

**FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR
THE ADDITION OF PRACTICAL
AND LIFE RELATED COURSES AT UBC**

For
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Table of Contents

Abstract.....3

Introduction.....3

Statement of Problem.....3

Proposed Solution.....4

Methods.....5

Findings.....5

Conclusion.....7

Recommendations.....7

Figures

Figure 1: Subjects Offered.....5

Figure 2: Course Costs.....6

Abstract

The feasibility of the AMS providing courses with practical life subjects was investigated in this report. A short online questionnaire administered to UBC students was used to determine the demand, as well as potential topics and budget of these courses. The results indicated a significant popularity for such courses, with a budget that will produce profit.

Introduction

The University of British Columbia was founded in 1908 and is one of the world's leading universities, contributing to many research projects and ranked highly in many subjects worldwide. UBC has fostered many that have changed the world greatly, such as Noble Prize winner Michael Smith, astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason, and our current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It is without a doubt that this prestigious institution has truly changed and developed the world we live in.

The different faculties and program structures at UBC strive to consistently to be up to date with current findings and research and provide students with the best resources to learn their subject of study. This leads to many prospering in a specific field while lacking basic knowledge in others, which is solved to a degree by the requirements of electives outside your major. Unfortunately, upon graduating and completing a degree many are left with minimal to no understanding of practical real-life knowledge and skill such as taxes, social etiquette, or even basic health problems and principles. Implementing addition of courses aimed to provide

experts with knowledge that can be applied in their day to day lives should become a part of *Shaping UBC's Next Century*.

Statement of Problem

With an ever-changing world, systems, strategies, ideas, theories, and institutions need to constantly be challenged and improved to serve the people better. While UBC excels at providing students with the knowledge and resources to specialize in certain fields, it lacks in resources to provide basic courses students can use towards their degree applicable to life. Many times, courses offered on similar topics are too detailed and serve those who wish to know more than what the average person is required to make sense of it. This leads to students being hesitant to step outside their comfort zone of their regular subjects to avoid having to spend too much time on an elective or lowering their grade point average.

Proposed Solution

A possible solution for this problem would be to bring for UBC's Alma Mater Society to offer a variety of short, informative courses which students are able to register in. Such courses should cover the necessities and basics of the topics and should be geared purely towards educating the students, as opposed to going into details required for those who are specialized in the field. This will promote students to take such courses and acquire skills and knowledge they can utilize in their day to day lives. The purpose of these short classes will be purely educational, without affecting their grades.

To determine the feasibility of the Alma Mater Society providing these short courses for university students to register in, this report analyzes information gathered from questionnaires provided to undergraduate students. This report will determine the popularity of offering such courses, what topics students are interested in, as well as determining an estimate of the budget which AMS will have if it is to proceed.

Methods

A three question, multiple-choice survey was administered to undergraduate students at the Vancouver campus of the University of British Columbia through an online portal. These were ethical in nature and outlined the purpose of the questionnaire, who was administering them, who the findings would be addressed to, and assurance of anonymity.

A total of 214 questionnaires were completed to analyze feasibility of the AMS providing practical courses for students to take. These surveys were distributed at random throughout all faculties, year levels, and genders to avoid bias. *SurveyMonkey* was used to administer these surveys through a variety of online groups consisting of UBC students, including Facebook and Instagram.

Findings

The first question of the survey asked students whether they were interested in courses offered by the AMS that would cover practical life skills. 86.9% responded “Yes,” showing a significant interest amongst students. As the AMS is a student society, it is important to offer and inquire

about students' needs and what is in their best interest. The high popularity of offering such courses should be brought to a more official vote, and the student council collectively should discuss ways to implement this initiative.

The second question focused on potential course topics students would want to be offered.

Choices included: real estate, taxes, dating, as well as an option to provide other course topics.

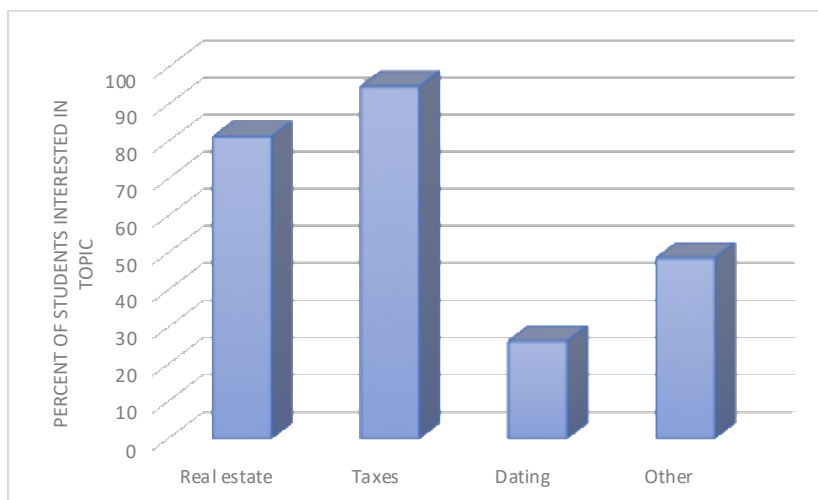


Figure 1. Subjects Offered. Percent of interest in suggested topics to be offered. Subject areas dealing with real life finances were of significant interest to undergraduate students at UBC.

Course topics that students suggested in the “Other” category that had a minimum of 10% popularity included “time management” as well as “networking.” It would be worthwhile to investigate the popularity of these course topics as well in a more formal university survey capturing a larger sample size.

To determine cost feasibility of such courses, we asked students the dollar amount that they believe to be appropriate for such courses, 3 hours in length. Choices were given between \$50,

\$100 and \$150 for the course. A 3-hour course would ideally be held in a room at the Student Building as UBC, with 30-60 students per session.

Using an average of 50 students enrolled into each session, and multiplying by each potential enrolment fee for each course, potential profits at each level are:

- \$50.00 = \$2500
- \$100.00 = \$5000
- \$150.00 = \$7500

Even at \$50.00 per student, there will be more than enough profit to cover any expenses including material, supplies, instructor as well as any other potential costs.

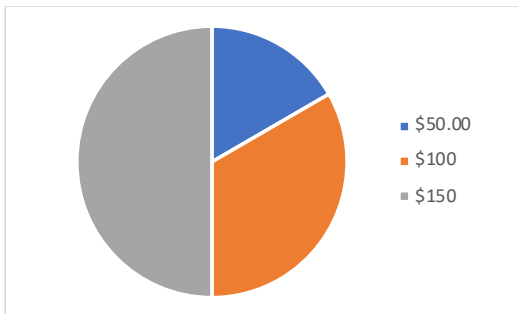


Figure 2. Course Cost. To determine the perspective budget available to run these courses, students were surveyed to determine the appropriate cost. 48% of students voted for \$50 for a 3 hour course, 34% voted for \$100 and 18% voted that \$150 is an appropriate amount.

Conclusion

While specializations and extensive research and knowledge in every niche major and topic is crucial for our world to continue being innovative and advancing, it is also important for individuals to be well rounded and know basics of what is required in a variety of areas. Our results from our questionnaire showed a significant interest for courses to be provided on campus by the AMS for students to take outside of their academic courses. This high level of support for bringing in practical courses suggests that there is a gap in the education of UBC

undergraduate students when it comes to areas outside of their major. The Alma Mater Society providing such courses will help build the fundamentals of their knowledge and skills to be able to pursue and achieve anything they pursue within or outside their degree.

Recommendations

From using a very short, basic survey through online means, we were able to see significant interest in practical life courses for students at UBC to be able to take. Further data collection using a greater sample size and a more formal approach is recommended. These may be used to determine more accurate information regarding potential subjects, costs and logistics of such courses. This could be done by administering surveys along with the instructor evaluations emailed out, and adding more questions aimed at the logistics of the potential courses.

