Being a Student During the Pandemic

- Results from SERU undergraduate and graduate surveys
- Discussion and Q&A with university leadership

June 18, 2020 | 10am PDT

YouTube LIVE CSHE Berkeley
SERU Consortium is a group of top tier research-intensive universities who collaborate by:

- Administering SERU surveys (census, online, customized, longitudinal) for policy and scholarly purposes
- Sharing SERU benchmark data and best practices
- Seeking paths for institutional self-improvement and collaborations
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Students’ Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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University of California, Berkeley

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University of Minnesota
SERU COVID-19 Survey Design

Content areas:
- Academic Experiences
- Financial Hardships
- Belonging and Engagement
- Health and Wellbeing
- Future Plans

Survey development principles:
1. Actionable
2. Short
3. Mobile friendly
4. Cost-effective
5. Allows benchmarking
Sample

- Ten U.S. institutions and 15 international institutions will administer the survey by the end of the summer.

- For this presentation, we used preliminary data from five U.S. institutions (May to mid-June).
  - Undergraduate students, 7-20%, $n = 22,516$
  - Graduate and professional students, 9-22%, $n = 7,690$
KEY TAKEAWAYS
Key Takeaways from the SERU COVID-19 Survey

1. There are disparities in students’ experiences and outcomes based upon their social identity, prior experience with online learning, and life responsibilities.
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2. Students experienced more obstacles to learning than positive benefits to transitioning online.
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2. Students experienced more obstacles to learning than positive benefits to transitioning online.

3. Students’ mental and physical health, wellbeing, and safety were negatively impacted by the pandemic.
Key Takeaways from the SERU COVID-19 Survey

1. There are disparities in students’ experiences and outcomes based upon their social identity, prior experience with online learning, and life responsibilities.

2. Students experienced more obstacles to learning than positive benefits to transitioning online.

3. Students’ mental and physical health, wellbeing, and safety were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

4. Undergraduates’ experiences are very similar to graduate and professional students’ experiences.
Key Takeaways from the SERU COVID-19 Survey

1. There are disparities in students’ experiences and outcomes based upon their social identity, prior experience with online learning, and life responsibilities.

2. Students experienced more obstacles to learning than positive benefits to transitioning online.

3. Students’ mental and physical health, wellbeing, and safety were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

4. Undergraduates’ experiences are very similar to graduate and professional students’ experiences.

5. Most students will re-enroll next year (unless graduating).
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES
Undergraduate Students Sample

- 0.8% transgender, 0.9% non-binary, 34.7% male, 63.1% female
- 8.2% low-income or poor, 18.9% working-class, 42.1% middle-class, 28.5% upper-middle class, 2.2% wealthy
- 0.1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 29.0% Asian, 7.5% Black or African American, 21.6% Latinx, 3.7% multiracial, 0.2% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 36.2% White, 1.7% unknown (IPEDS definitions, only reported from two schools so far)
- 25.1% first-generation, 74.9% continuing generation
- 0.8% asexual, 1.4% questioning, 1.3% pansexual, 1.1% queer, 3.4% gay or lesbian, 8.0% bisexual, 5.0% prefer not to answer or self-describe, 79.1% straight
- 2.1% physical disability, 3.1% learning disability, 5.0% cognitive or neurological disability, 27.4% emotional or mental health disorder or disability
- 8.8% international students
Satisfaction with Remote Instruction

64% Are Satisfied with the Quality of their Courses

81% Are Satisfied with Support from Instructors

49% Adapted Well or Very Well to Online Instruction
These groups were significantly more likely to struggle in adapting to online instruction compared to their peers:

- Black or African American students, Latinx students
- Low-income and working-class students
- Students majoring in physical sciences, social sciences, humanities and performing arts
- Transgender and non-binary students
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and pansexual students
- Students with a learning disability, cognitive disability, or emotional/mental health disability or disorder
- Students responsible caring for children or other adults
- Students who had never taken an online course before the pandemic
Top Five Obstacles to Remote Learning

- Lack of motivation for online learning: 76%
- Lack of interaction/communication with other students: 64%
- Inability to learn effectively in an online format: 61%
- Lack of access to an appropriate study space or distracting home environment: 56%
- Course content that is not appropriate for online learning: 43%
- None: 4%
Top Five Obstacles to Remote Learning

- Lack of motivation for online learning: 76%
- Lack of interaction/communication with other students: 64%
- Inability to learn effectively in an online format: 61%
- Lack of access to an appropriate study space or distracting home environment: 56%
- Course content that is not appropriate for online learning: 43%
- None: 4%
Top Five Positive Experiences with Remote Learning

- 38% I had more time for academics.
- 33% I felt less stressed about my studies.
- 23% I was able to prepare more for classes.
- 21% I felt more comfortable participating in class discussions.
- 20% I enjoyed learning in an online format.
- 26% None
Health & Wellbeing

- **36%** Clinically Significant Major Depressive Disorder Symptoms
- **38%** Clinically Significant Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms
- **23%** Worried Their Food Would Run Out Before They Had Money to Buy More
- **37%** Worried They Would Not Have Enough Money to Cover the Cost of Housing
These groups were significantly more likely to experience clinically significant major depressive disorder symptoms compared to their peers:

- Black or African American students (43%), Latinx students (41%)
- Low-income or poor students (49%)
- Performing arts and humanities majors (42-49%)
- Non-binary students (66%)
- Transgender students (63%)
- Gay or lesbian (46%), bisexual (51%), queer (60%), asexual (55%), pansexual (56%) students
- Caregivers of children (41%) or other adults (46%)
These groups were significantly more likely to experience clinically significant generalized anxiety disorder symptoms compared to their peers:

- Latinx students (43%)
- Women (43%)
- Low-income or poor students (51%), working class students (44%)
- Performing arts and humanities majors (48-53%)
- Non-binary students (67%)
- Transgender students (67%)
- Gay or lesbian students (49%)
- Bisexual (55%) and queer students (64%)
- Caregivers of children (49%) or other adults (44%)
Did you relocate during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- No: 33%
- Yes, to a location within the same state: 50%
- Yes, to a different state: 13%
- Yes, to a different country: 3%
- Other: 1%
Reported it was “never true” or “sometimes true” that they had a place to live:

- that was free from physical/emotional violence or abuse
- that was free from drug or alcohol abuse
- where their identity was respected (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity)
- where they felt safe and protected
of international students reported that instances of xenophobia, harassment, or discrimination has been a concern for them.
Plans for Fall 2020 (if not graduating):

Domestic Students
- Will continue: 91%
- Will not return: 1%
- Undecided: 8%

International Students
- Will continue: 85%
- Will not return: 2%
- Undecided: 13%
Do you expect the COVID-19 pandemic to delay the semester or term you intended to graduate?

- No: 52%
- Yes: 12%
- I don’t know: 36%
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES
Land Acknowledgement

The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities is located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people. The University resides on Dakota land ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1851.

Today, the state of Minnesota is home to twelve federally and non-federally recognized indigenous nations including five Dakota Nations and seven Ojibwe Nations. Those nations include the Prairie Island Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Indian Community, Lower Sioux Indian Community, Upper Sioux Community, Mendota Mdewakanton Tribal Community, Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Red Lake Nation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, White Earth Nation, Fond du Lac Band of Ojibwe, and Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.
Equity in Assessment Practices

In addition, I live six blocks from where George Floyd was murdered and two blocks south of Lake Street/Hiawatha in South Minneapolis, where many of our community shops, restaurants, and buildings were destroyed. George Floyd’s final words force us to confront the undeniable evidence of systemic racism and violence against Black communities. As researchers, policymakers, administrators, and faculty in higher education, we cannot look away.

We must listen, learn, support, and advocate members of Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color who continue to experience the damaging effects of historical trauma, oppression, and systemic racism.

We must also embed equity-minded practices within our assessment of students’ experiences. I encourage you to view a recent webinar offered by ACPA on this topic: https://www.myacpa.org/acpa2go
Graduate and Professional Students Sample

- 0.6% transgender, 1.0% non-binary, 37.9% male, **59.2% female**
- 0.6% asexual, 0.7% questioning, 1.1% pansexual, 2.2% queer, 4.2% gay or lesbian, 5.6% bisexual, 6.0% prefer not to answer or self-describe, **79.6% straight**
- 25.6% first-generation, **74.4% continuing generation**
- 7.8% low-income or poor, 21.7% working-class, **42.6% middle-class**, 26.5% upper-middle or professional-middle class, 1.4% wealthy
- 2.3% learning disability, 2.7% physical disability, 4.5% cognitive or neurological disability, **23.2% emotional or mental health disorder or disability**
- Only reported from two schools so far: 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 5.6% Asian, 2.3% Black or African American, 11.4% Latinx, 4.6% multiracial, 0.4% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, **74.1% White**, 1.5% unknown
- **18.5% international students**
Academic Experiences

- 43% Had Never Taken an Online Class Before the Pandemic
- 76% Are Satisfied with their Online Experience
- 88% Are Satisfied with Support from Instructors
- 64% Adapted Well to Online Instruction

SERU COVID-19 SURVEY
These groups were significantly more likely to struggle in adapting to online instruction compared to their peers:

- Students who had never taken an online course before the pandemic
- Transgender and non-binary students
- Bisexual, queer, and pansexual students
- Students with a learning disability, cognitive disability, or emotional/mental health disability or disorder
- Low-income and working-class students
- Students of color
### Top Five Obstacles to Remote Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation for online learning</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: SERU COVID-19 Survey*
Obstacles to Degree Progress

51% Lack of Access to an Appropriate Study Space or Distracting Home Environment
40% Inability to Conduct Research
33% Inability to Attend Professional Conferences
25% Need to Provide Additional Care for Yourself or a Family Member
Top Five Positive Experiences with Remote Learning

35%: I had more time for academics
31%: I felt less stressed about my studies
24%: I enjoyed learning in an online format
17%: I was able to prepare more for classes
16%: I was more productive completing homework or assignments
28%: None of the above

Academic Experiences: 35%
Health, Wellbeing, & Safety: 31%
Future Plans: 24%
SERU COVID-19 SURVEY
Satisfaction with Advisor or Faculty Mentor’s Support...

- Seeking funding to financially support your continued education: 70%
- Conducting your research during the campus closure: 70%
- Preparing for your career or the job market: 58%

Academic Experiences | Health, Wellbeing, & Safety | Future Plans

SERU COVID-19 SURVEY
Health & Wellbeing

- 31% Clinically Significant Major Depressive Disorder Symptoms
- 38% Clinically Significant Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms
- 20% Worried Their Food Would Run Out Before They Had Money to Buy More
- 36% Worried They Would Not Have Enough Money to Cover the Cost of Housing
These groups were significantly more likely to experience clinically significant major depressive disorder symptoms compared to their peers:

- International students (36%)
- Non-binary students (54.8%)
- Transgender students (53.5%)
- Bisexual students (45.2%)
- Queer students (51.55%)
- Low-income or poor students (40.2%)
These groups were significantly more likely to experience clinically significant generalized anxiety disorder symptoms compared to their peers:

- Women (41.2%)
- Non-binary students (63.5%)
- Transgender students (67.5%)
- Gay or lesbian students (46.5%)
- Bisexual and queer students (60.5% each)
- Caregivers of other adults (44.2%)
- Low-income or poor students (46.3%)
Did you relocate during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- No: 77%
- Yes, to a location within the same state: 10%
- Yes, to a different state: 10%
- Yes, to a different country: 1%
- Other: 1%
Safety

~10%

Reported it was “never true” or “sometimes true” that they had a place to live

- that was free from physical/emotional violence or abuse
- that was free from drug or alcohol abuse
- where their identity was respected (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity)
- where they felt safe and protected
29% of international students reported that instances of xenophobia, harassment, or discrimination has been a concern for them.
Plans for Fall 2020 (if not graduating):

Domestic Students
• Will continue: 95%
• Will not return: 1%
• Undecided: 4%

International Students
• Will continue: 96%
• Will not return: 1%
• Undecided: 4%
Do you expect the COVID-19 pandemic to delay the semester or term you intended to graduate?

- No: 42%
- Yes: 23%
- I don’t know: 35%
Forthcoming SERU COVID-19 Survey Policy Briefs:
• Students’ financial concerns
• Students’ safety in their current housing situation
• International students’ experiences
• Health and wellbeing analyses (e.g., mental health, food and housing insecurity)
• Overall disparate impacts
• Engagement and belonging
• Students’ volunteerism and community engagement

THANK YOU!