

# Housing Insecurity at UC Davis 2017

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### University of California Global Food Initiative Fellowship

## Introduction

The undergraduate student body at UC Davis, ASUCD, has been trying to understand if housing insecurity is an issue on its campus, and if so how large is it. Through the Global Food Initiative, ASUCD has been given the opportunity to finally address their housing concerns. The 2017 UC Davis Home Security Survey was created to assess on an in depth level, the quantity and intensity of students during the winter break of this academic year, and then this survey was compared to the 2016 UCUES data.

The aspect of housing insecurity is a difficult one to define and it widely has been stigmatized and defined poorly. When people speak of housing insecurity they only think of people sleeping on the streets, and omit those in other unsafe or unstable conditions. In the Housing Security Survey, housing insecurity is related to how much a student has to worry about where they will sleep at night, but also takes into account the factors of their sleeping conditions. Where someone sleeps is important, but the conditions of that environment need to be known due to issues of overcrowding which many students have reported in previous focus groups.

However, for college students the mission of finding a place to live is even more difficult because they are often starting from nothing both in terms of credit history or income, and they also must face the challenge of consistently rising tuition. It is important for everyone to have a stable home environment. With the goal of making the UC the healthiest place to work, teach, or study, comes with ensuring its students are housed properly and safely.



## Project Goals

Our goal for the survey was to use the Housing Security Survey to determine how large and severe the issue of housing insecurity is at UC Davis. Some steps to the process:

- Meet with local members of the Davis community and try to gather anecdotal evidence regarding housing insecurity, and use existing city data as a reference
- Survey students to gather hard data for the first time regarding housing conditions at the University
- Investigate causes for students not having a stable and safe place to live
- Develop a proposal tailored to UC Davis based on the Home Security Survey and UCUES data to help those housing insecure students

## Materials and Methods

The survey was sent out by Center for Student Affairs Assessment (CSAA) and was open from January 10th until January 26th 2017. During that time, a total of 2,863 students completed the survey. It was sent out after winter break because that is the time students are kicked out of dorms and if they are unable to go home for the holiday season, then they have are more at risk of not having a place to live for a month. We thought that international, and LGBTQIA students would have the hardest time going home due to financial burdens or family reasons. Additionally, this time of year is very cold and if students were able to voice their living conditions anonymously, this would be the most opportune time for them.

The survey was roughly twenty five questions using a variety of question types including Likert-type scales, multiple choice, and open ended questions. It had two main parts, housing conditions during the past December 2016 break, and housing conditions for the upcoming 2017 Winter quarter. Some of the questions were:

- Where did you live during break and for the upcoming quarter? (e.g., on-campus apartment, off-campus apartment/house, a car, a shelter, couch-surfing)
- General conditions of where you stayed during break and also for the upcoming quarter (# of bed and bathrooms, amenities, # of people living there, # of nights spent there each week)
- Financial questions (overall income, sources of income, how students spent those funds whether it be rent, school, entertainment, etc.)

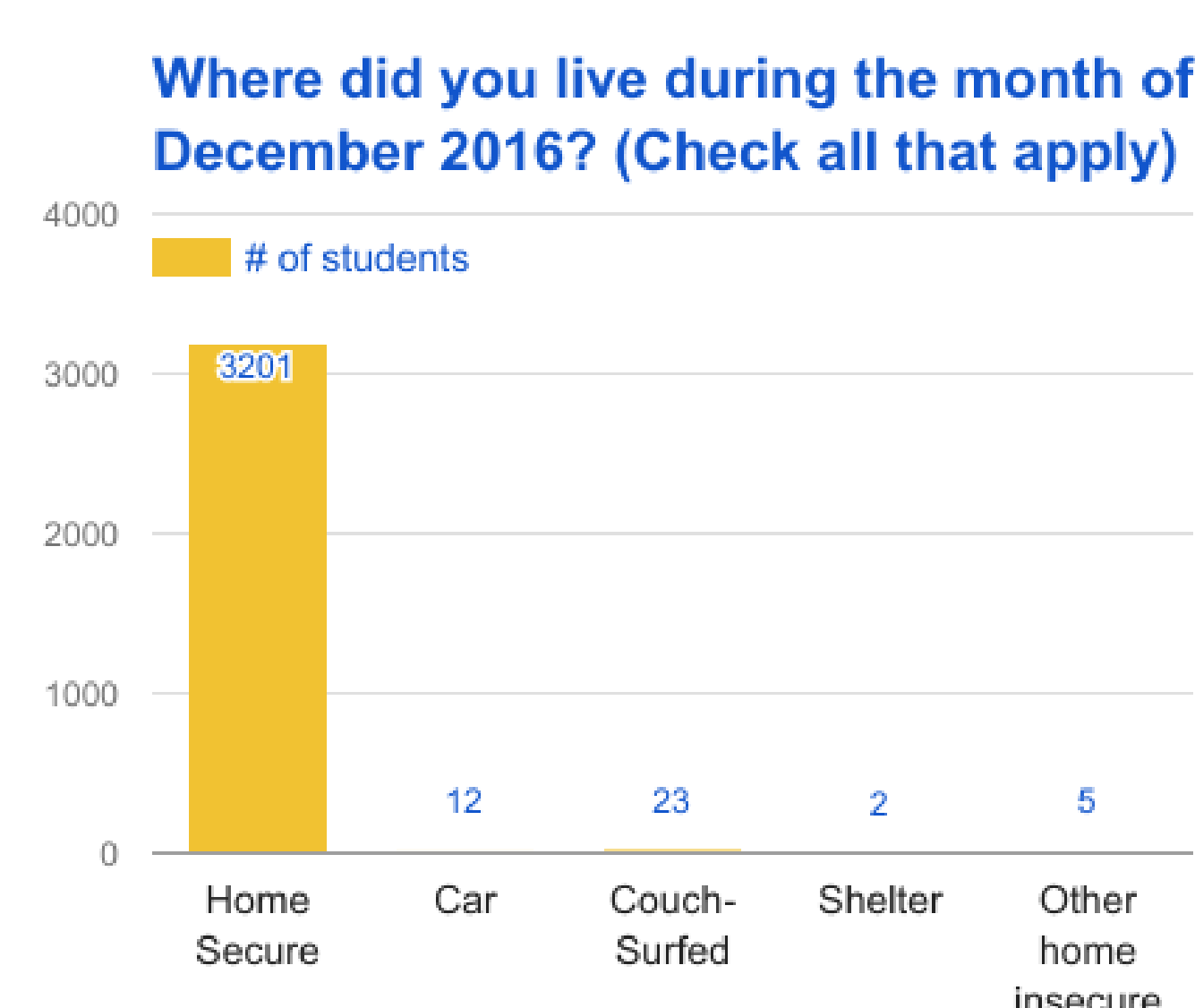
## Results and Outcomes

The first question about “Where did you live during December 2016?” was dominated by students being in the “home secure” category. This answer is a grouped response and had items that suggested housing security, which included living in a dorm, Greek affiliated house, an off-campus apartment, and at home with parents or relatives. There was an “Other” option, but many of those (261/266) were indicative of housing insecurity also, and included responses such as an off-campus duplex, or variation of an off-campus home. There were five responses under the “Other” option which were deemed to be housing insecure. Those responses were a shipping container, hostel, hotel, bus, and bouncing around between relatives’ homes and an off-campus house. All of the remaining 42 responses were indicative of housing insecurity, but were provided by only 16 unique students, which result in representing 0.6% of all those who responded to the survey.

Part two about where students were going to live for the upcoming Winter quarter produced similar results:

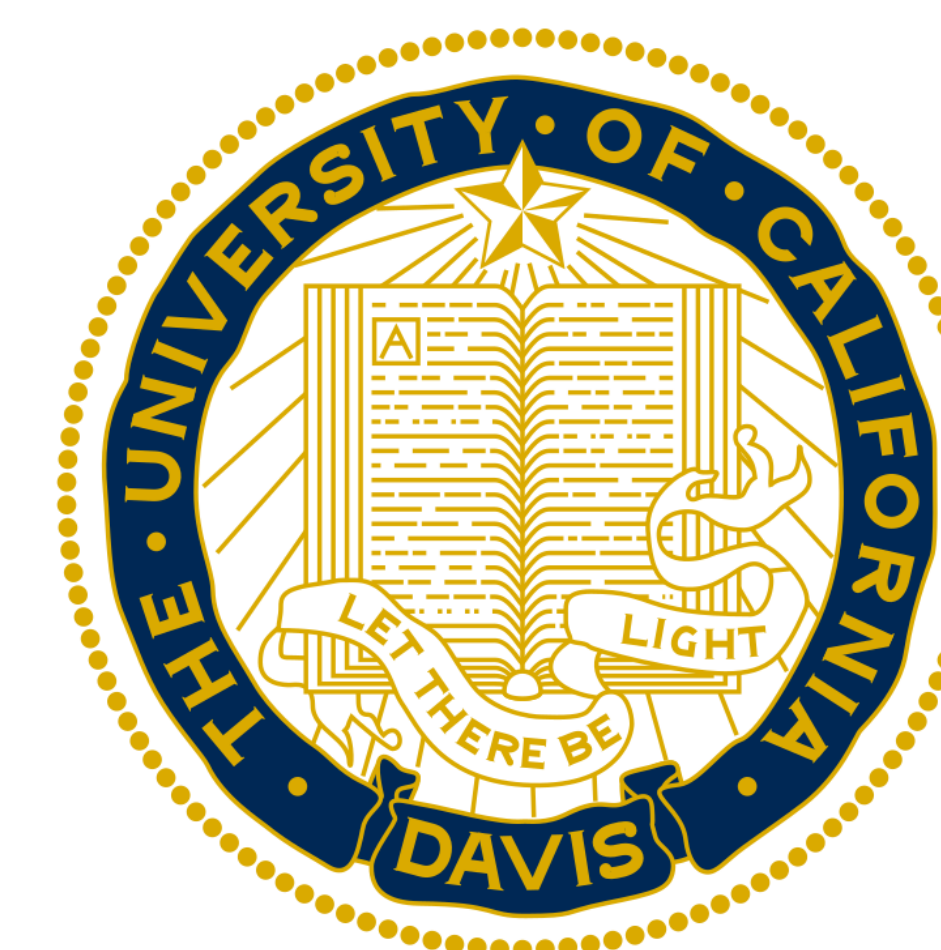
- 1,802- Home Secure
- 11- Car
- 11- Couch surf
- 0- Shelter
- 1- Other home insecure

In part two, the “Other home insecure” response was that the student was living with their brother because they “can’t find home”.



## Conclusions

Using both the Home Security Survey and the UCUES 2016 data, they show that home security is not a pressing problem among UC Davis undergraduates. Only a maximum of 2.69% of students in either survey reported some degree of insecurity within the past two years. Although the quantity of individuals is very low, it does not speak to the intensity of those that are struggling with housing insecurity.



## Future Goals

For the future, the severity of housing insecurity that these few students face will need to be addressed and looked at more closely. In order to do so, some of the students who completed the Home Security Survey will be reached out to in order to help understand some of the causes that led them to being housing insecure, and how UC Davis can help change that.

Another next step is to develop a formal process for when students do come forward with no place to live. Currently there are very few resources when students are unable to find housing and with all UC's gaining extra students for the next five years, the future students will have it even harder to find a place to live. The city of Davis has one of the lowest vacancy rates in the state, around .02% yearly, and this will force students to live further away from campus, or into drastic situations such as living in cars or increasing the number of roommates they must take on.

## Literature Cited

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- Planell, Joan. "ASUCD Housing Insecurity Interview." Personal interview. 26 Oct. 2016.
- "UCUES 2016 UC Davis Campus Report." UCUES 2016 UC Davis Campus Report (2016): 1-54. Budget and Institutional Analysis. University of California, Davis, Fall 2016. Web. 23 May 2017.

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