

Council Executive Reports

University Students' Council
Council Meeting 6
22 January 2020





EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, January 22nd, 2020

Item:	Executive Reports
Presenter:	Bardia Jalayer, President
Purpose of Report:	For Information

Background

The President leads the day to day of the organization and drives the political and advocacy based activities as well as providing direction for the entire organization based on the voice of students. These activities dictate the work of the services and operations within the USC and therefore inform the areas overseen by the COO.

Highlights

USC Elections: Continuing to promote the Elections, which at the time of writing is still in the Nomination Period, but by Council will be in full swing campaign period. Excited to see the ideas brought forward by all candidates from Councillors, Faculty and Affiliate President, and the USC Presidential Candidates. We've filmed and posted videos highlighting our positions, done one instagram takeover with more scheduled, and through EGC are working on continuing all of the good work.

Advocacy Priorities: Currently working with Cat and her team on priorities of Off-Campus Housing, Sustainability on Campus, and Self-Reported Absences. Have held meetings with campus partners for these, and looking to meet with other resources who may be necessary in the near future. Cat and her associate have also been busy organizing federal and municipal lobby weeks.

Space: Continuing discussions with the University and also within the USC on spaces that are soon to be available and that the USC can potentially take control of, while also looking at efficiencies within our existing spaces to see if we can better use the square footage. More discussions to come with the Executive, staff, and the University, as well as our students to see their space needs.

Budget Process: Still working on it. Executive Budgets are close to being finalized, and Declan and I (at the time of writing) are currently reviewing the Corporate budgets to prepare to take them to the Board of Directors.

Midnight Breakfast: Midnight Breakfast was a big success with over 1500 plates served over the course of three nights. We were very fortunate to have the volunteer support of many coordinators, associates, and some Councillors! We're looking forward to doing it again this semester.



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Item:	Executive Reports
Presenter:	Cat Dunne, Vice President
Purpose of Report:	For Information

Background

The Vice President of the USC is your advocate to the decision-makers. They bring up the issues that students face on a day-to-day basis to university administration and all levels of government: municipally, provincially, and federally. The Vice President's team works on crafting evidence-based policy recommendations that work in the best interest for students, which the Vice President then advocates on, alongside the President, to enact change.

Highlights

Provincial Advocacy:

- I met with the Ministry of Women's Issues to discuss our sexual violence recommendations in December. Last week, I also had a meeting with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to further discuss the details and implementation of OUSA's sexual violence recommendations. This is very promising that they will work to implement some of our recommendations including changes to the women's campus safety grant, updating ontario regulation 131/16, releasing the full student voices on sexual violence survey data, and mandating that campus security receive bystander intervention training.
- I also met with the Ministry of Women's Issues to discuss our sexual violence recommendations.
- Myself and my associate are in the process of writing OUSA's new Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policy Paper to go to General Assembly March 13-15.
- General Assembly Preparations are ongoing.
- OUSA Updates: OUSA is in the process of preparing our budget submission to submit for the budget cycle.
- SCI Update: The government is appealing SCI - this will take months to a year to process. Sitting tight for now. I am also sitting on a Webinar to discuss the impacts on student associations this year to elevate the profile of the issue as OUSA President.

Federal:

- UCRU Lobby Week (February 1-6): We are in the process of preparing for our Advocacy Week. We are completing logistics (setting up meetings), and are finalizing our briefs on international students support; indigenous students; Canada student loans and grants revisions and undergraduate research/work-integrated learning.
- Bardia and I attended a Budget Consultation on January 14 to put forward the USC's priorities.
- Had introductory meeting with MP Mathysen, and met with MP Vecchio and MP Young to discuss USC's priorities going forward with a new Parliament
- I am sitting on the Student Organizers Community of Practice for the Courage to Act Project (A Federally-funded project to create a federal framework for gender-based violence preventions at post-secondary institutions)

Municipal:

- The City of London is in the middle of their multi-budget cycle. We have been paying close attention to transit to ensure student services are not cut by attending many meetings and consultations. We are also engaging with as many consultations as possible to support business cases relevant to Western students.
- I will be meeting with as many councillors as possible over the coming weeks to discuss this. Many of these will also take place during Local Advocacy Week.
- Local Advocacy Week: My team is preparing for Local Advocacy Week by booking meetings with local politicians municipally, provincially and federally in order to push the USC's priorities. Mackenzy has been working hard on the briefs for our asks and on scheduling this week.
- GBV Bar Strategy: Working on the implementation of this now at the Wave and Spoke. Safe Cities is looking to use our pilot as the basis for one of their recommendations to City Council in March.

University:

- Supporting an all gender washroom and changeroom strategy and advocacy with Pride and Cecilia
- Working on WIL and Ancillary Fee Policy Papers with Associates
- My Associate, University is working with the Western Student Senators on mandatory lecture recordings to assist with accessibility and students whose first language may not be English



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Item:	Executive Reports
Presenter:	Cecilia Liu, Student Programs Officer
Purpose of Report:	For Information

Background

The Student Programs Officer is responsible for managing all of the student-run services and programs provided by the USC. Their role includes overseeing the USC's general programming, Peer Programs, Peer Support portfolio, and the Orientation Program in partnership with the university.

Highlights

Orientation Week:

Winter Soph Training, a new initiative focused on the topic of mindfulness led by the 2019 Orientation Staff, was held on January 17th. Residence Soph interviews are currently in progress and FOCA Soph applications were due January 20th at 9:00AM.

There was an Orientation Advisory Board meeting held on December 12th, 2019. Here we unanimously passed the Orientation Staff Terms of Reference, a centralized document where a brief description of all of OStaff's roles and their relationships with one another can be found. Additionally Jeff Amour (USC Chief Operation Officer) and Chris Alleyne (Western's AVP Housing and Ancillary Services) provided a summary of how UWO and the USC would collaborate in the future of providing Sophs with their rally and O-Week merchandise.

Programming:

On January 6th we held a successful Bachelor Premier event. Although the original host was not able to attend, it was still a successful event. The Public Arts Commission has begun a five week free workshop series in partnership with many different campus groups such as the McIntosh Gallery, the Western Photography Club, and Western Calligraphers. They are also currently holding a call for Arts Around the Globe for an upcoming exhibit. On January 23rd EnviroWestern will be holding their second Pre-loved Clothing Sale this year in the UCC atrium. Also on January 23rd from 11-2PM, Charity will be holding Chill and Chat with Charity, an event

focused on mental health in collaboration with the WEC, Student Health and Wellness, USC Peer Support, and CMHA Middlesex. On January 24th applications to be an Early Outreach Leadership Developer are due and January 27th is the deadline for the call for crew for TheatreWestern's *The Wizard of Oz*. TheatreWestern also recently announced their playwrights and directors for Purple Shorts. On January 29th the Arkells will be headlining our annual PurpleFrost concert in the Mustang Lounge.

Peer Support Portfolio:

Peer Support is currently in the middle of completing a Quality Improvement (QI) project with CMHA and CICMH that will be complete by May 2020, with recommendations that can be implemented for the next school year. They are also collaborating with Student Experience and other campus partners on the Bell Let's Talk campaign, with an atrium day being held on January 29th.

On February 5th, Health Promotions will be hosting Samantha Bitty, who will be hosting Sexy Sexual Health Trivia in the Wave.

Peer Programs:

Allyship Network ran two campaigns titled *Storm the Haus* and *My Coming Up Story*, which aimed to encourage LGBTQ2+ students to run in the upcoming USC elections. Throughout December and January, Ethnocultural Support Services ran three campaigns: *A Brief Inquiry into International Student Experiences*, *Stigmatization in the Workplace*, and *Campus Conversations*. The newest USC coordinator, *International Student Support* now has an Instagram account (@USCISS) and are currently running the *Did You Know* series which aims to inform international students of on- and off-campus resources, supports, services, activities, and so on.

From January 13th to 16th I spearheaded the #HERETOLEAD campaign with the Associate Communications and Peer Programs. Together, we created an installation that aimed to physically represent the barriers that students of marginalized groups would face when deciding to run in an election or apply for a position. The campaign highlighted different attributes of experiences of historically underrepresented communities in leadership positions through thoughts, statistics, encouraging messages, and real-life metaphors such as doors and balls that students would have to push through. The installation ended with a postcard campaign where students could write messages to their peers encouraging them to assume a leadership position.

January 13th was the first meeting of the President's Anti-Racism working group, where I sit as one of six undergraduate student representatives. The current timeline for the working group is for it to be set to finish in April and for actionables to be implemented afterwards.



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COUNCIL

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Item:	Executive Reports
Presenter:	Declan Hodgins, Secretary-Treasurer
Purpose of Report:	For Information

Background

As Secretary Treasurer, I am responsible for a number of key support areas in the organization. I am in charge of the organization's financial strategy and I directly oversee executive budgets. I also run financial programming, such as the grants system, Student Refugee Program, financial literacy programming, and the USC Income Tax Clinic. I provide governance support to the executive, overseeing the crafting of policies and resolutions and helping other executives accomplish their legislative goals. I also act as a legislative resource and support to council and the board. I sit on the board of Campus Trust, which is our health and Dental provider. Finally, I oversee the USC clubs system with our 200+ ratified clubs.

Highlights

Finance: We are in budget season and the entire Finance department is hard at work getting the budget ready for presentation in February. We have received all departmental budgets and are currently in the process of finalizing the last outstanding parts. The next major process for me will be building the fee requirements to present to council at our next meeting. The budget will focus on strategic investments into communications and advocacy, as well as building institutional sustainability.

I have also started consultation for the orientation budget, which will be presented at a later meeting. I have also been monitoring our overall financial picture, and so far our finances are tracking very well for the year.

Governance: My portfolio has continued our review of our governance, culminating in a number of motions that have gone forward at this meeting as well as at the board. One that I am especially proud of is Bylaw 4, which is being presented at this meeting. This Bylaw will provide needed clarity and transparency to our financial affairs. Our future projects include an evaluation of executive discipline procedures and the policies governing the role of the executives within the organization.

Elections: While my position no longer supervises EGC, I still sit on it as a resource member. I have focused on providing support and advice to the team and integrating initiatives of the EGC and the Executive.

Clubs: The Clubs system continues to run smoothly. We recently held a clubs appreciation event and over 100 club executives showed up. Additionally, we have started the clubs ratifications process and have begun vetting clubs for admission into our clubs system. Clubs have until January 31st to reach the necessary membership of 25 to stay ratified.

Campus Trust: Our Health and Dental plan continues to be stable and provide excellent service for students. On the Campus Trust Board, I have continued to push forward my various proposed governance changes, however I have felt that the pace at which the board has been reviewing my proposals to be completely unacceptable. I have always maintained that meaningful governance change to the Trust is a precondition to the USC remaining in the Trust. At present, USC students represent over 50% of Trust membership, yet the USC has very little representation at the decision making table, and governance in other areas is seriously deficient. We will continue to push for better representation at the Trust, as well as looking at alternatives. Our AGM is coming up on Monday, and I look forward to representing the USC when I am there.

Financial Programs: Our Grants program has had slower than expected applications, but has been running smoothly and distributing funds to a variety of student initiatives. We have concluded our first set of extremely successful financial literacy programs and we are now working on planning more for next semester. Our Income Tax Clinic is also moving forward, and is set for a major expansion this year.



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Item:	Executive Reports
Presenter:	Nico Waltenbury, Communications Officer
Purpose of Report:	For Information

Background

The Communications Officer leads strategic communications, public relations, and organizational branding. The portfolio is responsible for providing open communication between students and the USC, including garnering feedback from students to inform programming, service delivery, and advocacy. The Communications Officer provides strategic support to all areas of the organization, from advocacy to promotions.

Highlights

State of the USC: The refreshed State of the USC was hosted last Tuesday night at the Wave and was a great success - thank you to everyone who attended. The event welcomed approximately 100 students to the Wave and all five executives spoke about their accomplishments to date, plans for the remainder of the term, and perspective of the state of our organization. The event was overhauled based on feedback from student leaders and was geared to a more internal/student leader audience. Our student feedback team surveyed attendees on topical advocacy issues and feedback stations garnered attendees thoughts on the USC's current branding and positioning. Collected feedback is presented in a supplemental report to this Council Report. A brand journalism story, photos, and a recap video will be posted on Friday, January 24.

Public Relations: My team and I are continuing to support the organization with public relations upon request. We offer media prep and pitching for all departments and portfolios. Media highlights since November Council include: CBC on #HereToLead, Gazette on State of the USC, and Gazette on Executive Restructuring. Western President Alan Shepard also gave a very positive shout-out to the USC in his Gazette feature article by highlighting the importance and professionalism of student leadership on campus. Upcoming potential media include the Arkells show, Project Sparkle, Break the STigma, Relay for Life, the Early Outreach Conference, and more.

Brand Journalism: The USC's brand journalism arm is in full swing, with a goal of publishing 2-3 articles per week. We recently hired two Brand Journalism Coordinators to support the portfolio for the remainder of the term and to increase our capacity to publish relevant and timely stories. As we continue to improve and build our story library, we are also expanding our audience. We have fully transitioned away from press releases, as we felt they did not connect with a student audience. Stories will continue to feature core-USC programs and services, and aim to focus on a student protagonist. The next step is to build a new USC News website, which we hope to launch by the end of February.

General Communications: We are in the beginning stages of developing a full USC branding campaign to launch by March, tentatively called #USCDoesThat (modelled off Laurier's #SUDoesThat, which our team saw during our Laurier external research trip in the summer). The purpose of the campaign is to educate students about what the USC is and what we do, leveraging guerilla marketing techniques to meet students where they are at. In parallel, we are planning for March Break Open House, a residence outreach campaign during the USC's annual hiring fair, and a long-term improvement to community open office hours.

Student Feedback: Beyond student feedback collected at State of the USC, we are currently collecting or preparing to collect feedback on a number of issues. The campus-wide academic counselling survey was released today; councillors are encouraged to assist with promotion in their respective constituency. More targeted surveys for Food Support Services and the Early Outreach Program are in development. My Associate, Student Feedback (Liem) is currently working to create a feedback best practices package for the portfolio, which will include research and recommendations on ethical research collection and storage, an evidence-informed and community-supported demographic question bank, and guidelines for statistical significance in data collection on campus. Liem is currently working with the Secretary-Treasurer portfolio to create a policy on data storage and access that will come to Council upon completion.

Communication Planning: In an effort to be more proactive, I have begun planning communications on major events/issues for the summer and fall. In collaboration with the Orientation Coordinator, Associate Orientation, and Student Programs Officer, our portfolio is beginning to plan and schedule communication for incoming students throughout the summer and approaching Orientation Week. We are also in the primary stages of building the communications plan for Broughdale 2020, with the intention of leveraging many of the assets and key messages we developed last summer.

Advocacy Communications: Communications specific to advocacy are in the works for February, during which time the VP portfolio conducts most of its second-term advocacy. We will do social media blasts during both Federal Advocacy Week and Local Advocacy Week, and we are planning to host a significant Advocacy Atrium Day on February 12th with the goal of telling students what advocacy is at the USC. The Atrium Day will be based on group Kahoot games related to advocacy trivia, where major prizes will be up for grabs. We are also planning a #AdvocacyWins campaign throughout February to highlight wins in USC advocacy at all levels of government that improve students' lives and educational experience.

Portfolio Changes: One of my major goals of the year has been to increase the legitimacy and importance of the communications portfolio within the USC, recognizing that communications has been (and continues to be) an area where our organization struggles. As a result of our executive's prioritization of communications, there will be a number of changes to the portfolio in the coming months. We are in the process of posting a new full-time Communications Manager position, which will report to the Senior Manager, Promotions and Corporate Partnerships and oversee the Marketing Coordinator, Hype Team Intern, and Social Media interns. This manager will act as a direct support to the VP Communications & Public Affairs. We are moving the strategic communication elements out of the Promotions Department and into the Communications Department. Promotions will continue to serve as a creative hub for content development (photography, videography, graphic design, and printing), and will prioritize part-time student employment whenever possible. The Associate, Student Feedback role will be changed to an intern position and report to the USC's Information Technology and Information Systems Department. Our team is currently in the process of working to increase the budget for student feedback to allow for greater investment in research incentives, paid part-time student feedback support (i.e., students soliciting feedback via iPad surveys across campus), and potentially seeking external support for professional opinion polling. Changes are still in the works and I intend to provide a full overview of portfolio changes, including an organization chart, by March.

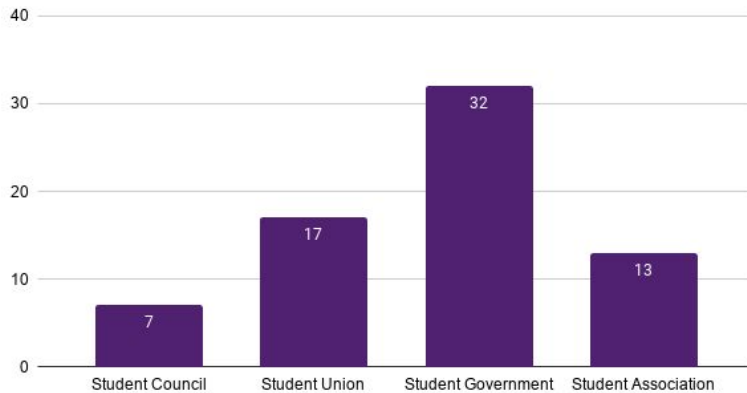
Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association Visit: Student Programs Officer Liu and I visited student executives from the University of Waterloo in December to learn more about their programs and processes and tour their student space. WUSA does not have a student executive equivalent of my position, but has seven full-time communications staff and approximately 30 paid part-time communications student staff. I met with Melissa Thomas, WUSA's Director of Marketing, Communications, and Outreach, to discuss their organization's approach to communications in an effort to gain context on best practices. WUSA faces many of the same relevance issues that we face, but recently underwent a complete rebrand (formerly FEDS) in parallel with the launch of the Student Choice Initiative, with the intention of starting fresh with their constituents. The information on their staff positions was extremely valuable in planning the restructuring of the USC's communications department.

Professional Development: Since the November Council Meeting, I attended two more courses at Western's Continuing Studies: Crisis Communications and Media Relations. The Crisis Communications course focused on preparing and responding to a variety of crises an organization may face, while the Community Relations course focused on identifying and leveraging the value organizations can gain by building a strong community relations strategy. A few key takeaways that I am working to integrate into my portfolio and role include:

- There is a difference between a crisis and an issue - a crisis stops the regular operations of your organization, while an issue requires attention but impacts only a specific subset of your organization → working to create a distinction between crises and issues at the USC and including the distinction in executive training to support better future response
- There often isn't time to determine how to respond to a crisis once it has already happened, which is why crisis communications plans are so important → working to develop a crisis communications plan for the USC, including a chain of authority, procedure of information flow, standard messages and templates, and advanced training for spokespeople
- In a crisis or hyper-intense moments, do everything you can to slow things down to regain control of the situation → thinking proactively about strategies to react to crises more effectively
- Brand is how an organization wants to be seen, while reputation is how the organization actually is; the communications leader's role is to measure and bridge the gap → building a research and feedback plan to evaluate the students' current perceptions of the organization to compare against the brand we define for ourselves
- Giving a friendly heads up goes a long way to building relationships → the USC should continue to pay forward good community relations to build useful future relationships with stakeholders

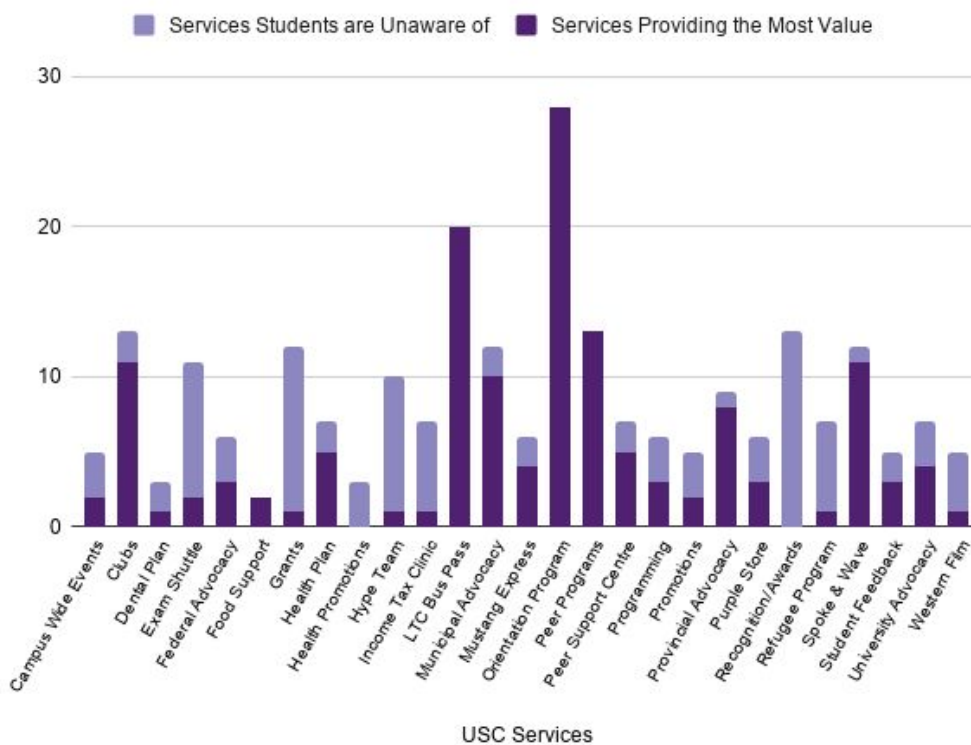
Station 2: Candy Wrappers

Question: What do you want the USC to be? (n=69)



Station 3: Stickers

Question: Which USC services do you believe provide the most value to students and what services are you not aware of? (n=240)



Note: recipients could select up to five services they thought provided the most value to students, and an unlimited number of services that they were not aware of.

State of the USC Microsurvey Analysis

Methodology

During the State of the USC event on January 14, 2020, four student feedback volunteers circulated the room with iPads to solicit attendees to complete four micro surveys on key USC advocacy areas: mental health, financial aid, transit, and academic counselling. Most of this solicitation occurred from around 6:30 PM-8:30 PM. Most of the approximately 100 attendees at the event were USC councillors, associates, coordinators, and interns.

Responses

One of the surveys received only 9 responses (academic counselling), meaning the data from that survey is unusable was excluded from this analysis. The remaining three surveys received roughly 40 responses, providing a significant sample size relative to the number of attendees at the event, and thus likely well representing the views of the event's guests.

Key Findings

Mental Health

- Over 50% of students described mental health services on campus as either “very good” or “Good”, with an additional 35% indicating “neither good nor poor”
- Only 12% of respondents described campus mental health services as “poor” and none as “very poor”
- Nearly 80% of respondents stated they know how to access mental health services and resources on campus

Financial Aid

- 87% of respondents said they either were personally affected or knew someone that was affected by the recent OSAP cuts
- Nearly all respondents knew about OSAP as a financial aid option, while 70% of respondents knew about other options available, on average
- Only 50% of respondents indicated they were aware of private bank loans as an option

Transit

- Over 80% of respondents use London Transit to get to and from campus while over 70% use the LTC to access local shopping
- Only half stated they used London Transit for late nights out/entertainment and only a third to travel to and from work
- Routes 102 and 106 (interlinked routes that connect Western/Wharnccliffe with Richmond Street) were most popular among attendees (~50% utility each)
- Route utility responses suggest a relatively even split between north-side and south-side students

Further Remarks

It must be noted the attendees at the State of the USC are generally far more engaged on campus and more aware of available services and resources thanks to their roles as student leaders. Thus, readers should be aware that knowledge of mental health resources, financial aid options, and transit routes is likely positively skewed by the sample group, relative to the general student population. Any lack of knowledge in this highly engaged student group should be particularly concerning.

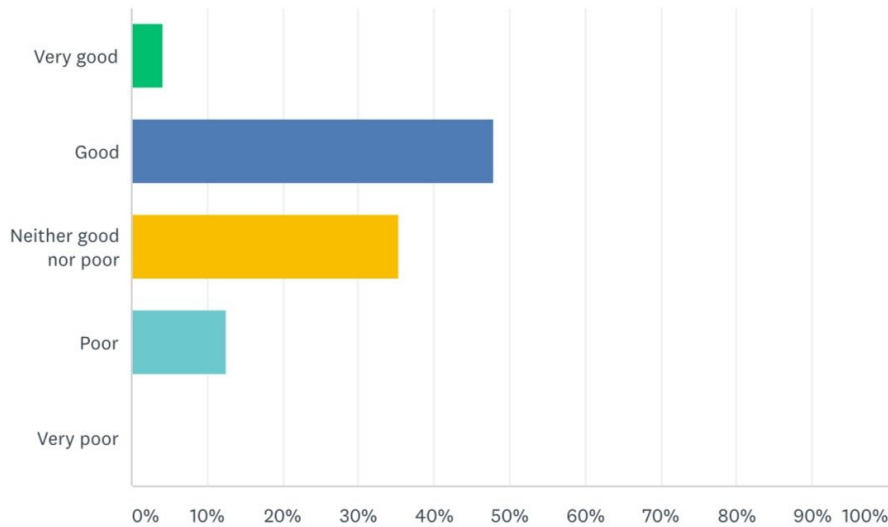
With regards to the question on knowledge of mental health resources on Western's campus ("Do you know how to access mental health services on campus?"), the 79% affirmative response evaluated only respondents perception of their own knowledge, rather than their actual knowledge.

Graphs on Pages 3-6 show results of each question on the three surveys.

Mental Health

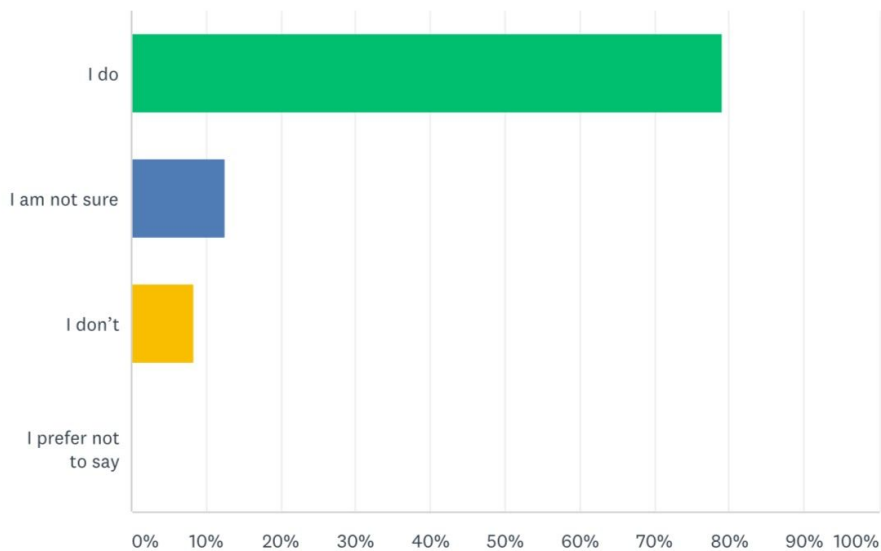
What do you perceive to be the quality of mental health support on campus?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



Do you know how to access mental health services on campus?

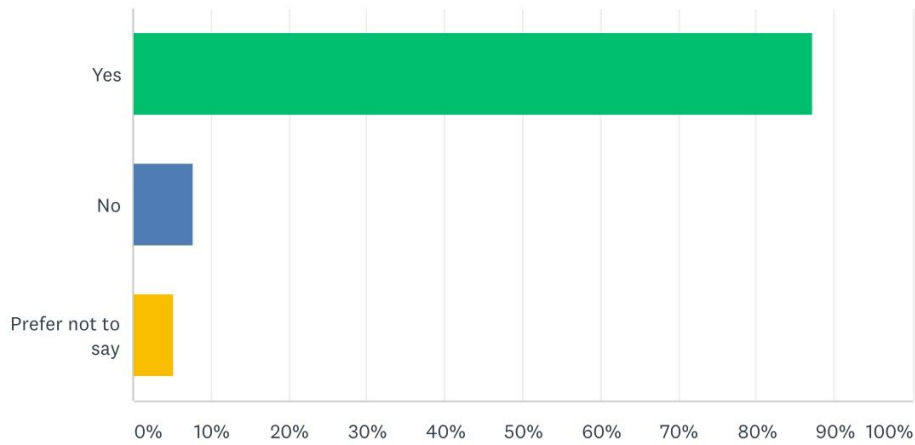
Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



Financial Aid

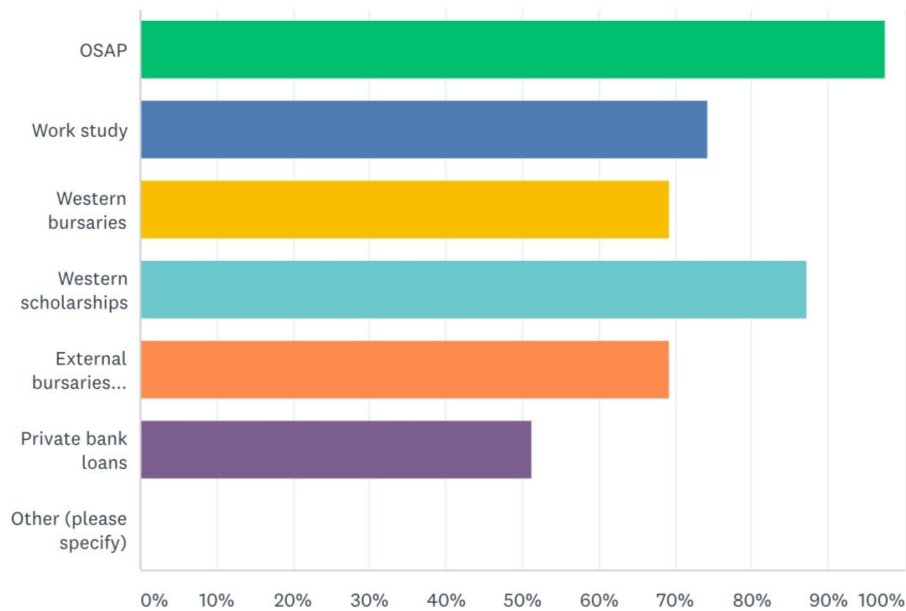
Were you or any of your peers impacted by last year's OSAP cuts?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



What options for financial aid are you aware of? Select all that apply.

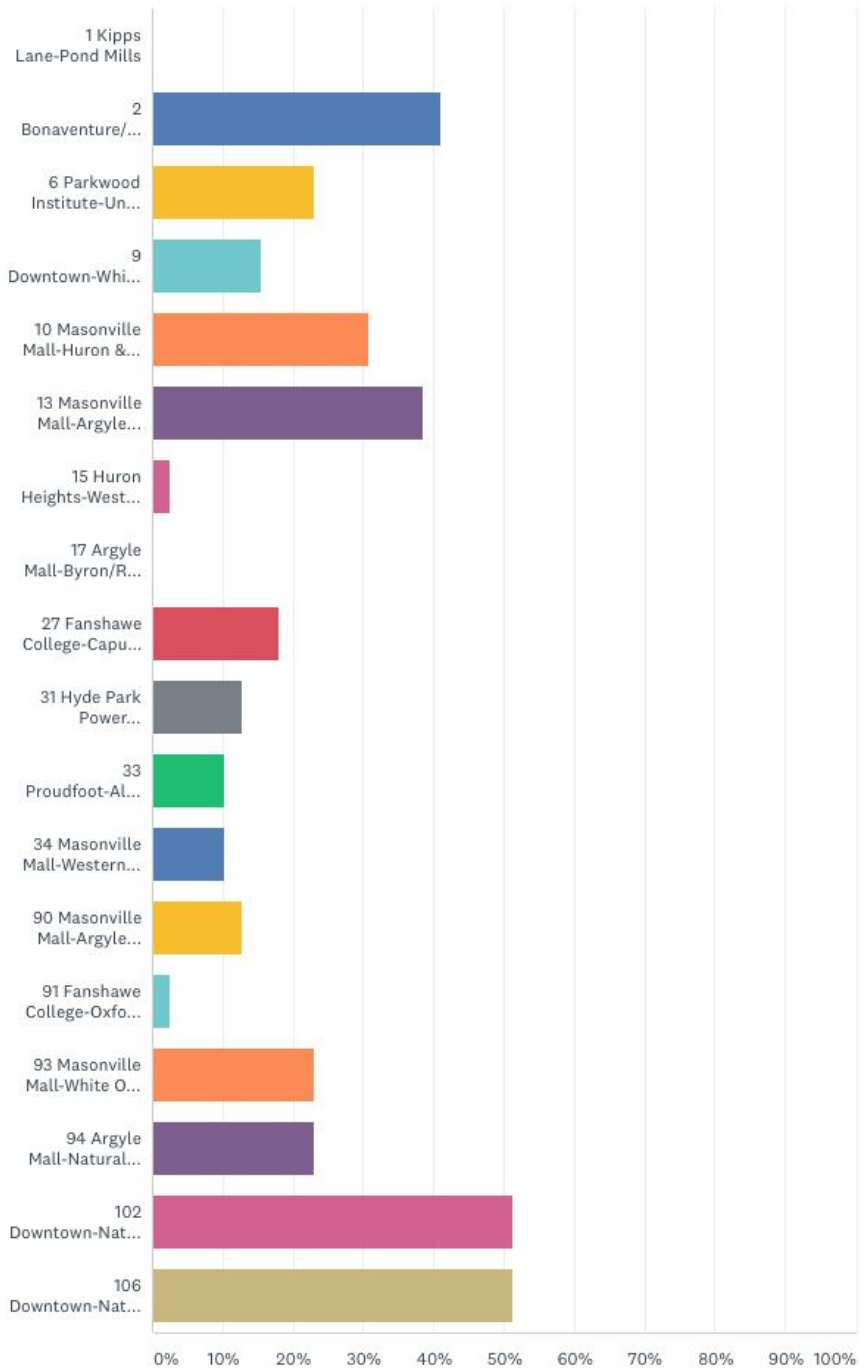
Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



Transit

Which routes do you take to and from Campus? Select all that apply.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



Where do you take the LTC/Local transit? Select all that apply.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0

