

USC National College Health Assessment Report

2003

*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 2003. 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

When comparing USC to national data for 2003, only combined undergraduate and graduate data were used as stratified data from the national survey were not available. When combining both undergraduate and graduate data to compare with the national data there were some percentage differences, but no statistical analyses were available.

Demographics: Our sample is fairly representative of the USC student population, however not of the national reference group. In demographics, the national sample consisted of 77% White students while the USC sample included 54.9%. In terms of gender, USC's sample included 53.8% female students and the national sample included 67.3%.

Health Behaviors: While there are more similarities than differences between USC and the national data, the items below highlight some of the trends.

- *Bicycle safety:* In terms of Helmet usage, when riding a bicycle 16.4% of USC students mostly or always wore a helmet, the national percentage was 22.9%.
- *Drug Use:* In alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana usage within the last 30 days, USC was below the national average in 2003. Among USC students 49.9% consumed alcohol between 1 and 9 days, and 52.3% from the national data.
- *Mental Health:* Regarding depression, USC appeared very similar to the national response on "feeling so depressed it was difficult to function". While 7.7% of USC students reported seriously attempting suicide, 10.3% of the national student sample reported seriously attempting suicide.

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, 18.4% 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 medical staff (88.7%), health educators (87.6%) and parents (66.3%) and least likely to believe information from friends (23.2%), television (20.2%), and religious centers (18.5%). Graduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from medical staff (91.9%), health educators (86.6%) and faculty (58.2%) and least likely to believe information from television (19.2%), friends (17.9%) and religious centers (16.3%).

Helmet Usage – Within the last school year, 74.5% of students never wore a helmet when riding a bicycle and 78.4% never wore a helmet when in-line skating.

Mental and Clinical Health Issues

Mental Health – Among respondents, 48.2% undergraduate students and 40.9% graduate students reported having felt so depressed at least once during the last school year that it was difficult to function. Also, 7.8% of undergraduate and 7.3% 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, sinus infections, and depression. However, 92.9% of undergraduate and 91.9% of graduate students described their general health as being excellent, very good, or good.

Sexual Behavior and Contraception

Sexual Behaviors – 78.6% of students have had either zero or one sexual partner within the last school year. However, 82.2% 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, 25.9% always used a condom.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

Alcohol Consumption – Among respondents, 72.7% had 0 to 4 drinks the last time they partied, although 55.9% 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, 14.3% of undergraduate students who drank within the last school year also reported that they had physically injured themselves. In addition, 2.0% of undergraduate respondents indicated that they drove after having 5 or more drinks within the last 30 days.

Cigarette Smoking – Among respondents, 13.4% of undergraduates and 12.9% of graduates reported that they smoke cigarettes one or more days in the last month, with an additional 2.4% of undergraduates and 3.3% of graduates who reported that they smoke on a daily basis. However, most students have never smoked cigarettes (67.9% of undergraduate and 71.9% of graduate students). Among 92.1% of undergraduate and 83.9% 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 (52.9%), dieted (31.1%), purged (1.5%) or took diet pills (5.1%). Of undergraduate and graduate students combined, 35.7% consider themselves to be overweight and 13.7% considered themselves to be underweight. Along with these numbers it should be noted that 51.3% of students are trying to lose weight and 6.5% are trying to gain weight.

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, 21.6% of undergraduate students perceived that the typical USC student smoked marijuana on a daily basis during the last 30 days. However, only 1.4% of undergraduates reported that they actually engaged in smoking marijuana 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>.

NCHA Trends Summary

The NCHA Trends Summary was established to reflect noticeable variations between the baseline report from 2000/2001 and the current 2003 report. It was also created with the design in mind to compare all future reports to that of its previous year. There were a number of statistically significant differences between the current report and the baseline report on a variety of topics, all of which are outlined below.

Impediments to Academic Performance

In 2003, 18.4% of undergraduates reported that internet use and computer games had a negative effect on academic performance; this is an increase from 16.2% in 2000/2001 ($p=NS$). Depression, Anxiety Disorder, and Seasonal Affective Disorder decreased among undergraduates from 18.0% in 2000/2001 to 13.9% in 2003 ($p=NS$). Among graduate students, cold/flu and sore throat decreased from 10.3% in 2000/2001 to 7.7% in 2003 ($p=NS$). Also in 2000/2001, 6.9% of graduate students reported sleep difficulties as an impediment to academic performance which increased in 2003 to 11.1% ($p=NS$). The only statistically significant difference among Impediments to Academic Performance was in regards to death of a family member or friend, where in the previous report 5.9% of graduate students were affected academically and 1.0% in the 2003 report ($p<.01$).

Health Information and Safety

Among undergraduates there were a number of statistically significant differences in health maintenance. From 2000/2001 to 2003, self-breast exams in females decreased from 37.2% to 26.2% ($p<.05$), Hepatitis B vaccinations increased from 77.9% to 90.3% ($p<.001$), dental exams increased from 78.2% to 84.2% ($p<.05$), and meningitis vaccinations increased from 44.1% to 72.1% ($p<.001$). Among graduate students there was only one statistically significant difference, meningitis vaccinations increased from 28.2% to 42.0% ($p<.01$).

Mental and Clinical Health Issues

Among undergraduates there was a decrease in the number of times they "felt so depressed that it was difficult to function", from 53.6% in 2000/2001 to 48.2% in 2003 ($p=NS$). There was also a decrease for graduate students as well from 46.0% to 40.9% ($p=NS$). In the category of sexual assault, undergraduates experienced a decrease in sexual touching against their will from 12.0% in 2000/2001 to 7.1% in 2003 ($p<.05$).

In 2000/2001 22.3% of undergraduates experienced sinus infections compared with 2003's report of 17.5%. Among graduate students, there was a decrease in experiencing strep infection between the two years from 8.5% to 5.5%. Statistical comparisons were not available on this question between the two years.

Sexual Behavior and Contraception

There has been a decrease in percentage of students engaged in sexual activity "within the last 30 days" between the two years. Of those undergraduates who had vaginal intercourse in the last 30 days, 25.9% always used a condom in 2003 compared to the 35.1% in 2000/2001 report ($p=NS$). Among undergraduate and graduate students there was an increase in birth control pill usage between the two years. The percentage of undergraduates who used birth control pill increased from 42.3% to 52.1% ($p=NS$). Graduate students displayed similar results as well with an increase from 34.6% to 39.1% ($p=NS$).

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

There was a decrease in marijuana use among undergraduates between the two years, 17.9% of undergraduates on one or more days in 2000/2001 reported using marijuana, compared to the 14.0% in 2003 ($p=NS$). Among graduate students, there was an increase in cigar use from 0.4% in 2000/2001 to 3.4% in 2003 ($p<.05$). In 2003, 67.9% of undergraduates and 71.9% of graduates never smoked cigarettes compared to the previous report of 60.5% and 67.6% respectively ($p<.05$ undergraduates, $p=NS$ graduates). The average number of drinks students drank the last time they partied or socialized in 2000/2001, was 3.16 drinks and in 2003 was 3.22 ($p=NS$).

There was a decrease in the percentage of undergraduates who drove after 5 or more drinks within the last 30 days from 4.7% in 2000/2001 to 2.0% in 2003 ($p=NS$). There was also an increase among undergraduates who used a designated driver from 43.6% to 48.1% in 2003 ($p=NS$). Among graduate students there was a decrease in the percentage of students who ate before and/or during drinking from 28.6% to 21.9% ($p=NS$). There was a statistically significant association among undergraduates who avoided games from 2000/2001 to 2003 ($p<.05$).

Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

Between 2000/2001 and 2003 there was an increase in the percentage of undergraduates who felt they were very underweight, from 0.5% to 1.7% respectively ($p=NS$), and an increase in the percentage of graduate students who felt they were very overweight from 3.7% to 7.8% ($p=NS$). Also among undergraduate students, there was an increase in the percentage of students taking diet pills to lose weight from 4.3% to 6.1% ($p=NS$). Among graduate students there was an increase in exercising to lose weight from 45.0% to 52.4% ($p=NS$). Graduate students also showed an increase in exercise habits, from 10.5% in 2000/2001 who exercised 5 to 7 days a week to 15.7% in 2003 ($p=NS$). There was a statistically significant increase in the average weight from 146.81 in 2000/2001 to 151.03 in 2003 ($p<.05$).

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 2003. 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 2003, 529 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 31.1%. Of those who responded, 58.3% indicated undergraduate status and 41.7% reported 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 2003 data. Biases were relatively small. The largest bias occurred with regards to gender; there was an overrepresentation of females, 53.8% who returned the survey as opposed to the 46.7% representation of USC. Other small discrepancies occurred such as; a slight underrepresentation of juniors by 2.1%, an overrepresentation of Masters students by 2.5%, an underrepresentation of

African-American students by 1.89%, and several other minute differences. When analyzing this type of data it is expected that a GPA bias will exist. However, in our sample a very 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 2003. 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 nominal data (responses to some scaled questions) and chi-squared tests were performed on categorical data (i.e. responses of 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=294)	Graduate (n=210)
<i>Age</i>	Under 21	53.0	0.0
	21-29	44.9	61.5
	30 and higher	2.1	38.5
<i>Gender</i>	Female	61.5	44.4
	Male	38.5	55.6
<i>Year in school</i>	1st year undergraduate	22.1	
	2nd year undergraduate	21.8	
	3rd year undergraduate	26.5	
	4th year undergraduate	24.1	
	5th year or more	5.4	
	Graduate		100
<i>Full-time student status</i>		97.3	76.0
<i>Ethnicity</i>	White – not Hispanic (includes Middle Eastern)	61.6	48.1
	Black – not Hispanic	3.1	2.4
	Hispanic or Latino	8.5	9.0
	Asian or Pacific Islander	25.9	38.1
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.0	0.0
	Other	5.4	3.3
<i>International student status</i>		7.3	31.7
<i>Membership in fraternity or sorority</i>		21.5	7.6
<i>Current relationship</i>	Single	61.3	44.7
	Married/domestic partner	1.7	32.7
	Engaged/committed dating relationship	36.0	19.7
	Separated	0.3	0.5
	Divorced	0.7	2.4
	Widowed	0.0	0.0
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	Heterosexual	93.1	93.6
	Gay/lesbian	3.8	2.5
	Bisexual	2.8	2.0
	Transgendered	0.0	0.5
	Unsure	0.3	1.5
<i>Living situation</i>	Campus residence hall	21.8	1.0
	Fraternity or sorority house	8.8	0.5
	Other university housing	15.6	1.9
	Off-campus housing	42.2	71.9
	Parent/guardian's home	10.5	9.5
	Other	1.0	15.2
<i>Paid hours worked per week</i>	None	49.3	32.1
	1 to 19	38.1	22.0
	20 or more	12.6	45.9
<i>Volunteered 1 or more hrs/week</i>		38.6	28.4

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	7.3	1.9	<.01
Allergies	2.4	1.9	NS
Physical assault	1.0	0.0	NS
Sexual assault	0.7	0.0	NS
Attention Deficit Disorder	6.3	3.8	NS
Cold/Flu/Sore throat	30.0	7.7	<.001
Concern for a troubled friend or family member	20.8	10.1	<.01
Chronic illness (diabetes, asthma, etc.)	2.4	1.9	NS
Chronic pain	1.7	1.0	NS
Death of a friend or family member	5.9	1.0	<.01
Depression/Anxiety Disorder/Seasonal Affective Disorder	13.9	9.2	NS
Drug use	2.4	0.0	<.05
Eating disorder/problem	2.1	1.0	NS
HIV infection	0.0	0.0	NS
Injury	3.8	2.9	NS
Internet use/computer games	18.4	5.4	<.001
Learning disability	2.8	1.4	NS
Mononucleosis	1.7	0.0	NS
Pregnancy (yours or your partner's)	1.7	1.4	NS
Relationship difficulty	19.0	13.5	NS
Sexually transmitted disease	0.7	0.0	NS
Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat	9.7	1.4	<.001
Sleep difficulties	26.1	11.1	<.001
Stress	36.7	15.9	<.001
Other	20.0	10.4	NS

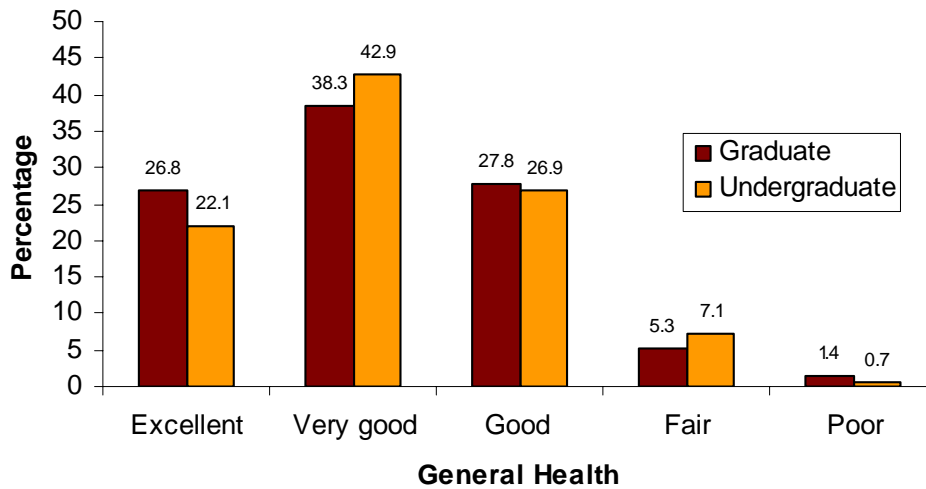
Bolded items represent the top eight items of interest.

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.

	Yes Responses, excludes “I don’t know” %			“I don’t know” Responses %	
	UG	G	P-value	UG	G
Dental exam and cleaning in the last year	84.2	70.4	<.001	2.4	1.0
Vaccinated against hepatitis B	90.3	72.0	<.001	22.1%	27.5
Routine GYN exam in the last year (females)	55.6	70.6	<.05	0.0	0.0
Vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis	72.1	42.0	<.001	17.2	36.1
Breast self-exam in the last month (females)	26.2	37.6	NS	0.6	0.0
Testicular self-exam in the last month (males)	30.7	30.2	NS	4.7	2.8

UG=Undergraduate Students, G=Graduate Students. Statistics presented differently from previous report.

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	28.9	14.8	<.001
Alcohol and other drug use prevention	38.8	14.3	<.001
Dietary behaviors and nutrition	32.7	11.9	<.001
Injury prevention and safety	12.6	9.5	NS
Physical activity and fitness	32.7	15.7	<.001
Pregnancy prevention	28.9	8.1	<.001
Sexual assault/relationship violence prevention	31.3	15.7	<.001
Sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention	36.7	13.8	<.001
Suicide prevention	8.5	4.3	NS
Tobacco use prevention	15.0	7.1	<.01
Violence prevention	19.7	10.0	<.01
None of the above	25.5	56.2	<.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	72.3	58.3	<.01
Magazines	55.4	60.0	NS
Friends	57.0	53.0	NS
Leaflets, pamphlets, flyers	60.3	50.8	<.05
Television	48.4	54.5	NS
Health center medical staff	56.4	51.3	NS
Internet/world wide web	61.4	64.6	NS
Campus newspaper articles	34.4	24.9	<.05
Health educators	42.1	32.0	<.05
Other	29.4	48.3	NS
Faculty/coursework	33.2	25.4	NS
Resident assistants/advisors	14.2	10.2	NS
Campus peer educators	8.9	9.3	NS
Religious center	5.4	9.2	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 medical staff (88.7%), health educators (87.6%) and parents (66.3%) and least likely to believe information from friends (23.2%), television (20.2%), and religious centers (18.5%). Graduate students stated they are most likely to believe information from medical staff (91.9%), health educators (86.6%) and faculty (58.2%) and least likely to believe information from television (19.2%), friends (17.9%) and religious centers (16.3%).

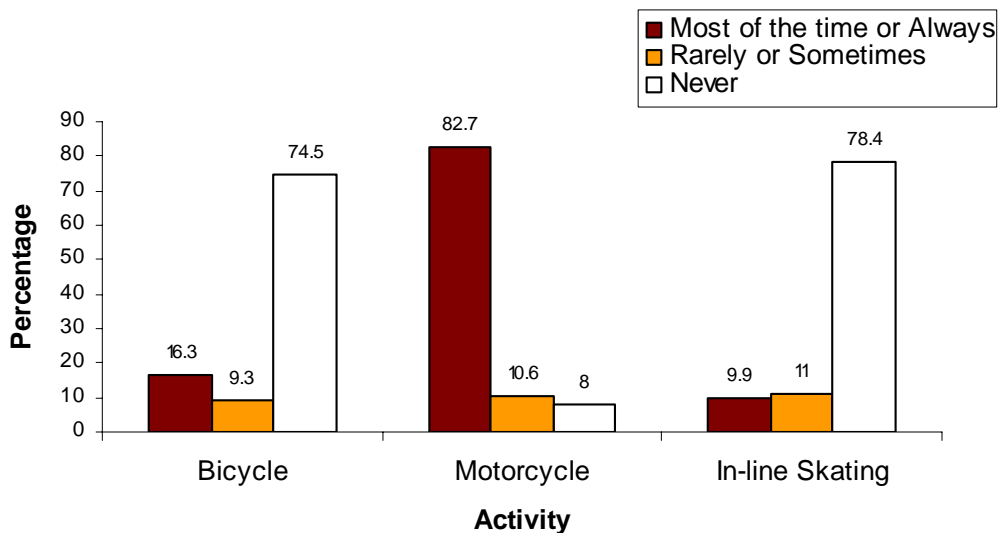
Refer to Question 3 of the survey.

- **Seatbelt Safety** – 97.3% 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** – 74.5% of students *never* wore a helmet when riding a bicycle and 78.4% *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, 6.1% of undergraduate and 2.4% of graduate students reported being involved in a physical fight. Within the last school year, 2.0% of undergraduates and 2.4% of graduate students reported that they were physically assaulted (does not include sexual assault).
There is a statistically significant association between physical fight involvement and classification, $p < .05$.
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	34.9	13.3	30.8	10.1
Seriously considered attempting suicide	7.5	0.3	6.8	0.5
Attempted suicide	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0

Depression Diagnosis and Treatment -

Refer to Question 41 of the survey.

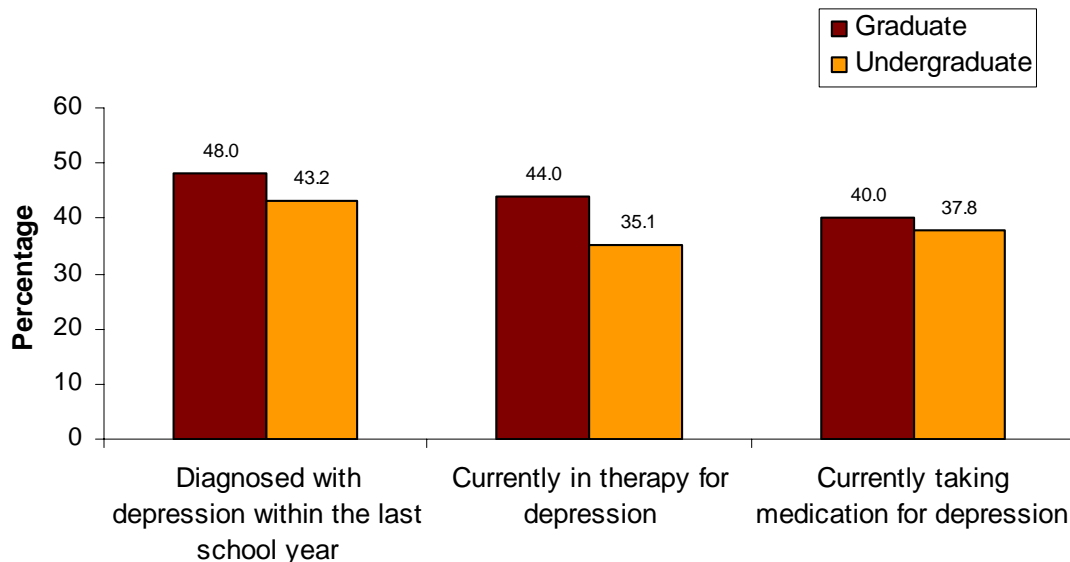
- Depression History** – 12.6% of students surveyed (13.1% undergraduates, 12.3% graduates) responded yes to “Have you ever been diagnosed with depression?”
Refer to Question 41 of the survey.

“The (12.6%) students who have previously been diagnosed with depression responded to the following questions:

“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?”



These data represent the percentage of students who answered yes to previously being diagnosed with 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	3.1	0.0	<.05
Sexual touching against your will	7.1	2.4	<.05
Attempted sexual penetration against your will	3.4	1.4	NS
Sexual penetration against your will	2.1	0.0	<.05

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

	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-value
Emotionally abusive	13.8	10.5	NS
Physically abusive	2.8	0.0	<.05
Sexually abusive	2.1	0.0	<.05

Reported Frequency of Health Problems -

Refer to Question 43 of the survey.

	<i>“Within the last school year, have you had any of the following?”</i>			<i>“Have you ever been diagnosed with any of the following?”</i>		
	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value	Undergraduate %	Graduate %	P-Value
Allergy problems	35.4	34.2	NS	32.9	39.0	NS
Anorexia	2.1	1.0	NS	2.1	1.5	NS
Anxiety disorder	11.6	9.5	NS	6.4	5.9	NS
Asthma	7.7	4.5	NS	14.0	11.8	NS
Back Pain	41.6	41.0	NS	19.6	29.5	<.05
Bronchitis	6.8	7.0	NS	16.0	17.9	NS
Bulimia	1.1	1.0	NS	1.4	1.0	NS
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	5.6	5.5	NS	4.3	6.0	NS
Chlamydia	0.7	0.0	NS	2.5	2.5	NS
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	3.2	4.5	NS	2.5	2.5	NS
Depression	20.4	16.0	NS	11.9	12.3	NS
Diabetes	0.0	2.0	<.05	0.0	1.5	<.05
Ear Infection	8.9	7.9	NS	27.3	28.0	NS
Endometriosis	0.4	0.5	NS	0.4	3.4	<.01
Fracture	4.9	2.5	NS	16.6	20.0	NS
Genital herpes	0.7	1.5	NS	0.7	3.5	<.05
Genital warts/HPV	1.4	2.0	NS	1.8	5.9	<.05
Gonorrhea	0.0	0.0	NS	0.7	1.0	NS
Hepatitis B or C	0.4	0.5	NS	0.7	3.9	<.05
High blood pressure	2.1	3.5	NS	1.4	4.9	<.05
High cholesterol	3.2	7.5	<.05	4.6	9.9	<.05
HIV infection	0.0	0.0	NS	0.0	1.0	NS
Mononucleosis	1.8	0.0	NS	7.4	5.4	NS
Pelvic Inflammatory Disease	0.4	1.0	NS	0.7	1.0	NS
Seasonal Affective Disorder	1.1	2.0	NS	0.7	0.5	NS
Sinus infection	17.5	17.8	NS	27.2	27.6	NS
Strep infection	10.9	5.5	<.05	29.9	28.1	NS
Substance abuse problem	2.5	2.0	NS	1.4	2.5	NS
Tuberculosis	0.0	0.5	NS	0.7	1.0	NS

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

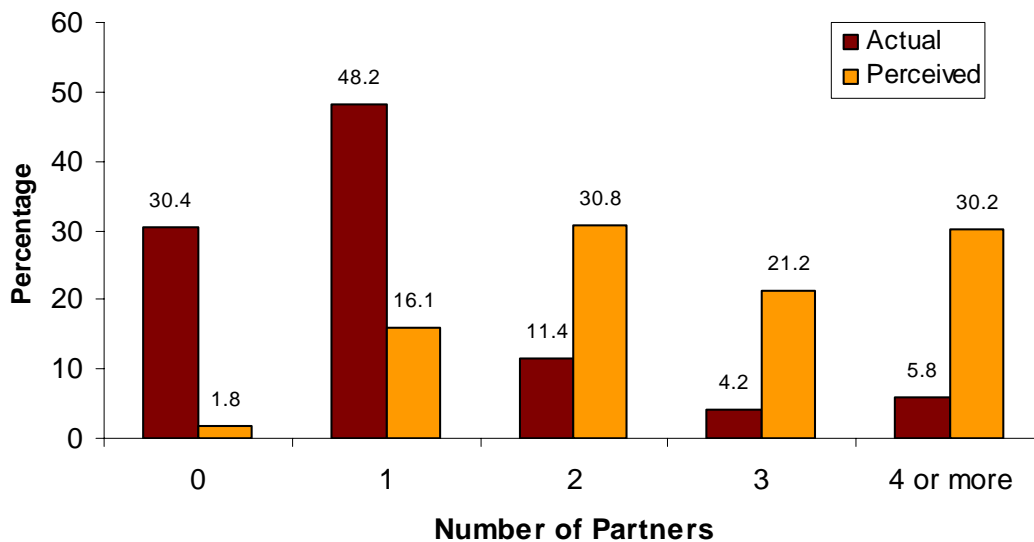
- **Unintended Pregnancy** – Among respondents who have had vaginal intercourse, 3.2% have unintentionally become pregnant or gotten someone else pregnant within the last school year.
Refer to Question 30 of the survey.
- **Emergency Contraception** – Among respondents who indicated that they are sexually active, 9.6% have used or had a partner who used emergency contraception (“morning after pill”) within the last school year.
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. There were no statistically significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students.

- **Sexual Partners** – While 78.6% of students have 0-1 sexual partners, 82.2% 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)	54.3	42.5	NS
Birth control pills	52.1	39.1	NS
Withdrawal	18.8	17.4	NS
Nothing	2.9	11.2	<.001
Spermicide (e.g. foam)	5.7	2.8	NS
Fertility awareness (calendar, mucous, basal body temperature)	4.0	8.3	<.05
Depo Provera (shots)	2.9	1.2	NS
Other method	3.4	4.5	NS
Diaphragm/Cervical cap/Sponge	0.0	1.2	NS
Norplant (implant)	0.0	0.0	NS

Percentages represent students who have had vaginal intercourse.

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

40.5% of undergraduates and 14.8% of graduate students reported that they have not had vaginal intercourse ($p < .001$).

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	49.5	2.1	50.0	2.7
Anal Intercourse	7.4	12.5	8.4	0.0
Vaginal Intercourse	44.8	25.9	59.7	15.5

There was a statistically significant association between classification with condom use during anal intercourse at the .01 level, and classification with condom use among vaginal intercourse at the .001 level.

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	19.5	12.3	67.9	0.3	0.3	62.0	37.7
Cigarettes	67.9	16.7	13.4	2.4	7.9	60.3	31.8
Cigars	80.2	15.7	4.1	0.0	54.1	45.5	0.3
Smokeless tobacco	90.7	7.3	2.0	0.0	59.1	39.2	1.7
Marijuana	67.8	16.8	14.0	1.4	12.7	65.6	21.6
Amphetamines	86.7	7.2	4.7	1.4	42.2	47.1	10.7
Rohypnol, GHB, Liquid X	99.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	69.6	29.1	1.4
Cocaine	95.6	2.7	1.6	0.0	62.6	33.6	3.8
Other drugs	89.7	6.0	3.6	0.7	47.1	47.5	5.4

All results are reported as percentages.

Undergraduate students were more likely to use marijuana and amphetamines at the .01 level of statistical significance.

Undergraduate students were also more likely to perceive that the typical student used alcohol and other substances at the .05 level of statistical significance, cigarettes and amphetamines at the .01 level of statistical significance, and marijuana at the .001 level of statistical significance.

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	24.9	13.9	60.7	0.5	4.9	65.5	29.6
Cigarettes	71.9	11.9	12.9	3.3	16.2	61.8	22.1
Cigars	83.3	13.3	3.4	0.0	54.2	41.9	3.9
Smokeless tobacco	92.7	6.3	0.5	0.5	58.2	39.3	2.5
Marijuana	77.5	16.3	6.2	0.0	28.1	61.1	10.8
Amphetamines	95.7	2.9	1.5	0.0	54.0	39.9	6.1
Rohypnol, GHB, Liquid X	98.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	73.2	26.3	0.5
Cocaine	93.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	68.6	29.9	1.5
Other drugs	91.5	6.0	2.0	0.5	58.4	38.9	2.6

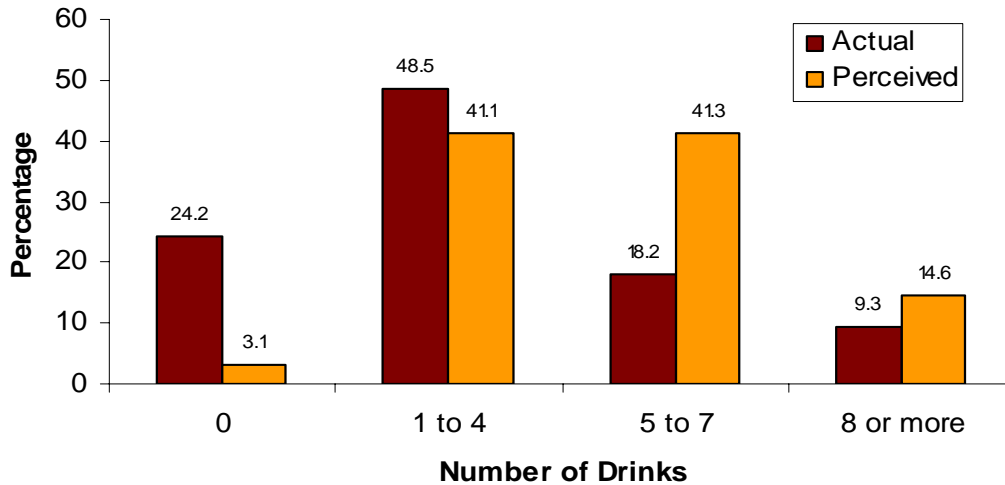
All results are reported as percentages.

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 .01 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?”

	Yes Responses, excludes “Non-drinkers”		
	Undergraduates %	Graduates %	P-value
Did something you later regretted	40.0	20.8	<.001
Forgot where you were or what you did	30.0	14.3	<.01
Physically injured yourself	14.4	5.8	<.01
Had unprotected sex	11.9	13.1	NS
Been involved in a fight	5.1	0.6	<.05
Physically injured another person	3.8	0.7	NS
Had someone use force or threat of force to have sex with you	2.1	0.6	NS

18.9% of Undergraduates and 24.1% of Graduate Students reported that they do not drink. (Statistics presented differently from previous report.)

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	48.1	27.0	<.001
Keep track of how many drinks you were having	33.2	33.0	NS
Eat before and/or during drinking	22.2	21.9	NS
Avoid drinking games	19.8	38.5	<.001
Determine, in advance, not to exceed a set number of drinks	16.5	21.9	NS
Have a friend let you know when you've had enough	10.4	9.0	<.05
Pace your drinks to 1 or fewer per hour	8.3	15.7	<.001
Choose not to drink alcohol	6.6	4.5	NS
Alternate non-alcoholic with alcoholic beverages	8.9	11.9	NS
Drink an alcohol look-alike (non-alcoholic beer, punch, etc.)	1.4	3.0	NS

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

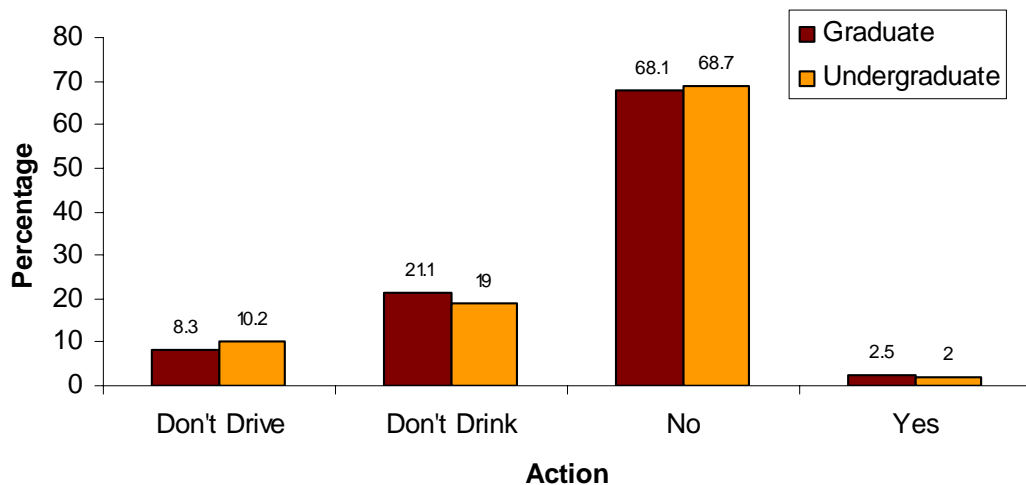
Students responded to a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from “Never” to “Always.” Chi-square tests were performed on all the responses; only the “Always” responses of students who “partied/socialized” are presented in the table for simplicity, however the p-values represent the range from never to always, not just “Always”.

- Designated Drivers** – Of those who drink, the majority of respondents (70.2%) reported that they **always** or **usually** use a designated driver.
*Correction for 2000-2001 data- should read 70.7% not 53.8%.
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?”

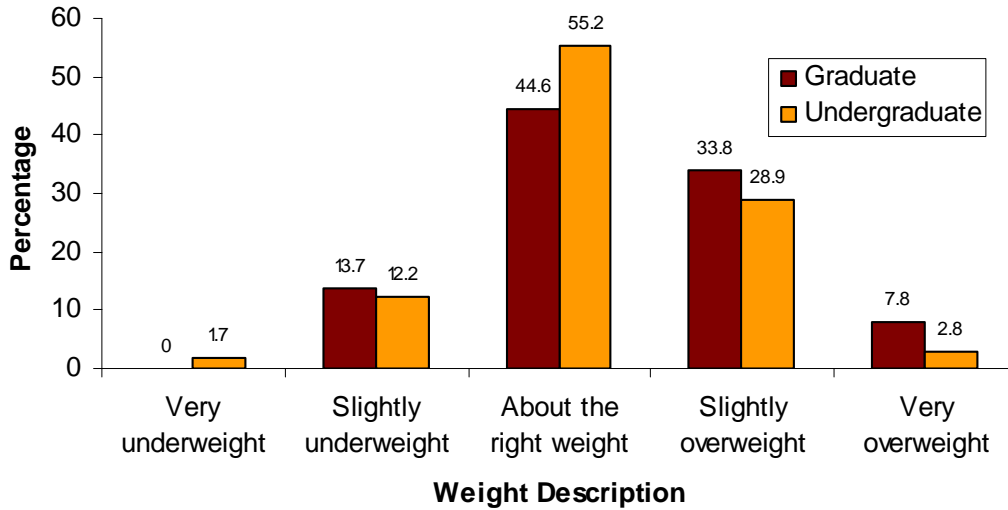


Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

Weight -

Refer to Question 35 of the survey.

"How do you describe your weight?"

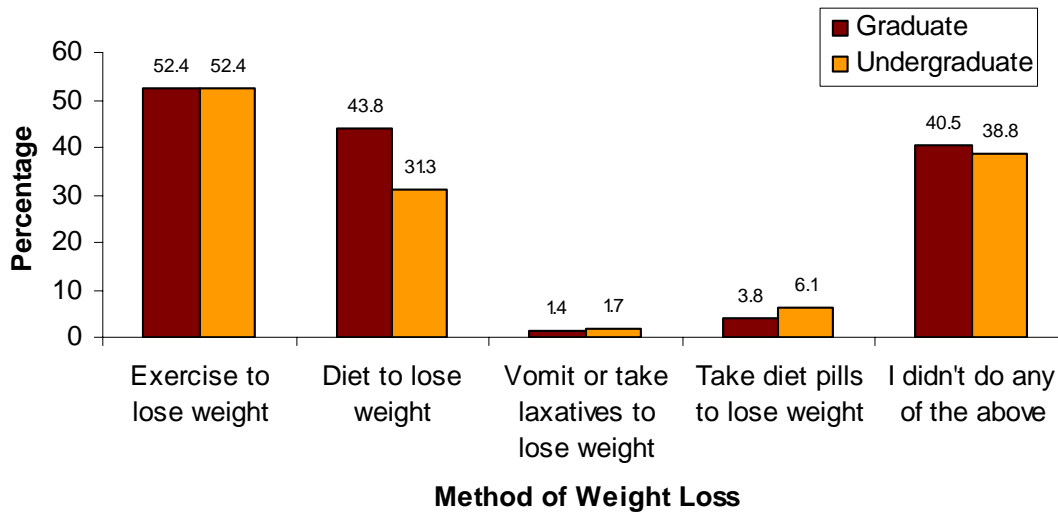


There was a statistically significant association between classification and weight description, $p < .01$.

Weight-related Behaviors -

Refer to Question 37 of the survey.

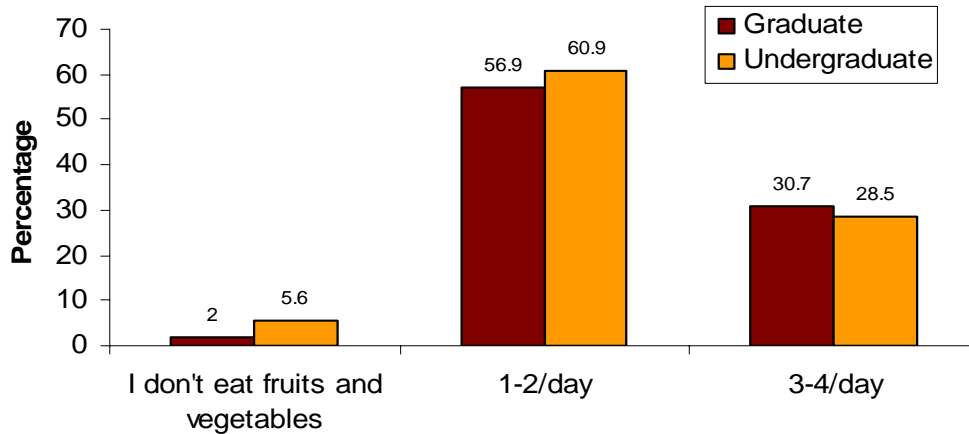
*"Within the last 30 days, did you do any of the following?"**



Fruit and Vegetable Intake -

Refer to Question 38 of the survey.

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



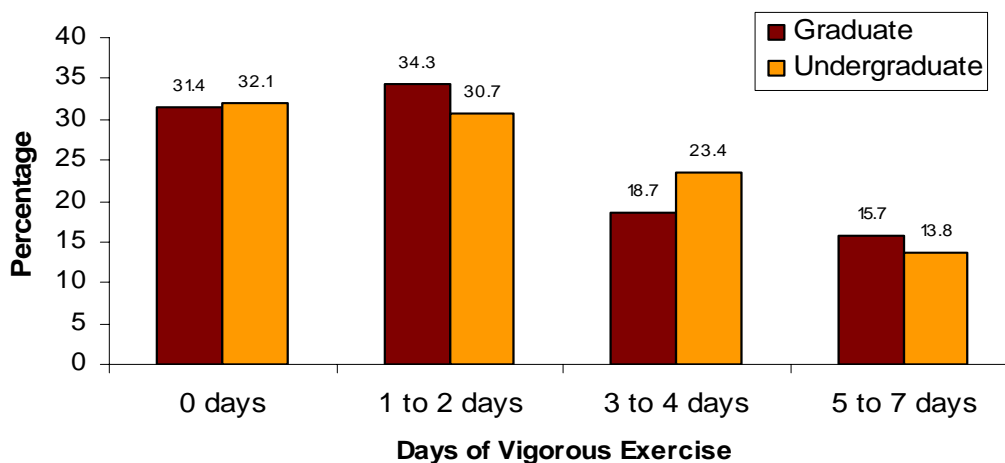
Vegetable Intake

- 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. 10.4% of graduate students and 4.9% of graduate students ate 5 or more servings per day. Graduate students were more likely to eat more fruits and vegetables 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?”



- Strengthening and Toning Exercises** – 60.8% of undergraduate and 59.0% of graduate students exercise to strengthen and tone muscle one or more days per week. 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. 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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A special thanks to the entire Health Promotion and Prevention Services staff and peer health educators for their continued support and feedback.

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

Appendix A
Representativeness of the 2003 Sample

Descriptor	All Students	Returned Survey	Difference
Class			
<i>Doctoral</i>	12.07	11.45	-0.62
<i>Masters</i>	24.59	27.10	2.51
<i>Professional</i>	5.02	4.77	-0.24
<i>Freshman</i>	7.54	7.82	0.28
<i>Sophomore</i>	12.93	13.55	0.62
<i>Junior</i>	16.43	14.31	-2.11
<i>Senior</i>	21.42	20.99	-0.43
Gender			
<i>Female</i>	46.71	53.82	7.10
<i>Male</i>	53.29	46.18	-7.10
Cumulative GPA by class			
<i>Doctoral</i>	3.71	3.72	0.01
<i>Masters</i>	3.50	3.51	0.01
<i>Professional</i>	3.33	3.38	0.05
<i>Freshman</i>	3.03	3.03	-0.01
<i>Sophomore</i>	3.13	3.22	0.10
<i>Junior</i>	3.11	3.18	0.08
<i>Senior</i>	3.15	3.27	0.12
Ethnicity			
<i>Native Amer.</i>	0.62	0.95	0.33
<i>Asian</i>	19.44	19.47	0.02
<i>Black</i>	5.32	3.44	-1.89
<i>Latino</i>	10.64	10.50	-0.15
<i>International</i>	17.18	17.75	0.57
<i>Unknown</i>	4.06	4.77	0.71
<i>White</i>	42.73	43.13	0.40
Owning Unit			
<i>ACCT</i>	2.67	3.63	0.95
<i>ANSC</i>	6.20	5.73	-0.47
<i>ARCH</i>	2.24	1.91	-0.33
<i>ASHU</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>BUS</i>	17.61	16.79	-0.81
<i>CNTV</i>	5.42	4.01	-1.41
<i>DENT</i>	2.93	2.67	-0.26
<i>EDUC</i>	3.78	4.58	0.80
<i>ENGR</i>	16.79	18.89	2.10
<i>FA</i>	1.03	0.95	-0.07
<i>FAPP</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>GERO</i>	0.37	0.00	-0.37
<i>ISSM</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>JOIN</i>	0.22	0.00	-0.22
<i>LAS</i>	27.25	28.63	1.38
<i>LAW</i>	2.50	2.86	0.36
<i>MUS</i>	4.01	2.67	-1.34
<i>PPD</i>	3.52	2.48	-1.04
<i>SOWK</i>	1.94	2.67	0.73
<i>THTR</i>	1.52	1.53	0.01

All results are reported as percentages except GPA.