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**SURVEY OF
FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
2004**

Master Report

June 3, 2004

Prepared for:

Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium ©

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UNIVERSITIES

CANADIAN UNDERGRADUATE SURVEY CONSORTIUM (“CUSC”)

PROTOCOL FOR DATA USE

Members of the consortium are bound by the following protocol for the control of survey data.

It was agreed by the participants that data were owned collectively and would be distributed only by collective agreement.

1. The purpose of the survey is to produce data that will allow participating institutions to assess their programmes and services. Comparisons with other institutions are made to assist in these assessments. Ranking of institutions is not, in itself, a purpose of the survey.
2. The survey data are owned collectively by the participating institutions.
3. The report that has been prepared may be reproduced and distributed freely on the campuses of participating institutions. However, use of the institutional code key is restricted to members of the steering committee and senior administration at the various campuses on a confidential basis.
4. Institutions will receive a data package that includes data for all participating institutions along with the institutional identifiers so that appropriate institutional comparisons can be made by each institution. This must be done in a way that protects the confidentiality of the institutional identities and respects the absolute right of each institution to decide what portions of its data should be disclosed.
5. For institutional promotion, recruiting or other public dissemination, rankings may not be used. However, an institution’s mean results, the aggregate mean results, and mean results for the comparable group of institutions in the survey report may be used, although the names of other institutions may not be used.
6. Access to the aggregate data for research purposes may be granted to interested persons provided that the intended use is a legitimate, non-commercial one, the researcher is qualified and agrees to acknowledge the ownership of the data by participating universities and to provide the consortium with a copy of any report or publication that is produced. Decisions on such requests will be made by a sub-committee consisting of Dennis Domoney, Eric McKee and Garth Wannan with consultation with members of the full steering committee in the case of requests that seem problematic.

Amended May 17, 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is the tenth cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC). The surveys have targeted various undergraduate sub-samples; four of the surveys have focused on a sample of all undergraduates, while the others have targeted specific types of students: either graduates or first-year students. This year's study presents the results for students who were attending their first year of undergraduate studies in 2004.

This year, 27 universities participated in the study. Most participating universities distributed 1,000 surveys to their first-year students. To ensure a high response rate, several reminders were mailed to students who had been chosen to participate. Overall, the response rate was almost 48%, and over 11,000 students participated. Compared with three years ago, when this survey was last conducted, little has changed in terms of results. First-year students in 2001 and 2004 are very similar, both in terms of their personal and academic characteristics, and in their attitudes toward their university experience.

Profile of first-year students

According to our survey, the typical first-year undergraduate student is a 20-year-old female. Indeed, female students outnumber male students by a factor of 2:1. This is similar to past surveys: two-thirds of the students are women and one-third are men. Although they are more common in our sample, for the most part, the experience and attitudes of female students appears to be similar to those of male students. While the average age of first-year students is almost 20 years, 84% of students are 19 years of age or younger. Overall, 15% of students report being a visible minority, and 2% of students identify themselves as Aboriginal people. About 5% of students self-report as disabled.

In their first year of university, a majority of students (55%) continue to live with their parents (or some other relative or guardian). About 43% are living independently, most commonly in on-campus housing (26%) or in rented accommodations (16%).

About two-thirds report that at least one of their parents has completed some form of post-secondary education, including 40% of students who report that both parents have completed post-secondary training.

Typically, students graduated from high school or CEGEP in 2003 (or later) and had a full course load both at registration and at the time of the survey. Most of these first-year students (65%) report majoring in Arts and Humanities, Social Science, Business, or Biological Science programs.

If their marks are any indication, many students are finding university more academically challenging than high school or CEGEP. While almost two-thirds of students report an average grade of A- or higher in high school or CEGEP, less than one-third expect such an average at the end of their first year of university. Typically, students expect a B/B+ average at the end of first-year university.

Financing education

Most students appear to rely on multiple sources to help finance their university education. On average, students report using three of 11 different sources. The most common sources of funding are personal. Family, mainly parents (64%), is the single most common financing source, but other personal financing sources, such as savings (40%) and earnings from summer work (37%), are also frequently mentioned. Other sources that students often use are university scholarships or financial awards (40%) and government loans or bursaries (30%).

Overall, the average amount received from all sources to help students finance their education is about \$8,000. Among students who use a particular source, the largest average amount is in the form of government loans or bursaries (\$5,300). Of those with a government loan or bursary, about 15% report having difficulty fulfilling the course load necessary to keep that loan or bursary. Parents and other family are also large contributors to students' education. On average, students receive about \$4,700 from parents and other relatives. Among those who received a university scholarship or financial award, the average amount from these sources is about \$2,100. Of those who report receiving a university scholarship or financial award, almost one-quarter report that they would be unable to attend university without such financial assistance.

While it is not necessarily a major worry for most students, education financing is of at least some concern to most. Overall, three-quarters of students are at least somewhat concerned about having sufficient funding to complete their university education, including over one-quarter who are very concerned.

Work income from a current job also contributes to education financing. Just over 4 students in 10 report being currently employed, and another 1 student in 5 is seeking work. Among those who are currently employed, about 8 students in 10 work 20 hours a week or less. The average employed student works about 16 hours a week.

Among employed students, about half report that their job (other than that related to co-op requirements) has at least some negative impact on their academic performance. This includes many who say that the negative impact is moderate (10%) or significant/substantial (6%). Not surprisingly, the more hours per week they work, the more likely students are to report that their employment is having at least some negative impact on their academic performance.

Motivation for attending and choice of university

Decision to attend university

We asked students to rate the importance of nine reasons in their decision to attend university. Almost all students report that at least one of these reasons was very important to their decision to attend university. Indeed, multiple reasons often play a role. For example, half of the students rate five or more reasons as very important.

Just over 8 students in 10 rate *getting a good job* as very important in their decision to attend university. Other reasons cited as very important by two-thirds or more of students are: *preparing for a specific job or career*, *pursuit of knowledge*, *getting a good general education*, and *increasing their knowledge in an academic field*.

Future employment appears to be the main motivation for students to attend university. Almost two-thirds of students choose either *preparing for specific job or career* (35%) or *getting a good job* (29%) as the single most important reason for going to university.

Choice of university

We asked students to rate the importance of 26 different reasons in their decision to attend their current university. The reasons most often thought to be very important include: *quality of academic programs* at their current university (57%); *specific career-related program* (54%); *the university has a good reputation* (48%); and *wanting to live close to home* (37%).

While many reasons are very important to students, when asked to choose one reason as the most important, students identify three key reasons: *specific career-related programs* (21%); *quality of academic programs* (18%); and *wanted to live close to home* (14%).

When selecting a university, almost 7 students in 10 report applying to more than one university. Among students who applied to more than one university, the average number was almost four. Not only did students often apply to more than one university, many (18%) also applied to a college. Overall, the vast majority of students (78%) report that they are attending their first choice of university.

In considering which university to attend, 8 students in 10 or more report reviewing brochures and pamphlets, visiting the university web site, visiting the campus, and/or having a university representative visit their high school or CEGEP. The most important contacts in their decision to attend their current university are these same sources: *campus visits* (25%), *university web site* (16%), *brochures or pamphlets* (15%), and *visit by a university representative* (13%).

Almost all students (90%) report being at least somewhat satisfied with their university's handling of their application for admission, including 56% who are very satisfied.

Experience prior to class

About 4 students in 10 report receiving assistance from their university before or while first registering. Among those who experienced such assistance, almost 9 in 10 (86%) report being at least somewhat satisfied, including almost 4 in 10 (37%) who are very satisfied.

The most common method of registering is on-line (64%), followed by mail (26%). In person (16%) and by phone (7%) are less common methods. Most students (85%) report being at least somewhat satisfied with the registration process, including 42% who are very satisfied. Students are slightly more likely to be satisfied with registration by mail or on-line than in person or by phone. Students report that they were able to register mostly (29%) or completely (53%) in the courses they wanted.

Most first-year students participated in a university orientation program (61%), and a majority of these students report that they had a positive experience. Indeed, the vast majority of students — 7 students in 10 or more — who attended orientation report being somewhat satisfied with it in terms of its making them *feel welcome, providing information about campus life and student*

services, helping them understand the university's academic expectations, helping in their personal and social transition to university, and building their confidence.

University experience

We asked students to rate their success with a wide variety of personal, academic, and practical adjustments to university. Of the eight academic adjustments rated by students, about 9 students in 10 (who rated these aspects) report having at least some success with *understanding content and information presented in courses* (including 43% who have had very much success), *meeting academic demands* (36%), *meeting computer literacy requirements* (58%), *choosing a program of studies that meet their objectives* (49%), and *performing adequately in written assignments* (34%). Students report the least success in terms of *getting academic advice*. While a majority reports at least some success, only 18% report very much success.

Most students (60%) also report at least some success in adjusting to personal aspects of university life. Among those who rate their success, at least 8 in 10 report some or much success in *adjusting to living here* (including 52% who report very much success); *feeling as if they belong at university* (45%); *making new friends* (44%); and *organizing my time to complete academic work* (28%). Less than half report success in *becoming involved in campus activities* (36%, including 9% who report very much success).

Most students report at least some success with practical adjustments. Some 3 students in 4 or more who provided a rating, report that they have had at least some success in: *finding their way around campus* (including 74% who report very much success), *using the library* (39%), and *finding suitable, affordable housing* (34%). Students have had the least success *finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations*. While almost 6 students in 10 (58%) report having at least some success, few say that they have had very much success (14%).

Satisfaction with aspects of university experience

Generally, students are satisfied with various aspects of their university, and most report that their expectations were met or exceeded.

We asked students to rate their satisfaction with 21 university facilities and services. Of those who report using various facilities and services, 8 students in 10 are at least satisfied with almost all. For example, about 9 students in 10 are satisfied or very satisfied with the *library facilities*, *access to computers*, *instructional facilities*, and *average class sizes*. Of the services and facilities tested, students are least satisfied with *parking facilities*. Indeed, less than half are satisfied, and only 11% are very satisfied, with parking.

Most students also appear to have positive experiences with university faculty. Some 7 or more students in 10 agree that: *professors are reasonably accessible outside class to help students* (including 25% who strongly agree); *generally they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they have received* (21%); *most of their professors encourage students to participate in class discussion* (19%); and *professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers* (19%).

While many students feel the university environment is impersonal, they are generally satisfied. About 9 students in 10 agree that they are satisfied with their decision to attend their university. Indeed, about 4 students in 10 strongly agree. For most, their experience at their university has met their expectations (64%). While for some (18%), their experience has fallen short, for almost as many (17%), their experience has exceeded their expectations.

Conclusion

Generally, students at Canadian universities report having a positive experience in their first year of university. As such, these results confirm much of what we found in 2001, the last time such a survey was conducted with first-year university students. While there are areas that might be improved, most students report being satisfied with both their choice of university and their university's fulfilling their expectations.

1.0 Introduction

This is the tenth cooperative study undertaken by the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC). The surveys have targeted various undergraduate sub-samples; four of the surveys have focused on a sample of all undergraduates, while the others have targeted specific types of students: either graduates or first-year students. This year's study presents the results for university students who were attending their first year of undergraduate studies in 2004.

Table 1 shows the types of students that have been surveyed each year by CUSC.

Year	Sample	Number of participating universities
1994	All undergraduates	8
1996	All undergraduates	10
1997	Graduating students	9
1998	First-year students	19
1999	All undergraduates	23
2000	Graduating students	22
2001	First-year students	26
2002	All undergraduates	30
2003	Graduating students	26
2004	First-year students	27

Each study is coordinated by Garth Wannan through the University of Manitoba Department of Housing and Student Life and is a cooperative effort by all universities involved.

1.1 Definition of first-year students

This year's study involves first-year university students. For the purpose of this research, first-year students are defined as:

- undergraduate students in a first-level Bachelor's program, either full or part time
- students who entered directly from high school or CEGEP
- students who, except for the current academic year, have no prior university or college experience.

For example, the sample might include undergraduate students enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program in the faculties/schools of: Agricultural & Food Sciences, Architecture, Arts, Dental Hygiene, Education, Engineering, Environment, Fine Arts, Human Ecology, Management, Music, Nursing, Physical Education/Recreational Studies, Science, and Social Work. Independent or special students were excluded from the sample.

1.2 How this research was conducted

For the past five years, Prairie Research Associates (PRA) Inc. and representatives from participating universities have reviewed existing surveys and methodology to prepare future questionnaires. Representatives of participating universities reviewed the draft for 2004, which PRA then revised to produce the final questionnaire (Appendix A).

Each participating university supported the study by:

- Generating a random sample of 1,000 students who were first-year students in the 2003-2004 academic year. Not all participating universities had 1,000 first-year students; in these cases, each university conducted a census of its first-year students.
- Mailing a package containing a cover letter, a questionnaire, and a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelope to sampled students.
- Mailing a reminder letter to all non-respondents approximately two to three weeks after the original mailing.

- Mailing a final reminder letter to all non-respondents approximately four to six weeks after the original mailing.
- Reviewing and returning the completed questionnaires to PRA for processing.

Appendix B presents the methodology guidelines for participating universities.

PRA reviewed the completed surveys, coded responses to specific open-ended questions, entered the responses on computer, reconciled/corrected any data errors, and programmed the tables using SPSS.¹

Table 2 (next page) shows the response rate by university, which ranged from about 17% to 57% with an average of almost 48%. This represents a good response rate for a survey of this type and is similar to that of the last survey of first-year students, conducted in 2001 (48%). In total, 11,132 completed surveys were returned and included in this year's study.

¹ There may be slight discrepancies between the tables in this report and the banner tables (bound separately). These discrepancies result from the way SPSS and MS Word treat decimals. On one hand, SPSS considers the entire value to the right of the decimal when rounding; thus, 4.49 is rounded to 5. On the other hand, MS Word considers only the first decimal place; thus, 4.49 is rounded to 4. Additionally, MS Word records any figure lower than 1 as <1, whereas SPSS records the figure to the first decimal place (i.e., 0.9).

University	Number distributed	Number returned	Response rate
British Columbia	1,000	325	32.5%
Calgary	1,000	516	51.6%
Carleton	1,000	398	39.8%
Concordia	1,000	450	45.0%
Dalhousie	1,000	396	39.6%
Lakehead	1,000	403	40.3%
Lethbridge	1,000	493	49.3%
Manitoba	1,000	362	36.2%
McMaster	960	451	46.9%
Montréal	1,000	565	56.5%
Mount Saint Vincent	485	176	36.3%
Northern British Columbia	557	276	49.6%
Nipissing	1,000	430	43.0%
Ontario College of Art & Design	960	452	47.1%
Ottawa	1,000	495	49.5%
Regina	1,000	504	50.4%
Ryerson Polytechnic	1,000	502	50.2%
Saint Mary's ²	1,463	476	32.5%
Saskatchewan	1,000	400	40.0%
Simon Fraser	1,000	460	46.0%
Toronto at Scarborough	1,000	507	50.7%
Trinity Western	698	302	43.3%
Wilfrid Laurier	1,000	518	51.8%
Windsor	1,000	459	45.9%
Winnipeg	1,000	430	43.2%
Victoria	1,000	343	34.3%
York	1,000	512	51.2%
Total	24,433	11,601	47.5%
Less late returns ³		469	
Total included in analysis		11,132	

² Independently, Saint Mary's included an additional 463 first-year students. Because the relative response rate was so low, it was decided to include all returns in our final sample rather than those just from the initial mailing of 1,000.

³ All completed questionnaires were to be returned to PRA by April 16, 2004. This was to allow coding, data entry, cleaning, analysis, and report preparation by early June. Unfortunately, the deadline for submitting completed questionnaires to PRA was incorrect in this year's protocol manual. Rather than April 16, the manual gave last year's deadline of May 21. While the survey coordinator attempted to alert all participating universities to this error in March, some universities did not receive the revised date. Consequently, we received final shipments from both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan on May 21. Although we include these surveys in the calculation of the response rate, only a subset of returns from these universities (265 for Regina and 170 for Saskatchewan) are included in the overall and group data presented in this report.

For comparison purposes, we have categorized the participating universities into three groups (see Table 3):

- Group 1 consists of universities that offer primarily undergraduate studies and that have smaller student populations.
- Group 2 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate studies and that tend to be of medium size in terms of student population.
- Group 3 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees, with most having professional schools as well. These tend to be the largest institutions in terms of student populations.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Lakehead University University of Lethbridge Mount Saint Vincent Nipissing University University of Northern British Columbia Ontario College of Art & Design Saint Mary's University Trinity Western University Wilfrid Laurier University University of Winnipeg	Carleton University University of Regina Ryerson Polytechnic University Simon Fraser University University of Toronto at Scarborough University of Windsor University of Victoria	University of British Columbia University of Calgary Concordia University Dalhousie University University of Manitoba McMaster University Université de Montréal University of Ottawa University of Saskatchewan York University

Participating universities change from year to year. Five universities that participated in the 2001 survey declined to participate in the 2004 survey. However, six universities that did not participate in the 2001 survey decided to join this year's survey. See Table 4.

	Included in 2004, but not in 2001	Included in 2001, but not in 2004
Group 1	Mount Saint Vincent Northern British Columbia	Brandon Trent UNB (Saint John)
Group 2	Victoria	-
Group 3	Calgary McMaster York	Alberta Queens

1.3 Discipline or area of study

Students recorded their major or subject area of concentration, which their university or PRA recoded into approximately 100 subject areas. PRA also grouped these subject areas into nine themes.

The process for defining subject area of concentration (or major) included the following steps:

- Individual universities reviewed and categorized student responses. However, some students recorded their personal area of interest rather than their current area of study. Some participating universities ignored students' responses and categorized their area of concentration based on administrative records.
- Those universities that did not code a student's area of study left it to PRA to make the decision. When a student's response was vague, unclear, or did not obviously fall into an existing category, we classified it as "other field."
- If students provided more than one major field of study, all were recorded, but we used the first response listed for classification purposes.

Table 5 shows the distribution of student's major fields of study.

Discipline	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Arts and Humanities	21%	20%
Social Science	19%	18%
Business	13%	12%
Biological Science	12%	10%
Professional	7%	6%
Engineering	5%	5%
Physical Science	4%	4%
Education	3%	4%
Other fields	8%	11%
Don't know/no response	7%	10%
Total	99%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

1.4 Comparison with previous first-year students survey

As mentioned, in 2001, a similar survey was conducted with first-year students. Throughout this report, we compare the results of this survey with the results of the 2001 study. However, as noted, not all of the universities that participated in 2001 participated in 2004, and some of the universities participating this year did not participate in 2001. Thus, any differences may result from the mix of participating universities rather than changes across time. We include these comparisons as a point of interest but recognize that further investigation may be necessary to assess the nature of these changes. That said, there are few statistically significant differences in results between the two surveys.

1.5 Statistically significant differences

Large sample sizes may inflate measures of statistical significance and lead to false conclusions about the strength of association. The chi-square measure of association, in particular, is susceptible to this. Therefore, we increased the standards for designating whether a relationship can be termed “statistically significant.” Two of the benchmarks shown in Table 6 must be met for us to term an association “statistically significant;” the Pearson’s chi-square must have probability of a type 1 error of 0.000, and the Phi coefficient or Cramer’s V must have values of .150 or greater. Throughout this document, we only report differences that meet this criteria.

Test	Level for significance
Pearson’s chi-square	.000
Phi coefficient	.150 or higher
Cramer’s V	.150 or higher

1.6 Outliers

Outliers can be caused by student error in recording their responses or data entry errors at PRA. After scanning the data for values that deviate from the norm, and verifying/correcting any data entry errors, we accepted the values provided by students as valid responses. This still means that the data may contain responses that some would consider unrealistic given the question asked. That said, we sometimes excluded outliers from the calculation of descriptive statistics such as means. The number of these “outliers” is small, and rather than arbitrarily setting a minimum and

maximum, we have included such responses in the analysis. The impact on the distribution of results is small, and we believe that it does not bias the results.

1.7 Non-response

As has been the practice for the last several years, non-responses have been included in the analysis. Thus, throughout this report, unless explicitly stated as a sub-population, overall results include those who did not respond to a particular question.

2.0 Profile of first-year students

In this section, we provide a profile of first-year students who participated in the survey.

2.1 Personal profile

As Table 7 (next page) shows, the typical first-year student is a 20-year-old female.

- As we have found in past surveys, female students outnumber male students by a factor of 2:1. This year is no exception. Two-thirds of students are women, and one-third are men.
- The average age of first-year students is almost 20 years. In fact, 53% of students are 18 years of age or younger, with the youngest being 16. About 8% are 21 years of age or older, including one student who is 93.
- Some 5% of students self-report as being disabled. Most commonly, students report such disabilities to be learning (2%), mental health (1%), visual (0.8%), physical (0.6%), or auditory (0.5%).
- Overall, 15% report being a visible minority, most often stating that they are: Chinese (3%), other Asian (3%), East Indian (3%), or Black/African (2%). Students attending Group 2 universities are slightly more likely to self-report as visible minorities (21%). This is likely because these universities tend to be in large urban areas. Students attending Group 1 universities (which tend to be in smaller communities) are less likely to identify as visible minorities (10%).
- About 2% of students identify themselves as Aboriginal people.

Table 7: Personal profile				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Gender Q37				
Male	33%	29%	37%	33%
Female	67%	71%	63%	66%
Age Q38				
18 years or younger	53%	57%	59%	47%
19 years of age	31%	32%	31%	31%
20 years of age	6%	4%	4%	9%
21 years or older	8%	6%	5%	13%
Average age	19.5	19.3	19.2	19.7
Disability Q48				
Total self-identified	5%	6%	4%	4%
Visible minority Q45				
Total self-identified	15%	10%	21%	17%
Aboriginal status Q47				
Total self-identified (net)	2%	4%	2%	2%
- First Nations	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
- Métis	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
- Inuit	<1%	<1%	-	-
- Non-status	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Note: The 'don't know/no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				

As Table 8 shows, the personal characteristics of students who participated in the 2001 survey are similar to those of students who participated in 2004. That said, the students in 2004 are younger than those in 2001. In part, this may reflect the elimination of Grade 13 in Ontario.

Table 8: Personal Profile: A comparison 2004 and 2001		
	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Gender		
Male	33%	34%
Female	67%	66%
Age		
18 years or younger	53%	37%
19 years of age	31%	41%
20 years of age	6%	10%
21 years or older	8%	11%
Average age	19.5	19.9
Disability		
Total self-identified	5%	5%
Visible minority		
Total self-identified	15%	14%
Aboriginal status		
Total self-identified	2%	3%
Note: The 'don't know/no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.		

2.1.1 Living arrangements

As Table 9 shows, in their first year of university, a majority of students continue to live with their parents (or some other relative or guardian).

- Some 55% of students live with their parents or other relatives. This is more common at larger institutions (especially Group 2 universities) primarily because parents or relatives are more likely to be located in the same large centre as students.
- Conversely, about 43% are living independently, most commonly in on-campus housing (26%) or in rented accommodations (16%). Living on-campus is much more common among students attending Group 1 universities, where over one-third of first-year students live in residence.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
With parents/guardians/relatives	55%	44%	65%	58%
In on-campus housing (residence hall/apartment/etc.)	26%	36%	20%	20%
Rented home/apartment/room	16%	17%	11%	19%
In personally owned home	1%	2%	1%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

The distributions of students' living arrangements are similar in 2004 and 2001, with slightly more students living independently in the 2001 survey. This may reflect the fact that students in the earlier survey tended to be slightly older. See Table 10.

	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
With parents	55%	50%
On-campus residence	26%	29%
Rented home/apartment/room	16%	19%
Personally owned home	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

2.1.2 Permanent residence

We asked students to indicate the population of the community in which they lived before starting university. As Table 11 shows:

- About half the students come from larger urban centres (with populations of 100,000 or more), including almost one-third who are from cities with populations of 300,000 or more.
- Reflecting both where they live and the location of the university, students attending Group 2 and 3 universities are more likely to be from the largest communities. Almost twice as many students attending Group 3 universities (40%) as Group 1 students (21%) are from communities with populations of 300,000 or more.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Lived on a farm/ranch	4%	5%	3%	3%
Less than 5,000	9%	13%	5%	8%
5,000 to 9,999	7%	9%	5%	6%
10,000 to 49,999	12%	13%	11%	12%
50,000 to 99,999	11%	14%	9%	8%
100,000 to 300,000	16%	16%	22%	12%
Over 300,000	31%	21%	34%	40%
No response	9%	8%	10%	10%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

We asked students to indicate their province of permanent residence. The distribution of students reflects the province in which participating universities are located.

- Almost half (46%) of students report that their province of permanent residence is Ontario.
- About 1 student in 5 is from the prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba – 19%).
- Over 1 student in 10 lives permanently in BC (13%).
- About 1 student in 10 is from Atlantic Canada (with most coming from Nova Scotia).
- About 1 student in 20 is from outside Canada.

Table 12 shows these results.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
British Columbia	13%	11%	24%	7%
Alberta	8%	11%	<1%	11%
Saskatchewan	4%	<1%	8%	4%
Manitoba	7%	10%	<1%	8%
Ontario	46%	46%	58%	37%
Québec	8%	<1%	<1%	20%
Nova Scotia	6%	13%	<1%	4%
Prince Edward Island	<1%	<1%	-	<1%
New Brunswick	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Territories	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
International/USA/other	5%	5%	5%	5%
No response	2%	2%	2%	3%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The distribution of students' permanent residence differs slightly from that of the previous survey. In 2004, slightly more students are from Ontario, and fewer are from the Atlantic provinces and the prairies.

See Table 13.

Province	2004 (11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
British Columbia	13%	10%
Alberta	8%	9%
Saskatchewan	4%	8%
Manitoba	7%	9%
Ontario	46%	39%
Québec	8%	10%
Nova Scotia	6%	6%
Prince Edward Island	<1%	<1%
New Brunswick	<1%	3%
Newfoundland	<1%	<1%
Territories	<1%	<1%
USA/International	5%	5%
No response	2%	<1%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

As mentioned, the distribution of permanent residence depends on the location of the institution, since, as we will see below, most students attend a university within their own province.

Table 14 shows the distribution of students by the province in which they are attending university. First-year students who responded to this survey represent universities in 7 of 10 provinces.

Table 14: Province in which attending university

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
British Columbia	15%	15%	27%	8%
Alberta	9%	12%	-	12%
Saskatchewan	4%	-	9%	4%
Manitoba	7%	11%	-	9%
Ontario	46%	46%	64%	34%
Québec	9%	-	-	24%
Nova Scotia	9%	16%	-	9%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Again, with some exceptions, the distribution of students by the province in which they are attending university is similar to the distribution of the 2001 survey.

Table 15: Province in which attending university: 2004 and 2001

	2004 (11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
British Columbia	15%	11%
Alberta	9%	9%
Saskatchewan	4%	8%
Manitoba	7%	10%
Ontario	46%	43%
Québec	9%	9%
Nova Scotia	9%	8%
New Brunswick	-	2%
Total	99%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Most (95%) students attending university in Québec are over the age of 18. This is most likely because they are coming out of CEGEP. Students attending university in Ontario and Nova Scotia also tend to be older than those in other provinces. In Ontario, 54% of students are over 18 years of age, while in Nova Scotia, 36% are over 18. In all other provinces represented in the survey, only about 25% of students are older than 18.

Figure 1 (below) shows that the majority of students attending these universities come from the same province in which the university is located.

- Over 9 students in 10 attending universities in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba also live permanently in those same provinces.
- Over 8 students in 10 attending universities in Québec and Alberta report that the province is their permanent home before they attended university.
- Over 7 students in 10 attending universities in British Columbia also live in that province permanently.
- Nova Scotia has the highest number of students from outside the province. Fewer than 2 students in 3 attending the universities there also reported living permanently in that province.

Students attending university in the province of permanent residence

(n=11,132)

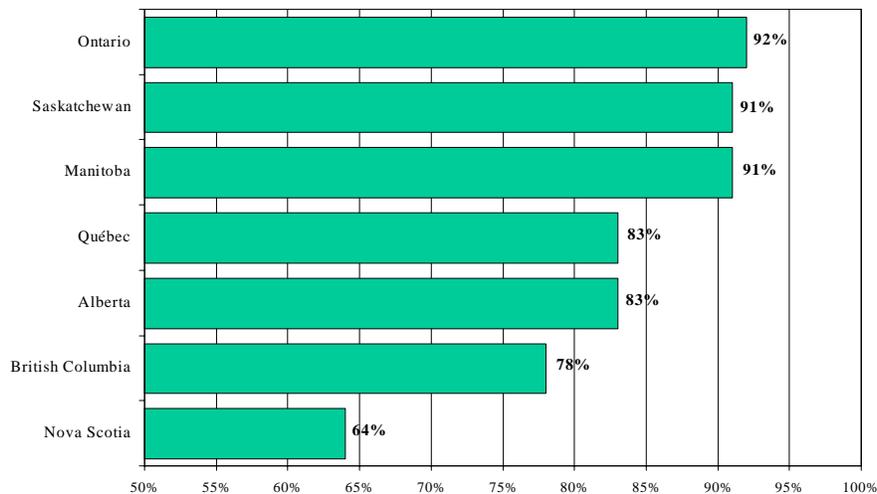


Figure 1

2.1.3 Parent's education

Table 16 shows the highest level of education of students' parents (as reported by students). About one-fifth of students did not know what level of education their parents achieved.

- About two-thirds of students report that at least one parent has completed some type of post-secondary education. Indeed, this includes 40% of students who report that both parents have completed post-secondary training.
- About half (52%) that their mothers completed post-secondary training, most commonly university (33%). Similarly, over half (54%) report that their fathers completed post-secondary education, again, most often, university (38%).
- About one-quarter of students report that their mothers' highest level of education was high school. About one-fifth report this level for their fathers.

Table 16: Parents' education Q49				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Mother's education				
Less than high school	4%	4%	4%	4%
High school or CEGEP	23%	25%	23%	22%
Some post-secondary	4%	6%	3%	4%
College/technical/trade school graduate	19%	22%	18%	17%
University graduate/professional	33%	29%	33%	35%
Other/don't know/no response	17%	14%	19%	18%
Father's education				
Less than high school	6%	7%	4%	5%
High school or CEGEP	18%	21%	17%	16%
Some post-secondary	3%	4%	3%	3%
College/technical/trade school graduate	16%	19%	16%	14%
University graduate/professional	38%	34%	40%	41%
Other/don't know/no response	18%	16%	20%	19%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

2.2 Academic profile

We asked students to record the subject or major area in which they are enrolled. These areas were then grouped into nine broadly defined disciplines as shown in Table 17 (below).

First-year students are pursuing degrees in:

- **“Generalist” disciplines.** Some 4 students in 10 (40%) cited programs classified as Arts and Humanities⁴ (21%) and Social Science⁵ (19%).
- **“Professional” disciplines.** Almost 3 students in 10 (28%) are in disciplines such as Business (13%), Professional⁶ (7%), Engineering (5%), or Education (3%).
- **“Science” disciplines.** About 1 student in 6 is currently in a science program (16%), mainly Biological (12%) or Physical Science (4%).⁷

Students attending Group 1 universities are more likely (48%) than others to report their major subject areas as Arts and Humanities or Social Science. Students in Group 2 and 3 universities are more likely than those in Group 1 to report being in Engineering and Professional programs.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Arts and Humanities	21%	28%	17%	16%
Social Science	19%	20%	17%	19%
Business	13%	11%	17%	12%
Biological Science	12%	11%	13%	12%
Professional	7%	5%	7%	10%
Engineering	5%	1%	8%	8%
Physical Science	4%	3%	4%	4%
Education	3%	4%	3%	3%
Other fields	8%	8%	7%	10%
Don't know/no response	7%	9%	6%	6%

Note: In cases where students provided more than one major, we took the first mention as the primary area of concentration.
 Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

⁴ “Arts and Humanities” programs include such areas of study as English or French Language and Literature, History, Philosophy, Music, and Religion.

⁵ “Social Science” programs include such areas of study as Economics, Family Studies, Political Science, Geography, Sociology, and Psychology.

⁶ “Professional” disciplines include areas of study such as Nursing, Pharmacy, Architecture and Social Work.

⁷ “Other fields” include areas of study such as Agriculture, Computer Science, Forestry, Communication, Recreation Studies, and Dental Hygiene.

The distributions of major or subject of concentration are very similar in 2004 and 2001. See Figure 2.

**Major or area of concentration:
2004 and 2001**

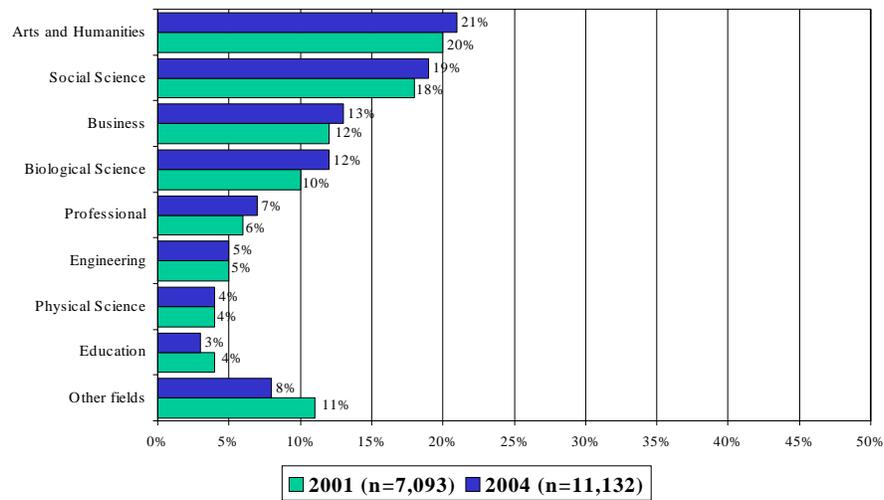


Figure 2

In 2004 (and in past surveys), male and female students tend to concentrate on different majors. Remember that two-thirds of our sample is female.

- Female students are more common than male students in most disciplines, but especially in Education, Professional, Arts and Humanities, and Social Science programs.
- Male students tend to be more common in Business and Physical Science programs. Male students also tend to dominate Engineering.

See Figure 3.

**Major or intended areas of concentration
by gender**
(n=11,089)

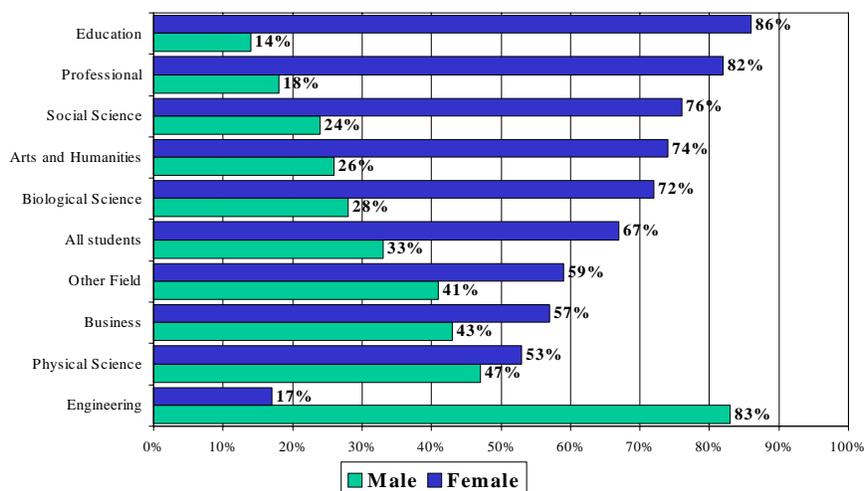


Figure 3

Most students graduated from high school or CEGEP in the same year they began their first year of university. In other words, they went immediately from high school graduation in the spring of 2003 to university in the fall.

Overall, about 8 students in 10 report that:

- They graduated from high school or CEGEP in 2003 (or later (78%).⁸ Almost 2 students in 10 report taking a break

⁸ Note that 35 students reported that they graduated high school or CEGEP in 2004.

in their education, finishing high school or CEGEP a year or more before beginning their university education.

- They took a full course load at registration (84%). This decreased only slightly, with 82% reporting a full course load at the time of the survey (the survey was administered in February, March, or April of 2004). Older students are less likely to have registered with a full course load in the fall. While 88% of the students 18 years of age or younger registered with a full course load, only 66% of students 21 years of age or older did the same.
- Their language of instruction is English (84%). Some 16% report French (8%) or some other (8%) as the language of instruction at university.
- About 1 student in 20 is studying in Canada on a visa. The older the student, the more likely he or she is to be studying in Canada on a student authorization study permit or visa. Some 3% of those 18 years of age or younger are studying on a visa, while some 18% of those 21 years of age or older are doing the same.

See Table 18.

Table 18: Academic profile				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Year graduated from high school or CEGEP Q24*				
2003 or later	78%	78%	81%	75%
2002	10%	10%	9%	11%
2001 or before	7%	7%	4%	9%
Full course load at registration Q25				
Yes	84%	84%	84%	83%
Full course load at time of survey Q26				
Yes	82%	84%	81%	82%
Language of instruction Q39**				
English	84%	94%	86%	73%
French	8%	1%	1%	19%
Other	8%	5%	12%	8%
Studying in Canada on a visa Q44				
Yes	5%	6%	6%	5%
*Note: The 'did not graduate' category is not shown.				
**Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%. The 'don't know/no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				

The change in course load is deceiving. While it appears that only about 2% of students reduce their course load between registration and the time of the survey, many more students drop or add courses throughout the term.

- Over 8 students in 10 appear to make no changes to their course load, that is, at least not enough to change their status as having a full or partial course load. Indeed, three-quarters of students both have a full course load at registration and maintain this course load at the time of the survey. About 8% did not have a full course load at registration and continue with a partial course load.
- The remaining 2 students in 10 report changing their course load status between registration and our survey. These students are split almost evenly between those who had registered a full load but, by our survey, had only a partial load (9%); and those who begin their registration with a partial load but have accumulated courses so that by our survey, they report a full course load (8%).

See Table 19.

Table 19: Changes in course load	
	All students (n=11,132)
No change	
Full Course load at both points in time	74%
Partial load at both points in time	8%
Change in course load	
Full load at registration/partial load at survey	9%
Partial load at registration/full load at survey	8%
Total	99%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.	

Another way of looking at this is that of those who began with a full course load at registration, about 89% had the same course load by the time of our survey.

2.2.1 Interest in campus living

As we reported earlier, about one-quarter of students live on campus.

Among the students who currently do NOT live in residence, almost one-quarter (about 17% of all students) would choose to live on campus if given a chance. See Table 20.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Live on campus Q42	26%	36%	20%	20%
Would choose to live on campus if given a chance Q43*	23%	20%	24%	23%

*Note: Only students who do not live on campus were asked if they would like to live on campus.

2.2.2 Grade point

We asked students to tell us their average grade in high school or CEGEP, as well as their expected average grade at the end of their first year of university. We also asked students to convert their grade point to a letter grade equivalent.

In high school or CEGEP:

- The average grade of these students is close to a A- (an average of 5.8 out 7; an A- is a 6).
- Almost 2 students in 3 (64%) report that their average grade at the end of their secondary schooling was an A-, A or A+.
- Almost 3 students in 10 (29%) report an average of B or B+ in high school or CEGEP.

Students' marks fall significantly in their first year of university (provided that these respondents are representative).

- The average grade falls from an A- to between a B and a B+.
- Almost 3 students in 10 (28%) report that they believe they will receive an average grade of A-, A or A+.

- Over half (54%) expect to end their first year with a B or B+.
- About 1 student in 6 (16%) expects an average grade of a C+ or lower.

See Table 21.

Table 21: Student grades				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Average grade in high school or CEGEP Q23*				
A or A+	36%	30%	38%	40%
A-	28%	26%	32%	28%
B+	17%	19%	16%	16%
B	12%	16%	10%	10%
C+	3%	5%	2%	2%
C or lower	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Average	5.8	5.6	6.0	5.9
Average grade expected at end of first year Q22*				
A or A+	9%	8%	8%	10%
A-	19%	18%	17%	21%
B+	24%	24%	23%	24%
B	30%	31%	32%	28%
C+	11%	12%	11%	10%
C or lower	5%	5%	7%	4%
Average	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.8
Note: The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				
*Note: This grade scale is based on the following: A/A+=7, A-=6, B+=5, B=4, C+=3, C=2, D=1.				

While on average, students' grades are lower in their first year of university than in high school or CEGEP, some students are doing better in university than they were in secondary school.

- Over one-third (36%) who had an A average (i.e., A+, A, or A-) in high school/CEGEP expect to maintain this average at the end of their first year of university. About half of these same students expect their average to fall to a B or B+. Just over one-tenth expect their grade to fall to a C+ or lower.
- Some 60% of students who had a B/B+ average expect to have this same average at the end of their first year of university. About 12% expect their average to increase to an A, while about 27% believe their average will fall to C+ or less.

- Those who graduate high school with the lowest grades (C+ average or less) tend to be the most likely to expect that their academic performance will improve in university. About 2 students in 3 who enter university with an average of C+ or less expect a higher grade at the end of their first year.

See Table 22.

Expected grade at end of first year	Grade in high school/CEGEP		
	A-, A or A+ (n=7,120)	B/B+ (n=3,237)	C+ or less (n=442)
A-, A or A+	36%	12%	11%
B/B+	53%	60%	57%
C+ or less	11%	27%	32%
Total	100%	99%	100%

2.2.3 Grades across time

Table 23 compares the reported grades of students in the current study to those of the 2001 survey.

The distribution of grades in high school or CEGEP is very similar (if not slightly higher in 2004) between the two years. Grades expected at the end of the first year of university are also almost identical.

	2004 (n=11,132)	2001 (n=7,093)
Average grade in high school or CEGEP Q23*		
A or A+	36%	32%
A-	28%	26%
B+	17%	18%
B	12%	14%
C+	3%	4%
C or lower	<1%	2%
Average	5.8	5.6
Average grade expected at end of first year Q22*		
A or A+	9%	9%
A-	19%	18%
B+	24%	23%
B	30%	30%
C+	11%	11%
C or lower	5%	7%
Average	4.7	4.6
Note: The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%. *Note: This grade scale is based on the following: A/A+=7, A-=6, B+=5, B=4, C+=3, C=2, D=1.		

2.2.4 Grades by discipline

Both secondary school grades and expected grades at the end of the first year of university vary by major area of interest (or discipline), as shown in Figure 4.

- Students in Physical Science programs tend to have the highest grade (A- on average) in high school/CEGEP, while students in Social Science programs tend to have the lowest grade (between a B and B+ on average).
- On average, all students regardless of discipline report expected grades at the end of their first year of university to be lower than in secondary school. Students in Physical Science programs expect the highest grade (B+ average) at the end of the first year of university, while students in all other disciplines expect lower grades (between a B and B+ average).

Major or area of concentration by average grades
 (n=11,132)

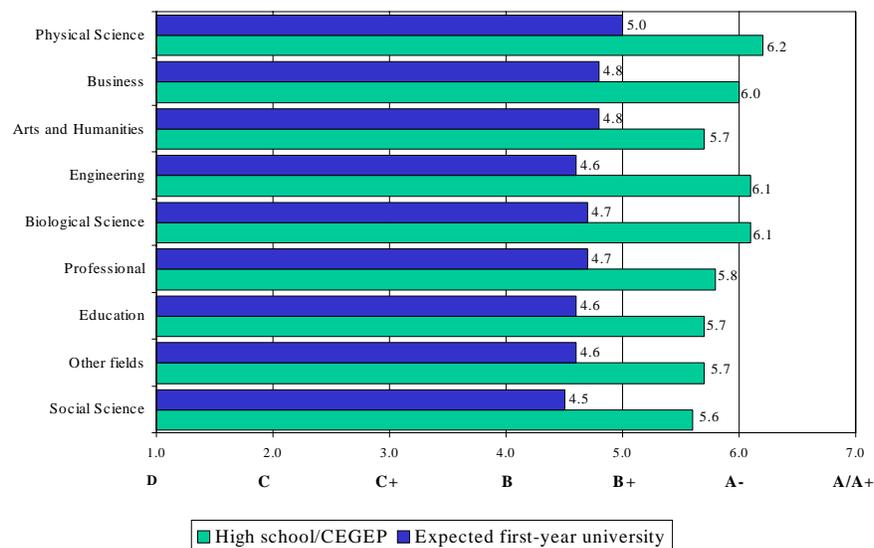


Figure 4

3.0 Financing education and current employment

In this section, we report on students' methods of financing their education and their employment while in university.

3.1 Source of financing education

We asked students to identify which of 11 sources they are using to help pay for their university education in the current academic year. Most students report using several sources.

- The most common source of funding is parents (family and spouses). Almost 2 students in 3 (regardless of university group) report parents or other family as a source of financing.
- About 4 students in 10 report using each of the following sources: personal savings, university scholarships, and earnings from summer work.
- About 3 students in 10 report using a government loan or bursary, while 2 in 10 report using earnings from current employment.
- About 1 student in 10 uses money from a university bursary.
- Fewer than 1 student in 10 reports using money from any of the other sources tested including RESP and investment income.

See Table 24.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Parents/family/spouse	64%	63%	63%	64%
Personal savings	40%	45%	34%	39%
University scholarship/financial award	40%	44%	36%	38%
Earnings from summer work	37%	44%	31%	35%
Government loan or bursary	30%	31%	30%	28%
Earnings from current employment	20%	20%	18%	23%
University bursary	10%	14%	7%	8%
RESP	7%	8%	8%	7%
Investment income	4%	5%	3%	4%
Work-study program	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Co-op program/work term	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other	11%	13%	9%	10%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

3.1.1 Number of sources

As mentioned, most students rely on multiple sources to help finance their university education. About three-quarters report using two or more of the 12 sources tested. Indeed, on average, students report using almost three of these sources.

Table 25: Number of sources of financing Q30

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
One	20%	16%	23%	22%
Two	24%	21%	26%	26%
Three	24%	25%	23%	24%
Four or more	28%	34%	23%	25%
No response	4%	4%	6%	4%
Average	2.8	3.0	2.6	2.7

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Older students depend on fewer sources of financing. While 36% of students 21 years of age or older depend on one source, only half as many students 18 years of age or younger (18%) depend on a single source.

3.1.2 Contribution by source

We also asked participants to estimate the average amount they receive from each of these sources.

- Overall, the average amount received from these various sources is about \$8,000. Students at Group 1 universities appear to receive slightly more (\$8,800), while those at Group 3 universities receive the least (\$7,600).

Among those who use these sources:

- The largest average amount is in the form of government loans or bursaries (amount \$5,300). Again, Group 1 students receive slightly more (\$5,800), and Group 3 students slightly less (\$4,800).
- Parents and other family are also large contributors to students' education. On average, students receive about \$4,700 from parents and other relatives. Again, students attending Group 1 universities receive slightly more (\$5,100), and those attending Group 3 universities receive slightly less (\$4,500).

These and other contributions are found in Table 26.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
All respondents				
Overall average	\$8,051	\$8,823	\$7,698	\$7,577
Average among those with these sources				
Government loan or bursary	\$5,298	\$5,784	\$5,242	\$4,839
Parents/family/spouse	\$4,705	\$5,060	\$4,601	\$4,465
RESP	\$4,206	\$3,887	\$4,381	\$4,408
Investment income (bonds, dividends, etc.)	\$3,586	\$3,268	\$3,492	\$4,066
Co-op program/work term	\$2,867	\$1,000	\$3,200	\$3,667
Personal savings	\$2,406	\$2,553	\$2,499	\$2,191
University scholarship/financial award	\$2,149	\$1,961	\$2,597	\$2,054
Earnings from summer work	\$1,985	\$2,007	\$2,043	\$1,925
Earnings from current employment	\$1,887	\$1,700	\$1,625	\$2,173
University bursary	\$1,315	\$1,256	\$1,135	\$1,519
Work-study program	\$1,184	\$1,460	\$1,072	\$1,212
Multiple other	\$3,978	\$4,119	\$3,928	\$3,826

Note: Amounts of \$1,000,000 and over have been excluded from the calculation of means.

Table 27 shows the median value for each contribution. In some cases, the median value is much lower than the average (parents), while in other cases, it is very close to the average (government loans or bursaries).

- Overall, half of the students report receiving less than \$6,400 from these sources, and the other half report receiving more than this amount.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
All respondents				
Overall median	\$6,400	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Median among those with these sources				
Government loan or bursary	\$5,000	\$5,600	\$5,000	\$4,496
Parents/family/spouse	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$3,000
RESP	\$3,300	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$3,200
Investment income (bonds, dividends, etc.)	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Co-op program/work term	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,750	\$3,000
University scholarship/financial award	\$1,500	\$1,250	\$2,000	\$1,500
Earnings from summer work	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,500
Personal savings	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,100
Earnings from current employment	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
University bursary	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Work-study program	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Multiple other	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$2,775

Note: Amounts of \$1,000,000 and over have been excluded from the calculation of medians.

3.1.3 Financing concerns

About one-third of students report that they have applied for a student loan.

Of those with a government loan or bursary, about 15% report having difficulty fulfilling the course load necessary to keep that loan or bursary.

Of those who report receiving a university scholarship or financial award, almost one-quarter report that they would be unable to attend university without such financial assistance. See Table 28.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Ever applied for a student loan Q29	34%	36%	34%	31%
Having difficulty fulfilling the course load needed to keep loans or bursaries Q31*	15%	13%	18%	15%
Unable to attend university without financial assistance from this university Q32**	23%	26%	22%	20%
*Note: Only students who had received a government loan or bursary were asked if they are having difficulty fulfilling the course load required to keep the loan/bursary.				
**Note: Only students who had received a university scholarship or financial award were asked if they would have been able to attend university without this financial assistance.				

As Table 29 shows, most students are at least somewhat concerned about having sufficient funding to complete their university education.

- Three-quarters of students are at least somewhat concerned, including over one-quarter who are very concerned.
- The remaining one-quarter are not concerned.
- The level of concern about funding has not changed significantly from 2001, when slightly more students were somewhat (49%) or very (28%) concerned.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Concerned about having sufficient funding to complete education				
Very concerned	27%	28%	30%	23%
Some concern	48%	49%	46%	49%
Not concerned	24%	22%	23%	26%
Note: The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				

3.2 Current employment

Just over 4 students in 10 report being employed, most commonly off campus (39%). Another 1 student in 5 is seeking work. Students reporting a full course load (at the time of the survey) are only slightly less likely to report working (40%), compared to students with only a partial course load (51%).

Among those who are currently employed:

- About 8 students in 10 work 20 hours a week or less. The average employed student works almost 16 hours a week.
- Just under 2 students in 10 work over 20 hours a week, including 4% who are employed full-time (30 hours or more a week).
- Students who are employed and have a full course load work less (14.5 hours), on average, than students with only a partial course load (18.9 hours).
- About half of the students report that their employment (other than that related to co-op requirements) has at least some negative impact on their academic performance. This includes many who say that the negative impact is moderate (10%) or significant/substantial (6%).
- Not surprisingly, the more hours per week they work, the more likely students are to report that their employment is having at least some negative impact on their academic performance. For example, of those who work 10 hours or less a week, some 38% report at least some negative impacts (including only 2% who report significant or substantial negative impacts). However, among those working over 30 hours a week, 66% report at least some negative impact (including 22% who report significant or substantial negative impacts).

Table 30 presents these results.

Table 30: Employment status Q33/Q34/Q35				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Currently employed Q33 (All respondents)				
Yes, both on and off campus	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Yes, on campus	2%	3%	2%	2%
Yes, off campus	39%	37%	38%	42%
No, but I am seeking work	21%	20%	24%	19%
No, and I am not seeking work	35%	38%	33%	34%
Number of hours worked per week Q34*				
10 hours or less	32%	29%	35%	33%
11 to 20 hours	49%	49%	47%	49%
21 to 30 hours	13%	14%	13%	12%
Over 30 hours	4%	4%	3%	4%
Average number of hours	15.5	15.9	15.0	15.3
Negative impact of non-co-op related employment on academic performance Q35*				
None	38%	40%	37%	37%
Some	37%	36%	37%	39%
Moderate	10%	9%	9%	10%
Significant	4%	4%	4%	4%
Substantial	2%	2%	3%	2%
*Note: Only students who are currently employed were asked how many hours they work per week and whether their employment has a negative impact on their academic performance. The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				

3.2.1 Employment by discipline

It appears that students in certain disciplines are more likely than other students to be employed. Those least likely to be employed (excluding work related to a co-op program) are students with majors in Engineering programs (70%). Those most likely to be employed are students in Education programs (51%). See Table 31.

Table 31: Employment by discipline			
	Not employed	Employed on or off campus	Average # of hours
Engineering	70%	27%	12.2
Biological Science	62%	36%	13.6
Physical Science	61%	37%	13.9
Business	57%	41%	15.5
Other fields	57%	41%	14.8
Overall	56%	42%	15.5
Social Science	54%	45%	16.5
Arts and Humanities	53%	45%	16.0
Professional	53%	46%	15.1
Education	47%	51%	15.4

4.0 Reasons motivating attendance and choice of university

In this section, we report on students' reasons for deciding to attend university in general, and their current university in particular.

4.1 Decision to attend university

We asked students to rate the importance of nine different reasons in their decision to attend university in general (see Table 32).

Almost all students report that at least one of these reasons was very important to their decision to attend university. Indeed, half of the students rate five or more reasons as very important.

The reasons most often rated as very important are related to future employment.

- Just over 8 students in 10 rate *getting a good job* as very important in their decision to attend university.
- About 3 students in 4 say that *preparing for a specific job or career* is a very important reason for attending university.

Most also consider the pursuit of knowledge as very important in their decision to attend university.

- Some 7 students in 10 say that *getting a good general education* was very important in their decision.
- Almost as many (2 students in 3) say that *increasing their knowledge in an academic field* was very important to their decision to attend university.
- Just over half also rate *developing a broad base of skills* as very important in their decision about university.

Other reasons are considered very important by less than half of the students.

- About 4 students in 10 say that *preparing for graduate school* was a very important reason.
- About 1 student in 3 says that *becoming a more cultured person* was very important in their decision.
- About 1 student in 5 reports that *meeting parental expectations* and *meeting new friends* were very important reasons in their decision to attend university.

These results are almost identical to those of the 2001 survey.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
f. Get a good job	82%	82%	84%	82%
a. Prepare for a specific job or career	74%	73%	75%	74%
b. Get a good general education	70%	68%	72%	70%
e. Increase my knowledge in an academic field	67%	66%	67%	69%
c. Develop a broad base of skills	51%	50%	51%	52%
d. Prepare for graduate/professional school	39%	37%	41%	39%
g. Become a more cultured person	33%	29%	32%	38%
h. Meet parental expectations	20%	18%	25%	19%
i. Meet new friends	18%	20%	17%	17%
j. Other	6%	7%	5%	5%

Depending on a student's major or discipline, the importance of these reasons can change.

- While a majority of students in all disciplines say that *getting a good job* was a very important reason in their decision to go to university, this is most common among student in Business, Engineering, or Professional programs. It is least common among students in Arts and Humanities programs.
- A majority of students in all disciplines also say that *preparing for a specific job or career* was a very important reason in their decision to attend university. It is most common among students in Education, Professional and Engineering programs, and least common among students in Arts and Humanities programs.

- A majority of students in Biological Science programs say that *preparing for graduate/professional school* was very important in deciding to attend university. Students in Engineering and Education programs are least likely to say that this was very important.

See Table 33.

Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very important"
Get a good job	Business	91%
	Engineering	88%
	Professional	88%
	Overall	82%
	Arts and Humanities	71%
Prepare for a specific job or career	Education	91%
	Professional	91%
	Engineering	83%
	Overall	76%
	Arts and Humanities	68%
Prepare for graduate/professional school	Biological Science	60%
	Social Science	45%
	Overall	39%
	Engineering	27%
	Education	24%

4.1.1 Most important reason

We asked students to choose one of these reasons as the “single most important” in their decision to attend university. As we found in 2001, most students’ prime motivation to attend university is related to future employment either in a specific field or in general.

- Almost two-thirds of students chose either *preparing for specific job or career* (35%) or *getting a good job* (29%) as the single most important reason for going to university.
- Each of the other reasons is “most important” to 10% or less of students.

See Table 34.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
a. Prepare for a specific job or career	35%	37%	31%	35%
f. Get a good job	29%	27%	32%	29%
b. Get a good general education	10%	10%	10%	10%
e. Increase my knowledge in an academic field	7%	7%	7%	8%
d. Prepare for graduate/professional school	7%	7%	8%	7%
c. Develop a broad base of skills	3%	4%	3%	3%
g. Become a more cultured person	3%	2%	2%	3%
h. Meet parental expectations	2%	2%	3%	2%
i. Meet new friends	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
j. Other	2%	2%	2%	2%
No response	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

As with their ratings of the importance of different factors in their decision to attend university, students in specific disciplines are more likely to cite specific reasons as the most important.

- Students in Education and Professional programs are more likely than others to say that *preparing for a specific job or career* is the most important reason in their decision to attend university.
- Students in Business and Engineering programs are more likely than other students to consider *getting a good job* as the single most important reason. This reason is significantly less common among students in Arts and Humanities and Education programs (the latter because they are preparing for a specific career).
- Students in Biological Science programs are more likely than other students to say that *preparing for graduate/professional school* is the most important reason.

See Table 35.

Table 35: Most important reason by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "most important"
Prepare for a specific job or career	Education	67%
	Professional	56%
	Overall	35%
	Business	29%
	Physical Science	29%
Get a good job	Biological Science	27%
	Business	44%
	Engineering	38%
	Overall	29%
	Arts and Humanities	20%
To prepare for graduate/professional school	Education	17%
	Biological Science	21%
	Overall	8%
	Engineering	2%
	Education	2%

4.2 Reasons for choosing their university

We asked students to rate the importance of 26 different reasons in their decision to attend their current university. We have grouped these reasons into four broad themes: personal, university programs and services, general aspects of university life, and other considerations.

4.2.1 Personal reasons

The location of the chosen university was a very important reason for many students in their decision regarding which institution to attend.

- For almost 4 students in 10, *wanting to live close to home* was very important in choosing their current university.
- Almost 1 student in 3 rates *accessibility of the campus from their home* as very important in their decision.
- About 1 in 10 says the fact that their *parents wanted them to enroll at this university* or their desire to *live away from home* were very important.
- Other personal reasons, such as the fact that their *friends or other family are currently attending the university*, are very important to less than 1 student in 10.

Table 36 shows the percentages of those who rated these reasons as being very important in their decision to attend their current university. These results are very similar to those of the 2001 survey of first-year students.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
a. Wanted to live close to home	37%	32%	44%	38%
c. Accessibility of the campus from my home	32%	26%	39%	33%
n. Parents/relatives wanted me to enrol here	11%	9%	13%	11%
b. Wanted to live away from home	9%	13%	8%	7%
p. Friends attending here	9%	8%	8%	10%
o. Other family member(s) currently attending here	4%	4%	5%	4%

4.2.2 University programs and services

Of all the reasons tested, *quality of academic programs* and *specific career-related programs* are most often rated as very important in students' choice of university.

- Almost 6 students in 10 report that the *quality of academic programs* at their current university was very important in their decision. This is the single most common reason rated as very important by first-year students.
- Over half of the students say that the fact that their current university offered a *specific career-related program* was very important in their decision.
- Less than 1 student in 5 rates the following programs or services as very important in their decision: *availability of on-campus residence, opportunities for international work or study, and the university's co-op program*. It appears that on-campus residence is very important to more students attending Group 1 universities. While this difference is suggestive, it is not statistically significant. However, the availability of co-op programs is statistically more important to students in Group 2 universities than to other students.
- Other university programs and services are rated as very important by 1 student in 10 or less, including *recreational facilities or programs, computer facilities, athletic or varsity sports, and special needs services*.

Table 37 presents this year's results, which are similar to those reported in 2001.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
e. Quality of academic programs	57%	58%	56%	58%
f. Specific career-related program	54%	55%	54%	54%
l. Availability of on-campus residence accommodations	17%	22%	14%	14%
v. Opportunities for international work/study abroad	15%	13%	16%	17%
u. Co-op program	15%	11%	23%	12%
y. Recreational facilities/programs	11%	11%	11%	12%
t. Computer facilities	10%	9%	11%	10%
x. Athletic/varsity sports	7%	7%	7%	7%
w. Special needs services	3%	3%	4%	3%

4.2.3 General aspects of university life

Students consider other aspects of university life when choosing an institution to attend.

- Almost half of the students report that the fact that a particular *university has a good reputation* was very important in their decision of which university to attend.

About 1 student in 4 says that:

- The *size of the university* was very important. Not surprisingly, this is more often seen as very important by students attending smaller universities. Over 4 students in 10 attending Group 1 universities say that this reason was very important in their decision, compared with less than half as many students from Group 2 or 3 universities.
- The *tuition fees* were very important in their decision to attend their current university.
- The *offer of financial assistance or scholarship* was very important in their decision. An offer of financial assistance or scholarship appears to be more important to younger students. While 27% of those 18 years of age or younger say that such an offer was very important, only 13% of those 21 years of age or older say the same.

These and other reasons are shown in Table 38. These findings have changed little from those of the 2001 survey of first-year students.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
g. University has a good reputation	48%	51%	45%	47%
h. Size of university	25%	42%	17%	15%
m. Tuition fees	25%	29%	25%	21%
d. Offered financial assistance/scholarship	24%	25%	25%	21%
s. Contact with students from the university	7%	7%	8%	8%

4.2.4 Other considerations

The remaining reasons for students' choice of university are shown in Table 39. Each was very important to about one-fifth of students or less.

- The *availability of public transportation* was very important to about 1 student in 5. Interestingly, it was significantly more important to students attending Group 2 or 3 universities than to those attending Group 1 institutions.
- Over 1 student in 10 reports the following reasons as very important in their decision: *size of city or town, physical appearance of the campus, or rich social life.*
- Less than 1 student in 10 reports that *school spirit or advice from counsellors or teachers* were very important in their decision.

Results have changed little compared to those of the 2001 survey of first-year students.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
r. Availability of public transportation	22%	15%	24%	27%
k. Size of city/town	14%	15%	12%	14%
z. Physical appearance of the campus	13%	14%	12%	14%
i. Rich social life	12%	14%	10%	13%
j. School spirit	9%	11%	8%	9%
q. Advice from counsellors or teachers	7%	7%	6%	7%

4.2.5 Reasons by discipline

Table 40 shows the reasons that were very important in the decision to attend a particular university by students' area of study or discipline.

- Perhaps not surprising, *specific career-related programs* were more often very important to students in Education, Professional, Engineering, and Business programs than to students in other disciplines.
- Students in Engineering and Business programs are also much more likely than other students to say that the *co-op program* was very important.
- *Athletic/varsity sports* was more often very important to students in Other fields (which includes those in Recreation Studies).

Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very important"
Specific career-related program	Education	78%
	Professional	76%
	Engineering	67%
	Business	61%
	Overall	56%
	Physical Science	49%
	Biological Science	46%
Co-op program	Engineering	37%
	Business	35%
	Overall	15%
	Arts and Humanities	7%
	Education	7%
Athletic/varsity sports	Other fields	15%
	Overall	7%
	Professional	5%
	Arts and Humanities	5%

4.2.6 Most important reason

We asked students to choose the single most important reason influencing their choice of university.

Three reasons stand out, accounting for more than half of all responses:

- *specific career-related programs* (21%)
- *quality of academic programs* (18%)
- *wanted to live close to home* (14%).

These three reasons are the most common regardless of university type (Group 1, 2, or 3). Indeed, the relative importance of all reasons is similar regardless of university type. The one exception is *size of university*, which almost 1 in 10 of those in Group 1 say is most important, compared with less than 1% of other students.

Table 41 shows the most important reasons. Reasons that were collapsed into the “other” category were each mentioned by 2% or less of students. These results are very similar to those of the 2001 survey.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
f. Specific career-related program	21%	22%	20%	21%
e. Quality of academic programs	18%	17%	16%	21%
a. Wanted to live close to home	14%	11%	17%	15%
g. University has a good reputation	9%	8%	10%	9%
d. Offered financial assistance/scholarship	6%	6%	7%	5%
c. Accessibility of the campus from my home	5%	4%	6%	6%
h. Size of university	3%	8%	<1%	<1%
m. Tuition fees	3%	4%	2%	2%
Other	18%	18%	19%	18%
No response	2%	2%	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

4.3 Selecting a university

We asked students about the process of selecting a university to attend.

- As Table 42 shows, about 7 students in 10 applied to more than one university. (In 2001, 6 students in 10 applied to more than one university.)
- On average, students who applied to more than one university, applied to almost four. Students attending Group 2 universities are slightly more likely than students attending other institutions to have applied to multiple universities.
- Of those who applied to more than one university, about 3 students in 10 applied to a university outside their home province.
- Almost 1 student in 5 applied to college as well as to university.
- Almost 8 students in 10 report that the university they are currently attending was their first choice. Among those who report applying to more than one university, slightly fewer—about 7 students in 10—report that they are attending their first choice.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Applied to more than one university Q3				
Yes	69%	68%	79%	64%
Total number applied to Q3A*				
Two**	26%	24%	22%	32%
Three	28%	31%	29%	25%
Four	17%	18%	17%	17%
Five or more	28%	26%	31%	26%
Average	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.7
Number outside home province Q3B*				
None	69%	71%	73%	65%
One	13%	13%	10%	14%
Two	7%	7%	7%	9%
Three or more	9%	7%	8%	11%
Average	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8
Applied to college as well Q4				
Yes	18%	19%	24%	13%
Currently attending first choice Q5				
Yes	78%	79%	72%	81%
*Note: Only students who applied to more than one university were asked the total number to which they had applied, and the total number to which they applied outside their home province.				
**Note: Students who said they applied to more than one university but indicated that they applied to one in total were assumed to have meant that they have applied to one university besides the one they currently attend, for a total of two. The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.				

4.4 Contact before choosing a university

We asked students about 12 different types of contact that they might have had before choosing their current university. Most appear to have had multiple types of contact before making their decision. This ranges from reading brochures and visiting web sites to meeting with university personnel (e.g., admissions office).

4.4.1 Personal contact

Table 43 shows the percentages of students who report having had personal methods of contact when choosing their current university.

- More than 9 students in 10 report *receiving brochures or pamphlets* from their current university prior to making their choice.
- More than 8 students in 10 report *visiting the university campus* prior to choosing their university.
- Some 8 students in 10 say they were *visited by a representative of the university at their high school or CEGEP*.
- About 2 students in 3 say they received *letters from a university representative*. A similar number report *meeting with an admissions officer on the campus*.
- About 6 students in 10 report *calls from students of the university*, and the same number reports *calls from university faculty*.
- About half report *contact from university coaches*.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
b. Brochures or pamphlets	93%	93%	93%	92%
c. Campus visit	85%	86%	87%	82%
a. University rep. visited my high school or CEGEP	80%	79%	83%	78%
d. Letters from university representatives to my high school or CEGEP	67%	68%	69%	65%
e. Meeting with university admissions officer on the campus	64%	65%	64%	62%
g. Calls from students of the university	61%	63%	62%	59%
f. Calls from faculty of the university	61%	63%	62%	57%
i. Contact from university coaches	50%	50%	52%	49%

Table 44 shows how important each contact was in students' decisions about which university to attend. The table shows the students who rate a contact as very important as a percentage of those who offered a rating (that is, those who experienced such a contact).

Of those who had experience with these types of contact, the most important are:

- *Campus visits.* Of the 85% of students who rate campus visits, about 4 students in 10 say that this type of contact was very important in their decision.
- *Brochures and pamphlets.* Of the 93% of students who received/reviewed printed materials, approximately 1 student in 4 rates it as very important.
- *Visit by a university representative to high school/CEGEP.* Of the 80% of students who experienced such visits, about 1 in 5 say it was very important.

Table 44: Considerations when choosing current university - Personal contact ('very important') Q9				
	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
c. Campus visit	37%	42%	35%	33%
b. Brochures or pamphlets	26%	26%	25%	28%
a. University rep. visited my high school or CEGEP	18%	20%	17%	16%
f. Calls from faculty of the university	15%	16%	17%	12%
e. Meeting with university admissions officer on the campus	14%	16%	13%	13%
g. Calls from students of the university	11%	12%	12%	10%
d. Letters from university representatives to my high school or CEGEP	10%	10%	12%	9%
i. Contact from university coaches	7%	8%	6%	7%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

4.4.2 Contact through media

Students report using various media sources in choosing their current university.

- Over 9 students in 10 visited their university’s web site before deciding which institution they would attend. This is up slightly from 2001, when 86% reported having used the university’s web site.
- Almost 3 students in 4 report having read the issue of *Maclean’s* magazine that ranked universities. Another 7 students in 10 say that they referred to other media reports regarding universities when making their decision.
- Some 6 in 10 report having seen or heard broadcast advertising.

See Table 45.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
h. University web site	94%	93%	93%	94%
k. Maclean's magazine	74%	73%	79%	71%
l. Other media reports	69%	67%	72%	69%
j. TV or radio ads	60%	59%	61%	60%

Table 46 shows the students who rate each consideration as very important as a percentage of those who offered a rating (that is, those who had used these sources).

- *University web site.* Of the 94% of students who had visited the university web site, about 1 in 3 say it was very important in choosing their current university.
- *Maclean's magazine.* Of the 74% who report reading *Maclean's* magazine, about 1 in 6 say it was very important in their decision.

Other media sources are very important to less than one-tenth of the students who used them.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
h. University web site	35%	32%	35%	39%
k. Maclean's magazine	16%	16%	19%	14%
l. Other media reports	7%	7%	9%	7%
j. TV or radio ads	3%	3%	3%	3%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

4.4.3 Most important contact in choice of program

We asked students to consider all contacts, academic and media, and identify which contact was the most important in their decision to attend their current university. Of these pre-decision contacts, four stand out as the most important to almost 70% of students.

- *Campus visit.* About 1 student in 4 reports that a visit to the university campus was the most important contact in their decision to attend this university. This is slightly more important to Group 1 students than to those attending other types of universities.
- *University web site.* About 1 student in 6 reports that the university's web site was the most important contact in their decision. The importance of the web site has grown. In 2001, 9% of students reported that it was the most important contact, compared to 16% in 2004.
- *Brochures and pamphlets.* About 1 in 7 reports that such materials were the most important.
- *Visit by university representative.* About 1 student in 8 reports that such a visit was most important.

Other reasons were most important to less than 1 student in 10 including *Maclean's* magazine (6%) and *meeting with university admissions officer* (3%). Still other reasons (included in the "other" category) are cited by less than 3% of students.

Table 47: Which of these was the single most important contact for your decision to attend this university? Q10

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
c. Campus visit	25%	30%	23%	22%
h. University web site	16%	13%	15%	19%
b. Brochures or pamphlets	15%	12%	14%	18%
a. University rep. visited my high school or CEGEP	13%	14%	13%	12%
k. Maclean's magazine	6%	5%	9%	4%
e. Meeting with university admissions officer	3%	3%	3%	3%
Other	16%	17%	17%	16%
No response	6%	6%	6%	6%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While students who are 19 or younger are most likely to cite a campus visit as the single most important contact (27%), students who are 21 or older do not rely as much on such visits (12%) partly because they do not have the same opportunity to make such visits. Older students (especially those who are 21 or older) tend to say that the university web site is the single most important contact (28%.) This compares with about half as many (14%) students 19 years of age or younger.

4.5 Application process

Most students report that they are satisfied with the way their university handled their application for admission.

- Nine students in 10 report that they are satisfied, including almost 6 in 10 who are very satisfied.
- One student in 10 is dissatisfied.

See Table 48.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Very satisfied	56%	64%	55%	51%
Somewhat satisfied	34%	29%	36%	37%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6%	4%	6%	8%
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%	3%	4%
No response	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Average	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3

Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Very satisfied=4, Somewhat satisfied=3, Somewhat dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1.
 Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

5.0 Experience prior to classes

In this section, we report on students' experience prior to classes, including any help they received in choosing their program, the course registration, and the orientation.

5.1 Help in choice of program

We asked students if, before or while registering, they received advice or help with their program or course selection.

- Just over 4 students in 10 report receiving such assistance or help.
- Most of those students who report receiving such advice are satisfied with the assistance they received. Over 8 students in 10 report being satisfied, including almost 4 in 10 who are very satisfied with the help they received from their university in deciding on their program or course selection.

See Table 49.

Table 49: University assistance regarding choice of program				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Received university assistance before or while first registering Q12A				
Yes	43%	43%	41%	44%
Satisfaction with assistance received in selecting program Q13*				
Very satisfied	37%	40%	36%	34%
Somewhat satisfied	49%	46%	51%	51%
Somewhat dissatisfied	9%	9%	8%	10%
Very dissatisfied	4%	3%	4%	4%
No response	1%	2%	1%	2%
Average	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
*Note: Only those who received assistance were asked how satisfied they were. Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Very satisfied=4, Somewhat satisfied=3, Somewhat dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.				

5.2 Course registration

We asked students how they registered at their university.

- Almost 2 students in 3 registered on-line.
- About 1 student in 4 registered by mail.
- About 1 student in 6 registered in person, and less than 1 in 10 registered by phone.

About 15% of students report using more than one of these methods to register. See Table 50.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
On-line	64%	51%	73%	69%
By mail	26%	31%	18%	27%
In person	16%	24%	13%	11%
By phone	7%	7%	8%	7%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

We asked students how satisfied they are with the process of course registration when they first registered. As shown in Table 51:

- Over 8 students in 10 are satisfied, including over 4 students in 10 who are very satisfied.
- Less than 1 student in 6 is dissatisfied, including 1 in 20 who is very dissatisfied with the process.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Very satisfied	42%	40%	43%	43%
Somewhat satisfied	43%	41%	44%	43%
Somewhat dissatisfied	10%	11%	9%	10%
Very dissatisfied	5%	7%	4%	5%
No response	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Average	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.2

Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Very satisfied=4, Somewhat satisfied=3, Somewhat dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The method of registration appears to have an impact on students' satisfaction with the process. Figure 5 shows satisfaction with the process by method of registration.

- Those who registered on-line or by mail are the most satisfied. Almost 9 students in 10 who used these methods are satisfied. This includes many who are very satisfied: 45% of those who registered on-line and 40% of those who registered by mail.
- Those who registered in person or by phone are less satisfied. Still, 3 students in 4 who registered in person are satisfied; only about 35% are very satisfied. While 2 students in 3 who registered by phone are satisfied, only 25% are very satisfied. In each case, a significant percent of students are dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with process by method of registration

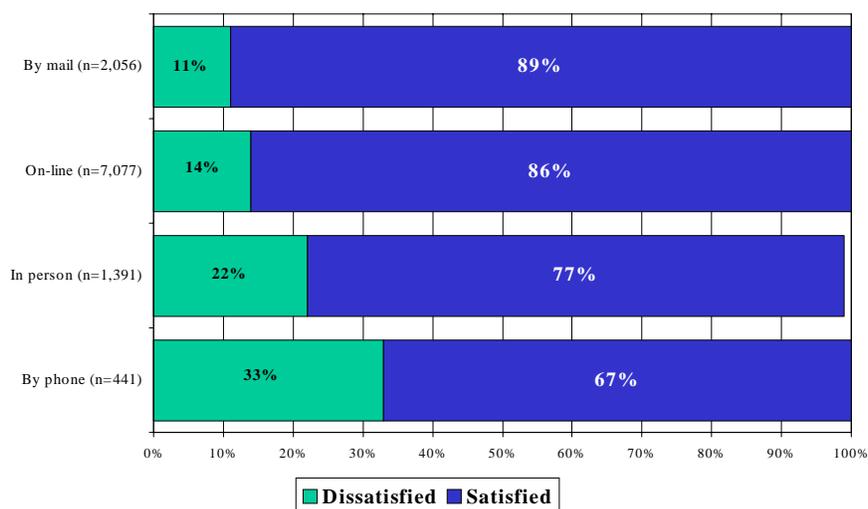


Figure 5

Just over half of the students were able to register completely for the courses they wanted. Another 3 in 10 were able to register in most of their desired courses. The remaining 1 in 6 registered in only some or none of the courses they wanted. See Table 52.

This is similar to, if not down slightly, from the 2001 survey when 57% reported being able to register in all of the courses they wanted.

Table 52: Last fall, to what extent were you able to register in the courses you wanted? Q15

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Completely	53%	52%	55%	53%
Mostly	29%	30%	28%	29%
Somewhat	14%	14%	14%	15%
Not at all	2%	2%	2%	2%
No response	2%	2%	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

5.3 University orientation

Most first-year students participated in a university orientation program, and a majority of these students report that they had a positive experience.

- Some 6 students in 10 report that they participated in an orientation program before or after arriving on campus last fall. This is almost identical to the 2001 result.

Of those who participated in an orientation program:

- Over 9 students in 10 say they are satisfied in terms of the orientation making them *feel welcome at the university*, including 45% who say they are very satisfied.
- About 8 students in 10 say they are satisfied (or very satisfied) with the orientation in terms of *providing information about campus life* (including 30% who are very satisfied), *providing information about student services* (27% very satisfied), and *helping them understand the university's academic expectations* (20% are very satisfied).
- About 3 students in 4 say they are satisfied (or very satisfied) with the orientation in terms of *helping their personal and social transition to university* (including 23%

who are very satisfied) and *building their confidence* (19% very satisfied).

These findings are presented in Table 53.

Table 53: Orientation				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Participated in an orientation program Q16				
Yes	61%	68%	63%	55%
Satisfaction with orientation - 'very satisfied'/'satisfied' Q17*				
a. Feeling welcome at the university	94%	94%	94%	94%
d. Providing information about campus life	82%	81%	84%	82%
e. Providing information about student services	81%	82%	83%	78%
b. Helping you understand university's academic expectations	78%	81%	78%	76%
c. Helping your personal and social transition to university	76%	77%	75%	75%
f. Building your confidence	73%	74%	72%	71%

*Note: Only those who participated in an orientation program were asked how satisfied they were.

Older first-year students are less likely to have participated in an orientation program. Almost 2 students in 3 who are 18 years of age or younger participated, compared to just over 4 in 10 of those 21 years of age or older.

6.0 University experience

In this section, we report on students' experience at university, including their self-assessed success in adjusting to various aspects of university life and their satisfaction with university programs, services, and faculty.

6.1 Adjusting to university

We asked students to rate their success in adjusting to 17 aspects of university life, which we grouped into three broad categories: academic, personal, and practical. In each case, students were to indicate whether they have been “very successful,” or have had “some success,” “little success,” or “no success” in adjusting to each aspect of university life.

6.1.1 Adjusting to academic demands of university

Not all students rate all aspects of university of life. Table 54 shows the percentage of students who could offer a rating of their success in adjusting to academic aspects.

Almost all students—over 90%—provide ratings of their success in adjusting to academic aspects of university life. There are some exceptions:

- Over 8 students in 10 rate their success in *getting academic advice*, as well as *meeting computer literacy required for their studies*.
- About 2 students in 3 rate their success in *performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills*.

Table 54: Success in adjustments to university - Academic (percent who offered a rating) Q18

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
j. Understanding content and information presented in courses	98%	98%	98%	98%
a. Meeting academic demands	98%	98%	98%	98%
f. Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives	96%	96%	96%	96%
h. Performing adequately in written assignments	95%	96%	94%	95%
n. Finding help with questions or problems	95%	96%	95%	94%
g. Getting academic advice	86%	88%	86%	84%
o. Meeting the computer literacy required for my studies	81%	82%	82%	81%
i. Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	65%	62%	68%	65%

Of those who could rate their success in academic adjustment, about 9 students in 10 report having had at least some success in the following areas:

- *Understanding content and information presented in courses*, including 43% who report having had very much success.
- *Meeting academic demands*, including 36% who report having had very much success.
- *Meeting the computer literacy required for their studies*, including 58% who report having had very much success.
- *Choosing a program of studies to meet their objectives*, including 49% who report having had very much success.
- *Performing adequately in written assignments*, including 34% who report having had very much success.

Of those who could offer a rating, about 3 students in 4 report having had at least some success in the following areas:

- *Finding help with questions or problems*, although only 25% report having had very much success.
- *Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills*, including 33% who report having had very much success.

Of those who could offer a rating, some 6 in 10 report having had at least some success in:

- *Getting academic advice*, including only 18% who report having had very much success.

Table 55 shows the 2004 results, which are very similar to those in 2001.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
j. Understanding content and information presented in courses	94%	95%	93%	94%
a. Meeting academic demands	91%	93%	87%	91%
o. Meeting the computer literacy required for my studies	90%	91%	91%	89%
f. Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives	89%	91%	88%	88%
h. Performing adequately in written assignments	87%	88%	85%	87%
n. Finding help with questions or problems	76%	79%	76%	74%
i. Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	75%	73%	75%	78%
g. Getting academic advice	60%	64%	59%	58%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.1.2 Personal adjustments

Almost all students rated their success in adjusting to various personal aspects of university life, except for *adjusting to living here*. See Table 56.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
p. Organizing my time to complete academic work	98%	98%	98%	97%
b. Making new friends with other students	97%	98%	98%	97%
k. Feeling as if I belong at university	97%	97%	97%	97%
c. Becoming involved in campus activities	95%	95%	95%	94%
d. Adjusting to living here	59%	65%	50%	60%

Among those who rate their success, almost 9 students in 10 report having had at least some success in:

- *Adjusting to living here*, including 52% who say that they have had very much success.

Among those providing ratings, over 8 students in 10 report having had at least some success in:

- *Feeling as if I belong at university*, including 45% who report having had very much success.

- *Making new friends with other students*, including 44% who report having had very much success.
- *Organizing my time to complete academic work*, although only 28% report having had very much success.

Again, among those who provide a rating, just over 1 student in 3 reports having had at least some success in:

- *Becoming involved in campus activities*, including only 9% who report having had very much success.

See Table 57.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
d. Adjusting to living here	87%	90%	81%	87%
k. Feeling as if I belong at university	83%	87%	83%	80%
b. Making new friends with other students	82%	85%	81%	81%
p. Organizing my time to complete academic work	82%	84%	79%	82%
c. Becoming involved in campus activities	36%	39%	35%	34%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.1.3 Practical adjustments

Most students—about 9 or more in 10—rated four practical adjustments involved in university life. The one exception was *finding suitable, affordable housing*, which affected only those who moved (or planned to move) to attend university.

See Table 58.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
l. Finding my way around the campus	97%	97%	97%	97%
m. Using the library	95%	94%	94%	95%
q. Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations	87%	87%	87%	87%
e. Finding suitable, affordable housing	47%	57%	38%	43%

Among those rating their success in terms of making practical adjustments:

- Over 9 students in 10 report having had at least some success in *finding their way around the campus*, including 74% who report having had very much success.
- Almost 8 students in 10 report having had at least some success *using the library*, including 39% who report having had very much success
- Some 3 students in 4 report having had at least some success *finding suitable, affordable housing*, including 37% who report having had very much success.
- About 6 students in 10 report having had at least some success *finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations*, including only 14% who report having had very much success.

See Table 59.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
l. Finding my way around the campus	96%	98%	96%	95%
m. Using the library	79%	80%	79%	80%
e. Finding suitable, affordable housing	75%	79%	69%	75%
q. Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations	58%	58%	57%	58%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.1.4 Success by discipline

Table 60 shows the one area of significant difference by discipline, in students' ratings of success adjusting to university life. In *performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills*, students in Physical Science and Engineering programs are more likely to report being very successful. Students in Social Science and Arts and Humanities programs report having had the least success.

Reason	Discipline	Percent stating "very much" success
Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills	Physical Science	51%
	Engineering	49%
	Overall	33%
	Social Science	23%
	Arts and Humanities	22%

6.2 Satisfaction with various aspects of university experience

Overall, most first-year students report that they are at least somewhat satisfied with the concern shown by their university for them as individuals.

- Just over 6 students in 10 are satisfied or very satisfied with the concern shown by their university for them as individuals. This includes only 13% who are very satisfied.
- Almost 3 students in 10 are dissatisfied.
- Students attending Group 1 universities are more likely than students attending Group 2 or 3 universities to be very satisfied. This is perhaps not surprising because Group 1 universities tend to be smaller and therefore may have more opportunity to demonstrate concern for students as individuals.

See Table 61.

Table 61: Concern shown by the university for you as an individual Q19D				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Very satisfied	13%	19%	9%	10%
Satisfied	49%	51%	47%	47%
Dissatisfied	20%	17%	23%	22%
Very dissatisfied	8%	5%	8%	9%
Don't know/no response	11%	8%	12%	12%
Average	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.6
Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Very satisfied=4, Satisfied=3, Dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.				

6.2.1 Academic facilities and services

We asked students to rate various academic facilities and services. As Table 62 shows, about 9 or more students in 10 could rate each facility or service, with one exception—only about 1 student in 10 rated the co-op services. This is not surprising because such services are not common.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
q19a. Average size of your classes	97%	98%	97%	97%
q19b. Instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment)	97%	97%	96%	96%
q20a. Library facilities	89%	90%	88%	90%
q20b. Access to computers	87%	85%	89%	87%
q20q. Co-op services	12%	10%	13%	13%

The vast majority of students are satisfied or very satisfied with each of the academic facilities and services. About 9 students in 10 are at least satisfied with:

- *Library facilities*, including 33% who are very satisfied.
- *Access to computers*, including 39% who are very satisfied.
- *Instructional facilities*, including 25% who are very satisfied. Students attending Group 1 universities tend to be slightly more satisfied with the instructional facilities at their universities. One-third of students attending Group 1 universities are very satisfied compared with one-fifth of those attending Group 2 or 3 universities.

Over 8 students in 10 are satisfied with:

- *Average class size*, including 28% who are very satisfied. Students attending Group 1 universities (45%) are more likely to be very satisfied than those attending Group 2 (22%) or Group 3 (17%) universities.
- *Co-op services*, including 24% who are very satisfied.

Table 63 presents the percentages of those who are satisfied or very satisfied with the various academic facilities and services.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
q20a. Library facilities	92%	92%	91%	94%
q20b. Access to computers	89%	92%	89%	86%
q19b. Instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment)	88%	91%	86%	87%
q19a. Average size of your classes	86%	94%	83%	80%
q20q. Co-op services	82%	82%	81%	84%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.2 General facilities/services

As Table 64 shows, while some facilities and services are rated by most students (e.g., campus book store and food services), others are used, and therefore rated, by fewer students. Students in Arts and Humanities programs are the least likely to rate the campus book stores, although the vast majority (86%) do.

- About 6 students in 10 rate *social activities and athletic facilities*. Students in Arts and Humanities programs (51%) are the least likely to rate athletic facilities, while students in Other fields are the most likely to offer a rating (74%).
- Some 4 students in 10 rate *parking facilities*, while 3 in 10 rate *university residences* and *campus medical services*. Students attending Group 1 universities rate *university residences* more often than do other students.
- About 1 student in 20 rates *university day care services*.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
h. Campus book store(s)	94%	91%	96%	95%
p. Food services	80%	81%	83%	77%
g. Social activities	64%	69%	62%	61%
c. Athletic/recreational facilities	62%	64%	64%	59%
f. Parking facilities	42%	45%	42%	38%
d. University residences	33%	44%	29%	26%
o. Campus medical services	27%	32%	24%	26%
e. University day care services	5%	4%	5%	4%

Of those who provided a rating, the vast majority of students are satisfied with these services. Almost 9 students in 10 report being satisfied with:

- *Athletic and recreational facilities*, including 37% who are very satisfied.
- *Campus medical services*, including 38% who are very satisfied.

Of those students who provided a rating, over 8 students in 10 report being satisfied with:

- *Campus book store(s)*, including 29% who are very satisfied.
- *Social activities*, but including only 18% who are very satisfied.
- *University residences*, including 35% who are very satisfied.
- *University day care services*, but including only 18% who are very satisfied.

Among students who provided a rating, about 7 students in 10 report being very satisfied with:

- *Food services*, including only 18% who are very satisfied.

As we found in 2001, of those students who provided a rating, their lowest level of satisfaction appears to be with:

- *Parking facilities*. Just less than half are satisfied with parking, including only 11% who are very satisfied.

See Table 65.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
c. Athletic/recreational facilities	88%	84%	88%	91%
o. Campus medical services	87%	87%	89%	86%
h. Campus book store(s)	84%	85%	78%	86%
g. Social activities	83%	82%	81%	86%
d. University residences	82%	83%	81%	81%
e. University day care services	79%	78%	78%	81%
p. Food services	70%	72%	65%	73%
f. Parking facilities	48%	49%	48%	46%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.3 Special services

As their name implies, special services tend to be used by far fewer students. About one-third of students or less rate their satisfaction with various special services. As Table 66 shows:

- The most commonly used special service is *study skills and learning support services*. Over 3 in 10 students rate their satisfaction with this service.
- One student in 4 rates *personal counselling services for students*.
- About 1 student in 5 rates *services for women students*, and about the same number rates *student employment or placement services*.
- Less than 1 student in 10 rates *services for international students* or *services for students with disabilities*.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
n. Study skills/learning support services	35%	39%	36%	30%
m. Personal counselling services for students	25%	27%	25%	23%
k. Services for women students	19%	20%	16%	19%
i. Student employment/placement services	18%	21%	18%	16%
l. Services for international students	8%	8%	8%	8%
j. Services for students with disabilities	6%	8%	6%	5%

Generally, students who use these services report being satisfied with their experience. Among students who rate these services, about 9 students in 10 are satisfied with:

- *Services for women students*, including 22% who are very satisfied.
- *Study skills and learning support services*, including 22% who are very satisfied.

Among those who offered a rating, more than 8 students in 10 report being satisfied with:

- *Services for students with disabilities*, including 33% who are very satisfied.
- *Services for international students*, including 28% who are very satisfied.
- *Personal counselling services for students*, including 23% who are very satisfied.

About 2 students in 3 are satisfied with:

- *Student employment or placement services*, including only 15% who are very satisfied.

See Table 67.

	All students	Group		
		1	2	3
k. Services for women students	90%	91%	89%	88%
n. Study skills/learning support services	86%	89%	84%	84%
j. Services for students with disabilities	84%	85%	84%	84%
l. Services for international students	83%	86%	78%	84%
m. Personal counselling services for students	81%	84%	81%	78%
i. Student employment/placement services	65%	65%	60%	68%

Note: Percentages are based on those who offered a rating.

6.2.4 Satisfaction with services by discipline

There are few differences by discipline in students' satisfaction with their facilities or services.

- Students in Arts and Humanities programs tend to be the most satisfied with *average class size*, while students in Engineering programs are the least satisfied.
- Students in Physical Science programs are more likely to be very satisfied with their *co-op program*, while students in Arts and Humanities programs are the least likely to report being very satisfied.
- Students in Education and Physical Science programs are slightly more likely to be very satisfied with *student employment or placement services*. Students in Engineering programs tend to be the least satisfied.

Table 68 shows significant differences in students' self-reported satisfaction by the major or intended area of interest.

Table 68: Satisfaction in adapting by discipline		
Reason	Discipline	Percent stating Very satisfied
Average class size	Arts and Humanities	37%
	Overall	29%
	Engineering	16%
Co-op program	Physical Science	46%
	Overall	24%
	Arts and Humanities	18%
Student employment/placement services	Education	23%
	Physical Science	22%
	Overall	16%
	Engineering	10%

6.3 Personal safety

While about 9 students in 10 report that they are satisfied with their personal safety on campus, only 4 students in 10 are very satisfied, which suggests that most campuses could do more to address the issue of safety.

Students attending Group 1 universities are slightly more likely to report being very satisfied, while students attending Group 2 or 3 universities are slightly less likely to report this level of satisfaction.

Both female and male students appear to be generally satisfied with their personal safety on campus. That said, female students (38%) appear to be slightly less likely to report being very satisfied compared with male students (47%). While this difference is suggestive, it is not statistically significant.⁹

See Table 69.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Very satisfied	41%	47%	37%	37%
Satisfied	48%	43%	51%	50%
Dissatisfied	5%	5%	4%	5%
Very dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know/no response	6%	4%	6%	7%
Average	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3

Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Very satisfied=4, Satisfied=3, Dissatisfied=2, Very dissatisfied=1. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

⁹ That is, it is not statistically significant based on the criteria we have established to measure such differences. See Section 1.5 for our definition of statistical significance.

6.4 Satisfaction with faculty

We asked students to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their professors. Most students report having positive experiences with university faculty. Students attending Group 1 universities appear to be more likely than those at other universities to agree with all of these statements, although only in some cases are these differences statistically significant. As Table 70 shows:

- Over 8 students in 10 agree that their *professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students*, including 25% who strongly agree.
- As many—over 8 in 10—agree that *generally they are satisfied with the quality of teaching they have received*, including 21% who strongly agree.
- Over 3 students in 4 agree that *most of their professors encourage students to participate in class discussions*, including 19% who strongly agree. Students attending Group 1 universities are more likely to agree (85%) than are students attending Group 2 and 3 universities (some 72% and 74% agree, respectively).
- Over 7 students in 10 agree that *at this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers*, including 19% who strongly agree. Students attending Group 1 universities are not only more likely to agree (82%), but also to strongly agree (30%). Students attending the larger institutions represented in Group 2 and 3 are less likely to agree. While about 67% of these students agree, only about 13% strongly agree.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
c. Most of my professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students	85%	88%	85%	83%
d. Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received	84%	89%	81%	83%
a. Most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussion	77%	85%	72%	74%
b. At this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers	72%	82%	66%	68%

6.4.1 Satisfaction with faculty by discipline

Generally, students in Arts and Humanities programs are more likely to strongly agree with the statements about faculty, while those in Engineering programs are less likely to strongly agree. For example, among students in Arts and Humanities programs, some 28% strongly agree that *professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers*. This compares with only 11% of Engineering students. See Table 71.

Reason	Discipline	Percent Strongly agree
q21a. Most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussions	Arts and Humanities	29%
	Overall	19%
	Biological Science	13%
	Engineering	11%
q21b. At this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers	Arts and Humanities	28%
	Overall	19%
	Engineering	11%
q21d. Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received	Arts and Humanities	27%
	Overall	22%
	Engineering	13%

6.5 Satisfaction with choice of university

We asked students to rate their level of agreement with the statement: *I am satisfied with my decision to attend this university*. Table 72 shows the results.

- Overall, about 9 students in 10 agree with this statement, including almost 4 in 10 who strongly agree.
- About 1 student in 10 disagrees.

While it appears that students in Group 1 universities are more likely than the other students to strongly agree, the difference is not statistically significant.

	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Strongly agree	38%	45%	32%	36%
Agree	51%	46%	56%	53%
Disagree	7%	5%	7%	7%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	2%	2%
No response	2%	3%	2%	2%
Average	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3

Note: This rating scale is based on the following: Strongly agree=4; Agree=3; Disagree=2; Strongly disagree=1. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

6.5.1 University experience met students' expectations

We asked students whether their experience at their university had met, exceeded, or fallen short of their expectations.

- About 8 students in 10 report that their experience at their university has met (64%) or exceeded (17%) their expectations.
- Conversely, almost 1 student in 5 reports that his/her experience has fallen short of expectations.

See Table 73.

Table 73: Degree to which university experience met expectations Q27A				
	All students (n=11,132)	Group		
		1 (n=3,956)	2 (n=2,934)	3 (n=4,242)
Exceeded	17%	22%	14%	15%
Met	64%	62%	64%	66%
Fell short	18%	15%	21%	18%

Note: The 'no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

7.0 Conclusion

This study involved a survey of over 11,000 first-year undergraduate students at 27 universities. As such, it is one of the most comprehensive studies conducted with first-year undergraduate students in Canada. This report provides an overview of the findings and is not intended to be exhaustive analysis of the results. This data represents a valuable resource for further study.

Students at Canadian universities have had a generally positive experience in their first year of university. As such, these results confirm much of what we found in 2001, the last time such a survey was conducted with first-year university students. As we found in 2001, this positive impression begins even before classes start. Generally, students entering first-year university report having a good experience in the process of choosing a university, registering at their chosen institution, selecting courses or programs, and adjusting to university life. Further, they are generally satisfied with services and facilities offered by their university and tend to have positive impressions of their professors.

For most students, the main objective in obtaining a university education is to prepare for employment. Indeed, the most important reasons for deciding to go to university are to prepare for a specific job or career, or more generally, to get a good job. While many say that attending university is about getting a good general education or developing a broad base of skills, few cite these as the most important reasons in their decision to attend.

It appears that when considering their post-secondary education, most students left their options open by applying to multiple institutions. In 2004, some 7 students in 10 — up from 6 in 10 in 2001 — report applying to more than one university. In addition, almost 1 student in 5 also applied to colleges. In spite of applying to various institutions, some 8 students in 10 report that the university they are currently attending was their first choice. This suggests that multiple applications are simply a safeguard in case they do not get into their favoured university.

A majority of students report that many different factors are very important in choosing a specific university. This is demonstrated by the fact that of the 26 reasons tested with students, no one reason is seen as most important by more than about one-fifth of students. This may suggest that many students do not seriously investigate alternatives because they intend to go to a specific

university. The top three reasons suggest a mix of motives, which may reflect the fact that many students do not really give a lot of thought to which university they attend. The most common reason is that the university offers a specific career-related program (21%), followed by the quality of the academic programs (18%). Both reasons suggest that participants could apply to almost all universities in Canada. Indeed, the third most important reason is likely the most honest: they chose a particular university because it is in close proximity to their home (14%).

While students apply to many universities, most have one in mind that they want to attend. This makes contact with students prior to their making a decision even more important for an institution to have a chance to influence a student's first choice. Most students report experiencing some form of contact from universities prior to making their decision. According to students, a campus visit, the university's web site, brochures and pamphlets from the university, and a visit from a university representative to their secondary school are most important in helping them to decide where to attend. However, each of these is very important to about one-third of students or less, which suggests that such contact may simply confirm what students had already decided.

Most students report a positive experience in the registration process, selection of classes, and orientation. The vast majority of students report being satisfied with the handling of their application for admission to their current university. Just less than half of students report receiving university assistance before or while first registering. Of these students, most are at least somewhat satisfied with the assistance they received.

About 6 students in 10 report participating in an orientation program. Orientation appears to play an important role in making students feel welcome, providing information on campus life, and introducing student services. It helps students in their personal and social transition to university and builds confidence. It also helps students understand the university's academic expectations. Given these benefits of orientation programs, it would appear that more students should attend. However, in the three years since the question was last asked, students are no more likely to attend orientation. That said, even students who attend orientation programs suggest that there is room for improvement. Only a minority of students is very satisfied with orientation in terms of any of these benefits. For example, among those who attended such a program, only 1 in 4 is very satisfied in terms of the orientation's helping them understand the university's academic expectations.

The vast majority of first-year students report that they have had at least some success in adjusting to various aspects of university life. That said, many students face challenges in making this adjustment. Just over one-third feel that they have been very successful in meeting academic demands, suggesting that the others may be struggling. Partly, this may be due to difficulty organizing their time to complete academic work; less than one-third report having very much success in this area. In both cases, students' lack of success may reflect a lack of academic advice. Only 6 students in 10 feel that they have had some success in getting such advice, including less than 1 in 5 who reports very much success. One wonders if the lack of academic advice contributes to students' difficulties in meeting academic demands and organizing their time.

Further, although they are only in first year, only 6 in 10 students report finding useful information and resources on careers and occupation (including only 14% who report very much success). While it is early on in their post-secondary education, it should be remembered that their main reasons for deciding to go to university are job-related. If students cannot find the information necessary to help in this goal, then students may become disenchanted with their university experience.

Generally, students are satisfied with the academic services and programs offered by their university. Students are least likely to be satisfied with non-academic services, such as parking or food services, but most are satisfied with their class sizes and the instructional and library facilities. They hold a similar view of their professors, who are said to be easy to access, to encourage participation, and to treat students as individuals. Most students also agree that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

That said, students face other challenges. Three-quarters of students report that they have at least some concern — including one-quarter who is very concerned — about having sufficient funding to complete their post-secondary education. Many depend on numerous sources for financing their education, and some are incurring large debt to pay for their education.

In spite of financial concerns, and a lack of success in particular areas, students remain very positive about their university experience and choice of institution. Indeed, the vast majority reports that their university experience met or exceeded their expectations, and some 9 students in 10 are satisfied with their decision to attend their current university.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

2004 Survey of First-Year University Students

This survey is being completed by first-year university students at a number of Canadian universities so that we may learn more about our new students and help them make a more successful transition to university. Using either a pen or pencil, please take a few minutes to complete and return your survey and be sure to answer the items on both sides of the page.
All of your responses are confidential.

Your decision to attend university

1. How important were the following reasons in your decision to attend university?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
a. To prepare for a specific job or career.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
b. To get a good general education.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
c. To develop a broad base of skills.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
d. To prepare for graduate/professional school.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
e. To increase my knowledge in an academic field.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
f. To get a good job.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
g. To become a more cultured person.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
h. To meet parental expectations.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
i. To meet new friends.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
j. Other (please specify) _____	F₁	F₂	F₃

2. From Question 1 above, which was the single most important reason in your decision to attend university? (Indicate the letter of the most important item)

Most important: _____

3. Did you apply for admission to more than one university?

F₀ No (Go to Question 4) **F₁** Yes

How many in total did you apply to? _____

How many outside of your home province? _____

4. Did you also apply to a college?

F₀ No **F₁** Yes

5. Is the university you are attending your first choice?

F₁ Yes (Go to Question 7) **F₂** No

6. (If "No" to Question 5) What university was your first choice?

Your decision to attend THIS university

7. How important were the following reasons in your choosing this university?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
a. Wanted to live close to home.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
b. Wanted to live away from home.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
c. Accessibility of the campus from my home.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
d. Offered financial assistance/scholarship.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
e. Quality of academic programs.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
f. Specific career-related program.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
g. University has a good reputation.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
h. Size of university.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
i. Rich social life.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
j. School spirit.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
k. Size of city/town.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
l. Availability of on-campus residence accommodations.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
m. Tuition fees.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
n. Parents/relatives wanted me to enroll here.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
o. Other family member(s) currently attending here.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
p. Friends attending here.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
q. Advice from counsellors or teachers.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
r. Availability of public transportation.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
s. Contact with students from the university.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
t. Computer facilities.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
u. Co-op program.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
v. Opportunities for international work/study abroad.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
w. Special needs services.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
x. Athletic/varsity sports.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
y. Recreational facilities/programs.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
z. Physical appearance of the campus.....	F₁	F₂	F₃
aa. Other (please specify) _____	F₁	F₂	F₃

8. From Question 7 above, which was the single most important reason in your decision to attend this university? (Indicate the letter of the most important item)

Most important: _____

9. How important were each of the following when you considered choosing this university? (Check one for each item)

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Not applicable
a. Visit by a university representative to my high school or CEGEP.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
b. Brochures or pamphlets	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
c. Campus visit.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
d. Letters from university representatives to my high school or CEGEP.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
e. Meeting with university admissions officer on the campus.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
f. Calls from faculty of the university.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
g. Calls from students of the university.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
h. University web site.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
i. Contact from university coaches	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
j. TV or radio ads.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
k. Maclean's magazine.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
l. Other media reports.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇
m. Other (please specify) _____	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₇

10. From Question 9 above, which one of these had the single most influence on your decision to attend this university? (Indicate the letter of the most important item)

Most important: _____

11. How satisfied were you with the way this university handled your application for admission?

- F₄ Very satisfied F₃ Somewhat satisfied
- F₂ Somewhat dissatisfied F₁ Very dissatisfied

(If "Dissatisfied" in Question 11) Please explain.

Your choice of program

12a. Before or while first registering, did you receive advice or help about your program or course selection from this university?

- F₁ Yes F₂ No (Go to Question 14a)

12b. Who or what office provided you with help or advice?

13. Overall, how satisfied were you with the help you received from this university in deciding on your program and course selection?

- F₄ Very satisfied F₃ Somewhat satisfied
- F₂ Somewhat dissatisfied F₁ Very dissatisfied

(If "Dissatisfied" in Question 13) Please explain.

Your experience with registration

14a. How did you register at university? (Check all that apply)

- F₁ On-line F₁ In person
- F₁ By phone F₁ By mail
- F₁ Other (specify) _____

14b. How satisfied were you with the process of course registration when you first registered?

- F₄ Very satisfied F₃ Somewhat satisfied
- F₂ Somewhat dissatisfied F₁ Very dissatisfied

(If "Dissatisfied" in Question 14b) Please explain.

15. Last fall, to what extent were you able to register in the courses you wanted?

- F₄** Completely
- F₃** Mostly
- F₂** Somewhat
- F₁** Not at all

Your experience with orientation

16. Did you participate in an orientation program before or after arriving on campus last fall?

- F₁** Yes
- F₂** No (Go to Question 18)

17. If you participated in an orientation program, how satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the orientation?

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know
a. Feeling welcome at the university ...	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
b. Helping you understand the university's academic expectations	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
c. Helping your personal and social transition to university	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
d. Providing information about campus life	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
e. Providing information about student services.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
f. Building your confidence	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
g. Other (please specify)	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
_____	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈
_____	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₈

Adjusting to university

18. How much success have you had in adjusting to the following at university? (Check one for each item)

	Amount of success				
	None	Very little	Some	Very much	Not applicable
a. Meeting academic demands.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
b. Making new friends with other students	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
c. Becoming involved in campus activities	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
d. Adjusting to living here.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
e. Finding suitable, affordable housing	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
f. Choosing a program of studies to meet my objectives	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
g. Getting academic advice	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
h. Performing adequately in written assignments.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
i. Performing adequately in courses requiring mathematical skills.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
j. Understanding content and information presented in courses.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
k. Feeling as if I belong at university ...	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
l. Finding my way around the campus	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
m. Using the library.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
n. Finding help with questions or problems	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
o. Meeting the computer literacy required for my studies	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
p. Organizing my time to complete academic work.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇
q. Finding useful information and resources on careers and occupations.....	F₁	F₂	F₃	F₄	F₇

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question carefully then enter a check (✓) in the appropriate circles or fill in blank lines as necessary. Return your completed questionnaire today.

Your experience at this university

19. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of this university?

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know
a. Average size of your classes.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
b. Instructional facilities (e.g., classrooms, labs, equipment).....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
c. Personal safety on campus	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
d. Concern shown by the university for you as an individual.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈

20. How satisfied are you with each of the following services or facilities at this university? (If you have not used the service, please select "No experience")

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	No experience
a. Library facilities.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
b. Access to computers	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
c. Athletic/recreational facilities	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
d. University residences	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
e. University day care services.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
f. Parking facilities.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
g. Social activities	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
h. Campus book store(s)	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
i. Student employment/placement services	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
j. Services for students with disabilities	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
k. Services for women students	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
l. Services for international students.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
m. Personal counselling services for students.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
n. Study skills/learning support services	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
o. Campus medical services.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
p. Food services	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈
q. Co-op services.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄	F ₈

21. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussions.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄
b. At this university, professors treat students as individuals, not just numbers.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄
c. Most of my professors are reasonably accessible outside of class to help students	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄
d. Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received.....	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄
e. I am satisfied with my decision to attend this university	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₄

Academic profile

22. What average grade do you expect to have at the end of your first year at university?

If your university uses a grade point system, please select the letter grade that best reflects the letter grade equivalent of your grade point average.

If your university uses percentage grades, please use this guide to select the approximate letter grade equivalent of your percentage grade.

Percentage	Equivalent for survey response
85% - 100%	A or A+
80% - 84.99%	A-
76% - 79.99%	B+
70% - 75.99%	B
66% - 69.99%	C+
60% - 65.99%	C
50% - 59.99%	D

☞ (Please check one)

A or A+ A- B+ B C+ C D
F₇ **F₆** **F₅** **F₄** **F₃** **F₂** **F₁**

23. What was your overall average grade in high school (or CEGEP)?

☞ (Please check one)

A or A+ A- B+ B C+ C D
F₇ **F₆** **F₅** **F₄** **F₃** **F₂** **F₁**

24. In what year did you graduate from high school or CEGEP?

YEAR: _____

F₀ Did not graduate

25. When you registered last fall, were you taking a full course load?

F₁ Yes

F₂ No

26. Are you currently taking a full course load?

F₁ Yes

F₂ No

27a. Has your experience at this university met, exceeded, or fallen short of your expectation?

F₃ Met

F₂ Exceeded

F₁ Fallen short

27b. Why did you rate your experience this way?

28. What is your major, intended major, or subject of concentration?

Financing your university education

29. Have you ever applied for a student loan?

F₁ Yes

F₂ No

30. Thinking about the current academic year, please indicate which of the following sources you are using to help pay for your university education. Then provide the approximate amount you have or will receive from each.

Currently using	Amount
F₁ Government loan or bursary	\$ _____
F₁ University scholarship/financial award	\$ _____
F₁ University bursary	\$ _____
F₁ Parents/family/spouse	\$ _____
F₁ Personal savings	\$ _____
F₁ Earnings from summer work	\$ _____
F₁ Earnings from current employment	\$ _____
F₁ Work-study program	\$ _____
F₁ Co-op program/Work term	\$ _____
F₁ Investment income (bonds, dividends, interest, etc.)	\$ _____
F₁ RESP	\$ _____
F₁ Other (specify) _____	\$ _____

31. (If using government loan or bursary) Are you having difficulty fulfilling the course load needed to keep your loans or bursaries?

F₁ Yes

F₂ No

32. (If using university scholarship or financial award) Would you have been able to attend university without financial assistance from this university?

F₁ Yes

F₂ No

33. Are you employed during the current academic term? (Excluding work related to a co-op program)

F₁ No, but I am seeking work (Go to Question 36)

F₂ No, and I am not seeking work (Go to Question 36)

F₃ Yes, on-campus (Go to Question 34)

F₄ Yes, off-campus (Go to Question 34)

F₅ Yes, both on and off-campus (Go to Question 34)

34. (If "Yes" to Question 33) On average, how many hours are you employed per week? (Excluding work related to co-op program)

AVERAGE HOURS/WEEK: _____

F₇ Not applicable

35. (If "Yes" to Question 33) Is your current non-co-op related employment having a negative impact on your academic performance?

F₁ None

F₂ Some

F₃ Moderate

F₄ Significant

F₅ Substantial

F₇ Not applicable

36. How concerned are you about having sufficient funding to complete your university education?

F₁ Not concerned, should have sufficient funds

F₂ Some concern, but will probably have enough funds

F₃ Very concerned, may not have enough funds

Please tell us about yourself

37. What is your gender?

F₁ Male

F₂ Female

38. What is the year and month of your birth?

YEAR: _____ MONTH: _____

39. What is your primary language of instruction?

F₁ English

F₂ French

F₃ Other

40. Where was your permanent home before you came to this university? (Check one)

- F**₀₁ British Columbia **F**₀₈ Prince Edward Island
- F**₀₂ Alberta **F**₀₉ New Brunswick
- F**₀₃ Saskatchewan **F**₁₀ Newfoundland and Labrador
- F**₀₄ Manitoba **F**₁₁ Nunavut
- F**₀₅ Ontario **F**₁₂ North West Territories
- F**₀₆ Quebec **F**₁₃ Yukon
- F**₀₇ Nova Scotia
- F**₆₆ Other (specify) _____

41. What is the population of the community in which you lived before starting university? (Check one)

- F**₁ Lived on a farm/ranch **F**₅ 50,000 to 99,999
- F**₂ Less than 5,000 **F**₆ 100,000 to 300,000
- F**₃ 5,000 to 9,999 **F**₇ Over 300,000
- F**₄ 10,000 to 49,999

42. Where are you currently living? (Check one)

- F**₁ With parents, guardians/relatives
- F**₂ In on-campus housing (e.g., residence hall, dormitory, apartment, etc.) (Go to Question 44)
- F**₃ In rented home/apartment
- F**₄ Rented room/rooming house
- F**₅ In personally owned home

43. (If not currently living on-campus) Would you choose to live on-campus if given a chance?

- F**₁ Yes **F**₂ No **F**₈ Don't know

44. Are you studying in Canada on a student authorization, study permit or visa?

- F**₁ Yes **F**₂ No

45. Do you consider yourself to be a member of a visible minority? (Note: visible minorities are those who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada)

- F**₁ Yes **F**₂ No (Go to Question 47)

46. (If "Yes" to Question 45) Please specify the visible minority with which you identify.

47. Do you consider yourself to be an Aboriginal person?

- F**₀ No
- F**₁ Yes - First Nations **F**₂ Yes – Métis
- F**₃ Yes - Inuit **F**₄ Yes - Non-status

48. Do you have a disability? (Check all that apply)

- F**₀ None
- F**₁ Mobility **F**₁ Hearing
- F**₁ Speech **F**₁ Partial sight or blind
- F**₁ Learning **F**₁ Head injury
- F**₁ Other physical disability **F**₁ Mental health
- F**₆₆ Other (specify) _____

49. If known by you, what is (or was) the highest level of education completed by your parents?

Mother: _____

F₈ Don't know

Father: _____

F₈ Don't know

50. Looking back on your experiences as a first-year student, what aspects of your experience at university have been most positive? (Note: Please add pages if you need more space to write)

51. What aspects of your experience at university have been most negative? How could we have helped or done a better job? (Note: Please add pages if you need more space to write.)

Thank you for your help.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope today.

APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

**SURVEY OF
FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
2004

PROCEDURES MANUAL**

ACTIVITY TIMELINE
(see Manual for details)

1. Ethical review (if necessary at your university)now
2. Selection of random sample of studentsas soon as practical
3. Preparation of cover letters, mailing lists, envelopes, etc..... early December 2003
4. First survey mailing around January 16, 2004
5. Reminder card to non-respondersaround January 30, 2004
6. Second mailing to non-responders..... around February 13, 2004
7. Mid-project return of completed surveys to U of M..... around February 17, 2004
8. Final return of all completed surveys and documentation
of your sampling procedures..... around May 14, 2004
9. FINAL RETURNS MUST BE RECEIVED BY PRA May 21, 2004

While we recognize that not all participants will be able to follow this timeline, please conform as closely to the schedule as you can.

1. INTRODUCTION

Standardized Research Methodology

At the present time there are approximately 27 universities participating in the 2004 *Survey of First-Year Students*. To ensure the procedural uniformity necessary to make meaningful comparisons, we request that each university follow the administrative procedures outlined in this manual.

Importance of Meeting Activity Deadlines

Your cooperation in meeting the activity schedule and timelines presented in this manual is important to the project and will be greatly appreciated. All survey activities including data analyses and preparation of final research reports must be completed by early June 2004. This schedule leaves little time for unforeseen difficulties or delays.

Although we will make every effort to accommodate late survey submissions, if your surveys are not received on schedule, we cannot guarantee that missing surveys can be included in the final data analyses.

For your convenience, all activity deadlines are presented on the following timeline and are also **highlighted** in paragraphs where activities are described.

Overview of Major Project Activities and Timelines

1. Ethical review (if necessary at your university) **now**
2. Selection of random sample of students **as soon as practical**
3. Preparation of cover letters, mailing lists, envelopes, etc..... **early December 2003**
4. First survey mailing around **January 16, 2004**
5. Reminder card to non-responders around **January 30, 2004**
6. Second mailing to non-responders..... around **February 13, 2004**
7. Mid-project return of completed surveys to U of M..... around **February 17, 2004**
8. Final return of all completed surveys and documentation
of your sampling procedures..... around **May 14, 2004**
9. **FINAL RETURNS MUST BE RECEIVED BY PRA** **May 21, 2004**

2. SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Sample Size

It has been agreed that each participating university will distribute surveys to a random sample of 1000 first-year students, or all first-year students if fewer than 1000. Unless you have made prior arrangements with us, please **DO NOT USE A SAMPLE LARGER THAN 1000 STUDENTS.**

Restrict Sampling to First-Year Students

Please ensure that **ONLY** first-year students are included in your final sample. Every first-year student (see definitions below) should have an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in your final sample of 1000.

For purposes of uniformity, it was agreed that:

- a) the sample should be restricted to undergraduate students in a first-level Bachelor's program;
- b) the sample should be restricted to first-year undergraduate students who entered directly from high school or CEGEP;
- c) except for the current academic year, sampled students should have no prior university or college experience;
- d) as long as they meet the above criteria, sampled students may include both part-time and full-time students;
- e) independent or special students should be excluded from the sample.

Definition of Undergraduate

Please include only students who are in a first level Bachelor's program. For example, in our research at the University of Manitoba, we usually define undergraduates as students enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program in the faculties/schools of: Agricultural & Food Sciences, Architecture, Arts, Dental Hygiene, Education, Engineering, Environment, Fine Arts, Human Ecology, Management, Music, Nursing, Physical Education/Recreational Studies, Science, and Social Work.

PLEASE KEEP A RECORD OF THE FACULTIES/SCHOOLS YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR FINAL SAMPLE. To help us understand how representative our sample is of the student population, if possible, please note the number of students sampled by faculty. We will also ask you for the total population by faculty.

Sampling Procedures and Requirements

Please use simple random sampling to select your sample of 1000 students. It is essential that your selection procedures ensure that each first-year student has an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample. Please make sure that the pool from which students are selected includes all first-year students, including full-time and part-time students, and students from in-province, out-of-province, out-of-country, etc.

(Please note that it was agreed that classroom administration of the survey is NOT acceptable since it would not guarantee a representative sample and uniform sampling procedures across universities.)

As a point of information, at the University of Manitoba, sampling is conducted with the cooperation of the Student Records Office. Once we inform them of the sampling requirements, faculties/schools to be included, etc., Student Records personnel conduct the random selection and provide us with master lists of names and three sets of address labels which we then use for mailing surveys and reminders.

Please begin your sampling process as early as possible to expedite the survey distribution.

3. SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE TRACKING PROCEDURES

All Surveys Will Be Mailed

All surveys, cards, and reminder letters should be distributed via Canada Post. Up to two separate reminders should be mailed to non-responders. In our experience, this procedure produces an acceptable student participation rate.

Initial Survey Distribution

The initial mailing should include three things:

- \$** a cover letter (see Appendix) which should be under the letterhead of your university and should bear the signature of a senior Student Affairs administrator at your university;
- \$** the *Survey of First-Year Students* (provided);
- \$** a #9 postage-paid business reply envelope which has been coded (more on this under **Response Tracking Procedures**).

Please mail surveys as close to January 16, 2004 as possible.

First Reminder Letter

Two weeks following the first mailing, non-responders should be sent a reminder card (see Appendix). Only the reminder card is sent at this time and is restricted to only those students who have not yet returned a completed survey.

Mail reminder cards two weeks after your initial mailing.

Final Reminder Letter

Two weeks after the mailing of the first reminder card, send a final mailing to non-responders. This mailing duplicates the first mailing. It should include a cover letter (see Appendix), another survey and another response envelope. Please note that the response envelopes for the final reminder letters need not be coded.

Mail final reminder letters two weeks after the reminder card.

Response Tracking Procedures

Multiple mailings to non-responders require a response tracking procedure. The process we have successfully used for a number of years is to assign a number to every student on our randomly selected master list of students who will receive surveys. Response envelopes are then coded with these numbers. When surveys are returned, the envelope code is noted on the master list to ensure that the student does not receive any additional mailings. Only students who have not returned completed surveys should be included in the first and final mailings reminders.

4. MID-PROJECT RETURN OF COMPLETED SURVEYS TO PRA

Because of the tight time frame for project completion, we request that mid-way during the distribution period you return (via courier) all completed surveys to PRA. This will allow us to get a head start on response coding and computer entry and will make it considerably easier for us to meet the final research completion date.

Send the early returns to PRA, Inc. #500-363 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 3N9 by courier around February 17, 2004.

5. FINAL RETURN OF ALL COMPLETED SURVEYS TO PRA, Inc.

Please endeavour to courier all remaining completed surveys to PRA by May 14, 2004.

In order to achieve our completion schedule, it is important that your completed student surveys are received by PRA as soon as possible. Although we will make every effort to include late surveys, we cannot guarantee that those received after May 21, 2004 will be included in the data. **If you know you will experience difficulty meeting this schedule, please let us know as soon as possible.**

6. SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTATION

To facilitate preparation of the Methods section of the final report, please provide the following information to PRA when you return your surveys:

1. list of faculties/schools included in your sample, as well as the number sampled in each and the total population of students in each;
2. brief description of the procedures used to select your random sample of students;
3. dates of the initial mailing, mailing of first reminders and mailing of final reminders;
4. one copy of the three different cover letters you included in mailings.

Include with the surveys you courier to arrive at PRA by May 21, 2004.

Please Return Materials to PRA By Courier

Please note that we request that all completed surveys be returned by courier to ensure their prompt delivery. (We have found parcel return via Canada Post to be slow and sometimes unpredictable.) Also please ensure that persons responsible for returning surveys are alerted to the importance of timely dispatch of all materials.

The address for the courier is:

Prairie Research Associates, Inc. (PRA)
#500 - 363 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3N9

Telephone: (204) 987-2030

7. APPENDIX OF COVER LETTERS

Cover Letter for Initial Survey Mailing

(Please use your letterhead and the signature of a senior Student Affairs administrator.)

Dear Student:

I am writing to request your participation in a confidential survey of your experiences at university. This study is being conducted at a number of Canadian universities and is directed to randomly selected students who enrolled last fall for their first year of university.

The survey will help us learn more about our new students and their expectations and reactions to university. Survey results will allow comparison of first-year student experiences at our university with those from other Canadian universities.

Please participate in this important project by completing and returning the enclosed survey. Naturally, all of your survey responses will be held in strict confidence and will be used **only** to produce overall response profiles. (You will notice that our return envelope has been numbered – this has been done only to allow us to send you a reminder letter, if necessary.)

While completing the survey is voluntary and you need not answer every question, we hope you will participate and provide as much information as possible to help create a representative sampling of opinion and reactions from our first-year students. This survey should only take about 20 minutes, and you may find that it will give you an interesting chance to review your university experiences.

We hope you will help with this important project by completing and returning your survey within the next few days. (Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to return your survey.)

Thank you in advance for providing this important feedback.

Sincerely

Reminder Card to Non-Responders (shipped with surveys)

Dear Student:

Remember receiving the *Survey of First-Year Students*? Your input on the survey is very important to us and we are concerned that we have not yet heard from you.

If you haven't done so already, please take a few minutes now or in the next few days to complete and return your survey. Your responses are very important in helping us learn more about students and how we can help them achieve success.

Please use the addressed, postage-paid envelope that came with your survey to return it. We look forward to hearing from you. If you have already returned your survey, I am sure that we will be receiving it soon. Thank you for your help.

Final Mailing to Non-Responders

Dear Student:

Although the majority of students have now returned their *Survey of First-Year Students*, we are concerned that we have not yet received your survey.

Students like yourself who were asked to participate in this survey were randomly selected to give a representative sample of our first-year students. Because of this, your responses are very important for helping produce a true picture of student experiences at this university.

Please help in this important research by completing and returning your survey. Another copy is enclosed, along with a return envelope. (If you have already returned your survey, I'm sure we will be receiving it shortly - thank you.) Naturally, participation in the survey is voluntary and strictly confidential.

We know that this is probably a busy time for you, but if you haven't done so already, please complete your survey and return it to us in the enclosed pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I offer our best wishes for your present and future activities.

Sincerely,

THANK YOU.

We appreciate your help and cooperation in following the procedures and meeting the deadlines outlined in this Manual. Your assistance will help us meet the final project completion schedule so that survey findings can be distributed to your university as early as possible. Thank you again for your help.