Student Experience Action Plan

Update
May 18, 2023

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Project Overview

In preparation for growth, we place a high value on crafting and delivering a truly *exceptional student experience*.

Using a **co-creation approach** allows SEAP to go beyond consultation to deliver a plan that reflects the diverse voices, needs and aspirations of our communities.

Since January, we have engaged with U of A communities to listen and learn about what is important for exceptional student experiences.
The project has three overarching goals:

1. **Refine:** Co-create an engaging “student experience commitment” that is unique to the U of A

2. **Plan:** Identify university steps needed to deliver that student experience

3. **Measure:** Track and report on specific metrics to monitor success
Timeline: Iterative Approach

Jan 2023

Student Engagements
Coded ~1,200 responses into 16 themes, sized based on volume of responses for each.
Staff Survey (200 responses)

Feb/Mar 2023

Continued to engage with students, staff and faculty and further refined findings into 7 themes.

April 2023

Co-creation Workshop #1
Design the first draft of our student experience commitment statement & principles.

May 2023

Student Survey to validate findings - 8,092 responses received or 19% of the student population
Faculty Feedback Form (66 responses)

Co-creation Workshop #2
Develop initiatives to deliver on commitment statement & principles

June/July 2023

Build and iterate the plan with students, staff and faculty

Sept 2023

Deliver Student Experience Action Plan

Implement & Measure
Student Experience Vision, Commitment Statement, Indigenous Worldview, & Principles
Draft Statements:

Student Experience Vision:
As members of our university, we *listen* and act together to deliver exceptional student experiences.

Student Experience Commitment:
Collectively, we nurture experiences where students explore their passions, expand their knowledge and skills, connect with communities, and find their purpose.

Indigenous Worldview:
We are all interrelated and interconnected, living, learning and working together for a balanced, supportive and healthy community with the land and with each other.
## Draft Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Includes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Connections are fostered         | We are a community that values different voices and perspectives, and fosters inclusivity with opportunities for meaningful connection. | ● Cultivated sense of belonging  
● Making friends  
● A connected and diverse community  
● Lively campus  
● Access to clubs  
● Student-driven change |
| Exploration is essential         | Every students’ journey will include opportunities for exploration that reflects their unique goals, identities, and position. | ● Managing time to balance study and life  
● Broad and varied academic experience  
● Preparation for entering and adjusting to the U of A  
● Confidence in transitioning to what’s next  
● Life in Edmonton & Camrose  
● Developing myself while I study  
● Experiential & hands-on learning |
| Challenge exists, in the right places | Students can expect to be challenged in ways that advance their learning and development, within an organization that is easy to navigate. | ● Accessible campuses  
● Supportive academic staff  
● Transparent costs  
● Agency and flexibility in learning  
● Accessible and proactive academic and administrative supports  
● Mental health and wellness supports  
● Beautiful campuses |
Student Survey

- Ran from April 3 - 21, 2023
- Promoted on our website, posters & SUTV
- 27,983 email invitations
- 8,092 responses: 19% of student population
- 5,745 were fully completed responses: 13.5% of population
- Completion rate of 71%
- This report considers fully completed & partial responses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Average Score (out of 4)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transparent &amp; Affordable Costs</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academic Agency &amp; Flexibility</td>
<td>3.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accessible Campuses</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Support Outside the Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Transitions Into &amp; Out of Study</td>
<td>2.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beautiful Campuses</td>
<td>2.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Supporting Academic Success</td>
<td>2.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Geographic Context: Edmonton &amp; Camrose</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Relationships, Connection &amp; Belonging</td>
<td>2.02</td>
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</table>
92% of respondents say affordable tuition is very important or essential to their student experience.

84% of respondents indicate having a clear understanding of how tuition and fees are spent is very important or essential to their student experience.

**Student Quote**

“Please make parking on campus more affordable and not $635 for 4 months.”

“...the lack of communication and tuition hikes while you’re in school made me not want to recommend the U of A.”
90% of respondents say clear communication of degree requirements is very important or essential to their student experience.

Flexibility looks different, to different students whether that's hybrid learning options, a flexible schedule, opportunities for experiential learning, and/or better coordination of exams and assignments.

### Academic Agency & Flexibility

#### Question Ranking (out of 53)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid learning options</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterms, assignments and exams that don't occur on weekends/evenings</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for hands-on, practical learning</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broad range of programs and course offerings</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated scheduling of midterms, assignments and exams</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to create a flexible class schedule that fits around my life</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User friendly course registration processes</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear communication of degree requirements</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

#### STUDENT QUOTE

“I wish I had known all the options for science, even after attending U of A’s open house I did not know I could take pharmacology or biochemistry because they were offered under medicine which I thought I could not directly go into.”

#### FACULTY QUOTE

“The current infrastructure and support systems must be improved. Even the initial process of registering for classes on Bear Tracks is difficult - the system is slow, crashes and there are many error messages.”
88% of respondents say feeling safe on campus at all times of day or night is very important or essential to their student experience.

79% of respondents say facilities that meet their study, social and other needs is very important or essential to their student experience.

**Student Quote:**

"My biggest challenge was breaking my leg. Accessibility was really bad, half the handicap buttons do not work."
69% of respondents say clear and easily searchable online information about on-campus support services is very important or essential.

66% of respondents say prompt or reliable access to supports (e.g., mental health supports, food bank, university health centre) is very important or essential.

Throughout my 5 years at the U of A, I have often struggled with my mental health, which has affected my academic performance and ability to make friends.

STUDENT QUOTE

UHC is amazing, always available and friendly doctors and nurses. Campus Food bank has been a life saver too.

STUDENT QUOTE
76% of respondents say support with preparing for transition to the workforce is very important or essential to their student experience.

Many students struggle with the transition into university.

“The stigma in first year where you have to feel like you have it all figured out [was very challenging]. I realized everyone was just as confused and intimidated as me.”

STUDENT QUOTE

“Entering university was difficult because I am a first generation university graduate and had little to no support planning my classes or prepping for school.”

STUDENT QUOTE

“The most negative aspect of my personal experience with U of A has been the fact that no one prepares you for real life or where to go after your degree.”
78% of respondents said clean and well-maintained campus spaces is very important or essential to their student experience.

Higher for:
- Business 81%
- Arts 81%

**Student Quote:**

"In my faculty, the building is not modernized nor quaintly old. It feels forgotten and under appreciated which transfers to my sense of pride.

**Student Quote:**

"This is a second home, it needs to be maintained so we feel at home."
70% of respondents say ability to get help from professors and TAs on coursework outside of class time is very important or essential.

Higher for:
- School of Public Health 77%
- Kinesiology, Sport & Recreation 74%
- Augustana 73%

My biggest challenge has been] that professors incorrectly assume students know how to access academic support services.

At Augustana, we don’t have access to the same resources as North Campus, e.g. state centre.
82% of respondents say feeling safe travelling to and from or near campus is very important or essential to their student experience.

73% of respondents say a hassle-free commute is very important or essential to their student experience.

STUDENT QUOTE:

"With Edmonton transit becoming more dangerous over the last few years, there should be more free parking."

"I have not been able to travel between Camrose and Edmonton [as there is no public bus]...I feel extremely isolated in Camrose due to this."
67% of respondents say making new friends is very important or essential to their student experience.

Higher for:
- International Students 75%
- Visible Minorities 70%
- Students in their First Year 69%

STUDENT QUOTE

I want a sense of community, to meet new people and try new things.

STUDENT QUOTE

The people in my student club make me feel connected to the U of A - I don’t just go to class and then go home.
Next Steps

Project Team:
- Continued synthesis of the student survey
- Begin drafting the action plan
- Test and iterate with the community

You:
- Visit and share: uab.ca/SEAP
- Contact us: seap@ualberta.ca
Leading with Purpose.