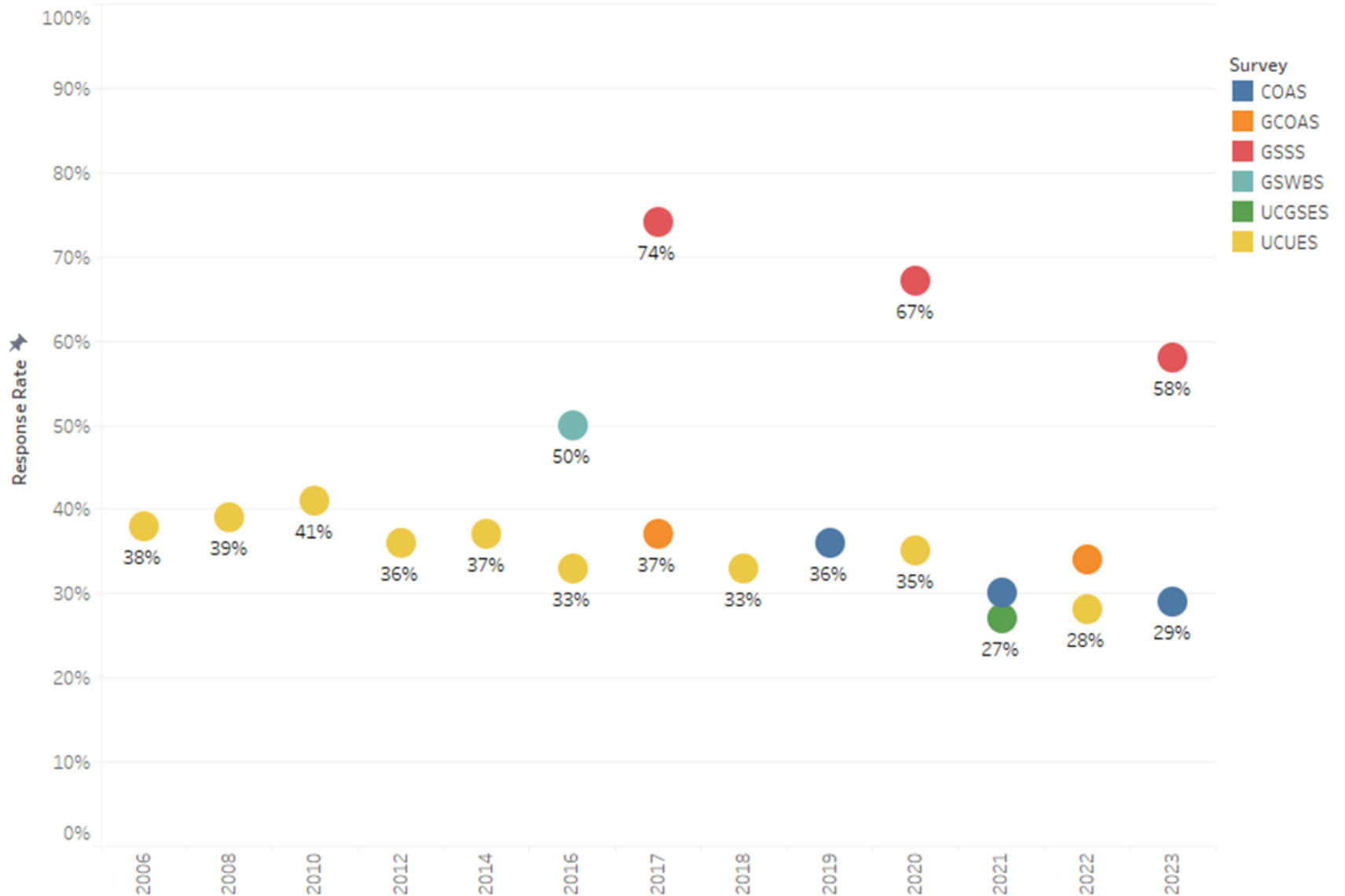




UC Survey Response Rate Strategies and Considerations

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Declining Response Rates



What response rate is enough?

Depends (1, 2)

- Larger institutions can have lower response rates and still have reliable results (even 5 or 10%)
- Is there a difference between responders and non-responders?
- Respondents should be representative of target population (and relevant subgroups)
- If you want to analyze by subgroups of the population, you will need more respondents

Sources: NSSE, The Review of Higher Education

Inter-survey differences

	GSSS	COAS, GCOAS	UCUES, UCGSES
Student Type	PhD admits	Enrolled students	Enrolled students
Messaging Strategy	Centralized, Consistent across campuses	Centralized, Consistent across campuses	Decentralized
Topic	Defined, Specific, (Financial Support)	Defined, Specific, (Cost of Attendance)	General, wide- ranging
Survey Duration	10 weeks	8 weeks	Varies (average 11-15 weeks)
Communication Mode	Email only	Email only	Varies, primarily email

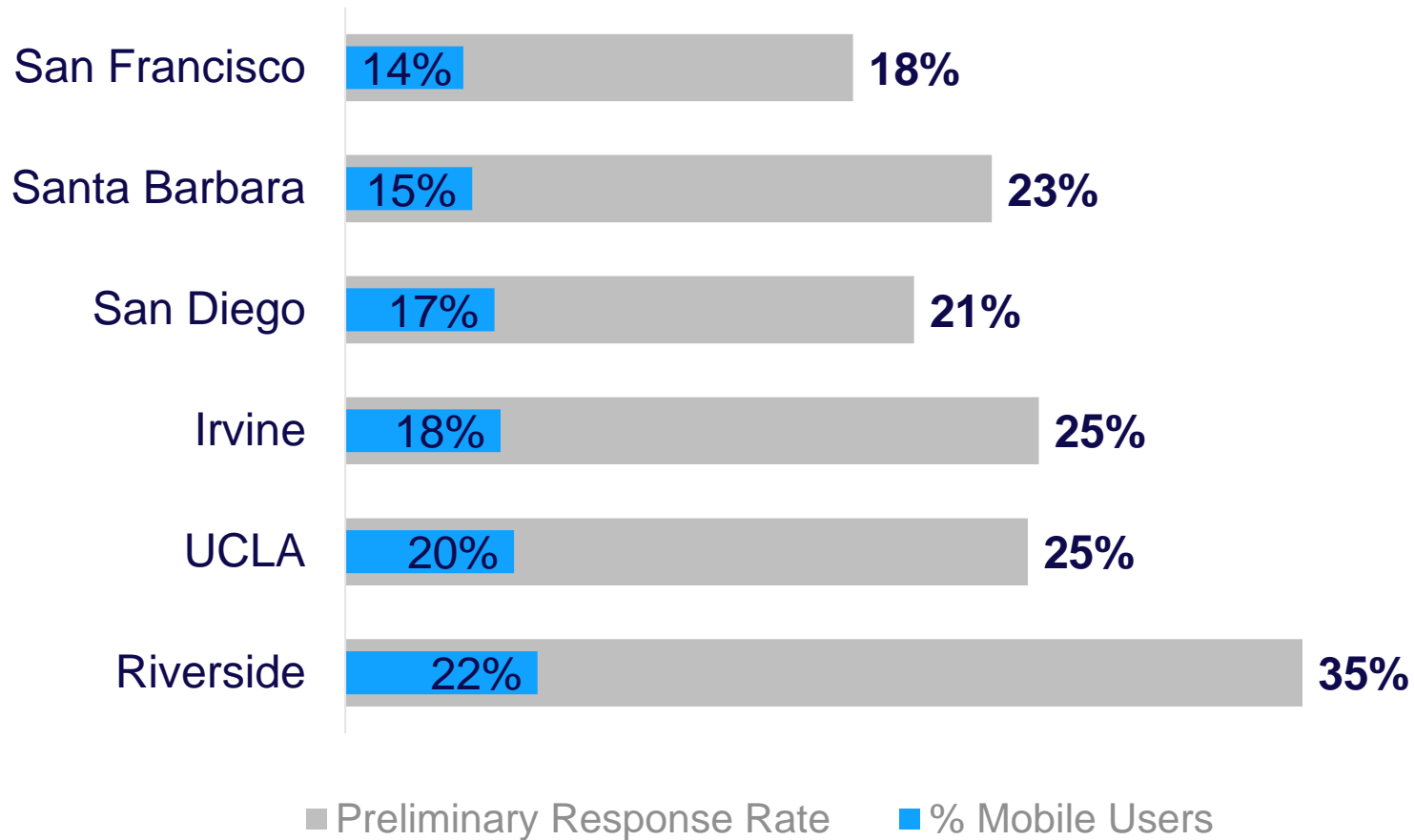
Length of surveys

Survey	Median Duration	Invitation Letter Length Descriptions	Consent Form Length Descriptions
GCOAS 22	4.7 minutes	"short survey" and "less than 15 minutes"	"about 15 minutes"
COAS 23	7.5 minutes	Not stated	Not stated
GSSS 23	12.9 minutes	"short online survey" and "less than 15 minutes"	"about 15 minutes"
UCGSES 23	24.0 minutes (27.7 minutes in 2021)	Varies – Some not stated and others ranged from 20 – 30 minutes	Varies – “about 20 minutes” to “approximately 30 minutes”
UCUES 22	27.8 minutes	Varies – Some not stated and others ranged from 20 – 30 minutes	Varies – “approximately 25 minutes” or “about 20-30 minutes”

Reminder frequency by survey and campus

Campus	GCOAS '22 Emails	GCOAS '22 Response Rate	UCGSES '23 Emails	UCGSES Response Rate (prelim.)
Berkeley	8	34%	5	33%
San Francisco	8	41%	4	18%
Davis	8	41%	8	24%
UCLA	8	35%	9	25%
Riverside	8	38%	11	35%
San Diego	8	41%	12	21%
Santa Cruz	8	45%	14	42%
Santa Barbara	8	46%	5	23%
Irvine	8	38%	5	25%
Merced	8	56%	13	46%

2023 UCGSES respondents who used mobile devices



Is SSO suppressing response rates?

- Students select wrong institution, which gets saved to browser cookies
- General access issues (UCGSES)
- People can click forward and answer with no SSO and take survey (therefore, no attached identifying information for gift card drawing or analyses)
- #1 most frequently emailed question from students related to SSO

SSO analysis

Survey	Total times a participant stopped at SSO screen	Unique IP addresses that reached SSO screen and stopped	Unique IP addresses that reached SSO screen and stopped more than once	Population Surveyed
COAS 23	14,448	10,162 (~12%)	1,672 (~2%)	84,439
UCGSES 23	16,366	11,617 (~19%)	2,082 (~3%)	60,392

Percentages are calculated as if each IP address represented a unique respondent. It is possible for multiple people to share one device or for one person to use multiple devices, and so these percentages should be interpreted with some caution.

Messaging and Survey Content: Current Methods and Future Considerations

Subject line methods for COAS, GSSS, UCUES, and UCGSES*

- Variety to attract a wider range of students
- Target differing motivations
 - Altruistic: "Share your voice and help UC Graduate Students"
 - Incentive-driven: "You could win a \$500 gift card!"
- Create a sense of urgency
 - "ONE WEEK LEFT to win!"
 - "ACTION REQUESTED- The Financial Cost of Attending UC"
 - "Deadline for UCUES prizes is approaching!"

Sender name methods for COAS, GSSS, UCUES, and UCGSES*

- Variety to attract a wider range of students
 - "On behalf of UC Davis Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr. Pablo G. Reguerín"
 - "UC Cost of Attendance Survey"
 - "UC Student Financial Support Team"
 - "Financial Aid and Scholarships Office" (this was not sent by us)
- Recognizability and relatability of sender name
 - "Edgar Perez-Lopez, GSA President"

*Messaging strategies for UCUES and UCGSES differ by campus

Survey content considerations

- Shorten survey?
- Look at drop off analysis
- Ensure survey content is aligned with student priorities and experiences
- Maximize survey technical functioning to reduce survey-taker frustration

Messaging process considerations

- Consider additional modes of message delivery beyond email
- Consider including student interns to work on response rate and messaging
- Student groups help send it out/ sign a letter
- Campus stakeholder offices help to send out the message? (e.g., financial aid office)
- Send from mail merge versus only Qualtrics
 - add images? Or buttons?
 - ask campuses what goes through to their email

Messaging content considerations

- Sender name
 - From 'Andrea Belgrade'
 - From 'UC Student Financial Support Team'
 - From 'On behalf of UCLA Vice Chancellor X'
 - From 'Cost of Attendance Survey Team'
- Highlight certain topics that students care about (e.g., mental health, financial support)
- Reporting back outcomes of the survey for policy (e.g., food pantry)
- Reporting back survey results (e.g., campus webpage with survey results, pdf reports, UCOP information center)

Incentive considerations

- Naming the incentive as ‘gift card,’ ‘prize,’ ‘Amazon gift card,’ or ‘\$XXX gift card’
- Variety of incentives
- Dollar amount and number of opportunities to win
- Charitable donation (e.g., food pantry)

Future directions

- Create a data table with each reminder message, subject line, sender name, send time, send date, etc.
- Include multiple administrations and surveys
- Code the subject lines for themes
- Analyze effectiveness of each factor while controlling for other factors

Subject theme urgency	Sender name	Sender email	Type of incentive in body	Type of incentive in subject	Number of characters in b	Number of characters in subj	Time estimate listed
no	for Student Affairs, Margaret	costofattendances	Amazon gift cards	generic gift card	1066	83	no
no	Cost of Attendance Survey	costofattendances	Amazon gift cards	none	645	35	yes
no	UC Cost of Attendance Survey	costofattendances	Amazon gift cards	none	872	37	no
yes	UC Student Financial Support Team	costofattendances	generic gift card	none	974	52	no

Potential proposal for GCOAS24

* This is just an example for illustrative purposes

**Each week, the remaining participants would be randomly assigned to condition A, B, C, or D (groups are not constant week-to-week)

Week	Condition A	Condition B	Condition C	Condition D
1	8 am launch	10 am launch	12 pm launch	2 pm launch
2	Monday morning	Tuesday morning	Wednesday morning	Thursday morning
3	Monday afternoon	Tuesday afternoon	Wednesday afternoon	Thursday afternoon
4	Help UC Graduate Students: Tell us your costs of attendance	ATTENTION REQUESTED: Tell us your costs of attendance	Win a \$500 gift card: Tell us your costs of attendance	Share your voice: Tell us your costs of attendance
5	From: UC Student Financial Support Team	From: UC Cost of Attendance Survey Team	From: Andrea Belgrade	From: On behalf of Executive Director Student Financial Support, Shawn Brick

Discussion

What factors should we consider testing for (e.g., time of day reminders are sent, # of characters in message body, etc.)?

A blurred background image of a person walking on a grassy path with large trees. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and blue pants, carrying a backpack. The scene is outdoors with bright lighting, creating a soft, out-of-focus effect.

Thank you! Questions?