

What High School Guidance/Career Counsellors Told Us about *Maclean's* Rankings

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THE SURVEY

- Survey designed & conducted by Academica
- Survey sponsor (U of R) not revealed to avoid bias
- High School Guidance/Career Counsellors in SK, southern AB and south-western MB
- Topics
 - Perceptions of selected universities in prairie region
 - Sources of information in counselling students re PSE
 - Participation in *Macleans*'s ranking survey and use of the rankings

THE SURVEY

- Conducted Feb 15/17 to Mar 26/17
- Response rates ranged from 27% for Saskatchewan (n=65) to 22% in each of the other provinces (combined n=60)
- The majority of respondents see themselves as career counsellors (not guidance)

THE KEY FINDINGS

- The *Maclean's* rankings have little to no influence on the student advising activities.
- Very few counsellors participate in the *Maclean's* reputational survey.
- Many are not aware of its existence and are not aware of an invitation to participate.
- Others feel they don't know enough about the universities.
- 61 of the 125 respondents believe that the U of R is ranked too low in the *Maclean's* reputational survey ("Best Overall" measure).

The *Maclean's* rankings were not seen to be an important source of information.

Q9. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being not at all and 10 being very much, how would you rate the level of attention you pay to the annual *Maclean's* University Rankings Canada issue as a source of information to inform your students on university choices in your region?

	Total (n=125)	Alberta (n=47)	Saskatchewan (n=65)	Manitoba (n=13)
Not at all	14%	13%	15%	15%
2	3%	2%	5%	-
3	16%	19%	14%	15%
4	9%	4%	11%	15%
5	10%	11%	11%	8%
6	8%	13%	6%	-
7	11%	13%	11%	8%
8	6%	4%	8%	8%
Very much	4%	9%	2%	-
Not sure	18%	13%	18%	31%
Average score	4.49	4.83	4.30	4.00

Counsellors discuss the *Maclean's* rankings very infrequently with their students

Q10. How often do your students discuss information in the annual *Maclean's* University Ranking Canada issue with you?

	Total (n=125)	Alberta (n=47)	Saskatchewan (n=65)	Manitoba (n=13)
Not at all	54%	45%	58%	69%
Not often	37%	36%	38%	31%
Sometimes	7%	15%	3%	-
Very often	2%	4%	-	-
Average score	1.56	1.79	1.45	1.31

Very few of the counsellors have participated in *Maclean's* survey of guidance counsellors.

Q17. Have you participated in the Maclean's University Ranking survey that targets guidance counsellors?

	Total (n=125)	Alberta (n=47)	Saskatchewan (n=65)	Manitoba (n=13)
Yes, every year	2%	6%	-	-
Yes, some years	10%	9%	8%	31%
No, but I am aware of the survey	46%	47%	46%	46%
No, and I am not familiar with this annual survey	41%	38%	46%	23%

The main reasons for not participating among those who knew of the survey

- Was not invited to complete the survey
- Don't know enough about the universities.
- 20% don't believe in ranking universities.

	Total (n=58)	Alberta (n=22)	Saskatchewan (n=30)	Manitoba (n=6)
Was not invited to complete the survey	60%	64%	57%	67%
Don't know enough about the universities	31%	23%	37%	33%
Don't believe in ranking universities	19%	18%	23%	-
Too busy	7%	5%	10%	-
My response wouldn't make a difference	3%	-	7%	-
Other, please specify	3%	9%	-	-

How do counsellors assessments correspond with *Maclean's* rankings? Alberta responses

Q18. For the National Reputational Ranking component of its University Rankings publication, Maclean's gathers the views of survey respondents on the quality of 49 Canadian universities. The table below shows results of the "Best Overall" national ranking for a number of universities as published in November 2016.

Alberta Sample (n=47)	Too high	Too low	About right	Don't know
University of Alberta: 5	21%	4%	47%	28%
University of Calgary: 12	17%	21%	38%	23%
University of Saskatchewan: 22	-	34%	19%	47%
University of Lethbridge: 31		62%	15%	23%
University of Regina: 34	2%	11%	32%	55%



How do counsellors assessments correspond with *Maclean's* rankings? Saskatchewan responses

Saskatchewan Sample (n=65)	Too high	Too low	About right	Don't know
University of Calgary: 12	2%	5%	42%	52%
University of Saskatchewan: 22	3%	35%	25%	37%
University of Lethbridge: 31	6%	9%	22%	63%
University of Regina: 34	-	48%	12%	40%
Brandon University: 48	-	8%	17%	75%

How do counsellors assessments correspond with *Maclean's* rankings? Manitoba responses

Manitoba Sample (n=13)	Too high	Too low	About right	Don't know
University of Manitoba: 14	8%	-	54%	38%
University of Saskatchewan: 22	-	23%	8%	69%
University of Regina: 34	-	8%	15%	77%
University of Winnipeg: 38	-	23%	8%	68%
Brandon University: 48	-	46%	31%	23%

Conclusions

- *Maclean's* rankings have little to no influence on counsellors' advice to students.
- Regarding the counsellors' survey, *Maclean's* reputational rankings have little validity.
- Counsellors are looking for information regarding attributes they value:
 - the quality of instructors
 - employment success of graduates
 - student support services, and
 - the presence of an inspirational learning environment.



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