UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

UBC Nightlife Events: International Students (Race and Migration)

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University of British Columbia

PLAN 522

Themes: Community, Wellbeing

April 30, 2019

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Executive Summary

As an internationally renowned and increasingly cosmopolitan educational institution, a key challenge for the University of British Columbia (UBC) over the coming decades will be nurturing a vibrant, and inclusive community culture that is welcoming to students from all different parts of the world. Part of this challenge will involve planning for the provision of quality 'uniquely UBC' events that are inclusive to international students.

The purpose of this research is to provide recommendations to UBC's Community Development team on what a unique nightlife event(s) that attracts and is inclusive to international students could look like. The focus on a 'night-time event' was chosen, as this was seen to be a salient gap in terms of current campus events offered and an area of immense opportunity. Due to the lack of literature relating directly to this specific area of research, a preliminary task for our team was to synthesize existing bodies of literature on international student experience on campus, and barriers to international student engagement in campus events. The core focus of our research however, involved carrying out a series of informal interviews, a focus group, and a mapping exercise with twelve international students at UBC (both graduate and undergraduate) to garner their garner their insights into how UBC could construct an appealing inclusive night-time event. This qualitative analysis yielded some perspicacious results.

Key findings related to the ideal timing of an event (Fridays, preferably in early-mid fall); the quality of the event (uniqueness and event quality were greatly preferred over event quantity or homogeneous 'party' or 'sports events'); and the disproportionate focus on first year undergraduate students when planning events (3rd or 4th year undergraduates often felt they were a limited number of events aimed at their cohorts). Graduate students also reported feeling socially isolated and uncomfortable attending the many campus events which they perceived to be aimed at undergraduates. There was also a general consensus that marketing was often a weak point in terms of campus

events, and that a primary barrier to international student engagement with campus events was lack of awareness about these events in the first place.

Our recommendations stem directly from these findings. Several key recommendations include

1. Providing low-cost (or free) events;
2. Utilize existing club networks and capabilities to improve outreach to international students, and to collaborate in the marketing and running of events.;
3. Consider the differences in the student experience for graduate and undergraduate students and what their motivators and interests are.

Additional recommendations relating to potential types of events and the timing and location of these are also included in this report.

This research addresses the cardinal issue of how to welcome and integrate international students into Canadian campus life at UBC. The findings of this report provide a preliminary starting point about how this may be achieved through the creation of specific events on campus which appeal and are inclusive to a diversity of students - including those from other countries. From here, further research is needed to better understand the differences between undergraduate and graduate students in terms of barriers for engaging with campus social life, as well as a feasibility study for the types of events suggested in our recommendations.

1.0 Background

A key goal of the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Campus and Community Planning department is to provide community-building programs that bring life and vibrancy to campus (The University of British Columbia, n.d.a). In the past, the UBC Community Development team has leveraged on-campus public and outdoors spaces to deliver programs such as the Harvest Feastival, Chef Challenge, UBC Pride, Kids Takeover UBC, and International Women's Day Festival: Turn it Up and Disrupt (S. Bouvette, personal communication, January 16, 2019). Most of these events take place during the daytime and early evening with high turnout. However, community feedback has conveyed a desire for night-time events at UBC (S. Bouvette, personal communication, January 16, 2019). For our research project, our group collaborated

with UBC's Community Development team to address the current shortage of night-time programs offered at UBC. The overarching goal of our study was to gain insights on the factors that could contribute to an inclusive and vibrant night-time event on campus, which would engage the entire campus community, especially underserved populations, specifically considering groups under the lens of race and migration; gender and sexuality; disability; and Indigenous.

Our group was tasked to focused on race and migration, and decided to accomplish this by reaching out to international students. UBC is recognized for having a large population of international students. In 2018, there were 15,405 international students enrolled at UBC's Vancouver Campus, constituting 27% of the campus' student population (Planning and Institutional Research, 2018). Compared to domestic students, international students have greater and different adjustment challenges such as difficulties with communicating in English and adjusting into a new culture (Andrade, 2006). In general, they tend to experience more anxiety, stress, homesickness, loneliness, and have less social support than domestic students (Andrade, 2006). Taking this into consideration, our group held focus groups with international students to hear their perspectives on UBC nightlife and ways the UBC Community Development team can support their personal well-being and social integration through various programming initiatives.

2.0 Purpose, Objectives, Research Questions and Significance

Purpose: To provide recommendations to UBC's Community Development team for a nightlife event(s) that is inclusive and uniquely UBC.

Objectives:

- Gain insight on the types of campus nightlife events that would appeal to international students
- Determine what would make campus nightlife events inclusive for international students
- Develop strategies that would encourage international students to participate in future UBC night events

Research Questions:

- What would a UBC night-time event that is inclusive to international students look like?
- What would make this event uniquely UBC?

Significance: Our study will help determine strategies to attract international students to inclusive on-campus UBC night events. Overall, our research findings will contribute

to night-time vibrancy at UBC and, more generally, social connection and placemaking on campus.

3.0 Literature Review

Currently, there is limited literature about the participation of international students in university campus nightlife events. Thus, we divided our investigation of the literature into (1) the experience of international students at UBC and (2) the different barriers and opportunities related to international student participation in campus events.

3.1 International Students of UBC

UBC's international student population makes up 27% of the entire student population (Planning and Institutional Research, 2018). As part of its online resources, UBC has provided a digital International Student Guide that is marketed to allow students to "find everything [they] need to know about life as an international student at UBC's Vancouver campus" (The University of British Columbia, n.d.b). This guide provides students with information regarding immigration, health insurance, work, taxes, taking academic breaks from studies, academic resources, and finances. Embedded in this guide is also a link to an online resource that speaks to adjustment to life in Canada, providing some insight as to Canada's multiculturalism and making a cultural transition.

UBC international students face a number of pressures, including being away from home and family for the first time, coming to a country where customs are new and foreign to them, and facing social pressures and the sense of needing find a way to fit in. In some cases, UBC's own community is implicit in contributing to the need to conform. For example, in February 2019, UBC's co-op office ran an advertisement for an upcoming workshop focusing on professional development; upon further review, the workshop was seen as a way to reduce one's foreign accent and assimilate into Western culture (Talitha, 2019).

3.2 International Students and Event Participation

Commonly identified adjustments challenges faced by international students in a post-secondary academic environment include language barriers, cultural unfamiliarity, homesickness, and social isolation (Slantcheva-Durst and Knaggs, 2019). As such, attending nightlife or community events may be a low priority for international students

considering the immense pressures and potential difficulties of adjusting to or succeeding in their post-secondary studies (Owens and Loomes, 2010). For example, Glass and Westmont (2014) note that international students experience pressure to prioritize studying for extended periods of time and neglect leisure time. This consequently limits the development of valuable social networks that may be essential coping mechanisms for loneliness or stress (Glass & Westmont, 2014). These barriers to participation in community events and challenges to succeeding in post-secondary studies amongst international students are further amplified if there is a lack of English fluency and cultural unfamiliarity (Andrade, 2006).

Studies have also shown that international students are likely to congregate into culturally-similar social groups to avoid uncomfortable interactions with foreign cultures (Kusek, 2015; Owen and Loomes, 2010). One contributing factor is that international students may face anxiety when interacting in English especially if they lack English proficiency, which can limit their ability to connect with domestic students (Smith and Khawaja, 2011). Similarly, international students may not participate in community events because of aforementioned reasons of cultural and language unfamiliarity (Kusek, 2015). As a result, Andrade (2006) finds that only a minority of international students developed meaningful friendships with domestic students largely due to favouring friendships with culturally-similar individuals; by the same token, building relationships with peers and others on campus can cultivate the opportunity for students to build a strong sense of belonging to the campus (Yao, 2016). A sense of belonging is associated with students' sense of social acceptance (Yao, 2016), and more generally is an important motivator and determinant of overall wellbeing (Seppala et al., 2013). Therefore, the experience of international students on campus and the significance of relationship building in well-being should be considered (Glass and Westmont, 2014; Andrade, 2006;). These commonly identified factors of anxiety, stress, homesickness, and loneliness experienced by international students in conjunction with potentially lower levels of social support contribute to their overall risk of mental health challenges such as depression (Andrade, 2006; Mori, 2000).

However, the literature also identifies areas of opportunities in creating events that appeal to international students. Owens and Loomes (2010) find that cross-culture interactions are an essential part of post-secondary learning that is also highly valued by students. For example, these cross-culture interactions can include attending multicultural events or celebrations like Chinese New Year and Indian Independence Day as a chance for international students to proudly share their culture with the

community (Owens & Loomes, 2010). This current general understanding of barriers and opportunities for international students to participate in events helped guide our research questions to determine how UBC could create inclusive and appealing nightlife events for international students.

Methodology

The main methodological framework we used for our research was Community-Based Research (CBR). CBR is an approach driven by key principles, such as being community driven and action oriented.

It emphasizes joining the community as full partners in all phases of the research process. Also, it recognizes the importance of involving members of a study population as active and equal participants. Normally, partners contribute with their expertise to enhance understanding of a given phenomenon and integrate the knowledge gained with action to benefit the community involved (Israel, 2001).

According to Israel and Shultz (2003) the main characteristics of CBR are:

1. Recognizing the community as a unit of identity and expertise,
2. Building on the strengths and resources of the community,
3. Promoting co-learning among partners,
4. Achieving a balance between research and action,
5. Emphasizing the relevance of community problems, and
6. Disseminating knowledge gained to and by all involved partners.

We collected data primarily through qualitative methods, namely focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

Target Population and Research Site:

Groups We Worked With: Our group investigated the impact of race and migration status on participation in evening / night-time events hosted on campus. Considering that Canada's context on race and migration status is a complex and broad topic to approach, we opted to focus specifically on both undergraduate and graduate international students.

<u>Site and Where We Focused Our Attention</u>: As our group was tasked to help establish the type of night-life that would be appealing to a variety of students for UBC, we focused our study on the entirety of the UBC campus.

Outreach Process:

We used different methods to reach out to students, including emails, announcements before lectures, and recruiting participants from our acquaintances. We emailed different international student clubs, residences (e.g. Green College, St. John's College, Ponderosa Commons, and others) and Student Associations. These outlets helped distribute our invitation by: including it as part of their weekly email newsletters; posting in their social media networks; printing and posting a flyer about our event; and/or sending an email to students with our invitation and a digital copy of our flyer. Members of our team also visited different faculties and classes to reach out to more students. Finally, we reached out to contacts from our personal networks to invite more international students.

We offered four different time slots for students to register for a focus group; we asked students to fill in a registration survey or contact our team by email to register for a focus group. The goal was to have 6-10 people attend each session for a focus group with a strategy to hold interviews if we were unable to recruit enough participants. Due to the time constraints of the research project and "no-show" participants, we did not obtain enough participants to host four focus groups. We adapted our methods to follow this schedule (Table 1):

Table 1: Schedule of events

Wednesday, February, 13	Thursday, February 14	Tuesday, February 26
Interview (2 participants)	Interview (2 participants) Focus group (7 participants)	Interview (1 participant)

Data Collection Methods:

As part of our data collection, we decided to conduct focus groups and semi-structured interviews. We were interested in using the focus group method to provide students with a more comfortable space and atmosphere to share their personal experiences and to obtain more in-depth insights for our research. The usefulness of the focus group format for this purpose has been identified extensively in the literature (Morgan and Spanish, 1984; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014; Green *et al*, 2015).

- Focus group (Figure 1): Comprised of seven international students. The session lasted around 50 minutes.

Figure 1: Focus group held on February 14, 2019

- Interviews (Figure 2): We conducted three different interviews. Two of the interviews had two students participate and lasted around 50 minutes; one interview was conducted with a single individual with a duration of 40 minutes.

Figure 2: Interview held on February 13, 2019

Both methods followed the same outline of activities and schedule described below. However, we allowed flexibility in the agenda, to allow participants to direct the discussion as appropriate. As part of the activity, students were asked to sign a consent form [Appendix A] to allow the proper use and dissemination of the information gathered.

1. Introduction / welcoming (5-10mins)

When participants first arrived, they were greeted by our team and asked to fill in a brief demographics survey [Appendix B]. Participants were then invited to take a seat, socialize for a few minutes, and have some pizza. To introduce the topic, participants were invited to visualize an event the had attended and enjoyed and consider the qualities of the event that made it enjoyable; participants were asked to share that perspective in the discussion.

2. Focus group/interview discussion (~25mins)

Moderators facilitated a discussion around the potential for a night-time social event that is inclusive to international students and what this might look like. Before the exercise, the research team prepared a list of questions to help address the objectives of the research and guide the conversation [Appendix C]. Since students addressed different issues and topics, we allowed a certain flexibility on the discussion. At least two members of the team were in charge of notetaking for the interviews and focus group with the objective of recording as many insights and information as possible.

3. Mapping exercise (5-10mins)

A mapping exercise (Figure 3) was carried out to determine where participants think would be a good location on campus to hold a night-time event. Students were asked to identify the following spaces:

- Their favourite areas on campus
- Areas on campus that they perceived as posing challenges of safety / concern / barriers to participating in events
- Their preferred locations for evening events

Figure 3: Mapping exercise conducted during focus group held on February 14, 2019

4. Reflection (10mins)

As a closure of the data collection, participants were given time at the end of the session to write down or share their reflections on what they personally would like to see in an inclusive night-time event. They were also asked to reflect on topics that they thought we had missed during our discussion and other traits about their favourite event that had not been included.

Results Analysis

We conducted a thematic analysis from the interview notes and transcripts to draw some high-level recommendations with respect to UBC's nightlife participation from international students. While the sample size was relatively small, there were many common themes across the sample. In general, there were marked differences between the experience of undergraduate and graduate students.

Results and Analysis

Participants

In total, 12 students participated in data gathering (Table 2), with half of the participants living on campus. Participants ages ranged from 21 to 34 years of age; seven of the participants were 25 years of age or younger (one student preferred not to answer). Students came from a variety of faculties including: Applied Science and Engineering, Arts and Political Science, Arts, and Planning.

Table 2. Participants by gender and education level

	Graduate	Undergraduate
Female	1	3
Male	7	1
Total	8	4

Participants came from eight different countries (Figure 4), and half of them expressed that they felt comfortable speaking in English (Figure 5). Two students preferred not to indicate their home country and one student declined to provide their language of comfort. The results provided the research team with a level of comfort in knowing perspectives from around the world were being included as at least 67% of participants represented perspectives from different countries. It is important to note that students were able to select more than one language of comfort. It was important to researchers to have students describe their language of comfort rather than proficiency. That only 50% of participants considered themselves comfortable communicating in English should be considered with respect to event marketing and making international students feel comfortable at events held on campus.
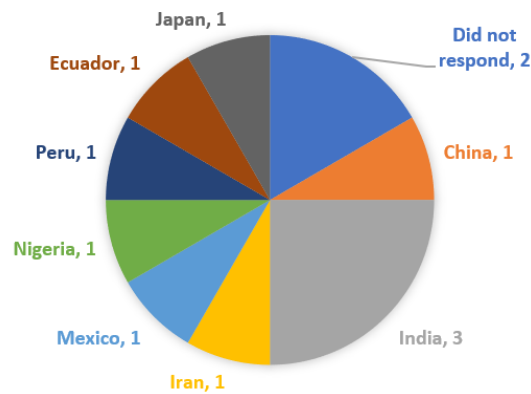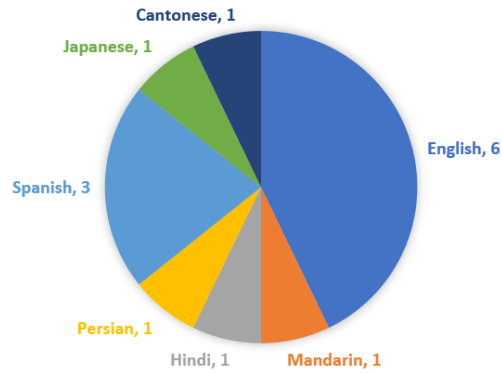
Figure 4: Participants' country of origin

Figure 5: Participants' language of comfort

Cantonese, 1
Japanese, 1
English, 6
Spanish, 3
Persian, 1
Hindi, 1
Mandarin, 1

Overview of Qualitative Analysis

Thematic analysis of the interview and focus group notes illustrated a number of common themes between all students. It also showed similarities and differences across graduate and undergraduate students. These differences will be discussed in greater detail below.

Interview and Focus Group Themes

1. Timing / Workload

Student schedules were seen were seen as a large barrier to students' ability to participate in activities that were not related to their academic studies. They stressed that consideration of exam season (typically around weeks six and seven of the semester) is important for them in participation of extra-curricular events. The week before and/or after reading week was suggested as an ideal time to host an event. The fall season was also identified as a good time due to the milder weather, though there was recognition that there are usually many events in September which could make the addition of an event overwhelming. Thursday or Friday nights were identified as the most desirable days and times for evening events.

Graduate students in particular stated that they had a lack of free time and felt that they needed to choose how they spent their free time "wisely." They also stated that they felt that their workload was very heavy and did not have a lot of time to invest in events; therefore, any events that were held would be preferred to be experienced on a shorter timeline or not require significant commitment.

2. Marketing

Graduate students in particular stated that they struggled to obtain information regarding events. They stated that the best way for them to access information was to

receive emails, however long, wordy emails were considered ineffective. While Facebook was another platform that was suggested to advertise events, it was made clear that not all students have Facebook or regularly engage in social media and that if it were a "Facebook group" event, students would need to be members of the group.

When interviewees described physical signage for *Homecoming* or *Storm the Wall* being advertised along Main Mall with lawn signs, some students that stated that they did not always frequent Main Mall and were not aware of the signs. This may be a result of the location of students' classes, and in particulate graduate students who may take most of their classes in one location on campus. As such, it is necessary to expand beyond physical signage on along Main Mall and consider other locations on campus as well as other mediums such as visually-appealing posters.

Undergraduate students did not seem to encounter the same issues as graduate students did when it came to event marketing, as it generally seemed that they were better connected with the overall campus community compared to graduate students.

3. Quality

Overall, both undergraduate and graduate students described that event quality was a big factor with respect to whether or not they would attend. Event quality encompassed not only the marketing of the event, but considered whether marketing matched the promise of event, the price of the event, and whether students felt like they received good value for the price paid.

Undergraduate students in particular identified situations where they had paid for events after seeing enticing marketing, but were disappointed once they had actually attended the event. One specific incident involved UBC's Pit Night where a long line up was created to make it appear that the event was popular; however, once inside the venue, there was actually few people participating in the event. Issues with event quality had a negative effect on the overall perspective of certain events and heavily influenced the likelihood of attendees returning to that event or an event of similar nature.

Students described the use of incentives as being a good way to increase participation. Things such as free tickets, free food, or "swag" were identified by participants as being particularly good motivators to attend an event. An aspect of a good quality event that

was brought up in each focus group was having food at an event. While food acted as a large motivator for attendance, alcohol was not as important of a characteristic in motivating attendance. There was interest in having alcohol at an event, but not making the event alcohol-centric.

4. Event Requirements

Events like *Storm the Wall* were identified as events with barriers to participation. *Storm the Wall* was listed as being particularly limiting because for students who self identified as being unathletic; students felt they needed to register with a group of people, which in and of itself was a turn off, because they could not participate by themselves. The fact that some individuals take it very seriously with training as well as needing to perform in front of others also contributed to students' disengagement. On the other hand, some students identified that their faculties were quite active and enjoyed participating in such events.

Competition-motivated events resulted in mixed feelings among students. Some students were very interested in having events centered around competition and sport - possibly between students and faculty - whereas other students preferred social and non-competitive events.

5. Price of Tickets and Availability

Generally, when it came to the price of tickets, both undergraduates and graduate students preferred events that were at a low cost or free. Students also identified cost as a barrier in participation, forcing them to often pick the events where they felt they would gain the most benefit Students also voiced that ticket availability for many events was quite limited. Specifically, it was said that the TEDx talk on campus was in high demand, and there were limited amounts of tickets sold for this event.

Graduate Student Barriers

6. Social Isolation

Graduate students generally expressed that they found it difficult to feel a sense of social belongingness in the UBC community. Generally, there was a feeling that UBC served an academic purpose and felt like their social needs had to be met off campus. One student stated that they would stay on campus only to work on school-related things and that the remainder of his life occurred off-campus. A general sense that all events are targeted towards undergraduate students was had with most of the

graduate students, as they were unable to attest to the experience of attending common UBC events such as *Storm the Wall* or *Block Party*.

Graduate students stated that they felt that UBC did not assist them in adjusting to life in Canada; the UBC orientation was very focused on academic and administration aspects, rather than social events and cultural aspects. Students' ability to understand the orientation was further challenged due to language barriers. A number of students stated that their faculties became responsible for making them feel welcome and having the ability to meet new people; however, this often limited them to meeting people from within their faculty. Others stated that there were significant limitations with respect to learning appropriate Canadian customs and socially-acceptable behaviours, making them feel out of place; this was described as being particularly challenging for individuals moving to a foreign country for the first time and living alone. With many graduate programs being quite small, many graduate students have difficulty meeting others outside of their programs, as programs also emphasize academics rather than social events. These social barriers were identified as being inhibitors to graduate student participation in events.

7. Department Driven and Networking Events

Graduate students listed events run by their own department as being those they attended most often. They stated that while they did not feel particularly supported by UBC as a school, they felt that their department provided opportunities to obtain professional training and network, often through the department's student association. Graduate students listed that they had much more interest in meeting people either professionally or socially in other departments through fun, social events. Graduate students also seemed to be focused on obtaining employment following completion of their degree, thus focusing their attention on professional networking.

Undergraduate Student Barriers

8. Club Driven Events

Undergrad students listed participation in club-driven events rather than UBC-organized events. They stated that clubs appeared to have good coordination among one another, allowing larger events to be held. Other undergrad students identified events that were promoted by the UBC Party Calendar Club as being events that were of most interest to them - UBC Party Calendar provided them with easy access to knowing when and where different events were being held and gave them a list of

options to spend their time. With UBC clubs being heavily influenced by undergraduates, Graduate students felt out of place at many of these events. Undergrads generally had a stronger network within the club community, while graduate students had a stronger network within their program.

9. Fresher *"Bucket List"*

None of the undergraduate participants were first year students; they were all upper level students who were familiar with many of the larger activities that occurred on campus such as *Storm the Wall*, *Homecoming*, and *Block Party*. The undergraduate students described a "Freshman 'Bucket List'" phenomenon, where students upon arriving to UBC in their first or second year have a desire to attend a number of events; however, by the time they reach their upper division years (third or fourth year) they felt that they had already attended the events and do not feel compelled to the same events again. Students stated that this was not particularly due to event quality, but rather related to the fact that they felt that the events were marketed towards first- or second-year students and they had already experienced the event. Students also described frustration that those who were not of legal drinking age in their first year could not attend many of these events and they then struggled to find friends to re-attend with them in their second year. This led to recommendations from students to have events re-configured to make them more appealing to upper level students or to host events that are targeted towards upper level students while maintaining the existing events, recognizing that they are most appealing to lower level students.

Mapping Exercise

10. Event Locations

Students identified a number of locations as their favourite places on campus or areas they felt would be appropriate to host campus-wide events (Figure 6). Some of the top areas for an event were:

- The Nest
- UBC Farm
- Museum of Anthropology (MOA)
- Koerner's Pub
- Chan Centre
- Nitobe Garden

Figure 6: UBC Map with participants' stickers Indicating their favourite places on campus, locations with barriers (e.g. being too far) and their preferred locations for a night-time event

Focus group members identified why these spaces were their preferred locations. The Nest was favored as it had easy access and was close to the bus loop, whereas the Museum of Anthropology and the Chan centre were favored as they were artistic event spaces with attractive facilities. The outdoor event spaces that were chosen were the UBC farm and Nitobe Gardens. These locations were said to be quiet and relaxing. However, the UBC Farm was also noted as an event space that could pose challenges, as it is located far from central campus.

With respect to safety for night-time events, overall most interviewees felt safe around campus but one of the focus group members expressed that he felt unsafe when walking alone on campus; his sentiments were attributed to discourse and perception of campus safety.

11. Desired Characteristics for Successful Events

With a unique group of individuals, there was a wide range of desired characteristics for successful events on campus. Some of the ideas that were brought up were events that had a social dimension to it, specifically, events that allowed the space to meet new people and catch up with old friends instead of the typical events just geared around partying and dancing. With UBC being such a large campus, many felt that after

second year. everyone disperses into their own programs, and it was nice to be able to catch up with old friends at more casual events. These characteristics also resulted in attendees providing suggestions on the types of events that would appeal most to them (Table 2).

Table 2. Participants' recommendations for events to be held on campus

Arts and Culture	Professional	Social	General
• Canadian Culture (e.g. "welcome to Canada) • Multicultural events (e.g. cooking and sharing food from different cultures; sharing of dance and art) • Art events (e.g. music concerts, theatre, dance)	• Professional / education events (e.g. TED talks) • Networking, "speed-dating"-style event	• Movie nights • Game nights (e.g. video games, escape rooms, scavenger hunts)	• Sports events • Night markets

Students emphasized the significance of culture and expressed Interest In attending any type of cultural event, particularly those enabling them to learn more about Canadian culture or a multi-cultural event (e.g. world fair). Students identified these events as ones that could help enhance the social connection between international students and domestic students, as they are able to share about their own cultures, interact with people from the same cultures, as well as learn about new cultures and meet new people.

An idea that was proposed was the 'flipping' of a space. This takes the traditional uses of an event venue and "flips" the space to another use. An extreme example would be turning the library into a nightclub. Other event ideas that were suggested were smaller and included events like going to see a local UBC student art gallery, or multicultural events that were geared towards foods. It was suggested that many of these smaller events would be in collaboration with UBC clubs.

Events with a central focus on music were also noted to be successful. Currently, many of the music events on campus are at a large scale (e.g. Block Party). Music events with

an intimate setting that promoted local UBC artists would be valued by students and would also require less planning than large scale music events. Events like these could be held in many locations on campus, including Koerner's Pub, MOA, the UBC Farm, the Nest, and one of the many UBC libraries (Flipped Space).

Limitations

One of the major limitations for this research was the short timeframe we had. This impacted all parts of our research, from project design to data analysis, but put especial pressure on our outreach efforts for potential survey respondents. Ideally, we wanted to have all our data collection completed before mid-February (reading break) to give us sufficient time to conduct our data analysis and prepare our report. However, this only gave us approximately 10 days to reach out to potential survey respondents. Although we did not initially perceive this to be an issue, our primary method of outreach was via email, which produced a lower response rate than we had anticipated. This is not something we fully realized until several days before our first focus group, when it became apparent that we had significantly fewer respondents than we had hoped for, and that we would need to substantially increase our outreach efforts. This made for a frenzied few days leading up to our first focus group.

A consequence of this limitation was that we had a smaller sample size that we were ultimately aiming for. The total number of participants from in the focus group was seven. Initially, we had hoped to have a total of 20-25 participants, with a fairly even male/female graduate/undergraduate split. Although participation for our focus group was sufficient, a greater number of participants could have provided a richer variety of perspectives and insights, potentially resulting in a more informative dataset.

A limitation of our "snowball" / convenience sampling outreach method was that we had little control on the type of international student who would sign up for our focus group. Consequently, some demographics were overly represented in our dataset (e.g. male graduate students), whilst others were significantly underrepresented or not represented at all (e.g. female graduate students, male undergraduate students). The results of this research should, as such, be interpreted with caution: a qualitative analysis of 12 students does not provide an unbiased representation of the wider international student community at UBC. Were we to repeat this research with more time and fewer resource constraints, we would perhaps have aimed to gain a more representative dataset by targeting specific demographics and groups of international

students through a more "segmentation" orientated outreach approach (Morgan, 1997). Working in collaboration with existing UBC international clubs to get specific types of participants may be beneficial for this purpose in the future.

Although the effectiveness of focus groups to provide valuable qualitative data is well documented (Morgan and Spanish, 1984; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2014; Green *et al*, 2015), the focus-group format does have some inherent limitations. One limitation is that some participants who are more outspoken than others tend to dominate the conversation (Smithson, 2000). In our situation, this was largely mitigated by our facilitators, who would often direct the conversation to allow shyer participants to contribute to the dialogue more easily. However, as part of what makes a focus group unique is letting the interaction and dialogue between participants take shape organically (Liamputtong, 2011), the opinions and thoughts of some dominant respondents are likely overrepresented in our dataset, whilst the voices of others were partially drowned out. We did try to circumnavigate this issue by having a five to ten minute 'reflection' period at the end of each focus group or group interview, where participants were able to individually write their thoughts on the matters discussed within the focus group or interview. However, participants were generally reluctant to present their opinions in writing, and appeared to prefer sharing their thoughts orally. Supplementing our focus group and group interviews with additional informal individual interviews before and/or after the focus group takes place would have been a potential way to mitigate this limitation further. Similarly, although our focus group methodology provided us with a rich qualitative dataset, carrying out some complementary quantitative analysis (perhaps through a short survey) could have provided a broader range of insights about what makes a UBC night-time event accessible to international students that would have been inaccessible through a purely qualitative approach (Terrell, 2012).

In addition to limitations in the methodology, there are also limitation in our research findings as the international students expressed an interest in participating in events that resulted in a sharing of culture and experience, with particular interest in learning more about Canadian culture. Unfortunately, as our study looked only at the international student population, it is unclear as to whether domestic students would be open to interacting more with international students or participating in events centered around multiculturalism.

Recommendations

This qualitative research project indicated that in order to bring about inclusive and uniquely-UBC events, a shift beyond the conventional focus on 'sports' and 'party' type events should be considered. After hearing the perspectives of international students on UBC nightlife and events, our group has developed the following recommendations:

Characteristics of events

While the data collected illustrated that event appeal can be a subjective measure, general statements were made that echoed across most study participants:

- Consider the differences in the student experience for graduate and undergraduate students and what their motivators and interests are

- Promote free or low-cost events

- Explore hosting cultural events
  - These events might include Canadian-specific and multicultural events such as Chinese New Year and Indian Independence Day events, or a "World Fair" where students can share the food, art, music, etc. of their home country.

- Consider new and unique events
  - Re-branding or re-configuring existing events could make them more appealing to upper level students, or consideration of events targeted towards upper level students while maintaining the existing events could mitigate the impact of the "Fresher bucket list"

- Ensure venue space meets expected attendance

Location

UBC has a number of prime locations that were identified as good locations to host campus-wide events; however, each location meets different objectives that should be considered, particularly when organizing night-time events:

- The Nest
- MOA
- Chan Centre
- Main Mall
- Utilize larger spaces for high attendance events

- Events such as TEDx talks are high demand and could warrant the use of a larger venue to accommodate all students wishing to attend.

Marketing

The key is to market future UBC night events to both graduates and undergraduates, as opposed to just the latter, to ensure that all students feel included and welcome at the events. To do so, UBC might consider the following recommendations:

- Partner with existing clubs
    - The UBC Party Calendar can also increase awareness of UBC night events.

- Use a diverse range of outreach methods
    - Methods could include: social media outlets (e.g. Facebook, Instagram), emails that are concise and include fun pictures, and visually-appealing posters displayed in various locations on campus (e.g. Main Mall, faculty buildings, the Nest, the Graduate Student Society Loft).

- Provide incentives (especially free food)
    - Participants had a positive reaction to the provision of free food at the event and/or social media contests to win free tickets or merchandise.

Timing

Students expressed a need to ensure that their academic needs were met, particularly with respect to their schedules and workload. To accommodate this need, successful events could:

- Be hosted the week before or after reading week

- Be hosted on Thursday, Friday or a weekend night

- Be drop-in or 1-2 hour commitments

Further Research and Next Steps

The results of our focus group and interviews highlight key differences between graduate students and undergraduate students; thus, further exploration as two separate target populations is recommended. As mentioned in the Limitations sections, a larger sample size with more diverse participants (including domestic students) would be helpful in gathering insights from more people, other faculties and year-levels. This

could be achieved through in-person recruitment methods (e.g. conducting intercept invitations, utilizing existing international/cultural club networks, visiting international residences) as opposed to email recruitment which was the primary method for this study.

- Conduct a feasibility analysis of the different types of events suggested in the previous section based on different evaluation criteria (e.g. cost, ease of organizing the event, ability to meet the community's objectives and feedback, resource and time requirements, and the reach and inclusivity of the event)

- Continue to collaborate with students during the nightlife event brainstorming and planning process through focus groups, community engagement booths, surveys, etc.
  - This would increase community support and participation in future nightlife events and help ensure that they are inclusive and uniquely UBC.

Conclusion

Our research has highlighted several barriers faced by international students to engaging with social campus life at UBC. In terms of navigating these barriers, our findings about the characteristics and types of events that would appeal to international students will be useful for UBC's Community Development team in planning for future campus events. Our research also revealed the divergent experiences of graduate and undergraduate international students at UBC. Future research seeking to better understand international student experience at UBC should endeavour to treat these two groups as separate populations. Welcoming and integrating international students to Canadian campus life at UBC should be a high priority for the university. Providing unique, interesting and quality events which appeal and include international students; keeping the price of events low; and utilizing existing club networks to promote and run campus events provide a framework for how this may be achieved.

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APPENDIX

A. Consent Form

<div align="center">

CONSENT FORM
Study for "Campus Nightlife Gap and Opportunity Analysis: Race and Migration Status"

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Principal Investigator: Sara Ortiz Escalante
Co-investigators: Laura Chow, Hayston Lam, Mark Poskitt, Sean Reisman, Ryah Rondolo, and Itzel Sánchez
Institution: University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning

Purpose:
For the final assignment in PLAN522, students are asked to provide recommendations for an on-campus UBC nightlife event and gain insight on the types of campus nightlife events that would be appealing to and inclusive of international students.

Study Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be discussing your ideas around nightlife events through a focus group or semi-structured interviews. You will be sharing your perspective, interests, and concerns regarding nightlife events within a safe environment.

Project Outcomes:
The data generated by this research will be used to inform UBC Campus and Community Planning and submitted as a report to the UBC SEEDS Office. You have been chosen to participate in this study because the students who are requesting your participation are interested in your perspective of nightlife at the University of British Columbia.

Confidentiality:
Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. Any notes will only be seen by Sara Ortiz Escalante and the co-investigators.

Potential Risks:
This study focuses on your preferences of night activities. You do not have to answer any of the questions posed in any phase of this study. You may skip any question. If you do not wish to answer a question in a personal interview, you may simply say something like, "I'd like to skip that question."

Remuneration/Compensation:
In order to acknowledge the time you have taken to be involved in this project, you will receive the following compensation for participation: the option to enter a draw for one of two $50 gift cards.

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions, you can contact Sara Ortiz Escalante at sara.ortizescalante@ubc.ca or 778-989-5164.

Contact for concerns or complaints about the study:
If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line

in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598, or, if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. By signing below, you acknowledge receipt of a copy of this Consent Form, for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study, for you to be audio-recorded, and taken pictures of during the focus group session/interview. If you do not want to be included in pictures, please inform a student facilitating the focus group session/interview.

Signature:
Printed Name:
Date:

B. Demographics survey questions:

- What is your country of origin / what is your ethnicity?
- Are you a graduate or undergraduate student or other?
- Do you live on campus or off campus?
- What is your language of comfort?
- Gender
- Age (or Age range)
- What program / faculty are you in?

C. Semi-structured Interview / Focus Group Questions:

- Do you ever stay on campus after class?
- What do you consider to be "late" to stay on campus?
- What would make you want to stay on campus longer?
- Have you been to any UBC events in the afternoon or evening? How were they? How did you learn about it? (e.g. mention past events)
- What sort of events would you like to see on campus? Would any of these be night-time events?
- Are there any aspects of events that would strongly encourage you to attend (e.g. food, drinks, music?) Are there any aspects of events that would strongly discourage you to attend ('dealbreakers')?
- What do you feel are the biggest barriers to your participation in an event hosted on campus in the evening time?
- Do you feel like there are any current events on campus that are inclusive to international students?
- What aspects of night events would make you feel excluded? (e.g. alcohol - age restrictions, language barriers?, location of events, etc.)
- Do you feel comfortable on campus? Do you have any safety concerns in participating in events on campus at night-time?

- Think about your favourite event that you attended. What did you like about it? What made it memorable for you? Etc. etc.
- What would you personally like to see in a UBC on-campus night-time event? Describe the ideal event, including as many details you can think of. What about the event would make it feel inclusive to international students? What would make it uniquely UBC?
- [[Maybe a survey question, listing different types of events, and ask them to select the top three [and describe the reasons for their choices?]] (E.g. movie screening, music concert, night market, silent disco, light festival, talent show, ice skating event, night-time picnic, etc.)

D. Focus Group Agenda:

- Introduction to the topic:
  - We are a group of students who have been tasked with looking at UBC's current nightlife and look at ways that UBC might be able to increase night-time vibrancy on-campus. We generally consider "night-time" as the time after sunset; however, we are interested in knowing what your perception of "night-time" is.
- We have elected to also utilize a map to have individuals:
  - Locate their favourite areas on campus
  - Areas on campus that pose challenges of safety / concern / barriers to participating in events
  - Preferred locations for evening events
- Reflection question:
  - What have we missed? What traits about your favourite event have not been included in today's discussion?

E. Picture From Mapping Exercise:

Legend:

- 🖤 = favourite place on campus
- ★ = ideal place for night event
- 🙁 = locations with barriers to participation (e.g. too far)