

# Conestoga Fall 2016 Student Success Week Survey Summary

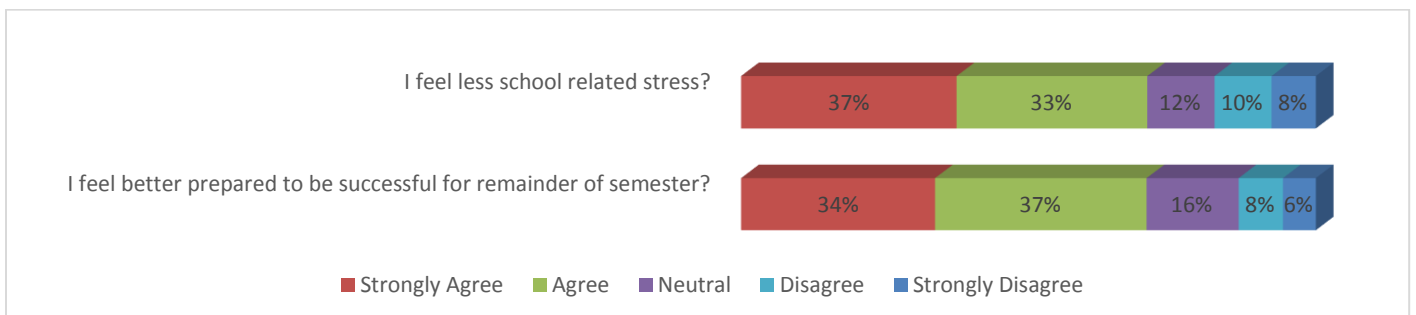
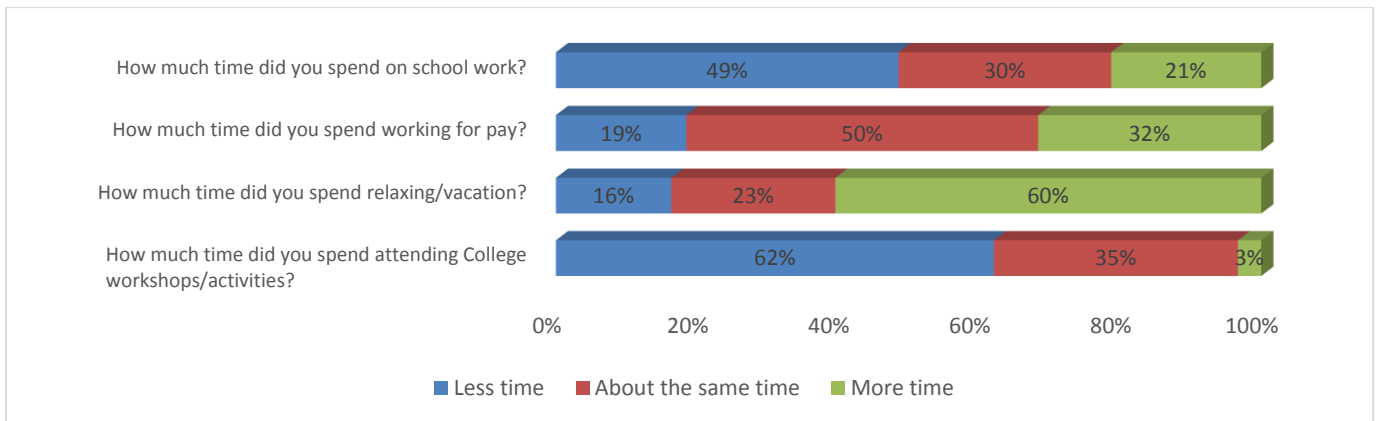
Beginning in September 2016, Conestoga’s Schools of Business & Hospitality, Media & Design and Liberal Studies adopted a new program delivery model that included a Student Success Week during Week 8 of each semester. All students in these programs were invited to participate in a feedback survey hosted from Oct. 31 – Nov. 7, 2016.

## Key Findings:

- Relatively speaking, students were quite eager to provide feedback – 22% responded (861 of 3,884 invitations). Results are **highly reliable** with a confidence interval of +/-3.0%.
- Overall, **70% feel that they have less school-related stress** because of the break – regardless of age, gender, credential, year of study or international student status, agreement ranges from 63% (students aged 30+) to 81% (Degree students); the majority of demographic groups are tightly clustered between 67% and 73%.
- Key area for improvement is the **scheduling of assessments** in a more distributed and intentional way.

## Highlights:

- Many students spent their time on other items besides school work with 60% of respondents focusing more time on relaxing/vacations.
- This break week also allowed 32% of students to spend more time working and 21% to spend more time doing school work.
- 38% of students spent the same or more time participating in college workshops/activities (13% went to the LRC, 6% to the Rec. centre, 3% to the Learning Commons and 10% to other locations).



- With regards to the perceived impact of the break week:
  - **70% feel that they have less school-related stress.**
  - **71% of students say they feel better prepared to be successful for the remainder of the semester.**
    - Results are very consistent across all demographic groupings.

Other suggestions as to how the effectiveness of the Break week could be improved focused on the following six themes. Of note, an exceptionally high number of students (38%) provided often very thoughtful and detailed comments.

Theme • Example comments	Number of Comments
<p>Scheduling of Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I feel that because this was the first fall reading week the assignments being put into the week before and week after were not thought out fully and were crammed into those two weeks on top of the normal amount of work. if they had dispersed the work better throughout the entire semester instead of just the week before or after, the reading week would have been better</i></li> <li><i>Putting all midterm exams before the exam so that the break can be spent actually relaxing or catching up on other assignments which are due after the break</i></li> <li><i>I spent the whole week preparing assignments and midterms because the week after I have something due everyday :( I was at the library from Monday to Friday from 8 to 5 to get my homework done. It was a homework week unfortunately not a student success week.</i></li> </ul>	113
<p>Positive comments with no suggestions for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>With the heavy workload of this program I found this beneficial to catch up on extra work, and have some time to relax.</i></li> <li><i>Pretty much nailed it. We found it very helpful to meet in large groups over the break to catch up on classwork that was highly technical. This led to the overall success of the class when we returned to regular work. No one was left behind who gave it an honest try. Maybe encourage students in other programs to do the same.</i></li> <li><i>Having the week off allowed me to catch up on other assignments. Not having to study for midterms over the break made it more stress free. I would recommend it for the future and I would not change anything</i></li> </ul>	104
<p>A negative or neutral view of Student Success Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There was a lot of pressure from professors and even the program coordinator to use the reading week to get a significant amount of work done. It was suggested that we don't take a break but increase our volume of work output. I think this is a major flaw in my program as research suggests and indeed the idea behind the reading week (at least outlined to me) was to take a break in order to recharge for the next two months. I think that the program could be improved by gaining faculty support for reading week being a much needed mental break for students.</i></li> <li><i>Would rather it be midterm week; have just midterms instead of classes and trying to do class after having a midterm</i></li> <li><i>Although having the week off is great for relieving stress, it put me in a state-of-mind where I would think "I'll get to it tomorrow". I would have preferred a week where we're able to come into class everyday with our teachers available in the class room, helping us with questions we may have as we work through getting caught up on assignments.</i></li> </ul>	33
<p>Disconnect between what was promised regarding Student Success week and what actually occurred</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>No homework assignments should be assigned during this break</i></li> <li><i>Don't have teachers call it a "break" - it's very misleading for students. My class still had on-going assignments and class prep due while on success week.</i></li> </ul>	24
<p>Timing of Student Success Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Use the week after Thanksgiving like all other schools.</i></li> <li><i>Fall Week suggested in the second week of November. Because it helps to prepare for final exams and helps to finish all pending assignments.</i></li> </ul>	20
<p>Scheduling of supportive activities during Student Success Week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Have workshops on more than one day so more people can get involved. For example- I worked Tuesday and was not able to attend the workshops and activities</i></li> <li><i>Perhaps include some program related seminars during the break as a brush up</i></li> </ul>	17
<p>Other</p>	11

### Key Lessons Learned:

- Utilize the Annual Program Reflection process to review the schedule of assessments and distribute them more evenly/intentionally throughout the semester.
- Review communication strategies to ensure the College is setting clear and realistic expectations for students and faculty.
- Consider additional ways to provide assistance to struggling students – increased workshop availability, program-specific supports/tutorial sessions, and guidance for staying in the “rhythm” of school.