



Student Affairs Information and Research Office

A department of Student Affairs

April 2007

University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES) Summary of 2006 UCUES Civic Engagement Module

The Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) is the research and assessment office within UCLA's Student Affairs organization. Our purpose is to use data-driven approaches to help the many Student Affairs offices that serve students by: keeping Student Affairs staff up to date about the backgrounds, experiences, and needs of UCLA students, assisting Student Affairs offices in assessing their services, and contributing to campus-wide and UC system-wide research and assessment efforts.

In all our activities, we support Student Affairs' continual efforts to promote the academic and personal success of UCLA students, to contribute to their development and learning, and to enhance the quality of campus life.

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes UCLA students' responses to the Civic Engagement module of the 2006 UCUES, which included questions about undergraduates' experiences with student activities, community service, and leadership; utilization of news and information sources; political engagement; and opinions on national issues. The primary purpose of this report is to compare UCLA findings to the average of student responses at the eight other UC campuses. As such, these data help identify aspects of the undergraduate experience that are unique to UCLA students versus those that represent a larger system-wide trend. Significant findings from the Civic Engagement module include:

- A greater proportion of UCLA students were involved in student activities than respondents at other UCs, particularly in student government, fraternities and sororities, and other on-campus student organizations.
- Responses to the 2006 UCUES show that UCLA students engaged in service activities at a higher rate and with greater frequency than their peers at other UCs.
- In comparison to students system-wide, UCLA students were significantly more likely to have used the campus newspaper as their main source of information for news and public affairs.
- Generally, UCLA students were similar to their UC peers with respect to their liberal political orientation and in their opinions on national issues. Slight differences emerged in particular areas of political engagement.

These data help inform the efforts of Student Affairs to offer relevant programming for civic engagement and political activism, as well as to provide access to volunteer and leadership opportunities.

Student Activities

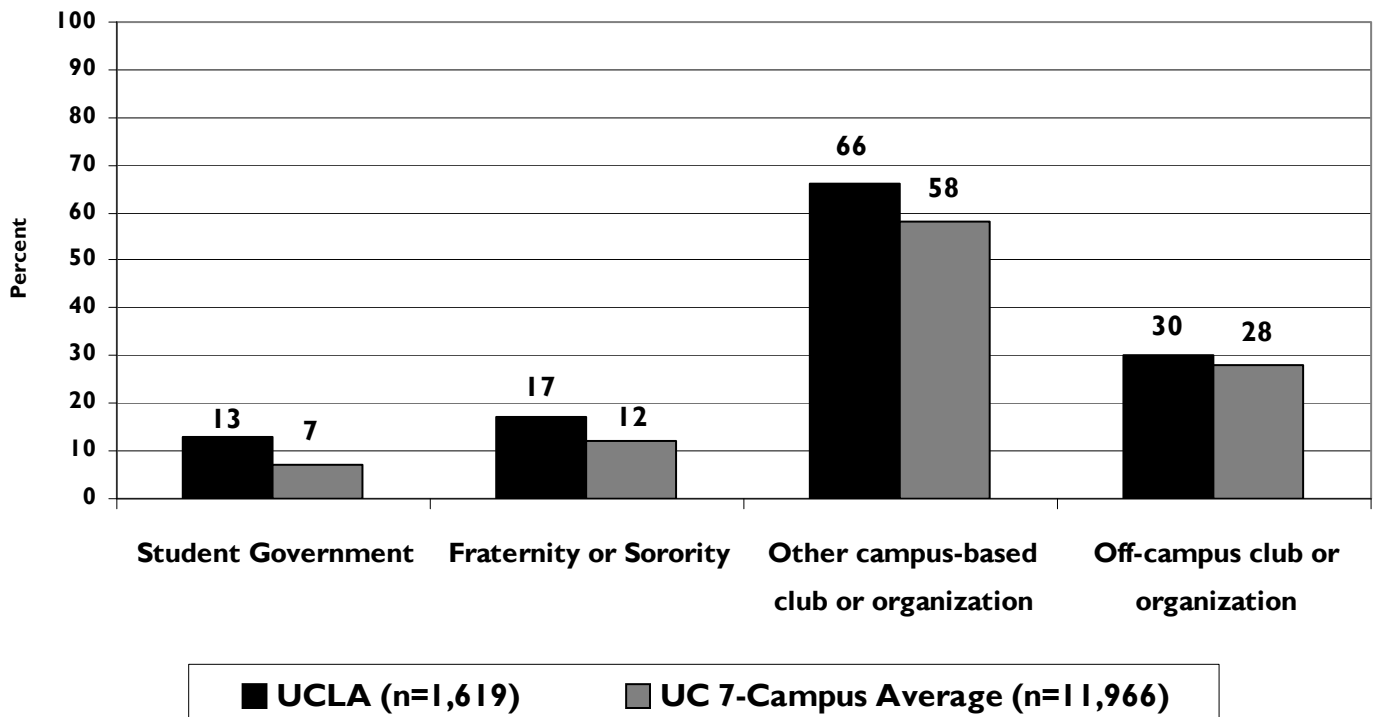
A greater proportion of UCLA students were involved in student activities than their peers at other UCs, particularly in student government, fraternities and sororities, and other on-campus student organizations (Figure 1). Not only were UCLA students more involved, they were also more likely to serve leadership roles as an officer or leader of their respective organizations.

Not surprisingly, a larger proportion of UCLA students strongly agreed or agreed that “opportunities for community service on campus are important” to them than was reported by other UC undergraduates (Figure 2). Further, UCLA students were more likely than students at other UC campuses to strongly agree or agree that the opportunities for development, such as leadership skills or abilities to affirm one’s cultural identity, are important experiences to them (Figure 2).

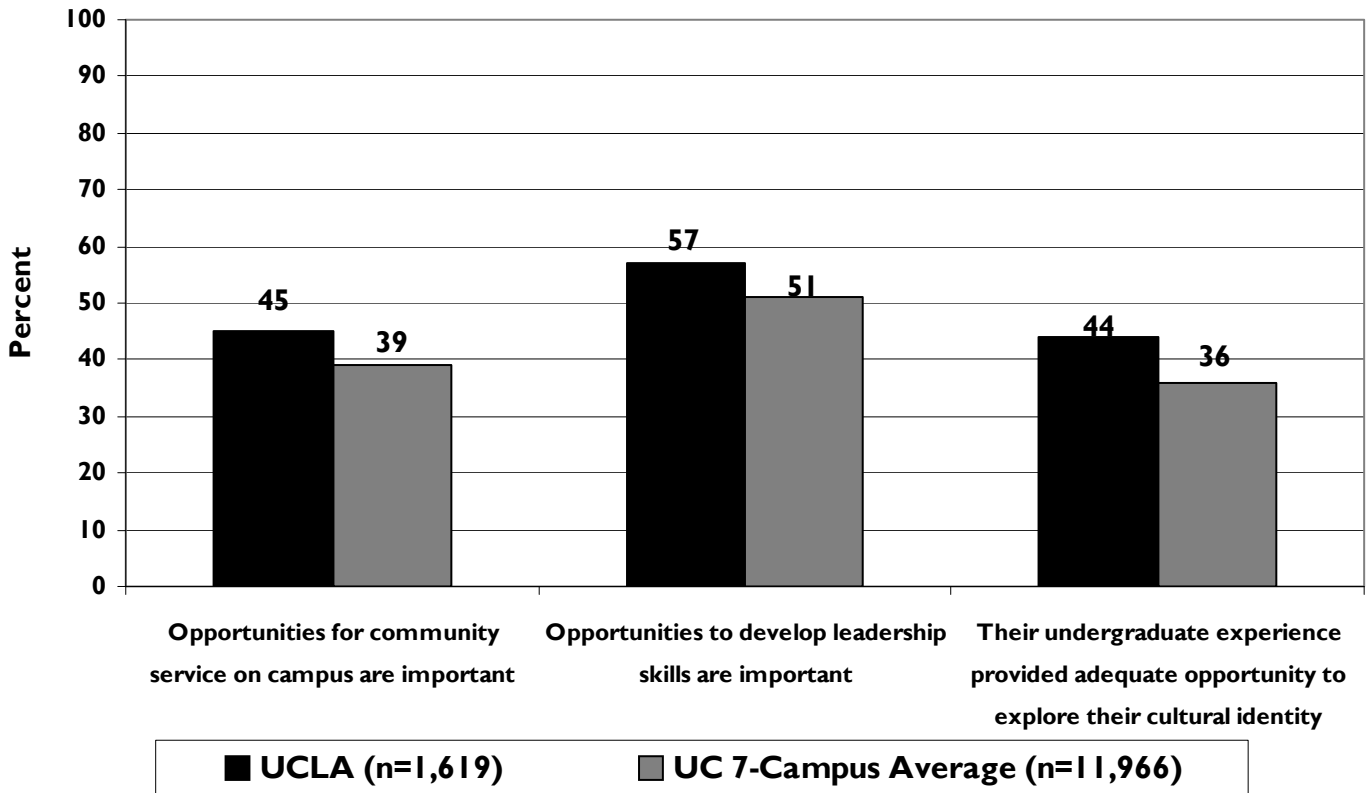
Background of UCUES

The 2006 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) is the fourth in a series of surveys of undergraduates at the University of California undergraduate campuses. As part of a larger collaborative project entitled ‘The Student Experience in the Research University-21st Century’ (SERU21), UCUES offers a rare in-depth examination of the undergraduate experience at the University of California. As such, it offers UCLA administrators, faculty, and students an opportunity both to closely examine campus life at UCLA and to compare it to the UC system as a whole. Results can be viewed through many lenses, such as by major, by college or school, by class standing, by entry status (direct/transfer), and by student characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, first language).

Figure 1. Participation in Student Activities as a Member or Officer



**Figure 2. Perceptions of Opportunities and Experiences at
Percent of Students who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that:**



Community Service

Responses to the 2006 UCUES show that UCLA students engaged in service activities at a higher rate and with greater frequency than their peers at other UCs. More specifically, 52% of UCLA respondents to the Civic Engagement module reported that they participated in community service work during the academic year as opposed to 43% of respondents at the other campuses. Further, just over half of the UCLA respondents who participated in service do so for three or more hours per week versus 44% of students at other UCs who report engaging in service with the same frequency.

Table 1 shows the various ways that UCUES respondents at UCLA as well as at other UC campuses gained access to service opportunities. The two most common ways for students throughout the UC to have become involved in service was through a campus student organization (other than the Greek system) and by finding their own service opportunity. In addition, UCLA students were even more likely than their peers at the 7 other UC campuses to have utilized these pathways to service and significantly less likely than respondents at other UCs to have engaged in community service through an internship or through a program where they received course credit.

Table I. Access to Community Service Opportunities

| | UCLA (n=1,619) | UC System^a (n=11,966) | Difference |
|--|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Through a student organization on campus besides the Greek system | 31.5 | 26.7 | 4.8** |
| I found the work on my own | 26.4 | 24.1 | 2.3 |
| Through a formal service program where I received pay or a stipend | 3.3 | 1.4 | 1.9 |
| Through a related class | 8.5 | 7.2 | 1.3 |
| Through my fraternity or sorority | 14.8 | 14.5 | 0.3 |
| Through university department or program | 4.7 | 6.0 | -1.3 |
| Through my religious organization or church | 7.9 | 9.8 | -1.9 |
| Through my internship | 1.0 | 4.0 | -3.0** |
| Through a program where I received course credit | 1.8 | 6.2 | -4.4** |

^aThe term system refers to a 7-campus average

*p<.05, **p<.01

Community Service (continued)

The Civic Engagement module of the 2006 UCUES also inquired about the reasons that students participated in community service. The greatest proportion of respondents at UCLA and across the system responded that they participated in community service “to help other people” (66% at UCLA vs. 62% at other UCs). Over one-quarter of students at UCLA and other UC campuses engaged in service for the following reasons:

- To meet people and make friends (37% at UCLA vs. 30% at other UCs)
- To learn more about the community (34% vs. 30%)
- To help gain experience for a future career (30% vs. 29%)

Although survey responses to the Core module indicated that a majority of students at UCLA and across the UC system plan to go on to graduate or professional school, their educational aspirations were not

the primary motivation for their service activity; only 18% of UCLA students and 15% of students elsewhere in the UC system reported that they participated in service “to help get in to a professional or graduate school program.”

Survey responses also indicate that just over 30% of students at UCLA participated in outreach activities as part of their community service work as opposed to 24% of students at seven other UC campuses. In addition, over 20% of students at UCLA and across the UC system engaged in the following types of service activities (although the participation rates for UCLA students tended to be slightly higher than their UC peers):

- Tutoring (29% at UCLA vs. 21% at other UCs)
- Mentoring (29% vs. 20%)
- General support (22% at both UCLA and other UCs)
- Teaching or educating (21% vs. 20%)

News and Information

Approximately two-thirds of UCUES survey respondents at UCLA and across the UC system reported that they “follow what’s going on in government and public affairs” at least “some of the time” (65% at both UCLA and other UCs). Survey responses indicate that most UC undergraduates utilized the Internet as their primary source of information for news followed distantly by campus newspapers, local television news, and national television news (Table 2). In comparison to students system-wide, UCLA students

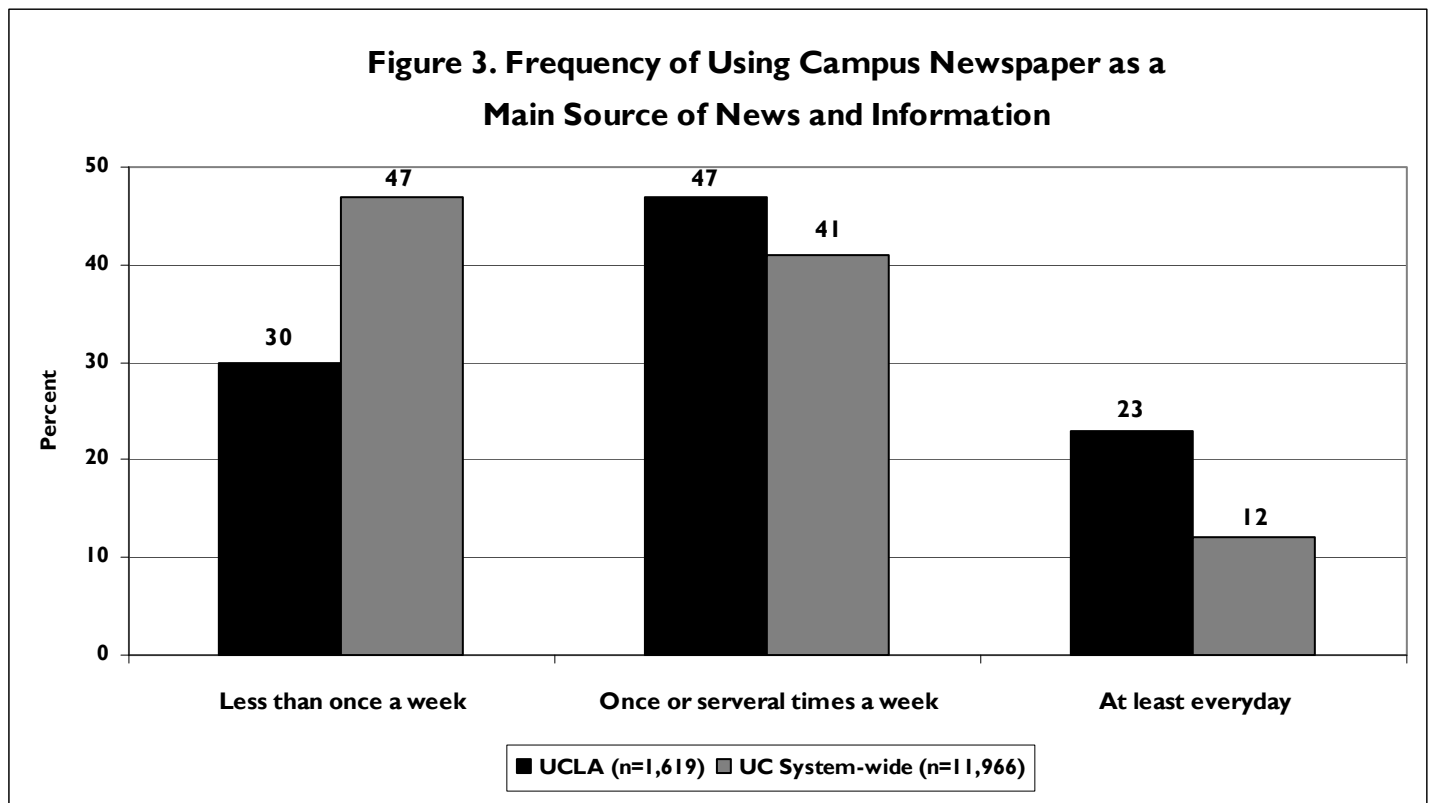
are more likely to have used the campus newspaper as the main source of information for news and public affairs (15% vs. 8%). Twenty three percent of respondents indicated that they read the campus newspaper at least once a day and 47% used it once or several times a week, which represents a significantly greater frequency of use than their peers at other UCs (Figure 3). Other than the campus newspaper, UCLA students did not significantly differ from students system-wide in their use of other sources of news and information.

Table 2. Main Source of Information For News and Public Affairs

| | UCLA (n=1,473) | UC System^a (n=9,414) | Difference |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Internet | 55.0 | 55.0 | 0.0 |
| Campus newspaper | 15.0 | 8.0 | 7.0** |
| Local television news | 10.0 | 10.0 | 0.0 |
| National television news | 9.0 | 11.0 | -2.0 |
| Public radio | 3.0 | 4.0 | -1.0 |
| Other daily newspaper | 3.0 | 6.0 | -3.0 |
| Public television | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Talk radio | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Weekly news magazines | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |

^aThe term system refers to a 7-campus average

*p<.05, **p<.01

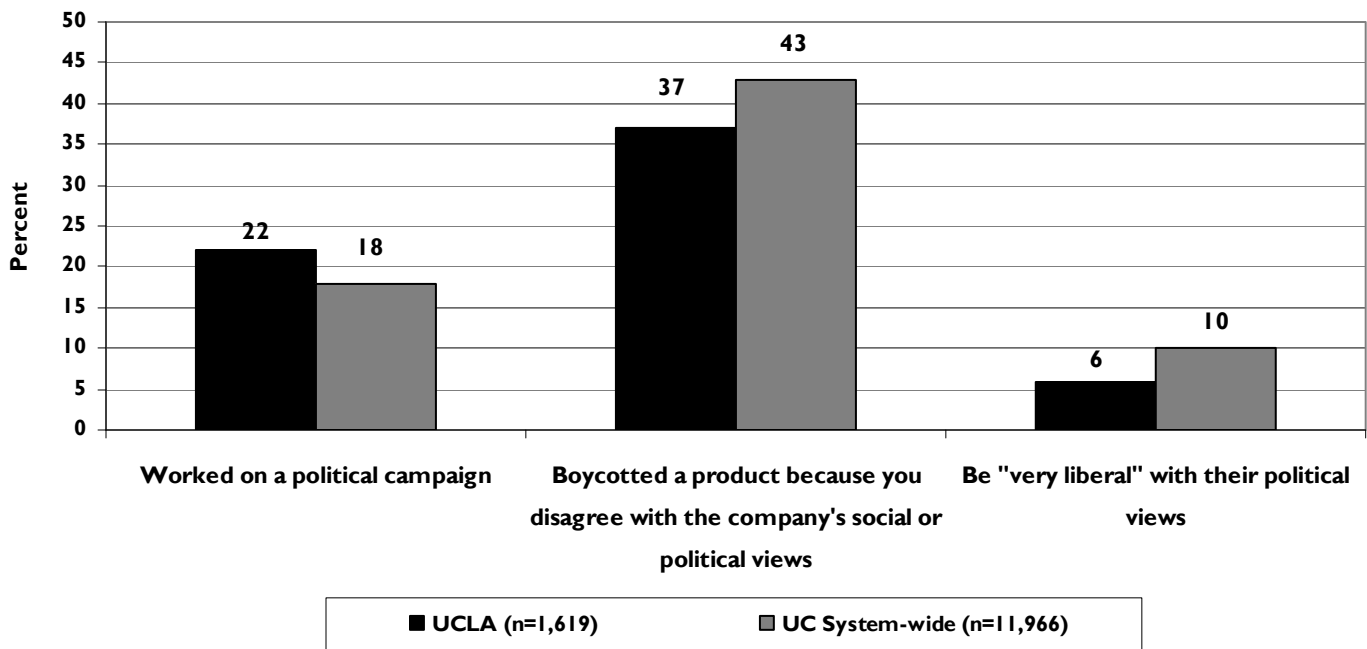


Political Engagement

Overall, UCLA students are fairly similar to other UC undergraduates with respect to their political orientation and engagement; more than half of student respondents across the UC system reported having a liberal orientation (57% at UCLA vs. 58% at other UCs). However, there are a few notable differences particularly in the percent of students who considered themselves

“very liberal,” which was slightly higher at UCLA than at the other UCs (Figure 4). In relation to students’ political engagement, UCLA students were more likely than their UC peers to have worked on a political campaign and were less likely to boycott a product because of disagreement with the company’s social or political views (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Political Engagement



2006 UCUES Survey Administration and Sample Representativeness: Civic Engagement Module

In spring and summer 2006, all UC undergraduate campuses participated in UCUES. Each student at the eight UC campuses was invited to complete the Core module. Seven of the UCs (all but UC Merced) also elected to administer four survey modules to a randomly-selected sub-sample of their undergraduate population, such that each respondent completed the Core and one module that addressed: 1) academic engagement, 2) civic engagement, 3) student development, or 4) student service utilization and satisfaction. The UCUES Civic Engagement module included items about participation in community service and leadership, news and information sources, and political engagement. A total of 1,619 undergraduates responded to the UCUES Civic Engagement module of the UCLA administration of the 2006 UCUES. While this only represents a 35% response rate, the sample generated by the 2006 UCUES was generally representative of the population of UCLA undergraduates. However, it is important to note that the sample of the UCLA UCUES Civic Engagement module slightly over-represents direct entry and Asian or Pacific Islander undergraduates and slightly under-represents freshmen. Other characteristics of the UCLA UCUES Core sample, such as gender (i.e. males and females), entry academic standing, geographic location, and the distribution across racial/ethnic groups are representative of the UCLA population. Thus, this sample has a great deal of utility for campus-based assessment and research efforts.

Opinions on National Issues

In general, both UCLA students and students system-wide overwhelmingly agreed that abortion should be legal (80% for both UCLA and the other UCs) and in light of developments in Iraq, that the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq (82% at UCLA vs. 81% at other UCs). Additionally, students indicated disagreement with the statement that “racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America” (88% vs. 90%).

A few of the notable differences among UCLA students and students system-wide include lower levels of strong agreement with the view that the wealthy should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now, a national health care plan is needed, and same-sex couple should have the right to legally marry (Figure 5).

Figure 6. Opinions on National Issues
Students "Strongly Agreed" With the Following:

