The Undergraduate Student Survey has been conducted at Simon Fraser University almost every Fall semester since 1992. These annual surveys provide us with essential feedback from our undergraduate students and this year’s survey addressed the following themes: Course Availability, T.A and Course Instructor Effectiveness, and Access and Affordability. Highlights from the survey are provided here and a full report on the survey may be obtained from the Office of Analytical Studies' web site: www.sfu.ca/analytical-studies/ugss/2005/2005.html. Please note that the statistics provided in this summary and in the report have been calculated from the data provided by survey respondents only.

This year, 21 undergraduate classes were selected for the survey and these were distributed across SFU’s five faculties as follows: eight in Arts, four in Applied Sciences, five in Business, three in Science and one in Education. A total of 1,049 surveys were completed in class, representing 65% of the unique registrants in those classes. Non-respondents were primarily absent from class.

Course Availability
- This Fall, 88% of survey respondents were able to register for the number of courses they wanted and 56% were able to register in all specific courses desired.
- Historical survey results show that course availability levels are improving this year over the recent lows attained in 2003, but are still below the highs achieved in 1997.
- Students said they could not register for specific courses this Fall due to full classes (51%), class time conflicts (33%) and final exam conflicts (9%).
- Over half (53%) of all respondents pursuing a degree are taking longer to complete than initially expected. According to respondents, this is primarily due to: courses not offered in the desired semester (19%), choosing to reduce course load (17%), and full courses (15%).
- The decrease in course availability may be partly responsible for the proportion of students who say they are taking longer than expected to graduate. (See Figure A).

Teaching Assistant and Course Instructor Effectiveness
- When asked to assess a variety of instructional traits of course instructors and teaching assistants, Fall 2005 respondents indicated that teaching assistants were more “responsive to questions” (85%) than “able to challenge you intellectually” (53%);
- respondents indicated that course instructors were more “fair in the treatment of students” (89%): than able to “develop or increase students’ interest in the subject” (52%); and
- generally, students are satisfied with the instruction provided by teaching assistants and course instructors at SFU. A significant proportion of students are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their TA’s (74%) and with their course instructors (88%).
Access and Affordability - Education Costs

- The estimated median annual academic expenses of SFU undergraduate students who were surveyed are $5,700 for domestic students and $15,300 for international students (includes tuition, student fees, educational materials and supplies).
- The estimated median annual non-academic expenses are $4,700 per year for undergraduate students (includes accommodation, utilities, food, household operations, clothing, transportation, health/personal care, recreation/entertainment, travel to visit family, etc.)
- 61% of the undergraduate student respondents live at home with their parents. These students expect to spend $1,000 to $4,000 per year on non-academic expenses versus $8,000 to $13,000 for students living away from home.
- The estimated median total annual education expenses are roughly $9,500 for domestic respondents and $25,400 for international respondents.
- Academic cost as a proportion of total education cost for a typical full-time student is 38% for students living away from home and 57% for students living at home with their parents.

Access and Affordability – Education Funding Sources

- The proportion of undergraduate respondents who expect to use each of a variety of funding sources and the median annual dollar amount they expect to spend from each source on their education is provided in Figure B. This figure also includes a comparison of responses from the 2003 survey.
- Although direct help from parents and family is the source used most often by students at $4,500 per year, the dollar contribution of loans at $5,700 is much greater (among those who use this source). Also, median parental income has increased from $65,000 in 2003 to $74,200 in 2005.

Access and Affordability – Steps Taken to Control Living and Education Costs

- Students cited that living at home (61%), cutting back on ‘extras’ (55%) and taking on employment during the school term as the top three steps taken to control costs in order to meet expenses.
- When asked where they would like to see their tuition fees spent, the top three areas mentioned were: more course sections (65%), curriculum improvements (45%), and student financial assistance (44%).

Overall Evaluation

- Students were asked to discuss any concerns with regard to their academic experience at SFU. A random sample of their comments is provided in the Undergraduate Student Survey Report of Findings: Fall of 2005.
- The top three concerns this year are: course availability and selection (24%), instructional staff (16%), and english communication (instructional staff) (10%).