Student Issues Survey

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West from October 24th to November 11th, 2016, among students at ten post-secondary institutions. The margin of error - which measures sample variability - is +/- 1.4 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

The survey was circulated by student associations to students from the University of British Columbia's Vancouver and Okanagan Campuses, Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, Camosun College, Emily Carr University, Langara College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Vancouver Community College, and Capilano University.

1. Voting Trends

The majority of all students (65%) have voted in a federal, municipal, or provincial election, either in Canada or abroad. The rate of voting is even higher among domestic students, 74% of which report having voted before.

The most popular election among students was the 2015 Federal Elections, in which 68% of domestic students report having voted.

2. Housing

49% of Undergraduate Students

61% of International Students

52% of Graduate Students

49% cited the high cost of living.

24% cited a lack of job opportunities.

Percentage of students that say it is "not too likely" or "not likely at all" that they will stay in where they are studying after they graduate.

Reason cited from those unlikely to stay.

The average monthly rent of students who do not live with family is $999.29.
2. Tuition & Loans

38% of students have taken on student debt, with the most common source of loans being BC Student Loans (64%) and Canada Student Loans (60%).

Only 11% of students are able to correctly identify the BC Student Loan interest rate, with 78% of students being unsure of the interest rate and 7% believing it was a lower rate.

The average total loans taken out to-date is $27,171.59.

When asked about the loan grace-period, only 30% of students correctly know that interest accumulates.

38% of students have taken on debt.

Of those with loans, 70% of students are either “somewhat” or “very” worried about repayment of their loans.

AMS Academic Experience Survey Results

Results are based on an annual online study conducted by Insights West in partnership with the Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver. The survey is intended for AMS UBC Vancouver students, and measures the UBC undergraduate and graduate student demographics to determine how the AMS can work towards improving the educational, social, and personal lives of UBC students.

The survey took place March 17th until April 4th, with a sample size of 2,484 out of eligible students, with a margin of error of +/- 1.97 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

1. Housing

Undergraduates tend to live off campus with their parents or roommates (33% of students), off campus with friends or roommates (22%), or on campus in student residence (27%).

Significantly more undergraduates live on campus than graduate students (34% against 17%).

One-in-ten undergraduates (9%) currently don’t have a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence.

One-in-five (18%) have experienced this during their time at UBC.
2. Academic affordability and Financial difficulty

When asked about resources for financial support during their studies, 55% of undergraduates reported both full time or part time employment, 78% reported relying on family as a financial support, 32% reported reliance on government student loans (a 4-point drop from last year).

While there are many factors for an increased reliance on family, and decreased reliance on government student loans, a contributing factor may be due to accumulating interest rate on loans.

38% of students estimate they will graduate with debt.

and of those students, 61% expect to owe $25,000 or more at graduation

Half of those 61% of students (33% total) will owe between $25,000 to $50,000, and the other half will owe over $50,000.

When asked about personal finances, one-in-five (19%) of students report that they may need to abandon their studies due to financial reasons.

36% experience financial hardship related to tuition and other expenses.

42% of respondents report worrying regularly about how to pay for tuition and other expenses.

45% of undergraduate students at UBC have in the past worried about feeding themselves due to cost.

At UBC, 71% of students went without a textbook or other course resource (such as ancillary resource, or course packs) due to cost. The mean amount spent on textbooks at UBC is $814.

12% of students took a longer degree than 4 years, where they took a reduced course load due to financial reasons.
3. Sexual Violence and Mental Health on Campus

63% of students feel safe at campus at night, while 19% disagreed with that statement. 80% of male respondents felt safe vs 51% of females. 90% of students are aware of UBC counselling, 30% of those students used it, and only 13% said it helped. UBC Student health services (at 89%), 38% used, and 27% said it helped.

Two-thirds (65%, +8 points) of students reported personally experienced discrimination on campus, with over one-in-ten (12%) frequently or often experiencing discrimination.

On-campus discrimination is most commonly related to students’ ethnicity (42%, +3 points) or gender (42%, +6 points).

Over half (54%) of women report experiencing gender discrimination, a significant increase from last year.

Over half (52%) of LGBTQ students report experiencing discrimination related to their sexual orientation.

Simon Fraser Student Society & Student-Care: Survey on the Stigmatization of Mental Illness in the Student Community

From March 22 - April 22, 2016, the healthcare provider for Simon Fraser Students’ Society conducted a nationwide survey on the stigmatization of mental illnesses in the student community. The following results are specific to the students at Simon Fraser University. The survey had 445 SFU respondents. An excerpt from the survey is shared below.

Attitudes toward mental health and illness

A large majority (91.9%) of respondents think that stigmatization prevents some people from seeking treatment for a mental illness.

97.2% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that our society needs to reduce prejudice and discrimination against people experiencing a mental illness.

76% say that the topic of mental health is very important to them with 71.4% placing mental health at the same level of importance as their physical health and 26.2% ranking their mental health above their physical health.
Personal experience with a mental illness

Of the 51.2% of surveyed students who have personally experienced a mental illness, more than half of them (52.4%) have been treated negatively or unfairly in the past because of a mental health problem (33.9% in the past year and 18.5% more than a year ago).

Just over half of respondents (56.5%) would feel comfortable asking for professional help while experiencing a mental illness. Even more say that they would be willing to discuss the illness with some close friends (82.0%) and some family members (67.9%). Only 26.6% would be comfortable consulting a professor and even fewer (24.2%) would feel comfortable consulting a supervisor.

74.7% of surveyed students have a family member or close friend who has experienced a mental illness.

When asked if a family member or close friend has ever sought treatment for a mental illness, 61.8% of respondents said yes.

52.4% have reported negative or unfair treatment in the past because of a mental health problem.

When asked if a family member or close friend has ever sought treatment for a mental illness, 61.8% of respondents said yes.

UVSS 2017 Annual Survey Results

In May 2017, the University of Victoria Student Society conducted an online survey of undergraduate students at UVic. There were 268 respondents who were asked to rank how important various student issues are to them. The results are based on a weighted average where 1 is “not important” and 5 is “very important”. Students were asked to rank the following issues:

- Affordable Education
- Mental Health
- Affordable Housing
- Sexualized Violence
- Public Transit
- Campus Sustainability
- Youth Employment
- Harm Reduction

The following had the top three weighted averages: Affordable education (4.22), Mental Health (4.07), and affordable housing (3.97).
Going a little deeper, within the issues of affordable education and mental health, the following weighted averages were identified:

**Affordable Education**
- Tuition Fees*: 4.28
- Textbook Affordability: 4.23
- Affordable Housing: 3.96
- Needs-based Grants: 3.47
- Student Loan Interest: 3.34
- Student Loan Forgiveness: 3.30

* Grants and loans, although ranked lower in this particular practice, are important methods into alleviating the pressures of high tuition and high textbook costs, and in some cases help students finance rental housing.

**Mental Health**
- Access to Counseling: 4.10
- Dealing with Depression: 4.05
- Suicide Prevention: 4.01
- Stress Management: 3.93
- Coping with Anxiety: 3.90
- Reducing Stigma: 3.58
- Substance Abuse: 3.32

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**SFSS Annual General Membership Survey 2016/17**

This survey is conducted annually to discuss key issues or concerns that students may have. In 2016/17, 2,650 SFU students responded to the survey in which 611 students indicated that they do not have access to the financial support (loans, bursaries, and scholarships) that they need to complete their studies. Likewise, 306 students indicated that they do not have enough financial resources to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes, transportation, etc.

Since October 2013, the SFSS has offered a food bank voucher program to support student in need. Students who identify the need for food are provided with up to three $25 vouchers per semester. The Food Bank program is funded by an annual $16,000 contribution from SFU and a $25 fee per full-time student ($13 for part-time) each semester. Currently, the program is at a $14,629 deficit. In Fall 2013, 193 Food Vouchers were redeemed. Three years later, in Fall 2016, 538 Food vouchers were redeemed indicating a 275% increase.