

Summary Report of Campus Consultations: Core Questions

Introduction

The University of Windsor launched the Aspire online survey between February and March 2022 as the first step in the strategic planning process. The survey was accessed by more than 2,000 respondents, with 1,534 usable responses. The Aspire Café Conversations were the second step in this consultation process. These sessions provided students, staff, and faculty with the opportunity to provide their input through in-person, discussion-based, consultation sessions targeted at key topics identified through the Aspire survey. More than 650 students and nearly 200 staff and faculty participated in these events. The Aspire online survey and Café Conversations aimed to gather respondents' perceptions of where the University of Windsor should be and how the University can best get there. As part of the consultations, attendees were asked core questions centered around the University of Windsor. This summary report will discuss student, staff, and faculty responses to two of these core questions.

It is important to note that these consultations were intended for broad, community-based input. The University also implemented separate consultations with approaches that are appropriate for specific communities whose voices must be heard. For example, while questions about Indigenization and Decolonization and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) were included in consultation questions, dedicated consultations with community members using informed and appropriate methods were also needed to ensure that this priority was supported by rich and informed processes.

Characteristics of a Dream University

As part of the Aspire Café Conversations, attendees were asked to answer the following question: **Imagine working at your dream University. What is your dream University's most important characteristic?** Over 1,000 individual answers were submitted to this question including 694 (69%) student, 187 (19%) staff, and 122 (12%) faculty responses. Table 1 presents the five most common themes identified in these responses by role.

Campus life was identified 92 times, 87 times by students and 5 times by staff. Responses in this theme included an abundance of social, on-campus events and activities, a university with a vibrant student life, and an engaged university community. The culture and atmosphere of the university was identified 74 times, 42 times by students, 4 times by faculty, and 28 times by staff. Responses identified a culture of care, a welcoming community, and a positive, respectful, and engaging work culture as a part of their dream university.

Research was identified 58 times, 55 times by students and 3 times by staff. Staff responses mainly identified research excellence as a part of their dream university while students identified opportunities for research.

Table 1. Five most frequent themes regarding the UWindsor community's dream University.

Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Students	Campus Life (87)	Research (55)	Culture and Atmosphere of University (42)	Co-op and Internships (41)	Student Support, Non-Academic (38)
Staff	Culture and Atmosphere of University (28)	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (21)	Trust and Integrity (13)	Reputation and Ranking (12)	Flexibility (10)
Faculty	Belonging (17)	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (15)	Student Centered/ Experience (7)	Scholarships and Awards (6)	Balanced Emphasis on Teaching and Scholarship (5)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

The same question was posed at the faculty council meetings across campus, with nine Faculties and units participating in these brief consultations. A total of 90 responses to this question were collected at these sessions. Respondents mentioned the culture and atmosphere of the university 16 times, indicating the desire for an inclusive, safe, collegial, compassionate, respectful, innovative, trustworthy, and collaborative university environment. Respondents also discussed the management and operations of the university seven times during these discussions, specifically mentioning a preference for strong leadership, clear communication regarding pathways to success and collaboration, and fewer bureaucratic barriers. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as well as aspects of the university as an employer were each brought up by respondents six times. Respondents want to see a greater commitment to and celebration of EDI. Regarding the management and operations of the university, respondents would like to see clear succession plans for leadership, greater support and more development opportunities, as well as flexibility regarding work for greater work-life balance.

Desired Impact of Aspire

Faculty, staff, and students also had the opportunity to answer the following question: **Imagine that we successfully implemented this strategic plan. Now it's 2027. Looking back, what was the one biggest, most impactful change that occurred at the University of Windsor as a result of Aspire?** Respondents submitted nearly 900 individual responses to this item including 694 (79.3%) students, 66 (7.5%) staff, and 116 (13.2%) faculty responses. Table 2 presents the five most common themes identified in these responses by role. Tuition was identified 104 times and focused on more affordable tuition both for

international and domestic students and more opportunities for scholarships. Campus life was identified 63 times and focused on a need for more on-campus and cultural events. Service was identified 58 times and suggested a need for longer operating hours for food services, the library, and the gym. Note that though these three themes were the most frequent, they were only identified by students.

Table 2. Five most frequent themes regarding the most impactful change from Aspire.

Role	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Students	Tuition (104)	Campus Life (63)	Service (58)	Post Grad (46)	Profs/ Faculty Members (41)
Staff	Culture and Atmosphere of University (10)	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (8)	Reputation and Ranking (5)	Student Centered Experience (4)	Community Impact (4)
Faculty	Reputation and Ranking (25)	Recruitment and Retention (14)	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (12)	Research (11)	Course and Program Options (7)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the theme.

Staff most frequently commented on the culture and atmosphere of the university, EDI, and reputation and ranking while faculty most mentioned reputation and ranking, recruitment and retention, and EDI. Of the top 5 identified themes none were represented in each group, but EDI was identified by all groups, 32 times by students, 8 times by staff and 12 times by faculty making it a significant concern for all members of the UWindsor community. It is important to note that equity, diversity and inclusion appears both as an area where change is a key priority, and above, for some groups, as an area of strength: there are a number of possible reasons for this, potentially including strong differences across the populations being consulted or within those populations and variations within the way it is being discussed within the category: some might, for example, see diversity of the community as a strength, or have a favourable reaction to change efforts on campus, while others view this as an area where not enough change has occurred or where they continue to experience core difficulties. This is a topic that is being taken up in greater depth in two upcoming consultation sessions, one on equity diversity and inclusion, and a second on anti-racism.

This question was also presented at the faculty council meetings mentioned above. A total of 70 responses were collected. Like the Aspire Café Consultations, two of the three most frequently mentioned themes discussed were the culture and atmosphere of the University as well as the University as an employer, each discussed seven times. In addition, respondents also discussed aspects related to research at the University seven times. Like the responses regarding their dream university, respondents want to see changes that led to a more positive, accountable, respectful, and vibrant university community. Commented regarding the University as an employer also paralleled those of the respondents dream

university, specifically mentioning changes in appreciating the need for work-life balance, higher wages, greater support, and boosting employee morale. Regarding research, respondents want to see greater innovation and diversity in research practices, funding for research, as well as student involvement and partnership in research projects.

Next Steps

These core questions were asked at almost every session in our process. They were considered to help shape the mission, vision and values as well as identify areas of focus for the strategic plan. Being able to identify aspirations, existing strengths and priorities for change over the next strategic plan directly shapes the University's direction and priorities.