

CAMPUS SNAPSHOT

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Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the Campus Snapshot study is to gain an understanding of student perceptions of the campus environment and student life at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). The study uses reflexive photography (also referred to as photovoice) as the means of data collection and encourages participants to identify, through photographing and journaling, issues within their surroundings that are significant to them.

There are two parts to this qualitative study. The first gathers student perceptions of their campus environment—a total of fourteen UFV students participated. For the second part of the study, senior administrators were sent the student photos and associated commentary and were asked to provide their feedback. Twelve administrators, primarily members of the Campus Planning and Advisory Committee (CPAC), provided their thoughts on specific photos and journal submissions.

Six interrelated themes emerged from the student submissions: campus connections, environment, sustainability, displays of visual art, study spaces, and academic support and learning opportunities. The participants provided many examples of what they liked, what they would like to see changed or enhanced, and what they feel represents UFV. They offered suggestions for improving areas that they felt needs to change. Senior administrators were given the opportunity to respond to specific submissions, or, overall, on any particular theme.

The results suggest that the participants would like UFV to place greater emphasis on creating connections on campus. The students appreciate and like the physical environment of the campus, the many displays of visual art, and the study spaces that are available to them. Nevertheless, they would like to see UFV continue to take a leadership role in sustainability initiatives and would like greater access to existing academic support services.

The majority of responses by administrators both supported, and agreed with, the students on their observations. In some cases, students identified items that the administrators were unaware of. When students identified issues where improvement is needed, more often than not, these issues are already on the administrators' radar and they have plans or policies in place or in development.

This study highlights the need to further enhance communication about our environment so that everyone who spends time on campus can gain a better understanding and appreciation of the space, and also to learn more about future campus plans. The study provides administrators insights on specific areas that UFV can continue to develop more of and enhance to create an ideal environment for all of those who interact with it.

Introduction

There are two parts to this qualitative study. The first provides student perceptions of the campus environment and of campus life at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV). For the second part, senior administrators were sent the photos and associated commentary submitted by students and were asked to provide feedback. Part of what prompted us to conduct this study was that we just passed the 10th anniversary of a similar study our department conducted. The results of the 2006 study were shared and generated much discussion and interest from both within and outside the university.

Campus planning is an area of focus at UFV; we have several projects underway including repurposing the Esposito building and major renovations to the exterior of some buildings. Other projects are in the planning phase, such as a distributed format of the Digital Hub. All of this makes a campus environment study timely and relevant.

Similar to the 2006 study, the current Campus Snapshot Study addresses three goals:

- To gain an understanding of student perceptions of UFV's environment and campus life
- To engage students in the development of their campus
- To create a dialogue between administrators and students

Using reflexive photography (also referred to as photovoice) as the means of data collection, this study encourages participants to identify, through photographing and journaling, issues within their surroundings that are significant to them.

Student Participants

Using their mobile phones, student participants were asked to capture images that portray things that they like about UFV, things that they would like to see changed or enhanced, and things that they felt represented UFV. Participants then recorded their thoughts and reflections for each photograph via a journal submission. In instances where they would like to see something changed or enhanced, they were challenged to provide a solution. The focus of the study was on the Abbotsford campus. However, a couple of the student participants included a few submissions that highlighted the Canadian Education park (CEP) as well.

Fourteen current UFV students participated in the 2018 study and submitted a total of 172 photos. Of the 14 students, 3 (21%) were male and 11 (79%) were female. Half of the participants were 20 years old or under, while 21% (3) were between 21 and 24 years of age and 29%(4) were older than 25 years of age. Two participants indicated they were international students, one being from China and the other from India. One participant lived in Baker House and the majority of others either lived with their parents (6) or in rented off-campus housing (5).

The participants were enrolled in a variety of programs including Geography, Environmental Science, Social Work, Business, Aviation, Fine Arts, Horticulture, Biology, Qualifying Studies and Computer Information Systems. The student participants were at various levels of their academic careers, ranging from first to fourth year. Twelve of the respondents are working towards a bachelor's degree, and two are looking to achieve a diploma.

Themes

In 2006, an analysis of student submissions identified five primary themes: student support services, campus environment, student space, growth, and venues for self-expression. In 2018, growth is no longer identified as being a major theme and, although the other themes remain similar, they have evolved since the previous study. In particular, a greater emphasis was placed on the connection of space as a means of increasing community engagement and on how the campus environment provides for learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. Sustainability of the campus environment also emerged as a major theme. The following provides details on the six major themes that emerged:

1. Campus Connections: providing opportunities that encourage engagement and interactions with other students as well as providing for student needs so they are more likely to spend time on campus. These opportunities can arise in a variety of formats such as clubs, events, and places. This theme includes the marketing that creates awareness and promotes student involvement in campus-wide initiatives and participation in social events, as well as the initiatives and events themselves.

2. Environment: the university's physical environment, including the condition of the physical plant and buildings as well as campus green space and landscaping. This category includes campus access and security.

3. Sustainability: our consciousness of our natural surroundings and how we can become active participants in the greater protection of our environment. UFV supports sustainability through the promotion and enforcement of existing policies and practices.

4. Displays of Visual Art: venues or places on campus designated for the artistic expression of students, alumni, and faculty. This theme also includes installations that UFV has selected to express its values and vision or, are there to simply enhance and beautify the campus.

5. Study Spaces: areas reserved for student use to study, either individually or in groups, or for informal group discussions. Such areas are found throughout the campus.

6. Academic Support and Learning Opportunities: academic support services, programs, learning resources and tools. The evaluation of student support services includes the perceived accessibility to these spaces. This theme includes the appreciation for opportunities to learn how to conduct research; particularly for programs that have a strong connection to the physical environment such as Geography and Agriculture.

Presentation of the Initial Results

In May of 2018, an overview of the initial results, categorized by themes, was presented to the members of the Campus Planning and Advisory Committee (CPAC). This committee includes senior administrators involved in setting the high level vision, as well as the long term space planning, for UFV's campuses. At the end of the presentation, CPAC members were invited to participate in a more comprehensive way. They would be sent six surveys (one for each theme) that included the majority of student photos and journal submissions. This survey would provide administrators the opportunity to respond to the issues students raised as well as to their ideas for improvements.

Senior Administration Participation

The surveys were distributed to the CPAC members in September. The six surveys included a total of 124 photos with each having a range between 10 and 32 photo and journal submissions. After each photo, CPAC members were provided the opportunity to respond in a comment box. If they preferred, they also had an opportunity to provide general comments on all the photos at the very end. Due to the length of time it takes to review the photos and respond, they were given until early November to participate.

A total of nine CPAC members responded to at least one survey. In addition, the initial findings were presented and discussed with the dean and associate deans in the College of Arts. Some comments from these meetings are included in this report.

Final Results

The following results are grouped by the six major themes and presented with both the initial submission from the students as well as the response from the senior administrators. Student participants indicated whether they liked the space, would like to see it changed or enhanced, or that the space is something they feel represents UFV; each photo and journal submission notes what they selected. In several instances, student participants took multiple photos of the same item and, in most of these cases, only one photo was selected. Regardless, the general content and intention of the journal submissions was preserved. Photo and quote credits were identified for each individual participant. The Photo Titles are included as provided by the student participants.

Theme 1: Campus Connections

Defined as the opportunities that encourage engagement and interactions with other students as well as accommodating student needs so they are more likely to spend time on campus. These opportunities can arise in a variety of formats: clubs, events, and places being some. This theme includes the marketing that creates awareness and promotes student involvement in campus-wide initiatives and participation in social events, as well as the initiatives and events themselves.

People have a strong need to feel connected. One way to improve this is to better advertise clubs and events that bring students together. There were several appeals made, from both students and administrators, about the need for more food choices as well as a need to extend the hours when food is available. When students stay late or attend classes on weekends, they have no choice but to leave the campus for food or to simply purchase snacks from one of the vending machines.

Providing study rooms and computer labs for extended hours is also something students and administrators recognized as being needed. Students want to be able to stay on campus and know that they will have access to food and to the spaces that support their academic studies. They would also like to see other spaces such as the campus gyms be resourced appropriately in order to make them usable.

Better access to food and food choices: With UFV's population growing there are more people staying on campus. Students have noticed how early things close on campus as well as the lack of food options they have. Once food service has closed for the day, students need to leave campus in order to get any food other than that available in vending machines. Having extended hours during the week and increased, even if limited, hours on the weekends would make a big positive impact on the students. Administrators agree with the need for the food service hours being extended as well having more variety for food options.

The kitchen spaces provided on campus are well used by students. It gives them an opportunity to bring in food to make a meal while they are on campus. These spaces are particular important given the lack of choices to purchase food. These spaces also make students feel at home and can also be used by clubs and activities that happen on campus.

"The kitchen spaces provided gives the campus a feeling being home. We can store our food in the fridges and heat it up as we go through the day."

Participant #5

Biology

Like 

"Providing access to kitchen facilities, particularly microwaves and fridges, is so important to helping students to see UFV as a home away from home and to building community on campus."

Administrator

1 - Kitchen (SUB)



Photo credit Participant 6

2 - Campus Life/Food services



Photo by participant #13

“Some students come here early in the morning and work until it’s late and campus closes. I think it is important to have at least limited hours on the weekends, and extended hours on Fridays for food at UFV student’s prime source of nutrition: Tim Hortons.”

Participant #13
Biology
Change/Enhance

“We need to consider how we can offer extended food services to our students.”

Administrator

“Is it possible for the cafeteria to provide a daily vegetarian option or premade vegetarian/vegan options in the fridge?”

Administrator

When everyone goes home right after class, this makes it challenging for students to make friends and can lead to feelings of isolation. This participant emphasizes the point by showing how quiet the campus is on Friday afternoons (Photo 3). An administrator responds by noting that the campus is actually “home to many students and yet, in off hours, it doesn’t feel that way. The campus is beautiful, but it is isolated.”

The picture features an out of place figure that's meant to seem like a ghost. It represents how empty the campus is on Friday nights, or in general the social isolation that can occur at UFV. I've heard many people express that it's difficult to make friends at UFV, and that it's a "commuter school" where people go to classes then go home. I find this sad! When I stay until ~3pm on Fridays, it really does feel like I could see a ghost instead of another living person. Modernicide refers to a "killing of modern people" referring to the ghost figure, but also questions where all the people are.”

Participant #5
Biology
Change/Enhance

“With more international students –that tend to really see UFV as their home—it is important for the university to make UFV a place where students don’t suffer from modernicide. Could a room or two in the SUB be open 24/7 in case someone needs a warm, safe place to go?”

Administrator

3 - Modernicide



Photo by participant #5

Creating a sense of community via events, clubs, and activities: Bringing students together for events can help create a greater sense of community. It encourages people to come out and connect with each other. As one student notes, “Being part of student clubs is easily my most favorite part of UFV. The majority of friends I have made and people I have met at UFV were due to clubs. These clubs helped me break out of my shell, while doing something wonderful for the community and while making friendships that will last long after we cross the convocation stage at graduation.”

4 - Yellow Wall Movie Night?



Photo by participant #6

“I heard that this yellow wall used to host outdoor car movie nights, I wonder if that is still happening?”

Participant #6

Visual Arts

Like 

“I love yellow wall movie night--pick a Thursday evening in the summer and make it happen :)”

Administrator

“Great idea”

Administrator

Another student suggests that food is a great way to encourage participation at events. “One of my favorite parts of UFV (and I think I can speak for the entire student body on this) is all the great events that offer free food! Coming from a smaller university sure has its advantages when these kinds of events are hosted. They not only promote a sense of belonging, they spread joy.” Other suggestions include having outdoor movie nights (Photo 4), a block party or hiding geocaches in various spots on campus to encourage exploration.

Creating more connections via better marketing: Students want to connect with one another and creating more awareness of student run clubs or events that are happening would be welcome. As Photo 5 illustrates, the bulletin boards can provide a lot of useful information but are sometimes confusing: there is so much advertised on them and many events posted have passed. One student participant suggests that if they were tidied up more regularly events would have better turn outs. Several students suggest creating awareness of clubs (Photo 6) and events would help encourage engagement and participation rather than putting on more events.

5 - Bulletin Boards

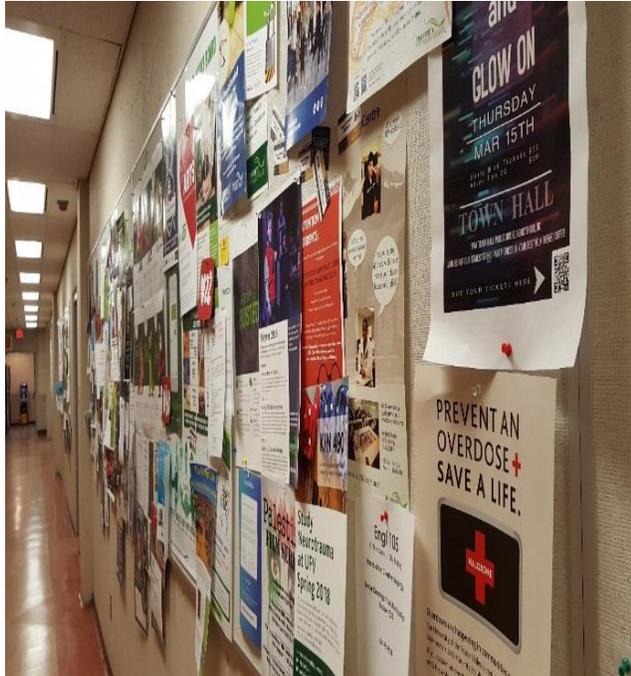


Photo by participant #6

“Having never taken the time to look at the bulletin boards, I suddenly have an appreciation for them. I found two entries for \$50-dollar gift cards. Maybe there should be someone who can filter through the things and tidy them up?”

Participants #4a/b
Business/Aviation

Change/Enhance & Like

“They are useful for finding out what is going on. It could be improved by keeping postings up to date.”

Participant #7
Horticulture

Change/Enhance & Like

5.1

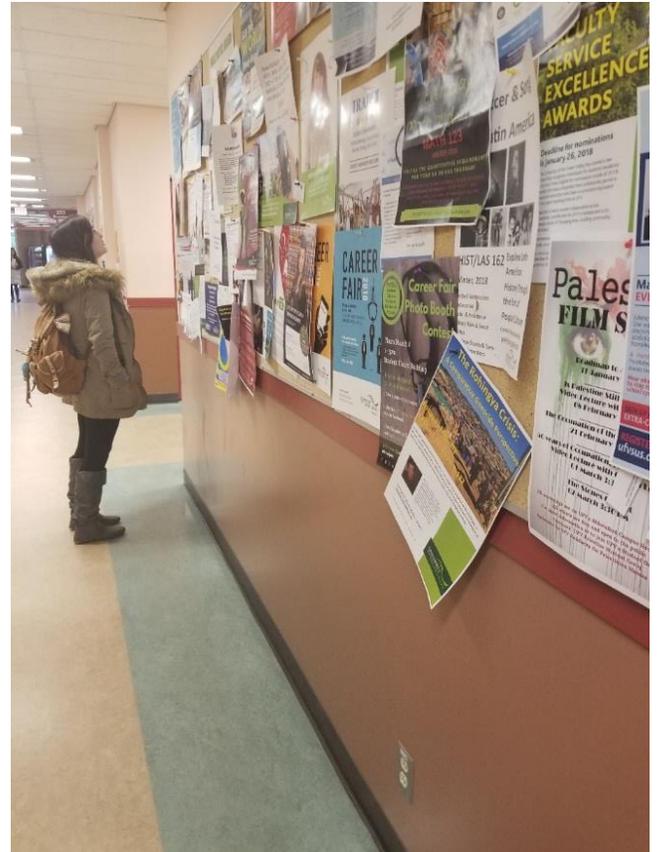


Photo by participants #4a/b

“It would be beneficial to advertise or host events each semester for recruitment and advertising. Creating awareness about who can join would be great.”

Participants #6
Visual Arts
Change/Enhance

6 - Awareness and Student Engagement of UFV's Clubs

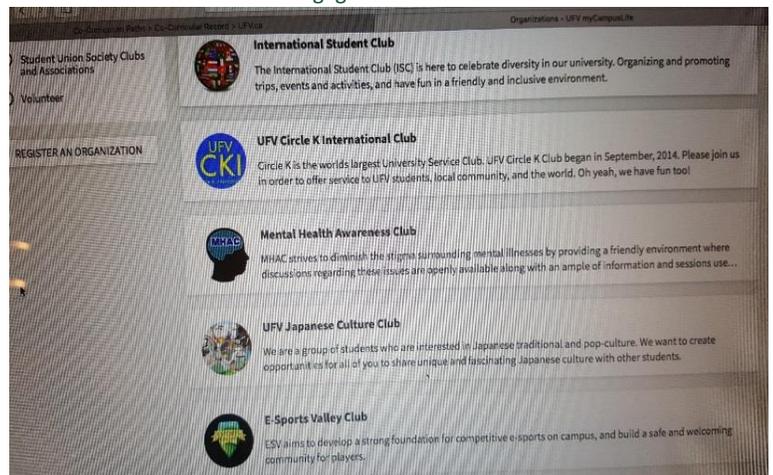


Photo by participant #6

Promoting health and wellness: There are many resources available for students that promote health and wellness as well as self-care. One participant notes that, “resources for mental health help represent UFV as they show that this is not just a school but a place to feel safe and welcome.” Another participant suggests improvements to the exercise rooms would be beneficial for many students. Students often find themselves going to the local recreation centre since UFV’s gyms do not provide the equipment and space that they are looking for. Student health and wellness is one of our priorities, investing in our gyms should be considered.

7 - Campus Gyms (Abby & CEP)

“The campus gyms are great, but they don’t offer enough equipment and students often find themselves paying extra to go to places that do.”

Participant #3
Social Work

Change/Enhance & Like 

“Student wellness is one of our priorities, let’s spend some money and get a bigger, better gym.”

Administrator



Photo by participant #3

Perceptions of equity and inclusivity: As noted by one participant, UFV’s spaces, like the multi-faith room, speak to UFV’s commitment to diversity and respect for others. Another participant identifies an area of inequality when it comes to providing feminine hygiene products (Photo 8). These spaces and actions (or inactions) provide students with a sense of equality and inclusion on campus.

8 - “I Have No Tampon, and I Must Bleed”



Photo by participant #5

“I’m trying to question why it is that I can get free condoms on campus, but not feminine hygiene products.”

Participant #5
Biology
Change/Enhance

“They’re coming!”

Administrator

Theme 2: Environment

This theme is defined as the university's physical environment, including the condition of the physical plant and buildings as well as campus green space and landscaping. This category includes campus access and security.

Everyone enjoys the campus's natural surroundings. They recognize the importance of our outdoor spaces and appreciate that we have views of the outdoors available from areas all over campus. Students particularly appreciate the new buildings like the Student Union Building and natural spaces that highlight our culture and history. Parking and the lack of available parking spaces was a concern, and the maintenance of some areas were identified. Administrators generally agreed with the students and could relate personally to many of the comments.

Beautiful UFV: Heading outside and walking through the green to meet up with fellow students after a long class is one of the many things our students look forward to while on campus. In addition to the campus green, the views of Mt. Baker and the integration of the natural environment on campus were mentioned by several students as something that they love about UFV. One administrator agreed noting that, "Our physical campus is one of our major strengths and should be recognized as such – maybe this could make it into UFV's strategic plan, it is that important."

"One of the things I enjoy about UFV is heading outside after a long lecture and walking through the green to get to the next building with my friends."

Participant #13

Biology

Like 

"We are fortunate to live in such a beautiful and abundant place! What can we do to preserve sightlines, and natural elements of our campus plan?"

Administrator

9 - Campus Life



Photo by participant #13

There were also some misconceptions about the marsh/retention pond area that borders along the campus green. Many students are unaware that research activity takes place in this area and that it has been intentionally left in its natural state. There are a couple of signs posted but they tend to be more of a "keep out" rather than providing details on this protected natural area.

10 - Environment



Photo by participant #15

"This area behind the marsh is mixed and disorderly and full with plants and disorderly."

Participant #15

Finance

Change/Enhance

" This space should be left in its natural state, as the student has equated gardens and parks with nature, and this mini-wetland provides diversity, environmental services and a learning space for Biology and Geography."

Administrator

Several UFV buildings were also highlighted in this study. In particular, the new Student Union Building (SUB) and the Agriculture building at Canada Education Park were emphasized as things that students liked and appreciated. One student even recognized how the buildings and the environment are directly connected to their ability to learn and how this is part of what UFV represents.

11 - UFV Chilliwack

"I believe this photo represents UFV because it shows both the beautiful environment (geographically and emotionally) to learn in and the high quality (agricultural) resources available for us to properly put our knowledge to use to become the best we can."

Participant #7

Represents UFV

"Both Abbotsford and CEP are beautiful campuses with wonderful grounds that we aim to beautify even more over the coming years."

Administrator



Photo by participant #7

Another student highlights the groups of cedar trees on campus and their significance to the Stó:lō Nation traditions and beliefs. One administrator admits that they weren't aware of this and another recognizes that we could do more to showcase indigenous plants and landmarks campus.

12 - Educational Boundary Trees

"Those 4 groups of Western Red cedars, which depict the educational boundary agreement upon the Stó:lō Nation traditional (unceded) land with the university are a great piece of culture and history that represents the University of the Fraser Valley."

Participant #1
Geography

Represents UFV ✓

"Wonderful imagery observed in the Red cedars on campus - we should do more to highlight/celebrate indigenous plants and landmarks on or near campus."

Administrator

"Didn't know this. Signage may assist? (Or maybe I missed it somehow)"

Administrator



Photo by participant #1

Areas of improvement: Students take pride in their school and the state of the existing physical buildings and environment play a large role in this. They notice when the infrastructure starts to show signs of decay or neglect but may not be aware of the plans that are underway to

remedy this. One administrator notes that "UFV is entering into an exciting time where we will be renewing the building exterior of buildings D and A." This "coming soon" project might not be as well known by students and others who are using these buildings

13a - Curb appeal



Photo by participant #3

13b - Curb appeal



Photos by participant #3

"I really like UFV, and the insides of the buildings are generally pretty decent, as are the exteriors of the newer buildings, but walking up to Bldg A, which is likely most people's first impression of the school fills one with a distinct sense of "...meh".

Dirty walls with mismatched paint touch ups, uneven paving stones with moss creeping up between the cracks, and stairs that are perhaps more effective as rainwater reservoirs than a way to increase your physical elevation are not very reflective of how awesome our school is."

Participant #3
Social Work
Change/Enhance

"Building D and A-East will get a much needed face-lift..."
Administrator

The parking challenge: Particularly during peak times, parking continues to challenge students as they arrive at university and have to drive around and search for parking spots. As one student comments that they may see a parking spot but then are beaten to it by someone who has driven in the wrong direction to take the spot. Other times parking is only found in poorly maintained gravel parking lots. One administrator recognized this issue and notes that "there is room for improvement in the organization of parking at UFV." Administrators also agree that there is a need for increased enforcement that may help alleviate some of the issues.

The gravel lot was noted by several student participants with some suggesting to pave it and another suggesting to plant grass between the parking spaces. An administrator clarifies that "this parking lot was intentionally made gravel so that a future building could be located there – rather than ripping up asphalt and dumping it into landfill. However, gravel does require more regular maintenance to keep it passable."

14 - Parking



Photo by participant #15

"This parking lot always has pot holes. It is in desperate need of maintenance."

Participant 4a/b
Business/Aviation
Change/Enhance

"As a frequent 'parker' in the gravel lot the pot holes are a bit of a problem. The maintenance crew does what they can to fill them in when they can but during rainy periods it is impossible to keep up."
Administrator

Finding your way around campus: All too often you will notice people looking very lost while looking at our campus maps, hoping someone will stop and offer assistance. The new markers on campus are helpful but improvements can still be made. One administrator ponders if moving to building names (rather than letters) might also help.

“Can we not orient the maps a little better?”

Participant #2
Environmental Science
Change/Enhance ☒

“A simple rotation of the maps will alleviate any confusion of the layout of the campus.”

Participant #1
Geography
Change/Enhance ☒

“Maps on campus are counterintuitive – perhaps this a project for Geography students to take on?”

Administrator

“Rotating the maps to the location would be helpful - I have talked to many students and visitors who are lost while standing in front of the maps.”

Administrator

15 - Map Orientation



Photo by participant #2

Theme 3: Sustainability

This theme is defined as our consciousness of our natural surroundings and how we can become active participants in the greater protection of our environment. UFV supports sustainability through the promotion and enforcement of existing policies and practices.

Several student participants supported UFV’s sustainability initiatives. They want to participate in the campus sustainability programs, be it with recycling or the clean-up of garbage and yard waste around the campus. They want to maintain our campus environment and, one student even identified UFV’s colours with that of sustainability. What can we do to encourage or support the campus population to become further involved?

UFV goes green: Students want to participate and contribute to these initiatives and they made several suggestions around our existing recycling program. Administrators were very supportive and appreciated the students interest and contribution to these initiatives.

“There are refuse disposal stations in convenient locations in every building. This station is outside the washrooms in building C.”

Participant #14
Fine Arts
Like 

“These pictures are not as branched out as they could be.”

Participant #6
Visual Arts
Change/Enhance

“I know UFV holds events that explain garbage and recycling--keep these going!”

Administrator

16 - Facilities



Photo by participant #14

Maintaining our campus environment: A couple of student participants noted that there are pockets of the campus that can be subject to garbage waste. Along similar lines, an administrator commented that clean up after an event seems to be much slower and landscaping and upkeep could be better. The administrator suggested that maybe students or departments could sign up to take care of parts of the campus, just the way people “adopt” a part of a road or highway.

17 - Trash



Photo by participant #2

“I often find when walking through the forested spaces at school that you come across piles of trash.”

Participant #2
Environmental Sciences
Change/Enhance

“Our beautiful campus is an important resource for our university, we need to maintain and invest in it.”

Administrator

Our campus's natural surroundings are one of the things that makes UFV so appealing and why we need to encourage everyone to do their part to take good care of it. Participant #11 comments how our school colour aligns and is associated with sustainability. Another participant suggests that it would be nice to see other initiatives that promote sustainability such as having green roofs.

“UFV campus is located with beautiful views, scenery, trees that all together make up our entire campus even more appealing.... UFV is concerned about sustainability and green is the color of sustainability.

Here at U.F.V, grow trees, go green”

Participant #11
Computer Information Systems

Like 

18 - Environment



Photo by participant #11

Theme 4: Displays of Visual Art

This theme includes venues or places on campus designated for the artistic expression of students, alumni, and faculty. This theme also includes installations that UFV has selected to express its values and vision or, are there to simply enhance and beautify the campus.

Everyone enjoys the art that is displayed throughout the university. One student suggested that informative signage about the art on display would be beneficial. The art gallery is another way to engage students. Administrators agree that this is an important part of our campus environment. One administrator supports the ideas and thoughts by the students but notes the need for better organization of what we are currently doing. *“I was amazed at the effort students put into writing about the art displays on campus. It shows just how important this is to students. The university has a resource in its visual arts, theatre, and graphic and digital design programs that can provide art on campus. Art on campus is already happening, we just need structures, both organizational as well as resource, in place to allow this to grow and flourish. The structure will also facilitate UFV being able to house and display work from external artists.”*

Information about art pieces: UFV has many art pieces which would benefit from proper signage that identifies the artist as well as what the art piece is about. Administrators agree that signage for the art on display needs to be addressed.

19 - Indigenous component

“This is actually something I really like other than we (regular, everyday people) have no clue about. There is now a beautiful display of a wheel thing (I do know it is a Stó:lō textile wheel as I asked the man building it). The problem which should be addressed is signage...”

Participant #1
Geography
Change/Enhance

“Signage for art displays needs to be addressed.”
Administrator



Photo by participant #1

An appreciation of art: The art that is displayed throughout UFV gives the hallways and areas a more creative feel. The art gallery is a great place for UFV students to showcase their work. The library and other departments have also decided to purchase and showcase student art works. Supporting students by displaying their work speaks to all students. Participant #3 comments that “I love the big, high impact artwork that we have in certain areas in the school. Helps the hallways feel less bland, as well as make it feel like more of a creative space. I would love to see more of this.” Another student suggests that we should have an “artist in residence” similar to what we have for writers.

20 - Art gallery at UFV

“I like that there is an art gallery for UFV students and people who present their works. I know it has been there for a long time, but it's a nice aesthetic and gets students engaged when there is something to showcase.”

Participant #6
Visual Arts
Like 

“Should there be a curator for the visual art? Would it help diversify the art we have?”

Administrator



Photo by participant #6

Integration with the environment and learning: Spaces that could benefit from our students' talents should also be considered as a way to showcase and integrate visual arts within our campus environment.

21 - Student expression



Photo by participant #6

“Art created by students and is a part of course work. This also makes UFV a more creative campus, utilizing plain structures to create a more exciting, fun, and pleasant atmosphere.”

Participant #6
Visual Arts

Like 

A visual expression of UFV's identity: Through our displays, students see UFV as an inclusive campus. Several student participants commented on the photo display in building B and how the “art installed around campus provides something that pleases everyone's taste.” Our international students see the SUB with flags from all over the world and they see the large photographs in building C with the pictures from various countries, and it makes them feel welcome. Local students see the same displays and are encouraged to look beyond their own community. It aligns with our institutional learning outcome of contributing both regionally and globally. As one student participant notes that these images “connect us to the outside world.”

22 - The Flags



Photo by participant #16

“The flags (in the SUB) represent UFV's multiculturalistic campus.”

Participant #6
Visual Arts
Represents UFV ✓

“Agree...a gorgeous feature in our student union building.”

Administrator

23 - Globalization

“...Being an international student, it just feels like home at U.F.V. In building C you can see all these pictures from various countries around the globe...”

Participant #11
Computer Information Systems
Represents UFV & Likes ✓👍



Photo by participant #11

Theme 5: Study Spaces

This theme includes areas reserved for student use to study, either individually or in groups, or for informal group discussions. Such areas are found throughout the campus.

Students are grateful for the various study spaces that are located around campus. Participants would like there to be more spaces for individuals as well as an increase in group study spaces. Many participants expressed their appreciation for the new seating as it provides greater flexibility and different ways to study. An administrator notes that these spaces are very important so that students can “share and connect with others.”

Spaces to connect with each other: Having places to promote the interaction of students who have similar interests is important, even more so for commuter campuses such as ours. One administrator states that “whether they are social or study lounges, sleep pods, study tables, chairs in hallways and outside – students need space to study outside of class – otherwise they go home. We want them to stay on campus as long as possible.”

24 - Lounges

“I like that there are places for certain organization or departments, like the Global Lounge for International students (which can also be open to anyone really).”

Participant #6
Visual Arts
Like 👍

“It is very important that students be provided with spaces to share and connect with others.”

Administrator



Photo by participant #6

White boards encourage learning everywhere: Having study rooms and white boards throughout the campus allow students to problem solve and collaborate in a creative way. Administrators see the importance of students being able to work together in a space that allows them to brainstorm and share ideas.

25 - Study Space



Photo by participant #15

“The white boards on campus give students a chance to present their ideas and be more creative. Also, this adds more of a cultural atmosphere on campus.”

Participant #15

Finance

Like

“Being able to show students work greatly improves learning through problem solving, accountability and collaboration.”

Administrator

Popular spots to study: The additional seating and new furniture located throughout the campus is greatly appreciated by students. It provides them a comfortable place to study, visit, and enjoy the views of the campus. Student participants value the flexibility of these spaces and that UFV has put resources into making existing study spaces better. Administrators added to this by commenting that the new furniture was intended to make studying more comfortable and that the injection of colour was intentional since “colour stimulates the brain.” They also note the importance of “connecting to the outdoor space” as a way to promote learning.

Student participants feel that there is large demand for more study rooms (like in the library) and one administrator suggests the need for an additional study/eating area (similar to the one in Building A by Spirit Bear Café).

26 - Informal Study Spaces

“I’ve got to say that I love these comfy chairs in D building, it would be really cool to see these in more areas of the school.”

Participant #3

Social Work

Like & Change/Enhance

“Out-of-class spaces are as important as in-class spaces. It is good to see UFV investing in these important learning spaces. More outdoor learning spaces are required.”

Administrator



Photo by participant #3

Theme 6: Academic Support and Learning Opportunities

This theme includes academic support services, programs, learning resources and tools. The evaluation of student support services includes the perceived accessibility to these spaces. This theme includes the appreciation for opportunities to learn how to conduct research; particularly for programs that have a strong connection to the physical environment such as Geography and Agriculture.

Students and senior administrators recognize the importance of the support and resources provided and how they can impact student success. Both the students and administrators see the importance of learning within the classroom environment as well as through other experiential learning activities. The spaces that UFV provides need to be accessible and accommodating to the needs of our learners. For example, student participants mentioned that there is a need to extend the hours for computer labs for students. Both administrators and students would like to know how this can potentially be accomplished.

Support for students: The resources that UFV currently provides for the students are prized. The Academic Success Centre, Math and Stats Centre, and the Upgrading and University Prep department were all noted as important resources to help students reach their academic goals. Students also look forward to fun events that provide support during stressful times of the year, such as the Long Night Against Procrastination. There was a request to expand some of the resources to the Chilliwack campus. Administrators are happy to see that students recognize and use the resources that are provided for them. One administrator notes, *“Many small initiatives can have a big impact.”*

27 - Student support services



Photo by participant #11

“Academic Success Centre is a very valuable resource. You can walk in or make an appointment online. They are patient, understanding and advise students and help provide solutions to problems at any step with their academics.”

Participant #11
Computer Information Systems

Like 

“Great example of collaborating across boundaries.”

Administrator

Access to support spaces and to the campus: Students have expressed a desire in seeing the campus open later at night and on the weekends. The administrators agree that the campus should consider extending the hours our campus is open so we can add “learning at any time” to our goal of “learning everywhere.”

28 - Lab Hours



Photo by participants #4a/b

“When you have a group project and can only meet once a week at 8:30 pm having the lab open until 10:00 pm isn’t enough time to work together.”

Participants #4a/b
Business/Aviation
Change/Enhance ☒

“Students who work during the week wish the campus would consider extending the hours of availability on the weekends.”

Participant #6
Visual Arts
Change/Enhance ☒

“We need to be open more on evenings and weekends, particularly Sundays.”

Administrator

“We need to be open longer.”

Administrator

Learning in spaces beyond the classroom: Our campus environment provides many opportunities to connect teaching, research, and learning for students without even leaving the campus. As one administrator notes “there are many learning opportunities right before us.” Students appreciate all of the opportunities that they have to participate in research and would even like these opportunities

extended to first and second year students. Students also appreciate the spaces that they can come to that support their studies and encourage their engagement in their discipline (Photo 30). An administrator acknowledges the importance of these spaces to study and also collaborate.

“I appreciate the micro-habitats that they are able to use without the need to travel to remote places.”

Participant #1
Geography

Like 🍷

“There should be more field study opportunities/use of the forest.”

Administrator

“Experiential learning through research – great learning opportunities.”

Administrator

29 - Research in progress



Photo by participant #11

30 - Student Study Space



Photo by participant #1

“Where would many of us students be if it wasn't for the study spaces provided by the university/departments.”

Participant #1
Geography

Like 

“These spaces are as important as in-class spaces”

Administrator

Summary of Findings

The results of this study illustrate how student participants perceive and interact with their campus environment. They provide numerous examples of how they would like UFV to place a greater emphasis on creating connections through events and spaces. The students truly appreciate and like the physical environment of the campus, the many displays of visual art, and the study spaces that are available to them. However, they would like to see UFV continue to take a leadership role in sustainability initiatives and would like greater access to existing academic support services.

The majority of responses by administrators both supported and agreed with the students on their observations. In some cases, students identified things that the administrators weren't aware of. More often than not, students identified things that are already on the administrators' radar and for which there are plans or policies in place or in development. This study highlights the need to further enhance communications about our environment so that everyone who spends time on campus can gain a better understanding and appreciation of the spaces.

As one administrator notes, the campus is a home to many. However, it is also a second home to many more. Our spaces and access to them can greatly enhance our experiences. Through intentional and strategic choices our campus can be a place that promotes learning in every way and at any time. As one student participant illustrates (Photo 31), an academic journey can face many hurdles. Hopefully, by addressing some of the concerns raised, UFV can reduce and even remove some of them.

31 - "Great things are done when men and mountains meet." - William Blake



"The mountain I'm standing atop represents all the hurdles I've overcome and I will overcome by pursuing my post secondary education."

Participant #5

Biology

Represents UFV ✓

"So typical of the challenges that students face when obtaining a postsecondary education. Their successes need to be celebrated. Great metaphor."

Administrator