



# Graduate student mental health

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# UC Graduate Well Being Survey

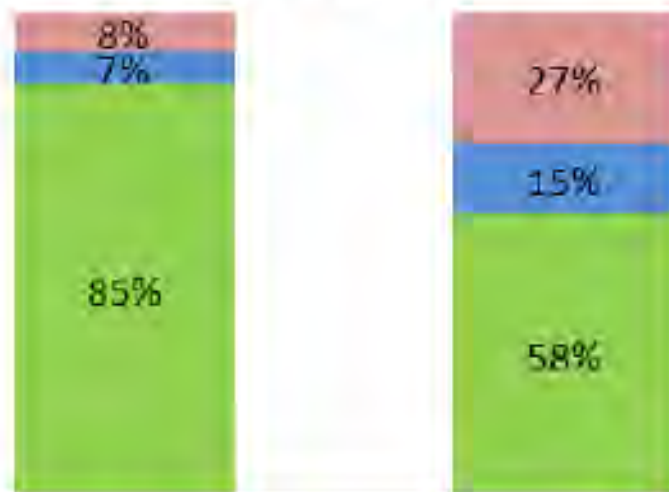
- A survey of graduate students across all ten UC campuses was done in Winter/Spring 2016
- Was administered to a stratified random sample of over 13,400 graduate students and received 5,356 completed responses, for a response rate of 40%
- Oversampling of subgroups by campus, race/ethnicity, and discipline increased the likelihood of sufficient respondent by race/ethnicity and discipline for reliable analysis.
- Differences by gender and race/ethnicity were not statistically significant
- [https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/\\_files/graduate\\_well\\_being\\_survey\\_report.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/_files/graduate_well_being_survey_report.pdf)

# Life satisfaction

- Approximately 73% of respondents reported being generally satisfied with their life
- Academic doctoral respondents who had advanced to candidacy were less likely to be satisfied with their life than other respondents.
- Respondents in the humanities were less likely to be satisfied with their life than those in professional fields or STEM1
- LGBTQ respondents were less likely to be satisfied with their life than other respondents
- Respondents' self-reported life satisfaction was correlated with academic progress and engagement.

# Effect of life satisfaction on academic success

On track to complete degree program on time

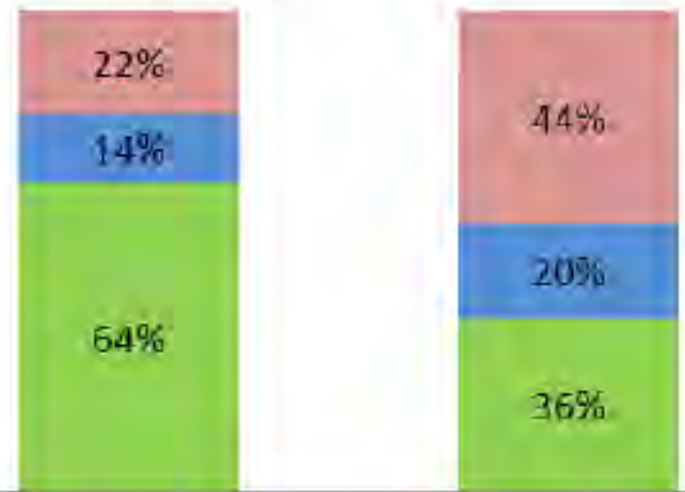


Satisfied

Dissatisfied

On track Neutral Not on track

Engagement in day-to-day work



Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Engaged Neutral Not engaged

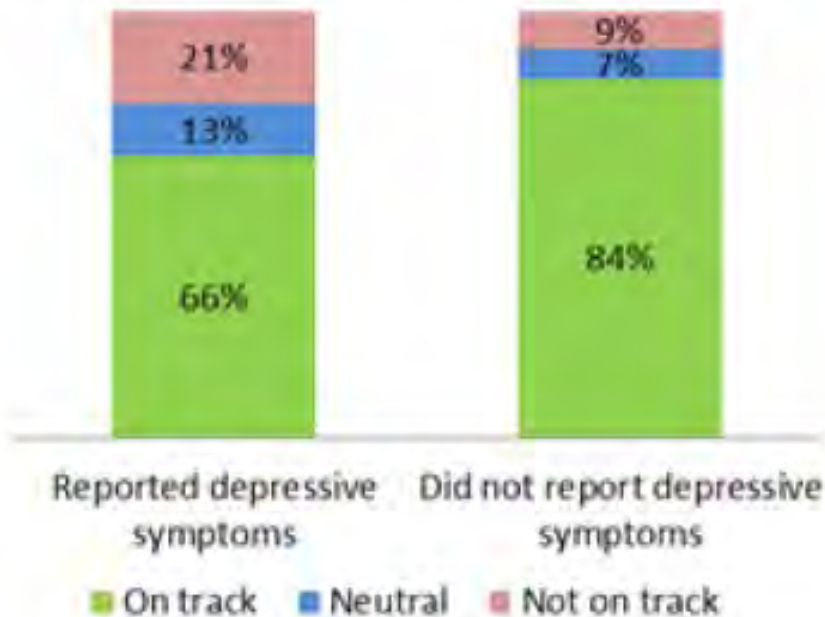


# Depression

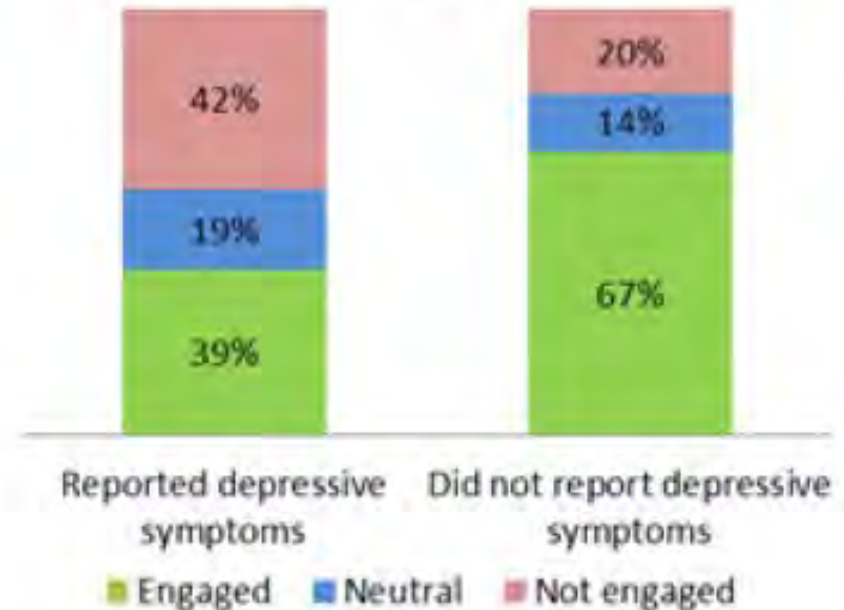
- The survey included the CESD, a clinically validated scale of depression
- Over one-third (35%) of respondents reported symptoms indicative of clinical depression
- Among academic doctoral respondents who had not advanced to candidacy, nearly half (47%) of those in the humanities and in the social sciences (45%) experienced symptoms of depression
- Respondents' self-reported symptoms of depression were correlated with academic progress and engagement.

# Effect of depression on academic success

On track to complete degree program on time



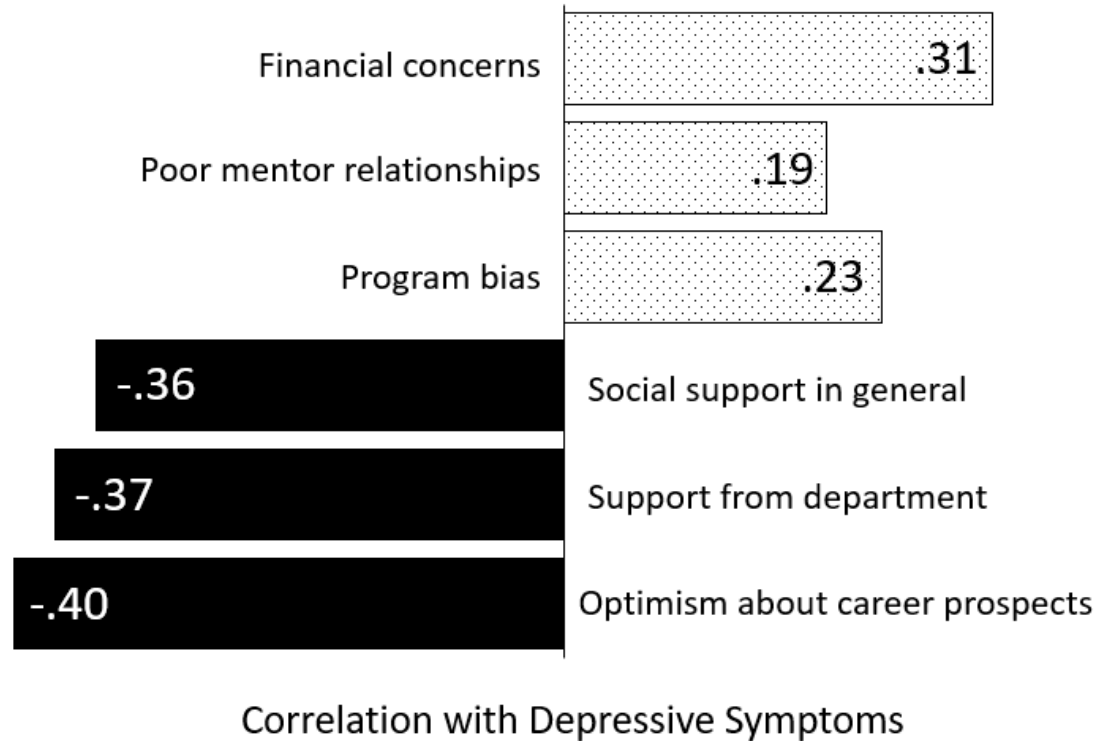
Engagement in day-to-day work



# Students' top priorities

- The top priorities respondents would like UC to prioritize are (in order): mental health, financial resources & management, career development, housing, and academic progress quality or engagement
- These were largely the same across all degree programs and disciplines

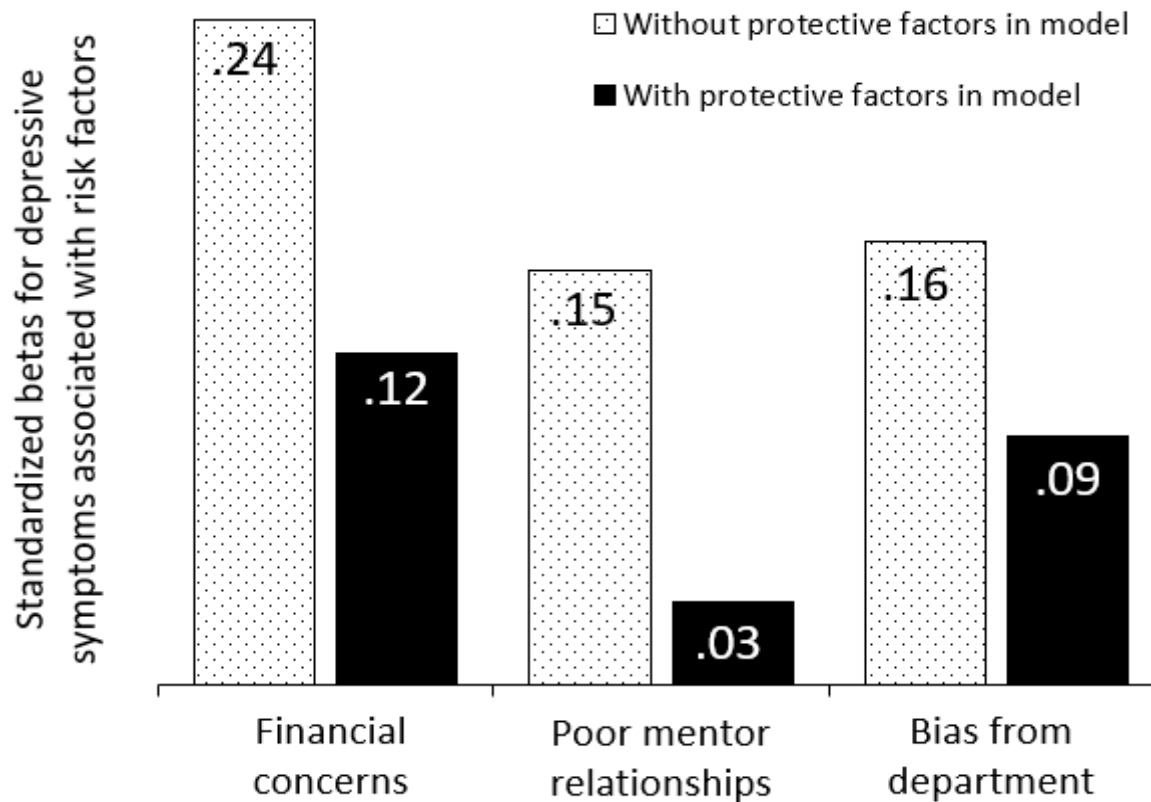
# Risk and protective factors for depression



*Charles et al., submitted*

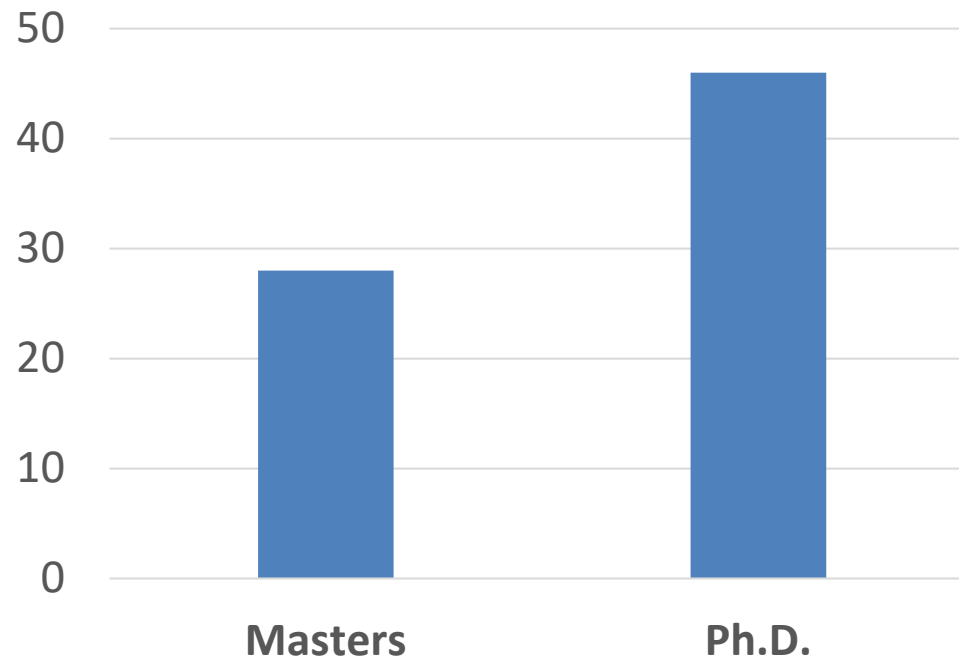


# Protective factors mitigate risk



# Existing Graduate Students – Winter and Spring 2016

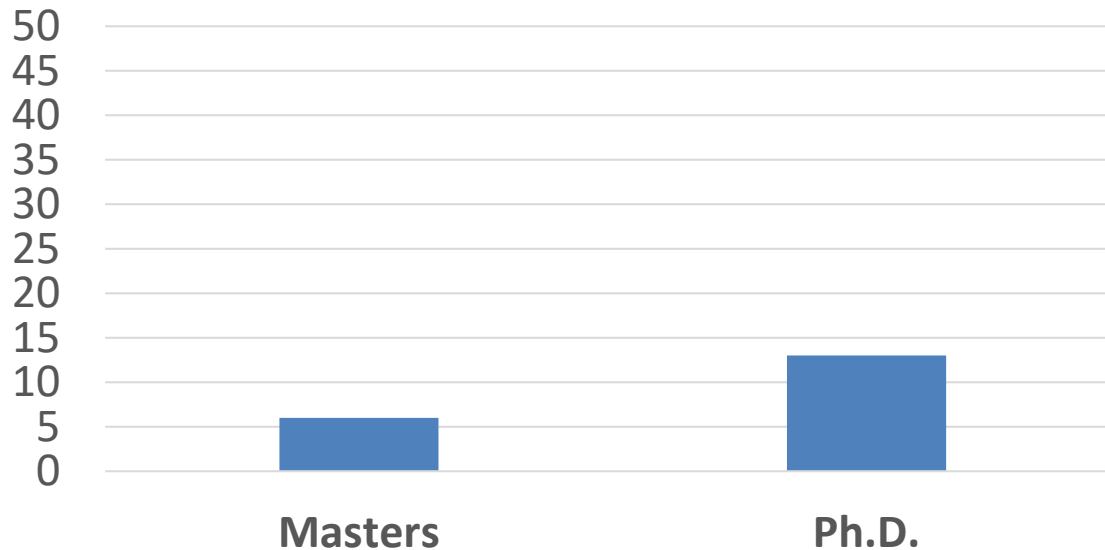
Percent of Students Scoring at the Cut-Off Score  
for Being at Risk, or Having, a Depressive Disorder



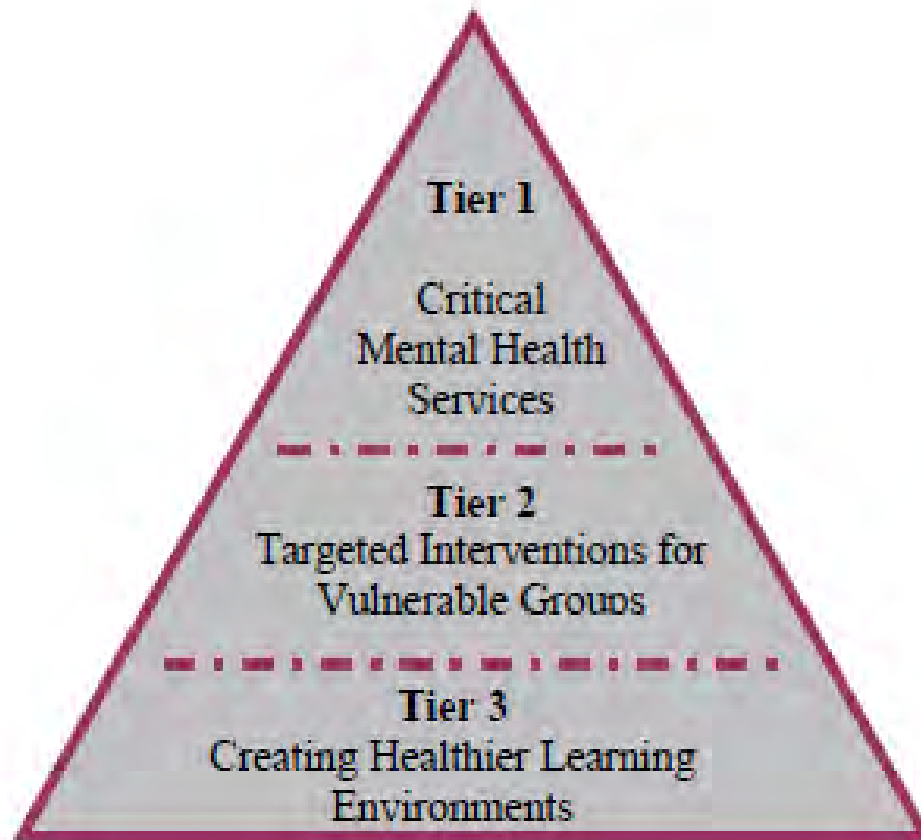
*Charles et al., in preparation*

# Incoming Students – Fall 2018

Percent of Students Scoring at the Cut-Off Score  
for Being at Risk, or Having, a Depressive Disorder



# Creating Healthier Learning Communities: a tiered model for improving student mental health



*UCOP, 2006*

# Prevention strategies at UC Irvine

- Academic policy changes
- DECADE mentor intervention to reduce bias
- Adequate financial support
- Enhanced professional development support
- Graduate student center
- Graduate academic counselor



# The UCI Model: A Graduate Division Counselor Model

- In 2011 the Graduate Dean identified need for a bridge resource between the student, the department and other campus resources. Position evolved from part-time to 100% dedicated counselor
- Clinically trained counselor, but NOT working as a clinician
- Academic departments can require students to meet with the counselor – especially if academic need is demonstrated
- Can be accessed by students, faculty and staff alike
- The graduate counselor model has been adopted by sister schools UCSB and UCLA

# Statistics

- Since December, 2014 **2550** students have been seen for individual appointments
- Top 3 stressors: Communication with advisors, burnout, and financial insecurity
- A higher volume of students are seen from the Schools of Engineering, Social Sciences, and Biological Sciences
- Over 200 wellness-focused workshops



# Graduate Counselor Responsibilities

- Provide stress management strategies in an academic setting
- Track academic and research progress
- Develop communication skills
- Advise on work-life balance
- Address issues around Imposter Syndrome
- Perform case triage, referrals to other service providers
- Work in conjunction with the UCI Consultation Team
- Clarify graduate policies



# Graduate Counselor Responsibilities

- Direct *We Are Them* (WATz Up) K-12 outreach program
- Facilitate campus-wide life skills workshops
- Coordinate *Foundations of Graduate Health and Wellness Certificate Program*
- Mediation of faculty-student disputes
- Future direction: Additional counselor and development of the *Graduate Student Wellness Ambassador Program*

## Foundations of Graduate Health & Wellness Program

The Foundations of Graduate Health & Wellness Program is available to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

To register for the next series, please visit:

<http://www.grad.uci.edu/professional-success/life-skills/index.html>

and complete an interest form.

