



Homeless College Students: Who are They and How Can We Help?

A Mixed Methods Communications Departmental Honors Thesis on Student
Homelessness in Higher Education

by Shadee Ashtari, Principal Investigator
Advisor: Professor Alexandra Lieben
Faculty Sponsor: Professor Steve Peterson
UCLA Department of Communications

June 16, 2013

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Defining Homeless Students | 7 |
| Research Questions | 8 |
| Literature Review | 9 |
| Interviews with Administrators and Student Group Leaders | 15 |
| Resources at the University of California, Los Angeles | 29 |

Chapter 2. Data

| | |
|---|----|
| Student Interviews | 36 |
| Survey Analysis | 36 |
| Results | 31 |
| What leads to student homelessness in higher education? | 58 |
| Effects on Students | 61 |
| Discussion | 64 |
| Solutions | 65 |
| Additional Research Challenges and Personal Note | 76 |

Chapter 3. Methodology

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Research Design | 78 |
| Target Population and Sample | 80 |
| Research Obstacles | 81 |
| Limitations of Sample | 82 |
| Ethical Considerations | 82 |
| References | 83 |
| Appendices | 86 |

Introduction:

In July 2010, a University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) student by the name of Diego Sepulveda was featured in an article titled “College Students Hide Hunger, Homelessness,” which transcribed his interview with *NPR News*. Diego Sepulveda was 22-years old, majoring in Political Science, and homeless. He recounts, “You’re always thinking, ‘How am I going to pay for next quarter? How am I going to get through the rest of the days here at UCLA?’” Unfortunately, Diego’s story is not unique.

In the midst of the 2008 economic downturn, UC fees increased 7.4 percent, and since then, tuition has roughly doubled. The UC is experiencing “the worst funding crisis” in its history, according to UC Vice President of Budgets. *The San Francisco Chronicle* reports, “For the first time this academic year, students contributed more to UC’s budget (\$3 billion) than the state did (\$2.4 billion).” Consequently, UCLA began receiving an influx of students in financial dilemmas similar to Diego’s—students sleeping in libraries, “couch-surfing,” or dropping out of school for financial reasons—and in the fall of 2008, UCLA created the Economic Crisis Response Team to identify and assist financially struggling students. Antonio Sandoval, head of UCLA’s Community Programs Office, identified the loss of jobs (particularly by middle class families) in a struggling economic market as a contributing factor to “a little-known but growing population of financially stressed students, who are facing hunger and sometimes even homelessness.”

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth reports a substantial recent increase in the number of homeless students nationwide, but firm numbers on the specific population are hard to find. “What we’re hearing from the college presidents and

leadership [is] that more and more students are struggling," says Michelle Asha-Cooper, of the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, D.C. "Some are taking out pretty large amounts of student loans to finance their education as well as their living costs. Some are enrolling part-time, some are even dropping out."

In Diego Sepulveda's case, a full-time job at Subway failed to meet his financial requirements, as he ultimately resorted to sleeping in the school library, friends' couches, and the Student Activities Center (where he would also shower). "I would shower, and it would give me at least some sense of being clean," Diego explained.

Sandoval confirms that UCLA lacks "the exact number of students experiencing the day-to-day hardship of food and shelter" due in part to students hiding their financial struggles. "It's very affluent here, it's Westwood, Bel Air, Beverly Hills," Sandoval says, "Students who come to UCLA want to fit the norm here, so they're not going to tell you they're homeless, or they're not going to tell you they're hungry" (Diego, 2010). The invisibility that accompanies students' shame of their situations does not help the fact that little information exists as it is on the extent of homelessness among university students or their experiences. Homeless Columbia University student Aaron Flowers explains, "People started looking at me differently [...] People stopped inviting me to [events], people started to treat me like a bum, like I was disgusting."

Meanwhile, the National Association of Students Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) reports that the "number of homeless students are likely to increase in coming years." For homeless college students, even the smallest issues have become obstacles: the price of a student ID, housing or enrollment deposits, a safe place to store textbooks and important documents, a safe and reliable place to sleep, etc. Moreover, the stereotype associated with the word "homeless" along with the highly mobile and disconnected nature of the homeless student

demographic makes identifying homeless college students a difficult task. According to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data, 33,039 college students identified themselves as homeless in the 2010–2011 academic year. Further illuminating the issue on a smaller scale, a Minneapolis Community and Technical College survey of 1,061 students this fall found that 9.7 percent of students identified themselves as homeless. The survey also found that 15.5 percent of the students said they frequently could not afford meals or groceries (Danielson, 2010).

In an interview with Dr. Ronald Hallett, Professor of Urban Education Reform at University of the Pacific, he explained that “Currently, federal legislation focuses on supporting students from kindergarten through high school graduation. We have a lot more work to do at the higher education level” (Hallett, 2012). In the face of recent economic turmoil and rising tuition fees, student homelessness in the United States is a growing phenomenon in need of further research and resources. Prevalent scholarship also reveals that most studies treat homeless youth as a homogenous population; “However, there is great variability among students experiencing homelessness, including such factors as causes, frequency, and duration of homelessness” (Buckner, 2008).

“Each year at our national conference, homeless students come forward to share their stories,” explains Jenn Hecker, the organizing director of the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. What often comes through is shame. Most feel as though they should be able to cover their costs.” Hecker goes on to say that these students generally attempt to blend in with their surrounding and are not forthcoming with the fact that they are homeless or live in poverty. Amongst other reasons, Hecker focuses on “rising housing costs for the problem” (Bader, 2004). A 2012 report on rent affordability by the National Low Income Housing

Coalition shows that is impossible for any minimum-wage worker in any state in the United States “to work 40 hours per week at minimum wage and afford a two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent” (Rosenthal, 2013). In West Virginia and Arkansas, minimum wage workers would need to work at least a 63 hours per week. Worse off, in California, Maryland, D.C., New Jersey and New York a minimum wage worker would need to work 130 hours per week or more to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

Advocates for the homeless account numerous examples of college and university students sleeping in their school libraries or classrooms, in their cars, or moving frequently from friend to friend’s couch. These students discretely shower and change in university gyms, if available.

Despite the anecdotes from countless university and college administrators and counselors across the country, concrete data and background details about homeless college students are obscure. "I wish statistics existed on the number of homeless college students there are," remarks Barbara Duffield, executive director of National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. "Once state and federal responsibility to homeless kids stops--at the end of high school--it's as if they cease to exist. They fall off the map. They are neither counted nor attended to" (Bader, 2004).

Martha Burt, principal research associate at the Urban Institute, adds "Nobody has ever thought about this population or collected data on them because nobody thinks they are a priority to study" (Bader, 2004).

Aesha, once a homeless student and now a Kingsborough Community College graduate explains, “The school should do more. They have a child care center on my campus, but they only accept children two and up. It would have helped if I could've brought my son to day care at

school. The college should also maintain emergency housing for homeless students" (Bader, 2004).

The reason emergency housing does not exist at many schools like Kingborough explains the Dean of Student Student Affairs at Kingsborough is because "As an urban community college, our students are commuters. Therefore, our student support services are developed within that framework" (Bader, 2004).

The issue boils down to the lack of a systematic federal safety net for the rising numbers of homeless college students. Former Department of Education administrator and founder of the LeTendre Education Fund Mary JeanTendre explains, "As far as I know, no college has ever asked for help in reaching homeless students. Individual colleges have come forward to help specific people, but there is nothing systematic like there is for students in elementary and high school" (Bader, 2004).

The purpose of this study is thus, to establish more concrete data quantifying the extent of the issue, to identify contributing and primary factors leading to student homelessness, and to understand the various negative effects of student homelessness on students (and the community). Ultimately, with these factors as a foundation, the research aims to establish the most effective program or resource for public higher education institutions in the United States to combat student homelessness.

Defining Homeless Students

For the purposes of this study, the definition of "homeless" in identifying homeless students will draw largely from Section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a federal policy directing school practice in contexts of homelessness. "Students" will be defined as youth between the ages of 18-24 who are enrolled in any post-secondary higher educational

institution (public or private). The following definition of “homeless” has been tailored for homeless college students, specifically (Miller, 2011):

- *Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals*
- *Students living in accommodation provided by homelessness service (i.e. shelters); student forced to live in overcrowded accommodation*
- *Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings*
- *Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, and some migratory children.*
- *Students who are forced to share housing with others, commonly referred to as “double-ups” to “couch surf (frequently move from house to house without a designated residence);” or student whose family may live in a shelter (or other forms of homeless residence)*

Research Questions

For the quantitative phase of this study the guiding research question are:

R1: What is the best way to quantify the number of homeless students at public universities and colleges in the United States?

R2: Approximately how many students at UCLA are homeless?

R3: Which personal/demographic attributes are associated with likelihood of student's homelessness?

For the qualitative phase of this study the guiding research question are:

R4: What are the principal reasons for student homelessness at UCLA?

R5: How do the physical and psychological consequences of being a homeless student impact academic performance?

R6: What is the most effective program/resource for public higher education institutions in the United States to combat student homelessness?

Literature Review

“A Critical Analysis of the Research on Student Homelessness” by Professor Peter Miller:

Despite the lack of concrete quantitative data on college student homelessness in the United States, University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor Peter Miller provides an analysis of previous scholarship, emphasizing the issue of student homelessness in the K-12 educational context. Miller concludes that “Unlike the wider population of homeless individuals, which is composed of a large proportion of middle-age males who have multiple high-risk characteristics,” student homelessness is more often a temporary state resulting from unfortunate individual or community circumstances. Particularly relevant in identifying a homeless college student’s profile is Miller’s characterization of youth homelessness as temporary, sparked by some crisis or financial downfall. In setting up a potential foundational cause of student homelessness (the study’s third research question), Miller identifies “the most common causes of the various forms of homelessness are insufficient affordable housing and shortages of jobs that pay just wages—both of which have been made worse by the recent economic recession in the

United States.” Miller’s analysis of previous research concludes that as jobs and affordable housing options have “disappeared in recent years,” more individuals (particularly students) have become vulnerable to poverty, “resulting in some of the highest rates of family and child homelessness in memory” (Miller, 2011).

Critical Theory

Critical Theory focuses on empowering human beings to overcome the limitations placed on them by race, class, gender, and most importantly in the case of student homelessness: poverty. Critical theorists maintain that researchers “need to acknowledge their own power, engage in dialogues, and use theory to interpret or illuminate social action” (Madison, 2005). In researching and establishing the most effective programs for public U.S. colleges and universities to implement in combating student homelessness, the research aims to apply Critical Theory in empowering a marginalized segment of the academic population—homeless students. Qualitative semi-structured interviews, illuminating students’ conditions while proposing educational accommodations, reflect Critical Theory’s end goal of social theorizing: “the desire to comprehend and, in some cases, transform (through praxis) the underlying orders of social life” (Morrow & Brown, 1994). In identifying the homeless student population through the employment of Critical Theory strategies, including interviews and intensive case studies, homeless students’ personal accounts will expose “the assumptions of existing research orientation, critique the knowledge base,” and further the field of Critical Theory application (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

Particularly poignant to the research on the homeless student population are the consequences associated with Critical Theory’s emphasis on marginalization. Most importantly,

“Marginalization was seen as a sociopolitical process, producing both vulnerabilities (risks) and strengths (resilience)” (Hall, 1999). The associated risks and resistance outlined by Dr. Joanne Hall in “Marginalization Revisited: Critical, Postmodern, and Liberation Perspectives” include:

- *Differentiation: the strength of cultural and personal uniqueness and the risk of becoming a scapegoat and being stigmatized.*
- *Secrecy: access to, and control of information to protect one's self and group, and the risks resulting from the dominating group's use of insider knowledge to their advantage.*
- *Reflectiveness: survival skills gained from leading an examined life, and the risks involved in the exhaustive processes of constant vigilance, and analysis of each new social encounter necessary for safety.*
- *Voice: expression of one's experiences as valid and different from the dominant myths, and the risks of being silenced.*
- *Liminality: having experiences not shared by others; severe trauma, stigmatization, and illnesses can foster abilities to empathize with others, but carry risks of alienation, altered perceptions, and heavy psychic strain (Hall, 1999).*

Homeless students battle insecurity, instability, and uncertainty every day and many of them actively remain invisible due to their own shame. In understanding the risks associated with marginalization, the study aims to understand, illuminate, and advocate for homeless students, which in turn may then reduce the associated stigma of severely traumatized, ashamed, and invisible members of the homeless student population. “Voice” and “Liminality” are especially

significant, as they reflect the existence of standardized stereotypes of the homeless population (“dominant myths”) and the fears of “alienation” students experience.

Vulnerability and Resistance Theory

Vulnerability and Resistance Theory holds that processes influencing someone’s psychosocial development “operate at several broad levels,” including at the individual, family, and community levels (Luthar *et al.*, 2000). The main focus of Resilience research is why some individuals manage to succeed under circumstances of immense pressure or trauma and why others fail. A significant portion of Vulnerability and Resistance theory has concentrated on children who thrive despite being in high risk situations (foster children for example). Ultimately, the research has illuminated several factors that “contribute to healthy development and positive adult outcomes, despite a wide variety of stressors” (Luthar *et al.*, 2000). Different factors include characteristics of the child, the nature of stressful life obstacles, and the support from the child’s key environment. The study concluded that environmental protective factors—the child’s family, school, and community—and individual characteristics—sociability, extraversion, openness to experiences, etc.—play significant roles in predicting whether a child will prevail or collapse in trying situations. Homeless students also reveal similar patterns of success or failure, in so far as some students graduate and some students do not. In the case of Diego Sepulveda, for example, he was quoted saying in his NPR interview that despite his difficulties, “Nothing is going to stop me. I’m going to reach my goals no matter what people say.” Other students, however, are dropping out (NPR, 2010). Understanding the role that schools play in the environmental factor can assist universities and colleges to better provide students with the support they need to succeed and ultimately decrease student attrition rates. The study also shows that even if schools provide the best support networks, some students may

still fail due to personal attributes, which is an important factor to take into consideration when evaluating the demographics of the homeless student population (which will be provided through a questionnaire).

Interviews with Administrators and Student Group Leaders

1. Natasha Saelua

Associate Director at UCLA Community Programs Office

1. Do you think student homelessness at UCLA is an issue?

“I do. I do. Especially given the rise of housing costs around UCLA. It makes it really hard for students. Sometimes you have eight people in one place.”

2. What resources are available at UCLA for homeless students?

“Economic Crisis Response Team has food vouchers. Have to give name, number, and e-mail.”

3. Where do homeless students sleep?

“On benches and couches in Student Activities Center.”

4. What is the most used/needed item?

“Nutritious food and hygienic items.”

5. Why have no surveys been conducted on this demographic?

“Time consuming”

6. What do you contribute as the main factors leading to students' homelessness?

“High cost of living in Westwood. Little or no opportunities for low-income housing that you’re not commuting 2 hours for. Essentially, lack of affordable housing. And larger economic family situations, families with larger economic crises.”

7. Does UCLA have free lockers available for students?

“Yes, in Student Activities Center outside 121B or if you are a member of “Recreations” at Wooden, free lockers there.”

2. Betzabel Estudillo

Formerly an undocumented student, she is now a United States citizen and one of the main facilitators of the CIRCLE Project (Collective of Immigrant Resilience through Community Led Empowerment). She is now a student at the UCLA Luskin School Social Welfare.

1. Homeless LGBT students?

“A large portion of undocumented homeless youth were kicked out of their homes and went to shelters with no access to resources or support systems. With no social security, they don’t have access to services.

2. What existing resources at UCLA do you recommend for homeless/hungry students?

“580 Café provides them free food and so does the Food Closet but recently they have less food and poor quality. Meal vouchers exist too but they are VERY limited...only accessible at certain times. Overall, there is very limited food; the times and locations aren’t always convenient; and food quality is poor.”

3. Clare Cady

*Assistant Director, Healthy Campus Initiative
Oregon State University*

1. How and why did the OSU Emergency Food Pantry get started?

“The Food Pantry was a result of gaps in the food safety net. The Food Pantry is student-fee funded in addition to donations from the local food bank’s donations. Last year we served 2,500 people. It is open every other week from 5-8pm; non perishables are available everyday however from 9-5.”

2. Does OSU have an idea of the number of homeless students on its campus?

“No.”

3. Have any surveys been done to quantify the population? If not, why not?

“No because it would take away time from serving the students.”

4. What other resources exist for homeless and hungry students?

“Meal Bux, a food subsidy. We give out 1,200 applications per quarter, about 75% qualify. School is also much smaller, 24,000 total at OSU. Emergency Temporary Housing is also available on campus which helps students especially during finals week. The student gets a single room, separate and tucked away for privacy issues. They’re residence halls but we made an agreement with the housing office. We start the student at two weeks but sometimes they need three or four weeks, which is fine.”

5. What do you contribute as the main factors involved in/leading to students’ homelessness? (Tuition, housing, etc.)?

“Affordable housing. There is 98% occupancy rate and often students can’t afford to find a place to live. Emergency situations are another factor. Home crisis or fires leave student homeless.”

6. What do you think are the most significant consequences for homeless students? (Academically, socially, etc.)?

“Students facing homelessness are less productive in their course work. They are focusing on their homelessness instead of school. Their lack of security leads to a negative impact on grades and physical health. Their mental health is also sacrificed.”

7. Does UCLA have free lockers available?

“No, but very very cheap. \$12/quarter.”

4. Maria Blandizzi

*Chair of the Economic Crisis Response Team
Director of Student Services Initiatives at UCLA*

*Reasons for Referrals:

| <u>Number of students per quarter</u> | <u>Reason for referral</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 86 | Outstanding University fees |
| 56 | Eviction/No local home |
| 37 | Insufficient credit/Lack of co-signer |
| 33 | Loss of financial aid |
| 21 | Illness/medical expenses |

Who?

- 30 - Undocumented students (short-term loans)
- 31 - Single Parent
- 22 - Foster youth

1. How and why was the Economic Crisis Response Team started? (2009)

“In light of the recession, the Vice-Chancellor recognized the impact on students with no family support and job market that wasn’t hiring. Bad credit also meant they couldn’t get private loans. A combination of issues in addition to fee increases led to the ECRT.

“Economic crisis” is an extraordinary financial crisis self-identified or identified by faculty; undergoing crisis that affects academic success and student success.

***Reasons for Referrals:**

| <u>Number of students per quarter</u> | <u>Reason for referral</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 86 | Outstanding University fees |
| 56 | Eviction/No local home |
| 37 | Insufficient credit/Lack of co-signer |
| 33 | Loss of financial aid |
| 21 | Illness/medical expenses |

Who?

- 30 - Undocumented students (short-term loans)
- 31 - Single Parent
- 23 - Foster youth

ECRT offers direct and indirect aid:

1. Chancellor's Grant, one-time \$4,000 grant
2. Facilitate meal/voucher program: up to 11 meals , per quarter, up to three quarters

780 students in past 2 month used food vouchers; easiest and quickest resource; no look
at financial records
3. Support the Food Closet by making referrals
4. Short-term loan program up to \$1,500 with no interest for 30 days; can be extended to 3 months
5. Connect students to networks and serve an advocacy role. For example if a student receives a parking ticket they cannot afford to pay, I call the parking office and develop a payment plan on behalf of the student so they don't accrue late fees.

6. Provide housing payment plans; extending due dates for financial crisis situations

2. Who funds it?

“Chancellor’s Grant directly from Chancellor’s donors, \$200,000.”

3. Are you aware of an estimate for the number of homeless college and university students at UCLA? Or who would know?

“Students I talk to are not homeless...they are showering in Wooden because there home is not close by and they are trying to make it affordable without paying for close housing. There are financial packages we offer: grants, loans, work study. It is your responsibility to fund your education, to go through all avenues before funding.”

4. What are the best options for aiding the homeless student population? Is subsidized housing an option? Does it exist at UCLA?

“No. Program initiatives in the works are interim housing and financial literacy on financial management”

5. What do you believe is the most important message to advocate on their behalf? What do you think is the most important resource/aid they need? (Food, school supplies, subsidized temporary housing?)

“Food”

5. Abdallah Jadallah

*Field Engineer at Peter Kiewit Sons'
Founder of the UCLA Food Closet, UCLA '11*

1. What inspired you to create The Food Closet?

“I had mentioned this religious belief...if you see a problem in society you have to go and fix it. You see this problem; let's create a solution in our UCLA community. So much food is being wasted in that time period, free food at events, extra free food. I went to student activity center...had a lot of students who would sleep in the office...Kerkoff or Student Activities Center, undocumented students sleep there.”

1. What did you observe from your experience to be the most necessary resource? Food? Toiletries? Bedding? Etc.

“Healthy food and somewhere to sleep.”

2. What do you believe is the most important message to advocate on their behalf?

“On the whole issue, the most important message is the Food Closet. This is a big problem we have in America in general. The Food Closet is there just to help out; it's not the solution to the problem. People need to become more knowledgeable and take more action. It's becoming discussed a lot more. I think the big issue, for me, is the way educational loans and interest are. A lot of these students, their parents don't have the money, so students take out loans and the interest would get so bad that they'd be working multiple jobs just to pay the interest not even the principal.”

6. Ugaso Sheik-Abdi

*Housing Policy Intern at Office of Congressman Keith Ellison
President of Minneapolis Community & Technical College's Wellness Advocates for You*

1. What inspired you to get involved with homeless efforts at MCTC? (Years involved)

“W.A. Y. (Wellness Advocates for You) Club originated because of the need for health clinics. It was established in 2009. Previous attempt failed because there hadn't been student

involved.

W.A.Y takes money from student services fee, 50 cents per credit added to student fees/tuition. There was a lot of push-back from administration to even acknowledge the issue of student homelessness existed. Because if they admit it's in an issue, it's on them. I did a short survey to see what resources are needed most. Faculty member helped compile the results. It came down to over 1,000 surveys and over a 100 people said they were currently homeless. Those with children or people of color had a high chance of being homeless and age was another factor.

Taking responsibility for the problem, the school administration did as little as they could, from my perspective. They argued they could not provide whatsoever. The other thing is they have the lowest graduation rate for people of color.

For me, it isn't necessary to do another survey, the need is there even if there are 10 students or 1 student, there's a need and we need to make an effort to get them housed and get them not to take the loans that sound like a great idea but aren't; you only have to take a 20 minute survey to take a loan which leads some students to take out ridiculous loans. Then there are fiscal concerns. They can't manage money well or there are mental health concerns. They take the money and don't understand that it's easy to get, but down the line they need to pay it back. Students need financial education/management. Many homeless students are between housing. The median one bedroom apartment is \$700 a month which is pretty steep.

Hardest part was keeping up the momentum. We had a potluck for students who need food. It created a sense of community so students don't feel ashamed for needing something Personally, I chose to be homeless because I had my own family crisis...went to nearest shelter...talked to case workers...you're in a group shower, no privacy...youth shelters, stuff

can get stolen, bed bugs, etc.

It was very hard to get any confirmation of anything sustainable happening from the administration. We still have a huge housing crisis at MCTC for students.

The “Resource Room” is a safe place to meet with social workers and community social workers for case helping...no guarantee that it’s going to be there next year. If we don’t keep pushing back right now, we won’t have the Resource Center anymore...then what else will fall by the wayside? It’s a place for clothing and toiletries and food shelve (semi-permanent).”

2. From your experience, what do you contribute as the main factors involved in/leading to students’ homelessness? (Tuition, housing, etc.?)

“Foreclosure and demand for housing that doesn’t put students at a transportation disadvantage (near a bus, etc.) is very intense. Really it’s about not enough supportive services, not identifying these students early on. If you could I.D. these students early on, have on initial student application with box that says are you currently homeless (including couch surfing), and then referencing them to the services RIGHT AWAY, you combat by targeting a population. Cost of living has increased. Students don’t have a support system or family. A really large part of it is they have mental or physical disabilities and their lives spiral out of control. They lose their job or if they get pregnant, any extreme life changing event or gradual build up, leads them to homelessness.”

3. From what you saw, what do you think are the most significant consequences for homeless students? (Academically, socially, etc.)

“Defaulting on loans is a huge issue. When their credit is ruined, their future is just made so difficult. How likely are you to go back to school if you drop out once? They face

depression, they are ashamed, and they feel socially unacceptable. If you want people to succeed, you need to really really help or else it's going to lead to more social and fiscal problems down the road. Need to keep it in the news."

7. Professor Ronald Hallett, University of the Pacific

Research interests include the influence of social context on educational participation and achievement. As a sociologist, his research seeks to address the social inequalities that influence marginalized student populations.

1. Hard data on the actual numbers of homeless students in colleges/universities are hard to come by (perhaps because it has recently spiked and garnered more attention than in the past or perhaps because homeless students do not generally out themselves as homeless due to embarrassment/wanting to fit in?) – different sources seem to state different statistics, and most of them include K-12 instead of exclusively college students; are you aware of an estimate for the number of homeless college and university students in America?

“No. The reason being that student “homelessness” becomes complicated at the postsecondary level. This is particularly true when considering four-year universities or other postsecondary institutions with residential options. A student’s family may live in a shelter (or other forms of homeless residence), but the student lives on campus during the school year. So is the student homeless? Maybe not during the academic sessions, but what about breaks and the summer … not to mention the transition period that may occur between graduation and getting a job. There are differing opinions about if students can be homeless if they have a room in a residence hall. I tend to believe they are still homeless.

The remainder of the students who are homeless likely couch surf, live in cars, or

have a placement in a youth shelter. The first two groups are very difficult to track. And the second group fall into the same dilemma as mentioned with the residence halls. One other issue is that people have been focusing a lot more on K-12 education. Given that earning a high school diploma is a huge barrier to college access, most advocates have focused most of their attention in helping students gain access to K-12. We have a lot more work to do at the higher education level.”

2. Are the majority of homeless college students previously homeless youth who attend college or are they students who began college with a place of residence and became homeless sometime during their higher education schooling? Are you aware of any data available on this breakdown?

“I am not aware of this data either. There is so much shame associated with homelessness that getting individuals to identify is difficult. In particular, the social stigma associated with homelessness in college (especially more elite institutions) leads many students to avoid identifying.”

3. As a related question, what do you think is the *primary* cause of student homelessness in post-secondary settings? (Tuition increases? Loss of jobs personally? Parents lose job?.)

“Honestly, I think this issue needs to be studied. I can guess, but I don’t really have any data to back up my guesses. I am not sure tuition increases would be the main cause; however, I am sure this is a contributing factor. I would imagine the causes are more personal – individual or family economic crises. I know some students “share” their financial aid funding with family to help keep them afloat.”

4. The scholarship available on homeless youth (mostly K-12) seems to indicate that youth homelessness is less chronic and more temporary—is it fair to assume college

homelessness is similar? If so, are you aware of the average length of time a student will go homeless in college?

“Another good question that needs investigation – I am not sure. I would imagine that individuals have varying experiences. For example, students in long-term youth shelters likely have been homeless for an extended period. Whereas there are students who hit a bump in the road that may last a semester.”

5. What programs or events generally spark the student’s escape from homelessness, or perhaps, what type of program is most beneficial to re-assimilation?

This seems obvious, but a program with a residential component that recognizes the needs of homeless students. As I mention in the About Campus piece, **having students move out during breaks can be really problematic**. In addition, similar to other low-income students, we need additional funding for tuition.

6. As you have discussed in your articles, a major challenge in identifying and quantifying the homeless population amongst students is due largely to the fact that they are ashamed and do not volunteer the information that they are homeless. You propose the use of different words other than “homeless” when advocating on their behalf in order to eliminate the negative stigma associated with “homeless.” What other ways/programs, maybe at other schools, do you suggest that could help make this population less ashamed and more visible? What is the most effective way to reach them?

“I think being more specific about the issue might help. Terminology like “residential instability” or “have you recently lost housing” or something like this might be easier for students to accept. In addition, **we need to build relationships with students and community**

organizations serving these students. An individual is more likely to open up about his/her struggle if he/she feels safe.”

7. What do you believe is the most important message to advocate on their behalf?

“Right now, I think we need to push for a conversation about supporting students in higher education. Yes, we need to do more work at the K-12 level; however, long-term stability is more likely to be achieved if these students have some sort of postsecondary training (e.g., certificate, associates, B.A.).”

8. What do you think is the most important resource/aid they need? (Food, school supplies, temporary housing?)

“Probably housing, money and mentoring.”

8. Mary Ann Prado

*Director of Resource and Referral Services
Minneapolis Community and Technical College*

1. Could you please tell me what your day-to-day work consists of as MCTC’s “college social worker”?

“A lot of students I see have poverty related issues, housing issues. I had created an intake form “advocacy and intake form” (online under student services) which gives me an overview of the student. That’s the first step. There are a lot of students in shelters, in homeless situations. A couple under-21-first-semester students staying with their grandma in senior home (which is not allowed). I give them a plan and connect them to appropriate resources. I ask them, are you hungry? What else do you need? Is your financial aid in order? Concept of looking at whole story of the student. Could be an intense 45 minutes. I serve as a one-stop opportunity center.

You also need community partnership, building really good working relationships, formally meeting for coffee. The long term goal is to get those resources at school, on the spot, for the students, getting county agents to provide county benefits.

We serve anyone (undocumented students are served). We try to serve currently registered students but I wouldn't reject them if they were suspended etc. We don't really ask for documentation. Community agencies don't really ask if student is documented, but with county benefits, they do care."

2. The Star Tribune, along with many other publications, have covered MCTC's and your efforts in the last couple years, particularly the ground-breaking use of a survey. You are the first school I have found with even a ball-park estimate. Can you tell me about your experience with this process?

A. Difficulties? How did you go about it?

"Not difficult to really get a number, with the "intake" form I mentioned. I was the designated "it person." People automatically came to me. The intake form allows me to see how many I see. There are a lot of students "doubling up."

We surveyed 1,000 students out of 14,000. 10% qualified as homeless. 90% of those I saw, through the intake form, had housing issues.

B. Any more recent surveys? Any way of comparing surveys?

"Now we have the resource center so it allows us to tally it. I can track now. It varies from 70 students per week. Half either getting evicted or the majority are in the shelters right now.

3. What resources exist for homeless/hungry students at MCTC?

- Informal Emergency Food Pantry (just created)

At first, the institution was not as supportive. I had to fight for \$5 subway cards, target cards. **They need snack-able stuff they can bring to school and carry around.**

A. How many students use it on a daily basis?

“A lot. We run out of food all the time so we’re adopting a new model. It’s random donations right now and whenever we have food it goes out so quickly. We give out 50 snack bags/day. On Monday we gave out 78.

4. What do you contribute as the main factors involved in/leading to students’ homelessness? (Tuition, housing, etc.?)

“A lot of our students don’t have any family. They are first generation college students with no family or the whole family is basically homeless. There is a lot of **generational poverty. It’s just a cycle.** Not having an income is another issue. They rely on student loans and grants. Also, there is just not a whole lot of housing, period. There is especially not a lot of affordable housing. Another issue is you need to have a good credit history, which some students don’t meet. Most importantly, the students need affordable housing with fewer restrictions.”

5. What do you think are the most significant consequences for homeless students?

(Academically, socially, etc.)

“They [homeless students] withdraw, they drop out, it’s just too hard. If you ask yourself, ‘If you don’t get a full 6 hours of sleep night the before, how are you going to come back to class ready to go?’” If you have not eaten, and all your things are in a backpack, and u have to barter and plan ‘If I stay here tonight, here’s what I would do.’ They shower in gym (**they have early access**). The face critical hygiene issues—no place to study, no place to rest, just no energy to succeed.” Students are facing eviction, are

behind in rent, are couch-hopping or staying in emergency shelters with some literally out in the streets. Students have varied problems. One needed a bus card to get to school. Three had housing issues: with one couch-hopping, one staying at a Salvation Army shelter, and another expecting to be homeless as family was moving out of state.

6. Does MCTC have temporary housing?

“No.”

9. Dwain Duran

Student Coordinator for the Food Closet at UCLA

1. Approximately how many students use the Food Closet per day?

“About 50-100 students use the Food Closet every day. We go through about 120-150 pounds of food per week.”

2. What is the most used/needed item?

“The majority of the foods are canned goods (beans, soups, etc.). Fresh stuff is usually gone by the end of the same day we receive it. Fresher produce, breads, grains, granola bars, yogurts etc. are needed. Canned foods are not the best option.”

3. Who funds the Food Pantry? How much funding does it receive?

“The Food Closet is all donations based from UCLA departments, local food banks, Swipes for the Homeless, etc.”

4. Does BRC have any idea of the numbers of “homeless” students on its campus?

“Enough to be noted, quite a bit. They’re under the radar and their pride doesn’t let them reveal their struggles.”

5. Have any surveys been done to quantify the numbers? If no, why not?

“Anonymity. There are sensitivity issues and some of these students don’t want their peers to know they’re homeless.”

6. What do you contribute as the main factors involved in/leading to students’ homelessness? (Tuition, housing, etc.?)

“**Tuition and housing costs** nearby school are major issues. Undocumented students also face obstacles receiving financial aid. Commuter costs are also another burden. A lot of the students I see are commuter students with financial difficulties. A lot of them have outside jobs, a lot of them are also undocumented students.”

7. What do you think are the most significant consequences for homeless students? (Academically, socially, etc.)

“**Decreases retention.** A lot of students are robbed of an education because of their financial burdens, they have to work full time while a lot of them also support their families back home.”

Resources at the University of California, Los Angeles

1. The UCLA Food Closet

The UCLA Food Closet is a small, unmarked storage closet on the second floor of the Student Activities Center where as many as 100 students a day visit to grab free snacks and food (mostly canned foods). The UCLA Food Closet, maintained by the Community Programs Office (CPO), was founded in 2009.

2. Meal Vouchers & the Economic Crisis Team (see interview with Maria Blandizzi)

3. 580 Café

580 Café is in the St. Alban's Episcopal Church at 580 Hilgard Ave and serves as a secular community service, providing free meals for UCLA students who cannot afford to eat. In a 2011 *Daily Bruin* interview, Campus Minister Jeanne Roe Smith, explains that the doors to the 580 Café are “always open” with couches for students to rest and fully stocked refrigerator. The food is free and as Smith explains, there are “no catches, no questions asked.” On Mondays and Tuesdays the West Los Angeles Meals on Wheels organization also provides hot food in addition to the coffee and sandwiches normally at Café 580. As long as the visitors are students, the refrigerator is available for them to help themselves.

Smith also explained that 580 Café has become a space “where students can discuss their personal experiences and frustrations,” writes the *Daily Bruin*. The article (“580 Cafe offers struggling students free food, develops community”) explains how the Café was “Founded initially to cope with the onset of the economic crisis, the 580 Cafe has been increasing its service in the last year to meet the growing waves of students facing rising tuition costs and budget cuts.” From 2010 to 2011, the amount of students the Café served doubled from 20 a day (three times a week) to 40 a day (five times a week).

Smith explains how students coping with overwhelming financial obligations, like housing and tuition, end up with “food stress” and prioritize eating at the bottom of their living necessities. The article also cites Edward Gurrola Jr., student development educator at the Bruin Resource Center in 2011. Gurrola examines the demographic change in the students afflicted by food hunger. “In our minds, we would tend to have a traditional image of groups who would be more hard-hit by financial difficulty,” Gurrola explains, but recently, there has been a shift toward students with middle class backgrounds facing food shortage. *The Daily Bruin* adds, “Gurrola views it as an indication of the lack of disposable income available to middle-income

families." According to Gurrola, "for families sending two or three kids to college, the parents are finding it difficult to come up with extra money. We must be aware that financial stress can affect everybody." □

Results

(Data: Quantitative (survey) and Qualitative (interviews) Method)

Interviews with Currently/Previously Homeless Students

The following interviewee names have been changed to preserve the privacy of the interview.

**PI = Principal Investigator*

1. Wendy Sherman

Previously homeless and undocumented UCLA student

Causes: Undocumented status, lack of affordable housing near UCLA, increased tuition costs

Effects: Poor academic performance, anxiety, depression, insecurity, helplessness

When I asked Wendy what the primary reasons for her previous homelessness was, Wendy identified **lack of affordable housing near UCLA, increased tuition costs, and lack of federal aid as the major issues** leading to her and other undocumented students she knew who are homeless at UCLA.

Prior to the 2011 passage of the CA DREAM Act, AB540 undocumented students were not eligible to receive funds from private scholarships, Cal Grants or grants and scholarships awarded by California public colleges and universities. Although the Dream Act now allows undocumented students to apply for California aid, Wendy explains that "undocumented students

still lack federal aid. They lack [access to] work permits therefore they can't find good paying jobs" to pay for tuition and housing. Some students result to "tutoring with bad hours" and poor pay in an effort to mitigate costs, Wendy adds.

Wendy explains, "When I transferred in as a freshman it was impossible to afford tuition and nearby housing" which led to commuting and eventually, "I would shower in SAC, sleep in Boelter in Engineering [on a] bench" or find a library on campus to sleep in.

Sleeping in Boelter, showering at the Student Activities Center (SAC), commuting, and working "bad hours," are not only inconvenient but also have significant emotional and physical effects. Wendy cites **poor academic performance** as one consequence. Instead of studying, students are commuting; instead of taking finals with a full night of sleep, they arrive to class after spending countless nights in a library chair or on a bench in Boelter. Jose accounts, "it depletes you...when I was commuting five hours a day, I was also working to pay for tuition so that was 7 hours a day I couldn't be studying [...] students also miss out on review sessions because they're working or far from campus."

From an emotional standpoint, Wendy illuminates that students "feel like they just **don't have any help**. They're **tired**." She confirmed **insecurity, anxiety, and shame as inevitable side effects of student homelessness**. Wendy explains that students are constantly weighing, "Should I eat or should I pay for the bus trip or for books?" The multiple stress factors in these students' lives are huge burdens on top of their academic work loads.

As far as university resources go, Wendy says "the Food Closet is great, but limited, and the voucher system is also limited...with only 11 vouchers per quarter, essentially one meal a week." Wendy adds that sensitivity on behalf of administrators for the food voucher system is

crucial for homeless students, and concludes with the importance of advocacy on behalf of homeless students: "Show that we exist. Advocate for food."

2. Ali Rider

Previously homeless student at UCD

Causes: Affordable housing, parent lost job, independent

Effects: Stress, anxiety

PI: Can you tell me about the instance or instances you have experienced "homelessness" at UCD?"

Ali: "Well I had problems with getting the money for rent and lost my lease at the beginning of the year I had to find a new place so I had to couch surf for a few weeks."

PI: How stressful. Why did you have problems getting the money for rent? Did you pay yourself?

Ali: "I had in middle school and high school always saved any money I earned. So I had saved up several thousand dollars. Since I am trying to graduate early I take around 20 units a quarter and would rather not work, I have been trying to live solely on this money and any I make during summer. Unfortunately I did not make as much as anticipated and I could not afford my place. Then I do odd jobs to make money for food and going to the pantry on campus helps."

PI: How did you find out about the food pantry?

Ali: One of my current roommates found out and told me about it. Otherwise I have no idea how I would have found out

PI: That has been helpful? How often did you or do you utilize it?

Ali: It is pretty helpful. I go probably on average once a week. Canned foods, cereal, sometimes toilet paper, or when they have snacks like granola bars then I won't be starving on campus all day.

PI: This is back-tracking a little, but were your parents not able to chip in? (financially unable to?)

Ali: They have a lot of financial issues, they pay for my grandparents rent as well, and my dad didn't have a job while I was in high school and he actually just **lost his job** about two months ago, although he has thankfully found another one. I know they have financial issues so I try not to ask too much.

PI: Understandable. Were there any academic or emotional consequences of your short period of displacement, or your overall financial issues, hunger, etc.?

Ali: There is just always the **stress** and **anxiety** that definitely do not help emotionally or academically.

PI: You have already touched on this, but basically what would you attribute as the primary cause or causes of your temporary homelessness? (i.e. tuition, rent)

Ali: Well if tuition wasn't so high then money might not be as big of an issue since I wouldn't mind staying four years and could then also work during school but rent is obviously what I had trouble paying

3. Hillary Kim

Previously homeless UC Davis student

Causes: financial/living crisis, independent/parents cannot financially support, credit card debt

Effects: frequent illness due to malnutrition, depression, anxiety

PI: When have you experienced "homelessness" at UC Davis?

Hillary: Only for a month about two years ago when something came up with my previous housing arrangement. After leaving the dorms, I was supposed to live with my then boyfriend, but literally right before moving in he tells me that he's not comfortable living with me anymore. I couldn't afford rent by myself.

PI: What does your support system consist of?

Hillary: Up until 2 months ago, it consisted of only grants. My parents can't help so I'm on my own. I have \$7,333 in student loans right now and over \$2,000 in credit card debt. The loans I took out after I quit my job, as I knew my parents could not help me financially with school and I had to pay for tuition and rent and food. The credit card debt is from daily living. Food is ridiculously expensive in Davis.

PI: What do you normally eat?

Hillary: Now that I've quit my food service job (and thus lost my free meal(s)), I usually just eat pasta with sauce and a little meat, plus a bowl of vegetables. If not that, then milk and cereal. Sometimes rice and some stir fried chicken and vegetables when I'm feeling generous.

PI: Can you tell me about the mental, physical, and academic consequences of your previous lack of permanent residence and your current lack of high quality food?

Hillary: I feel like I've gotten sick a lot more frequently this year than ever before, and I imagine the lack of adequate nutrition plays a part in that (though the Pantry at UCD does help; free canned vegetables, yay! It's better than nothing).

PI: You mentioned depression, anxiety, and shame in your survey. How did these come into play throughout your experiences?

Hillary: My original goal was to become a veterinarian. I had reality knocked into me though; there was no way I could pay off both undergraduate debt and veterinary school debt in a reasonable amount of time, especially with the demand for veterinarians going down like crazy every year. Aside from that, my GPA was far below acceptable for even the most mediocre grad school, let alone veterinary school. The lack of financial support and low grades combined led to many months of depression and anxiety. As for shame, I felt that I had wasted two+ years and my family's time having raised me, as it appeared that I would, as some put it, amount to nothing. Another problem was that I never had a great support group in terms of friends.

PI: Have you ever utilized any outside resources (i.e. food banks) or resources at UC Davis (i.e. food vouchers) besides the pantry?

Hillary: No, I hadn't been aware of them until recently, and I didn't think I qualified.

PI: Have you ever gone to a counselor or anything at school?

Hillary: Yup, I've gone to the Counseling and Psychological Services center on campus a number of times. Not really helpful. The first one just heard me out and asked if I felt better after gushing my heart out, and the second one literally told me, "Sorry, I don't know what to say..."

PI: Thank you so much for your time and insight. Is there anything else you would like to share about your struggles? How the school or community could help more?

Hillary: I think there should be **more advertisement about the food bank** and whatnot, but other than that, I think UCD has been improving a lot in terms of helping their underfinanced students.

The Pantry was definitely a great idea and has been extremely helpful.

4. David Froehlig

Currently homeless UCLA student

Causes: independent/single parent cannot financially support, credit card debt

Effects: health issues, frustration, fear, insecurity, isolation, dropping out of school, hunger

PI: What is your current living arrangement?

David: Sleeping in car and staying with friend occasionally.

PI: How long have you been sleeping in your car for?

David: Just started again this Spring quarter. Have slept in my car in the past.

PI: How many times have you experienced homelessness at UCLA?

David: My entire time here. I used to rent a storage space to sleep in (2011) in Westwood. I started in 2010 Fall. I withdrew two terms in a row and then just came back this Spring 2013. I attended as an UCLA extension student and concurrent enrollment student while at community college before being admitted. The storage space I rented was about \$80 a month. About 5'x5' or 5'x6' in size.

PI: Can you tell me about that experience, if you are comfortable?

David.: Sure, no problem. Well it was actually a nice upgrade from sleeping outside. But that was before I went to UCLA. The most stressful part about it was not being able to sleep when I wanted to. It was in an apartment building. I had no sneak into the place I rented since it was not for living. I'd have to circle the block if people were hanging around their cars or on their balconies. Sometimes it could be really frustrating, taking an hour before I could enter my storage space. Leaving in the morning was much easier (about 1-5 minutes). Another part about it was being organized and memorizing the location of my belongs and having a routine, so that I could do everything in the dark (brush my teeth, get dressed, etc.) I didn't use the light because it might give away that I was in the space.

PI: I cannot imagine how stressful this was for you.

David: I would not go back to that. That was one reason I decided to quit school. I didn't want to deal with that anymore. The renter kept a mattress in the space. He asked if he needed to move it,

I said, "No, I don't have that much stuff to store." I did that so I could use it to sleep, albeit it was twisted up against the wall. I rotated the mattress so the owner wouldn't know I used it.

PI: You mentioned it was better than sleeping outside earlier...where outside did you try and sleep prior?

David: At first rooftops for about a year when I first moved to CA. That was stressful for the same reasons as the storage. Police, security, janitors I had to avoid at night in order to get to my sleeping spot. Then there was avoiding students and teachers in the morning. To avoid the latter I had to wake up really early. Later on it was sleeping along the highway , other side of the fence.

PI: Leading up to all this, what do you contribute as the primary cause(s) of your homelessness?

David: Not unemployment: I worked all these times except for one term in the storage while going to UCLA because I wanted to focus just on school and get the best grades. **Parents:** In an indirect way. I suppose if I had two parents they'd be more able to help me. **My mother alone** always struggled herself. Me moving out made things cheaper for her. I'd say financial aid. I qualified for the maximum amount. And after I got "maximum eligible aid" it still was not enough to pay for housing. They say the rest can be fulfilled by parent plus loans (if ones parents have credit and are willing), or private loans. I unfortunately used to have **bad credit** from something 6 years ago. I fixed that later though

PI: And you mentioned you worked all these times, what is your job and how much do you make (if you don't mind me asking)?

David: I always worked in food service because I could get free food and it's the only job, I think, that's available after school hours of 4pm.

PI: Can you please walk me through a day at UCLA for you? Where do you normally eat, shower, study?

David: Now with a car I can "sleep in." Wake up and run or walk to school. No more biking, too stressful having bikes stolen. Go to the gym and have my shower done by 8 or wake up a bit earlier and go to the gym and then get dressed. Use the microwaves around campus to heat/cook breakfast or eat fruit somewhere. Sometimes go to Ralphs in the morning for yogurt or cold items (until I discovered the food pantry and the student lounge this quarter). Then go to class. Then study until night unless I have work. Leave at midnight or 11 back to the car.

PI: How did you find out about the food pantry? Also, are you aware UCLA has free food vouchers (albeit very limited # of them) for students no questions asked?

David: Randomly, just walking through the building and saw the door open and went in. I didn't know about the food vouchers.

PI: Where do you keep your valuable items? (i.e. books, social security...)

David: When I slept outside or roofs, I couldn't own valuables. I always kept my social on me. I rented a PO Box. I joined gyms so I could have a locker and kept clothes in there.

PI: Do you know about the free lockers available at UCLA in SAC?

David: No. I pay for one at the gym. Be nice to have another one. It gets cramped in my current one.

PI: How often is getting enough to eat a problem for you?

David: Restaurant jobs have become more corporate these years. No more free meals and limited employee discount. I am hungry sometimes but I try to embrace it, think about Gandhi, as funny as that sounds. **If I go to bed hungry I won't wake up hungry.** So I can skip dinner that way. But I eat lots of peanut butter. That's cheap. And bagels. Protein and carbs.

PI: That's a great attitude, but still seems stressful. Have you ever utilized any outside city resources (i.e. food banks)?

David: **Once I tried joining some teen thing in Santa Monica, the process was complicated and very un-confidential.** I didn't want a record of accepting social services then. Later I applied for food stamps but I rented an apartment then. Had to work at least 20-25hrs, can't remember which, in order to qualify. I lived like a King then. I don't want to use that service again though.

PI: Have there been academic consequences of homelessness at UCLA been for you?

David: **As a student nothing is more valuable as time. Losing time trying to get to bed, losing time getting off a roof unnoticed (I did get caught and had to move).** I withdrew mostly because I wanted to work full time and get an apartment, and not have to sneak around anymore. I came back to school now because I was able to buy a car. That's my apt and good enough.

PI: Have you experienced any emotional or physical consequences? (i.e. anxiety, insecurity, etc.)

David: **Health:** a few. **No insurance as community college student.** I **twisted my ankle once and it was bad.** I was going off the roof when I was trying to get down in the night to go to the bathroom and twisted on a slope. No one around, just hopped back and went to bed. Took 5 months to heal because I had to work at the restaurant. Another time I got "lightly hit" by a car on my bicycle. My toe got injured and I had an infection. **When I got scared enough about the infection I went to the hospital.** I had to use a fake address, etc. **Emotional,** yea. Just lots of **frustration** sometimes. I can take it for about 4 months and then it starts to wear me down. Not so much now. Car helps and I have had time to make friends I can tell. I have two friends I can tell about my situation.

PI: That's great you have friends you can trust. I was going to ask about that, what does your support system consist of? (friends, family, school counselors, etc.)

David: **Can't tell my mother because that would worry her.** She can't help me so no reason to tell her. My sister I can talk to. Sometimes she has the means to help me in an emergency. I'd call from payphones on phone cards and talk for hours. Maybe once a month. Now I have a cell. Technology helps a lot. **No school counselors,** I used to be extremely secretive about my living **situation.** Even now I don't tell.

PI: Are you afraid school counselors would make note of it? Not keep it confidential?

David: I don't think they have much means to help. I spoke to one counselor a little about my situation at UCLA just because I wanted her to understand I'm a great student, but at a disadvantage and then I withdrew from school.

PI: They may not, but they may be able to hook you up with resources at school that may be able to help...free food vouchers (11 meals/quarter); the food pantry etc. But yeah, I know what you mean.

David: I wish I could do as other students, have time to join a club and do a sport. But those students don't need to work so much. Yes, those two things you mentioned to me earlier would be really nice aid.

PI: Did you ever sleep in night Powell? (Library.)I know a friend who used to do that...

David: I did that sometimes. It's really cool to have that option.

PI: You've already touched on this, but what are the most difficult aspects of your day to day life associated with your highly mobile lifestyle?

David: Weight. Carrying dirty clothes from locker to car (have to park far away), carrying my food (until I noticed the UCLA pantry (helps A LOT). Although I had food stolen or thrown away, despite my note. Then I gave up storing food in fridge for a while. Carrying work clothes in bag. Weight and trying not to sweat since I don't shower at night. Not being able to socialize. I have to plan if I think someone will ride in my car (move my sleeping bag and pillows to the trunk). Or faking I live somewhere. Having an excuse all the time. When outside the rainy season was tough. Holidays are the worst time. Everything is closed.

5. Jonathan Black

Previously homeless UCLA student

Causes: financial/living crisis, independent/parents cannot financially support, recession

Effects: negatively affected academic performance, insecurity, fear

PI: Are you currently or were you ever during your time at UCLA “homeless,” which includes sleeping in your car, couch-surfing, doubling-up with friends etc.?

Jon: Yes I was, between Freshman/Sophomore year for about 9 months.

PI: What was your living arrangement? Can you tell me a little bit about where you slept, how you find a place to sleep, your challenges, etc.?

Jon: Before coming to UCLA I was living with my aunts. They were already in mortgage trouble when I was there so I was already expecting them to lose their house. First year I was in the dorms, but for winter break/spring break I'd have to go back and there was nowhere to go back to. I ended up sleeping in my now ex-girlfriend's car. Also we never told her parents that I was sleeping in the car so I would have to hide out from them every morning when they would go to work. And at it was so hot, 9am when the sun comes up the car gets burning.

PI: So to back-track a little, what *exactly* led to this situation?

Jon: So my parents are divorced and have been for a long time. I was living with my dad. Teenage angst years where I didn't really get along with him, it didn't help that my mom was pushing me to act out against him either. Long story short, I ended up moving out of there and

into my aunts' house, my mom's sisters. But they didn't have their financials in line, bad investments, gambling, market downfall around 2008. That was the whole story about not having electricity and water sometimes. When it came time for UCLA to start it was a little getaway from those problems, but basically I knew there wasn't going to be a place to go back to. Added to that was that my mom talked me into "selling" my car that I had in high school to my aunt. By winter break freshman year, they were already moving their stuff out for foreclosure and with no car, nowhere to go.

PI: Okay got it. So what did a day at UCLA for you at the time look like? Where do you normally eat, shower, or study?

Jon: Depends on where I slept but normally I had my ex take me to the gym. I have a membership that I got years ago which I only pay \$20 a year, so I kept that and used it to shower, brush my teeth, and all that stuff in the morning. Usually whoever hosted me let me eat with them, one of my best friend's family used to have me over for dinner a lot.

PI: Did you ever use any UCLA resources like food vouchers?

Jon: I would crash at certain friend's house too. I'm a bit prideful. I never really told any of them how I was living or what I was doing. And I never knew UCLA had food vouchers.

PI: Where did you keep your valuable items? (books, social security, etc.)

Jon: Pretty much on me

PI: I know you mentioned your friend's family would have you over for dinner but was getting enough to eat ever a problem for you in general during this time?

Jon: I would always make it work some way or other. \$1 menus were awesome and I had some money saved from my summer job that got me by until I got the job at the library at CLICC

PI: I can't imagine the effects of all that moving on school and just the stress...What were the academic, physical, and emotional consequences, if any, of the whole situation at the time for you?

Jon: At the time, it was just what I needed to do. I didn't think any different honestly but I've always been the type to hold my emotions in. Not the best thing to do since after every so much you'd blow up. Funny thing is that I didn't notice my academics unless I look at my transcript now. **Every time I see an irregular grade it's pretty much because something was going on at that particular moment.** Looking back though, it looks crazy after everything and I really can't believe all that happened over that period

PI: What would you say were the most difficult aspects of your day to day life associated with your highly mobile lifestyle?

Jon: **To me, not having the sense of stability,** the feeling of "being home" whether the place is shitty or amazing, but it's yours.

6. Jennifer Roehling

Previously homeless student at UCR

Causes: single parent cannot financially support, undocumented student

Effects: depression, fear, insecurity, hunger, isolation

PI: At the time you were homeless, can you tell me where you stayed? Challenges?

Jenn: That was for my first and third year as an undergraduate. I was living on my friend's couch and had to sleep in my car for a little.

PI: What would you say led to your homeless status those previous times?

Jenn: Probably my legal status followed by my financial one. Also being raised by a single mom, so even when I struggle financially I would always avoid telling her so as not to worry her because she was already helping me enough by helping with tuition.

PI: How did your legal status affect your situation?

Jenn: Thanks to the CA dream act (Ab131) I am able to get state financial aid and do not worry so much as before about paying for tuition and a place to leave close to school. But yes everything was difficult, there was not much that I was able to do without a SS#. I was not able to work or receive financial aid, so my mom and I had to work multiple jobs in order to barely pay for school tuition. Also as a consequence of all that stress I was in depression part of my 2nd and 3rd year. I would normally shower at some friend's apartment but I would not tell anyone that I did not have a place to stay because I usually do not like to bother people so most of my friends and family have no idea about this. I always try to show a strong me and wouldn't like anyone to say "Poor Jenn." My last class finished at around 7-8pm so I would be on campus the whole time doing hw and studying because there was no internet at my friend's house. I think the most difficult part was that I would not eat well because I did not have money to buy food at the

cafeteria and even when I had lunch it did not last me for the whole day. There was almost nobody at that time because I was a freshman I did not know exactly how everything worked, did not have many friends because some of the people I met lived at the dorms and they were able to meet new friends easily but I was not.

PI: Have you ever utilized any outside resources (i.e. food banks) or resources at UCR (i.e. food vouchers) to combat your homelessness? If Yes, what resource(s)?

Jenn: Yes but not in UCR. I used to go to a food place in LA very close to downtown, where you buy lots of food for around \$20. The name is world harvest food bank, it is on Venice blvd.

PI: Are you aware of any food vouchers or aid at UCR that you could have used?

Jenn: No. I am one of the co-founders of Poder (providing opportunities dreams and education in Riverside) and we always tried to get food donations for UCR students but it never happened.

10:45am

PI: What were the most difficult aspects of your day to day life associated with your highly mobile lifestyle?

Jenn: Aside from being hungry, probably feeling that I did not have a place to call home, because even if I would go home, my mom lives in her work so I would stay in my sister's couch and that did not feel like home either.

7. Rebecca Cherney

Currently homeless CSUSM student

Causes: tuition, affordable housing, previous debt, bad credit

Effects: exhaustion, fear, anxiety, hunger, poor academic performance

PI: What is your current living arrangement? (not asking for address. Ex. staying at a friend's house, sleeping in car, etc.)

Rebecca: Couch surfing, staying at my friends' houses. I was in foster care.

PI: Before this, you came from foster care straight into this situation?

Rebecca: No I went to FIDM and got a degree but when I transferred to CSUSM I had trouble with finances due to the school messing up my financial aid. At FIDM I could afford an apartment.

PI: How long have you now been homeless for?

Rebecca: Just for a few months. I'm trying to save up to get my own place. With tuition and school and stuff it's been hard to save money.

PI: What do you contribute as the primary cause or causes of your homelessness?

Rebecca: **Definitely school.** Since CSUSM didn't transfer me in correctly they messed up my financial aid so I have had to pay out of pocket for a lot of expenses and loans and they put a cap on my loans. I'm just trying to pay bills loans. I have a financed car, I have credit cards maxed

out and I have loans from FIDM that are not deferred that need to be paid. Such a problem. I try to apply for food stamps and I keep getting denied because I get financial aid and they see that as fit to pay.

PI: Does your school offer food vouchers that you're aware of?

Rebecca: No not that in aware of in the ACE scholar foster program but so far they don't help out

PI: What have the academic, physical and emotional consequences of homelessness at your university been for you?

Rebecca: Bad grades. My grades have gone down and I am on academic probation. Because I am not able to get to school sometimes, my last grades were 3 C- and 1 C+ all because I missed class, teachers lowered my grade one full grade.

PI: Not being able to go to school? Work?

Rebecca: Work sometimes. Sometimes I don't have gas.

PI: What about the emotional consequences, if any?

Rebecca: Just stressed out and sad all the time. Feel like I'm not getting ahead when I should be or I just need a break.

PI: What does your support system consist of? (friends, family, school counselors, etc.)

Rebecca: Just friends, I don't really have family. I also worked full time at FIDM and full time school but for some reason at CSUSM the hours are all split up and I can't do that.

PI: What/Where do you normally eat?

Rebecca: Fast food or at home if I can afford groceries. Sometimes I don't eat just because I can't afford it.

PI: What message, if any, would you like to advocate on behalf of yourself or others facing similar challenges to fellow university students and the community?

Rebecca: That the university should make it easier for students who are struggling, and possibly have alternatives for the students such as a free meal at the school or maybe \$5 gift cards set aside for students who can't afford food or housing arrangements because it's really frustrating. Just that foster care sucks and the schools don't take the struggles into consideration with grades and such as my academic status. But also when times are tough you can still push and get through them, I have. I will have 4 degrees once I graduate just sometimes things are hard!

8. Liz Becker

Previously undocumented homeless UCLA student

Causes: undocumented student status, kicked-out of house for sexual orientation, commuting

Effects: depression, anxiety, insecurity, hunger, substance abuse, dropping out of school, negatively affected mental health

Liz: As an undergraduate “I had to commute two hours a day and at the end of the day I didn’t have food to eat, so ten of us [friends in similar situation] would get leftovers from faculty luncheons. We got creative hunting for food and we were sharing food. With UCLA, we were fighting for payment plans because our classes were being dropped when we couldn’t pay. For us, we have the summer to work to pay for fall, winter, and spring tuition and sometimes we just didn’t have enough.

PI: What are homeless undocumented students’ situations like?

Liz: A huge problem is commuting. We don’t have the ‘college experience.’ If there is a meeting and we need to stay late, we start couch surfing. It’s easy to blend in because no one can identify you...people are in the library late and it looks like you’re just [sleeping there after studying late] but just because you are a student doesn’t mean you’re not homeless. We would sleep in SAC [Student Activities Center], the library, but they started cracking down after 11pm ...we used to go to Moore, crash at Graduate lounges...[homeless students] stick together...when you find a safe place, you stick around there...

What were some of the challenges?

Liz: No place to keep your stuff; you carry your life in your backpack. You try and carry as little as possible because you don’t want to look homeless...less you carry, the better. Toiletries, basic necessities you don’t think about—we’d have to carry them.

PI: From your experience, what are the main reasons these students are homeless today?

Liz: I think the number one reason is tuition, and then housing is towards the end. There is a

hierarchy of needs: tuition, books, food, place to sleep.

What are some of the effects homelessness has on students?

Liz: Toll on mental health...youth between the ages of 16 and 25 are starting to form their identify as an adult. They develop depression and anxiety, and some turn to substance abuse to try and cope. Some students tell their parents they're queer and get kicked out which leads to couch surfing. They settle with living with bad people in bad situations. Coming out [as a homosexual] and not being accepted by friends also leads to maladaptive coping behaviors, like excessive drinking. Getting a job to pay for tuition is also hard for undocumented homeless youth because of their status. The mentality for these students is first, tuition; then, the rest: books, eat, apartment. Those came later.

Survey

Data collection via a confidential survey began on Tuesday, March 12. One hundred forty-three total respondents have taken the survey on homeless college/university students. One hundred and eleven UCLA participants have taken the survey thus far (77.6%) and the remaining 32 breakdown as follows:

- New York University: 1 respondent
- Barnard College in New York: 1 respondent
- University of San Diego: 1 respondent
- Brown University: 1 respondent
- University of California, Riverside: 1 respondent
- Minneapolis Community & Technical College: 1 respondent
- California State University San Marcos: 1 respondent
- *Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo*: 2 respondents
- Santa Monica Community College: 2 respondents
- San Diego State University: 1 respondent
- *Saddleback College*: 1 respondent
- University of California, Santa Cruz: 2 respondents
- University of Southern California: 2 respondents
- University of California, Davis: 15 respondents

The survey was administered through Wednesday, June 12th. A total of nine currently or previously homeless students have partaken in one-hour interviews. The purpose of this study is twofold. First, the research attempts to identify the demographics, characteristics, and histories (why they became homeless) of homeless UCLA and other university/college students, and with

that information ascertain what university resources can better assist a struggling student population. The other purpose of the study is advocacy; the survey is designed to understand how many students at UCLA and other schools are aware of the issue of student homelessness.

Who are Homeless University/College Students and Where are they Living?

For a demographic snapshot: 16.1% of all respondents are self-identified as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 48% as white, 39.1% as Asian, 1.6% as African America, and 11.3% as Middle eastern (Q4). Eighty-three percent of survey respondents are citizens, 16.% are not, and .8% did not want to answer (Q9).

More importantly, the data report indicates that of the 127 respondents that answered this question, 20.5% think student is an issue at their university while 38.6% of respondents “don’t know” if student homelessness is an issue at their school (Q1). The results of this research will ultimately speak to the 60% of participants who “do not know” or do not think homelessness is an issue in higher education. Advocacy for an invisible and marginalized group as difficult to identify as homeless students is the first step in combating the stigma surround the issue. It is also vital in the ultimate goal of securing greater resources for students in need.

Question 18 results indicate that 58% of UCLA student respondents are “Financial Aid Recipients.” Furthermore, according to Question 33, “In your time as a student at your university, have you ever experienced ‘homelessness’ as defined at the beginning of the survey?”— 16.1% (or 19 respondents) of all respondents who answered the question said yes. Almost 84% answered no. Fifteen of the affirmative respondents are UCLA students (79% of *affirmative* answers) while four (21% of *affirmative* answers) are students at the other colleges/universities.

This question is asked of the respondent towards the beginning of the survey, before the student starts answering specific living arrangement questions. What is interesting is that the data indicate that although only 16.1% of student respondents said they'd experienced "homelessness," a larger amount actually ended up qualifying under the definition provided them, as illuminated through their responses to questions like "Are you currently living in transitional or emergency shelters" (Q23).

Of the 117 respondents that answered this question, 20.5% of students (or 24 students) are "currently sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; or living in emergency of transitional shelters" (Q21). Nineteen of those students, or 79% of affirmative respondents, are UCLA students while the remaining five students are students from the other schools listed. Thus, when asked if they are "homeless," far fewer students (19) said they are homeless or have experienced student homelessness. But when the question is broken down to include a broader less typical association, asking if they are currently living in motels or doubling-up because they lost their house, they answer affirmatively. This is important because it indicates the gap between the definition of homeless and the reality of its inclusiveness. Even the struggling students themselves associate negatively with the word "homeless," as opposed to "sharing housing" etc., indicating the importance of word choice in reaching out to this vulnerable population.

For Question 22, when asked "Have you at any point since attendance at your university shared the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; lived in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations?" –18.2% of respondents answered Yes.

Moreover, sixteen students in total “currently have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (i.e. library, car, student activities center)” (Q23), or 15.8% of the total respondent population. Of the 16 affirmative respondents, 14 of them are UCLA students. **At a bare minimum, 14 UCLA students are currently sleeping in public space like a car, library, or park bench due to financial difficulties and the loss of a permanent residence.**

Question 25 asks the student, “Do you *currently* live in emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings?” Approximately 3% said Yes, all UCLA students. The following question asks if they have experienced this situation if not currently, at any point while a student at their university—six students, all at UCLA, answered affirmatively.

Transitioning from public space to moving frequently from couch-to-couch, Question 27 asks the student, “Are you *currently* forced to share housing with others, commonly referred to as ‘double-ups’ or to ‘couch surf’ (frequently move from house to house without a designated residence)?” Approximately 6% of respondents are currently couch-surfing or doubling-up. The following question (Q28) asks the same question to include not present cases, but any previous experience, yielding 16/1% of students to respond affirmatively.

Hand in hand with issues of homelessness is the issue of hunger. Question 29 asks, “Is getting enough to eat a problem for you usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?” From the entire population, 6.2 “Usually” cannot get enough to eat while 22.1% “Sometimes” have trouble getting enough to eat, indicating the wider-spread and associated issue of student hunger. Approximately 76% of the students “sometimes” not being able to get enough to eat are UCLA students and 71.4% of the “Usually” hungry are also from the UCLA subset.

In order to utilize a different method of assessing how many students are homeless at UCLA Of the 106 that responded to Question 30, “How many students do you know who are ‘homeless’ at your university/college?” the average for the total population was approximately .8. Specifically for the UCLA subset, the average is .97, meaning on average, each person knows one homeless student, with a maximum of 15 and a minimum of 0.

When asked, “What areas do you feel your school should help more with?” tuition, job opportunities, and temporary housing ranked in the top three with 88% of all respondents included “tuition,” 76% asked for more “job opportunities,” 52.8% cited “temporary housing,” 50% noted “food,” and 44% included “advisors/counselors” (Q31).

What leads to student homelessness in higher education?

A study published by the *American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences* in February of 2012 by Nita Paden begins to inspect the reasons behind the rising phenomenon of student homelessness in higher education. An important point to understand is the distinct difference between the general homeless population and the homeless student population. Blurring these identities has in large part contributed to one of the primary challenges in quantifying and identifying this demographic—their fear of being stereotyped in the same way the general population is. “College students are typically not homeless upon their arrival to campus. Students may have initially had support from home, scholarships, financial aid, etc. that allowed them to make the decision to pursue their college degree” (Paden, 2012). Once enrolled, however, numerous variables can lead to the loss of permanent housing, including family crisis—“the student’s family may have experience a loss of income or other hardship that prevents them from financially supporting their student” (Paden, 2012). Moreover, in the face of

a struggling economy, the student himself may lose his job, losing a primary source of financial survival, “or the jobs available provide salaries that are inadequate to support the student” (Paden, 2012). Another contributing factor the study illuminates is that tuition increases after the student enrolls, as the University of California, Los Angeles student population has experienced in the last four years. In essence, “Tuition increases may result in the student only being able to pay tuition with no money remaining for other necessities.” As a result, some students drop out, while those who remain to complete their degree, resort to unfortunate circumstance to get by, “in an intolerable roommate situation, including domestic violence, drug use, or extreme incompatibility” (Paden, 2012).

Questions 32 and 32b of the survey conducted in this research ask the student “What do you contribute as the primary cause(s) of your homeless” and along with multiple boxes to check for answers, the question also allows for open-ended responses. The large majority of the open-ended and chosen multiple choice responses repeat two major themes: tuition and lost job (either their own job or a parent lost a job). Open-ended survey responses also included:

- **Student A:** “Financial aid was not enough to help with tuition. In order to study to get As, I had to reduce the hours I worked to 20 hrs/week which was a lot but reasonable to get good grades. It wasn’t enough to afford rent though. More hours also meant I was too tired to study.”
- **Student B:** “Loans from previous college have been taking up a majority of my paycheck which should be going towards tuition and housing.”
- **Student C:** “One deceased parent, one absent parent. I am completely on my own and I just don’t make enough to support all the costs of living school.”

- Student D: “A few things. A family crisis along with a previous year’s debt and bad credit. The other big thing is no affordable housing near school. Rent is too high.”

From the respondents who qualified to receive and answer Question 32 (29 respondents), “the primary causes of your homelessness” break down as seen in Figure 2 (*note, respondents can choose more than one cause), with tuition, parent(s) lost job, and family crisis as the top three reasons:

- ❖ **Tuition:** 64% of respondents
- ❖ **Parent(s) lost job:** 44.8%
- ❖ **Family crisis:** 44%
- ❖ **I lost my job:** 31%
- ❖ **Too many dependents:** 20.7%
- ❖ **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Mental Illness:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Kicked out of my house:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Addiction:** 6.9%

Figure 2. Survey reports: Reasons for Homelessness

In accordance with the limited but existing scholarship previously touched upon, tuition and an economic recession leading to layoffs/lost jobs rank as the leading causes of student homelessness.

To gage whether the population at large had taken on work to help pay for overwhelming costs, Question 34 asks “Have you taken on a job/additional jobs to pay for tuition?” Approximately 36% of the total population responded affirmatively, indicating the burden of tuition as a major financial vacuum for students. The follow-up question (Q34b) asks if they took

on extra work to pay for housing—20% of respondents have taken on an additional job to help combat the increased cost of housing.

Of the 26 currently or previously homeless students who answered “How many separate instances of homelessness have you experienced since you began attending your college/university?” the mean was a 1.38. Therefore, it seems students are not experiencing continuous, separate, and frequent bouts of homelessness but the data indicate that the average student undergoes some specific financial or family crisis and thus experiences approximately one instance of homelessness.

In an effort to gage campus awareness of existing resources for struggling students, Question 37 asks “Have you ever utilized any outside resources (i.e. food banks) or resources at your university (i.e. food vouchers) to combat your homelessness?” Roughly 13% of respondents answered affirmatively while an overwhelming majority, approximately 87%, has not utilized school resources when in need. Forty-six percent of those who did utilize school resources listed the Food Closet at their school while 30.8% listed meal vouchers.

According to the survey, free food sources were the most frequently used when available.

Effects on Students

A longitudinal study conducted by Stanford University researchers in 2009 observed a large, urban school district in a rare experiment including children whose families were living doubled up with others or in hotels. “Overall results showed that homeless and highly mobile (H/HM) students scored significantly lower in reading and math than other low income students, and both ranked well below the general student population” (Obradović *et al.*, 2009). The study explains that homeless students experience a “broader constellation of risk factors” than other

impoverished students, including “economic stressors, parental job loss, and parental financial distress; residential mobility; school mobility; crowding; and hunger and poor nutrition” which have a “greater effect on student performance.” The findings in this study provide a starting point in answering Research Question 5. Although the study observed younger children, the underlying factors of poor academic performance are the same for homeless college students and the consequences are just as profound. Students living in poverty feel incapable of continuing in school; even some students who have paid work “at a level that enabled them to live, found their capacity to study was compromised by their employment commitments” (Bessant, 2003).

Specific research on homeless university students also indicates homeless university students “take longer than the standard duration to complete their degrees” (Grace *et al.*, 2012). For these students, poor academic performance could detrimentally alter their futures, and in fact defeat the very point of attending higher education: to secure their futures.

Some students do not even qualify for loans; in some cases undocumented students cannot apply for financial aid or loans while other students, who are citizens, may not qualify for loans because of bad credit or the lack of a co-signer. In any case, the concept of loans as a remedy for the homeless college student phenomenon does nothing but prolong addressing the issues while ultimately creating life-long burdens. To this effect, Noam Chomsky writes, “Students who acquire large debts putting themselves through school are unlikely to think about changing society, When you trap people in a system of debt, they can’t afford the time to think. Tuition fee increases are a “disciplinary technique,” and, by the time students graduate, they are not only loaded with debt, but have also internalized the “disciplinarian culture.” This makes them efficient components of the consumer economy.”

Socially, physically, and emotionally, the impact of homelessness on college students is

so unbearable that many drop out before completing their degrees. "Without housing, access to a work space, or access to a shower, students' lives suffer, their grades suffer, and they are more likely to drop classes, if not withdraw entirely from school," explains Associate Professor of English at Florida State University, Amit Rai. "If seen from the perspective of students, administrators would place affordable housing and full access to health care at the top of what a university should provide" (Bader, 2004).

Depression, anxiety, negatively affected physical and social health, isolation, fear, shame, and insecurity are but a few of the profound effects of homelessness this research has found to have on university/college students.

Most importantly, Question 33 of this study's survey on homeless students (exclusively asked of currently or previously homeless students) attempts to understand what the psychological, physical and emotional effects, if any, of homelessness was on these students. This question was exclusively asked of currently or previously homeless students. Twenty-four of them responded. The three most frequent effects of homeless on these students included

depression, anxiety, and negatively affected academic performance. Anxiety, fear, shame, and negatively affected mental health were also identified as significant effects of homelessness.
(See Figure 3.)

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 80% | - Depression |
| 67% | - Anxiety |
| 62.5% | - Negatively affected academic performance |
| 58.3% | - Helplessness |
| 58.3% | - Negatively affected mental health |
| 58.3% | - Insecurity |
| 45.8% | - Negatively affected physical health |
| 45.8% | - Negatively affect personal relationships |
| 41.7% | - Isolation |
| 41.7% | - Shame |
| 33.3% | - Fear |
| 16.7% | - Substance Abuse |
| 16.7% | - My property was stolen |

Figure 3. Effects of Homelessness on College/University Students

Discussion

The research process ultimately further illuminates the difficult nature of gathering concrete data on a highly mobile and secretive population. Despite this, with what data was collected, through qualitative interviews and quantitative surveying, the research concludes that student homelessness is indeed an issue at UCLA (with 14 UCLA students currently sleeping in a public space like a car, library, or park bench due to financial difficulties and the loss of a permanent residence) and calls for further surveying and analysis of an unfortunately rising population across the United States. The data also show clear patterns in how and why students become homeless; the effects of homelessness on a student's physical, mental, and emotional health; and what program(s) are being utilized the most. The research reflects that tuition, parent(s)' loss of job(s), and lack of affordable housing are the three most common primary reasons for student homelessness at the university/college level. Other largely common factors in both the quantitative and qualitative research include: single parent, undocumented student status, and poor credit/unable to qualify for loans. The survey indicates a significant portion of students (6%) are currently "doubling up" or "couching surfing" due to lack of finances and that a large portion of students at large are forced to take on additional job(s) to pay for tuition and housing. From the data available thus far, it is also clear that student homelessness follows short-term trends, as opposed to long-term chronic homelessness (i.e. "a couple weeks" with an average of one incident of homelessness per previously/currently homeless respondent). Most significantly, the effects of homelessness are emotionally and psychologically daunting, with 80% of previously/currently homeless student survey takers reporting depression, 67% citing anxiety and 62.5% reporting negatively affected academic performance. All three of these top-ranking effects seen in the survey are confirmed by the qualitative interviews, with every

interview including at least two of the following: depression, anxiety, insecurity, or negatively affected academic performance.

Solutions

The saddest part of this entire issue is that is solvable. Every public and private college or university has the tools to begin working towards the alleviation of student homelessness, whether it be advocacy campaigns or implementation of charity-based Food Closets. Before implementing solutions, however, the college or university must overcome some wide-spread obstacles at schools all over the nation.

First, universities and college administrations and counselors must become more educated on the issue of student homelessness in higher education. The word “homeless” has evolved, and many administrators and students are not aware of the expansive nature of the definition, including students couch-surfing or doubling up. Upon acquiring a firmer grasp of the issue and its meaning, the biggest challenge for universities and colleges is to quantify how many of their students qualify as homeless and to identify the nature of their homelessness. Schools need to begin implementing regular and frequent surveys in an effort to accrue identifying data that will better help them assist their students. Then, the students need to be placed on a vulnerability index, allowing the school to prioritize the neediest and most endangered students and to allocate funds proportionate to level of need.

The second obstacle is determining where to locate the university contact point (i.e. at Financial Aid Office, Health and Wellness Center, Student Housing, the Office of Student Affairs etc.). Particularly in California, with years of budget cuts chipping away at higher education, resources are scarce, and shortages of personnel, time, or space present challenging

problems for some colleges and universities. Nonetheless, a centralized university contact point is a necessary step, should be implemented early on in the process, and should be set for a location and environment where students can easily find it and feel comfortable discussing personal or private issues.

A third challenge is the implementation of an effective communication strategy. “A communication strategy is essential for creating awareness of the needs of students by the university and awareness of students of assistance programs offered [...] There should be messages to inform students in need of the availability and location of assistance, as well as messages to inform agencies, faculty and other students so that should they encounter a homeless student, they know where to direct them (See Figure 1).” The messages should be focused on relaying information on available resources and services at the university/college (Paden, 2012).

Figure 1: Communication Flows - Informing and Persuading Homeless Students

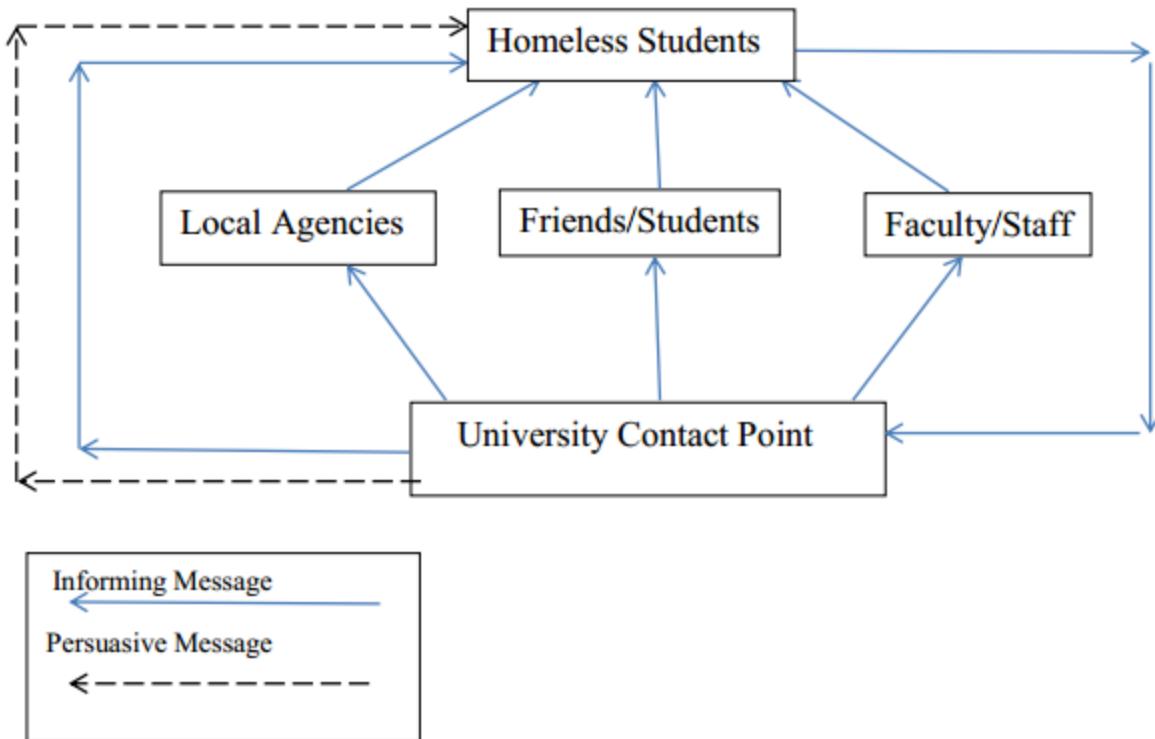


Figure 1: Communication Flows - Informing and Persuading Homeless Students (Paden, 2012)

After these informational challenges are overcome and the necessary structural underpinnings are implemented, universities and colleges can begin to implement the following ten mechanisms and strategies to begin solving the issue of student homelessness in higher education:

1. Changing how we think and speak about student homelessness

As this research has shown, shame is a significant underlying factor of why schools and organizations have such a difficult time gathering concrete information on the state of student homelessness in colleges and universities. Aside from their highly mobile nature, many students hide the facts surround their lives of poverty. To combat this, administrators, counselors, and

students need to begin re-framing the image of student homelessness. In an interview with Professor Ronald Hallett at the University of the Pacific, he highlights the importance of words in dealing with such a complex issue. Hallett explains, “Words matter. The problem with this language is that youth rarely identify with the term ‘homeless.’ Shame permeates the life of individuals without residential stability.” The unintended consequence for students who reject the term due to its stigma is that they do not receive the needed support to navigate the educational system. Working to change the stigma around the word “homeless” or perhaps as Hallett suggests, using “highly mobile,” can potentially encourage more homeless students to seek support while simultaneously providing researchers a more visible, accessible, and accurate sampling population.

Moreover, a more inclusive, socially attractive word would also serve to help agencies collaborate and collect data more efficiently and consistently. Federal agencies, including the Departments of Education (Education), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), collect data on homelessness; yet, “because research studies GAO reviewed often used different definitions of Homelessness [...] and focused narrowly on unique populations over limited geographical areas, the studies cannot be compared or compiled to further an understanding of which factors are associated with experiencing homelessness” (United States Government Accountability Office, 2010). Thus, the acceptance, application, and more universal usage of a more sensitive word with a broader definition could consolidate and increase available data while not stigmatizing a marginalized population of students.

2. Utilizing existing resources: faculty and counselors can reach out

Sometimes, the people students trust the most are individual teachers or counselors.

Simple sensitivity and assistance can sometimes make a substantial difference to a student. One faculty member requested here name and school not be disclosed, but expressed that she “has allowed several homeless students to sleep in her office during the past decade. Although there is no institutional interest or involvement in keeping these students enrolled, a few faculty members really care about the whole student and don't shy away from helping” (Bader, 2004).

Although this is not a solution to student homelessness, it is an alleviating force that can motivate susceptible and vulnerable students not to drop out of school and to continue working towards their degrees.

3. Consistency in university counselors and staff involvement

If a homeless student approaches a counselor or administrator, they must be well-equipped and sensitive in responding to their problems. More importantly, these students need a consistent and invested reference point, a counselor that will follow-up on the students progress even if the student drops off the radar. Dana Scott, coordinator for the education of homeless children with the Colorado Department of Education, identifies “a single supportive adult that stepped up and helped them navigate the system as the most influential factor in aiding homeless students” (Nelson, 2011).

4. Consolidation and wide-spread/frequent distribution of information on available resources

In order for the “single supportive adult” to effectively operate as Scott projects, “there must be a wide-spread distribution of information on available resources to individuals that work directly with students, including faculty, residence hall staff, academic advisors, counseling

programs, and educational resource centers" (Nelson, 2011).

Another crucial aspect is consolidation. Most universities, including UCLA, lack a clear, organized, consolidated, and accessible platform for what resources are available to homeless students and how they can go about receiving them. Most of the homeless students at UCLA I interviewed were unaware of the (very limited but existing) meal voucher program available for struggling students. Information for different resources are scattered, sometimes are only available in person, and are often not updated. Available resources the university/college has in place for struggling students must be consolidated onto one website with links and applications available on how to receive the resources and where exactly to go to speak to a counselor or administrator. Search optimization must be utilized by campus IT staff to make online resources more easily accessible to students in search of help. Students are constantly being bounced around from Financial Aid to Housing to Wellness Centers and many give up before finding any answers. At UCLA , for example, the Economic Crisis Team was created in part to resolve this issue and provide references and information for students while connecting them to further resources. Most of their services, however, more specific information on their whereabouts or appointments, are much harder to locate online. Colleges and universities need to begin building informative online platforms that also connect students not only to university resources, but also to local, state, and federal avenues for aid with websites listed, including:

- “The National Clearinghouse of Families and Youth provides recommendations for college students who may be homeless.

- The National Center for Homeless Education lists resources for college students who may be dealing with homelessness.
- Some students who are homeless may be able to apply for grants through the Federal Trio Program, a form of federal assistance targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities.
- Homeless young people hoping to attend college (or already attending) may not know that federal law enables those who lack a "fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence" to claim independent student status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. Youth workers can advertise this fact using a free poster from the National Center for Homeless Education and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators" (Promoting Federal Student Aid to Homeless College Students, 2013).

In essence, universities/colleges that do have any safety nets in place for students, need to modernize and organize in order to more effectively connect struggling students with existing and future resources.

5. Assign homeless students to university/college residence halls open year-round, including during breaks

As confirmed by the interviews conducted with students throughout this research, many students who perhaps live in dorms during the school year, are left with no place to go when universities shut down dorms during school breaks and vacations. Students who grew up in

foster care, or students whose parent(s) lost their home, end up sleeping on the street, in cars, or on friend's couches. Dana Scott (Colorado Department of Education's coordinator for the education of homeless children) confirms "assigning homeless students to residence halls open year-round, including during breaks" as one significant way to prevent a specific subset of the student homeless population's loss of residence (Nelson, 2011).

6. Allowing housing deposits to be placed on a bill rather than large and required up-front payments

Some universities and colleges do accommodate this, but not all. Especially in the face of state budget cuts and a national economy recovering from a enormous job losses, universities and college need to permit eligible students in need to place their housing costs on a bill system which arranges smaller installments due with longer periods to accrue the payment. "This way, financial aid can help pay for it; and it gives students storage space to keep personal documents or belongings," explains Scott. In that light, schools should also set aside a number of free lockers for struggling students in Student Activities Centers and the library to avoid their things from getting stolen and to provide a safe place for essential school and living items (i.e. social security, books, etc).

8. Implement a small quarterly/semester student fee

In light of the rise of hunger and homelessness at the college and university level, a few universities and colleges have begun installing small student fees in quarterly/semester tuition bills which are sent towards the school's programs aimed at helping homeless and hungry students, including Food Pantries, emergency housing, or meal vouchers. Minneapolis

Community & Technical College, for example, which has a large number of homeless students attending the College, has added 50 cents per credit to student fees which goes towards the school's program Wellness Advocates for You, which provides free food and wellness services to its struggling students.

Oregon State University also implemented a similar program, which added a small student-fee which goes towards the school's Food Pantry, providing free food and snacks to hungry and homeless students.

According to administrators, the installment of the student-fees has been a huge assistance in providing students with needed resources and providing the necessary staff to run the programs. UCLA, amongst many other university and colleges, does not have such a system set up. Most institutions that do offer any similar resource to their students, like a Food Pantry, are solely donation-based, which does not allow for consistent accessibility to food, let alone healthier foods.

With the implementation of a small quarterly student-fee (i.e. 25 cents), a portion could also be kicked back to Financial Aid so that students who cannot afford the increase can opt-out. At UCLA, with over 40,000 undergraduate students, a quarterly fee of 25 cents for three quarters/year would yield over \$30,000 per year which could be proportionally allotted towards the Food Pantry, the creation and sustainment of temporary housing, textbooks, and the production and distribution of a comprehensive informational pamphlet (print and online) on available university resources and programs for homeless students.

8. Interest-free student loans

At many universities, it seems common for administrators to be pushing loans down

students' throats as a solution to their financial problems. But many of these students lack co-signers, have poor or ruined credit, or lack the financial management education to understand the interest implications of a loan they get hooked into in less than 20 minutes.

In an interview with Ugaso Sheik-Abdi, Housing Policy Intern at Office of Congressman Keith Ellison and former President of Minneapolis Community & Technical College's Wellness Advocates for You program, she explained that schools need to "make an effort to get them housed and get them not to take the loans that sound like a great idea but aren't; you only have to take a 20 minute survey to take some of these loans which leads some students taking out ridiculous loans. Then there are fiscal concerns. They can't manage money well or there are mental health concerns. They take the money and don't understand that it's easy to get, but down the line they need to pay it back plus interest. Students need financial management education first."

Furthermore, according to Abdallah Jadallah, Field Engineer at Peter Kiewit Sons' and founder of the UCLA Food Closet, "A lot of these students, their parents don't have the money, so students take out loans and the interest would get so bad that they'd be working multiple jobs just to pay the interest on the loan, not even the principal!"

Alternatively, no-interest loans offer benefits to struggling students who qualify for them. They will only have to return the exact amount they borrow, without the potentially thousands of dollars in interest added to their eventual expense.

9. Partnering with local agencies

Many universities and colleges already partner with local agencies or charities to provide more resources for their students. UCLA for example, receives donations from the Los Angeles

Food Bank and works with Swipes for the Homeless to draw students themselves into the fight against homelessness. Universities and colleges that do not already do so should start identifying local agencies, charities, and student organizations to collaborate with in alleviating student homelessness. “This could increase a university’s emphasis on civic purposes of higher education while addressing the needs of their students” (Leiderman, et al.2002).

Available anecdotal evidence also suggests that a homeless or hungry student will often turn to their local food bank before seeking university resources because information on local agency resources are more easily accessible online. Once the student approaches a volunteer at a food bank, they often ask for references on shelter, but oftentimes volunteers are not fully prepared to informatively present all the available resources, especially not at the university level. To bridge this gap, “Communities and Universities may be able to work together to both increase awareness of homelessness and develop a process to help met the needs of students” (Paden, 2012).

10. Awareness: Encourage Debate

Lastly, “debate should be encouraged if the circumstances and needs of homeless people are to be interpreted and responded to as accurately and as effectively as possible” (Drake et al, 1998). Although complete consensus on the issue of homelessness is unlikely, advocating for homeless college students and engaging in debate on the best ways to alleviate the issue will lead to a wider array of possible solutions. Policy-makers, professional and volunteer agencies, along with homeless students themselves ought to engage in discussing a rising American phenomenon

that affects not only students, but parents, children, schools, governments, and taxpayers for years to come.

Additional Research Challenges and Personal Note

Aside from the difficult nature of quantifying a highly mobile population or the challenges associated with overcoming feelings of shame in getting participants to reveal their stories, working with school administrations has also been a difficult task. Many university administrators do not want to admit to student homelessness. Key authority figures in charge of crucial social roles, like the Director of UCLA's Economic Crisis Team (founded in order to help struggling students in the face of the 2008 recession), perpetuate these attitudes with comments like: "Students I talk to are not homeless...they are showering in Wooden because their home is not close by and they are trying to make it affordable without paying for close housing. There are financial packages we offer: grants, loans, work study. It is your responsibility to fund your education, to go through all avenues before funding."

Perhaps the issue here is one of defining "homeless," or perhaps it is a political or ideological dilemma. It is, however, the position of this paper that these students do in fact qualify as homeless (depending on their specific situation). For the most part, students who are showering everyday in Wooden or sleeping in the library regularly are not doing so because they are cheap or they are trying to "make it affordable"—the issue is that they simply *cannot afford* to live by school and therefore must sacrifice a permanent residence in order to pay for tuition. Just because a student's family may have a residence somewhere in the state, it does not realistically mean the student has livable access to it. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in the research, loans and grants are by no means a solution to these students' issues. Some of these students have bad credit or no-cosigner and therefore do not qualify for loans; some students are

undocumented and therefore do not qualify for loans or federal aid; some students without financial management education take out terrible loans with large interests which end up magnifying their financial problems. Work study is also not universally available to all students.

Ugaso Sheik-Abdi, Housing Policy Intern at Office of Congressman Keith Ellison , co-founded the Minneapolis Community & Technical College's Wellness Advocates for You in order to provide food and resources for hungry and homeless MCTC students. But the process was incredibly difficult, in most part due to administrators: "There was a lot of push-back from the administration to even acknowledge that the issue of student homelessness existed, because if they admit it's in an issue, it's on them. As far as taking responsibility for the problem, the school administration did as little as they could, from my perspective. They argued they could not provide whatsoever."

In addition to fiscal or ideological differences, no UC school I contacted had any data or had ever conducted a survey to quantify how many of their students were in conditions of poverty like homelessness. MCTC was the only school which had conducted a survey a few years ago and it was not the school administration which conducted the survey but two or three people out of Wellness Advocates for You, including Ugaso Sheik-Abdi.

As a result, when attempting to gather any information from the school, every office, program, and administrator would refer me to someone or somewhere else—from Financial Aid to Housing to Student Affairs to Economic Crisis team; there was no consolidated information source. After three referrals, the fourth point would often be non-responsive, often leading to a dead end, having to start all over. Even at the level of student government, which was also contacted throughout the research to gather information and collaboration for solutions, there was a strong pattern of non-responsive, non-information on the issue, and resistance. One

General Representative of UCLA's student government responded with "Finding the exact number of homeless students is very difficult" and suggested moving on from quantifying the student population in need. Upon asking the Representative if there was a way UCLA's student government could help distribute the online survey in order to quantify the population in need to allocate resources accordingly, he responded, "But even then, are the students even able to check their emails and do they have regular access to a computer? [...] The school can't keep certain track of it all." Yes, every UCLA student must have computer access to pass any class, enroll in school, or turn in assignments—even if they have to access it through library computers. The argument that poor students do not have computer access at a world-class university and can therefore not be quantified is ridiculous and only goes to demonstrate the lack of commitment some administrators have to solving more complex student issues.

Lastly, the impression I received from many administrators, professors, and even students was the idea that unless homeless students reach a certain threshold, or critical number, then it is not really an issue. As indicated by the survey conducted in this research, at a very minimum, 20 students at UCLA are homeless. It does not matter if UCLA has five, 15, or 200 homeless students—the university is morally obligated to have basic programs and services available to quickly remove students from these emotionally and physically traumatizing situations—especially during times of doubling UC tuition costs and economic recessions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study will use a mixed methods design, which will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods throughout the research process. Due to the lack of existing concrete

quantitative date on the number of homeless students at UCLA, quantitative surveying is necessary to build a foundational estimate. However, in understanding the backgrounds of homeless students, qualitative interviews will also be necessary in order to draw a genuine portrayal of student life. Thus, neither approach alone could fully capture the details of the situation. Overall, the research will draw from an interpretive critical approach—focusing on experiences of the participants with an end goal of contributing to a change in higher education policy for homeless student.

Both numerical and text data, collected concurrently, will help better understand the research questions. A mixed methods study, however, requires prioritization, implementation, and integration (Creswell *et al.*, 2003). For this study, priority, and hence emphasis, will be given to the qualitative approach. In regard to implementation, date collection will occur concurrently while integration will occur towards the end of the research process.

This study will use a specific mixed method model: sequential explanatory mixed methods design, consisting of a first phase—which will collect the numeric data using an in-person questionnaire—and a second phase which will then utilize interviews and case studies to develop qualitative date. The first set of numeric data aims to identify the demographic and personal characteristic variables while the second set will attempt to provide a holistic representation of the research issue, including what internal and external factors contribute to student homelessness.

The research question for the first, quantitative phase focuses on what factors predict students' homelessness at UCLA. Demographic characteristics (including gender, age, GPA, employment, family status, year of enrollment, physical health, etc.) on the questionnaire will direct the strength of the relationship between personal attributes and the dependent variable,

student homelessness.

Target Population and Sample

The target population in this study are “homeless” (as defined in the introduction) university and college students in the U.S. However, the broader university/college student population will receive questionnaires in order to assess a rough estimate of the proportion of homeless students. In-depth semi-structured interviews (in person, or over the phone) will consist exclusively of homeless university/college students that are eligible as defined in the questionnaire. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (77.6%) are UCLA students due to the fact that the survey was accessible to non-UCLA students later on in the research process due to limited responses. Thus, the smaller numbers of struggling of students at the other universities in no way reflect a larger issue at UCLA necessarily, but instead reflect my access to more resources to distribute the survey along with it being accessible to UCLA students for a longer period than to students from other school.

The interview questions focus on answering research questions 4-6 (principal reasons for homelessness; physical and psychological consequences on academic performance; most effective program/resource). Following the in-depth semi-structured interview, the respondent will also be asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire (SAQ). Interviewed students will be able to review and correct the content of the interview after it has been transcribed, if necessary.

The interview will be guided by a pre-set list of questions and topics that will need to be covered during the dialogue, but it will also be open to topics that may stray from the pre-set guide in an effort to capture the genuine differences and similarities between respondents’ lives as homeless students. The semi-structured interview style will also allow respondents to express

their views and experiences openly, on their own terms.

In order to analyze the qualitative data, I will read through the interview transcripts and notes, code the data by dividing and labeling the text, combine the codes to develop themes, connect related themes, and ultimately discuss the conclusions (Creswell *et al.*, 2002).

Further qualitative data analysis will involve analyzing within and across case studies, after developing detailed descriptions of each student, in an effort to contextualize the data individually and holistically.

Limitations of Sample

“Homelessness is quintessentially such a population and indeed that it is ill defined and very mobile makes it even more difficult to enumerate,” explains Professor Malcolm Williams of Cardiff University (Williams, 2010). Firstly, homeless students’ frequent geographic mobility makes contacting them more difficult. Secondly, due to embarrassment, pride, or a variety of other reasons, many students purposefully remain invisible. Williams adds, “They rarely appear on voting lists, medical registration (with a doctor), they rarely have bank accounts and do not pay local taxes” (Williams, 2010). “Doubled-up” students also contribute to the difficulty of quantifying homeless students as well as to the under-estimation of the population. Those residing at any designated establishment for the homeless (i.e. a shelter) are more easily and regularly accessible.

As a result, the students who are more visible or are willing to come forward for interviews may represent a specific subset of the student population. The lack of a randomized sample may leave the study open to differences in personal attributes skewing the data toward a particular personal characteristic. Although this may limit the generalizability (and hence, external validity) of the study, it should not damage the internal validity of the research.

Furthermore, the results are by no means a proportional representation of the school at large. I sought groups to take the survey which seemed pre-disposed to conditions of poverty or homelessness (i.e. Food Pantry student groups). Therefore, the results are more geared towards in-depth understanding of profiles of existing or previously homeless students and are no longer an attempt to assess what percentage of the entire student body is homeless (due to limited resources and time).

Advantages and Limitations of the Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design

Advantages to the design include easy implementation by a single researcher (since one stage sequentially follows another) and an opportunity to analyze the quantitative results in more detail in case there are unforeseen outcomes in the numerical portion of the study. The tradeoff, however, involves sacrificing a larger length of time to complete the data collection and the possibility of quantitative data resulting in no significant differences (Creswell *et al.*, 2002).

Ethical Considerations

Since the study will require interviewing a vulnerable student population, the research has been subjected to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and has been approval.

References

1. Bader, Eleanor. "Homeless on Campus." *The Progressive*. The Progressive, July 2004. Web. 13 May 2013. <<http://progressive.org/node/718>>.
2. Bessant, J. (2003). The problem of poverty amongst tertiary students: Why it is missing from the policy agenda. *Melbourne Studies in Education*, Vol 44 (2), 69-87.
3. Buckner, J.C. (2008). Understanding the impact of homelessness on children: Challenges and future research directions. *American Behavioral Scientist*, (51), 721–736.
4. Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (3 ed.). London, England: Sage Publications, Inc.
5. Danielson, A. (2010, December 3). *Kstp's 5 eyewitness news covers homelessness at mctc* . Retrieved from <http://info.minneapolis.edu/bid/105490/KSTP-s-5-Eyewitness-News-Covers- Homelessness-at-MCTC>
6. Diego, S. (2010, July 27). Interview by Hillard Gloria [Personal Interview]. College students hide hunger, homelessness. Retrieved from <http://m.npr.org/news/front/128778321?singlePage=false>
7. Drake, Robert E., Carolyn Mercer-McFadden, and Kim T. Mueser. "Result Filters." *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 24.4 (1998): 589-602. *National Center for Biotechnology Information*. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Web. 22 May 2013. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9853791>>.
8. Hall, J. (1999). Marginalization revisited: Critical, postmodern, and liberation perspectives. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 22(2).
9. Hallett, R. (2012, November 19). Interview by S. Ashtari [Personal Interview]. "college homelessness."

10. Liederman, S., Furco, A., Zapf, J., & Goss, M. (2003). *Building partnerships with college campuses: Community perspectives*. (Monograph: A publication of the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education's Engaging Communities and Campuses Program). The Council of Independent Colleges.

11. Luthar, S., D. Cicchetti, and B. Becker. 2000. The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71 (3), pp. 543–562.

12. Madison, D. (2011). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance*. (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

13. Marty, G., Keys, D., & Hart, A. (2012). Homeless university students: Experiences with foyer-type service, *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 3(1).

14. Miller, P. (2011). A critical analysis of the research on student homelessness. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), 303-329. doi: 10.3102/0034654311415120.

15. Morrow, R., & Brown, D. (1994). *Critical theory and methodology (contemporary social theory)*. (1 ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

16. Nelson, Libby. "In College, Without a Home | Inside Higher Ed." In College, Without a Home Inside Higher Ed. Inside Higher Ed, 11 July 2011. Web. 5 Feb. 2013.

17. Obradovic, J., Long, J., Cutuli, J., Chan, , C., Hinz, H., Heistad, D., & Masten, A. (2009). Academic achievement of homeless and highly mobile children in an urban school district: Longitudinal evidence on risk, growth, and resilience. *Development and Psychopathology*, 21, 493-518. doi: 10.1017/S0954579409000273.

18. Paden, Nita. "HOMELESS STUDENTS? NOT AT MY UNIVERSITY: THE REALITY OF HOMELESS COLLEGE STUDENTS." *American Society of Business and Behavioral*

Sciences. 19.1 (2012): 669-73. American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences. Web. 15 Apr. 2013. <<http://asbbs.org/files/ASBBS2012V1/PDF/P/PadenN.pdf>>.

19. "Promoting Federal Student Aid to Homeless College Students." *National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth*. National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth, n.d. Web. 13 June 2013. <<http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/the-beat/2011/03/homeless-fafsa>>.

20. Ravenhill, M. (2008). *The culture of homelessness*. (p. 19). Ashgate.

21. Reed-Victor, H. & Stronge, J. (2002). Homeless students and resilience: Staff perspectives on individual and environmental factors. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 8 (2), 159-173. Williams, M. (2010). Can we measure homelessness? a critical evaluation of 'capture-recapture.' *Methodological Innovations*, 2(5), 49-59. doi: 10.4256/mio.2010.0018.

22. Rosenthal, Andrew. "Paying Rent on Minimum Wage." *Taking Note Paying Rent on Minimum Wage Comments*. The New York Times, 30 May 2012. Web. 13 June 2013. <<http://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/paying-rent-on-minimum-wage>>.

Appendix 1: Online Survey on Homeless University/College Student

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Survey on Highly Mobile University/College Students

****Important Definitional Guidelines**

For the purposes of this survey “homeless” and “highly mobile” are used interchangeably. **A “homeless” or highly mobile student includes (but is not limited to) students:**

- **“doubling up”:** forced to share housing with others due to economic hardship, social/family crisis, or loss of housing
- **“couch surfing”:** frequently move from house to house without a designated residence
- **sleeping in Powell Library, Student Activities Center, or other school properties** due to economic crisis for short or extended periods
- **living in car**, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

1. Do you believe student homelessness at your university/college is an issue?

Yes No I do not know

2. What is your gender? Male Female

3. What is your age?

18 22

19 23

20 24

21 Other

4. What is your ethnicity? Hispanic/Latino White Asian African-American

Middle Eastern Other _____

5. What year are you at your university/college?

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Other _____

6. Are you employed? Yes No

a. If Yes, how many hours per week do you work? _____

b. If Yes, what is your hourly wage? _____

c. If No, how do you get money?

Parents Other family member(s) Financial Aid/Government support

Other _____

7. Do you have children? Yes No

a. If yes, how many? _____

8. What is your primary language? English Spanish Other _____

9. Are you a U.S. citizen? Yes No

10. What educational level did your parents attain? Elementary School Middle School

Some High School High School Diploma Some College

College Diploma Other

11. Were you adopted or in foster care while growing up? Yes No

11b. If Yes, for how many years? _____

12. How many times have you moved in your life? _____

13. Your parents' current marital status:

Married

Separated

Widowed

Divorced

- Raised by single parent
- Raised by someone other than parent(s)
- Other

14. City/State/Country of your parents' or guardian's current residence:

15. Are you a Financial Aid Recipient at your university/college?

- Yes
- No

15b. If Yes, what type? (loans, grants, scholarship, etc.) _____

For Questions 17-20 please rate your parent(s)' financial status on a scale of 1-5:

1 = homeless/living in extreme poverty; 2 = lower economic class; 3 = middle class; 4 = upper middle class 5 = upper class, extremely wealthy.

16. What year did you begin your schooling at your university/college? _____

17. Your parent(s)' financial status when you began at your university/college:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

18. Your parent(s)' financial status two years after you enrolled:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- N/A

19. Your parent(s) financial status today: 1 2 3 4 5

20. In your time *as a student at your university/college*, have you ever experienced

“homelessness” as defined above?

- Yes
- No

21. Are you *currently* sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; or living in emergency or transitional shelters?

- Yes
- No

21b. If Yes, where are you living and for how long? _____

22. Have you *at any point since attendance at your university/college* shared the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; lived in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations?

Yes No

22b. If Yes, where were you living and for how long? _____

23. Do you *currently* have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (i.e. library, car, student activities center)?

Yes No

23b. If Yes, where are you sleeping and for how long? _____

24. Have you *at any point since attendance at your university/college* had a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings? (i.e. library, car, student activities center)?

Yes No

24b. If Yes, where were you living and for how long? _____

25. Do you *currently* live in emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings?

Yes No

25b. If Yes, where are you living and for how long? _____

26. Have you *at any point since attendance at your university/college* lived in emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings?

Yes No

26b. If Yes, where were you living and for how long? _____

27. Are you ***currently*** forced to share housing with others, commonly referred to as “**double-ups**” or to “**couch surf** (frequently move from house to house without a designated residence)”?

Yes No

26b. If Yes, where are you living and for how long (not asking for address; ex. “Friend’s house for two weeks”)?

28. Have you ***at any point since attendance at your university/college*** been forced to share housing with others, commonly referred to as “**double-ups**” or to “**couch surf**” (frequently move from house to house without a designated residence)?

Yes No

28b. If Yes, where were you living and for how long (not asking for address; ex. “Friend’s house for two weeks”)?

29. Is getting enough to eat a problem for you usually, sometimes, rarely, or never?

- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

30. How many university/college students do you know who are “homeless”?

31. What areas do you feel your school should help more with? Temporary housing

- Food Tuition Relief/Reduction Job opportunities Money
- Advisors/Counselors Other_____ None of the above

If you answered “Yes” to one or more of the questions 19-27b:

32. What do you contribute as the primary cause(s) of your homelessness?

_____ **32b.** If your response falls into one of the below categories, **please check all that apply:**

Lost Job Parent(s) Lost Job(s) Tuition Addiction Family Crisis
 Too many dependents Mental Illness Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 Kicked out of my house

33. Which of the following do you feel you have experienced as a result of your “homelessness”?

Check all that apply:

Insecurity Depression Anxiety Fear Shame
 Helplessness Isolation

Negatively affected academic performance Negatively affected physical health

Negatively affected mental health relationships Negatively affected personal relationships

My property was stolen Substance abuse

Other _____ None of the above

34. Have you taken on a job/additional jobs to pay for tuition? Yes No

34b. To pay for housing/rent? Yes No

35. Who did you live with before you became “homeless”?

Parents Family Friends Self Group home Other _____

36. How many separate instances of homelessness have you experienced since you began attending your university/college? _____

37. Have you ever utilized any outside resources (i.e. food banks) or resources at your university/college (i.e. food vouchers) to combat your homelessness? Yes No

37b. If Yes, what resource(s)? _____

If you answered Yes to any of the Questions 19-27b and/or answered Questions 32-37b:

38. Would you be willing to participate in a short 20-30 minute phone or online interview with the primary investigator of this study? Everything in the interview and the survey will remain confidential. Your time and assistance will be compensated with your choice of food vouchers or a Trader Joe's Gift Card.

Yes No Need more information

****If Yes/Need more information:**

Please fill out:

Name (OPTIONAL):

Contact Info:

Phone number: _____ **and/or E-mail:** _____

Best time to contact you: _____

39. Would you like to be entered into the raffle to win a \$50 Trader Joe's Gift Card?

Yes No

If Yes, please include a way to contact you. Otherwise, there is no way to distinguish your survey when it is drawn from the raffle. Please include phone number and/or email address:

Thank you so much for your time and participation!!

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

(Sample: UCLA student interview questions)

Interview Questions

- 27.** What is your current living arrangement? (not asking for address. Ex. Couch-surfing, staying at a friend's house, sleeping in car, etc.) Can you tell me a little bit about where you sleep, how you find a place to sleep, your challenges, etc.?
- 28.** How many times have you experienced homelessness at UCLA?
- 29.** How long did you experience homelessness for or how long have you currently been homeless for?
- 30.** Can you please walk me through a day at UCLA for you? Where do you normally eat, shower, sleep, study?
- 31.** Where do you keep your valuable items? (books, social security, etc.)
- 32.** Are you aware of the free lockers available at UCLA?
- 33.** How often is getting enough to eat a problem for you?
- 34.** Where, what, and how often do you normally eat?
- 35.** How many UCLA students do you know who are "homeless"? _____
- 36.** What areas do you feel your school should help more with? (Temporary housing, food, etc.)
- 37.** Have you taken out loans at UCLA? Why or why not?
- 38.** What do you contribute as the primary cause(s) of your homelessness?
- 39.** What have the academic consequences of homelessness at UCLA been for you?
- 40.** What have the physical or emotional consequences of homelessness at UCLA been for you? (hunger, etc.)
- 41.** What does your support system consist of? (friends, family, school counselors, etc.)
- 42.** Do you currently have a job? How much do you get paid?
- 43.** Have you taken on a job/additional jobs to pay for tuition? Or to pay for housing/rent?
- 44.** Who did you live with before you became "homeless"?
- 45.** Have you ever utilized any outside resources (i.e. food banks) or resources at UCLA (i.e. food vouchers) to combat your homelessness? If Yes, what resource(s)? _____
- 46.** What resources are you aware of at UCLA that could help you (vouchers, etc.)?
- 47.** What are the most difficult aspects of your day to day life associated with your highly mobile lifestyle?
- 48.** What message would you like to advocate on behalf of yourself or others facing similar challenges to fellow Bruins and the community?

Appendix 3: Figures 2 & 3

- ❖ **Tuition:** 64% of respondents
- ❖ **Parent(s) lost job:** 44.8%
- ❖ **Family crisis:** 44%
- ❖ **I lost my job:** 31%
- ❖ **Too many dependents:** 20.7%
- ❖ **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Mental Illness:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Kicked out of my house:** 17.2%
- ❖ **Addiction:** 6.9%

Figure 2. Survey reports: Reasons for Homelessness

| | |
|-------|--|
| 80% | - Depression |
| 67% | - Anxiety |
| 62.5% | - Negatively affected academic performance |
| 58.3% | - Helplessness |
| 58.3% | - Negatively affected mental health |
| 58.3% | - Insecurity |
| 45.8% | - Negatively affected physical health |
| 45.8% | - Negatively affect personal relationships |
| 41.7% | - Isolation |
| 41.7% | - Shame |
| 33.3% | - Fear |
| 16.7% | - Substance Abuse |
| 16.7% | - My property was stolen |

Figure 3. Effects of Homelessness on College/University Students