

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

**STUDENTS' UNION UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCES**

**SURVEY PROJECT 2005**

University of Alberta Students' Union  
Office of the Vice President Academic  
November 2005

## **A. Method**

A 26-item Online Survey was designed to assess students' academic experiences to facilitate meaningful contributions to the development and implementation of University academic goals and priorities in areas including but not limited to teaching, learning, research, and technology that are committed to improving the quality of the undergraduate experience. Basic demographic data (i.e., age, gender) was also collected from participants.

The survey was made available to participants online at the Learning Solutions (xLS) Website in April of 2005. An individual invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 5,004 undergraduate students enrolled in the 2004-05 school year. Student emails were obtained from the Office of the Registrar and Student Awards. One thousand three hundred and four (1304) respondents completed the survey (a 26% response rate).

Data collected from the online survey was captured in a database and then exported to a statistical package for analysis. All statistical procedures were conducted and results were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 13.0). The percentages of questions left unanswered by participants were considered in the analysis of the data (number of responses for each question is indicated by an "n"). Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis techniques.

## B. Quantitative Data

Respondents' Quantitative responses are either presented in a chart or table below the corresponding survey questions.

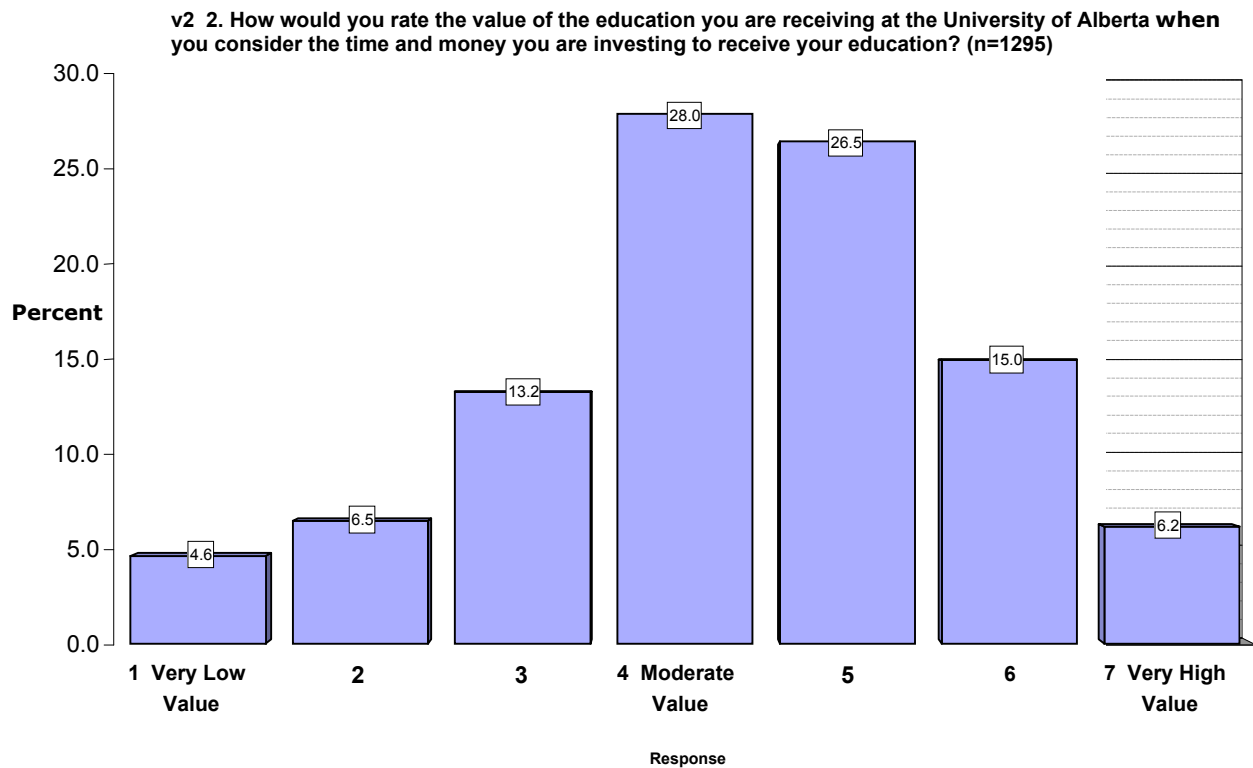
1.     a) Overall, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience at the University of Alberta?
- b) Specifically, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience provided in the classroom?
- c) Specifically, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience provided outside of the classroom?

**Table 1: Respondents' Overall Ratings of their Academic Experience**

Response Choices	Ratings (%)						
	Very Low Quality	2	3	Moderate Quality	5	6	Very High Quality
A) Overall Educational Experience at the U of A (n=1295)	1	2	2	17	36	36	6
B) Educational Experience in the Classroom (n=1296)	1	2	7	24	34	27	5
C) Educational Experience outside of the Classroom (n=1288)	2	5	11	30	25	21	6
<b>Note.</b> Number of responses= "n"							

2. How would you rate the value of the education you are receiving at the University of Alberta when you consider the time and money you are investing to receive your education?

**Chart 1**



3. Students have a wide range of views about what constitutes a high quality of education. What factors have the highest priority in your idea of what makes a university education high quality? Please rate each item below using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is *very low priority* and 5 is *very high priority*.

**Table 2: Priority of Factors to Respondents' Opinion of a High Quality Education**

Factors	Ratings (%)				
	Very Low Priority	2	3	4	Very High Priority
A. Small Class Sizes (n=1294)	7	15	30	31	17
B. Meaningful interaction with Instructors (n=1294)	1	6	14	36	43
C. Flexible degree programs (n=1287)	2	7	20	41	30
D. The university has a good reputation (n=1293)	3	7	20	41	29
E. Comfortable classrooms (n=1288)	2	7	23	42	26
F. Instructors who care about students' learning (n=1295)	*	1	4	22	73
G. Opportunities to do research (n=1292)	10	16	30	27	17
H. Degree Program prepares you for a future career (n=1295)	1	2	5	23	69
I. Meaningful interaction with other students (n=1296)	3	7	22	42	26

J. Positive Attitudes of student services staff towards students (n=1296)	1	5	18	42	34
K. Accurate and helpful academic advising (n=1294)	1	3	10	33	53
L. Applying knowledge to practice (e.g., co-op, internship, field experience, etc) (n=1295)	1	3	12	32	52
M. Instructors who are good teachers (1296)	*	*	2	13	85
N. Courses are relevant to your future career (n=1288)	1	1	6	25	67
O. Being taught primarily by tenure-track faculty (n=1274)	8	15	41	27	9
P. Extracurricular activities available to student (n=1294)	10	15	29	31	15
Q. Opportunities to study abroad (n=1294)	15	21	27	23	14
R. Thorough and helpful course resources (e.g., notes, textbooks, etc.) (n=1296)	*	2	8	38	52
S. Developing skills in the use of technology (n=1292)	2	8	25	44	21
T. Availability of quality study space on campus (n=1296)	4	11	19	37	29
U. Lab facilities are equipped with modern technology and materials (n=1295)	2	6	15	42	35
V. Instructional technology is used in courses (n=1293)	4	11	32	36	17
W. Courses in which instructional technology is used (n=1292)	5	13	36	33	13
X. Quality technology is available to students on campus (n=1294)	1	3	17	46	33
y. Grading reflects high standards (n=1297)	1	3	20	48	28
<b>Note.</b> Number of responses = "n", No responses = "*"					

4. The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.

a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is *not at all common* and 5 is *very common*, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.

b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.

**Table 3: Respondents' Experiences with Instructors at the University of Alberta**

Factors	Ratings (%)					Most Important (n=1304)
	Very Uncommon	2	3	4	Very Common	
A. Take an active interest in my learning (n=1281)	6	21	38	28	7	31

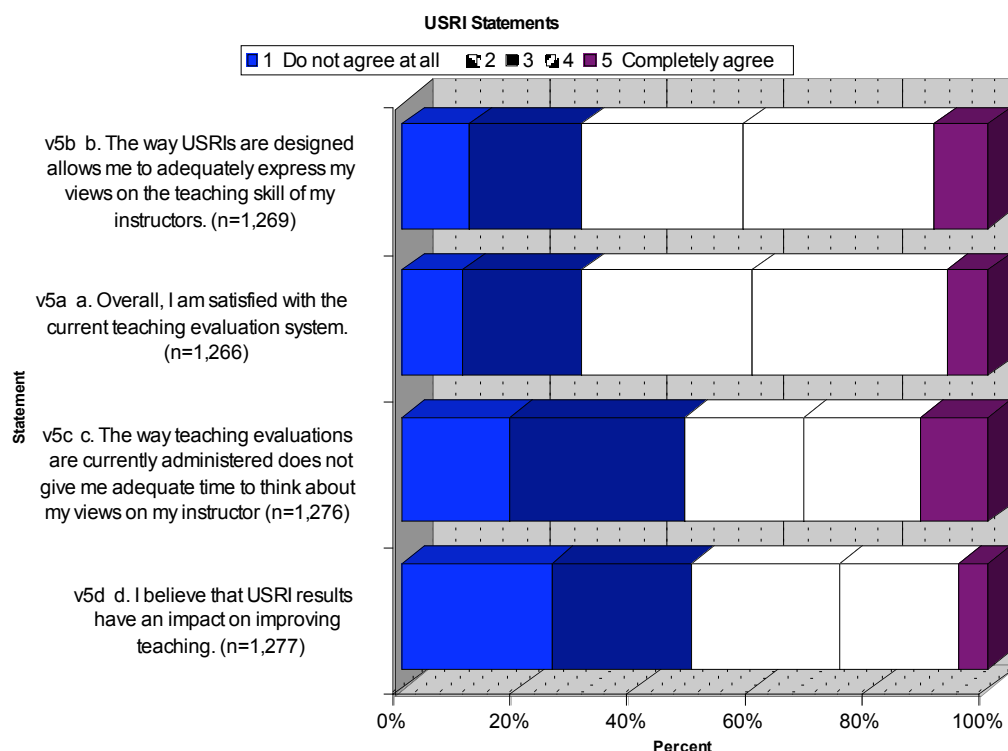
B. Are accessible/available outside of class (n=1283)	1	8	25	44	22	26
C. Encourage class participation (n= 1287)	5	17	34	30	14	9
D. Make an effort to verify that students are learning (n=1286)	9	26	34	26	5	24
E. Take pride in teaching (n=1282)	3	13	38	35	11	26
F. Encourage feedback from students (n=1280)	7	18	32	33	10	10
G. Show respect for students (n=1283)	1	4	19	43	33	32
H. Use Teaching Assistants (TAs) effectively (n=1278)	12	21	35	25	7	3
I. Have good communication skills (n=1277)	2	11	30	44	13	38
J. Use class time to expand on course notes and readings and teaching concepts (n=1276)	3	9	28	42	18	27
K. Discuss research in the field of study in a way that is relevant to the course material (n=1282)	9	17	31	31	12	10
L. Demonstrate Skill in teaching (n=1284)	3	14	35	38	10	39
M. Make an effort to interact with students (n=1287)	5	18	35	34	8	16
N. Show enthusiasm for the subject matter they are teaching (n=1282)	2	6	23	44	25	42
O. Possess a thorough knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching (n=1277)	*	2	12	42	44	46
P. Use technology in class in ways that are appropriate and helpful to my learning (n=1284)	4	14	34	39	9	4
Q. Motivate me to learn more (n=1285)	4	16	39	33	8	25
R. Have good English Skills (n=1280)	4	11	25	35	25	28
S. Are well-organized (n=1277)	1	5	24	51	19	20
T. Make an effort to assist students with using technology required for class (n=1278)	9	21	39	25	6	4
U. Give me good feedback about my learning on assignments and exams (n=1282)	10	25	32	27	6	25
V. Return assignments and exams to students within an acceptable time period (n=1285)	4	11	26	39	20	10
W. Creates assignments and exams that test my understanding of course material and not just my ability to recall information (n=1279)	6	17	27	37	13	25

X. Use grading scheme fairly(n=1282)	4	10	27	45	14	17
Y. Appropriately balance difficulty of midterm and final exams (n=1278)	4	12	31	42	11	15
Z. Create assignments and exams that accurately reflect course content and learning objectives (n=1280)	3	9	25	49	14	31

**Note.** Number of responses = “n”, No responses = “\*”. Totals in the last column reflect the percentage of respondents who felt each response was the most important quality in determining a good teacher.

5. The following questions ask you to evaluate your satisfaction with the current student evaluations of teaching (Universal Student Ratings of Instruction- USRIs) at the University of Alberta. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is *do not agree at all* and 5 is *completely agree*

**Chart 2**



\*Note: Responses are ordered from highest to lowest response mean

6. The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with programs and courses offered by the University of Alberta. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is *do not agree at all* and 5 is *completely agree*, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

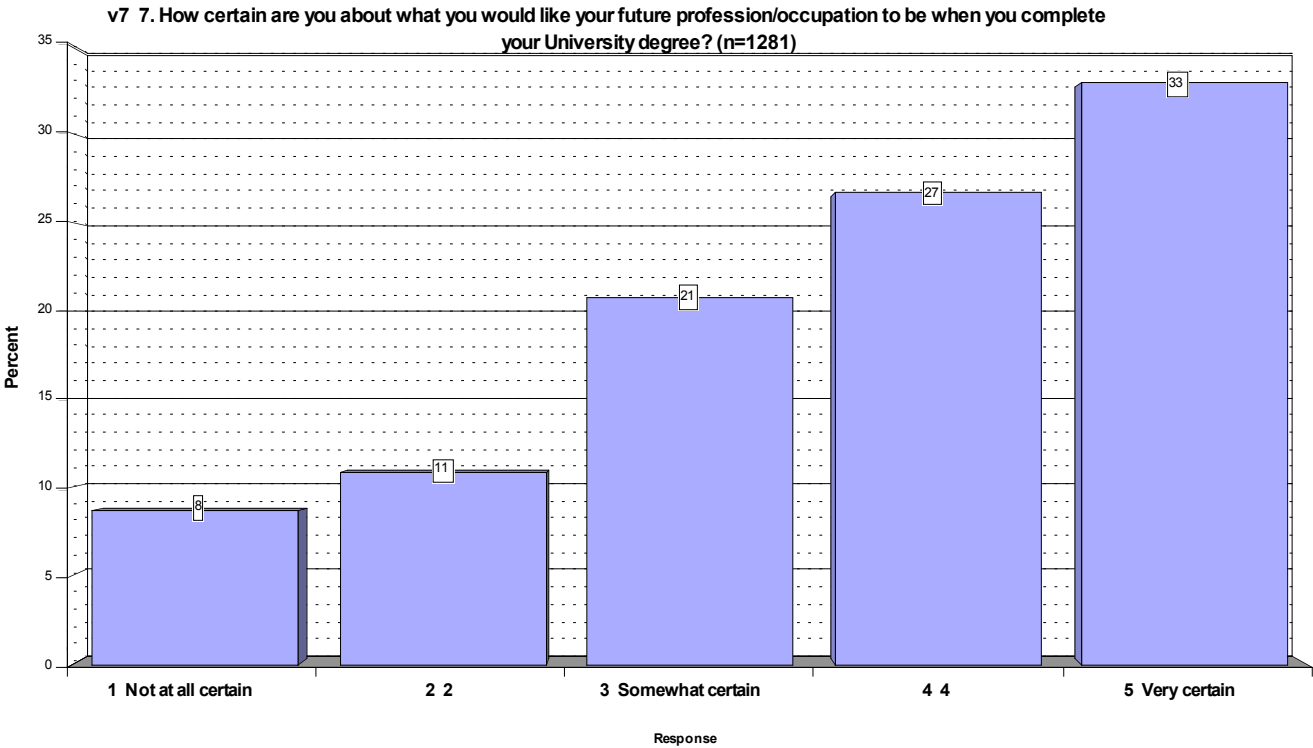
**Table 4: Respondents' Experience with Programs and Courses Offered by the University of Alberta**

Factors	Ratings (%)				
	Do Not Agree at all	2	3	4	Completely agree
A. My program gives me sufficient opportunity to take courses I want to take for my own interest. (n=1285)	11	20	24	30	15
B. My program meets my needs for a University education (n=1283)	2	7	20	47	24
C. Overall, my program is doing a good job of preparing me for my future career. (n=1278)	5	14	29	37	15
D. My program should be more focused on the development of practical skills than it currently is. (n=1283)	7	17	24	27	25
E. My program should be more focused on the development of theoretical knowledge than is currently is. (n=1281)	17	37	35	8	3
F. That classes I need for my program are not offered frequently enough. (n=1275)	14	17	23	24	22
G. I am satisfied with the opportunities available to me to apply what I am learning through practical experience (e.g., co-op, internship, field experience, practicum, etc.). (n=1276)	12	17	28	28	15
H. There should be more consistency in content between different sections of the same course (n=1282)	7	15	33	24	21
I. Grading standards are inconsistent from one class to another (n=1282)	7	19	24	26	24
J. Course material provides a good balance between breadth and depth (n=1284)	3	10	43	38	6
<b>Note.</b> Number of responses = "n", No responses = "*"					



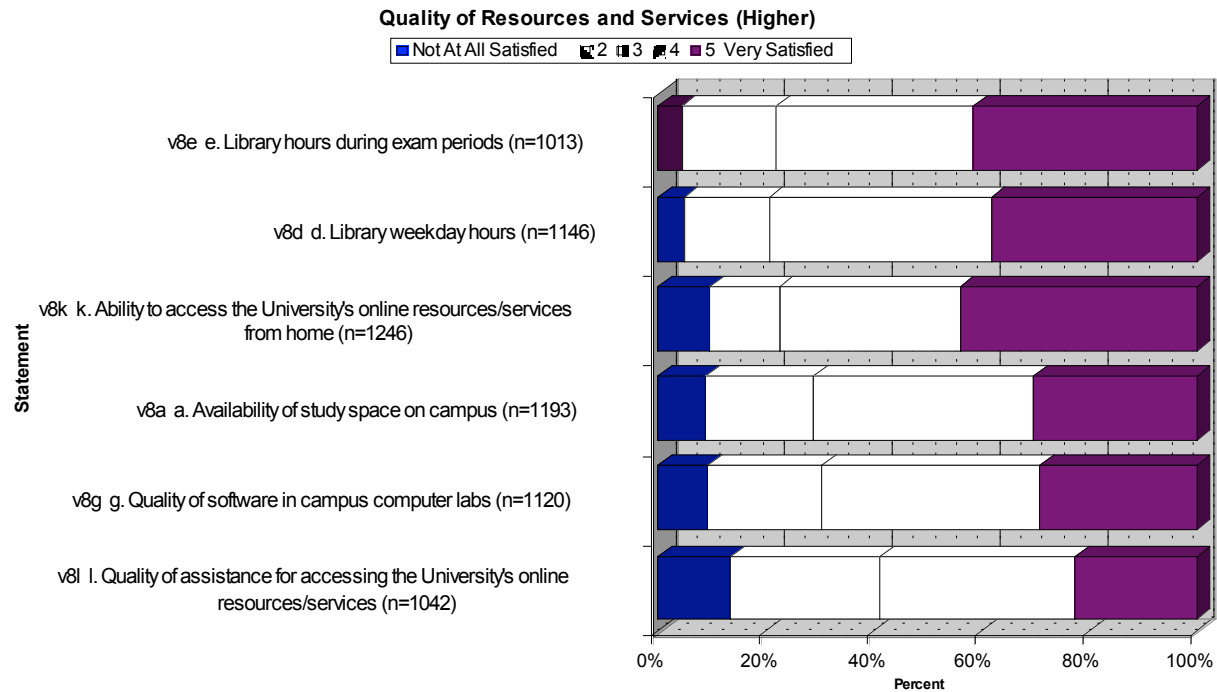
7. How certain are you about what you would like your future profession/occupation to be when you complete your University degree?

Chart 3



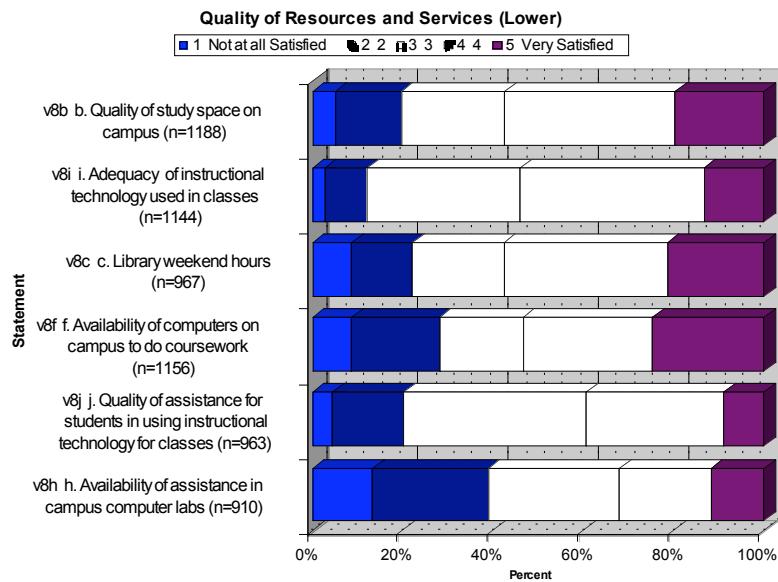
8. The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with services available at the University of Alberta to assist you in your learning. Using a scale from one to 5 where 1 is *not at all satisfied* and 5 is *very satisfied*, please rate your satisfaction with each of the following. If you have not used the service, please select N/A.

**Chart 4 a**



\*Note: Responses are ordered from highest to lowest response mean

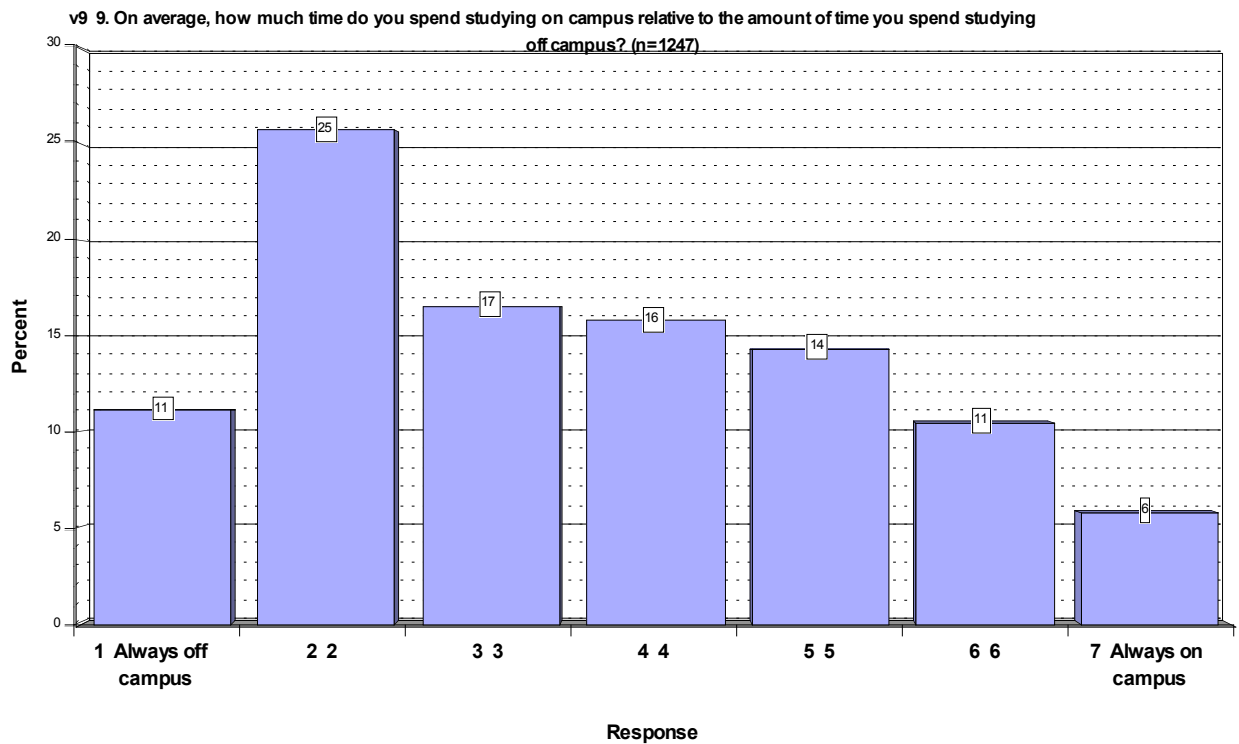
**Chart 4b**



\*Note: Responses are ordered from highest to lowest response mean

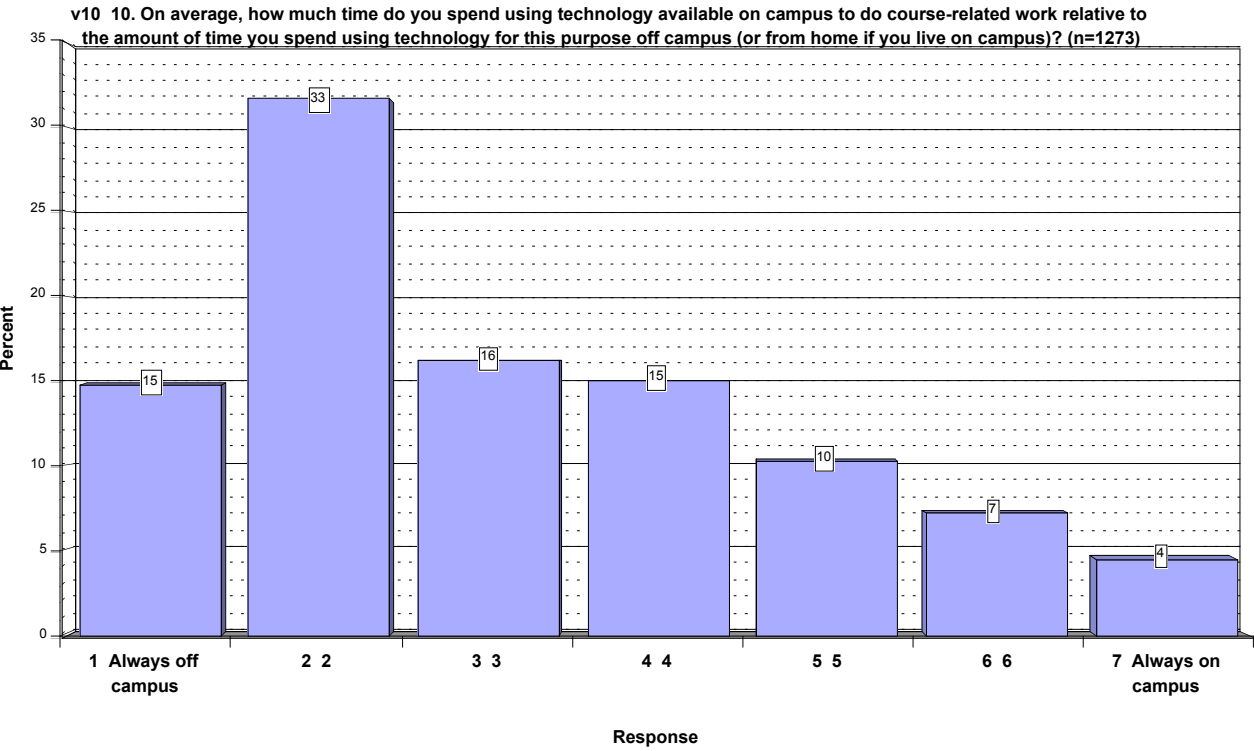
9. On average, how much time do you spend studying on campus relative to the amount of time you spend studying at campus?

**Chart 5**



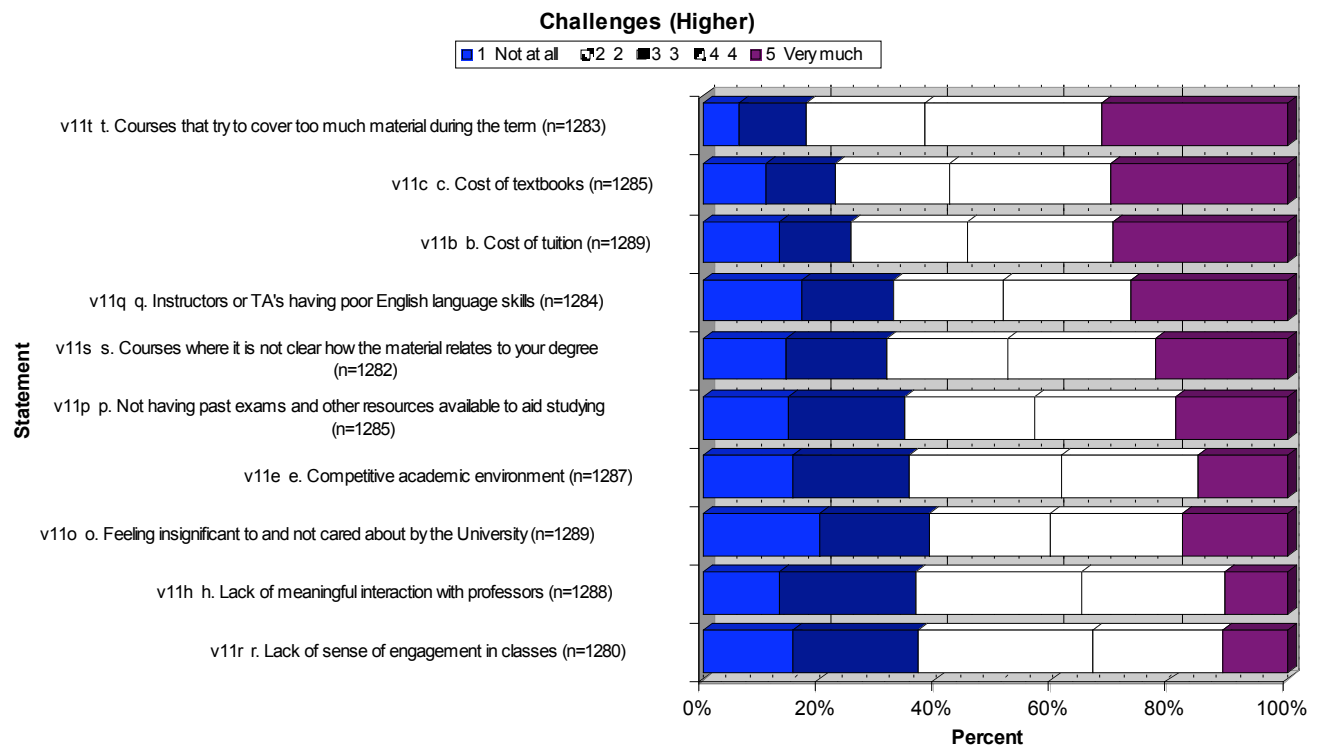
10. On average, how much time do you spend using technology available on campus to do course-related work relative to the amount of time you spend using technology for this purpose off campus (or from home if you live on campus)?

**Chart 6**



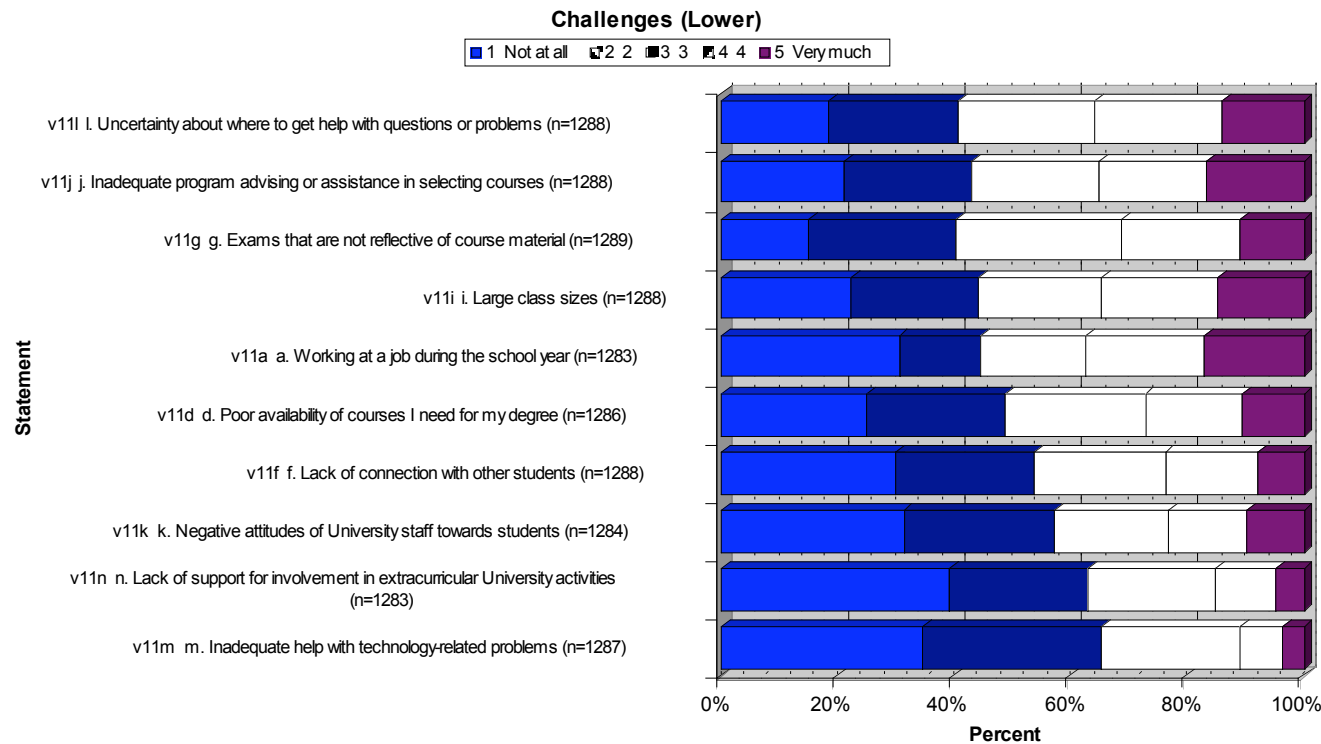
11. Students face a number of challenges throughout the course of completing their education, some of which have the potential to negatively affect their academic performance. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of how much they have negatively affected your academic success (i.e., grades, ability/motivation to complete degree, etc.) at the University of Alberta using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is *not at all* and 5 is *very much*.

**Chart 7 a**



\*Note: Responses are ordered from highest to lowest response mean

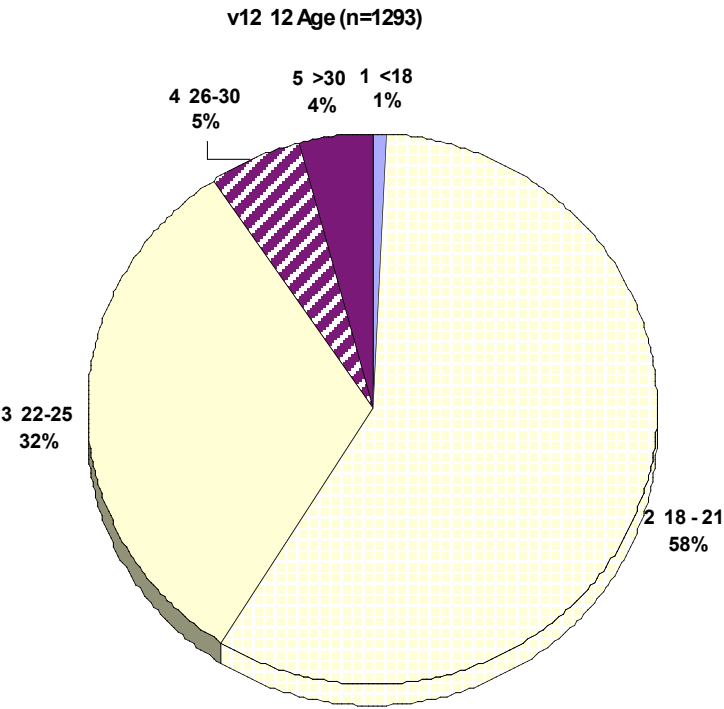
Chart 7b



\*Note: Responses are ordered from highest to lowest response mean

12. Age:

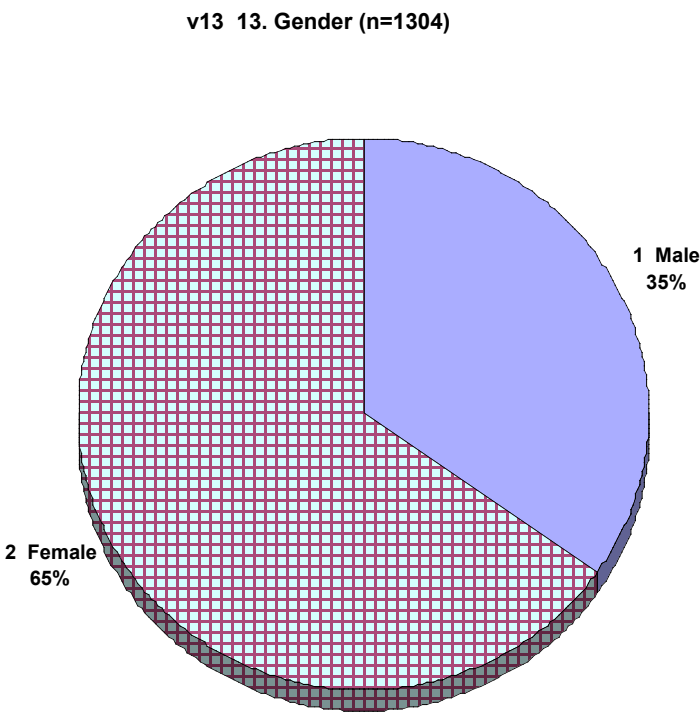
Chart 8





13. Gender:

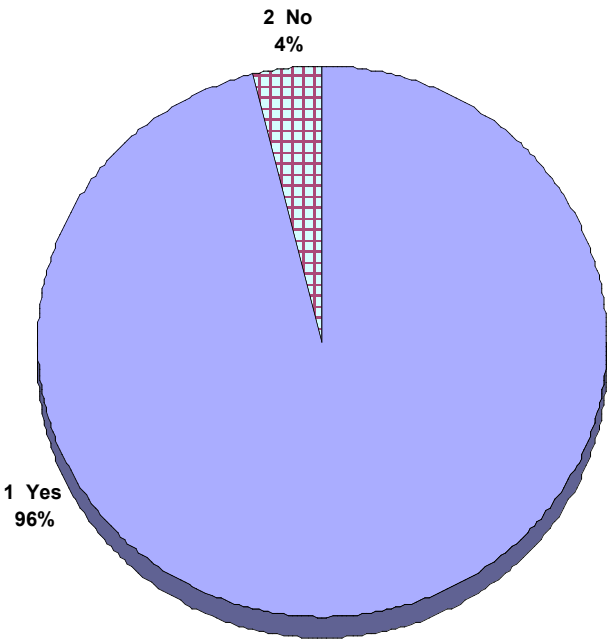
Chart 9



14. Are you a landed immigrant?

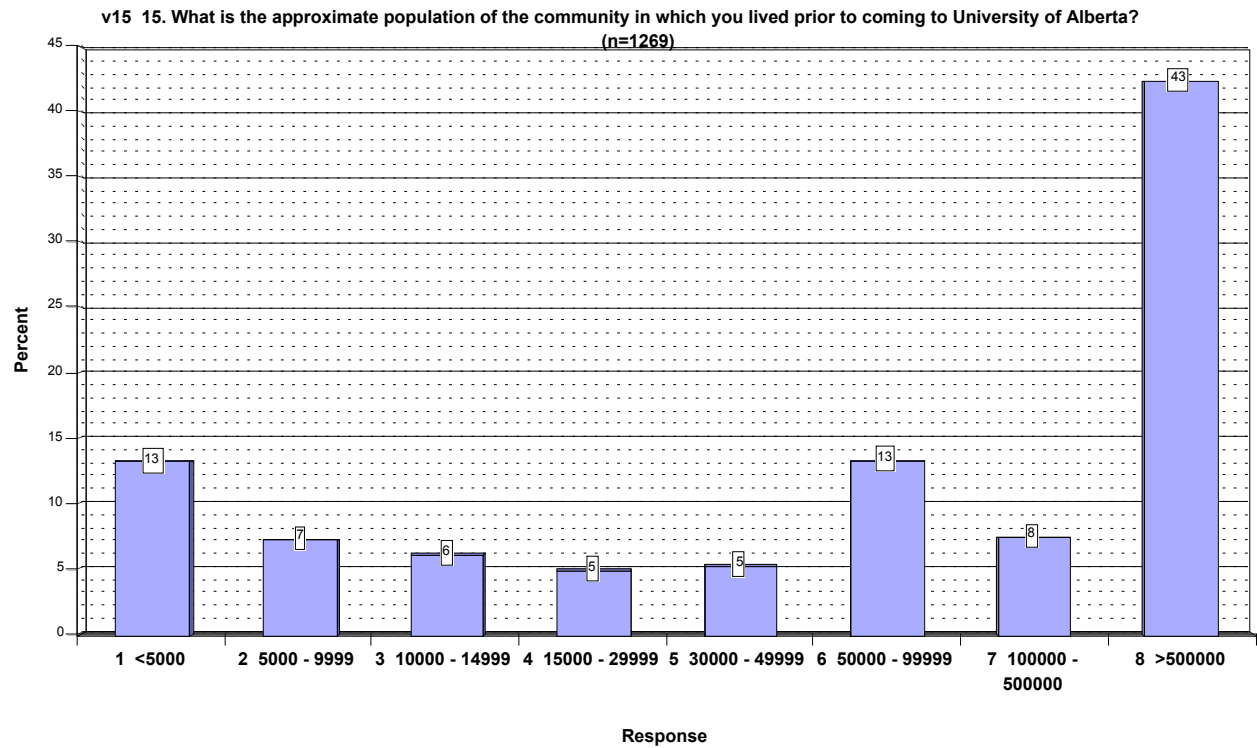
Chart 10

v14 14. Are you a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant? (n=1293)



15. What is the approximate population of the community in which you lived prior to coming to University of Alberta?

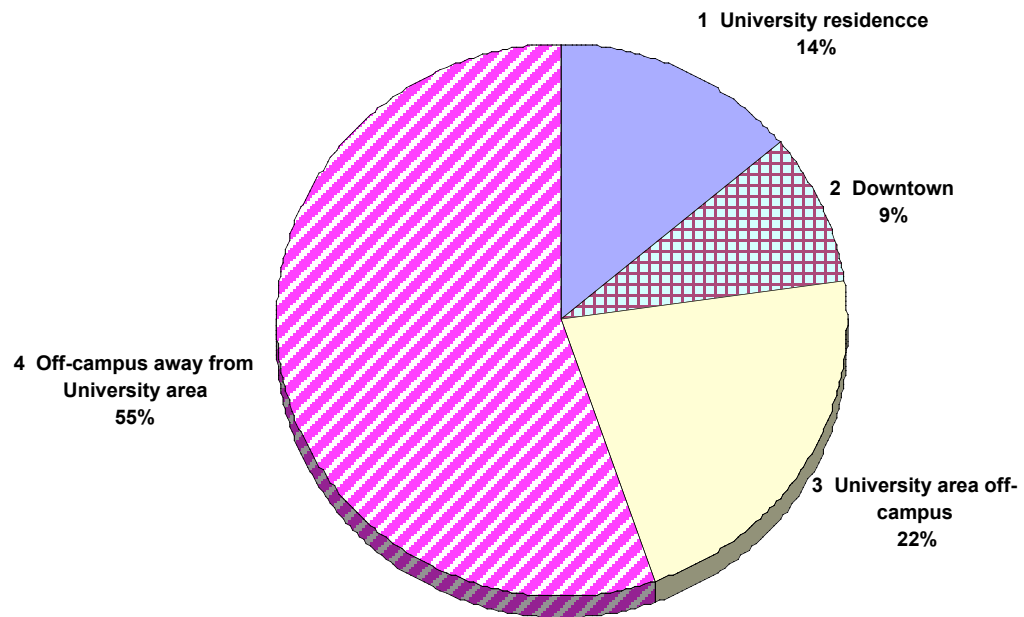
**Chart 11**



## 16. Where do you currently live?

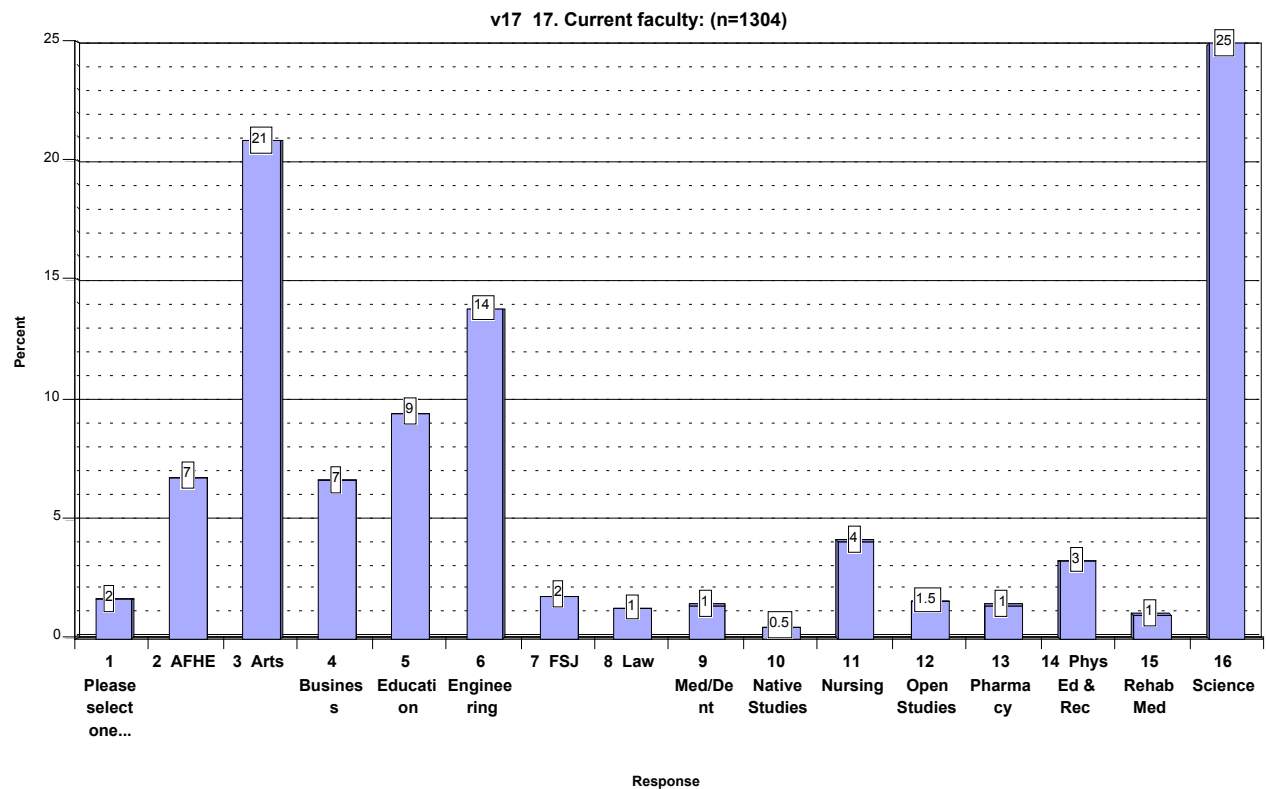
**Chart 12**

v16 16. Where do you currently live? (n=1293)



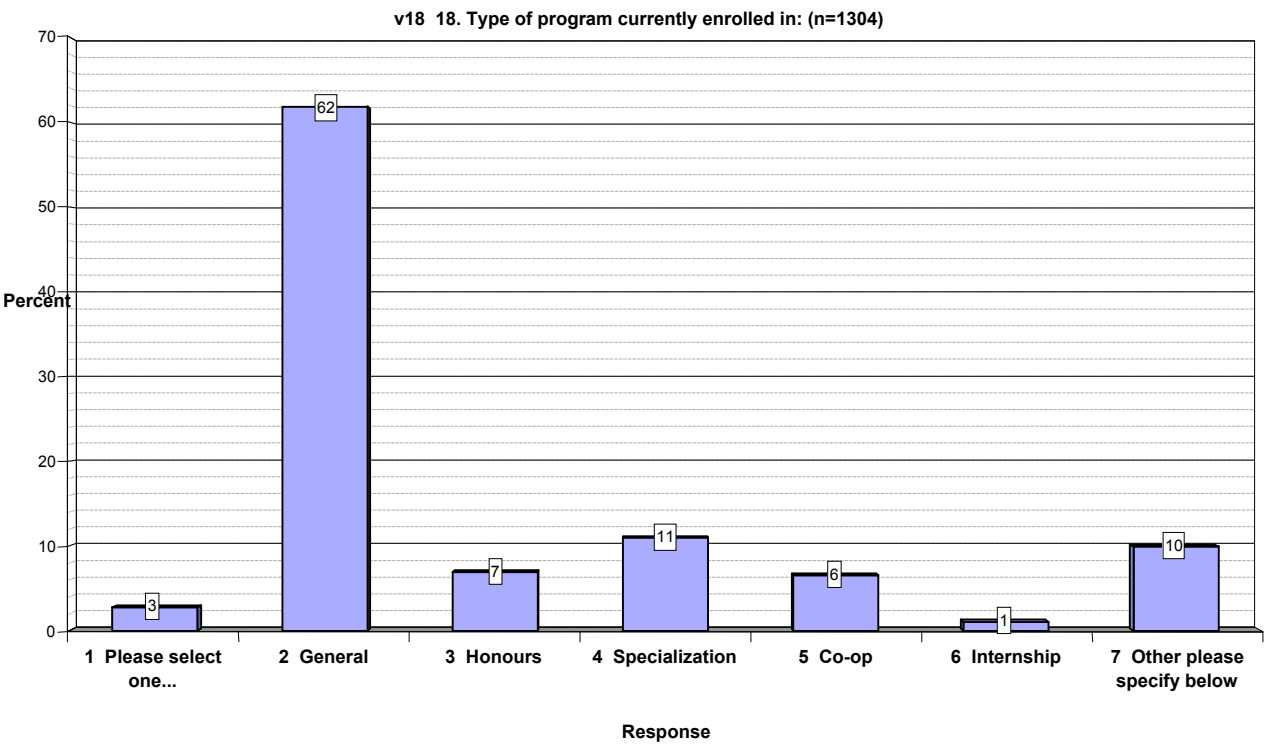
17. Current Faculty

Chart 13



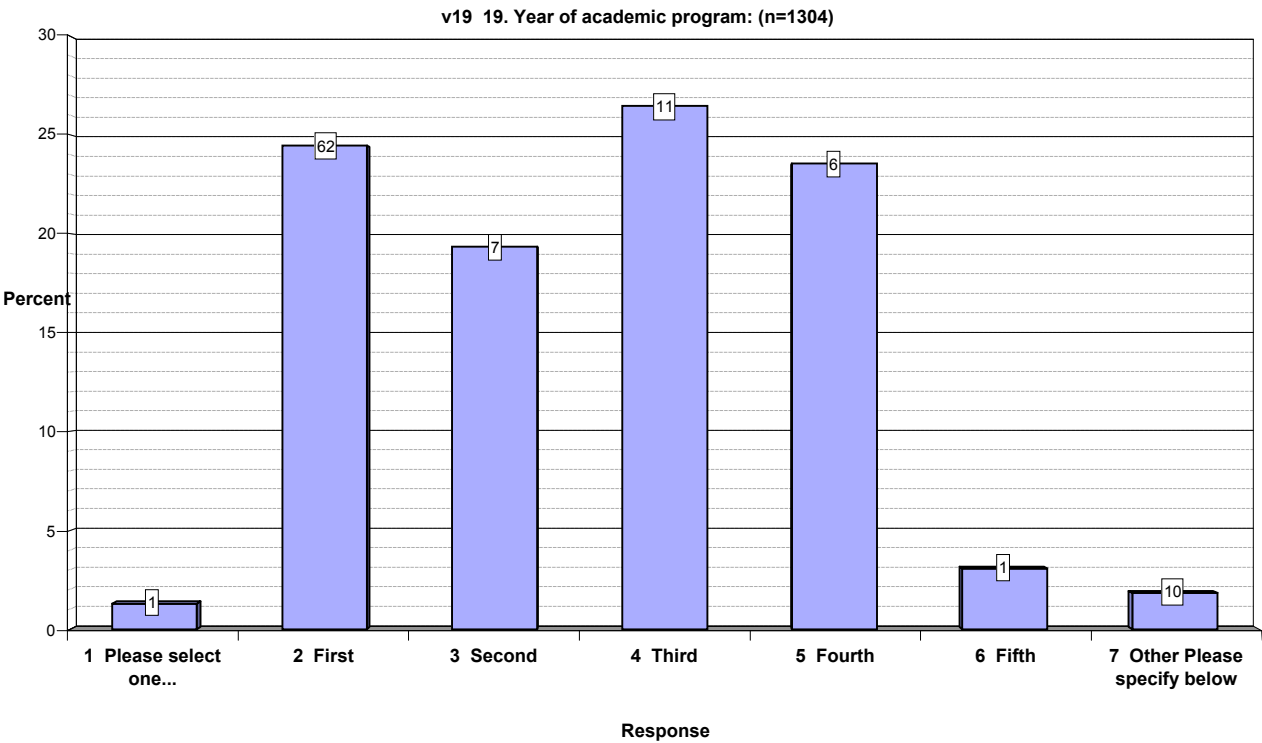
18. Type of program currently enrolled in:

Chart 14



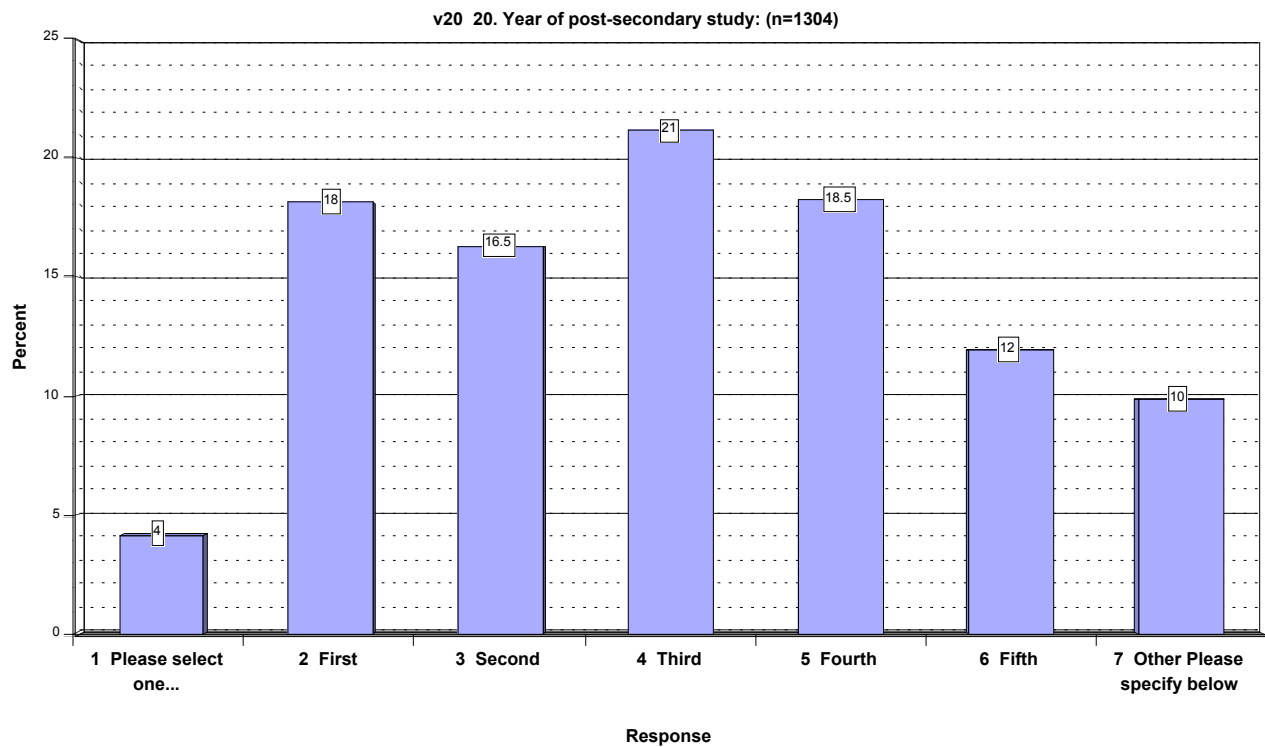
19. Year of Academic Program:

Chart 15



20. Year of post-secondary study:

Chart 16

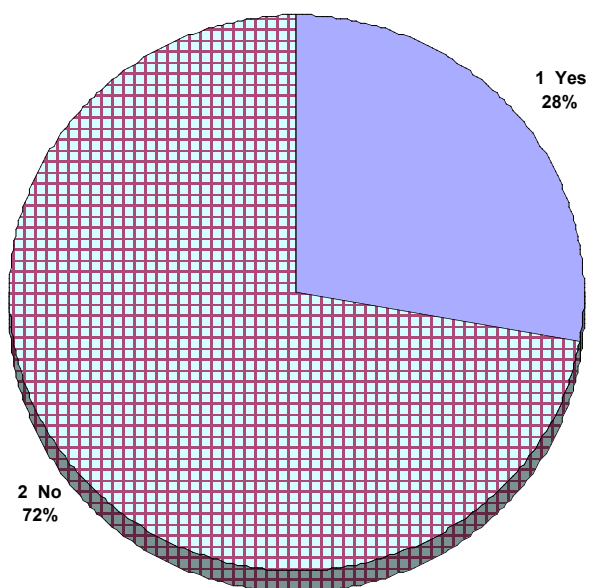




21. Did you transfer to the University of Alberta from another post-secondary institution?

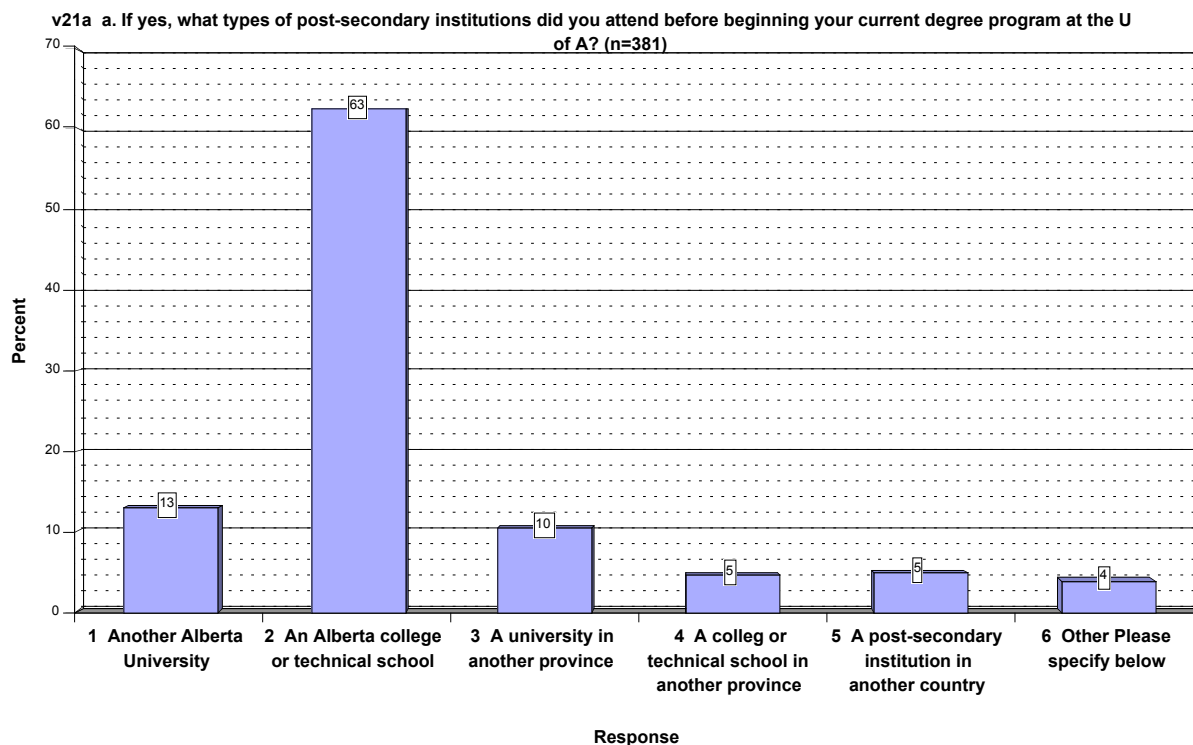
**Chart 17**

v21 21. Did you transfer to the University of Alberta from another post-secondary institution? (n=1292)



21. a) If yes, what types of post-secondary institutions did you attend before beginning your current degree program at the University of Alberta?

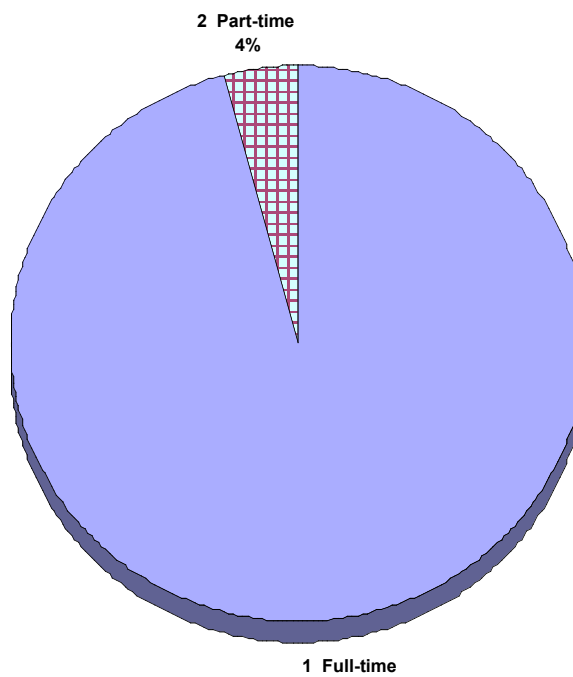
**Chart 18**



## 22. Current student status:

**Chart 19**

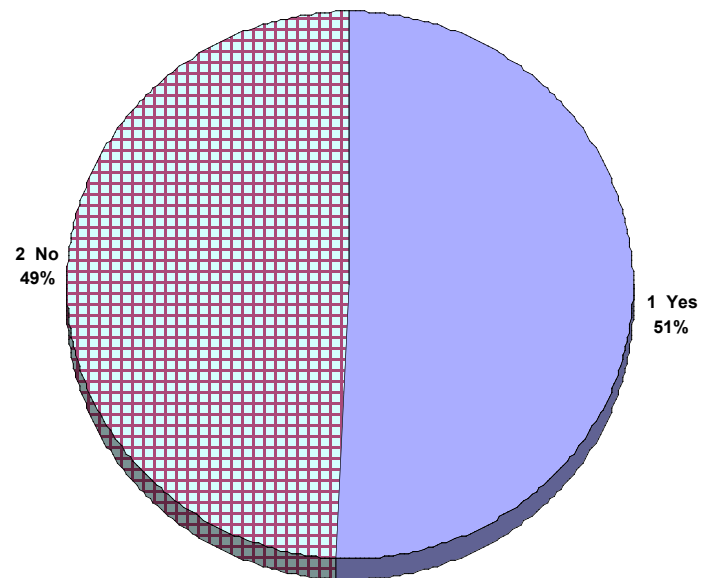
v22 22. Current student status: (n=1292)



23. Do you usually hold a paying job during the school year to help over your educational expenses?

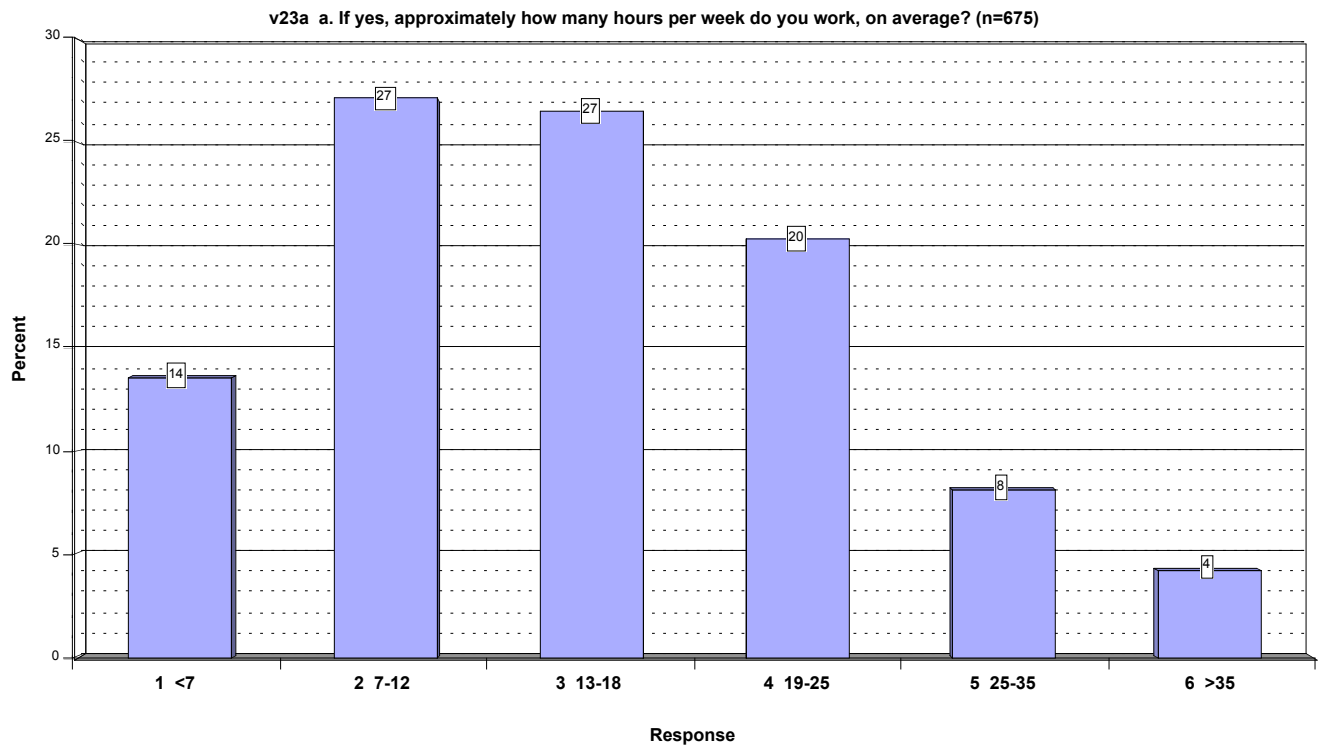
**Chart 20**

v23 23. Do you usually hold a paying job during the school year to help cover your educational expenses? (n=1290)



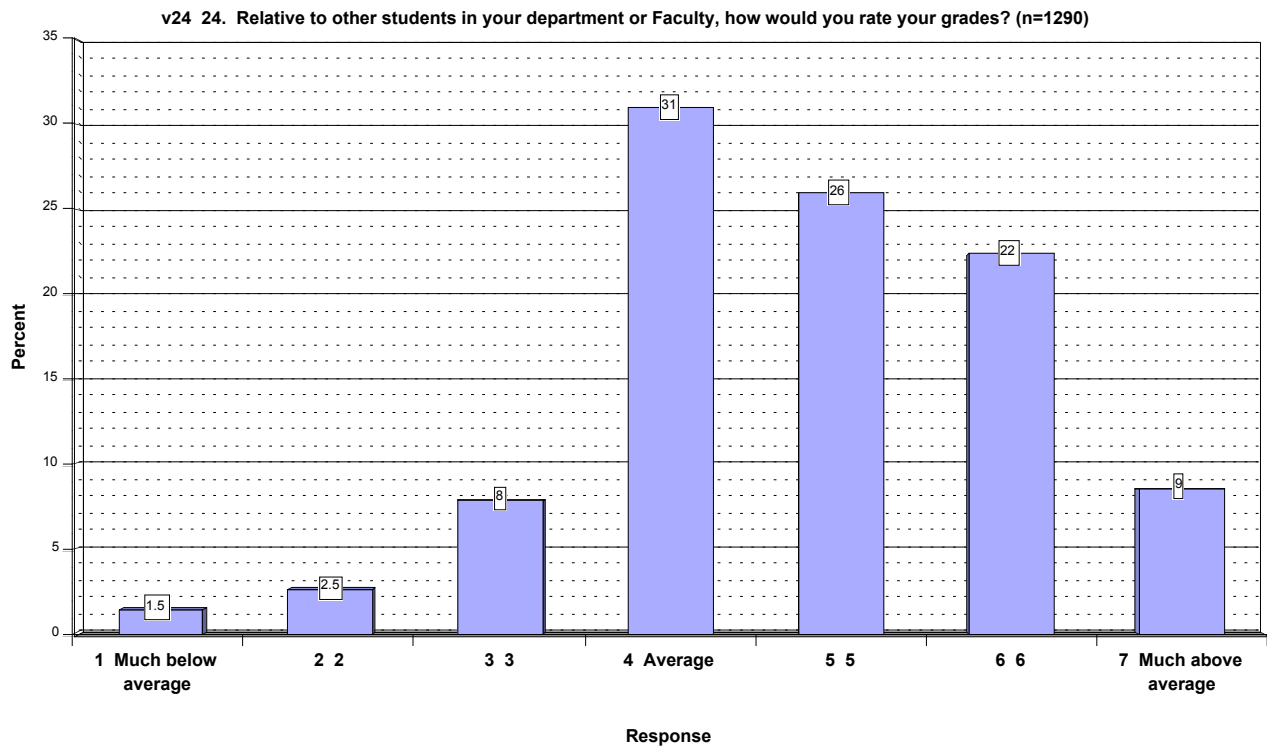
23. a) If yes, approximately how many hours per week do you work, on average?

**Chart 21**



24. Relative to other students in your department or Faculty, how would you rate your grades?

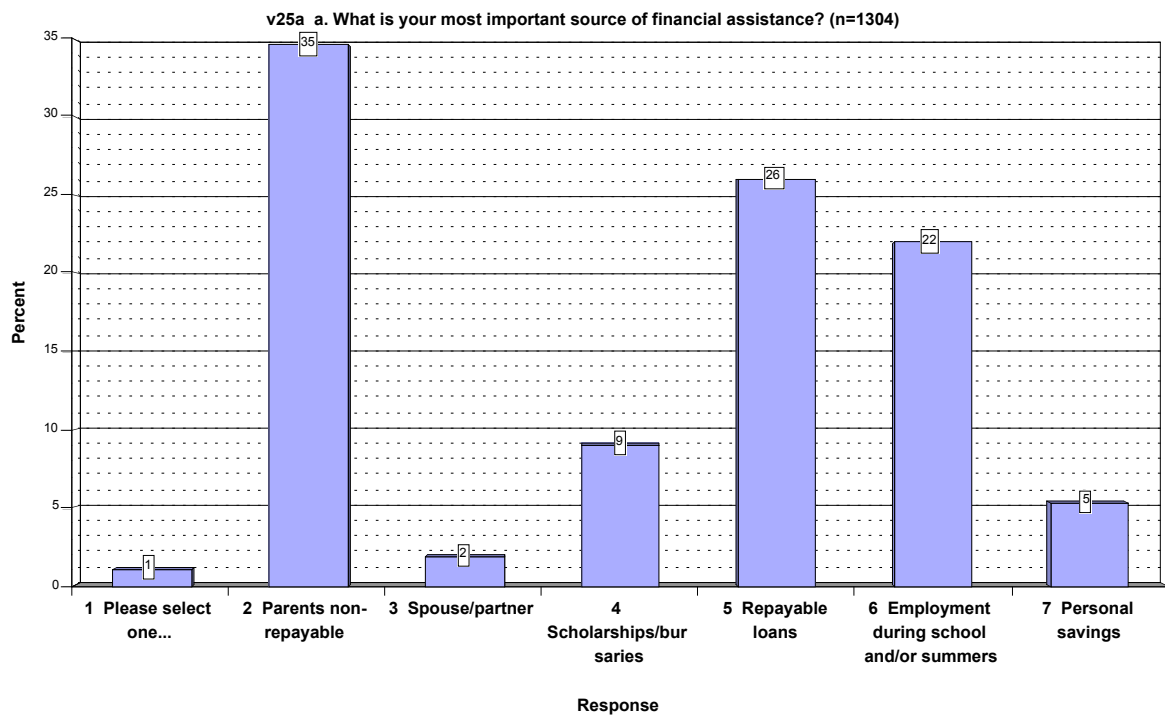
Chart 22



25. Students pay for their education in many different ways. Please rank the three main sources of financial assistance for you studies, with 1 being the largest source, and 3 being the smallest source.

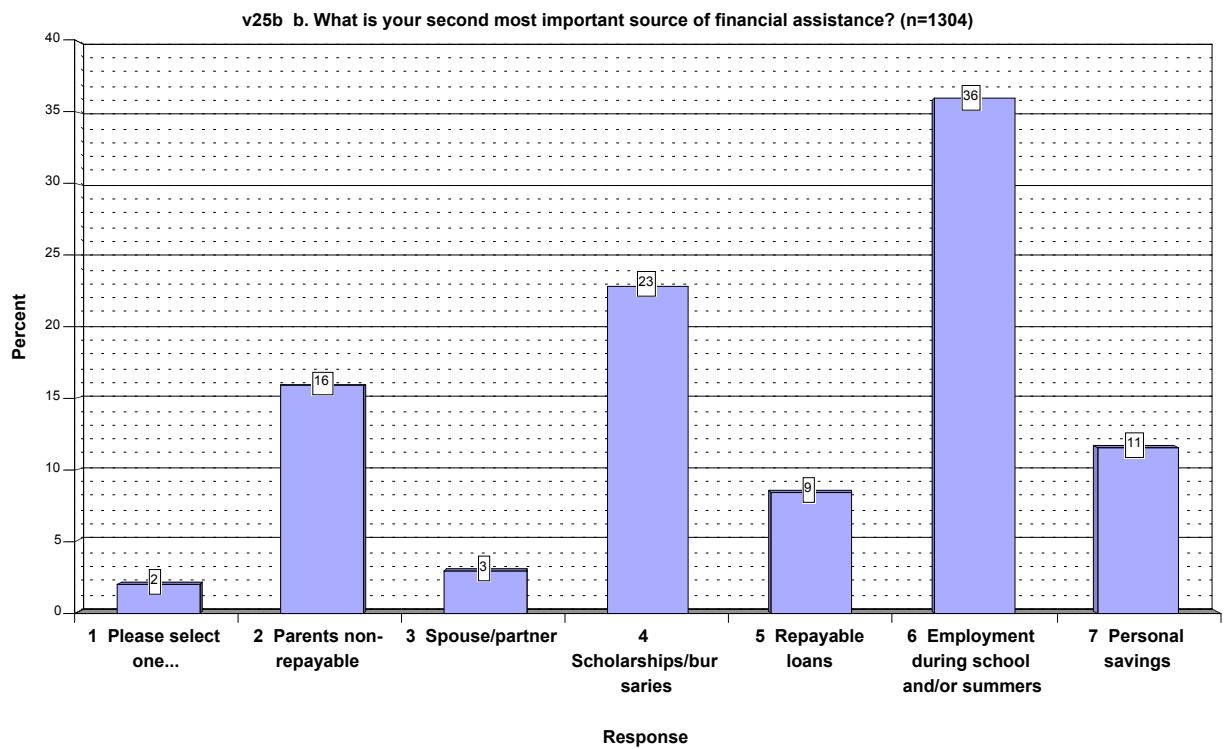
a) What is your most important source of financial assistance?

**Chart 23**



b) What is your second most important source of financial assistance?

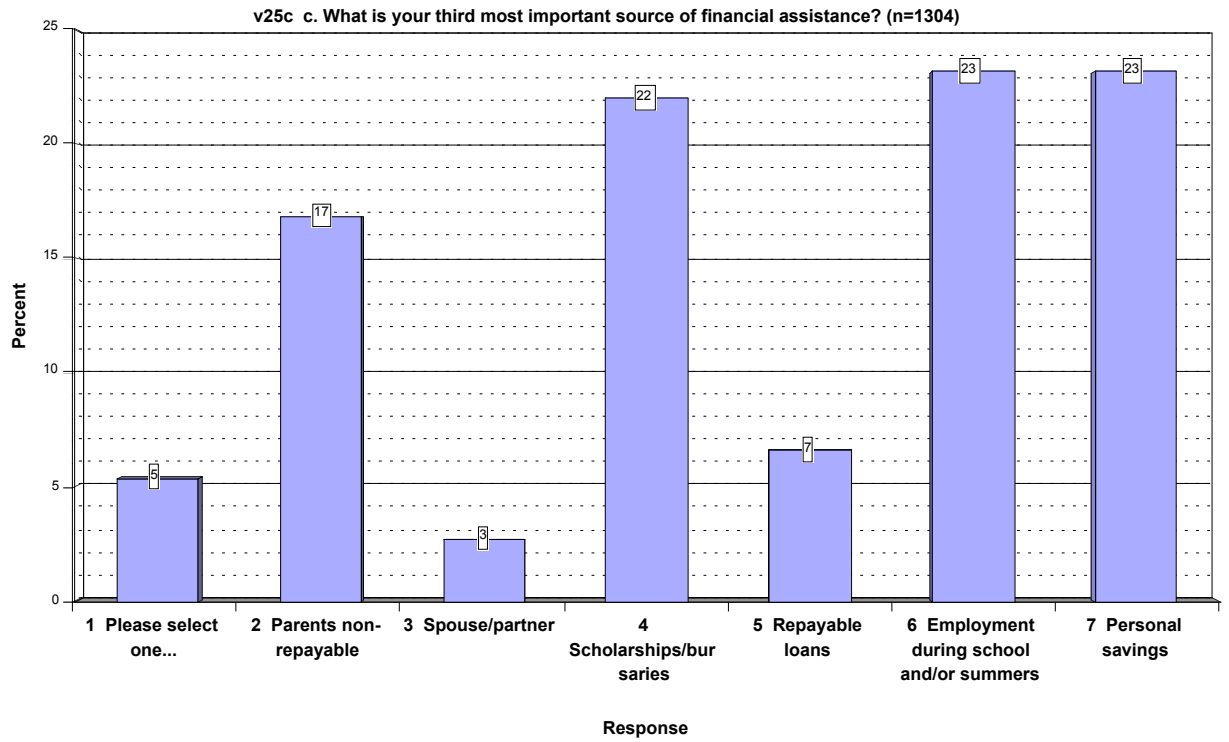
**Chart 24**





c) What is your third most important source of financial assistance?

**Chart 25**



## **C. Cross Tabs**

### **GENDER**

Not surprisingly, men and women exhibit many different tendencies and opinion on all matters, including academic. The following section will outline several pertinent distinction found between the genders in their survey answer.

#### Priorities For a Quality of Education:

*Students have a wide range of views about what constitutes a high quality of education. What factors have the highest priority in your idea of what makes a university education high quality? Please rate each item below using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low priority and 5 is very high priority.*

In terms of defining quality of education, women were far more likely than men to answer that each individual area was either a High Priority (4) or a Very High Priority (5). That being said, the differentiation between genders was generally not particularly significant. Some of the more notable distinctions were in women preferring smaller classroom sizes, flexible programs and degrees, positive attitudes of university student services towards the students they deal with, availability of opportunities to study abroad, the availability of high quality study space and grading systems that accurately and fairly reflect the University's high standards.

There were some important separations in which males tended to rank certain elements more highly than women. These include the opportunity to develop skills in the use of technology, appropriate use of instructional technology in the classroom and the availability of a wide selection of courses in which instructional technology is used.

#### Instructional Experiences

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.*

*a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all common and 5 is very common, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.*

*b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.*

Again, generally females were more likely to indicate that they had experienced many of the factors more commonly than their male counterparts. Some areas in which these distinction were more predominant included using: TAs effectively, using class time to expand on course notes, assigned reading and teaching concepts, and discussing research in the field of study in a way that is relevant to the course. Conversely, males selected the following experiences more frequently: Encouraging class participation, taking pride in teaching, having good communication skills and giving good feedback about their learning.

Males were more likely to rank the following statements higher than the female respondents: Good job

### Programs and Courses

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with programs and courses offered by the University of Alberta. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is do not agree at all and 5 is completely agree, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

Male respondents were more likely than females to indicate a high priority to the following statements: *Overall, my program is doing a good job of preparing me for my future career* and *My program should be more focused on the development of theoretical knowledge than is currently is*. Otherwise, both genders responded similarly for each available option.

### University of Alberta Services

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with services available at the University of Alberta to assist you in your learning. Using a scale from one to 5 where 1 is not at all satisfied and 5 is very satisfied, please rate your satisfaction with each of the following. If you have not used the service, please select N/A.*

Females were more likely to respond that the classes they needed for their degrees were not offered frequently enough, that they were satisfied with the access to online coursework and resources and that they were satisfied with the quality of assistance offered for the university's online services. Males were more likely to indicate that they were satisfied with the availability of computers used for course work.

Females are also more likely to use technology on campus than males are.

### Obstacles to a successful university career

*Students face a number of challenges throughout the course of completing their education, some of which have the potential to negatively affect their academic performance. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of how much they have negatively affected your academic success (i.e., grades, ability/motivation to complete degree, etc.) at the University of Alberta using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very much.*

Obstacles that appear to affect women more than men include the cost of tuition and textbooks, the competitive academic environment of the university, inadequate program advising, uncertainty about where to get help, and courses that try to cover too much over the course of one year.

### Demographics

#### *Faculty*

Unsurprisingly, men were more likely to be from the faculties of Engineering and science, and other professional faculties. Women were more likely to be from Arts, Education and other smaller faculties such as Nursing and Rehab med.

#### *Program Type*

Males were more likely than females to be enrolled in specialized programs such as coops, honours degrees, internships and 'others'. Females were more likely to find themselves in general programs (66% vs. 41%).

#### *Work*

Women were considerably more likely to hold a job during the school year.

#### *Grades In Relation To Their Peers*

Males were more likely to identify themselves as either being 'below average' or 'above average' in terms of their grades. Women were more likely to indicate that they considered their grades to be 'average' relative to their peers.

#### *Sources of Income*

Males are more likely to indicate that their primary source of income is employment during the summer or the school year (30% vs 18%). Females were more likely to indicate that they rely on student loans, parental support or savings.

#### *Urban Vs. Rural Background*

The males respondents were marginally more likely to come from cities.

## **Age**

For the age based crosstabulations, the various age categories have been collapsed into two major groupings: the younger demographic (21 years of age and under) and the older demographic (22 years of age and older). It is important to note here that, for the most part, the younger demographic will be in either their first or second year, whereas the older demographic is generally in third year, fourth year or above. As we will see later, the exceptions are largely students who have transferred from one institution to another.

As was the case with the gender crosstabulations, one group was more likely to consistently rank each question more favorably than the other (a 4 or a 5 on positive feedback questions and a 3 or lower on negative feedback questions). In this case, the younger demographic was more likely to respond favorably than their older counterparts. While the following section will outline only the most pertinent distinctions between the two groups, except for the most minor exceptions, this rule stands true in almost every case and can thus be inferred for responses not provided.

### **Quality Education at the University of Alberta**

- a) Overall, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience at the University of Alberta?*
- b) Specifically, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience provided in the classroom?*
- c) Specifically, how would you rate the quality of your educational experience provided outside of the classroom?*

*How would you rate the value of the education you are receiving at the University of Alberta when you consider the time and money you are investing to receive your education?*

As stated, younger students were more likely to indicate that they receive a high quality education at the University of Alberta. This was the most prominent when asked if their quality of education was an accurate reflection of the time and money they spend at the institution. (\*Find Numbers\*)

### **Priorities For A Quality Education**

*Students have a wide range of views about what constitutes a high quality of education. What factors have the highest priority in your idea of what makes a university education high quality? Please rate each item below*

*using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low priority and 5 is very high priority.*

Younger students were more likely to select the following choices as being a 'high' or a 'very high' priority (4 or a 5): Comfortable classrooms, meaningful interaction with other students,, helpful academic advising (small difference), instructors who are good teachers (small difference), extracurricular activities, and opportunities to study abroad.

Older students indicated the following as being high priorities: Classroom sizes, meaningful interaction with professors, applying knowledge to practice, developing skills in the use of technology, grading reflects high standards.

### Instructional Experiences

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.*

- a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all common and 5 is very common, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.*
- b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.*

Younger students and older students had very distinct opinions regarding the types of experiences they have had at the university of Alberta. Younger students indicated a higher level of importance for every listed quality with the exception of the following:

'motivate me to learn more', 'have good English skills', 'Use technology in class in ways that are appropriate and helpful to my learning' and 'Creates assignments and exams that test my understanding of course material and not just my ability to recall information', in which the older demographic responded more favorably.

As for the second half of the question, of the qualities listed, younger students were most likely to indicate 'take pride in teaching', 'use classtime to expand on course notes and readings', 'make an effort to interact with students', 'make an effort to interact with students', and 'demonstrate skill in teaching' as being the most important factors in a quality instructor. Older students tended to prefer: 'Creates assignments and exams that test my understanding of course material and not just my ability to recall

information' and 'take pride in teaching'. The other categories ranked fairly evenly between the two groups.

### Teaching Evaluations

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your satisfaction with the current student evaluations of teaching (Universal Student Ratings of Instruction- USRIs) at the University of Alberta. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is do not agree at all and 5 is completely agree*

Younger students are more likely to indicate that they find the current University teaching evaluation methods to be effective and satisfactory. They are also more likely to believe that they have enough time to conduct their evaluations than their older peers. In general, older students appear to be very cynical regarding the University's USRIs.

### Programs and Courses

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with programs and courses offered by the University of Alberta. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is do not agree at all and 5 is completely agree, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

Younger students were more likely to indicate that their program satisfies their needs for a university education, that they have sufficient study space on campus and that this study space is of adequate quality and that the instructional technology used in the classroom is adequate. They also indicated more frequently that they felt their teachers English skills were not satisfactory and that and that their courses cover too much material in one semester.

On the other hand, older students responded that they feel that their programs should be more focused on practical and applicable knowledge than they currently are and that there is a lack of consistence in the grading system from one class to another. However, they indicated that they also feel that their programs meet the needs they have for a university education.

### Obstacles to Education

*Students face a number of challenges throughout the course of completing their education, some of which have the potential to negatively affect their academic performance. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of how much they have negatively affected your academic success (i.e., grades, ability/motivation to complete degree, etc.) at the University of Alberta using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very much.*

The different age groups also indicated that they had different obstacles that impede their education. The older demographic distinctly responded more highly than their younger peers. They identified, with greater frequency, the following obstacles as being particularly problematic: working during the school year, the rising cost of tuition, the cost of textbooks and course related materials, the size of classrooms, the negative attitudes displayed by some university staff members towards students, and the overwhelming feeling of being insignificant and not cared about by the University.

## Demographics

### *Rural vs. Urban*

Younger students tended to come from rural regions. (23% vs. 16.9%)

### *Residence Type*

Younger students are more likely to live in residence, older students are more likely to live downtown or away from campus- the majority of both populations are from the university area.

### *Program Type*

Younger respondents more likely to be in honours, specialization, internships, coops. Older students were more likely to select "other"

### *Year of Study*

The majority of younger students were in first, second or third year. The majority of older students were in third or fourth year.

### *Transfer*

Younger students were far less likely to have transferred from another post-secondary institution than their older counterparts. 85.8% of younger students indicated that they had not transferred compared to 52.8% of older students. A total of 47.2% of older students responded that they were transfer students.

### *Full Time vs. Part Time Studies*

Older students are more likely to be part time students.

### *Work During the School Year*

Younger students are more likely to have part time jobs: (54% compared to 42.3%)

Younger students are less likely to work more hours than older students. 46.7% of younger students work 12 hours or less compared 33.8% of older students.



### *Sources of Financial Support*

Younger students are more likely to select parents non-repayable (43.1% vs. 23.6%) and Scholarships and Bursaries (12.8% vs. 4%). Older students are more likely to select Repayable loans (36.8% vs. 19.1%) Younger students are also more likely to indicate scholarships and bursaries as their secondary source (29.7% vs. 14.3%)

### *Faculty Type*

Younger students are more likely to be from Academic faculties (58%) and older students are more likely to be from professional faculties 60.9%

### *Program Type*

Younger students are more likely to be from General programs (65.9%) and older students are more likely to be from Not General programs (39.6%).

### *Year of academic program*

(61% of younger students are in the introductory years of their academic careers (first and second year) and 81.4% of older respondents are from senior level years (third year and above), with 11% being in fifth year or higher.

### ***Population Size (Urban vs. Rural)***

There was very little distinction in the opinions held by students coming from urban populations and those from rural backgrounds. There are, however, a few key areas in of interest that must be noted.

The Urban and Rural categories have been re-categorized from several more specific categories. Any person coming from a population region of less than 10,000 people has been classified as being from a rural are. Subsequently, urban areas include populations from anywhere above 10,000,

### *Instructional Experiences*

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.*

- a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all common and 5 is very common, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.*
- b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.*

Students from urban areas were more likely to indicate certain instructional trends that make for a quality instructor. They were more likely to select: 'taking pride in their teaching', 'possess a thorough knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching', 'motivate me to learn more', and 'appropriately balance mid term and final examinations'. Urban students were also more likely to indicated that courses try to cover too much during the term (63.6% vs. 57.1%)

On the other hand, rural students are more likely to indicate that strong English skills are necessary to a quality instructor.

#### Sources of Financial Assistance

Rural students are more likely to indicate that they rely on non-repayable student loans as their primary source of financial assistance than their urban peers ((31.3% vs. 25.1%).

Rural students are also more likely to indicate that they rely on employment during school and/or summer as their secondary source of income (41.7% vs. 35.2%).

#### Transfer Students

Rural transfer students were more likely to indicate that their first institution was in Alberta (84.9% vs. 73.1%) and, of transfer students, rural student were most likely to transfer from technical institutions (78.1% vs. 64.5%)

#### Demographics

There are a few demographic trends that should be noted in this report.

##### *Age*

Students over the age of 30 are considerably more likely to be from urban communities. Rural students are more likely to be under the age of 21 (66.2% vs. 57.1%). Rural students are more likely to be under the age of 21 (66.2% vs. 57.1%)

##### *Transfer Students*

Rural transfer students were more likely to indicate that their first institution was in Alberta (84.9% vs. 73.1%) and, of transfer students, rural student were most likely to transfer from technical institutions (78.1% vs. 64.5%).

##### *Landed Immigrant status*

Of the students that declared themselves to not be landed immigrants, the majority hailed from urban areas.

##### *Population Size of home community*

53% of urban students indicated that they were from communities with over 50000 people.

### *Residence type and location*

Urban students are more likely to live off campus away from the university area (59.9% vs. 34.7%) Rural students are also more likely to live in residence. (19.7% vs. 12.7%)

### *Work During the Academic Year*

Urban students are more likely to work during the school year (54.3% vs. 36.3%). Rural students are less likely to work during the school year and, moreover, are less likely to indicate work as being an obstacle to their education (28.2% vs 41%)

### *Primary Sources of Financing*

Urban students are more likely to indicate the following as being their primary sources of financial assistance: parents (36.4 for urban students vs.9.7 of rural students).

They are also more likely to indicate the following as being their secondary source of financial assistance: Scholarships and Bursaries (24.6/19.3).

Rural students are more likely to indicate that they rely on non-repayable student loans (31.3% vs. 25.1%) as their primary source of financial assistance. They are also more likely to indicate that they rely on employment during school and/or summer as their secondary source of income (41.7% vs. 35.2%)

## **Type of Faculty**

Faculties were separated into two distinct types of faculties: Academic and Professional. The major distinction between the two is the necessity for a pre-professional year of study before entry into the faculty, and or other requirements such as an examination (LSAT, MCAT, etc.) The most important exception to this rule are the faculties of Engineering, Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, and Nursing which, even though they accepts students in their first year, are considered professional degrees due to the type of structure their programs function in. Thus, the Academic faculties include Arts, Science, Campus Saint-Jean, Native Studies and Open Studies, and the professional faculties include Business, Law, Medicine and Dentistry, Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics, Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physical Education and Recreation, and Rehabilitation Medicine.

In general, students from Academic faculties are more like to respond favourably towards the university and the experiences that they have had there. This collaborates the finding that are based on aged, since many of the Academic faculty respondents were also among the younger demographic.

In questions regarding satisfaction with the University as a whole and their academic experience, while both groups were likely to indicate a relatively high level of satisfaction, students from

Academic faculties have certain concerns that have been clearly outlined, particularly in terms of their particular programs responding to their needs- for this reason, all program related concerns have been included together rather than separately, in order to best represent these feelings as a whole.

On the other hand, students from Professional faculties appear to be more concerned about the effectiveness of the University's teaching evaluation system and were considerably less likely to indicate a high level of satisfaction with it. This section will focus largely on these two areas, along with other pertinent data that distinguishes the two groups.

#### Program Experiences and Concerns

Students from Academic faculties are more likely to indicate that flexibility in their program is of a high priority (35.5% of Academic faculty students indicated that this was a 5 on the 5 scale vs. 23.7% of Professional faculty students.) Academic faculty students also noted that the opportunity to do research was of a high priority, with 23.8% of them selecting a 5 on the 5 scale, compared to only 11.2% of Professional faculty students. Academic students appear to be more concerned with the availability of opportunities to study abroad with 41.3% indicating either a 4 or a 5 level priority, compared to 32.6% of Professional Faculty students. Academic students were more likely to indicate the need for quality study space on campus with 69.8% ranking as a high or a very high priority (4 or 5) versus 61.9% of Professional students.

In terms of evaluating the quality of their teachers, Academic students were more likely to state that the most common experiences they had with their professors were: availability of their professors outside of the classroom, show respect for their students, effective use of Teaching Assistants, possession of good communication skills, use of classroom time to expand on notes and concepts covered in course materials, discuss research in the field in a relevant manner, show enthusiasm for the subjects they teach, have good English skills, use the grading scheme fairly, appropriately balance the difficulty of the mid term and final examinations and, create assignments and exams that accurately reflect the course content. Interestingly enough, for many of the headings that Academic students ranked as being more common, Professional students ranked as being more important such as strong English skills, showing respect for their students and accurately reflecting course content in exams and assignments.

On the other hand, Professional faculty students are more likely to indicate that the need for their program to prepare them for a future career was of a high priority, with 73.9% selecting a 5 on the 5 scale, compared to 64.5% of Academic students. They equally indicated that the need for opportunities to apply knowledge into practice was very high (59.1% of Professional students ranked it a 5, vs. 45.2% of Academic students) and that their courses must be relevant to, and prepare them for a future career (73.3% vs. 61.2%). While both groups indicated a high priority to developing skills in the use of technology, Professional students ranked it higher (69.9% vs. 60.5%). They generally indicated that the list various experiences they had had with teachers were less common to them than to Academic students. However, for the most part, where Academic students indicated a very high level of 5 responses, the Professional students ranked a high level of 4 responses, which may indicate that they are not as far behind as it may appear.

Academic students were also more likely to indicate that they are satisfied with the opportunity they have to take courses that they want to take for their own personal interest with 51.6% selecting a 4 or a 5, compared to 39.4% of Professional students. However, Professional students

were marginally more likely to indicate that their program meets their needs for a University education and were considerably more likely to indicate that their program is doing a good job of preparing them for their future career (64.4% vs. 38.7%).

Academic students were more concerned with the availability of classes required for the completion of their program. 52.1 either strongly or very strongly agreed that the courses they need are not offered often enough. Only 38.8% of Professional faculty students agreed with that sentiment. Academic students are equally less satisfied with the availability of practical experience programs in their fields. Only 29.2% indicated a strong or very strong satisfaction level, compared to 57.1% of their Professional faculty counterparts.

51.2% of Academic students indicated that they are certain or very certain of what they would like their future career to be upon graduation. This is significantly lower than the Professional Faculty students, where 68% responded favourably.

#### Teaching Evaluations

As stated, Academic students appear to be more satisfied with the current teaching evaluation system than their Professional faculty peers; 44.8% of them ranked their satisfaction level at a four or a 5 versus 36.1% of professional students. Moreover, they are more likely to strongly agree that the USRIs are designed to allow them to adequately express their views on

the teaching skills of their instructors (46.4% vs. 37.5%) and to believe that USRIs have an impact on improving teaching (28.4% vs. 22.7%). It should, however, be noted that for this final question, neither group was particularly inclined to “strongly agree” with the statement. Only 6% of Academic faculty students selected a 5 on the scale, along with 4% of Professional faculty students.

### Space and Services

While both groups of students appear to be satisfied with the amount of study space on campus and the availability of computers to do coursework, the Academic students responded slightly more favourably. Both groups responded almost identically in terms of satisfaction with the currently library hours, and this satisfaction was quite high. Both groups were equally highly satisfied with the availability of quality assistance for the use of technology outside of the classroom.

### Obstacles to their Educational Experience

Both Academic and Professional students seemed concerned about each of the obstacles listed. However, Academic students were more likely to indicate the following as being greater impediments to their learning: lack of connection with students, inadequate program advising, uncertainty about where to get help with questions or problems, lack of support for involvement in extracurricular activities, lack of engagement. The most important distinctions between the two groups were in the areas of Academic Advising, which 40.5% of Academic students indicated was a high or a very high obstacle (compared to only 28.8% of Professional students), and being unsure about where to get help with questions or problems (42.5% vs. 29.5%).

Professional students were more likely to indicate that their Instructors of TAs’ poor English skills were an obstacle to their learning (52.8% vs. 44.2%). Also, they were concerned about having courses in which it is unclear how it is relevant to their degree (50.9% vs. 44.7%).

### Demographics

#### *Age and Year of Program*

Unsurprisingly, students from Academic faculties tended to be younger. This is largely due to the fact that many professional faculties require a pre-professional year before entry. 68.4% of students under the age of 21 were enrolled in Academic faculties, compared to 50.1%. Moreover, students in Academic faculties were more likely to be in the introductory years of their program. 50.5% of Academic faculty students were in their first two years of studies, compared to 38.5% of Professional faculty students.

### *Program Type*

People from academic faculties were more likely to indicate that they were enrolled in honours programs, and in general programs and less likely to indicate that they were in specialization, coop, internship or other. Thus, students from Academic faculties were more likely to indicate that they were enrolled in Academic Specialized fields (29.7% vs. 6.6%), and those from professional faculties were more likely to indicate that they were enrolled in Practical Specialized or Other types of programs (31.2% vs. 5.2%)

### *Work During The Academic Year*

Students from Academic faculties were more likely to indicate that they had a job during the school year (55.6% vs. 45.7%)

## **Type of Program (General vs. Non-General)**

*Q3- Students have a wide range of views about what constitutes a high quality of education. What factors have the highest priority in your idea of what makes a university education high quality? Please rate each item below using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low priority and 5 is very high priority.*

### Priorities for a Quality Education

Students who are enrolled in non-general programs are more likely to indicate that they feel that their quality of education is High (4) or Very High (5) (47.6% vs. 39.6%).

Respondents from non-general programs are also more likely to indicate that the "opportunity to do research", "apply knowledge to practice" as being high priorities for a quality education. Conversely, students from general programs are more likely assign a high priority to having comfortable and spacious classrooms and quality study space as being high priorities.

### Instructional Experiences

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.*

*a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all common and 5 is very common, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.*

*b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.*

While both program types were likely to respond that many of the listed experiences were relatively common, there were some substantial distinctions in terms of what they identified as being the most important factors in determining whether or not someone is a good teacher.

Students from General programs are more likely to indicate “encourage class participation”, “encourage class participation”, “encourage feedback from students”, “have good English skills” and “appropriately balance the weight of the final and midterm examinations” as being the most important factors in a good teacher.

Students from Non-General programs are more likely to indicate “take pride in teaching” and “Discuss research in the field of study that is relevant to the course material” as being the most important factors in determining what makes a good teacher.

### Programs and Courses

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with programs and courses offered by the University of Alberta. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is do not agree at all and 5 is completely agree, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.*

Students from general programs are more likely to indicate that they agree with the following statements: “my program gives me sufficient opportunity to take courses I want for my own interest” (48.1% vs. 40.5%) and “my program should be more focused on the development of practical skills than it currently is” (54.5% vs. 51.4%).

Students from non-general programs are more likely to indicate that they agree with the following statements: “overall, my program is doing a good job of preparing me for my future career” and “I am satisfied with the opportunities available to me to apply what I am learning through practical experience” (50.2% vs. 38.5%).

### Certainty about Future Career

General faculty students appear to be more uncertain about their future career than their non-general counterparts. When asked: *How certain are you about what you would like your future profession/occupation to be when*



*you complete your University degree?*, 56.9% of general students indicated that they were certain (4) or very certain (5), compared to 65.5% of non-general students.

### Obstacles to a successful university career

*Students face a number of challenges throughout the course of completing their education, some of which have the potential to negatively affect their academic performance. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of how much they have negatively affected your academic success (i.e., grades, ability/motivation to complete degree, etc.) at the University of Alberta using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very much.*

General students are more likely to indicate the following as being important or very important obstacles to their education: Cost of tuition (58.3% vs. 49.3%), cost of textbooks (61% vs. 52.1%), competitive academic environment (41.9% vs. 34.1%), large class size (38.8% vs. 27.8%), Inadequate program advising or assisting in selecting courses (39.2% vs. 27.7%), uncertain about where to get help with problems or questions (39.5% vs. 29.7%), inadequate help with technology related problems (12% vs. 8.7%), feeling insignificant or not cared about by the University (43.9% vs. 36.3%), lack of engagement in classes (36.4% vs. 27.6%), and courses that try to cover too much material during the term (65.6% vs. 46.1%).

### Demographics

#### *Work During the Academic Year*

Students who are enrolled in general programs are more likely to work during the school year than students who are enrolled in non-general programs. Of the students that responded that they work during the academic year, 52.6% were from general programs, compared to 47.1% from non-general programs.

#### *Grades Relative to Peers*

Students in non-general programs were significantly more likely to respond that their grades were above the average. 50.1% of general students selected responses that were above the "average" (5, 6, or 7 on a 7 scale), compared to 69.2% of non-general students. This is not surprising since many non-general programs have higher standards for acceptance and for maintaining specialized programs, honors and co-ops.

#### *Primary Sources of Financing*

Students from general programs are more likely to rely on their parents as their primary financial source (38.4% vs. 28.6%). Conversely, non-general students are more likely to indicate that they support themselves primarily

through work during the summer and the academic year (27.3% vs. 19.7%).

#### *Gender*

Women are more likely to be enrolled in general programs than males (68.0% vs. 61.2%). Males are more numerous in specialized fields (38.8% vs. 32%).

#### *Age/Year of Program*

People enrolled in non-general faculties tend to be older than those enrolled in general ones (44.7% vs. 39%). Moreover, non-general students are more likely to be part of the older demographic (61.4% vs. 52.6%). In fact, 8.5% of non-general students are in their fifth year or above. This is, again, likely due to the fact that many non-general programs require one full year of study before entry. Thus, any first year student is unlikely to be in a specialized program.

#### **Year of Study**

In this section, Introductory level students will be those who are in their first or second year of study. Those who are in their third year or above will be referred to as Senior level students.

#### **Priorities For a Quality of Education:**

*Students have a wide range of views about what constitutes a high quality of education. What factors have the highest priority in your idea of what makes a university education high quality? Please rate each item below using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very low priority and 5 is very high priority.*

Overall, Introductory level students were more likely to indicate that they were satisfied with the quality of education offered by the University of Alberta. On a 7 scale, where 1 is the lowest quality possible and 7 is the highest, 45.7% of Introductory students selected a 6 or a 7, compared to 40% of Senior level students.

When considering the quality and the value of the University in relation to its cost, Introductory students were once again more likely to indicate that they were satisfied with the University of Alberta. 22.1% of Introductory level students indicated a 6 or a 7, compared to 20.3% of Senior level students.

In considering their priorities for a quality education, Introductory students were more likely to select the following: Accurate and helpful academic advising (89.6% vs, 84.1%) and availability of quality study space (69.1%

vs. 63.2%). Otherwise, the two groups answered each question relatively similarly.

### Instructional Experiences

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your experiences with your instructors (professor, sessional instructors, graduate students, etc.) at the University of Alberta.*

*a) Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all common and 5 is very common, please rate how common it is for your instructors at the U of A to exemplify each of the following characteristics.*

*b) Please then select the 5 statements that reflect the characteristics that are most important to you in determining whether or not you consider someone to be a good teacher.*

Introductory students were more likely to indicate the following choices as being very common experiences: "takes pride in teaching", "use TAs effectively", "shows enthusiasm for what they are teaching", "returns assignments and exams to students within an acceptable period of time" and "uses grading scheme fairly".

Introductory students were equally more likely to indicate that the following traits should be considered the "most important" in determining a good teacher: "encourage class participation",

"use class time to expand on notes and readings" and "appropriately balance difficulty of midterm and final exams".

Senior students were more likely to indicate the following choices as being very common experiences: "discusses research in the field of study in a way that is relevant to the course material", "motivates me to learn more" and "has good English language skills".

Senior students were also more likely to indicate that the following traits should be considered the "most important" in determining a good teacher: "shows respect for students" and "creates assignments and exams that test my understanding of course material and not just my ability to recall information".

### Teaching Evaluations

*The following questions ask you to evaluate your satisfaction with the current student evaluations of teaching (Universal Student Ratings of Instruction- USRIs) at the University of Alberta. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is do not agree at all and 5 is completely agree*

Overall, Introductory level students appear to be more satisfied with the current teaching evaluation system. 47.5% of them indicated a 4 or a 5 (on a 5 point scale), compared to 34.6% of Senior level students. They equally indicated that they are more likely to feel that these evaluations accurately reflect their feelings about an instructor or a course (47.7% chose a 4 or a 5 vs. 37.1%) and that USRIs have an impact on improving teaching (31.1% vs. 20.8%). It is important to note that, at the time of this survey, first year students would have only filled out one USRI evaluation.

### Programs and Courses

While Introductory level students were more likely to respond that their program suited their needs and that their program was suitably preparing them for their future career the difference between the two groups was marginal. However, when asked whether their program should be more focused on the development of practical skills than it currently is, the Senior level clearly indicated that they agreed far more than their Introductory counterparts. 57.3% of Senior level students responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, compared to 48.4% of first and second year students. Senior students also indicated that they had a marginally higher level of certainty about their future careers.

### Space and Services

Introductory students were more likely to indicate that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of study space on campus (74.9% vs. 63.5%). They were also more likely to indicate being 'very satisfied' with the availability of computers on campus (29.1% vs. 20.9%). However, Senior level students were more likely to spend time on campus using this technology (14.3% vs. 8.3%)

### Obstacles to Education

*Students face a number of challenges throughout the course of completing their education, some of which have the potential to negatively affect their academic performance. Please rate each of the following factors in terms of how much they have negatively affected your academic success (i.e., grades, ability/motivation to complete degree, etc.) at the University of Alberta using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all and 5 is very much.*

Introductory students were more likely to indicate the following obstacles as being high impediments to their academic careers: "competitive academic environment" (42.3% vs. 35.8%) and "lack of connection with other students" (28% vs. 20.5%),

Senior levels were more likely to select the following obstacles as being the most difficult to face during their academic career: "working a job during the

school year" (40.4% vs.33.6%), and "inadequate program advising and assistance" (37.5% vs. 31.8%),

## Demographics

### *Age*

Senior level students are considerably more likely to be over the age of 21 than Introductory level students (59.7% vs. 17.%)

### *Residence Type*

Introductory students are more likely to live in residence than Senior level students (21.9% vs. 7.8%).

### *Program Type*

Introductory students are more likely to be enrolled in an introductory level program than Senior level students (68.2% vs. 59.9%)

### *Transfer Students*

Senior level students are more likely to have transferred to the University of Alberta than Introductory level students (36.4% vs 16.7%)

### *Work During the Academic Year*

Senior level students are more likely to work during the academic year than Introductory level students (58.5% vs. 41%)

### *Primary Sources of Financing*

Introductory students are more likely to rely on the following as their primary form of financing: parents (39.8% vs. 31.4%) and scholarships and bursaries (14.9% vs. 4.6%). Senior level students are more likely to indicate relying on repayable loans (31% vs. 20.5%) and employment during school/summer (25.5% vs. 18.1%).

Introductory students are more likely to rely on the following as their secondary form of financing: parents (18.5% vs. 14.6%) and scholarships and bursaries (30.5% vs. 17.8%).

Senior level students are more likely to indicate relying on employment during the summer months (42.6% vs. 29.4%)

### *Faculty*

57.2% of Introductory students come from Academic faculties, compared to 45.1% of Senior level students. Conversely, 54.9% of Senior level students come from Professional faculties, compared to 42.8% of Introductory level students.

### *Program type*

Introductory students are more likely to be enrolled in general programs (68.2% vs. 59.9%).

### *Grades Relative to Peers*

Senior students are more likely to indicate that they have above average grades (60.2% vs. 53.2%)

## **Grades Relative to Peers**

Unsurprisingly, students who perform better at the University of Alberta, are more likely to look upon it favorably. The following section will expose this truth- it will simultaneously attempt to identify what types of students make for "above average" students academically. Certainly, various factors influence this- not the least of which is individual capacity- however, there are also certain trends that may lead us to believe that being a strong student is more complex than simple intelligence.

Students will be classified into three categories for the following section: respondents who ranked their grades as being "below average" (a 1, 2, or 3 on the seven point scale), those who ranked themselves as being "average" (a 3 on the seven point scale) and those who ranked themselves as being "above average". These are, of course, self-identified titles, and therefore not completely reliable in terms of how each respondent actually performs academically. They will, nonetheless, provide us with a strong guideline to examine them by.

### Quality of Education

As stated, the stronger the student, the more satisfaction they display with the University. Thus, those who best rated the quality of education at the University of Alberta were the above average students, with 47.2% indicating a 6 or a 7 on the seven point scale. Second came the average students, with 39.1% indicating high satisfaction, and lastly came the below average students with 31% responding with high satisfaction.

When asked to rate the quality of education in the classroom, again the same trend appears, with 37.6% of above average students, 27.7% of average students, and 21.3% of below average students indicating a high to very level of satisfaction.

In terms of quality of education outside of the classroom, once again the highest rank came from the above average students (30.8%), followed by the average students (24.3%) and the below average students (18.7%).

The same results appear for each group rating the quality of the University in relation to the cost of their education.

#### Priorities For a Quality of Education:

When asked to identify the following priorities for a quality education, the below average students were more likely to prefer the following:

The below average students were more like to identify the following as being "high priority" (4) or "very high priority" (5) areas on the five-point scale: extracurricular activities available to students.

The average students were more like to identify the following as being "high priority" (4) or "very high priority" (5) areas on the five-point scale: thorough and helpful course resources and instructional technology used in courses,

The above average students were more like to identify the following as being "high priority" (4) or "very high priority" (5) areas on the five-point scale: comfortable classrooms and grading reflects high standards.

#### Instructional Experiences

Below average students did not, in *any* case demonstrate being more likely to have commonly experienced any of the statements provided. In fact, more often than not, they ranked the lowest of the three groups in terms of the various experiences they had had. Average students generally ranked each experience as being slightly less common than their above average counterparts. For their part, above average students were more likely to indicate the following as being 'common' or 'very common' experiences: take an active interest in my learning, make an effort to ensure that students are learning, shows respect for students, show enthusiasm for the subject they are teaching, motivate me to learn more, have good English skills, give me good feedback about my learning on assignments and exams, use grading scheme fairly, and appropriately balance midterm and final exams.

In terms of what is considered most important in determining a good teacher, the tables were significantly turned. Below average students were more likely, in almost every case, to indicate each statement of as being more important in determining a quality instructor than their peers. Thus, they were more likely to indicate: take an active interest in my learning, use class time to expand on course notes and readings and teach concepts, have good English skills, make an effort to assist students with using technology required for the class, return assignments and exams to students within an acceptable time period, use grading scheme fairly and appropriately balance midterm and final exams as being high priority areas.

Average students are more likely to indicate the following as being the most important priorities in determining a good teacher, make an effort to ensure that students are learning, make an effort to interact with students, motivate me to learn more, give me good feedback about my learning on assignments and exams, create assignments and exams that accurately reflect course content and learning objectives,

Above average students were more likely to indicate: “demonstrate skill in teaching” as being the most important in determining a high quality teacher. While they generally ranked each statement as being a high priority, they were not as clear in their deliniation as their peers.

### Teaching Evaluations

Above average students were more likey to completely agree with the statement that the current USRI system does not give them adequate time to think about their views on their instructors (13.5%), followed by below average students (10.5%) and average students (9.1%). Otherwise, each group responded relatively similarly to the questions regarding instructor evaluations.

### Programs and Courses

Above average students were more likely to indicate that, overall, their program is doing a good job of preparing them for their career. 27% of above average students indicated a 5 on the five point scale, compared to roughly 18% for both average and below average students. They were also more satisfied with the opportunities available to them to apply what they are learning through more practical experience. Both below average and above average students indicated similarly in terms of course content consistent between various sections, as well as highlighting the fact that grading standards are inconsistent from one class to another. Finally, above average students were more likely to indicate that course material provides a good balance between breadth and depth.

Above average students were more likely to indicate that they were very certain about what they would like their future to be upon completion of their degree. 35.3% of them indicated a 5 on the five-point scale, followed by 32.1% of average students and 24.2% of below average students.

### Space and Services

Average students were approximately 8% less likely to indicate being completely satisfied with the weekday library hours than their peers. On the other hand, above average students were most likely to indicate being



satisfied with the current library hours during exam periods. They were equally more likely to indicate being satisfied with the availability of computers on campus to do coursework and the ability to access the University's online resources and services.

### Obstacles to Education:

#### *Cost of tuition:*

Below average students were the most likely to indicate that the cost of tuition was a great obstacle to their education (33.5%), followed by average students (30.8%) and finally by above average students (28.3%).

#### *Cost of textbooks*

Below average students were the most likely to indicate that the cost of textbooks was a great obstacle to their education (32.3%), followed by average students (30%) and finally by above average students (29.5%).

#### *Competitive academic environment*

Below average students were considerably more likely to indicate that the competitive academic environment of the University was an impediment to their education (29.7%), followed by average students (16.8%) and finally by above average students (11.2%).

#### *Lack of connection with other students*

While both average and below average students indicated very similarly, average students were more likely to indicate the lack of connection with other students as being an obstacle to their learning (9.8%). Only 6.4% of above average students agreed.

#### *Exams that are not reflective of the course material*

Below average students were more likely to indicate that their exams were not reflective of the course material (18.1%), followed by average students 12% and finally by above average students (9%)

#### *Large class sizes*

Below average students were more likely to indicate that large class sizes had a negative impact on their learning (22.6%), followed by average students (14%) and by above average students (13.8%).

#### *Inadequate program advising or assistance*

Below average students were more likely to indicate that inadequate program advising was problematic to their education (27.1%), followed by above average students (15.7%) and by average students (14.5%).

#### *Uncertainty about where to get help with questions or problems*

Below average students were more likely to indicate that uncertainty about where to get help has been an important obstacle for them (19.4%), followed by above average students (13.4%) and by average students (12.8%)

*Inadequate help with technology related problems*

Below average students were more likely to indicate that inadequate help with technology related problems has been a hindrance to their education (6.5%), followed by above average students (3.6%) and by average students (2.3%)

*Feeling insignificant and not cared about by the University*

Below average were more likely to feel that the University does not care about them. 51.9% of students ranked either a 4 or a 5 on the five point scale, compared to 40.8% of average students and 38.4% of above average students.

*Not having past exams and other resources*

Below average students were most likely to consider this to be a major obstacle to their learning. 25.8% of them ranked it as being a 5 on the five scale, compared to 20.1% of average students and 17.1% of above average students.

*Instructors or TAs having poor English language skills*

Below average students were most likely to consider this to be a major obstacle to their academic success (36.1%), compared to 25.4% of average students, and 25.6% of above average students.

*Courses where it is not clear how the material relates to your degree*

Below average students were most likely to consider this to be a major obstacle to their learning (28.6%), compared to 23.7% of average students and 20.4% of above average students.

*Courses that try to cover too much material during the term*

Below average students were most likely to consider this to be a major obstacle to their learning (49.7% ), compared to 34.2% of average students and 26.8% of above average students.

Demographics

*Age*

Of the students that indicated that they were under the age of 21, 68.4% considered themselves to be below average students, compared to 56.8% of average students and 56.9% of above average students. In general, the older a student is, the more likely they will consider themselves to be above average.

### *Type of Program*

77% of below average students indicated that they were enrolled in general programs, compared to only 58.6% of above average students. 10.7% of above average students responded that they were in honors programs, compared to 2% of below average students and 2.6% of average students.

### *Transfer*

32.5% of average students indicated that they had transferred from other institutions, compared to 25.8% of below average students and 25.5% of above average students.

### *Sources of Financial Support*

While there was no considerable differentiation between the three groups in terms of their choices for their primary source of financial support, 28.3% of above average students selected scholarships and bursaries as being their secondary source of financial support (compared to only 17% of average or below average students). Average students were most likely to respond that they secondarily relied on employment during the school year (42.8%), compared to 34.3% of above average students and 32.7% of below average students.

### *Gender*

Males were more likely to rank themselves as either below average (42.2%) or above average (36.1%), compared to below average (29.3%). Females were more likely to rank themselves as being average (70.7%), compared to above average (63.9%) and below average (57.8%).

### *Year of Academic program*

Students who indicated that they were below average were equally more likely to be in their Introductory years of their academic program (60.4%), compared to 43.8% for average students and 41.4% for above average students.

## **Transfer Students**

### Quality of Education

When asked to rank the University of Alberta in terms of the overall quality of education, transfer students were more likely to rank it unfavorably. While 45.3% of non-transfer students gave the U of A. a 6 or a 7 on the seven-point scale, only 35.2% of transfer students ranked it the same. 7.9% of transfer students ranked the institution as being lower than moderate quality, compared to only 3.6% of non-transfer students.

This trend continues when examining the quality of the educational experience provided in the classroom, with 34.3% of non-transfer student rating the University as being high or very high quality, compared to 25.6% of transfer students.

Finally, in terms of the quality of education in relation to the total cost of education, 24% of non-transfer students believed their education to be of high or very high value, compared to only 13.9% of transfer students.

### Priorities for a quality education

Transfer students were considerably more likely to rank the following as being 'very high priority' areas: small classroom sizes (23.6% vs. 14.8%) and meaningful interaction with your instructors (49.7% vs. 40.9%).

Conversely, non-transfer students were more likely to indicate the following as being higher areas of concern: opportunities to do research (rank of 4 and 5 on the 5 point scale- 47.3% vs. 38.7%), meaningful interaction with students (27.8% vs. 20.1%), extracurricular activities available to students, and opportunities to study abroad.

### Instructional Experiences

Generally, transfer students were more likely to indicate that, from the list of experiences provided, most were uncommon or only slightly common. It is likely that these students are using a comparison technique between their prior institution and the University of Alberta in examining the types of experiences that they have had here.

Transfer students were considerably more likely to select the following as being 'very common' traits in their instructors: motivate me to learn more (9.6% vs. 7.7%) and have good English skills (28.7% vs. 23.3%),

Non-transfer students were considerably more likely to select the following as being 'very common' traits in their instructors: are accessible/available outside of class (24.3% vs. 17.3%), show respect for students (35.3% vs. 28%), use classtime to expand on course notes and readings and teach concepts (19% vs. 14%), use grading scheme fairly (15.7% vs. 11.3%) and create assignments and exams that accurately reflect the course content and learning objectives (15.2% vs. 12.1%).

Transfer students were more likely to select the following as being 'most important' in determining a quality instructor: shows respect for students (36.6% vs. 30.8%), return assignments within an acceptable time period (12.6% vs. 8.8%) and create assignments and exams that accurately reflect course content and objectives (34.6% vs. 29.5%).

Non-Transfer students were more likely to select the following as being 'most important in determining a quality instructor: use classtime to expand on course notes and readings and teach concepts (29.2% vs. 22.5%).

### Teaching Evaluation

Non-transfer students were more likely to agree or completely agree that, overall, they are satisfied with the current teaching evaluation system (42.9% vs. 33.8%) and that they believe USRI results have an impact improving teaching (27% vs. 21.7%).

### Programs and Courses

Transfer students were more likely to completely agree with the following statements: my program should be more focused on the development of practical skills than it currently is (31.5% vs. 22.6%), I am satisfied with the opportunities available to me to apply what I am learning through practical experience (17.8% vs. 13.4%) and grading standards are inconsistent from one class to another (28.5% vs. 21.6%).

Non-transfer students were more likely to completely agree with the following statements: my program gives me sufficient opportunity to take courses that I want to take for my own interest (16.2% vs. 10.1%) and my program meets my needs for a university education (24.6% vs. 20.3%).

In general, transfer students are more likely to be very certain about what they would like their future career to be upon completion of their degree (38.4% vs. 30.9%).

### Space, Resources and Services

Transfer students are more likely to be very satisfied with the weekend library hours (22.7 vs. 20.9%) than are non-transfer students.

Non-transfer students are more likely to be very satisfied with the following: availability of study space on campus (31.4% vs. 23.1%), quality study space on campus (20.4% vs. 17.3), weekday library hours (38.3% vs. 34%), library hours during exam periods (41% vs. 37.6%), availability of computers on campus to do course work (27.7% vs. 16.2%), quality software in campus computer labs (29.3% vs. 24.8%) and availability of assistance in campus computer labs (13.1% vs. 8.3%)

## Obstacles to a Quality Education

Transfer students are more likely to name the following as being very important obstacles to their university careers: working a job during the school year (23% vs. 14.8%), cost of tuition (37.2% vs. 27%), cost of textbooks (33.7% vs. 28.7%), large classroom size (19.4% vs. 13.2%),

negative attitudes of the University staff towards students (13.9% vs. 8.1%), uncertainty about where to get help with questions or problems (18.1% vs. 12.3%), Inadequate help with technology related problems (5.1% vs. 3%) and feeling insignificant to and not cared about by the University (23.4% vs. 15.6%).

Non-transfer students are more likely to name the following as being very important obstacles to their university careers: Instructors or TAs having poor English skills (28.2% vs. 23.4%).

## Demographics

### *Age*

Of those students who indicated that they had transferred from another institution, 50.8% were between the ages of 22 and 25.

### *Population size*

Non-transfer students are more likely to come from a community with a population of more than 50 000 people (45.3% vs. 34.6%).

### *Residence type*

Non-transfer students are more likely to live in a University residence (15.6% vs. 10%) and transfer students are more likely to live off-campus, away from the University area (56.9% vs. 51.3%).

### *Year of Academic Program*

Non-transfer students are more likely to be in their first or second year of study (51.1% vs. 26.7%). Transfer students tend to be senior level students in their third or fourth year.

### *Grades in Relation to Peers*

In general, non-transfer students are more likely to indicate that they are above average students (58.7% vs. 54.2%). Transfer students are more likely to indicate that they are average students (36.4% vs. 29%).

### *Work during the School Year*

Transfer students are more likely to hold a job during the academic year than their non-transfer peers (56.4% vs. 48.5%).

### *Sources of Financing*

Non-transfer students are more likely to rely their parents as their primary source of financial support (37.8% vs. 28%). Transfer students are more likely to rely on repayable student loans (40.1% vs. 21%). Non-transfer students are more likely to indicate that they rely on scholarships and bursaries as their secondary source of financial support (26.7% vs. 14.7%), whereas transfer students are more likely to select employment during school and/or summers (43.6% vs. 34.1%).

### *Gender*

Women are more likely to be transfer students than non-transfer students (69.4% vs. 63.8%). Men are more likely to be non-transfer students (36.2% vs. 30.6%).

### *Population size*

Non-transfer students are more likely to come from large cities (45.3% vs. 34.6%) and transfer students are more likely to come from medium sized cities (26.6% vs. 18.5%).

### *Faculty Type*

Of students who indicated that they were transfer students, 60.3% of them were in professional faculties.

### *Hours Worked Per Week*

Non-transfer students were more likely to respond that they work less than 12 hours per week (43.3% vs. 35.2%) and transfer students were more likely to indicate that they work 25+ hours a week (16.7% vs. 10.6%).

## **Work during the school year**

### Quality of Education

Students who work during the school year are more likely to ascribe the University of Alberta to be highly or very highly valuable in relation to the time and money invested in it (24.9% vs. 17.6%).

Students who work during the school year are more likely to indicate that they ascribe a very high priority to meaningful interaction with their professors (46.5% vs. 39.7%).

Students who work during the school year are less likely to ascribe a high or very high priority to a degree program that prepares them for a future career (94.2% vs. 89.9%).

Students who work during the school year are more likely to ascribe a very high priority to accurate and helpful academic advising than those who do not work (56.7% vs. 49.9%)

Students who work during the school year are more likely to ascribe a high or very high priority to opportunities to study abroad (40.3% vs. 33.6%).

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to ascribe a very high priority to lab facilities that are equipped with modern technology and materials (36.8% vs. 33.9%).

### Instructional Experiences

Students who work during the school year are more likely to rate 'encourage class participation' as being common or very common traits in an instructor (49.1% vs. 38.9%), along with 'have good English skills' (27.6% vs. 22%).

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to rate 'creates assignments and exams that test my understanding of course material and not just my ability to recall information' as being common or very common than their working peers (53.8% vs. 49.3%)

Students who work are more likely to indicate 'take an active interest in my learning' as being one the most important aspects of a quality instructor (36.1% vs. 27.3%)

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to select 'have good communication skills' as being one of the most important factors in rating the quality of an instructor. They are equally more likely to rank 'demonstrate skill in teaching' highly (43.3% vs. 35.3%)

### Teaching Evaluations

Student who do not work during the school year are more likely to agree or completely agree that URSI results have an impact on teaching (30% vs. 21.2%).

### Programs and Courses

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to agree or completely agree with the following statements: 'my program meets my needs for a University education' (73.4% vs. 68.6%), 'overall, my program is doing a good job of preparing me for my future career' (54.7% vs. 47.8%) and 'I am satisfied with the opportunities available to me to apply what I am learning through practical experience' (45.4% vs. 40.4%).

Students who work during the school year are more likely to agree or completely agree with the following statements 'the classes I need for my



program are not offered frequently enough' (51.1% vs. 42.7%, and 'grading standards are inconsistent from one class to another' (27.4% vs. 19.7%).

### Space, Services and Resources

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to hold a higher level of satisfaction than transfer students in terms of the quality of study space on campus. 59.8% of those who do not work during the year were satisfied or very satisfied with the spaces, compared to 55% of those students who do. They were equally more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied by the availability of computers on campus to do coursework (59% vs. 47.7%).

### Obstacles to A Quality Education

Students who work during the school year are more likely to consider the following to be the most important obstacles to their education: working a job during the school year (26.7% vs. 7%), cost of paying tuition (37% vs. 22.6%), cost of textbooks (35% vs. 25.1%), poor availability of courses I need for my degree (12.1% vs. 9%), large class size (17.3% vs. 12.5%), program advising or assistance in selecting courses (18.8% vs. 14.6%), negative attitudes of University staff towards students (10.7% vs. 8.6%) and lack of support for involvement in extracurricular activities (5.7% vs. 3.8%).

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to consider the following to be the most important obstacle to their education: Instructors or TAs having poor English skills (28.1% vs. 25.8%),

### Demographics

#### *Age*

The younger age demographic is less likely to hold a job during the academic year (64.7% vs. 53.3%) than the older demographic (46.7% vs. 35.3%).

#### *Enrollment status*

Part time students are more likely to work during the academic year than full time students (61.% vs. 2.1%).

#### *Transfer students*

Transfer students are more likely to work during the academic year (30.9% vs. 24.6%)

#### *Sources of Financial Support*

Students who do not work during the school year are more likely to rely on their parents as their primary source of financial support (40.3% vs. 29.9%). Students who work during the year are more likely to rely on non-repayable student loans as their primary source of income (31.3% vs. 21.2%).

Students who do not work are more likely to rely on scholarships and bursaries as their secondary source of income (27.3% vs. 19.6%) and students who are employed throughout the school year are more likely to rely on employment during the school and summers (43.6% vs. 29.7%).

#### *Gender*

Women are more likely to work during the school year (73.1% vs. 57.1%) and men are more likely not to (42.9% vs. 26.9%).

#### *Community Size*

Of those who hold employment during the academic year, more are likely to come from a large city (46.5% vs. 38.1%). 85% of those who work during the school year are from Urban communities.

#### *Residence location*

Students who are employed during the school year are more likely to live away from campus (74.3% vs. 53.4%).

#### *Faculty type*

Students from academic faculties are more likely to hold a job during the school year than those who are from professional faculties (55.2% vs. 44.8%).

#### *Program type*

Students from general programs are more likely to hold school-time employment than those from non-general programs (66% vs. 61%).

#### *Hours worked*

Of those who work during the school year, 47.67% work from 12 to 25 hours. 12.7% work more than 25 hours per week.

## **D. Qualitative Data**

Qualitative data was coded into categories and common responses were summarized below.

When students were asked to, "*make any additional comments you have about any topic*" the highest number of respondents commented on academic concerns (110), followed by quality of instructional staff (101), costs (60), non-instructional staff (52), student resources (37), concerns about the facilities (36), relevance and application of their education (29), concerns about the survey (26), teacher evaluations (25), registration and scheduling (23), comments from the Faculté St. Jean (5), and other General Comments (23).

### **Specific Academic Concerns**

#### **Grading System (21)**

- 89: As well, I find the freedom given to clinical teachers to evaluate their students is extremely unfair as some students who do well in one class would do poorly in another and vice versa. The inconsistency in the knowledge of teachers is also frustrating as some students are given information others are not that.
- 203: 130 students and a 2.3 class average. They should be consistent with other universities. This just forces students to go "average shopping" instead of picking courses they might learn something from.
- 226: Also, I find the system of grading (especially in the Faculty of Arts) to be somewhat arbitrary and unbalanced. I think the effort should be on learning and personal development, and not careers, money and grades (as it seems to be now). Thank you
- 261: The main beef I have with the University is the marking scheme. Students are graded, in most of my classes anyway, against each other. This is NOT a true representation of what I as a student have achieved! For example, if I am fortunate to be the brainiac in a class of underachievers, then all is well, otherwise ... Marking should be a reflection on how much the student has learned, assimilated, and is able to apply, not on class ranking. Just my .02
- 412: Pharmacy students should not be graded on a curve. It is a professional faculty, competition should not be encouraged.
- 566: I don't think it's right for Prof's to give exams that are curved but have an average of 30% or below it, to me, not an acceptable testing method and does not show the students true understanding of the subject matter.

- 419: I find it difficult to believe that courses that are put on a hard curve (first and second year courses with high enrollment) are equivalent from one year to the next. How can a person who gets a B- at 55% be equivalent to a B- at 65% the next year? The most learning that I did in 4 years at university and 2 years at college was through field work and an undergraduate thesis. This is where I determined what I enjoyed and I learned that research does not require straight A's. At a research University this should be encouraged as it allows research minded professors to deal with students on another level and it allows them to communicate on different terms.
- 463: Grading standards are inconsistent.
- 647: PHYSL 210 tries to cover way too much material for its allotted time. It goes into too much depth. Students in BIOCH 205, NUFS 374, NUTR 301, and NUFS 223 try way too hard so it is hard to get a relatively good mark. The students set the bar too high. The grades should be adjusted appropriately.
- 736: I love university life here at u of a, but the classes are horrible. I'm going to Grant MacEwan next year which should be a better fit for me as there are smaller class sizes and grades aren't marked on the curve, and that will be nice to receive my actual marks. I think letter grades can be deceiving. Seeing a 70% on a transcript looks better than a c. also, large class sizes make it very very hard to learn during class time and there should be more course packs incorporated. also, programs should stop switching to newer editions of textbooks since most times, there's very minor and insignificant things that are changed.
- 743: In specific reference to grading, I've found that most professors (at least in the Department of English) are far too carefree with their grades. Work I've done that doesn't deserve a B has gotten an A grade. Professors, while they shouldn't feel it's necessary to fail students, should be comfortable with doing so if they deserve it
- 902: The grading at the U of A is unfair. People who get below 50% can still pass, and people who are above 50% can fail. Do you see the problem with this?
- 947: I find the difference between departmental grading scales ridiculous. For example, an A in East Asian Studies is 98-100%, while the History department marks an A as 90-100%. These systems ought to be standardized, because all that is seen in the end is the letter, and not the departmental breakdown. That is my one MAJOR pet peeve.
- 1015: I really do not think that it is fair to grade students on the curve
- 1028: I am an atypical student, but typical for post RN students. This track is not necessarily designed to be as helpful to working RNs as it could be - needs more internet courses offered. "Context based learning" is overused. (Coursework is largely context based but exam is not). BIGGEST CONCERN: curving marks in small classes. If the

surnames are too few to give a standard curve, then unlikely to have an appropriate number for a curve in marks (class could be exceptionally bright or dumb...) While I have had no problem with this, I know of students with 91% that got A-. This seems unreasonable (that was an exceptionally talented class of only 23 students).

- 1057: As for tests, I strongly disagree with the curved method of grading. It removes responsibility from the profs. I believe that if I study hard and get a mark of 80, it should stay that way, no matter what everyone else's marks are. It's time for professors to take accountability for their actions, and for tests to be monitored by outside sources to make sure they aren't too easy or too hard. I just finished a very easy test... I feel like my mark will fall, even though I got most of the questions. The test did not offer me full creativity to display my knowledge, which I feel was high, and yet I feel like my mark will fall only because "only 5% of grades can be A in this class of 400". Okay, that's about it! (This was a great outlet for my University-related frustrations... I hope it helps change things for the better!)
- 1132: The reliance on 'grading on the curve' combined with a reliance on 100% final examinations (as opposed to assignments, essays etc) is disadvantageous to those students who have difficulty with exam situations. As someone who hasn't had to write exams in 10 years, and never did well with them in the first place, the lack of opportunity to excel in assignments will likely hurt my career (law firms want to see transcripts when hiring)
- 1225: The bell curve makes any marking scheme fair. The most unfair marking I have received came from any class where there was fixed mark brackets (A = 90-95%)
- 1275: Generally, I enjoyed the University experience this year; however, I felt that although I did well on exams, because others did well, my mark suffered. I feel that if everyone knows the material quite well, then giving out low marks for an acceptable grade is a bit unfair.
- 1285: Curving was inappropriate for our courses as well (average entry grade was ~8... so no-one should HAVE TO fail a course if everyone works hard... everyone is smart enough). Only apply a normal curve to grades if it has standard distribution... don't force 2% of students to get D grades!!
- 1289: I disdainly hate the new grading system. It is too uptight and when it comes to rewards, it is very little. It might help the instructors but not to the students. I felt that there is too much gap or distance between one grade letter to the other. It makes the learning environment a lot more competitive and thus university life a lot more stressful.

## **Inequality of Learning Opportunities Between Faculties (15)**

- 98: The Philosophy department should get more funding. I didn't enroll in the University to attend a trade school. The UofA should be concerned about the development of a complete person, not just a cog in a machine who is highly specialized in his or her field and ignorant about everything else.
- 134: I know that in a lot of programs there is some degree of preparation for future careers, and it would be nice to see that in Science too, especially in areas that don't just focus specifically on Medicine or Dentistry.
- 217: Courses need to cover fewer topics in greater depth or lengthen the school year (not preferred). Opportunities like the bio 299 research program are a good idea, but they are implemented horribly. 13 positions for 63 applicants is inadequate. Acceptance is based on GPA, which tends to suffer in students who are not sufficiently motivated... poor motivation tends to be caused by lack of opportunities to participate in said programs...
- 329: One thing I don't understand is why there isn't an industrial internship for general science psychology students. I was told that this was because the other psychology programs are more in-depth... this is true for the honors program; however, I can take more psychology courses (total) in the general program than in the specialization program. AND if that were indeed true, then why is it that general arts psychology students (and not those in general science psychology) get to participate in the internship???
- 352: Because I'm an international student, I'm not allowed to participate in the Co-op or any other practical program. I hope U of A can help to solve this problem; however, it's already my last year to graduate, I hope that U of A can give our international student more opportunities to work more than a part-time job.
- 505: I think it is really important to have access to classes. I am trying right now to get into art/design classes for my Major in Education, and they stuck me on a waiting list for an appointment (which they still haven't called me for 2 weeks later), to see if I can be put on a waiting list to possibly get a change to get into one class...I need 12 credits in art/design still and they won't let me in because I am an Education student and we are called very last on the list. They need more instructors, better facilities and better academic advisors/resources.
- 512: More opportunities for hands-on experience should be offered, especially within the Faculty of Arts
- 625: U of A is a good university. I am a bit disappointed with the dropping of 4th year classes in Physics due to lack of enrollment, but it doesn't affect me too much personally.

- 780: Engineering has taught me a lot of useless stuff and I've spent hundreds of dollars on useless courses. There are courses that I want to take but don't fit in my schedule (because of required Engg courses) or that the courses I'm interested in aren't recognized as options or electives by my department. I hate it. For instance, I have only 5 options and 2 of them are decided for me by my department. Leaving 3 options, which isn't enough to diversify myself when I'm taking about 52 courses in my entire degree!
- 848: There is a lack of flexibility with in the degree programs. Coming out of high school one has very little knowledge of what sort of occupational positions are available. Once in university it is expected that you know what it is that you want to commit you life to, but it is not so! There needs to be more flexibility in the amount of time a degree program is required to be completed in. You might enter a faculty or program with intent to finish it but find out that it is just not for you.
- 855: The Faculty of Education needs to place more emphasis on practical experience earlier on in the degree rather than a 4 week practicum in year 3 and a 9 week in year four.
- 944: Biological Sciences was very open, flexible, theoretical, better instructors, larger classes and un-related to careers. Overall, I had a much more positive experience in the flexible Science program.
- 951: I think that you should make the first year English course the same across the board... like if you're in ENGL 111 the instructors should have a list of literature to choose from so as to standardize the class as it is completely unfair that some classes study Harry Potter while others do things like Samuel Beckett which in itself is hard enough to understand never mind interpret. The instructors should also mark the same, that is to say have a standardized marking scheme that should be given to the students at the beginning of the course instead of them never seeing one.
- 1033: English is a good course for Science students to take, but it takes up too much space for the full year. It might be beneficial to make it a half year course for science students. Thank you.
- 1167: Arts students should not be forced to take a fine arts class the option of doing so would be fine.

## **Inconsistencies in Faculties (16)**

- 60: I have also been in Sciences and Rehab med. The experiences of each faculty are very different. For example, I would have responded differently if it were about sciences. Large class sizes, poor teaching, and lack of language skills would have been an issue. For rehab med, there is very poor organization and politics. Rehab med (OT) needs help--it is embarrassing to the university. Phys Ed is by far the most

positive experience of them all. Teachers are more motivated, course material is relevant and there is a positive and friendly atmosphere.

- 80: As far as I am concerned the Native Studies department is the only department worth anything at this University. If ever I desire further education outside of the field of Native Studies I would never consider re admission to the University of Alberta.
- 92: I really did not enjoy my university career and am completely thankful that this is my last semester and I will never have to come back. I think that most of the professors have no knowledge about how to teach. Maybe they should wander over to the education building and sit in on a couple of classes. There was a great deal of inconsistency between the teaching style and course format of each and every course I took. I think the courses should all be set up in a similar fashion although I realize the differences in content call for some variations. But in some classes teachers would say that group work is really important while in another class the prof would say group work is stupid (which I agree with). In one class you would have lots of assignment, in another class only exams. It seemed like I spent more time adapting to each individual teacher than I spent actually learning. If every prof had a format that was followed by everyone, then students would be able to get used to one teaching approach and it would be much easier to learn.
- 254: The nursing faculty is very disorganized; the marking system is inconsistent and a large portion of our grade in clinical is based on whether our instructor likes us. The nursing faculty needs to be restructured in order to decrease the frustration of students!
- 318: There is a huge variety in teaching quality. Some profs dedicate themselves completely to facilitating learning, while others seem to have absolutely no idea as to what they're doing.
- 368: I appreciate the chance to take part in this survey. A problem I had though is trying to accurately answer some of the questions when I have had such excellent classes like BUS 201 and MGTSC 352 and some horrible classes like MGTSC 312 and ORG A 322. Finding an accurate reflection is somewhat difficult because I did not want to subject my responses to the recency effect. But all things considered, I managed. Thanks.
- 387: I answered the questions specifically relating to the faculty of nursing. If I were answering the questions regarding my post-secondary before I went into nursing the answers would have been different.
- 392: My experience in the Faculty of Law is much better than my experience in the Faculty of Science was, so I have based my responses solely on this degree.
- 527: Some teachers have been exceptional, and some teachers can't even decide on a way to pronounce important terms for the class. It's a complete toss-up as to whether or not a course will be taught efficiently and well. At higher levels, teachers are much better at



engaging the class and are much more interested in each student's learning; however, often we've had such bad experiences in our first year that we've lost all faith in our instructors' abilities.

- 540: In one department for example instructors, course material relevance, etc would rate very high and in the other rather low
- 589: The "weeding out" process for junior-level courses should be abolished. -There needs to be more consistency between course sections in terms of instruction and evaluation.
- 774: This year I have really enjoyed my University experience. I would like to see some more consistency between lab marking on assignments as I found that this was really discrepant according to the TA.
- 995: The discrepancies between professors (teaching the same course) in terms of material presented, exam content, and grading schemes, is often much more than it should be, and can affect one's overall grade.
- 1004: Discrepancy in grading is not very common from one section to another because of the bell curve. However, I have witnessed instances where one's success in the lab component of a course depended on the TA's own marking criteria, resulting in much discrepancy from one lab section to another
- 1043: There needs to be a consistency in content between courses, it's difficult to do higher level courses when the prerequisites have different content such as MARK 301.
- 1241: The quality of education at the University of Alberta has been really variable according to the course. Some courses and instructors have been awesome, yet some courses and especially TAs have been terrible. Keeping this in mind, overall I would still say that my university experience so far, has been a positive one.
- 1294: The majority of the Education professors are fantastic, while there are a couple of psych professors that have no idea what it means to teach an education student - I have felt like I was in grades school and/or did not need to pay for the lecture as all the material covered was repeated verbatim from the text- and some just do not care i.e.: tenured profs in Ed Psych only. AS a whole, I much prefer the Ed department to the humanities department. I am sure this is because many Ed professors have taught for years and have not forgotten what it is like to be a student.

## **Exams, Assignments (12)**

- 88: a final complaint is that course exams should be monitored more closely by course captains. I can't count how many times I have gotten exams that are unbelievably difficult, unrealistically easy, or had little or nothing at all to do with course material.

- 89: Lastly, the exams built for the tutorial based classes are never fair as the information covered in class rarely covers what is needed for on the test.
- 653: I believe that the laboratory components of the Science courses are unnecessary and are too heavily weighted. Specifically, the laboratory component of the BIOL 100-level courses (BIOL 107 and 108 in from my experience) are useless and time consuming as well as a significant percentage of the grade for those courses.
- 797:and most importantly there needs to be increased accountability in grading...I get my exams back and there is nothing, no indication of why I got the mark that I did...this is unacceptable in a faculty where marks are so critical to future success and competition is so high...
- 847:Scores reflect combination of OT and Kinesiology degrees
- 877: Regular assignments make it MUCH easier to do well in a course, as if you don't realize you've missed something, you can find out without bombing a midterm. Biology 108 seems unrelated to biochem (107 seemed much more relevant). I wish it wasn't a requirement.
- 881: To be quite honest, I think that the whole system of lecturing and testing is not nearly the best way to teach. I want to actually build stuff in my classes, learning the concepts and formulas along the way.
- 1026 There should not be too many additional course work, which is not stipulated in the course description give out at the beginning of the term. Instructors should be taught the importance of creating exam questions that test what students have learnt and not just for recall purposes. The university should look into its grading system. Grading on the curve is not the best way to reflect or maintain the university's high standard. There should be no final exams for English courses, have the students do an authentic task or project that really reflect their understanding and ability to argue on the texts they have read. The English department should really look into that.
- 1081: profs should assign more assignments so that students can keep up with the course material and not fall behind.
- 1161: The way exams are conducted is appalling. a) ID is not checked b) People do not finish writing when the time is up c) I have seen people copying each other d) You are expected to write exams in uncomfortable places such as v wing d) The standard of Exams is not maintained year to year e) Exams are often a recall test rather than a knowledge and understanding test f) you are often given hardly any past papers
- 1267: exam marks tend to focus too much on getting exactly the correct answer and not on having the correct procedure to get the answer. when you have page long mathematical answers, simple errors occur and shouldn't make you fail the course.
- 1284:- University courses tend to be more work-intensive than they need to be. Assignments etc. should only be assigned if they meaningfully advance education; not just so that there is something to mark. - Exams tend to be poor ways of assessing students. They

invariably require students to memorize all kinds of details and rarely test application of knowledge because there is only so much that can be done in 2-3 hours. Instead, more courses should rely on other forms of assessment that test application of knowledge while allowing students to access information and course notes (in the real world, one has access to resources)

## **Class Size (11)**

- 20: I think the most important thing that needs to be done is make the classes smaller so there is more interaction between other students and the prof as well.
- 327: I hate the 200 people in large classes with a prof that can hardly speak English and is only there because he/she has to be. The learning curves are completely different and I am not getting the value out of my \$ in the large science classroom
- 506: and large class sizes when this interferes with the efficiency of the class and learning (i.e. class discussion is too intimidating but required, the prof can't mark all the papers so grad students (or as I once discovered, fellow undergrads who had completed the course) are being paid the mark per paper).
- 530: class sizes bigger than my entire high school population back home. Although I realize that this type of experience is normal, it is not satisfactory.
- 665: Also, I have found that I have generally done better in smaller, more personal classes. Some of the huge classes I have had in Tory Lecture Theater and Humanities Lecture Theater have presented me with some difficulties. I think this is because it is hard to connect with the prof and hard to follow along when you feel so anonymous. Despite this, coming to the U of A has been a great experience. I have met a lot of new people and learned a lot.
- 670: and the class sizes definitely need to be controlled, especially in 300 and 400 level courses where the expectations of the course require more interaction with the professors and other students that are not currently being met because of the demand for enrollment.
- 681: for question 11, I would like to strongly emphasize the fact that large class sizes and courses that tried to cover too much in one term were definitely the most detrimental factors to my grades.
- 808: The class sizes were much larger and the professors were much less available.
- 1026: Small classroom size allows more interaction among instructor and students. This is important because it allows instructor to be interested in students' learning. Instructor's ability to understand student needs and keeping to the course description is extremely important.

- 1042: Moving back to the discussion of teaching, the University experience could be greatly improved with a few simple (but costly) changes. The most important of these is reducing class sizes. A lecture with four hundred students is counter-productive to providing a decent learning environment. With so many students, instructors do not have time to provide individual commentary, nor answer most questions. It feels as if we are encouraged not to ever ask anything, since there is no time for most questions to be answered in class, and there is no one to ask out of class.
- 1042: It seems that classes are much smaller in the arts (particularly humanities) and in engineering. It is time that science students receive equal treatment.
- 1166: classes are too large,
- 1225: I came from a very small department; small class sizes can also be a problem. It is nice to have classes large enough that there will be enough different types of people that you can make good friends. I found that large classes and small classes were of the same quality as long as there was sufficient help during labs, and plenty of office hours during the week.
- 1186: I received my first degree in psychology from Augustana University College in 1997. I found the small class sizes there more beneficial and the teaching standard was higher.

## **Course/Program Quality (8)**

- 130: I am extremely dissatisfied with the education I have received at the University. As tuition went up up up, the quality of my education did not. It is too easy to pass courses, and if I chose to, I could leave the university have learned little more than when I arrived. I have spent four years of my life, will have spent almost five before I am done, and view the entire experience as a complete waste. It saddens me to the POINT OF TEARS because I am so passionate about learning and education, but because of financial reasons, this is the only institution I could attend. Please, PLEASE, I beg you, IMPLORE YOU to not let this happen to future students.
- 153: The Law School is... (forgive me here) bullshit. We're paying so much bloody money to be here, yet we can't study uninterrupted in our own library, we can't enroll in classes we want (or ridiculously need due to ALL the required classes) because they are all offered at the same time, all the quality professors seem to be "on sabbatical". It's ridiculous - the U of A law school is trying to compete with other schools in the country, yet all we seem to be getting in return for insane tuition is a sub-standard education. And I, for one, am sick of it.
- 216: I am disappointed with the Occupational Therapy program offered at U of A. I feel that the amount of knowledge that students

are expected to know in such a short time span is very frustrating. I feel (as well as many classmates) that we will not be competent Occupational therapists when we graduate. My cousin who is in nursing does not feel confident in her skills also, despite doing well in the program. However, my cousin who took courses at Grant Mac, said she feels quite confident in her skills and attributes the difference to the increased practical opportunities to learn as well as the dedication and excellence of teaching. In the OT program I feel that we do have good teachers, but they are often busy with many extra curricular demands, which causes them to be rushed, although they mean well. Also, the graduate students who sometimes teach classes are not well prepared and cannot answer questions effectively. I think that this faculty needs more teachers who are dedicated to teaching and take pride in their work, not those who are pursuing many different activities and happen to be teaching as well. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to vent.

- 610: The quality of course materials is extremely low. In some classes a text book is terrible and the professor simply goes over the text book without any expansion, then requires the student to expand the concepts for assignments and exams without any examples to follow making it very difficult to perform adequately. Usually these professors clearly understand the material but simply cannot relate it to the class effectively, making it very frustrating to interact with the professor because they do not understand why the students have problems with such a simply concept. Try having professors who are there to teach, not there to do research and forced to teach as well.
- 874: Frankly the issue is not so much with the university itself but with the nursing program. The entire program has been a complete and total disappointment so far. My general classes have been quite good. The profs and the course material was adequate.
- 914: I find that the nursing program's CBL process does not give enough direction in terms of theory-based learning. Many students are not sure whether the information they have collected was sufficient enough for the optimal increase in nursing knowledge-base.
- 1166: and the university has a horrible program for anthropology and archaeology. If I had known how poor it was before entering I would have gone elsewhere like U of C or UBC. I am incredibly disappointed with the University of Alberta, and would like to see things change, but by the time they do, I will be finished. I will not even think of doing my Masters at this institution
- 1294: Courses offered in the Ed After Degree program (especially psychology) are extremely mundane, repetitive and a waste of money if you already have a BA.

## **Value of Undergraduate Study to the University (6)**

- 62: The university could greatly improve the quality of the educational experience it provides students by making more of a commitment to undergraduate study,
- 121: Overall I believe the University of Alberta to be a good place for me to get my degree, though I sometimes doubt that it is an undergraduate-based institution (that not enough attention is paid to undergraduate studies as opposed to research etc.). The biggest issue I have is the rigidity of the degree programs. I entirely resent the fact that people have to take courses that have absolutely nothing to do with their program of study. Core courses are a complete sham and money grab and I abhor being forced to take them. Another, similar, problem is that the course requirements for some majors/minors are badly thought out. For example, a course about medieval Japan does not count towards a major of Ancient and MEDIEVAL History! That is ridiculous. There are more examples than that, but that gets the point across.
- 127: I believe the U of A has many strengths, unfortunately it has too high of an emphasis on improving its research image, instead of the quality of teaching undergrads.
- 670: I was enrolled in the Faculty of Science (1999- Dec 2003). That faculty is entirely too focused on graduate studies, and most of the senior courses are very much intended for those people, and students who aren't planning to pursue graduate studies in science are not having their educational needs met well.
- 879: I have found that undergrads do not seem as important to the university as graduates. My best-friend ended up dropping out of school because she became very sick and the reason was undiagnosed for months. Her grandma, to who she was very close, died the semester before just before exams and so my friends deferred all her exams and then because of her illness was not able to write them. She asked the school if she could just take the entire semester over, but because she did not take any of her finals failed all her courses and was subsequently kicked out of University. Yet I have a Grad school friend who had cancer and was therefore not able to keep a full course load and not only was the university completely understanding about it they extended her funding another year. So my one friend gets kicked out of school because she is sick and unable to complete her exams and my other is sick, is unable to pull a complete course load and gets more funding. I do not think that there is equal treatment between undergrads and graduate students and that is to me a major problem.
- 995: After having experienced post-secondary at Grant MacEwan, the University has been a considerably more negative experience. There is a general attitude of uncaring towards undergrads.

## **Competitiveness Concerning GPA and Program Admission (5)**

- 651: GPA averages are becoming too high to compete with. my problem is that I have been trying to switch into Kinesiology from Phys Ed. and this year is my last chance. I only have 1 more kinesiology course to graduate and 6 for Phys Ed. however, if my GPA isn't high enough (over 3.2) I may not get in and have to graduate as a phys ed student and all my science education is wasted and traded in for dance and gymnastics. I have been trying to switch since I got here 2 years ago (I didn't have physics 30 so they put in phys ed) and with a GPA of 3.0 I might not get in. some things here are just not individualized/tailored to a student's wants/needs of what they would like to do once they graduate. Before I transferred here I had a GPA of over 3.5 which would have been more than acceptable to get into kinesiology.
- 765: this university is a great place. the most intimidating thing is how competitive it is. I shouldn't be surprised because everyone wants to be on top. it would be nice to feel like students want to help each other and not sabotage each other.
- 794: Q 24 - We NEVER know what the grades are of the other students in the TL-DL program. I have just completed my fifth course in this program and have yet to know how the others in the courses have been graded! My marks are good enough for me but there are times when it would be nice to know how the others did!
- 1049: It seems that the competitive nature of the university detracts from my education. I am generally more worried about keeping my grades above a certain point than truly understanding the material and concepts presented. For example, I have had exams where 15% of the final exam was based on one paragraph of material covered for two minutes in class. I do not believe that this is indicative of the level of learning achieved. Rather this is an indication of one's ability to memorize and regurgitate facts, which is not what I believe a university education is about.
- 1277: The marks to get into programs in the University are also getting out of hand. It is getting so that you need a 3.7 to get into anything, however the marking prevents all but maybe 5 or 10% of the students to get into these programs.

## **Technology in the Classroom (4)**

- 706: The push for more technology in the classroom has had strong negative impacts on many courses I've been in. Some instructors view having web notes and/or PowerPoint slides as being mandatory;

that they MUST use these resources. In my experience, professors that have made extensive use of these have had LESS satisfying courses than those I've had that simply write on an overhead. There is a strong tendency to simply show dozens of PowerPoint slides without actually explaining anything. The end result is that as a student I have learned very little as nothing has been explained to me, and that the sheer volume of information covered during the term is overwhelming (75 slides/hour\*3 hours/week\*12 weeks=2700 slides).

- 932: There should be a ban on PowerPoint notes being used in class. The second I see another prof using PowerPoint next year, is the same second I will quit showing up for their class, just like this year. I'm paying to be taught from a professor, not a screen. I might as well read out of my textbook (as I do when they use PowerPoint anyways) instead of going to class. Also, ample time should be given for midterms/finals. Being marked on a curve and also being restricted with time pretty much makes it a race to see how much you can get done as fast as possible. Some people aren't necessarily worse at the class, but need just a few more minutes of analyzing problems before they can get into it. Unlike my professors, I don't have a PhD and therefore can not simply look at a question and know the answer/procedure right away. 50 minutes for a midterm is not acceptable. These two issues are pretty much the worst two I have encountered this year.
- 1285: Some profs abuse PowerPoint presentations, allowing them to zoom through loads of information in a matter of minutes. Since PowerPoint makes it so easy for profs to go quickly, they must realize that students may not be able to keep up. PowerPoint is good as long as profs don't go way too fast, or load slides with excess info.
- 1225: There seems to be an obsession with technology this survey. My worst lecture of my entire university career was done by PowerPoint for every single lecture. The best lectures used only a white boards or black boards (no over heads, handouts, webpage, etc). Crappy profs can make up for poor teaching/English by providing excellent handouts/webpage use. In the end, I might have fallen asleep through every single lecture, but as long as I had the handouts, I learned the same amount as if the prof was half decent (happened for two lectures)

### **Leniency of University Requirements (3)**

- 33: I've found that the academic standards at this university are too low. Increased enrollment has lead to many students in classes who do not deserve to be there. On almost a daily basis, class time is wasted by students who do not understand how to behave in a classroom environment, or when it is quiet, there are always questions being asked which demonstrate a complete lack of understanding in the class material. The lack of intelligence and understanding of my fellow students often reminds me of a junior high school environment



and not a post secondary institution. Frequently I am disgusted that a large portion of my peers are receiving the same degree that I am. Unfortunately it appears that profs often end up teaching to the lowest students in the class, which leads to a painful experience for the top students in the class. I notice this the most when it comes to group projects. In almost every group project I have had the misfortune of working on, I've found that my peers have much lower standards than I do, and if they are only capable or willing to work towards a B, that will substantially lower my GPA, so I'm forced to do the majority, and in some cases, the entire assignment or project so that my grades are not negatively impacted. Also, groups like the student's union always promote extracurricular activities. I have found that if I want to maintain a reasonably acceptable GPA (3.75 or higher) it is impossible for me to become involved in other activities, especially when I require 6 courses per term for the entirety of my academic career. With the quantity of work given, it is impossible to become involved in much more than homework. It is about time that some of the student's union or university committees actually talked to real students taking full course loads about the university experience, and not the students who take 2 classes a term and claim it to be strenuous on top of their committee responsibilities. It appears to me that the university does not fully understand the university experience, and how negative it can be, especially for students who hope to pursue grad studies and aren't willing to take 5 or more years to complete their degrees.

- 450: Communication skills are a vital aspect of a good University education, and I am very much disappointed that the U of A is decreasing the required amount of English credits for non-English majors. It looked like it was being disregarded before they lowered the standards...
- 1163: I don't feel as though the university cares at all how much I learn. they seem to be content with pushing me through classes, learning only the most general concepts and taking my money for it. it seems as though the programs are geared toward individuals who see learning as just an obstacle to their career, which alienates all those who really enjoy and want an in-depth understanding of all the subject matter. I'm quite confident that just about anyone who enters into the university can easily drift through with just vague idea of the broadest of concepts taught in their courses and come out holding a piece of paper that symbolizes nothing but better employability. The "education" I've received is a farce, especially considering the five thousand I spill out every year to sit in a class of a hundred people just to have some monotone professor natter at me about concepts so general and superficial they can't be bothered to show any interest. If you're going to put me into dept up to my neck, at least give me my money's worth. Now I can understand that the people who read this aren't at all the one's to blame. In that case I apologize if I've insulted you. I hate getting yelled at for someone else's decisions, but

hopefully you can use this to show those who are responsible just how discontent I am with my university experience.

## **Other (8)**

- 753: I would REALLY appreciate if the U of A would try and make the transition from high school to first year smoother. The workload and expectations increases exponentially and it would be nice if first year students are allowed to SLOWLY adapt to the University environment. Also, almost no time can be spent for extracurricular activities, if semi-decent and decent grades are desired, but that's probably just for first year engineering students. The work to play ratio in my life after University began September is practically unacceptable.
- 797:also, there should be some system where 8 of our best tenured professors DO NOT go on sabbatical in the same year
- 851: As for academics, I hold this University very high. It is well known and holds up high in national/international standards.
- 1145: It also seems too much time is spent trying to do well on exams rather than learning. You would think the two go hand in hand but often they don't. Peace.
- 1268: People also have to learn that University is to learn, not have their education handed to them on a silver platter. You have to work and you will most likely have to teach yourself, regardless of whether or not the professors and TAs can speak English. We are not at daycare.
- 1058: also I feel my grades were not poor, just that it seemed I was below the class average.
- 321:3.the transferring of credits from another university
- 449:Graduate level programs are often expressed as unreachable goals to students, and courses taken at other institutions are not easily transferable to UofA

## ***Quality of Instructional Staff***

### **Language Barrier (41)**

- 12: Seriously, get more English speaking TA's. It is extremely difficult for those in my labs who have little understanding of the field to grasp what is needed to be successful in the lab.
- 36:My biggest concern is the lack of English skills exhibited by my TAs
- 38: The University really needs to concentrate on hiring math and statistics professors who are understandable. With the complete and

utter failure of the high school math curriculum to prepare students for university math, students really don't need yet another barrier to learning.

- 88: overall, my first year has been ok. only a couple of complaints: some teachers and TAs have poor English skills. I think that there should be a better screening process.
- 127: Many profs have terrible English skills which adversely affects my learning and enjoyment in that class. Some rare profs however, are extraordinary.
- 162: English language skills are key to the learning environment! There is nothing worse than trying to learn from someone that you have to teach English to. Instructors, be they TA's, sessionals, or tenure tracks NEED to be able to communicate.
- 214: The most significant problem in instruction at the University is English language proficiency. Having a professor who does not speak English well GREATLY affects learning. Overall I have greatly enjoyed studying at this university
- 298: As far as professors go, I have not encountered any whom I could not understand. This is an important issue though. If students' cannot understand the material being thought, and above that what the professor is saying, class and life can become more stressful than it already is.
- 306: I think the good experiences weigh out the bad. I think the majority of my bad experiences occurred in the first two years when it was more likely to have a TA who didn't speak English and a prof that just didn't care
- 364: The only teacher I had problems with in terms of their English skills was Alice Kin, and it effected my grades a lot so I feel that communication skills are important to learn.
- 423: Lack of English language skills causes a lot of problems in classes and makes it very difficult to learn
- 435: I cannot emphasize enough how frustrating it is to have a TA that barely speaks English. This has happened in countless courses I have taken. It seems as though the University administration hires these TA's without being concerned for the academic welfare of the very students who pay their salaries. It makes students feel worthless and upset.
- 462: Math and Statistics has the worst profs and TA's, especially in stats. My experiences have been the worst in this area, especially due to very low English proficiency.
- 506: professors and TA's who do not speak proficient English (if you can't understand my question, how will I ever get an answer),
- 530: I had a very negative first year, with TAs who couldn't speak English
- 573: The inability of instructors to speak English is frankly ridiculous at this stage in society in North America. If they can not form proper sentences, how can they teach students a difficult concept.

- 612: Since my days of having non-English speaking TAs seem to be over, I remember them being a huge barrier to what I was learning in that particular lab. While I realize this is an international research university and most funding comes from that source, I believe local students should not be disadvantaged by a TA who must teach only because it is a mandatory part of their research contract.
- 620: TAs who were virtually useless because their English was too difficult to follow;
- 650: Also, there are WAY TOO MANY professors/TAs that do not speak good English. How are we supposed to learn if we have trouble understanding what is being said?
- 665: Generally, I am quite satisfied by my experience at the University so far. However, I have had some Prof's that have been quite bad. They didn't connect at all with students and they had poor English language skills which made it difficult to understand what was going on in a lecture intensive class.
- 737: I haven't understood a single word some of my lab TAs have said. It's turned into a bad joke.
- 767: I don't know how many times I've heard horror stories about other first year students getting a prof. or TA that can't speak English. I lucked out and only had one.
- 881: It would also really help my academic performance if Aramark hired someone who can actually speak English.
- 898: I cannot stand all the professors who don't speak English, professors who can't understand a word you're saying are useless; Yungie Xu for example, she doesn't understand two words of English, yet I have to pay 500 just to take her class, which was useless too. I think the university could try to hire more professors who have English as a FIRST language, not a second language.
- 899: The majority of my TA's in Statistics, Math, Physics and Geophysics didn't speak English and couldn't understand questions posed to them.
- 919: One should not be allowed to be a teaching assistant or instructor if you have very poor English skills, or if you don't know how to teach.
- 930: One of the most significant problems I had was teachers who had a heavy to moderate accent. Anything taught in that class would be unprocessed because students spend class time trying to decode the messages. It's not fair for the price we pay...and I pay all my tuition from paid hourly wages.
- 975: TA's who do not speak fluent English should not be "teaching" classes, as it greatly detracts from the learning ability of almost everybody in the class when we can't understand what they are saying or when they have no clue what we are asking because they don't understand us.
- 1009: Most professors don't speak good English! This is Canada!

- 1010: I understand that for ESL (English second language) Masters students' need to be a Ta's as part of their program, but there has to be at least one non-ESL TA should be a requirement for any course.
- 1022: I have had good experiences at the University so far. My biggest concern would be those teachers whose English is very unclear. Although these teachers are no less knowledgeable in their field it is extremely hard to learn in an environment when you spend the whole time trying to figure out what your prof has been saying.
- 1030: Too many poor English speaking immigrants are involved with the University.
- 1042: Because of the lack of instructor availability, a reliance on TAs has developed, yet it has been my experience that some TAs are awful, being both indifferent and incomprehensible. TAs should take mandatory verbal English tests. If students can't understand most of what a TA is saying, they should not be a TA, end of discussion.
- 1057: I also have had problems with profs who know their material but aren't well versed in English and are hard to understand... But it's a hard line to draw.
- 1058: I had many professors who lacked English proficiency,
- 1113: And the TA's with good English skills is of utmost importance. Overall though, I'm glad I was able to attend the institution.
- 1121: I began in the Faculty of Science, and I left because the T.A.s speak unintelligible English - to the point where it was hindering my education and ability to receive help. I am having better success at maintaining a consistently acceptable grade average in Arts. Overall I am happy with my professors, and satisfied with my (Arts) education thus far.
- 1145: You had many questions about the professors and the ones that stand out are "good communication skills" and "speak good English" because it absolutely amazes everybody how many professors and TA's (>0) there are who cannot be understood. This is definitely very frustrating and very unacceptable.
- 1164: I hate having to try and decode whatever a prof has to say, I spend more time in class trying to figure out if the prof meant to say train-hardening or strain-hardening. Need more white people that speak English
- 1233: TA's in the lab that actually can understand you would definitely be an improvement, especially where chemistry is concerned
- 1285: I was in general Sciences before entering pharmacy... in general sciences, the English skills of the professors was much lower and if they spoke better English, that would have helped a lot

## **Training and Hiring of Instructors (11)**

- 192: Some instructors really need to be interviewed more closely before being allowed to teach.

- 292: I would like to see individuals with graduate degrees teaching professional degree students and not just teachers with a professional degree in that field
- 312: This is a teaching university; instructors who cannot teach should not be here, period.
- 321: professors not actually knowing how to teach (this is particularly noticeable as I am an Education student).
- 449: It should be a requirement for all professors at the University to have some sort of training in the educational field so that they may be able to better pass on knowledge to their students.
- 518: More effort should be made to employ profs who are enthusiastic and thoroughly knowledgeable about their area of teaching. Being knowledgeable, however, means nothing if there is no ability to teach. I have had many profs who can't seem to communicate well with the class as a whole. Especially regarding the cost of tuition, we should be getting profs who are willing and capable of teaching instead of just handing out multiple choice exams. (class size could also play a factor in this problem).
- 638: Instructors should take some kind of teaching course. It is very frustrating to have an instructor who knows a LOT about the subject, but has absolutely no idea how to effectively convey their knowledge to students who do not know nearly as much as them. Basically, they are not effective teachers.
- 780: I think professors also need to be hired on their ability to teach rather than just do research. Many of my profs can't see outside their office and I suffer because of that. I'm not paying tuition so they can ignore me in the classroom and have them care less about the courses that form my foundation as a professional in the industry. No wonder so many students in my year are unemployed.
- 903: The professors have all been horrible showing poor teaching skills and no clearly indicating what the concepts of the class are.
- 1012: I feel that there is not enough of a focus on finding professors who are also good teachers. The few that are really stand out. I also believe that upon reaching tenure, there is no review process and teachers get worse. I also feel that there should be more of a focus on obtaining non-tradition teachers and more use of guest speakers to help extend the scope from pure academics. I also feel co-op programs should be expanded.
- 1042: As well, some of the sessional instructors are extremely poor. Too many times instructors do not understand what they are teaching and are confused by the most simple of student queries. The university's reliance on under-qualified instructors as a cost-cutting measure is pitiful. However, to the credit of the university, all faculty professors that I have had so far have been exceptional. I just wish there were more of them. Incredibly frustrating is how class size seems to be directly related to faculty.

## **Students' Expectations for classes and Instructors (11)**

- 154: I feel strongly that students are not well respected by university staff. I also feel strongly that other students talking in class and disrespecting professors has negatively affected my learning and academic success and contributes to the lack of respect that students receive. I would like to see strict penalties enforced for talking in class and wish that other students would make their best effort to arrive on time, not disrupt the class by waltzing in late and waking right in front of the prof! (I see this all the time and it blows me away!) and turning off their cell-phones.
- 337: Another quality that makes a good teacher is reviewing material in the present lecture from the previous lecture.
- 367: The part about what is important in a prof-how can you pick five- all of those qualities are important but I guess I would say experience, enthusiasm, communication, and that they care about you are the most important.
- 377: Overall, I must say that I love the U of A, all it has to offer and the environment and people I have met here. I'm having a great time. My only really concern is that as my courses are getting harder, I've noticed that many of professors present the material rather than teaching it. I, as would most of my classmates, would really appreciate a thorough explanation of concepts rather than a brief outline. Thanks for sending me the survey!
- 471: I'm also very annoyed when teachers don't put up their past exams to study from just because they don't want to make up a new exam - it's a primary study aid and it gives a good idea of class difficulty when you are trying to pick a class.
- 742: The instructor has the greatest impact on my success, if the instructor loves what they are teaching, is organized, and interested in the students actually understanding the concepts, I will do well. Exams should be similar format to the assignments.
- 773: Computing Science Programs should offer a greater selection of third and fourth year courses. The professors should be chosen on their ability to relate concepts to students, rather than just being experts in their field.
- 905: So far, I felt that I had to pay too much tuition compared to the academic helps or academic needs that I wanted (such as, getting helps from the prof. etc.). Since I'm an international student, I have to pay approx. twice the amount of the tuition of the other (normal) students. Because of that reason, I do really care about the classes (teaching environment) and the instructors' attitude towards the students (one prof that I had last year didn't help me at all for any questions that I asked just because the question was so easy for him, in fact it was really hard problem for me). In my opinion, it is very problematic to have instructors who do not respect their students or

having critical English problems (in either speaking or writing). Other than that, I'm very satisfied with U of A.

- 1003: I think that it important to have prof that have experience in the field, so that they can give examples of practical experience in the field. I have had 2 extreme cases one prof who did not have a degree in the course she was teaching, and a second is a prof who was in post secondary until he was 35, then he began teaching and has very little practical experience. The prof where I feel I have learned the most has extensive experience in the field, and I motivated to learn more in his classes.
- 1117: Professors need to connect with students and show more interest in them, and their students and/or personal lives. Otherwise we don't care either about their class because they don't care about us. If we see a prof working hard to know us, we are motivated to know them and the subject matter becomes more interesting. Profs can teach us more than just subject material. They know the field, etc. but they need to be available to students.
- 1284: - More meaningful interaction with instructors and instructors that care about students are absolutely essential.

### **Instructors Focused on Research (10)**

- 174: I feel that to the University we are just a bunch of students with ID numbers. We are not recognized as students, but just as numbers. I also feel that based on the amount of money I am paying for each course, I should be getting the best education seeing as the U of A is one of the more expensive universities to attend. However, I find that a lot of the professors are foreigners doing research and who MUST teach in order to receive a grant. So really, they do not care about their students, they come to class, teach in a monotone voice, bore you to death so that you are discouraged from taking a higher level course.
- 204: The questions that asked about "How do I feel about instructors"... A majority of the time I feel that instructors just come to class to fulfill their requirement of teaching so that they can continue on with their research. The best class I ever had was one where the professor WANTED to teach us, had an open door policy, and had a full grasp of the course material. Everyone clapped for that prof. I had him for 2 classes, both classes everyone clapped. As for the other profs, they usually don't even come close for even a thank you. But, to who ever reads this, this is only from what I feel as being in Electrical Engineering, taught by engineering prof's.... instructors should be forced to give feedback, to talk to the students, to interact, to give positive advice about the world "out there", rarely does that happen! Thank you for hearing my rant...



- 419: Large class sizes don't matter as long as the professor is available for consult either after class or during office hours. Many professors that set office hours are not always around during them making some large classes difficult to learn in. The U of A is a research university, but some professors who need to fulfill their teaching requirements should not make teaching seem like a chore
- 530: From the lack of quality of teaching I'm seeing in the science department (especially in the chemistry labs), I'm beginning to believe that this university is more focused on its research credits than its ability to incorporate student needs into the university's operations.
- 532: It seems, as of late, there has been more of a focus by profs towards personal research and grad studies and not towards the education and instruction of undergrads. For some profs it seems like teaching undergrad classes is a burden and they treat it very lightly. Though there are two profs (Dr. Burch [Phil] and Dr. Mos [Psych]) who have completely broken this mold and have saved my opinion of undergrad instruction at the U of A.
- 589: -Most profs at this University care more about their research grants than teaching and their students. -Instructors should be required to take 'effective teaching' courses before being allowed to teach. -The U of A seems more interested with being a business than being an academic institution.
- 612: I have been very satisfied with the quality of teaching in the last 1-1 1/2 years here, and feel that professors' research endeavors have not interfered with their teaching ability. Many of my professors are teachers only second to researchers, but as of late, their zealous nature for the things they study manifests itself in how they teach, and it is interesting to get first hand knowledge of groundbreaking science and conservation issues.
- 650: Also, many professors are just not good instructors. Most are very knowledgeable in their area of study, but just because they are doing good research, that doesn't mean they can teach well. The U of A needs to focus on quality instruction rather than research.
- 745: Anyway, bottom line quality of instruction is poor, profs want to research not instruct. I have had one professor tell the class "I make \$140,000 a year regardless how many people are in my class so if you don't like my instruction transfer". That shows what we put up with.
- 1027: I personally believe that the University of Alberta has become too research oriented and by becoming so has lost touch with its goal of being a teaching facility. Many professors in my field (psychology) have been terrible lecturers and are obviously more concerned with their research than in their students' learning. Upon coming to the U of A from Grant MacEwan I was extremely disappointed and disheartened with this. If I had to do it all over again, I would not finish my degree at the U of A.

## **Instructors' Interest Perceived Interest in Teaching (4)**

- 374: Instructors who are not interested in what they are teaching have a great impact on my attitude towards University education.
- 418: One last thing - I hate classes in which the teacher is boring, or the content covered in class is EXACTLY the same as what is in the textbook. There are far too many classes like that at the university. However, there were a few noteworthy ones where the teacher just loved what they were teaching, and it really made a difference for me. As a future teacher, I feel rewarded by that demonstration of passion while I am a student. I really need that, and there should be more of that.
- 477: A lot of my negative comments towards professors at the University is basically resulting from one Professor. I'm frustrated that my negative teacher evaluation has had no on this individual. He is not engaged in teaching and should have retired a long time ago. I feel the University should be able to let go profs who have been at the University more than a decade but are not performing up to the standards,
- 497: Without a doubt, teachers make or break the post-secondary learning environment. I've had three teachers over two years that stand above the rest in terms of student-teacher involvement, passion and depth of knowledge. Those three classes are, frankly, the only three that have really made me feel that I was getting an exceptional education (and, might I add, the course material they were teaching had nothing to do with my interests). Also, teaching that goes beyond the theoretical basics are very much appreciated. I want depth, meaning and a sense of tangibility in my courses. I want to know that what I'm learning applies to real life. For instance, in poli. sci., I don't want to be taught the mere theoretical definition of "orientalism". I want to see it in action, I want to understand the theory's critiques, and I want to work with the theory myself. I hope all of that made sense!

## **Instructor Organization and Preparedness (4)**

- 620: but in undergrad my key concerns were profs with disorganized difficult to follow lectures,
- 642: I have some great prof's at the U of A. However, in general I find that prof's are not teaching at a university level. They are incredibly disorganized and waste a lot of time encouraging class participation. I don't believe that it is a professor's job to motivate students. Classes are expensive: this is the motivation!
- 1057: It is hard to judge the general quality of profs on campus, as they differ greatly. I have had profs this year who are terribly

disorganized, waste class time with pointless stories, regularly started class 15 min. late, offended students, etc. I have also had profs this year who are excellent; they know their material, they teach it well, they are passionate about it, and they make me want to learn more. I believe the profs I've had who aren't as good have been rated poorly before, yet they continue to teach without improving their methods in the wake of complaints... Something should be done to make professors more accountable, maybe an official sitting in on classes here and there to make sure quality is maintained in teaching.

- 1186: I realize the nursing after degree program is still being developed, however I have been disappointed in the level of disorganization and poor (lack of) instruction/feedback I have received from my instructors

### **Teaching Assistant Quality (4)**

- 167: Competent TA's in labs would be nice -The teaching abilities of the professors should be made consistent. (There are way too many professors out there who may be great researchers but do not know how to teach). -If the above is not satisfied then good professors who end up having students from other classes sit in on their lectures should be given larger classrooms.
- 174: I also feel the same way about the TA's. In all the labs that I have I have not actually encountered a TA who actually cares about the students. Maybe there are TA's who do care about their students and in the 6 labs that I have had, I just have had bad luck. But that is a lot of labs to have bad luck in. Also, the Chemistry department has TA's teaching students how to carry out labs when the students can barely understand what the TA is saying. So if a student is to do something wrong, it is their fault since they would ask the TA how to do it, but what is the point since the TA can barely understand what it is that you are saying and you cannot understand what they are trying to explain to you. I think that the University needs to smarten up its act in terms of the language and teaching skills of their professors and TA's. The students pay a large sum of money to get a good education. We get a good education, however the teaching staff just suck!
- 286: I like how it goes, but I think the TA's are not very good at times.
- 289: The prof's that I have had that are graduate students have been a million times better than actual professors. Aside from one or two profs, the quality of my instruction, as well as the selection of classes has been very poor.
- 419: In addition, graduate students that work with these professors are excellent mentors and advisors.

## **First year classes (2)**

- 650: Instruction at the UofA is somewhat lacking, specifically in first year courses. Instruction gets much better as you start to specialize in your program.
- 671: I have found that the first year courses, and more general courses I have taken seem to be the ones in which the professor was not meeting my standards, and that in general, the class sizes were also larger. The courses offered specific to my faculty have very good professors who are interested in their own work as well as my education, they make an effort as to getting to know myself and others in the class.

## **Positive comments (11)**

- 306: My third year of university has been excellent. The classes are smaller, I know all my classmates and the prof knows me by name. Profs have gone out of their way to help me find a summer job, give me a reference or keep an eye out for potential employers.
- 327: I love the AFHE faculty and courses. The class sizes are small and the profs go above and beyond the call of duties, they actually care about how well you do.
- 648: The faculty in the department of anthropology is the best professors I have had in my four years at the U of A. They care a lot about their students and all are very knowledgeable about what they are teaching. I transferred to Arts from Science because of this; the science professors were boring, unenthusiastic, and generally seemed like they would rather have been doing anything but teaching. It is very hard to have to work when you are in school, especially when you are competing with students whose parents are paying for everything and who have all weekend to get their assignments done.
- 930: Most teachers I have encountered are very passionate and knowledgeable about what they teach. That's awesome
- 1132: Thanks for the opportunity to participate in this survey. Generally, I'm extremely impressed with the caliber of instruction at the law faculty. It surpasses all of that present in my other university experiences (undergrad and grad).
- 1148: It is hard to generalize three years worth of profs and TAs, most things averaged to be a three, but as far a first year goes the university experience was much more negative and stressful. Now that I am in my specialization, the teachers are more engaging, interaction with profs and students has increased. Now my university experience is much more positive and my marks have also have fallowed suite.
- 1277: I have for the most part had descent professors, and the majority of them are enthusiastic about teaching and seem to care.

- 1288: I found the quality of teaching in the geology dept to be very good. The teaching in the 1st year science dept however I found to be less satisfactory. Classes are very competitive due partly to their size.
- 721: Dr. Ruth DyckFehderau is the best prof. I've ever had.
- 881: Get more teachers like Carmen Ropchan and the world would be a much better place.
- 1120: Some professors have been excellent. One math prof, Dragos Hermiak, I'm not sure of the spelling of his last name. He was a great prof.

## **Negative comments (8)**

- 622: Class sizes never bother me, but assigning inappropriate professors to courses they cannot teach does.
- 502: I have only had a couple of bad professors (or TAs), but their impact has been great. I hope that the evaluations are taken seriously!
- 573: Rating the teachers section was very difficult as I have had some teachers that have excelled in certain areas and are amazing teachers. Yet about 40% of my teachers I would deem inadequate for the cost of my education. I did not transfer from another school, but have a degree from NAIT and can compare my schooling to there. Although a higher standard is set by the UofA, NAIT offered much better quality of instruction. If NAIT was more difficult i.e. did not allow inadequate students to graduate, they would blow the UofA out of the water
- 738: I am very upset with my U of A education, and am kicking myself in the butt for not going to another institution. Never will I recommend the U of A to anyone. The professors however, are awesome and teach with so much knowledge and passion, it's the only good thing I can say that the U of A has given to me for a \$30 000 price tag.
- 899: As a student at the UofA for 6 years, I've seen just about everything. The majority of my profs were not teachers; they were experts in their field that couldn't bring material down to their student's levels.
- 1113: Seriously, some profs were absolutely horrible. For my money, I expect quality instruction which in many cases did not happen.
- 1120: I've had horrible profs too. The TA's in my faculty (Comp Sci) usually aren't very good, I'm in the process of completing a course where in the lab we get no explanation from the TA on how to complete the lab, and we are not allowed to ask him for help in certain areas of the Labs. It is written into the lab that we will receive a zero if we ask for help with our code, and this was a course with a heavy programming requirement. He speaks very poor English, and when questions are asked that he should know, he often has no idea. This is not the first time I've had a TA like this and it probably won't be the last

- 287: Math 300 is the worst course ever, everything about my life at U of A has been positive until I met captain confusion, Dr. Kunzle... smart man, but lets be honest, nobody has any idea what he is talking about

## **Other (2)**

- 851: Unfortunately it is very difficult to monitor progress on a micro scale as it is in the classroom. Some professors are exceptional at teaching, while others lack compassion or enthalpy for a students studies.
- 1208: Most positive values given refer to a handful of professors. Professors at the U of A are somewhat average. This could either be because of the fact that I compare them to the few exceptional professors, or they really are just "average".

## **Costs**

### **Lower Tuition Costs (25)**

- 20:Also tuition needs to be lowered so people in lower income areas have the opportunity to go to university because it is not only tuition that is expensive it's also the cost of living that is very difficult.
- 62: increasing accessibility by decreasing tuition,
- 142: Rising cost of education is a significant problem - the recent Klein freeze of tuition is welcome but we need a permanent solution that not only increases the number of spots available but also the decreases/keeps the same the cost of university.
- 226: My main concerns with my post-secondary education are: tuition, grades and the quality of education. Since I don't usually have the grades for scholarships I end up working the entire summer to pay for school but even then I can't make enough money. So I work during the school year which cuts into my study time which means my grades drop which means I won't get the scholarships for next year.
- 293: Interesting One comment about Phys and Rec why do activity class (PAC) cost the same amount as any other academic credit course?
- 295: The cost of tuition is constantly going up but as it does this it does not reflect the quality of learning at the University. As a co-op

student I am forced to take correspondence classes as there are no classes that fit into my schedule. I work a part time job and have student loans to pay off so I am not able to take night classes. This issue should be addressed b/c I know I am not the only student who would like affordable Secondary Education

- 356: Overall my University experience is good. I would come back, if I could afford it (which is questionable).
- 449: Tuition is extremely high, especially for the impersonal service we receive from most of our prof's.
- 557: Please stop increasing the tuitions for out-of-faculty purposes.
- 645: I feel that the cost of education at the University of Alberta is becoming so high, that Post-Secondary Education is becoming inaccessible to many people.
- 670: And differential tuition for Law - to which I have applied, (and the other faculties subjected to it) is a ridiculous idea that is only going to dissuade students from coming to the U of A.
- 708: With the cost of education increasing it gets harder to afford any education especially if you are getting older. How are we, as students, expected to become professionals in Alberta if we can't afford the education, and if we work we can't get the necessary grades? What's the solution?
- 784: I have to say the same thing everyone else probably does, that school is WAY too expensive in such a rich province, and that I can only afford to buy one textbook per semester. It sucks man...Also, ppl keep telling me that my \$15,000 BSc is worthless and that hurts...make it worth something.
- 825: Tuition is WAY too high. I am now in debt because I cannot cover tuition on my own, and my parents won't help. The student services financial aid won't help either. This causes a lot of unnecessary stress, which has affected my grades, because I am forced to work practically full time. I don't have the necessary study time, because I'm trying just to pay my tuition. This is a big problem that many people face, and it should be rectified. Most of the tuition isn't even for class, but for government, or "beautifying" the school. This is unnecessary. Thanks
- 869: The factor that has negatively affected my academic performance is financial duress. Both lack of adequate funding from student loans and their max. lifetime limit has placed undue stress not only on my academic performance but also on my personal mental and physical wellbeing. while I do not care to elaborate on my present circumstances in this study, I do intend to take time this summer to voice these concerns through the appropriate channels. Should you wish to discuss these matters further, I would be willing to meet directly with those concerned. I can be contacted at [ksprague@ualberta.ca](mailto:ksprague@ualberta.ca)
- 905: So far, I felt that I had to pay too much tuition compared to the academic helps or academic needs that I wanted (such as, getting

helps from the prof. etc.). Since I'm an international student, I have to pay approx. twice the amount of the tuition of the other (normal) students.

- 924: Tuition needs to decrease, but without a marked decrease in quality of service or accessibility of gov't student loans need to increase.
- 946: As would linking tuition increases to inflation instead of being so erratic
- 1160: School is too expensive. it can be too competitive to obtain scholarships, and is tough to work while going to school. My parents do NOT have enough money to help support me as my brother is also going to school full time. University is not as great as I had hoped it would be. I am disappointed.
- 1057: My other complaint is that tuition is increasingly high, but I'm sure that's tops most everyone's list :) I am lucky for my parents who assist me financially though I will be repaying them once I have a steady job following my degree.
- 1132: <1> that the differential tuition is staggeringly huge (and might prevent me from finishing the program, as I have not in the past been able to qualify for scholarships and bursaries) -
- 1166: Cost of schooling is OUTRAGEOUS,
- 1252: Increases in tuition will continue to be a problem for students, hindering what potential they may have. Quite sad really.
- 1277: Tuition is too high.
- 589: -Tuition is ridiculously high and the University can and should do more to secure government funding. Furthermore, this university's elitist sense to make education accessible to only the wealthy and raise entrance requirements will only harm the institution - this is a public facility. -

## **Financial Assistance (18)**

- 13: Third most important financial assistance scholarships AND employment contributing roughly the same amount. I indicated only employment.
- 14: Funding; It's becoming too hard to get funding from the government and from the province. I have to work full time to barely get by, I don't qualify for student loans and I have no other financial options. What is a student to do? Most of us don't qualify for loans because of our student status, or haven't been out of the house for 4 years. If I had waited/worked 2 years prior to entering into university my grades wouldn't have been good enough, now an 85% average means nothing as far as entrance grades go! I wish the SU would work more on making the financial assistance office less hostile towards students who come to them for help. More options should be available to make education more accessible. Nobody should have to



work full-time and go to school full time, it's too hard on their grades and the student themselves. I'm very disappointed in the quality of help from the University.

- 19: There is clearly not enough funding because even with loans and my summer job I can't make enough to not burden my parents with my financial troubles.
- 27: I am a student who can not get a student loan and was surprised to find that the Student's Unions main bursary fund was directed to people who could or who had loans. I was not allowed a bursary do to the fact that I never applied for a loan (knowing I would not get one), is there possibly a way to fix this so those of us out there whose parents make money but are not supporting us can share in the pie?
- 118: There needs to be more focus on making scholarships, bursaries, and loans available to the middle-class, who do not have the money for school but are considered to have too much money to qualify for loans or to be considered as having "financial need". Also, I think that when calculating averages for scholarships etc. the number of classes should be taken into account. It is not fair for a person taking 5 classes to be judged against someone taking 4. The workload is not at all comparable.
- 145: One thing I would like to say about Financial Services is that the scholarships etc are abundant, but they are so hard to discover and apply for on time. There should be an automated online database wherein I plug in my program, year, etc, and applicable awards are emailed to me so I can apply for them. I would also like credit for the idea when it goes online! This survey should have been chopped up in at least 5 pages to prevent loss and make it more digestible.
- 84: Lack of funding from the government is to blame for most of the universities problems. The students union is to blame for not making it a public issue nearly enough. An advertising campaign with television and newspaper coverage is the only way to increase public support of government funding to the university.
- 279: My first choice of money through parents are from the Canadian Scholarship fund and my Father's work provides money for my school as well. When those dry-up I will definitely have to apply for Student loans, but I am probably ineligible because of household earnings. Money I will therefore probably have to borrow from parents will likely be repaid.
- 312: We need more bursaries. Scholarships for students in science.
- 329: Bursaries and scholarships, particularly for those who are in greater need of financial assistance is important. I know a girl who really needs assistance; she works p/t, her family is poor, but when she went to apply for one of the bursaries, the person who she had to see was VERY rude and made her feel guilty and unworthy of it. She ended up not applying for it, even though she needs it.
- 350: I find the University does not offer enough assistance to students in need.

- 354: Another challenge I faced this year was financial--I was not given ANY student loans (provincial or federal) and am relying on a student line of credit to see me through
- 404: Scholarships should be more based on need than grades
- 515: I would like to see more scholarships available to students who are not the single top person, also more scholarships with fewer restrictions of program, gender, ethnicity, where you live, etc. I find some of them discriminatory.
- 664: It really bothers me that so many people slack off prior to coming to University and have no money, so they get grants and scholarships, plus some of their loans are forgiven as well. Just for not having money, they get lots of it for free. Then there's me - I bust my butt for years prior to coming to school and have always worked 50 hours a week in jobs that really suck, and because of that, all I get is a Jason Lang scholarship after getting a 3.5 GPA in engineering. I come from a single parent family with 5 kids and no parental support, get great grades, with expenses of 13,000 a year from rent, insurance, gas, tuition, books, and all the other bills that come with living on your own - and there's a measly 1000 dollars. I mean, all that covers is textbooks for a year! I want to know why people who work hard are rewarded with less compared to people who don't work nearly as hard and are rewarded with more. This is Alberta, and if they're smart enough to be in University, they have no excuse for not working lots when opportunity arises. There's plenty of jobs for every student to work two! Not only that, but the student loan system is set up to help students who's PARENTS don't make much money. Well, what if the parents don't want to help their kid with school? It's not the parents responsibility at all. So how come those students can't get loans then? I think the financial assistance system sucks for all those who have to work hard in school AND outside of school. Here's how it currently works: 1) If a person slacks in the work department and does average in school, he may receive some money based on financial need and how much money the parents make. 2) If he hard to support himself because of financial need and wanting to sacrifice now to avoid student loans, but performs average in school, he or she generally receives nothing. Hmm..... 3) If a person performs excellent in school but doesn't work hard outside of school (resulting in no money), they receive lots of money based on performance and need. 4) This is the group that really sucks to be in: If a person works really hard in school and does well (top 10% of the class), and has no financial assistance, but busts his butt outside of the school to support himself, he receives almost nothing, simply because he's motivated and sacrifices. In other words, I want a scholarship.
- 690: It would be more helpful to international students if there are more scholarship for international undergraduates. Usually, most scholarships are only eligible to Canadian citizens. Yet, the tuition fee of international students is way higher than local students.

- 694: the cost of school is back breaking to those who are burdened by student loans. A general lack of respect by University employees to students. not enough career counseling or help with degree planning.

## **Cost of Textbooks and Other Class Related Materials (11)**

- 89: I am disappointed that with such a high tuition cost that many of the supplies needed in class are not provided and are the students responsibility. At GMCC our supplies were included in tuition and given to us in class.
- 353: I am in a program that straddles education, arts and science courses and it is fairly obvious that most of the funding in this university is going to the faculty of science. It seems to me that Arts and Education students are getting shafted. The most aggravating thing is paying \$5,000 in tuition as an education student, being crammed into a class with hundreds of other students, then being nickled and dimed in class where we are asked to pay anywhere from \$5 to \$15 in classes for "photocopies." Why aren't these expenses paid for by my tuition fees? Meanwhile, science students get twice the instructional time per credit in the form of labs, more support from TAs, and I have yet to be asked for photocopying fees in any science class. In one of my EAS classes, we were told that gas for two fairly extensive field trips was covered by our tuition, yet as an Education student, my tuition doesn't cover even \$5 of photocopies required for class.
- 404: GET RID OF THE BOOK STORE THEY DON'T NEED TO MAKE MONEY OFF STUDENTS.
- 612: I feel that the cost of tuition and textbooks especially are abhorrent. For example, a required \$130 textbook was not referred to ONCE in one of my classes. Shameful to think a poor student trying to get a better education experience is losing money on a textbook
- 670: Textbooks prices are getting ridiculous
- 676: I think the cost of books is outrageous! I think the price of parking is too high
- 1042: I have many gripes with the university. Firstly, the selection of many first year textbooks is quite awful -- they are generally overpriced, poorly phrased, and contain blatant errors. To add insult to injury, the bookstore price gouges students by selling books for above list price. When books are cheaper from Chapters, Amazon and Barnes and Noble, even with shipping, something is horribly wrong. As well, having the bookstore buy back used books at less than half their original cost and reselling them at ~80% of list price is shameful. Why does the book store prey on students when its role is supposed to be to help them?
- 1120: Text book prices are unbelievable, I don't know how you justify forcing students to pay \$150 for a 90 page text books. I can't

complain about tuition because it honestly isn't as bad as most places in Canada.

- 1233: Instead of focusing so much on getting tuition lower, maybe start looking at the cost of textbooks which is often inflated at the University bookstore.
- 1170: on the topic of textbooks- many I have purchased are hardly used except for assignments, some are very difficult to understand, and I will never recoup the losses spent paying for them. they are mostly pretty much useless
- 1203: I think more attention should be paid to field experience, and less to theory. Spend less money on fancy computer labs, and more on practical things like lowering tuition, smaller class sizes, new teachers with spunk. Go easier on the international tuition fees, and any fee raises in general should be only applied to the incoming year (students should not have to pay more each year that they attend). Also, you ask about people working outside of class, but parenting is one thing that is not mentioned. I feel the needs of students that are also parents are often neglected.

## **Cost of Parking and Transportation (2)**

- 431: Transportation is also a big issue. Parking is pricey, and certain bus frequencies are very lacking. In addition, traffic itself on campus is troublesome.
- 960: Textbooks and parking cost too much, buses don't really run in my area so I HAVE to drive, does it really need to cost that much??

## **Other Costs (2)**

- 84: Also, coming from Saskatchewan, I am quite disappointed that the university charges its student to watch university sport. This is not the practice at the university of Saskatchewan and does not make sense
- 1042: The SU seems to cherish a tradition of failure rivaled only by its own lack of imagination when it comes to protecting the well-being of students. Despite the enormous SU fees, it has failed to prevent tuition increases, failed to push for better classroom conditions, and failed to push for greater university administrative accountability. Most students have not benefited from the SU. Yet despite this poor performance, the SU continues to charge excessive dues

## **Satisfied with Tuition Costs and Funding Opportunities (5)**

- 625: We receive lots of funding from the government (~2/3 of the actual cost of our education)
- 793: Thanx for the access fund bursary. It saved my kneecaps.
- 625: Tuition levels are good.
- 1169: I feel that tuition is completely fair for the education we receive. I do not support lowering tuition at all, I feel that we get more than what we pay for. The School of Business has been wonderful to me, and I feel that students that feel they pay too much for school should go out, get involved and see how much the university has to offer.
- 1268: People have to quit whining about tuition costs. University is WAY more expensive in other places and of less quality.

## ***Non-Instructional Staff***

### **Not Satisfied with Program Advisors (22)**

- 8: The faculty advisors for the engineering department, particularly Richard Greene and Ken Porteus, are quite possibly the worst people I have ever met. They consistently put people down, talk down to them and do not assist/aid the students in anyway. It is disappointing that after so many years they are still employed at the University of Alberta. For example how Richard Green has gone so far as to violate a student's HUMAN RIGHTS.
- 266: Advisor availability is often poor.
- 274: Every student should have an advisor that can follow them throughout their career to provide some meaningful advice. In some departments you have that. In my department, the advisors are essentially useless, just words on paper that if you're lucky, you see them once per year. We need some seasoned pros open to ideas to perhaps provide some guidance to students.
- 491: I am disappointed with the lack of service I have received from the advisors within my faculty. Due to poor advising and the lack of service I have had to take courses that I was advised to take, but did not actually need. I have yet to meet or speak to my advisor as the reception in my faculty advises us that we do not need to see them and that reception can answer all our questions. Why do we have advisors if they do not meet with students is that not their key duty, to advise students? The advising staff has also added extra stress to my final year and to my final practicum by being ill informed on what criteria is needed to complete a degree within their own faculty and

advising me that I would not graduate and then later changing their mind and deciding I will now graduate.

- 492: I now have to take 2 spring courses because my questions were not addressed or answered clearly. I think the most difficult part of University is registering in classes and understanding what classes you need to take to fulfill your degree requirements. I know it's a business and I am not complaining about that, but I do think that there should be better assistance provided to those who are coming out of high school or transferring. I just found it a real pain in the ass to organize everything over the internet and could not believe the difficulty I had talking to a person who could finally help me. Once I did get a person to help me they were very nice on the phone, just a little vague about my questions.
- 506: I am currently away on exchange in Australia and having attended another university really highlights the positives about being a UofA student. My only problems with the UofA after three years are: lack of central academic advisors
- 605: The advisors at the U of A suck!!!! Out of everyone who I have ever talked to that has gone to see one they say the same thing, the advisors have no clue about degree requirements, and never seem to have the time to actually do their job properly and help the student out. They always have a meeting to attend or the office is closing early that day. It's kinda funny when you think about this because if it wasn't for the students those hacks would be unemployed. I think they really should think about this fact. They work for us; our tuition goes toward paying their salary. Also with regards to tuition, you can raise it every year within reason. People are very short sighted about this fact, when you are out of school you will make the \$20000 back for tuition the first year of work.
- 642: My other big complaint is the service provided by academic advisors/faculty representatives. I find the people to be impatient, short and often rude. However, I have also used some of the services run by SU and the friendliness and knowledge of these students has GREATLY relieved stress!
- 676: I am kind of confused about what courses I need to take to fulfill my degree and the faculty I am in has not been very helpful.
- 678: My main concern is advisors not caring. I must see several advisers to get my questions finally answered.
- 705: Student advisors, should be there to assist students in planning their academic years, especially when they are graduating and wanting to ensure they have all the correct courses. Being told that the advisors did not have time to make appointments with students is disrespectful since the essence of their job is to help students. What else are they doing with their time? With that I have lost a lot of respect for the university and the current faculty I am enrolled in.
- 720: Just in the past 2 years I have really found that at University it's hard to know what to do. As in what courses to take, what to major in,

what careers are out there for various majors. I also find through talking with other students that although we like what we are learning, we don't think that it will apply to any career. I also feel that as a student asking advisors for help is useless. I once asked for help from one advisor and she responded by saying "You'll have to go on your own time to do because we can't do everything for you guys." WHAT?! I was asking her for help on which elective to take. Needless to say I have never gone back to the advisors.

- 730: Poor advising in the Faculty of Science in general. They were not able to give any meaningful advice on how to improve grades and which courses to pick for my program. This is why I am in AFHE waiting to transfer back to science.
- 791: My biggest complaint about my University experience is that there is not adequate access to program advising related to courses. I am still uncertain as to where to seek assistance with certain course related questions. (and if I do find them, they are often disrespectful or unhelpful).
- 801: I am disappointed with the quality of advising I received. I talked to many different people about getting into the nursing program and they all told me to do different things. It is like no one knows what is going on and just tell you what their guess is. People should get their information straight because students are making serious decisions based on what they are saying.
- 880: I believe that after four years at the U of A, I feel disillusioned and apathetic, this is a university that I would never recommend anyone attend. The professors were great but they polarized between exceptionally easy to exceptionally hard. THE ABSOLUTE WORST PART OF MY POST SECONDARY WAS THE FACT THAT I COULD NEVER SEE AN ADVISOR EVEN THOUGH MY TUTION PAYS FOR ONE AND THE STAFF UP IN THE ARTS ADMINISTRATION ARE NOTHING BUT NATZI'S THEY ALWAYS DEMEANED ME AND MADE ME FEEL INSIGNIFICANT AND WORTHLESS. THESE STUPID BITCHES WORK BECAUSE OF STUDENTS WHO PAY TUTION AND EMPLOY THEM, RATHER THAN BEING HELPFUL THEY ARE OLD BATS THAT HAVE BEEN TOO JADED AND BITTER TO PROVIDE ANYTHING USEFUL TO STUDENTS BESIDE SACRASIM AND ATTITUE. THIS IS AN AREA THE UNIVERSITY HAS TO WORK ON BECAUSE IT IS A SHARED EXPERIENCE AMONG MANY ARTS STUDENTS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION OF ARTS UNDERGRADS IS A JOKE AND NOT WORTH GOING TO. WHY DO THESE EMPLOYEES GET AWAY WITH TREATING STUDENTS LIKE GARBAGE? I WOULD NEVER DO MY POST GRAD WORK AT THIS UNIVERSITY OR ATTEND IT FOR ANY MATTER BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY OF ADMINISTRATION TO ACTUALLY DO WHAT THEY GET PAID FOR, IF YOU DONT LIKE ANSERWING QUESTIONS FIND A NEW JOB, ALSO WHY IS IT ONLY IN ARTS THAT ADVISORS WONT DIRECTLY SPEAK TO STUDENTS? EVERY OTHER FACULTY HAS PLENTY OF ADVISORS FOR STUDENT RELATIONS, ASK ANY ARTS STUDENT HOW MANY TIMES THEY HAVE

REQUESTED ADVISORS ONLY TO BE DIRECTED TO SOME INEXPERINCED COUNTER STAFF THAT THINK THEY CAN TELL YOU WHAT TO DO.

- 917: I have been quite frustrated by student advisors who have been rude and not at all helpful. i.e. in scheduling questions/problems. they seem to care more about the universities policies and rules (that mind you I know can be bended or even broken) than helping and working out solutions which benefit both the student and the university. The have been very quick to tell me what I can't do as opposed to what can be done. I have often felt like just a number. that the university cares more about my payment of tuition than it does me. I often feel that university resources (finances, faculty staff, libraries, etc) are poorly managed.
- 1055: I found a major problem in the academic advising section. I believe that I was very wrongly advised on which courses to choose and the timing in which I took them. I think because of the first year stress and the such heavy course load that I took on, that my marks greatly suffer from that fact. When I returned for more advice, the counselor was not very helpful, and may have confused me even more. I did not like their demeanor towards me and it has made me not want to seek academic advice in the future!
- 1097: I have attended numerous post-secondary institutions, and I am not very impressed with the U of A as far as the administration is concerned. It is hard to find an advisor who will really help you out. When I go to seek advice from an advisor, it is like standing in line at a grocery store. Everyone is waiting in line, it is very impersonal, and my problem is usually not solved. I transferred in January, and it was a painful process where I only figured out how to do such a thing by chance. I just wanted to be a full-time student in any faculty starting in January. Apparently this is nearly impossible. No one knew how I could do this. Other institutions that I have been at seem to know about administrative matters and the policies of the college/university across faculties.
- 1228: I went to see an advisor to obtain help with my schedule, their lack of knowledge is going to end up costing me an extra year to finish my degree and the tuition cost that goes along with that.
- 1259: I find the advisors in my AFHE very rude and not very helpful and it's not only me even a couple of other girls I know completely agree with me. and I think the advisors should be more helpful and not talk to us like a bunch of 6 year olds.
- 1277: I feel like the University is in no way trying to help me, I went to an academic advisor for advice on courses and was told that they would not help me. The calendar is too hard to comprehend without help from advisors. Feel like I am being educated by an institution.



## Administration Staff (10)

- 62: Many of the things the administration does, like raising international student tuition, evicting Pembina hall residents for office space, and all without proper consultation and input from students, decreases the experience of students at the U of A, which has the potential to be world class, but settles for much less.
- 67: My time at this university has been nothing but a series of hoops through which to jump. My advisor and the university administration as a whole has seen me, in my opinion as nothing more than a cash cow who is getting in the way whenever they ask questions
- 127: As well, the impression on students is that the bureaucrats do not care about the students.
- 220: I don't know what tenure-track instructor is exactly so this question should be more clear. I am currently on probation and am extremely disappointed and frustrated with the lack of respect shown with anybody I have had to deal with regarding my probation. I am expected to divulge extremely personal information as to why I did poorly and why they should let me stay at the university, but I tried for 3 months to get a half-hour meeting with the associate dean (academic) and was turned down repeatedly because she was busy. A high level of urgency and importance is expected when I am dealing with those involved in some way with the probation, and yet, there is a complete lack of return when they deal with me. My probation was the result of a very difficult year personally, along with three difficult courses in which I passed but did poorly enough to warrant getting kicked out of university. This experience has fouled my view of the university, and more specifically my faculty, and the way in which they choose to deal with people on a personal level.
- 333: I have found the administration at the U of A often to be inadequate, slow, and not helpful, especially when I was transferring from my previous university.
- 389: The one thing that continues to cause me concern is the attitude of the university admin. On applying for admission I sent 3 letters, having made countless phone calls and several emails, as of today's date none of the letters have been acknowledged much less have my questions been responded to. My feeling is that I am buying a degree from an academic Wal-Mart rather than earning one. I came back to school to have my personal values challenged and my values reconsidered it is not happening. Frequently it is a matter of agreeing with the prof or don't speak. One guy challenged a prof and was not engaged in debate but told to go to the office for a private talk the student has not returned to class So what happened was it intellectual censorship? Education is about an exchange of ideas not cramming pointless information in to vomit it out in an exam. That's my position good luck

- 436: the fine arts administration is the worst on campus
- 530: Students must be treated as the intellectual, developing young minds they are, and as such, need to be shown respect by the university's administration. I still feel like a number in this school. As well, the fact that this university is even CONSIDERING closing down its only graduate student residence is appalling. This is a prime example of where the administration's views lie. As I stated before, the university needs to realize that it is, above all things, a school with students who are people. The next thing you know, classes will have to be taught on the roofs of the buildings in order to accommodate this "much-needed" office space that the administration is dreaming up.
- 786: It would be nice if the administrative staff was more cooperative with the students, to actually listen to what the student needs instead of jumping to conclusions and refusing the request.
- 995: and there is little effort made by the administration to make university a better experience. It seems that feedback is disregarded, and students are ignored, with more emphasis placed on outside interests.

## **Other Non-Instructional Staff (9)**

### **Library Staff (2)**

- 80: I love the Native Studies Faculty because it is so small, I am in the Education faculty as well and I dread having to ask a question to the staff about anything because either they don't know what they are talking about or they don't care about me. The Rutherford library is also a horrible place to go, they are all very rude and unaccommodating, except the reference desk. Too much Bureaucracy. The Rutherford people should be happy with their jobs but they all seem to hate students and do not know how to interact with the public.
- 1035: The biggest issue I ever had with the University is how unfriendly and unhelpful the librarians are in the education library. I have only had poor experiences with them and that is why I try to avoid the library and seek resources from elsewhere. Although...the staff at St. Joe's is terrific

### **Support Staff (IE CSS, Parking Attendants) (2)**

- 564: I think you should have added a section regarding OTHER non-instructional staff, such as janitors and parking staff... You'll have a hard time finding a friendly parking attendant or a janitorial staff on Main Campus. Every time I saw a janitor, I would smile at them, but all they would do is ignore me. As for the parking attendants, I haven't met one yet that wasn't rude to me!

- 658: On another note, CSS is useless. The only thing they do is arrest me and my friends coming back from scholars to our residence in Lister. We are doing nothing, but trying to get to our homes, and now I've been given 2 Public Intoxication Tickets. Along with that I have been fined by the University as well as out on Conduct Probation for 3 years. We are not harming anyone, just trying to get home. The CSS could be trying to prevent rapes but they would rather pick on intoxicated students. Because of there use of unnecessary force, I have sustained nerve damage in my left hand, and as a result was not able to play hockey this year.

### **Office Staff (5)**

- 890: The secretaries in the Music Department Office (there are about 7 of them) mostly seem lazy, uninterested, and uninformed. They are usually rude and unaccommodating to the students who come in, and their office hours are very inconvenient for students in full-time studies.
- 514: I find the staff in undergrad offices are rude.
- 641: I find that especially in the arts department the women who work in the general office are rude and feel that student inquiries are a burden. Also I feel that professors do not inform students that a TA is responsible for marking their work and that affects students GPAs
- 899: The Faculty of Science staff at the main office is completely unhelpful, rude and degrading to students. This university made me feel like a number only - over and over. No one cares about what you are up to, if you succeed or not. Even when I was told I had an advisor for my programs, they were not aware of the University Calendar Rules and Regulations - which I ended up paying dearly for. New students don't have a clue - this is what advisors are for. Unfortunately, my advisor led me a dead end and, needless to say, I wasn't impressed. Overall, I was not impressed with the education that I received at the UofA. The way I was treated for the 6 years was appalling.
- 903: The staff I have gone to, whether it be at the department of my faculty or even the finance center, have never actually answered my question yet. They treat me like I am dumb so I do not finish what I am saying because they are not helpful at all.

### **Information Exchange (5)**

- 321:4.the staff at the university-you ask one person one thing and you get one answer and you ask another person in the same department and you get a different answer
- 329: I have had a hard time contacting professors via email that are doing research at the UofA. I have tried to find out who accepts volunteers for their labs/research, but they never reply. It seems

impossible to get lab experience, which is really important for grad school and for future jobs in general.

- 670: My current faculty for Special Studies was chosen entirely on the basis of who allows students to attend only the Winter term, and I have had very little interaction with any Faculty representatives since I registered (and none of it in person).
- 1110: The organization and planning of our Faculty must get better. There is no excuse for getting information critical to the success of a course the week before the course is to be run and changing information at the last minute
- 1153: Nursing is currently a self-taught degree with the CBL program. Some major revisions need to be done to ensure that all graduates are graduating with the same information.

### **Other (5)**

- 25: I am the university's paying customer, and it would be nice to have some quality customer service provided to me. If I treated my customers at work this way, I would've been fired 4 years ago.
- 425: Bias, discrimination and a negative mind set by selected staff towards color, learning abilities, English speaking ability, and lack of respect for the quality of foreign education. That affects negatively in grading patterns.
- 812: I graduated from NAIT feeling very happy and satisfied with the program. I'll graduate from the UofA feeling relieved that this nightmare is over and that the staff and faculty did all they could to bring me down. The engineering department has an arrogant attitude towards the students, and especially to graduates from NAIT. Perhaps the material taught here at the UofA is more in depth. However, I would recommend NAIT to anyone that I know, but I would not recommend the UofA. It really comes down to the attitude of the "higher up" people of authority and their lack of respect for the students, and their arrogant manner of dealing with us students. It is really just useless to try and talk to these people
- 1288: The business dept is an absolute nightmare to deal with as a student in a double-major program. This should be dealt with as long as these programs are being offered as realistic choices. They provide very little support and cater very heavily to full-time business students.471:I also think the School of Business academic advising staff is excellent at answering questions quickly via over e-mail

### **Student Resources**

## Online Resources (13)

- 14: I pay a lot of money every year, and often I feel like I am receiving sub-quality teaching and resources, especially WebCT. Beartracks and the whole registration system is also extremely frustrated. I can't register in any of the classes I need to go further in my degrees because bear tracks doesn't allow regular registration (e.g. if your in this year you register at this date), it only allows general registration for my specific courses (300&400 level), if its your field of study you should have priority, it shouldn't be that once EVERYONE else has registered then those of us who require these courses can register. I have a very hard time getting into my required courses.
- 84: WEB CT is terrible.
- 88: also, I think that WebCT should be improved. I am impressed with the improvements in it so far this year but other improvements should be made. these things include more servers for faster page loading and logging in and it should be easier for teachers to post course information (a few have mentioned that it is difficult to do this and as a result I have missed certain information).
- 154:the university site and WebCT are often down when I need them
- 271: I think the most difficult aspect I encountered during the studies in the U of A is the access of course materials and resources off-campus. Since I am occupied from other various things daily, sometimes I won't even have time to properly review the coursework simply via internet or library resources. Though I am aware that there are online services like WEBCT or Bear Track to aid me in the process, however I encountered various problems navigating the details (like broken link, server down). Some courses that I took didn't even provide online resources. For example, there is no past midterm or final or notes on my 300 level math courses. I can't get good practice that way without proper support. This will significantly alter my education progress and my grades overall. Since I can't manage to buy every single textbook for every courses that I took due to financial difficulties, any resources outside the class and textbook became very important to me. A course in the undergraduate degree doesn't simply compose of teacher in class and textbook from student. I sincerely hope that U of A can take this into consideration. Thank you for the concern.
- 356: With regards to technology in classrooms. WebCT is a waste of time. Some days it works good, some days it doesn't. The online reserve (library) is not accessible at home.
- 514: I really don't like Beartracks. I don't understand why it needs a day off on Sunday
- 797:bear tracks is frustrating, registration was a nightmare, courses should be offered at times other than 3:30 in the afternoon

- 995: Web CT is often more trouble than it is worth, and is extremely frustrating when it cannot be accessed properly.
- 1285: Beartracks and WebCT have become such complex and convoluted programs that they take way too long to load on computers... Simple is better. (for example, restrict the size of graphic files for U of A/WebCT logos, so that the computer can load them easily)
- 27:-Need more online exams
- 533: I think it would be a great benefit if classes were more interactive. where students have the option of going on-line and learning more and not.
- 1120: It would be nice if the newsgroups were more easily accessible off campus. I know there is a working beta that allows you to view and reply to existing newsgroups and posts, but it does not allow you to post new messages in the newsgroups.

## **Make Extracurricular Activities More Available (6)**

- 127:Also, at least in engineering, I find that I have no time to be involved in hardly any extracurricular activities and what is worse I find that I don't even have time to perform physical exercise which is obviously detrimental to my health.
- 369: Nursing is a very excluded faculty from the rest of the university. I hope in the future the faculty can be integrated into activities that are held on the center of campus (since our classes are usually on the far end. ESPECIALLY for student union activities. I have only been able to vote once due to being in clinical, working through the times allotted. Outreach to us, as well as other medical faculties needs to be changed.
- 506:Orientation activities when I attended my first year were ridiculous (I'm sorry but where in UofA life have I ever heard someone doing a UofA cheer in regular circumstances),
- 530: The availability of extra-curricular activities must be made known to first years, as well as the fact that they are not here only to learn inside a classroom.
- 884: Most students are very socially isolated and the university doesn't do anything about it, the alternative is beer drinking clubs. Which is not the interest of all!! They should implement a much more friendly and serious socializing and understanding program that would make students feel they are brothers and sisters in this educational experience and together they can make it heaven or hell. Some professors tend to somehow escape the rules of respect and mature communication, they are very few yet they can definitely ruin the mood and setting of an educational experience. There isn't any leadership programs or ideas, its all about being competitive and the same students are in all of the available programs. The silent majority

are watching hoping that their skills even if were not the "best" can we worked on. I don't personally feel that I am in a business degree a such as its a new level of weird high school. Some universities give you the sense of a business feel for example the clothing and discussions etc. I believe having interviews with students is a good idea on how to do better or even focus groups that are voluntary. All the best

- 1233: Make extracurricular activities more available on weekends, I didn't attend any because I am already busy during the week.

### **It is the Student's Responsibility to get Involved (2)**

- 145: This school rocks. I am willing to pay high tuitions, but that does not mean that I am ok with the current trend of increase. it isn't right. I have found many ways to be involved on campus, from the ESA to CTSSA, Dean's selection committee, and more. My marks aren't the best, but I don't care. School is about so much more than marks that I won't get discouraged of I'm only an average student.
- 946: More support for extracurricular University activities would be very much appreciated.

### **Food Concerns (6)**

- 27:-More places for meal cards to be used on campus
- 28: have more microwaves in the university!
- 329:- Beverage prices (from pop-machines or at most stores on campus) are too much; many other places off campus sell them cheaper -- often 25 cents or more cheaper - More healthy food choices, and having these things be more affordable is also very important. It is hard to eat healthy on a budget! Most places charge \$5 for a sandwich, but you can get a hamburger, fries, and a pop for that price--or less--at BK or other such places...
- 329:CAB is a rip-off; lots of the food is bad and the prices are WAY too high
- 676: Some food (ex. cab) is gross and expensive, relative to off campus.
- 930: Places that provide food services are great, but some don't take interact, and some places that do charge 35 cents on top of the food charge. Don't think that is fair to some who have very little money to eat. They don't have anywhere else to go if they have classes soon

### **Relief Services (4)**

- 520: The only positive and effective aspect I found at the U of A was the student counseling services, what a sad commentary on the U of A.
- 795: Also I would like to say that the Specialized Support and Disability Services is an excellent organization and I have greatly benefited from their services and interaction with the staff.
- 1097: I also find it ridiculous that a university with a dentistry/pharmacy and a medical school does not have a health plan. Even Lethbridge Community College does (aka Last Chance College). Considering the ridiculous cost of tuition compared to other Alberta post-secondary institutions, I think that a Health Plan is deserved. Other than this, I am, for the most part satisfied with my education. However, the U of A is at the bottom of the list of the various post-secondary institutions that I have attended.
- 1132: the student union's emergency fund helped a lot in first year, and the staff there also helped me sort out a student loan problem that nobody else could fix.

## **Students' Union (4)**

- 342: The students Union's role in the university experience for students is ambiguous at best. The only thing they have done that I can identify is produce a sun-style newspaper and a movie night in SUB. Not exactly something I need to pay 100\$ a year for.
- 513: When asked to vote for the students union I don't feel I have a good reason to go out because I don't feel they do anything for me. My after school activities amount to going home, I don't play school sports and don't go to school parties so "What does the students union do for me".
- 917: I think the students Union is the biggest waste of money and resources as they have done a grand total of nothing for me over the last 5 years (other than bombarding me with annoying posters about people who I don't know and could care less about every march) do everyone a favour and disband the SU. at the very least would all save \$125 or so each year.
- 1045: I think it's great that the Student's Union cares enough about the quality of our education to compose such a survey and use its responses to create change to better our education. Thank you for caring!

## **Other (2)**

- 527: Question 11 should have a "not applicable" option. The most important source of information in regards to help planning classes has



been friends or acquaintances. The calendar doesn't explain APEs or state which pre-requisites have been waved...it doesn't even explain who to ask. Registering for classes has been the worst experience in my entire university life.

- 622: CAPS is doing a very fine job and should try to raise their profile on campus. More internship opportunities need to be encouraged with local businesses and companies.

## ***Facilities***

### **Computer Labs and Software (11)**

- 143:1)My major is in Statistics, and the courses that I take often requires S-Plus, R, SAS software programs to complete assignments, but campus only have 2 computer labs containing those softwares. Even though, they usually fully occupied by other classes. S-Plus and SAS are very expensive softwares to buy for us, as students. I recommend that campus should add at least one more lab with (about 50 computers with those softwares) that only allows Statistics/Math students to enter with a long access time(20 hours preferably). That way, we can work on our assignments without interfering other labs (or get kicked out of labs).
- 224: I'd like to say, in particular, that the Chemistry Computer Lab is probably the most obsolete on campus. All of the other labs have upgraded software (to Windows XP); however the Chemistry Computer lab is using Windows 95, which does not support Flash Drives or other storage technologies.
- 367:Computer service is good on campus and it usually works just fine but if you need assistance heaven help you
- 445: The computer labs in NREF are not big enough for Civil students and they are heavily infiltrated by other engineering disciplines. It makes it extremely difficult to work on projects that involve civil specific software. Something must be done to alleviate this problem - either police the labs with card swiping, or provide other disciplines with their own labs. Even as it is, there are not enough computers for civil students alone. There are less computers in the new building for civil students than there were in the old building. This is a huge step backward.

- 471: Sometimes, there is not enough room in the computer labs and its really frustrating to stand in line or go from building to building trying to find one.
- 561: There should be more printers available in the ETLC. Software should be of the same version across campus (e.g. version of MatLAB in CAB is old but is new in ETLC.) Computer labs should be open at least as late as the library, or install Microsoft office into some computers in Mackenzie library. It is very inconvenient when the subscription to ProEngineer in the ETLC computer labs runs out during the last two weeks of class thus making the program unavailable in these labs.
- 622: Computer use in the labs needs to be strictly enforced to discourage chatters and gamers, especially during midterms and finals when papers are due. Lab equipment, especially for first-year labs, needs to be updated.
- 738: For the amount of money we pay, I think it's ridiculous that we need to wait in line for 20 minutes if we want to use a computer ONLY to find that the PC's do not work.
- 930: Also, some computers in the labs are of high quality, and some are of really crappy quality. It's hard to say whether good or bad for the university. There are many places to study, but it is hard to find private and QUIET places to study.
- 1259: also computer labs are always too crowded and usually have a wait up to at least 5-10 min in the knowledge common.
- 1229: It would be great (although maybe not affordable) to have cameras in the classrooms so that being physically present for lectures can be a thing of the past (and one day I'm sure it will be) and lectures can be watched from computers anywhere on the planet (Saving many a very long commute).

## **Study areas (12)**

- 28: more places for large study groups to have places to meet
- 124: 24/hr study space in SUB is great
- 419: Study space on campus sucks pretty bad. If you want to be comfortable then you are in noisy areas. If you want to read then you are forced to sit on turn of the century furniture.
- 514: There are not enough places to do GROUP work on campus.
- 552: there should be some place in the library for us to study late, but just until 10PM, also for Friday and Sat. night, the library is not open at all, so I hope this problem can be solved~
- 625: I like the silent space in SUB.
- 774: I study on-campus often and like the study areas however, it is kind of difficult to find a relatively quiet space to work in. Thanks for

selecting me and I hope these comments help you to make the U of A even better.

- 795: One thing that I would also mention is the lack of comfortable study space at different areas of campus, I think if there was a space in the Business/Tory area it would be greatly beneficial to the student population.
- 797: I think it is ridiculous that we pay substantial tuition in the faculty of law and don't have the Weir Library for law only study space
- 993: The 24hr study space in SUB was a long overdue idea. It is the only comfortable place to go and study really late at night.
- 1010: As for study areas, more public study environments, such as CAB or SUB or HUB, would be nice. Public study environments as in discussions can take place. Also I think improving the quality of the locations are important too. Like the Cameron Library study hall get nasty during exam time. The Apple computers are good source of technology on Campus
- 1002: the study environment in U of A is not very comfortable.

## **Buildings and Class Space (12)**

- 86: I believe I am very lucky to be in the Faculty of Engineering as I believe it has great professors and we have new facilities for our use. That said I do not believe other students receive the same level of new technology and the use of adequate lecture theaters. I think this should be addressed.
- 230: Maybe before changing Pembina into classroom space they should use GSB and CIVE/EE which are mostly empty on a daily basis.
- 270: Some of the buildings on campus are a safety and health concern for myself (i.e. mould and fire safety). Labs are in poor condition with poor equipment that is older than I am.
- 555: The business faculty needs to be expanded. Class sizes are a little too large. The Winspear should be expanded to offer more study space.
- 620: it's very annoying to have noisy undergrads congregating in the law library when I pay so much money for tuition - at my level of tuition I expect to have a few fringe benefits, such as perhaps a slightly nicer building and a better monitored library
- 903: When I came to the university from Grant MacEwan I expected great things but I was utterly disappointed. The class sizes are too big and I guess more crowded than big. You have no personal space when learning in lectures or writing exams.
- 930: Some classroom desks and chairs are horrible. especially in Tory and V-wing. They have really really old chairs with little slabs of wood for a table top. Very hard to take notes, or look at alternative reading and notes at the same time. You would think the school could donate these old chairs and replace them. It's hard to think you are going to

a reputable school yet sitting in the cheapest seats. Makes you feel like you aren't valued as a student. The Engineering buildings have way nicer facilities

- 1021: The UofA needs to focus on the bigger picture. Look at where the shortages are in the workforce and open up more spaces in the appropriate faculties (I know this requires more class space -and the bottom line is, we need it). As a student who has been trying to transfer to another faculty for 3 years, it frustrates me that the faculty simply does not have the physical resources to take more students (even though more graduates are needed).
- 1053: I pay the same tuition, and dedicate myself to developing the skills for my future career as an artist, and yet our facilities are overcrowded and of poor quality (painting in the basement of HUB, with poor ventilation), and the painting department only has 2 full time faculty. But anyway, you know this already.
- 1167: Tory lecture hall needs some major work. The classrooms are uncomfortable with so many students (even in 4th year). There should be labs for a lot of the courses involving computer and analysis of data, but there aren't.
- 1224: The art facilities of this university are despicable. WE have a painting studio in the BASEMENT OF A MALL. How are we to be taken seriously as a cultural institution with no windows, fume basement and fluorescent lighting. Look at any of the notable cultural and academic facilities in Europe and we are a back water educational facility in terms of providing acceptable accommodations for art students. I'm in science so I've seen both sides, we don't need computers that go 1.2E-6 seconds faster than the old ones... if the university wants any notoriety in international affairs it should be well rounded, not just a "science and technology institution". If you wanted that go to NAIT.
- 1277: I hate the disparity between faculties. The Tory building is falling into the river, the classrooms are cramped and uncomfortable, just an antiquated building, while the Engineering faculty has had at least two new buildings in the three years I have been here. They do not pay that much more for tuition so why would they receive not just superior, but vastly superior buildings. Also the funds spent on things like those little gears on the fancy light posts. The money wasted on that could have been better used for something else on campus.

## **Recreational Facilities (2)**

- 151: Although the recreation facilities are really good, they are way too small for the amount of people using them (i.e.: the weight room).
- 154: The new Knowledge Common is incredible! I love the easy access to computers on campus and the beautiful green spaces to relax in. We need another rec centre! It's so difficult to get a machine in the

gym and we desperately need another ice surface! Thanks for the opportunity to be heard!

## ***Relevance and Application of Education***

### **Relevance of Classes and Prerequisites (15)**

- 62: My current program is general science, but only because I was forced to transfer from an honors program last year, due to my mark in one course, English, that has little relevance to my program of study, physiology.
- 188: I have found that my program is a bit of a joke. We don't learn anything new, they just teach us common sense and try and make it seem like the information is new when we've already learned it in other classes. This program could easily be cut in half if they took out all the fluff!
- 264: We are in university now. We should be smart enough to take classes that relate to our field of study. We shouldn't be told what to take. If I am a marketing major and I have to take MIS classes or Management Science classes that are not of interest to me or not relevant to my field of study it just makes me feel like I am wasting my time and money. Also, not caring about a class tends to make grades fall.
- 192: Mandatory English should be removed from degree requirements!
- 373: Today I wrote a final for Edit 202. The class is incredibly inane for technologically literate people, like myself and many, many others in the class. The lecture, according to the instructor, is only available T-R from 5:00-6:20. Whatever. A schedule was handed out at the beginning of the semester and lecture slides are usually posted in advance, therefore I, and many others, could see when it would be pointless to wait around for hours for a class in which we would learn nothing. Redundancy is something students simply do not have time for. On the exam, I knew the answer to every conceptual question pertaining to classes which I did not attend. I did not, however, have a clue as to which demo was done by guest lecturer A and which was done by guest lecturer B. Or whether it was 'Crustation Currency' or 'Cattepillar Cash' that someone used as an example of instructional entertainment. But that doesn't matter because it's totally irrelevant to the course material and concepts, right? Wrong. Apparently they were important enough to merit more than 10% of the questions on the final. What an insult. I'm not sure if it was done out of spite for people who skipped classes which had no conceptual benefit to them, or

simply a lack of good things to ask about, but now it seems really convenient that professor evaluations are done before finals.

- 383: Prerequisites for many classes do not reflect the prior knowledge needed for the class. A lot of assumptions are made that we just have it as common knowledge, or have learned it somewhere.
- 533: course material seems irrelevant and trivial; I see no application. except for of course the classes I am majoring in. those are awesome. but the requirement are very tedious and bring down GPA big time. if somehow introductory courses were more helpful and applicable, it would help
- 665: Also, some of the classes that are mandatory for by degree (BCom) seem to have no relevance to the degree and especially to the real world. There are some mandatory classes (Mgtsc 312 and 352, Bus 201) that presented me with a lot of irrelevant information that I cannot ever see myself using in the future. If students wish to take these classes then they should remain available but they should not be forced on students who have no interest in the field and who don't care about the subject matter.
- 749: Most of the difficulties I am having at school are due to a lack of effort on my part. The biggest problem I have is with classes that don't seem to be very relevant to my program.
- 775: I sometimes feel that for the amount of money that we pay for our schooling, we do not get a whole bunch out of it. We go to class for 3 months for almost 3 hours a week...and in some classes I feel that I haven't learned anything of significance. It feels like a waste of time.
- 887: My degree (BARLS) is currently being re-designed and it's a good thing that it is! The relevance of the classes to my degree were poor and I feel that there was not enough classes available in the different patterns. I probably would not refer people to the Recreation faculty at the UofA right now.
- 923: The major problem I have with the University is that I am forced to take courses that I have no interest in and do not contain material that will help me in my future career. I do not see the point in paying to take classes that will be of no use to me.
- 944: This survey was very difficult for me to complete because I had 2 very different experiences in my current and previous degree program. AFHE is very applied, career focused but makes you take joke 'filler' classes, profs get to know you, but they are less skilled teachers and researchers.
- 1050: Often I have wondered at the relevance of some of the options I could take regarding my degree. It seemed as though I took them to fill time. As a result, some classes felt like a waste of time - and money. I do not enjoy taking arbitrary classes when I could be taking useful courses, but could not because they were full.
- 1149: I have taken courses where I have left feeling that my money was wasted. I could see no relevance to my program, the instructors

did not instruct what was supposed to be covered, they were unprofessional and came to class unprepared. When I completed these classes, I left feeling I wanted my money back, because it was not worth the \$400-500.

## **Relevance Towards Careers (7)**

- 162: My faculty needs to put more focus on technical aspects, as that is what employers are looking for. It's great to tell us about how to measure parameter "X" or how to use sampling device "y", but it is more important that we have used it and know how to sample. Less talking, more doing please. Employers want us to be able to do things, not talk about doing them.
- 182: I don't feel that any courses I have taken relate to my degree in education, but that I gathered far more information actually teaching in the classroom. I am required to take classes that have no relevance to anything that I will teach.
- 731: I feel that there is far too much of a focus on employment, and not enough on theory. As well, technology takes too much of a centre role in classes; teachers should know how to teach, not use technology as a crutch. Often group projects and 'real life situations' take away from academic learning opportunities. Instead of incorporating these 'real life experiences and applications' and group projects, students should be strongly encouraged and \*supported\* to get involved in their communities, not just as students, but as community members, applying what they're learning in school to concrete solutions in Edmonton and beyond. In this way, students will be able to apply what they are learning, but still spend time in school LEARNING instead of spending their time, energy, and money in projects that may 'benefit us' in our future careers. University is not about being employed at the end -- that is what technical institutions are for.
- 738: I feel that for the money that goes into my tuition, I feel absolutely RIPPED OFF with my education! I didn't learn anything relevant that I could apply in my work field (currently I am doing an internship).
- 899: After all of this education, I was NOT AT ALL prepared for the job I currently work at. I've learned 99% of what I now do after completing most of my courses. This is unacceptable.
- 1043: It's important that professors have a high degree of knowledge about their subject area. I feel that the university does not accurately prepare students for their careers. There needs to be more hands-on experience, I feel that I haven't gotten that at the U of A, there is a lot of theory and knowledge but I have no idea how to apply it in the real world.

- 1145: Many survey questions evaluating the University and education quality could be answered better after graduating. It would allow me to really know how well I am being prepared for my career, what the quality of my education is, and whether or not there is too much garbage content. I could have put not satisfied at all for every question on the survey, but if I can have good University related career when I graduate I will be 100% satisfied.

## **Practical Knowledge (5)**

- 235: I really wish I could have had a co-op component to my degree in Conservation Biology. Although I feel I have learned a great deal, I am not very confident that a lot of it will be used out in the workforce. I would have benefited GREATLY with help finding jobs because I just did not know where to look and felt I didn't have the practical knowledge to get hired.
- 781: The program that I am in is the worst program and has the most unsatisfied students of any I've ever talked to. you ask about instruction...what instruction, our program is pay 2200.00\$ per semester and teach yourself...CBL, the biggest waste of time and money ever. I will never recommend the UofA nursing program to anyone. We need way more practical skills not useless nursing models from the 1960's.
- 780: Also, our school is teaching stuff from over 50 years ago and there is not many courses that teaches the newest and up-to-date material that is out in industry. These are the things employers are looking for and because UofA doesn't take the opportunity to teach students the new stuff we're at a disadvantage in the industry. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't have done Engineering or gone to UofA. It's not what it claimed to be.
- 1273: I have enjoyed my university education although there should be more practical and hands on opportunities available for General Science students. Often, hands on experiences (i.e. internships) are tailored for Specialization and Honor students only.
- 1285: However, I found the quality of the courses and their content much better than that of Pharmacy on the whole... teachers were much more enthusiastic. In Pharmacy, the professors' English skills are great, but the curriculum spends far too much time on unnecessary specialty courses, and definitely needs more emphasis on the important, practical information which the majority of students will need to know once they graduate.
- 1288: I also believe that the cost of internship/co-op programs is unreasonable, and should be reflective of the help students get from the dept, which seems to be very little (in the geology dept). The co-



op program is a good idea; we just have limited incentive to participate.

## **Admission requirements (2)**

- 418: We had the discussion in many classes this semester (my last semester) about how the education degree program is all theory and not really any practical. In addition, admission is granted solely on academics rather than at least partially on commitment to the teaching profession. In my personal opinion, this should change.
- 658: The courses that I have to take to get into my programme are ridiculous. My business degree will be very, very specialized. I will not need the skills that I didn't get from two semesters of English 111(it's useless, I write essays in other courses and get feedback there, also Emily Dickenson has no relevance to an International Business Degree, with a post degree in Law), Stats is irrelevant to me, as is Econ which is 99% useless to me. These courses have no bearing on my future, and yet I am forced to take them and do exceedingly well. The fact that these classes are boring and useless does not induce me to go and do well. The teachers are boring and they make me want to die, but alas I know no rich or powerful people to pull strings for me, so I have to get a degree to get any reasonable job.

## **Survey Concerns (27)**

- 105: Question 11 of this survey was not very practical... how can I say that any of these selections have negatively affected my academic "success"? There will be a bias in how many of these questions are phrased. I don't think results from this survey can be used as any indication of quality of educational experience.
- 196: under the 'gender' section you should have a space for folks who do not fit either category. if this is confusing for you, gender is a social construct! it is not natural, and the university should be sensitive to this. this is indicative of the UofA's stance on diversity, pathetic. perhaps administrators or whomever writes these surveys should take a women's studies class or two. as for the questions on grasp of the English language, this is a common "problem" for students who hold a racist, Eurocentric position on people from outside of Canada. the fact you even address this is further proof that once again the academy of heterosexual, European, men catering to the needs of other hetero, European, men! there is NOTHING wrong with having to ask a prof to repeat a word, or concept due to lack of understanding. I'm sure it is

just as hard to come to Canada and teach classes with an accent as it is to take classes from folks with accents different from our own.

- 276: The lack of color coding in Question 4 made it a chore to select the most important 5 headings.
- 376: Um, when it asks me if I'm a Can. citizen or landed immigrant, the choices are a) yes or B) no. I answered yes. I am a Canadian citizen. This is worded terribly. Sloppily. I am impressed that this questionnaire is being circulated. Thumbs up.
- 402: "Gender" is not about male or female. SEX (as in anatomical SEX) is about male and female. GENDER is about woman/man. Sometimes, they go together. Sometimes they don't. Be sensitive to this, please.
- 444: This survey was difficult to answer, due to the fact that one cannot generalize about all instructors, especially when considering electives in courses, which are not really related to one specific faculty. For example, when asking about communication skills and English language, on the majority, instructors do have good English, but there are some who do have poor English, making it very difficult to grasp the course content. It would be nice if there were room to comment on all questions, to allow for one to explain their answers perhaps, so as to not apply all answers to the whole. Thanks.
- 484: you should have a parents (repayable) section in the above category. Definitely not the same thing as a loan, which gains interest.
- 508: Does the University really care about my responses to this survey, or care about the student's union as a whole? I'm skeptical. I felt a lot of the questions on this survey were leading, and that the agree/not agree scale was not a very effective of communicating with you.
- 536: question fourteen, I think you should revise it for it is unclear whether yes means Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant, and dido for no.
- 540: Some departments in this university are far superior on these issues than others. This survey might be more useful if you broke it up by department.
- 554: make an "are you sure you want to reset" prompt
- 564: There is an error on question 14 regarding citizenship.... I said yes to the being Canadian, but the answers provided are not appropriate for the question
- 592: I am glad to see a survey of this type. I am hopeful that this will aid in creating a more positive post secondary experience for future students.
- 604: When it says "Please select one..." it doesn't select it.
- 650: Question # 15, what do you mean by "community"? The city/town I came from, the actual neighbourhood I come from...?
- 672: THIS SURVEY TOOK ME MORE THAN 20 MINUTES
- 728: This survey was a little science student biased.

- 756: This survey was very useful to fill out, however as a Drama student I didn't not quite feel as though my answers to questions are an accurate representation of my views on certain issues. Many of the factors which students consider detrimental to their learning environment do not exists within my program due to the small size, there are consequently other issues which are not addressed in this survey.
- 894:I didn't know what to answer for the question asking whether I was a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant...you had a yes or no option...I am a Canadian citizen in case that was unclear
- 922: for this survey, you should really change the questions such as "Instructors or TA's having poor English language skills" and "Have good English language skills" to language of instruction. Since I go to FSJ, none of my classes are in English so those questions don't really apply.
- 1088: I am doing my first year at Faculté Saint-Jean so some of the questions about the teacher's English skills should be considered as the teacher's French skills.
- 1104: Question 14 I didn't know what I was answering yes to. I am a Canadian citizen, but no I am not a landed immigrant.
- 1106:I think that this surveys answers on several of the topics need to be improved as it is not applicable in the Faculty of Arts to have a TA in any of the classes, other than introductory English. It might also be considered that the addition of a students goals might affect the differences in answers as some majors offer many courses and others are restricted to required courses until the later levels.
- 1118: All of question 25 doesn't apply to me, since I was sponsored to go to school.
- 1184: Question #14 is worded poorly. Although the intention is "yes, a Canadian citizen", which hopefully is how most interpret it, the question can also be understood as "yes, a landed immigrant". Also, how come there was no question included regarding living conditions (e.g. residence) affecting education?
- 1208: Ambiguous Question of: "Are you a Canadian Citizen or a landed immigrant" Answer or "yes" or "no". Is this an answer to the first or 2nd question? -Canadian born, and not a landed immigrant.
- 808: It would be helpful if you could break this survey into different stages of education. My experiences in my first and second year courses were much different than my experiences in my later courses. I am afraid that this survey does not allow for this distinction. My experience with the larger first and second year courses was not as positive as the years following.

## ***Teacher Evaluations***

### **Lack Bearing of Evaluations on Teaching Positions (11)**

- 62: The absolute worst instructor I have ever had in my entire life announced to my class, immediately after we filled out our course evaluations, that he had been offered tenure that very morning. As our evaluations had left the room less than 2 minutes prior, I doubt the abysmal rating I gave, and all of my friends gave, had any bearing on the university's decision
- 162: Teacher evaluations seem to be a waste of time. If the instructor is tenure track, the evals seem to have no bearing. Even sessionals seem to not be effected by evaluations.
- 318: I think that the USRIs need to be worded better and should have more effect on how profs are monitored and how they run their classes.
- 419: Having been involved with grad students and professors who receive teaching reviews it is very apparent that these mean very little. They are often considered to be bitterness and anger that is anonymously expressed. These reviews need to be seen by department chairs or faculty Deans. The comments are the most important parts and they are rarely followed. It would be nice to do mid-term reviews, just like we get exams midway through.
- 542: USRI's need to be taken seriously. I have had on more than 1 occasion a professor/TA who did very poorly on their USRI and they were teaching the same course the same way the next term and the next term after that. It gives students the feeling that our opinions don't matter when this occurs.
- 589: Course/instructor evaluations are useless because they are oversimplified and too general. They are also completely ineffective towards tenure-track and tenured instructors thanks to the academic union.
- 603: Please do talk to Profs who get negative feedback from students.
- 622: The teacher evaluations feel like an exercise in futility; I've had profs twice who have repeated their mistakes.
- 676: I feel some of the profs don't care about the students and even when you write evaluations on them, they rarely change their style for the next year.
- 812: and I wonder if this survey is useless as well. I also wonder if the teacher evaluations are useless as well. For example, one specific teacher received an absolutely terrible evaluation from the majority of our class. To me, this should cause the University to find someone better to teach the course for next year...however this did not happen. Therefore, either the surveys were not considered, or the faculty was to lazy to make the change, or they just don't care what the students

think. That's the way I see it. One final comment, Uri's is completely useless. There is a TA who does not speak a word of English, doesn't understand any of the concepts anyway (in any language), got an entire lab section of poor USRI's and is still teaching the same lab section as of last year. Apparently, USRI's are ignored when it's convenient. I feel sorry for any future student who has to endure that lab section. I would not recommend this type of experience to anyone. I do applaud the fact that there is an actual survey being sent out (after I've finished 6 years here). I think it's sad this is the first survey that I've ever received in 6 years.

- 1263: I think that the teaching evaluations are a total waste of time because no one cares what we have to say as students. No matter how bad a professor is rated nothing happens to him/her, and nothing changes to help the students.

### **Relevance of Questions Presented in USRIs to Real Classroom Setting (4)**

- 110: The Universal Ratings of Instructions are widely thought by students to be a complete waste of time, and I completely agree. The questions appear designed to elicit moderate answers without asking the questions that actually matter the most to students. For example: is the professor doing a good job? Do you think the professor is qualified to teach the course? Is there a significant flaw in the course that could easily be fixed? Do students generally show up to class or are they able to learn the material sufficiently from the course materials i.e. does the instructor's presentation add any value? Are there better materials that could be used in the course? Do you feel that the instructor's marking is arbitrary? Can the instructor quantitatively justify marks given for assignments and exams? Is a marking scheme used and provided to students? Are students in the course generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the course? Would you recommend this professor or take another course with them? Do you feel that this course was a waste of time? None of these questions are addressed by asking "did the instructor treat the students with respect" or "did the instructor provide a conducive environment to learning".
- 586: My biggest concern are the teacher surveys (USRIs) handed out. I don't think that they adequately reflect the learning environment or the quality of instruction. This survey better exemplified a way of "testing" teachers and their skills
- 1076: This type of survey should be available to students all the time. I feel that it asks more relevant questions than the USRIs and it is more inclusive.

- 1106: USRIs are too general for their purposes. They do not provide options to critically analyze the professor or sessional instructor in a meaningful way. Rather, they use an impersonal format that would easily provide satisfactory results instead of a representative picture of the needs and wants of students from the institution as well as the professor within a certain faculty.

## **Availability of Information (4)**

- 14: The University should also make students aware of the ways to contest their treatment in class from profs. I hate that once I'm in a class and past the withdrawal date that things mysteriously start to go very wrong (e.g. tests not being available to write, professors being rude to their students, or profs just suddenly becoming unavailable). Just filling out the evaluation form at the end of the class doesn't help. We need to have someone to bring these issues to so that they can be dealt with. I don't think that students should have to suffer academically because a prof cannot carry their own weight in the class. Students of a current running class should be able to say something about how the class is being run at the time, they shouldn't have to wait until the class is over, this only makes the next class better for different students not the current ones who are suffering from professor error, or ignorance.
- 133: I find the student reviews of teachers are very vague and waste class time because reviews aren't available to students, but have been useful to effect change in a prof
- 471: Most of the students I've talked to don't even know that USRIs are available on the web to look at, so promote that as a way of finding good teachers.
- 547: USRI results need to be made public better. The current URL for them is largely unknown by students. I hope I helped with the survey, thanks.

## **Supplementary Evaluations (4)**

- 13: You asked how the effective the student evaluation of profs is. I believe it is somewhat ineffective because major components of the course have not been completed. (i.e.: exams) also (and this is a much larger concern in my mind) not all assignments have been graded (particularly in labs) and returned at the time of evaluation. Perhaps a (optional?) supplementary evaluation after the marks have been returned would be appropriate to determine if the student's view were still consistent after the remainder of the course is complete? If

this were the case, it should only be written comments, and the exam may adversely affect student's opinion of the course/prof.

- 394: There really needs to be mid term evaluations done. The evaluations that are currently being done, catch students at their weakest and most stressful periods, where their critical commentary about their courses/instructors is the least of their concerns
- 405: I just wanted to add about the teaching evaluations...I think they would be SO much more effective if we did two-one at midterm and then after the course, so that the teacher can potentially fix problems or whatever. Even if nothing changes, I think students would feel that their opinion mattered
- 1206: Course evaluations would be more helpful if we did them at mid terms as well as at the end of the term. It provides more motivation for students to give constructive criticism if it would benefit them personally. All lab, lecture, and seminar sections should have evaluations.

## **Other (2)**

- 124: i think the course evaluations should be typed up by administrative staff so that instructors do not know who is writing.
- 1145: For the USRIs I know it is impractical but I think that they would be somewhat more effective/accurate if they could be done after finals. Most of the learning and a huge chunk of your grade is done after we do the survey.

## ***Registration and Scheduling***

### **Class Availability (9)**

- 143:2) Some courses that I take are only offered once every 2 years, e.g. Stat 432, etc. I would like it to be offered once every year. Thank you.
- 321: To me, the four biggest problems at the University of Alberta are the following: 1. lack of availability of courses
- 453: The biggest problem I currently have with my program is MEC E 420 seems to conflict with most every course, and it is only offered once per year. As such, I have to complete one extra term where I will be taking one course. A simple solution is to offer MEC E 420 in both terms, at a time that does not conflict with any other fourth year course. Also, my degree program (Traditional Mechanical Engineering) is very inconvenient for people who have transferred from other Faculties and are between years, because many of the required

courses conflict. In addition, it would be very helpful if all of the second year courses were offered in the spring or summer terms. Finally, the advisors I have talked with have not been as helpful as I would have liked, which is probably due to the non-flexibility of the Mechanical Engineering program. It would be helpful if they could adjust when courses are offered, or if they had the ability to add additional sections.

- 706: The second problem I have is with the availability of certain courses. Some courses I've tried to get in have only 20 spots per term, and are mandatory for several science degrees; my chances of being able to take these courses are essentially zero as preference is given to those who need the courses to graduate. As a result, my schedule tends to become more of what will fit rather than what will be useful and interesting to me.
- 960: Courses need to be offered more often, good profs though
- 995: There is very little flexibility in terms of when courses are offered, and the manner in which they are delivered (there is no self-study option, and not many classes in spring and summer).
- 1114: The guidelines to become an accounting major are too hard to meet. The B electives are too hard to register in as they are often full. I will have to drop my accounting major because I cannot register in a B elective and I have way too many A electives as I graduate in December. gaultier@ualberta.ca
- 1239: The U of A is ok but it would be nice to have better support and availability of classes to finish a degree in under 5 years because of scheduling
- 1259: there should be more flexibility of classes available.
- 1289: Another thing is the unavailability of some of major courses that I require. Those that are offered in fall aren't offered in winter. It makes my scheduling for timetable a nuisance. I suggest that some of the major courses to be offered in spring/summer with a bit more wide-spread timetable. I'm sure profs would be willing to teach in spring/summer and it brings in more money to university regarding tuition fees.

## **Exam and Class Times (8)**

- 28: having lab exams 2 weeks before school ends!!!!
- 97: Exam timetables in this school always seem to need improvement
- 115: Having a spread out final exam schedule would be nice. In the last 2 semesters, my exams have all been bunched day after day after day. Very stressful. I have been forced into a couple of evening courses over the years (that are required for my degree), effectively cutting me off from many extracurricular activities. VERY annoying.
- 124: MORE COURSE NEEDED TO BE OFFERED AT MORE FLEXIBLE TIMES!



- 298: There are some situations where exams fall on the same day, or the immediate proceeding day. This makes little sense to me, as there are two exam weeks. To make matters worse, exams can fall on Saturdays
- 795: Sometimes it is hard to work out a schedule that doesn't have large gaps (i.e. 3 hours) because the classes that you want aren't offered at any other time. If a time doesn't work for your personal timetable, it is offered the next term or the next year at exactly the same time.
- 797: in a small faculty getting your schedule to work is impossible
- 940: Being a mature student with a full time career, the most critical aspect of my education at the UofA is the availability of evening and weekend course offerings in core subjects, of which there are very few.

## Other (6)

- 112: The limitations that the psych department puts on enrollment are frustrating. The faculty of Arts notified me that I could enroll March 30th. However, I could not get into most of my psych classes because they give priority to all 4th year students until MAY 25! It's great that they give priority to 4th year students, but what if I'm in my fourth year and NEED a psych course that conflicts with a class I NEED for my minor? I am afraid of how things will work out for my last year of school. In short, I think that registration should be opened up to third year students, too.
- 337: Furthermore, arrangements for midterm/final review sessions (aka question and answer) that are at reasonable times... when students do not have classes. So after 5pm is good and anything before is bad
- 471: When picking out courses, the syllabus should be available so that you can gauge your course load for next year and know who is teaching it in order to look them up on the USRI. For example, before Business switched to Blackboard - you can see how all the syllabi to know the amount of assignments and term projects would be involved and usually, its the same teacher teaching it. I've been lucky in the School of Business to know that instructors know my name and I think that really makes a difference. I'm also lucky that the School of Business puts you cohorts in your 2nd year and classes have group projects to force you to interact and develop a connection with another student even if its just an acquaintance. I felt unconnected with other students when I was 1st year.

- 492: The largest problem I found when transferring here was the lack of help I received when trying to set up my schedule and trying to register
- 589: There is not enough room for students to customize and tailor their course work to their interests
- 918: each faculty should offer students help sessions on how to become a better student, especially first year students, who have study skills that are not applicable to university level class

### ***Faculté St. Jean (5)***

- 600: business courses given at the Faculté St Jean do not always cover the same material as they do at the School of Business and the professors are not always of the same quality, this is very frustrating because I need to take the courses in French but I feel that I am not getting as good of a course
- 808: It would be helpful if you could break this survey into different stages of education. My experiences in my first and second year courses were much different than my experiences in my later courses. I am afraid that this survey does not allow for this distinction. My experience with the larger first and second year courses was not as positive as the years following. The class sizes were much larger and the professors were much less available.
- 872: At FSJ, I find that available sections of courses and available courses in general are huge problems for me. There are absolutely no choice amongst classes at the senior level. If more sections were offered or there were more choices, my last 2 years at university would have been a lot less stressful.
- 1159: I feel that the high quality of my university education is due to the fact that I attended the Faculté St. Jean. I was much more impressed with the program there than I was with the classes I attended at the main campus in my first year.
- 1304: When I was rating the professor's and commenting on how satisfied I was with the University of Alberta, it was all relative to the FSJ. I have never participated in a course on main campus.

### ***Other (23)***

- 61: I work full-time in the School of Business, so I have access to a computer in my office, which allows me a computer and place to study after business hours if need be. I have only taken one class so far at

the U of A, so I guess my answers are somewhat biased based upon that one course.

- 229: Personally, I have been most satisfied with my educational experience. The UAH certainly deserves its exemplary reputation for academics.
- 303: Forestry Rocks!
- 352: You should make people aware that the population of Edmonton is ~680000
- 440: university is a scary community to join. Everywhere you look people seem like they are waiting for you to fail and give up, even though giving up would be the easy way out, where would I be without university? Nowhere, so I'm forced to stay.
- 460: Being a single parent I face many challenges not addressed here that greatly impact my education, finances, and opportunity to work.
- 488: I am currently doing an after-degree BComm. My first degree was in engineering, also from the U of A.
- 517: no comments.
- 589: Blatant favoritism towards engineering needs to be discontinued.
- 623: no comments
- 625: People should stop whining and be thankful for the quality and accessibility of education that we have. Also, I think that university should be (and is for the most part) a competitive place so that my degree is of value and I am proud of it.
- 695: i tried to answer this survey as honestly as possible but the truth is that this survey isn't really applicable to me because I never attend class and I am not planning on returning to the UofA so I couldn't really make honest answers.
- 853: I think it is great the university is looking for feedback. I think a good idea would be to integrate faculties to help the university. An example would be giving class credit for computer science students to help restructure the university library website or update it. Another could be to get business students to help promote on campus events (SU), businesses (RATT) etc. By integrating students, marks and the university, there would be more satisfaction among students. There is a rich resource of smart students who have great ideas that could help to make a better school system. I think communication between faculty and the university systems would help involve students. It would be hard work, but it would pay off in the end.
- 906: overall, I believe this coming to this university has been one of the best decisions I've ever made.
- 940: Question: How can someone in my position, who has built a career over more than 15 years, build on my education and not sacrifice everything, including a very high salary, which has allowed me to only have paid off my debt from my first set of student loans about 5 years ago? That question speaks to the root of the future of education for the masses, as the cost of a university education soars

(along with the cost of living) and as job markets bubble and burst in smaller cycles.

- 1011: University is a great time and all. Sometimes it's a ton too stressful though. I myself think that there's too much stress here, and I know I'm not the only one. But overall, it's a good time.
- 1021: Additionally, selection processes for some faculties need to change. Frankly, there are a lot of students that cannot get into their desired programs because those that did not cut it for medicine now decided to do the next-highest paying thing they could snatch up. What ever happened to proper intentions and passion for what one would make their career? I'm probably barking up the wrong tree, but hopefully these realizations will strike others sooner than later.
- 1123: The U of A is a place where it is exceedingly easy to get "lost in the sea of anonymity". I am the type of student that seldom gets out, and finds it difficult to interact with other students. For the most part, successful students are the ones who have the drive to put in the necessary time and energy, and the social presence to collaborate with others to complete the work. It's good that the SU is taking interest in enhancing the educational experience for students, but I am doubtful that it will really help since success is really dependent on the individual student's mindset and pre-existing skills.
- 1140: Maybe university is not a job-training or technical school...
- 1184: Finally, what hope is there for people who have messed up and then want to improve and start over? E.g. messed up first 2 years of undergrad either in grades or course selection. Even if they try hard, some doors remain closed. And it's not always the individual's fault. Sometimes it's a tough situation.
- 1276: I have a BA and a BEdAD. I am now in a Diploma program by Distance Education and have been a part-time student after my degrees and before entering the Diploma program. I work .75 as a teacher.
- 1285: The faculty is all friends too, so they back each other up... if something isn't being done well, it's very hard to get it changed.
- 1296: The University professors, on a whole, are in a very self inflated believe their own "B.S." mode. They are claiming that the more they get paid, the better quality of education the students will be receive. This is evident in many disciplines (teachers, nurses, police officers...in general the public service (yes I am part of this, so I can speak from personal experience). The less the Professors teach, the less likely we are to need them. We will be able to have internet type Universities from any country. As University is self taught anyway, what do we need Prof's for? I could keep on going!!! You get my drift?? The problem with the University system is that, actually, the problem starts long before. in the early childhood school system. Children are passed on from grade to grade, then upon entering University these poor students are totally shocked with the expectations. Look at the drop out and failure rate. The University does not care because they

have their tuition and government grants for these students. The student upgrades, or transfers to another field because they were not properly prepared for University. Or the oodles of "kids" that enter into programs where there is no real chance for a productive career. That is my shortened story and I am sticking to it!! Sorry for any typing errors, I have to go!!!