



Why listen to public online discussion?

Students discuss academics, housing, social life, and basic needs online. Aggregated public posts may help identify topics for follow-up between surveys and administrative reporting.

Objectives: Identify recurring topics; describe posting and language-sentiment patterns; and explore whether place mentions can inform future assessment.

Study cohort

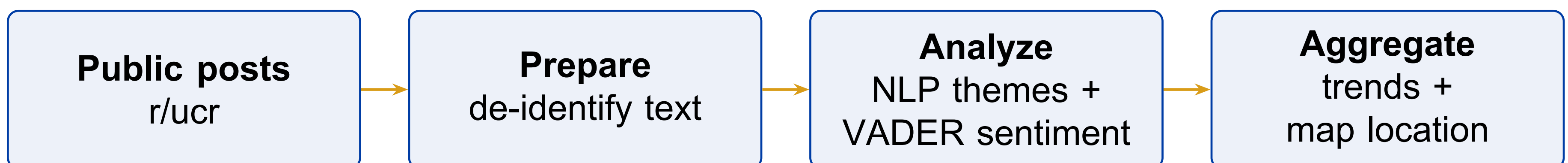
1,759

public r/ucr posts

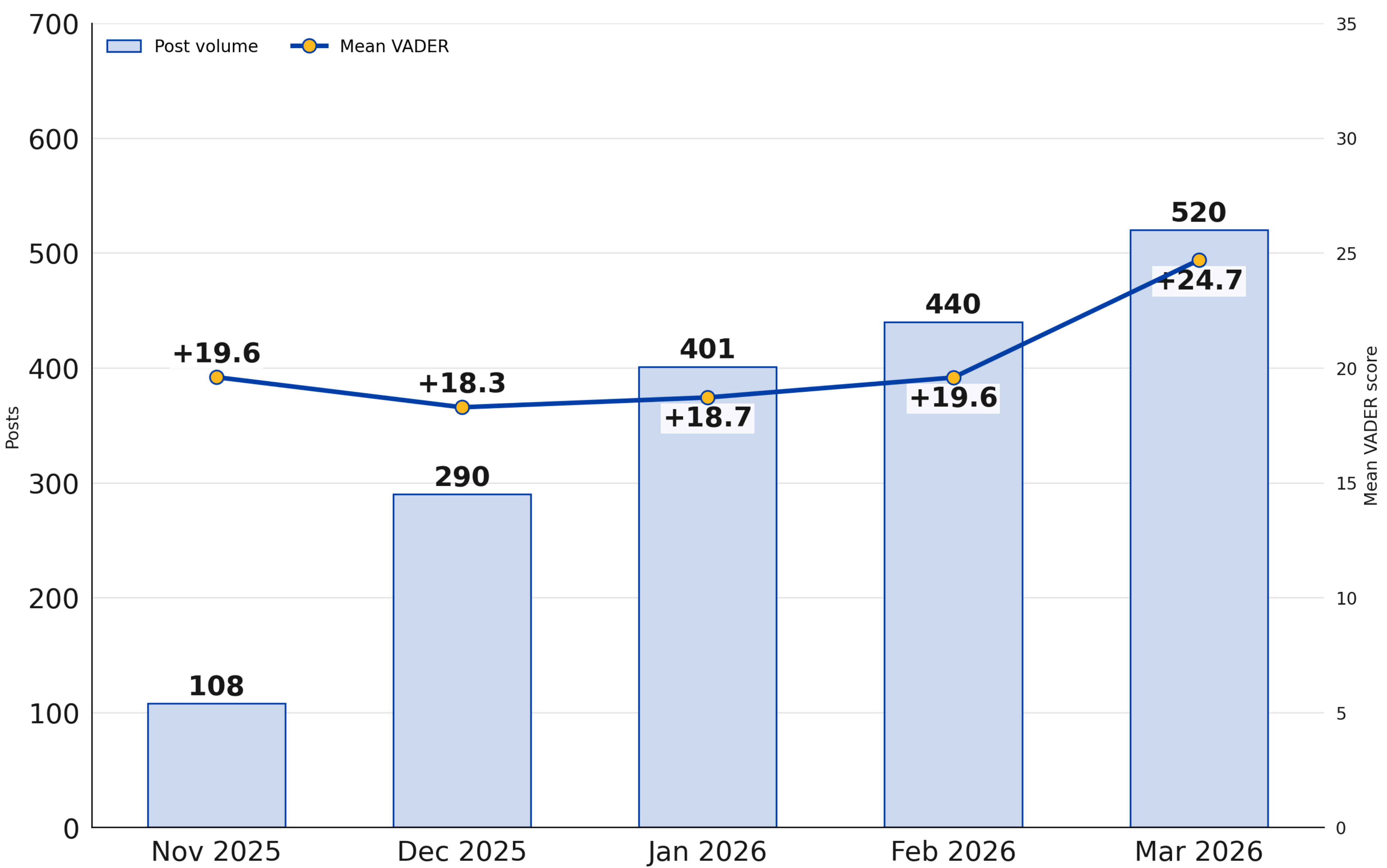
Nov 18, 2025–Mar 31, 2026 • Mean VADER: +20.7 / 100

Study design and analytic workflow

Source: Public r/ucr posts from Nov. 18, 2025–Mar. 31, 2026. Quantitative analyses use each post's title and latest saved self-text; comments and media are excluded.

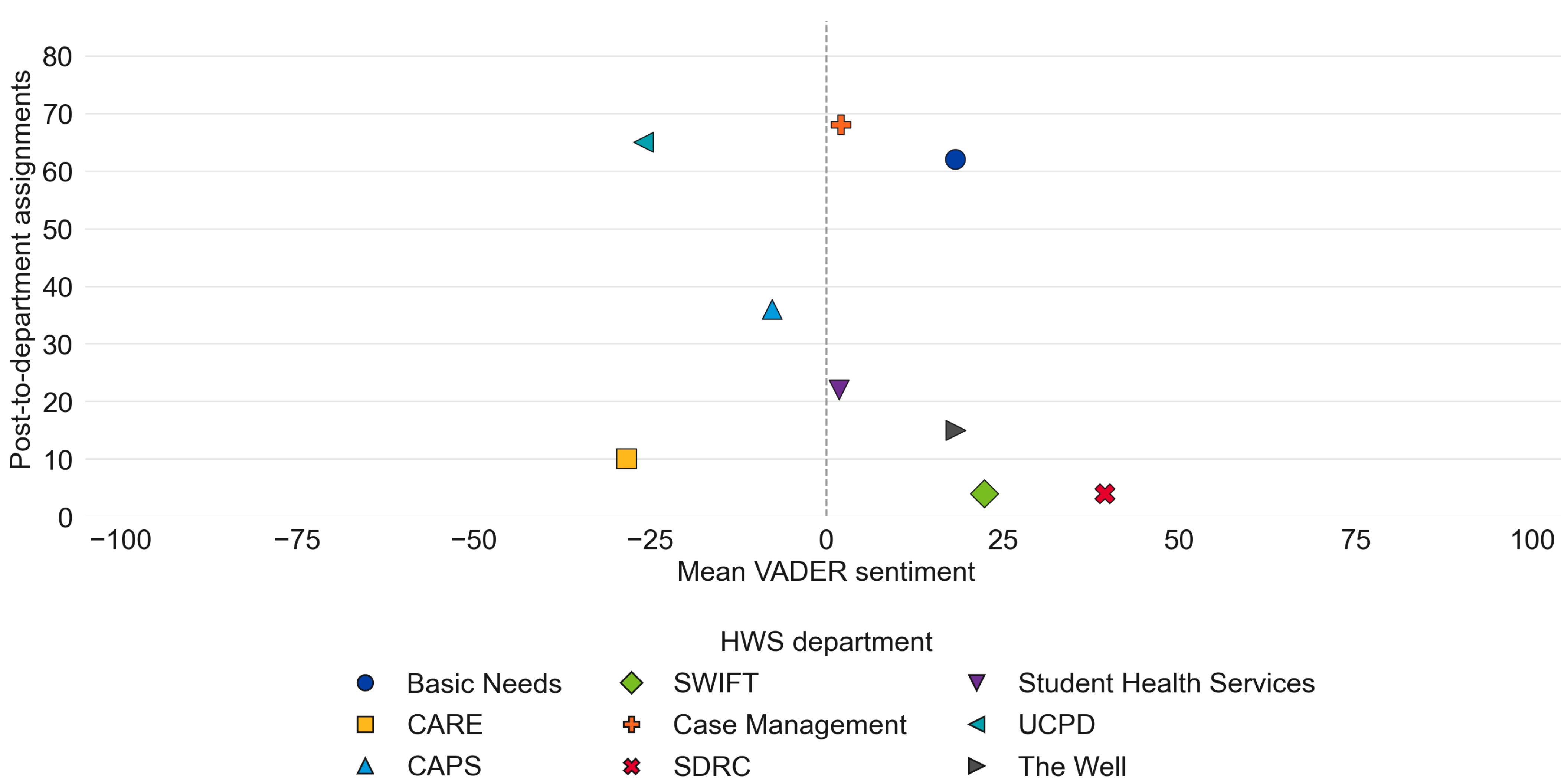


Posting and sentiment trends



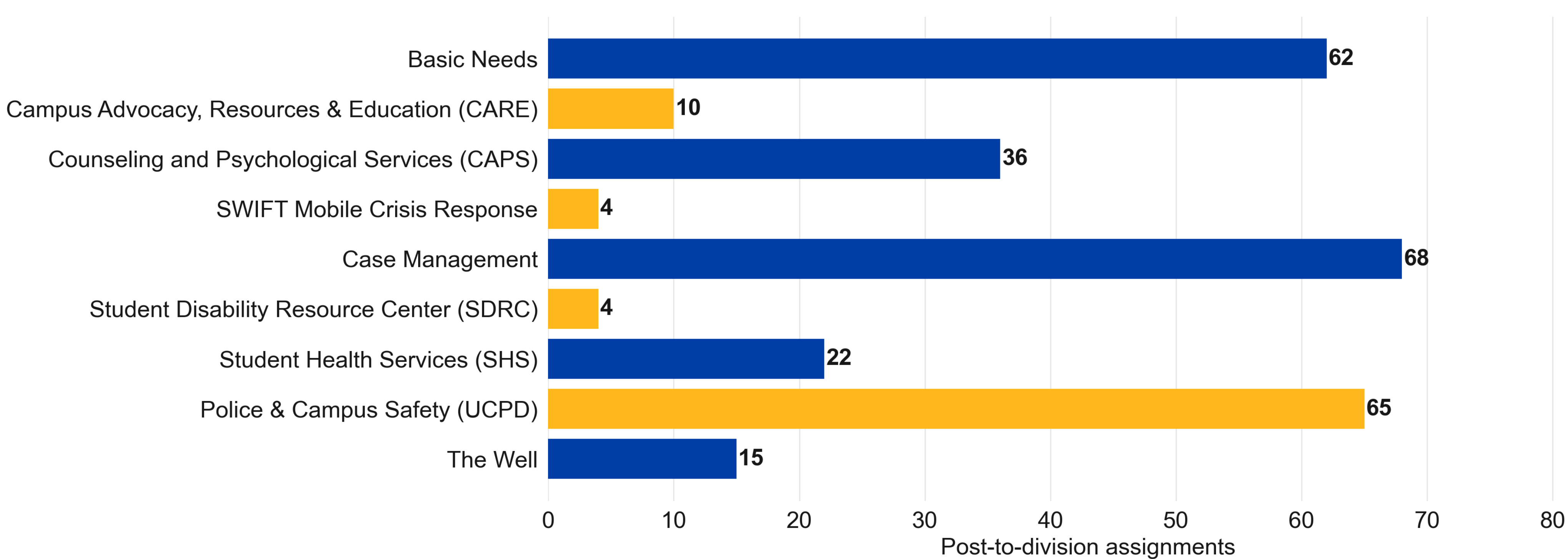
Monthly post volume rose over the studied timeframe. Mean monthly VADER scores ranged from +18.3 to +24.7. These descriptive patterns do not explain why posting or wording changed. The sentiment axis is scaled to observed monthly means; the full VADER range is -100 to +100.

HWS department volume × sentiment



Posts may map to multiple departments.

HWS department assignment split



209 posts received at least one HWS division tag and 67 received multiple tags. Bars count post-to-department assignments.

Post excerpts mapped to HWS departments

Mental health example

Title: I have no friends and I'm going insane

Post text: I'm not even a weird person or anything I had a pretty solid group freshman year that was highkey toxic as hell and just split apart. I joined some professional orgs on campus and I also work so I feel like I don't really have time to do rec clubs. Making friends in those 200 people lecture halls is practically insane...

Mapped departments: CAPS; The Well

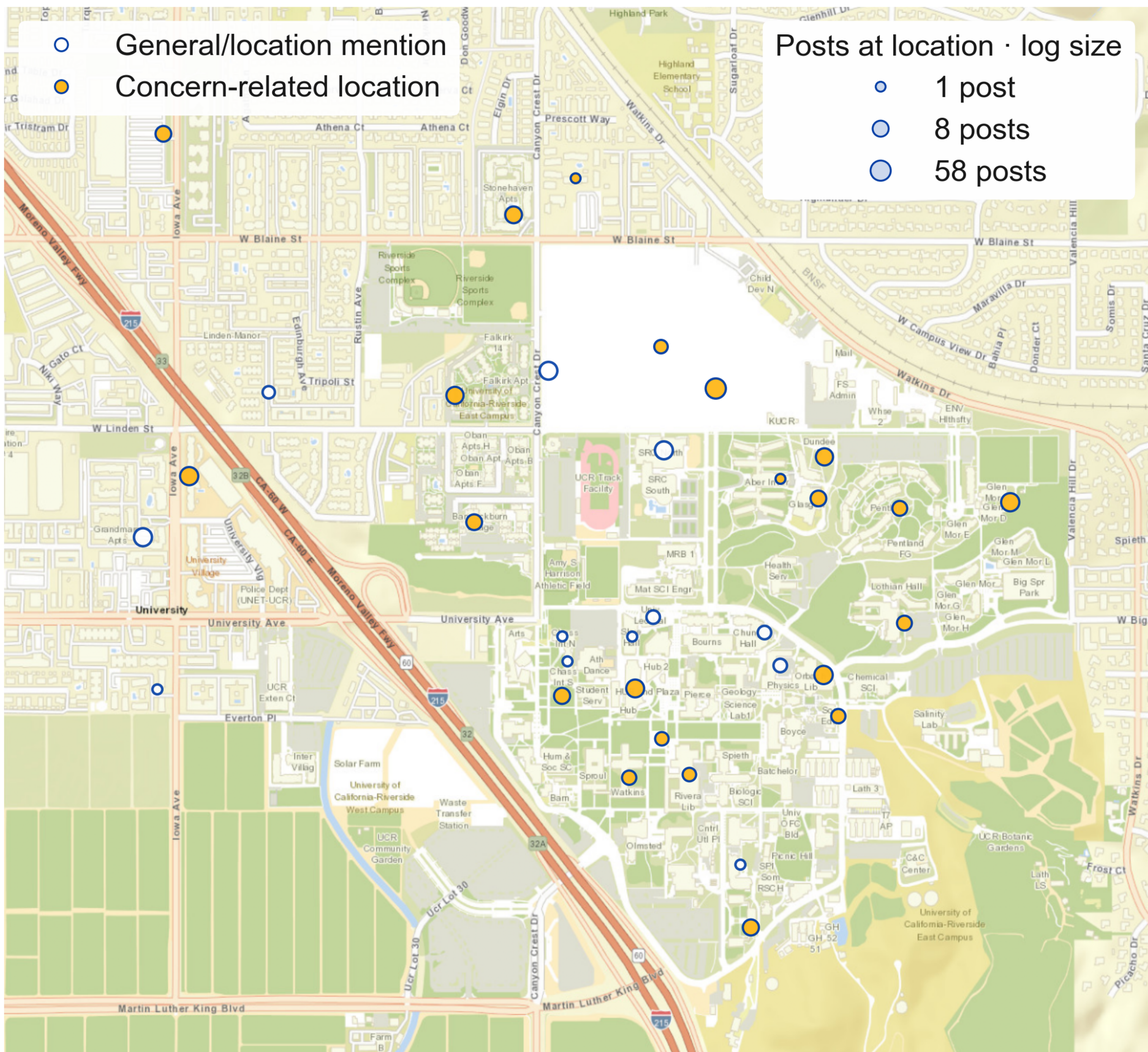
Campus safety example

Title: Someone just hit me with their scooter

Post text: Someone head on hit me while on their scooter, I was walking in a linear path looking down at an email. After they hit me, they step off their scooter, and say "I was going on the right" and rode off. I said "my bad". If you're reading this, and you're the one who rammed me with your scooter outside of bcoe, I want you to know it WAS NOT my bad. It was your bad...

Mapped departments: Student Health Services (SHS); Police & Campus Safety (UCPD)

A new spatial lens: Esri campus map



Points show mapped place mentions. Marker size represents distinct posts at a location; color marks concern-related or general mentions.

Mapped mentions

The map shows 313 approved or auto-mapped post-location pairs across 34 coordinates. These are place mentions, not verified incidents. A post may map to more than one location.

Public health relevance and limitations

- Pair online signals with surveys and institutional data to identify topics for further assessment.
- Use place context to guide prevention and access questions; do not label people or places as unsafe.
- Reddit users are self-selected, and automated text and place matching can miss context or misclassify posts.
- Validate labels and co-design referral pathways with HWS and campus partners before operational use.

Privacy and responsible interpretation

- Observational use of public content; no user contact or attempt to identify people.
- Findings are aggregated for program assessment and referral, never individual profiling or discipline.
- Sentiment is a language proxy, not a measure of any student's mental health.