Online Undergraduate Course Initiative (OUCI)
2014-15

Executive Summary of Evaluation Results
Prepared by Laurie Harrison and Hedieh Najafi

This report provides the results of our annual evaluation for the Online Undergraduate Course Initiative for the 2014-15 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 Innovation and Undergraduate Education and the Online Learning Strategies portfolio with regard to planning and resourcing of institutional support for online learning.

OUCI courses that were redesigned for fully online delivery for the academic year 2014-2015 are as follows:

Department	Instructors	Course	Session	# Students Enrolled
FASE	Michael Seica	APS160H1- Mechanics	Fall 2014	27
ARTSC	Melody Neumann & Ken Yip	CSB201H1- Mol Bio Biotech & You	Fall 2014	51
ARTSC	Jennifer Campbell	CSC108H1- Intro to Computer Programming	Fall 2014	157
ARTSC	Craig Hagerman	CSC108H1- Intro to Computer Programming	Winter 2015	153
ARTSC	Marie-Anne Visoi	FCS292H1- FCS Special Topics I	Winter 2015	57
ARTSC	William Ju	HMB300H1- Neurobiology of Behav	Fall 2014	50
ARTSC	William Navarre	MGY277H1- Intro Med Micro	Winter 2015	378
UTM	Michelle Troberg	LIN204H5- English Grammar	Fall 2014	411
UTM	Kyle Smith	RLG203H5- Introduction to Christianity	Winter 2015	191

Support to Learners

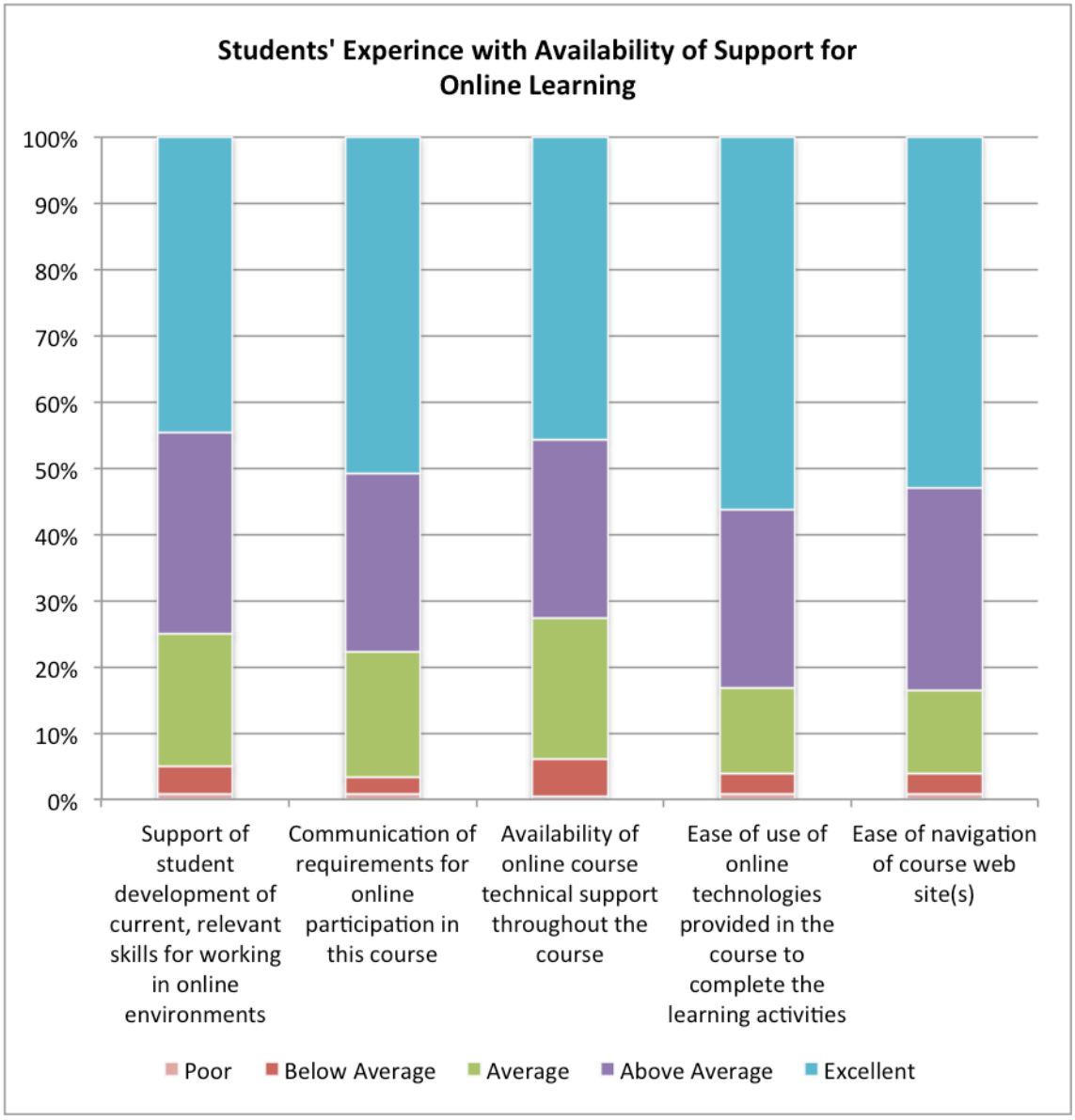
A survey regarding experience and availability of support for learning online is provided to instructors for distribution to all students in pilot offering of each of the new OUCI-funded courses. A sample of 456 students responses to a common web survey have been analyzed. These students have taken seven different online courses:

Course	**# Students Responding to Survey**	**% Students in Sample**
CSB201H1- Mol Bio Biotech & You	24	5.3%
CSC108H1- Intro to Computer Programming (Fall 2014)	49	10.7%
FCS292H1- FCS Special Topics I	44	9.6%
HMB300H1- Neurobiology of Behav	18	3.9%
MGY277H1- Intro Med Micro	192	42.1%
LIN204H5- English Grammar	69	15.1%
RLG203H5- Introduction to Christianity	60	13.1%

Students answered the following questions regarding their experience with availability of support for online learning:

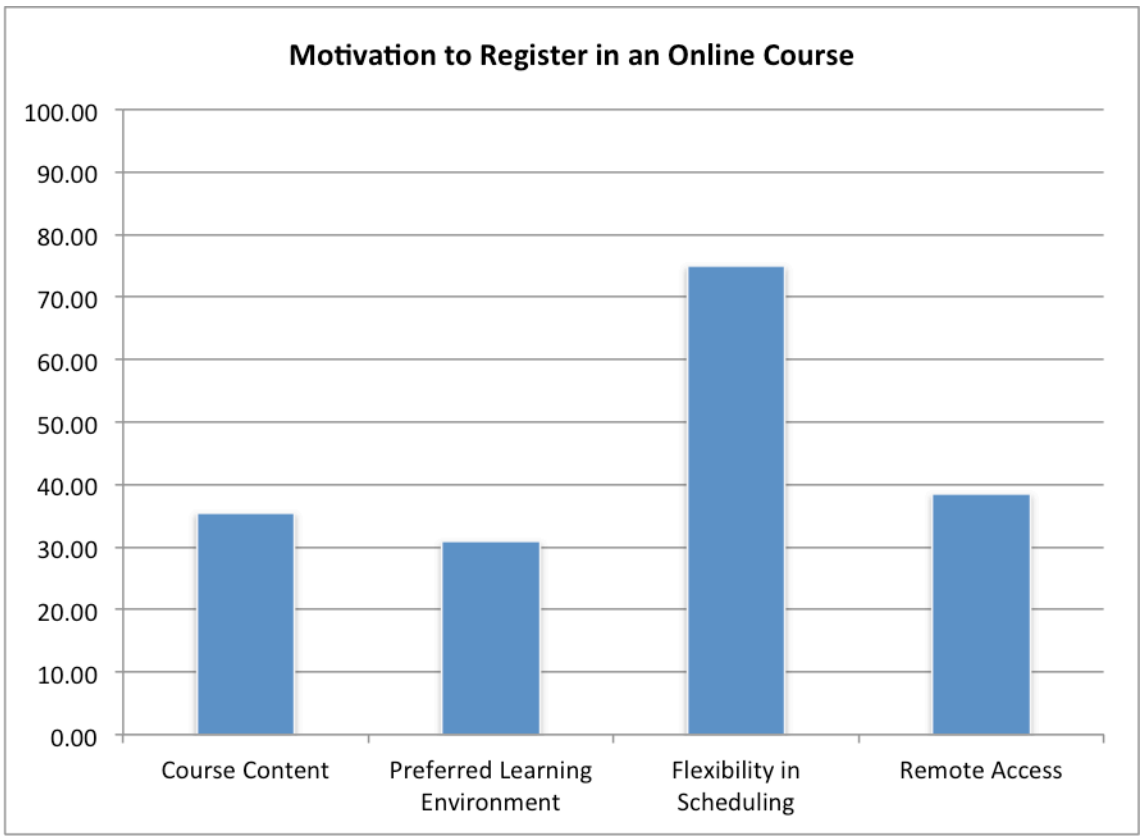
1. Support of student development of current, relevant skills for working in online environments
2. Communication of requirements for online participation in this course
3. Availability of online course technical support throughout the course
4. Ease of use of online technologies provided in the course to complete the learning activities
5. Ease of navigation of course web site(s)

Results are similar to those reported last year, with students reporting positive perceptions of technology-enabled support to learning. For all five questions, at least 70% of respondent rated the effectiveness of various support component for online learning in online courses as 'Above average' or 'Excellent'. Students' responses to survey items are shown in the graph below.



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. Similar to previous years, in 2014, Flexibility in Scheduling was the most common motivator, selected by more than 70% of students surveyed. The other three factors were selected by approximately 30% to 38% of students, which is consistent with previous results. The graph below, demonstrates students' motivation to register in online courses.

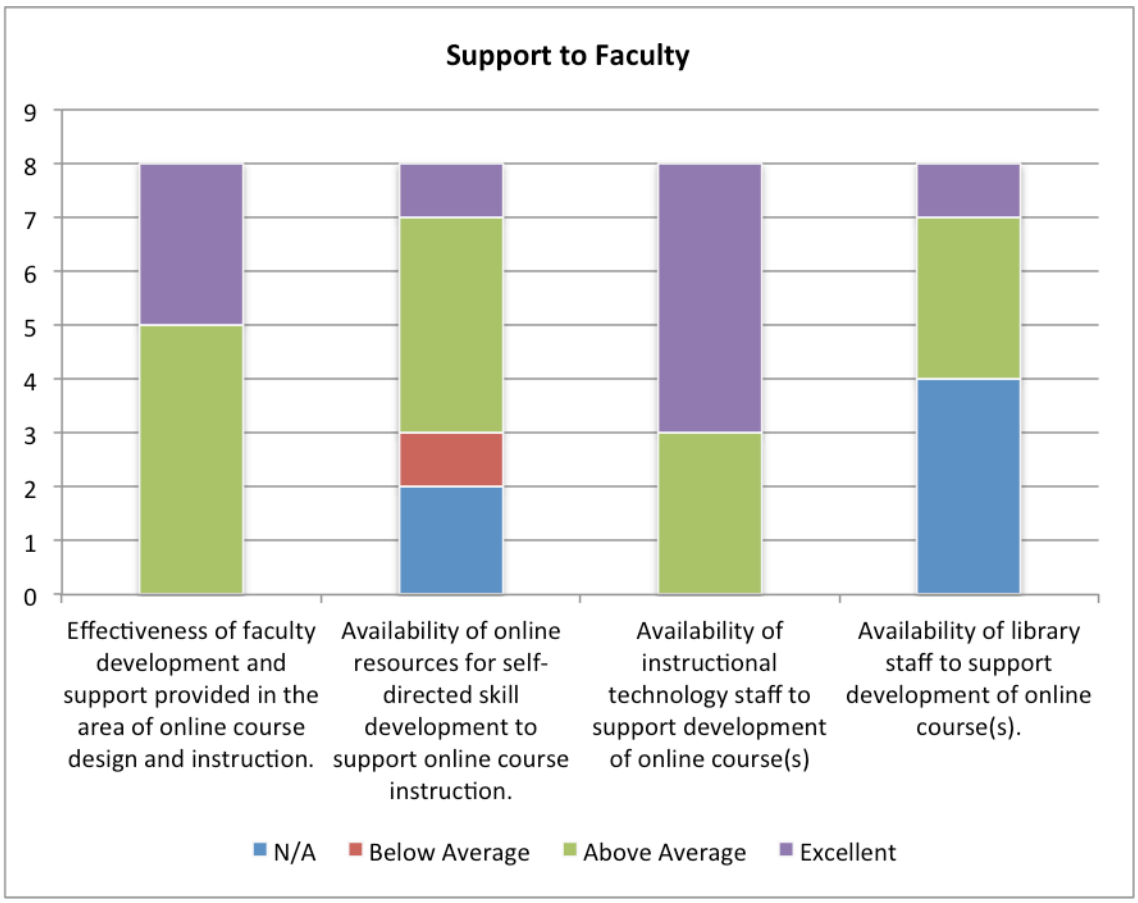


86.25% of students stated they would take another online course, representing an increase over last year's result of 79% who would take another online course.

Support to Faculty

Eight faculty members and 7 IT staff directly involved in the OUCI project work responded to surveys. Separate surveys were designed for each group, and participated in a focus group related to support and infrastructure needs.

As the graph below shows, participating faculty members ranked the level of support for three key indicators as above average or higher. Faculty members, however, requested more online resources for self-directed skill development. Faculty indicated particular interest in video and screen casting technologies, asking for improved studio space and access to software. Peer networking and support for using new institutional tools, specifically synchronous technologies such as Collaborate, within the UofT portal were other support areas that faculty members requested in the focus group meeting.



IT Staff Feedback

IT staff answered questions regarding challenging aspects of their work in supporting faculty members to develop online learning strategies and course content, high-demand areas of support, and recommendations for faculty development resources to be created. Below is a summary of IT staff feedback on each area:

- Challenges in supporting faculty
  - Providing sufficient professional development to faculty members' regarding instructional design to ensure that online designs reflect best practices.
  - Faculty members' lack of time, shortage of IT staff, shortage of resources
  - Lack of awareness of tools and how to use them appropriately informed by guidelines for best practice
- High-demand areas of support
  - Video production
  - Webcasting
  - Formative and summative assessment design
  - Implementing new tools
- Recommended priorities for creation of new faculty development resources

    - Instructional design process resources to encourage linking learning outcomes to content, learning activities, assessment, and choice of technology
    - How-to guides that are linked to pedagogy

Creating additional online collaborative opportunities for faculty members and IT staff was also suggested as a means to foster frequent communication and interaction regarding online course design.

Strategies for Further Improvement

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

- **Program Networks:** Continue to facilitate faculty development activities for program/discipline areas where a peer network is emerging and engage faculty as co-facilitators. Share processes by which faculties improve teaching and learning.
- **Making Online Strategies Visible:** Significantly expand the showcase of strategies linked from the CTSI web site. Provide additional video resources and research literature where possible and references to new CTSI guides on “portalinfo” site.
- **Extended Faculty Development:** Finalize and roll out pilot of extended faculty program for 2015 OUCI cohort using a hybrid model. Include SoTL component and incentives for sharing/informing the work of peers in community.
- **Leverage Interest in Re-Usable Course Materials:** Explore promotion of "Modules" as a course framework, including documentation of underlying pedagogy. Facilitate faculty and educational technology network activities for OER development processes and curriculum integration.