



INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
AND PLANNING

MEMO

ATTENTION Senate	TEL
FROM Zareen Naqvi, Director, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	
RE IRP Reports for Information	
DATE August 20, 2019	TIME

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

Attached are two reports for information:

- **2018/19 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes student course grades at the University over a ten year period. The 2018/19 Grades Report covers the period from 2009/10 to 2018/19. Attached is the Summary Report. More detailed information is available on IRP's website: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>
- **2018 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report:** The UGSS survey is conducted every fall term. The attached Highlights Report presents a summary of key findings from the Fall 2018 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/ugss2018.pdf>

If you have trouble accessing files on IRP's website, please contact askIRP@sfu.ca.

Enclosure

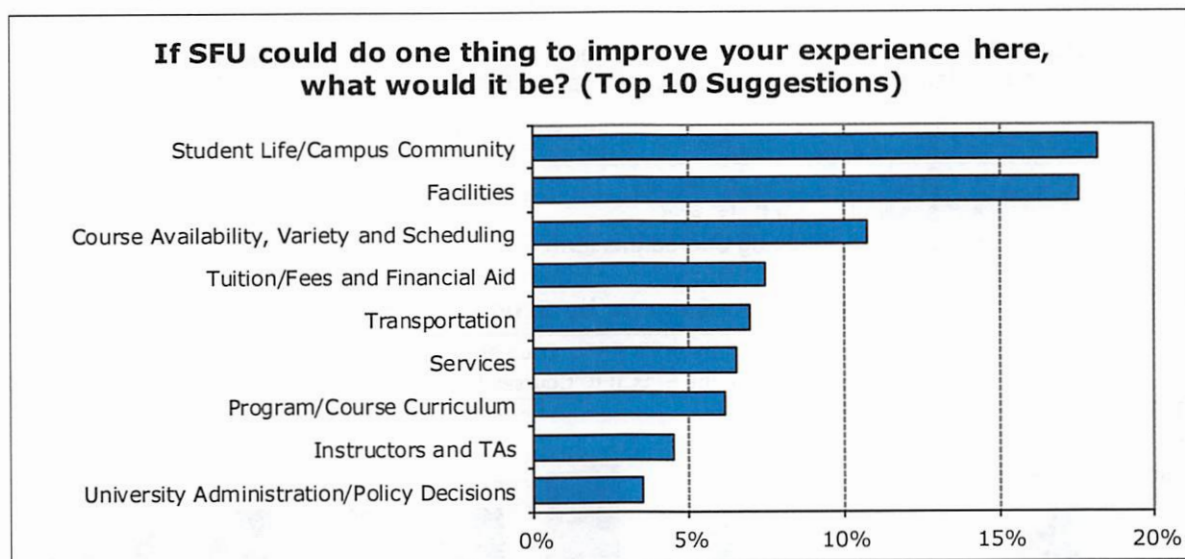
Fall 2018 Undergraduate Student Survey: Highlights

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 8,029 students participated in this year's survey, yielding an overall response rate of 31.3%. 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 satisfied³ 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.



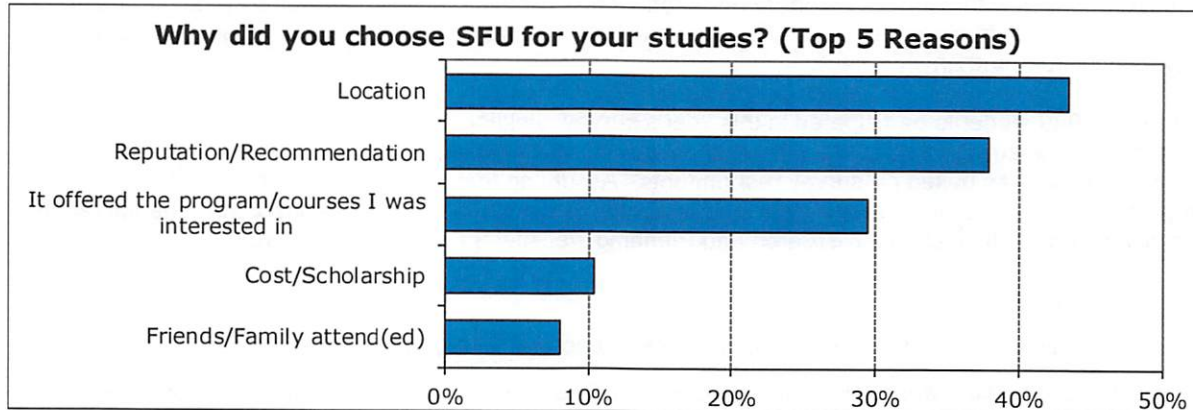
¹ It should be noted that a change in methodology, from in-class paper survey to online survey, was instituted in 2006. The paper surveys, administered to a random sample of classes, resulted in a "captive audience" and high response rates. In contrast, the online surveys, usually administered to the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

³ For the purposes of this report, the categories of "Very Satisfied" and "Somewhat Satisfied" have been combined and will be referred to as "satisfied."

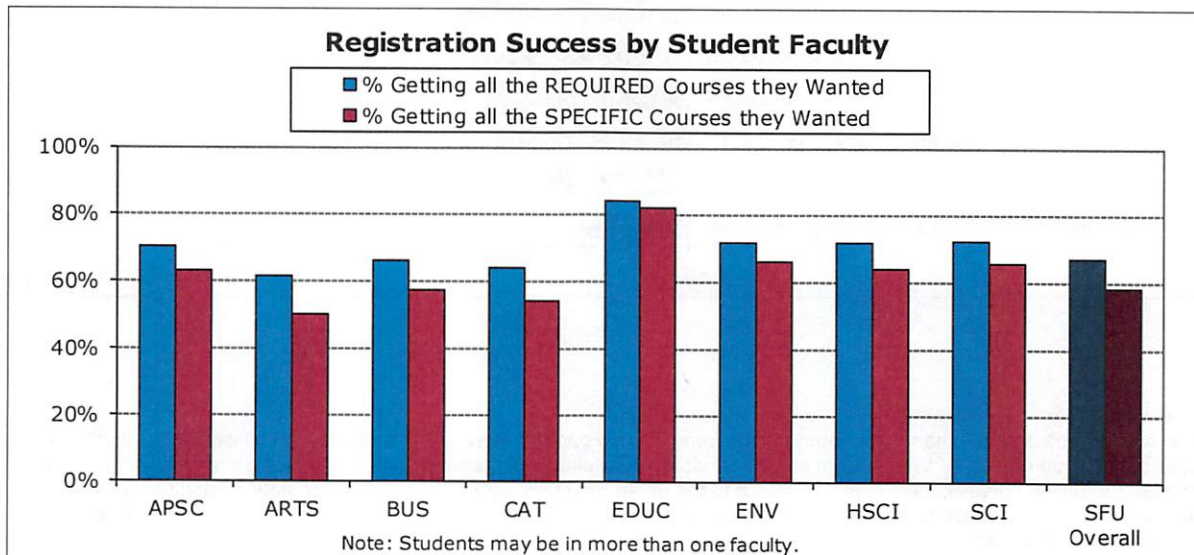
Why Students Chose SFU

- When students were asked why they chose SFU for their studies, the most common responses were:
 - SFU's location,
 - SFU's reputation/recommendation, and
 - SFU offered the program or courses they were interested in.



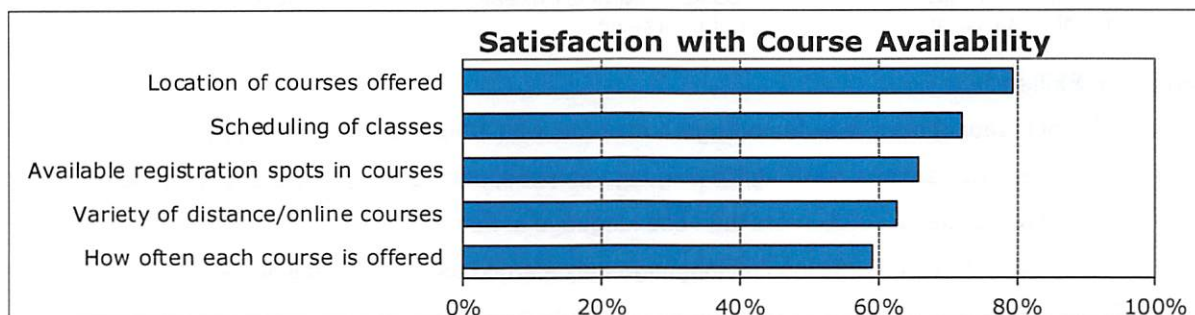
Course Availability

- 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:** 67% were able to register in all of the required courses they wanted this term. This is statistically lower than last year's rate of 69%.
 - 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:**

- Respondent satisfaction was highest for:
 - location (campus) of courses offered (79% satisfied) and
 - scheduling of classes (72%).
- Satisfaction was lowest for other aspects of course availability:
 - available registration spots in courses (66%),
 - variety of distance/online courses offered (63%), and
 - course frequency (how often each course is offered; 59%).

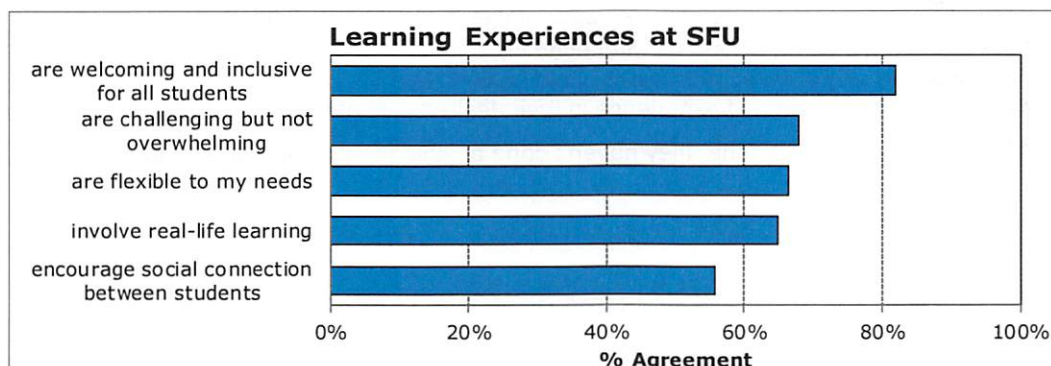


Credential Completion Times

- **Delayed Credential Completion:** 67% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential, which is statistically significantly higher than last year's rate of 64%.
 - Commonly cited reasons for taking longer include:
 - course availability issues (51%),
 - students taking a reduced course load (38%),
 - working in a job, outside of co-op (38%), and
 - participation in co-op (33%).

Teaching and Curriculum

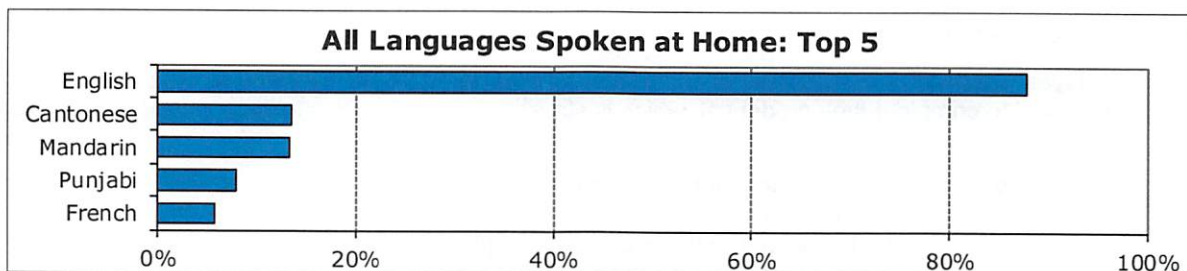
- **Quality of Teaching:** 82% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of teaching at SFU (compared to 84% last fall, a statistically significant difference).
- **Learning Experiences:**
 - 82% of respondents agree that learning experiences at SFU are welcoming and inclusive for all students,
 - 65-68% agree that their learning experiences are challenging but not overwhelming, flexible to their needs, and involve real-life learning, and
 - 56% agree that their learning experiences encourage social connection between students.



- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Students were asked to select the top three qualities, skills, or experiences they think an SFU graduate should have. Respondents indicated that the most important qualities/skills/experiences are:
 - critical thinking skills (selected by 45% of respondents),
 - the ability to apply knowledge/methods learned in life and at work (37%), and
 - have participated in "learning through experience" such as co-op, field school, practicum, etc. (29%).
- **Research with Faculty Members:** 18% 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.

Language Skills

- 88% of respondents speak some English at home, with 38% speaking only English at home.
- 62% speak at least one non-English language at home, and 12% speak no English at home.
- 51% of respondents speak more than one language at home.
- 60% said that English was the first language they learned as a child and still use.
- 88% of respondents speak English most often with their friends.

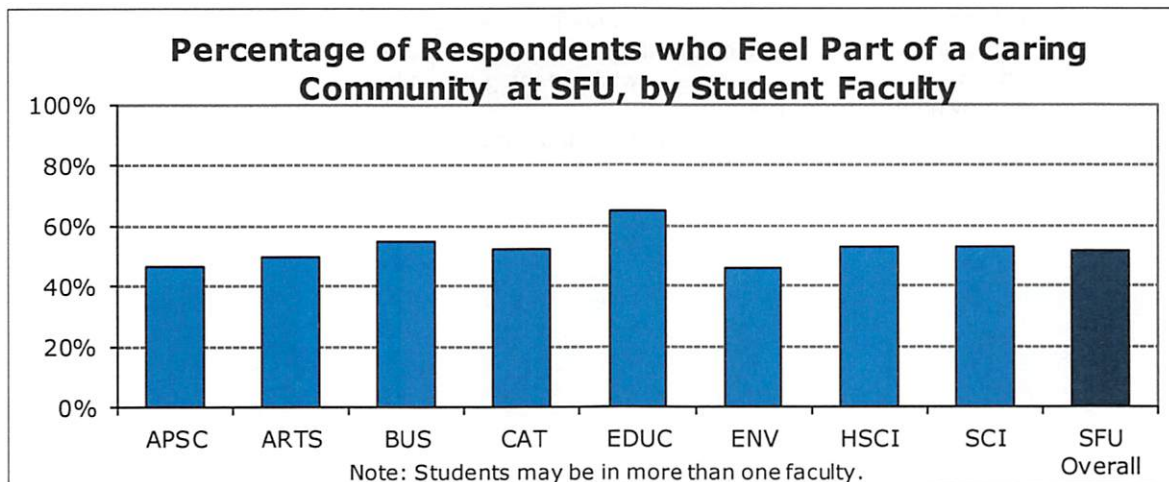


Services

- **Registrar and Information Services:** 85% of respondents are satisfied.
- **Recreation, Technology, and Food Services:** 69-74% are satisfied.
- **Mental Health Support Services and International Services for Students:** 49-51% of respondents are satisfied.
- **Participation in Co-op:** Overall, 65% of respondents said that they are or are planning to participate in co-op. Most respondents (86%) who are participating or planning to participate in SFU Co-op said that one of their top three reasons for choosing to participate in co-op is to get relevant work experience.
- **Career Planning:**
 - 68% of respondents discussed their career options/plans with friends or family,
 - 68% researched careers they are interested in,
 - 50% spoke to someone in their desired field of work, and
 - 44% gained paid or unpaid experience in their desired field of work.
 - 11% of respondents said that they haven't done anything to prepare for a career.

University Culture and Environment

- 51% of respondents feel part of a caring community at SFU.
- 59% agree that SFU provides them with a supportive environment that enhances their well-being.
- 45% agree that SFU provides them with a supportive environment that reduces unnecessary personal and academic stress.
- Overall, 26% of respondents agree that SFU resources help them maintain their mental health.



General

- **Employment:**
 - 58% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed. Among these:
 - 10% work 30 hours or more per week in a paid job,
 - 65% work 10–29 hours per week, and
 - 24% work less than 10 hours per week.
- **Engagement at SFU:** Students were asked if they have participated in a list of activities at SFU over the course of their education here:
 - 42% have participated in an SFU club (vs. 48% in 2016), with an additional 28% planning to participate, and
 - 36% participated in a department, program, or faculty event (vs. 38% in 2016), with an additional 30% planning to participate.

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:
 - continuing to renovate and repair buildings,
 - continuing to increase the number study areas, 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, and
 - increase the number of course sections.
- **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,
 - improving and increasing counselling and medical services
 - 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.