



**How is COVID-19 Impacting
Student Mental Health and
Academic Outcomes
A Year Later: A Follow up Study**

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Spring Semester 2020

A Global Crisis!

- A sudden shifts to online instruction
- Health and financial concerns
- Social distancing and shutdowns

Spring Semester 2021

A New Normal?

- Returned to in-person or hybrid
- Health and financial concerns
- Social and political divide



Two Surveys: One Year Apart

How is the pandemic impacting college and university students in the U.S.?



- National online survey in April-May 2020 and 2021
 - 2020 ($n = 197$)
 - 2021 ($n = 142$)
- Recruited via social media, faculty email or listserv



The Questions We Asked

Demographics
and financial
concerns



Mental health
and focus



Self-report class
GPA currently
and in February



Social isolation
and polarization
due to COVID-19
(only in 2021)



Having COVID-19
or High-risk for
complications



Grade decreases were related to

Spring 2020

Higher financial concerns, Lower Parent income



High-risk or had COVID-19



Depression, Anxiety, Academic distress, and less ability to focus



Higher financial concerns, working, and working more hours

High-risk for COVID-19 complications

Depression, Anxiety, Academic distress, and less ability to focus

Spring 2021



Pandemic Mental Health

2020

11%

Elevated Depression

2021

35%

39%

Elevated Anxiety

29%

47%

Academic Distress

36%



2021 Social Isolation and Polarization

58% Felt loss of closeness with family or friends due to differing safety beliefs during pandemic



62% Felt isolated from others at least half of the time spring 2021





- Students who are high risk for COVID-19 complications (or have family that are) have a greater risk for academic challenges
- Students that work or have higher financial concerns are at greater risk for academic and mental health challenges
- Grades decreased by 1 letter grade in 2020, and by .64 of a letter grade in 2021
- There are extremely high levels of mental health distress social isolation and loss of closeness with friends and loved ones.
- Mental health counseling, awareness, and outreach is still essential and nationwide waitlists, especially in college counseling centers, need to be addressed.