

US students stressed out: study

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First-year students on US campuses are experiencing record levels of stress, according to a study showing increasing financial and academic pressures on young people entering university.

The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) study, which surveyed 200,000 students entering their freshman year on American campuses last year, was released Thursday and found that just under 52 percent reported their [emotional health](#) was very good or "above average."

That figure represents a major decline from 1985, the first year of the self-ratings survey, when nearly two-thirds of incoming freshmen placed themselves in those categories. It's also a decline of 3.4 percentage points from 2009.

Female freshmen were more likely than their male peers to report feeling stressed. The UCLA researchers said just under 46 percent of females ranked their emotional health as very good, compared to 59 percent of males.

Women were more than twice as likely to frequently feel "overwhelmed by all I had to do" as high school seniors preparing for their first year of university.

"Stress is a major concern when dealing with college students," said John Pryor, lead author of the report.

"If students are arriving in college already overwhelmed and with lower reserves of emotional health, faculty, deans and administrators should expect to see more consequences of stress, such as higher levels of poor judgment around time management, [alcohol consumption](#) and academic motivation."

America's economic crisis adds to the stress, according to the study, which said 53 percent of students rely on loans to help pay for college. In addition, nearly three-quarters of students reported receiving grants and scholarships, representing a nine-year high.

"The increasing cost of higher education poses a significant barrier to college access for today's students," said Sylvia Hurtado, co-author of the report.

"Students and families are now charged with the task of becoming more resourceful and strategic in finding new and creative ways to pay for college," she added.

Parents of students are also more likely to be unemployed: nearly five percent said their father was out of work -- a record high; and the rate of unemployed mothers, nearing nine percent, continued to increase.

Economic concerns seem to have influenced students' political views. Nearly two-thirds of students said wealthy people should pay more taxes, compared to just half of the [students](#) surveyed in 2002.

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