

HARPER ADAMS STUDENTS' UNION

Student Voice Report

Term One 2023/24

Introduction

The HASU Student Survey 1, 2023/2024 received 874 responses. This is a 9.5% increase from last year.

Below is a chart recording demographic changes in our responses and a comparison of our survey demographics percentages relative to the university.

	2022/2023	2023/2024	Harper Demographics 2023/2024	Survey Response Percentage	Difference to Uni demographics
Total Number	Responses: 799	Responses: 874	All enrolments 3,262	26.80%	
Undergraduate	783	849	2,402 or 73.64%	97.14%	+23.5%
Postgrad	16	25	328 or 10.05%	2.86%	-7.19%
LGBTQ+	75	120	n/a	13.73%	n/a
Commuter	n/a	137	n/a	15.68%	n/a
Mature	n/a	84	778 or 29.16%	9.61%	-19.55%
Students with disabilities	161	228	586 or 21.96%	26.09%	+4.13%
International	41	57	395 or 14.8%	6.52%	-8.28%
BAME	28	47	693 or 25.6%	5.38%	-20.22%

Survey response increases of underrepresented groups compared to 22/23 demonstrates the hard work of our Student Executives to promote HASU voice work among their community.

This survey has a strong focus on underrepresented groups in part to assist our Executives in their campaign planning. With greater knowledge of their communities, the Executives can plan a campaign based on the needs of their group.

Two questions were added – *Do you consider yourself a commuter student?* and *Are you a mature student (aged 21 or over when you started your course)?* to better understand these underrepresented communities.

The survey also focused on student voice, mirroring the student voice NSS questions. Historical NSS data shows improvements across Harper albeit with below benchmark scores for Harper vs Sector in NSS Theme 7: Student Voice. Including key NSS questions in the HASU student survey was an opportunity to take stock of our current cultural and academic conditions and act for the betterment of student experience and outcomes.

The survey also mirrored three questions from a nationwide WonkHe/Pearson study on belonging and mental health. This was done to investigate comparisons between national cultural challenges and challenges specific to Harper Adams.

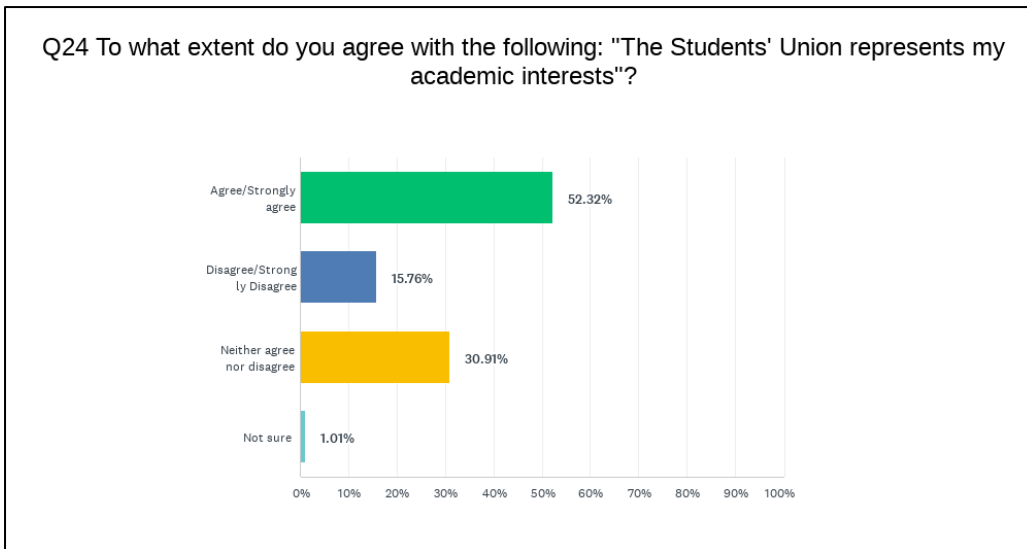
Executive Summary

Key Finding	Action
Postgrad students and mature undergraduate students have communicated a need for greater community on campus.	We will continue collaborating with our postgrad Student Executive to design activities specifically for mature student groups.
Mature undergraduate students score lower on all mental health/wellbeing measures than the average undergraduate.	We will explore the possibility of adding an elected Mature Student Executive for the upcoming academic year.
There is a statistically significant, positive relationship between participating in SU clubs and societies, and the mental health of our students.	<p>The SU has developed a range of new societies in conjunction with student leaders. We are committed to developing additional opportunities and reviewing our prices to ensure activities are accessible and sustainable.</p> <p>We will continue to investigate how HASU can increase new activities for the growing diversity of student interests and work with the University where applicable.</p>
There is a widening gap between the feelings of safety and community amongst heterosexual students and LGBTQ+ students.	We will work with the university, the LGBTQ+ Society, and our LGBTQ+ Student Representative, to create new strategies that build positivity among the LGBTQ+ community.
Students have communicated a need for additional plug sockets in lecture theatres.	We will continue lobbying for the university to invest in the infrastructure of the university by providing the plug sockets necessary for effective learning.
Students continue to report the need for additional social and informal learning space.	We will continue to lobby the university to invest in more fit-for-purpose spaces on campus, including a renovation of the ground floor Faccenda (the 'SU hub').

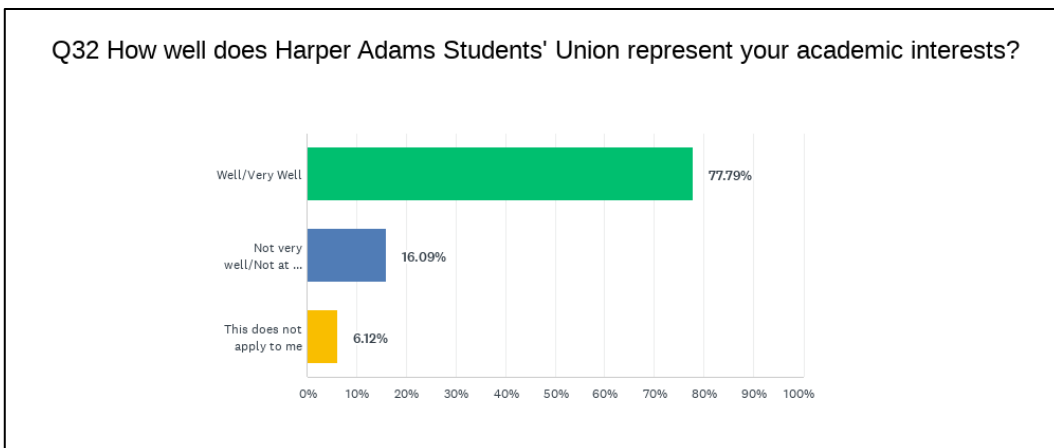
Student Voice Report – Survey 1

NSS Questions

There is a suggested improvement in response to the question of Harper Adams Students’ Union academic representation of students. Though the question format was altered to mirror the NSS, a comparison suggests that our voice work is making a difference.



HASU Student Voice Survey 2 2022/23



HASU Student Voice Survey 1 2023/24

We predict that our greater emphasis on academic representation, and our commitment to communicate those efforts to students, has resulted in this positive shift in opinion. We believe it is also a reflection of the hard work of our Educational Champions. Question 33 tells us that 72% of students agree or strongly agree

that: "SU Educational Champions (Course Reps) represent my voice at course committee meetings". A breakdown of this question by year and faculty provides opportunities to improve representation by showing years/departments in which students feel less confident in their academic representation. A breakdown of this question by faculty will be presented at a collaborative meeting scheduled with all ECs with the aim of deliberating on future strategies.

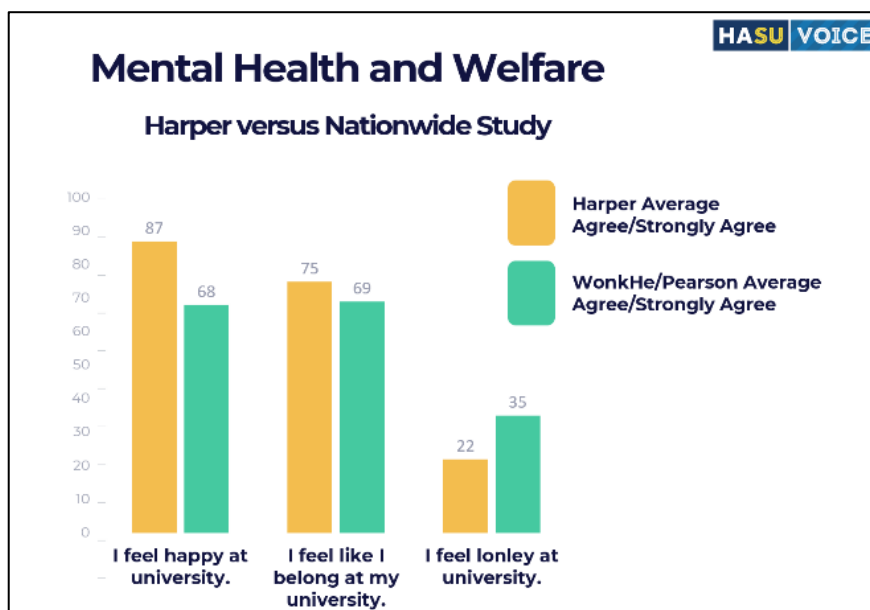
The additional NSS questions suggest that while student voice work is improving on campus, final year students are the least likely to answer positively to student voice NSS questions. Therefore, there is a predicted improvement in student voice NSS questions, though this improvement may not be seen until the following year's survey.

Student Voice Questions from WonkHe/Pearson

The WonkHe/Pearson study surveyed 5,233 students from 15 universities across the UK. The study's focus on mental health and belonging was used as a measure of the overall health and wellbeing of the student body, as well as a strong measure of the student experience as a whole. For that reason, we mirrored three of the questions to compare Harper students to this larger, national group. Results show that in each question, Harper students self-reported higher levels of belonging and happiness, and lower levels of loneliness than the average WonkHe/Pearson responder.

While this is positive, it should be noted that the WonkHe/Pearson study was done in the year 2021/2022 and the recent covid lockdown experience was most likely an influence.

This may shed light on our own survey results from final year students who consistently show lower satisfaction levels. It is possible that beginning their educational journey in lockdown conditions has decreased the student experience of these Year 4s even into their final year.

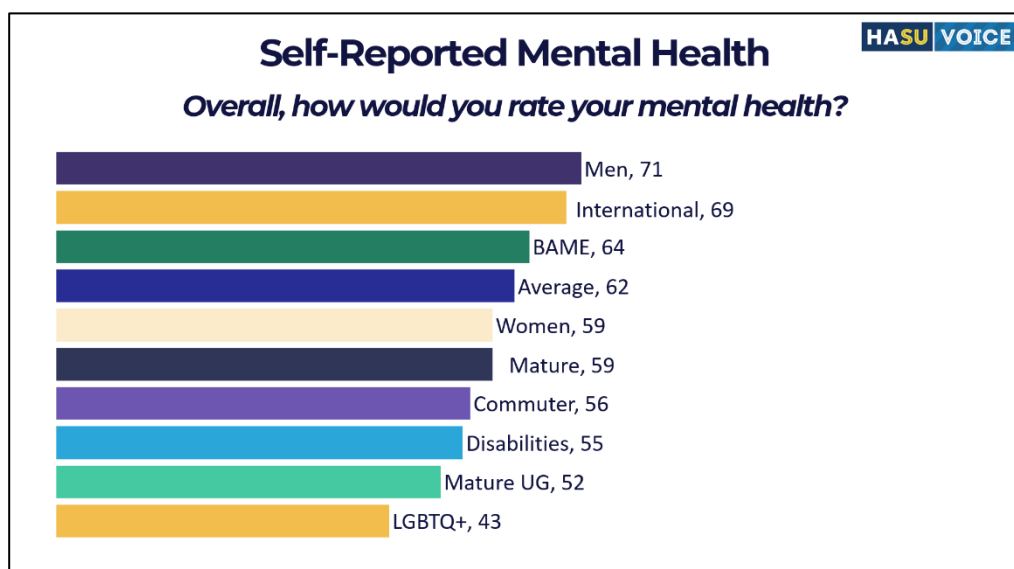


Mental Health

Statistical analysis of our data demonstrates that self-reported mental health correlates positively with a sense of belonging, feelings of happiness, and not feeling lonely (see appendix).

The following student groups: BAME, LGBTQ+, those with disabilities, commuters, and students who did not join a club or society, showed significantly lower scores on the four wellbeing variables – they are less likely to feel a sense of belonging, report lower feelings of happiness, higher feelings of loneliness, and lower mental health (see statistical graphs in appendix).

When asked to self-report their mental health, LGBTQ+ (43/100), mature undergrads (52/100), and students with a disability (55/100) rank the lowest. Men (71/100) and international students (69/100) rank the highest.



Postgrad Summary

Responses from postgraduates show a desire to grow community. When asked ‘How important is it to feel a part of the Harper community?’ postgrads responded with 81/100. When asked if they feel a part of the Harper community, they responded with an average of 64/100.

This 17-point difference compares to an 8-point difference reported by the undergraduates.

Relative to undergrads, the postgrads are much less likely to join an SU club or society. 55% of undergraduates join a club and 55% a society, versus 14% of postgrads joining a club and 23% a society. When postgrads were asked for their reason for not joining, most responded that they don’t have the time, or don’t feel that the available clubs and societies are appropriate for postgrads.

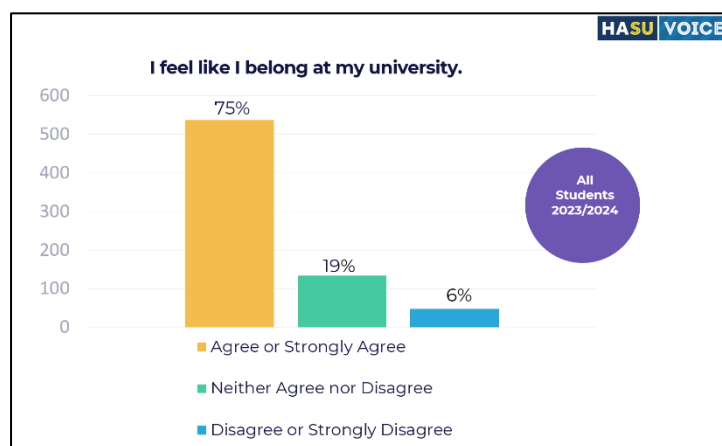
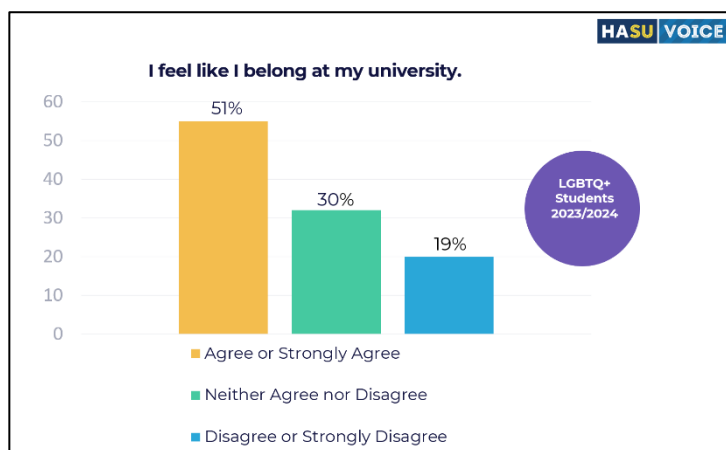
For these reasons, the SU will continue collaborating with our postgrad Student Executive to design activities specifically for this mature group. The written responses from postgrads indicate that the idea of ‘community’ differs from that of the undergrads and we will work to consider the specific interests and needs

of these students.

LGBTQ+ Summary

While our number of LGBTQ+ survey responders has increased this year – suggesting the possibility that numbers of LGBTQ+ students have increased on campus – feelings of belonging and safety have not improved.

Results show that LGBTQ+ students feel less safe in SU venues and on campus, relative to non-LGBTQ+ students. LGBTQ+ students are also less likely to report feeling as though they belong at their university.



They also report feeling less respected by other students relative to their heterosexual peers and are feeling less respected this year relative to last year.

Harper’s LGBTQ+ students are reporting lower mental health – from 48/100 last year to 43/100 this year. This downward trend for LGBTQ+ mental health is not mirrored by the average mental health score which has risen 2 points – from 60 to 62.

In response to this widening gap between the feelings of safety and community amongst heterosexual students and LGBTQ+ students, the Students’ Union is motivated to create a new strategy that builds positivity among the LGBTQ+ community.

Mature, Undergraduate Summary

Results from mature students in undergraduate programs were lower than average in all wellbeing/mental health questions. They report lower mental health scores, lower feelings of community, and higher rates of loneliness. They are less likely to join clubs and societies and are more likely to report a lack of events offered by the Students’ Union and the university that suit their interests.

We recommend that more events be offered to this group in alignment with their interests and needs and recommend the creation of events for all mature students on campus – postgrad and undergrad.



We will also explore the possibility of adding an elected Mature Student Executive for the upcoming academic year.

Other Underrepresented Groups

Commuter, Disabilities, Women, BAME, International

All underrepresented communities showed lower than average survey responses to wellbeing and belonging questions with one exception – Postgrads show a slightly higher belief that they belong at university relevant to the average Harper student.

Therefore, we will continue working with our Student Executives in the creation of individual campaigns financially supported by the SU and designed for the needs of the group.

Sports and Societies

Students who join a club or society report stronger mental health. Club and society members also report significantly stronger feelings of belonging and happiness, and lower feelings of loneliness (see appendix). These results support our efforts to promote and fund the clubs and societies that are vital to our students' wellbeing.

Furthermore, the under-funding of certain clubs and societies (like crafting, dance, theatre, etc) which are not of the historical Harper type (traditionally rugby, shooting, etc) is likely leading to greater feelings of alienation for many members of our diversifying student body.

Campus Life

We continue to ask students how we can improve their academic and social experiences here at Harper and continue to receive requests that social space be improved to allow for more comfortable and efficient collaboration.

The ground floor of the Faccenda building – the 'SU Hub' in particular – is a large, underused space that the SU believes would be ideal for this persistent student problem. While there has been positive discussion with Estates regarding this renovation, there has been no concrete steps toward improvement.

Students also consistently request more outlets in lecture theatres, especially Teaching Block and Weston Lecture Theatre. Again, while Estates has been verbally positive in their efforts to address this persistent need, there is no concrete plan to add sockets and we will continue to lobby for this student need.

Appendix – Statistical Notes

Mental health (Q66) correlates positively with sense of belonging (Q59).

There are only 265 responses for the mental health question. The mean score is 62% (min = 0 and max = 100, Standard deviation = 25.4). See the descriptive statistics below.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel happy at university. (High score High happiness)	719	1.00	5.00	4.1544	.76288
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	719	1.00	5.00	3.3825	1.07635
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	719	1.00	5.00	3.9332	.88219
Mental Health rating	265	.00	100.00	62.0302	25.43424
Valid N (listwise)	265				

The four wellbeing variables (happiness, not lonely, sense of belonging and mental health rating) correlate positively and strongly with each other. They are all statistically significant (p <.001). See the correlation table below.

Therefore, mental health (Q66) correlates positively with sense of belonging (Q59), happiness (Q57) and not feeling lonely (Q58).

Correlations

		Mental Health rating	I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	I feel happy at university.(High score High happiness)	I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)
Mental Health rating	Pearson Correlation	1	.487**	.585**	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	265	265	265	265
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	Pearson Correlation	.487**	1	.671**	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	265	719	719	719
I feel happy at university. (High score High happiness)	Pearson Correlation	.585**	.671**	1	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	265	719	719	719
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	Pearson Correlation	.462**	.441**	.511**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	265	719	719	719

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The groups which showed statistically significant lower score on the four wellbeing variables are: BAME, LGBTQ+, those with disabilities, commuters, those did not join a club and those not joined SU society.

Students who join a club or society self-report stronger mental health and greater feelings of belonging, happiness and less likely to feel lonely.

See the test results.

		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	White	680	4.1706	0.017	Significant	
	BAME	38	3.8684			lower
	Total	718	4.1546			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	White	680	3.9632	<.001	Significant	
	BAME	38	3.3947			lower
	Total	718	3.9331			
Mental Health rating	White	241	61.7261	0.632	Not Significant	
	BAME	23	64.3913			
	Total	264	61.9583			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	White	680	3.4015	0.037	Significant	
	BAME	38	3.0263			lower
	Total	718	3.3816			
		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	LGBT group	107	3.7383	<.001	Significant	Lower
	Not LGBT	581	4.2565			
	Prefer not to say	31	3.6774			
	Total	719	4.1544			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	LGBT group	107	3.4206	<.001	Significant	Lower
	Not LGBT	581	4.0534			
	Prefer not to say	31	3.4516			
	Total	719	3.9332			
Mental Health rating	LGBT group	52	43.2885	<.001	Significant	Lower
	Not LGBT	200	67.7950			
	Prefer not to say	13	48.3077			
	Total	265	62.0302			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	LGBT group	107	3.0187	<.001	Significant	Lower
	Not LGBT	581	3.4802			
	Prefer not to say	31	2.8065			
	Total	719	3.3825			
		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	With disabilities	183	3.9727	<.001	Significant	Lower
	No	519	4.2216			
	Prefer not to say	16	4.0625			
	Total	718	4.1546			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	With disabilities	183	3.8197	0.13	Not Significant	
	No	519	3.9730			
	Prefer not to say	16	3.9375			
	Total	718	3.9331			
Mental Health rating	With disabilities	70	55.4143	0.003	Significant	Lower
	No	188	65.0585			
	Prefer not to say	6	41.1667			
	Total	264	61.9583			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	With disabilities	183	3.2459	0.016	Significant	Lower
	No	519	3.4451			
	Prefer not to say	16	2.8750			
	Total	718	3.3816			

		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	Not joined club	336	3.9732	<.001	Significant	lower
	Yes, Joined club	383	4.3133			
	Total	719	4.1544			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	Not joined club	336	3.6845	<.001	Significant	lower
	Yes, Joined club	383	4.1514			
	Total	719	3.9332			
Mental Health rating	Not joined club	121	57.3223	0.006	Significant	lower
	Yes, Joined club	144	65.9861			
	Total	265	62.0302			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	Not joined club	336	3.2679	0.007	Significant	lower
	Yes, Joined club	383	3.4830			
	Total	719	3.3825			
		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	Not joined SU society	335	4.0478	<.001	Significant	lower
	Yes,joined SU society	384	4.2474			
	Total	719	4.1544			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	Not joined SU society	335	3.7791	<.001	Significant	lower
	Yes,joined SU society	384	4.0677			
	Total	719	3.9332			
Mental Health rating	Not joined SU society	107	57.2430	0.011	Significant	lower
	Yes,joined SU society	158	65.2722			
	Total	265	62.0302			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	Not joined SU society	335	3.2746	0.012	Significant	lower
	Yes,joined SU society	384	3.4766			
	Total	719	3.3825			
		N	Mean	Sig		
I feel happy at university.(High scoe High happiness)	Non Commuter	598	4.1789	0.055	Significant	lower
	Commuter	121	4.0331			
	Total	719	4.1544			
I feel like I belong at my university.(High score High sense of belonging)	Non Commuter	598	3.9766	0.003	Significant	lower
	Commuter	121	3.7190			
	Total	719	3.9332			
Mental Health rating	Non Commuter	229	63.0393	0.103	Not Significant	
	Commuter	36	55.6111			
	Total	265	62.0302			
I feel lonely at university (High score not lonely)	Non Commuter	598	3.3946	0.501	Not Significant	
	Commuter	121	3.3223			
	Total	719	3.3825			