

INFORMED BY 20 YEARS OF DATA:

CAMPUS CLIMATE 1996-2016



THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA





HOW DO OUR STUDENTS THINK WE ARE DOING?

That's the question at the core of every Campus Climate survey. 20 years ago, when we conducted our inaugural Campus Climate survey, and every five years since then, we've set out to check the pulse of our students and campus life. Then and now, we are one of the few universities in the country to conduct a longitudinal study of this nature.

One thing we know for certain is that the student experience is 24/7, influenced by thousands of touchpoints and people. And like students, no two experiences are ever the same. What's absolutely clear to us is that everything, everything – from feeling that they are challenged academically (80% of students agree) to making three or more visits to the Think Tank Writing Center (90% retention rates!) to breaking a sweat at the Rec (86% retention rates!) – adds up.

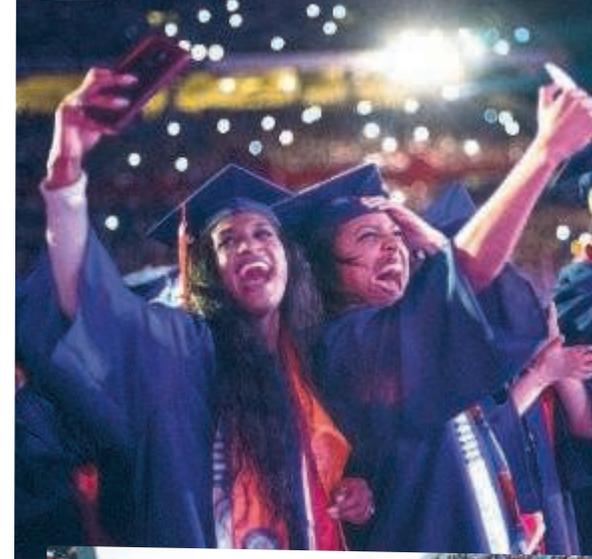


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As we've seen around the country, and here at the University of Arizona, college campuses are experiencing greater intensity of activism and discussions. In a separate survey, 96% of our students indicated that they had encountered more conversations about political topics and ideas. So it's clear that today's environment requires a greater need for a dispassionate, data-informed way that we think about the campus experience as the volume of debate increases.

To that end, the Campus Climate survey engaged many of the issues that have emerged on campuses nationwide. Our data findings reflect new, broadened definitions of diversity and safety that challenge old mindsets. We also dove into topics related to food insecurity and the economic realities our students face. With every topic explored in the survey, it's up to us to find new ways to facilitate change built upon collaboration, dialogue, and openness.

In twenty years, I'm sure there will be new challenges and questions that we can't yet anticipate. One thing we've learned is that you never know where the data will take you. But as long as the data continues to speak to us, we'll listen.

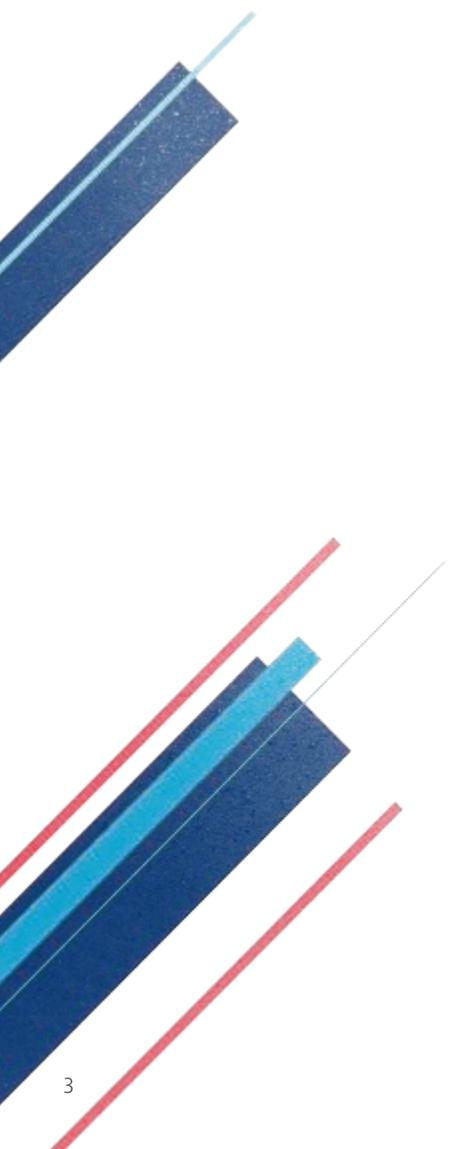


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MELISSA VITO

*Senior Vice President for Student Affairs,
Enrollment, and Strategic Initiatives*





GENERAL UA PERCEPTIONS

CAMPUS CULTURE AND SOCIAL LIFE

The Campus Climate survey is about more than just asking how our students feel, it's really about stepping into the journey with them. Are they proud to call themselves Wildcats? Are they satisfied that they're receiving a challenging, world-class academic experience? Do they feel valued as people and that the UA cares about their safety? Moving at the velocity of our students requires that we ask tough questions while staying open to surprises.

By and large, the Campus Climate survey results point to an extremely positive overall student experience. More than three out of four students agree that UA is providing them with a high-quality education that is preparing them for the job market and future graduate school opportunities. 86 percent agreed that school spirit is strong and nearly 75 percent said that they are proud to be a student at the UA.

Campus Climate survey results also help illuminate areas requiring additional attention and new ideas. Since 2011, we have seen a dip of nine percentage points compared to 2011 (from 79 percent to 70 percent)

in students' sense of safety. Meanwhile, students' sense of community also dropped by six percentage points, from 71 percent to 65 percent. Our qualitative data tells us some of this decline can be attributed to the presence of campus preachers alarming students with verbal abuse, the highly polarizing presidential election which continues to be a source of vitriol and division nationally, and the very real presence of cyberbullying. Compared to years past, threats to student safety aren't just physical, they're increasingly emotional.

To provide the campus community with resources to engage in respectful civil discourse, the Dean of Students has developed a repository of online resources, including a #SpeakYourPeace campaign to encourage civility in campus conversations, a process for reporting concerns regarding disruptive or unprotected speech, and hosted UA's inaugural Constitutional Issues in Higher Education Conference in 2016 and again in 2017.

Campus leadership is driven to instill in each member of our community a sense of safety, belonging, and value. We believe that the many bright spots in the 2016 survey can serve as a starting point for larger campus conversations and programmatic solutions to ensure an inclusive campus environment that fosters learning and understanding among all students.

SENSE OF BELONGING

Since the inception of the Campus Climate survey, UA students have consistently felt positively about its social environment and campus culture



NEARLY NINE IN 10 (86%) UNDERGRADUATES AGREED THAT SCHOOL SPIRIT IS STRONG AT THE UA

Compare this to 1996 when 77% of students agreed that “school spirit is strong”

74%

of undergraduates and **71%** of graduate students agreed that they were proud to be a student at the UA

65%

of undergraduate and **68%** of graduate students felt as though they belong at the UA

PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

A significant majority of undergrads believe that the UA provides a quality education and is preparing them for a career

72%

agreed the UA is preparing them to be successful in the job market and **79%** of graduate students also agreed

GRADUATE SCHOOL PREPARATION

A large majority of undergrads believe that the UA provides a quality education and is preparing them for grad school

76%

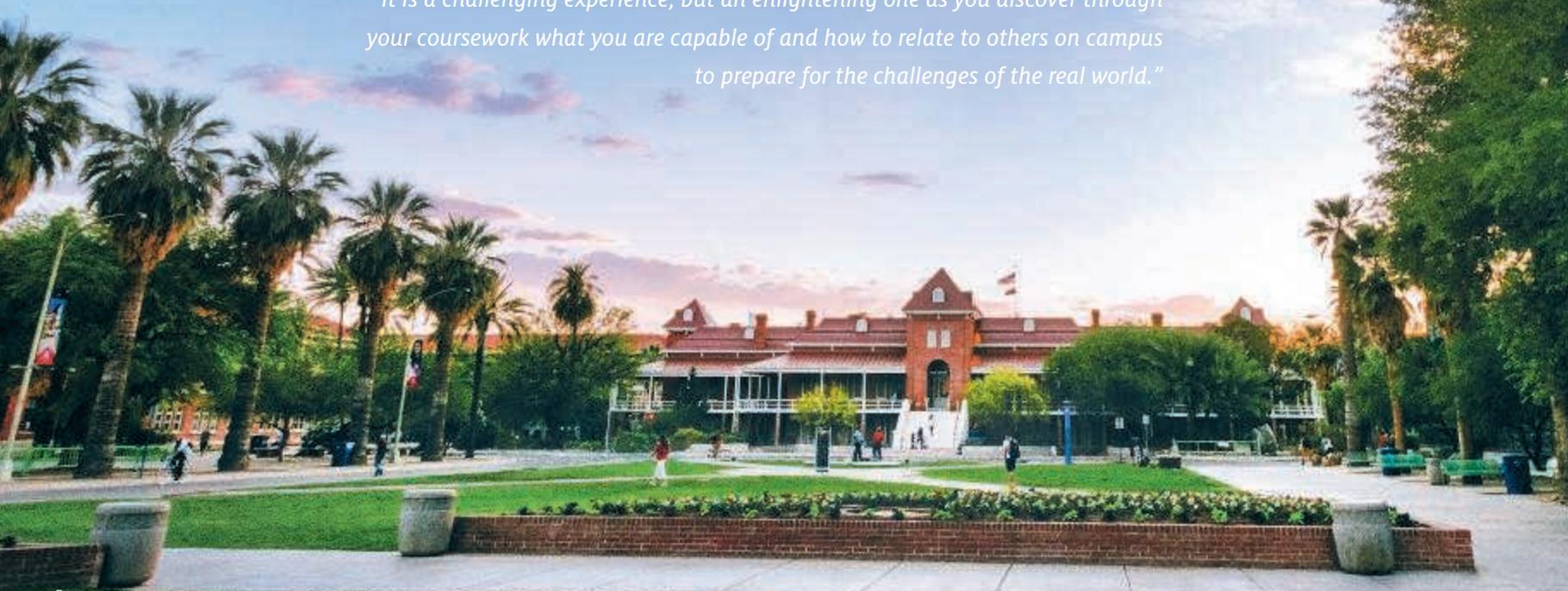
agreed the UA is preparing them for future graduate school opportunities

"I love the UA because it is a big enough school to meet lots of people, but small enough to feel like you belong."

"At this campus, you're part of a community and yet your individuality is just as important. When studying, seeing others do the same fuels your drive."

"Being a student at the U of A feels good because the classes may be difficult but there's always a TA, professor, or student ready to help."

"It is a challenging experience, but an enlightening one as you discover through your coursework what you are capable of and how to relate to others on campus to prepare for the challenges of the real world."





GENERAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

Among the many Campus Climate survey highlights, the UA scored very high marks among its student body for providing a challenging, exceptional academic experience, while also improving efficiency in course availability. This year, 80 percent of our students agreed that the UA provided them with a challenging academic experience, an increase in four percentage points from 2011. We've also seen a jump in the proportion of students who believe the UA prioritizes teaching, increasing from 54% in 2011 to 61% in 2016.

Much of our progress can be attributed to our faculty, who continue to embrace the challenges of teaching with energy and enthusiasm. In the past few years, we've created measures to improve student-faculty interaction and now, we're reaping the benefits.

For example, in 2009, the Office of Instruction and Assessment was founded to enable improvements in instructional pedagogy and technology in the classroom. In 2013, more faculty learning communities were developed through the UA American Association of Universities Undergraduate STEM Education

Project. As a result, more faculty use active learning, as well as student-centered instructional approaches that are more engaging. In addition, classroom technology has improved through the use of the Student Technology Fee and since summer 2015, more collaborative classrooms of all sizes are available that enable student-centered instruction.

Finally, we've made strides on issues related to course availability and class sizes, to improve efficiency along the path to graduation. As a result of the increased number and type of courses available during freshmen orientation and increased budget incentives for departments to increase seats in general education and foundational major courses, more students are finding it easier to graduate in a timely manner. In 2016, 64 percent of undergraduates agreed that the UA consistently offers courses needed for a timely graduation, a jump in 10 percentage points from 2011 and 17 points from 1996. 59 percent of students also reported a more favorable student to faculty ratio, up from 51 percent in 2011.

STUDENT/FACULTY RATIO

Despite enrollment increases the UA continues to improve student satisfaction regarding student/faculty ratios

2011 51% ----- 59% **2016**

AGREED THAT THEIR CLASSES HAVE A FAVORABLE STUDENT/FACULTY RATIO

COURSE AVAILABILITY

64%

agreed that UA consistently offers courses needed for a timely graduation, representing an increase of 17 percentage points from survey findings in 1996

CHALLENGING ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

2011 76% ----- 80% **2016**

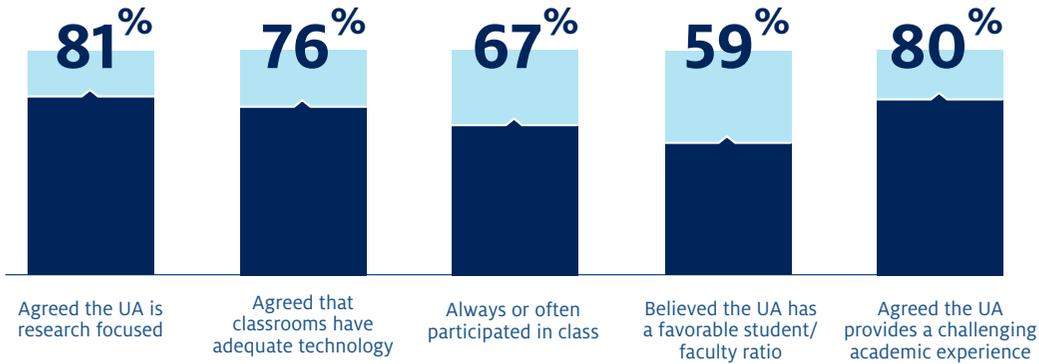
AGREED UA PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH A CHALLENGING ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

A closer look:

- ▶ 76% agreed they are receiving a quality education at the UA
- ▶ Transfer students were significantly more likely to agree that the UA provides a challenging academic experience
- ▶ 88% of graduate students agreed that the UA is a university where research is a high priority



QUALITY CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES





STUDENT – FACULTY INTERACTION

The student-faculty relationship is at the core of the university experience. When students and faculty are mutually inspired and aligned in shared educational pursuits we know that learning becomes more active, more alive, and longer lasting. The UA is home to outstanding faculty members who regularly provide mentorship and guidance outside the classroom.

As a result, we are proud to report a significant rise in the percentage of undergraduates who agreed that faculty were accessible for academic support at 87 percent compared to 74 percent in 2011. 69 percent of students also reported that faculty were accessible for mentorship and career guidance, up 10 percentage points from 2011. Finally, 77 percent of undergraduates indicated they were satisfied with the quality of faculty instruction in 2016, up from 71 percent in 2011.

Faculty responsiveness is a key indicator of their connections to students, but also an indicator of efficiency in helping students move toward graduation. With 83 percent of students indicating satisfaction with faculty by email, we can see that lines of communication are open and that students are moving through their academic paths smoothly. As the UA continues to diversify its education portfolio to include online and hybrid courses, electronic communication between students and faculty will play an increasingly important role in our institutional efficiency.



ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION OVER TIME

The percentage of students who expressed satisfaction with the quality of faculty instruction has increased by 13 percentage points since 2006



87%

of graduate students expressed satisfaction with the quality of faculty instruction. Nearly seven out of 10 graduate students indicated they had a faculty mentor and **52%** of graduate students indicated that they had assisted faculty with research projects

A closer look:

- ▶ In 2016, Pell-eligible and Arizona residents were more likely to be satisfied with the quality of instruction than their peers



“Being a student at the UA is being a part of a vast community that still knows your name. It is to have the resources of a larger school at your fingertips while also being able to converse meaningfully with your professors.”

“To be a student at the University of Arizona, is to be challenged and supported by all faculty and staff. They push you to be the best student possible.”



ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advisors play a crucial role in student life and supporting university-wide retention. As the primary facilitators between students and their degree paths, advisors are in a position to dramatically influence a student's ability to make academic plans, complete their degrees on time, and make necessary changes or revisions.

In 2016, we saw gains across the board for academic advising. Students indicated improvements in academic planning, confidence in advisors, responsiveness, timeliness, and belief that advisors sought to understand their unique needs.

Findings regarding students' interactions with academic advisors suggests that key enhancements made to the advising experience in recent years have paid off. In 2016, 81 percent of undergraduates agreed they were able to accomplish or resolve questions during an academic advising appointment, up from 77 percent in 2011. In addition, a greater proportion of students also agreed that their academic advisor helped them develop an academic plan, from 71 percent in 2011 to 75 percent in 2016. They also felt

more confident about the information and advice that they received, from 67 percent in 2011 up to 73 percent in 2016.

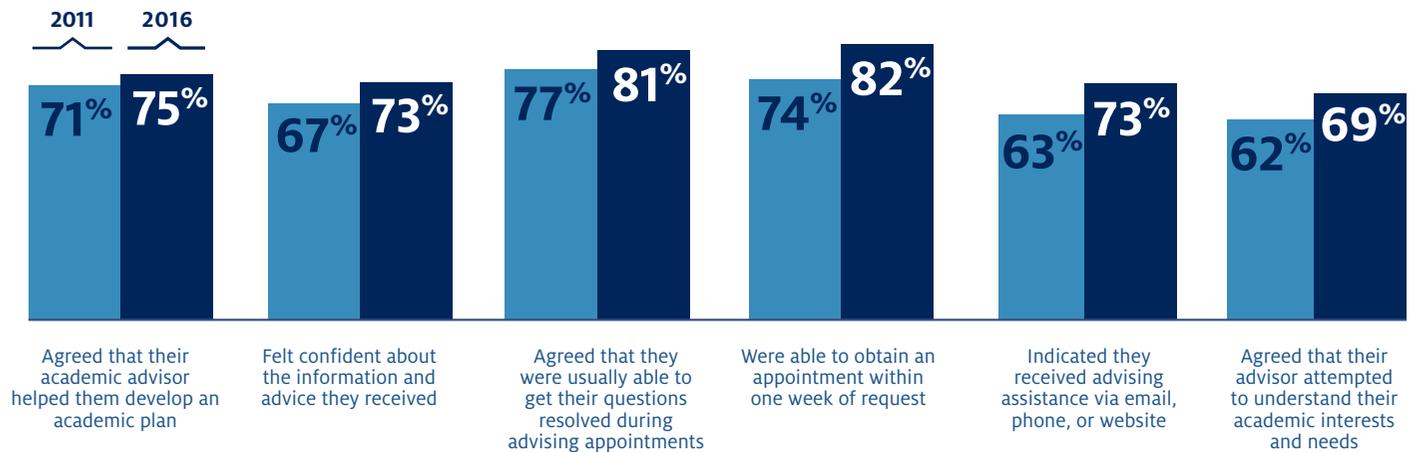
The importance of our academic advisors is underscored by the fact that Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) metrics call for consistent increases in retention and graduation rates over the next 10 years. Together with the advanced data tools we're giving them, advisors can make a huge difference in the lives of students by continuing to build relationships and partnerships with students. It's a testament to the work they do on the frontlines to see our numbers increase.





EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

Gains have increased for a variety of reasons. First, most advisors are now located within academic departments. Second, we're now using more analytical tools to support advising. Last, we're providing professional development for advisors through the Advising Resource Center.



"It is amazing to be part of such a large college but still feel like you're part of something. Everyone belongs in their own way and is able to join so many amazing organizations and clubs."

"Being a student at the University of Arizona has opened up countless opportunities for me to become involved in academic work beyond the classroom as well as opportunities to become involved in the Tucson community."





ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT PATTERNS

Involvement plays a significant role in a student's college experience. Supported by decades of research, we generally know that student involvement in educationally purposeful activities most often has positive associations with a wide range of desired college outcomes.

Student involvement, particularly engaged learning, is a key initiative for the university so it's gratifying to see many wins in this area. Highlights from the survey include:

69%

of undergraduate respondents indicated involvement with at least one campus club or organization

20%

of undergraduate respondents indicated that they held a campus leadership position

At the University of Arizona, involvement occurs in various forms. For example, students can participate in clubs and organizations, cultural/resource centers, Greek life, and study abroad. Or, they can practice civic engagement through student government, and get involved in career preparation, research, and employment.

Compared to 2011, we have made strides in creating more on-campus job opportunities for students. In 2016, 45 percent of students reported they worked on campus, compared to 41 percent in 2011. We have also seen a decrease in the number of undergraduate students who work 20 or more hours per week. This year, 36 percent of undergraduate students reported they worked 20 or more hours per week, an 11 percent drop from 2011. Data also shows that more than half of our students are employed and approximately half of our undergraduate students have engaged in career exploration and preparation.

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

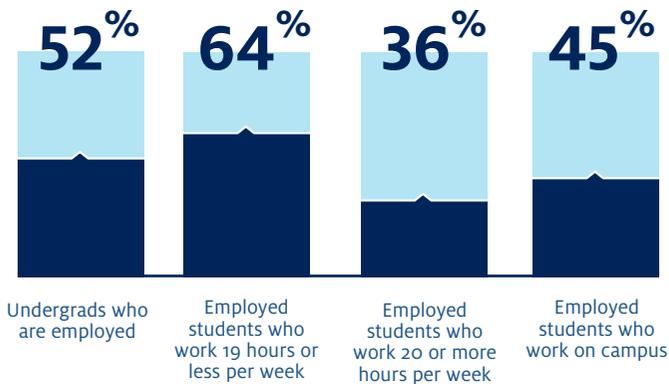


In 2016, nearly seven out of 10 students indicated they were involved with at least one UA club/organization

A closer look:

- ▶ In the last 10 years there has been a 14 percent increase in UA club and organization involvement
- ▶ According to a 2017 Gallup survey of UA students, 80% of undergraduates believe the UA does a 'good' or 'very good' job of developing students' leadership skills

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT



CAREER READINESS

42% } FRESHMEN

Although only in its second year, early data indicate that 100% Engagement is taking hold, with 42% of freshmen indicating they engaged in career exploration and preparation

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



Exercise and sports



Digital media, music, TV



Socialize with friends



Self-care



Outdoor recreation



Student clubs, organizations, volunteering



Music, theater, arts and crafts



Campus events



Religious services



I CLIMATE FOR DIVERSITY

At the UA, it's not good enough to simply increase the number of diverse students, we want to create a place where every student feels valued and welcomed. While our progress in diversifying the UA student population is noteworthy, it is also important that our students experience an inclusive and equitable educational environment. Campuses across the country, and certainly the UA, are thinking closely about expanded notions of identity, diversity, intersectionality, and inclusion. And findings from the survey reflect a student body that is grappling with those questions as well.

In the 2016 Campus Climate survey we looked at diversity across a broad spectrum of categories including race, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability, Pell-eligibility, and more. In doing so, we were able to see patterns of students' experiences and perceptions that may be unique to select groups. Overall, the campus population largely finds the UA to be a place that is committed to, and fosters, a climate that values diversity. However, compared to the 2011 Campus Climate survey, there have been noticeable changes in our students' feelings about diversity on campus. Our qualitative data reflect emerging opinions around topics such as race, gender, and other forms of identity, as well as an overall increased awareness of the nuances around those topics. Certainly, activism and intensity of conversations has increased on our campus and around the nation, which contributes greatly to shaping the way that students and other members of the campus community engage with one another.

Data show that not all students experience the climate for diversity as favorably as the general findings above. These data-informed insights serve as a barometer for taking a quick pulse of UA's climate for diversity and indicates opportunities for our community of students, faculty, and staff to commit to engaging in more inclusive practices.

We view our diversity and institutional quality as mutually reinforcing values that drive our campus mission. For instance, as an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution, the UA is one of just four schools selected by the National Science Foundation to host thought leaders in science, technology, engineering, and math to imagine the future of STEM education on college campuses among Hispanic students. Certainly, there is much more to be done but we always seek to do more and continually ask how we can ensure that every student feels valued and that they belong at the UA.



70%

agreed that the UA fosters a climate that values diversity, which was the same for both undergraduate and graduate students

68%

undergraduate students agreed that the UA has policies that reflect a commitment to multiculturalism and diversity, whereas **73%** of graduate students expressed agreement

58%

agreed that faculty are sensitive to the needs of diverse students, up from **55%** in 2011; whereas **67%** of graduate students expressed agreement

61%

agreed that the UA strives for diversity among its faculty and staff

67%

agreed that the UA strives for diversity among its student body

A closer look:

- ▶ **72%** of undergraduates agreed that their professors encourage them to think about issues from different perspectives (Gallup, 2017)

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

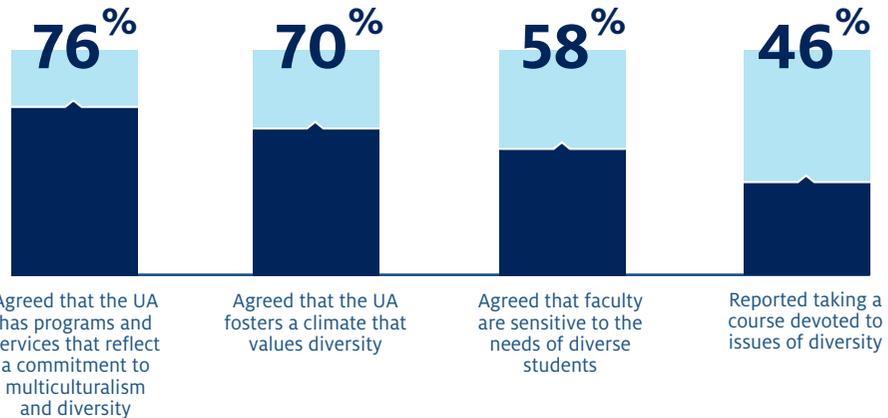
68%

of undergrads felt free to express their political beliefs

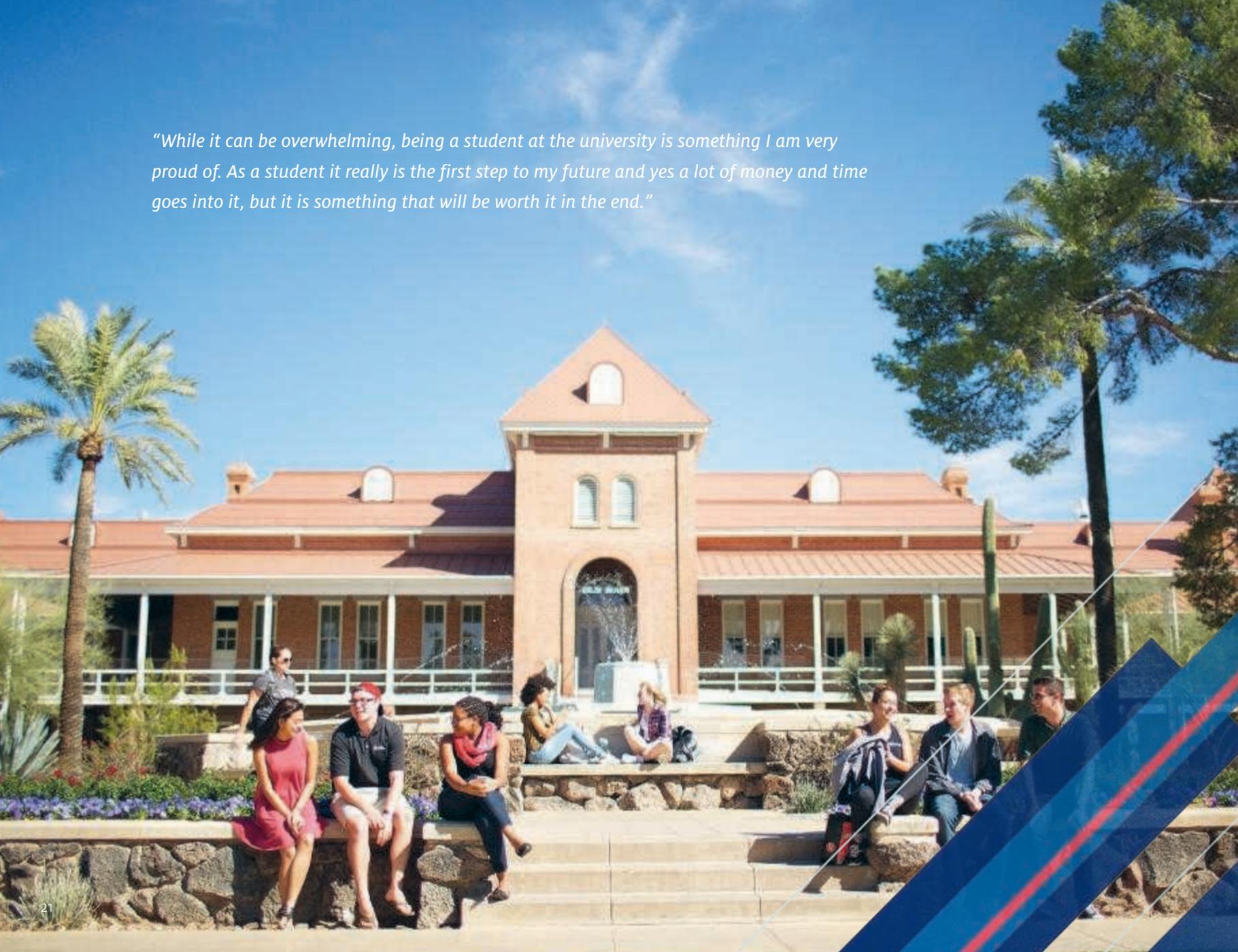
64%

of undergrads felt free to express their religious beliefs

BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



“While it can be overwhelming, being a student at the university is something I am very proud of. As a student it really is the first step to my future and yes a lot of money and time goes into it, but it is something that will be worth it in the end.”



ECONOMIC CLIMATE

One of the new sections in the 2016 Campus Climate survey gauged the economic welfare of our students. We sought to gain greater insight into the financial realities that affect students, so for the very first time we asked about food and housing insecurity. Collecting data about such economic struggles helps UA better understand aspects of students' lives that may challenge their ability to fully actualize their educational goals and can negatively impact their ability to stay enrolled or graduate.

As many other universities have identified, one of the most alarming emerging issues on campus is food insecurity and the need to address it with direct interventions. Since its inception in 2012, the UA Campus Pantry has expanded its services to distribute food staples to students and staff at no cost. Today, the UA Campus Pantry distributes nearly 1,200 pounds of food per week to individuals experiencing food insecurity.

We seek to create an environment where students can feel secure in their ability to have a stable college experience and persist to graduation. In the meantime, we've taken several steps to alleviate many of the concerns outlined in the data. In addition to the Campus Pantry, and services such as those provided by the UA BookStores services reduce textbook prices, among others, the university has made a significant reinvestment in financial aid, especially for the freshman class.

41%

of undergraduate respondents agreed that their ability to attend/stay enrolled at the UA has been negatively affected because of a lack of money, while **31%** of graduate students indicated agreement

20%

of undergraduate and **12%** of graduate respondents indicated that they often or always skipped meals or ate less because they didn't have enough money for food

52%

of undergraduate and **29%** of graduate respondents indicated that they often or always ate unhealthy or nutritiously unbalanced meals because healthier options were too expensive or inaccessible

20%

of undergraduate and **8%** graduate students indicated they often or always experienced an unstable residence for financial reasons (e.g., moved frequently, evicted, thrown out, etc.)



CLOSING ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM MELISSA VITO

I have to take a moment to recognize those who made the Campus Climate survey possible. Our data and analytics approach is facilitated by our incredible Assessment & Research team. Their work in gathering the Campus Climate data, reading the texture and tenor of the data, and assisting our entire division to integrate assessment into their planning and daily practice has been invaluable in building our culture of evidence. Under their guidance and leadership, this survey was administered with consultation and feedback from a broad scope of cross-campus leadership including faculty members, Academic Affairs, the Disability Resource Center, the SALT Center, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, the UA Food Pantry, the Dean of Students' Office, the Office of the President, and national experts. Lastly, I would like to thank the 1,700 undergraduate and graduate students who participated in the survey. It's clear from your involvement and candid responses that you truly believe in creating the best UA possible.

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