

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO EXECUTIVE REPORT

This report provides an executive summary of the University of Waterloo's findings in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2016 First-Year Student Survey of Undergraduate Students. A sample of 711 students from the University of Waterloo participated in the survey.

This report highlights key findings and provides a comparison of University of Waterloo students, students at all 34 participating universities (n=14,886), and those attending 12 comparable universities (n=6,176). All percentages reported are based on those students who could provide a rating.

PROFILE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Demographic profile

Although University of Waterloo students are more likely to self-identify as members of a visible minority, they are less likely to be female compared to students nationally.

The majority of students from the University of Waterloo are female (57%), but at a lower percentage than students nationally (66%). The typical first-year student at the University of Waterloo is 18 years of age.

Although University of Waterloo students tend to be more likely to self-identify as a member of a visible minority (63%) compared to students nationally (40%), they are just as likely to report being Aboriginal (1% versus 3% nationally). About 18% report having a disability, which is on par with students nationally (22%).

Around 12% of University of Waterloo students are first generation (that is, neither parent/guardian has any post-secondary education), which is similar to students elsewhere.

TABLE 1: Demographic profile

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Female | 66% | 63% | 57% |
| Average age | 18.6 | 18.0 | 17.9 |
| Visible minority | 40% | 46% | 63% |
| Aboriginal | 3% | 3% | 1% |
| First generation | 11% | 12% | 12% |
| Disability | 22% | 22% | 18% |

About 75% of University of Waterloo students live on campus, a statistic that is much higher than that of students nationally (40%) or at comparable institutions (48%). Among those not living on campus, 39% of University of Waterloo students would choose to live on campus if given the opportunity.

Academic profile

The typical first-year student at the University of Waterloo is studying full-time (100%) and did not transfer from another institution (97%), which is similar to students nationally (94%).

About 40% of University of Waterloo students report an average university grade of A- or higher, which is a larger proportion than students elsewhere.

About 85% of University of Waterloo students received a financial award from the university, which is more than the proportion nationally (58%) and at similar universities (69%).

TABLE 2: Academic profile

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Studying full-time | 95% | 94% | 100% |
| Received a financial award from this university | 58% | 69% | 85% |
| Reported university grade of A- or higher | 31% | 28% | 40% |
| Transferred from another institution | 6% | 2% | 3% |

Employment

Compared to students nationally, University of Waterloo students are less likely to be working in their first year.

About 19% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo report being employed, which is lower than the proportion nationally (34%) or among comparable institutions (29%). In addition, University of Waterloo students report working almost 14 hours per week, which is on par with students nationally (14 hours) and at comparable institutions (13 hours).

MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING UNIVERSITY

Regardless of where students are studying, job/career-related reasons are the most common motivators for attending university. At the University of Waterloo (as elsewhere), the biggest motivator is *to prepare for a specific job or career*, which is selected as the top motivator by 42% of students (compared to 44% nationally and 43% at comparable universities).

TABLE 3: Top five most important reasons to attend

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Prepare for career | 44% | 43% | 42% |
| Make a positive difference | 10% | 10% | 12% |
| More likely to get job | 10% | 12% | 11% |
| Get more fulfilling job | 9% | 9% | 8% |
| Satisfy intellect | 7% | 6% | 7% |

CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

Applications

University of Waterloo students are less likely to have applied to college and more likely to have applied to other universities than students nationally.

At University of Waterloo, 97% of students applied to other universities, while only 3% applied to colleges. The former is higher than results nationally (76%), while the latter is lower than results nationally (17%).

Regardless, 84% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo say the university was their first choice, which is similar to the proportion nationally (81%), though higher than at comparable universities (76%).

TABLE 4: Applications

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Applied to other universities | 76% | 87% | 97% |
| Applied to college | 17% | 11% | 3% |
| University is first choice | 81% | 76% | 84% |

Most important reason for selecting their university

University of Waterloo students put more emphasis on whether the program offers work experience when selecting their university compared to students nationally.

For the University of Waterloo, first-year students put the most emphasis on the program *offering work experience* when selecting a university, much more than students nationally (43% versus 12% nationally). The most common reason among students elsewhere is that the *university had the program they wanted*. University of Waterloo students seem to put less

emphasis on selecting the university on the basis of *wanting to live close to home* (5% versus 16% nationally).

TABLE 5: Top five most important reasons for selecting

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Offers work experience | 12% | 17% | 43% |
| Has program I want | 33% | 32% | 27% |
| Academic reputation | 9% | 6% | 11% |
| Live close to home | 16% | 15% | 5% |
| Live away from home | 4% | 4% | 4% |

Sources of information

University of Waterloo students place more importance on media sources than students nationally when selecting their university.

University of Waterloo students place more emphasis on rankings by media sources (*Maclean's, Globe and Mail, QS, The Times, Academic Ranking*) and printed university literature (brochures, pamphlets, viewbooks) than students nationally.

TABLE 6: Major differences in importance of sources of information (somewhat or very important)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Printed university literature | 44% | 47% | 55% |
| Maclean's rankings | 29% | 30% | 51% |
| Globe and Mail Report | 20% | 22% | 36% |
| QS World University Rankings | 20% | 20% | 36% |
| The Times Higher Education World University Rankings | 20% | 20% | 34% |
| Academic Ranking of | 17% | 18% | 30% |

World Universities

UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION

University of Waterloo students are just as likely as students elsewhere to be satisfied with their university orientation experiences.

Overall, 83% of first-year students at the University of Waterloo participated in orientation in the fall. This compares to 68% nationally and 73% at comparable universities.

While University of Waterloo students are more likely to attend orientation, they are no more likely than students nationally and at comparable universities to be satisfied with their orientation experiences.

TABLE 7: Satisfaction with orientation (very or somewhat satisfied)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Feeling welcome | 93% | 93% | 91% |
| Providing info about campus life | 87% | 87% | 86% |
| Providing info about student services | 86% | 86% | 86% |
| Helping understand academic expectations | 86% | 86% | 85% |
| Helping transition to university | 81% | 82% | 78% |
| Building confidence | 77% | 77% | 76% |

REGISTRATION

University of Waterloo students are just as likely to be satisfied with aspects of registration as students nationally or at comparable universities.

TABLE 8: Satisfaction with registration (very or somewhat satisfied)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Getting into all courses | 84% | 84% | 86% |
| Process of registering | 78% | 79% | 84% |

TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

Generally, first-year students at the University of Waterloo report success transitioning to university; however, there is one aspect where University of Waterloo students report much more success (10% or higher) than students nationally. As Table 9 shows, University of Waterloo students report much more success in *finding career information*, which 71% of University of Waterloo students report having some or very much success compared to 61% nationally.

TABLE 9: Biggest differences in success transitioning (some or very much)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Finding career information | 61% | 62% | 71% |

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with 26 different facilities and services that they used. Among services used by at least half of University of Waterloo first-year students, at least 91% report being satisfied with all except *university residences* (81%) and *food*

services (73%). Satisfaction among University of Waterloo first-year students is similar to students nationally and at comparable universities.

PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSORS

University of Waterloo students have similar perceptions of their professors as students elsewhere.

First-year students at the University of Waterloo hold similar perceptions of their professors as students

elsewhere. The largest proportion of agreement for University of Waterloo students is that their professors *treat students the same regardless of race* (97%), *treat students the same regardless of gender* (97%), and *seem knowledgeable in their field* (97%).

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

University of Waterloo students are less likely than students nationally to expect to apply to a professional program.

Although it is early in their post-secondary studies, 30% of University of Waterloo students plan to apply to graduate school, which is similar to students elsewhere. However, University of Waterloo students are less likely to say they will apply to a professional program (23%) compared to students nationally (29%).

TABLE 10: Post-graduation plans

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Apply to professional program | 29% | 27% | 23% |
| Apply to graduate school | 34% | 31% | 30% |

PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

University of Waterloo first-year students appear to be less likely than students nationally to agree or strongly agree that *their course load is manageable* (76% versus 81% nationally). However, they are just as likely to say *most of their courses are interesting* (86% versus 85% nationally), *they had adequate information about their program before enrolling* (80% versus 77% nationally), and *they are in the right program* (78% versus 75% nationally).

TABLE 11: University education (agree or strongly agree)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Most courses are interesting | 85% | 84% | 86% |
| Course load is manageable | 81% | 79% | 76% |
| Had adequate information about program before enrolling | 77% | 79% | 80% |
| In right program | 75% | 75% | 78% |

PERCEPTIONS OF FINANCING EDUCATION

University of Waterloo students are just as likely as students elsewhere to agree or strongly agree that *university is worth the cost* (68%) and that *they have the financial resources to complete their program* (73%).

TABLE 12: Financing (agree or strongly agree)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| University is worth the cost | 71% | 68% | 68% |
| Have the financial resources to complete my program | 71% | 71% | 73% |

COMMITMENT TO COMPLETION

University of Waterloo students are more likely than students nationally to say they plan to complete their degrees at their university.

While University of Waterloo students have similar levels of satisfaction on many aspects when compared to their counterparts nationally, students at the University of Waterloo are more likely to plan to *come back next year* (95%) and *complete their degree there* (92%) than students elsewhere.

TABLE 13: *Persistence* (agree or strongly agree)

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Plan to come back next year | 91% | 92% | 95% |
| Plan to complete my degree here | 82% | 84% | 92% |

STUDENT SATISFACTION: KEY INDICATORS

Generally, University of Waterloo students have similar views on their university as students nationally. They are just as likely to *recommend their university* (92% versus 95% nationally), to be *very satisfied with their decision to attend this university* (27% versus 25% nationally), or to *strongly agree that they belong at their university* (22% versus 24% nationally).

The proportion of students at the University of Waterloo who say their experience is *exceeding their expectations* (22% versus 23% nationally), that they are *very satisfied with the quality of teaching* (17% versus 18% nationally), and that they are *very satisfied with the concern shown to them as an individual* (5% versus 6%) is on par with students elsewhere.

TABLE 14: *Key indicators*

| | All universities (n=14,886) | Comparable universities (n=6,176) | University of Waterloo (n=711) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Would recommend university | 95% | 94% | 92% |
| Very satisfied with decision to attend this university | 25% | 23% | 27% |
| Strongly agree that they belong at this university | 24% | 23% | 22% |
| Exceeding expectations | 23% | 22% | 22% |
| Very satisfied with quality of teaching | 18% | 16% | 17% |
| Very satisfied with concern shown to them as individual | 6% | 5% | 5% |