

Examining the University of Regina Student Experience Impact of Academic and Extra-Curricular Experiences on Students' Growth and Development

Completed in April 2012, the *2012 CUSC Survey of Graduating Students* focused on undergraduate university students deemed eligible to graduate in 2012. The survey was distributed to more than 41,000 students at 36 universities across Canada. In total, 15,062 undergraduate students from across Canada completed the survey, including 430 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 2009, 2006, and 2003 CUSC surveys of graduating students. Unless stated otherwise, all differences reported are not statistically significant.

This second report in a series of six examines students' assessment of the impact of various academic and extra-curricular university experiences on their growth and development.

Impact of Academic-related Experiences on Students' Growth and Development

Students rated whether 16 academic-related experiences they may have had while at university contributed *none* (sic), *very little*, *some*, or *very much* to their growth and development¹. Among students who rated their contribution as *very much*, Table 1 lists experiences that contributed most and least to University of Regina students' growth and compares it to students nationally and at comparable universities.

- ▶ Among the 16 experiences, University of Regina students tend to indicate that aspects directly related to instruction and course work have the biggest impact on their growth and development. As seen in Table 1, the experiences most likely to be identified by University of Regina students as having contributed very much to their personal growth and development included *classroom instruction* (64%), *interactions with faculty in class* (51%), and *essays and written assignments* (51%). These were followed closely by *participation in classroom discussions* (49%) and *feedback on assignments* (47%). These ratings are slightly higher than those provided by students nationally and at comparable universities.
- ▶ Conversely, University of Regina students see academic experiences outside of their classroom experiences and core curricula as contributing least, including such things as *involvement in faculty research*, *recommended readings*, and *interactions with teaching assistants* (with fewer than 1 in 5 saying they contributed very much to their growth and development). Students are also less likely to rate *online instruction* as contributing very much to their development. Perhaps this is because this

¹ Only students who had experience with each aspect reported were included in the analysis. Non-responses and "not applicable" responses were excluded.

aspect misses many of the in-class components noted above that students say contribute very much to their growth and development.

- ▶ Some experiences that University of Regina students indicate contributed least to their growth and development were more likely to be considered as having a large impact by students nationally and at comparable universities, especially *involvement in faculty research activities* and *interaction with teaching assistants*. The difference is most apparent with the latter activity with only 11% of University of Regina students indicating that interactions with teaching assistants contributed very much to their growth and development as compared to students elsewhere (25%).

Nationally, including the University of Regina, the contribution of many of these experiences varies by students' discipline and reflects the differences in instruction modes and requirements related to those disciplines. Therefore, it is not surprising that Arts and Humanities students (and, to a lesser extent, Education students) are more likely to say that experiences such as *participation in classroom discussions*, *written assignments and essays*, *use of library resources*, and *personal interactions with faculty in class* contributed very much to their development. In contrast, students in science programs (Physical or Biological Sciences) are more likely than students in other disciplines to say that *laboratory experiences*, *interactions with teaching assistants*, *undergraduate theses*, and *involvement in faculty research activities* contributed very much to their growth and development.

	National (n=14,632)	Comparable universities (n=5,932)	University of Regina			
			2012 (n=430)	2009 (n=557)	2006 (n=551)	2003 (n=515)
Classroom instruction	60%	59%	64%	57%	61%	60%
Written assignments and essays	49%	48%	51%	54%	56%	Not asked
Personal interactions with faculty in class	44%	44%	52%	46%	49%	43%
Faculty feedback on assignments	44%	45%	47%	45%	48%	40%
Participation in classroom discussions	43%	43%	49%	44%	47%	41%
Interaction with teaching assistants	25%	25%	11%	11%	13%	16%
Involvement in faculty research activities	25%	24%	18%	20%	17%	13%
Online instructions	17%	17%	14%	11%	28%	Not asked
Recommended readings	16%	15%	16%	14%	15%	12%

Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Growth and Development

Students rated the impact 17 extracurricular activities had on their growth and development using the same scale of *none* (sic), *very little*, *some*, or *very much*. Table 2 identifies the extracurricular activities that University of Regina students were most and least likely to report as contributing *very much* to their growth and development.

- ▶ Although some activities contribute very much to the students involved, they do not affect a large number of students. For instance, University of Regina students are most likely to say that *participating in international study or exchange* contributed most to their growth and development, although only

13% of University of Regina students had experience with this activity. On the other hand, 97% of students had experience *interacting with other students*, which was the second highest rated activity in terms of its contribution to students' growth and development.

- ▶ According to University of Regina students, the extracurricular activities least likely to contribute very much to their personal growth and development are: *serving as a peer or resident advisor*, *attending campus social events*, and *attending home games of university athletic teams*. In each case, fewer than 1 in 5 students with experience say each contributed very much to their growth. At the University of Regina, there has been a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of students who say that *serving as a peer or resident advisor* contributed very much to their growth and development. Also, the proportion is about half of that reported by students nationally and at comparable universities.

Table 2: Extracurricular activities that contributed most and least to student growth and development (% saying 'very much')

	National (n=14,632)	Comparable universities (n=5,932)	University of Regina			
			2012 (n=430)	2009 (n=557)	2006 (n=551)	2003 (n=515)
Contributed most						
Participating in international study or exchange	74%	76%	66%	53%	68%	71%
Interacting with other students	60%	61%	56%	55%	59%	67%
Participating in student government	46%	44%	49%	37%	38%	43%
Contributed least						
Serving as a peer or resident advisor	37%	39%	18%	22%	35%	49%
Attending campus social events	23%	23%	17%	15%	15%	13%
Attending home games of university athletic teams	16%	15%	13%	15%	13%	8%

Examining results nationally (including students from the University of Regina), there are several differences by various groups and the contribution they believe these activities had on their growth and development.

- ▶ Female students are more likely than male students to report that *participating in international study or exchanges* (80% versus 64%) and *being a teaching assistant* (61% versus 46%) contributed very much to their growth.
- ▶ The older a student is, the less likely he or she is to say that *participating in international study or exchanges* and *participating in student government* contributed very much to his or her growth.
- ▶ Students 23 and younger are more likely than those 24 and older to say that *serving as a peer or residence advisor* contributed very much to their growth.

About CUSC

The 2012 CUSC survey is the 18th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires* (CUSC/CCREU) and the 13th 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 students who will be graduating from their program of study in 2012 and compares results to previous surveys conducted in 2009, 2006, and 2003. The survey involved 37 participating universities and over 15,000 students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 36.5%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 430, which represents a 31.5% 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 2012, eleven 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), Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier. This reflects a higher number of participating Group 2 institutions as compared to earlier surveys of graduating students, with seven in each of the 2006 and 2003 studies.

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.

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.