



The Profile and Early Experiences of New Berkeley Undergraduates

Office of Planning & Analysis,
AVC-CFO

In fall 2011, UC Berkeley welcomed 4,443 new freshmen and 2,335 new transfer students to the campus to begin their undergraduate studies. Highlighted here is a profile of these new students, as well as a compilation of their early experiences at Berkeley, guided by the following questions:

- 1) Who are our new students and where do they come from?
- 2) What are some of their early impressions of UC Berkeley?
- 3) What are their goals, expectations, and concerns, particularly about their first-year?
- 4) Looking at previous cohorts, what do we know about the first-year experience?

Methodology

The data presented below was obtained from two primary sources. First, **institutional data** from the census files were utilized to determine the gender, residency status, ethnicity, course taking patterns, and retention rates of all new students. Second, **survey data** from the fall 2011 Survey of New Students was used to fill-in the demographic gaps, where necessary (e.g., religious affiliation, sexual orientation), and to capture the experiences, initial impressions, aspirations, and concerns of both freshmen and transfer students as they begin their studies at Berkeley. Note that survey data are not as complete as some institutional data, as the survey was administered only to students over the age of 18-years-old, and the response rate varied from 34% (for freshmen) to 37% (for transfers). For a complete set of survey results, go to the Office of Planning & Analysis home page at <http://opa.berkeley.edu/>.

Who are our new students and where do they come from?

The diversity of the campus is one of the reasons why students choose to come to Berkeley and the “ability to get along with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives” is one of the top three skill development areas that undergraduate alumni say they received from a Berkeley education according to the 2011 Undergraduate Alumni Survey. Below is a profile of our fall 2011 new student body and the demographic, socioeconomic and geographic diversity that they bring.

New Freshmen Students

- 52% Female
- 65% CA Residents; 21% Out of State
- 14% International (n = 610)

New Transfer Students

- 49% Female
- 77% CA Residents; 5% Out of State
- 18% International (n = 417)
- Average Age = 23 years old

Race/Ethnicity of New Freshmen (Domestic Students)		
Asian	49%	n = 1873
White	31%	n = 1205
Chicano/Latino	12%	n = 475
African-American	3%	n = 130
Native American/Alaskan Native	1%	n = 33
Pacific Islander	0%	n = 11
Decline to State	3%	n = 106
Total New Domestic Freshmen	3,833	

Race/Ethnicity of New Transfer Students (Domestic Students)		
White	42%	n = 810
Asian	28%	n = 538
Chicano/Latino	19%	n = 362
African-American	5%	n = 103
Native American/Alaskan Native	1%	n = 18
Pacific Islander	1%	n = 10
Decline to State	4%	n = 77
Total New Domestic Transfers	1,918	

SURVEY OF NEW STUDENTS DATA

Freshmen Survey Respondents

Sexual Orientation:

86% Heterosexual; 3% Gay/Lesbian;
3% Bisexual; 5% Self-identified Queer/
Questioning/Unsure/Other

Religious Affiliation:

18% Christian; 10% Roman Catholic;
4% Buddhist; 3% Jewish; 2% Muslim;
6% Other Religions

36% Not religious; 12% No preference;
9% Spiritual but not associated with a
major religion

Transfer Student Survey Respondents

Sexual Orientation:

78% Heterosexual; 5% Gay/Lesbian;
5% Bisexual; 5% Self-identified Queer/
Questioning/Unsure/Other

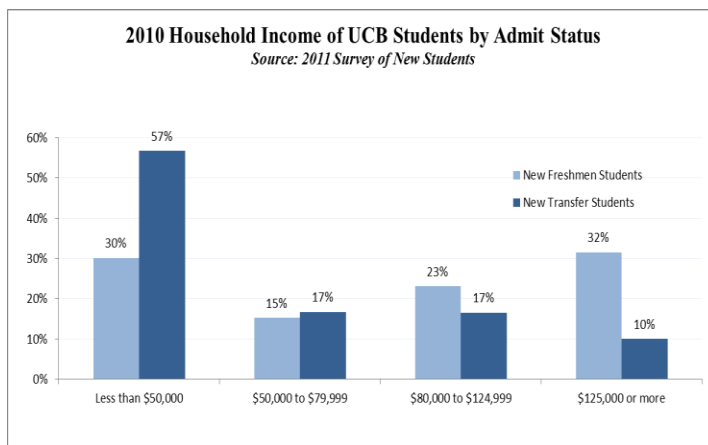
Religious Affiliation:

16% Christian; 8% Roman Catholic;
5% Buddhist; 3% Jewish; 3% Muslim;
3% Other Religions;

34% Not religious; 13% No preference
15% Spiritual but not associated with a
major religion

First Generation College

Fully 44% of new transfer students reported that neither of their parents has a four-year college degree (earned either in the United States or a country of origin), compared to 21% of new freshmen students.



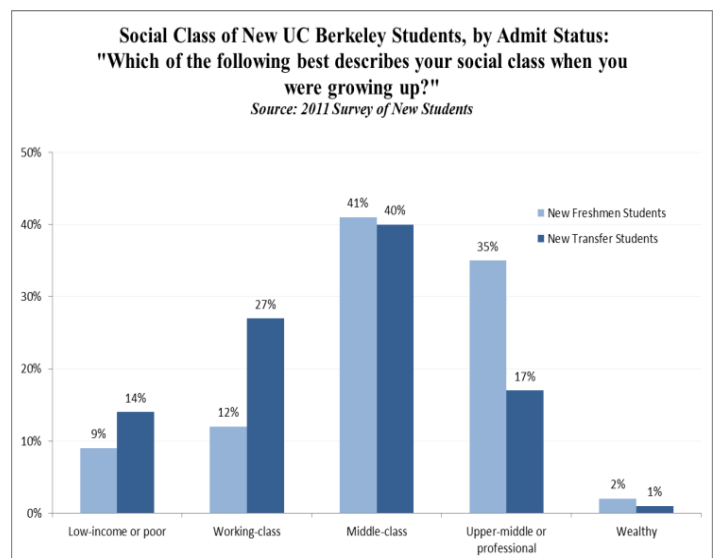
Household Income:

Of the new transfer students responding to the Survey of New Students, 57% reported that their annual household income was less than \$50,000, compared to 30% of new freshmen. At the upper end of the income spectrum, 1 out of 3 freshmen, compared to 1 out of 10 transfers, reported an annual household income of \$125,000 or more.

Social Class While Growing Up:

As shown in the graph to the right, roughly the same proportion of new freshmen and transfer students (~40%) reported that they would best describe their social class when growing up as being “Middle-class.”

However, a greater proportion of new transfers, as compared to new freshmen, described their social class as being either “Working-class” or “Low-income/poor” (41% versus 21%, respectively) when growing up. Conversely, freshmen were more likely than transfers to report that their social class when growing up was “Upper-middle/professional.”

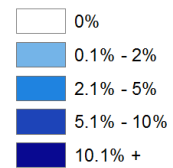


Geographic Diversity

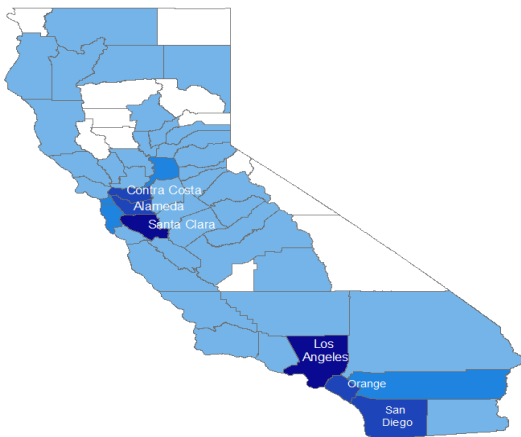
California Residents:

Fall 2011 new freshmen, who are California Residents, come to Berkeley from across the state (46 of 58 counties represented). As shown in dark blue on the maps, the largest percentage of new freshmen students comes from Los Angeles and the Southern Coast (43%), followed by the San Francisco Bay Area (33%). New transfer students, while following a similar pattern (42 of 58 counties represented), have a greater draw from additional counties near to the campus (Marin and Sonoma).

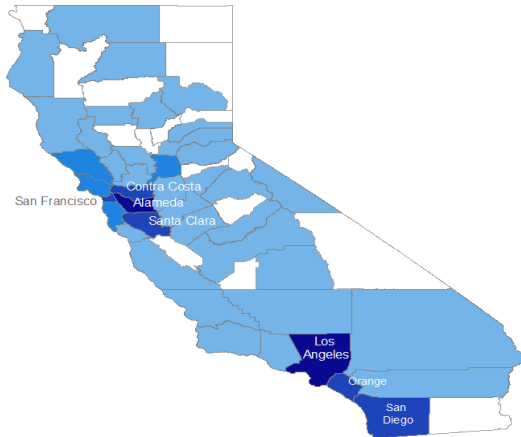
% of CA Residents



Freshmen:



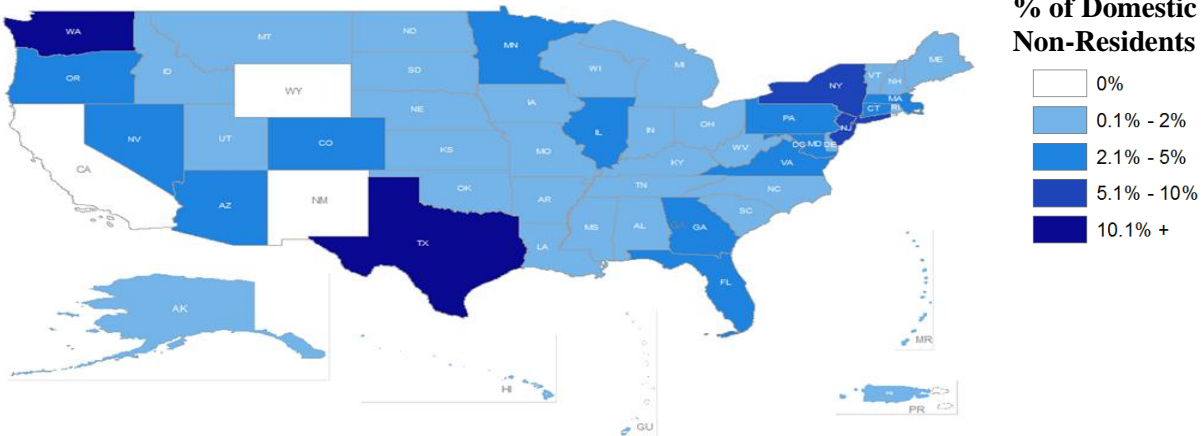
Transfers:



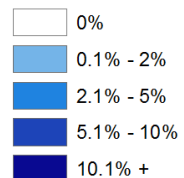
Domestic Non-Residents:

Domestic non-resident (DNR) new freshmen come from 48 of 50 states in the nation (excluding California) with the greatest proportion of new DNR freshmen from Washington (13%) and Texas (10%), followed by New Jersey (8%) and New York (6%). More new DNR freshmen (26%) come from the neighboring West/Northwestern region (AZ, NV, OR, WA) than from the combined metropolitan areas (24%) along the Eastern seaboard (DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA). In comparison with fall 2007, the percentage of new DNR freshman coming from Washington State has nearly doubled (an increase from 7% to 13%), overtaking Texas as the state sending the largest proportion of DNR freshmen to Berkeley.

Freshman:



% of Domestic Non-Residents



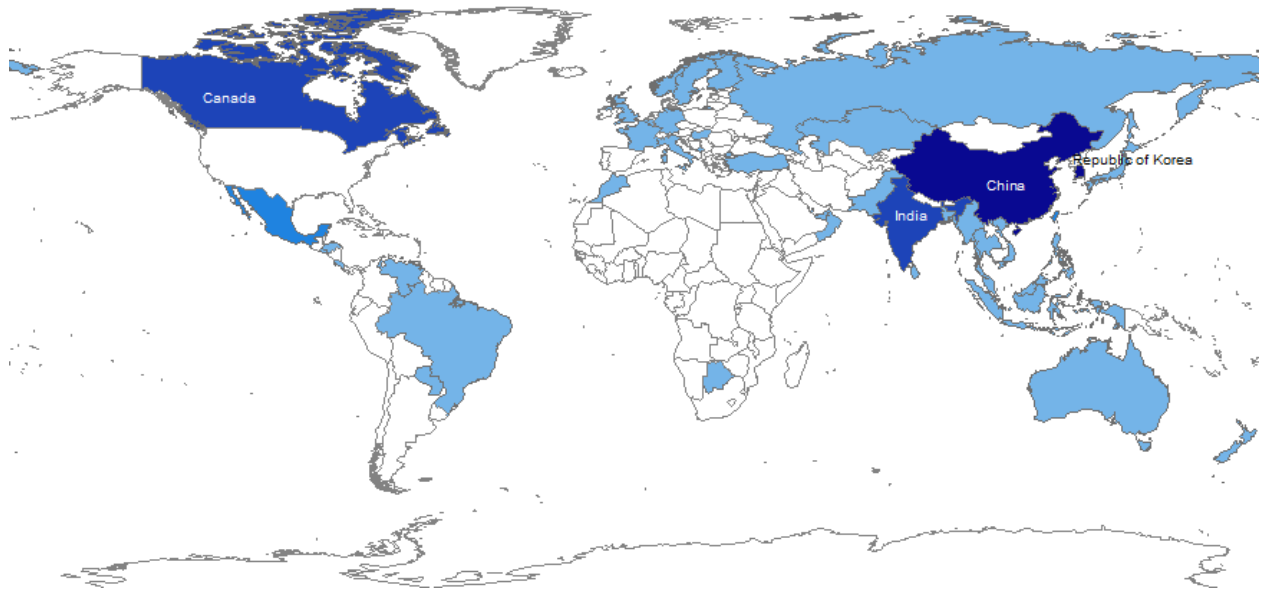
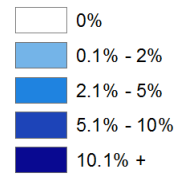
Note: New DNR transfer students' states of origin were not mapped, as this group represents only 5% of the new transfer student cohort.

International Students:

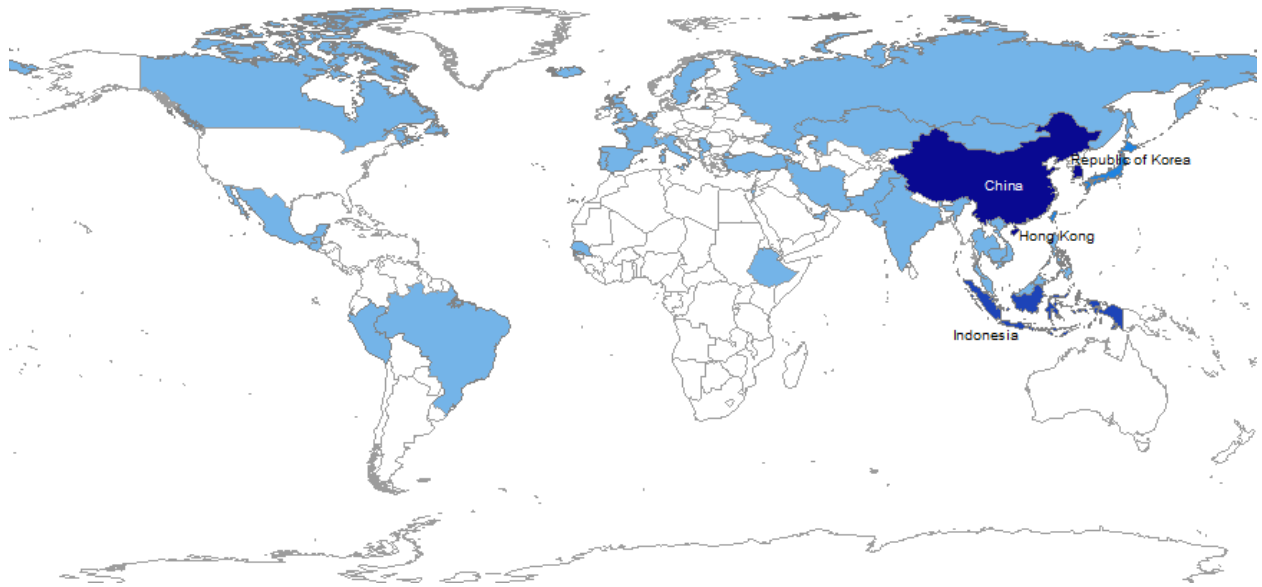
A large percentage of new, international transfer students come to Berkeley from countries in Asia with the greatest draw from South Korea (35%) followed by China (19%).

New, international freshman students follow a similar pattern with the largest percentage coming from China (37%) followed by South Korea (18%), but have a greater draw from countries in North America including Canada (8%) and Mexico (2%), as well as from India (7%).

% International



Transfers:



Survey Respondents (Domestic and International Students):

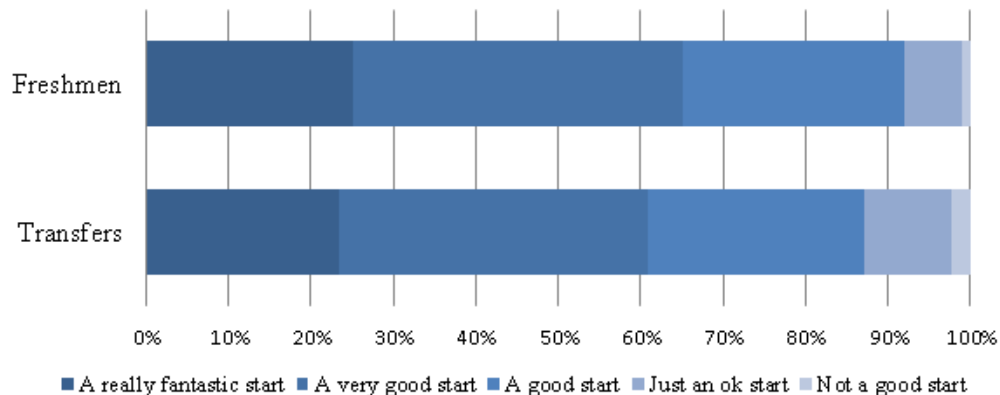
When asked, 91% of new freshmen and 85% of new transfers indicated that “obtaining the skills I need to function in the international arena” was an important (somewhat to very) college goal.

What are some of the early impressions of UC Berkeley?

Below are selected results from the fall 2011 Survey of New Students which captured the experiences, initial impressions, aspirations, and concerns of both freshmen and transfer students as they began their studies at Berkeley.

The overwhelming majority of students reported that their Berkeley experience was off to a good start, or better. When asked to complete the sentence, “overall, I’m off to a _____”, more than 60% of new freshmen and transfers said they were off to “a very good start” or “a really fantastic start”. That figure jumps to 92% for freshmen and 86% for transfers when “a good start” is included.

Overall, I am off to...



When asked about their initial impressions of the campus, freshmen and transfers share a feeling of pride about attending, that diversity is important, and that the campus has a strong commitment to undergraduate education. Transfer students feel more valued as an individual on campus, compared to freshmen.

Freshmen Transfers

Early Experiences and Impressions of the Campus (Agree = somewhat agree/agree/strongly agree)

97%	96%	agree that they are proud to attend this school
94%	92%	feel that diversity is important on this campus
92%	95%	agree that Berkeley has a strong commitment to undergraduate education
76%	86%	feel valued as an individual on this campus

Diversity with Roommates

70%	46%	reported having roommates who differed in Race/ Ethnicity
43%	26%	reported having roommates who differed in Religious preferences
36%	31%	reported having roommates who differed in Social or Economic Class

One way that Berkeley students experience diversity is by having a roommate who differs from themselves, often by race/ethnicity though differences are also seen by religious preference or social or economic class.

What are their goals, expectations, and concerns, particularly about their first year?

When asked to rank their most important college goals, both freshmen and transfers ranked “obtaining skills needed to pursue a chosen career” as their most important college goal. Freshmen followed with “discovering what kind of person I really want to be” and “establishing meaningful friendships”, while transfers followed with “developing in-depth understanding of a specific field of study” and “preparing for graduate or professional school.” “Forming a romantic relationship” fell to the bottom of the list for both freshmen (26%) and transfers (15%).

Freshmen Transfers

Ranking the most important college goals (Ranked - Very Important)

88%	86%	obtaining skills needed to pursue the chosen career
81%	71%	discover what kind of person I really want to be
79%	62%	establishing meaningful friendships
75%	73%	developing in-depth understanding of specific field of study
70%	72%	preparing for graduate or professional school

New freshmen and transfers assign particular values to attending a research institution, particularly having access to a world-class library, being able to learn research methods, and assisting faculty members with research.

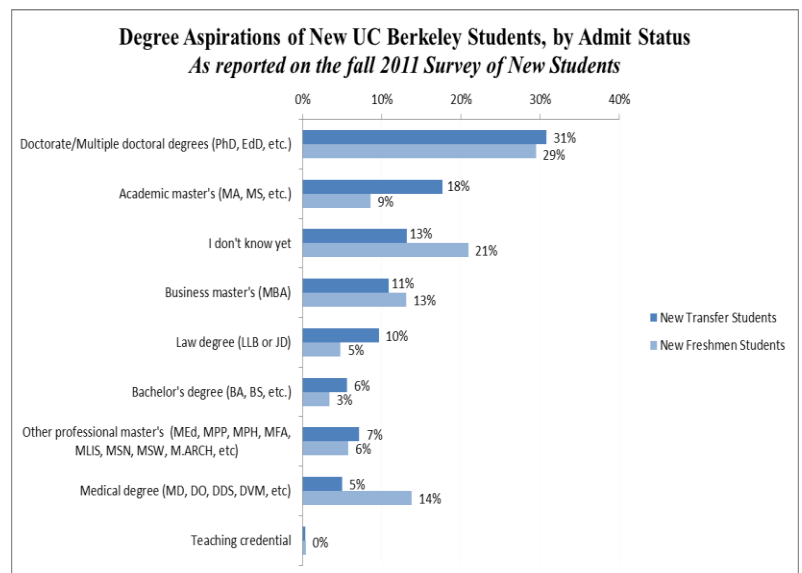
Freshmen Transfers

Values and Expectations about the Berkeley Experience (Important = important/very important/essential)

82%	89%	reported that having access to a world-class library is important as an undergraduate at a research institution
80%	80%	indicated that learning research methods is important to their undergraduate experience
78%	75%	reported that assisting faculty members with research is important to their undergraduate experience at Berkeley
67%	72%	reported that it is important that they learn about faculty research
68%	67%	shared that pursuing their own research is important

The degree aspirations of new transfers students, who are typically juniors, are somewhat different than degree aspirations of new freshmen. A larger proportion of new transfer students aspire to earn an academic master’s degree relative to new freshmen (18% versus 9%).

Conversely, new UC Berkeley freshmen are much more likely to aspire to earn an advanced degree in medicine (14%) compared to new transfer students (5%). These differences hold even when taking into account the fact that a larger proportion of new freshmen, compared to new transfers, are undecided about their degree.



When asked about their top ranking concerns at the start of the first semester, freshmen and transfers both ranked “being successful academically” (e.g., understanding material, GPA and getting into the desired major) first. And when asked about specific academic and social concerns, maintaining a high enough GPA, balance between academic and social activities, and concern about making the right kind of friends topped the list for freshmen. Transfers shared concerns over maintaining a high enough GPA and striking a balance between academic and social activities, they also had concerns about academic and career/professional advising.

Freshmen Transfers

Academic and Social Concerns (*Concerned = somewhat concerned/concerned/very concerned*)

92%	93%	reported being concerned about maintaining a high enough GPA
84%	75%	expressed concern over striking a balance between academic and social activities
79%	74%	are concerned about making the kind of friends they want
76%	76%	are concerned about getting the academic advising needed
76%	75%	are concerned about getting the career and professional advising needed
61%	54%	reported being concerned about being able to cope with expectations of parents and family

When asked about what they perceived as their obstacles to success during the first year, freshmen were more concerned about poor study behaviors; feeling depressed, stressed or upset; and bad study environment were obstacles to succeeding in the first year. Transfers share concerns about feeling depressed, stressed, or upset; coupled with concerns over the impact of paid employment and competing family responsibilities.

Freshmen Transfers

Anticipated Obstacles to Success During the First Year (*Often = occasionally/frequently/all the time*)

53%	43%	poor study behaviors
51%	52%	feeling depressed, stressed, or upset
46%	37%	bad study environments (e.g., noisy roommate, poor internet access, inadequate computer or software)
43%	48%	paid employment
30%	48%	competing family responsibilities

When asked about concerns over affordability, freshmen were concerned about finding affordable housing and financing their overall education. Transfers were concerned about financing their overall education and more immediately, paying for the next year.

Freshmen Transfers

Affordability Concerns (*Concerned = somewhat concerned/concerned/very concerned*)

84%	72%	finding affordable housing while being a student
83%	80%	financing their overall education while being a student at Berkeley
75%	79%	paying for their undergraduate education for the next academic year
61%	74%	feel that, given the grants and scholarships received, the total cost of attending UCB is manageable

Transfers felt with grants and scholarships received, the total cost of attending was manageable and when asked about awareness of the Blue and Gold Opportunity Program (which ensures scholarships and grants will cover fees for students from families making \$80,000 or less), 60% of transfers were aware of the program compared to 39% of freshmen.

Also, as cited as a potential obstacle to success, transfers indicated they were likely to work during the semester, with 13% planning to work more than 15 hours a week.

Freshmen Transfers

	Expectation about work hours per week during the current semester	
63%	52%	do not plan to work this semester
9%	7%	plan for paid employment 1-5 hours per week
16%	16%	expect to work 6-10 hours per week for paid employment
9%	12%	expect to work 11-15 hours per week for paid employment
3%	13%	plan for paid employment greater than 15 hours per week

Looking at previous cohorts, what do we know about the first-year experience?

There has been very little change in course taking behaviors for new freshmen and transfers. In Fall 2011, new freshmen took on average 5 courses and 15 units and new transfers took just over 4 courses and 14 units and there is little or no variation when looking at California residents, domestic non-residents and international students. The table below provides the top 10 courses taken by new freshmen and transfers, highlighting the importance of math & science gateway courses for new freshmen and the importance of particular upper division course for new transfers. Another item to note is that the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) data shows that a higher proportion of new freshmen coming to Berkeley do not need Reading & Composition (R&C); 51% for R&C 1A in Fall 2011, compared to 37% in Fall 2006 and 15% for R&C 1B in Fall 2011, compared to 9% in Fall 2006 come in with AP units that can opt them out of these courses.

Top Courses for New Freshmen

	Fall 2004		Fall 2011
CHEM 001A	924	CHEM 001A	785
MATH 001A	756	CHEM 001AL	776
MATH 016A	405	MATH 001A	613
PHYS ED 006	376	MATH 016A	546
MATH 001B	360	MATH 053	313
PSYCH 001	325	NUSCTX 010	301
ASTRON 010	321	PHYS ED 011	284
NUSCTX 010	309	PHYS ED 012	270
PHYS ED 007	270	MATH 001B	263
COLWRIT R001A	253	ENGLISH R001A	216

Math & Science Common Good
 Reading & Composition
 Mens & Womens Intercollegiate Athletics

Top Courses for New Transfers

	Fall 2004		Fall 2011
EDUC 198	282	EDUC 198	445
POL SCI 179	79	ENGLISH 198	113
ENGLISH 100	71	POL SCI 179	89
ECON 100A	70	POL SCI 003	86
PSYCH 150	62	EDUC 197	74
POL SCI 003	58	ECON 100A	74
UGBA 102A	54	STAT 021	72
UGBA 101A	51	SOCIOL 005	69
SOCIOL 005	50	UGBA 102A	68
ENGLISH 045B	49	ENGIN 007	65

Top Course in both Fall 2004 and Fall 2011
 Math & Science Common Good

Lastly, first-year students, across racial and ethnic groups, are retained to the second year at a high rate at UC Berkeley. The most recent overall retention rates (for the 2009 cohort) are 97% for freshmen and 95% for transfers. Across ethnic and racial groups, retention rates vary as shown below.

