



PROPOSED  
NEW  
STUDENT  
BUILDING

JULY 23

2012

---

STUDY SPACE SURVEY REPORT

## Prepared by:

Federation of Students,  
University of Waterloo

## Authors:

Andrew Noble  
Alexandra Russell

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
BACKGROUND.....	3
METHODOLOGY.....	3
DATA.....	4
DEMOGRAPHICS .....	4
QUESTIONS .....	5
Is there adequate study space on campus?.....	5
What do students want in a study space? Do students prefer quiet space or some noise? .....	7
Where do students want to see more student space? .....	8
CONCLUSIONS .....	9

## INTRODUCTION

The University of Waterloo (University) and the Federation of Students (Feds) have begun to actively investigate the need and desire for a new student building on campus. As part of this, Feds has begun an extensive consultation process to determine what undergraduate students are looking for, with regards to student space.

The proposed location is west of RCH and south of Physics, as approved by The Board of Governors on April 5, 2011.

The cost of the building is expected to be divided between undergraduates, graduates, and the University. Cost distributions will be dependent on what types of space are included, and will be determined through negotiations between the University, Feds, and the Graduate Students Association.

## BACKGROUND

We asked full-time undergraduate students to complete the Study Space Survey. This survey was run to assess student space needs at the University of Waterloo. The information collected in the report was used to determine if there is a perceived lack of study space on campus and student priorities for increased study space and amenities in the space.

Information regarding need for study space, and amenities desired in study spaces, helped determine what was prioritized in the new student building proposal.

## METHODOLOGY

The target population was all full-time undergraduate students. The study space survey was available on the Federation of Students' website starting in March 2012 for one month. The survey was advertised through social media and via email to potential respondents. The study population, or the group of potential respondents, was all full-time, undergraduate students who were on campus during the Winter 2012 academic term. The survey received 1396 responses.

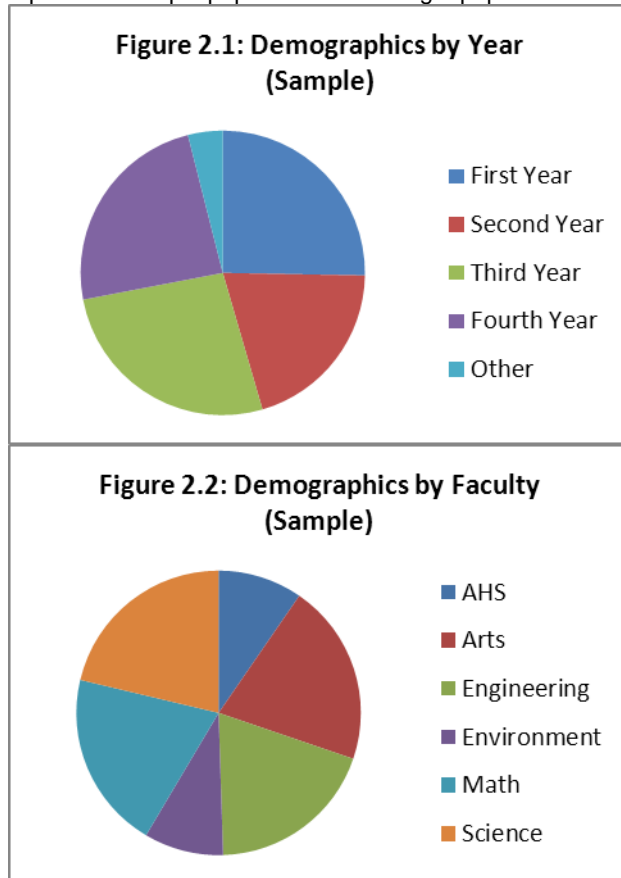
The survey included three demographic questions (faculty, year, and whether or not the respondent lived in residence) and nine questions about study space on campus. Questions were, in this order:

- Do you feel there is adequate study space for students on campus? *Yes/No*
- Do you prefer to study someplace on campus rather than your own home/residence room? *Yes/No*
- Do you feel that some study spaces on campus are underutilized? *Yes/No*
  - List all the study spaces that are underutilized that you can think of. *Text Answer*
- Where is your favourite place on campus to study? *M/C Study Locations*
  - Why do you like to study there? *Clickable amenities*
- Where on campus would you like more study space? *M/C: 6 Options & none-of-the-above*
- What other comments do you have relating to study space on campus? *Text Answer*
- If you would like to receive a copy of the findings of this survey and/or if you want to learn whose names were drawn for prizes, please fill in your email address again below. *Text Answer*

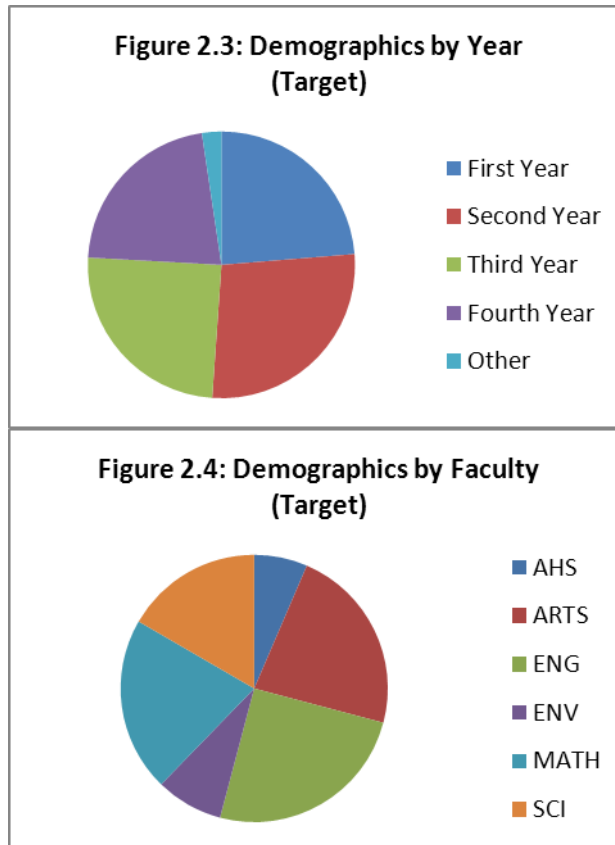
## DATA

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Figures 2.1 through 2.2 show the demographics of all respondents. Figure 2.1 shows the distribution of respondents by year of study, while Figure 2.2 shows by faculty. Additionally, it is important to note that 28% of all respondents lived in residence when surveyed. It has been noted that the sample population, as outlined, is representative of the study population. Below, we will compare the sample population to the target population.



Figures 2.3 through 2.4 show the demographics of the target population (all full-time undergraduate students). Similar to above, Figure 2.3 shows the distribution of full-time undergraduate students by study year and, Figure 2.4, by faculty. Excluded from the count are Computing and Financial Management Students and students registered through Renison as the numbers are negligible and neither of these were an option on the survey. Software Engineers are included under Engineering.



It can be seen visually that the sample is representative of the target with respect to distributions across faculties and years. There is a slight amount of selection bias due to sampling from only on-campus students, but this amount is negligible.

Further sampling error may result from students' interest in completing the survey. Students who feel strongly about a lack of study space may have been more motivated to complete the survey. However, the survey was introduced as a "Student Study Space Survey," and this is, arguably, a topic concerning all students. In addition, as an incentive to complete the survey, those who completed the survey were entered into a draw to win an Apple iPad or a Blackberry Playbook.

## QUESTIONS

### *Is there adequate study space on campus?*

#### RATIONALE

In discussions with students, there seems to be a general concern about the amount of study space on campus. Students will often report their frustration through online social media platforms such as twitter.com and omguw.com. This question was asked to determine what percent of students believe there is adequate study space on campus. It was framed in a positive way: "Is there adequate study space on campus?" and placed as the first question in order to avoid biasing the participant.

#### RESPONSES

## All Respondents

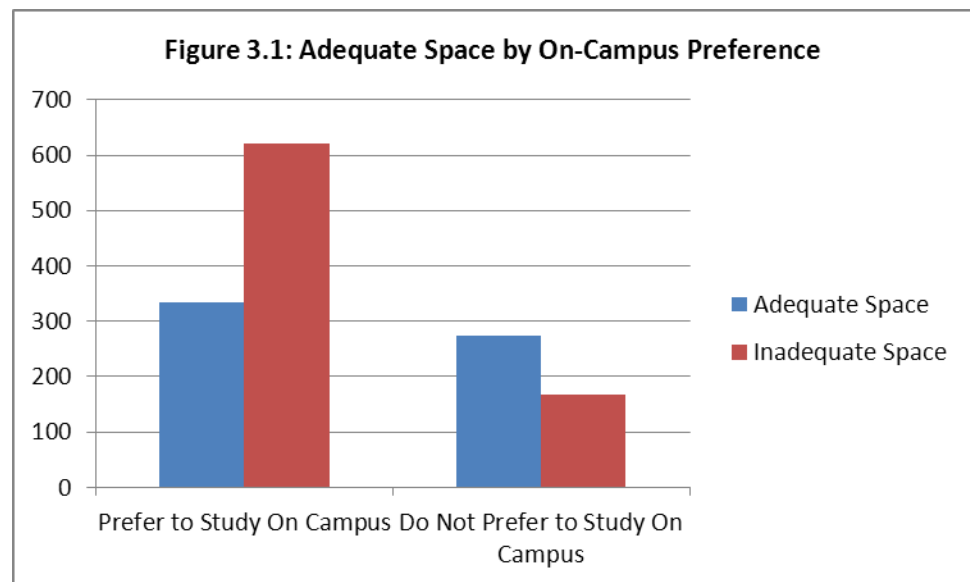
Students were asked: “Do you feel there is adequate study space for students on campus?” There was an only *yes* or *no* choice for the response. Of all the respondents, 57% responded that there was inadequate study space available.

Given the sample size, we can determine that this percentage has a 2.60% margin of error, meaning that there is a 95% chance that the actual percentage of full-time undergraduate students who feel that there is inadequate study space on campus is between 54.00% and 59.19%. See *Appendix B* for complete calculations.

## Students Who Prefer to Study on Campus

We can easily believe that students who prefer to study on campus would have a better perception of the space available to them than the students who prefer to study off campus or at home (See Figure 3.1).

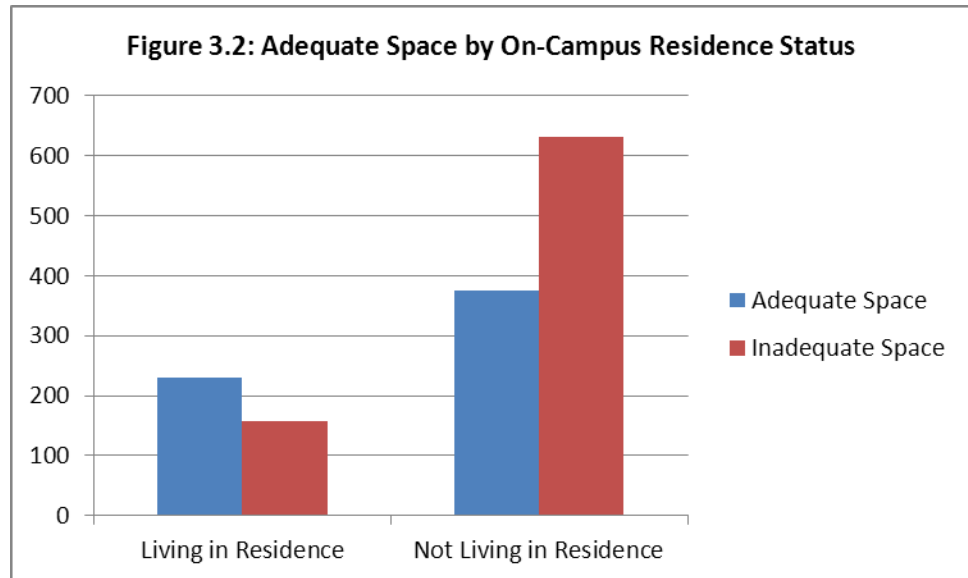
Respondents were asked if they preferred to study on campus or at home. Of all of the respondents who preferred to study on campus (955 of 1396), 65% responded that there was inadequate study space available. This percentage has a 3.02% margin of error. See *Appendix C* for complete calculations.



## Students Not Living in Residence

Similarly, we can imagine that students living in on-campus residences have a different perspective than students living off campus (See Figure 3.2).

Respondents were asked whether or not they lived in residence. Of all the respondents who did not live in residence (1008 of 1396), 63% responded that there was inadequate study space available. This percentage has a 2.99% margin of error. See *Appendix D* for complete calculations.



## RESULTS

By the responses we received, we can reject the hypothesis that the majority of students feel that there is an adequate amount of study space on campus.

## *What do students want in a study space? Do students prefer quiet space or some noise?*

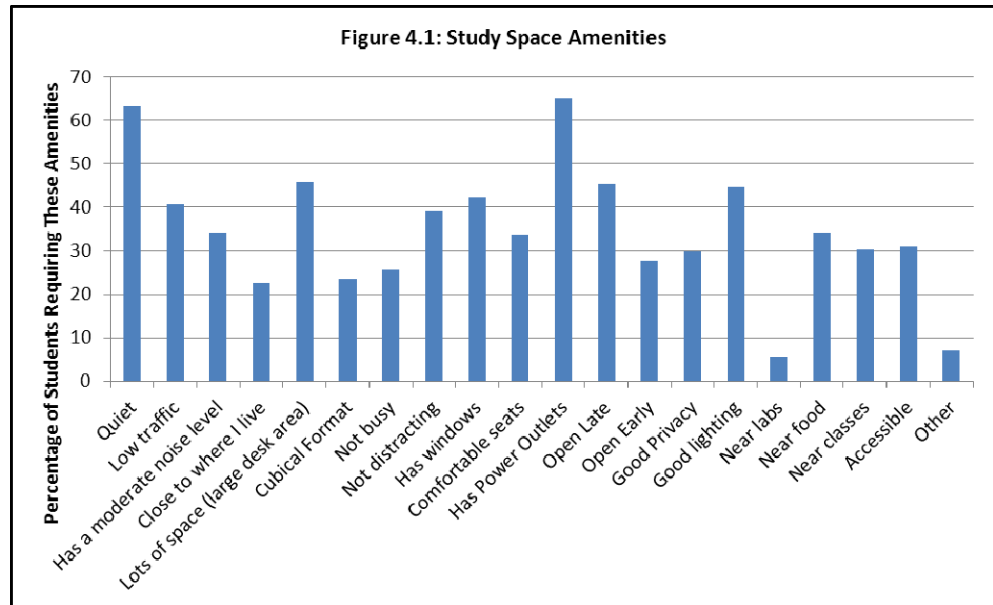
## RATIONALE

In the development on new study space on campus, it is important to know what is most important within a space. Within the planning of such a space, data must support the amount of silent study space versus more open, moderate-noise, study space. In order to ensure that participants did not simply select all positive amenities within a study space, this question was asked as a follow-up to the previous question “where is your favourite place to study on-campus?” Asking the question in this way allows us to observe the reasons behind students’ favourite places of studying, and thus allows us to discover what are student priorities regarding study space.

## ALL RESPONSES

Respondents were asked to select where on campus they prefer to study. Immediately following that question, they were asked “Why do you like to study there?” They were given a list of common study space amenities. All of the amenities and their respective rankings are shown in Figure 4.1.





The highest ranking amenity was power outlets, followed closely by a quiet environment. Also popular were large desk area, windows, good lighting, and open late. Whereas 63.18% of respondents choose their location because of it being quiet, 34.10% of respondents desire a moderate noise level. This would suggest that for approximately every 3 students, 2 desire quiet study space while the other desires moderate noise.

Less than a quarter of students selected proximity to living quarters, cubical format, and proximity to labs.

Lowest ranking was proximity to computer labs. This could suggest that students no longer have a large need for computer labs. Those who responded "Other" were asked to specify; two of the most common additions were whiteboards/blackboards and near classmates or friends.

## RESULTS

In study spaces, the most important amenity for students is power outlets. Many students require the following: good lighting, windows, large desk space, late operation hours, and low traffic. The following are amenities are not required by students in study spaces: proximity to living quarters and proximity to lab space.

Approximately two out of every three students prefer quiet space, while one third of students prefer a moderate volume in their study space.

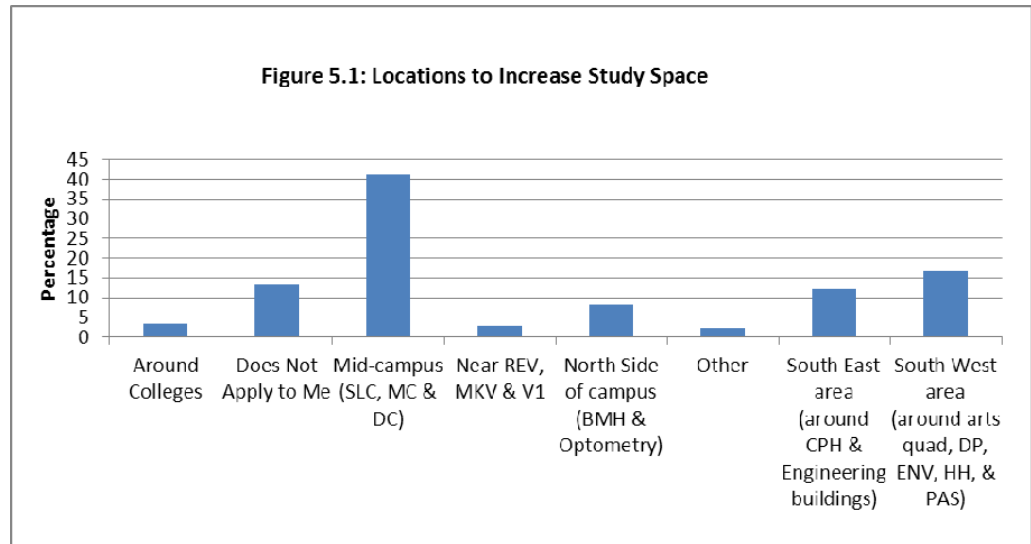
## Where do students want to see more student space?

### RATIONALE

In the potential of new buildings on campus, knowing where to emphasize an increase in study space is important. This question was asked in order to determine where students would like to see more study space.

### ALL RESPONSES

Respondents were asked to select where they would most like to see more study space. They were given seven options, as seen in Figure 5.1.



It is clear that there is high demand for study space around mid-campus and the Student Life Centre.

We can imagine that there is some bias from each of the respondents depending on which faculty they are enrolled in. However, as determined in Section 1, the distribution of respondents across faculties is representative of the target population, so it is not necessary to correct for this bias. Figure 5.1 accurately reflects where University of Waterloo undergraduate students want more study space.

## CONCLUSIONS

Out of all the locations near and on campus, most students showed a desire for more study space around mid-campus (SLC, MC & DC).

## CONCLUSIONS

The overall theme of the survey responses is that students want more study space, preferably around mid-campus (SLC, MC & DC), and including power outlets, good lighting, windows, large desk space, late operation hours, and low traffic. Other findings from this survey include:

- Students do not value proximity to their place of residence or proximity to lab space as important factors in determining a place to study.
- Two out of every three students prefer quiet space, while one third of students prefer a moderate volume in their study space.
- Students living in residence believe there is adequate study space on campus, whereas students not living in residence believe there is not adequate study space on campus.

The key implication of this survey is that students support the development of more study space on our campus. Ideally, this space would be around mid-campus.