

Empathy, Engagement, and Organization

Findings on UW Students' Experience of Remote Instruction

Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Living & learning in a pandemic
- III. Supporting student learning
- IV. Resources on teaching remotely
- V. Questions/Discussion

Interaction Guidelines

- We will pause briefly for questions after Sections II & III (major findings)
- We plan 15-20 mins at end for questions/discussion
- Use Q&A to post questions
- You have the option to upvote questions
- Moderator will pose questions to presenters

Living & Learning in a Pandemic

ASUW/GPSS Student Climate Survey

Spring 2020

- open weeks 4-6
- COVID-19 & transition to remote instruction
- 3588 respondents

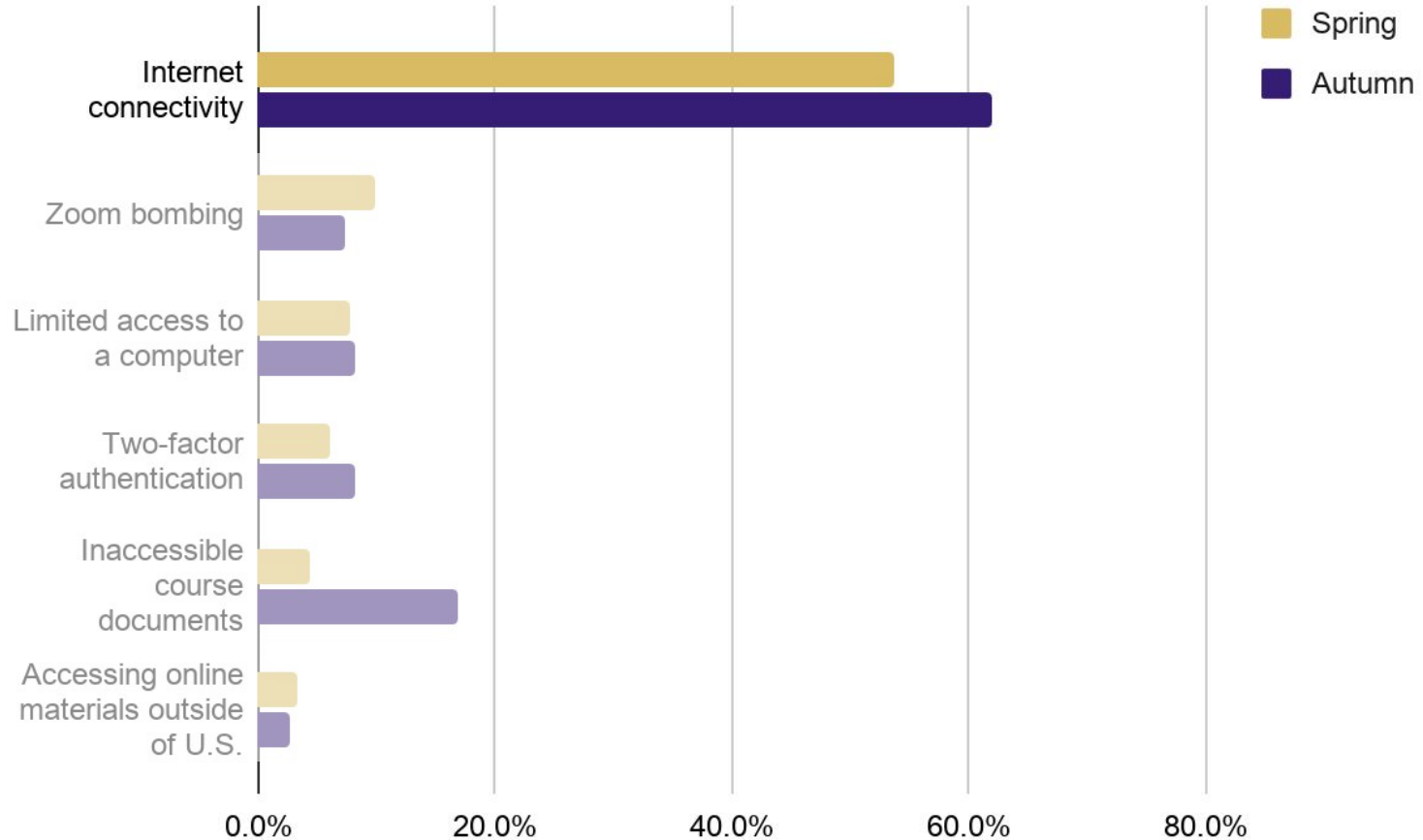
Autumn 2020

- open weeks 10-11
- COVID-19, remote instruction, additional events
- 2248 respondents

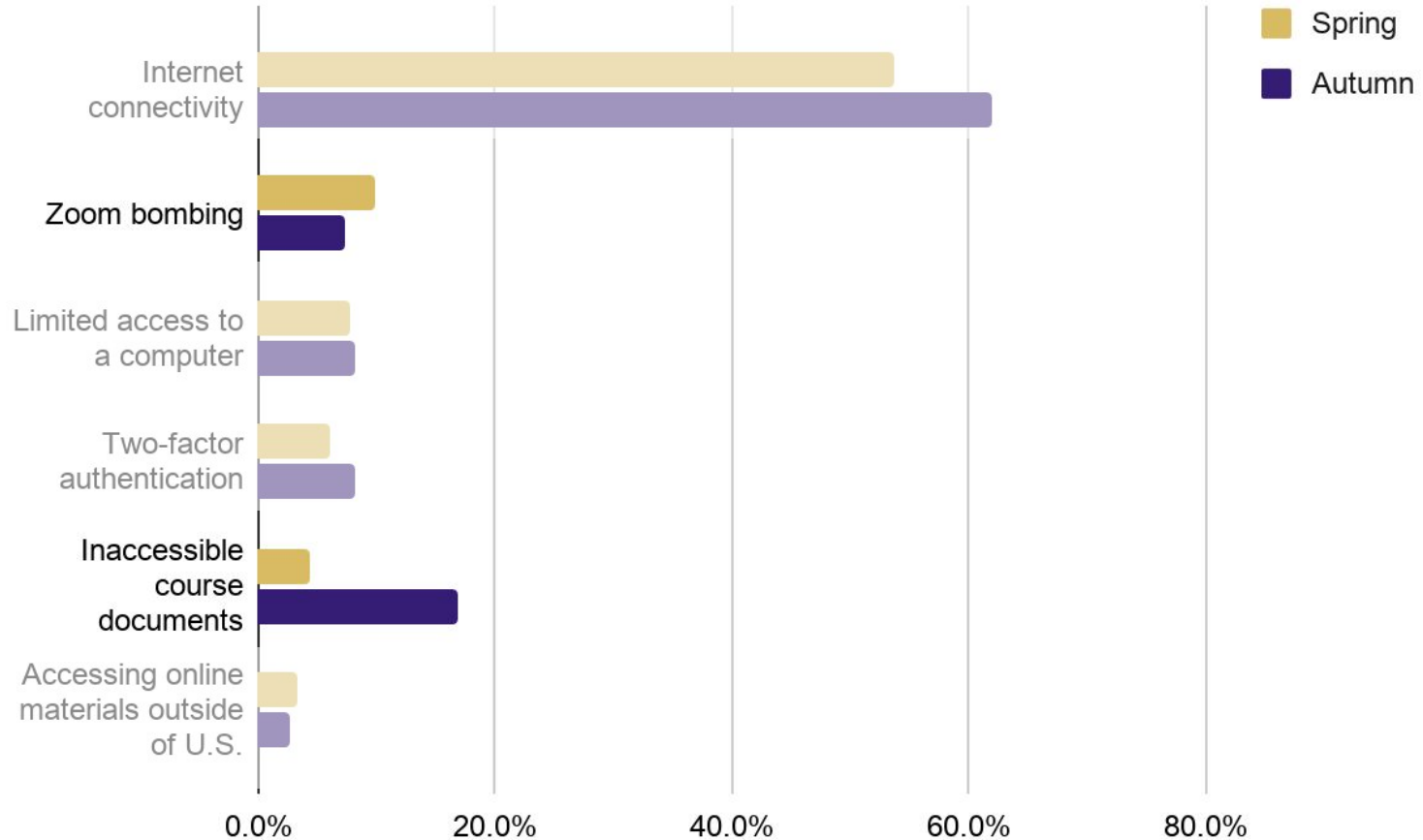
Survey Focus

- Have you experienced any of the following [technical/academic/personal] issues this quarter?
- How disruptive have these [technical/academic/personal] issues been to your educational experience?
- Level of academic engagement
- Grad students: Anticipate more time or funding?
- Autumn: Impact of 2020 events beyond pandemic
- Open-ended questions

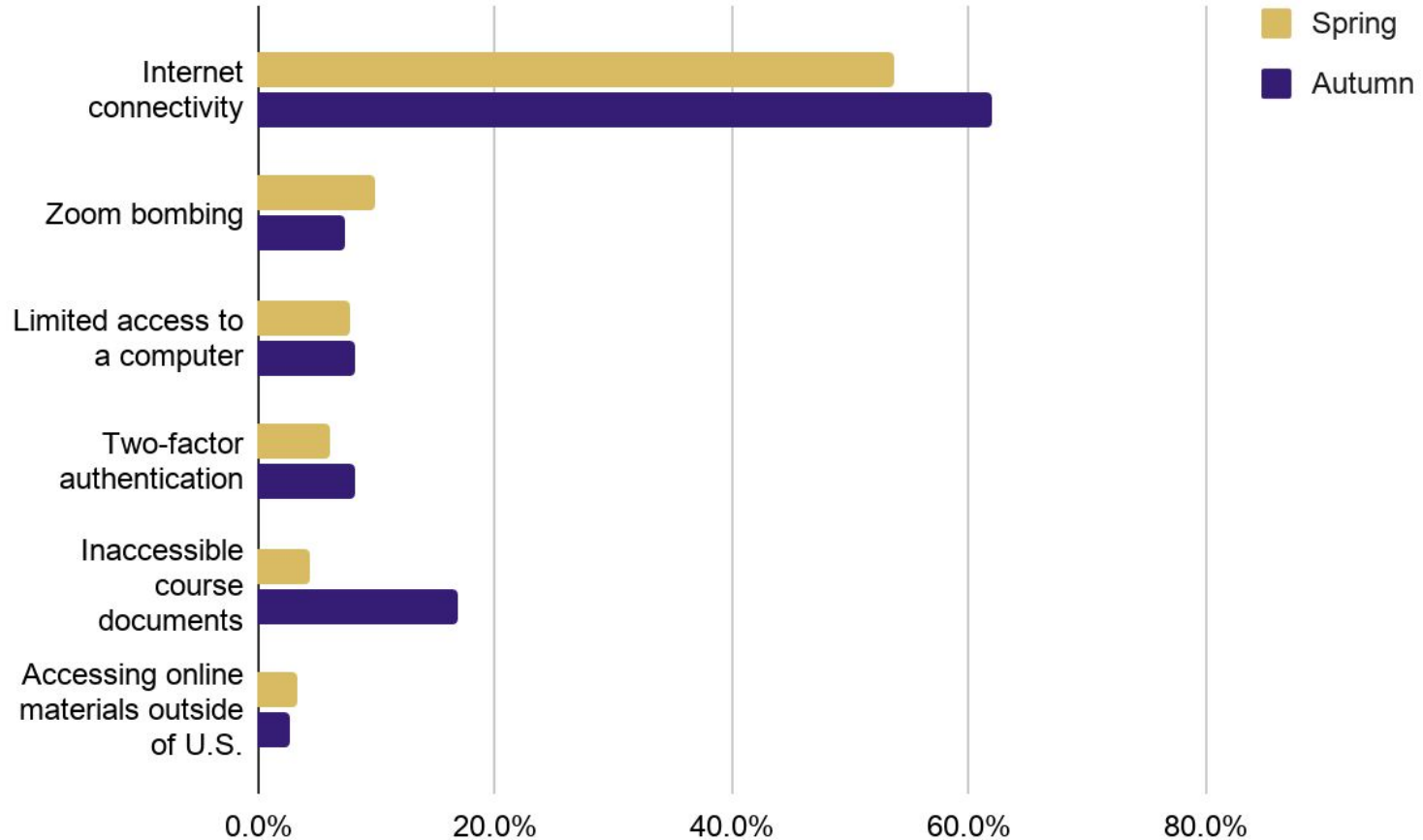
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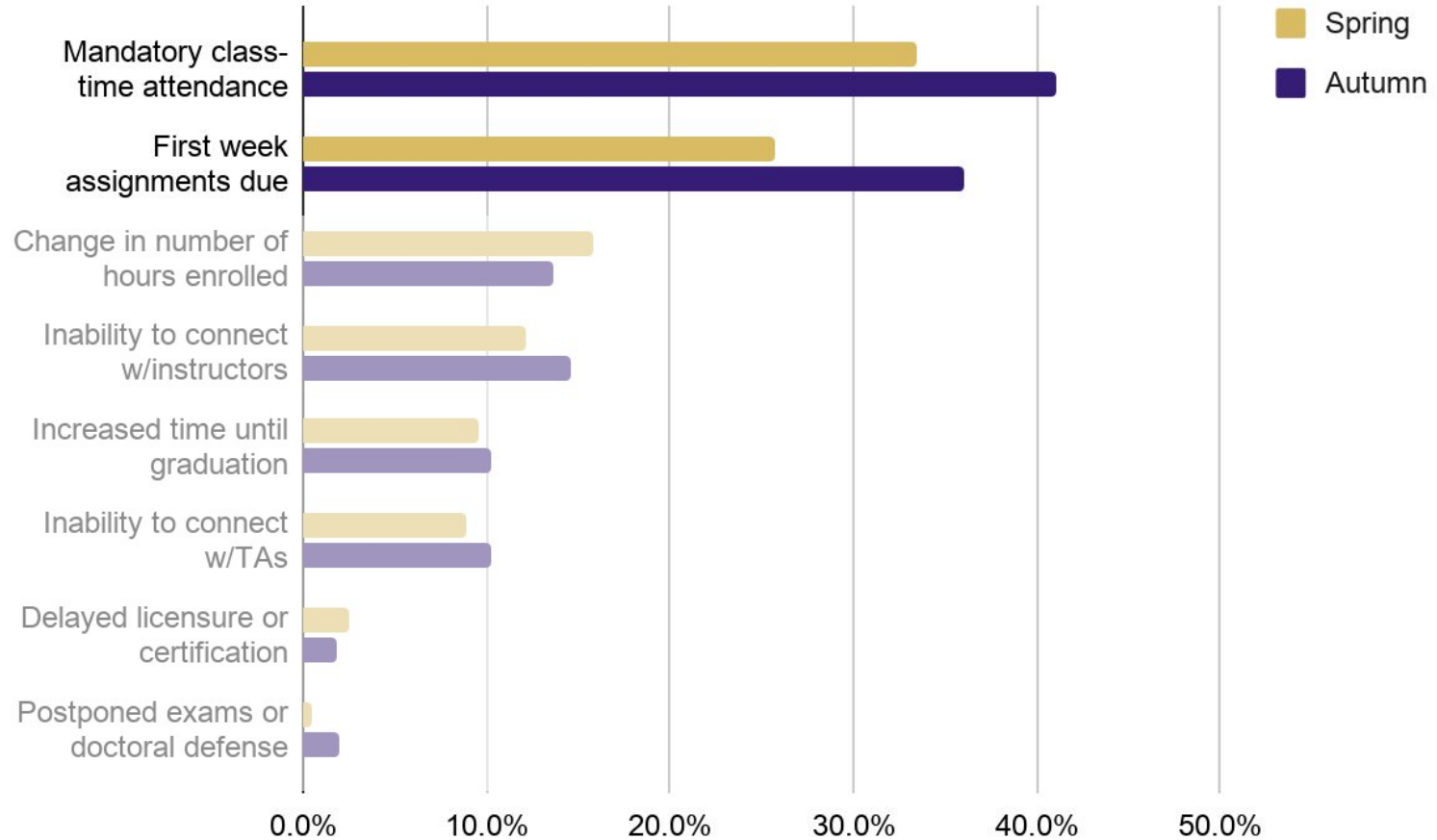
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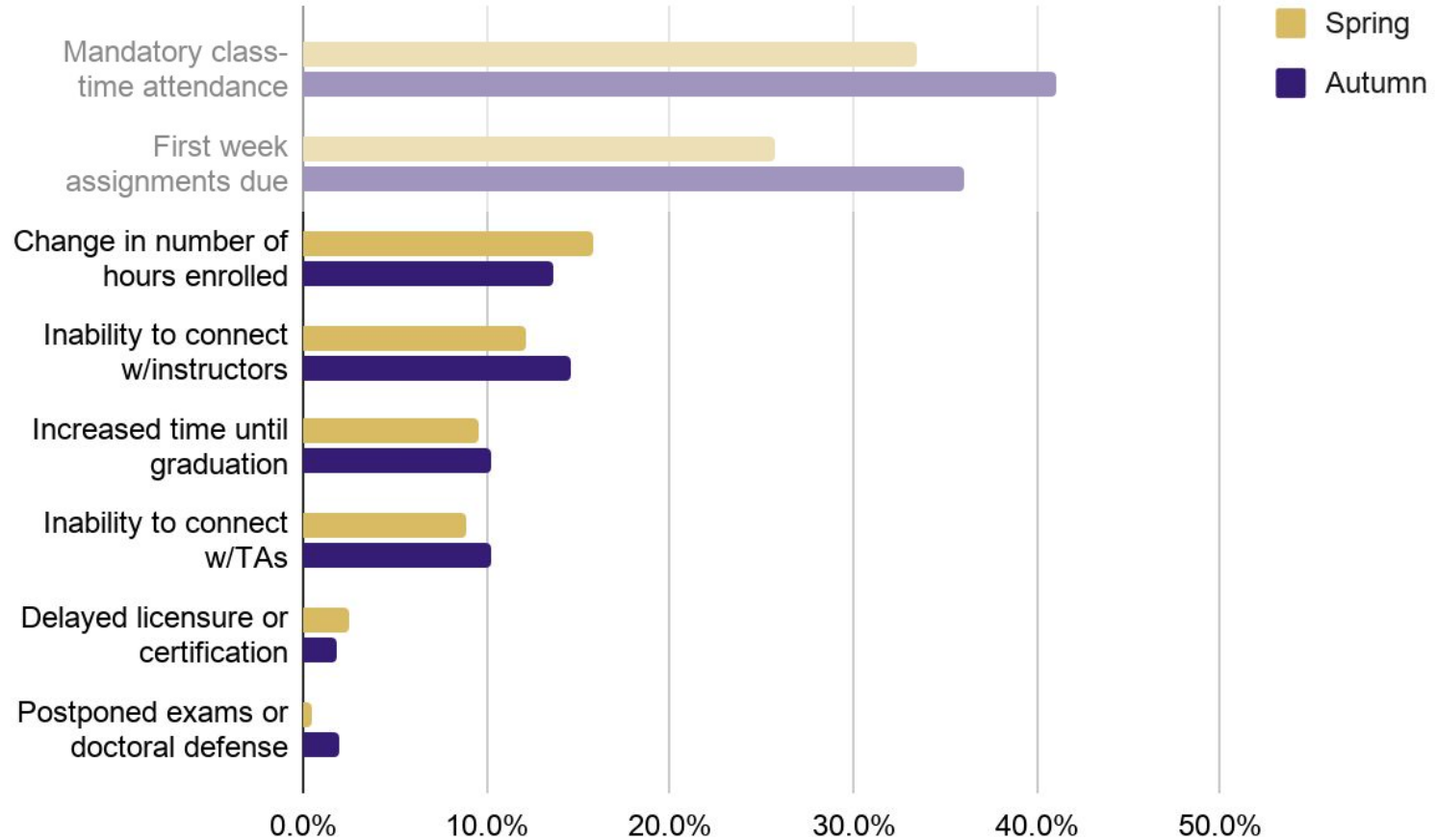
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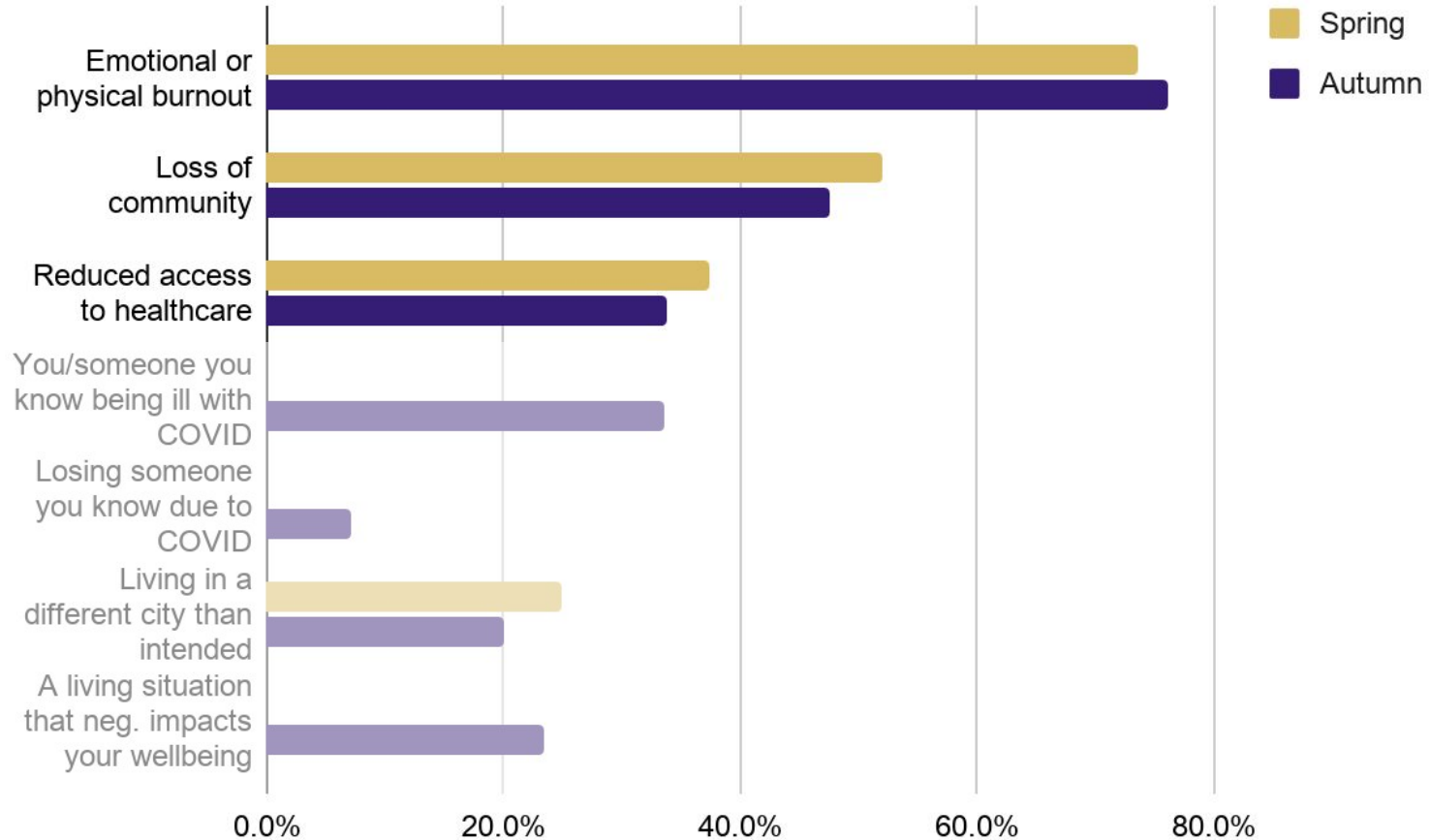
Academic Issues



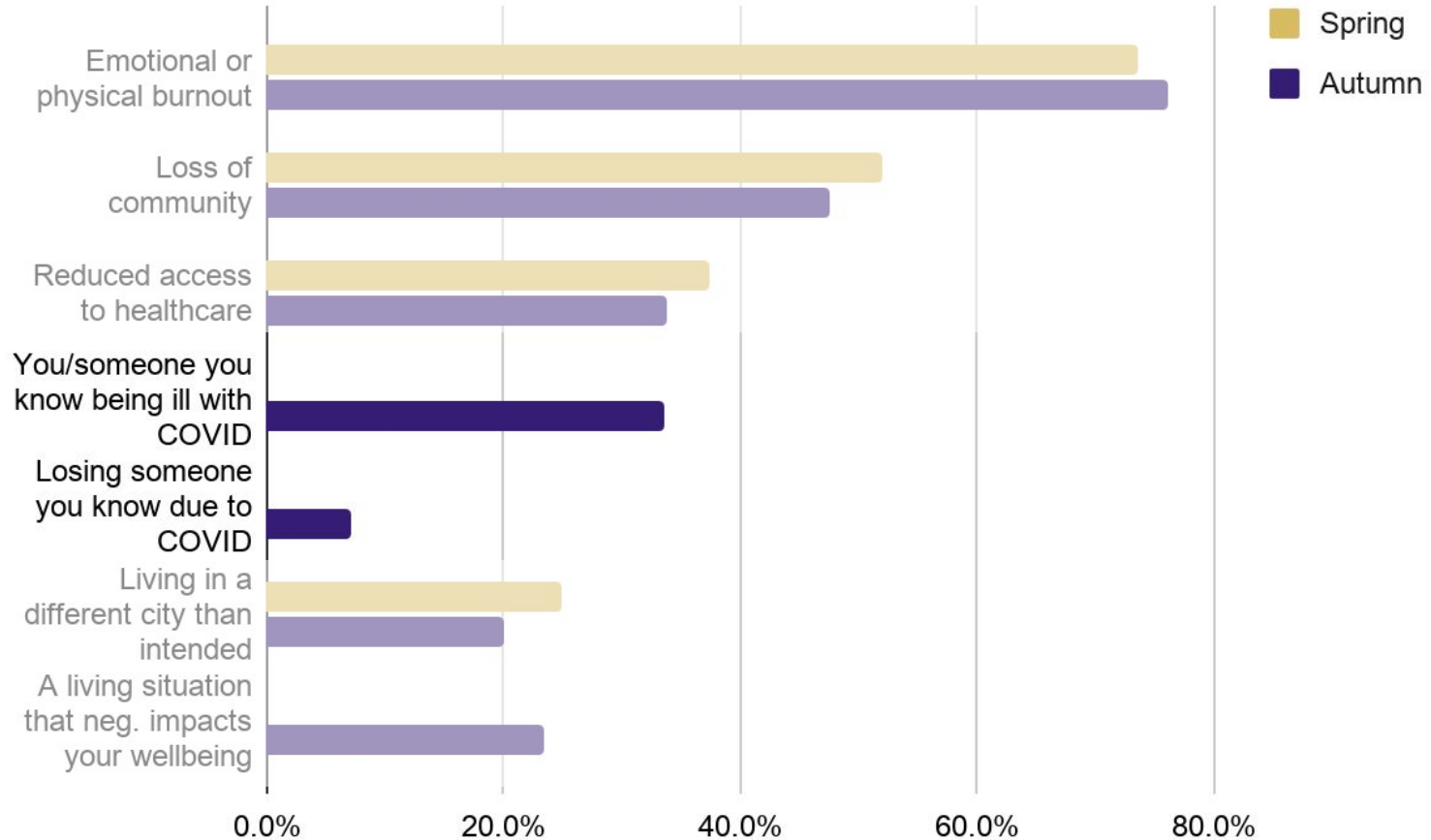
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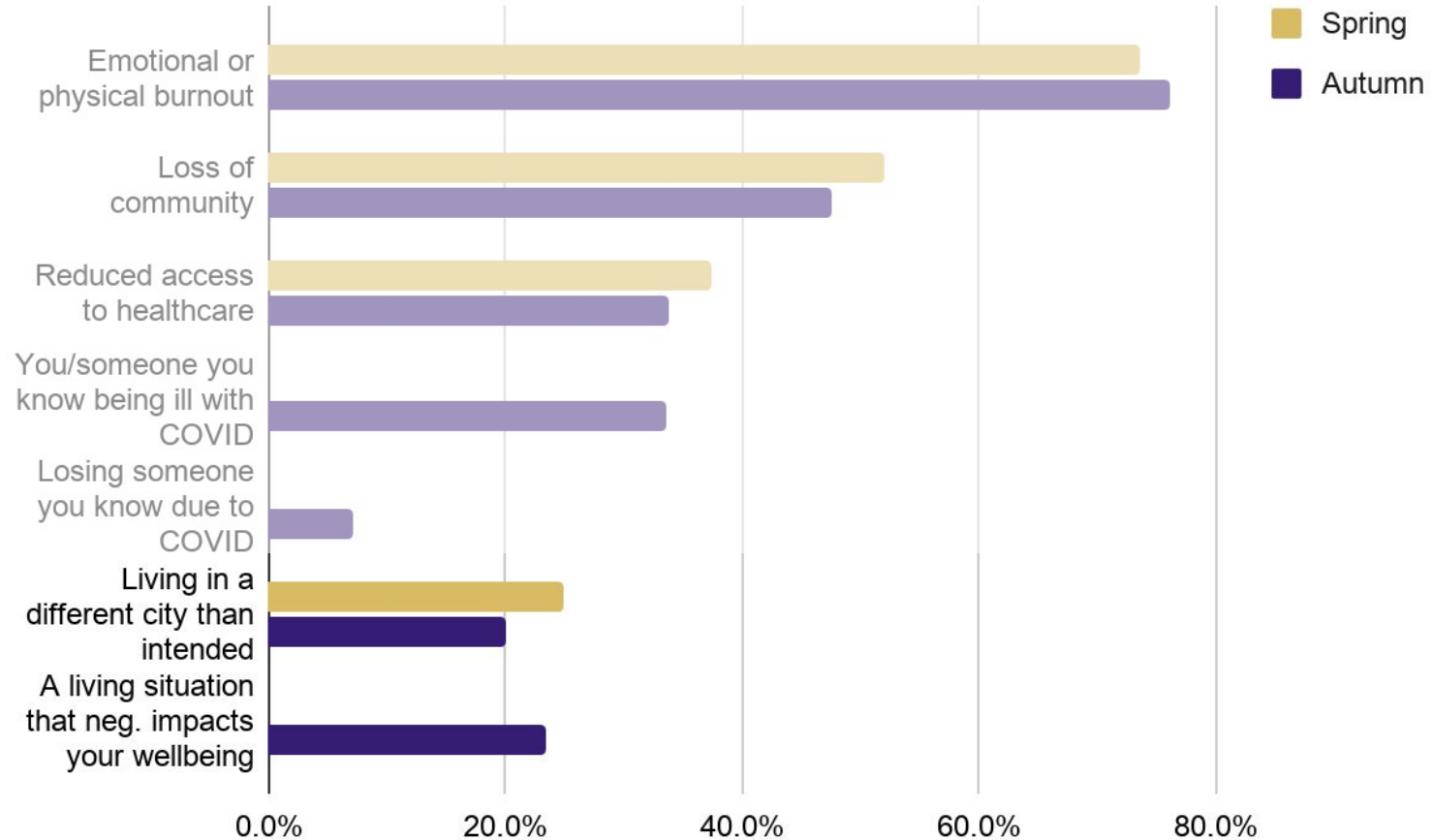
Personal Issues



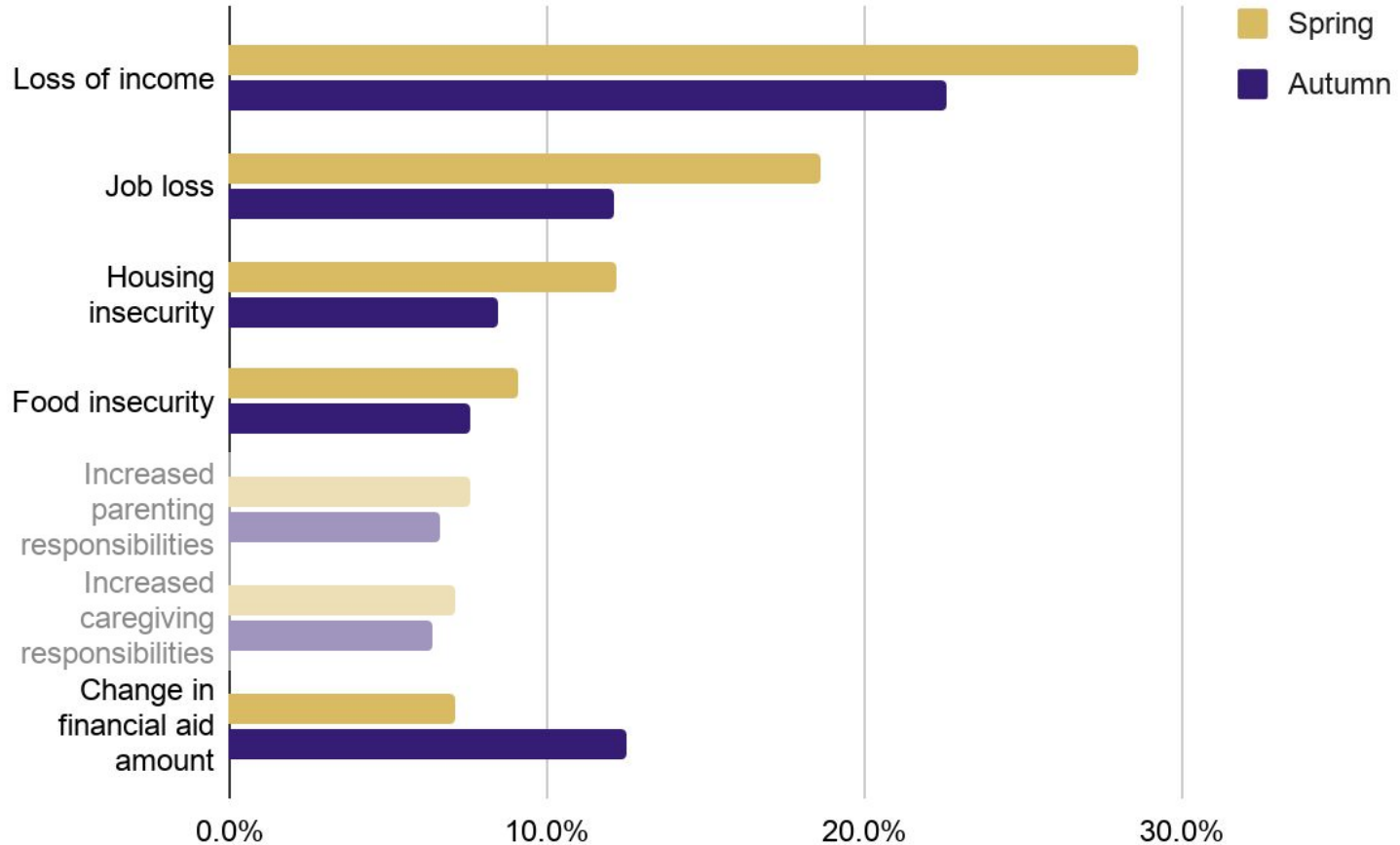
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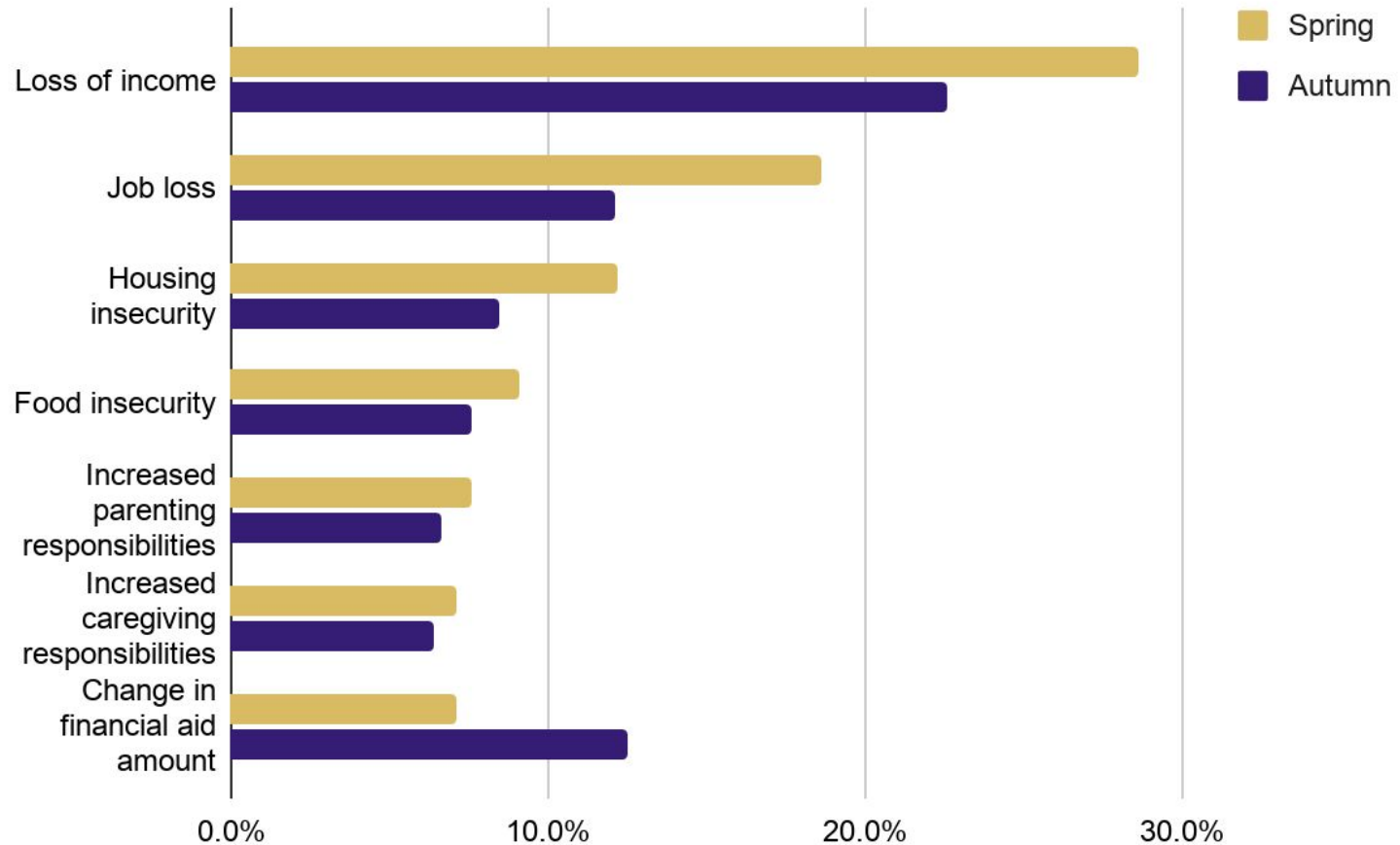
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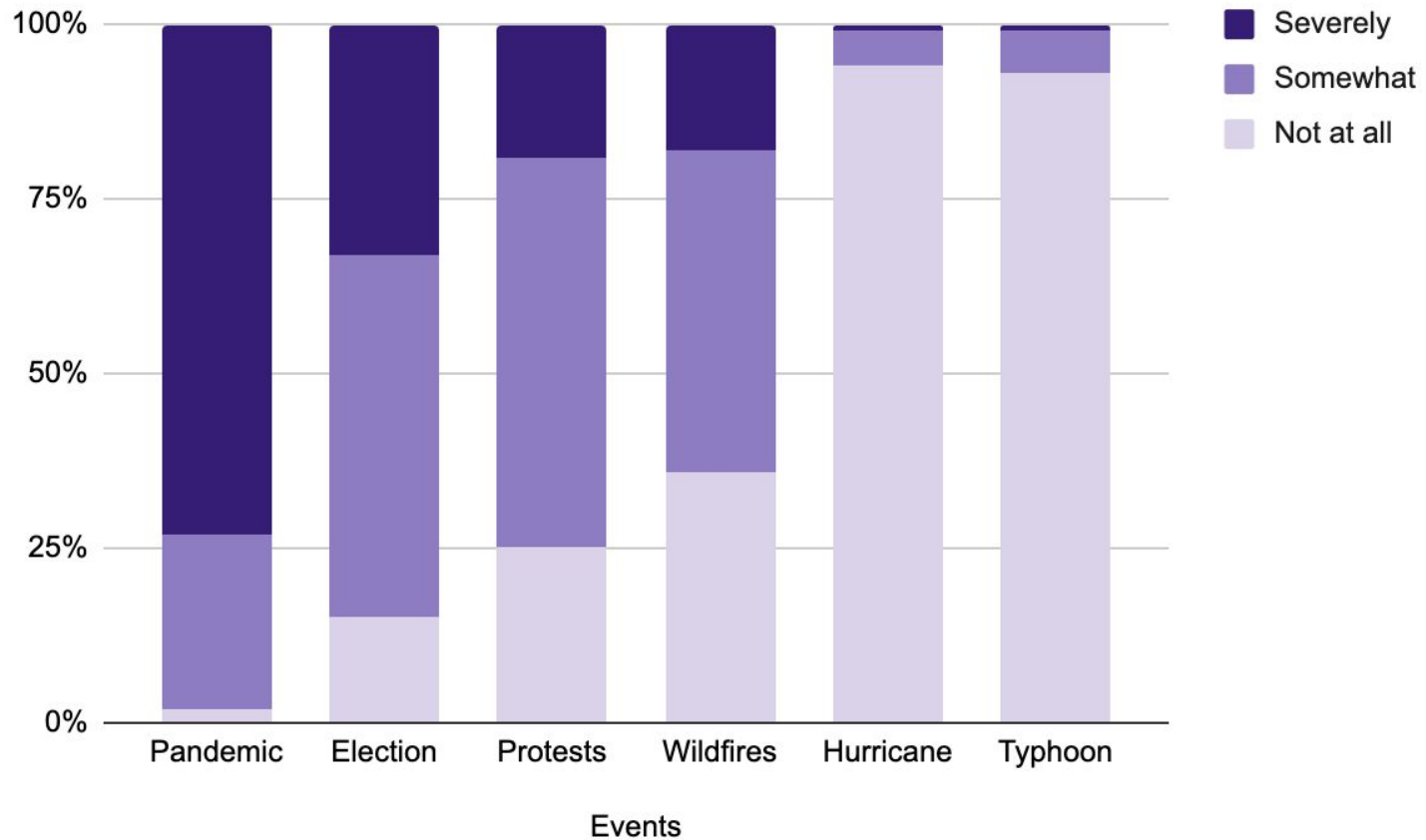
Personal Issues, cont.



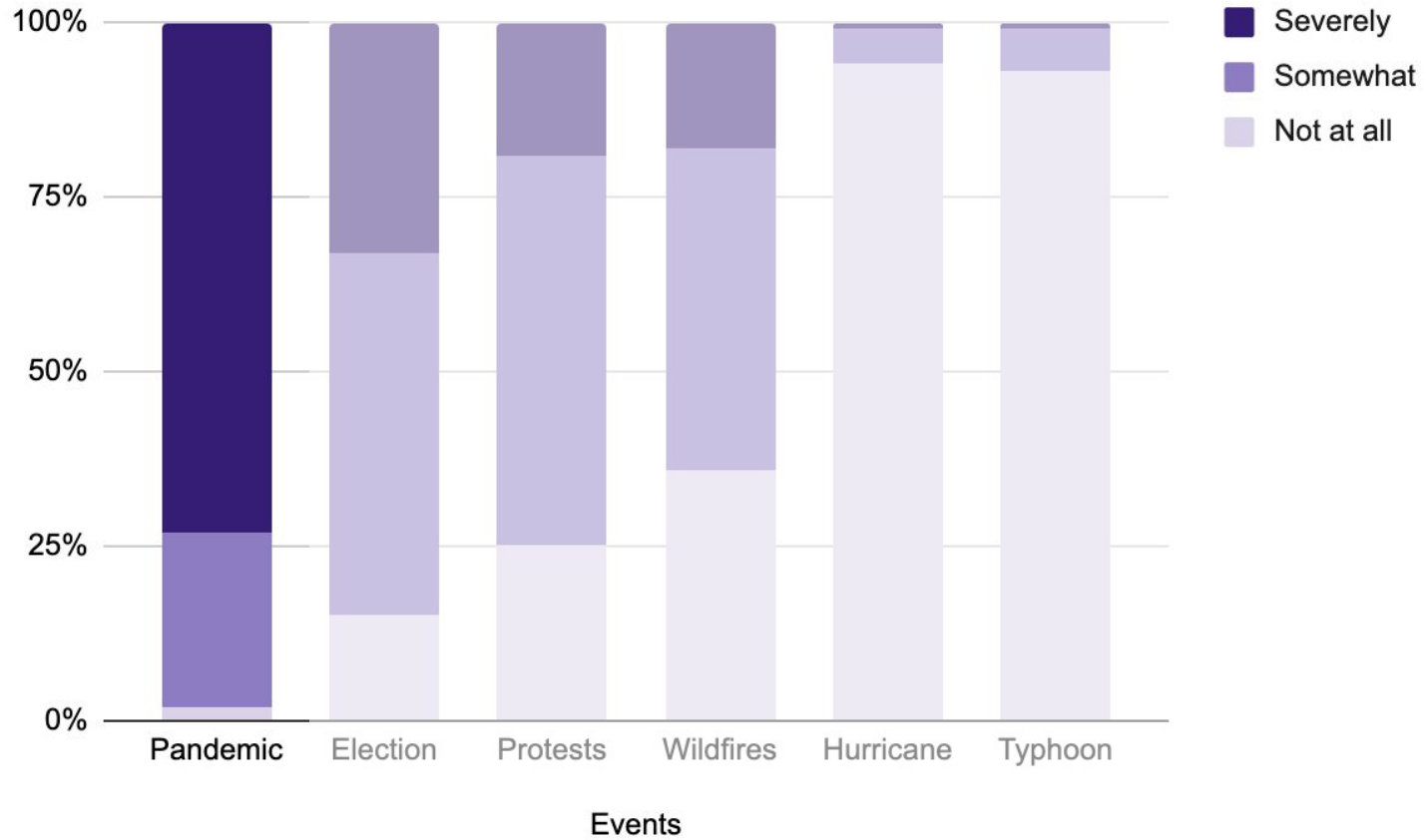
Personal Issues, cont.



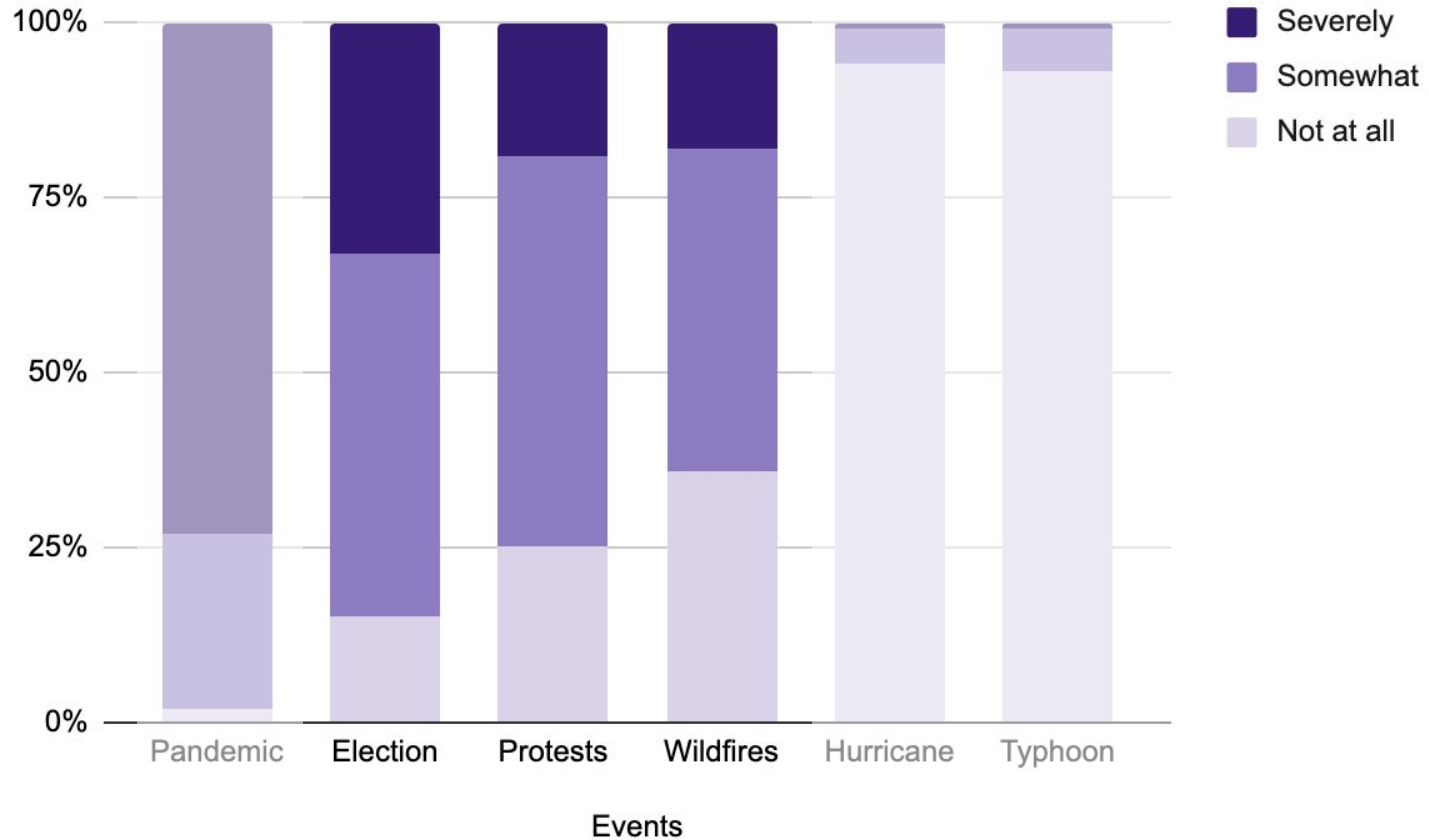
Impact of 2020 Events



Impact of 2020 Events



Impact of 2020 Events



Multiple, Compounding Events

“Classes are online, reading is online, group projects are online, homework is online. **Mental and physical fatigue coupled with the stress of the quarantine and separation from my cohort are taking a serious toll on my mental, emotional, physical, and academic health.**”

“Social isolation has led to a poor mental state and hopelessness. **As the feelings of isolation increased throughout the quarter, my academic performance decreased at the same rate.**”

Multiple, Compounding Events

"...I'm disabled, working part time to support my mom who got laid off, and my 15- and 13-year-old siblings while being a full time student."

"I have to work full time to make ends meet, I had to manage my family who got sick with coronavirus, the pandemic is causing me anxiety, etc. With everything going on, my education has taken a back seat...**As I have been doing my homework assignments, I would think 'I have more important things to deal with than this'.**"

Direct Impacts of COVID

“When I got Covid-19 my teachers didn't seem to have a concrete plan to accommodate me. I also am currently dealing with the lasting side effects of the virus ...I am still having difficulty with my courses and feel uncomfortable asking for accommodations two weeks later.”

“My grandmother died due to Covid eight days ago. I can hardly get any school work done because I miss her so much... **there is no way for the professors to give me extra time with finals this close.”**

Academic Stress

“Profs expecting us to have the same attention span and motivation this quarter despite all the outside factors going on is ridiculous.”

“I think that **professors have decided to make exams more difficult because they think we have more free time but some of us don't**, and studying in a time when mental health outlets are limited can be super difficult.”

“Exams and homework for me have been filled with technical difficulties and it’s been really rough trying to manage coursework and stay on top of grades.”

“If only...”

“I was unable to watch class lectures, because Panopto (or maybe Panopto via Canvas?) is quite buggy when accessing through a slow internet connection....[T]he real problem was that the instructor was unwilling to provide download links or an alternate way to access class lectures.”

“Mandatory group work is difficult if not impossible to organize effectively over zoom. Every for-credit class I took this quarter had group work worth at least 20% of the final grade, and in only one class was every group member able to consistently meet to do the work.”

“If only...”

“It's really frustrating to have to attend class during class hours....Many of my classes occur at the same time my child's classes do. It's really difficult to leave my child unattended and stay engaged during class. I wish more professors would be willing to record their lectures and let us view them on our own time.”

“The biggest issue is the time zone difference since I can't get visa in China. **I have to stay up all night to attend class and it's hard for me to sleep during daytime.** So I suffered from insomnia the whole season...causing many complication both mentally and physically.”

Campus Connections

“As a first quarter student, the lack of connection has been difficult. I do feel like I'm missing out socially, but **it also feels like a missed learning opportunity when I can't connect with my classmates to share ideas.**”

“Missed opportunity to participate and access UW campus and extracurricular activities. **It's harder to develop educational and professional relationships.**”

“In-class learning provides you a lot more ways to connect to the professor and other classmates. **Group projects and group assignments are hugely affected.**”

Learning from Home

“I have a disruptive and difficult home environment... I also have ADHD and sensory processing disorders where **I really need a quiet space to work, which is why I was delighted to have my own office on campus. After the pandemic hit, I couldn't use my office because my work isn't critical.**”

“**I am noise sensitive and I had construction being done in the apartment next to me for this whole quarter...**Very aggravating during tests without any access to a library or coffee shops.”

Financial Instability

“Job insecurity was by far my biggest difficulty this quarter. The job market in my city was hit by the pandemic so badly that I had to resort to taking two jobs with unreliable hours, both an hour away from me (and 45 minutes away from each other).”

“Housing has been a financial burden for international students as we couldn't return to our campus apartments and had to keep paying full rent. We have to pay full rent for the quarter and a heavy cancellation fee if we quit housing in the middle of the academic year.”

The Good

“I appreciate having more time. Besides WIFI issues, **I feel more engaged. I can remember my material better because my I am not in class for 6+ hours a day and commuting for 2 hours per day**....This has helped me learn about technology, Zoom etiquette, and how to communicate with my professors and peers professionally.”

“**Remote learning is a more accessible form of education for MANY non-traditional students** (disabled students, commuter students, student parents, and more). It is critical that UW remains remote-accessible (panopto recordings, Zoom live streams, etc) for those impacted by in-person learning.”

Questions

Supporting Student Learning

Sample

Course eval question	Number of student responses	Number of Course evals Included	Average Responses per Course	Average Response Rate
What is helping you learn in this course?	92,630	4,829	19	51.9%
What is hindering your learning in this course?	79,999	4,397	18	52.3%
What can your instructor do to improve your learning in this course?	42,093	2,301	18	50.6%
If this course were offered remotely again, what suggestions do you have to improve the student experience?	37,175	2,053	18	54.9%
If this course were offered remotely again, what suggestions do you have to improve the course?	38,079	2,087	18	55.1%

Approaches

- Topic modeling (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) to identify common topics, conducted by UW-IT
 - Total sample
- Inductive process of constant comparison to identify themes, conducted by OEA
 - 500 randomly selected responses

Supporting student learning

- Create an engaging, collaborative online experience
- Provide useful course material
- Communicate clear expectations
- Develop well-organized online course content
- Adapt to online learning

Create an engaging online experience

Well-coordinated, synchronous discussions can improve engagement

“Post questions prior to class for students to come to class prepared to answer or discuss. I found that was pretty effective at keeping me more engaged.”

Create an engaging online experience

Discussion boards are effective for asynchronous engagement

“Posting discussion board assignments that are relevant to the topics covered that week, and then requiring students to answer and respond to three of their classmates' posts helps keep students on track with material and engaged in difficult but necessary conversations with each other.”

Create an engaging online experience

Breakout rooms enable students to collaborate and discuss content, as well as simply interact with one another

“...more small group discussions to avoid single people dominating conversation. the best talks i had in this class were during breakout discussions to talk about our short stories.”

“schedule some live sessions to stimulate student interactions with some breakout sessions for example to do a homework exercise.”

Provide useful course material

Diverse content can improve learning and engagement

“...[the] variety of media sources we get to interact with - not just powerpoint but also short video clips, longer video clips, podcasts, readings really helps keep the material feeling fresh and engaging.”

Provide useful course content

Past exams, additional problem sets, different types of examples are useful

“...I like that the problem sets require me to really think about what I learned and how to apply that to actual problems. It helps the information stick with me better.”

“Don’t just have one type of problem- write down how to do it and move on to the next... I wish there were multiple problems of the same type worked one way and worked the other way around”

Improving course organization

Students desire course content in one place

Impact of well-organized course

“The simplicity in accessing assignments all posted in one place with labeling makes sense and outlines for expectations are all included with each week’s instructions...”

Impact of poorly organized course

“The course is organized very poorly so most people had literally no idea what was going on, what was expected of us, or any of that until at least the third or fourth week. Most people did not understand what the [course topic] was or the scope and many of us still do not.”

Clearly communicate expectations

Confusion about expectations overshadow primary course objectives for students

“The point of this class was not clear to anyone in it for a very long time constant mentions of deliverables with no clear indication of what those even are.”

“I enjoyed the material greatly but I feel that I would have benefited from knowing my responsibilities as the quarter began especially with the circumstances of remote learning.”

Adapting to online learning

Restructure examinations and testing to fit remote learning.

“A different examination style. People are already living in very uncertain times, **why add more stress** in the exam style especially when it is already open book? ...

Holding weekly quiz sections would be very useful... One thing i would suggest is to **give more time for the exams** because it was long and very hard to finish in fifty minutes.”

Adapting to online learning

Labs feel inefficient and unnecessary

“I find that handing out lab reports that are the same as previous quarters **is not a good way to learn and demonstrate knowledge of the lab since the learning experience is drastically different** ... not having hands on experience is a huge disadvantage when needing to complete a lab report regardless of the videos and lab manual provided.”

Adapting to online learning

Live lectures that are also recorded helps students during the pandemic

Students would like the option to attend live discussions as well as the opportunity to experience lectures asynchronously

Summary

- Well-coordinated, synchronous discussions and asynchronous discussion boards are effective at improving engagement
- Breakout rooms encourage collaboration, community
- Clear expectations earlier in the quarter coupled with a well-organized course can alleviate anxiety and uncertainty
- Useful course material is critical in improving student learning
- Recording live lectures enables struggling students to experience lectures at their convenience

Questions

Additional Resources on Teaching Remotely

<https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/resources-teaching-remotely/>

Resources for Teaching Remotely

UW Information Hubs



Canvas Resources



Facilitated or Self-paced Courses



Workshops or Webinars



Video Resources



<https://teaching.washington.edu/programs/teaching-remotely-pop-up-series/>

Teaching Remotely Pop-Up Series

This online series explores timely topics related to teaching remotely. Sessions include best-practices and essential aspects of effective remote instruction along with opportunities to share ideas and resources.



Upcoming session

Conveying Presence & Care Asynchronously

Access begins 4:00 p.m. on March 4 and concludes 4:00 p.m. on March 25

<https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/international-availability/>

Known Technology Limitations

Tool	Available in China?	Impacted by Internet Speeds?	Recommendations
Canvas	Yes	Yes	Students may experience poor performance when accessing large files and/or specific Canvas features. Instructors should upload content directly to Canvas rather than linking to content hosted elsewhere.
Canvas Quizzes	Yes	Yes	Display questions one at a time. Do not embed unavailable content, such as YouTube videos.
Dropbox	No	—	Use Microsoft OneDrive for large files.
Facebook	No	—	Use UW Microsoft Teams for student interaction.
UW Google G	No	—	Use UW Microsoft Office365 ProPlus.

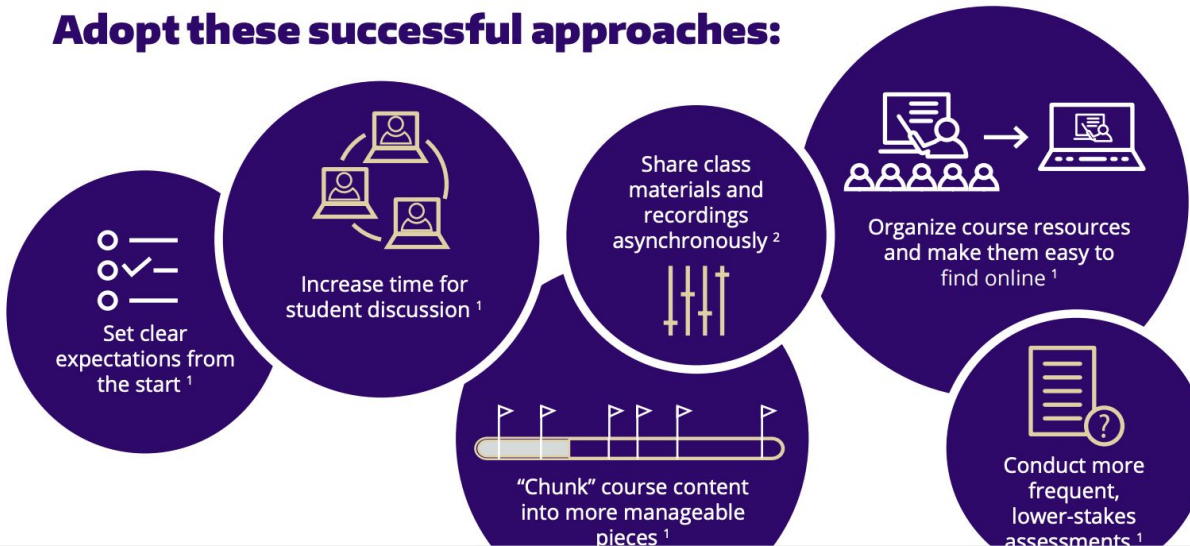
<https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/research/learning-during-pandemic/>

LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC

SPRING 2020 FINDINGS

Key quantitative and qualitative data was collected via student surveys during the spring quarter to understand the impact of COVID-19 on student learning.

Adopt these successful approaches:



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Questions/Discussion