

USC National College Health Assessment Report
2000 and 2001

*Health Promotion and Prevention Services
University Park Health Center
A Division of Student Affairs
University of Southern California*

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Executive Summary

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) was conducted by Health Promotion and Prevention Services on the University Park Campus in the Spring of 2000 and the Spring of 2001. The resulting data provide a picture of the health-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of USC undergraduate and graduate students on a variety of topics, such as safety, mental and physical health, sexual behaviors, substance use, and nutrition.

The following report includes a number of key findings:

Comparison to National Data

Comparison of USC and national data is difficult because data for combined 2000 and 2001 stratified by undergraduate and graduate students was not available. However, in comparing undergraduate students from the national and USC data in the year 2000 the data appears strikingly similar. This might lend some credibility to the representativeness of this data.

Impediments to Academic Performance

Undergraduate and graduate students reported that the factors which most negatively impacted their academic functioning were stress, cold/flu/sore throat, sleep difficulties, concerns for a troubled friend or family member, and depression/anxiety disorder/seasonal affective disorder. In addition, 16.2% of undergraduates reported that internet use and computer games had a negative effect on academic performance.

Health Information and Safety

Believability of Information – Undergraduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from health educators (89.6%), medical staff (88.8%) and parents (65%) and least likely to believe information from friends (22.2%) and television (20.2%). Graduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from medical staff (92.4%), health educators (88.7%) and leaflets (58.7%) and least likely to believe information from friends (19.8%), television (19.8%) and religious centers (18.7%).

Helmet Usage – Within the last school year, 72% of students never wore a helmet when riding a bicycle and 82% never wore a helmet when in-line skating.

Mental and Clinical Health Issues

Mental Health – Among respondents, 53.6% undergraduate students and 46.0% graduate students reported having felt so depressed at least once during the last school year that it was difficult to function. 11.9% of undergraduate and 6.5% of graduate students seriously considered attempting suicide during that same year.

Clinical Health – The most frequently cited health problems experienced by both undergraduate and graduate students were back pain, allergy problems, and sinus infections. However, 90.7% of undergraduate and 90.4% of graduate students described their general health as being excellent, very good, or good.

Sexual Behavior and Contraception

Sexual Behaviors – 81% of students have had either zero or one sexual partner within the last school year. However, 81.4% of students perceived that the typical USC student has had two or more partners. In addition, of those undergraduates who had vaginal intercourse in the last 30 days, 35% always used a condom.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

Alcohol Consumption – Among respondents, 75.8% had 0 to 4 drinks the last time they partied, although 53% of students perceived that the typical USC student had 5 or more drinks the last time they partied.

Consequences of Drinking Alcohol – As a consequence of drinking, 14.4% of undergraduate students who drank within the last school year also reported that they had physically injured themselves. In addition, 4.7% of undergraduate respondents indicated that they drove after having 5 or more drinks within the last 30 days.

Cigarette Smoking – Among respondents, 20.7% of undergraduates and 12.4% of graduates reported that they smoke cigarettes, with an additional 5.5% of undergraduates and 4.4% of graduates who reported that they smoke on a daily basis. However, most students have never smoked cigarettes, as indicated by 60.5% of undergraduate and 67.6% of graduate students. Among 95.2% of undergraduate and 87.4% of graduate students, the perception was that the typical USC student smoked cigarettes one or more days or on a daily basis in the past month.

Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

Students reported that to lose weight within the last month they exercised (48.5%), dieted (27.9%), purged (1.4%) or took diet pills (3.9%). Of undergraduate and graduate students combined, 36% consider themselves to be overweight and 27.3% considered themselves to be underweight.

Perceptions of the Typical USC Student

In addition to self-reported behaviors, students were asked about their perceptions regarding the behaviors of the typical USC student. Overall, it was found that there were misperceptions about sexual behaviors, as well as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. For instance, 36.2% of undergraduate students perceived that the typical USC student drank on a daily basis during the last 30 days. However, only 0.2% reported that they actually engaged in drinking on a daily basis.

Throughout the report, there are footnotes under each table or bar chart that refer to the corresponding question in the survey instrument. If you have any additional questions regarding the data provided in this report, please contact Paula Swinford, Director of Health Promotion and Prevention Services at 213/740-4777 or <swinford@usc.edu>.

Introduction

If the true mission of any college health program is to “advance the health of students,” data describing the health behaviors and status of the student population is a necessary tool. This data helps to inform policy makers, administrators, faculty, staff and students about current health behaviors and helps to set programmatic priorities.

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) is a national research initiative coordinated by the American College Health Association (ACHA), to assist institutions of higher education in collecting data about the health of their students. The NCHA allows each campus to generate prevalence rates for a variety of health issues at the institution, such as alcohol and tobacco use, sexual behavior, body weight, and mental health.

The goal of this assessment is to provide data on the prevalence and perceptions of student health behaviors. In addition, this survey can provide current information on students’ health status, misperceptions about student behavior, and identify concerns and strengths within the campus community. This data can aid the campus by providing a firm basis for planning and evaluating services that can positively impact students’ safety, well-being and academic performance.

This report provides data on the population of students at the University Park Campus and highlights differences in the undergraduate and graduate student populations whose numbers are equally proportionate on the campus.

This report summarizes key points from the survey. Due to the length of the survey not all data points have been included. Analyses of additional questions as well as copies of the instrument are available for interested readers through Health Promotion and Prevention Services in the University Park Health Center at 213/740-4777.

Methods

Questionnaire design. The NCHA questionnaire consists of fifty-eight questions divided into seven sections:

- demographic characteristics
- impediments to academic performance
- health information and safety
- mental and clinical health issues
- sexual behavior and contraception
- alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- weight, nutrition, and exercise

Procedure. The survey was conducted at the University of Southern California in the Spring of 2000 and the Spring of 2001. During both years, the NCHA was mailed to 1700 randomly selected undergraduate and graduate students on the University Park Campus. All 1700 students were mailed a postcard alerting them to the forthcoming survey, as well as two subsequent mailings after receiving the survey in an effort to increase the return rate. Students who returned the survey were given the option of entering a raffle to win one \$500 gift certificate and two \$250 gift certificates to the USC bookstore as incentives. A numerical coding system was used to maintain the confidentiality of respondents.

Response rate. In 2000, 537 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 31.6%. Of those who responded, 57.1% indicated undergraduate status and 42.9% reported graduate status. In 2001, 501 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 29.5%. Of those who responded, 57.7% indicated undergraduate status and 42.3% indicated graduate status.

Representativeness. It appears the data collected accurately represents the USC University Park Campus student population, based upon the representativeness analysis performed on the 2001 data. Biases were relatively small. The largest bias occurred with regards to gender; there was an

overrepresentation of females, underrepresentation of males; an overrepresentation of doctoral students; an underrepresentation of undergraduate seniors; a slight overrepresentation of Asian-American students and an underrepresentation of African-American students. When analyzing this type of data it is expected that a GPA bias will exist. However, in our sample a small bias is present, but it was less than what normally occurs in other samples drawn from the same student group.

(Please refer to Appendix A for the representativeness table).

Analytic strategy/data preparation. This report focuses on the surveys that were conducted in 2000 and 2001. Data have been aggregated for the two-year period. Appropriate chi-squared tests or t-tests of statistical significance have been performed to determine the magnitude and direction of differences between undergraduate and graduate students. T-tests were performed on responses to scale questions and chi-squared tests were performed on frequency distributions (i.e. yes/no, did/did not, etc). Throughout the report, p-values are reported in the charts or at the bottom of graphs.

Demographics

Descriptor	Category	Undergraduate (n=559)	Graduate (n=406)
<i>Age</i>	Under 21	57.1	0.2
	21-29	39.6	66.9
	30 and higher	3.3	32.7
<i>Female</i>		62.6	54.1
<i>Year in school</i>	1st year undergraduate	25.7	
	2nd year undergraduate	20.1	
	3rd year undergraduate	27.1	
	4th year undergraduate	23.3	
	5th year or more	3.7	
	Graduate		100
<i>Full-time student status</i>		98.2	82.9
<i>Ethnicity</i>	White – not Hispanic (includes Middle Eastern)	49.1	47.6
	Black – not Hispanic	5.1	4.0
	Hispanic or Latino	11.5	6.9
	Asian or Pacific Islander	28.9	38.1
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.7	0.2
	Other	4.9	3.1
<i>International student status</i>		7.6	30.2
<i>Membership in fraternity or sorority</i>		18.1	6.5
<i>Current relationship</i>	Single	65.5	45.5
	Married/domestic partner	3.6	31.6
	Engaged/committed dating relationship	30.1	21.9
	Separated	0.0	0.0
	Divorced	0.0	0.0
	Widowed	0.0	0.0
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	Heterosexual	94.5	94.0
	Gay/lesbian	2.2	3.2
	Bisexual	2.0	1.2
	Transgendered	0.0	0.0
	Unsure	1.0	1.5
<i>Living situation</i>	Campus residence hall	23.3	0.2
	Fraternity or sorority house	7.0	0.0
	Other university housing	18.0	3.4
	Off-campus housing	35.4	78.0
	Parent/guardian's home	13.1	8.0
	Other	3.2	10.4
<i>Paid hours worked per week</i>	None	46.2	28.5
	1 to 19	38.1	19.6
	20 or more	15.6	51.8
<i>Volunteered 1 or more hrs/week</i>		35.7	30.9

All results are reported as percentages.

The discrepancy between the total number of participants reported on p.5 of this booklet and the total number of participants reported in this table exists because those participants who did not complete all questions on the Demographics section of the survey were excluded from this demographic analysis.

Impediments to Academic Performance

“Within the last school year, have any of the following affected your academic performance?” (i.e., received an incomplete, dropped a course, received a lower grade in a class, on an exam or on an important project)

Refer to Question 44 of the survey.

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Alcohol use	8.0	1.2	<.001
Allergies	4.2	2.7	NS
Physical assault	1.1	0.0	NS
Sexual assault	0.8	0.2	NS
Attention Deficit Disorder	4.7	3.2	NS
Cold/Flu/Sore throat	31.6	10.3	<.001
Concern for a troubled friend or family member	18.1	7.9	<.001
Chronic illness (diabetes, asthma, etc.)	3.3	2.2	NS
Chronic pain	3.2	1.4	NS
Death of a friend or family member	7.8	5.9	NS
Depression/Anxiety Disorder/Seasonal Affective Disorder	18.0	8.2	<.001
Drug use	2.6	1.2	<.001
Eating disorder/problem	1.1	0.7	NS
HIV infection	0.2	0.0	NS
Injury	5.7	1.6	<.01
Internet use/computer games	16.2	6.5	<.001
Learning disability	1.7	2.4	NS
Mononucleosis	1.5	0.5	NS
Pregnancy (yours or your partner's)	1.4	0.9	NS
Relationship difficulty	19.8	8.6	<.001
Sexually transmitted disease	0.7	0.2	NS
Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat	7.5	3.4	<.05
Sleep difficulties	28.1	6.9	<.001
Stress	38.1	17.0	<.001
Other	19.2	8.6	<.05

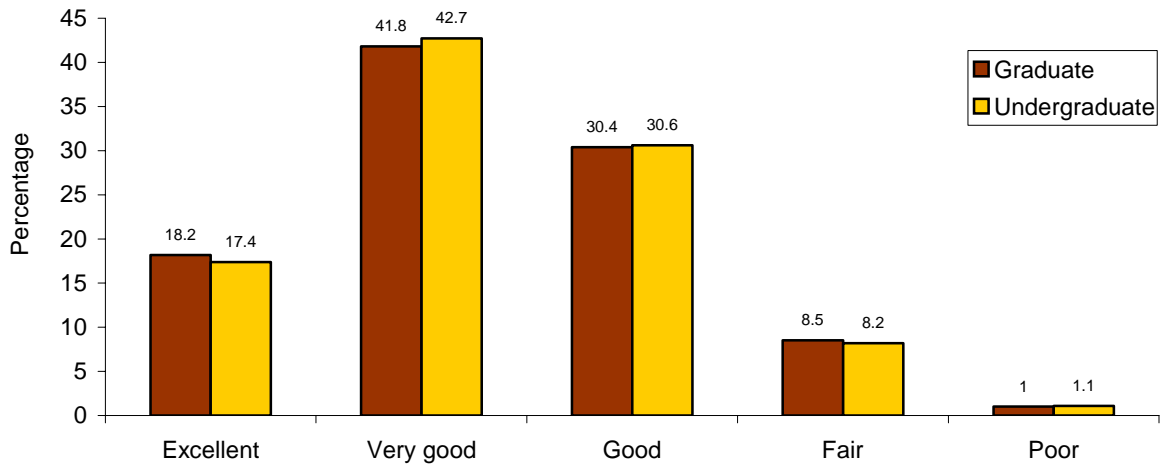
Bolded items represent the top eight items of interest.

Health Information and Safety

General Health -

Refer to Question 1 of the survey.

“Considering your age, how would you describe your general health?”



Health Maintenance and Self-Care -

Refer to Question 42 of the survey.

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
Dental exam and cleaning in the last year	78.2	67.3	<.001
Vaccinated against hepatitis B	77.9	66.6	<.001
Routine GYN exam in the last year (females)	54.5	68.4	<.001
Vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis	44.1	28.2	<.001
Breast self-exam in the last month (females)	35.6	40.8	NS
Testicular self-exam in the last month (males)	20.3	21.0	NS

Health Topic Information from USC -

Refer to Question 2 of the survey.

“On which of the following health topics have you ever received information from your college or university?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
AIDS or HIV infection prevention	30.7	23.1	<.01
Alcohol and other drug use prevention	35.8	20.4	<.001
Dietary behaviors and nutrition	19.4	11.8	<.001
Injury prevention and safety	12.8	12.3	NS
Physical activity and fitness	25	15.6	<.001
Pregnancy prevention	20.7	11.5	<.001
Sexual assault/relationship violence prevention	33.3	15.6	<.001
Sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention	31.7	19.7	<.001
Suicide prevention	9.8	5.3	<.01
Tobacco use prevention	12.8	12.3	NS
Violence prevention	19.6	8.4	<.001
None of the above	28.9	50.7	<.001

Columns sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were possible.

Drug free schools document is mailed out to all students, faculty and staff each academic year.

Sources of Health-related Information -

Refer to Question 4 of the survey.

“Do you usually get health-related information from any of the following sources?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
Parents	71.2	63.3	<.01
Magazines	63.4	62.7	NS
Friends	61.4	61.9	NS
Leaflets, pamphlets, flyers	56.2	53.2	NS
Television	55.1	52.6	NS
Health center medical staff	53.8	52.8	NS
Internet/world wide web	53.1	61.3	<.01
Campus newspaper articles	40.7	26.4	<.001
Health educators	40.0	42.6	NS
Other	31.1	50.0	<.05
Faculty/coursework	28.1	25.4	NS
Resident assistants/advisors	15.8	7.6	<.001
Campus peer educators	10.6	8.8	NS
Religious center	8.7	7.5	NS

Columns sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were possible.

- Believability of Information** – Undergraduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from health educators (89.6%), medical staff (88.8%) and parents (65%) and least likely to believe information from friends (22.2%) and television (20.2%). Graduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from medical staff (92.4%), health educators (88.7%) and leaflets (58.7%) and least likely to believe information from friends (19.8%), television (19.8%) and religious centers (18.7%).

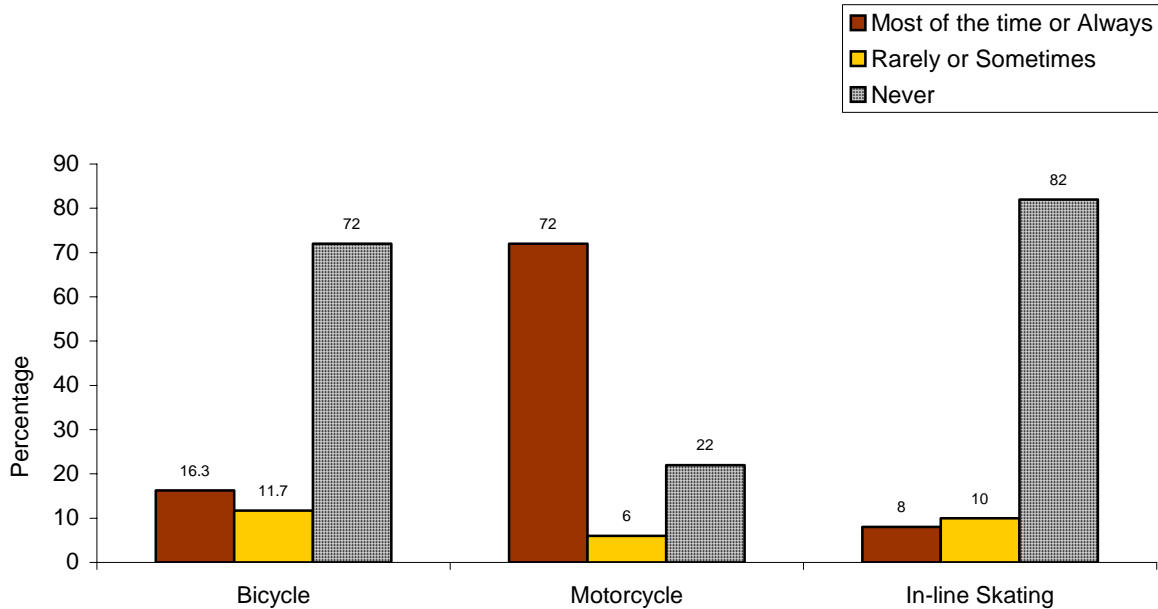
Refer to Question 3 of the survey.

- **Seatbelt Safety** – 97.8% of students surveyed wore a seatbelt *most of the time* or *always* when riding in a car within the last school year.
Refer to Question 5 of the survey.
- **Helmet Usage** – 72% of students *never* wore a helmet when riding a bicycle and 82% *never* wore a helmet when in-line skating.
Refer to Question 5 of the survey.

Safety Helmet Usage -

Refer to Question 5 of the survey.

[If you rode a bike, motorcycle, or used in-line skates] “within the last school year, how often did you wear a helmet?”



- **Physical Fights or Assaults** – Within the last school year, 4.8% of undergraduate and 2.2% of graduate students reported being involved in a physical fight (undergraduate students were more likely to report being involved in a physical fight at the .05 level of statistical significance). Within the last school year, 3.9% of undergraduates and 1.9% of graduate students reported that they were physically assaulted (does not include sexual assault).
Refer to Question 6 of the survey.

Mental and Clinical Health Issues

Mental Health -

“Within the last school year how many times have you...?”

Refer to Question 40 of the survey.

	Undergraduate %		Graduate %	
	1-6 times	7 or more	1-6 times	7 or more
Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function	36.9	16.7	36.6	9.4
Seriously considered attempting suicide	9.9	2.0	5.8	0.7
Attempted suicide	2.3	0.2	0.5	0.2

Undergraduates were more likely to feel so depressed that it was difficult to function at the .001 level of statistical significance and more likely to seriously consider attempting suicide at the .01 level of statistical significance.

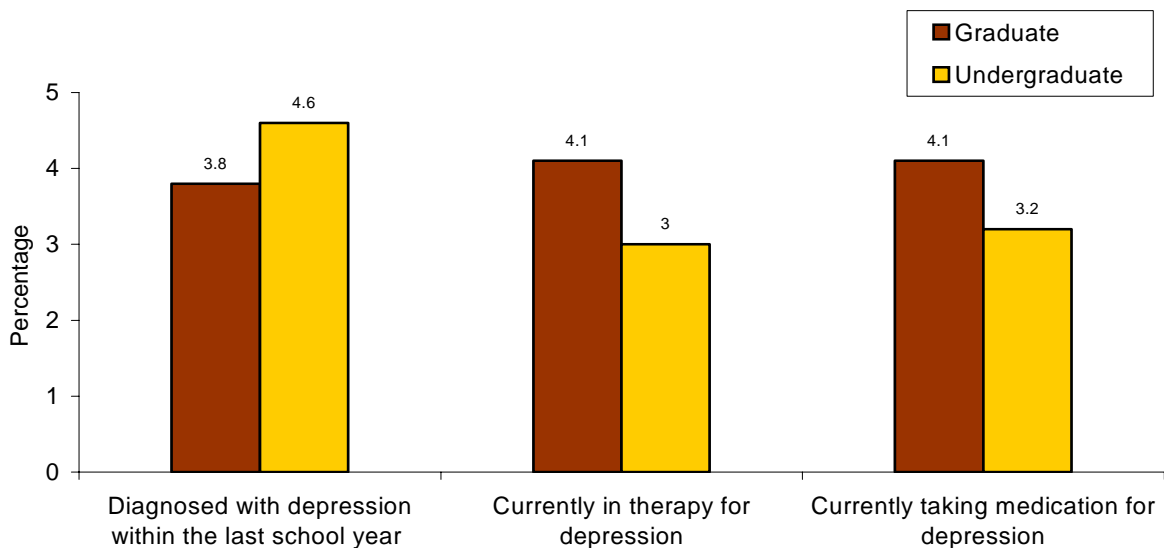
Depression Diagnosis and Treatment -

Refer to Question 41 of the survey.

“Have you been diagnosed with depression within the last school year?”

“Are you currently in therapy for depression?”

“Are you currently taking medication for depression?”



Abusive Relationships and Unwanted Sexual Advances or Sexual Assault -

Refer to Question 7 and Question 8 of the survey, respectively.

“Within the last school year, have you experienced...?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
Verbal threats for sex against your will	4.6	1.5	<.001
Sexual touching against your will	12	2.7	<.001
Attempted sexual penetration against your will	3.9	0.2	<.001
Sexual penetration against your will	1.6	0.2	<.05

“Within the last school year, have you been in a relationship that was...?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
Emotionally abusive	14.4	8.4	<.001
Physically abusive	3.2	1.0	<.01
Sexually abusive	2.5	0.5	<.01

Reported Frequency of Health Problems -

Refer to Question 43 of the survey.

	“Within the last school year, have you had any of the following?”			“Have you ever been diagnosed with any of the following?”		
	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Allergy problems	39.3	41.2	NS	33.2	42.8	<.001
Anorexia	1.3	0.5	NS	2.2	1.8	NS
Anxiety disorder	7.8	6.7	NS	4.6	7.0	NS
Asthma	8.4	7.0	NS	15.2	11.8	NS
Back Pain	47.2	43.1	NS	22.5	22.1	NS
Bronchitis	8.2	6.9	NS	17.0	21.6	NS
Bulimia	1.3	1.2	NS	1.3	1.5	NS
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	6.5	5.8	NS	3.3	5.6	NS
Chlamydia	1.3	0.5	NS	2.4	2.6	NS
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	3.8	2.0	NS	1.3	2.3	NS
Depression	19.4	15.7	NS	9.2	12.8	NS
Diabetes	0.5	0.5	NS	0.2	0.8	NS
Ear Infection	8.9	7.0	NS	27.2	25.0	NS
Endometriosis	0.9	0.8	NS	1.1	1.8	NS
Fracture	4.2	3.7	NS	18.4	17.5	NS
Genital herpes	0.7	2.3	<.05	1.1	3.0	<.05
Genital warts/HPV	0.7	0.5	NS	1.3	3.6	<.05
Gonorrhea	0.0	0.0	NS	0.2	0.3	NS
Hepatitis B or C	0.4	0.5	NS	1.5	2.0	NS
High blood pressure	2.2	4.0	NS	2.9	6.8	<.001
High cholesterol	1.6	3.7	<.05	3.9	6.8	<.05
HIV infection	0.0	0.3	NS	0.2	0.8	NS
Mononucleosis	1.6	0.8	NS	6.8	7.4	NS
Pelvic Inflammatory Disease	0.4	0.0	NS	0.7	0.8	NS
Seasonal Affective Disorder	2.2	20.0	NS	1.3	1.5	NS
Sinus infection	22.3	16.3	<.05	28.4	29.8	NS
Strep infection	12.6	8.5	<.05	29.1	30.2	NS
Substance abuse problem	2.5	0.8	<.05	0.9	0.8	NS
Tuberculosis	0.2	0.8	NS	1.1	3.8	<.001

Columns sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were possible.

Discrepancies between reported frequency of health problems within the last school year and lifetime diagnosis may be due to self-diagnosis v. professional health care provider diagnosis.

Sexual Behavior and Contraception

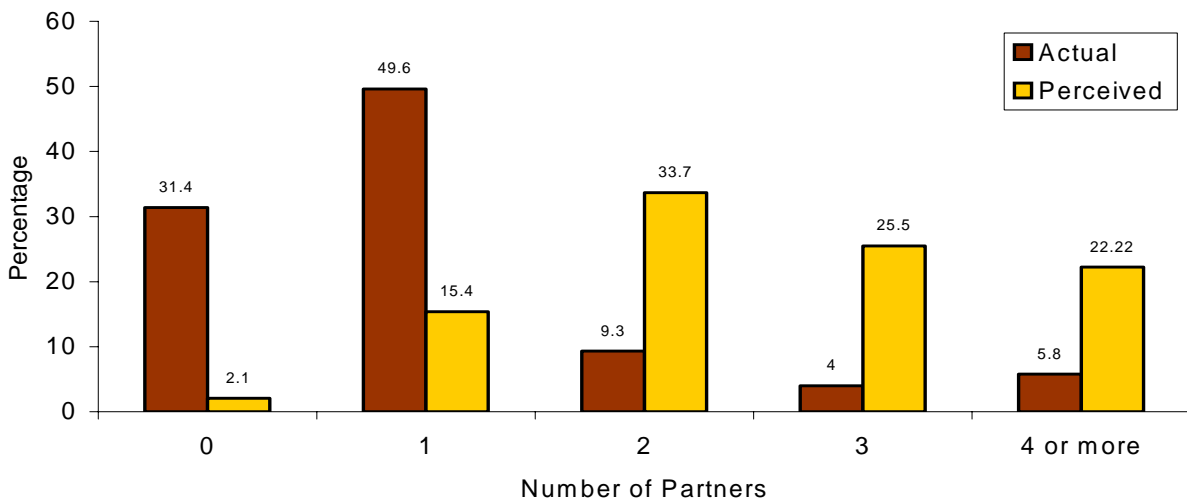
- **Unintended Pregnancy** – Among respondents who have had vaginal intercourse, 3.0% have unintentionally become pregnant or gotten someone else pregnant within the last school year.
Refer to Question 30 of the survey.
- **Emergency Contraception** – Among respondents who indicated that they are sexually active, 8.0% have used or had a partner who used emergency contraception (“morning after pill”) within the last school year. Undergraduates were more likely to use emergency contraception at the .05 level of statistical significance.
Refer to Question 29 of the survey.

Number of Sexual Partners v. Perceptions -

Refer to Question 20 and Question 22 of the survey, respectively.

“Within the last school year, with how many partners, if any, have you had sex (oral, vaginal, or anal)?”

“Within the last school year, with how many partners do you think the typical student at your school has had sex (oral, vaginal, or anal)?”



In the graph above, undergraduate and graduate results were combined. Undergraduate students were more likely to perceive that the typical student has had a greater number of partners at the .01 level of statistical significance.

- **Sexual Partners** – While 81% of students have 0-1 sexual partners, 81.4% of students perceive that the typical student has had 2 or more partners.
Refer to Question 20 and Question 22 of the survey, respectively.

Contraceptive/Birth Control Methods -

Refer to Question 28 of the survey.

“If you have had vaginal intercourse, what method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy the last time?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Condoms (male or female)	49.6	43.3	NS
Birth control pills	42.3	34.6	<.05
Withdrawal	18.3	21.8	NS
Nothing	3.0	5.0	NS
Spermicide (e.g. foam)	3.7	2.8	NS
Fertility awareness (calendar, mucous, basal body temperature)	3.4	8.4	<.01
Depo Provera (shots)	2.9	1.1	NS
Other method	2.4	6.7	<.05
Diaphragm/Cervical cap/Sponge	0.3	1.1	NS
Norplant (implant)	0.3	0.3	NS

Columns sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were possible.

32.6% of undergraduates and 13.9% of graduate students reported that they have not had vaginal intercourse.

Condom Use -

Refer to Question 25 of the survey.

“Within the last 30 days, if you are sexually active, how often did you or your partner(s) use a condom during oral sex, anal intercourse, or vaginal intercourse?”

	Undergraduate %		Graduate %	
	Engaged in this sexual activity	Always used a condom	Engaged in this sexual activity	Always used a condom
Oral Sex	46.1	0.9	54.7	3.8
Anal Intercourse	4.2	30.9	10.8	16.7
Vaginal Intercourse	46.7	35.1	62.5	28.6

Graduate students used condoms more often during oral sex at the .001 level of statistical significance, during vaginal intercourse at the .01 level of statistical significance, and during anal intercourse at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

Substance Use v. Perceptions of Use -

Refer to Question 9 and Question 10 of the survey, respectively.

Within the last 30 days among UNDERGRADUATE students:							
Substance	<i>Actual Use:</i> How many days did you use the following substances?				<i>Perception of Use:</i> How often do you think the typical student at your school used the following substances?		
	Never	Not in last 30 days	One or more days	Used daily	Never	One or more days	Used daily
Alcohol	20.9	12.7	66.3	0.2	2.0	61.8	36.2
Cigarettes	60.5	13.2	20.7	5.5	4.8	54.2	41.0
Cigars	76.6	19.1	4.3	0.0	46.1	52.2	1.6
Smokeless tobacco	92.3	6.1	1.6	0.0	55.8	40.8	3.4
Marijuana	64.0	17.6	17.9	0.5	14.4	68.1	17.5
Amphetamines	90.9	95.5	4.4	0.2	40.5	50.6	8.8
Rohypnol, GHB, Liquid X	97.7	1.4	0.9	0.0	62.7	36.0	1.3
Cocaine	94.7	3.7	1.7	0.0	57.7	39.6	2.7
Other drugs	85.8	8.5	5.5	0.2	40.8	56.4	2.8

All results are reported as percentages.

Undergraduate students were more likely to use cigarettes at the .01 level of statistical significance and use cigars and marijuana at the .001 level of statistical significance. Undergraduate students were more likely to perceive that the typical student used all the above substances at the .001 level of statistical significance except cigars, which was at the .01 level of statistical significance and smokeless tobacco where there was no difference.

Within the last 30 days among GRADUATE students:							
Substance	<i>Actual Use:</i> How many days did you use the following substances?				<i>Perception of Use:</i> How often do you think the typical student at your school used the following substances?		
	Never	Not in last 30 days	One or more days	Used daily	Never	One or more days	Used daily
Alcohol	22.1	17.5	60.5	0.0	3.5	73.7	22.7
Cigarettes	67.6	15.7	12.4	4.4	12.6	66.5	20.9
Cigars	83.5	16	0.4	0.0	54.8	44.2	1.0
Smokeless tobacco	95.6	3.9	0.4	0.0	59.7	39.0	1.3
Marijuana	75.2	18	6.8	0.0	33.1	60.3	6.6
Amphetamines	91.5	6.1	2.1	0.2	55.5	41.2	3.3
Rohypnol, GHB, Liquid X	97.3	2.2	0.5	0.0	73.4	25.6	1.0
Cocaine	95.4	4.4	0.2	0.0	71.4	27.6	1.0
Other drugs	88.7	7.4	3.4	0.5	56.0	42.1	1.9

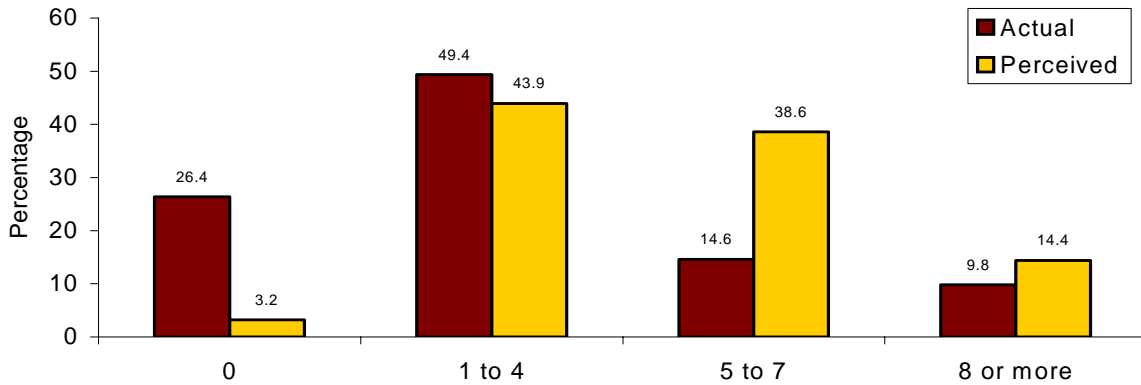
All results are reported as percentages.

Alcohol Consumption v. Perceptions of Alcohol Consumption -

Refer to Question 13 and Question 15 of the survey, respectively.

“The last time you ‘partied/socialized,’ how many alcoholic drinks did you have?”

“How many alcoholic drinks do you think the typical student at your school had the last time he/she ‘partied/socialized’?”



In the graph above, undergraduate and graduate results were combined. Undergraduate students were more likely to have had more alcoholic drinks at the .001 level of statistical significance and more likely to perceive that the typical student had a greater number of alcoholic drinks at the .001 level of statistical significance.

Consequences of Drinking Alcohol -

Refer to Question 18 of the survey.

“If you drink alcohol, within the last school year, have you experienced any of the following as a consequence of your drinking?”

Number of Drinks

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Did something you later regretted	34.2	17.5	<.001
Forgot where you were or what you did	26.8	12.6	<.001
Physically injured yourself	14.4	6.0	<.001
Had unprotected sex	12.4	8.3	NS
Been involved in a fight	4.1	1.7	NS
Physically injured another person	3.9	0.7	<.001
Had someone use force or threat of force to have sex with you	2.1	0.3	<.05

Protective Drinking Behaviors -

Refer to Question 17 of the survey.

“During the last school year, if you “partied/socialized,” [did you always]?”

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Use a designated driver	43.6	32.5	<.001
Keep track of how many drinks you were having	29.5	37.3	<.05
Eat before and/or during drinking	25.3	28.6	NS
Avoid drinking games	18.7	37.4	<.001
Determine, in advance, not to exceed a set number of drinks	14.7	21.9	<.001
Have a friend let you know when you've had enough	13.2	9.7	<.001
Pace your drinks to 1 or fewer per hour	9.9	17.2	<.001
Choose not to drink alcohol	8.8	9.8	NS
Alternate non-alcoholic with alcoholic beverages	8.2	8.8	<.05
Drink an alcohol look-alike (non-alcoholic beer, punch, etc.)	2.7	2.5	NS

Since multiple responses were possible, more than 100% may be indicated.

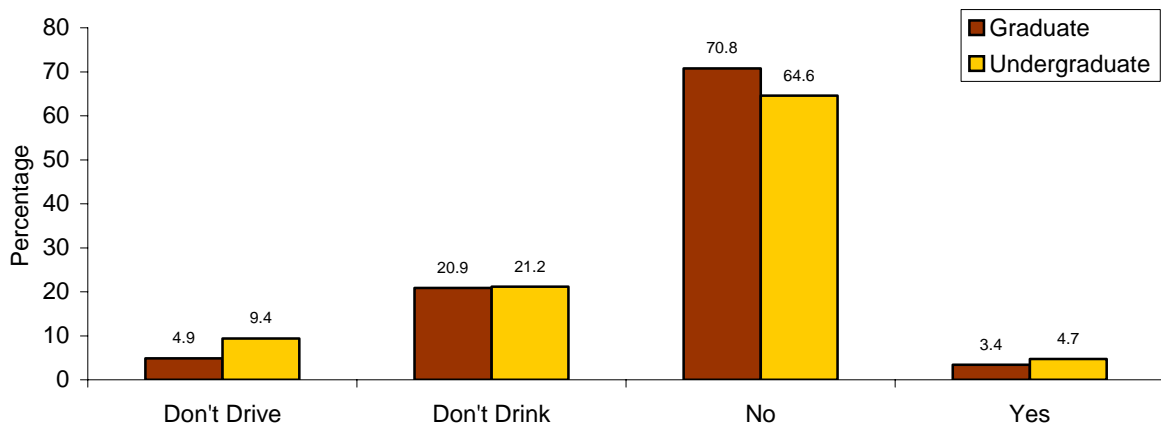
Students responded to a 5-point scale that ranged from “Never” to “Always.” T-tests were performed on all the responses; only the “Always” responses are presented in the table for simplicity.

- Designated Drivers** – Of those who drink, the majority of respondents (53.8%) reported that they **always** or **usually** use a designated driver.
Refer to Question 17 of the survey.

Drinking and Driving -

Refer to Question 11 of the survey.

“Within the last 30 days, did you drive after having 5 or more drinks?”

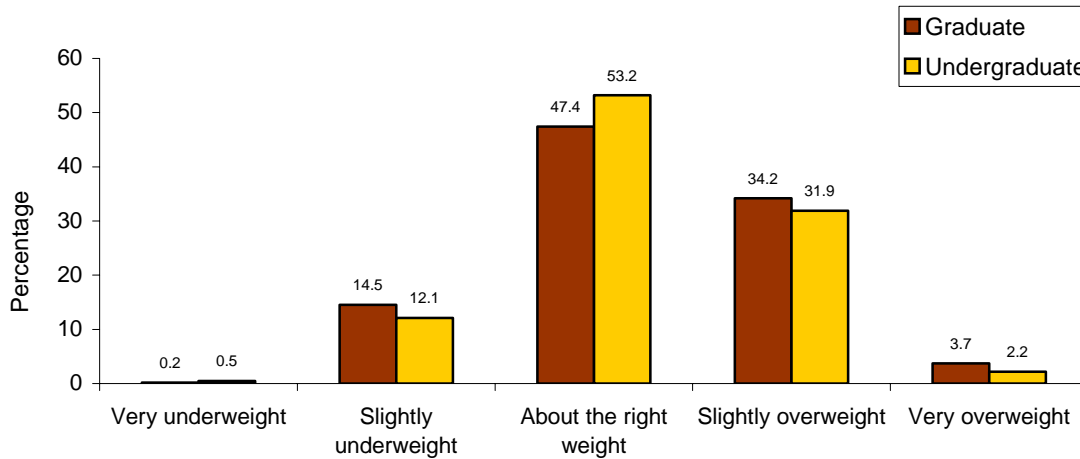


Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

Weight -

Refer to Question 35 of the survey.

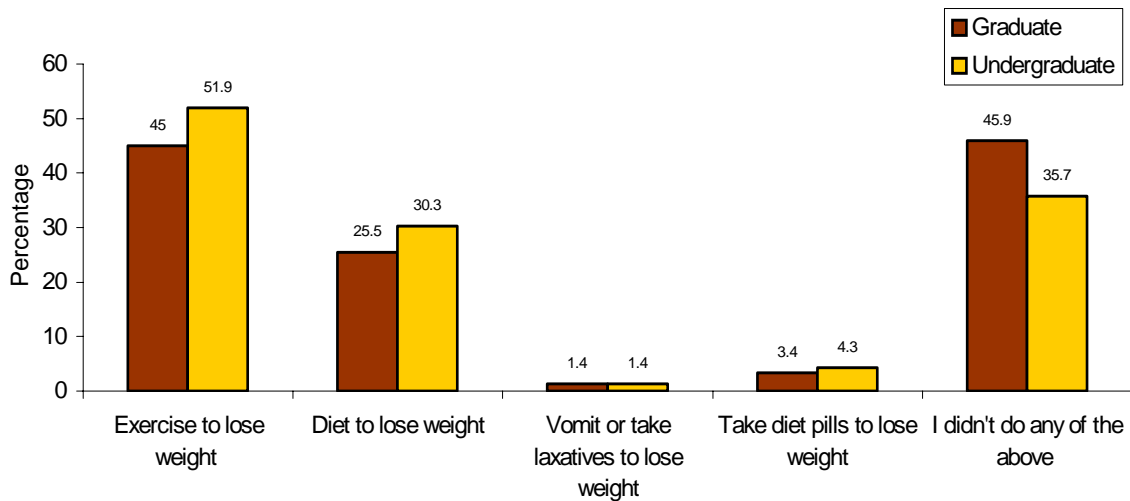
“How do you describe your weight?”



Weight-related Behaviors -

Refer to Question 37 of the survey.

“Within the last 30 days, did you do any of the following?”*

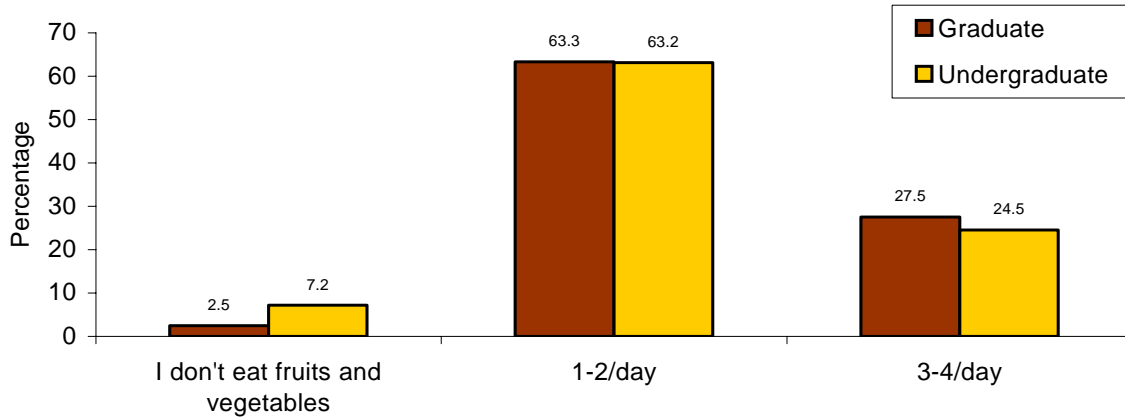


Undergraduates were more likely to exercise to lose weight at the .05 level of statistical significance. Graduate students were more likely not to do any of the activities at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Fruit and Vegetable Intake -

Refer to Question 38 of the survey.

“How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you usually have per day?”

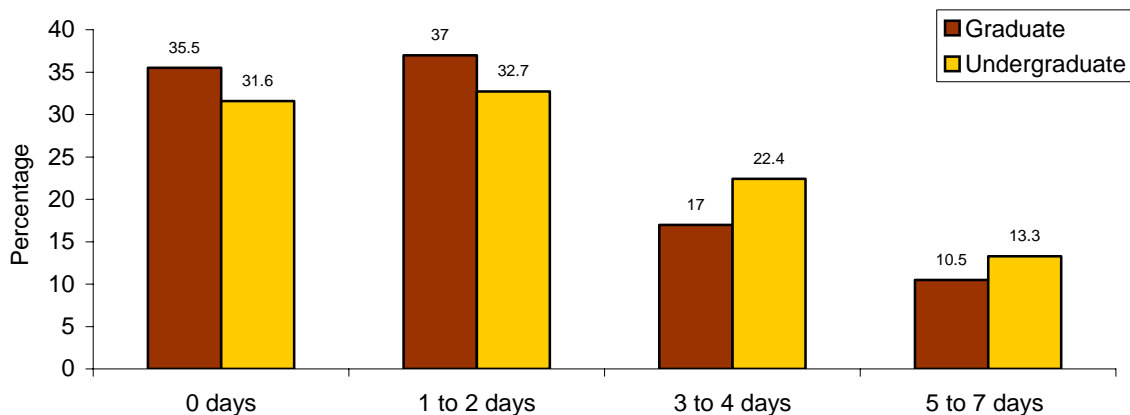


- Fruit and Vegetable Intake** – 24.5% of undergraduate and 27.5% of graduate students eat 3-4 servings of fruit and vegetables per day, which is the USDA recommended daily allowance. Graduate students were more likely to do this at the .01 level of statistical significance. Refer to Question 38 of the survey.

Exercise Habits -

Refer to Question 39 of the survey.

“On how many of the past 7 days did you participate in vigorous exercise for at least 20 minutes or moderate exercise for at least 30 minutes?”



Undergraduate students were more likely to vigorously exercise at the .01 level of statistical significance.

- Strengthening and Toning Exercises** – 60% of undergraduate and 53.7% of graduate students exercise to strengthen and tone muscle one or more days per week. Undergraduates were more likely to do strengthening and toning exercises at the .001 level of statistical significance. Refer to Question 39 of the survey.

Limitations

Surveys are only useful to the extent that they reflect the opinions of the population. While we have established that the sample is representative of the USC University Park Campus in terms of demographics and college major, the degree of representativeness in terms of health-related attitudes and opinions is unknown, as this is the first of such surveys at USC. The survey results do correlate to similar studies completed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College Health Association. When a survey includes questions on sensitive subjects such as drug use and sexuality, there is always the possibility that a response bias has influenced the results. However, the literature shows that an anonymous health behavior survey, such as the NCHA, gives the responder an opportunity to share more accurate information than would otherwise be provided. In general, the best way to minimize the chances of a response bias is to achieve a high response rate. The response rate of approximately thirty percent achieved in these surveys, while typical of USC surveys, is not of sufficient size to ensure representativeness on all important factors. It is therefore recommended that the results described in this report be thought of as preliminary until further research is done.

Conclusion

A student's health has a great impact on their academic functioning and performance. Therefore, this data can be utilized by various departments and organizations on campus to form partnerships and collaborations in order to provide a more integrative approach to advancing the health of the students.

Most students reported their general health as being excellent, very good, or good. However, there are a number of specific health issues such as stress, sleep, depression and anxiety that negatively impact the lives of students and should continue to be addressed in programmatic ways by faculty and staff. The rate of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation experienced by both undergraduate and graduate students underscores the need for continued resources, education, and support in the area of mental health. Finally, with respect to the misperceptions held by students around the behaviors of their peers, continued efforts by the campus community to create and support an accurate picture of USC students are greatly needed.

The mission of the University of Southern California is the "development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit." In order to truly facilitate this mission, the health of students must be a top priority. The data provided by the National College Health Assessment is a tool for all departments and organizations to use in order to advance the health of our students and aid in their growth as well-functioning individuals in society.

References

ACHA-NCHA website: http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/assessment.cfm

USC University Park Student Health Center website:
http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/

Health Promotion and Prevention Services website:
http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/promotion/index.html

Counseling Services website:
http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/counseling/index.html

If you have any questions about this document and/or the data presented please contact HPPS at 213/740-4777.

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Thank you to all the students who sent in completed surveys; your efforts help us to serve you better.

Appendix A
Representativeness of the 2001 Sample

Descriptor	All Students	Returned Survey	Difference
Class			
<i>Doctorate</i>	15.82	19.73	-3.91
<i>Master's</i>	22.35	22.44	-0.08
<i>Freshman</i>	11.06	12.77	-1.71
<i>Sophomore</i>	13.82	13.15	0.67
<i>Junior</i>	17.41	16.25	1.16
<i>Senior</i>	19.35	15.67	3.69
Gender			
<i>Female</i>	47.59	58.22	-10.63
<i>Male</i>	51.76	41.20	10.57
Cumulative GPA by class			
<i>Doctorate</i>	3.40	3.37	0.03
<i>Master's</i>	3.31	3.39	-0.09
<i>Freshman</i>	2.91	2.99	-0.08
<i>Sophomore</i>	3.04	3.17	-0.12
<i>Junior</i>	3.01	3.09	-0.07
<i>Senior</i>	3.05	3.10	-0.05
Ethnicity			
<i>Other</i>	3.47	3.87	-0.40
<i>African-American</i>	5.00	2.51	2.49
<i>Asian-American</i>	20.76	23.21	-2.45
<i>Latino</i>	10.71	10.06	0.65
<i>Native American</i>	0.47	0.39	0.08
<i>International</i>	16.24	16.83	-0.59
<i>White</i>	43.35	43.13	0.22
Owning Unit			
<i>Accounting</i>	2.59	2.71	-0.12
<i>Annenberg</i>	5.35	5.03	0.32
<i>Architecture</i>	1.71	1.74	-0.03
<i>BKPT</i>	0.06	0.00	0.06
<i>Business</i>	14.24	13.54	0.70
<i>Cinema-Television</i>	5.65	5.03	0.62
<i>Dental</i>	3.71	4.26	-0.55
<i>Education</i>	3.82	5.03	-1.21
<i>Engineering</i>	15.41	15.09	0.32
<i>Fine Arts</i>	1.00	0.97	0.03
<i>Gerontology</i>	0.65	0.58	0.07
<i>GSPA</i>	4.94	3.68	1.27
<i>Judaic Studies</i>	0.24	0.39	-0.15
<i>LAS – Humanities</i>	4.94	5.61	-0.67
<i>LAS – Natural Sciences</i>	4.71	5.61	-0.90
<i>LASO</i>	6.29	5.80	0.49
<i>LAS – Social Sciences</i>	11.12	9.28	1.83
<i>LAW</i>	2.47	3.87	-1.40
<i>LSDN</i>	0.06	0.00	0.06
<i>Music</i>	3.24	3.68	-0.44
<i>OT</i>	0.06	0.19	-0.13
<i>PPD</i>	2.41	1.74	0.67
<i>PPSW</i>	0.06	0.19	-0.13
<i>PUAD</i>	0.35	0.39	-0.03
<i>Social Work</i>	2.65	3.48	-0.83
<i>SURP</i>	0.12	0.00	0.12
<i>SWGR</i>	0.06	0.00	0.06
<i>Theatre</i>	1.94	2.13	-0.19

All results are reported as percentages.