University of Toronto
Online Undergraduate Course Initiative (OUCI)
2013-14

Executive Summary of Evaluation Results

This report provides the results of our annual evaluation for the Online Undergraduate Course Initiative for the 2013-14 academic year, as well as selected comparisons with previous results. Through this evaluation we may identify areas where our efforts are most effective, as well as areas that can be further enhanced with regard to support for online courses prior to and during instruction. Survey data and focus group feedback are gathered annually from a range of stakeholder groups including online instructors, students and educational technology professionals. Outcomes of the data analysis inform the Vice Provost Academic Programs and the Office of Online Learning Strategies with regard to planning and resourcing of institutional support for online learning.

OUCI courses redesigned for fully online delivery for the academic year 2013-2014 that have been included in this study are as follows:

FAS	Don Boyes	GGR273 - Geographic Info & Mapping II	Fall 2013
FAS	Melody Neumann & Ken Yip	CSB201H - Current Topics in Molecular Biology	Fall 2013
Nursing	Kim Widger	NUR430 - Research Course	Fall 2013
UTM	Lee Bailey	CCT225 - Data Analysis I	Fall 2013
FASE	Shai Cohen	APS162 - Calculus for Engineers I	Fall 2013
FASE	Shai Cohen	APS163 - Calculus for Engineers II	Winter 2014
FAS	Julia Mikhailova	SLA430 - Advanced Writing in Russian	Winter 2014

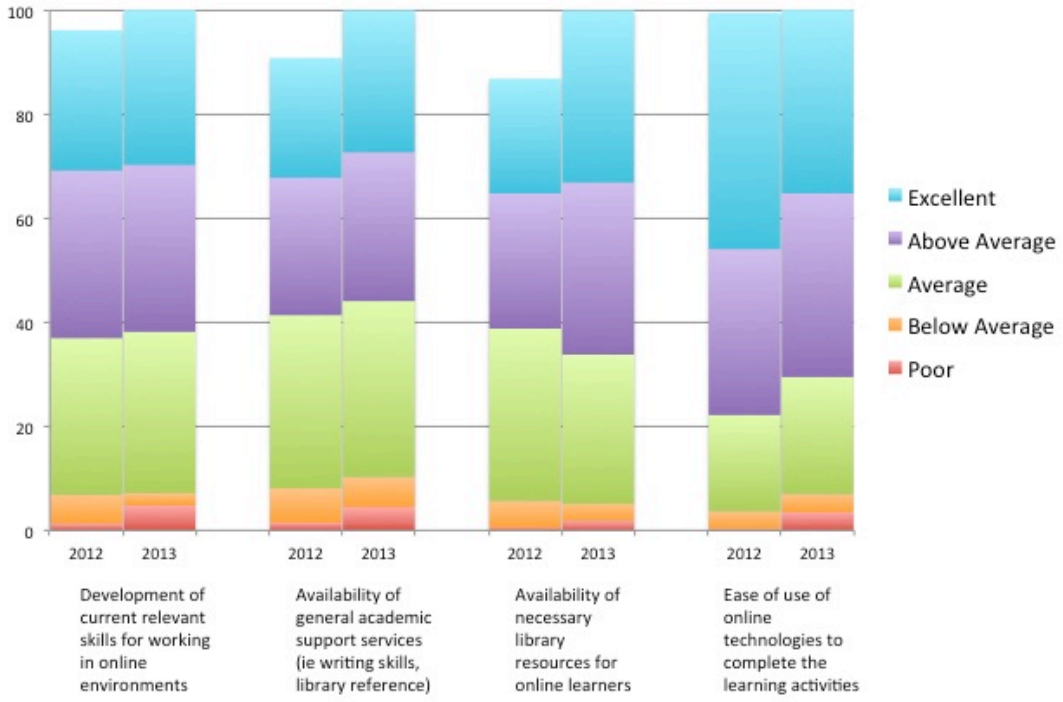
Instructors for two other courses moved to offering a hybrid mode in Fall 2013 as an interim design stage also participated:

UTM	Michelle Troberg	LIN204 - English Grammar	Fall 2013
FAS	Hakob Barsegnyan	HPS100 - Introduction to History and Philosophy of Science	Fall 2013

Support to Learners

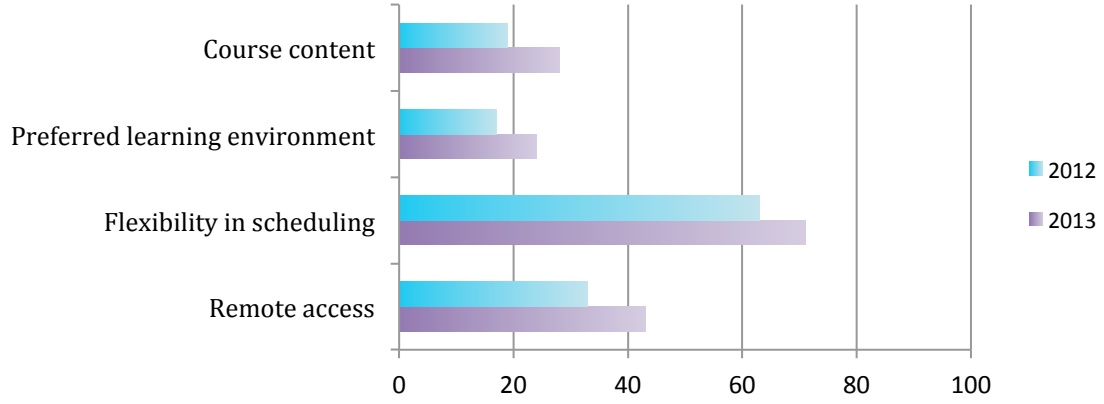
A survey regarding experience and availability of support for learning online is distributed to all students in pilot offering of each of the new OUCI-funded courses. A sample of 173 student responses to a common web survey have been analyzed. These students have taken 7 different online courses: 59.0% have taken NUR430, 18.5% have taken CSB201, 8.1% have taken CCT226, 5.8% have taken APS162, 4.6% have taken SLA430, 2.9% have taken GGR273, and 1.2% have taken CTLA1. Results are similar to those reported last year, with students reporting positive perceptions of technology-enabled support to learning.

Approximately 65% of students gave ‘Above average’ to ‘Excellent’ ratings with regard to effectiveness of various support components within online courses. Details are as follows:



Most important motivator(s) to register in an online course

The students were asked to select the most important factors that motivated them to take an online course. For 2013, flexibility in scheduling was again the most common motivator, selected by more than 70% of students surveyed. The other three factors were selected by 27% to 43% of students, which is consistent with previous results.

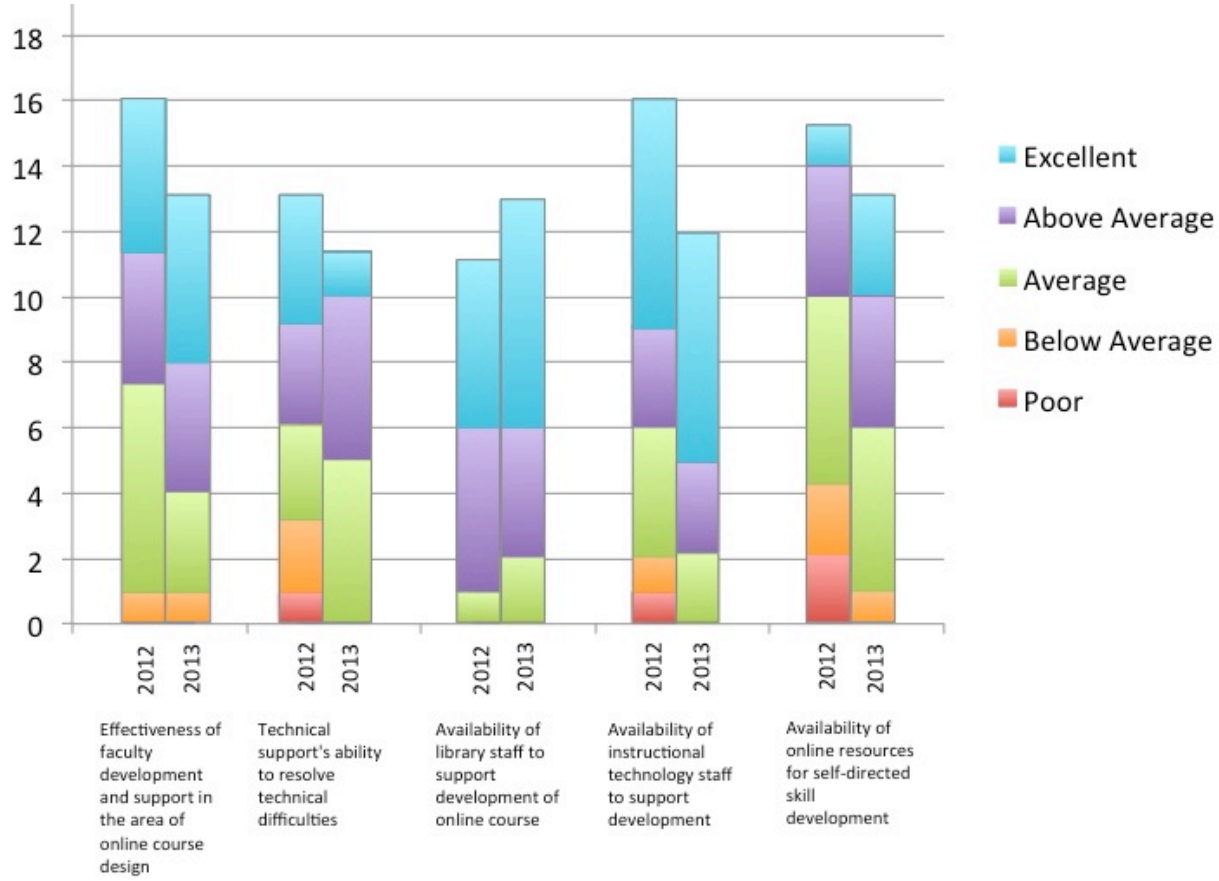


79% of students stated they would take another online course, representing a small decrease over last year's result of 85.8% who would take another online course.

Support to Faculty

Eight faculty members and six IT staff directly involved in the OUCI project work responded to a survey and participated in a focus group related to support and infrastructure needs. Support was quite consistently seen to be "average" or better across key indicators, although demand for faculty development, including resources for self directed learning have room for improvement. These results show gains over last year's survey results that may be attributed to the addition of

one full time educational technology professional position to support a range of activities within the Online Learning Strategies portfolio. Faculty indicated particular interest in video and screen casting technologies, as well updates and support related to new institutional tools being introduced within the UofT portal.



The survey results, in combination with the input gathered through both instructor and educational technology focus group sessions signal the opportunity for improvements through the following strategies:

- Extend faculty development support through development of capacity and support networks within divisions and programs. Local community expertise and leadership with linkages to central support is a sustainable model to meet growing demand.
- Develop additional online resources for self-directed faculty development, including introduction to online pedagogy, instructional models, example active online activities and assessment strategies. These could be used by faculty, staff and TAs.
- Begin piloting selected components of a possible online design and instruction certificate program, which might be offered in a flexible hybrid model yearly beginning in 2015.
- Collaborate with the CTSI/ITS Academic and Collaborative Technology support team to enhance communication regarding new tools available for online teaching and support resources for introduction of those new technologies.
- Collaborate with CTSI to development strategies to support for video and screen cast production methodologies.