

Student Legal Services 2020-21

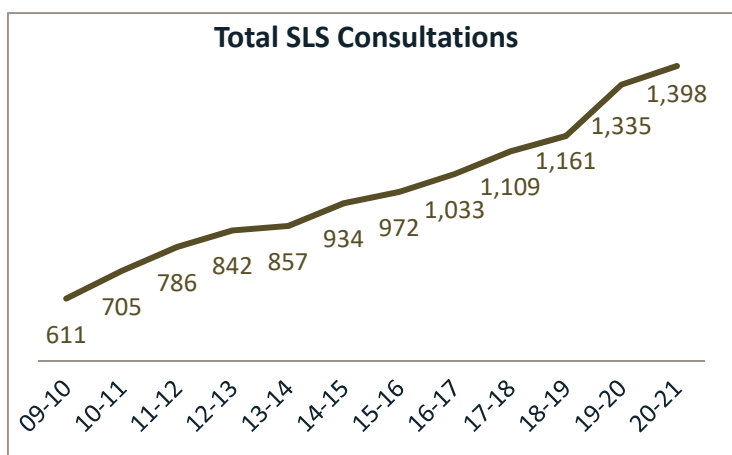
Overview

The Student Legal Services (“SLS”) mission is to **support student retention by improving students’ ability to stay in school via high-quality counseling and assistance with their legal issues**. SLS offers the following services:

- **Legal Consultations:** Free and confidential 30-minute consultations for currently registered students offering advice, guidance, and coaching related to their legal questions, rights, obligations, and processes. Areas of law include landlord/tenant, small claims actions, family law, traffic and alcohol citations, criminal, credit and collection matters, auto and health insurance claims, accidents and personal injury, consumer fraud, technology and privacy issues, general contract law, and basic estate planning. SLS does not represent students, but assists in the preparation and review of letters, legal documents, and court filings. SLS provides referrals to outside counsel or other third-party resources as appropriate.
- **Tip Sheets and Forms:** SLS offers a set of tip sheets and template documents on its Web site that relate to the most common areas of legal questions for students, including multiple detailed COVID-19 updates in 2020-21.
- **Workshops:** SLS presents educational sessions about legal rights on topics of interest or concern to students.

2020-21 Highlights and Key Metrics

- **1,398 total legal consultations**, up 4.7% from 1,335 in 2019-20 (26.2% of consultations were return visits by students with follow-up needs).
- Topic area of top growth from 19-20: Landlord-Tenant
- Consulted with City of Berkeley on tenants’ rights legislation related to COVID.
- The following demographic groups consulted with SLS in a proportion higher than their average numbers on campus: African-American students (**45.6% higher** than the campus average), Native American students (**48.3% higher** than campus average), and students age 24+ (**13.0% higher**). For the first time in the 14 years of tracking this data, Latinx students, transfer students, undergraduates with lower parental income, and Pell Grant-eligible undergraduates did **not** consult with SLS in higher proportions. **COVID-19 and remote learning** seem likely to have had an influence on these unprecedented results. *[All student demographic data is aggregated.]*
- Among all SLS clients, 5.7% were encountering severe financial distress, 4.8% were dealing with housing insecurity or significant habitability problems, and 4.1% were at risk of potential violence and/or targets of harm.
- Student learning outcomes assessment survey of SLS clients had 132 responses (22.3% rate; see separate report).



Most Common Legal Issues	Top Referral Sources
Landlord-Tenant (64.9%)	Friend/word of mouth or previous SLS client (48.6%)
Small Claims Court (8.5%)	Campus administrative or academic department (16.5%, from 68 different referral sources)
Credit problems/consumer fraud (4.6%)	Personal research by student (15.5%)
Police citations for alcohol, shoplifting and other misdemeanor or infraction offenses (4.5%)	Social media (primarily Twitter, Facebook, Reddit) (9.7%)
Auto insurance/accident/other personal injury (4.4%)	City of Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board (5.6%)
Family Law (4.1%)	ASUC Student Legal Clinic, ASUC Renter’s Legal Assistance, and ASUC Student Advocate (2.4%)