

**Office of the President**

**TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:**

## **DISCUSSION ITEM**

*For Meeting of November 18, 2020*

### **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This item provides an overview of students with disabilities at UC, a growing constituency among undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Based on data provided by the Office of the President (UCOP) and by campus reports, this item describes trends and academic outcomes among this population. Finally, it describes disability accommodations provided by the University, discusses challenges and successes faced by students with disabilities and disability services practitioners, and identifies issues for further consideration.

Key findings:

- During the 2019–20 academic year, nearly 19,000 students with disabilities received accommodations from campus Disabled Students Services offices.<sup>1\*</sup> These students make up almost seven percent of UC’s undergraduate and graduate student population (Figure 1).
- Between 2017 and 2020, the percentage of UC students with disabilities requesting accommodations increased across the system by two percentage points (Figure 1).
- UC has experienced increased growth in the number of students with disabilities receiving accommodations; however, the financial resources to support this growth have not been commensurate.
- Additional financial and programmatic support can enhance UC’s efforts to build and sustain an inclusive and accessible environment for enrolled students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are key contributing members of the campus community, and their unique perspectives and lived experiences bring value to UC.

#### **TRENDS AND OUTCOMES**

Analyses of several data sources reveal that students with disabilities have poorer academic outcomes than students who do not have disabilities, especially for students with learning or cognitive disabilities, and are overall less satisfied with their campus experience. Refinement of

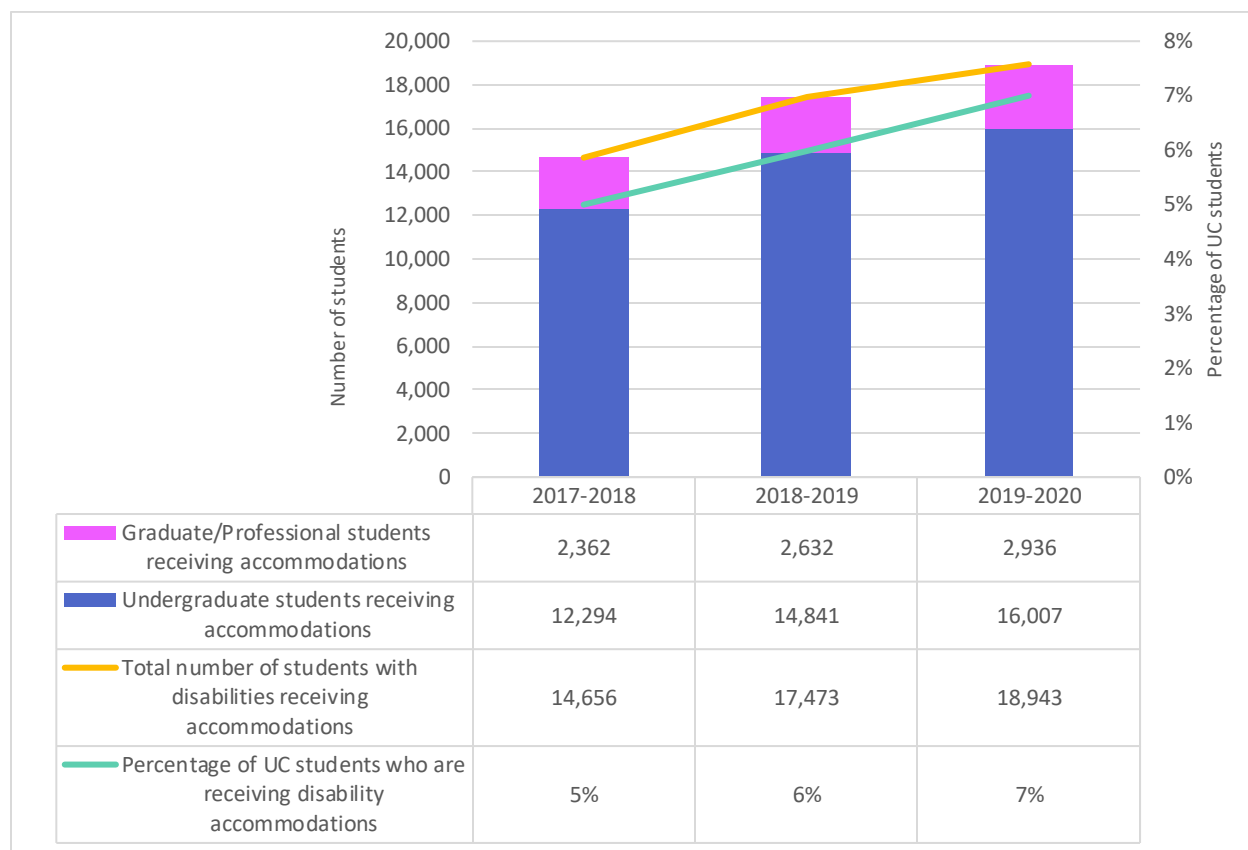
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<sup>1</sup> The names of campus programs that provide student disability services vary by campus; this item refers to these programs as “Disabled Student Service (DSS) offices.”

research methods is needed to better understand the experiences of students with disabilities, given the nascent and complex landscape of data evaluation and reporting for this population.

The population of students with disabilities at UC has grown in recent years. According to reports provided by campus Disabled Students Services (DSS) offices, both the number and percentage of UC students receiving accommodations have increased over the last three academic years (Figure 1). Further research is needed to determine the cause of this increased percentage of UC students receiving accommodations.

**Figure 1: UC Students Receiving Accommodations, 2017–2019**



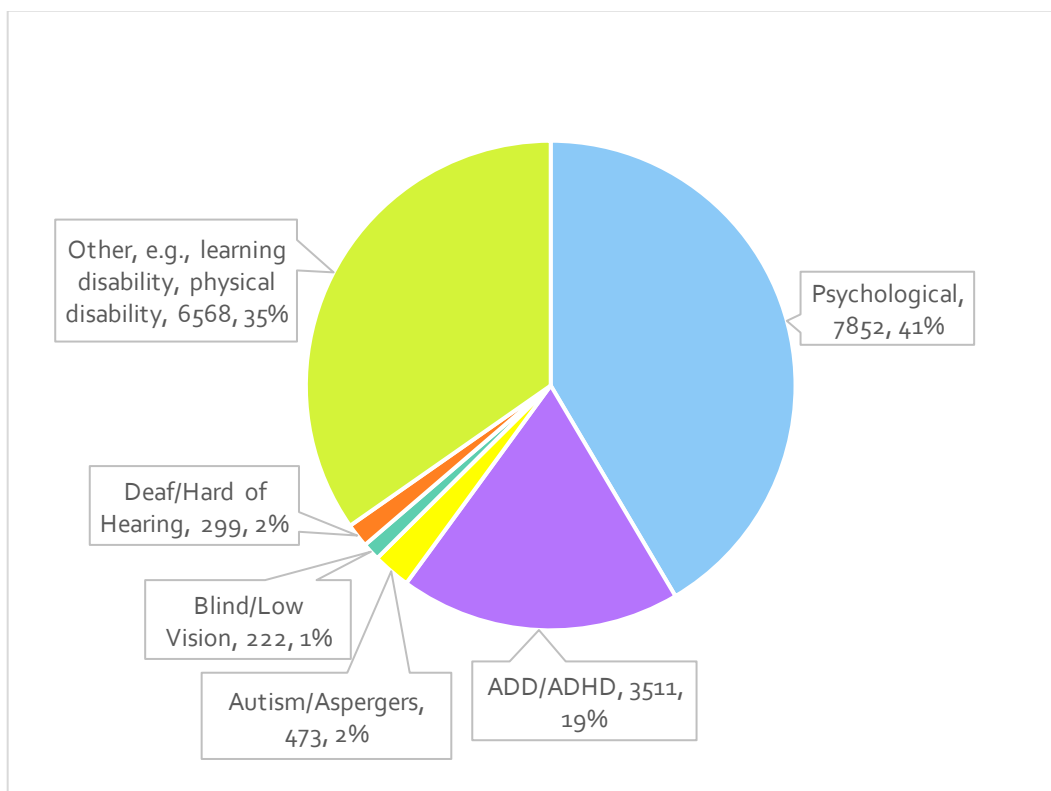
Source: UC Campus Disabled Students Services offices, 2020

### *Types of Disabilities*

Figure 2 reflects the overall number of undergraduate and graduate/professional students with disabilities receiving accommodations by disability category in 2019–20, as provided by the DSS offices. The most common type of disability among these students is psychological disabilities (41 percent), followed by other disabilities, e.g., learning disabilities, etc. (35 percent).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For definitions of disability types, see [Americans with Disabilities Act Title III Regulations, Section 36.105](https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleIII_2010/titleIII_2010_regulations.htm#a105) ([https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleIII\\_2010/titleIII\\_2010\\_regulations.htm#a105](https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleIII_2010/titleIII_2010_regulations.htm#a105))

Figure 2: UC Undergraduate and Graduate Students by Type of Disability, 2019–20



Source: UC Campus Disabled Students Services offices, 2020

The UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) collects data on different types of disabilities than those tracked by the DSS offices. In the 2018 administration of UCUES, respondents were asked, “Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at UC [Campus Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access the campus?” Respondents selected “yes” or “no” from a list of types of disabilities, including physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition), learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder), cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury), mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder), other disability or condition (respondents were asked to specify)<sup>3</sup> (Appendix I).

### ***Retention and Graduation Rates of Students with Disabilities***

In the 2018 UCUES survey administration, respondents who indicated having a disability or condition had significantly lower four-year graduation rates compared with those who did not report having a disability, especially for neurodevelopmental/cognitive disabilities or

<sup>3</sup> Since the 2018 UCUES question is specific to whether a condition or disability “significantly affects” the experience of a student with disabilities, the findings are limited in that the data may not include students with disabilities who do not consider their disability as “significantly affecting” their experiences.

conditions (21 percentage points lower), learning disabilities or conditions (20 percentage points lower), physical disabilities or conditions (11 percentage points lower), and emotional or mental health conditions (11 percentage points lower) (Table 1). UCUES respondents had generally higher four-year graduation rates than students who did not respond to a UCUES survey, so this sample likely represents an overestimate of the actual four-year graduation rates of UC students. Additional trends related to students with disabilities as captured by UCUES are included in Appendix III.

**Table 1: Four-Year Graduation Rates by Disability Status and Type of Disability, 2018**

Type of Disability or Condition	Number of UCUES freshman entry respondents with the disability who graduated within four years	Number of UCUES freshman entry respondents without the disability who graduated within four years
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	67%	78%
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	58%	78%
Cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	58%	79%
Mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	70%	81%
Other disability or condition	68%	78%
Any disability or condition	70%	82%

Source, 2018 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey

### *Campus Climate*

According to the final report of the systemwide UC Campus Climate Study conducted in 2012–13, respondents with disabilities—which included students, postdoctoral scholars, trainees, staff, and faculty—reported lower satisfaction with their campus climate than respondents without disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

The report also noted that 28 percent of undergraduate students with disabilities responding to the survey had seriously considered leaving UC, compared with 17 percent of undergraduate students without disabilities. In addition, 30 percent of graduate and professional students with

<sup>4</sup> Rankin & Associates, Consulting, “University of California System Campus Climate Project,” March 2014, [https://campusclimate.ucop.edu/\\_common/files/pdf-climate/ucsystem-full-report.pdf](https://campusclimate.ucop.edu/_common/files/pdf-climate/ucsystem-full-report.pdf).

disabilities considered leaving UC, compared with 16 percent of graduate/professional students without disabilities.

Findings from the 2018 and 2020 UCUES indicated that students with disabilities generally reported more negative learning experiences and perceptions of their campus than students without disabilities. These findings include the following:

- *Respected on campus:* Fifty percent of students with mental health disabilities strongly agreed or agreed that students with a disability or condition “like theirs” feel respected on their campus, compared with 37 percent of students with physical disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- *Campus friendliness:* Eleven percent of students with disabilities rated the general climate for students at UC as more hostile than friendly, compared with only seven percent of students without disabilities.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, 17 percent of students with physical disabilities rated the general climate for students at UC as more hostile than friendly.
- *Campus safety:* When asked to rate the general climate for students at UC along the dimension of “safe” to “dangerous,” 16 percent of students with disabilities rated the general climate as dangerous, compared with only 12 percent of students without disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Data Limitations***

Systemwide data pertaining to UC students with disabilities is currently limited due to a lack of centralized data collection. Hence, the data contained herein are derived from the following sources: reports from DSS offices, data from the 2018 and 2020 administration of the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), and the 2012–13 UC Campus Climate Study. Differing data collection methods among these sources have resulted in inconsistent and incongruous data on students with disabilities. Accurate comparisons cannot be drawn among the three data sources given that UCUES respondents comprise a small sample of undergraduates with disabilities, while the data from the DSS offices and the Campus Climate Study Project include undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. Moreover, because these data sources are based on students’ self-reported disability status, they may not accurately reflect the true number or experiences of all students with disabilities at UC. (See Appendix I for more information on the limitations of UCUES.)

Although UC databases contain limited student record-level information about students with disabilities, UC campus DSS offices report annually on the aggregate number of students using their services. In the 2019–20 academic year, nearly 19,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with disabilities received accommodations for learning and mobility; this is 6.6 percent of the total UC student enrollment.<sup>8</sup> In comparison, 5.1 percent of Californians

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<sup>5</sup> Based on UCOP analyses of 2018 UCUES data.

<sup>6</sup> Based on UCOP analyses of preliminary 2020 UCUES data.

<sup>7</sup> Based on UCOP analyses of preliminary 2020 UCUES data.

<sup>8</sup> Accommodations are legally mandated modifications, services, or aids that give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from the education process by ensuring equal access to learning and mobility. A reasonable accommodation may include (A) making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by

aged 16–20 have a disability, and, nationally, 6.3 percent of Americans in the same age category have a disability.<sup>9,10</sup>

### DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

In addition to State and federal law (described in Appendix II), UC policy prohibits the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from any educational program or activity, including admission to the University, participation in University services (e.g., counseling and placement, etc.), financial aid, student employment, social organizations, and athletics, among other programs. The policy also indicates that the University shall provide accessible on-campus housing to students with disabilities.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Campus Disabled Student Services Offices*

As with all public universities, each UC campus operates a Disabled Student Services (DSS) office to help students with disabilities successfully transition to and succeed at UC. Students with disabilities consult and enroll with their campus DSS office to determine their needs, obtain documentation of accessibility needs, and access necessary accommodations. Students' disability status and necessary accommodations are then shared with the student's faculty and lecturers so they are aware of the needed accommodations. DSS offices serve enrolled students as well as campus visitors. Staff and faculty with disabilities request and acquire disability accommodations through their campus Human Resources department.

Each campus DSS office has a portfolio of services to meet the needs of its disabled population. Campus-provided accommodations for students with disabilities typically consist of note-taking services (e.g., scribes, speech-to-text transcription); reading accommodations (e.g., dictation software, alternatively formatted books, course material); test-taking accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams, proctoring, wheelchair-accessible testing stations, large-print exam booklets); deaf and hard-of-hearing services (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time closed captioning, assistive listening devices and translators); mobility assistance transportation services (on-campus golf cart or shuttle ride service, wheelchair, scooter, crutches, etc.); universal building design, among other methods of providing accessibility such as preferential seating in class; and modification of academic requirements (e.g., part-time

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individuals with disabilities; and (B) "... acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities." (Retrieved from <https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm#12201h>)

<sup>9</sup> Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at the Cornell University ILR School, "2018 Disability Status Report California" (Cornell University, 2018), [https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport\\_CA.pdf](https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport_CA.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at the Cornell University ILR School, "2018 Disability Status Report United States" (Cornell University, 2018), [https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport\\_US.pdf](https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport_US.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACAOS) 140.00: Guidelines Applying to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability: <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710534/PACAOS-140>

enrollment, extended time for completion of degree requirements). Campuses provide priority registration for students with disabilities, accommodations in student housing, campus buildings, and facilities, and assist with accessibility for co-curricular student activities (e.g., concerts, dances, clubs, etc.)

### ***Accommodations During COVID-19***

The outset of COVID-19 has raised both opportunities and challenges for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. For example, online or distance learning can enhance accessibility for some students but may be challenging for faculty who are not adept at teaching virtually. According to 2020 UCUES results, 45 percent of students with disabilities agreed that “remote learning is harder than learning in person,” compared with 39 percent of students without disabilities. As a result, DSS offices are experiencing increased requests for accommodations to make remote learning accessible. Another challenge that has emerged with the transition to remote learning is in providing students with testing accommodations, such as faculty revising exam schedules to allow students with disabilities in different time zones to take exams at a normal time of day.

To address these challenges, DSS staff have mobilized to ensure that the appropriate technical support is available to all students who need it, including students without disabilities. For example, UC San Francisco’s Student Disability Services Office offers all students assistive technologies such as speech-to-text software.

## **CHALLENGES**

Despite the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), meeting the needs of students with disabilities remains a challenge for both students with disabilities and for those providing the accommodations. Students with disabilities face unique programmatic, structural, and social barriers to accessing and being included in higher education, largely because of the lack of consideration for this population in curriculum development and campus infrastructure design.

### ***Transitioning From High School to College***

The transition from high school to college poses programmatic barriers for students with disabilities, largely because, unlike in K–12 schools, the onus falls on the student to take charge of their disability accommodations.<sup>12</sup> For example, students entering higher education are responsible for having their disability evaluated, providing the documentation of the disability to a disability services office, acquiring accommodations, and staying on track academically. In K–12 districts under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, school districts are responsible for identifying the disability, and parents are responsible for providing an evaluation of disability. K–12 districts under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) develop

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<sup>12</sup> Disability Support Services, “Differences Between K-12 and College,” CSU San Marcos, n.d., <https://www.csusm.edu/dss/differencesbetweenk-12/index.html>.

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an individualized education plan to guide their special education supports and services. In contrast, college students must initiate a request for reasonable accommodation during registration and request an accommodation letter at the start of each academic term.

### ***Lack of Accessible Design in Building Infrastructure and Furniture***

According to a 2020 report from UC Access Now, a nascent UC advocacy group for students with disabilities, some UC students with disabilities reported the challenge of a lack of accessible buildings and furniture.<sup>13</sup> Not all buildings complied with the ADA, and many campus buildings do not have hands-free building entrances. Students described a lack of wheelchair-accessible furniture, including desks in lecture halls, exam tables in medical exam rooms, and tables in dining commons and event halls. The report indicated that many buildings have inadequate signage directing wheelchair users to elevator locations. Student anecdotes to UCOP indicate elevators have been left broken for extended periods of time. Disabled Students Services (DSS) directors have also acknowledged such infrastructure challenges in interviews with UCOP.

### ***Lack of Disability Awareness/Training for Staff and Faculty***

UC Access Now has indicated a general lack of awareness among University staff and faculty about how to treat students with disabilities. UC Access Now and several DSS directors have cited microaggressions experienced by students with disabilities, or instances where lecturers or faculty were not understanding of students' need for accommodations in order to access course materials or exams. When staff and faculty are not properly informed about the needs of students with disabilities, this lack of awareness can manifest as insensitive behaviors. According to 2020 UCUES data, 16 percent of respondents indicated that they heard teaching faculty or instructors express negative or stereotypical views about learning or psychological disabilities, and 12 percent heard these views with regard to physical disabilities).

### ***Variability of Funding and Resources***

As the proportion of students with disabilities at UC increases with overall UC enrollment, funding resources have not kept pace with this demand. DSS offices reported annual budgets for operations and accommodations of about \$13.8 million in 2017–18, \$14.4 million in 2018–19, and \$15.4 million in 2019–20. However, the average expenses per student has decreased during these years (\$944 per student in 2017–18 to \$813 in 2019–20). DSS office budgets are funded through a combination of State funds, extramural gifts and grants, and student services fees. At four campuses, UC students have agreed to support classmates with disabilities by voting in favor of campus-based fees.

Expenses for accommodations often far exceed budgets given the unpredictability and variability in accommodations requests; that is, in any given year, expenses for academic accommodations may vary widely depending on factors such as the number of students requesting

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<sup>13</sup> UC Access Now, "Demands for Universal Design, Accessibility, and Inclusion for the Disabled Students, Staff, and Faculty of the University of California on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act," July 26, 2020.



accommodations and the type of accommodation needed (captioning, translating, screen readers, and so forth). The number of requested testing accommodations, including extended time to complete tests, have also increased in recent years. On some campuses, thousands of students request test accommodations, which pose both logistical and financial challenges in arranging for test proctors.

The way in which academic accommodations are funded, managed, and provided also vary widely across the campuses. On some campuses, the cost of accommodations for testing and test proctoring is shared between the academic department and the DSS offices, and on others it is funded centrally. It should be noted that the budgets described herein do not typically include facilities accommodations for housing residents, accommodations for student employees such as teaching assistants (accommodations for teaching assistants are paid for by the academic department or human resources), and accommodations for summer sessions, UC extension, or co-curricular activities.

### ***Provision of Resources***

According to DSS directors, the ability to provide timely services is a common challenge. For example, providing note-takers can be problematic due to note-taker availability, quality of the notes, and compensation. On campuses where note-takers are compensated, limited budgets make it more difficult to provide note-takers for an ever-increasing student population. Where students are not paid, finding enough student volunteers to become note-takers is difficult.

### ***Faculty Buy-in and Training***

At times, DSS offices have faced challenges in ensuring that faculty make their curricula accessible for students with disabilities in a timely manner. Typically, a faculty member learns about how to make their lectures or curricula accessible only in response to an accommodation request. This indicates a need for more proactive training and awareness on accessible pedagogy and curricula for all campus faculty and instructors.

## **PROMISING PRACTICES**

### ***Promising Practices of Campus Disability Services and Programs***

Despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19 and lack of funding, student advocates and the campus Disabled Student Services (DSS) offices continue to cultivate an atmosphere that promotes academic success and inclusivity for students with disabilities. Campus examples include:

- UC Davis' DSS office initiated the FACES Project, which is a series of posters displaying photos and quotes of students with disabilities placed throughout campus to promote visibility and inclusion of students with disabilities and to destigmatize their experiences.
- UC Santa Barbara's DSS office utilizes its own campus-developed online disability

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services management system that allows the disability services office to track students and accommodations. The system also allows students with disabilities to apply and enroll for disability services (including evaluation and certification) and to schedule appointments with the DSS specialist, and it allows exam proctors to view scheduled assignments.

- UC San Francisco’s DSS office provides an assistive technology software, Otter AI, for students with disabilities as well as for the entire campus. The office recognized the broad application of the software’s ability to translate speech into text and offered it to the entire campus community, including students without disabilities. Otter AI can be integrated with digital learning platforms, such as Zoom.
- UC Berkeley’s DSS office includes a “Cal TRiO” program, which is a disability student service designed to support students with disabilities through the provision of individualized academic coaching; financial literacy training and financial aid assistance; graduate/professional school and career counseling; and community building and cultural events, among other services and activities.<sup>14</sup> It is one of nine federal TRiO programs in the country funded by the U.S. Department of Education through a competitive grant.<sup>15</sup>
- UCLA’s DSS office provides a webpage of faculty resources, including a faculty portal, accommodation instructions, FAQs, information for faculty, and a faculty handbook, all of which aim to ensure that faculty are informed about how to support students with disabilities and provide accommodation when needed.<sup>16,17</sup>
- UC Davis has recently established a four-year program for students with intellectual disabilities, called Supported Education to Elevate Diversity (SEED). Funded through a \$2.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, SEED will be the first of its kind in California. The first group of 12 students is expected to begin classes in the fall 2021 and is likely to include people with autism, Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome and other neurodevelopmental disabilities.<sup>18</sup>

### *Disability Studies Programs*

UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and UCLA currently offer minors in Disability Studies, a relatively nascent academic discipline that examines the meaning, nature, and consequences of disability from a variety of perspectives, including arts and humanities, health sciences, social sciences, public policy, technology, and education.<sup>19</sup> The field also explores how to best meet the challenges and alleviate the problems of those with impairments or disabilities, with

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<sup>14</sup> UC Berkeley Disabled Students’ Program, “TRiO DSP Student Support Services,” Berkeley, n.d., <https://test-dsp-ob.pantheon.berkeley.edu/support-services/trio-dsp-student-support-services>.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Education, “Student Support Services Program,” U.S. Department of Education, September 25, 2020, <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html>.

<sup>16</sup> UCLA Center for Accessible Education, “Faculty Handbook” (University of California, Los Angeles, 2020), <https://www.cae.ucla.edu/Portals/122/Documents/19-20%20CAE%20Faculty%20Handbook-2.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> UCLA Center for Accessible Education, “Information for Faculty,” n.d., <https://www.cae.ucla.edu/faculty>.

<sup>18</sup> “UC Davis to Establish 4-Year Program for Students With Intellectual Disabilities,” October 2020, <http://ucdavis.edu/news/uc-davis-establish-4-year-program-students-intellectual-disabilities/>

<sup>19</sup> Undergraduate Education Initiatives, “Disability Studies,” UCLA, 2020, <http://www.uei.ucla.edu/academic-programs/disability-studies/>.

emphasis on the role of those affected in defining problems and evaluating solutions.<sup>20</sup>

### ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Discussions with the Disabled Student Services (DSS) offices and student advocacy groups have revealed the following issues for consideration:

- **The need for training and educating faculty and staff on how to accommodate students with disabilities, honor accommodation requests in concert with their campus DSS office, and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.** Such training would foster more inclusive environments, raise awareness of challenges faced by students with disabilities, destigmatize disability and the need for accommodations, and improve the UC experience of students with disabilities. Campuses may also consider asking faculty to submit course syllabi one term in advance in order to help plan for academic accommodations.
- **The need to promote Universal Design by providing assistive technologies that can be used by students with disabilities—as well as by all other students, faculty, and staff—in developing and delivering curriculum and other essential services (e.g., accessible lectures and teaching tools).** This change would address Universal Design, which promotes an “environment [that] is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use” and benefits everyone.<sup>21</sup>
- **The need to coordinate centralized data collection methods between DSS, systemwide student survey instruments, and campus data management systems.** Centralized coordination will ensure that measurement tools and definitions align systemwide (e.g., disability categories data, data collection methods).

### CONCLUSION

Current efforts to make a UC education accessible and attainable for enrolled students with disabilities are not always adequate. As this population continues to grow, commensurate funding, improved data collection, and increased efforts to raise awareness about the needs of these students among staff, faculty, and students are necessary to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment for students with disabilities.

### KEY TO ACRONYMS

ADA	American Americans with Disabilities Act
DSS	Disabled Students Services
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

<sup>20</sup> Regents of the University of California, “Disability Studies,” Berkeley, 2020, <https://disability-studies.ugis.berkeley.edu/>.

<sup>21</sup> National Disability Authority, “What Is Universal Design,” 2020, <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>.

HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IPA	Information Practices Act
TA	Teaching assistant
UCUES	UC Undergraduate Experience Survey

**Appendices**

- I. Limitations of UC Undergraduate Experience Survey—Students with Disabilities Data
- II. Overview of Federal Disability Policies
- III. Summary of UC Undergraduate Experience Survey—Students with Disabilities

## Appendix I: Limitations of UC Undergraduate Experience Survey—Students with Disabilities Data

The University of California does not have a centralized system for collecting data on students with disabilities. As such, this item relies upon data from the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), which is a biennial survey electronically administered to all undergraduates enrolled at UC.

The Regents item relies upon data from the 2018 and 2020 UCUES. However, it should be noted the administrations of both surveys varied. Namely, in 2018, all students received questions about having a disability. In 2020, only randomly selected students were asked about having a disability.

To gauge the number of UC students with disabilities, responses from the following question are reflected in this item<sup>22</sup>: “Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at UC [Campus Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access the campus?” (Yes or No). Students selected their conditions or disabilities from the following options.<sup>23</sup>

- *Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)*
- *Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)*
- *Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)*
- *Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder)*
- *Other disability or condition, please specify \_\_\_\_\_*

The question’s construction and language provided other limitations:

- The use of the word “significantly” is subjective and may conjure inconsistent definitions of disability among respondents.
- Students with disabilities may feel that they are adequately managed or supported, either by themselves or by campus services, and may not respond in the affirmative that their experiences are being affected.
- The findings may include students with temporary disabilities (e.g., broken appendage, concussion, etc.) making it difficult to accurately capture the experiences of students with permanent or chronic disabilities.
- The inclusion of the word “conditions” expands the range of students’ interpretations of their disabilities (e.g., medical ailments).
- For students identifying more than one condition or disability, it is impossible to determine which condition or disability has impacted their student experience or for which condition or disability they are receiving accommodation.

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<sup>22</sup> Responses were not weighted (adjusted to count certain responses more heavily than others) to try to better represent the population, in part because we have no idea what is the “true” population rate of students with conditions or disabilities.

<sup>23</sup> The emotional or mental health option references concern or condition, not disability.

While this item utilizes the 2018 and 2020 UCUES, due to the surveys' administration methods, question construction, and language, the generalizability of the data on students with disabilities is limited.

## **Appendix II: Overview of Federal Disability Policies**

### ***Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 & Title II***

Enforced by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) Office of Civil Rights, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the DOE. Title II extends the prohibition on discrimination established by Section 504 to all activities of state and local governments regardless of whether these entities receive Federal financial assistance.<sup>24</sup>

*Note: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees free public education to all children regardless of disability and governs how states and public agencies provide special education-related services, applies to K–12 schools only.*

### ***American Disabilities Act (ADA)***

July 26, 2020 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The ADA extends the protections of Section 504 beyond the school and the workplace to other settings. It grants civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion.<sup>25</sup> For instance, a postsecondary school may not deny an individual admission because of disability status, and the ADA requires institutions to provide accommodations to students with disabilities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, “Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act,” ADA.gov, n.d., [https://www.ada.gov/ada\\_title\\_II.htm](https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_II.htm).

<sup>25</sup> ADA National Network, “What Is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?,” adata, September 2020, <https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>.

<sup>26</sup> Rob Gould and Sarah Parker Harris, “Higher Education and the ADA” (ADA National Network: University of Illinois Chicago, 2019), [https://adata.org/sites/adata.org/files/files/ADA%20Research%20Brief\\_Higher%20Education%20and%20the%20ADA\\_FINAL.pdf](https://adata.org/sites/adata.org/files/files/ADA%20Research%20Brief_Higher%20Education%20and%20the%20ADA_FINAL.pdf).

## Appendix III: Summary of UC Undergraduate Experience Survey—Students with Disabilities

### Introduction

This brief provides an overview of results of the 2018 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) related to disability. It is important to note that findings from UCUES are not representative of all UC undergraduate students. Rather, they are illustrative of what students are experiencing.

### Methods

The survey instrument can be found at: [https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/survey-instruments/Instrument\\_UCUES\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/files/survey-instruments/Instrument_UCUES_2018.pdf)

### Prevalence of Disability at UC by Type of Disability

UCUES participants answered the question “*Do you have any conditions or disabilities that significantly affect your experience as a student at UC [Campus Name], including how you learn or perform academically, interact with others, or access campus?*”

- Emotional or mental health conditions were the most commonly reported type of disability or condition among UCUES respondents (26 percent of UCUES respondents).
- The most common “other” disabilities or conditions specified included: Type 1 diabetes or diabetes (35 respondents), asthma (19 respondents), epilepsy (18 respondents), ADHD (14 respondents), and insomnia (13 respondents).

Type of Disability or Condition	Percentage and number of UCUES respondents who answered “Yes”
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	3% (2,093)
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	3% (1,974)
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	4% (2,673)
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	26% (17,377)
Other disability or condition (please specify)	1% (1,001)
Any disability or condition	29% (19,638)

### Accommodations by Type of Disability

If they answered yes to the previous question, respondents were asked, “*Do you currently receive accommodations from campus due to your disability or condition?*”

- The disability or condition category in which the highest rate of students reported receiving accommodations was learning (42 percent), followed by physical (40 percent) and neurodevelopmental/cognitive (40 percent).



- Students who reported having an emotional or mental health concern or condition were less likely than students who reported having the other types listed above to receive accommodations.
- Not all students with disabilities or conditions need or wish to receive accommodations.

Type of Disability or Condition	Percentage of UCUES respondents who indicated that they currently receive accommodations
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	40%
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	42%
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	40%
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	19%
Other disability or condition	29%
<b>Any disability or condition</b>	<b>21%</b>

### Gender by Type of Disability

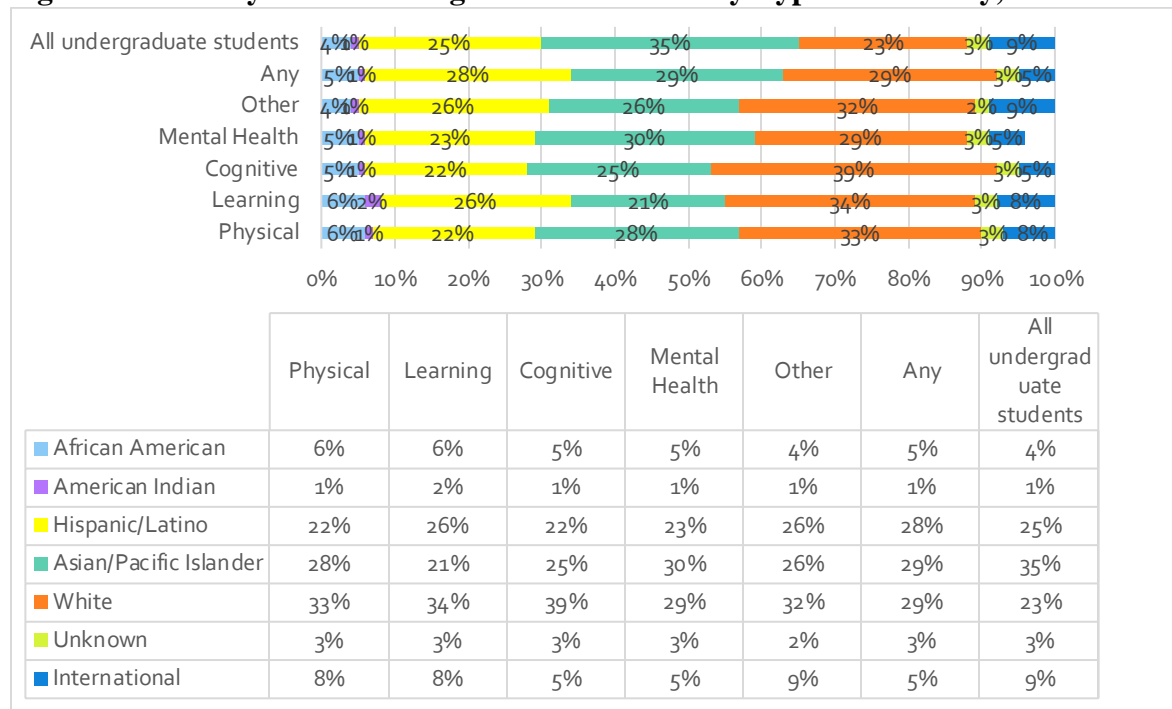
- Female students were more likely than their male counterparts to report having an emotional or mental health concern.
- Male respondents were more likely than females to identify having any of the other disabilities or conditions.

Type of Disability or Condition	Female	Male
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	59%	40%
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	56%	43%
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	55%	44%
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	73%	27%
Other disability or condition	57%	42%
<b>Any disability or condition</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>All UCUES Respondents</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>38%</b>

### Ethnicity by Type of Disability

- White students and African American students were more likely than students overall to report any type of disability or condition, especially learning or cognitive disabilities or conditions.
- Asian students were less likely to report any type of disability or condition.

**Figure 3: Ethnicity of UC Undergraduate Students by Type of Disability, 2018**



Source: UC Undergraduate Experience Survey, 2018

### Pell Status by Type of Disability

- Students who reported having a disability or condition are more likely to have Pell Grants than students without disability.

Type of Disability or Condition	Percentage and number of UCUES respondents who indicated a disability or condition and who receive a Pell Grant during their 1 <sup>st</sup> year
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	45% (931)
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	46% (895)
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	42% (1,116)
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	44% (7,710)
Other disability or condition	44% (439)
<b>Any disability or condition</b>	<b>44% (8,582)</b>
<b>No disability or condition</b>	<b>40% (14,828)</b>

### First-Generation Status by Type of Disability

- Students who reported having a disability or condition are slightly more likely than students who did not report having a disability or condition to be first-generation students.

Type of Disability or Condition	Percentage of UCUES respondents who are first-generation college students
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	43%
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	42%
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	36%
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	45%
Other disability or condition	43%
<b>Any disability or condition</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>No disability or condition</b>	<b>42%</b>

### Graduation Rates of Students with Disabilities

- Students who reported having a disability or condition had significantly lower four-year graduation rates compared with those who did not report having a disability, especially for neurodevelopmental/cognitive disabilities or conditions (21 percentage points lower), learning disabilities or conditions (20 percentage points lower), physical disabilities or conditions (11 percentage points lower), and emotional or mental health conditions (11 percentage points lower).

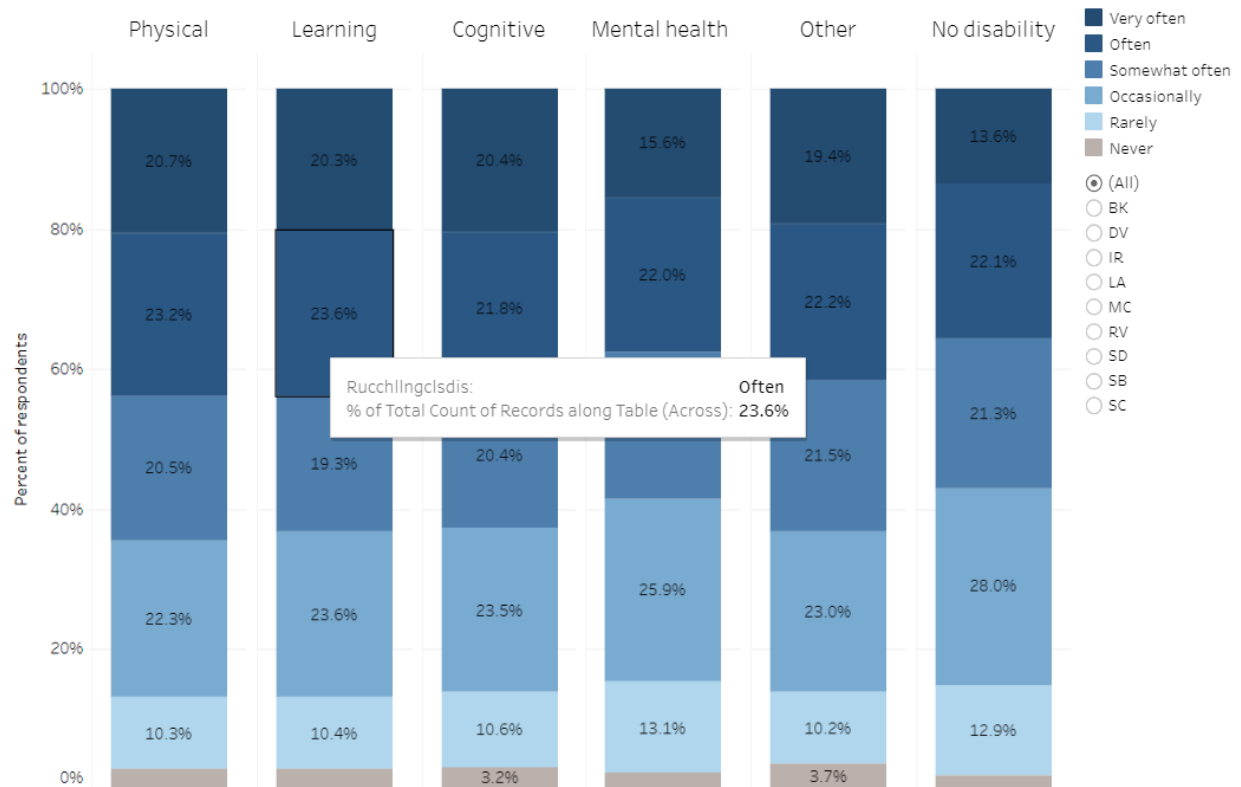
Type of Disability or Condition	Number of UCUES freshman entry respondents with the disability who graduated within four years	Number of UCUES freshman entry respondents without the disability who graduated within four years
Physical disability or condition (e.g., mobility limitation, sensory condition)	67%	78%
Learning disability or condition (e.g., dyslexia, speech disorder)	58%	78%
Neurodevelopmental/cognitive disability or condition (e.g., autism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, brain injury)	58%	79%
Emotional or mental health concern or condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder)	70%	81%
Other disability or condition	68%	78%
<b>Any disability or condition</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>82%</b>

NOTE: UCUES respondents had generally higher four-year graduation rates than students who did not respond to a UCUES survey, so this sample likely represents an overestimate of the actual four-year graduation rates of UC students.

### Class Participation of Students with Disabilities

- Students with disabilities are 6 percentage points more likely to report contributing to a class discussion than students without disabilities.

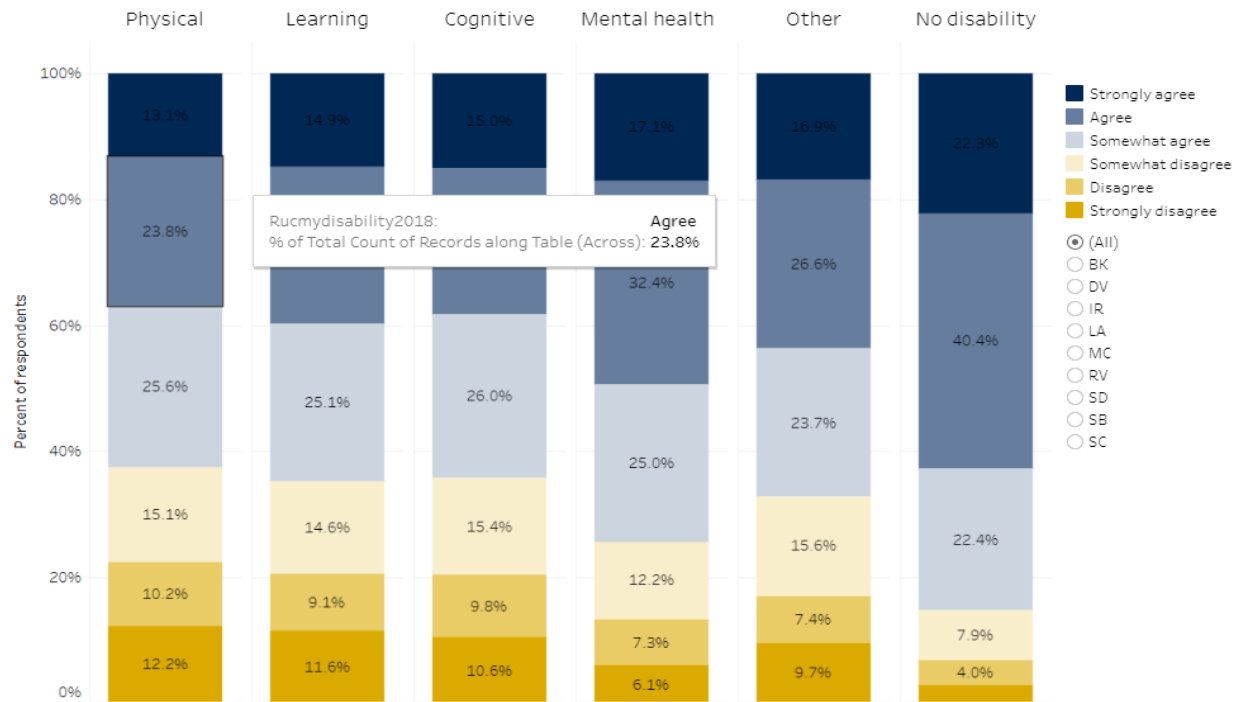
Q1. During this academic year, how often have you done each of the following?  
Contributed to a class discussion



### Respected on Campus

- Students with a mental health disability are over 10 percentage points more likely to report feeling respected on campus, compared with students with other disabilities. This may allude to a lack of awareness about disabilities in general and to higher levels of awareness about mental health.

Students with a disability or condition like mine are respected on this campus



### Student Awareness of Students with Disabilities

“Please rate your awareness and understanding of the following issues when you started at this campus and now.” The results below reflect responses from all UCUES respondents, including those who reported having a disability or condition.

Issue	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Total
Issues relevant to learning or psychological disabilities (started)	1,959 4%	5,829 13%	15,642 34%	13,708 30%	5,843 13%	3,257 7%	46,238 100%
Issues relevant to learning or psychological disabilities (now)	861 2%	2,414 5%	10,126 22%	14,886 32%	11,206 32%	6,647 14%	46,140 100%
Issues relevant to physical disabilities (started)	1,960 4%	6,028 13%	15,742 34%	13,609 29%	5,630 12%	3,226 7%	46,195 100%
Issues relevant to physical disabilities (now)	980 2%	2,904 6%	11,782 26%	15,557 34%	9,550 21%	5,319 12%	46,092 100%