

Frequently Asked Questions About UC-Hillel Partnership Focus Groups

UC is participating in [Hillel International's Campus Climate Initiative](#), an essential part of UC's broader ongoing campus climate efforts.

With involvement by senior leaders on all 10 UC campuses, the UC Office of the President (UCOP) has hosted full day convenings and educational seminars led by Hillel International. Campus teams consult with Hillel International staff and work directly with Hillel's research partner, National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (NORC) to assess campus climate to foster a positive, inclusive, and welcoming campus climate for all students. Beginning in spring 2026, campuses will participate in virtual focus groups led by NORC.

Q: What is the purpose of the focus groups?

A: Focus group data will provide a qualitative window into how students feel about campus climate and antisemitism. Participation in focus groups is voluntary. Designed to support institutional understanding rather than evaluate campuses, the insights gleaned from the focus groups will complement the University of California's ongoing efforts to address student concerns and cultivate a positive and welcoming campus environment.

Q: How will focus group participants be selected?

A: NORC will recruit students using established qualitative research methods designed to ensure participation from students with a range of experiences, perspectives and academic backgrounds.

Q: How will student data privacy be addressed?

A: To maintain confidentiality, student names will be changed to a member number during focus groups. During the focus group, participants will be referred to by their member number instead of their name. Students will receive an informed consent form from NORC in advance that explains the purpose of the focus group and what they can expect, including the topics to be discussed.

Per NORC's general protocols and in accordance with applicable laws, only participants and researchers are permitted to observe the focus groups. Only the NORC research team has access to the focus group materials following the conclusion of the focus groups.

Q: How will the focus group findings be used?

A: Campuses, UCOP and Hillel International will review the findings to better understand student experiences and identify themes that may help inform future campus climate efforts.

Discussion topics may include:

- Student interpretations of institutional actions and communications.
- How students understand and discuss antisemitism within the campus context.

- Areas of clarity, ambiguity, or disagreement.
- Points of convergence and divergence across student perspectives.

Campuses may use these insights to explore how the information might inform efforts to advance the sense of inclusion and belonging among Jewish students and combatting antisemitism. UCOP will review systemwide themes to identify opportunities for broader institutional support and coordination.

More Information

For questions about the focus group process, contact Erin Knepler (knepler-erin@norc.org) and Alicia Taylor at NORC (taylor-alicia@norc.org)

For general questions about the UC-Hillel Partnership, contact Kari Stewart at UCOP (kari.stewart@ucop.edu)

For questions about Hillel International's role post-focus groups, contact Lisa Armony at Hillel International (larmony@hillel.org)