

Understanding Gambling Among Nevada's College Students

Findings from the 2025 NSHE Student Gambling Survey

Knowledge.

Research.

Innovation.

Andrea Dassopoulos
Project Manager, Nevada Problem Gambling Project

Dante Miller
Graduate Student

Prepared for Advisory Committee on Problem Gambling January 28, 2026

Gambling is part of Nevada life and student life, too

- Nevada's college students have a unique relationship with gambling, shaped by the state's culture, economy, and accessibility.
 - What do students think about gambling-related issues in Nevada?
 - How well do students understand the risks related to gambling?
- Like students everywhere, Nevada's students everywhere face psychological, social, and environmental vulnerabilities related to gambling
 - How and how much do students engage with different forms of gambling?
 - How many of our students are experiencing gambling-related harms?
 - Are they aware of available resources and willing to access them if needed?

About the survey

- Conducted April 25 to May 9, 2025
- Via email to 97, 961 NSHE students
- 4,615 students responded (~5%)
- First 1,500 respondents received a \$10 Amazon gift card
- Asked about gambling behaviors, gambling risks, beliefs and knowledge about gambling, and awareness of resources

NSHE Institution		
<i>University of Nevada, Reno</i>	587	14%
<i>University of Nevada, Las Vegas</i>	1982	46%
<i>Nevada State University</i>	350	8%
<i>Great Basin College</i>	58	1%
<i>Truckee Meadows Community College</i>	252	6%
<i>Western Nevada College</i>	60	1%
<i>College of Southern Nevada</i>	1060	24%
Total	4349	100%

Who responded

Gender	
Woman	62%
Man	34%
Another Gender	4%

Race or Ethnicity (select all that apply)	
White	42%
Latino/a or Hispanic	30%
Asian	18%
Native American, Alaska native, or Native Hawaiian	5%
Black or African American	11%
Middle Eastern or Northern African, Other	3%

Sexual Orientation	
Straight	73%
Other Orientation	27%

Economic Vulnerabilities	
Eligible for Pell Grant	58%
First generation college student	68%

Longest Place of Residence Before turning 18	
Nevada	69%
Another state	26%
Another country	5%

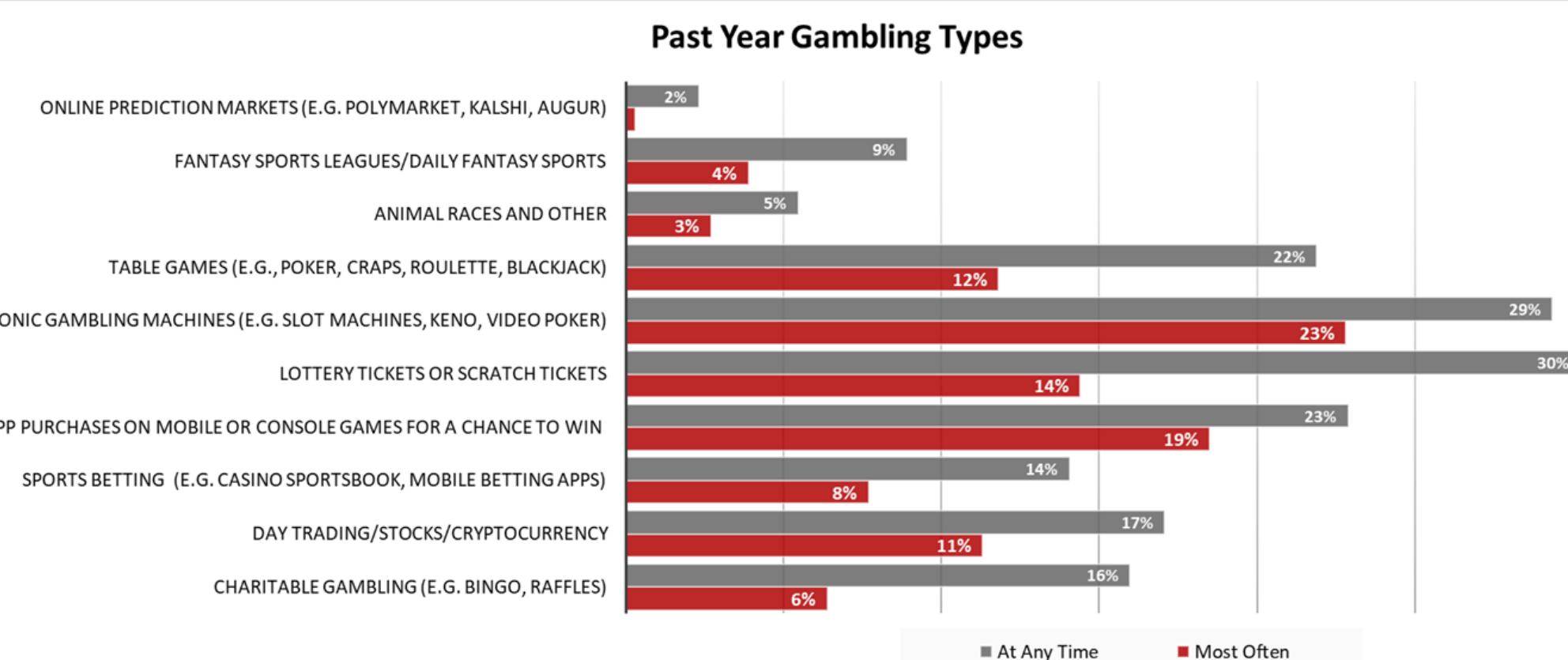
Age	
Average age: 26 (range 18-77)	
Traditional-age students (18-24): 59%	

Students don't always recognize gambling

- Misunderstandings about what counts as gambling may influence risk awareness and help-seeking
- Newer, digital, and skill-framed forms of gambling are the least recognized as gambling

Activity	% Who Said "Not Gambling"
Buying lottery tickets	16%
Trading or speculating in cryptocurrencies or day trading stocks	47%
Betting in online prediction markets	15%
Participating in fantasy leagues with entry fees	45%
Buying loot boxes or in-game items in video games	60%

Nearly three in four (72%) Nevada students gambled in the past year



Measuring gambling risk and harm

- Brief BioSocial Gambling Screen (BBSG)
 - A short, validated tool that identifies potential problem gambling

Biological	Psychological	Social
Urge or restlessness when trying to stop gambling	Feeling guilt or criticism about gambling	Financial, relationship, or other life consequences

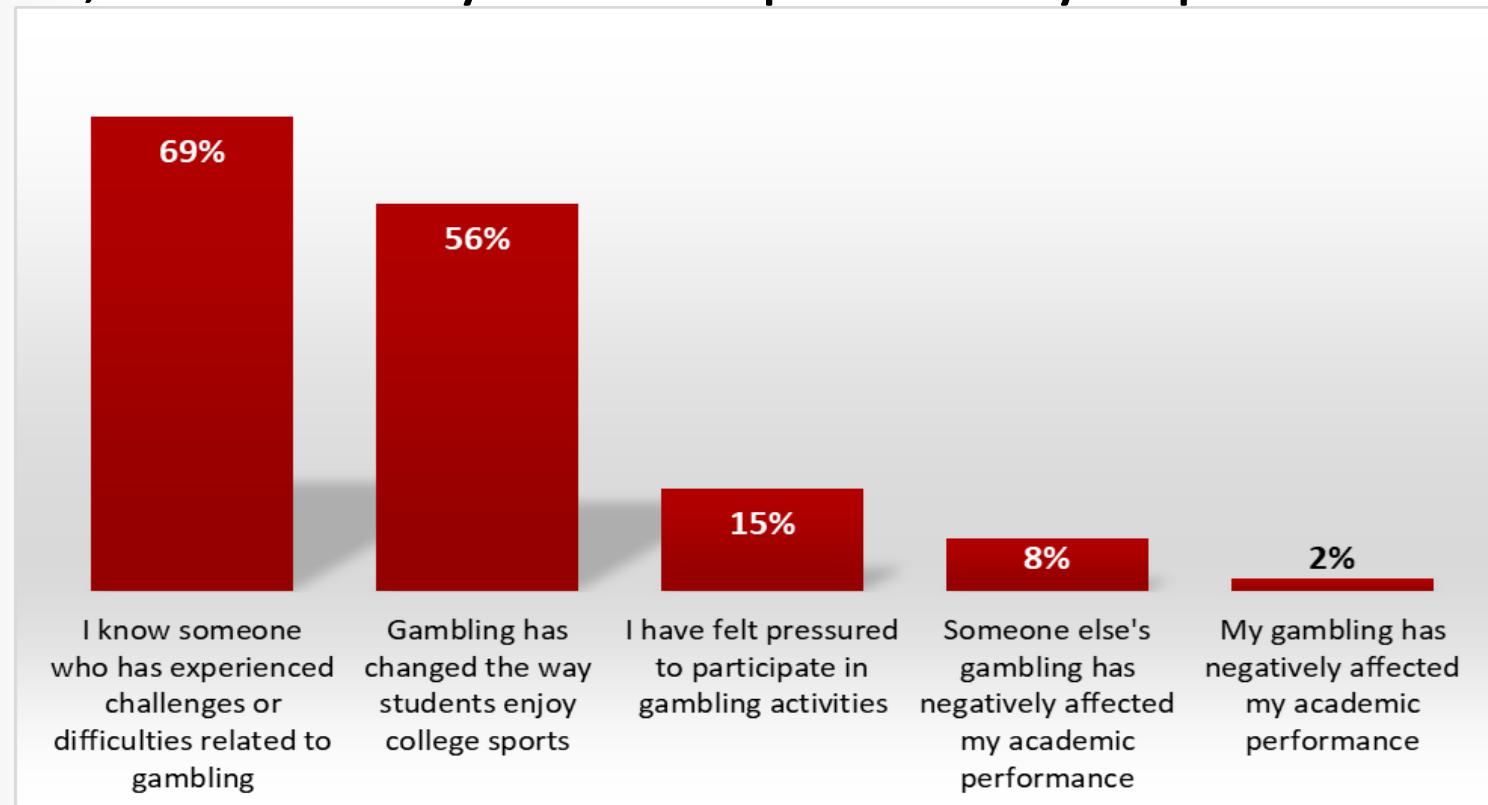
- Answering “yes” to one or more items is considered *at risk for gambling problems*
- NSHE-wide, 5.6% of students screened were identified as *at-risk*
 - Men (9.2%) and transgender/nonbinary students 9.6% were statistically significantly more likely than women (3.4%) to endorse at least one indicator of gambling harm

Sports betting is linked to higher risk

- Students with higher interest in sports were significantly more likely to bet on sports
- Increased frequency of sports betting is significantly associated with positive BBGS risk scores
- There's a significant and strong association between live or in-game betting (placing bets during events) and a positive BBGS screening
- Patterns mirror national NCAA data (2023)

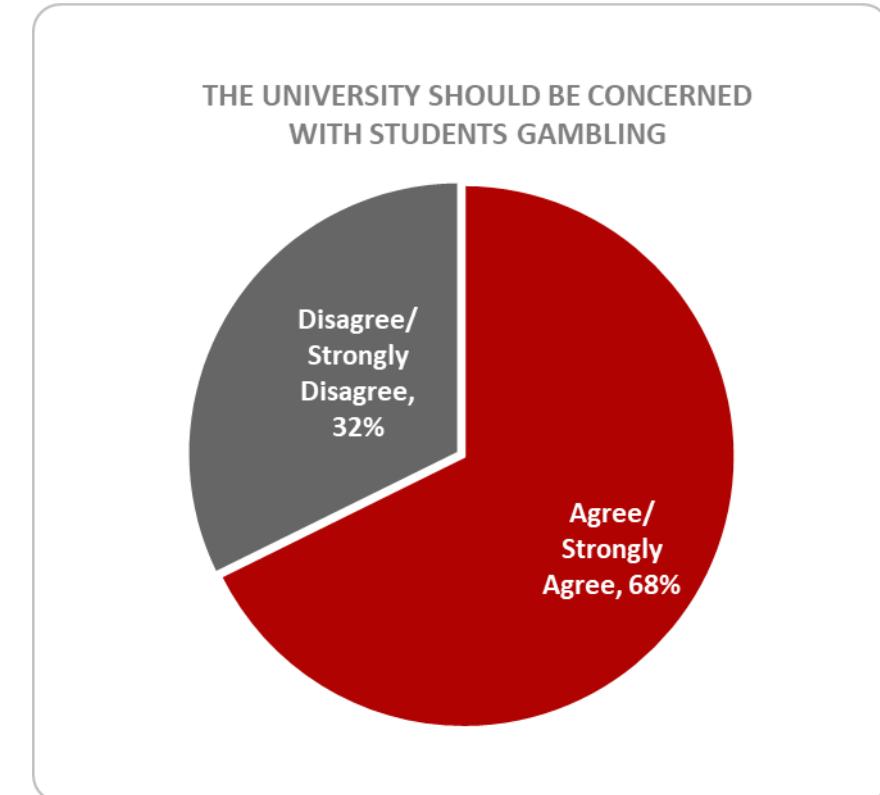
Gambling reaches beyond individual players

Most students have seen gambling affect their peers, campus life, or sports culture, even if they haven't personally experienced harm



Opportunities for supporting NSHE students

- **Awareness and Education**
 - Embed gambling awareness within broader wellbeing efforts
- **Outreach and Visibility**
 - Make help easy to find and visible across campuses
- **Faculty and Staff Engagement**
 - Build capacity to identify and support students in need
- **Campus Culture and Dialogue**
 - Normalize healthy conversations about gambling and risk
- **Monitoring and Assessment**
 - Track student behaviors and outcomes to guide future action



Acknowledgements: This research was supported by NVDPBH and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Problem Gambling



NEVADA DIVISION of PUBLIC
and BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

igi.unlv.edu

 [@UNLVigi](https://twitter.com/UNLVigi)

andrea.dassopoulos@unlv.edu