

Examining the University of Regina Student Experience Demographic Profile of First-Year Students

Completed in April 2013, the *2013 CUSC Survey of First-Year Students* focused on undergraduate university students who started at the University of Regina during the 2012–2013 academic year. The survey was distributed to more than 41,000 students at 35 universities across Canada. In total, 15,218 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, including 668 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 2010, 2007, and 2004 CUSC surveys of first-year students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

Demographic profile of first-year students

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of responding first-year students for the University of Regina, comparing it to the profile of students nationally and at comparable universities. Results show:

- ▶ The average age of first-year students across the country, at comparable universities, and at the University of Regina is about 18 years. Other than 2004, when the average age of first-year University of Regina students was 19, the typical University of Regina student has been just over 18 years old.
- ▶ Among University of Regina first-year students, around 7 in 10 are female. This tends to be higher than the proportion reported among institutions nationally (66%) and at comparable institutions (62%). Although women tend to be overrepresented in the surveys (at the University of Regina and other institutions), results show very few differences in results by gender.
- ▶ The demographic profile of first-year students at the University of Regina is similar to students throughout Canada, although University of Regina students are much more likely to report that they are of Aboriginal ancestry (7% at the University of Regina versus 3% nationally and 2% at comparable universities).
- ▶ Far fewer University of Regina students self-report being a member of a visible minority (18%) as compared to students nationally (37%) and from comparable universities (45%). There is a statistically significant increase in the proportion of students who self-identify as being a member of a visible minority at the University of Regina (up from 7% in 2004 to 18% in 2013).

| | National (n = 14,550) | Comparable universities (n = 6,205) | University of Regina | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | | 2013 (n = 668) | 2010 (n = 612) | 2007 (n = 460) | 2004 (n = 265) |
| Average age | 18.5 | 18.0 | 18.1 | 18.2 | 18.0 | 19.1 |
| Female | 66% | 62% | 73% | 67% | 67% | 69% |
| Disabled | 9% | 9% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 2% |
| Visible minority | 37% | 45% | 18% | 11% | 7% | 7% |
| Aboriginal | 3% | 2% | 7% | 7% | 4% | 5% |
| International student | 5% | 5% | 3% | - | - | - |

Living arrangements

Table 2 shows that first-year University of Regina students often have different living arrangements than first-year students at other universities in Canada.

- ▶ Given that most first-year students stay close to home to study, it is not surprising that 56% of University of Regina students live with their parents during their first year. However, this proportion is higher than the proportion nationally (47%) and at comparable universities (41%). The difference is largely driven by the fact that more students nationally (36%) and at comparable universities (48%) live on-campus during their first year than University of Regina (28%) students.
- ▶ Among those not living on campus, 21% of University of Regina students said they would choose to live on campus if given the opportunity. The proportion has ranged from 10% to 25% of first-year University of Regina students over time.

| | National (n = 14,550) | Comparable universities (n = 6,205) | University of Regina | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | | 2013 (n = 668) | 2010 (n = 612) | 2007 (n = 460) |
| With parents | 47% | 41% | 56% | 57% | 56% |
| On campus | 36% | 48% | 28% | 22% | 24% |
| Rented housing | 14% | 10% | 15% | 18% | 20% |
| Own home | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | <1% |

Grades

Table 3 provides an academic profile of participating first-year students.

- ▶ The vast majority of first-year University of Regina students (87%) started university in the academic year following their graduation from high school. This compares to 86% at similar institutions and 80% nationally.
- ▶ Comparing high school grades shows that University of Regina students have entering grades that are on par with students nationally and at comparable institutions, with 74% of University of Regina students reporting an average grade of A- or higher (compared with 72% nationally and 77% at similar universities).
- ▶ Although high school entry grades are similar, when asked what average grade do you expect to have at the end of your first year, University of Regina respondents are less likely to anticipate achieving a

grade of A- or higher than students from other universities. Among first-year students at the University of Regina, 27% expect a grade of A- or higher, which compares to 36% nationally and 34% at comparable universities.

- ▶ Results nationally (including students from the University of Regina), show that younger students had higher grades in high school than older students. In fact, 77% of first-year students 18 years of age and younger had high school grades of A- or higher. This steadily drops as students get older, to 48% of those 21 and older. However, by the end of their first year, students expect virtually the same grades, regardless of their age.
- ▶ Nationally (including the University of Regina), students' grades in high school appear to have some connection with their choice of academic program, as students in Engineering, Physical Science, and Professional programs are most likely to report having a high school grade of A- or higher, while students pursuing a degree in Social Science and Education are least likely. However, there is virtually no difference between disciplines and students' expected grades at the end of their first year of university.

| Table 3: Academic profile | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| | National (n = 14,550) | Comparable universities (n = 6,205) | University of Regina | | | |
| | | | 2013 (n = 668) | 2010 (n = 612) | 2007 (n = 460) | 2004 (n = 265) |
| Year of high school graduation | | | | | | |
| Previous year or sooner | 80% | 86% | 87% | 82% | 87% | 84% |
| Two years or later | 20% | 13% | 13% | 18% | 13% | 16% |
| Average high school grade | | | | | | |
| A- or higher | 72% | 77% | 74% | 75% | 79% | 76% |
| B or B+ | 25% | 21% | 22% | 20% | 17% | 19% |
| C+ or lower | 4% | 2% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 5% |
| Average grade expected at end of first year | | | | | | |
| A- or higher | 36% | 34% | 27% | 23% | 26% | 29% |
| B or B+ | 50% | 51% | 54% | 54% | 54% | 50% |
| C+ or lower | 13% | 15% | 19% | 23% | 20% | 21% |

About CUSC

The 2013 CUSC survey is the 19th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 14th study in which the University of Regina has participated. Since 1996, the survey has run in a three-year cycle, with different student populations targeted each year: all undergraduates, first-year undergraduates, or graduating students.

This study focuses on undergraduate university students who started in the Fall 2012 term and compares results to previous first-year surveys conducted in 2010, 2007, and 2004.. The survey was distributed to more than 41,000 students at 35 universities across Canada. In total, 15,218 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 37.0%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 668, which represents a 49.2% 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 2013, 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 as compared to earlier surveys of graduating students.

In this report, the University of Regina is not included in either the *National* category (all three Groups) or the *Comparable Universities* category (Group 2 institutions).

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.

Weighting

In order to compensate for the discrepancies between the population of first-year students among participating institutions and the sample population, the combined (national and comparator) data in this report have been weighted.

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.