REPORT ON THE 2015

NMMU STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

Developed by the Department of Student Governance and Development and the Department of Educational Administration (MSU)

Authors: Manager: Leadership Training and Development:

Ms. D. Potgieter (Student Governance and Development, NMMU)

Ms. N. Nkosi

Assisted by:

Associate Professor M. Wawrzynski (Michigan State University)

Senior Manager: Leadership Training and Development: Ms. K. Elliott (Student Governance and Development, NMMU)

July 2016

CONTENTS PAGE

List of Tables

List of Graphs

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing awareness of the importance of student engagement for learning and achievement (Shernoff, Csiksentmihalyi Schneider, and Shernoff, 2003). Studies have found that a student's sense of connection to a college or university community remains an essential element of student engagement (Hazeur, 2008). Student engagement, which is the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities, not only refers to activities inside the classroom, but also those outside the classroom, or co-curricular activities. Research has found that co-curricular activities are necessary components of student engagement and it is clear that student life and student retention are directly connected to students' sense of belonging (Hazeur, 2008).

The value of the benefits and involvement of co-curricular activities has not been measured consistently nor appropriately communicated to students and staff at NMMU. For student development programs to be perceived as co-curricular experiences that promote student learning, it is vital to assess student development programs with methods of evaluation that are comparable to those used to evaluate curricular courses. Student feedback on co-curricular learning and satisfaction will contribute to an educational experience that is relevant and responsive to their holistic development as fully engaged citizens. This type of assessment and evaluation is necessary to ensure that the university is achieving the desired standard of quality in students' co-curricular activities

To heed the call, the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD) has engaged in its second year of the Student Experiences Survey. This survey will provide the institution with confidential detailed annual reports on co-curricular learning.

The purpose of the survey is to assess and analyse co-curricular learning of NMMU students. The objectives of the study were to assess and analyse:

1. the top competencies of student life activities
2. if there is a difference in participation and interest in co-curricular activities by student demographic variables
3. challenges affecting students' participation in co-curricular activities

The report will:

1. Identify if co-curricular learning is linked to the identified learning outcomes
2. Identify areas where more focused interventions are needed
3. Inform the planning of co-curricular activities to enhance the quality of student experiences.

The results of the previous surveys highlighted the following:

- Student perceptions of the NMMU were generally high

- The major student life activities that students partake in differed for Port Elizabeth and George.

- The major learning outcomes identified by student life participants were the same in Port Elizabeth and George.

- Overall, effective communication, appreciating diversity and meaningful interpersonal relationships were the learning outcomes that non-participants felt they would receive if they participated in student life activities.

- Major constraints regarding student participation in campus life activities are the time activities are held as well as other commitments, lectures, and financial constraints.

1.1. Structure of the report

The report comprises four sections. Section one discusses the design and data collection, section two contains an interpretation of the data results and section three discusses the major findings and recommendations. Section four provides the appendix, which includes a copy of the survey

2. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

Data collection and methodology will remain consistent for the duration of the survey. A two-pronged approach to data collection was employed. First, we used a census approach. Survey notification, a link to the survey, and reminder messages was forwarded to all students. The rationale for choosing such an approach was that all NMMU students have access to the portal. The second means of recruitment used convenience sampling by placing student volunteers strategically around campus (e.g., cafeterias and public transportation areas) to ask students to complete an online version of the SES if they had not already complete it. Five senior students were equipped with tablets to enhance response rates. Tablet computers, which have recently become popular in face to face survey data collection, were used. Several studies indicate that survey respondents are more willing to complete surveys using tablets because of what they deem "the cool factor" of using this technology (Bhaskaran, 2010; Horovitz, 2010; Jones & Sinclair, 2011).

Tacit consent is given once the participant reads the written information and clicks on the link to access the survey. The respondents were assured anonymity.

2.1.   Survey Design

The survey was developed through a consultative process with members of the Co-Curricular Forum at the NMMU and included various campus stakeholders as well as Michigan State University faculty and doctoral students who conduct student engagement and student learning outcomes research. The survey was submitted to the NMMU Research Ethics Committee (Human) for final approval.

The 68-item questionnaire is divided into the following sections and categories;

Sections	Categories
1	*Student' perceptions of life at NMMU*

2	*Types of co-curricular involvement* – a range of activities are listed varying from society involvement to sport club participation
3	*Time spent per week on co-curricular experiences/ activities*
4	*For students participating*: Learning outcomes linked to their participation
5	*For students not participating*: Perceived learning outcomes linked to their participation
6	*Interferences* with involvement in co-curricular experiences/ activities
7	*Biographical information* E.g.: Race, Gender, Age, Year of Study, Faculty, Campus, Living Community

A Likert-type rating scale with an unequal 1-5 agreement format was selected. There is an argument against having a mid-point being that people usually hold opinions or judgements one way or the other. The support for the idea of neutrality is that it represents a genuine alternative judgement and so does not express their opinions if they have no genuine position.

SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The total number of respondents to the Student Experiences Survey is 4287 students. This represents 16.3 % of the 26316 students who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The estimated sampling error based on the survey sample size, the total number of respondents, and the overall response rate is 1.4 percent.

Registered NMMU students on the North, South, 2nd Avenue, Missionvale and George campuses were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. The responses for individual items are presented in tabular form as mean scores. The number of

respondents who answered each question (n) is indicated in a separate column after the mean scores in the tables.

The mean scores represent the aggregate of the responses on the range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). In the interpretation of the individual items, mean scores are interpreted in the following manner:

- A score of 4.2 and more indicates a high level of satisfaction

- A score of between 3.4 and 4.2 indicates an acceptable level of satisfaction;

- A score of between 2.6 and 3.4 indicates room for improvement

- A score of 2.6 and less signals a problem that is in need of urgent attention.

The data were coded and analysed with the assistance of a statistician. The statistical techniques used in the analysis, based on the relevance to the research questions is frequency analysis; cross-tabulation analysis and correlation analyses. Frequency analysis produces frequency counts and percentages for the value of an individual variable. Cross-tabulation enabled researchers to see if there is a relationship between two variables, while correlation analysis was used to test the existence of relationships between the variables beings studied. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, tables, percentages and correlation tests were used in the data analysis and summaries. Relationships between variables were identified, using frequencies, chi-square tests for independence, independent sample t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests.

Data will be analysed per annual intake. This will enable action research based on information received. After the three year period, we will be able to analyse trends in co-curricular learning outcomes.

Port Elizabeth and George campus have been analysed separately in order to highlight unique trends from each campus with regards to student life activities and student perceptions.

3. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO THE SURVEY

Of the 4287 students that participated in the survey, 4136 were from Port Elizabeth and 151 from George. Comparisons of demographic information between registered students and respondents show that the respondents are generally representative of the student population in both Port Elizabeth and George.

3.1. Participant information

In this section, respondents are described according to specific biographical variables, namely nationality, gender, race and age range.

3.1.1. Nationality
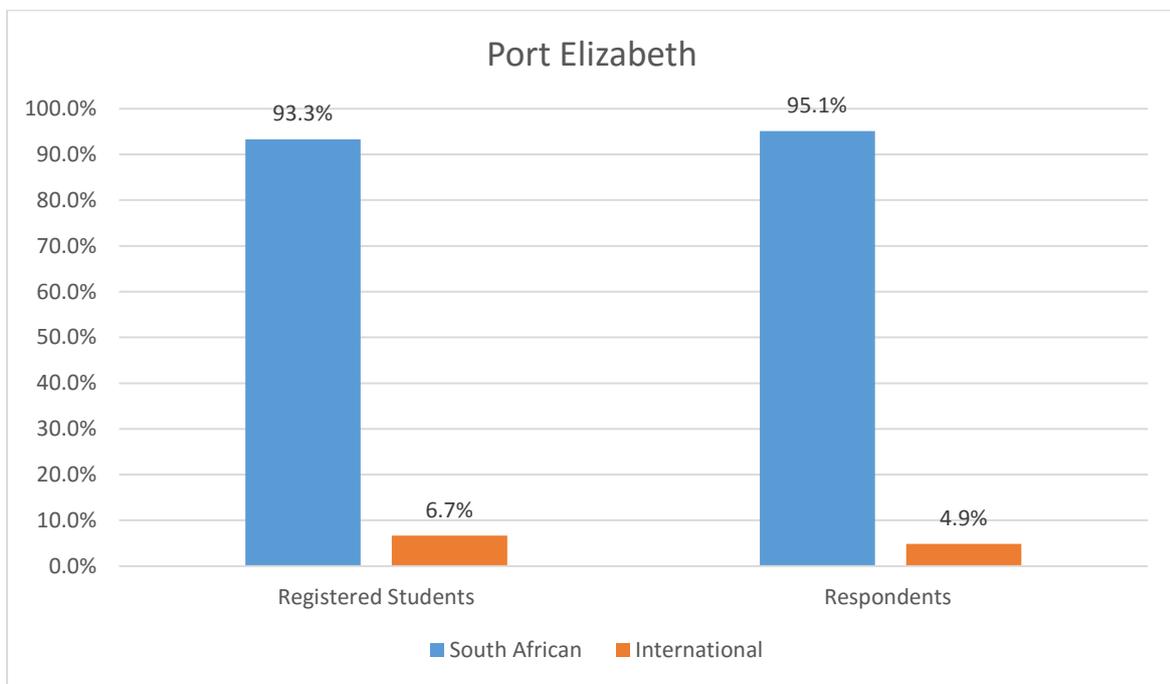
Graph 1: Registered students vs respondents according to nationality - Port Elizabeth
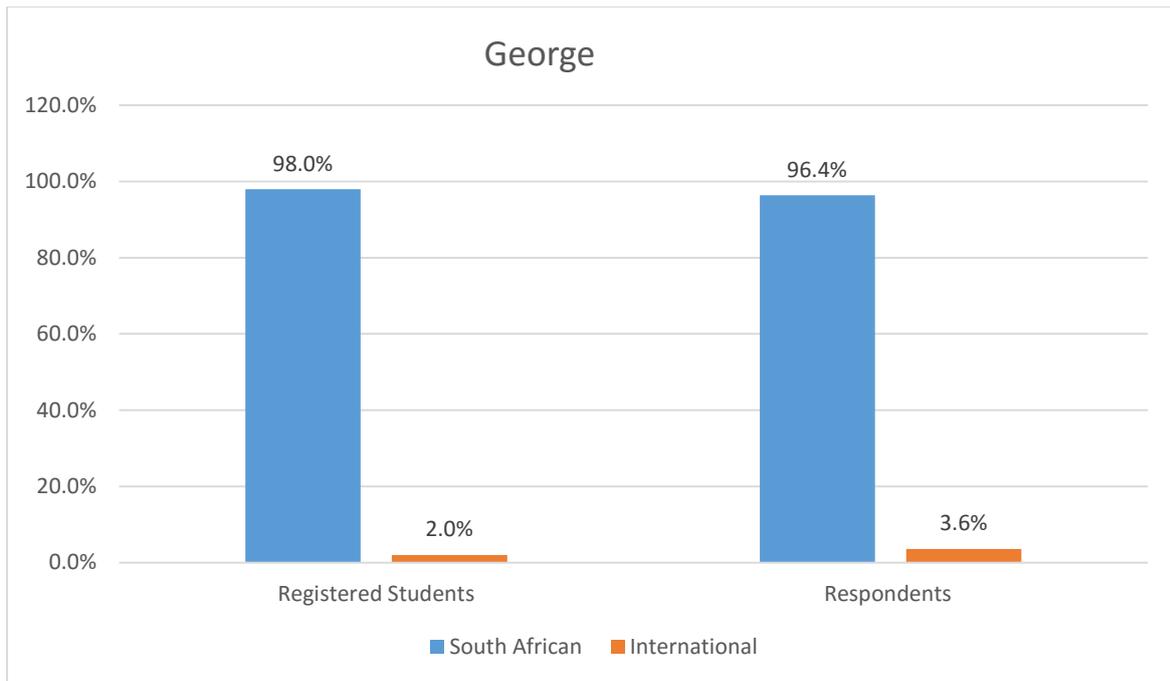
Graph 2: Registered students vs respondents according to nationality - George

Graph 1 and 2 demonstrate the nationality breakdown of the students compared to the general student population in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

3.1.2. Gender

Graph 3: Registered students vs respondents according to gender - Port Elizabeth
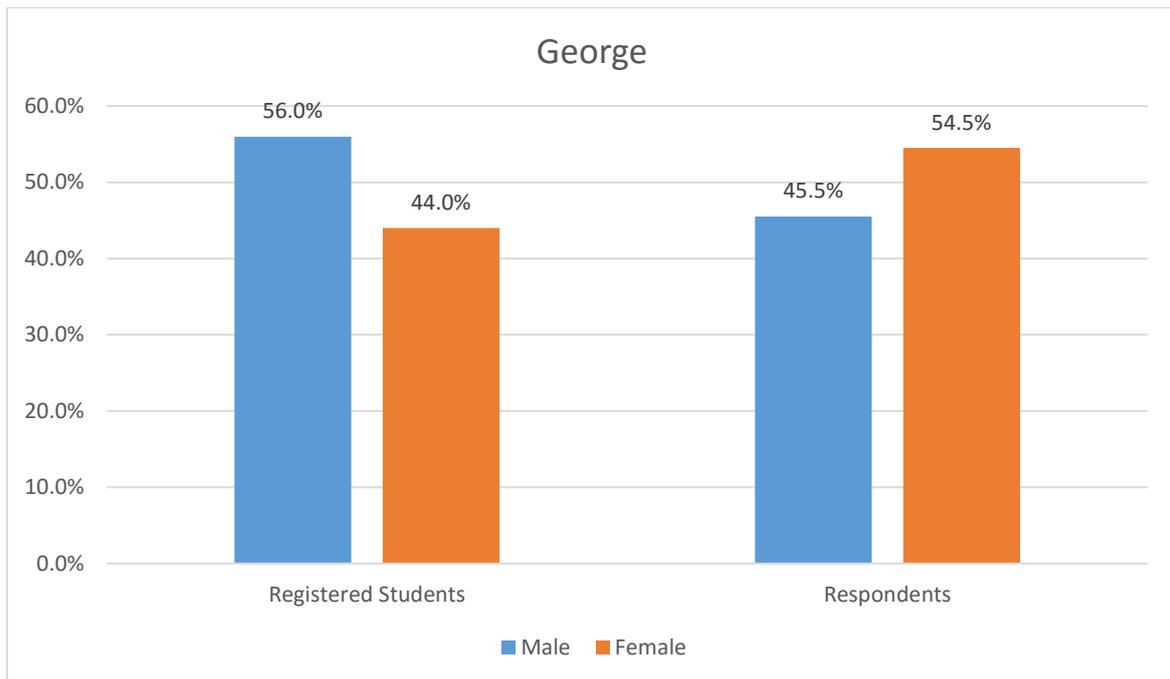
Graph 4: Registered students vs respondents according to gender – George

Graph 3 and 4 demonstrates the breakdown of respondents according to gender compared to the general student population. Both graphs indicate that the survey

attracted a higher percentage of female respondents than males in both Port Elizabeth and George. While George campus has a predominantly male student population, most survey respondents were female.

1.1.3. Race[1]
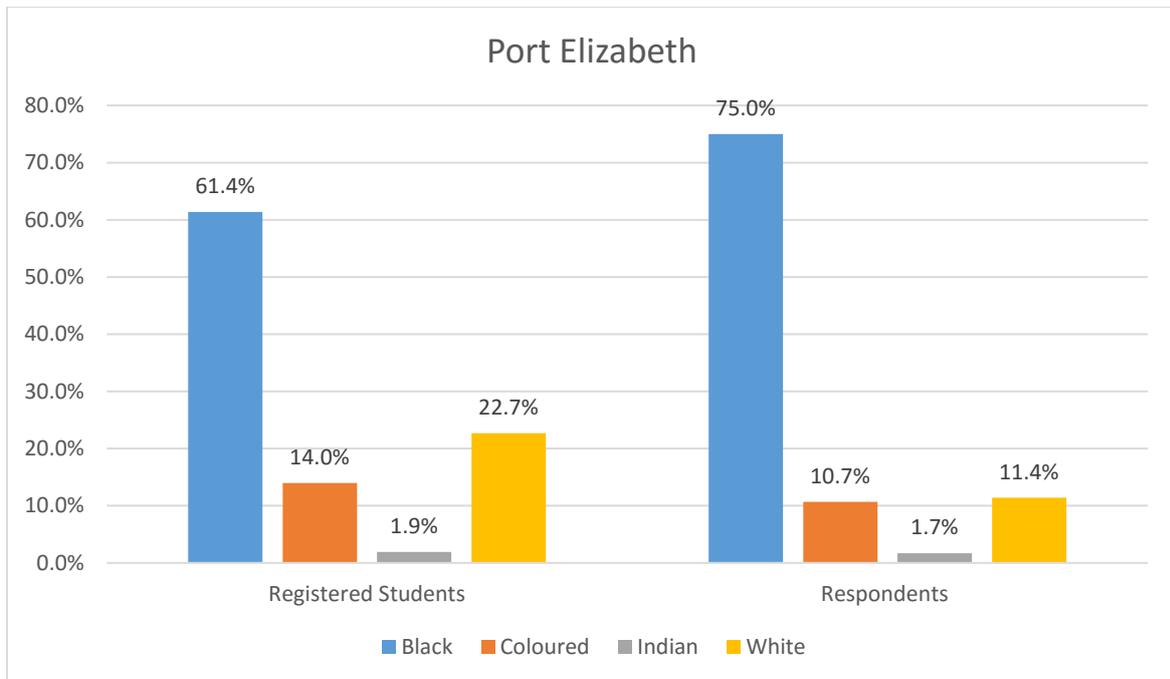
Graph 5: Registered students vs respondents according to race - Port Elizabeth

---

[1] Race groups are tallied according to main race groups set by NMMU DHET according to Home Affairs specifications
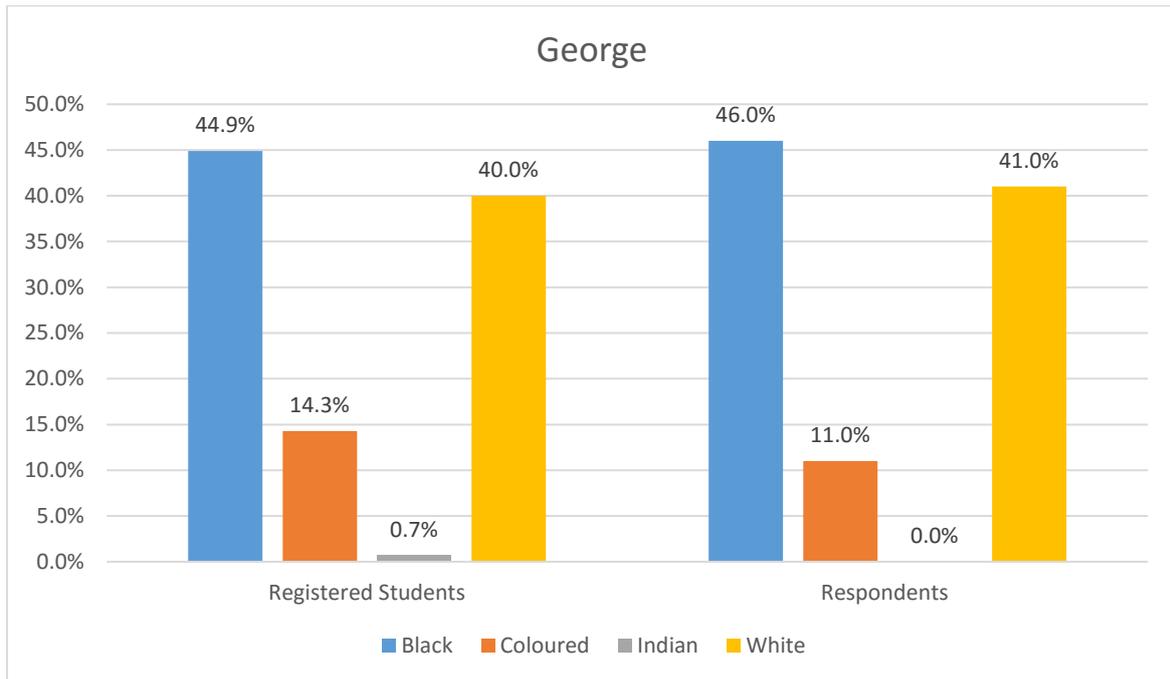
Graph 6: Registered students vs respondents according to race - George

Graph 5 and 6, which demonstrate a comparison of the race classification of respondents with registered students in Port Elizabeth and George respectively, indicates that relatively more black students responded to the survey in Port Elizabeth, and in George the racial breakdown of respondents is more or less representative of the student population.

3.1.4. Age

As indicated by graphs 7 and 8 below, most respondents are younger than 25 (94.5% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 93.6% of respondents in George are between ages 18-24). More than half of all respondents fall within the 21 – 24 age range in both Port Elizabeth (54.9%) and George (50.5%), followed by 18-20 (39.6% in Port Elizabeth and 43.1% in George). In George campus there were no respondents over the age of 30.
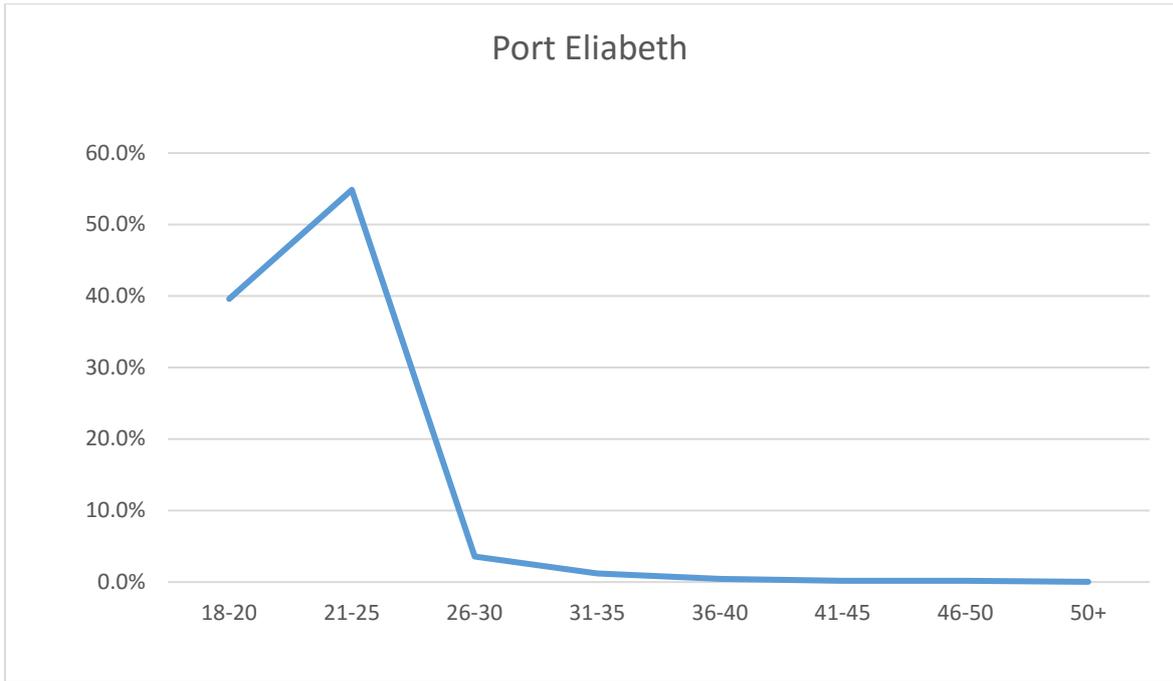
Graph 7: Age range of respondents - Port Elizabeth
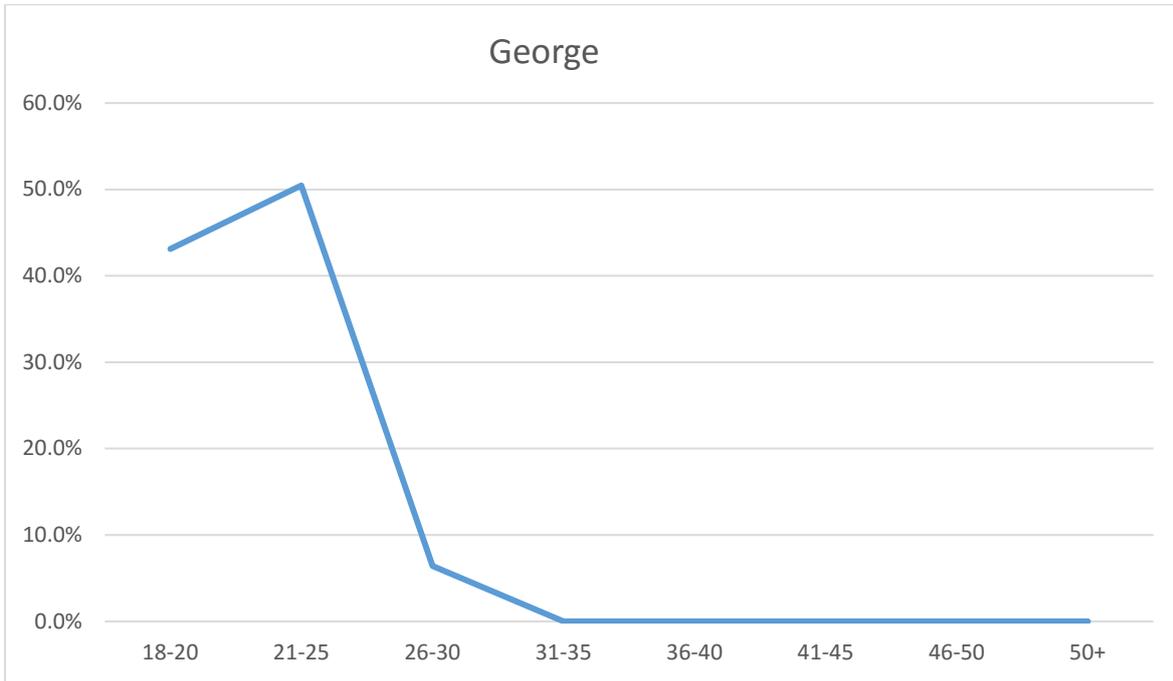
Graph 8: Age range of respondents - George

3.2. Faculty information

This section will describe respondents according to their faculty and campus information compared to the general NMMU student population.

3.2.1. Campus attended
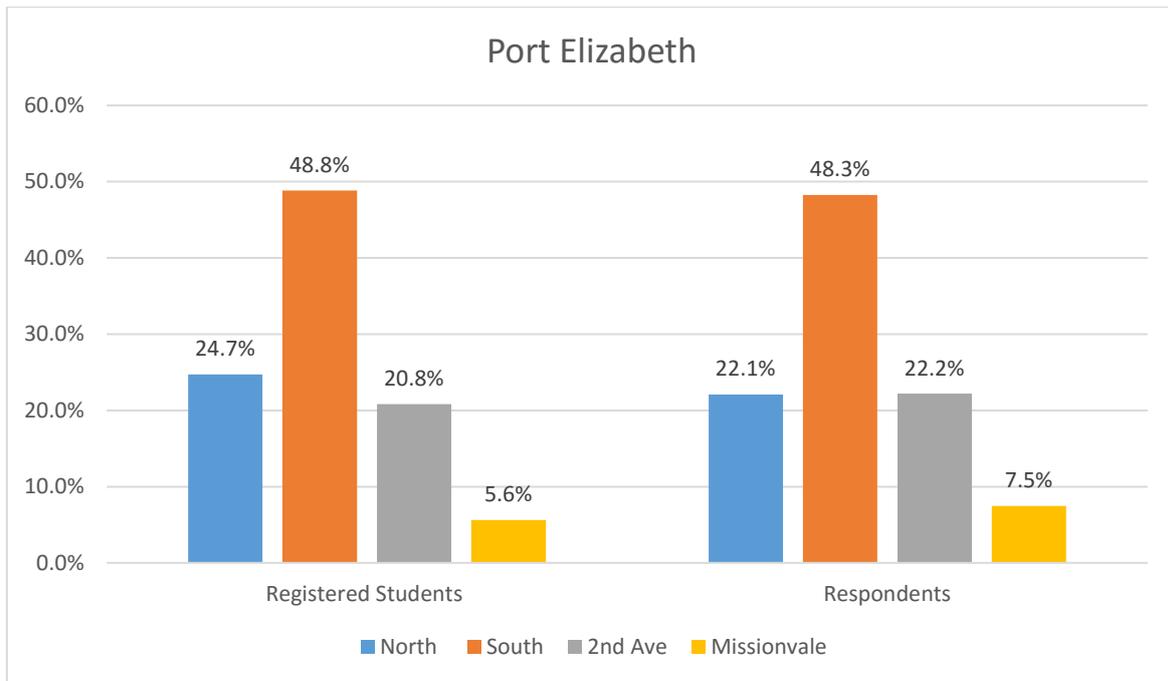
Graph 9: Registered students vs respondents according to campus attended - Port Elizabeth

As shown by graph 9, the number of respondents was proportionate to the student population. The highest proportion of respondents were from South campus, which has the highest proportion of registered students.

3.2.2. Registration status

Graph 10 and 11 conveys the number of respondents who are registered full-time versus those who are registered part time compared to the general population in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, there were more full time students who responded to the survey in Port Elizabeth and in George, all respondents were registered full-time.
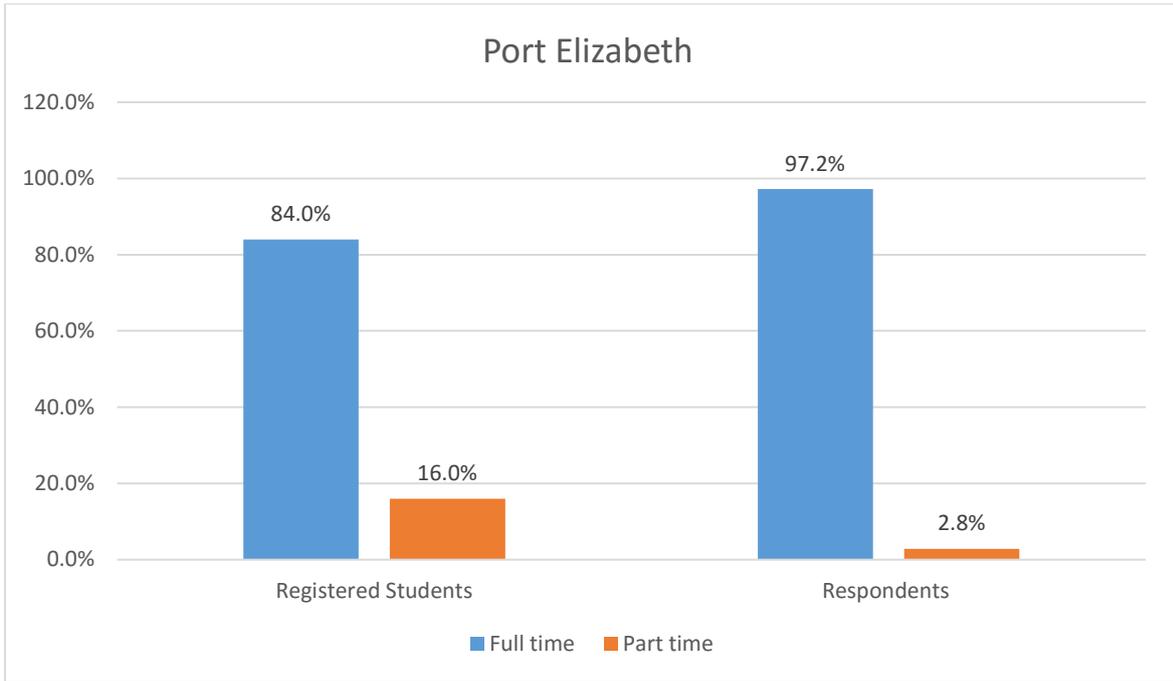
Graph 10: Registered students vs respondents according to registration status- Port Elizabeth
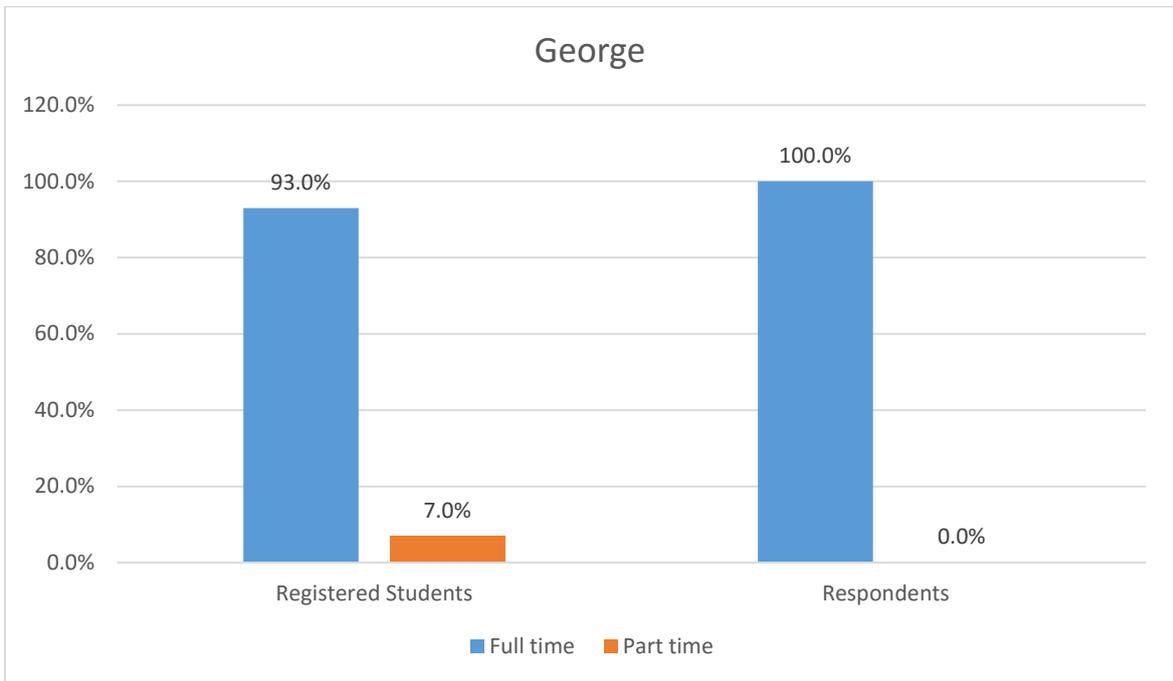
Graph 11: Registered students vs respondents according to registration status – George

3.2.3. Academic level

Academic level refers to whether students are undergraduate or postgraduate students.
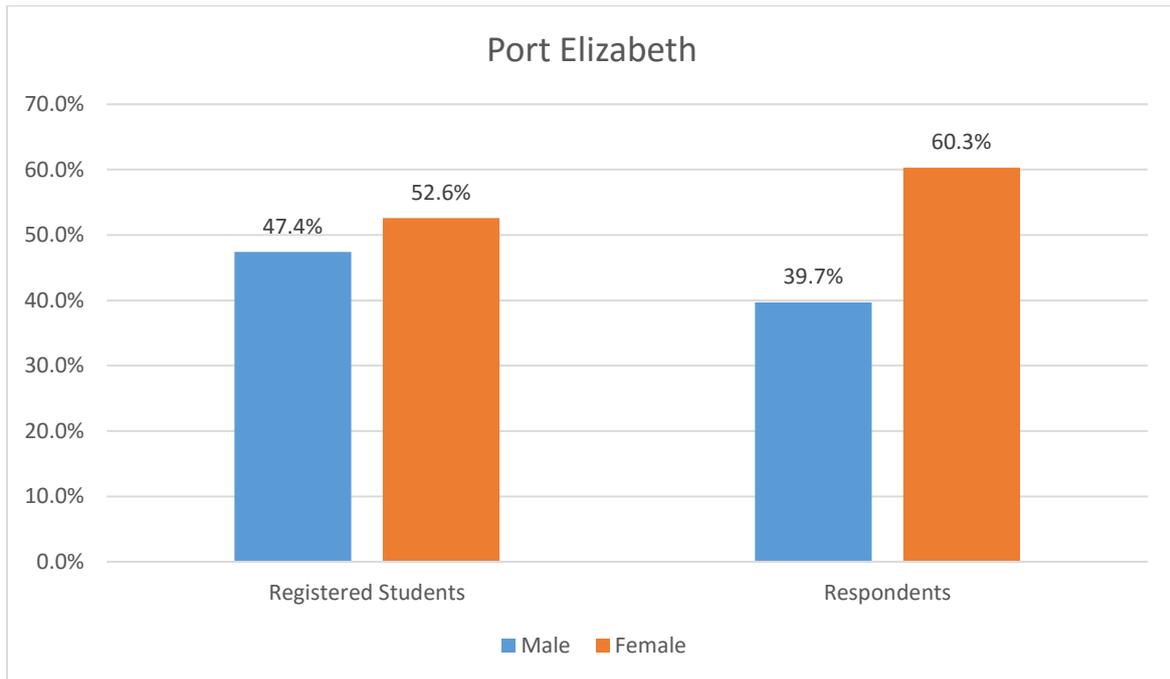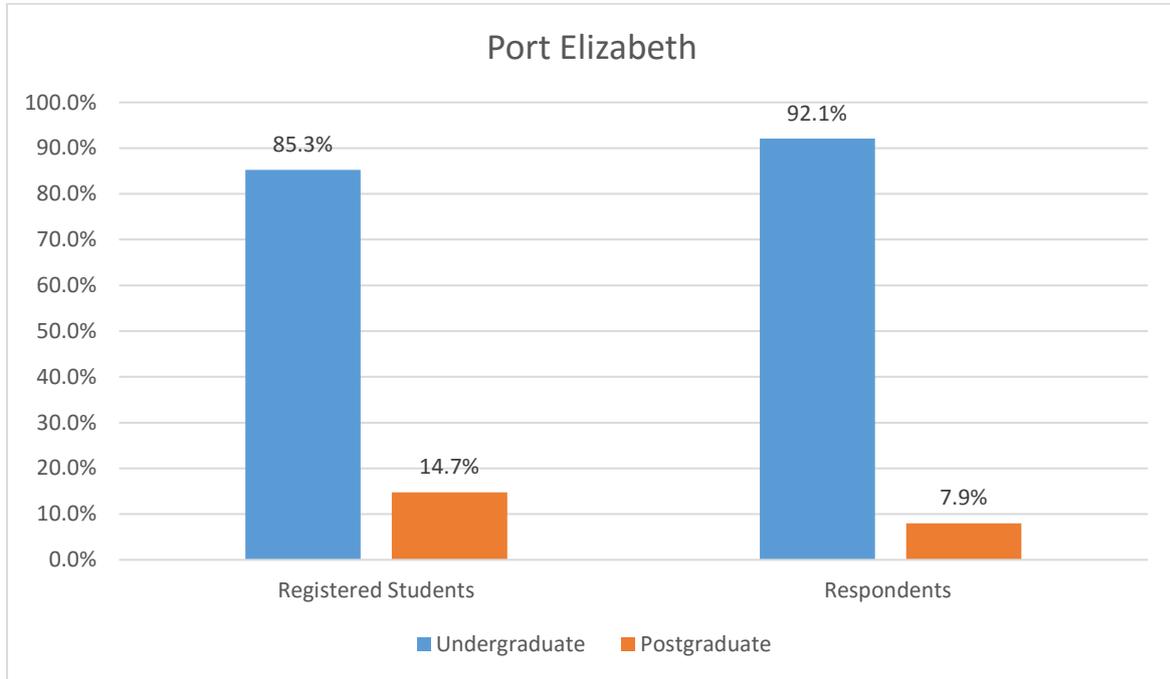

Graph 12: Registered students vs respondents according to academic status - Port Elizabeth
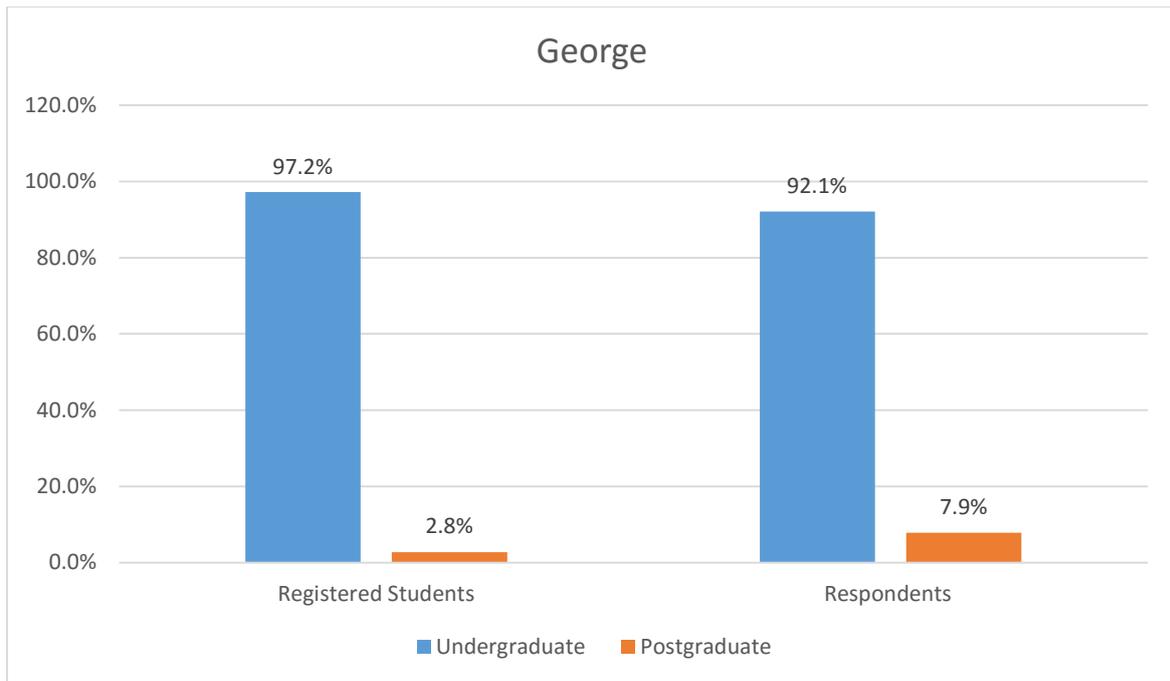
Graph 13: Registered students vs respondents according to academic status – George

Graphs 12 and 13 demonstrate that in both Port Elizabeth and George, respectively, the proportion of respondents who are postgraduate students is relatively representative of the general population, having only a slight variation. The proportion of postgraduate respondents is slightly lower than the proportion of the general population.

3.2.4. Academic year of study

Academic year of study refers to the year of study of the course that a student is in.

In Port Elizabeth as shown by graph 14 below, 29.6% of respondents are in their first year, 33.5% are in their second year, 27.2% are in their third year of study and 9.7% are in their fourth year.

In George, 48.2% are in their first year, 14% are in their second year 28.9% are in their third year of study and 8.8 % are in their fourth year (shown in graph 15).
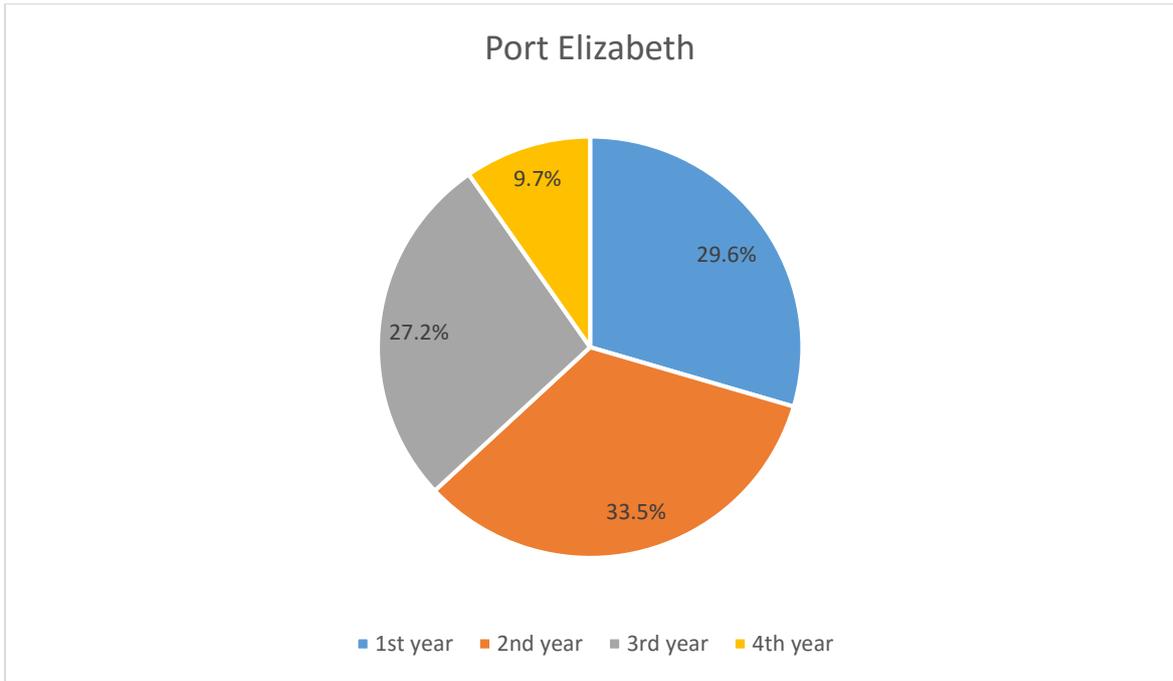
Graph 14: Year of study - Port Elizabeth
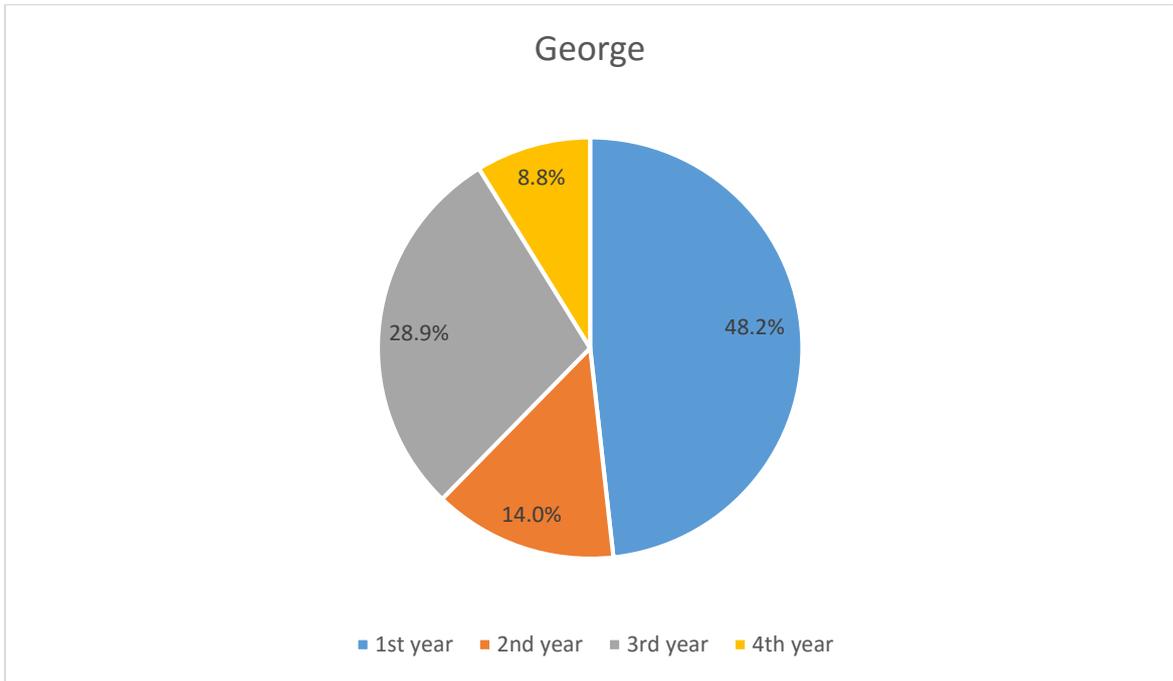
Graph 15: Year of study – George

3.2.5. Faculty

Graph 16 and 17 reflect the breakdown of respondents according to the faculties in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, respondents are representative of

the NMMU population with regards to faculty. However, the graphs show that the survey attracted a smaller number of students from the science faculty.
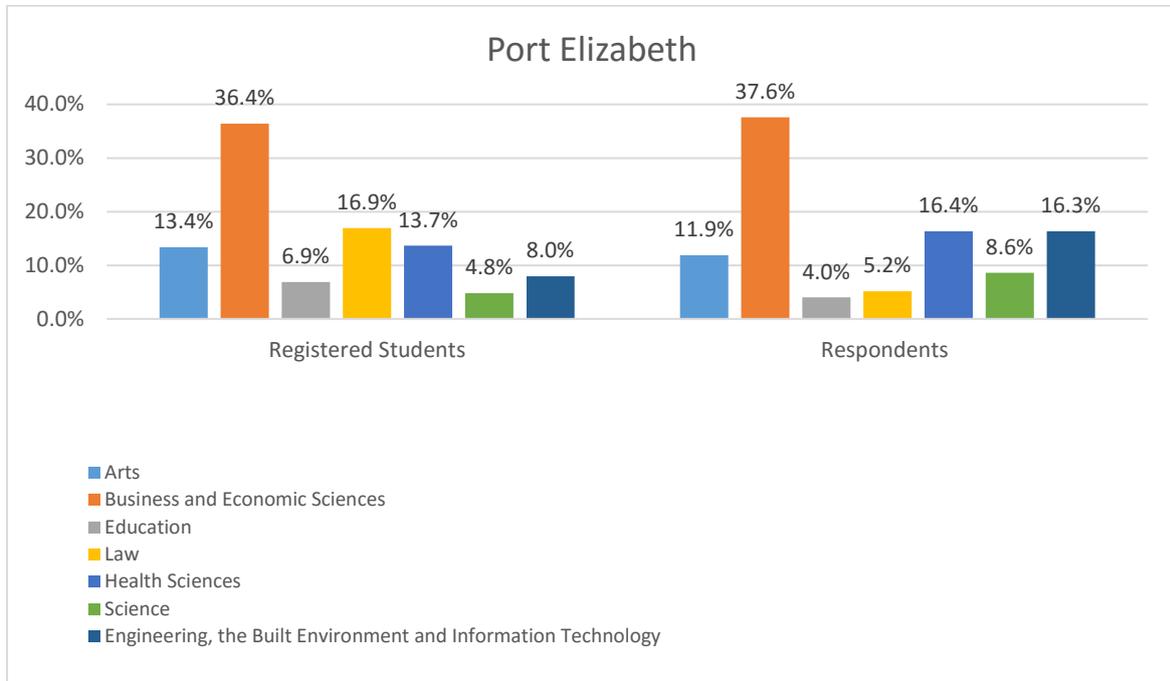
Graph 16: Registered students vs respondents by faculty – Port Elizabeth
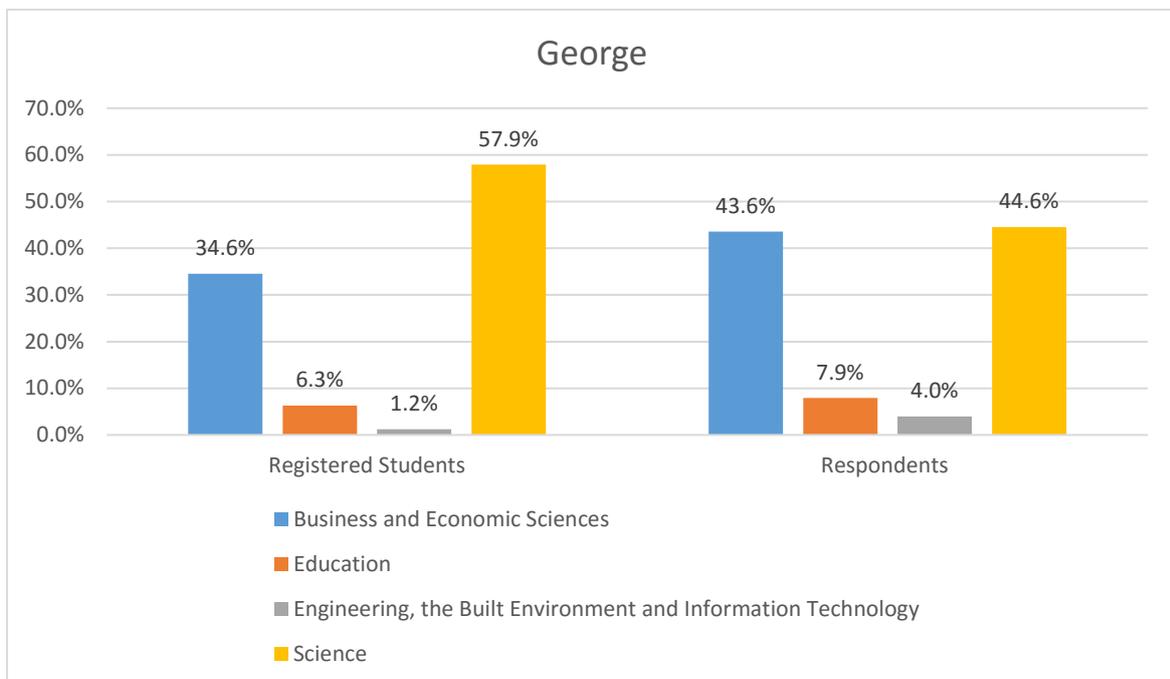
Graph 17: Registered students vs respondents by faculty – George

3.3. Living, commuting, and finance

This section will describe respondents according to on and off campus variables, how respondents commute and how they finance their studies.

3.3.1. On vs off campus breakdown

Graphs 18 and 19 demonstrate the on and off campus breakdown of respondents compared to the registered NMMU students.
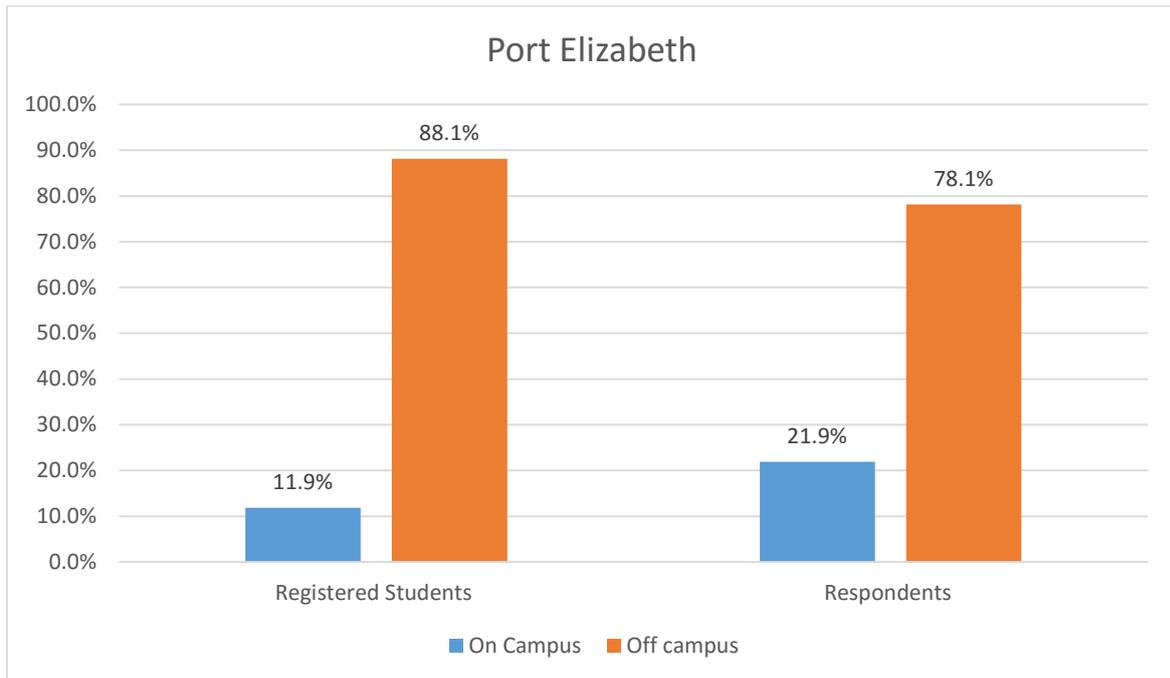
Graph 18: On vs off campus breakdown - Port Elizabeth
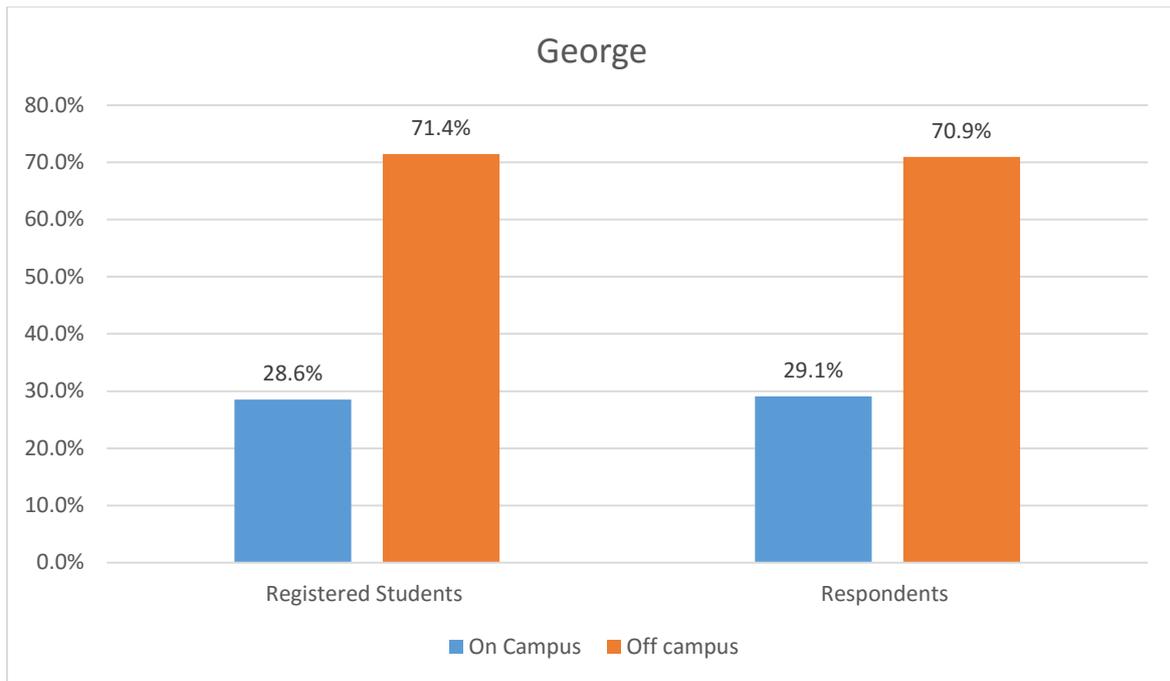
Graph 19: On vs off campus breakdown - George

While most respondents reside off campus in Port Elizabeth, a higher proportion of respondents reside on campus as compared to the general student population.

In George, the survey attracted a relatively similar proportion of on and off campus respondents compared to the general population.

3.3.2. Off campus type of living

Of the respondents that live off campus in Port Elizabeth, 36.3% reside in an accredited off campus residence, 29.1% live in private accommodation, 34.6% live at home or with extended family.

Of the respondents that live off campus in George, 23.2% reside in an accredited off campus residence or house, 39% live in private accommodation, and 37.8% live at home or with extended family.

3.3.3. Primary commute to campus

The following graphs indicate that the top primary commute to campus in Port Elizabeth is the NMMU shuttle service and driving one's own car in George.
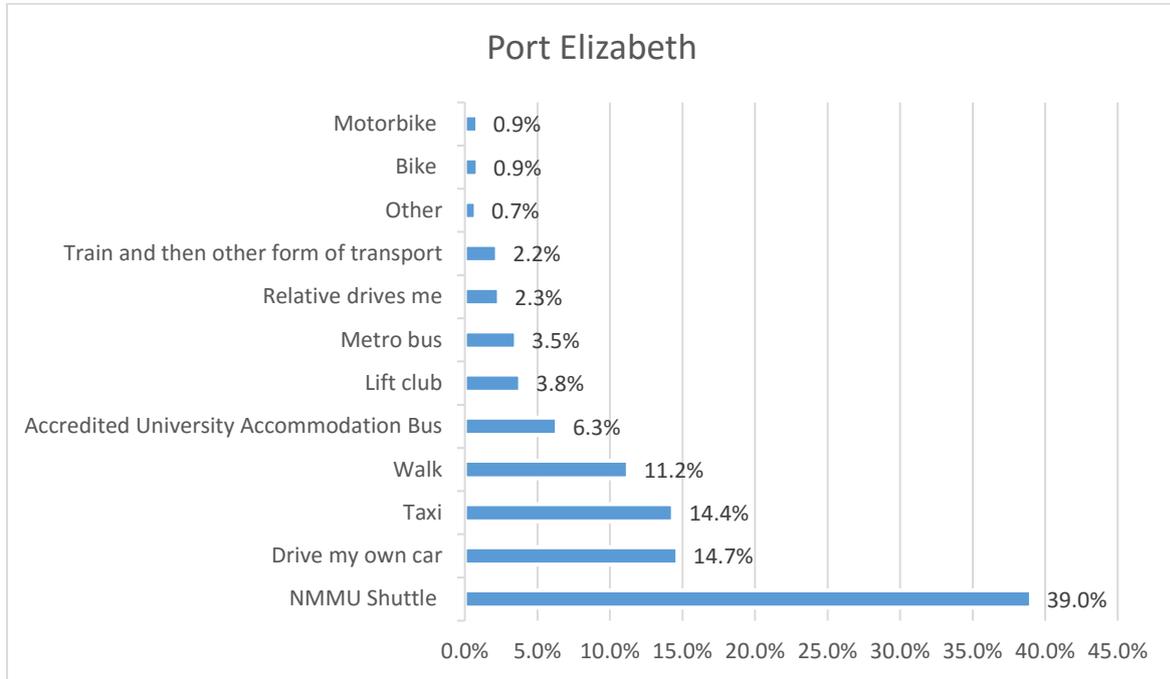
Graph 20: Primary commute to campus - Port Elizabeth
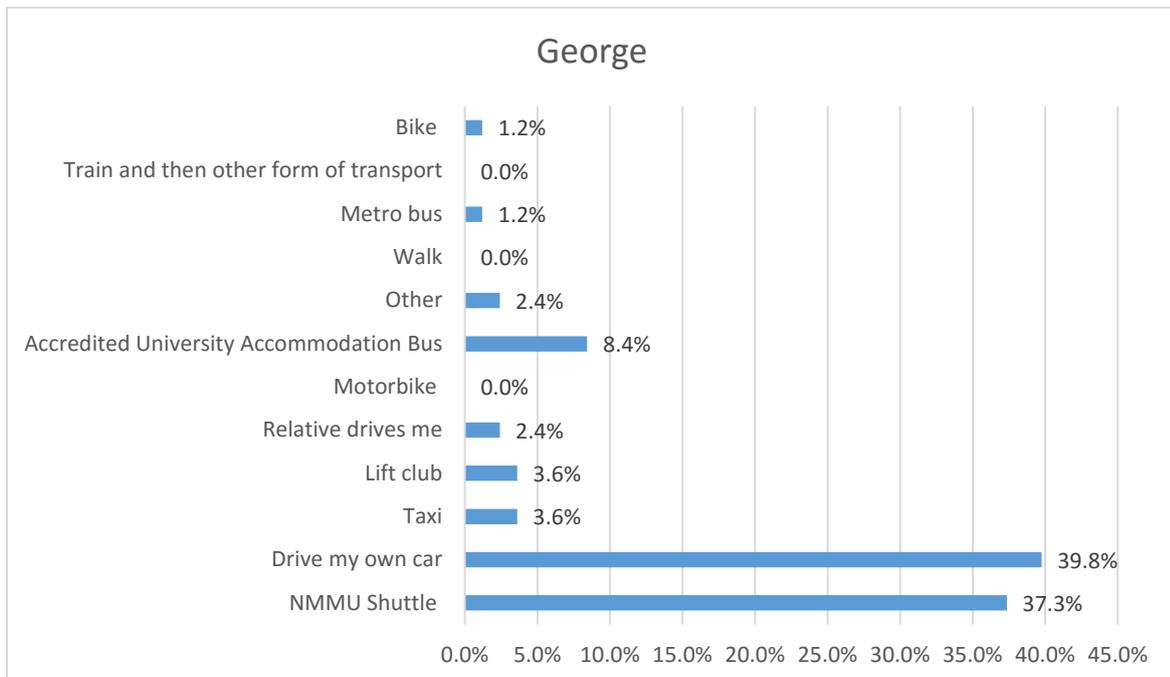
Graph 21: Primary commute to campus – George

As shown by graph 20, the top five modes of commuting to campus by respondents in Port Elizabeth are the NMMU shuttle (39%), driving own car (14.7%), taxi (14.4%), walking (11.2%) and accredited university accommodation bus (6.3%)

In George, as highlighted by graph 21, the top five modes of commute are driving one's own car (39.8%), the NMMU Shuttle (37.3%), taxi (3.6%), lift club (3.6%) and being driven by a relative (2.4%).

3.3.4. Method of financing education

The top methods that respondents use overall to finance their education are personal or family savings, NSFAS loans and bursary or sponsorship.
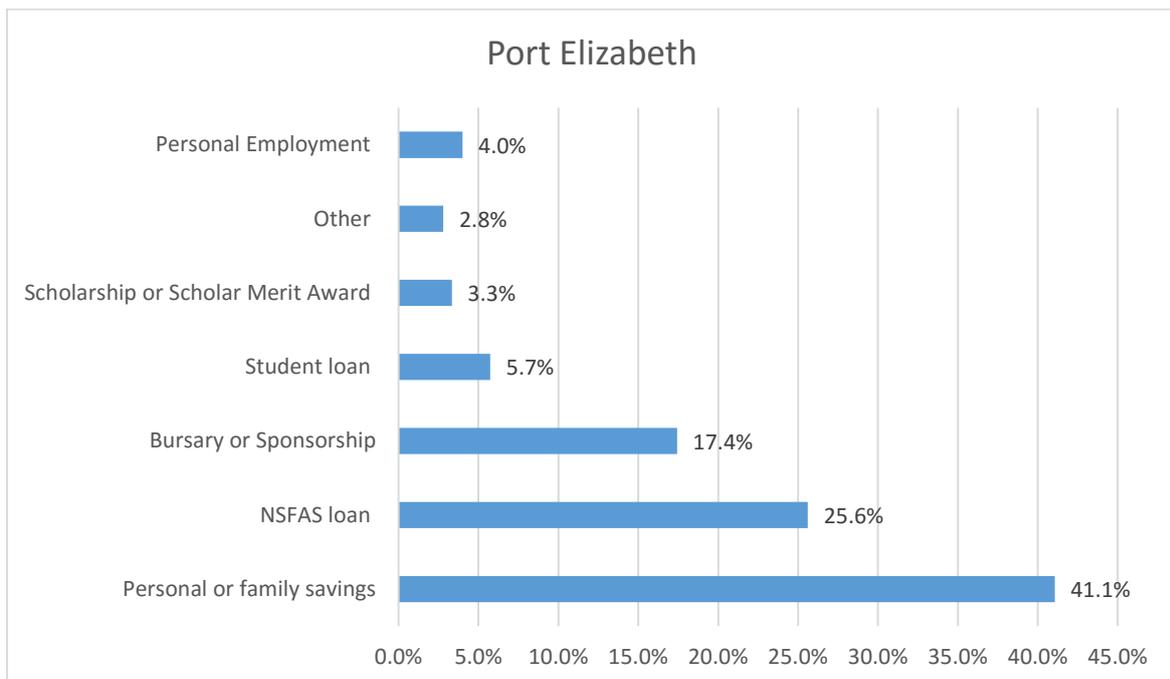
Graph 22: Method of financing education - Port Elizabeth
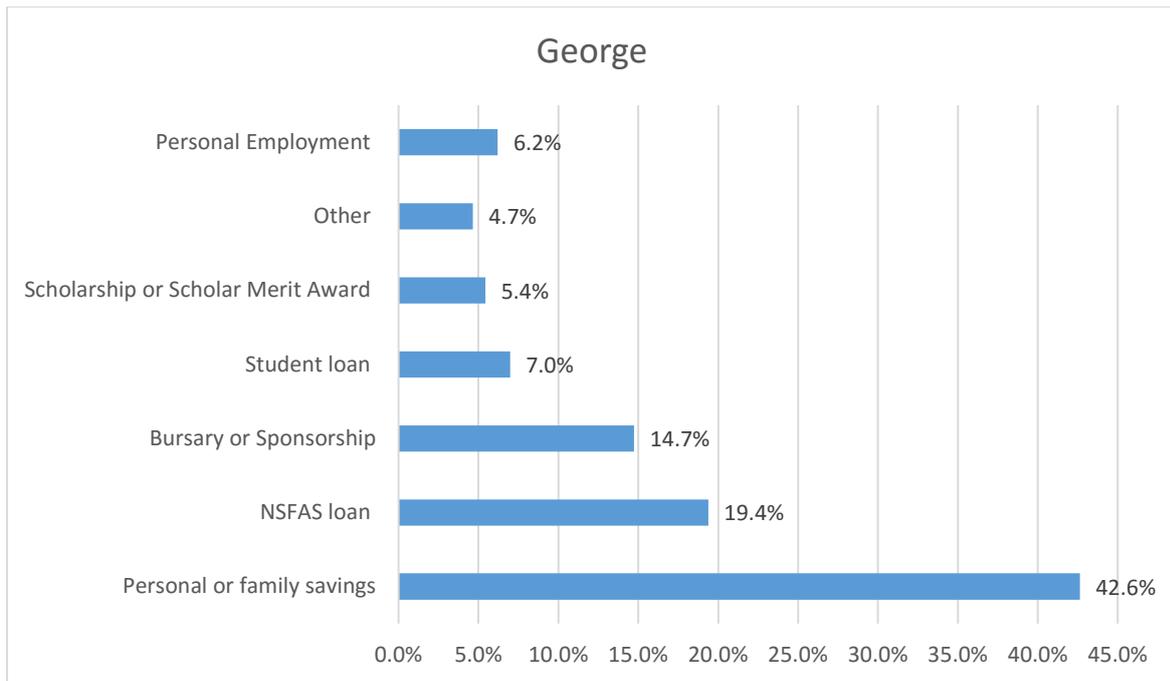
Graph 23: Method of financing education – George

As indicated by graph 22, most respondents in Port Elizabeth finance their education through personal or family savings (41.1%), followed by NSFAS loans (25.6%) and bursary or sponsorship (17.4%).

In George, graph 23 shows that most respondents' education is funded by personal or family savings (42.6%), followed by NSFAS (19.4%) and bursary or sponsorship (14.7%).

4. PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LIFE AT NMMU

The first section of the survey was completed by all respondents in order to get an idea of their perceptions of student life at NMMU. Participants were required to rate the level at which they agree with the following statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5):

- My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU
- I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU
- I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU
- I am proud to be attending the NMMU
- I feel like NMMU is a community
- I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus

The overall results are as follows:

Table 1: Perceptions of student life - Port Elizabeth

Question	Mean	Number	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.4	4102	59.2%	29.0%	8.0%	1.6%	2.1%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.9	4071	26.7%	42.2%	24.2%	4.5%	2.3%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	4075	54.9%	36.2%	6.2%	1.2%	1.6%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.3	4076	48.2%	37.6%	10.9%	1.4%	1.9%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.9	4052	29.5%	41.3%	21.1%	5.8%	2.3%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	3.0	4065	12.4%	20.0%	29.4%	24.2%	14.0%

Table 2: Perceptions of student life – George

Question	Mean	Number	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.5	151	61.6%	22.5%	11.9%	0.7%	3.3%
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.8	151	27.2%	37.1%	27.2%	6.0%	2.6%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	151	56.3%	34.4%	5.3%	2.6%	1.3%
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.3	151	53.0%	29.8%	12.6%	2.0%	2.6%
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.8	149	21.5%	42.3%	25.5%	6.7%	4.0%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.6	151	3.3%	18.5%	35.1%	25.2%	17.9%

Student perceptions are overall positive on both campuses, as evident in the low mean score of students who feel excluded (mean score = 3.0 and 2.6 in Port Elizabeth and George respectively). The mean scores of other perceptions indicate an acceptable level of belongingness overall.

Although student perceptions are overall positive, the following variables scored the lowest mean scores on both campuses:

- I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU (3.9 in Port Elizabeth; 3.8 in George)
- I feel like NMMU is a community (3.9 in Port Elizabeth; 3.8 in George)

The results were further analysed using multivariate analysis techniques. T-Tests were conducted on student perceptions according to gender in order to determine whether there were any significant differences in perceptions between males and females. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were then used to determine the differences between the race groups.

The results of the analyses follow.

4.1. Student perceptions according to gender

Table 3 and 4 show that in Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents differed significantly on three perceptions and on one in George.

Table 3: Student Perceptions according to gender - Port Elizabeth

Question	Sex	Mean	Number	Difference	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	Female	4.5	2028	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.4	1335		
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	Female	3.9	2007	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	3.9	1326		
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	Female	4.5	2012	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.4	1328		
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	Female	4.3	2015	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.2	1326		
I feel like the NMMU is a community	Female	4.0	1998	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	3.9	1318		
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	Female	3.0	2005	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	2.9	1323		

Table 4: Student Perceptions according to gender - George

Question	Sex	Mean	Number	Difference	Effect
	Female	4.5	61		N/A

My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.		4.2		No significant difference	
	Male		51		
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	Female	3.8	61	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	3.7	51		
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	Female	4.4	61	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	4.3	51		
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	Female	4.4	61	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.0	51		
I feel like the NMMU is a community	Female	3.6	61	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	3.6	50		
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	Female	2.8	61	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	2.4	51		

In Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents had statistically significant differences, with female respondents had slightly higher mean scores and a small magnitude or effect size for the following perceptions: "my family encourages me to continue with my education at the NMMU," "I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU" and "I am proud to be attending the NMMU". All three perceptions had a small effect size (eta squared = 0.002).

In George, there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females, however, there was a statistically significant difference in the perception, "I am proud to be attending the NMMU" between males and females of a small magnitude or effect (eta squared = 0.04). Female respondents had a slightly higher score.

4.2. Student perceptions according to race

Table 5 and 6 highlight student perceptions by race in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

Table 5: Student perceptions by race - Port Elizabeth

Question	Black (N=2325)	Chinese (N=8)	Coloured (N=330)	Indian (N=52)	White (N=344)	Effect

Question						Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.5	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	4	3.6	3.8	4	3.6	Small effect
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.4	4	4.3	4.5	4.3	Small effect
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.3	4	4.3	4.3	4.1	Small effect
I feel like the NMMU is a community	4	3.1	3.9	4.1	3.5	Small effect
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.9	2.7	3.1	3.2	3.	No difference

Table 6: Student perceptions by race - George

Question	Black (N=46)	Coloured (N=11)	White (N=41)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the NMMU.	4.6	4.6	4.4	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU	3.9	3.6	3.8	No difference
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU	4.5	3.9	4.5	No difference
I am proud to be attending the NMMU	4.4	4.2	4.2	No difference
I feel like the NMMU is a community	3.7	3.4	3.9	No difference
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.4	3.1	2.7	No difference

For Port Elizabeth, the overall ANOVA found a statistically significant between races. When the statements were examined separately, the magnitude or effect size of the difference is small, with the exception of "I feel like NMMU is a community," which has a moderate effect size (partial eta squared = 0.6). An inspection of the mean scores indicated that Indian (M=3.6, SD=1.05), White (M=3.43, SD=1.08) and students who identified themselves as "Other" (M=3, SD=1.06) had the lowest level of agreement with the statement. White and Other students have a score of between 2.6 and 3.4, which indicates room for improvement.

In George, the MANOVA found that there is no statistically significant difference between the races. All mean scores were above 3.4, indicating an acceptable level of satisfaction.

5. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

Graph 24 and 25 show the number of respondents who participate in student life activities vs those who do not in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. The survey attracted a greater number of students that do not participate in student life activities over students who do both in Port Elizabeth and more respondents who do participate in student life activities in George over those who do not.
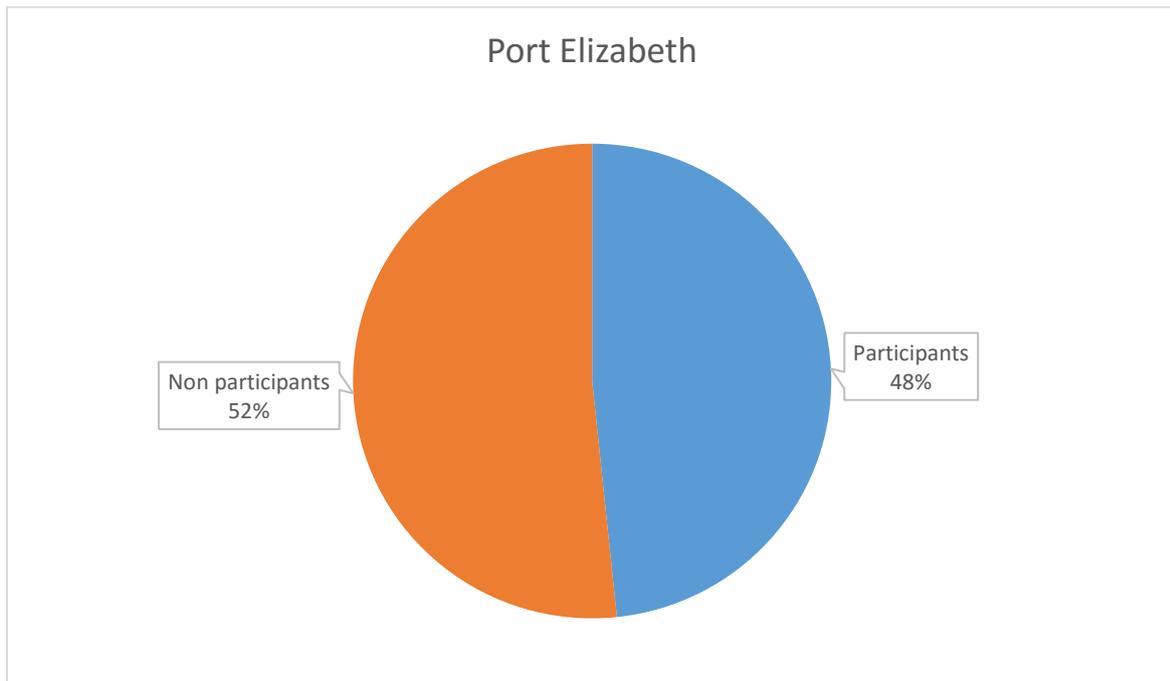
Graph 24: Respondents who participate in student activities vs non participants - Port Elizabeth
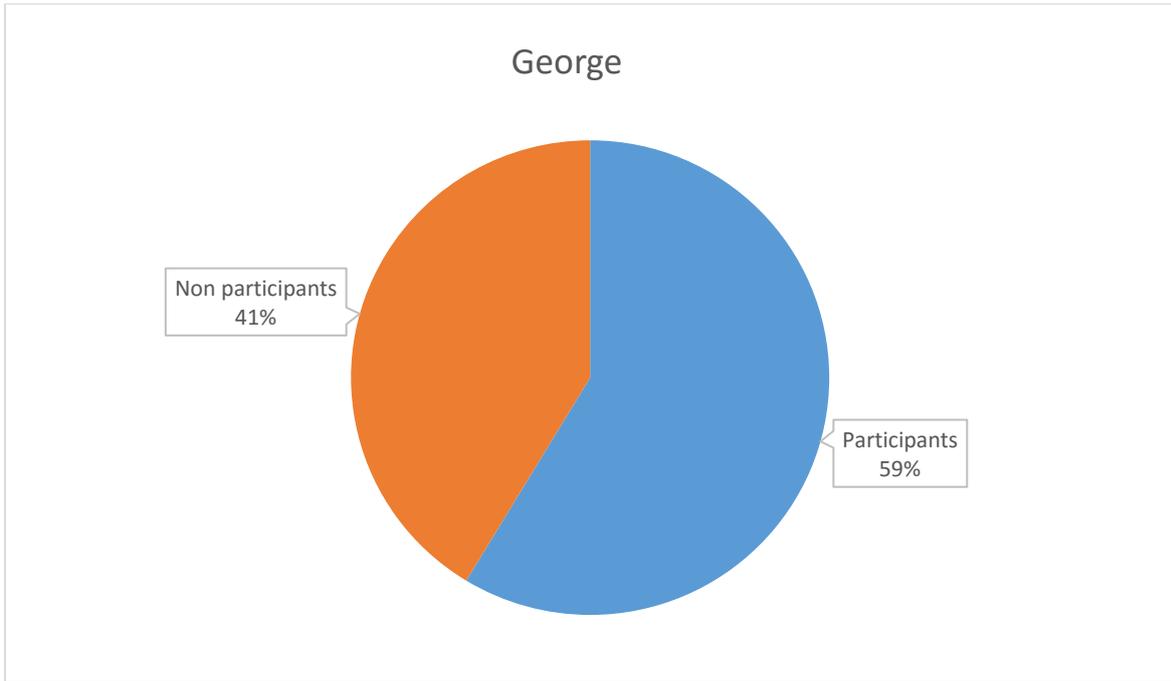
Graph 25: Respondents who participate in student activities vs non participants - George

## 5.1.	Participation and time spent on student life activities

Student life activities are divided into Societies (which are broken down to four types: academic, developmental, religious and political), Arts and Culture activities, Sports Clubs, and Residence Leagues and Events. The following section demonstrates a breakdown of the number of participants of each student life activity according to the type of student life activity for both Port Elizabeth and George respectively as well as time spent on student life activities.

5.1.1. Overall time spent on student life activities
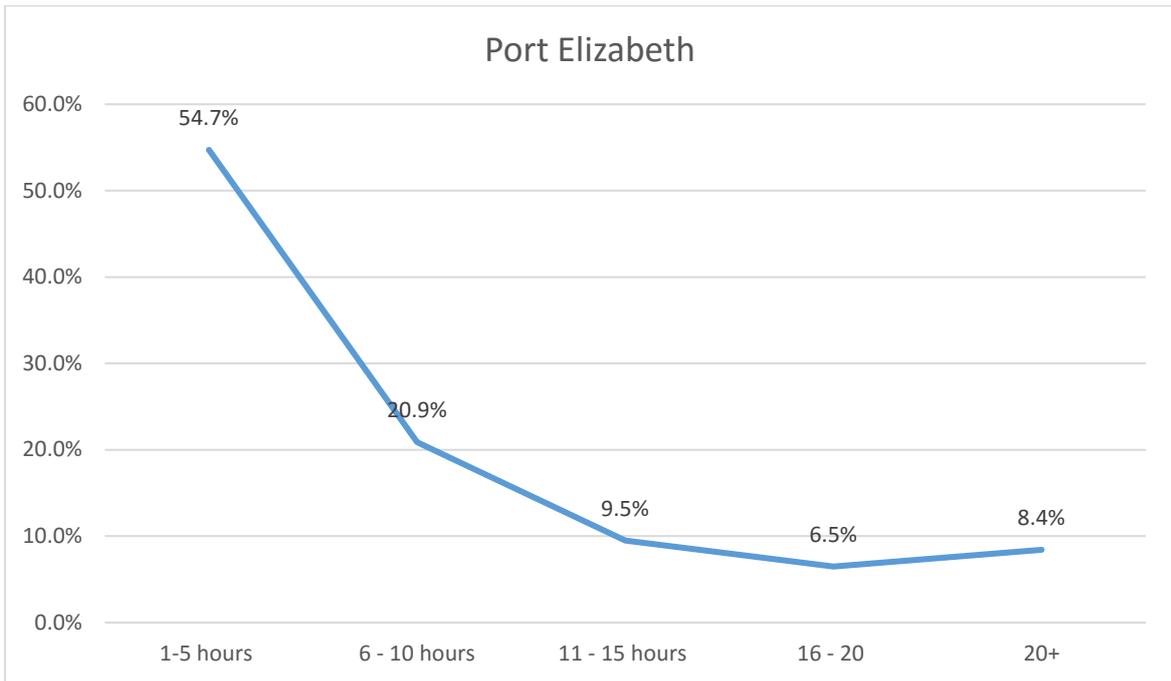
Graph 26: Overall time spent on student life activities – Port Elizabeth
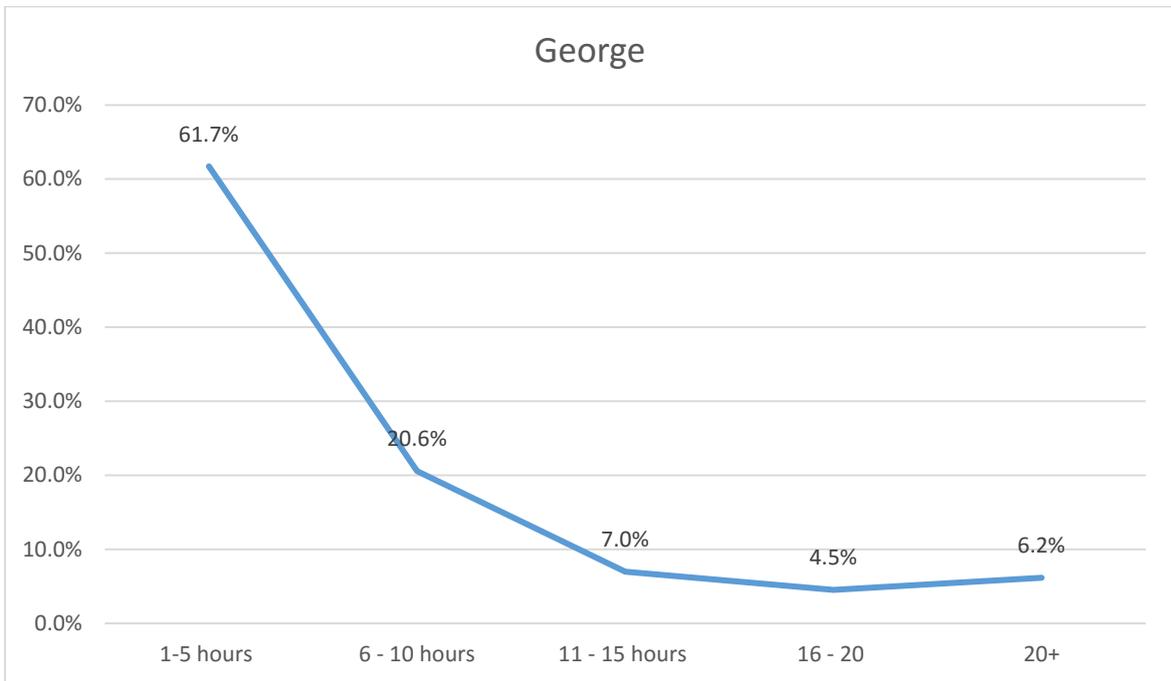
Graph 27: Overall time spent on student life activities – George

As highlighted by graphs 26 and 27, more than half of the respondents dedicate 1-5 hours per week on student life activities (54.7% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 61.7% in George).

5.1.2. Societies

Participation in Societies
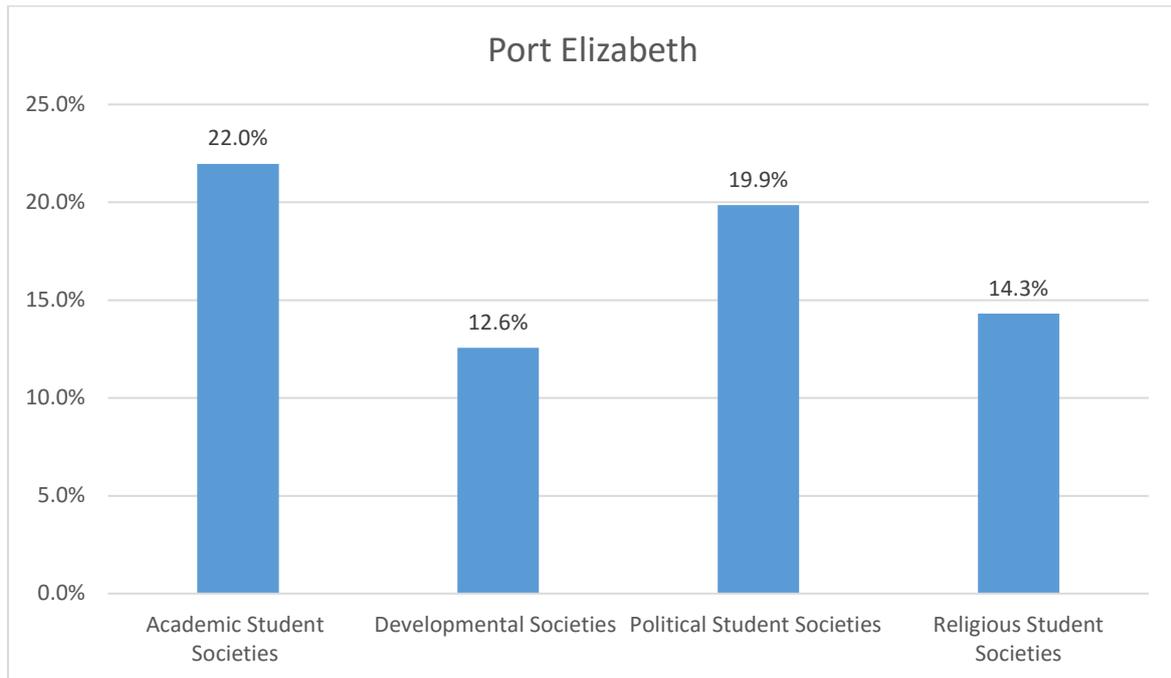
Graph 28: Society participation – Port Elizabeth
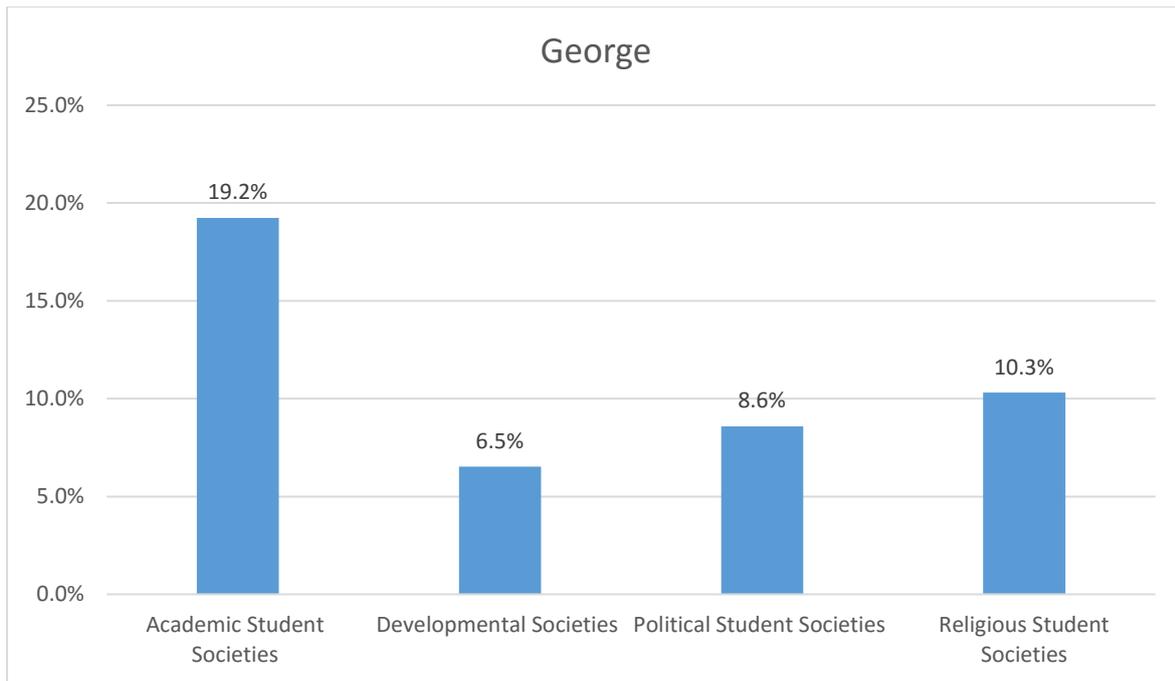
Graph 29: Society participation - George

Graph 28 shows that most respondents in Port Elizabeth participated academic societies, followed by political societies then religious and developmental societies.

Graph 29 shows that in George, academic society participation was also the highest, followed by religious, then political and developmental societies.

Time Spent on Societies
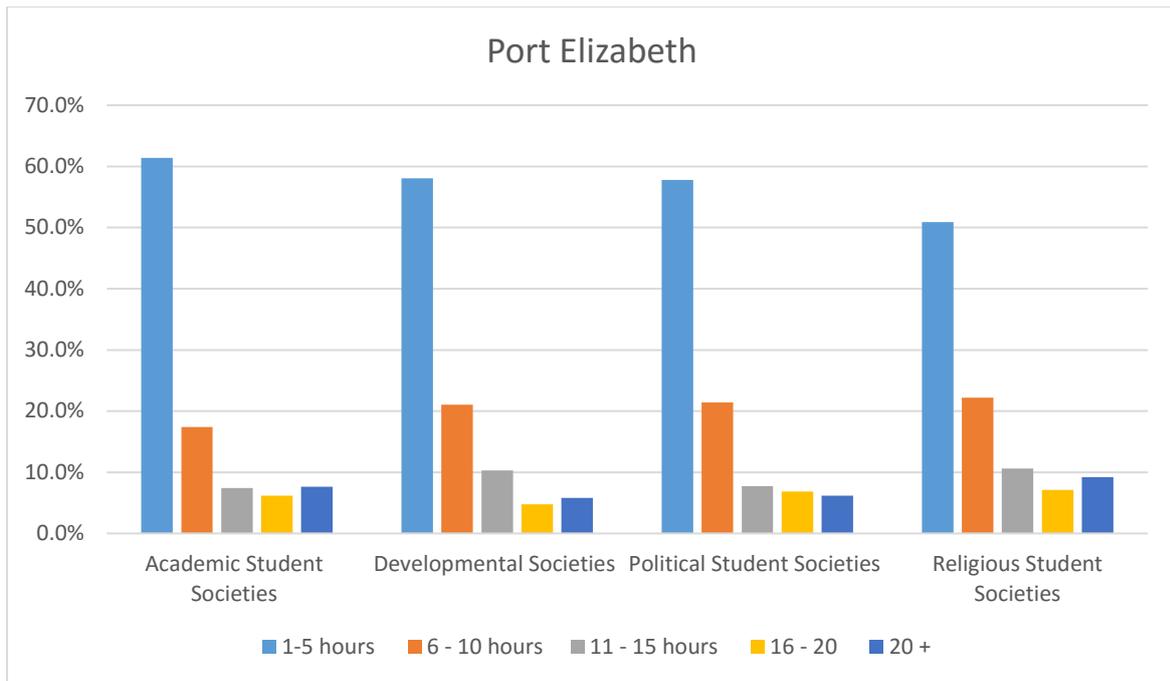
Graph 30: Time spent on societies - Port Elizabeth
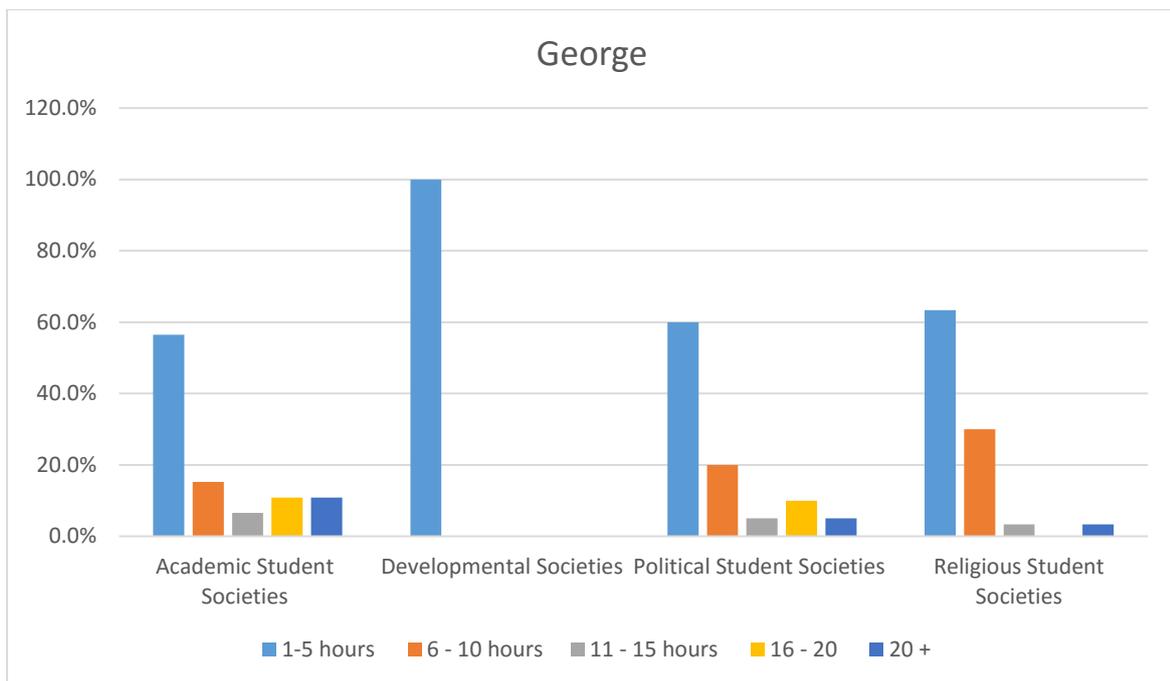
Graph 31: Time spent on societies - George

Graphs 30 and 31 indicate that respondents dedicate 1-5 hours a week overall to society participation in both Port Elizabeth and George.

5.1.3. Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture participation

7.5% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity. 21.3% of George respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity.

Time spent on Arts and Culture activities
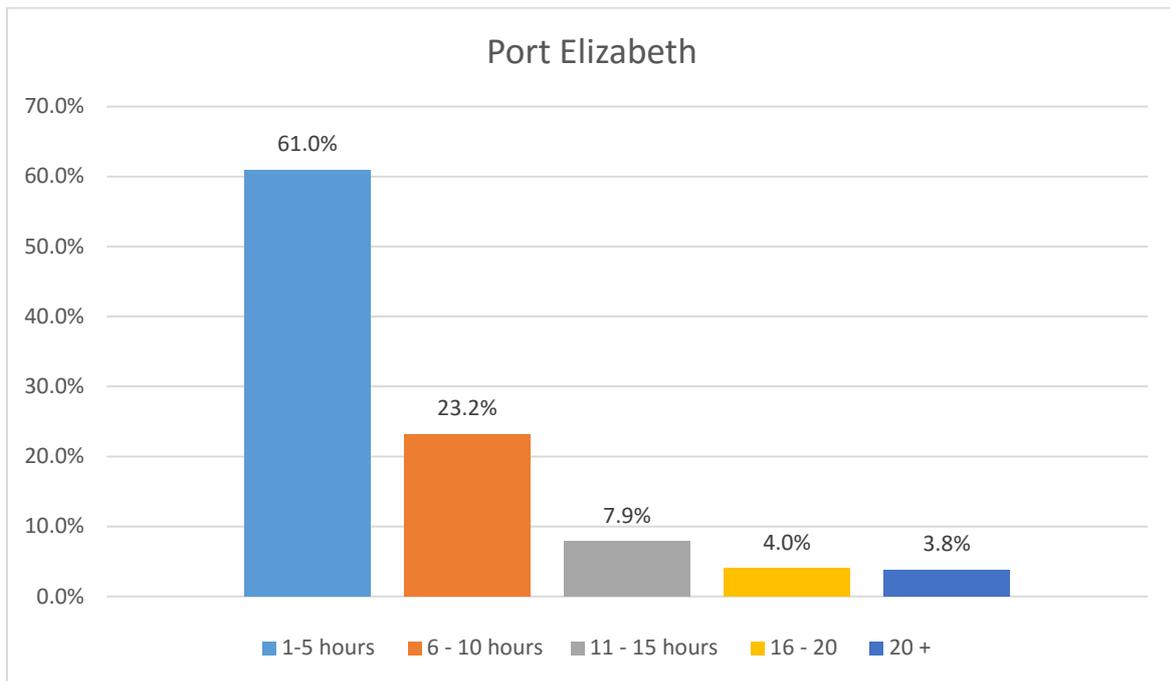
Graph 32: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities - Port Elizabeth
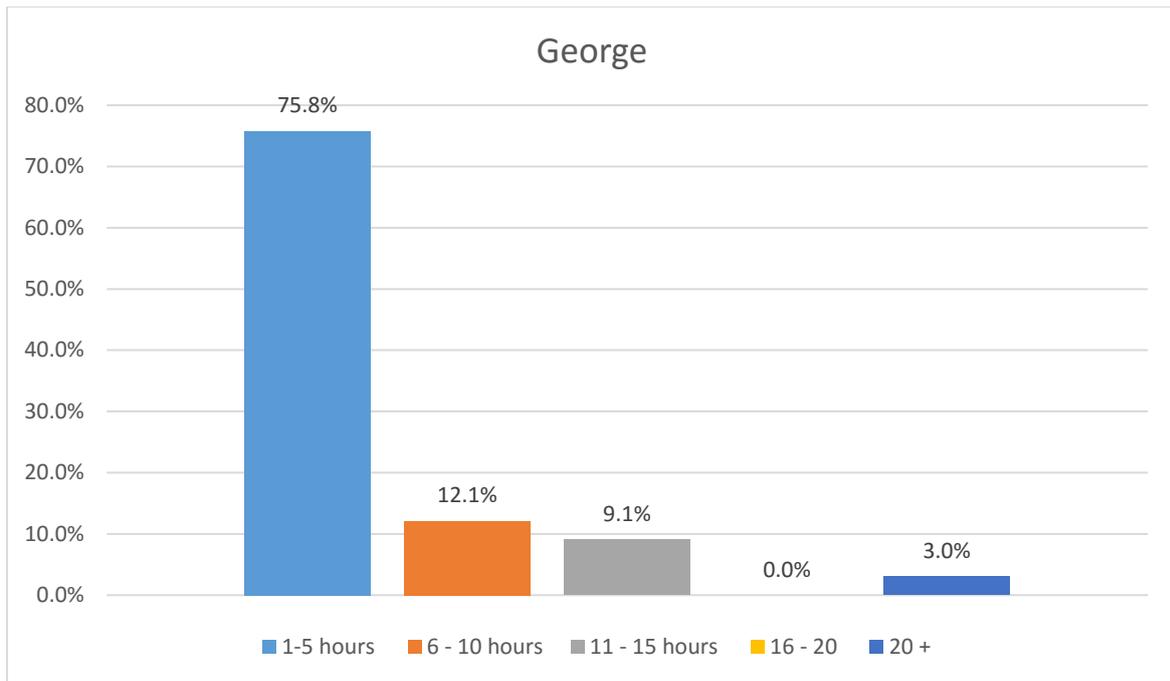
Graph 33: Time spent on Arts and Culture activities – George

Graph 32 and 33 highlight that on both campuses, most Arts and Culture participants spent 1-5 hours a week on Arts and Culture activities (61% in Port Elizabeth and 75.8% in George).

5.1.4. Sports Clubs

Sports Club participation

12% of Port Elizabeth respondents participate in a sport club. In George, the highest participation is in sports, with over a quarter of respondents (27.1%) being part of a sports club.

Time spent on Sports Club participation
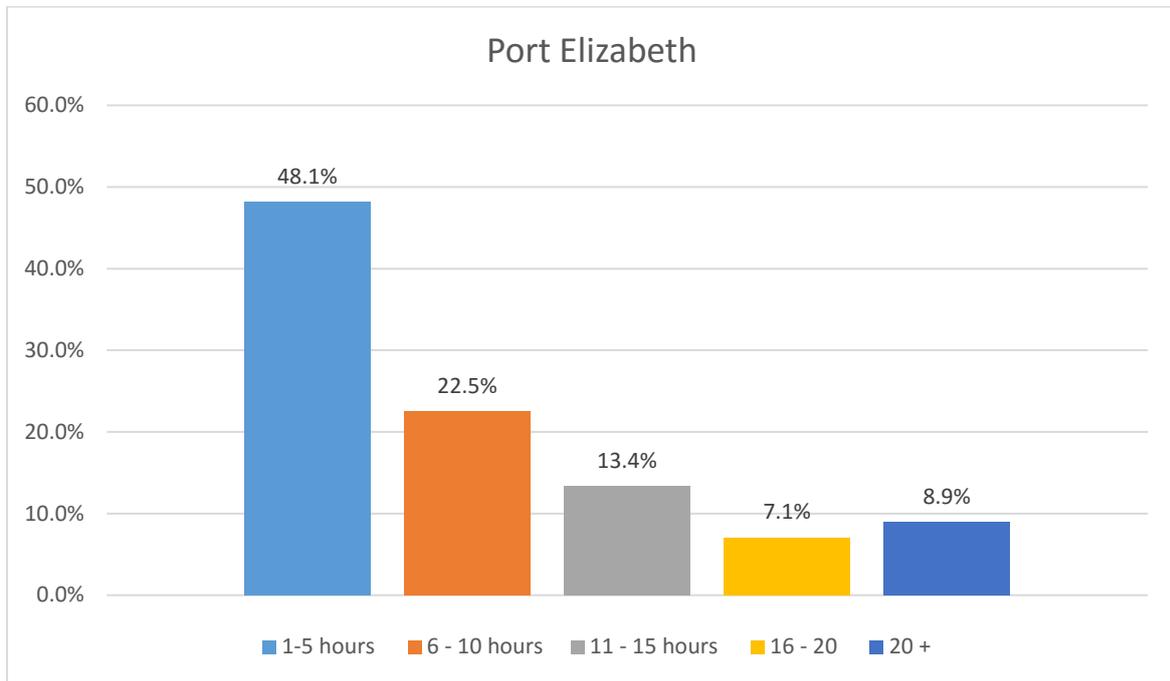
Graph 34: Time spent on sports clubs - Port Elizabeth
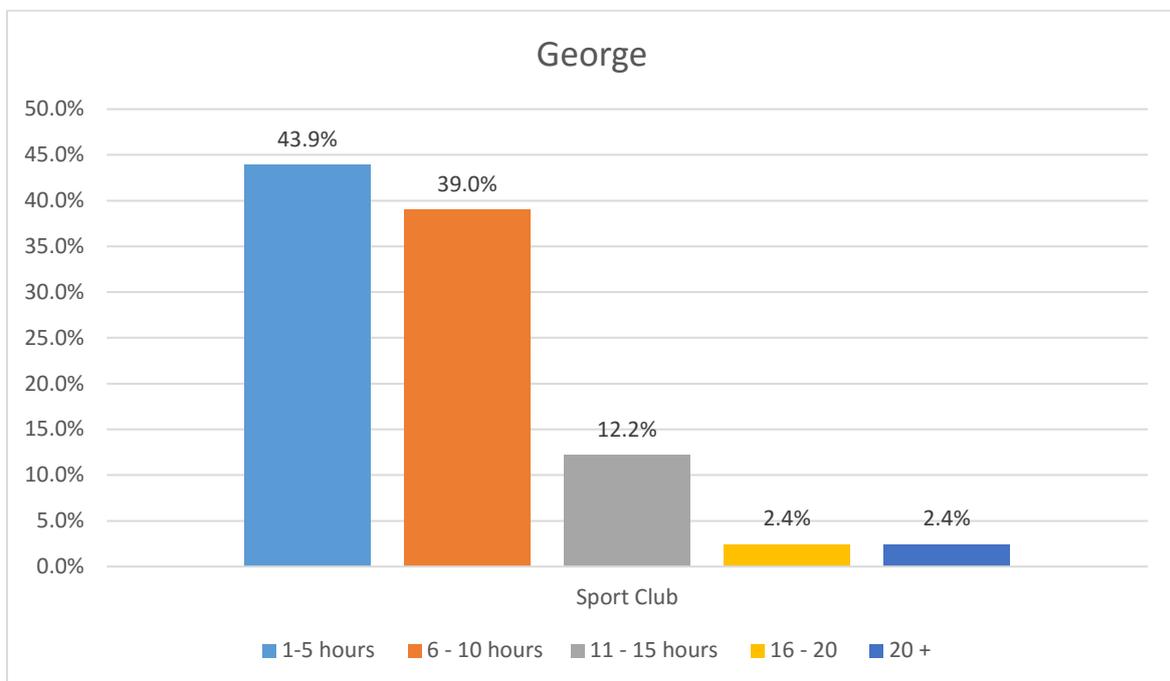
Graph 35: Time spent on sports clubs - George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents that participate in sport clubs (48.1%) dedicate 1-5 hours per week to sports clubs as indicated by graph 34.

Graph 35 indicates that 43.9% of George sports club participants spend 1-5 hours a week on sports club participation.

5.1.5. Residence League

Residence league participation

7.2% of Port Elizabeth and 6.9% of George respondents reported participating in residence league activities.

Time spent on residence league activities
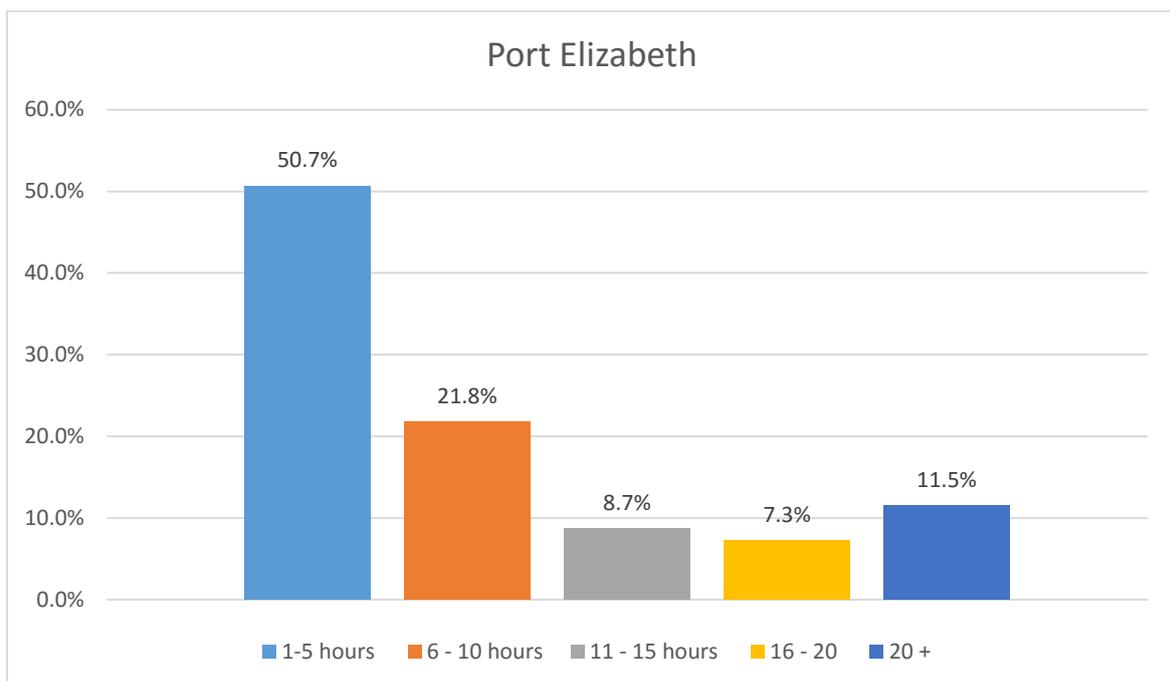
Graph 36: Time spent on residence league activities - Port Elizabeth
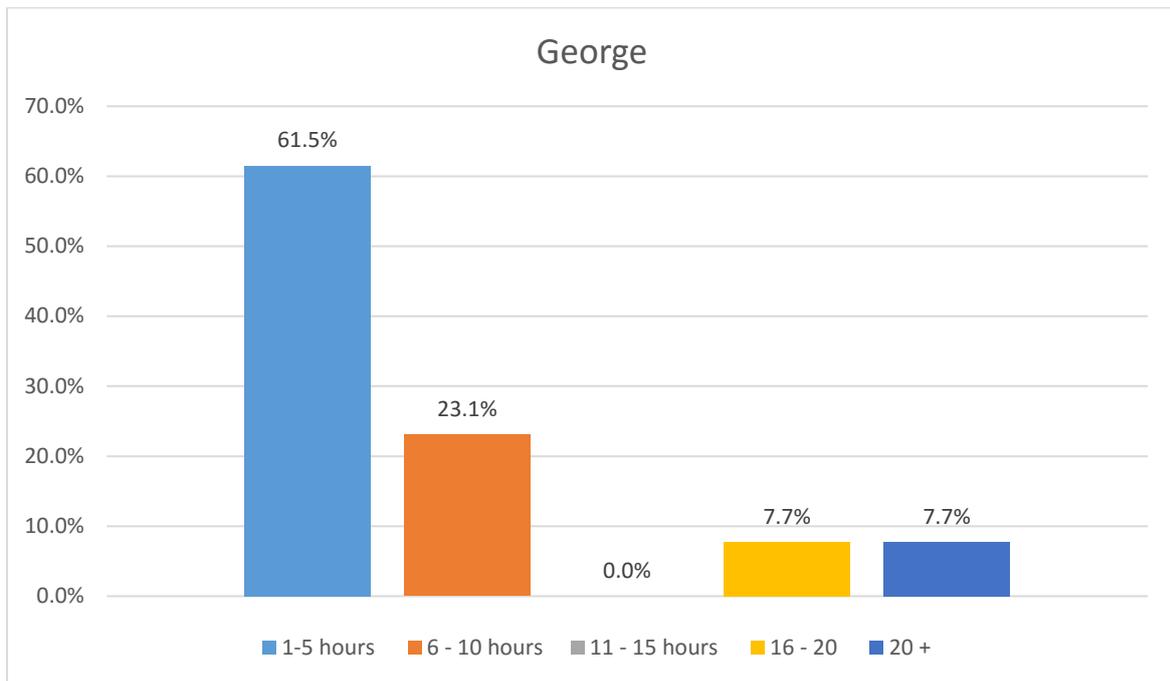
Graph 37: Time spent on residence league activities - George

More than half of Port Elizabeth respondents and almost two-thirds of George respondents dedicate 1-5 hours a week on residence league activities.

5.1.6. Residence Events

19.5% of Port Elizabeth respondents and 21.2% of George respondents reported spending time on residence events. In Port Elizabeth, 48.6% and in George, 61.5% of respondents spend 1-5 hours a week on residence events.
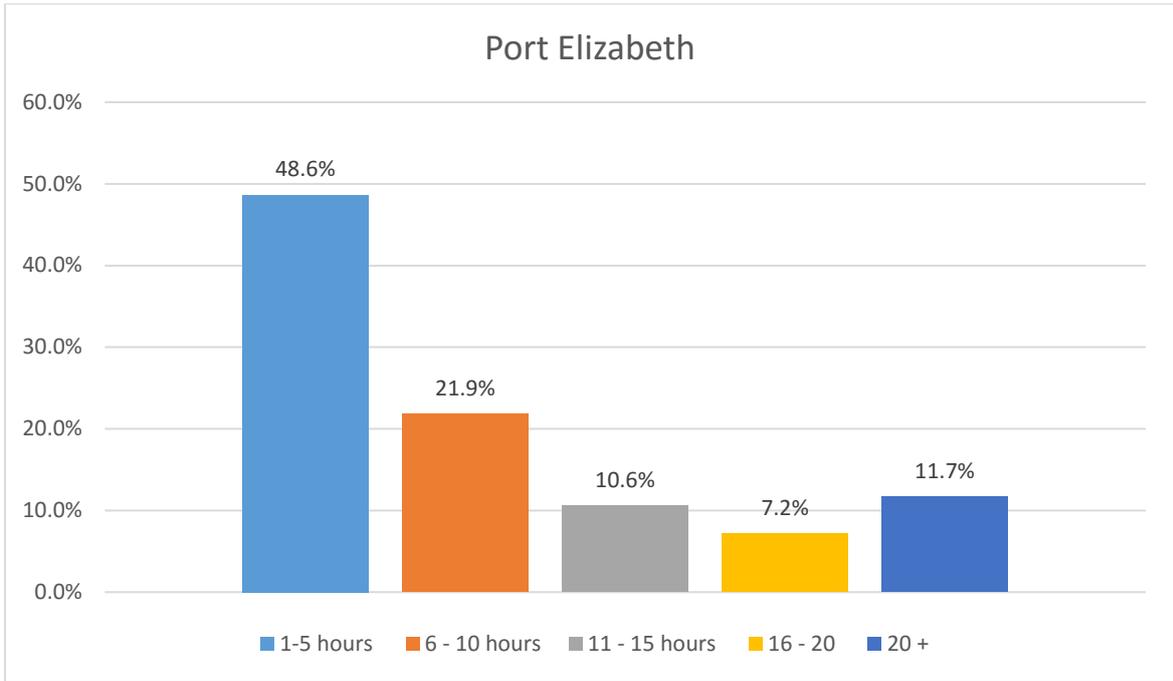
Graph 38: Time spent on residence events - Port Elizabeth
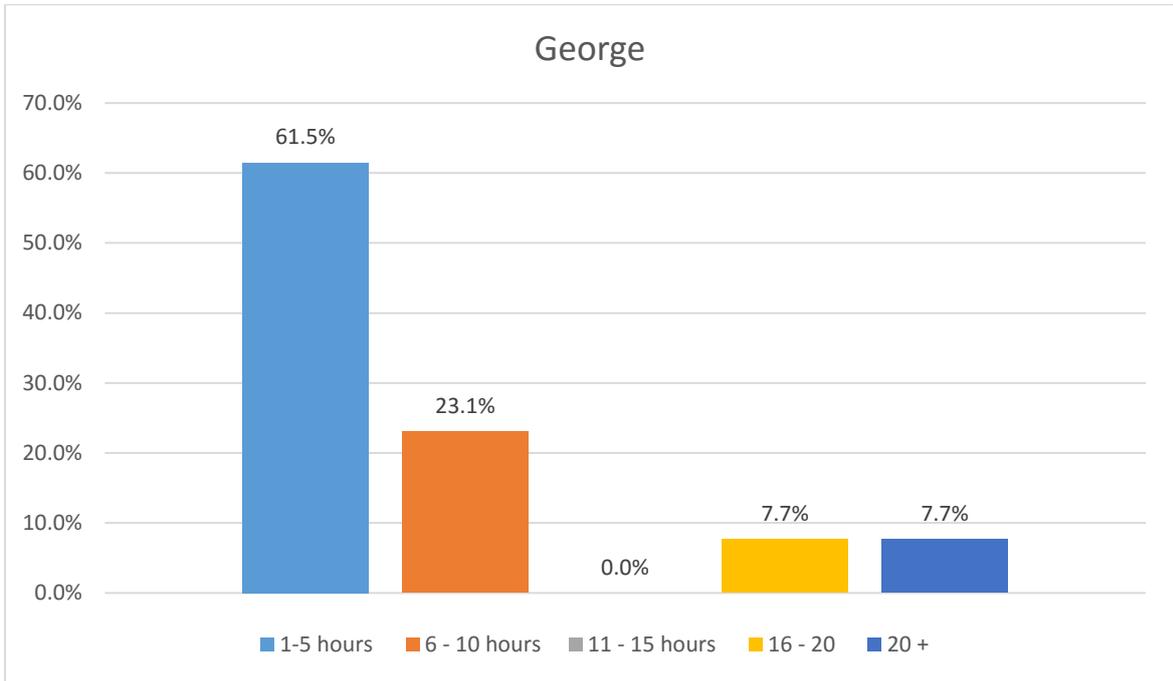
Graph 39: Time spent on residence events - George

5.1.7. "Other" student life activities

Student life activities that were listed by respondents as "other" included Choir (Res, NMMU or in a society), WELA (Women in Engineering Leadership Association), Cheerleading, Backpack to Briefcase, UNASA (United Nations Association of South Africa), Unity in Africa Foundation, NMMyou Student newspaper, Sanlam foundation challenge, Tutoring and Ubuntu Society.

5.2. Participants in leadership positions

31.4% of Port Elizabeth and 30% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions. Graphs 40 and 41 highlight the types of leadership positions respondents that respondents reportedly hold.
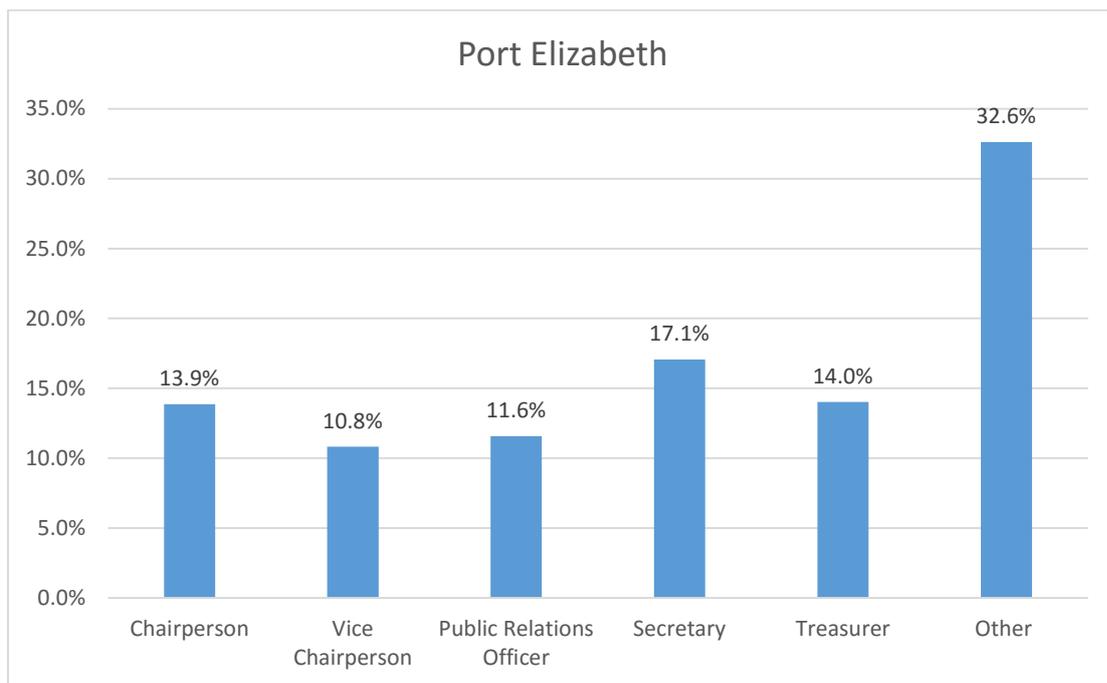
Graph 40: Leadership positions held by participants - Port Elizabeth
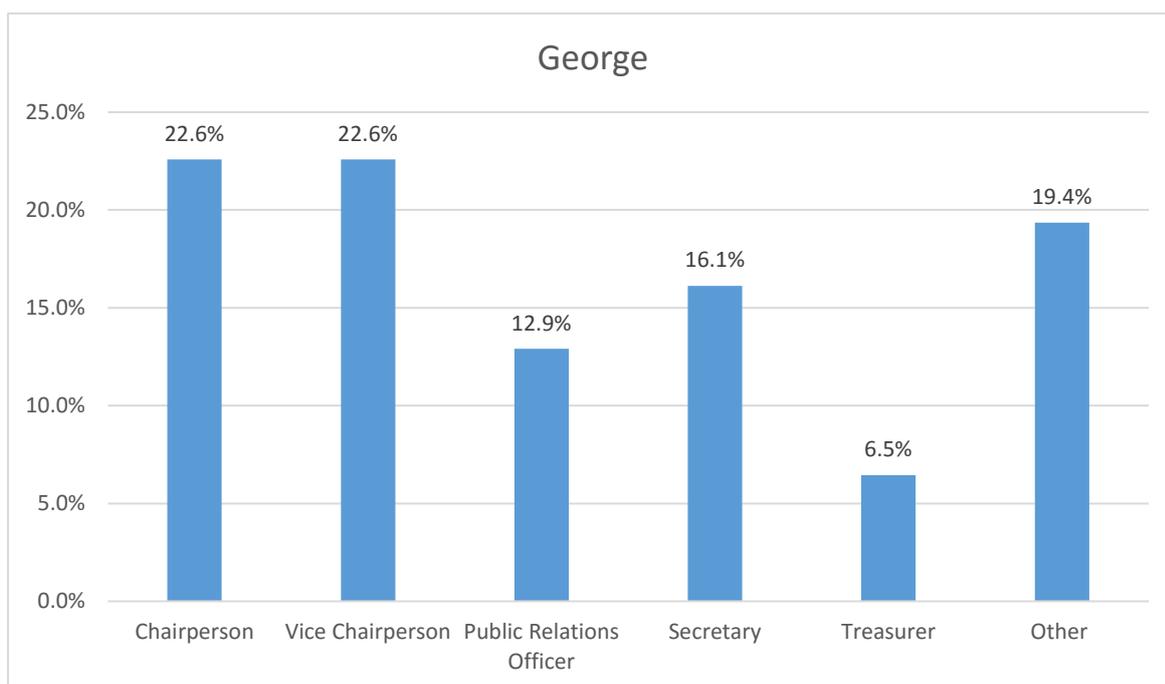
Graph 41: Leadership positions held by participants George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents held the position of secretary. In George, an equal amount of respondents held chair and vice chair positions.

The table below lists the positions that respondents reported as "other" in the overall survey.

Table 7: Leadership position reported as "Other"

Position	Percentage
Society officer / leader	25.2%
Captain	17.6%
Subcommittee member	17.6%
Class/site rep	10.1%
House committee	5.9%
Deputy	5%
Editor	4.2%
Team leader	3.4%
Additional member	2.5%
Coach	2.5%
Events co-ordinator / organiser	2.5%
Committee/council member	1.7%
Executive member	0.8%

Vice-Captain	0.8%

5.3.   Co-curricular participation

Co-curricular activities refer to the following activities: Beyond the Classroom, Supplementary Instruction (SI) leader, How2Buddy, Residence Mentor and Nelson Mandela Champions Within. Participation in these activities result in a co-curricular record (CCR), which is an official record which recognises involvement in NMMU co-curricular activities and enables students to record their learning and involvement and allows them to plan their growth and development.

Overall, almost a third of all respondents participate in co-curricular activities (35.4% of Port Elizabeth and 26.5% of George respondents). Graphs 42 and 43 demonstrate a breakdown of respondents according to co-curricular participation in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.
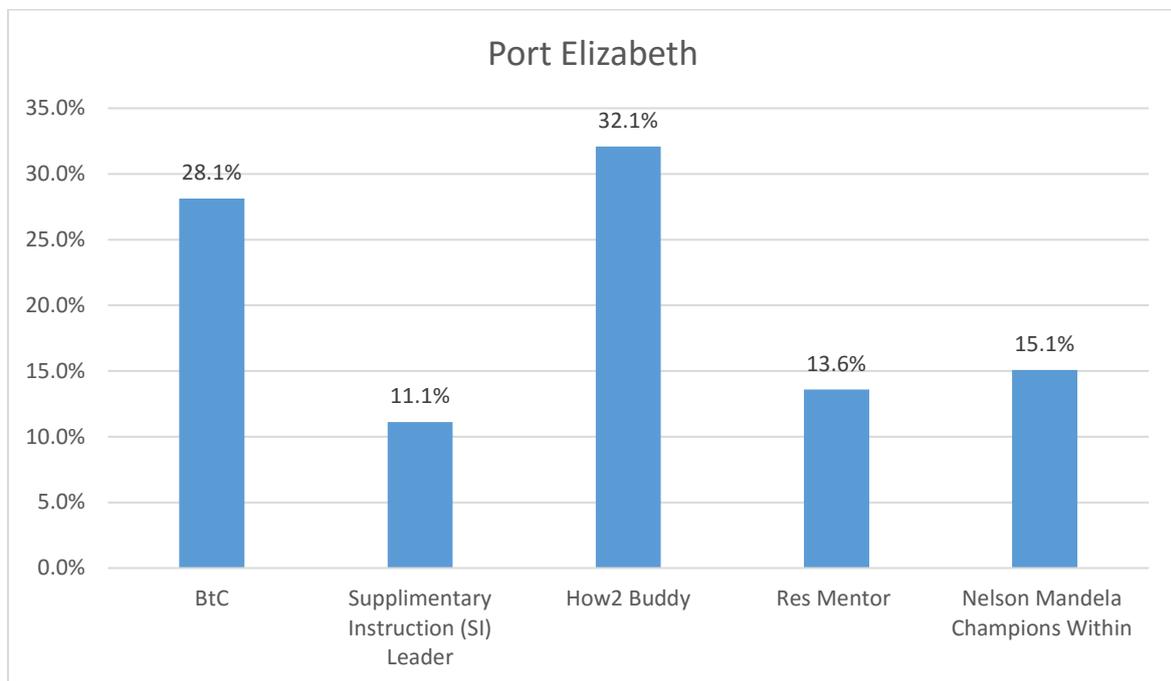
Graph 42: Co-curricular participation - Port Elizabeth
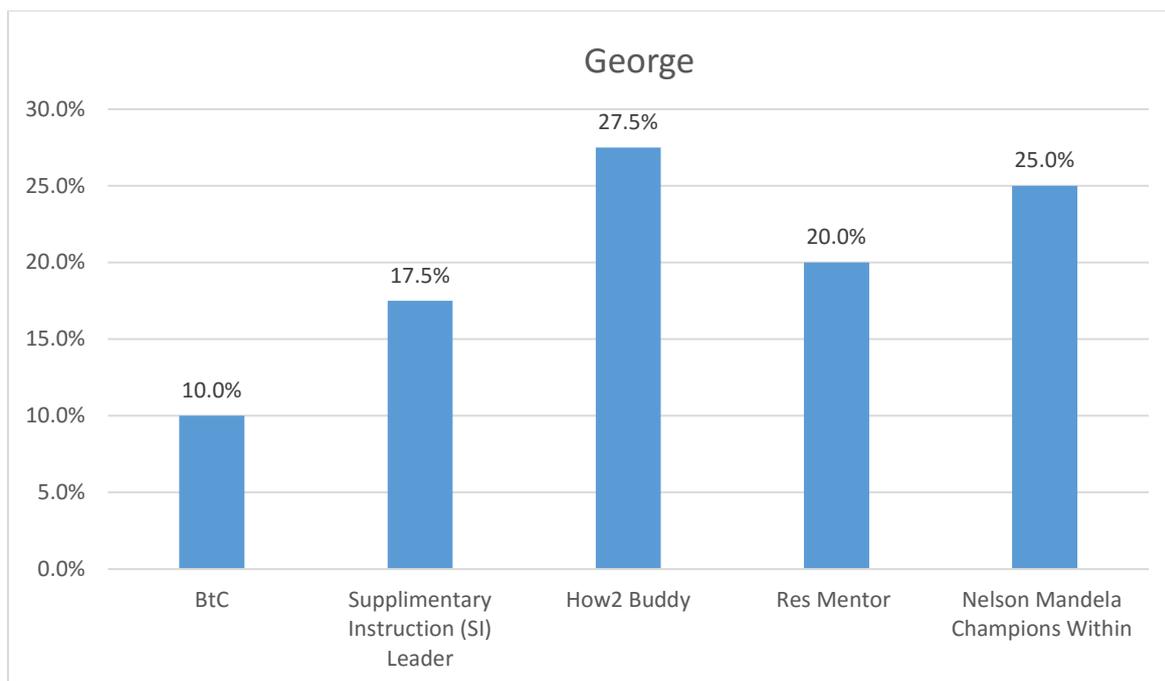
Graph 43: Co-curricular participation – George

Of the respondents that participate in co-curricular activities, most participate in the How2 Buddy programme.

In Port Elizabeth, 28.1% participate in the Beyond the Classroom (BtC) programme, 11.1% are supplementary instruction (SI) leaders, 32.1% participate in the How2 Buddy programme, 13.6% are residence mentors and 15.1% participate in the Nelson Mandela Champions Within.

In George, 10% participate in the Beyond the Classroom (BtC) programme, 17.5% are supplementary instruction (SI) leaders, 27.5% participate in the How2 Buddy programme, 20% are residence mentors and 25% participate in the Nelson Mandela Champions Within.

6. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

This section focuses on the competencies of student life activities. Respondents who participate in student life activities were asked to identify the learning they gain from

participating in student life activities. Non-participants were also asked what they felt they would gain from participating in student life activities.

These competencies were adapted from the development indicators of the learning outcomes of co-curricular activities as set by the NMMU.[2] Although there are 15 competencies, only those learning outcomes most likely to be identified among a majority of the array of co-curricular activities were included on the survey (the learning outcome from which each competency is derived from is listed next to the competency).

This section also compares the perceived learning outcomes of BtC participants with those set out by the programme in order to determine whether their participants' perceived views correlate with those set out by the programme.

6.1. Perceived competencies by students who participate in student life activities

The tables below show the perceived learning outcomes by students who participate in student life activities ranked from highest to lowest by mean score for Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

Table 8: Perceived learning outcomes of student life activity participants - Port Elizabeth

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.3
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.3
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.3
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (information literacy)	4.1

---

[2] NMMU learning outcomes and development indicators are attached to this report as an appendix

Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4.1
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.1
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (intellectual growth)	4.1
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.8

Table 9: Perceived learning outcomes of student life activity participants - George

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.3
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.2
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.2
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (information literacy)	4.1
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4.1
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.1
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (intellectual growth)	4
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	3.9
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9

Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	3.9
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	3.8
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.8
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.6
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.6

Table 8 and 9 show that participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of belongingness or higher.

For participants in Port Elizabeth, the top competencies are:

- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)

For participants in George, the top competencies are:

- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)

6.2. Perceived competencies by non-participants

Table 10 and 11 show the perceived learning outcomes of student life participation by non-participants.

Table 10: Perceived learning outcomes by non-participants - Port Elizabeth

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.1
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.1
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (information literacy)	4
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.9
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.9
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (intellectual growth)	3.9
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	3.9
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.9
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.9
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.7

Table 11: Perceived learning outcomes by non-participants - George

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.2
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.1
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)	4
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	3.9
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	3.9
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	3.9

Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	3.9
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	3.9
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	3.9
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	3.9
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (information literacy)	3.8
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	3.8
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	3.8
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (intellectual growth)	3.7
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	3.7
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	3.7
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	3.7
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.7
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	3.7
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.7
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.6

For non-participants the competencies are also ranked at an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning and higher.

The top perceived competencies for Port Elizabeth non-participants are:

- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)

The top perceived competencies for George non-participants are;

- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)

- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)
- Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (self-awareness and development)

6.3. Perceived learning outcomes of co-curricular activities –BtC

The BtC leadership programme is designed to help students understand and develop themselves with a comprehensive focus on leadership. Members are required to be actively engaged in sessions that expose them to new perspectives, foster reflection, and encourage action in their daily lives.

The learning outcomes of BtC as indicated in the CCR are:

- Intellectual growth
- Appreciating diversity
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships

In the previous year, 2014, the programme was not offered in George campus. However, it has since been available and as a result, the perceived learning outcomes for Port Elizabeth and George may be compared.

According to BtC participants in Port Elizabeth, the major competencies they receive from participating in the programme are:

- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)

- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)

According to BtC participants in George, the major competencies they receive from participating in the programme are:

- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified somewhat similar competencies that they feel they receive from being part of the BtC programme, with "understand and appreciate human and cultural differences" being their highest ranked competency.

Based on these top competencies, the learning outcomes identified by BtC participants can be highlighted. Table 12 compares the learning outcomes as out outlined by the programme with the top three identified by participants overall.

Table 12: BtC learning outcomes, vs learning outcomes according to participants

BtC learning outcomes	Learning outcomes according to BtC participants
Intellectual growth	Appreciating diversity
Appreciating diversity	Meaningful interpersonal relationships
Meaningful interpersonal relationships	Effective communication

Overall, the BtC programme meets 2 out of the three learning outcomes set out by the programme according to BtC participants on both campuses.

7. INTERFERENCE

This section highlights the top reasons likely to interfere with participation in co-curricular activities or experiences in Port Elizabeth vs George.

Table 13: Top interferences in student life activities - Port Elizabeth vs George

Port Elizabeth	George
Lectures/class (49.6%)	Day/time the activity is held (47.7%)
Day/time the activity is held (45.5%)	Time (involvement in other activities) (41.1%)
Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (37.2%)	Lectures/class (40.4%)
Time (involvement in other activities) (33.1%)	Finances, lack of money (35.8%)
Finances, lack of money (32%)	Transport (24.5%)

As indicated by table 13, the top interference in student life participation for respondents Port Elizabeth are lectures or classes, and in George, it is the day or time that activities are held.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSIONS

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

Overall the biographical characteristics of respondents is similar to the general NMMU population. Some exceptions include that there were more female respondents in George, which comprises of a predominantly male student population. Port Elizabeth also had a slightly higher number of black respondents (75%) when compared to the overall population (61.4%) and inversely, a slightly lower number of white respondents (11.4%) when compared to the student population (22.7%).

Overall, 94% of respondents are under the age of 25. In George, there were no respondents over the age of 30, and in Port Elizabeth, 2% of respondents were over the age of 30.

With regards to faculty information, slightly more respondents are registered full-time in Port Elizabeth (97.2%) as compared to the general student population (84%). In George, all respondents were full-time registered students. In Port Elizabeth, most respondents were in their second academic year of study (33.5%). Almost half of all George participants were in their first academic year (48.2%)

The survey attracted a higher number of on campus participants when compared to the general student population. In George, on and off campus respondents was in proportion to the general student population. Of the students that live off campus, most respondents from Port Elizabeth live in accredited off campuses residences and in George, most live in private accommodation.

In Port Elizabeth, the primary commute is the NMMU shuttle and in George, most respondents drive their own car. On both campuses, most of the respondents finance their education through personal and family savings.

With regards to student perceptions, the mean scores show an acceptable level of belongingness overall, as evident in the low mean scores of students who feel excluded (mean score = 3.0 and 2.6 in Port Elizabeth and George respectively).

Although student perceptions are overall positive, "I feel a sense of connection with the NMMU" and "I feel like NMMU is a community" were the lowest in both Port Elizabeth and George.

Further analysis show that in Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents had statistically significant differences, with female respondents had slightly higher mean scores and a small magnitude or effect size for the following perceptions: "my family encourages me to continue with my education at the NMMU," "I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU" and "I am proud to be attending the NMMU". All three perceptions had the effect size of 0.002.

In George, there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females, however, there was a statistically significant difference in the perception "I am proud to be attending the NMMU" between males and females of a small magnitude or effect (eta squared = 0.04). Female respondents had a slightly higher score.

ANOVA analysis of student perceptions according to race in Port Elizabeth found a statistically significant difference between races. A separate examination of the statements found that the magnitude or effect size of the difference is small, with the exception of "I feel like NMMU is a community," which has a moderate effect size. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that Indian, White and students who identified themselves as "Other" had the lowest level of agreement with the statement which indicated room for improvement.

In George, the MANOVA found that there is no statistically significant difference between the races all scores indicated an acceptable level of satisfaction.

Overall, 54% of respondents participate in student life activities, most of whom spend 1-5 hours per week on student life activities. In Port Elizabeth the student life activities with the most participants are academic societies (22%) followed by political societies (19.9%) then religious societies (14.3%). In George, sports clubs (27.1%) has the most participants followed by arts and culture activities (21.3%) and academic societies (19.2%).

Overall almost a third of participants are in leadership positions (31.4% of Port Elizabeth and 30% of George respondents) and participate in co-curricular programmes (35.4% of Port Elizabeth and 26.5% of George respondents). Of the respondents that participate in co-curricular activities, most participate in the How2 Buddy programme.

Based on the top rated competencies according to respondents who participate in student life activities in both Port Elizabeth and George (although ranked differently on each campus) the top learning outcomes of student life participation are:

- Independence
- Appreciating diversity
- Self-awareness and development
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Values exploration

The learning outcomes that non-participants believed they would gain by participating in student life activities differed for each campus. Based on the top ranked competencies, the learning outcomes that non-participants in Port Elizabeth feel they would benefit from participating are:

- Self-awareness and development
- Appreciating diversity
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Effective communication

Based on the top ranked competencies, the learning outcomes that non-participants in George feel they would benefit from participating are:

- Self-awareness and development
- Effective communication
- Values exploration

With regards to the BtC programme, survey findings differ from those of the previous year. Participants identified two of the three learning outcomes that are set out by the programme and identified effective communication as a third learning outcome of the programme. Participants also highlighted competencies with learning outcomes of self-awareness and development, healthy behaviours and values exploration as outcomes that they believe arise from being part of the programme.

The top interference in student life participation for respondents Port Elizabeth are lectures or classes, and in George, it is the day or time that activities are held.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this survey thus far support the literature on the benefits of co-curricular student engagement. Similarly to the previous year, the findings of the survey indicate that from participating in student life activities, students achieve the following learning outcomes: independence, self-awareness and development, appreciating diversity, values exploration and meaningful interpersonal relationships. The survey also highlights that the competencies that students gain from co-curricular activities are not limited to those highlighted by the programme and co-curricular activities instil more than what they set out to.

The survey also highlights that students who do not participate also recognise the benefits of student engagement. Non-participants believe that from participating in student life activities, they would achieve the following learning outcomes: appreciating diversity, self-awareness and development, meaningful interpersonal relationships, effective communication and values exploration.

It is recommended that these findings receive consideration as a follow-up to the survey and to:

- Communicate the findings of the student life survey with relevant staff

- Intensify marketing and communication strategies to students. This will increase student awareness of programmes on offer that will assist them to be more employable graduates

- Use the results of the survey to enhance the current offerings to inform the development of future programmes to best meet the needs of our students

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank:

- Professor Matthew Wawrzynski, Michigan State University for his continued support, motivation and expertise in the design, collation and interpretation of the data.

11. REFERENCES

Bhaskaran, V. (2010, August 5). Will the iPad kill the paper survey? Research. Retrieved from http://www.research-live.com/comment/will-the-ipad-kill-thepaper-survey?/4003283.article

Hazeur, C. (2008). Purposeful Co-Curricular Activities Designed to Increase Engagement: A Practice Brief Based on BEAMS Project Outcomes. Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Horovitz, B. (2010, July 28). Market researchers get new tool in iPad. USA Today. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2010-07-28-ipad28_ST_N.htm

Jones, J. L., & Sinclair, B. (2011). Assessment on the go: Surveying students with an iPad. Georgia State University Library. University Library Faculty Publications.

Shernoff, D. J., Csikszentmihalyi, M., Shneider, B., & Shernoff, E. S. (2003). Student engagement in high school classrooms from the perspective of flow theory. School Psychology Quarterly, 18(2), 158.