



Objective

This study examines whether low-income status or significant financial hardship impacts the use of academic resources among UCSD students.

Introduction

Education as a Social Determinant of Health

- Education attainment is linked to higher income, improved access to healthcare, better health behaviors, and longer life expectancy.¹

Current Disparities

- Low-income college students experience challenges in their pursuit to higher education that impact their GPA scores, retention and graduation rates, and consequently, their long-term health outcomes.^{2,4}

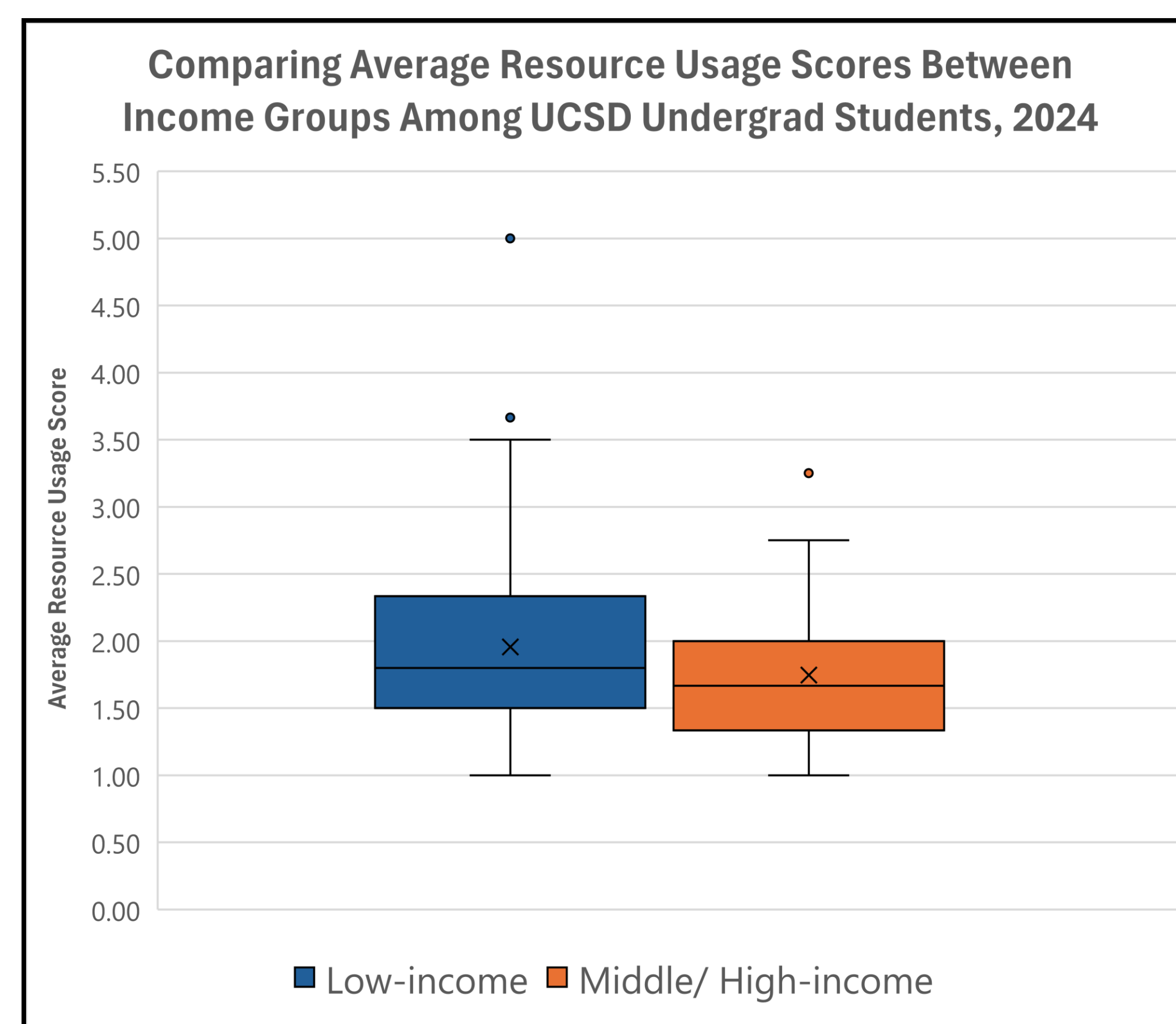
Importance of Resource Utilization

- Effective use of resources positively correlates with academic performance and may help mitigate disadvantages faced by low-income students, improving academic and long-term health outcomes.^{1,3,5}

Methodology

- A Qualtrics survey targeted undergraduate students, yielding 125 responses of which 105 were viable
- 67 respondents identified as low-income or experienced significant financial hardship, 38 identified as middle/high income
- Income status was determined by Pell Grant receipt and/or difficulty meeting basic needs (household incomes of \$50,000 or less)
- Participants rated their awareness and frequency of usage of 6 campus resources on a scale from 5 ("Very Often") to 1 ("Never")
- Scores averaged to generate an Average Resource Usage Score
- Welch's t-test was employed to compare these scores between two income groups

Results



Note: The p-value comparing average resource usage scores between the income groups (n=67 and n=38) is 0.08, indicating no significant difference ($p > 0.05$ threshold).



81%
79%



75%
74%



37%
37%



18%
8%



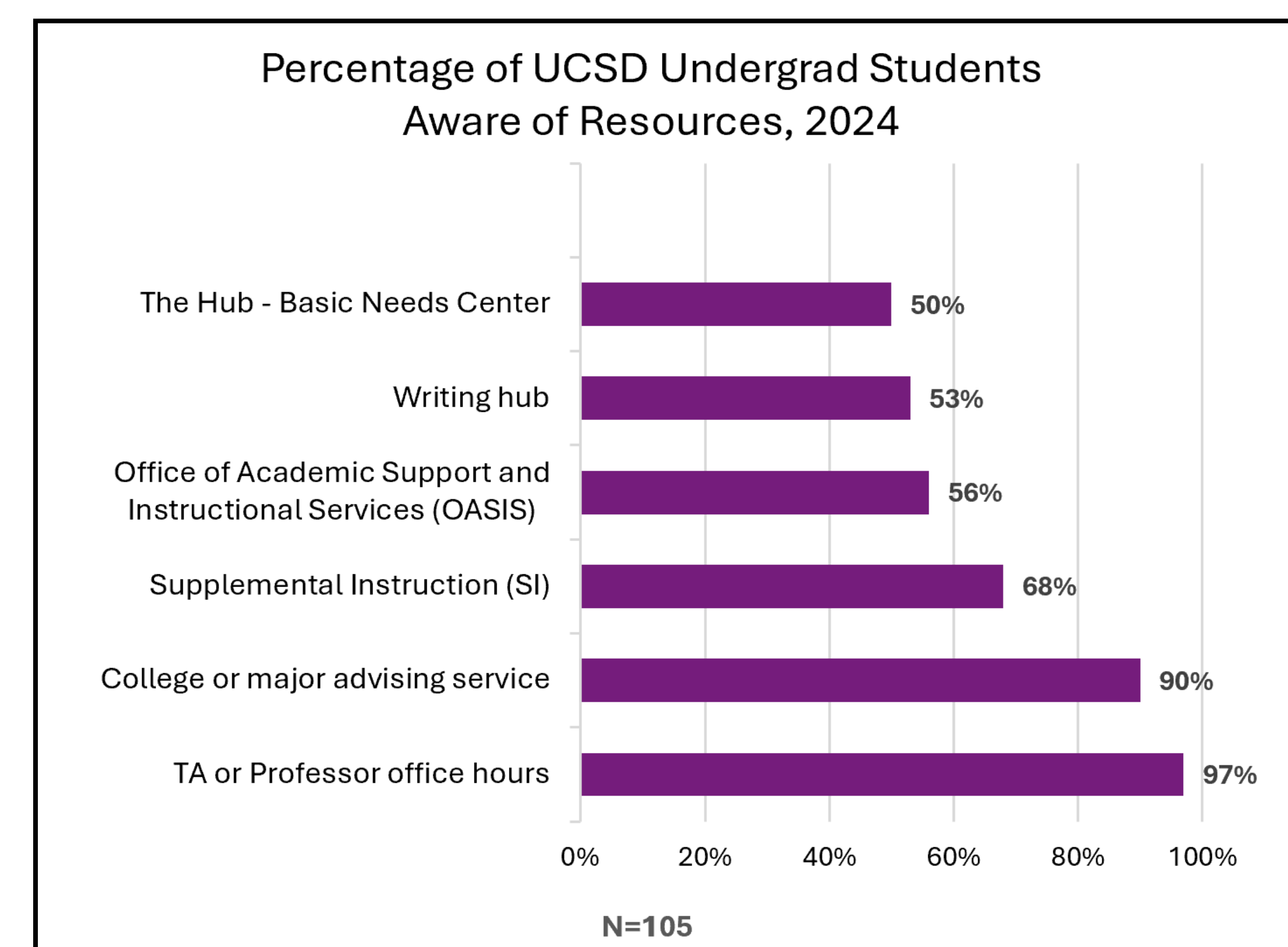
16%
18%



15%
16%

Resource	Low-income	Middle/ High-income
TA or Professor office hours	4	4
College or major advising service	3	3
Supplemental Instruction (SI)	4	4
Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS)	3	3
Writing hub	3	4
The Hub - Basic Needs Center	4	4

Rated on a scale of 1 - 5
1 = not accessible and 5 = easily accessible



Conclusion

- No significant difference in resource use or accessibility scores between income groups ($p=0.08$).
- Most used/known resources: Office hours and advising, followed by Supplemental Instruction; least known/used: The Hub – Basic Needs Center.
- Low-income students access resources similarly to higher-income peers, indicating effective equitable access efforts, however this needs regular monitoring.
- Awareness low: Only 50% knew 5 of 6 resources.

Policy Implications

- Increase awareness and accessibility for outreach programs with more flexible hours on campus.
- Collaborate with student organizations to enhance financial support and equitable access

Limitations and Future Research

- The methods used to measure income status and resource utilization might not fully capture students' financial situations or their interactions with academic resources. Future research should refine these methods for more accurate assessments.

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