

LGBTQ+ Student Enrollment & Experience at UCLA

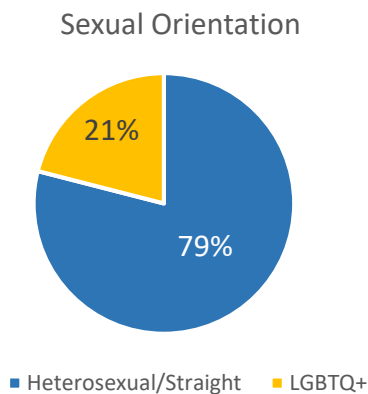
LGBTQ+ students are one of the underserved groups in the UCLA community. It is essential to assess the experience of LGBTQ+ students in order to improve ways to better serve the LGBTQ+ population. This report examined LGBTQ+ student demographics and undergraduate experience at UCLA with data from University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey 2020 (UCUES), and American College Health Association 2021 (ACHA).

Undergraduate Student Experience

This section compares LGBTQ+ undergraduate students’ experiences with heterosexual students’ experiences by using the data from the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES). The response rate of UCUES 2020 was 21% (6537/30534). For more information on UCUES 2020, please visit <https://sairo.ucla.edu/by-survey/ucues>.

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

- Among 6861 valid responses on sexual orientation, 79% students report that they are straight/heterosexual, 21% students identified themselves as LGBTQ+. More survey respondents are female identifying compared to other genders.



Gender		
	N	%
Female	5027	64.8%
Gender non-binary	58	0.7%
Male	2444	31.5%
Trans-female	2	0.0%
Trans-male	14	0.2%
Different Identity	12	0.2%
Missing data	196	2.5%
Total	7753	100%

Ethnicity

- Among all valid responses of the survey, 31.1% the LGBTQ+ respondents are White, 24.8% are Asian, and 23.7% are Hispanic or Latinx students. Other ethnicities do not have a strong representation among the survey respondents.

Race and Ethnicity				
	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	9	0.2%	4	0.3%
Asian	1873	34.6%	358	24.8%
Black Non-Hispanic	138	2.5%	24	1.7%
Hispanic	1125	20.8%	342	23.7%
International	432	8.0%	106	7.4%

Pacific Islander	15	0.3%	9	0.6%
Two or More Races	315	5.8%	127	8.8%
Unknown	146	2.7%	24	1.7%
White Non-Hispanic	1366	25.2%	448	31.1%
Total	5419	100%	1442	100%

Students with Disabilities

- In general, a higher percentage of LGBTQ+ students reported having disabilities compared to heterosexual/straight students, mostly notably, emotional or mental health disability/condition.
- 57.9% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported that they have emotional or mental health disability or condition, compared of 28.7% of straight respondents.

	Disability or Health Condition			
	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
Physical disability	160	3.0%	74	5.5%
Learning disability	133	2.5%	73	5.4%
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability	193	3.6%	147	11.0%
Emotional or mental health	1543	28.7%	777	57.9%

Campus Climate

- 84.5% of LGBTQ+ respondents agreed that UCLA is a safe and secure campus, compared to 91.0% of straight respondents.
- 88.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents agreed that their sexual orientation are respected on this campus, while 97.2% straight students held the same belief.
- 18.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents believed that UCLA students often hold negative views on sexual orientations, while only 3.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents believed that non-teaching staff at UCLA often hold negative views on sexual orientations.

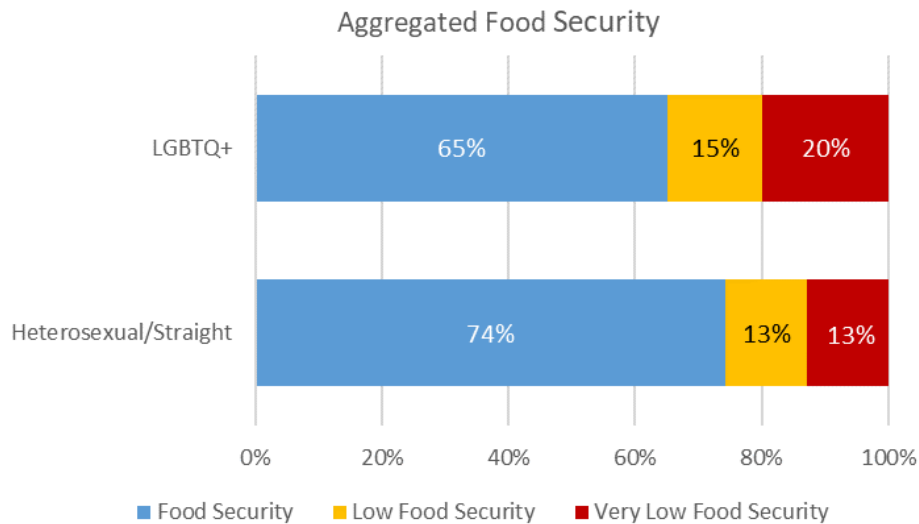
Financial Security:

- 59.1% of LGBTQ+ student respondents reported that they somewhat often/often/very often worry about debt and financial circumstances.

Food Security:

- Overall, fewer LGBTQ+ respondents have food security (65.2%) compared to heterosexual/straight students (74.2%).
- 20% of the LGBTQ+ respondents showed to have very low food security, compared to 13% of heterosexual students.
- Among all questions on the topic, a higher percentage of LGBTQ+ respondents reported it is often true that they had to cope with food insecurity compared to the percentage of straight students who conducted these behaviors. Notably, the following:
 - Ever cut the size of meals or skip meals: (28.7% of LGBTQ+; 21.2% heterosexual/straight student)

- Eat less: (30.7% of LGBTQ+; 22% heterosexual/straight student)
- Hungry but didn't eat: (25.5% of LGBTQ+; 17.3% heterosexual/straight student)
- Cut the size of meal every month: (25.5% of LGBTQ+; 21.7% heterosexual/straight student)



Food Security

		Straight		LGBTQ+	
		N	%	N	%
Cut the size of your meals or skip meals	No	4252	78.8%	960	71.3%
	Yes	1146	21.2%	387	28.7%
Eat less than you felt you should	No	4212	78.0%	933	69.3%
	Yes	1185	22.0%	414	30.7%
Hungry but didn't eat	No	4461	82.7%	1003	74.5%
	Yes	934	17.3%	344	25.5%
How often cut the size of meal	Only 1 or 2 months	390	34.1%	121	31.5%
	Some months but not every month	505	44.2%	165	43.0%
	Almost every month	248	21.7%	98	25.5%
The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more.	Never true	4317	80.1%	982	73.1%
	Sometimes true	928	17.2%	293	21.8%
	Often true	146	2.7%	69	5.1%
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	Never true	4127	76.6%	903	67.2%
	Sometimes true	981	18.2%	308	22.9%
	Often true	281	5.2%	132	9.8%

- While both straight and LGBTQ+ students some moderate level of housing insecurity, there was a small difference between the two groups. A higher percentage of LGBTQ+ students reported

that they experience anxiety, depression, have difficulty focusing on studies, ate less nutritious meals and skip meals monthly compared to heterosexual students.

- Every month, students reported experiencing the following because they were worried about paying for housing:
 - Anxiety: 15.7% LGBTQ+; 11.4% heterosexual/straight respondents
 - Depression: 13.1% LGBTQ+; 6.9% heterosexual/straight respondents
 - Had difficulty focusing on studies: 17.4% LGBTQ+; 11.4% heterosexual/straight respondents
 - Ate less nutritious and/or balanced meals: 13.5% LGBTQ+; 8.8% heterosexual/straight respondents
 - Skipped meals: 11.2% LGBTQ+; 6.7% heterosexual/straight respondents

How often did because you were worried about paying for housing?

		Straight		LGBTQ+	
		N	%	N	%
Experienced anxiety	Every month	571	11.4%	197	15.7%
	Some months during the year	816	16.3%	213	16.9%
	1 or 2 times in the year	926	18.5%	256	20.4%
	Never	2681	53.7%	591	47.0%
Experienced depression	Every month	343	6.9%	164	13.1%
	Some months during the year	609	12.2%	187	14.9%
	1 or 2 times in the year	697	14.0%	154	12.3%
	Never	3329	66.9%	750	59.8%
Had difficulty focusing on your studies	Every month	571	11.4%	219	17.4%
	Some months during the year	898	18.0%	201	16.0%
	1 or 2 times in the year	770	15.4%	189	15.0%
	Never	2754	55.2%	648	51.6%
Ate less nutritious and/or balanced meals	Every month	437	8.8%	169	13.5%
	Some months during the year	791	15.9%	183	14.6%
	1 or 2 times in the year	623	12.6%	151	12.1%
	Never	3111	62.7%	750	59.9%
Skipped meals	Every month	335	6.7%	140	11.2%
	Some months during the year	621	12.4%	151	12.0%
	1 or 2 times in the year	647	13.0%	154	12.3%
	Never	3387	67.9%	810	64.5%

COVID-19 Effects on Learning

- Overall, both straight and LGBTQ+ students reported high concerns on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both groups are highly concerned about their ability to perform well on tests and assignments in online courses. (59.7% of LGBTQ+ respondents and 52.8% of straight respondents).
- Secondly, a higher percentage of LGBTQ+ respondents (58.5%) showed that they are very concerned about learning effectively in the remote instruction environment.

- In addition, both groups also voiced concerns the ability to conduct research (44.1% of LGBTQ+ students; 37.7% of heterosexual or straight students), and interacting with faculty outside of class (42.9% of LGBTQ+ students; 38.1% of heterosexual or straight students).

COVID-19 Effects on Learning: "Very Concerned" Responses

	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
Having reliable access to the Internet	685	12.7%	256	17.9%
Learning effectively in the remote instruction environment	2547	47.3%	838	58.5%
Having access to an appropriate study space	1674	31.1%	558	38.9%
Accessing the learning support services (e.g., tutoring)	1214	22.9%	404	28.9%
Accessing library resources and services	1294	24.4%	454	32.0%
Doing well on tests and assignments in online courses	2842	52.8%	855	59.7%
Missing classes	1024	19.1%	372	26.0%
Ability to conduct research	1760	37.7%	540	44.1%
Interacting with faculty outside of class	2043	38.1%	612	42.9%
Getting the courses I need for my major	1282	24.3%	398	28.2%

COVID-19 Effects on Students

- Both LGBTQ+ and straight students reported being very concerned with how COVID-19 affects them. 62.2% of LGBTQ+ respondents were very concerned with being isolated from friends, while roughly half of the heterosexual students shared the same level of concern.
- Over a half of LGBTQ+ respondents (56.2%) voiced that they were very concerned with not getting a job after graduation, compared to 48.2% of heterosexual students.
- 32.3% of LGBTQ+ student respondents reported being very concerned with having access to healthcare, while only 22.4% of straight students had the same level of concern.
- Besides the effects mentioned above, more than a third of the LGBTQ+ students also reported being very concerned with paying bills (40.3%), losing job (35.1%), and not attending commencement (34.3%), although the difference in percentage of respondents were small between straight and LGBTQ+ respondents.

COVID-19 Effects on Students: "Very Concerned" Responses

	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
Not graduating on time	605	11.7%	216	15.9%
Not attending my commencement	1559	34.6%	396	34.4%
Losing my job	1235	30.1%	374	35.1%
Not getting a job after graduation	2378	48.2%	731	56.2%
Paying bills	1740	35.2%	528	40.3%
Being isolated from friends	2678	49.9%	892	62.3%
Accessing healthcare	1177	22.4%	452	32.3%
Meeting basic needs (e.g. housing)	867	16.4%	329	23.3%

Health, Safety & Well-being

Created by the American College Health Association (ACHA), the ACHA-NCHA Survey is a nationally recognized research survey that focuses on understanding the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and health behaviors of college students. The response rate for the survey was 15.5% (929/59921). For accompanying information including participant demographics and survey methodology, please visit: <https://sairo.ucla.edu/by-survey/ncha>. Due to the small sample size, results may not be representative of the entire UCLA student population.

Abusive Relationships, Sexual Abuse, and Stalking

- 12.5% of LGBTQ+ respondents, compared to 6.4% of straight/heterosexual respondents, reported being verbally threatened in the last 12 months.
- 7.8% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported that a partner insulted them or put them down to make them feel bad in the last 12 months, while only 4.4% straight respondents reported the same situation.
- 5.2% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported that they were sexually touched without consent in the past 12 month, while 1.9% straight respondents reported the same experience
- 4% of LGBTQ+ respondents stated that sexual penetration was attempted on them without consent, compared to 0.6% straight student respondents.

Violence and Intimate Partner Violence in the Last 12 Months

	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
A partner called me names, insulted me, or put me down to make me feel bad	30	4.4%	18	7.8%
A partner often insisted on knowing who I was with and where I was or tried to limit my contact with family or friends	16	2.4%	8	3.5%
A partner pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, choked, or hit me without my consent	7	1.0%	7	3.0%
A partner forced me into unwanted sexual contact by holding me down or hurting me in some way	7	1.0%	5	2.2%
A partner pressured me into unwanted sexual contact by threatening me, coercing me, or using alcohol or other drugs	6	0.9%	9	3.9%

Violence (Not Intimate Partner) in the Last 12 Months

	Straight		LGBTQ+	
	N	%	N	%
I was in a physical fight	10	1.5%	3	1.3%
I was physically assaulted (do not include sexual assault)	11	1.6%	7	3.0%
I was verbally threatened	43	6.4%	29	12.5%
I was sexually touched without my consent	13	1.9%	12	5.2%
Sexual penetration (vaginal, anal, oral) was attempted on me without my consent	4	0.6%	10	4.3%
I was sexually penetrated (vaginal, anal, oral), or made to penetrate someone without my consent	3	0.4%	9	3.9%

Summary and Conclusion

Based on the latest survey data, LGBTQ+ students make up to 21% of the UCLA undergraduate student population. While there is a large number LGBTQ+ undergraduates, the latest survey results suggest that LGBTQ+ students still face challenges and marginalization. This section provides a brief summary of the key findings from this report.

1. Mental health issues remain to be an essential challenge that LGBTQ+ students face. Programs that promote mental health wellness among the LGBTQ+ community are needed.
2. A higher rate of LGBTQ+ respondents screened positive for suicidal screening compared to straight respondents, which indicate a strong need for crisis intervention resources. LGBTQ+ also have reported a higher rate of conducting self-injury behaviors.
3. LGBTQ+ undergraduate students have a higher rate of physical and learning disabilities, chronic conditions, and mental health concerns. The finding suggests the importance of providing access to LGBTQ+ students.
4. Many LGBTQ+ students experience food insecurity and housing insecurity, some report that these insecurity affect their lives negatively, such as anxiety and depression. The finding suggest a need for programs that helps alleviate food and housing insecurity.
5. A higher percentage of LGBTQ+ students experience violence, sexual abuse, and assault from both intimate partners and non-intimate partners.
6. A large proportion of LGBTQ+ students were screen positive for loneliness, suggesting that there is a need for community support and peer groups.
7. Almost half of LGBTQ+ respondents, compared to only 22.5% of heterosexual respondents stated that they used mental health services in the last 12 months. This finding dictates that LGBTQ+ students may have worse mental health or are more likely to seek mental health assistance.
8. Both straight and LGBTQ+ students reported concerns on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Limitations

It is important to recognize that this fact sheet has a few limitations that may lead to inconclusive results. First of all, the sample of the surveys do not represent the whole undergraduate student body, nor all LGBTQ+ students. Since students complete surveys on a voluntary basis, it is possible that there are LGBTQ+ students who chose to not complete the survey or disclose their sexual orientation.

Moreover, this fact sheet primarily included data from two surveys. It is likely that there are other surveys or data sources that have a larger sample size and capture different aspects of LGBTQ+ students' experiences. While this fact sheet focused on quantitative data, qualitative data from interviews and focus groups may offer administrator a better understanding on how to serve LGBTQ+ students with their needs.

Additionally, existing social stigma attached to LGBTQ+ identity could prevent some students from willing to report their identities. Since the timing of coming out varies for each person, it is also likely that some LGBTQ+ students came out after they have completed the survey, thus their experiences were not recorded as LGBTQ+ students.

Another limitation of this data is that the UCUES is administered bi-annually. The UCUES with COVID-19 impact questions was conducted in 2020 while this LGBTQ+ fact sheet was written in early 2022. Since the COVID-19 outbreak took place in March 2020 in the U.S., it is possible that students expressed more concerns during the early stage of pandemic. In March 2022, students may have gained more strategies of effective remote/hybrid learning after two years of coping with the remote environment. Hence, the 2020 UCUES data may not reflect the latest attitudes of students as of 2022.

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