



## A look at First-Year Student Success in the Bachelor of Arts

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### Transcript

00:00:05:52 - 00:00:11:12

**Jiyoung:** Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for joining today's Lunch and Learn series.

00:00:11:12 - 00:00:33:34

**Jiyoung:** My name is Jiyoung and I teach Sociology and I'm a member of this Arts Cohort department. I'm very excited about today's talk, particularly to have an opportunity to understand how our first-year students are actually doing, and particularly hearing about the data and analysis from the department.

00:00:33:34 - 00:00:48:28

**Jiyoung:** Understanding the first-year students is the key component for our Arts Cohort project. In particular, in terms of how we want to build decolonial education together with our first-year students.

00:00:48:28 - 00:01:03:93

**Jiyoung:** Some of our first-year students would be Indigenous students from this traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc. And some of them would be also Indigenous students from the other parts of this particular island.

00:01:03:93 - 00:01:38:06

**Jiyoung:** And some of our first-year students would be also the descendants of white settlers and racialized immigrants and also international students. Keeping these different lives' trajectories of our students in our mind, I would like to acknowledge that we are all here on this uncended traditional land of the Secwépemc, which TRU's Kamloops campus is located on, and we, also, with different life trajectories, are here with a deep commitment to decolonization through our education.

00:01:38:06 - 00:01:44:08

**Jiyoung:** And I'm very happy to introduce today's speaker, Dr. Dominique Bourdin.

00:01:44:08 - 00:02:02:26

**Jiyoung:** She moved to Kamloops with her husband and son and joined TRU's Integrated Planning and Effectiveness Department in 2019. Her joining this department was a significant career change because she has a PHD in Atmospheric Science.

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**Jiyoung:** And in her prior life, she predicted weather and hydrologic reservoir inflows. So now she says she analyzes and predicts student behavior.

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**Jiyoung:** Which is actually much more chaotic in nature. So at the same time, I believe we are all here and we love that particular chaotic sight of our students.

00:02:26:68 - 00:02:31:26

**Jiyoung:** So please welcome this, and we are very happy to have you.

00:02:31:26 - 00:02:36:82

**Dominique:** Thank you. Thank you for having me, everyone.

00:02:36:82 - 00:02:47:79

**Dominique:** You'll have to forgive me if I'm doing a lot of sniffing and throat clearing. I had a wicked sinus infection last week, but I'm feeling relatively amazing today. That's great.

00:02:48:12 - 00:03:20:88

**Dominique:** Yeah, today, we're going to take a look at first-year students in the Bachelor of Arts and what we can see about who the students are, how we can measure student success and how we can maybe track how those things change as the Cohort Program gets underway. So I'll start just briefly by acknowledging that we are on the traditional and unceded territory of the Secwépemc Nation within Secwepemcúl'ecw and I'm grateful to be able to live and work in this place.

00:03:21:13 - 00:03:38:28

**Dominique:** The purpose of this presentation is really to spark discussion about what interventions might be needed for which students and how we can track the impact of the Cohort initiative. First, we're going to look at who our first-year Bachelor of Arts students are.

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**Dominique:** What happens to them in their first year in terms of retention and grades. What they're saying about the first-year experience through a variety of different survey tools.

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**Dominique:** Then we'll take a really quick look at the views of graduates of the program. And at the very end, there's a list of resources that everybody should be able to access to do further research, because there is a ton of data and we can only skim the surface today, in this presentation.

00:04:08:12 - 00:04:19:48

**Dominique:** The key theme of this presentation really is student success. We tend to think about student success in terms of things like grades, retention and graduation rates, but it really is a multifaceted thing.

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**Dominique:** Today, the focus is going to be primarily on academic achievement and persistence. But the survey data that we are going to look at later will touch on all of these other pieces as well.

00:04:31:66 - 00:04:47:22

**Dominique:** In part one, we're going to take a look at who our students are. The majority of students who apply to the Bachelor of Arts are domestic, 15% are self-declared Indigenous students and 19% are rural.

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**Dominique:** Over half of the domestic applicants are from the direct high school admission category with approximately one third of those from within our local Kamloops-Thompson School District. Okay. Now we're switching

00:05:04:06 - 00:05:21:57

**Dominique:** to students who have actually enrolled in the program, and we're looking at the cohorts from Fall 2018 through Fall 2022, because we're looking so much at retention in today's presentation. We're not looking at the Fall 2023 cohort because we don't know how they've been retained to Fall 2024 yet.

00:05:23:33 - 00:05:43:72

**Dominique:** Based on the previous slide, it's no surprise that the greatest proportion of our first-year domestic students are from within our local school district, and nearly one third of those come from just the top five high schools in the area. International students make up only a small proportion of the Bachelor of Arts students as we'll see on the next slide.

00:05:43:72 - 00:06:01:83

**Dominique:** And this program has a lot more diversity than some of the other programs on campus. And what I mean by that is that India still has the largest proportion of the students in the program, but it's only 13%, and then the next country is at 11%, whereas Fall 2023 for the on-campus total.

00:06:01:83 - 00:06:10:98

**Dominique:** India was in the top spot, but it has 44% of our total international student body. And then I think Nigeria was second at 11%.

00:06:10:98 - 00:06:21:07

**Dominique:** So your program has the students spread out a lot more in terms of what countries they're from. Okay. So as I said,

00:06:21:07 - 00:06:36:27

**Dominique:** the majority of BA students in the five-year study period were domestic. Fewer than one third identify as man, 17% are self-declared Indigenous and about two thirds are 18 or younger.

00:06:37:12 - 00:07:00:64

**Dominique:** International students have a slightly higher proportion of men and they tend to be a little bit older, and that's because they have a higher proportion of students who are applying out of the delayed high school or transfer category, whereas we saw before that the domestic students are primarily coming out of the direct from high school. Excuse me.

00:07:00:64 - 00:07:17:00

**Dominique:** In the Fall 2023 Student Census, which we're going to dig into a bit more deeply later. 9% of new arts baccalaureate students reported that they were taking care of dependents.

00:07:17:00 - 00:07:35:81

**Dominique:** 43% were living in residence, and 38% reported that they were working during the Fall 2023 term with most working 11 to 20 hours. The distribution of work hours is similar to the on-campus baccalaureate overall.

00:07:40:20 - 00:07:55:93

**Dominique:** The full-time working students only make up 2% for Bachelor of Arts and that's similar for most other programs, except for TRU Gagliardi where that 10% of BBA students are working full-time. So they're really what's driving up the on-campus total to 4%.

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**Dominique:** Looking now at entering grades. So, what we're looking at here is English 11 grade, or if we don't have that on file, we're looking at some sort of English 12 grade.

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**Dominique:** We don't have it for all of the domestic students. We just have it for the students from BC and not all of them, but we're working with the registrar to switch to a different dataset that might have more coverage.

00:08:24:52 - 00:08:40:16

**Dominique:** 61% of domestic students in these cohorts had an entry grade of 80 or higher, with women tending to score a little bit higher than men. There's been an upward trend in the entry grades for both men and women.

00:08:40:16 - 00:08:45:83

**Dominique:** Men are in the teal color. Women are in the navy blue.

00:08:47:92 - 00:09:02:59

**Dominique:** A pretty steady upward trend except for Fall 2020, where fewer students scored 90 and above, probably because of difficulties transitioning to online learning. Okay. Now we have an idea of

00:09:02:59 - 00:09:13:91

**Dominique:** who the first year BA students are and we can take a look at some measures of student success when they get started at TRU. First, I want to touch on the high school grade inflation.

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**Dominique:** Is it myth, or is it reality? It's reported in Ontario, students are facing really stiff competition to get into programs, and instructors are indicating that the students are struggling more.

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**Dominique:** At TRU, we have seen the increase in high school English grades, but we're seeing it alongside an increase in first-term GPA, and the first-term GPA drop, which is how much a student's grade tends to drop when they get to university, is actually decreasing. This suggests that we're actually attracting students who are more academically prepared.

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**Dominique:** Like high school and first-term grades, first-year Fall to Winter and Fall to Fall retention rates have also been exhibiting an upward trend. So in this diagram, the light teal on the top, those are the Fall to Winter retention rates.

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**Dominique:** So, you were here in Fall, did you stick around to the Winter term? That rate is obviously much higher than the Fall to Fall, which is, you were here in the Fall, did you stick around to second year?

00:10:21:23 - 00:10:42:53

**Dominique:** I wanted to point out that the growth in retention rates is linked to the growth in entry grades because the students who score highest in their high school grades. So the teal line at the top of the upper-right graph, they have higher retention than the students who come in with lower grades, which makes sense.

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**Dominique:** And the proportion of those students in each of our cohorts is growing over time, as shown in the bar chart at the bottom right. Student behavior is complex.

00:10:55:18 - 00:11:09:14

**Dominique:** It's not just as simple as retained or not retained. This is a student pathways diagram, and it's showing the behavior of BA students, both domestic and international lumped together, who started in Fall 2018.

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**Dominique:** The yellow bar indicates students who are taking a straight path through the BA to graduation. Students who move into the red have left TRU, and you'll see that there are some students, I have a pointer, who move from the red back into the yellow.

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**Dominique:** Those are probably our part-time students who are just taking a year off and then coming back. We've got students who move into different programs, that's the orange, I believe.

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**Dominique:** Students who graduate with a BA are in the green, and students who graduate with another credential at TRU are in the blue. Now we can take a look at student retention by profile.

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**Dominique:** Blue is the students who are retained to TRU. Yellow is students who are lost.

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**Dominique:** The sage color is retained to a different faculty or school and the teal is retained to the Faculty of Arts, but in a different program. We can see that there's not much spread in the Fall to Winter retention through these different student profile groups.

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**Dominique:** But when we look at the Fall 1 to Fall 2 transition, we can see that men are slightly less likely to be retained than women, domestic students, significantly less likely to be retained than international students, and the younger students, a little bit more likely to stick around. When we look at retention by term 1 grades, we see some much stronger trends.

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**Dominique:** We already know that Fall to Winter retention is higher than Fall to Fall retention. It's also a lot less dependent on their first-term grades.

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**Dominique:** And I think this is just because the students are registering for fall and winter at the same time. So they've made that commitment in their minds and there's sort of a barrier to not showing up in the winter.

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**Dominique:** They have to log in and de-register for classes. But in their minds, they're already here for the winter.

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**Dominique:** They've got that plan made in their mind. But, when we get into second year, we see a pretty steep decline in retention rates as we go through the different grade bands.

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**Dominique:** Okay. Here we have a different way of looking at the retention characteristics of students by entry grade, which is on the lower axis, and first-term GPA on the y-axis.

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**Dominique:** It's split into four quadrants, and in this one, we're looking at Fall to Winter retention. This is essentially telling us how the grade drop impacts Fall to Winter retention.

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**Dominique:** So we've got the group on the lower left quadrant. We call these the struggling students.

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**Dominique:** They weren't great high school students and they're struggling in their first term at TRU. They're the least likely to be retained.

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**Dominique:** Then we have the students who found their groove. They weren't great high school students, but they're doing really well in university.

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**Dominique:** We've got the excelling students. They were keeners in high school and they're still excelling here.

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**Dominique:** Then we've got students who have been grade shocked. They did well in high school, but they've seen their performance drop in their first term at TRU.

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**Dominique:** Not surprisingly, the found-their-groove group has higher retention than the grade-shocked group because they've had a boost to their confidence and they're feeling good about university. Interestingly, the correlation between entry grade and first-term GPA is not very strong.

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**Dominique:** We can see that there is a tendency for students who score better in high school to get higher grades in their first term. But there's a lot of spread in the data points.

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**Dominique:** If we look at the right half of the graph, it's just over half of those strong entry English students who are scoring 3.0 in their first term and they're pretty evenly split between the above-3.0 and below-3.0 groups.

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**Dominique:** So this might indicate that it's a little bit difficult to determine who would benefit more from the Cohort program based on their entry grades alone. This is a similar view, but now we're looking at the transition from Fall 1 to Fall 2, or first year to second year.

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**Dominique:** We've got first-term GPA on the bottom and second-term GPA on the y-axis. Again, we have a struggling group.

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**Dominique:** The performed relatively poorly in both terms and they're at the greatest risk of not being retained. The bounce-back students are students who didn't do great in first term, but maybe they found academic supports or they learned good study habits and they're doing much better in their second term, and they have retention that's nine points higher than the struggling group.

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**Dominique:** The excelling group, they did well in first term and second term, they're the most likely to be retained. And then we've got a losing steam group who did well in first term but are struggling a little bit in second term.

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**Dominique:** The key takeaway I want to point out here is that if we can make sure that students who are struggling in term 1 get access to supports and learn good study habits, there's an opportunity to shift a lot of those data points from the struggling quadrant up into the bounce-back quadrant where the retention is nine points higher. Looking now at international student retention, these are pretty small n-values, so don't read too much into these, but the characteristics are completely different.

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**Dominique:** The excelling group is being retained at a rate of 90%, and the struggling group is only five points lower than that, because international student motivations are very different from domestic student motivations. Now, looking at retention by course load, we've got a distribution of course load, so we can see that most students are taking four courses.

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**Dominique:** Very few students are studying part-time, very few first-year students are studying part-time, and they have the lowest retention rates. But again, they're probably coming back, some of them, at least, in a later term as we saw in that pathways diagram.

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**Dominique:** And the sweet spot for retention seems to be around three or four. Is that what I said, three or four?

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**Dominique:** Four to five courses. Yeah. They have the highest retention.

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**Dominique:** It's really rare for students to take six or more courses. I found a couple of students over the past five years who took seven courses.

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**Dominique:** All of them dropped out. But the students who took six courses actually did pretty well.

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**Dominique:** They were retained at, I believe, 55% and both the retained and unretained students had similar GPAs near 3.5.

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**Dominique:** So they're just, like, really keen students. Yeah. Go ahead.

00:18:00:99 - 00:18:05:00

**Speaker 1:** Is this looking at students who are taking OL and online classes?

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**Dominique:** I'm only looking at Kamloops campus in this.

00:18:06:31 - 00:18:09:23

**Dominique:** Yeah. Sorry. I should have pointed that out.

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**Dominique:** Okay. Onward to Part 3, what are the Bachelor of Arts students, first-year Bachelor of Arts students, saying about their experience when they get here?

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**Dominique:** The TRU Fall Student Census is relatively new. We've done it for the past two years, and we're going to, the plan is to keep doing it for the foreseeable future.

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**Dominique:** Because it's annual, we can use these outcomes to gauge the impact of the Cohort Initiative, which is great. The survey is open to all TRU students, but the results that I'm showing here are only for Kamloops campus.

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**Dominique:** There were about 2,600 students from Kamloops campus who responded, 498 of whom were new baccalaureate students and 146 of which were in the Faculty of Arts. I can't drill down to the Bachelor of Arts specifically.



00:19:01:55 - 00:19:15:33

**Dominique:** This is baccalaureate in Arts, so it would include Fine Arts and interdisciplinary studies and general studies, and I think that's all of them. So the Census asks students about educational goals.

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**Dominique:** Most said that their goal was to obtain a credential in their chosen field. New Arts students were more likely than other new baccalaureate students to say that their goal was personal enjoyment and improvement.

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**Dominique:** They were less likely- Inside joke I'm missing? Less likely to cite skills upgrading and improved job prospects.

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**Dominique:** And nearly three quarters of the students said that their studies at TRU were preparing them well or very well for their educational goals. There's a lot in these next few slides.

00:19:51:30 - 00:20:09:45

**Dominique:** I'm not going to cover every single one of these rows because we don't have time, but all of this information is available on SharePoint or Tableau server, and there are links at the end, again, where you can dig in by yourselves. So now we're looking at student engagement and experiences.

00:20:09:45 - 00:20:37:38

**Dominique:** So the bars are showing the new Arts baccalaureate students' responses, and then I've put new Kamloops-campus baccalaureate overall responses to the right, with any differences larger than three percentage points in red or green in other slides. So, a majority of new Arts students agree that TRU, faculty, staff, and students offer a supportive and inclusive environment.

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**Dominique:** This result is similar to the overall new-baccalaureate result. New Arts students are less likely to agree with statements related to developing connections, meeting their needs for social interaction, and feeling a sense of belonging.

00:20:50:88 - 00:21:08:07

**Dominique:** The last Census piece we're going to look at, and there are a lot more in the full report, is awareness and use of student services. Most new Arts baccalaureate students seem to be aware of academic advising services, the Writing Center, and counseling services.

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**Dominique:** But nearly half reported that they were unaware of the services offered by the Career and Experiential Learning Department and the Academic Assessment Center, and they reported less awareness than the new baccalaureate overall. The Canadian University Survey Consortium, or CUSC, is administered every winter on a three-year cycle where they survey first-year students, then middle-year students, then graduating students.

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**Dominique:** All of these are on-campus baccalaureate. The last first-year CUSC survey was done in Winter 2022 on the Fall 2021 cohort, which means the next one is Winter 2025 on the Fall 2024 cohort, which is perfect timing for this initiative.

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**Dominique:** So the 2022 survey had 369 respondents, all of which were new baccalaureate, and 100 of which were Kamloops Bachelor of Arts students. The topics covered are really similar to the Fall Student Census.

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**Dominique:** So first, educational goals. This survey goes into a little bit more detail than the Student Census.

00:22:16:07 - 00:22:46:22

**Dominique:** So here, 57% of students, of Bachelor of Arts students, indicated that they have a specific career or a few different options in mind, compared to 63% for the overall baccalaureate responses. The results from this section and the lower section indicate that first year BA students have less clarity around their career options and career goals than students in other faculties.

00:22:48:06 - 00:23:04:31

**Dominique:** CUSC also has some questions directly related to the student experience in transitioning to university. Here again, bar graphs are showing results for the new Bachelor of Arts students, and down the right side, we have the responses for overall new-baccalaureate students.

00:23:04:31 - 00:23:23:89

**Dominique:** The largest success gaps here, the areas where the BA students were less likely to report success, were in performing well in classes requiring math, getting involved in campus activities, finding career information, making friends, and getting academic advice. So, similar to some of the things that we saw in the Fall Student Census.

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**Dominique:** CUSC also has a section on commitment to completion. In this section, the biggest commitment gaps between BA and other baccalaureate students were having good study habits, planning to return next year, planning to complete at TRU, and feeling like the degree was worth the cost.

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**Dominique:** And given what we saw earlier about clarity around career goals, it makes sense that they're not even sure they're in the right program. And if they're not sure they're in the right program, they're probably less likely to come back next term or next year.

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**Dominique:** Okay. The next survey tool that we have access to is National Survey of Student Engagement, or NSSE.

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**Dominique:** TRU participates in it every three years, and this measures first-year and fourth-year student engagement within a few different themes. Our last NSSE was in 2023.

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**Dominique:** So our next one won't be until 2026. The reports are generated by NSSE and they're provided to us at a pretty high level.

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**Dominique:** I think 2023 was only provided at the institutional level, but in 2020, we did get some reports by faculty or school. So this is, like, the driest thing ever.

00:24:41:61 - 00:24:55:38

**Dominique:** This is what the 2020 Arts first-year student results looked like. I've highlighted some of the areas where we scored 10% or more higher than our comparators.

00:24:55:38 - 00:25:09:62

**Dominique:** These are areas like learning strategies, student-faculty interaction, effective teaching practices, and supportive environment. There are a few indicators on the left where we scored a tiny bit lower than our peers, but really small differences.

00:25:10:22 - 00:25:30:34

**Dominique:** In 2023, we participated in an additional topical module on mental health and well-being. We do have a higher level of detail in this particular piece, so I was able to pull together this comparison of first-year Bachelor of Arts student responses versus first-year baccalaureate overall.

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**Dominique:** BA students selected lower difficulty rankings for all metrics except for academics, which is the top bar. They report they're sleeping better, have better physical health.

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**Dominique:** They're also reporting less loneliness, which seems contradictory to the results from the prior two. So I'm not sure what's up with that.

00:25:53:59 - 00:26:11:50

**Dominique:** Okay. In 2023, we administered a Fall stop-out survey with the Registrar's Office where 452 on-campus students who were eligible to enroll in Fall 2023, but were asked about their decision not to return.

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**Dominique:** There were 161 respondents. So the survey is limited by small sample size, and I also can't drill down to just first-year.

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**Dominique:** But I can share some really high-level results. 18% of respondents said that they were taking time off, with men and students aged 20+ more likely to choose that option.

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**Dominique:** 14% said that they transferred to another post-secondary institution. Not surprisingly, the average- to high-achievers were more likely to select that option.

00:26:38:58 - 00:26:49:95

**Dominique:** Many students mentioned that the courses that they needed were not offered or they were full, or they just didn't work with their schedule. Whether or not that applies to the students in Arts, I can't tell.

00:26:49:95 - 00:27:01:27

**Dominique:** But I think we're working on improving the survey for next year so that we can get some more slicing and dicing out of it. Where am I? What slide is this? 33.

00:27:03:73 - 00:27:07:10

**Dominique:** Part 4. This is a really short one.

00:27:07:10 - 00:27:19:56

**Dominique:** What are the views of graduates of the Bachelor of Arts program? The BC Student Outcome Survey is administered to tens of thousands of former BC post-secondary students.

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**Dominique:** The results I'm showing here are for 2020 through 2022. These are students from cohorts well before the ones that we looked at in Section 2. Of nearly 30,000 respondents,

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**Dominique:** just under 1,500 graduated with a TRU bachelor's degree and 147 of them had a degree in the humanities. Only 39 were BA graduates.

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**Dominique:** There's more data points if I add in general studies, but it doesn't really change the outcomes on the coming slides. Most of our graduates are working, and they agreed that the knowledge and skills that they gained at university are useful in performing their job.

00:28:02:35 - 00:28:22:22

**Dominique:** 95% were satisfied or very satisfied with their education. BA respondents felt that their program equipped them with strong writing skills, but they were less likely than other disciplines to say that their program helped them develop the skills to work effectively with others.

00:28:22:22 - 00:28:40:44

**Dominique:** If we look at that item in more detail, we can see that the humanities graduates rated that skill development lower than any other discipline. Maybe this is linked to the Fall Student Census and the CUSC finding that the students are having a hard time developing relationships with their peers.

00:28:40:44 - 00:28:47:20

**Dominique:** That could be some low-hanging fruit to tackle. Okay. We've covered a lot today,

00:28:47:20 - 00:29:04:49

**Dominique:** so I'll leave you with some closing remarks. First-year grades seem to be a pretty good predictor of retention, and providing academic supports to students who struggle in term 1 has the potential to shift retention by moving students from that struggling quadrant up into the bounce-back quadrant.

00:29:04:49 - 00:29:17:78

**Dominique:** It's not too late to help students if they did poorly in term 1. Common themes in a lot of the survey outcomes were lack of social connection, lack of clarity around career goals.

00:29:17:78 - 00:29:31:68

**Dominique:** And then, the graduates feeling that they weren't very well equipped to work effectively with others. Those could be some good areas to tackle.

00:29:31:68 - 00:29:55:80

**Dominique:** So we built a custom dataset to do all of the analysis here, but everything exists in a report that we've already published somewhere. So there's the Applications Trends Workbook, student profiles, retention, grades, and then all of the survey outcomes are available somewhere, either on our SharePoint or on Tableau Server.

00:29:55:80 - 00:30:02:95

**Dominique:** Tableau Server has limited licenses. So I know, I think Deans and Program Chairs typically get access.

00:30:02:95 - 00:30:15:10

**Dominique:** But I think there are other ways that we can distribute these workbooks to a wider audience by packaging them up in different ways. That's it. Any questions?

00:30:20:67 - 00:30:34:16

**Speaker 1:** I wanted to ask a question about who first-year students are. In that, I'm not sure if I'm correct, but I heard that if you weren't sure where you're going, you're often put into a Bachelor of Arts program.

00:30:34:16 - 00:30:45:61

**Speaker 1:** And so, in some of that, we are not looking at people who are really declared or invested in a particular Arts program. So how much of that might be in some of this as well?

00:30:45:61 - 00:30:56:56

**Dominique:** I did take a look at students who had declared a major early, and it was a small group, but they were more likely to be retained. So I think there's definitely some merit to what you're saying.

00:30:56:56 - 00:31:05:000

**Dominique:** But, I mean, unless we're forcing the students to declare a major early, it would be hard to really separate.

00:31:06:00 - 00:31:16:24

**Speaker 1:** Kids who are, you know, completing high school here, maybe, due to their upbringing, they're encouraged to sometimes take some programs, and they just get lugged into a Bachelor of Arts.

00:31:16:24 - 00:31:23:86

**Speaker 1:** And so I wonder how much of that is in here as well. When we've got these students coming in, kind of where they're falling.

00:31:23:99 - 00:31:27:01

**Dominique:** Yeah. It would be hard to pick them out, unfortunately.

00:31:27:01 - 00:31:29:07

**Speaker 1:** Yeah. I thought that might be the case.

00:31:30:00 - 00:31:31:00

**Dominique:** Yeah?

00:31:31:00 - 00:31:35:00

**Speaker 2:** Do you have data on the efficacy of interventions such as Early Alert?

00:31:35:00 - 00:31:45:09

**Dominique:** So there's a paper that we published back in 2018 that touches on some of those. I don't know if Early Alert was one of the things in there.

00:31:45:09 - 00:31:49:99

**Dominique:** And I'm not aware of any specific research that we have on the subject.

00:31:50:00 - 00:31:54:60

**Speaker 3:** We did quite a while ago, I think it was with Experiential Learning.

00:31:54:60 - 00:32:16:05

**Speaker 3:** It was looked at in the past, but I don't think in the last few years. It's been number of years since we've looked at it from our office.

00:32:16:54 - 00:32:29:29

**Crystal:** Are there opportunities, like, where you're talking about, the timing is really fortuitous for some of these in the cohort. Is there an ability, or will there be, to pull those students' data out with identifiers?

00:32:29:29 - 00:32:32:60

**Crystal:** Identifiers of, whether or not they're in the program, not who they are.

00:32:23:60 – 00:32:34:41

**Dominique:** Yeah. I think Doris said that

00:32:34:41 - 00:32:48:53

**Dominique:** we're working with the Registrar, or the Registrar is working with your group to be able to identify those students right in Banner. In which case, it would be super easy to link them to any of this data, even the survey outcomes, I believe, are linked to TID.

00:32:48:53 - 00:33:08:00

**Speaker 3:** Depending on how the cohort is built in the system, we would be able to tap onto that. And, if not in an automated way, if we were to have a list of IDs, we would be able to then link things in the back and be able to do more with that.

00:33:09:91 - 00:33:13:02

**Speaker 1:** So the surveys aren't really anonymous, then?

00:33:13:02 - 00:33:22:14

**Speaker 3:** No, no, I'm not talking about the surveys, but in order to look at some of the grades and some of the other pieces that the cohort will be.

00:33:22:14 - 00:33:42:25

**Speaker 3:** The surveys are not, we wouldn't be able to do one to one. However, if there are specific pieces on, you know, if the cohort takes a specific course, or there's some identifier that then we can link to.

00:33:42:25 - 00:33:49:93

**Speaker 3:** Some of that, we would be able to look at that. But no, we wouldn't be tying individual responses to that.

00:33:51:86 - 00:33:58:49

**Speaker 4:** How far along is the planning in the Cohort Initiative?

00:33:58:57 - 00:34:05:67

**Speaker 5:** Well, in some ways, we're doing very, very well and we're ahead of where we thought we would be.

00:34:05:67 - 00:34:22:64

**Speaker 5:** So, this year has been undertaken with a group of faculty members where we're really focusing on current development. And in fact, we've had a series of these Lunch and Learns every week where we're fine-tuning our understanding.

00:34:22:64 - 00:34:52:83

**Speaker 5:** And then we have an intensive curriculum-revising week in April where we're going to be coordinating all of our course outlines with one another and with the library as well, so that part is going really well. There's another part which we thought we had sorted on October 23, but we just got schedules back and it seems the schedule is not where we thought it was.

00:34:52:83 - 00:35:15:76

**Speaker 5:** In October, we thought that issue was done and sorted. So in that respect, we're having a meeting tomorrow morning to try to sort that out because we just got schedules back, and we had requested a particular profile of course schedules in order to facilitate group activities across the Cohort.

00:35:15:76 - 00:35:29:53

**Speaker 5:** And that didn't happen as we had thought that it would be. But we're definitely, and we've got the draft for the invitation letter that we're just finalizing that we'll be ready to send out to students.

00:35:29:53 - 00:35:39:35

**Speaker 5:** I think we give ourselves, Wednesday, is the deadline to have that draft finalized to be sent to students to invite them to take part in the Cohort.

00:35:39:35 - 00:35:43:65

**Speaker 4:** Then of course, we're going to ask, before, you see the role of Career Services, Writing Center, et cetera.

00:35:43:65 - 00:35:53:49

**Speaker 4:** In that, I also spent my own story as a first year, soon to be failing, at Carleton University. Massive Arts cohort.

00:35:53:49 - 00:36:02:44

**Speaker 4:** Center of Writing, mandatory, Center of Career planning, an old version of Career Planning, not a modern, sophisticated Career Planning. That's what got me into second year.

00:36:02:44 - 00:36:11:35

**Speaker 4:** And then, for the friendship one, that's really important. It's not until fourth year when I was in Honours that, we had a cohort in fourth year and then I finally made friends.

00:36:11:35 - 00:36:18:27

**Speaker 4:** We had thousands of art students at Carleton. And then, when I went to McCourt for my Master's of Education, that became a really tight group of friends.

00:36:18:27 - 00:36:31:00

**Speaker 4:** But the friendship part is huge, I think, in first year, as well as the, I know we don't do mandatory, but if I wasn't forced to go to the Writing Center first year, and Career Services, I would not have made it to second.

00:36:37:00 - 00:36:40:01

**Speaker 2:** So, highlighting the different career opportunities for students.

00:36:40:01 - 00:37:00:15

**Speaker 4:** So, building in, when I look at our stats, Business is our number one student usage of the Career departments, then Sciences, then Tourism, then Trades because they have different programs built in. That's how it falls, out for our appointments of, almost 3,000.

00:37:00:15 - 00:37:22:19

**Speaker 5:** Well, I know even in my own case, I have had, maybe, three in the however many years that I've been here. Interactions where I've invited people in from Career Services, which is much lower than, I do make my students go to the Writing Center. So yeah, absolutely.

00:37:22:19 - 00:37:48:28

**Speaker 5:** And Jenna, maybe you can speak a little bit more to some of the things that you're doing in your course that impact directly.

00:37:34:31 - 00:37:48:29

**Speaker 2:** So I've been redesigning all my curriculum, based on reading, and, actually, a lot of the Lunch and Learns, but I do feel like opportunities for students to, because, obviously, what was it, 46%, do you think it was?

00:37:48:29 - 00:37:52:37

**Speaker 2:** Not knowing about Career Education.

00:37:52:37 - 00:37:55:00

**Speaker 4:** And that's typical, in the whole, post-secondary.

00:37:55:00 - 00:38:05:00

**Speaker 2:** So I would love to connect with you, to find out ways that we can, whether it's people coming in and maybe doing a student panel, of different Co-op opportunities and some of that.

00:38:07:00 - 00:38:12:47

**Speaker 5:** In the Science Cohort, we've been engaging with you quite closely, have a module.

00:38:12:47 - 00:38:24:66

**Speaker 5:** So I just sent Lindsey a request to add Yumio. So, Yumio is also one of our members here.



00:38:24:66 - 00:38:43:51

**Speaker 5:** We didn't really go around and introduce ourselves, as we often do. But Mio's our Learning Strategist and she'll be interfacing with students as well as coordinating and collaborating with the Science Cohort and, in some ways, you're ahead of us in this project.

00:38:43:51 - 00:38:49:26

**Speaker 5:** But we haven't had time to set ours up, so who knows how that will be? That's a great question.

00:38:49:26 - 00:39:01:97

**Speaker 5:** Really important to look at the interconnection between knowing what they're doing in the Faculty of Arts and its connection to why they're here.

00:39:04:57 - 00:39:09:85

**Speaker 6:** Just a comment to some of the points you were making earlier.

00:39:09:85 - 00:39:14:36

**Speaker 6:** There's several open admission programs at TRU. Bachelor of Arts is one.

00:39:14:36 - 00:39:27:75

**Speaker 6:** I'm from Advising, and I know that we've worked with many of the new students who are just starting out. Many of our students come into TRU without the direct prerequisites into many of our open programs.

00:39:27:75 - 00:39:40:54

**Speaker 6:** Identifying the end goal is really important, not necessarily just a career goal, but an academic goal. And that connection with an academic goal is really important at the onset.

00:39:40:54 - 00:39:55:97

**Speaker 6:** How is the Cohort working in terms of advising towards that academic goal from the beginning? How is this being piloted to our biggest group of domestic applicants, particularly the School District 73.

00:39:55:97 - 00:40:02:89

**Speaker 6:** So, I'm curious to know where advising is fitting into this bigger picture and helping students with that connectivity.

00:40:02:89 - 00:40:07:01

**Speaker 5:** Yeah, that's a great question.

00:40:07:01 - 00:40:32:61

**Crystal:** So, a little bit of organization of the projects. We have Mark Wallin doing the administrative stuff, and then there's six faculty members that are the curricular, in-class, and I think we have to build those connections, because the faculty members are the ones that have the most physical, in the same room, eye contact, go make an appointment, go do those things.

00:40:32:61 - 00:40:42:31

**Crystal:** But also, we have Mio who's going to be helping with Mark. Together they'll form a team about the wraparound supports.

00:40:42:31 - 00:40:53:52

**Crystal:** And, the emphasis is, how do we build stronger? So we'll be these communicative conduits as the six faculty, and in future, hopefully more faculty.

00:40:53:52 - 00:41:13:86

**Crystal:** But that connection is, like, how do we build these links where we can have these constellations where the Writing Center sends people to Careers and Careers sends people to, and the faculty are moving the students around. It's great that these things are being measured. Awareness

00:41:13:86 - 00:41:21:90

**Crystal:** of, knowledge of whether these things exist or not. I think that's one of the things we want to know as the Cohort.

00:41:21:90 - 00:41:30:94

**Crystal:** How do we move the dial on the average student? But we're also going to be, the idea is this is supposed to be the stage for the Faculty of Arts as a whole.

00:41:30:94 - 00:41:42:50

**Crystal:** And faculty-to-faculty communication of, I'm in an office, hallway, with all the people from Psychology, and we're always like, oh, this is going on. Or, I'm so busy right now because I have a meeting.

00:41:42:50 - 00:41:47:99

**Crystal:** Like, why are you meeting with the advisors? Or, like, I've been here for 19 years and I haven't met your office.

00:41:47:99 - 00:42:06:00

**Crystal:** Like, I only learned two years ago that a good way to advertise my class was to make sure I sent an email to all the advisors and, that has been like, enrollments in my courses have just, whoosh. So it's that institutional knowledge, too, for other faculty, like, how do things work?

00:42:06:00 - 00:42:09:31

**Crystal:** How does a student find their way into my classroom?

00:42:09:31 - 00:42:11:03

**Speaker 6:** I appreciate the comment.

00:42:11:03 - 00:42:26:09

**Speaker 6:** I know that we've got around nine open admission programs. Many of our students land in the bigger ones, Science, Business, Computing, and Communications, without actually having that as an end goal at the beginning of the onset. And knowing how our students navigate,

00:42:26:09 - 00:42:35:43

**Speaker 6:** it's great to see the data and support of this wraparound service piece. And academic advising at the beginning should get the very forefront of that as well. And helping students

00:42:35:43 - 00:42:48:71

**Speaker 6:** navigate through it effectively, efficiently. With that goal being at the very forefront of what the student is ultimately wanting to do, versus losing the student in terms of transfer pieces, et cetera, et cetera.

00:42:48:71 - 00:43:06:41

**Speaker 6:** We know that many of our students who land in our open programs have no intentions of staying after year one for various reasons. So, even bigger discussions in terms of, how do we help students navigate effectively, Enrollment Services being one, a two-tiered admission process, possibly.

00:43:06:41 - 00:43:18:39

**Speaker 6:** But, knowing we don't have that in existence, it's making sure that these students are clearly connected and clearly have a goal in mind. Why am I doing the Cohort?

00:43:18:39 - 00:43:25:14

**Speaker 6:** What is my intention? Why am I taking Philosophy or Political Studies or Sociology? Where am I going?

00:43:25:14 - 00:43:41:93

**Speaker 6:** So I think those are our bigger pathway discussions that, we make connections with Larry's team, Counseling, Jenna's team. So we do hold a lot of that hub-sense wraparound service in our area, very much so, so I encourage you to reach out.

00:43:42:14 - 00:43:47:54

**Speaker 5:** Mio, put that on your list to do.

00:43:51:58 - 00:43:53:90

**Jiyoung:** Yeah, thank you so much.

00:43:53:90 - 00:44:10:84

**Jiyoung:** I think, you just mentioned, that having that strong connection at the personal level and also at the academic level, will definitely increase a sense of belonging that we all want to create. And, I actually had more-specific questions.

00:44:10:84 - 00:44:23:66

**Jiyoung:** I see the topic of sense of belonging several times. What other measures or questions are you using to evaluate students' sense of belonging at TRU?

00:44:23:66 - 00:44:46:97

**Jiyoung:** And, as you mentioned, it's interesting that Arts graduates were saying that they had difficulty working with other peers. And then, it might be also connected to the issues of, maybe they did not have many friends while they were actually doing those studies.

00:44:46:97 - 00:45:02:95

**Jiyoung:** So I'm curious about how, maybe, the factors of having friends and connections with faculty, or connections with other universities, all of those are part of that measurement for a sense of belonging and, how you are doing that?

00:45:02:96 - 00:45:06:49

**Dominique:** I don't work with the survey stuff very often.

00:45:06:49 - 00:45:23:94

**Dominique:** So I'm not familiar with all of the questions.

00:45:09:05 - 00:45:23:95

**Speaker 3:** I'll try to, I don't have all the details, but each one of the surveys, sense of belonging in general has been an area of interest, in terms of that connection, of students with other students, as well as with the institutions.

00:45:23:95 - 00:45:38:53

**Speaker 3:** And so the different surveys asked different questions. Several of which are asking them, what their connection to their institution or their program is, sort of, very directly.

00:45:38:53 - 00:45:51:91

**Speaker 3:** Other questions are about their perceptions of support for them at a personal level, as well as for their academic pursuits. So the different surveys asked different questions.

00:45:51:91 - 00:46:12:83

**Speaker 3:** So in some of them, there's multiple questions, and in some of them is, maybe, a single one. We, for the purpose of this presentation, we didn't do that analysis to look at some of those, but it certainly did identify that that may be an area for Arts specifically, that is a little bit different than from other areas.

00:46:12:83 - 00:46:17:60

**Speaker 3:** So it's just a report for what we got from here for this project.

00:46:17:60 - 00:46:19:10

**Dominique:** Yeah. There are about a thousand

00:46:19:10 - 00:46:27:75

**Dominique:** different rabbit holes that I could have gone down, in looking at all this data. If there's any rabbit hole that you want me to go down? I'll think about it.

00:46:27:75 - 00:46:28:86

**Jiyoung:** No, no, I'm good.

00:46:36:00 - 00:46:37:74

**Speaker 2:** Okay. Rabbit hole question.

00:46:37:74 - 00:46:51:23

**Speaker 2:** I worked with, we got some data from Rankin Center. I asked him once about, you know, do you look historically at data in terms of the impact of, you know, a specific course on academic success like SDSS.

00:46:51:23 - 00:47:01:90

**Speaker 2:** And he was like, might be a job. But, would that be a rabbit hole, would be a possibility, to look at the impact of a certain course that's specifically teaching study skills?

00:47:01:90 - 00:47:03:36

**Dominique:** Yeah. Anything is possible.

00:47:03:36 - 00:47:07:28

**Speaker 3:** Yeah. I mean, we have done that in the past.

00:47:09:28 - 00:47:18:76

**Speaker 3:** But it's been a while since some of those, and you know, you may have some recollection of that.

00:47:25:96 - 00:47:28:64

**Speaker 5:** We could do it again, but the numbers are pretty small.

00:47:28:63 - 00:47:52:26

**Speaker 3:** That becomes part of the issue, when the numbers are very small, it's, you know, it really can't generalize that that was a factor that made the difference. However, that can be one of those things that can be put together, and, you know, a bigger grouping of interventions that we may want to measure, perhaps.

00:47:52:26 - 00:48:02:71

**Speaker 3:** But certainly, we can take a look at it, not something that would certainly give you, yeah. The numbers are very small on that. Because,

00:48:02:71 - 00:48:05:16

**Speaker 3:** you know, it's not mandatory, right?

00:48:10:16 - 00:48:19:99

**Yumio:** Is there any way that we can look at the system to see the GPA, generally, for specific courses and how, generally, the GPAs are higher or lower?

00:48:19:99 - 00:48:28:03

**Yumio:** Because then, sometimes, if the general GPAs from this course, if it's lower, it means, maybe, something.

00:48:28:03 - 00:48:31:91

**Speaker 3:** Yes, like your bottleneck kind of courses and different pieces.

00:48:31:91 - 00:48:39:44

**Speaker 3:** So, that exists already. There's a grading, the grades report.

00:48:39:44 - 00:48:42:47

**Speaker 3:** And the Chairs have access to that.

00:48:42:47 - 00:48:47:21

**Dominique:** I don't know that we can filter down to specific programs, though.

00:48:47:20 - 00:48:48:75

**Speaker 3:** Yeah, not the program, but the course.

00:48:48:75 - 00:48:50:25

**Dominique:** Yeah. But we wouldn't be able to see,

00:48:50:25 - 00:48:57:11

**Dominique:** like, how many of the students in the course were BA students, because Arts has a lot of service to other departments.

00:49:04:00 - 00:49:07:22

**Tom:** I'm Tom Waldichuk, I teach geography.

00:49:07:21 - 00:49:13:91

**Tom:** Down the hall. Anyways, I'm not part of this Cohort group, but I just have a question.

00:49:13:91 - 00:49:28:17

**Tom:** Have you ever looked at the impact of year-long courses versus 12-week courses? When I did my BA a long time ago, most of my courses were year-long courses.

00:49:28:17 - 00:49:39:39

**Tom:** They were, you know, all the way to April. And I know TRU or UCC, we did have those, you know, courses way back when, and I can't remember which, was it Nursing?

00:49:39:39 - 00:49:47:49

**Tom:** Yeah. They were, so I'm just curious if that's had any, because I got to know students after eight months, and it wasn't so rushed.

00:49:47:49 - 00:49:55:06

**Tom:** You know, now, it's just like, boom, boom, boom, you know, and if somebody is sick, then they're gone, you know? And they can't keep up.

00:49:55:06 - 00:50:01:72

**Tom:** I mean, that's just one example. Is that possible, to bring those back?

00:50:07:72 - 00:50:09:11

**Tom:** Maybe in the 20th century.

00:50:09:11 - 00:50:12:80

**Speaker 3:** I'm not sure if we have any right now.

00:50:12:80 - 00:50:16:08

**Speaker 6:** Nothing in year 1.

00:50:16:08 - 00:50:19:24

**Tom:** Anyways, I was curious.

00:50:20:76 - 00:50:25:46

**Speaker 5:** What would be a bottleneck course in Arts?

00:50:27:84 - 00:50:35:60

**Speaker 3:** When I'm thinking of bottleneck course, it'd be, you know, some of those courses where the failure rate is really high.

00:50:35:60 - 00:50:48:53

**Speaker 3:** So it depends. I can't recall one off the top of my head, but I think you all know what some of those are.

00:50:48:53 - 00:50:59:49

**Speaker 3:** And they often tend to be, some of those have been courses that are also requirements for the majors. So then, that starts some of that filtering. So, students who may tend to go

00:50:59:49 - 00:51:12:15

**Speaker 3:** to a certain major but do not do well in some of those courses. And I think it relates on some of what Dominique pointed out in terms of students reporting difficulty with math?

00:51:12:15 - 00:51:23:31

**Speaker 3:** I think some of the statistics courses, things like that. They tend to be, I'm going by total memory, so don't quote me on that, but that's my impression.

00:51:23:31 - 00:51:37:66

**Speaker 5:** I was going to confirm your impression. Our statistics courses, usually the courses that satisfy the reasoning credit, the scientific reasoning credit, in Arts, are the ones that are the bottleneck courses for our students. And, Elementary Formal Logic.

00:51:37:66 - 00:51:43:57

**Speaker 5:** Yes, that's my reading, there's the students who come to me to not fail.

00:51:45:80 - 00:51:48:21

**Speaker 7:** So there's a statistics course?

00:51:48:21 - 00:51:53:70

**Speaker 5:** There's Statistics and Elementary Formal Logic. Two of them.

00:51:53:70 - 00:52:02:03

**Crystal:** I teach one of the courses as part of the Cohort, in the first year, Geography 1000. It's a science credit with a lab component.

00:52:02:03 - 00:52:12:03

**Crystal:** And I was offered supplemental learning, TA support, because it was identified as a low-GPA course.

00:52:15:15 - 00:52:26:55

**Speaker 3:** That's what I was referring to, you can identify it by course, what the grade distribution within the courses are over time.

00:52:27:43 - 00:52:46:17

**Jiyoung:** You have used gender and age as main factors to analyze data. By any chance, do you also have some other data about, geographic location, social class, or, race or ethnicity that have been affecting that data?

00:52:46:17 - 00:52:48:87

**Dominique:** We have geography.

00:52:52:00 - 00:53:04:86

**Speaker 3:** It's not something that TRU's been collecting, has in general, a lot, so we don't have some of the other demographic data that can be used there.

00:53:04:86 - 00:53:13:80

**Speaker 3:** So, gender, age, Indigeneity is self-reported. So we do have that.

00:53:13:80 - 00:53:27:28

**Speaker 3:** And we can tell where students are coming from. Either from the application, and we tend to use a lot of the application postal codes to identify where they're coming from as a proxy.

00:53:27:28 - 00:53:35:87

**Speaker 3:** Because, really, it is where they're mailing the application from. It doesn't necessarily mean that they're originally from, you know, there.

00:53:35:87 - 00:54:02:94

**Speaker 3:** But it is a bit of a proxy, that's about the limit of what we have. And something that I think, we're not unique in not having that data with other institutions, but, I think, in the system, there's a realization that there is something that we were all like, but that collection is also something we need to go into very carefully as well.

00:54:08:32 - 00:54:18:38

**Jiyoung:** Yes. I learned so much today, thank you so much for today's presentation and also, I very much appreciate your feedback and questions and suggestions.

00:54:18:38 - 00:54:22:73

**Jiyoung:** I definitely see a much bigger connection from today.

00:54:22:74 - 00:54:28:73

**Dominique:** I've sent the slide decks to Jenna and, so, they should be able to distribute them, I'm hoping.

00:54:28:72 - 00:54:34:45

**Dominique:** But if not, feel free to reach out to me personally or the IPE at TRU.ca and we'll hook you up.

00:54:34:45 - 00:54:53:31

**Speaker 5:** So, the slides will be in the Teams with every other slide deck, and then, Misha, she's actually collecting additional supporting material, and we will eventually have the link to the video with the slides integrated. Again, thank you so much.