

The Impact of Berkeley Connect

The Berkeley Connect program has a track record of proven success supporting the core missions of teaching and research at UC Berkeley.

What Students Tell Us

Every semester, the students in Berkeley Connect participate in an exit survey assessing their experience in the program.¹ In 2016-2017:

- **96%** of participants would recommend the program to a friend
- **94%** reported increased awareness of available educational resources
- **93%** reported deepened knowledge of academic discipline
- **92%** met others who share their academic interests
- **91%** increased their sense of belonging at Berkeley
- **91%** increased their confidence that they can succeed at Berkeley



“Coming to Berkeley, before enrolling in Berkeley Connect, to be quite honest....I felt like a number, a nobody. Berkeley Connect really helped me....and assured me that my voice and my ideas were worthwhile.”

What the Data Tell Us

An institutional data analysis performed by the Division of Equity & Inclusion shows that participation in Berkeley Connect improves students’ academic performance.

Transfer students: Over 40% of Berkeley Connect participants are transfer students. Comparing all transfer students who participated in Berkeley Connect between 2010 and 2015 with the entire transfer population for the same period, significantly **fewer** Berkeley Connect participants have a **first-term GPA below 3.0**, and significantly **more** Berkeley Connect participants have a **GPA of 3.5 or higher:**

GPA	All Transfers	BC Transfers
GPA 2.0 to 2.9	22%	16% (-6%)
GPA 3.0 to 3.4	32%	33% (+1%)
GPA 3.5 to 4.0	40%	46% (+6%)

¹ Because completing the survey is a course requirement, the response rate is close to 100%.

Under-represented students: The percentage of under-represented minority (URM) students in Berkeley Connect (both transfer and non-transfer) is consistently higher than the percentage in the total undergraduate population. URM first-year students who participated in Berkeley Connect, compared to all URM first-years, demonstrate higher academic success across the board:

Performance Measure	All URM First-Years	BC URM First-Years
1 st Term GPA	3.03	3.11
1 st Year Probation Rate	10%	9% (-1%)
1-Year Retention Rate	95%	98% (+3%)
3-Year Retention Rate	89%	96% (+7%)
4-Year Graduation Rate	56%	60% (+4%)

These figures show that *URM students who participated in Berkeley Connect in their first year were half as likely to drop out in their third year as those who did not.*

These results are even more remarkable given that a higher percentage of URM Berkeley Connect participants, compared to all URM students, are **first-generation college students** (+3%), **from the lowest ranked high schools** (+4%), and **from the lowest parental income bracket** (+2%).

Berkeley Connect by the Numbers

Most mentoring programs can only serve a small number of students each year. Because of its unique model, in which graduate students mentor undergraduates both one-on-one and in small-groups, Berkeley Connect is able to serve thousands of students each year.

- 11,468 enrollments between 2010 and 2017
- Up to 1,500 enrollments a semester
- 200 UC Berkeley graduate students have received Berkeley Connect fellowships and served as mentors to undergraduates between 2010 and 2017
- Each Berkeley Connect Fellow mentors two groups of 20 students each semester, or 80 students a year
- Each participating student meets one-on-one with their mentor at least 2 times a semester, with the option to meet more frequently
- Each student participates in 6-9 small-group discussions facilitated by their mentor
- Berkeley Connect operates in 13 academic departments, in 4 colleges, each with a discipline-specific curriculum developed by a faculty director
- 68% of the Berkeley Connect budget is spent on graduate student support (fellowships)

What Alums Tell Us

Recent UC Berkeley graduates attest to the difference that Berkeley Connect made for them:

“I think one of the biggest contributors to academic success can be having access to a strong community of peers to rely on, and Berkeley Connect definitely helps build and provide that.”

“At a big university it's easy to become isolated, and departments can be intimidating....I'm incredibly fond of my memories of my department, and many of them were shaped by Berkeley Connect.... Berkeley Connect was a wonderful resource.”

*“I arrived to Berkeley as a struggling transfer student who had a hard time adjusting to the expectations and rigor of Berkeley. During my first semester, I was able to go from adjusting and struggling, to a straight A student and received all A-'s in all of my courses as a new student. **If it were not for Berkeley Connect, I would not have been so successful so quickly.**”*

*“I came to Cal as a transfer student. I thought I knew what I was doing....I was completely wrong.... I was completely lost. I felt like a freshman all over again. What on earth was a GSI? What were office hours? What were study groups? I was not familiar with any of these However, **Berkeley Connect offered me all the guidance, support, and help I needed.**”*

*“One of the most challenging parts of my undergraduate career at Cal was navigating my new academic environment as a first-generation, Mexican-American transfer student. **What provided me with ease and introduced me to other students who were experiencing similar challenges was my participation in Berkeley Connect....**I not only learned how to navigate college, but I also learned about research opportunities, and met graduate students and mentors whom have had a significant impact in my academic trajectory....especially now that I am preparing to enter a PhD program.”*

What Former Mentors Tell Us

Receiving a Berkeley Connect fellowship not only provides our outstanding graduate students with financial support, it helps them develop mentoring skills that will serve them well in their future careers.

“The professional development that I've received over the past two years has really helped me to develop well beyond who I was two years ago and I can't thank Berkeley Connect enough for that.”

“I can't express how much Berkeley Connect has meant to me in my last year as a graduate student.”

“Berkeley Connect did not interfere with my ability to do my research, on the contrary, it provided necessary grounding for me to advance in my professional goals.”

“The moments in which I was able to really help students get more out of their experience here at Berkeley were extremely rewarding.”

Learn more at:

berkeleyconnect.berkeley.edu