



MEMO

ATTENTION Senate	TEL
FROM Zareen Naqvi, Director, Institutional Research and Planning (IRP)	
RE IRP Reports for Information	
DATE August 23, 2017	TIME

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

Attached are two reports for information:

- **2016/17 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes student course grades at the University over a ten year period. The 2016/17 Grades Report covers the period from 2007/08 to 2016/17. Attached is the Summary Report. More detailed information is available on IRP's website: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>
- **2016 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 2016 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with Faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. The topics included: course availability, credential completion time, teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment. The full report is located at: <http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/ugss2016report.pdf>

Enclosure



**SFU**

**Simon Fraser University**  
Institutional Research and Planning

**2016/17 Grades Report:**  
**Historical Distribution of**  
**Undergraduate and Graduate Course Grades**  
**2007/08 to 2016/17**

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Summer 2017

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## I – Introduction

This report summarizes student course grades at Simon Fraser University over the ten year period from 2007/08 to 2016/17<sup>1</sup>. SFU faculty and staff can access more detailed information at the SFU Institutional Research and Planning website (<http://www.sfu.ca/irp/students/grades-report.html>).

## II – Definitions and Notes

To calculate the average course grades, each grade is assigned a numeric value, defined in Table 1. These values are weighted by the number of students who received each particular grade, to produce an overall average.

**Table 1: Simon Fraser University's Grade Scale**

A+ = 4.33	B+ = 3.33	C+ = 2.33	D = 1.00	N = 0.00
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00	F = 0.00	
A- = 3.67	B- = 2.67	C- = 1.67	FD = 0.00	

Note: FD is defined as a fail (academic discipline) and has only been in use since Summer 2009.

Table 2 lists the grades that have no numerical equivalent, and are therefore omitted from the calculation of average grades, and from this report. Although they are not included in the averages, credit is granted for the following grades: "AE", "CC", "CR", and "P".

**Table 2: Grades with No Numerical Equivalent**

Grade	Definition
AE	aegrotat standing, compassionate pass
AU	audit
CC	course challenge
CF	course challenge failed
CN	did not complete challenge
CR	credit without grade
DE	deferred grade
FX	formal exchange
GN	grade not reported
IP	in progress
P	pass, ungraded
W	withdrawn
WD	withdrawal
WE	withdrawal under extenuating circumstances

Among undergraduate courses, "lower division" courses are those numbered from XX1 to 299, inclusive. "Upper division" courses are numbered 300 to 499, inclusive.

Data reported on a yearly basis refers to fiscal year. For example, 2016/17 grades are the grades accumulated over the 2016 Summer term (SFU term code: 1164), the 2016 Fall term (SFU term code: 1167), and the 2017 Spring term (SFU term code: 1171). The grades data for each fiscal year is taken as

<sup>1</sup> Effective April 1, 2009, SFU introduced two new faculties: the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology, and the Faculty of Environment. Also, effective April 1, 2011, the Department of Archaeology moved from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to the Faculty of Environment. Further, effective Spring 2017, the Semester in Dialogue courses moved from the Faculty of Science to the Faculty of Environment. These changes in faculty structure have initiated the move of certain courses to different faculties. All data in this report reflect the current faculty structure.

of the middle of the following summer term, to allow time for grade challenges and deferred grades to be resolved.

To protect student privacy, grade distributions based on five grades or fewer are not reported. Co-op courses, work-terms, and practicums are excluded from this report. Where they could be identified, courses graded as Pass/Fail are also excluded.

### III – Analysis

#### III.A – Undergraduate Course Grades

##### *III.A.1 – Lower Division Course Grades (Courses Numbered XX1-299 Inclusive)*

#### **FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 3 and Figure A):**

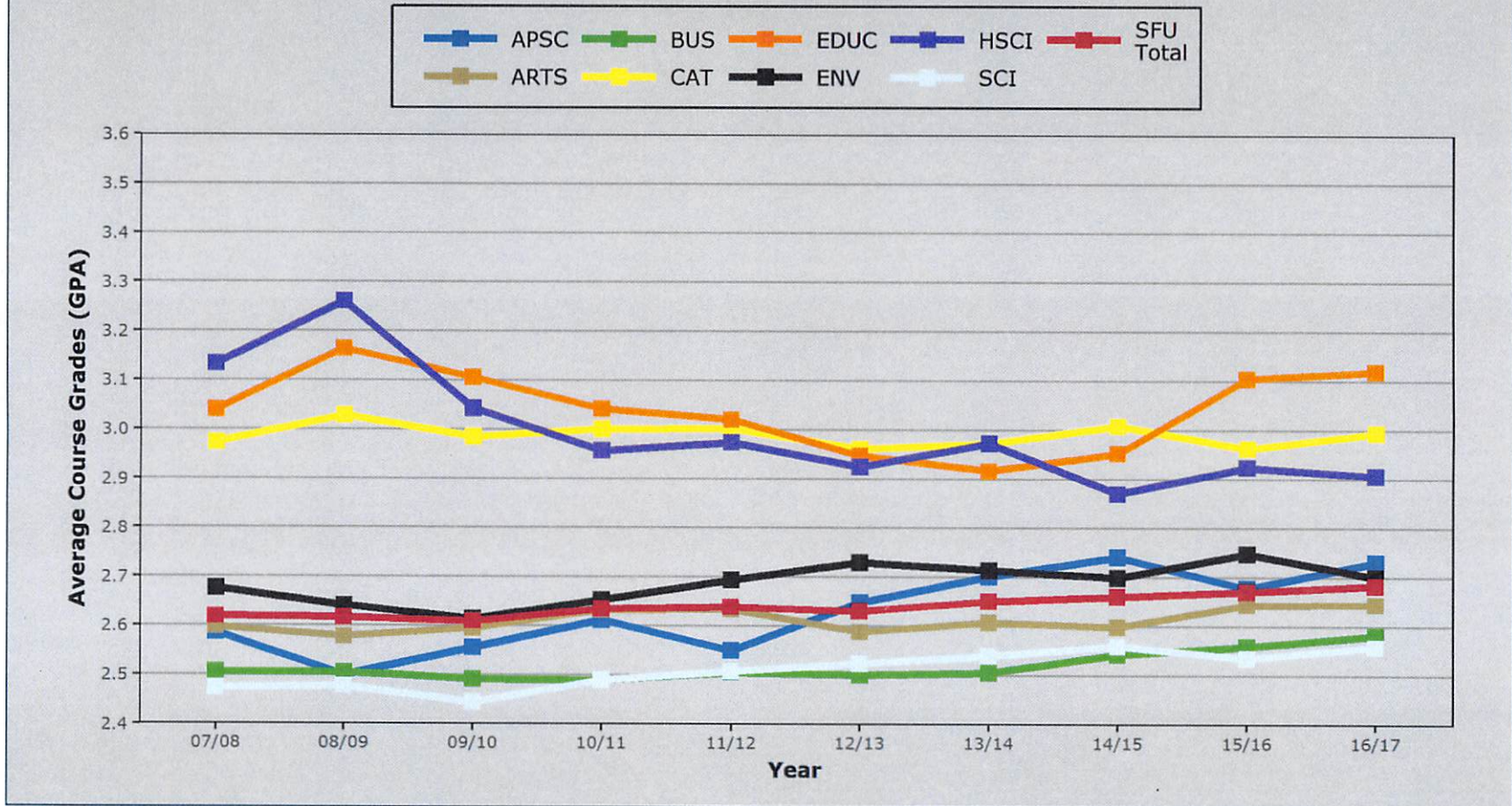
- For each of the past ten years, the faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Education (EDUC), and Health Sciences (HSCI) have awarded higher average lower division grades than the rest of the faculties.
  - The Faculty of Education (EDUC) awarded the highest average lower division grades in 2016/17. EDUC has awarded the highest average lower division course grades in five of the last ten years, with an average awarded grade of 3.04 over the past decade.
  - In 2007/08 and 2008/09, the Faculty of Health Sciences (HSCI) awarded the highest average lower division grades, and it has since remained among the top three faculties in awarding the highest average lower division course grades (10-year average of 2.98).
  - The Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT) awarded an average grade of 2.99 in lower division courses over the past decade.
- In general, lower division courses in the Faculty of Environment (ENV) have awarded higher average grades than those in Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) and Applied Sciences (APSC). For each of the past ten years, APSC courses have awarded a higher percentage of “A” grades<sup>2</sup> and a higher percentage of “F” grades<sup>3</sup> than courses in ENV and ARTS. Average lower division grades in APSC have been increasing and have been similar to ENV for the past four years.
- Lower division courses in the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculty of Science (SCI) have generally awarded the lowest average grades.

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<sup>2</sup> This includes “A+”, “A”, and “A-”

<sup>3</sup> This includes “F”, “FD”, and “N”

**Figure A**  
**Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded by Faculty:**  
**Lower Division**



**Table 3: Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of "A" Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty – Lower Division**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2016/17	10-Year Average	2016/17	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	2.73	2.64	27.6%	25.8%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.64	2.61	18.5%	17.5%
Business	2.58	2.52	14.3%	13.5%
Communication, Art and Technology	2.99	2.99	26.6%	28.0%
Education	3.12	3.04	36.8%	34.6%
Environment	2.70	2.69	22.2%	21.3%
Health Sciences	2.91	2.98	23.9%	30.4%
Science	2.56	2.51	21.9%	20.6%
University Total	2.68	2.64	21.6%	20.7%

**LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>4</sup>:**

Comparing the average lower division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>5</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Courses in Chinese (CHIN) have awarded the highest average lower division grades. Note that 2013/14 was the first year that this subject was offered by APSC.
  - Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded grades considerably below the APSC average.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - Courses in Greek (GRK) have awarded the highest average grades. In fact, the seven subjects in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to award the highest average grades in the last ten years are all language subjects (Greek, Persian, Chinese, Arabic, First Nations Language, Italian, and Language). Note that this is only the fourth year that Arabic (ARAB) and First Nations Language (FNLG) courses have been offered, and only the seventh year that Persian (PERS) and Language (LANG) courses have been offered.
  - Philosophy (PHIL) and Economics (ECON) courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Business (BUS):
  - Over the last ten years, lower division courses in Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) and Business Administration (BUS) have awarded very similar average grades.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Publishing (PUB) and Contemporary Arts (FPA) courses have awarded the highest lower division course grades over the last ten years. Note that this is only the fifth year that lower division PUB courses have been offered.
  - Communication (CMNS) courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Education (EDUC):
  - On average, Education (EDUC) courses have awarded higher lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.

<sup>4</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the lower division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make.

<sup>5</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

- Environment (ENV):
  - Courses in the Environment (ENV) subject have awarded the highest average lower division grades. Note that this is only the fourth year that lower division ENV courses have been offered.
  - Archaeology (ARCH) has awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - Other than SCI courses (which have only been offered as lower division courses for two years and with few students), the highest average lower division grades have been awarded in Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology (BPK) and Physics (PHYS) courses.
  - Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA), Mathematics (MATH), and Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.

#### **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>4</sup>:**

##### ***2016/17 Average Lower Division Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Chinese (CHIN) courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Language (LANG).
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Economics (ECON).
- Business (BUS):
  - Business Administration (BUS) courses awarded higher average lower division grades than Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) courses in 2016/17.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Publishing (PUB) courses.
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT).
- Education (EDUC):
  - In 2016/17, Education (EDUC) courses awarded higher average lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Sustainable Community Development (SCD) courses. Note that this average is based on a relatively small number of grades.
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Environmental Science (EVSC) and Archaeology (ARCH) courses.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average lower division grades in 2016/17 were awarded in courses with the Science (SCI) subject code. Note that these averages are based on a relatively small number of grades.
  - The lowest average lower division grades were awarded in Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA). Note that this average is based on a relatively small number of grades.



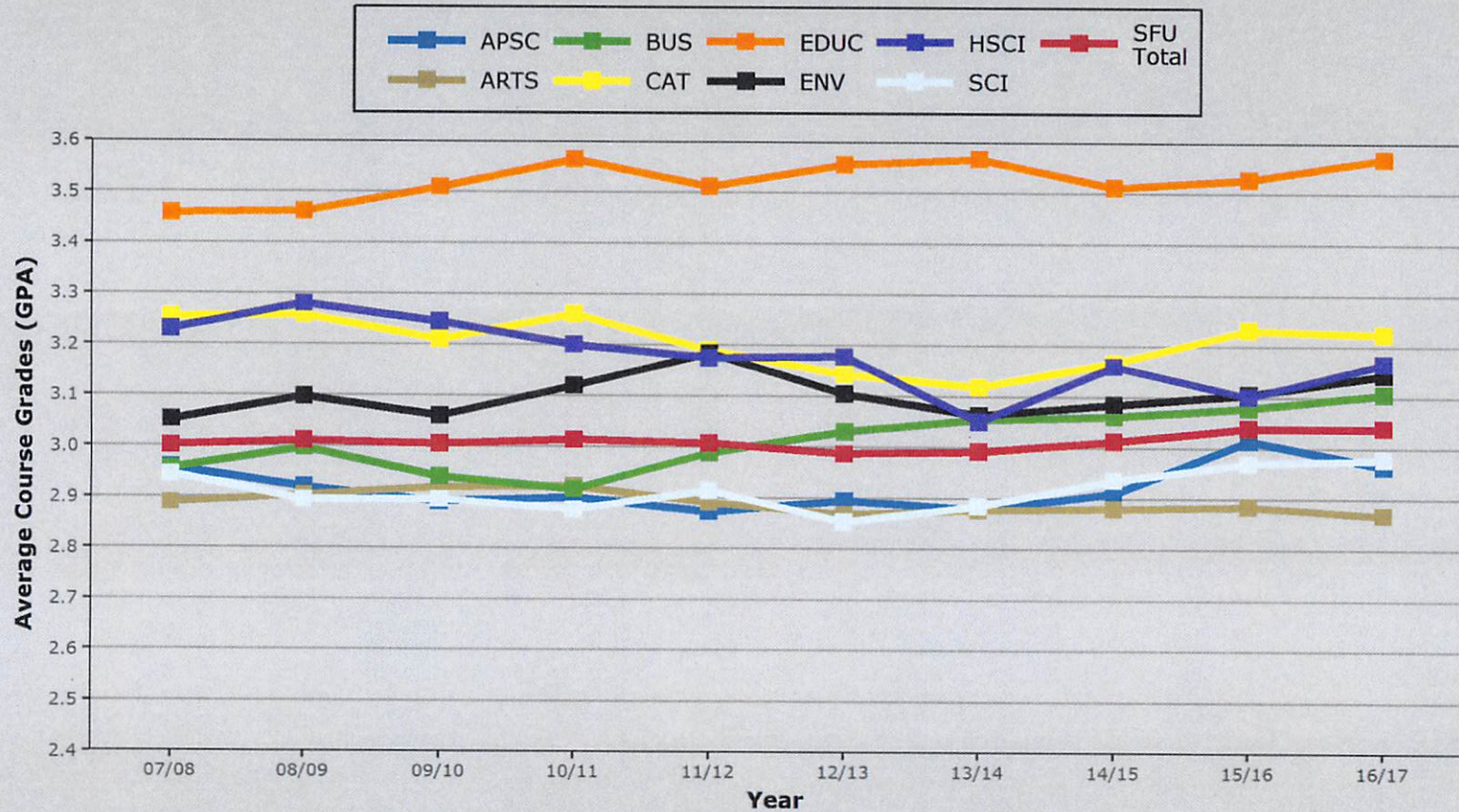
***Large Changes in 2015/16 to 2016/17 Average Lower Division Grades:***

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average lower division grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: First Nations Studies (FNST: 2.91 to 3.29) and Persian (PERS: 3.12 to 3.49). Note that few grades were awarded in PERS.
  - Decreases: Arabic (ARAB: 3.41 to 3.01), Environmental Science (EVSC: 2.93 to 2.65), and Environment (ENV: 3.39 to 3.14). Note that few grades were awarded in ARAB.

***III.A.2 – Upper Division Course Grades (Courses Numbered 300-499 Inclusive)*****FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 4 and Figure B):**

- The Faculty of Education (EDUC) awarded the highest average upper division course grades in each of the last ten years (average grade awarded: 3.52).
- After Education, the Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Health Sciences (HSCI), and Environment (ENV) have awarded the highest average upper division grades over the past ten years (10-year average of 3.20, 3.15, and 3.10, respectively).
- The remaining faculties have consistently awarded lower average upper division grades, in the range of 2.89 to 3.01. The Beedie School of Business (BUS) has generally awarded higher average upper division grades than the remaining faculties. Average upper division grades in BUS have increased for six years and have been similar to ENV over the past four years.

**Figure B**  
**Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded by Faculty:**  
**Upper Division**



**Table 4: Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of "A" Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty – Upper Division**

Course Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2016/17	10-Year Average	2016/17	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	2.96	2.92	33.3%	32.4%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.87	2.89	25.5%	26.8%
Business	3.11	3.01	31.9%	29.0%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.22	3.20	38.4%	38.9%
Education	3.57	3.52	64.2%	61.8%
Environment	3.14	3.10	39.5%	36.9%
Health Sciences	3.17	3.15	35.9%	37.0%
Science	2.98	2.92	33.8%	31.8%
University Total	3.04	3.01	33.5%	32.7%

**LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>6</sup>:**

Comparing the average upper division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>7</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Computing Science (CMPT) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average upper division grades have been awarded in Italian (ITAL).
  - Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) courses have awarded average upper division grades considerably below the faculty average.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Contemporary Arts (FPA) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Publishing (PUB) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades. Note that this is based on only seven years of data.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Dialogue (DIAL) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Geography (GEOG) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average grades have been awarded in Marine Science (MASC). Note that MASC courses have generally awarded few upper division grades each year.
  - Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.

<sup>6</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the upper division level are not discussed in this section since there are no comparisons to make.

<sup>7</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

## **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>6</sup>:**

### ***2016/17 Average Upper Division Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2016/17, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) courses awarded the highest average upper division grades, and Computing Science (CMPT) courses awarded the lowest.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average upper division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Italian (ITAL). However, note that few grades were awarded in ITAL. Among the subjects which awarded more than 50 grades in 2016/17, Chinese (CHIN) awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Business Administration and Economics (BUEC) courses awarded the lowest average upper division grades in 2016/17.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average upper division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Contemporary Arts (FPA).
  - The lowest average upper division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT).
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average upper division grades awarded in 2016/17 were in Dialogue (DIAL).
  - The lowest average upper division grades were awarded in Geography (GEOG).
- Science (SCI):
  - The subject awarding the highest average upper division grades in 2016/17 was Marine Science (MASC).
  - The lowest average upper division grades were awarded in Mathematics and Computing Science (MACM).

### ***Large Changes in 2015/16 to 2016/17 Average Upper Division Course Grades:***

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average upper division grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: Development and Sustainability (DEVS: 3.10 to 3.56). Note that few grades were awarded in DEVS.
  - Decreases: International Studies and Political Science (ISPO: 3.04 to 2.64), Sustainable Community Development (SCD: 3.48 to 3.10), First Nations Language (FNLG: 3.51 to 3.22), Marine Science (MASC: 4.02 to 3.73), Asia-Canada (ASC: 3.03 to 2.76), and Hellenic Studies (HS: 3.11 to 2.86). Note that few grades were awarded in FNLG, HS, and ISPO.

### ***III.A.3 – General Observations (All Undergraduate Courses)***

- In 2016/17, the average undergraduate grade awarded was 2.83.
- The average undergraduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 2.79.
- Over the past ten years, upper division courses have consistently awarded higher average grades than lower division courses in all faculties.

### **III.B – Undergraduate Course Grades by Student Faculty (see Table 5 and Figure C)**

This section summarizes the 2016/17 undergraduate course grade distributions within each faculty, controlling for the faculty of undergraduate students enrolled in the courses.

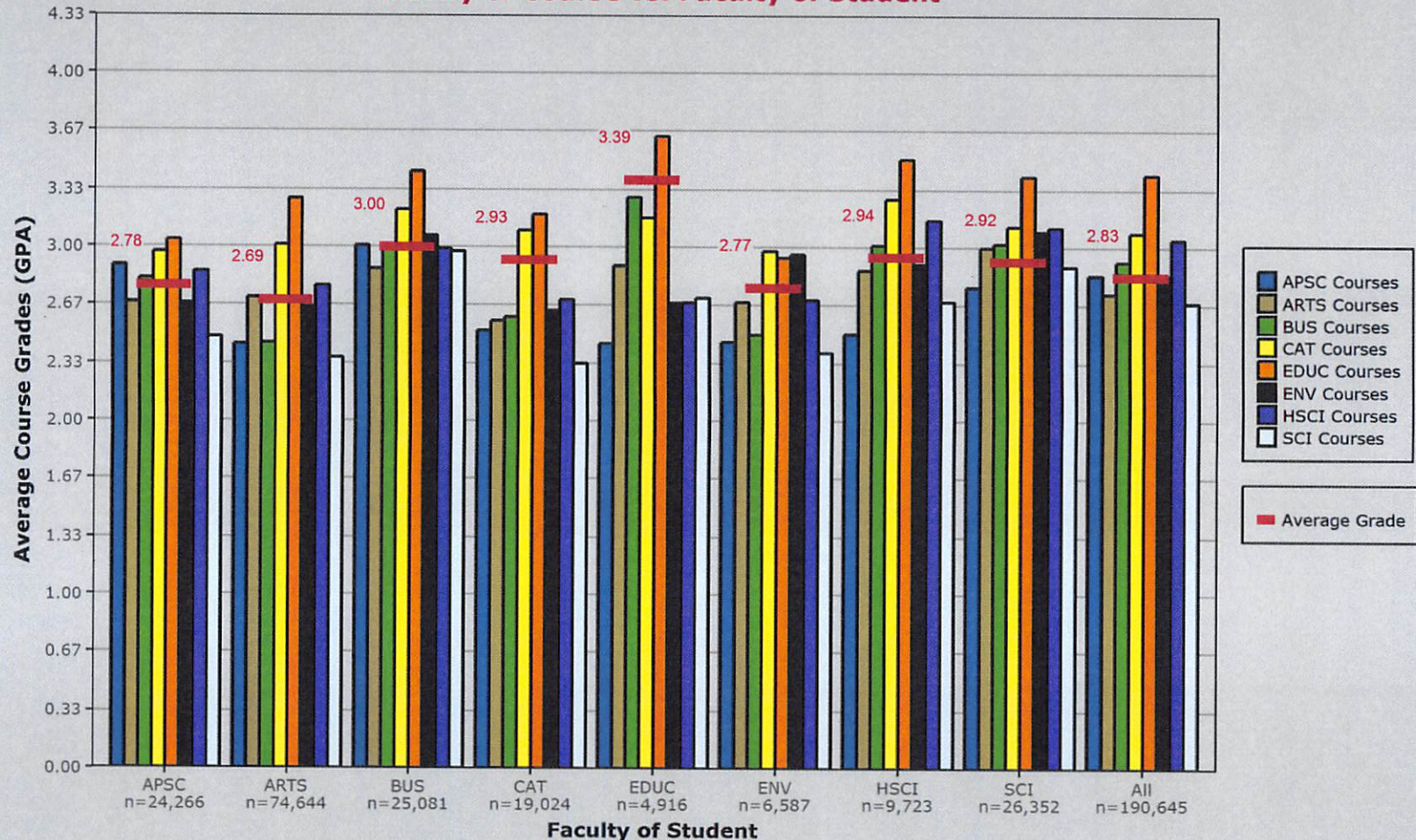
**Table 5: 2016/17 Average Undergraduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of “A” Grades Awarded, by Faculty of Student**

<b>Faculty of Student</b>	<b>Average Course Grades</b>	<b>% "A" Grades Awarded</b>
Applied Sciences	2.78	27.5%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.69	21.0%
Business	3.00	29.6%
Communication, Art and Technology	2.93	27.9%
Education	3.39	55.2%
Environment	2.77	25.4%
Health Sciences	2.94	29.4%
Science	2.92	31.6%
All Undergraduate Students	2.83	26.6%

#### ***By Faculty of Students:***

- Students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC) were awarded the highest grades overall in 2016/17, with an average course grade of 3.39.
- Students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) were awarded average course grades of 3.00.
- Students from the Faculties of Science (SCI), Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), and Health Sciences (HSCI) were awarded average grades from 2.92 to 2.94.
- Students from the Faculties of Environment (ENV) and Applied Sciences (APSC) were awarded average course grades of 2.77 and 2.78, respectively.
- Students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) were awarded the lowest average grades in 2016/17, with an average course grade of 2.69.
- Students from all faculties most frequently took courses from their own faculties.
- Students from the Faculty of Environment (ENV) achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Communication, Art and Technology (CAT).
- Students from all other faculties achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Education (EDUC).

**Figure C**  
**Undergraduate Course Grades, 2016/17**  
**Faculty of Course vs. Faculty of Student**



Notes: Only averages based on 6 or more grades are graphed.  
 'All' category includes students who are not associated with a faculty.  
 Only includes grades awarded to undergraduate students.

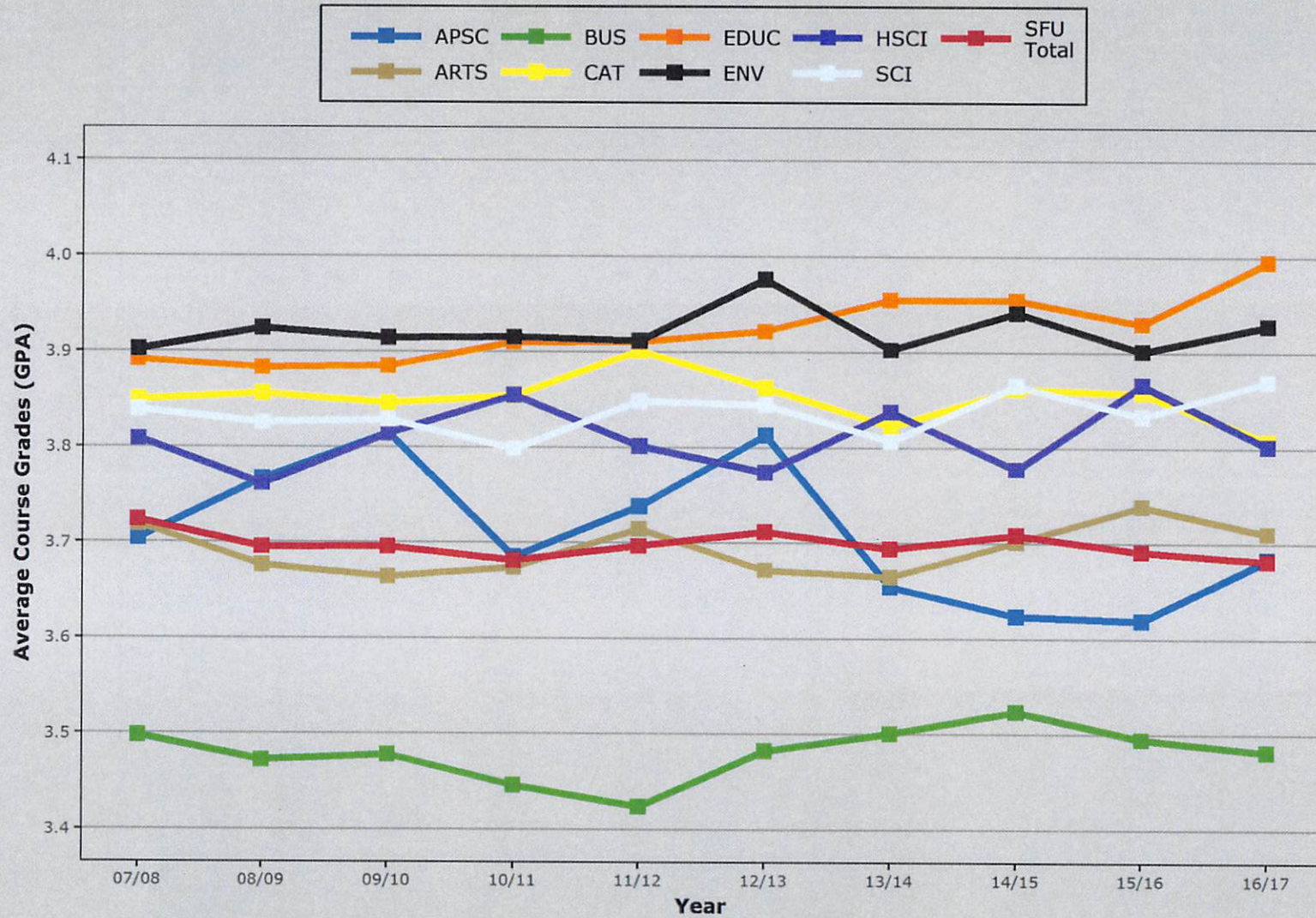
**By Faculty of Courses:**

- In courses offered by the Faculties of Applied Sciences (APSC) and Science (SCI), students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) received the highest average grades in 2016/17.
- In courses offered by the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and Faculty of Education (EDUC), students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC) received the highest average grades in 2016/17. Note that few EDUC students were awarded grades in BUS courses.
- In courses offered by the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) and Environment (ENV), students from the Faculty of Science (SCI) received the highest average grades in 2016/17.
- In courses offered by the Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT) and Health Sciences (HSCI), students from the Faculty of Health Sciences (HSCI) received the highest average grades in 2016/17.
- Apart from the Faculty of Education (EDUC), courses in all faculties were most frequently taken by students from within those faculties. Faculty of Education (EDUC) courses were most often taken by students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), followed by students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC).

**III.C – Graduate Course Grades****FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 6 and Figure D):**

- The Faculties of Environment (ENV) and Education (EDUC) awarded the two highest average graduate level course grades for each of the past ten years, each with a 10-year average of 3.92.
- The Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Science (SCI), and Health Sciences (HSCI) have awarded similar average grades over the past decade, with 10-year averages of 3.85, 3.84 and 3.81, respectively.
- The Faculties of Applied Sciences (APSC) and Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) have generally awarded lower average graduate grades than all other faculties except Business (10-year averages of 3.70 and 3.69, respectively).
- The Beedie School of Business (BUS) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades in each of the last ten years, with an average grade awarded of 3.48.

**Figure D**  
**Average Graduate Course Grades Awarded by Faculty**





**Table 6: Average Graduate Course Grades Awarded and Percentage of "A" Grades Awarded, by Course Faculty**

Faculty	Average Course Grades		% "A" Grades Awarded	
	2016/17	10-Year Average	2016/17	10-Year Proportion
Applied Sciences	3.68	3.70	76.4%	74.8%
Arts and Social Sciences	3.71	3.69	77.4%	74.9%
Business	3.48	3.48	49.8%	48.8%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.81	3.85	84.6%	87.3%
Education	3.99	3.92	94.9%	91.4%
Environment	3.93	3.92	93.6%	94.1%
Health Sciences	3.80	3.81	83.0%	85.2%
Science	3.87	3.84	87.8%	84.4%
University Total	3.68	3.70	70.4%	71.8%

**LONG-TERM COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>8</sup>:**

Comparing the average graduate course grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>9</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) has awarded the highest average graduate course grades. Note that MSE has only been offering graduate-level courses for the past nine years.
  - Computing Science (CMPT) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - Psychology (PSYC) has awarded the highest average graduate grades over the past decade.
  - Applied Legal Studies (ALS) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Graduate-level courses in all CAT subjects awarded very similar average grades, with Publishing (PUB) awarding slightly lower average grades than the other subjects.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Resource and Environmental Management (REM) has awarded the highest average graduate grades.
  - Development and Sustainability (DEVS) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades. Note that DEVS has awarded very few grades over seven years of offering courses.
- Science (SCI):
  - Courses in Biological Sciences (BISC) have awarded the highest average graduate course grades.
  - Physics (PHYS) has awarded the lowest average graduate grades.

<sup>8</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the graduate level are not discussed in this section, since there are no comparisons to make.

<sup>9</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year, or awarded five or fewer grades in all previous fiscal years combined

## **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>8</sup>:**

### ***2016/17 Average Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2016/17, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) awarded the highest average graduate course grades.
  - Engineering Sciences (ENSC) awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average graduate grades in 2016/17 were awarded in Psychology (PSYC).
  - History (HIST) courses awarded the lowest average graduate course grades in 2016/17.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average graduate grades in 2016/17 were awarded in Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) courses.
  - Courses in Contemporary Arts (FPA) and Communications (CMNS) awarded the lowest average graduate grades.
- Environment (ENV):
  - In 2016/17, courses in Resource and Environmental Management (REM) and Geography (GEOG) awarded the highest average graduate grades.
  - Development and Sustainability (DEVS) awarded the lowest average graduate grades in 2016/17. Note that very few grades were awarded in DEVS.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average grades in 2016/17 were awarded in Biological Sciences (BISC), Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology (BPK), and Applied Mathematics (APMA).
  - The lowest average course grades were awarded in Physics (PHYS).

### ***Large changes in 2015/16 to 2016/17 Average Course Grades:***

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) in the average graduate course grade awarded from last year to this year:
  - Increases: Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA: 3.35 to 3.85), Applied Mathematics (APMA: 3.61 to 4.01), Archaeology (ARCH: 3.59 to 3.92), and French (FREN: 3.40 to 3.67). Note that few grades were awarded in ACMA, APMA, and FREN courses.
  - Decreases: History (HIST: 3.70 to 3.23), Philosophy (PHIL: 3.89 to 3.45), and Physics (PHYS: 3.70 to 3.34). Note that few grades were awarded in graduate level HIST courses.

## **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**

- In 2016/17, the average graduate grade awarded was 3.68, which is similar to last year. The average graduate grade awarded at the university has been fairly stable over the last ten years.
- The average graduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 3.70

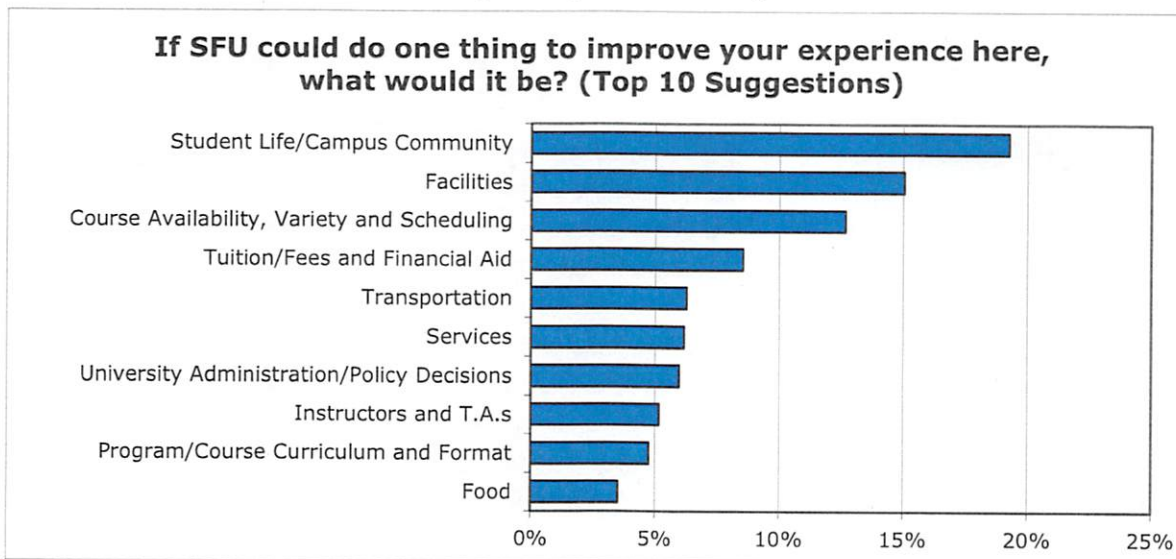
## Fall 2016 Undergraduate Student Survey: Highlights

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 teaching and curriculum, services, and university culture and environment.

A total of 7,181 students participated in this year's survey, yielding an overall response rate of 28.3%. Highlights of the survey results are presented here. Statistics provided in this summary and in the full report are estimates based on survey respondents. Assuming that the sample is representative, proportions calculated on all respondents are accurate within  $\pm 1.0\%$ <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

- 88% of respondents are satisfied with their general SFU experience.
- When students were asked what single thing SFU could do to improve their experience here, the most common responses were:
  - improve student life,
  - improve facilities, and
  - improve course availability, variety, and scheduling.

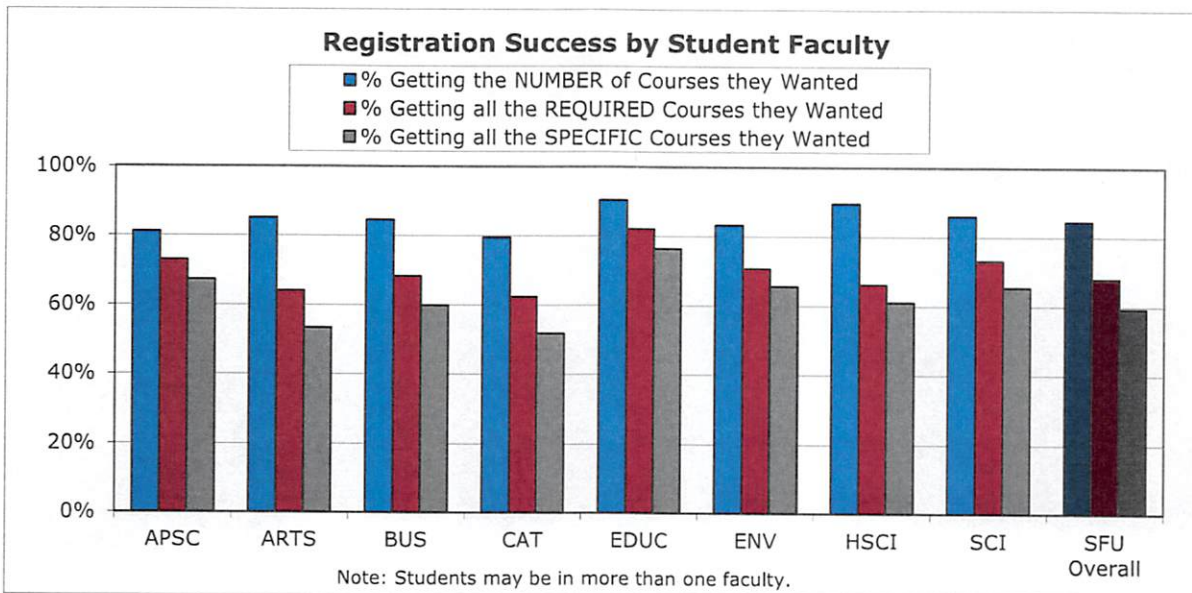


<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that a change in methodology, from in-class paper survey to online survey, was instituted in 2006. The paper surveys, administered to a random sample of classes, resulted in a "captive audience" and high response rates. In contrast, the online surveys, usually administered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

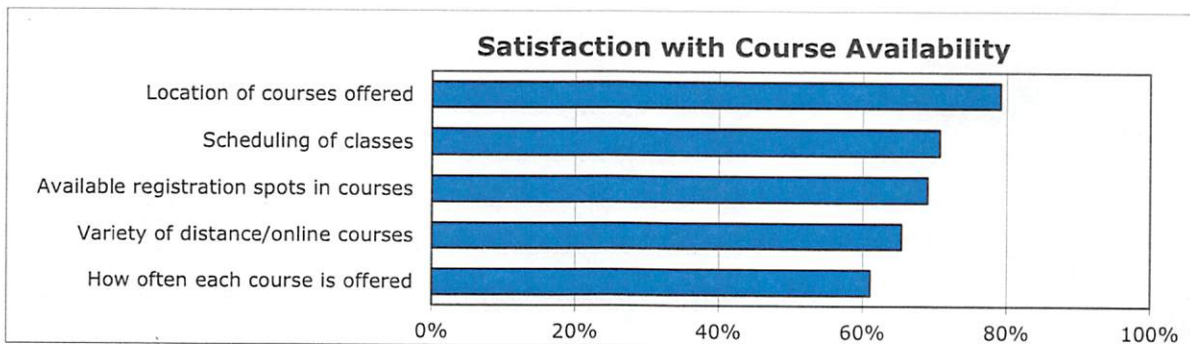
<sup>2</sup> Note that this margin of error does not control for multiple comparisons. Survey research should be considered exploratory, and definitive conclusions must be drawn with caution.

**Course Availability**

- **NUMBER of Courses:** 85% of respondents were able to register in the number of courses they wanted this fall. This is the same as last year’s rate.
- **SPECIFIC Courses:** 59% were able to register in all of the specific courses they wanted to take this term, similar to last year’s rate.
- **REQUIRED Courses:** 68% were able to register in all of the required courses they wanted this term. This is the same as last year’s rate.
  - Registration difficulty in required courses was most often due to:
    - full classes,
    - scheduling conflicts, and
    - courses not being offered this term.



- **Satisfaction with Course Availability:**
  - Satisfaction with aspects of course availability is statistically higher than last year:
    - 79% are satisfied with the location of courses,
    - 71% are satisfied with course scheduling,
    - 69% are satisfied with available registration spots in courses, and
    - 65% are satisfied with the variety of distance/online courses offered.
  - Satisfaction with course frequency (61%) is higher than last year, but not statistically different.

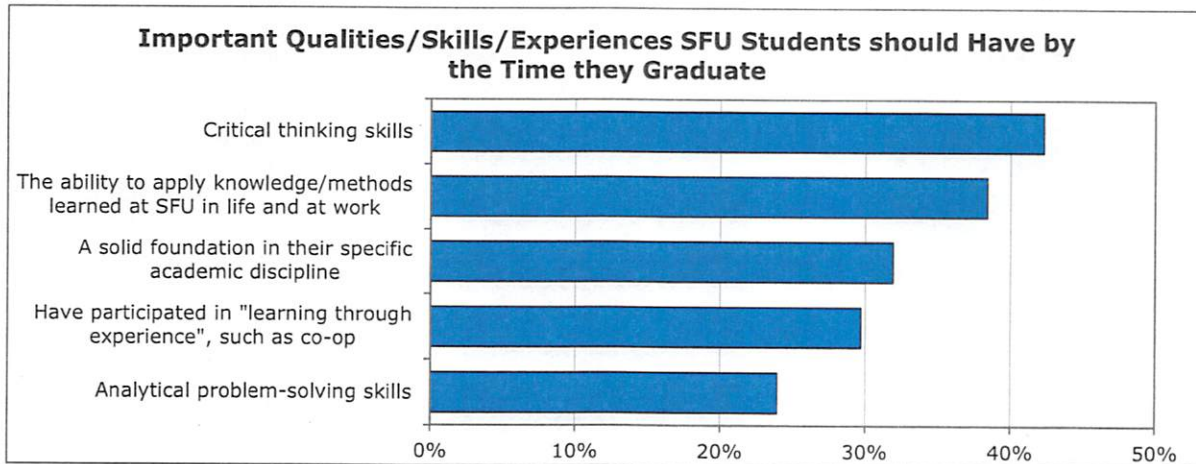


### Credential Completion Times

- **Delayed Credential Completion:** 65% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential, which is a statistically significant difference compared to last year's 63%.
  - Commonly cited reasons for taking longer include:
    - course availability issues - e.g. full courses, schedule conflicts, courses not offered, etc. (53%),
    - taking a reduced course load (41%),
    - employment outside of co-op (38%), and
    - participation in co-op (34%).

### Teaching and Curriculum

- **Quality of Teaching:** 86% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of teaching at SFU (compared to 85% last fall – not a statistically significant difference).
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Students were asked to select the top three qualities, skills, or experiences they think an SFU graduate should have. The top choices are displayed in the graph below. Among the top five selected skills:
  - 85% of respondents are satisfied that SFU is providing them with critical thinking skills,
  - 74% are satisfied that SFU is providing them with the ability to apply knowledge/methods learned,
  - 83% are satisfied that SFU is providing them with a solid foundation in their specific academic discipline,
  - 74% are satisfied that SFU is providing opportunities for "learning through experience," and
  - 83% are satisfied that SFU is providing them with analytical problem-solving skills.

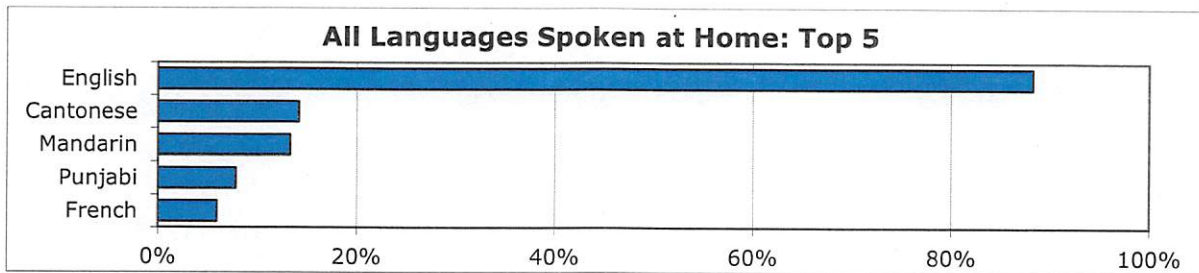


- **Research with Faculty Members:** 18% of respondents considered to be in fourth year or higher (based on credits completed and basis of admission) said that they have worked within a faculty member's research team, outside of coursework.

### Language Skills

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

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

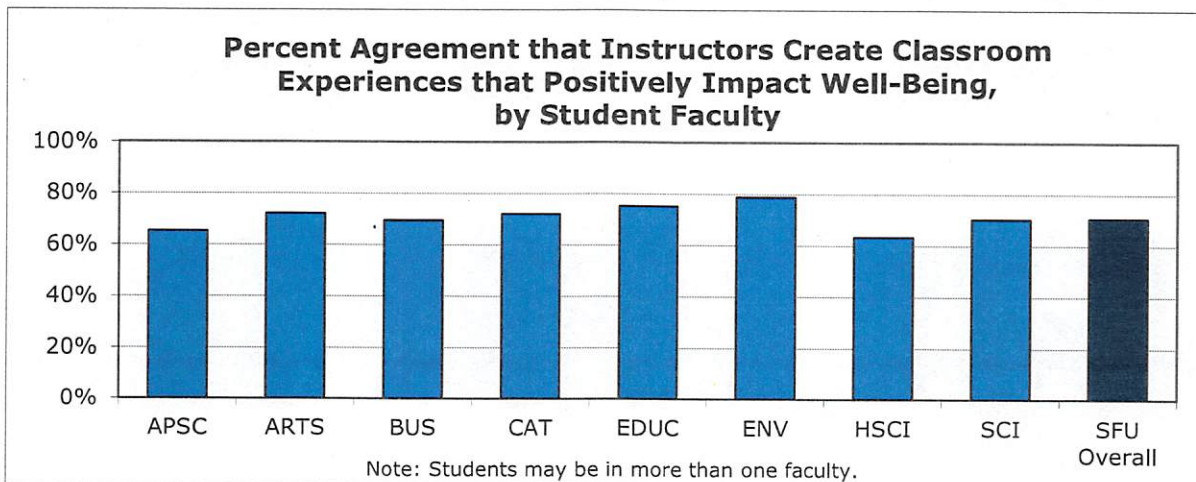


**Services**

- **Registrar & Information Services:** 87% of respondents are satisfied.
- **Technology Services and Recreation:** 76-79% are satisfied.
- **Food Services:** 71% are satisfied.
- **Medical Services, International Services for Students, and Mental Health Support Services:** 48-60% of respondents are satisfied.
  - Note that only 31-41% of respondents have used these services.

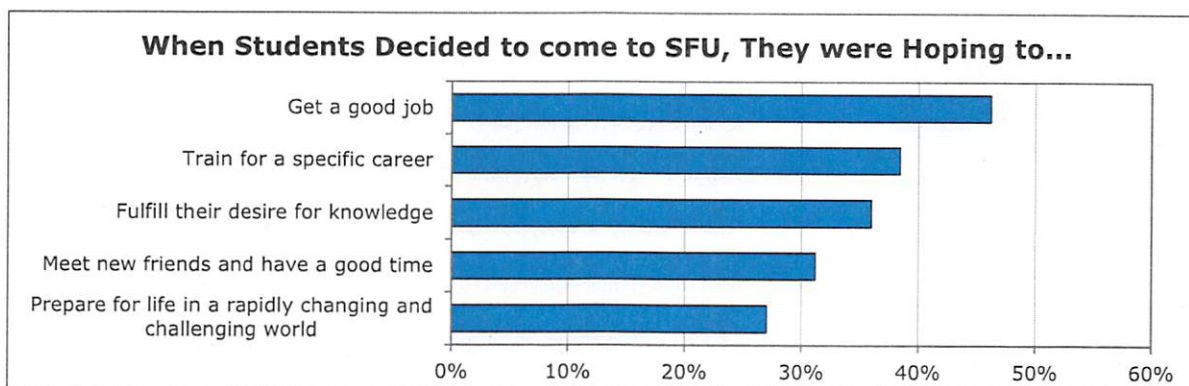
**University Culture and Environment**

- 71% of respondents agree that their instructors create classroom experiences (including online courses) that positively impact their well-being.
- 63% agree that SFU is a place that positively impacts their well-being.
- 63% agree that SFU is a place that supports their ability to cope with challenges and overcome them.
- 47% agree that it is easy to make meaningful social connections with others at SFU.



**General**

- **Student Goals:** Students were asked to indicate what they were hoping to get out of their education when they decided to come to SFU. Students could select up to three choices, and the top choices are displayed in the graph below.



- **Employment:**
  - 55% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed, which is the same as last fall. Among these:
    - 9% work 30 hours or more per week in a paid job,
    - 22% work 20–29 hours per week, and
    - 43% work 10–19 hours per week.
- **First Generation Students:** 22% of respondents are first generation post-secondary students (i.e. their parents/guardians have not attended a post-secondary institution).
- **Engagement at SFU:** Students were asked about their participation in various activities at SFU over the course of their education here. Among respondents:
  - 48% have participated in an SFU club, with an additional 24% planning to participate.
  - 38% have participated in a department, program, or faculty event.
    - 13% indicated that they were unaware of such events.
  - 17-20% have participated in co-op, an SFU volunteer program, or a class project involving a community or business organization.
    - 19-45% said they would like to participate in these experiences.
  - 9% have participated in student government, 15% indicated that they are interested in participating, and 63% said they are not interested in participating.
  - 3-7% have participated in work-study, international exchange/study abroad, or field schools.
    - 17-34% said they were planning to participate in these programs.
    - 30% of respondents indicated that they were not aware of field schools at SFU.

## Recommendations

- **Student Life/Campus Community:** Students continue to request improvements to student life and the campus community, such as holding more social events like parties and group activities.
- **Facilities:** Based on comments received, student satisfaction with facilities could be further improved by:
  - continuing to increase the number of study spaces on campus, such as creating more group and quiet study areas,
  - improving the heating and cooling of SFU buildings,
  - cleaning the washrooms more frequently,
  - continuing to renovate and repair buildings, and
  - improving the amount of colour on campus.

- **Course Availability and Scheduling:** Student responses suggest the need for continued effort to:
  - increase the frequency of courses,
  - increase the number of course sections,
  - offer a wider variety of course times, specifically offer more evening and online courses, and
  - offer a wider variety of courses.
- **Policies and Services:** Some additional student suggestions over the last few years for improving their experience at SFU include:
  - providing more advertising about available services,
  - improving transportation service and parking availability,
  - increasing the amount of practical/hands-on experience in courses,
  - improving the English-language skills of instructors and TAs,
  - lowering tuition and fees, and improving financial aid,
  - continuing to improve food quality while keeping prices low,
  - improving access to wi-fi and power outlets,
  - continuing to improve the SFU website, enrollment system, and online course systems, and
  - improving academic advising.