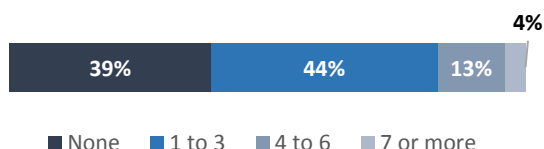


# WELLNESS SERIES: GRADUATE MEAL SKIPPING

## 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. 17 percent of respondents skipped over 4 meals per week.

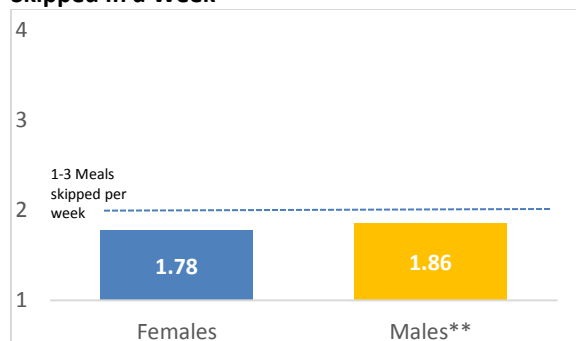
**Figure 1. Meals Skipped In a Week**



## Comparison by Gender

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 less than three meals per week (see Figure 2). When compared to female respondents, males were significantly more likely to indicate skipping meals ( $p < 0.01$ ).

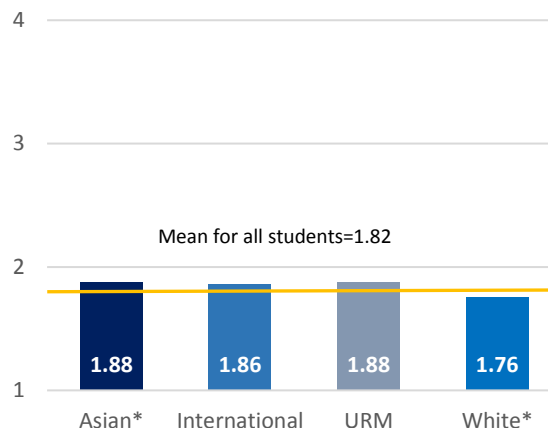
**Figure 2. Gender Mean Comparison for Meals Skipped In a Week**



## Comparison by Race/Ethnicity

Asian students reported skipping significantly more meals when compared to all respondents (see Figure 3). Conversely, White students reported significantly lower numbers of meals skipped than all students. No significant differences were found between all students and International and URM students.

**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 reasons for meal skipping. Students' top four major reasons for skipping meals were: (1) time constraints in the students' schedule; (2) not having time to prepare food at home; (3) the cost of food on campus; and (4) a lack of hunger (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Top Reasons for Skipping Meals**

Time constraints in schedule	62.3%
Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home	37.5%
Cost of food on campus	21.5%
Not hungry	20.1%

## Comparison by Gender

Among those who responded that they skipped at least one meal per week ( $N = 2208$ ), there were significant differences between male and female respondents several areas (see Table 2). Male respondents were more likely to cite the cost of food on campus as a major reason for skipping meals ( $p < 0.01$ ). As far as campus food options, female respondents were significantly more likely to cite the location of restaurants on campus as a barrier ( $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, female respondents were more likely to cite time constraints and not having time to prepare food at home as reasons for skipping meals ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2. Gender Mean Comparison of Reasons for Skipping Meals**

	Female	Male
<b>Cost of food on campus**</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>2.50</b>
Overall cost of food	1.63	1.60
<b>Location of restaurants on campus**</b>	<b>1.58</b>	<b>1.46</b>
Hours of operation of restaurants on campus	1.54	1.51
Not hungry	1.84	1.85
Desired weight loss	1.40	1.37
<b>Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home**</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>2.03</b>
Have nowhere to store food brought from home	1.47	1.44
<b>Time constraints in schedule**</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.50</b>

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

When looking at the differences between racial and ethnic groups with regards to reasons identified for skipping meals, the magnitude of reasons identified by Asian and White students did not differ from the mean of all students (See Table 3). Significant differences were found in the responses provided by International and URM students. International students were significantly less likely to consider not having time to prepare food from home as a reason for skipping meals ( $p<0.01$ ). International students did identify desired weight loss significantly more likely as a reason for skipping meals than the overall graduate student population ( $p<0.05$ ). URM students were significantly more likely to cite the overall cost of food ( $p<0.01$ ) and the cost of food on campus ( $p<0.05$ ) as reasons for skipping meals.

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

	All	Asian	International	URM	White
Cost of food on campus	1.78	1.77	1.66*	1.91*	1.77
Overall cost of food	1.62	1.66	1.49*	1.78**	1.58
Location of restaurants on campus	1.53	1.56	1.50	1.56	1.50
Hours of operation of restaurants on campus	1.51	1.55	1.53	1.51	1.48
Not hungry	1.86	1.82	1.85	1.78	1.89
Desired weight loss	1.40	1.40	1.47*	1.35	1.41
Don't have time to prepare food to bring from home	2.15	2.19	2.01**	2.27*	2.14
Have nowhere to store food brought from home	1.43	1.48	1.41	1.53*	1.41
Time constraints in schedule	2.55	2.59	2.48	2.60	2.53

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

Note: Graduate and Professional Student Survey 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>.