This New Student Survey report profiles the Fall 2018 incoming class of UCSB transfer entry students, the factors influencing their decision to attend UCSB, financial and mental health concerns, expectations for academic engagement, knowledge and skills they bring to UCSB, and political views.

**Background and Methods**

The New Student survey was administered in Summer and Fall 2018 in an effort to derive an increasingly clearer picture of the profile of undergraduate students entering UCSB. This is the first year the entering transfer cohort was included in the New Student Survey. New students were given a survey link as part of their Orientation checklist, and students were emailed at the beginning of the school year with an invitation to participate. A total of 255 transfers completed the survey out of an incoming cohort of 2,472, giving us a response rate of 10%. Transfer students responded to survey at a lower rate than freshmen-entry students (15% response rate).

**Demographics of Survey Respondents vs. Population**

- Women responded to the survey at a higher rate than men – while 51% of the population of incoming transfers was male, men make up only 36% of the survey respondents.
- Caucasian students are also somewhat overrepresented in the survey sample – 38% compared to 34% of the population of entering transfers, while underrepresented minorities (URM) responded at a lower rate, 25% of the sample compared 31% of the new transfer population.

**Other Background Characteristics**

- Among survey respondents, 38% attended a high school that was either completely or mostly non-white, while 32% attended a high school that was either completely or mostly white.
- Close to half (44%) of entering transfer students say that English was not their native language, and 46% are first generation college students.
- Approximately 86% identify as heterosexual, while 3% report being transgendered.
- Transfer entry students report lower high school GPAs than those who enter as freshmen - 21% had at least an A average in high school vs. 47% of freshmen responding to the New Student Survey.

**Applying to College**

- The majority of transfers entering in Fall 2018 applied to 3 or more additional colleges besides UCSB; one-fourth (25%) applied to 6 or more. Seven percent (7%) applied only to UCSB.
- Overall, over half (55%) of entering transfers say UCSB was their first choice, and another third (32%) had UCSB as their second choice college.

**Reasons for Attending UCSB**

Students rated the relative importance of various factors on their decision to attend UCSB.

- Overwhelmingly, new transfers say that the academic reputation was a very important or important reason they attended UCSB (93%).
- Other reasons endorsed as important by a majority of transfers in their decision to attend UCSB include the employment prospects of UCSB graduates (85%), the high admission rate of UCSB graduates to graduate and professional schools (80%), its good reputation for social and extracurricular activities (73%), UCSB graduates making a difference in the world (71%), rankings in national magazines (67%), and their visit to the campus (66%).
- Logistic regression was used to determine which factors predict whether a student chose UCSB as their first choice college. Interestingly, results showed that the campus visit was the only factor that significantly predicted UCSB to be one’s first choice. There was, however, a marginally significant effective for being offered financial aid (p < .10).

**Number of Additional Colleges Applied To Beyond UCSB**

- URM transfers applied to more schools – 37% applied to 6+ others. UCSB was the first-choice college for 68% of URM transfers. Asian students are less likely to say that UCSB was their top choice (44%).
- Transfer-entry students applied to fewer other colleges than freshmen (4 vs. 8, on average), and are more likely to say that UCSB was their first choice (55% vs. 31% of freshmen).
Financial Considerations

- The majority of incoming transfers have concerns about financing their college education: 48% say they have some concern but think they will probably be okay, and 20% say they have major concerns and are not sure they will have enough funds.
- Overall, 55% of students had to work 6 or more hours a week the previous year, and 48% say there is a very good chance they will need to get a job to help pay for college expenses.
- Further examination reveals that financial worry is particularly acute for first generation college students and underrepresented minorities. They are significantly more likely to say that financing their college education is a major concern (30% 1st gen and 32% URM vs. 11% of students whose parents went to college and 16% non-URM).

Prior Year Experiences

- Incoming transfer students prioritized spending time studying the last year before attending UCSB over any other activity, studying 11 hours per week on average. One-fourth (26%) said they spent at least 16 hours studying every week.
- New transfer students spent 10 hours per week working for pay the previous year, on average.
- Other ways transfer students spent their time include: using social media (6 hours/wk), socializing with friends in person (6 hours), exercise or sports (4.5 hours), watching TV (4 hours), household / childcare duties (3 hours) playing video games (3 hours), or reading for pleasure (2.5 hours).
- One-third (35%) report partying at least one hour per week, and almost half (48%) say they spent at least one hour per week participating in student clubs/groups.
- Further analyses revealed female students spent somewhat less time studying each week, but significantly more hours working for pay than their male counterparts.

Civic Engagement

- The majority of new transfers were involved in volunteer work. About a fifth (21%) said they volunteered frequently during the past year, and another 46% said they volunteered at least occasionally. In addition, 40% said there was a “very good chance” they would participate in volunteer or community service work at UCSB.
- Twenty-two percent frequently discussed politics in the last year, 53% communicated publicly about a cause, 43% voted in a student election, 39% helped raise money for a campaign, and 30% demonstrated for a cause.

- 46% of new transfers say there is a “very good chance” they will vote in a local, state, or national election while at UCSB, while 17% say the same of participating in student protests or demonstrations. Freshmen-entry students are more likely to say they plan to vote (60%), demonstrate (23%), or volunteer (51%).
Mental Health
Mental health indicators generally show a minority of incoming transfer students frequently struggling with issues related to wellbeing.

- 10% frequently struggled with depression in the past year, 30% frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do, and 35% thought there was a “very good” chance they would need seek personal counseling at UCSB. A majority (74%) did think there was at least “some chance” that they would seek personal counseling at UCSB.

- Other indirect behavioral measures of wellbeing were also only frequently reported by a minority of students: 8% said they “frequently” drank alcohol their during the last year, 4% said they frequently came to class late, 3% said they frequently skipped school altogether, and 2% frequently failed to complete homework on time.

- Further analyses revealed white students were more likely to report drinking alcohol frequently and feeling depressed. Female students report feeling more frequently overwhelmed by all they have to do than male students. Women and first generation college students were more likely to say there is at least “some chance” they will seek counseling, compared to men and students whose parents went to college.

- New transfer students were more likely than new freshmen to report frequently drinking alcohol (8% vs. 3%) and less likely to be frequently overwhelmed (30% vs. 39%).

Expectations for College

- Overall, most incoming transfers believe that there is a very good chance that they will experience a variety of positive outcomes at UCSB; particularly socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group (77%), making at least a “B” average (70%), and being satisfied with the university (68%).

- While 30% of incoming transfers think there is at least some chance they will change their major, the same is true for 6 out of 10 (60%) of new freshmen. New freshmen are also more likely to plan to participate in student orgs (68% vs. 55%) or study abroad (41% vs. 31%).

- Further analyses revealed a variety of subgroup differences. Women were more likely than men to say there was at least “some chance’ that they would participate in student protests or demonstrations (58% versus 40%) or participate in volunteer or community service (87% versus 74%).
• With regard to ethnicity, Asian (63%) transfer students are less confident than white (80%) and URM (77%) students that there is a “very good chance” they will make at least a “B” average. Asian students are also significantly more likely to say there is at least “some chance” that they will change their major (44%) compared to white (13%) or URM (20%) students.

• First-generation transfer students are more likely to say there is at least “some chance” they will transfer out of UCSB (22% vs. 10% of students whose parents went to college).

Knowledge, Skills, and Traits
Incoming transfers generally rate themselves “above average” compared to their peers on most skills.

• Specifically, incoming transfers are largely confident in their drive to achieve and academic ability, and they consider themselves more compassionate and understanding than their peers.

• However, transfer students seemed less sure about their mathematical ability, emotional health, public speaking ability, spirituality, artistic ability, and computer programming skills, all of which had more than half rate themselves as average or below average.

• Further analyses revealed white transfer students rate themselves “above average” on academic ability (74%) more often than URM (68%) and Asian (57%) transfer students. However, Asian students (27%) and URM students (22%) perceive themselves to have better computer programming skills compared to white students (9%).

• First-generation college students are more likely than non-first generation transfer students to rate themselves “below average” on public speaking ability (28% vs. 17%) and intellectual self-confidence (9% vs. 3%). And yet, first-generation transfers believe they have a greater drive to achieve than their peers – 34% say they are in the “highest 10%” compared to 24% of students whose parents went to college.

• Significant gender differences also existed, with more men rating themselves in the “highest 10%” than women on academic ability (28% vs. 11%), intellectual self-confidence (23% vs. 11%), competitiveness (22% vs. 9%), creativity (20% vs. 10%), emotional health (18% vs. 8%), public speaking (18% vs. 6%), and spirituality (18% vs. 6%)

• However, women entering UCSB as transfer students perceive themselves to have a greater drive to achieve than the men (81% vs. 72% “above average”).

• New transfer students are less confident in their academic ability than entering freshmen (67% “above average” vs. 78%), and specifically their mathematical ability (49% vs. 57%). On the other hand, transfer students feel more social self-confidence than the new freshmen cohort (58% vs. 33%).
Political Views

- About half of incoming transfers identify themselves on the liberal end of the political spectrum, with 41% identifying as liberal and 7% identifying as far left. In contrast, 43% of incoming transfers identify as moderate or “middle of the road”, 8% identify as conservative, and less than 1% as far right.

- Caucasian transfer students tend to be more polarized (11% far left and 13% conservative), while Asians tend to be middle-of-the-road (59%), and URM students tend to be liberal (53%).

Accordingly, most students also endorse a variety of politically liberal opinions and policies, across both economic and social issues. Further analyses revealed that some positions vary with regard to ethnicity.

- A large majority of Asian transfer students believe that students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions (90% vs. 60% of Caucasian and 67% of URM students).

- 43% of new Asian transfer students no longer perceive racial discrimination as a major problem in America, compared to 9% of Caucasian and 10% of URM students.

- Asian students are also much less optimistic about an individual’s ability to bring about change in our society - 68% agree there is little an individual can do vs. 19% of Caucasian and 27% of URM students.

- URM students are more likely to agree that undocumented immigrants should have access to public education in the US (92% vs. 74% of Caucasian and 82% of Asian students). They also feel more strongly that wealthier people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now (52% “strongly agree” vs. 38% of Caucasian and 21% of Asian students).

- Caucasian transfers are less likely to agree that colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus (74% vs. 90% of URM and 89% of Asian students). However, fewer Caucasians (63%) and URMs (64%) think colleges have the right to ban extreme speakers, compared to Asian students (77%).
Major Preparation

- In preparation for attending UCSB, one-fourth (25%) of new transfer students say they took “all” of the major-preparation or pre-major courses required for their intended major. Another half (51%) say they took “most but not all”.
- Transfer students in the Social Sciences are more likely to say they have completed less than half of the preparation for their major (21%). Humanities majors are more likely to say they are “not sure” if they completed the pre-major requirements (21%) or that their major does not have any pre-major requirements (12%).

Future Plans

- The majority of incoming transfers ultimately intend to pursue post-graduate education, with approximately 68% reporting that they intend to receive a graduate-level degree. They are somewhat less likely than freshmen-entry students (81%) to plan on earning a degree beyond their Bachelor’s.
- More transfer students than freshmen, however, have some idea about their intended career - only 12% were undecided, compared to 20% of the new freshmen cohort. The most commonly cited careers incoming transfers chose were research scientist (9%), accountant (8%), finance (8%), entrepreneur (6%), business manager (4%), sales/marketing (4%), medical doctor (4%), writer/producer/director (3%), lawyer (3%), and engineer (3%).

Conclusions

- Similar to new freshmen surveyed, new transfer students report coming to UCSB overwhelmingly for its academic reputation and the career and graduate school prospects as a result of attending. UCSB was the first-choice college for over half of the new transfer students surveyed.
- Most incoming transfers are optimistic about their future experiences at UCSB, and feel well-prepared in a conventional sense for attending UCSB, with mathematical ability as a slight exception.
- A significant number of incoming transfers expressed worry about the financial costs of attending UCSB, and this effect is particularly acute among first-generation college students. About half of all new transfer students say they will need to get a job to help pay for their college education.