

# **Three-Partner Collaborative Evaluation of Student Transition, Performance, Experience, and Outcomes in Practical Nursing (PN) – Nursing Degree (BScN) Bridging Education**

## **Phase II Report**

**A Research Project Funded by the College University  
Consortium Council (CUCC) and Collaboratively  
Conducted by Researchers at:**

**University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)  
Durham College (DC)  
Georgian College (GC)**

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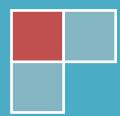
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report details data analysis conducted for Phase II of the CUCC-funded project: *Three-Partner Collaborative Evaluation of Student Transition, Performance, Experience, and Outcomes in Practical Nursing (PN) – Nursing Degree (BScN) Bridging Education*, a collaborative research project between the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Durham College, and Georgian College.

Between April 2012 and June 2012, data in the form of quantitative surveys and qualitative exploration of student experience was collected from a total of 156 current RPN-BScN students, past students, and workplace contacts. Of the total respondents, 131 fully completed questionnaires were submitted by current students. This data ( $N = 131$ ) was used for the statistical analysis component of this report. Additionally, email notification was sent to all current students offering them an opportunity to participate in the research if they had not done so already, resulting in collection of data from an additional 2 current students that is included in the qualitative data analysis ( $N = 133$ ).

For the purposes of the analyses presented in this report, a 10% difference in response patterns between students at the two campuses (Oshawa Campus – University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and Durham College (DC) shared campus and Georgian College (GC) Campus) was arbitrarily deemed to be a ‘significant’ difference. Additionally, the threshold for a ‘significant’ response rate was also arbitrarily set for the purposes of this report – in this case at 60%.

This report provides data analysis around the following five focal areas of investigation. In all areas, important insight into student experience, student behaviours, and student life context is gleaned. Student experience and evaluation of the program is very positive overall. However, there are important lessons in terms of facilitators and barriers identified by current students and the degree to which academic services are accessed and evaluated as effective or ineffective. Differences in response patterns, particularly around facilitators and barriers and academic services, between students enrolled at the Oshawa Campus (UOIT-DC shared campus) and the Georgian Campus are concerning. The data does not allow us to determine if these differences are related to:

- the actual services and supports themselves
- how students are oriented to and made aware of the services and supports at the different campuses
- the program model where students are integrated with other university students on one campus (Oshawa Campus) and take classes in a cohort model on the other campus (Georgian Campus)
- other factors, such as student differences not identified in this data collection

Regardless, this information provides us with insight into the need to tailor our orientation and ongoing communication with students in such a manner that we provide clear and consistent

messaging about those factors, supports, and services which promote success according to student experience.

### **Area of Inquiry #1: Understanding Our Student Population**

Of the 131 current students who participated in this phase of data collection, 55 (42%) are enrolled at the Georgian campus and 76 (58%) are enrolled at the Oshawa DC-UOIT campus. Because one student was a transfer student between campuses, at times there is a minor variation in this number (i.e., 54 and 77) depending on where this student was enrolled at the time of the data collection or the point in time to which information collected refers. The majority of students (76%; N=94) are completing the program on a full-time basis. The difference in commute times for students attending the two campuses is relatively small. The average commute time for students attending the Georgian campus to attend class is approximately 13 minutes longer, each way. While age ranges from 21-57, the majority (74%) of current students range in age from 25-44 years of age. Male students are in the minority representing only about 8% of the total respondents. Just over half (51.1%) of the students who took part in this data collection phase responded that they are currently married. Well over half of our students (Georgian combined 59.3%; Oshawa combined 61.0%; overall 60.3%) have dependent care responsibilities, with the majority of these related to children under the age of 18. The time between completing PN diploma programs and beginning the bridging program ranges from 0-15 years for Oshawa students (average = 3.39 years) and 0-29 years for Georgian students (average = 3.03 years). Close to one-third of students concurrently work full-time as RPNs. In addition to working within nursing, 6.6% work full-time outside of nursing. Another 45.3% of students work part-time in nursing as RPNs while 8% work part-time outside of nursing. Finally, 17.2% of current students work casual in nursing while 5.8% work casual outside of nursing. The vast majority (65%) of students work between 24-40 hours per week, with 9% working greater than 40 hours per week. Close to one third of our students gave up full-time employment. Median family income was just barely into the \$50,000-\$70,000 category, with the mean and mode falling in the \$30,000-50,000 category. Close to one-quarter of our students had an average family income of <\$30,000. Concurrently, 15% of our students indicated an average family of income of >\$90,000. The vast majority of students (82%) anticipate completing the RPN to BScN Program with some degree of student debt. The average anticipated student debt approached \$20,000 at each site. The majority of students (N=88) are able to access some funding, including government program such as the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), employer support, and the Nursing Education Initiative (sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care) . The emerging picture is one in which students are concurrently working full-time, studying full-time, and caring often for multiple dependents in the context of lives with many responsibilities.

### **Area of Inquiry #2: Student Experience Year by Year through the PN-BScN Bridging Program**

Throughout the program, students experience challenges in relation to the workload and managing multiple demands on their time. These findings are highly consistent with the data

collected in 2009-2010 and analyzed as part of Phase I of this study. Additionally, we see a progressive change in attitude and orientation of students as they move through the program. Learning requirements and expectations that students experience in the university setting are seen as significantly different than the learning contexts that most students have previously experienced in college settings. These differences relate both to level of difficulty, and to the expectations of independence and self-directedness. Student respondents in Year 1 and Year 2 express a higher degree of frustration with this context, while students in Year 3 focus more on their feelings of confidence and mastery.

### **Area of Inquiry #3: Facilitators and Barriers to Success in the RPN-BScN Bridging Program**

In terms of employment factors, while students from both campuses generally responded that work schedule flexibility promoted success, significantly more students from Oshawa responded positively to this item and significantly more students from Georgian identified the lack of flexibility as a barrier to success. In terms of personal factors, support received from colleagues and employers was significantly more pronounced with the Oshawa students in terms of promoting success versus the Georgian students. Similarly, the lack of colleague support was a significantly greater barrier to success for Georgian campus students than for Oshawa campus students. A wide range of differences are seen when examining academic factors that promote or are barriers to success. Students from both campuses generally perceived the overall program of study in a very positive light, with very few identifying the program of study as a barrier and the vast majority seeing it as promoting success. The trend across evaluation of academic factors reveals that Oshawa students have much more positive perceptions of factors promoting success.

### **Area of Inquiry #4: Supports and Services Accessed and their Effectiveness**

The degree to which students are accessing some of the academic services available to them is very positive. For students enrolled at the Oshawa campus in particular, 8 of the 10 academic services examined were accessed by more than two-thirds of the students. The only two services not accessed to this degree were the Counseling Centre and the Centre for Students with Disabilities, both services which would be expected to show a lower rate of use. For students enrolled at the Georgian campus, while only three services meet this level of use (Faculty, Program Coordinator, Academic Advisor), an additional two services were accessed by at least half of the participants in the Barrie cohort (Financial Aid, Library/Librarian). The greatest access of services is similar across students groups at both campuses: a) Program Coordinator, b) Faculty, and c) Academic Advisor.

The fact that students enrolled at the Oshawa campus evaluated the effectiveness of all academic services that were queried at >60% threshold, albeit an arbitrary designation for this report, is highly encouraging. Additionally, 5 of the 10 services under examination were evaluated by students on the Georgian campus as effective at >60% threshold (Academic advisor, Program Coordinator, Peer Tutoring, Faculty, and the Library/Librarian). The greatest

areas of satisfaction for users of services on both campuses were identified as being: a) Program Coordinator, Faculty, and the Library/Librarian. It is noteworthy that in general, the services that are most utilized are also most highly evaluated.

There is a very significant difference in the degree to which students are accessing academic services on the two campuses. A total of 7 of the 10 services were accessed significantly more (i.e., >10% difference in relative use) by students at the Oshawa campus than at the Georgian campus. These services include: Writing Centre, Academic Advisor, Peer Tutoring, Library/Librarian, Health Centre, Counselling Centre, and Centre for Students with Disabilities. The juxtaposition of this finding of significantly less use of support services by Georgian campus students with anecdotal student feedback from this group that they feel there needs to be more support available to them is concerning and highlights the need to address the underlying cause.

Six academic services (Writing Centre, Library/Librarian, Financial Aid, Health Centre, Counselling Centre, and the Centre for Students with Disabilities) showed a significant difference in the degree to which they were assessed as effective by students at the different campuses. All of the academic services provided for students at the Oshawa campus were evaluated by users as effective at or above the 60% threshold (arbitrarily deemed as 'satisfactory' for the purposes of this study). When evaluated by students enrolled in the Georgian cohort, a total of five services fell below the 60% threshold for satisfaction when looking at level of effectiveness. These include the Writing Centre, Financial Aid, Health Centre, Counselling Centre, and Centre for Students with Disabilities.

### **Area of Inquiry #5: Student Experience of Changes to Self and Professional Role**

Across all years, students perceive personal gains which they see as a credit to themselves. Sometimes they feel supported in achieving these gains, but sometimes perceive a lack of support. As students progress through the program, they describe increasingly positive personal attributes that they see as part of their role and self-identification as a nurse.

Critical thinking and understanding the impact of one's actions as a nurse are enhanced with increased knowledge and skill, as well as application of theory and research. While there is reference to growth in relation to professional work as a nurse, respondents focussed even more heavily on personal growth that then leads to changes as a professional.

### **Additional Areas of Inquiry**

Due to challenges with data collection, two additional areas of inquiry (Area of Inquiry #6: Workplace Contact Experience of Having Employees Enrolled in the Program; Area of Inquiry #7: Past Student Experience of the Program) will be reported in December 2012.

## **Dissemination Activities**

This report describes current dissemination activities related to Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this project. One poster presentation and one oral presentation have successfully been delivered. One oral presentation is accepted for September 2012, and two additional submissions are under review through a peer-review process.

## **Financial Reporting Requirements**

Please find attached the financial reporting documents related to this phase of the project.

## **Fictional Student Composites**

### **Meet Gwen & Anna: Composites of Current Students at each of the RPN to BScN Program Campus Sites (June 30, 2012)**

On both the Oshawa and Barrie sites for the UOIT-DC-GC RPN to BScN Program, most students have never been to university before. They are awarded 33 transfer credits on admission and complete the program in approximately three years, which entails studying year-round for 2 of the 3 years. The Oshawa students tell us they graduated from their Practical Nurse Program anywhere from 0-15 years ago and the Georgian students 0-29 years ago. A composite story has been created to show our research data in an accessible format to personalize our findings. Two students who are entering the summer semester, an integrated clinical-theory course between second and third year, discuss their experience with the RPN to BScN Program. Interestingly, and unbeknownst to our Gwen and Anna, second year RPN to BScN Bridging Program students have a higher attrition rate than the four-year Collaborative BScN Program students. We listen to them reflect on their experience and end the composite with a look into the future for our two students, based on third year student feedback during our research processes.

#### **Gwen on the Oshawa Campus of UOIT-DC**

*My name is Gwen and I am 35 years old. I graduated 3 ½ years ago from a Practical Nursing Program. I am one of twenty-nine students in year two at the Oshawa campus, who took part in the RPN to BScN Program research, conducted during the May 2012 orientation to a summer clinical course. My RPN to BScN courses are mostly face-to-face on the Oshawa campus of UOIT-DC. This year we integrated with the Collaborative BScN Program students in many of our classes. In some of the courses, we are taught with health sciences students. I am married, like over half of the students in my class. I am a bit concerned as a few of my colleagues' marital status has changed over the past year. In my program, three-quarters of us have children under the age of 18. I have a two year old son and a four year old daughter. One of my worries is having good childcare for them.*

*I have the option of completing my program of study on a full-time or part-time basis, but have remained full-time. My commute time to school is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour and to clinical it's almost an hour. If I don't have our family car to use, it sure helps to have good transit available. I work 31 hours per week in complex continuing care in a hospital, about the same hours that I worked in first year. Like about half of my class, I gave up full-time employment in my first year back at school. Our family income is now \$50,000 a year and I worry it will go down if I need to work less in my third year. I hear it is demanding to finish the program. I anticipate having \$18,000 school-caused debt upon graduation. Like the majority of my peers, I have some education funding support from my employer and from the government. It is important to me to be successful in this program and it helps that I have work schedule flexibility, job security, work support for continuing education, and especially support from my work peers. It has also helped to be able to take a leave of absence from work when I need more time for my studies. Of course, I need more than support at work and my family matters a lot to my success. My personality helps too!*

*At school, there are a number of services for students' success on campus and I have accessed the academic advisor, program coordinator, faculty, and computer/IT support, but I think the computer fees in my tuition are too high. I like the mix of online and face-to-face classes, as well as practicum opportunities for areas of practice not in my Practical Nurse Program. The writing and math requirements in my courses support me towards my career transition in nursing. The writing centre and library also help me to be successful at school. I like the tutors and teaching assistants (TAs) in my big classes although many of my classmates don't think they learn as much from a TA. The campus facilities are good for students if you need a health centre or counselling. Overall I like the program and feel it will make me successful as a nurse.*

#### **Anna on the Barrie Campus of Georgian College**

*My name is Anna and I am 35 years old. I finished my Practical Nurse Program three years ago. I am one of eighteen students in year two at the Georgian campus, who took part in the RPN to BScN Program research, conducted in the May 2012 orientation to a summer clinical course. Almost half of my class is married although several of us have changed our living arrangements since coming into the program. Like most of my classmates, I have children – two school-age daughters. I would have preferred to come to school part-time but only full-time is offered at this campus. The only way to go part-time is to break an arm or to fail a course. It takes me about an hour to commute to classes but I go to clinical close to my home so that is only a half hour trip. I work 24 hours per week in long-term care which is slightly less than I worked in first year. I gave up my full-time RPN job to come to school. Almost half of us in my class did that and I would do it again. Our family income is about \$50,000 per year and I will have a student debt of \$17,000 by the end of this program. Like the majority of my classmates, I am eligible for education funding support from my employer and government. I have to wait for my OSAP information to come in the mail directly from UOIT or travel to Oshawa to get it, which frustrates me.*

*I like the flexibility I get from my workplace to attend school and the support of job availability for RNs. When I don't have support about arranging my schedule from my nursing colleagues at work, it makes school more difficult. Jobs for RPNs are not as available in my area.*

*My colleagues at school have been together since we started the program last year. We have all our classes together except for electives which I took online because I didn't feel that there were many options for me at this campus and I like that flexibility anyway. We never see nursing students that are in another collaborative program at the Georgian campus or have classes with non-nurses, except for online courses. I know my colleagues well and who to work with in group assignments. Some of my peers haven't gotten over some issues about organization in the program from first year and bring them up at class meetings with the Admin staff. So I don't go to those meetings. At school, I have a program coordinator for support about my courses and I like the class formats and scheduling. Online courses are especially good for me, although, there is little computer access and IT support on campus. I'd like more help but haven't accessed the on-campus resources as yet. I think the program will help me be successful as a nurse.*

**And,**

*We asked Gwen and Anna what they would tell a student who is coming into year two to expect in the RPN to BScN Program. They answered students should expect program challenges, challenges to work-life balance, independent learning and offered tips for success. The program challenges included financial pressures, stress, program issues with level of difficulty and disorganization, and technology (cost and skills for online learning). In terms of work-life balance, our second year students advise first year students to understand that school changes your life completely, not to work full-time, to be flexible in scheduling activities and that supports are available if you are resourceful. Gwen and Anna cautioned that there is a lot of studying to do and not to get behind as there is a lot of responsibility for self-directed learning and you have to ask for help. Finally, their tips for success include time management and priority setting within realistic goals, being open to new ideas and taking risks.*

*Overall, our students recognize school must be a priority that changes life in relation to family and work. They see themselves as key to strategies for independent learning and success; they say expect to study hard and to be frustrated with the workload.*

*We then asked Anna and Gwen how being in the RPN to BScN Program has changed them personally. They have made many personal gains but feel a lot of stress. They report being frustrated with courses that don't enhance clinical knowledge, feel more tired and critical. While they are more knowledgeable, they can't wait for school to be over to get their personal lives back and to get active again. On the other hand, they tell us they look for opportunities and feel more resourceful. Their confidence has increased and they take pride in the leadership now shown in personal and professional life. They state their knowledge and skills have grown, especially their critical thinking – Anna and Gwen say they see things from a broader perspective and from multiple angles. They have learned to be organized and to do research knowing they can't just assume anything. While they give credit to themselves for determination and commitment, they can grudgingly give credit to the school for some of their personal growth.*

*They claim to respond better to adversity and rise to challenges that require empathy and resilience.*

*We then inquired about how being in the program has changed Anna and Gwen as a nurse. They grouped their answers into three areas of change: application of knowledge and critical thinking, change of character, and professional growth. They report a broadened nursing focus that includes the whole healthcare team, global issues and a deeper understanding that nursing includes health teaching and research in practice. Their health assessment skills and appreciation for systemic problems have grown. The increased knowledge and application of that knowledge comes with a critical eye and feeling more competent. Anna and Gwen find it hard to separate the personal and professional so see themselves changed as nurses in terms of being more caring and compassionate, more evidence-based, and more appreciative about life after meeting patients who are living with complex health challenges. While it is hard to find a happy balance with work, school, and life, Anna and Gwen are determined to reach their goal of achieving a BScN and becoming an RN. They are studying harder in second year and using their learning at work. They appreciate the role of the RN more since starting this program and are excited about the possibilities for themselves.*

*What Anna and Gwen will experience in their third year, according to their peers who are a year ahead, are more confidence, more positivity, and insight into their accomplishments over time in the program.*

As teacher-researchers, we hope that meeting Anna and Gwen makes reading the research report compelling. While we celebrate with the students the areas that are going well, we are concerned about the emerging picture in which students are working and studying concurrently, both with heavy workloads, and at the same time carrying multiple personal responsibilities. They have substantial financial challenges despite receiving some external funding. While resources are available, students experience barriers to success and there are significant differences in the degree to which students are accessing and evaluating the effectiveness of services. All of these factors must be considered in our program and curriculum content, delivery, and expectations.

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**Table 1: Update on Deliverables for Phase 2**

<b>PHASE II</b> <b>Apr 1, 2012 – June 29, 2012</b>			
<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Required Action/Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Secure ethical approval at all 3 partner sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit REB documents to ethics review committees at all sites and secure REB approval at all sites</li> <li>Ensure all members of the research team, research coordinator, and research assistants have completed mandatory research ethics training</li> </ul>	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical approval in place at all 3 partner sites</li> <li>The tri-council ethics tutorial has been completed by all members listed on the REB applications</li> </ul>
<b>Collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>online questionnaires, focus group, face to face, and telephone interview guides</li> <li>online journaling exercise</li> </ul> </li> <li>Train research assistants and research coordinator in use of interview guides</li> <li>Schedule and conduct focus group interviews with current students to explore further their experiences as they progress through the program</li> <li>Schedule and conduct face to face and telephone interviews with past students (graduates and students who have left the program)</li> <li>Schedule and conduct focus group and face to face interviews with employers</li> <li>Transcribe audiotapes from focus groups and interviews</li> </ul>	Completed for Current Students  Ongoing for Workplace Contacts and Past Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through a consultative process, it was determined that the most expeditious route by which data could be collected from the largest number of current student participants was through the use of online qualitative and quantitative data collection (Lime Survey). In lieu of focus groups, participants were given the opportunity to answer qualitative questions focusing on their experience of the year of the program they were just completing. Responses were analyzed using Nvivo9, with the identification of common themes and the use of multiple researchers assigned to each question to allow for inter-rater reliability</li> <li>Workplace contacts were given the option of completing the survey online or by a face-to-face or telephone interview. Interviews were conducted, responses transcribed, and themes identified through a multi-member research team.</li> <li>team members collaborated in the development of the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze data using Nvivo9</li> <li>Develop categories and themes related to the data that provide insight into the research questions</li> </ul>		qualitative questions, the identification of quantitative measures with proven validity and reliability measures, and extensive collection of demographic data not available through Phase 1 student tracking information
<b>Report to CUCC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a full report to CUCC based on defined deliverables, including minimally results of data analysis examining the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the student experience year by year through the PN-BScN bridging program (taking a “snapshot” in winter 2012)?</li> <li>What do students perceive as barriers and facilitators to their success as they move through the program?</li> <li>What kinds of supports (academic, personal, financial, employer, etc.) are they accessing, to what degree, and how effective are these?</li> <li>How is the students’ experience of self and professional role changed through the educational experience?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Tables 2-70 for a summary of data analysis with interpretation of findings and suggestions for next steps</li> </ul>

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## SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION: PHASE 2

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### Project Activity: Collect and Analyze Qualitative and Quantitative Data

#### **Component A: Current Student Data Collection**

Data collection with current students for Phase 2 of this study took place largely over the months of April-May 2012, with data analysis occurring in June of 2012. A total of 156 current RPN-BScN students, past students, and workplace contacts completed quantitative surveys and qualitative exploration of student experience. This data is represented in Tables 2-6.

Of the total respondents, 131 fully completed questionnaires were submitted by current students through data collection that took place concurrent to DC-UOIT-GC learning experiences (introduction to summer clinical courses for students completing Year 1 and Year 2 of the program, Canadian Registered Nursing Exam (CRNE) preparation course for students completing Year 3 (completion of the program of study). This data ( $N = 131$ ) was used for the statistical analysis component of this report and is summarized in **Table 2**, which presents an overview of respondents. Additionally, email notification was sent to all current students offering them an opportunity to participate in the research if they had not done so as part of the scheduled activities. Through this broadcast, an additional 4 students completed questionnaires, with only 2 fully completed, for a total of  $N = 133$  current student participants included in the qualitative analysis.

**Table 2: Overview of All Respondents for Phase II**

Date of Data Gathering	Participant Category	#of Survey Respondents	Completed Surveys	Incomplete or Partial Data	Eliminated Surveys
April 24, 2012 to 8 May, 2012	Current Students	139	<b>131</b>	6	2
June 8, 2012 to June 11, 2012	Current Students (2 <sup>nd</sup> retrieval)	4	<b>2</b>	2	-
May 18, 2012 to June 18, 2012	Past Students	7	<b>2</b>	5	-
May 22, 2012 to June 01, 2012	Institutional Contacts	6	<b>5</b>	1	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>

NOTE: Raw data from 2 students removed prior to statistical analysis r/t failure to consent as per instruction

**Table 3: Current Student Participants (included in statistical analysis)**

Date of Survey	Participant Category	Campus Site	Number of Participants
April 24, 2012	Year 3	Georgian Campus	14
May 1, 2012	Year 3	Oshawa Campus	15
May 7, 2012	Year 2	Georgian Campus	18
May 8, 2012	Year 2	Oshawa Campus	29
May 7, 2012	Year 1	Georgian Campus	22
May 8, 2012	Year 1	Oshawa Campus	33
<b>Total completed surveys</b>			<b>131</b>
Incomplete data set			6
<b>Total participants</b>			<b>137</b>

**Table 4: Current Student Participants by Program Year**

Year	Number of Participants
3	29
2	47
1	55
Incomplete data set	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>

**Table 5: Current Student Participants by Educational Site**

Campus Site	Number of Participants
Georgian Campus	55
Oshawa Campus	76
Incomplete data set	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>

**Table 6: Current Student Participants (Round 2- Extended Participation Invitation)**

Date of Data Collection	Number of Participants	Completed Survey	Incomplete Data
June 8-11, 2012	4	2	2

## **Component B: Workplace Contact Data Collection**

Data collection for workplace contacts related to Phase 2 deliverables took place in late May, 2012. Data analysis followed in mid-June 2012. As per our Research Ethics Board Approval, current students were invited to provide workplace contact information for a person within their healthcare organization who would be able and/or willing to provide information about the workplace experience of having students undertaking PN-BScN education. A total of 6 workplace contacts were provided by current students. Of these, 5 fully completed either telephone interviews or submission of an electronic mixed method questionnaire. **Table 7** provides an overview of these counts. As a result of this relatively low number of responses, we have elected to continue to try to collect data and will report on the results of workplace contact interviews in a subsequent report.

**Table 7: Workplace Contact Participants**

Number of Participants	Complete	Incomplete
6	5	1

## **Component C: Past Student Data Collection**

Despite significant efforts to reach graduates and students who have left the RPN-BScN Program for a variety of reasons, we ultimately only received responses from 7 past students. Of those responses, 2 were fully completed questionnaires, 2 partially completed (with data sets complete enough to be included in some of the analyses), and 3 were too incomplete for any relevant analysis (**Table 8** provides a summary of this data). This noted challenge in securing follow-up data from graduates is a significant finding, leading to the introduction of discussion around development of stronger alumni structures within this program (discussion tabled for fall 2012). Additionally, Phase III is designed to allow insight into the experiences and perceptions of new graduates (those completing the program this spring will be contacted for follow-up over the fall). It is hoped both that: a) this finding of challenges in contacting past students will inform processes used in Phase III, and b) the data collected in Phase III will be able to give us further insight into perceptions of past students.

**Table 8: Past Student Participants**

Date of Survey	Completed Surveys	Partially Completed	Incomplete Surveys	Total Surveys
May 18, 2012 to June 18, 2012	2	2	3	7

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## AREA OF INQUIRY #1:

### UNDERSTANDING OUR STUDENTS

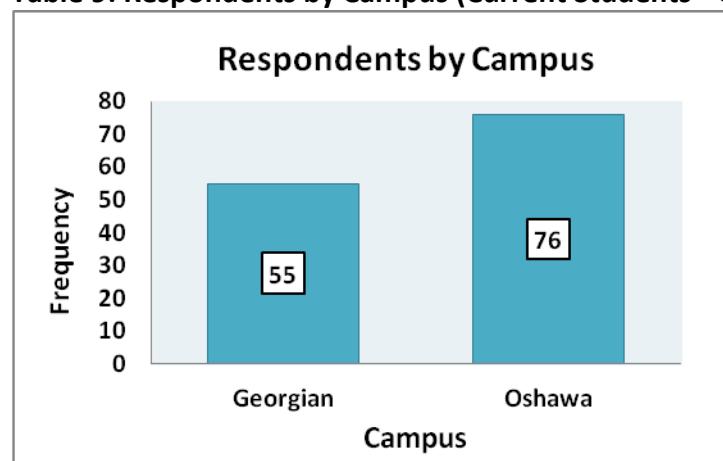
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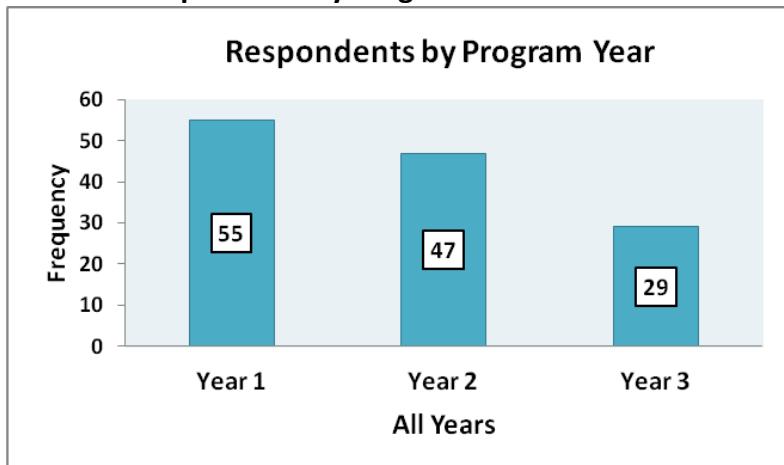
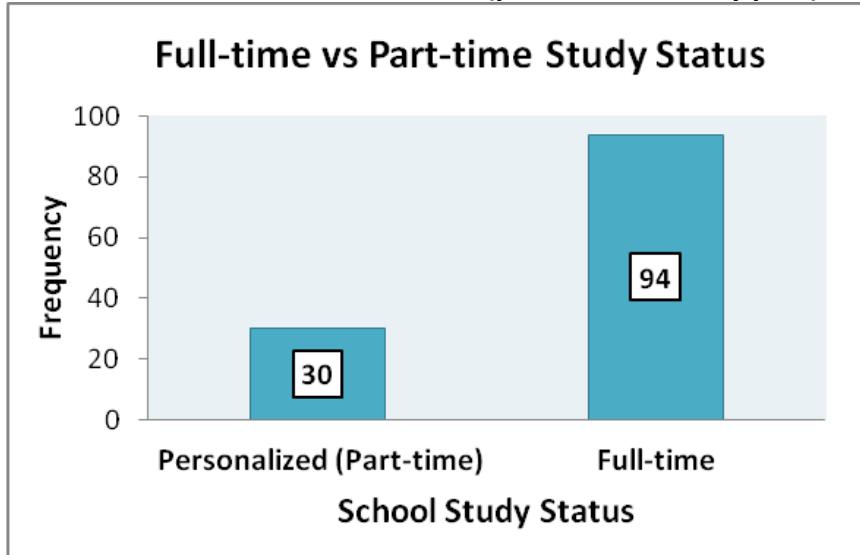
In order to understand our student body as a whole, we asked our participants questions about their personal, educational, and employment circumstances at the beginning of our LimeSurvey questionnaire. Our RPN to BScN Program is available on two campuses about a 90 minute drive apart. Students take the program on a full-time (3-year) or part-time basis, and have diverse lifestyles and life circumstances. It is important to know the continuum of what characterizes our students in the RPN to BScN Program. We were especially interested in identifying the competing priorities in our students' lives and any changes in their life circumstances (employment status, income, etc.) during the program. We know that students find the program intense and demanding and wondered how this manifested in their daily lives. This analysis will increase our ability to anticipate and orient mature students to the realities of post-secondary education.

#### **Distribution by Campus, Program Year, FT or PT (personalized) Study Plan, and Commute**

Tables 9-12 provide an overview of the respondents for this phase of the study. Of the 131 current students who participated in this phase of data collection, 55 (42%) are enrolled at the Georgian campus and 76 (58%) are enrolled at the Oshawa DC-UOIT campus (**see Table 9**). Number of respondents across Year 1 and Year 2 of the program were fairly similar (42% of respondents were completing Year 1 of the program, 36% of respondents were completing Year 2 of the program, and 22% of respondents were completing Year 3 of the program (**see Table 10**). Of current students who indicated whether they were completing full-time or part-time (personalized) study plans, 76% (N=94) were completing the program on a full-time basis. For logistical reasons, students enrolled in the Georgian cohort are currently only offered full-time admission. This fact likely skews enrolment toward full-time status, despite what student preference might otherwise be (**see Table 11**).

**Table 9: Respondents by Campus (Current Students - Georgian and Oshawa/UOIT Campus)**



**Table 10: Respondents by Program Year****Table 11: Full-time versus Part-time (personalized study plan) Status**

**Table 12** provides an interesting comparison of commute times for students to the various campuses and to their clinical requirements. While we had previously been under the impression that commuting was a much more significant issue for students attending the Georgian campus, data reveals that the difference in commute times for students attending the various campuses is not as large as had been thought. The average commute time for students attending the Georgian campus to attend class is approximately 13 minutes longer (Georgian 66 min; Oshawa 53 min), each way, with students in Year 1 of the program showing similar commute times. The average commute to clinical requirements for students attending the Georgian campus is actually approximately 4 minutes shorter each way than students attending the Oshawa DC-UOIT campus. Regardless of the finding that commute times are not as variable

as was anticipated, it is clear that students in general are commuting a significant distance to study in this program, regardless of which campus they are admitted to.

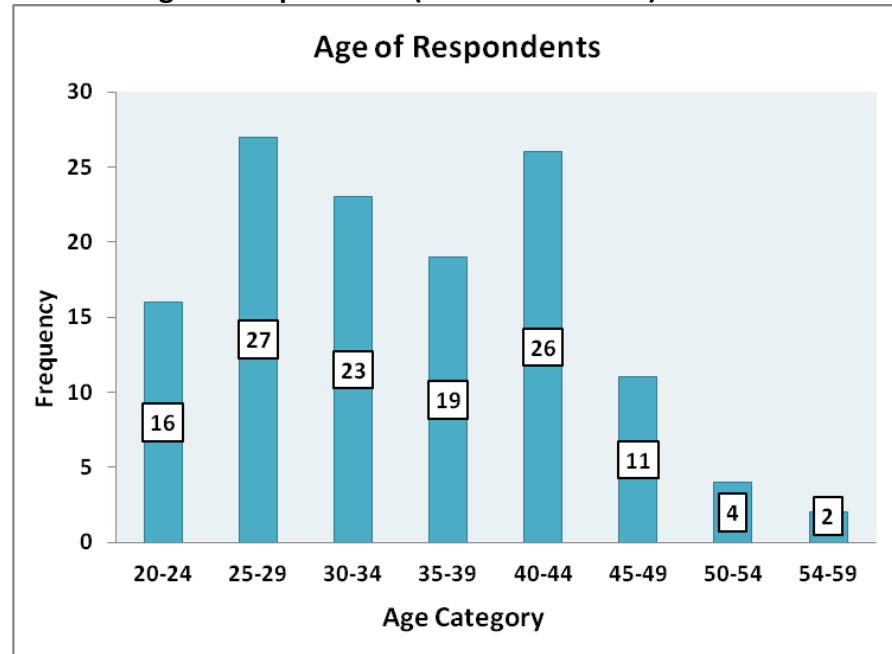
**Table 12: Current Student Commuting Requirement by Campus**

	Oshawa DC-UOIT Campus				Georgian Campus			
	Year 1 students	Year 2 students	Year 3 students	All Years	Year 1 students	Year 2 students	Year 3 students	All Years
Average Commute to School (min)	66 min	46 min	50 min	<b>53 min</b>	66 min	63 min	68 min	<b>66 min</b>
Average Commute to Clinical (min)	53 min	55 min	29 min	<b>49 min</b>	62 min	30 min	37 min	<b>45 min</b>

### **Basic Demographics: Age and Gender**

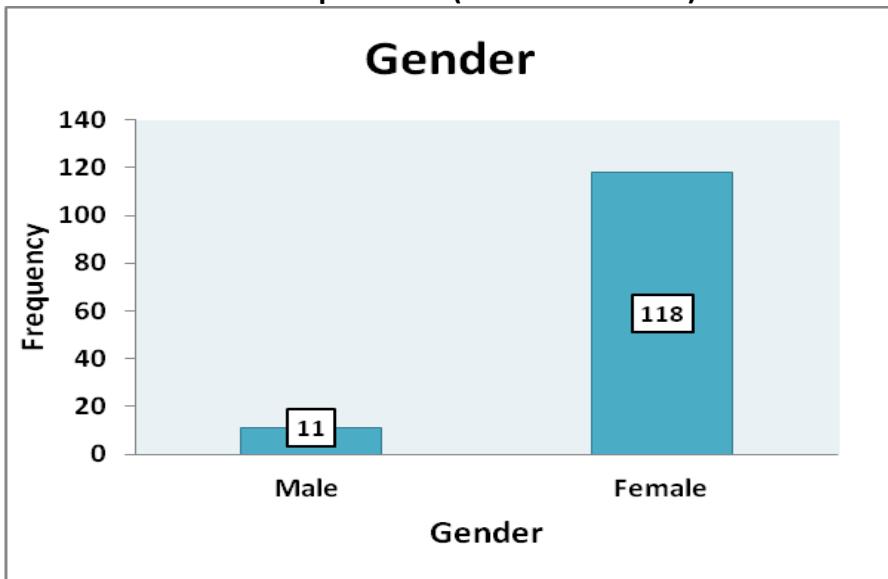
Tables 13-15 provide an overview of some relevant basic demographic information about our students. While age ranges from 21-57, the vast majority (74%) of respondents (current students) range in age from 25-44 years of age (see Table 3). Typical of gender distribution in nursing education both provincially and nationally, male students are in the minority representing only about 8% of the total respondents (see Tables 14 & 15).

**Table 13: Age of Respondents (Current Students)**



**Table 14: Gender of Respondents (Current Students)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Male	11	8.0	8.5	8.5
Female	118	86.1	91.5	100
Total	129	94.2	100	
Missing System	8	5.8		
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100</b>		

**Table 15: Gender of Respondents (Current Students)**

### **Marital Status and Dependent Care Responsibilities**

Tables 16 and 17 provide data that gives us a glimpse into the personal lives of our students. Overall, just over half (51.1%) of the students who took part in this data collection phase responded that they are currently married, with a higher percentage of Oshawa students (57.9%) married than Georgian students (41.8%). Not surprisingly, we see the corollary with students identifying as currently single, with a slightly higher proportion of Georgian students (36.4%) falling into this category than Oshawa students (30.2%). Participants were also asked to indicate if their marital status had changed over the course of their studies. A total of 12 students (9.2%) from both campuses indicated some type of change, with an even distribution between both campuses.

**Table 16: Marital Status**

		single	married	common law	separated	divorced	widowed	no answer
<b>Oshawa</b>	<b>count</b>	23	44	4	2	1	0	3
	<b>percent</b>	30.2%	57.9%	5.3%	2.6%	1.3%	0.0%	3.9%
<b>Georgian</b>	<b>count</b>	20	23	5	2	2	2	1
	<b>percent</b>	36.4%	41.8%	9.1%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	1.8%
<b>Combined</b>	<b>count</b>	43	67	9	4	3	2	4
	<b>percent</b>	32.8%	51.1%	6.9%	3.1%	2.3%	1.5%	3.1%

**Table 17** provides very interesting insight into one of the unique, but not surprising features of the student population enrolled in the RPN to BScN Program. Well over half of our students (Georgian combined 59.3%; Oshawa combined 61.0%; overall 60.3%) have dependent care responsibilities, with the majority of these related to children under the age of 18. This finding warrants further exploration in terms of unique factors that may contribute to challenges in completing this type of educational program.

**Table 17: Dependent Care Responsibilities**

Total students	# Student with Dependents	% by Year and Site
<b>Georgian – Year 1</b>		
22	11	50%
<b>Georgian – Year 2</b>		
18	14	77.7%
<b>Georgian – Year 3</b>		
14	7	50%
<b>Georgian Combined</b>		
54	32	59.3%
<b>Oshawa - Year 1</b>		
33	15	45.5%
<b>Oshawa - Year 2</b>		
29	21	72.4%
<b>Oshawa - Year 3</b>		
15	11	73.3%
<b>Oshawa Combined</b>		
77	47	61.0%
<b>Totals</b>		
<b>131</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>60.3%</b>

### **Practice Focus, Concurrent Employment in Nursing, Hours Worked**

The time between completing PN diploma programs and beginning the bridging program ranges from 0-15 years for Oshawa students (average = 3.39 years) and 0-29 years for Georgian students (average = 3.03 years). **Tables 18-22** summarize data relevant to concurrent work that students undertake while studying. Areas of practice ranged from high acuity in-patient areas to community-based care (**see Tables 18-19**). Close to one-third (32%; N=41) of students concurrently work full-time as RPNs (**see Table 20**). In addition to working within nursing, 6.6% (N=9) work full-time outside of nursing. Another 45.3% of students (N=58) work part-time in nursing as RPNs while 8% (N=11) work part-time outside of nursing. Finally, 17.2% (N=22) of current students work casual in nursing while 5.8% (N=8) work casual outside of nursing. The vast majority (65%; N=80) of students work between 24-40 hours per week , with 9% working greater than 40 hours per week (**see Tables 21 & 22**). *The emerging picture is one in which students are concurrently working full-time, studying full-time and caring often for multiple dependents. Given that this type of bridging education is often considered “compressed”, this combination of school, work, and life obligation is a very important consideration, both in reviewing program requirements and in being able to appropriately advise students about what undertaking this program will mean to their lives.*

**Table 18: Area of Nursing Practice**

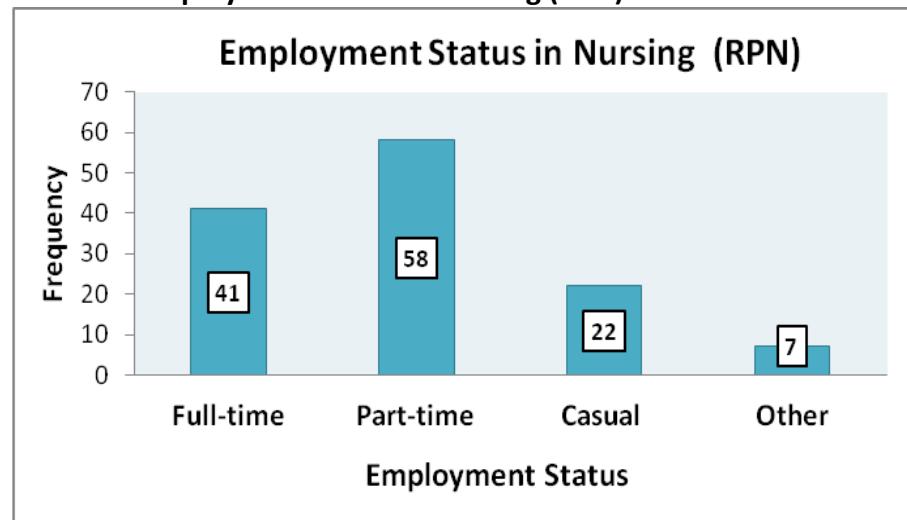
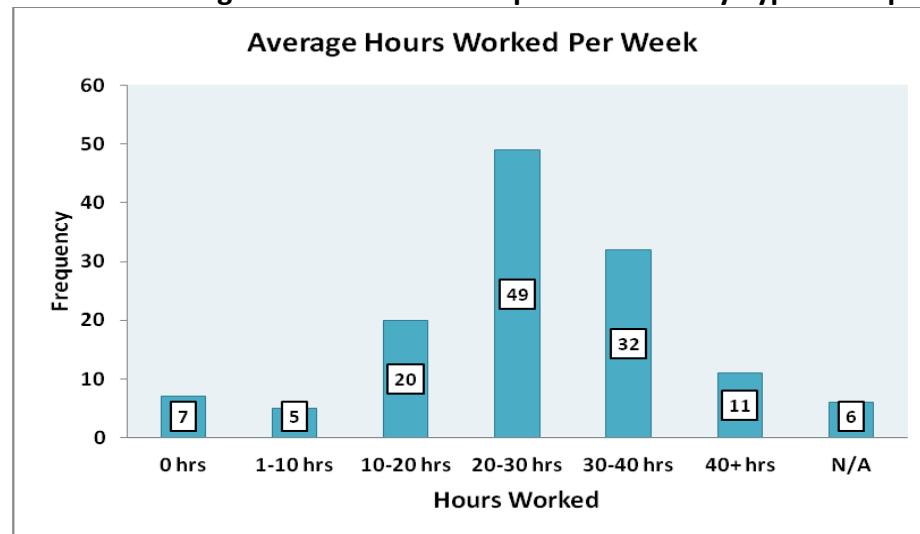
<b>Current Practice Area(s)</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>
<b>Long Term Care/Gerontology</b>	54	29.3%
<b>General Medicine</b>	30	16.3%
<b>Emergency Department</b>	16	8.7%
<b>General Surgery</b>	14	7.6%
<b>Rehabilitation</b>	11	6.0%
<b>In-Patient Psychiatry</b>	8	4.3%
<b>Homecare</b>	6	3.3%
<b>Cardiology/Cardiac Surgery</b>	6	3.3%
<b>Post-Partum</b>	5	2.7%
<b>Operating Room/PACU</b>	4	2.2%
<b>Orthopaedics</b>	4	2.2%
<b>Specialty Out-Patient Dept.</b>	4	2.2%
<b>Family Practice</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Other Community-Based Practice</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Neurology</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Paediatrics</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Oncology/Haematology</b>	3	1.6%
<b>Correctional Nursing</b>	2	1.1%
<b>Other In-Patient Practice</b>	2	1.1%
<b>Obstetrics/Labour &amp; Delivery</b>	2	1.1%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100%</b>

PLEASE NOTE: The data contains dual responses as participants are working in more than one practice area

**Table 19: Summarized Nursing Areas of Specialization for Current Students**

Current Practice Area(s)	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Hospital-Based Care	105	57.1%
Long Term Care/Gerontology	54	29.3%
Community-Based Care	14	7.6%
Rehabilitation	11	6.0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100%</b>

PLEASE NOTE: The data contains dual responses as participants are working in more than one practice area

**Table 20: Employment Status in Nursing (RPN)****Table 21: Average # of Hours Worked per Week in Any Type of Employment**

**Table 22: Average Hours Worked Each Week by Program Year and Site**

Total Participants	Total # of Responses	0 hrs	1-10 hrs	11-20 hrs	21-30 hrs	31-40 hrs	40+ hrs	N/A	Total Work Hours
<b>Georgian - Year 3</b>									
14	14	1	0	1	7	4	1	0	412/14 <b>29.42 hours</b>
<b>Oshawa - Year 3</b>									
15	15	1	1	4	4	4	1	0	369.5/15 <b>24.63 hours</b>
<b>Georgian - Year 2</b>									
18	17	1	2	1	10	3	0	1	401.5/17 <b>23.62 hours</b>
<b>Oshawa - Year 2</b>									
29	28	1	0	5	9	9	4	1	873/28 <b>31.18 hours</b>
<b>Georgian - Year 1</b>									
23	22	1	0	6	7	6	1	1	588.5/22 <b>26.75 hours</b>
<b>Oshawa - Year 1</b>									
32	29	2	2	3	12	6	4	3	856.5/29 <b>29.53 hours</b>
<b>Response Per Category</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Total Participants</b>	125	<b>165.13/6 = 27.52 average hours</b>							
<b>Georgian</b>	53	<b>79.79/3 = 26.60 average hours</b>							
<b>Oshawa</b>	72	<b>85.34/3 = 28.44 average hours</b>							

**Table 23** summarized responses around leaving full-time employment to attend school. Close to one third of all of our students (N=42; 32%) gave up full-time employment, with a higher proportion of Georgian campus students responding affirmatively to this question. When asked if they could do this over again, would they make this same decision again to leave full-time employment for school, the vast majority (N=37= 90.5%) said that they would.

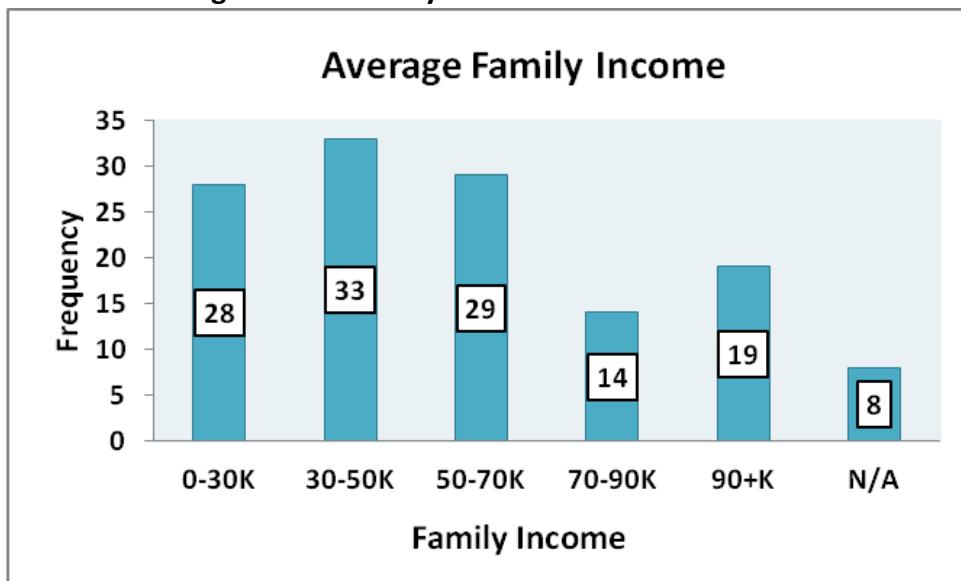
**Table 23: Students Who Gave Up a Full-time Job for School**

	Oshawa				Georgian			
	Year 1 students	Year 2 students	Year 3 students	All Years	Year 1 students	Year 2 students	Year 3 students	All Years
<b>Count</b>	5	11	5	<b>21</b>	7	10	4	<b>21</b>
<b>Percent</b>	15.2%	37.9%	33%	<b>27.6%</b>	31.8%	55.6%	28.6%	<b>38.2%</b>

### **Income, Student Debt, and Scholarships/Bursaries**

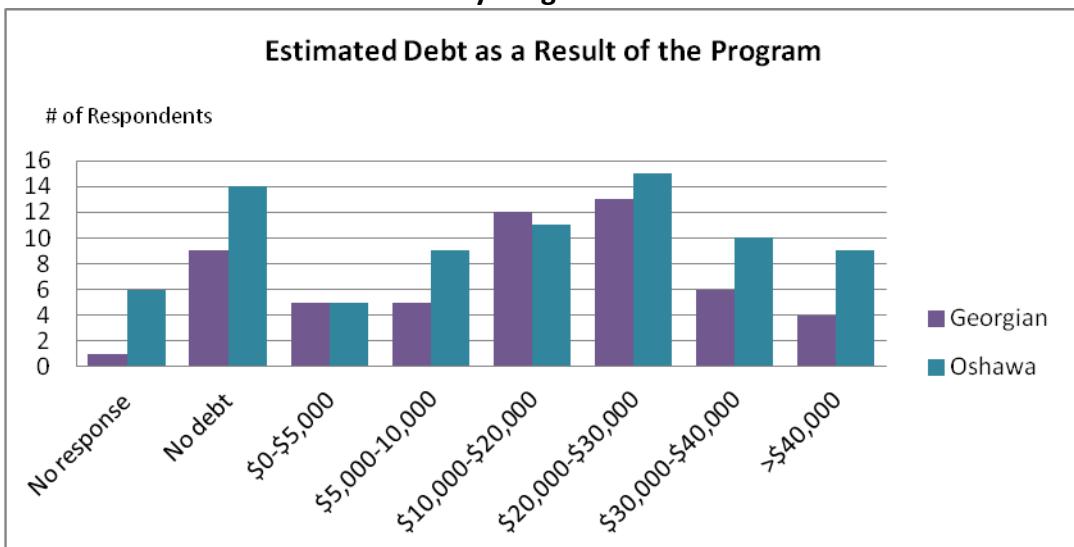
**Tables 24-28** reveal important data regarding finances for our current students, including income, anticipated student debt, and access to scholarships and bursaries. Median family income was just barely into the \$50,000-\$70,000 category, with the mean and mode falling in the \$30,000-50,000 category. It is very important to note that close to one-quarter of our students (23%; N=28) had an average family income of <\$30,000. Concurrently, 15% of our students indicated an average family of income of >\$90,000 (N=19) (**see Table 24**).

**Table 24: Average Annual Family Income**

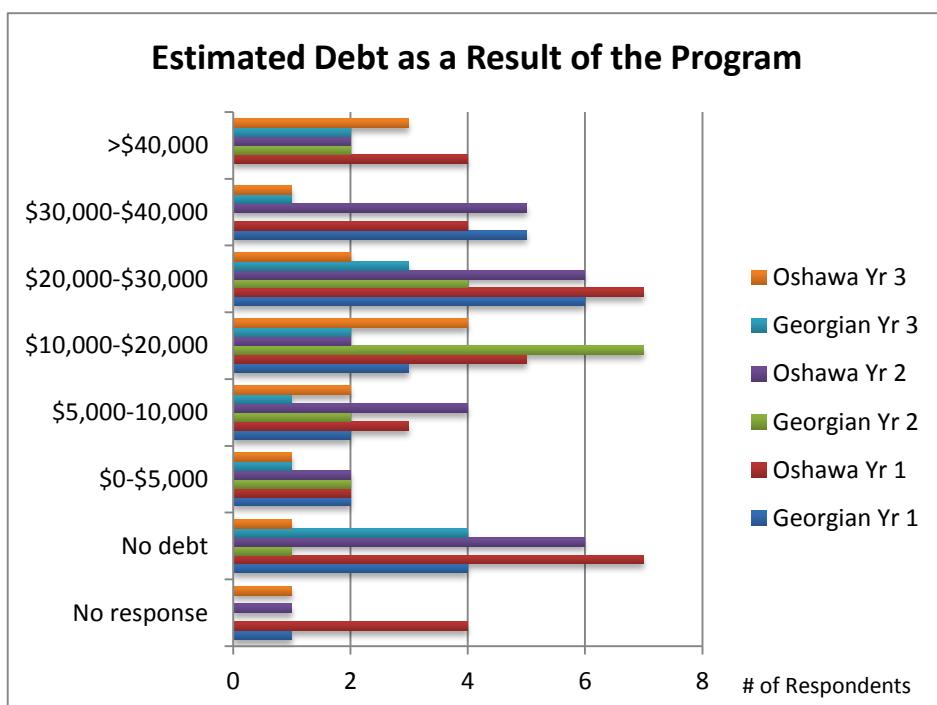


The vast majority of students anticipate completing the RPN to BScN Program with some degree of student debt. Of the 127 students who responded to the question asking that they estimate the amount of student debt they will have accrued by the time they complete the program, 82% (N=104) estimate some degree of debt. **Tables 25-27** provide overviews by year, program site, and total summary. There was a high degree of similarity in terms of anticipated debt regardless of site of enrolment, with the average anticipated student debt approaching \$20,000 at each site (Georgian \$17,130; Oshawa \$18,219). The median and mode anticipated debt category was \$10,000-\$20,000 for students at both sites. This information is particularly concerning given the data presented in **Table 24** which shows, by and large, relatively low to moderate income for students, despite their continued employment throughout the program.

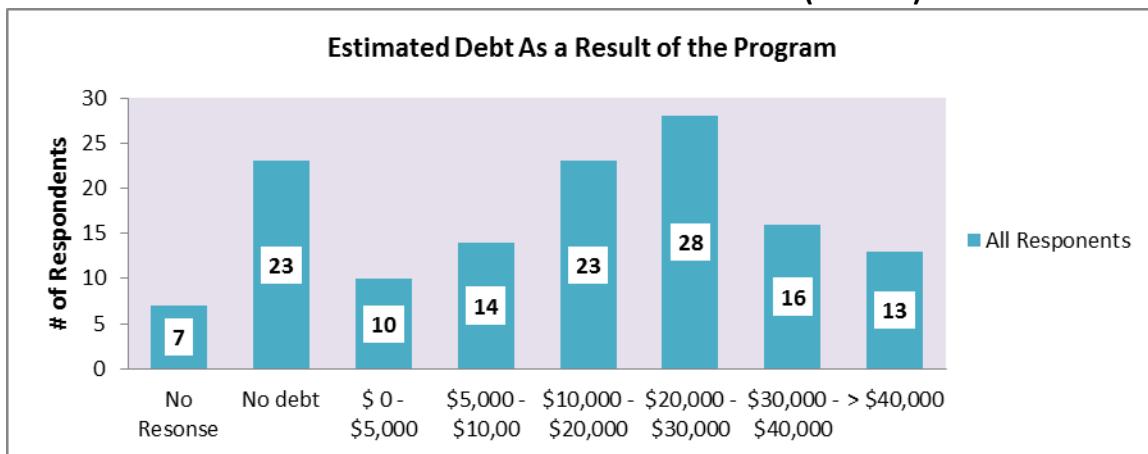
**Table 25: Estimated Student Debt by Program Site**



**Table 26: Estimated Student Debt by Program Year and Site**



**Table 27: Estimated Student Debt for RPN to BScN Students (all sites)**

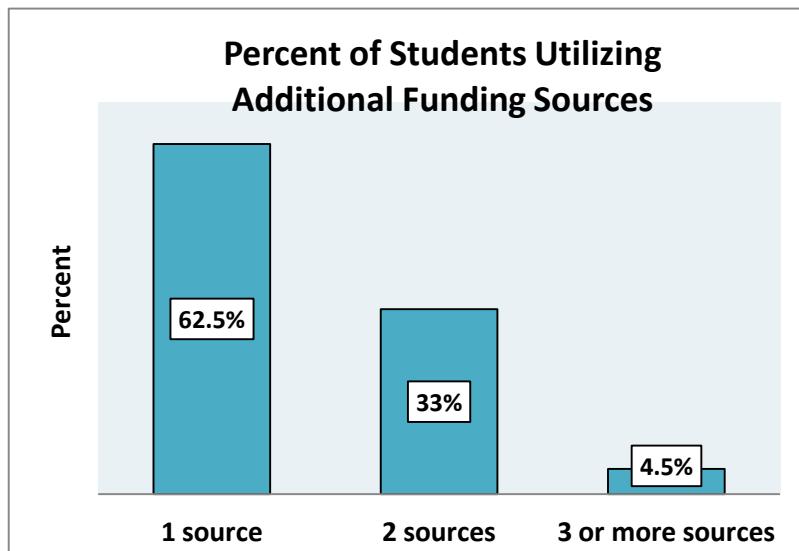


**Tables 28-31** depict the degree to which students enrolled in the RPN to BScN Program are accessing funding from other sources. The majority of students (N=88) are able to access some funding, including government program such as the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), employer support, and the Nursing Education Initiative (sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care) which makes \$1500 available for nurses to upgrade their education through a variety of mechanisms. The largest number was able to access funding through their employer (23%). The proportion of students who access some type of grant, scholarship or other educational funding support across each campus is very similar (Oshawa 67.5%; Georgian 64.8%). Worthy of note, a significant portion of students (37.5%) are accessing financial support through more than one source. *Details provided by respondents about the actual extent of this funding are not specific enough to report on actual amounts, but the picture of students working too much, likely earning too little, and accruing debt despite receiving some external funding is a very significant finding.*

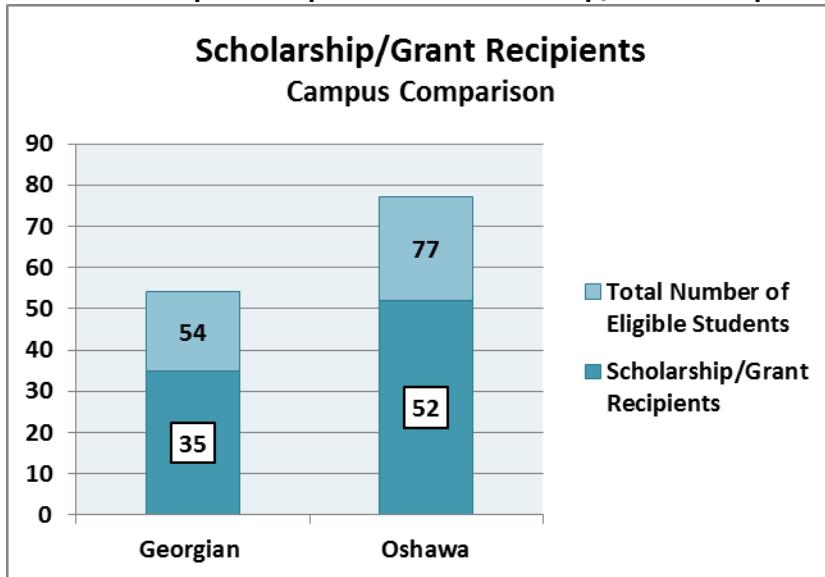
**Table 28: Additional Funding Derived from X (Multiple) Number of Sources**

	Georgian 1	Oshawa 1	Georgian 2	Oshawa 2	Georgian 3	Oshawa 3	
<b>Funded Participants</b>	12	20	13	19	11	13	<b>88</b>
							<b>Percent</b>
<b>1 source</b>	10	13	8	11	8	5	<b>55</b> <b>62.5%</b>
<b>2 sources</b>	1	7	4	7	3	7	<b>29</b> <b>33.0%</b>
<b>3+ sources</b>	1	0	1	1	0	1	<b>4</b> <b>4.5%</b>

**Table 29: Number of Additional Funding Sources Accessed by Students**



**Table 30: Campus Comparison of Scholarship/Grant Recipients**



### **Understanding our Students Section Summary**

Of the 131 current students who participated in this phase of data collection, 55 (42%) are enrolled at the Georgian campus and 76 (58%) are enrolled at the Oshawa DC-UOIT campus, with 76% (N=94) completing the program on a full-time basis (for logistical reasons, students enrolled in the Georgian cohort are currently only offered full-time admission). The difference in commute times for students attending the various campuses is not as large as had been thought. The average commute time for students attending the Georgian campus to attend class is approximately 13 minutes longer, each way. While age ranges from 21-57, the vast majority (74%) of respondents (current students) range in age from 25-44 years of age. Typical of gender distribution in nursing education both provincially and nationally, male students are in the minority representing only about 8% of the total respondents. Just over half (51.1%) of the students who took part in this data collection phase responded that they are currently married, with a higher percentage of Oshawa students (57.9%) married than Georgian students (41.8%). Not surprisingly, we see the corollary with students identifying as currently single, with a slightly higher proportion of Georgian students (36.4%) falling into this category than Oshawa students (30.2%). Well over half of our students (Georgian combined 58.2%; Oshawa combined 61.8%; overall 60.3%) have dependent care responsibilities, with the majority of these related to children under the age of 18. The time between completing PN diploma programs and beginning the bridging program ranges from 0-15 years for Oshawa students (average = 3.39 years) and 0-29 years for Georgian students (average = 3.03 years). Areas of practice ranged from high acuity in-patient areas to community-based care. Close to one-third (32%) of students concurrently work full-time as RPNs. In addition to working within nursing, 6.6% work full-time outside of nursing. Another 45.3% of students work part-time in nursing as RPNs while 8% work part-time outside of nursing. Finally, 17.2% of current students work casual in nursing while 5.8% work casual outside of nursing. The vast majority (65%) of students work between 24-40 hours per week, with 9% working greater than 40 hours per week. Close to one third of all of our students (32%) gave up full-time employment. Median family income was just barely into the \$50,000-\$70,000 category, with the mean and mode falling in the \$30,000-50,000 category. Close to one-quarter of our students (23) had an average family income of <\$30,000. Concurrently, 15% of our students indicated an average family of income of >\$90,000. The vast majority of students (82%) anticipate completing the RPN to BScN Program with some degree of student debt. The average anticipated student debt approached \$20,000 at each site (Georgian \$17,130; Oshawa \$18,219). The majority of students (N=88) are able to access some funding, including government program such as the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), employer support, and the Nursing Education Initiative (sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care).

**Table 31: Additional Funding Students Accessed (Scholarships/Grants/Bursaries)**

Additional Funding Sources: Scholarships/Grants/Bursaries									
	Campus Year	Georgian 1	Oshawa 1	Georgian 2	Oshawa 2	Georgian 3	Oshawa 3	Total	% of Category
	Funded Participants	12	20	13	19	11	13	88	67.2%
	Total Participants	22	33	18	29	14	15	131	
Sources of Funding	<i>Employer</i>	4	5	4	7	3	6	29	23.2%
	<i>University</i>	3	5	3	2	0	4	17	13.6%
	<i>Service Organization</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1.6%
	<i>Professional Association</i>	1	4	2	3	4	3	17	13.6%
	<i>Nursing Education Initiative</i>	2	8	9	14	7	8	48	38.4%
	<i>Other</i>	4	4	1	1	0	2	12	9.6%
	Total	20	26	19	28	14	23	Total	Percent
								125	100%
Additional Funding Derived from X Number of Sources	<i>1 source</i>	10	13	8	11	8	5	55	62.5%
	<i>2 sources</i>	1	7	4	7	3	7	29	33.0%
	<i>3 or more sources</i>	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	4.5%

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## AREA OF INQUIRY #2:

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### STUDENT EXPERIENCE YEAR BY YEAR THOROUGH THE RPN-BScN PROGRAM

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A total of 133 current students were asked to respond to the question: If you met a student who is coming into your year of the program, what would you tell them to expect?

Responses were analyzed using Nvivo9 software. Responses were coded and themes were identified to two levels of abstraction. **Table 32** provides an overview of the themes that were identified and **Table 33** provides a summary. For all 3 Years of the program, students identified what they perceived to be program challenges, what they felt were tips for success for their year of the program, and ideas related to work-life balance. Unique to Year 2 was the identification that students should be prepared for a large amount of independent learning. Given that Year 2 includes a fair amount of online learning and a higher requirement for self-directed learning strategies, this makes sense. Unique to Year 3 was the identification of Positive Outcomes for students. Consistent with the data previously analyzed in Phase 1 of this study, the progression for students from resistance to change through Years 1 and 2, to excitement and encouragement around positive personal and professional change is reflected in the responses.

**Table 32: Themes Related to RPN-BScN Student Experience Year by Year through the Program**

Year of Program	Analysis to 2 Levels of Abstraction	Examples from each year
Year 1	a) Program challenges	a) heavy course load b) need to be self-directed c) the school is dedicated to your success but you need to work hard d) a lot of online work
	b) Tips for success	a) Buddy with people who will help, not party b) Stay on top of your studies c) Make school a priority d) Work hard and keep your head down
	c) Work-life balance	a) Consider location of school, work and childcare b) Hard to work, take care of a family and go to school at the same time c) Don't fall behind d) Lots of reading and independent work

Year 2	<b>a) Program challenges</b>	a) Expensive program including laptops b) Stress -- need family support c) Program difficult and disorganized d) Technology – need computer skills for online learning (ie Adobe Connect)
	<b>b) Tips for success</b>	a) Time management and priority setting important b) Be open to new ideas and take risks c) Set realistic goals; have a ‘what if’ plan d) Expect to study hard
	<b>c) work-life balance</b>	a) Supports are available if you are resourceful b) Be flexible in scheduling academic and non-academic activities c) Expect life to change completely d) Do not work full-time
	<b>d) Independent learning</b>	a) Do a lot of studying and do not get behind b) Lots of responsibility c) Lots of self-directed learning d) Do everything yourself with little help
Year 3	<b>a) Program challenges</b>	a) Faculty can be disorganized b) Lots of research papers to write c) Takes money to do this d) Lots of theory and writing but not enough practicum
	<b>b) Tips for success</b>	a) Expect to be challenged b) Be sure it is what you really want to do c) Support is readily available at UOIT d) It takes time, money and a supportive family
	<b>c) Work-life balance</b>	a) Only work casual or part-time (and not at all in the last year) b) Don’t leave electives until the final semester c) Increased workload with clinical placements d) Be organized and take it one day at a time
	<b>d) Positive outcomes</b>	a) Program demands commitment that can be life altering b) You are almost done; hang in there c) Make school a priority d) The program requires true dedication, thoughtfulness and attention

**Table 33** provides an overall synopsis of the qualitative analysis when students were asked to provide a description of each year in the program. Throughout the program, students experience challenges in relation to the workload and managing multiple demands on their time. These findings are highly consistent with the data collected in 2009-2010 and analyzed as part of Phase I of this study. Additionally, consistent with those previously reported findings, we see a progressive change in attitude and orientation of students as they move through the program. Learning requirements and expectations that students experience in the university setting are seen as significantly different than the learning contexts that most students have previously experienced. These differences relate both to level of difficulty, and to the expectations of independence and self-directedness. Student respondents in Year 1 and Year 2 express a higher degree of frustration with this context, while students in Year 3 focus on the feelings of confidence and mastery.

**Table 33: Overarching Themes**

Themes	Summary of Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The program is intense and demanding.</li> <li>b) Students describe the need to implement strategies for academic success and work-life balance. Life through the duration of the program will be different for students and their families.</li> <li>c) The first 2 years of the program are more often characterized by struggle and frustration with workload, whereas the final year of the program reveals insight into accomplishments.</li> </ul>	<p>There are many comments about the heaviness of the workload and the need for time management and organization.</p> <p>Students recognize school must be a priority and that it changes a person's life in relation to family, work, and the composition of their personal life.</p> <p>Students resist program requirements initially, feeling burdened with the demands they experience in multiple areas of their lives</p> <p>Students experience a struggle to become self-directed, more independent learners than in their past educational experiences, but see this skill as valuable as they complete the program.</p>

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## **AREA OF INQUIRY #3:**

### **FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO SUCCESS IN THE RPN-BScN BRIDGING PROGRAM**

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Exploring students' perceptions of those elements in their personal, social, work, and educational life that support their success (or fail to do so) enables us to gain greater insight into how we can provide the highest quality educational experience and maximize both student learning and student support. Through careful attention to this data, we have a singularly important opportunity to understand student experience and to impact student learning.

For the data that was analyzed in relation to those factors that student perceive to be barriers and facilitators to success in the RPN to BScN bridging program, a 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = a strong barrier to my success, 2 = somewhat a barrier to my success, 3 = neither promotes my success nor creates a barrier, 4 = somewhat promotes my success, 5 = strongly promotes my success). Responses were analyzed based on whether respondents identified factors, which were clustered around areas of employment, personal, academic, and other (general), as either a barrier or facilitator to success.

Participants were also asked to identify which academic services they accessed and to what degree they perceived these services to be effective or ineffective. Again, a 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = somewhat ineffective, 2 = neither effective nor ineffective, 3 = somewhat effective, 4 = very effective, 5 = not accessed).

For all of this data, comparisons between response patterns of students enrolled at the Georgian (Barrie) off-site campus and the Oshawa (UOIT-Durham College) campus are made. These comparisons provide very important information in terms of the areas of similarity and in particular the areas of difference between student perceptions around facilitators, barriers, services accessed, and evaluation of academic services. As a general benchmark, this report will highlight areas of difference in response patterns between students on the 2 campuses when those differences are greater than 10%. These areas are highlighted in the charts in yellow and provide insight into areas of difference that warrant greater exploration and direct effort to remedy. As context for this section, it is helpful to keep in mind that where designated "Oshawa", students attend class on the UOIT-Durham College campus and are integrated with other university students. Where designated "Georgian", students attend class on the Georgian campus through an off-site satellite offering of the bridging program in partnership with Georgian College and where students complete the program in a cohort model, access largely Georgian academic services, and are only integrated with other university students in a select number of online courses. There is no integration of our Georgian students with the general or nursing GC population of students.

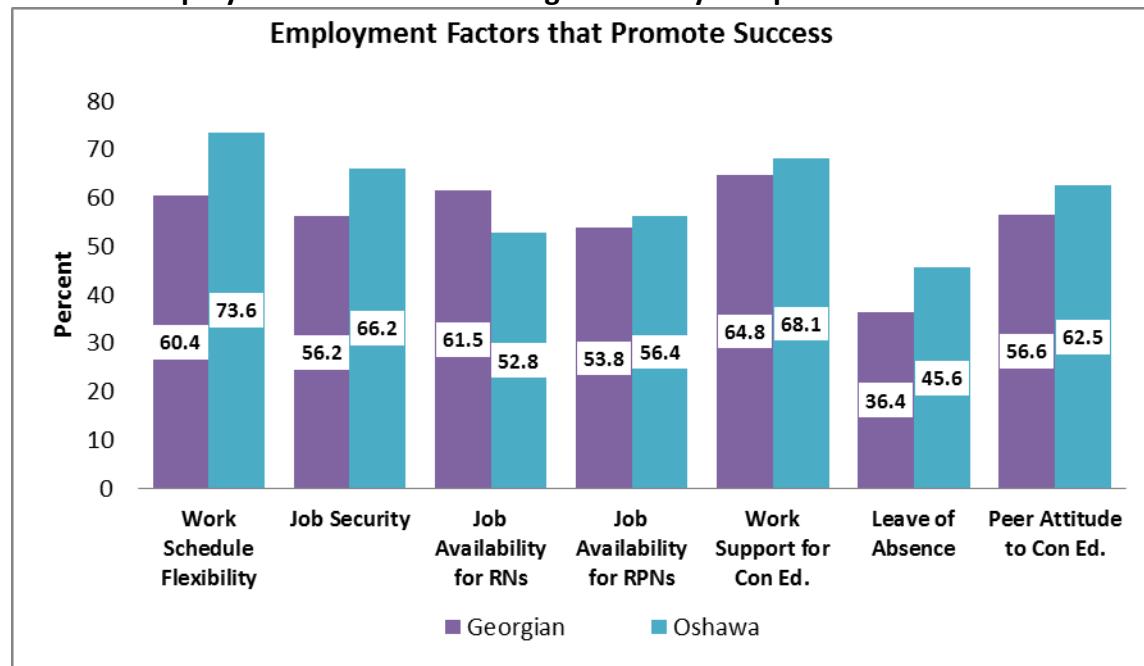
## **Employment Factors**

**Tables 34 and 35** highlight those employment factors (schedule flexibility, job security and availability, support and peer attitudes) identified by current students as either moderately or significantly promoting their success in the program. If we arbitrarily use a 60% response rate as a measure of a “significant” response, we are able to identify a number of employment factors that current students see as important in promoting success. Students from the Oshawa campus identified work schedule flexibility, job security, work support for continuing education, and peer attitude to continuing education as important employment factors promoting success. Students from the Georgian campus identified work schedule flexibility, job availability for RNs, and work support for continuing education as important employment factors promoting success. Differences were noted between cohorts across two factors. Oshawa students identified more strongly the impact of flexible work schedules and job security.

**Table 34: Employment Factors that Promote Success**

	Work Schedule Flexibility	Job Security	Job Availability for RNs	Job Availability for RPNs	Work Support for Continuing Education	Availability of a Leave of Absence	Peer Attitude to Continuing Education
Georgian	60.4%	56.2 %	61.5 %	53.8 %	64.8 %	36.4 %	56.6 %
Oshawa	73.6%	66.2 %	52.8 %	56.4 %	68.1 %	45.6 %	62.5 %
Combined	68.0%	62.1 %	56.6 %	55.3 %	66.7 %	42.0 %	60.0 %

**Table 35: Employment Factors Promoting Success by Campus**

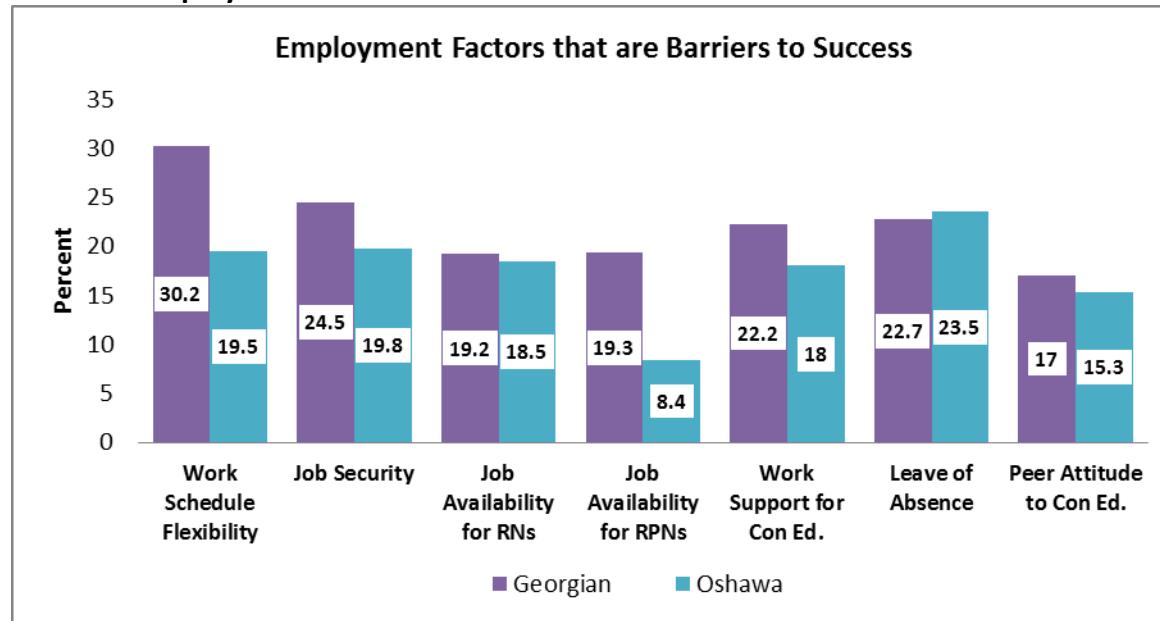


**Tables 36 - 37** look at student perceptions of employment factors that they see as a barrier to their success in the program. In terms of barriers to success, the vast majority of responses for both Oshawa students and Georgian campus students fell below 20%. However, similar to the response pattern around facilitators, Georgian campus students perceived the lack of work schedule flexibility as a much more significant barrier than did Oshawa campus students. Additionally, Georgian campus students identified job availability for RPNs as a more significant barrier to their success in the program. This finding is important in light of the data presented in **Table 23**, which showed that 38.2% of Georgian campus students had given up full-time RPN positions to complete the program.

**Table 36: Employment Factors that are Barriers to Success**

	Work Schedule Flexibility	Job Security	Job Availability for RNs	Job Availability for RPNs	Work Support for Continuing Education	Availability of a Leave of Absence	Peer Attitude to Continuing Education
<b>Georgian</b>	30.2%	24.5%	19.2%	19.3 %	22.2 %	22.7%	17.0 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	19.5%	19.8%	18.5%	8.4 %	18.0 %	23.5 %	15.3 %
<b>Combined</b>	24.0%	21.8%	18.9 %	13.0 %	19.8%	23.2 %	16.0 %

**Table 37: Employment Factors that are Barriers to Success**



## **Personal Factors**

**Tables 38-39** highlight those personal factors (support from family and colleagues, previous skills such as computer literacy, and work-life balance), which students identified as promoting their success in the program. Students from the Oshawa campus identified all listed personal factors as promoting success at >60% mark, and in several cases >80% of students identified a factor a significant to promoting success (family support, technical skill set, personality traits). Georgian campus students also identified many of these personal supports as promoting success. However, while students from both campuses showed similar response patterns related to technical and writing skills, personality traits and work-life balance, it is interesting to note that support from employers and work colleagues was much more highly represented in the Oshawa students. Family support, while not reaching the 10% threshold identified as a “significant difference between groups” for the purposes of this report, was notably more highly represented by Oshawa students as well. These findings are worthy of further examination.

**Table 38: Personal Factors that Promote Success**

	Family Support	Colleague Support	Employer Support	Technical Skills	Writing Skills	Personality Traits (determination)	Work-Life Balance
Georgian	76.4 %	52.8 %	52.7%	81.8 %	77.8 %	94.6 %	79.7 %
Oshawa	85.0 %	70.2 %	65.8%	81.3 %	77.4 %	89.5 %	73.7 %
Combined	81.3 %	62.8 %	60.2%	81.5 %	77.5 %	91.6%	76.1 %

**Table 39: Personal Factors that Promote Success by Campus**

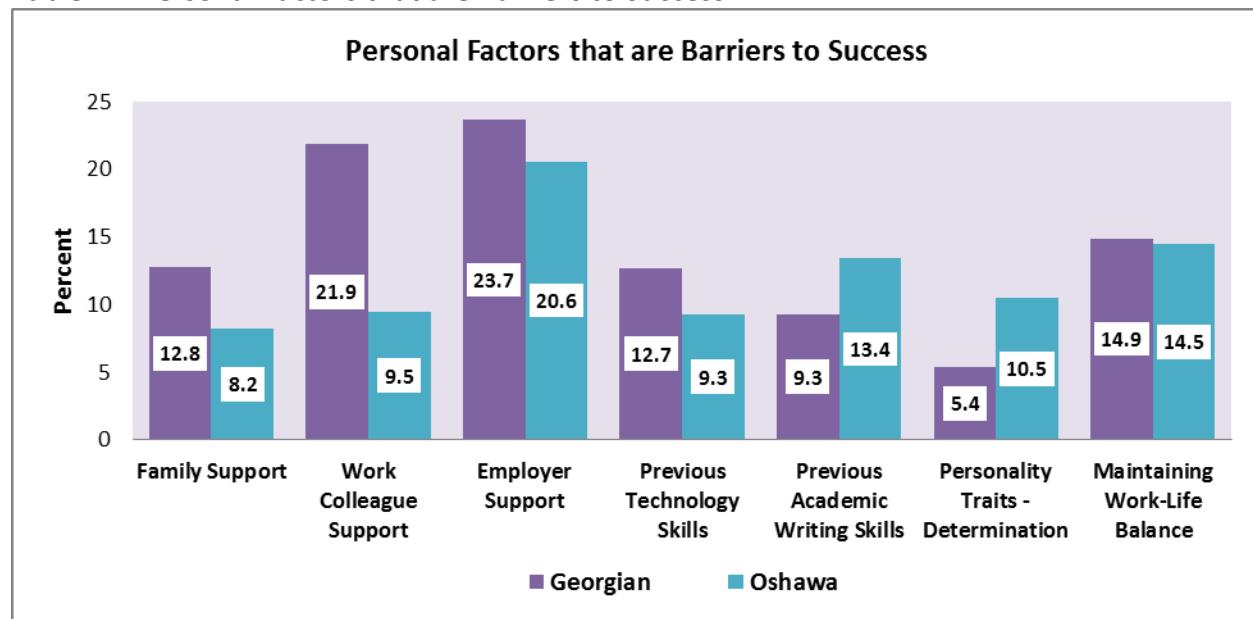


**Tables 40-41** present data examining these same personal factors, this time looking at what students perceived to be barriers to success. Once again, responses indicated that few students perceived these factors to be barriers to success, with most falling well below 20% response rates. A single area of significant difference is seen in relation to the level of support from work colleagues. As we continue data collection with institutional contacts, this area of difference is worthy of further examination.

**Table 40: Personal Factors that are Barriers to Success**

	Family Support	Colleague Support	Employer Support	Technical Skills	Writing Skills	Personality Traits (determination)	Work-Life Balance
<b>Georgian</b>	12.8 %	21.9 %	23.7 %	12.7 %	9.3 %	5.4 %	14.9 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	8.2 %	9.5 %	20.6 %	9.3 %	13.4 %	10.5 %	14.5 %
<b>Combined</b>	10.1 %	14.8 %	21.9 %	10.7 %	11.7 %	8.4 %	14.6 %

**Table 41: Personal Factors that are Barriers to Success**



### **Academic Factors**

A large number of academic factors were examined, such that the data is broken up into 2 segments, part A and part B. **Tables 42-45** present findings from assessment of academic factors, part A, while **Tables 46-49** summarize those findings from part B.

**Tables 42-43** highlight academic factors (part A and part B) identified by current students as promoting their success in the program. Of all the areas of inquiry, this focus shows the greatest degree of variability between students attending classes on the Oshawa campus and those attending classes on the Georgian campus. For this reason, data will first be described campus by campus.

As seen in **Tables 42-43**, more than 60% of the students at the Oshawa campus rated the following academic factors as promoting their success:

- academic advisor
- program coordinator
- faculty
- computer access and IT support
- online learning
- face-to-face learning
- clinical learning
- program writing requirements
- program math requirements
- overall program of study
- online format of classes
- face-to-face format of classes
- scheduling of classes (day/time and place)

A review of the data presented in **Tables 42-43** shows that >60% of Georgian campus students rated the following academic factors as promoting their success:

- program coordinator
- online learning
- face-to-face learning
- clinical learning
- overall program of study
- online format of classes
- face-to-face format of classes
- scheduling of classes (day/time and place)

These results, which in many cases show well over three-quarters of students at the Oshawa campus perceiving the identified academic factors as promoting their success, are very highly endorsing of the academic supports and the academic structure of the program.

However, it is essential to glean from these patterns of response any differences in student perceptions by campus of the academic factors that promote their success. Comparison of these findings between the two campuses (and therefore between the two types of program offerings) is illuminating. Students at the Oshawa campus were more than twice as likely to identify the writing centre and the library/librarian as promoting success. Other significant differences are seen in students' perceptions of whether faculty, face to face learning, and clinical learning promote success. In all instances, Oshawa students rated these factors as significantly more likely to promote success. Additionally, and not surprisingly, Oshawa students cited computer access and IT support as much more positively promoting success. Given that students who enrol in this program through the DC-UOIT campus are part of the laptop program with extensive IT support, this finding is not surprising and is confirmation that these services are important for student success. However, this finding must be tempered with data presented as part of the Phase I analysis, revealing significant student discontent with having to pay for the laptop program. While students are clearly evaluating IT support and the laptop program as promoting their success, they do not share the same enthusiasm with having to pay for this service. This finding is highly relevant as UOIT embarks on a wide-scale evaluation of the future directions of their technology-enhanced educational supports. A pattern worthy of identification is that in all cases of significant difference for academic facilitators, part A, Oshawa students evaluated these more highly than Georgian students.

**Table 43** continues to reveal very significant differences in students perceptions related to academic factors promoting support in the program (part B). Students completing the program at the Oshawa campus rated the positive impact of tutors and TAs 2-4X more positively than students attending classes at the Georgian campus. Students at the Oshawa campus were also much more positive with respect to both program writing requirements and program math requirements, as well as the program of study overall. The only academic factor that Georgian campus students rated more positively as promoting success than Oshawa students was online courses. Given that commute times to campus and clinical do not vary to the degree we had expected between these groups, the travel time to attend class cannot be considered the overriding rationale for this finding. **Table 44** provides a summary of these findings.

Further examination related to the very different student experiences of academic supports is critical to understanding what promotes success with this type of educational offering. However, the following areas of difference are most critical to examine:

**Areas where Oshawa students rated academic factors significantly more promoting success:**

- writing centre
- computer access and IT support
- clinical learning abilities
- library/librarian
- private tutors/editors

- tutorial assistants
- program writing requirements
- program math requirements
- overall program of study
- face to face format of classes

**Areas where Georgian students rated academic factors significantly more promoting success:**

- online class format

**Tables 45-47** examine student response patterns in relation to academic factors that are perceived to be barriers to their success. In general, the degree to which students perceived any of the identified academic factors to be barriers to success was quite low, generally falling well under 20% for all categories. This finding is again highly endorsing of student perception of academic factors impacting their success in the program. Comparison of differences between student response patterns for the two campuses (hence the two types of program offerings) is again valuable. Only two areas of significant variability across program types were seen. **Table 45** reveals that respondents at the Georgian campus were more than twice as likely to identify computer access and IT support as a barrier than students at the Oshawa campus (21.2%; 8.4%). The preceding discussion around the availability of the laptop program at the Oshawa campus but not at the Georgian campus is once again relevant to this finding. On the other hand, students at the Oshawa campus were almost twice as likely to perceive tutorial assistants as a barrier to their success as Georgian students (31.8%; 16.7%). This finding must also be considered in light of **Table 43**, which shows that for Oshawa students, a virtually equivalent number of students experienced tutorial assistants as promoting their success, as those who saw them as barriers to their success (31.9%; 31.8%).

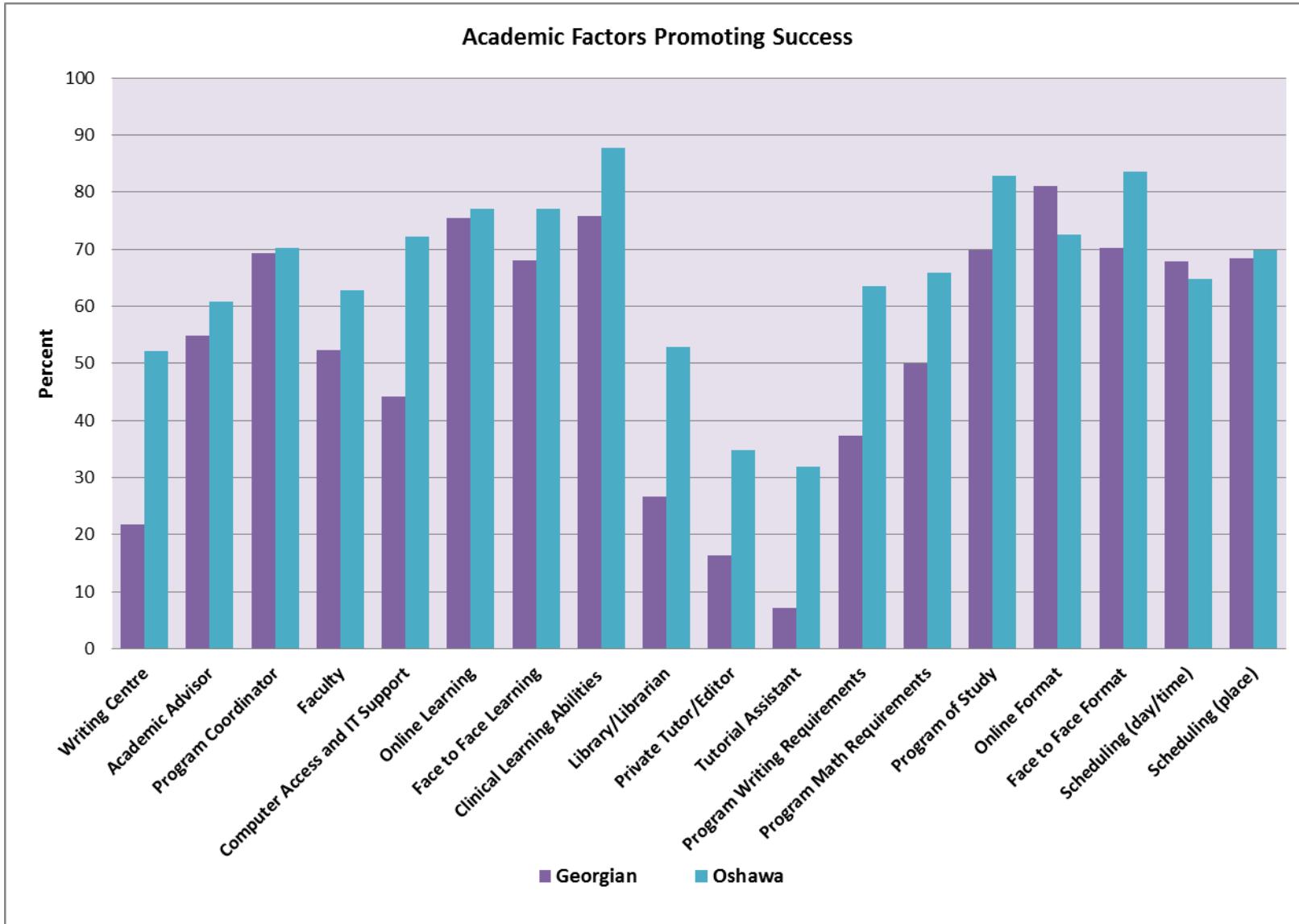
**Table 42: Academic Factors that Promote Success (Part A)**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Faculty	Computer Access and IT Support	Online Learning	Face to Face Learning	Clinical Learning Abilities	Library/ Librarian
<b>Georgian</b>	21.7 %	54.9 %	69.3 %	52.4 %	44.2 %	75.5 %	68.0 %	75.9 %	26.7 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	52.1 %	60.8 %	70.3%	62.8 %	72.2 %	77.0 %	77.0 %	87.8 %	52.9 %
<b>Combined</b>	40.1%	58.3 %	69.8 %	59.3 %	60.5%	76.4 %	75.0 %	82.8 %	42.6 %

**Table 43: Academic Factors that Promote Success (Part B)**

	Course Offering								
	Private Tutor/Editor	Tutorial Assistants	Program Writing Requirements	Program Math Requirements	Program of Study	Online format	Face to Face Format	Scheduling (day/time)	Scheduling (place)
<b>Georgian</b>	16.3 %	7.2 %	37.3 %	50.0 %	69.8 %	81.1 %	70.3 %	67.9 %	68.5 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	34.8 %	31.9 %	63.5 %	65.8 %	82.8 %	72.6 %	83.5 %	64.8 %	69.9 %
<b>Combined</b>	27.5 %	22.2%	52.8 %	59.2%	75.3 %	76.2 %	78.0 %	66.1 %	68.4 %

**Table 44: Summary of Academic Factors Promoting Success**



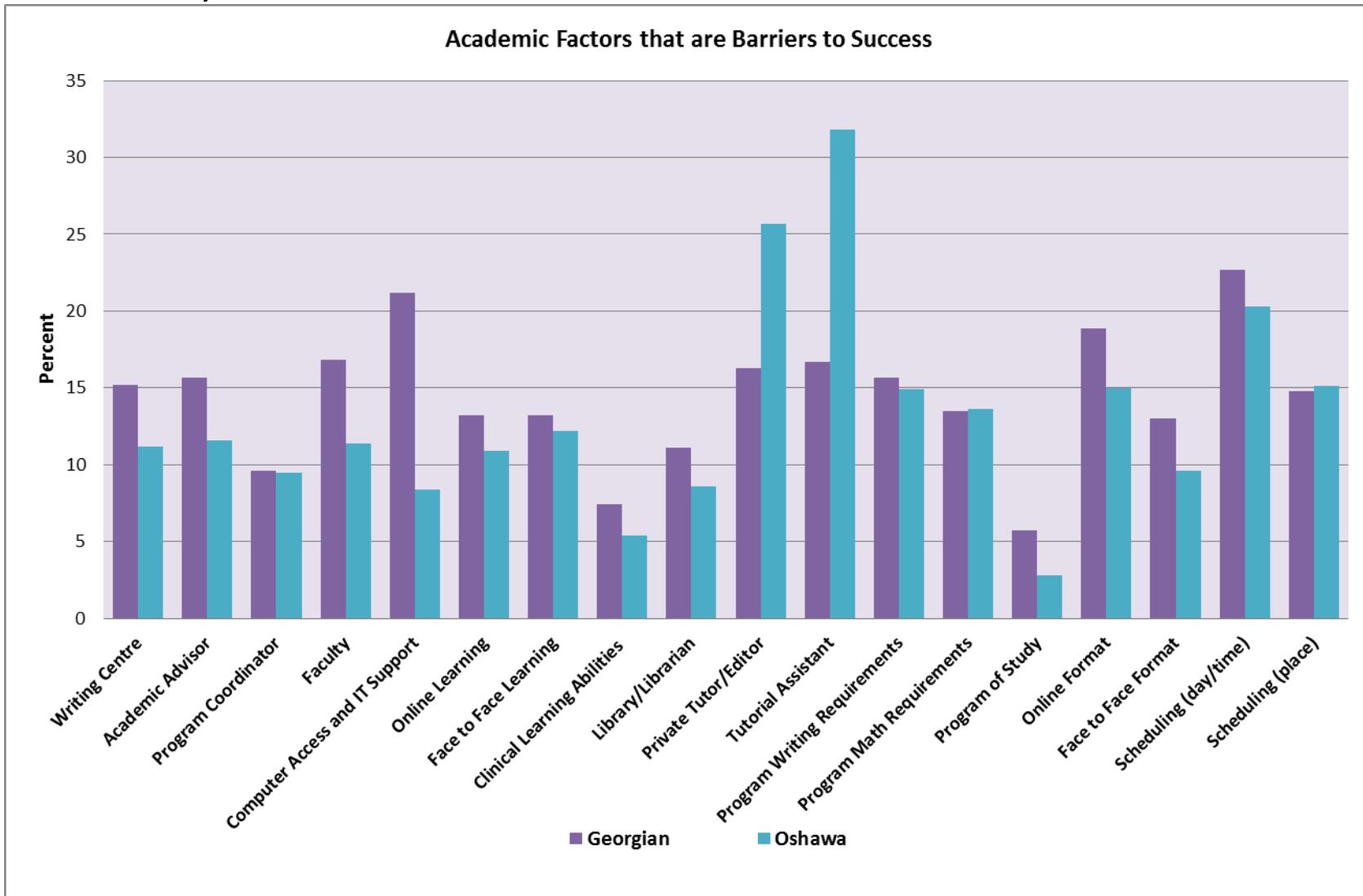
**Table 45: Academic Factors that are Barriers to Success (Part A)**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Faculty	Computer Access and IT Support	Online Learning	Face to Face Learning	Clinical Learning Abilities	Library/Librarian
<b>Georgian</b>	15.2 %	15.7 %	9.6 %	16.8 %	21.2 %	13.2 %	13.2 %	7.4 %	11.1 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	11.2 %	11.6 %	9.5 %	11.4 %	8.4 %	10.9 %	12.2 %	5.4 %	8.6 %
<b>Combined</b>	12.8 %	13.3 %	9.6 %	12.7 %	13.7%	11.8 %	12.6 %	6.2 %	9.5 %

**Table 46: Academic Factors that are Barriers to Success (Part B)**

	Course Offering								
	Private Tutor/Editor	Tutorial Assistants	Program Writing Requirements	Program Math Requirements	Program of Study	Online format	Face to Face Format	Scheduling (day/time)	Scheduling (place)
<b>Georgian</b>	16.3 %	16.7 %	15.7 %	13.5 %	5.7 %	18.9 %	13.0 %	22.7 %	14.8 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	25.7 %	31.8 %	14.9 %	13.6 %	2.8 %	15.0 %	9.6 %	20.3 %	15.1 %
<b>Combined</b>	22.0 %	26.0%	15.2 %	13.6 %	4.1 %	16.6 %	11.0 %	21.3 %	14.9%

**Table 47: Summary of Academic Factors that are Barriers to Success**



### **Other Factors**

**Tables 48-49** highlight ‘other’ factors that the research team considered potentially relevant for students success. These include things like: a) some university non-academic services (e.g., the health centre, counselling services, financial aid office, etc.); b) access to resources such as child care, a vehicle, transit system, and c) personal coping mechanisms such as outlets for stress, hobbies, and physical activity. If we continue to use the 60% response rate as the indicator of significance, none of these factors significantly promote success. However, we are able to identify significant differences in response patterns between Oshawa and Georgian students (hence students completing the two different types of program offerings). Oshawa students all identified the following factors as significantly more important in promoting their success: health centre, counselling centre, stable family income, and access to public transit.

**Tables 50-51** provide data around student response rates in relation to whether these other factors are barriers. Two areas that are clearly identified as barriers by students are: a) financial (Georgian 46.2%; Oshawa 44.3%) and stable family income (Georgian 35.2%; Oshawa 28.2%). A significant difference between the two groups can be seen in the degree to which Oshawa students identified access to child care as a barrier to success close to twice as often as Georgian campus students did.

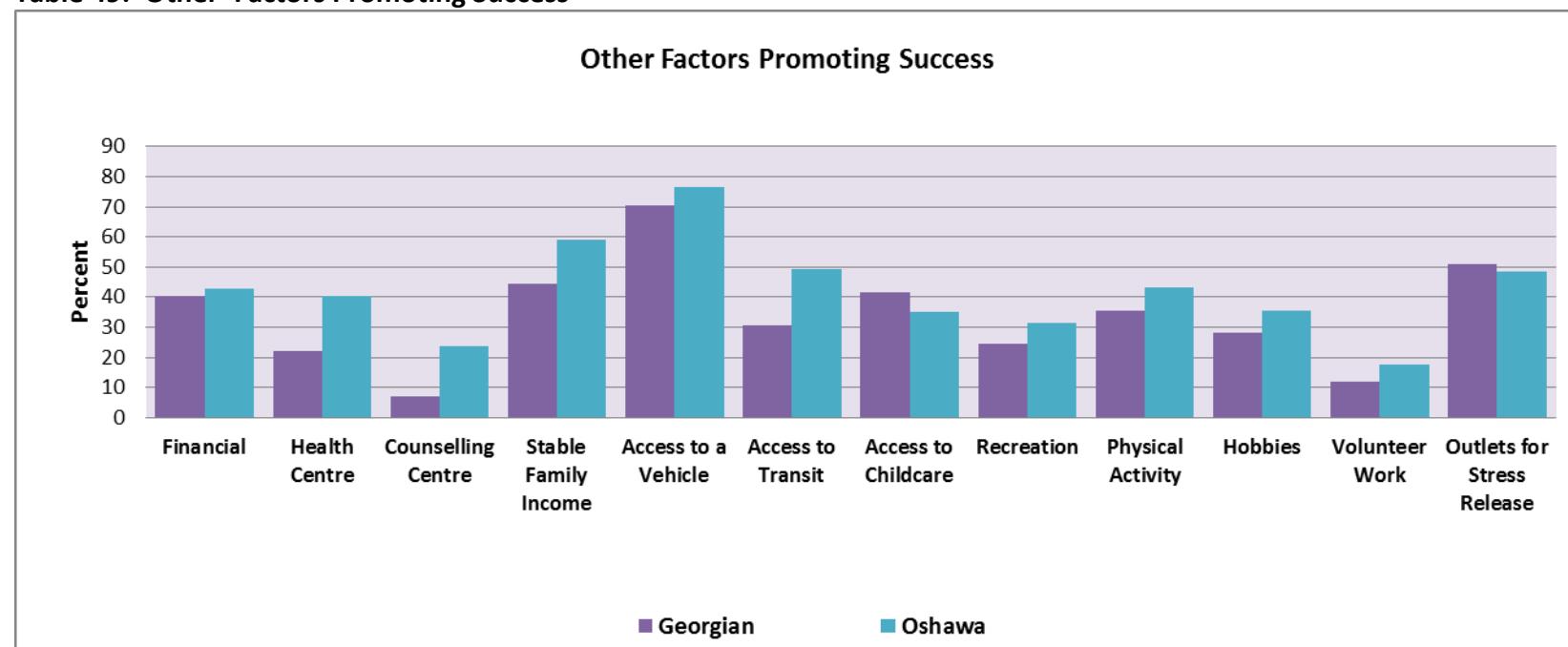
### **Facilitators and Barriers Section Summary**

The data described in this section of the report provides excellent insight into the school, work, and personal lives of the current student complement of the RPN-BScN bridging program offered through the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Durham College, and Georgian College. The picture that emerges is one that reveals many more differences in the student responses by campus (and hence program type) than might have been anticipated. In terms of employment factors, while students from both campuses generally responded that work schedule flexibility promoted success, significantly more students from Oshawa responded positively to this item and significantly more students from Georgian identified the lack of flexibility as a barrier to success. In terms of personal factors, support received from colleagues and employers was significantly more pronounced with the Oshawa students in terms of promoting success versus the Georgian students. Similarly, the lack of colleague support was a significantly greater barrier to success for Georgian campus students than for Oshawa campus students. A wide range of differences are seen when examining academic factors that promote or are barriers to success. Students from both campuses generally perceived the overall program of study in a very positive light, with very few identifying the program of study as a barrier (Georgian 5.7%; Oshawa 2.8%) and the vast majority seeing it as promoting success (Georgian 69.8%; Oshawa 82.8%). The trend across evaluation of academic factors reveals that Oshawa students have much more positive perceptions of factors promoting success. Understanding this difference in student experience of academic factors across campuses, and in particular amongst students at the Georgian campus, is essential to ongoing program development and improvement. The following section, which focuses on which academic services are accessed by students and how they are perceived, will aid in this evaluation.

**Table 48: Other Factors Promoting Success**

	Financial	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Stable Family Income	Access to a Vehicle	Access to Public Transit	Access to Childcare	Recreation	Physical Activity	Hobbies	Volunteer Work	Outlets for Stress Release
<b>Georgian</b>	40.4 %	22.2 %	7.0 %	44.4 %	70.4%	30.7 %	41.5 %	24.4 %	35.5%	28.3 %	11.9%	51.0 %
<b>Oshawa</b>	42.9 %	40.3%	23.8 %	59.2 %	76.4 %	49.2%	34.9 %	31.3 %	43.4 %	35.4 %	17.5 %	48.5 %
<b>Combined</b>	41.8 %	37.0 %	16.9 %	52.8 %	73.8 %	36.5 %	37.5 %	28.6 %	40.1 %	32.4 %	15.3 %	49.6%

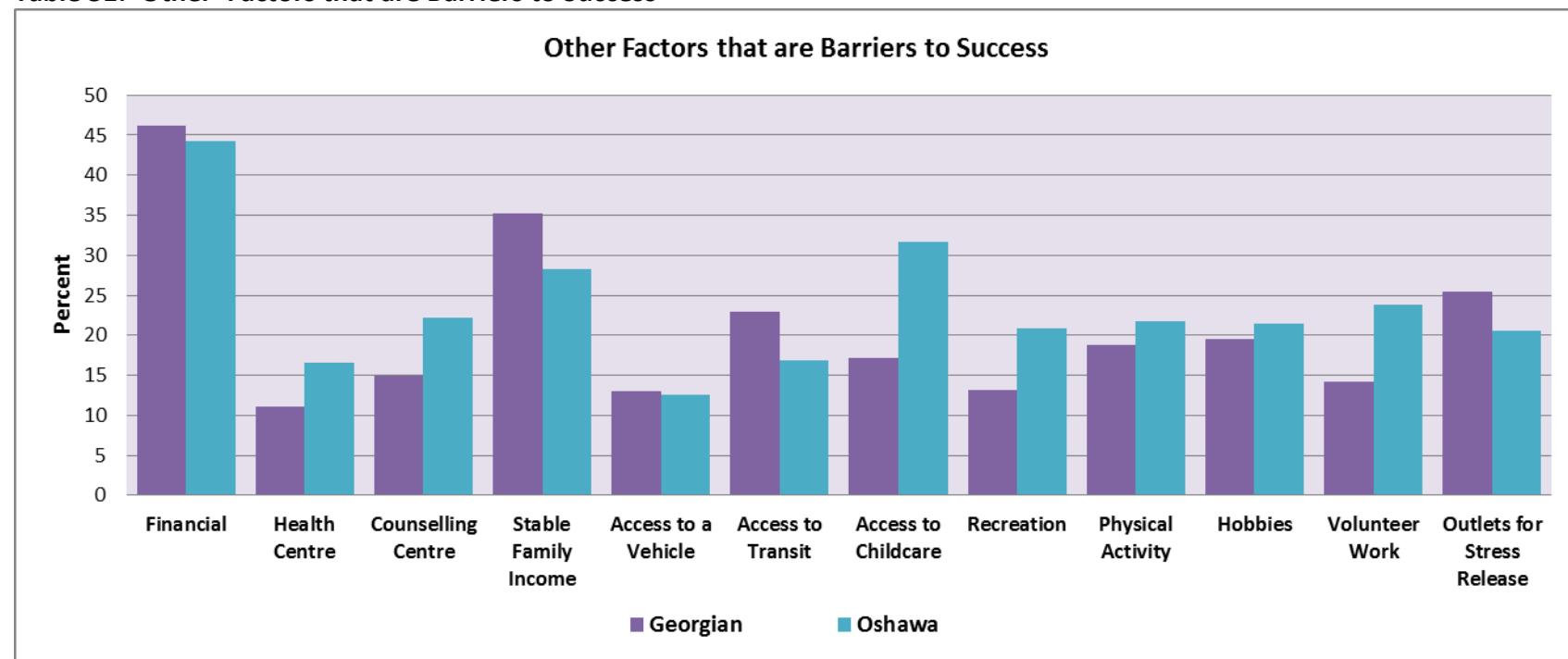
**Table 49: ‘Other’ Factors Promoting Success**



**Table 50: 'Other' Factors that are Barriers to Success**

	Financial	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Stable Family Income	Access to a Vehicle	Access to Public Transit	Access to Childcare	Recreation	Physical Activity	Hobbies	Volunteer Work	Outlets for Stress Release
<b>Georgian</b>	46.2 %	11.1 %	15.0 %	35.2%	13.0%	23.0 %	17.1 %	13.2 %	18.8%	19.5 %	14.2%	25.5%
<b>Oshawa</b>	44.3 %	16.5%	22.2 %	28.2 %	12.5 %	16.9%	31.7 %	20.9 %	21.7 %	21.5 %	23.8 %	20.6 %
<b>Combined</b>	45.1 %	14.2 %	20.0 %	31.2 %	12.7%	19.2 %	25.9 %	17.8%	20.5%	20.7 %	20.0 %	22.6%

**Table 51: 'Other' Factors that are Barriers to Success**



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## AREA OF INQUIRY #4: SUPPORTS AND SERVICES ACCESSED AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

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From a list of 10 academic services (see **Table 52**), participants were asked to indicate which services they had accessed and using a 4 point Likert scale (1 = somewhat ineffective, 2 = neither effective nor ineffective, 3 = somewhat effective, 4 = very effective) rate the degree to which these services were effective.

**Table 52: Academic Services Ranked by Participants**

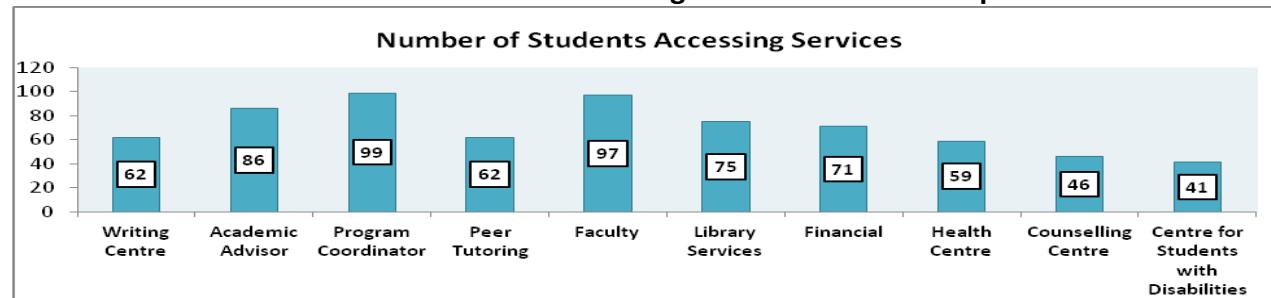
Type of Service	Site- Specific, Shared, or Mixed Service	Notes
Writing Centre	Site Specific	There is a focus on use of the writing centre as an academic support beginning in the bridge term in a mandatory course taken by all students: HLSC1300U Information and Communication Technology in Health Care
Academic Advisor	Shared	
Program Coordinator	Site Specific	Change in Program Coordinator at GC in fall 2011
Peer Tutoring	Site Specific	UOIT has a peer tutoring program
Faculty	Mixed	Some faculty are site specific, in some courses faculty from UOIT travel to GC to teach or teach GC students online
Library/Librarian	Site Specific	There is a focus on use of library resources beginning in the bridge term in a mandatory courses taken by all students: HLSC1300U Information and Communication Technology in Health Care
Financial Aid	Shared	While in the past documents could be transferred from the Oshawa campus to the Georgian campus financial aid office, they now are mailed directly from Financial Aid at the Oshawa campus to students at their home address
Health Centre	Site Specific	
Counselling Centre	Site Specific	
Centre for Students with Disabilities	Site Specific (with requirement to register with centre at UOIT for Georgian students)	UOIT has a reciprocal agreement for students to use services provided by Georgian, but students must register at the UOIT Centre for Students with Disabilities

**Tables 53-55** provide a summary of supports and services accessed by all respondents (Oshawa and Georgian campuses) when data from respondents at both sites is merged. They also indicate the degree to which respondents indicated that they found these services to be effective, using the 4-point Likert scale (1 = somewhat ineffective, 4 = very effective). However, it must be noted that the overall pattern of responses varies so greatly between campuses that the merged data provides little insight into student behaviour and evaluation of academic services. Rather, the following pages will additionally provide an analysis of student responses site by site.

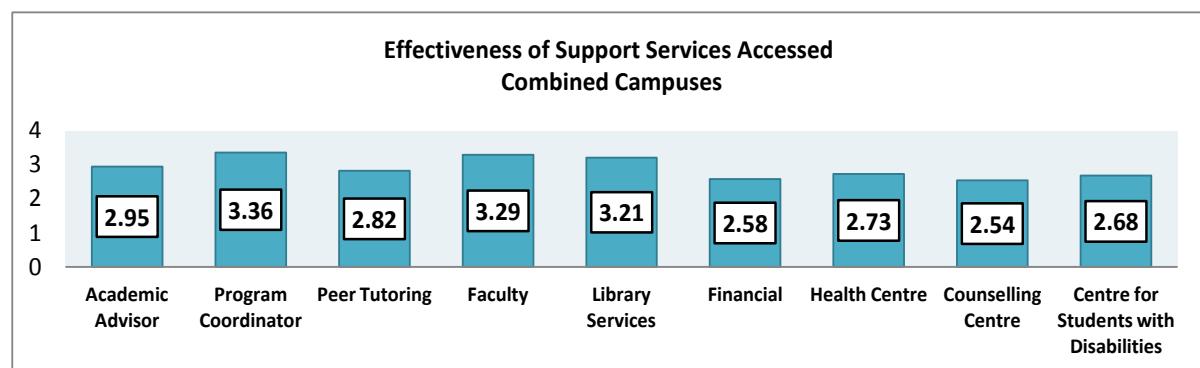
**Table 53: Supports and Services Accessed and Their Effectiveness (Combined Campuses)**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Peer Tutors	Faculty	Library/Librarian	Financial Aid	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Centre for Students with Disabilities
<b>Number of students who Accessed Service/Support</b>	62	86	99	62	97	75	71	59	46	41
<b>Average of Likert Scale: 1-4 for Effectiveness</b>	2.95	2.95	3.36	2.82	3.29	3.21	2.58	2.73	2.54	2.68

**Table 54: Combined Number of Students Accessing Services on Both Campuses**



**Table 55: Combined Evaluation of Effectiveness of Support Services on Both Campuses**



### **Services Access – Comparison of Respondents from Oshawa Campus and Georgian Campus**

Tables 56 provides an overview of the degree to which students enrolled at the Oshawa campus accessed the identified services and their evaluation of the effectiveness of these services, showing a breakdown of student responses. Table 57 provides this same data for students enrolled at the Georgian campus.

With Table 58, we begin an analysis of the relative use of services by students at the various campuses. Tables 58-59 provide the same data, from opposite viewpoints. In the bar graph, we depict the degree to which the 10 identified academic services were accessed (not yet considering student evaluation of the effectiveness of these services) by campus location. This data reveals striking differences in the degree to which students are accessing almost all academic services. If we continue to use a 10% difference in response patterns as an indicator of a significant difference, ***we are able to see that Oshawa campus students are accessing the following services significantly more: writing centre, academic advisor, peer tutoring, library/librarian, health centre, counselling centre, and the centre for students with disabilities.***

Table 60 provides a summary of the degree to which Oshawa campus students are more often accessing these seven identified services, and the similar pattern of use for the 3 services which show no significant difference (program coordinator, faculty, financial aid). As Table 60 reveals, the relative difference in the use of academic services by students at the Oshawa and Georgian campuses is striking, ranging from 1.18 times greater use (academic advisor) to 1.72 times greater use (health centre). Four key services (writing centre, peer tutoring, health centre, and the centre for students with disabilities) show patterns of greater use in excess of 1.5 times the use by Oshawa students as by Georgian campus students. In all of these instances, services are campus specific.

While the temptation may exist to characterize students who attend the Georgian campus offering of the collaborative RPN-BScN program as “commuters” who travel significantly greater distances (and who are therefore less likely to use campus services), our investigation of commuting times for students does not support this assumption. As presented in Table 12, commuting times for students across campuses are quite similar, with an average difference of just 13 minutes longer for Georgian campus students. ***This significant and concerning differential pattern of use of academic services between campuses is a priority to resolve.*** Many of these services are intimately associated with the expectations of self-directed learning required for university education (e.g., writing centre and library/librarian), while others have the potential to very positively impact both student learning and student experience of the program and educational institution.

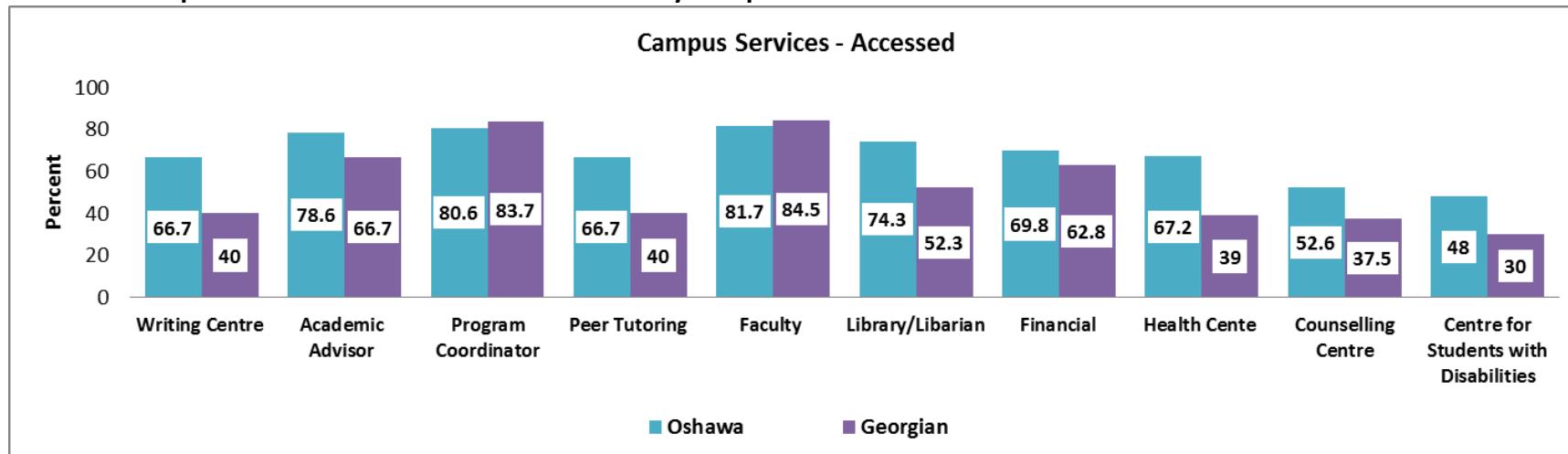
**Table 56 – Supports and Services Accessed and Their Effectiveness (Oshawa Campus)**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Peer Tutoring	Faculty	Library/Librarian	Financial	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Centre for Students with Disabilities
<b>Total Students =76</b>										
<b>Total responses</b>	69	70	72	66	71	70	63	64	57	52
<b>Somewhat ineffective</b>	2	8	3	6	5	3	10	6	6	6
<b>Neither effective or ineffective</b>	10	6	8	6	3	3	6	9	5	3
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	18	20	12	18	18	23	17	13	14	13
<b>Very effective</b>	16	21	35	14	32	23	11	15	5	3
<b>Not accessed</b>	23	15	14	22	13	18	19	21	27	27
<b>No response</b>	7	6	4	10	5	6	13	12	19	24
<b>Percent of Students</b>										
<b>Somewhat ineffective</b>	2.9%	11.4%	4.2%	9.1%	7.0%	4.3%	15.9%	9.4%	10.5%	11.5%
<b>Neither effective or ineffective</b>	14.5%	8.6%	11.%	9.1%	4.2%	4.3%	9.5%	14.1%	8.8%	5.8%
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	26.1%	28.6%	16.7%	27.3%	25.4%	32.9%	27.0%	20.3%	24.6%	25%
<b>Very effective</b>	23.1%	30%	48.6%	21.2%	45.0%	32.9%	17.5%	23.4%	8.8%	5.8%
<b>Not accessed</b>	33.3%	21.4%	19.4%	33.3%	18.3%	25.7%	30.2%	32.8%	47.4%	52%

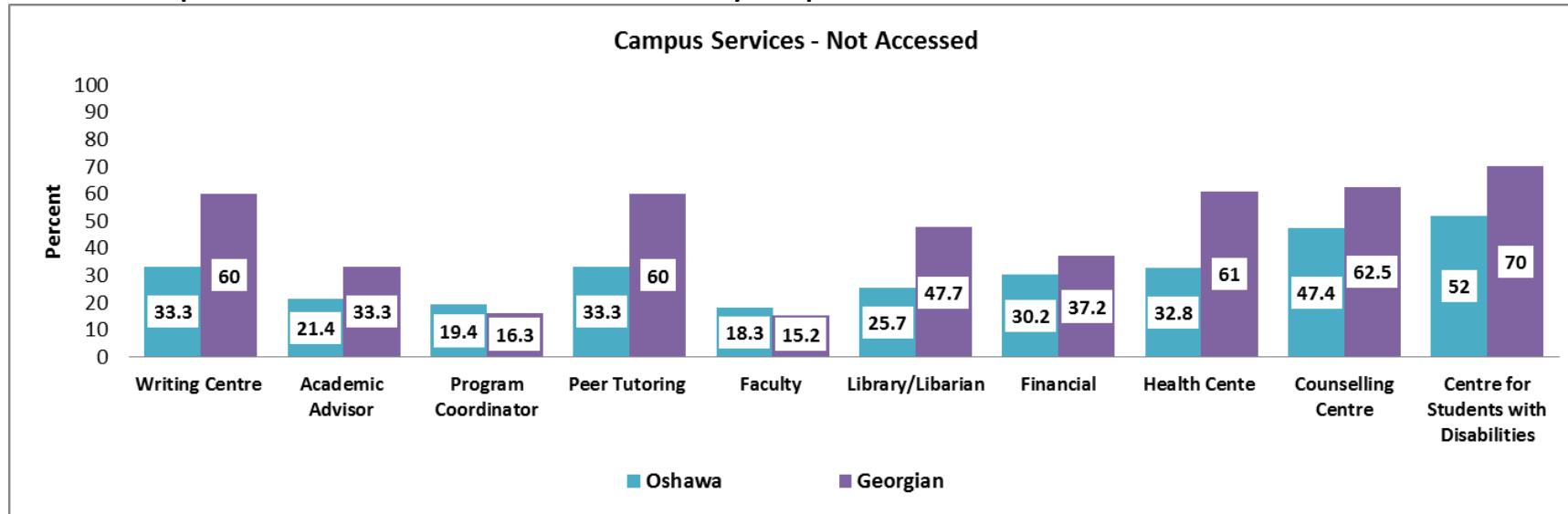
**Table 57 – Supports and Services Accessed and Their Effectiveness (Georgian Campus)**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Peer Tutoring	Faculty	Library/ Librarian	Financial	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Centre for Students with Disabilities
<b>Total students =50</b>										
<b>Total responses</b>	45	45	49	45	46	44	43	41	40	40
<b>Somewhat ineffective</b>	4	4	3	3	1	1	8	3	3	3
<b>Neither effective or ineffective</b>	5	5	3	3	6	5	5	6	5	3
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	7	12	11	10	15	8	8	6	7	6
<b>Very effective</b>	2	9	24	2	17	9	6	1	0	0
<b>Not accessed</b>	27	15	8	27	7	21	16	25	25	28
<b>No response</b>	5	5	1	5	4	6	7	9	10	10
<b>Percent of Students</b>										
<b>Somewhat ineffective</b>	8.9%	8.9%	6.1%	6.7%	2.2%	2.3%	18.6%	7.3%	7.6%	7.5%
<b>Neither effective or ineffective</b>	11.1%	11.1%	6.1%	6.7%	13.0%	11.3%	11.6%	14.6%	12.5%	7.5%
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	15.6%	26.7%	22.4%	22.2%	32.6%	18.2%	18.6%	14.6%	17.5%	15%
<b>Very effective</b>	4.4%	20%	53.3%	4.4%	37.0%	20.5%	13.6%	24.4%	0	0
<b>Not accessed</b>	60%	33.3%	16.3%	60%	15.2%	47.7%	37.2%	61.0%	62.5%	70%

**Table 58: Comparison of Academic Services Accessed by Campus**



**Table 59: Comparison of Academic Services NOT Accessed by Campus**



**Table 60 – Relative Comparative Degree to Which Academic Services are Accessed More Frequently by Oshawa Students**

	Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Peer Tutoring	Faculty	Library/ Librarian	Financial Aid	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Centre for Students with Disabilities
Oshawa % accessed	66.7%	78.6%	80.6%	66.7%	81.7%	74.3%	69.8%	67.2%	52.6%	48%
Georgian % accessed	40%	66.7%	83.7%	40%	84.5%	52.5%	62.8%	39%	37.5%	30%
Relative Comparison	(relative degree to which the service is cited as accessed by Oshawa students vs Georgian students)									
	1.67 X more often	1.18 X more often		1.67 X more often		1.42 X more often		1.72 X more often	1.40 X more often	1.6 X more often

### **Effectiveness of Services**

Tables 61-65 provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the services. In order to create meaningful comparisons, the percentages used reflected the views of those students who indicated that they had accessed each of the services (i.e., for example, what percentage of students who indicated that they had accessed the writing service rated it as effective, neither effective nor ineffective, or ineffective). For clarity with these comparisons, the two categories of somewhat effective and very effective were merged.

Table 61 provides a great deal of insight into students' perceptions of the effectiveness of services that they are accessing. While services are generally evaluated positively, there are some distinct areas of concern as well as very illuminating patterns of variation between students at the Oshawa campus and the Georgian campus. Additionally, Five of the previously cited 7 services which are accessed more frequently by Oshawa campus students are also rated as more effective by Oshawa campus students (writing centre, library/librarian, health centre, counselling centre, and the centre for students with disabilities). All of these are services offered separately on each campus. While significantly fewer (>10%) students accessed their Academic Counsellor and Peer Tutoring from the Georgian cohort than students enrolled on the Oshawa campus, their evaluation of the effectiveness of these services was similarly positive. Additionally, there was a greater than 10% variance in the degree to which students who accessed the financial aid office found it to be effective, with Oshawa students also finding this service to be more effective.

Table 62 provides another view for comparison of effectiveness of services by users at each campus. Additionally, Table 63 presents data comparing responses from users of academic services who indicated that they found them to be ineffective. A variance of >10% between

campus cohorts was only identified for the writing centre, with 4.3% of users at the Oshawa campus rating it as ineffective and 22.2% of users at the Georgian site rating it as ineffective. When considering the degree to which students found services ineffective, two areas stand out: financial aid was identified by over 20% of students from both campuses (Oshawa 22.7%; Georgian 29.6%) as ineffective. This is a shared service operated by UOIT. Additionally, close to one quarter of users of the centre for students with disabilities (Oshawa 24%; Georgian 25%) rated it as ineffective. This is an independent service operated by each campus, but with a service agreement between UOIT and Georgian College which requires that all students register with the Centre at UOIT to access services.

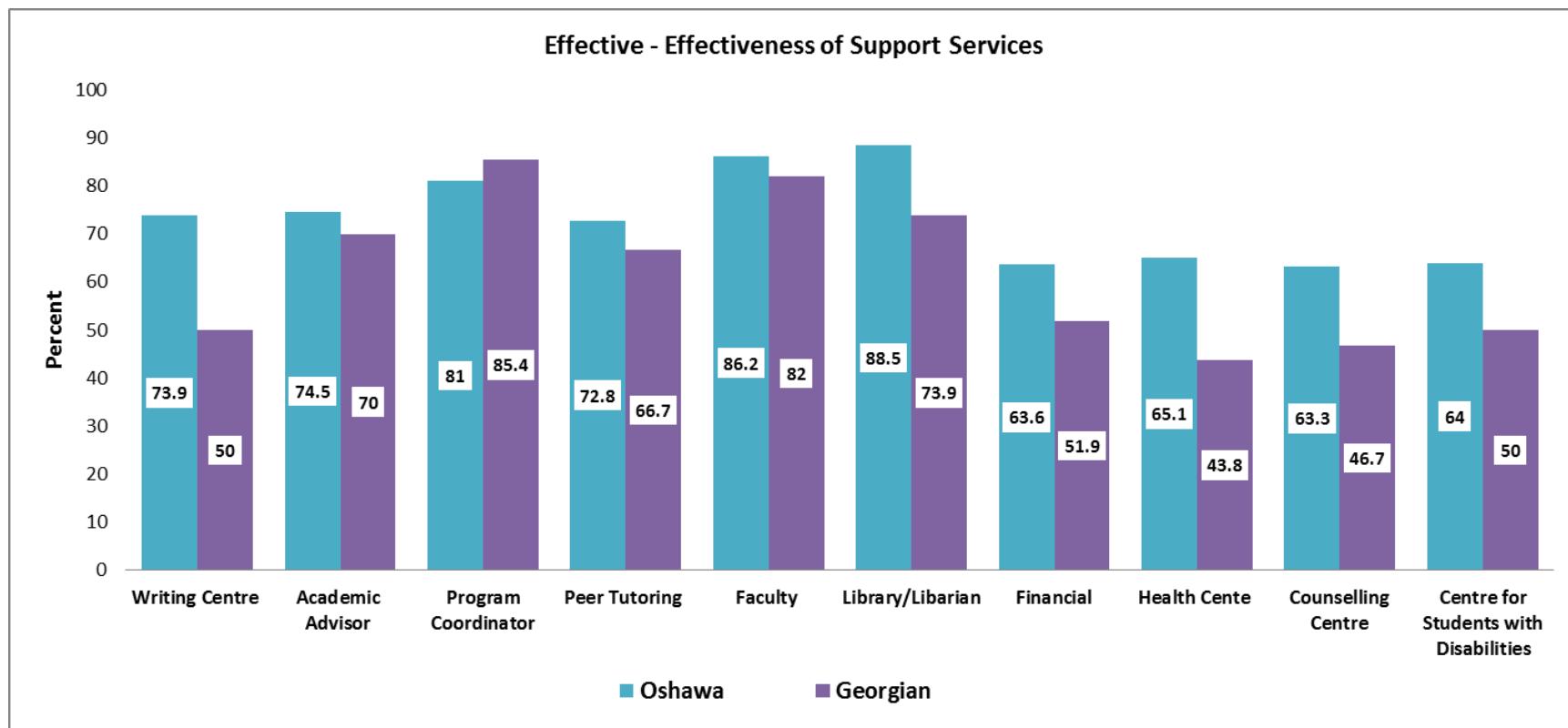
Additionally, when evaluated by students who had accessed the 10 specific services under examination, all of the academic services provided for students at the Oshawa campus were evaluated by users as effective at or above the 60% threshold (arbitrarily deemed as ‘satisfactory’ for the purposes of this study). Three services in particular stand out for the positive evaluation at >80% effective by Oshawa campus students: a) the program coordinator (81%), b) faculty (86.2%), and c) the library/librarian (88.5%). When evaluated by students enrolled in the Georgian cohort, a total of five services fell below the 60% threshold for satisfaction when looking at level of effectiveness. These include the writing centre (50%), financial aid (51.9%), health centre (48.3%), counselling centre (46.7%), and centre for students with disabilities (50%). All of these services except financial aid are independent services. Financial Aid is a shared service, with students at the Georgian campus working with personnel from the Oshawa site by various methods of face to face and long distance communication. Two services stand out for positive evaluation above the 80% effective level: a) program coordinator (85.4%) and faculty (82%). **Tables 61, 64-65** provide comparisons of the degree to which users of services rated them as ineffective, neither effective nor ineffective, or effective.

**Table 66** provides a summary of the top 3 academic services accessed by students (combined and by campus). It is worthy of note that given all the differences in response patterns amongst students at the two program sites (and hence students completing the program via the different types of program offerings), the top 3 services accessed are surprisingly identical (program coordinator, faculty, and academic advisor).

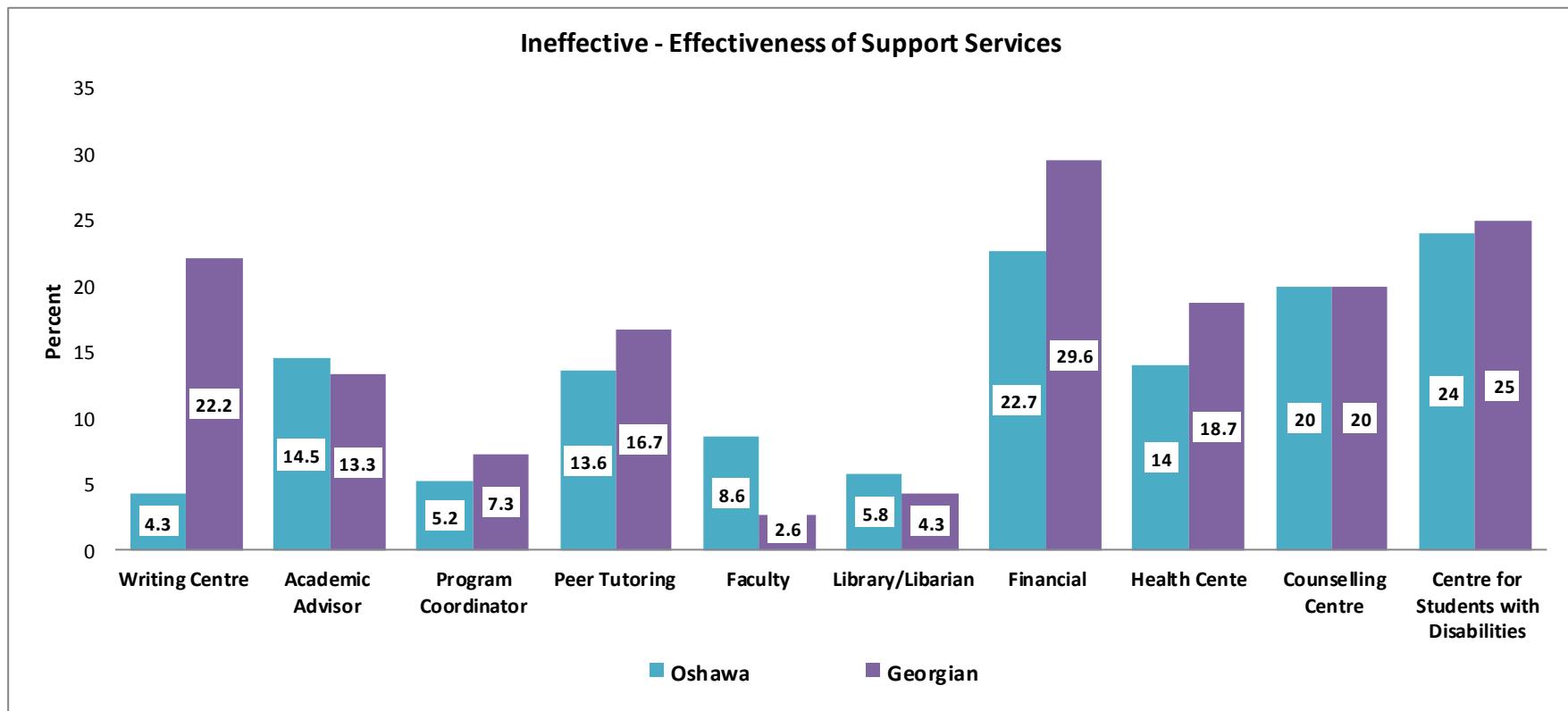
**Table 61: Comparative Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Services by Campus by Users of Services**

Table 61: Comparative Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Services by Campus by Users of those Services											
		Writing Centre	Academic Advisor	Program Coordinator	Peer Tutoring	Faculty	Library/Librarian	Financial	Health Centre	Counselling Centre	Centre for Students with Disabilities
Ineffective	Oshawa	4.3%	14.5%	5.2%	13.6%	8.6%	5.8%	22.7%	1.4%	20%	24%
	Georgian	22.2%	13.6%	7.3%	16.7%	2.6%	4.3%	29.6%	18.7%	20%	25%
Neither effective or ineffective	Oshawa	21.7%	10.9%	13.8%	13.6%	5.2%	5.8%	13.6%	20.9%	16.7%	12%
	Georgian	27.8%	16.7%	7.3%	16.7%	15.4%	21.7%	18.5%	37.5%	33.3%	25%
Effective	Oshawa	73.9%	74.5%	81%	72.8%	86.2%	88.5%	63.6%	65.1%	63.3%	64%
	Georgian	50%	70%	85.4%	66.7%	82%	73.9%	51.9%	48.3%	46.7%	50%
Type of Service (independent, shared, or mixed)		Indep	Shared	Indep	Indep	Mixed	Indep	Shared	Indep	Indep	Indep
Services with < 60% satisfaction	Oshawa										
	Georgian	X						X	X	X	X
Services with >10% variance between campuses		X					X	X	X	X	X

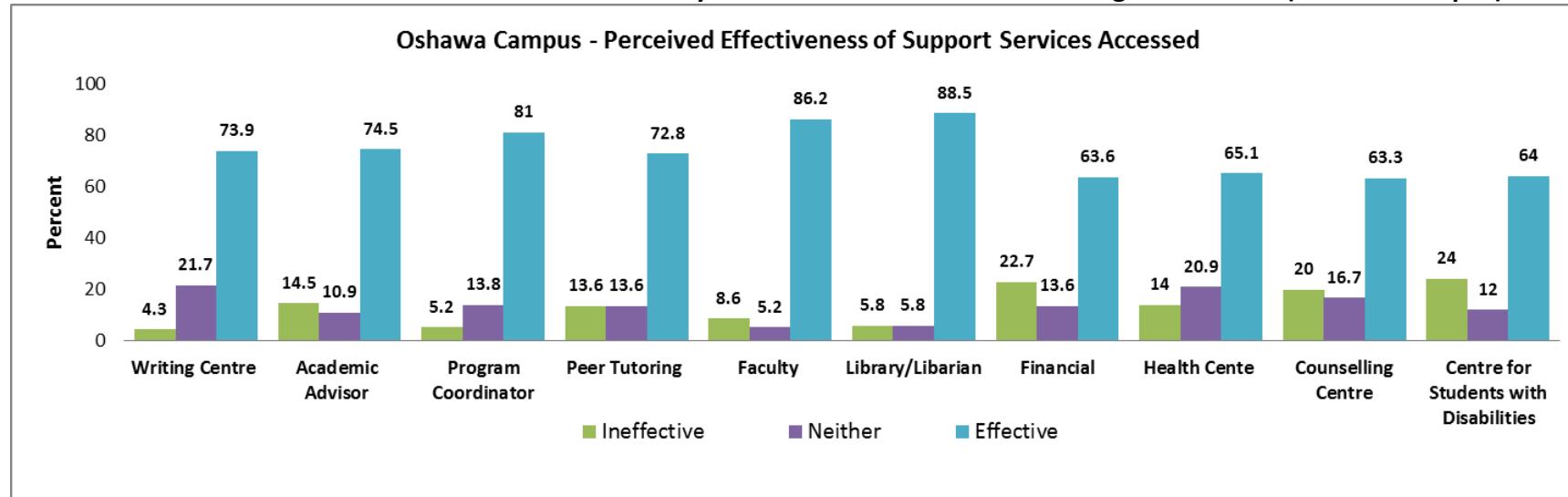
**Table 62: Percentage of Respondents by Campus Who Found Academic Services They Accessed to be Effective**



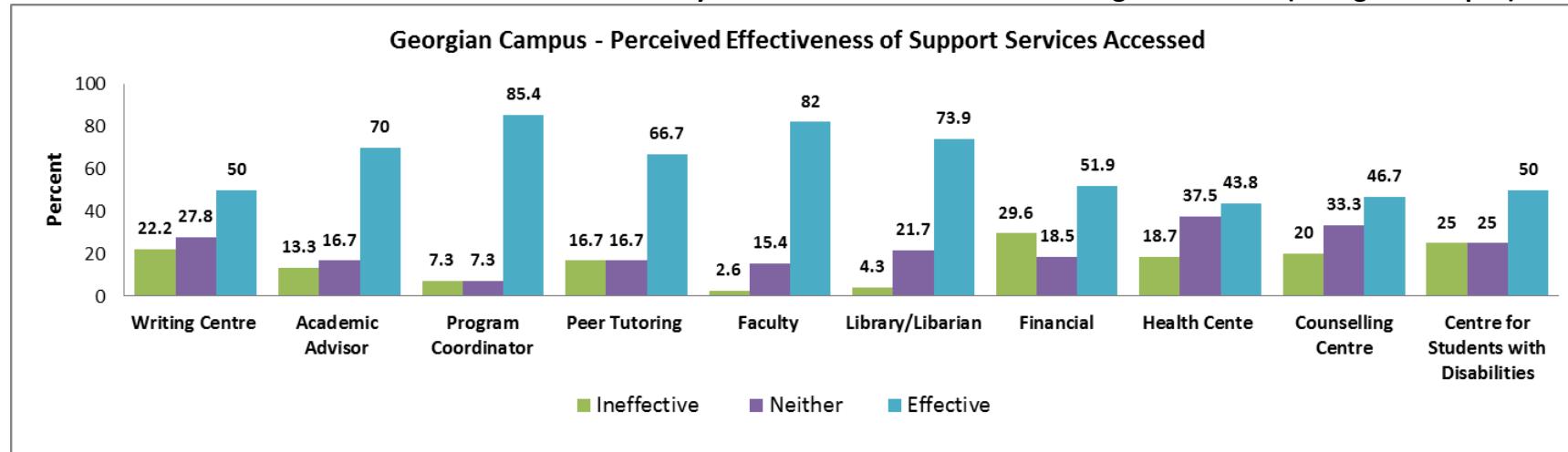
**Table 63: Percentage of Respondents by Campus Who Found Academic Services They Accessed to be Ineffective**



**Table 64: Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Services by Students who Indicated Accessing the Services (Oshawa Campus)**



**Table 65: Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Services by Students who Indicated Accessing the Services (Georgian Campus)**



**Table 66: Top 3 Academic Services Accessed (combined and by site)**

Table 66: Top 3 Academic Services Accessed			
	Combined	Oshawa	Georgian
<b>Program Coordinator</b>	99 out of 126 Students (79%)	58 out of 76 students (76%)	41 out of 55 students (75%)
<b>Faculty</b>	97 out of 126 Students (77%)	58 out of 76 students (76%)	39 out of 55 students (71%)
<b>Academic Advisor</b>	86 out of 126 Students (68%)	55 out of 76 students (73%)	30 out of 55 students (55%)

#### **Access and Evaluation of Effectiveness of Academic Services Section Summary**

This data presented in this section of the report continues to provide insight into the behaviours and experiences of students in the RPN-BScN Bridging Program. There are some very positive and encouraging findings. In particular the degree to which students are accessing some of the academic services available to them is very positive. For students enrolled at the Oshawa campus in particular, 8 of the 10 academic services examined were accessed by more than two-thirds of the students. The only two services not accessed to this degree were the Counseling Centre and the Centre for Students with Disabilities, both services which would be expected to show a lower rate of use. For students enrolled at the Georgian campus, while only three services meet this level of use (faculty, program coordinator, academic advisor), an additional two services were accessed by at least half of the participants in the Barrie cohort (financial aid, library/librarian). The greatest access of services is similar across students groups at both campuses: a) Program Coordinator, b) Faculty, and c) Academic Advisor.

The fact that students enrolled at the Oshawa campus evaluated the effectiveness of all indicated academic services at >60% threshold, albeit an arbitrary designation for this report, is highly encouraging. Additionally, 5 of the 10 services under examination were evaluated by students on the Georgian campus as effective at >60% threshold (academic advisor, program coordinator, peer tutoring, faculty, and the library/librarian). The greatest areas of satisfaction for users of services on both campuses were identified as being: a) Program Coordinator, Faculty, and the Library/Librarian. It is noteworthy that in general, the services that are most utilized are also most highly evaluated.

Once again, however, the picture that emerges is one that reveals many more differences in the student responses by campus (and hence program type) than might have been anticipated. There is a very significant difference in the degree to which students are accessing academic services on the two campuses. A total of 7 of the 10 services were accessed significantly more (i.e., >10% difference in relative use) by students at the Oshawa campus than at the Georgian

campus. These services include: Writing Centre (accessed 1.67 times more by Oshawa students), Academic Advisor (accessed 1.18 times more by Oshawa students), Peer Tutoring (accessed 1.67 times more by Oshawa students), Library/Librarian (1.42 times more often by Oshawa students), Health Centre (accessed 1.72 times more by Oshawa students), Counselling Centre (accessed 1.4 times more by Oshawa students), and Centre for Students with Disabilities (accessed 1.6 times more by Oshawa students). The juxtaposition of this finding of significantly less use of support services by Georgian campus students with anecdotal student feedback from this group that they feel there needs to be more support available to them is concerning and highlights the need to address the underlying cause of this behaviour.

Six of the academic services under examination (Writing Centre, Library/Librarian, Financial Aid, Health Centre, Counselling Centre, and the Centre for Students with Disabilities) showed a significant difference in the degree to which they were assessed as effective by students at the different campuses (i.e., a variance of >10% for the purposes of this report). All of the academic services provided for students at the Oshawa campus were evaluated by users as effective at or above the 60% threshold (arbitrarily deemed as ‘satisfactory’ for the purposes of this study). When evaluated by students enrolled in the Georgian cohort, a total of five services fell below the 60% threshold for satisfaction when looking at level of effectiveness. These include the Writing Centre, Financial Aid, Health Centre, Counselling Centre, and Centre for Students with Disabilities. All of these services except financial aid are independent services for each campus.

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## AREA OF INQUIRY #4:

### STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF CHANGES TO SELF AND PROFESSIONAL ROLE

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A total of 133 current students were asked to respond to the questions: How has being in the program changed you as a person? How has being in the program changed you as a nurse? Data was collected online in a text-based qualitative data collection format. Responses were analyzed using Nvivo9 software. Responses were coded and themes were identified to two levels of abstraction by multi-member teams who compared use of coding strategies/labels for inter-rater reliability. **Tables 67-68** provide an overview of the themes that were identified across each of the years of the program.

When considering how participation in the program has changed them as a person, the only common theme identified across all three year of the program was that of 'personal gains'. Across all years, personal gains included increased confidence and increased knowledge and critical thinking abilities. Additionally, in Year 2 and Year 3, respondents saw personal gains in terms of changes in their character, such as patience, independence, resourcefulness, and maturity.

For Year 1 students, two additional themes were identified: a) Perspective, characterized by the development of different ways of looking at issues and adapting to them; and b) Time management, focusing on the challenges with limited available time and strategies for balancing life in the face of time pressures. For Year 2 students, one additional theme, labelled Stress was identified. Respondents referred to the degree to which they experienced stress related to both school and other life demands. No additional themes were identified for Year 3 students.

**Table 68** provides an overview of the themes identified related to student perception of changes in self as a person, as well as a summary of the examples provided by respondents. Across all years, students perceive personal gains which they see as a credit to themselves. Sometimes they feel supported in achieving these gains, but sometimes perceive a lack of support. As students progress through the program, they describe increasingly positive personal attributes that they see as part of their role and self-identification as a nurse.

**Table 67: Overview of Themes Related to Student Perception of Changes in Self as a Person**

Program Year	Analysis to 2 Levels of Abstraction	Examples from each year
<b>Year 1</b>	a) Personal gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) More confident</li> <li>b) More knowledgeable</li> <li>c) Better critical thinking</li> <li>d) Smarter</li> </ul>
	b) Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Can't get anywhere with instructors [so need] to balance home and school responsibilities</li> <li>b) Caused me to look at stress coping mechanisms</li> <li>c) Have become motivated and disciplined</li> <li>d) Learning has brightened me up and helped gain that spark to heal others</li> </ul>
	d) Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Focus on achieving best grades possible</li> <li>b) Concentrate on school work</li> <li>c) Quality family time more than quantity</li> <li>d) School full-time and work full-time means no time for anything else</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	a) Personal gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Changes in character (increase in patience, independence, look for opportunities, enjoy life, resourceful)</li> <li>b) Changes in confidence (more leadership in personal and professional life, pride),</li> <li>c) Changes in knowledge (increased critical thinking, grown in knowledge and skills, broader perspective, see from multiple angles)</li> <li>d) Taught me to organize and research – not just to assume</li> </ul>
	b) Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Frustrated with courses that don't enhance clinical knowledge</li> <li>b) Feel more stressed and more critical</li> <li>c) More tired, less active, less personal life</li> <li>d) More knowledgeable but more stressed out – can't wait for school to be over</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	a) Personal gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Increased resilience, develop new ways to deal with touch situations</li> <li>b) Change character (appreciation, empathy, growth, matured, proud, self-aware)</li> <li>c) Confidence (great sense of accomplishment, positive outlook, stronger person)</li> <li>d) Knowledge (critical thinking, technology/computer skills, deeper understanding of pathophysiology, of career options)</li> </ul>

**Table 68: Overarching Themes Related to Changes to Self as a Person**

Themes	Summary of Comments
a) Students are able to see personal gains with credit to themselves, the school and sometimes (in their opinion) despite the school	Students report focusing on their studies with determination and commitment, sometimes with and sometimes without perceived school support.
b) Consistent upward trend in positive personal attributes that constitute self as nurse	Personal changes are specific to responding to adversity and to rising to a challenge engendering broader perspectives and claims of resilience, empathy and appreciation.

When considering how participation in the program has changed them as a nurses, three common themes were identified across all 3 years of the program. Respondents wrote of their self-assessment of enhanced application of knowledge and critical thinking. As students progressed in the program, the degree to which they focussed on application of theory and research to practice and their appreciation of the need to make independent decisions about the care they provided also increased. Respondents also wrote of changes in their character as nurses, identifying increased levels of confidence, ability to think ahead and plan, increased capacity for caring and greater focus on caring and compassion. Finally, the theme of Professional Growth was identified across all three years. Respondents wrote of broadening their focus, becoming lifelong learners, becoming more professional, and seeing the potential for career advancement.

**Table 70** provides an overview of the themes identified related to student perception of changes in self as a nurse, as well as a summary of the examples provided by respondents. Critical thinking and understanding the impact of one's actions as a nurse are enhanced with increased knowledge and skill, as well as application of theory and research. While there is reference to growth in relation to professional work as a nurse, respondents focussed even more heavily on personal growth that then leads to changes as a professional.

**Table 69: Themes Related to Student Perception of Changes in Self as a Nurse**

Program Year	Analysis to 2 Levels of Abstraction	Examples from each year
<b>Year 1</b>	a) Application of knowledge and critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Deeper understanding of illness and patient</li> <li>b) ensure what I am observing makes sense with my interventions</li> <li>c) skills were mastered</li> <li>d) using skills and concepts practically at work</li> </ul>
	b) Change in character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) accountable and conscientious</li> <li>b) caring – more theory behind skills</li> <li>c) confidence increased</li> <li>d) more resourceful and organized</li> </ul>
	c) Professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) More consciousness of impact of my actions</li> <li>b) Mature and accountable</li> <li>c) Be professional</li> <li>d) Using critical thinking at work to figure out why and where pain is, instead of going for the medication first</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b>	a) Application of knowledge and critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Broadening nursing focus to health care system and global, including health teaching and research in practice</li> <li>b) Complete better health assessments and understand systemic problems</li> <li>c) More depth of knowledge, more critical eye</li> <li>d) More knowledgeable therefore more competent</li> </ul>
	b) Change of character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) More caring and compassionate</li> <li>b) More evidence-based so more confident</li> <li>c) Appreciate life more after meeting patients who are really sick</li> <li>d) Recognize all who are involved in the circle of care</li> <li>e) Hard to find a happy balance with work and school and life</li> </ul>
	c) Professional Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Determination to reach goal</li> <li>b) Lifelong and self-directed learning</li> <li>c) Understand role of RN and excited about possibilities</li> <li>d) Feel like studying harder – use learning at work</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3</b>	a) Application of knowledge and critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Think beyond what is presented to understand pt's condition</li> <li>b) Communicate more effectively</li> <li>c) Increased critical thinking, knowledge and skills</li> <li>d) Incorporate theory into practice with insight into caring behaviours and theoretical foundations</li> </ul>
	b) Change of character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) See clients more holistically</li> <li>b) More confidence, ability to think ahead</li> <li>c) Better nurse – ready for challenges; feel self-reliant</li> <li>d) More confident</li> </ul>
	c) Professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Broadening nursing focus – better understanding of health and its impact on society</li> <li>b) Career advancement opportunities</li> <li>c) Joy of learning</li> <li>d) Confused – original reasons for admission changing</li> </ul>

**Table 70: Overarching Themes Related to Changes to Self as a Nurse**

Themes	Summary of Comments
a) Critical thinking & understanding of impact of one's action and one's role are enhanced with increased knowledge, skill and theory/research base	Many respondents provided examples where they focussed on self-assessment of professional growth through critical thinking, knowledge enhancement, and skill acquisition.
b) Growth shows up in professional work, but is integral to the personal development that occurs because of the program	Many examples were cited of how the personal and professional are connected in becoming a registered nurse.

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## **Additional Areas of Inquiry**

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Two additional areas of data collection were conducted as part of Phase II of this project. Area of Inquiry #6 focussed on the workplace contact experience of having employees enrolled in the program. Area of Inquiry #7 focussed on past student experience in the program. Data collection for both these areas of inquiry took place in April- early June 2012.

Current students were invited to provide workplace contact information for a person within their healthcare organization who would be able and/or willing to provide information about the workplace experience of having students undertaking PN-BScN education. A total of only 6 workplace contacts were provided by current students. Of these, 5 fully completed either telephone interviews or submission of an electronic mixed method questionnaire. As a result of this relatively low number of responses, we have elected to continue to try to collect data and will report on the results of workplace contact interviews in a subsequent report.

Despite significant efforts to reach graduates and students who have left the RPN-BScN Program for a variety of reasons, we ultimately only received responses from 7 past students. Of those responses, 2 were fully completed questionnaires, 2 partially completed (with data sets complete enough to be included in some of the analyses), and 3 were too incomplete for any relevant analysis). This noted challenge in securing follow-up data from graduates is a significant finding, leading to the introduction of discussion around development of stronger alumni structures within this program).

Phase III of this is designed to allow insight into the experiences and perceptions of new graduates (those completing the program this spring will be contacted for follow-up over the fall). It is hoped both that: a) this finding of challenges in contacting past students will inform processes used in Phase III, and b) the data collected in Phase III will be able to give us further insight into perceptions of past students, albeit recent graduates.

Due to these challenges with data collection, these two additional areas of inquiry (Area of Inquiry #6: Workplace Contact Experience of Having Employees Enrolled in the Program; Area of Inquiry #7: Past Student Experience of the Program) will be reported on in the December 2012 final report.

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## Dissemination Activities

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**Data from this research project has been disseminated through the following academic presentations:**

Coffey, S., Lindsay, G., Sproul, S., Laird, A., Byrne, C., Erwin, E., Cochrane, M., Cummings, K., Macdonald, K., Mairs, S., Munro-Gilbert, P., Vogel, E., Bouchard, S., Lulat, Z., Salamat, N. Evaluation of Student Experience and Performance in RPN-to-BScN Education. RPNAO Educators Conference, Toronto (June, 2012) [poster presentation]

Coffey, S. & Anyinam, C. (2012). *Higher Education in Nursing: Innovative Programs Meet Our Duty to both Society and Our Profession.* RNAO Nursing: Caring to Know, Knowing to Care International Conference, Jerusalem, June 2012.

**The following presentations have been accepted through a peer-reviewed process:**

Coffey, S., Lindsay, G., Sproul, S., Laird, A., Byrne, C., Erwin, E., Cochrane, M., Cummings, K., Macdonald, K., Mairs, S., Munro-Gilbert, P., Vogel, E., Bouchard, S., Lulat, Z., & Salamat, N.). Bridging Education Shapes the Future of Nursing. Submitted to 4<sup>TH</sup> Biennial Nursing Conference, Faculty of Nursing, University of Windsor (September, 2012)

Coffey, S., Lindsay, G., Sproul, S., Laird, A., Byrne, C., Erwin, E., Cochrane, M., Cummings, K., Macdonald, K., Mairs, S., Munro-Gilbert, P., Vogel, E., Bouchard, S., Lulat, Z., Salamat, N. Evaluation of Student Experience and Performance in RPN-to-BScN Education. Submitted to RPNAO 54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and Conference: Putting Knowledge and Compassion into Action. Toronto, September 2012.

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## **Financial Reporting**

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Please find attached the financial reporting for this project. A pdf of the signed version of this document was transmitted electronically on June 28, 2012. As per our communication from CUCC on March 13, 2012, funds allocated to Phase 1 of this project but not yet spent will be carried over to Phase 2. If you would like us to provide an updated budget to reflect this, we would be happy to do so.

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