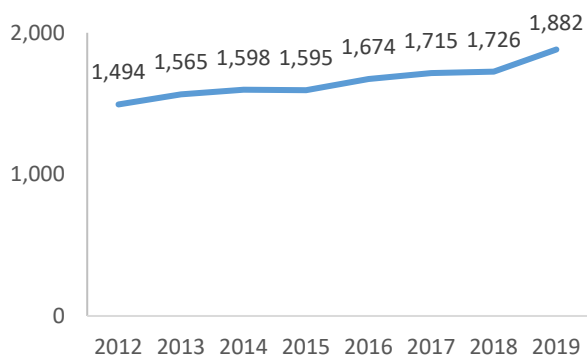


## Undergraduate foster youth at the University of California

Since 2012, the number of undergraduates who are current or former foster youth<sup>1</sup> enrolled at the University of California has steadily increased. In Fall 2019, over 1,800 foster youth enrolled in the UC system as undergraduates, up from 1,494 foster youth in 2012. This brief summarizes enrollment trends, demographic characteristics, fields of study, and graduation outcomes of UC undergraduates who are current or former foster youth (henceforth collectively referred to as foster youth). In addition, this brief describes their satisfaction with their undergraduate student experience and their basic needs from the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) as well as post-graduation employment outcomes.

UC undergraduate foster youth fall headcount, 2012-2019



## Undergraduate enrollment

The top three UC campuses with the largest percent share of foster youth undergraduates in Fall 2019 were Los Angeles, Davis, and Riverside.

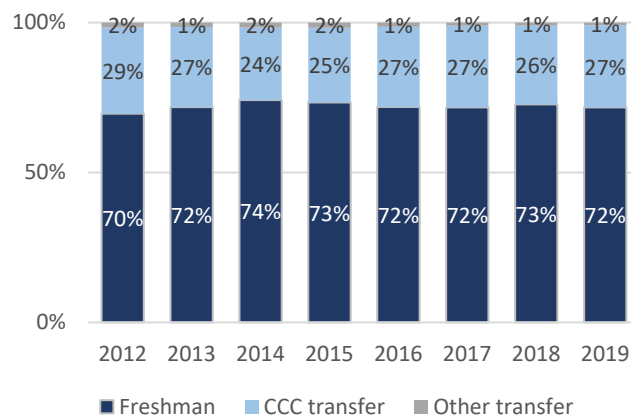
UC undergraduate foster youth enrollment Percent share by campus, Fall 2019

Campus	Count	Percent
Los Angeles	346	18.4%
Davis	243	12.9%
Riverside	240	12.8%
San Diego	219	11.6%
Irvine	186	9.9%
Santa Barbara	179	9.5%
Berkeley	177	9.4%
Santa Cruz	157	8.3%
Merced	135	7.2%

The majority of undergraduate foster youth entered UC as freshmen. Over 70 percent of foster youth enrolled at UC in Fall 2019 originally started at UC as freshmen.

Since 2012, however, the percent of foster youth who enter UC as transfer students has slightly decreased. Twenty-seven percent of undergraduate foster youth enrolled in Fall 2019 originally entered UC as a California Community College transfer student, down from 29 percent in Fall 2012.

UC undergraduate foster youth entry, Fall 2012-2019

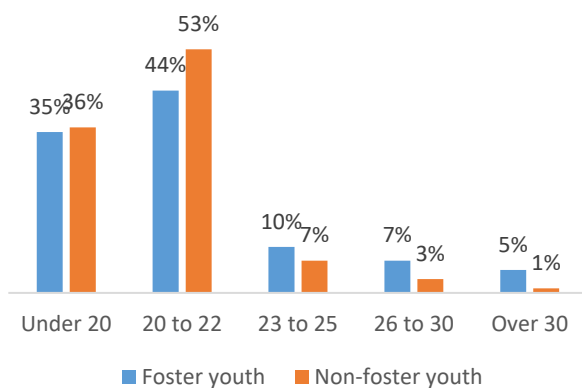


<sup>1</sup> Current and former foster youth were identified through students' self-report on admissions applications or receipt of the California Chafee Grant.

## Foster youth demographics

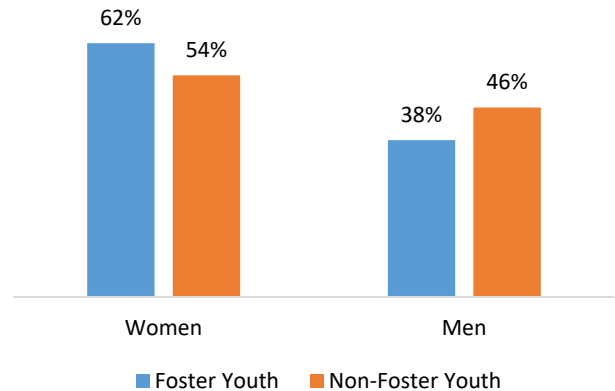
A slightly higher proportion of foster youth undergraduates are older compared to their undergraduate peers. About 1 in 5 undergraduate foster youth is aged 23 years or older, compared to 11 percent of non-foster youth undergraduates.

UC undergraduates and age groups – Fall 2019



Among the foster youth undergraduate population, the majority are female. Almost two-thirds (62 percent) of foster youth undergraduates are women, compared to 54 percent for non-foster youth undergraduates

UC undergraduates and gender – Fall 2019

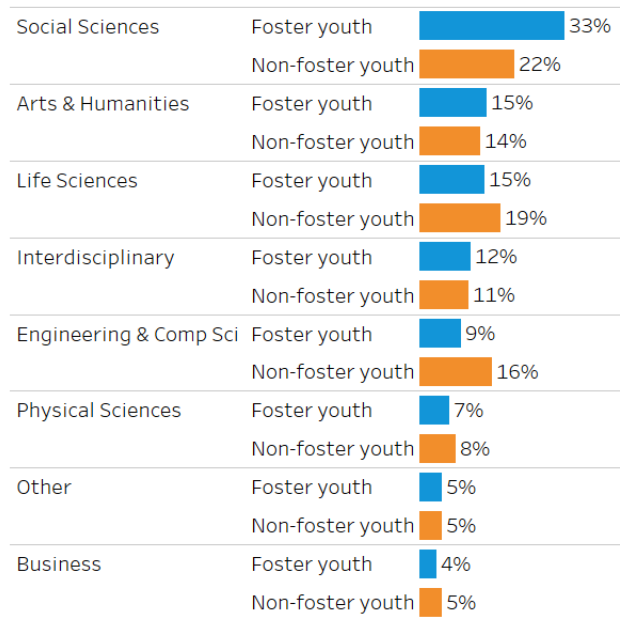


In addition, foster youth undergraduates are more likely to be Hispanic/Latino(a) (38 percent) and Black/African American (16 percent) compared to non-foster youth undergraduates (25 percent and 4 percent respectively). They are also less likely to be Asian/Pacific Islander (20 percent) and White (18 percent) compared to non-foster youth undergraduates (34 percent and 21 percent respectively).

UC undergraduates and race/ethnicity – Fall 2019

Hispanic/Latino(a)	Foster youth	38%
	Non-foster youth	25%
Asian/Pacific Islander	Foster youth	20%
	Non-foster youth	34%
White	Foster youth	18%
	Non-foster youth	21%
Black/African American	Foster youth	16%
	Non-foster youth	4%
International	Foster youth	5%
	Non-foster youth	13%
Unknown	Foster youth	2%
	Non-foster youth	3%
American Indian	Foster youth	2%
	Non-foster youth	0%

UC undergraduates and distribution of majors<sup>2</sup> – Fall 2019

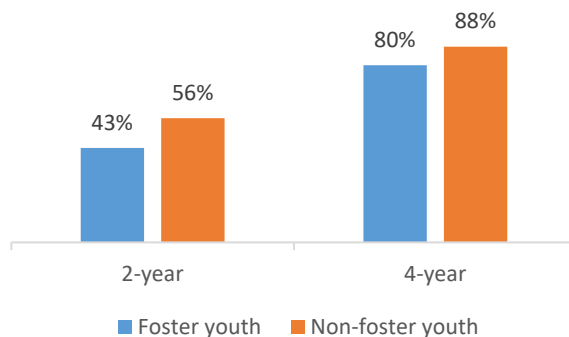


With a few exceptions, foster youth undergraduates' chosen discipline of study closely resemble that of non-foster youth undergraduates. Foster youth undergraduates are more likely to major in the social sciences (33 percent vs. 22 percent) and less likely to major in life sciences and engineering and computer sciences (24 percent vs. 35 percent) compared to non-foster youth undergraduates.

## Graduation rates

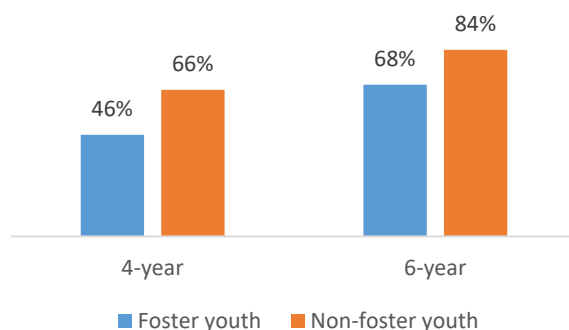
Undergraduate foster youth have lower graduation rates than their non-foster youth peers. Undergraduate foster youth who enter as transfers have a lower two-year graduation rate than non-foster youth transfer entrants (43 percent versus 56 percent). Their four-year graduation rate is also lower than non-foster youth transfer entrants at 80 percent and 88 percent, respectively.

Transfer two-year and four-year graduation rates for entering cohorts between Fall 2012-2015



Among undergraduates who enter UC as freshmen, there is a similar trend. Undergraduate foster youth who enter as freshmen have a lower four-year graduation rate than non-foster youth freshmen entrants (46 percent versus 66 percent). In addition, their six-year graduation rate is lower than non-foster youth freshmen entrants at 68 percent and 84 percent, respectively.

Freshman four-year and six-year graduation rates for entering cohorts between Fall 2012-2013

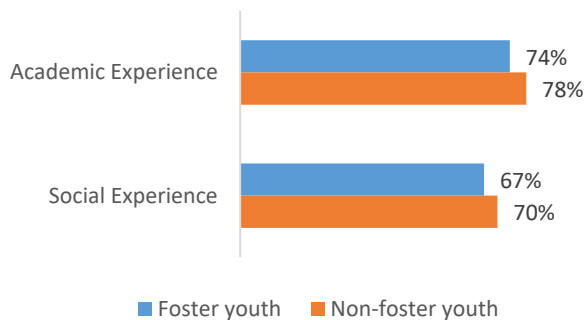


<sup>2</sup> "Other" includes majors, such as Education, Public Health, and Public Administration.

## Satisfaction with undergraduate experience and sense of belonging

UC's Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) asks students a wide range of questions about campus academic and social life. Students indicated their level of satisfaction with overall academic and social experience on a scale from 1 to 6, with 1 being 'very dissatisfied' and 6 being 'very satisfied.' The figures about student satisfaction shows the percentage of students who were 'somewhat satisfied,' 'satisfied,' or 'very satisfied.' As shown in the figure below, foster youth undergraduates expressed slightly lower rates of satisfaction with their academic and social experience at UC compared to non-foster youth peers (74 percent vs. 78 percent and 67 percent vs. 70 percent respectively).

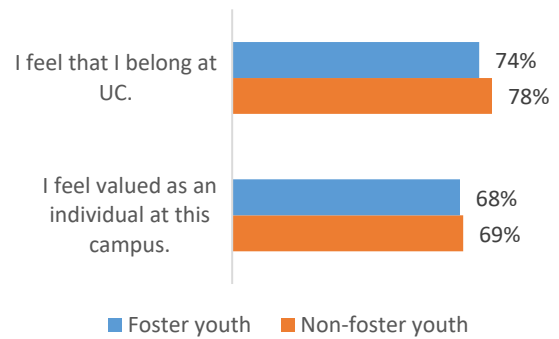
### Satisfaction with academic and social experience



Students also indicated their level of agreement to the statements "I feel that I belong at UC" and "I feel valued as an individual at this campus." Almost 75 percent of foster youth reported that they 'somewhat agreed,' 'agreed,' or 'strongly agreed' that they had a sense of belonging on campus, compared to 78 percent of non-foster youth undergraduates. Also, a similar proportion of foster youth undergraduates (68 percent) indicated that they felt valued as an

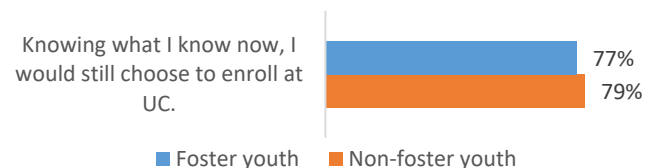
individual on campus compared to their non-foster youth counterparts (69 percent).

### Sense of belonging and feeling valued



Students were asked to also indicate their level of agreement to the statement "Knowing what I know now, I would still choose to enroll at UC." A high proportion of foster youth undergraduates (77 percent) felt that they would still choose to enroll at UC.

### Would still choose to enroll at UC



## Undergraduate Basic Needs

Meeting the basic needs of food and housing security is a multidimensional challenge for communities across the country and one that higher education also faces. UC added food and housing questions to the 2016 UCUES to further examine the issue of basic needs. Food insecurity was defined as an affirmative response to either or both of the statements "I was worried whether my food would run out before I got more" and "The food I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more." Students who indicated either statement was "sometimes true" or "often true" were considered food insecure. About

60 percent (61 percent) of undergraduate foster youth reported having experience food insecurity, which is higher compared to non-foster youth (44 percent). When examining by campus, reports of food insecurity ranged from 45 percent at UC San Diego to as high as 71 percent of foster youth at UC Riverside.

*Food insecurity among UC undergraduates, UCUES 2016*

Campus	Foster youth	Non-foster youth
Riverside	70.6%	52.2%
Berkeley	68.4%	38.7%
Merced	65.0%	57.3%
Davis	64.8%	45.5%
Santa Cruz	64.6%	47.4%
Irvine	60.1%	45.4%
Santa Barbara	59.2%	47.8%
Los Angeles	54.7%	34.5%
San Diego	45.1%	41.3%
<b>Systemwide</b>	<b>60.5%</b>	<b>43.7%</b>

The question related to housing was: “Since attending UC, have you ever been homeless for any of the following lengths of time (check all that apply)? (Homeless means not having stable or reliable housing, e.g., living on the street, in vehicles, motels, campgrounds, single-occupancy facilities, or couch surfing in other people’s homes for temporary sleeping arrangements).” The response categories included: 1) No; 2) Yes, during Fall-Spring academic year; 3) Yes, during Summer when taking classes; 4) Yes, during Summer when not taking classes, and 5) Yes, during Winter break. Homelessness was defined as not having stable or reliable housing during any time point during the school year. In other words, a student was considered as homeless if any of the five “Yes, ...” choices were selected. About 13 percent of undergraduate foster youth

reported that they experienced homelessness at some point during their enrollment, which is higher compared to non-foster youth (5 percent). When examining by campus, reports of homelessness ranged from 7 percent at UC Santa Cruz to 23 percent at UC Berkeley.

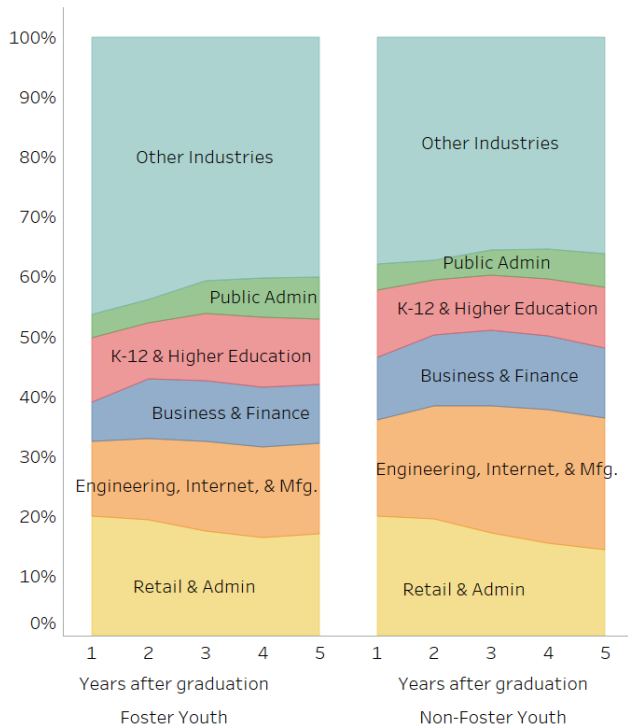
*Housing insecurity among UC undergraduates, UCUES 2016*

Campus	Foster youth	Non-foster youth
Berkeley	22.8%	4.8%
Los Angeles	15.9%	3.9%
Santa Barbara	11.8%	7.1%
San Diego	11.6%	4.6%
Irvine	11.2%	4.9%
Merced	10.0%	4.0%
Riverside	9.8%	4.3%
Davis	8.4%	3.7%
Santa Cruz	6.7%	6.7%
<b>Systemwide</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

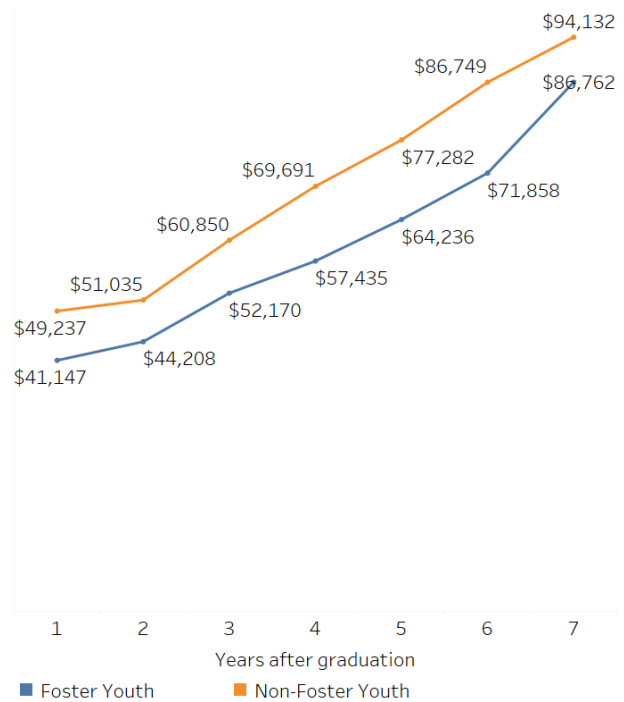
## Undergraduate foster youth alumni in the California workforce

After graduation, UC’s undergraduate foster youth alumni go on to contribute to California’s economy. Almost 20 percent (17 percent) of foster youth bachelor’s degree recipients employed in the state go on to work in the retail and administration industries, about 11 percent go to work in K-12 and higher education, and 10 percent work in business and finance industries. In addition, foster youth undergraduate alumni are less likely to work in the industries of engineering, internet, and manufacturing compared to non-foster youth undergraduate alumni who are employed in California (15 percent versus 22 percent).

California industry employment of UC undergraduate alumni



Average earnings of UC undergraduate alumni working in California



UC undergraduate foster youth alumni who go on to work in California experience wage growth. On average, they earn almost \$45,000 two years after graduating and entering the California workforce, and average earnings increase to more than \$86,000 seven years after graduating and entering the California workforce. Although undergraduate foster youth alumni experience an increase in earnings after graduation, their average earnings is less than their non-foster youth counterparts whose average earnings two years after graduating and entering the California workforce is about \$51,000 and increases to \$94,000 seven years after graduation.

## Conclusion

Between Fall 2012 and 2019, the number of undergraduates who are current or former foster youth has steadily increased. UC enrolled over, 1,800 foster youth at the undergraduate level in Fall 2019. The foster youth undergraduate population differs somewhat demographically from the non-foster youth population—they are slightly older, are predominantly female, are more likely to be Hispanic/Latino(a) or Black/African American, and more likely to major in the social sciences. In addition, foster youth undergraduates have lower graduation rates than other undergraduates.

Foster youth undergraduates' satisfaction with their experience at UC as well as basic needs highlight some areas of success and potential need. Compared to non-foster youth undergraduates, foster youth

undergraduates report similar levels of feeling valued as an individual on campus and would still choose UC knowing what they know now. However, foster youth undergraduates were slightly less satisfied in some areas, such as the overall academic and social experience and feeling a sense of belonging on campus. In addition, a significantly high proportion of foster youth undergraduates experience food insecurity and homelessness.

After graduating from UC, undergraduate foster youth who work in California go on to contribute to the state's economy, mostly within the industries of retail and administration, and they are less likely to work in engineering, internet, and manufacturing compared to non-foster youth undergraduate alumni. Additionally, foster youth undergraduate alumni experience a growth in wages within seven years of graduating and entering the California workforce; however, they earn less than non-foster youth undergraduate alumni.