree recipients. The life expectancy of a degree earner (bachelor’s or higher) is seven years longer than those who never attended college.¹³

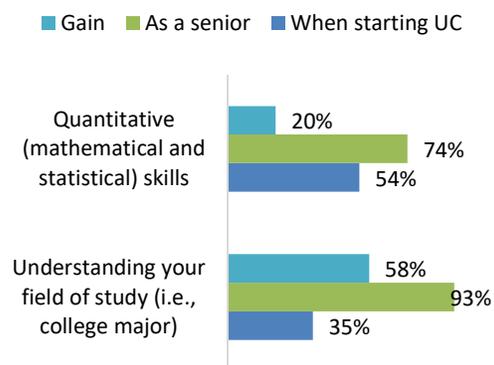
Other studies have found a strong positive relationship between educational attainment and eating fruits and vegetables, seat belt use, and preventative medical care¹⁴. One study¹⁵ found that while high income and high educational attainment households bought the most nutritious items for meals, the low income

and high educational attainment households purchased more items for nutritious meals than the high income and low educational attainment households. When one considers information literacy as a potential moderator for these outcomes, a relationship between healthier eating and educational attainment becomes more likely.

Field of study and quantitative reasoning

Studies show a positive impact of college on academic self-concept. However, there is some research that suggests negative impacts on self-concepts related to math ability, particularly for women¹⁶. Quantitative skills can be especially important for financial decision making after college.

Figure 15. Percentage of UC seniors who rated quantitative skills or understanding their field of study as good, very good, or excellent, UCUES, 2018



¹³ Trostel, P. A. (2015). It’s Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and to Society.

¹⁴ Cutler, D. M. & Lleras-Muney, A. (2010). Understanding differences in health behaviors by education

¹⁵ Hanbury, J., Rahkovsky, I. and Schnell, M. (2015) Is the Focus on Food Deserts Fruitless? Retail Access and Food Purchases Across the Socioeconomic Spectrum,

¹⁶ Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2016). *How College Affects Students: 21st Century Evidence that Higher Education Works.*

UC undergraduates reported a 58 percentage point gain in knowledge in their fields of study, however there was only a 20 percentage point gain for quantitative skills. Females rated themselves slightly lower than males, with an 18 percentage point gain compared to a 22 percentage point gain.

Psychosocial change

College engages students with a population that differs from their K-12 peers. Thus students may undergo psychosocial change: a change in self-concept through interactions with others and feedback that either confirms or disconfirms self-concepts. Psychosocial change represents one aspect of personal growth. Several aspects of psychosocial change in college have been studied, such as identity development (racial and ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious, and spiritual). There is some evidence that students rely less on external authorities, have an enhanced internal locus of control, and exhibit increased autonomy.

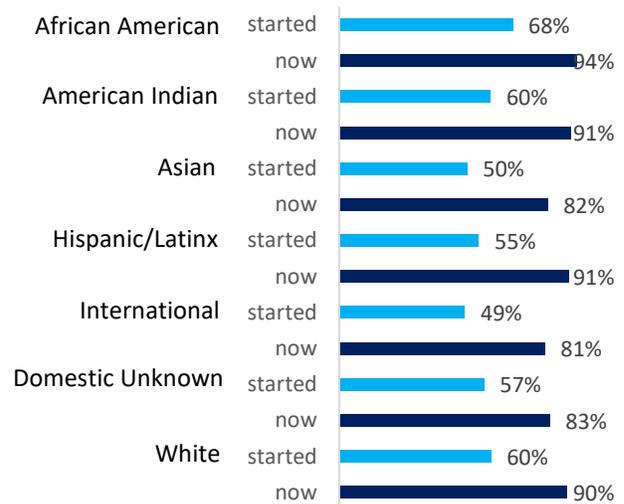
Racial and ethnic identity development

Previous studies suggest limited evidence that college aids racial and ethnic identity development. Although there is limited evidence, there are studies that suggest that some students experience changes in racial and ethnic identity over time during college that are associated with students’ exposure to certain experiences in college. More specifically, exposure to diversity, intergroup dialogue, support and validation, and population-specific

organizations, have positive effects on racial and ethnic identity development¹⁷

UC seniors reported that their level of awareness and understanding of their own racial and ethnic identity increased from when they started at UC; 64 percent reported that their level of awareness and understanding was good, very good, or excellent when they started at UC versus 83 percent as seniors. When examining this information by race/ethnicity (see figure 16), percent growth ranged from 26 percent (African American and Domestic Unknown) to 36 percent (Hispanic/Latinx).

Figure 16. Percent of UC seniors reporting their level of awareness and understanding of their racial and ethnic identity is good, very good, or excellent, UCUES, 2018



Awareness and understanding of social issues

While at UC, undergraduates’ perceived level of awareness and understanding of social issues increases.

¹⁷ Farrington, C.A. (2019). *Noncognitive outcomes of liberal arts education*.

UC undergraduates students were asked to reflect on when they started at UC and at the time of taking the survey and rate their awareness and understanding of a range of issues related to gender, learning or psychological disabilities, their own racial and ethnic identity, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class.

Figure 17. Percent of UC seniors reporting their level of awareness and understanding of social issues is good, very good, or excellent, UCUES 2018

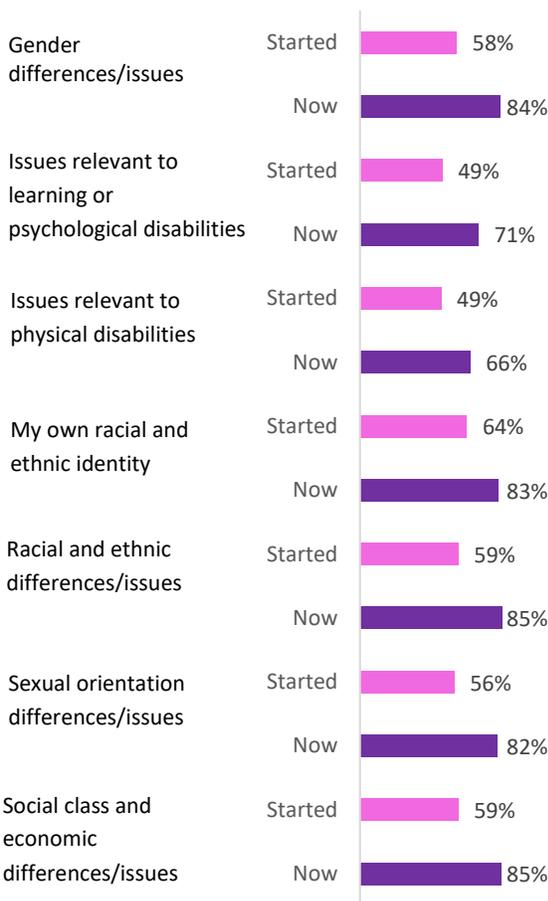


Figure 17 shows that UC senior perceived that their level of awareness and understanding on

these issues increased from when they started at UC to when they were seniors. Percent growth differences ranged from 17 percentage points (issues relevant to learning or psychological disabilities) to 26 percentage points (differences/issues related to gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class).

Happiness & life satisfaction

Evidence suggests that having a higher salary leads to better living conditions and better health care, which can contribute to less stress and higher reported levels of happiness. In 2012, Americans with bachelor’s degrees (and without graduate degrees) earned \$32K (134 percent) more than high school graduates who never attended college¹⁸. UC bachelor’s degree earners also earn more than their non-UC college graduate counterparts. Preliminary analysis linking 1970s graduates of two UC campuses to their near end-of career (in their late-50s) earnings in California show median earnings of \$97K (Berkeley) and \$82K (Santa Cruz), in 2018 dollars. These wages significantly exceed the nationwide median earnings of \$75K among college graduates in the same age cohort, as measured by the 2017 American Community Survey.

However, salaries alone do not tell the whole story. In fact, evidence suggests that people view wealth in relative terms— e.g. when people get richer but do so along with the people around them, they do not necessarily view their situation as inherently better and therefore are not necessarily happier. For this

¹⁸ Trostel, P. A. (2015). It’s Not Just the Money: The Benefits of College Education to Individuals and to Society

reason, researchers have tried to disentangle wealth and income from measures of happiness. They endeavor to determine if the fact that college graduates are higher earners, as shown above, makes them happier when compared to those whose education ends at the high school level or before, or if there is more to the story.

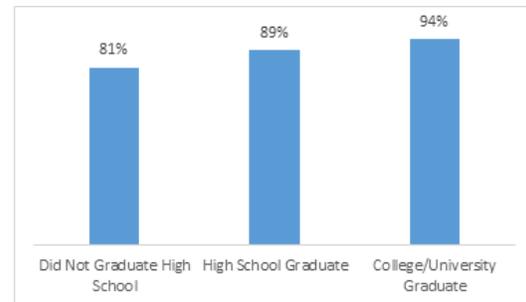
One such study utilized General Social Survey's data from 1972 to 2000 and found that high school graduates with no additional schooling reported being happy eight percentage points more often than high school drop outs (see figure 18). College graduates reported being happy five percentage points more often than high school graduates.¹⁹

Controlling for income, the strength of the relationship between education and happiness weakens, but is still apparent: high school graduates reported being happy four percentage points more often than high school dropouts, and college graduates reported being about two percentage points happier than high school graduates (see figure 18).²⁰

Another study asked the question, "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days: would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy or not too happy?" (Blanchflower, 2011).²¹ Using this approach, they found that years of schooling had a strong positive effect on levels of happiness/life satisfaction—the more educated people were, the higher the happiness score. Each year of education in the

United States resulted in 0.017 more happiness points, which means that the difference between completing high school and completing a college degree was slightly greater than 0.06 happiness points²²

Figure 18. Percentage happy by educational attainment



There is compelling and growing evidence that college and university graduates are happier than their counterparts who end their studies with a high school diploma or before, even when accounting for differences in income.

Marriage

College degree earners are more likely to marry, and data also show married people tend be happier than non-married people. Roughly half of U.S. adults today are married. This number has remained fairly constant over the years but is down nine percentage points from the peak in 1960 of 72 percent.²³ This decline is, in part, due to the fact that Americans are getting married later in life. Some of this decline is also because more Americans are living with a

¹⁹ Oreopoulos, & Salvanes, K.G. (2011). *Priceless: The Nonpecuniary Benefits of Schooling*. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25 (1): 159-84.

²⁰ (Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2011)

²¹ Researchers created a regression equation to measure the results by using as its dependent variable a cardinal version of

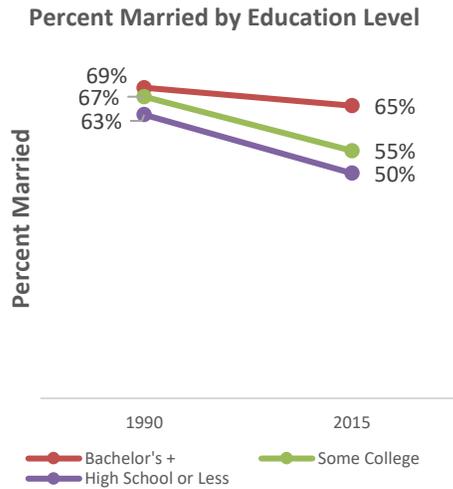
people's answers where "very happy" is coded 3, "pretty happy" is coded 2 and "not too happy" is coded 1.

²² Blanchflower, D. G. (2011). *International Happiness*,

²³ Parker, K. & Stepler, R. (2017) *As Us Marriage Rate Hovers at 50%, education gap in Marital Status Widens*

partner and raising children outside of marriage.

Figure 19. Percent Married by Education Level²⁴



Source: Pew Research Center Analysis 1990-2000 decennial censuses and the 2010 and 2015 American Community Surveys (IPUMS)²⁵

Figure 19 shows that bachelor’s degree recipients are more likely to marry than those with some college and the gap widens further when compared to those whose education stopped after high school. In 2015, among adults ages 25 and older, 65 percent with a four-year college or university degree were married, compared with 55 percent of those with some college education and 50 percent among those with no education after high school. The likelihood of getting married has decreased since 1990 regardless of educational level, however the sharpest declines are for those with a high school diploma or less.²⁶

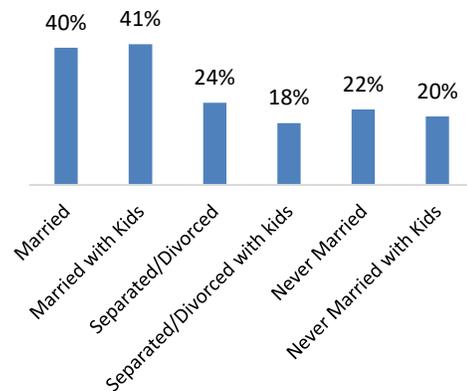
²⁴ (Parker & Stepler, 2017)

²⁵ Note: “Some college” includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree. Adults who are separated are not classified as married.

An analysis by the Pew Research Center also shows the education gap in marital status has continued to expand and that marriage rates are more closely linked to socio-economic status than any previous time.²⁷ Lower-income, never married adults are more likely to cite financial instability as a reason they are not married. In particular, non-married non-whites cite financial uncertainty as a primary reason for not marrying.

The link between income and marriage rates partially helps explain why college graduates are more likely to marry. As a consequence, combining of two incomes through marriage amplifies the disparity of income between college degree earners and those with a high school diploma or less education.

Figure 20. Percent ‘happy’ by Marital and Parenthood Status²⁸



Source: General Social Survey, 2010-2018

Figure 20 shows the relationship with marriage and happiness. Married people ages 18-50 are

²⁶ (Parker & Stepler, 2017)

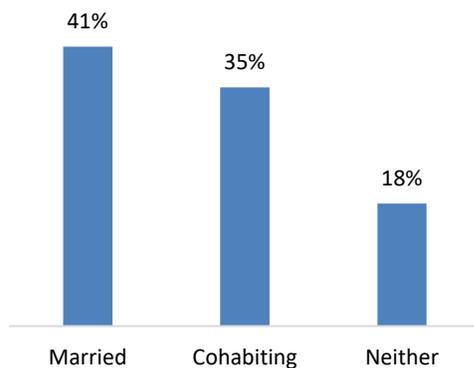
²⁷ (Parker & Stepler, 2017)

²⁸ Wofinger, N. (2019) Are Married People Still Happier?

report greater happiness than their non-married, separated/divorced and never married counterparts. Married people are also more likely to be happy than those in domestic partnerships and significantly happier than those who are not married or cohabitating (see figure 21).

New research shows that younger adults are more likely to have shared a home with a partner than a spouse. However, the same research also shows that cohabitation does not necessarily mean that those arrangements result in the same levels of happiness that comes with marriage (see figure 21).²⁹

Figure 21. Percent “very happy” by relationship status³⁰



Source: General Social Survey, 2010-2018

According to the same research, married and cohabitating couples give different reasons for why they chose their relationship. Married people are more likely to cite love and the desire to have children for their choice to get married while cohabitating partners cite practical reasons, such as convenience and finances for their living arrangements.³¹ Married couples are also more likely to express

happiness with the division of household chores, work/life balance and levels of communication within the relationship.³²

In summary, college graduates marry at higher rates than those who did not graduate college or university, which results in higher levels of happiness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, UC undergraduate education equips students with 21st century skills and prepares students for completing graduate degrees. UC graduates can expect higher levels of job security and job satisfaction than non-college degree earners. In turn, these long lasting benefits can lead to improved interpersonal relationships, informed health decisions, enhanced life satisfaction, and happiness.

Future research

While researching indicators of personal well-being by educational attainment, there were

“Measures of both objective and subjective well-being provide key information about people’s quality of life. Statistical offices should incorporate questions to capture people’s life, evaluations, hedonic experiences and priorities”

- Joseph Stiglitz while chairing the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress.

²⁹ Ingraham, C. (2019) Married people have happier, healthier relationships than unmarried couples who live together, data show.

³⁰ (Ingraham, 2019)

³¹ (Ingraham, 2019)

³² (Ingraham, 2019)

challenges to assessing UC graduate outcomes. Some data on job satisfaction and workforce skills needs were available for UC PhD alumni, however, data for undergraduate alumni were not. Additionally, while UCUES provided some data for students during their time at UC on 21st century skills and psychosocial change, information on undergraduate alumni 21st century skills acquisition and psychosocial change impact on employment outcomes was not available. An undergraduate alumni survey could help better understand how these skills transfer to the workplace post-graduation. Furthermore, data on UC alumni happiness, life satisfaction, and health outcomes were not available, but could be added as questions on both an undergraduate and graduate alumni survey.

Additionally administering an external assessment (rather than self-assessments) of these areas could be useful to better understand the impact of a UC degree. Metrics like these could be helpful in understanding the areas that UC programs help students develop and areas that programs could provide more focus on if necessary. There is also research underway to use external assessment of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and information literacy (civic reasoning) in UC Irvine's Next Generation Undergraduate Success Measurement Project, led by Dean Richard Arum and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

It is worth mentioning that even though there is not complete information on UC undergraduates or other college degree earners in these areas of personal well-being, there is even less data on people who did not go to

college. College students and alumni are more regularly asked about their state of well-being and personal development than high school graduates or high school non-completers. This is also an area to consider for potential research.

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