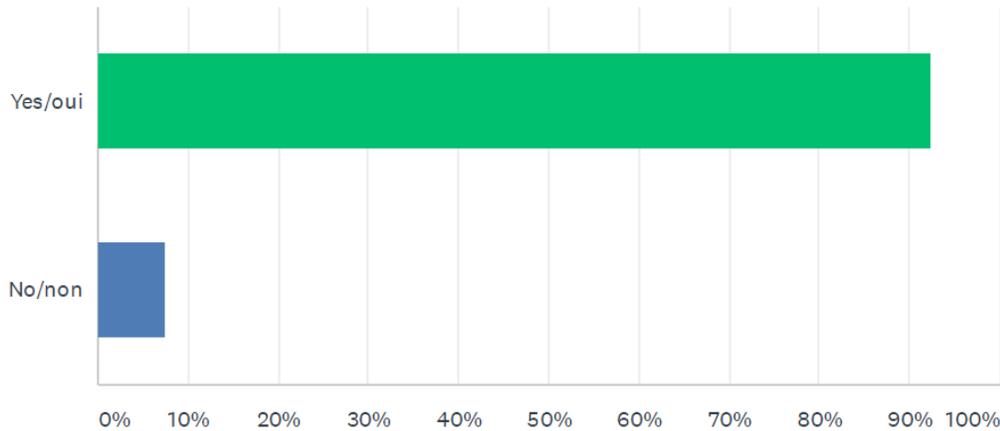


2020 Student-Athlete survey summary and analysis

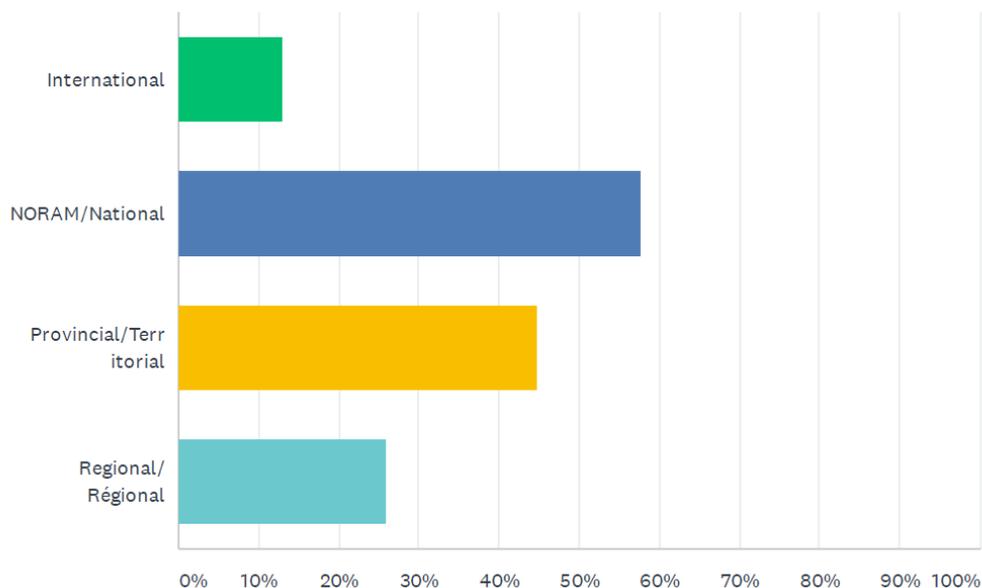
Q1 Are you or will you be racing in xc skiing during the 2019-20 race season?
Participez-vous ou participerez-vous à des courses de ski de fond pendant la saison 2019-20?



Summary and analysis

- 131 respondents in total
- The survey was targeting post-secondary students so some respondents were attending CEGEP in Quebec or a high school outside Quebec (assuming this was their final year so were responding as graduating to university for fall of 2020). 22 athletes corresponded to either statuses.
- The vast majority of respondents are currently racing

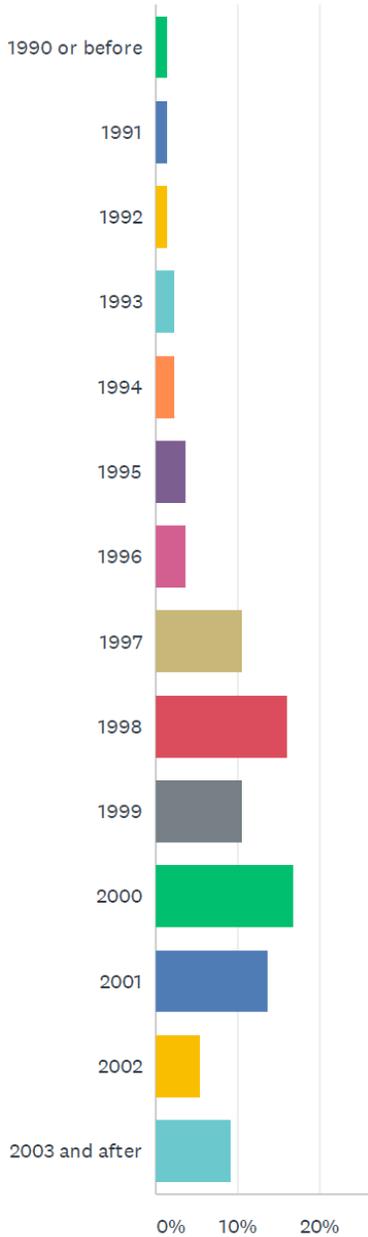
Q2 If you will be racing during the 2019-20 race season, which level of racing will be your main focus / Si vous participerez à des courses au cours de la saison 2019-20, indiquez le niveau de course qui sera votre objectif principal:



Summary and analysis

- Error in answering options that allowed for multiple choices; some respondents have picked more than 1 level of racing as their main focus. Nonetheless, stats indicate that the vast majority of respondents race at a high level, ie provincial/territorial and above.
- Thus answers should reflect the reality of athletes needing to commit significant time for training and competing given their age and stage of development.

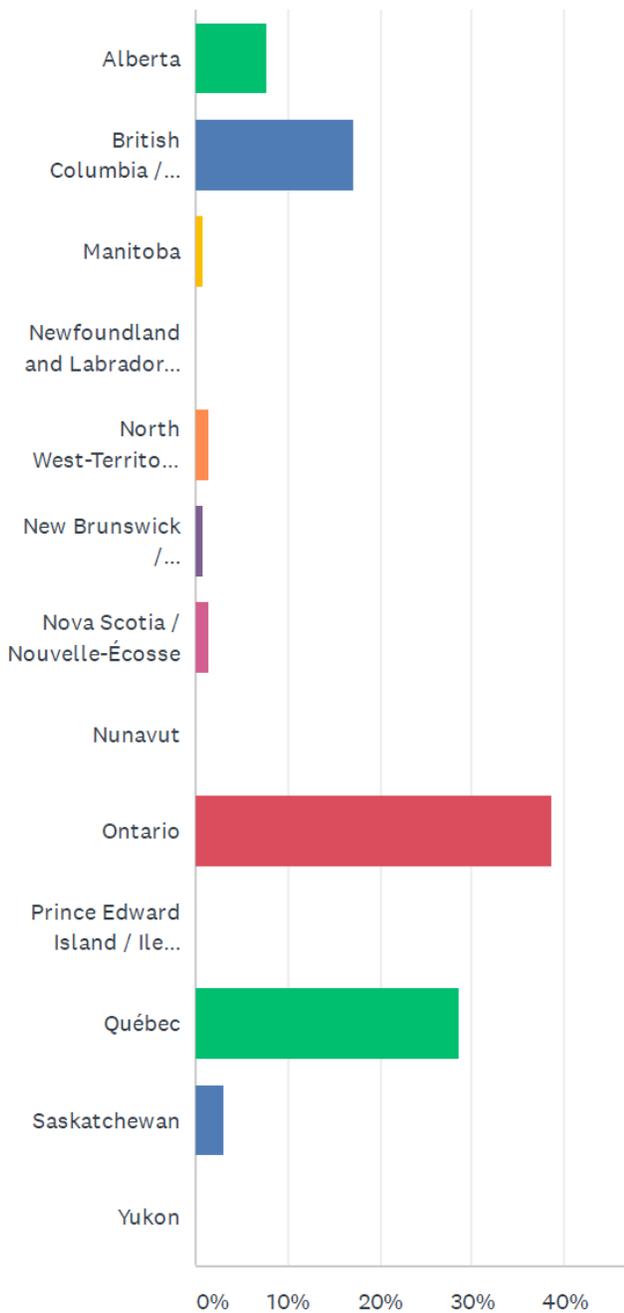
Q3 Please indicate your year of birth / SVP indiquez votre année de naissance.



Summary and analysis

- 60% of respondents born between 1997 and 2001 (18 to 22 year old) and therefore race in the U20 and U23 categories
- Athletes born between 2001 and 2003 were essentially high school students or attending CEGEP in Quebec

Q4 Please enter your home province or territory / Indiquez votre province ou territoire de résidence.



Summary and analysis

- Majority of respondents from Ontario and Quebec (67%). Not surprising since these 2 divisions count the most Nordiq Canada licensed skiers and also the greatest number of universities. That is also why these 2 divisions are considered as standalone U Sports conferences, while the two others are formed of Western divisions and Atlantic divisions.
- Ontario in particular already counts many University teams, some varsity programs. U Laval varsity program in Quebec also accounts for several respondents. This fact suggests that many answers reflect the reality of athletes already members of university ski teams.

Q5 Which statement describes you better? / Quel énoncé vous décrit le mieux?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I am an active xc ski racer currently enrolled in University/College classes (correspondence or in class) for the 2019/2020 academic year. Je suis actuellement un coureur ou une coureuse de ski de fond inscrit(e) à l'université/collège (par correspondance ou en classe) pour l'année scolaire 2019-2020.	78.46% 102
I am an active xc ski racer not currently enrolled but considering taking University/college classes (correspondence or in class) for the 2020/2021 academic year. Je suis actuellement un coureur ou une coureuse de ski de fond pas actuellement inscrit mais qui envisage de suivre des cours à l'université/collège (par correspondance ou en classe) pour l'année scolaire 2020-2021.	6.92% 9
Other (please provide detail) Autre (veuillez préciser)	14.62% 19
TOTAL	130

Summary and analysis

- Vast majority of respondents currently enrolled in university or college which suggests that they can currently relate to the reality of active post-secondary student-athletes. This is normal as this survey specifically targeted this demographic group.

Q6 What university (if applicable) are you currently enrolled in (please specify city and province)? / À quelle université (si applicable) êtes-vous actuellement inscrit(e) (veuillez préciser la ville et la province)?

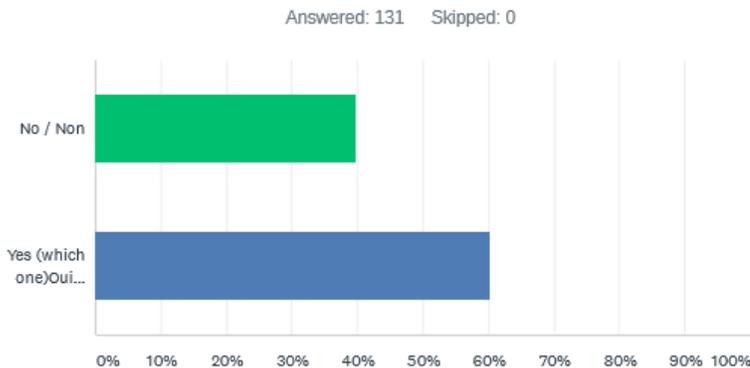
SCHOOL/ÉCOLE	DIV.	#
U of Calgary	AB	13
U Laval	QC	12
U of Ottawa	ON	11
Carleton	ON	10
McGill	QC	7
U of Guelph	ON	7
Lakehead U	ON	5
Nipissing	ON	5
McMaster	ON	4
U of Alberta	AB	4

U of Toronto	ON	4
UBC	BC	4
UBCO	BC	2
Bishop	QC	2
ETS (Montreal)	QC	2
U Sherbrooke	QC	2
UQTR	QC	2
HEC	QC	1
Heritage	ON	1
Laurentian U	ON	1
École Polytechnique (Montreal)	QC	1
U of Waterloo	ON	1
TOTAL:		103

Summary and analysis

- Almost half of respondents attending universities come from 4 institutions: U of Calgary, U Laval, U of Ottawa and Carleton
- 18/22 universities represented are in Ontario or Quebec

Q7 Are you currently a member of a university ski team, and if so which one? / Étes-vous actuellement membre d'une équipe de ski universitaire et, si oui, laquelle?



SCHOOL/ÉCOLE	
Rouge et Or (QC)	10
U Ottawa (ON)	13
McGill (QC)	7
U de Montréal (QC)	4
Université Bishops (QC)	2
Carleton U (ON)	10
U of Calgary (AB)	3
U of Toronto (ON)	3
Augustana U (AB)	1

Nipissing U (ON)	5
Lakehead U (ON)	4
Guelph U (ON)	5
Nordic Skate XC (?)	1
Waterloo U (ON)	1
McMaster U (ON)	4
UBC (BC)	2
Laurentian U (ON)	1
Total :	76

Summary and analysis

- 60% are currently a member of a university ski team
- Respondents were primarily from Laval University, University of Ottawa, and Carleton University ski teams. Confirms that the majority of respondents are from QC and ON and are part of a ski team.
- 40% of respondents are not on a post-secondary ski team. It can be surmised that a ski team does not exist at the attended institution of the athlete or that the athlete is simply not a member of that team.

Q8 Whether you are currently a member of a university ski team or not, which would be your preferred university to attend if it had a varsity xc ski team program (i.e. offering athletic and academic support)? / *Que vous soyez actuellement member d'une équipe de ski universitaire ou non, quelle serait votre université de choix si elle avait un programme d'équipe universitaire de ski de fond (i.e. offrant un support sportif et académique)?*

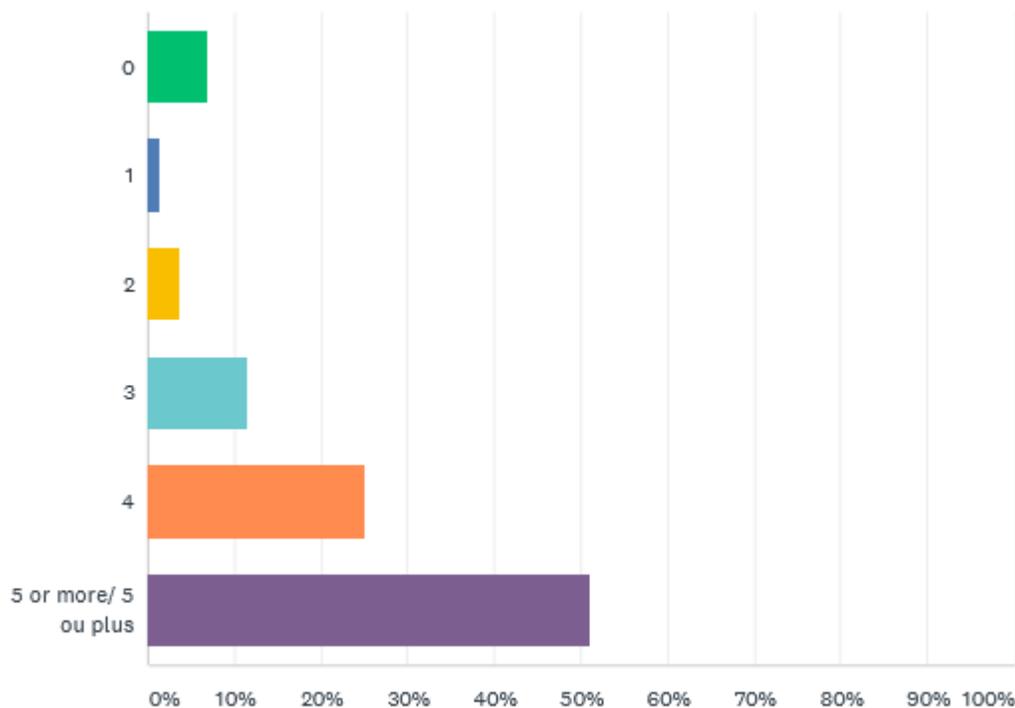
Preferred Varsity Ski Team	
Ottawa	6
Calgary	10
Manitoba	1
NCAA	1
Queens	1
Laval	13
UQTR	2
UBC	1
McGill	7
U de Montréal	2
Bishops	1
Sherbrook	2
Alberta	3
UBC Okanagan	6
UBC	13
Carleton	4
Saskatchewan	1
UNB	1
Toronto	1
Guelph	5
Lakehead	4

Nipissing	4
Dalhousie	2
McMaster	6
Harvard	1
UQAL	1
Don't know	2

Summary and analysis

- Calgary, Laval and University of British Columbia had the highest preferred response rate.
- Of the three, only Laval currently offers a varsity xc ski team program offering academic and athletic support.
- The combined responses from UBC and UBC Okanagan, along with those for U of Calgary, indicate that there is a very strong interest in a varsity ski team program from those institutions. These stats should be presented to them to encourage these institutions to initiate varsity programs for xc skiers.
- Furthermore, the high rate of responses for U of Calgary and UBC suggests strong potential participation in an eventual Western USPORT conference racing series.
- Apart from these 4 preferred institutions, the vast majority of respondents chose universities located in Ontario and Quebec. This makes sense as there are quite more universities located in these two provinces, along with a higher population, and strong ski divisions/membership. Currently, Ontario is the only province with a strong University ski circuit and hosting an official provincial university championship event (OUA).

Q9 How many classes were you enrolled in for the Fall semester? / À combien de cours étiez-vous inscrit (e) à la session d'automne?



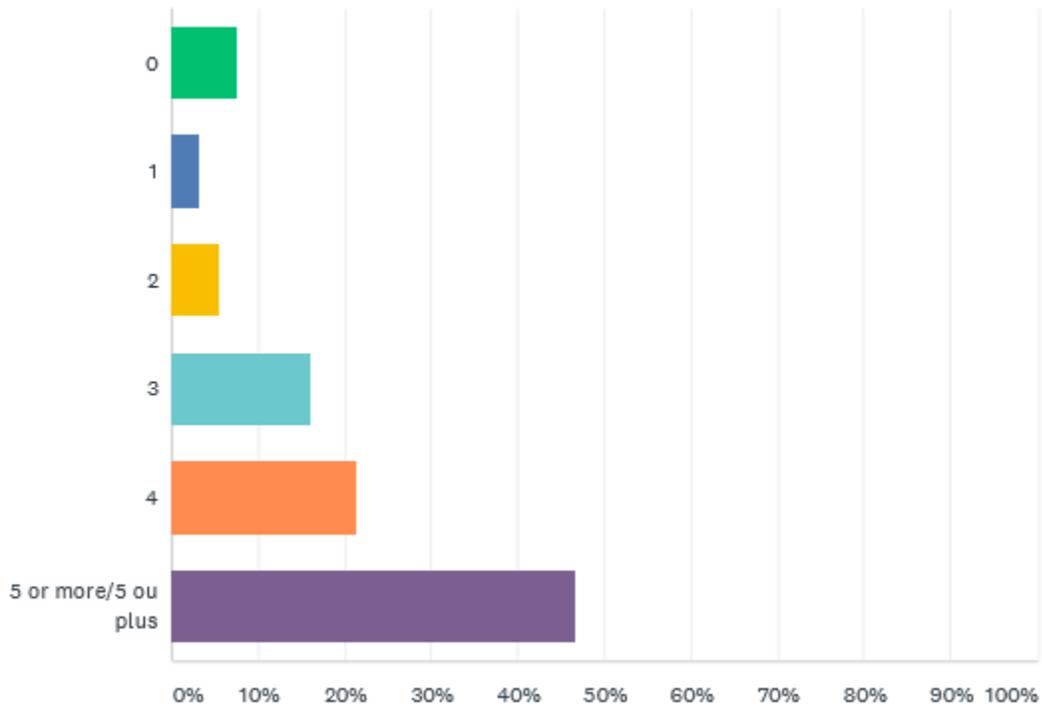
Summary and analysis

- 88% of respondents were full time students in the fall (taking 3 or more courses).
- Taking minimum of three courses may be a requirement to receive scholarships, athlete eligibility, student

loans, and to access RSP contributions.

- 51% of respondents taking 5 or more classes which indicates that many student-athletes make a priority of maintaining an important course load year round despite the important demands of training and racing at the level indicated in Q2. This may suggest a prioritization of school over athletic excellence for a majority of current student-athletes. If true, further investigation as to reasons why should be undertaken to hopefully identify ways for athletes to opt for a more balanced approach.

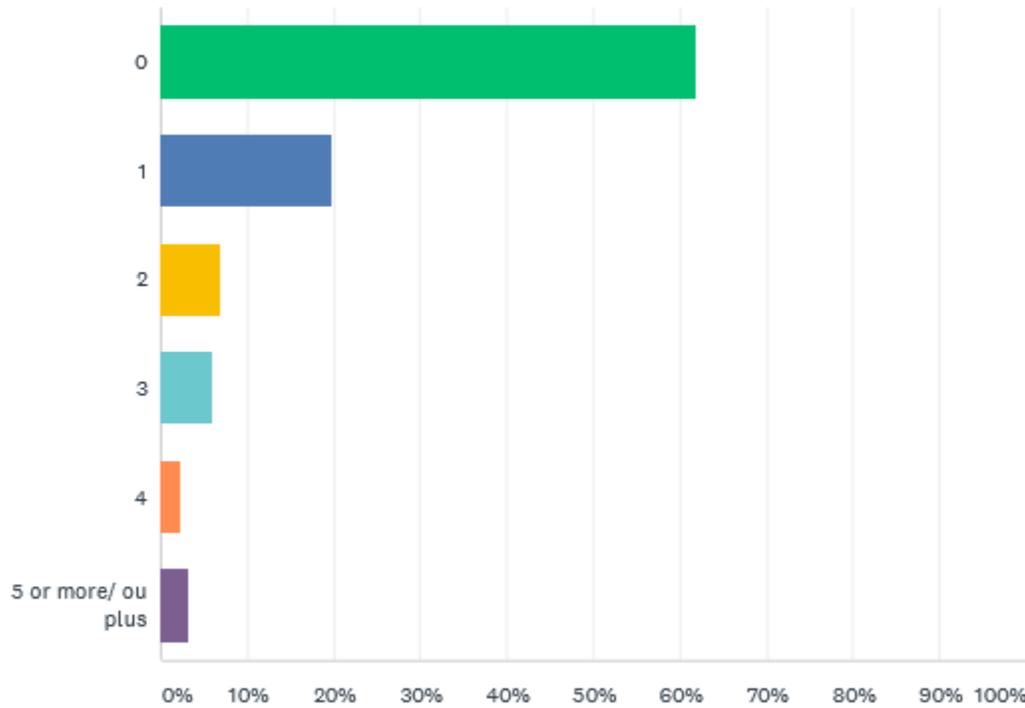
Q10 How many classes are you enrolled in for the Winter semester? / À combien de cours êtes-vous inscrit (e) à la session d'hiver?



Summary and analysis

- 84% of respondents taking 3 courses or more during the winter semester, only 4% less than for the fall semester.
- With a high proportion of students having indicated that they are also racing, it is important to note that they have not reduced their course load significantly in the peak racing months. As suggested in Q9 this may be to maintain benefits associated with a full time course load.
- Because of the significant time commitment required to pursue excellence in both sport and school considering the number of classes the average student-athlete is enrolled in, it would be interesting to collect and analyze data on how successful these student-athletes actually are in either fields, and in what ways one may actually positively or negatively influence the other.

Q11 How many classes do you plan on enrolling in for the Summer semester? / À combien de cours prévoyez-vous vous inscrire à la session d'été?

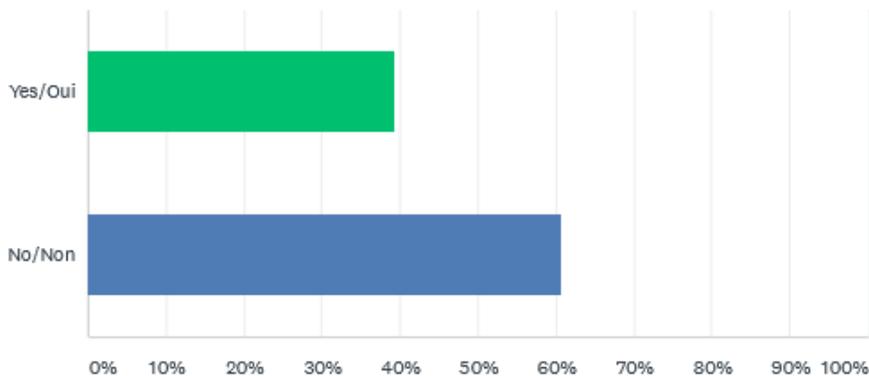


Summary and analysis

- Demonstrates that generally the students are following a standard academic program focused on Fall and Winter semesters but nonetheless a significant proportion of student-athletes (38%) do take 1 course or more during summer.
- Based on the high response rate of full time students over Fall and Winter, it can be surmised that those taking courses over the summer do so to fulfill academic timelines and course availability and not necessarily to free up course time during the winter race season.

Q12 As a student-athlete, are the FISU Winter Games an important goal to you? / En tant qu'étudiant-athlète, les Jeux d'hiver de la FISU sont-ils un objectif important pour vous?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 1

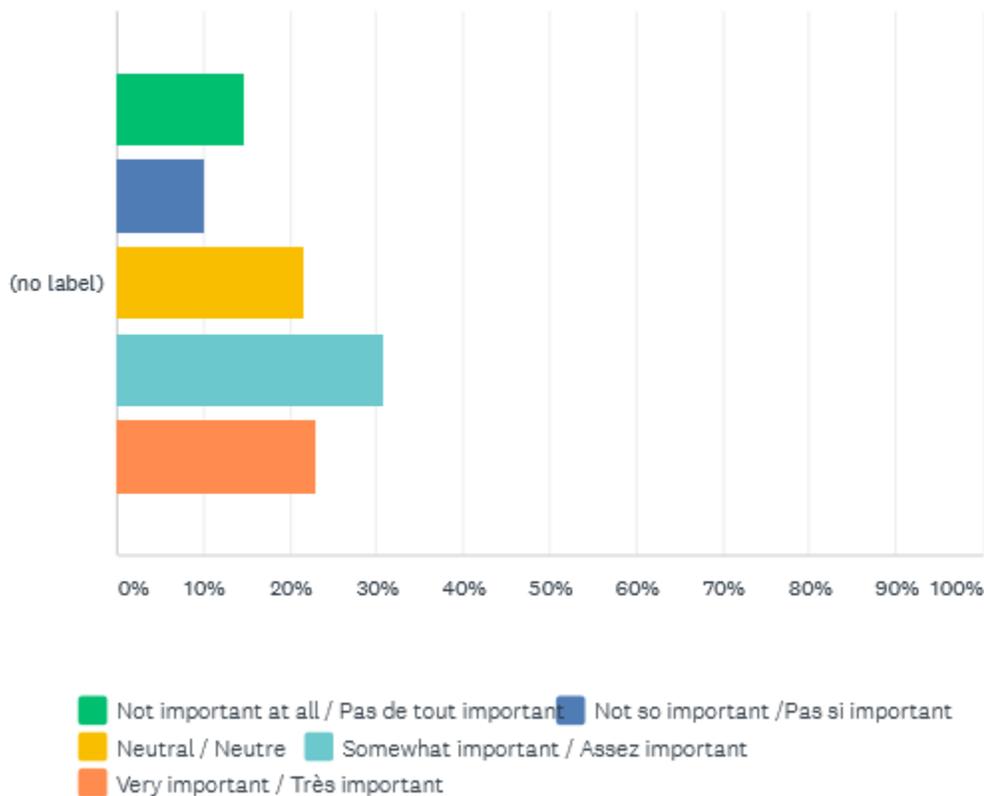


Summary and analysis

- Fairly split response, with preference towards FISU games as being a non-important goal.
- Respondents indicated in the concluding question of the survey that a deterring factor of FISU games is the associated trip costs, along with the lack of support from Nordiq Canada. These sentiments may contribute to FISU games as being a non-important goal.

Q13 As a student-athlete, how important are University athlete rankings to you on provincial and national racing series (including Nationals)? / En tant qu'étudiant-athlète, dans quelle mesure les classements des athlètes universitaires sont-ils importants pour vous en ce qui concerne les séries de courses provinciales et nationales? (Y compris les championnats canadiens)

Answered: 130 Skipped: 1



Summary and analysis

- 54% of respondents indicating that university athlete rankings at events are somewhat important to very important
- In retrospect, the interpretation of what being “neutral” on the question actually means is ambiguous. The intent of the choice of answers provided was to provide a clear scale from *Not important at all* to *Very important*. The scale would have been clearer using terms such as not important at all, not so important, somewhat important, quite/fairly important and very important.
- In the absence of a clear interpretation of the intent of respondents choosing “neutral”, it still seems reasonable to assume that those respondents thought that university athlete rankings were more than “not so important”. If this assumption is commonly accepted, then it would mean that a fairly

strong majority of respondents feel that these rankings are at least important enough to not disregard the initiative.

Q14 How important are the following aspects of a xc ski team program to you when considering what school to attend (please rate each of item)? / Dans quelle mesure les aspects suivants d'un programme d'équipe de ski de fond sont-ils importants pour vous lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer l'école à fréquenter? (Veuillez évaluer chaque élément)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT / PAS DU TOUT IMPORTANT	NOT SO IMPORTANT / PAS SI IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL / NEUTRE	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT / ASSEZ IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT / TRÈS IMPORTANT	TOTAL
The program having Varsity Status / Le programme ayant un statut d'équipe universitaire officielle	1.01% 1	9.09% 9	12.12% 12	42.42% 42	35.35% 35	99
Having a Full Time Head Coach / Bénéficier d'un entraîneur chef à temps plein	0.97% 1	4.85% 5	10.68% 11	29.13% 30	54.37% 56	103
Support for academic accommodations (deferring exams/academic scholarships etc) / Soutien pour les arrangements scolaires (report d'examens/bourses d'études, etc.)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.06% 2	26.80% 26	71.13% 69	97
Number of races the team attends / Nombre de courses auquel l'équipe participe	4.08% 4	5.10% 5	12.24% 12	46.94% 46	31.63% 31	98
Attending the CCUNC National Championships / Participer aux championnats nationaux CCUNCU	9.18% 9	14.29% 14	16.33% 16	32.65% 32	27.55% 27	98
Athletic Scholarships / Bourses pour les étudiants-athlètes	1.06% 1	9.57% 9	6.38% 6	39.36% 37	43.62% 41	94
Ability to take classes online or by correspondence / Possibilité de suivre des cours en ligne ou par correspondance	8.16% 8	15.31% 15	22.45% 22	32.65% 32	21.43% 21	98
School's proximity to quality xc ski/training facilities / La proximité de l'école par rapport à des installations de ski de fond et d'entraînement de qualité.	0.99% 1	1.98% 2	3.96% 4	30.69% 31	62.38% 63	101
Diversity of programs offered by the school / Diversité des programmes offerts par l'école	2.75% 3	5.50% 6	15.60% 17	35.78% 39	40.37% 44	109

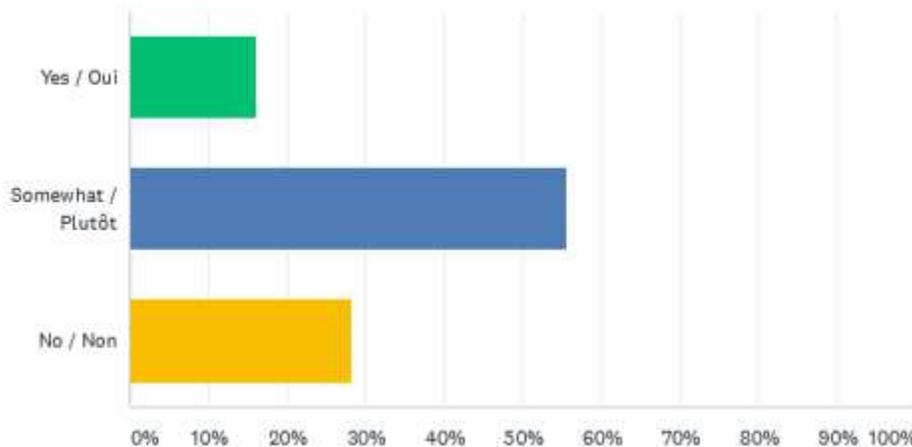
Summary and analysis

- All fields were deemed as being quite important but the highest ranked fields were support for academic accommodations and school's proximity to quality xc ski/training facilities. This makes sense as accessibility to trails and facilities are important when students don't have a lot of time to dedicate commuting to training. This plays in favour of schools that are already located in close proximity to quality trails and training facilities.
- The program having *Varsity Status* is also indicated as being important, along with *having a*

dedicated full time coach. A full time coach increases the quality and delivery of programming. *Varsity Status* may offer more funding as well as program credibility. Varsity Status may also make hiring a full time coach possible with increased funding and support from the university.

- Programs that offer *athletic scholarships* are also desirable. As both skiing and school are expensive, athletic scholarships help ease the financial burden.
- *Support for academic accommodations* is ranked as being very important (deferring exam, academic scholarships, etc.). With most student athletes having a full course load in the race season it makes sense that deferring exams and accommodations are seen as being important factors so that the student-athletes can attend competitions.
- Students are thinking about finances when considering important aspects of an xc ski program to attend.

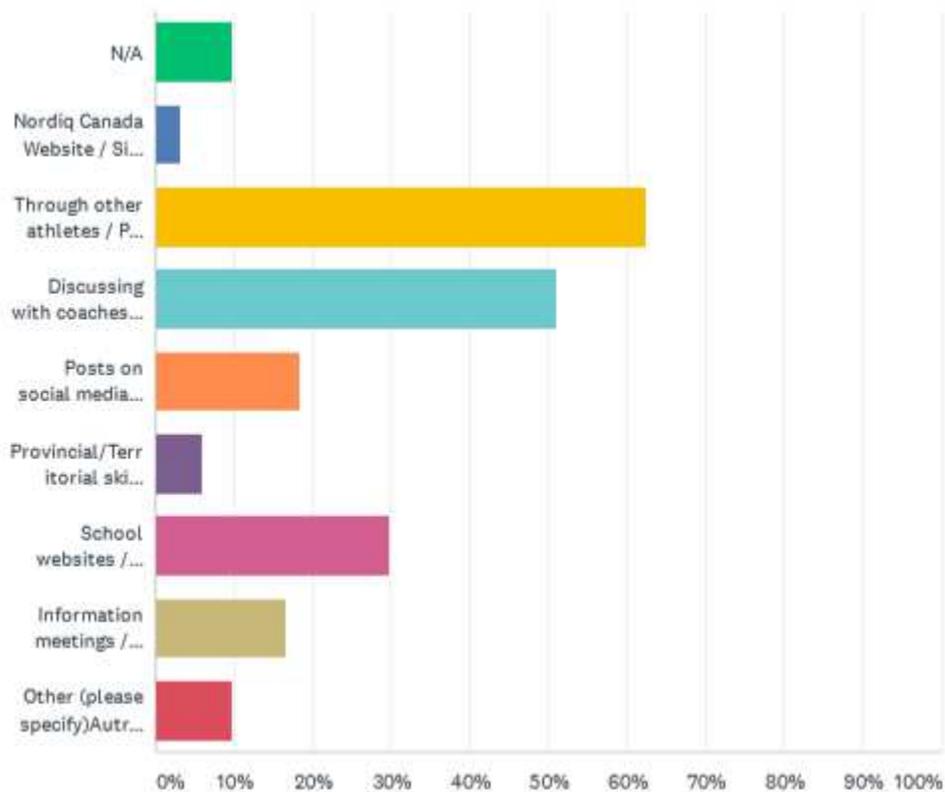
Q15 Do you feel like it is easy to inform yourself of the options available to combine skiing and post secondary education? / Croyez-vous qu'il est facile de vous informer sur les options qui s'offrent à vous pour combiner les études postsecondaires et le ski ?



Summary and analysis

- 72% say that they find it relatively easy to be informed on that topic but given the preferred source of information of athletes, the quality and accuracy of this information can be questioned as it seems to come mostly from word of mouth from coaches and other athletes.
- Still close to 30% did not find it easy to find information on this topic suggesting a need to continue improving the depth of information collected on post-secondary sport program options and its dissemination.

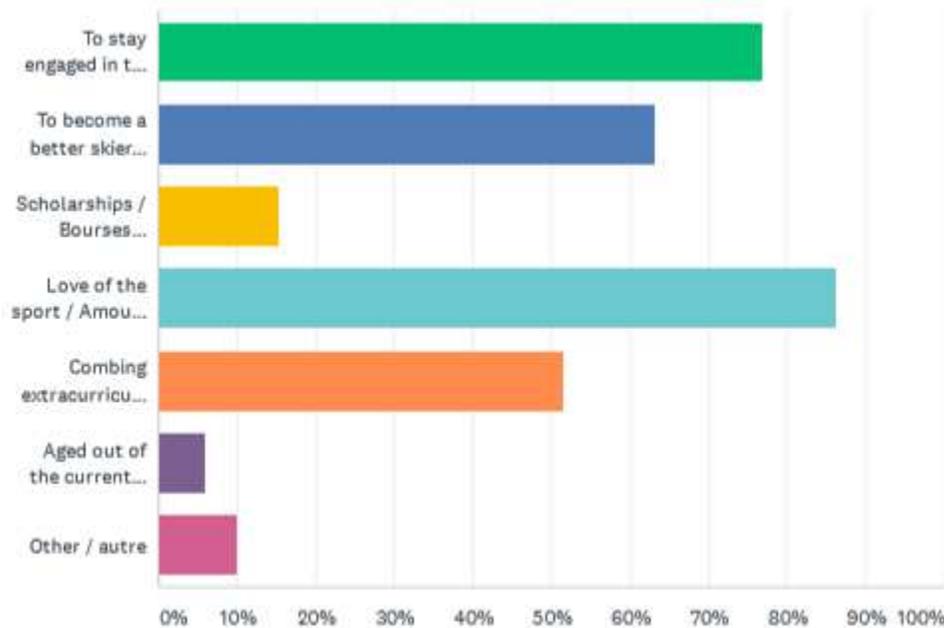
Q16 If applicable, how did you find information about combining skiing with education (select all that apply). / S'il y a lieu, comment avez-vous trouvé de l'information sur la possibilité de combiner le ski et les études? (Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent)



Summary and analysis

- Respondents found information mainly through other athletes and discussions with coaches.
- Either NSO and ski divisions do not provide adequate information, or student athletes do not go to seek information from those organizations.
- Based on responses, it would be valuable for coaches to educate themselves on academic opportunities and for universities to advertise and provide information on their websites.
- Other answers were finding information via personal initiatives and the internet.

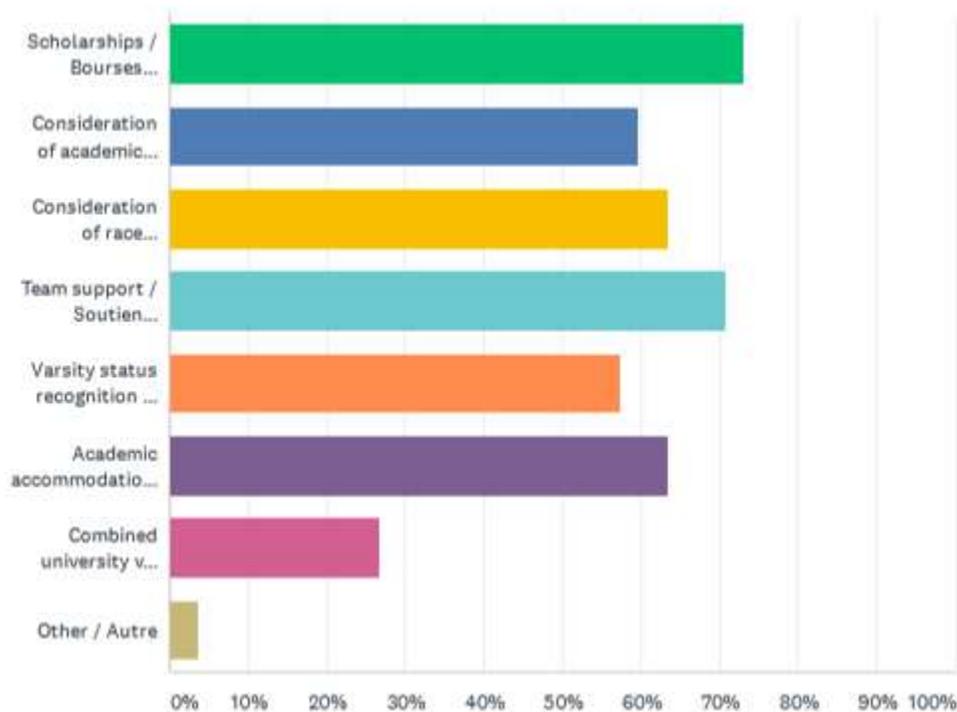
Q17 If applicable, why are you combining your skiing career with an education? Why is this important to you? Check all pertinent boxes. / Si applicable, quelles raisons vous motivent à combiner votre carrière de ski avec des études ? Pourquoi est-ce important pour vous ? Cochez toutes les cases pertinentes.



Summary and analysis

- Respondents combine studies with a ski career to *stay engaged in the sport, to become a better skier, for the love of sport* and to *combine extracurricular with school to help in future ambitions*.
- 86.15% indicated that they pursue skiing and studies for the love of sport. Therefore, this population are great ambassadors for the sport of xc skiing as they enjoy the sport.
- To better help student-athletes to reach their goals of becoming better skiers, a full time coach could be helpful.
- Other answers spoke to the need for a plan after skiing, and combining studies with a ski career as means to prepare for a post-ski career.
- Also, respondents indicated that there are not many opportunities and funding for skiers in Canada. Therefore, they see education as a good backup.
- Additional themes were life balance and mental health.

**Q18 What would facilitate the balance of ski racing and your academic endeavours?
Select all that apply/ Qu'est-ce qui faciliterait la conciliation entre le ski de
compétition et vos projets académiques? Cochez toutes les réponses pertinentes.**



Summary and analysis

- Answers were evenly distributed.
- Combined university vs club model question may have been misleading, as the two can work together and should not be in opposition to each other.
- Also, it was noted that combining local clubs with universities keep bigger and more competitive teams. This answer addresses the *combined university vs club model* question but is worth noting due to the ambiguous nature of the original question.
- The theme of money and academic accommodations/scheduling once again emerged.
- Varsity status recognition is still ranked high.
- Consideration of race scheduling is also important, as indicated in other comments/suggestions with regards to conflicting race and exam schedules. With that being said, this goes hand in hand with academic accommodations and scheduling.
- Other topics include: less expensive entry fees, minimal travel, and USport recognition.

Q19 Other comments/suggestions on facilitating the combination of ski racing and postsecondary education in Canada? / Autres commentaires ou suggestions pour faciliter la conciliation du ski de compétition et de l'éducation postsecondaire au Canada?

The main areas of feedback can be broken down into three themes: The importance of developing and recognizing post-secondary ski racing streams, USport Status, and support of FISU games.

1. Post-secondary ski programs

Student athletes have repeatedly emphasised the importance of developing and expanding post-secondary ski racing.

Some elements include:

- Develop better varsity racing and competition programs, especially in Western Canada.
- Create regional university race circuits
- League designation means schools will cover more of the costs for athletes. (Example, more races recognized as OUA, other than just the championships.)
- Respondents have emphasised the need for coaches to support and create student athlete opportunities.
- Increase post-secondary racing visibility in NSO and Division communications.

2. USport Status

- Respondents have also highlighted the need for USport status, as this is a requirement for some university ski teams to gain varsity status. With this may come better funding opportunities for university ski teams.

**NB - In early April, 2020, Nordiq Canada applied to USport (the national governing body of University sport in Canada) to obtain USport official recognition for 2021-2022.

3. FISU Games

- Request for financial athlete and coach support from the NSO for FISU games.
- Recommendation that FISU games should be added to NST and WC selection criteria.

In summary, student-athletes have repeatedly emphasized that it is possible to combine studies with racing and training. Students-athletes have expressed their frustrations over being viewed as “half athletes”, as well as the student-athlete pathway being overlooked or dismissed. Recommendations that Nordiq Canada and Divisions could work better to support and validate university skiing as a viable pathway by means of financial support, communications, development of regional race circuits and recognition. Student-athletes are important ambassadors for the sport and don't want to be overlooked.