



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

James B. Milliken
President

March 31, 2026

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

universityofcalifornia.edu

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Senator Laird:

CAMPUSES

- Berkeley
- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- Merced
- Riverside
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Cruz

Pursuant to Section 66021.1(b) of the Education Code, enclosed is the University of California’s annual report to the Legislature on *Institutional Financial Aid Programs*.

If you have any questions regarding this report, Associate Vice President Cain Diaz would be pleased to speak with you. He can be reached by telephone at (510) 987-9350, or by e-mail at Cain.Diaz@ucop.edu.

Sincerely,

James B. Milliken
President

MEDICAL CENTERS

- Davis
- Irvine
- UCLA
- San Diego
- San Francisco

Enclosure

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

- Lawrence Berkeley
- Lawrence Livermore
- Los Alamos

- cc: Senate Budget and Fiscal Review
- The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, Chair
- Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #1
- (Attn: Mr. Diego Lopez)
- (Attn: Mr. Kirk Feely)
- The Honorable David A. Alvarez, Chair
- Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
- (Attn: Mr. Christian Griffith)
- (Attn: Mr. Tobias Wolken)
- Mr. Hans Hemann, Joint Legislative Budget Committee
- Ms. Jessica Holmes, Department of Finance
- Ms. Jessica Deitchman, Department of Finance
- Ms. Gabriela Chavez, Department of Finance
- Mr. Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst Office
- Ms. Jennifer Pacella, Legislative Analyst Office
- Ms. Florence Bouvet, Legislative Analyst’s Office
- Provost and Executive Vice President Katherine S. Newman
- Vice President and Vice Provost Yvette Gullatt
- Associate Vice Provost Cynthia Davalos

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Senior Vice President Meredith Turner
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Nathan Brostrom
Associate Vice President Cain Diaz
Associate Vice President and Director Kathleen Fullerton

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID
PROGRAMS

*Report to the Legislature
Pursuant to Education Code Section 66021.1*

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OVERVIEW

Legislative Text

Language in Section 66021.1 of the California Education Code directs the California State University and requests the University of California to report annually to the California State Legislature on their respective institutional financial aid programs. In the 2018 Budget Act (Assembly Bill 1809), these reporting requirements and the timeline for completing the report changed.

Additional information on financial aid expenditures, trends, and outcomes for undergraduate students, as well as information on graduate student financial support, will continue to be reported to the UC Board of Regents in the *Annual Report on Student Financial Support*. The latest can be found on the UC Office of the President's Enrollment Services web page at:

<https://www.ucop.edu/enrollment-services/data-and-reporting/reports-to-the-regents-on-student-financial-support/index.html>

Additional information about the University's financial aid programs, affordability, and social mobility may be found at the following locations:

- The University's *Budget for Current Operations*, which can be found at ucop.edu/operating-budget/budgets-and-reports/current-operations-budgets/index.html
- The UC Accountability Report, which is available at accountability.universityofcalifornia.edu
- The UC Information Center, which is available at universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter

The University presents this report in response to the request for a report on its institutional financial aid programs. That request reads as follows:

Statutory Language AB 1809, Chapter 23, Statutes of 2018 amends Section 66021.1 of the Education Code to read:

(a) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Institutional financial aid" means all institutional grant aid, including institutional student need-based and merit-based aid.

(2) "Students" means California residents who are undergraduate students at the University of California or the California State University.

(b) The California State University shall, and the University of California is requested to, report annually to the Legislature on their respective institutional financial aid programs. The California State University shall, and the University of California is requested, to provide reports on or before March 31 of each year.

(c) The reports shall include all of the following:

(1) A description of the goals, terms, and policies of each of the university's institutional aid programs, including eligibility criteria, allocation of financial aid awards, fee waivers, and other relevant information.

(2) A description and explanation of any changes the university has made to any of these policies since the prior year, and any changes the university intends to make for the next academic year.

(3) The total amount the university expended on institutional aid for students, for the two prior academic years, the current year, and a projection for the next year, and the average and 90th percentile undergraduate institutional aid award amount provided per recipient for the prior two academic years and the current academic year.

(4) By parental income level or expected family contribution deciles, both of the following information for the prior academic year:

(A) Net price, which shall be the balance of the total cost of attendance minus all grant aid.

(B) The percentage of students receiving institutional aid and the average dollar amount of that institutional aid.

(5) For the prior academic year, the current academic year, and the budget year, an analysis identifying the estimated number of undergraduates with financial need; their aggregate cost of attendance and aggregate expected federal parent contribution; the aggregate amount of financial aid, including federal gift aid, state gift aid, institutional need-based aid, institutional merit-based aid, other institutional gift aid, and private gift aid, received by these students; the aggregate remaining amount to be met by work, borrowing, or other means; and an explanation of the estimated change in aggregate student need in the budget year resulting from changes in the cost of attendance, and other factors, including any fee increases proposed by the university in its fall budget proposal. The explanation shall include an estimate of the extent to which cost increases will be offset by federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs. The explanation shall also include an explanation of how year-to-year non-tuition cost increases were calculated.

(6) The typical financial aid package for a typical dependent undergraduate student with a parent income of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000), forty thousand dollars (\$40,000), sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000), eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000), and one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

(7) An aggregate summary of financial aid awarded to students, including scholarships, grants, waivers, loans, and work-study awards from federal, State, institutional, and private sources for the prior academic year.

(8) Indicators of the effectiveness of the university's aid programs in achieving the university's stated goals related to financial aid.

(9) Information on students who submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or Dream Act Application, but do not receive a Cal Grant or institutional financial aid for the prior academic year. This information shall be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, expected family contribution deciles, and dependency status.

(10) The California State University shall include information on the number of students who are eligible for a grant pursuant to the State University Grant Program but do not receive it or receive a partial award for the prior academic year. This information shall be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and campus of attendance.

(11) The University of California is requested to include information on the average undergraduate student financial self-help level. This information shall be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and campus of attendance.

(d) To the extent the university provides the information requested in subdivision (c) in reports to its governing board or in other university publications, those reports or publications may be submitted to the Legislature to satisfy this request.

(Amended by Stats. 2019, Ch. 497, Sec. 77. (AB 991) Effective January 1, 2020.).

URL:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&division=5.&title=3.&part=40.&chapter=2.&article=3.

I. INSTITUTIONAL AID FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The University of California’s undergraduate financial assistance programs are designed to make the University financially accessible to all eligible students. To achieve this goal, the University’s Undergraduate Financial Aid Policy, adopted by the Regents in 1994, calls upon the University to make the *full cost of attending the university*—known as the total cost of attendance or the student budget—manageable for eligible students and their families, irrespective of their family resources.

Managing the Cost of Attendance: The Education Financing Model

The University’s approach to student financing is built around an integrated conceptual framework that is used to:

- Guide its work in helping students and their parents manage the cost of an undergraduate education.
- Define its role in funding the University’s undergraduate student financial support programs.
- Determine how much undergraduate financial aid to allocate to each campus.

This framework, known as the Education Financing Model (EFM), is based on the following set of principles:

- The total cost of attendance (resident student tuition and fees, books and supplies, living and personal expenses, and transportation)—also known as the student expense budget—represents the context for the EFM.
- A partnership among students, parents, federal and State governments, and the University is required for the successful implementation of the EFM.
- All students should expect to make a similar self-help contribution from part-time work and educational loans, if necessary, toward their cost of attendance without regard to family income or resources.
- Flexibility is needed for students in deciding how to meet their expected contribution and for campuses in implementing the EFM to serve their particular student bodies.

The EFM is built upon a simple framework. In narrative terms, under the framework, the student expense budget minus (1) a reasonable parent contribution calculated according to federal

standards, (2) anticipated grant aid from State and federal sources, and (3) a manageable student self-help contribution from part-time work and loan, if necessary, equals the amount of University grant aid needed.

Understanding how the University's undergraduate institutional aid program is administered requires a general understanding of each of the elements of the framework. These elements are explained below.

- Student expense budget:** The student expense budget represents an estimate of a student's total costs while attending college. This budget accounts for expenses such as student tuition and fees, books and supplies, housing and food, transportation, and personal expenses, and it reflects differing expenses associated with different campuses and different living arrangements. The University of California carefully reviews the student expense budgets every year before awarding financial aid and before distributing resources across the system.
- Parent contribution:** The expected contribution from parents is calculated in accordance with the federal needs analysis methodology.
- Federal and State grant aid:** Federal and State grant aid is extremely important to UC students. Grant aid is what reduces the need for students to work and borrow to cover their educational costs, and together, federal and State grants account for over 50 percent of the grants received by UC undergraduates.
- Manageable student self-help contribution from work and borrowing:** While University financial aid recipients are expected to contribute to their expenses, the goal of the EFM is to keep the hours worked within a manageable range, to minimize student loan debt, and to keep the total student contribution consistent across income levels.
- University grant aid:** University grant assistance is awarded to students whose full cost of attendance is not covered through sources listed above. Without the University grant to cover remaining expenses, some students would be left facing the need to work or borrow at higher levels. This would be inconsistent with the principle calling for equity in expectations.

***The Conceptual Framework of the
Education Financing Model***

Student Expense budget (total cost of attendance):

Less Reasonable contribution from parents

Less Federal and State grant aid

Less Manageable student self-help contribution from work and borrowing

Equals University grant aid needed

Undergraduate Institutional Aid Programs

The University's undergraduate institutional aid programs can be grouped into four categories:

- **Need-based grants.** Need-based UC grants represent the most significant source of institutional aid for UC undergraduates. The primary goal of UC need-based grants is to provide financial access to students according to the terms of the Education Financing Model (EFM) as described above. The specific awarding criteria vary slightly across campuses, consistent with the flexibility provided to campuses under the EFM. Funding for UC grants is allocated by the Office of the President, taking into account campus differences in local costs (on- and off-campus housing, campus-based fees, books and supplies, health insurance, etc.) and student resources (parental resources and grants and scholarships from all sources).

Undergraduate need-based grants are funded primarily from the University Student Aid Program (USAP) budget, which is augmented each year due to the University's practice of setting aside a portion of new tuition and fee revenue for need-based aid. Like all USAP-funded programs, UC grants must be awarded in accordance with USAP Administrative Guidelines (available at <https://www.ucop.edu/enrollment-services/policies/universitywide-program-policies-and-guidelines/revise-administrative-guidelines-for-usap-and-select-aid-programs-final-002.pdf>).

- **Scholarships.** UC scholarships are typically based on criteria such as academic achievement or athletic ability. Eligibility for certain scholarships may be limited to financially needy students, but scholarships are generally available to students at any income level who demonstrate particular merit as defined by the terms of the scholarships.

Most UC scholarships are funded from private gifts and endowments and are restricted to students at a particular campus, consistent with donors' wishes. Selection criteria vary according to local campus objectives and donors' wishes.

- **Tuition exemptions and waivers.** Certain UC students are exempt from paying in-state tuition and fees and/or nonresident supplemental tuition under a variety of exemption programs, or are eligible for waivers that cover these charges. In most cases, the policies implementing these exemptions and waivers were approved by the Regents in order to align UC policy with statutory exemptions created by the Legislature for students at the California State University and the California Community Colleges. The two largest programs are:

Cal Vet Fee Exemptions: Eligible dependents of deceased or disabled veterans are exempt from paying in-state tuition and fees.

AB 540 Nonresident Tuition Exemptions: Students other than persons excluded from the term "immigrants" for purposes of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. Sec. 1101) who graduated from a California high school (or the equivalent) and either 1) attended a California high school for three years or 2) earned the equivalent of

three years of high school credit at a California high school and attended three years at some combination of California elementary or secondary schools are exempt from paying nonresident tuition.

Effective January 1, 2018, eligibility for an AB 540 tuition exemption expanded to include students who meet both 1) time and coursework requirements and 2) degree or unit requirements below. Additionally, effective January 1, 2023, eligibility also expanded to remove the previous cap on California community college attendance towards the three-year requirement as described below.

Time and coursework requirements:

Either:

- a. Three full-time years attendance or attainment of equivalent credits at any of the following:
 - a. California high school
 - b. California adult school (including non-credit courses offered by a California community college)
 - c. California community college

OR

- b. Three years of high school coursework and three years of total attendance in a California elementary school, California secondary school, or any combination of the two

Degree or unit requirements

Meet one of the following three requirements

- a. Graduation from a California high school (or attainment of the equivalent)
- b. Attainment of an associate's degree from a California Community College
- c. Fulfillment of minimum transfer requirement from a CCC to UC or CSU

- **Loan and work-study programs.** UC campuses administer a small number of UC-funded loans (including the Dream Loan Program, described below) and work-study programs. While these programs fill specific niches for certain students (e.g., students who do not meet all of the federal eligibility requirements for Title IV loan and work-study programs), they represent a tiny fraction of UC undergraduates' overall borrowing and employment earnings.

Recent and Anticipated Changes to Institutional Aid Policy

Regental Discussions of Institutional Aid and Reducing Student Loan Burden

The Board of Regents renewed the Tuition Stability Plan in November of 2025, which outlines predictable tuition increases through 2032–33. The tuition increases for undergraduates are only applied to new students, who then can count on the same tuition for up to six years. In addition to the predictability this offers to non-financial aid recipients, the increases will result in new tuition revenue for financial aid. The portion of new revenue set aside for UC's need-based financial aid program for undergraduates decreased from 45 percent to 40 percent. It is important to note that the reduction in the return-to-aid percentage means that University financial aid will grow more slowly, not that it is being cut.

In 2022, the UC Board of Regents updated Regents Policy 3201 to reflect the aspirational goal of eliminating student loan debt promoted by President Drake. This goal is also reflected in the Compact with Governor Newsom. A debt-free pathway is made possible and relies on continued support for federal and State financial aid programs, particularly the California Middle Class Scholarship Program.

II. EXPENDITURES AND PROJECTIONS

Figure 1 shows information regarding total expenditures and awards for each category of institutional aid award described in the previous section. Figures 1 and 2 exclude emergency grants, which were intended to provide support beyond the typical total cost of attendance.

Figure 1: Undergraduate Institutional Aid Expenditures, 2023–24 to 2025–26

	2023–24 (actual)	2024–25 (actual)	2025–26 (estimated)	2026–27 (estimated)
Gift Aid				
Grants				
Total amount	\$1,025.3 M	\$1,021.6 M	\$1,089.1 M	\$1,157.1 M
Average award	\$10,225	\$10,805	\$11,413	\$12,006
90 th %	\$19,284	\$20,292	\$20,900	\$21,493
Scholarships				
Total amount	\$213.8 M	\$228.1 M	\$237.3 M	\$241.4 M
Average award	\$6,212	\$6,094	\$6,281	\$6,325
90 th %	\$12,900	\$13,250	\$13,438	\$13,481
Subtotal—all Gift Aid				
Total amount	\$1,239.1 M	\$1,249.8 M	\$1,326.4 M	\$1,398.5 M
Average award	\$10,731	\$11,262	\$11,843	\$12,363
90 th %	\$20,290	\$21,610	\$22,191	\$22,711
Exemptions and Waivers				
Cal Vet (Fees)				
Total amount	\$43.4 M	\$57.6 M	\$60.6 M	\$63.8 M
Average award	\$13,752	\$14,436	\$15,045	\$15,691
90 th %	\$13,752	\$14,436	\$15,045	\$15,691
AB 540 (NR Tuition)				
Total amount	\$162.0 M	\$185.8 M	\$199.3 M	\$213.5 M
Average award	\$32,574	\$32,050	\$34,064	\$36,139
90 th %	\$32,574	\$32,050	\$34,064	\$36,139
Other				
Total amount	\$20.3 M	\$25.9 M	\$26.9 M	\$27.4 M
Average award	\$10,350	\$10,829	\$11,162	\$11,240
90 th %	\$32,574	\$32,050	\$34,064	\$36,139
Loans and Work-Study				
Loans				
DREAM Loan*	\$1.9 M	\$1.5 M	\$1.5 M	\$1.5 M
Total amount	\$7.1 M	\$6.8 M	\$7.1 M	\$7.2 M
Average award	\$1,785	\$1,721	\$1,774	\$1,786
90 th %	\$3,300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Work-Study				
Total amount	\$4.7 M	\$6.9 M	\$7.1 M	\$7.3 M
Average award	\$2,827	\$3,087	\$3,183	\$3,205
90 th %	\$5,013	\$5,999	\$6,000	\$6,000

*DREAM Loan is funded through a 1:1 match of State and institutional funding.

Trends in Student Costs, Resources, and Need

Figure 2 displays information about the aggregate cost of attendance, expected parental resources, gift aid, and remaining need for California resident undergraduate need-based aid recipients in academic years 2024–25 through 2026–27.

The total cost of attendance represents a combination of known direct charges (such as systemwide and campus-based tuition and fees and on-campus student housing) and estimated other costs (off-campus housing, textbooks, transportation, etc.) incurred by the student over the course of the academic year. To estimate these other costs, the University conducts a periodic Cost of Attendance Survey (COAS); the COAS was last administered in Spring 2023, and the results are available at <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/services/survey-services/UCOAS.html>.

The COAS asks students for information about their expenditures on costs such as off-campus rent, meals (other than those covered by their meal plans), books and supplies, transportation expenses, personal expenses, and other costs. During the intervening years between surveys, budget items derived from the COAS are adjusted annually to account for inflation.

Figure 2: Projected Undergraduate Student Costs and Resources, 2024–25 to 2026–27*

	2024–25 (actual)	2025–26 (estimate)	2026–27 (estimate)	2026–27 incr. (estimate)
Total # recipients of need-based aid/need	109,317	110,329	111,433	1,103
(a) Aggregate Total Cost of Attendance (TCOA)	\$4,899.9 M	\$5,162.2 M	\$5,318.1 M	\$155.9 M
(b) Aggregate Student Aid Index/Parent Contributions	\$594.0 M	\$599.5 M	\$605.5 M	\$6.0 M
(c) Aggregate Federal gift aid	\$557.8 M	\$563.0 M	\$568.6 M	\$5.6 M
(d) Aggregate State gift aid				
Cal Grants	\$1,078.6 M	\$1,134.5 M	\$1,195.1 M	\$60.6 M
Middle Class Scholarships**	\$225.1 M	\$227.2 M	\$229.3 M	\$2.1 M
Other State aid	\$14.7 M	\$14.9 M	\$15.0 M	\$0.1 M
(e) Aggregate UC need-based grants	\$1,021.6 M	\$1,089.1 M	\$1,157.1 M	\$68.0 M
(f) Aggregate UC merit-based awards	\$117.9 M	\$122.7 M	\$124.8 M	\$2.1 M
(g) Aggregate other UC gift aid (incl. exemptions)	\$177.8 M	\$179.4 M	\$181.2 M	\$1.8 M
(h) Aggregate private gift aid	\$36.0 M	\$37.8 M	\$38.9 M	\$1.0 M
(i) Aggregate remaining need to be met by work, borrowing or other means (a – [b through h])	\$1,076.3 M	\$1,194.1 M	\$1,202.7 M	\$8.5 M

* Dollar figures are in millions. The totals are rounded to one decimal place and 2026–27 increase may look different than the difference between 2026–27 and 2025–26 totals displayed in the table due to this rounding error.

** MCS figures for 2024–25 are based on awards to need-based applicants. For 2025–26 and 2026–27, estimates assume that the amount grows with enrollment only.

Overall, the University expects undergraduate need not met by the sources described above to increase by \$8.5 million in 2026–27. Both the 2025–26 and 2026–27 estimates are based on 2024–25 outcomes, adjusting for inflation and enrollment growth.

III. FINANCING A UC EDUCATION

Typical Financial Aid Packages

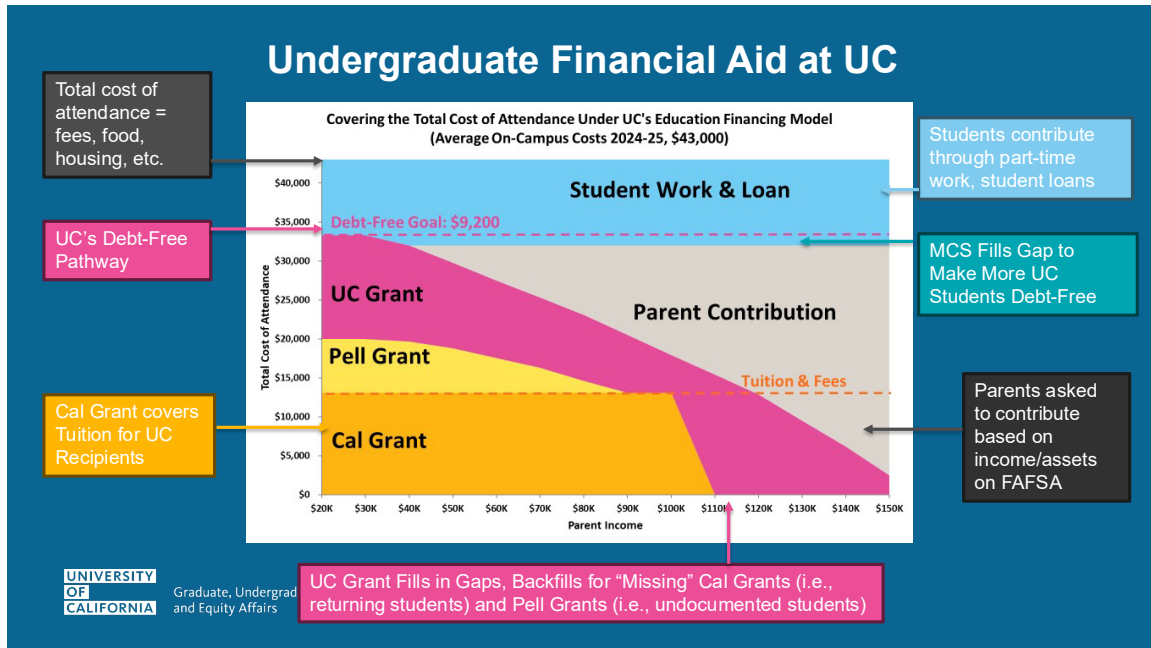
Figure 3 depicts typical financial aid packages for students at different parent income levels living on-campus.

- **Self-help:** Self-help components of a student’s package include an expected contribution from employment and, in some cases, student loans. UC expects all students to be capable of making a self-help contribution.

The self-help for new California students from the lowest-income backgrounds was set at the target of \$7,900 under the Path to Debt-Free UC program in 2022–23. See the lower self-help for students on the left side of Figure 3, which rose to \$9,200 in 2024-25.

The State’s Middle Class Scholarship (MCS) program also reduces self-help. Because MCS is awarded without regard to the parent contribution for most students, middle class students receive larger awards than their low-income peers. During the phase-in to full funding for MCS, some middle-class students will reach the debt-free self-help earlier than lower-income students, at least when taking into account a contribution from their parents.

- **Parent contribution:** As shown below, the expected parent contribution rises quickly with income. Parents are not, however, expected to pay this amount out of current income alone. A student’s package may include a parent loan to help families cover this amount, and many families contribute from savings as well.
- **Grant assistance:** Grant assistance consists of need-based gift aid provided primarily through a combination of four sources: federal Pell Grants, Cal Grants, UC Grants, and Middle Class Scholarship. The specific mix of grants depends on the student. UC Grants are awarded so that, in combination with all other grants, self-help is equalized across students.

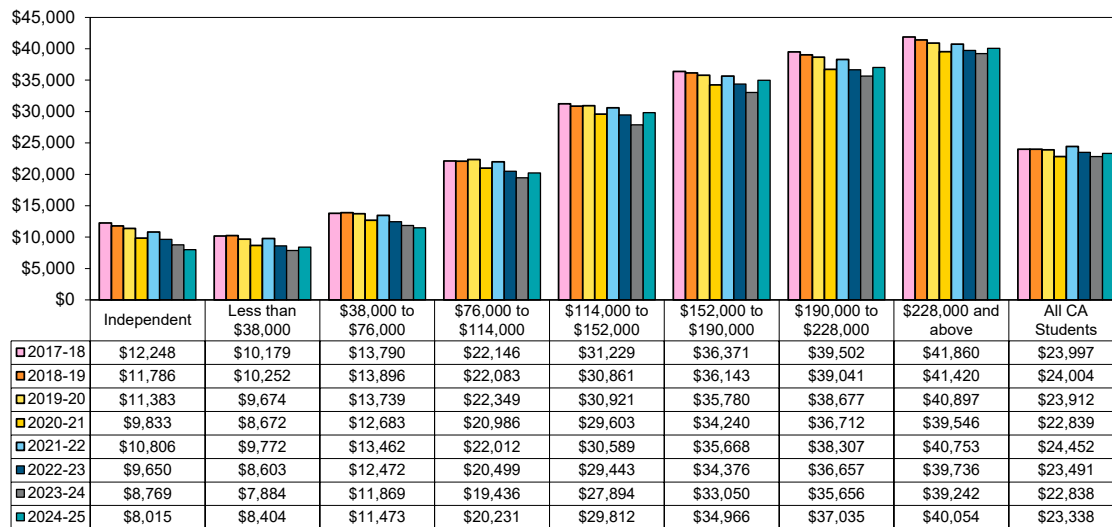
Figure 3: Typical Financial Aid Packages, 2024–25

Net Cost by Parent Income

The net cost of attendance represents the share of the total cost of attendance that a student and their family are responsible for covering, i.e., the Student Self-Help and Parent Contribution in Figure 3. Consistent with the EFM, UC's net cost—the cumulative impact of grants, scholarships, and exemptions on the actual cost of attendance—is lowest for those students with the fewest financial resources.

Figure 4 shows the trend in net cost for UC students by family income over time. Changes in the net cost of attending the University—that is, a student's total cost of attendance less any grants, scholarships, and exemptions—have varied substantially depending on parent income.

Figure 4: Trends in the Net Cost by Parent Income Among CA Residents, 2024–25 Constant Dollars



Net cost is a function of a number of elements, including the estimated total cost of attendance, parent contributions, and gift aid. The total cost of attendance does not vary much by income and the parent contribution is a function of the federal needs analysis formula. The primary tool to ensure that a UC education is affordable, then, is the use of need-based financial aid.

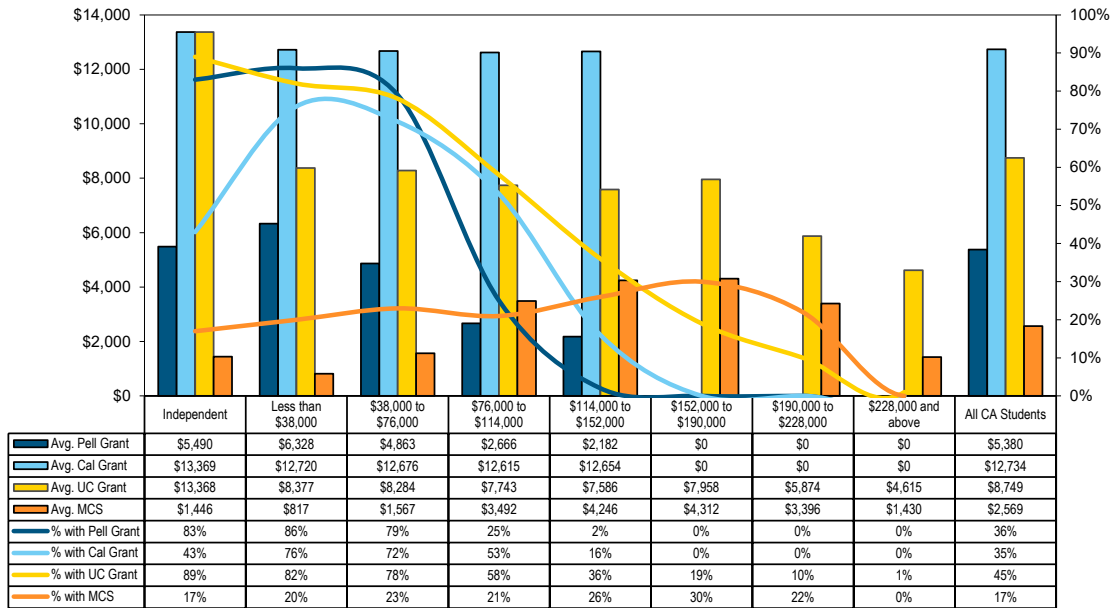
Figure 5 shows the distribution of the primary federal, State, and University need-based grants and Middle Class Scholarship by parent income. The federal Pell Grant program provides grants (up to \$7,395 in 2024–25) to low-income students. Eligibility declines rapidly with income, leading to the steep drop-off shown by the dark blue line in the figure.

Cal Grants typically cover students' systemwide fees at UC. The Cal Grant program has an income ceiling that is high enough to include many families who do not qualify for a Pell Grant. However, as the light blue line in Figure 5 shows, the likelihood that a student qualifies for a Cal Grant declines quickly once parental income exceeds about \$114,000. Cal Grant eligibility requirements favor students who enroll in college within a year of graduating from high school or who transfer from a community college before they reach the age of 27, resulting in a lower percentage of Cal Grant recipients among independent students.

A student's UC grant (the gold line and columns) fills in any remaining need after taking into account the student's total cost of attendance, parental resources, self-help expectation from work and borrowing as necessary, and other grants received. Compared with Pell Grants and Cal Grants, UC grants serve a broader range of students and are more sensitive to students' overall resources and costs (not just tuition and fees). The average UC grant is highest for independent students for two reasons: independent students with financial need have no parental resources to draw upon and they are less likely than other low-income students to meet the Cal Grant eligibility requirements.

The Middle Class Scholarship program similarly fills in gaps for students whose other aid does not meet their non-tuition costs, less an expected contribution from part-time work.

Figure 5: Pell Grant, Cal Grant, UC Grant and MCS Awards Among CA Residents, Academic Year 2024–25



Student Self-Help

As described above, the EFM assumes a consistent contribution from students to help cover their own total cost of attendance. The University’s goal is to ensure that the self-help, which includes part-time work and borrowing, as necessary, is manageable.

The self-help level in any given year is a function of the estimated total cost of attendance less the expected contribution from parents and all available gift aid. If gift aid from any source increases in a given year, all things equal, the self-help expectation will decrease. If gift aid decreases, the self-help expectation will increase.

The State’s Middle Class Scholarship (MCS) program similarly provides grant assistance to students in order to lower the amount that they need to provide to cover the cost of attendance. Figure 6 shows the average self-help level in 2024–25 by campus with and without MCS.

Please note a methodological change in this year’s report. The self-help levels reported in the first row of Figures 6 and 7 are based on all gift aid without MCS. The second row is based on all gift aid students received in 2024–25 (need-based and non-need-based grants and scholarships including MCS).

Figure 6: Self-Help Levels 2024–25¹

	Berkeley	Davis	Irvine	Los Angeles	Merced	Riverside	San Diego	Santa Barbara	Santa Cruz	System
Average Self-Help	\$7,000	\$9,300	\$12,700	\$9,200	\$9,400	\$10,600	\$14,100	\$14,000	\$10,500	\$10,700
Average Self-Help with MCS	\$6,700	\$8,800	\$12,200	\$8,700	\$9,000	\$10,100	\$13,500	\$13,600	\$10,000	\$10,200

Figure 7 shows the self-help levels by race and ethnicity. The variation between racial/ethnic groups is due to a number of factors that correlate with race. For example, the distribution of students from different racial/ethnic groups is not uniform across the system and, as Figure 6 shows, there is some variation in self-help levels by campus. The University awards its financial aid without preference to gender, race, ethnicity, or national origin.

Figure 7: Self Help by Race/Ethnicity, 2024–25

	African American	American Indian	Asian	Chicano-Latino	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*	Unknown	White
Average Self-Help	\$10,300	\$9,900	\$11,200	\$10,300	\$10,500	\$10,800	\$11,000
Average Self-Help with MCS	\$9,800	\$9,500	\$10,700	\$9,900	\$10,000	\$10,300	\$10,400

*Native Hawaiian/PI reported separately from Asian students unlike in prior reports where Hawaiian/PI were included with Asians.

Applicants

Figures 8–10 show the number of applicants for financial aid—defined as those filing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application—and the type of aid that they received.

As Figure 8 shows, 77 percent of applicants received a Cal Grant or UC gift aid. As Figure 8 shows, the vast majority of those not receiving either a Cal Grant or UC gift aid were from families with a Student Aid Index (SAI) above \$20,000.² One to two percent of the lowest income families were not served by these financial aid programs; they included late applicants, students served by other financial aid programs (e.g., scholarship awards), or students otherwise ineligible (e.g., failed to register for Selective Service, failed to complete other required paperwork).

Furthermore, UC observed more students whose families had sizeable assets qualifying for very low SAI scores in 2024–25, the first year of the new FAFSA. Those with large assets did not qualify for need-based financial aid, despite the low SAI.

¹ The self-help levels reported in Figures 6 and 7 represent averages across all UC need-based grant recipients. For each student, the self-help level represents the typical estimated cost of attendance less parent contribution and any gift aid excluding MCS, and, in the bottom row, includes all gift aid (need-based and non-need-based) including Middle Class Scholarship (MCS).

² With the new FAFSA, the Student Aid Index (SAI) replaced the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), with lowest value at –\$1,500 (versus EFC \$0).

Figure 8: Applicants for Financial Aid and Receipt of Aid, by SAI, 2024–25

SAI Deciles (Not Income)	CA Resident Financial Aid Applicants	CA Residents with Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by SAI Decile	CA Residents without Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by SAI Decile
\$-1,500 to \$0	67,003	65,986	98%	1,017	2%
\$0 to \$5,000	16,408	16,251	99%	157	1%
\$5,000 to \$10,000	9,785	9,603	98%	182	2%
\$10,000 to \$15,000	6,141	5,936	97%	205	3%
\$15,000 to \$20,000	5,204	4,775	92%	429	8%
\$20,000 to \$25,000	4,598	3,537	77%	1,061	23%
\$25,000 to \$30,000	3,986	1,762	44%	2,224	56%
\$30,000 to \$35,000	3,505	784	22%	2,721	78%
\$35,000 to \$40,000	3,216	520	16%	2,696	84%
Greater than \$40,000	27,998	4,094	15%	23,904	85%
Total	147,844	113,248	77%	34,596	23%

Figure 9 further examines the students identified in Figure 8 who did not receive a Cal Grant or UC gift aid. Nearly 8,698 of these students missed the Cal Grant filing deadline (see Figure 9).

An additional 10,668 students qualified for the MCS program (see Figure 9). Accounting for both of these populations—those who did not meet the State’s deadline for applying for financial aid and those served by MCS—leaves 18,204 students, or 12 percent of California on-time applicants for aid, who did not qualify for assistance, the majority of whom had high SAIs and were therefore less financially needy.

Figure 9: Applicants for Financial Aid and Receipt of Aid, by SAI, 2024–25

SAI Deciles	CA Residents without Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	Late Applicants (post March 2)	MCS Recipients Among Those without Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	On-time Applicants not served by Cal Grant, UC Gift Aid or MCS	% of all Applicants
\$-1,500 to \$0	1,017	573	78	366	1%
\$0 to \$5,000	157	84	27	46	0%
\$5,000 to \$10,000	182	110	31	41	0%
\$10,000 to \$15,000	205	92	67	46	1%
\$15,000 to \$20,000	429	165	214	50	1%
\$20,000 to \$25,000	1,061	262	703	96	2%
\$25,000 to \$30,000	2,224	518	1,529	177	4%
\$30,000 to \$35,000	2,721	593	1,901	227	6%
\$35,000 to \$40,000	2,696	577	1,840	279	9%
Greater than \$40,000	23,904	5,724	4,278	13,902	50%
Total	34,596	8,698	10,668	18,204	12%

Figures 10 and 11 show applicants by financial aid dependency status and race/ethnicity.

Figure 10: Applicants for Financial Aid and Receipt of Aid, by Dependency Status, 2024–25

Dependency Status	CA Resident Financial Aid Applicants	CA Residents with Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by Dependency	CA Residents without Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by Dependency
Independent	13,491	12,904	96%	587	4%
Dependent	134,332	100,339	75%	33,993	25%
Total	147,823	113,243	77%	34,580	23%

Figure 11: Applicants for Financial Aid and Receipt of Aid, by Race/Ethnicity, 2024–25

Ethnicity/Race	CA Resident Financial Aid Applicants	CA Residents with Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by Race/Ethnicity	CA Residents without Cal Grant or UC Gift Aid	% of Applicants by Race/Ethnicity
African American	9,282	7,643	82%	1,639	18%
American Indian	1,117	752	67%	365	33%
Asian	51,716	36,499	71%	15,217	29%
Chicano/Latino	57,074	50,135	88%	6,939	12%
Native Hawaiian/PI	369	258	70%	111	30%
Unknown	2,717	1,705	63%	1,012	37%
White	25,569	16,256	64%	9,313	36%
Total	147,844	113,248	77%	34,596	23%

California Dream Loans

The California Dream Loan program provides student loans to undocumented AB 540 students at CSU and UC. The Legislature provided \$2.5 million in UC’s annual budget for the program, which has been matched by UC’s own funding of \$2.5 million each year. Figure 12 shows the Dream loan allocations and awards for years 2022–23 to 2024–25. Up to 4,000 undocumented students have access to student loans as a tool to finance their education. Their documentation status currently prohibits these students from qualifying for federal student loans. In 2020–21, graduate academic and professional students who are undocumented also became eligible to borrow through the program.

Demand for the program has not yet matched the funding available and there are proposals to expand borrowing limits at the graduate level, as well as considering how unused funds may be rolled over into a scholarship for these students in proceeding years.

Figure 12: California Dream Loan Allocations, Awards

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
State Match	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
UC Match	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000
Combined Funding	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Total Dream Loan Funding	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Loans Borrowed	\$2,617,129	\$1,919,316	\$1,503,808
Recipients (Full Year Equivalent)	787	603	460
Average Loan	\$3,326	\$3,183	\$3,266

IV. OUTCOME MEASURES

The University monitors multiple student outcome measures in order to evaluate the effectiveness of its undergraduate financial aid programs. They are designed to answer four basic questions:

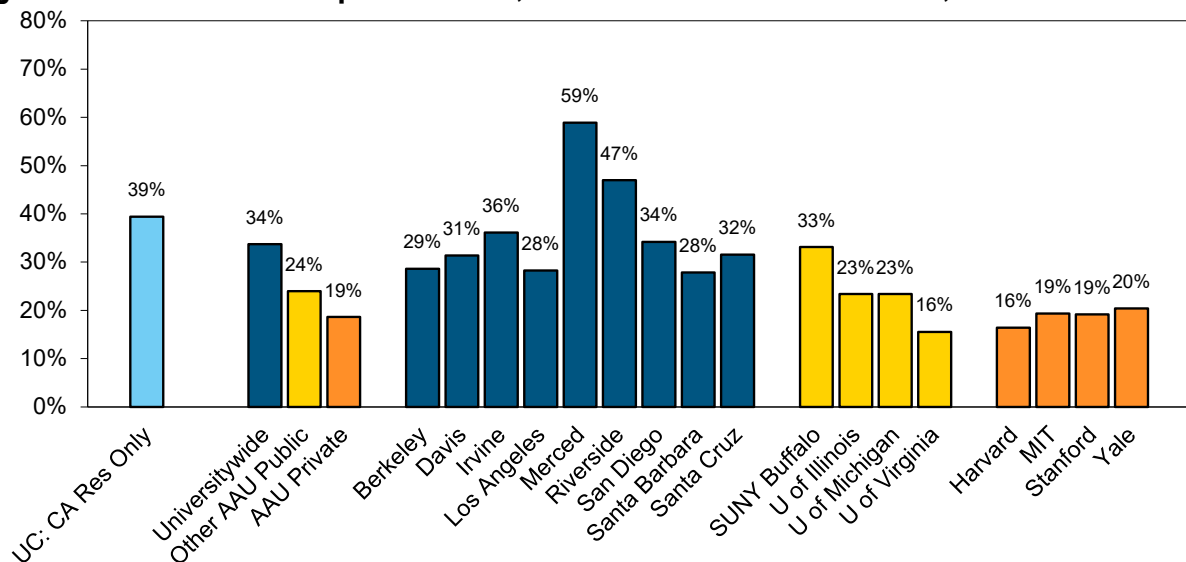
- Is the University financially accessible to students at every income level?
- Do UC students work manageable hours?
- Do students' financial circumstances affect their academic success?
- Do students graduate with manageable debt?

Additional outcome measures are available in the University's Accountability Report, online Information Center, and Annual Report on Student Financial Support.

Enrollment of Low-Income Students

The percentage of undergraduate students with Pell Grants provides a useful means to compare different institutions in terms of their financial accessibility for low-income students. See Figure 13.

Figure 13: Pell Grant Recipients at UC, Other Research Universities, 2023–24³



Systemwide, UC enrolled a higher percentage of Pell Grant recipients among all students—34 percent—than any other top research university in the country in 2023–24.⁴ To keep the Pell percentages comparable with other institutions, all undergraduates are included when calculating

³ Association of American University (AAU) member institutions.

⁴ Figures shown are for 2023–24, the most recent year for which data are available through the Federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS figures include only students enrolled in the fall term and hence may differ slightly from figures published elsewhere. The percentage of Pell California residents is from the 2023 UC fall enrollment data.

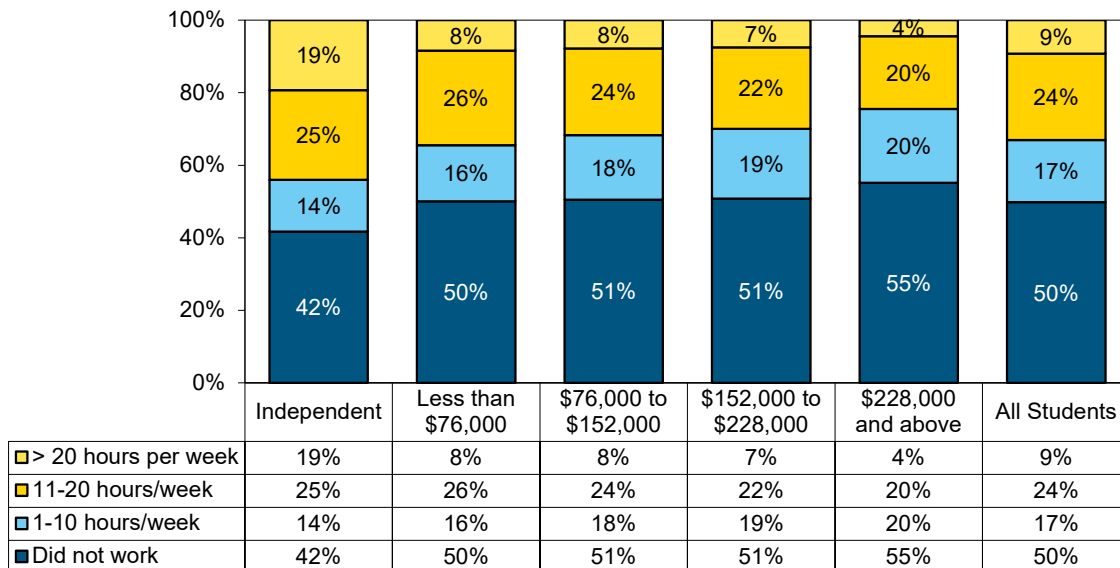
the 34 percent. The percentage of Pell Grant recipients increases to 39 percent when limiting the analysis to California residents.

UC's exceptional success at enrolling low-income students is due, in part, to a combination of two strong need-based aid programs: the University's own institutional aid program and the State's Cal Grant program. While students at other institutions often benefit from either a strong institutional aid program or a strong state aid program, UC students benefit from both.

Student Work Hours

Under the EFM, the University expects each student to make a manageable contribution from employment towards financing the cost of the student's education, not to exceed 20 hours per week. The "cap" of 20 hours per week was based on research that suggests working more than that tends to negatively affect a student's academic progress and performance. The University conducts periodic student surveys to monitor students' employment patterns. Findings from the spring 2025 survey are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Hours of Student Employment by Income, All Undergraduates, 2025 University of California Cost of Attendance Survey (COAS)



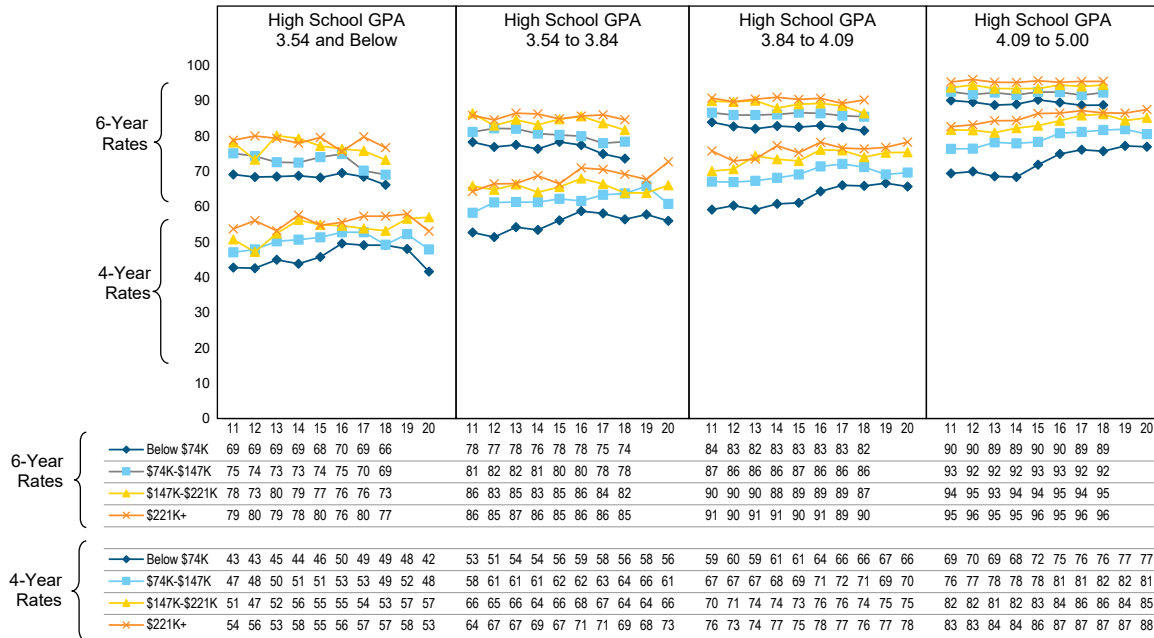
Among dependent students, work patterns show relatively slight variations by parent income. Many students at every income level do not work. This is consistent with the flexibility inherent in the EFM about how students actually cover their expected contributions. It also supports findings from a survey of parents of UC students, many of whom felt that it was their responsibility to cover their student's expenses so that their student did not have to work. One reason why some parents perceive UC's costs as burdensome may be that they are covering not only their expected share but also the student's expected contribution from work.

Some students at every income level report working more than 20 hours per week, which is beyond the upper bound of the University's manageable range. Many factors may account for this, such as parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute the amount expected of them, or extraordinary expenses (higher than average discretionary expenses, family obligations, etc.).

Academic Success

Four-year graduation rates for higher-income students have generally exceeded those of lower-income students with similar levels of academic preparation. These rates, which have diverged and converged somewhat at different points in time, show no apparent relationship to changes in students’ costs or financial aid (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates by Entering Year, Parent Income, and High School GPA



Six-year graduation rates show less difference by parental income level. Overall, the patterns suggest that the University’s financial aid programs allow low-income students to remain enrolled long enough to overcome socioeconomic disadvantages, although additional work is necessary to close these gaps.

Cumulative Debt Upon Graduation

The incidence of postgraduate debt declines with parent income. Students from high-income families are much less likely to graduate with debt than students from low-income families or independent students (see the dark blue lines in Figure 16).

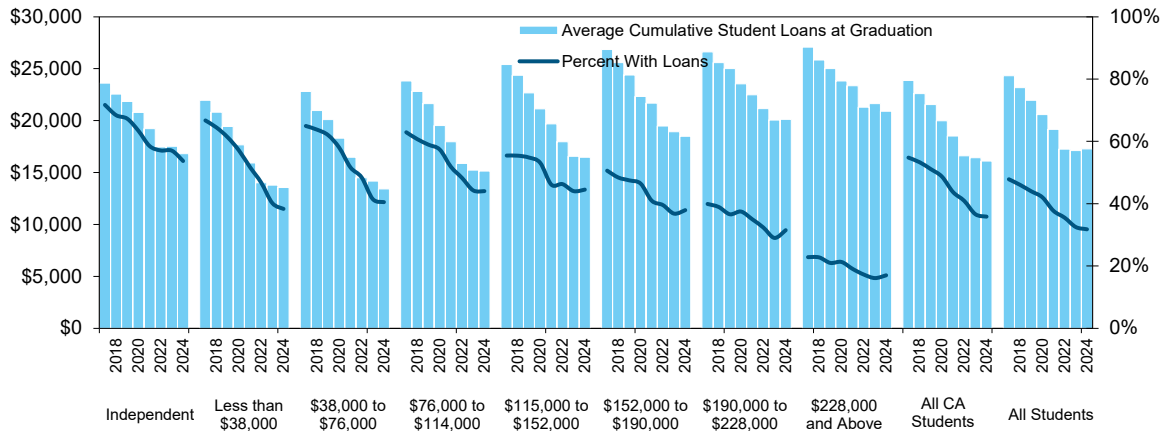
Overall, 32 percent of the UC graduating class of 2024–25 had some student loan debt, slightly less than the 2023–24 graduating class (33 percent). The average cumulative student loan debt at graduation for these borrowers (\$17,264) is comparable to the figure for 2023–24 graduates (\$17,114) after adjusting for inflation.

Borrowing among California resident students is higher (36 percent) than borrowing among all undergraduates, but still represents a decline from 2023–24 where 37 percent borrowed. Resident

undergraduates saw a decline in the average debt, from \$16,417 in 2023–24 to \$16,103 in 2024–25 after adjusting for inflation.

UC’s average student debt at graduation for all students and for California residents remains low compared to national averages. Nationally, 62 percent of the graduating class of 2019 had student loan debt, with an average of \$28,950 per borrower, according to the Project on Student Debt.⁵

Figure 16: Trends in Cumulative Debt at Graduation Among California Residents by Parent Income and Among All Students, 2024 Constant Dollars



⁵ Student Debt on TICAS website: <https://ticas.org/our-work/student-debt/>.

Appendix: Detailed Expenditures

Pursuant to **Section 66028.6** of the Education Code, the University of California is required to provide annually to the Legislature information on the expenditures of student fee revenues. The use of student fee revenue is reported, in the Detailed Expenditures by Program section of the Governor's Budget's, for past, current, and budget years. The table below lists the information presented in the Governor's Budget, by the representative expenditure categories. The report is to be submitted on or before February 1 each year, beginning with the 2012–13 academic year.

UC combines General Fund and fee revenue for efficient fiscal operations. It does not budget nor expend resources by individual fund source.

6440 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DETAILED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM STUDENT MANDATORY FEES (Rounded to thousands)		
	2024-25 (actual)	% of Total
INSTRUCTION		
GENERAL CAMPUSES INSTRUCTION	1,864,203	41.58%
HEALTH SCIENCES INSTRUCTION	123,295	2.75%
Subtotal	1,987,498	44.33%
ACADEMIC SUPPORT		
LIBRARIES ACADEMIC SUPPORT	10,271	0.23%
OTHER ACADEMIC SUPPORT	325,943	7.27%
Subtotal	336,214	7.50%
STUDENT SERVICES		
Subtotal	454,377	10.13%
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT		
Subtotal	300,627	6.71%
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PLANT		
Subtotal	41,239	0.92%
STUDENT FINANCIAL AID		
Subtotal	1,363,650	30.41%
TOTAL	4,483,605	100.00%

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