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# Student Parent Survey

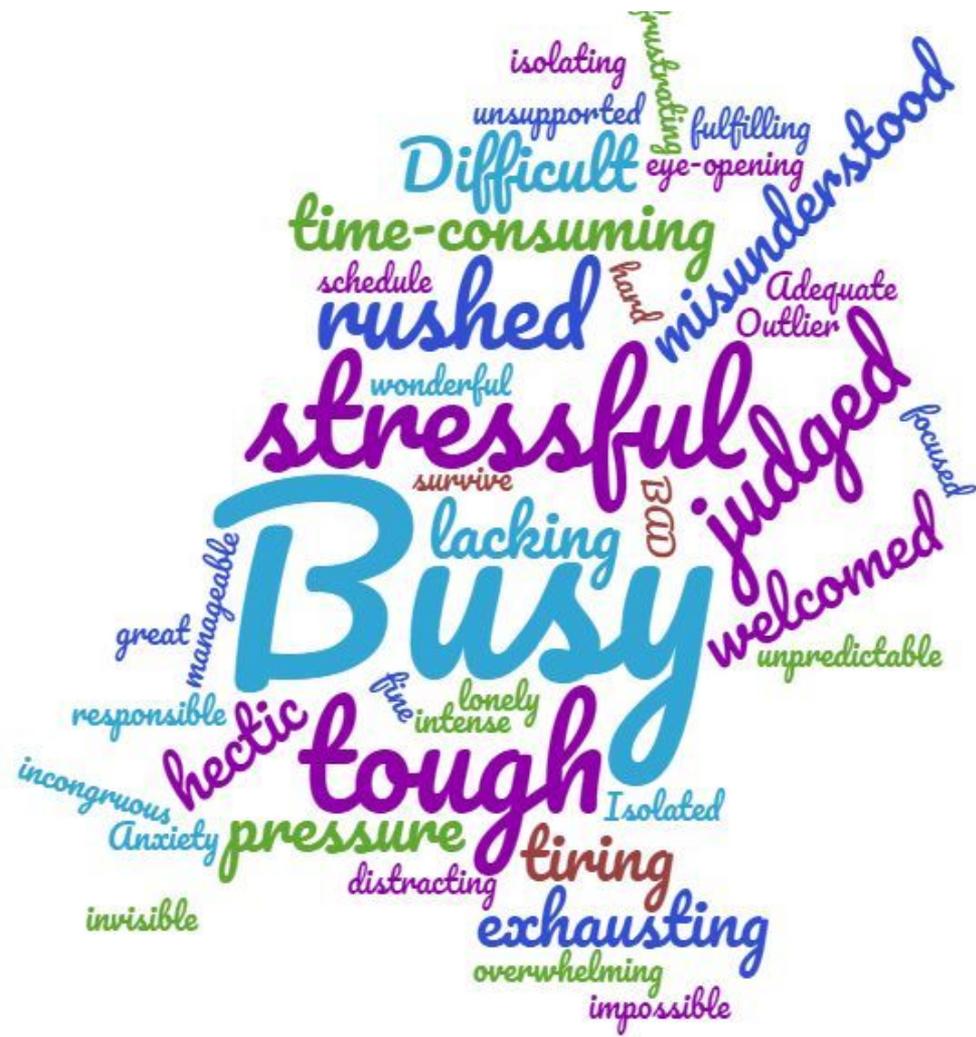
— Developed by the Office of the  
Dean of Students —

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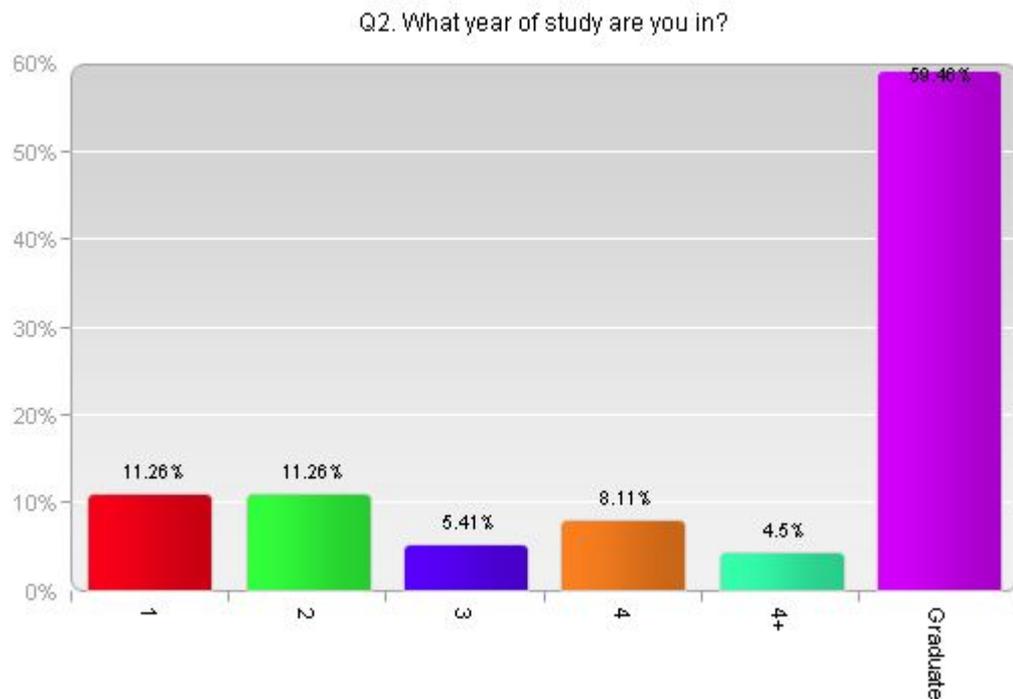
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# Survey Administration

- Survey open September 19 - October 6, 2017
- All Graduate and Undergraduate UofA students were sent a link in the Student Digest and invited to participate through Campus Labs
- 238 responses:
  - 72% identify as female, 25% as male, 1% as other, 1% prefer not to answer
  - Primary Campus: 92% North Campus, 6% South Campus
  - Full-time status 83%, Part-time status 17%
    - 74% answered “yes” that their decision to study part-time is influenced by parenting commitments



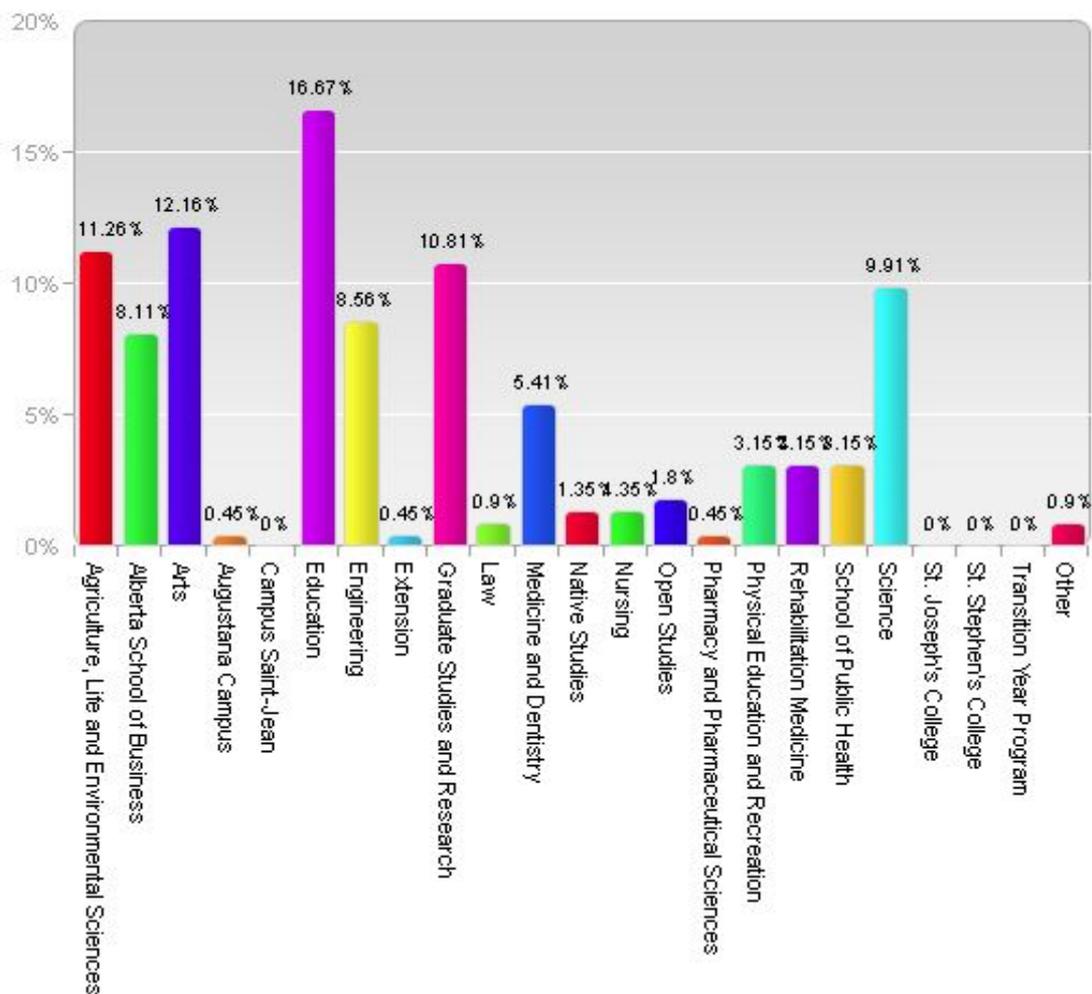
# Year of Study



\*27% of participants took more than 1 year off between completing secondary school and starting university

# Faculty

Q5. What faculty?



# Living Accommodations

## In Residence:

- 13% of participants live in a residence managed by Residence Services
- Of these, 96% live in Michener Park, 4% (1) live in East Campus Village

## Not in Residence:

- 49% live in a property that they own
- 41% live in property that they rent
- 9% live with family

# Students with Children or a Plan to Parent

- 72% of participants have children
- Of these, the children's ages are:
  - 15% under 12 months
  - 9% between 12-18 months
  - 11% between 18-24 months
  - 28% between 2-5 years old
  - 24% between 5-10 years old
  - 13% between 10-18 years old
- In each age category, the average number of children was 1
- For participants who are not currently a parent, 75% indicated they are planning on becoming a parent while completing their degree

# Support

- 63% indicated they currently have support to help them take care of their child/children
  - 43% have a partner/spouse who helps them
  - 19% have family who live locally and help them
  - 6% live with family who help them
  - 25% use a daycare/dayhome
  - 1% use a nanny
  - 4% rely on friends to help
- When asked what supports parents currently access on campus:
  - Majority of responses said nothing/do not know of any (1 mention of the ECHA breastfeeding space)

# Utilization of Specific Parental Supports, Programs, Accommodations

- 17% of respondents said they accessed a specific parent support/program on campus:
  - Of these, 56% accessed the GSA Child Care grant
  - 24% were aware of the GSA Child Care grant but do not qualify for it due to other funding

# Childcare Challenges

What challenges have you experienced in locating safe and accessible childcare?

- Affordability/Cost: 29%
- Inaccessible (waitlists):27%
- None: 18%
- Flexibility/part-time (with a student schedule): 16%
- Inconvenient location: 10%

# Childcare Successes

What successes have you experienced in locating safe and accessible childcare?

- Securing childcare that is **convenient** to work/home (Incl. UofA daycares/dayhomes/nanny): 39%
- No success so far: 19%
- Relying on friends/family: 14%
- Securing childcare that is **safe/trustworthy**: 13%
- Success with a subsidized program (i.e. AB Child Care Subsidy): 5%
- Having childcare that is **flexible** with varying hours: 3%

# University Provided Services

What parental-related services do you think the university should make available for student parents?

- Affordable, accessible, flexible on-campus childcare/pre-school/after school care (at night, while at the gym, during kid's PD days/spring breaks): 66%
- A parent network/social events (community): 7%
- Maternity/Paternity leaves or specific benefits
- Less stigma to discuss starting a family with supervisor
- Information about parental rights during a degree

## ...Continued

- Child friendly study groups
- Breastfeeding spaces
- Continuation of student services access while on [parental] leave
- Baby change stations in bathrooms
- Increased accessibility for strollers in parkades
- Specific scholarships
- Family friendly social events
- More online course options (academic flexibility)

# Emergency or Hourly Child Care

Do you regularly require emergency/hourly care for your child?

- Yes: 51%
- No: 49%

When do you regularly require emergency/hourly care?

- On a weekly basis: 26%
- On a monthly basis: 48%
- Very rarely: 26%

# Community

Would you be interested in becoming involved in a student group or club composed of other student parents on campus?

- Yes: 63%
- No: 37%

# Do Parents share their parental status with others?

When asked:

- Yes: 85%
  - "I'm a proud parent", "It's why I look tired all of the time", "most of my classmates are and it helps build community"
- No: 6%
- Sometimes: 9%

# Is Campus Child-Friendly?

- Yes: 25%
  - “Kids make people happy”
- No: 41%
  - No specific child friendly places, no baby change stations, not stroller accessible
- In the middle: 34%
  - Had not thought about it, “not particularly”

# Barriers with bringing a child to campus

- Numerous responses: have not tried
- Family washrooms/baby change stations
- Lack of child-friendly events/things for kids to do
- Too crowded
- Physical barriers, not stroller friendly

Is there a need for baby change stations and breastfeeding/pumping specific areas?

- Almost 100% yes: “these should be standard”

# Other feedback:

*“Classes that are open to having children attend, where necessary, are important - having the feeling that your children would be welcome. Native Studies is particularly good with this, even though I have never needed to bring my children. Others have, and it has not been discouraged by staff or students.”*

*“Emergency care for students who have unexpected situations arise sounds like a great idea. Or even a 1 hour daycare service where students can bring in their children while they attend class for an affordable price would be great.”*

*“ha ha, wait for my book to come out!”*

*“Haven't experienced any barriers at this point, however I know if I was single parent or not financially secure and had to complete my nursing degree it would have been very difficult to manage child care needs with the easily/late times of doing clinical placements.”*

*“I am able to spend very little time on campus, apart from attending classes as I worry about getting back home to my baby. If there were child care facilities on campus I could check on my baby periodically while also participating in extracurricular campus activities and events.”*

# Other feedback:

“I am constantly making sacrifices in the care of my children or to my studies. For example: one of my kids is sick means I will be up all night regardless of having a midterm or exam the next day this lack of sleep impacts my academic success. On the flip side if I want to study the night before the exam I have to choose between continuing to study or taking an hour or two to help put the kids to bed. This absence in their lives impacts my relationship with them and puts more strain on my spouse who care for them during the day without break.”

“I feel like some accommodations should be made to make sure there is as much equity for student parents as possible. For instance, when I was inquiring about an internship position, where I could potentially be placed anywhere in Alberta, I was told that no accommodation would be made because I have children. I was told that it would not be fair to the other interns who would have to relocate to other areas and personally incurred the cost. It was assumed that I was trying to make a case to stay in the Edmonton area, when in truth I would be very willing to go anywhere within driving distance to my house (which is actually in rural Alberta and I commute everyday to school) so that my children could have their lives as undisrupted as possible. My spouse is a first responder and is called it frequently, which compounds the situation. “

“I’m so very glad to see this survey and initiatives being considered. Given the increasing requirement for education to compete in the labour market, parent students seem altogether more common than I imagined. I look forward to a university that supports all its students”.

# Other feedback:

*“Most professors are understanding if there's a need to leave earlier because of daycare's closing time e.g.”*

*“There are very few scholarships or awards available for part-time students. People who are part-time students may need to work and look after their family responsibilities, but have access to very few awards. There should be awards specifically targeted at parents to facilitate and encourage them to continue their education.”*

*“A committee to improve parents experiences on campus would be fantastic! Great idea to do this survey!”*

*“It is a challenging situation to mix graduate student life and parenthood, but it is manageable. Transportation and childcare are the most problematic things, as well as not having a support network since we are new to Canada. But, the benefits of my daughter learning English and French are immeasurable.”*

*“I'm just shocked that a big university like Alberta does not have even a single family room!”*

