The University of California Systemwide Student Survey Research:
A Holistic Approach to Understanding and Improving Student Experience

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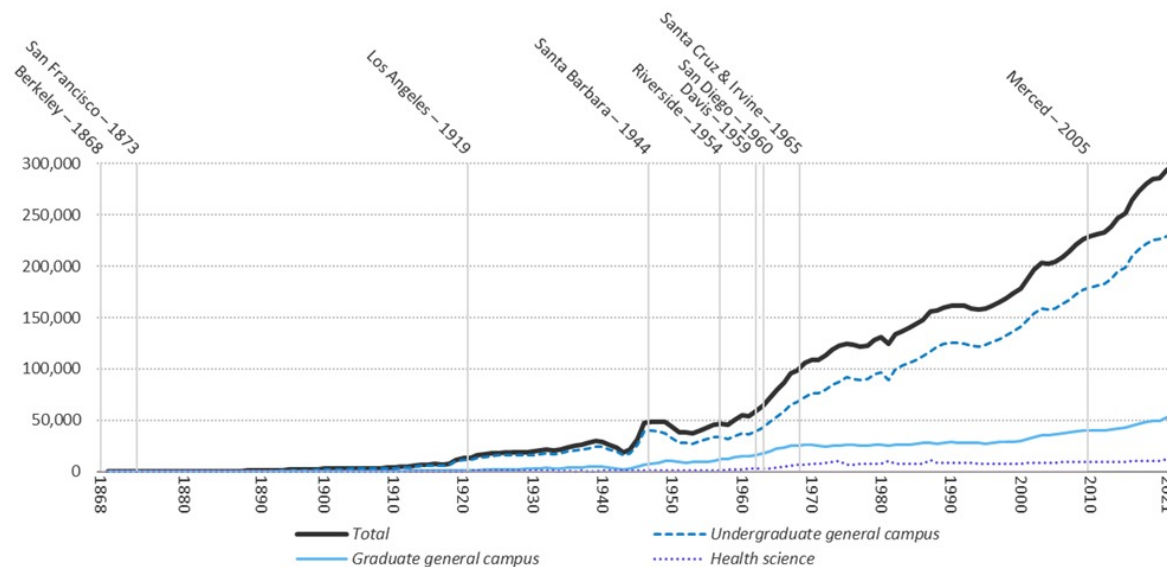The University of California

Main topics

1. A brief overview of the University of California

2. Contextual frameworks for survey research on student experience

3. Understanding student experience: systemwide survey administration and data reporting

4. Improving student experience: data analyses for assessment and decision making

Acronyms

- **UC**-University of California

- **UCOP**-University of California Office of the President

- **IRAP**-Institutional Research and Academic Planning

- **UCUES**-University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey

- **UCGSES**-University of California Graduate Student Experience Survey

- **IR**-institutional research

- **IEO**-Inputs-Environment-Outputs

- **ETL**-Extract, Transform, Load

A brief overview of the University of California

- Public research university with 10 campuses and about 300,000 students

UC Accountability Report: https://accountability.universityofcalifornia.edu/2022/exec-sum.html
UC enrollment at a glance: https://universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/fall-enrollment-glance
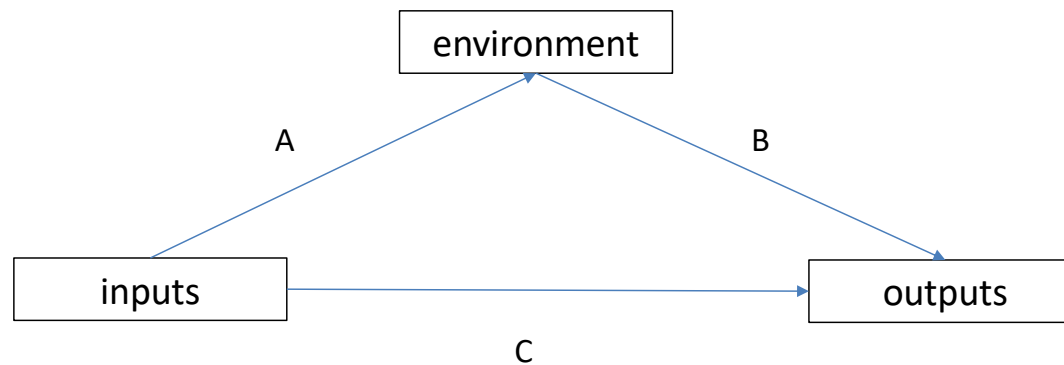
A brief overview of the University of California

- A very diverse university with students from different backgrounds and cultural experiences

https://100students.universityofcalifornia.edu/

Contextual frameworks for survey research on student experience

- The inputs-environment-outputs model (I-E-O)

Astin, Alexander W. What Matters in College? San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,1993.

Contextual frameworks for survey research on student experience

- How to define the quality of undergraduate education?

"The quality of education has long been a concern among undergraduate education researchers: at the very core of undergraduate education research is an implicit desire to create a high-quality educational experience for all students."

Bowers, A. W., Ranganathan, S., & Simmons, D. R. (2018). Defining quality in undergraduate education: Directions for future research informed by a literature review. Higher Learning Research Communications, 8(1), 51–64. http://dx.doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v8i1.392

Understanding student experience: systemwide survey administration

UC systemwide surveys

Undergraduate Education and Experience

- UC Undergraduate Experience Survey
- Undergraduate Cost of Attendance Survey
- Undergraduate Application Survey
- Admitted Transfer Applicant Survey
- Undergraduate Alumni Survey
- CA Degree Completion Survey

Graduate Education and Experience

- UC Graduate Student Experience Survey
- Graduate Student Well-Being Survey
- Graduate Cost of Attendance Survey
- Graduate Student Support Survey
- PhD Career Pathways Survey
- Graduate Alumni Survey

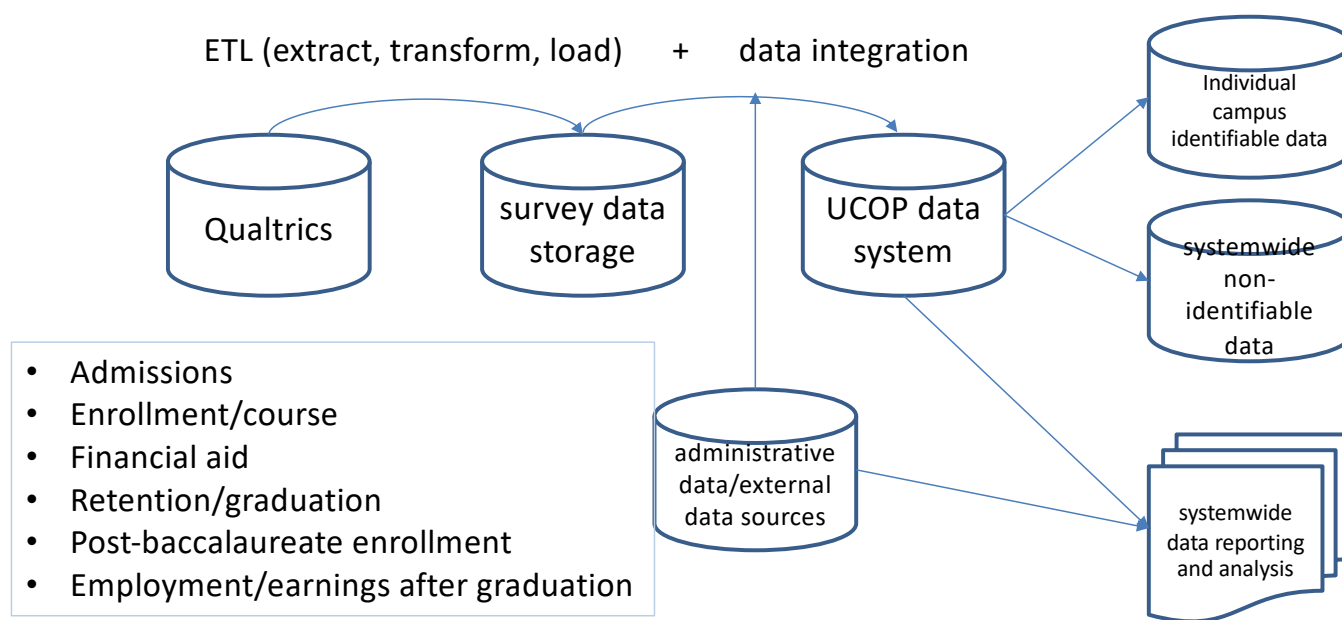**Other Systemwide Surveys**

- Student Food Access and Security Survey
- Campus Climate Survey

- Most of our surveys were developed locally by UC with professional staff, faculty, researchers, and students involved.
- Total student experience: student satisfaction with and engagement in academic and social opportunities, academic and personal development, educational experiences, program quality, well-being, basic needs, plans and aspirations, financial situation, and so on.
- Institutional Research uses Qualtrics to administer the surveys in close collaboration with the campuses and functional departments.
- We use multiple marketing strategies to encourage survey participation, e.g., reminders from the President/Chancellors, Deans, Chairs, and student organizations, incentives, messages on Student Portal, publicity materials, sharing links to the response data from previous survey administrations, etc.
- Most of our surveys are administered to all students. The response rates are high, ranging from about 30% to 50%. Respondents are fairly representative of population.

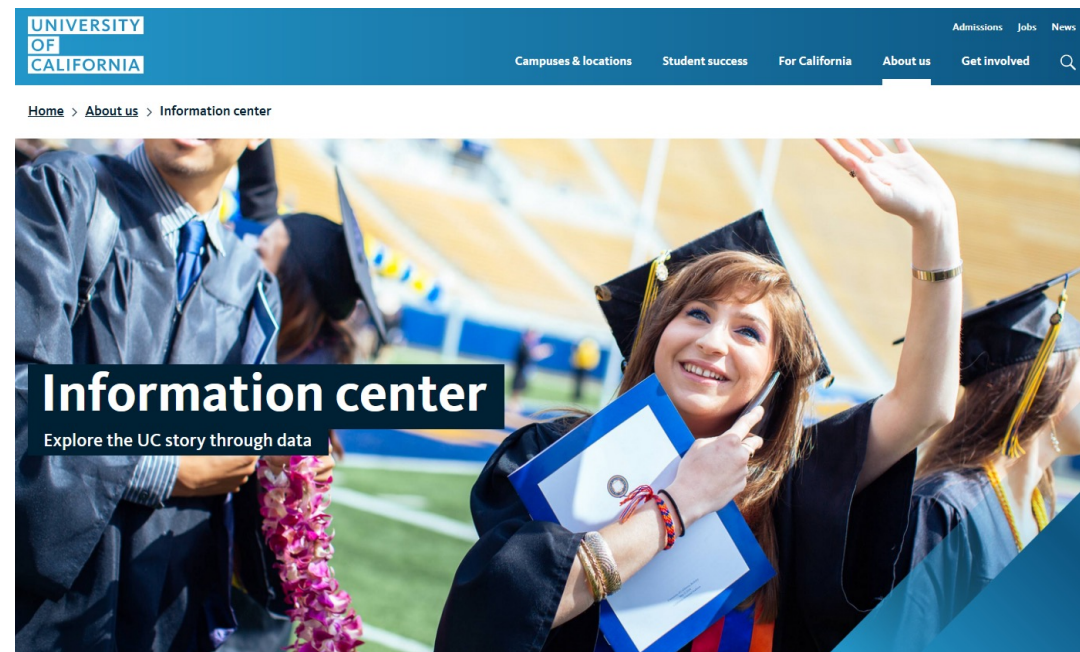https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning//services/survey-services/index.html

Understanding student experience: systemwide survey data integration and sharing

ETL (extract, transform, load) + data integration

Qualtrics

survey data storage

UCOP data system

Individual campus identifiable data

systemwide non-identifiable data

administrative data/external data sources

systemwide data reporting and analysis

- Admissions
- Enrollment/course
- Financial aid
- Retention/graduation
- Post-baccalaureate enrollment
- Employment/earnings after graduation

Understanding student experience: systemwide survey reporting

- Survey data dashboards
  - Data tables with detailed information
  - Longitudinal data dashboards
  - Word cloud of responses to open-ended questions
- Comprehensive reports
- Topic briefs
- Research presentations at UC internal meetings and professional conferences
- Responses to ad hoc requests

https://universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center

Improving student experience: data analyses for assessment and decision making

- Survey data is one of the main data sources for program review, accreditation, student learning outcomes assessment, and UC's Accountability Report.

- To provide students with appropriate learning and life support, survey results have been presented to
  - the Regents
  - Undergraduate/Graduate Divisions
  - Admissions committee like the Transfer Task Force
  - the Undergraduate Advising Committees
  - Counseling and Psychological Services
  - the Internship and Careers Center
  - the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Unit
  - Student Financial Support team
  - Basic Needs Committee
  - study abroad centers for initiatives
  - Undergraduate Research Office…

- Results are shared with students in different ways.

https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning//services/survey-services/ucues-20th-anniversary1.html

Takeaway points

1. It is important to create a high-quality educational experience for all students.

2. Administering a survey/surveys is an effective and practical way to hear students' voice and examine total student experience, but we need to get our campus stakeholders (e.g., faculty, students, and professional staff) involved in the entire process to ensure it is done properly.

3. Reporting survey data as widely as possible using multiple reporting tools can help our campus stakeholders and the general public better understand student experience.

4. It is the key to share survey results and findings with our campus stakeholders, so that they may use our findings in their decision-making and eventually turn data into actions to improve student experience.

Thanks! Questions?

Explore the UC story through data at the UC Information Center!
http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter