The Undergraduate Student Survey has been conducted at Simon Fraser University every Fall semester since 1992 (except in 2002.) This annual survey provides essential feedback on the academic experiences and concerns of our undergraduate students. Every year, the survey asks students about their experiences with course availability at SFU, as well as a range of other topics that change from year to year. The new topics for this year’s survey were teaching and curriculum, experiential learning programs, and a selected range of services.

A total of 5,896 students participated in this year’s survey, yielding an overall response rate of 25.1%. Highlights of the survey results are presented here. Statistics provided in this summary and in the full report are estimates based on survey respondents, and are accurate within ±1.3%, 19 times out of 20.

The full report is available on the Institutional Research and Planning web-site: http://www.sfu.ca/irp/surveys/ugss/index.html

### General Experience

- 87% of respondents are satisfied with their general SFU experience.
- When students were asked what single thing SFU could do to improve their experience here, the most common responses were:
  - improve course availability, variety and scheduling,
  - improve facilities, and
  - improve student life.

#### If SFU could do one thing to improve your experience here, what would it be? (Top 10 Suggestions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Availability, Scheduling</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Life</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Policies</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition/Fees and Financial Aid</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors/TAs</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Content, Workload</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 It should be noted that a change in methodology, from in-class paper survey to online survey, was instituted in 2006. The paper surveys, administered to a random sample of classes, resulted in a “captive audience” and high response rates. In contrast, the online surveys, administered to the entire SFU undergraduate student population, result in larger samples but lower response rates, which could make the results less generalizable. Measures were taken to reduce potential biases resulting from a lower response rate.

2 This margin of error applies to estimates based on the entire sample, assuming that the sample is representative.
Why did Students Choose SFU?

- When asked why they chose SFU for their studies, respondents most often cited:
  - specific programs/courses at SFU,
  - SFU’s location,
  - SFU’s reputation/quality of education, and
  - the campus environment.

Course Availability

- In general, this year’s course availability results were similar to the 2008 results. Differences were not statistically significant.
- NUMBER of Courses: 79% of respondents were able to register in the number of courses they wanted this fall [the same rate as last fall.]
- SPECIFIC Courses: 54% were able to register all of the specific courses they wanted to take this term [the same rate as last fall.]
- REQUIRED Courses: 66% were able to register all of the REQUIRED courses they wanted this term [vs. 65% last fall.] Registration difficulty was most often due to:
  - full classes,
  - scheduling conflicts,
  - courses not being offered this term,
  - inconvenient scheduling, and
  - insufficient travel time between classes offered on different campuses.
  - Respondents in the Faculty of Business Administration were least successful in registering for all of the required courses they wanted to take, while those in Education, Applied Sciences and Environment were most successful.

![Fall 2009 Registration Success, by Faculty](image)

- Delayed Credential Completion: 55% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential [vs. 54% last fall.] Commonly cited reasons for delay include:
  - course availability issues [especially full courses, scheduling conflicts, and courses not being offered in the desired term], and
  - students choosing to reduce their course load and/or choosing to take courses that did not count towards their credential.
Rates of delayed completion are highest in the Faculty of Business Administration (61%). However, many of these students were delayed due to entering a co-op program. Since the co-op program is intended to enhance the educational experience, delayed completion may not be a negative outcome in some cases.

- Trends indicate that course availability has become generally more problematic over the past ten years. However, there was little change from 2008 to 2009.

### Satisfaction with Course Availability:

- Satisfaction with course availability decreases as course level increases.
- 78% of respondents are satisfied with the location (campus) of courses offered.
- 63 - 64% of respondents are satisfied with course frequency (how often courses are offered), and scheduling.
- 55 – 57% of respondents are satisfied with available registration spots in courses and the variety of distance/online courses offered.
Teaching, Curriculum and Experiential Learning

- **W/Q/B Courses:** Roughly half of this year’s respondents agreed that W/Q/B (writing-intensive, quantitative, and breadth) courses produce the benefits for which they were designed. This is slightly up from last year’s results.

- **English Language Skills:**
  - 12% of respondents said that they sometimes struggle in their classes due to *their own* English language skills.
  - 47% indicated that they sometimes struggle due to *their instructor’s* English language skills.

- **Cohort Programs:** 74% of respondents said that if they were to start their SFU studies over again, they would be interested in joining a cohort program (a group of students who take courses together at the same time.)

- **Interdisciplinary Learning:**
  - 45% of respondents agreed that SFU’s reputation for interdisciplinary learning was a factor in their decision to study here.
  - 70% agreed that students benefit when they are required to take courses outside of their field of study.

- **Experiential Learning Programs:**
  - Over 80% of respondents agreed that co-op, practica/internships, and research assistanceships deserve to be awarded academic credits towards a degree.
  - ~80% said they would be interested in participating in experiential learning programs that resulted in academic credits towards an SFU degree (see chart, below.)
  - 55% of respondents agreed that students should be required to participate in experiential learning programs at least once during their degree.

**Interest in Experiential Learning Programs, IF they were to Yield Academic Credits towards a Degree**

- **Co-op**
- **Work-Study**
- **Research Assistanceship**

![Chart showing interest in experiential learning programs](chart.jpg)
Services / General

- **Campus Traits**: Respondents indicated what they like best about the SFU campuses:
  - Burnaby:
    - Beautiful campus
    - Access to academic resources (library, faculty, staff, etc.)
    - Course selection
  - Surrey:
    - Condition of buildings
    - Easy commute
    - Beautiful campus
  - Vancouver:
    - Easy commute
    - Close to places of interest
    - Condition of buildings

- **Food on the Burnaby Campus**: The most requested improvements include: decreasing the price of food on campus, and improving the variety and quality of food choices.

### Food on Burnaby Campus: High Priorities for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper Food</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Variety of Food Choices</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Quality of Food</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer Hours where Food is Sold</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food in More Locations on Campus</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger/More Comfortable Eating Areas</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Specialized Food Options</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Service</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Students could select up to 3 choices*

- **Campus Activities**: Students were asked how likely they are to attend/participate in a range of activities at SFU. Among respondents,
  - 62% are very/somewhat likely to attend free lectures and speakers,
  - 56% are likely to participate in student clubs and in volunteer/service-related activities,
  - 51% are likely to attend evening and late-night social events, and
  - 32% said that they are likely to attend athletics games.

- **Personal Connections**: When asked what out-of-classroom experience made them feel the most connected to other people at SFU, the most common responses were:
  - clubs and athletics,
  - spending time with other students/friends, and
  - SFU Orientation.
  - It should be noted that a large proportion of respondents either left this question blank (17%), or else said that they had not had any out-of-classroom experiences at SFU that made them feel connected to people here (13%).
• **Library and Student Learning Commons:**
  - 30% of respondents have attended a writing or learning strategies consultation in the last year, and 72% of these students were satisfied with their experience.
  - 83% are satisfied with the Library’s quiet study space.
  - 78% are satisfied with the Library’s group study space.
  - In the last year:
    - 81% of respondents have used the Library’s computers.
    - 65% have borrowed books from the SFU Library.
    - 75% have accessed online journal articles.
    - 63% have accessed electronic books.
    - 39% have requested materials from other libraries.
    - 42% have taken the online tutorial on avoiding plagiarism.

• **Communication with SFU:** 98% of respondents would like SFU to keep them informed via e-mail.

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How would you prefer to be kept informed by SFU?

E-mail 100%
In-class Announcements 60%
Announcements on SFU’s Website 35%
Posters on Campus 20%
SFU Facebook Site 15%
Postal Mail 5%
Telephone 5%
Twitter 0%
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• **Employment:** 56% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed. Among these:
  - 11% work more than 30 hours per week,
  - 35% work 16 – 30 hours per week, and
  - 45% work 6 – 15 hours per week.
  - 53% of employed students are also studying full-time (at least 12 credits in fall 2009.)

• **Use of Time:** In a typical week, students spend on average:
  - 11-15 hours in class,
  - 6-10 hours studying or preparing assignments ON CAMPUS,
  - 11-15 hours studying or preparing assignments OFF CAMPUS,
  - 6-10 hours working in a job, and
  - 6-10 hours engaged in extra curricular activities/recreation.