

Campus Encounters in the Past Two Weeks

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Prepared for UASU Executive Committee by
Department of Research and Advocacy



Overview

This survey ran on the UASU Perks platform from February 23 to 27, 2023. It reached 703 points of contact, representing 79% of unique Perks users during that timeframe. The survey comprised three questions: a 'choose all that apply' list of experiences (informed by recent student comments in a variety of public and governance venues); a filtering question (whether respondents had used the Lister or PLH dining halls during the same time period); and a text question about the best places to stay warm.

Note that temperatures in this time period fell as far as -33 Celsius before windchill.

"In the past TWO WEEKS, have you personally experienced any of the following on campus?"

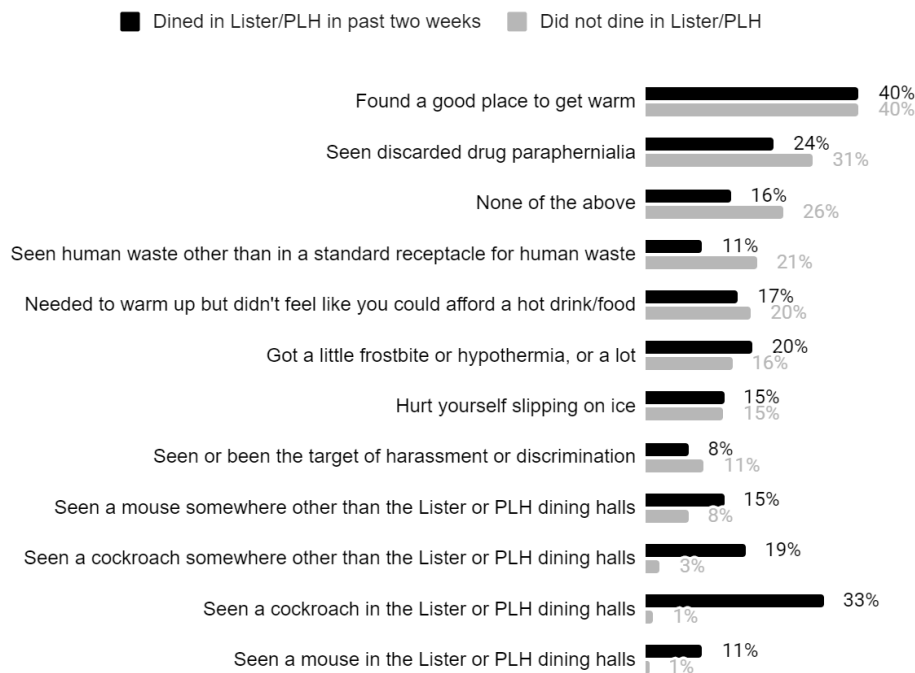


The frequency of these health and safety-related events is cause for concern, especially given the response rate of the survey. Cold weather (which also impacts transit safety) is going hand in hand with injuries (one in seven students in the past two weeks), some degree of frostbite or hypothermia (one in six), food insecurity impacting access to hot drinks or hot food when students need to warm up (one in five), and seeking/finding a good place to get warm (two in five).

Extreme cold is likely also impacting the number of people without sufficient social supports (including many students) who are attempting to find shelter on campus, with consequences for student health and safety.

"For filtering the above: have you eaten in the Lister or PLH dining halls at any point in the past two weeks?"

75 respondents (around one in ten) had eaten in these dining halls in that time period. Their responses differed from other students — most notably, in that they were far more likely to encounter vermin on campus both inside and outside of dining halls. It does not take much imagination to generate possible reasons why 15–20% of students who used residence dining halls might see vermin somewhere other than dining halls.



Students who had eaten in the dining halls in the past two weeks showed other variations: they were somewhat less likely to see discarded drug paraphernalia in that time period, half as likely to see human waste out of place, and somewhat more likely to get some degree of frostbite or hypothermia.

"What are the best places to get warm on campus when it's -30?"

Out of 703 responses, the most common were SUB (167, several with special mention of the fireplace), libraries (several dozen, including 45 mentions of libraries, 46 mentions of Rutherford, and/or 15 mentions of Cameron), HUB (39), CAB (35), CCIS (23), Tory (19), ECHA (15), Humanities (11), and Education (8). Many other places (e.g. John Scott Library, Tory basement, Rutherford fifth floor) received honorable mention. Respondents often prioritized connectedness without needing to go outside, or mentioned specific hallways/pedways (e.g. the connection between CCIS and the Biological Sciences Centre). Several students also cited experiences with serious cold while waiting for transit.