



INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
AND PLANNING

MEMO

ATTENTION Senate	TEL
FROM Zareen Naqvi, Director, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	
RE IRP Report for Information	
DATE September 11, 2018	TIME

At a meeting of Senate held on March 7, 2011, Senator Paul Percival requested that relevant IRP reports be brought to Senate for information.

Attached is the **2017 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report**, submitted for information. The UGSS survey is conducted every fall term. The attached Highlights Report presents a summary of key findings from the Fall 2017 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with Faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. The topics included: course availability, credential completion time, teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment. The full report is located at:

<http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/ugss2017report.pdf>

Enclosure

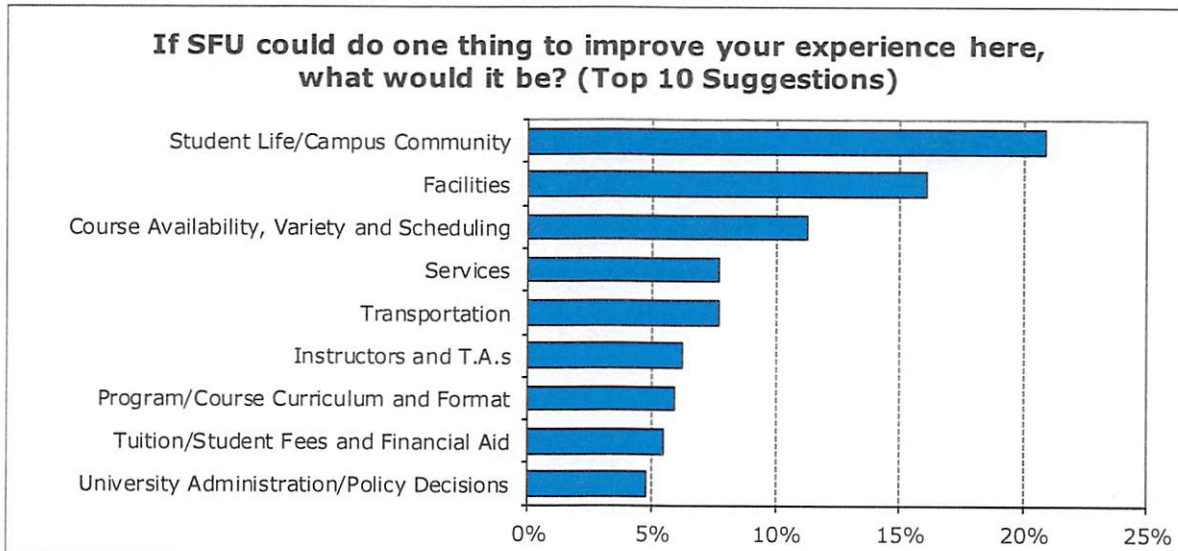
Fall 2017 Undergraduate Student Survey: Highlights

The Undergraduate Student Survey has been conducted at Simon Fraser University every Fall semester since 1992¹ (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 and credential completion at SFU, as well as a range of other topics that change from year to year. This year's topics included teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment.

A total of 7,665 students participated in this year's survey, yielding an overall response rate of 30.2%. Highlights of the survey results are presented here. Statistics provided in this summary and in the full report are estimates based on survey respondents. Assuming that the sample is representative, proportions calculated on all respondents are accurate within $\pm 1.0\%$ ², 19 times out of 20. The full report is available on the Institutional Research and Planning website: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp>

General Experience

- 86% 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 student life,
 - improve facilities, and
 - improve course availability, variety, and scheduling.

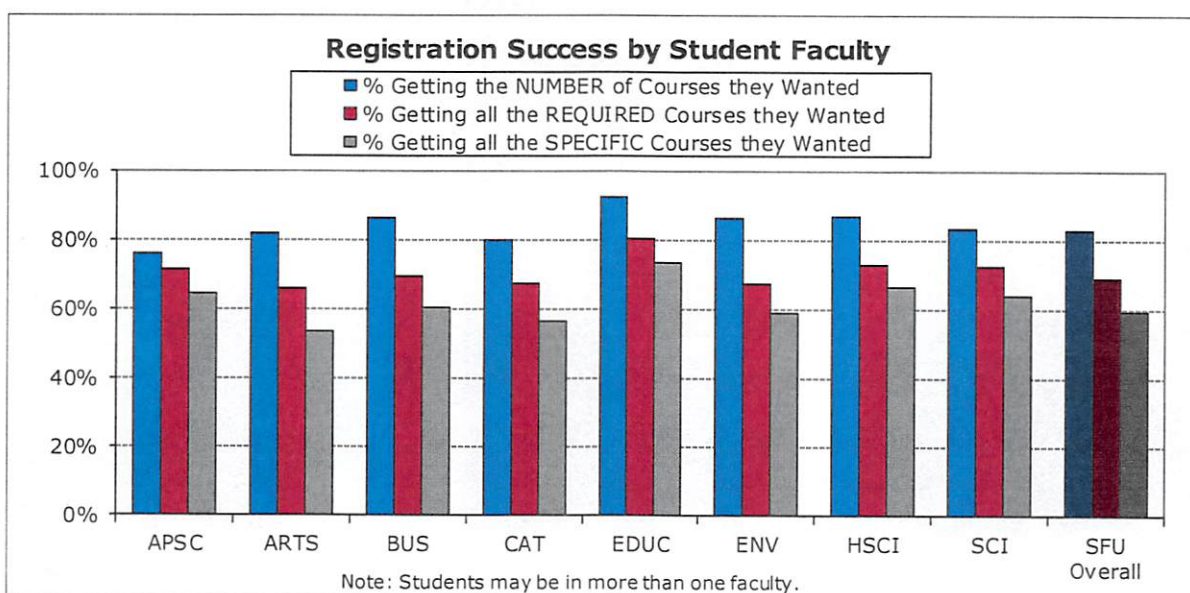


¹ It should be noted that a change in methodology, from in-class paper survey to online survey, was instituted in 2006. The paper surveys, administered to a random sample of classes, resulted in a "captive audience" and high response rates. In contrast, the online surveys, usually administered to the 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.

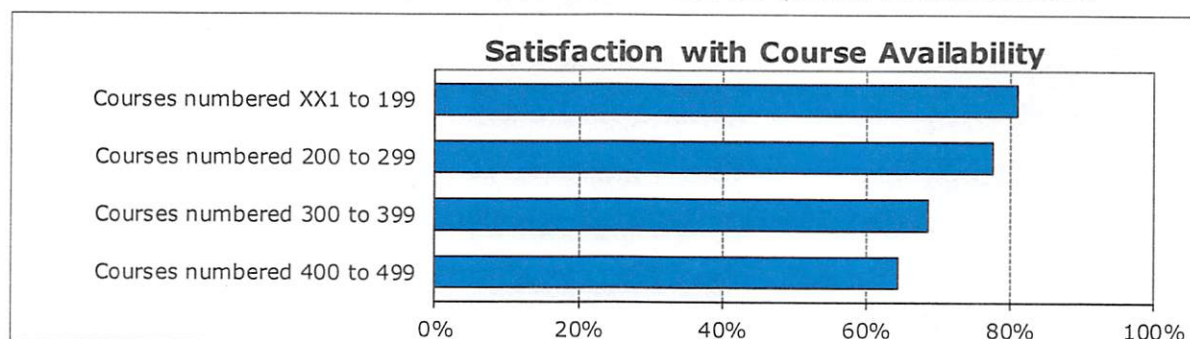
² Note that this margin of error does not control for multiple comparisons. Survey research should be considered exploratory, and definitive conclusions must be drawn with caution.

Course Availability

- **NUMBER of Courses:** 83% of respondents were able to register in the number of courses they wanted this fall. This is statistically significantly lower than last year's rate of 85%.
- **SPECIFIC Courses:** 59% were able to register in all of the specific courses they wanted to take this term, similar to last year's rate.
- **REQUIRED Courses:** 69% were able to register in all of the required courses they wanted this term. This is similar to last year's rate.
 - Registration difficulty in required courses was most often due to:
 - full classes,
 - reserved spaces in classes,
 - scheduling conflicts, and
 - courses not being offered this term.



- **Satisfaction with Course Availability:**
 - Satisfaction decreases as course level increases, ranging from 81% satisfaction for courses numbered XX1 to 199, down to 64% for courses numbered 400 to 499.
 - These rates are similar to the last time this question was asked in 2015.



- **Morning and Evening Classes:**

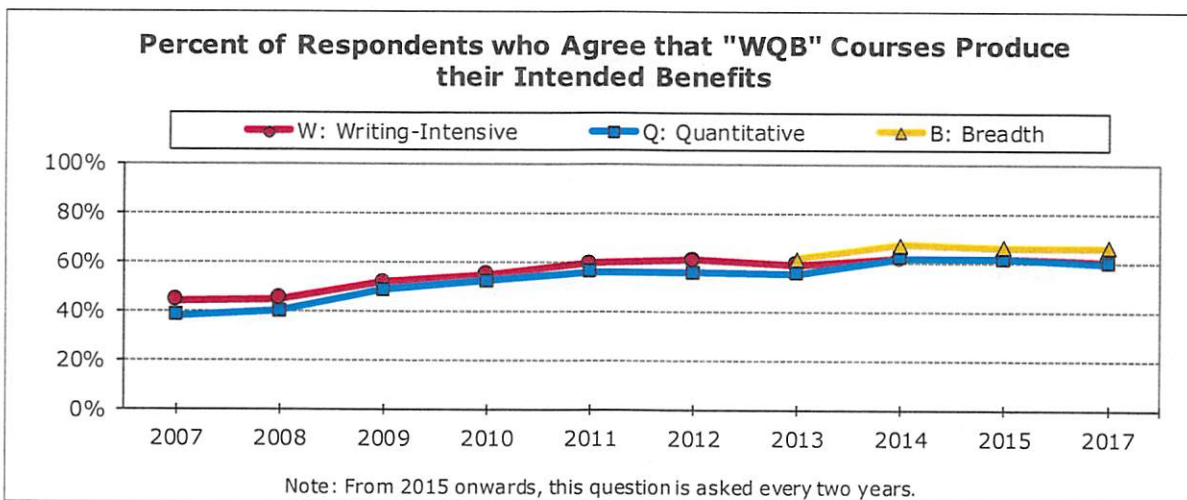
- 79-83% of respondents are willing to attend an 8:30am class on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, and
- 78-83% of respondents are willing to attend a class at or after 4:30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.

Credential Completion Times

- **Delayed Credential Completion:** 64% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential, which is similar to last year's rate.
 - Commonly cited reasons for taking longer include:
 - course availability issues (53%),
 - students taking a reduced course load (43%),
 - working in a job, outside of co-op (38%), and
 - participation in co-op (37%).

Teaching and Curriculum

- **Quality of Teaching:** 84% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of teaching at SFU (compared to 86% last fall, a statistically significant difference).
- **WQB Courses:** Just over half of this year's respondents agreed that these courses produce the benefits for which they were designed (60% agreement for "W" courses, 60% for "Q" courses, and 66% for "B" courses).

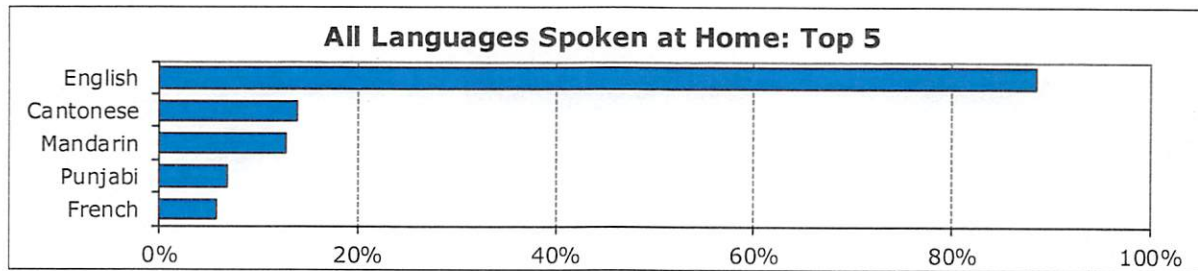


- **Research with Faculty Members:** 19% of respondents considered to be in fourth year or higher (based on credits completed and basis of admission) said that they have worked within a faculty member's research team, outside of coursework.
- **Teaching and Course Evaluations:** 81% of respondents said that evaluations would be more important to them if instructors used the results to shape their teaching practices.

Language Skills

- 88% of respondents speak some English at home, with 40% speaking only English at home.
- 60% speak at least one non-English language at home, and 12% speak no English at home.
- 50% of respondents speak more than one language at home.
- 59% said that English was the first language they learned as a child and still use.

- 90% of respondents speak English most often with their friends.

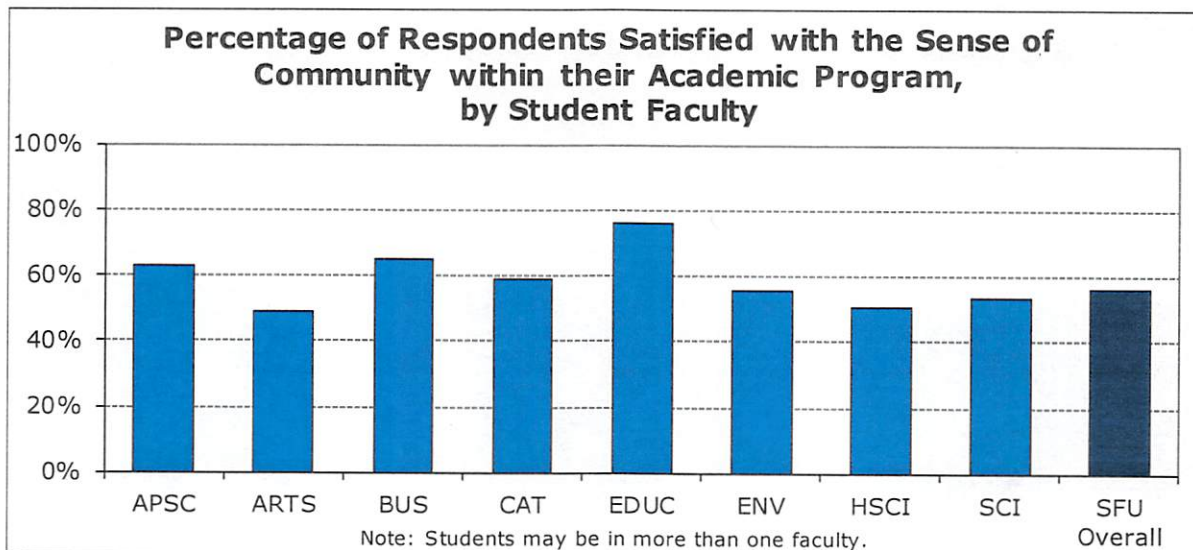


Services

- **Library (other than SLC):** 85% of respondents are satisfied with the SFU Library.
- **Work Integrated Learning:** 56% are satisfied.
- **Student Learning Commons (SLC) Services:**
 - 54% are satisfied with learning strategies support,
 - 51% are satisfied with academic writing support, and
 - 43% are satisfied with English language support.

University Culture and Environment

- 56% of respondents feel that they are thriving³ as a university student this term.
- 56% are satisfied with the sense of community within their academic program.
- 40% are satisfied with the sense of community on campus as a whole.



³ Thriving was defined in the question as "getting the most out of your university experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the university experience."

General

- **Employment:**
 - 60% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed, which is statistically significantly higher than last fall. Among these:
 - 12% work 30 hours or more per week in a paid job,
 - 64% work 10–29 hours per week, and
 - 24% work less than 10 hours per week.
- **Attendance of Science Workshops/Events:** 15% of respondents had attended an on-campus Science workshop/event prior to applying to SFU, and 83% were satisfied with it.

Recommendations

- **Student Life/Campus Community:** Students continue to request improvements to student life and the campus community, such as holding more social events like parties and group activities.
- **Facilities:** Based on comments received, student satisfaction with facilities could be further improved by:
 - improving the amount of colour on campus,
 - continuing to increase the number of group and quiet study areas,
 - improving the heating and cooling of SFU buildings, and
 - increasing the amount of seating on campus.
- **Course Availability and Scheduling:** Student responses suggest the need for continued effort to:
 - increase the frequency of courses,
 - increase the number of course sections, and
 - offer a wider variety of courses.
- **Policies and Services:** Some additional student suggestions over the last few years for improving their experience at SFU include:
 - improving transportation service and parking availability,
 - increasing the amount of practical/hands-on experience in courses,
 - improving the English-language skills of instructors and TAs,
 - lowering tuition and fees, and improving financial aid,
 - continuing to improve food quality while keeping prices low,
 - improving access to wi-fi,
 - continuing to improve the SFU website and enrollment system, and
 - improving academic advising.