



Strategic Planning Survey Results Simon Fraser University

June 10, 2022

Presentation

Prepared by Academica Group



Agenda

- 1 Context, Purpose & Method
- 2 Results
- 3 Key Findings
- 4 Questions & Discussion

Context

- Two options were shared with the SFU community to gather input during Phase One of the *SFU: What's Next* strategic planning process:
 - Community consultation via the online discussion tool, ThoughtExchange
 - Online survey
- Both activities are being summarized and will be shared back to the community over the summer.
- Phase Two will include multiple round table discussions, both intimate and larger in scale, peer-to-peer student engagement as well as audience-specific town halls.





Survey Purpose

Gather broad input from SFU students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, partners and others who have a vested interest in the future of SFU as part of the *SFU: What's Next* process





Method

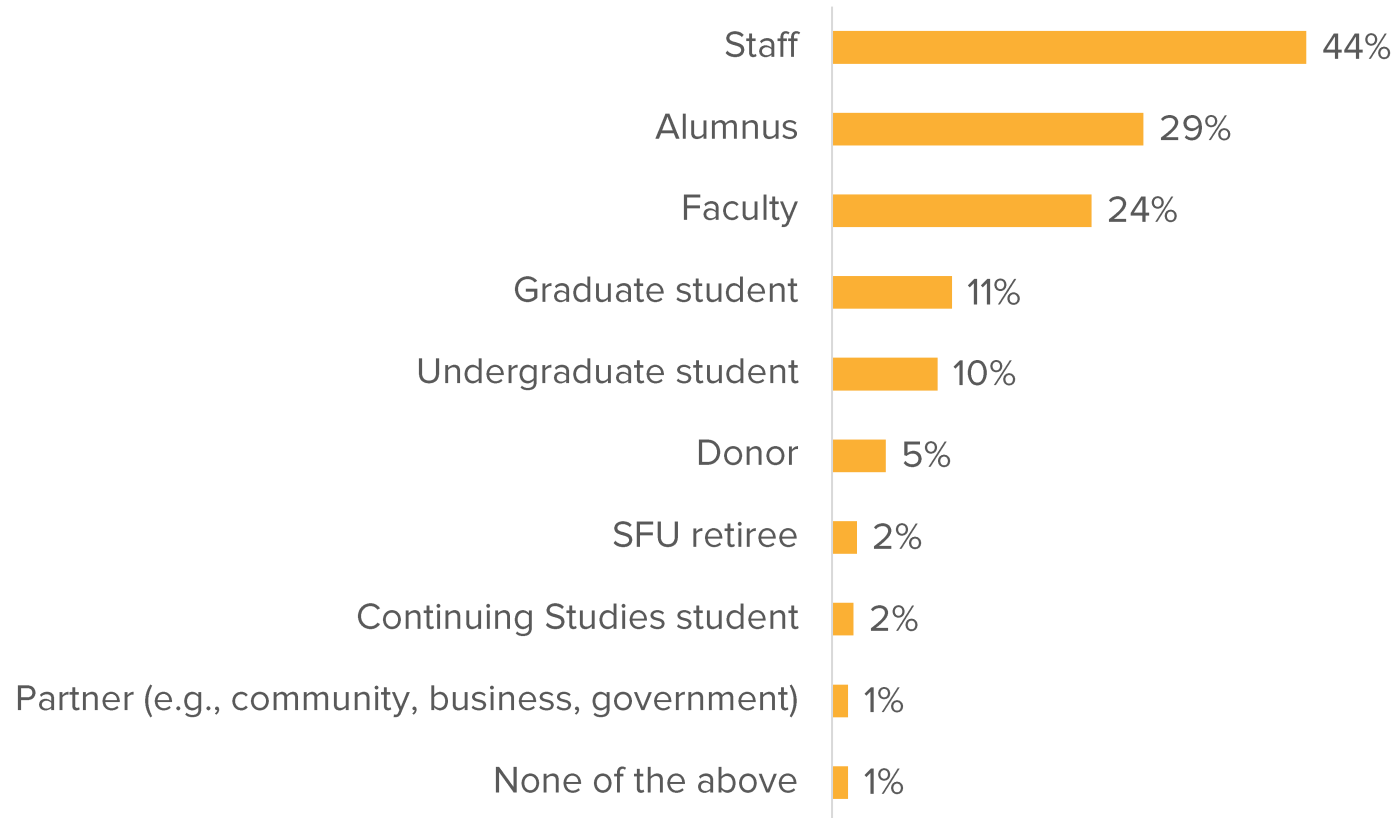
- Online survey between April 4 and May 1, 2022.
 - Survey questions were developed collaboratively by Academica and the SFU Strategic Planning project team.
 - SFU stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and partners were invited to complete the survey through a variety of communications channels.
 - 601 SFU stakeholders completed the survey.
 - Open-ended survey questions were analyzed by multiple coders. Two researchers at Academica Group independently coded the same random sample of 50 responses for each open-ended question, then compared coding to come to consensus on preliminary codes/theme groupings and language used. The rest of the coding was done by one researcher, using the preliminary coding frame as a reference and returning multiple times to each question to ensure coding was consistent.
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Survey Results

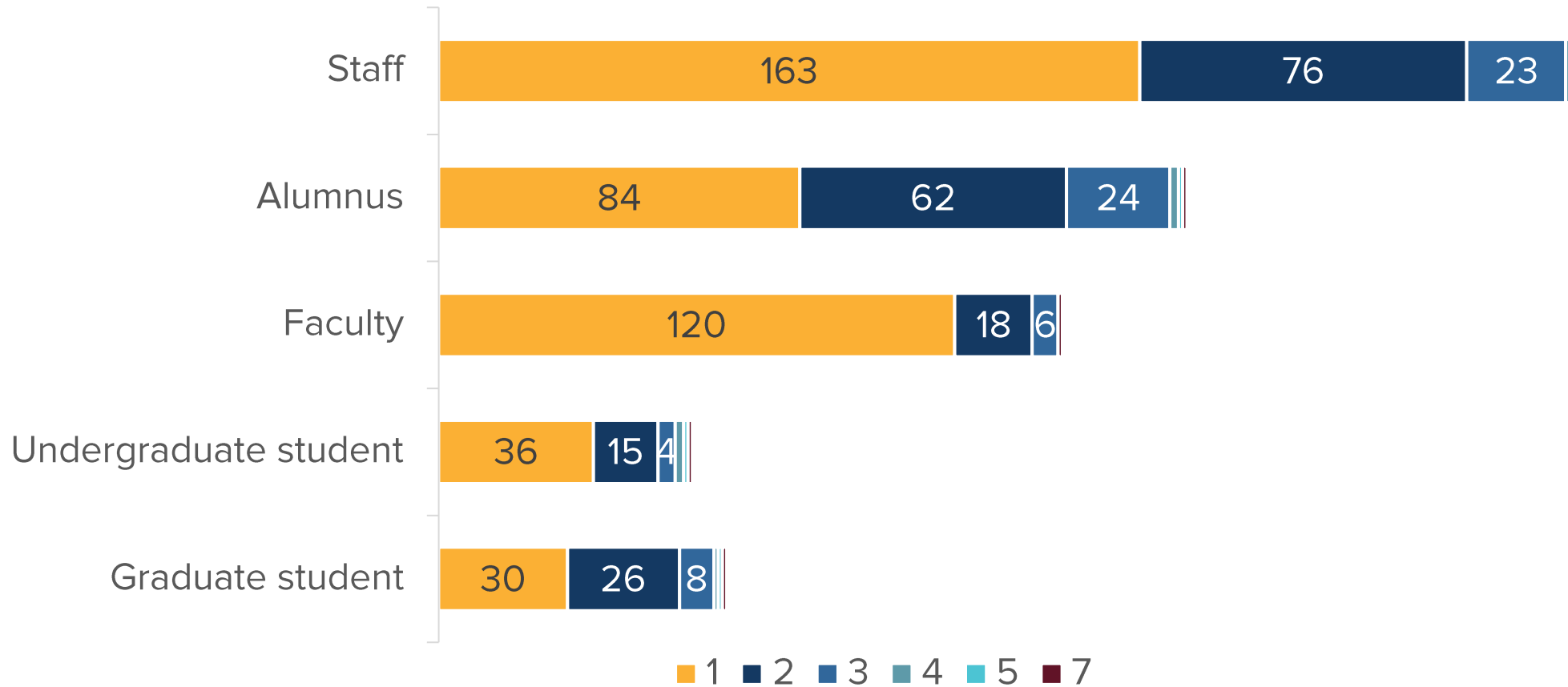
Relationship with SFU



Number of Selections	n
1	459
2	109
3	29
4	2
5	1
7	1

n = 601; Which of the following best describes your relationship with SFU? Please select all that apply.

Number of Selections by Relationship



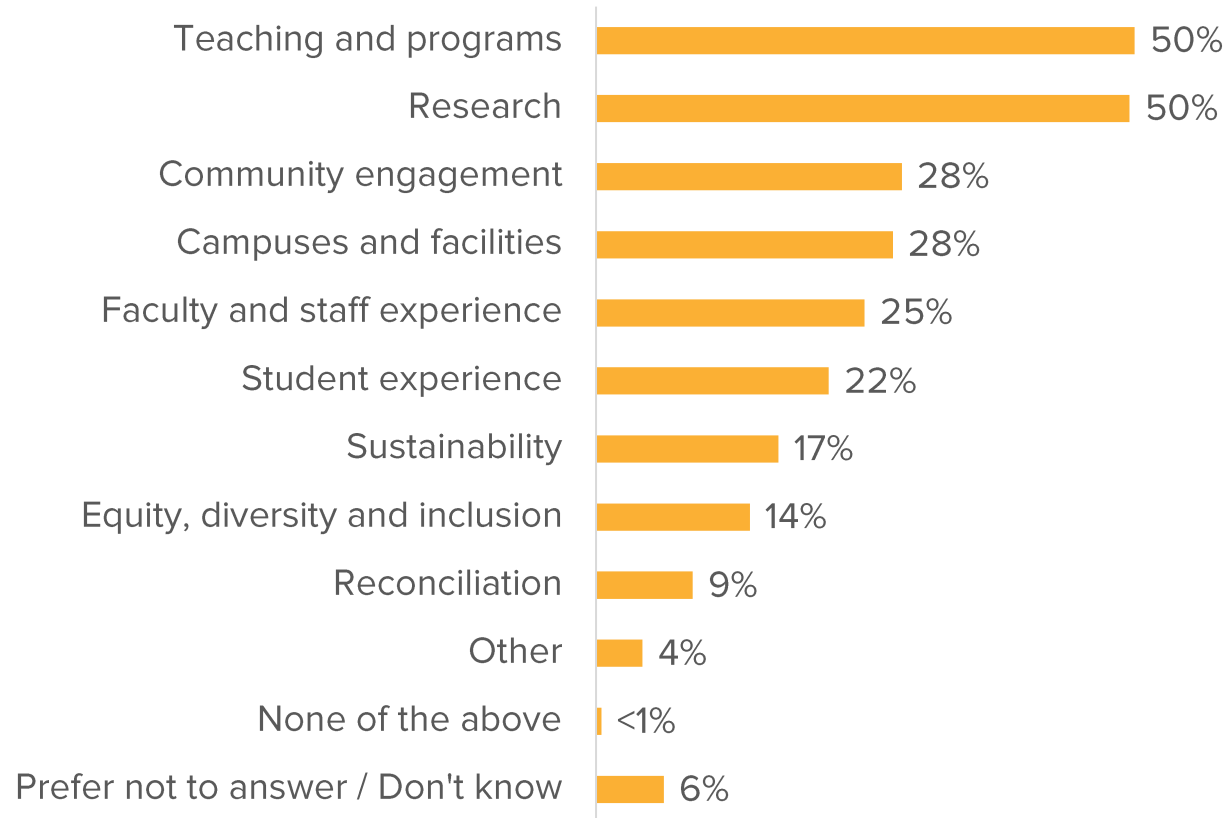
n = 601; Which of the following best describes your relationship with SFU? Please select all that apply.

Number of Selections by Relationship

	Staff	Alumnus	Faculty	Graduate student	Undergrad student	Donor	SFU retiree	Continuing Studies student	Partner	None of the above	NET
Staff	265	61	8	30	14	14	0	5	3	0	265
Alumnus	61	174	12	10	11	20	2	3	7	0	174
Faculty	8	12	145	4	2	6	2	1	1	0	145
Graduate student	30	10	4	67	5	2	0	1	3	0	67
Undergraduate student	14	11	2	5	59	0	0	3	4	0	59
Donor	14	20	6	2	0	30	1	2	0	0	30
SFU retiree	0	2	2	0	0	1	14	0	0	0	14
Continuing Studies student	5	3	1	1	3	2	0	12	2	0	12
Partner	3	7	1	3	4	0	0	2	9	0	9
None of the above	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
NET	265	174	145	67	59	30	14	12	9	9	601

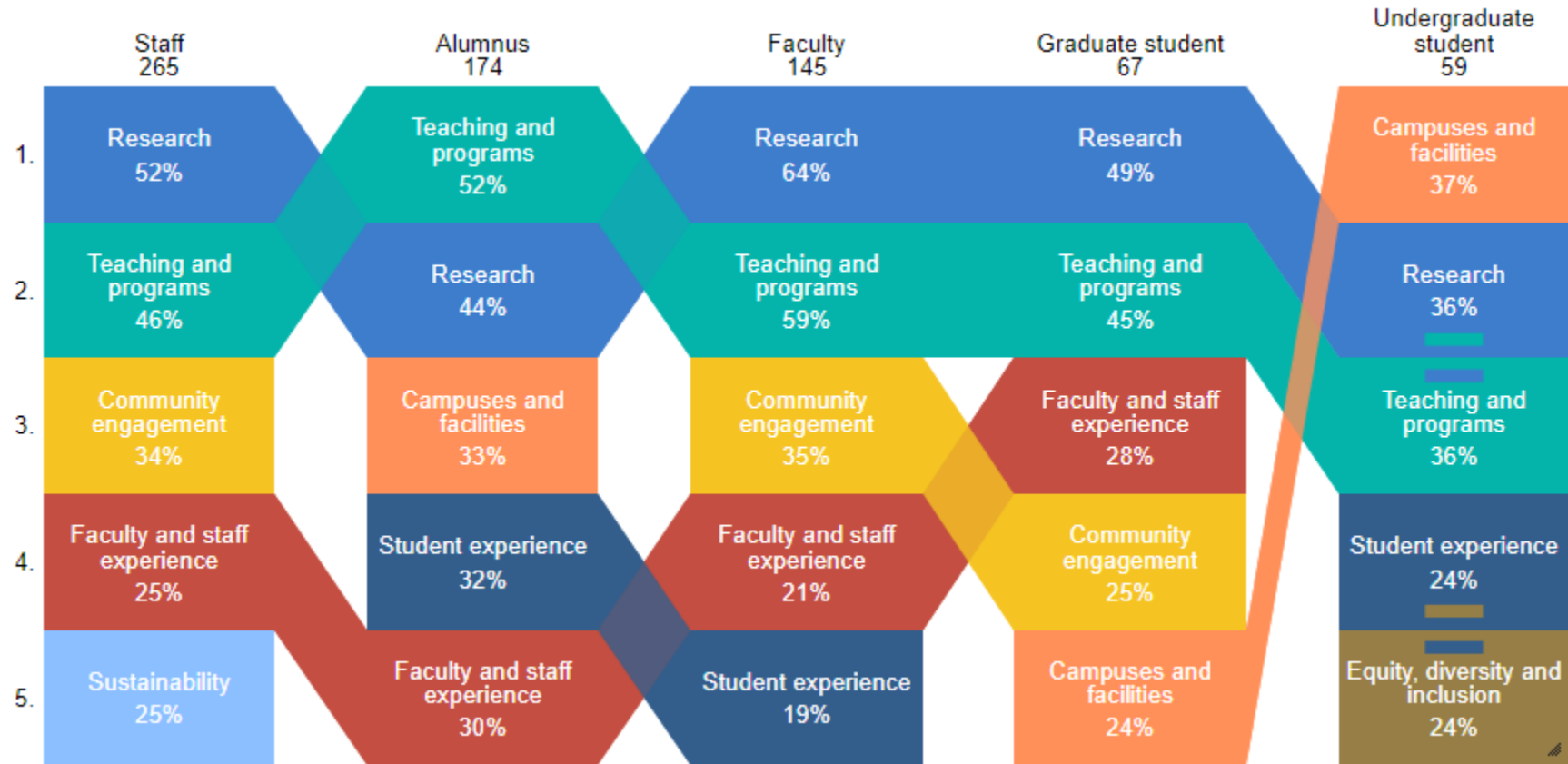
n = 601; Which of the following best describes your relationship with SFU? Please select all that apply.

Key Strengths of SFU



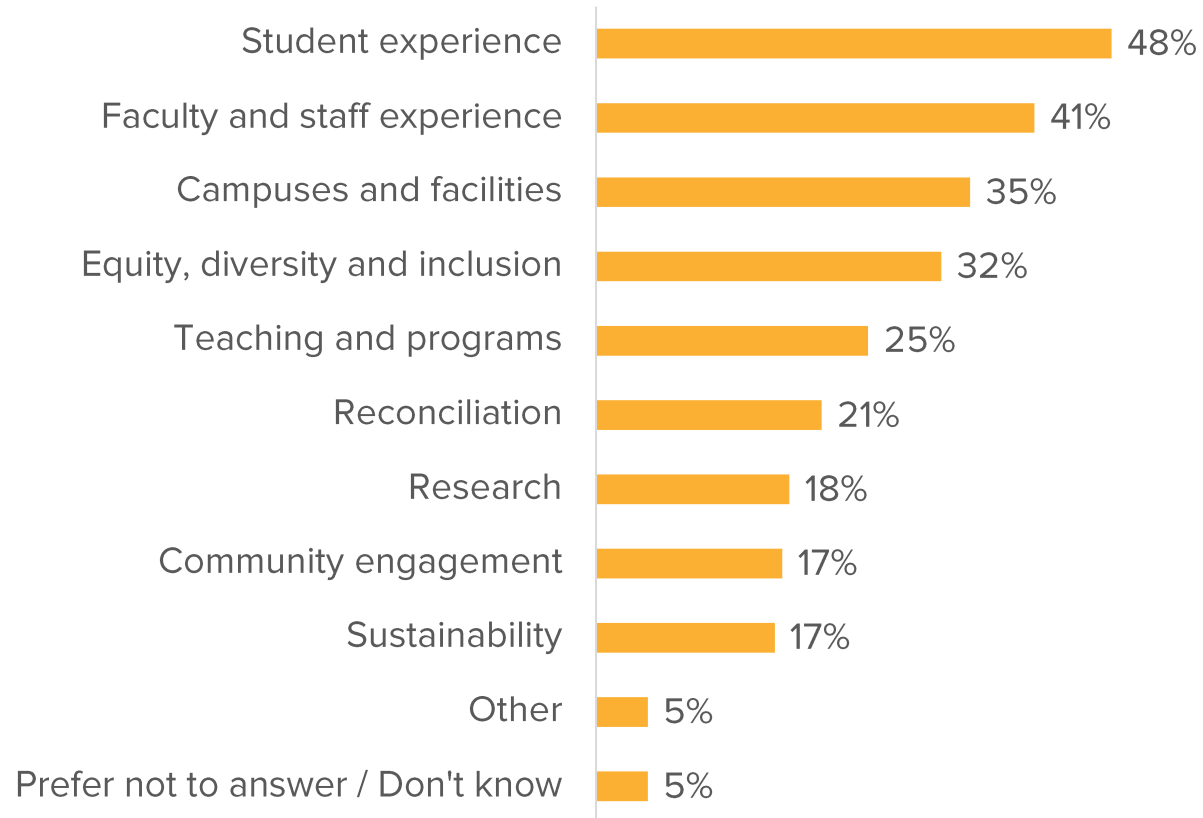
n = 601; Thinking about SFU overall, what do you consider to be three (or up to three) key strengths of SFU?

Key Strengths of SFU By Relationship



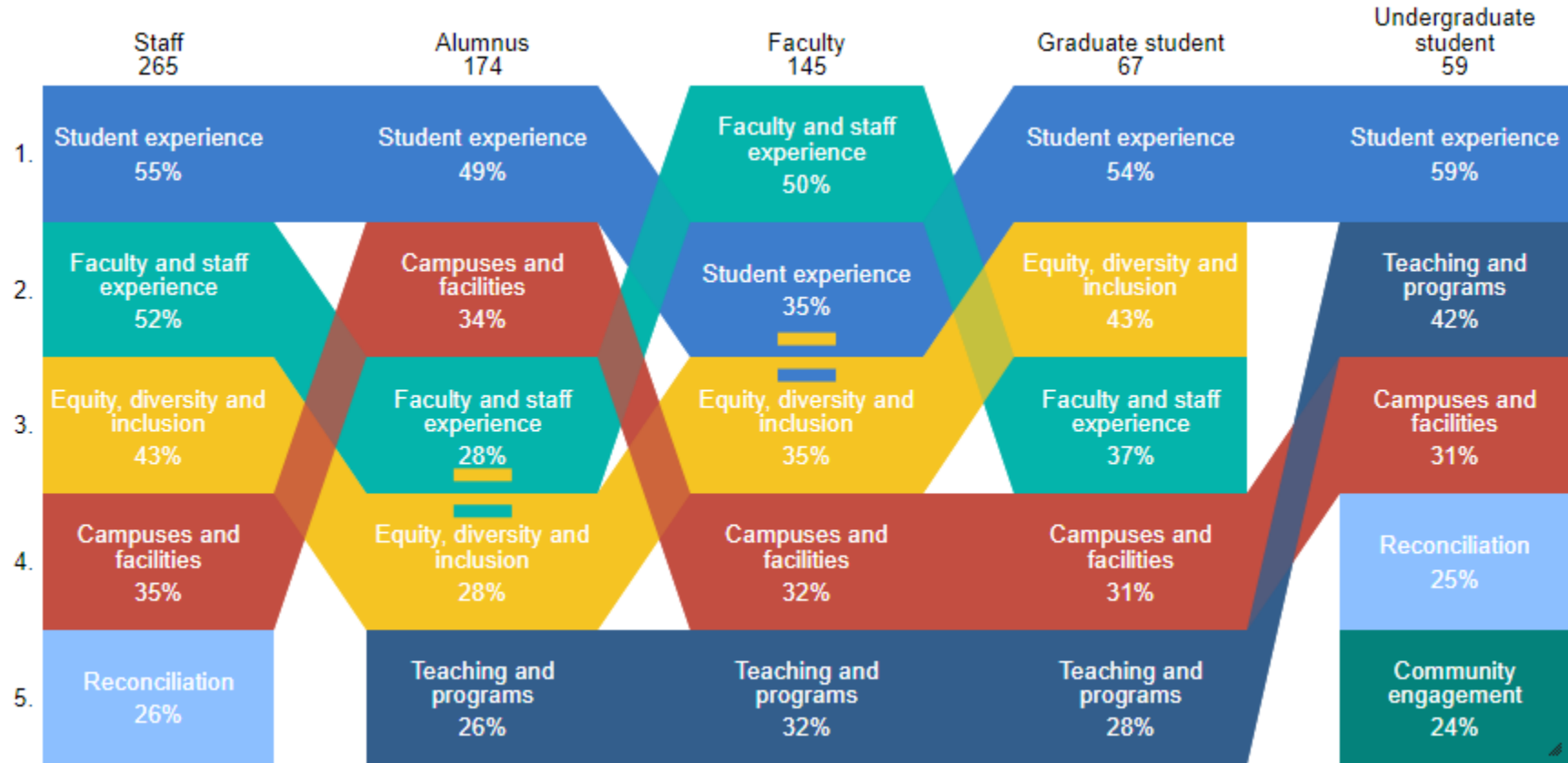
n = 601; Thinking about SFU overall, what do you consider to be three (or up to three) key strengths of SFU?

Key Areas for Improvement



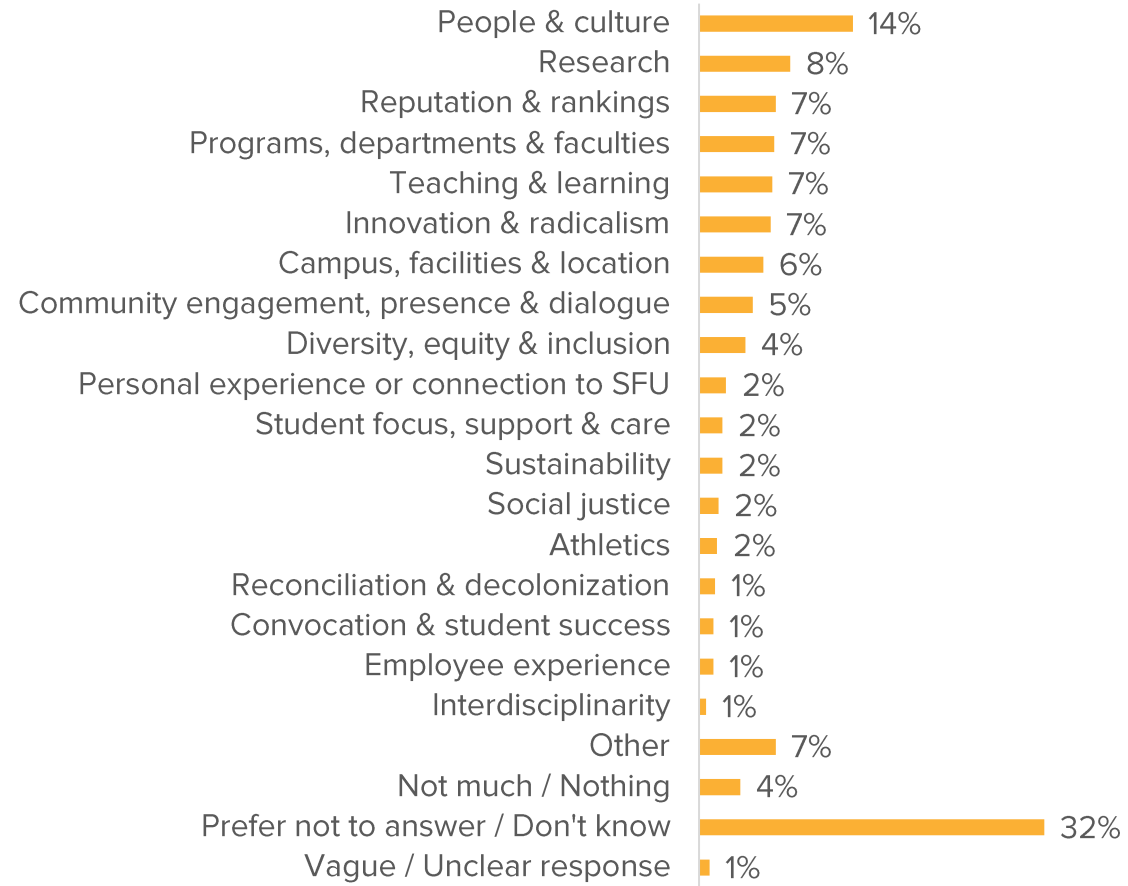
n = 601; What do you consider to be three (or up to three) key areas in which SFU most needs to improve?

Key Areas for Improvement



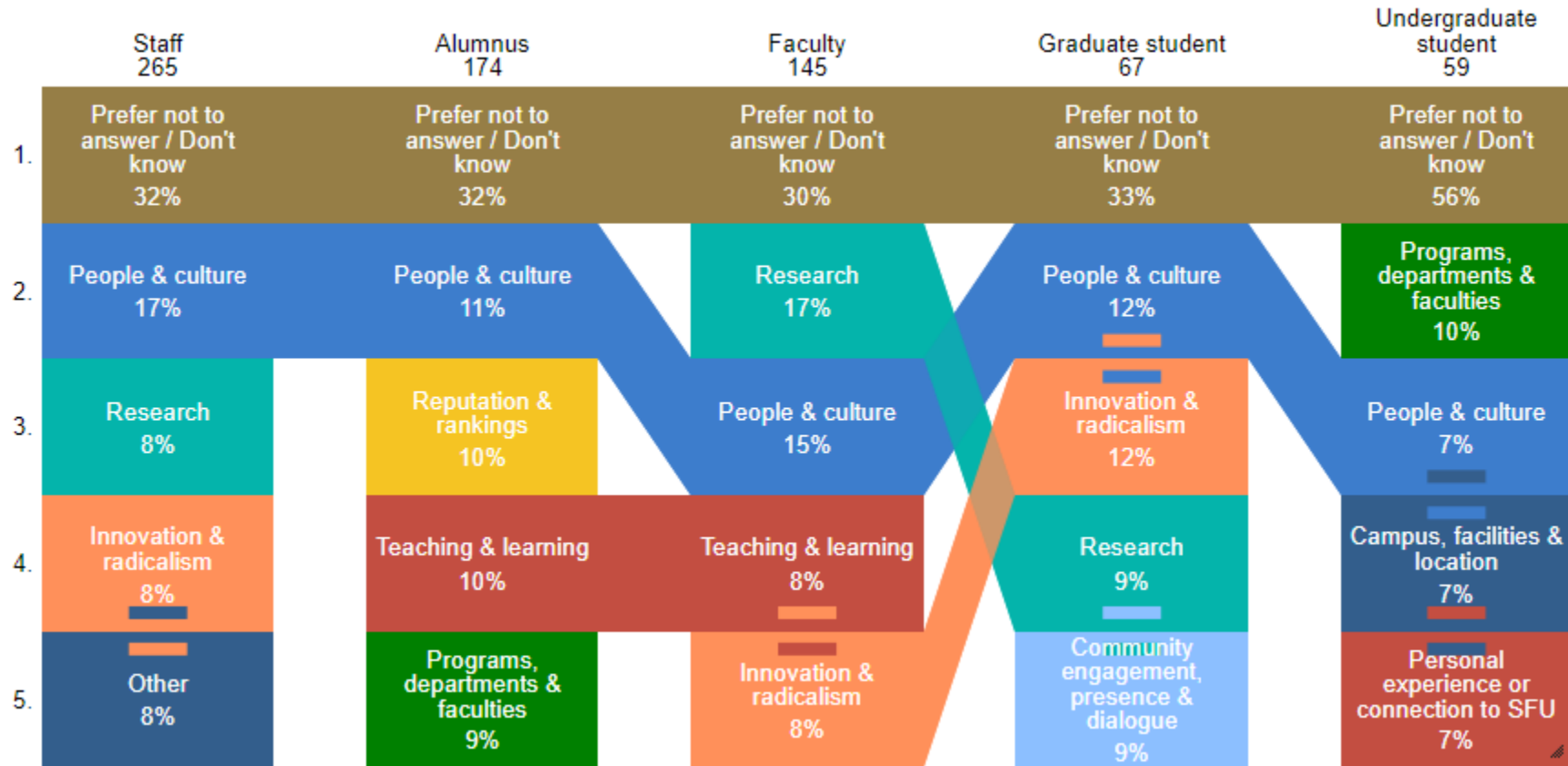
n = 601; What do you consider to be three (or up to three) key areas in which SFU most needs to improve?

Most Proud of SFU For



n = 601; Thinking about SFU, what makes you most proud of the university? - Coded

Most Proud of SFU For



n = 601; Thinking about SFU, what makes you most proud of the university? - Coded

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

People & culture

“I love my program and the faculty, staff, and students within it. The teaching and learning are engaging, critical, and inclusive.”

“Small community of people that are able to get work done. Whether its research, projects, or any subject, students and faculty are always willing to work together.”

“Our dedicated staff and faculty who come together to provide an exceptional student experience in terms of educational quality and support.”

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

Research

“Top of the world research achievements.”

“Community Engaged Research, research that benefits beyond citations.”

“My colleagues are conducting research that has a major impact on our field.”

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

Reputation & rankings

“Its consistently high ranking as a comprehensive university.”

“We are a very visible institution, nationally and internationally recognized for research and educational programs. There is very interesting research taking place, I am happy to support that work.”

“The strength and stature that it has reached in its short life so far. It has been remarkably successful young university.”

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

Programs,
departments
& faculties

“The breadth of programs available and the quality of education students receive.”

“The co-op program....still a leader in this arena.”

“Our faculty development and TA/TM development programs.”

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

Teaching & learning

“On its best days, SFU combines ambitious and high-quality teaching and research with a greater openness and flexibility than most other Canadian universities with its ambitions.”

“The quality of the faculty -- both their research programs and expertise and their dedication to providing a meaningful education.”

“That it prioritizes student engagement and experiential learning to address real-world problems with evidence-based solutions.”

Most Proud of SFU For Sample Quotes

Innovation & radicalism

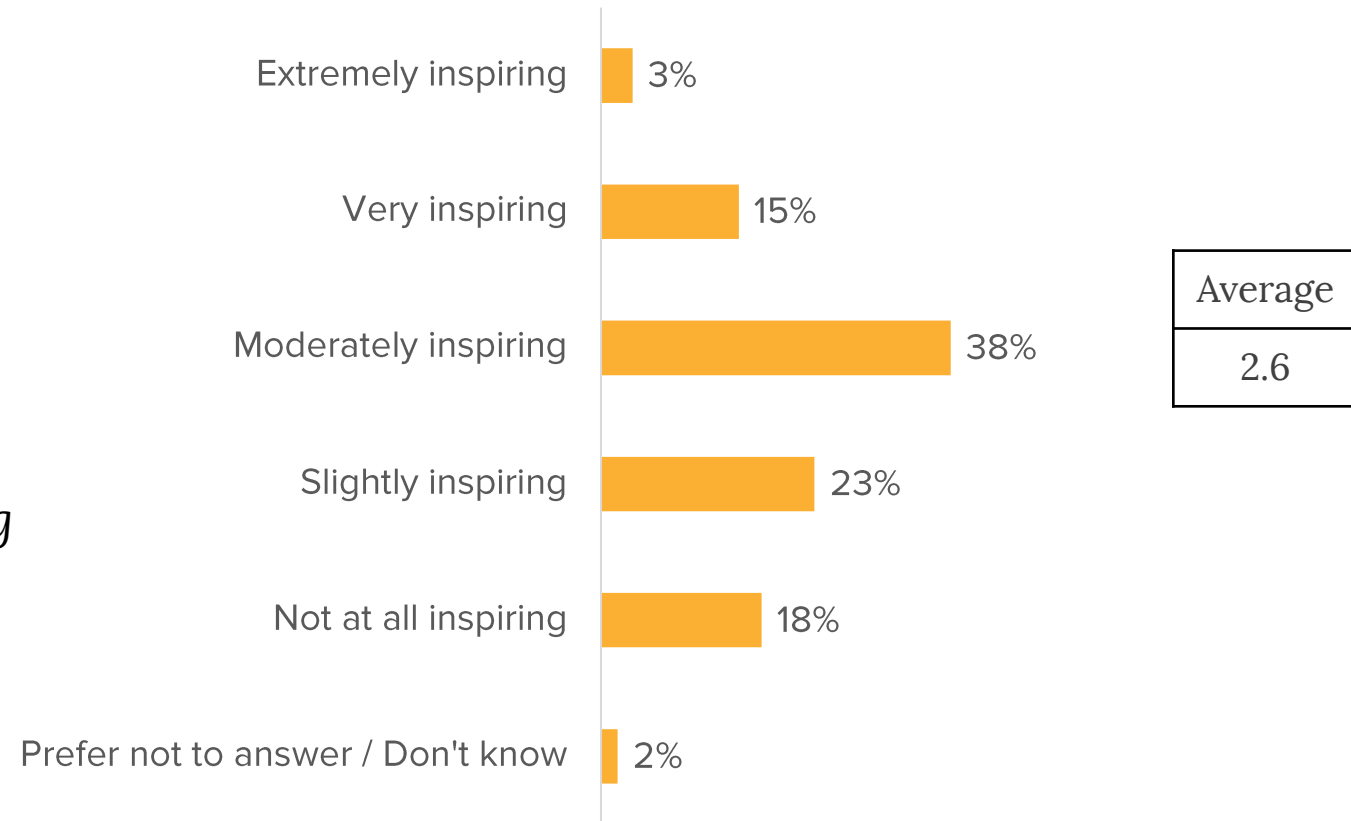
“The innovative aspect of SFU sets it apart from other post-secondary institutions and in my opinion, the major draw for people in BC.”

“One of the most unique research/academic/teaching environments which boldly experiments with various novel ideas and themes.”

“Unique, maverick spirit, history of standing up and doing things differently. In redefining it's purpose perhaps for the future, there's a massive opportunity to go back to the core/origin story and redefine what it means to be a university today.”

Extent to Which the Vision is Inspiring

Current vision statement:
To be the leading engaged university, defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research, and far-reaching community engagement.

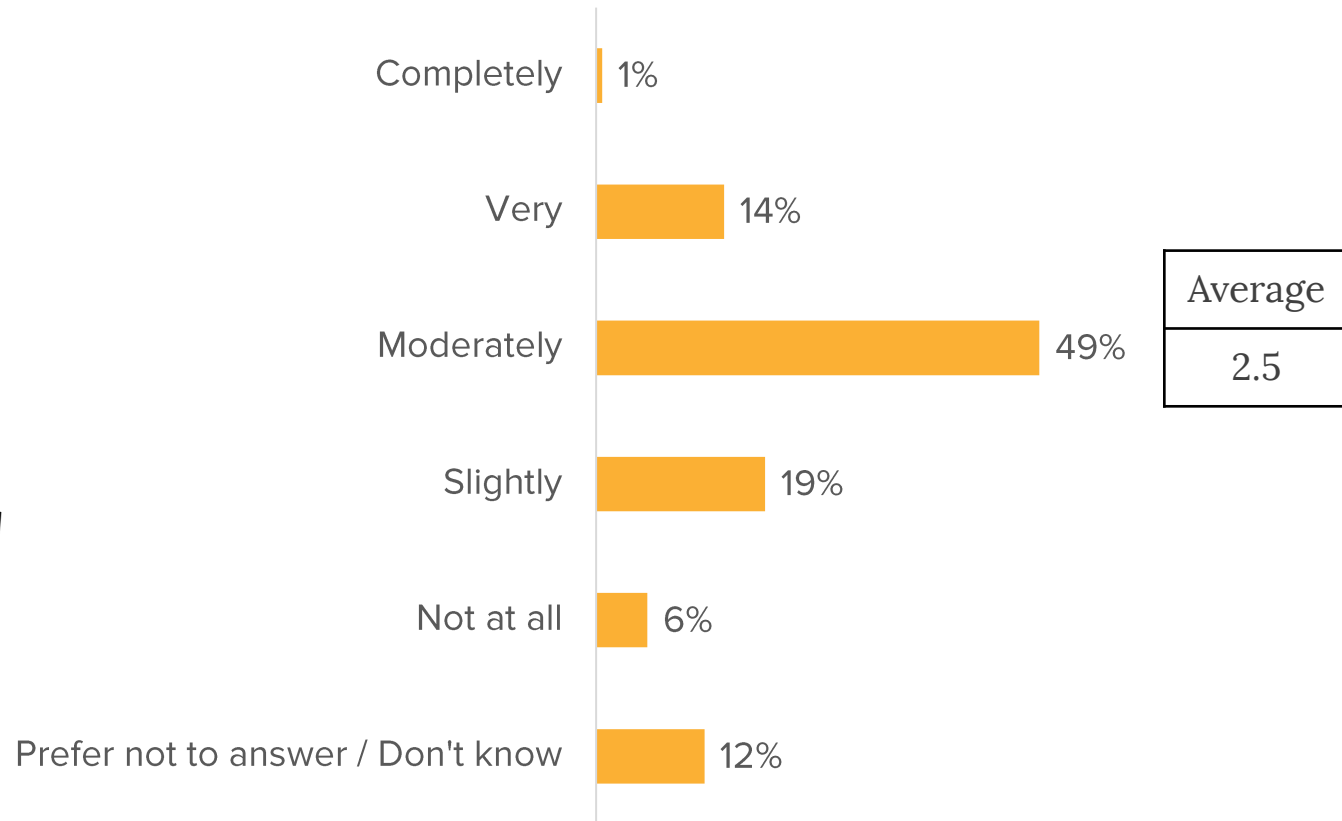


n = 601; How inspiring do you find this vision?

Average rating, where 1=Not at all inspiring and 5=Extremely inspiring (Prefer not to answer / Don't know excluded from average calculation)

Extent to Which SFU Has Achieved the Vision

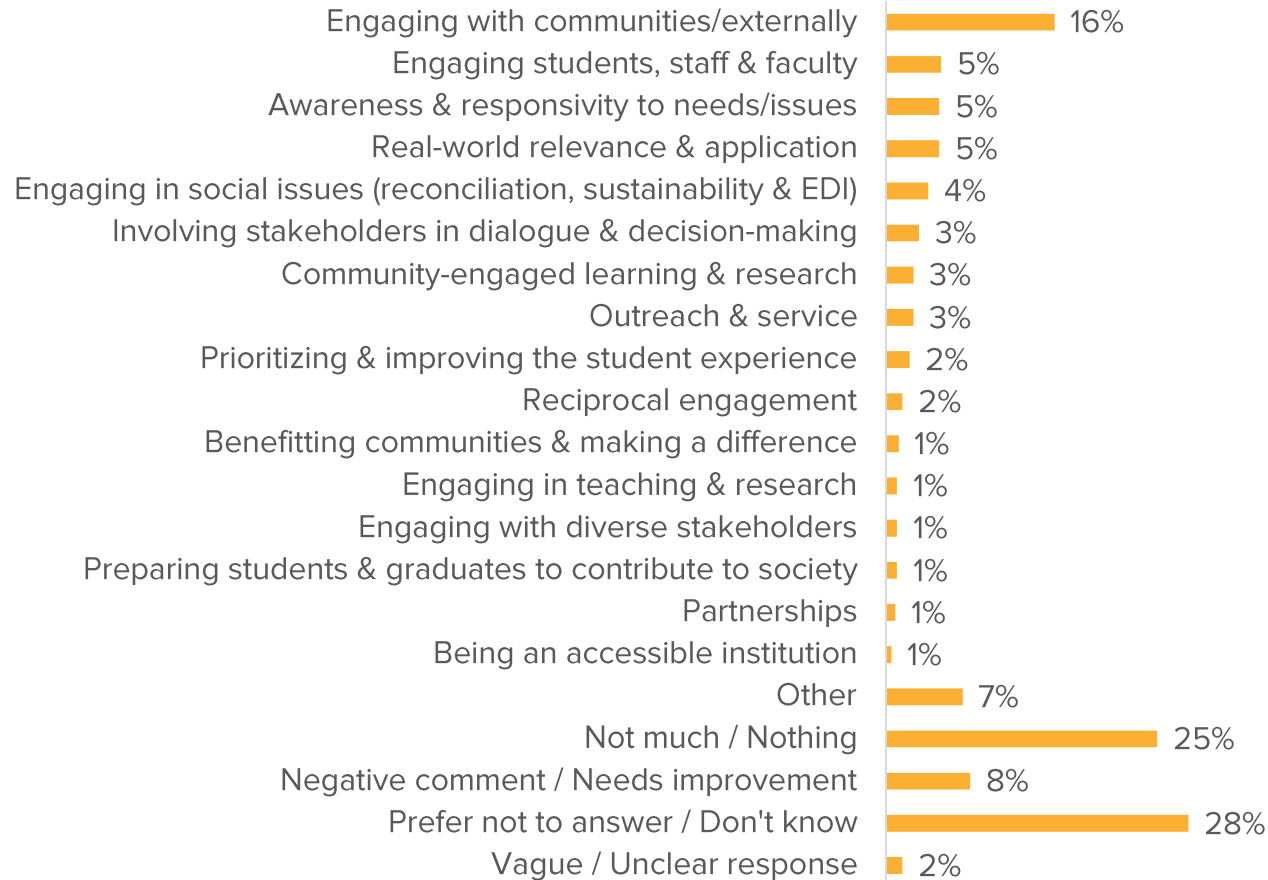
Current vision statement:
To be the leading engaged university, defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research, and far-reaching community engagement.



n = 601; To what extent has SFU achieved the current vision?

Average rating, where 1= Not at all and 5= Completely (Prefer not to answer / Don't know excluded from average calculation)

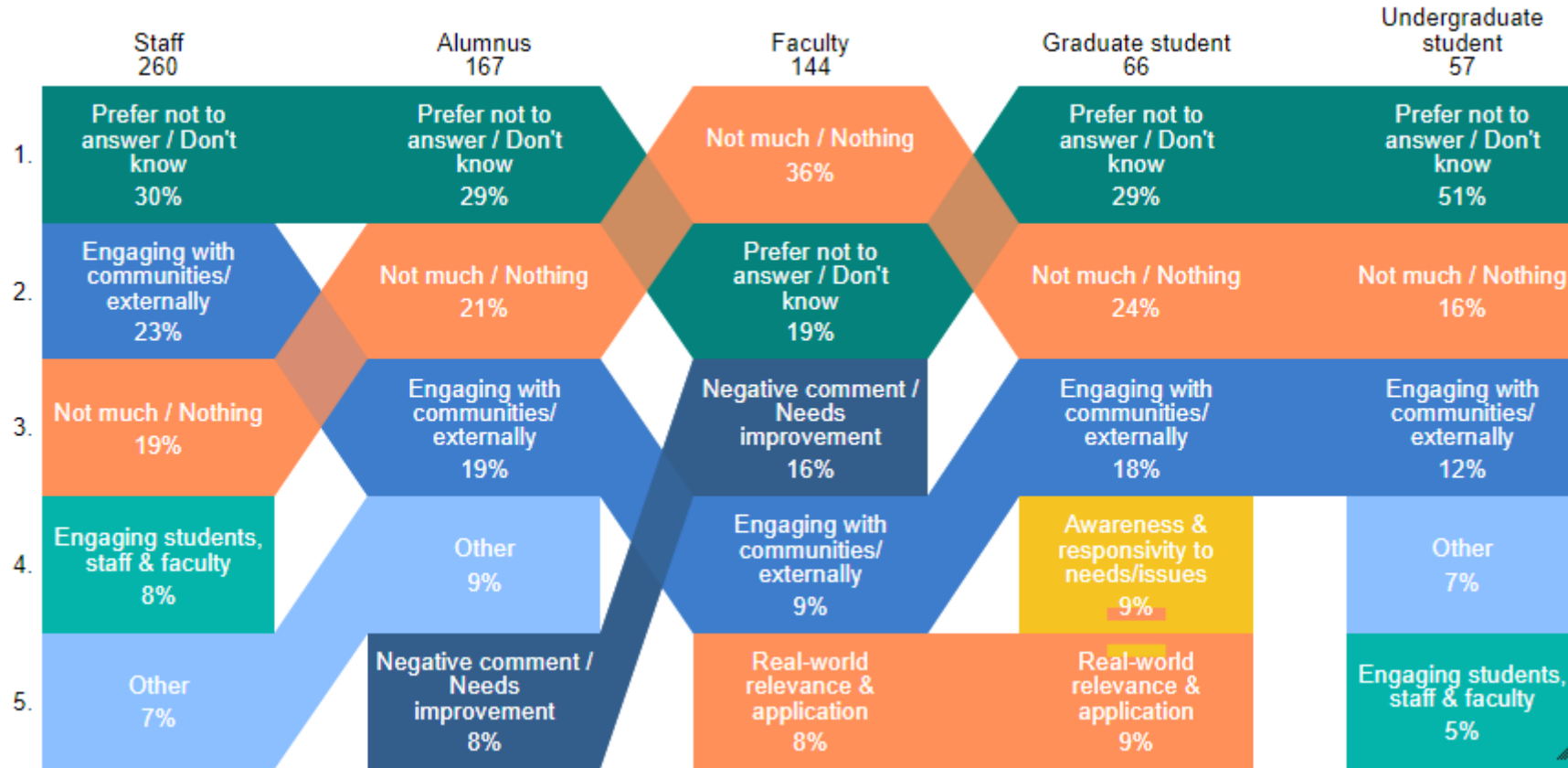
Meaning of "Canada's engaged university"



n = 587; What does SFU's vision of being "Canada's engaged university" mean to you today? - Coded

Responses that included a negative view or a comment on an area in need of improvement were also coded under "Negative comment / Needs improvement"

Meaning of "Canada's engaged university" By Relationship



n = 587; What does SFU's vision of being "Canada's engaged university" mean to you today? - Coded

Responses that included a negative view or a comment on an area in need of improvement were also coded under "Negative comment / Needs improvement"

Meaning of "Canada's engaged university"

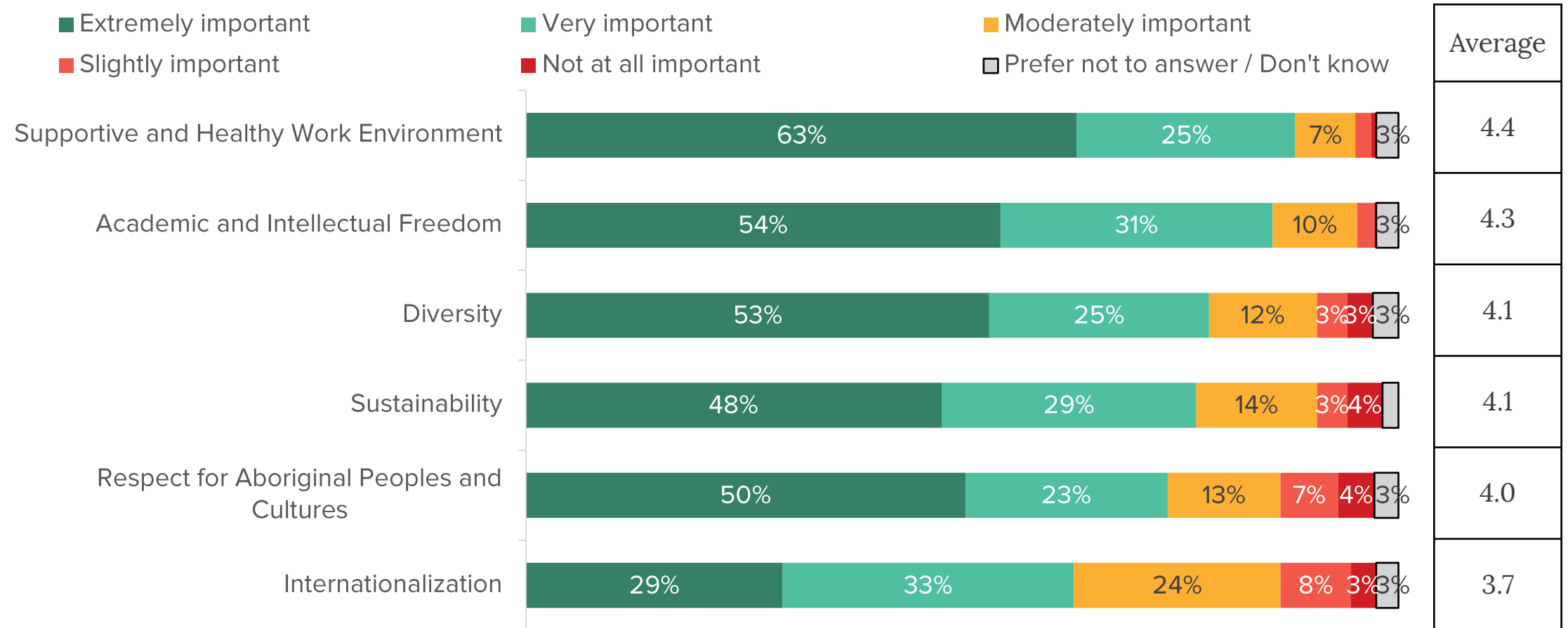
Sample Quotes

"That the university is engaged with the world around it - its approach to education and its research focus address the real issues facing society today and help tangibly improve our lives."

"It means small, engaged class sizes, many student programs (both student-led and staff led), lots of international engagement through all levels of student programming, staff projects, and faculty research & relations."

"Being connected and engaged in reciprocal relationships with the communities it is embedded in."

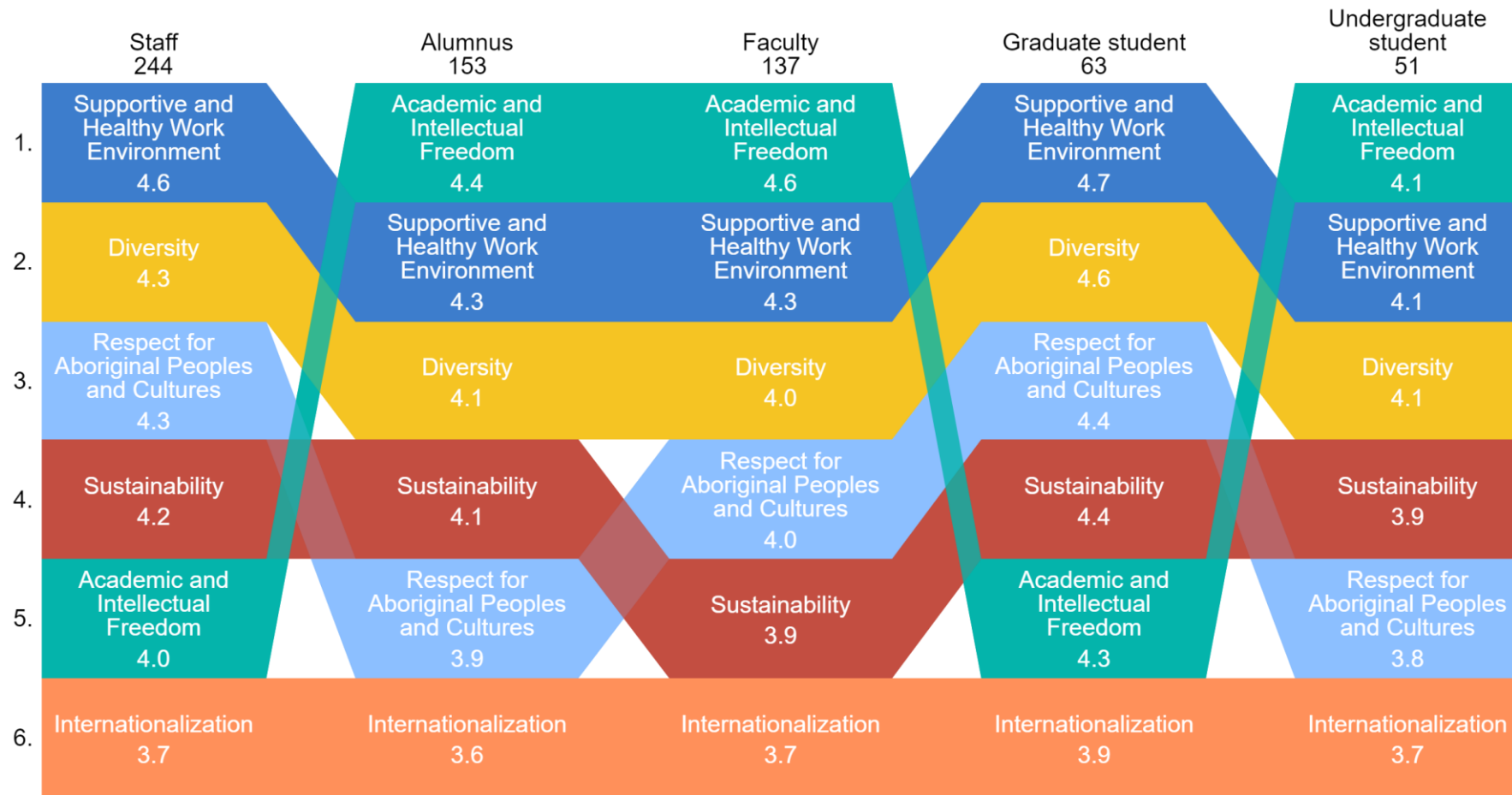
Importance of Principles for Guiding Future Work



n = 548; How important are each of the following six principles for guiding the future work of SFU?

<3% not shown; Average rating, where 1=Not at all important and 5=Extremely important (Prefer not to answer / Don't know excluded from average calculation)

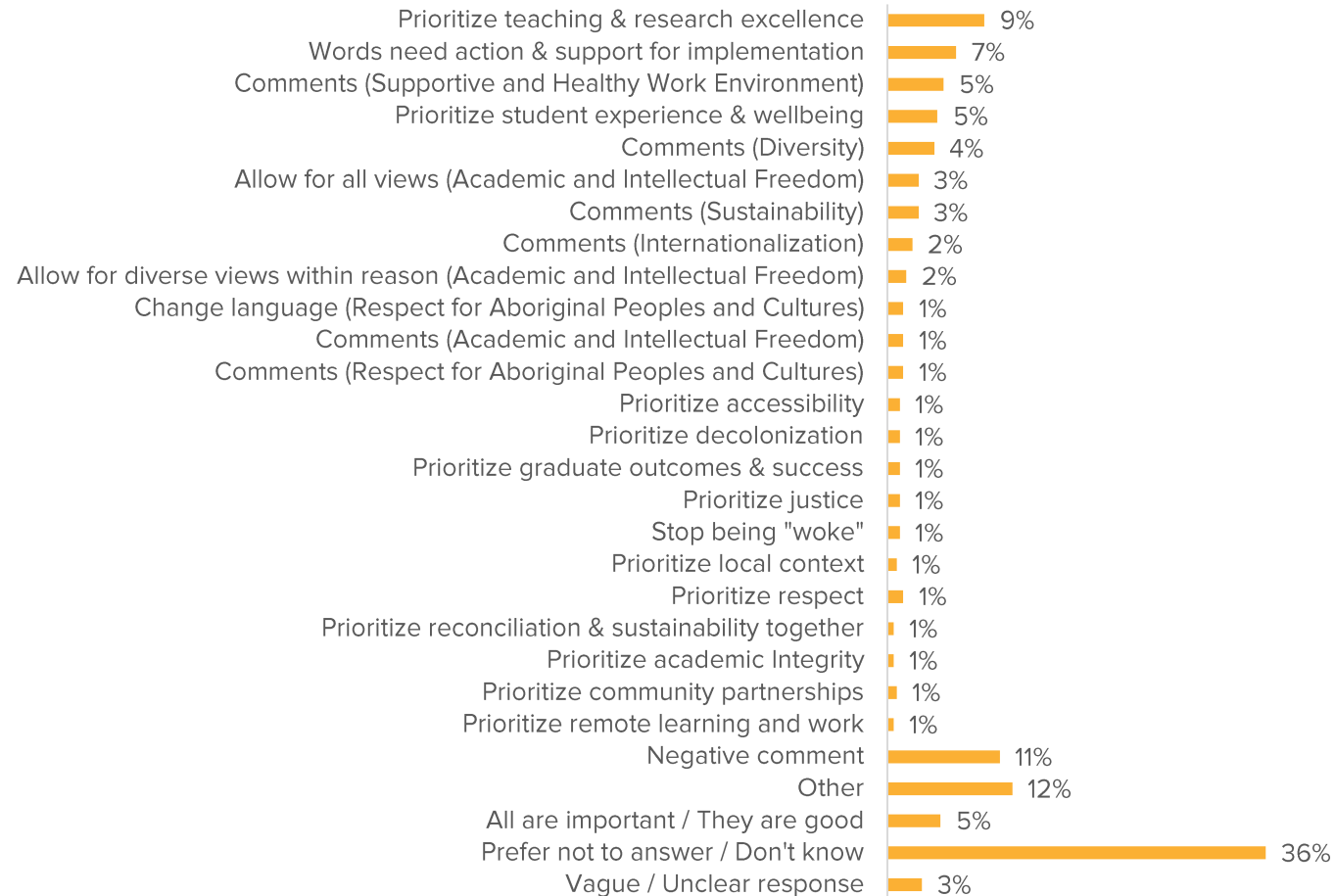
Importance of Principles for Guiding Future Work By Relationship



n = 548; How important are each of the following six principles for guiding the future work of SFU?

Average rating, where 1=Not at all important and 5=Extremely important (Prefer not to answer / Don't know excluded from average calculation)

Comments about Principles to Guide Future Work



n = 337; Do you have any comments about the principles that should guide the future work of SFU? This could include ideas for other principles that should guide SFU or feedback on SFU's existing principles (above). – Coded

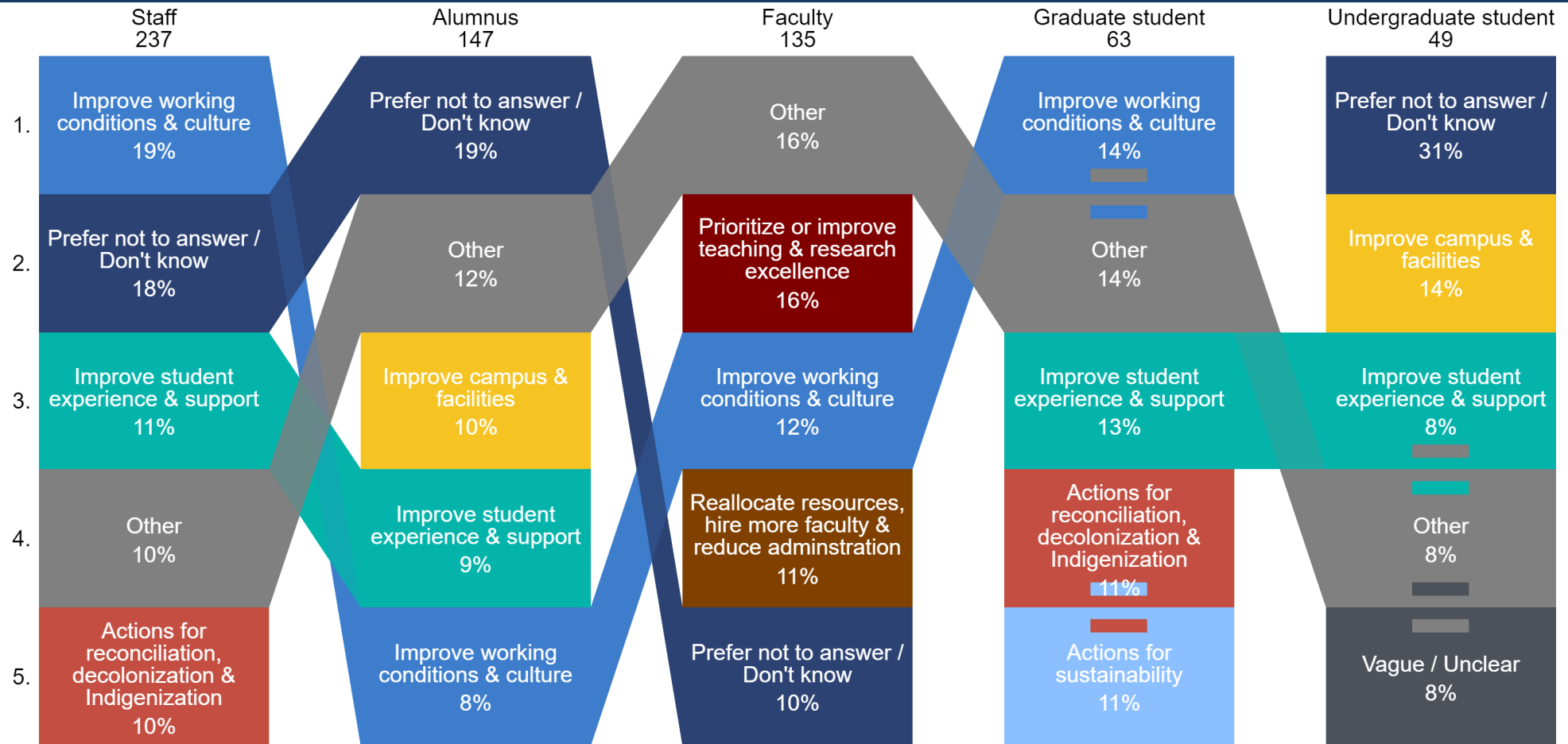
Responses that included a negative view or a comment on an area in need of improvement were also coded under “Negative comment”

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years



n = 536; If SFU could accomplish one thing in the next 5 years, what should it be? - Coded

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years



n = 536; If SFU could accomplish one thing in the next 5 years, what should it be? - Coded

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years

Sample Quotes

Improve working conditions & culture

“Improve working conditions for students, faculty and staff.”

“Become a living wage employer and ensure that all contracted staff receive the same benefits and remuneration as SFU employees.”

“To have faculty and staff feel supported, respected, well and equitably compensated, and confident in their safety and wellbeing at SFU.”

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years

Sample Quotes

Improve
student
experience &
support

“Improved student and community engagement to create more vibrancy on the Burnaby Mountain Campus.”

“Affordable housing for students.”

“Aim to have faculty to student ratios much higher than what they are right now.”

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years

Sample Quotes

Improve
campus &
facilities

“Ease & improve technology access and innovation.”

“Truly accessible campuses, incorporating universal design.”

“Air conditioning in all Burnaby campus buildings.”

One Thing SFU Should Accomplish in Next 5 Years

Sample Quotes

Actions for reconciliation, decolonization & Indigenization

“Implement the calls to action in Walk This Path With Us and build upon it.”

“Decolonizing research practices in all faculties and programs.”

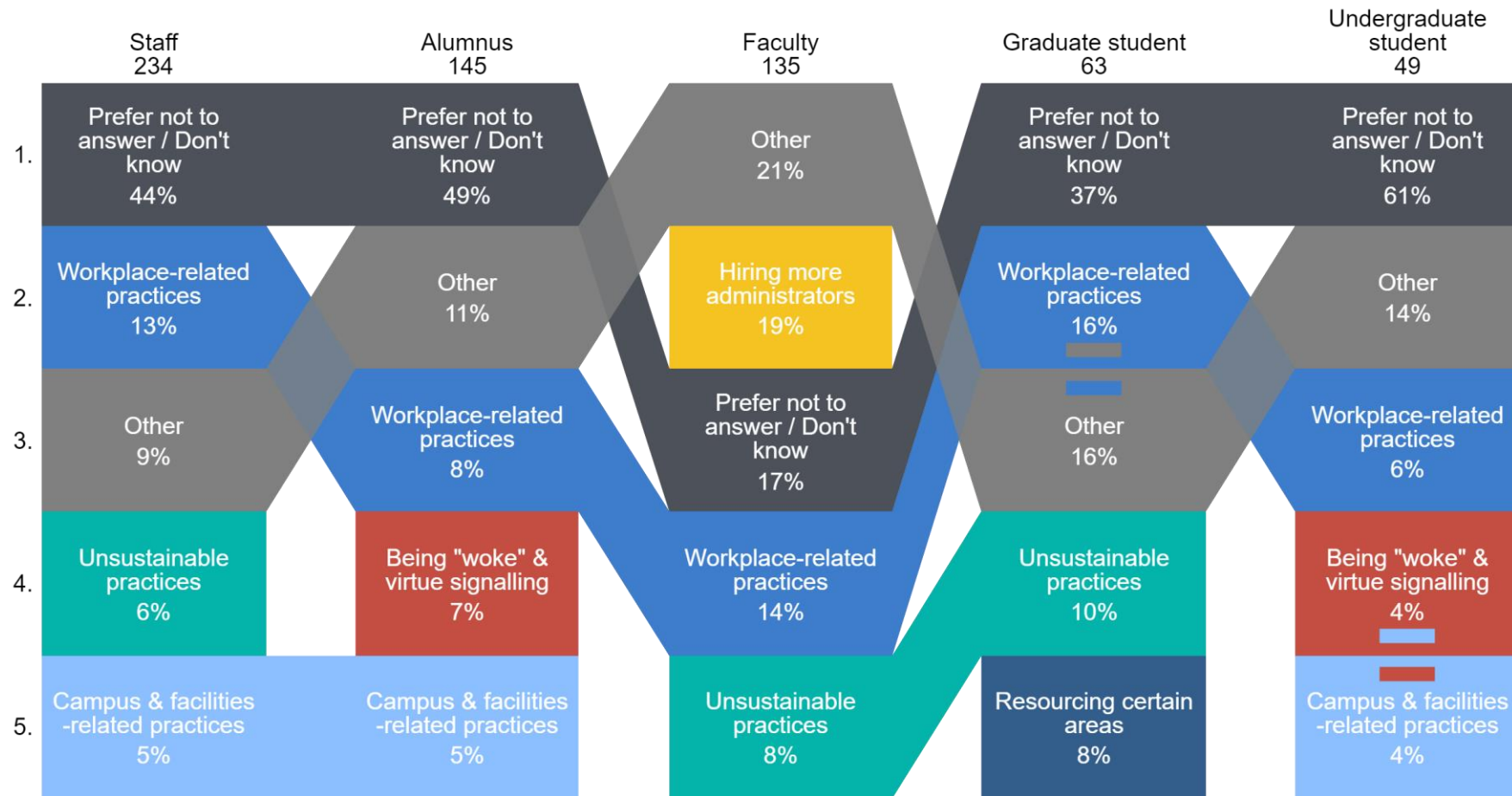
“Model a real commitment to reconciliation through not just recruiting more Indigenous students and hiring more Indigenous faculty but also revisiting some of our core assumptions about how a university has to run.”

Activities that SFU Could Stop or Reduce



n = 532; Are there any activities that SFU could stop doing or reduce? - Coded

Activities that SFU Could Stop or Reduce



n = 532; Are there any activities that SFU could stop doing or reduce? - Coded

Activities that SFU Could Stop or Reduce

Sample Quotes

Workplace- related practices

“The reliance of temporary staff positions to carry out work that is fundamental to safety, wellbeing, appropriately addressing issues along with harm and inclusion must stop.”

“Contracting out work.”

“Underpaying employees in the most expensive city in Canada, improving the benefit plan to reflect the reality of healthcare costs.”

Activities that SFU Could Stop or Reduce

Sample Quotes

Unsustainable practices

“Reduce car emissions by providing better access to the university.”

“Banning all plastic one-way container in any setting on campus, including coffee cup lids, food trays, etc.”

“We use so much paper as an institution. How can these processes be digitized?”

Activities that SFU Could Stop or Reduce

Sample Quotes

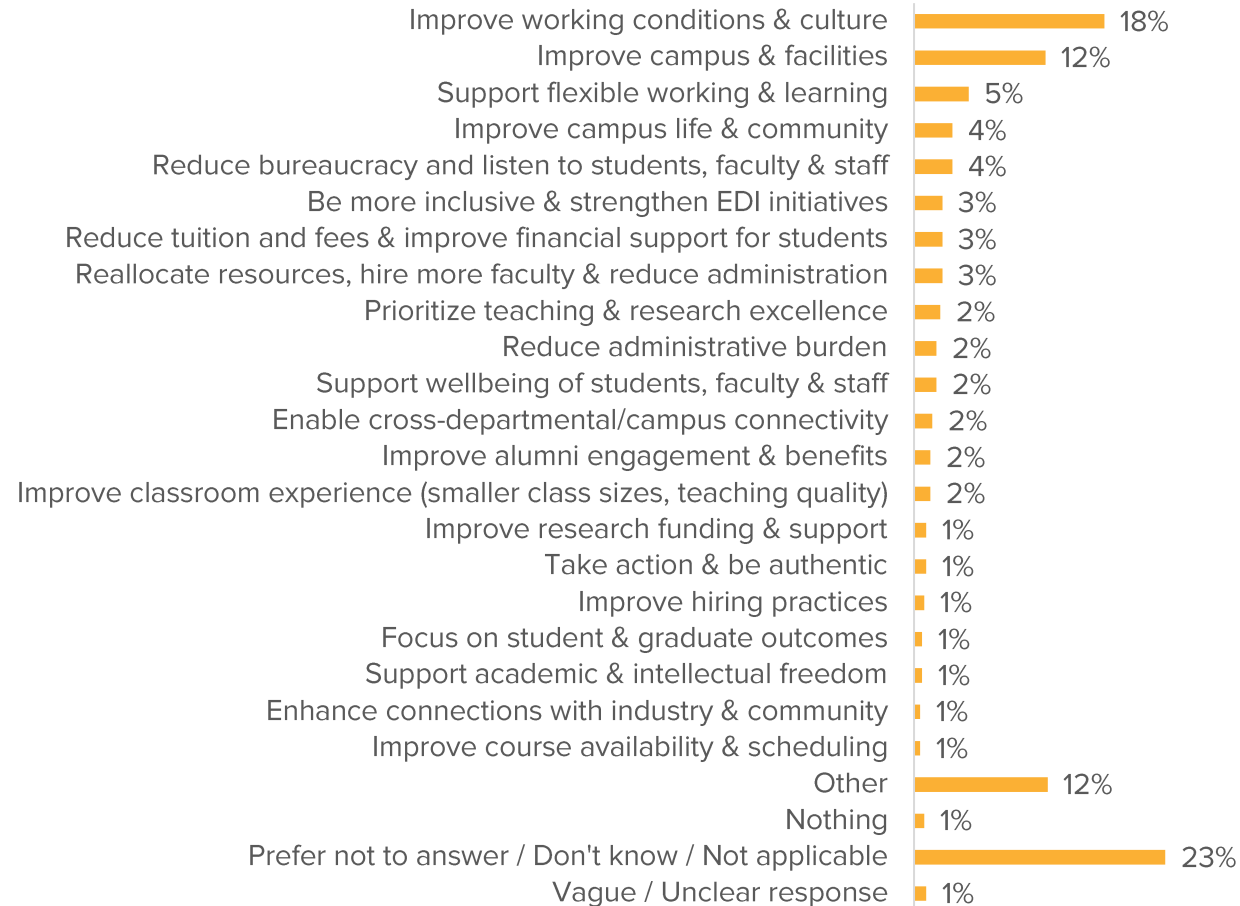
Hiring more administrators

“Stop hiring senior admin and provide more support to staff and faculty on the ground. We don't need more bureaucrats.”

“I believe SFU is increasingly top-heavy with administrators, and the drift of resources in this direction is undercutting our efforts to enhance research and teaching. The latter are central to the mission of any serious university.”

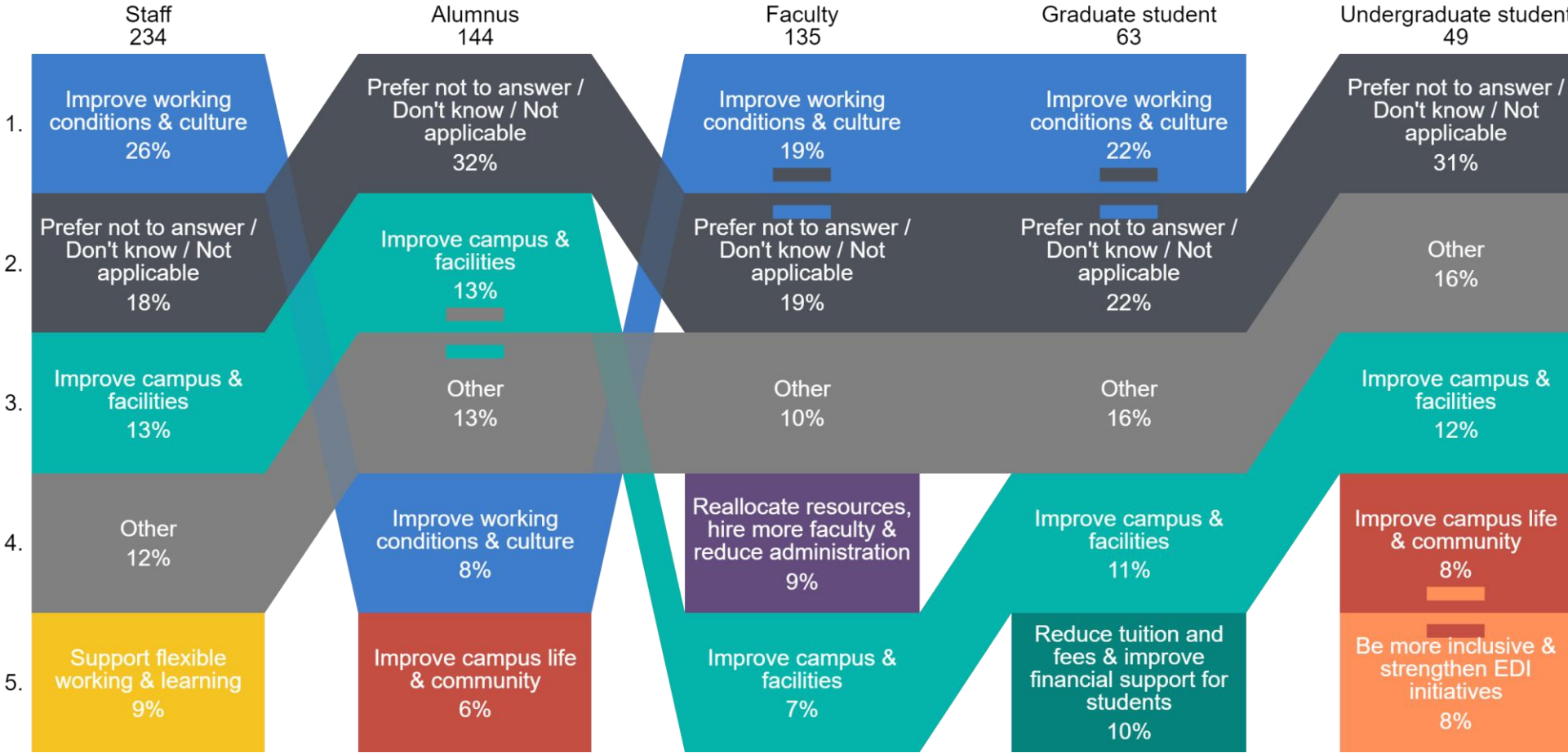
“Stop hiring administrative staff who do not have an obvious role in helping faculty, staff, and students achieve the primary goals of the university.”

One Change SFU Could Make that Would Improve Experience



n = 531; What's one change SFU could make that would most improve your experience at SFU? - Coded

One Change SFU Could Make that Would Improve Experience



n = 531; What's one change SFU could make that would most improve your experience at SFU? - Coded

One Change SFU Could Make that Would Improve Experience

Sample Quotes

Improve
working
conditions &
culture

“Be a better place to work. In my department, some labs don't even have clean water to drink. RAs are mistreated, overworked, and underpaid.”

“Show appreciation for the hard work that people put into their jobs.”

“Find a way to be more consistent in how staff and faculty are treated. To create community between staff and faculty rather than separateness.”

One Change SFU Could Make that Would Improve Experience

Sample Quotes

Improve campus & facilities

“Funding to upgrade some of the older offices/buildings.”

“Colour the walls, the most drab university in Canada at the moment.”

“Improve all aspects of IT at SFU. Networks, applications, workstations, etc.”

One Change SFU Could Make that Would Improve Experience

Sample Quotes

Support flexible working & learning

More course availability, and flexible offerings (online, hybrid, classes offered at multiple campuses).

Create more flexible working environments where staff can work from home or in the office as their job requires. A greater work-life balance will improve morale and increase the value that staff are able to add to the university.

Don't be so tied to brick & mortar classrooms and services. Covid-19 proved a lot can be done virtually.



Key Findings



Key Findings

SFU stakeholders perceive teaching and research to be SFU's top strength and see room for improvement in student, faculty and staff experience and campuses and facilities.

- Half of respondents perceived teaching and programs (50%) and research (50%) to be among SFU's top three key strengths.
- At least a quarter of respondents also perceived community engagement (28%), campuses and facilities (28%), and the faculty and staff experience (25%) as key strengths.
- When asked about what makes them most proud of SFU, top areas were the people and culture (14%) and research (8%).
- The top areas in which respondents indicated that SFU can improve are the student experience (48%), faculty and staff experience (41%), and campuses and facilities (35%).

Key Findings

SFU's vision evokes a moderate level of inspiration among stakeholders.

- When asked about how inspiring they find SFU's vision, nearly 40% found it only moderately inspiring, and when asked about the extent to which SFU has fulfilled this vision, nearly 50% felt it had been moderately fulfilled.

"Canada's engaged university" is not well understood by the SFU community.

- When asked about what "Canada's engaged university" means to them, half of respondents said it did not mean much (25%) or they did not know/preferred not to answer (28%).
- The most common interpretation referred to engaging with communities and stakeholders external to the university. Other interpretations referred to internal engagement with students, faculty, and staff, awareness and responsiveness to needs and issues, and ensuring that research and teaching have real-world relevance and applications.
- Top words that respondents would like SFU to be described by in the next five years include innovative, research, university, excellence, community, top, leader and sustainable.



Key Findings

Fostering a supportive and healthy workplace environment and culture and allowing for academic and intellectual freedom remain important guiding principles.

- Among the six guiding principles, “Supportive and Healthy Work Environment” and “Academic and Intellectual Freedom” were the most important principles for guiding future work at SFU.
- Further comments about the six guiding principles were commonly focused on the need to create an equitable and healthy workplace environment and culture and expand and bolster the “Diversity” principle. Comments related to the “Academic and Intellectual Freedom” principle suggest a tension between allowing for expression of all views and consideration of how some views impact psychological safety or inclusion of all members of the community.

SFU’s current guiding principles lack a focus on teaching and research excellence and fostering a supportive and engaging student experience.

- It was commonly noted that principles related to teaching and research excellence and the student experience were missing, and that SFU needs to back up the principles with action.



Key Findings

Top areas for change at SFU relate to improving working conditions, the student experience, and campus facilities, and reducing unsustainable practices and administrative bloat.

- There were several differing views about one thing that SFU should accomplish in the next five years, however, the top suggestion related to improving working conditions and culture (11%), followed by improving student support and the student experience (9%) and campus facilities and infrastructure (9%).
- Respondents also had differing views about activities that SFU should stop doing or reduce. 11% of respondents pointed to workplace-related actions, such as paying a living wage, stopping outsourcing of food and cleaning services, and ending reliance on contract positions. Other top suggestions were stopping unsustainable practices (6%) and reducing the number of senior administrators (6%).
- Suggestions for changes that would improve their experience at SFU also varied, with top suggestions relating to improved working conditions and culture (18%) and improved campus facilities (12%).



4 Questions & Discussion



This report was published by Academica Group,
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