

COVID-19 Graduate & Professional Student Survey Report

Health and Safety Committee,
University of Iowa Graduate & Professional
Student Government (GPSG)

March 2021

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Mackensie Graham, President of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) for her continued support for this project. We are indebted to GPSG Vice President Ellen Kiser for diligently guiding the 'Data Team' along the whole process. We thank GPSG executives Jason Semprini for his valuable feedback and Charlene Tran for her contribution in social media outreach activities. We would like to thank all members of the health and safety committee 'Data Team' for their time and contribution including Logan Murray, Abdinasir K Ali, Qierra R Brockman.

We thank all the graduate and professional students who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the survey.

Key Findings

1. Mental health is a major concern for students. Only about half of students reported that their current mental health status was good, very good, or excellent (46%) and the vast majority of students reported their social and emotional health was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (89%) and racial unrest (70%). About 70% of students indicated a need for more mental health services.
2. About half of students (55%) reported being sometimes, often, or very often worried about paying their bills and 42% were worried about having access to health care. When asked what services and support they needed, nearly half of students (46%) reported needing financial assistance and health services.
3. The vast majority of students reported stress from their workload (92%), the political climate (91%), work-life balance (88%), and social isolation (83%). Most students reported that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their academic productivity (78%) and about half reported that it had a negative impact on their ability to reach program milestones.
4. There are gender and racial differences in health status, basic needs, stressors, and the impact of COVID-19. Non-binary students were less likely to report having positive physical and mental health, had higher levels of basic need worries, stressors, and were more likely to experience negative impacts of COVID-19. Black students had higher levels of worry for basic needs, stressors, and more likely to experience negative impacts of COVID-19 and racial unrest.
5. A high percentage of international students reported that they were worried about immigration related regulations (78%), ability to travel home (80%), and health of family members (85%). International students also reported poorer mental health than their U.S. citizen counterparts.
6. About half of students (46%) were satisfied with their online activities. About all students reported having access to a laptop and 85% access to internet, while only 54% reported access to VPN and 34% to research software. Nearly a quarter of students reported need technology assistance.
7. The majority of students agreed that the University of Iowa communicates COVID-19 updates effectively (65%), but less than half agreed the University has supported students to adapt to changes (42%) and been transparent with decision-making (42%). Only a third of students reported they feel safe on campus and that the University has done a good job protecting students from the negative consequences of COVID-19.
8. The vast majority of students follow preventative guidelines for COVID-19.

COVID-19 Graduate and Professional Student Survey Report

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has majorly reshaped our lives over the past year. The purpose of this survey is to document the experiences and concerns related to COVID-19 along with other topics amongst graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa. To conduct the survey, a multidisciplinary 'Data Team' comprised of graduate student researchers was assembled by the Health and Safety Committee of the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG). Utilizing our skillset to serve the graduate and professional student community during the pandemic was a key motivational factor behind assembling the data team.

The survey was conducted when graduate and professional students were experiencing not only the COVID-19 pandemic but also political unrest, racial justice issues, and discriminatory policies against international students. The survey attempted to capture existing disparities and the mood of the students in respect to all these issues.

This report is comprised of data from the survey that GPSG administered to graduate and professional students through a campus-wide email as well as through social media outlets from November 10, 2020 to November 27, 2020.

Of the 8,043 graduate and professional students who received the survey questionnaire, a total of 890 responded to the survey. After cleaning the data for non-responses and excluding those with less than 15% information, there was a total of 838 students in the final sample, resulting in a response rate of 10.42%. The methodology followed to conduct the survey and to prepare this report are available in (Appendix 1: Survey Methodology) of this document. Demographic analysis of the sample is provided on Page 7, followed by detailed analysis of the survey data.

The report describes the key findings related to:

- Student Well-Being
- Resources and Support Needed
- Perceptions of Institutional Response
- Compliance with Public Health Measures
- Additional Feedback

The survey data is reported for all graduate students as well as disaggregated at times to examine differences in experiences by race and gender.

Sample Demographics

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of sample

Gender (N=804)	Number	Percentage
Men	248	31%
Women	518	64%
Non-Binary*	22	3%
Prefer not to answer	16	2%
Race (N=803)		
White	650	81%
Black	13	2%
Asian	50	6%
Hispanic	32	4%
American Indian	2	0.25%
Middle East/North African	7	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0.25%
Other	24	3%
Prefer not to answer	23	3%
Citizenship Status (N=797)		
US Citizen	745	93%
International Student	40	5%
Other	12	2%
Age (N=808)		
20-25 years	307	38%
26-30 years	243	30%
31-35 years	123	15%
36-40 years	58	7%
Above 40 years	77	10%
Program of Study (N=792)		
Masters	304	39%
PhD	265	33%
Professional Degree	156	20%
Other	67	8%
College (N=768)		
College of Business	116	15%
College of Dentistry	24	3%
College of Education	56	7%
College of Engineering	25	3%
College of Law	51	7%
College of Medicine	127	17%
College of Nursing	29	4%
College of Pharmacy	28	4%
College of Public Health	63	8%
Graduate college	243	32%
More than one college	6	1%

Note: N's differ due to missing values. *Non-binary includes gender queer, gender non-conforming, or other non-binary gender identities

Student Well-Being

This section describes students’ current health status, worries related to basic needs, main contributors of stress, and the impact of COVID-19.

Health Status

When asked to rate current physical health, students reported mostly good or very good physical health (Figure 1). Self-reported mental health status is more concerning with more than 50% students reporting their mental health status as poor or fair (Figure 2).

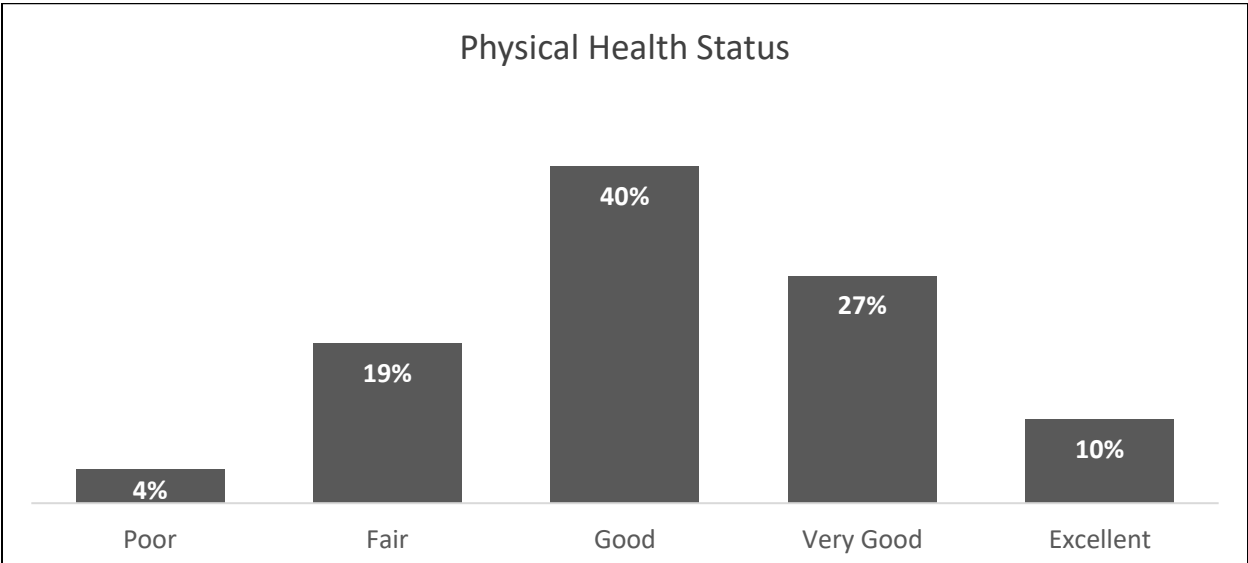


Figure 1: Physical Health Status

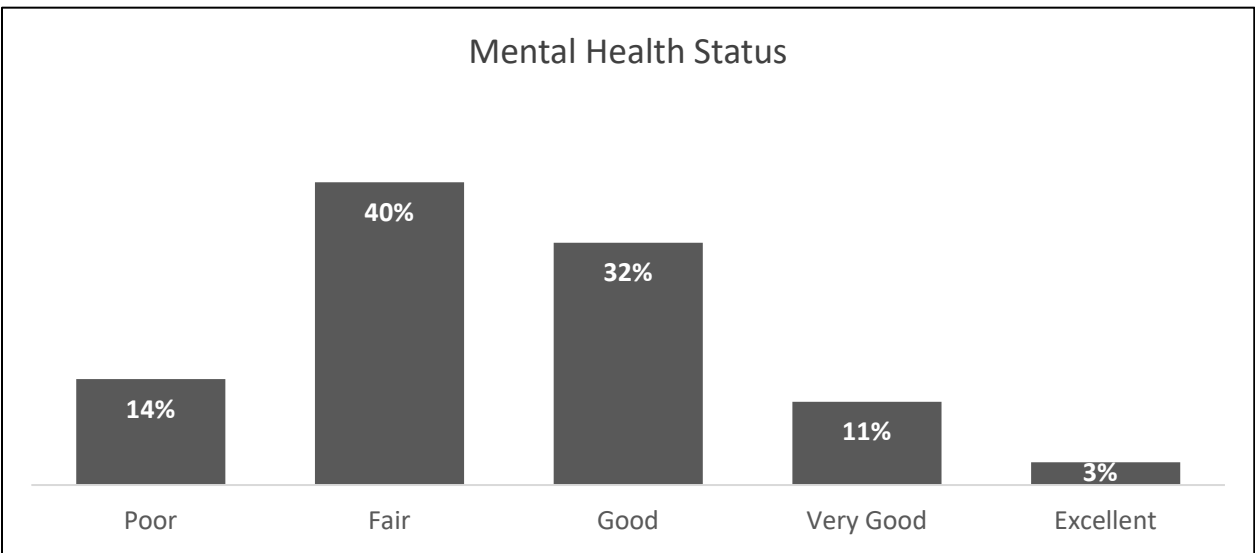


Figure 2: Mental Health Status

When examining differences in health status by gender, we see that non-binary students are significantly less likely to report having positive physical and mental health (Figure 3). Only 20% of non-binary students reported that their mental health was good, very good, or excellent. Women are slightly less likely to report positive health as well.

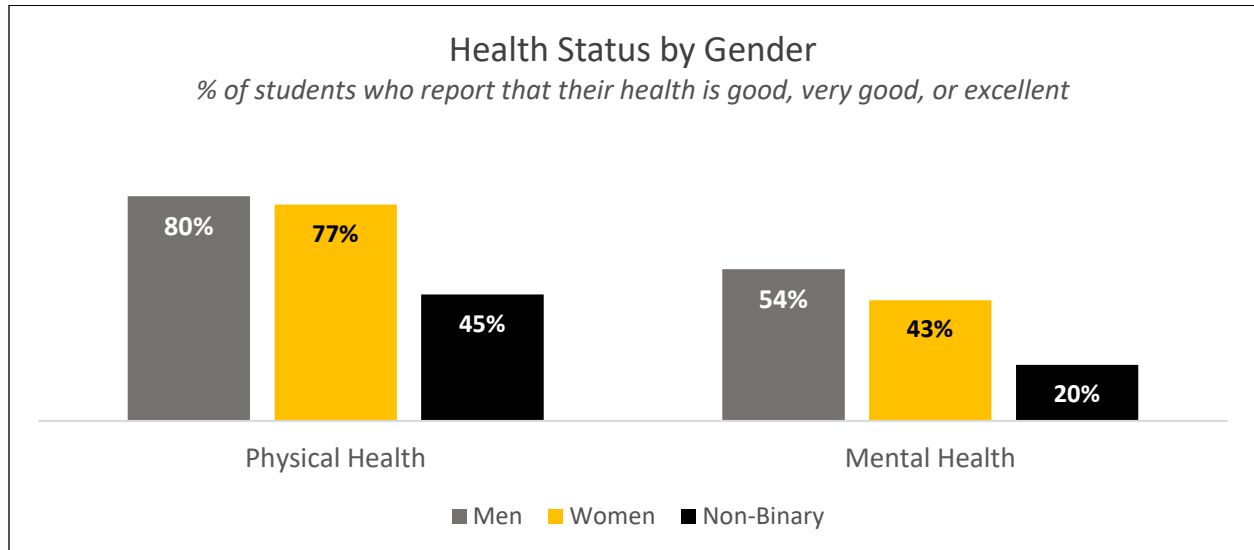


Figure 3: Health Status by Gender

Looking at racial differences in health status, Black, Latino, and students of 'other' race category report lower levels of physical health compared to White and Asian students. A lower percentage of Latino students and students of 'other' race category reported their mental health to be good, very good or excellent compared to White, Black, and Asian students.

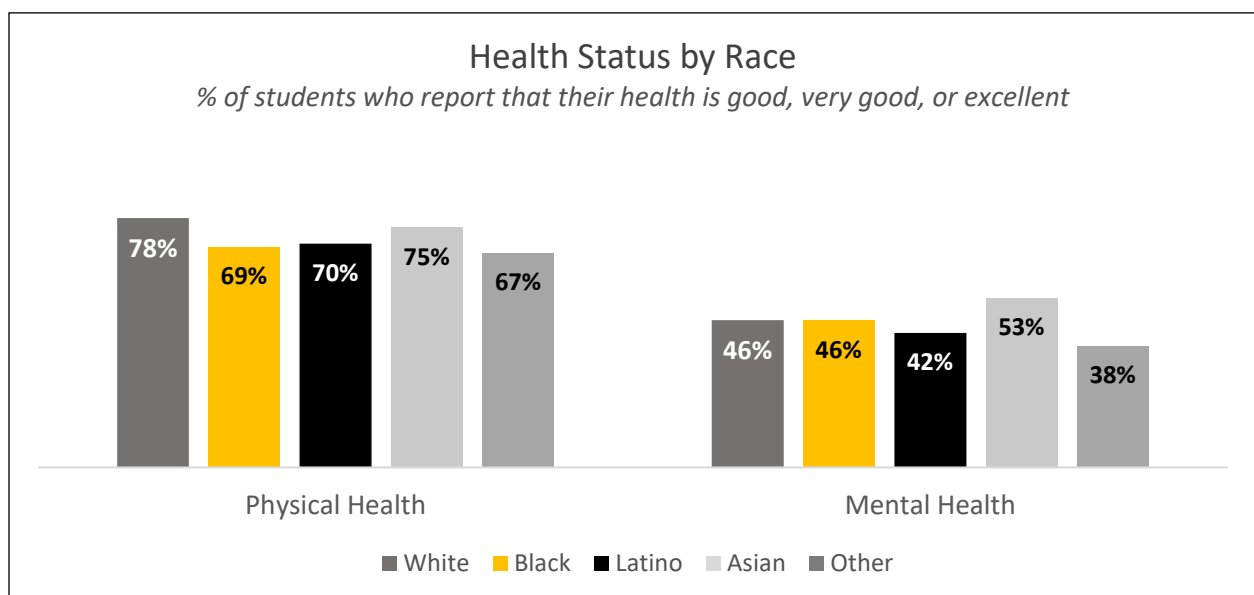


Figure 4: Health Status by Race

In another subgroup analysis, we found that international students are also likely to report high levels of poorer mental health than their U.S. counterparts (61% compared to 54%).

The findings from the open-ended questions give us more insights to these numbers. Students were appreciative of the opportunities provided by the University to remain healthy during the pandemic. Mental health services, counseling services, and other support from the University is much in demand and could be ramped up to meet higher demand. The students are a varied heterogenous group and their needs, response to the pandemic, and expectations are also varied.

Some quotes from open ended remarks concerning health status:

“The Rec Center's virtual classes have been a significant source of relief. I normally go to the gym 4-5 days a week but don't feel comfortable going in the middle of a pandemic. Having the online classes has given me regular activity and given me a break from everything that is going on.”

“I will be graduating soon, and I know getting a job in the US as an international student is really difficult. I am having anxiety and sleepless nights about this. In fact, I am thinking of postponing my graduation date just because of this. I need help! with career services, counselling, and mental health services.”

Basic Need Worries

Financial security is the biggest concern among students with about half of the students (55%) reporting that they are sometimes, often, or very often worried about paying bills. The second highest worry is having access to health care (42%), and nearly a quarter of students are worried about housing and food security (Figure 5).

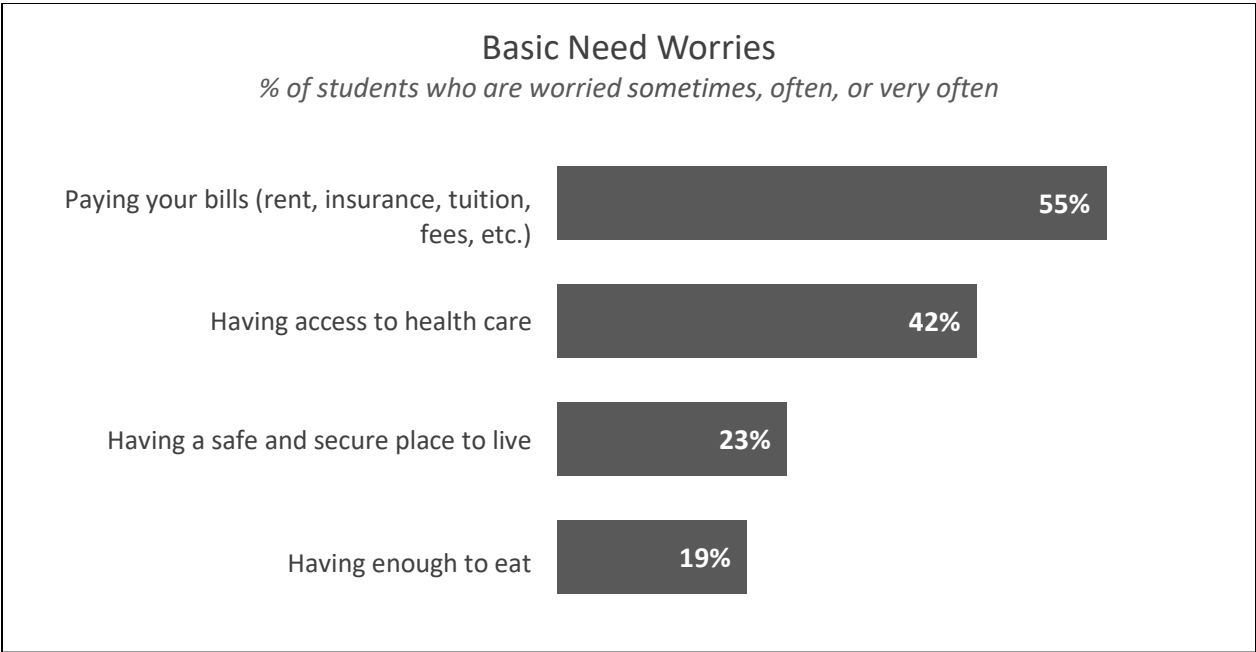


Figure 5: Basic Need Worries

When examining gender differences (Figure 6), non-binary students are more worried than men and women about basic needs. For example, 70% of non-binary students reported being worried about having access to health care compared to 44% of women and 35% of men. Women were more likely to be worried about paying bills, health care access, and food security compared to men, but men were more likely to be concerned about housing security than women. vs. 27%).

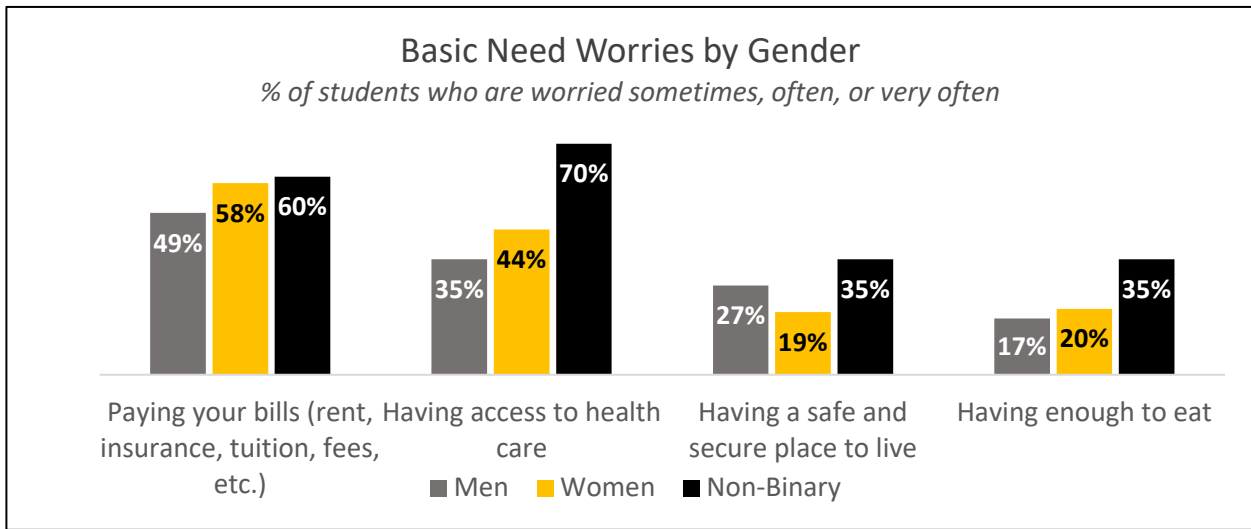


Figure 6: Basic Need Worries by Gender

Subgroup analysis by race (Figure 7) shows that Black students are more concerned about finances and healthcare access than others. Almost all (92%) Black students and 59% Latino students worried sometimes, often, or very often about paying bills including rent, insurance, tuition, fees etc. 77% of Black students and 56% of Latino students worried about having access to healthcare. Housing security was again highest among Black students (46%) followed by Asian students (42%). Black and Latino students shared the highest concern (38%) for food security.

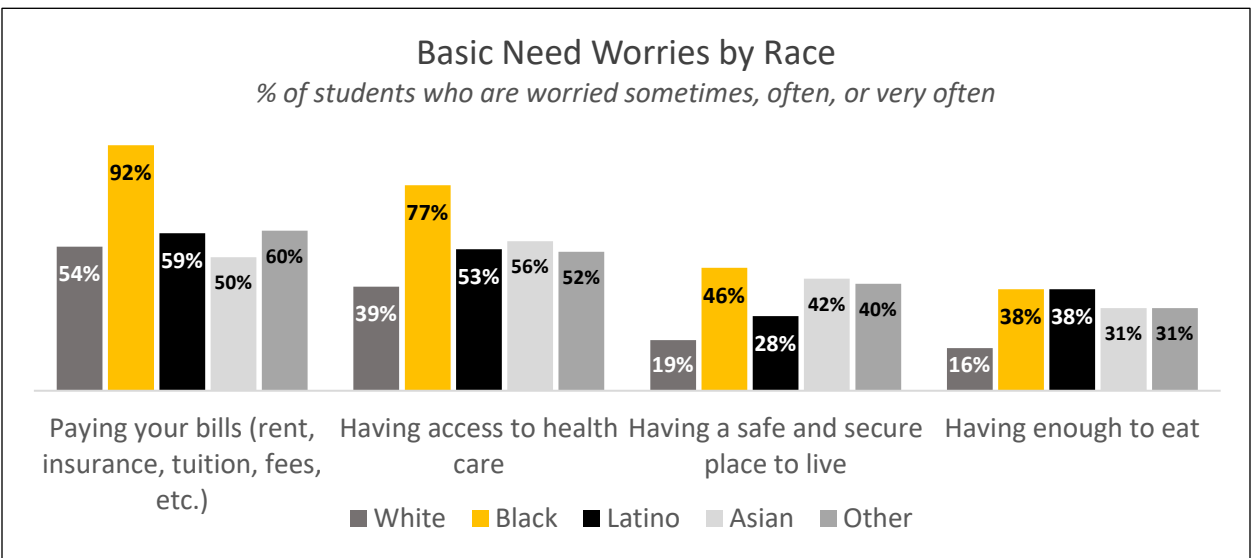


Figure 7: Basic Need Worries by Race

Financial worries and need for financial support were recurrent themes in the open-ended responses (Table 2). The following themes identified through qualitative analysis of the remarks highlights the need for financial resources.

Table 2: Qualitative Findings for Basic Need Worries

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
Better compensation	<i>"Grad students need to be paid more for teaching during a crisis"</i>
Continuous funding	<i>"COVID has created major time losses and set everyone back, and we need extended contracts to compensate for that time and to balance the extra work we've done to transition to online teaching, etc."</i>
Aid and assistance	<i>"The childcare assistance provided by the university does not meet the financial need adequately. Monthly childcare costs are equivalent to a 2nd mortgage for parents, and the reimbursement is quite small. Please know that I appreciate any financial assistance and consideration. It's just that a single parent making grad student wages can't provide childcare and still make ends meet without student loans."</i>
Aid and assistance	<i>"Some sort of compensation for all the working from home related expenses would be really helpful. I didn't have much of a home office pre-COVID but had to build one with computer, webcam, and sound machine to make it all work. It was a big expense that I would not have purchased outside of the pandemic."</i>
Health insurance support	<i>"I would like the assurance that my healthcare would be fully covered should I contract COVID. Additionally, I would like hazard pay for having to go into a potentially unsafe work environment."</i>
Access to testing	<i>We need widespread access to covid 19 testing ON CAMPUS. To stop the spread we can't just limit testing to symptomatic students. EVERYONE should be able to easily get a test any time they want one. The barriers to getting a covid test (without lying to the screener (which my friends have started doing in order to get a test)) are very high.</i>
Reduced tuition	<i>"I'm also paying full tuition to have most of my professor upload videos on the weekend. I'm paying more money to self-teach. I kind of regret going here when I could've taken online classes somewhere else for cheaper."</i>
Refund on campus fees	<i>"I'm disappointed that the University is still charging fees that aren't completely applicable during these times such as a gym fee. That one should be optional for sure."</i>

Stressors

Students reported high levels of stress for all indicators that we included in the survey, with the greatest level of stress coming from workload, the political climate, and work-life balance.

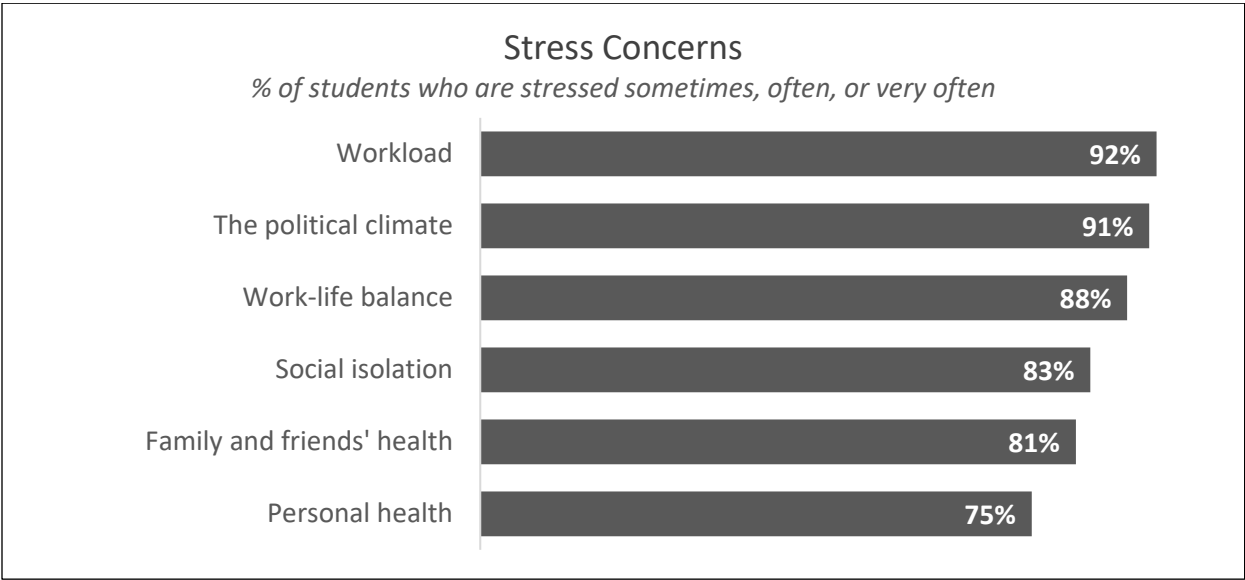


Figure 8: Stress Concerns

While looking at the stressors by gender (Figure 9), non-binary students faced the highest levels, particular with health-related stressors. In comparison, men were considerably less likely to report stress in all indicators.

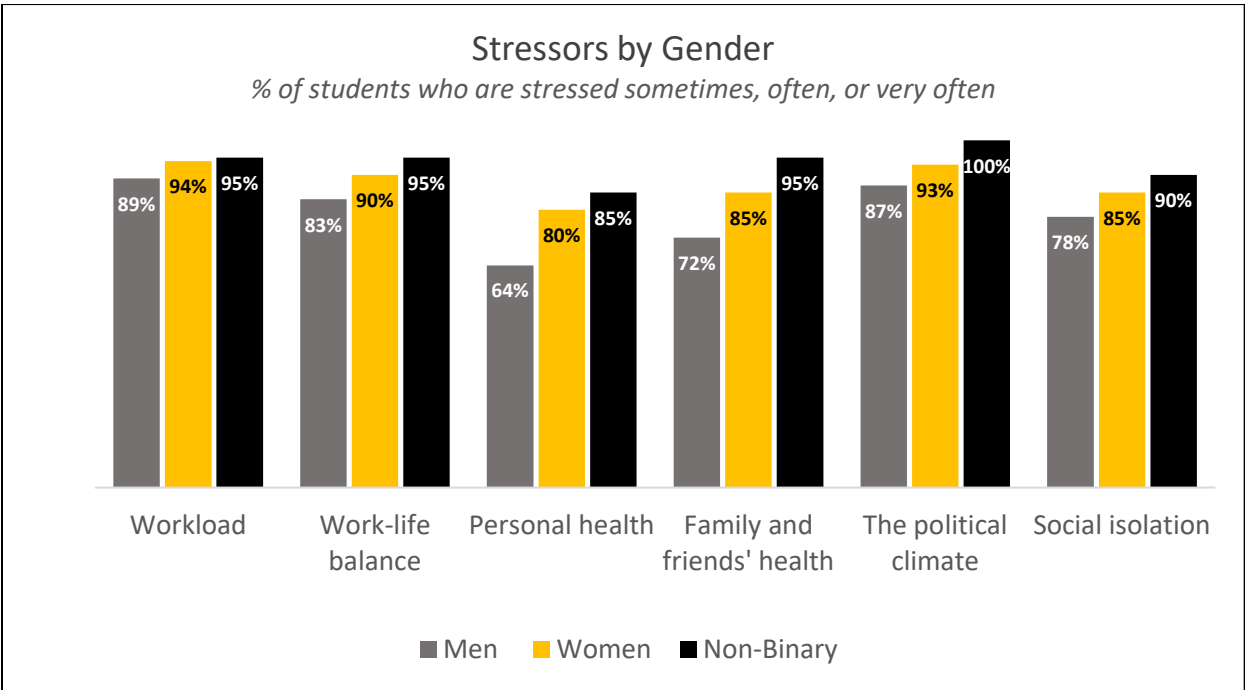


Figure 9: Stressors by Gender

(Figure 10) show how these stressors varied by race. Black students report higher levels of stress due to workload, work-life balance, family and friends' health, and social isolation compared to white, Asian, and Latino students. Latino students report higher levels of stress due to personal health and the political climate than white, black, and Asian students.

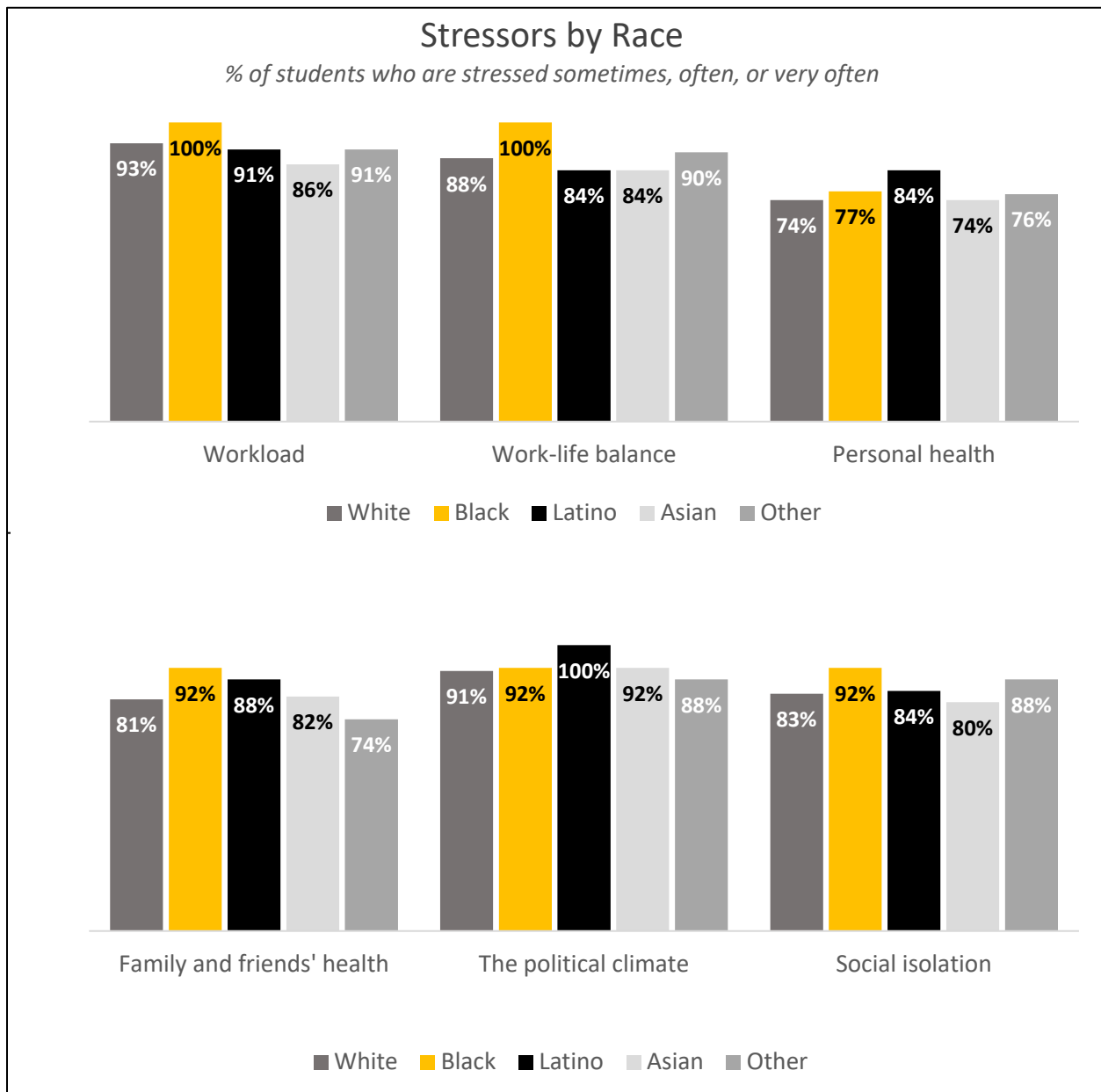


Figure 10: Stressors by Race

The qualitative findings help us better understand these findings on stressors (Table 3). Students expressed their concerns about their capacity to learn as well as fulfil their responsibilities especially those in Teaching Assistant positions.

Table 3: Qualitative Findings for Stressors

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
Frustrated with the situation	<i>"I think we can all know that this is just a tough time to be a student/professor. Nowhere near the education/potential everything could (and should) be."</i>
Challenges with teaching responsibilities	<i>"Developing hybrid course design feels like a double workload for TA appointments, especially TA appointments where the student worker fully teaches and is responsible for their course. This significantly impacts time and stress load, making taking classes and focus on graduate student learning extremely difficult."</i>
Challenges with teaching responsibilities	<i>I hope classes go 100% online in the Spring. As a TA, I really feel unsafe teaching undergrads in an airborne viral pandemic.</i>
Lack of academic accommodations	<i>"It was very disheartening as a TA to not have been asked about my preferences for teaching in person or online. I was only asked by my department chair a few weeks into the start of the semester. My opinion therefore felt very undervalued despite the fact that I was the one being told (not asked) to teach in person."</i>
Minimally affected	<i>"My job and academic requirements have been minimally affected."</i>

Impact of COVID-19

Most graduate students report a negative impact of COVID-19 on their social and emotional health (89%), academic productivity (78%), physical health (68%), and ability to reach program milestones (53%) (Figure 11). These results are also aligned with the mental health status of the students and the high percentage of students reporting stressors.

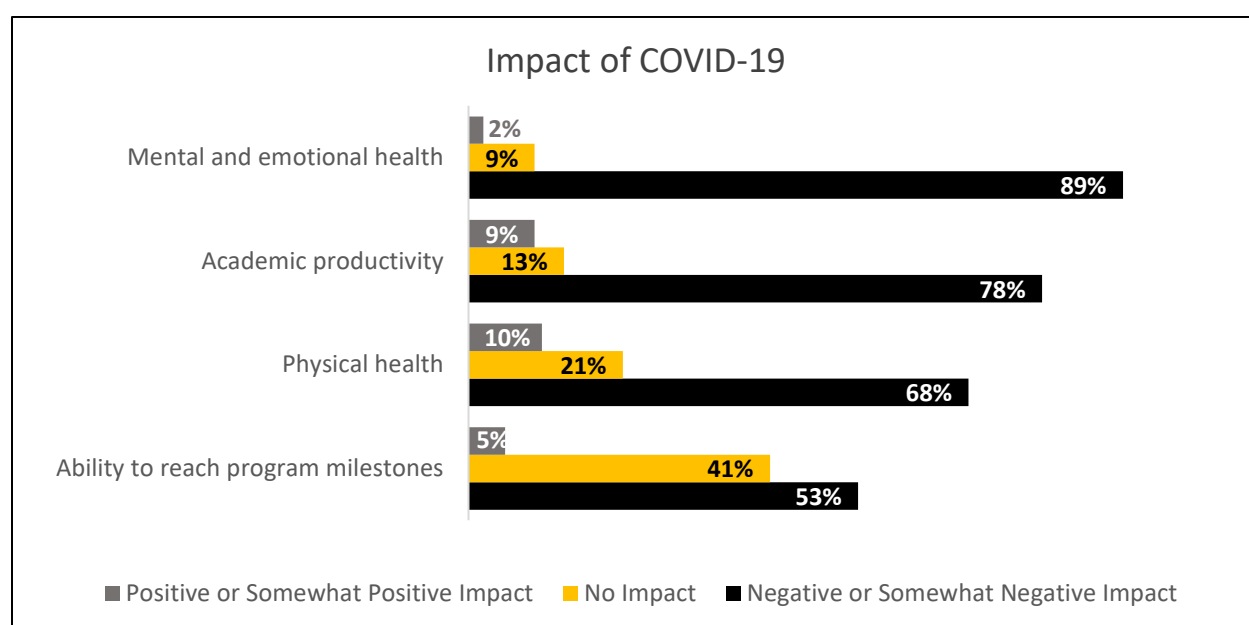


Figure 11: Impact of COVID-19

Gender subgroup results show that non-binary students are more likely to report negative impact of COVID-19 on all the four aspects that were probed (Figure 12). Also, a high percentage of female students were negatively impacted by COVID-19 in terms of mental and emotional health (93%), academic productivity (80%), physical health (71%), and ability to reach milestones (52%).

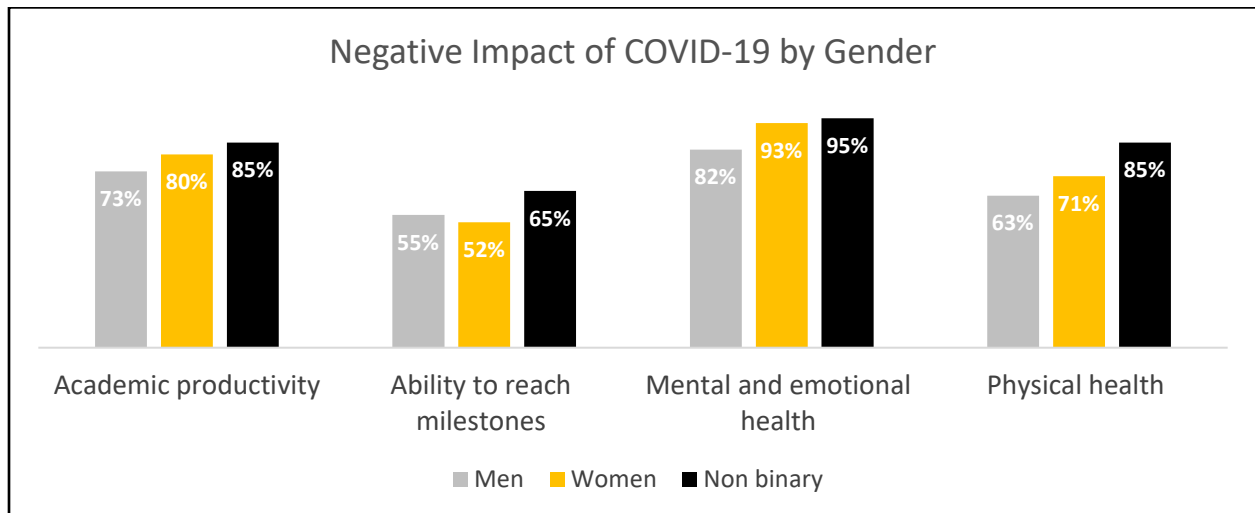


Figure 12: Negative impact of COVID-19 by Gender

Subgroup results by race (Figure 13) reveal that Black students experienced a greater negative impact than students from other races on all aspects except academic productivity. For example, 100% of Black students were negatively impacted in terms of mental and emotional health. Compared to other categories, a high percentage of white students reported their academic productivity (80%) and mental and emotional health (90%) to be negatively impacted by COVID-19.

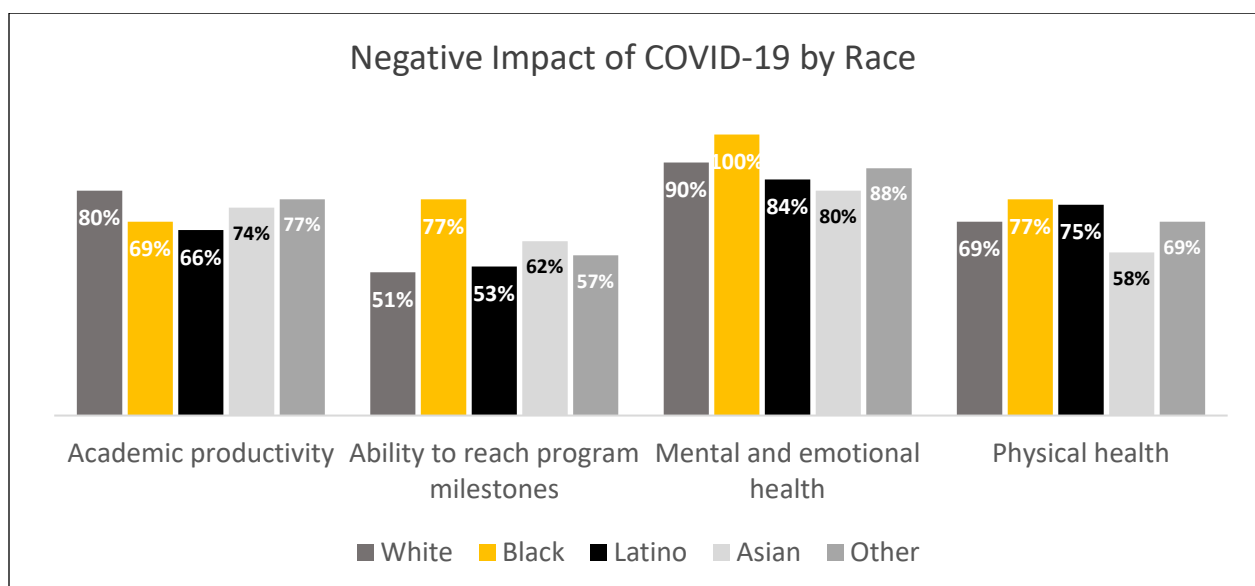


Figure 13: Negative impact of COVID-19 by Race

The qualitative feedback also shows that some of these worries extend beyond the realm of academic worries into the pandemic or post pandemic job market and employment opportunities (Table 4). The shift to online training, need for more flexibility, and accommodations were part of the open-ended feedback.

Table 4: Qualitative Findings for Impact of COVID-19

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
Job market concerns	<i>I'm more concerned about graduating in December with jobs scarce than I am with attending classes</i>
Flexibility with assignments and submission	<i>I think we should be able to do at least one course pass/fail, whether it is required for the degree or not. There's no reason why we should be pretending that we can perform normally with the combination of online classes and the stress of the pandemic.</i>
Flexibility with assignments and submission	<i>Though professors in my department have repeatedly been encouraged to reduce workloads and be flexible, no this is not the case.</i>
Inability to achieve full potential	<i>"I think we can all know that this is just a tough time to be a student/professor. Nowhere near the education/potential everything could (and should) be."</i>
Need for semester breaks	<i>"Please give students more mid semester breaks. We need the extra support with Covid. We are mentally drained."</i>
Flexibility with program milestones	<i>"I need the university to quit hounding me to finish my degree on time when I'm pregnant, teaching, and have a young child at home that I have to homeschool because I am high-risk for COVID and can't risk sending him to school or daycare. They should give everyone an extra year to count as graduating "on-time" or fulfilling degree requirements "in a timely manner", just as they should do for faculty."</i>
Better PPE	<i>It would be nice to have better face shields. Everyone I know has already given up on theirs because they are so scratched/ broken.</i>

Impact of Racial Unrest

Racial unrest significantly impacted the mental and emotional health of students (Figure 14). 70% respondents reported a negative effect of racial unrest on their mental and emotional health while 40% reported a negative impact on academic productivity.

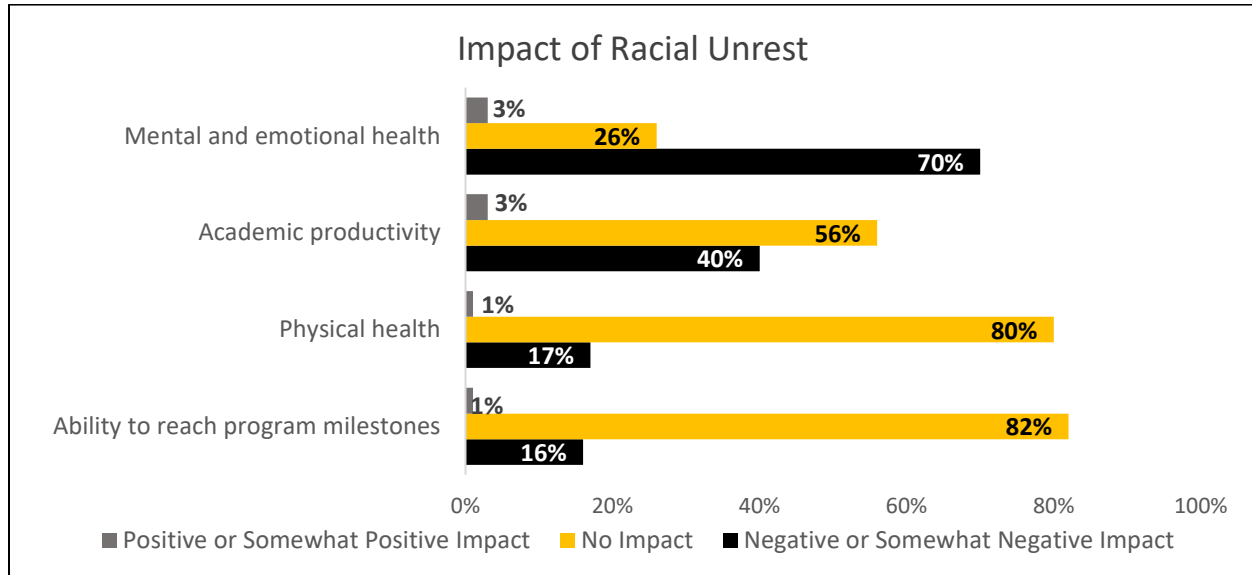


Figure 14: Impact of Racial Unrest

Women and non-binary students experienced more negative effects of racial unrest when compared to men (Figure 15). For example, 75% of non-binary students reported that their academic productivity was negatively impacted by racial unrest compared to 44% of women and 30% of men.

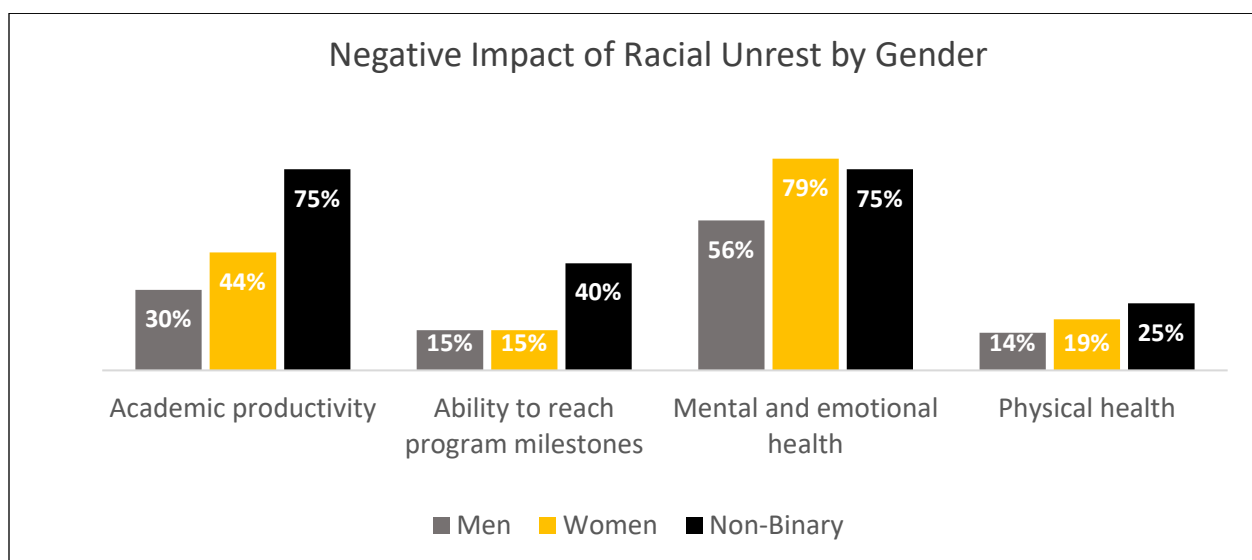


Figure 15: Negative Impact of Racial Unrest by Gender

The negative effect of racial unrest was most pronounced among Black students (Figure 16). It affected all aspects of their lives including mental health (100%), academic productivity (85%), ability to reach program milestones (62%), and physical health (69%).

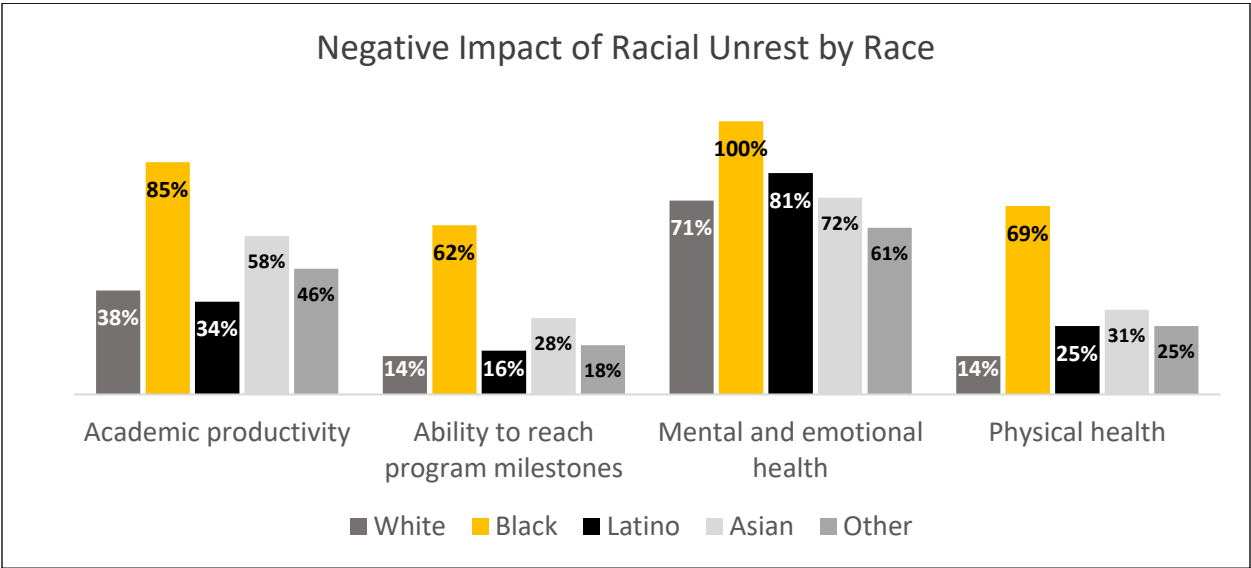


Figure 16: Negative Impact of Racial Unrest by Race

The qualitative feedback also shows the need for more conversation on racial issues (Table 5). Using the existing political climate as a learning opportunity, the urgency of arranging relevant training programs were highlighted in the open-ended feedback.

Table 5: Qualitative Findings for Impact of Racial Unrest

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
University not being neutral	<i>"I don't feel that I, personally, and my thoughts and views are accepted within this environment that is associating itself with progressive leftist views. This public-funded academy has an obligation of promoting diverse views that are balanced across differing points-of-view."</i>
Political climate as a learning opportunity	<i>"Social unrest is the demonstration of how ordinary people, including students, think of the societal issues that are not touched/addressed in the academic field. That is why these protests reinvigorate academic productivity and content."</i> <i>"These events were catalysts that made me to change my life for the better. It gave me the time to reflect on my life and decide what I want in life and who I want to be."</i>
Need for training	<i>Higher education needs more diversity training, recruitment, and vetting of individuals to make sure they are respectful to everyone. This isn't politics, because it's not about public policy. This is about fundamental respect for fellow humans, even those who are different from you.</i>

Need for more conversation on racial issues	<i>"The university's response to the police violence in Iowa City, my departments response to the conversation about racism and police violence, as well as the universities response to COVID have really soured my relationship to academia."</i>
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International Student Concerns

In addition to the questions that were fielded to all students, we asked international students (N=51) specifically about their concerns regarding changing immigration policies, difficulties in international travel and pandemic situation in their home countries (Figure 17). A high percentage of international students reported being in constant worry about these three aspects. In addition to these concerns, these students also face other challenges which is captured in this quote from an open-ended response.

"I will be graduating soon, and I know getting a job in the US as an international student is really difficult. I am having anxiety and sleepless nights about this. In fact, I am thinking of postponing my graduation date just because of this. I need help! with career services, counselling, and mental health services."

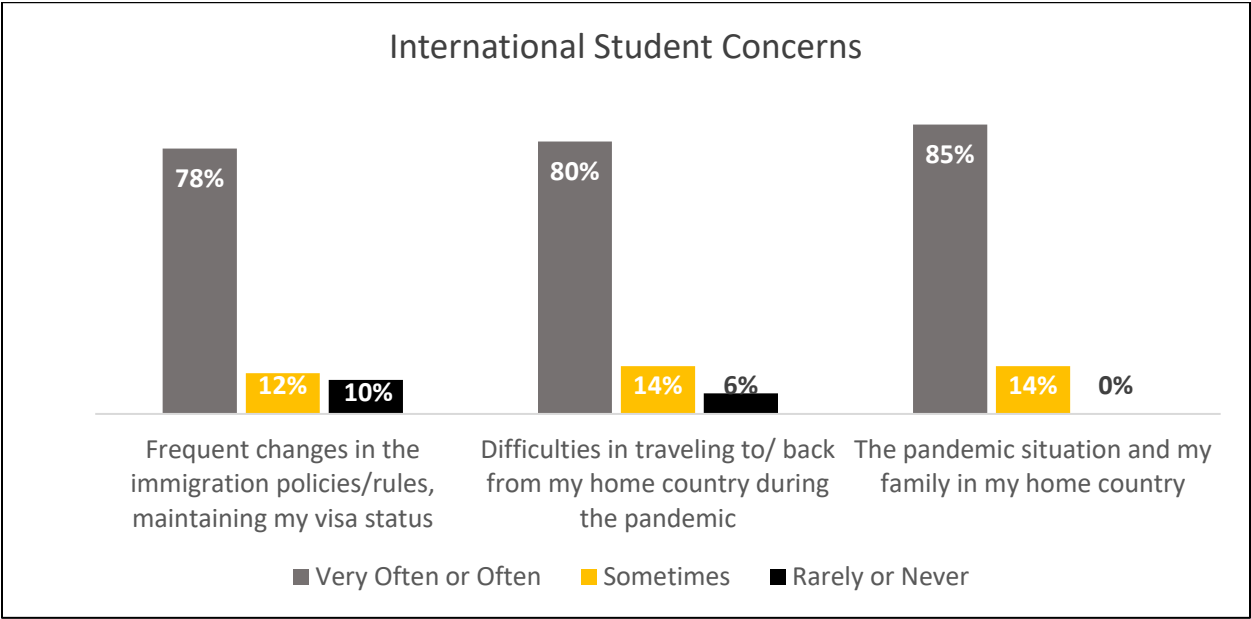


Figure 17: International Student Concerns

85% international graduate students were very often or often concerned about the pandemic situation and their family living in their home countries. Difficulties in travelling to/back from their home country during the pandemic concerned 80% international students very often or often. Frequent change in the immigration policies/rules and maintaining their visa status worried 78% international students.

Resources and Support

Online Learning

Of the 85% of students who reported currently participating in online academic activities, nearly half of students reported satisfaction with the online activities while a third of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction (29%) (Figure 18).

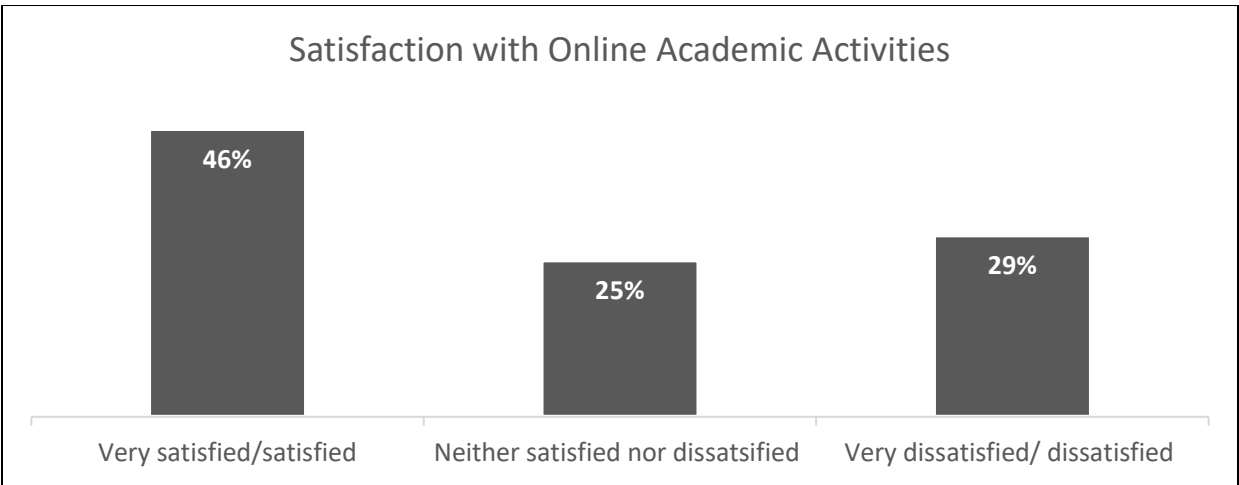


Figure 18: Satisfaction with Online Academic Activities

The survey also asked about access to tools for online academic activities (Figure 19). The majority of students have access to a laptop, internet, and video account. Only about half of students reported access to a VPN and about a third reported access to research software.

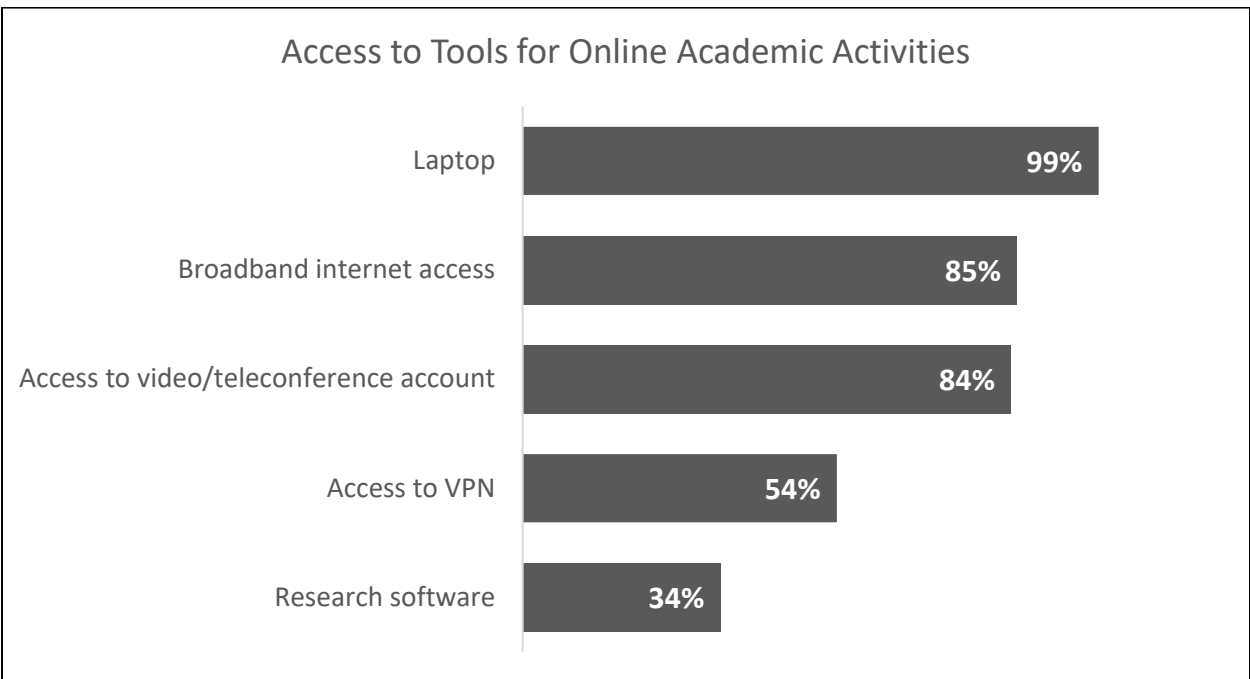


Figure 19: Access to Tools for Online Academic Activities

In the open-ended questions, some issues were raised by students about their online learning experiences. Some of the remarks pointed to gaps in the online learning experiences and highlighted some looming discrepancies. Students had these specific remarks about online academic activities:

“Prerecorded classes are a huge help in case I’m not able to attend the scheduled zoom time due to having the kids home.”

“Educate professors/advisors how to use Zoom effectively.”

“I wish that my classes were always scheduled for a certain time. A few of my classes that are recorded say we can watch the lectures at any time. The lack of structure is hurting my academic performance.”

“IT issues have been absolutely awful and a huge hindrance- there is a lot of work I would be able to complete from home- and I would much prefer because lab is insanely crowded- but I can’t because my access to remote desktop and remote data storage are extremely limited.”

Services and Support Needed

When asked what other resources, support, or accommodations are needed during this time, nearly 70% students indicated a need for more mental health resources (Figure 20). About half of students reported needing health services and financial assistance, and a quarter reported needing technology assistance.

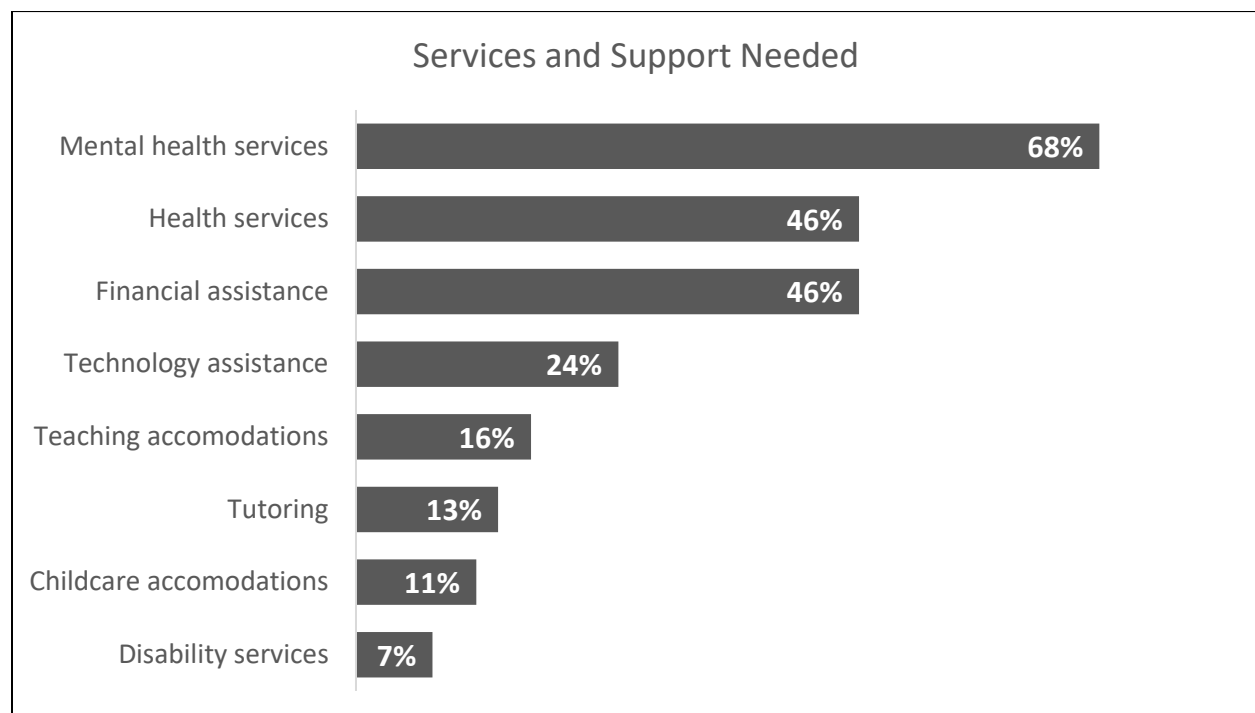


Figure 20: Services and Support Needed

The findings on this theme from the qualitative analysis are included below (Table 6). Some of these quotes are also included under other themes above, but we retain some here as well to emphasize the needs of students.

Table 6: Qualitative Findings for Services and Support Needed

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
More support for students with disability	<i>I have a learning disability; the disability office has become a joke since COVID started. It seems like they have changed their approach in the last year. It used to be that they were helpful when working with faculty. Now they focus on not approving resources and supports. This is especially true for graduate students.</i>
Mental health support	<i>I will be graduating soon, and I know getting a job in the US as an international student is really difficult. I am having anxiety and sleepless nights about this. In fact, I am thinking of postponing my graduation date just because of this. I need help! with career services, counselling, and mental health services.</i>
Financial assistance	<i>"Some sort of compensation for all the working from home related expenses would be really helpful. I didn't have much of a home office pre-COVID but had to build one with computer, webcam, and sound machine to make it all work. It was a big expense that I would not have purchased outside of the pandemic." "Grad students need to be paid more for teaching during a crisis."</i>
Health services	<i>"I would like the assurance that my healthcare would be fully covered should I contract COVID. Additionally, I would like hazard pay for having to go into a potentially unsafe work environment."</i>
Access to testing	<i>We need widespread access to covid 19 testing ON CAMPUS. To stop the spread we can't just limit testing to symptomatic students. EVERYONE should be able to easily get a test any time they want one. The barriers to getting a covid test (without lying to the screener (which my friends have started doing in order to get a test)) are very high.</i>
Support for in person learning	<i>I needed to be back in class, which is the educational experience I paid for, but am not receiving.</i>
Keeping campus public spaces and facilities open	<i>We need to be able to use on campus facilities. We are being charged for full tuition but receiving none of the perks of being on a campus, this is ridiculous. What if I don't have internet at home? What if I don't have a printer? Being banned from being on campus outside of class hours makes it impossible to be productive.</i>
Support for experiencing student life	<i>Graduation is a concern just because I want there to be some event.</i>

Perceptions of Institutional Response

When asked about their perceptions of institutional response (Figure 21), students are most likely to agree that the university communicates COVID-19 updates effectively (65%). However, only 42% students agreed that the university has provided support to students to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic, and an even lower percentage (34%) agreed that the university has done a good job of protecting students from the negative health consequences of COVID-19. Only about a third of the students responded positively about feeling safe on campus (32%) and being satisfied with the university's response to COVID-19 (37%).

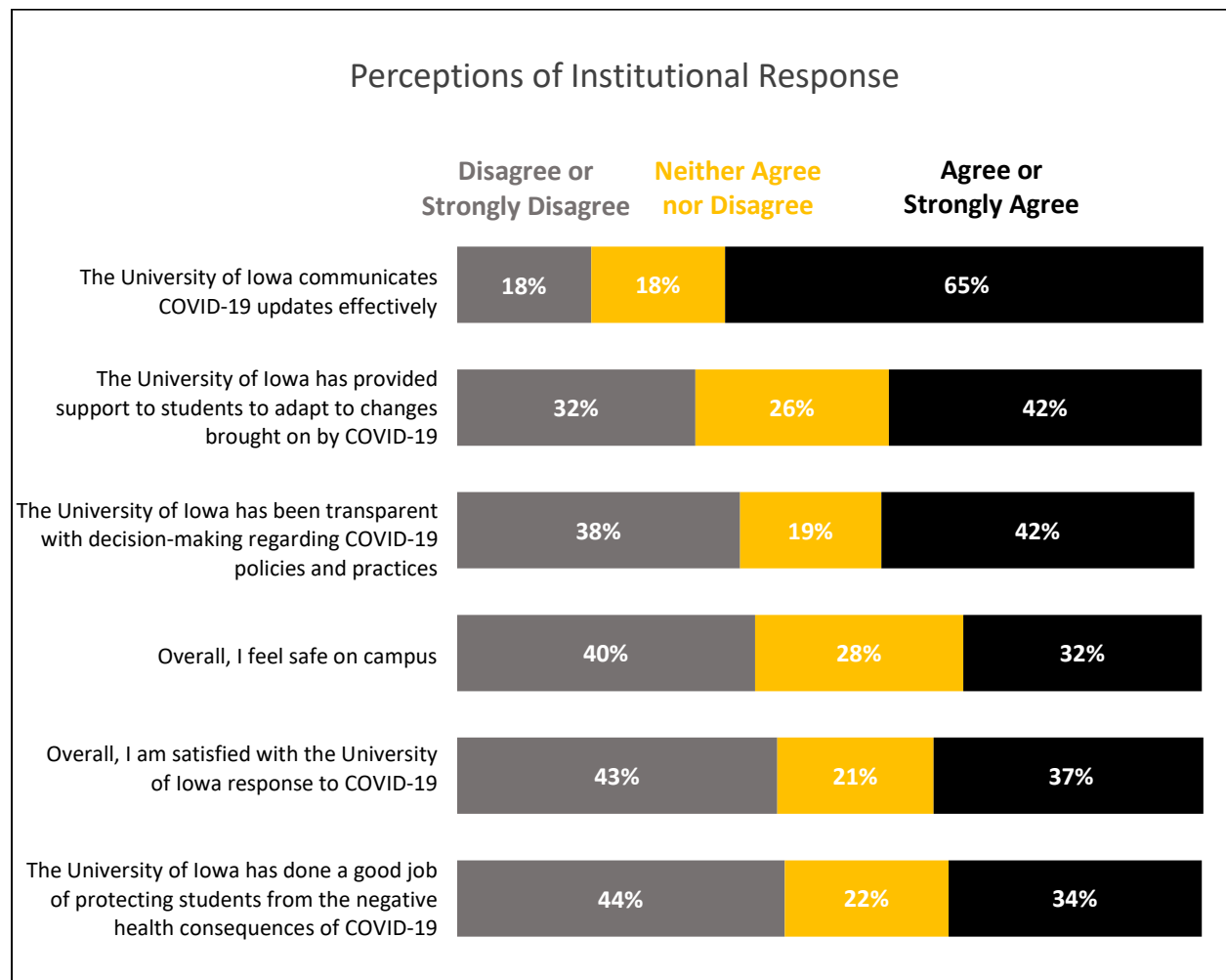


Figure 21: Perceptions of Institutional Response

These perceptions were more evident in the student quotes from the open-ended questions (Table 7). Some students expressed concerns and disappointments with the university's COVID-19 decisions and called for more transparent decision making. There were also calls for better information management, testing, and overall handling of the pandemic situation by the university.

Table 7: Qualitative Findings for Perceptions of Institutional Response

Theme	Quotes from the open-ended questions
Disappointed with University actions	<i>The University of Iowa has profoundly failed its students, staff, faculty, and community. The people behind the decision to hold in-person classes are complicit in the illness and deaths of people.</i>
Safety is personal responsibility	<i>A school's responsibility is to educate, not dictate health regulations. People have the choice to be here or not, stop pandering to all the babies.</i>
University has to enforce more safety policies	<i>I am extremely disappointed that the bars are open especially for Halloween and weekends in general. This is only asking for more cases. I believe all bars should be closed, and parties should be shut down. We need to actually ENFORCE masks and social distancing instead of lightly encouraging it. Those of us who have changed our entire way of life and try to do the right thing day after day are extremely frustrated and exhausted by those who don't care and get away with it.</i>
Better information management by the University	<i>The U of I provide weekly email updates on COVID incidence. Yet, without a commentary or benchmark to indicate which statistics are important or how the U of I will react to certain COVID levels the data is not very useful. Data, by itself, does not provide much helpful insight. The University might consider providing commentary or strategy surrounding different COVID data points to help the community better understand how the University might proceed if various COVID incidents increase or decrease.</i>
Better testing	<i>We need widespread access to covid 19 testing ON CAMPUS. To stop the spread we can't just limit testing to symptomatic students. EVERYONE should be able to easily get a test any time they want one. The barriers to getting a covid test (without lying to the screener (which my friends have started doing in order to get a test)) are very high.</i>
Other prevention measures	<i>"Sanitation stations were helpful. Thank you for providing". "It would be nice to have better face shields. Everyone I know has already given up on theirs because they are so scratched/ broken".</i>
Overall handling of the situation by the University	<i>"Administration is handling COVID very well". "From what I've heard, the campus was not prepared to have students come to campus with COVID. However, they should be resolving this problem now so that they are prepared next semester and in the future. Creating, maintaining, and updating emergency and disaster plans should be an ongoing conversation for the future, since there will undoubtedly be more emergencies in the future. Now is the time to prepare".</i>
Transparency in decision making	<i>I wish the university was clearer about who was consulted when making decisions about campus being open. It certainly did not feel like graduate students were given a seat at that table, which is troublesome given how many classes graduate students teach.</i>

Compliance with Preventative Guidelines

The vast majority of students follow preventative guidelines for COVID-19 (Figure 22). Most students complied with preventive guidelines such as wearing a mask in public settings (99%), maintaining social distance of 6 feet or more when interacting with others (92%), staying at home when sick (94%), and washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently (90%). While analyzing the responses to compliance guidelines, no disparities were seen in terms of gender or race, and students from all subgroups complied with the preventative guidelines.

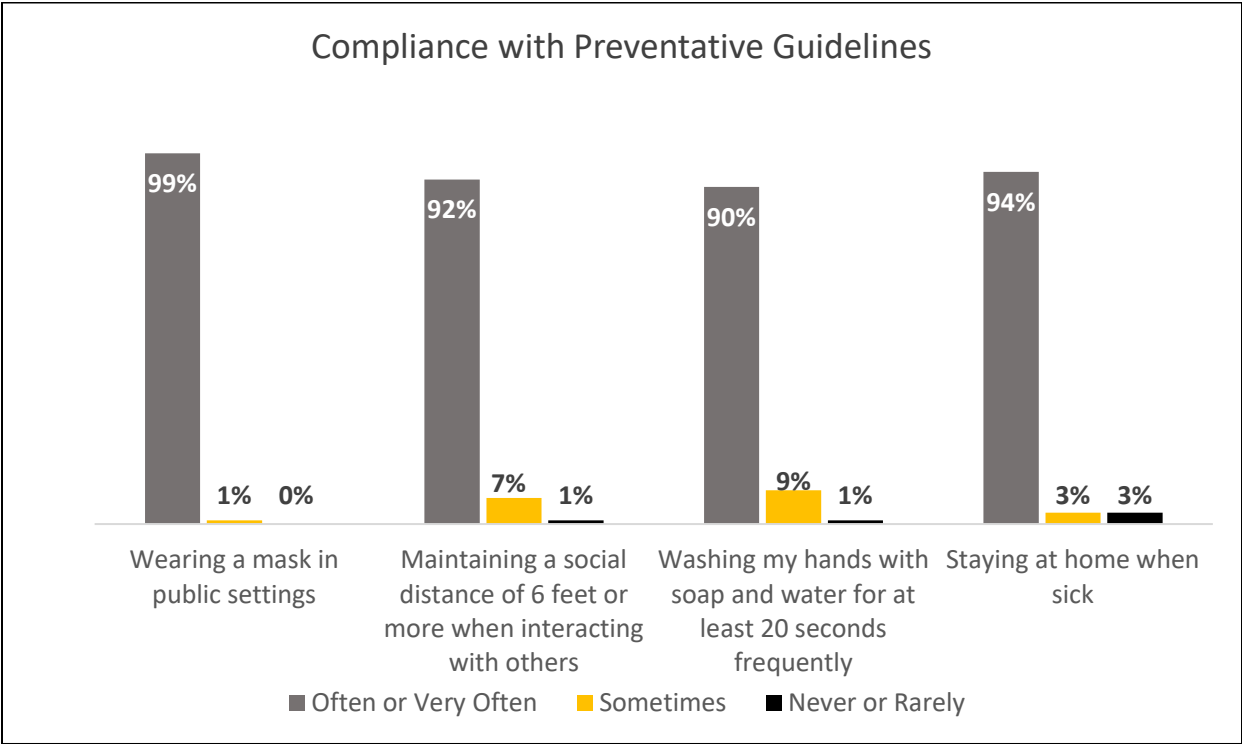


Figure 22: Compliance with Preventative Guidelines

Additional Feedback

In addition to the survey findings on the COVID-19 pandemic and current events, the students also provided specific suggestions for GPSG.

Suggestions on adding resources:

“One resource or event GPSG could do is a tutorial on subleasing. Possible tips and tricks to navigate subleasing. I know many people in my apartment complex are trying to sublease their apartment next semester since classes are online.”

Suggestions on seeking student feedback:

“Thank you for putting this survey together! It shows that GPSG actually cares about their classmate’s welfare during this abnormal year.”

“This survey came 8 months too late. During the transition to online environment in March/April I had a horrible loss in productivity (I was part of the University Staff at the time), and also the ability to learn properly as a student.”

These suggestions are very important and relevant to GPSG. GPSG executives will take these suggestions into consideration and adopt appropriate policies to address these issues.

Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

Sample

The target population for this survey was all graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa. We used a voluntary response sample by sending a link to complete the survey online through a campus-wide email and social media posts, allowing students to decide whether to be in the sample.

The survey was sent to a total of 8,043 graduate and professional students enrolled at UIOWA in the Spring of 2020. Of the 890 students who responded, we excluded data from 52 (6% of the respondents) due to partial responses. The final sample size consisted of 838 students. This represents an overall response rate of 10.42% of graduate and professional students enrolled at the University of Iowa in the Fall of 2020.

Questionnaire

After thorough literature review, the questionnaire used in this study was designed by graduate student researchers. The survey was administered using the web based Qualtrics program. The survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3 of this report.

Data Analysis

We utilized a mixed method approach to prepare the report. To analyze the survey data, the multidisciplinary 'Data Team' of the GPSG Health and Safety Committee worked in two groups: a quantitative data analysis group and a qualitative data analysis group. A team of five student researchers comprised the quantitative analysis group and worked to clean and analyze the quantitative portion of the data. For this analysis, simple descriptive statistics and some subgroup analyses by major categories of gender and race were used. Some response groups were clubbed in the gender and race category since the numbers were very too few for any meaningful analysis.

Two graduate students with expertise in qualitative analysis comprised the qualitative analysis group and analyzed the open-ended questions to define themes and categories that were relevant to the report. Both these students independently coded the qualitative data and later reconciled their codes together. A summary of the qualitative findings can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Finally, the qualitative and quantitative teams met as one group to discuss their findings and to finalize strategies for combining both set of analyses in the report. Analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and Stata 16.1 statistical software.

Limitations

This is a one-time cross-sectional survey of the students. Responding to the survey was voluntary and this could introduce some selection bias in the study since those who did not respond may have had different experiences and opinions than those who decided to participate. However, we see that the gender and program distribution is roughly similar to the overall graduate student population at the University of Iowa. We also have responses from a variety of different colleges which further convinces us that the sample was representative

Despite these limitations, this study allows us to build a baseline and, at the same time, inform GPSG and university administration about concerns, priorities, and needs of the graduate and professional student population.

Appendix 2: Qualitative Findings by Themes

Themes	Financial Support	Academic Support	Course Modifications	Facility and Service Availability (Availability of Resources?)	Sentiments (Emotional Expression?)	Safety Measures	Student Body Support
Codes	Better compensation	Compassion and better communication	Pass and fail set-up	Physical health support	Frustrated with the situation	Enforcement of safety policies	Housing support
	Continuous funding	Home office setting (Online teaching support?) and compensation	Flexibility with assignments and submission	Mobility support	Support for in-person learning	Better information management	GPSSG support
	Aid and assistance	Academic accommodations	More respite period	Support for students with disability	Profits over safety	Better testing and reporting plans	Transparency and representation
	Health insurance support	Employment support	Recorded sessions are helpful	Social support	Challenging situation	Sanitation stations	Better surveys
	Reduced tuition	Better conversation about racism	Continuing online classes	Remote access	Not neutral	Incongruent steps between university and campuses	
	Refund on campus fees	Inequality improvement efforts	Extended time to complete program	Mental health support	Minimally affected	Better PPE support	
			Better course structure	Keeping campus public spaces and facilities open	Opinion on racism and social unrest	Satisfaction with applied measures	
			Better online teaching supports	Graduation ceremony	Disappointments with the university	Better safety plan	
					Opinion on anti-police		
					Catalyst for the better		
					Safety is personal responsibility		

Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire

COVID-19 Graduate and Professional Student Survey

Intro COVID-19 Graduate and Professional Student Survey. The COVID-19 pandemic has majorly reshaped our lives in the recent months. The Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) invites you to participate in a survey that will give us more information about your concerns related to how the pandemic has affected your lives, resources and support needed, and perceptions of the institutional response. Your participation will help us gain insights that will allow us to improve and focus our advocacy for students during this time. We are not collecting any identifiable information and your responses to the questions will be completely confidential. If you would prefer not to answer a question, you can skip to the next question. If you have any concerns or questions about the survey, please contact GPSG at gpsg@uiowa.edu. Thank you for your participation!

The first set of questions will ask about your concerns related to COVID-19.

Q01. Thinking about this academic year, how often have you worried about the following?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Paying your bills (rent, insurance, tuition, fees, etc.)					
Having enough to eat					
Having access to health care					
Having a safe and secure place to live					

Q02. Thinking about this academic year, how often have the following contributed to your stress?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Workload					
Work-life balance					
Personal health					
Family and friends' health					
The political climate					
Social isolation					

Q03. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your...?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Academic productivity					
Ability to reach program milestones (degree, exams, etc.)					
Mental and emotional health					
Physical health					

In addition to the pandemic, we are also interested in how other major events have impacted you.

Q04. How has civil unrest tied to racism impacted your...?

	Negative impact	A somewhat negative impact	No impact	A somewhat positive impact	Positive impact
Academic productivity					
Ability to reach program milestones (degree, exams, etc.)					
Mental and emotional health					
Physical health					

We are also interested in the impact COVID-19 has had on international students.

Q05. Are you an international student?

- Yes
- No

Q06. During this academic year, how often have you worried about the following?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Frequent changes in the immigration policies/rules, maintaining my visa status					
The pandemic situation and my family in my home country					
Difficulties in traveling to/ back from my home country during the pandemic					

This next set of questions asks about your experiences with online academic activities and resources needed during this time.

Q07. Are you currently participating in online academic activities?

- Yes
- No

Q08. How satisfied are you engaging in online academic activities?

- Extremely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

Q09. Which of the following tool(s) do you have access to in order to participate in online academic activities? (Please check all that apply.)

- Laptop
- Access to VPN (to access server)
- Broadband internet access
- Access to video/teleconference account
- Research software

Q10. Which of the following services and support do you need during this time? (Please check all that apply.)

- Health services
- Mental health services
- Tutoring
- Disability services
- Financial assistance
- Technology assistance
- Childcare accommodations
- Teaching accommodations

Q11. What other resources, support, or accommodations do you need during this time?

In the next section, we are interested in your perceptions of the institutional response to COVID-19.

Q12. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The University of Iowa has done a good job of protecting students from the negative health consequences of COVID-19.					
The University of Iowa has provided support to students to adapt to changes brought on by COVID-19.					
The University of Iowa has been transparent with decision-making regarding COVID-19 policies and practices.					
The University of Iowa communicates COVID-19 updates effectively.					
Overall, I am satisfied with the University of Iowa response to COVID-19.					
Overall, I feel safe on campus.					

The next set of questions asks about your compliance with the national and state preventative guidelines.

Q13. During this academic year, how often have you engaged in the following practices?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Wearing a mask in public settings					
Maintaining a social distance of 6 feet or more when interacting with others					
Washing my hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently					
Staying at home when sick					

Q14. Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, or concerns?

Before you go, we would like to gather some information about yourself.

Q15. How do you rate your current physical health?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

Q16. How do you rate your current mental health?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

Q17. What age are you?

- 20-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36-40 years
- 40+ years

Q18. How would you describe your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Gender queer or gender nonconforming
- Other gender identity _____
- Prefer not to answer

Q19. What racial/ethnic categories do you identify with?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Other race or ethnicity _____
- Prefer not to answer

Q20. What college are you apart of? Select all that apply.

- College of Dentistry
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Law
- Graduate College
- College of Nursing
- College of Pharmacy
- College of Public Health
- College of Business
- College of Medicine

Q21. What program are you currently enrolled in?

Masters

- PhD
- Professional
- Other _____

Q22. During this academic year, on average how many days in a week are you physically present on campus?

- 0 days
- 1-2 days
- 3-4 days
- 5-6 days
- 7 days

Q23. With what classification do you currently live in the U.S.? Select all that apply.

- U.S. Citizen
- First-generation American
- Naturalized citizen
- Permanent resident
- F-1 Visa Holder
- J-1 Visa Holder
- Other _____
- Prefer not to answer

Q24. Where are you currently residing?

- In Iowa City, Iowa
- Elsewhere in Iowa
- In a U.S. state other than Iowa
- Outside the U.S.

Q25. Who is currently residing with you? Select all that apply.

- I live alone
- Spouse or partner
- Roommates(s) not including partner or family
- Children
- Parents
- Other family
- Other _____

Thank you for taking the survey. Your responses will help inform GPSG's advocacy with administration moving forward.