



# IOWA

*The University of Iowa*

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**NATIONAL  
COLLEGE  
HEALTH  
ASSESSMENT  
SPRING 2025**

*Graduate & Professional Student Summary*

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## *Administration Information*

The National College Health Assessment III survey was conducted between late February to mid-March of 2025. All undergraduate, graduate and professional students were invited to take the online survey.

962 University of Iowa graduate and professional students completed the survey, for a response rate of 12.6%.

Student Wellness administered the third version of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA-III) for the third time in 2025 (first being in 2021), but also administered an older survey version (NCHA-II) for several years prior to that. Many questions on the NCHA-III survey were not the same as NCHA-II, and in 2021, the NCHA-III was administered during a time when most University of Iowa classes were online. Both factors limit the ability to examine health behavior trends over time.

This report & NCHA reports from previous years can be viewed at <https://studentwellness.uiowa.edu/ui-health-data>.

Questions can be directed to Karen Grajczyk-Haddad at [karen-grajczyk@uiowa.edu](mailto:karen-grajczyk@uiowa.edu).



# *Notable Findings*

## *Compared to National Sample\**

**University of Iowa (UI) graduate & professional students are...**

- more likely to report feeling like they belong at their college or university
- more likely to feel like they lead a purposeful and meaningful life
- more likely to report high or marginal food security
- more likely to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep on weeknights

- more likely to report alcohol use in the last 3 months
- slightly more likely to do something they regretted
- less likely to meet aerobic physical activity guidelines
- slightly less likely to eat 3+ vegetables servings per day

\*compared to spring 2024 national sample of undergraduate students (21,844 students from 128 schools)

## *Compared to UI Undergraduate Students*

**UI graduate & professional students are...**

- more likely to report high or marginal food security
- more likely to feel like they lead a purposeful and meaningful life
- less likely to report attempting self-injury in the last 12 months
- less likely to participate in high risk drinking behaviors

- less likely to meet aerobic and muscle strengthening physical activity guidelines
- less likely to get 7-9 hours of sleep on weeknights
- less likely to be classified as a desired weight according to body mass index (BMI)
- slightly less likely to eat 3+ servings of fruits per day



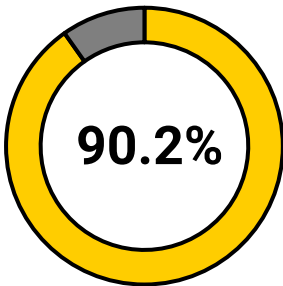
# Academic Impediments\*

	2023	2025
Procrastination	32.7%	34.5%
Stress	33.8%	30.6%
Chronic health conditions	26.7%	28.8%
Anxiety	27.6%	27.7%
Depression	18.9%	17.7%
Sleep	17.3%	16.6%
ADHD	9.1%	12.9%
Cold/Virus or other respiratory illness	10.7%	11.4%
Career	9.7%	11.1%
Finances	9.6%	10.5%

*\*Top ten of 49 items that negatively impacted academic performance in the last 12 months*

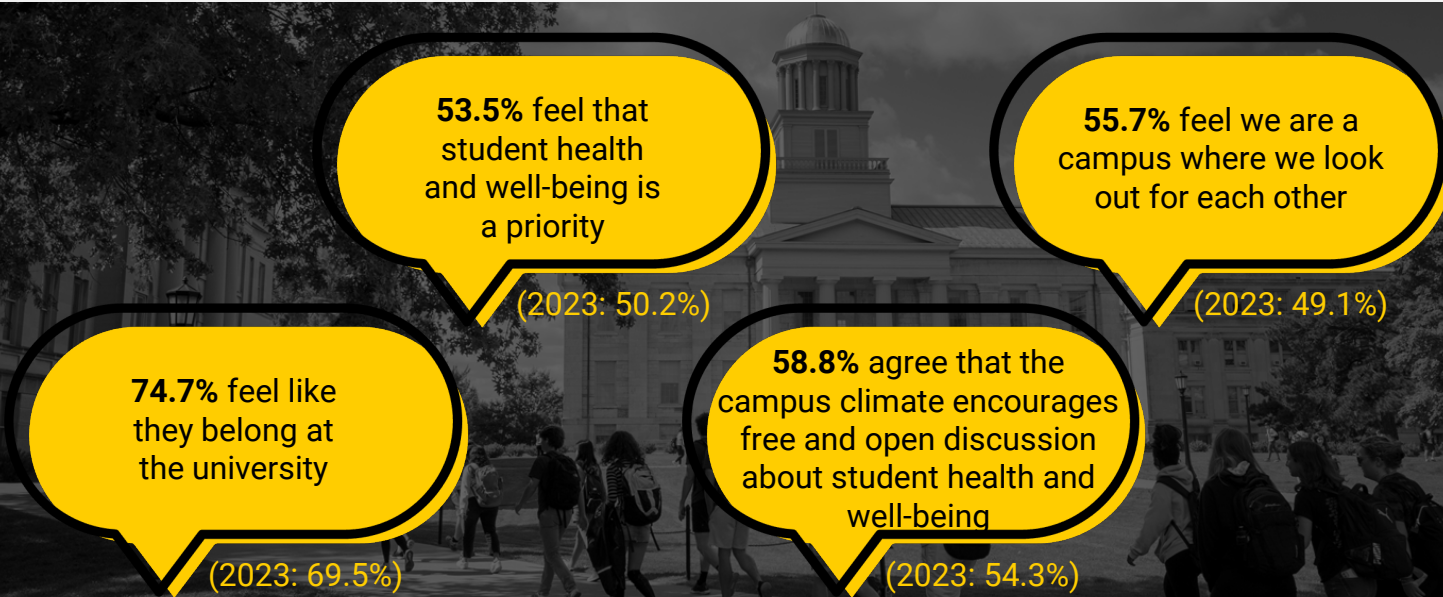


# General Health



of graduate and professional students report being in good, very good, or excellent health.  
(2023: 89.9%)

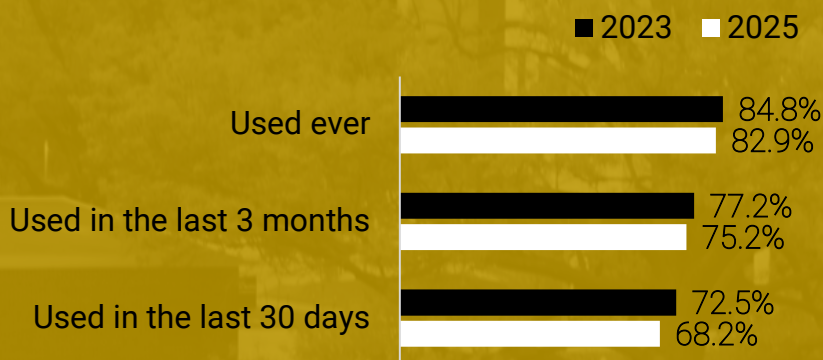
# Campus Culture\*



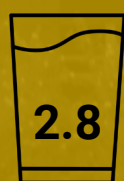
*\*percent of students who responded "agree" or "strongly agree"*



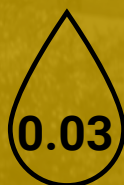
# Alcohol Use



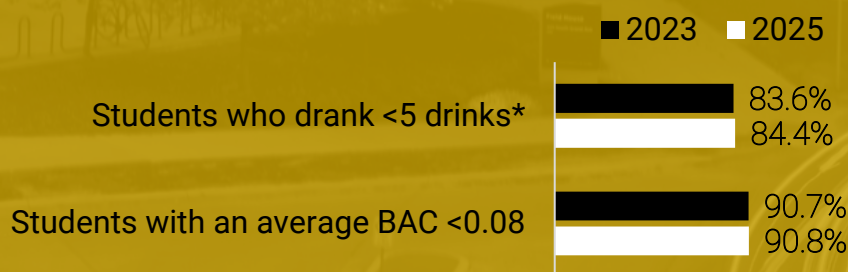
*Of those who used alcohol in the last 3 months...*



Average number of drinks\*  
(2023: 2.9)



Average blood alcohol concentration (BAC)  
(2023: 0.03)



*\*the last time they drank alcohol in a social setting*

## Other Statistics

**1.2%** reported that their alcohol use negatively impacted their academics (2023: 1.6%)

**19.2%** reported driving after drinking in the last 30 days (2023: 19.6%)

**23.7%** reported drinking to get drunk the last time they drank\* (2023: 23.6%)

**23.6%** reported getting drunk the last time they drank\* (2023: 24.4%)

**1.8%** are in recovery from at least one substance (2023: 1.7%)

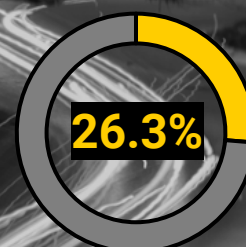
*\*of those who used alcohol in the last 3 months*

## High-Risk Drinking\*

**19.2%** of all graduate and professional student respondents and **32.5%** of students who reported alcohol use in the last two weeks have had at least one instance of high-risk drinking in that time frame.  
(2023: 23.7%, 37.1%)

*\*(females: 4+ drinks / males: 5+ drinks)*

## Negative Consequences\*



experienced at least one negative consequence from their use  
(2023: 29.8%)

	2023	2025
Brownout	17.3%	15.6%
Did something regretted	16.5%	15.3%
Had unprotected sex	7.5%	7.4%
Blackout	6.9%	7.0%
Physically injured self	2.7%	3.9%

*\*of students who used alcohol in the last 12 months*



## Other Substance Use

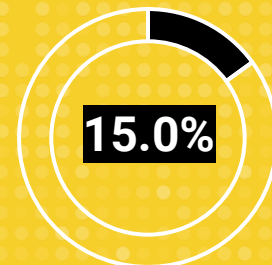
### Cannabis



**23.8%**  
of students reporting  
cannabis use in the  
last 30 days have  
driven within 6 hours  
of use at least once.  
(2023: 22.8%)

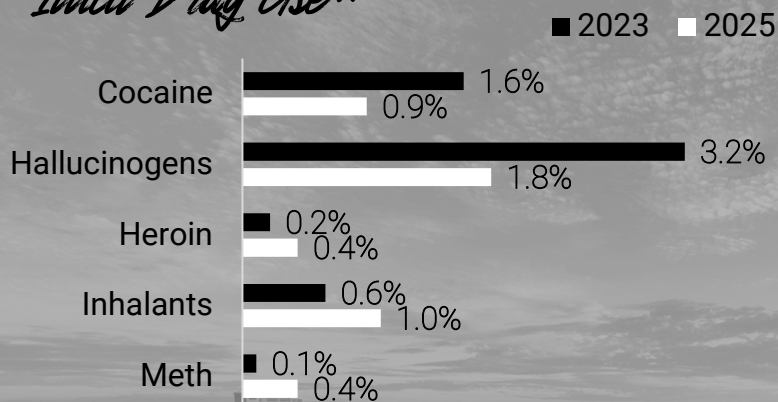
**1.2%**  
of all student respondents  
reported that cannabis  
had negatively impacted  
their academics in the last  
12 months.  
(2023: 0.6%)

### Nicotine

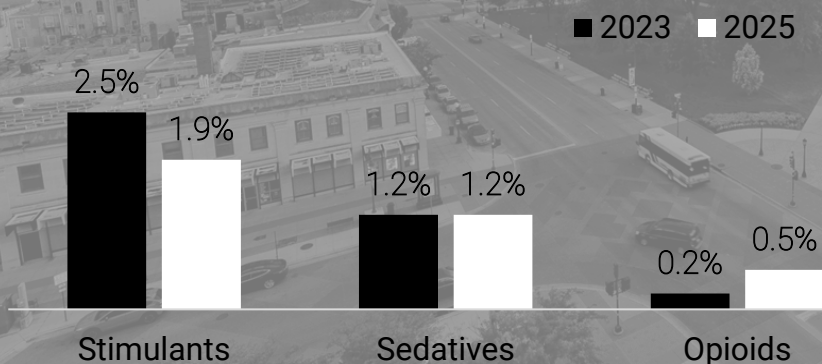


have used at least one  
nicotine product in the  
last 3 months  
(2023: 13.5%)

### Illicit Drug Use\*



### Illegal Use of Prescription Drugs\*



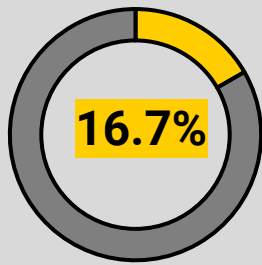
\*percent of students who used in the last 3 months

### Nicotine products used in the last 3 months

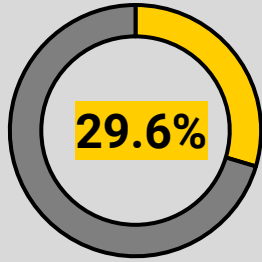
2023	2025
E-cigarettes or Other Vape Products	
8.6%	8.7%
Cigarettes	
5.6%	6.0%
Cigars	
1.8%	1.9%
Hookah	
1.2%	0.6%
Chewing/Smokeless Tobacco	
1.1%	1.8%



## Nutrition



of students reported eating 3+ servings of fruit per day in the last 7 days.  
(2023: 19.5%)



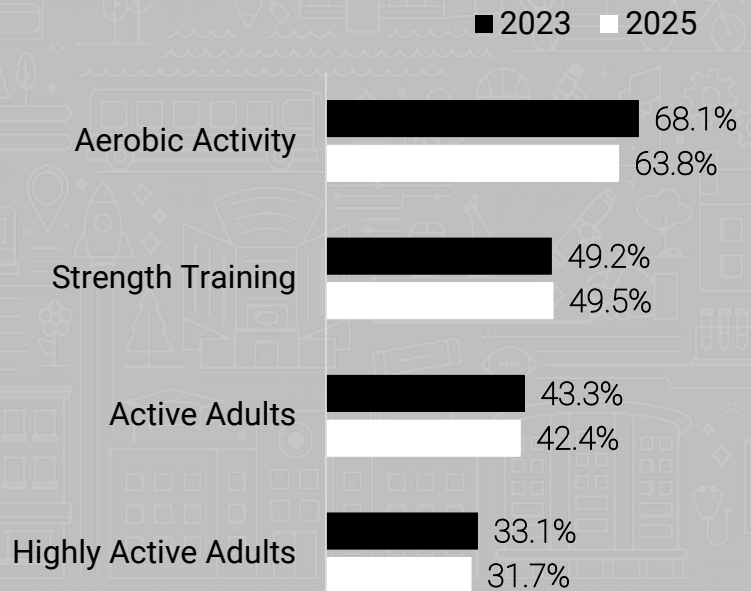
of students reported eating 3+ servings of vegetables per day in the last 7 days.  
(2023: 34.7%)



**59.3%** drink 1+ sweetened beverage per day in the last 7 days.  
(2023: 56.2%)

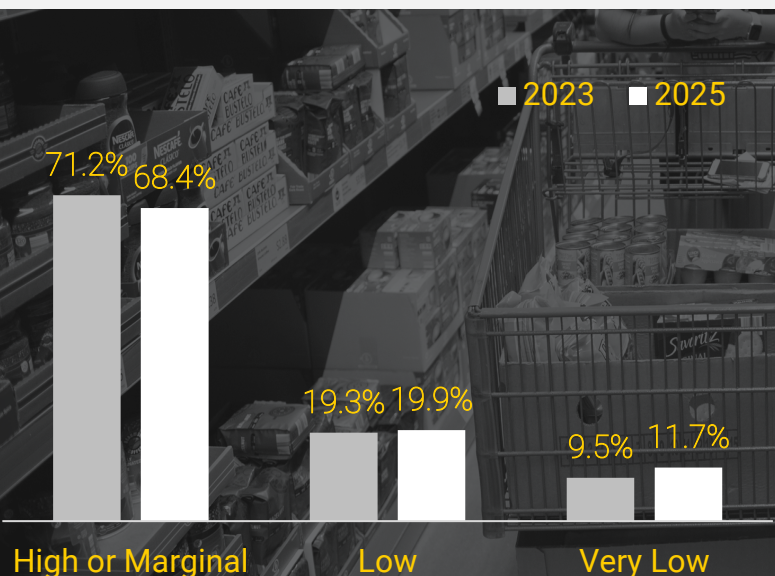
**17.2%** have had energy drinks/shots at least 5 days in the last month.  
(2023: 12.3%)

## Physical Activity\*



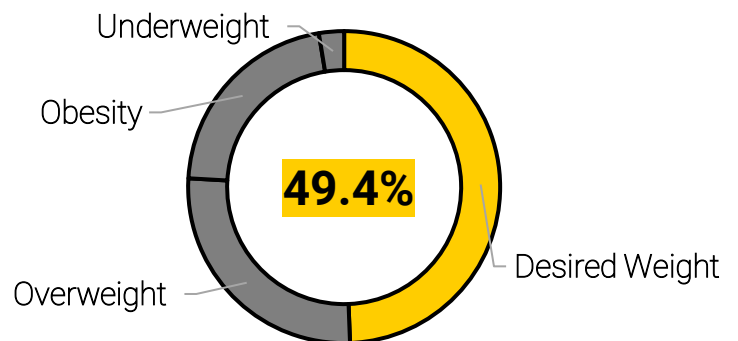
\*percent of students meeting recommendations

## Food Security\*



\*USDA Food Security Index; last 30 days of having access to enough food for an active, healthy life

## Weight



of students are within the desired weight range (BMI of 18.5-24.9), with an average BMI of 26.4. 49.2% are trying to lose weight.  
(2023: 48.2%, 26.0, 47.2%)



## Mental Health

**13.4%**

reported serious psychological distress on the Kessler-6. (2023: 12.0%)

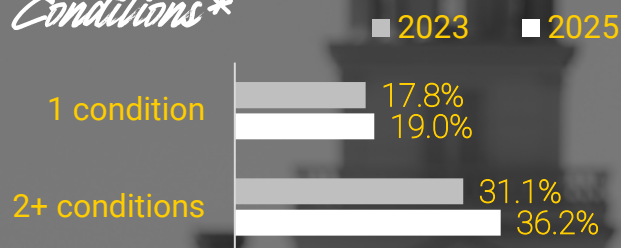
**5.2%**

attempted self-injury in the last 12 months. (2023: 5.4%)

**0.7%**

attempted suicide in the last 12 months. (2023: 0.8%)

### Conditions\*



\*percent of each sample reporting ever being diagnosed with mental health conditions

### Top Conditions Ever Diagnosed

Anxiety	44.2%
Depression	30.8%
ADD/ADHD	16.4%

**44.1%** of students reported using a mental health service in the last 12 months. (2023: 42.8%)

**46.3%** have ever been prescribed medication for mental health condition(s), and **52.2%** have ever received counseling.

## Stress

### Top Stressors\*

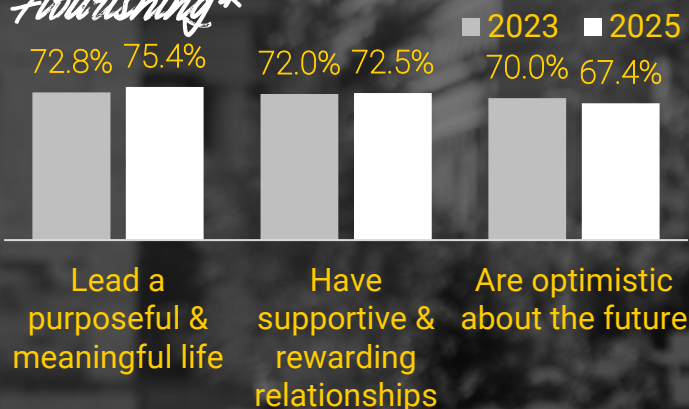


	2023	2025
Average number of challenges/stressors*	4.3	4.3
Students reporting moderate or high stress levels**	75.7%	75.4%

\*last 12 months

\*\*last 30 days

### Flourishing\*



\*percent of students who "agree" or "strongly agree"

## Sleep

**52.5%** nap at least once a week (2023: 50.6%)

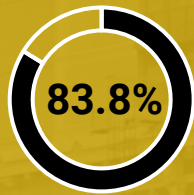
**65.3%** report getting 7-9 hours of sleep each night on weeknights (2023: 65.3%)

**67.4%** of students feel tired or sleepy 3+ days/week (2023: 67.9%)

**83.4%** report getting 7-9 hours of sleep each night on weekends (2023: 79.1%)

## Sexual Health

	Had Sex Last 30 Days	Mostly/ Always Used Barrier*
Vaginal	51.4%	29.9%
Oral	46.2%	2.3%
Anal	5.2%	14.6%



used pregnancy prevention the last time they had vaginal intercourse\* (2023: 82.9%)

*In the last 12 months...*

**1.8**  
average number of sexual partners\* (2023: 1.5)

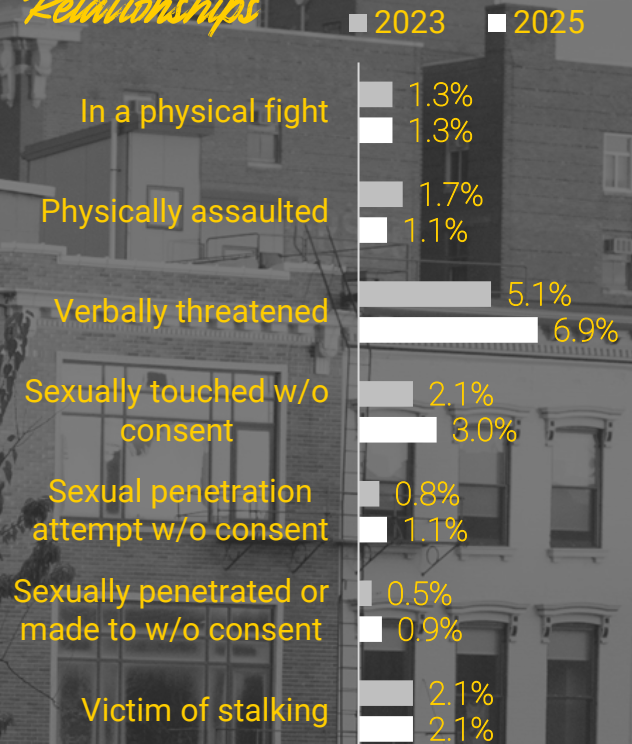
**11.6%**  
used emergency contraception\* (2023: 6.1%)

**1.0%**  
experienced unintentional pregnancy (2023: 0.9%)

\*among sexually active students

## Violence\*

### Violence Outside Intimate Relationships



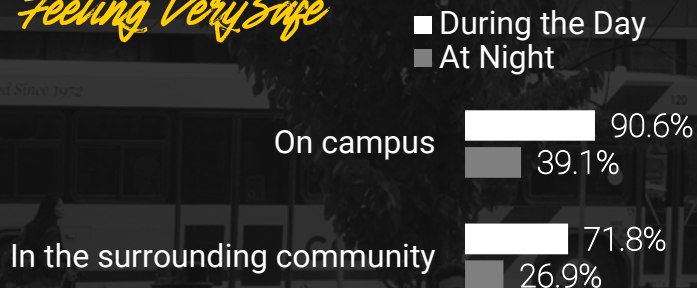
### Intimate Partner Violence

	2023	2025
Were called names, insulted or put down	7.8%	7.2%
Had partner(s) who insisted on knowing who they were with and where they were or who tried to limit contact with family/friends	2.7%	3.6%
Were pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, choked or hit without consent	1.3%	1.5%
Were forced into unwanted sexual contact	0.4%	1.5%
Were pressured into unwanted sexual contacts	0.8%	1.6%

\*last 12 months 10

## Safety

### Feeling Very Safe



### Behaviors

Mostly/Always Wear a Helmet*	
Motorcycle or scooter	65.8%
Bicycle	69.6%
Driving	
While texting/using apps**	55.6%
Had an accident***	5.4%

\*last 12 months; of those who have ridden

\*\*last 2 weeks of those who have driven

\*\*\*last 12 months of those who have driven

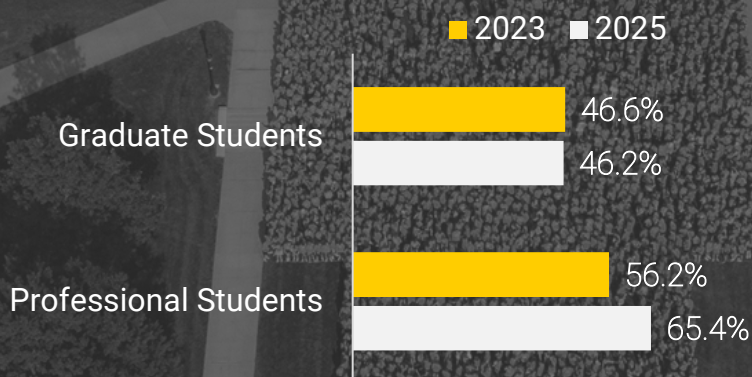


## Notable Changes

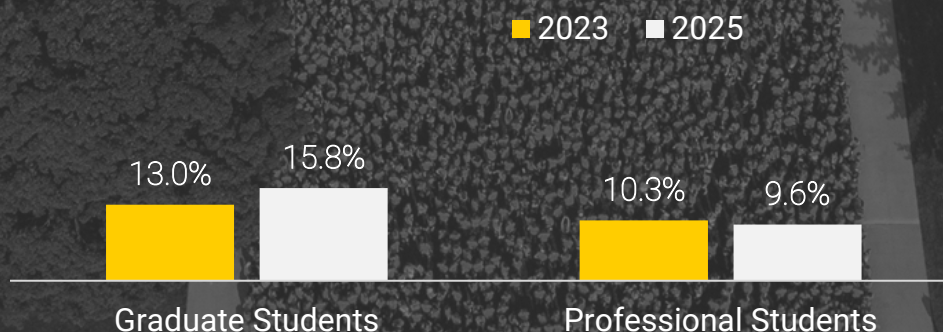
Aligned with the goals outlined in the UI Strategic Plan and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Plan, this section focuses on student perceptions of well-being and a key mental health indicator: serious psychological distress. The following data compare results from the two most recent NCHA (National College Health Assessment) surveys conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic—a period marked by increased institutional focus on well-being and mental health initiatives.

These metrics are essential for understanding the challenges students face and offer valuable insights into their overall mental health. Ultimately, the data reinforce the critical need to continue prioritizing health and well-being as foundational elements of student success.

### *Feel That Student Health and Well-Being is a Priority*



### *Kessler-6 Serious Psychological Distress*





# Definitions

## **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**

Science-based recommendations for physical activity to promote health, reduce the risk of chronic diseases, and improve overall well-being.

**Aerobic activity:** At least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week, at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity, or an equivalent combination of both.

**Muscle strengthening activity:** Perform activities involving all major muscle groups on 2 or more days per week.

## **Active Adults**

Individuals who meet or exceed the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans by engaging in the recommended levels of physical activity.

## **Highly Active Adults**

Individuals who exceed the aerobic and muscle strengthening activity recommendations.

**Aerobic activity:** More than 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week, or more than 150 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic activity per week, or an equivalent combination of both.

**Muscle strengthening activity:** Perform activities involving all major muscle groups on 2 or more days per week.

## **Body Mass Index (BMI)**

A measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to adult men and women. The standard classifications are:

Underweight: BMI <18.5

Normal weight: BMI 18.5-24.9

Overweight 25.0-29.9

Obesity (Class I): BMI 30.0-34.9

Obesity (Class II): BMI 35.0-39.9

Extreme obesity (Class III): BMI  $\geq 40.0+$

## **USDA Food Security Index**

An evaluation of consistent, reliable access to enough food for an active, healthy living.

**High food security:** No problems or limitations in accessing adequate food.

**Marginal food security:** Occasional or minor issues with food access, but no significant reduction in food intake or disrupted eating patterns.

**Low food security:** Households reduce the quality, variety, or desirability of their diets, but food intake and normal eating patterns are not significantly disrupted.

**Very low food security:** Disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake due to insufficient resources.