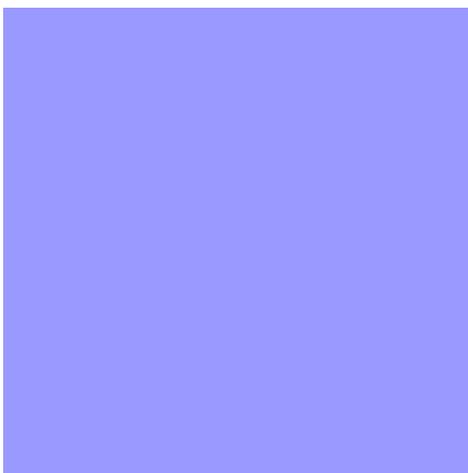




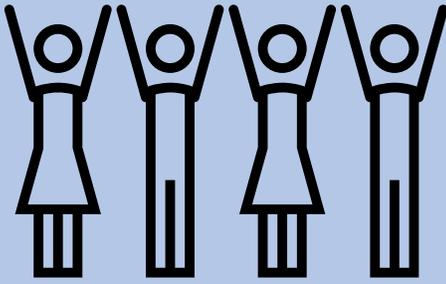
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

EMERITUS COLLEGE

2021 SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT



August 2021



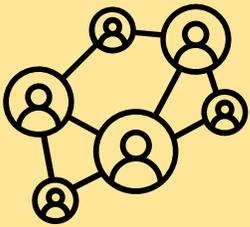
RESPONDENTS

456 UBC Emeritus College members responded to the survey

284 comments were provided

The respondents were representative of the 1227 survey recipients in terms of gender, age, and length of retirement

87% are satisfied with retirement



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

39%

Doing research

18%

Teaching

18%

On committees



EXPANDING INTERESTS

731

responses to establishing new Special Interest Groups

34%

Outdoor Physical

29%

Family & Community

23%

Culinary

14%

Music & Arts Appreciation



FEEDBACK TO THE COLLEGE

90%



UBC Benefits for emeriti

61%



College Programs

74%



Medical & Travel Insurance options

2000 positive responses to Newsletter sections

CONTINUING EVOLUTION

Comparing later to early years post-retirement:

Higher

- Pursuit of new interests
- Volunteer work
- Provision of care to family &/or friends

Lower

- Connection to the university
- Connection to work colleagues
- Engagement in professional activities

Not so Retiring

“I do not relate to the term ‘retirement’. I resonate more to ‘re-inventing’, ‘re-tooling’, ‘re-firing’.” (2021 Survey respondent)

Unique in Canada, the UBC Emeritus College was approved in June 2018 by both the Board of Governors and the Senate, building on the success of the UBC Association of Professors Emeriti (APE) (1987-2019) by enhancing the potential for emeriti to maintain existing relationships and develop new ones with colleagues in other disciplines. The College continues the important role of APE in supporting faculty members and senior academic administrators as they transition into retirement, providing a welcoming social and intellectual environment, and advocating for benefits and programs to promote the well-being of all.

Emeriti contribute to the academic work and reputation of UBC through lecturing and mentoring, research and publishing, and participation in university committees, among other commitments. They are also active in special interest groups of the College for travel, photography, films and poetic odysseys, and enthusiastic contributors to the newsletter and special presentations of artistic and published works at general meetings.

In Spring 2021 the College conducted this survey of its members to garner qualitative feedback on its programs and activities, and to explore how people adapt to a new phase in life. There were 456 respondents who were representative of the 1227 survey recipients in terms of gender, age, and length of retirement. Many people took the time to provide comments which will be helpful in shaping College initiatives.

Only 8 respondents (2%) indicated dissatisfaction with their post-retirement experience, while 87% expressed satisfaction (41 (11%) were neutral). We hope that you will appreciate that the information in this report contributes to the growing view that "Retirement may be an ending, a closing, but it is also a new beginning."¹

¹ www.wisesayings.com/authors/catherine-pulsifer-quotes/#4030

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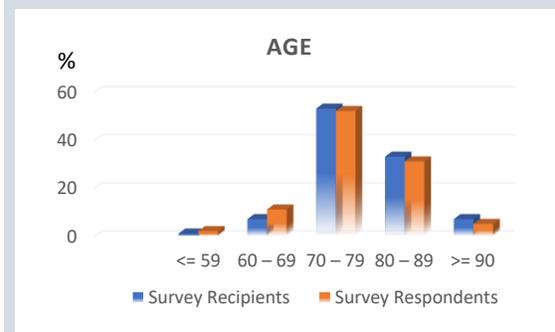
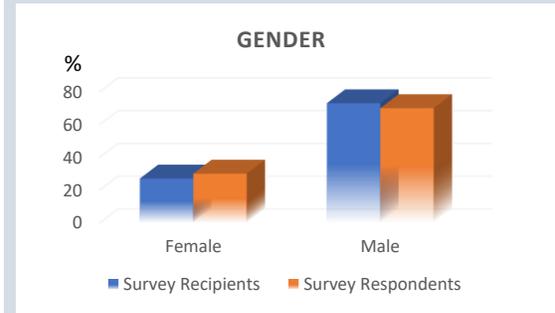
The Survey

The survey used an on-line questionnaire developed in Qualtrics, a cloud-based service provider contracted by UBC, and which meets UBC privacy and security requirements. Survey information collected using this tool is stored in Toronto ON and backed up in Montreal QC. Survey sections and questions were largely drawn from APE surveys conducted in 2012 and 2017 so results could be compared. Questions were reviewed and additional fields of inquiry were suggested by relevant committees within the college including Communications, Programs, Special Interest Groups, Transitions to Retirement and Continuing Scholarly Activities. The survey was opened April 29th and closed May 31st. Notice with an embedded link was sent via email on three occasions (April 29th, May 13th, and May 27th) and posted in the May e-newsletter.

Of 1740 individuals in the College registry the survey was sent to 1227 members for whom there was a current email address. In 2017 only 1% of survey respondents elected to use paper questionnaires so it was decided to use only electronic means in 2021. The response rate of 456 (37%) compared favourably to the 2017 results of 317/1048 (30%).

Shuyi Tan from the Short-Term Consulting Service (STCS) of the UBC Department of Statistics conducted an analysis of subgroups of the respondents to validate whether the survey respondents were representative of the Emeritus College members who were sent the surveys; and to investigate whether the patterns of responses were influenced by gender, age, or year of retirement. Previous surveys did not include gender identification. “Year of Retirement” was categorized into groups which were selected because mandatory retirement at age 65 years ended at UBC in May 2007 and benefits were introduced for those working past age 65 along with flexible retirement options; and because Transition to Retirement seminars started in 2018. Figures in the sidebar show that the survey respondents were representative of survey recipients in terms of gender, age, and length of retirement.

Not everyone answered all questions, and many questions allowed multiple response selections, so response percentages to questions were calculated using the number of selected responses (ie. “Important” “Not Important”) divided by the total number of people who answered any part of the question.



What people are doing

Professional Activity

The broad range of professional activities in which emeriti continue to be engaged was revealed by a multiple-choice question with 11 options which solicited 1087 responses. The data highlighted in the sidebar shows the proportion of these 1087 responses for groups of related activities. Amongst all respondents, 179 people (39% of respondents) continue to participate in research, including 7 people in their 90s. 83 respondents continued to teach, including 3 in their 90s.

“I retired from UBC in 2001, but continued teaching and research at two other universities, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, so, in effect, my active career continued for several years after that. I published my last book in 2009 with EJ Brill; it was based on extensive fieldwork in rural north China, c2002-2008. So, my teaching and research career continued until 2009.”

“For the past 18 years I have lived and worked at universities mainly in Thailand - but also India and Indonesia. It continues to be a rewarding life, academically - as well as living in the tropics.”

“I continue to work in journal editing. I am also much involved in disciplinary history, prepare history of Botany and Botanical sciences at UBC. I also volunteer with the Music school.”

“I appreciate the College and I think that by being a member of the college it has made a difference in my transition to retirement. The Subsidy supports definitely made a difference in my international participation in conferences. Thanks so much.”

60%

 (652 responses)

- Doing research
- Publishing peer reviewed work
- Reviewing papers
- Reviewing grants
- Involved in doctoral defenses

AGE	NUMBER DOING RESEARCH
<= 59	3
60 – 69	7
70 – 79	14
80 – 89	102
>= 90	7
Not known	46
Total	179

21%

 (227 responses)

- Involved with committees
- Mentoring colleagues
- Attend admin meetings
- Provide input to media

12%

 (130 responses)

- Teaching
- Mentoring trainees

AGE	NUMBER TEACHING
<= 59	2
60-69	8
70-79	46
80-89	24
>= 90	3
Total	83

Expanding Interests

Established Special Interest Groups at the College are Travel, Photography, Film and Poetic Odysseys which meet regularly throughout the year. The 456 survey respondents provided 724 responses to a list of 10 proposed new groups and suggested an additional 7. The data highlighted in the sidebar shows the proportion of these 731 responses for groups of related activities. The enthusiasm to develop groups was highlighted by 106 of 456 survey respondents (23%) providing their name and contact information in order to be involved. Zoom enabled people to continue to meet during the pandemic and revealed the interest in people residing remotely to be included. There is active discussion on how to facilitate engagement of people who do not live near the UBC Vancouver campus.

“I have come to appreciate that as a UBC Professor Emeritus I have amazing opportunities to contribute to society through retirement which is very satisfying.”

“The activity of the college and its offerings needs to be amped up. Improve the opportunities for engagement and social interaction among the retirees.”

“Many of these Special Interest Groups would interest me but I live in Greece and my involvement is basically virtual.”

“Would love to have things inclusive of the Okanagan campus.”

“I feel happier and more fulfilled in semi-retirement than I was when working full-time.”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS INTEREST IN NEW GROUPS:

34% (248 responses)

OUTDOOR/PHYSICAL

Walking
Cycling
Hiking

30% (216 responses)

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

Book Club(s)
Volunteerism
Grandparenting
New Retirees
Seniors Learning
International Relations

23% (164 responses)

CULINARY

Wine Tasting
Dining
Cooking

14% (99 responses)

Music Appreciation
Art Appreciation

Continuing Evolution

We asked people to indicate whether their involvement in certain activities had changed in recent years compared to earlier years of retirement, exploring 7 areas:

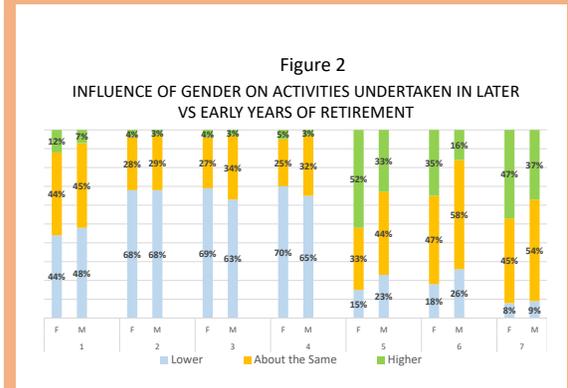
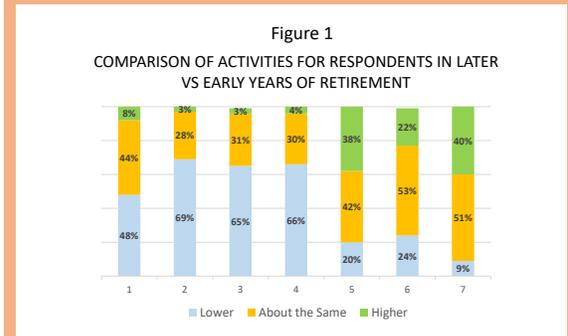
- Work-related
 - 1 Connection to the university community
 - 2 Connection to work colleagues
 - 3 Engagement in professional activities
 - 4 Involvement in interdisciplinary projects
- Personal Life
 - 5 Pursuing new interests
 - 6 Volunteering in the community
 - 7 Providing care to family and/or friends

Figure 1 in the sidebar reveals a sharp contrast between responses to the 4 work-related questions and the 3 questions about personal life, with lower levels of work-related activities and higher personal commitments in later compared to early phases of retirement. Figure 2 shows there was no significant gender pattern in respondents’ levels of work connection. However, for personal life, female respondents show higher commitments than men in later compared to early phases of retirement.

“After retirement I went back to school and got a Diploma in Textile Art which has occupied much of my time since in various capacities from teaching to administration.”

“So far in my retirement I have been very busy with continued UBC research, some consulting, intense involvement in community-based activities and working on my own projects (building an airplane).”

“I have found retirement to be a most wonderful experience. Doing creative work -- writing fiction and publishing it -- has provided me with new perspectives and great opportunities to exercise my imagination in new ways. To be honest, it’s been totally exhilarating.”



Feedback to the College

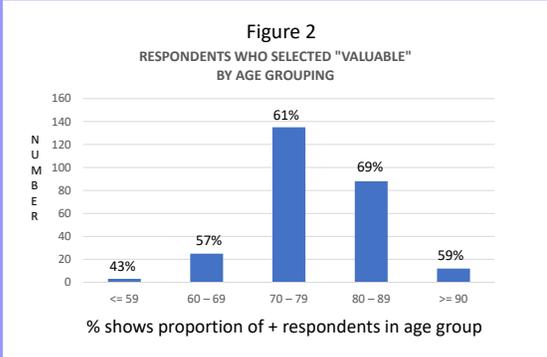
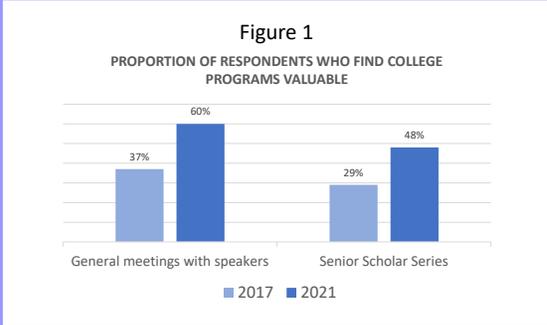
Programs

The College provides a variety of programs to enrich the intellectual focus and continued intellectual involvement of its members within a welcoming social environment. The COVID19 pandemic prevented all but two programs from continuing to be held. Both the General Meetings with invited speakers and the Senior Scholar Series continue to be well-received and compared to 2017, there has been an increase in the proportion of people who find these valuable (Figure 1). Figure 2 indicates those aged 80-89 years had peak interest in the programs, although there were greater numbers of positive respondents in the group aged 70-79 years. Gender had no influence on the rating. Respondents indicated an interest in seeing a return of programs that have been on hold during the pandemic, including Philosophers Café (38%), Research Day (36%) and Guided Tours of UBC venues (23%). During the pandemic, the office staff have done a wonderful job to enable on-line meetings but only 50% of respondents found the switch to Zoom was “easy”. Overall, a majority (40%) selected the choice to “provide the option of in-person and internet access for all events” which was most favoured by younger (age <80y) and more recently retired (2008-21) people. There were a range of comments about the ability of people to join on-line meetings from afar, balanced by keen interest to see an end to isolation and meet in-person.

“The speaker series is excellent. Just terrific range of topics and very high-quality presentations.”

“Emeritus College is doing a great job in developing innovative ways to connect people and meet their interests. Thank you so much!”

“I do miss the campus and taking part in events/activities in person!”

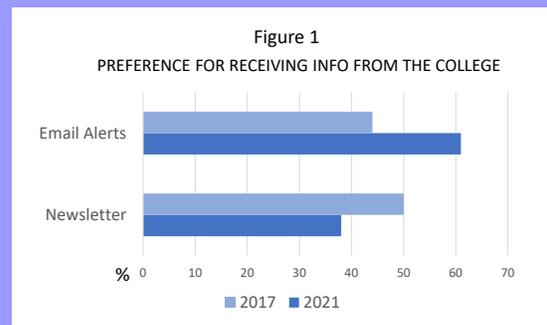


Communication

Various channels are used to convey information about the College, its members, and activities. A newsletter is published electronically five times a year. Members are invited to submit letters to the editor, "op-ed" pieces, book reviews, articles about travel or other material for possible publication. There has been a concerted effort to build the College website resources and utility, and a strong commitment to provide timely information via email alerts. Compared to 2017 there has been a shift to preference for receiving information from the College by email alerts (Figure 1). As in 2017, social media remains unpopular; only 7 respondents (1.5%) indicated an interest in receiving College information by this means. While 33% of respondents indicated they never visit the College website, most respondents (54%) indicated they visit once a month, usually to look for news and events. A multi-choice question asked people to rate the overall value of each of the 8 newsletter sections which elicited 2000 positive responses. Overall, 70% of respondents found value in the newsletter. As in 2017 the two most valued items were information of meetings with speakers and information about other events around campus and elsewhere. Forty people took the time to provide comments.

“Kudos to the new newsletter editor, Margery Fee, who is doing a wonderful job -- like her predecessor!”

“It takes time, but I think efforts need to be made to increase the visibility of the Emeritus College within departments and the university as a whole. The College is the voice for retired colleagues and all that they have to offer but also the experience in supporting people with their planning and transition into retirement.”



Final Comments

“Never forget that even after retirement your advice and experience are calculable assets of UBC.”

“It would be nice to know how many members live outside of Vancouver and, if there are other members like me, acknowledge that the Emeritus College is indeed a distributed Provincial institution, very much like UBC is at present.”

“Keep up the good work. Keeping connected is vital.”

“As I am ninety years old and just surviving has become a full time job! I enjoy reading about all the programs that are active even without participating. Thank you for asking.”

“The long questionnaire is exactly what a research project should be, and I hope us older folks will take the time to ponder each question and answer them, perhaps not in the time suggested.”

“Hugely impressed with how the Emeritus College has taken flight and expanded its offerings. I am also relieved that it is a home for those with divergent interests and is not focused predominantly on colleagues who continue to pursue research endeavours. It is a great model for other academic institutions across the province, nationally and even internationally. Well done!”

“Lets all stay young, without its mistakes.”