



# Munger Hall Survey Analysis:

Evolution of Student Opinion



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## **Part 1: Background on Munger Hall**

Construction on Munger Hall was set to begin in the summer of 2023, but plans have been postponed due to a significant volume of community feedback since the project was made public. This project was designed by Charles Munger. Munger plans to fund the project and has previously funded other projects at UC Santa Barbara. The expansion of campus housing is outlined in the 2010 Long Range Development Plan, which states that UCSB will add 5,000 student beds by 2025.<sup>1</sup> The initial design for Munger Hall has undergone significant revisions, including a reduction from 11 to 9 floors, which has reduced the bed count from 4,536 to 3,500.<sup>2</sup> Proposed to be the largest dorm on campus, the design has been criticized for the density of student residents, lack of windows in 94% of bedrooms, and lack of an on-site dining hall considering its distant location from other dining halls. Since the summer of 2022, there have been tours of the built mock-up of Munger Hall which includes hallways, corridors, a kitchen, bedroom, and a common area.<sup>3</sup> Tours for Munger Hall are open to the general public, and the school has encouraged people to give feedback on the mock-up through a visitors survey. Currently, Munger hall has no construction timeline. According to Chancellor Yang's report at the UC Regents Meeting on January 18th, a revised building plan for Munger Hall will be presented to the Regents by this summer, based on recommendations from an independent panel of the UCSB Academic Senate.

### **Current Policy Context**

UC Santa Barbara's 2010 Long Range Development Plan with City of Goleta, the Multi-Year Compact between the Newsom Administration and the UC, and the Governor's proposed 2023-2024 fiscal year budget present a complex web of challenges. UC Santa Barbara has reached the Long Range Development benchmark of 25,000 students well before the 2025-26 academic year and without the conditional addition of 5,000 beds to accommodate the increase

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<sup>1</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sv6C1r957kwLHlIXIs57\\_3y4WP6aXRh\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sv6C1r957kwLHlIXIs57_3y4WP6aXRh_/view)

<sup>2</sup>

<https://dailynews.com/2022-10-06/munger-hall-design-change-eliminates-two-floors-awaits-final-approvals/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/145tIAmkH3Qq6HrIMMpV7W\\_Bu-g0d7QRa/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/145tIAmkH3Qq6HrIMMpV7W_Bu-g0d7QRa/view)



in enrollment. Simultaneously, the Governor's compact outlines a 1% increase in annual UC enrollment from 2023-24 and 2026-27, with 2022-23 enrollment serving as the baseline year.<sup>4</sup> The Governor's proposed budget, in the face of a predicted \$22.5 billion state deficit, presents obstacles to increasing UC housing capacity.<sup>5</sup> The proposal delays \$250 million in affordable housing grants, initially allocated in the 2023-24 budget, to 2024-25. The plan also pushes out \$1.8 billion in interest-free loans for student housing from the 2023-24 and 2024-25 budgets to 2024-25 and 2025-26. The 5% annual base increase to UC funding will hold but will likely not make up for delayed funds in terms of addressing the pressing need for student housing across the UC system. According to the State Legislative Analyst's Office assessment, the 5% base increase is at risk of becoming unaffordable in future budgets. Given the current state of housing affordability in Isla Vista and across UC campuses, one must question the decision to find budget solutions at the detriment of housing funding. Subject to May revisions, the proposed delays in available state funds for student housing further limit the feasibility of alternative-funding methods for student housing projects by UC Santa Barbara.

### **Survey Aims**

A survey was sent to all undergraduates by the Associated Students Office of the President for the purpose of collecting data on student opinion on Munger Hall as it has faded from the national news agenda, and as more students have been able to visit the mock-up. The survey received 1,350 responses. Notably, this survey captures the opinion of students who have visited the Munger Hall mock-up facility on campus. 337 students reported having visited the mock-up, 231 of which completed the survey, capturing a significant number of students' experiences. While this survey had a comparatively lower response pool than the survey conducted in the Fall, which received over 4,000 responses, this survey assess current student opinion taking into account time and actual visitation to the mock-up. Our analysis will take into account general student opinion as well as emphasize focus on those who visited the mock-up. We hope to provide insight into student opinion on Munger Hall over a year after the project was revealed to the public.

<sup>4</sup> <https://dof.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Programs/Education/UC-Compact-May-2022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2023/4733/Student-Housing-030923.pdf>



## Part 2: Individual Student Testimonials

This part will contain qualitative testimonials of students who qualify for select filters in this study. The survey response must pass the select filters in order to be eligible for selection as a testimonial. The baseline filter for all testimonials is that the student completed 100% of the survey. This is our best attempt at filtering out students who did not answer truthfully.

- **First Impressions of Munger Hall:** (filter applied : Toured the Munger Hall “Mock-Up”)

There were a total of 231 students who toured Munger Hall & completed 100% of the survey. Featured below are some of the short-answer responses to the question of “ Can you share some first impressions?”

- **Second year female:**

- “If there is a dining hall within the dorm the location seems fine, but if there isn’t then it will be very inconvenient to get food. The location isn’t really located near anything, so the UC would have to make sure to supply proper resources.”

- **Second year male:**

- “ The concept of it is cool. The problem is the dorm rooms are extremely small, areas lack natural lighting, and is somewhat far from campus.”

- **Third year female:**

- “Looks nice, I’m not totally into the all single occupancy rooms and the virtual windows still creep me out.”

- **Second year non-binary/third gender:**

- “Depressing, sad, concerning. We make sure pets have plenty of room and air; are your students, human beings, not worthy of a single window? When COVID cases are rising in California and students are desperate for housing to attend your school, this isn’t the answer”

- **Fifth year(gender not specified):**

- “While I understand the appeal, it does not seem like a reasonable living situation. Windows are simple and incredibly important, and while it is “nice”, the idea that thousands of students will be packed into these spaces is concerning. More housing is not the solution.”



- **Common Likes of Munger Hall:** (filter applied : Toured the Munger Hall “Mock-Up” & completed 100% of survey)

There were a total of 231 students who toured Munger Hall & completed 100% of the survey. Featured below are the most frequent responses from the 231 students to the question, “From what you know, what do you like about Munger Hall?”

*Table 2.1: Common Likes of Munger Hall*

<b>Word(s)</b>	<b>Frequency</b> (% out of 231)
<b>Nothing</b>	<b>76</b> (33%)
<b>Housing</b>	<b>71</b> (31%)
<b>Single</b>	<b>18</b> (8%)
<b>Kitchen</b>	<b>15</b> (6.5%)
<b>Campus</b>	<b>10</b> (4.3%)

\*\*disclaimer: frequency for “nothing” includes keyword searches of “n/a”, “none”, and “nothing” \*\*

- **Nothing:** the students liked nothing that Munger Hall provided
- **Housing:** the students liked the additional housing that Munger Hall provided
- **Single:** the students liked the single rooms that Munger Hall provided
- **Kitchen:** the students liked the kitchen area that Munger Hall provided
- **Campus:** the students liked the proximity to campus that Munger Hall provided



- **Common Dislikes of Munger Hall:** (filter applied : Toured the Munger Hall “Mock-Up” & completed 100% of survey)

There were a total of 231 students who toured Munger Hall & completed 100% of the survey. Featured below are the most frequent responses from the 231 students to the question, “From what you know, what are your biggest dislikes about Munger Hall?”

*Table 2.2: Common Dislikes of Munger Hall*

<b>Word(s)</b>	<b>Frequency</b> (% out of 231)
<b>Window</b>	<b>189</b> (82%)
<b>Small</b>	<b>102</b> (44.2%)
<b>Health</b>	<b>34</b> (15%)
<b>Fire</b>	<b>31</b> (13.4%)
<b>Prison</b>	<b>25</b> (11%)

- **Window:** the students disliked the lack of windows that Munger Hall provided
- **Small:** the students disliked the small size of the rooms that Munger Hall provided
- **Health:** the students disliked the poor mental and physical health that Munger Hall provided
- **Fire:** the students disliked the fire safety concerns that Munger Hall provided
- **Prison:** the students disliked the prison-like environment that Munger Hall provided

### **Comparative Analysis of Survey Results**

Common likes and disliked of Munger Hall’s design emerge across the responses of those reported having visited the mock-up in our survey, the AS student survey conducted in the Fall of 2021, and the mock-up visitors survey results from April to September of 2022. In regard to positive aspects of the design, the minority of students in favor of Munger Hall in 2021 often emphasized the importance of establishing new student housing regardless of specific site





features.<sup>6</sup> Our analysis of common likes points to a similar trend of students valuing Munger as a general housing solution. Analysis of the visitors survey also points to basic needs of daily living as being the most appealing features of Munger Hall, most notably the single occupancy bedrooms. Table 2.1 indicates that single bedrooms are a favorable feature. There are clear trends in regard to the most negatively viewed aspects of the Munger Hall design. By far, the most negatively viewed aspect of the design reported across every survey are the windowless bedrooms and suites. Students expressed that the virtual window is not a substitute for real windows. Also frequently criticized across the surveys are the small room size and potential for negative effects on the mental health of residents, as well as concerns around the density of students. Across the surveys, the lack of windows remained the most commonly rejected aspect of the general design.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/145tIAmkH3Qq6HrIMMpV7W\\_Bu-g0d7QRa/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/145tIAmkH3Qq6HrIMMpV7W_Bu-g0d7QRa/view)



### Part 3: Factors Affecting Student Opinion

Preliminary analysis of the December 2022 survey data shows that a visit to the Munger Hall mock-up shows no correlation with more positive views towards Munger Hall. As demonstrated in the table below, the percentage of students who unconditionally support Munger Hall are similar regardless of whether or not a student has visited the mock-up. The same can be said for the groups of students who are in support of Munger Hall with the addition of major changes. However, students who have visited the mock-up are more likely to be completely against Munger Hall. We can see that out of all the students who have visited the mock-up, nearly 45% are unequivocally opposed to Munger Hall. This is an 8% increase over students who have not visited the mock-up.

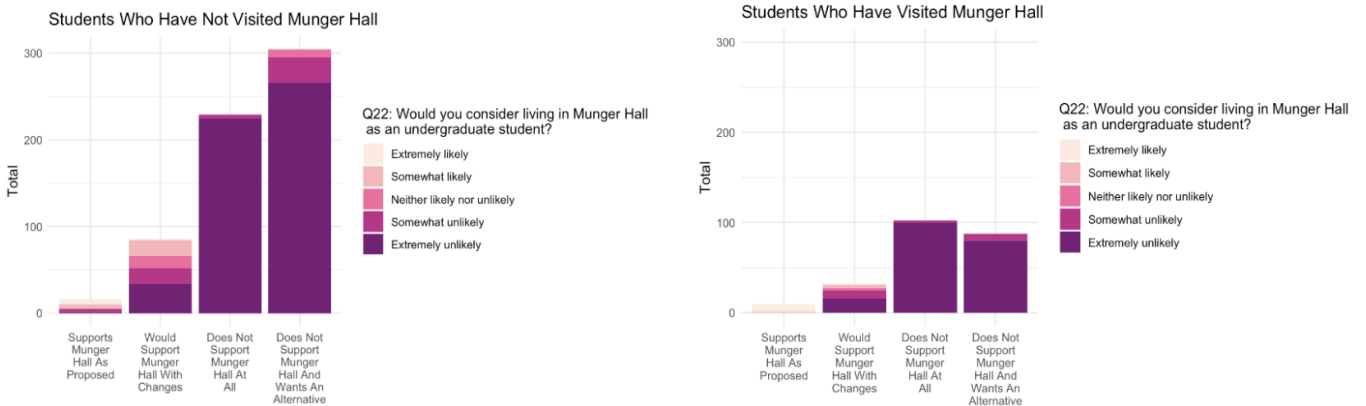
Table 3.1: Student Stances Towards Munger Hall

	Did Not Visit Mockup (%)
Supports Munger Hall	2.51
Supports Munger Hall With Changes	13.50
Does Not Support Munger Hall	36.11
Wants Alternatives	47.88
	Visited Mockup (%)
Supports Munger Hall	3.90
Supports Munger Hall With Changes	13.85
Does Not Support Munger Hall	44.16
Wants Alternatives	38.10

We’ve also analyzed several survey questions that were found to be highly correlated with the general student population’s opinion of Munger Hall. By looking at the connections between these variables and the question, “What is your stance on Munger Hall?”, we were able to determine a recurring pattern.



Graph 3.1 & 3.2: Breakdown of Student Opinion Towards Living in Munger Hall



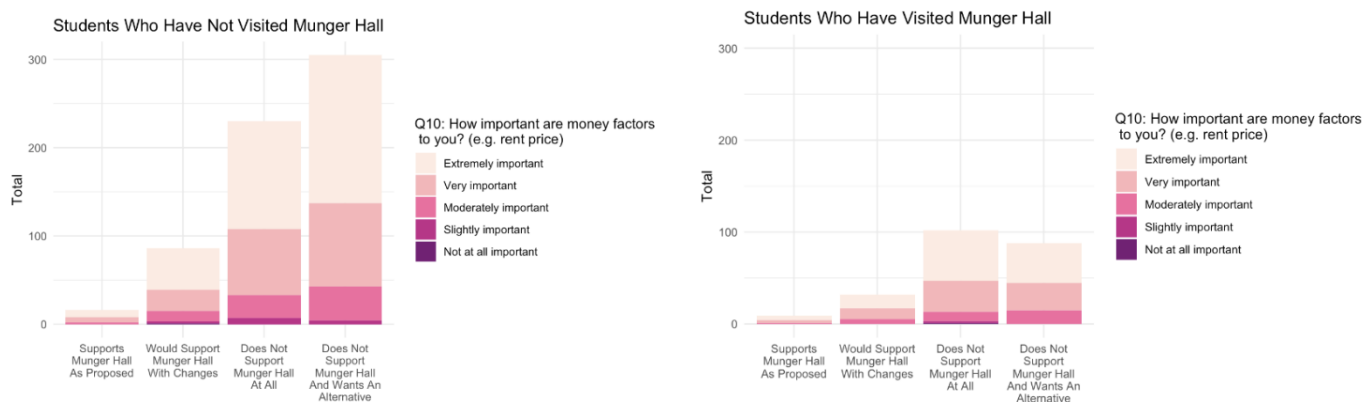
These graphs represent how likely students are to consider living in Munger Hall as undergrads. The students are broken up into two groups: those who have not visited the mock-up and those who have. These students are further stratified based on their level of support for the Munger Hall project.

Graph 3.1 & 3.2 are visual representations of how likely students are to consider living in Munger Hall as an undergraduate student based on two factors: whether they've visited the mock-up, as well as their opinion of Munger Hall. Students who have not visited the mock-up but are in complete support of the project seem to have mixed opinions on whether they'd consider living in Munger Hall. 37.5% of these students are extremely likely to consider living in Munger Hall, 31.25% are somewhat likely, 0% are neither likely nor unlikely, 25% are somewhat unlikely, and 6.25% are extremely unlikely to consider it. However, 88.89% of students who have visited the mock-up and unconditionally support Munger Hall consider themselves extremely likely to consider living in Munger Hall. The remaining students consider themselves somewhat likely to consider living in Munger Hall. Although the shift in the number of students who fully support Munger Hall after visiting the mock-up appears significant, students who support Munger Hall, have visited the mock-up, and consider themselves extremely/somewhat likely to live in Munger Hall as an undergraduate student only make up 9.14% of the sample of students who have visited the mock-up. The vast majority of students who have made a visit to



the mock-up retain similar opinions or an increasing sense of aversion towards the idea of living in Munger Hall as an undergraduate when compared to students who have not visited the mock-up.

Graph 3.3 & 3.4: Breakdown of Student Opinion on the Importance of Monetary Factors



These graphs represent how students view the importance of monetary factors based on whether they’ve visited the mock-up, as well as their level of support for the Munger Hall project.

Regardless of whether students are for or against the idea of Munger Hall, or whether they’ve visited the mock-up, one thing remains consistent: students find monetary factors to be important. This is obvious, considering the fact that a UC education can be a financial burden. According to the 2020 UCSB Portrait, 51% of students who graduated in the 2018-2019 academic school year and started as a freshman took out a loan.<sup>7</sup> The average debt these students faced was approximately \$18,995. In addition, 52% of UCSB students received some form of financial aid based on their family income. The average aid provided to these students was \$21,037. The average cost of attendance in the 2018-2019 school year, assuming students were from California and were living on campus, was \$36,659.<sup>8</sup> This leaves a significant monetary gap that students are expected to make up. Given that these figures were obtained from a study conducted nearly four years ago, it’s highly likely that the average student today is even more

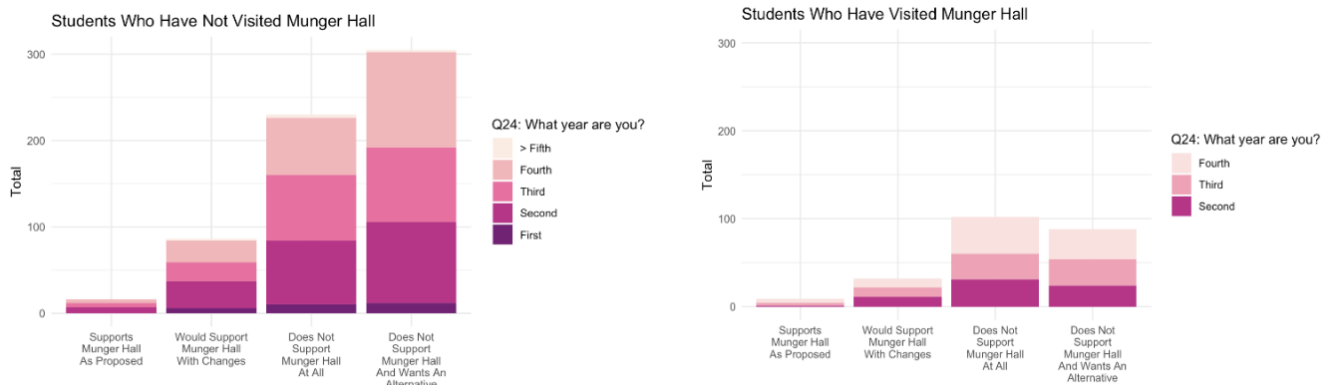
<sup>7</sup> [https://my.sa.ucsb.edu/catalog/Current/Documents/Other%20Docs/UCSB\\_Portrait\\_2020.pdf](https://my.sa.ucsb.edu/catalog/Current/Documents/Other%20Docs/UCSB_Portrait_2020.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.collegetuitioncompare.com/trends/university-of-california-santa-barbara/cost-of-attendance/>



hampered by financial worries. The typical UCSB student isn't in a position to worry about safe and clean living conditions, especially considering the housing crisis that's taking place today. Munger Hall promises a solution to the rent burdened students of UCSB; safe, clean, and above all, affordable housing. According to an article published by UCSB's official newsite, The UCSB Current, the "...cost of a single bedroom in Munger Hall will be required to be 20-30% below the market rate for housing in Isla Vista..."<sup>9</sup> At first glance, this would appear to be an incredible opportunity for the students of UCSB. Yet Graph 3.3 & 3.4 reveal a different story: students are not wooed by Munger Hall's incentivizing promise of inexpensive housing. Out of all the students who have not visited the mock-up and are completely against the Munger Hall project, 85.65% view monetary factors as extremely or very important. Out of all the students who have visited the mock-up and are completely against Munger Hall, 87.25% view monetary factors as extremely or very important. It's clear that certain aspects of Munger Hall, whether it be the small rooms, brutalist style, or massive scale, are pushing students away despite the importance of secure, economical housing.

Graph 3.5 & 3.6: Breakdown of Student Opinion of Munger Hall Based on School Year



<sup>9</sup> <https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2022/020643/experience-munger-hall-model-house>



Over 96% of the students who filled out the survey were second, third, and fourth years. These students remain distributed relatively evenly throughout each level of support for Munger Hall. Graph 3.5 & 3.6 visually demonstrate the even distribution of second, third, and fourth years of each bar. The analysis of survey taker's grade levels against their opinions of Munger Hall only served to reveal that grade levels have little to no correlation with student answers to the question, "Do you support Munger Hall?" The same can be said for every question that was asked in the survey. As evidenced by our analysis of questions 10, 22, and 24 within the context of student stances towards Munger Hall, we've found that these variables give hints towards the general student population's sentiment toward Munger Hall. The qualitative data captured within the survey can help reveal the specifics of why students find themselves so dissatisfied with Munger as it currently stands.



## **Part 4: Conclusions from the Survey**

Our survey produces several findings on student opinion of Munger Hall across time and how factors such as financial affordability and visiting the mock-up affect student opinion. Opinion on specific aspects of Munger Hall have remained stable across the variations of the design since its initial reveal in 2021; students are concerned about the lack of windows, density, and general effects on mental health. Students continue to express majority positive opinion on the single occupancy bedrooms, and those who support the construction of Munger Hall appreciate the effort to address the housing crisis and provide affordable housing for students. These findings are consistent across the three surveys that have been conducted on student opinion. However, our results in regard to the effects of visiting the mock-up on student opinion differ with those of the mock-up visitors survey. Our findings indicate that visiting the mock-up is associated with hardening disapproval for the overall project, whereas the visitors survey reports that student opinion on Munger Hall improved significantly after the mock-up tour. A few important distinctions should be made in regard to the content of the two surveys. There were a total of 231 students who toured Munger Hall & completed 100% of the survey, while the visitor's survey recorded 77 student respondents (as of the most recent report in the independent panel's analysis). The response rate of all those who visited the mock-up and were sent the survey, including staff and others, was approximately 43%. This represents a significant gap in the data received in the most recent AS survey and the available data from the visitor's surveys. This points to uncertainty around the effects of visiting the mock-up on student opinion.

The results of this survey corroborate the design recommendations made by the Academic Senate independent panel. Design modifications such as the addition of operable windows, increase in bedroom size, considerations of student dining, and decrease in density are important to gaining consensus on Munger Hall. These recommendations limit the number of beds the project can provide and thus present additional challenges to meeting the promises of the Long Range Development Plan and the Governor's Compact. It is the task of the Munger Hall design team to accommodate as many of these recommendations as possible while also ensuring the donor remains dedicated to funding the entirety of the project, as other funding sources appear to be unreliable in the short term.