

Examining the University of Regina Student Experience

Universities' contribution to students' knowledge and skills development

Completed in Spring 2018, the *2018 CUSC Survey of Graduating University Students* focused on undergraduate university students deemed eligible to graduate in 2018. The survey was distributed to close to 51,000 students at 32 universities across Canada. In total, 14,760 graduating students from across Canada completed the survey, including 372 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 2015, 2012, and 2009 CUSC surveys 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 communications skills, analytical and learning skills, work skills and 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 similarly to students nationally and at comparable universities.

- ▶ Among the four communication skills rated, the University of Regina contributed most to students' growth and development in *speaking to a class or audience* (64%), higher than their counterparts nationally (53%) or at comparable institutions (51%).
- ▶ U of R graduating students reported that their university also contributed to their growth and development in *writing clearly and correctly* and *speaking to small groups* (63% both). U of R respondents rated these skills similarly to their peers nationally (63% and 60% respectively) and slightly higher than their peers at comparable institutions (61% and 58%).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents reported that their university contributed least to *second or third language skills* (13%) and only 6% said it contributed very much to their growth and development. These ratings were similar than their counterparts nationally (7%) and at comparable institutions (6%).
- ▶ Among University of Regina respondents, male students were less likely (19%) to report that the university contributed very much to their growth and development in either *speaking to small groups* or *speaking to a class or audience* than their female counterparts (26% and 27% respectively). There was no substantive difference in their sense that the university contributed to their *writing clearly and correctly*.



Table 1: University contribution to students' communication skills (<i>much or very much</i>)	National (n=14,760)	Comparable universities (n=6,238)	University of Regina	
			2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Writing clearly and correctly	63%	61%	63%	73%
Speaking to small groups	60%	58%	63%	70%
Speaking to a class or audience	53%	51%	64%	68%
Second or third language skills	18%	17%	13%	18%

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 which U of R students reported ratings slightly lower than students at other universities.

- ▶ University of Regina respondents said the university contributed most to their *ability to find and use information* and to *thinking logically and analytically* (67% both), slightly lower than respondents nationally (73% and 71% respectively) and at comparable institutions (72% and 69% respectively).
- ▶ University of Regina respondents reported that their university contributed least to their *mathematical skills* (23%), lower than students nationally (31%) and at comparable universities (32%).
- ▶ While University of Regina respondents (55%) were somewhat less likely than their counterparts nationally (60%) or at comparable institutions (60%) to say their university contributed to *understanding abstract concepts*, they were as likely (41%) as their peers nationally (41%) and at comparable institutions (41%) to say it contributed much.
- ▶ Female students at the University of Regina were more likely than male students to say that their university contributed very much to their *ability to find and use information* (23% versus 12%). Similarly, female students were much more likely than their male counterparts to say their university contributed very much to their development in *listening to others to absorb information accurately* (19% versus 7%).
- ▶ Male students at the U of R were more likely than female students to say that their university contributed much or very much to their development in *mathematical skills* (49% versus 15%). This difference may reflect the differing concentrations by gender in academic programs.

Table 2: University contribution to students' growth and development in analytical and learning skills (<i>much or very much</i>)	National (n=14,760)	Comparable universities (n=6,238)	University of Regina	
			2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Ability to find and use information	73%	72%	67%	77%
Thinking logically and analytically	71%	69%	67%	77%
Understanding abstract concepts	60%	60%	55%	61%
Listening to others to absorb information accurately	59%	58%	52%	60%
Reading to absorb information accurately	58%	56%	48%	59%
Effective study and learning skills	56%	55%	52%	59%
Thinking creatively to find ways to achieve an objective	56%	55%	55%	67%
Mathematical skills	31%	32%	23%	28%



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

Students' perceptions of their university's contribution to their working skills varied. For most working skills, U of R respondents rated their university similarly to students from other universities in Canada. Table 3 shows that U of R 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 somewhat more likely to say that the university contributed (much or very much) to their *skills and knowledge for employment* (47%) than their counterparts nationally (43%) or at comparable institutions (45%). They were also slightly more likely (41%) to report contributions to *knowledge of career options* than students nationally (38%) or at comparable institutions (40%).
- ▶ Students nationally (40%) and at comparable institutions (43%) 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 (35%).
- ▶ Female students at the University of Regina were more likely than male students to say that their university contributed much or very much to their development in *skills and knowledge for employment* (50% versus 39%), although they were as likely to say it contributed much (31%).
- ▶ Male students at the U of R were more likely than female students to say that their university contributed much or very much to their development in *entrepreneurial skills* (21% versus 12%).

Table 3: University contribution to students' growth and development in work skills (<i>much or very much</i>)	National (n=14,760)	Comparable universities (n=6,238)	University of Regina	
			2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Working independently	73%	73%	69%	73%
Cooperative interaction in groups	59%	59%	58%	65%
Skills for planning and completing projects	58%	57%	54%	61%
Skills and knowledge for employment	43%	45%	47%	53%
Computer literacy skills	40%	43%	35%	37%
Knowledge of career options	38%	40%	41%	45%
Entrepreneurial skills	20%	21%	15%	23%

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

Table 4 presents students' ratings for university's contribution to their growth and development in *life skills*.

- ▶ At the upper end, about 6 in 10 U of R respondents said the university contributed much or very much to several skills, including *ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own* (including 26% very much), *dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective* (16% very much), *ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses* (19% very much) and *time management skills* (21% 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, ability to lead a group to achieve an objective, moral and ethical judgement* and *self-confidence* than students nationally or from comparable institutions.
- ▶ Female students at the University of Regina were more likely than male students to say that their university contributed much or very much to their development in *time management skills* (61% versus 56%), *moral and ethical judgement* (52% versus 44%) and *appreciation of the arts* (34% versus 27%).

Table 4: University contribution to students' growth and development in life skills (<i>much or very much</i>)	National (n=14,760)	Comparable universities (n=6,238)	University of Regina	
			2018 (n=372)	2015 (n=461)
Ability to interact with people from backgrounds different from your own	63%	63%	63%	66%
Persistence with difficult tasks	59%	59%	56%	61%
Time management skills	59%	59%	57%	63%
Dealing successfully with obstacles to achieve an objective	59%	59%	58%	67%
Ability to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses	54%	53%	57%	65%
Ability to lead a group to achieve an objective	50%	49%	53%	56%
Moral and ethical judgement	49%	48%	58%	60%
Self-confidence	47%	45%	50%	59%
Appreciation of the arts	31%	32%	27%	34%
Spirituality	16%	16%	19%	22%

University of Regina respondents, as well as their counterparts nationally and at comparable universities, were less likely to say that their university contributed to their growth and development in the various skills than were graduating students in 2015. This trend is apparently more pronounced at the University of Regina.

Areas perceived by students as being the most important for universities' contribution to student development

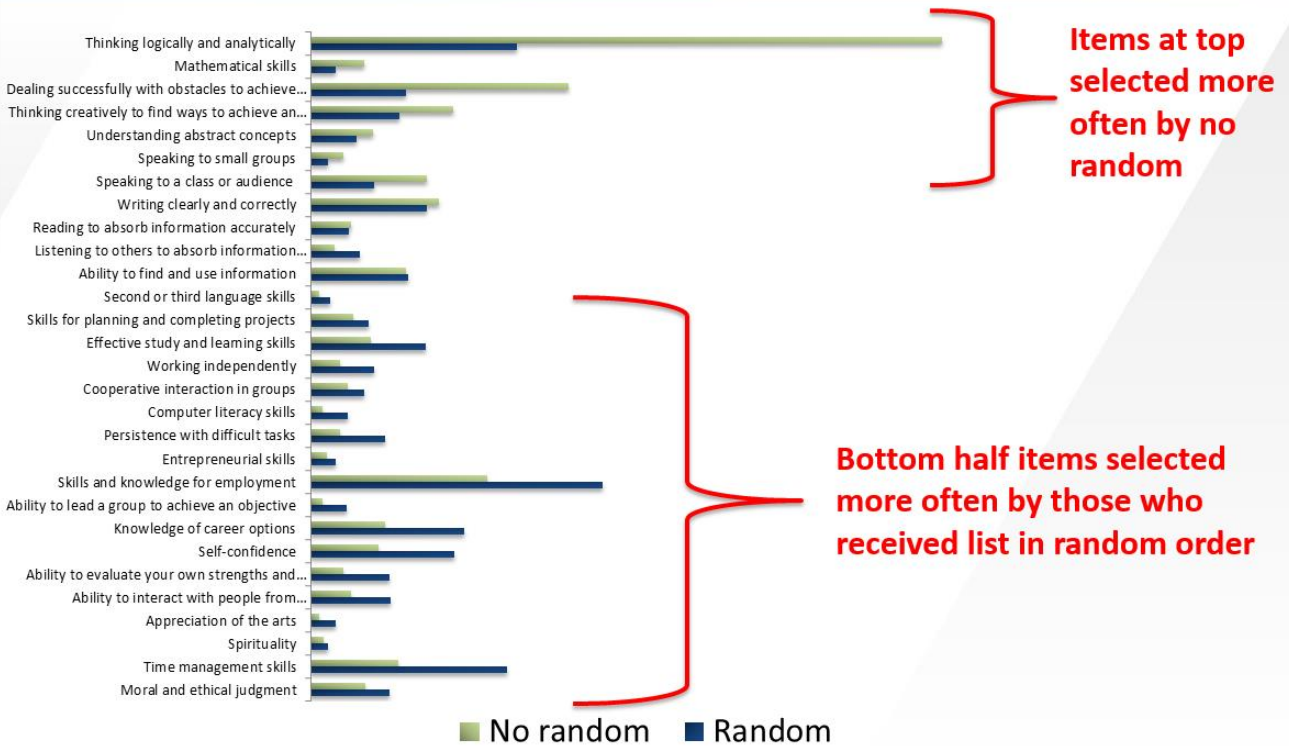
Among the 29 areas where students rated their university's contribution, students were asked to rank the top **three** most important areas for a student's growth and development. In previous surveys, the items appeared in the same order for every respondent. In 2018, an experiment was conducted to support or reject the thought that students tend to select the top items in a long list and that randomizing the order of items would reduce this tendency.

For universities that chose to participate in the experiment, a random selection of 25% of their students in their sample received the version of the survey that randomized the order of items in questions that have long lists. Results of the experiment confirmed that "*items at top were selected more often by those who received the list in no random order*" and that "*bottom half items were selected more often by those who received the list in random order*". The table on next page shows national results of the experiment, according to information provided by PRA Inc. for CUSC.

As a result, randomization of order will be employed for questions in this format (where students are asked to select the top 3 items) in future CUSC surveys. This also means that care is required in using the results of such questions in the 2018 and past CUSC surveys.



Most important area for growth and development (dvl1st)



About CUSC

The 2018 CUSC survey is the 24th cooperative study undertaken by the *Canadian University Survey Consortium / Consortium canadien de recherche sur les étudiants universitaires (CUSC/CCREU)* and the 19th 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 undergraduate students in separate years. In 2014, the All Undergraduate student survey was changed to a survey of Middle-Years 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, or, as in the case of the University of Regina, students who have earned between 25 and 101 credits).

The 2018 survey was directed to students deemed to graduate in 2018; this report compares results to the previous surveys conducted in 2015, 2012 and 2009. The 2018 survey involved 32 participating universities and almost 15,000 graduating university students from across Canada, yielding an overall response rate of 29.1%. Participating students from the University of Regina numbered 372, representing a 37.7% 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 2018, ten Group 2 universities participated in the survey. Along with the University of Regina, they included Carleton, Lakehead, Ryerson, Simon Fraser, Moncton, New Brunswick (Fredericton), Victoria, Waterloo, and Wilfred Laurier.

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.

