

Section 1



CURRENT STATE OF THE CRISIS



Image Credit: Daily Nexus File Photo



Image Credit: Daily Nexus File Photo



Image Credit: Daily Nexus File Photo

SANTA BARBARA

With its sunny ocean views and abundance of natural beauty, Santa Barbara is famously portrayed as an idyllic laid-back beach community. However, securing stable, affordable housing in this scenic place is exceptionally difficult.

Santa Barbara is the fifth most expensive city in the State of California.* The astronomical cost of housing disproportionately affects Santa Barbara's most vulnerable residents, including students, single parents, working-class individuals, and low-income households.



Image Credit: John Wiley User: Jw4nvc - Santa Barbara via Wikimedia Commons



Image Credit: Daily Nexus File Photo

*Source: Best Places to Live Report, *U.S. News* (2023).

ISLA VISTA

Past and Present

Prior to the inception of the area we know as Isla Vista, the Chumash people occupied its land that they named Anisq'Oyo for over 15,000 years. Through imperial conquest, settler colonialism, and eventual military control, the land was taken from, and never returned to, the Chumash people. Beginning in the 1920s and accelerating through the 1960s, most housing in Isla Vista was constructed adjacent to UC Santa Barbara to accommodate a burgeoning student population.

Isla Vista was zoned for high-density housing while lacking adequate municipal representation. It has since been incorporated in 2014 as a community services district, with limited capacity to govern. Today, the area houses thousands of UCSB students in aging housing stock while facing the consequences of nonexistent city oversight and regulation amidst a worsening housing crisis.



Image Credit: Daily Nexus



Image Credit: alanmak via Wikimedia Commons

A coastal landscape featuring a cliffside on the left with a wooden walkway leading down to the ocean. The sky is overcast, and the water is calm. In the background, there are some buildings and a blue tarp on the cliffside.

Isla Vista is a community services district with an important but limited capacity to govern. It has largely been left to create its own local government. It is overseen at the county level, causing residents to slip through the cracks when in need of social services.

EXCERPT FROM:



April 12, 1987



Isla Vista is completely surrounded by UCSB -- except on its southern boundary, which is the Pacific Ocean. This unusual configuration is the result of a decision by the UC Regents in the 1960s to leave a large segment of privately owned-land within the bowels of the Santa Barbara campus. Since a couple of the Regents either personally owned some of those properties, or were on the boards of directors of corporations which did, we are only left to speculate about their motives. The official story is that the State of California didn't have sufficient funds at the time to develop both a campus and a community, so they left the community-building task to the private sector.

-- The result was Isla Vista. --



ISLA VISTA

Key Housing Facts



Isla Vista houses **12,492** people per square mile*



Isla Vista's average rent is **\$3,155** for an 801 sq. ft. apartment**



Statewide average: **69.4** people per square mile*



98% of the households in Isla Vista are renter-occupied*

*Isla Vista houses 23,000 students who are roughly split between UCSB and Santa Barbara City College. Approximately 61 percent of UCSB's students live off campus in Isla Vista, Goleta, and Santa Barbara. More students are turning to off-campus housing given that UCSB suspended its 2+2 program that guaranteed undergraduates two years of housing in campus apartments if they lived for two years in residence halls.****

Sources: *Maddie George, et al., Isla Vista Housing Help!: A Guide for First-Time Tenants (2022).

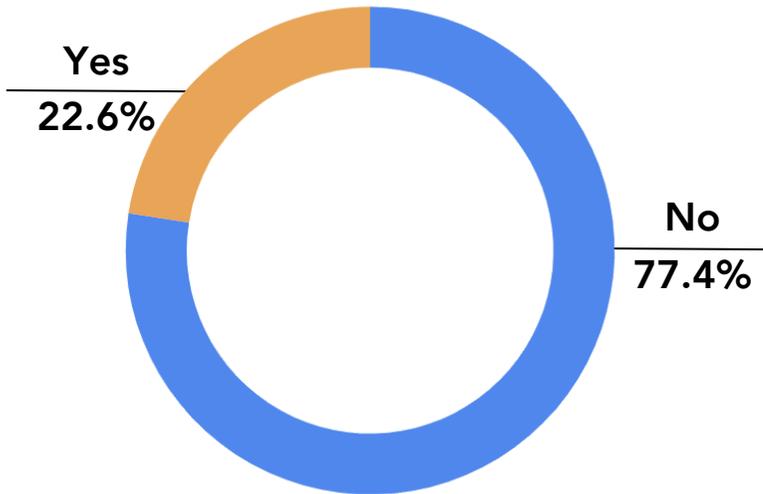
**Isla Vista, CA Rental Market. Rentcafe.com (2023).

*** UCSB Student Affairs Official Website (2023), *Santa Barbara Independent*, September 11th, 2023, *Daily Nexus*, September 23rd, 2022.

ISLA VISTA

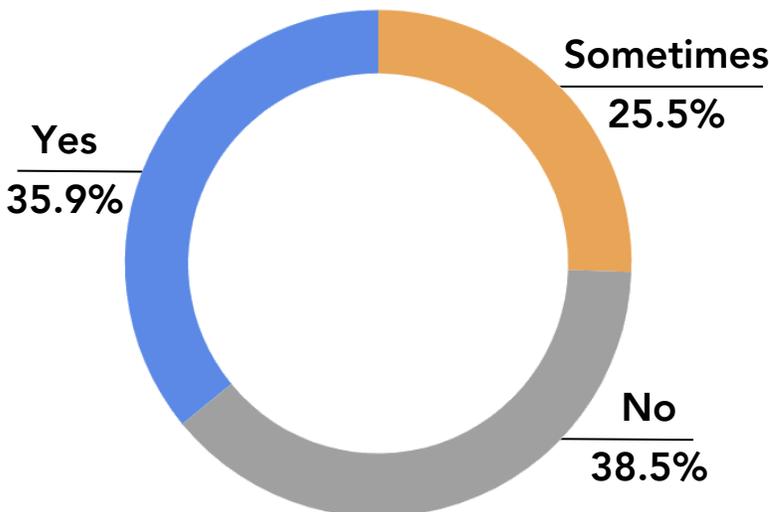
What do students have to say?

Do you think your housing is affordable to attend UCSB?
(Approximately 1/3 of ones' monthly income going towards rent is considered affordable housing.)



In a voluntary survey conducted by the Blum Center, **77.4%** of respondents consider their housing unaffordable.

Do your housing costs affect your ability to pay for basic needs*?



The same voluntary survey showed that more than **60%** of respondents struggled to afford their basic needs due to high housing costs.

*Basic needs are defined as the minimum requirements people need to live a healthy and functioning life. Basic needs include shelter, food, clothing, clean drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, and public transportation.

ISLA VISTA

What do students have to say?

UCSB student comments about UCSB's housing crisis reveal high levels of discontent regarding UCSB housing and a desire to learn more about topics such as alternative housing plans and tenants' rights.



"My anxiety reaches its peak when thinking about where I will go during the breaks and especially during summer while transitioning to housing for the next school year."

"I want to know how we will change policies to halt the crisis and how to make it better. I believe UCSB should take more responsibility for the students in Isla Vista...they are absolutely responsible for their part in our housing shortage. What do they plan to do with current and future enrollment to help deflate this issue?"

"Why is getting a bed so hard here?"

"When/how is UCSB going to build more graduate student housing? It's essential to being able to afford to work at the University."

"Why haven't we placed rent control on landlords who are clearly ripping off students and profiting off their inability to find housing near campus?"

ISLA VISTA

Santa Barbara City College



Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) is unique in that it is regarded as a destination city college. While approximately half of the student population are Santa Barbara County locals, the other half of SBCC's student population comes from all over the United States and abroad. This creates a challenge with UCSB and SBCC students both seeking and often competing for the same housing resources.

Despite being classified as a large institution with roughly 14,000 students in 2022, SBCC doesn't provide any on-campus housing. Beach City, an apartment complex owned by St. George & Associates, houses around 500-600 students and largely serves as SBCC's "dorms" due to its location nestled in between SBCC's East and West campuses.

Beach City and the various other small complexes within the Mesa do not come close to meeting the housing needs of SBCC students. Many SBCC students opt to live in Isla Vista, despite the community's limited housing and proximity to UCSB. Students from both campuses are attracted to Isla Vista's social life that caters to college students.

ISLA VISTA

How much do students spend on housing?

Housing costs in Isla Vista vary. Based on a combination of data from a student survey and rental cost data released by the city of Santa Barbara, we calculated an estimated range of what students can expect to pay in monthly rent in Isla Vista.

	<p>Some students report a single room costing as little as \$900 in Isla Vista. However, the average rent of a 3-bedroom duplex in Isla Vista is \$6,600. If each occupant of a duplex wanted a single room, that would cost \$2,200 per person.</p>
	<p>Some students report paying less than \$750 for a double room in Isla Vista, and some report paying over \$2000.</p>
	<p>While many students cram into triple rooms as an opportunity to save costs, a triple in Isla Vista can still cost some students around \$1500.</p>
	<p>A quad room is the ultimate cost-minimizing option. Many students report spending around \$750 to share a room with three other students, yet one survey respondent pays over \$1750 monthly rent for a quad room.</p>

Source: [City of Santa Barbara 2022 Rent Survey for the South Coast.](#)

UCSB'S HOUSING CONTRACT

2010 UCSB Long Range Development Plan

The Long Range Development Plan (LRDP)

UCSB is obligated through its Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) to provide additional campus housing for students, faculty and staff. In 2010, UCSB made an agreement with Santa Barbara County and the City of Goleta to build an additional 20,000 to 25,000 beds by the year 2025, in addition to building new housing units for 1,800 faculty and staff and 5,000 students.

The housing development plans outlined in the LRDP are based on a projected 1% annual enrollment increase to the year 2025, equalling to about 250 students per year for a maximum enrollment of 25,000 by 2025.

In September 2022, the County of Santa Barbara filed a lawsuit against the University of California Regents, accusing UCSB of violating the 2010 LRDP following reports that UCSB had a total enrollment of 26,179 students for 2020-2021.

UCSB has only completed the development of 1,500 additional beds for students and 160 faculty homes.

Has UCSB violated this contract?

While the LRDP agreement states that UCSB's enrollment may not exceed 25,000, John Longbrake, UCSB's vice chancellor for external affairs, claimed that enrollment numbers over 25,000 were based on higher-than average Fall Quarter enrollment figures for 2021.*

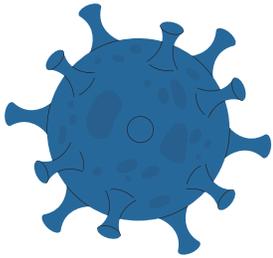
Longbrake asserts that the enrollment cap outlined in the LRDP is measured by a three-quarter average; therefore, UCSB has not officially violated its contract. That being said, former Supervisor Gregg Hart of the County of Santa Barbara (now Assemblyman Hart) maintains that **UCSB "has failed to meet its promise to provide adequate housing for students, faculty, and staff."**

UCSB enrollment has steadily increased since 2010 and reached the maximum cap of 25,000. **Total student enrollment for the 2020-21 AY was 26,179. Enrollment for 2022-23 was 26,421. The current 2023-24 AY enrollment is 26,068.****

Source: *City of Goleta Announces Intent to Sue, *Noozhawk* (2021)
**Student Enrollment Trend, UC Santa Barbara

ISLA VISTA

Impact of COVID-19



As a consequence of COVID-19, students needed lower density housing; however, housing costs in Isla Vista made this a difficult goal. Students sought housing options on Facebook and other social media platforms; they experienced intense competition for units and an increase in scams.



UCSB closed its on-campus housing facilities during the COVID-19 crisis and access was only given to students with special circumstances.



UCSB partnered with local hotels to shelter unhoused students. The cost of a hotel room was the same as a university-owned double. By December 2021, 280 UCSB students were living in hotel housing.*

Source: *"What's it like to study from a hotel? As UC housing crunch worsens, these students are finding out." CalMatters. November 23, 2021.

ISLA VISTA

Renovictions

Mass evictions are an observable pattern in Isla Vista. Property owners justify evictions by claiming they are performing substantial renovations. However, the proposed capital improvement projects (CIP) are often not completed and involve unnecessary upgrades to permit higher, inflated rents. These evictions leave former tenants, many of whom are low-income families or individuals, with no other forms of housing. Some are forced to leave the Santa Barbara area entirely. These evictions are not only unethical but also often unlawful; CIP's should be legally limited to solely ensuring that units comply with health and safety codes. Evicted tenants should also be ensured compensation and accommodations.*

In 2006, more than 50 low-income and Spanish-speaking Isla Vista families were given a 30-day eviction notice from the Cedarwood apartments in order to replace these families with student renters. In 2014, six families were evicted by Majestic Asset Management in order to renovate their units and raise the rent by over 50%. After the tenants had secured other housing, Majestic opted not to go through with the renovations.**



Image Credit: The Channels



Image Credit: Santa Barbara Independent

In March 2023, over 1,000 residents at apartment complex CBC & The Sweeps received eviction notices due to renovation, forcing residents to vacate their homes within 60 days. On April 6, the County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to pass an emergency ordinance requiring Core Spaces, the owners of the complex, to provide proof that renovations would be happening. This has slowed down the eviction process, but residents are still vulnerable to eviction.***

Sources: *Santa Barbara Independent, April 4th, 2023, Santa Barbara Independent, April 6th, 2023.

**Daily Nexus, April 2nd, 2015, Santa Barbara Independent, August 24th, 2006.

***Santa Barbara Independent, April 4th, 2023.

ISLA VISTA

Unhoused Students



A survey conducted in 2013 found that 8% of UCSB students were without a home at some point in their college career. Since then, the housing crisis in Isla Vista has continued unabated.*



Despite campus efforts to help its unhoused students, many students have resorted to living in vans and cars or commuting long distances to receive their education.**



**A UCSB student
in his converted
van.**

Image Credit: *Los Angeles Times*

Sources: **Santa Barbara Independent*, June 27th, 2015.

***Los Angeles Times*, November 12th, 2021.

ISLA VISTA

Tenants' Rights

Finding a rental unit in Isla Vista is hard, but tenants' problems don't stop there. Predatory landlords take advantage of tenants and do not always follow the law. See below for a summary of your rights as a tenant*:

Landlords must give the tenant reasonable advance notice in writing before entering the unit. This does not include emergencies, if the tenant has abandoned the unit, if the tenant is present and gives consent, or if the tenant and landlord have agreed that the landlord will enter to make repairs.

California law allows landlords to use a tenant's security deposit for four purposes:

- (1) unpaid rent;
- (2) cleaning the rental unit when the tenant moves out, but only to make the unit as clean as it was when the tenant first moved in;
- (3) for repair of damages other than normal wear and tear;
- (4) the cost of restoring or replacing furniture or personal property

Tenants are entitled to a move out inspection, where they can request a walk-through inspection prior to move-out. The rental company must notify the tenant in advance of any defects in the property that could be deducted from their security deposit so tenants can make repairs.

The security deposit cannot be used for repairing defects that existed in the unit before you moved in. This includes normal wear and tear during your/previous tenancies, or for cleaning a rental unit that is as clean as it was when you moved in.

Certain resources do exist for tenants, such as the UCSB Rapid Rehousing Program, the Isla Vista Tenants Union (IVTU), and the UCSB Legal Resource Center (LRC). For a full list of student resources, see the Housing Resources Addendum below.

Source: Isla Vista Community Services Official Website (2023).



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