

UCI School of Education

The Next Generation Undergraduate Success Measurement Project

The University of California, Irvine School of Education is serving as a pilot demonstration site to develop and implement a state-of-the-art measurement project to improve our understanding of the value of undergraduate educational experiences, and promote evidence-based models of undergraduate student success. Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the project is tracking for two years a sample of 1,273 undergraduates comprised of freshmen, junior transfer and continuing juniors. Everything from transcripts to online classroom behavior, living situations to student moods is being considered.

Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted higher education and students' lives. As part of the Next Generation Undergraduate Success Measurement Project, the project research team administered two surveys to UCI students to gain further insights about their experiences and attitudes related to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in undergraduate education. The first survey was sent out March 11, shortly after UCI announced its switch to remote learning. 568 students responded to the first survey. The second survey was sent a few weeks into the spring quarter, on April 13. 608 students responded to the second survey. 399 students responded to both surveys.

Main Takeaways

Students are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in an appropriate, altruistic, and community-focused way, though they are concerned about how the pandemic will affect their education.

- Students are more concerned for their larger community than themselves.
- Students' biggest source of stress is the impact the COVID-19 pandemic will have on their education. However, they think that UCI's actions have been the appropriate level of stringency.
- Students' mental health has not changed since pre-pandemic.

New Responsibilities Related to COVID-19

The adjacent word cloud was generated by the word frequency in response to the question: "What responsibilities or tasks do you have right now besides your UCI course work?"

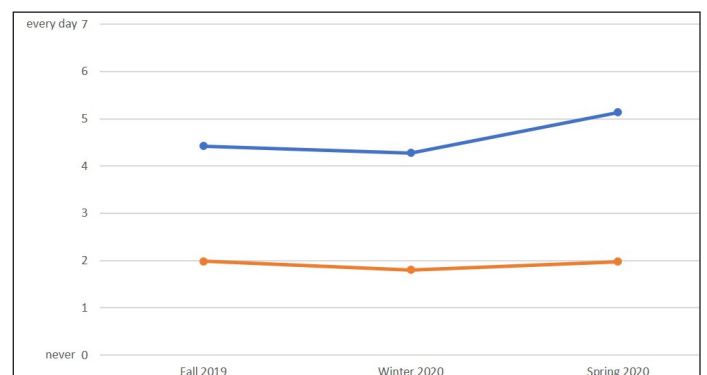
- Many students have new responsibilities related to caring for their families and siblings.
- The ten most frequent words were: errands, family, caring, home, chores, working, helping, siblings, house, cleaning.



Stress Related to Academic Demands

A subsample of the survey participants completed surveys previous to the outbreak of COVID-19. For these students we investigated if their perceived stress due to academic and practical demands changed over time. We asked: In the past seven days, how often did you perceive stress related to academic demands (blue), and practical demands (orange).

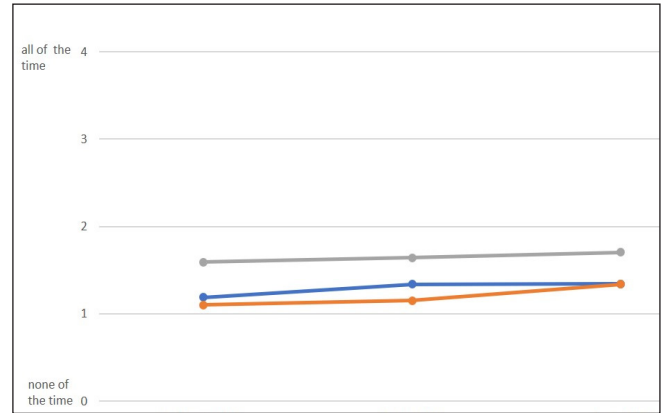
- Students report more stress related to academic demands (e.g., coursework, procrastination, study-life balance), compared to stress in other domains (e.g., practical demands: finances, housing, transportation).
- Students' stress related to academic demands increased after UCI moved to online classes.
- 80% of students (of N = 577) are concerned that the shift to online classes will cause disruptions to their academic progress.



Mental Health

A subsample of the participants of the study completed surveys previous to the outbreak of COVID-19. For these students we investigated if their mental health changed over time.

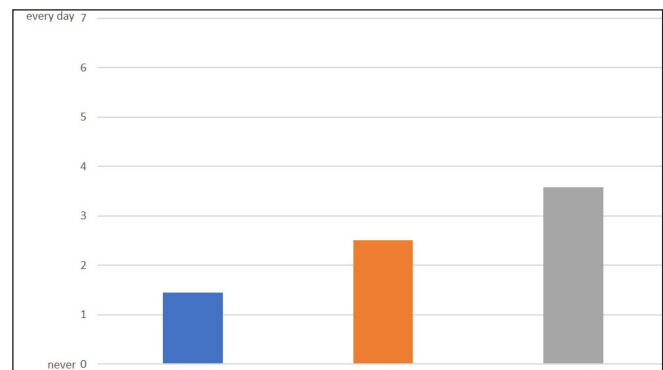
- Chart shows frequency in which participants felt depressed (blue), hopeless (orange), or lost sleep over worries (gray) in previous few days, from February 2020 - April 2020.
- Feelings of being depressed, hopeless, and having trouble sleeping did not increase after the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The mental health of students is relatively stable and not strongly affected by the pandemic to date.



Stress Related to Self, Family, and Larger Community

Students were asked how many times in the previous seven days they felt stress related to themselves (blue), their family (orange), and their community (gray).

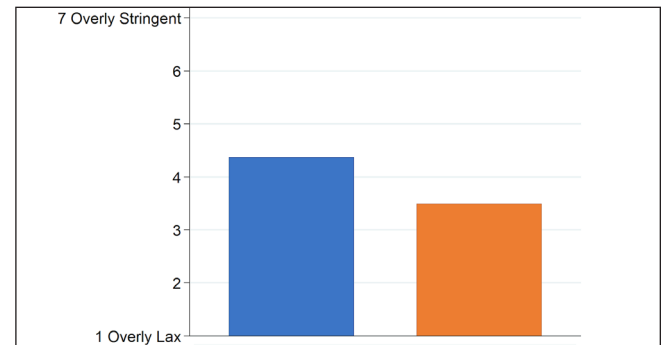
- Students reported less stress related to themselves, compared to their family and larger community.
- Students reported the most stress related to their larger community, compared to their family and selves.



Perceptions of UCI Leadership and Government

Students were asked how stringent the measures being taken are, scaled 1-7. Blue = Measures taken by UCI, Orange = Measures taken by the government.

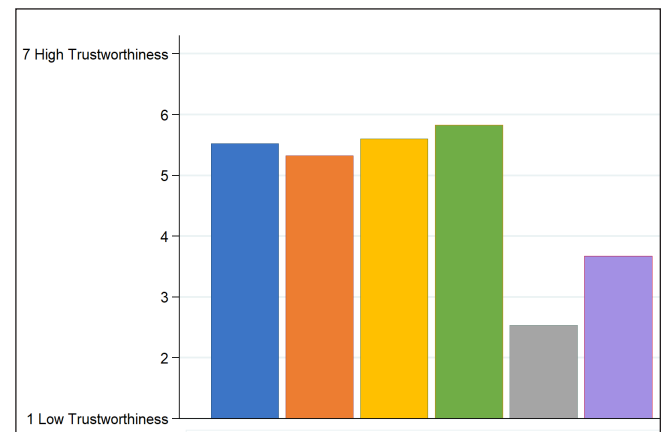
- Students perceive UCI's actions regarding COVID-19 as neither overly lax nor overly stringent.
- Student's perceived the government's actions as more lax, compared to UCI's actions.



Perceived Trustworthiness in Information from Different Sources

Students were asked how trustworthy various sources are, scaled 1-7. Blue = UCI Official, Orange = California Governor, Yellow = State Health Department, Green = CDC, Gray = U.S. President, Purple = News Media.

- Students perceive information about COVID-19 from local authorities and government (e.g., UCI officials, California governor), and the CDC as more trustworthy compared to information from the U.S. President.
- Over time, there is a slight increase of perceived trustworthiness of information from all sources, except from the U.S. President. Perceived trustworthiness for the president remains relatively low.



The research on this card was conducted by members of the Next Generation Undergraduate Success Measurement Project Team:

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