

SFU: WHAT'S NEXT?

ThoughtExchange Data Analysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses the responses to the six key questions asked on the platform, ThoughtExchange, during the What's Next? process. It provides a summary of the methodological approach taken to coding and analysing the discussion threads shared on ThoughtExchange as well as the results of the analysis.

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Key points

- 01** Six key questions were asked on the platform ThoughtExchange:
1. What difference should SFU make in the world around us?
 2. What is SFU's next bold move?
 3. What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?
 4. What SFU moments make you proud?
 5. What values or principles should SFU uphold?
 6. What does 'Canada's Engaged University' mean to you today?
- 02** A total of 1,229 faculty, staff, undergraduate students, graduate students, donors, Continuing Studies students, partners, SFU retirees and others took part in the online discussion threads
- 03** A total of 725 thoughts were posted on ThoughtExchange
- 04** Staff were the highest engaging group of participants
- 05** Partners (described as community, business and government) were the least engaging group of participants
- 06** Seven research assistants from seven different academic disciplines were onboarded to code the data
- 07** Results indicate that the most common themes that emerged are as follows (in alphabetical order):
- Accountability and respect
 - Climate change and sustainability
 - Creativity and innovation
 - Eliminating bureaucracy and administrative hierarchies while improving efficiencies in management and budget allocation
 - Equity, diversity and inclusion
 - Improved working conditions and environments for staff, faculty and researchers
 - Partnerships, community and reciprocity
 - Reconciliation and decolonisation
 - Student-centric approaches to policy and practice
 - Teaching, learning and research excellence
- 08** The results reveal that the current priorities of the University, namely Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as well as Student Experience are well-aligned with the sentiments of the community at SFU, however the emerging themes provide further nuance to our understandings of existing priorities at SFU

INTRODUCTION

SFU: What's Next? is a cross-university collaboration co-led by SFU President Joy Johnson and VP Academic and Provost (pro tem), Wade Parkhouse, and sponsored by the SFU Senior Leadership Team of Vice-Presidents, Deans and Associate Vice-Presidents.

**SFU:
WHAT'S
NEXT?**

Over the course of 2022, there have been community conversations to have collectively express SFU's vision, purpose, priorities and commitments, with the goal of developing a framework that aligns efforts across the university for the next five years.

The first stage of community conversation was conducted through a platform known as ThoughtExchange. President Johnson wanted to hear from you to ensure the framework accurately reflects the values and priorities of SFU communities. ThoughtExchange is described as an anti-bias enterprise discussion management platform. Via this platform, faculty, students, staff, alumni, donors, partners and others were engaged to reflect on six key questions:

1. What difference should SFU make in the world around us?
2. What is SFU's next bold move?
3. What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?
4. What SFU moments make you proud?
5. What values or principles should SFU uphold?
6. What does 'Canada's Engaged University' mean to you today?

Between March 21, 2022 and May 1, 2022, participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on the ThoughtExchange platform. Following the closeout of the gathering of thoughts on May 1, 2022, a research team was assembled which constituted seven research assistants from seven different academic disciplines to analyse the data gathered. Upon analysing and thematically coding the data, a final review was conducted to determine the highest to lowest ranking themes that emerged from the data. The rankings were provided by the SFU community throughout the course of their engagement with the ThoughtExchange platform. This report shares the results of the data analysis along with some personal insights of the research team.

This mode of data collection is one of five modes of data collection and engagement which will take place with the SFU community to garner input in the What's Next? process. The other stages of data collection entail a survey administered by Academica Group, round table discussions hosted by leaders from across SFU with existing groups such as student clubs and faculty departments, engagement pop-ups for students and town halls for students, faculty, and staff (three separate town halls) to share preliminary results.

We hope that this report reflective of your input and illuminating for a way forward, and brings us one step closer to drafting a University Strategic Plan as a collective.

RESPONSES SUMMARY

Six key questions were posed to the SFU community during the ThoughtExchange consultations. Of the six questions, the question that drew in the highest number of responses (280 participants) was, 'What difference should SFU make in the world around us?' to which 169 thoughts on the ThoughtExchange dashboard were shared. The second question that drew in the highest number of responses (238 participants) was 'What is SFU's next bold move?' to which 157 thoughts were shared, followed by the question, 'What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?', to which 194 participants responded, sharing 104 thoughts. The fourth highest number of responses was to the question, 'What SFU moments make you proud?' which drew in 184 participants who shared 89 thoughts, followed by the question, 'What values or principles should SFU uphold?', which drew in 174 participants who shared 122 thoughts. The question with the least number of participant engagement was, 'What does 'Canada's Engaged University' mean to you?', which drew in 159 participants who shared 84 thoughts.

The number of 'Staff' responses were the highest for every question. Following 'Staff' responses, the highest to lowest number of participant group varied per question. For the question, 'What difference should SFU make in the world around us?', 'undergraduate students' were the participant group with the highest number of responses (60), followed by 'faculty' (56). 'Alumni' and 'Graduate student' responses tied at 40 responses per participant group followed by 'Donor' responses (15). 'Partner' responses, described as community, business and government, tied with 'SFU Retiree' responses (5) followed by the participant group labelled as 'None of the above' (4) and lastly, 'Continuing Studies students' (1).

In contrast, for the question, 'What is SFU's next bold move?', 'Alumni' provided the highest number of responses (59) after 'Staff', followed by 'Graduate students' (38), 'Undergraduate students' (31) and 'Faculty' (30). The group of respondents labelled as 'None of the above' provided the highest number of responses (8) after 'Faculty', followed by 'Donors'. 'SFU Retirees' were one of the least engaged participants groups (2) followed by 'Continuing Studies students' (1) and 'Partners' (1).

For the question, 'What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?', 'Alumni' once again provided the highest number of responses (54) after 'Staff', followed by 'Faculty' (41), 'Graduate students' (17) and 'Donors' (11). 'Undergraduate students' and 'None of the above' both tied at (4) responses each, followed by 'Continuing Studies students' (3) and 'SFU Retirees' (2). Partners provided no responses to this particular question.

In response to the question 'What SFU moments make you proud?', 'Undergraduate students' provided the highest number of responses (38) after 'Staff', followed closely by 'Alumni' (37) and 'Faculty' (30). 'Graduate students' accounted for the group with the next highest number of responses (9), followed by 'None of the above' (7) and 'Donor's' (6). One 'Partner' provided a response while zero 'Continuing Studies students' and 'SFU Retirees' engaged with this particular question.

In response to the question, 'What values or principles should SFU uphold?', 'Faculty' had the most to say (50), followed by 'Graduate students' (28), 'Alumni' (26) and 'Undergraduate students' (16). 'Donors' and 'None of the above' had one of the lowest response rates (5), followed by 'SFU Retirees' (4), 'Continuing Studies students' (2) and 'Partners' (2).

Finally, the question with the lowest level of engagement overall, "What does 'Canada's Engaged University' mean to you?" was responded to the most by 'Faculty' (38) after 'Staff' (76), followed by 'Alumni' (29), 'Undergraduate students' (20) and 'Graduate students' (18). 'Donors' had one of the least response rates (8), followed by the group labelled as 'None of the above' (4), and 'Continuing Studies students', 'Partners' and 'SFU Retirees', each at 2 responses per group.

Participant responses to the 6 ThoughtExchange questions

(in order of number of responses received: highest to lowest)

QUESTIONS	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	NO. OF THOUGHTS	RATINGS	RELATIONSHIP TO SFU	
What differences should SFU make in the world around us?	280	169	7,597	22% (60) Undergraduate student 15% (40) Graduate student 0% (1) Continuing Studies student 21% (56) Faculty 48% (128) Staff	15% (40) Alumni 5% (15) Donor 1% (5) Partner* 1% (5) SFU Retiree 1% (4) None of the above
What is SFU's next bold move?	238	157	5,847	13% (31) Undergraduate student 16% (38) Graduate student 0% (1) Continuing Studies student 12% (30) Faculty 58% (136) Staff	25% (59) Alumni 3% (7) Donor 0% (1) Partner* 0% (2) SFU Retiree 3% (8) None of the above
What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?	194	104	3,666	2% (4) Undergraduate student 9% (17) Graduate student 1% (3) Continuing Studies student 22% (41) Faculty 69% (130) Staff	29% (54) Alumni 5% (11) Donor 0% (0) Partner* 1% (2) SFU Retiree 2% (4) None of the above
What SFU moments make you proud?	184	89	2,511	21% (38) Undergraduate student 5% (9) Graduate student 0% (0) Continuing Studies student 17% (30) Faculty 54% (95) Staff	21% (37) Alumni 3% (6) Donor 0% (1) Partner* 0% (0) SFU Retiree 4% (7) None of the above
What values or principles should SFU uphold?	174	122	3,344	9% (16) Undergraduate student 16% (28) Graduate student 1% (2) Continuing Studies student 29% (50) Faculty 46% (78) Staff	15% (26) Alumni 2% (5) Donor 1% (2) Partner* 2% (4) SFU Retiree 2% (5) None of the above
What does 'Canada's Engaged University' mean to you today?	159	84	1,901	13% (20) Undergraduate student 12% (18) Graduate student 1% (2) Continuing Studies student 25% (38) Faculty 51% (76) Staff	19% (29) Alumni 5% (8) Donor 1% (2) Partner* 1% (2) SFU Retiree 2% (4) None of the above
TOTAL	1,229	725		*(eg. Community, business, government)	

METHODOLOGY FOR CODING

Seven research assistants were onboarded to code and analyse the data collected through ThoughtExchange. The methodology for coding was approached mostly inductively, meaning the seven research assistants that were onboarded to code the data, read and interpreted the raw textual data directly in ThoughtExchange. This was done in order to develop themes through each of their unique lenses and interpretation of the data rather than assigning a single code book that aligned with preconceived notions of what themes might emerge. This was done with the intention of allowing themes to emerge organically from the perspective of seven research assistants, each of whom hailed from different disciplinary traditions, namely from Economics, Education, Global Humanities, Mathematics, Public Health, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, and Communication.

The seven research assistants who supported coding the data, were not provided formal training, nor did they have prior knowledge about common language employed at SFU when discussing the emerging topics. This was done intentionally to allow for a truly raw interpretation of the data, informed by grounded theory¹. The only training provided was that with a member of ThoughtExchange to equip the research assistants with knowledge about software capabilities in ThoughtExchange. The first phase of coding entailed each research assistant reading each response/thought provided to each question within ThoughtExchange and creating up to 15 themes per question. The limit of 15 themes per question was a software limitation. The seven research assistants then re-grouped to review and refine the themes that they each came up with and to ensure that all thoughts had been assigned a theme. The third phase of coding entailed a returning to the raw data to use a 'compare and contrast' method to ensure the developed themes were grounded in the data². The final phase of coding entailed clearly naming the themes in an effort to strive for being concise and precise. For a brief synopsis of each of the research assistants' approach to coding, in their own words, please see below:

Maria Abarca

The themes were created using an exploratory process with an inductive coding ground-up approach, with no theming restrictions (I kept developing themes in a word table for questions that make up more than 15). Raw data was analyzed several times to become familiar with, organized, and grouped into themes with clear boundaries (not interchangeable or redundant). In order to decrease the number of themes by testing adequacy and any connection between them, data were summarized by key features of the large dataset in a well-structured manner, identifying the most relevant themes to build an understanding of the phenomena and disregarding the not obviously of direct relevance.

Aylar Adeh

For identifying emerging themes and patterns of thoughts and perceptions, thematic analysis was employed, using both inductive and deductive analysis processes. As a first step, I familiarized myself with the data by reading all the data multiple times. Afterward, initial themes were generated by inductive open coding (i.e., identifying and assigning codes to segments of text to organize the data into meaningful groups). After that, initial themes were reviewed and further evaluated. The final steps included identifying and naming final themes and preparing for the report. The thematic analysis included more than 725 thoughts and six discussion threads, which led to the identification of six to nine themes for each question.

Thuy Do

I started coding by skimming through all the thoughts first then reading one by one and coding based on how I understood the content of the answers and the questions. My understanding was affected by my educational background which is development/international studies and liberal art education. I go back and forth and changed my themes several times to get the themes that can explain/cover the thoughts that I want to code. Therefore, my themes are finalized and not further minimized.

Stan Hetalo

For each question, I reviewed the wordcloud and most popular words in first place. This step provided lots of information about how to properly structure most of the responses. Then, I started by searching and coding comments with several most popular words – it usually covered a solid chunk of responses. After that, I proceeded one-by-one response and either fit into the existing category or left it until I found another comparable comment, which

1 Xu and Zammit (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-9. doi: 10.1177/1609406920918810.

2 Ibid.

gave me an ability to combine and create a new category. Yet, I tried not to create many categories and fit a comment into the existing category if possible. In the end, I went over most common words once again followed by the overall review to make slight adjustments and ensure every response fits its best one or two categories.

Catherine Jeffery

I used an inductive approach to generate themes from the dataset. Browsing through the first few entries on each page, I noted some of the main themes and points of intersection. After making these into themes in the online tool, I methodically combed through each piece of textual data and assigned it to a theme, creating new ones when necessary. I tried to make the themes exclusive as much as possible, limiting the number of pieces of data that were assigned to more than one theme. After coding the entire dataset, I reviewed the themes and merged those that had many intersections. I also tried to keep themes broad enough that they could hold a non-trivial number of datapoints, so I eliminated themes that only captured a miniscule number of shared thoughts.

Elina Jin

This research employs inductive approaches to conclude overarching themes from survey responses. Through data observation, this report seeks patterns and similar ideas in these responses, and proposes dominant themes shared by SFU community members. All data are coded within the ThoughtExchange platform. The theming process of survey responses consists of several steps: environmental scan of all thoughts; word frequency check of responses in each question; examine each thought within their contexts and generate 13-15 themes; find similarities of these existing themes to create matrixes for coding hierarchy and dynamics.

Besides, I practiced critical mindset in this qualitative analysis. In the process, I deliberately created as many themes as I observed in these thoughts, so that I could catch new ideas that were close to daily practices. Besides, I tried to avoid over-merging and high-level themes, and created a theme hierarchy to display specific needs from a certain group. Meanwhile, I intended to seek underrepresented voices that are not competent in numbers yet transformative for future changes. My goal is to seek new insights besides existing predominant conversations that we discuss in public nowadays.

Marie Pitre

To begin coding, I read through all of the thoughts associated with each question to get a general idea of the thoughts. After reading through the responses, I went back over each thought and created general themes as they presented themselves. After creating general themes, I went back through the responses and identified more specific themes. Additionally, in this step, I consolidated the themes generated in the previous two steps, if possible. The penultimate step was to identify any possible secondary themes in the responses. Finally, I created the themes on ThoughtExchange and reread through the completed themes to ensure that all responses were themed as well as consistent.

The next section of this report provides an overview of the themes that emerged from the four phases of coding.

RESULTS

The results of coding are shared in the order of the rank assigned to each thought. The ability to rank thoughts was a delivered capability in the ThoughtExchange software which allowed all participants to view all the thoughts shared and to rank them as most to least important. While there are different ways in which the data can be organised and presented, the authors of this report felt that the most authentic approach would be to honour the ranking assigned by the participants of the ThoughtExchange exercise.

What Difference Should SFU Make in the World Around Us Today?

The results of a thorough analysis of all the emerging themes for the question with the highest level of engagement, ‘What difference should SFU make in the world around us today?’, revealed that the highest ranked thought was the thought about the importance of supporting and investing in faculty through increased salaries, affordable housing and research and teaching. Following that thought, the next highest ranked thoughts were themed as the importance of reducing bureaucracy, reconciliation, decolonisation and inclusion, followed by the importance of increasing financial supports for faculty, staff and research assistants, enhancing the educational experience through equity and accessibility. Climate action and sustainability were ranked as the next most important priorities, suggesting that SFU can be a leader in the climate crisis. The importance of creating a space for critical inquiry and returning to the academic mission of the institution by focusing on teaching and research excellence was ranked as a salient thought. Well-being and the mental health of faculty, staff and students was highlighted as equally important as teaching and research excellence. Learning supports and innovation were ranked as a slightly lesser priority but highlighted as important nonetheless. Hiring practices and support for workers was similarly raised as one way in which SFU could make a difference in the world around us. Measurable progress in EDI, hybrid work, online education and social responsibility by working towards research for change, were the next highest-ranking thoughts. The importance of academic freedom and student-centered academic approaches were ranked as the least important thought with respect to the how SFU can make a difference in the world around us today.

“We should model decolonizing practices for other universities and institutions. Decolonizing practices is an moral imperative and with leadership from Indigenous staff, faculty and community members SFU could be ahead of the curve.”

“Become a living wage employer (including sub-contracted workers). We attract excellent staff who have the ability to thrive.”

“We should refocus our efforts on serving our students. What programs and services enhance their student experience? Supports needed to be successful?”

What is SFU's Next Bold Move?

With respect to the question, ‘What is SFU's Next Bold Move?’, the highest ranked thoughts centered on the topic of improving workplace conditions. More specifically, the themes that emerged were the importance of creating fair and equitable working conditions, creating supportive workplaces, including establishing hybrid work, providing a living wage, competitive salaries, improved financial compensation and significant improvements to human resources overall. Closely associated with thoughts about improving working conditions, were thoughts about transforming leadership, reducing administrative hierarchies and offering stronger worker benefit policies. Along the same line of thought, were thoughts shared about increasing student funding and support, flexible work, importance of establishing respectful working environments and improving the work culture overall. The next highest-ranking thought was with respect to climate change and sustainability, including climate action. Creating new programs and facilities, including establishing professional schools and programs were the next highest-ranking thought. Enhancing instruction and teaching were ranked next highest followed by equity, reconciliation, decolonisation, inclusion and diversity. Peppered throughout the exchanges are lesser ranked thoughts such as the importance of local investments, community partnerships, trans/interdisciplinary studies, accountability, transforming structures of power and taking student-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

What Could We Stop Doing to Make Room for Renewed Priorities?

In response to the question, ‘What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?’, the highest ranked thoughts were mostly about eliminating bureaucracy in administration by coming up with tech solutions to eliminate to save time with processing hard copy forms. Ranked equally, was the importance of genuine action by way of revising and reducing teaching loads, focusing on outcomes and shifting from performance-based funding models to people-based funding models. The next highest ranked thought was attributed to seeing genuine action by way of listening to students’ voices, adopting an EDI-lens and focusing on measurable actions with EDI and reconciliation efforts through deep surveys. Staffing ranked as the next highest thought, expressed as the need to reduce the number of managers and temporary workers, and improving overall working conditions. Eliminating bureaucracy and paperwork by enhancing tech solutions were ranked next highest followed by the importance of creating supportive working environments for staff. Other thoughts ranked as moderately important are the importance of managerial transparency, shared responsibility, listening to students’ voices, adopting hybrid work, enhancing renovations and spaces and better allocation of resources. Reviewing and reducing expenditures ranked as one of the least important thoughts.

What SFU Moments Make You Proud?

The question, ‘What SFU moments make you proud?’ elicited a number of responses which closely align with the existing priorities of the university. The highest ranked thought was with respect to SFU’s commitment to decolonisation, EDI, anti-racism, accountability and reconciliation, citing examples such as Black community groups providing support for students, the signing of the Scarborough Charter and changing SFU’s athletics team name. The next highest-ranking thought was about the high-quality research conducted at SFU and the facilities at SFU, along with excellence in research and teaching as well as SFU’s commitment to knowledge dissemination and research and knowledge mobilisation. Of equal importance was the thought about community engagement, citing examples such as the establishment of the SFU food hub and the community fridge and partnerships and SFU’s efforts towards embracing cultural diversity. The next highest-ranking thought was with respect to the advocacy work of students and student leadership. SFU’s ability to academic knowledge with community knowledge to inform policy and decision-making was ranked of equal importance followed by the presence of hard-working staff and administration. Major events such as convocation and particularly the pipe band were also identified as moments that make people proud of SFU as well as a commitment to climate change and sustainability, citing examples such as SFU’s decision to divest as well as its commitment to UN’s Race to Zero. School spirit and campus life were also mentioned as moments that make people proud of SFU, albeit these comments generally ranked lower in importance.

What Values or Principles Should SFU Uphold?

Thoughts around the question, ‘What values or principles should SFU uphold?’, garnered a range of responses. The highest ranked thought was determined to be respect, inclusion and reciprocity. Accessibility and support for in general, as well as anti-racism, anti-oppression and equity were the next highest-ranking thoughts followed by excellent in research and teaching as the two core roles of the university, in the opinion of the author of the thought. Remaining socially engaged through a culture of inquiry, curiosity and flexibility by remaining committed to excellence in research and learning was the next highest-ranking thought. This thought was closely followed by next highest-ranking thought on the subject of upholding values associated with academic freedom and critical thinking. Employment equity and respect for all workers, by way of competitive living wages, was a fairly high-ranking thought alongside the importance of being student-centric in our approach. The importance of reconciliation appeared to be the next highest-ranking thought, alongside anti-oppression and decolonisation. As with the other ThoughtExchange questions, the theme of climate change and sustainability were identified as important values we should uphold at SFU followed by effective administration, described as demonstrated leadership in teaching, research and administration.

“The ground-breaking research of our faculty. And the everyday things professors do to incrementally improve the learning experience for students. A university needs its stars as much as it needs its brilliant, innovative and compassionate teachers. It needs to be both, not one or the other.”

“Equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. To commit to intentional, meaningful action to advance equity & inclusion and to address racism & discrimination.”

“Solutions-focused research, teaching and learning. We are part of the communities we are located in and we have a responsibility to our planet, to our neighbours, to our communities.”

What Does ‘Canada’s Engaged University’ Mean to You?

In response to the question, ‘What does ‘Canada’s Engaged University’ mean to you?’, the highest-ranking response was, a solutions-focused research, teaching and learning approach as a commitment to the broader society in which we are situated. To others, engagement meant collaboration and partnerships, research and knowledge mobilisation, partaking in creating a more sustainable future for everyone, as well as valuing its employees and researchers through good wages and benefits. For others, being engaged meant leading the way in climate justice, being accountable and socially responsible, engaging in real-world issues, working closely with communities to mobilise research and knowledge, bridging the gap between the academy and the community. For some, it meant that as an institution, we acknowledge and hold ourselves accountable, to be transparent and listen to our constituents. Some felt that it was important to work on internally engaging with one another and enhance internal partnerships before engaging with the community while others felt it is important to engage beyond the desire to engage for the purposes of global rankings and economic profit. The thought of engaging to some meant that we are committed to changing the world, to build a better, equal and just world, wherein everyone feels safe and cared for. To some, it meant the ability to speak freely, and without prejudice within respectful work environments and to others it means engaging with our students as a priority. Similarly, some felt that engagement begins with engaging all workers at SFU by ensuring cleaners and food services are included. In contrast, some felt that research and teaching should be the core business of the university and that engagement did not bear significance.

To summarise, the core themes that resulted from thematically analysing the thoughts in ThoughtExchange are as follows, in alphabetical order:

1. Accountability and respect
2. Climate change and sustainability
3. Creativity and innovation
4. Eliminating bureaucracy and administrative hierarchies while improving efficiencies in management and budget allocation
5. Equity, diversity and inclusion
6. Improved working conditions and environments for staff, faculty and researchers
7. Partnerships, community and reciprocity
8. Reconciliation and decolonisation
9. Student-centric approaches to policy and practice
10. Teaching, learning and research excellence

The results from the coding reveal that overall, the current priorities of the University, namely Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as well as Student Experience are well-aligned with the sentiments of the community at SFU. The responses received through the ThoughtExchange discussion threads reveal nuances as to how the top three priorities have been envisioned but can be further enhanced, in way that provides a richness and authenticity to the work that lies ahead of us.

The next section documents the personal reflections of the coders as they read through each thought posted on ThoughtExchange:

Maria Abarca

After capturing the respondent's ideas, my personal interpretation of the data reveals that SFU community is willing for a transformative change in particular three main areas.

1) Improving labour conditions (financial, social, health & wellbeing) for all levels and positions (from TA, RA, cleaning and maintaining workers, to administrative, faculty, and researchers staff) with technological solutions and less administrative workloads.

2) The responsibility for solid actions around "teaching-learning-research" with a more dynamic and innovative approach that improves the quality of life and responds to the pressing social and environmental problems (climate crisis, violence crisis, reconciliation and decolonizing commitments, and so on)

3) SFU is an institution with the principle of "social justice" in a local, regional, national and international level rooted in tradition and multiculturalism, therefore, celebrations of those achievements has a heavy impact on SFU's community and must rely on equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

Aylar Adeh

My first impression was that everyone was incredibly proud of SFU's dedicated employees, researchers, and advanced research centers and facilities. After reading all responses, I believe the most significant point raised was the importance of SFU's people and community. Two themes were prominent across all inquiry areas: listening to students' voices and concerns, and ensuring fair and equitable working conditions for faculty and staff. It was also highlighted that SFU should prioritize research and education over politics and dedicate funds and opportunities toward achieving excellence in research and education to further improve its international standing.

Thuy Do

This is an effective strategy to prepare for a development strategy of an organization. The questions are well organized and implied the organizer's purposes. Thoughts are also well developed receiving meaningful answers/responses from participants. However, many thoughts somehow lead to unclear, and nonsense statements. That means, the answers/responses of two participants are just to repeat the statements/thoughts and have no other choices. In addition, many thoughts are repetitive, disorganized, and not related to the questions, especially thoughts in question #5.

Stan Hetalo

Overall, I find the responses to be captivating and their value worth a lot for our community. They are mostly consistent with the question asked. A grain of salt is a few comments that include unrelated answers, such as promoting EDI when the question was about what SFU should stop doing... But at a larger scale, respondents paint an overall coherent picture about values, needs, and gaps to be utilized. Lots of people dedicated their time to these questions and their responses are intelligible as well as insightful. I truly believe, the final output should (and would!) make use of these answers for the greater good of our community and highlight striking topics that of most importance for the future of SFU's vision.

Catherine Jeffery

All qualitative research is inevitably informed to some extent by the researcher's background. In this dataset, I was struck by some of the major trends shared by multiple participants, likely because of my experience with such issues. For example, I noticed that labour-related concerns were dominant across several questions, with individuals

sharing thoughts on compensation, staff support, workloads, graduate student workers, and inclusion of currently outsourced workers. My attention to these issues is unsurprising given my own background working in labour advocacy. I also noticed a tension between community engagement and more academically oriented priorities like research and teaching, with several participants suggesting that SFU's core values ought to be focused on key academic activities rather than outward-facing initiatives. Of course, other participants noted the opposite, arguing for a move away from traditional academics towards more community partnerships. Again, this was likely informed by my own experience as a critical researcher concerned with the role academic institutions play in the world around us.

Elina Jin

I notice two narratives about the role of SFU in people's perception. Some people see SFU as a public service that prioritizes social responsibilities and transformative innovations. The other view is to perceive SFU as a business that begs for capital accumulation and embraces liberal management mindset. However, both sides emphasize on the social responsibilities and human-centered management approaches of SFU in future operation.

Budget allocation is a hot topic discussed these responses. Some people advocate for more invest to faculty members and students, and less money spent in center admin team, especially senior admin positions. Meanwhile, RA and contract workers' benefits are constantly addressed.

Issues of education equity are constantly discussed in these responses. However, people from local communities and international groups address different practice in education equity. My question is "equity" for whom?

Marie Pitre

While working on the coding for this project, I often felt like I was missing the student perspective in many of the responses, especially since current students were a small portion of the participants. Barring the thoughts discussing tuition freezes, equity in testing, and other similar ideas, many of the thoughts lacked a focus on students and the student perspective. Consequently, some responses that were outliers in this phase presented more of the student perspective. Thus, I wonder if students will identify with the common results from this report and how I have coded the thoughts.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The results of coding are shared in the order of the rank assigned to each thought. The ability to rank thoughts was a delivered capability in the ThoughtExchange software which allowed all participants to view all the thoughts shared and to rank them as most to least important. While there are different ways in which the data can be organised and presented, the authors of this report felt that the most authentic approach would be to honour the ranking assigned by the participants of the ThoughtExchange exercise.

The analysis and results shared in the previous section are fairly comprehensive, however as with any research undertaking, there were limitations and challenges in coding the data obtained through ThoughtExchange. One of the challenges was the posting of the same responses to all questions posed, a number of times, irrespective of the relevance of the response, presumably as an attempt to elevate the importance of certain messages. Another challenge was that some thoughts were packed with information that could be coded in more ways than the software was capable of allowing. In those circumstances, some of the coders took written notes to document when a thought warranted more than an allowable number of themes to be assigned. Another limitation of a project of this size was the challenges inherent in capturing the sentiments of all the coders, per question, per thought in an inclusive yet comprehensible way. Another challenge was the limitation of 15 themes per question which the software allowed. In instances where more than 15 themes were required, coders manually documented additional themes for particular thoughts. Lastly, a significant limitation of the software was that a cross analysis of all the themes for all the questions and all the thoughts was not possible, therefore the analysis was conducted manually, by exporting all the themes, per thought, per question, into a spreadsheet for secondary analysis. In the future, alternative software may be considered to eliminate manual analyses. Below are the reflections of the coders on the limitations and challenges they encountered in their coding experience:

Maria Abarca

It was challenging to theme a few responses because they either failed to address the question at hand or left room for misunderstanding. The answers to the 6 questions have a lot in common, making it challenging to identify distinct themes for each topic. Because of this, some themes or questions share the same or comparable themes.

Some questions have a particular situation, for example, “What does Canada’s engaged University mean to you today?” shown several unfavorable reaction. “What could we stop doing to make room for renewed priorities?” answers were more related to things to do instead of stop doing. What values or principles should SFU uphold? resulted in three main themes with same amount of responses.

Aylar Adeb

Personally, I did not find coding challenging at all since I was thoroughly reading and learning about the people and community at SFU. As far as coding capacity is concerned, it was adequate. And even the very few entries that may have had sentence structure problems could still be easily understood and categorized.

Stan Hetalo

There are a few. The first one is when some participants do not answer the question asked and try to push an unrelated idea. The second one is when people simply stack too many thoughts within a single comment – it makes their response to be broad and/or vague. Finally, a few responses were not fully clear – usually they are low ranked – since they lack structure or lucid idea in first place.

Thuy Do

There are some repetitive submissions which are not a problem for me to code, but they may affect the result. There are also many unclear submissions or unanswered questions in which I have to code based on the questions and the thoughts. That also applies to not answering the questions and unclear submissions. Coding capacity is more than enough because we can create summary themes which I did for questions 5 and 6.

Catherine Jeffery

One major challenge with coding, as with all qualitative research, is ensuring that the analysis is accurate and reflects the data fairly. While coding in a team helps to ensure that this is the case, I also sought to do this individually by creating an original set of themes based on a relatively random sample of the data and then updating these as necessary to make sure they continued to fit with the data. Another major challenge emerged in using the ThoughtExchange platform. I found it somewhat difficult to add or edit themes because when doing so, the platform refreshes the page and brings the user back to the beginning of the first page of datapoints, and from there I would have to scroll back to where I had just been. Not being able to assign thoughts to more than two themes was also slightly challenging as I would normally (in other software programs) start with several messy, overlapping themes and clean them up in subsequent rounds of coding.

Elina Jin

“Submission”: Some submissions did not answer the questions. Normally, my approach to qualitative research is to clear data before coding. However, in this ThoughtExchange platform, I cannot clear data within the system. It would be more convenient to accommodate RAs’ needs if we were allowed to download the data for individual analysis.

“Coding capacity”: We only have one level to conclude themes. Thus, I need to manually create theme/sub-themes to accommodate this platform. It would be handier if we are provided with at least two levels in theming these thoughts, and more capacities on the number of codes.

“Tiles” function: Sometimes responses are comments are themed with two tags. The file shows portion details of our themes. However, the logic of this “portion” calculation assumes that each thought is attached with only one theme. This contradicts my coding process.

Marie Pitre

The challenges of coding for this project include the ThoughtExchange platform, the generality of responses, and the staggered rollout of the questions. First, let's look at the limitations of the ThoughtExchange system. For example, it was difficult to create detailed themes because the program limited the number of themes to 15. Specifically, the availability of more themes would allow an adjustment for thoughts that had similar overall themes but exhibited a slightly different take on that theme. Additionally, ThoughtExchange limited the number of themes per thought to two and did not provide a robust alternative for coding several themes in a thought. With a greater allowance or an alternative method, the 15-theme limit might not have made such an impact on my results. A second challenge was the general and, at times broad, responses. For example, one thought said "efficiency in all that we do" which was difficult to code because it could have fit into several categories and the intention of the author might not align with any of those categories. Lastly, it was clear that the date when the ThoughtExchange platform was available for each question impacted the coding. This was a challenge because the responses seemed to be disconnected from each other. Thus, while some themes repeated in each question, it was difficult to keep similar themes throughout the coding, both in number and focus.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFILES

Maria Abarca

Maria was born and raised in Mexico, City. She completed my Bachelor in Medicine, as well as ENT specialization in my home country. Throughout her work as a clinical and research physician in public and private hospitals in Mexico she became aware of the impacts of social inequities on health and wellbeing in my patients, especially on the minority groups. She decided to start the Master of Public Health at SFU on Fall 2021 interested in designing strategies focused on health inequities and providing evidence-based decision-making to address the connections across social determinants of health, discrimination, communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases.

Aylar Adeh

Aylar Adeh is currently, pursuing a PhD in Education (Languages, Cultures, and Literacies Program) at Simon Fraser University.

Thuy Do

Thuy earned a Master of Arts degree in International Development and Social Change from Clark University, the USA in 2012 under the International Ford Foundation scholarship. Thuy previously earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Development Economics from Nong Lam University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Thuy is a faculty member (on leave) of the Liberal Art department, faculty of Social Sciences at Hoa Sen University (HSU). Prior to pursuing her Ph.D. in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's studies at SFU, Thuy had more than 10 years working and doing research in Vietnam for a local government in the Mekong Delta and International NGOs in Ho Chi Minh City.

Stan Hetalo

Stan Hetalo is a senior – 4th year – PhD candidate in Economics at SFU. His passion is driven by the novel questions that extend our understanding about the world

we live in. To be specific, he work on global problems that are tied to local issues, such as big weather events. His current research relates wildfire smoke impact to the Canadian labour market on a national scale.

Catherine Jeffery

Catherine is an MA candidate in the School of Communication whose research focuses on personal finance and digital apps. Apart from her academic work, Catherine is also a peer facilitator with the Research Commons. She's interested in qualitative research methods, new financial technologies, and enjoys reading science fiction in her spare time.

Elina Jin

Elina Jin is currently a graduate student in the department of Global Humanities. She has been learning, teaching, researching, and volunteering at SFU in multiple capabilities, including Student Services, Centre for Educational Excellence, ISTLD, department of Global Humanities, Global Asia program, and etc. As an international student, she believes in the power of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Marie Pitre

Marie Pitre is a PhD student in the Math Education program at SFU. Marie perceives that SFU has a unique opportunity through "What's Next?" to create a culture that emphasizes open education, diversity, and equity. With experience teaching at the secondary and post secondary level, she believes that students come first. Mathematics can provide empowerment to those students. While working as an instructor in the states, she has been nominated as the Teacher of the Week and received the Educator Recognition award from the University of California, Irvine. Marie holds a BA in Mathematics from Vassar College and a Masters in Mathematics from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.