



# NSSE 2023 Qualitative Analysis



San Francisco State students were given the opportunity to comment on  
“What is going well and What they would like to see changed”

The presentation summarizes text mining results of comments from 730 first-year and senior students who responded to the open-ended question in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

**Institutional Research**  
**October 2023**

# AREAS OF STRENGTH

WHAT ONE THING SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED AT THIS INSTITUTION?

The top 6 themes that emerged from the open-ended comments were:

## Diversity and Inclusivity

Students appreciated SF State's commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Student comments highlight a clear and unwavering commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive campus culture and system.

## Valuable Discipline Areas

There was a strong support for maintaining programs and courses for social, ethnic, and historical studies. They found those areas as a significant part of the school's identity.

## Support System

Students remarked on SF State as the supportive environment. Specifically, they spoke highly of SF State's tutoring supports, Gator Groceries, student-led leadership programs, and counseling services.

## Campus Landscape

Students commended the SF State campus as visually appealing and positive atmosphere. The campus helped students reduce stress level and encouraged social interactions.

## Rigorous Curriculum

Students pointed out the quality and rigor of foundational courses in academic programs (e.g., Computer Science).

## Human Support

Students perceived supports from faculty and staff positively. To students, they are approachable, accessible, and committed to student success and well-being.



# Student comments:

## What One Thing Should Not Be Changed at This Institution?

“The vision of SFSU and most of the programs is about diversity and inclusion....”

“... the way people can be on campus and express how they feel, with organizations or clubs, is great feeling like there is a group of people who will get how you feel and understand what you like”

**- DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY**

“Major support this institution has for providing students ways to help them survive like the groceries and market and to help them socially and academically.

**- SUPPORT SYSTEM**

“I am so grateful to be in college and had interactions with professors who are so brilliant in their experience and knowledge.”

“I would not change the staff. I worked with ... and I value their input as my professors. ”

“... being new and confused with everything, I was grateful for the staff and faculties informing us all about important resources.”

**- HUMAN SUPPORT**

“Building a strong foundation in the fundamentals of ... curriculum”

**- RIGOROUS CURRICULUM**

“The SFSU campus is incredibly beautiful and peaceful. Personally, I’ve experienced an increase in the amount of beauty and peace on campus in the past academic year. ”

**- CAMPUS LANDSCAPE**

“I ‘d say keep the social, ethnic and historical studies classes intact. SFSU’s ethnic studies classes is a huge part of the school's identity. ... learning these ideas about human identity will develop an understanding on how people interact with each other in spite of our differing backgrounds.”

**- VALUABLE DISCIPLINE AREAS**



# AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

WHAT ONE THING SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED AT THIS INSTITUTION?

The top 6 themes that emerged from the open-ended comments were:

## Affordability

Education affordability was the most commonly mentioned. Students expressed financial concerns with high tuition, living and housing cost. This ongoing concern is exacerbated due to pandemic impact.

## Curriculum Practicability

Students expressed concerns about the applicability of some courses to the real world. They highlighted course offerings to ensure they were relevant and provided practical skills.

## Flexibility

Students emphasized the importance of retaining online and hybrid class options to succeed academically while working and taking personal responsibilities. There's a call for flexible class scheduling and course offerings.

## Social & Community Building

Students expressed a need for better social integration and community building on campus. That included increasing awareness of social events, improving connections among students, and making it easier for students to find clubs and organizations.

## Teaching & Advising Quality

Students commented about the quality of faculty, in particular, effective teaching. Advising also needed to be improved with better coordination, clearer course alternatives, and more guidance in course selection.

## Different Needs

Students commented about their needs and urged for differentiated support.

- **Academically oriented seniors** wanted to be recognized by their academic achievement.
- **Commuters** asked for more support for lower cost of transportation and commuter safety.
- **STEM students** called for cutting-edge resources and opportunities to connect with the field.
- **Nontraditional undergraduates** urge awareness and understanding of their unique support needs.

# Student comments

## What One Change Would Improve Your Educational Experience Most?

“Cutting the cost of a college education!”

“The price of housing has caused many students to transfer out of this institution or face themselves to take a year off until they're able to pay for their education.”

“More free resources for students, like parking. that should be cheaper.”

“I had such negative experiences navigating many issues related to graduation and financial aid throughout my time at SFSU.

**- AFFORDABILITY**

“Incorporate more practical, hands-on experiences into the curriculum. Many students feel that the theoretical knowledge they learn in class does not translate well to the real world. By providing opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in practical settings...

**- CURRICULUM PRACTICABILITY**

“Ensure that professors are keeping up to date with technology and adjusting older long syllabuses and heavy reading requirements that has the same material accessible online”

“Better organization around class schedules and clearer communication and coordination between academic and major departments about requirements for graduation”

“make navigate easier to use so students can schedule appointments with certain professors or counselors.

**- TEACHING & ADVISING QUALITY**

“Fully online and hybrid if necessary to better accommodate students that financially can't afford to travel to campus often or at all and need to balance life and work schedules or because of health or medical reasons or disability challenges.”

“I wish there were more in-person classes to get a better feel.”

“Returning to in-person classes completely will aid learning as it usually seems to have a better effect on attention, participation,

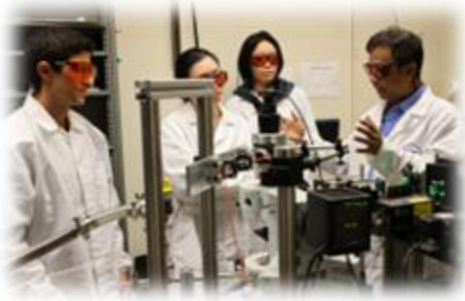
“Offering more choices of professors offering the same course.”

**- FLEXIBILITY**





# VARIOUS VOICES FROM SUB-POPULATIONS



“Accommodating students in the STEM fields with more resources, educational opportunities and genuine human connections would greatly improve this school.”

*- Students majoring in STEM*



“The school should support more students who are graduating and have high educational achievement. I feel abandoned by school when I couldn't see much of support during senior year. I have worked hard for honors, but there is no different with others.”

*- Academically oriented seniors*



“Consider that not all students are straight out of high school, and there are many older adult learners, returning back to college to explore different careers or to finish college since they didn't have the opportunity because of either finances or working for decades, returning to school.”

*- Nontraditional undergraduates*



“... the cost of transportation (gas) is too much. it also takes up a huge amount of time to commute”

“More accommodations should be given to people that commute from very far, It's hard to go home with traffic after a long day at school and immediately have to work on an assignment.”

*- Commuters*





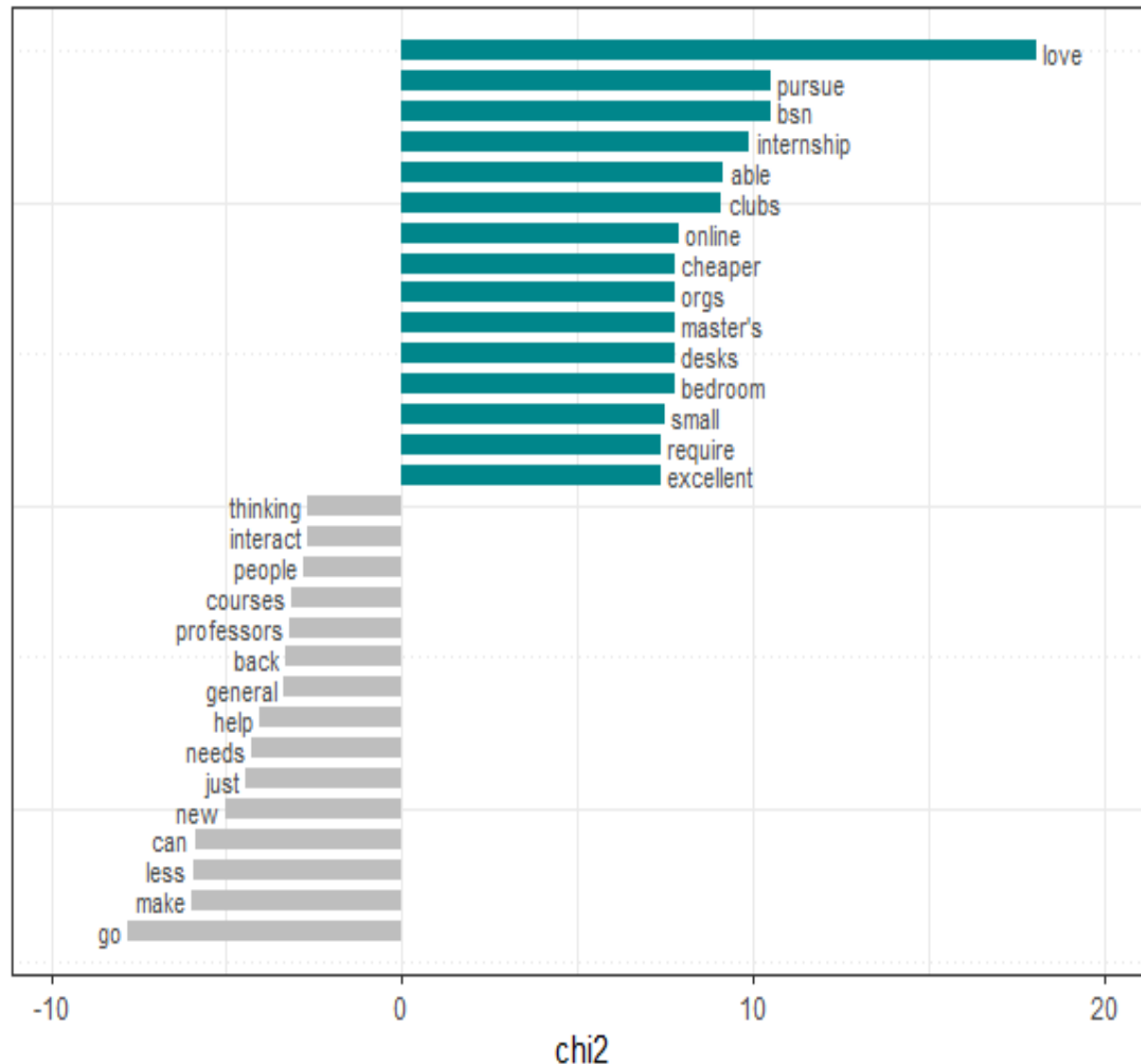


# DEEPER DIVE INTO STUDENT FEEDBACK

The presentation summarizes keyness analysis results of comments from those who rated the overall experience as “Excellent” or “Poor.”



# Students Who Rated “Excellent” on Overall Evaluation



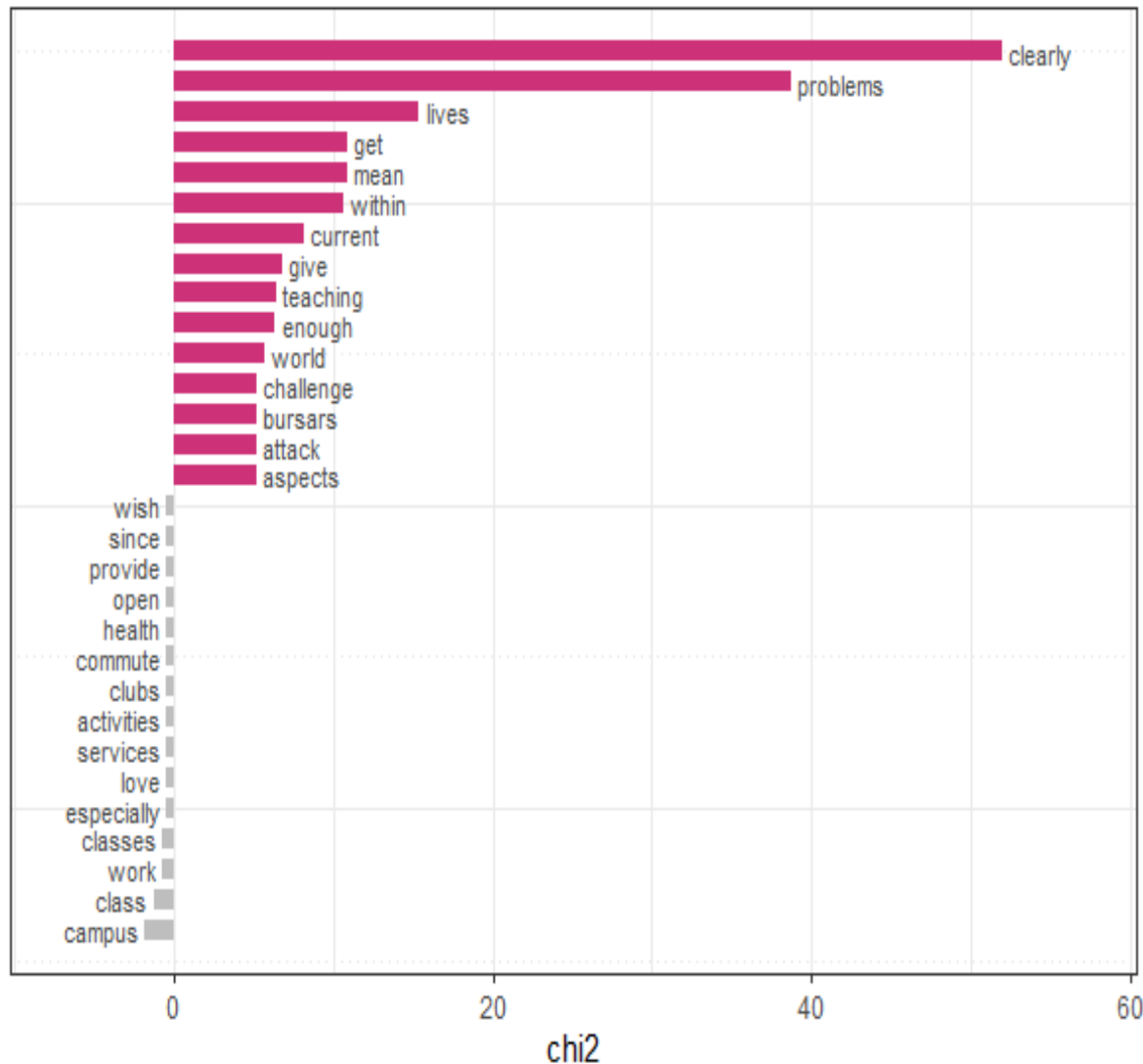
*Positive emotions and satisfaction are more likely associated with engagement with a variety of curricular and extracurricular activities.*

*Positive emotions and satisfaction are hardly related to aspects of courses, professors, or interactions with people in the learning community.*

- Keyness analysis is to evaluate whether the word occurs more frequently in the target corpus than in the reference corpus. If yes, the word may be a key term of the target corpus.
- It uses a Chi-Squared test, and the results indicate significantly more or less uttered words by the target group compared to the reference group.



# Students Who Rated “Poor” on Overall Evaluation



*Students who rated “Poor” on the overall evaluation articulated challenges and concerns focused on teaching quality, the financial aspect of the college experience, and the satisfactory level of the current support system.*

*Students who rated “Poor” on the overall evaluation are less likely to be aware of the importance of health, engage in curricular and extracurricular activities on campus, and balance between work or personal life and academic responsibility in the college journey.*

- Keyness analysis is to evaluate whether the word occurs more frequently in the target corpus than in the reference corpus. If yes, the word may be a key term of the target corpus.
- It uses a Chi-Squared test, and the results indicate significantly more or less uttered words by the target group compared to the reference group.