



# Athabasca University Students' Union

**2021 Annual Survey Results  
Report for Council**



# 2021 Annual Survey Introduction

AUSU's Annual Survey is a powerful opportunity for Athabasca University (AU) students to use their voices candidly. Their anonymous feedback helps shape the priorities of the AUSU Executive Team and Student Council throughout the year.

The following Annual Survey Report is a guiding resource intended to support student leaders as they champion fellow AU undergraduates. The 2021 Annual Survey circulated in November and included 25 carefully crafted questions.

The data presented tells a story about the experiences of the 1,380 AU undergraduate learners who completed the survey. The feedback echoes their satisfaction ratings, ranked priorities, and concerns about AU and AUSU. Topics include AU tuition costs, tutors, and course content, as well as AUSU Student Council initiatives, advocacy priorities, and services. The top three advocacy priorities indicated by respondents are:

- Lowering the cost of education
- Improving the quality of learning
- Increasing available financial aid

Finally, it is recommended that student leaders read this report in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. How students are learning, earning an income, and managing their lives has been greatly impacted and is reflected in their many calls for increased financial and mental health supports.

To discuss the 2021 Annual Survey or Report, please contact your AU Students' Union at [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).

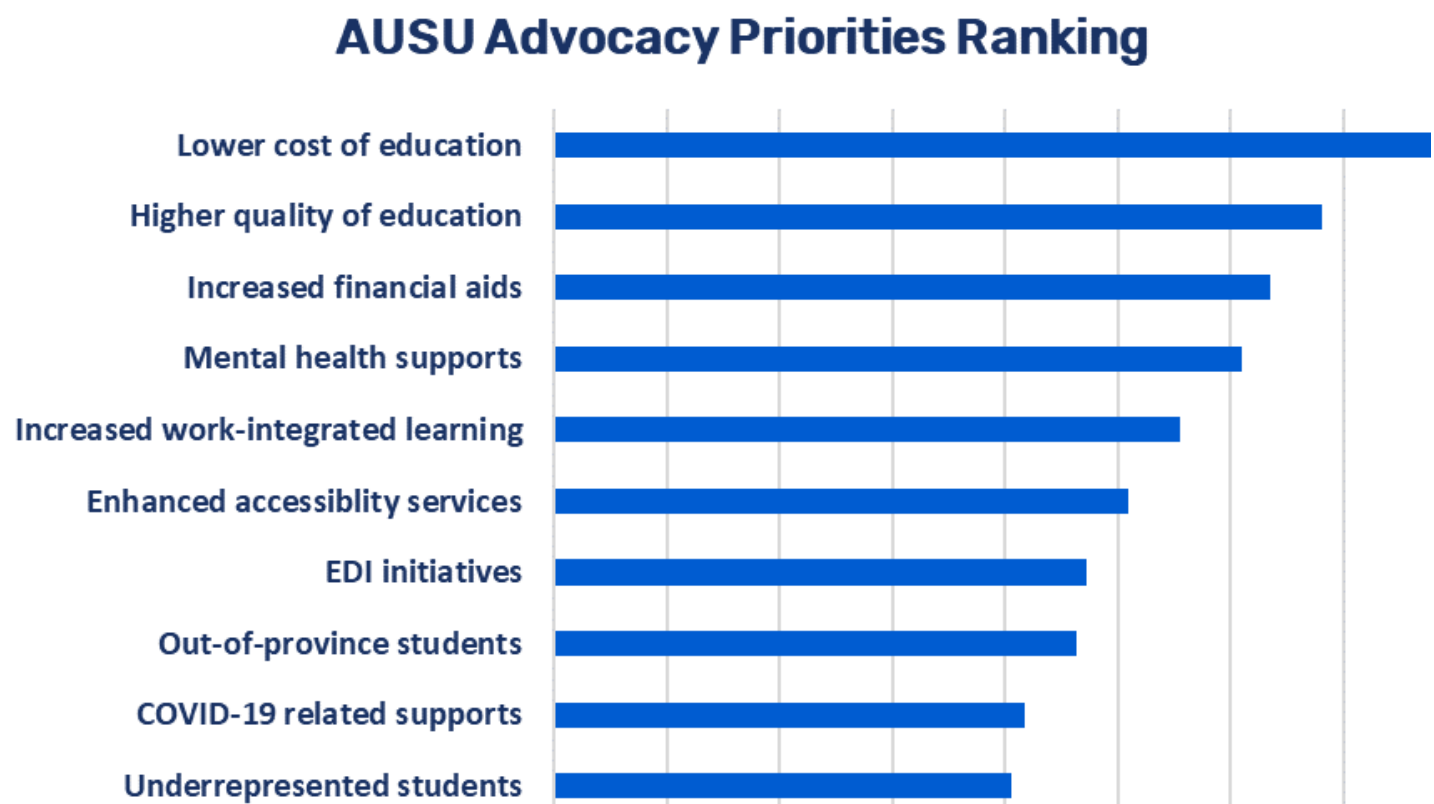
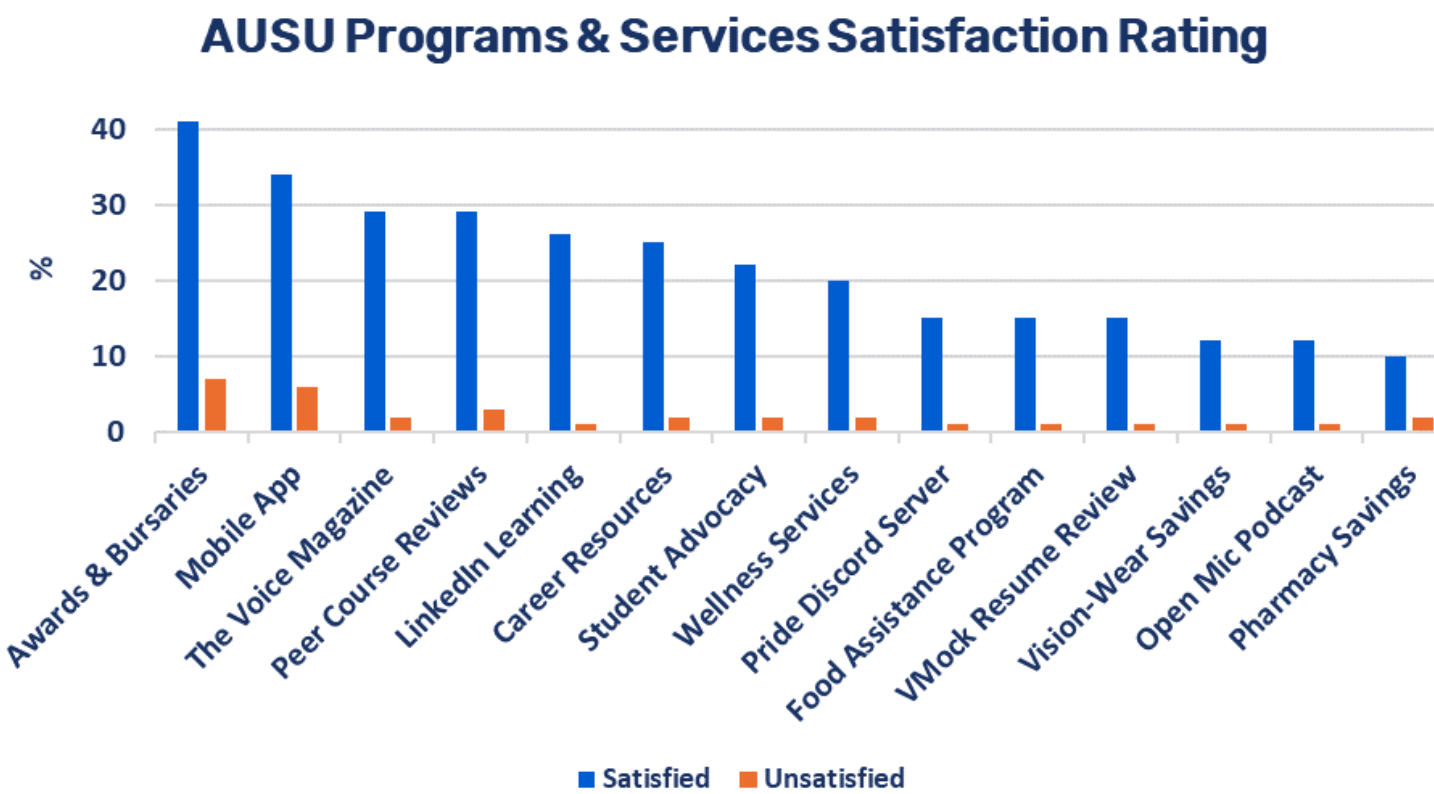
And thank you to all the AU Students who participated!

**23,039 Recipients**

**1,380 Responses**



# Key Survey Highlights



# Survey Data

## Q1: What is your current student status at AU?

Rank	Status	
#1	Program student	80%
#2	Non-program student	17%
#3	Unsure	2%
#4	Visiting	1%

## Q2: What faculty are you enrolled in?

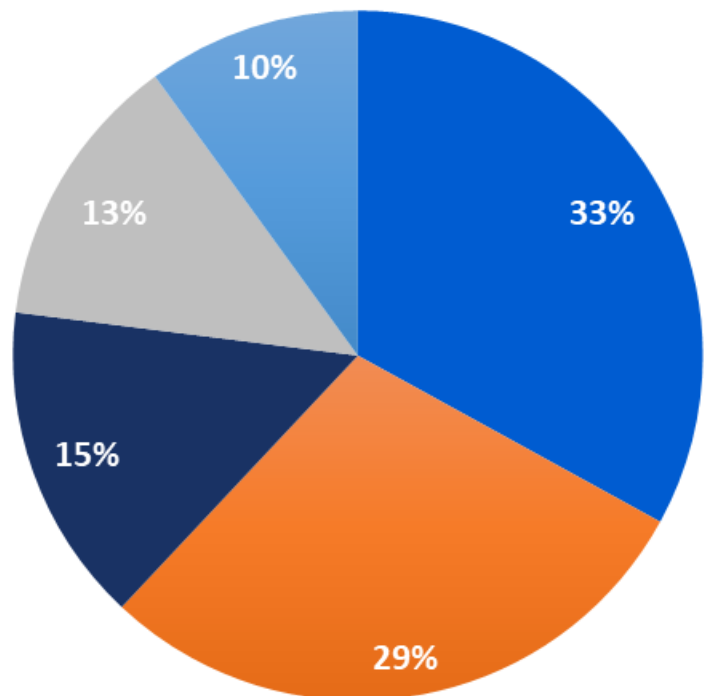
■ Faculty of Humanities  
& Social Sciences

■ Faculty of Business

■ Faculty of Science &  
Technology

■ Non-faculty  
(unclassified student)

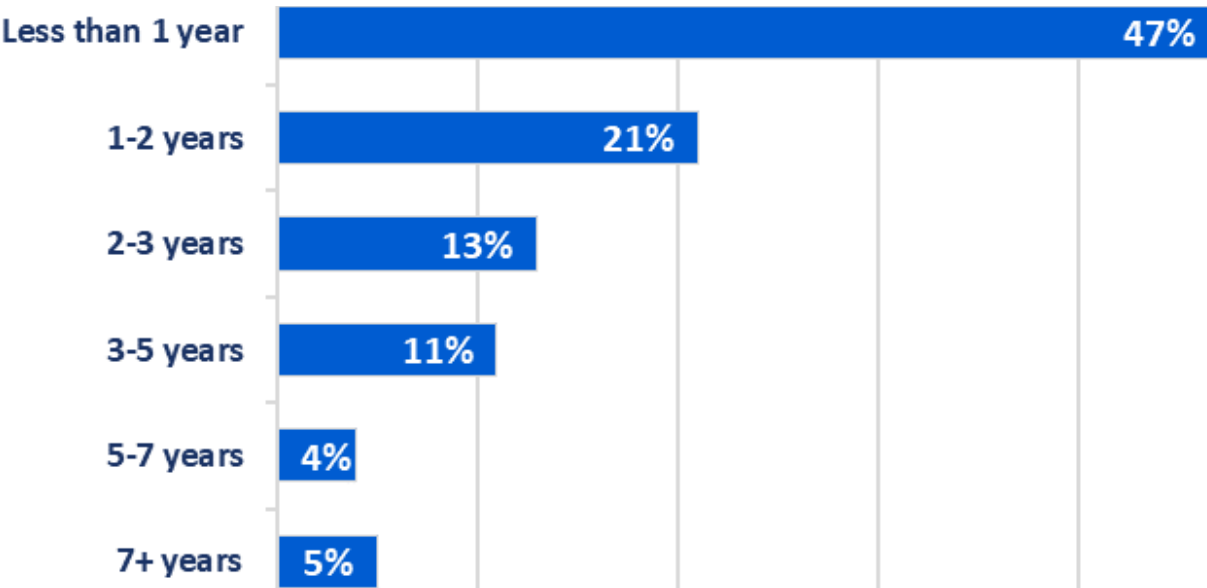
■ Faculty of Health  
Disciplines



**Q3: What province, territory, or country are you located in?**

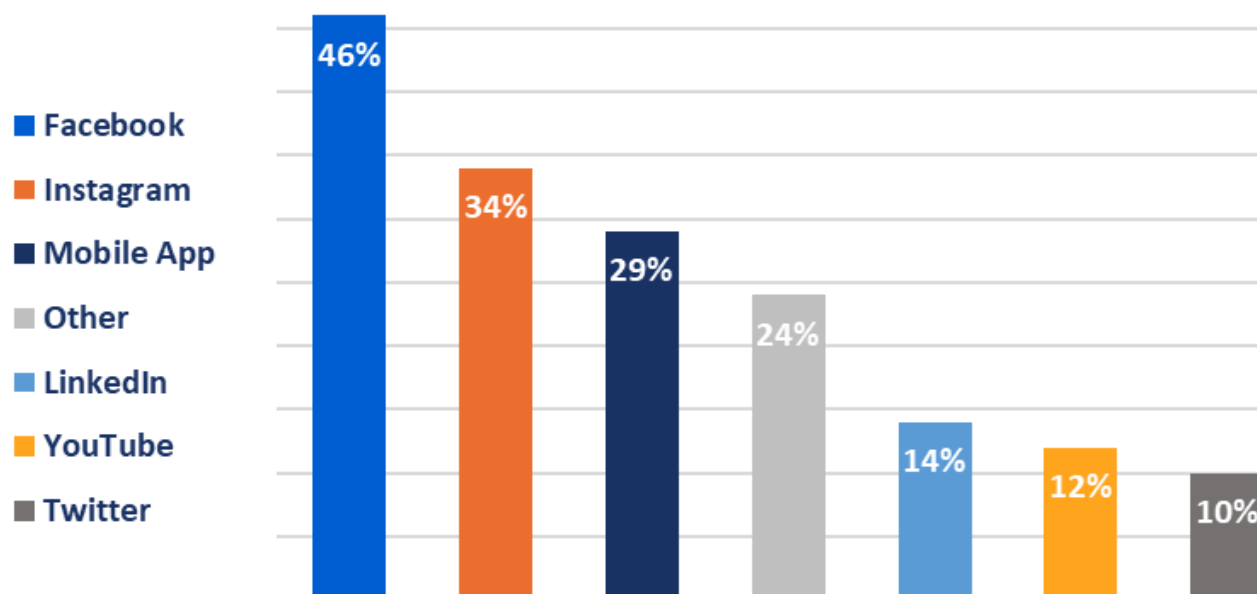
Rank	Priority				
#1	Alberta	53%	#8	New Brunswick	2%
#2	Ontario	20%	#9	International	1%
#3	British Columbia	8%	#10	Northwest Territories	0.9%
#4	Saskatchewan	5%	#11	Newfoundland & Labrador	0.7%
#5	Manitoba	4%	#12	Yukon	0.6%
#6	Quebec	2%	#13	Prince Edward Island	0.3%
#7	Nova Scotia	2%	#14	Nunavut	0.2%

**Q4: How long have you attended Athabasca University?**



Tip: it will be helpful to keep these demographics in mind as you analyze the survey results, noting that 73% of respondents reside in Alberta and Ontario and 50% are in their first year at AU.

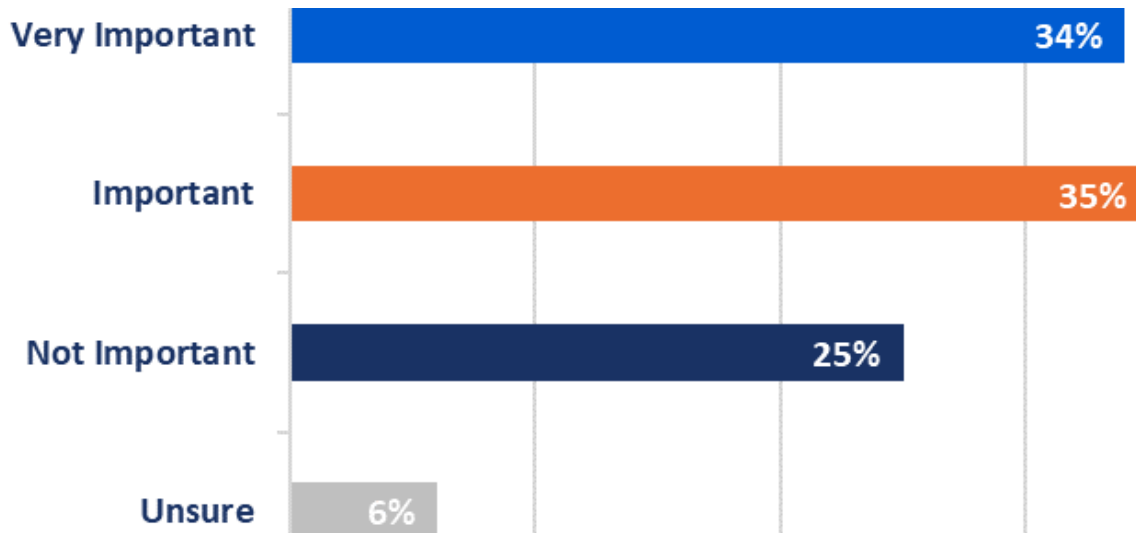
**Q5: Please indicate the social media channels you currently use most to stay informed while attending AU.**



**If other, please specify.**



**Q6:** Resume development was identified as a primary career service for AUSU to explore further in 2021. How important is it to you to have support developing your resume?



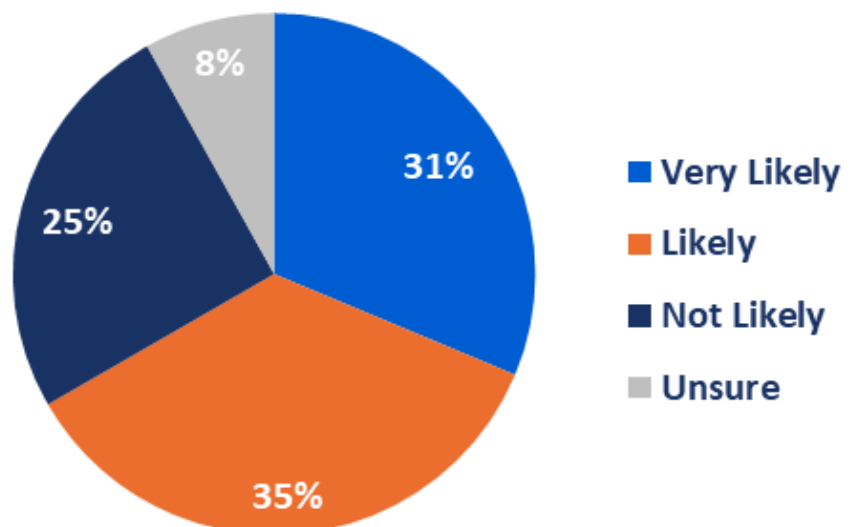
GET THE SPOTLIGHT  
WITH A **STANDOUT RESUME**

**vmock**

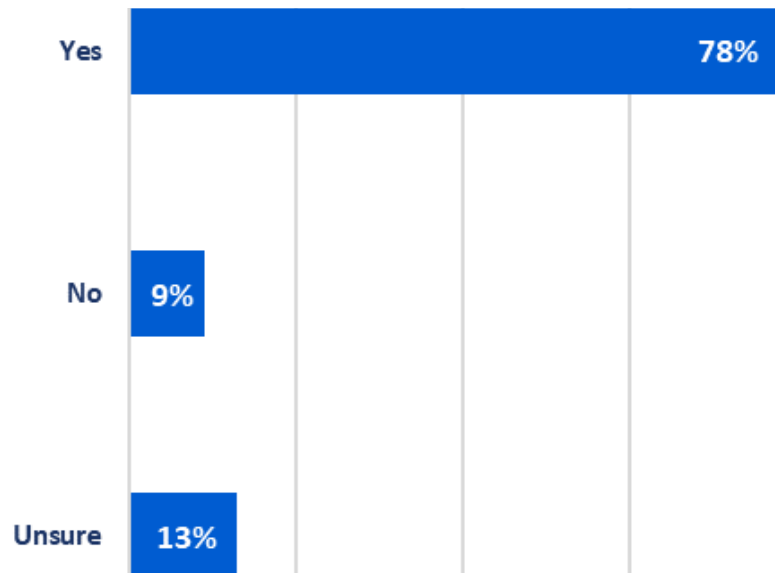
BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**AUSU**

The banner features a background image of hands writing on a resume. The VMock logo is on the left, and the AUSU logo is on the right.

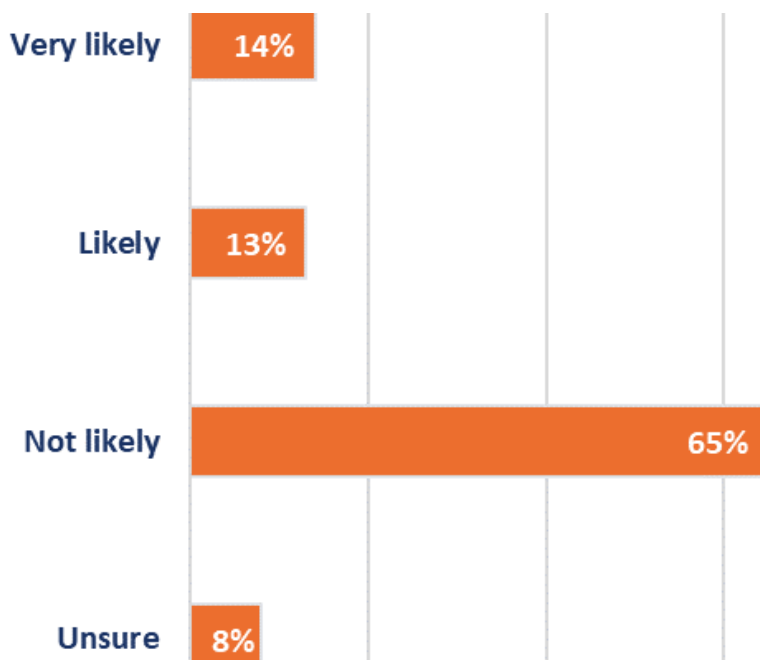
**Q7:** In September 2020, AUSU was proud to launch an online resume review service through VMock. This gives AUSU members the opportunity to develop a new resume or enhance the one they have. How likely are you to utilize this service to build an amazing resume?



**Q8:** AUSU has been offering a Virtual Food Assistance Program that supports students without reliable access to affordable, nutritious food. Beginning October 1st, AU students in need are eligible to enter a monthly draw for 1 of 5 grocery gift cards worth \$100 each. Do you see this as a worthwhile investment address food insecurity at AU?



**Q9:** AUSU's Virtual Food Assistance Program has been offered since February 2021 and will continue to be a priority in 2022. How likely are you to use this service and apply for food assistance?



AUSU has received **307** applications for the Virtual Food Assistance Program between the program launch in February and end-of-year in December, 2021!



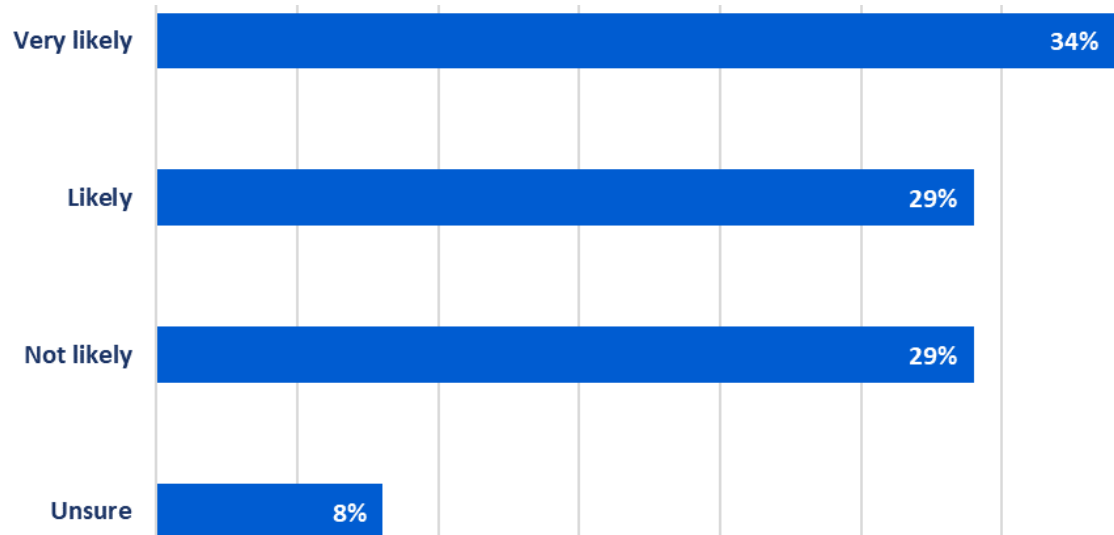
**Q10: AUSU is currently advocating for accessible, affordable broadband internet across Canada, both internally at AU and to the provincial and federal governments. Please indicate all the below options that apply to you and your broadband internet experience.**

Location	
I live in a city.	66%
I live in a town.	18%
I live in a rural area.	16%
I live in a remote area.	4%
I am an international student.	0.29%
I live on a First Nation reserve.	0.07%
Experience	
There is high quality, high-speed internet where I live.	58.8%
There is poor quality, high-speed internet where I live.	15.4%
There is quality, high-speed internet where I live but I can't afford it.	12.2%
There is quality, high-speed internet where I live but I don't have proper devices to use it.	3.1%
There is no high-speed internet access where I live.	2.6%
There is quality, high-speed internet where I live but it is very expensive.	1.0%
There is average quality, high-speed internet where I live.	0.5%
Other	1.3%

## Additional Comments:

Cost or Income
I am on a low-income program with SaskTel that has made internet affordable to me.
Internet is included in rent and is split between two living units to make it more affordable.
Work
As someone who travels frequently for work, advocating for discounted mobile internet plans would be greatly appreciated.
I am mobile and find it difficult to get solid high-speed internet for my exams. This would be a salvation for my situation.
I work away from home, often in bush, where I do my schoolwork via mobile hotspot from my phone.
Home
I had to buy a home in town because there was limited access to quality internet and cell phone service. Without access to those services, I can not complete my education.
I have satellite only and must pay companies up to \$800 to travel north for installation or repairs. Starlink has recently become available though, so no more install fees if I use them.
I live in a very small city with a monopolized internet company that provides subpar service.
I live on a reserve. The high-speed internet offered here drops frequently and leaves us without internet when the weather is poor.
I will be moving out to a rural area and am worried about the equality of the high-speed internet.
In the city, I have access to high-speed, fairly affordable internet (still kinda pricey though). While at home on a farm in rural Saskatchewan, we have access to "high-speed" internet, but it really isn't high-speed at all and is crazy pricey.
Choice and Quality
Internet is "high-speed" but I am unable to write exams using ProctorU.
Internet is LTE, and therefore affected by weather. XploreNet is unfriendly with its customers in general when troubleshooting, and are the only ISP outside Starlink in my area, so they have a monopoly.
Limited choices of providers, unreliable service.
There is high-speed internet where I live, however, it has poor reliability and equipment failures.
There is high-speed internet where I live, but it's slow with limited data access.
Starlink
I currently have Starlink, which is awesome, but not everyone has this option because it's still in Beta.
I have Starlink.

**Q11: AUSU is exploring options for online Virtual Health Services for AU students that would provide affordable (in some cases, free) virtual access to a family doctor, physiotherapy, pharmacy services, fitness and wellness resources, and 24/7 mental health services, to name a few. What is the likelihood that you would access a Virtual Health Hub to fulfil your health needs?**

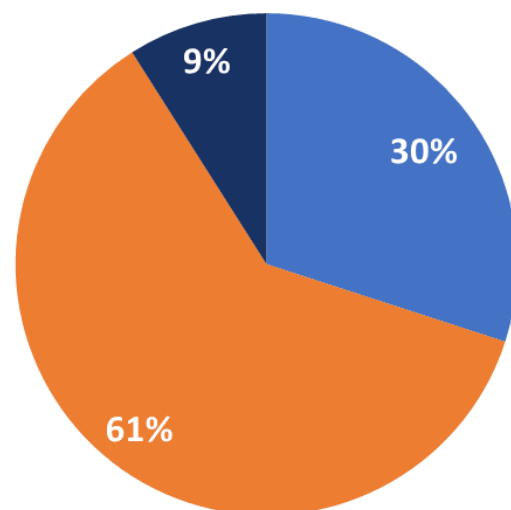


**Q12: AUSU provides a variety of programs and services to its members. Please share with us your level of satisfaction with the following AUSU services:**

Program or Service	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Have not used	Was not aware
Awards & Bursaries	13%	28%	7%	42%	42%
LinkedIn Learning	10%	16%	1%	52%	21%
Student Mobile App	10%	24%	6%	37%	23%
Peer Course Reviews	8%	21%	3%	41%	28%
Career Resources	8%	18%	2%	58%	15%
The Voice Magazine	8%	22%	2%	42%	27%
Student Wellness	7%	13%	2%	54%	23%
Student Advocacy	7%	15%	1%	54%	22%
Virtual Food Assistance Program	7%	8%	2%	54%	30%
Pride Discord Server	6%	7%	1%	42%	42%
Vision-Wear Savings	6%	7%	1%	45%	42%
Open Mic Podcast	4%	7%	1%	53%	35%
Pharmacy Savings	4%	6%	2%	43%	45%

**Q13: AUSU is expanding its Awards & Bursaries Program to assist students on their AU academic journey. Have you ever applied to one of the awards and bursaries available through your students' union?**

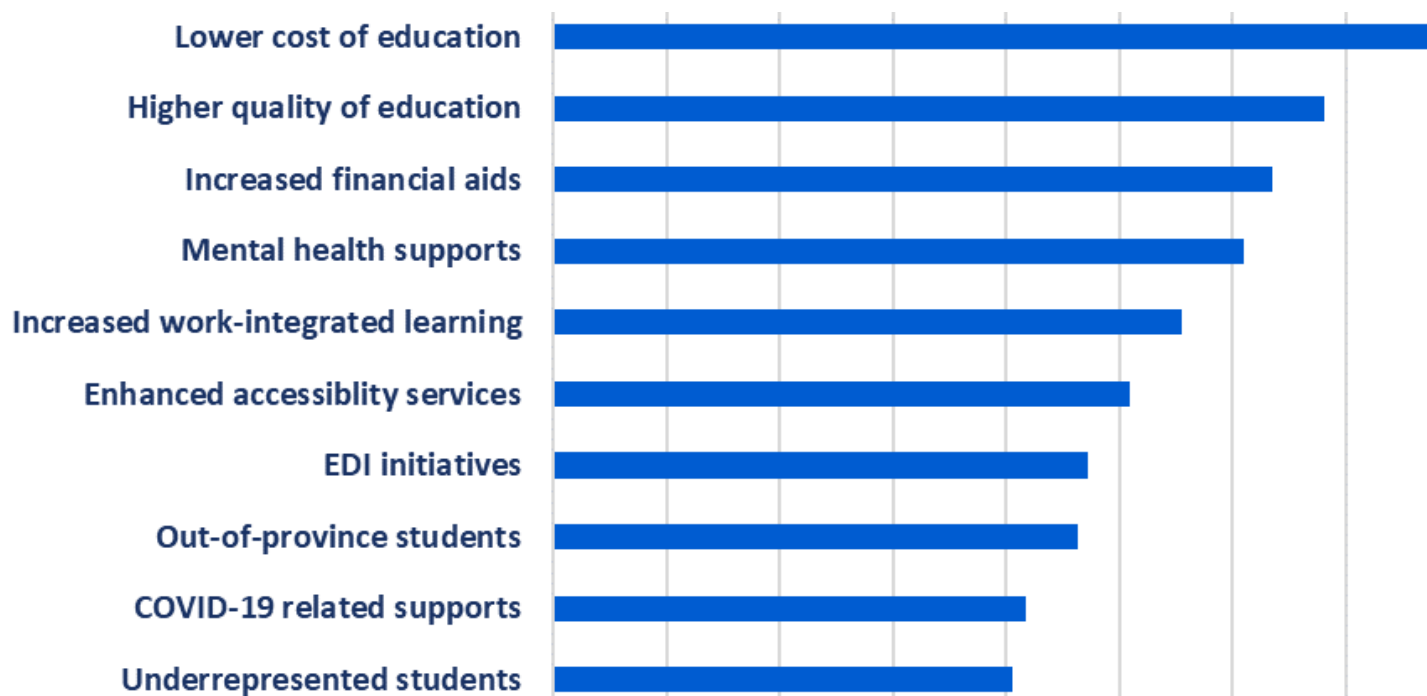
■ Yes  
■ No  
■ Was Not Aware



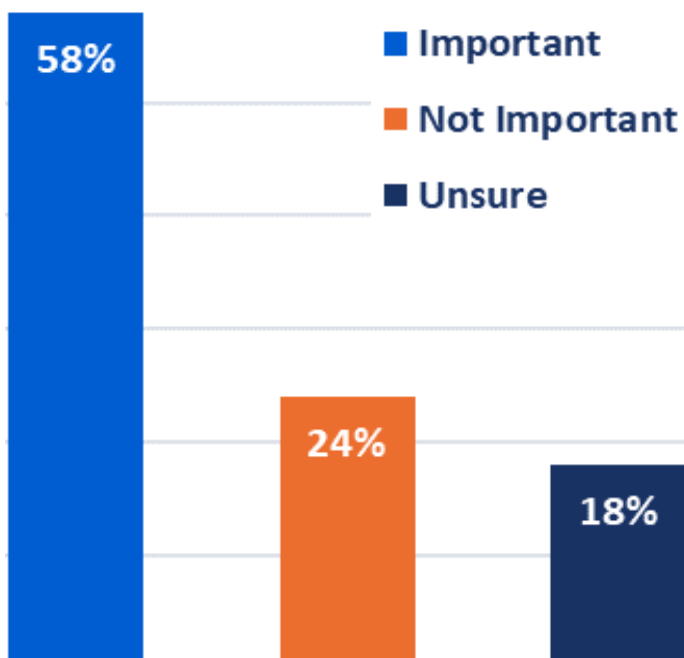
**Q14: If you have applied for one of the AUSU awards or bursaries, please answer the following regarding your overall experience:**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
I understand that the AUSU Awards & Bursaries Program is open for all AU undergraduate students.	61%	5%	34%
The timelines to submit my application were adequate.	45%	5%	50%
The amount of each award and bursary is enough to make a significant impact in a student's life.	45%	10%	45%
I knew when it was time to apply based on AUSU communications sent to students.	43%	11%	46%
The awards program is promoted well to students.	43%	12%	45%
The process was easy to navigate.	42%	8%	50%
The application was easy to complete.	41%	8%	51%
The awards being offered were varied and I was able to find an award that fit my circumstances.	34%	19%	47%

**Q15:** AUSU wants its advocacy efforts to reflect AU student priorities. Of the following AUSU advocacy priorities, please rank them, with 1 being most important and 10 being of lesser importance.



**Q16:** AUSU is currently advocating for more program-related work-integrated learning options at AU. How important is it for you to have a work placement , practicum, or internship in your program?





**Q17: AUSU is developing an understanding of the role of an AU academic tutor to the student experience. Please answer the following questions about your student experience with AU tutors.**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
AU tutors treat me with respect.	72%	5%	23%
AU tutors are there to assist me with my course questions.	66%	12%	22%
I receive course graded from my AU tutors in a timely manner.	63%	15%	22%
AU tutors respond to my emails in a timely manner.	62%	14%	24%
AU tutors are there for me when I need course assistance.	60%	12%	28%
I receive meaningful feedback from my AU tutors on assignments.	59%	16%	25%
AU tutor hours are accessible to me.	57%	17%	26%
AU tutors are easy to connect with.	53%	24%	23%
AU tutors help me with my course work when I don't understand something.	51%	15%	34%
I receive enough support from AU tutors to be successful.	50%	21%	29%
I am not sure of what the role of my AU tutor is.	28%	55%	17%
I get no benefit from my AU tutor.	20%	55%	25%

**Q18: AUSU has placed a high priority on advocating for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within the students' union and AU. Please rank the level of importance of the following EDI initiatives, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being a lesser priority.**

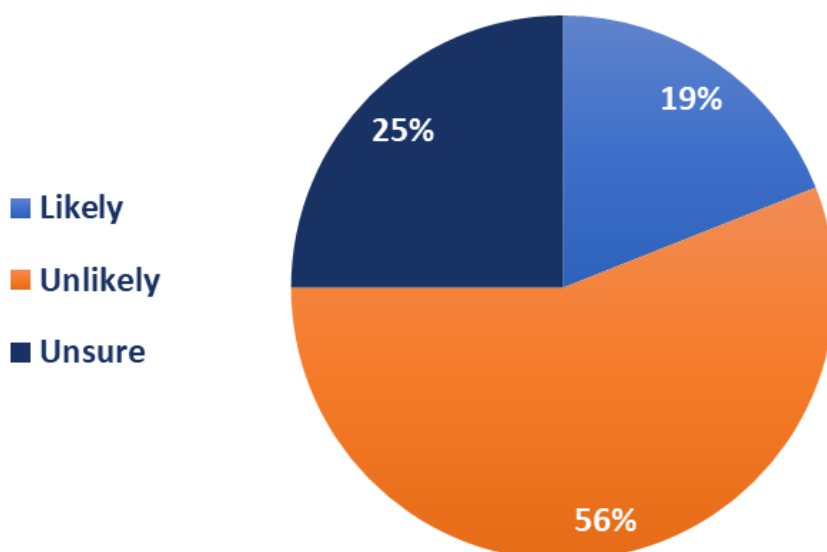
Rank	Priority
#1	Bringing awareness to AU regarding underrepresented student groups
#2	Consulting with equity-seeking groups in EDI initiatives
#3	Advocating for equity-seeking groups within AU
#4	Planning more events for students in underrepresented communities
#5	Advocating to AU to have a dedicated EDI office

**Q19:** AUSU has created an Indigenous Circle made up of AU elected Indigenous students to help decolonize our organization and contribute positively to the lives of AU Indigenous students. Rank the following priorities for the Indigenous Circle to focus on in its first year, with 1 being the highest priority and 8 being a lesser priority.

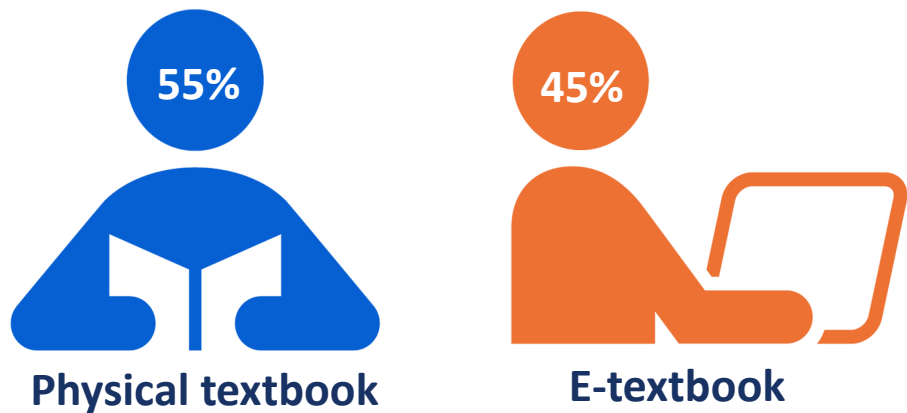
Rank	Priority
#1	Better supports for new Indigenous students attending AU
#2	Fostering the growing Indigenous student community at AU
#3	Advocating to AU and the provincial and national governments for changes that impact Indigenous students
#4	Representing AU Indigenous students provincially and nationally
#5	Representing Indigenous students on AU and AUSU committees
#6	Advocating to decolonize the AU community
#7	Communicating AU information better to Indigenous AU students
#8	Advocating for more Indigenous student awards at AU



**Q20:** AUSUnights is a monthly student social, uniting AU students by creating a space for them to meet and socialize online. These events are hosted via Zoom on the 2nd Thursday of every month. How likely are you to attend an AUSUnights virtual student social?



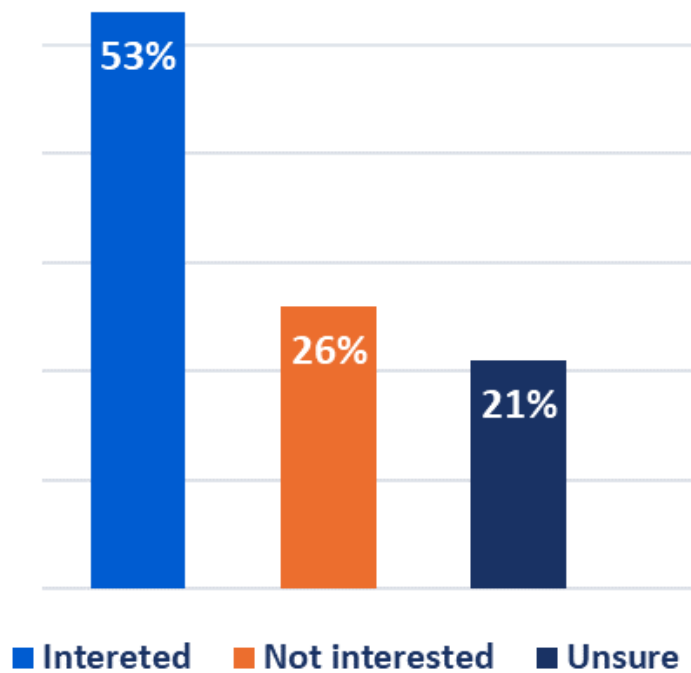
**Q21:** AUSU is continually advocating for student choice as it relates to e-texts or physical textbooks. Based on your preference, which learning resource do you prefer?



“Regarding textbooks, students should be able to choose between digital or hard copy. Every student learns differently even without an acknowledged disability and having the choice can have a huge impact on learner success. I personally need both hard copy and digital. Some courses are better with digital and others better with hard copy.”

- AU Undergraduate Student

**Q22:** AUSU is placing a priority on advocating to AU for more undergraduate student research opportunities, especially for students looking onto graduate studies. How interested are you in the opportunity to include student research in your AU experience?

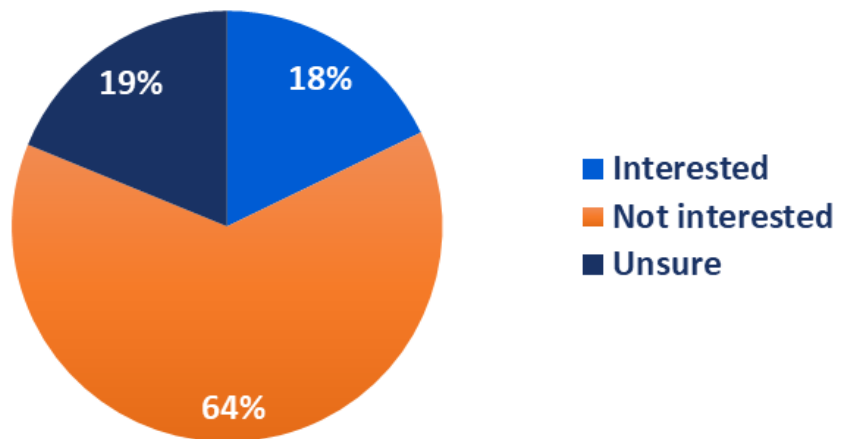


# 2022 GENERAL ELECTION GET INVOLVED MAKE A DIFFERENCE



**Nominations Open February 8, 2022**

**Q23:** AUSU will be hosting 2022 Elections for Student Council and the Executive Committee in March 2022. This is an opportunity for AU undergraduate students to take on leadership roles within the students' union and the Executive Team, which are paid positions. How interested are you in running for a leadership role within AUSU?



**Q24:** AUSU understands there may be barriers for students who might consider running for Student Council that make it difficult to step forward for 1 of the 13 positions. Please check all of the following barriers that apply to you.

