



STUDENTS' UNION
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

2022 Summer Advocacy Survey Report

September 2022

Contents

Introduction	3
Respondent Profile	3
Student Jobs and Experiential Learning.....	4
Tuition and Fees.....	6
Course Materials and UCalgary Bookstore	7
Public Transportation & UPass	9
Return to In-Person Learning & Student Wellness	10
Compassionate Grading Option: Credit Granted.....	13
Students' Union Programming.....	14
Alberta Provincial Election	15
UCalgary Presidential Review	16

Introduction

The Students' Union ran the 2022 Summer Advocacy Survey from August 18 to September 24, 2022. The survey received a total of 327 responses, of which 99% were undergraduate students at the University of Calgary. With a total enrolment of 26,696 students as of the Winter 2022 term, the Summer Advocacy Survey had a 1.2% response rate, and an 86.3% completion rate.

The survey was promoted to students via the SU's social media and emails to all undergraduate students, sent by the SU President.

Students were presented with 58 total questions on topics including student employment, tuition and fees, the University of Calgary bookstore, public transit and the UPass, the return to in-person learning, academic concerns, the upcoming Alberta provincial election, support services and programs on campus, and the recent performance review for UCalgary President, Dr. Ed McCauley.

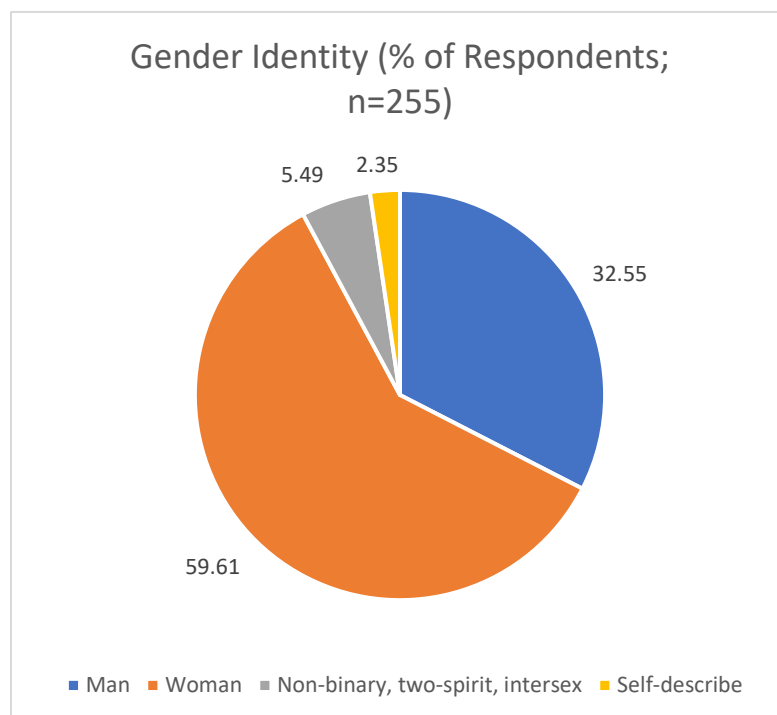
The SU collects demographic data from survey respondents to help meet the diverse needs of the student community and better identify sources of inequity, to guide the SU's advocacy and development of its programs and services.

Respondent Profile

The typical survey respondent is an undergraduate student in their first (26.6% of respondents) or second (24%) year of program, enrolled in one of the University's largest faculties: Arts (34.1% of respondents), Science (21.9%), or Engineering (16.3%).

83.6% of respondents were between 18 to 24 years old, but the survey received responses in all age groups, ranging from 17 or under (5.2% of respondents) to 45 years or older (0.37%).

International students made up 9.23% of responses.

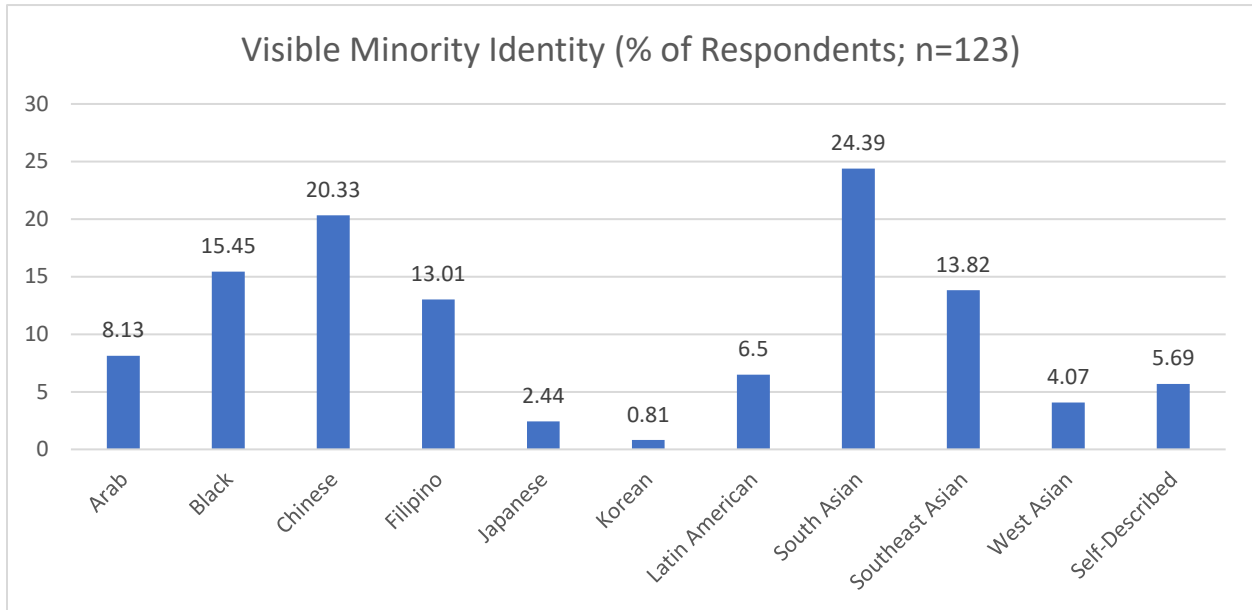


59.6% of respondents identified as women, 32.6% as men, 5.5% as non-binary, two-spirit or intersex, and 2.35% of respondents self-described their gender identity, with responses including genderfluid, gender non-conforming, or agender. 5% of respondents identified as a transgender person.

64.8% of respondents identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual, with the next largest portion of respondents identifying as bisexual (20.1%). 7.4% identified as queer, 3.7% as homosexual, and 4.1% self-described their sexual orientation, with responses including asexual or pansexual.

4.3% of respondents identified as Indigenous (including First Nations, Métis, or Inuk).

Respondents were asked if they identified with any of the visible minority communities as defined by the Employment Equity Act and elaborated on by the [University of Calgary's EDI Glossary](#):

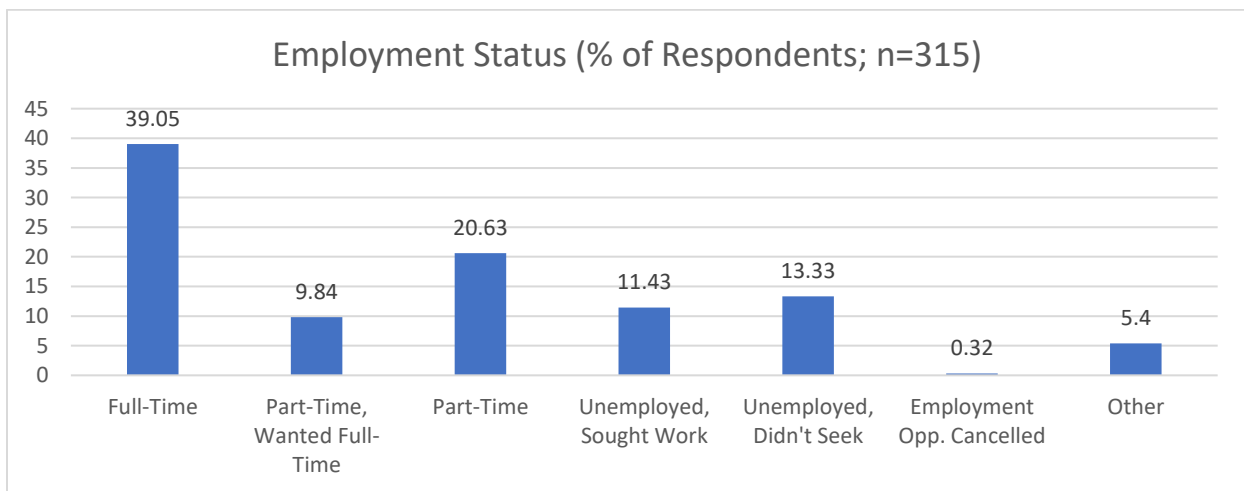


49% of respondents identified as being atheist or having no religion, while other respondents identified with Christianity (27.6% of respondents), Islam (9.1%), or a self-described religion (8.2%), which included responses such as agnostic, catholic, or a non-specific spirituality.

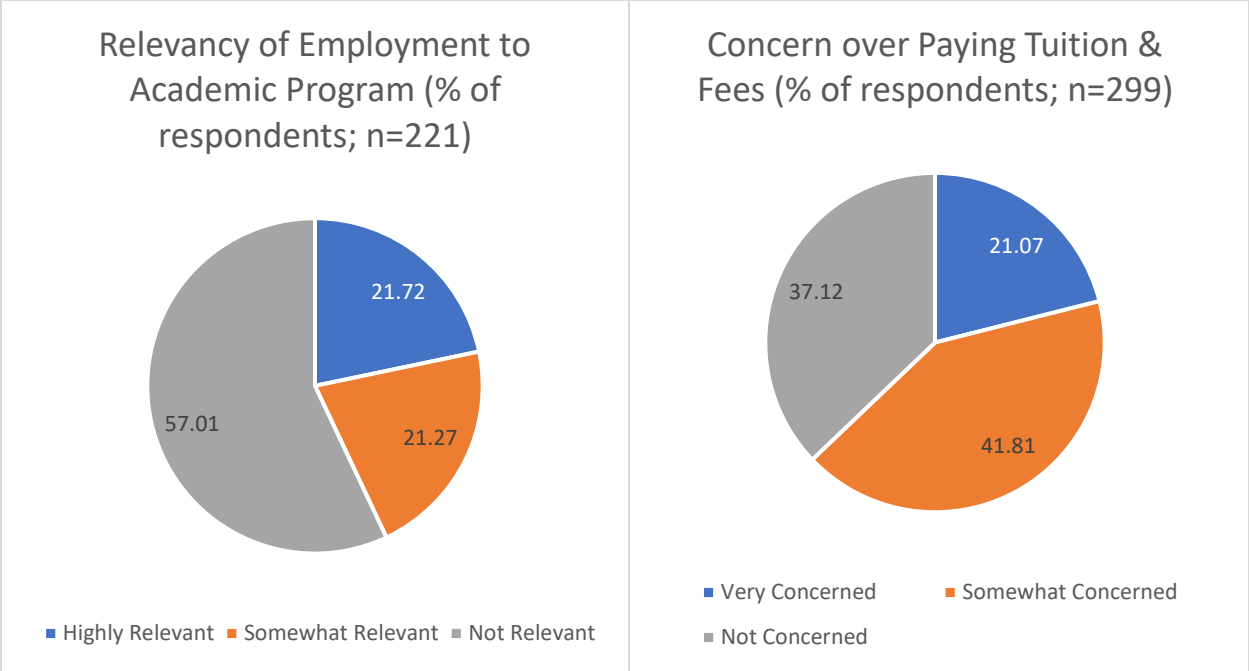
17.9% of respondents identified as having a mental disability, under the [Student Accommodation Policy](#)'s definition of disability. 7.2% identified as having a physical disability.

Student Jobs and Experiential Learning

Respondents were asked about their employment status during the period of May to August 2022:



Between respondents who wanted full-time work but could only find part-time, or those who couldn't find employment at all, 21.3% of respondents were under-employed.



A majority (57%) of respondents who did find paid employment over the summer were unable to find jobs related to their academic program, and only 21.7% found employment highly relevant to their studies.

Additionally, 62.3% of respondents expressed concern about their ability to pay their tuition and fees for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students about Experiential Learning and undergraduate research opportunities. The University of Calgary launched its [Experiential Learning Plan](#) in 2020, with the intention of having all undergraduate students participate in at least two high-quality experiential learning opportunities during their studies. The [University’s Eyes High strategy prioritized research and scholarship](#), with a specific focus on increasing undergraduate student involvement in research programs.

32.5% of respondents had taken part in at least one Experiential Learning opportunity, and only 16.7% of respondents had taken part in an undergraduate research opportunity.

The 67.5% of respondents who had not taken part in Experiential Learning, and the 83.3% who hadn’t taken part in undergraduate research, were asked why they hadn’t:

“Why have you not taken part in a _____ opportunity? Select all that apply.” (“Experiential Learning” n=203, “Undergrad. Research” n=305)		
Reason	“Experiential Learning”	“Undergrad. Research”
I don't know how to find a _____ opportunity	47.3%	45%
I am concerned about balancing my academic workload with a _____ Opportunity	35.5%	29.5%

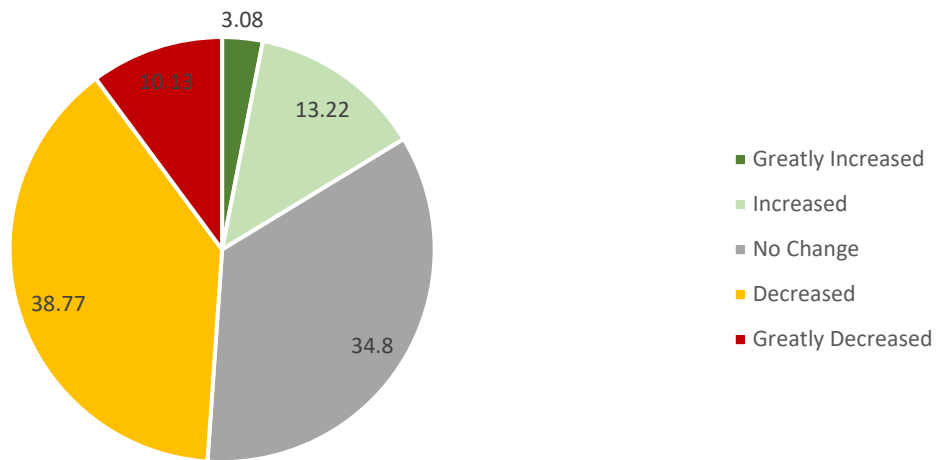
“Why have you not taken part in a _____ opportunity? Select all that apply.” (“Experiential Learning” n=203, “Undergrad. Research” n=305)		
Reason	“Experiential Learning”	“Undergrad. Research”
I am planning to engage in _____ later in my degree	29.6%	25.1%
I'm not sure how to get references or build a strong resume or interview skills to apply for a _____ Opportunity	24.1%	21.9%
I am focused on my GPA / academic success and _____ would be a distraction	19.7%	18.7%
I want to finish my degree in a specific amount of time and _____ might set me back from my targeted graduation date	15.3%	14.3%
Financial barriers prevent me from participating in a _____ opportunity (e.g., need to focus on working / can't afford to take part in Experiential Learning)	14.3%	10.4%
I don't think _____ applies to my program of study	10.3%	11.6%
I am an international student and am not sure how to navigate _____ with my study/work permit(s)	5.9%	n/a
Accessibility barriers prevent me from participating in a _____ opportunity (e.g., lack of accommodations for mental or physical disability)	4.9%	2.4%
No particular reason	4.9%	6.8%
I am not interested in _____	4.4%	18.7%
I have applied for _____ opportunities but was not accepted	2%	2.8%
Other reason(s) <i>(“Other” responses included a lack of awareness or knowledge of the opportunities, and being a first-year student)</i>	7.4%	6.4%

In both cases, students primarily were unsure of how to find an opportunity for experiential learning or undergraduate research. Other major concerns included balancing regular course work, application skills, and a focus on grades in coursework or finishing their program in their target timeline.

Tuition and Fees

Only 24.8% of respondents felt that their anticipated tuition costs reflected the quality of education they expected to receive, and, despite the fact that students are estimated to pay an average of 25% more in tuition since 2019, 48.9% of respondents felt that the quality of their education had decreased over the last year, and only 16.3% felt that their quality of education had increased.

Perceived Change in Quality of Education (% of respondents, n=227)



The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students about some of the specific mandatory non-instructional fees they are charged, including the \$57.58 per term to support Dinos Athletics, and \$275.63 per term for the Student Services Fee.

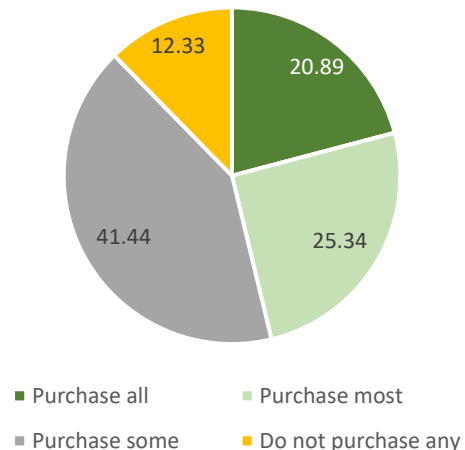
61.35% of respondents felt that the \$57.58 for Dinos Athletics was poor value for students, given the benefit of free entry to regular season Dinos games. 80.7% of respondents expressed that mandatory student fees should not be used to subsidize the Dinos Athletics program.

81% of respondents did not know what services the Student Services Fee supported specifically, and 96.5% of respondents supported the idea of the University publishing a detailed, annual report explaining where their Student Services Fee money goes.

Course Materials and UCalgary Bookstore

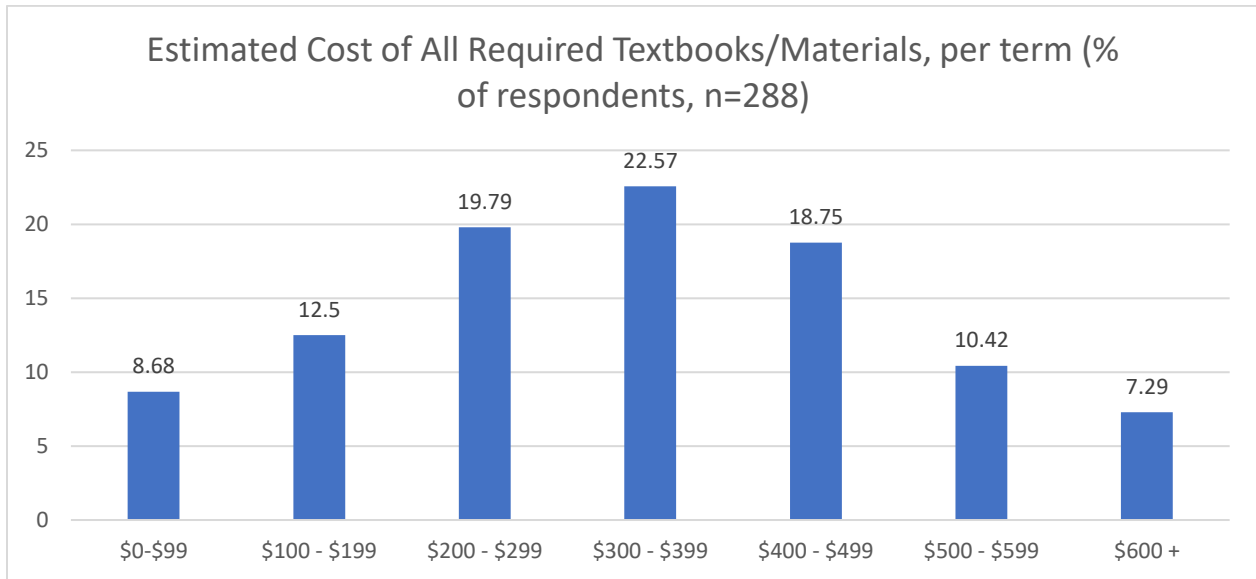
The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students about their textbooks and course material purchasing habits. Most respondents purchased “some” of the required textbooks and course materials (41.4% of respondents), while others indicated that they purchased “most” of the textbooks and materials (25.3%). 20.9% of respondents purchased all required textbooks and materials, while 12.3% indicated that they do not purchase any textbooks or required materials.

Required Course Material Purchasing Habits (% of respondents, n=292)



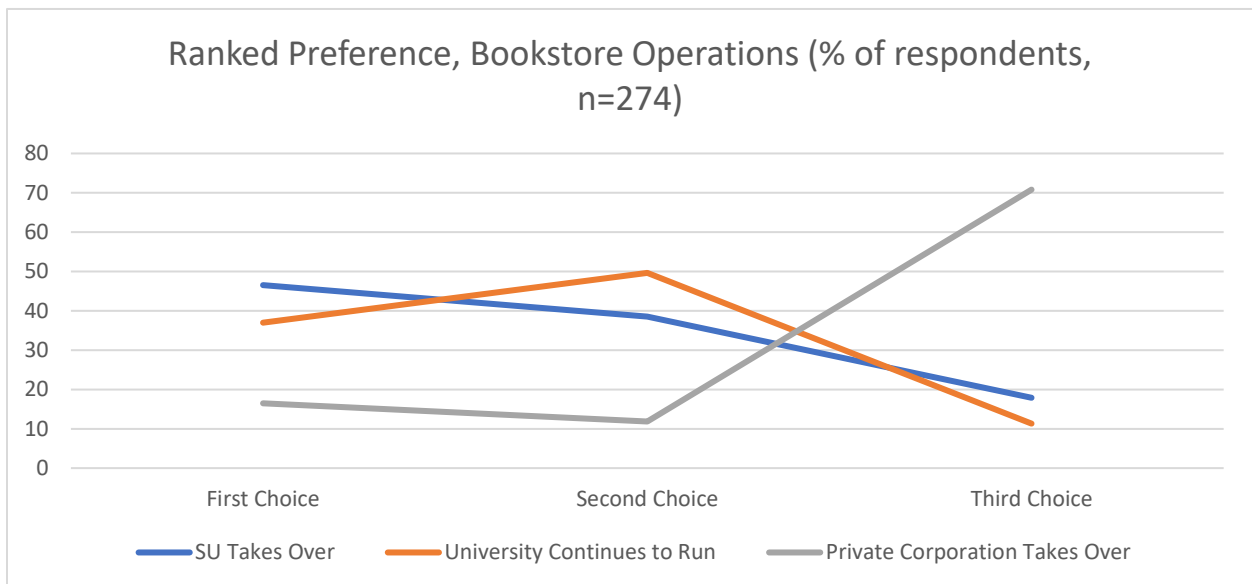
Most respondents purchased some of their required materials new and some used or second-hand (53.9% of respondents), with the remaining respondents being roughly equally split between purchasing all textbooks and materials new (22.3%), or all of them used or second-hand (23.8%).

Students were asked to estimate the total cost of their textbooks and required course materials, if they were to purchase all of them for a given term:



The largest single share of respondents fell into the category of spending an estimated \$300 - \$399 per term (22.6%) to purchase all of their required course materials and textbooks, and 61.1% of respondents estimate having to spend between \$200 and \$499 per term on required course materials and textbooks.

In the Spring of 2021, the SU learned that the University of Calgary administration was considering privatizing the campus bookstore to a third-party corporation. The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students to rank their preferred outcome for the bookstore, between continuing to be run by the University, being overtaken by the SU, or being privatized and run by a corporation.



Respondents most preferred that bookstore operations be taken over by the SU (46.5% ranked the SU as their first choice), with continuing to be run by the University a close second (37% ranked the University as their first choice). Respondents overwhelmingly ranked privatization as their last choice, with 70.1% ranking privatization as their least preferred option.

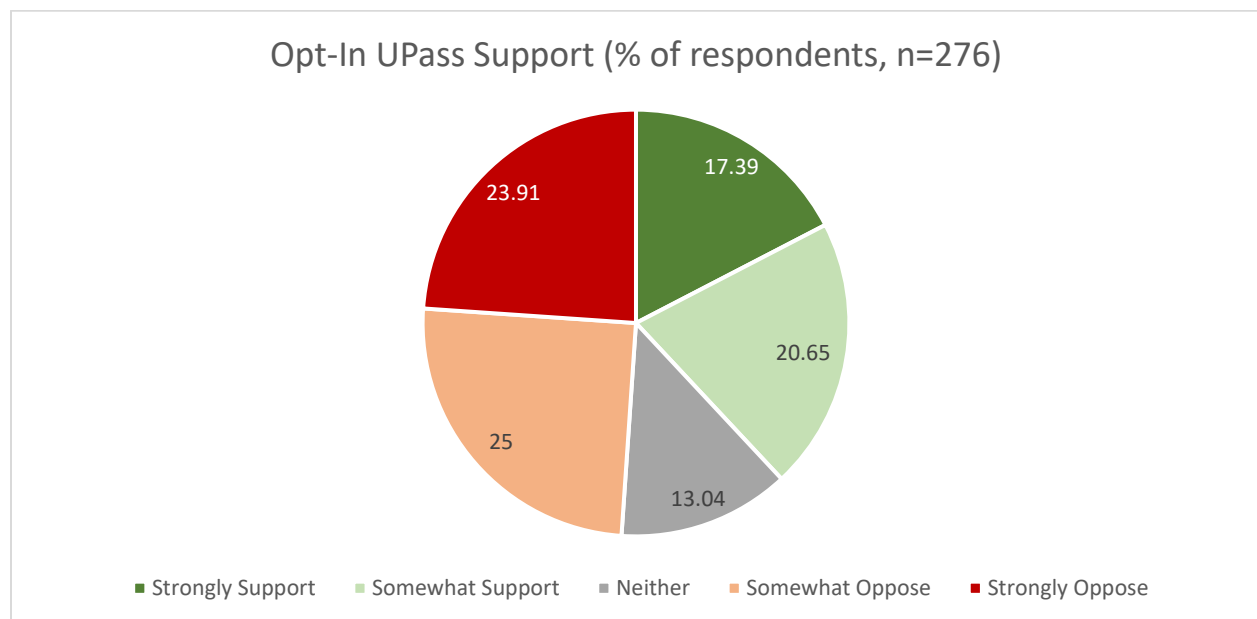
The mean average ranking for preference also saw the SU as the most preferred option, with an average ranking of 1.72 (with 1 being “most preferred”). The University continuing to run the bookstore received an average ranking of 1.74, and privatization by a corporation was ranked on average at 2.55, a distant third-place ranking from students.

Public Transportation & UPass

86.2% of respondents take Calgary Transit (including the C-Train or city busses) at least once per week during the academic year, and a strong majority of 58.5% take Calgary Transit four or more times per week.

The SU has been reviewing the UCalgary UPass, which allows eligible undergraduate students unlimited access to Calgary Transit services. Currently, all full-time enrolled undergraduate students pay \$160.00 per term for the UPass, regardless of whether they want it, or use Calgary Transit. Because all students, regardless of whether they use the UPass, pay the fee, the fee is lower than it likely would be, if it was on an opt-in only basis.

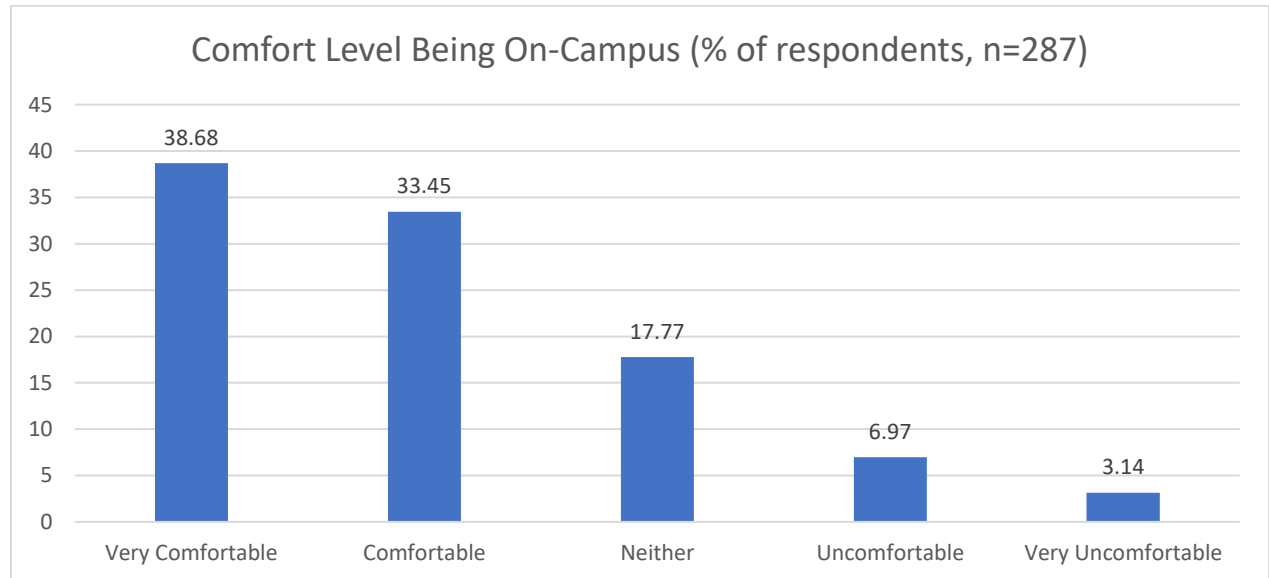
The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students whether they would support or oppose transitioning the UPass to an opt-in basis, where only students who want the UPass would be required to pay for it, with the caveat that the fee would likely be higher for those who access the UPass than it is currently.



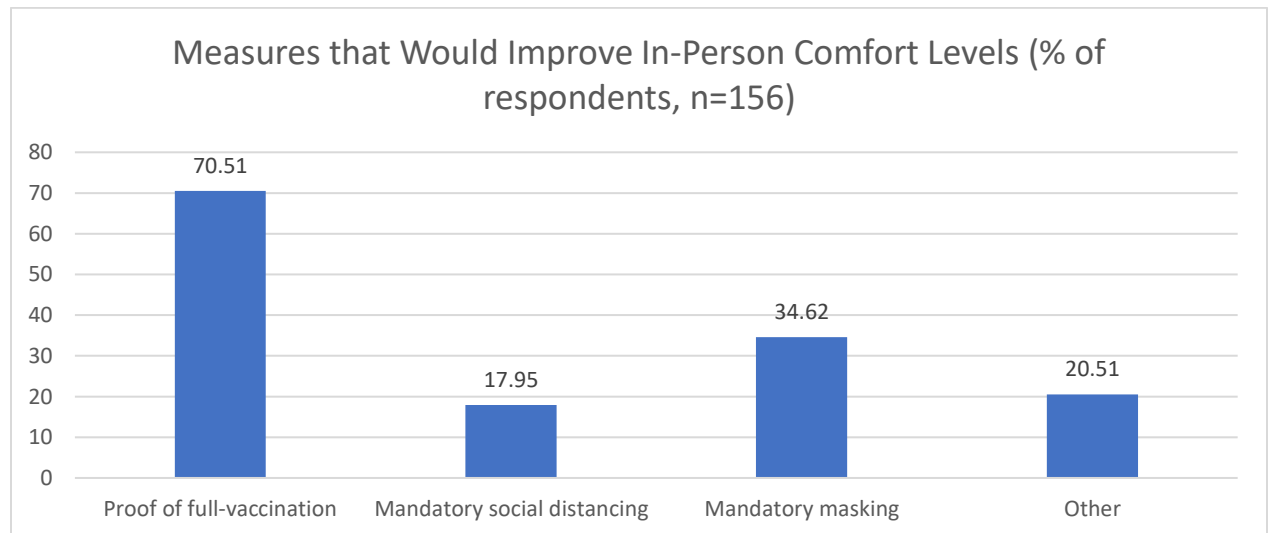
While there was not a clear majority in opposition to the idea of an opt-in UPass, the largest share of respondents overall were against the idea. Only 38% of respondents supported the idea, while 48.9% opposed it. A sizeable portion of 13% of respondents did not express a strong opinion either way.

Return to In-Person Learning & Student Wellness

Since March of 2020, the University of Calgary student experience had been disrupted in some form by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting public health measures. In the Fall 2022 term, students returned to in-person learning and on-campus student life in full force for the first time in earnest since the beginning of the pandemic. The Summer Advocacy Survey asked respondents questions to help gauge their comfort levels with the return to campus, and what they felt they needed to succeed.



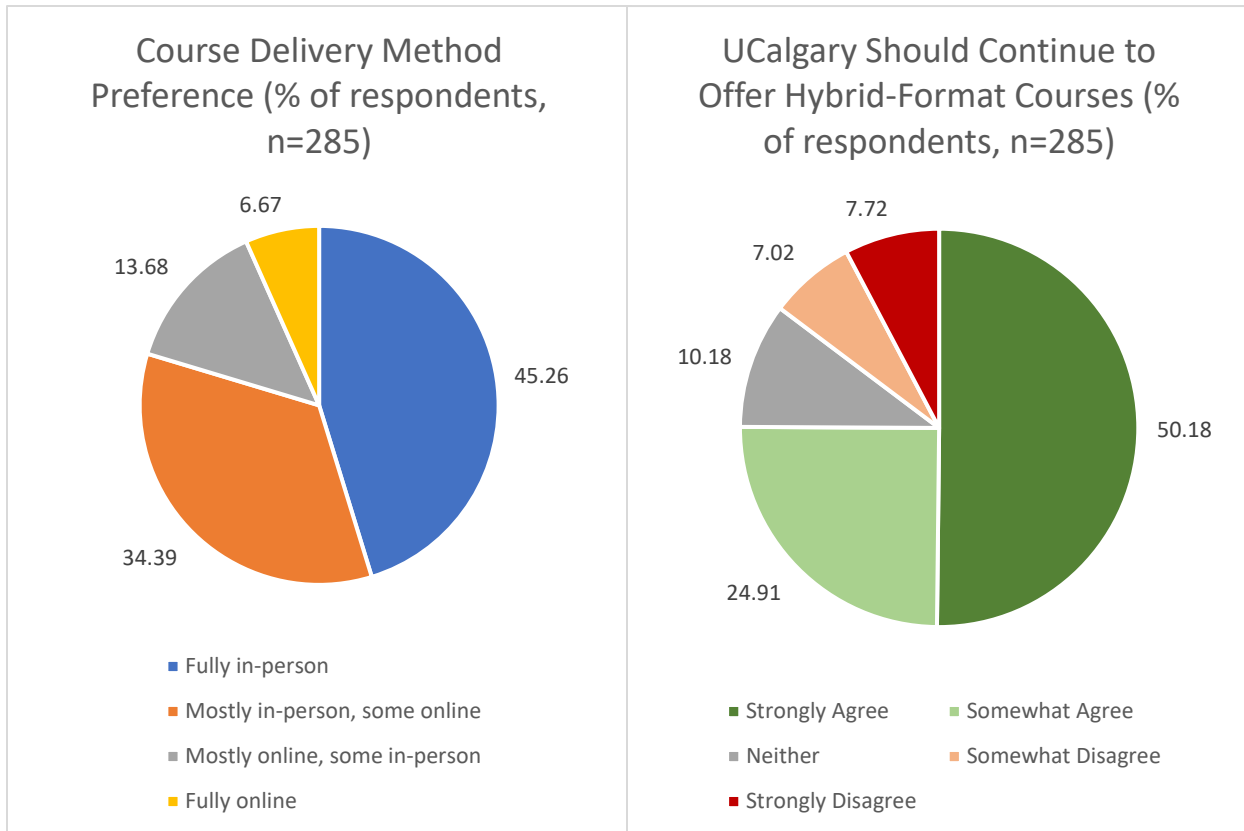
72.1% of respondents expressed that they felt comfortable returning to campus for in-person learning and accessing services in-person, while 10.1% were uncomfortable. For students who expressed that they were anything but “very comfortable,” the Summer Advocacy Survey asked them what would help to improve their comfort level being on-campus, in-person.



Respondents overwhelmingly expressed that mandatory proof of vaccination to be on-campus, as was enforced in previous terms, would help to make them feel more comfortable (70.5% of respondents). Others expressed that mandatory masking on-campus would help (34.6%). Others provided their own

ideas, which included suggestions such as improved access to hybrid or online instruction for students who are sick, to discourage them from coming to campus when ill alongside a policy for students to remain home if they are ill.

The Summer Advocacy Survey also asked respondents about their preference for the balance of in-person, hybrid, or online courses offered by the University of Calgary.



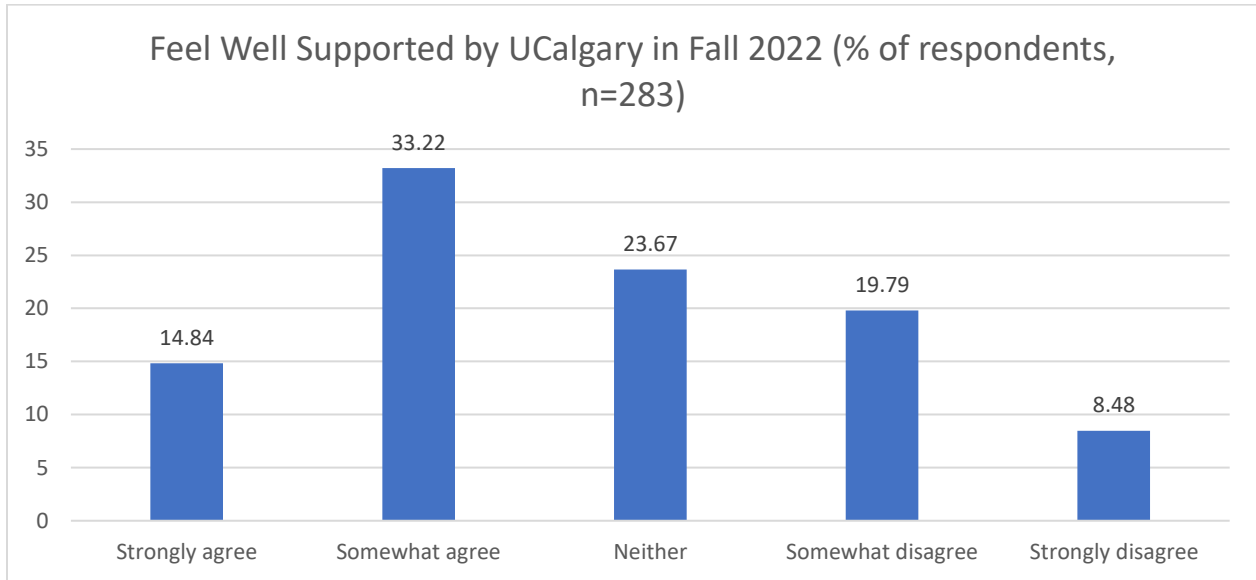
Overall, students strongly supported the idea of continued offering of hybrid-format courses, where course content is delivered both online and in-person, even if it was no longer required by public health orders, with 75.1% supporting the idea, and only 14.7% opposing it.

While the largest share of students expressed a preference for fully in-person learning overall, a sizeable portion of 34.4% did express a preference for a mixed-delivery format where most of the content is delivered in-person, with some online.

With students having been away from campus for nearly two years, the SU wanted to gather an understanding of what support systems students had on campus, and what gaps needed to be addressed.

Respondents in general were aware of the SU Wellness Centre on campus, with 90.1% aware. However, only 40.6% of respondents expressed that that they were familiar with some or all of the services that the Wellness Centre offers.

Respondents were asked whether they felt well-supported by the University of Calgary as they transitioned to in-person learning for the Fall 2022 term:



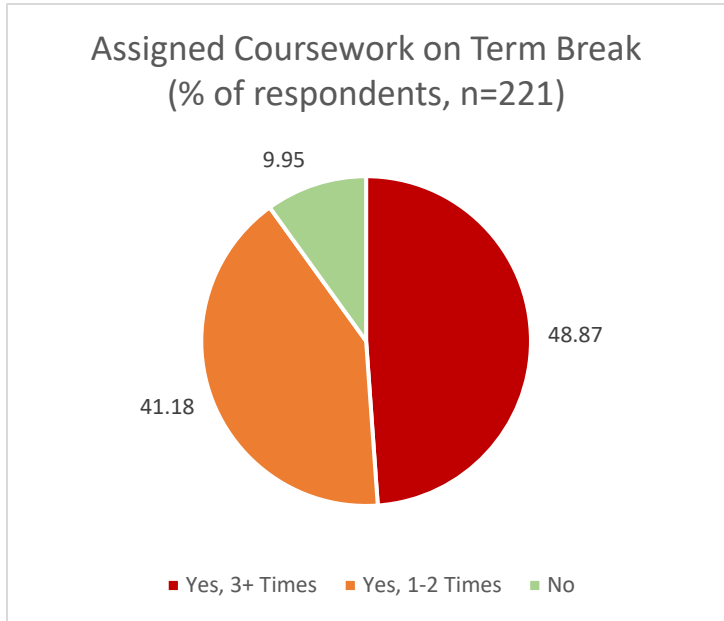
Only 48.1% of respondents expressed that they felt well-supported by the University in their transition to in-person learning, leaving a majority of students feeling unsupported.

The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students what would help them to feel more supported:

"What would help you to feel more supported by the University of Calgary in the return to in-person studies in the Fall 2022 semester? Select all that apply." (n=275)	
Option	% Respondents
Academic advising (such as what courses to take, program advising, etc.)	62.6%
Social opportunities (such as events, networking opportunities, etc.)	60.7%
Formal / professional mental health supports on-campus (such as counsellors, medical services, etc.)	47.6%
Studying or coursework workshops	38.6%
Faculty-specific orientation	29.8%
Other mental health supports (such as peer support, education workshops and training for students, etc.)	29.5%
Information or supports about the rest of the city (such as carpooling programs, community information, etc.)	25.8%
Campus tours	19.3%
Nothing would help me to feel more supported	8.4%
Other	6.2%

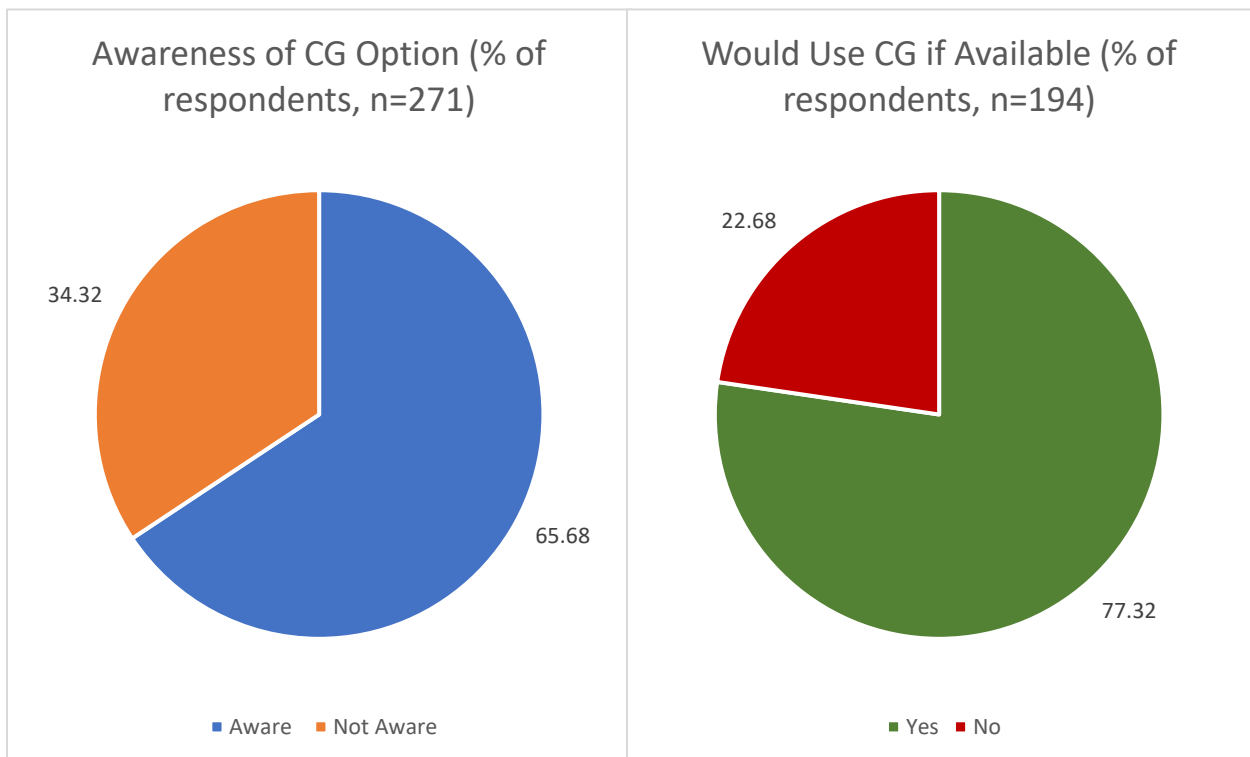
The SU is concerned about the assignment of course work with deadlines on or immediately following the Term Breaks. The SU believes that students, and faculty, deserve a dedicated break for their mental health, and that the purpose of the Term Break should align with [the University of Calgary’s Mental Health Strategy](#).

The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students whether they had been assigned deadlines for coursework during or immediately following their Term Break: only 9.6% of respondents expressed that they had not.



Compassionate Grading Option: Credit Granted

The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students about their awareness of the Credit Granted grading option, which the SU had originally advocated to the University to implement. Credit Granted allows students to take an unweighted “CG” grade in a course where they received a grade of C- or better, instead of their original grade. CG was designed to provide students with an opportunity to receive credit for a course they would otherwise consider withdrawing from if their grade suffered due to illness or unforeseen personal circumstances during the term.

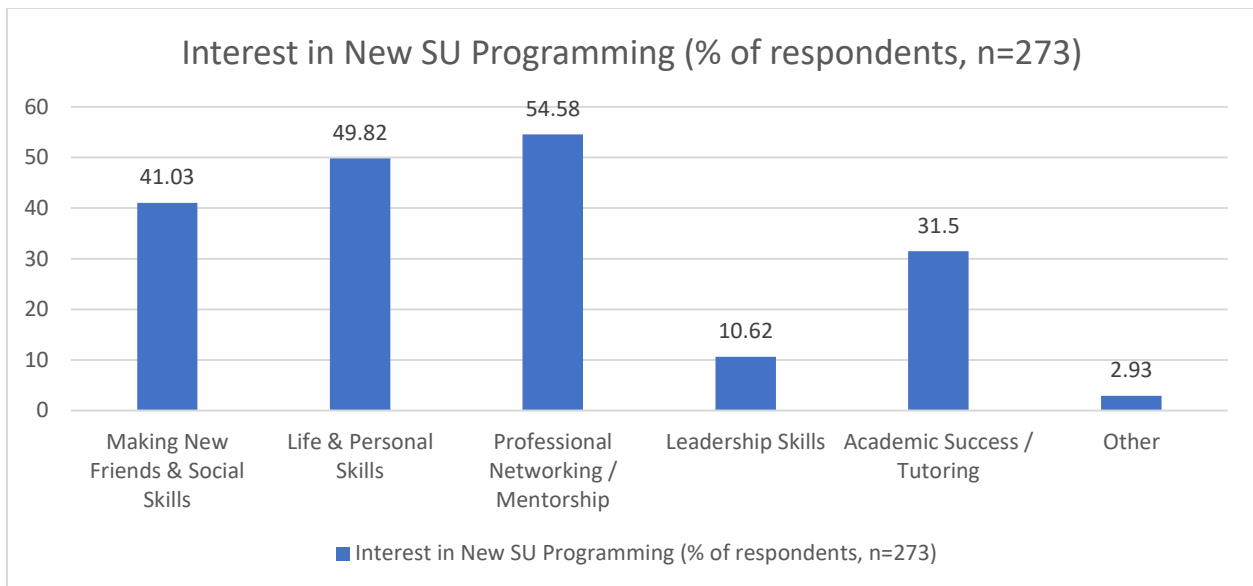


More than two-thirds of students were aware of the CG option, and 77.3% of respondents expressed that, if CG was available to them, they would make use of it.

Overwhelmingly, 96% of respondents expressed that all undergraduate students should have access to CG in some form, with reasonable restrictions (n=249). The SU continues to support and advocate for access to CG for all undergraduate students.

Students' Union Programming

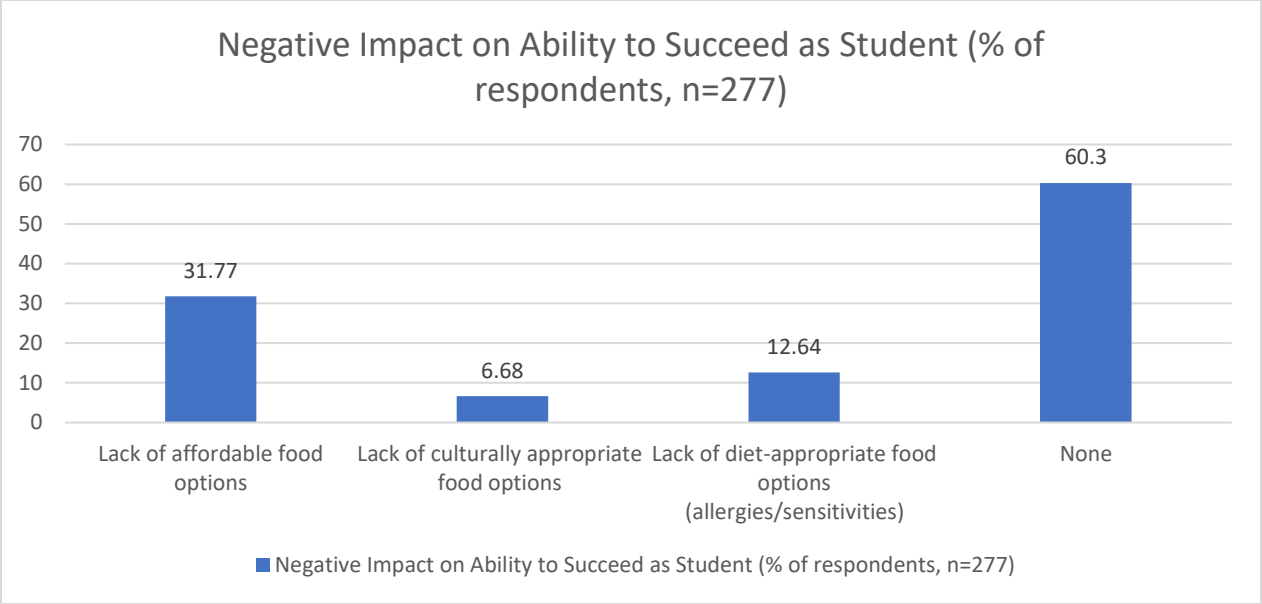
As students returned to in-person learning, the SU wanted to assess what students want from their Union, in addition to what they want from their University. Respondents were asked to select up to two options for new programming ideas that they would like to see the SU implement for students:



A majority of respondents selected “Professional networking / receiving formal mentorship” as one of their two choices (54.6% of respondents), while “Life & personal skills” were a close second (49.8%), which included things such as cooking and nutrition or personal budgeting/finance.

When asked about their preferred method of delivery for this new programming, respondents were divided, though 37.6% expressed interest in workshops or structured sessions. Other popular options included group discussions or activities (24.35%), or online resources such as videos or worksheets (23.25%).

The SU also asked students about the impact of food security on their academic performance, to help inform development of programming at the SU Campus Food Bank, which provides a range of food security offerings. 31.8% of respondents indicated that a lack of affordable food options had a negative impact on their ability to succeed as a student, and 12.6% indicated a lack of food options that meet their dietary needs (such as allergies or sensitivities) presented issues for them.



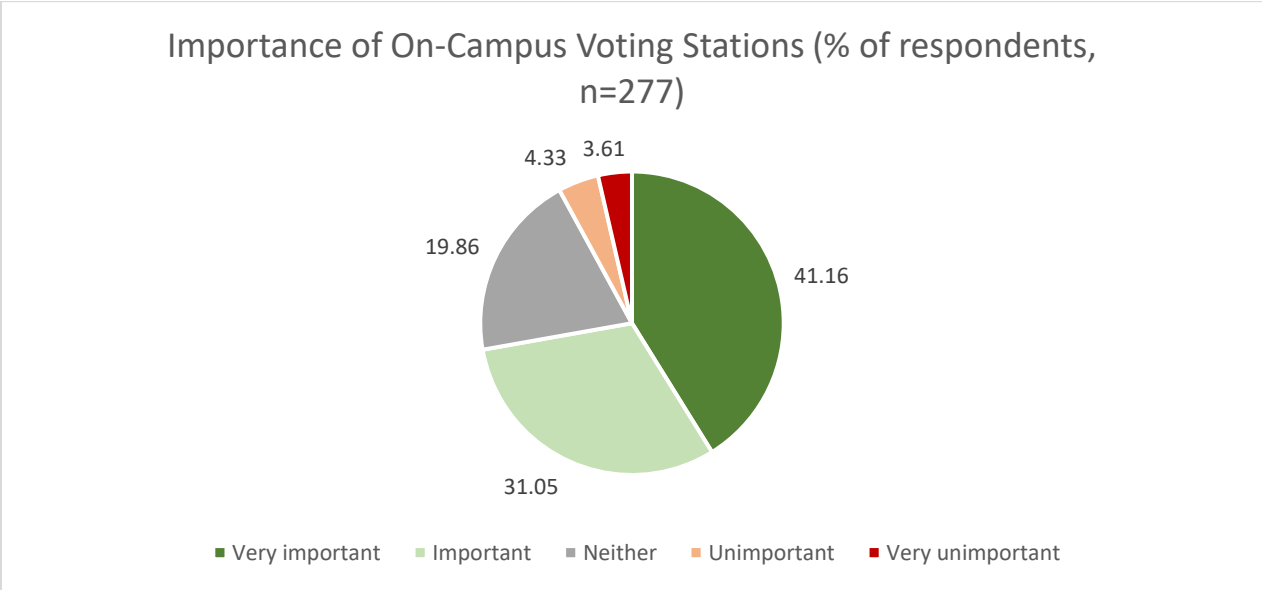
Only 60.3% of respondents indicated that these food security categories did not have a negative impact on their ability to succeed as a student, leaving 39.7% of respondents overall with at least one food security concern.

Alberta Provincial Election

The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students about the upcoming May 2023 Alberta Provincial Election. Only 41.2% of respondents were aware that a provincial election will be held in May 2023.

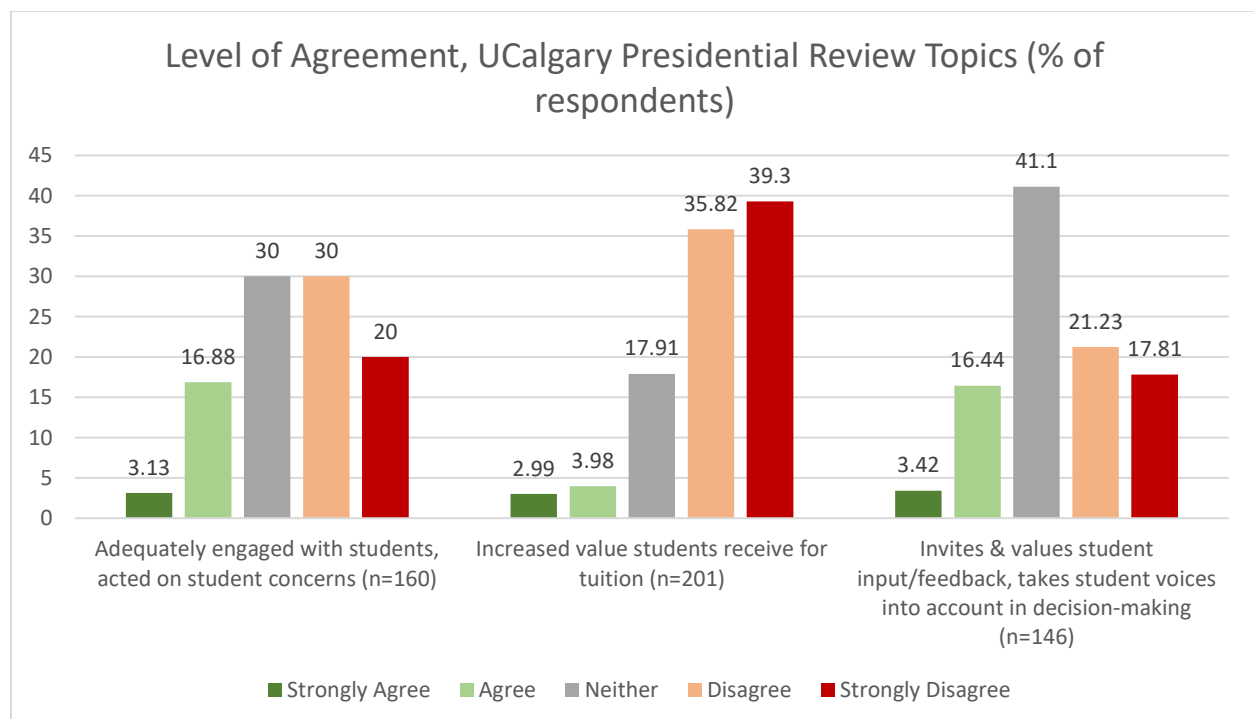
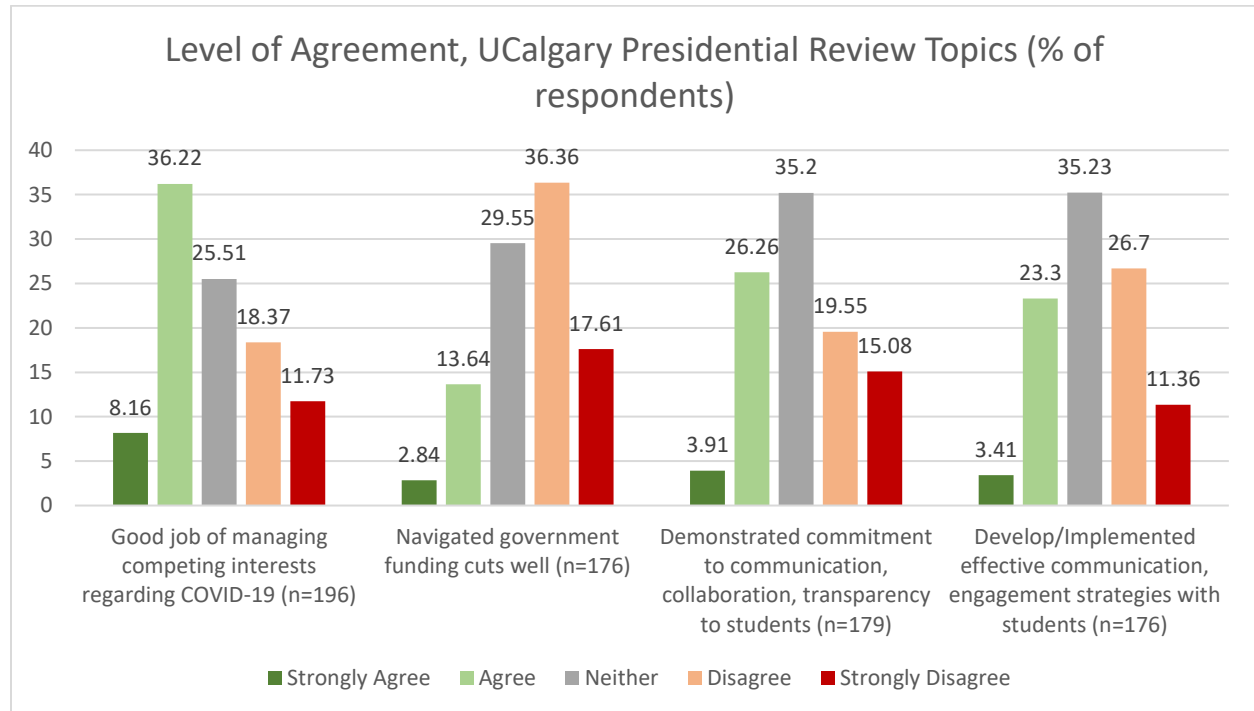
However, 94.6% of respondents expressed that they intend to vote when the election does come.

In recent years, the SU has undertaken advocacy to ensure the presence of on-campus voting stations during elections to help improve access for students and ensure a strong student voter turnout. The Summer Advocacy Survey asked students how important on-campus voting stations were to them:



UCalgary Presidential Review

In 2022, UCalgary President Dr. Ed McCauley was renewed for a second five-year term. To coincide with this term renewal, the SU sought to collect feedback from students about Dr. McCauley’s performance in the role over his first term, to help shape the way that the SU and SU Elected Officials work with university administration and what areas to advocate on. The Summer Advocacy Survey included 7 questions about Dr. McCauley’s performance as UCalgary President:



End of report.