

Key Findings from the College Commencement Survey

Class of 2021

Results as of March 25, 2021

(n=3,491)

75% of respondents showed a preference for the “small department” ceremonies.

52% showed a preference for having virtual in the spring, then in-person ceremonies when it’s safe to gather.

45% showed a preference for having a large ceremony without individual recognition.

35% showed a preference for the walk alone while being streamed and recorded for eventual use in virtual celebrations.

32% showed a preference for having a drive-through event.

19% thought it likely or extremely likely that concern about COVID infection would exclude them or their families/friends from any in-person ceremony in June.

7% felt that way about their likelihood of being excluded because of financial challenges.

15% felt that way because of not being able to travel.

44% thought it likely or extremely likely that they, their classmates, their families/friends, or their classmates’ family/friends would be excluded from any in-person ceremony in June because of concern about COVID infection.

34% felt that way because of financial challenges.

49% felt that way because of not being able to travel.

25% of respondents thought that they, their classmates, their family/friends, or their classmates’ families/friends were likely or extremely likely to be excluded from in-person gatherings in June for all three reasons.

61% believed exclusion could occur because of at least one of these three reasons.

69% of those who prefer a virtual celebration in the spring, then in-person ceremonies when it’s safe to gather, believed at least one of the areas of concern was likely or extremely likely to cause exclusion this June.

89% of the respondents reported that they would be available to participate in June.

When considering their latest availability to participate in person, the respondents reported the following:

4% didn't respond.

18% were only available June 2021.

24% were available as late as July to September 2021.

11% were available as late as October to December 2021.

6% were available as late as January to March 2022.

10% were available as late as July to September 2022.

27% were available after September 2022.

In other words: **54%** said that they were available after September 2021.

Differences by race/ethnicity:

Whites showed a preference to wait to a lesser extent than others: **44%** to **55%**.

Specifically, they prefer to wait to a lesser extent than:

Asian Americans: **57%**

Hispanics: **54%**

International **59%**

Asian Americans showed a preference to wait more than others: **57%** to **50%**.

International students showed a preference to wait more than others: **59%** to **51%**.

Here are the survey items, as they were asked on the instrument fielded from March 1, 2021:

COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT SURVEY

Thank you for responding to the Commencement Survey - Class of 2021.

The UCLA College, professional schools, academic departments and programs, and student affinity groups are already planning to provide an array of virtual celebrations for the Class of 2021. Nobody knows what the status of the pandemic will be in Los Angeles County during June, and therefore UCLA has not yet determined the parameters for any potential in-person gatherings if they become possible. The campus hopes that guidance from the public health authorities and the government will also allow us to celebrate in additional ways that include safe, in-person gatherings.

It is important to us that we include your voice during the planning process as we explore our options.

Please note that demographic information from the student records system will be connected to your answers anonymously for analytical purposes; however, your responses will never be made public in a manner that identifies you as an individual. The campus strives to make decisions that embody our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The final data analyzed will include only responses from UCLA students and graduates – at both the undergraduate and graduate levels – who qualify to participate in Commencement 2021.

Please note: The campus commits to offering an opportunity for in-person celebrations to both the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021, separately and when it is safe to gather, whether these celebrations take place in June or later. This survey is our opportunity to hear from the Class of 2021. The Class of 2020 will be contacted at a future date with a survey tailored for them. Please choose your level of preference for each of the following in-person celebration options. Keep in mind that the prospect of large gatherings occurring in June is very, very unlikely. The options below suggest types of experiences instead of detailed specifications for the events.

A response of 0 indicates you do not prefer the option at all; a response of 10 indicates you strongly prefer the option.

[Please note: In the statistical presentation above, “showed a preference” means that the respondents chose from the upper range of the scale (from 6 to 10).]

- Small departmental ceremonies on campus that fulfill our safety obligations. These would be graduating-student-only events with remote feeds for families and friends to attend virtually. They would likely be outdoors with physical distancing and masks.
- A walk-through acknowledgment of each graduating student alone in a campus space, with this footage incorporated into a virtual program. Up to 100 words about the graduating student could be read. Family and friends would view the moment via live-stream or from nearby cars.

- A drive-through ceremony with each individual waiting in a car queue with their family and friends. Only the graduate could exit the car, for acknowledgment, then immediately return to the car for drive-off. This would include a live-stream component and would likely occur off campus. There would be alternate accommodations for participants without cars.
- A single ceremony for all graduating students at which no graduate is recognized individually (i.e., no names are called). Graduates would sit with distancing on the stage area in the venue, and families and friends would be present in person but physically distant. Some speakers could deliver their remarks remotely; others could be present (there is no guarantee that any speakers or performers would be physically present). To accommodate everyone, the campus would likely have to hold such a ceremony more than once.
- A virtual celebration this June followed by an in-person ceremony with family and friends present when it's safe to gather. The ceremonies might be smaller and spread out over time, but names would be read and each graduating student would walk across the stage. We don't yet know when the ceremonies would begin, but it could be as late as next year (2022).

What is your best guess about your availability to participate in a commencement ceremony for the Class of 2021 in person during the following date ranges? Leave any options blank if you don't know your availability for those times.

Please mark all of the options below when you **WOULD DEFINITELY BE AVAILABLE** to attend an in-person commencement.

- June 2021
- July through September 2021
- October through December 2021
- January through March 2022
- July through September 2022
- After September 2022

How likely do you believe that you and your fellow graduating students would be EXCLUDED from attending an in-person event to celebrate Commencement this June?

- Classmates will be excluded because of concerns about COVID infection for themselves and/or their family/friends who want to come.
- I will be excluded because of concerns about COVID infection for myself and/or my family/friends who want to come.
- Classmates will be excluded because of financial challenges that they and/or their family/friends are experiencing.
- I will be excluded because of financial challenges that I and/or my family/friends are experiencing.
- Classmates will be excluded because they and/or their family/friends will not be able to travel.
- I will be excluded because I and/or my family/friends will not be able to travel..

Please mark all of the following student affinity group celebrations you hope to attend if a celebration can be in person:

- African Student Union Celebration
- American Indian Graduation
- Army ROTC Commissioning
- Asian Pacific Coalition
- Athletics Graduation
- First To Go Student Celebration
- Ideas
- Lavender Graduation
- Muslim Students Association
- Pacific Islander Graduation
- Parenting Students Celebration
- MEChA de UCLA Raza Graduation
- Samahang Pilipino Student Celebration
- Sikh Students
- Transfer Students
- UCLA Hillel/Jewish Celebration
- Underground Scholars Initiative
- Vietnamese Student Celebration