

**REPORT ON THE 2018
NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY STUDENT
EXPERIENCES SURVEY**

**Developed by the Department of Student Governance and
Development and the Department of Educational Administration**

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF STUDENT EXPERIENCES SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

A vast number of researchers have highlighted the importance of student engagement in student development (Hu and Kuh, 2002; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff, 2003; Hazeur, 2008 amongst others). Defined as participation in educationally effective practices both inside and outside the classroom, leading to a range of desirable outcomes (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek, 2007), student engagement not only highlights the importance of academic activities, but also activities outside the classroom, or student development (co-curricular) activities. Research has found that co-curricular or student development programmes are a necessary and integral component of student engagement and the university experience. For student development programs to be perceived as experiences that promote student learning, student development programs must be assessed with methods of evaluation comparable to those used to evaluate curricular courses.

Student feedback on co-curricular learning and satisfaction is important as it will contribute to an educational experience that is relevant and responsive to students' 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.

1.1 Structure of the report

This is a continuation of the Student Experience Survey administered by the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD). The purpose of the survey is to assess and analyse co-curricular learning of Nelson Mandela University students. The objectives of the study were :

1. To conduct a survey to assess student co-curricular experiences.
2. To investigate and identify student learning outcomes.
3. To identify the top learning outcomes associated with student life activities.

The survey provides the institution with confidential detailed annual reports on co-curricular learning.

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 cocurricular activities to enhance the quality of student experiences.

The results of the previous surveys highlighted the following:

- Student perceptions of the Nelson Mandela University were generally high.
- Approximately 50% of first-year students are involved in cocurricular experiences.
- More than 15% of students are involved in cocurricular activities for between 1-5 hours per week.
- Overall, participants identified growth in independence, meaningful interpersonal relationships, appreciating diversity, self-awareness and development, and values exploration due to cocurricular participation.
- Students involved in cocurricular experiences report higher sense of belonging than students who are not involved.
- The Nelson Mandela University Shuttle is the most used method of transportation.
- The major barriers to involvement in campus life activities are the day or time that activities are held and lecture or class commitments.

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

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 were forwarded to all students. The rationale for choosing such an approach was that all 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 completed 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 Nelson Mandela University 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 Nelson Mandela University Research Ethics Committee (Human) for final approval.

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

Sections	Categories
1	<i>Student' perceptions of life at Nelson Mandela University</i>

2	<i>Types of co-curricular involvement</i> – a range of activities are listed varying from society involvement to sport club participation
3	<i>For students participating:</i> Learning outcomes linked to their participation
4	<i>For students not participating:</i> Perceived learning outcomes linked to their participation
5	<i>Interferences</i> with involvement in co-curricular experiences/activities
6	<i>Biographical information</i> 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, ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. This was chosen in order to determine the perceptions and level of participation of survey respondents.

SECTION 2: INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The total number of respondents to the Student Experiences Survey was 4804 students. This represents 16.8 % of the 28 658 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 1.29%.

Registered Nelson Mandela University students on the North, South, 2nd Avenue, Missionvale, Bird Street, 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 belongingness or identified

learning;

- A score of between 3.4 and 4.2 indicates an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning;
- A score of between 2.6 and 3.4 indicates room for improvement; and
- A score of 2.6 and less signals a problem that needs 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 are frequency, cross-tabulation, 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 being 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 and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests.

The annual analysis of data has enabled action research based on the information received. After the three-year period, we will be able to analyse trends in co-curricular learning outcomes.

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

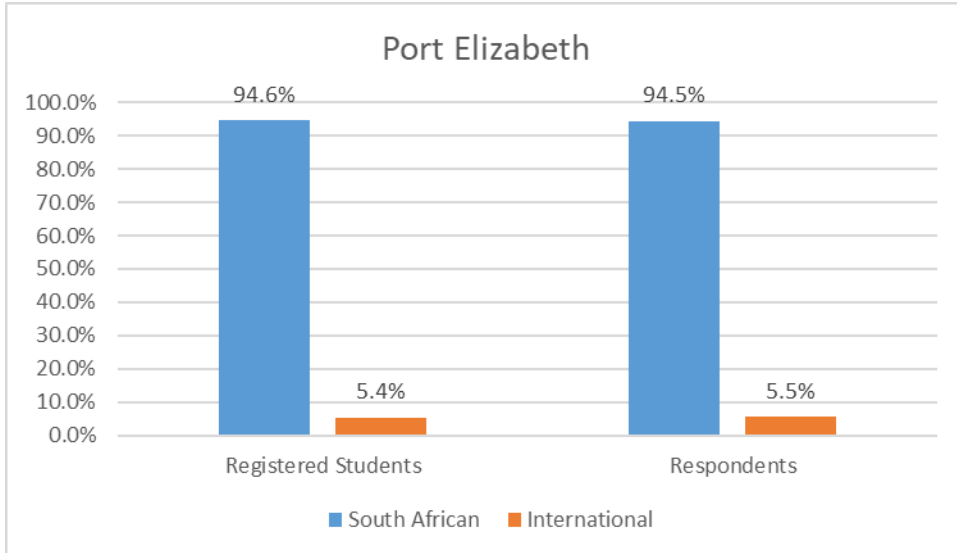
3. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO THE SURVEY

Of the 4804 students who participated in the survey, 4541 were from Port Elizabeth and 245 from George (18 respondents did not list a campus). 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.

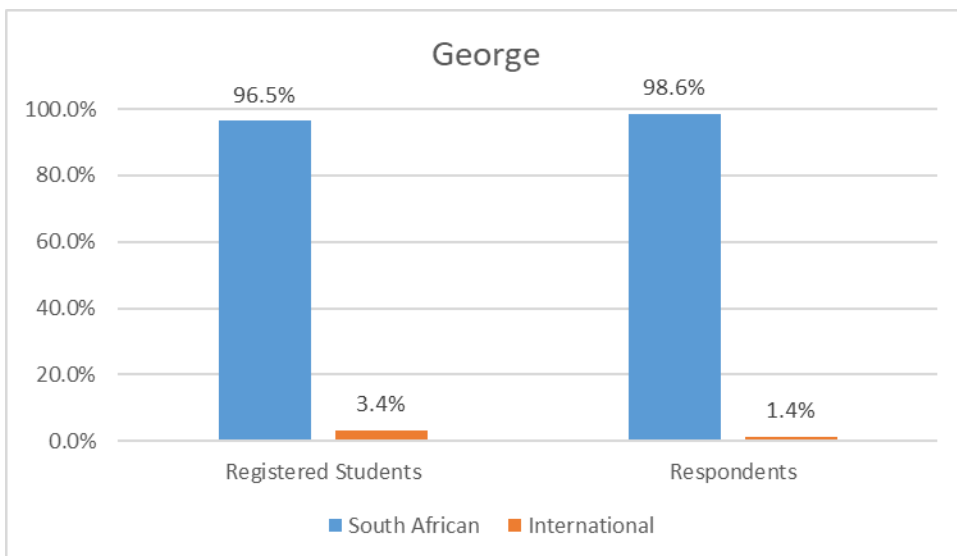
3.1. Participant information

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

3.1.1. Nationality



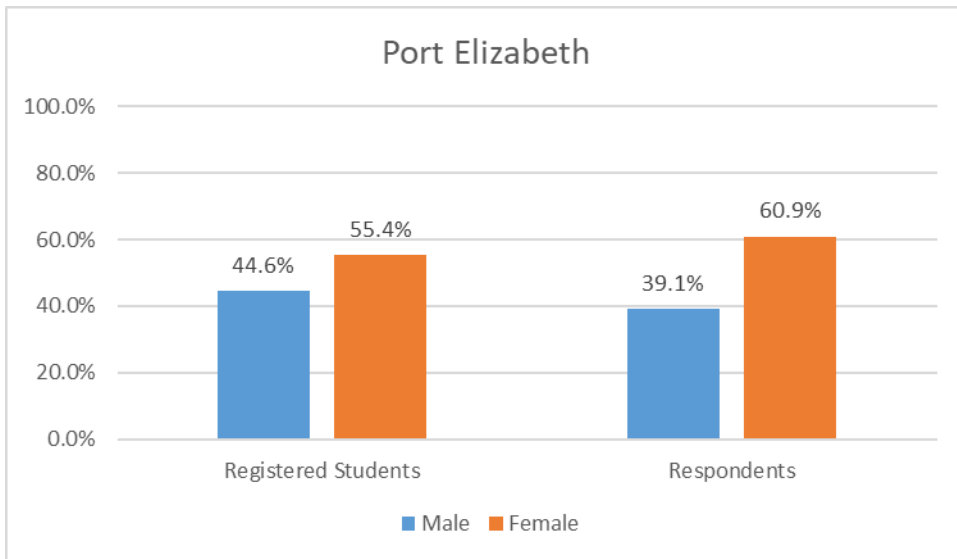
Graph 1: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality - Port Elizabeth



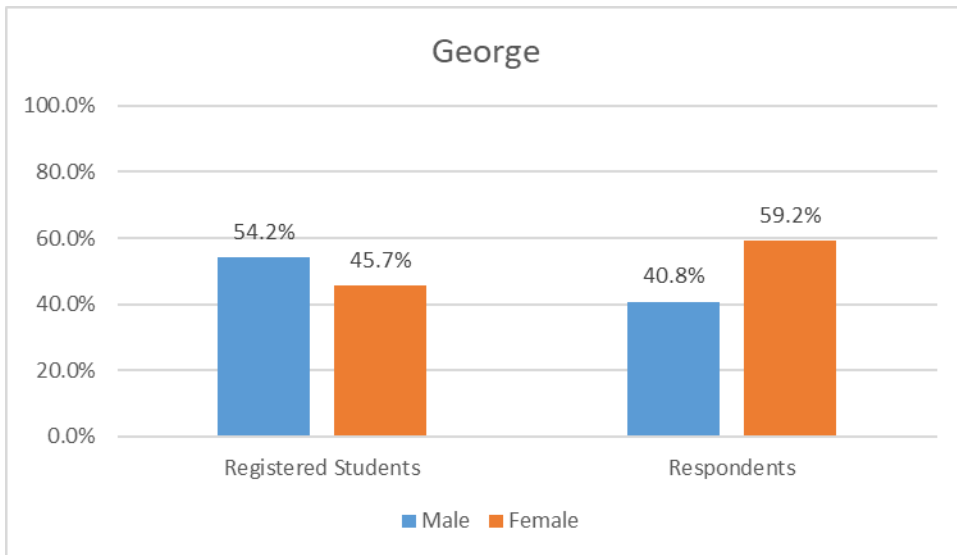
Graph 2: Registered students vs. respondents according to nationality – George

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. Sex



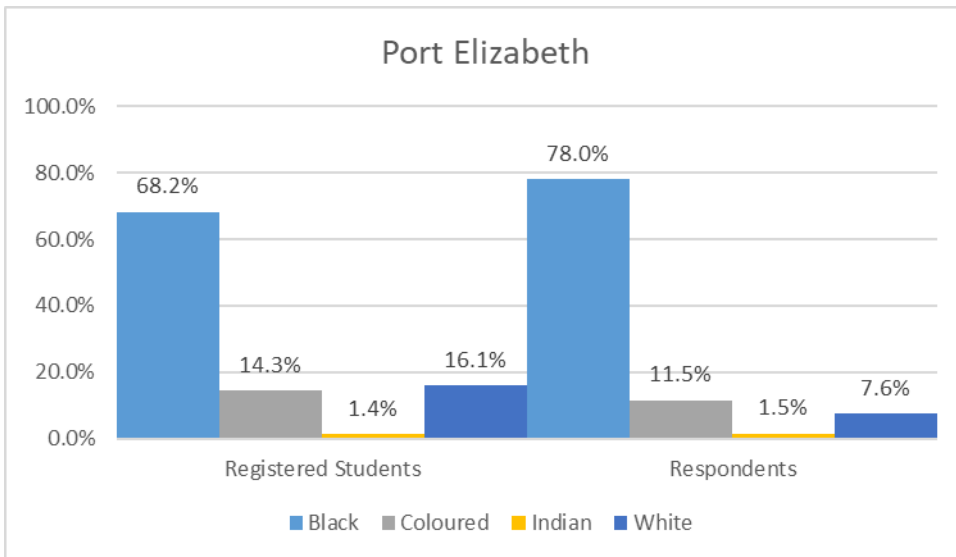
Graph 3: Registered students vs. respondents according to sex - Port Elizabeth



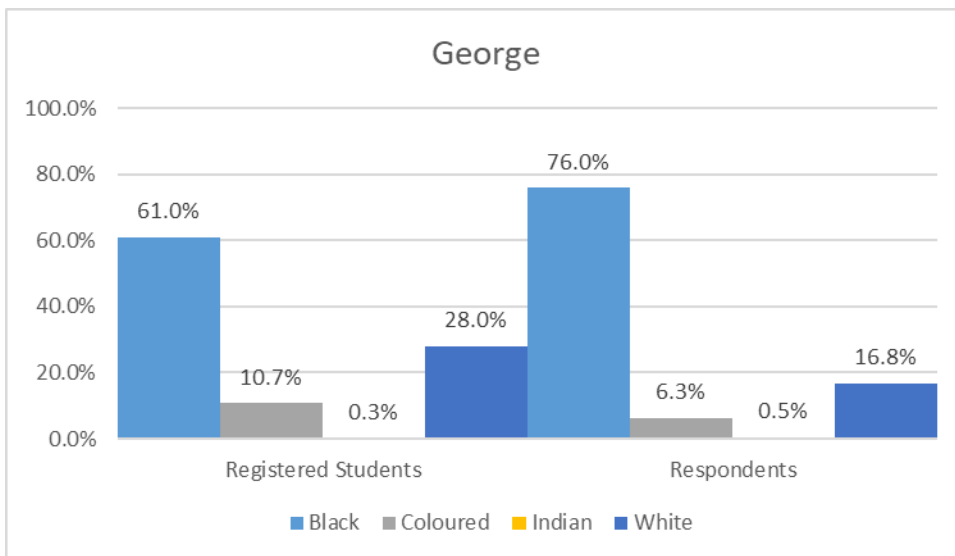
Graph 4: Registered students vs. respondents according to sex – George

Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate the breakdown of respondents according to sex 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 had a predominantly male student population, more respondents were female.

3.1.3. Race¹



Graph 5: Registered students vs. respondents according to race - Port Elizabeth



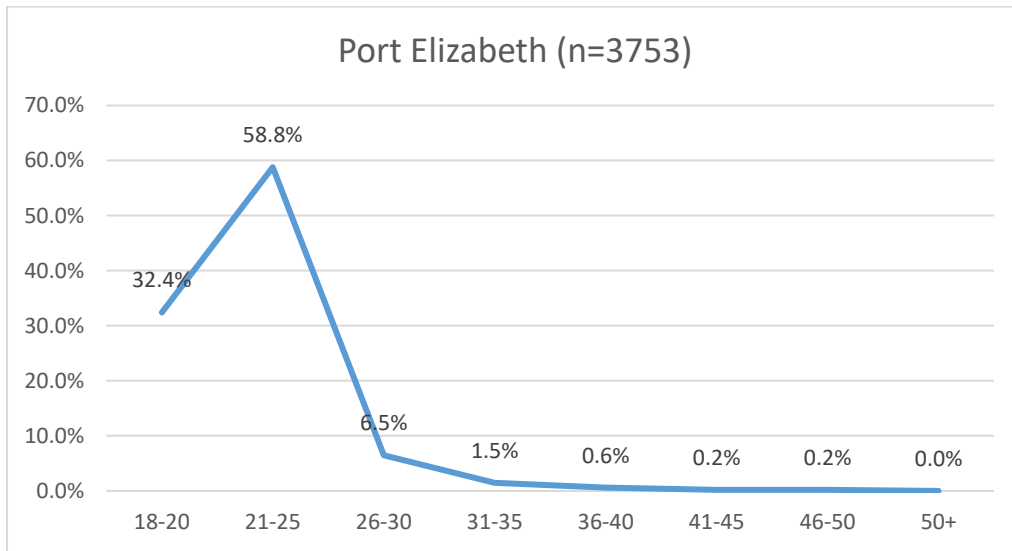
Graph 6: Registered students vs. respondents according to race – George

Graphs 5 and 6, which demonstrate a comparison of the race classification of respondents with registered students in Port Elizabeth and George respectively, indicate that relatively more black students responded to the survey. Fewer white students responded to the survey.

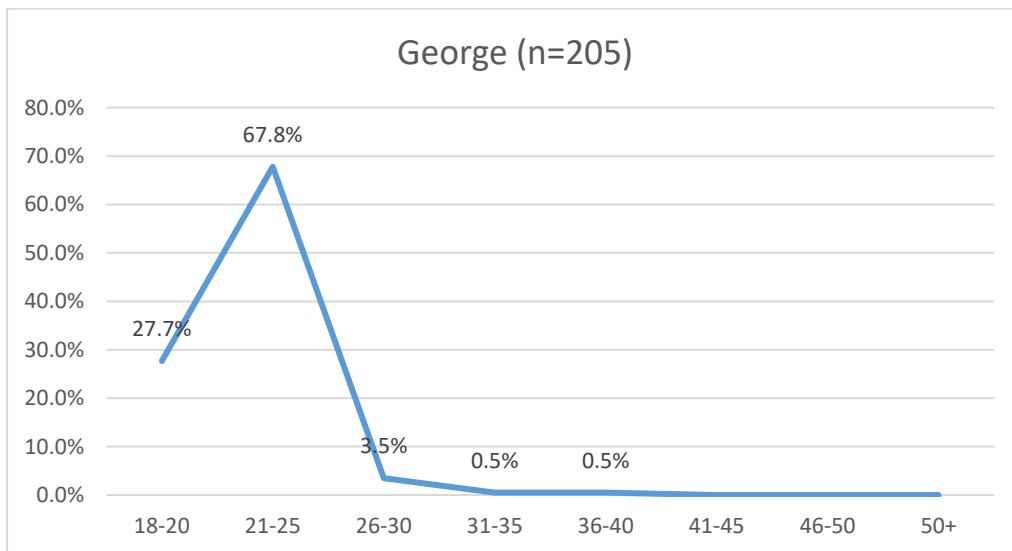
¹ Race groups are tallied according to main race groups set by Nelson Mandela University DHET according to Home Affairs specifications

3.1.4. Age

As indicated by graphs 7 and 8 below, most respondents are younger than 26 (91.2% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 95.5% of respondents in George are between ages 18-25). More than half of all respondents fall within the 21 – 25 age range in both Port Elizabeth (58.8%) and George (67.8%), followed by 18-20 (32.4% in Port Elizabeth and 27.7% in George).



Graph 7: Age range of respondents - Port Elizabeth

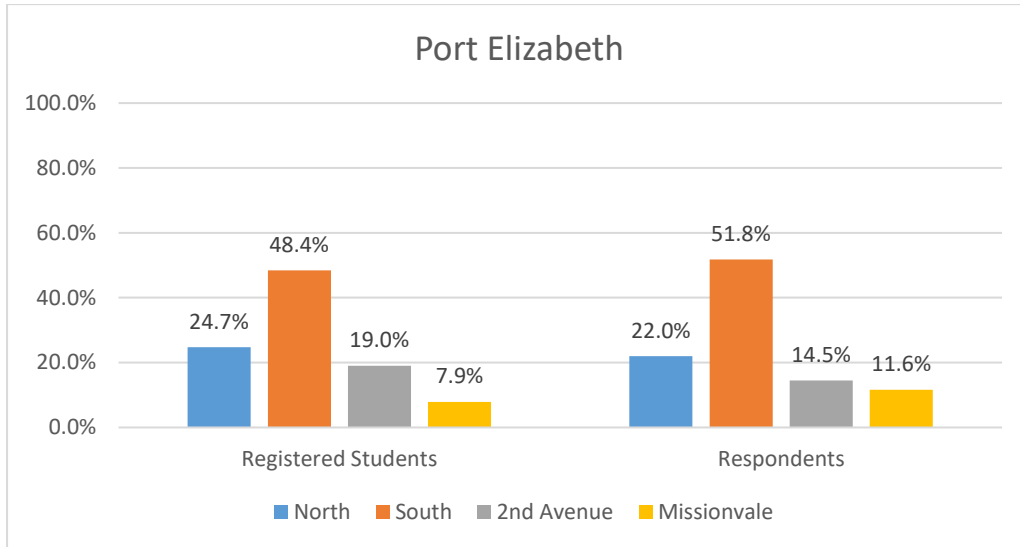


Graph 8: Age range of respondents - George

3.2. Faculty information

This section describes respondents according to their faculty and campus information compared to the general Nelson Mandela University student population.

3.2.1. Campus attended

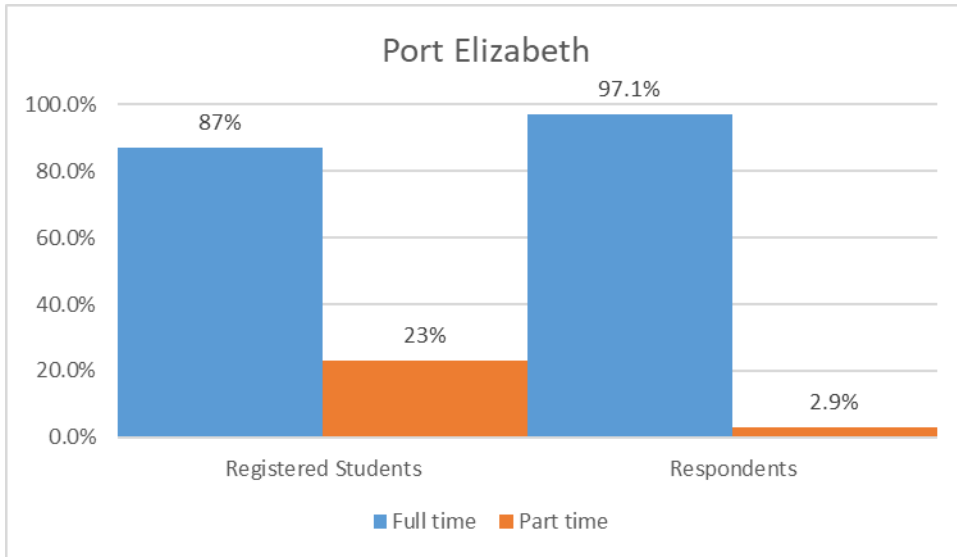


Graph 9: Registered students vs. respondents according to campus attended - Port Elizabeth

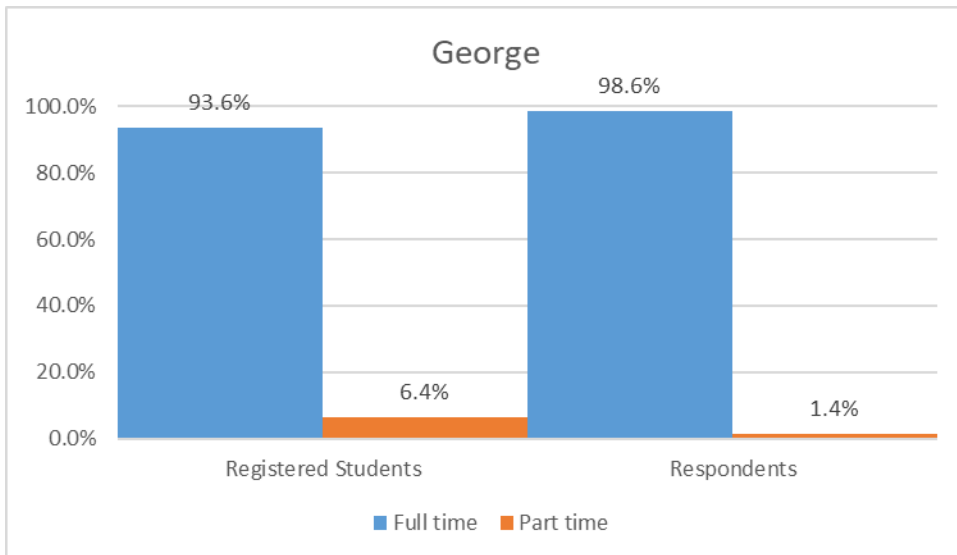
As shown by graph 9, the number of respondents on each campus was proportionate to the student population. The highest proportion of respondents were from South campus, which had the highest proportion of registered students.

3.2.2. Registration status

Graphs 10 and 11 convey 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, when compared to the Nelson Mandela University population, there were more full-time students who responded to the survey.



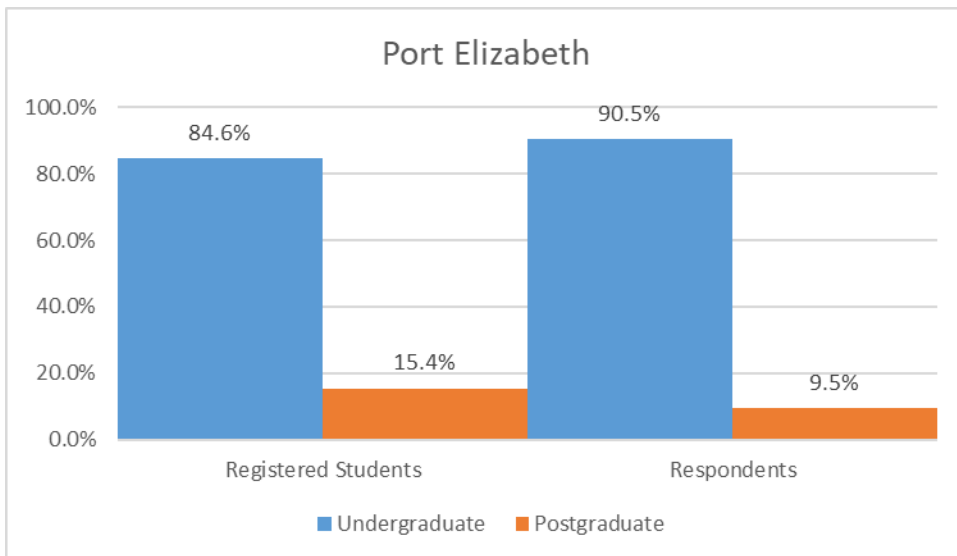
Graph 10: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status- Port Elizabeth



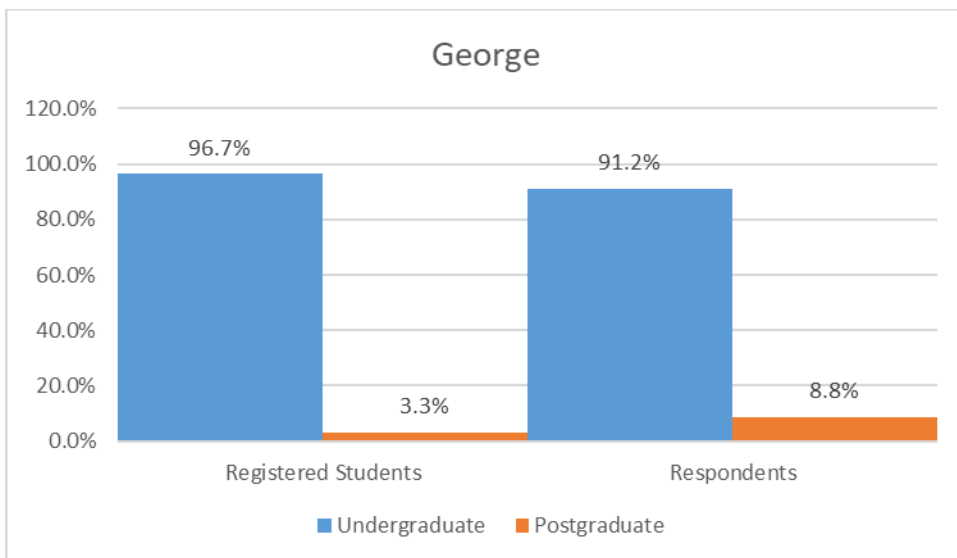
Graph 11: Registered students vs. respondents according to registration status – George

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

Graph 12 shows that the academic level ratio of respondents in Port Elizabeth is like the registered university population.

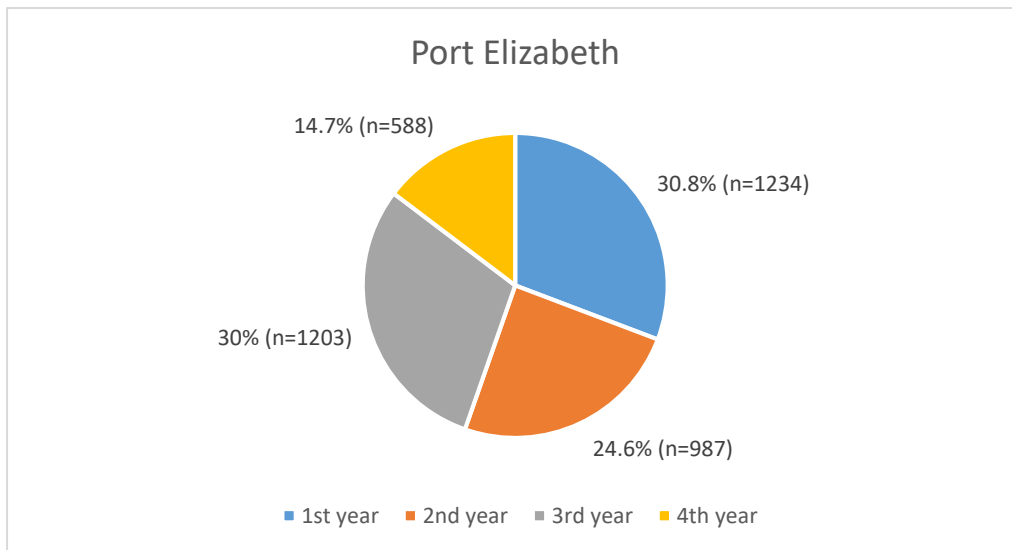
Graph 13 shows that with regards to the academic level ratio in George, slightly more postgraduate students responded to the survey when compared to registered students.

3.2.4. Academic year of study

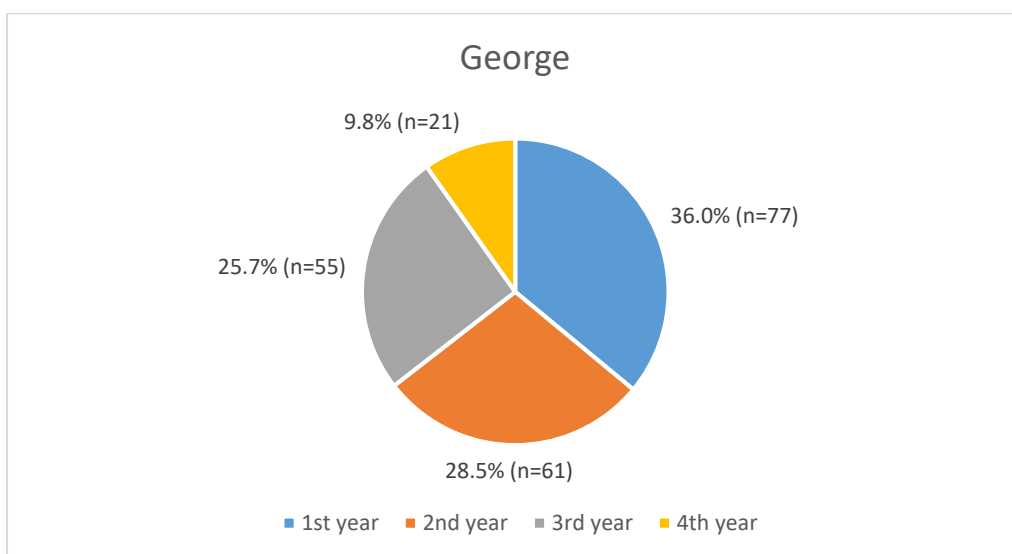
Academic year of study refers to the year of study of the course that a student is in.

In Port Elizabeth, most of the respondents were in their first or third year. More specifically, 30.8% (n=1234) were in their first year, 24.6% (n=987) were in their second year, and 30% (n=1203) were in their third year.

Most respondents in George were first (36%, n=77) or second year students (28.5%, n=61).



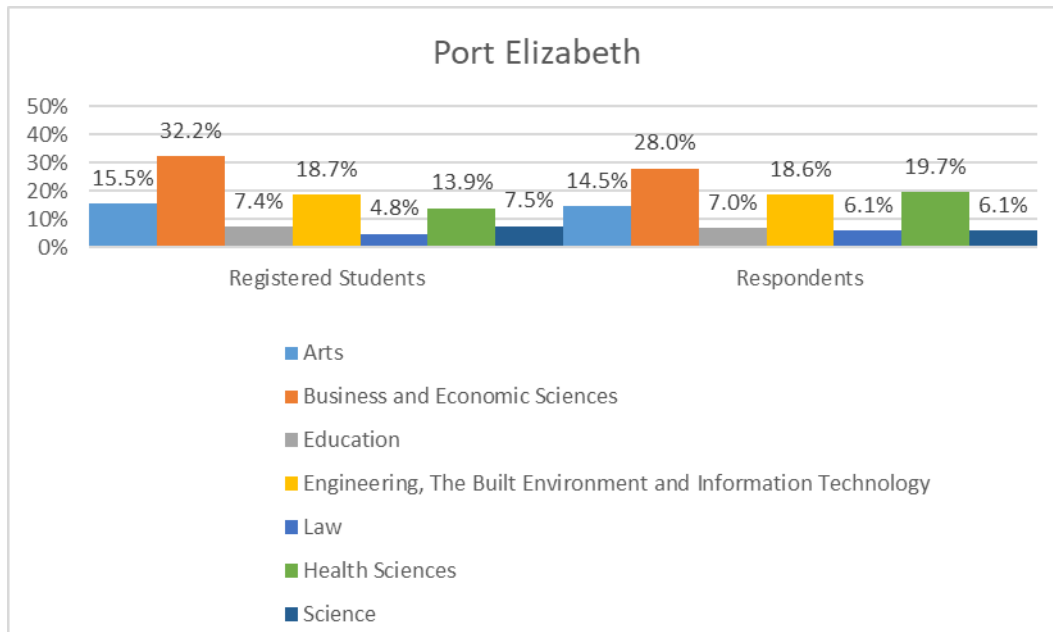
Graph 14: Year of study - Port Elizabeth



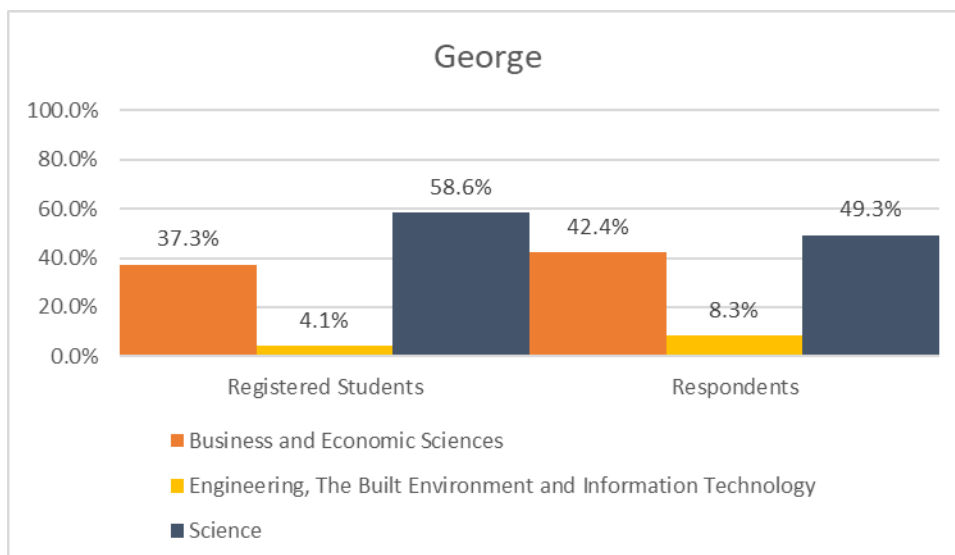
Graph 15: Year of study – George

3.2.5. Faculty

Graphs 16 and 17 reflect the breakdown of respondents according to the faculties in Port Elizabeth and George respectively. Overall, respondents are generally representative of the Nelson Mandela University population with regards to faculty in Port Elizabeth. In George, nearly half of respondents are from the science faculty (49.3%). The other half are from the business and economic sciences faculty (42.4%).



Graph 16: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – Port Elizabeth



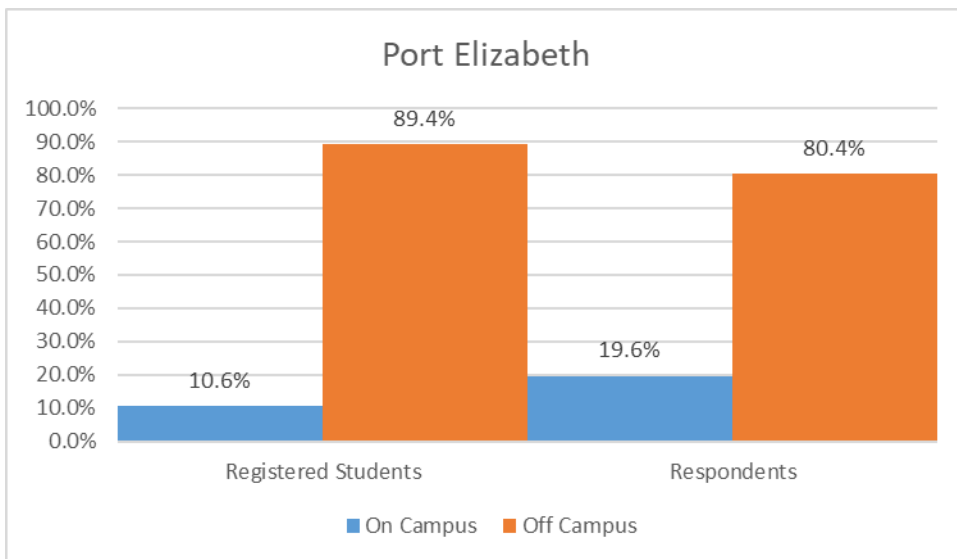
Graph 17: Registered students vs. respondents by faculty – George

3.3. Living and commuting

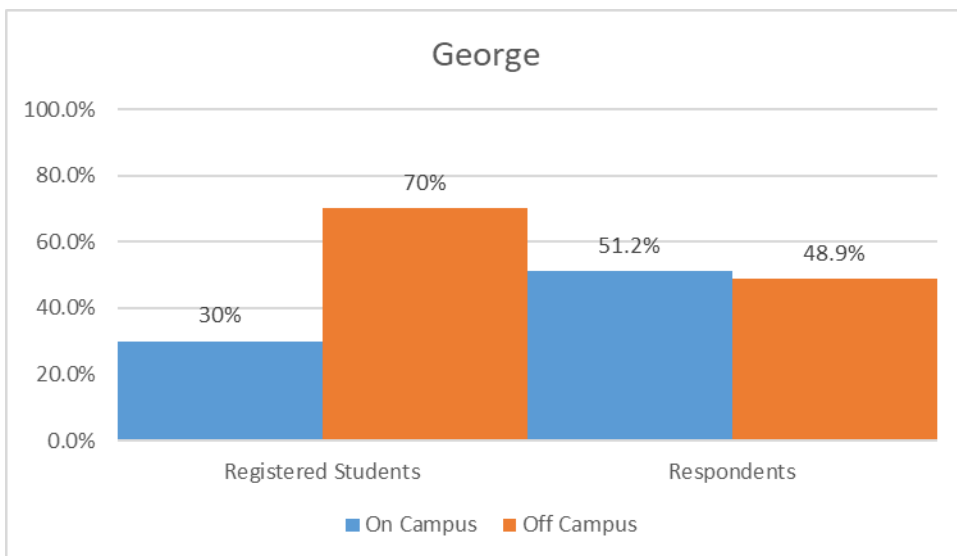
This section will describe respondents according to on and off campus variables, how respondents commute and how they finance their studies.

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 Nelson Mandela University students.



Graph 18: On vs. off campus breakdown - Port Elizabeth



Graph 19: On vs. off campus breakdown - George

When compared to the general student population, the survey attracted a greater number of students who reside on campus in Port Elizabeth.

In George, the survey attracted a comparatively high number of on-campus students, with 51.2% of respondents residing on campus compared to 30% of the proportion of registered students.

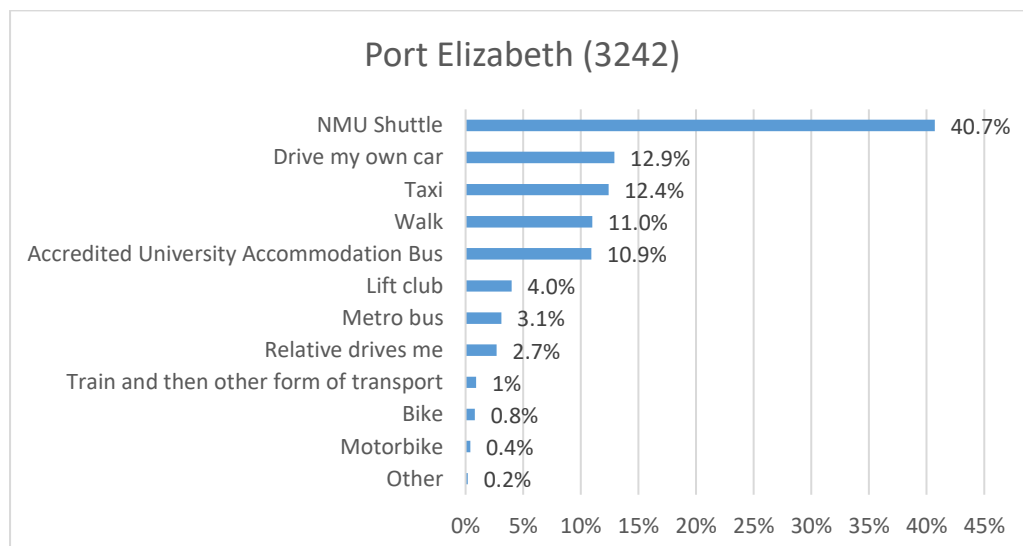
3.3.2. Off campus type of living

Of the 3272 respondents who live off campus in Port Elizabeth, 43.7% reside in an accredited off-campus residence, 25.9% live in a private accommodation, and 30.4% live at home or with extended family.

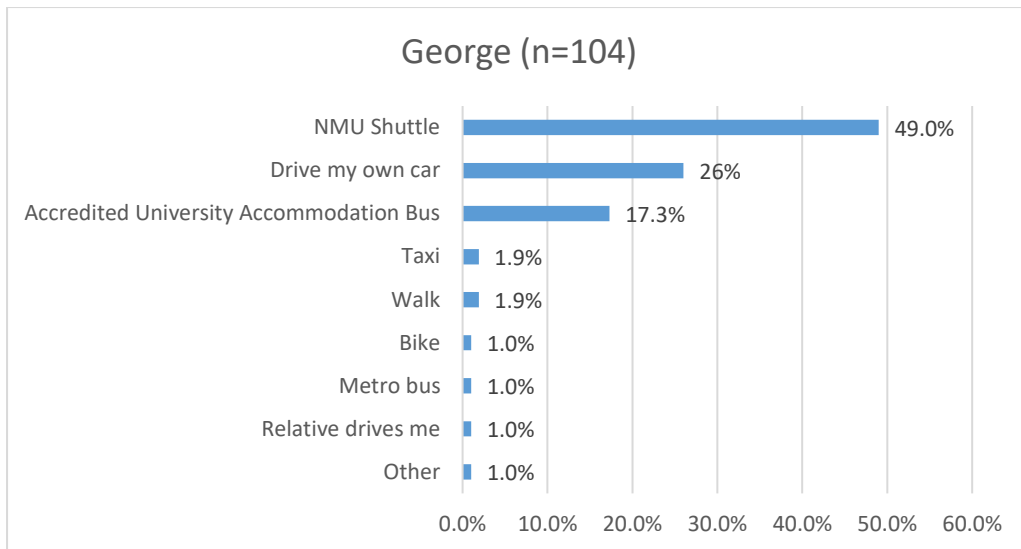
Of the 105 respondents who live off campus in George, 52.4% live in an accredited university residence or house, 25.7% live in a private accommodation, and 21.9% live at home with family or extended family.

3.3.3. Primary commute to campus

The following graphs indicate the top primary way to commute to campus on both campuses is the Nelson Mandela University shuttle service.



Graph 20: Primary commute to campus - Port Elizabeth



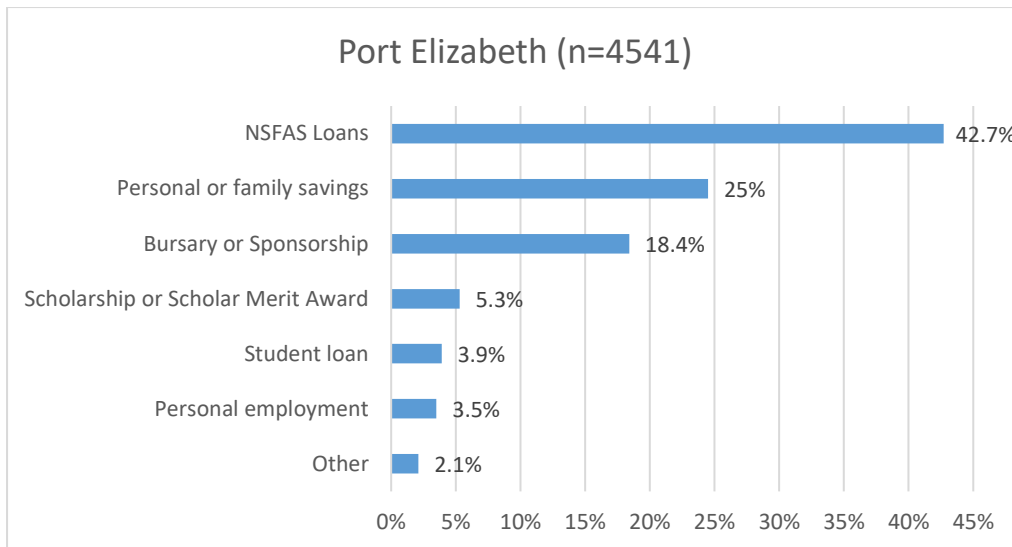
Graph 21: Primary commute to campus – George

As shown by graph 20, the top five modes of commuting to campus by respondents in Port Elizabeth are the Nelson Mandela University shuttle (40.7%), driving own car (12.9%), taxi (12.4%), walking (11%), and accredited university accommodation bus (10.9%).

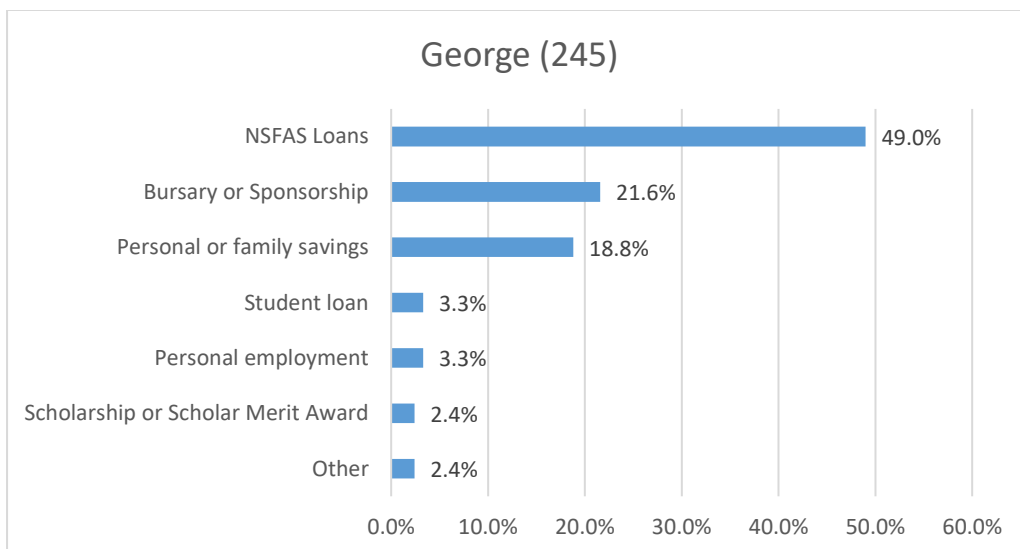
In George, as highlighted by graph 21, the top modes of commute are the Nelson Mandela University Shuttle (49%), drive own car (26%), accredited university accommodation bus (17.3%), and other forms of transportation such as walking, taxis, biking, metro buses, or riding with a relative (7.8%).

3.3.4. Method of financing education

The top methods respondents use overall to finance their education are NSFAS loans, personal or family savings, 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 NSFAS loans (42.7%) followed by personal or family savings (25%) and bursary or sponsorship (18.4%).

In George, Graph 23 shows most respondents' education was funded by NSFAS loans (49%) followed by bursary or sponsorship (21.6%) and personal or family savings (18.8%).

4. PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT LIFE AT NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

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

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

The overall results are as follows:

Question	Mean (sd)	n	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University	4.4 (0.9)	4521	57.2%	28.5%	9.4%	2.4%	2.5%
I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University	3.7 (1.0)	4509	23.9%	39.8%	26.7%	6.1%	3.5%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University	4.4 (0.8)	4505	57.9%	32.9%	6.1%	1.5%	1.7%
I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University	4.2 (0.9)	4500	44.6%	36.4%	14.2%	2.5%	2.2%
I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community	3.8 (1.0)	4479	26.5%	37.1%	24.9%	8.1%	3.5%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.9 (1.3)	4497	12.9%	18.4%	29.3%	21.7%	17.7%

Table 1: Perceptions of student life - Port Elizabeth

Question	Mean (sd)	n	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University	4.4 (0.9)	243	60.1%	25.5%	10.3%	2.1%	2.1%
I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University	4 (0.9)	243	32.9%	39.1%	21.4%	4.9%	1.6%
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University	4.5 (0.8)	242	63.6%	26.9%	6.2%	1.2%	2.1%
I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University	4.4 (0.8)	241	58.1%	32%	5.8%	2.5%	1.7%
I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community	3.9 (1.0)	241	30.7%	38.6%	21.2%	7.1%	2.5%
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.7 (1.2)	242	9.5%	16.9%	27.7%	28.5%	17.4%

Table 2: Perceptions of student life - George

Student perceptions were overall positive on both campuses, as evident in the relatively low mean score of students who feel excluded (mean score=2.9, sd=1.3 and mean=2.7, sd=1.2 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 Nelson Mandela University (mean=3.7, sd=1 in Port Elizabeth; mean=4, sd=0.9 in George)
- I feel like Nelson Mandela University is a community (mean=3.8, sd=1 in Port Elizabeth; mean=3.9, sd=1 in George).

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

The results of the analyses follow.

4.1. Student perceptions according to sex

Table 3 shows that in Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents differed significantly on three perceptions.

Question	Sex	Mean	n	Difference	Effect size
My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University	Female	4.4	2413	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.3	1554		
I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University	Female	3.7	2409	Significant difference	Small
	Male	3.8	1548		
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University	Female	4.5	2407	Significant difference	Small
	Male	4.4	1548		
I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University.	Female	4.2	2409	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	4.2	1542		
I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community	Female	3.8	2394	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	3.8	1535		
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	Female	2.9	2408	No significant difference	N/A
	Male	2.9	1541		

Table 3: Student perceptions according to sex - Port Elizabeth

In Port Elizabeth, male and female respondents had statistically significant differences, with female respondents reporting 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 Nelson Mandela University” (eta squared = 0.007), “I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University” (eta squared = 0.002), and “I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the NMMU” (eta squared = 0.002). All three perceptions had a small effect size.

Further analysis of the student perceptions according to sex found that there was no significant difference in student perceptions between males and females in George.

4.2. Student perceptions according to race

Tables 4 and 5 highlight student perceptions by race in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.

Question	Black (n=2902)	Coloured (n=429)	Indian (n=56)	White (n=284)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University	4.4 (sd=0.9)	4.4 (0.9)	4.5 (0.7)	4.4 (0.8)	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University	3.8 (1.0)	3.7 (1.0)	3.9 (0.9)	3.4 (1.0)	Small
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University	4.5 (0.8)	4.6 (0.5)	4.5 (0.7)	4.3 (0.8)	No difference
I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University	4.2 (0.9)	4.2 (0.9)	4.1 (0.9)	3.9 (0.9)	Small
I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community	3.8 (1.0)	3.7 (1.0)	3.7 (1.0)	3.3 (1.1)	Small
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.9 (1.3)	2.8 (1.2)	2.8 (1.3)	2.9 (1.2)	No difference

Table 4: Student perceptions by race - Port Elizabeth

Question	Black (n=156)	Coloured (n=13)	White (n=35)	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my education at the Nelson Mandela University.	4.5 (0.9)	4.5 (1.1)	4.4 (0.8)	No difference
I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University	4.1 (0.9)	3.8 (1.1)	3.5 (1.0)	Medium
I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at the Nelson Mandela University	4.6 (0.8)	4.4 (1.1)	4.3 (0.7)	No difference
I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University	4.6 (0.7)	4.2 (1.1)	3.9 (0.9)	Medium
I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community	4.1 (0.9)	3.6 (1.0)	3.1 (1.1)	Large
I sometimes feel excluded from activities or events on campus	2.6 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)	3.2 (1.1)	No difference

Table 5: Student perceptions by race - George

For Port Elizabeth, the overall ANOVA found a statistically significant difference between races amongst some of the perceptions.

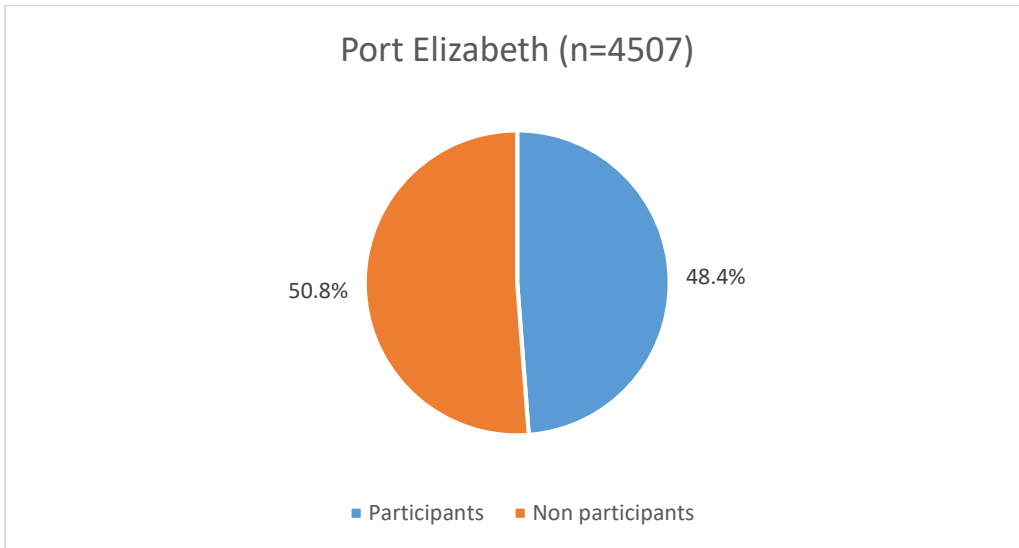
White students' perceptions differed from other students when it comes to the statement "I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University." The magnitude or effect size of the difference is small ($\eta^2 = 0.02$). The scores indicated that black students ($m=3.8$, $sd=1$) and coloured students ($m=3.7$, $sd=1$) had a slightly higher mean score than white students ($m=3.4$, $sd=1$).

White students additionally had different perceptions from both black and coloured students in the statements "I am proud to be attending the Nelson Mandela University" and "I feel like the Nelson Mandela University is a community." When it comes to the Nelson Mandela University pride perception, white students ($m=3.9$, $sd=0.9$) had a lower mean score than black ($m=4.2$, $sd=0.9$) and coloured ($m=4.2$, $sd=0.9$). The magnitude or effect size of the difference is small ($\eta^2 = 0.012$). White students' perceptions of Nelson Mandela University as a community ($m=3.3$, $sd=1.1$) differed from black ($m=3.8$, $sd=1$) and coloured ($m=3.7$, $sd=1$) students' perceptions with a small effect size ($\eta^2=0.019$). Inspection of the mean scores indicates there is room for improvement regarding this statement for white students.

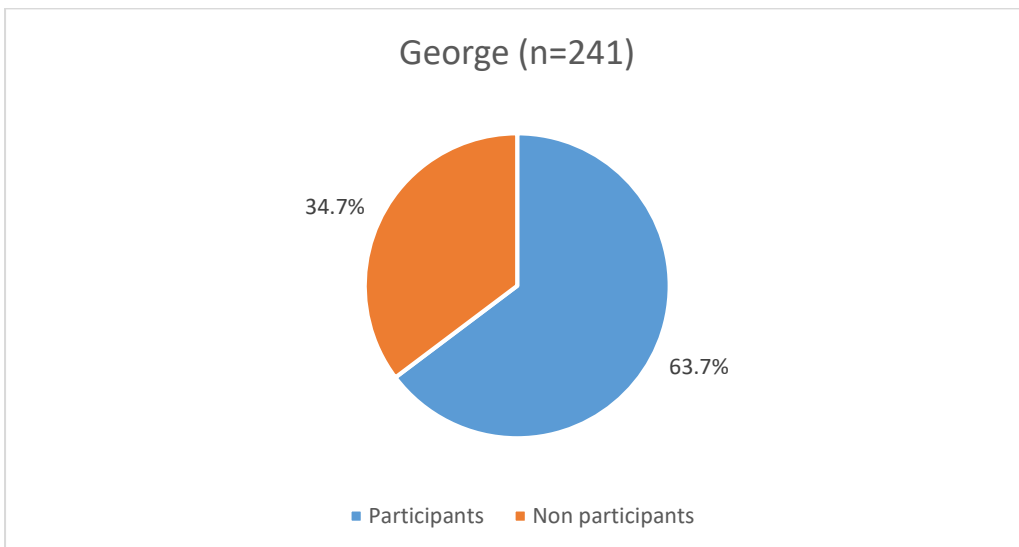
In George, the ANOVA found statistically significant differences by race with regards to perceptions in three statements. Black ($m=4.1$, $sd=0.9$) and white ($m=3.5$, $sd=1$) students had a statistically significant difference of medium magnitude ($\eta^2 = 0.091$) in perceptions of connection with the Nelson Mandela University. Nelson Mandela University pride also differed by black students ($m=4.6$, $sd=0.7$) and white students ($m=3.9$, $sd=0.9$) with a medium magnitude ($\eta^2=0.098$). Finally, black students' perceptions of the Nelson Mandela University as a community ($m=4.1$, $sd=0.9$) was different from white students' perceptions ($m=3.1$, $sd=1.1$) with a large effect ($\eta^2=0.141$). Closer inspections of the mean scores indicate the black students tended to report slightly higher scores.

5. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES

Graphs 24 and 25 show the number of respondents who participate in student life activities versus those who do not in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.



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

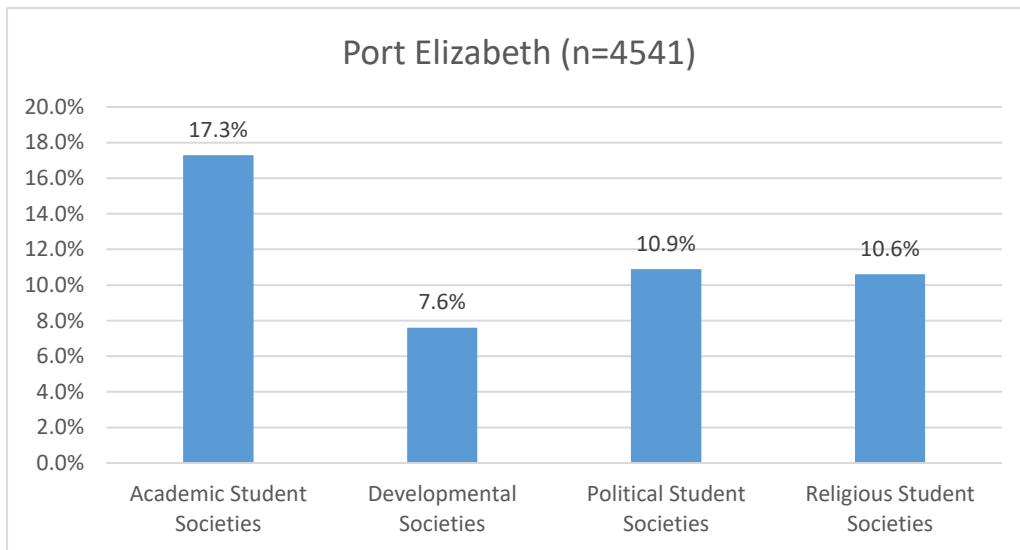
The survey attracted a greater number of students who do not participate in student life activities in Port Elizabeth, with 48.4% of respondents being student life participants. In contrast, more respondents are student life participants in George (63.7%).

5.1. Participation in student life activities

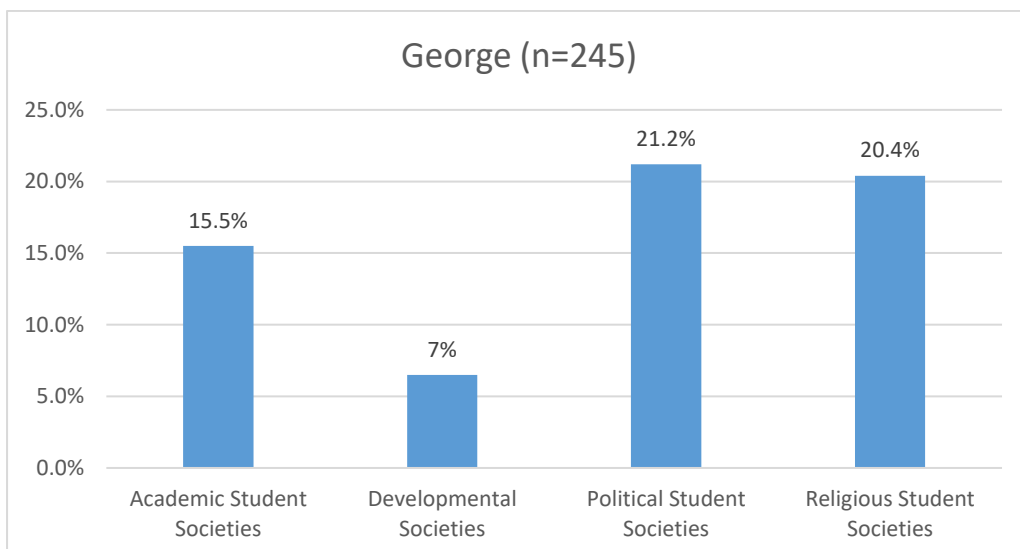
Student life activities are divided into Societies (which are broken down to four types: academic, developmental, religious, and political), Arts and Culture activities, Sports Clubs, and Residence Leagues and Events. The following section demonstrates a breakdown of the number of participants of each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

5.1.1. Societies

Participation in Societies



Graph 26: Society participation – Port Elizabeth



Graph 27: Society participation - George

Graph 26 shows that most society participants in Port Elizabeth participated in academic societies, followed by political societies, then religious and developmental societies.

Graph 27 shows that in George, political society participation was the highest, followed by religious, then academic and developmental societies.

5.1.2. Arts and Culture

Arts and Culture participation

5.3% of Port Elizabeth respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity. 9.4% of George respondents reported participating in an Arts and Culture activity.

5.1.3. Sports Club

Sports Club participation

9.2% of Port Elizabeth respondents participate in a sport club. In George, 6.5% of respondents were part of a sports club.

5.1.4. Residence League

Residence league participation

4.6% of Port Elizabeth and 6.5% of George respondents reported participating in residence league activities.

5.1.5. Residence Events

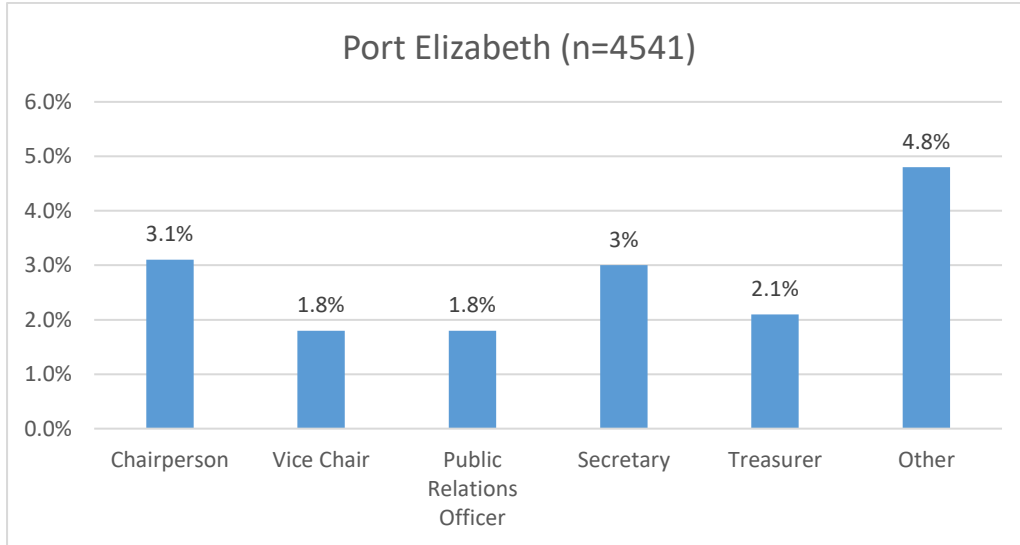
Many respondents reported spending time on residence related events. 14.2% of respondents partook in residence events in Port Elizabeth. In George, 24.5% of respondents participated in residence events.

5.1.6. “Other” student life activities

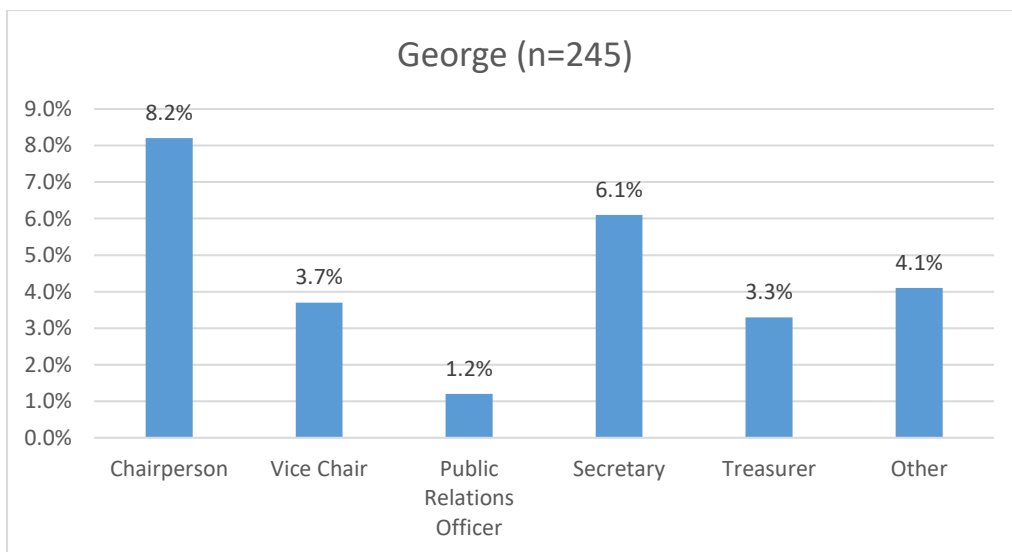
Student life activities listed by respondents as “other” included community outreach or volunteer work, peer helping, house committees and residence subcommittees, mentoring, tutoring, and the anime society.

5.2. Participants in leadership positions

13.4% of Port Elizabeth and 21.6% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions. Graphs 28 and 29 highlight the types of leadership positions respondents that respondents reportedly hold.



Graph 28: Leadership positions held by participants - Port Elizabeth



Graph 29: Leadership positions held by participants George

In Port Elizabeth, most respondents in leadership positions held the position of chairperson, followed by secretary. Most respondents with leadership positions also filled the role of chairperson in George. Very few respondents reported being public relations officers in George.

The table below lists the most common positions that respondents reported as “other” in the overall survey.

Position	Percentage
Captain	19.4% (n=21)
Representative	15.7% (n=17)
House Committee	13.0% (n=14)
Subcommittee Member	8.3% (n=9)
Events Coordinator	7.4% (n=8)
Academic Officer	7.4% (n=8)
Mentor	5.6% (n=6)
Community Outreach Officer	4.6% (n=5)
Student Leader	4.6% (n=5)
Deputy Secretary	3.7% (n=4)
Wellness Officer	3.7% (n=4)
Technical Services	2.8% (n=3)
Editor	1.9% (n=2)
Vice-Captain	1.9% (n=2)

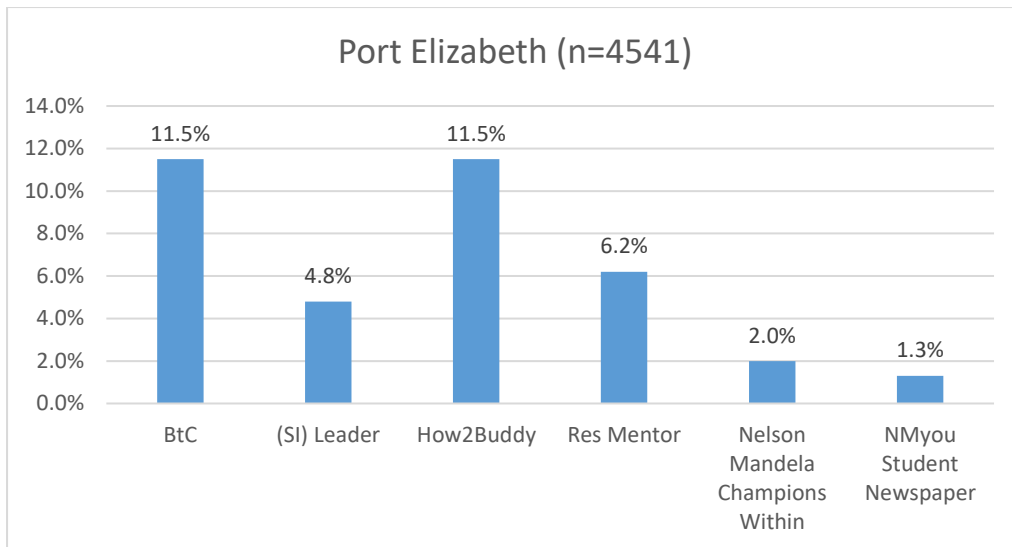
Table 6: Leadership position reported as "Other"

5.3. Co-curricular participation

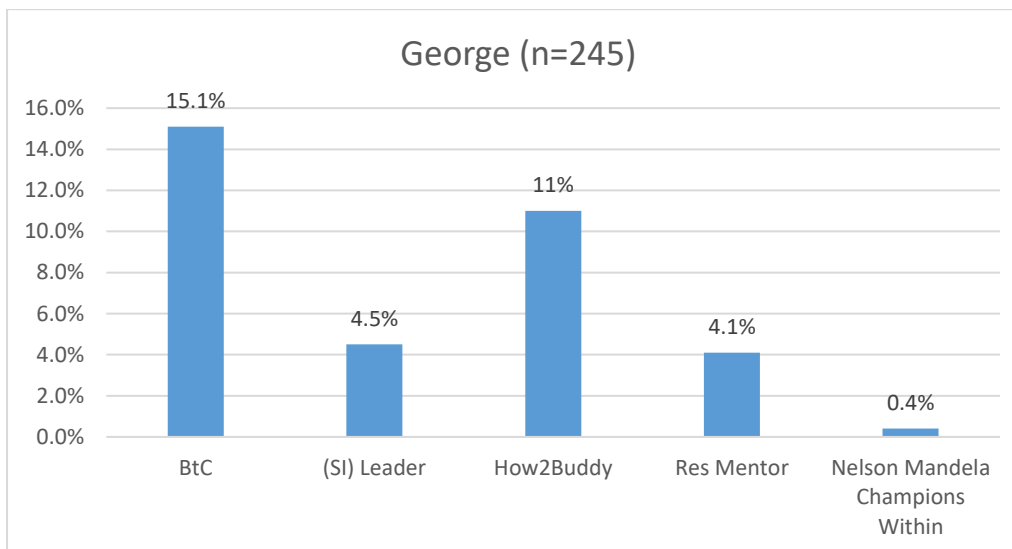
Co-curricular activities refer to the following: Beyond the Classroom, Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leader, How2Buddy, Residence Mentor, Nelson Mandela Champions Within, and NMyou Student Newspaper. Participation in these activities results in a co-curricular record (CCR) (an official record recognising involvement in Nelson Mandela University co-curricular activities) that enables students to record their learning and involvement and allows them to plan their growth and development.

Overall, roughly half of all respondents participate in co-curricular activities (48.4% of Port Elizabeth and 63.7% of George respondents).

Graphs 30 and 31 demonstrate a breakdown of respondents according to co-curricular participation in Port Elizabeth and George respectively.



Graph 30: Co-curricular participation - Port Elizabeth



Graph 31: Co-curricular participation – George

Of the respondents who participate in co-curricular activities in Port Elizabeth, most participate in the Beyond the Classroom (BtC) programme (11.5%) and How2Buddy (11.5%), then Residence Mentors (6.2%), Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leaders (4.8%), Nelson Mandela Champions Within (2%), and NMyou Student Newspaper (1.3%).

In George, most respondents were in the BtC programme (15.1%), followed by How2Buddy (11%), Supplementary Instruction (SI) Leaders (4.5%), Residence

Mentors (both 4.1%), and Nelson Mandela Champions Within (0.4%). No respondents from George participated in NMyou Student Newspaper.

6. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

This section focuses on the competencies gained from 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 Nelson Mandela University.² Although there are 17 competencies, only those learning outcomes most likely to be identified among most co-curricular activities were included on the survey (the learning outcome from which each competency is derived 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.

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean (sd)
Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)	4.5 (0.7)
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.4 (0.7)
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.4 (0.7)
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.4 (0.7)
Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)	4.4 (0.8)

² NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY learning outcomes and development indicators are attached to this report as an appendix

Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.7)
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.8)
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.8)
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.3 (0.7)
Follow basic protocols (Professionalism)	4.3 (0.7)
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.3 (0.8)
Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration)	4.3 (0.7)
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.3 (0.8)
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.3 (0.8)
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.2 (0.8)
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2 (0.7)
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.2 (0.8)
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.2 (0.7)
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.2 (0.7)
Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication)	4.2 (0.8)
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4.1 (0.8)
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.1 (0.8)
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.1 (0.8)
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.1 (0.9)
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4.1 (0.9)
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4 (0.9)
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.9 (0.9)
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9 (0.9)
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.8 (1.0)

Table 7: Perceived competencies of student life activity participants - Port Elizabeth

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean (sd)
Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)	4.6 (0.7)
Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)	4.6 (0.7)
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.5 (0.6)
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.5 (0.7)
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.4 (0.7)
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.4 (0.7)
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.4 (0.7)
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.4 (0.8)
Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration)	4.4 (0.7)

Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.7)
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.7)
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.3 (0.8)
Follow basic protocols (Professionalism)	4.3 (0.7)
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.3 (0.8)
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.3 (0.8)
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.2 (0.7)
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.2 (0.8)
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.2 (0.8)
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.2 (0.8)
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.2 (0.8)
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1 (0.8)
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.1 (0.9)
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4.1 (0.8)
Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication)	4.1 (0.8)
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4.1 (0.9)
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4.1 (0.9)
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	4.0 (0.8)
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.9 (0.9)
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.7 (0.9)

Table 8: Perceived competencies of student life activity participants - George

Tables 7 and 8 show that participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of learning or higher.

For participants in Port Elizabeth, the top competencies are

- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)

For participants in George, the top competencies are

- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)

6.2. Perceived competencies by non-participants

Tables 9 and 10 show the perceived learning outcomes of student life participation by non-participants.

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean (sd)
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.3 (0.7)
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3 (0.8)
Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)	4.3 (0.8)
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2 (0.8)
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4.2 (0.8)
Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)	4.2 (0.8)
Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration)	4.2 (0.8)
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2 (0.8)
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.2 (0.8)
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.2 (0.8)
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.2 (0.8)
Follow basic protocols (Professionalism)	4.2 (0.8)
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2 (0.8)
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4.2 (0.8)
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.2 (0.8)
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4.2 (0.8)
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4.2 (0.8)
Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication)	4.1 (0.8)
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.1 (0.8)
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1 (0.8)
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1 (0.8)
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.1 (0.8)

Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.1 (0.8)
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4.1 (0.8)
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4.1 (0.8)
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4 (0.8)
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9 (0.9)
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	3.9 (0.9)
Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.9 (0.9)

Table 9: Perceived competencies by non-participants - Port Elizabeth

Competency and corresponding learning outcome	Mean (sd)
Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)	4.4 (0.7)
Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)	4.3 (0.7)
Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)	4.2 (0.8)
Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)	4.2 (0.7)
Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4.2 (0.7)
Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)	4.2 (0.9)
Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)	4.2 (1.0)
Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)	4.1 (0.8)
Follow basic protocols (Professionalism)	4.1 (0.8)
Understand how values and ethics affect decision making (Values exploration)	4.1 (0.9)
Commit to personal morals and ethics (Values exploration)	4.1 (0.9)
Identify and develop an effective solution to a problem (Intellectual growth)	4.1 (0.7)
Think creatively to generate new ideas and innovations (Adaptability)	4.1 (0.8)
Seek to negotiate and balance diverse views to reach a workable solution (Collaboration)	4.1 (0.8)
Explore career fields and workplace options (Career development)	4.1 (0.8)
Effectively facilitate group discussions (Leadership development)	4.1 (0.8)
Use information from a variety of sources (including past experiences) to make decisions, form an opinion or argument (Information literacy)	4.1 (1.0)
Respond to challenges, transitions, and new situations more openly (Adaptability)	4.1 (0.8)
Cooperates with others to achieve a common purpose (Collaboration)	4 (0.8)
Experience greater career development opportunities (Career development)	4 (0.8)
Able to articulate ideas (Effective communication)	4 (0.7)
Actively engage in my community to work for positive change (Social responsibility)	4 (0.9)
Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)	4 (0.9)
Develop mutually beneficial relationships with others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)	4 (0.8)
Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)	4 (0.9)
Identify obstacles to achieving goals and ways to overcome them (Self-awareness and development)	4 (0.8)
Manage my time effectively (Independence)	4 (0.9)

Plan and implement a task without direct oversight (Independence)	3.9 (0.8)
Implement ways to manage stress effectively (Healthy behaviour)	3.9 (0.9)

Table 10: Perceived competencies by non-participants - George

For non-participants, the perceived potential competencies gained from involvement are also ranked at an acceptable level of belongingness or identified learning and higher.

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

- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)

The top perceived potential competencies for George non-participants are

- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Effectively communicate with people through speaking, writing and other means of communication (Effective communication)
- Seek involvement with people different than me and/or with different points of view (Appreciating diversity)
- Listen attentively to others (Meaningful interpersonal relationships)

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

The BtC leadership programme was 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

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)
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Take responsibility for my actions (Independence)
- Increase my self-confidence (Self-awareness and development)
- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)

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

- Demonstrate respect for the environment (Social responsibility)
- Realize learning is a lifelong process (Intellectual growth)
- Understand and appreciate human and cultural differences (Appreciating diversity)
- Identify personal strengths and growth areas (Self-awareness and development)
- Identify and pursue individual goals (Self-awareness and development)

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified different competencies that they feel they receive from being part of the BtC programme. Table 11 identifies the learning outcomes identified by BtC participants in Port Elizabeth and in George.

Port Elizabeth	George
Appreciating diversity	Social responsibility
Intellectual growth	Intellectual growth
Independence	Appreciating diversity
Self-awareness and development	Self-awareness and development
Social responsibility	Meaningful interpersonal relationships

Table 11: Top learning outcomes as identified by BtC participants - Port Elizabeth vs. George

Based on these top competencies, the overall learning outcomes identified by BtC participants can be highlighted. Table 11 compares the learning outcomes as outlined by the programme with the top three identified by participants overall.

BtC learning outcomes	Top reported learning outcomes according to BtC participants
Intellectual growth	Intellectual growth
Appreciating diversity	Appreciating diversity
Meaningful interpersonal relationships	Self-awareness and development

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

Overall, the BtC programme meets all of the three learning outcomes set out by the programme according to BtC participants on both campuses, though respondents reported higher gains in self-awareness and development than meaningful interpersonal relationships.

7. INTERFERENCE

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

Port Elizabeth (n=4541)	George (n=245)
Day/time the activity is held (55.8%)	Day/time the activity is held (52.7%)
Lectures/class (53.5%)	Lectures/class (50.2%)
Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (43.3%)	Time (involvement in other activities) (48.2%)
Time (involvement in other activities) (41.2%)	Finances, lack of money (35.5%)
Finances, lack of money (36.8%)	Transport (difficulty getting to activities) (34.3%)

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

As indicated by table 13, the top interference in student life participation for all respondents is the day or time that activities are held.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSIONS

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

In 2018, the survey attracted a slightly larger number of respondents than past years.

Overall the biographical characteristics of respondents are similar to the general Nelson Mandela University population. The survey also attracted comparatively more black students and more on-campus students. Most respondents were between the ages of 18 to 25 (91.2% in Port Elizabeth and 95.5% in George).

With regards to faculty information, slightly more respondents were registered full-time in Port Elizabeth (97.1%) as compared to the general student population (86%). In George, almost all respondents were full-time registered students (98.6%). In Port Elizabeth, most respondents were in their first academic year of study (30.8%) followed by third year students (30%). Most George participants were in their first academic year (36%) followed by second year students (28.5%). In George, half of respondents were from the science faculty (49.3%) and the other half from the business and economic sciences faculty (42.4%) which is representative of the overall student population. In Port Elizabeth, respondents were generally representative of the general Nelson Mandela University population when it comes to faculties attended.

The survey attracted more on-campus respondents when compared to the general student population, significantly so in George campus. In Port Elizabeth and George, most students are either living in a university accredited accommodation, at home, or in a private accommodation. The Nelson Mandela University shuttle is the primary commute to campus for respondents followed by driving their own cars on both campuses. On both campuses, NSFAS loans were the main method that students used to finance their studies.

Student perceptions are overall positive as mean scores indicate an acceptable level of belongingness. The lowest rated perceptions on both campuses were “I feel a sense of connection with the Nelson Mandela University” and “I feel like Nelson Mandela University is a community.” Perceptions were generally the same across sex with no significant differences in George. There were several statistically significant differences in Port Elizabeth, but the sizes of the differences were practically small. There were, however, significant differences by race for most perceptions. ANOVAs found the perceptions of students differed by race in feelings of connection to the Nelson Mandela University, pride in attending the Nelson Mandela University, and feelings of the Nelson Mandela University as a community. White students generally scored lower than black and coloured students. For all of these statements at Port Elizabeth, effect size was low, and white students had lower mean scores. In George, the effect sizes ranged from medium to large.

There were more respondents that do not participate in student life activities than those that do in Port Elizabeth. The inverse is true for George. In Port Elizabeth, the top five student life activities were academic societies (17.3%), residence events (14.2%), political societies (10.9%), religious societies (10.6%) and sports club participation (9.2%). The top five student life activities in George were residence events (24.5%), political societies (21.2%), religious societies (20.4%), academic societies (15.5%) and arts and culture societies (9.4%).

With regards to leadership positions, 13.4% of respondents in Port Elizabeth and 21.6% of George respondents reported being in leadership positions.

Overall, approximately half of respondents reported being in co-curricular activities (48.4% in Port Elizabeth and 63.7% in George). In Port Elizabeth, most were BtC participants or How2Buddies, and most were BtC participants in George.

With regards to learning outcomes and competencies, both student life participants and non-participants rated all competencies on an acceptable level of belongingness or higher.

Based on the top-rated competencies, the overall top learning outcomes of student life participation for participants on both campuses are

- Intellectual growth
- Meaningful interpersonal relationships
- Independence
- Social responsibility

The top-rated competencies for non-participants are

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

Port Elizabeth and George respondents identified similar competencies that they feel they received from being part of the BtC programme. Based on the top competencies, the overall learning outcomes identified by BtC participants generally aligned with the intended learning outcomes, indicating the BtC programme is largely achieving its stated educational goals.

BtC learning outcomes	Top reported learning outcomes according to BtC participants
Intellectual growth	Intellectual growth
Appreciating diversity	Appreciating diversity
Meaningful interpersonal relationships	Self-awareness and development

The major interference in participating in student life activities overall were the day or time the activity is held. The top 5 interferences differ only in rank for Port Elizabeth and George.

In Port Elizabeth, the top 5 interferences were the day/time the activity is held, lectures/class, transport (difficulty getting to activities), time (involvement in other activities) and finances, lack of money. In George, the top 5 were day/time the activity is held, lectures/class, time, finances, lack of money, and transport (difficulty getting to activities).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this survey support the claim that the benefits of co-curricular student engagement cannot be overlooked. The survey highlights that students who do not participate also recognise the benefits of student engagement. Both students who participate in student life activities and those who do not participate believe that from participating in student life activities, they would achieve the following learning outcomes: appreciating diversity, intellectual growth and social responsibility. Survey findings support student development theories as the positive benefits of participating in student life activities on students' lives is evident.

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 Nelson Mandela University students

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