



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

To: Senate

From: Zareen Naqvi, Director  
Institutional Research and  
Planning (IRP)

Subject: IRP Reports for Information

Date: August 19, 2014

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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:

- **2013/14 Grades Report:** This report is prepared once a year and it summarizes student course grades at the University over a ten year period. The 2013/14 Grades Report covers the period from 2004/05 to 2013/14. Attached is the Summary Report. The full report is located at IRP's website at:  
[http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/students/grades\\_report/grades.report.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/students/grades_report/grades.report.pdf)
- **2013 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 2013 survey. Topics covered are selected in consultation with Faculties, Student Services and other administrative units of the University. The topics included: course availability, teaching and curriculum, language skills and support, and selected services, such as the Library and Academic Advising. The full report is located at:  
<http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/surveys/ugss/ugss2013report.pdf>

Enclosure



**SFU**

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

**2013/14 Grades Report:  
Summary  
Historical Distribution of  
Undergraduate and Graduate Course Grades  
2004/05 to 2013/14**

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## I – Introduction

This report summarizes student course grades at Simon Fraser University over the ten year period from 2004/05 to 2013/14<sup>1</sup>. The full report, which presents the full grade distributions in both tabular and graphical formats, is available online, here:

[http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/students/grades\\_report/grades.report.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/students/grades_report/grades.report.pdf)

## 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	

Notes: FD is defined as a fail (academic discipline) and has only been in use since Summer 2009. In graduate-level courses, C- and D grades have a numerical value of 0.00.

Table 2 lists the grades that have no numerical equivalent, and are therefore omitted from the calculation of average grade, and from this report. Although they are not included in the average, 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 001 to 299, inclusive. "Upper division" courses are numbered 300 to 499, inclusive.

Data reported on a yearly basis refers to fiscal year. For example, 2011/12 grades are the grades accumulated over the 2011 Summer term (SFU term code: 1114), the 2011 Fall term (SFU term

<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 Archeology moved from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to the Faculty of Environment. This new faculty structure has initiated the move of certain courses to different faculties. All data in this report reflect the current faculty structure.

code: 1117), and the 2012 Spring term (SFU term code: 1121). The grades data for each fiscal year is taken as 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 001-299 Inclusive)*

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

- The Faculty of Education (EDUC) has awarded the highest average lower division course grades in five of the last ten years, with an average awarded grade of 3.02 over the past decade.
- In 2006/07, the Faculty of Health Sciences (HSCI) began offering undergraduate courses. In its first three years, Health Sciences awarded the highest average lower division grades, and has since remained among the top three faculties for awarding the highest average lower division course grades (8-year average of 3.03).
- The average grades awarded in lower division courses in the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT) increased until 2008/09, and have been slowly decreasing since then. However, this faculty is still among the top three faculties awarding the highest lower division grades.
- All the other faculties have consistently awarded lower average grades in their lower division courses. In general, lower division courses in the Faculty of Environment (ENV) have awarded higher grades than those in Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) and Applied Sciences (APSC), while lower division courses in the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculty of Science (SCI) have awarded the lowest average grades

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

<b>Course Faculty</b>	<b>Average Course Grades</b>		<b>% “A” Grades Awarded</b>	
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>10-Year Average</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>10-Year Average</b>
Applied Sciences	2.70	2.60	26.2%	25.1%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.61	2.62	16.9%	17.6%
Business	2.51	2.51	12.7%	13.4%
Communication, Art and Technology	2.97	2.97	25.8%	27.2%
Education	2.92	3.02	29.5%	33.7%
Environment	2.71	2.69	20.8%	21.1%
Health Sciences	2.97	3.03*	28.4%	33.8%*
Science	2.54	2.50	21.1%	20.3%
University Total	2.65	2.63	20.3%	20.3%

\* The Faculty of Health Sciences began offering undergraduate classes in the Fall 2006 term.

## **LONG-TERM COMPARISONS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>2</sup>:**

Comparing the average lower division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>3</sup>:

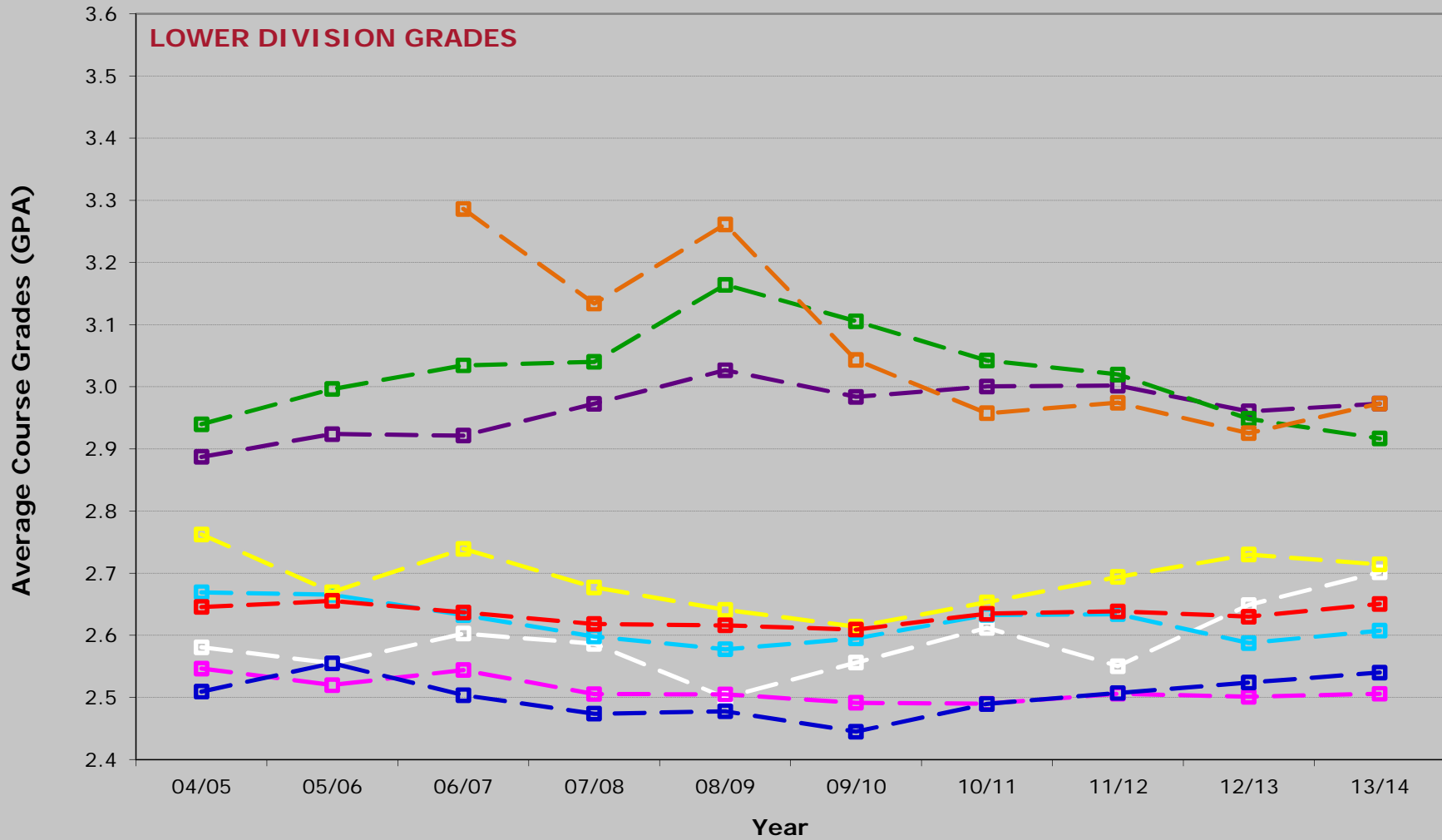
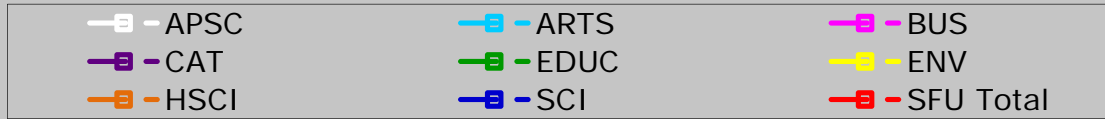
- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - Courses in Chinese (CHIN) have awarded the highest average lower division grades. Note that this is the first year that this subject has been offered by APSC.
  - Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM) courses have awarded grades considerably below the APSC average.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - Courses in Persian (PERS) have awarded the highest average grades. In fact, the five subjects in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to award the highest average grades in the last ten years are all language subjects (Persian, Greek, Chinese, Italian, and Language). Note that this is only the fourth year that PERS courses have been offered.
  - Philosophy (PHIL), Economics (ECON) and Business Administration & Economics (BUEC) courses have awarded the lowest average lower division grades.
- Business (BUS):
  - Over the last ten years, lower division courses in Business Administration & Economics (BUEC) and Business Administration (BUS) have awarded very similar average grades.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Contemporary Arts (FPA) and Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) courses have awarded the highest lower division course grades over the last ten years.
  - Communications (CMNS) courses have awarded the lowest average grades.
- Education (EDUC):
  - On average, Education (EDUC) courses have awarded higher lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average lower division grades have been awarded in Sustainable Community Development (SCD).
  - Geography (GEOG), Archeology (ARCH) and Development & Sustainability (DEVS) courses have awarded the lowest average grades. Note that this is only the third year that DEVS courses have been offered.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average lower division grades have been awarded in Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology (BPK) courses.
  - Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA), Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM) and Mathematics (MATH) courses have awarded the lowest average grades.

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<sup>2</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the lower division are not discussed in this section, since there are no comparisons to make.

<sup>3</sup> excluding subjects that awarded five or fewer grades in the most recent fiscal year

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





## **CURRENT COMPARISONS AND TRENDS WITHIN FACULTIES<sup>2</sup>:**

### ***2013/14 Average Lower Division Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - The highest average lower division grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Chinese (CHIN) and Engineering Science (ENSC) courses.
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM) courses.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Greek (GRK).
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Business Administration & Economics (BUEC).
- Business (BUS):
  - Business Administration & Economics (BUEC) courses awarded lower average grades than Business Administration (BUS) courses in 2013/14.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Contemporary Arts (FPA) and Publishing Program (PUB) courses.
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Communications (CMNS).
- Education (EDUC):
  - In 2013/14, Education (EDUC) courses awarded higher average lower division grades than Foundations of Academic Literacy (FAL) courses.
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Environmental Science (EVSC).
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Development and Sustainability (DEVS) courses.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average grades in 2013/14 were awarded in Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology (BPK) courses.
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Actuarial Mathematics (ACMA).

### ***Large Changes in 2012/13 to 2013/14 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: Cognitive Science (COGS: 2.57 to 2.87), Explorations (EXPL: 2.94 to 3.23), and Engineering Science (ENSC: 2.84 to 3.09).
  - Decreases: Persian (PERS: 3.57 to 3.31).

### III.A.2 – Upper Division Course Grades (Courses Numbered 300-499 Inclusive)

#### FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 4 and Figure B):

- With the exception of 2006/07, the Faculty of Education (EDUC) awarded the highest average upper division course grades in each of the last ten years (average grade awarded: 3.50).
- After Education, the Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT) and Health Sciences (HSCI) have awarded the highest upper division average grades over the past ten years (10-year average of 3.20 and 3.17, respectively.) It should be noted that HSCI has only been offering undergraduate courses for the past eight years, and the averages for its first two years were based on relatively small sample sizes.
- The remaining faculties have consistently awarded lower average upper division grades, averaging in the range of 2.90 to 3.04. Upper division grades awarded in the Faculty of Environment (ENV) have generally been higher than those awarded in the remaining faculties.

**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	
	2013/14	10-Year Average	2013/14	10-Year Average
Applied Sciences	2.88	2.91	29.8%	32.2%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.88	2.90	26.1%	27.4%
Business	3.06	2.97	30.7%	27.3%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.12	3.20	32.7%	39.5%
Education	3.57	3.50	65.5%	60.0%
Environment	3.02	3.04	32.3%	33.0%
Health Sciences	3.05	3.17*	31.0%	38.3%*
Science	2.90	2.91	31.1%	32.2%
University Total	2.99	3.00	31.6%	32.5%

\* The Faculty of Health Sciences began offering undergraduate classes in the Fall 2006 term.

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

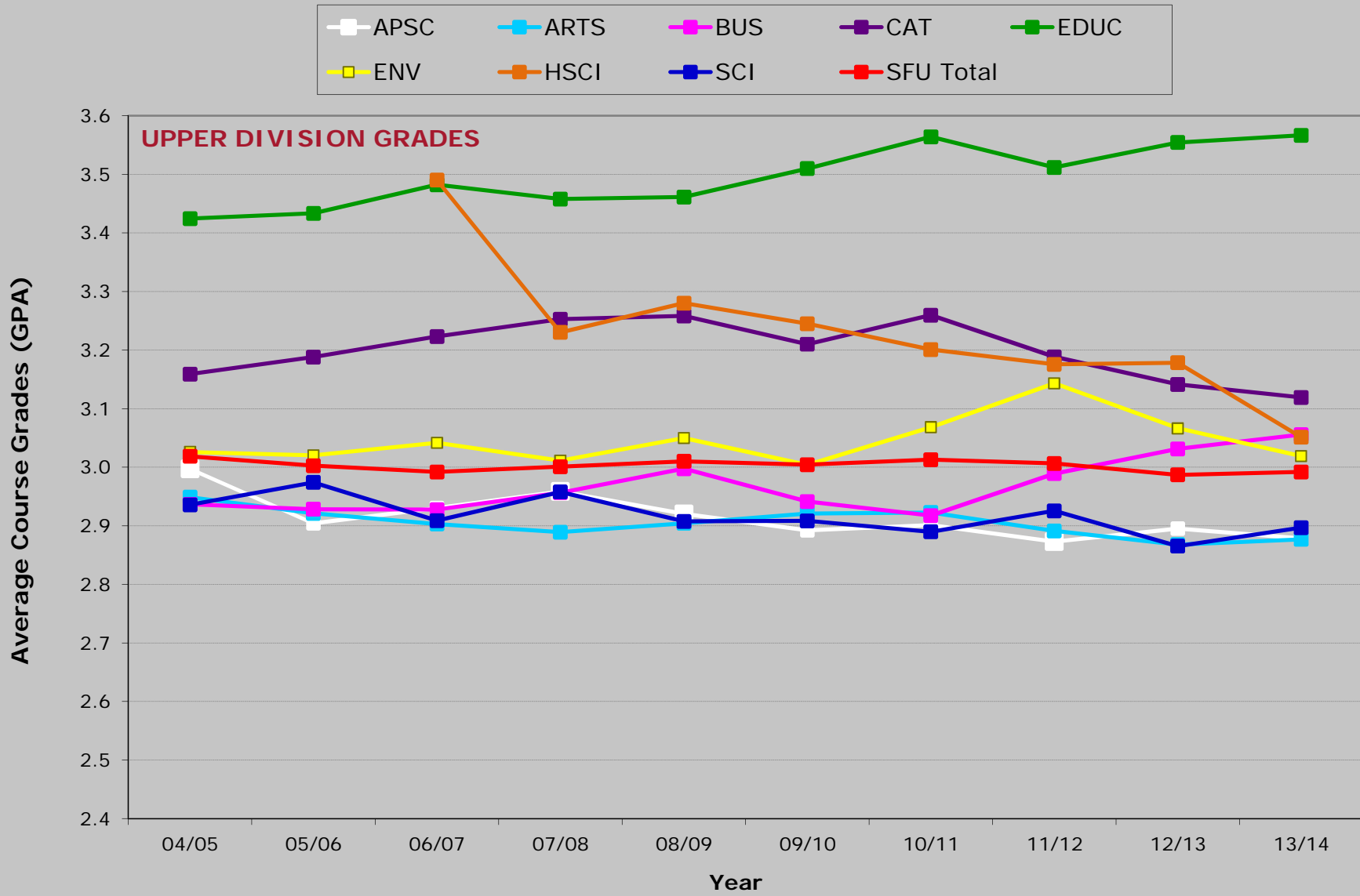
Comparing the average upper division grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>5</sup>:

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - On average, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) and Engineering Science (ENSC) courses have awarded higher upper division grades than Computing Science (CMPT) courses.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average upper division grades have been awarded in German (GERM) and Italian (ITAL). Note that both of these subjects usually award fewer than 30 upper division grades each year.
  - Business Administration & Economics (BUEC) courses have awarded average grades considerably below the faculty average.

<sup>4</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the upper division 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

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



- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Contemporary Arts (FPA) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades.
  - Publishing (PUB) courses have awarded the lowest upper division grades. Note that this is based on only four years of data.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Development & Sustainability (DEVS) courses have awarded the highest average upper division grades. Note that this is only the third year that DEVS courses have been offered, and that DEVS usually awards fewer than 30 upper division grades each year.
  - Geography (GEOG) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average grades have been awarded in Marine Science (MASC) and Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue (DIAL). Note that MASC usually awards fewer than 40 upper division grades each year.
  - Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM) and Mathematics (MATH) courses have awarded the lowest average upper division grades.

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

##### ***2013/14 Average Upper Division Course Grades:***

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2013/14, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) and Engineering Science (ENSC) courses awarded higher average upper division grades than Computing Science (CMPT) courses.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Explorations (EXPL), German (GERM), and Spanish (SPAN). Note that very few grades were awarded in Explorations and German.
  - Business Administration & Economics (BUEC) and Economics (ECON) courses awarded the lowest average upper division grades in 2013/14.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Contemporary Arts (FPA).
  - The lowest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Publishing (PUB).
- Environment (ENV):
  - The highest average grades awarded in 2013/14 were in Development and Sustainability (DEVS; note that very few grades were awarded in DEVS this year).
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Geography (GEOG).
- Faculty of Science (SCI):
  - The subjects awarding the highest average grades in 2013/14 were Marine Science (MASC) and Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue (DIAL). Note that very few grades were awarded in MASC this year.
  - The lowest average grades were awarded in Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM) and Mathematics (MATH).

### **Large Changes in 2012/13 to 2013/14 Average Upper Division Course Grades:**

- The following subjects have seen large changes (of at least 0.25) this year over last year's average upper division grade awarded:
  - Increases: Statistics (STAT: 2.78 to 3.06) and Japanese (JAPN: 2.82 to 3.07).
  - Decreases: Cognitive Science (COGS: 3.62 to 3.21), Italian (ITAL: 3.63 to 3.25), Mathematics & Computing Science (MACM: 2.56 to 2.20), General Studies (GS: 3.49 to 3.19), and Nuclear Science (NUSC: 2.90 to 2.64). Note that very few grades were awarded in Italian and General Studies this year.

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

- In 2013/14, the average undergraduate grade awarded was 2.80.
- 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 grades than lower division courses in all faculties.

### **III.B – Undergraduate Course Grades by Student Faculty**

This section summarizes the 2013/14 undergraduate course grade distributions within each faculty, controlling for the faculty of undergraduate students enrolled in the courses (see Figure C).

**Table 5: 2013/14 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	2.66	23.7%
Arts and Social Sciences	2.70	21.1%
Business	2.94	27.4%
Communication, Art and Technology	2.86	25.2%
Education	3.42	58.3%
Environment	2.85	27.4%
Health Sciences	2.82	25.3%
Science	2.86	29.0%
All Undergraduate Students	2.80	25.1%

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

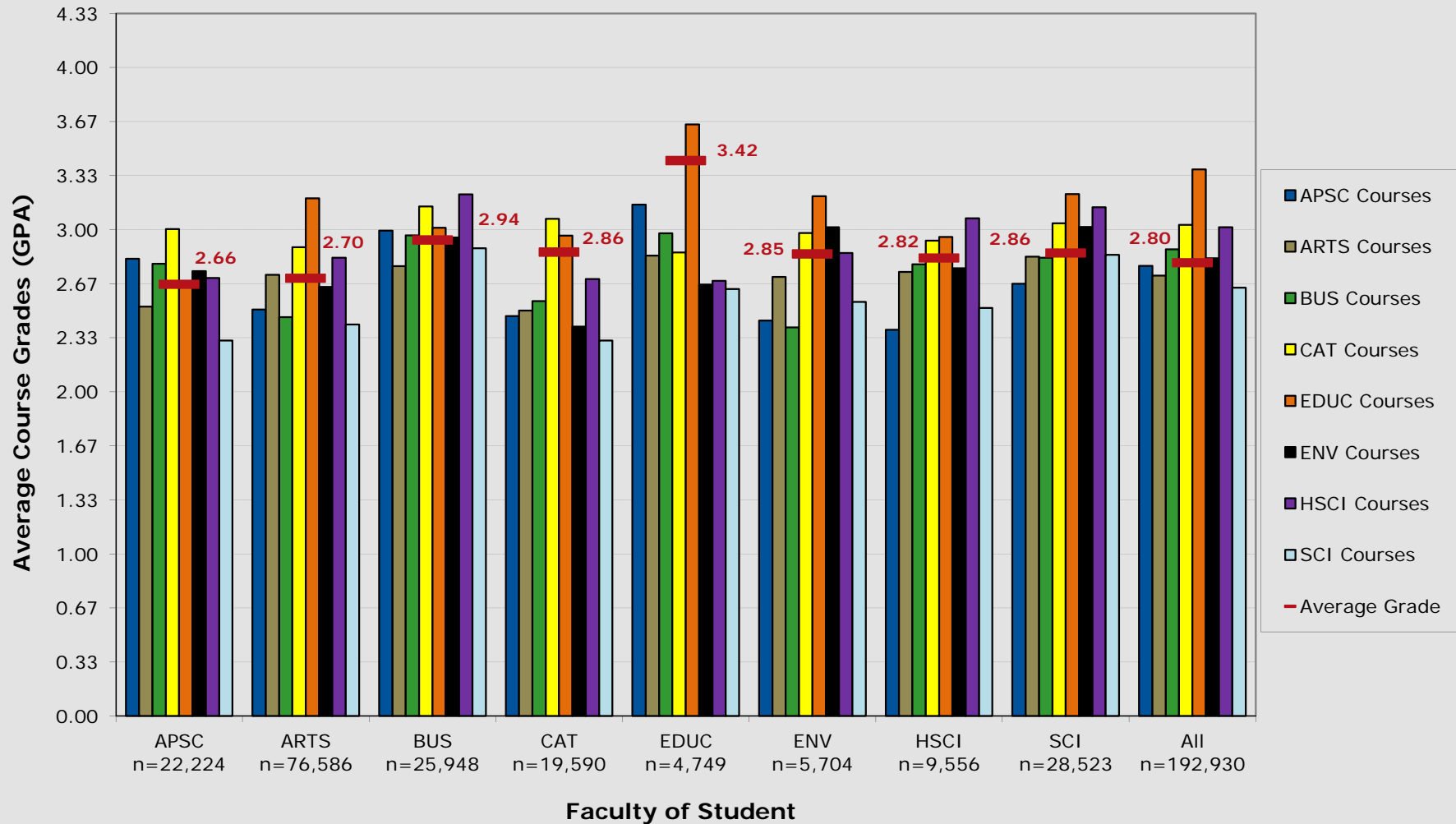
- Students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC) were awarded the highest grades overall in 2013/14, with an average course grade of 3.42.
- Students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) were awarded average course grades of 2.94.

- Students from the Faculties of Communication, Art & Technology (CAT), Science (SCI), Environment (ENV), and Health Sciences (HSCI) were awarded average grades from 2.82 to 2.86.
- Students from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS) and Applied Sciences (APSC) were awarded the lowest average grades in 2013/14, with average course grades of 2.70 and 2.66, respectively.
- Students from all faculties most commonly took courses from their own faculties.
- Students from the Faculties of Applied Sciences (APSC) and Communication, Arts & Technology (CAT) achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Communication, Arts & Technology (CAT).
- Students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (HSCI) achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Health Sciences (HSCI).
- Students from all other faculties achieved their highest average grades in courses taught in Education (EDUC).

***By Faculty of Courses:***

- In courses offered by the Faculties of Education (EDUC), Applied Sciences (APSC), Business (BUS), and Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), students from the Faculty of Education (EDUC) received the highest average grades in 2013/14.
- In courses offered by the Faculty of Environment (ENV), students from the Faculty of Science (SCI) received the highest average grades in 2013/14.
- In courses offered by the Faculties of Communication, Art & Technology (CAT), Health Sciences (HSCI), and Science (SCI), students from the Beedie School of Business (BUS) received the highest average grades in 2013/14.
- Apart from the Faculty of Environment (ENV), courses in all faculties were most frequently taken by students from within those faculties. Faculty of Environment (ENV) courses were most often taken by students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), followed by students from the Faculty of Environment (ENV).

**Figure C**  
**Simon Fraser University: Undergraduate Course Grades, 2013/14**  
**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.

### **III.C – Graduate Course Grades**

#### **FACULTY COMPARISONS (see Table 6 and Figure D):**

- The Faculty of Environment (ENV) has awarded the highest average graduate level course grades in eight of the last ten years, with an average awarded grade of 3.92.
- The Faculty of Education (EDUC) has been one of the top two faculties in eight of the last ten years, in terms of average graduate grades awarded (10-year average is 3.89).
- The Faculties of Communication, Art and Technology (CAT), Health Sciences (HSCI), and Science (SCI) have awarded similar average grades over the past decade, with 10-year averages of 3.85, 3.81 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 3.74 and 3.69, respectively).
- The Beedie School of Business (BUS) has awarded the lowest average grades in each of the last ten years, with an average grade awarded of 3.48.

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

<b>Course Faculty</b>	<b>Average Course Grades</b>		<b>% “A” Grades Awarded</b>	
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>10-Year Average</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>10-Year Average</b>
Applied Sciences	3.65	3.74	73.2%	77.6%
Arts and Social Sciences	3.66	3.69	73.2%	75.6%
Business	3.50	3.48	49.7%	48.4%
Communication, Art and Technology	3.82	3.85	86.1%	86.9%
Education	3.95	3.89	94.1%	90.0%
Environment	3.90	3.92	93.7%	94.2%
Health Sciences	3.84	3.81*	88.4%	85.2%*
Science	3.81	3.81	83.0%	82.7%
University Total	3.69	3.70	71.7%	72.6%

\* The Faculty of Health Sciences began offering graduate classes in the Fall 2005 term.

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

Comparing the average graduate course grades awarded over the last ten years<sup>7</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 six years, and the averages for its first three years were based on relatively small sample sizes.
  - On average, Engineering Science (ENSC) and Computing Science (CMPT) courses have awarded similar grades.

<sup>6</sup> Faculties with only one subject at the graduate 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



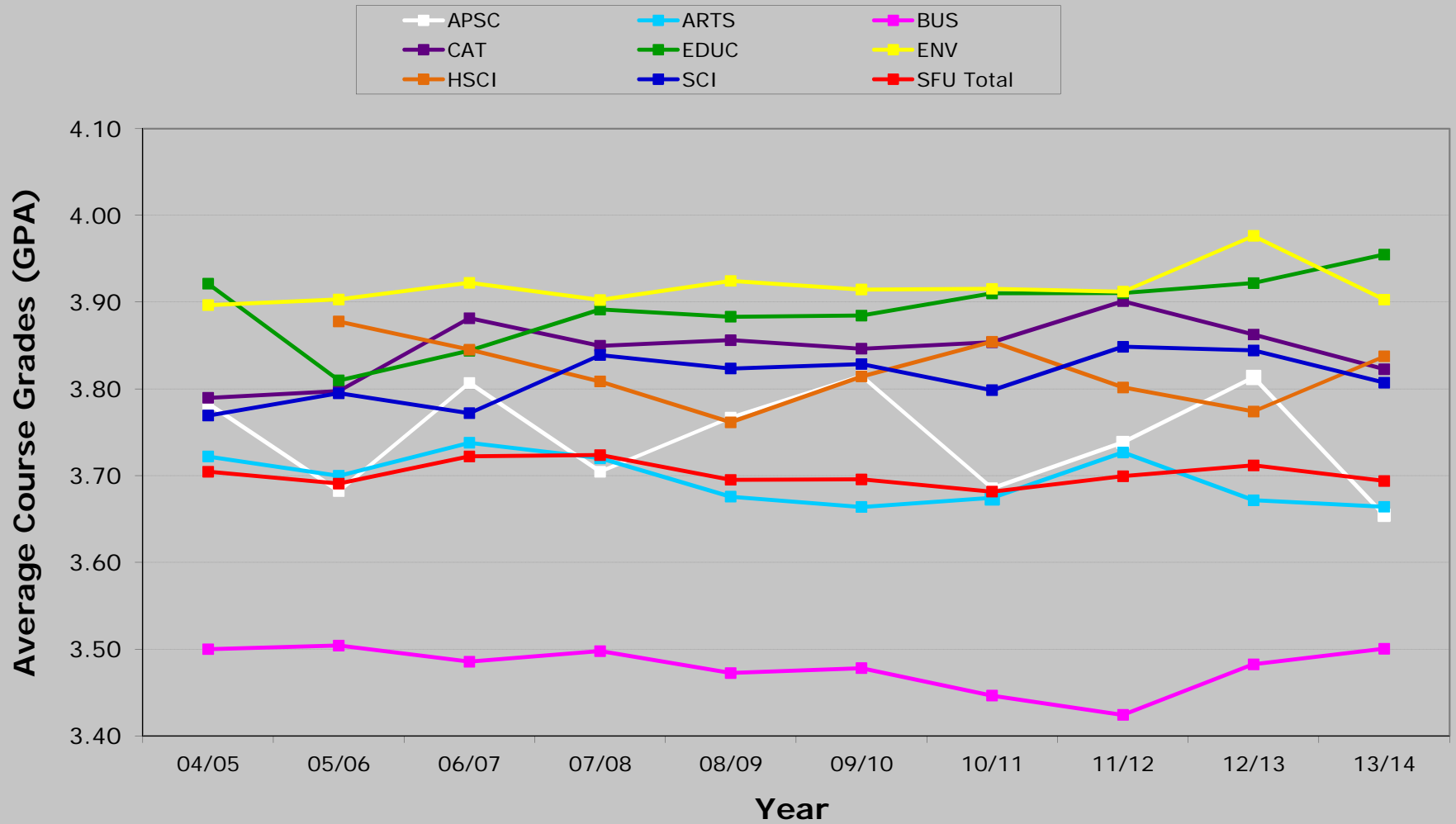
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - Psychology (PSYC) has awarded the highest average grades over the past decade.
  - Applied Legal Studies (ALS), International Studies (IS), Humanities (HUM), and Economics (ECON) have awarded relatively low average grades. Note that very few grades were awarded for Humanities.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - Communications (CMNS) has awarded the highest average grades.
  - Publishing (PUB) and Interactive Arts and Technology (IAT) have awarded the lowest average grades.
- Environment (ENV):
  - Resource & Environmental Management (REM) has awarded the highest average grades.
  - Development & Sustainability (DEVS) has awarded the lowest average graduate course grades. Note that the average grade for this subject is based on a small sample size, and that this is only the fourth year that DEVS courses have been offered.
- Science (SCI):
  - Courses in Biological Sciences (BISC) and Molecular Biology & Biochemistry (MBB) have awarded the highest average graduate course grades.
  - Physics (PHYS) courses have awarded the lowest average grades.

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

#### **2013/14 Average Course Grades:**

- Applied Sciences (APSC):
  - In 2013/14, Mechatronic Systems Engineering (MSE) awarded the highest average graduate course grades.
  - Computing Science (CMPT) awarded the lowest average graduate course grades.
- Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS):
  - The highest average grades in 2013/14 were awarded in Psychology (PSYC), Liberal Studies (LS), Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies (GSWS), and Linguistics (LING). Note that very few grades were awarded in GSWS.
  - Humanities (HUM) courses awarded the lowest average graduate course grades in 2013/14. Note that very few grades were awarded in HUM.
- Communication, Art and Technology (CAT):
  - The highest average grades in 2013/14 were awarded in Contemporary Arts (FPA) courses.
  - Courses in Publishing Program (PUB) awarded the lowest average grades.
- Environment (ENV):
  - In 2013/14, courses in Geography (GEOG) awarded the highest average grades.
  - Archaeology (ARCH) awarded the lowest average grades in 2013/14.
  - Note that very few grades were awarded in these two subjects.
- Science (SCI):
  - The highest average grades in 2013/14 were awarded in Biomedical Physiology & Kinesiology (BPK; note that very few grades were awarded in BPK).
  - The lowest average course grades were awarded in Physics (PHYS).

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



**Large changes in 2012/13 to 2013/14 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: Philosophy (PHIL: 3.05 to 3.78).
  - Decreases: Humanities (HUM: 3.56 to 2.62), Sociology & Anthropology (SA: 3.85 to 3.30), French (FREN: 3.81 to 3.43), and Archaeology (ARCH: 4.01 to 3.75). Note that very few grades were awarded in graduate level HUM, FREN and ARCH courses.

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**

- In 2013/14, the average graduate grade awarded was 3.69, a slight decrease from last year's. The average graduate grade awarded at the university has been fairly stable over the last 10 years.
- The average graduate grade awarded over the past ten years is 3.70.



## HIGHLIGHTS

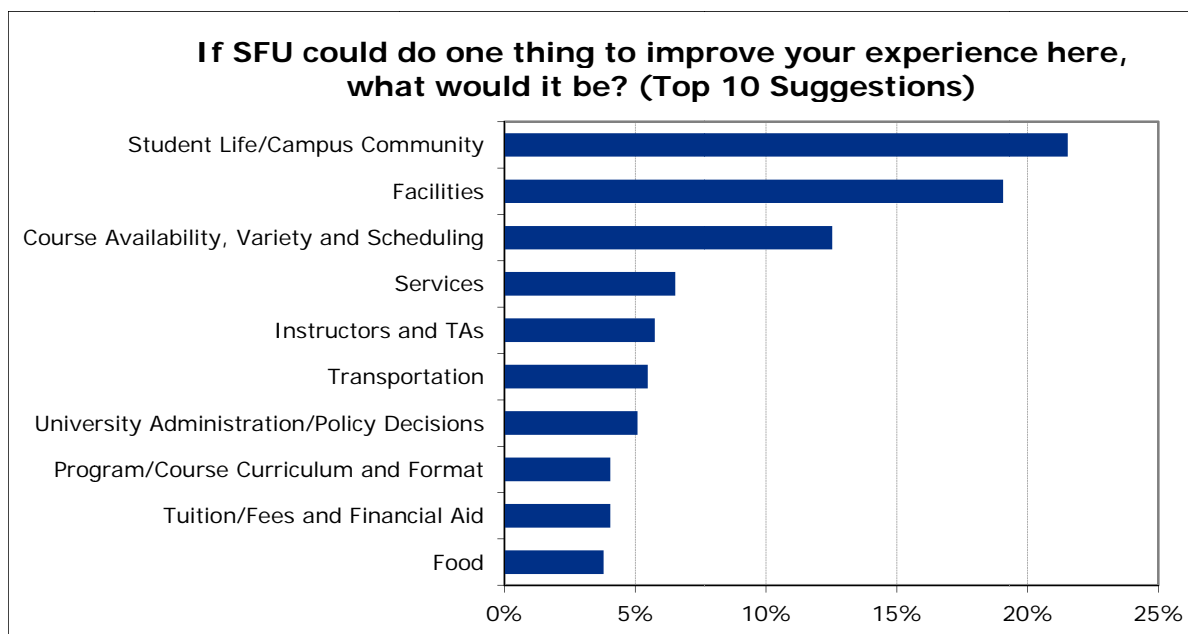
### FALL 2013 SFU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY

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 at SFU, as well as a range of other topics that change from year to year. This year's topics included teaching and curriculum, language skills and support, and selected services, such as the library, the Bookstore, and academic advising.

A total of 5,929 students participated in this year's survey, yielding an overall response rate of 23.9%. 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  $\pm 1.2\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The full report is available on the Institutional Research and Planning web-site: <http://www.sfu.ca/irp/surveys/ugss.html>

#### General Experience

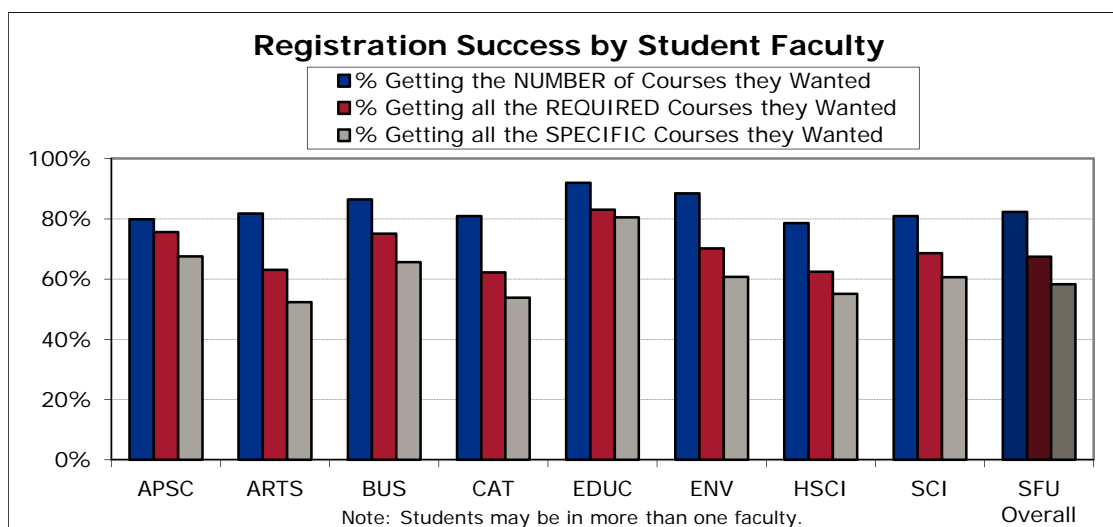
- 88% of respondents are satisfied with their general SFU experience.
- 58% agree that SFU supports students to have a healthy work-life balance.
- When students were asked what single thing SFU could do to improve their experience here, the most common responses were:
  - improve student life,
  - improve 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.

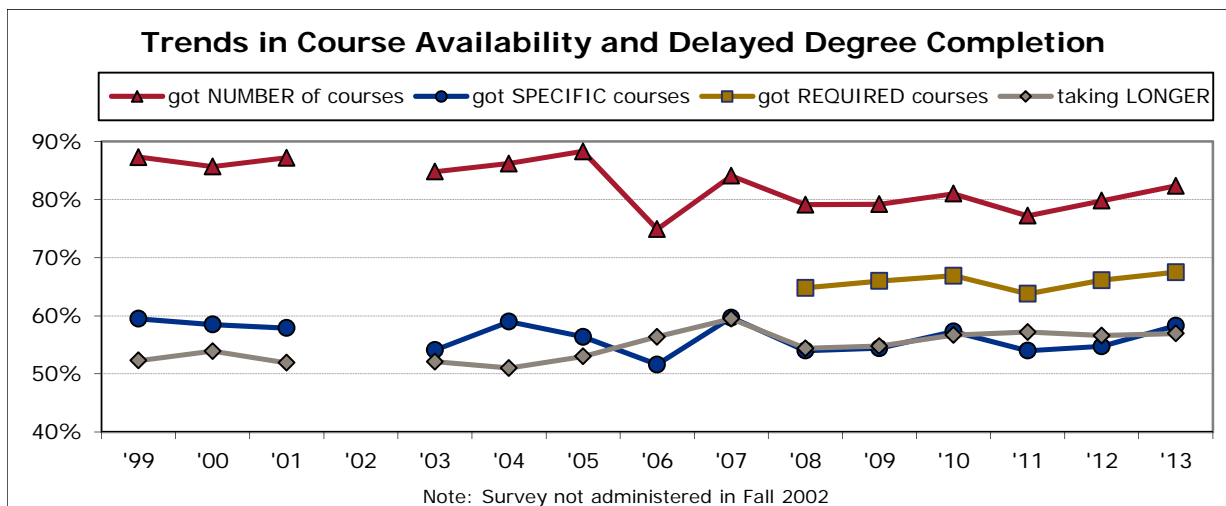
## Course Availability

- This year's course availability results were similar to the 2012 results. Most differences were not statistically significant (exceptions are noted).
- **NUMBER of Courses:** 82% of respondents were able to register in the number of courses they wanted this fall, versus 80% last fall.
- **SPECIFIC Courses:** 58% were able to register in all of the specific courses they wanted to take this term. This is a statistically significant increase from last fall's rate of 55%.
- **REQUIRED Courses:** 67% were able to register in all of the REQUIRED courses they wanted this term (vs. 66% last fall).
  - 93% of respondents are taking required courses at SFU this term (Fall 2013), while only 33% are taking any general interest courses outside of their program of study.
  - Registration difficulty in required courses was most often due to:
    - full classes,
    - scheduling conflicts,
    - courses not being offered this term, and
    - spaces being reserved for other students.
  - Respondents in the Faculty of Education (EDUC) were most successful in registering for all of the required courses they wanted to take, while those in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (ARTS), Health Sciences (HSCI) and Communication, Art and Technology (CAT) were least successful.

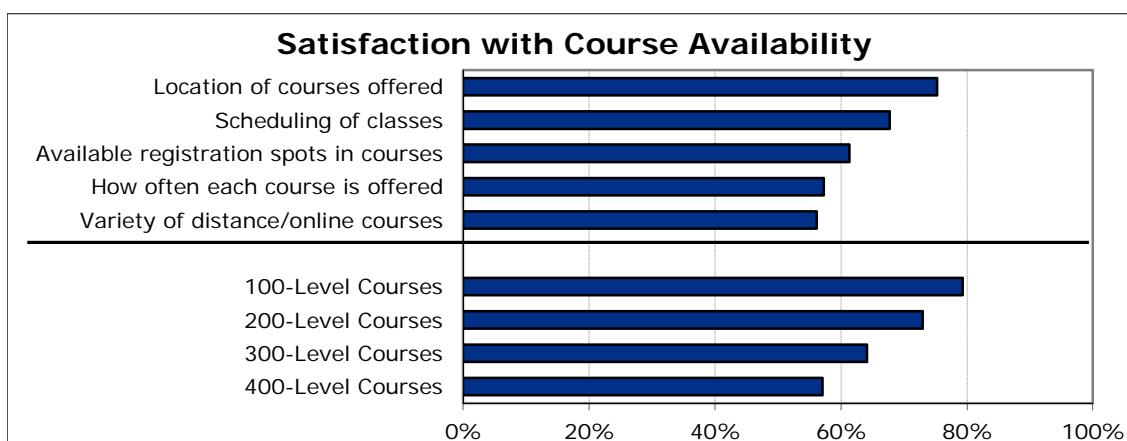


- **Credential Completion Time:** 57% of respondents reported that they are taking longer than expected to complete their credential (this is the same rate as the last three years).
  - 85% of students felt that it was important to finish within their expected timeframe.
  - Commonly cited reasons for delay include:
    - course availability issues (e.g. full courses, scheduling conflicts, courses not being offered, etc.; 53% of delayed respondents, down from 58% last year),
    - taking a reduced course load (42%, up from 40% last year), and
    - working in a job outside of co-op (32%, down from 35% last year).
  - Rates of delayed completion are highest in the Beedie School of Business, the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology, and the Faculty of Health Sciences (61% each) and lowest in the Faculty of Education (36%).

- Trends:** Course availability has become generally more problematic over the past fifteen years, but has been fairly stable over the last six years (slight improvements in the past two years have yielded a return to the 2010 levels).



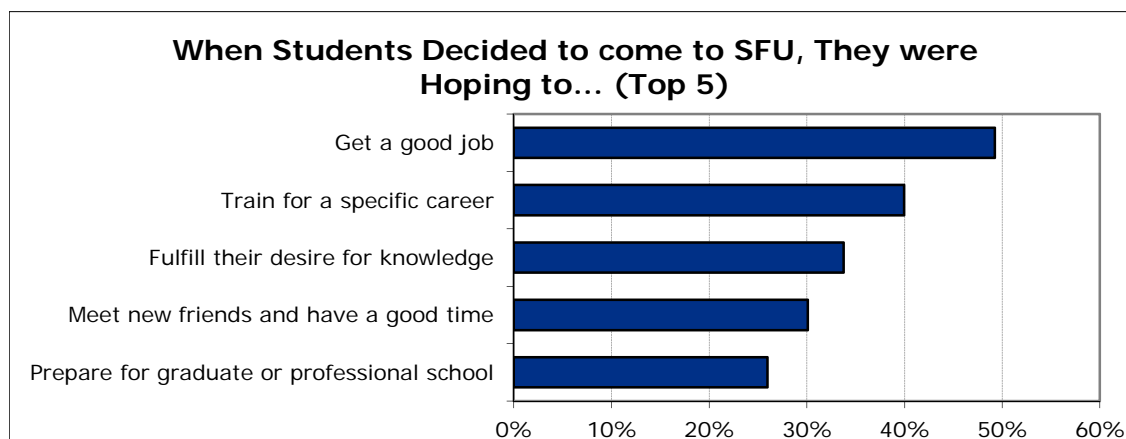
- Satisfaction with Course Availability:**
  - Satisfaction with course availability decreases as course level increases.
    - Satisfaction levels are similar to last year’s levels for lower division courses, and slightly higher for upper division courses.
    - Satisfaction with the availability of 400-level courses is similar across faculties, with the exception of being substantially higher among respondents in Education.
  - 68-75% of respondents are satisfied with course scheduling and the location (campus) of courses offered.
  - 56-61% are satisfied with course frequency, available registration spots in courses (course capacity) and the variety of distance/online courses offered.



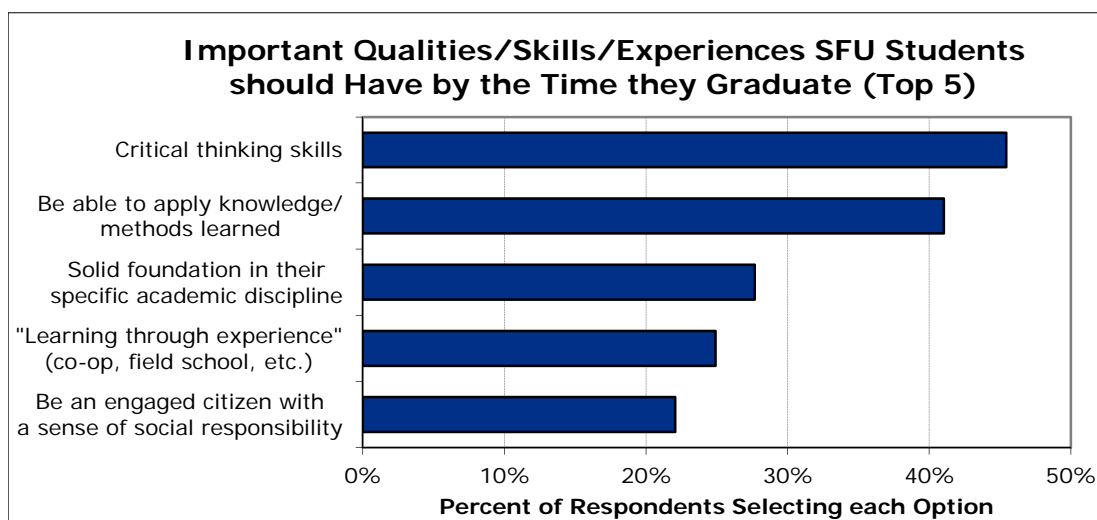
**Teaching and Curriculum**

- Quality of Teaching:** 85% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of teaching at SFU.
  - Students were asked to indicate, from a list, the two most important qualities of a course instructor. Of the list provided, the top two choices were “clearly communicates course content” (selected by 59% of respondents) and “connects all course components” (38%).

- **Student Goals:** Students were asked to indicate what they were hoping to get out of their education when they decided to come to SFU. Respondents indicated that getting a good job was their top priority.

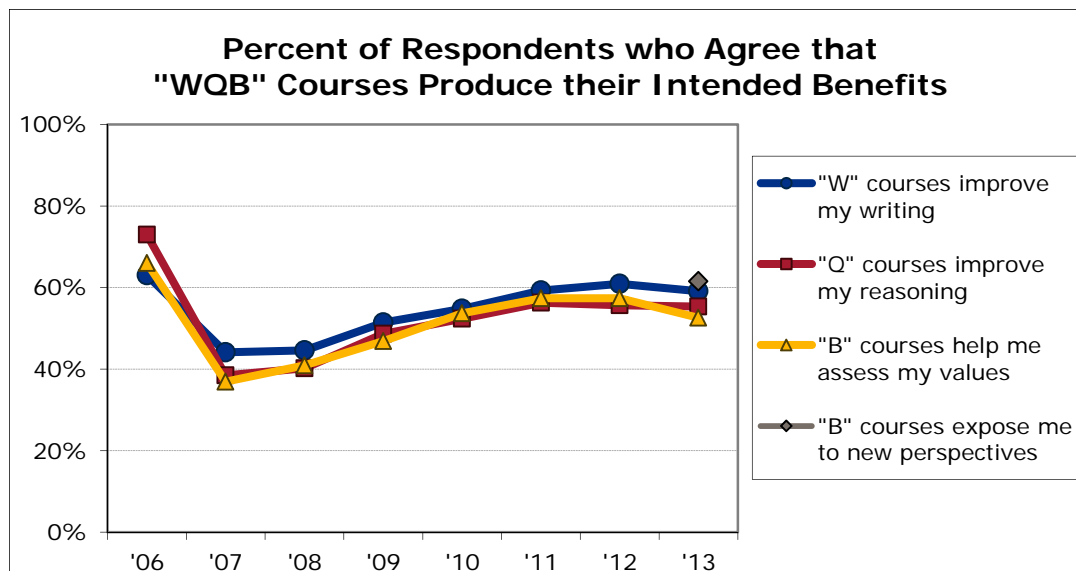


- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Students were asked what qualities, skills or experiences they think an SFU graduate should have. Students could select up to three choices, and top choices are displayed in the graph below. Among the top five selected skills:
  - 86% of respondents are satisfied that SFU is equipping them with critical thinking skills,
  - 73% are satisfied that SFU is preparing them to apply the knowledge and methods they have learned,
  - 84% are satisfied that SFU is giving them a solid foundation in their academic discipline,
  - 72% are satisfied that SFU is providing opportunities for "learning through experience", and
  - 74% are satisfied that SFU is making them an engaged citizen with a sense of social responsibility.



- **Academic Integrity:**
  - 93% of respondents indicated that they have been told that academic integrity policies exist at SFU.
  - In the past year, 25% of respondents have suspected another student of cheating during a test or exam, and 21% have suspected another student of cheating on a major written assignment.

- **WQB Courses:** Just over half of this year's respondents agreed that these courses produce the benefits for which they were designed (59% agreement for "W" courses, 55% for "Q" courses, and 53-62% for "B" courses).

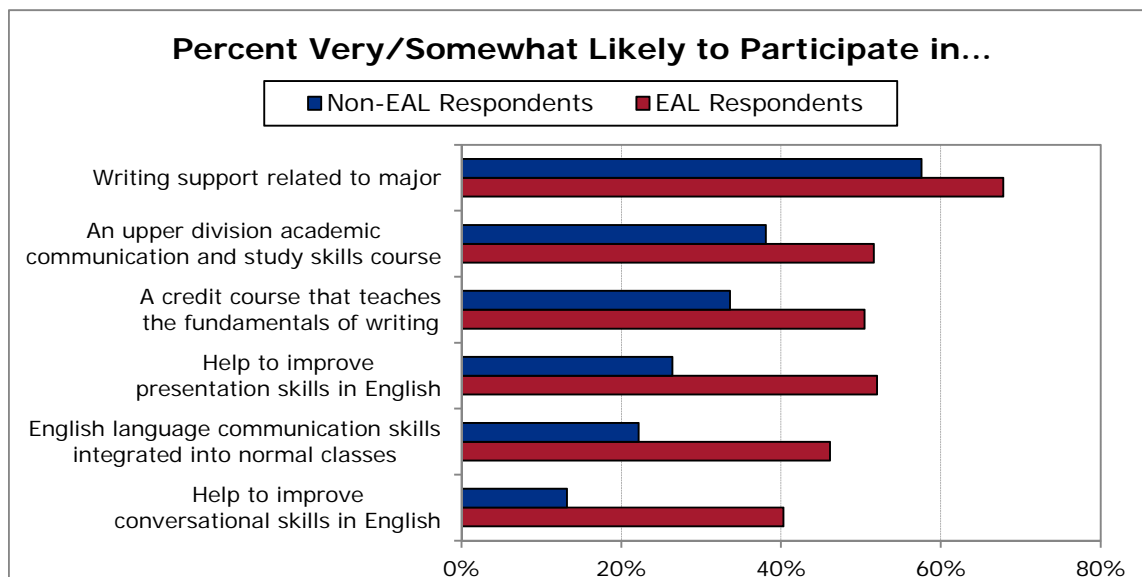


- **Research with Faculty Members:** 16% of graduating respondents said that they have worked within a faculty member's research team, outside of coursework. This is similar to last year's result.

## Language Skills and Support

- **English Language Skills:**
  - 88% of respondents speak some English at home, and 40% speak only English at home.
  - 60% speak at least one non-English language at home, and 12% speak no English at home.
  - 43% were identified as English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. Among these students, 26% indicated that they speak no English at home.
  - Students were asked if they felt prepared when they first arrived at SFU for the level of English required of them in their courses. Overall:
    - 93% of respondents felt prepared for the level of English listening skills required,
    - 88% felt prepared for both the level of reading and speaking skills, and
    - 77% felt prepared for the level of writing skills required.
  - 40% of respondents said that they sometimes struggle in their classes because of their instructors' English language skills, and 38% sometimes struggle due to their TA's English language skills.
  - 15% of respondents felt they would perform better in their classes if they had English language support.
- **English Language Support:**
  - When given a list of English language programs, respondents said that they would be likely to participate in a program with writing support related to their major (62% very/somewhat likely).
  - When asked what topics they want support in, most respondents indicated that they want support in technical and professional writing for their discipline (59%).





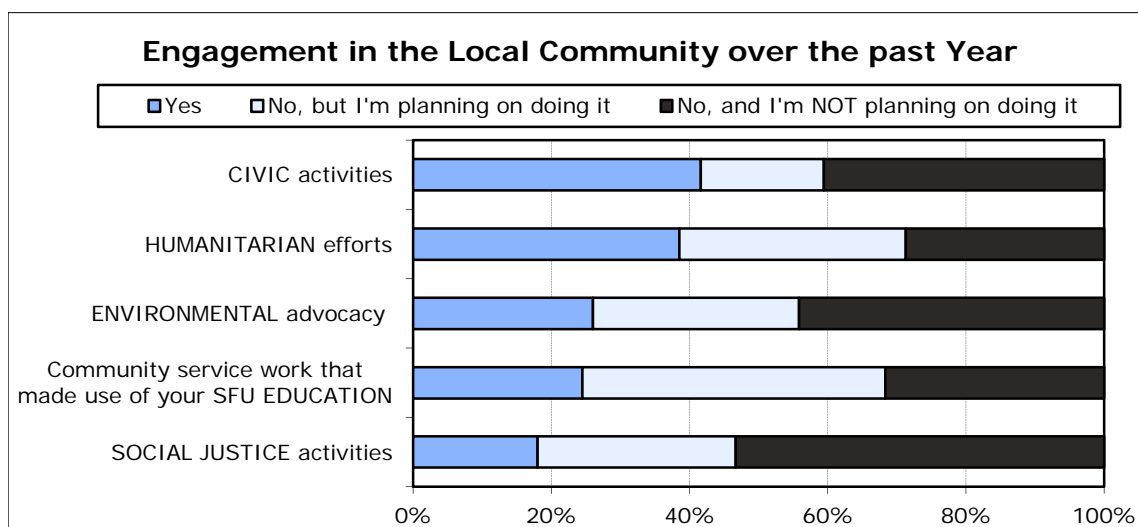
## Services

- **Advising:** 79% of respondents have used academic advising services at SFU, and of those who have used these services, 78% are very/somewhat satisfied.
- **Library:**
  - 46% of respondents indicated that they have used the course reserve materials in the library, while
  - 30% were unaware of library research assistance available online by chat, e-mail or text.
- **Bookstore/Textbooks:**
  - 71% of respondents purchased textbooks from the SFU Bookstore (physical store) in Fall 2013,
  - 10% purchased textbooks from the SFU Online Bookstore/eShop, and
  - 56% purchased textbooks from another location.

## General

- **Engagement at SFU:** Students were asked about their participation in various activities at SFU over the course of their education here. Among respondents:
  - 32% had participated in a department, program, or faculty event, while 11% indicated that they were unaware of such events.
  - 13-17% had participated in co-op, an SFU volunteer program, or a class project involving a community or business organization.
    - Approximately 39-64% more said they would like to participate in these experiences.
  - 3-7% had participated in work-study, international exchange/study abroad, or field schools.
    - An additional 47-65% said they would like to participate in these programs.
    - 22% of respondents indicated that they were not aware of field schools at SFU.
  - Finally, 4% had participated in student government, with 21% indicating that they were interested in participating, and 60% saying they are not interested in participating.

- **Engagement in the Community:** Students were asked about their engagement in their local community and in an international setting.
  - Local community, in the last year:
    - 39-42% have engaged in civic and humanitarian activities, and
    - 18-26% have engaged in environmental activities, social justice activities, and community service work that made use of their SFU education.



- International setting, in the last year:
  - 11-13% have engaged in civic and humanitarian activities, and
  - 6-7% engaged in social justice activities, environmental advocacy, and community service work that made use of their SFU education.
- **Employment:** 55% of respondents are currently employed or self-employed. Among these:
  - 11% work 30 hours or more per week in a paid job,
  - 57% work 10-29 hours per week, and
  - 32% work less than 10 hours per week.
  - Employed respondents working 30+ hours per week were more likely to be engaged in civic, humanitarian, and social justice activities in their local community.

## Recommendations

- **Student Life/Campus Community:** Students continue to request improvements to student life and the campus community, such as holding more student events on campus and increasing advertising for athletic events, social events, and clubs.
- **Facilities:** Based on comments received, student satisfaction with facilities could be further improved by:
  - continuing to increase and improve study spaces,
  - continuing to renovate and repair buildings, such as changing the flooring in the AQ and improving the lighting,
  - continuing to improve the washrooms,
  - fixing the broken chairs and desks in classrooms,
  - continuing to upgrade the technology and equipment used in classrooms, and
  - improving the heating and cooling of SFU buildings.

- **Course Availability and Scheduling:** Student responses suggest the need for continued effort to:
  - increase the frequency of required courses,
  - increase the number of sections available for courses that have been historically popular,
  - schedule courses likely to be taken together at non-overlapping times (and at sufficiently spaced times, when they are offered on different campuses), and
  - increase the number of classes offered online and in the evening.
- **Policies and Services:** Some additional student suggestions over the last few years for improving their experience at SFU include:
  - providing more guidance to new students, such as maps, workshops, and orientation,
  - improving advising, such as providing more advice about what courses to take,
  - providing more career-based courses with practical/hands-on work,
  - providing more academic help,
  - continuing to improve the website, enrollment system, and online course systems,
  - lowering tuition and fees, and/or improving financial aid, and
  - continuing to improve the quality and price of food on campus.