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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION:</b>	Senate	<b>DATE:</b>	August 26, 2021
<b>FROM:</b>	Zareen Naqvi, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	<b>PAGES:</b>	1 of 1
<b>RE:</b>	IRP Reports for Information		

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

Attached are two reports for information:

- **2020/21 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes course grades at the University over a ten-year period. The 2020/21 Grades Report covers the period from 2011/12 to 2020/21. Attached is the Summary Report. More detailed information is available on IRP's website: <https://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>
- **2020 Undergraduate Student Survey (UGSS) Report:** The UGSS survey is conducted every fall term. The attached Highlights Report presents a summary of key findings from the Fall 2020 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. This year's topics included: course availability, credential completion times, teaching and curriculum, services, SFU's COVID-19 response, and university culture and environment. The full report is located at: <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/UGSS%202020%20Report.pdf>

If you have trouble accessing files on IRP's website, please contact [askIRP@sfu.ca](mailto:askIRP@sfu.ca).

Enclosure

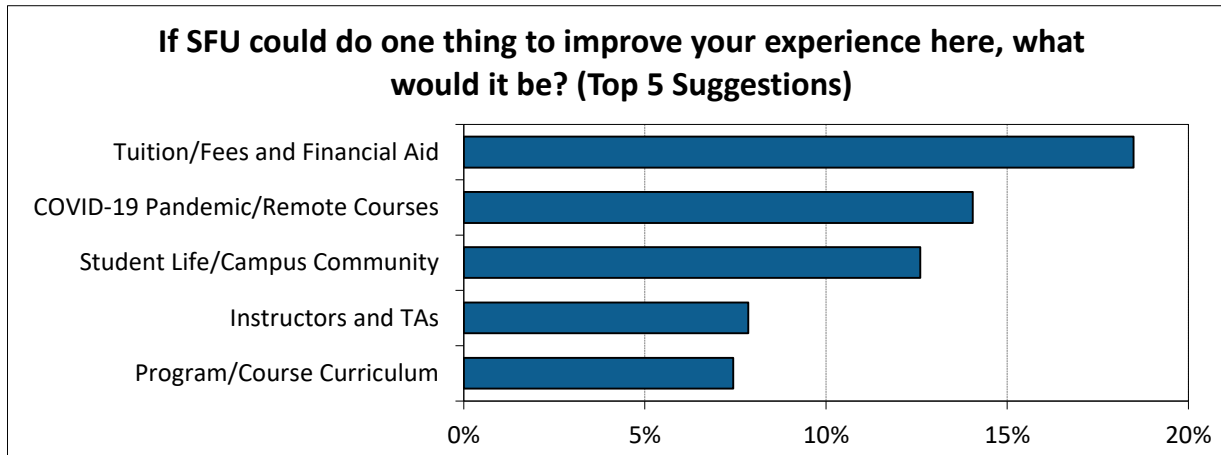
## Fall 2020 Undergraduate Student Survey: Highlights

The Undergraduate Student Survey has been conducted at Simon Fraser University every Fall semester since 1992<sup>1</sup> (except in 2002). This annual survey provides essential feedback on the academic experiences and concerns of our undergraduate students. Every year, the survey asks students about their experiences with course availability and credential completion at SFU, as well as a range of other topics that change from year to year. This year’s topics included SFU’s COVID-19 response, teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment.

A total of 8,332 students participated in this year’s survey, yielding an overall response rate of 32.4%. Highlights of the survey results are presented here. Statistics provided in this summary and in the full report are estimates based on survey respondents. Assuming that the sample is representative, proportions calculated on all respondents are accurate within  $\pm 0.9\%$ <sup>2</sup>, 19 times out of 20. The full report is available on the Institutional Research and Planning website: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp>

### General Experience

- 77% of respondents are satisfied<sup>3</sup> with their general SFU experience.
- When students were asked what single thing SFU could do to improve their experience here, the most common responses were:
  - decrease tuition/fees and increase financial aid,
  - improve the COVID-19 pandemic situation and remote courses, and
  - improve student life/campus community.



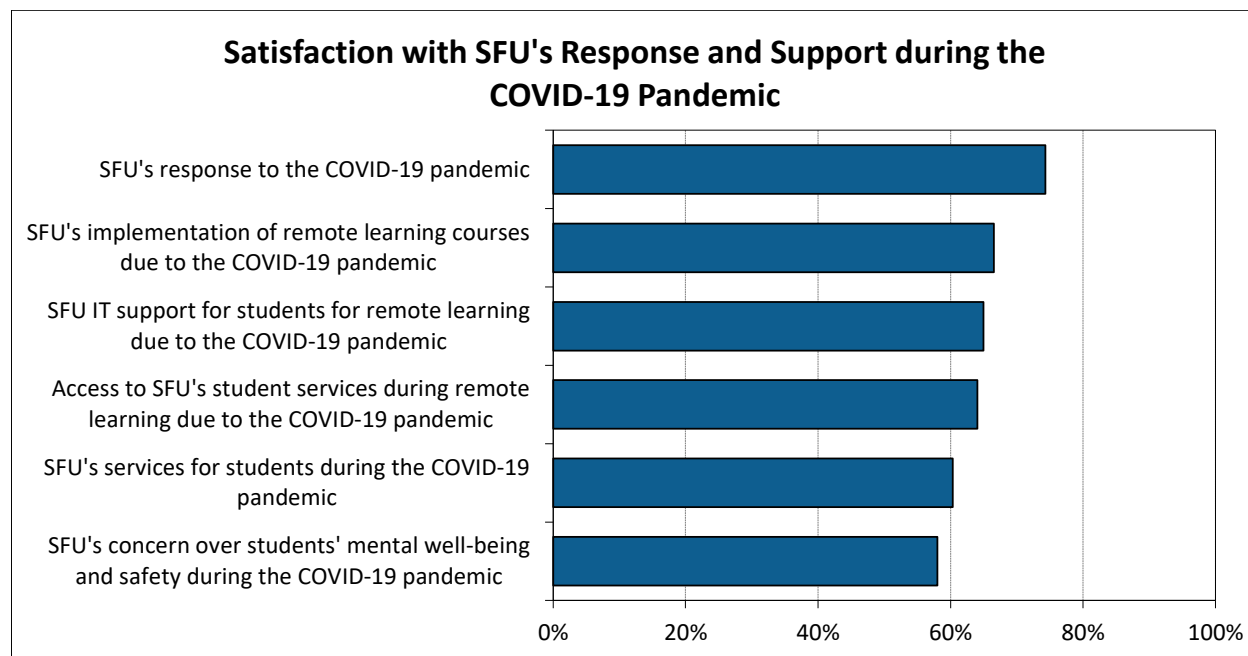
<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that a change in methodology, from in-class paper survey to online survey, was instituted in 2006. The paper surveys, administered to a random sample of classes, resulted in a “captive audience” and high response rates. In contrast, the online surveys, usually administered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

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

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this report, the categories of “Very Satisfied” and “Somewhat Satisfied” have been combined and will be referred to as “satisfied.”

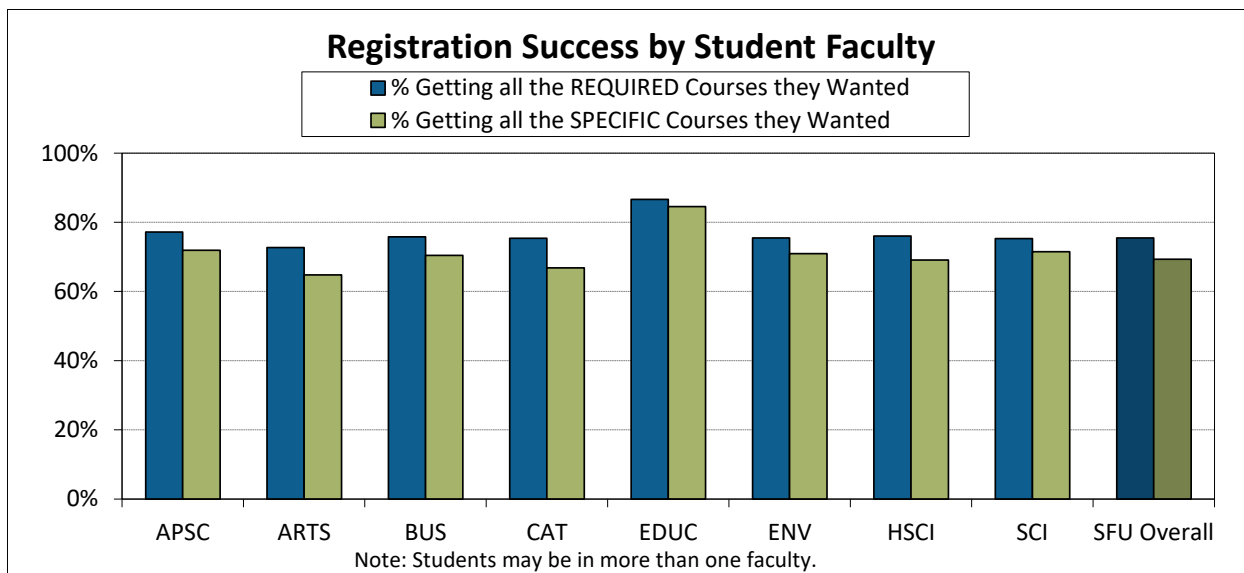
This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most courses and services were only offered online. Students were asked a set of questions to assess their satisfaction with SFU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of online courses and services. From the figure below:

- 74% of respondents are satisfied with SFU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- 67% are satisfied with SFU's implementation of remote learning courses.
- 58% are satisfied with SFU's concern over students' mental well-being and safety.



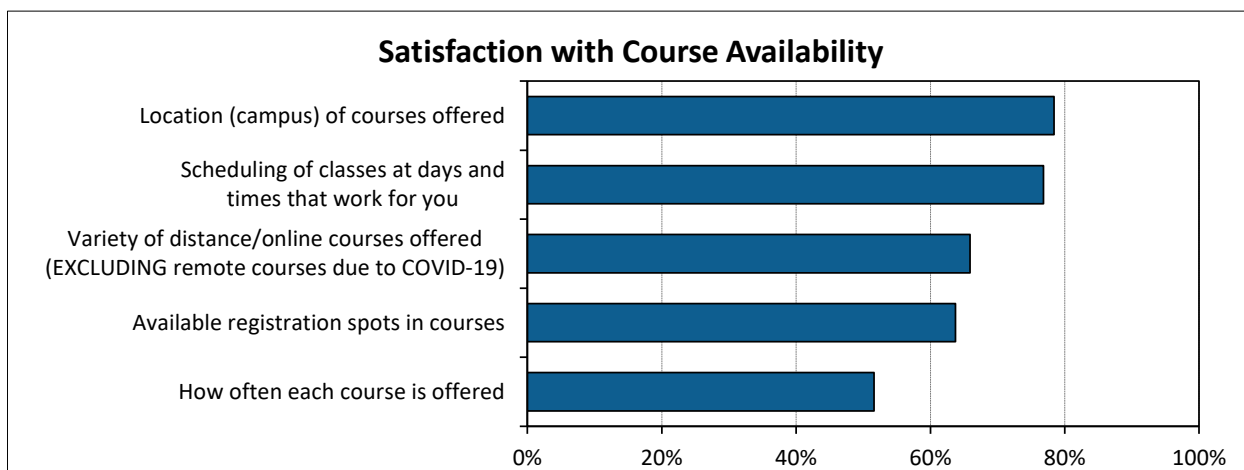
### Course Availability

- **SPECIFIC Courses:** 66% were able to register in all of the specific courses they wanted to take this term. This is statistically significantly higher than last year's rate of 60%.
- **REQUIRED Courses:** 75% were able to register in all of the required courses they wanted this term. This is statistically higher than last year's rate of 68%.
  - Registration difficulty in required courses was most often due to:
    - full classes,
    - reserved spaces in classes,
    - scheduling conflicts, and
    - courses not being offered this term.



- Satisfaction with Overall Experience with Course Availability:**

- Respondent satisfaction was highest for:
    - location (campus) of courses offered (78% satisfied) and
    - scheduling of classes (77%).
  - Satisfaction was lowest for other aspects of course availability:
    - variety of distance/online courses offered (excluding remote courses due to COVID-19; 66%),
    - available registration spots in courses (64%), and
    - course frequency (how often each course is offered; 52%).



## Credential Completion Times

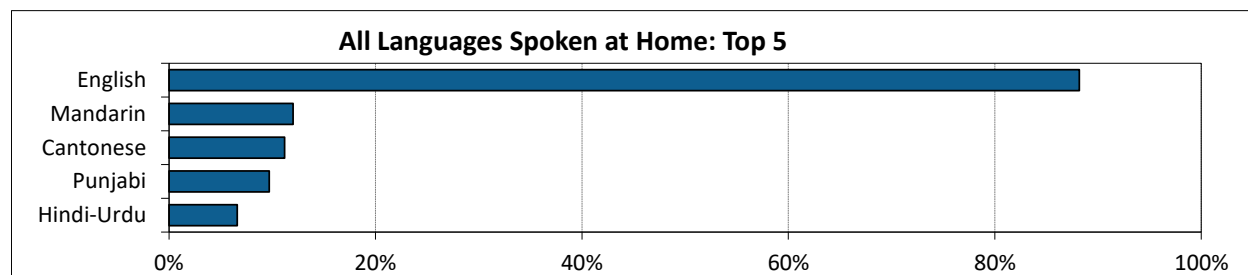
- **Delayed Credential Completion:** 63% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential, which is statistically significantly lower than last year's rate of 67%.
  - Commonly cited reasons for taking longer include:
    - course availability issues (54%),
    - students taking a reduced course load (46%), and
    - working in a job, outside of co-op (42%).

## Teaching and Curriculum

- **Quality of Teaching:** 80% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of teaching at SFU (similar to 81% last fall).
- **Remote Courses:**
  - 67% of respondents agree that they are able to keep up with course requirements for the courses they are taking remotely during the Fall 2020 term.
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Students were asked to select the top three qualities, skills, or experiences they think an SFU graduate should have. Respondents indicated that the most important qualities/skills/experiences are:
  - critical thinking skills (selected by 48% of respondents),
  - the ability to apply knowledge/methods learned in life and at work (38%),
  - a solid foundation in their specific academic discipline (29%), and
  - have participated in "learning through experience" such as co-op, field school, practicum, etc. (29%).
- **Research with Faculty Members:** 15% of respondents considered to be in fourth year or higher (based on credits completed and basis of admission) said that they have worked within a faculty member's research team, outside of coursework.

## Language Skills

- 88% of respondents speak some English at home, with 37% speaking only English at home.
- 63% speak at least one non-English language at home, and 12% speak no English at home.
- 52% speak more than one language at home.
- 59% said that English was the first language they learned as a child and still use regularly.
- 88% speak English most often with their friends.

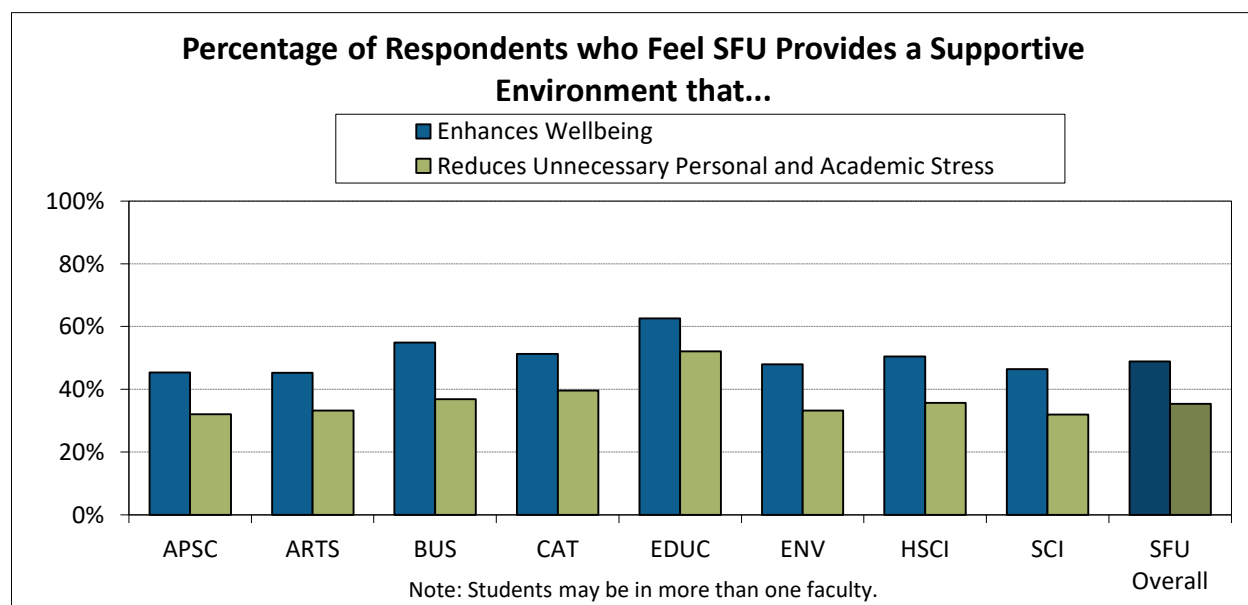


## Services

- **Academic Advising:** 36% of respondents have used this service during the Fall 2020 term, and 85% are satisfied.
- **Registrar and Information Services:** 27% of respondents have used this service during the Fall 2020 term, and 86% are satisfied with it.
- **Library:** 25% of respondents have used this service during the Fall 2020 term, and 85% are satisfied with it.

## University Culture and Environment

- 37% of respondents feel that they are thriving<sup>4</sup> as university students this term.
- 48% of respondents feel part of a caring community at SFU.
- 49% agree that SFU provides them with a supportive environment that enhances their well-being.
- 35% agree that SFU provides them with a supportive environment that reduces unnecessary personal and academic stress.
- Overall, 36% of respondents agree that SFU resources help them maintain their mental health.

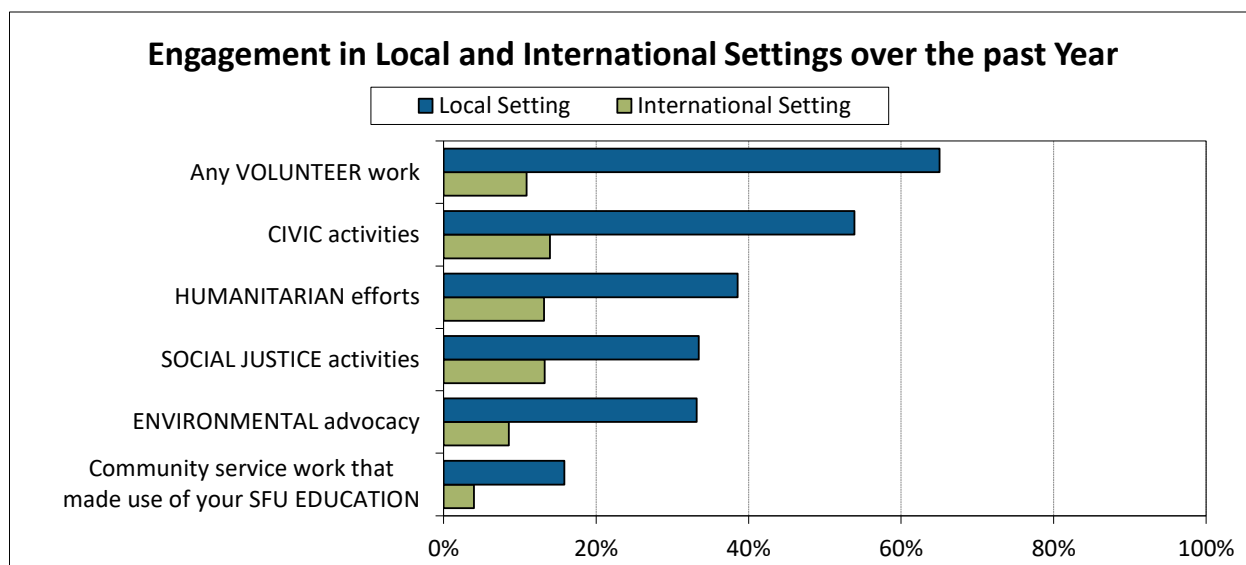


## General

- **Employment:**
  - 52% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed. Among these:
    - 11% work 30 hours or more per week in a paid job,
    - 63% work 10–29 hours per week, and
    - 26% work less than 10 hours per week.

<sup>4</sup> Thriving was defined in the question as “getting the most out of your university experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying the university experience.”

- **Engagement at SFU:** Students were asked if they have participated in a list of activities at SFU over the course of their education here:
  - 38% have participated in an SFU club, with an additional 32% planning to participate, and
  - 35% participated in a department, program, or faculty event, with an additional 29% planning to participate.
- **Engagement in the Community:**
  - **Local Community:**
    - In the last year:
      - 65% have done volunteer work,
      - 54% have engaged in civic activities,
      - 33-39% have engaged in humanitarian efforts, environmental activities, and social justice activities, and
      - 16% have engaged in community service work that made use of their SFU education.
  - **International Setting:**
    - In the last year:
      - 13-14% have engaged in civic activities, social justice activities, and humanitarian efforts,
      - 9-11% have engaged in environmental activities and volunteer work, and
      - 4% have engaged in community service work that made use of their SFU education.



### Recommendations

- **Student Life/Campus Community:** Students continue to request improvements to student life and the campus community, such as holding more social events like parties and group activities.

- **Online Courses:** Student satisfaction with online courses could be further improved by:
  - continuing to improve online assignments and exams,
  - continuing to improve online technology for courses (e.g. audio and video), and
  - improving consistency between course layouts.
- **Facilities:** Based on comments received, student satisfaction with facilities could be further improved by:
  - continuing to increase the number study areas,
  - continuing to renovate and repair buildings, and
  - increasing the amount of colour, paintings, and greenery on campus.
- **Course Availability and Scheduling:** Student responses suggest the need for continued effort to:
  - increase the frequency of courses, and
  - increase the number of course sections.
- **Policies and Services:** Some additional student suggestions over the last few years for improving their experience at SFU include:
  - lowering tuition and fees, and improving financial aid,
  - improving the teaching skills of instructors and TAs,
  - increasing the amount of practical/hands-on experience in courses,
  - improving transportation service and parking availability,
  - improving and increasing counselling and medical services,
  - continuing to improve the SFU website and enrollment system, and
  - improving academic advising.