

University of Windsor

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Research Result Summaries

2019

Sci of Relief survey results (spring 2019)

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Summary of Sci of Relief survey findings

Participant demographics

- Students/post-docs (N = 308)
 - 71.5% female, 28.5% male
 - 80.1% undergraduate, 19.9% graduate/post-doc
 - 33.8% biology, 18.5 chem/biochem, 12.3% computer science
- Faculty/staff (N = 40)
 - 43.6% female, 56.4% male
 - 50% at UWindsor <15 years, 50% >15 years
 - 35.1% chem/biochem, 16.2% physics, 13.5% environ., 13.5% biology

Undergraduate Student Stress

- Student-reported stress level = 70.20 (SD 20.16), range 8-100
- Faculty estimate = 67.00 (14.98), range 30-95
- Significant discrepancies on 17/30 items – faculty/staff consistently produced higher estimates.
- Undergraduate student top 5 stressors: grades, workload, future career, time management, anxiety issues
- Faculty/staff predictions of undergraduate top 5 stressors: anxiety issues, grades, time management, workload, future career
- Conclusion: faculty correctly estimated level of undergraduate student stress

Graduate Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Stress

- Student-reported stress level = 68.02 (SD = 21.14), range 12-100
- Faculty estimate = 55.92 (SD = 17.19), range 18-82
- Significant discrepancies on 11/30 items – again, faculty/staff produced consistently higher estimates
- Graduate student/post-doctoral fellow top 5 stressors: future career, workload, anxiety issues, time management, sleep issues
- Faculty/staff predictions of graduate student/post-doctoral fellow top 5 stressors: future career, time management, financial problems, employment issues, anxiety issues
- Conclusion: faculty underestimated level of graduate student/post-doctoral fellow stress

Coping with stress

- Qualitative findings
 - Hobbies and leisure (40.9%)
 - Physical health self-care (29.5%)
 - Seeking social support (25.6%)
 - Mental health self-care (19.2%)
 - Active problem-solving (12.3%)
 - Struggling or not coping (7.8%)
- No group differences in use of strategies, but female students reported more strategies used

- Small negative correlation between overall stress level and number of strategies reported ($r = -.16, p < .05$)

Students' familiarity with UWindsor programs

- >70% students consider programs helpful
- Most-used programs:
 - SOS exam aid sessions (52.8%)
 - USci network (36.6%)
 - Academic advisors (32.1%)
- Least-used programs:
 - Online/phone-based programs (9.5%)
 - MySci peer mentoring (16.3%)
 - PASS (17.3%)*
- Reasons for not using programs varied by program
 - Did not seem relevant (e.g., SOS Exam Aid sessions, Academic Advisors)
 - Not enough time (e.g., USci Initiatives)
 - Not interested (e.g., Science Society)
 - Did not know about it (e.g., PASS, MySci peer mentoring, online/phone support)
 - Prefer to handle own problems (e.g., Student Counselling Centre)

Faculty/Staff's familiarity with UWindsor programs

- >70% staff/faculty members consider programming helpful
- Best known programs:
 - Academic Advising (92.3%)
 - Student Counselling Centre (92.5%)
 - Science society (72.5%)
- Least known programs:
 - MySci Peer Mentoring (43.6%)
 - any one of the online/phone-based Mental Health Programs (30.0%)

Participants' suggestions for moving forward

- Still undergoing formal analysis but some early ideas:
- The Faculty of Science should
 - Continue: Promoting the importance of mental health and stress management within Science, efforts towards de-stigmatization
 - Stop: Heavy workload and expectations
 - Start: Improved communication, more resources for graduate students, more career prep, academic support and mental health promotion