

COVID-19 Impacts on UBC Students Survey Report

Office of the VP Academic & University Affairs

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Prepared by:

Georgia Yee

VP Academic and University Affairs

Morgan Lorenz

Associate VP University Affairs

Shivani Mehta

Associate VP Academic Affairs

Chloe Andres

Policy and Research Commissioner

Hannah Edward

Campaigns and Outreach Commissioner

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Executive Summary

Purpose

This report details the data collected from the “COVID-19 Impacts on UBC Students Survey” and outlines the student advocacy response plans of the AMS addressing the trends. The survey ran from June 3rd - 29th, 2020 and collected 7,410 responses (5,989 complete responses, 1421 incomplete responses) from current and recently graduated UBC students (13% response rate). The purpose of this project was to gather data on the major financial, academic, and safety/wellbeing concerns of all UBC students that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure any aid programs for students are informed of their needs and priorities.

As we, at the AMS, navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we must simultaneously acknowledge that the global racial injustices and economic crises have impacted the health and safety of our students. As we pursue a post-COVID recovery, we reaffirm our commitment to climate, racial, and economic justice. Any questions about the results and the implications of this report can be directed to the Office of the VP Academic & University Affairs at **vpacademic@ams.ubc.ca**. Further aggregated results not included in this report, but may be made available upon request with the approval of the VP Academic & University Affairs.

Methodology

The “COVID-19 Impacts on UBC Students” Survey was developed as a response to the pandemic and the transition to online learning. The questions were designed to be answered by current domestic and international students enrolled in baccalaureate or graduate programs, as well as students in the graduating class of 2020. Furthermore, the same questions were posed to every student with additional questions such as, “How has Covid19 impacted your research conditions?” for Graduate and Honors students, to gather data addressing the specific needs of each population.

The survey was administered with the use of UBC’s survey software (Qualtrics) and administrative type data. This data type allowed individuals to receive personalized links to the survey matched to their student numbers, which was done with the intention of removing the need for students to self-report their faculties/programs and to remove the risk of students completing the survey multiple times. The data was then isolated by Faculty and shared with

each Faculty's Associate Dean, Academic who was responsible for leading the development of learning resources for Term 1 Winter Session. The comprehensive survey questions ([linked here](#)) were created by the AMS in partnership with the Graduate Students Society (GSS) Vice-President of University and Academic Affairs, Nicolas Romualdi, and his Associate of Data Affairs, Yu Luo, as well as UBC Planning and Institutional Research (UBC PAIR) Associate Director, Grace Lau, and Torun Halvorsen.

The analysis of the COVID-19 survey is divided to discuss each section of the survey. The first section examines the financial impacts of COVID-19 on students, focusing mainly on the aspects of employment and financial aid. The second section analyses safety and wellness, specifically feeling secure at UBC during COVID-19 and student perceptions of their mental health statuses. Following this, shorter sections on transportation and student housing issues will be discussed. With the later section elaborating on the academic impacts of the pandemic, emphasizes the needs for students to access technology for online course work. And the final section explores student perceptions of the COVID-19 support which has been offered so far. At the end of each section, a set of recommendations will be listed that outline the response plan the AMS aims to take in addressing the trends impacting students in the UBC community.

By conducting this survey, the AMS is able to continue its data driven student advocacy. We are incredibly thankful for the support of UBC PAIR and the GSS.

Respondent Profile

The following is a summary of the respondent profile. Students who indicated their status as 'Graduate' or 'Honors Baccalaureate' were given additional questions to understand how COVID-19 has impacted their research. The data shown, unless otherwise stated, encompasses all student responses as submitted.

Breakdown by Domestic and International Students (Q2.1)

Residency Status	Overall	Students Surveyed
Domestic (BC)	62.9%	4,474
Domestic (Out of BC)	12.9%	920
International	24.2%	1,722

Breakdown by Program Year Level (Q2.3)

Year Standing	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+
Overall	22.7%	24.1%	22.8%	18.4%	8.1%	1.5%	1.4%
Students Surveyed	1,616	1,717	1,624	1,310	580	104	103

Breakdown by Students in Global Exchange Program or Co-op Placement (Q2.5)

Program Status	Overall	Students Surveyed
Incomplete Global Exchange	2.0%	142
Incomplete Co-op Placement	1.9%	138
Complete Global Exchange	7.8%	554
Complete Co-op Placement	4.9%	346
Students Not in Programs	83.4%	5,924

Overview Honors, Graduate, Co-op/Go Global Status

- Out of 7,116 respondents, 62% percent indicated that they are BC residents. Further statistical tests have been conducted to identify the impacts that are specific to or more amplified for international students at UBC (Q2.1).
- 11.8% (574) of Baccalaureate students reported to be in the Honors program (Q2.2) which implies they had been taking five courses and/or completing their research-based project at the time of the transition to online learning.
- 14.5% (975) respondents indicated they had completed their degree or program at UBC as of April 2020 (Q2.4) and would have begun working or furthering their education.
- Within 12 months of June 2020, 7.5% (536) students had anticipated going on a 'Go Global' Exchange Trip and 13.7% (972) had planned to participate in the Co-op Program, with 2.0% (140) students planning for both (Q2.6).

For information regarding Graduate students and students in Research-Based Programs (sections Q3-Q4), please email info@gss.ubc.ca.

Financial Wellbeing

Employment Status

This section details the impacts of COVID-19 on employment status by indicating the employment levels before and after the pandemic was announced in March 2020.

Students Hired For Part-time or Full-time Work Between May to August 2020 (Q5.5)

Possible Answers	Overall	Students Surveyed
Yes	41.3%	2,475
No	58.7%	3,522

The table (Q5.5) indicates that 2,475 students had made provisions for employment during the summer of 2020 and may have been relying on this source of income or experience for future opportunities. As an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 17.5% (764) students were let go (Q5.6) while 58.1% (2,532) were still employed and the remaining 24.4% (1,061) were unsure at the time of the survey.

Additional Employment Details

- At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, 52.1% (3,389) of students reported to be employed part-time or full-time out of 6,504 respondents (Q5.1).
- Moreover, out of 4,815 respondents, 30.4% (1,462) indicated that their employment was terminated due to COVID-19 (Q5.2) while 69.6% (3,353) were still employed.
- In June 2020, 17.2% (1,118) respondents indicated to be working from outside of their homes (Q5.3), while 25.2% (1,645) of respondents were working from home.
- 44.7% (1,917) students employed at the time of the survey were receiving pay for the shifts they were scheduled to work, while 55.3% (2,374) were not paid (Q5.4).

Financial Aid

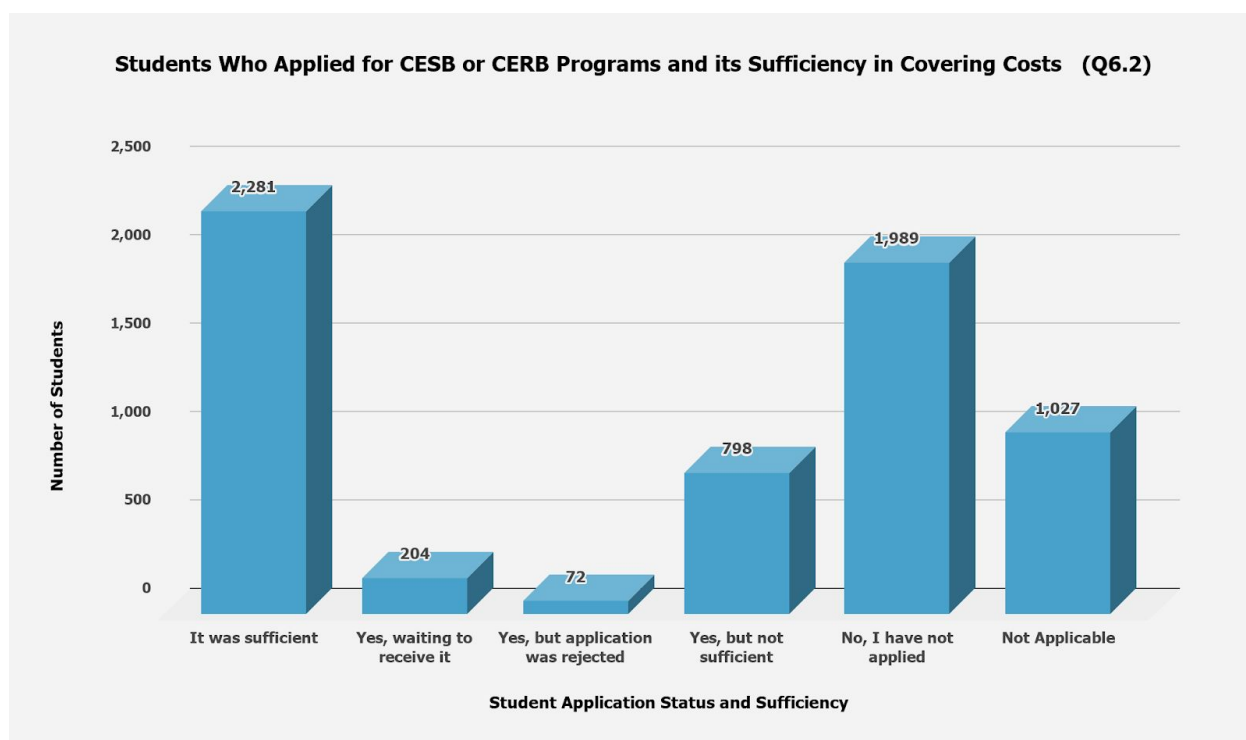
This section details the source(s) of financial aid students have been dependent on as a result of the pandemic. It evaluates the student engagement with CERB/CESB within the UBC community. As well as the student perception of the financial aid available during the pandemic as provided by UBC Enrolment Services and the Canadian Government.

Student Opinion of the Financial Support Provided by the Canadian Government (Q6.3)

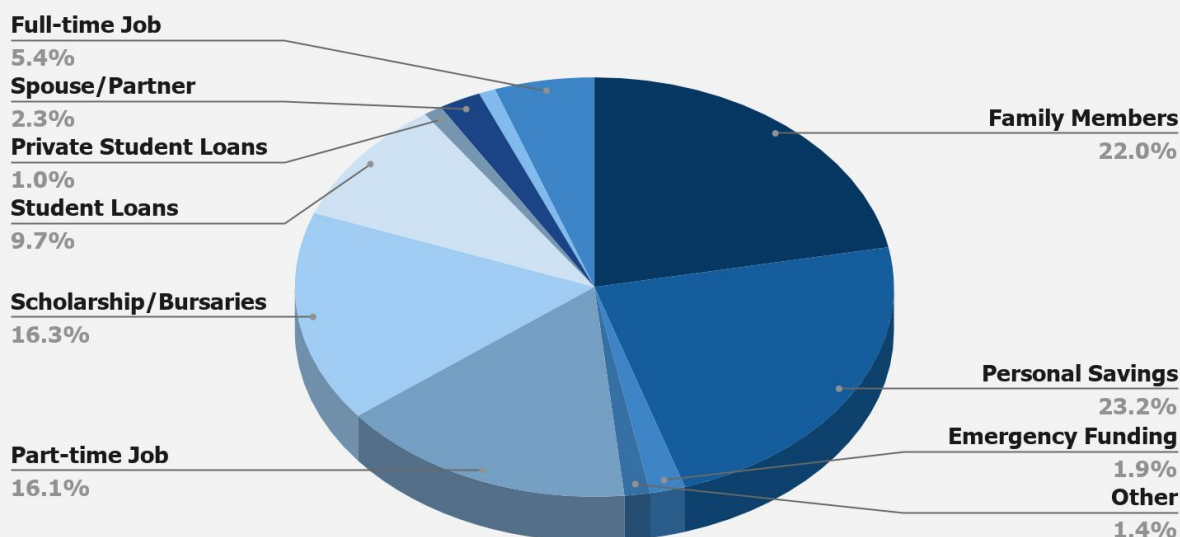
Possible Answers	Overall	Response Count
Yes, both the Federal and Provincial Governments have provided adequate funding	40.0%	2,543
Yes, only the Federal Government has provided adequate funding	27.4%	1,744
Yes, only the Provincial Government has provided adequate funding	1.7%	110
No, neither Government has provided adequate funding	27.4%	1,744

Students Aware of the Canada Emergency Benefits - CESB and/or CERB (Q6.1)

Possible Answers	Overall	Students Surveyed
Yes, I am aware	92.6%	5,621
No, I am not aware	4.6%	278
Unsure	2.8%	168



Sources of Financial Support for Academic Costs Students Use (Q6.9)



Students Engagement with Financial Loans As a Result of the Pandemic (Q6.5)

Possible Answers	Overall	Students Surveyed
Student Loans	28.0%	762
Bank Loans (not student loans)	6.3%	172
Credit Card Debt	16.4%	447
Borrowed from Family and/or Friends	49.2%	1,339

Student Ratings of Enrolment Service Advisor in Managing Financial Stress (Q6.8)

Rating	Very Unhelpful	Unhelpful	Neutral	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful
Overall/ Students Surveyed	10.6% (389)	17.6% (647)	43.7% (1,603)	17.9% (657)	10.1% (372)

Students Aware of the Financial Resources Offered by UBC's Enrolment Services (Q6.4)

Possible Answers	Overall	Students Surveyed
Yes, I am aware	31.5%	1,948
No, I am not aware	53.2%	3,289
Unsure	15.3%	948

Additional Financial Aid Details

- Questions Q6.1 and Q6.4 included a link to the Canadian Emergency Response website and the Enrolment Services UBC website respectively to connect students with the resources and ensure that those who are eligible can apply.
- 5,621 students indicated they were aware of CESB/CERB (Q6.1), yet almost 2,000 students reported not to have applied (Q6.2). This ineligible student population may be those who were not working prior to the pandemic (have therefore not made at least \$5,000 to qualify) and those with communication barriers.
- When asked to select sources of financial support (Q6.9) 85.3% of respondents indicated family support and/or savings. Suddenly having to rely on scholarships or bursaries to continue funding their education may create barriers for students who do not meet the minimum course-load or grade point average requirements.
- Q6.4 indicates that 53.2% (3,289) respondents are not aware of the financial resources offered at UBC while 15.3% (946) of students are unsure. This is concerning as it indicates that students who do not reach out to their Enrolment Services Advisor (ESA) have no other way of receiving information on financial aid. Therefore, these students suffer as a result of the general lack of information.
- There are negative implications on mental health for the students who rely on any type of loan (Q6.5) as most options include incurring debt of some kind. For many students, this may be additional to previous loans or debt already accumulated.
- Q6.6 asked only to Graduate students, 21.4% (114) claimed to have applied for Enrollment Services Emergency Funding. However, this does not determine how much funding was given to these applicants, simply that they needed assistance and applied. Graduate Student Financial Aid was 10.5% (56) and the remaining Graduate Student Emergency Bursary was 68.0% (362) students.
- 68.6% (3,645) of students agree that UBC did not provide adequate financial aid to relieve the stress caused by the pandemic, 31.4% (1,666) believe they did (Q6.7).

- 23.1% (1,291) of students indicated that the summer suspension of the U-Pass Program at UBC was creating financial barriers for them (Q6.10) while 76.9% (4,303) did not. This may be due to the health protocols which mandated the closure of schools and businesses over the summer and may not be reflective of the commuting student population relying on U-Pass during regular

Student Testimonies

“Well, I was a bit disappointed because when I was consulting with the advisor about my unexpected flight and moving-out expenses, she simply said I'm not applicable because the financial aid is only for those who are desperate (who even can't afford to rent a place or any food), which wasn't really mentioned in the emails I got.”

“International students are often left on their own because it is assumed that they have the financial ability to weather the storm. But when tickets home are at least \$10,000/seat, it is very unrealistic to not give these students any help.”

“I am a single mother of 3 children and have come this far already so I cannot quit, it would be an insult to my children as they have already lost out on time with their mother because of the time/money I have spent on receiving higher education. I wish I could get my in class time over and done with but with navigating these new systems I have to spend extra time learning new ways of studying and doing so in my home where I have to tell my children to not disturb me while I study or in class on zoom. I am an indigenous learner far from my home community so there is no family support near for my kids.”

“I wasn't really able to capture my situation with the options provided in this survey. I had two summer jobs lined up - one was lost, and another I was able to keep. We are only eligible for CESB if we make less than \$1000 per month so anyone in my situation is basically screwed (I lost one job, and the one I got to keep puts me just over the 1k limit). Some other questions that were weird: I don't even know what an Enrolment Services Advisor is and don't think I was ever contacted by one? And, I feel strongly that UBC should offer tuition amnesty for the Summer and reduced tuition in the Fall.”

“I can not take any bank loans as interest is forbidden in my religion, I am not eligible for government assistance as I am not Canadian, and the ESP informed me that as long as I'm eating and housed there's not much that they can offer. My parents have been drastically affected financially by the current situation and I'm stuck here as I can't get back home.”

“International students were not considered by the government for the CESB, and students who were hired for the summer and let go prior to receiving their first salary/payment are not eligible to apply for the CERB (since we're international citizens). It doesn't matter about our citizenship. We're stranded in a country we CHOSE to call home, and when the government is helping peers but ignoring you it really puts into perspective of what's important. International students provide

a backbone to the UBC society and without recognizing that, the government and school is doing wrong by the hundreds of students left stranded without any financial assistance.”

Financial Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

In understanding that young people and students are the most financially burdened demographic, the AMS will advocate for the creation of a student/youth employment wage subsidy which will be used to incentivize businesses to hire students and young people.

Recommendation 2.

The AMS will continue to advocate for extensions to the student loan repayment freeze along with an extension to the evictions freeze. These advocacy points will be used as long-term lobbying precedents to encourage the provincial and federal government to create sustainable solutions.

Recommendation 3.

The AMS will continue to work with BC Campus to advocate to the provincial government on the expansion of Open Education Resources (OERs) into homework, assessment, and online learning platforms. This expansion will lead to affordability solutions on the high cost of conventional textbook prices.

Recommendation 4.

The AMS will advocate to Enrolment Services and the Registrar's office to find ways to ensure the financial aid programs (such as the Technology Bursary) are more accessible to students.

Safety and Wellness

COVID-19 Security at UBC

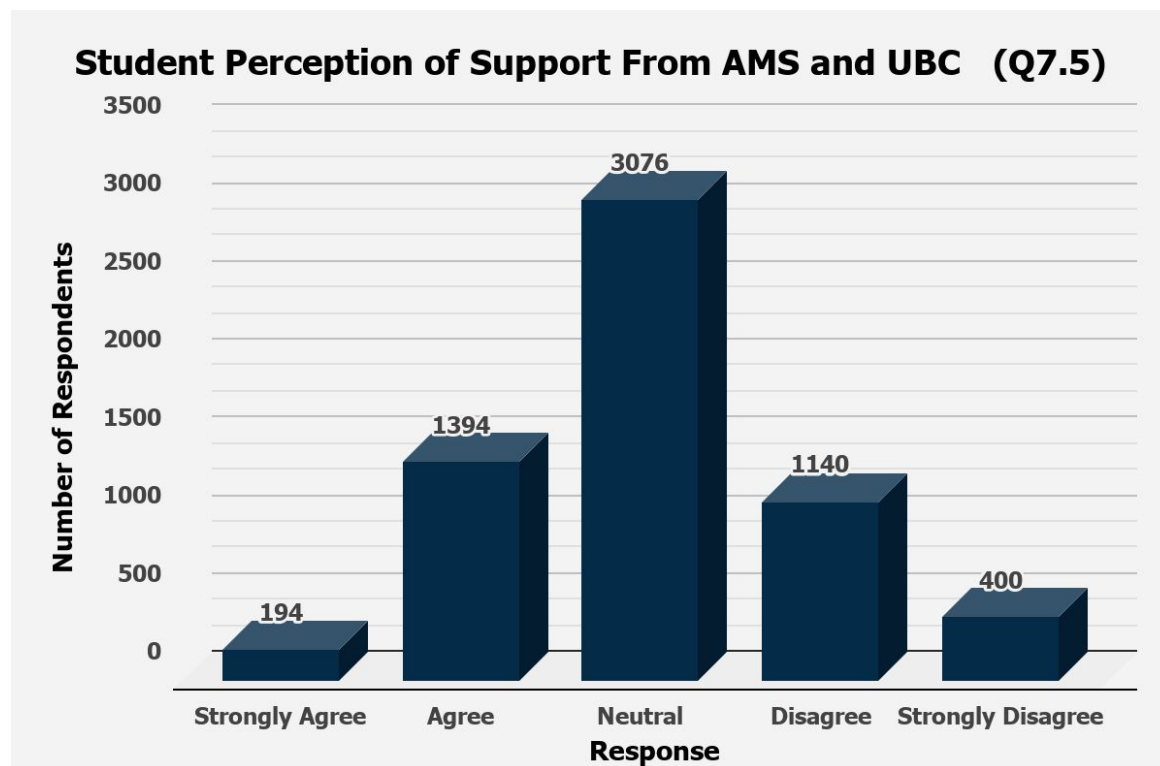
The safety foreword presented on the survey as [Q7.1](#): “Social Distancing is measure to prevent the spread of a contagious disease by maintaining a physical distance between people and reducing the number of times people come into close contact with each other.” The questions were asked to understand students’ perception of their own safety and wellness, questions discuss social distancing, wearing of masks, and access to AMS/GSS health resources.

Breakdown of Student Ratings on Questions Regarding Safety at UBC (Likert Scale)

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q7.2 “I am confident I will be able to practice social distancing in the upcoming months.”	31.5% (1,959)	44.7% (2,779)	12.2% (761)	9.7% (603)	1.9% (117)
Q7.3 “I feel comfortable wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves.”	33.2% (2,064)	41.6% (2,582)	14.3% (886)	8.9% (550)	2.1% (131)
Q7.6 “I would feel physically safe returning to UBC campus by continuing to practice social distancing.”	18.3% (1,135)	31.5% (1,958)	19.9% (1,235)	20.1% (1,247)	10.2% (632)

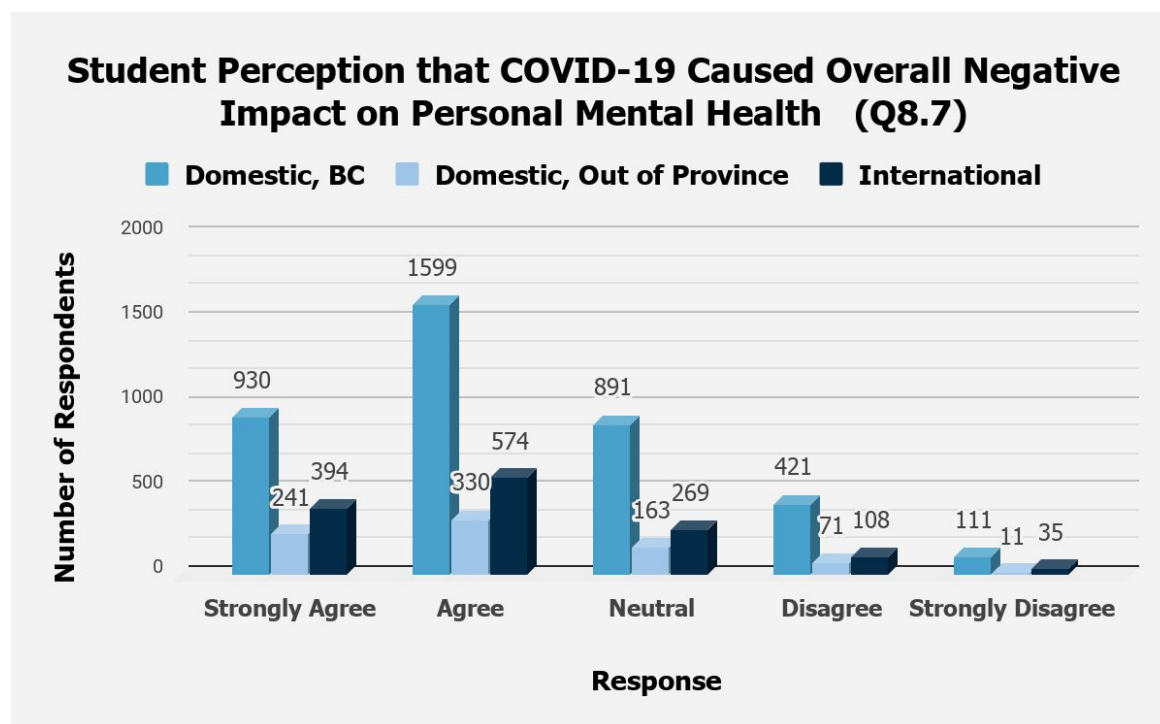
Breakdown of Students Aware of AMS/GSS Resources and How to Access Them (Q7.4)

AMS/GSS Resource	Overall and Students Surveyed
EmpowerMe	19.7% (2,061)
AMS SASC	19.1% (1,996)
AMS FoodBank	21.6% (2,253)
AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan	33.5% (3,503)



Personal Health and Wellbeing

This section concerns student perceptions of home safety, food security, sleeping patterns, and emotional support systems. As well as respondent engagement with social media.



Question Asked	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q8.1 "I feel safe in the place where I am currently staying."	58.1% (3,576)	34.1% (2,099)	5.3% (329)	1.7% (106)	0.7% (43)
Q8.2 "I have enough nutritious food to eat every day."	56.1% (3,455)	34.1% (2,099)	6.4% (394)	2.8% (172)	0.6% (36)
Q8.3 "In the past 2 months, I have been concerned with where my next meal will come from."	2.0% (121)	6.8% (418)	8.7% (537)	31.4% (1,930)	51.2% (3,148)
Q8.4 "I have been able to maintain a regular sleep schedule during the pandemic."	13.5% (832)	27.1% (1,671)	14.3% (883)	28.1% (1,730)	16.9% (1,040)
Q8.5 "I have a reliable and accessible emotional support system."	19.0% (1,172)	41.0% (2,526)	22.5% (1,383)	13.2% (815)	4.2% (258)

Impacts of COVID-19 on the Amount of Time you Spend Engaging with Social Media (Q8.6)

Response	Domestic, BC	Domestic, Out of Province	International Students	Total
Decreased Quite a Bit	89 (1.4%)	26 (0.4%)	34 (0.6%)	149 (2.4%)
Decreased Somewhat	170 (2.8%)	40 (0.6%)	60 (1.0%)	270 (4.4%)
No Increase/ Decrease	1,608 (26.2%)	376 (6.1%)	576 (9.4%)	2,560 (41.7%)
Increased Somewhat	1,502 (24.5%)	284 (4.6%)	508 (8.3%)	2,294 (37.4%)
Increased Quite a Bit	577 (9.4%)	90 (1.5%)	200 (3.2%)	867 (14.1%)

Student Testimonies

"Social Distancing doesn't seem to work well in practice (from my experience). Although I try, I cannot prevent others from walking or talking far too close to me. Many do not take this matter as seriously as those of us with at risk family members."

"My understanding is that EmpowerMe/other counselling services offered are only covered by UBC for a few sessions. Which isn't enough for someone experiencing mental health difficulties especially during a time like this."

"I think the biggest concern I would have is that there is only so much I can do to stay safe, but if the people around me aren't practicing social distancing or wearing protective equipment then it's not as safe as it could be."

"UBC could be more understanding when dealing with students who are under mandatory self-isolation due to recently returning from abroad. SHHS, for example, would not allow me to check out of my residence contract until I returned the key despite not being able to do so myself; without a friend's help, I would have had to pay two extra weeks of rent."

"I am nervous about having to access health or mental health services online in a situation where I do not have a private room and I know others can hear me."

"My safety concerns are regarding the racial and social justice issues that underlie the University's education. Academia is elitist and functions as a meritocracy. The effects of this are most prevalent in Sauder and Science where mental health is bad, the environment is toxic, and sexual assaults are not taken seriously enough."

"The University has not provided enough information about how the pandemic will relate to completion of graduate programmes. This has been a constant source of anxiety and stress for me."

"My social media has increased since the uprisings in the US (where I'm from). My mental health has fluctuated, because although I've made more time for taking care of myself in general, I am also spending more time feeling very aware of what I am eating and how I look. As someone with a mood disorder and an eating disorder, I would say that although my experiences combined come out neutral, I have been experiencing a lot of ups and downs."

Safety and Wellness Recommendations

Recommendation 5.

The AMS will address the students' concerns of safety at home, such as domestic violence abuse or negative familial circumstance, by continuing to maintain the operation and spread awareness of resources such as UBC's Student Assistance Program, SVPRO and AMS SASC.

Recommendation 6.

The AMS will continue to maintain the operation and awareness of the Food Bank by ensuring that all health protocols are followed and students suffering from food insecurity are supported as well as increasing the locations made available on campus.

Recommendation 7.

The AMS will continue to advocate for compassionate teaching and academic concession to the Associate Deans, Academic as the majority of students reported not having had enough sleep or a reliable emotional support system over the summer will be entering the school year with an already fragile mental health system.

Recommendation 8.

The AMS will continue to leverage the online platforms we hold to connect with students in our community and to communicate the services and resources the AMS and UBC provide. Furthermore, working with Orientations and Virtual Collegia through the Center for Student Involvement and Careers to help incoming students feel supported by their academic community.

Transportation

This section details the frequency of which students engaged with public transport in teh, and how often they predict to use transit in the fall. As well as the respondents access to other modes of safe and operable transportation such as vehicles or bikes.

Frequency of Public Transit Use as Essential Transportation During This Pandemic (Q9.1)

Student Status	Extremely often	Very Often	Somewhat Often	Not so Often	Not Often At All
Domestic, BC	122 (2.0%)	132 (2.2%)	312 (5.1%)	606 (10.0%)	2,753 (45%)
Domestic, Out of Province	40 (0.7%)	42 (0.7%)	79 (1.3%)	155 (2.5%)	498 (8.2%)
International	81 (1.3%)	120 (2.0%)	204 (3.3%)	363 (5.9%)	595 (9.8%)
Total	4.0% (243)	4.8% (295)	9.7% (596)	18.4% (1,127)	63.0% (3,852)

Students Predicting their Primary Means of Transport in the Lower Mainland in Fall (Q9.3)

Method of Transportation	Public Transit	Personal/ Family Vehicle	Bike	Other (please specify)
Outcome/ Students Surveyed	33.9% (1,653)	47.8% (2,328)	12.7% (619)	5.5% (270)

Students Predicting Frequency of Public Transit use in the Lower Mainland

Frequency	More than 7 times a week	5 – 7 times a week	5 – 7 times a week	1 – 3 times a week	Not applicable / Not be in Vancouver Area
Summer	3.6% (221)	4.0% 246	7.3% (448)	44.7% (2,726)	40.3% (2,460)
Fall	11.8% (722)	11.3% (689)	14.9% (908)	33.3% (2,033)	28.7% (1,753)

Additional Transit Information

- The majority of students, 62.1% (3,661), reported having access to an operable vehicle. However, this leaves 37.9% (2,236) without access to this form of transportation (Q9.2).

Student Testimonies

“The public transit started charging fares again, but I don't have my U-pass and have to pay the full amount each time. This is going to be a concern for me during the summer.”

“I commute from the North Shore and I am aware that many students do as well. I am certain that the number of students who commute from the north shore is going to greatly exceed the space on busses due to social distancing. I cannot afford to drive to UBC because of the tremendous cost of parking fees on campus. If we are forced to drive to UBC because of the lack of bus availability please help us with the parking crisis at UBC. Please make as many classes as possible optionally online.”

“Over the summer I work full time which means taking the bus too and from work everyday, five days a week. If classes were to continue in a mostly online setting I would still take the bus 10+ times a week as my work hours would increase.”

“I am extremely upset that the U-Pass was cancelled for the summer without the option to opt in or out. Now that transit requires fees and we have 3 out of 4 summer months to go still, I'm forced to look at buying a transit pass, which is way more expensive than the U-Pass option.”

“I would be more comfortable taking my classes online and not having to commute using transit because of the lack of ability to social distance and get to UBC in a reasonable time.”

Transit Recommendations

Recommendation 9.

The AMS will design and fund a transit subsidy for the Summer Term (2) of 2020-2021 (July-August) to ensure that students, especially graduate students, are able to use transit for essential services and commutes to campus. The transit subsidy will subsidize transit prices to those of the previously established U-Pass prices (\$42.50) in accordance with the *Universal Transit Pass Agreement*.

Recommendation 10.

The AMS will negotiate with Translink through the U-Pass Advisory Committee (UAC) on the reinstating of the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) program in order to ensure that enrolled students can use transit throughout the Fall for essential services - whether it is to visit the doctor, buy groceries, or see family. The negotiations must take into account the financial, geographic, and health concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on students.

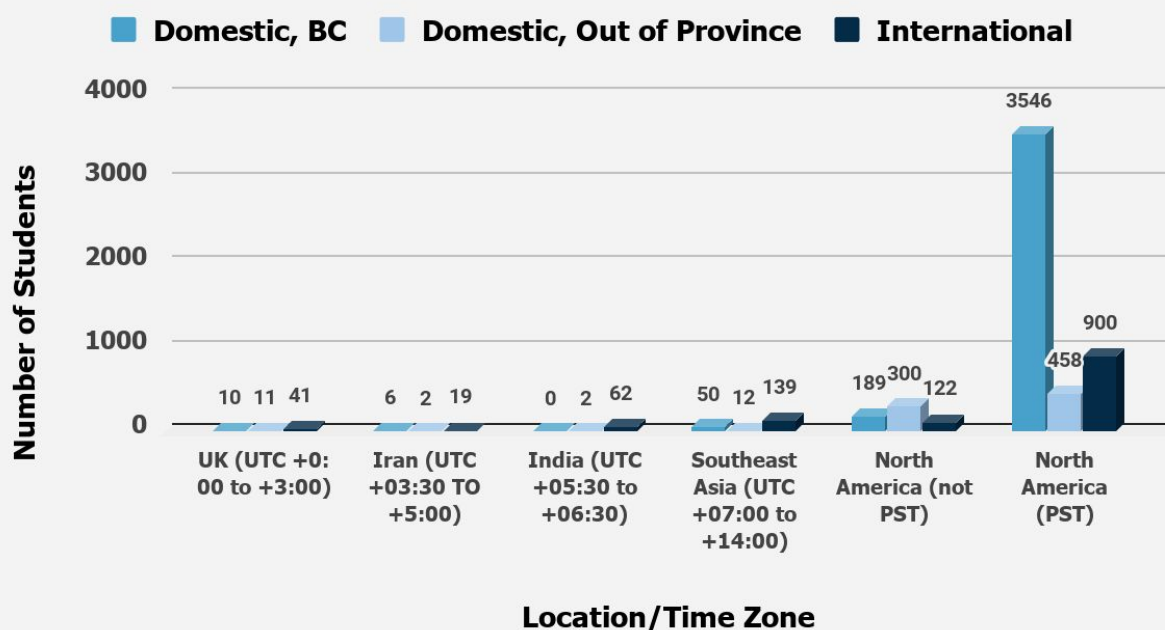
Student Housing

This section discusses the data that is specific to Student Housing such as details regarding contracts and refunds for year-round stay. As well as data regarding students that have already transitioned to another location, will be transitioning homes and/or time zones.

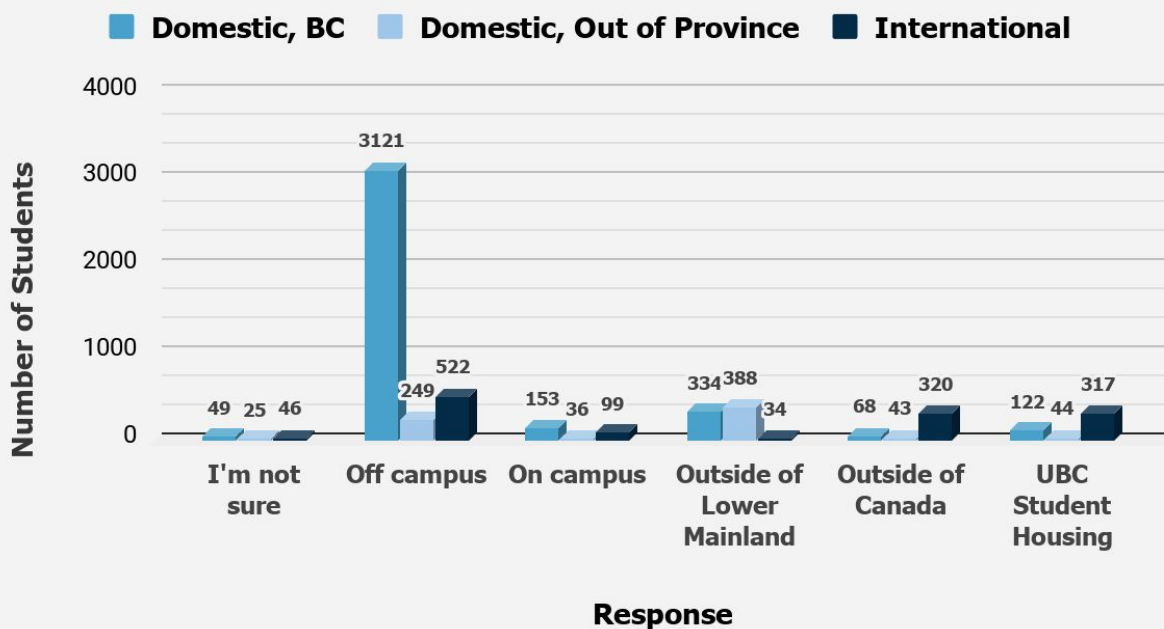
Students that Moved from Campus Back to their Home Due to the Pandemic (Q10.4)

Student Profile	Yes	No	Total
Domestic, BC	425	783	1,208
Domestic, Out of Province	137	303	440
International	515	299	814
Total	1,077	1,385	2,462

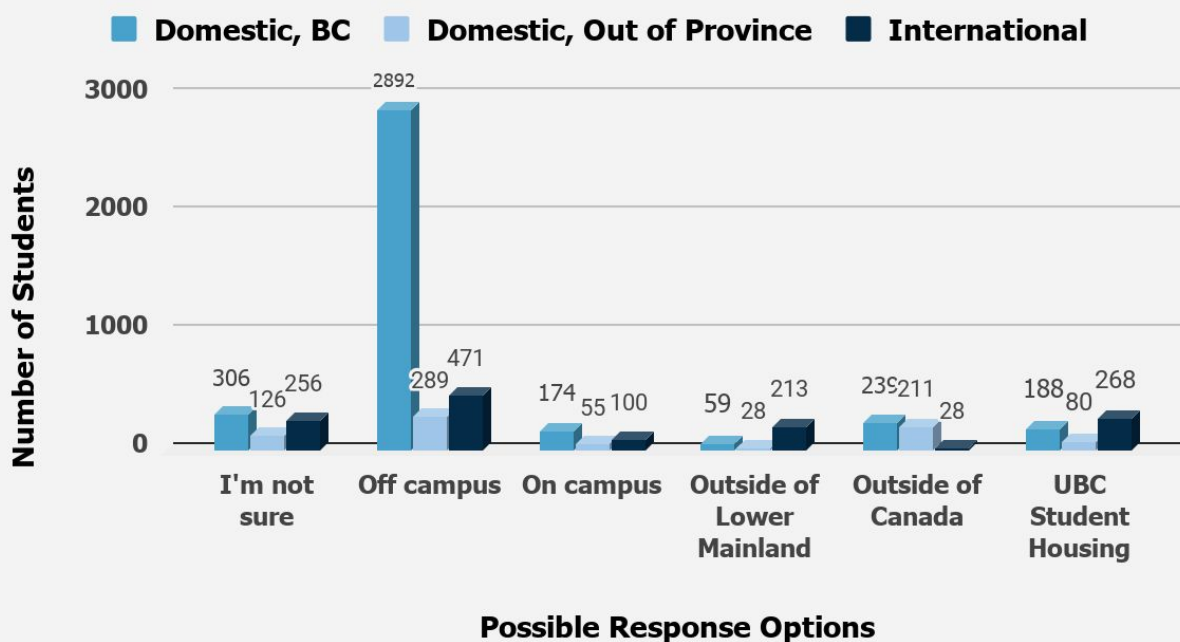
Primary Time Zone of Respondents for 2020/21 Year (Q10.3)



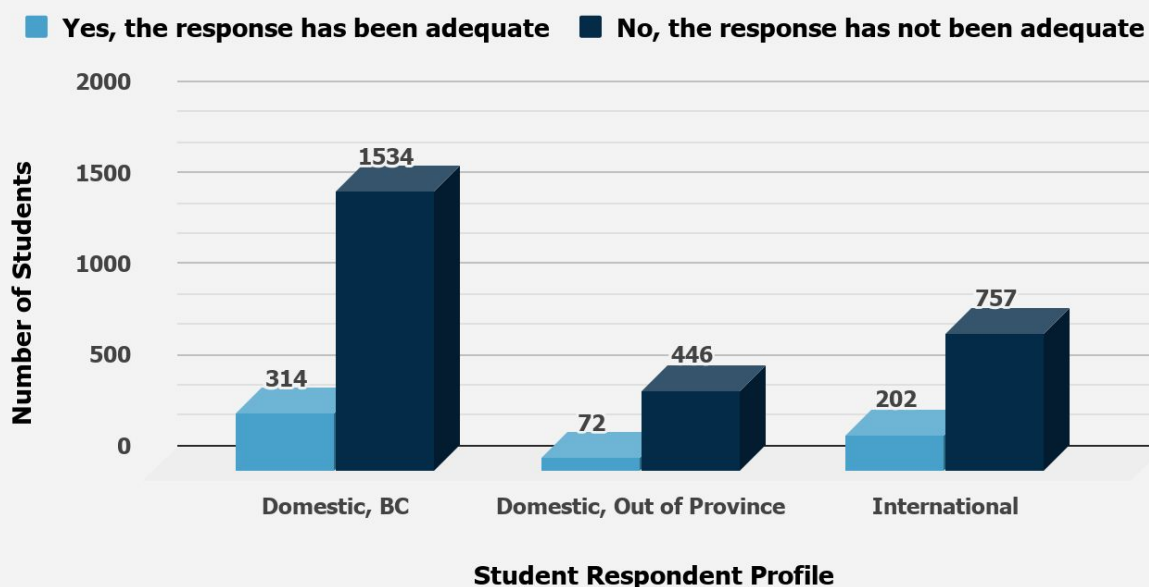
Students' Primary Residence in Summer 2020 (Q10.1)



Students' Anticipated Residence for Fall 2020 (Q10.2)



Response to Adequacy of Federal COVID-19 Support in Addressing Student Housing Affordability (10.9)



Planning for Future Housing	Yes	No
Q10.10 - Are you transitioning between living situations in the next six weeks? (July 15th - August 10th)	18.8% (1,061)	81.2% (4,581)
Q10.11 Were you planning on staying on campus over the summer?	19.5% (1,143)	80.5% (4,716)
Q10.12 Have you been on campus at all in the last four weeks? (May 6th - June 1st)	27.8% (1,661)	72.2% (4,309)

Additional Student Housing Information

- Over half of the respondents, 56.3% (1,387), who lived on campus before the pandemic reported to have moved back home this leaves 43.7% (1,078) who did not move (Q10.4).

- 36.6% (354) of students living Student Housing reported not to have received a refund (Q10.5) although they moved out early in their contract, but 63.4% (614) did.
- Out of the students that signed the Year Round Housing Contract for the 2020-21 year, 63.7% (748) are worried about how they will pay for rent 36.2% (426) (Q10.6).
- Students were asked if they had stable housing for the next six months (Q10.7) and 87.5% (5,029) of respondents said yes, while 12.5% (718) students did not.
- A large percentage, 82.3% (2,742) (Q10.8) disagreed that UBC has adequately addressed the crisis of affordable student housing during the pandemic while 17.7% (589) agreed.

Student Testimonies

“UBC has not provided any support to students holding year-round residence contracts. Considering it is expected most students leave campus, it is a huge financial burden to us and our families to pay \$5000+ to hold our room for the summer, when we don’t even know if we’ll be back on campus in September. Additionally, flexible cancellation/refund policies have not been made clearly available”

“My rent is going to increase this summer, but my stipend from UBC has not increased to match the inflation on rental or other living costs. This is unfair and making my life harder and more stressful.”

“UBC student housing should introduce rent control and relief for international students who are hit worse financially due to the amount of tuition we are paying.”

“UBC must offer the provincial rent subsidy to students in residence. Asking your ESA for support is not an option when funds are inapplicable to so many students.”

“UBC student housing is too expensive for students who are supporting themselves, including paying for tuition and living costs. the covid 19 pandemic has only made this more difficult. this makes access unequal to students from lower income backgrounds.”

Housing Recommendations

Recommendation 11.

The AMS will advocate to the provincial government to increase emergency funding towards post-secondary institutions to ensure that students who are facing severe financial hardship including hardship with regards to housing insecurity, are being adequately supported.

Recommendation 12.

The AMS will continue to lobby the provincial government to re-establish an eviction and rent freeze throughout 2020 and 2021 to address the lack of employment and affordability issues that students are facing in response to the possible second wave of COVID-19.

Recommendation 13.

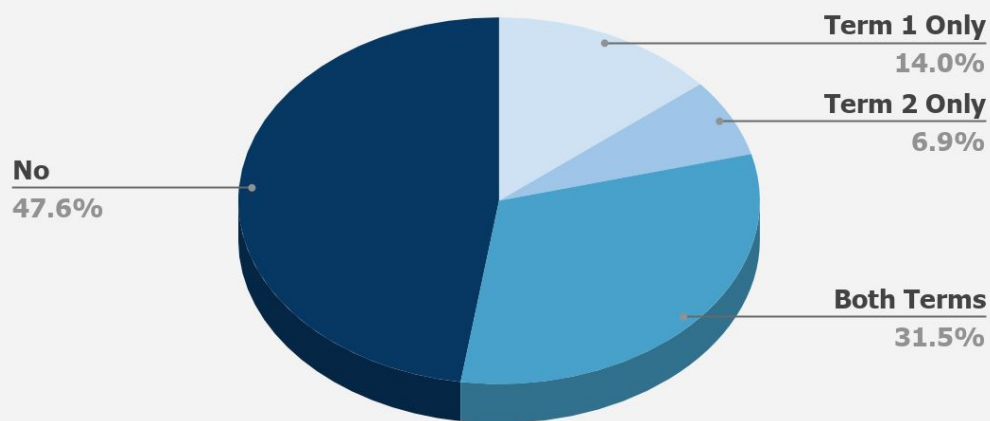
The AMS will work with student unions across the province to cite the lack of student housing inclusion in provincial housing support as a precedent towards the creation of student housing legislation.

Online Learning

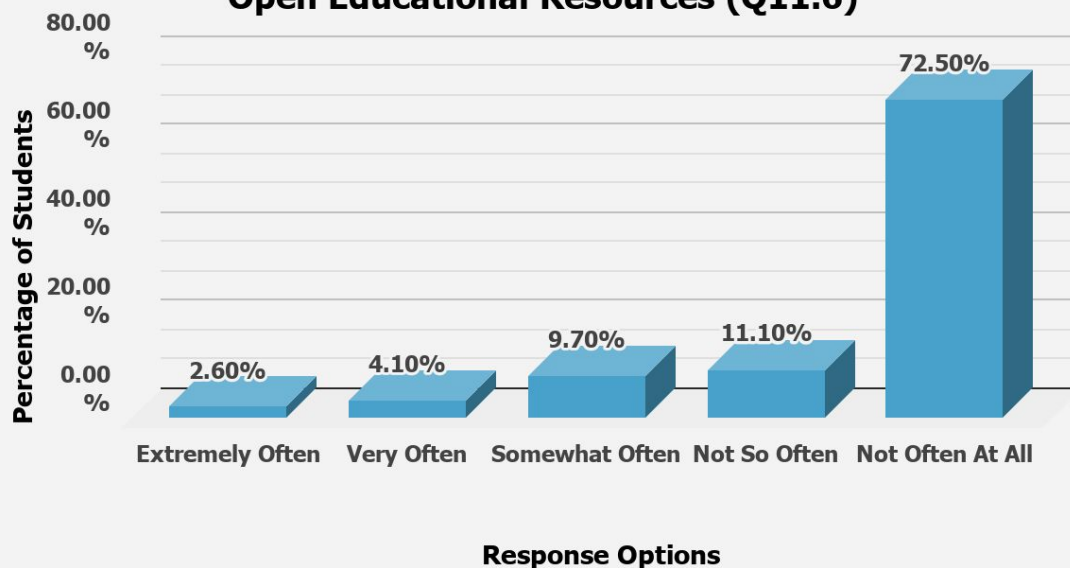
Technology and Resources

This section details data that involves the upcoming 2020 Summer Session and 2020/21 Winter Session, particularly the impacts of COVID-19 on the timelines of students' degree, their feeling towards learning online, and their familiarity with Open Educational Resources.

Students Enrolled in Courses for Summer 2020 (Q11.1)



Respondent Frequency of Engagement with Open Educational Resources (Q11.6)



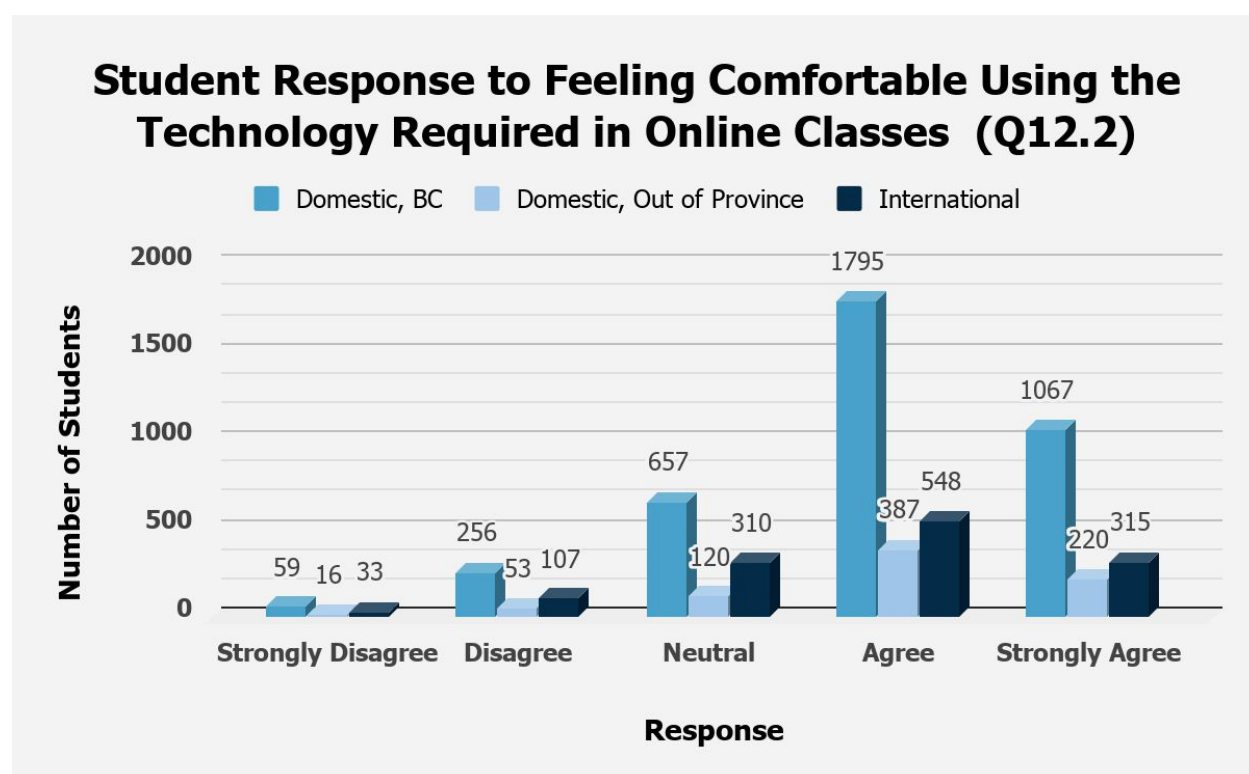
Additional Technology and Resource Information

- Of the students taking summer courses online (Q11.2) 38.8% (1,433) were asked to purchase required materials for their instruction while 61.2% (2,261) were not required.
- The COVID-19 pandemic placed restrictions on the courses available online for Summer and Fall sessions, this delayed the degree timeline for 16.1% (968) of students, and left 32.6% (1,967) of students unsure (Q11.3).
- Question Q11.4 asked students if they had access to the necessary technology to complete their courses online, 68.9% (4,113) of students said yes while 23.3% (1,389) said no. This question also included a link to the [Chapman Learning Commons](#) to guide students that needed help securing the necessary resources.
- When asked about Open Educational Resources, 17.2% (1,033) said they had used them for past courses, while 67.9% (4,083) reported not to have and 14.9% (899) were unsure (Q11.5). This question also included a link to the [Open UBC](#) website.
- 7.3% (439) of respondents indicated that they had checked the [keeplearning.ubc.ca](#) website for UBC learning resources while 92.7% (5,571) had not (Q11.7).
- This question was answered by all respondents to gauge which individuals registered as Teaching Assistant had checked the [keep Teaching.ubc.ca](#) for support and resources. It indicated that 15.3% (108) of TAs had checked the website, and 84.7% (706) hadn't (Q11.7).

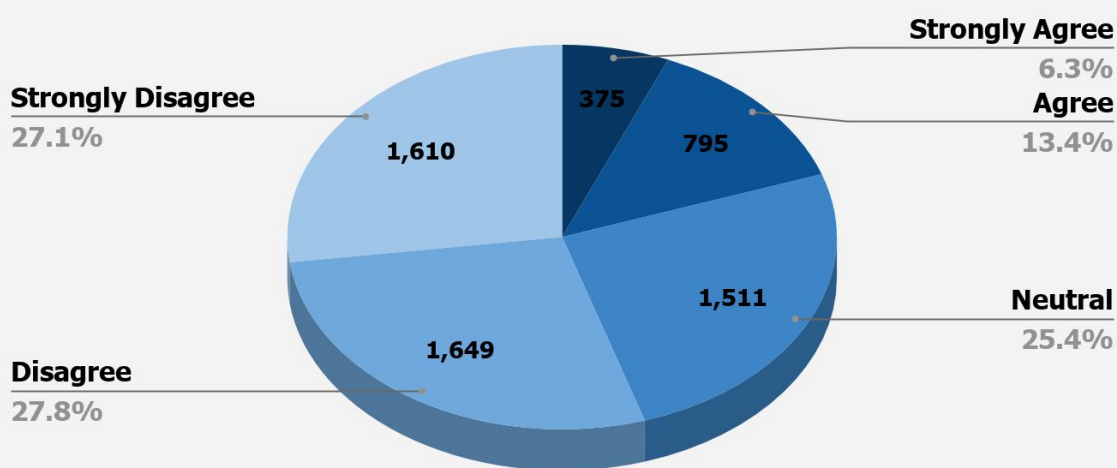
Student Experience

This particular section details information about baccalaureate thesis work, as well as pedagogical methods and tools in the COVID-19 context.

Question Asked	Extremely Often	Very Often	Somewhat Often	Not So Often	Not Often At All
Q12.1 I am able to continue my thesis work without interruptions during the COVID-19 outbreak. (Baccalaureate Degree Honours students only)	2.6% (155)	4.1% (241)	9.7% (572)	11.1% (654)	72.5% (4,285)



Respondent Assessment of Engagement with Course Material As Better Through Independent Study and Online Lectures (Q12.3)

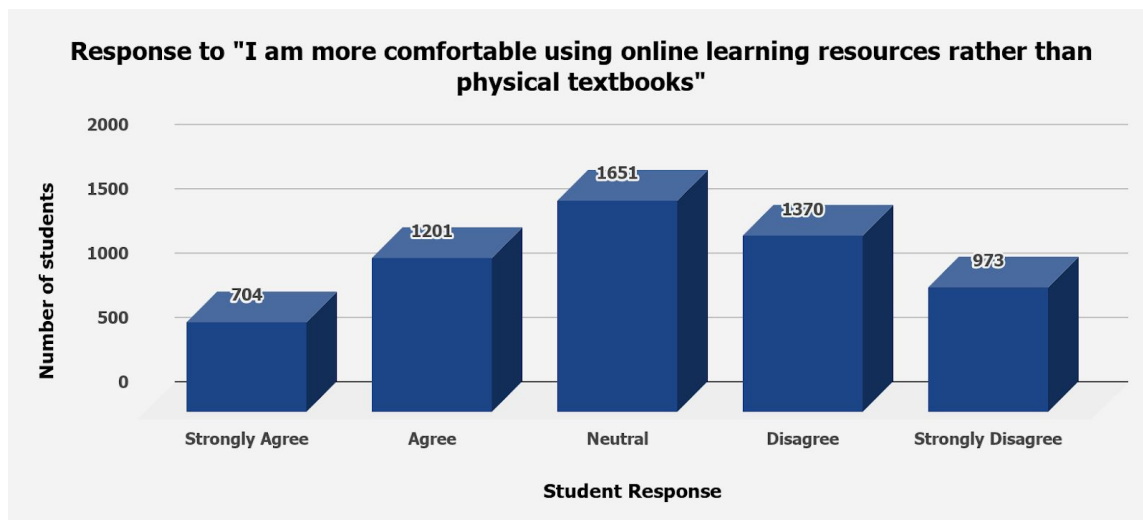


This section includes a statistical test¹ which was conducted in order to explore the relationship between students' access to supplemental resources for course material and students' engagement with the course material. The results found that the more students agree that they have equitable access to educational resources to supplement course material, the better they are able to engage with the course content in the context of independent study and online lectures. This is a noteworthy finding as it reveals that there is an evident need for resources (i.e. articles, journals, practice questions, textbooks) that will help students understand their course materials in an independent learning setting. Such resources might help bridge the gap in learning in order to make up for the lost face-to-face pedagogical style which students might have been conditioned to learn through pre-pandemic.

This is a significant finding as it shows that a majority of students are not able to optimize their academic performance through independent study and online lectures. This may be rooted in the various learning styles of students, which are likely becoming accentuated, given the massive shift in learning context from in-person to the virtual world. Depending on the course and the students' individual learning style(s), students may be experiencing exacerbated difficulty in visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical, social, or solitary learning styles. Therefore, over 3,000 students will potentially need additional and versatile academic support in order to accommodate their respective learning styles and overall ability to become educated.

¹ See Figure A in Appendix.

Rating	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Q12.4 I am able to access resources to help me understand my course materials ie. textbooks, practice questions</i>	10.0% (591)	43.4% (2,573)	32.4% (1,920)	10.7% (636)	3.4% (203)
<i>Q12.5 I find study groups and interactive calls beneficial to my understanding of course material</i>	10.7% (631)	32.8% (1,938)	32.5% (1,923)	16.2% (955)	7.9% (466)
<i>Q12.6 I find courses taught via online platforms to be more content heavy and fast paced.</i>	17.0% (1,004)	32.9% (1,946)	36.2% (2,142)	11.7% (690)	2.2% (130)
<i>Q12.7 My instructor has prepared and organized for this course to be easily taught via online platforms</i>	8.8% (517)	30.0% (1,766)	42.6% (2,507)	13.3% (784)	5.3% (309)
<i>Q12.9 I feel more comfortable using online textbooks, learning materials, and class references more than physical textbooks.</i>	11.9% (704)	20.4% (1,201)	28.0% (1,651)	23.2% (1,370)	16.5% (973)
<i>Q12.10 I always pay for textbooks when the class requires them.</i>	16.0% (948)	32.0% (1,894)	19.4% (1,146)	22.1% (1,308)	10.4% (615)



Other reasons for discomfort with technology use could potentially root from political tensions occurring in international students' home countries within the COVID-19 context. These countries include (but are not limited to) mainland China, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey or Venezuela. International students who chose to return to any of these countries for the duration of the school year may be experiencing discomfort with the use of technology due to the government regulation of online activities, as well as the various barriers and restrictions when it comes to digital communication and online access to educational resources. For example, in mainland China, banned websites include GSuite (any Google platform), Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Box/Dropbox, Slack, Skype, WhatsApp, and various national/global news outlets. Even with the use of VPNs to circumvent the Great Firewall in China and to access these platforms seems an unreliable and perilous endeavour due to the political surveillance culture that regulates citizens' access to online content. Therefore, such circumstances might incite fear of detainment to students and contribute to the discomfort reported in the survey. In addition, a proportion of international students must face obstacles such as unreliable internet connections and disproportionate time zones, which might significantly hinder their academic performance.

Additional Online Learning Information

- Regarding the textbook costs for summer and fall courses (Q12.8), 22.6% (1,327) of students reported to have been asked to purchase their physical textbook materials for the 2020 academic year while 77.4% (4,532) of people reported not to have

Student Testimonies

"I'm a Master of Occupational Therapy student and this has significantly disrupted our program and learning. The learning in our program involves a lot of hands on work, face to face interactions, and group work. Our learning has been cut and pasted, sections have been postponed, and it all feels rather disjointed. Considering this, I am upset that our tuition costs remain the same considering our education and learning is a fraction of what it was meant to be."

"I had to drop out of a course after paying for materials, because the online platform was too difficult to keep up with. I am also unable to get a tuition refund because I dropped out too late (tried for too long to keep up with the course, because I didn't want to slow down my progress toward a degree)."

"I have found that some professors exceed the 50 minute class time or change their class style so they can make it much more dense with learning material when doing online classes. I also find it very helpful when professors allow us to go over lecture recordings at a time that matches our schedules. I'm happy to put in the required course engagement hours for each day but I would prefer flexibility on the time of day I choose to go over course material. This is because due to covid-19 some of us must take what we can get in regards to jobs and opportunities, so they may not fit into a regular course schedule."

"Recently my professor asked that we leave our video on during our midterm and I did not feel that comfortable with that as it felt 'invading' to be watched by my peers."

"Professors need to be better. Course delivery needs to be better. The quality of education I've been receiving has not been the same as in person and I cannot defend the amount of money I'm spending on this online degree as reasonable or representative of what in person classes offered me."

"It's hard as a student with disabilities. I don't feel that even CFA was really well equipped with how to deal with the new situation and understandably so. But this new format discouraged me from taking summer courses and made it difficult to complete my Spring term."

"Having had multiple concussions staring at screens for long periods of time can be incredibly taxing for me! It leads to severe headaches and I personally find it much harder to focus on a screen in comparison to a written page."

"Introduce alternative options for open textbooks for students who are struggling financially."

"Transitioning to online learning and requiring the purchase of a book available in a physical only format is ridiculous. The expectation that students (who were informed by UBC that they no longer needed to reside in Canada) will be able to source the requisite physical material is insane. Furthermore, requiring the use of services such as Proctorio is not only a massive

invasion of privacy, it does not take into account the living situations of students who may not have access to a stable internet connection, or the technology required to participate in examinations held in this manner.”

Online Learning Recommendations

Recommendation 14.

The AMS will work with student unions across the province to advocate to the provincial government on the necessity of online learning materials as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's imposition of online learning.

Recommendation 15.

The AMS will work towards securing provincial funding for the development of Open Education Resources through budgetary recommendations via the *AMS BC Budget 2021* Consultation Submission.

Recommendation 16.

The AMS will work with both UBC and provincial partners on the continued development of the TextbookBroke campaign for the online atmosphere.

Recommendation 17.

Re-examine the application of the Academic Concessions policy to incorporate technology problems, connectivity issues, and care for dependents as examples of compassionate grounds. Ensure that Academic Decision-makers have resources to support in order to make a compassionate, ethical, and fair decision in light of the new evolving circumstances regarding COVID-19.

Student Reception of UBC Communication

Rating	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q13.1 - The precautions taken by UBC to protect students have been communicated clearly.	11.4% (680)	46.1% (2,747)	25.1% (1,496)	13.5% (802)	3.8% (228)
Q13.2 - I would like to receive more communication from the administration at UBC	16.6% (987)	33.3% (1,984)	32.9% (1,959)	13.8% (825)	3.4% 202
Q13.3 - I am receiving adequate updates regarding how courses will be taught in the upcoming fall semester.	6.2% (370)	32.3% (1,921)	25.6% (1,522)	24.3% (1,443)	11.5% (684)
Q13.4 - I have a strong understanding of the teaching expectations for the online courses for the summer.	5.0% (293)	26.1% (1,537)	39.5% (2,323)	21.4% (1,262)	8.0% (469)
Q13.5 - I have a clear understanding of what the upcoming academic school year will look like for me.	3.2% (192)	16.2% (962)	19.6% (1,161)	35.0% (2,080)	26.0% (1,541)
Q13.6 - I have a clear understanding of what campus life will look like for the upcoming school year.	2.1% (122)	10.7% (632)	18.1% (1,076)	37.9% (2,251)	31.2% (1,851)

<i>Q13.7 - I understand what student employment will look like in the upcoming year ie. RA, Collegia Advisor, TA</i>	1.3% (78)	7.1% (423)	29.5% (1,746)	35.3% (2,088)	26.8% (1,584)
<i>Q13.8 - I am receiving clear communication in regards to student housing for the upcoming year.</i>	1.3% (79)	8.2% (481)	52.1% (3,058)	22.0% (1,289)	16.3% (959)
<i>Q13.9 - I understand the tuition costs for the upcoming school year.</i>	3.2% 190	20.4% 1,205	22.2% 1,314	30.8% 1,822	23.5% 1,390
<i>Q13.10 - I feel comforted by the updates from UBC on how they are proceeding with COVID-19.</i>	3.6% 211	27.9% 1,654	39.8% 2,359	19.1% 1,133	9.7% 576

A statistical test² was conducted in order to establish if there is a direct relationship between students' individual perception of their own mental health and the following variables: understanding of tuition costs, perceptions of instructor preparedness for online learning, understanding of expectations in the upcoming academic year, and understanding of student employment. The test revealed that holding all other variables constant, the *vaguer* the understanding of tuition costs, perceptions of instructor preparedness, expectations in the upcoming academic year, and future student employment, the *more negative* students' overall self-assessed mental health. This is a significant finding as it reveals that uncertainty regarding students' academic and professional experiences is a major influence on students' mental health. The uncertainty which students are experiencing during the pandemic may potentially be due to (or related to) communication barriers between the University and its students. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap in understanding of academic and university matters, it might be useful to re-assess the current communication methods in use for transmitting information between the University and the students.

Student Testimonies

² See Figure B in Appendix.

“The student housing response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been slow and non-transparent. Though it is understandable that finalizing protocols during this unique time can be a long and arduous process, I think some transparency in this process is necessary for students who do not live in the lower mainland.”

“I’m a medical student who was expecting to be in hospitals and clinics this summer to do hands-on, practical training. Instead I paid \$6000 for the summer term to be emailed a list of YouTube videos to watch. I understand that COVID-19 has curtailed the faculty’s ability to provide me with high-quality instruction during these months - c’est la vie - but to pay the same amount of tuition when I’m not going to be using supplies or receiving in-person supervision feels kind of ludicrous.”

“It is ridiculous that we are expected to pay full tuition for a significantly inferior educational experience. Further, I was unable to take a necessary language course this summer because it was canceled (it cannot be moved online). As an international student, this means I may have to extend my study permit, leading to an increase in expenses to maintain this permit in addition to the cost of living.”

“UBC Housing has treated its graduate student tenants like children. Disconnecting the stoves and ovens at Green in March, issuing late contracts for 2020-2021 (as of 6/18, they still have not arrived), and refusing to consult directly with residential communities on issues that affect their health and livelihood are just a few examples. At one point they threatened to lock us out of our laundry room at Green and justified it by saying everyone has to make sacrifices during the pandemic. There has been no transparency and next to no consultation with residents through all of this. It’s hard to overstate the negative impact UBC SCHS’s policies have had on the mental and physical health of residents at Green College. Fuck them. They should be paying for our therapy bills and buying us kitchen appliances.”

Communication Recommendations

Recommendation 18.

UBC and the AMS should engage with social media opportunities and other accessible forms of communications to students that are straightforward, direct, concise, and consistent in frequency, particularly in departments like Student Housing and Community Services.

Recommendation 19.

UBC should create proactive outreach opportunities with staff and peer student staff members to perform periodic check ins on students.

Recommendation 20.

The AMS will collaborate with the UBC Communications Department to create a structure of what communications should be disseminated via email and what priorities may be better suited to a students.ubc.ca blog post.

Conclusion

Stream 1: Financial Support

As a result of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, UBC students have been burdened with unanticipated expenses. The goal of the financial support stream is to ensure that students are provided with adequate financial aid in order to allow students to meet expenses that are not covered by federal or provincial government funding. It is recommended that UBC continues to support the COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for domestic and international students who:

- 1) Are from disadvantaged financial backgrounds and do not have access to or are unable to afford the costs of a computer and/or high-speed internet, and/or are unable to afford costs of home study (e.g. buying a desk, chair, etc.) in order to support virtual learning;
- 2) Have lost income and cannot pay for rent, food, or other necessities, where government support is not sufficient or does not at all cover these costs.

In addition to the COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund, it is recommended that UBC implement a Rental Supplement program specifically for students in on-campus housing during the Fall 2020 term. In particular, it is recommended that any additional funding from AMS projects is pooled into subsidies, such as housing subsidies in the Rental Supplement program. Given the evidence of financial insecurity surrounding meeting rent payments in the 2020-2021 school year, it is especially important that UBC students who reside on-campus are adequately supported, since students who live on-campus are not eligible for funding in the COVID-19 Rental Assistance program launched by the provincial government.

In order to further alleviate the financial burden imposed by the pandemic, it is recommended that the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) is expanded, in addition to the provision of affordable online course materials. Since data reveals that most students are likely to purchase required textbooks for courses, it can be inferred that the expenses for course materials may significantly cut into students' daily living expenses.

Lastly, in order to supplement (or provide) income for students in a suppressed job market, it is recommended that increased attention is given to connecting students with Work Learn, co-op, and other job opportunities through virtual job fairs and active outreach. It is important that students are able to access a source of income during the school year in order to make up for the potential loss of income caused by cancellation of Summer Co-op programs, lay offs, and thus, a lack of savings.

Stream 2: Academic Support

It is important to keep in mind that while education remains an important commitment and responsibility of students, the atmosphere in which that education will take place in the 2020-2021 school year might not necessarily be “normal”. In other words, it is important to be mindful that students will not only be balancing their respective commitments to their education at UBC, but also balancing the ongoing effects of the pandemic on various aspects of their lives such as their family, their work, or most importantly, their own selves. Therefore, it is recommended that UBC modifies requirements for academic accommodation in order to make them more flexible for domestic and international students, where COVID-19 has affected their studies under compelling/compassionate grounds. The lenient softening of Credit/D/Fail deadlines is encouraged, considering the shift in virtual learning environments. Such a system would allow students to switch from Credit/D/Fail to the letter grade option with less pressure, depending on how the pandemic has affected their studies. Decision-making surrounding special consideration should go beyond illness or injury and examine the student’s home circumstances and personal responsibilities outside of the academic setting (e.g. lack of quiet space, cohabitation with abusive family members or partners, connectivity issues, lack of access to proper technology, and so on).

Moreover, the softening of harsh deadlines or policies related to student work in the classroom setting should be considered. In practise, this could be executed by providing guidelines to professors, TA’s, supervisors, and other faculty members to encourage them to be flexible, understanding, and open to communication with students instead of upholding previously held, or perhaps unrealistic classroom dynamics. That being said, it is equally important that the loss of quality of course content is not tolerated. It is recommended that the leeway in shifting to online delivery is to be expected and students are encouraged to be patient, however, sharp drops in teaching services (e.g. extremely short lectures, ending the term’s weeks early, poor quality assignments) that do not meet UBC standards should not be tolerated.

Stream 3: Mental and Physical Health Support

Testing, contact tracing, and maintenance of sanitation measures in the months ahead must be more thorough and prevalent than at present. In practice, this could be executed by expanding sanitizing, testing, and tracing programs for both asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals within UBC households and buildings, in addition to implementing new sanitizing measures at campus bus stops, carshare or bicycle share stations that follow routes within the UBC Endowment Lands.

UBC must also focus on funding mental health support programs in order to prepare for the long-term effects of the trauma incurred by students, faculty, and administrative staff through the COVID-19 crisis. Long periods of social isolation, unemployment, grief, and the overwhelming

stress of enduring such a crisis will contribute to psychological problems such as anxiety, insomnia, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, psychosis, and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, tailored support to potential victims of domestic abuse within a COVID-19 context must be properly integrated into mental health programs for students, faculty and staff. Such prolonged states of mental threat might considerably jeopardize academic and professional performance as they intersect with physical health risks and impact students' ability to participate in the University setting

List of Compiled Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

In understanding that young people and students are the most financially burdened demographic, the AMS will advocate for the creation of a student/youth employment wage subsidy which will be used to incentivize businesses to hire students and young people.

Recommendation 2.

The AMS will continue to advocate for extensions to the student loan repayment freeze along with an extension to the evictions freeze. These advocacy points will be used as long-term lobbying precedents to encourage the provincial and federal government to create sustainable solutions.

Recommendation 3.

The AMS will continue to work with BC Campus to advocate to the provincial government on the expansion of Open Education Resources (OERs) into homework, assessment, and online learning platforms. This expansion will lead to affordability solutions on the high cost of conventional textbook prices.

Recommendation 4.

The AMS will advocate to Enrolment Services and the Registrar's office to find ways to ensure the financial aid programs (such as the Technology Bursary) are more accessible to students.

Recommendation 5.

The AMS will address the students' concerns of safety at home, such as domestic violence abuse or negative familial circumstance, by continuing to maintain the operation and spread awareness of resources such as UBC's Student Assistance Program, SVPRO and AMS SASC.

Recommendation 6.

The AMS will continue to maintain the operation and awareness of the Food Bank by ensuring that all health protocols are followed and students suffering from food insecurity are supported.

Recommendation 7.

The AMS will continue to advocate for compassionate teaching and academic concession to the Associate Deans, Academic as the majority of students reported not having had enough sleep or a reliable emotional support system over the summer will be entering the school year with an already fragile mental health system.

Recommendation 8.

The AMS will continue to leverage the online platforms we hold to connect with students in our community and to communicate the services and resources the AMS and UBC provide. Furthermore, working with Orientations and Virtual Collegia through the Center for Student Involvement and Careers to help incoming students feel supported by their academic community.

Recommendation 9.

The AMS will design and fund a transit subsidy for the Summer Term (2) of 2020-2021 (July-August) to ensure that students, especially graduate students, are able to use transit for essential services and commutes to campus. The transit subsidy will subsidize transit prices to those of the previously established U-Pass prices (\$42.50) in accordance with the *Universal Transit Pass Agreement*.

Recommendation 10.

The AMS will negotiate with Translink through the U-Pass Advisory Committee (UAC) on the reinstating of the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) program in order to ensure that enrolled students can use transit throughout the Fall for essential services - whether it is to visit the doctor, buy groceries, or see family. The negotiations must take into account the financial, geographic, and health concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on students.

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Appendix

Figure A: Regression table

. regress Q12_3new Q12_4new

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	5,914
Model	1348.13239	1	1348.13239	F(1, 5912)	=	1114.95
Residual	7148.45351	5,912	1.20914302	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.1587
				Adj R-squared	=	0.1585
Total	8496.5859	5,913	1.43693318	Root MSE	=	1.0996

Q12_3new	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Q12_4new	.5124337	.0153465	33.39	0.000	.4823489	.5425185
_cons	.1796186	.0403394	4.45	0.000	.1005386	.2586985

Figure B: Regression table

. regress Q8_7new Q13_9new Q12_7new Q13_5new Q13_7new

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	5,809
Model	389.795459	4	97.4488649	F(4, 5804)	=	100.12
Residual	5648.98643	5,804	.973291942	Prob > F	=	0.0000
				R-squared	=	0.0645
				Adj R-squared	=	0.0639
Total	6038.78189	5,808	1.03973517	Root MSE	=	.98656

Q8_7new	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Q13_9new	-.0577082	.0123366	-4.68	0.000	-.0818925	-.0335238
Q12_7new	-.1016222	.0139522	-7.28	0.000	-.1289738	-.0742707
Q13_5new	-.12286	.0140317	-8.76	0.000	-.1503673	-.0953527
Q13_7new	-.0628712	.0163443	-3.85	0.000	-.0949121	-.0308304
_cons	3.321235	.0351879	94.39	0.000	3.252254	3.390217