



LANGARA
COLLEGE

Langara College

2009 Current Student Survey Report

Office of Institutional Research

Langara College

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SURVEY SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

This year saw major changes in the structure and methodology of the Current Student Survey. Instead of one very long survey, we released three separate surveys to three randomly selected samples. The core questions were the same in all three surveys, but each also had a section devoted to a specific student service. The first two surveys focused on the Langara application and registration processes. The final survey asked students about course scheduling experiences and preferences. The Application survey was sent out to a randomly selected sample of 1,500 new students. The Registration and Courses surveys were each emailed to random samples of 1,400 new and returning students. The samples closely reflected the actual student population on program area and gender. Email notifications for the online questionnaires were sent out on October 29, with reminders on November 2, 6 and 12. By the survey deadline, a total of 1,178 valid questionnaires were returned, a final response rate of 27.4%. The accuracy of the survey results is estimated to be $\pm 2.9\%$, 19 times out of 20.

A comparison of the survey respondents to the student population showed that this response sample over-represented female students, and slightly over-represented international students, students with higher GPAs and those attending full time. Because of the oversampling of new students for the Application survey, the overall response sample strongly over-represented new students. Each set of survey respondents was compared to its original population, and responses were weighted to achieve a sample representative of the student population. The set of core questions were merged and weighted against the whole student population.

Limited Enrollment students comprised such a small portion of the response sample that they were grouped with Arts and Sciences for reporting purposes.

Table 1: Characteristics of Student Population and Survey Respondents

Characteristics		Student Population	Respondents (unadjusted)	Respondents (adjusted)
Gender	Male	44.2%	37.6%	44.2%
	Female	55.8%	62.4%	55.8%
Major Program Area	Arts & Science	74.9%	75.2%	74.9%
	Limited Enrolment	1.5%	1.9%	1.5%
	Career	10.6%	11.9%	10.6%
	Degree	13.0%	11.0%	13.0%
Registration Status	New	32.9%	57.7%	56.4%
	Returning	67.1%	42.3%	43.6%
Course Load	Full-time	72.3%	80.4%	72.3%
	Part-time(<9 credits)	27.7%	19.6%	27.7%

LANGARA COLLEGE CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY – FALL 2009

PROFILE OF LANGARA STUDENTS

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Characteristics		Percent	Characteristics		Percent
Gender	Male	44.2%	Course Load	Full-time	79.1%
	Female	55.8%		Part-time	20.9%
Age¹	17 or younger	20.3%	Registration Status	New ¹	56.4%
	18-21 years	44.9%		Returning ¹	43.6%
	22-25 years	16.7%		Domestic	88.7%
	26-30 years	8.4%		International	11.3%
	31-39 years	6.4%		Aboriginal	1.5%
	40+	3.3%			
First Language	English	74.9%	Terms at Langara	1-3 Terms	70.5%
	French	1.0%		4-6 Terms	14.8%
	Mandarin	9.7%		7-9 terms	9.3%
	Cantonese	5.9%		10-12 Terms	2.8%
	Korean	2.0%		13+ Terms	2.5%
	Japanese	1.0%			
	Filipino/Tagalog	0.8%			
	Farsi/Persian	0.7%			
	Other	4.0%			

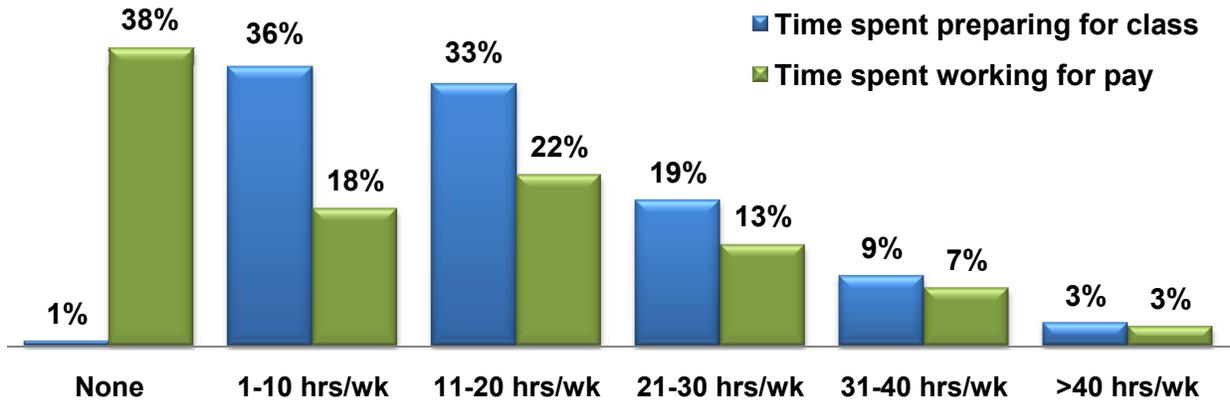
Table 3: Registration Program of Respondents

PROGRAM	%	PROGRAM	%
Arts and Sciences	74.9%	Display + Design	0.4%
Aboriginal Studies	0.3%	Early Childhood Education	0.8%
European Studies	0.1%	Education Assistant	0.1%
Bachelor of Business Administration	7.1%	Engineering Transfer	0.1%
Business Management	0.1%	Fine Arts	1.5%
Marketing Management	0.1%	Journalism	1.0%
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	3.3%	Library & Information Technology	1.8%
Nursing Transition/Waitlist	2.6%	Nutrition & Food Service Management	0.6%
Bachelor of Recreation Management	0.3%	Professional Photo Imaging	0.4%
Applied Urban & Rural Planning	0.5%	Publishing	0.7%
Criminal Justice	1.3%	Recreation	0.9%
Commerce	0.1%	Social Service Worker	0.3%
Computer Studies	0.2%	Theatre Arts	0.1%
Management Information Systems	0.1%		

¹ These variables are not representative of the actual population, since this survey oversampled new students in order to better examine the Application process.

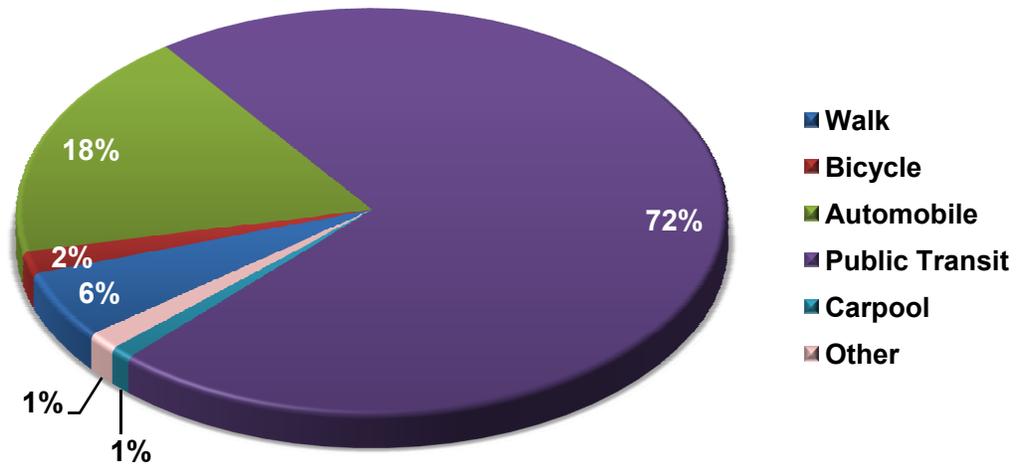
In general, students spent more time studying or preparing for class than working, although part-time work remained prevalent. Students over age 26 were most likely to be working more than 31 hours per week, while younger students tended to work part-time or not at all.

Figure 1: Hours per Week Spent Working and Studying



Public transit was the most popular mode of transportation by far, especially among younger students. Use of public transit has increased by almost 11 percentage points since Fall 2008.

Figure 2: Primary Mode of Transportation

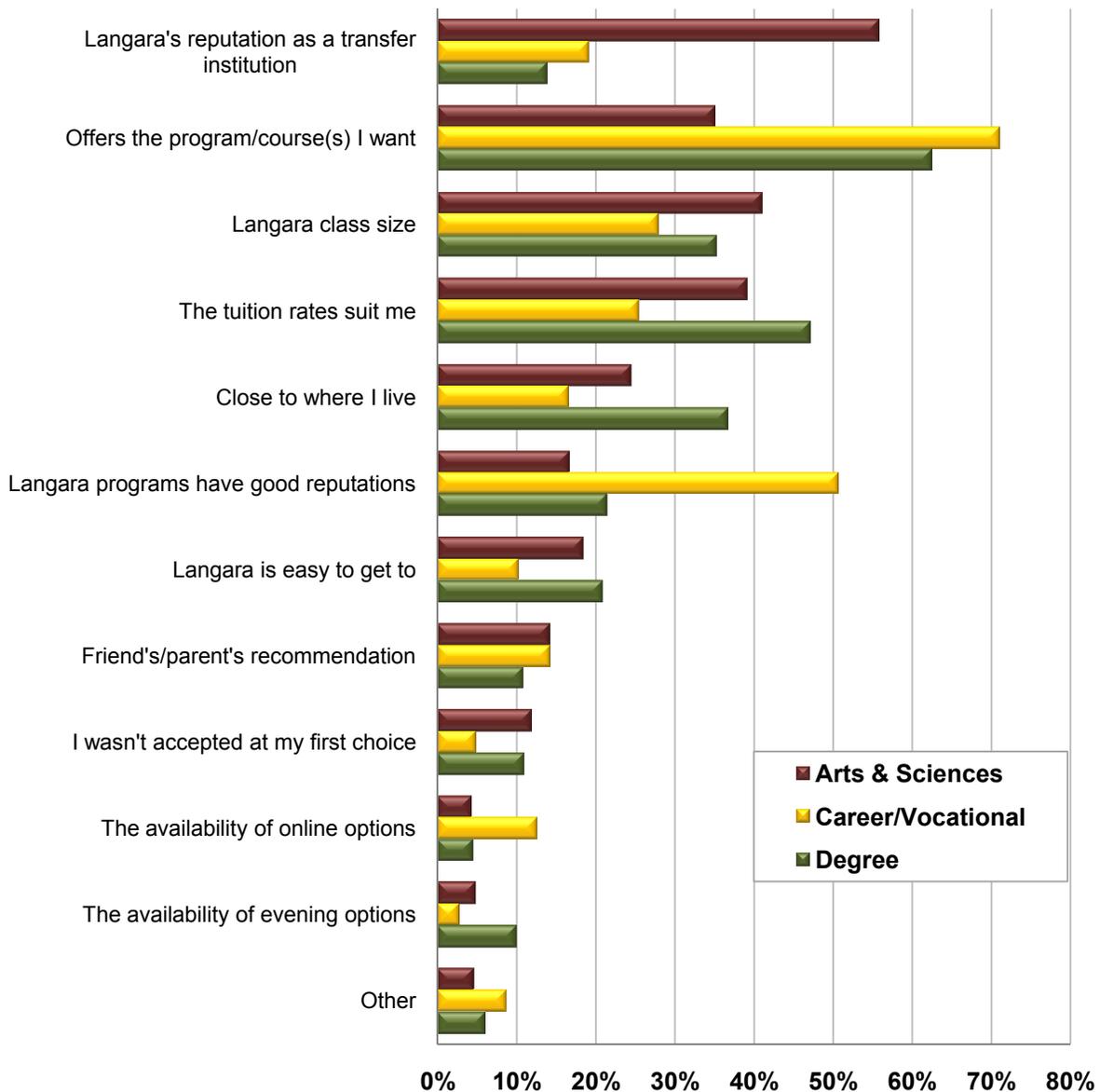


REASONS FOR CHOOSING LANGARA

Students decided to come to Langara for a variety of reasons. Foremost were Langara’s reputation as a transfer institution, our program or course offerings, class size and tuition rates. Comparison to previous years is not justifiable, as the number of factors presented in the survey was expanded greatly this year.

Arts and Sciences students were influenced primarily by Langara’s reputation as a transfer institution, but also by class size and tuition rates. Both class size and tuition were much more important for young students. For Career/Vocational students, Langara’s program/course offerings were the most influencing factor, followed by program reputation then class size. Program reputation was significantly more influential to students in Photography, Fine Arts, Marketing Management, Journalism, Early Childhood Education, Education Assistant, Recreation and Social Services Worker programs. Degree students were also most motivated by Langara’s program/course offerings (more so for Nursing than Business students), but tuition rates and distance from home were also important.

Figure 3: Reasons for Attending Langara

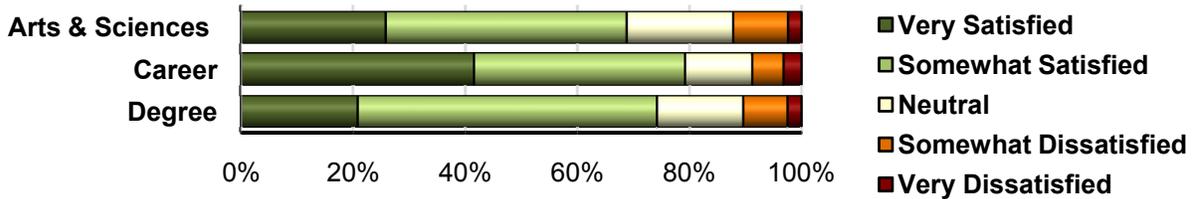


Note: Percentages do not total 100% as respondents were asked to select their top *three* reasons.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LANGARA

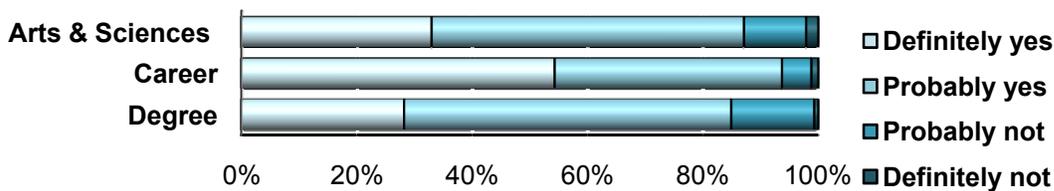
Seventy percent of respondents were ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ satisfied with their overall experience at Langara. Career/Vocational students were most likely to be very satisfied. However, the most influential factor in overall satisfaction was not program, but age: Students over age 29 were significantly more likely to be ‘very satisfied’. Among students age 29 and under, cumulative GPA was the best predictor of satisfaction, with high achievers and new students somewhat more likely to be ‘very satisfied’.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with Langara Experience



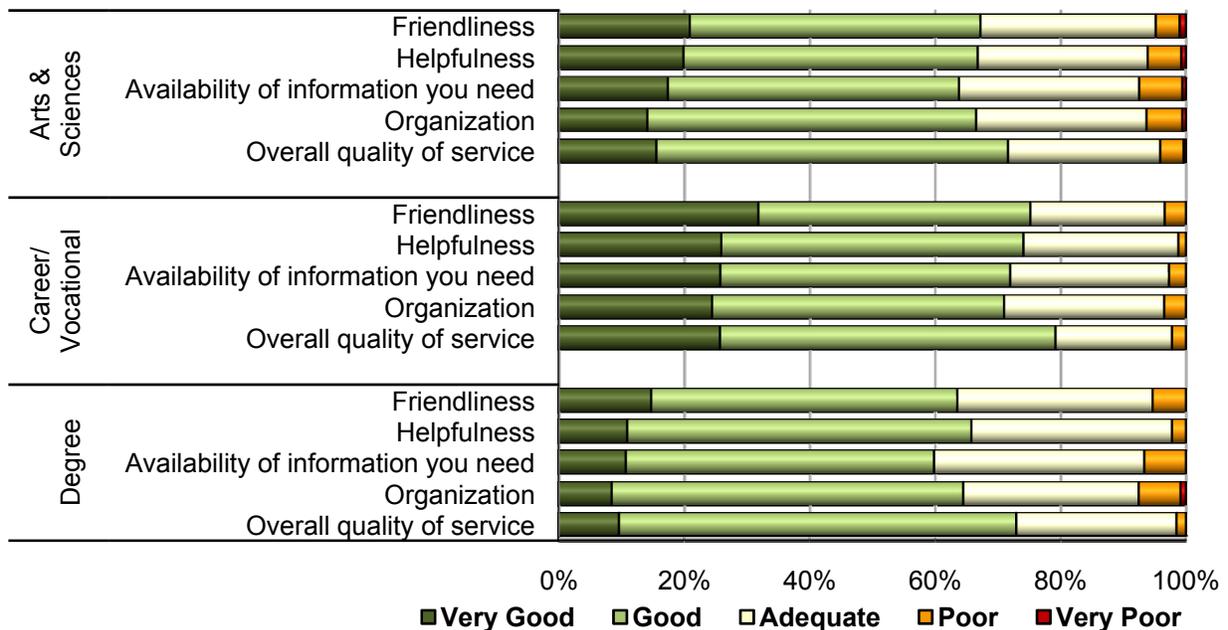
The great majority (87.5%) of students would ‘probably’ or ‘definitely’ attend Langara again, given the chance to start over. Again, Career/Vocational student ratings were the most positive. Students with cumulative GPA greater than 3.3 were more likely to say they would ‘definitely’ attend.

Figure 5: If You Could Start Over Again, Would You Attend Langara?



Approximately two thirds of students had positive initial impressions of Langara. Overall quality of services received the most encouraging reviews. However, availability of information and overall quality of service received significantly lower ratings from students who had attended Langara for more than three terms. Older students tended to rate higher on helpfulness and friendliness of Langara staff.

Figure 6: Initial Impressions of Langara College



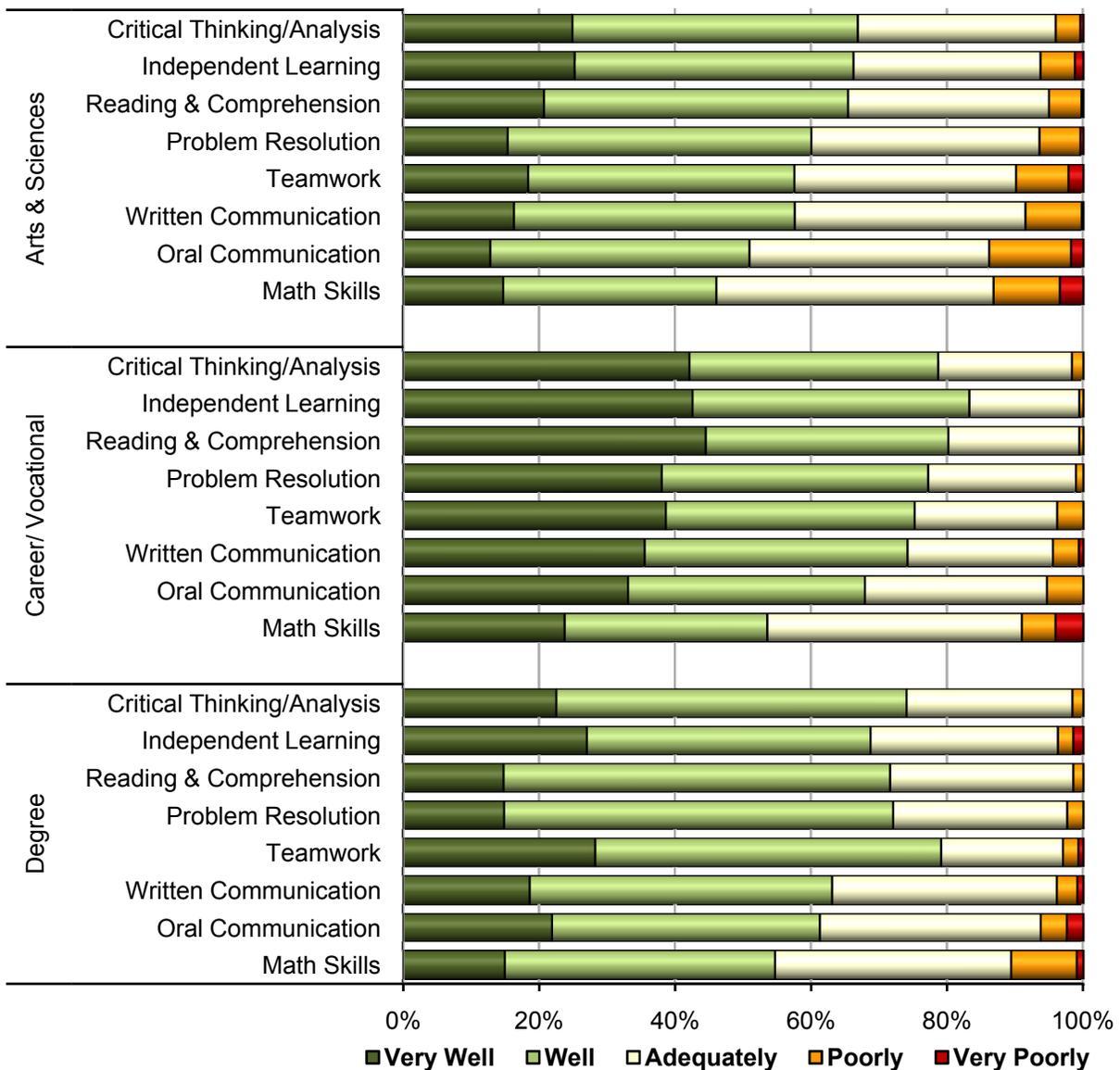
SKILL DEVELOPMENT

This section focused on the extent to which students' programs had prepared them in developing specific abilities. Arts and Sciences students rated critical thinking and independent learning skills most positively. Degree students felt they had well developed skills in teamwork and critical thinking. Career/Vocational students thought they were best prepared in independent learning and reading skills, and were much more likely to feel very well prepared in all skill areas.

Aside from program area differences, other influencing factors were age and cumulative GPA. Reading skills were rated significantly lower by 17-18 year old students. Older students felt better prepared in problem solving and speaking skills. New students and students with a cumulative GPA greater than 2.6 felt significantly more prepared to learn independently and speak effectively.

Ratings have generally remained stable since 2008. This year saw minor improvements in ratings of writing skills from Career/Vocational and Arts and Sciences students and critical thinking skills from Degree students. Degree and Career/Vocational students' ratings of Math skills decreased slightly.

Figure 7: Skill Development Ratings

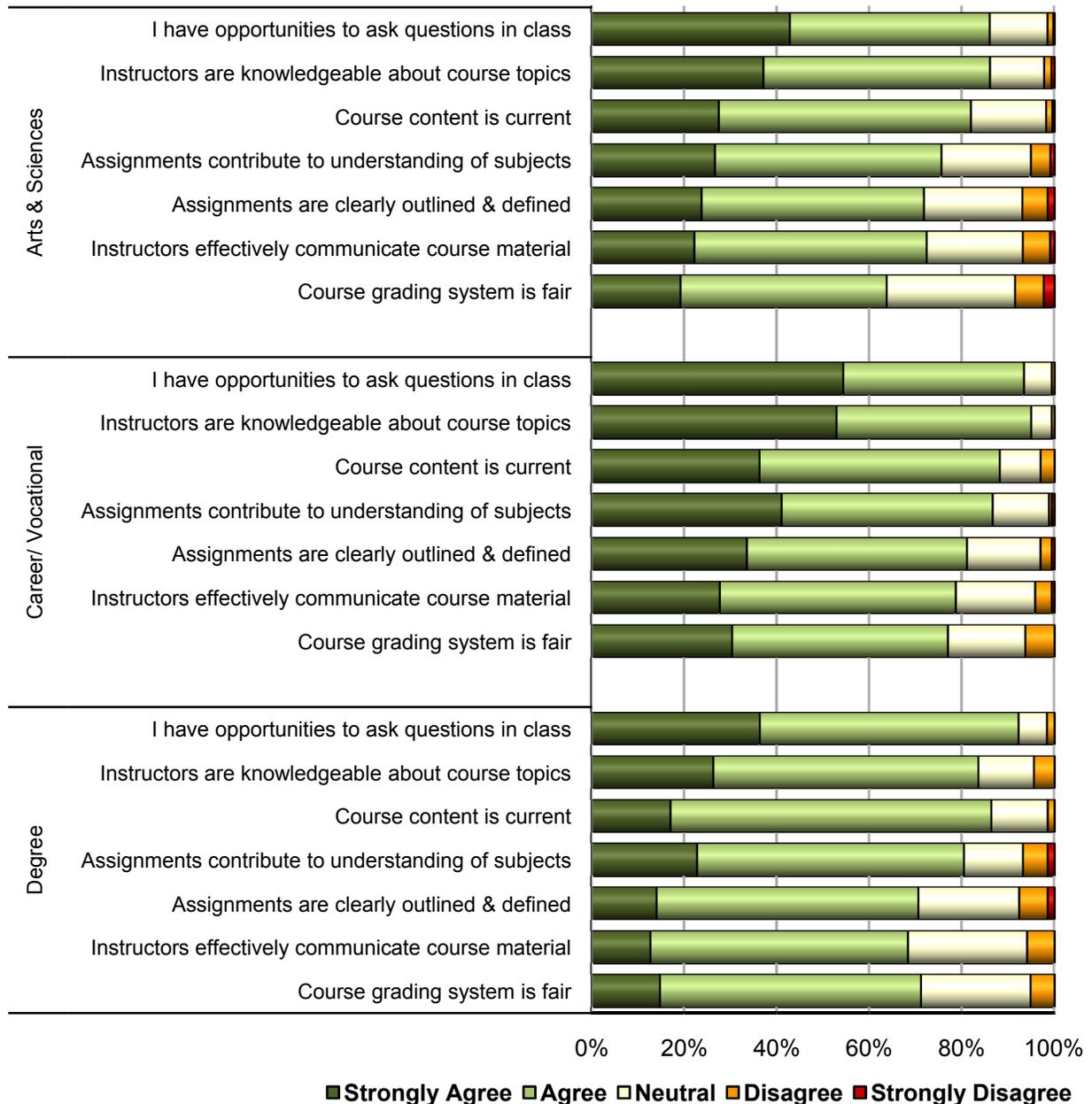


INSTRUCTION

Ratings of course instruction at Langara were quite positive. Arts and Sciences and Career/Vocational students gave their best ratings to instructor knowledge, while Degree students were most positive about their ability to ask questions in class. Career/Vocational student ratings were higher than Arts and Sciences or Degree students' in almost all areas. Ratings have remained relatively stable since 2008.

Program area was only a significant factor in ratings of instructor knowledge of topics, where Career student ratings were much higher. In general, older students provided better ratings of course content, clarity of assignments and fair grading systems. Students with cumulative GPA greater than 2.6 were much more likely to strongly agree that assignments contributed to their understanding of the topic and that they had opportunities to ask questions in class.

Figure 8: Evaluation of Course Instruction

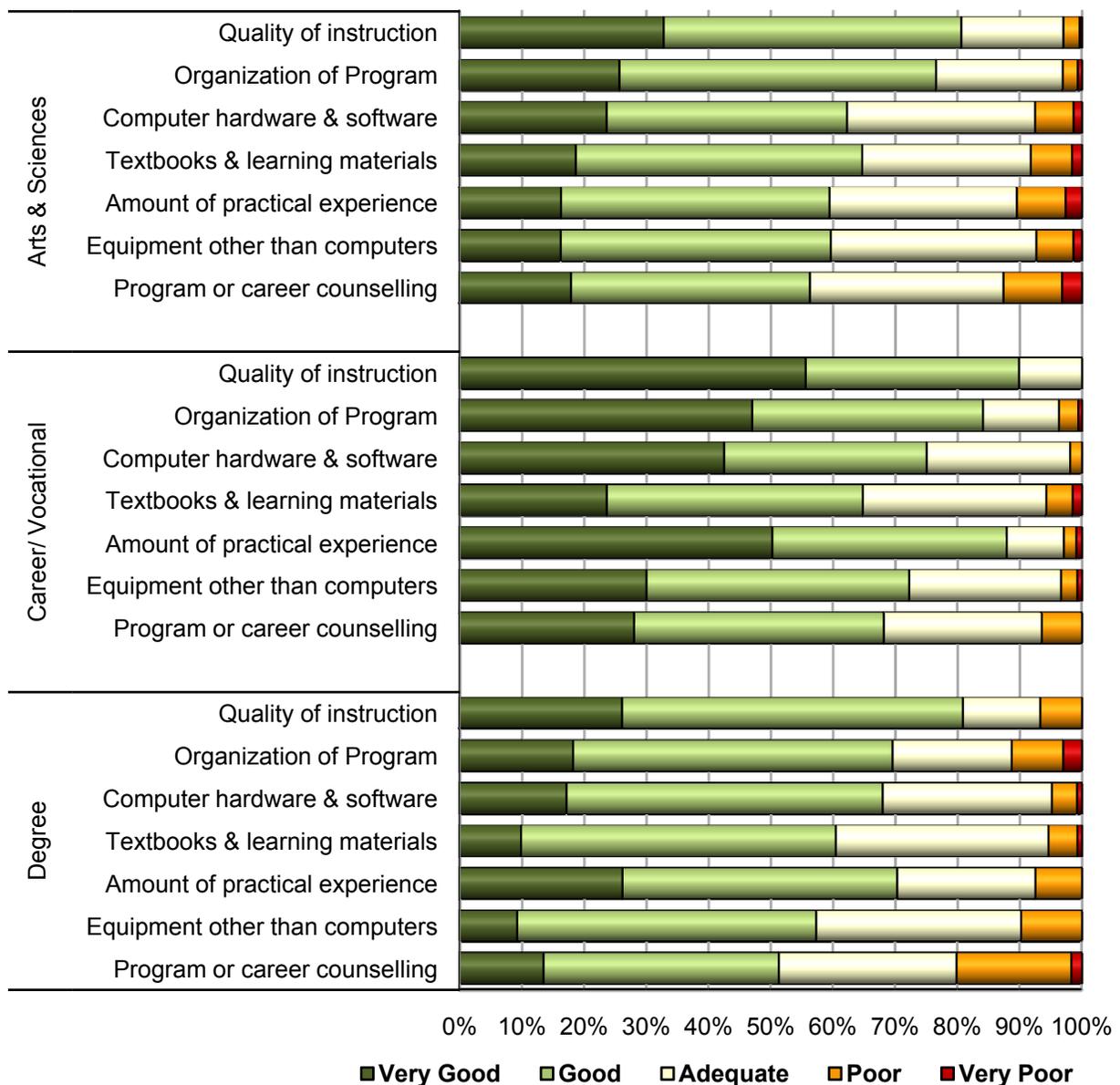


PROGRAM/COURSE OF STUDY

When asked to provide opinions on various other aspects of their Langara programs, positive ratings were highest for overall quality of instruction, regardless of area of study. Arts & Sciences students also rated program organization quite well, while Career/Vocational and Degree students were very happy with the amount of practical experience they received. Program or career counselling received the least positive evaluation from students in all areas of study. Compared to 2008, positive ratings remained stable or increased in almost all areas. There were notable improvements in program organization and equipment other than computers.

Program area was the most influential factor in ratings of overall quality of instruction, program organization, amount of practical experience and computer equipment. New students were significantly more likely to give program or career counselling ‘good’ ratings, while full-time returning students most often rated this service as ‘adequate’.

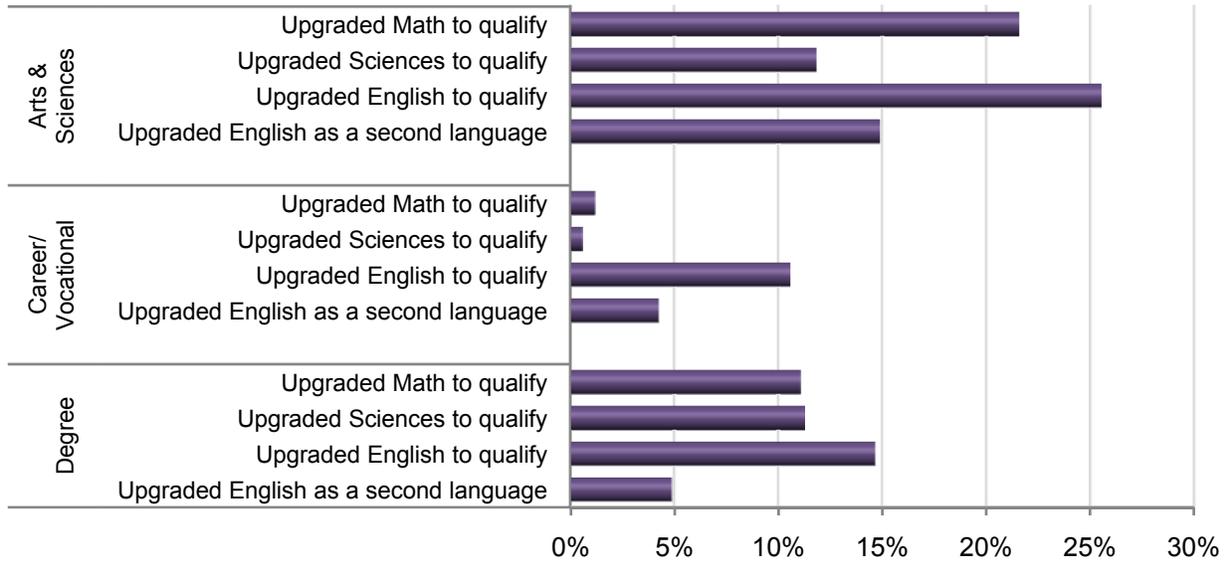
Figure 9: Evaluation of Program/Course of Study



PROGRAM QUALIFICATION

For the first time, we asked students about the level of upgrading they needed to qualify for their program. Just over half of students entered their program with no upgrading. Improved English and Math skills were common prerequisites, particularly among Arts and Sciences students. Approximately 13% of students needed English as a second language before they qualified for their program. Career/Vocational students were least likely to need upgrading, while Arts and Sciences students were most likely.

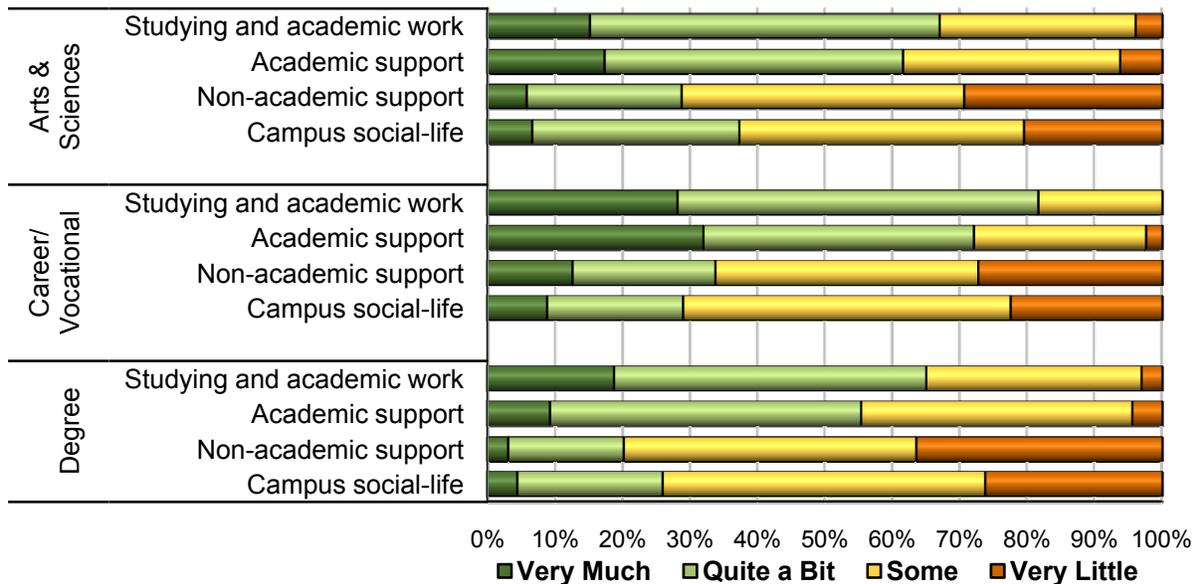
Figure 10: Upgrading Required to Qualify for Program Entrance



CAMPUS LIFE

Overall, ratings of Langara’s focus on campus life¹ increased from last year, especially among Degree students. Students over age 29 were more likely to say that Langara focused ‘quite a bit’ on studying and academic work. New students and those with higher cumulative GPAs felt Langara provided better academic support. Domestic students (and particularly returning domestic students) were most likely to feel that Langara provided ‘some’ or ‘very little’ focus on campus social life and non-academic support.

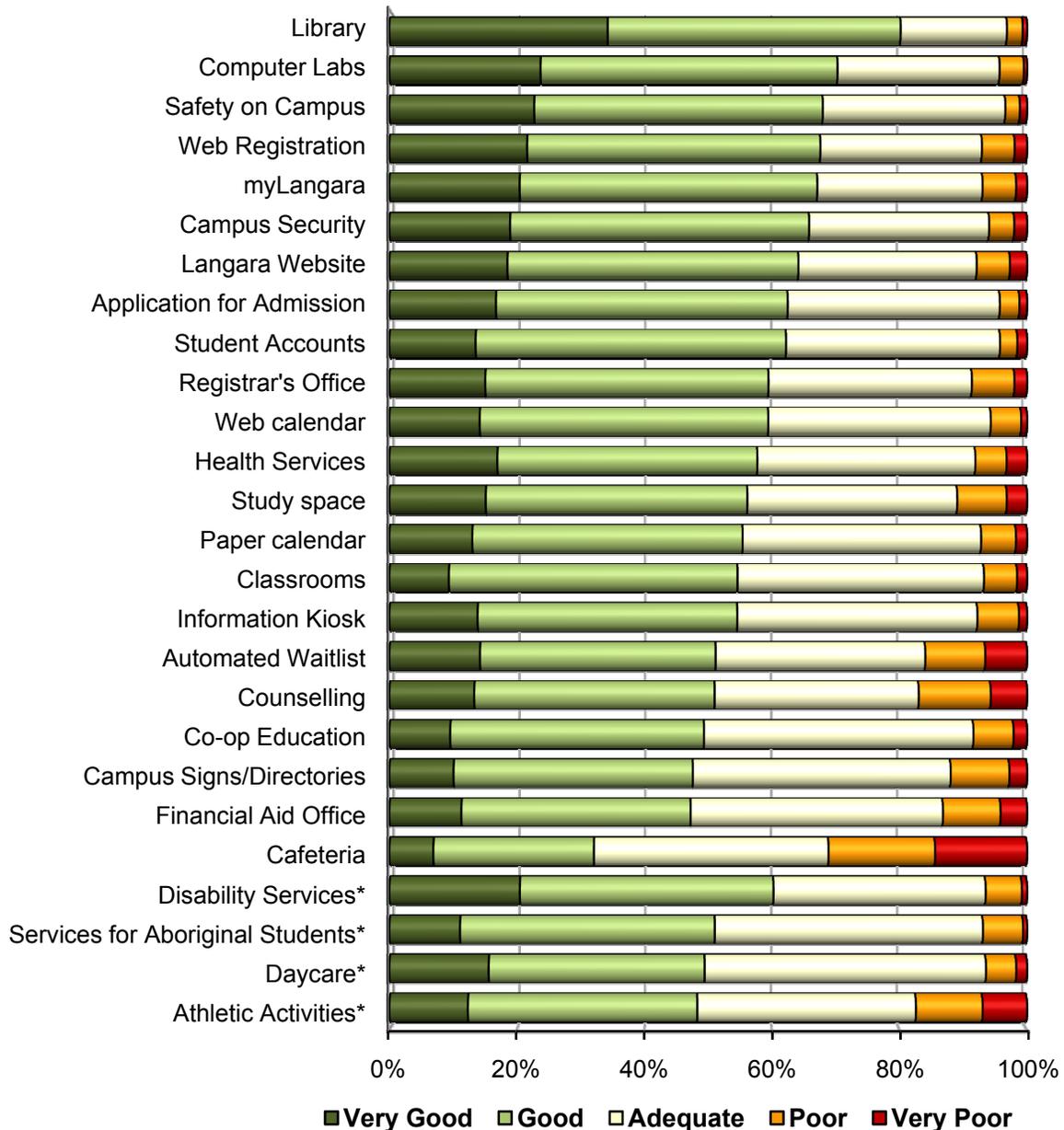
Figure 11: Areas of Campus Life Emphasized by Langara College



LANGARA STUDENT SERVICES

Among the general student population, almost all Langara services received more than 50% positive ratings. Top ratings went to the Langara Library (80% 'good' or 'very good'), computer labs (70%) and safety on campus (68%). Negative ratings ('very poor' or 'poor') given to the Cafeteria (31%), athletic activities and Counselling (17% each) were somewhat higher than for other College services.

Figure 12: General Ratings of Langara College Services



* These services were rated as 'Have Not Used' by at least 66% of respondents.

Degree students gave significantly lower ratings to classroom space than did Career/Vocational or Arts and Sciences students. Langara's calendars (both web and paper) were rated higher by part-time students. Students with cumulative GPAs greater than 2.4 were much more positive about application; web registration and the automated waitlist. The cafeteria and campus signage received significantly better ratings from students aged 17 and under. New students were more positive than returning students about the Registrar's Office, campus security and study space.

When compared to 2008, Arts and Sciences and Career/Vocational student ratings of almost all Langara services remained stable or decreased, but in most cases the declines were much greater among Career/Vocational students. Career/Vocational ratings of Co-op Education, Health Services, the Financial Aid Office and the Daycare all dropped by more than 26 percentage points, and six other services declined by more than 10 percentage points. For both Arts and Sciences and Career/Vocational students, the one exception to this trend was myLangara, where positive ratings increased by 6 to 16 percentage points. Degree student ratings were the most positive, remaining stable or increasing in most service areas. Athletics, the Financial Aid Office and myLangara received positive rating increases of more than 18 percentage points. The only areas where Degree students gave declining rating were the Information Kiosk, Campus signage and Counselling.

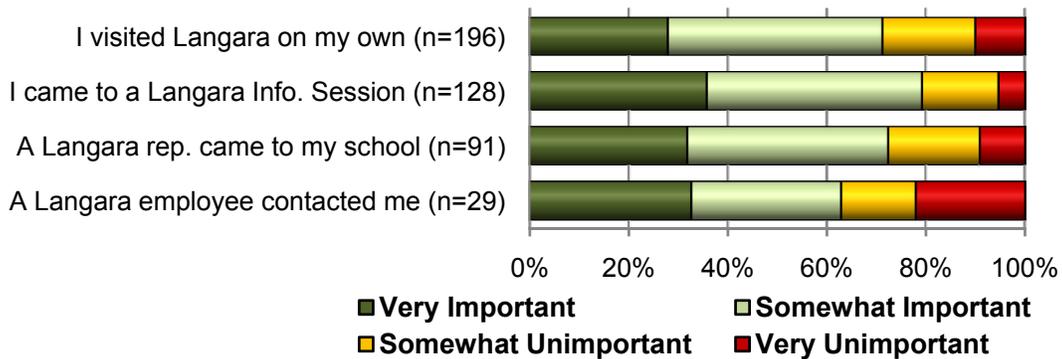
The overall trend for the last five years has been one of declining ratings for most services. The exception was in Fall 2008, when almost all services received at least some increase in positive ratings.

LANGARA APPLICATION PROCESS

This year’s survey contained a section devoted to examining students’ experience with Langara’s application process. This segment was given to new students only.

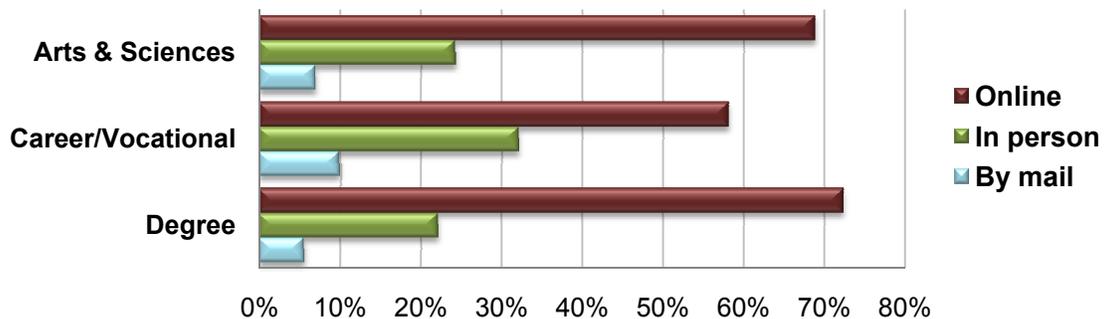
Prior to applying to Langara, 50% of new students visited the campus on their own, and 71% of those felt it was ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ important to their decision to apply to Langara. Male students were slightly more likely to visit Langara on their own, but female students were significantly more likely to believe that their visit was influential in their decision to come here. Fewer students (33%) came for a Langara Information Session, but those that did reported more influence on their decision. Female students were significantly more likely to find the Information sessions ‘very important’.

Figure 13: Importance of Prior Contact in Decision to Apply to Langara²



Just over two thirds of all new students (and 83% of new students age 17 or younger) applied online. Among students over age 17, those taking full-time studies also preferred online applications, while those studying part-time were divided between applying online and in-person.

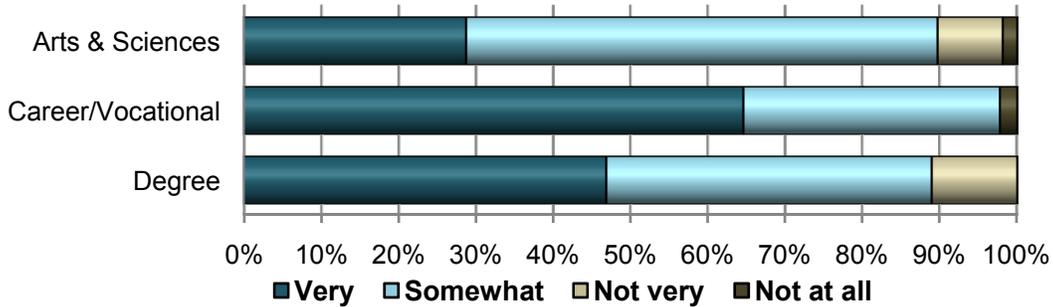
Figure 14: Application Method of New Langara Students



² ‘n’ specifies how many students had this type of contact before applying to Langara.

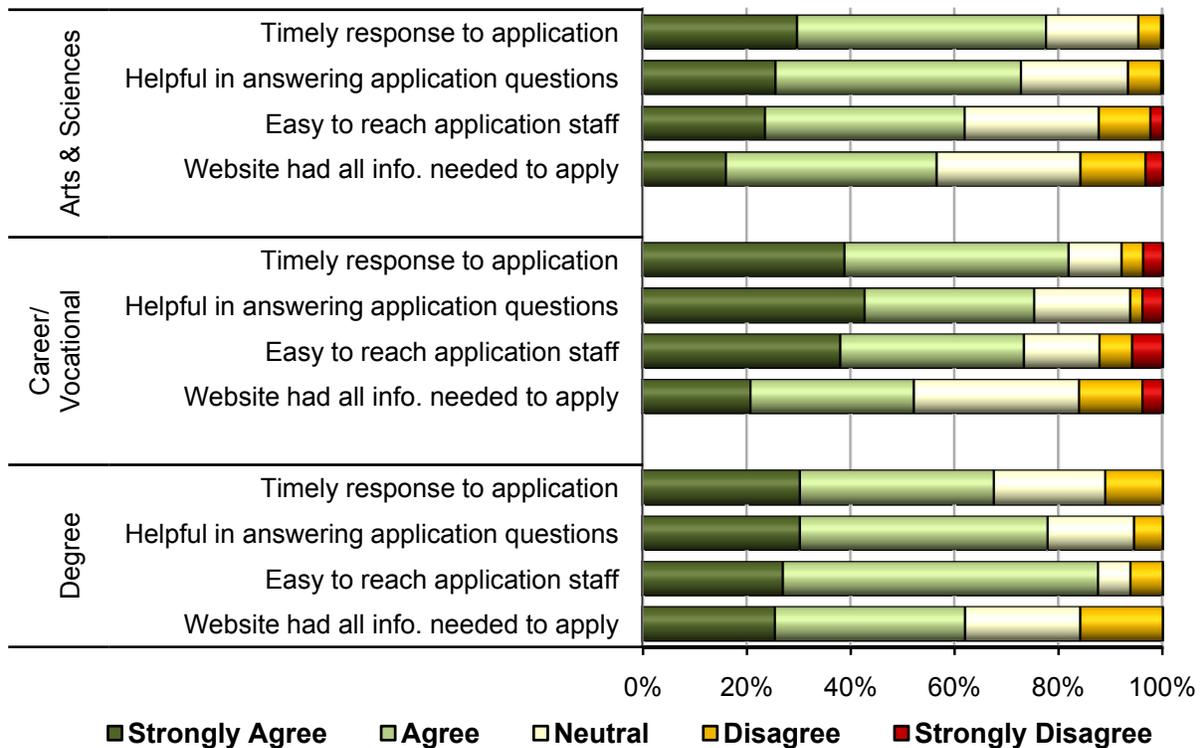
Very few students had difficulty understanding their Program admission requirements. Career/Vocational students were the least likely to have difficulties in this area.

Figure 15: Clarity of Program Admission Requirements



Even though new Degree students found it easier to reach application staff, all new students were fairly happy with how helpful staff were in answering their application questions. New Arts and Sciences and Career/Vocational students were more positive than Degree students about receiving a timely response to their application. Fewer students, and particularly Career/Vocational students, felt that the Langara website contained all the information they needed to apply.

Figure 16: The Langara Application Process

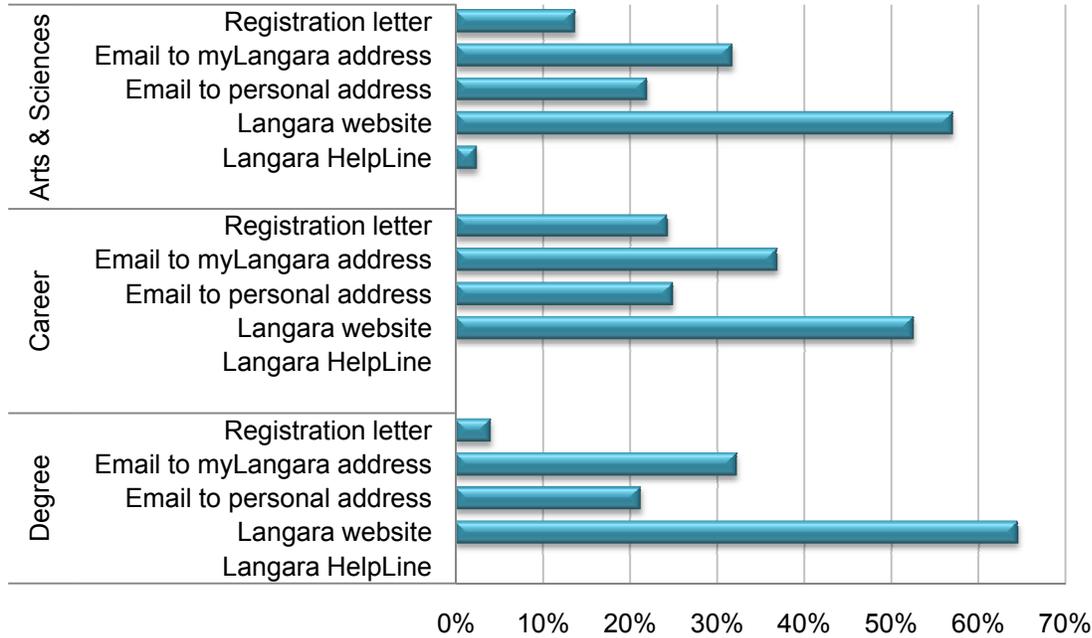


Students were asked to provide open-ended comments regarding any problems they experienced and improvements they would most like to see. The most common complaints and suggestions were about the clarity or availability of information and instructions, particularly regarding the online application process. Verbatim comments are available on request.

LANGARA REGISTRATION PROCESS

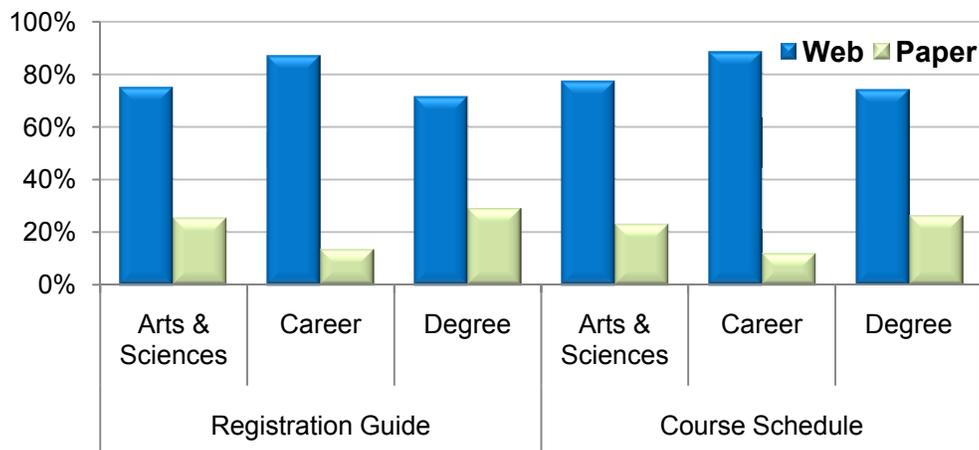
Students were also asked about their experience with the Langara registration process. This segment was given to both new and returning students. Regardless of program area, the majority of students found their registration date through the Langara website. However, students who had attended Langara for only one or two terms were significantly less likely to use the website, and more likely to receive this information via an email to their personal address. Thirty percent of new students got their registration date from their registration letter.

Figure 17: Methods of Finding Fall 2009 Registration Date



Students overwhelmingly preferred the online registration guide and course schedule to the paper versions, although approximately one quarter of Degree and Arts and Sciences students still use paper. Students who have taken more than two terms at Langara were significantly more likely than newer students to use the paper course schedule.

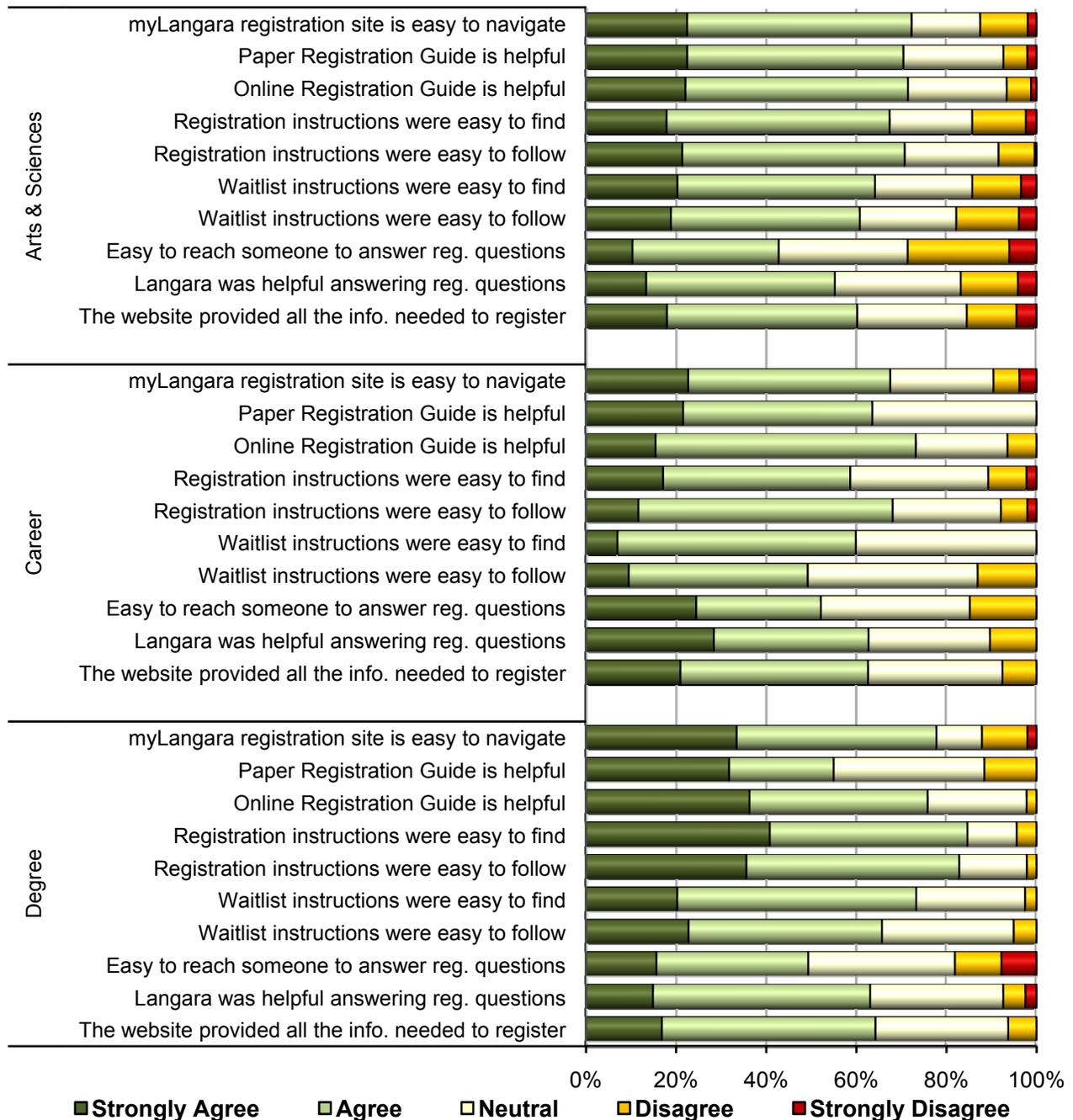
Figure 18: Registration Guide and Course Schedule Preferences



LANGARA COLLEGE CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY – FALL 2009

Among Langara’s registration services, the most positive ratings were given to “The myLangara registration website is easy to navigate”, “The online Registration Guide is helpful” and “Registration instructions were easy to follow” (72% each). Personal service areas such as “It was easy to reach someone who could answer my registration questions” received less positive responses. Returning students were more positive than new students about the paper registration guide and the ease of registration instructions. Students over age 22 were more likely to think that the online registration guide was helpful. Female students found registration instructions easier to locate. Students who had attended more than 6 terms at Langara found the waitlist instructions easier to follow and were more likely to feel that the website provided all necessary information. Second year students had the hardest time reaching someone to answer their registration questions.

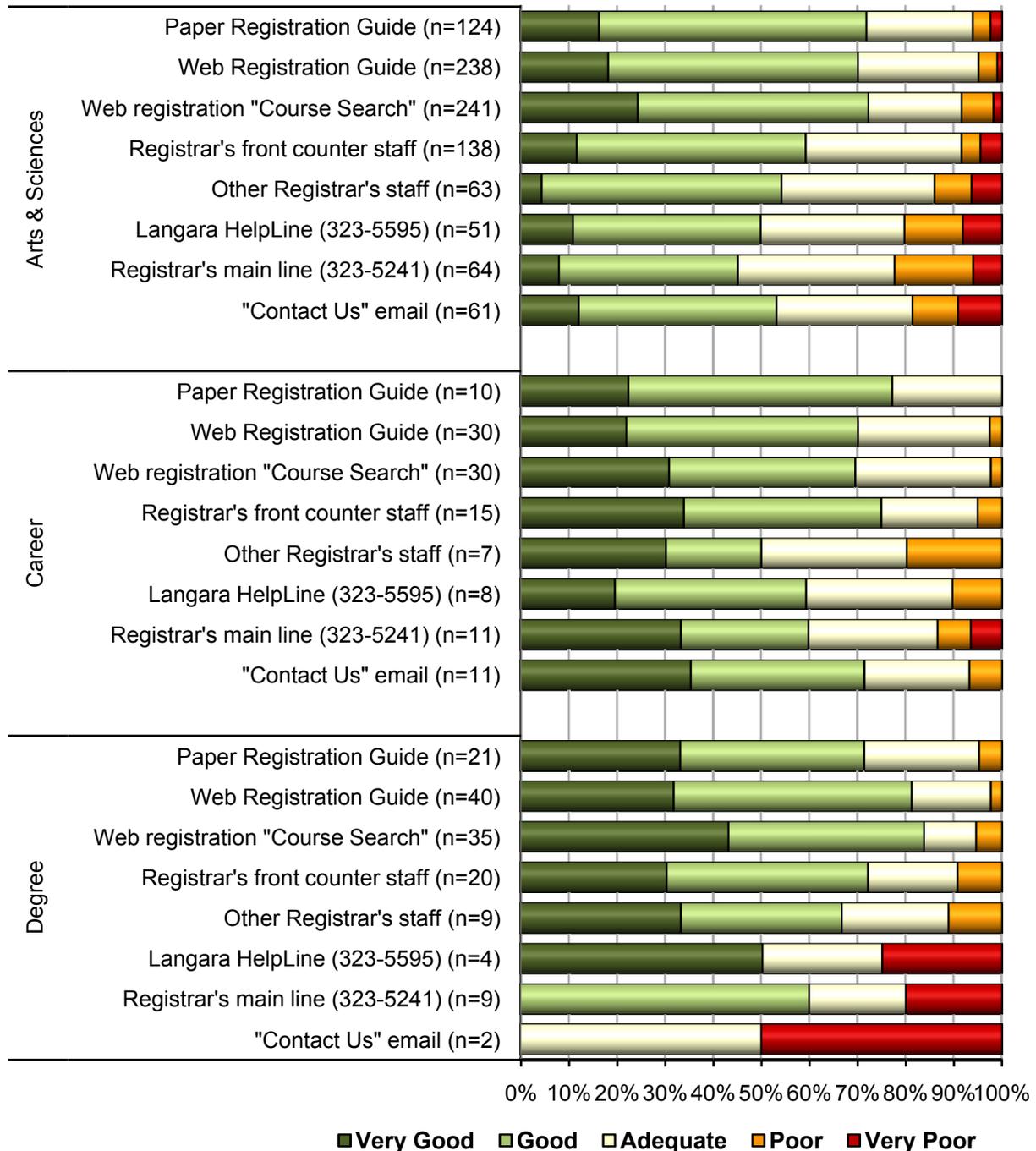
Figure 19: The Langara Registration Process



LANGARA COLLEGE CURRENT STUDENT SURVEY – FALL 2009

Registrar's Office products received relatively positive ratings, with the 'Course Search' function on the registration website being the most used and best rated service, followed closely by the Web Registration Guide. The Langara Helpline and 'Contact Us' email were the least used services. The two Registrar's Office phone lines were the most poorly rated services. There was little difference between program areas when rating Registrar's Office products, but Career/Vocational students were the most positive about the Registrar's Office staff. Newer students were less liable to use the paper registration guide and more likely to use the "Contact Us" email service. New and second year students gave less positive ratings of the web registration guide.

Figure 20: Student Ratings of Registrar's Office

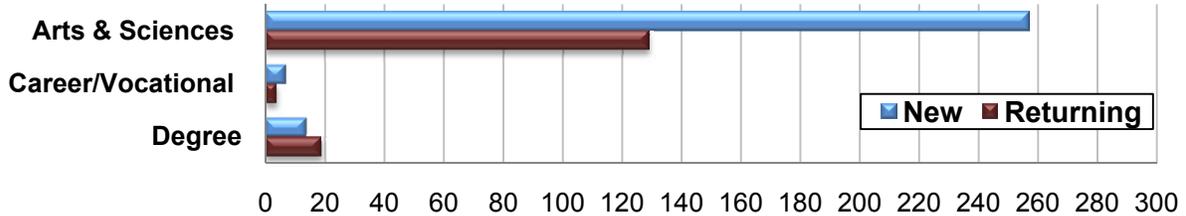


Note: 'n' specifies the number of students who indicated that they had used the service this semester.

LANGARA COURSE REGISTRATION

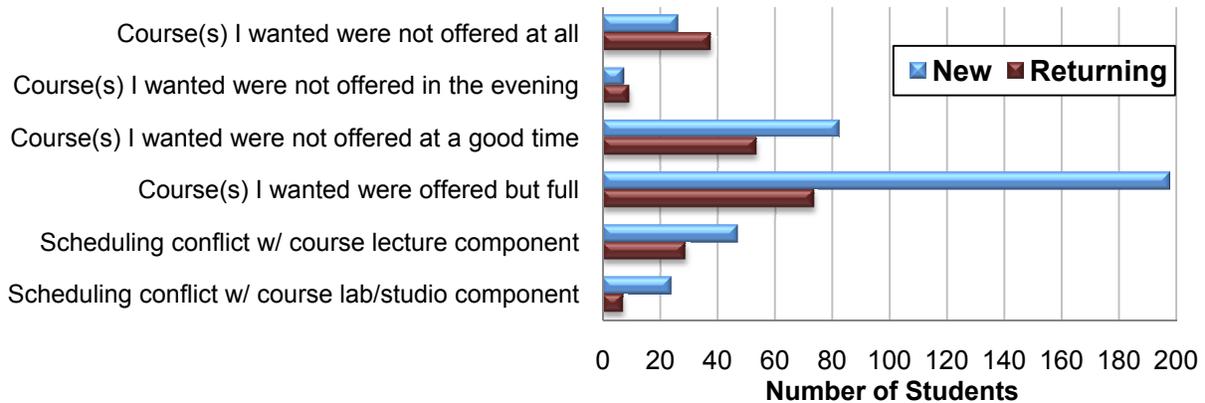
For the most part, Career/Vocational and Degree students were able to register in all the courses they wanted this Fall term. In Arts and Sciences, only 54% of new and 63% of returning students got all the courses they wanted.

Figure 21: Number of Students Not Able to Register in Desired Courses



Full courses were the largest complaint, followed by courses not fitting the students' schedule. Arts and Sciences students (particularly those who were new or had a cumulative GPA of 2.17 or below) had significantly more difficulty with full courses. Students with a CGPA of 2.17 or less were more likely to have scheduling difficulties, regardless of program area.

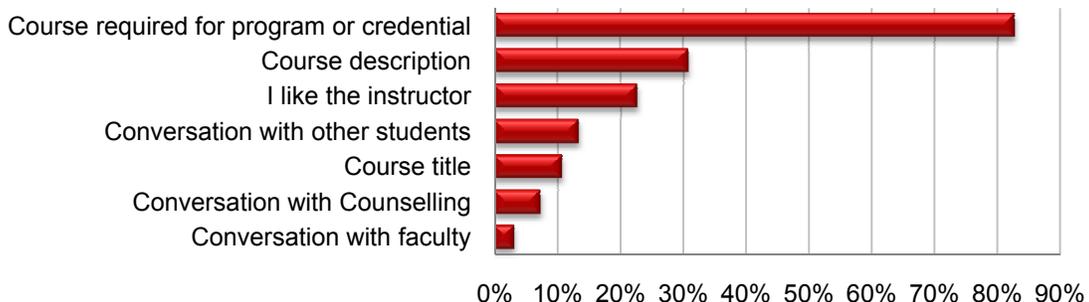
Figure 22: Why Arts & Sciences Students Could Not Register in Desired Courses



Of the 430 students who were not able to enroll in all their desired classes, 24% missed at least one course because every section was full, while 20% had scheduling conflicts that resulted in at least one missed class. Eighty-five students enrolled in one or more courses mainly because there were seats available. Sixty-five students (mostly returning Arts and Sciences students) also took courses at other institutions this term, most often at SFU or UBC.

The most influential factor in students' course selection was that the course was required (83%). This was particularly the case for full-time Career/Vocational and Degree students. Young students were the most likely to be persuaded by a course description or title. Male students were more likely to be influenced by conversations with faculty or other students.

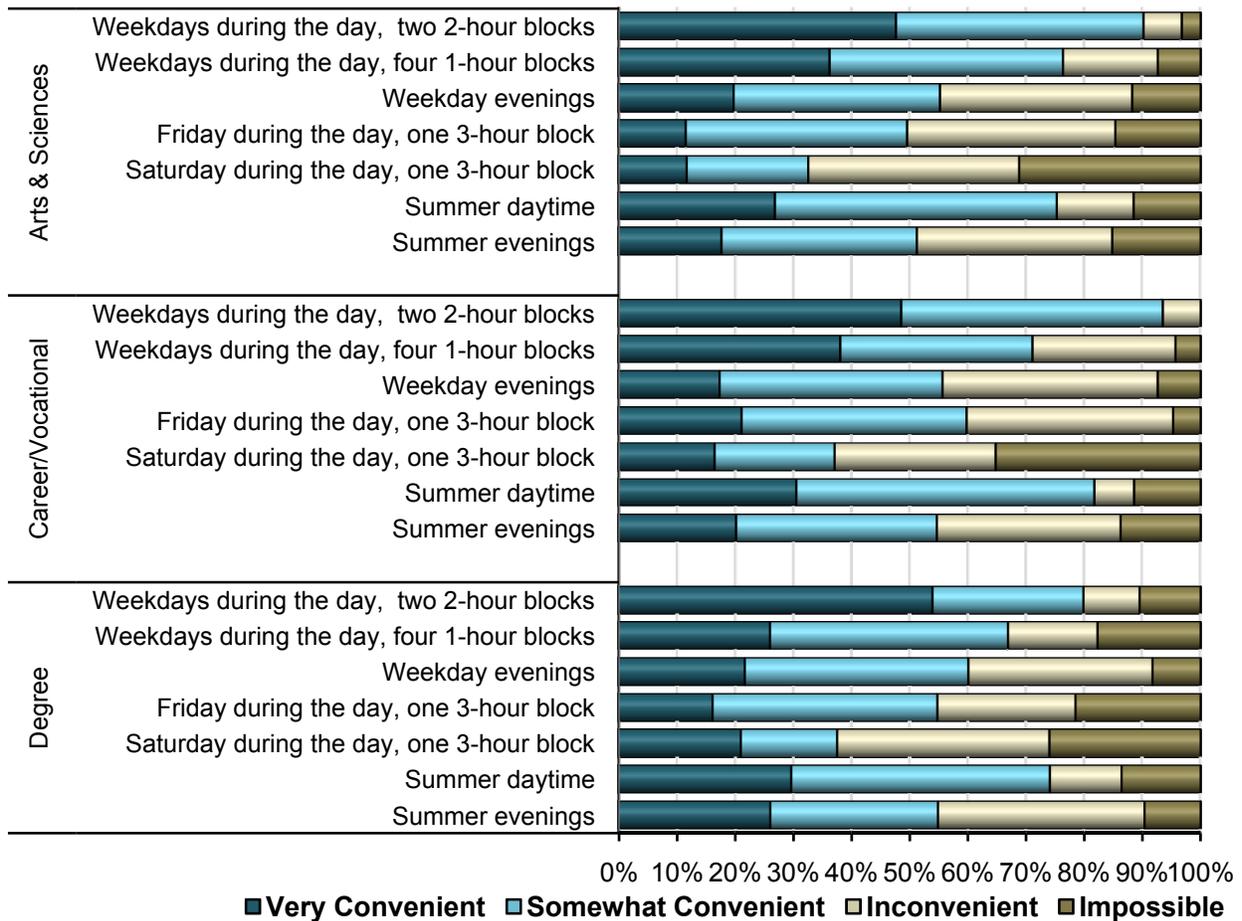
Figure 23: Influential Factors in Students' Course Selection



When asked about course scheduling, students were overwhelmingly in favour of two 2-hour daytime classes. After the 2x2 blocks, Arts and Sciences students preferred weekday four 1-hour blocks. Career/Vocational and Degree students' second choice was Summer term daytime classes. Saturday daytime classes were everyone's least favourite option.

The most influential factors with regards to scheduling were the students' age and course load. Significantly more full-time students thought that the 2x2 block was 'very convenient'. Part-time students liked the 3-hour blocks on Friday more than full-time students, and were much more apt to find the four 1-hour blocks 'impossible'. Students age 19 and younger were significantly more likely to find weekday evening classes 'inconvenient', Saturday 3-hour blocks 'impossible' and Summer evening classes either 'inconvenient' or 'impossible'. These two schedules were mainly practical for a small number of part-time students over age 19. Weekday evening classes were 'very convenient' for students over age 24.

Figure 24: Student Course Scheduling Preferences



GENERAL COMMENTS

The most common comments provided were about the cafeteria, instructors, sports and social activities and Langara Campus. Cafeteria comments were overwhelmingly negative, and mostly focused on the prices and lack of healthy food. Students gave a variety of suggestions, praise and critiques regarding instruction. Quite a few students called for more the opportunity for athletic and social activity. A lot of students like the new buildings but complain about classroom temperatures and the shortage of quiet study space. They generally approve of the Library, but some commented that that it is too loud for studying. Verbatim comments are available on request.

¹ Question taken with permission from the *Student and Information Technology in Higher Education 2007 Questionnaire*, EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research.