UCLA | **Student Affairs Information & Research Office**

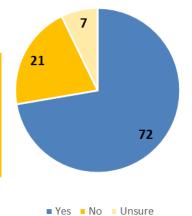# Graduate Student Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In order to understand how students were faring during the rapid changes to instruction and daily life during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) worked with campus stakeholders to develop questions to be included the Student Affairs Graduate and Professional Student Survey (GPSS) in Spring 2020. This report includes the final summary charts of key content areas that were summarized at various points during the Spring and Summer terms to inform campus decision-making. A total of 2862 students responded to the survey (a response rate of 24%). For general information about the GPSS survey visit: https://www.sairo.ucla.edu/By-Survey/GRAD-Survey

Intent to Return to Campus for Fall 2020

Do you plan to enroll at UCLA in Fall 2020?
% reporting
Source: GPSS 2020

Reasons cited among "No" respondents:	%
Plan to graduate before Fall 2020	96%
Financial challenges	2%
Health concerns	0%
Family responsibilities	1%
Visa/travel concerns or restrictions	2%
Other	3%

Reasons cited among "Unsure" respondents:	%
Plan to graduate before Fall 2020	24%
Financial challenges	53%
Health concerns	17%
Family responsibilities	18%
Visa/travel concerns or restrictions	15%
Other	41%

■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

Majority of "other" responses reference the quality of remote instruction and whether classes will be online in Fall, along with overall financial concerns. For full list of "other" responses, see Appendix II.

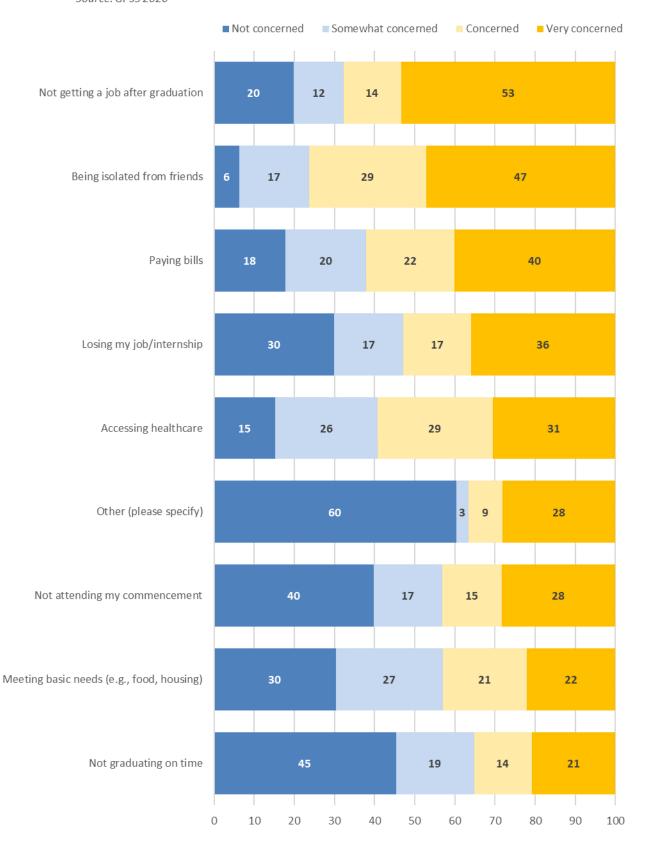**Students are most concerned about learning in the remote instruction environment and conducting research**

% reporting level of concern for "effects on learning"
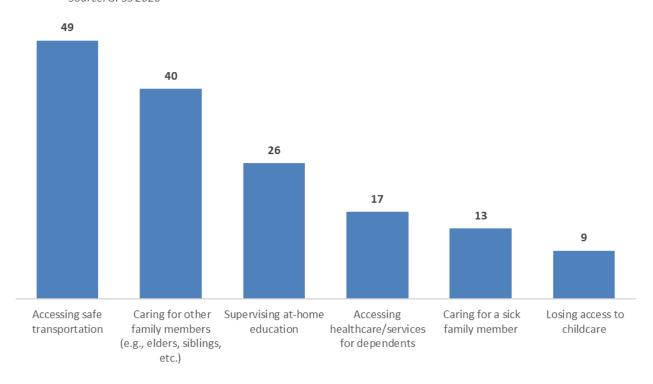*Source: GPSS 2020*

■ Not concerned ■ Somewhat concerned □ Concerned ■ Very concerned

Concern	Not concerned	Somewhat concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
Learning effectively in the remote instruction environment	9	19	26	46
Ability to conduct research	18	19	22	42
Doing well on tests and assignments in online courses	19	20	26	35
Interacting with course faculty	17	25	27	32
Having access to an appropriate study space	21	22	24	32
Other learning concerns	48	8	15	30
Accessing library resources and services	24	28	22	26
Interacting with advisor	28	26	22	23
Accessing technology resources needed to conduct my academic work	31	27	21	21
Getting the courses I need for my program	42	23	17	18
Accessing the learning support services I need	36	29	20	16
Having reliable access to the Internet	41	28	16	15
Missing classes	44	24	19	14

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

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Other Concerns

Not getting a job after graduation is a prominent concern

% reporting level of concern for "effects on you"
Source: GPSS 2020

Legend: ■ Not concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Concerned ■ Very concerned

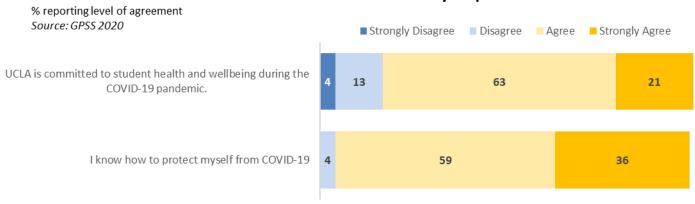| Concern	Not concerned	Somewhat concerned	Concerned	Very concerned
Not getting a job after graduation	20	12	14	53
Being isolated from friends	6	17	29	47
Paying bills	18	20	22	40
Losing my job/internship	30	17	17	36
Accessing healthcare	15	26	29	31
Other (please specify)	60	3	9	28
Not attending my commencement	40	17	15	28
Meeting basic needs (e.g., food, housing)	30	27	21	22
Not graduating on time	45	19	14	21

Accessing safe transportation and caring for family members are prominent challenges
% reporting "challenges due to COVID-19" (mark all that apply)
Source: GPSS 2020

Challenge	%
Accessing safe transportation	49
Caring for other family members (e.g., elders, siblings, etc.)	40
Supervising at-home education	26
Accessing healthcare/services for dependents	17
Caring for a sick family member	13
Losing access to childcare	9

Perspectives on Health

Students are confident in their own and UCLA's ability to promote health.
% reporting level of agreement
Source: GPSS 2020

Legend: Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
UCLA is committed to student health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.	4	13	63	21
I know how to protect myself from COVID-19		4	59	36

Appendix I: Respondent Demographics

	N	Percent
Residency		
California	1447	50.6%
International	587	20.5%
United States (except California)	713	24.9%
Class Level		
Masters/Professional Masters	1262	46.0%
Ph.D. Pre Candidacy	1088	39.7%
Ph.D Advanced to Candidacy	391	14.3%
College		
College of Letters and Science: Humanities	111	4.0%
College of Letters and Science: Institute of the Environment and Sustainability	9	3.9%
College of Letters and Science: International Institute	9	0.3%
College of Letters and Science: Life Sciences	198	0.3%
College of Letters and Science: Physical Sciences	153	6.9%
College of Letters and Science: Social Sciences	190	5.3%
David Geffen School of Medicine	167	6.6%
Graduate Division	4	0.1%
Graduate School of Education and Information Studies	174	6.1%
Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science	324	11.3%
Herb Alpert School of Music	34	1.2%
John E. Anderson Graduate School of Management	427	14.9%
Jonathan and Karin Fielding School of Public Health	205	7.2%
LS: Basic Biomedical Sciences	1	0.0%
Medicine: Basic Biomedical Sciences	1	0.0%
Meyer and Renee Luskin School of Public Affairs	154	5.4%
School of Dentistry	107	3.7%
School of Law	195	6.8%
School of Nursing	132	4.6%
School of the Arts and Architecture	69	2.4%
School of Theater, Film, and Television	83	2.9%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4	0.1%
Asian	562	19.6%
Black Non-Hispanic	90	3.1%
Hispanic	395	13.8%
International	581	20.3%
Pacific Islander	6	0.2%
Two or More Races	119	4.2%
Unknown	99	3.5%
White Non-Hispanic	891	31.1%
Gender Identity		
Man	943	38.9%
Woman	1396	57.5%
Trans Man	3	0.1%
Trans Woman	4	0.2%
Transgender	1	0.0%
Nonbinary	22	0.9%
Gender Fluid	4	0.2%
Gender Non-Conforming	3	0.1%
Gender Variant	1	0.0%
Genderqueer	8	0.3%
Two Spirit	2	0.1%
Different Identity	5	0.2%
Decline to state	34	1.4%
First Generation		
First Generation	709	29.3%
Not First Generation	1708	70.7%

Disability		
At least one disability	797	34.9%
No disability	1480	65.1%

Appendix II: "Other" Reasons for Possible Non-Attendance

ability to find work in this economy

Already graduate

ARE YOU SERIOUS? You aren't listing some major categories here. For one, if a sizeable amount of my classmates don't return, I likely won't either. I am attending to build relationships with them. #2, if the education offered is through remote learning, I'm likely out, especially if you think you are going to be charging people the full tuition rate. What a joke.

Classes my be on line again, this is unacceptable.

Clinical internship (in abstentia)

concern on the quality of online course

concerned about cost benefit of online learning.

Concerns about quality of instruction

concerns about remote instruction

covid-19

Debating if the degree I was promised is being met

depends on the classes offered

Depends on tuition/virtualness of program

Dismissal

do not want to continue with online classes.

don't want to spend the same tuition fee but only get online courses

Fully virtual format is not as valuable as in-person, so I may defer until we can return to classroom.

Funding from department

Funding has not been decided

graduate already

Graduated

Graduated

Graduated 05/31

Graduating from Master's program but reconsidering the PhD program I am in because of everything possibly still being online.

housing

I am a recent graduate of spring 2020

I am graduating in June 2020

I am now learning on-line, however my tuition was supposed to go to hybrid learning. I feel robbed that I am still paying this insane tuition, and not getting the education I am paying for.

I am skeptical whether my department is prioritizing my research and quality of education. I am skeptical that my department has the resources to support my education and needs. I am skeptical that public health systems and government are able to manage the pandemic in this country in such a way that I can get back on track with my work in a timely manner

I am studying a 1 year LL.M. program which ends May 2020.

I attend UCR and I have fulfilled my course requirements

I can't conduct human subjects research and my advisors are not being reasonable with their expectations. You need to look into this please. It's wrong that you won't give people who conduct human subjects research extra time. You all should change the design of graduate education.

I can't justify paying full tuition for a program being delivered via zoom. Especially if I lose my job.

I clicked this box but it's really winter I'm unsure about. I think I'm OK going through fall quarter online but I really want the in-person experience. If we're still 100% online for winter, I may want to pause my program.

I do not believe I will be getting the value for the tuition I would be paying if the quarter is remote.

I do not learn effectively in a remote environment.

I do not want to enroll and pay 30k for online classes.

I have every credit I need. All that is left to do is do my thesis project. There is no point to taking more classes and running up more student loan debt.

I hope to finish my dissertation in August, but it partially relies on some childcare over the summer (camps) so I can have quiet, focused time to write. Another consideration is the job market. If there are no jobs, I may drag my heels and stick around a little longer for at least some income and healthcare as a GSR.

I might take a leave of absence and come back when classes are back on campus

I want to attend school in person

I want to TA for an in-class environment

I will finish one degree in June and am scheduled to finish the other next June. I am finding it increasingly impossible to justify taking further loans to get subpar online education with no tangible benefits just so I can produce a compromised thesis off other people's research (as fieldwork is not possible right now and departments are not adapting). I am devastated to lose this degree, but UCLA is not doing anything to make the online grad experience meaningful or effective.

If classes are remote, it's not worth the cost of attendance and missing out on the EMBA experience

if Fall 2020 is going to be online, i will strongly consider taking a leave of absence

If Fall quarter isn't in-person, I won't want to attend.

if I don't graduate, I may end up leaving

If it will be remote learning, then I probably will gap a quarter because remote learning doesn't work well with the learning experience and academic work production in my department

If tuition is raised, it is not worth it

If UCLA is remote in Fall 2020, I will have to think about the cost/benefit of my program at that time. I would rather not pay exorbitant amounts to get a subpar education.

If virtual, I may take a leave of absence

If we're expected to come to campus with masks on and there's no vaccine. I am not ok with that.

If you're planning on charging me the same tuition cost for a lesser experience, I have other substitutes to attending school that I'd rather take than get a lesser educational experience.

Instruction mode being remote still

Internship

It's honestly not worth paying full tuition for online classes.

Leave of absence

Looking for job

may consider gap year because of the current social situation in LA

May graduate before Fall 2020

May take a leave of absence if FALL 2020 is remote, as it may impact recruiting and the in-person learning experience.

Mental health issues make it difficult to complete program

Might forgo masters

might or might not graduate before Fall 2020

My degree is only a two-year program and online music classes are less effective than in-person rehearsals.

My degree requires in-person meetings in order to be fully effective.

My program is clinic based for the next year. If the clinic is not open and departments will not be finding alternative ways to complete clinic requirements, I will not be paying tuition since the quarter will not be advancing my degree.

my program is very hands-on, if my classes are online I am not sure it would be worthwhile to enroll.

My program is waiting to see if internships for the next year will be available to students in-person / what protocols will be regarding the internship. I'm hoping to find out more about how this will impact the next year of my program.

No remaining classes to take towards degree. Thesis film is incomplete.

not getting the learning environment i signed up for

not if it's online

Not sure if it will be remote learning

online learning continues

online learning is not worth the tuition

OPT

Out of state student-- finding housing if my in state roommates decide to stay home

personal

Preference for in-person instruction; would consider a leave of absence.

Program experience changed drastically

Quality of education is not worth price

quality of online education received in Spain 2020 quarter

Reduced Class Offerings

remote

Remote learning

remote learning not necessarily worth it

ROI for online experience vs in-class session

Taking leave of absence

Tenure-track Assistant Professor position starts August 15, 2020. I am in a rush to finish dissertation.

The cuts in the program are not being offset by adjustments in tuition and especially professional fees

the EMBA program isn't designed for remote learning. We're not getting the same benefit.

The experience is not worth the tuition being charged

the online learning experience has not been going well. Not sure if this is worth the tuition I am paying.

This decision will depend on if we will be online in the fall and if the school will decide to waive some of our fees.

transfer

UCLA has not indicated whether the Fall 2020 semester will be remote.

Virtual is not even close to the same quality as in person. I would rather just wait until I can resume in person learning.

Whether I can graduate hinges on the decision of the US and Chinese government, so there is a lot of uncertainty in my life now

Will be on filing fee

will study at another school

Zoom classes aren't worth it. If we are remote learning in the fall I will have a tough decision to make