

Examining the University of Regina Student Experience Universities' Contribution to Students' Knowledge and Skills Development

Completed in Spring 2015, the *2015 CUSC Survey of Graduating University Students* focused on undergraduate university students deemed eligible to graduate in 2015. The survey was distributed to more than 57,000 students at 36 universities across Canada. In total, 18,144 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, including 461 from the University of Regina.

This report focuses on the University of Regina's students, comparing them to students nationally and to students attending institutions comparable to the University of Regina. Where possible, this report also compares results with the 2012 CUSC survey of graduating students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

This fourth report examines graduating students' assessment of the impact their university had in developing their knowledge base and skills in the context of four thematic areas including (1) communications skills, (2) analytical and learning skills, (3) work skills and (4) life skills.

Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in communication skills

Table 1 shows students' ratings of their university's contribution to their growth and development in communication skills. Overall, results indicate that University of Regina respondents rate their university's contribution more highly than students nationally and at comparable universities.

- ▶ Among the communications skills rated, the University of Regina contributed most to students' growth and development in *writing clearly and correctly* (73%) and *speaking to small groups* (70%). University of Regina respondents were much more likely to rate these skills highly than were their peers nationally (63% for both) or at comparable institutions (64% and 63%). They were also much more likely to report strong growth and development in *speaking to small groups* (31%) than their counterparts nationally (26%) or at comparable institutions (26%).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents reported that their university contributed least to *second or third language skills* (18%) and only 6% said it contributed very much to their growth and development. These results were mirrored by their counterparts nationally and at comparable institutions.
- ▶ Among University of Regina respondents, males were less likely (64%) to report that the university contributed to their growth and development in either *speaking to small groups* or *speaking to a class or audience* than their female counterparts (74% and 70% respectively). There were no substantive differences in their sense that the university contributed to either their *writing clearly and correctly* or *second and third language skills*.

Table 1: Students reporting their university contributed *much or very much* to their communication skills

	National (n=18,144)	Comparable universities (n=7,916)	University of Regina	
			2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Writing clearly and correctly	63%	64%	73%	72%
Speaking to small groups	63%	63%	70%	Not Asked
Speaking to a class or audience	56%	56%	68%	Not Asked
Second or third language skills	20%	17%	18%	19%

Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in analytical and learning skills

Table 2 presents students' ratings of their university's contribution to their analytical and learning growth and development.

- ▶ For analytical and learning skills, University of Regina students report ratings similar to students at other universities. University of Regina respondents say the university contributed most to their *ability to find and use information* (77%) and to *thinking logically and analytically* (77%) and least to their *mathematical skills* (28%), which is the same as students nationally and at comparable universities.
- ▶ While University of Regina respondents were somewhat more likely than their counterparts nationally or at comparable institutions to say their university contributed to *thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective* (67%), they were only as likely (20%) as their peers nationally (20%) and at comparable institutions (20%) to say it contributed very much.
- ▶ Male students at the University of Regina are more likely than female students to say that their university contributed very much to their ability to *think logically and analytically* (34% versus 25%). Similarly, male students are much more likely than their female counterparts to say their university contributed very much to their *mathematical skills* (48% versus 19%). The result is statistically significant.

Table 2: Students reporting their university contributed *much or very much* to their analytical and learning skills

	National (n=18,144)	Comparable universities (n=7,916)	University of Regina	
			2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Ability to find and use information	75%	75%	77%	Not Asked
Thinking logically and analytically	73%	74%	77%	68%
Thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective	60%	62%	67%	Not Asked
Understanding abstract concepts	63%	63%	61%	63%
Listening to others to absorb information accurately	61%	60%	60%	Not Asked
Effective study and learning skills	57%	57%	59%	57%
Reading to absorb information accurately	61%	60%	59%	Not Asked
Mathematical skills	32%	33%	28%	27%

Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in work skills

For most work skills, University of Regina respondents rated their university on par with students from other universities in Canada. Table 3 shows that University of Regina students like students elsewhere, are most likely to report that their university contributed most to their ability to *work independently* and least to *entrepreneurial skills*.

- ▶ University of Regina respondents were much more likely to say that the university contributed (much or very much) to their *skills and knowledge for employment* (53%) than their counterparts nationally (43%) or at comparable institutions (45%). They were also somewhat more likely (45%) to report contributions to *knowledge of career options* than students nationally (38%) or at comparable institutions (40%).
- ▶ Students nationally (42%) and at comparable institutions (45%) were more likely to report that their universities contributed much or very much to their *computer literacy skills* than did respondents from the University of Regina (37%).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents were more likely to say the university contributed to *working independently* and *cooperative interaction in groups* than were University of Regina graduating students from 2012.

Table 3: Students reporting their university contributed much or very much to their work skills

	National (n=18,144)	Comparable universities (n=7,916)	University of Regina	
			2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Working independently	75%	75%	73%	65%
Cooperative interaction in groups	61%	63%	65%	56%
Skills for planning and completing projects	59%	59%	61%	61%
Skills and knowledge for employment	43%	45%	53%	58%
Knowledge of career options	38%	40%	45%	Not asked
Computer literacy skills	42%	45%	37%	37%
Entrepreneurial skills	22%	23%	23%	17%

Universities' contribution to students' growth and development in life skills

Table 4 presents students' ratings for their university's contribution to their *life skills*. The ten skills described as "life skills" vary in terms of graduating students' perceptions of the contribution their university made to each.

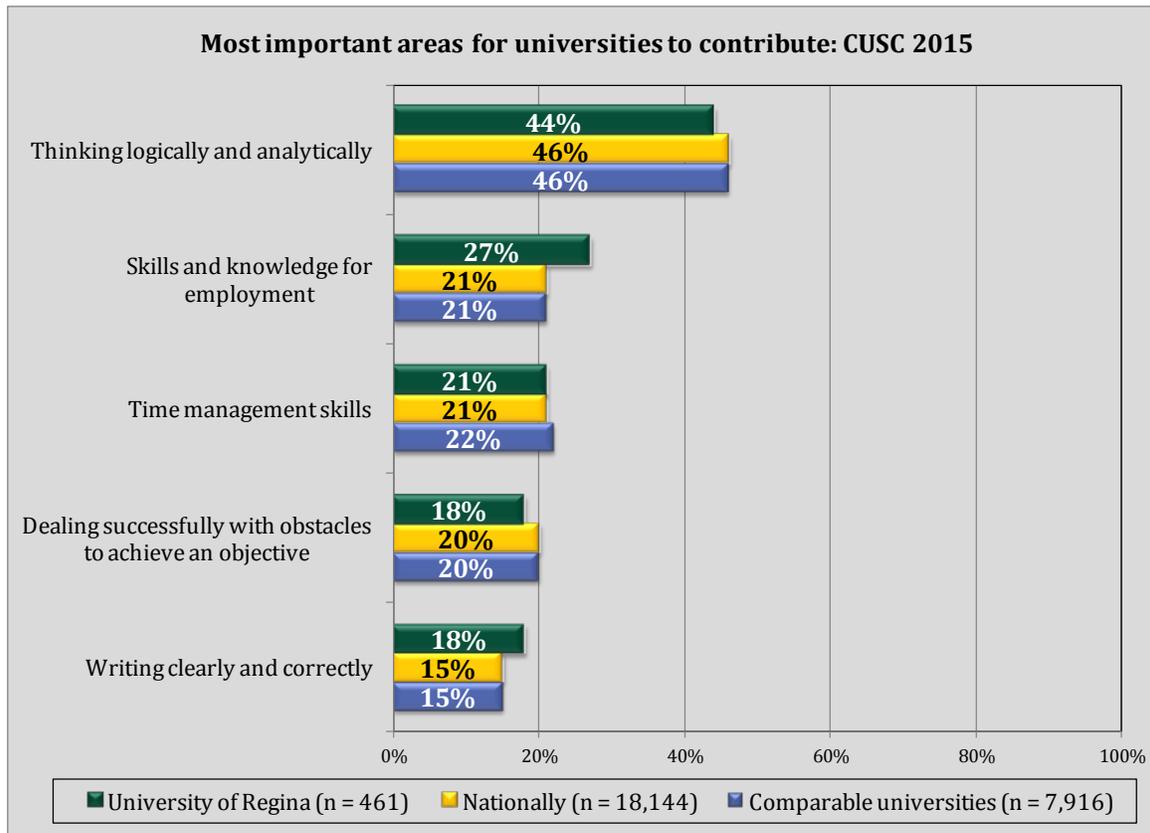
- ▶ At the upper end, at least 6 in 10 University of Regina respondents say the university contributed much or very much to several skills, including *dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective* (including 18% very much), *ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own* (27% very much), *ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses* (20% very much) and *time management skill* (23% very much).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents were more likely to say their university contributed much or very much toward their *ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses*, *self-confidence* and *moral and ethical judgement* than students nationally or from comparable institutions.

Table 4: Students reporting their university contributed <i>much or very much</i> to their life skills				
	National (n=18,144)	Comparable universities (n=7,916)	University of Regina	
			2015 (n=461)	2012 (n=430)
Dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective	64%	66%	67%	Not asked
Ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own	63%	64%	66%	Not asked
Ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses	58%	59%	65%	Not asked
Time management skills	61%	62%	63%	55%
Persistence with difficult tasks	60%	61%	61%	57%
Moral and ethical judgement	51%	51%	60%	46%
Self-confidence	52%	53%	59%	57%
Ability to lead a group to achieve an objective	50%	52%	56%	Not asked
Appreciation of the arts	32%	32%	34%	33%
Spirituality	17%	17%	22%	16%

Areas students perceive as being most important for universities' contribution to student development

Among these 29 areas where students rated their university's contribution, students were asked to rank the top **three** most important areas for a student's growth and development. Students' choices are diverse, and no single factor is seen as most important to more than 4 in 10 students at the University of Regina.

- ▶ As with respondents nationally (46%) and at comparable institutions (46%), University of Regina students (44%) placed most emphasis on having their university contribute to their *ability to think logically and analytically*, including 26% who said it was most important.
- ▶ Respondents from the University of Regina placed more emphasis on areas related to the category of work skills than their counterparts. University of Regina respondents rated *skills and knowledge for employment higher than their peers nationally* or at comparable institutions and were more likely to rate it most important (14%) than students nationally (10%) or at comparable institutions (10%).



About CUSC

The 2015 CUSC survey is the 21st cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 16th study in which the University of Regina has participated. Prior to 2014, the surveys ran in a three-year cycle, targeting first year, graduating, and all students in separate years. In 2014, the All Students survey was changed to a survey of middle-year students (i.e., students in the second or third year of a four-year program, second year of a three-year program, or second to fourth year of a five-year program).

This study focuses on undergraduate students who will be graduating from their program of study in 2015 and compares results to previous surveys conducted in 2012, 2009, and 2006. The survey involved 36 participating universities and over 18,000 students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 31.5%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 461, which represents a 46.1% rate of response.

University comparisons

For comparison purposes, CUSC categorizes the participating universities into three groups:

- ▶ Group 1 consists of universities that offer primarily undergraduate studies and have smaller student populations.
- ▶ Group 2 consists of universities that offer both undergraduate and graduate studies and 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 population.

The University of Regina is included in Group 2. In 2015, twelve Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Brock, Carleton, Lakehead, Ryerson, Simon Fraser, Thompson Rivers, Moncton, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier. This reflects a higher number of participating Group 2 institutions compared to earlier surveys of graduating students, with eleven in 2012 and seven in 2009.

Because different universities participate each year, differences in results among similar surveys from earlier years may result from the inclusion of different universities rather than changes over time.

Statistically significant differences

In order to term an association as statistically significant, the Pearson's chi-square must have probability of a type 1 error of less than .001 and either the Phi coefficient or Cramer's V must have a value of .150 or greater.

Non-response

Non-responses have not been included in the analysis. Therefore, throughout this report, unless explicitly stated as a subpopulation, overall results do not include those who did not respond to a particular question. However, for questions where "don't know" is a valid response, overall results include those who selected "don't know" to a particular question.

Note: Tables in this report might not add up to one hundred percent due to rounding errors and/or because some categories (such as "Other") are not reflected in the table.

For more information about CUSC/CCREU, visit the website at www.cusc-ccreu.ca.