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Experience Survey. Every
student has a voice.

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ucues.berkeley.edu

UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)
UC Berkeley Office of Planning & Analysis

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Undergraduate Engagement, Satisfaction, and Challenges at the University of California:

Insights from UCUES Administration and Key Findings

Tongshan Chang Yang Yang

Institutional Research & Academic Planning

University of California Office of the President

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Topics

- An overview of UCUES Administration and Instrument Structure
- Uses of UCUES data
- Key findings of undergraduate engagement, satisfaction, and challenges
- A demonstration of UCUES dashboards

UCUES development and administration

Every student has a voice.

The Center for Studies in Higher Education at UCB and Institutional Research Offices at UCOP and campuses developed UCUES.

IR Office at UCOP took over UCUES administration from CSHE and continued to administer it once every other year.

2004

1998-2002

2012

UCUES was administered first time as a systemwide census online survey and once every other year since then by CSHE.

For more information: <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/services/survey-services/UCUES.html>, <https://www.seru.edu/about/history>

UCUES structure and major topics

Core Module (administered to all students)

- Satisfaction
- Academic Engagement
- Educational experience
- University climate
- Major evaluation
- Academic and personal development
- Student well-being
- Cost of attendance
- Plans and aspiration
- Personal characteristics

Module I

(administered to a proportion (33%-50%) of students)

- Satisfaction with campus culture
- Involvement in academic activities
- Time use
- Education experience & globalization
- Community service

Module II

(administered to a proportion (33%-50%) of students)

- Student life and development
- Academic and personal development
- Advising
- Aspirations

Campus Module

(administered to a proportion (33%-100%) of students)

- Topics campuses are interested in

Special Topics Module

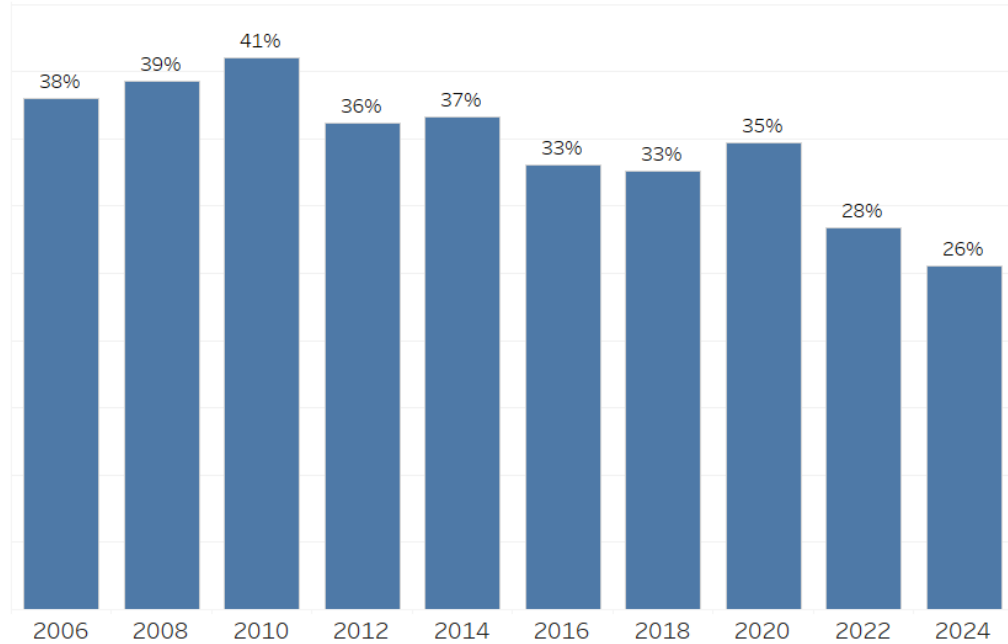
(administered to all students)

- Basic needs (food and housing security)
- COVID-19 questions
- Artificial intelligence questions
- Sexual misconduct

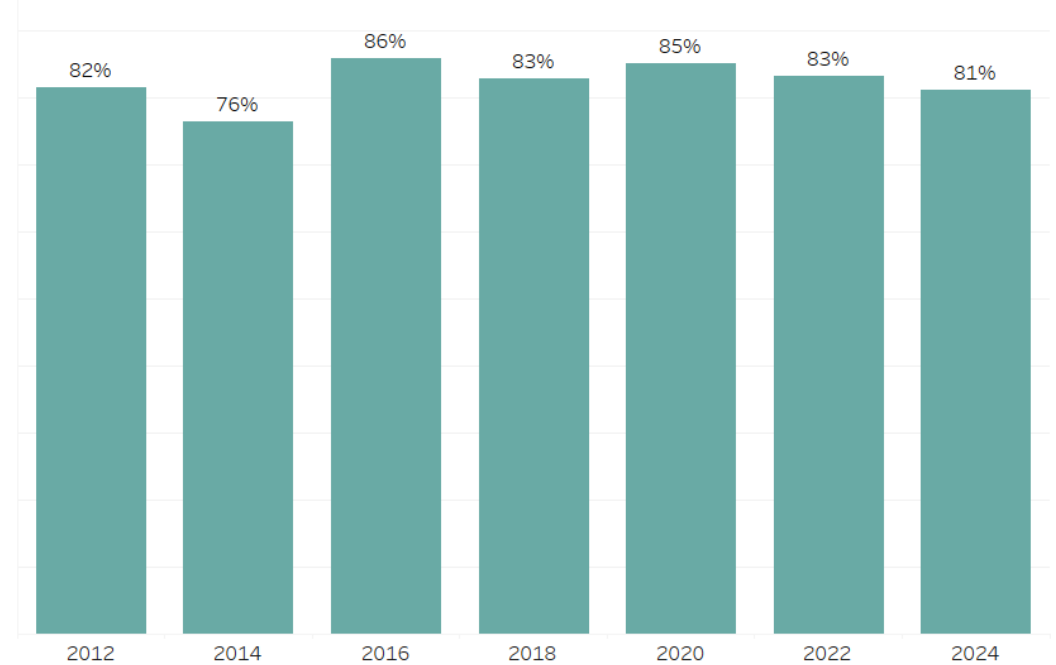
For more information: <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/services/survey-services/UCUES.html>

UCUES response rates

Response rates



Completion rates



- On average, UCUES response rates are much higher than those of similar surveys, e.g., NSSE and SERU (non-UC participating institutions.)
- By student characteristics, international students, male students, and seniors are less likely to respond to UCUES.
- Overall, respondents are fairly representative of student population.

For more information: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/student-survey-completion-and-response-rates>

Uses of UCUES data

11

Administrations
(2004-2024)

650,000
responses

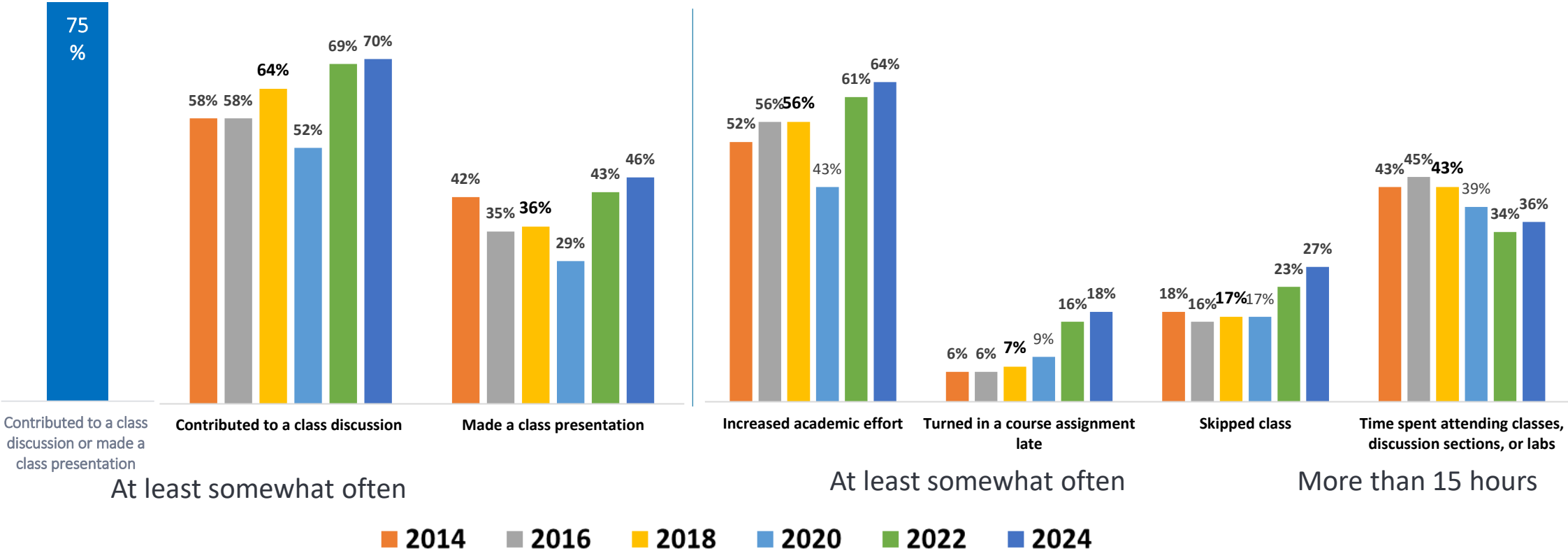
UCUES data has been used extensively to improve the undergraduate experience at UC.

- Public reports on student experiences, allowing UC constituents and the broader public to gain valuable insights into student engagement and success
- [Analyses](#) on student engagement, satisfaction, opportunities, and obstacles to academic work and campus life to enhance evidence-based decision making to improve student success and development
- [Reports](#) to the UC Board of Regents to support UC decision-making in various areas, e.g., planning for a multi-year framework, academic integrity, admissions, campus climate, etc.
- UC [Accountability Report](#)
- Assessment of progress toward to UC systemwide goals, e.g., the compact [goal](#) on career-relevant skills and [basic needs goals](#)
- Campus program review and WASC accreditation

Engagement in academic activities

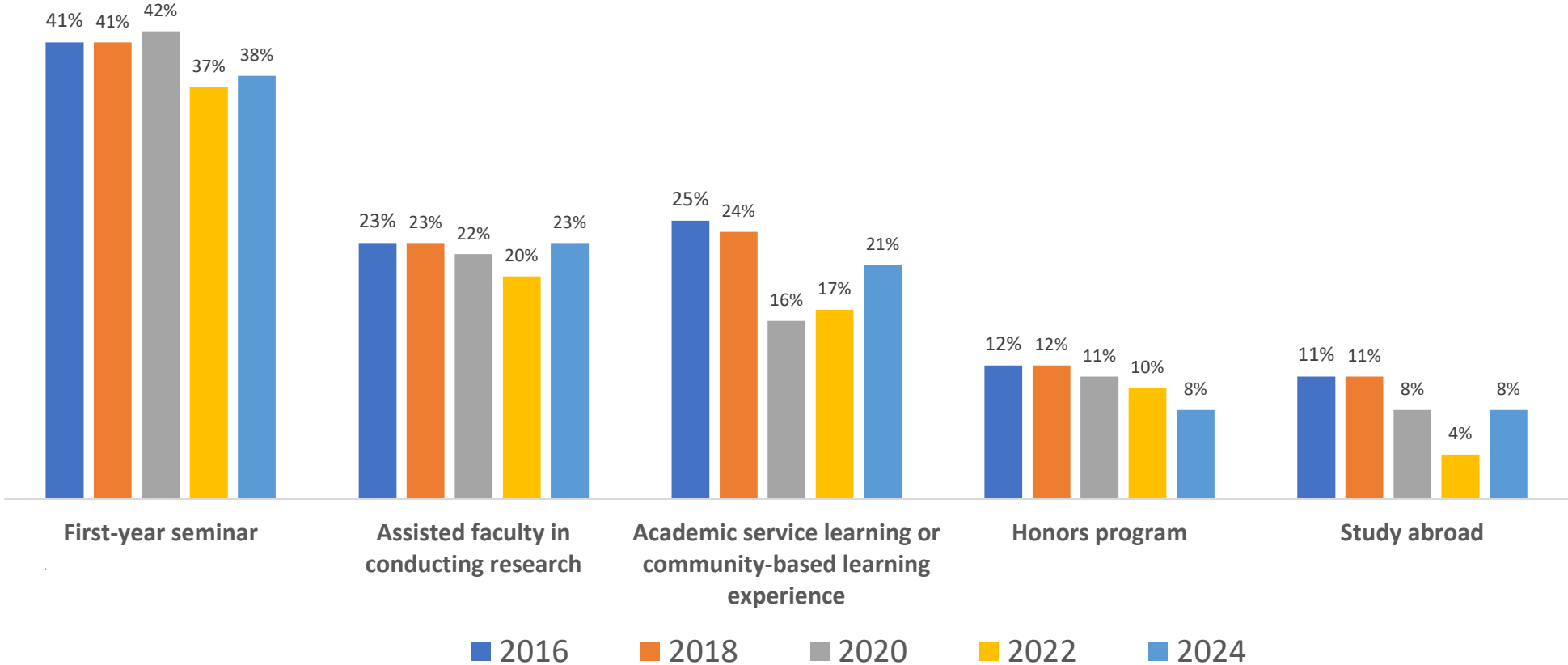
In 2024, 75% of respondents at least somewhat often contributed to a class discussion or made a class presentation.

In recent years, more than 60% of respondents increased academic effort, but students more likely turned in a course assignment late and skipped class, and spent less time attending classes, discussion sections, or labs.



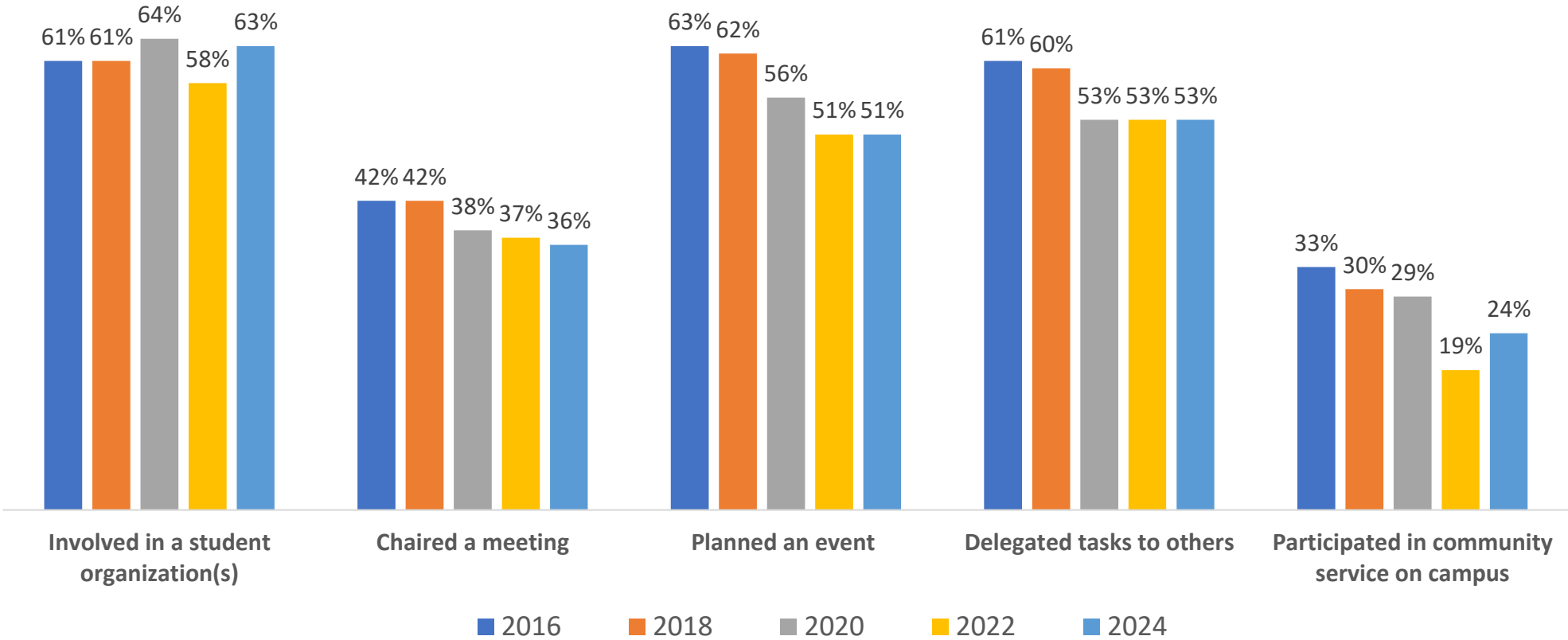
Engagement in academic activities

Respondents enhanced their academic knowledge and skills by participating in various academic activities.



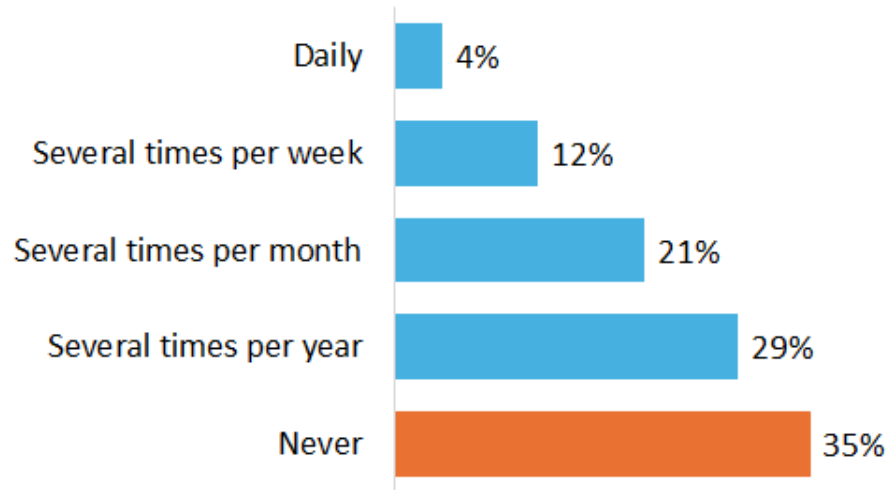
Engagement in co-curricular activities and community service

Many respondents were actively engaged in **various co-curricular activities** and **community service**.

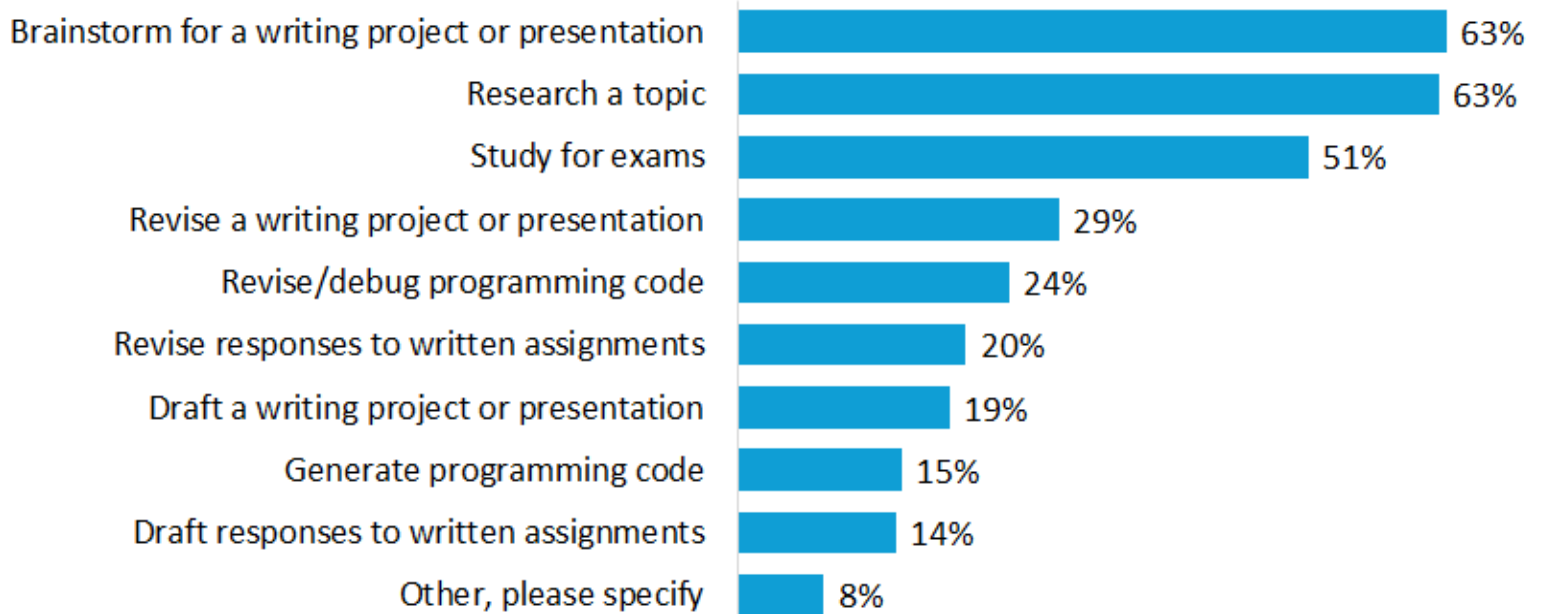


Uses of artificial intelligence tools

At least 65% of respondents had used AI tools.



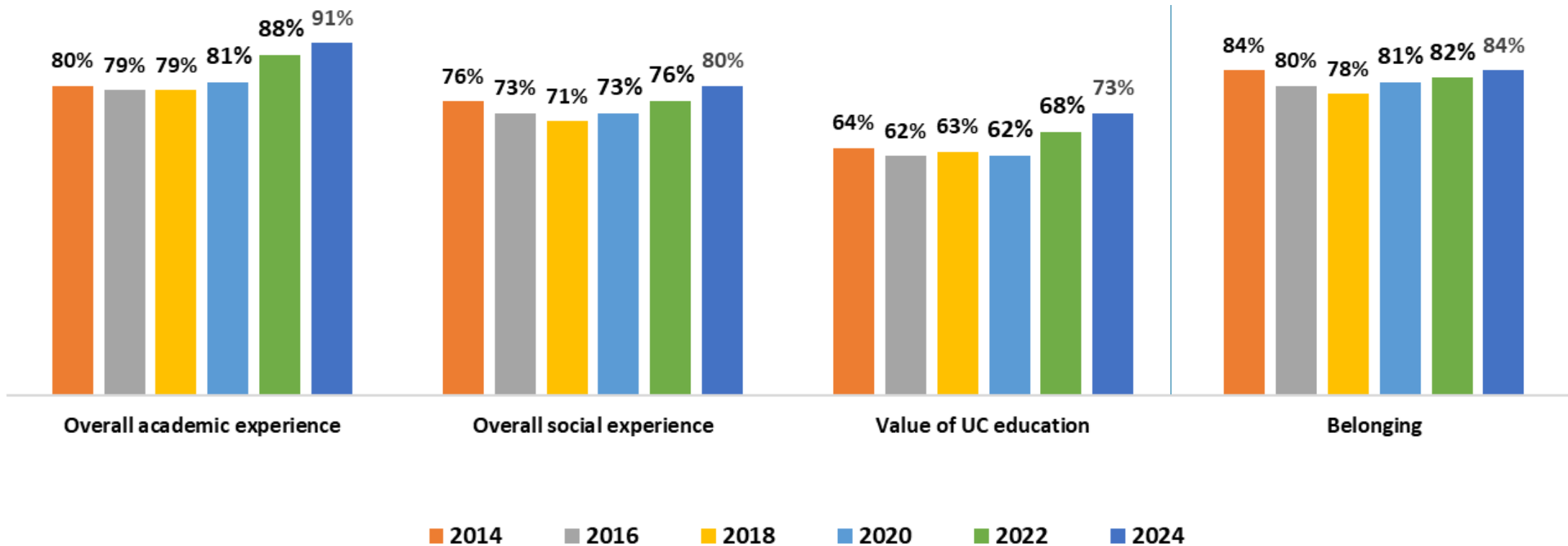
Students use AI tools in different ways to support their learning.



For more information: <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/ucues-ai-use.pdf>

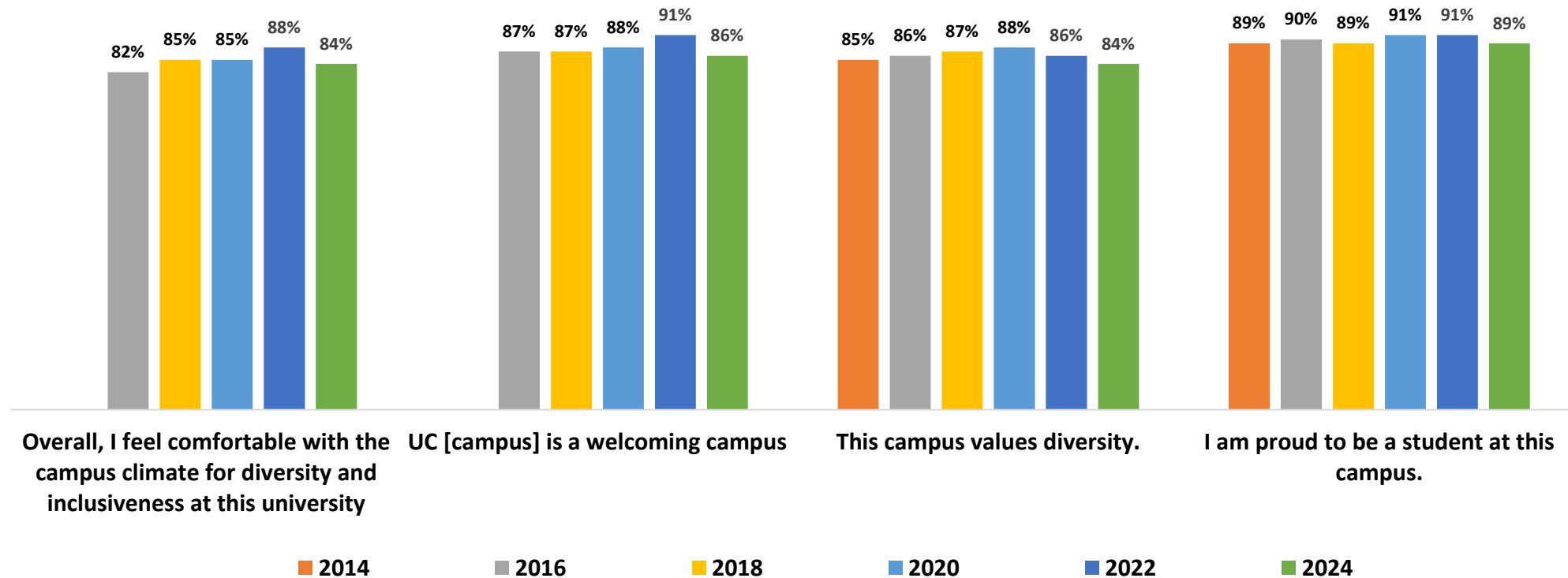
Satisfaction/sense of belonging at the campus

A large majority of respondents were **at least somewhat satisfied** with their academic and social experiences and **agreed** that they belonged at their campus.



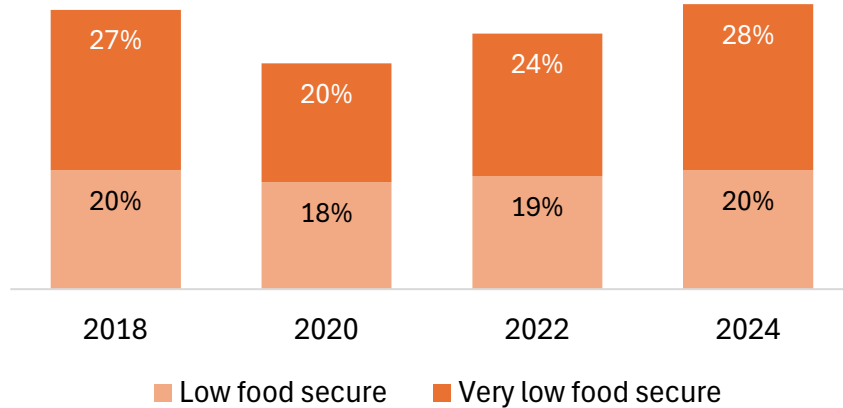
Satisfaction with campus climate

A large majority of respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with campus climate.

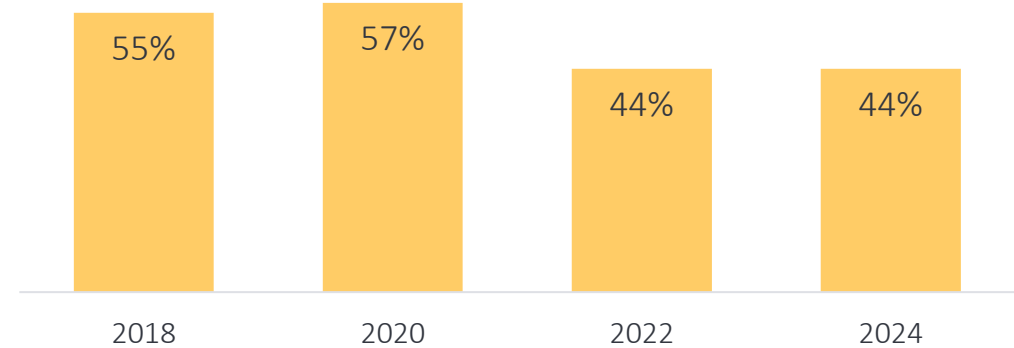


Challenges – basic needs insecurity, financial concerns, and mental health

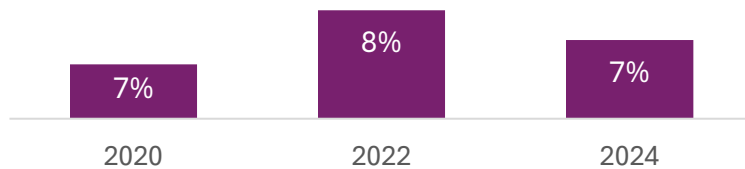
nearly 50% experienced **food insecurity** in recent years



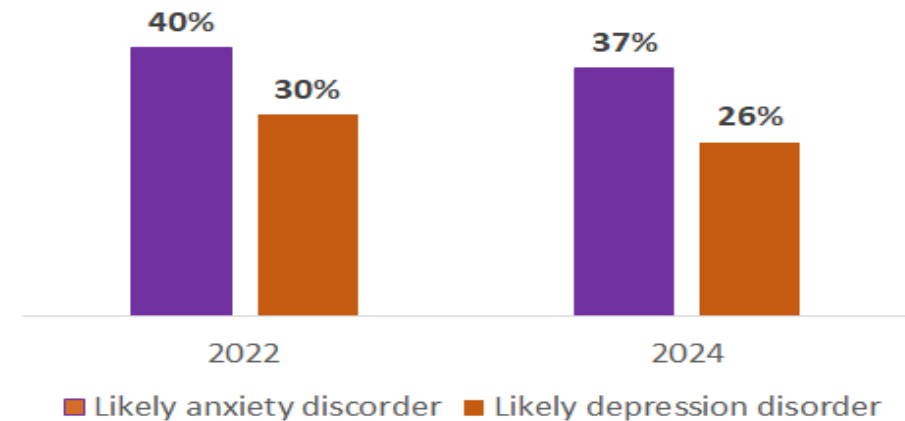
about 50% at least somewhat often worried about their **debt and financial circumstances**



about 7% experienced **housing insecurity**

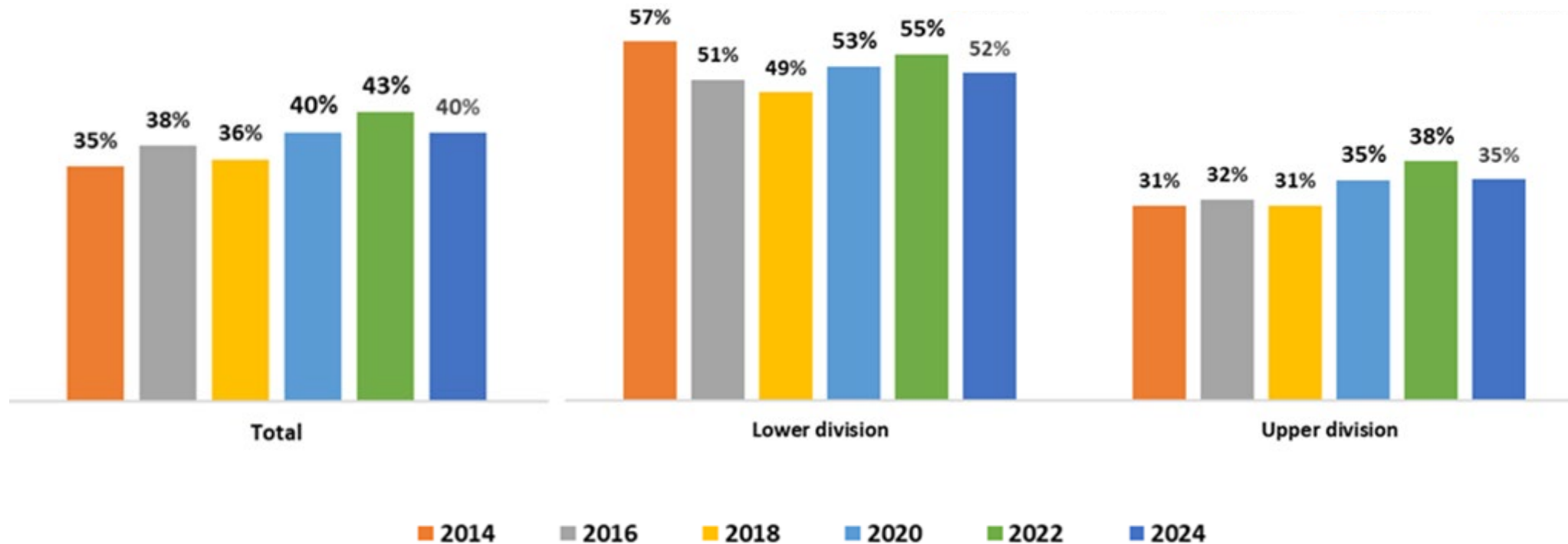


in 2024, 37% likely **anxiety disorder** and 26% likely **depression disorder**



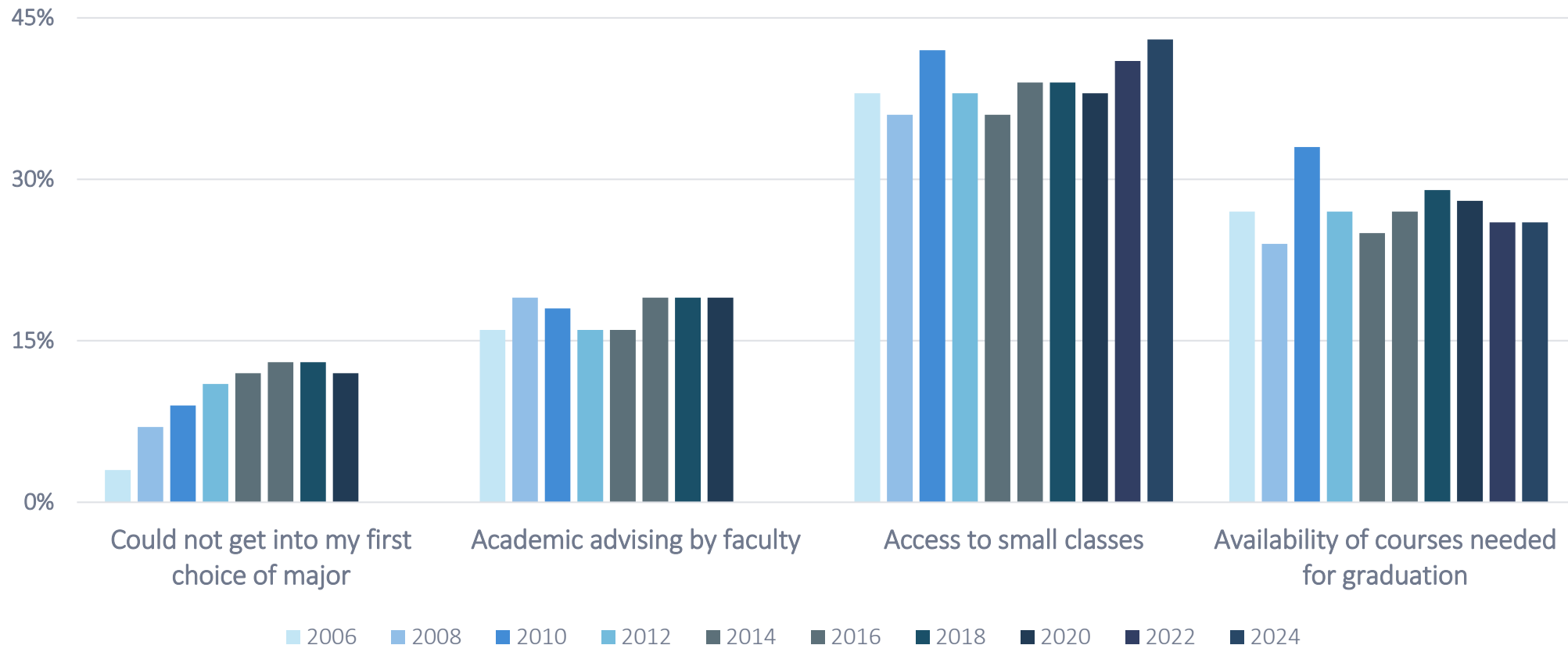
Challenges – Academic relation with faculty

Overall, about 40% of respondents said they **did NOT** know any faculty member well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation.



Challenges—getting into the first choice of major and dissatisfaction with advising and access to small classes and courses needed for graduation

Nearly 15% of respondents **could not get into their first choice of major**, and more than 15 % respondents were at least somewhat **dissatisfied with academic advising by faculty**, close to 45% with **access to small classes**, and about 30% with **availability of course needed for graduation**.



Challenges – obstacles to student school work or academic success

Many respondents reported that they at least frequently experienced various obstacles to their school work or academic success.

	2014	2018	2020	2022	2024
Feeling depressed, stressed, or upset	31%	40%	43%	37%	31%
Poor study behaviors	31%	30%	31%	32%	29%
Inability to concentrate on my work	25%	24%	29%	30%	27%
Job responsibilities (e.g., paid employment)	20%	22%	21%	19%	19%
Reluctance to ask for academic help when I need it	19%	18%	20%	20%	19%
Family responsibilities	21%	22%	21%	22%	19%
Inadequate study skills	18%	18%	19%	19%	18%
Poor study environment	22%	21%	22%	19%	16%
Weak math skills	10%	10%	9%	9%	10%
Physical illness or condition	8%	8%	7%	8%	9%
Going hungry, not having enough food		6%	4%	5%	5%
Weak English skills	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Inconsistent access to housing, or homelessness		3%	2%	3%	3%
Military deployment	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%

Demo of the UCUES website and data dashboards

UCUES website: <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/services/survey-services/UCUES.html>

UCUES data tables: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/ucues-data-tables-main>

UCUES longitudinal dashboard: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/ucues-longitudinal>



Thank you!