

SERU/UCUES Research Symposium

A New Generation of University Students: Understanding the Student Experience and Seeking Opportunities to Translate Analysis into Practice

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## **ABSTRACT**

### ***The Rich and the Poor: Economic Stratification Among Undergraduates at the University of California***

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In the midst of rising tuition fees and other costs, is there evidence of increased financial strain and negative effects on the experience and circumstances of students from lower income groups at the University of California? This study will focus on undergraduate students from lower and upper family incomes, looking at variables such as the socioeconomic background of parents, immigrant and race/ethnicity status, majors, academic achievement and civic engagement, amount time working, borrowing levels and Pell Grant data, expectations and satisfaction, along with a comparative look at the income distribution of students at UC and other major research universities and highly selective colleges. The paper will also provide a comparative look at students from upper income backgrounds. The objective will be to gauge the extent to which UC, and campuses such as Berkeley and UCLA, serve lower and middle-income families relative to comparable institutions, and to provide a preliminary assessment of affordability and satisfaction using UCUES.