

SAC Campus Climate Poll

Student Affairs Committee Leadership

Matthew Beck (SEAS '28), Graduate Co-Chair

Huda Paracha (Barnard '26), Undergraduate Co-Chair

Helen Han Wei Luo (GSAS '27), Vice Chair

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Campus Climate Poll

- Background
- Housing & affordability
- Dining and food insecurity
- Commuting
- Space on campus
- Campus access conditions
- Common themes

Background

- Our Campus Climate Poll opened on Friday, November 21st and is still collecting responses. So far, we have **2880 respondents (about 8.0% response rate)**
 - **Undergraduate: 50.7%**
 - **Graduate (Masters): 30.3%**
 - **Graduate (PhD/Doctoral): 16.8%**
 - **Other: 2.2%**
- Notably: first semester students responded in higher rates than other populations (for graduate and undergraduate students)
- Of students who chose to self identify themselves...
 - **First Generation: 46.6%**
 - **Low-income: 47.6%**
 - **International: 46.8%**
 - **Transfer: 17.7%**
 - Chose not to answer: 1267 people

Housing and Affordability

- Of respondents to this poll, **51.9% of students live in university housing** (30.8% undergrad housing, 21.1% in graduate housing).
- Of those who have student housing, in general, the majority of students are extremely satisfied (22.9%) or **somewhat satisfied (47.7%)** with their housing situation, amenities in unit, and general conditions.
- Highest satisfaction for housing is access to public transportation and housing community (84.9% extremely or somewhat satisfied).

8.9% of students could not live on campus due to lack of university housing inventory (~3200 students scaled up).

- There is a notable peak in dissatisfaction of amenities and maintenance for reasons mentioned in open ended response discussed in a later slide.

Housing and Affordability

At any time since coming to Columbia, have you experienced any of the following?
(please select all that apply)

947 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Had to borrow money from friends or family to help pay for living expenses (not including tuition)	699
Found yourself unable to pay your rent	313
Had to move in with other people for financial reasons	288
Found yourself unable to pay utility bills in full	199
Defaulted on a debt or faced debt collectors	133
Had to move two or more times within one academic year for financial reasons	92
Did not know where you were going to sleep, even for one night	82
Eviction	22
Stayed in an abandoned building, automobile, or other place not meant as housing	13
Stayed in a homeless shelter	4

Housing (Open Ended)

- **Laundry Machines are broken in many dorms very frequently and very expensive for graduate students**
- **Unbearable temperature control in university housing**
- **Facilities is not properly maintaining common bathroom areas. Many reports of mold and poor trash removal**
- Poor water pressure in water fountains, showers, etc. across campus
- Long wait times for campus shuttles
- Poor relationship/interactions with residence staff and maintenance workers
- High Cost of Housing
- Rooms/furniture/appliances outdated
- Poor soundproofing
- Lot of stolen mail packages
- Broken elevators

Food Insecurity

- **23.1%** of students self identify with **some degree of food insecurity**
 - Compare this to the LENS data survey that showed **36% of Columbia students** as food insecure (our survey is weighted with more first semester undergraduates who are on meal plans)
- **7.4%** of students being continuously food insecure.

Extrapolating: approximately 2,736 - 8,316 students are food insecure at any given time at Columbia and its affiliate schools.

- **4.9% of students rely on SNAP benefits.** While **32.5%** of students are **unsure if they even qualify** for SNAP.
 - 90.8% of students who are enrolled in SNAP were affected by the pending cuts coming from the government shutdown
- Large populations of students identified they have had to skip meals, cut the size of meals, have heightened food insecurity near the end of semesters, and are unable to afford balanced meals due to financial reasons.

Dining Services

- Of those surveyed: **46% are on a meal plan**, 54% are not on a meal plan.
- Of those on the meal plan:
- **31.8% of students are somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied with the price of the current meal plan.**
- **The main reasons graduate students do not purchase a meal plan:**
 - **High Price (45.3%)**
 - **Not being aware they could purchase a meal plan (39.4%)**
- **The main reason undergraduate students do not have a meal plan is cost (74.7%)**
- **Currently, meals are offered in the \$10 - \$12 range**
 - **This is affordable for only 29.8% of students**
- **Our polls suggest graduate students would consider purchasing a meal plan at:**
 - **\$5 - \$7 per meal: 90.5% of students**
 - **\$7 - \$10 per meal: 60.2% of students**
- Yes we understand we are asking for a 50% reduction in meal cost, however for-profit restaurants in the area, for example, the “U Bar and Grill” offers a \$5 lunch deal (no other purchase necessary).

We welcome collaboration to with administration to come up with a plan to reduce meal plan costs

Commuting

- Self reported identity of commuter student:
 - Undergraduate: 11.2% consider themselves commuters
 - Graduate: 39.9% consider themselves commuters
- Of commuters (select all that apply, many students use many modes):
 - **79.4% of students use subways**
 - 37.6% of students use the bus
 - **12.6% of students use the university shuttle**
 - 11.4% of students travel by car
 - 7.6% of students use commuter rail (NJ Transit/LIRR/MNR)
 - 9.9% use other (bicycle, ferry, etc.)
- Commutes most commonly fall in the 15-30 minute time frame, but **40.1% of students travels 45+ minutes**, 20.9% of students travel 60+ min
- 71.2% of students commute to campus 4+ days per week, paying multiple fares per day
 - **Expense of over \$1200 per student per year, ~\$34.5 million spent by Columbia students**

Commuting

- A range of 28-43% of students note that commuting affects their academic performance, class attendance, family life, **social life**, nutrition, and **sleep and health** at least half of their days as students.
- 19.7% of students are satisfied with commuting accommodations (courses) while 10.3% of students are satisfied with the financial assistance from Columbia for their commute
- **Fair Fares** (NYC program for 50% discount to MTA):
 - **70.2% of students have never heard of Fair Fares**
 - **32.2% of students are eligible for Fair Fares**
 - **10.6% of students are enrolled in Fair Fares**
 - We believe this may be higher due to reporting parental income
- **We are suggesting a strong push to enroll students in Fair Fares, which we have begun to work on, and in addition provide a University Wide Pilot for a need-based program of \$250,000 for Spring 2026**

Space on Campus

- Quantitative takeaways
 - We polled the value/satisfaction of non-residential space, study spaces, common meeting spaces, event spaces, outdoor spaces, and student lounges.
 - Our main takeaway is the data shows a wide range of satisfaction here.

We believe we need to dissect each question by school to get the best sense of areas of improvement.

Campus Access Conditions

- **80.7% of students** agree or strongly agree they **feel safe on campus** while only 3.9% of students strongly disagree
- **Only 40.56% of students** agree or strongly agree **campus gate closures contribute to feeling of safety**, 33.0% strongly disagree (similar response to same question about limited campus access and building swipe access)
 - 78.0% of students support a partial reopening of the gates**
 - 70.1% of students support full reopening of the gates**
- Students are extremely mixed on how they feel about campus access conditions (Morningside) - ~20%+/- 5% in each of very comfortable to very uncomfortable, noting minimal impact on sense of safety based on opening/closing of gates.
- Experience with Public Safety at the gates
 - 47.8% positive | 27.2% neutral | 25% negative

Thank You!

