

What is the CUSC survey?

The Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) is a group of Canadian universities working cooperatively to gain a better understanding of the Canadian undergraduate student population. The CUSC survey runs once a year in the winter term and operates on a three year cycle, alternating between first year students, middle years students, and graduating students. First-year students were last surveyed in 2016.

What is the purpose of this survey?

To collect feedback from first-year undergraduate students at the U of S in order to better understand students' experiences, goals, development and satisfaction with their university.

Who participated in this survey?

Students from universities across Canada participated. For the U of S, a random sample of 1,000 first-year students were invited to participate. Of this sample, 313 completed the questionnaire representing a response rate of 31.3%.

For more information, please visit usask.ca/ipa or contact Institutional Planning and Assessment at: ipa_assessment@usask.ca

Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2019: First-Year Student Survey

Profile of University of Saskatchewan first-year students

- Respondents were mostly Canadian citizens (91%), female (70%), and just over 18 years of age. Roughly one in five identified as a member of a visible minority (22%), while 7% self-identified as Aboriginal.
- Of these students, 20% self-reported as having a disability.
- Just 8% were first-generation students in that neither parent had any post-secondary education.
- Almost all of the respondents (99%) were registered in courses full-time in their first year.
- A little over a third (39%) of respondents lived with parents, guardians or relatives. Almost a quarter (22%) live on-campus while 22% live in rented housing off-campus or live in personally-owned home (2%).

Financing education

- 77% of first-year students (56% for the peer group¹) reported they received a scholarship, financial award or bursary from the U of S. Of these students, 21% noted that they would not have been able to attend university without this assistance as compared to 30% in the peer group.
- 35% of first-year students reported they were employed during the academic year (39% in peer group) with another 22% looking for employment (29% in peer group).
- Of the employed students, 96% reported working less 20 or less hours per week while most (49%) worked 10 hours or less. Of these students, 45% felt that their employment negatively impacted their academic performance, whereas 12% felt that it positively impacted performance.

Decision to attend university and the U of S in particular

- Sources of information that first-year students found to be most important when making the decision to attend the U of S were: *parents* (54%); *the university's website* (50%); and *students attending the university* (45%).

¹ Peer group: CUSC defines peer groups according to degree programs that are offered.

Universities in the same group as the U of S included: Concordia, Dalhousie, Calgary, Ottawa, and Manitoba.

- 35% of current U of S students had applied to more than one university. Of those that applied elsewhere, 92% reported that the U of S was their first choice.
- Students indicated that the top reasons for choosing the U of S were: *it had a program I wanted to take* (88%); *the city it's in* (66%) and *the academic reputation of the university* (65%).

Experience prior to classes

- 94% of students expressed being satisfied with being able to get in to the courses they wanted (84% in the peer group) and 84% were satisfied with the process of registering (77% in the peer group).
- 80% of students (60% for the peer group) reported attending a university orientation program. The highest rated outcomes of orientation were: *helping understand the university's academic expectations* (84%) *building confidence* (82%); and *helping your personal and social transition to university* (78%).

Educational experiences

- Most students had positive perceptions of the program in which they were enrolled including the following that were rated highly: *most of my courses are interesting* (88%); *my course load is manageable* (83%) and; *I am in the right program for me* (78%).
- At the time of the survey, the majority planned to come back to the university next year (89%) and to eventually complete their degree at the U of S (87%).
- A little more than 8 in 10 students agreed that they feel as if they *belong at this university* (85%) including 37% who felt they belonged *very much*. Only about 1 in 10 disagreed (12%), including 2% who felt they did not belong at all.
- In terms of general satisfaction with the quality of teaching that students received, 93% agreed that they were either satisfied or very satisfied compared to 86% in the peer group.

University experience

- When asked to rate their success with transitioning to university, first-year students reported having the most success *finding your way around campus* (96%) and the least success in *becoming involved in campus activities* (46%).
- There was at least 89% of students satisfied with a list of university facilities (e.g., library, computing services, residences, food services, athletic facilities, etc.) with the exception of *parking facilities* (50%) and *university residences* (50%).
- For academic services students were most satisfied with *study skills and learning supports* (95%) and least satisfied with *tutoring* (88%).
- The majority (74%) of students said their experience at the university *met their expectations* (70% in the peer group), while 15% said their *expectations have been exceeded* (15% in the peer group). Conversely, 10% said their *experiences fell short of expectations* (14% in the peer group). The area where students expressed that expectations were met least was in terms of *course grades* (42%).

Overall satisfaction

- The majority of first-year students said they were satisfied with the *concern shown by the university for them as an individual* (72%).
- Almost all respondents were satisfied with *their decision to attend this university* (94%), of which 24% who are very satisfied. In terms of the perceived overall quality of education, 93% were satisfied with 11% reporting being very satisfied.
- Students were asked to rate the likelihood that they would recommend their university on a scale from 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely). Using a Net Promoter Score calculation, where detractors (rating of 0 to 6) are subtracted from promoters (rating of 9 or 10), USask has a score of 23% (36% promoters minus 13% detractors). In comparison, the peer group score was 14%.

For more information, visit

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