

Context

The *Post-Secondary Learning Act* mandates student associations to work for students' well-being and represent their voices. Each year, UASU surveys its members, the undergraduate students of the University of Alberta, to learn about their needs and priorities. Respondents provided extensive demographic information, including gender and LGBTQ2S+ identity, self-identified neurodiversity, parenting status, and first-generation status.

Our 46-question survey ran from November 25th to December 9th, in both English and French. We attempted to contact all 32,000 UAlberta undergraduates through our master mailing list, SUTV ads, posters, and faculty/department associations. 3944 students participated, or roughly 12.3% of the undergraduate student body. (For context, the Spring 2019 NCHA survey had 1485 respondents at UAlberta, and the 2017 NSSE had a comparable sample size to the NCHA.)

The Health Canada Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) Adult Scale comprised ten out of our 46 questions. Our 2019 survey may be the largest Canadian study of post-secondary student food insecurity that uses a validated instrument.

Key Items

- First Nations students were over seven times more likely than other students to have dependent children, while Métis students had parenting rates comparable to other students.
- Women were twice as likely as men to identify as LGBTQ2S+.
- While First Nations undergraduates were somewhat less likely than other students to identify as LGBTQ2S+, one in four Métis students identified as LGBTQ2S+.
- 12.6% of respondents self-identified as neurodiverse; gender strongly influenced responses to this question.
- 31.1% of respondents self-identified as first-generation students, including 43.3% of students who parent, 54.7% of First Nations students, and 50.4% of Métis students.
- We asked 10 questions related to food insecurity.
 - Out of 3944 respondents, 490 (12.4%) qualified as highly or severely food insecure, while another 758 (19.2%) qualified as moderately food insecure, for a total food insecurity rate of 31.6%. These results are comparable with undergraduate students at several other Canadian universities.
 - The faculties of Arts, Education, Open Studies, and Native Studies all averaged above the threshold of moderate food insecurity by Health Canada standards.

- Several other groups experienced high rates of severe food insecurity by Health Canada standards:
 - Gender non-binary students (33%)
 - Students with various dietary needs
 - First-generation students (18%)
 - Students age 25 or older (20%)
 - Students who parent (18%)
 - Métis students (20%)
 - First Nations students (21%)
- Students reported high satisfaction with, or interest in, The Landing and the Peer Support Centre.
- Students strongly supported a variety of proposed sustainability and capital projects, such as a zero-waste initiative, various long-term SUB renovations, and an energy management program involving solar power.
- Métis and First Nations students were much less likely than most other students to find work during the school year, but tended to work longer hours.
- We asked two questions related to the learning environment and freedom of expression.
 - Students tended to prefer a comfortable, supportive learning environment over a challenging learning environment, but moved toward the middle as they grew older and progressed in their programs. A fourth-year student, or a student in their mid twenties, was more likely than an earlier/younger student to put equal weight on challenge and comfort/support. Priorities also varied by faculty and Aboriginality, but gender emerged as the strongest predictor of a student's feelings on this question.
 - 47.5% of respondents believed, to some extent, that most UAlberta students feel free to discuss serious and controversial issues. 37.2% disagreed. Gender, orientation, Aboriginality, age, and year of study had little impact, unlike the previous question.
- We asked two questions related to academic skills development.
 - Confidence in academic writing ability varied with gender, Aboriginality, first-generation status, faculty, and year of study. (The top faculties were Law, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Education, and Arts.)
 - Confidence in avoiding plagiarism or other academic misconduct did not improve year over year, and did not vary by demographic. It varied only by faculty. (The top faculties were Medicine and Dentistry, Business, Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Augustana.)
 - The Faculty of Science was overrepresented among the 5% of respondents who reported low confidence in both academic writing ability and avoiding academic misconduct.
 - 8% of respondents had high confidence in their writing ability, but low confidence in avoiding academic misconduct.

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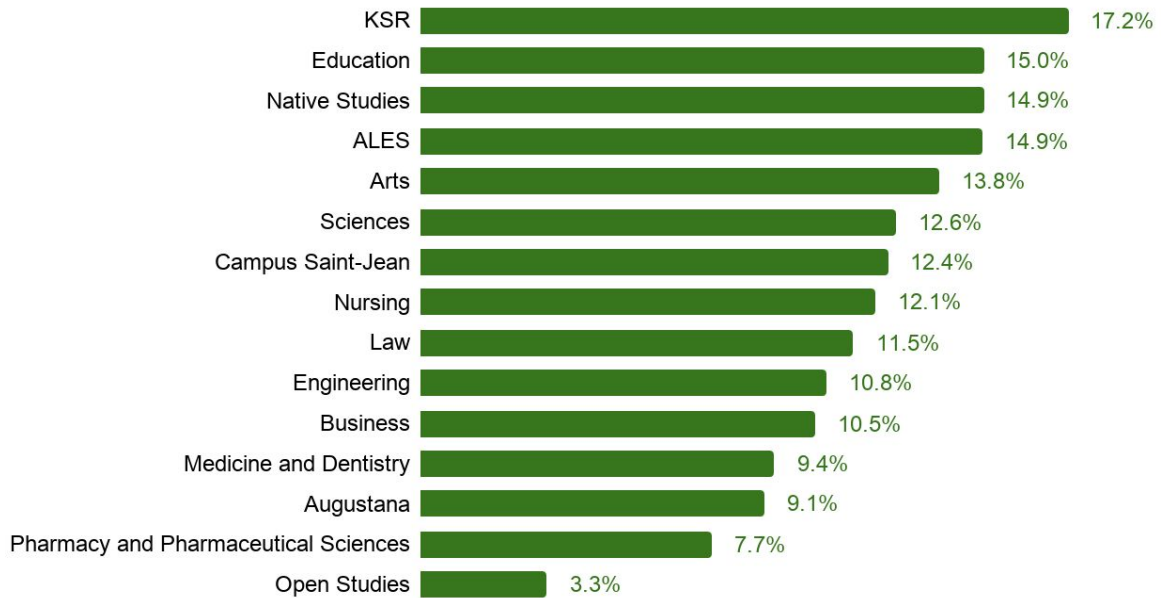
Sample Composition

Faculty

With almost 4,000 students participating, the survey achieved a respectable response rate even among some of the professional faculties, e.g. 12% of the Faculty of Nursing.

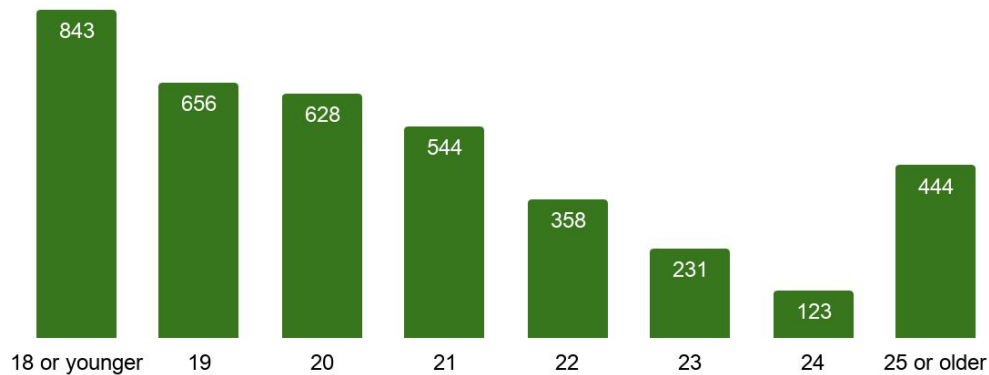
Response rate by faculty

As compared with 2019-20 U of A Student Workbook



Age and year of study

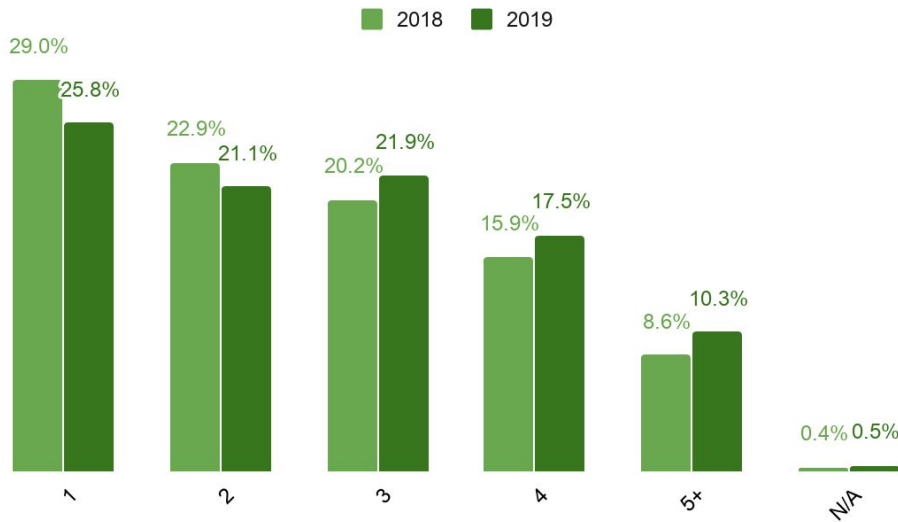
Age of respondents



11% of respondents were age 25 or older.

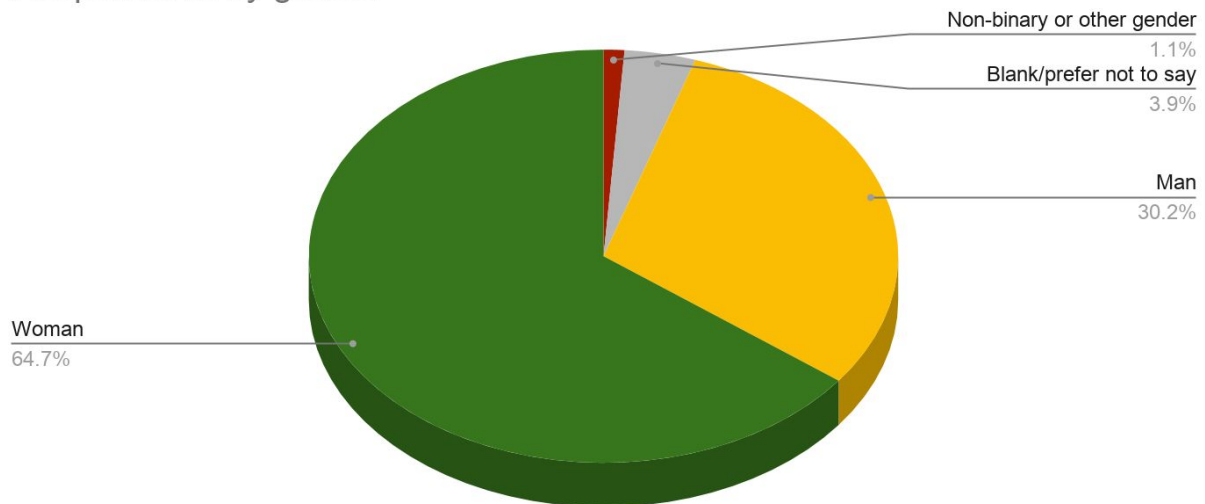
One known weakness of the 2018 survey sample was an imbalance toward early-year students. By comparison with the 2018 sample and the 2018-19 Annual Undergraduate Enrolment Report, we believe the 2019 sample's proportions are more representative of the general student body.

Distribution by year of study, 2018 and 2019 survey samples



Gender

Respondents by gender



By comparison, the Registrar's 2018-19 Annual Report on Undergraduate Enrolment lists the undergraduate student body's gender proportions as 55.43% female, 44.52% male, and 0.05% 'other.' As noted in our 2018 survey report, "0.8% of [the 2018 survey's] respondents (around 40 individuals) identified as 'non-binary or other' on our survey, and another 3.6% either preferred not to say or simply left the question blank.

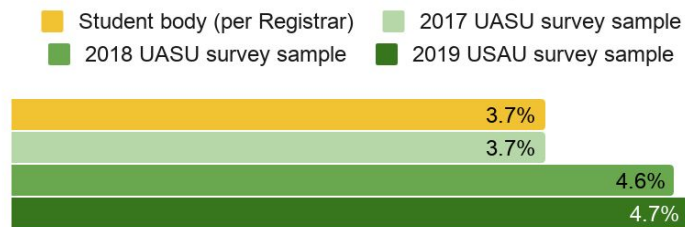
Therefore, we suggest that ‘other’ may not be the most accurate and meaningful phrasing for capturing gender diversity.”

We also note the high uptake among women and low uptake among men that we observed in our 2018 survey.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students

The Registrar’s 2018-19 Annual Report notes that there are 1175 Indigenous students, 3.7% of the undergraduate student body. Our 2019 survey took a different approach by separating these three categories in a ‘choose all that apply’ question. 75 students self-identified as First Nations and 113 self-identified as Métis. A small number (too low to meet data privacy thresholds) self-identified as Inuks.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representation



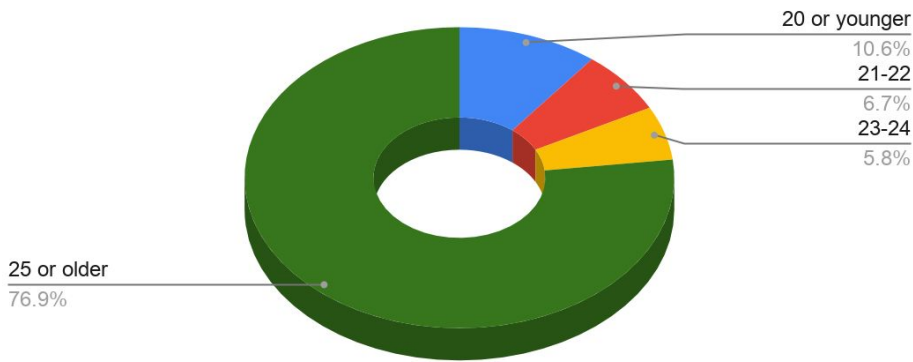
A total of 185 students, or 4.7% of our sample, identified as at least one of the three. This proportion maintains the 2018 survey’s high FNMI representation rate. In keeping with the 2019 ARRC Recommendations, FNMI students remain a population of special interest.

Students who Parent

104 students, or 2.6% of our sample, identified as having dependent children. We refer to these respondents as ‘students who parent’ or SWP. One weakness of our survey design was that it did not take into account students who may be caregivers of others, such as elderly/infirm parents. Survey participation from students who parent remained relatively stable in 2019. In 2017, they made up 2.7% of the UASU annual survey sample; in 2018, they made up 3.2%. Roughly one out of four students who parent is age 24 or younger.

Our previous (2018) survey noted that FNMI students were much more likely than non-FNMI students (11.6% versus 3.2%) to be parents of dependent children. This 2019 survey saw a comparable proportion (9.7%). However, our question design allowed us to look deeper. 14 out of 75 First Nations respondents (18.7%) and a small number (<5%) of 114 Métis or Inuit respondents self-identified as students who parent. In other words, First Nations undergraduates were over seven times more likely than other students to have dependent children.

Age ranges of students who parent



Neurodiversity

"The term 'neurodiverse' is often used by students who have neurological conditions, including but not limited to Asperger's, dyslexia, ADHD, learning disabilities, bipolarity, OCD, etc. Do you consider yourself neurodiverse?"

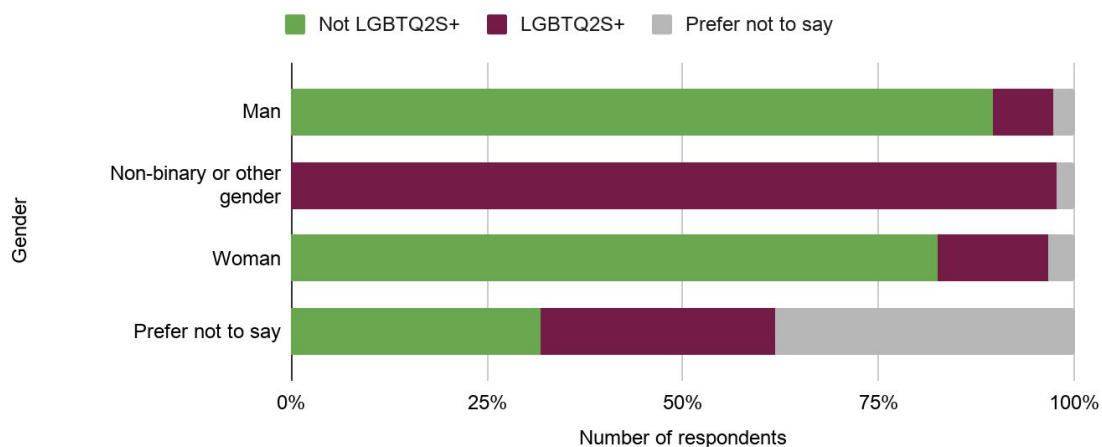
12.6% of all respondents self-identified as neurodiverse based on this definition. An additional 3.8% preferred not to say. This is the first year that neurodiversity status has been included in a UASU survey as a population of special interest.

We found that gender was closely associated with neurodiversity. 13.5% of women, only 9.1% of men, and 75.6% of gender non-binary respondents self-identified as neurodiverse.

LGBTQ2S+ Identity

12.9% of respondents self-identified as LGBTQ2S+. An additional 3.4% preferred not to say. By comparison, the 2018 survey sample was 10.7% self-identified LGBTQ2S+.

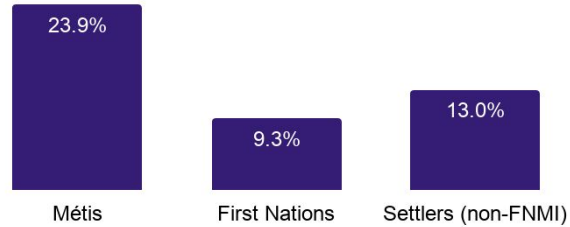
LGBTQ2S+ identity by gender



Women were twice as likely as men to identify as LGBTQ2S+.

A full 38.6% of neurodiverse students were LGBTQ2S+, compared to 9.0% of neurotypical (i.e. not neurodiverse) respondents.

Proportion of FNMI and non-FNMI students identifying as LGBTQ2S+



LGBTQ2S+ identity proved to be highly diversified within FNMI students. While only one in ten First Nations students identified as LGBTQ2S+, the proportion for Métis students rose to one in four.

First-generation students

“Do you consider yourself a first-generation student? (Typically, the parents of first-generation students do not have university degrees.)”

31.1% of our entire 2019 sample identified as first-generation students by this definition. This proportion is in line with our 2018 survey (33.0%). Women were slightly more likely than men (33% versus 30%) to identify as first-generation.

43.3% of students whose parent, 54.7% of First Nations students, and 50.4% of Métis students identified as first-generation. First-generation status did not vary with LGBTQ2S+ identity.

Note on Research Limitations

Our annual surveys include questions designed to inform our services, programs, businesses, and advocacy efforts, leading to space constraints. As a result, there were other questions, including some demographic questions used last year, that could not fit in our 46-question survey.

For space reasons, we did not use the HFSSM Child Scale, which would have let us calculate true household-level food insecurity rates instead of individual adult rates. The HFSSM Child Scale would also have given us more concrete data on how food insecurity impacts the families of students who parent.

Food Insecurity

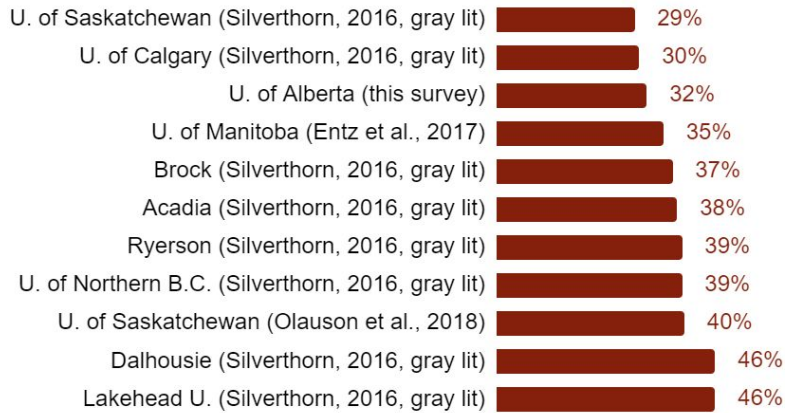
Our survey included the ten-question Adult Scale from Health Canada's [HFSSM food security module](#). Rather than measuring household food insecurity, we shifted the wording of each question to the first person singular (i.e. "You and other household members worried food would run out..." became "I worried food would run out"). We made this choice because our previous surveys indicated that students have a wide variety of living arrangements that may make household-wide measures less accurate to a given student's experience. (For example, in the 2018 survey, up to one out of three students lived with an on- or off-campus roommate, whose food security situation could be widely different.) Our HFSSM question set was as follows:

- *I worried food would run out before I got money to buy more.*
- *The food I bought didn't last and there wasn't any money to get more.*
- *I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.*
- *I cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I cut the size of meals or skipped meals in 3 or more months because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I ate less than I felt I should because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I was hungry but did not eat because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I lost weight because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.*
- *I did not eat for a whole day in 3 or more months because there was not enough money for food.*

Per Health Canada's marking instructions, two to five affirmative responses indicated moderate food insecurity, and six or more affirmative responses indicated high food insecurity. Out of 3944 respondents, 490 (12.4%) qualified as highly food insecure, while another 758 (19.2%) qualified as moderately food insecure, for a total food insecurity rate of 31.6%.

Our results are comparable with similar surveys at the University of Manitoba (Entz et al, 2017, 35.1% food insecurity) and the University of Saskatchewan (Olauson et al., 2018, 39.5% food insecurity), as well as the influential gray-literature paper *Hungry for Knowledge* (Silverthorn, 2016), which surveyed several Canadian institutions.

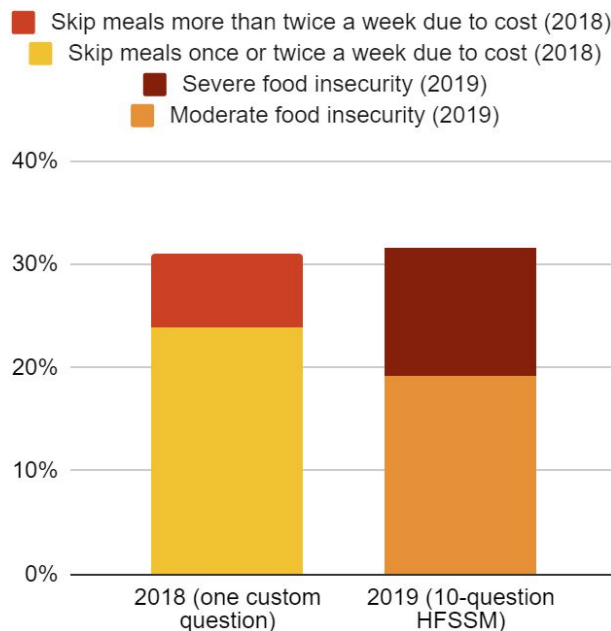
Food insecurity rates among Canadian university students



For context, Health Canada (Rhoshanafshar and Hawkins, 2015) has estimated Canada’s rate of household food insecurity (comprising both moderate and high insecurity) as 8.3%, and Alberta’s rate at 8.1%.

We compared our HFSSM results with the single custom question that we used to measure food insecurity in the 2018 survey. Closely compatible results suggest that our custom question is a substantive, if non-validated, instrument for briefly approximating food insecurity: *“Do you skip meals due to the cost of food?” [No / Yes, once or twice a month / Yes, once or twice a week / Yes, more than twice a week / Prefer not to say.]”*

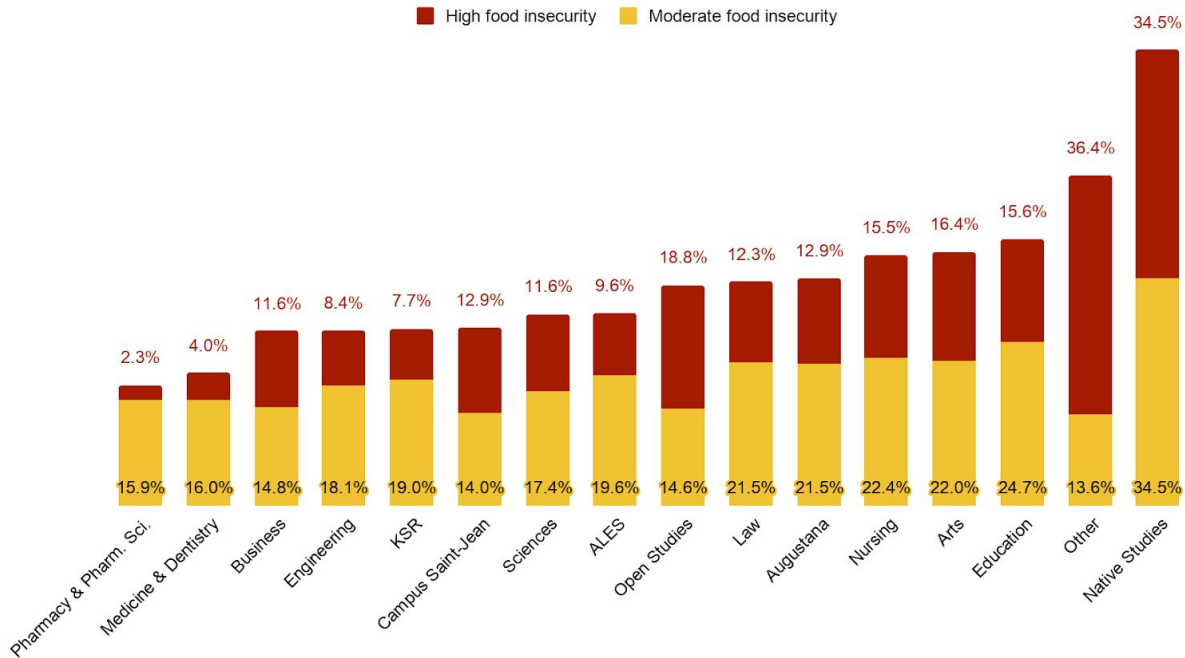
FI measurement tools compared



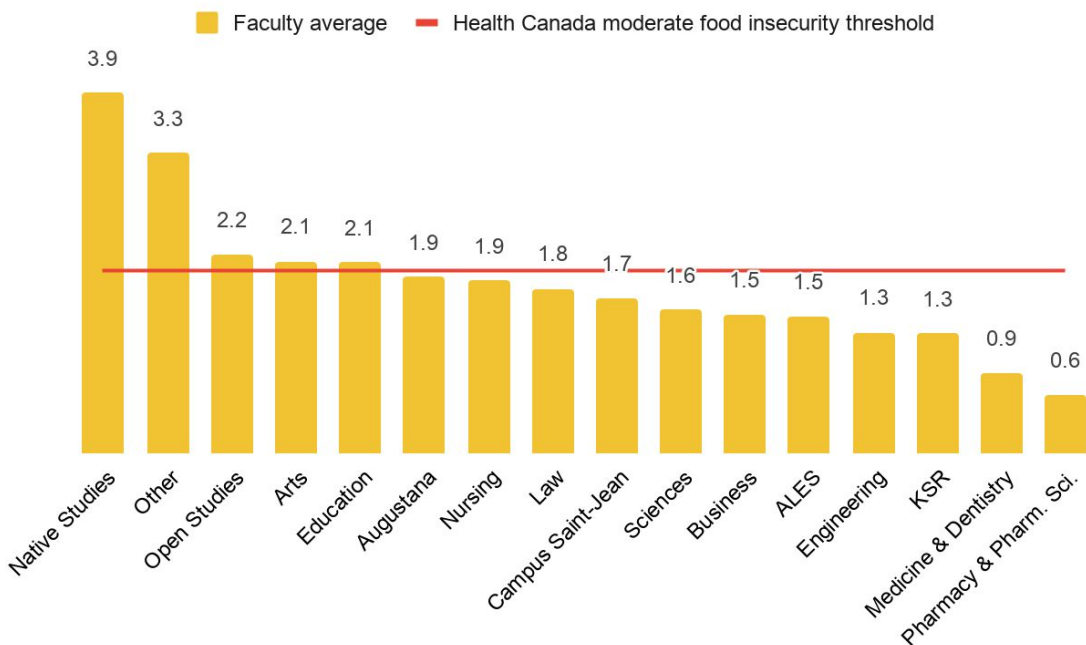
Food insecurity in specific groups

The faculties of Arts, Education, Open Studies, and Native Studies (as well as students who selected 'Other') all averaged above the threshold of moderate food insecurity by Health Canada standards. Their food insecurity rates ranged from 38% to 69%.

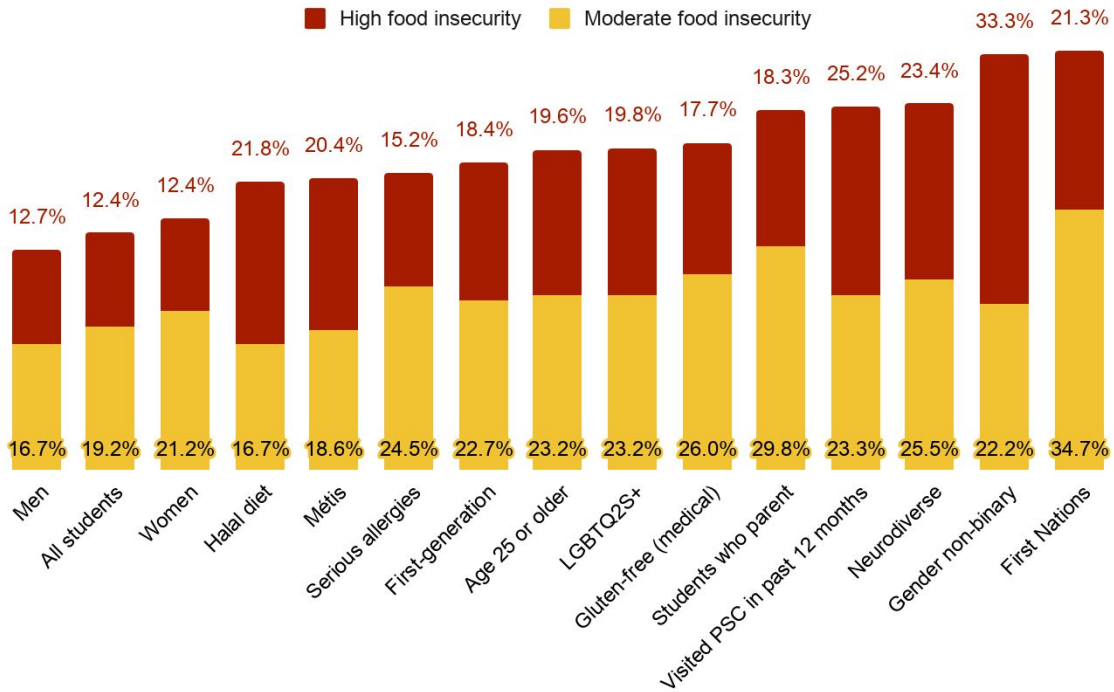
Food insecurity rates by faculty



Mean affirmative food insecurity responses per faculty

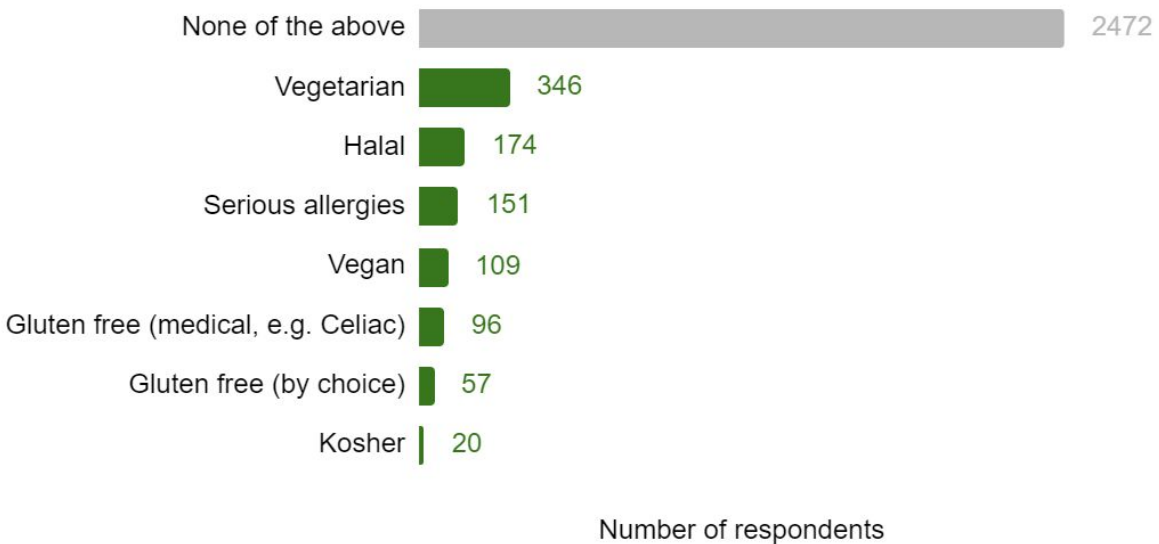


Food insecurity rates among populations of interest



For additional context, a 'choose all that apply' question with randomized option order gathered data on specific dietary needs. We compared these responses with food insecurity scores and noted any significant correlation.

Specific dietary needs and preferences

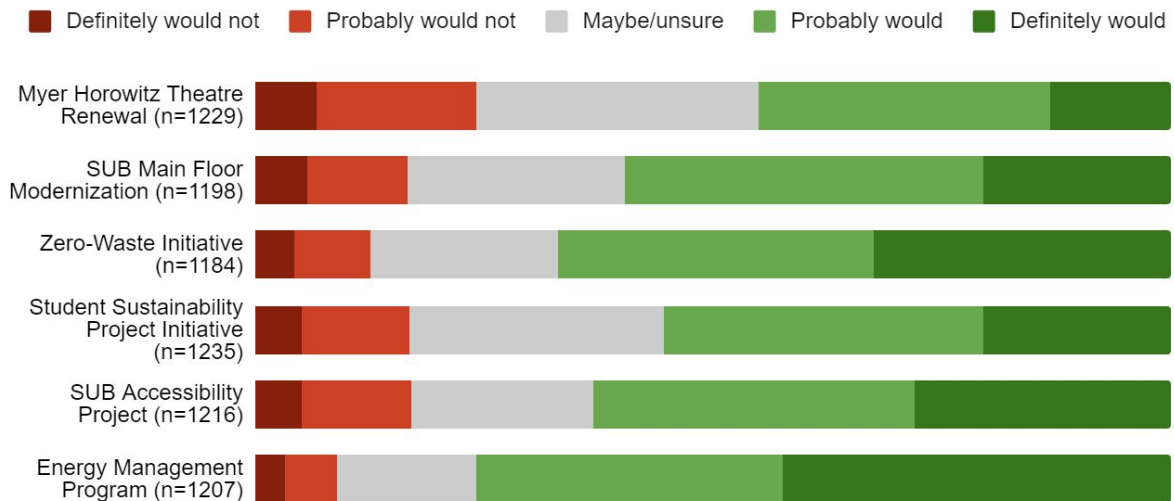


Sustainability and Capital Fund Consultation

A set of three questions consulted the student body on a potential Sustainability and Capital Fund, slated for a Winter 2020 referendum. Each of the first two questions was A/B tested, presenting randomly chosen students with one of three potential sustainability-related projects in detail.

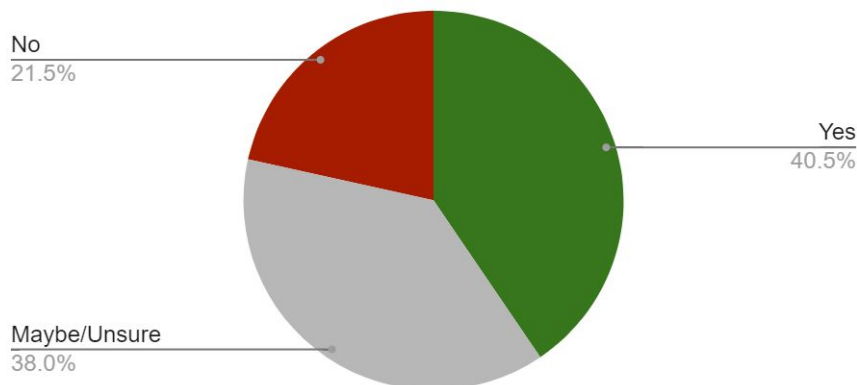
Support levels for potential Sustainability and Capital Fund projects

With number of students who were asked about each project

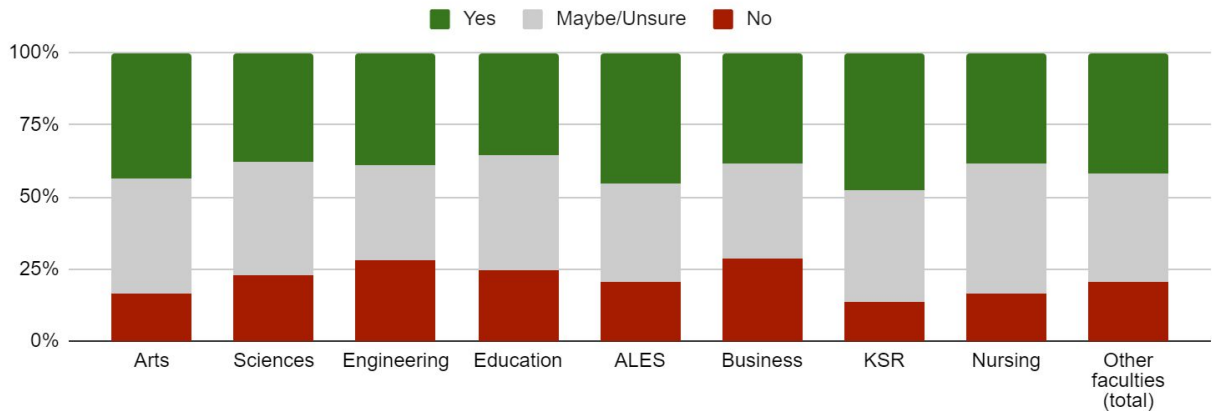


After each respondent saw an explanation of two randomized projects, and decided whether or not they supported the specific projects they saw, the survey asked them about their general support for a Sustainability and Capital Fund.

"Would you support the creation of a Sustainability and Capital Fund?"

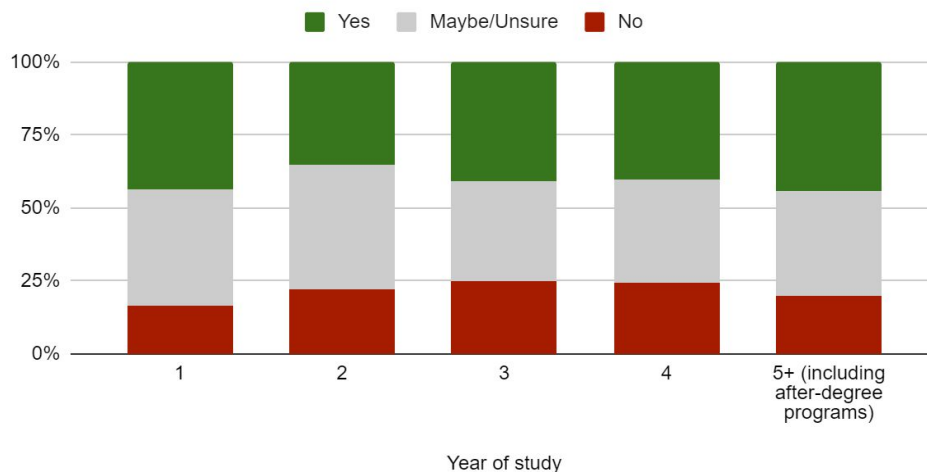


"Would you support the creation of a Sustainability and Capital Fund?" (by faculty)



Several populations of interest tended to demonstrate higher-than-average support: First Nations students (50.7%); Métis students (46.2%); neurodiverse students (46.5%); LGBTQ2S+ students (51.5%); and students who parent (44.9%).

"Would you support the creation of a Sustainability and Capital Fund?" (by year of study)



The initiative saw relatively stable support across years of study.

When a proposed levy is involved, any potential burden on students is a primary concern. We compared support for the initiative with food insecurity status and found that conditions of neediness did not affect support levels. The initiative saw 42.2% 'Yes' support among students with high food insecurity, and 40.1% 'Yes' support among students with moderate food insecurity.

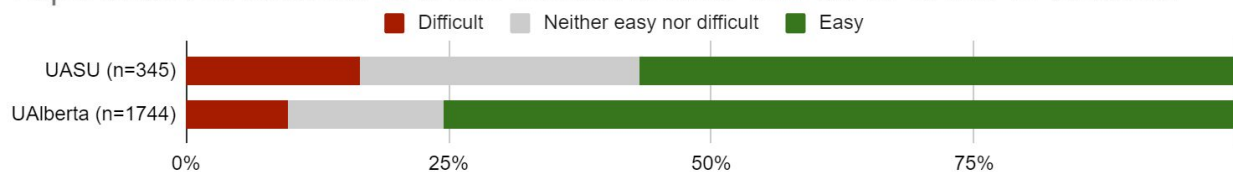
UASU Operations

Programs and Services

Students overwhelmingly find it easy to book a room with either UASU or the University. However, there may be room for streamlining in UASU's room booking process.

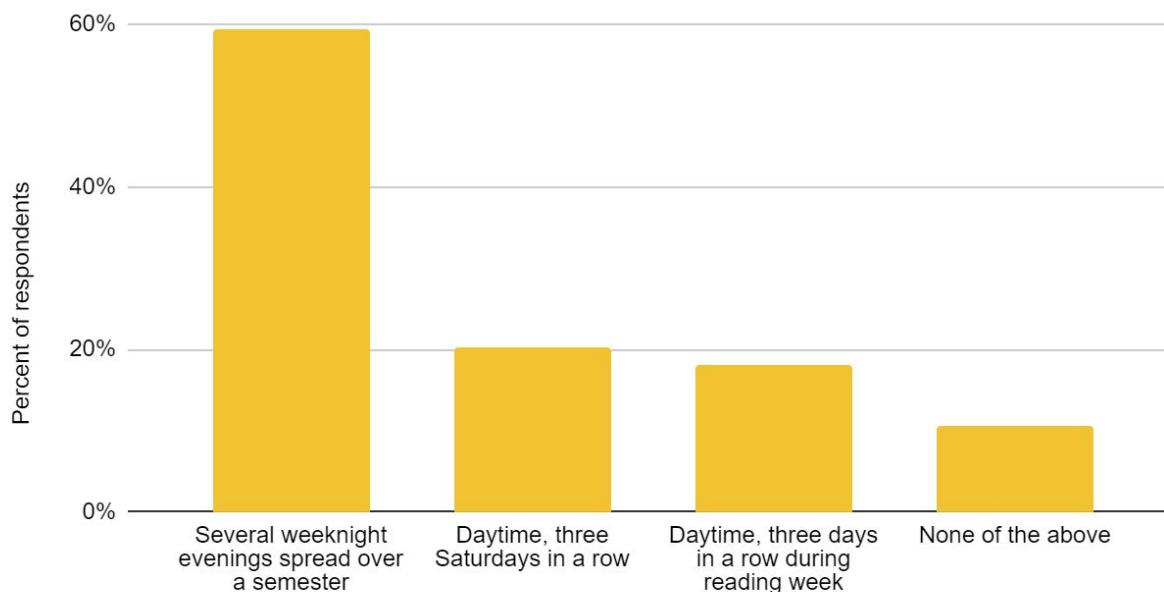
Demographics did not appear to affect ease of booking a room.

Experiences of students who had booked a room with either UASU or UAlberta



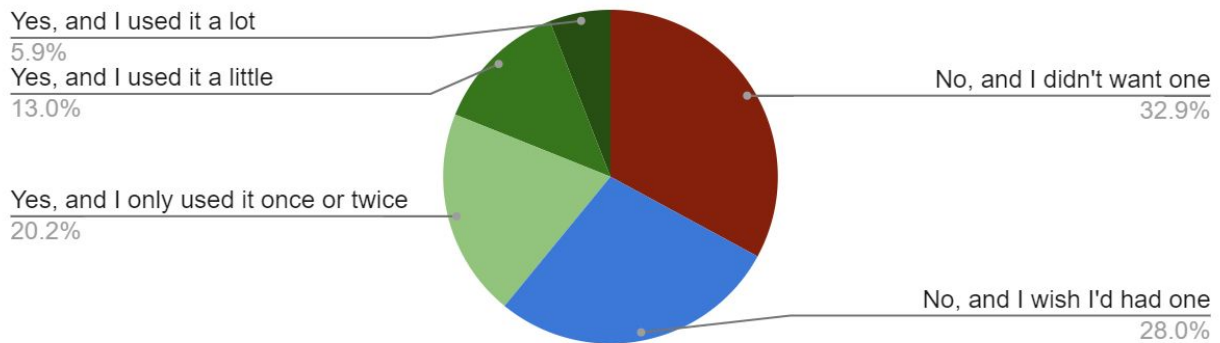
UASU offers extensive workshop programs, particularly around leadership development. Three out of five respondents would prefer to take a workshop program over several weeknight evenings throughout a semester. One out of five would prefer Saturdays during the day, and another one out of five would prefer to take the workshop over reading week.

"Imagine you want to join a free workshop program that's available in several time formats. Which options would work best for you? (Choose all that apply.)"



Understandably, those proportions changed for students who parent. Weeknight evenings remained the most popular choice, but only at 42%. 'None of the above' rose to 27%.

"Did you get a Students' Union handbook/day planner?"



Businesses

UASU owns and operates several businesses, such as Dewey's, SUBmart, and Daily Grind, both to serve students and to support other services. UASU staff requested one of the survey's few open-ended questions: "Thinking about bars, restaurants, or other dining options, do you find that you have different expectations for on-campus and off-campus businesses? Can you explain?"

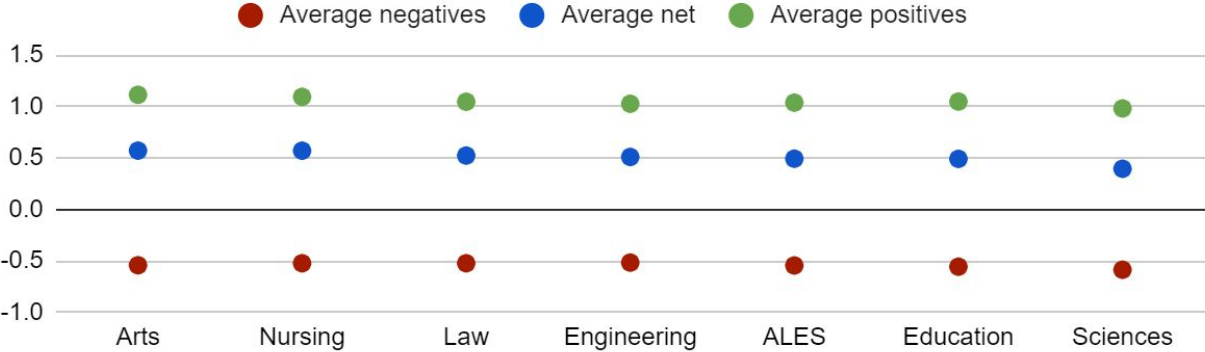
Students delivered roughly 1930 text responses, more than 33,000 words. Understandably, they expressed a wide variety of opinions. Few united narratives emerged, apart from a general consensus that campus food is too expensive. Some common themes were as follows:

Keyword	Approximate Occurrences	Typical context
Yes	263	Expectations are different
No	224	No difference in expectations
Quality	216	Campus food is lower quality
Cheap	200	Campus food should be cheaper
Expensive	169	Campus food is too expensive
Fast	162	I expect campus food to be quick
Health	150	I can't find healthy options on campus
Price	123	Prices are higher on campus
Afford(able)	106	I can't afford to buy food on campus

Service	97	Quality of service is lower on campus; on-campus service should be faster
Variety	53	Campus has a good variety
Vegan/Vegetarian	42	Options are too rare/expensive
Safe	39	Campus is safer than off-campus
Casual/Atmosphere	37	A casual atmosphere should be a priority on campus
Deal(s)	31	There should be special deals for students

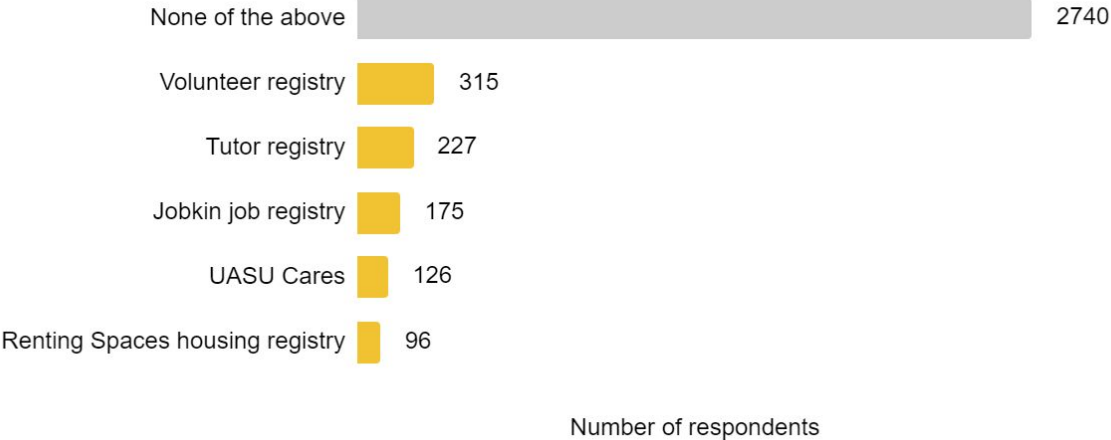
We performed sentiment analysis in R using the bing lexicon. Despite students' focus on things they wish to improve, we found that responses were generally positive, with some variation across faculties. We found little variation across gender and year of study.

Sentiment analysis of bars question across selected faculties

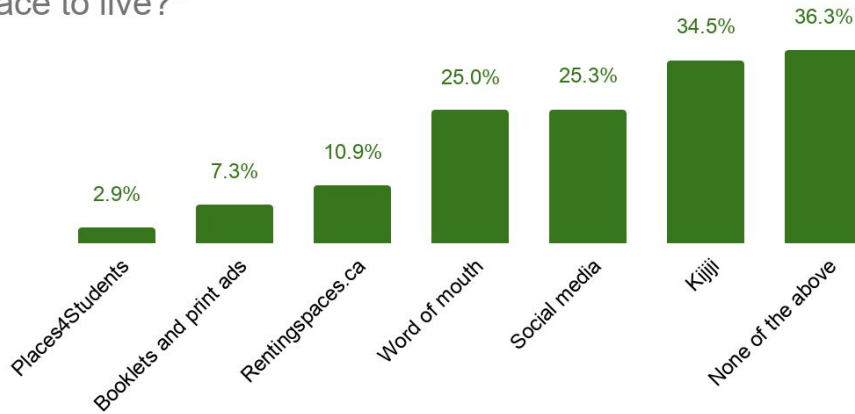


Spotlight: Online Services and Registries

"Which of these online SU services have you used in the past year? (Choose all that apply.)"

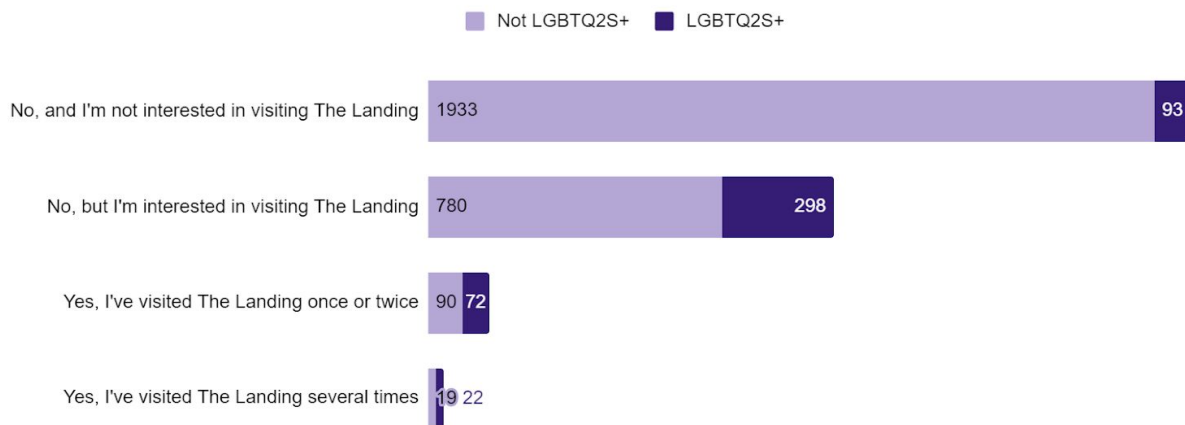


"Which of these resources do you use when looking for a place to live?"



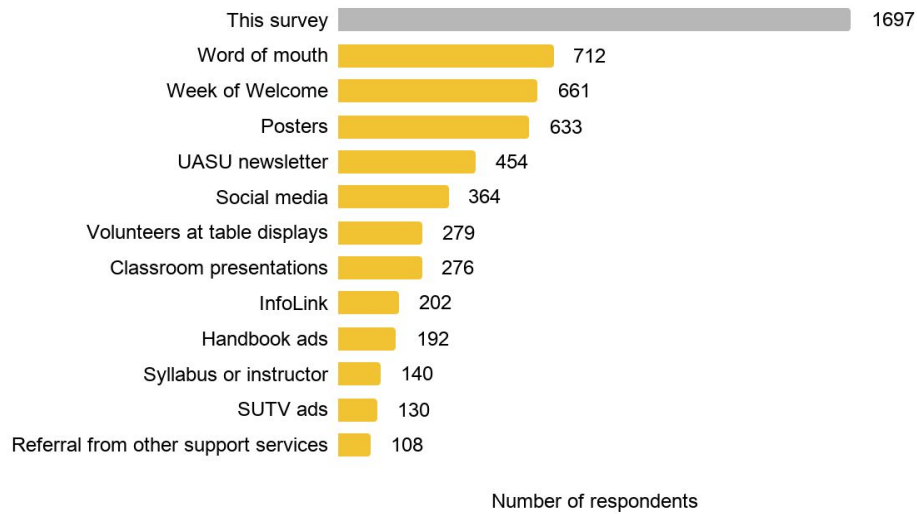
Spotlight: The Landing

"Have you visited The Landing (0-68A SUB), a community space and resource centre for sexual and gender diversity?"



One out of four LGBTQ2S+ men and one out of five LGBTQ2S+ women were not interested in visiting The Landing. Conversely, one out of five straight men and one out of three straight women answered 'no, but I'm interested in visiting.' Out of the 40+ gender non-binary students who answered the question, around 15 had visited The Landing, around 20 had not but were interested, and a small number were not interested.

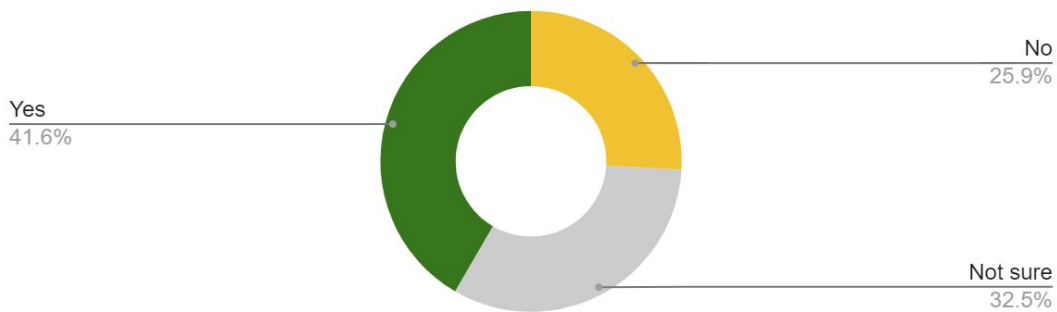
"How did you learn about The Landing? Choose all that apply."



Note that, since the survey functions in an informational role as much as a measurement role, the 'This survey' option is probably overselected.

Spotlight: Peer Support Centre

"Would you visit the Peer Support Centre (2-707 SUB), which offers a free, confidential place to talk with trained volunteers about the stress and challenges you face?"



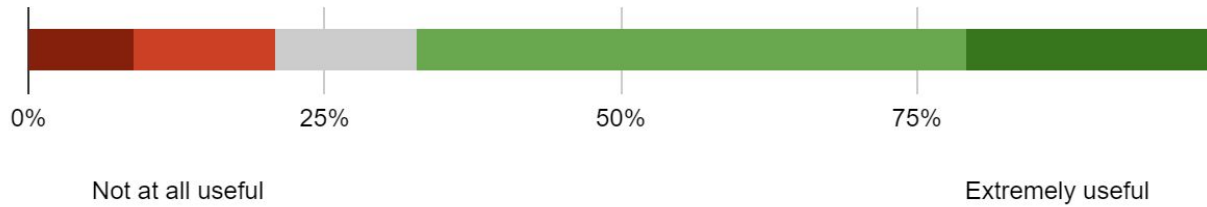
4.7% of respondents had visited the Peer Support Centre (PSC) in the past 12 months, and another 1.2% preferred not to answer the question.

Of those who had visited the PSC in the past year, around 6% were not sure if they would visit again, and around 8.5% would not visit again.

Respondents who had visited in the past year were asked a short set of follow-up questions:

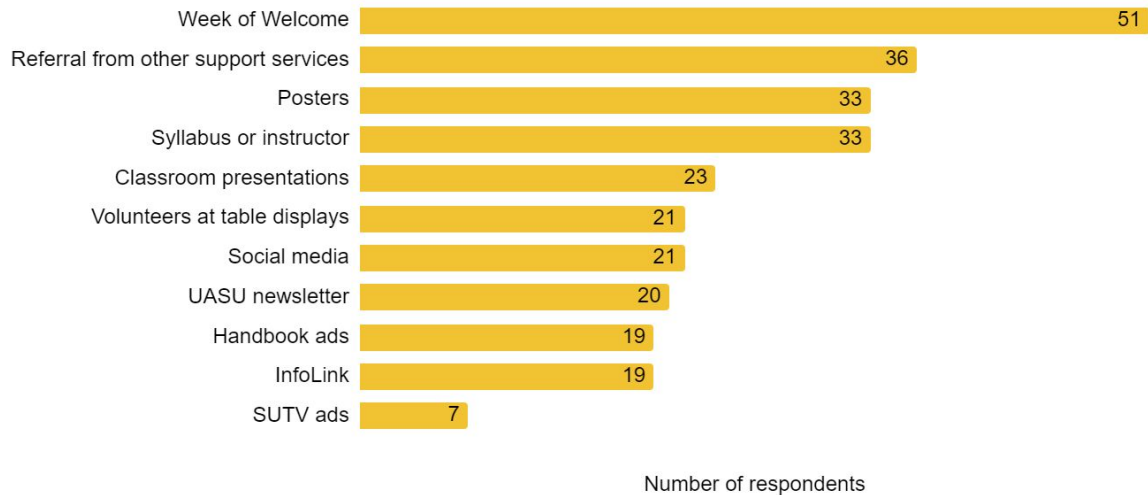
"Was your Peer Support Centre visit useful to you?"

All respondents who had visited the PSC in the past 12 months (n=163)



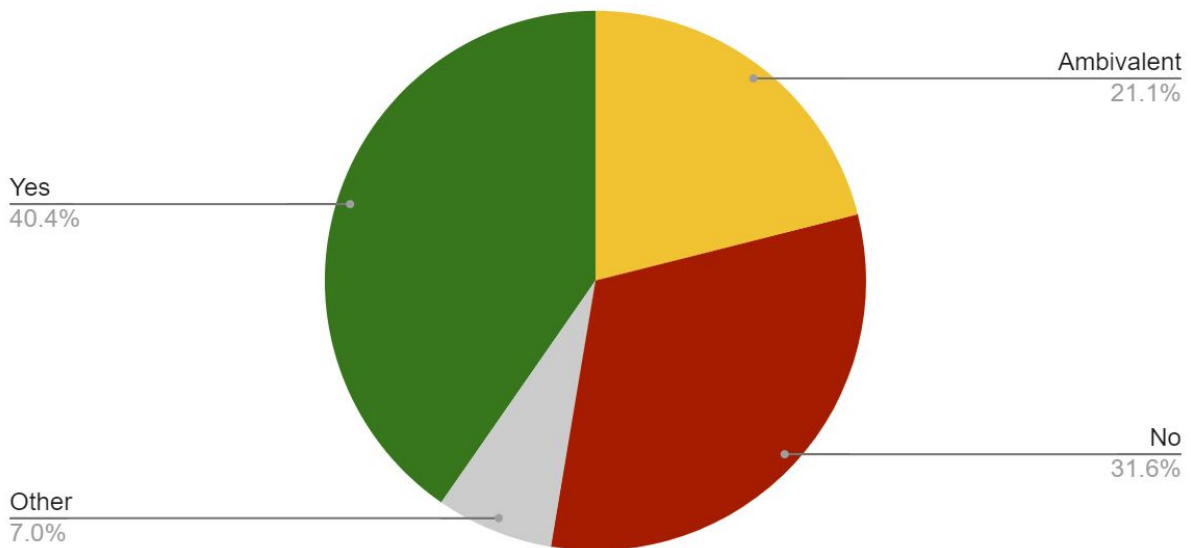
"How did you learn about the Peer Support Centre? Choose all that apply."

All respondents who had visited the PSC in the past 12 months (n=163)



"Did you receive the support you needed during your Peer Support Centre visit?"

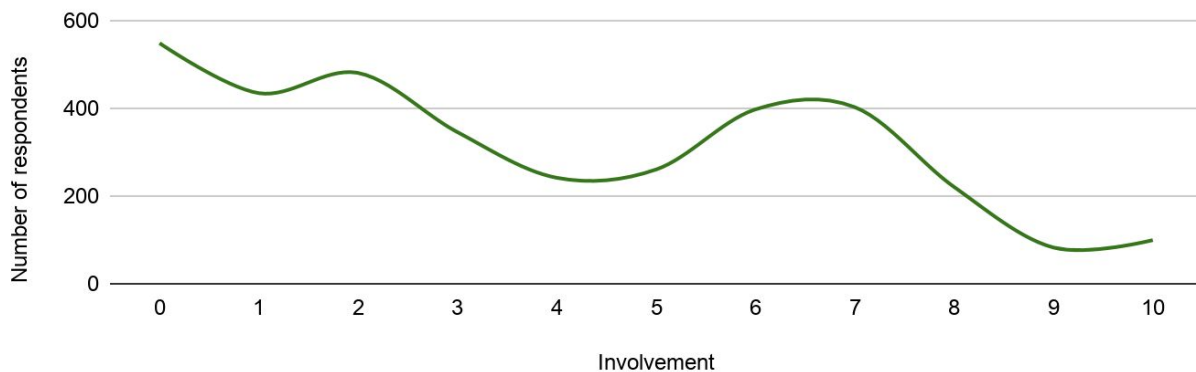
Coded text responses (n=58)



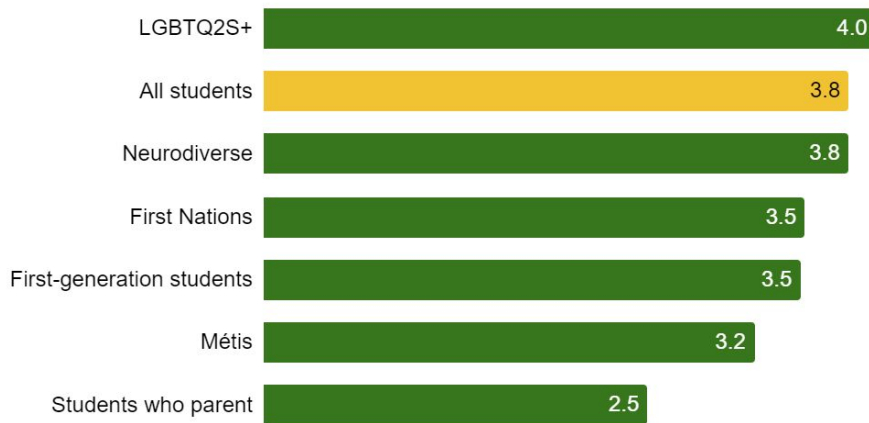
It should be noted that several of the text responses, particularly critical ones, seemed to confuse the Peer Support Centre with UAlberta Counseling and Clinical Services. Peer Support Centre staff have received the full text of all responses.

Student Involvement

"How involved are you on your campus? (Examples: campus recreation, faculty/department association, clubs, volunteering, attending events.)"



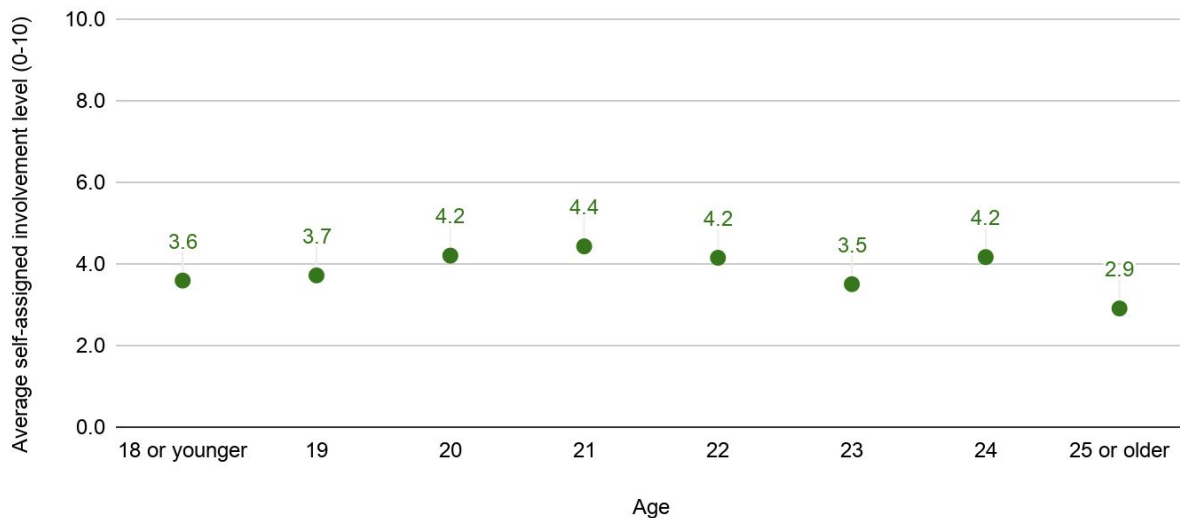
"How involved are you on your campus? (Examples: campus recreation, faculty/department association, clubs, volunteering, attending events)"



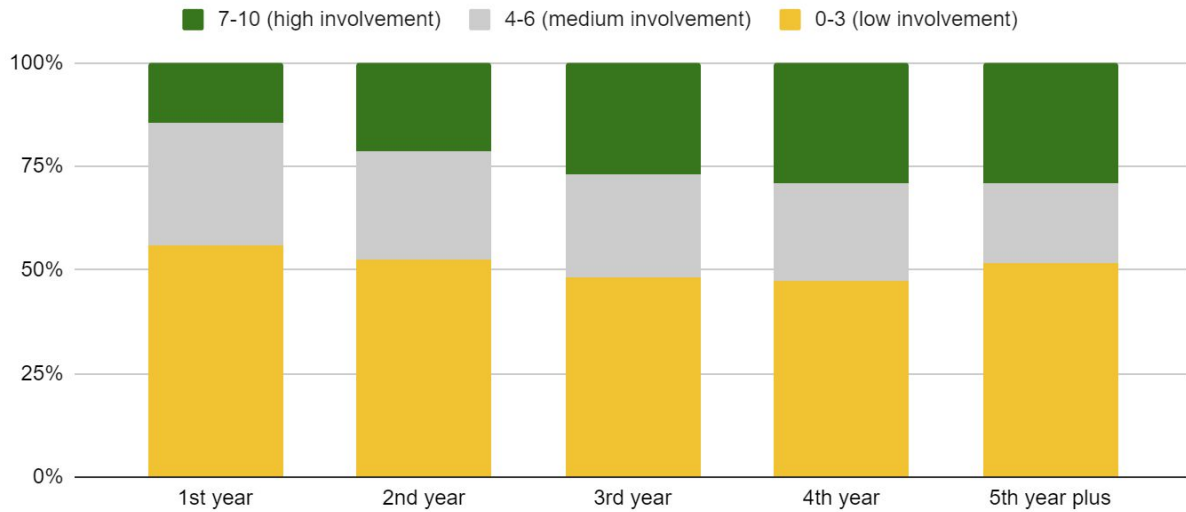
Average score (0-10) by population of interest

Self-reported levels of involvement in student life tended to increase modestly with age and year of study. Mature students (age 25+) were a notable exception.

"How involved are you on your campus? (Examples: campus recreation, faculty/department association, clubs, volunteering, attending events.)"

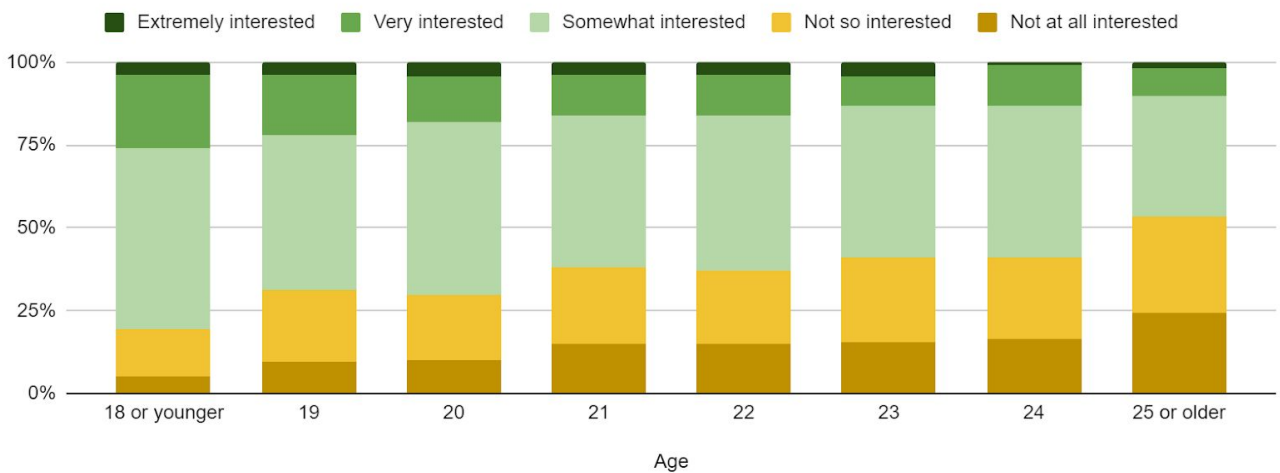


"How involved are you on your campus? (Examples: campus recreation, faculty/department association, clubs, volunteering, attending events.)"



Meanwhile, interest in some kinds of events shifted with age.

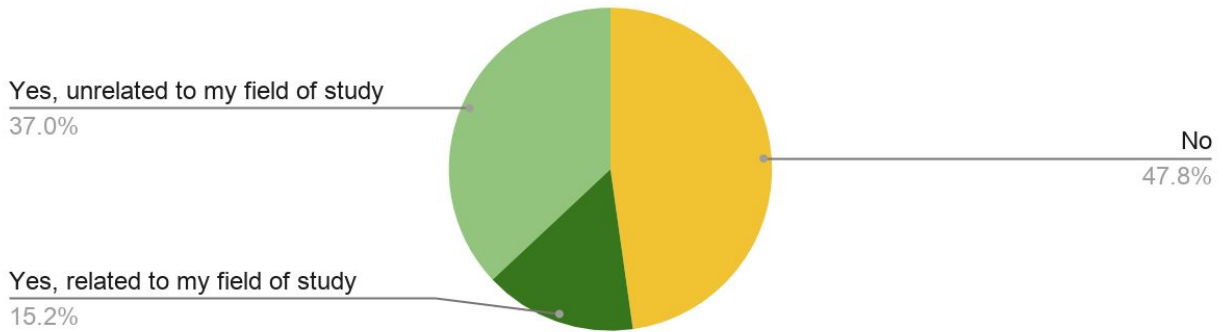
"Some students enjoy casual, low-commitment drop-in events (e.g. board game days). Are you interested in casual drop-in events?"



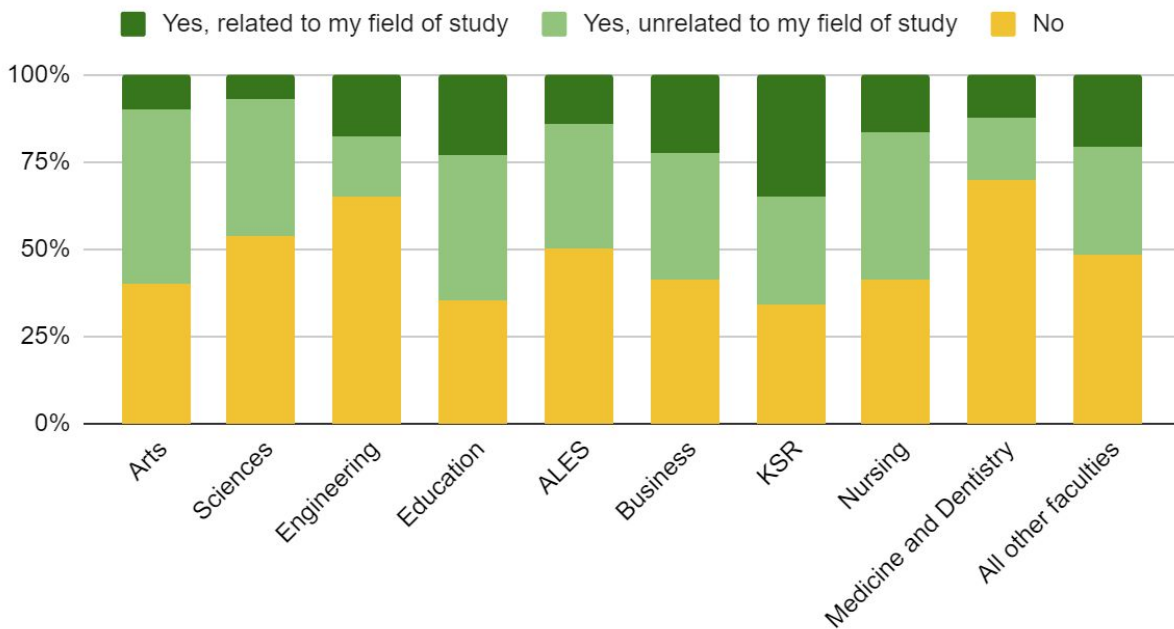
Student Employment

In the current political climate, and with tuition increases of up to 22.5% on the horizon, we decided to place a greater emphasis on whether students find jobs, especially jobs that are relevant to their careers.

"Have you held a job this semester?"



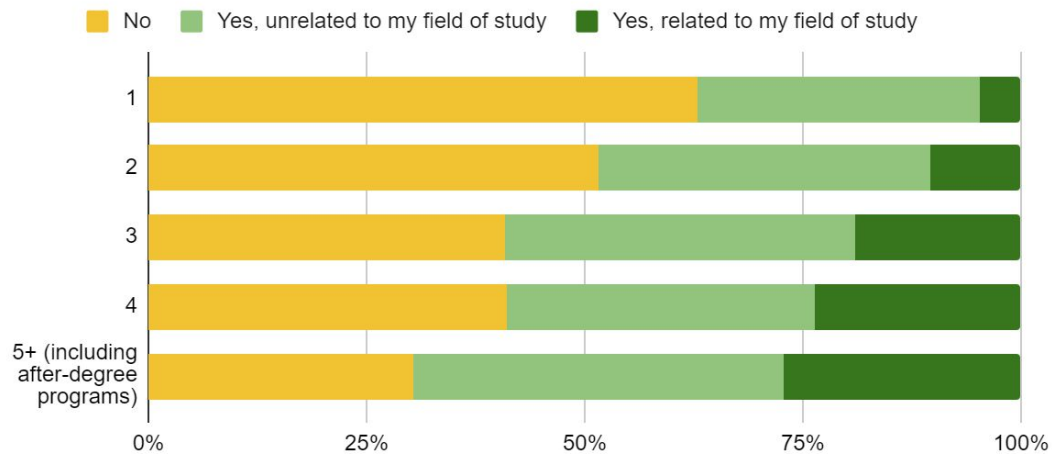
"Have you held a job this semester?"



Due to practicum and clinical requirements, professional faculties obviously have different proportions of employment, particularly career-related employment. Even so, we see a concerning level of variation between faculties. Factors may include institutional culture, rigor of workload, and variation in faculty-level information and support.

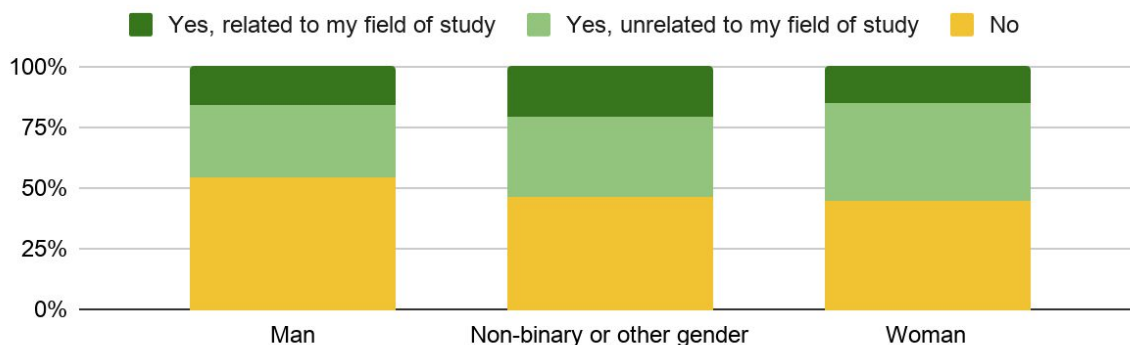
On a more positive note, we see dramatic increases in employment rate, including career-related employment rate, by year of study. Over half of third- and fourth-year students works during the school year. Rates of career-related employment double in second year, and double again in third year. One out of four fourth-year students holds a career-related job of some kind during the school year.

"Have you held a job this semester?" by year of study



We found modest variation in employment rates by gender: women and non-binary students were more likely than men to work during the school year. (Note that this question made no distinction between types of jobs, or between full-time and part-time employment.)

"Have you held a job this semester?" by gender



Aboriginal Employment

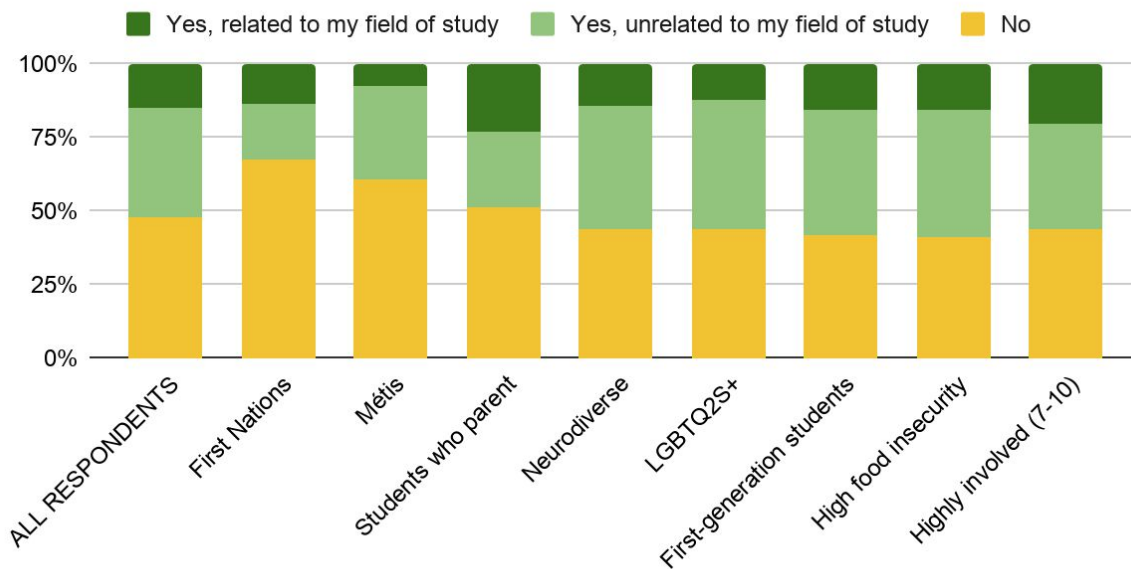
Crucial guiding documents speak to the vital importance of nurturing and increasing equitable employment opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. These documents include: the final report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (see Calls for Justice 1.1, 4.2, 4.4, 17.19, and 18.24); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see Articles 17.3 and 21.1); and the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see Calls to Action 7 and 92).

Likewise, UASU's Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Committee has recommended that UASU enhance its own hiring practices and "advocate for institutional commitments, at every level of the University, to develop financial, housing, and job opportunities for Aboriginal students."

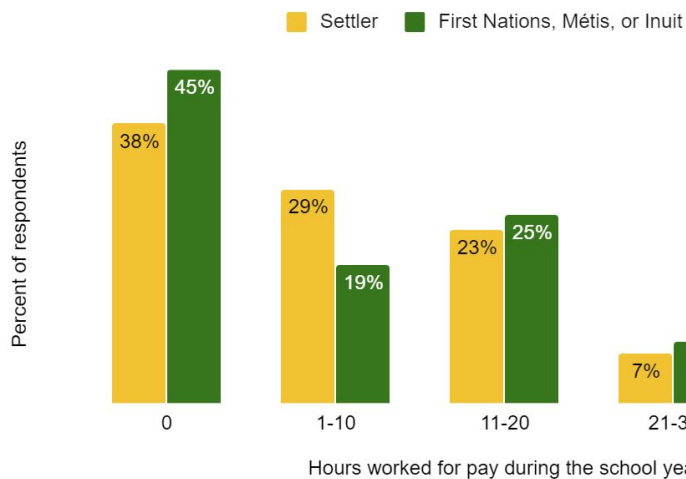
With these principles in mind, we have paid special attention to the employment-related information that Aboriginal students offered while taking our surveys.

We found that Métis and First Nations students were much less likely than most other students - including other populations of interest - to find work during the school year. For context, we reexamined the 2018 survey data, and found that, while FNMI students are less likely to find work during the school year, they are more likely than other students to work substantive part-time jobs (11-30 hours per week).

"Have you held a job this semester?" by population of interest



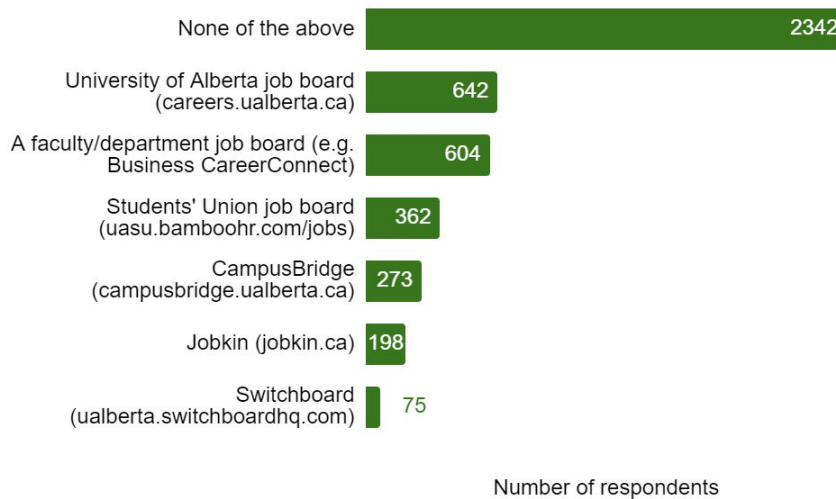
Hours worked (FNMI vs settler students)



Finding Employment

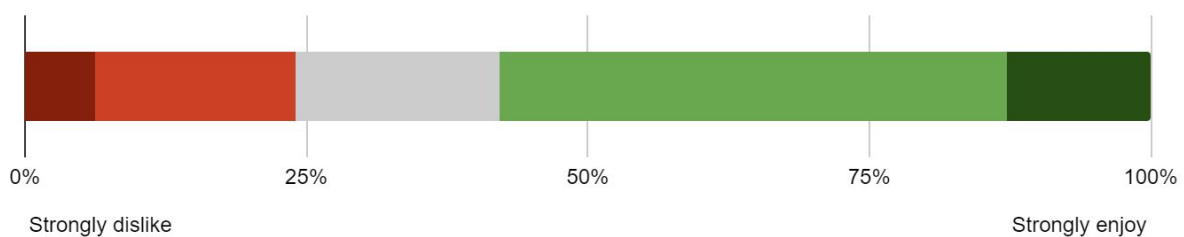
UASU runs two job boards, one for internal opportunities and the other (jobkin.ca) for external postings. Meanwhile, UAlberta runs at least three at an institutional level. However, the vast majority of students do not use any of the UASU or UAlberta job boards when looking for work. Thousands of UAlberta students likely need stronger support or a clearer sense of their options when trying to find employment.

"Which of these websites do you use when looking for job opportunities? (Choose all that apply.)"



During the school year, UASU employs over 200 students, including roughly two dozen InfoLink Peer Advisors. The InfoLink team requested the following survey question to gauge the extent to which InfoLink jobs are an interesting and satisfying employment opportunity for students.

"Typically working alone, InfoLink staff give directions, process lost and found items, and refer people to the services they need. InfoLink booths can be found across North Campus. Do you think you would enjoy or dislike this sort of job?"

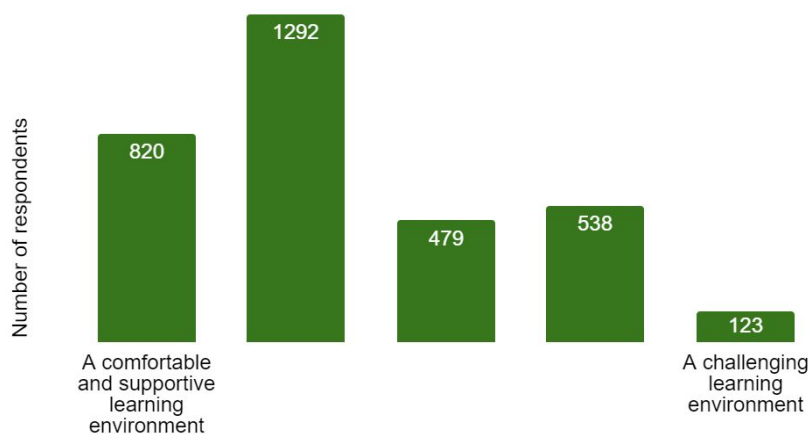


The Learning Environment

Support versus Challenge

We know from other engagements that students place value on their learning environment being comfortable, supportive, but also challenging. We decided to construct our question on this topic as a matter of priorities or forced decision. 64.9% of students favored a comfortable, supportive learning environment to a lesser or greater extent, while 20.3% favored a challenging learning environment. The remaining 14.7% were undecided or weighted the two priorities equally.

"What's more important?" (5-point slider scale)



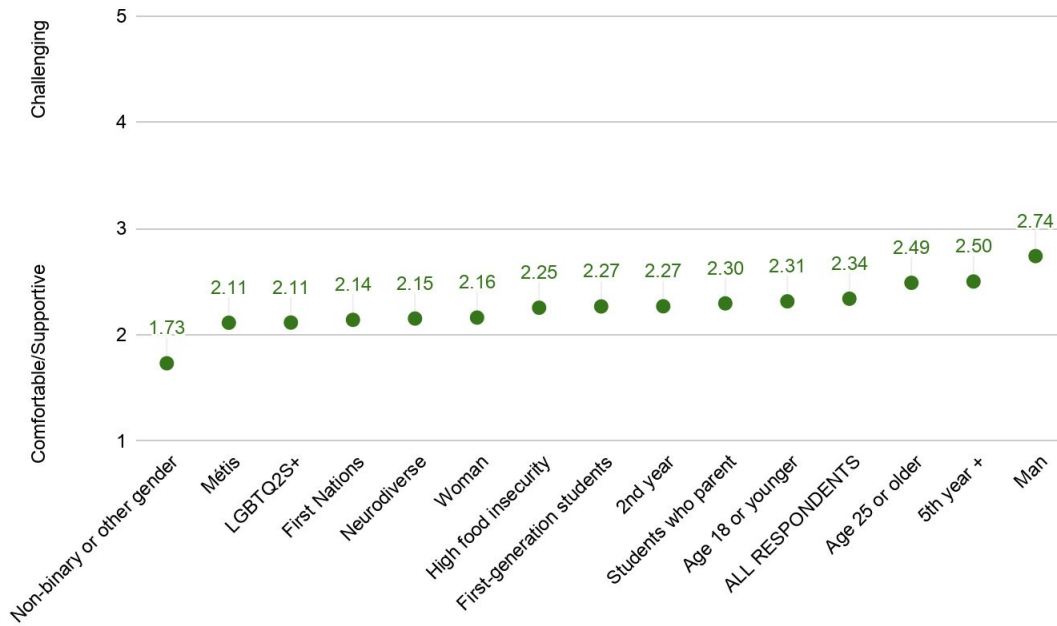
One important takeaway is that, no matter how much students value a challenging learning environment, the University must continue to provide all necessary support. In November 2017, a UASU student survey found that 66% of the 1700 respondents were unaware that the Discrimination, Harassment, and Duty to Accommodate Policy existed. 22% were unaware of the Code of Student Behaviour. 58% 'did not know much' or 'did not know anything at all' about their rights and responsibilities in a university environment.

We also examined priorities by population of interest. Several groups leaned more toward a comfortable, supportive learning environment than the student average:

- First Nations and Métis students
- LGBTQ2S+ students
- Gender non-binary students
- Neurodiverse students
- Women

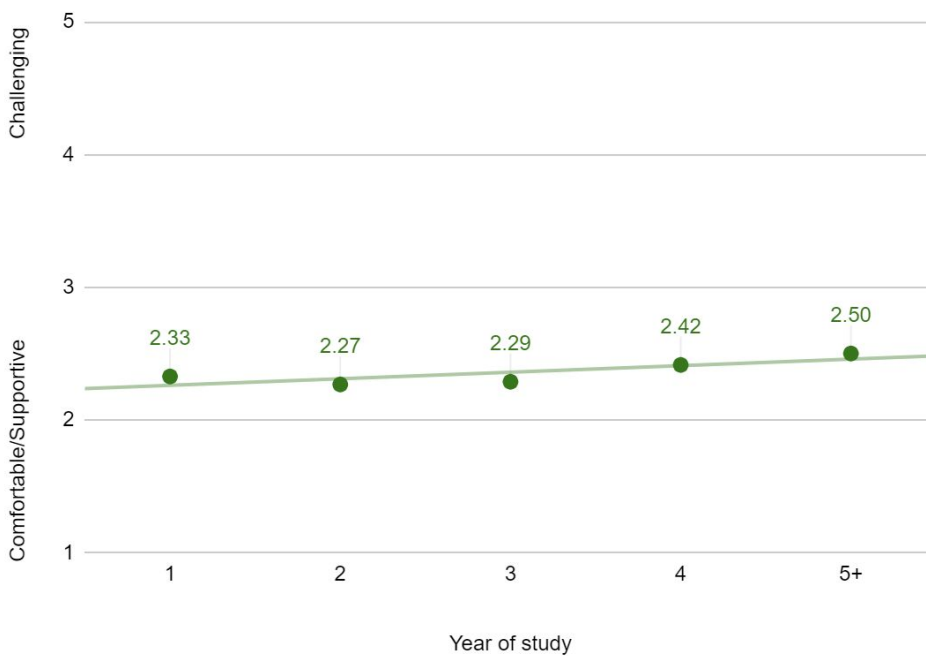
The only demographic group that leaned more toward a challenging learning environment than the student average was men.

Learning environment priorities (average score, 1-5 sliding scale)

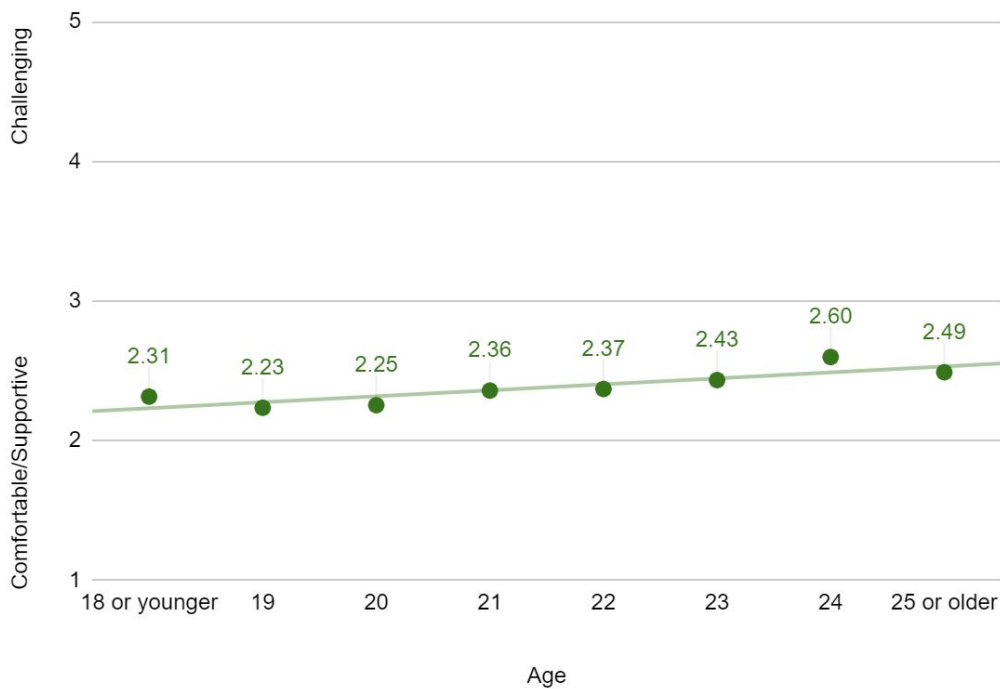


We found that, as students get older and as they progress in year of study, they shift toward the centre and become somewhat more likely to weigh the two priorities equally.

"What's more important?" (average score, 1-5 slider scale)



"What's more important?" (average score, 1-5 slider scale)



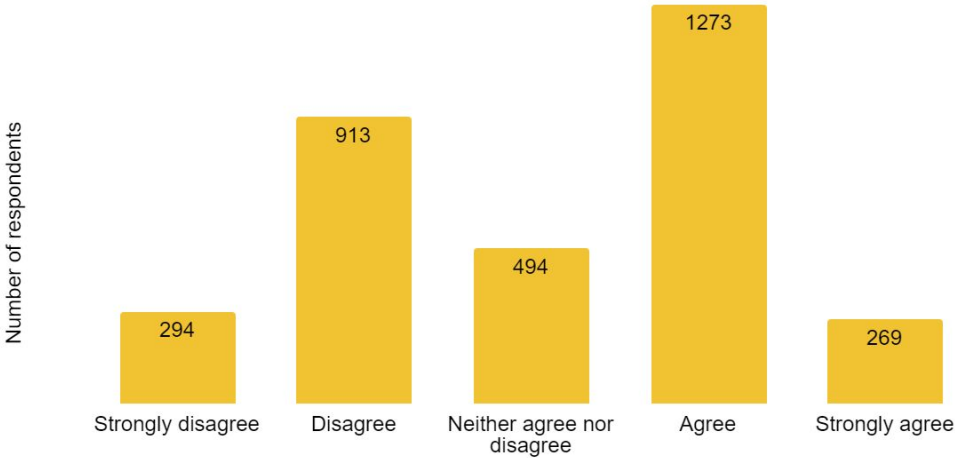
Responses varied drastically by faculty.

Faculty	Average score (1-5 slider scale)
Education	1.97 (most focused on comfortable/supporting learning environment)
Campus Saint-Jean	2.06
Native Studies	2.08
Augustana	2.16
Arts	2.19
Nursing	2.21
ALES	2.23
Open Studies	2.28
Sciences	2.37
KSR	2.37
Medicine and Dentistry	2.56
Pharmacy and Pharm. Sci.	2.59

Business	2.64
Engineering	2.77
Other	2.86
Law	2.96 (most focused on challenging learning environment)

Perceived Freedom on Controversial Issues

Agree or disagree? "I think most UAlberta students feel free to discuss serious issues even when others might disagree with their perspective."

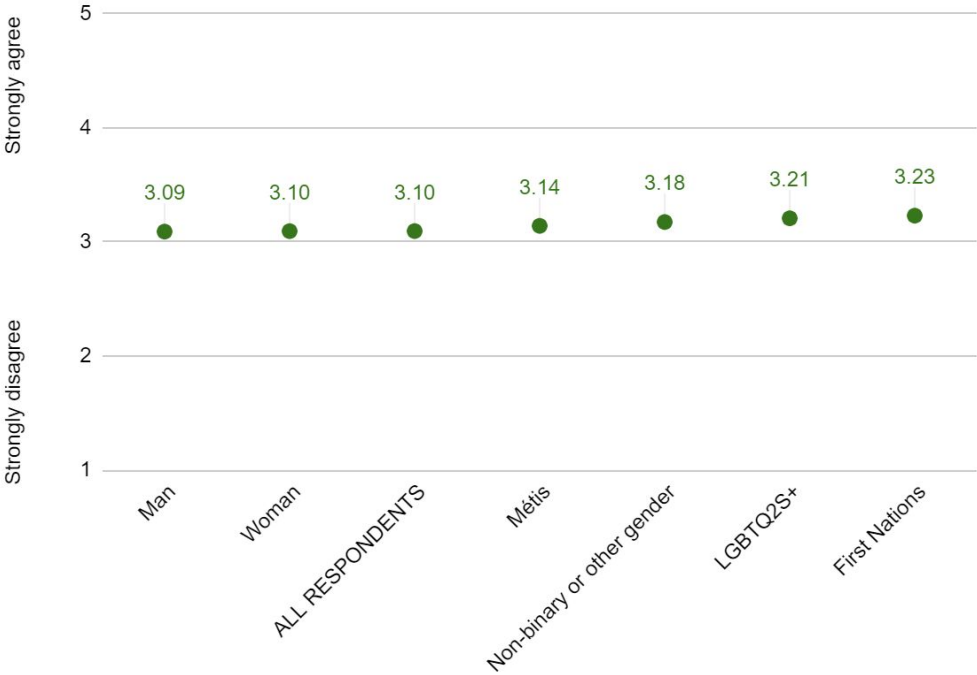


A total of 47.5% believed, to some extent, that most UAlberta students feel free to discuss serious and controversial issues. A total of 37.2% disagreed.

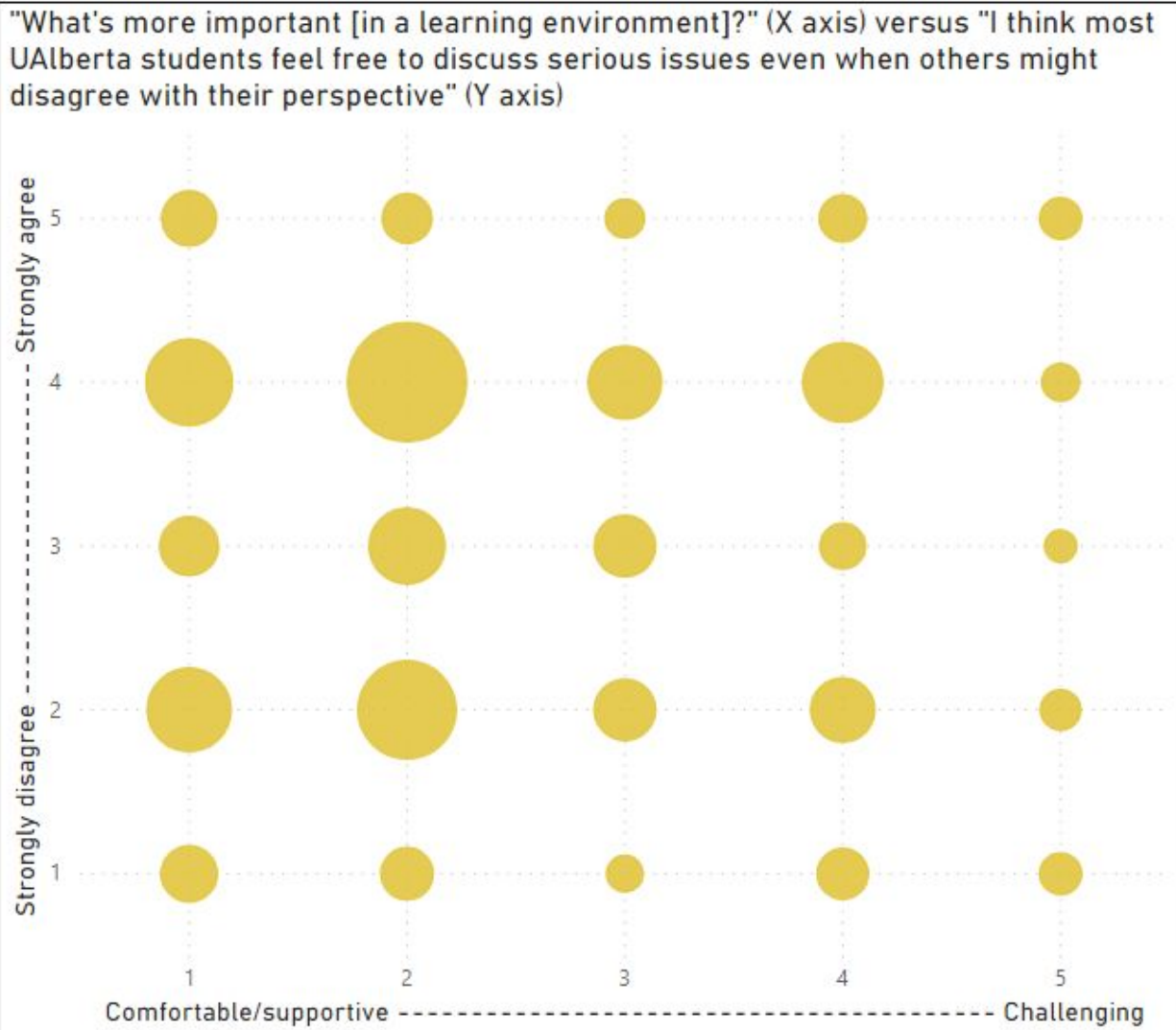
Faculty	Average score (1-5 slider scale)
Other	2.81 (weakest belief that students feel free to discuss controversial issues)
Law	2.90
Pharmacy and Pharm. Sci.	2.92
Business	2.95
Education	3.03
Sciences	3.06
Medicine and Dentistry	3.08
Arts	3.13
ALES	3.13
Native Studies	3.13
KSR	3.14

Nursing	3.14
Campus Saint-Jean	3.15
Engineering	3.16
Augustana	3.26
Open Studies	3.35 (strongest belief that students feel free to discuss controversial issues)

Agree or disagree? "I think most UAlberta students feel free to discuss serious issues even when others might disagree with their perspective."



Gender, orientation, Aboriginality, age, and year of study had little impact on mean scores, unlike the previous question. First-years and students age 18 or younger were slightly more likely to agree with the statement.

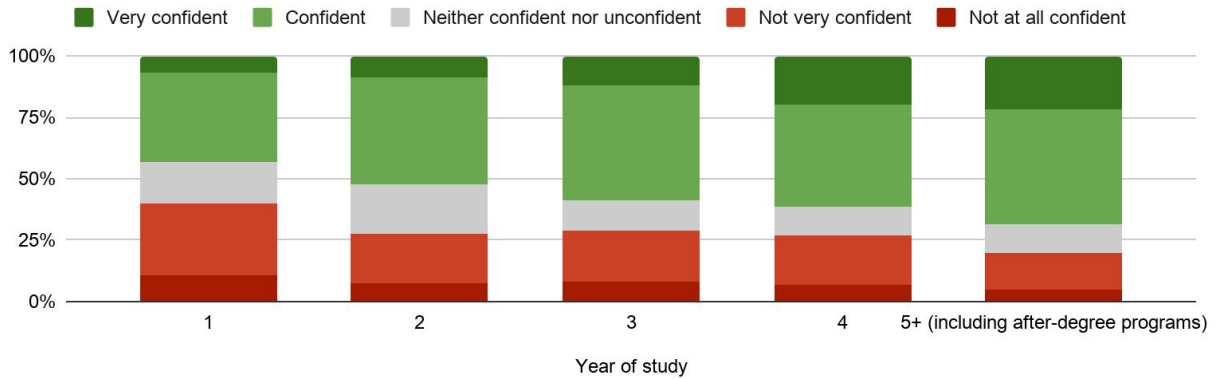


When comparing our two questions on the learning environment, we found that a student's preference for challenge over comfort/support did not predict their opinion on the campus's openness to discussing controversial opinions. A Pearson product-moment correlation test produced a value of 0.02 (no association). Students' answers to these questions vary widely and independently.

Academic Skills

Writing Ability

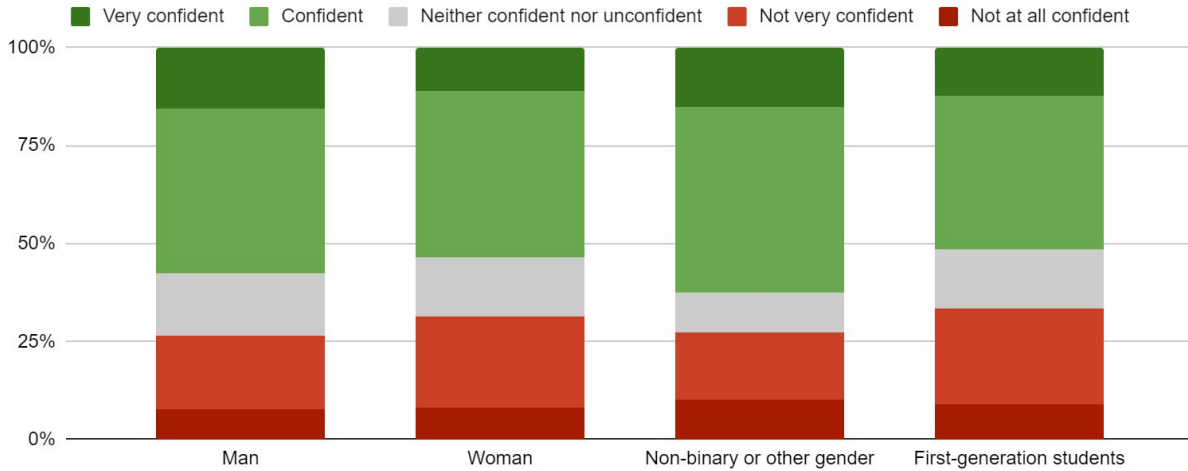
"How confident are you in your ability to write a good paper or essay?"



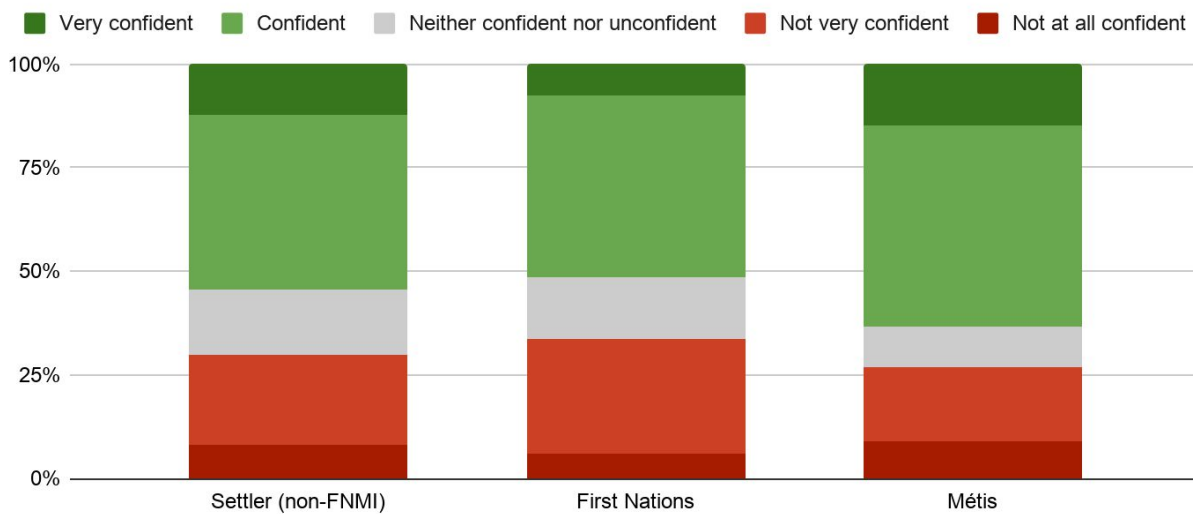
	Average score (1-5 slider scale)
Native Studies	2.96 (least confident in ability to write a good paper)
Augustana	3.07
Sciences	3.08
Engineering	3.15
ALES	3.23
Campus Saint-Jean	3.30
Nursing	3.32
Medicine and Dentistry	3.36
KSR	3.37
Open Studies	3.37
Business	3.40
Arts	3.41
Education	3.47
Other	3.47
Pharmacy and Pharm. Sci.	3.68
Law	4.00 (most confident in ability to write a good paper)

Gender, first-generation student status, and Aboriginality emerged as points of interest for this question.

"How confident are you in your ability to write a good paper or essay?"



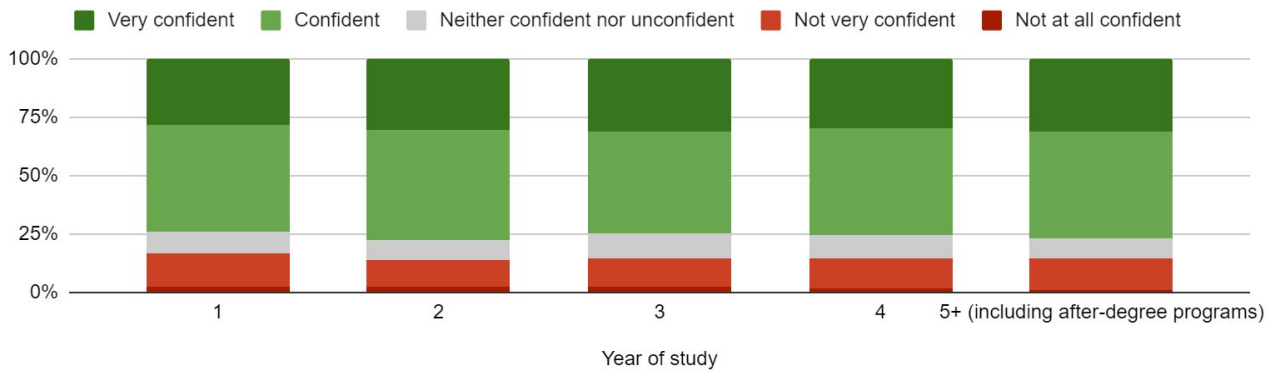
"How confident are you in your ability to write a good paper or essay?"



First Nations students trended slightly lower than average for academic writing confidence, while Métis students trended higher than average.

Avoiding Academic Misconduct

"How confident are you that you can avoid making a mistake with plagiarism or other kinds of academic misconduct?"

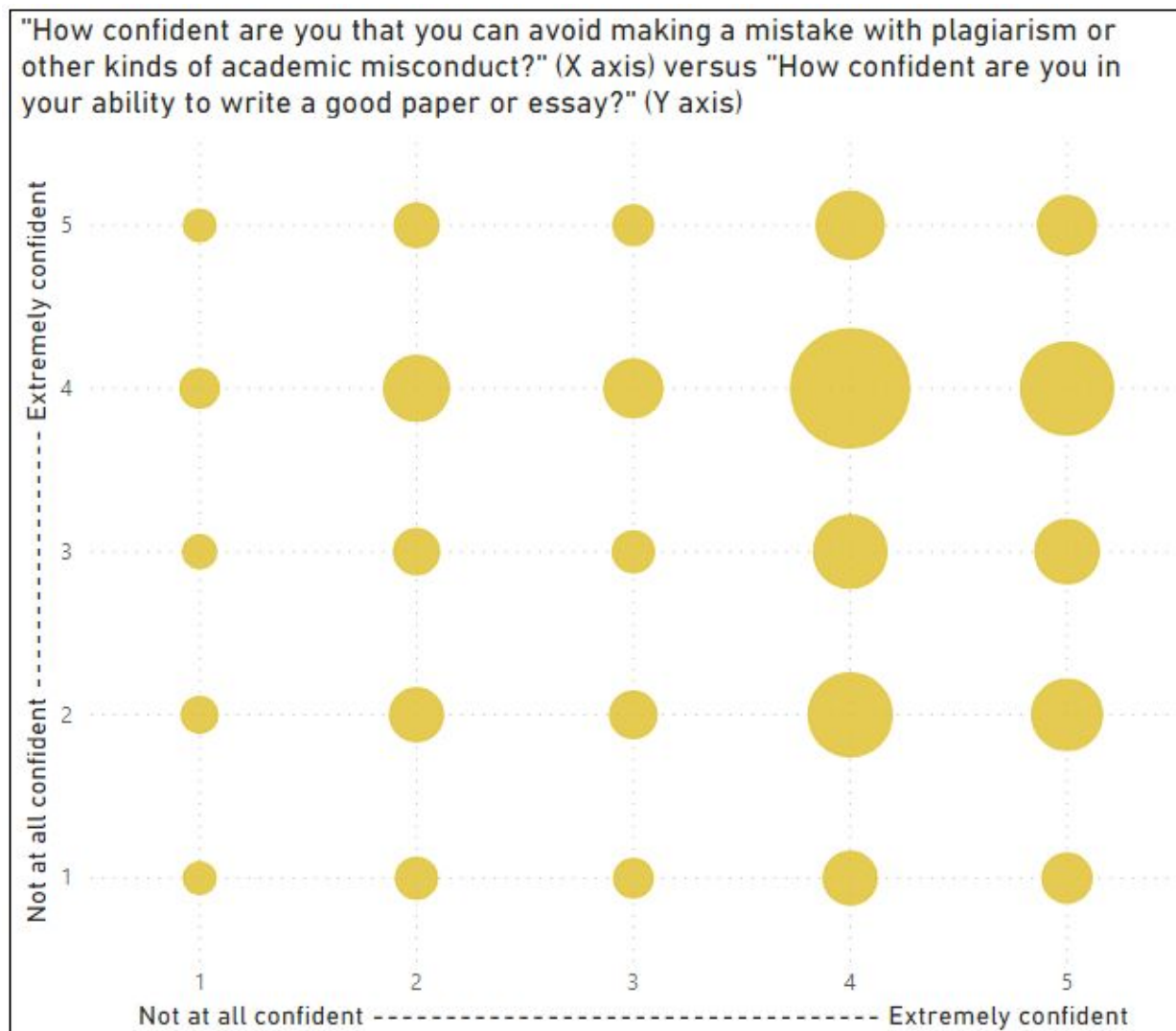


Roughly one out of five students had low confidence in their ability to avoid making a mistake with academic misconduct, and four out of five feel confident. The challenge for University of Alberta faculties is that these proportions remained stable across years of study. A fourth- or fifth-year student was just as likely as a first-year student to feel low confidence in their ability to avoid academic misconduct.

	Average score (1-5 slider scale)
Other	3.39 (least confident in ability to avoid plagiarism or other academic misconduct)
Open Studies	3.65
ALES	3.78
KSR	3.80
Nursing	3.80
Sciences	3.82
Native Studies	3.83
Law	3.86
Arts	3.90
Campus Saint-Jean	3.91
Education	3.91
Engineering	3.94
Augustana	3.96

Pharmacy and Pharm. Sci.	4.03
Business	4.06
Medicine and Dentistry	4.06 (most confident in ability to avoid plagiarism or other academic misconduct)

None of our demographic lenses of interest (gender, Aboriginality, first-generation status, and so forth) had a significant impact on answers to this question.



We note that only a small proportion of students (141 out of the 2738 who answered both questions, or 5%) had low confidence (1 or 2 on a 5-point scale) in both skills. The only noticeably overrepresented faculty in this group was Science students (28.4% of the group, compared to 20.3% of the entire sample).

220 students (8%) who were confident (4 or 5) in their academic writing ability were *not* confident (1 or 2) in their ability to avoid academic misconduct. No faculty was significantly overrepresented in this group.

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