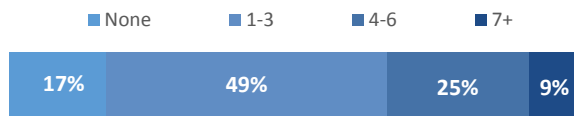


WELLNESS SERIES: UNDERGRADUATE MEAL SKIPPING

Meal Skipping

The survey asked students to report the average number of meals they skipped per week (see Figure 1). Almost half of the respondents indicated they skipped 1-3 meals during the week. Concerning is the large portion, over 1/3 of respondents, who specified skipping 4 or more meals per week.

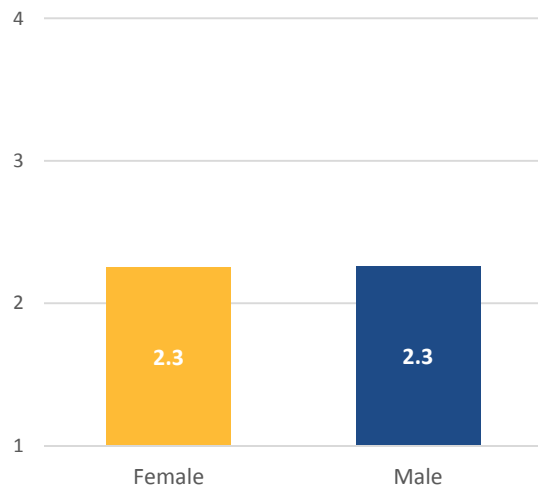
Figure 1. Meals Skipped In a Week



Comparison by Gender

There were no significant differences between undergraduate female and male student participants in their meal skipping tendencies (see Figure 2). On a 1-4 scale, participants were asked to select none (1), 1-3 (2), 4-6 (3), or 7+ (4). Both female and males reported skipping an average of 4-6 meals per week.

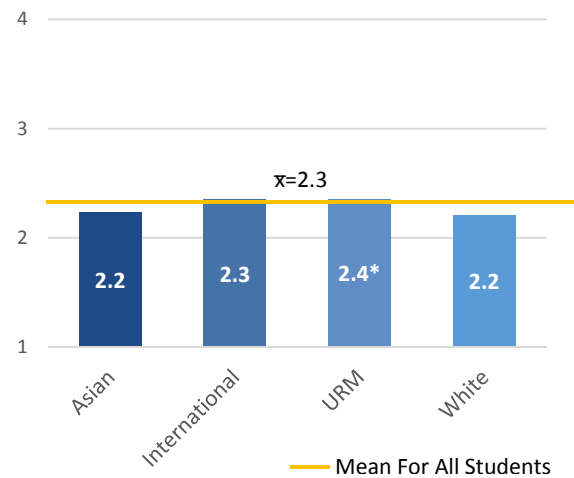
Figure 2. Gender Mean Comparison for Meals Skipped In a Week



Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

Differences were minimal by race/ethnicity in comparison with all respondents (see Table 3). URM respondents are the only group that were significantly different than all respondents ($p < .05$).

Figure 3. Race/Ethnicity Mean Comparison of Meals Skipped In a Week



Reason for Skipping Meals

When students indicated that they skipped at least 1-3 meals per week, they were asked to indicate whether each reason was a major reason for skipping meals. Students' top four major reasons for skipping meals were: (1) constraints on the students' schedule; (2) students' do not have time to prepare food to bring from home; (3) the cost of food on campus; and (4) the overall cost of food (see Table 1). Undergraduate students identified meal plan restrictions as an additional reason for skipping meals along with prioritizing sleep and disliking campus offerings.

Table 1. Top Reasons for Skipping Meals

Reason	%
Time constraints in schedule	47%
Cost of food on campus	26%
Overall cost of food	22%
Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home	22%

Comparison by Gender

Among those who skipped meals ($N=2994$), there were significant gender differences in major reasons for skipping meals (see Table 2). For all reasons, females were more likely than males to indicate them as a reason for skipping meals ($p < .05$). Both females and males identified time constraints in schedule, cost of food on campus,

and overall cost of food as the top three major reason for skipping meals.

Table 2. Gender Mean Comparison of Reasons for Skipping Meals

	Female	Male
Cost of food on campus	1.9**	1.8**
Overall cost of food	1.8**	1.7**
Location of restaurants on campus	1.6**	1.5**
Hours of operation of restaurants on campus	1.6*	1.6*
Not hungry	1.8**	1.7**
Desired weight loss	1.6**	1.3**
Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home	1.8**	1.7**
Have nowhere to store food brought from home	1.5**	1.4**
Time constraints in schedule	2.4**	2.3**

Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

When looking at differences amongst major reasons for skipping meals, significant differences were found for international, URM, and White respondents when compared to the overall mean for all students (see Table 3). Overall, all groups rated “cost of food on campus” the top reason for skipping meals.

Table 3. Race/Ethnicity Mean Comparison of Reasons for Skipping Meals

	All	Asian	International	URM	White
Cost of food on campus	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.3
Overall cost of food	1.9	1.9	1.7**	2.0**	1.9
Location of restaurants on campus	1.8	1.8	1.6**	1.9**	1.8**
Hours of operation of restaurants on campus	1.6	1.6	1.7*	1.7*	1.5*
Not hungry	1.6	1.6	1.7*	1.6	1.6
Desired weight loss	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8
Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home	1.4	1.4	1.6**	1.4	1.4
Have nowhere to store food brought from home	1.8	1.8	1.6*	1.8	1.8
Time constraints in schedule	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

Scale: 1=Not at all a reason, 2= Somewhat a reason, and 3= A major reason

Note: UCUES 2014 data was used for this brief. Analysis of the data primarily included frequencies and descriptive statistics. To understand group differences by gender and race/ethnicity, we conducted t-tests. The average for each race/ethnicity was compared to the overall average in order to determine if the average of each group (Asian, International, URM, and White) differed respective to the overall mean. Significance was calculated and reported as follows: one asterisk (*) p<0.05, two asterisks (**) p<0.01.

For accompanying information including participant demographics, survey methodology, and additional undergraduate wellness series briefs please visit: <http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/2014-Wellness>.