

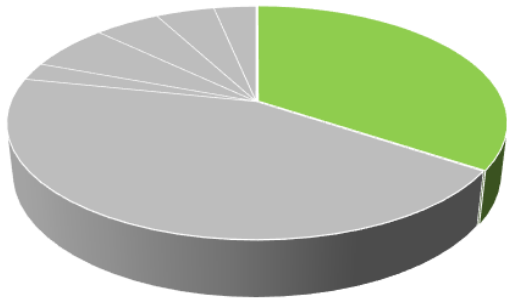
MENTAL WELLBEING & THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT



DEFINED AS: CURRICULUM, PROGRAM NAVIGATION, WORKLOAD, EXAMS, PROFESSORS, AND CLASSROOM SPACE.

HINDERING

The academic environment was the **second most frequently selected** environment by participants when asked what **HINDERS** mental well-being!



"The stress of midterms and due dates can hit anybody's mental health hard. It seems though that within programs, everything seems to come down the pipe at the same time which can cause a lot of stress. Chill weeks with no tests are great, but at the cost of having 5 tests the next week. It can push some people to their breaking point."
(Undergraduate Student)

HERE'S WHY:

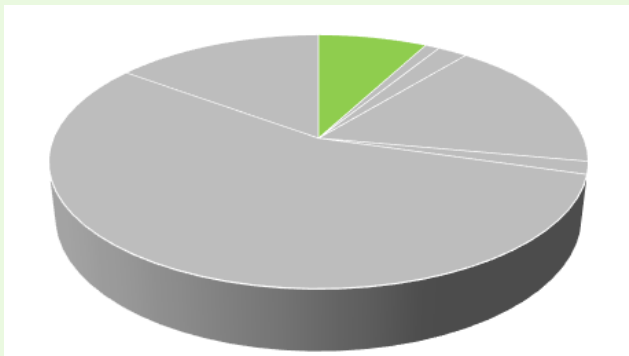
- Overwhelming workload
- Professors with poor communication and unclear expectations
- Exam scheduling practices, and the inflexibility of the exam scheduling policy
- The Academic Concession policy
- Constant changes within programs, and lack of communication regarding changes

"Poor communication between the prof + students leads to conflicting exams + midterms, lack of compassion over time, and time management. Academic hardship during exams is weakly enforced. I should qualify if I have 2 exams within 24hrs."
(Undergraduate Student)

"I believe students at UBC are hugely over - stressed. There is no program-level oversight of workload, expectations, and deadlines."
(Faculty)

SUPPORTIVE

The academic environment was selected by only 8% of participants when asked what is most **SUPPORTIVE** to mental well-being!



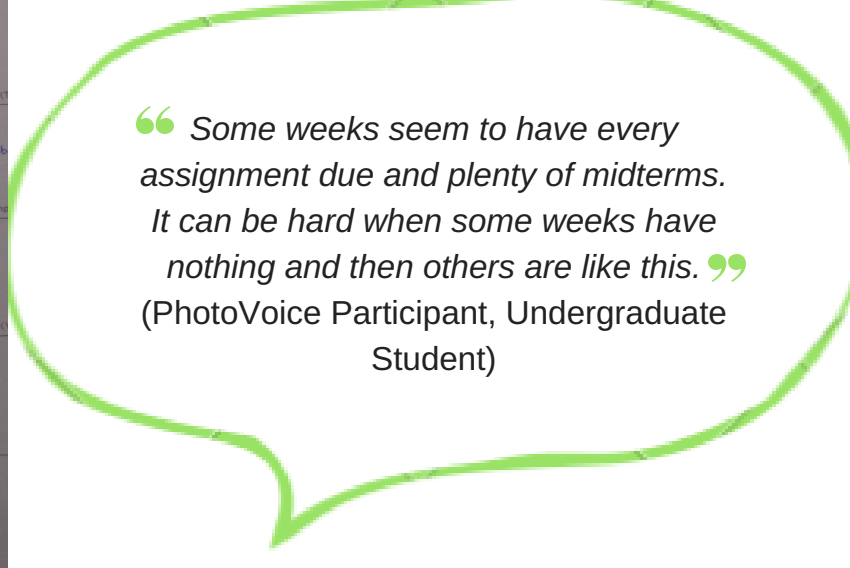
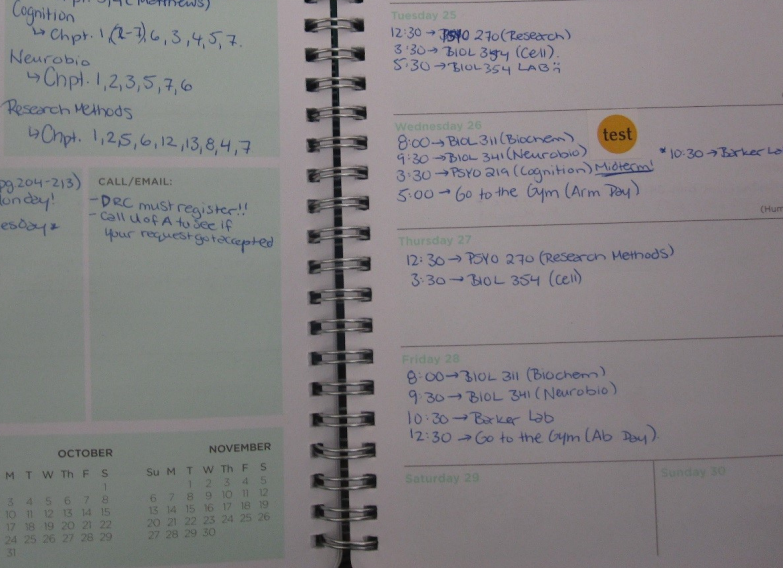
"Professors present students with goals and challenges to overcome, which develops a mentality and work ethic to adapt to stressful situations and tasks."
(Undergraduate Student)

HERE'S WHY:

- Small class sizes
- Supportive, approachable professors
- Natural lighting and comfortable chairs in classrooms
- Reasonable workload
- Well organized programs and courses with clear expectations

"Professors are never in a hurry, they will take time to explain the best they can. Students are respected."
(Undergraduate Student)

"Yes, of course this is university, so that one test is important because that's why you are here but in the end your physical and mental well-being is the most important thing and that should be priority number one."
(Undergraduate Student)



“ Some weeks seem to have every assignment due and plenty of midterms. It can be hard when some weeks have nothing and then others are like this. ”
 (PhotoVoice Participant, Undergraduate Student)

Workload

Many student participants are overwhelmed with their workload and shared that the most stressful times during the semester are when they have several exams and course projects due during the same week. In addition, many students shared that they must be employed to support themselves financially and that this only exacerbates their stress. Respondents wanted a more balanced and reasonable workload, and professors that are empathetic.

Exams were perceived as very stressful to student respondents, especially when they had multiple exams within a short time frame. Many discussed the frustration of the inflexibility of the midterm and final exam schedules. Others shared the stress related to missed exams and the need to reschedule exams. Participants wanted to know their exams schedule sooner and have more flexibility in the exam schedule.

Exams

Program Navigation

Respondents shared that programs that are continually undergoing changes can be frustrating to students, especially when these changes are not communicated effectively. Students stated that well-designed programs with clear organization create less stress for students.

Overall, respondents spoke positively of professors. Many respondents stated that professors are supportive, approachable, flexible, and understanding, making academic programs easier to navigate.

Professors

Classroom Space

Students found it difficult to focus and learn in classrooms that had poor lighting, uncomfortable chairs, and cold temperatures. Classrooms that are bright and full of natural light were perceived as supportive to wellbeing, because they create a positive learning environment, and reduce stress.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Share your ideas! - Write a letter to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, or use social media, or write a blog post to share your ideas for change!
- Stay up-to-date on VOICE activities - follow us on Twitter and Facebook!
- Get involved in or start a project, committee, club, or action group!
- Be a student representative on university committees to advocate for change!

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO FOSTER WELLBEING ON OUR CAMPUS



For More Information or to Get Involved:
<http://campushealth.ok.ubc.ca/>

