



2022 Career and Academic Services Student Satisfaction Survey Results

Purpose

The College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALs) conducts an annual satisfaction survey to gain an understanding of student experiences, needs, and opportunities within the services provided with the college. Results allow Career and Academic Services to adjust programming and services as well as celebrate successes.

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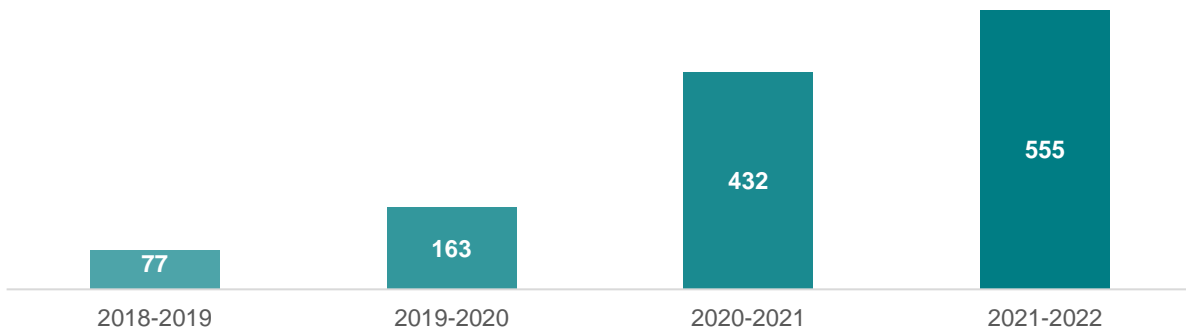
Background and Methods

Students in the College of Agriculture & Life Sciences were surveyed at the end of the Spring 2022 semester about their experiences and engagement during the 2021-2022 Academic Year.

The survey was designed using the [CIVITAS 2018 “The State of Students: Student Perspectives on Graduation Barriers & Advising Support”](#) and the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\) 2019 “Engagement Insights: Survey Findings on the Quality of Undergraduate Education”](#) as a guide.

Questions include student experiences and satisfaction with major selection, academic advising, CALS Career Center services, events, and student engagement in clubs and organizations. Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics. Where appropriate, comparisons to the previous year’s results and/or the national surveys are presented.

Response rates have increased



The anonymous survey collected through Qualtrics. CALS students who completed the survey were entered into a raffle for UA and CALS branded gift items. The survey was marketed by advisors and staff through email, D2L pages, text messages, events, and social media.

While the response has increased, results are limited. Reviewing CALS majors and responses, the response rate is over 17%. Compared to recent surveys at the University of Arizona, which have had an average response rate of 11%, we are pleased to have had so many students complete the survey. Results have a 95% confidence level and a +/- 3.5% margin of error.

Demographics are presented in the appendix.

Descriptive statistics, crosstab analysis, and comparative analysis were conducted throughout.

While the results of this survey are limited, they can serve to frame discussions on successes, improvements, and planning.

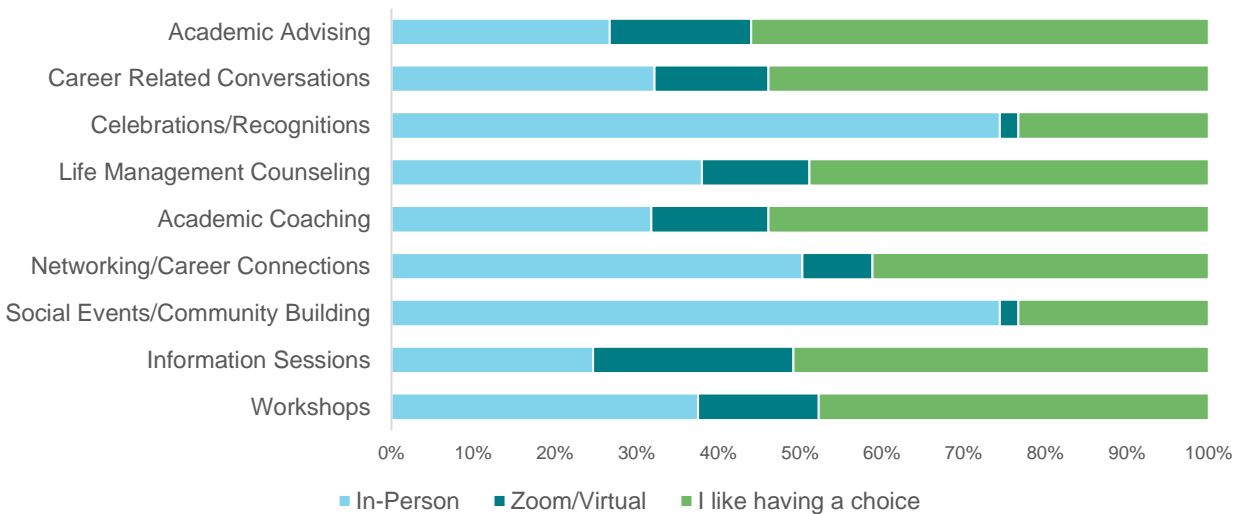
Results

Modality Preferences and Benefits

COVID-19 forced student services and resources online. This academic year brought more opportunities to be in-person on main and Near You Network campuses, however, the pandemic had not ended.

Students* want to choose how they receive support and services

Except when it comes to being recognized and socializing



*Arizona Online students were not asked this question

As indicated in the table above, students want a choice in how they receive most services and supports. The exception being recognitions and celebrations as well as social and community building events. Hybrid options will need to continue to promote the most student engagement and accessibility.

Students indicated that **in-person support experiences can lead to better connections with peers, staff, and faculty**, engage them more fully, allow for seeing the faces of those they interact with, and provide an opportunity for free food.

In the last academic year, CALS Advisors and Student Support staff offered appointment modality choice that included in-person 40% of the time. When presented with a choice, only 29% chose an in-person appointment.

All students, including Arizona Online students, were asked about the benefits of virtual support experiences. Students responded that the **biggest benefit for virtual services is convenience**. They also indicated that it helps with time management, accessibility (audio, transcripts, etc.), and lowers the cost of commuting. In comments, several students mentioned that virtual attendance allows them to participate more frequently due to chronic illnesses and reduces their concerns from becoming infected with COVID-19 or other infectious diseases that put them at higher risk for poor health outcomes.

Students were asked about how they would like to be reminded of appointments, events, and important deadlines. **Email was ranked as the most preferred method, followed by text message, and phone calls.** D2L announcements and a mobile application push notification were ranked as least preferred.

Degree Choice and Difficulty

Nearly 70% of students are in the same major they selected upon admission to the University of Arizona. Of those who changed majors, over a quarter of students changed to a CALS major from outside of CALS.

Students who changed their major primarily describe their interests changing as the main factor for the change. Other common influences included having experiences such as classes or internships that sparked a passion or otherwise helped them realize a particular field was not for them, classes that were too difficult, too much stress in previous major, employability, and not receiving the services and support from advisors and faculty needed to succeed in their original program. Students shared insights such as:

“I took RNR 160, and the professor was so amazing, he made me fall in love with natural resources.”

“I realized I didn’t like the major I was in and also the advisors in that major weren’t helpful.”

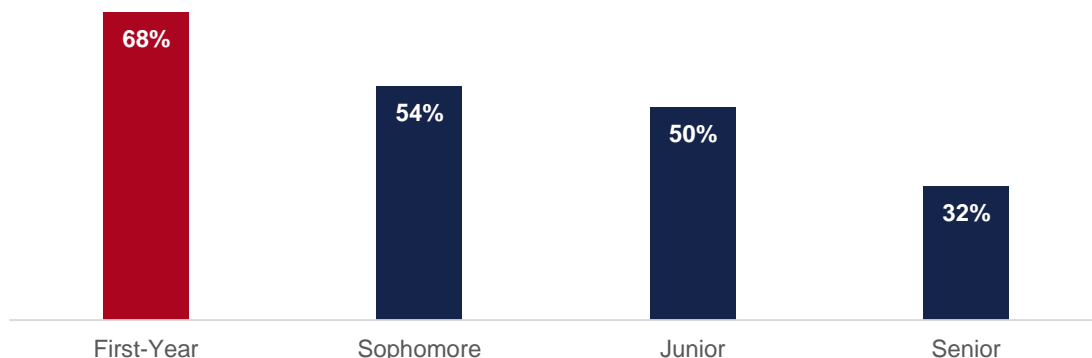
“I wanted to transfer to BE because the job field had better opportunities and paid more. My motivation is to help the environment and that did not change.”

Students from each major are represented in the results.

Just **over half (51%) of students feel that completing their degree will not be too difficult.** Students who express difficulty cite **anxiety, being overwhelmed, affordability, life circumstances, and tough classes** most often as reasons for their challenges. Overall, CALS students reported similar difficulty and challenges as in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Nationally, 25% of students reported difficulty completing their degree (CIVITAS, 2018).

First Year Support Remains Critical for Retention & Completion

Proportion of students citing degree completion difficulty by academic level



Marginalized and first-year students experience more difficulty in degree completion than their counterparts

First Generation	Continuing Generation	Students of Color	White Students	Transfer	First-Time
54%	45%	52%	46%	54%	46%

First-generation students are more likely to cite **tuition affordability, cost of fees and materials, and working** compared to non-first-generation students. Students of color are more likely (52%) than white peers (46%) to report difficulty completing their degree, though. We know that students of color face additional barriers within institutions (Hussain & Jones, 2021), however, that was not addressed in this survey.

Student employment yielded various results. Over half of working full-time, over 20 hours per week, unemployment, and unpaid caretaking students reported difficulty in finishing their degrees. **Students working less than 20 hours per week reported markedly less difficulty (35%) with degree completion compared to their peers.**

Academic Advising

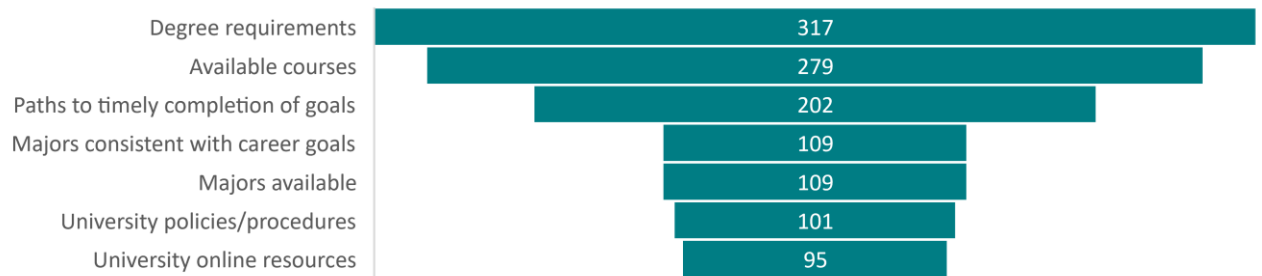
As indicated above, academic advisors are an important resource for students and 95% of students know who their advisor is. Most (93%) of students report that their **advisor is available** (down 3% from the previous year) and 82% of students indicate that they have met with their advisor in the last term or within the last six months. **Further, 93% of students say that connecting with an advisor is not difficult**, up 3% from last year. This is well above the national result of 42%.

Just over half of **students want to hear from their advisor at least once per semester** about their academic progress, personal development, or getting answers to questions. An additional **40% of students want to connect with their advisor more frequently**. In comparison, 70% of students would like to communicate with an advisor monthly, according to CIVITAS (2018).

Advisors assist with a wide variety of student support. Students chose several areas in which advisors increased their understanding as indicated in the chart below. Results are consistent with the previous year's survey.

Students met with Advisors for an increased understanding of key topics

Academic Progression



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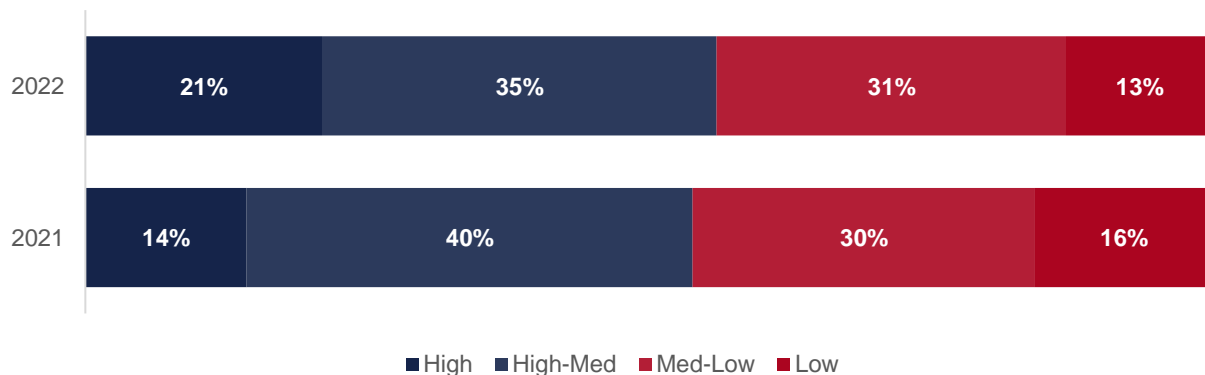
Personal and Professional Development



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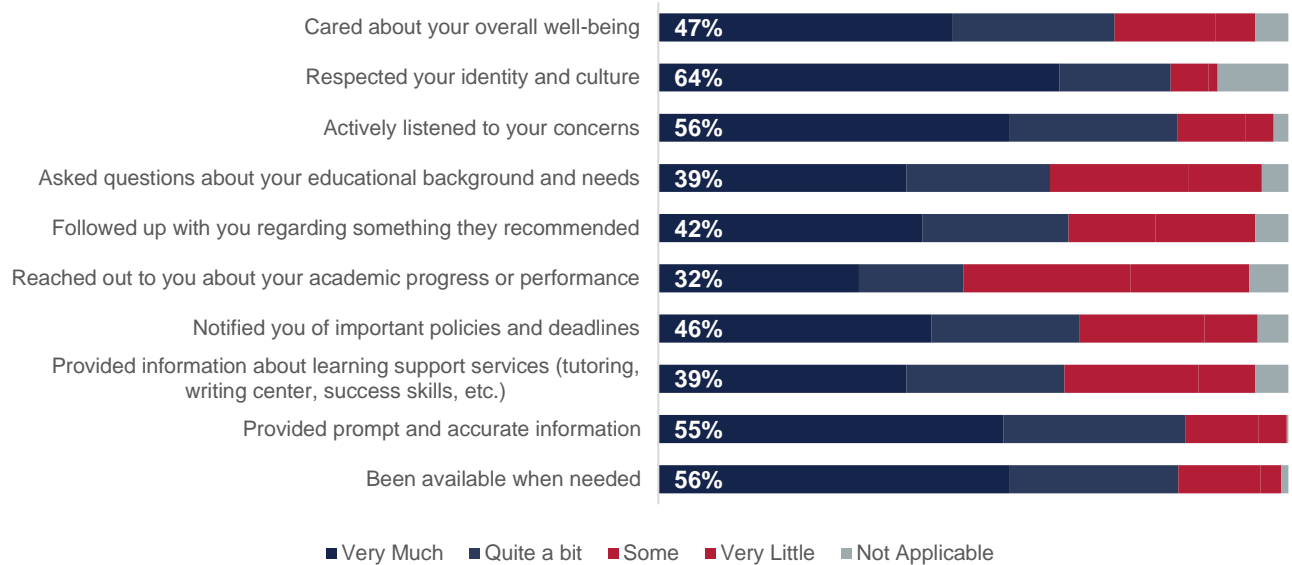
NSSE (2020) has found that advising **quality matters more than advising frequency**. Adapting the scale from the NSSE Academic Advising Topical Module focused on the question to assess advising quality, students were asked how much advisors did certain things. Scores indicate that **over half of CALS students are receiving high to medium quality advising**, as shown in the table below.

Advising Quality Increased This Year



An examination of variables suggests that advising quality is strongest in respecting identities and culture, availability, and active listening and can increase with more proactivity and personalization.

Advising Quality Indicators Show Strengths and Opportunities



Advising in CALS grew most in asking student questions, providing referrals for academic support, policies and deadlines, and follow-up. Although there were mostly areas of growth, high quality active listening remained stable while caring and **respect for identities and culture showed a reduction in high quality experiences.**

Most Indicators Point to Growth Year-Over-Year



When asked what would make meetings with advisors more meaningful, student top five requests were to:

- Be knowledgeable about the college, instructors, and culture
- Know them and their current situation(s)
- Already know their academic history
- Proactively reaches out to support them, and
- Reach out to connect periodically

Career Center

Just under 20% have been to the CALS Career Center or attended a virtual event in the past academic year. Comparatively, over 20% have used University of Arizona career support services through LifeLab or Student Engagement & Career Development. Students who changed their majors to a CALS major are less likely to have gone to the Career Center.

Based on the services offered, **students report that the Career Center does resume review best**, followed by workshops and providing career advice.

CALS Career Center Services Could Be Promoted More to Students

Are you aware of the services the CALS Career Center offers?



While services may not be well known or clear, students are more aware (37%) of the CALS Virtual Career Center. **Transfer students, sophomores, and those attending UArizona through a Near You Network campus were the least aware** of the CALS Career Center and the CALS Virtual Career Center.

Students were able to provide suggestions of networking and/or skill building topics they would like to develop. While most students did not add a comment or weren't sure what to ask for, common themes included the following, in order from most mentioned to least:

- **Job Search Support (73)**
Students are asking for workshops and individual support on searching for careers related to their degree, completing job applications, writing cover letters and resumes, how to develop and effective LinkedIn presence, using Handshake, preparing for interviews, how to effectively market oneself in the job market, and handling salary negotiations and rejections.
- **Networking (44)**

Students want to network with peers in similar majors, faculty, and professionals. Several students also wanted to attend workshops on how to network. They are also interested in affinity-type groups to meet peers and professionals with similar identities.

- Professionalism (25)**
 Students had questions on professional public speaking, email communication, dress, etiquette, forming a mentor relationship, navigating work/life balance, and teamwork skills.
- Internships and Volunteer Opportunities (21)**
 How to search for internships, common internship expectations, balancing internship opportunities with other opportunities and obligations, and funding during internships were the most requested workshop topics under this theme.
- Graduate and Professional School Preparation (12)**
 Students seeking a graduate or professional degree asked for assistance in choosing which schools to apply to, getting research experience, preparing their application, writing personal statements, practice interviews and visits, and negotiations.

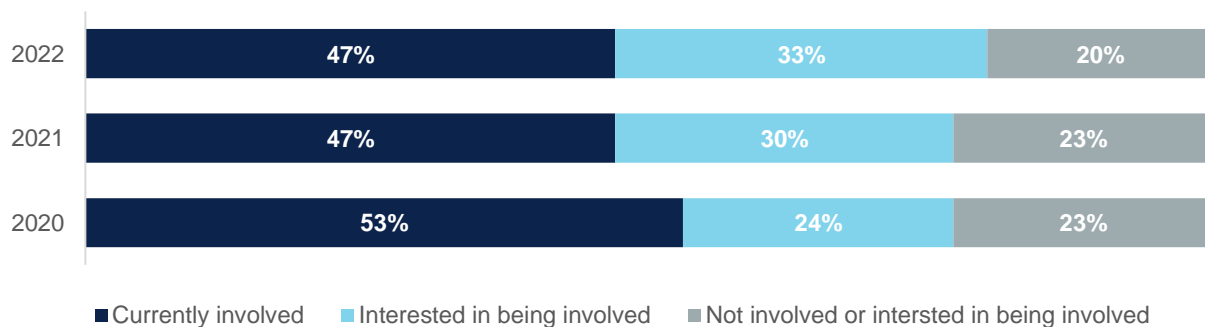
Engagement

Student engagement takes a variety of forms. CALS Career and Academic Services works with students to provide community building events, connection opportunities, and support for student clubs and organizations.

Clubs and Organizations

Nearly 50% of students are currently involved in a student organization or club, with an additional third of students interested in becoming involved.

Student Interest in Being Involved Shows Growth



Transfer and first-generation students report less involvement, but over 40% of transfer students and first-generation students are interested. Half of students working full-time and almost 60% of unpaid caretakers would like to be involved. Further, first-year are slightly less involved.

Considering that these groups are less likely to be retained, increasing involvement, and thus sense of belonging, can support better retention rates (Pedler et al., 2021).

Students learned about clubs most frequently from friends, fellow students, social media, tabling events, faculty members, and fliers.

Those who are not involved cite barriers such as not being sure how to get involved or what is available, not having enough time, being focused on coursework, work, and family obligations. All student groups referred to the same barriers in involvement. In comments, students most commonly shared that they did not know how to find clubs and that they want the flexibility to participate online. These comments included Arizona Online and Near You Network campus students, but also students who live off campus, work, and are caretakers.

Nearly half of students reported having held or being in a leadership role in a club or organization, while 17% have not but are interested. Students interested in leadership positions did indicate what type of support they would need to become a leader. The top three methods for support included:

- Information about expectations
- Peer mentorship
- Encouragement from advisors and/or faculty

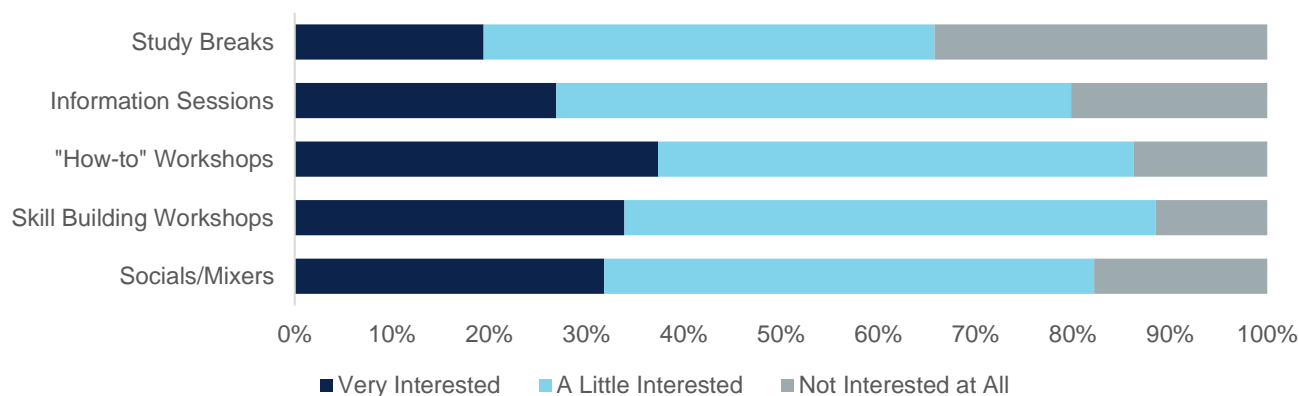
Events

Nearly 40% of CALS students attended CALS events in the last academic year. New Student Welcome followed by the CALS Virtual Career Fair and CALS Student Appreciation Week had the most students attend.

Students who have not reported attending CALS events shared barriers such as not being at times that work for them (25%), not knowing about them (22%), not having time to attend (18%), and not knowing anyone else going (16%) as the biggest factors. Nearly 12% of students said that they did not attend because the events did not interest them.

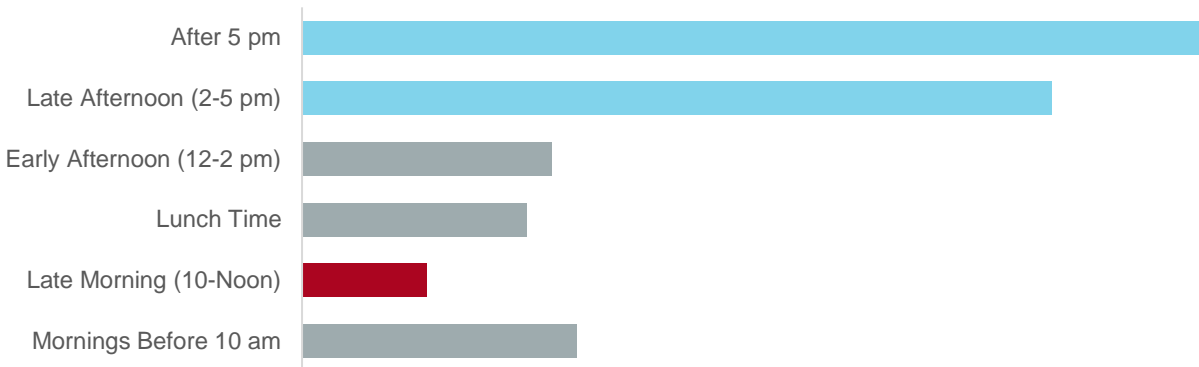
Students Interested in Learning, Growing, and Socializing

What types of events would you be interested in attending in CALS?



In comments, students mentioned desiring career-related workshops and networking events as well as mental health workshops.

Student Availability for Events

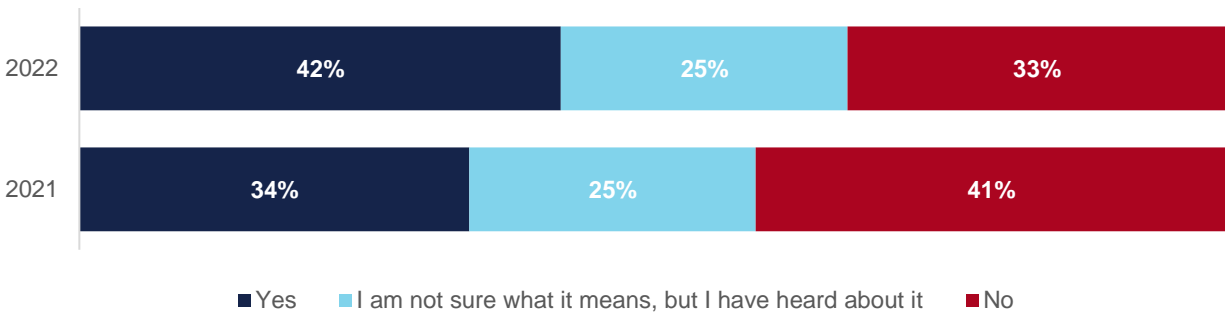


Life Management Counseling

Life Management Counseling (LMC) was established in CALS in 2020 as part of the University of Arizona Strategic Plan. Licensed clinicians provide short-term mental health services and consultation for students, staff, and faculty for the Division of Agriculture, Life & Veterinary Sciences & Cooperative Extension.

Student Awareness of Life Management Counseling is Growing

Did you know that CALS offers Life Management Counseling?



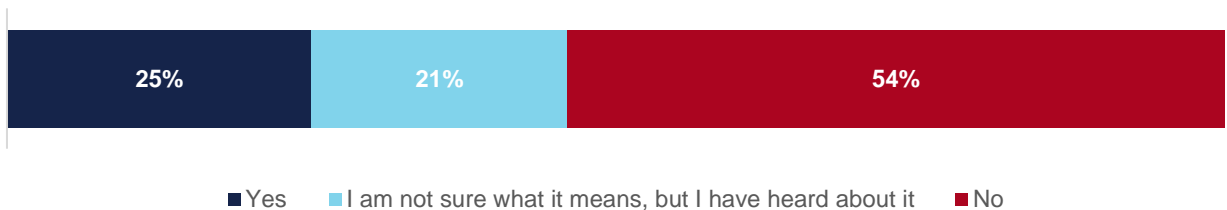
Nearly 40% of students aware of Life Management Counseling are actively promoting the service to their peers. Considering the stigma of mental health and help-seeking behaviors surrounding it, this is a positive indicator of support.

CALS Learning Lab: Powered by the SALT Center

The CALS Learning Lab: Powered by the SALT Center launched in Fall 2021. Learners are able to connect with support services focused on learning how to learn and key executive functioning skills such as time management and organizing course materials to exam preparation and note-taking strategies. Students are referred, or can refer themselves, for 1:1 coaching or attend workshops. Additionally, students who would benefit from a higher-level support can qualify for testing services and/or SALT Center services.

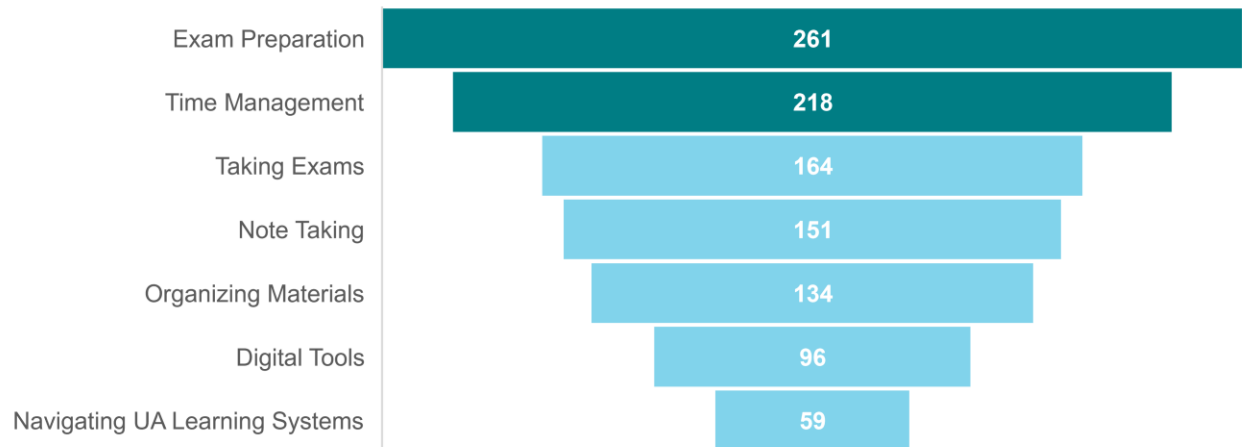
Awareness of the CALS Learning Lab: Powered by the SALT Center Needs to Grow

Are you aware of the new CALS Learning Lab: Powered by the SALT Center?



Learners Need Exam Preparation and Time Management Support Most

What type of skills workshops would you find most valuable?



Of the learners aware of the Learning Lab, **38% of students are actively sharing this resource with their peers.**

CALS Scholarships

The College of Agriculture & Life Sciences awards over \$1 million in scholarships to students annually. Students can apply for scholarships specific to the college through Scholarship Universe with an April 1st deadline.

3 of 4 CALS Students are Aware of Scholarships in CALS

Did you know that CALS offers over \$1 million in scholarships annually?



Students who did not apply did not think they qualified (25%), were unaware of scholarships (24%), said they missed the deadline (19%), did not know what to include in the application (14%), or did not know how to apply (13%). A few students also mentioned that they did not have time or did not need additional funding.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in CALS

The Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension (ALVSCE) has a Diversity and Inclusion Council made up of students, staff, faculty, and leadership administration.

I feel that CALS embraces diversity and inclusion



To protect respondents, an intersectional disaggregation was not conducted. A breakdown of demographics is included in the appendix. This significant limitation should be highly considered while reviewing disaggregated results.

However, disaggregating the responses by singular factors was examined. No differences were revealed between responses from white-identified students and students of color. Male-identified students (29%) were more likely to disagree or be neutral than female-identified students (20%), however significantly more female-identified students participated in the survey than male-identified students. To respect the anonymity of students with identities inclusive of transgender, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, and other non-listed identities, their responses were grouped together to reveal that 37% disagreed or were neutral regarding their feelings of diversity and inclusion being embraced in CALS.

There were no differences between first-generation and continuing-generation students. Students who are employed full-time or are unpaid caretakers disagree more so (by nearly 10%) than students who are employed part-time or unemployed, suggesting that CALS could grow in inclusion of students with significant responsibilities outside of university engagement.

Students offered suggestions on how CALS can demonstrate embracing diversity and inclusion. Topic themes primarily revolved around increased representation and more public displays of advocacy. Specifically, students want to see more diverse students, faculty, and staff in their classrooms and for diversity to be discussed in classrooms. Diversity appreciation weeks on social media were also mentioned by more than one student.

A portion (potentially identifying information has been redacted) of one student's response includes:

“Demonstrating the idea that CALS embraces diversity and inclusion is not equal to actionable changes in the department...CALS has a culture of laidback acceptance from professors and students, but not yet advocacy. We can increase guest speakers from different backgrounds and pass the mic to underrepresented identities in environmental science and natural resources... I see really great representation of diverse backgrounds in student staff but not in tenure professor or full-time staff to mentor.”

Additional Responses

CALS Students Feel Supported



Additional suggested means of support include creating additional ways to connect with peers, faculty, and the larger University of Arizona community, personalized support and outreach from academic advisors, and more opportunities for tuition support.

When students were asked if there was anything else that they would like us to know about their experience in CALS most students did not respond. Those that did tended to share positive comments about their experience. Here are a few samples responses:

“I am very glad I switched majors. CALS is a very supportive group and I feel like I grew more once I switched majors.”

“CALS has been very kind to me and shows genuine concern for me as a student and my future goals”

“I love CALS and really appreciate my academic advisor.”

“I think being a CALS student has been one of the greatest experience. Everyone is so supportive and nice to me. I know everyone is here to help me in some way if I need it.”

Other comments mentioned frequently were requesting better communication around how to get involved, stronger diversity efforts, more proactive student outreach, more events (in-person and online), and mixers. Sample responses include:

“After taking this survey I see there are so many great opportunities I just simply don’t know about them so if they could be advertised more via email or text as well as social media I would to attend.”

“There’s nothing about LGBT students in CALS, so I feel pretty isolated.”

“I would just like to feel like I am having more personalized help. I feel as if I am just another student on my advisors list.”

Next Steps

This report will be shared with the Career and Academic Services team, CALS Leadership, and CALS Advisors. Subject matter experts have the opportunity to provide additional context to results and will be encouraged to identify area(s) of improvement to focus on in the upcoming academic year.

To request a presentation or additional data, email [Danielle Flink](#), Student Success and Retention Specialist.

Appendix - Demographics

Gender		Class Standing	
Female	76.94%	Freshman	15.49%
Male	15.88%	Sophomore	21.57%
Transgender	0.57%	Junior	28.63%
Non-binary	2.48%	Senior	28.43%
Genderqueer or gender nonconforming	1.51%	Graduate	3.73%
Agender	1.13%	Unknown	2.16%
Prefer not to answer	0.95%		

Race/Ethnicity		Campus	
Asian American or Asian	7.67%	Main	83.14%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3.07%	Distance	2.35%
Black or African American	3.92%	Online	13.92%
Hispanic or Latinx	24.19%	Global	0.2%
Middle Eastern or North African	1.19%	Not Sure	0.39%
Pacific Islander	1.7%		
White or Caucasian	54.86%		
An identify not listed	0.85%		
Prefer not to answer	2.56%		

Admission Type		First Generation Status	
Transfer	33.53%	Yes	41.37%
Freshman	64.31%	No	57.45%
Unsure	1.96%	Not sure	0.98%
Prefer not to answer	0.2%	Prefer not to answer	0.2%

Year of Admission		Employment Status	
2022	4.32%	Full-time	14.9%
2021	28.09%	Part-time, 20+ hours per week	35.69%
2020	26.33%	Part-time, less than 20 hours per week	14.51%
2019	21.61%	Unemployed	29.41%
2018	14.54%	Unpaid caretaker	2.75%
2017	2.36%	Other	2.75%
2016	1.18%		
2015 to 2007	1.57%		

Citations

Hussain, M., & Jones, J. M. (2021). Discrimination, diversity, and sense of belonging: Experiences of students of color. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 14(1), 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000117>

Pedler, M. L., Willis, R., & Nieuwoudt, J. E. (2021). A sense of belonging at university: student retention, motivation and enjoyment. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(3), 397–408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877x.2021.1955844>

[CIVITAS 2018 “The State of Students: Student Perspectives on Graduation Barriers & Advising Support”](#)

[National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\) 2019 “Engagement Insights: Survey Findings on the Quality of Undergraduate Education”](#)