2017 Applicant Survey: Summary

Survey Purpose

The 2017 Applicant Survey is a four-year follow-up to the 2013 Applicant Survey. In 2013, the survey was conducted to provide essential feedback to the UFV Admissions Task Force and MARCOM. For the 2017 Applicant Survey, its purpose was two-fold:

> • To inform UFV Education Plan and SEM Plan initiatives and focuses by enabling discussions on the intersection between applicant's goals, needs, and perspectives with the goals and priorities in these plans, and

> • To inform academic and administrative areas of applicant perspectives on UFV supports, services, and application process.

Survey Details

In May and June 2017, all undergraduate UFV applicants for the 2017 Fall Semester (4422 applicants) were given an opportunity to fill out a survey about their awareness of and experience with UFV. Respondents were asked to assess their application process and a range of student services, and to describe their background and their study and career plans. The survey resulted in an overall response rate of 13% (n=514) with 388 complete and 126 incomplete surveys in comparison to the 2013 Applicant Survey which generated a 16% response rate with 514 useable surveys (for more information on the 2013 Applicant Survey, please see **Appendix 1**). For this analysis, only the responses from those who fully completed the survey are included. The following summary provides an overview of the key findings of the survey.

Respondents' Profile

To ensure inclusivity, for the 2017 survey, multiple gender indicators were provided. Of the survey completers (n=388), female respondents (n=273) outnumbered male respondents (n=106) by a ratio of 2.6:1. Another small group of participants indicated either transgender or neither male nor female gender status or chose not to respond to this question. Approximately 64% of applicants were in the 17-18-year old age group, with 24% more respondents between 19 and 24 years of age. Around 50% of respondents live in the Fraser Valley College Region, including Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Mission.
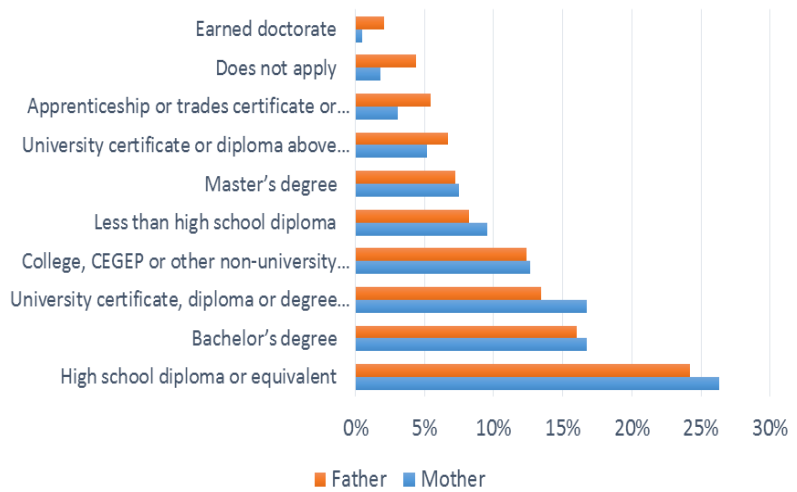
Top five responses to selected demographic questions are presented below.

Where do you live?		What language do you speak at home? (all that apply)		Which program did you apply to?	
Abbotsford	27.8%	English	91.2%	BA	20.4%
Chilliwack	16.2%	Punjabi/ Hindi/Other	16.8%	BSc	19.8%
Langley Aldergrove	11.6%	French	4.6%	BBA	9.3%
Surrey North	9.0%	Chinese - all	4.4%	BA Crim Justice	4.9%
Mission	7.2%	Spanish	3.1%	BSc Nursing	4.9%

60% of respondents were graduating from high school in 2017 while another 24% indicated that their highest level of education was a high school diploma or equivalent (pre-2017). Only 1% of respondents had not achieved a high school diploma or higher upon filling out the survey.
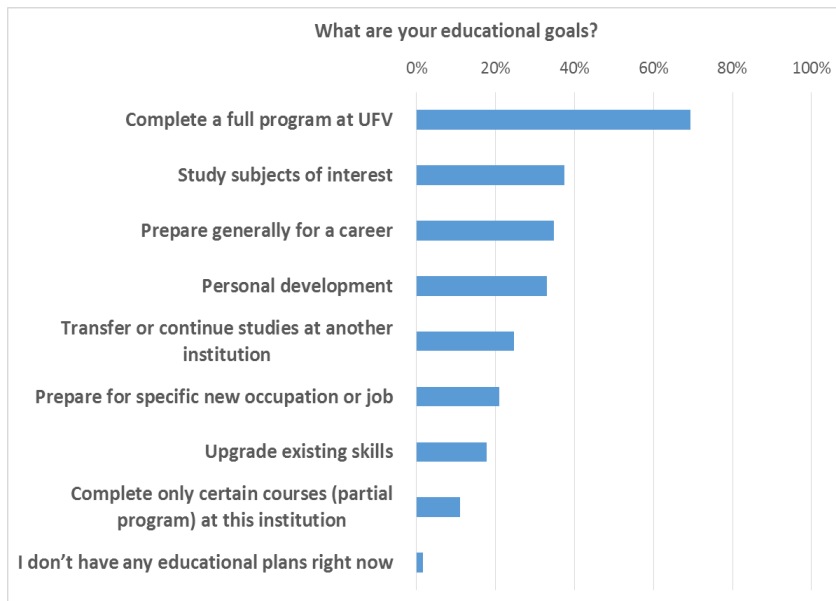
42% (n=164) of the applicants were first generation university students[1]: roughly 60% of their fathers and 50% of their mothers did not receive any college or university education. However, if we also exclude any parent who has an education level of "College/CECEP non-university certificate or diploma" from the grouping that determines a first generation student, then the percentage of first generation applicants falls to 30% (n=117).

Parents/Guardians Highest Level of Education

Educational Goals

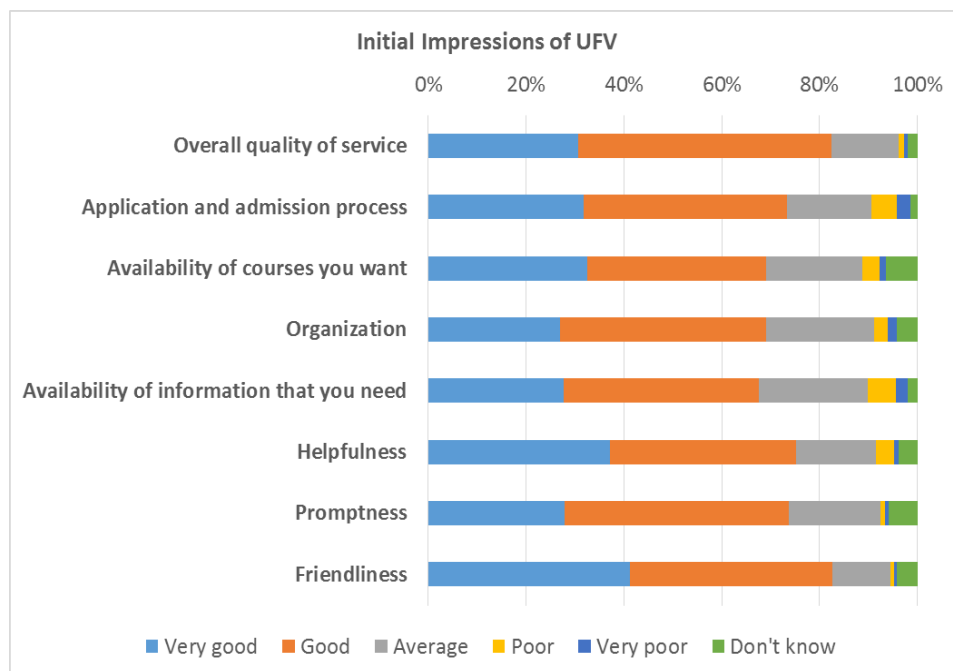Some 45% of applicants applied solely to UFV and to no other universities. Among UFV-offered credentials, 60% of respondents are seeking a Degree, 14% plan on pursuing a Masters' and 11% would like to obtain a Diploma. Approximately 68% of respondents hope "a great deal" to be a UFV student in the fall, and 81% - to be in their program of choice. About 89% have very clear and somewhat clear career goals while 92% indicate that they are very to somewhat clear on their educational goals. One-third (33.2%) of respondents

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[1] To determine "first generation student," both mother and father's highest level of education was "less than HS diploma," "HS diploma," "College/CEGEP non-university certificate or diploma," or "Trades/Apprenticeship."

indicate that they are much clearer on their educational plans compared to six months ago.

Finances (26%), admittance to another institution (19%), and lack of convenient transportation (18%) are quoted as the main likely barriers to becoming a UFV student.

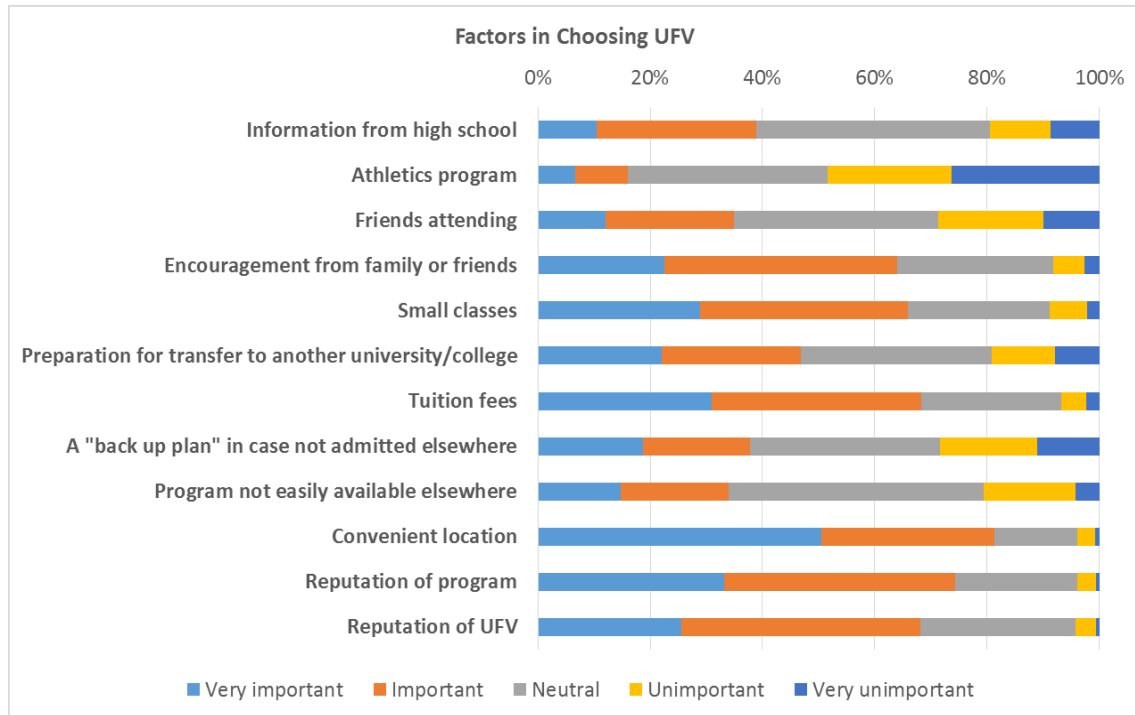## Impressions of UFV

Initial Impressions of UFV

The overwhelming majority of the applicants have a positive impression of UFV. The availability of information is one of the perceived drawbacks (8% of respondents ranked it "Poor" or "Very Poor") and for some, the application and admissions process was not a positive experience (8% poor or very poor).

Of all student services, advising is the most used by applicants (58% of respondents indicate that they have used it), and almost all of the respondents who have used it are very or somewhat satisfied with the services (90% of respondents who used Advising).

	% Used	% Missing	% of those who used Services			
			Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Advising	58%	1%	50%	40%	8%	2%
Counselling	25%	1%	59%	35%	1%	5%
Financial Aid	25%	1%	36%	40%	16%	8%
Disability Resource Centre	12%	1%	40%	51%	4%	4%
Advising Centre	39%	1%	63%	29%	7%	1%
Indigenous Student Centre	10%	2%	44%	49%	3%	5%
Other	9%	35%	42%	50%	3%	6%

The respondents rank "convenient location" as the number one factor for choosing UFV. It was important (either "Very Important" or "Important") to about 80% of applicants. The reputation of the program (74%), the reputation of UFV (68%), and tuition fees (68%) also played an important role.

Factors in Choosing UFV

Most important factors that triggered initial interest in UFV are (multiple choices possible):

- Parents/ Guardians/ Relatives (49%)
- Peers/ Friends your own age (41%)
- Guidance counsellors/Advisors (24%)
- UFV website (24%)

Least important factors that triggered initial interest in UFV are (multiple choices possible):

- Stories about UFV in the news (3%)
- UFV presence at a career or education fair (9%)
- Direct communication with UFV faculty or staff (9%)

Application Process

Around 87% of applicants used the UFV website for submitting their application, 2% dropped off a hard copy, and 7% applied online through ApplyBC. 94% of applicants submitted interim grades (6% were not required to submit them), and 79% of respondents who submitted the grades found the process straightforward or somewhat straightforward.
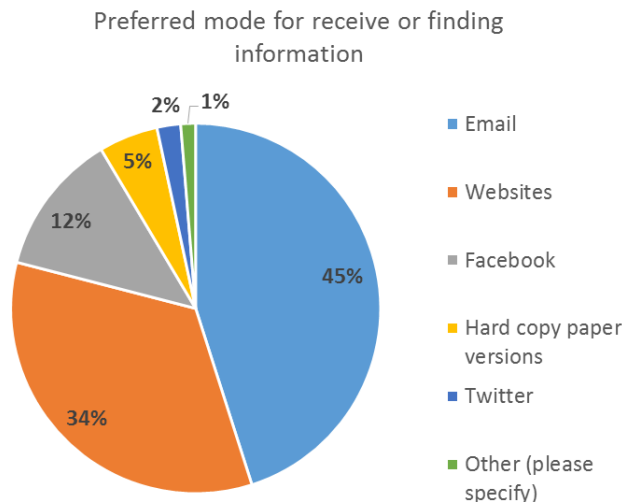
Up to 39% strongly agree that the application process was well-informed, clear, and with easy to follow instructions. 42% to 52% have some doubts ("somewhat agree"), and up to 23% ("somewhat/strongly disagree") disagree with one or more statements. In particular, 23% of respondents somewhat to strongly disagreed that the application instructions on the UFV website were clear and easy to follow.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Don't know	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I knew what to expect after I had submitted application	27%	52%	2%	15%	4%
The letter confirming my application was clear about the next steps	39%	44%	3%	9%	4%
Finding information about application requirements was easy	34%	44%	1%	16%	5%
Application instructions on the UFV website were clear and easy to follow	34%	42%	2%	18%	5%

Media Sources of Information

Email (45%) and websites (34%) are the media sources used to give, receive, or find information by survey respondents.

In selecting multiple media sources that respondents like to receive or find information, almost 50% of respondents indicated that like to utilize hard copy paper versions but only 5% specified that this was their preferred mode for obtain information.

Preferred mode for receive or finding information

- Email
- Websites
- Facebook
- Hard copy paper versions
- Twitter
- Other (please specify)

Orientation

Did you attend the "Start Your Journey" student orientation at UFV?	#	%
No	210	13%
Yes	152	87%
Total	**362**	100%

Of those who responded to the question, 42% (152) respondents attended the "Start Your Journey" orientation held in May 2017. 87% found this session useful while 13% indicated that they did not find it useful.

The majority of participants in the orientation found the session very helpful and as one applicant expressed, "*it's very overwhelming for some people coming out of high school but the orientation took some of that stress away with the information they gave us.*" This sentiment was voiced by many who attended the orientation session(s).

> "*it's very overwhelming for some people coming out of high school but the orientation took some of that stress away with the information they gave us .*"

Suggestions to improve the orientation from the few that were not satisfied include providing specific program information for each program as "*it only focused on the bigger programs*" and having faculty for various programs attending the orientation so that students could "*meet the teachers and have them explain their program and how they run their classes*." In addition, one respondent noted that much of the tour was to locations that the student wouldn't be going to and the respondent suggested "*maybe different tours for different programs? Like not worrying about taking students in the science program to see all the arts stuff, but also have full campus tours for those that want them.*"

Do you plan on attending the second orientation "Continue Your Journey" offered at UFV before the fall term?	#	%
No	162	45%
Yes	195	55%
Grand Total	**357**	**100%**

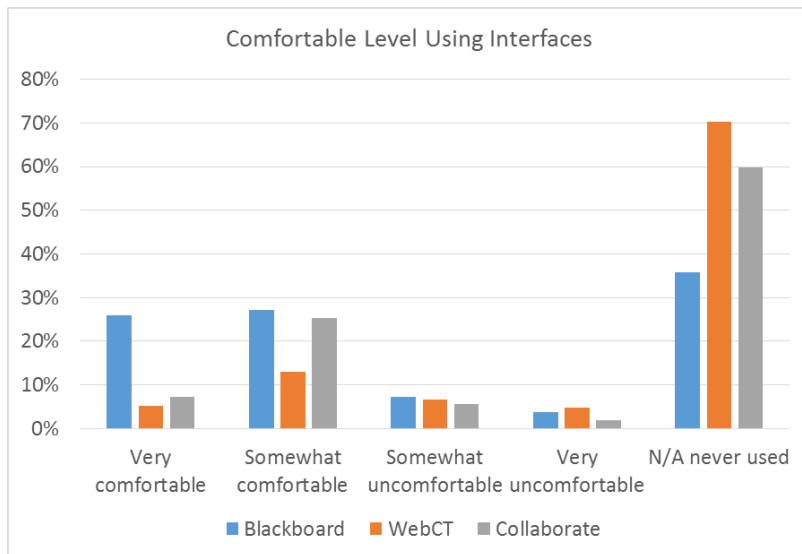Interestingly, more than half of the survey respondents (n=195) plan on attending the second orientation held in August 2017.

Preferred Learning

Class Environments

When asked to select all preferred learning settings, a majority of respondents selected "in a small/medium classroom on campus" (82%). Other locations with equal proportions of responses included "in a lab setting on campus" (27%), "outdoors on campus" (27%), and "in a professional setting" (27%).
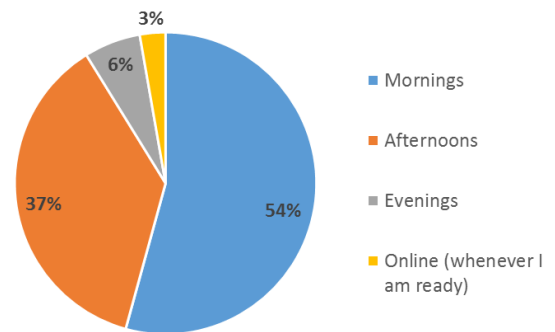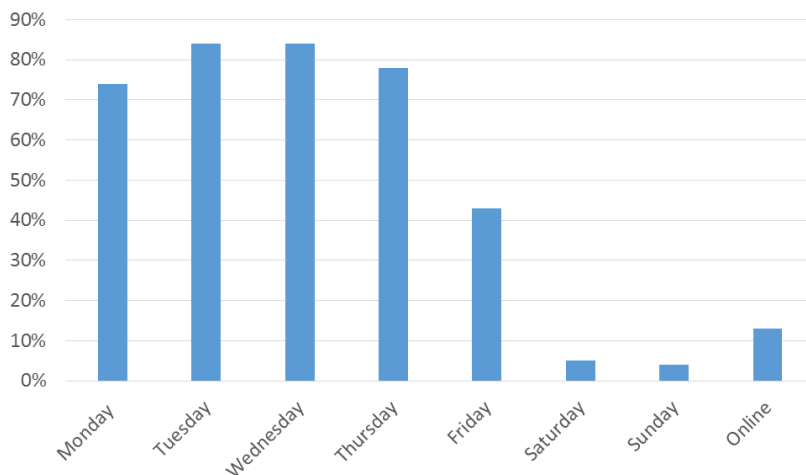
Interfaces

Over half of the respondents (53%) have used and are somewhat to very comfortable with Blackboard while 70% indicate that they have never used WebCT and of those who have, only 18% are very or somewhat comfortable using it.

Time of Day/ Days of the Week

Survey participants were asked which times of the day and days of the week that they preferred to take their classes (select all that apply). More than half of respondents (54%) indicated that they prefer mornings, followed by afternoons (37%) for taking classes.

Legend:
- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Evenings
- Online (whenever I am ready)

Pie chart values: 54%, 37%, 6%, 3%
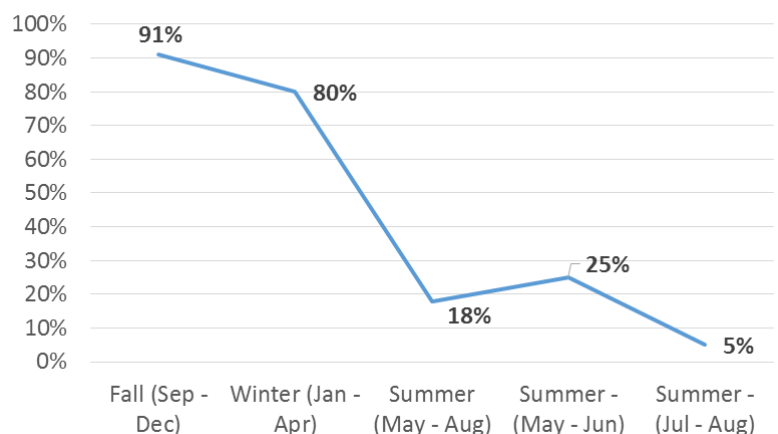
Preferred Days of the Week for Classes

Tuesdays (84%), Wednesdays (84%) and Thursdays (78%) were the most preferred days of the week to take classes for these respondents.
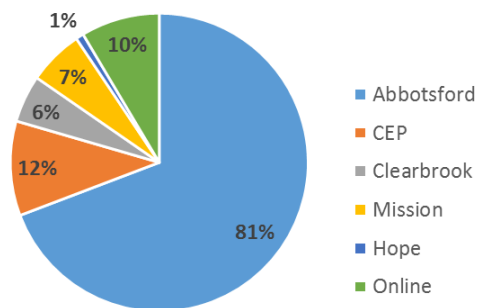
Semesters

The majority of respondents indicated that the fall is a preferred semester to takes classes (91%), followed by winter (80%), and summer – May to June (25%).

Preferred Semesters to Take Classes

Line chart values: Fall (Sep - Dec) 91%, Winter (Jan - Apr) 80%, Summer (May - Aug) 18%, Summer - (May - Jun) 25%, Summer - (Jul - Aug) 5%

Campuses

By far, Abbotsford is the most preferred campus to take classes by respondents. Program and city of residence may also be a factor in respondent's choices of where they prefer to take their classes.

Legend:
- Abbotsford — 81%
- CEP — 12%
- Clearbrook — 6%
- Mission — 7%
- Hope — 1%
- Online — 10%

Experiential Learning

Survey participants rated paid experiential learning opportunities as of the most benefit to them. "Participating in a paid co-op work placement" (83%) and "participating in a 'work study' paid position at UFV" (78%) generated the most interest followed by "participating in a non-paid field experience" (71%).

	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Somewhat uninterested	Completely uninterested	Does not apply to me	% Very/Some what Interested
Participating in a paid co-op work placement while in my program	52%	31%	6%	2%	8%	83%
Participating in a non-paid field experience (work placement in your field of study)	23%	48%	16%	4%	8%	71%
Participating in student teaching	18%	32%	26%	11%	13%	50%
Participating in a clinical placement	14%	26%	21%	12%	27%	40%
Participating in a study abroad program (in Canada or abroad)	38%	29%	14%	8%	11%	67%
Participating in a study tour (in Canada or abroad)	35%	32%	14%	8%	10%	67%
Participating in a "work study" paid position at UFV	37%	41%	9%	4%	9%	78%
Working with a faculty member on a research program	25%	33%	18%	10%	14%	58%
Participating in a learning community where students take two or more classes together	22%	46%	17%	6%	8%	68%
Holding a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	20%	27%	28%	14%	11%	47%

Perceptions of Positive Aspects and Areas for Improvement

The respondents were asked to comment on what they appreciated in their dealings with UFV and what they would change about their experiences. The respondents left 100 comments in the "drawbacks" section and 196 comments in the "positive sides" section.

The content analysis of the comments identified that the major positive theme is the helpfulness of the staff at the institution. Fortunately, the most frequently used suggestion to improve is "nothing" (84

occurrences), and this is supported by "not change anything" (24 occurrences). Besides the latter comment about UFV experiences, the top five themes in areas for improvement and in positive perceptions are listed below.

Positive Aspects	Number of occurrences
Helpfulness (willingness to help, helpful staff)	87
Friendliness	51
Communication & Prompt responses	31
Advisors and counselors (knowledgeable and supportive)	29

Areas for Improvement	Number of occurrences
Information, Communication (insufficient, confusing)	29
Website (confusing, not working properly; difficult to navigate)	24
Registration (clearer instructions when and how to register)	23
Courses (difficult to get into the needed ones; signing up for is complicated)	15

A few applicants' suggestions on improving the improving information availability, registration and the website:

"The application process is very unclear. I had difficulties making sure everything was done. Especially since in the first one in my family to do higher education. So I had no guidance, and would of liked more information."

"I had a hard time finding out times for admission into courses and figuring out exactly what to do to make a schedule. If exact times and a "how to register for courses" link were added, that would improve the experience."

"Send out or mail hard copies of the time and date for class registrations just so its more clear to the new students. Ufv login site gets a bit overwhelming for a (high school) graduating student."

"A less confusing website, program/courses wise. It was very hard as a high school student trying to navigate the website to see what program to apply for. Random links would take to you to different pages, and its hard to learn."

"Make the web page clearer. There's a lot of places where you can get information but it is confusing"

"I would've really loved recieving an email from the university confirming or declining my acceptance."

"I would change how you provide information about everything that needs to be done in order for you to be accepted in to the program because it says some things online and then others you get emailed to you and then some you're told at the information session so i would have absolutely everything you need on one list either online or emailed to you once you apply."

"I wish there was more word on how to be more involved with the school, and if there's any athletic sports that I can join in on as well as if there's any fun events held at the school as well."" So many scholarship donors would like to see proof if admission. A physical letter, or one in a linked document would be so useful to send on."

Appendix 1:   Applicant Survey 2013