

Pandemic Impacts and Student Attitudes about Returning to Campus

January 14, 2022

Prepared for UASU Executive Committee

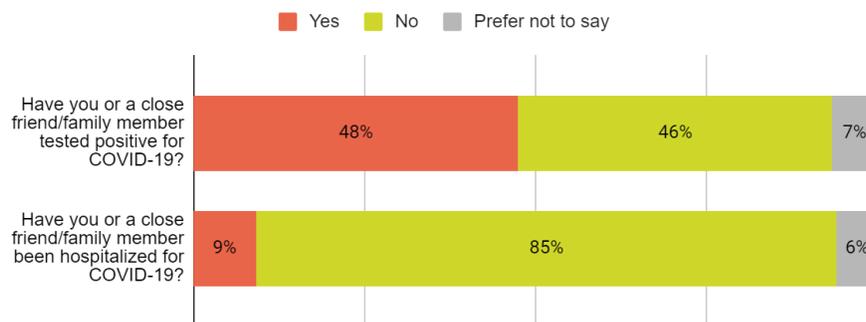


Overview

This short UASU Perks survey (n=940) ran from January 6 to 10. To the best of our knowledge, the resulting data is the only relevant, current picture of UAlberta undergraduate students' opinions at this scale. Further complementary surveys are planned or ongoing.

COVID-19 prevalence among students and their loved ones

Half of students report that they, a family member, or a close friend have had COVID-19. One out of ten students report that they, a family member, or a close friend have been hospitalized for COVID-19.

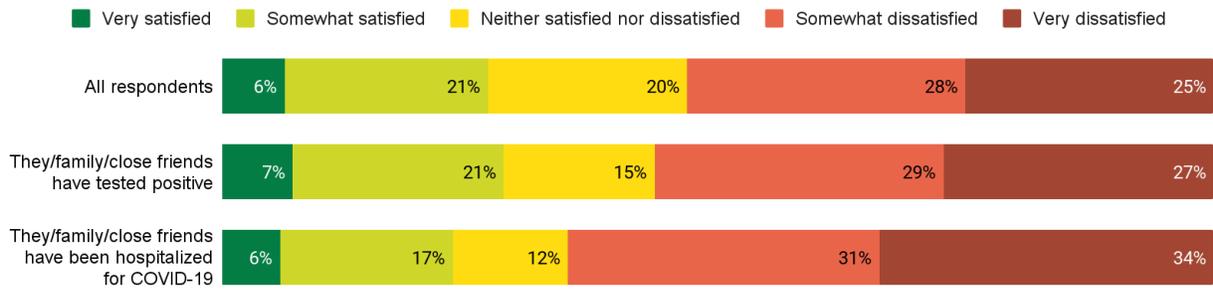


In a [concurrent survey](#) (n=728), 10.4% of respondents had tested positive for COVID-19, over $\frac{2}{3}$ of them in the past six months. This is consistent with [provincial rates](#): as of January 11, Alberta has seen 430,000 total cases, roughly 10% of the province's population.

Student perceptions of recent University communications

"Since the omicron variant has been spreading much faster than previous waves of COVID-19 and much is still unknown, most in-person classes have gone remote until at least January 23. The University made this announcement on December 22. How do you feel about the University's efforts SINCE THE DECEMBER 22 ANNOUNCEMENT to communicate with students about what the next few weeks will look like?"

Students, especially those impacted by COVID as above, are mostly dissatisfied with the University's efforts to communicate with them about what the next few weeks will look like.

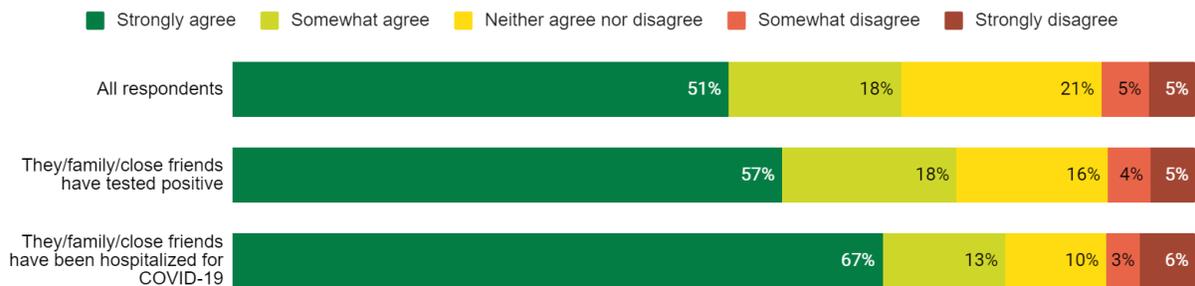


Students, especially within residence, report relying on word of mouth to get access to information concerning COVID-19 updates regarding the proportion of the residence population that had been affected by COVID.

Impact of extending the add/drop deadline

"Agree or disagree? Extending the add/drop deadline from January 18 to the end of January would be important to my plans for Winter 2022."

Students, especially those impacted by COVID as above, strongly agree that extending the add/drop deadline to the end of January would be important to their own personal plans for the semester.



On January 14, the University [announced](#) that the drop/delete deadline would be extended until January 21. The add deadline would remain as January 18. This adjustment, while useful to many students, did not go far enough.

Comfort levels around timeframes for returning to in-person instruction

"Based on what you know right now, which of the following options comes closest to how you feel?"

Students' comfort levels with returning vary widely, reflecting the controversy and frustrations we've seen online. However, at the time of the survey (January 6-10), the majority of students felt they would be comfortable returning to in-person classes sometime in late January to late February. At this point the University's plan was to return on January 23.

Since this survey, omicron numbers have risen significantly, and the University has [announced](#) that in-person classes will resume on February 28 rather than January 23. Even in early January, roughly ½ of UAlberta students already preferred a mid-February return or later, and most preferred a return date that was later than the official plan at the time.



The one out of ten students who reported that they, a family member, or a close friend have been hospitalized for COVID were far more likely to say they would not be comfortable coming back for the whole semester.