Campus Climate Comparison

By
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Executive Summary

In the spring quarters of 2008, 2010, and 2012, UC Davis participated in the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), a UC-wide census of all undergraduates at the nine general campuses. The survey includes a number of items that addresses dimensions of campus climate. This report presents trend data from the three implementations of UCUES to investigate the impacts of significant events on the overall campus climate for undergraduates.

Events Impacting Campus Climate

Fee increases.
In the aftermath of the economic downturn in fall 2008, the University of California has received decreasing financial support from the State of California. In November 2009, the regents approved fee increases across the University of California. The announcement sparked a sit-in in Mrak Hall which led to the arrest of 52 students. Undergraduate fees increased by 15% in winter and spring terms of 2010, and an additional 15% increase beginning in summer 2010. The Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan was instituted to mitigate the effects on students from low-income households. As state funding has continued to plummet, undergraduate fees have continued to rise: fees rose again by 8% in Fall 2011 and by 9.6% in Winter 2012. Subsequently, the Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan was extended to students from families making less than $80,000. More recently, concerns about affordability for middle-class families have been voiced, though no fee relief has yet been extended to meet their needs.

Hate incidents.
In the winter of 2010 UC Davis experienced a number of troubling incidents that shocked the campus community and brought campus climate into daily conversation. Several swastikas were found spray painted on the UC Davis campus, one on the door of a Jewish student’s room in a campus residence hall. Hateful words were spray painted on the door of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center (LGBTRC). An opinion article in the Aggie, The Rise of the Girly Men, evoked far-reaching campus conversation about the devaluation of attributes associated with women. News of hateful incidents on other UC campuses added to the distress of underrepresented student communities on the Davis campus and throughout the UC system. Campus concern about the events eventuated in an increase of resources for the LGBTRC center.

Student activism.
In November 2011, a decision to remove Occupy activists from the UC Davis quad resulted in the pepper-spraying of student activists, an event which sparked negative publicity of the campus which was national and international in scope. Beginning in January of 2010, protesters conducted a sit-in at the campus branch of U.S. Bank in Memorial Union, intermittently blocking its entrance. In March 1, the bank announced the closure of the branch and the termination of its agreements with the campus.

New Student Community Center.
On a more positive note, the new Student Community Center opened its doors in January 2012. The new facility, partially funded by a student fee initiative approved in 2002, included expanded facilities for the Cross Cultural Center, LGBTRC, and the Student Recruitment and Retention Center, among other student resources.
**Effects on Campus Climate**

Because the UCUES response sets are large, statistical significance at the level of the entire respondent population is not a particularly useful determinant of impact: small differences in ratings will register as statistically significant. UCUES researchers suggest a .2 difference in mean ratings as an appropriate measure of substantive difference at the campus level. This guideline, however, may underestimate differences for items that were asked by only a portion of the entire undergraduate population (i.e., items in modules rather than the core). The judgments below take both of these perspectives into account.

Several of the UCUES items which measure global climate (climate for the entire undergraduate population) remain essentially unchanged over the three administrations of the survey. These include: *I feel that I belong at this campus; I feel valued as an individual on this campus; Most students are proud to attend this school and I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus.*

Mean ratings of other global measure of campus climate fell moderately from 2008 to 2010, and remained at the 2010 level in 2012. These include: *Knowing what I know now, I would still choose to enroll at this campus; I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus; and I am proud to be a student at this campus.* The UC Davis rating on political expression is the lowest in the system, but there is less than a .2 difference between the minimum and maximum ratings).

Students in both 2010 and 2012, however, are less likely to agree that *The institution values students’ opinions* than students in the 2008 cohort. But even the lowest rating on this item (4.06 in 2010) remains on the positive side of the six-point rating scale: on average, students *somewhat agree* that the institution values student opinions.

Students rated the campus as *less friendly, caring, tolerant and safe* in 2010 than in 2008. In 2012, ratings rose on each of these dimensions of climate except *safe* which, nevertheless, still receives a high rating from our students: our students rate us substantively lower than the highest-rated UC, but much higher than the lowest-rated UC campus. Campus ratings of friendliness and tolerance remain lower than they were in 2008, but do not differ substantively from the highest-rated UC campus on these characteristics.

Despite repeated and substantial increases in campus fees, student ratings of the affordability of UC Davis, which have never been high, vary only moderately and not in a consistent direction.

In the aftermath of multiple hate incidents in Fall 2010, ratings for respect regardless of gender and (even more markedly) sexual orientation fell substantially. UCUES items rating respectful treatment of these groups rose to or exceeded 2008 levels in 2012.

There is no evidence of a substantive negative impact of the November 18 pepper-spray incident on students’ perceptions of campus climate.
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ........................................................................................................ ii

Events Impacting Campus Climate .................................................................................. ii

Effects on Campus Climate .............................................................................................. iii

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 1

**Results** ........................................................................................................................ 2

General Campus Climate ................................................................................................. 2

- Figure 1. Global Measures of Campus Climate: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .................. 2
- Figure 2. Sense of Personal Value: 2008, 2010, 2012 ............................................. 3
- Figure 3. Student Pride: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ......................................................... 4
- Figure 4. Freedom to Express Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ............................... 5
- Figure 5. Perceptions of Campus Atmosphere: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ............... 6
- Figure 6. Perceptions of Difficulty and Affordability: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ...... 7

Problems on Campus ........................................................................................................ 8

- Figure 7. Appropriate Behavior on Campus: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ................. 8

Campus Climate and Diversity ......................................................................................... 9

- Figure 8. Importance of Diversity: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ................................. 9
- Figure 9a. Respect by Ethnicity: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .......................... 10
- Figure 9b. Negative Comments by Ethnicity: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ........................................ 10
- Figure 10a. Respect by Gender: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ......................................... 11
- Figure 10b. Negative Comments by Gender: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .................. 11
- Figure 11a. Respect by Immigration Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ................. 12
- Figure 11b. Negative Comments by Immigration Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .... 12

- Figure 12a: Respect for Political Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ...................... 13
- Figure 12b: Negative Comments about Political Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .... 13
- Figure 13a. Respect by Religious Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ....................... 14
- Figure 13b. Negative Comments about Religious Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ... 14
- Figure 14a. Respect for Sexual Orientation: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ................. 15
- Figure 14b. Negative Comments by Sexual Orientation: 2008, 2010, and 2012 .... 15
- Figure 15a. Respect by Socioeconomic Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012 ............. 16
- Figure 15b. Negative Comments re: Socioeconomic Status: 2008, 2010, 2012 .... 16

**Appendix** ................................................................................................................... 17

Methodology ..................................................................................................................... 17

Data Collection ................................................................................................................. 17
Introduction

Campus climate is a multi-faceted concept. One definition of campus climate is:

*Behaviors within a workplace or learning environment, ranging from subtle to cumulative to dramatic, that can influence whether an individual feels personally safe, listened to, valued, and treated fairly and with respect.*

†

In the spring quarters of 2008, 2010, and 2012, UC Davis participated in the *University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)*, a UC-wide census of all undergraduates at the nine general campuses. The survey includes a number of items that address dimensions of campus climate. The survey consisted of a “Core” of questions answered by all respondents and several “modules” to which respondents were randomly assigned, each of which focused on a particular facet of the undergraduate experience. Both the survey Core and the Student Development module contained items that addressed campus climate along several dimensions, and these are the focus of this report.

UCUES provides trend data useful in assessing both the global campus climate as experienced by all undergraduates and the climate for undergraduates along multiple dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) as perceived by all respondents. (Upcoming reports will explore campus climate as reported by students of differing ethnicities, genders, sexual orientation, etc.)

This report presents data on campus climate from the UCUES administrations in Spring 2008 and Spring 2010, and the Spring 2012 administration. The first section addresses global dimensions of campus climate, and the last section addresses campus climate for seven dimensions of the undergraduate population: gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial/ethnic identification, political affiliation, socio-economic status, and immigration background.

UC-campus comparison data from 2012 UCUES is included for the items measuring global campus climate to provide additional context for interpreting the data.

† [http://www.provost.wisc.edu/climate/what.html](http://www.provost.wisc.edu/climate/what.html)
Results

General Campus Climate

Figure 1a. Global Measures of Campus Climate: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 1b. Global Measures of Campus Climate: UC Comparisons, 2012
Institutional Analysis - Student Research and Information

Figure 2a. Sense of Personal Value: UC Davis 2008, 2010, 2012

Figure 2b. Sense of Personal Value: UC Comparisons, 2012
Figure 3a. Student Pride: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 3b. Student Pride: UC Comparisons, 2012
Figure 4a. Freedom to Express Beliefs: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 4b. Freedom to Express Beliefs: UC Comparisons, 2012
Students were also asked to rank the general campus climate by various descriptors. These items were each presented as a 6-point semantic differential scale with only the endpoints defined; a high rating is desirable.

Figure 5a. Perceptions of Campus Atmosphere: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 5b. Perceptions of Campus Atmosphere: UC Comparisons, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>2008 Mean</th>
<th>2012 Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostile to Friendly</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal to Caring</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intolerant to Tolerant</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous to Safe</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, students were asked to rate the campus in terms of affordability and academic difficulty. For the first and third items, intellectual and affordable, a high rating is desirable.‡

Figure 6a. Perceptions of Difficulty and Affordability: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 6b. Perceptions of Difficulty and Affordability: UC Comparisons, 2012

‡ The scale for intellectual has been reversed from the orientation in the survey, so that a high rating is desirable. The scale for affordable was already positively oriented and was not changed. The scale for easy or hard was also left unchanged, since neither extreme is desirable.
Problems on Campus

Finally, students were asked their level of agreement with several statements related to appropriate and acceptable campus behavior.

Figure 7a. Appropriate Behavior on Campus: UC Davis 2008, 2010, and 2012

* A high score is desirable for this item, while a low score is desirable for the other three.

Figure 7b. Appropriate Behavior on Campus: UC Comparisons, 2012
Campus Climate and Diversity

Much of the study of campus climate centers on the extent to which the university embraces and welcomes diverse populations.

Figure 8a. Importance of Diversity: 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 8b. Importance of Diversity: UC Comparisons, 2012
In order to impart a more comprehensive view of changes of campus climate for specific subgroups of undergraduates, the following data displays group multiple measures of diversity pertaining to specific student populations.

**Figure 9a. Respect by Ethnicity: 2008, 2010, and 2012**

**Figure 9b. Negative Comments by Ethnicity: 2008, 2010, and 2012**
Figure 10a. Respect by Gender: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- Students are respected here regardless of their gender:
  - 2008: 5.00
  - 2010: 4.82
  - 2012: 4.93

- Students of my gender are respected on this campus:
  - 2008: 5.07
  - 2010: 4.85
  - 2012: 5.05

Figure 10b. Negative Comments by Gender: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- Faculty have expressed negative or stereotypical views about genders:
  - 2008: 1.38
  - 2010: 1.51
  - 2012: 1.51

- Staff have expressed negative or stereotypical views about genders:
  - 2008: 1.37
  - 2010: 1.45
  - 2012: 1.50

- Students have expressed negative or stereotypical views about genders:
  - 2008: 2.61
  - 2010: 2.62
  - 2012: 2.48
Figure 11a. Respect by Immigration Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 11b. Negative Comments by Immigration Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012
Figure 12a: Respect for Political Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- I feel free to express my political beliefs on campus:
  - 2008: 4.66
  - 2010: 4.55
  - 2012: 4.57

- Students are respected here regardless of their political beliefs:
  - 2008: 4.61
  - 2010: 4.50
  - 2012: 4.57

- Students of my political beliefs are respected on this campus:
  - 2008: 4.72
  - 2010: 4.61
  - 2012: 4.78

Figure 12b: Negative Comments about Political Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- Faculty have expressed negative or stereotypical views about political beliefs or affiliations:
  - 2008: 1.98
  - 2010: 1.95
  - 2012: 1.86

- Staff have expressed negative or stereotypical views about political beliefs or affiliations:
  - 2008: 1.54
  - 2010: 1.58
  - 2012: 1.62

- Students have expressed negative or stereotypical views about political beliefs or affiliations:
  - 2008: 2.95
  - 2010: 2.92
  - 2012: 2.78
Figure 13a. Respect by Religious Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- I feel free to express my religious beliefs on campus:
  - 2008: 4.68
  - 2010: 4.69
  - 2012: 4.67

- Students are respected here regardless of their religious beliefs:
  - 2008: 4.61
  - 2010: 4.56
  - 2012: 4.70

- Students of my religious beliefs are respected on this campus:
  - 2008: 4.67
  - 2010: 4.60
  - 2012: 4.81

Figure 13b. Negative Comments about Religious Beliefs: 2008, 2010, and 2012

- Faculty have expressed negative or stereotypical views about religion:
  - 2008: 1.54
  - 2010: 1.39
  - 2012: 1.56

- Staff have expressed negative or stereotypical views about religion:
  - 2008: 1.38
  - 2010: 1.46
  - 2012: 1.51

- Students have expressed negative or stereotypical views about religion:
  - 2008: 2.61
  - 2010: 2.66
  - 2012: 2.33
Figure 14a. Respect for Sexual Orientation: 2008, 2010, and 2012

Figure 14b. Negative Comments about Sexual Orientation: 2008, 2010, and 2012
Figure 15a. Respect by Socioeconomic Status: 2008, 2010, and 2012

Students are respected here regardless of their economic or social class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students of my socio-economic status are respected on this campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15b. Negative Comments about Socioeconomic Status: 2008, 2010, 2012

Faculty have expressed negative or stereotypical views about socio-economic status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff have expressed negative or stereotypical views about socio-economic status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students have expressed negative or stereotypical views about socio-economic status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix

Methodology

Data Collection

In the spring of 2012, the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) was administered electronically with an internet-based questionnaire to all undergraduates at the nine general campuses of the University, including 23,643 undergraduate students at UC Davis. The response rate as of July 18, 2012 across the University of California was 37.0% but varied widely by campus. A total of 10,519 UC Davis students participated in the survey, for a campus response rate of 44.5%.

In the spring of 2010, the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) was administered electronically with an internet-based questionnaire to all 171,859 undergraduates at the nine general campuses of the University, including 23,357 undergraduate students at UC Davis. The response rate across the University of California was 43.3% but varied widely by campus. A total of 11,523 UC Davis students participated in the survey, for a campus response rate of 49.3%.

In the spring of 2008, the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) was administered electronically with an internet-based questionnaire to all 162,259 undergraduates at the nine general campuses of the University, including 22,451 undergraduate students at UC Davis. The response rate across the University of California was 39.2% but varied widely by campus. A total of 7040 UC Davis students participated in the survey, for a campus response rate of 31.4%.

In each of these administrations of UCUES, and typical of survey research in general, female students responded to UCUES at a higher rate than males. Otherwise, UCUES respondents are remarkably representative of the UC Davis undergraduate populations surveyed.

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* In each administration, the UCUES population was limited to undergraduate students included in the 3rd week snapshot for winter quarter and who were 18 or older by April 1 of that year. Thus the size and specific characteristics of the populations may differ slightly from official enrollment statistics reported elsewhere.

** The lower than average response rate is attributable to the decision to actively promote the survey at UC Davis for one month only. Some other campuses continued to email reminders for two to five months.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% UC Davis UCUES Population</th>
<th>% UC Davis UCUES Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N =</strong></td>
<td>23,643</td>
<td>10,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano-Latino</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity (Asian)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Indian/Pakistani</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Standing</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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