

Spring 2016 SERU

Student Experience in the
Research University Survey

Report on Sustainability



Prepared by Student Success Initiatives

UTell Us 2016

Demographic Comparison and Note on Generalizability

In Spring 2016, approximately 37,274 adult undergraduate students were invited, via email, to participate in the UTell Us survey. The instrument for the spring was the SERU – Student Experience in the Research University. The survey opened in March 2016 and closed at the end of May 2016. In addition to email solicitation, students could access the instrument through a link on the Student Success Initiatives webpage and various social media posts. This research was conducted under the approval of The Office of Research Support, Study Number 2016-01-0047. Data provided here are approved for release to INTERNAL UT AUDIENCES ONLY. These data may not be shared, published, distributed or duplicated in any form without written permission from Student Success Initiatives, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

In quantitative research, there is a specific formula that enables researchers to determine the sample size they need to achieve a particular degree of confidence that the sample statistics they collect approximate the actual population parameters of interest¹. Based on this formula, UT Austin would need a random sample of 652 students to be 99% confident that the data approximate the full population, within a 5% margin of error (typical for this population size and type of analysis).

UT Austin SERU data includes valid responses from 6,562 undergraduates. Out of the eligible population of 37,274 undergraduates, this is a 17.6% response rate – on par with benchmark SERU schools. Although the sample is not obtained randomly, a sample size of 6,562 is well above the number needed to be 99% confident that the statistics approximate the population of UT Austin degree-seeking undergraduates, within a 5% margin of error.

The SERU instrument is divided into modules, with the first module delivered to all participants, and each of the following modules randomly assigned to about 20% of the respondents. This means that some questions in the data were responded to by a smaller number of participants – typically about 1,340 students. This sample size still allows us to be 99% confident that these data approximate the entire population of UT Austin degree-seeking undergraduates, within a 5% margin of error.

Further, a brief comparison of a few demographic categories between SERU respondents and all UT undergraduates shows that the SERU sample is not markedly different, noting only a moderate underrepresentation of first-years and overrepresentation of seniors.

| | UT Undergrads N=39,619 | SERU N=6,562 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Age | 20.4 | 20.4 |
| Freshman | 20% | 26% |
| Sophomore | 21% | 24% |
| Junior | 24% | 25% |
| Senior | 35% | 26% |
| Architecture | 1% | 1% ¹ |
| Business | 11% | 11% ¹ |
| Communication | 10% | 9% ¹ |
| Education | 5% | 5% ¹ |
| Engineering | 14% | 16% ¹ |
| Fine Arts | 3% | 2% ¹ |
| Geosciences | 1% | 1% ¹ |
| Liberal Arts | 22% | 21% ¹ |
| Natural Sciences | 26% | 27% ¹ |
| Nursing | 1% | 1% ¹ |
| Social Work | 1% | 1% ¹ |
| Undergraduate Studies | 4% | 5% ¹ |

| | UT Undergrads N=39,619 | SERU N=6,562 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Female | 52% ² | 49% (59% UT ²) |
| Male | 48% ² | 34% (41% UT ²) |
| Trans/GQ/GNC/Other | not available ² | 1% (n/a UT ²) |
| Not Reported | not available ² | 16% (n/a UT ²) |
| American Ind. or AK Alone | 0% | 0% ³ |
| Asian Alone | 20% | 21% ³ |
| Black or Afr. Amer. Alone | 4% | 4% ³ |
| Black or Afr. Amer. Multi. | 1% | 1% ³ |
| Hispanic | 22% | 23% ³ |
| Multiracial (excl. Hisp/Black) | 3% | 3% ³ |
| Native HI or Other PI Alone | 0% | 0% ³ |
| White Alone | 44% | 44% ³ |
| Foreign/Not Reported | 6% | 5% ³ |

¹Categories represent FIRST college/school during Spring 2016 ²UT only collects binary gender data ³Not in SERU data; pulled from UT files

¹ Bartlett, II, J. E., Kotriik, J. W., & Higgins, C. C. (2001). Organizational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 19(1), 43-50.



SERU 2016 Descriptive Statistics – Sustainability

Narrative Summary

All sustainability questions appeared in the Wild Card module and were completed by 1,335-1,346 students, with the exception of the question about environmental news consumption, which appeared in a different module and was completed by 796 students. Means for all questions except two fell between Sometimes/Some/Occasionally and Often/Quite a Bit/Somewhat Often. The two exceptions were participating in a campus or community sustainability project and going on a field trip in your bioregion – both of which fell between Never and Sometimes. This page includes a brief snapshot of the Wild Card questions. Following pages include more details and charts.

Personal Behaviors

Never (1), Sometimes (2), Often (3), Very Often (4)

| During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| Altered your behavior to become more sustainable. | 2.19 | 0.90 |
| Participated in a campus or community sustainability project. | 1.61 | 0.85 |
| Went on a field trip in your bioregion. | 1.40 | 0.78 |

Course Requirements

Never (1), Sometimes (2), Often (3), Very Often (4)

| In your experience at UT Austin during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| Completed an assignment that evaluates our responsibilities to future generations. | 2.13 | 0.99 |
| Completed an assignment that evaluates the sustainability of some activity. | 2.09 | 0.95 |

Very Little (1), Some (2), Quite a Bit (3), Very Much (4)

| During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? | Mean | SD |
|---|------|------|
| Evaluating the moral dimensions of social and/or environmental problems. | 2.49 | 0.98 |
| Understanding the complex relationships between economic, social, and ecological systems. | 2.34 | 1.01 |
| Comprehending ways in which human activities may exceed the carrying capacity of systems that support us. | 2.25 | 1.03 |

UT Influence

Very Little (1), Some (2), Quite a Bit (3), Very Much (4)

| To what extent does UT Austin emphasize each of the following? | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| Learning about sustainability. | 2.28 | 0.87 |
| Taking responsibility for the welfare of your communities. | 2.26 | 0.85 |
| Understanding local economies and/or ecosystems. | 2.12 | 0.87 |

Very Little (1), Some (2), Quite a Bit (3), Very Much (4)

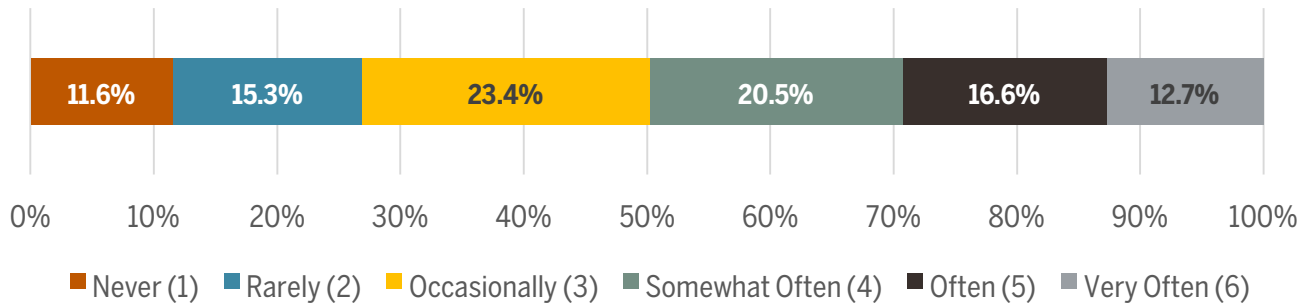
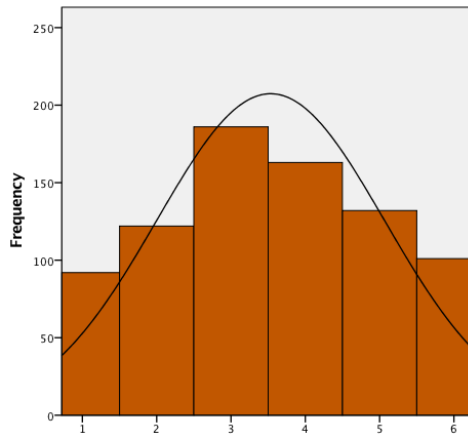
| To what extent has your experience at UT Austin contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in: | Mean | SD |
|---|------|------|
| Articulating a vision of a just and sustainable society. | 2.20 | 0.91 |
| Acquiring the skills to help organizations become more sustainable. | 2.20 | 0.91 |
| Understanding of the economic dimensions of sustainability. | 2.19 | 0.91 |



News Results – During this academic year, how frequently have you followed news about global climate and environmental issues?

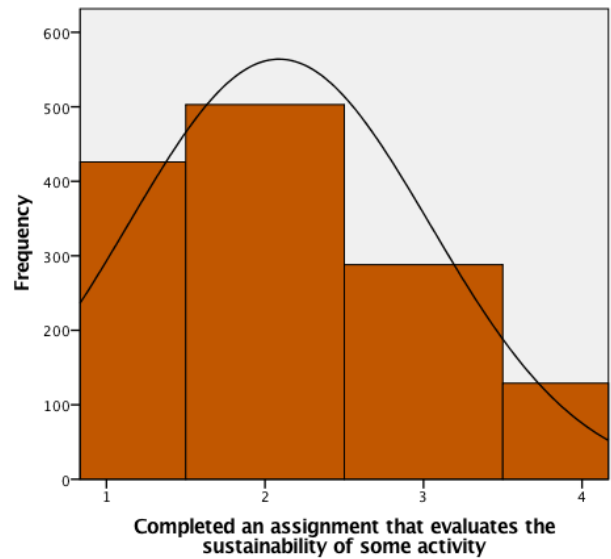
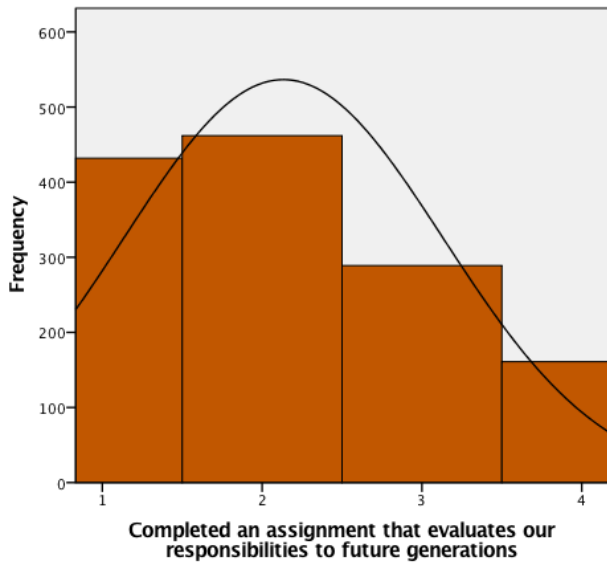
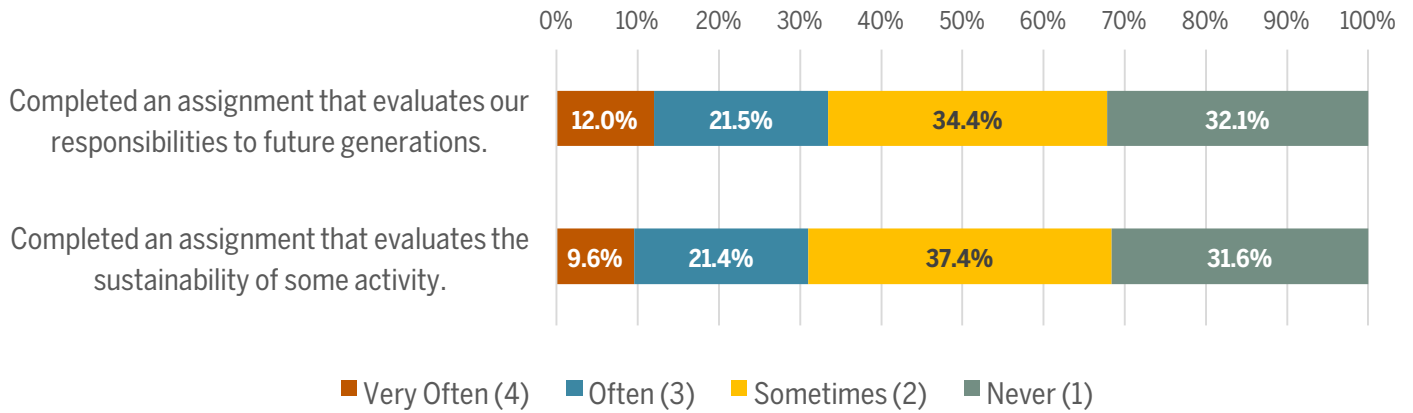
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|---------------|--|
| N | 796 |
| Mean | 3.53 (halfway between Occasionally and Somewhat Often) |
| St Dev | 1.53 |

| | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| 1 | Never | 11.6% |
| 2 | Rarely | 15.3% |
| 3 | Occasionally | 23.4% |
| 4 | Somewhat Often | 20.5% |
| 5 | Often | 16.6% |
| 6 | Very Often | 12.7% |



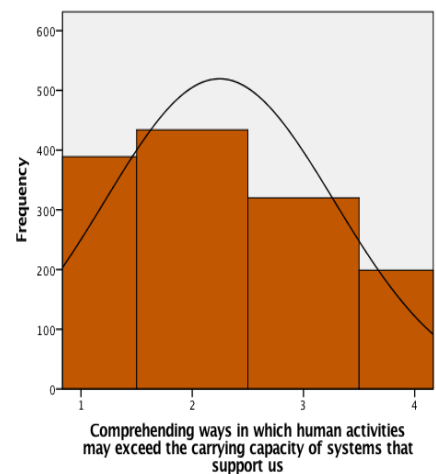
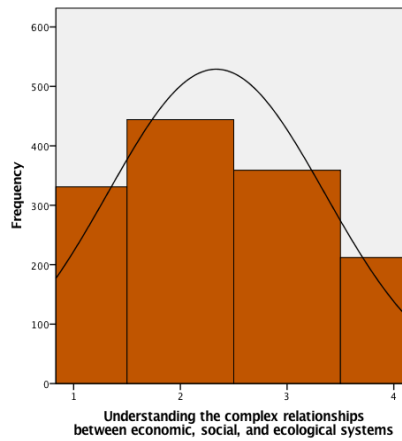
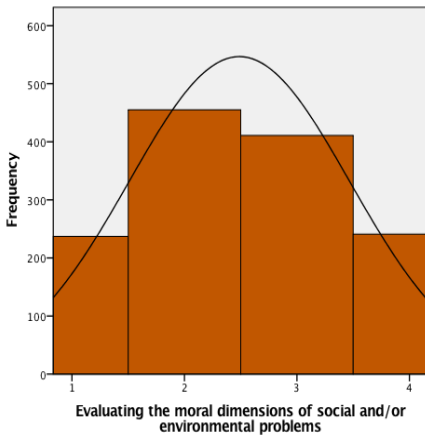
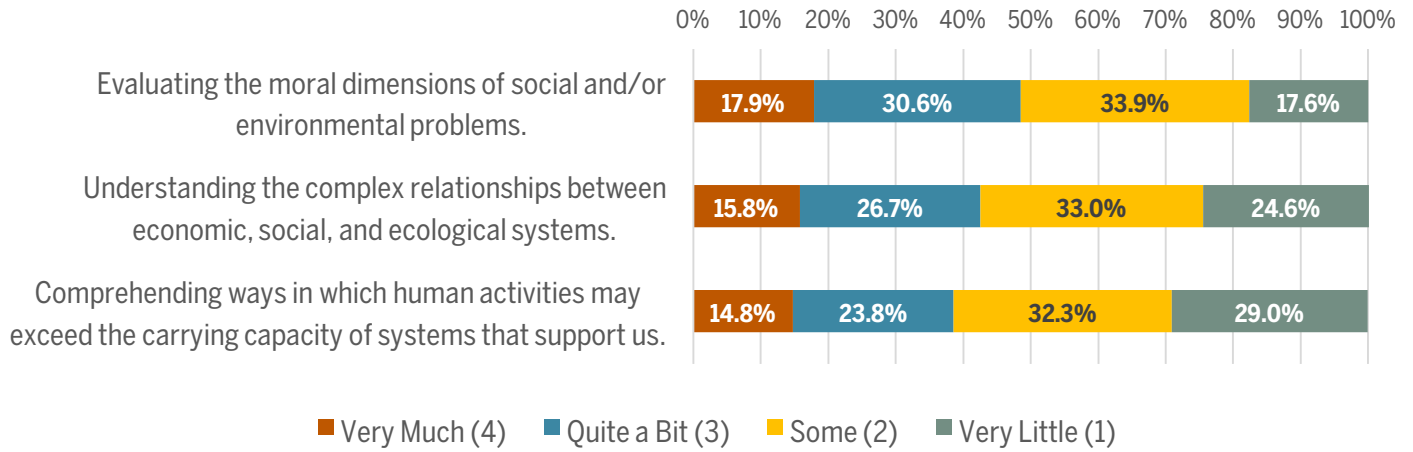
Assignment Results – In your experience at UT Austin during the current school year, about how often have you: (questions ordered by mean)

| | N | Mean | SD |
|--|-------|------|------|
| Completed an assignment that evaluates our responsibilities to future generations. | 1,344 | 2.13 | 0.99 |
| Completed an assignment that evaluates the sustainability of some activity. | 1,346 | 2.09 | 0.95 |



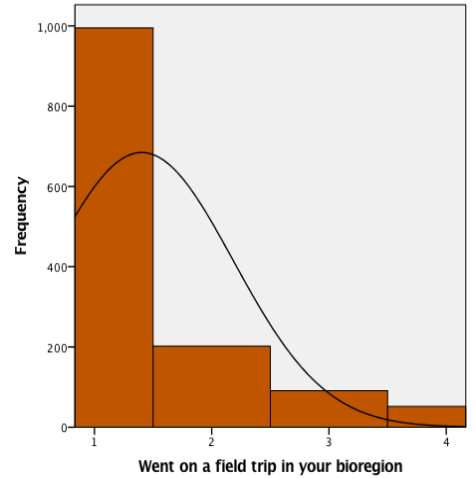
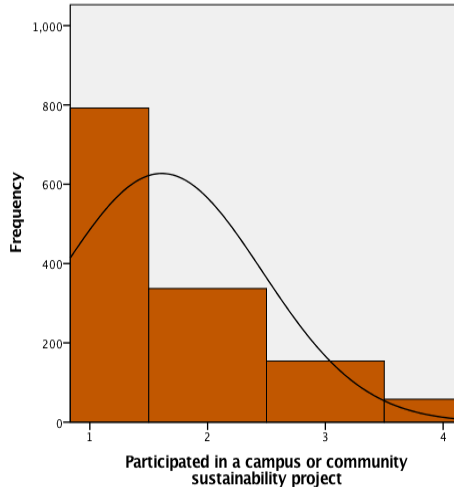
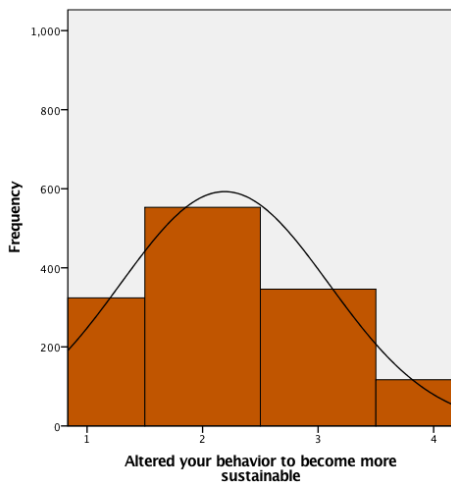
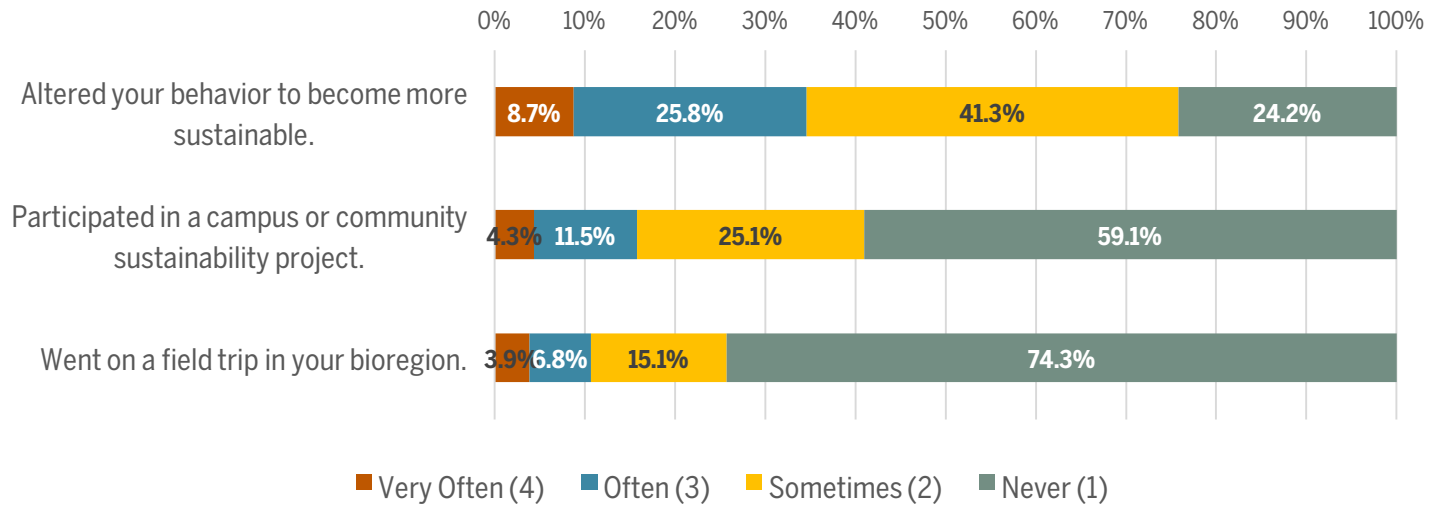
Coursework Results – During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities? (questions ordered by mean)

| | N | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|------|------|
| Evaluating the moral dimensions of social and/or environmental problems. | 1,344 | 2.49 | 0.98 |
| Understanding the complex relationships between economic, social, and ecological systems. | 1,346 | 2.34 | 1.01 |
| Comprehending ways in which human activities may exceed the carrying capacity of systems that support us. | 1,342 | 2.25 | 1.03 |



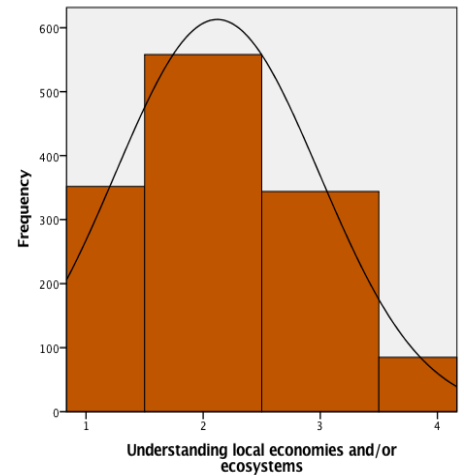
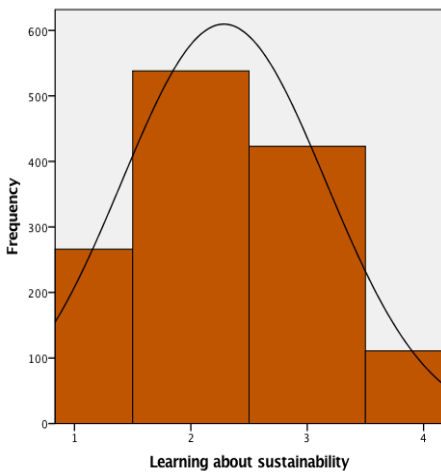
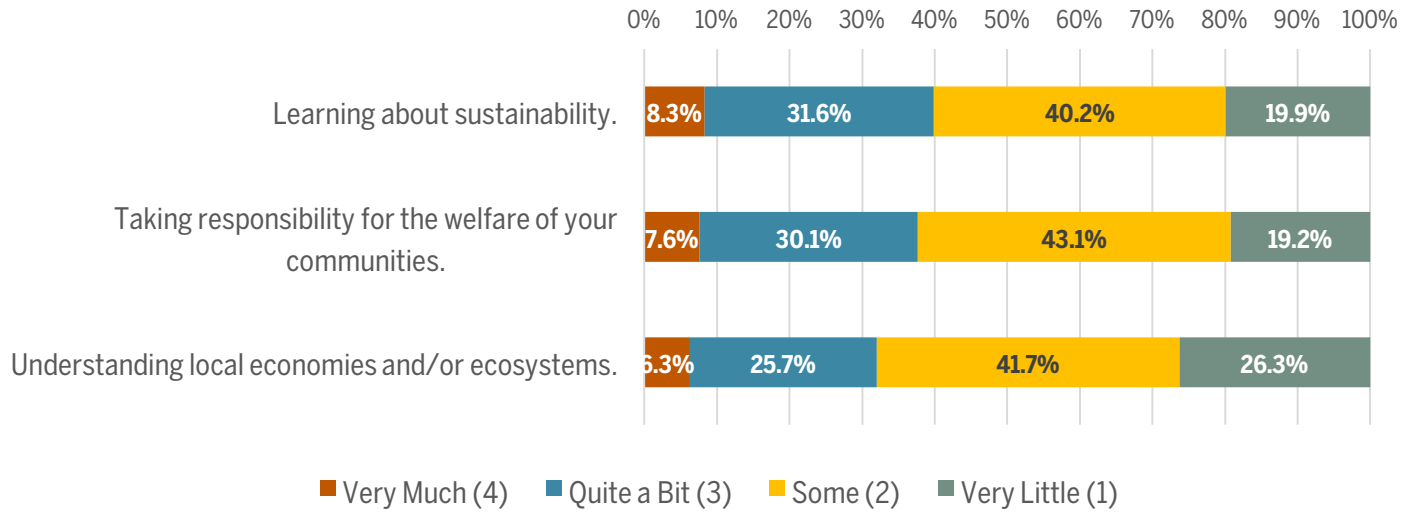
Behavior Results – During the current school year, about how often have you: (questions ordered by mean)

| | N | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|------|------|
| Altered your behavior to become more sustainable. | 1,340 | 2.19 | 0.90 |
| Participated in a campus or community sustainability project. | 1,341 | 1.61 | 0.85 |
| Went on a field trip in your bioregion. | 1,340 | 1.40 | 0.78 |



UT Emphasis Results – To what extent does UT Austin emphasize each of the following? (questions ordered by mean)

| | N | Mean | SD |
|--|-------|------|------|
| Learning about sustainability. | 1,338 | 2.28 | 0.87 |
| Taking responsibility for the welfare of your communities. | 1,340 | 2.26 | 0.85 |
| Understanding local economies and/or ecosystems. | 1,339 | 2.12 | 0.87 |



Development Results – To what extent has your experience at UT Austin contributed to your knowledge, skills, and person development in the following areas? (questions ordered by mean)

| | N | Mean | SD |
|---|-------|------|------|
| Articulating a vision of a just and sustainable society. | 1,341 | 2.20 | 0.91 |
| Acquiring the skills to help organizations become more sustainable. | 1,336 | 2.20 | 0.91 |
| Understanding of the economic dimensions of sustainability. | 1,335 | 2.19 | 0.91 |

