

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

UBC Club and Constituency Survey - Alma Mater Society (AMS) Support

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SOCI 380

Themes: Buildings, Community

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UBC Club and Constituency Survey - AMS Support

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Sociology 380: Survey Research Methods

Project Summary

The research question we aim to answer through this survey is **“To what extent do clubs and constituencies feel they are provided with adequate support from the AMS?”** Our project is seeking to measure the extent clubs and constituencies represented by the AMS feel supported and heard by them, and by surveying elected representatives, we will be able to conclude if the AMS is doing enough to effectively support student groups. Using the data collected through this survey, the AMS will be able to adjust their policies in order to provide more satisfactory support to UBC clubs and constituencies.

Sustainability Goals

This survey relates to UBC’s Strategic Goal #3 in the section “UBC Community” of the 20 Year Sustainability Strategy for The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus which states, “Innovative engagement programs strengthen linkages across the campus to generate a sense of place and support the creation of a vibrant, animated, and sustainable live-work-learn community,” (The University of British Columbia, 2014). This is an example of social sustainability in that the purpose of this goal is to build an effective live-work-learn community that fosters growth within the student community, where members will feel fully supported in achieving their goals and feel like they are part of the UBC community. Our survey will seek to increase the extent to which this sense of community is felt, and will allow the AMS to make the appropriate changes to ensure this is achieved. Social sustainability is thus the foundational goal of our survey as in order for students to feel supported, they must feel connected and this creates a sustainable, connected campus.

Key Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable Name	Variable Description	Level of Measurement	Type of Variable
Perceived Support	The level of support students’ groups believes they are receiving.	Ordinal	Dependent variable
Group Type	The group is either a club, constituency, resource group, or departmental group.	Nominal	Independent variable
Group Size	The number of people in the student group.	Interval	Independent variable
Services Knowledge	The awareness of the services the AMS offers student groups.	Ordinal	Independent variable

Services Use	Whether the student group has used a service provided by the AMS.	Nominal	Independent variable
Resources Knowledge	The awareness of physical resources offered by the AMS to student groups.	Ordinal	Independent variable
Resources Use	Whether the student group has used a physical resource provided by the AMS.	Nominal	Independent variable
Budget	The budget allocated to the student group.	Interval	Independent variable
Membership Fee	The cost of joining the group to students.	Interval	Independent variable
Role of Respondent	The executive position the respondent holds.	Nominal	Independent variable

Mock Grant Application

Project Information

Title: UBC Club and Constituency Survey - AMS Support

Key Words: AMS, support, student groups, club, constituency

Ethical Considerations: An ethical consideration for this survey is ensuring all respondents do not feel pressure to disclose personal/triggering information, particularly in relation to questions referring to the usage of SASC. This will be detailed to ensure the respondent will understand. The proposed survey research will not involve children under 18, chemicals/pollutants, or animals (ethical considerations outlined by the Connect Community Grant offered by UBC).

Target Audience

Cole Evans, the Vice President of Administration of the AMS has asked us to conduct this survey to gain a greater understanding of how AMS support is perceived by clubs and constituencies. We will present the survey results and findings to Cole and the AMS Council so that the AMS can gain insights into the best strategy for improving club and constituency support.

Project Description

Our research population is 1750 elected representatives of clubs and constituencies who receive support from the AMS. Through conducting this survey, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which club and constituency members perceive the AMS and the support that the AMS provides for their organization. Additionally, we hope to help the AMS improve their relations with UBC clubs and constituencies and have a better understanding of the things they are doing that are successful, and more importantly the things that are unsuccessful. From the data we collect and analyze, the AMS will be able to construct an environment in which clubs and constituencies are supported with regard to sustainability, especially social sustainability.

Three Project Goals and Outcomes

1. Our first goal is to gain an understanding of perceived support within the student groups that we are surveying. This will be understood from the data we receive. We expect that as the size of the student group, the budget, the use and understanding of AMS services and resources goes up, that the perceived support will also increase.
2. We will distribute the survey on January 13th, 2020 for the first time, with one reminder to complete the survey being sent one week later, on January 20th, 2020. One last reminder to complete the survey will be sent on January 23th 2020. The deadline to complete the survey is January 27th, 2020. This deadline will give the respondents plenty of time to complete the survey, as well as enough time for the data to be analyzed so if necessary, new policy can be implemented by the next school year.
3. We will analyze data collected during the survey process, and consolidate findings in a written report by April 1, 2020. This deadline will allow ample time for data analysis, while still ensuring the information is relayed to Cole Evans and the AMS before summer so that changes can be implemented. We will present this written report to the AMS so that Cole Evans and other AMS executives may use the findings to improve support for UBC clubs and constituencies.

Timeline

- December 9th, 2019: Survey will be complete and ready to be distributed.
- January 13th, 2020: The initial request to complete the survey will be distributed to the randomly selected participants.
- January 20th, 2020: A second email containing the link reminding people to complete the survey will be distributed.
- January 23th 2020: A final reminder to complete the survey will be sent out to the participants.
- January 27th, 2020: This will be the deadline to complete the survey.
- January 28th, 2020 to March 30th, 2020: Data will be collected, analyzed and a final report will be drawn up during this period of time.
- April 1st, 2020: Findings and data will be consolidated into a written report and be given to our community partner, Cole Evans on this day.

Project Description

Study Population

Our research population is elected representatives of clubs and constituencies who receive support from the AMS. This will be the majority of student groups at UBC. This will be the most useful population to survey so as to answer our dependent variable as these representatives will have the most experience and knowledge of the ways in which the AMS has supported them and their group. We are choosing to survey elected representatives rather than the general membership of clubs as they understand the structure and ways in which they can functionally receive support, as general members may not be aware of these intricacies, thus by choosing solely elected members we will be able to gain a more useful insight into their perception of support.

The population size for this survey is 1750 individuals. There are over 350 student groups represented by the AMS, and each of these has on average 4-5 elected representatives. These elected executives are all UBC students in a variety of leadership capacities, including President, Vice President, Treasurer or VP Finance, among other positions depending on the nature of the club. A complete list of the clubs represented by the AMS and the respective elected executives of clubs and constituencies are listed we will have access to, through Cole Evans (AMS VP Administration). The list of all elected executives given access to us by Cole will constitute our sample frame.

Study Design and Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy we are using is systematic random sampling. Systematic random sampling involves the use of a sampling frame and sampling interval, or skip interval. The sampling frame we will utilize is a list of all elected representatives of clubs and constituencies at UBC, which we will have access to through Cole Evans (AMS VP Administration). This list will be arranged alphabetically to avoid issues of periodicity, and guarantee that no clubs or constituencies would be systematically excluded from the sample. We obtained the value of 3 for our sampling interval (k) by dividing the population size of 1750 by the sample size of 300 and then taking into account an expected response rate of at least 50%. The ideal sample size would be at least 300 so we overestimated this in calculating k , taking into account our expected response rate of at least 50%. We expect a very high response rate because we expect respondents to see the value of participating in this survey. It directly affects AMS operations related to UBC clubs and constituencies, and addresses how the AMS can be a better support to them.

This prospective sample size was determined based on Cole's estimation of a sample size that would produce useful data. In our deliberation with Cole, we discussed the heterogeneity of the population - we determined that a larger sample size (so smaller value of k) would be ideal because there is likely a great diversity of opinions among different clubs and constituencies, and we want the data we collect to capture as wide a range as possible. The other factor that influenced our decision to aim for a sample size of at least 300 was the degree of accuracy required in our conclusions. Because the AMS will be using the data collected through this survey to make changes in how they support subsidiary organizations, a high degree of accuracy

with regard to perceived support is critical to ensure that resources are allocated in an effective way, that will encourage the sustainability of subsidiary organizations. Sustainability will be measured using UBC's Sustainability Goal #3, relating to social sustainability (The University of British Columbia, 2014).

Utilizing a systematic random sampling strategy will allow us to achieve a random representative sample that can then be generalized to the population of elected representatives of clubs and constituencies at UBC. This design will be a longitudinal trend study, so the AMS will have the ability to reuse the survey and look at how attitudes and perceived support changes over time - and especially be able to investigate the effectiveness of changes they have put in place in response to findings from the first implementation of the survey.

Due to its structure, this sampling strategy will exclude general members of the clubs and constituencies who may have different opinions with regard to how supported they feel their club is by the AMS. Lastly, there is always the possibility of sampling error, based on chance, that the random sample statistics do not match the parameters of the population.

Survey Administration

This survey will be administered via email in the form of a newsletter to the individuals in the population who have been randomly selected from the sampling frame. The email will include a link to the Qualtrics survey (Appendix 1). The email will also include a paper copy of the survey, in .pdf form, and instructions outlining how to submit this, should the respondent choose the paper format. In addition to the initial email newsletter, we will send members of the sample a follow-up reminder email including the survey link, to ensure the highest response rate possible. In this email, there will be contact information for Cole Evans (Vice President Administration) and Jennifer Cheng (Associate Vice President Administration) as they are the first point of contact for student groups.

One advantage of a web-based survey is the low cost and convenience of administering the survey, and the ease of data analysis. Qualtrics begins to analyze the data and provides tools for analysis. A limitation of web-based surveys is that the specificity and comprehensiveness of respondents' answers will be restricted due to the formatting of the survey. Respondents will not be able to offer as much detail as they might in an interview, and the potential for relevant follow up questions is eliminated. We have attempted to remedy this limitation by anticipating a great diversity of opinions and shaping the survey questions to reflect this. Another disadvantage of web-based surveys is generally a lower response rate, due to low investment on the part of potential respondents. The effect of this will be mitigated in our survey as we will ensure that members of clubs and constituencies understand that the survey is for their benefit as it is seeking to improve the services offered to them. Improved support for clubs and constituencies is an incentive in itself. In order to encourage respondents to complete the survey in its entirety, we have written the questions to ensure that they are relevant and interesting, as well as not too difficult to answer.

Face-to-face interviews may have a higher response rate and a higher potential for detailed responses, however considering the number of respondents we intend to collect data from, the cost would severely outweigh these benefits. Postal surveys would also potentially have a higher response rate, but again, the high financial cost and labour time associated with this method would outweigh the benefit of a possible higher response rate. Additionally, our

population is made up of students, thus an accurate list of addresses would be difficult if not impossible to obtain.

The costs of administering this web-based survey will be very low due to the accessibility of a list of elected club and constituency representatives, so no further research will be required to obtain a sufficient sampling frame. In addition, because the survey will be emailed via the AMS clubs newsletter, it will be of no extra cost to add a link to the Qualtrics survey within the newsletter. There will be a cost of obtaining a Qualtrics account, however, this is well within our budget and is the most cost-effective option for our survey. We will analyze data collected during the survey process using Qualtrics and SPSS and consolidate findings in a written report which we will present to the AMS Council so that Cole Evans and other AMS executives may use the findings to improve support for UBC clubs and constituencies.

Due to the rationale outlined above, a longitudinal trend study design, with the sample selected through systematic random sampling, and the survey administered through Qualtrics is the most appropriate and applicable mode of data collection which will allow for an efficient and useful study.

Pilot Testing

Survey pilot testing is a critical step in developing a survey. Pilot tests are employed to ensure that the questions are clear and that respondents understand the questions how we intended them. Additionally, pilot testing allows us to ensure that the survey follows a logical flow, is organized and is overall appealing to the respondents, as appealing surveys are likely to generate more responses.

As part of the process of developing our survey, to ensure clarity and relevance, we conducted ten pilot tests. We used a variety of methodologies and found patterns in feedback that we incorporated into the final copy of our survey. To conduct our pilot tests, we used two methodologies, retrospective interviewing and the think-aloud methodology. We pilot tested both the online Qualtrics version of our survey and the paper version using these two methodologies. We ensured the people who we conducted the pilot tests upon were indeed elected representatives of AMS clubs and constituencies so that any issues they had with the questions were raised so the final survey could be as accurate and effective as possible.

The retrospective interview method consists of getting someone to complete the survey and reviewing the results afterwards to see if the respondent answered any questions unexpectedly. After taking the survey, respondents are invited to give general feedback about the survey, including any problems they may have come across while taking the survey. This method allows us to figure out how long it takes to complete the survey which is an important piece of information to have on your finalized version of the survey.

The other methodology we utilized in our pilot tests was the think-aloud method, also known as the metacognitive approach. This strategy consists of having the respondent actively vocalize their thoughts to the survey administrator as they answer questions. We asked the respondents to tell the administrator what they thought the questions were asking, and what they seemed to be intended to measure. It should be emphasized to the respondent that it is not how they answer the survey that matters, but how they are thinking about the questions and responses.

Based on the feedback we received in the pilot testing process, we took the following steps to improve our survey, increasing clarity, relevance, and the overall respondent experience. Some of the wording of the questions in our original survey was vague or unclear, so we edited

these questions to maximize clarity and specificity to ensure the respondents would understand the questions in the way we intended. Additionally, certain questions were not relevant to all respondents - for example, the questions referencing club finances are only relevant to club treasurers - so we adjusted the survey so that certain questions would only be asked depending on respondents' answers to question 1) What is your role in the group? To remedy this issue of relevance, we also added an 'N/A' response category to the indexes because some questions might not be relevant for all respondents. We changed some response categories to mirror the associated questions - for example, one question asks about satisfaction but the original response categories use the words 'good and bad'. We changed this wording to 'satisfied and unsatisfied'. We also adjusted the overall flow of the survey questions to improve the experience of completing the survey for respondents.

Works Cited

The University of British Columbia. (2014). 20-Year Sustainability Strategy for The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus. 20-Year Sustainability Strategy for The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus. The University of British Columbia . Retrieved from https://sustain.ubc.ca/sites/sustain.ubc.ca/files/uploads/CampusSustainability/CS_PDFs/PlansReports/Plans/20-Year-Sustainability-Strategy-UBC.pdf

Appendix

1. Student Group Email

Dear *Insert Student Group Name* Executive,

You have received this email as you are part of a specific student group and we are requesting that you fill out the attached survey.

This survey aims to measure how student groups at UBC feel about the support offered by the AMS, with regard to the sustainability of their group. In this survey, we conceptualize sustainability according to UBC's Strategic Goal #3 in the section "UBC Community" of the *20-Year Sustainability Strategy for The University of British Columbia Vancouver Campus*. It states that "Innovative engagement programs strengthen linkages across the campus to generate a sense of place and support the creation of a vibrant, animated, and sustainable live-work-learn

community,” (The University of British Columbia, 2014). The report can be found here: https://sustain.ubc.ca/sites/sustain.ubc.ca/files/uploads/CampusSustainability/CS_PDFs/PlansReports/Plans/20-Year-Sustainability-Strategy-UBC.pdf

Please answer the survey questions as a representative of the group referred to in this email. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the survey, which can be found here: https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bkY31UcLvoSXd3v

The answers submitted in this survey will be confidential. We will not use your responses to identify you, and none of your opinions will be attributed to you personally.

If you would like a paper copy, have any questions, or would like more information, please contact the AMS Vice President Administration, Cole Evans (vpadmin@ams.ubc.ca), the AMS Associate Vice President Administration, Jennifer Cheng (vpadminassist@ams.ubc.ca) or visit the AMS’ website (<https://www.ams.ubc.ca/>).

3. Online Survey

https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bkY31UcLvoSXd3v

4. Associated Costs

Item	Predicted Cost	Notes
Printing (paper copies for accessibility)	\$100	25 paper copies
Final Deliverables (final bounded report)	\$80	10 copies x \$8
Qualtrics Account Membership	\$3000	One off payment for a year long membership
Risk Allowance/Contingency	\$1000	Unexpected costs (i.e. increased use

		of paper survey)
Statistical Analysis Program	\$594	6 months x \$99 per month
Total	\$4774	

5. Codebook

1. Role of Respondent

[Var. ROLE]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
President	1
Treasure/VP Finance	2
Other Elected Executive	3
No Response	9

2. Student Group of Respondent

[Var. STUGROU]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
Club	1
Constituency	2
Resource Group	3
Departmental Group	4
No Response	9

3. Number of Members

[Var. MEMBERS]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
10-25	1
26-50	2
51-75	3
76-100	4
101+	5
No Response	9

4. Cost of Membership Fee

[Var. FEE]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
\$1-15	1
\$16-20	2
\$21-25	3
\$26+	4
No Response	9

5. Total Group Budget

[Var. BUDGET]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
\$	# (\$)
Don't Know	0
No Response	999999

6. Satisfaction with Reimbursement Process

[Var. REIMBUR]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat Disagree	3
Somewhat Agree	4
Agree	5
Strongly Disagree	6
Not Applicable	7

7. Satisfaction with Instructions for Funds and Grants

[Var. FUNDS]

<u>Response</u>	<u>Punch</u>
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat Disagree	3
Somewhat Agree	4
Agree	5
Strongly Disagree	6
Not Applicable	7