

EXECUTIVE REPORT

This report provides an executive summary of University of the Fraser Valley's findings in the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2013 First-Year Student Survey of undergraduate students. A sample of 375 students from the University of the Fraser Valley participated in the survey.

This report highlights key findings and provides a comparison of University of the Fraser Valley students against students at all 35 participating universities (n = 15,218) and those attending similar universities (n = 3,096). Similar universities are defined by CUSC as Group 1 universities and include institutions that offer primarily undergraduate courses and have smaller student populations. In the current survey, there are 16 participating Group 1 universities. All percentages reported on are based on those students who could provide a rating.

PROFILE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Demographic profile

The typical University of the Fraser Valley student is female and 18 years of age.

On par with results nationally and at similar universities, the typical University of the Fraser Valley student is female (64%) and about 18 years of age (18.2 years). About 3 in 10 (32%) of University of the Fraser Valley students self-identify as a visible minority compared to 21% of students at similar universities and 36% nationally. Akin to both similar universities (5%) and nationally (3%), a small percentage of University of the Fraser Valley students (5%) self-identify as Aboriginal.

University of the Fraser Valley students (3%) are much less likely than students nationally (36%) and at similar universities (27%) to live in on-campus housing, primarily because the vast majority of students live with family (92%). Even with such a low proportion living on campus, only about 21% of University of the Fraser Valley students who were not already living on campus would like to do so if given the opportunity.

Academic profile

Compared to other universities, University of the Fraser Valley students were equally likely to be in need of financial assistance but were less likely to receive such assistance.

The typical first-year student at University of the Fraser Valley graduated from high school in 2012 or later (54%), indicating that approximately half of Fraser Valley students entered directly from high school. This is lower comparable to students at similar universities (66%) and nationally (80%). This seems to indicate that fewer University of the Fraser Valley students entered the institution directly from high school than those at institutions nationally.

In high school, 69% of University of the Fraser Valley students received an average grade of A- or higher, which is higher than the average reported by students at similar universities (56%), but not by students nationally (72%). However, any differences students may have had coming into university do not seem to carry over into students' first year of university, as 43% of University of the Fraser Valley students expect an average grade of A- or higher, which is slightly higher than the proportion nationally (36%) or at similar universities (38%).

Regarding financing, compared to similar (39%) and all other universities (54%), a much lower proportion of University of the Fraser Valley students (13%) received financial assistance in the forms of scholarships, financial awards, or bursaries. However, the need for financial assistance for students at University of the Fraser Valley (30%), similar universities (33%), and universities nationally (29%) is similar, with about as many students indicating they would not have been able to attend university without the scholarship, financial award, or bursary they received.

TABLE 1: Key academic differences

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
A- or higher average in high school	72%	56%	69%
A- or higher average at end of first year	36%	38%	43%
Received financial assistance	54%	39%	13%
Unable to attend university without financial assistance	29%	33%	30%

CHOOSING UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY

Attending university

University of the Fraser Valley students emphasize employment-related reasons for attending university.

University of the Fraser Valley students appear to be motivated to attend university for employment-related reasons more than educational reasons. About three quarters of University of the Fraser Valley students mention to *prepare for a specific job or career* (51%) or to *get a good job* (25%) as the most important reason for pursuing a university education. These results are similar to students at other universities. See Table 2.

TABLE 2: Most important reason for attending university

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
Prepare for job	42%	48%	51%
Get a good job	26%	23%	25%
Increase knowledge in field	8%	7%	5%
Get general education	8%	7%	5%
Prepare for higher studies	8%	7%	9%

About 41% of University of the Fraser Valley students applied to more than one university for admission, which is comparable to students at similar universities (49%), but less common when compared to results nationally (70%). Even with this difference, the proportion of students who are attending their first-choice university at Fraser Valley (78%), similar universities (81%), and all universities (78%) are relatively the same.

Decision to attend University of the Fraser Valley

University of the Fraser Valley students were most influenced by their high school counselors and word of mouth when deciding which university to attend.

Almost half of University of the Fraser Valley students (46%) received contact from the university before graduating high school. This level of contact from their current university is on par with that reported by students at similar university (40%) and nationally (45%).

When choosing among 13 points of contact students might have with their institution, University of the Fraser Valley students most commonly rate *advice from high school counselors* (22%), *word of mouth* (18%), and *visits by a university representative to their high school* (13%) as the single most important point of contact in their decision to attend their university. Nationally and at similar universities, the most influential form of contact

tends to be *campus visits and open houses* (22% nationally and 18% at similar universities) followed by *word of mouth* (15% nationally and 18% at similar universities).

Examining the impact of advertising shows that 49% of University of the Fraser Valley students recall seeing advertising from the university, which is similar to results for students nationally (50%) and at similar universities (58%). However, as shown in Table 3, University of the Fraser Valley students are more likely to be aware of newspaper advertising and less likely to be aware of billboard advertising compared to those nationally or at similar institutions.

TABLE 3: Awareness of advertising

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
Recall of any advertising	50%	58%	49%
- Online	25%	25%	20%
- Billboard	21%	25%	9%
- Newspaper	14%	17%	25%

Students were asked to rate which of 17 aspects was the most important factor in their decision to attend the University of the Fraser Valley. Among the 17, *living close to home* (41%) stood out as being most important to students followed by *specific career-related programs* (16%) and *tuition fees* (13%).

For students nationally (23%) and at similar universities (24%), *specific career-related programs* were most important in their decision when choosing a university, while *tuition fees* (3% and 4% respectively) did not have much influence on their decisions.

STARTING UNIVERSITY

Process of starting university

Like students at similar and all universities, Fraser Valley students are overall very satisfied with the process involved in starting university, including the aspects shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Very satisfied with aspects of starting university

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
Application for admission	63%	67%	70%
Help with choosing program	53%	59%	61%
Getting into courses	49%	51%	50%

Orientation

A slightly higher proportion of University of the Fraser Valley students (69%) attended orientation compared to students nationally (65%) and at similar universities (57%). However, as shown in Table 5, University of the Fraser Valley students report similar levels of satisfaction with the various aspects of orientation.

TABLE 5: Satisfaction with orientation

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
Feeling welcome at university	92%	93%	94%
Providing information about campus life	84%	85%	86%
Providing information about student services	83%	86%	85%
Helping understand academic expectations	82%	84%	83%
Helping personal transition to university	79%	81%	81%
Building confidence	76%	79%	79%

ADJUSTING TO UNIVERSITY

Of the 16 academic, personal, and practical aspects of university life that University of the Fraser Valley students were asked to rate their level of success adjusting to, the majority were somewhat or very successful (ranging from 33% to 98%).

Fraser Valley students were most successful in *understanding content and information presented in class* (98%), *choosing a program of studies to meet personal objectives* (96%), *meeting academic demands* (96%), and *finding their way around the campus* (96%). Students were least successful in *finding suitable and*

affordable housing (52%), *new living arrangements* (40%), and *becoming involved in campus activities* (33%).

Students at other universities typically succeeded and had challenges with the same aspects as University of the Fraser Valley students; however, they had more success *becoming involved in campus activities* than Fraser Valley students (53% among students nationally and 48% among similar universities). This difference is likely due to the small proportion of University of the Fraser Valley students who report living on campus.

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH FACULTY

University of the Fraser Valley students are satisfied with the faculty and generally provide ratings on par with similar universities and higher than results nationally. See Table 6.

TABLE 6: Agree with statements about faculty

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
<i>Professors are accessible outside of class</i>	90%	93%	95%
<i>Satisfied with quality of teaching</i>	89%	93%	92%
<i>Professors encourage discussions</i>	83%	91%	92%
<i>Professors treat students as individuals</i>	79%	90%	94%

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Among 31 different facilities and services University of the Fraser Valley students were asked about, over half had experience with 14 of them. Of these 14, University of the Fraser Valley students are most satisfied with *average class size* (97%), *library facilities* (96%),

instructional facilities (95%), *general condition of buildings and grounds* (95%), and *academic advising* (94%). Overall, students at similar universities and students at all universities report comparable satisfaction levels.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

University of the Fraser Valley students are more likely to be employed and work more hours than students at other universities.

At University of the Fraser Valley, two thirds of students are employed (68%), which is higher than the proportion of students nationally (37%) or at similar universities (50%). Not only are University of the Fraser Valley students more likely to work, those who do work report working more hours per week on average than students

nationally (16 hours compared to 14 hours among students at nationally).

While University of the Fraser Valley students on average work more, those who are employed report that employment has a similar level of impact on their academic performance, as 26% report a negative impact compared to 28% nationally and 30% at similar universities.

KEY OUTCOME MEASURES

Compared to students at similar universities, University of the Fraser Valley students are slightly less likely to be satisfied with their choice of university than students nationally.

About 40% of University of the Fraser Valley students are *very satisfied with their decision to attend their university*, and 19% say their experiences *exceeded their expectations*. Both of these results are slightly lower than those nationally (44% and 24% respectively) and at similar universities (51% and 27% respectively).

In spite of these results, Fraser Valley students (80%) are about equally likely to continue studies in the following academic year compared to students at similar universities (82%), but are somewhat less likely than students nationally (87%). See Table 7.

TABLE 7: Key outcome measures

	University		
	All (n = 15,218)	Similar (n = 3,096)	Fraser Valley (n = 218)
Intending to continue studies in following academic year	87%	82%	80%
Strongly satisfied with decision to attend this university	44%	51%	40%
Very satisfied with concern shown for students as individuals	27%	37%	37%
University experience exceeded expectations	24%	27%	19%