



Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

# **Student Consultation** SURVEY 2014

**Final Report**

Strategic Projects Group  
University of New England

# Student Consultation

## SURVEY 2014

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is a fee charged to students for the provision of a range of services and amenities of a non-academic nature. During the six-week period 22 September to 31 October 2014, UNE conducted an online Student Consultation Survey to gather ideas and feedback from all students about the collection and allocation of the SSAF. The survey is one of a number of avenues that support genuine, meaningful and collaborative consultation with the University's diverse student body, to inform decision making regarding funding priorities and allocations for the SSAF.

A total of 670 responses were submitted during the survey, comprised of (67%) off-campus and (33%) on-campus students. The survey mirrors the demographic composition of the total student body, by enrolment type, study load, residential status, age, gender, and study mode. A number of key findings were generated by the survey, including the following:

- The top three preferences for the allocation of the SSAF for all on-campus and off-campus students are services and amenities related to: health & welfare, employment & careers and study skills. Also ranked in the top five for on-campus students are finances, accommodation, legal services, food & drink, orientation, advocacy, and sport.

- Preferred funding categories differ between on-campus and off-campus students. On-campus students rank finances, legal services, food & drink, sports, clubs and insurance more highly than off-campus students.
- Students enrolled on-campus have higher levels of awareness (81%) about the SSAF than off-campus students (64%). The survey highlights a variation in the preferences and profile of on-campus in contrast to off-campus students, including a higher proportion of international (18%), higher degree research (9%) and residential students (38%).
- Levels of awareness about the SSAF are positively correlated with levels of satisfaction.
- Results identify opportunities to more specifically target activity for on-campus students, together with enhancing levels of awareness and student satisfaction. Opportunities include services and amenities accessed via residential colleges, targeted activity for on-campus higher degree research students and on-campus international students.

Submissions from students included over 13,300 words in the form of ideas, concerns and general comments regarding the collection and allocation of the SSAF. This report provides a summary of those responses. This report is also available as a one-page infographic.

# Student Consultation

## SURVEY 2014

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### INTRODUCTION

This report provides an analysis of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) Student Consultation Survey 2014 data and a summary of implementation at the University of New England. This report has been endorsed by the SSAF Committee and is used to inform decision-making on the allocation and strategic management of the SSAF. The report offers an overview on the administration of the SSAF, comparative profile of the student body and survey response, followed by survey results, analysis and recommendations.

On 11 October 2011, the Australian Parliament passed legislation allowing universities and other higher education providers to charge a fee for services and amenities of a non-academic nature. The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) is charged to students for services and amenities, such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, child care, financial advice and food services. UNE has a formal consultation process with students and their representative bodies to identify priorities for the allocation of funds generated by the student services and amenities fee. Implementation of the fee is conducted in accordance with the Australian Government's *Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines*.

### STUDENT CONSULTATION

Student consultation and fund allocation is overseen by the SSAF Committee, delivering expertise in the management of the fee and a vehicle for consultation with students and student representative bodies. The Committee plays a pivotal role in managing the student consultation and fund allocation process. The Committee is made up of a balanced membership of student representatives, UNESA and University staff that provide expertise in specific areas, including facilities management, student administration and services, operations and residential systems. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Financial Officer, reports to the University Executive and is supported by a project manager.

The purpose of the SSAF Committee is to:

- Oversee student consultation and related activities in line with the requirements of the Student Services, Amenities, Representation and Advocacy Guidelines.
- Serve as a forum for the University to meet with democratically elected student representatives to consider priorities for the use of Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) revenue.
- Provide the Vice-Chancellor with recommendations for the distribution of SSAF revenue.
- Monitor the use of SSAF revenue against proposed priorities.

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Based on feedback through consultation and student surveys, the SSAF Committee has established a Strategic Framework to guide the allocation of SSAF funds to deliver a suitable mixture of immediate benefits for students and the achievement of long term strategic priorities. The Strategic Framework includes a four-tier system of funding priorities:

1. Building robust and resilient student engagement and elected student representation is key to future UNE success.
2. Phased development of longer term strategic initiatives that align with future-proofing UNE's vision: "Learning without limits".
3. Investment with immediate benefits, shorter term projects.
4. Clubs and Societies capacity building & otherwise open to a bidding process.

In 2014, the SSAF Committee further strengthened the Strategic Framework with the addition of immediate and long term fee management priorities to support the achievement of SSAF objectives, including: student consultation and engagement; benefits realisation; and strategic program management, outlined below.

Immediate	Medium term
<b><i>Student consultation and engagement</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communications &amp; engagement strategy</li> <li>▪ Annual survey</li> <li>▪ Consultation timeline and process</li> <li>▪ Online form for ad hoc feedback and ideas</li> <li>▪ Publication of annual fund allocations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increasing awareness of existing services and amenities</li> <li>▪ Refresh online content with more user-oriented information and Q&amp;A fact sheets</li> <li>▪ Competitive market for new ideas</li> </ul>
<b><i>Benefits realisation</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making the most of what SSAF funds have and will be been invested in</li> <li>▪ Maximising usage of existing services and amenities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify, measure and communicate positive impacts of funded services and amenities</li> <li>▪ Review of best practice consultation</li> </ul>
<b><i>Strategic program management</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project monitoring and controls</li> <li>▪ Template project plans</li> <li>▪ Fund allocation modelling</li> <li>▪ Business case proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Process simplification</li> <li>▪ Fee structure analysis</li> <li>▪ Explore options for sustainability</li> <li>▪ Refreshed program management plan</li> </ul>

Program management priorities are supported by a SSAF Program Management Toolkit, including project management tools and resources, fact sheets, forms, financial policies & procedures, allocation processes, governance and links to guidelines and legislation. Detailed information regarding the SSAF and materials to support its implementation are available on the SSAF website at: <http://www.une.edu.au/study/fees/student-services-and-amenities-fee>.

### Best Practice Student Consultation

UNE is committed to achieving best practice student consultation to support the effective implementation of the SSAF, through genuine, meaningful and collaborative student consultation. To this end, the University has established a formal consultation process with students and their representative bodies to consider the specific uses and priorities for the allocation of student services and amenities fees. Consultation is conducted through a range of avenues, including: forums, surveys, regular feedback and the SSAF Committee. The SSAF annual survey is one of a number of avenues students are able to have input to the management and allocation of SSAF and does not detract from other mechanisms for ongoing feedback. Student consultation also includes:

- publishing identified priorities and individual projects for proposed fee expenditure and allowing opportunities to comment on those priorities by students and student associations and organisations; and
- meeting with democratically elected student representatives and representatives from major student organisations at the University to consider the priorities for use of fee revenue.

The opinions of students and their representatives are taken into account in the planning and implementation of the SSAF, and through the SSAF Committee include direct interaction with a member of the University Executive. Students are given adequate time to prepare for discussions and provided printed copies of agenda papers. Consultation with students also ensures a diverse representation in meetings and forums, including off-campus, on-campus, international, domestic, undergraduate and postgraduate representatives. All students enrolled at UNE are invited to participate in the SSAF survey, regardless of their liability to pay the fee. The student consultation survey is completed prior to 31 October, with the following year's fees published no later than 1 October.

## SSAF Fee Structure 2014

Under current legislation, any person who is enrolled or seeking to enrol with a higher education provider can be charged a student services and amenities fee. At UNE, off-campus (100% online) and cross-institutional students are currently exempt from paying the fee. The fee is invoiced in two periods (Trimester 1 & 2 or Research Period 1 & 2) unless students are enrolled in a Year-Long Teaching Period, in which case it is invoiced once at the annual rate.

Enrolment Type	Full-Time Fee 2014	Part-Time Fee 2014
Domestic On-Campus Coursework students	\$281	\$210
Domestic On-Campus Higher Degree Research students	\$210	\$157
International On-Campus students	\$281	\$210
Off-Campus students (100% online)	Exempt	Exempt
Cross-institutional students	Exempt	Exempt

The fee is subject to indexation under the Higher Education Grants Index, at an amount determined by the Australian Government.

### Deferral to SA-HELP

Students who are Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders living in Australia, and enrolled in a course of study or bridging course for overseas-trained professionals are eligible to defer the SSAF to SA-HELP. Each student's Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN) sets out the amount of the student services and amenities fee, the day the fee was payable and the amount of the SA-HELP debt in relation to the fee.

### Allowable use of Funds

The Higher Education Support Act places limits on the allowable use of funds generated through the SSAF. The SSAF is not used to support political parties, or to support the election of a person to a Commonwealth or State or Territory Parliament or local Government body. The SSAF is used for the provision of services and amenities that fall within one or a number of allowable expenditure categories:

- providing food or drink to students on a campus of the higher education provider
- supporting a sporting or other recreational activity by students

- supporting the administration of a club most of whose members are students
- caring for children of students
- providing legal services to students
- promoting the health or welfare of students
- helping students secure accommodation
- helping students obtain employment or advice on careers
- helping students with their financial affairs
- helping students obtain insurance against personal accidents
- supporting debating by students
- providing libraries and reading rooms (other than those provided for academic purposes) for students
- supporting an artistic activity by students
- supporting the production and dissemination to students of media whose content is provided by students
- helping students develop skills for study, by means other than undertaking courses of study in which they are enrolled
- advising on matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)
- advocating students' interests in matters arising under the higher education provider's rules (however described)
- giving students information to help them in their orientation and
- helping meet the specific needs of overseas students relating to their welfare, accommodation and employment.

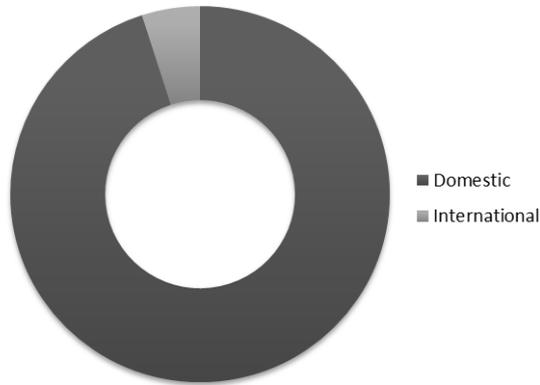
Depending on the nature of the activity, the University may deliver the services and amenities itself or contract a third party to deliver them on its behalf. A detailed list of allowable expenditure and examples are available to all students on the SSAF website.

## UNE STUDENT PROFILE

The University enjoys a rich diversity across its total student profile. Over 78% of the total student body at UNE is enrolled off-campus, the majority of which study part-time (72%). The composition of on-campus students differs in many ways from of the off-campus cohort. Typical enrolment patterns are in reverse among international students, the majority of whom (79%) are enrolled on-campus, constituting 18% of all on-campus students. The majority (84%) of on-campus students study full-time. Course type composition differs between on and off campus students, with Higher Degree Research students representing a greater portion of overall on-campus students (9%) than off-campus (2%); together with a higher concentration of undergraduate courses (82%), in contrast to (60%) among off-campus, with a lower proportion of postgraduate students (8%) on-campus to (31%) off-campus. The profile of SSAF survey respondents reflects the natural composition of the UNE student profile, with minor variations in course type, domestic status and attendance type, potentially caused by a slightly higher response rate among on-campus students.

## UNE STUDENT PROFILE

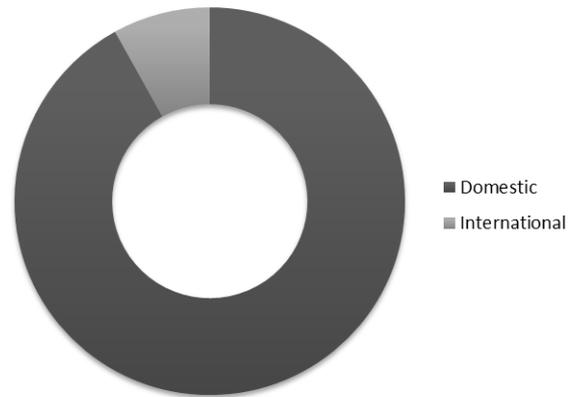
**Total UNE Student Numbers**



Domestic	95%	20,307
International	5%	1,058
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,365</b>

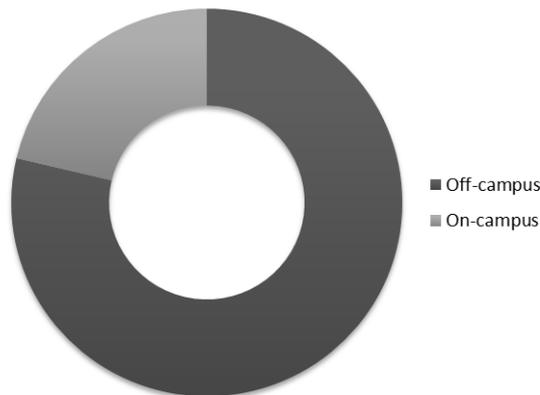
## SSAF SURVEY PROFILE

**Total Survey Student Numbers**



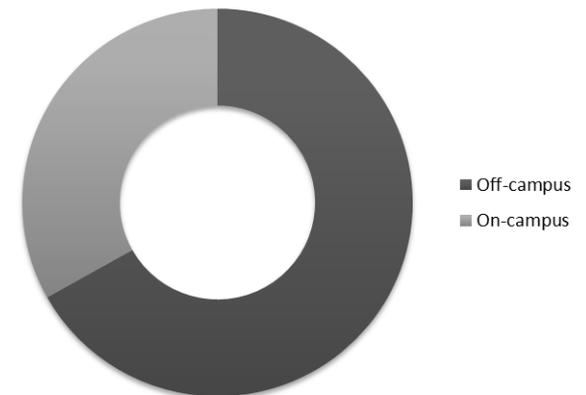
Domestic	92%	616
International	8%	54
<b>Total</b>		<b>670</b>

**Enrolment Mode**



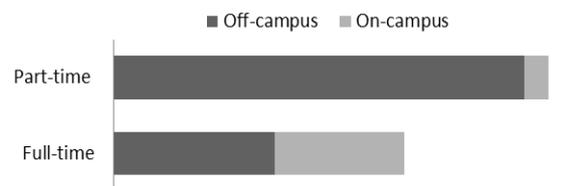
Off-campus	78.7%	16,809
On-campus	21.3%	4,556
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,365</b>

**Enrolment Mode**



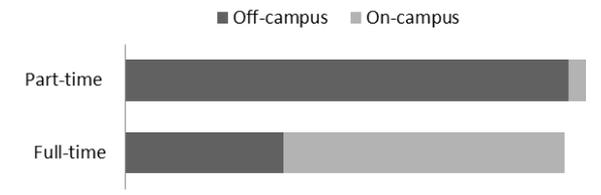
Off-campus	67%	448
On-campus	33%	222
<b>Total</b>		<b>670</b>

**Attendance Type**



Attendance Type	Off-campus	On-campus	Total
Full-time	4730	3825	8555
Part-time	12079	731	12810
<b>Total</b>	<b>16809</b>	<b>4556</b>	<b>21365</b>

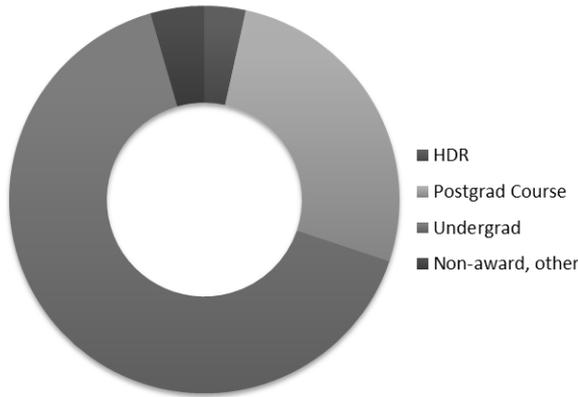
**Attendance Type**



Attendance Type	Off-campus	On-campus	Total
Full-time	118	209	327
Part-time	330	13	343
<b>Total</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>670</b>

## UNE STUDENT PROFILE

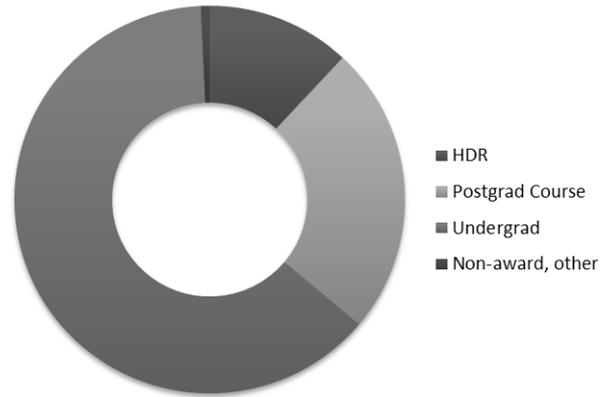
### Course Type



	Off-campus	On-campus	Total
Higher Degree Research	325	406	<b>731</b>
Postgraduate Coursework	5326	384	<b>5710</b>
Undergraduate	10223	3745	<b>13968</b>
Non-award and other	935	21	<b>956</b>

## SSAF SURVEY PROFILE

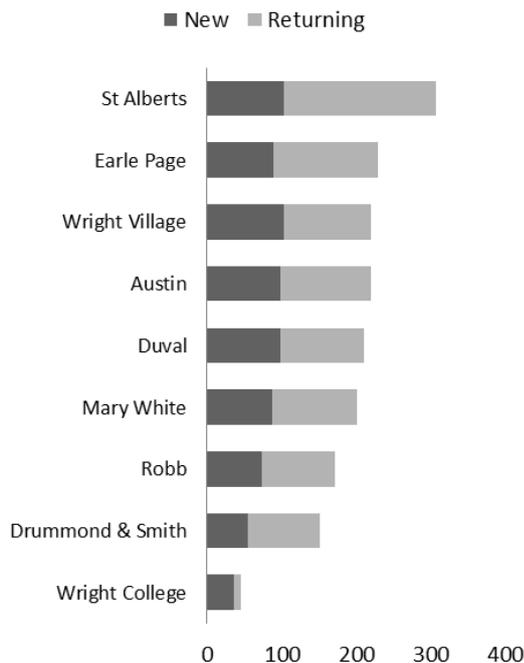
### Course Type



	Off-campus	On-campus	Total
Higher Degree Research	28	52	<b>80</b>
Postgraduate Coursework	137	25	<b>162</b>
Undergraduate	278	145	<b>423</b>
Non-award and other	5	-	<b>5</b>

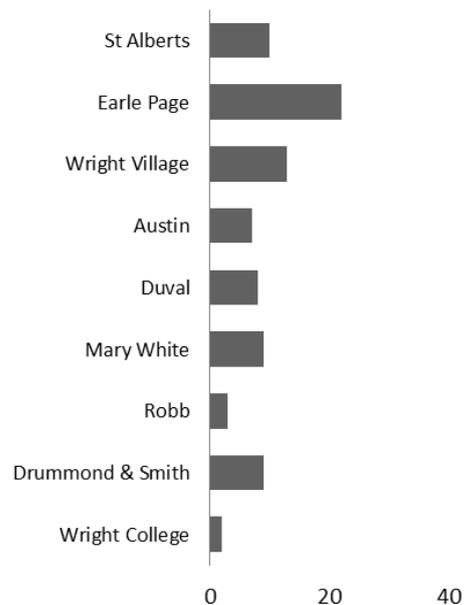
### Students Living on Campus

A total of around 1,759 students reside on campus across the University's nine colleges. This is comprised of 1,452 at eight UNE colleges and 307 in St Albert's College, an independent college operating under the Armidale Catholic Diocese. Residential colleges are an important element in the richness and depth of student life at UNE and represent a substantial proportion (over 38%) of the overall on-campus student body.



### Students Living on Campus

37.4% of on-campus survey responses were submitted by students living on campus, reflective of the total proportion of residential students. Survey responses were submitted from students in all residential colleges. The variation in response rates may be partially attributed to the inclusion of vacation periods in accommodation contracts, and other academic and non-academic activities coinciding with the survey administration dates.



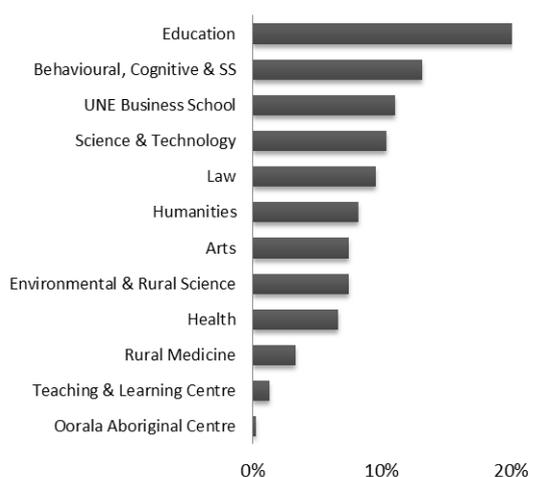
## Regional Composition of Students at Enrolment

The total UNE student profile shows a strong regional presence across the New England & North West NSW, North Coast NSW, Sydney and greater NSW areas in addition to a significant interstate and international student cohort. Just over 8% of on-campus students were located in other states or territories at enrolment.

Student Residence (on/off campus)	On	Off	Total
New England and North West NSW	30%	8%	2768
NSW North Coast	18%	10%	2417
Sydney	6%	22%	3982
Remainder of NSW	18%	26%	5256
Southern Queensland	3%	6%	1165
Brisbane	1%	4%	804
Remainder of Queensland	1%	2%	459
Other States & Territories	4%	18%	3147
Overseas (Domestic)	-	2%	309
Overseas (International)	18%	1%	1058

## Study Load by School

Equivalent full-time study load varies across disciplines, with a higher than average proportion (14%) of Environmental & Rural Science students engaged in Higher Degree Research, and a moderately higher ratio of postgraduate degree students in the fields of Education (37%), Health (26%) and the UNE Business School (27%).



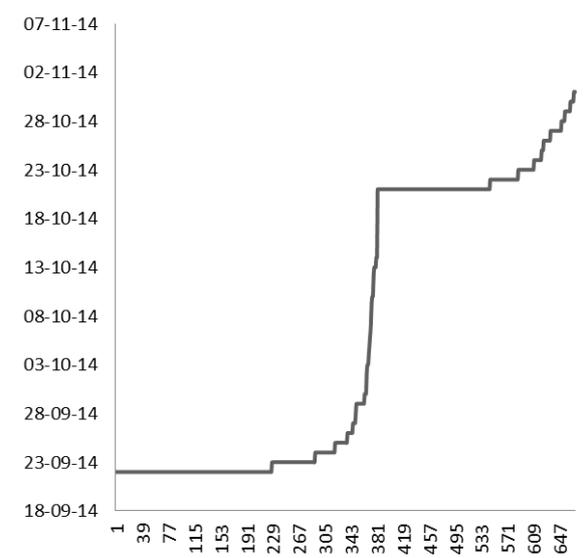
## SSAF SURVEY 2014

In September 2014, a SSAF Student Consultation Survey was distributed to all UNE students by email. Survey participants were asked to share their ideas and thoughts about the allocation and use of SSAF funds, this included ranking the 19 allowable SSAF funding categories in order of preference. Detailed examples across all of the expenditure categories were provided with the survey, and are available to students at all times. The survey was administered using the University's online survey tool and subject to ethical clearance. The survey remained open for a total of six weeks during the second Trimester, closing on 31 October 2014. UNE and UNESA worked closely to develop and promote the survey via social media, including the UNE website, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and by email.

## SURVEY RESULTS

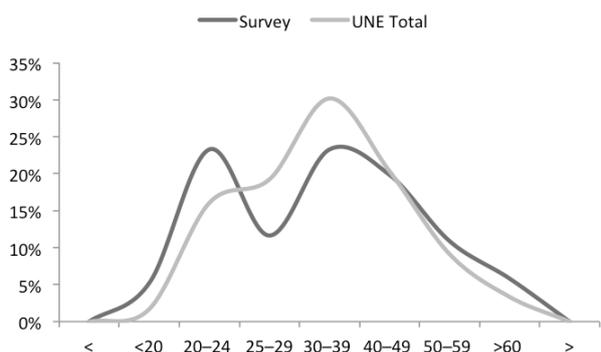
### Response Rate

A total of 670 students responded to the survey during its six-week duration. Survey creation dates indicate that reminder emails were the most effective means to communicate the survey to students. The majority of students completed the survey on the day they received the first and second emails, on 22 Sept and 21 Oct. Survey results indicate a seven-day deterioration rate, suggesting the survey could achieve a similar response over a shorter period. Survey completion rates were helped to a small degree through promotions via Facebook, UNE Blogs and Twitter.

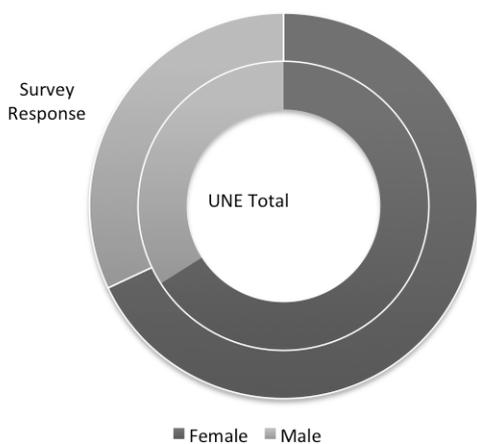


### Age & Gender

Age of survey respondents broadly reflect the composition of UNE’s total student body. However, age results of the survey profile demonstrate a comparably lower response rate among students between 25 – 29 years of age, particularly in contrast to their younger peers between 20 – 24 years of age. Further strategies to target engagement with this cohort of students may be of value in future.



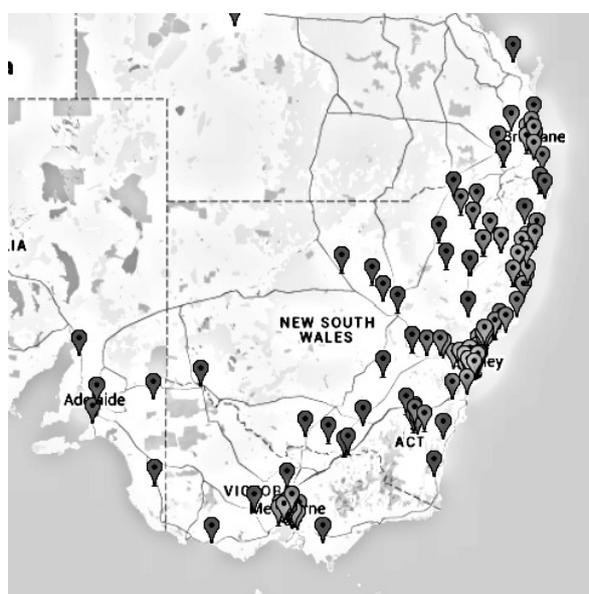
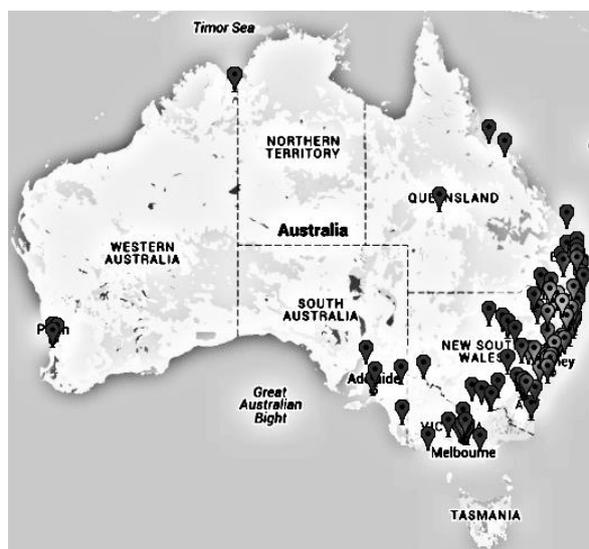
68% of survey respondents are female, reflecting the make-up of the UNE student population (66%).



Age & gender	Female	Male	Total
< 20	25	10	35
20 – 24	111	45	156
25 – 29	52	26	78
30 – 39	99	57	156
40 – 49	94	39	133
50 – 59	55	18	73
> 60	18	21	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>670</b>

### Geolocation

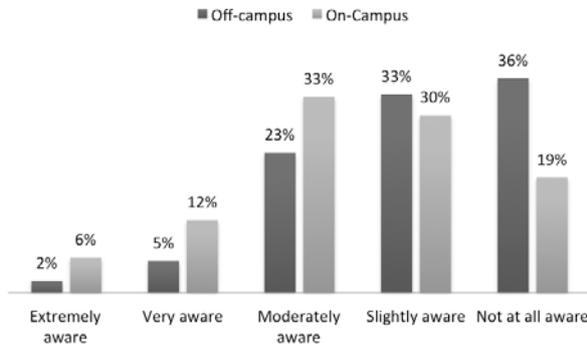
Survey responses reflect the broad regional composition of UNE students, particularly across south eastern Australia. The following graphics are based on postcode mapping data collected through the survey. International postcodes have been excluded due to mapping software limitations.



### Awareness

Survey results indicate a good majority (70%) of UNE students have some level of awareness about the student services and amenities fee, although to varying degrees. Levels of awareness differ by enrolment mode (on-campus/off-campus). Students enrolled on-campus show higher levels of awareness (81%) than off-campus students (64%). Current efforts to raise awareness and engage students

(including through the survey itself) being implemented at the time of the survey may not be immediately identifiable in the survey results. As awareness has not previously been tested, a change in results over time is not yet available.



Lower levels of awareness among off-campus students coincide with a small degree of confusion about the fee exemption, some off-campus students are not aware they are exempt from paying the fee. Levels of awareness differ by age, although age alone is not strongly correlated with particular levels of awareness. Students that are less aware of the SSAF are across all age groups and degree types.

A weak positive correlation ( $r = .272$ ) exists between levels of awareness and levels of satisfaction (with the SSAF information). Students that are very dissatisfied with the SSAF are also exhibit very low levels of awareness about its purpose and use. Similarly, higher levels of awareness are associated with higher satisfaction. A significant proportion of students indicated that they are not sure about the SSAF information. Significant content redevelopment and communications activity since the survey is expected to generate a change in these results over time.

Satisfaction & Awareness	EA	VA	MA	SA	NA
Very Satisfied	3	2	2	4	1
Satisfied	8	26	58	27	29
Not sure	5	16	90	153	175
Dissatisfied	4	6	24	26	21
Very Dissatisfied	2	1	4	5	43

Key: EA = Extremely aware, VA = Very aware, MA = Moderately aware, SA = Slightly aware, NA = Not at all aware.

*‘There is knowledge that the SSAF exists and needs to be paid in one form or another, but not a lot of knowledge about what it is for. While the website is very good, only those really interested will research the different funding categories available, so maybe*

*make a small pamphlet or bookmark with some facts that can be easily handed out or disseminated to catch more people’s attention.’*

*‘As I am off-campus and unlikely to ever attend the campus, three does not seem to be much included in this fee structure that is relevant to me.’*

*‘I don’t benefit in any way from SSAF since I work full time and study part-time at distance. I shouldn’t have to pay for these fees when academic [fees] are already so high.’*

*‘I feel that off-campus students should pay a smaller fee as we cannot access most of the services provided using the SSAF.’*

*‘As an off-campus student, I am aware that I don’t pay the SSAF fee, but would be prepared to if there were amenities that made me feel more connected to the University. Podcasting the various annual extra-curricular lectures (e.g. Michael Kirby Lecture); more off-campus ways for students to earn New England Aware (NEA) points; clubs that enable off-campus/distance participation; etc. It feels very isolated out here in Moodle-land.’*

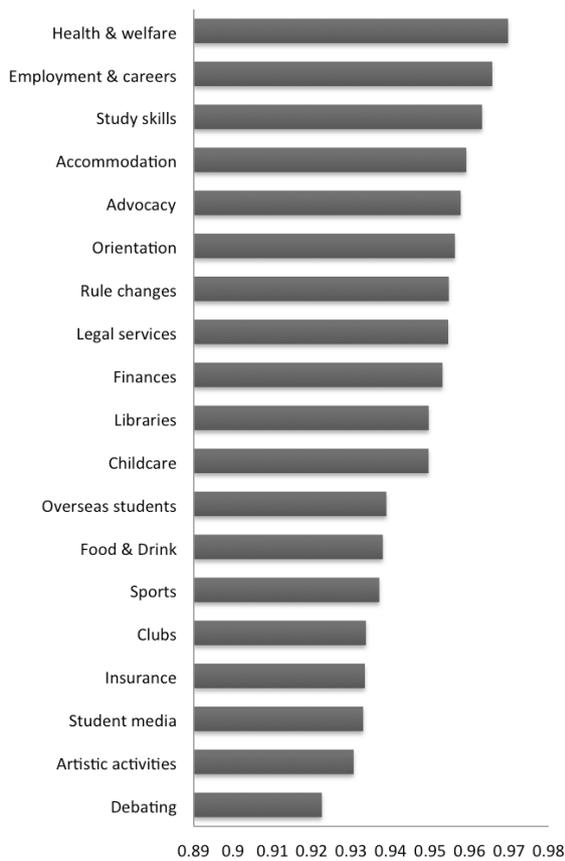
*‘Thank you UNE as an online part time disabled Indigenous single parent woman I am more than satisfied with all you provide for me. Thank you.’*

**Allocation Preferences**

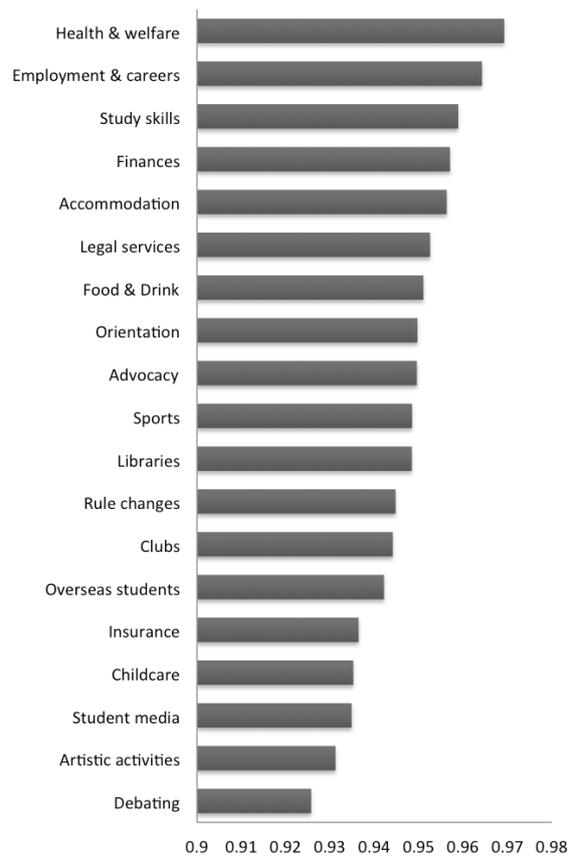
The 2014 SSAF Survey asked students to rank each of the 19 allowable expenditure categories in order of preference. The expenditure categories are defined by higher education legislation. Explanation and examples of each funding category are available on the SSAF website and were hyperlinked to this section of the SSAF survey. Allocation preferences have been calculated using a category sum index.

The top three preferences for the allocation of funds are health & welfare, employment & careers and study skills. These top three elements are consistently rated highly by most students. Similarly, the least preferred allocations: student media, artistic activities, and debating, are rated consistently low by all students. Categories between the top and bottom three differ significantly between on-campus and off-campus students. On-campus students rank finances, legal services, food & drink, sports, clubs and insurance more highly than off-campus students. Whereas, off-campus students rank accommodation, advocacy, orientation, rule changes, libraries, childcare and overseas student needs more highly.

### Off-Campus Student Preferences



### On-Campus Student Preferences



*'Childcare, accommodation and orientation are essential. I am not into sport so I am biased. Also not being on campus except for perhaps once a year, these services are not relevant for me.'*

*'Financial support for textbooks and/or on-campus accommodation for intensives.'*

*'Free return of books to library.'*

*'Mental health services.'*

*'As I am off-campus and don't pay the fee, none.'*

*'Assistance with parking when attending Intensive Schools.'*

*'Support and activities for HDR students.'*

*'Advocacy and advice for students.'*

*'Medical and dental care - maybe increased parking options.'*

*'More online support and a coffee or tea at exam locations, social interactions with off campus students.'*

*'I think providing guidance as to the suitable courses and qualifications to gain access to different careers. I think at the start of studies it is hard to envisage the structure of your degree and know how best to choose majors and other subjects to get where you might want to be in terms of career readiness. So some guidance in these areas would be really helpful.'*

*'Anything to do with sporting and wellbeing - e.g. free healthy breakfasts to get people up to class in the mornings.'*

*'Addressing issues such as lack of car parks, run-down buildings and creating more study spaces for more students. Also give information sessions about careers for all areas of study.'*

*'Better support for postgraduate research student events.'*

*'Cafeteria opening hours to be aligned with residential school times.'*

*'Career networking and graduate positions.'*

*'Cheaper food and more options on campus. Social opportunities for non-college students'*

## Ideas and Concerns

Over 13,300 words of comments and ideas were submitted through this year's survey, covering a wide range of issues, concerns and ideas. Strong, broad support by students. It is noted that a number of these services and amenities are already provided by UNE and funded by SSAF. Comments from students:

*'There is a mass shortage of car parks in all areas of the campus except for the western car park.'*

*'Better support for postgraduate research student events. Unlike undergraduate students who can foster and develop a sense of community through studying in class room environments, post graduate research students tend to work in isolation which has a significant impact on their mental health. Social events organised and supported at a school level would help foster a greater sense of inclusion.'*

*'Inter-university pen-pal program, or even a university-to-high-school pen-pal program to help give high school aged students who are thinking of going to university (year 9, 10, 11) some insight into university studies to help them prepare.'*

*'Would be nice to see more collaborative special projects offered by UNE that students could apply for (like those offered to VC Scholars) or event days held that might attract off-campus students of a specific discipline.'*

*'Competition prizes on non-academic endeavours, e.g. artistic: art, sculptor, writing, and music.'*

*'Making the campus more sustainable - updating the cafeteria, recycling bins, putting in gardens, supporting an environmental group etc.'*

*'I think the focus should be on improving student well-being and providing students with a competitive edge in the workforce, as well as empowering and engaging the colleges.'*

*'You should provide halal (Muslim) foods.'*

*'Cheaper food and more options on campus.'*

*'Increased disability services. Services that allow students with a disability and who are external to interact more.'*

*'Helping graduates get jobs.'*

*'Parking, parking, parking, parking, etc...'*

*'Addressing issues such as lack of car parks, run-down buildings and creating more study spaces for more students. Also give information sessions about careers for all areas of study.'*

*'I think the amount of the fee is too high as not every student needs or uses the service!'*

*'More awareness needs to be raised about what our money is going towards.'*

*'Doing a great job.'*

*'Continue policy whereby external students do not pay SSAF.'*

*'In my experience, HDR students benefit less.'*

*'There is no use for SSAF for PhD students who have a different study rhythm than undergraduate students.'*

*'Aboriginal input for SSAF funding?'*

*'I believe that funding made available to the SSAF should be split in accordance with the percentages of students involved in each of the above [preference category] activities.'*

*'People are not aware at all that they can apply to gain some funding for certain projects/associations, I have only recently become aware. This opportunity needs to be promoted.'*

*'Recreational activities, such as picnics outside Armidale, opportunities to get together.'*

*'Social events organised and supported at a school level would help foster a greater sense of inclusion [for research students].'*

*'Subsidies for food & drink, renovations for dining halls and common rooms, more transparency in future planning.'*

*'There is little attention given to research degree students who mostly spend their time alone either doing research or writing. They should be properly integrated into the SSAF agenda.'*

*'Medical students in their clinical years see none of this funding, maybe there needs to be some brainstorming in order to assist those who also pay this fee but have no way of utilising the benefits of it.'*

## ANALYSIS

This survey is one of a number of avenues students are able to share their ideas and have input to the management and allocation of the SSAF. The survey achieved its objective as a vehicle for feedback from students while supporting genuine, meaningful and collaborative consultation. The survey demonstrates the key differences between on-campus and off-campus students with respect to their engagement with the University and preferences for fee expenditure. This report provides data that may facilitate more direct targeting of SSAF funded activity toward on-campus students.

### Strengths

UNE benefits from a diverse and engaged student body enrolled in on and off-campus studies across a broad range of disciplines and degree types. Management of the fee benefits from executive sponsorship and broad expertise and student involvement through the SSAF Committee. The SSAF Committee has an established consultation, allocation, governance and program management process, purpose designed for the SSAF.

### Problems

The survey has identified the need to raise further awareness about the collection and allocation of the fee, and what benefits are provided to students. The SSAF Committee may also undertake to explore the profile of students with lower levels of awareness, to support a more targeted campaign, if necessary.

### Opportunities

Opportunity exists for the SSAF to contribute to the continued enhancement of quality student experience through short term, medium term and major strategic projects. Projects and initiatives funded by the SSAF deliver substantial benefits for students, some of which are not fully realised. The survey and previous allocations indicate further opportunity to invest a greater focus of SSAF activity toward on-campus higher degree research students and on-campus international students which make up 9% and 18% respectively, of all on-campus students. Opportunity also exists to enhance appropriate services and amenities delivered through the University's residential colleges, housing over 38% of all on-campus students.

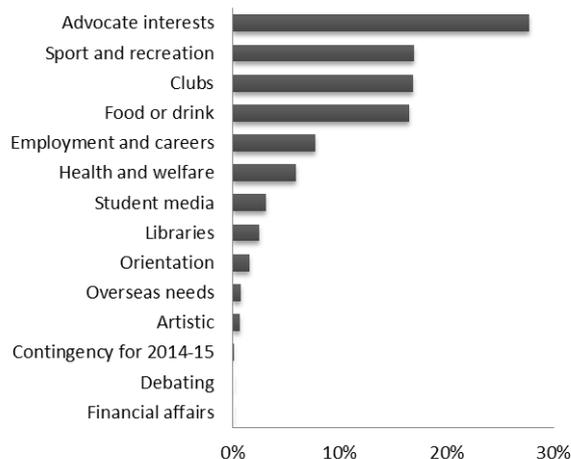
### Threats

Continuation of the SSAF is exposed to changes in the political and legislative environment. SSAF was charged by Australian Universities for the first time in 2012, under legislation which introduced a prescribed list of allowable expenditure categories. Limited financial viability of some services in the absence of fee revenue adds the potential for loss of services if the fee were wholly discontinued. Options for sustainability of student services and amenities in the absence of the fee may benefit from further exploration.

### Preferences and Allocations

Students have ranked their preferences for the allocation of the student services and amenities fee. It is noted that the ranking of preferences may not directly equate to fee expenditure due to the relative availability, use and cost of services and amenities that fall under each category.

#### Financial Summary of 2014 Allocations



The University provides an Annual Report shortly after the end of each calendar year, detailing allocations, expenditure and progress of significant projects funded under the SSAF.

### Data Integrity & Ethics

To ensure validity of data, the survey was distributed via student email accounts, verified using student login credentials, without collecting identifying data. Links to detailed information about the SSAF, including examples of allocations under each heading were provided with the survey. No participation incentives were used in this survey. The SSAF Student Consultation Survey 2014 is approved by the *Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)* of the University of New England, with Approval Number HE14-271, valid

to 17 September 2015. Survey questions were of a general nature regarding the collection and allocation of the SSAF, to support allocations planning, fee management and prioritisation of expenditure categories. Participation in the survey is voluntary. No individual has been identified in any publication or report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the SSAF Student Consultation Survey, and in light of future implementation planning, the following recommendations aim to maximise student benefit for funded initiatives and support continuous improvement in the strategic management of the fee.

### Allocation priorities

In response to student consultation and current year allocations, it is recommended that the SSAF Committee accept the findings of this survey report and consider the following priority areas in preparation for Trimester 1, 2015:

1. Continued and enhanced focus on the top three student preferences: health & welfare, employment and careers and the development of study skills for on-campus students.
2. Increased focus and equitable allocation of funds for the necessary creation and/or improvement of appropriate services and facilities available through residential colleges.
3. Increased focus and targeted activity for on-campus international students, in particular through student clubs and societies.
4. Increased focus and targeted activity for on-campus higher degree research students, in particular through student clubs and societies.

### Student consultation and engagement

5. Continued and enhanced communications and promotional activities to raise awareness of the SSAF and funded services and amenities, using appropriate channels.
6. The survey continues to be administered each year during the second Trimester, remain open for a minimum of three weeks, with a closing date of no later than 31 October. The survey continues to be developed and promoted in parallel with UNESA. The survey is combined with

a UNESA-facilitated Moodle forum to provide the opportunity for further discussion and qualitative feedback.

7. Survey participation incentives (e.g. appropriately valued prizes) are used as a tool to promote future surveys, to increase overall participation and in particular students 25 – 29 years of age.
8. The Strategic Projects Group prepare and table a separate report detailing the University's achievement of fee management best practice recommendations of the National Union of Students (NUS) Report into the Implementation of the SSAF.

### Strategic program management

9. The SSAF Committee engage the development of a refreshed SSAF Program Management Plan to guide the effective implementation of the SSAF in 2015 and beyond.
10. Standard project management methodologies are adopted across all projects of strategic significance to the University, including those wholly or partially funded from the SSAF.

## Notes

The Strategic Projects Group wishes to thank the SSAF Committee for their consideration and endorsement of this report. Care has been taken to ensure the accuracy and integrity of data contained within this report, no liability is accepted for any errors.

## Contact Details

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12 November 2014

General student enquiries should be directed to **UNE Student Support** by telephone: 02 6773 2897 or email at: [studentsupport@une.edu.au](mailto:studentsupport@une.edu.au).