

2019 UBIT Student Experience Survey



Executive Summary

3/6/2020

UBIT Communication and Engagement
Office of the VPCIO
UB Information Technology

2019 UBIT Student Experience Survey

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Introduction

The more than 4,500 UB students who responded to our 2019 Student Experience Survey well-represent the attitudes and qualities of the UB student population: their responses were smart, inquisitive, tech-savvy and confident in what they need from the institution to further their academic and personal goals.

Based on their feedback, UBIT can report that the institution rose to the expectations of students with regard to technology in 2019, despite some significant challenges.

In 2018, Chegg.com—one of the most popular third-party academic sites among UB students (p. 9)—sustained a breach exposing passwords for some 26,000 UB student who reused their UB email and password on that site. The risk of compromised accounts from third-party sites like these exemplifies the utmost importance of providing the best possible security resources and education for UB’s students, employees and affiliates.

In 2019, UBIT made significant changes to our information security landscape, including a shift to SecureW2 device-based authentication for the eduroam Wi-Fi network, and the implementation of Duo two-step verification for UBITName accounts.

Although improved security necessarily requires behavioral change on an individual level, disruption and dissatisfaction as a result of these changes have been minimal: more students than ever (63%) are connected to eduroam, and a large majority of students (71%) responded positively to the addition of two-step verification at UB (p. 7).

Today, these changes are serving a more secure technology environment for everyone connected to the university, on and off campus. The value derived from these initiatives would not have been possible without feedback from students, who helped test UB’s new eduroam onboarding process, and advised UBIT regarding the two-step verification policy for undergraduate and graduate students.

As always, students represent the vanguard of innovative technology use, and our annual survey not only serves as a measure of our progress and success with previous years’ initiatives; it allows us to look forward with confidence. With the responses in mind, we can build a reliable learning technology environment; one that plays a pivotal role in student retention and academic success.

Pictured on front: The Global Innovation Challenge takes on the topic of communicating science in a complex world in January 2020 in Hayes Hall. This is the second day of the annual competition, co-organized by Community for Global Health Equity, faculty fellows Drs. Katarzyna Kordas and Jennifer Surtees, Blackstone Launchpad, and UB Sustainability. Photo by Douglas Levere.

About the Survey

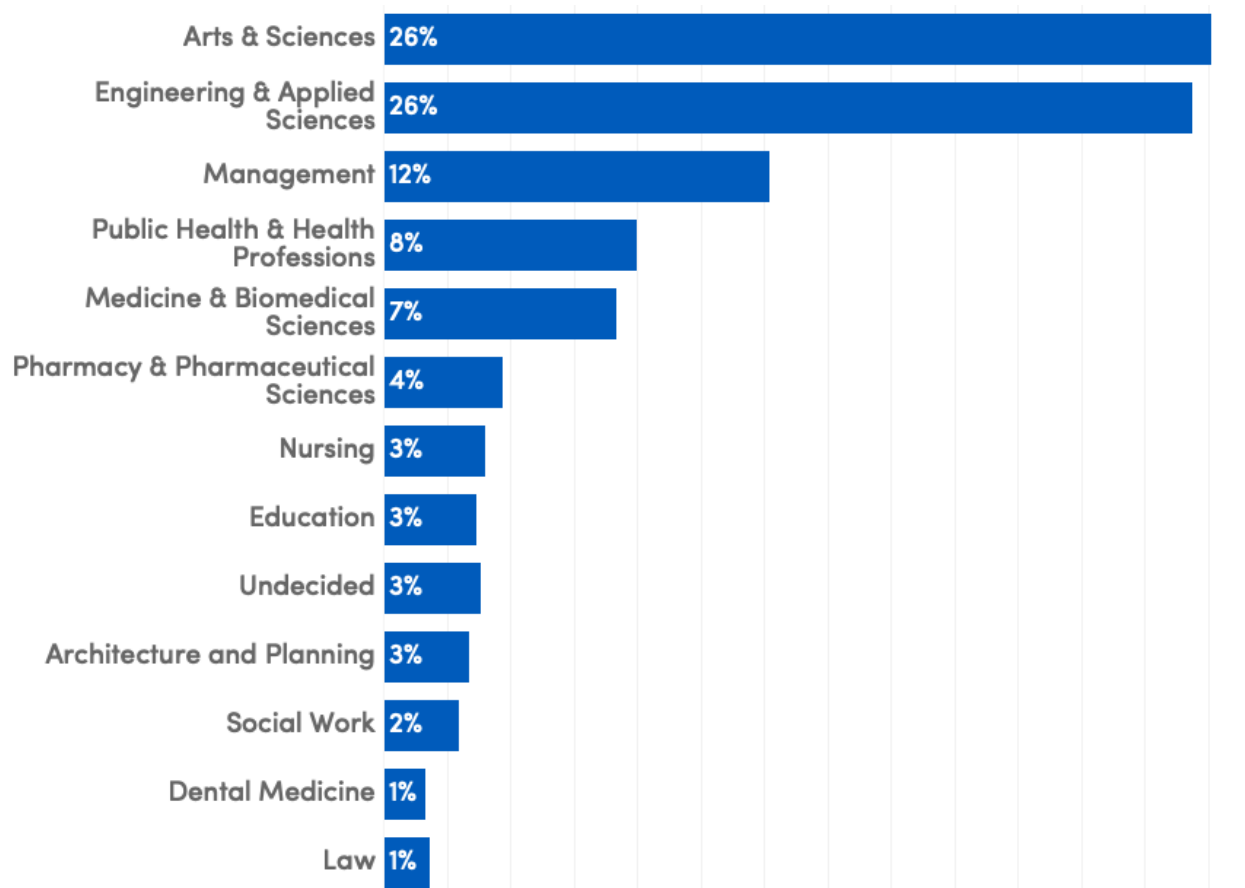
4,571 UB students responded to the 2019 survey, representing undergraduates at all levels, as well as graduate students and non-degree seeking students.

The 2019 UBIT Student Experience Survey was open from October 21 to November 4, 2019, and contains 29 questions designed in conjunction with instructional and support IT staff in each technology area surveyed, as well as the UB offices of Student Life, Campus Living, Undergraduate Education, University Libraries and other campus stakeholders.

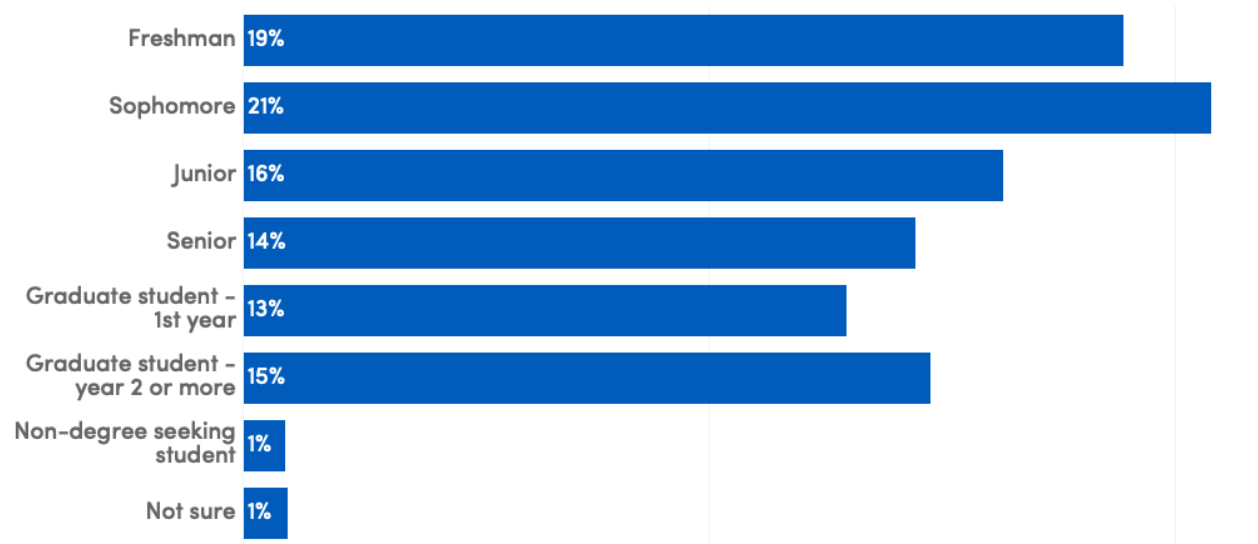
Responses were collected using Qualtrics. Students were encouraged to participate through social media and online promotions, including pop-up browsers in public computing sites, for a chance to win \$25 Campus Cash.

While some key questions were required, many were not; where applicable, percentages reflect the number of students who answered that specific question.

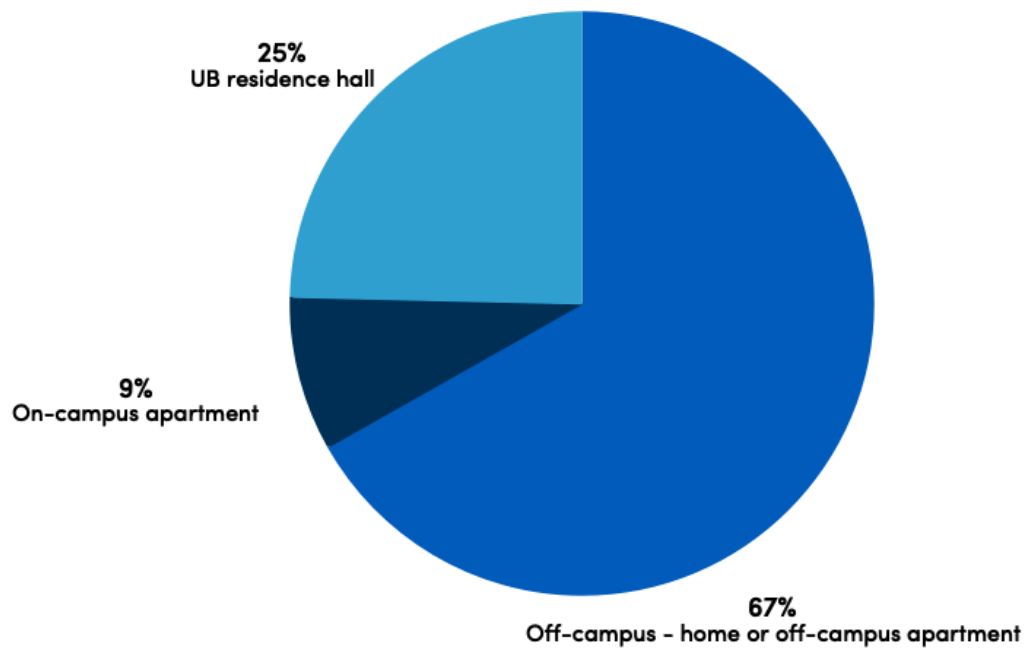
In what UB School or College are you enrolled?



What is your class standing?



Where do you live?

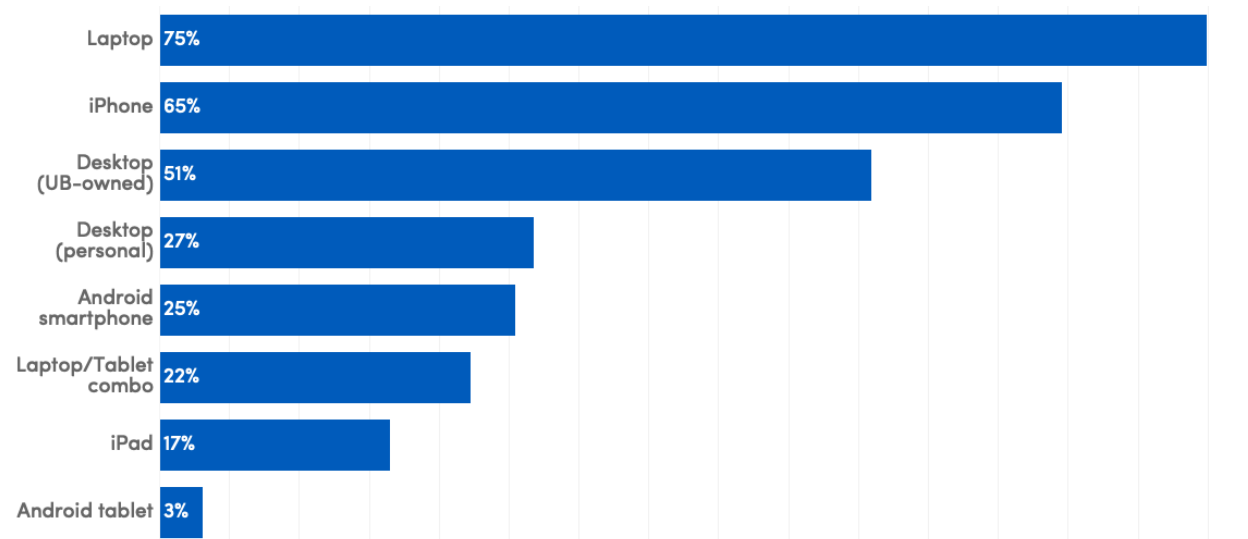


Part I. Students, Technology and Higher Education

What devices do students use in their lives, both personal and academic? How do they use technology to stay productive and in touch with the people and institutions around them?

Devices

Which devices have you used since the beginning of the semester?



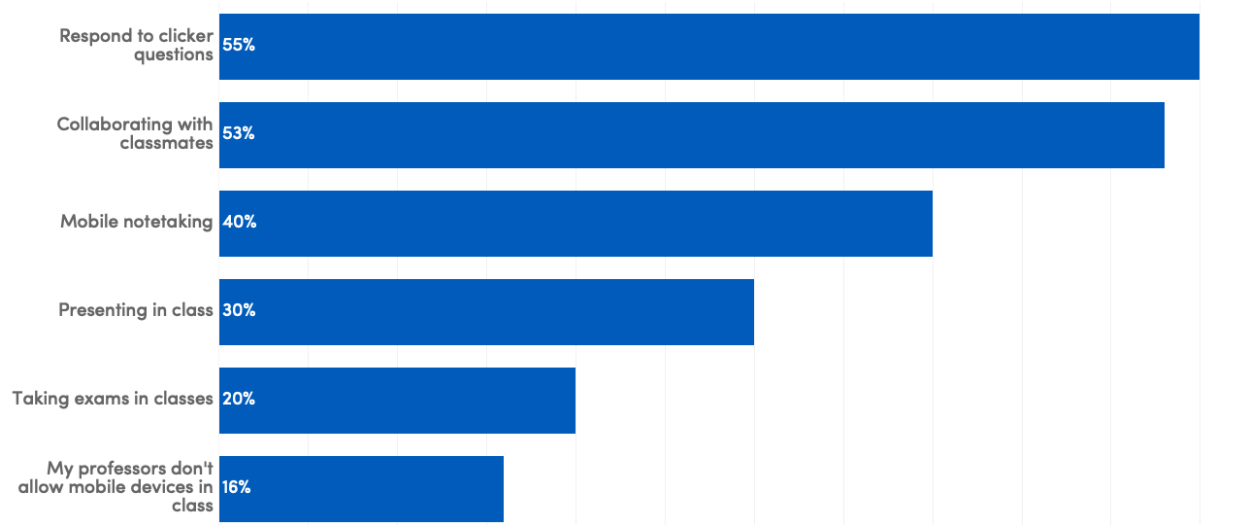
Devices	Used by	Used for
Smartphones	90% of students	Social media and staying updated about events on campus
Laptops	75% of students	Homework and web browsing
Tablets	20% of students	Notetaking and streaming

In addition to these most common student devices, students also reported using a variety of gaming consoles (17%) and “smart” wearables (23%), TVs and streaming devices (38%), speakers (11%), light bulbs (3%) and more. The number of students who reported using devices like these rose slightly over 2018.

53% of students reported using a Windows device as their primary device (95% of whom use Windows 10, the latest version). 30% use macOS (42% of whom use 10.15 (Catalina), the latest version, which was released just prior to this survey).

In the classroom

How do you want to use your smartphone or tablet in UB's classrooms?



78% of student respondents told us they felt their instructors had the classroom technology they needed in order to provide the best possible learning experience at UB.

Following national trends, UB students expect to engage with classroom learning using digital devices (ECAR, 2019, p. 17).

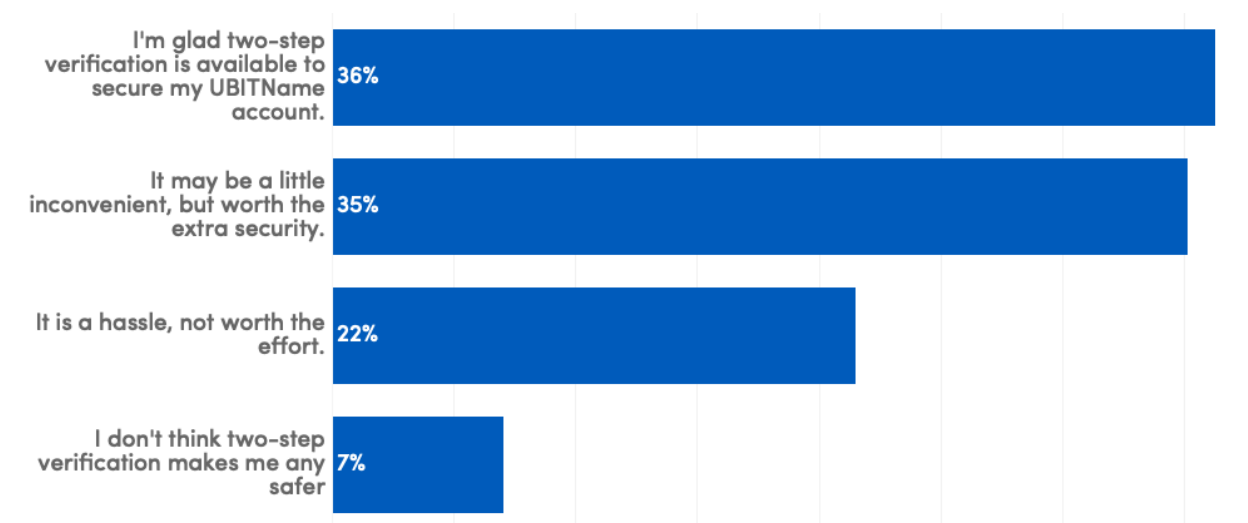
A strong majority of student respondents at UB (94%) indicated they saw value in using mobile devices in the classroom, for tasks like responding to instructor questions, collaborating with other classmates and taking notes.

In our 2019 UBIT Faculty Survey, more faculty told UBIT they were incorporating mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets in the classroom than before (51%, versus 46% in 2017); this places UB faculty firmly in line with national trends (ECAR, 2019, p. 18).

Students confirm this trend: 16% of student respondents reported that they take classes where mobile devices aren't allowed, down from 19% in 2018.

Security

How do you feel about new Duo two-step verification at UB?



Security efforts comprised a large share of public-facing IT changes at UB in 2019. For the first time, UB students were required to use Duo two-step verification on their UBITName accounts (with faculty and staff following in early 2020).

Aware that this change would affect nearly every member of the UB community, UBIT took great efforts to involve community members in the process. Students in UB's MBA program worked with UBIT to gauge attitudes among UB community members regarding two-step verification. Their research suggested most people would welcome the additional layer of security, even if it required additional steps or effort when logging in.

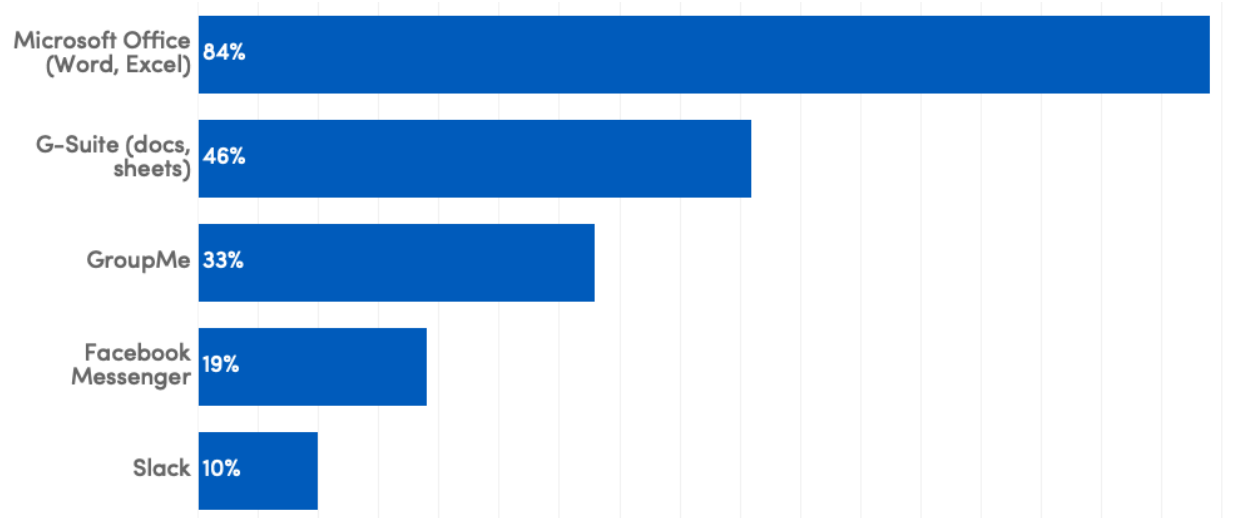
This appears to be the case, as the majority of UB students surveyed (71%) responded positively to the forthcoming two-step requirement at UB (as of November 2019).

The smallest segment of students (7%) saw no efficacy in two-step verification, while a larger segment (22%) felt the additional inconvenience of using a second factor when logging in outweighs the security benefits.

UBIT continues to spread awareness with student-facing events and communications such as news articles on the UBIT website, email, social media and more, to highlight the fact that two-step verification is a proven security measure that, along with other general safe computing practices, will help secure critical student data like financial aid and tuition information, social security numbers and phone numbers.

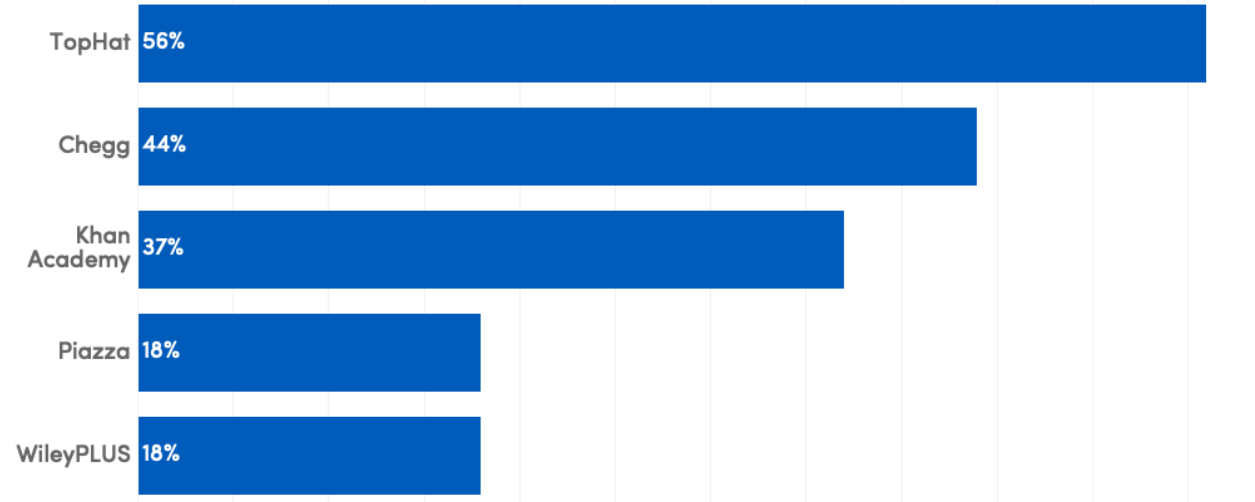
Digital tools for academics and productivity

What software do you use for productivity in your work at UB?



Students are using UB-provided resources for productivity (Microsoft Office via free download from the UBIT website; G-Suite for Education through their UBmail Powered by Google accounts) and supplementing them with third-party messaging/communication apps like GroupMe (33%), Facebook (19%) and Slack (10%).

Which non-UB academic websites have you signed up for?



Now that many educational publishers are adopting a “digital first” strategy (KcKenzie, 2019), student success is increasingly tied to the use of third-party digital academic resources. These resources are often mandated by instructors, as well as used by students to supplement UB-provided resources.

When students re-use their UB email and passwords on these sites, it poses a significant security challenge to the university. In 2018, Chegg.com (which 44% of respondents reported using) was breached, leaking over 40 million email addresses and passwords.

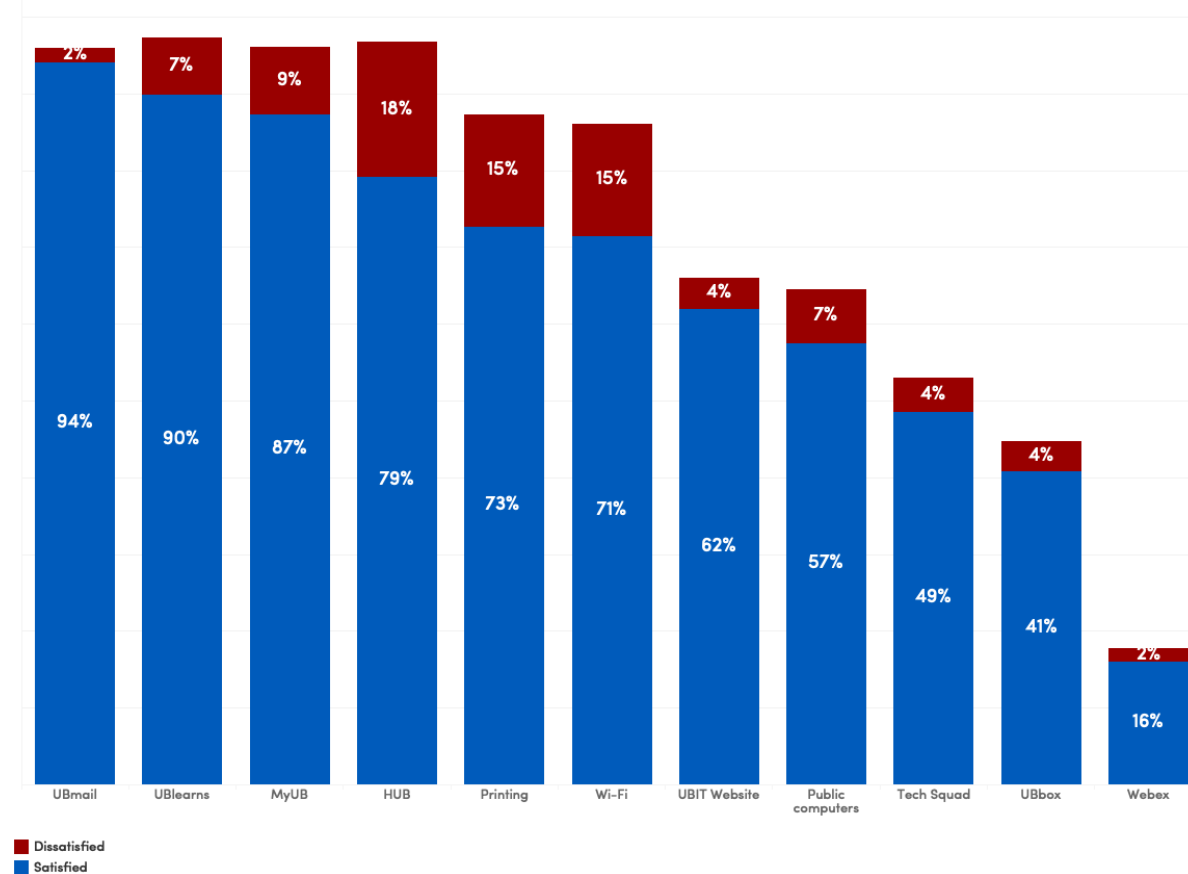
UB’s Information Security Office estimates that as many as 26,000 UB students’ login information was indirectly exposed as a result of this non-UB breach. A cross-departmental team worked daily to identify potentially affected students and work with them to re-secure their accounts.

The new Duo two-step verification requirement for UB students promises to dramatically reduce the impact of incidents like these, since an exposed password is no longer enough to gain unauthorized access to a UB student’s account.

Part II. Students and UBIT

UBIT adds value to the student experience by collaborating with students and their instructors to provide the tools they need. Here is how students rated UBIT services.

Satisfaction with UBIT services



Satisfaction with eduroam Wi-Fi at UB rose by one point in 2019, while dissatisfaction fell by nine points. Wi-Fi satisfaction at UB is slightly higher than the national average, as reported by EDUCAUSE (71% at UB, vs. 65% nationally) (ECAR, 2019, p. 15).

Over 2,700 students left open-ended comments suggesting areas where Wi-Fi could be improved. The most common areas recommended for improvement were the Student Union (14%), Knox Hall (7%) and outdoor areas (6%).

In 2016, 57% of students who responded to our annual survey told us they wanted a more mobile-friendly experience using the HUB Student Center. In Fall 2019, the HUB's interface was updated with a new, tile-based interface for easier use on any device screen.

To address low student awareness of Webex (compounded by the use of other, third-party messaging and communication platforms (p. 8), UBIT implemented a Webex awareness campaign in February 2020 targeting students with advertisements on Stampede buses, in residence halls and in the Spectrum student newspaper.

IT communication and awareness

Where do you prefer to go first to find information?

Channel:	Students use it to look for...
Email	campus news, new IT services
Text messages	campus closings and emergencies
UBIT website	"how to" IT help articles
UBIT Alerts	campus emergencies
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok)	updates from friends

Students expect institutional information, including campus news and information about IT services, to come in the form of emails and information on UB web pages. However, they want to receive timely UB-related information, such as campus closings and emergencies, through text messages and specialized alert channels.

How did you learn about free software from UBIT, like Microsoft Office 2019?



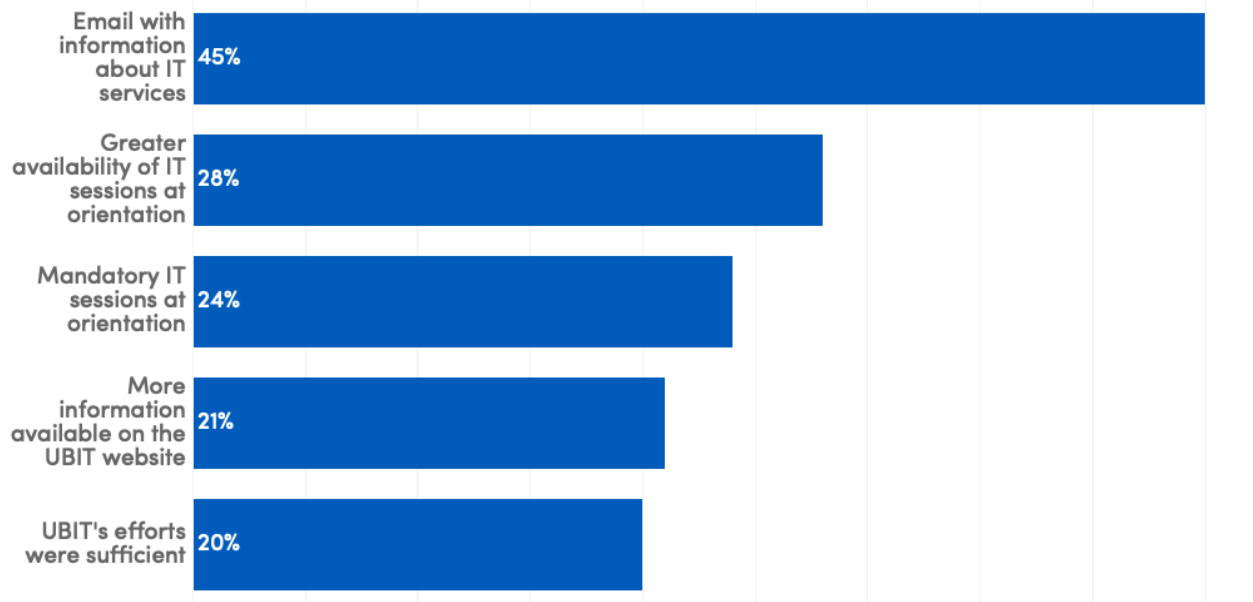
UB students learn about free software, and IT services generally, in three primary ways:

1. **Word of mouth:** friends, classmates and instructors together comprise the most common channel for students to learn about technology resources.
2. **UBIT website:** free software is prominently featured, and students who visit the website for other reasons are likely to see information about free software.
3. **Orientation:** free software is a topic in all orientation presentations and materials. Orientation leaders are coached about top IT talking points, including free software.

UBIT also promotes free software to students through advertisements on Stampede buses, posters in residence halls, videos, digital signage around campus and more.

The percentage of respondents in 2019 who did not know about free software (13%) is down slightly from the previous five-year average (14.4%).

What would have made it easier for you to get started with Information Technology at UB?



Students expect the university to send official communication via email (p. 11). 45% of responding UB freshmen told us they would have liked to receive an email outlining available IT services at UB. The number of students requesting IT information via email has increased in recent years; in response, in 2018, UBIT began consolidating newsworthy IT items in a regular email that students receive three times every fall and spring semester.

Students also requested more UBIT sessions at orientation, and 24% of responding students requested that these sessions be made mandatory. UBIT currently offers optional orientation sessions during undergraduate, international and graduate student orientation. Through face-to-face orientation events, UBIT reached approximately 400 new UB students in 2019, and approximately 330 members of their family.

UBIT also participates heavily in Fall move-in events, offering hands-on assistance configuring devices and promotional materials highlighted how to get help, download free software and more.

20% of freshmen who responded said that UBIT's efforts were sufficient without recommendations for improvement, consistent with previous years' reports.

Part III. Conclusion

What will technology at UB look like by the end of 2020? Students may notice some of the apps and services they use every day becoming easier to use, more contemporary in design and navigation, and available more often when students need them. In particular:

- **MyUB**, UB's flagship online portal, will be reimagined to offer greater personalization and utility for students, and everyone else at UB;
- **UB Learns** will be updated to provide better navigation on mobile and desktop devices to students and instructors alike;

These are big changes, with the potential to affect each UB's students and faculty alike. Through UBIT's annual Student Experience Survey, UB students have sizeable influence over efforts like these. The role students play in driving IT change at UB ensures we can maximize the value students derive from these investments.

As always, UBIT wishes to thank the students who have responded to this survey and participated in our Student Advisory Group for their contribution to our work.

To see full results or analysis from previous years' surveys, visit the UBIT website:

buffalo.edu/ubit/about/strategic-initiatives/reports/UBIT-student-experience.html

References:

EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research, *ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology*. 2019. Accessed from <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/10/2019-study-of-undergraduate-students-and-information-technology>

McKenzie, Lindsay. "Pearson's Next Chapter," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 19, 2019.