

Summary

Student Profile and Perceptions Survey

Fall 2006

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Institutional Research
Douglas College
November 2006

Student Profile And Perceptions Survey, 2006

Introduction

Survey Description

Every two years since 1990, students registering at Douglas College in the fall semester have been given one of a series of short questionnaires to complete. Each questionnaire has half a dozen demographic questions in common, followed by differing sets of questions on such topics as educational goals, perceptions of Douglas College and previous education.

By dividing the study into twelve questionnaires, an extensive set of questions can be posed without burdening any individual respondent. The disadvantages of an eight percent sample for each questionnaire include less precise data and sample sizes which are too small to permit disaggregation by program of study.

Methodology

The 1990 and 1992 versions of the survey were conducted during in-person registration at Douglas College (and hence the survey was known as the Fall Registration survey.) Response rates for these years were approximately 75 – 80%, generating more than 500 completed responses for each questionnaire. In 1994, with the introduction of telephone registration, the questionnaire was distributed to students as they went to obtain a new library card, or to renew an old card.

The method used since 1994 relies heavily on the support of personnel in the Library and Client Learning Services, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Not every student validates their library card at the beginning of semester, students and staff are often busy, and a number of other factors limit the number of responses received. The response rate is generally in the 35 – 40 percent range, considerably lower than when the survey began, but still sufficient to generate the 250 responses needed for an adequate sample size.

The format of the 2000 version of the survey changed so that the completed questionnaires could be scanned, rather than the data entered manually with survey software. The “scan bubbles” questionnaires were created with software that permits custom questions to be printed in a variety of formats on blank paper, but there were nevertheless limitations on how questions could be posed. Thus some questions had to be posed differently than in the past. Also, some questions were added or changed as part of the normal updating of each version of the survey.

Response Rate and Data Reliability

A total of 3,200 scannable questionnaires were received from the 8,700 students registered at Douglas College in Fall 2006, making for a 37 percent response rate. Each of the twelve versions of the questionnaire had about 270 responses, although not every respondent answered every question.

The accuracy of a sample size of 270 can be easily seen by comparing responses to the common demographic questions that appear on all versions of the questionnaire: the results to the same question sometimes vary by a couple of percentage points, while they are almost identical in other instances. This suggests that the pattern of survey completion was indeed fairly random and reliable.

Comparisons of the 2006 results with those from past years show fairly smooth trends, rather than large fluctuations. This is further confirmation that the results are reasonably reliable. Of more concern that the reliability of this year's data is the trend of declining response rates over the past decade.

In short, the results of this survey are fairly reliable but only accurate to within two or three percentage points. For example, the survey suggests 87% of Douglas students have a cell phone, but the true number could well be as low as 84% or as high as 91%. The survey results thus should be viewed as a "broad brush" portrait of the student body, not as absolutely precise.

Demographics of Respondents

Questions common to all twelve questionnaires.

2,654 responses

Broad field of study:

21%	Arts
16%	Health Science
14%	Commerce & Business Administration
13%	Criminology
11%	Science
7%	Child, Family & Community Studies
6%	Office Administration
5%	English as a Second Language
5%	Developmental Studies
4%	Performing Arts

Gender:

68%	Female
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Age:

32%	15 - 19 years
44%	20 - 24 years
22%	25 years and older

Number of previous semesters at Douglas College:

36%	Zero
13%	One
16%	Two
35%	Three or more

Number of courses this semester:

9%	One
14%	Two
29%	Three
29%	Four
15%	Five
4%	Six or more

Which campus student is attending this semester: (choose all that apply)

89%	New Westminster
31%	David Lam

Part A: Sources of Information about the College

286 responses

Percentage of students rating each of the following as either "Essential" or "Important":

87%	Douglas College website
76%	College instructors
71%	Registrar's Office/Admissions Office
62%	College advisors/counselors
59%	College calendar
52%	Past/current Douglas students
52%	Family
44%	High school counsellors or teachers
41%	Friends (not Douglas students)
34%	Other
29%	Employer

Difficulty getting sufficient information about Douglas College:

2%	Difficult
35%	Occasionally difficult

Percentage of students rating each of the following as either "Entirely" or "Mainly":

94%	Accuracy of printed information
90%	College employees were friendly and helpful when giving you information
88%	College web site is clear and helpful
88%	Printed information was helpful and easy to understand
83%	Accuracy of oral information from College employees
72%	Sufficient printed information

Preferred method for receiving information:

32%	Web site
45%	Email (percentage is growing)
13%	In-person (percentage is dropping)
6%	Telephone
4%	Print

Part B: Perceptions of Douglas College

277 responses

Percentage of students rating each of the following as "High"
(other response options were Average, Low, and Don't Know):

High

64%	Diversity of students
55%	Helpfulness of employees
49%	Accessibility for mature students
40%	Quality of your program
40%	Ease of registering in courses (steady growth from 18% in 2000)
37%	Range of courses offered
37%	Sensitivity to student's needs
35%	Help to students in setting goals
35%	Reputation of Douglas College
33%	Commitment to excellence
31%	Preparation for study at university
31%	Preparation for getting a good job
29%	Quality of campus life
27%	Overall quality of all programs
25%	Quality of physical facilities
22%	Admission requirements to your program
21%	Quality of graduates
21%	Caliber of student in your program

Part C: Reasons for Choosing Douglas College

276 responses

Douglas College as first choice of institution:

78% First choice

Percentage of respondents saying reason was "highly" important:

50%	Courses/programs offered
45%	Quality of instruction
43%	Location
35%	Day and/or time when courses are offered
33%	Reputation
33%	Personalized instruction
29%	Cost
28%	"Open door" admissions philosophy
28%	Helpful Douglas employees
20%	Advice from educators
20%	Advice from family
19%	Advice from friends
18%	Size of campus
17%	Diverse or multicultural student body
13%	Buildings and facilities
12%	Advertisements
11%	Campus life, e.g. sports
11%	Other
10%	Not admitted elsewhere

Part D: Previous Education

281 responses

Highest level of education prior to entering Douglas College:

2%	Some high school
61%	High school graduation
14%	One year post-secondary
10%	Two years post-secondary
5%	Three or more years post-secondary
7%	University degree
1%	Other

Enjoyment of most recent education prior to Douglas:

79%	Positive experiences
15%	Neutral
6%	Negative experiences

Success in most recent education prior to Douglas:

73%	Very or moderately successful
21%	Average
6%	Somewhat or very unsuccessful

Relation of prior education to current studies:

24%	Closely related
50%	Somewhat related
27%	Unrelated

Highest level of education attained by either parent:

7%	Some high school
23%	High school graduation
22%	Some post-secondary
41%	University degree
8%	Other

Attendance at other institutions (past or present):

8%	SFU
7%	BCIT
4%	UBC
23%	Another BC College
7%	Another BC University
18%	Other post-secondary institution

Last secondary school district attended:

24%	Coquitlam
11%	Burnaby
3%	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows
6%	New Westminster
13%	Surrey
9%	Vancouver
4%	Delta
7%	Other Lower Mainland
6%	Other BC
6%	Other Canada
11%	International

Part E: Educational Goals

282 responses

Percentage of students claiming each of the following reasons for continuing their education was highly important (other options were Average, Low, or Irrelevant):

High

71%	To get credits and/or a diploma
62%	Prepare for a new or first career
61%	Personal intellectual development
60%	Complete a full program at Douglas
58%	Transfer to another institution
53%	Personal interest in certain subjects
45%	Get a job right after leaving Douglas
44%	To gain confidence
28%	To decide what subjects to study
28%	Upgrade existing job skills
25%	Funding/financial aid available
24%	To experience student life
21%	To take only a few specific courses
18%	To meet family expectations
7%	Could not find a suitable job

Note: Reported reasons are not necessarily the actual reasons

How employed students perceive themselves:

72%	A student who happens to be working
28%	A worker who happens to be studying

Part F: Demographic Profile of Students

280 responses

Permanent address:

15%	Burnaby	18%	Surrey
12%	New Westminister	5%	Delta
26%	Coquitlam (Tri Cities)	14%	Vancouver
6%	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows	3%	Other Lower Mainland
		2%	Outside Lower Mainland

Address five years ago:

80%	Lower Mainland
6%	Other BC
3%	Outside BC
12%	Outside Canada

Main form of transportation to Douglas College:

38%	Own car
5%	Ride in family or someone else's car
39%	Skytrain (15% in 2000)
12%	Bus
5%	Walk, bicycle and other

Travel time (one way):

54%	Less than 30 minutes
41%	30 – 60 minutes
6%	More than 1 hour

Closest campus to where you live:

64%	Douglas College
16%	Kwantlen
6%	SFU (Burnaby)
5%	BCIT
4%	Langara
5%	VCC
2%	Other

Accommodation:

60%	Parent's home
23%	My own place (perhaps with spouse)
9%	Shared dwelling
8%	Other

Gross income (optional question):

45%	Under \$5,000
25%	\$ 5 - 10,000
15%	\$10 - 15,000
14%	\$15,000 and over

Monthly rental/cost of housing:

43%	\$0 - \$99
26%	\$100 - \$499
11%	\$500 - \$699
21%	\$700 or more

Part G: Financial Resources

282 responses

Apply for a student loan or borrow money for the current semester:

24% Yes

Debts from previous loans:

79% None
8% Under \$5,000
13% Over \$5,000

Plan to obtain paid employment this semester:

38% None
46% Up to 20 hours per week
16% 21 or more hours per week

Sources of income during semester:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Main Source</u>	<u>Second Source</u>
Savings	12%	24%
Part-time job	39%	23%
Full-time job	6%	1%
Spouse	7%	4%
Parents	24%	25%
Other	12%	22%

Relocated to attend Douglas:

8% By choice
5% By necessity

Finances a problem this semester:

14% Big problem
32% Small problem
29% Not really
25% Not at all

Children living at home (one or two parent family):

10% Yes

Single parent: 7% Yes

Financial dependants (other than children living at home):

7% Yes

Sacrifices in regular job in order to attend Douglas:

12% Yes, extensive
39% Yes, somewhat

Part H: Multiculturalism

286 responses

Childhood languages other than English(choose only one):

52%	None
15%	Chinese
10%	Other Asian
8%	Punjabi/Hindi
6%	French
8%	Other European
1%	Middle Eastern

Ethnic background:

37%	English
28%	Asia Pacific
15%	Other European
11%	East Indian/South Asian
1%	Middle Eastern
8%	Other

Occasionally speak another language at home:

32%	Yes, by choice
18%	Yes, by necessity)

Lived in another country for over a year as a child:

33%	Yes
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Lived in another country for over a year as an adult:

19%	Yes (21% in 2000)
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Difficulty with spoken English:

13%	Occasionally
1%	Often

Feel distinct because of your cultural background:

27%	Occasionally
6%	Often
3%	Constantly

Experience difficulty understanding Canadian culture:

9%	Occasionally
2%	Often

Part I: Registration Success

283 responses

Number of courses wanted and obtained:

<u>Number of Courses</u>	<u>Wanted</u>	<u>Obtained</u>
One	4%	9%
Two	10%	14%
Three	36%	29%
Four	35%	29%
Five	11%	15%
Six or more	5%	4%

Number of courses missed because all sections were full:

73%	None (improved from 47% in 1998)
15%	One
8%	Two
2%	Three
1%	Four or more

Number of courses missed because of timetable conflicts or other commitments:

70%	None (improved from 45% in 2002)
17%	One
11%	Two
2%	Three
0%	Four or more

Number of courses taken mainly because space available and fit timetable:

65%	None (improved from 40% in 2002)
13%	One
12%	Two
6%	Three
2%	Four
3%	Five or more

Taking courses elsewhere this semester:

17%	Yes
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Satisfaction with course selection (recognizing College lacks resources to guarantee sufficient spaces):

30%	Very satisfied (improved from 20% in 1998)
45%	Satisfied
18%	Neutral
5%	Dissatisfied
2%	Very dissatisfied

Part J: Course Delivery

281 responses

Percentage saying the following course times were very convenient:

- 54% Daytime during the week
- 37% Evenings, Monday to Friday
- 29% Friday evenings
- 22% Saturdays

- 33% Summer

- 28% Compressed format (fewer weeks, more hours per week)

Shift work causes problems for course attendance:

- 22% Yes, often
- 47% Occasionally
- 31% Never

Appeal of unconventional ways of offering courses:

- 18% Yes, definitely
- 35% Yes, but only in some situations
- 21% Don't know, but would like to find out
- 12% Don't know, but suspect not
- 10% No, generally prefer usual methods
- 4% Definitely not

Preference for the college to offer fewer courses in order to offer more sections of each course:

- 18% Yes
- 25% Indifferent
- 58% No

Put more time and money into developing different ways of offering courses:

- 31% Definitely
- 46% Perhaps
- 12% Probably not
- 5% No
- 7% Don't know

Internet activity desired in Douglas courses:

- 5% None
- 14% Minimal
- 48% Some
- 26% Much
- 7% Don't know

Part K: Equity Group Membership

291 responses

First Nations/Aboriginal:

3% Yes

Visible minority:

32% Yes, definitely

12% Perhaps

Have a disability:

11% Physical impairment (e.g. visual, mobility, hearing, dexterity)

7% Learning or other cognitive impairment (e.g. dyslexia, head injury)

2% Other disability

Severity of impairment or disability:

9% Minor

3% Medium or major (accommodation needed at college)

Have received money from employment insurance in the past year:

4% Yes

Have received income assistance ("welfare") in the past year:

2% Yes (down from 5% in 2000)

Part L: Computer Usage

283 responses

Number of computers at home:

2%	None
42%	One
56%	Two or more

Age of newest computer in your home:

3%	Not applicable
47%	One year or less
29%	Two years
22%	Three years or more

Home internet connection:

4%	None
57%	Cable
36%	High speed phone
2%	Low speed phone

Have:

87%	Cell phone
6%	Personal digital assistant

Have access to a laptop computer:

42%	No
5%	No, but sometimes I can borrow one
19%	Yes, someone else's
34%	Yes, my own

Check email:

27%	At least twice a day
42%	Once a day

Spend three or more hours per week:

36%	Word processing
36%	Web searches or browsing
33%	Email/chat
17%	Other
11%	Games

Skill level is proficient:

57%	Email
57%	Word processing
53%	Web browsing
49%	Chat
27%	Presentation, e.g. PowerPoint
25%	Other applications
18%	Spreadsheets