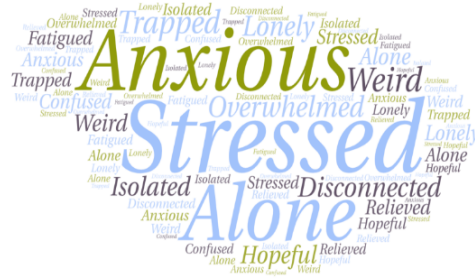


# UNDERSTANDING THE UC MERCED STUDENT EXPERIENCE



UC Merced is committed to providing students with the academic, personal, and career resources needed to be successful. This visual provides data related to the Fall 2020 UC Merced student experience.



Students, what is one word to describe how you are feeling this semester (Fall 2020)?

During a recent undergraduate and graduate student forum, 75% of respondents mentioned feeling "stressed" and "anxious."

#### CAPS Data on Mental Health

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Presenting student concerns ranked in order | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Depression</li> <li>Stress</li> <li>Self-Esteem</li> <li>Loneliness</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Data collected from Fall 2020.

"It's just been exhausting and overwhelming. I feel trapped and stuck in a continuous loop that I'm unable to change because the current circumstances our country faces prevents me from doing so. As a result, I just feel tired and a bit as if I'm just rolling with the punches...it's hard to keep up with schoolwork, and spending all hours of the day sitting at a desk staring into a computer makes it just that much harder to feel relief and relaxed."  
~Anonymous Student~

"I think we just need the opportunity to be heard and speak up so we can at least alleviate some of the stress we're feeling right now in the moment. I think the lack of transparency between students and faculty is something that stands in the way of how we can grow during this time and if we were just able to get rid of that divide it could make a huge difference. We just need an opportunity to speak up in an environment that we'll actually be heard in and our fears will be addressed."  
~Anonymous Student~

### Current UCM Student Concerns

- Unclear expectations regarding remote learning
- Insufficient/lacking proper technology
- Unstable and toxic home environments
- Housing and financial insecurity
- Lack of motivation and focus
- Uncertainty about their future
- Unhappy with current reality (i.e. different college experience)
- Ensure faculty are aware of and accommodating of current student concerns
- Disconnection from the university and isolation
- Inconsistent faculty expectations (flexibility with COVID-19)
- Bureaucratic and administrative barriers to student success
- Unclear communication related to accessing campus resources and updates
- Safety concerns within Merced County
- Free speech versus hate speech (understanding student rights and polarization)
- Exhaustion, stress and anxiety impacting mental health and wellness

### Recommendation #1 Greater Faculty Engagement and Individualized Student Success Planning

- The Dean of Students Office will provide training to staff and faculty on supporting students during COVID-19, consult with staff and faculty individually to incorporate high impact practices into their pedagogy and will work with administrators in all schools to discuss and address ongoing academic student concerns.
- The University will develop a campus-wide strategic plan and host ongoing student, staff and faculty town hall meetings to hear and share concerns, provide updates and discuss student success strategies.

### Recommendation #2 Increased Radical Healing Spaces and Diversified Student Involvement Opportunities

- The Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs will lead ongoing radical healing spaces for all undergraduate and graduate students, host weekly drop-in hours for student consultation and support and provide weekly equity, justice and inclusion virtual lounge discussions around various topics.
- The Office of Student Involvement will diversify modes of student engagement for undergraduate and graduate students (ensuring opportunities are virtual, "HyFlex," and/or in person), provide grant opportunities for clubs and organizations and work collaboratively with ASUCM to host student forums and provide funding for students.
- Counseling and Psychological Services will diversify counseling groups and initiatives offered to undergraduate and graduate students allowing students more opportunities for students to connect, encourage, and support one another.

### Recommendation #3 Advance Student Agency, Elevate Student Voice and Strengthen Community Partnerships around Safety

- The UC Merced Police Department (UCMPD) will launch "We Hear You, We are Here," a campaign rooted in equity-minded frameworks and student agency, collaborate with various stakeholders to create student resources around protest and disruption guidelines and the importance of student participation and advocacy and offer student listening sessions around safety, trust and restoration, and facilitating political discourse on campus.
- UCMPD will also meet with Merced County Police Chiefs and other community stakeholders to foster greater community collaborations that addresses trust and student, staff, and faculty safety concerns within Merced County.
- The Police Advisory Board has been created and revised to make recommendations related to campus issues and concerns, community outreach programs, training, policy development and ways to help support the goals and initiatives of the UC Merced Police Department.

### Recommendation #4 Enhance Resources and Conversations around Student Rights

- The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) will develop initiatives around conflict management and restorative justice and create resource guides highlighting the rights of students.
- Additionally, OSRR will offer ongoing workshops and forums around free speech, academic integrity and decision making and will train staff and faculty on supporting students through free and open discourse, first amendment rights, viewpoint neutrality, and civic engagement.
- The Protocol Oversight Group (POG) continues to encourage frequent interaction and discussion between and among members of the campus community to ensure open avenues of communication around peaceful assemblies and protests.

"I just think that both the UC system and professors need to understand that the current polarization that our country faces is having a tremendous impact on students...In order to feel safe, I feel like you need to feel heard, like your voice matters. However, when you are so disconnected you feel like you have no voice. As a first year student, I feel like many of us are extremely disconnected."  
~Anonymous Students~

### RESOURCES

- Student Success Anywhere Resources: [success.ucmerced.edu/](https://success.ucmerced.edu/)
- Basic Needs Resources: <https://basicneeds.ucmerced.edu/>
- Wellness Resources: <https://counseling.ucmerced.edu/> & <https://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/dean-students>
- Student Rights: <https://osrr.ucmerced.edu/> & <https://police.ucmerced.edu/>