Background

Housing Master Plan Task Force January 2017 report:

- Demand for campus housing significantly outpaces supply
- UC Berkeley has the lowest percentage of beds for our student body of any campus in the UC system
- High prices of housing impacts student experience
- Identifies nine potential sites for development
- Calls for a survey as one aspect in decision-making process
Methodology

• Working group from the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, Division of Student Affairs, Office of Planning and Analysis, and Graduate Division met to design survey, collect data, and summarize results.

• Web survey went out to 27,292 undergraduates, 10,440 graduate students, and 1,160 postdocs during period of 4/7/17-5/16/17.

• CalNet authentication provided authorized access only and allowed for a generic survey link (CalNet UID mapped to unique survey ID).

• Prize drawing.

• Email notifications (initial invitation and 5 survey reminders) as well as social media and newsletter reminders.

• Survey content covered: Current housing situation, costs and satisfaction, housing security, impact of housing on experience, rankings of potential building locations.
Response

• Overall participation rate (completes + partials) of 24%
• 23% of undergraduates either completed or partially completed the survey
  – No significant difference in response between freshman/transfers
  – Seniors responded at a lower rate (17% v. 25%)
• 26% of graduate students responded
• 32% of postdocs responded
Crisis evaluation
The housing situation was not a significant factor in respondents’ decisions to come to Berkeley, but many were concerned.
New undergraduate students’ level of concern about finding affordable housing

Newly entering undergraduates express high levels of concern regarding finding affordable housing while at Berkeley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Finding affordable housing while I’m a student at UC Berkeley”</th>
<th>Not at all concerned (1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>Very concerned (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016 Transfer Entrants</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016 Freshman Entrants (excludes FPF)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016 Fall Program for Freshmen (FPF) students</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fall 2016 Survey of New Students - (Student Life & Development Module)
Respondent comments: finding affordable housing

“I live in West Oakland because a **two month** search for affordable and livable options in Berkeley **proved to be unfruitful.**”
– Undergraduate Student

“My housemates were strangers to me and my roommate before we moved into the house. Moving to my current house was an **act of desperation** to find a place to live, and created a heavy burden for my single mother due to the rent and utilities cost being at the peak maximum of my mother's budget. In order to help my mom with these costs, I took on a part-time student job at the library. If my rent wasn't so high, taking on a job would be optional instead of mandatory.”
– Undergraduate Student

“Too expensive for not much space, but was the best I could find in this rental market. **Prolonged searches, and stress and uncertainty**, can put you in a more vulnerable situation depending on supply.”
– Undergraduate Student
Respondent comments: finding affordable housing (cont’d)

“After a **two months long search** I found a cheap room with good roommates. The issue is the constant fear of being asked to leave the apartment (i.e., by our landlady). I cannot afford rent anywhere else.”

- Postdoc

“I **searched for months** for housing, which **stressed me out a lot.** I wound up paying decent rent ($2800 for 3 people) and have an apartment with livable space, but I am a 25-30 minute walk from my classes, so that's the trade off. I wish I could have lived closer to campus.”

- Undergraduate Student

“If I had known how bad the **cost of living** would be here, I would have seriously considered **completing my PhD elsewhere,** and UC Berkeley has always been my dream.”

- Graduate Student
10% of all respondents self identified as having experienced homelessness at some point since arriving at UC Berkeley, the rate was double for postdocs.

Survey Question: “Since arriving at UC Berkeley, have you ever been homeless for any length of time? (Homeless means not having stable or reliable housing, (e.g., living on the street, in vehicles, motels, short-term rentals, camp grounds, single-occupancy facilities, or couch surfing in other people’s homes for temporary sleeping arrangements).”
Where respondents lived when homeless

Respondents lived in a range of locations when experiencing homelessness

- Couch surfing/other people’s home
- Short-term rentals (e.g., Air B&B)
- Motels
- Single-room occupancy facilities
- In vehicles
- Non-residential campus buildings
- On the street/in a park
- Inside abandoned building or home
- Shelter
- Campgrounds

(n = 390)

(n = 334)

(n = 70)
Respondent comments: homelessness while at UC Berkeley

“As an older transfer student, my only UC housing offer was a shared triple unit bedroom and about a 25 minute walk from Campus. Deciding to live on my own instead, I started the school year technically homeless, couch surfing and renting a room on a weekly basis.”
– Undergraduate Student

“Housing prices are unmanageable, and I was homeless and living in a car for three months last semester with a friend!”
– Undergraduate Student
## Duration of homelessness while at UC Berkeley

Most respondents experienced homelessness for one week to one month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Homelessness</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Postdoc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One day</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than a day, but less than 1 week</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week to a month</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 months</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 months</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 months</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondent Count</strong></td>
<td>388</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Length of time it took to find current housing

Half of respondents indicated that it took more than one month to find their current housing

- More than one day, but less than one week
- One week to a month
- One month or more

Half of respondents indicated that it took more than one month to find their current housing:

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Postdoc

(n = 5,258)
(n = 2,426)
(n = 344)
Current housing situation
Percentage of respondents living with partners or children

Some undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs are making housing decisions for themselves and as well as partners and/or children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergrads</th>
<th>Grad students</th>
<th>Postdocs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No live-in partners or children</td>
<td>5,945 (97%)</td>
<td>1,906 (72%)</td>
<td>168 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents with partners(^1)</td>
<td>106 (2%)</td>
<td>544 (20%)</td>
<td>109 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents with children(^2)</td>
<td>83 (1%)</td>
<td>214 (8%)</td>
<td>88 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,134 (100%)</td>
<td>2,664 (100%)</td>
<td>365 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Excludes respondents living with children  
\(^2\)Includes respondents living with or without partners
Average monthly housing, food, and utility costs

Undergraduates living in university owned housing reported higher monthly expenses than their respective counterparts living in non-university owned housing. For graduate students, this trend was reversed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate (n = 5,099)</th>
<th>Graduate (n = 2,408)</th>
<th>Postdoc (n = 340)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-University Owned</td>
<td>University Owned</td>
<td>Non-University Owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without partners or children</td>
<td>$1,252 (n = 3,290)</td>
<td>$1,577 (n = 1,650)</td>
<td>$1,601 (n = 1,650)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with partners or children</td>
<td>$2,108 (n = 79)</td>
<td>$2,439 (n = 80)</td>
<td>$2,478 (n = 471)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amounts shown represent an average of the monthly housing cost (e.g., rent), food, as well as select utilities. Utilities include: Water, Garbage, Gas, Electricity, and Internet.
Monthly reported housing, food, & utility costs

Respondents with families reported monthly housing, food, and utility costs of ~$900 more on average than those without families.

Values shown in red are the mean dollar amounts paid per month for housing, food, and utilities, by each respective respondent group.

Utilities include: Water, Garbage, Gas, Electricity, and Internet
Respondent comments: satisfaction with housing

“I commute two hours every day to get to campus, riding my bike and BART for a total of > $100/month, on top of my outrageous rent. I just couldn't afford an apartment closer to campus. And I still have to live with a stranger in a tiny, loud apartment. Even as a postdoc, I have no money saved at the end of every month.”
- Postdoc

“I am so frustrated with our housing situation, considering UCLA students live in luxury compared to our housing. I pay the same amount for a broken-down apartment with insect problems in the basement with homeless people living outside my window as my best friend does for an apartment with laundry, a pool, a gym, and a dishwasher in sparkling Westwood.”
– Undergraduate Student

“The Berkeley Student Cooperative has given me the absolute best living situation I could ask for... It is extremely affordable and provides nutritious food, a welcoming and academically focused community and an abundance of amenities.” – Undergraduate Student
Level of satisfaction with current housing cost

Postdocs are least satisfied with their current housing cost, followed by undergraduates – particularly those with freshman class standing.
The type of housing respondents were living in when surveyed

A greater proportion of undergraduates (35%) live in university owned housing as compared to graduate students (12%) and postdocs (6%)
Who respondents were living With
(Excludes those living in most types of undergrad university owned housing)

Most respondents reported living with some type of housemate; only 4% of undergrads and 15% of grad students and postdocs lived alone.

Respondents who lived in the residence halls, most university owned apartments, Bowles, and university overflow housing were not asked this question. However, those living in University Village Albany (family housing) and university owned graduate student housing were asked this question.
The proportion of respondents not living with a partner, who shared a bedroom

Undergrads are more likely to share a bedroom than are graduate students and postdocs

Percentages exclude those who reported living with a partner/spouse, but include those who reported living alone. Represents responses to two different survey questions, which are shown on the previous two slides. Thus, the difference in percentages shown in the number of respondents.
Satisfaction with current proximity to campus by commute time

Undergraduates’ satisfaction with proximity drops more quickly with increased commute time.
Have you ever considered leaving UC Berkeley because of the housing situation?

A high proportion of respondents with children have considered leaving.
“Unfortunately, postdocs are limited in the duration at the UC Village [student family housing]. I would have to leave in a few months which would increase all my cost by an additional 1500-200$. I am seriously thinking if we could afford staying in UC or terminating my position.” - Postdoc
Potential housing
Postdocs & graduate students are most willing to live with a mix of families & individuals; Undergrads are most willing to live amongst multiple student populations.

- Willing to live in community with families/individual mix:
  - Undergraduate: 46%
  - Graduate: 69%
  - Postdoc: 74%

- Willing to live in community with multiple populations:
  - Undergraduate: 45%
  - Graduate: 77%
  - Postdoc: 48%

- Willing to share a bedroom with another person:
  - Undergraduate: 72%
  - Graduate: 6%
  - Postdoc: 7%

Darker colors correspond to a response of “yes” and lighter colors to a response of “maybe”
#1 and #2 most important factors in potential housing

Undergraduate

- Price: 45
- Proximity: 10
- Safety: 6
- Live alone: 3
- Physical condition: 4

Graduate

- Price: 44
- Proximity: 9
- Safety: 13
- Live alone: 7
- Physical condition: 5

Postdoc

- Price: 37
- Proximity: 22
- Safety: 23
- Live alone: 16
- Physical condition: 13
#1 and #2 most important factors in potential housing

Price is the most important factor across all groups

Undergraduates value proximity

Safety is important to respondents with children

“Undergrads,” “Grad students,” and “Postdocs” exclude respondents living with partners and/or children

“With partners” includes respondents living with partners (without children)

“With children” includes respondents living with children (with or without partners)
Percent ranking the site #1

- Unit 3 Densification
- Upper Hearst Parking Garage
- Channing-Ellsworth
- Bancroft & Oxford
- People's Park
- Gateway (University & Oxford)
- Oxford Tract
- Smyth-Fernwald
- Albany Village
- Richmond Field Station

Percent ranking the site #1

- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Postdoc
Undergraduates’ preferred housing type

Percent ranking housing type #1

- Studio Apt: 18
- Shared BR in Co-op: 13
- BR in Co-op: 10
- Shared BR in Apt: 6
- BR in Apt: 4
- 1-3BR Apt: 3
- BR in Res Hall: 2
- Shared BR in Res Hall: 1
- Shared BR at other campus: 1

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 5,276 - 5,404)
Excludes undergraduates who live with partners or children
Undergraduates’ reasons for not considering housing types

"Unsuitable" indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout.
Graduate students’ preferred housing type

Percent ranking housing type #1

- Studio Apt: 25
- 1BR Apt: 10
- BR in Co-op: 5
- 2BR Apt: 4
- BR in Apt: 2
- 3BR Apt: 1
- Shared BR in Apt: 1
- Shared BR in Co-op: 1

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 1,780-1,815)
Excludes respondents who live with partners or children
Graduate students’ reasons for **not** considering housing types

**Graduate students not living with partners or children**

- **Studio Apt**
- **1BR Apt**
- **BR in Co-op**
- **BR in Apt**
- **2BR Apt**
- **Shared BR in Co-op**
- **Shared BR in Apt**
- **3BR Apt**

“**Unsuitable**” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout.
Postdocs’ preferred housing type

Percent ranking housing type #1

- Studio Apt: 29
- 1BR Apt: 17
- 2BR Apt: 11
- BR in Apt: 4
- BR in Co-op: 3
- 3BR Apt: 1
- Shared BR in Apt: 
- Shared BR in Co-op:

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 144 - 152)
Excludes postdocs who live with partners or children
Postdocs’ reasons for **not** considering housing types

“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout
Preferred housing type for respondents with partners

Percent ranking housing type #1

- 1BR Apt: 32%
- 2BR Apt: 25%
- Studio Apt: 7%
- 3BR Apt: 3%
- Shared BR in Apt: 2%
- BR in Apt: 1%
- Shared BR in Co-op: 1%
- BR in Co-op: 1%

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 683-704)

Includes undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs who live with partners
Respondents living with partners: reasons for not considering housing types

Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs living with partners

“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout.
Preferred housing type for respondents with children

Percent ranking housing type #1

- 2BR Apt: 22
- 3BR Apt: 16
- 1BR Apt: 13
- Studio Apt: 4
- Shared BR in Apt: 1
- Shared BR in Co-op: 1
- BR in Apt: 0
- BR in Co-op: 0

“%I live in a studio which works well for me, although it is very difficult when my partner visits, because she has children. It is difficult to afford something suitable for families reasonably close to campus.” – Graduate Student

Percent of #1 rankings out of total valid responses for each housing type, range of valid responses (n = 322-347)
Includes undergraduates, graduate students and postdocs who live with children
Respondents living with children: reasons for not considering housing types

Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs living with children (with or without partners)

“Unsuitable” indicates it would not be an option for the respondent’s housing situation for any reason other than price or layout.
Learn more

housing.berkeley.edu/housing-task-force-2017