

**FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
GRADUATE CAUCUS**

**PREPARED BY
GENEVIEVE WHITE
& AMILYA LADAK**

IMPACT OF COVID-19 SURVEY

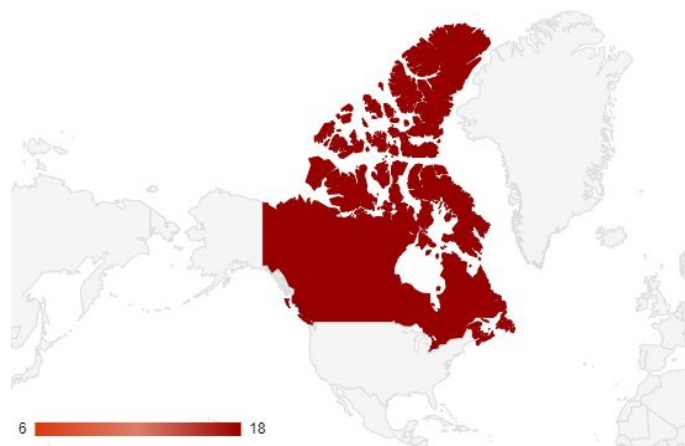
OCTOBER 2020



**SIMON
FRASER
UNIVERSITY**

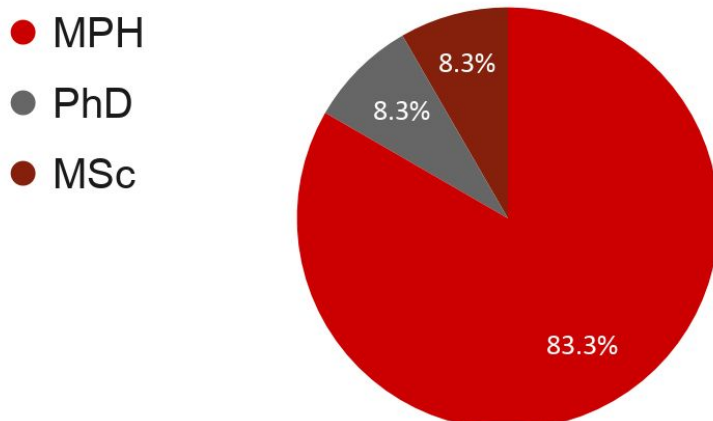
INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Caucus conducted a survey to assess the impacts these unprecedented events are having on students' personal and academic lives. The survey took place from September 11 to September 27, 2020 and was open to all MSc, PhD, and MPH graduate students in the faculty. This report highlights the important findings of the survey and details recommendations for responsive action at the Caucus and faculty levels.

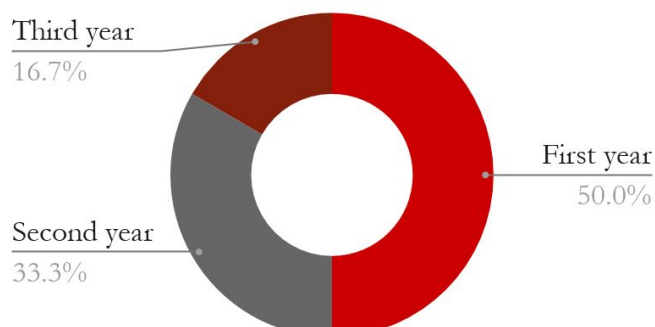


- ❖ Out of 24 total respondents, 18 are located in British Columbia, while the remaining 6 are located outside of Canada.

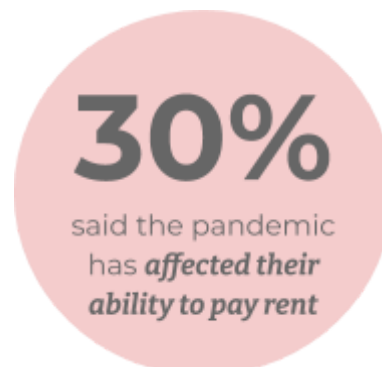
Breakdown of respondents by program



Respondents' current year of program

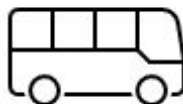
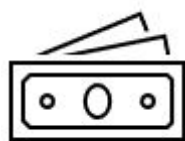


FINANCIAL IMPACTS



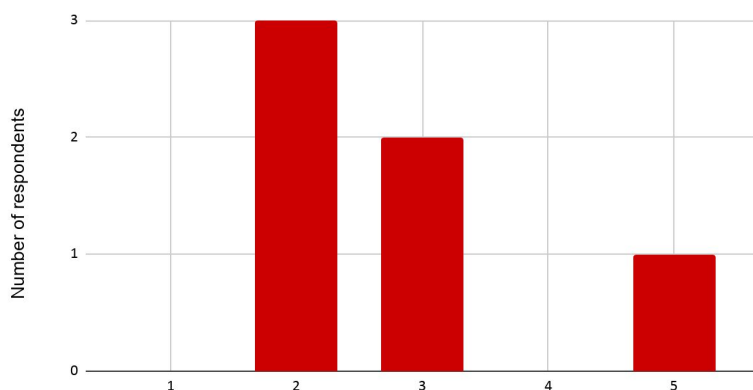
❖ Examples of financial impacts students experienced include:

- ☐ Cost of setting up home workplace environment
- ☐ Loss of work or delay in start date
- ☐ Reduction in hours
- ☐ No UPASS coverage in the summer months



RESEARCH IMPACTS

On a scale of 1 to 5 how much has your research progress been impacted?



1= all progress halted, 5= not impacted at all

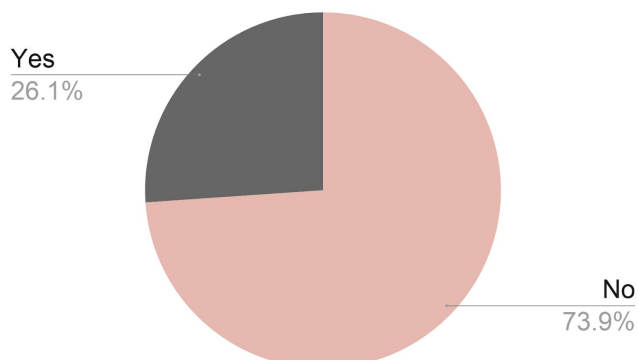
3 out of 4

MSc/PhD students
said they are
concerned about
their future
financial status as a
result of slowed
down research due
to COVID-19

- ### ❖ Although some students were still able to perform their research tasks remotely, the financial stress due to the delay in their research progress is a concern for many students.

ACADEMIC IMPACTS

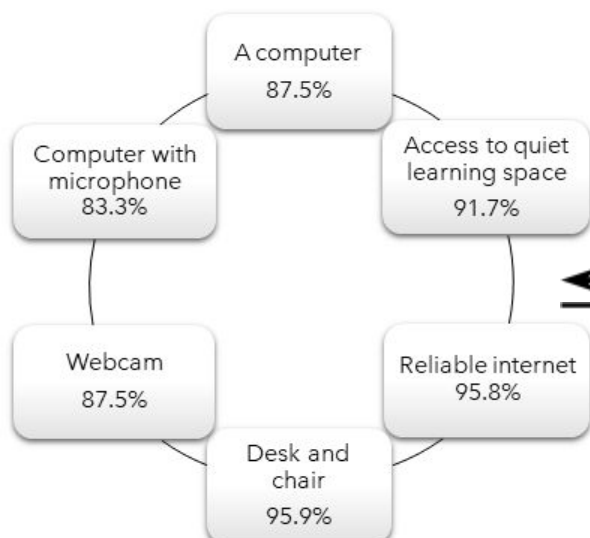
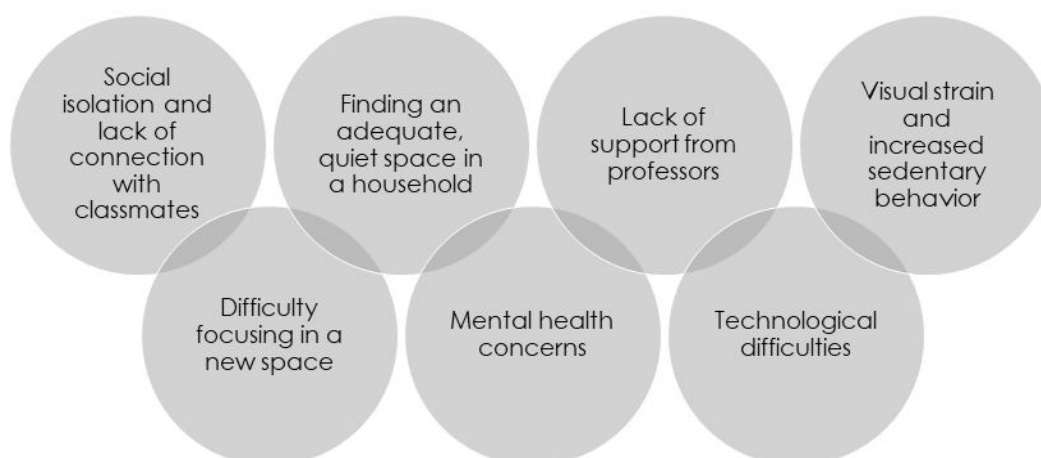
Have you considered taking a leave of absence due to COVID-19?



50% of students said COVID-19 has impacted their academic progress



❖ Students reported the following as the most challenging aspects of adjusting to online learning:



❖ When asked what constitutes an **adequate workspace** for them, students said...



Almost 30% of students reported that they **do not** have access to this space

HEALTH IMPACTS

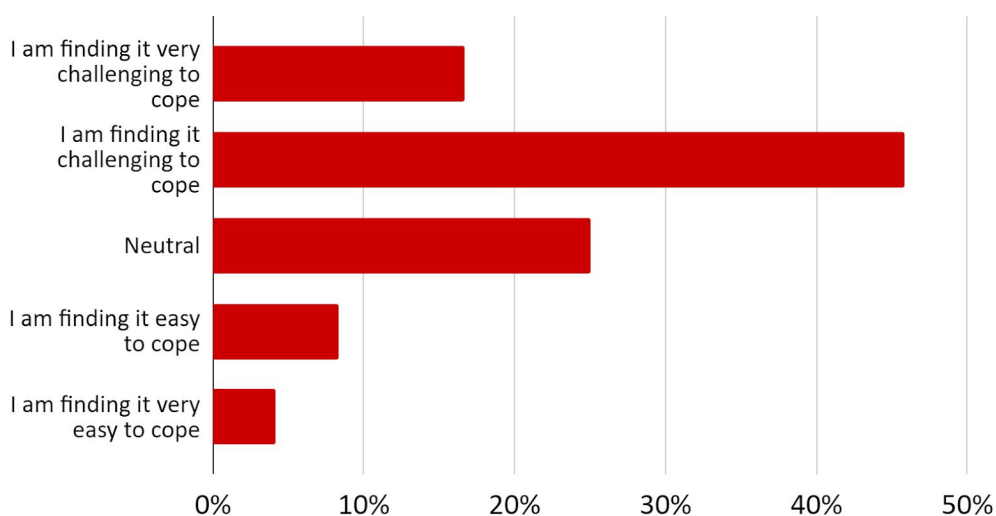
Two-thirds
of respondents said
COVID-19 has
affected their
physical activity and
nutrition



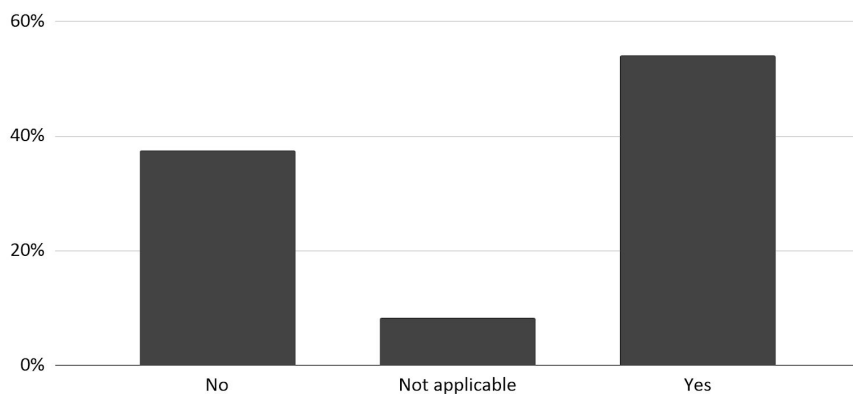
70.8%

of respondents reported
experiencing a sense of
social isolation during the
pandemic

How are you coping overall during the pandemic?



During the course of the pandemic do you feel that isolation has had a significantly negative impact on your mental health?



STUDENT CONCERNS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Faculty:

- ❑ Enhance teaching quality
- ❑ In-person activities if safe to do so, namely Capstone project
- ❑ Avoid scheduling outside of class course requirements when possible
- ❑ If classes are synchronous, do not include participation in grading criteria
- ❑ Clear communication from the Faculty regarding:



- Steps being taken to provide research support and relief
- Financial support including practicum stipend & scholarship payments
- Points of contact & administrative procedures (e.g. practicum forms)



Recommendations To Caucus

Advocacy

Transparency

Safe environment for students to express concerns

Caucus Action Items:

- ➔ Explore the possibility of a COVID-19 fund to alleviate financial barriers to securing a comfortable home workspace
- ➔ Continue Happy Hour Zoom series & other virtual events to facilitate social connection
- ➔ Continue with biweekly newsletter to promote communication and engagement with students
- ➔ Enhance ongoing dialogue with faculty to address student concerns
- ➔ Schedule Town Hall for all FHS graduate students to voice their concerns & discuss solutions