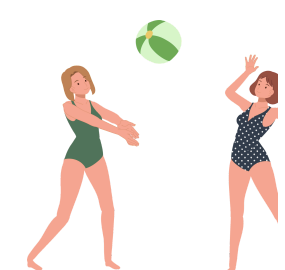


SINK OR SWIM

KALIZE PITTMAN
MARIAH RODRIGUEZ
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SOCIAL SUPPORT AS A LIFELINE FOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVES



- Understand the correlation between perceived social support and academic success.
- Identify trends between forms of social support and challenge the assumption that all support types equally impact academic success.

INTRODUCTION



While previous research highlights the general impact of social support on student well-being, it often overlooks how different types of support shape student experiences. This is especially relevant at schools where students report feeling disconnected, like UC San Diego, which, despite its academic prestige and ranking as the 6th top public university in the U.S., it consistently underperforms in the UC-wide biannual student satisfaction survey (average of 61% vs UC-wide average of 75%). Thus, UCSD has been given the nickname “UC Socially Dead.”

METHODOLOGY



- Exposure: type of social support (emotional, informational, instrumental, etc.)
- Outcome: academic performance (grades, GPA, satisfaction, etc.)
- Data Collection: Anonymous survey to gather both qualitative and quantitative data via Qualtrics
- Statistical tests: One-Way ANOVA
- Participants: UCSD undergraduate students, primarily comprised of seniors and Public Health majors.

DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

STUDENT GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
3% INTERNATIONAL
6% OUT OF STATE
91% IN STATE



STUDENT GEOGRAPHICAL
30% FIRST GEN STUDENT
70% LEGACY LEARNERS

RESULTS & DATA COLLECTION

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IS THE MOST COMMONLY REPORTED SUPPORT TYPE

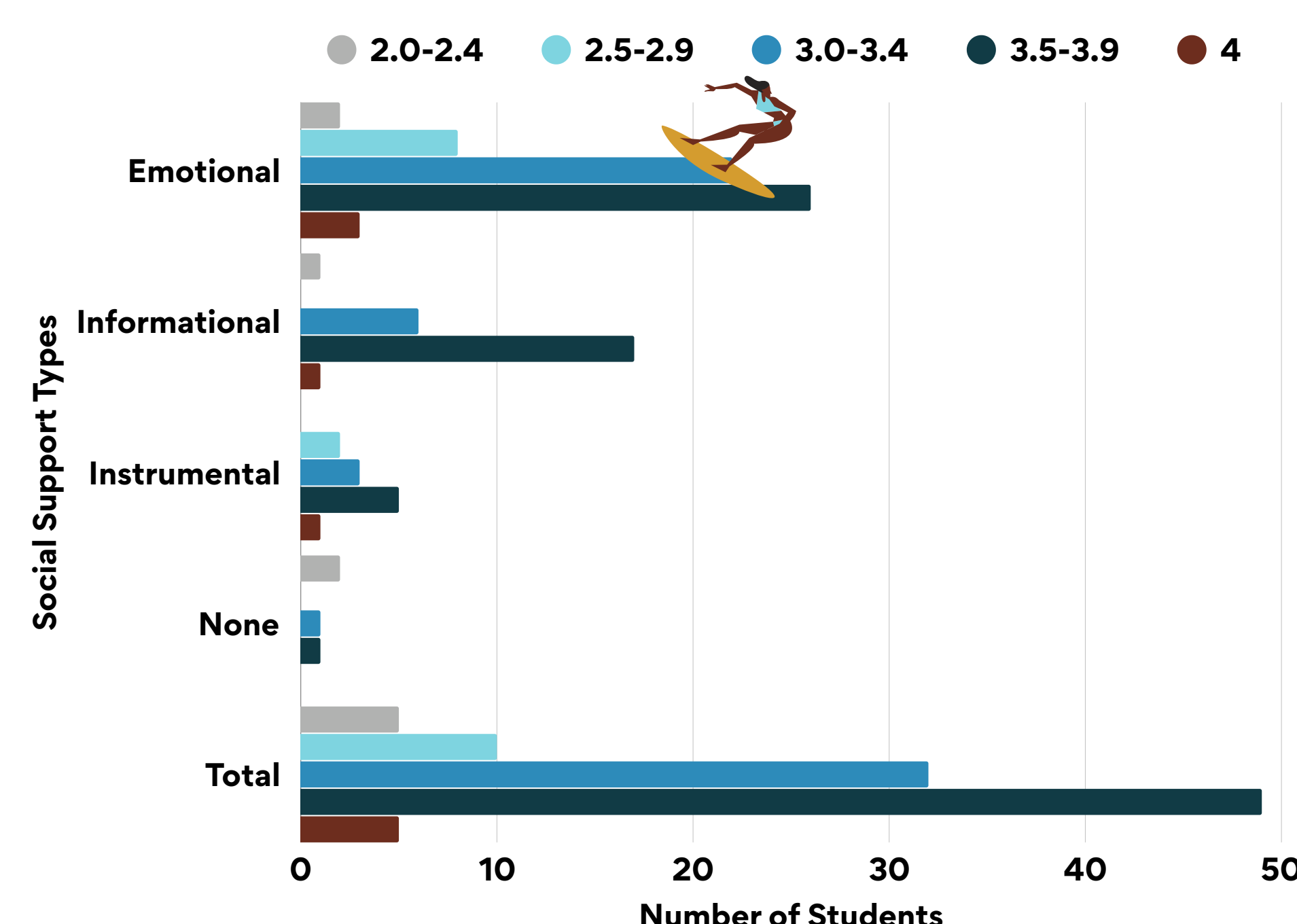


Figure 1: Shows Emotional (encouragement, motivation) support being the highest rated across all GPAs. Informational (assignments, studying, etc.), Instrumental (financial, housing, etc.), and None (don't feel that support affects academics) and corresponding GPA during Winter Quarter 2025.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES CORRELATES WITH HIGHER GPA

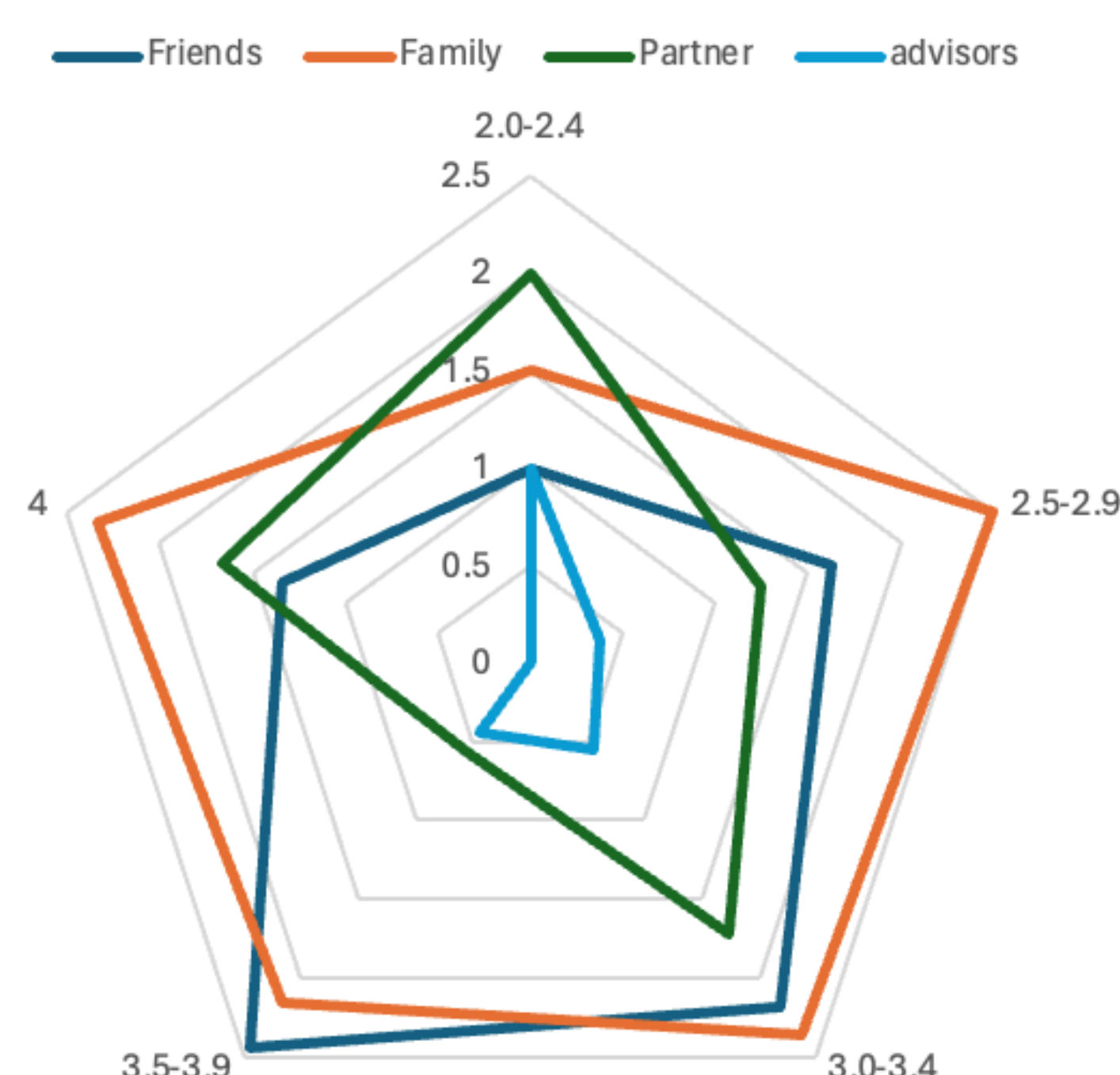


Figure 3: Radar chart illustrating the types of emotional support ranked by students by GPA. As students diversify forms of emotional support, GPA tends to increase.

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT USERS AVERAGE HIGHER GPAS

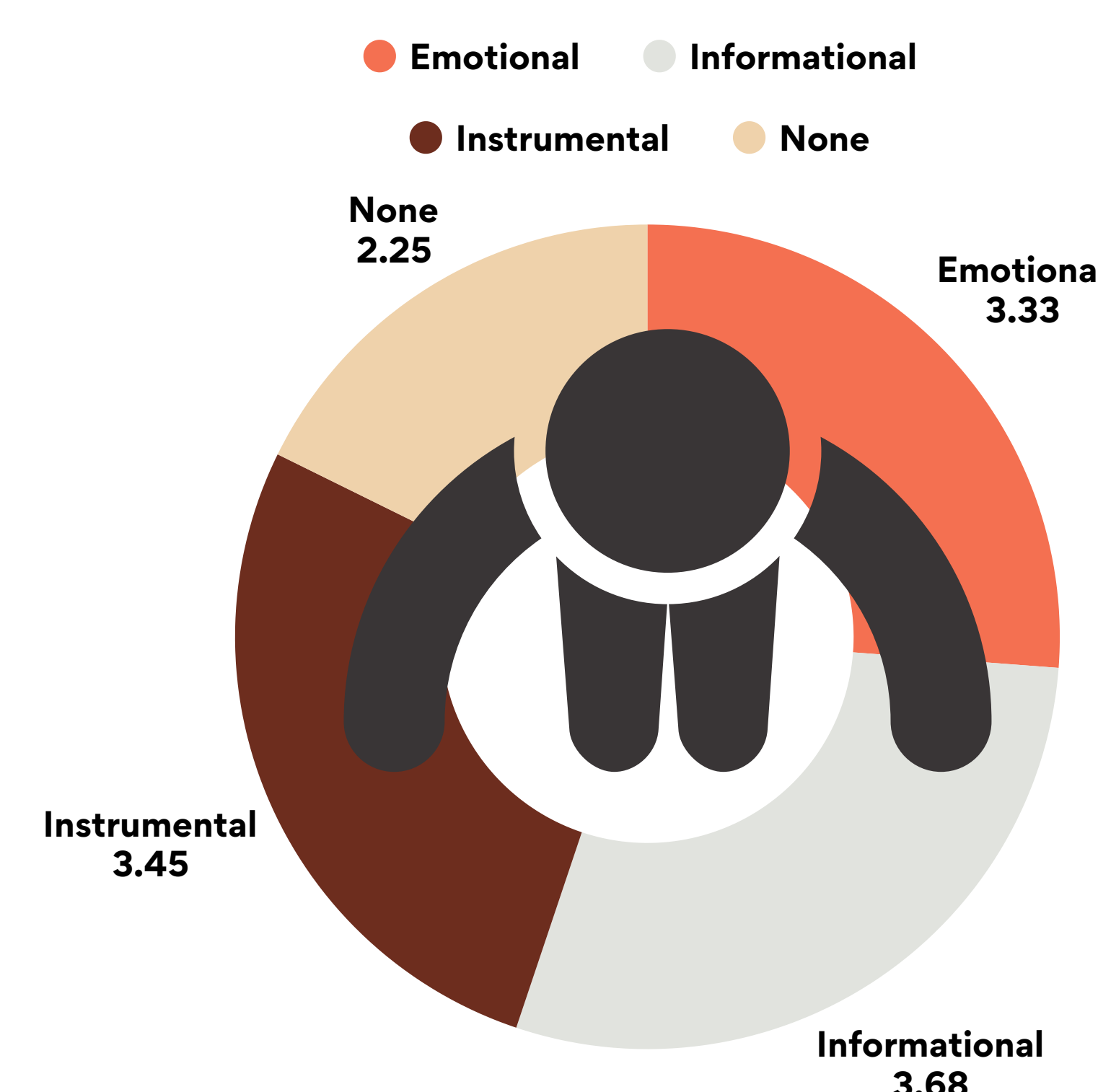


Figure 2: Shows results of survey by support type: Emotional, Informational, Instrumental, and None and corresponding averaged GPA during Winter Quarter 2025.

FIRST GENERS AND TRANSFERS HAVE HIGH GPA, BUT LOW SATISFACTION

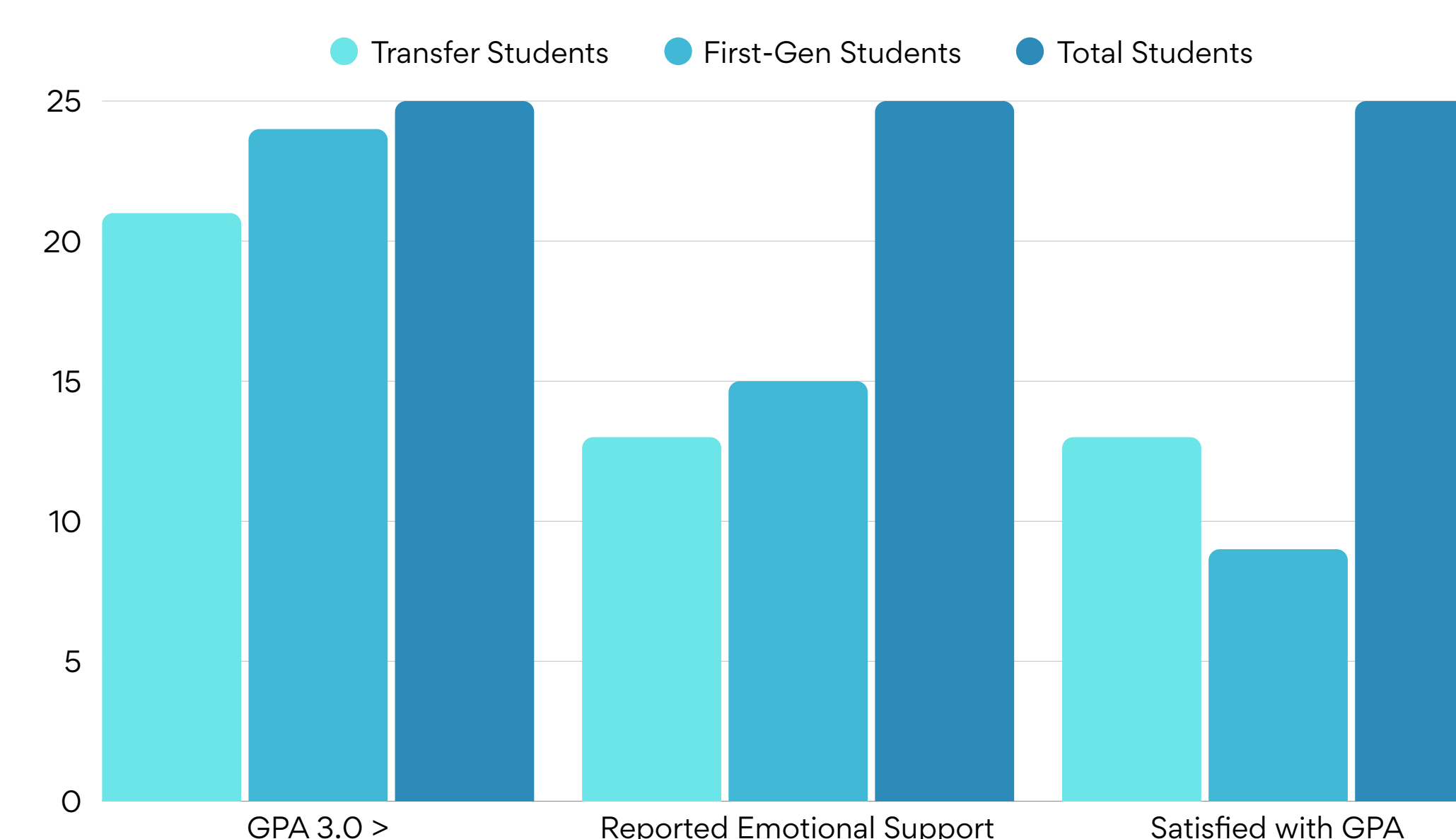
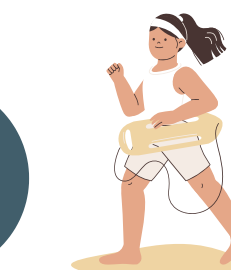


Figure 4: Bar graph depicting GPA ≥ 3.0 , emotional support and GPA satisfaction. Despite strong academic success; emotional support and satisfaction greatly differ for transfers and first gens despite being high-achieving.

INTERPRETATIONS



Findings and Trends :

- Academic success doesn't always equal satisfaction, especially for first-gen and transfer students who may thrive on paper but struggle emotionally.
- Students with strong personal support systems (friends, family, partners) report higher satisfaction than those relying solely on institutional resources.
- Informational support—like clear advising and mentorship—is closely tied to higher GPAs and academic confidence.
- Students who receive multiple types of support (emotional, informational, instrumental) tend to perform better overall.
- A one-size-fits-all model fails diverse students; UCSD should tailor support services by background (e.g., first-gen, transfer, international).

CONCLUSION



Our research highlights the vital impact of diverse social support on academic success. To better support students, UCSD should foster a more inclusive environment, strengthen belonging through social involvement, address the needs of diverse demographics, and learn from other UC campuses. As student needs evolve, so must support systems—ensuring all students have access to consistent, sustainable, and personalized support is key to both academic and personal growth.



REFERENCES