

Most Meaningful Learning Experience

More than 3,080 seniors – approximately 49 percent of all survey participants – responded to the following question: **What was your most meaningful learning experience at UCLA?** The majority of responses to this question fell into one or more of 16 themes (represented by 4,968 theme code tags and 5,364 sub-code tags). The table below summarizes these 16 themes. Illustrative responses are presented for the five most prevalent themes.

All Response Themes, in Order of Decreasing Prevalence

	# of Responses	% of Responses
Curriculum and Coursework	991	32.2
Personal Growth	857	27.8
Faculty	639	20.8
Intellectual Gains	472	15.3
UCLA General	439	14.3
Interactions Outside the Classroom	421	13.7
Extracurricular Involvement	266	8.6
Research Experience	247	8.0
Academic Programs	163	5.3
Other	156	5.1
TAs	79	2.6
Non-Academic Programs and Resources	65	2.1
Academic—Other	59	1.9
Academic Resources and Support	48	1.6
Work	47	1.5
The Arts	19	0.6

Student Quotes: Top 5 Themes

Curriculum & Coursework (32.2%, 991 Responses)

Being introduced to phonetics and phonology, I was able to find that thing I'd been searching for all my life that I know now will drive me forward in my future endeavors. It's difficult to put into words what it was like being able to discover my passion as I lived here, and I know I will look back fondly on my time spent here for the rest of my life.

I think my most meaningful learning experience comes from the courses I have taken in the Music Industry Department. This department was a big reason as to why I came to UCLA in the first place, and I was able to learn so much about the industry by taking

these classes. Not only did I learn from amazing lecturers/professors, but I was also able to meet and work with friends in the department, which further strengthened these classes and my overall experience at UCLA.

PhySci 107 in the cadaver lab. This was the first time I felt like I "genuinely & confidently knew something" which was extremely rewarding and fulfilling! I also really got to know my TAs and peers which made me feel like a part of something more and like I had a good foundation of support. I loved this class and would take it over and over again if I could!

Getting to be a part of an Ecological Arts exhibition with the UCLA DESMA department as an Environmental Science major. I believe more departments should have opportunities like this for interested non-majors to broaden their learning. It was the most memorable class I took at UCLA, and one where I found myself actually wanting to do more work than was required for the class.

Learning about the history of racism fundamentally changed the way I think about society and the world around me. Learning about different types of social orders as well as a more complete version of US history has inspired me to dedicate my life to making the world a better place. I plan on using all my resources to help underprivileged communities get the equity they deserve.

My 153L chemistry course was the class that began the shift from pure theoretical to practical application of biochemistry. The moment that reality struck had changed my view on all my past courses by seeing what those courses had been leading up to. It pushed me to be more inquisitive and through the use of kinesthetic learning, I was able to grasp concepts in a way I had never done in any other class before that.

My exposure to curriculum outside of the European tradition. I have been craving most of my life to see myself in my education, so being able to participate in a class with Indigenous, Chicano, and other POC literature in the same academic rigor has proven to be very fulfilling to me, particularly because until this point in my education, I had been told that these communities and cultures did not have anything to contribute to the academic world.

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA has been taking courses that are in subjects I am passionate about such as Theater and Sociology. Being able to learn about acting and social theories and actually put them into practice have brought me lots of happiness and learning. I've been given the opportunity to discover more about myself as well as the world and the things that make me the happiest all while being surrounded by so many amazing people.

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was my first required class for the Brain and Behavioral Health Minor, PSYCTRY 176. This was a very small class (16 students) that was designed to get students to problem-solve and work collaboratively. Since taking this course, I have actively sought out classes that allow me to problem-

solve real-world issues as opposed to simply regurgitating learned information. This class allowed me to apply my prior knowledge in regard to a topic and create innovative solutions and then present these solutions to academics in the field. Overall, taking this class greatly changed how I believe classes should be structured and provided me with invaluable experience in collaboration and cooperation.

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was probably our class discussions where everyone got to give their own opinions of certain experiences, views, and overall aspects of life. This gave everyone a sense of feeling welcome, heard, and overall cared for which I really enjoyed. It also allowed us to see and experience the views of others and what paths they have took in life in certain experiences which was really interesting to learn about.

My most meaningful learning experience was being a member of the Benjamin Graham Value Investing Concentration my junior year. The insight I gained from the guest speakers and applying my financial literacy towards relevant projects prepared me for the workforce in a way I never imagined and helped me learn more about the different fields in finance.

My most meaningful learning experience was in ASIAAM 120: Yellow Peril's Revenge: Asian American Independent Cinema where I had the opportunity to learn more about the Asian American diaspora. The stories behind these films resonated with me, as an Asian American woman, and I got to know more about myself and my identity.

My most meaningful learning experiences have been through the classes for my Education minor. If I had only taken classes in the Statistics major, I do not think I would have cared as much about social justice issues as I do currently. My favorite classes have been Sociology of Education (EDUC M108) and Understanding Pathways to College (EDUC 143) because they have introduced me to social issues and have encouraged students to discuss these ideas. EDUC 143 was meaningful because the discussion sections were designed to foster collaboration and interaction among students.

Taking Math 123 was the most meaningful learning experience. When I was taking that course, I found geometry to be very interesting, and I came up with some ideas of different approach on what I learned in the class, and discussing it with the professor was a fond memory. I decided to go to graduate school after taking that course.

Taking various communication classes taught me so much about interpersonal communication, group communication, and I learned a whole lot of valuable lessons in social issues and concepts with media. All these classes helped me refine what I would want to do post-graduation, and led me to meet great people and learn awesome things.

The most meaningful learning experience I had at UCLA was my time in a student ran course. This course discussed about the community conditions and was tied with one of

the on-campus retention programs. I felt that this was very meaningful because it taught something that is hardly discussed in academia. Furthermore, the class being student ran made it more engaging and fruitful.

Personal Growth (27.8%, 857 Responses)

My most meaningful learning experience of being here at UCLA has taught me how to overcome any difficulties that may come my way, and just to embrace every moment for any opportunity that is given to me. UCLA has changed my mindset into becoming a more resilient person, and show me how sky is the limit. There are so many new skills I have learned that I just don't need to use within class, but in my life as well. I have made so many new friends, and have great opportunities of learning new things I never knew I would learn. Overall, my experience at UCLA I will remember forever, and I will ensure to keep this mindset and skills active throughout my life.

The most meaningful learning experience at UCLA for me was learning how to build connections with others and how to plan out my future accordingly so that I do everything step by step and not overwhelm myself.

I grew up in a very narrow-minded environment. My family chooses to only see things their way, and criticize those who think differently. While being at UCLA, I have learned new perspectives and ideas that has helped shape who I am today.

Being a leader in the Filipino community has taught me how to lead with love and to never hold back. To always resist oppression and to always struggle for freedom.

Being able to adjust to the speed of the quarters and use my time effectively to study while balancing it with social life and making and maintaining friendships from clubs. it was a challenging learning curve but I think I'm now better at managing my time and knowing when I need to study and when I can go and have fun.

During my time at UCLA, I learned how to study effectively and I developed time management skills. I also learned the importance of reaching out to TAs, professors, and other students in your class. I used to figure things out on my own even if I was unable to reach a solution/answer. However, sometimes reaching out to other students to develop study groups or asking TAs/professors for opinions and help can make a huge difference when it comes to learning.

For me it was learning that I am ultimately in control of my own opportunities. Even though you might be at a university that is absolutely incredible and provides amazing opportunity for academic experiences, clubs, social interaction, etc., it is ultimately up to you to make use of these. You need to put yourself out there and grab those opportunities yourself. Nothing is going to change if you don't put in the effort, if you don't go out to club meetings, orientations, socials, info sessions, office hours. As a transfer student, it's easy to feel a sense of detachment and lack of community, difficulty

in navigating the various networks and finding ways in which to get your foot in the door (especially at the start). However, through being proactive to make the most of your experience, and by continuously putting in effort, not only do you learn an incredible amount about yourself, but you simultaneously learn how to navigate life, social situations, network, and lastly, gain an incredible education through working with the amazing staff at UCLA. Thus, your gain is all about what you put into your experience.

For me, some of my primary growth has been in my attitude. I have learned to prioritize balance in life during my time at UCLA and to approach my daily activities with intention. I have had the opportunity to become more emotionally mature and to make informed decisions for my own life, which I know I will take beyond college.

I can't pinpoint one moment as the most meaningful learning experience, so I'll say that being at UCLA was a meaningful experience. My decision to attend UCLA came with a lot of firsts: It was my first time living outside of my hometown, my first time being away from my family, my first time living with roommates, and my first time having to fully take care of myself. I was the only person from my high school senior class to go to UCLA, so I knew no one at the school and had to build a network from zero. Academically, all of my classes introduced me to new ideas/concepts and forced me to think in different ways.

I had a hard time adjusting to the different environment at UCLA in regards to the new city and the expectations of my academics. Getting myself into the rhythm and pace as a student here took me some time, but it made me reconsider my skills in time management and seeking resources. I am still a work in progress but I really value the experiences at UCLA that pushed me to improve myself as a student and I will keep working on it to reach my full potential.

I grew so much as a person during my time at UCLA. I learned to be independent, to manage my time, and how to have productive conversations with people you may have conflict with. Living on my own, away from family and friends, has taught me a lot about myself.

I learned how to challenge myself and that it's perfectly okay if things don't always go to plan. I have done a lot of self-discovery going back and forth between major and minor interests and ultimately found my true passions along with where my real strengths lie. I was challenged in many courses and did not always earn the best grade in the class, but I can strongly and confidently say that I came out of these tougher courses much more knowledgeable.

I learned how to manage my own time and schedule as well as my learning style. I learned to ask for what I need before the deadline instead of procrastinating on essential things. I also learned to advocate for myself as a student and an adult and that was huge.

I learned to believe in myself, push myself, and understand that balance is important. From the start, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to pursue, I just knew college was the next step. I struggled in the beginning because I felt like I was incapable of succeeding in a new environment. After overcoming that and gaining more intellectual confidence, I focused on pushing myself to really learn my material, go to OH and ask questions, and be prepared as much as I could be for my classes. After finally settling into the rhythm of studying and self-confidence, I finally found through clubs and social events at UCLA that it's also important to have fun and balance academics with social activities.

I think my most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was learning how to be more open to new ideas and perspectives in a professional and respectful manner. It is important to be able to hear other opinions without judgement even though they might [not] align with yours.

Learning how to deal with failure-- I think the UCLA student body is typically very smart. We all are very smart and because of the competitive environment you are competing with the best of the best and that was something I had to learn. I was no longer automatically the smartest in the room. Learning to put in extra work, study, allocate time to sit down with hard material was something that I learned. I am not automatically good at my classes and learning to fail and try again is a hard but amazing lesson that I learned.

Faculty (20.8%, 639 Responses)

Listening to lecturers who I could tell were truly passionate about their teaching and could communicate that passion well. Those were the times I could focus the best and get immersed in the material in a positive way which helped me foster passion of my own and enjoy the experience of learning at UCLA.

I believe spending time with instructors at office hours allowed me to better meet my instructors and know them for who they are. In certain classes, I had the opportunity of meeting my instructor's partners and children and I am very grateful for knowing these professors on a more personal level. I also highly value my experience in the Bjork Learning and Forgetting Laboratory because I had the privilege of working under Drs. Bjork and learning so much from them both!

I has [had] never known that thinking was so much fun and artificial intelligence was not a distant and boring topic until I took COMM 188C with Professor Gao. The professor is not only knowledgeable and intelligent by himself but also patient, humorous and modest in his teaching. In this newly established course, I was surprised to know that he adapted his course schedule according to the students' need, and he never stopped learning and kept himself up-to-date with the emerging tech news and advancement throughout the course. He frequently challenged students to think thoroughly of the current issues in artificial intelligence, inspired us to reflect on the relationship between technology and our life, and encouraged different opinions in and out of the class. Also,

PH50A with Professor Kim-Farley is another life-changing inspirational course that greatly broadened my horizon. Through the form of a flipped class, I was able to learn the textbook at my own pace and enjoy additional knowledge in the lecture time. The class time has been effectively managed to include diverse sections in addition to the review of textbook materials. With other topics including happiness, what's new in Covid, career choices, a student's choice lecture, students' presentations on public health issues, the professor's personal stories, and lectures from guest speakers (all of which as well as the professor himself were extraordinary professionals in their fields), I not only improved my literacy in public health but also gained confidence and courage to live a better life.

The professors who had such a clear passion for the subjects they were teaching, and a desire to share that knowledge with their students in a collaborative way—a way that invited students to not only sit and listen, but to participate in their own learning—those professors have absolutely changed my life.

I got the most out of my time at UCLA when I was interacting and learning from professors who clearly have passion and first-hand experience with their subjects. Professors like Jared McBride and Brian Griffith made teaching seem effortless because they knew so much off the tops of their heads that they were willing to share, and especially in smaller classes, treated us like peers and respected what we had to contribute to the discussion. They are the individuals behind the impact UCLA has had on my life.

The relationships I formed with my professors are the two most meaningful learning experiences I encountered at UCLA. Having these relationships formed during my years here are truly dear to me. These are mentors I can turn to later in life for guidance and academic assistance. Professor Von Blum has made himself extremely available and has helped me in many ways. He wrote me a letter of recommendation for law school, along with Professor Momdjian. These professors are dedicated to their students and make themselves available to their current and past students. This aspect is the most meaningful of all.

Learning from the rich knowledge and experiences of the professors was one of the most valuable experiences for me in my journey at UCLA. Some of the professors at UCLA deeply care about the topics they teach and will do their best to deliver the best knowledge to their students. Being an immigrant and transfer student, I was not knowledgeable about certain things and communities like Native Indians, and the history of the U.S. and California, both social and political. Getting to learn about the important issues of the U.S. from some of the distinguished professors has been a very meaningful learning experience for me. I believe that one learns more from the experiences of others, and at UCLA, I got the opportunity to learn from my professors, TAs, and peers and incorporate their experiences into my learning journey. I can say that as a UCLA graduate, I have learned and lived some valuable and meaningful experiences that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

My most meaningful learning experiences have been with professors who allowed me to view history, art, literature, and the world with an open mind and challenge any and all existing ideologies. These professors have provided a safe space for creativity and critical thinking, as well as provided me with the desire to continue learning throughout my life.

The most meaningful experiences were had with professors who did not shy away from controversial topics and really challenged my views. A great example was when I was questioned about my plans for retirement in a public affairs class by my professor in a way that made me realize I was not at all prepared. Professor Fernando Torres Gil was so knowledgeable and understanding that he really laid a great groundwork for what our goals should be and how to reach that point, along with all the possible ways to reach those goals. Professors such as John Zaller in the Political Science department are also really knowledgeable and provide great intellectual points. Professors like Zaller and Gil most importantly however were the only professors I had that didn't try to win me over as a supporter of theirs but actually just laid down the cold hard knowledge.

Intellectual Gains (15.3%, 472 Responses)

I had many meaningful experiences during my time at UCLA. I believe the most meaningful occurred in classes where I learned something new that made me have an "ah ha" moment. Where I was able to change my perspective on my experience as a first-generation Black undergraduate woman and my interactions with the world, and the world's interactions with me. Moments where I could make sense of why things are the way they are, where I felt empowered in my walk in academically and professionally, and where I could have conversations with my parents where we thought critically about our environment, who we are, and who we want to be.

I learned to think more deeply about the information I had learned and how to apply my knowledge to solve novel problems. My learning was much more application-based at UCLA as opposed to simple memorization and information regurgitation in high school. It greatly challenged me to be a deeper thinker and scholar.

During my time at UCLA, the most meaningful learning experience came from the combination of in-class learning and real-world application. As I studied various subjects, I noticed how concepts overlapped between classes, leading to a deeper understanding of my chosen field. This connection between different areas of knowledge laid the groundwork for my intellectual development and was further enhanced by applying these concepts outside the classroom. Through personal projects and internships, I was able to connect academic theory with real-world situations, which resulted in a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. These combined experiences not only sharpened my professional abilities but also highlighted the true worth of my education, creating a truly rewarding and impactful learning journey.

I took a class about the philosophy in literature (Philosophy 5). I have never looked at language the same way – the intrinsic value and meaning of words is far deeper than I ever thought, and has subsequently made me more carefully consider the things I say and how I communicate.

My most meaningful experience at UCLA has to be the opportunities to collaboratively think with my peers throughout my entire learning experience. It gave me the opportunity to invite and interpret different perspectives into my thought and apply these things moving forward.

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA actually took place in my Philosophy 22 (Introduction to Ethical Theory) course, in which we were presented with various outlooks and perspectives on issues such as, moral judgment, moral responsibility, and moral evil. For our midterm and final papers, we were required to synthesize the views of some of the most famous philosophers of ethics, and then provide our own thoughts and reactions in response to these specific views. For me, these papers ultimately taught me the importance of HOW to think, and not WHAT to think.

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was honestly learning from my peers in my major and minor classes, to not only take in what such experts in the field have to say but how others view the material was a gift!

My most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was the critique of my writing, which has better prepared me to be more precise and intentional with my writing (even just emails). Also, Professor Leaps' courses have been extremely eye-opening to those with different life experiences than I.

My most meaningful learning experience was during my art and technique of filming class. I have loved movies and film my whole life so learning the actual process for making movies was really meaningful.

My most meaningful learning experiences was learning how to unlearn something in order to expand my understanding of a concept. For example, in a cognitive science class about perception and learning, I had to think about the underlying structure of basic problems in order understand how learning occurs and is applied to novel problems.

The most meaningful learning experience at UCLA is knowing how to question, be critical, analytical, and research topics that I am interested in. This is very valuable to me because learning is something explorative and ongoing to me and I do believe that I got to practice this and put that into play during my time at UCLA.

The most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was discovering how much knowledge there is in academics and the standards that are held by smarter and wiser generations before and the need to hold these standards going further in time.

The amount of writing, while I resented it at first, I now understand that it has turned me into a fantastic writer. I am so grateful the University pushed me to write so much. it really paid off!

Physics problem sets, especially for mechanics and electrodynamics, the absolute time of my life. I'm not being sarcastic, they were so fascinating and fun.

UCLA General (14.3%, 439 Responses)

As much as I learned inside the classroom I learned outside the classroom by diving into my passions. I give UCLA credit for creating an environment that cultivates a community of creative individuals who are driven to follow their passions. I have been consistently inspired by my peers throughout my experience here.

I believe one of my most meaningful learning experiences at UCLA was learning how to be around people as motivated and academically driven. Before this, I was always around people my age and in my hometown. My old high school classmates and my school always carried a reputation of not caring about school and a lot of drop outs. I was never with anyone who had goals or aspirations like mine past high school. So being with people who are as ambitious and motivated felt very nice but at the same time it is hard because I also get in my own thoughts.

I learned how fortunate I have been to attend a school with access to resources. During the pandemic lockdown, I reconnected with some high school friends at different universities and they were experiencing academic and technical difficulties that my friends and I at UCLA were not. I felt that my education was secure because of the school I had chosen to attend, and I will carry this lesson with me through my next step in my academic journey.

That being in a large school or taking large classes should not be intimidating because you will find a core group of people that will guide you through your experience and support you through anything. As a transfer student I felt like I was coming to the game late, and UCLA immediately made me feel like I had been there since the beginning.

The most meaningful learning experience at UCLA was learning how to navigate numerous resources as a first-generation student.

Being able to bounce ideas off of the intelligent people around me is something that I have deemed extremely valuable, and I feel like that opportunity has bolstered my education in the best way possible.

The most meaningful learning experience I had at UCLA was the chance to view and analyze textiles in the Fowler Museum's collection. It was impactful to see artifacts in person rather than looking at photographs. It broadened my understanding and appreciation for museum work and helped me to narrow the focus of my future studies.

Growing up with immigrant parents and seeing one of them get deported I grew up feeling very isolated with that experience as I had no one to relate to. Coming here to such a diverse environment I was able to meet and hear other people's stories and experiences with immigration that helped me not feel as alone and also see different perspectives of other immigrants from other countries that aren't just from my own (Mexico). This made me feel like a part of another community within UCLA which I am glad to have experienced.

My most meaningful experience at UCLA was learning to step out and meet new people. My entire life, I was judged and made fun of for hobbies that I enjoyed, causing me to drop the hobbies and try to get into ones that were "trendy" or "cool." When I transferred to UCLA, I hid my hobbies once again in fear that I would have been made fun of by my roommates and peers, when in fact, to my surprise, no one cared that I liked to play games during my free time or that I listened to J-pop and K-pop. Because of this, I have met so many people who I consider now to be good friends of mine and am eternally grateful that I found a community that I felt comfortable in and accepted.

Learning how to live and exist in such a large environment was eye-opening and taught me a lot about independence.

Being able to connect with those who come to form the same community as me. This helped with the imposter's syndrome and having a support group on who I could rely on. It shows that we can make it despite what statistics say.

The [Veteran Resource Center], the veteran community at UCLA is essential in providing resources to the older veteran community trying to obtain their undergraduate or post-doc education.