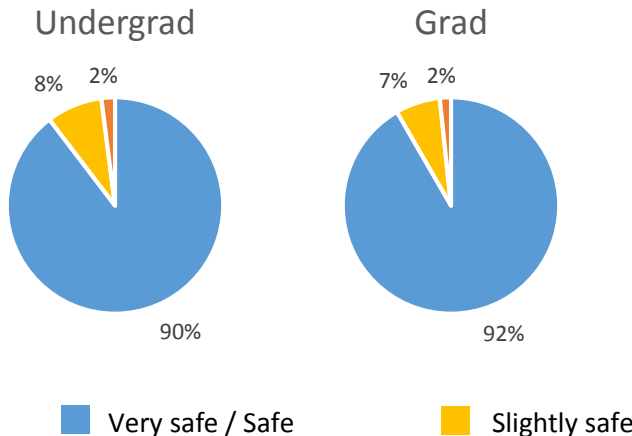
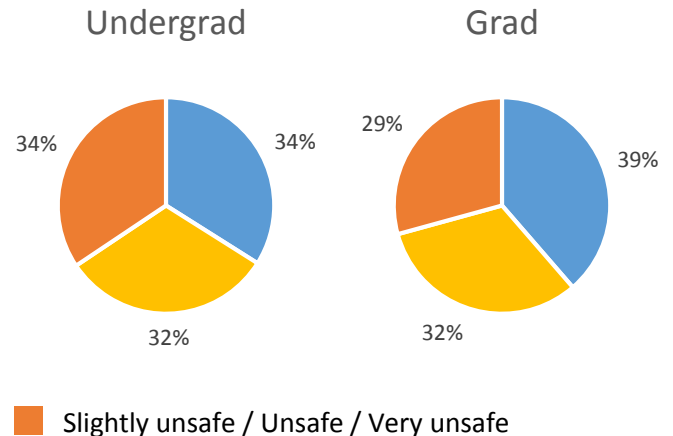


## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

### FEELINGS OF SAFETY AT UCLA



### FEELINGS OF SAFETY IN THE U.S.



Source: Dashew Center Biennial Survey of International Students, 2019-2020

### REASONS WHY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FEEL UNSAFE

Seven themes emerged from the analysis of qualitative comments about why students feel unsafe. Themes include: 1) guns, 2) urban environment, 3) discrimination and exclusion, 4) international identity, 5) health and wellness, 6) terrorism and disaster, and 7) landscape at UCLA. Top themes are profiled below.

#### Guns

*386 students out of 718 mentioned guns or shootings 391 times. This accounts for 33% of all responses and 54% of all students who commented. Representative quotes for this theme include:*

- “The lack of gun control laws. I was here when the campus had the threat of an active shooter. I will never forget the experience...”
- “I think it's because of guns especially as it's the second amendment... I think even if California regulations are strict, you are not safe from gun violence at any time.”
- “Gun laws here are very different from those in my home country. At home, possession of arms is prohibited. Incidences of gun violence scares me.”
- “I feel slightly unsafe because I see news about shootings frequently and it is possible that most people I interact with on a daily basis carry guns...”
- “I feel very safe inside the campus, but not safe outside UCLA in the US. People could have guns on their own in this country, and I never know what could happen. I don't dare to have cash with me, nor to have conflicts with anyone. I seldom walk outside campus after 10:00 pm. However, none of these would be a concern to me back in China, as it is a really safe place....”

#### Urban Environment

*326 students out of 718 mentioned situations related to living in an urban environment 447 times. This accounts for 38% of all responses and 45% of all students who commented. Responses in this theme include mentions of subthemes such as homelessness and crime. Representative quotes for this theme include:*

- “I don’t worry about the safety on campus. But there are many homeless people around the Keystone/Mentone University Apartment ... and they sometimes (often at night) shout at me when I pass by....”
- “There are a lot of homeless people[’s] tent[s] or just homeless people on the street and even though I know I’m not supposed to fear them, it still makes me feel unsafe.”
- “Relatively higher crime rates and incidents related to physical abuse, theft, stalking, and injury happens more than in my home country. I see [the] LAPD pursuing somebody almost at least once a week, which causes tension in the neighborhood. Although I understand this is not something UCLA can independently mitigate, this causes anxiety among international students coming from low crime rate countries.”
- “The high incidence of crimes, especially theft and sexual assault, both on campus and outside in a large city like Los Angeles makes me feel a lot more unsafe than in other countries I call home.”
- “... The public transportation is extremely poor in LA, especially in the evening, while there are drunk people, junk[ies], and homeless people at almost every corner. I couldn’t find a better way to go home after 10 pm other than Uber. But my work ... forces me to stay in the lab until 11 or 12 pm ....”

## Discrimination & Exclusion

*143 students out of 718 mentioned situations related to discrimination and exclusion 205 times. This accounts for 17% of all responses and 20% of all students who commented. Responses in this theme include mentions of -phobias (e.g. xenophobia, homophobia, ...), -isms (e.g. racism, sexism, ...), the political climate, hate speech, sexual harassment, bullying, and bias. Representative quotes for this theme include:*

- “News stories about racist attacks against foreigners. Body language that sometimes feels that I am not welcome.”
- “Being a woman makes me feel vulnerable, and in places where being Chinese stands out I feel [I receive] unsafe attention and judgement.”
- “Been called “n\*\*\*\*r” multiple times by random people on the street. This country legitimately hates black people and I feel sorry for the blacks that grew up here. I know there’s probably about 10 black internationals at UCLA but it’s a culture shock for us.”
- “I’m Muslim...I’ve been yelled at five [times] in public (in LA, New York and Salt Lake)... One friend actually asked me one night while we were both high... ‘how the hell can you support ISIS man?’ For the record, I don’t support ISIS. Want to make that clear in case the NSA is listening in.”
- “Racism and gender-based violence are realities I’ve encountered in the U.S. and that keep me from feeling fully safe even if there aren’t any immediate threats around me.”
- “At UCLA there is a campus culture that is evident in the way some speak and act that suggests sexual harassment and racial/gender discrimination are still issues. I fear issues pertaining to transphobia, racial discrimination, gender discrimination are at large across the U.S. and perpetuated by the current U.S. administration.”

## Other Themes

*Other themes account for less than 10% of responses and less than 10% of all students who commented.*

- Responses in the international identity theme mention lack of a support system nearby, unfamiliarity with U.S. cultural norms and laws, language barriers, and the financial cost of being an international student.
- Responses in the health and wellness theme mention mental health and financial distress, distrust of people, and uncertainty around internship and job opportunities.
- Responses in the terrorism and disaster theme mention earthquakes, fires, and terrorist threats.
- Responses in landscape at UCLA mention lack of support from UCLA, open campus (non-gated), and evangelism on campus.

Source: Dashew Center Biennial Survey of International Students, 2019-2020