

2023 WUSA Election Report

March 2023, Prepared by Mariam Mazen

Summary of Past Elections

The following table shows the overall turnout for the past few years' elections:

Year	Unique Voters	Eligible Voters	Percentage	Notes
2019	5203	33 240	15.65%	Legal Service and GRT UPass Referendum happened consecutively with this Election
2019 Fall By-Election	563	8265	6.8%	Overall Turnout
	324	8265	3.92%	Engineering Council
	109	2315	4.71%	Environment Council
	130	2656	5.07%	AHS Council
2020	4120	33 764	12.2%	
2021	1738	34 084	5.09%	All Executive positions were acclaimed
2022	1372	29 635	4.63%	New governance structure; election occurred in July this year
2023	1264	35 160	3.59%	First year using the new governance structure during typical timeline

Voter Demographics

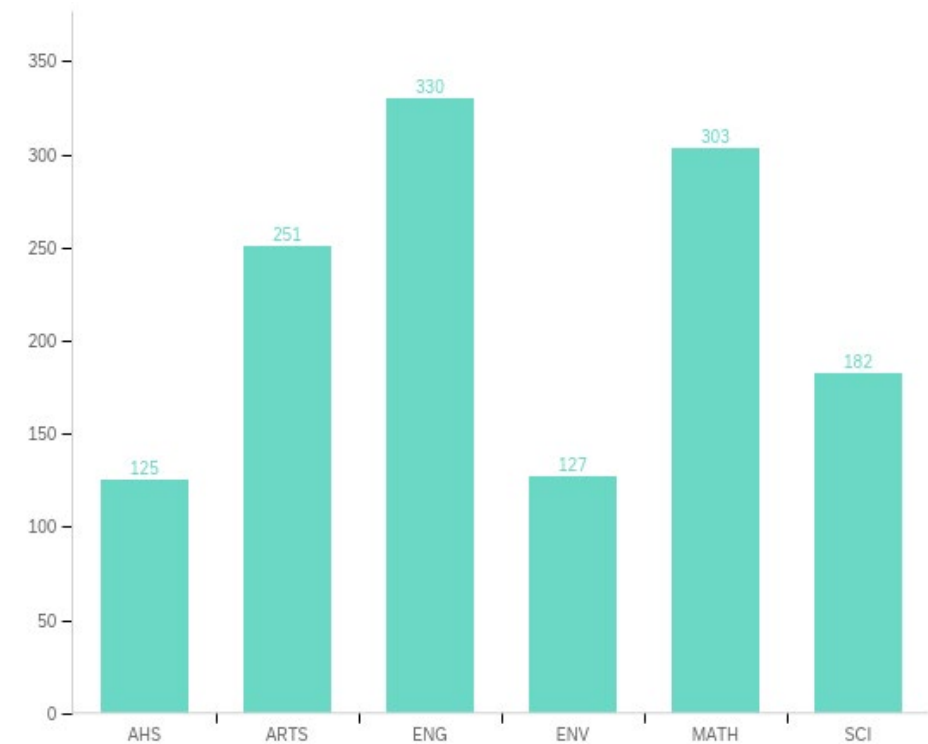
In 2022, there were 1321 total voters, while in this year's election there were only 1264 total voters. The voter turnout for 2023 was 3.59% which is lower than it was for 2022 (4.63%). The following graph shows the number of voters in each faculty at the University of Waterloo for 2023. In 2023, Engineering had the highest number of voters at 330, followed by Math (303), Arts (251), Science (182), Environment (127) and Health (125). This distribution of voters across faculties is very similar to the 2022 data. However, only looking at the number of voters does not reveal the relative percentage (# of voters/total eligible voters) for each faculty. After calculating the relative percentage of voters, Environment has the highest relative percentage of voters at 5.94%, followed by Health (4.59%), Engineering (3.64%), Math (3.37%), Arts (3.19%) and Science (2.93%).

In terms of year of study, voters in their fifth year of study and NL¹ make up a very small number of voters. First-year students make up the highest percentage of the voters at 29.03% whereas in 2022, first-year

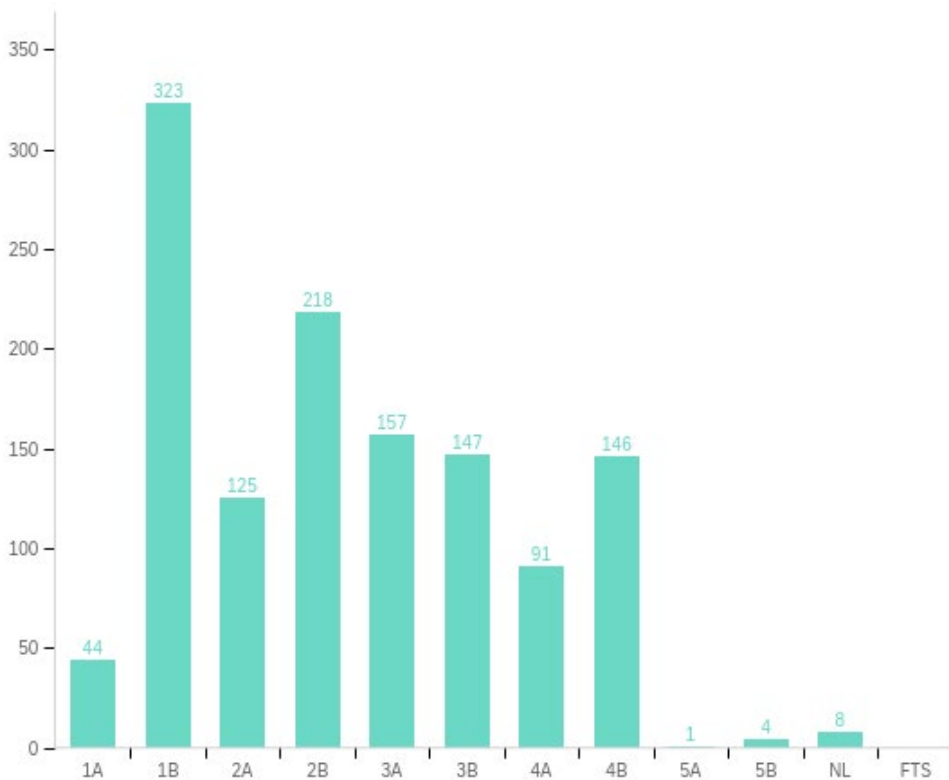
¹ "NL" stands for "no level", meaning the student is: either (1) a post-degree student (finished degree but interested in more courses); (2) a non-degree student; or (3) studying here on a letter of permission (taking courses at Waterloo but getting a degree at another school)

students made up 37.60% of voters. For 2023, the second highest number of votes comes from second-year students at 27.13% followed by third-year students at 24.05% and fourth-year students at 18.75%.

2023: Voter Faculty



2023: Voter Year of Study



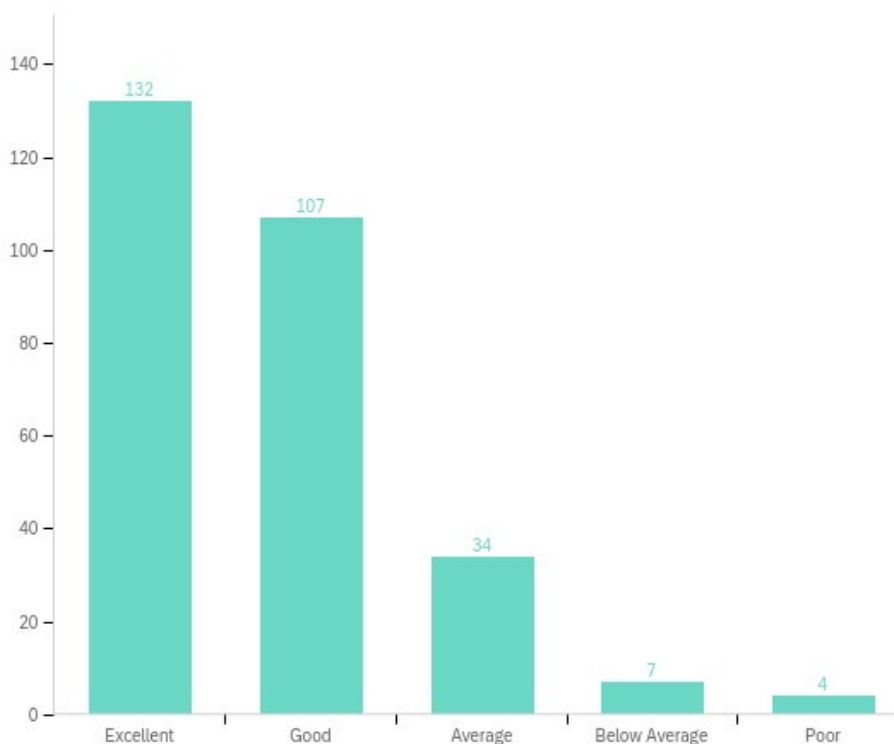
Exit Survey

After voting, all voters were asked to complete the 2023 WUSA Elections Survey on survey.wusa.ca. This year's exit survey had a 22.47% (284 responses) participation rate, compared to 7% (96 responses) in 2022.

Satisfaction with vote.wusa.ca

Voters were asked to rate their experience voting through vote.wusa.ca. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, most respondents (46.48%) indicated that their experience was excellent, followed by good (37.68%), average (11.97%), below average (2.46%), and finally, poor (1.41%). Compared to the results from 2022, a higher proportion of voters rated their experience "excellent", and a lower proportion rated their experience "good" and "average." In 2022, most respondents (43.96%) indicated that their experience was good, followed by excellent (38.46%), average (12.09%), below average (3.30%), and finally poor (2.20%).

Figure 1: Please rate your experience voting through vote.wusa.ca



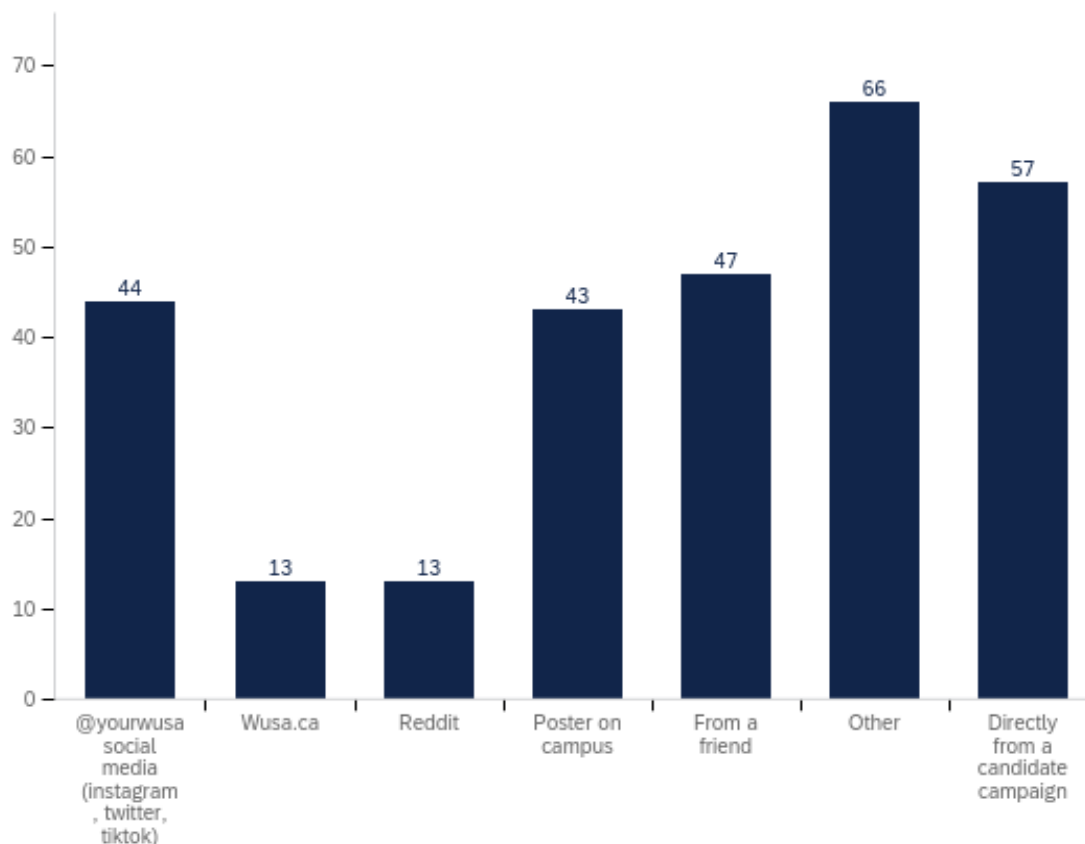
Voters were then asked to elaborate on any additional feedback they may have about vote.wusa.ca. The suggestions include the following:

- Having a profile available on the voting website of each candidate
- Ability to compare candidates' side by side
- Providing summaries for the confirmation votes
- Making the voting website more mobile-friendly, as many users experienced slower loading times and distorted displays
- Determining the order in which candidates' profiles are listed (e.g., alphabetically) since many users did not read the profiles at the bottom of the page

Voting Promotions

Voters were asked to indicate where they had heard about this year's WUSA Elections. As demonstrated in Figure 2, most students (23.32%) selected "other" and stated they heard through the email sent out by WUSA and the booth in SLC. In future surveys, these should be included as options for voters to choose from. Furthermore, 20.14% heard directly from the candidate campaign, 16.66% heard from a friend, and 15.55% heard from @yourwusa social media pages. 15.19% saw it on posters on campus, 4.59% heard from wusa.ca and the remaining 4.59% heard through Reddit.

Figure 2: Where did you hear about this year's WUSA Elections?



Voter Motivations

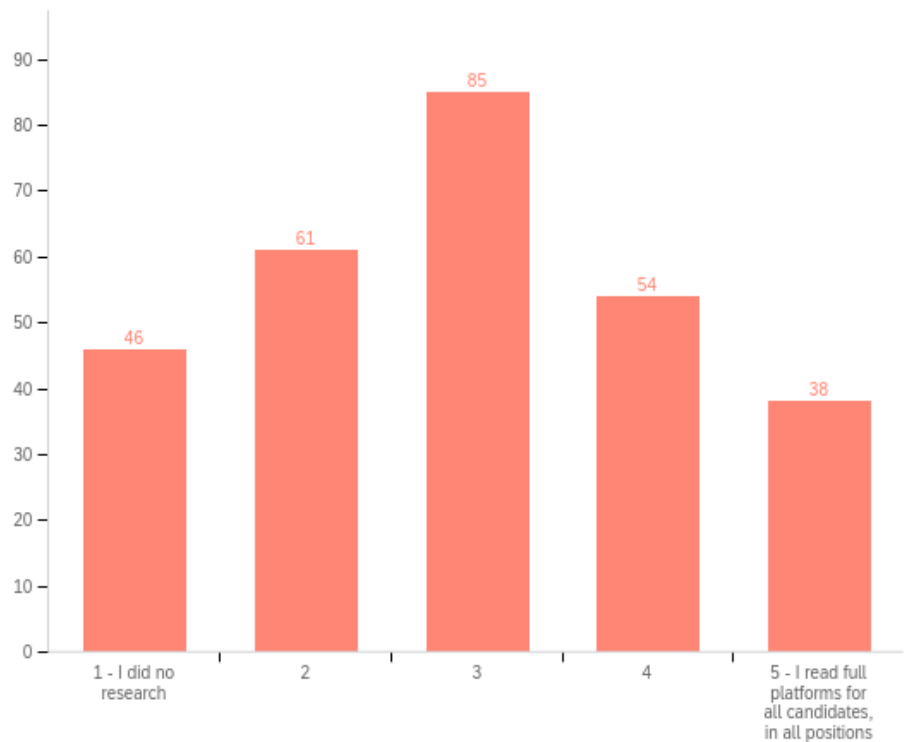
Voters were also asked what motivated them to vote in this year's WUSA Elections. The top two reasons for voting were because of a friend who was running and wanting to see changes throughout the University. Other responses include:

- Doing one's civic duty
- Wanting to have a say in who represents them
- Procrastinating
- Voting for someone who can make necessary changes
- Connections with candidates that campaigned
- Enjoying the voting process
- Seeing campaigns and advertisements around campus

Candidate Research and Familiarity

Respondents were asked to indicate how much candidate research they did prior to voting in the 2023 WUSA Elections by rating from 1 (I did no research) to 5 (I read full platforms for all candidates, all positions). As seen in Figure 3, most voters (29.93%) chose a 3 rating, followed by a rating of 2 (21.48%), 4 (19.01%), 1 (16.20%) and 5 (13.38%). These results are similar to the 2022 survey where the majority (38.20%) of voters also chose a 3 rating. However, there was a decrease in the number of voters that gave a 5 rating from 16.85% to 13.38%. There was also a slight decrease in the number of voters who did no research from 16.85% in 2022 to 16.20% in 2023.

Figure 3: On a scale of 1-5, how much candidate research did you do prior to voting in this election?



Top Issues for Students

Voters were asked what the top issues were that they felt WUSA should be addressing. In order of most mentioned issues, the answers include:

- Housing advocacy
- Expand or reform mental health service
- Transparency with tuition charges
- Co-op rights, ranking, interview support
- More financial aid for undergraduate students
- Allowing more “opt-out” options in tuition

Returning Voters

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had participated in a WUSA Election before. Figure 4 shows that 51.76% of respondents had not voted in a WUSA Election before, while the remaining 48.24%

had. Most voters in 2023 were new voters. This is similar to the previous year where most voters (52.27%) in 2022 were returning voters.

Figure 4: Have you voted in a WUSA Election before?

