Pan-Canadian Study of First Year College Students

Report 1

Student Characteristics and the College Experience

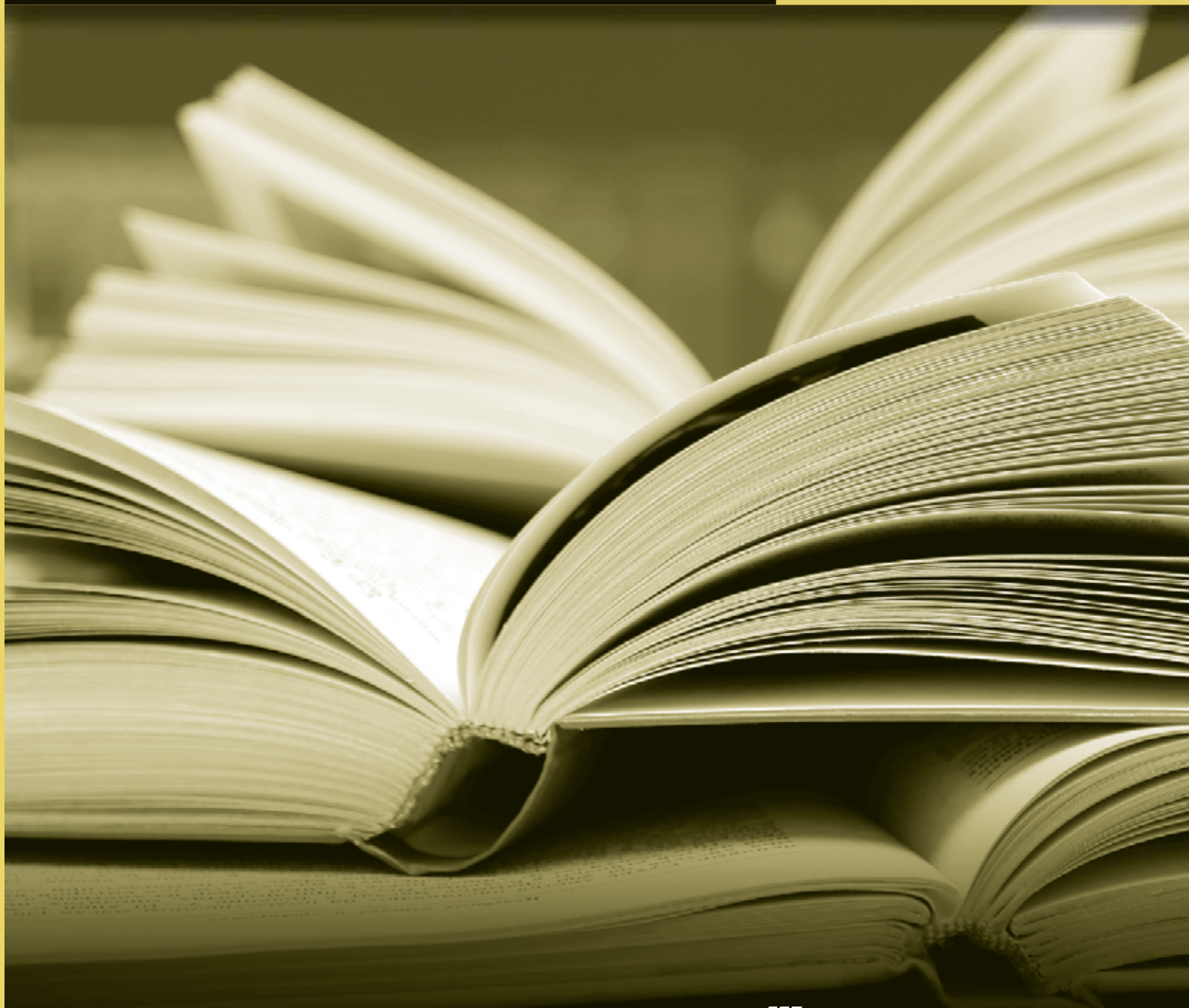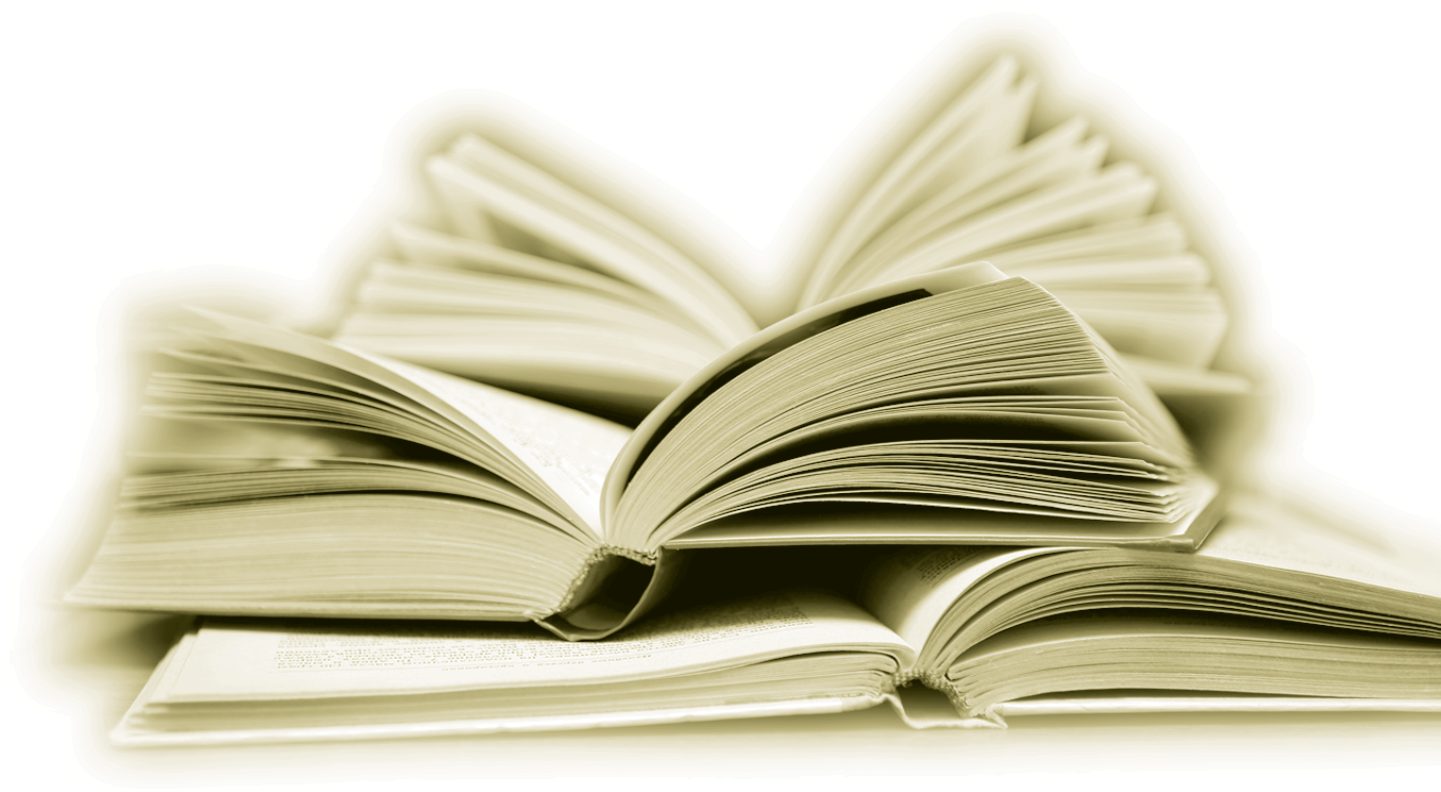# Pan-Canadian Study of First Year College Students

Report 1

Student Characteristics and the College Experience

Association of Canadian Community Colleges
Human Resources and Social Development Canada

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This paper is available in French under the title *Étude pancanadienne sur les étudiants collégiaux de première année, Rapport 1 : Les caractéristiques des étudiants et l'expérience collégiale.*

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Learning and quality postsecondary education are critical for Canada's continued prosperity, particularly in today's global knowledge economy. Colleges and institutes have a pivotal role in postsecondary education in Canada by producing highly qualified graduates for direct entry into the labour market and facilitating transitions into further postsecondary education.

It is recognized that information and data on students attending Canadian colleges and institutes is severely limited. This study, funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) begins to address this issue. The study involved two surveys of first year students at colleges and institutes:

• the Survey at College Entry to identify the characteristics of these students; and

• the End of First Term Survey to gain an understanding of the nature of their experience during the first term.

A total of 28,992 students completed the Survey at College Entry, from 102 participating colleges and institutes and a total of 17,642 students completed the End of First Term Survey, from 92 participating colleges and institutes. While a large sample of students enrolled in their first year of college was polled in this survey, more than two-thirds of the respondents were from Ontario. Although a substantial number of institutions and respondents were obtained from the Atlantic Provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, those in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia were under-represented. For this reason, overall project findings should not be viewed as representative of first-year college students nationwide. However, until a future study captures a more nationally representative sample, the current findings are the best and most comprehensive description of first-year students in Canadian colleges, institutes, cegeps and university-colleges achieved to date.

This report, the first in a series of three, provides a descriptive overview of the first results of these two surveys. A second report will describe the differences in the profile and experiences of visible minorities, Aboriginal students and new Canadians.   The third report will be a longitudinal analysis of the determinants of first term outcomes using data from the over 6,000 students who completed both surveys and grades data submitted by participating colleges and institutes.

Some of the key results from this study are highlighted below:

■ **A Profile of First Year Students at Colleges and Institutes**

The college entry survey results provide a first ever profile of students attending Canadian colleges and institutes. The results confirm that colleges and institutes admit students with diverse characteristics, including their demographic and family background and academic, personal and life experiences, particularly since just as many students came to their college or institute from the workforce as from high school.

■ **Students' Skills**

Results from both the entry and end of term surveys showed that a significant number of students believed their basic academic and learning skills were weak, in particular for study, test taking and math skills. In addition, an equivalent number reported they could use help in developing these skill areas and would use college services if offered. However, at the end of first term, service use findings showed that a significantly lower percentage of students used services than reported a need.

■ **Students' Goals**

In terms of students' educational goals, respondents from both surveys confirmed the labour market focus of college and institute programs as most indicated they enrolled in their program to access a specific occupation or for career advancement. At the same time, significant numbers of students viewed college programs as a stepping-stone to university. Generally, respondent students were decisive in their college goals, were committed to graduating and perceived the benefits of a postsecondary education as many and varied.

■ **Areas of Difficulty**

While the largest percentage of students reported their greatest difficulty in college was balancing the demands of their studies with those of work and family, many cited specific difficulties that could have a profound influence on their success. For example, one third reported significant difficulty knowing how to improve their grades. A significant proportion of respondent students were also experiencing financial difficulties as many expressed concerned about financing their studies at college entry and even more expressed this concern at the end of the first term.

It is important to note that despite students' lack of confidence in their skills and uncertainty about the career they would hold after graduation, the majority of students began college confident that they would succeed in their studies and achieve a postsecondary credential.

■ **Students' Experiences and Engagement in College**

The findings from the end of term survey provide helpful insights into the experiences of college/institute students during their first semester. The results depict the first term experience as one in which the majority of first year students have positive interactions with other students and faculty. Students also considered their academic experiences to be positive and, overall, survey respondents were very satisfied with their college experience and with their specific institution. Indeed, the majority felt they were gaining the knowledge and skills they needed to be successful in the future.

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1   Introduction

Learning and quality postsecondary education are critical for Canada's continued prosperity, particularly in today's global knowledge economy. Colleges and institutes have a pivotal role in postsecondary education in Canada by producing highly qualified graduates for direct entry into the labour market and facilitating transitions into further postsecondary education.

Canadian colleges and institutes are mandated to address the needs of diverse groups of learners within the communities they serve. These groups include first time postsecondary students directly from high school, adult learners seeking to increase literacy or workplace skills and highly skilled professionals needing to adapt to changing technologies and meet new skills and knowledge requirements.

In order to fulfill this mandate, colleges and institutes offer a diverse range of programs and make use of different learning strategies. Program offerings include basic literacy, adult basic education and high school equivalency, career-oriented certificates and diplomas, apprenticeship training, contract training for business and industry, post-graduate diplomas, university transfer and applied and baccalaureate degrees. It is also important to note that curriculum is developed with direct input from business and industry to ensure graduates acquire the skills and knowledge employers require.

Colleges and institutes are learner-centred and provide wrap-around support services which are intended to ensure learners succeed from the point of entry to program completion, and then successfully move into the labour market. The Pan-Canadian Inventory of Exemplary Practices in Learning at Colleges and Institutes conducted in May 2005 and funded by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) helped to identify the types of institutional policies, programs, practices and services that exhibit high levels of student involvement, engagement and persistence. The report from this study and a searchable database of exemplary practices provided by colleges and institutes is available on the website of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

An extensive review of the literature on the impact of college on students in the United States, conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) demonstrated that, among other findings, three sets of variables contribute to student learning and educational outcomes in postsecondary institutions:

- Characteristics of students
- Characteristics of educational institutions
- Interactions between these two sets

Until now, no pan-Canadian research of this type has been conducted and, in particular, information on students attending Canadian colleges and institutes is severely limited.

This study, conducted with funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), begins to address the lack information on Canadian college and institute students. The study is also a continuation of previous work the ACCC has undertaken in the area of student success, including a 1997 study entitled Just Say Yes to Student Success which was the concluding report of the ACCC Task Group on Student Success and Retention. It is important to note that colleges and institutes identified the need for this study as an important next step during the 2004 ACCC symposium on student success.

The study involved two surveys of first year students at colleges and institutes, the first to identify the characteristics of these students and the second then to gain an understanding of the nature of their experience during the first term. This report provides a descriptive overview of the first results of these two surveys. A second report will describe the differences in the profile and experiences of visible minorities, Aboriginal students and new Canadians.

All participating colleges were provided with a CD which contained their institution's survey results as well as the national results. The CD also provided institutions with specially designed software, the College Experience and Outcomes System, to enable colleges and institutes to provide end of semester average and second term enrolment status data for survey respondents. These outcomes data will be added to the database to complete

the analysis on the determinants of first year outcomes for the over 6,000 students for whom common records are available from both surveys. This information will be used to identify four student outcome groups: academically successful persisters, academically successful leavers, failed persisters and failed leavers (Dietsche, 1990, 1995). A summary of these findings will be provided in the third report on the determinants of first year outcomes.

Students were also asked to provide comments for both the college entry and end of term surveys. At college entry, students were asked to comment on what one thing their college or institute could have done better, as well as what they actually do, to make beginning their studies easier. At the end of first term, students were asked to comment on what they wish they had known or better understood when they started their programs, the biggest challenge they faced during the first semester, what went better than they expected and a particular source of pride or pleasure from the first semester. Some examples of students' comments are provided throughout this report in order to give voice to the issues addressed. Given the extremely high numbers of comments received from participating students, there is clearly further complementary qualitative research to be done using these comments.

The results of this study provide some insights into college/institute students' perceptions of their learning experiences, their learning needs, and support services that students would benefit from to overcome barriers, enhance their overall experience and contribute to the successful completion of their programs. To this end, the results also help to inform policy and program development for colleges and institutes in terms of the types of learning strategies and support services offered, as well as for provincial and federal government departments to help shape postsecondary education policies and programs.

2 Overview of the Research Program and Methodology

This study has three fundamental questions:

- What are the characteristics of students attending Canadian colleges and technical institutes,

- What is the nature of the college student experience during the first year,

- What are the key determinants of student academic success and persistence.

The main objectives of this research program are to:

- Develop a comprehensive profile of students enrolling for the first time in either an apprenticeship, university transfer or career-related program at a Canadian college, technical institute or university-college;

- Describe the nature of student experiences during the first year of college in terms of their attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and college interactions,

- Identify and describe any differences in the experiences of specific student groups such as new Canadians, aboriginal students and visible minorities,

- Identify the characteristics of students, the college experience and possible interaction effects that promote learning and persistence in the first year.

2.1 Project Organization and Management

The project structure included two advisory panels created to provide advice and guidance for the design, development and implementation of this project.

- The **Research Design and Instrumentation Advisory Panel** was composed of experienced researchers from each of the six ACCC regions of Canada (British Columbia/Yukon, Alberta/Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic) who were locally involved in similar studies and advised on research methodology and questionnaire construction.

- The **Vice Presidents Academic (VPA) and Vice Presidents Student Services (VPSS) Advisory Panel** was also composed of one VPA/VPSS representative from each of the six regions, and constituted an advisory panel to assist with the validation of research methods, survey questionnaires and ensure institutional involvement on a regional basis.

The ACCC would like to acknowledge and thank the members of these two advisory panels for their contribution to this study. The list of members of the advisory panels is provided in Appendix 1.

The project was managed by Peter Dietsche Ph.D., Vice President, Research and Institutional Quality, Mohawk College, and Principal Investigator for this study, in collaboration with the ACCC.

2.2 Data Collection Procedures

A general methodological approach to studying student development in postsecondary institutions and to assess their impact on learning has been described by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991). This research study utilizes the same methodology and involves a longitudinal, repeated-measures survey of first-year postsecondary students registered in college and institute certificate, diploma or four year programs.

Student characteristics and college experience information was collected using two on-line surveys. Significant incentives were offered to encourage student participation.

Participating Canadian institutions identified for inclusion in this project were members of the ACCC. Following ACCC protocol, the Presidents/Chief Executive Officers of each institution were invited to participate via email by Gerry Brown, President of ACCC, in late June 2005. Institutions were also asked to provide the name contact coordinates of an individual who could act as a project liaison.

The timeframe for the Survey at College Entry extended from August 29 – September 30, 2005. The timeframe for the Survey at End of First Term extended from November 7 – December 9, 2005. For both surveys, institutions were invited to promote the survey on campus by whatever means were at their disposal. A generic announcement was provided to all institutions that could be used as an on-campus poster or adapted for newsletters, institutional portals and email messages to first year students.

Diagrammatically, the structure of the data collected in this project is shown in Figure 1

Figure 1
Overall Data Structure

First Year Students

| Entry Questionnaire (data set 1) | End-of-Term Questionnaire (data set 2) | College Average & Status (data set 3) |
| Sept. 2005 | Nov.–Dec. 2005 | Feb.–Aug. 2006 |
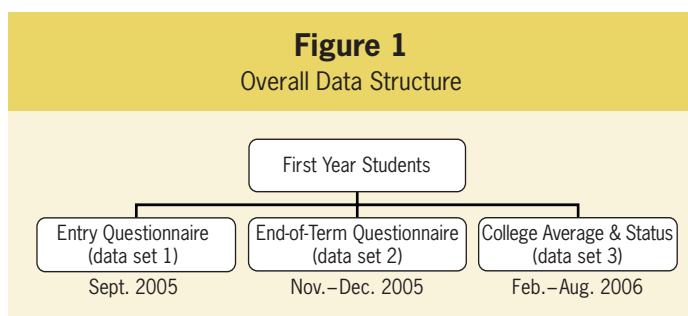
Students who completed the web-based surveys were asked to provide their unique identifier (student number). The vast majority complied with this request so that almost all survey information can be linked to create one merged file of the two data sets.

2.3 Survey Instruments

Two survey instruments were developed based on work conducted between 1992–2004 by the Principal Investigator as well as other Canadian researchers in this area. For comparison purposes, where possible, survey items that aligned with questions from national level studies (e.g. Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) were used.

The full survey questionnaires are available on the ACCC website, however, in general terms, each survey instrument collected the following information from new college students enrolled in postsecondary certificate, diploma and post diploma transfer and career preparation programs.

2.3.1 Survey of Student Characteristics (College Entry Survey)

Eight basic dimensions of new student characteristics were measured via the first survey. The modules making up this instrument and the variables contained within each are listed below.

Module 1: College & Respondent Identity and Status

• 12 items including: enrollment status, program length, program choice level

Module 2: Demographic & Family Background

• 18 items including: age, gender, Socio-Economic Status (SES), first language, minority status, citizenship status, number of dependents, activity prior to college, residence type

Module 3: Academic Background & Preparation

• Nine items including: highest level of education, college preparatory workshops, basic skills proficiency

Module 4: Secondary School Variables

• 12 items including: self-report high school average, attitudes on high school learning, high school academic behaviour

Module 5: Career Preparation, Selection & Certainty

• Seven items including: high school career guidance experience, career exploration, college program certainty/clarity

Module 6: Expectations of College

• 46 items including: hours working while studying, support needs and receptivity, college goals

Module 7: Financing College

• 13 items including: financing postsecondary education (PSE), family support for PSE, use of loans, financial concerns

Module 8: Attitudes

• 25 items including: confidence in success, perceived value of PSE, preference for job, commitment to graduation, career certainty

Module 9: Open ended Items

- Two items in this module allowed respondents to write their own comments on what their college could have done better and did to make the beginning of their studies easier

Survey of Student Experiences (End of Term Survey)

The second survey of new students assessed student attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, behaviours and experiences during the first semester of college. Some of these variables will be used to operationally define measures of student integration (Tinto, 1987,1993), involvement (Astin, 1977, 1993) and engagement with the college learning environment. These variables have been consistently shown in the research literature to have an important impact on learner success and persistence. The questionnaire included a total of 141 items clustered in seven modules. The modules making up this instrument and the variables contained within each are listed below.

Module 1: College & Respondent Identity and Status

- 12 items including enrollment status, program length, program choice level

Module 2: Demographic & Family Background

- 15 items including: age, gender, SES, first language, minority status, citizenship status, number of dependents, activity prior to college

Module 3: College Finances

- Four items including: financial concerns, highest level of education, college preparatory workshops

Module 4: Skills Self Assessment and Academic Behaviour

- 19 items including: self-reported basic skills proficiency, courses dropped, overall college average, study hours, class attendance, homework completion, college prep workshop

Module 5: College Academic Experiences

- 63 items including: support needs and receptivity, difficulties in college, frequency of group study, perceptions of faculty and institution, frequency of faculty interaction

Module 6: Attitudes re: Confidence, Commitment and Certainty

- 60 items including: hours financing PSE, confidence in success, perceived value of PSE, preference for job, commitment to graduation, career certainty, perception of program, value of PSE, intent to leave

Module 7: Time Use, Extracurricular Involvement and Service Use

- 28 items including: use of time on campus, participation in extracurricular activities and frequency of college service use.

Module 8: Open Ended Items

- This module contained four text-box items allowing students to make extensive comments related to their college experience, including challenges and aspects that went well during the first term.

3 Survey Sample and Limitations

This section provides an overview of the samples from both the Survey at College Entry and the End of First Term Survey and explains the limitations of this study.

3.1 Survey at College Entry

A total of 28,932 students completed the Survey at College Entry, from 102 participating colleges and institutes. Table 1 shows the distribution of student records by national region as defined by ACCC. The full list of college and institutes which participated in the Survey at College Entry is provided in Appendix 2.

3.2 End of First Term Survey

A total of 17,642 students completed the End of First Term Survey, from 92 participating colleges and institutes. Table 2 shows the distribution of student records by national region as defined by ACCC. The full list of colleges and institutes which participated in the End of First Term Survey is provided in Appendix 3.

Table 1. Distribution by Region of Responses to the College Entry Survey 2005

Region	Number	Percent
British Columbia and Yukon Region	2,444	8
Alberta and Northwest Territories Region	2,013	7
Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nunavut Region	841	3
Ontario Region	19,892	69
Quebec Region	1,052	4
Atlantic Region	2,663	9
Missing	27	
TOTAL	**28,932**	**100**

Source: College Entry Survey 2005

Table 2. Distribution by Region of Responses to the End of Term Survey 2005

Region	Number	Percent
British Columbia and Yukon Region	1,345	8
Alberta and Northwest Territories Region	1,168	7
Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nunavut Region	456	3
Ontario Region	11,480	65
Quebec Region	625	3
Atlantic Region	2,566	14
Missing	2	
TOTAL	**17,642**	**100**

Source: End of Term Survey 2005

3.3 Limitations of the Study

While a large sample of students enrolled in their first year of college was polled in this survey, more than two-thirds of the respondents were from Ontario. Indeed, the Ontario sample represented all public colleges and constituted 25 percent of the total first-year student population in that province. While a substantial number of institutions and respondents were obtained from the Atlantic Provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, those in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia were under-represented. For this reason, overall project findings should not be viewed as representative of first-year college students nationwide. However, until a future study captures a more nationally representative sample, the current findings are the best and most comprehensive description of first-year students in Canadian colleges, institutes, cégeps and university-colleges achieved to date.

Throughout this report there are tables which compare the results of both the College Entry and End of Term Surveys for questions which were common to both survey instruments. However, it is important to note that the data in these tables cannot be considered to be longitudinal data as the College Entry Survey respondents were not all the same as respondents to the End of the Term Survey. An actual longitudinal analysis will be done with the over 6,000 common records of respondents who completed both surveys. This analysis will be documented in the third report in this series on the determinants of first year outcomes.

4 Registration Characteristics of Respondent Students

College was the first choice for the vast majority (82 percent) of respondents.

The vast majority of respondent students (82 percent from the entry survey and 81 percent from the end of term survey) were attending their college or institute for the first time as full-time students. The College Entry Survey asked students who indicated they were not attending college for the first time to specify why and their reasons for leaving previous studies. One in five respondent students were not attending a college or institute for the first time, and among those, one-third had already completed a program, one third had partially completed a program on another occasion, and almost one quarter had attended their college/institute previously as part-time students. Among respondents who left previous studies, the largest percentage, 27 percent, did so because they were dissatisfied with their experience, which is consistent with results from the Youth in Transition Survey (Lambert et. al., 2004) in terms of a poor 'fit' between their interests and their program of study. In addition, 18 percent said they had changed career plans, and only one in ten cited financial reasons for leaving.

In terms of postsecondary education goals, the majority of College Entry Survey respondents (82 percent) confirmed that attending their current college or institute was their first choice. Eight percent indicated that attending a university was their first choice and six percent indicated that their first choice would have been to attend another college. The majority of respondents were also enrolled in their first choice program.

4.1 Programs and Fields of Study of Respondents

The profile of respondents from both the entry and end of term surveys were consistent in terms of the programs and fields of study. Most students (up to 58 percent) were enrolled in career or technical programs. In addition, up to 13 percent were enrolled in university preparation or transfer programs. In terms of degree programs, 13 percent of entry survey respondents and 15 percent of end of term survey respondents were enrolled in degree programs.

Academic programs encompassed all the major fields of study as shown in Figure 2, with most students enrolled in Business (up to 23 percent), followed by 17 percent enrolled in Health Sciences. Most students (up to 47 percent) were enrolled in two year programs, up to 23 percent were enrolled in three year programs, and 11 percent were enrolled in four year programs.

4.2 Prior Learning and Recognition

The College Entry Survey also asked students whether they received any academic credits for experience gained prior to attending their current college or institute. A notable finding was the fact that over one-half of respondents reported they did not know they could apply for academic credit based on experiences prior to college. This is in spite of the fact that the results of the Pan-Canadian Inventory of Exemplary Practices in Learning at Colleges and Institutes showed that over 80 percent of institutions reported they were implementing a program of prior learning and recognition (PLAR). Almost one third of respondents indicated that they knew about prior learning and recognition but did not apply when they began their college/institute program.

Figure 2
Fields of Study of Respondent Students, 2005

Field	Percent
Business	23%
Health Science	17%
Social and Community Services	10%
Applied Engineering Technologies	10%
Applied Arts/Media	9%
Hospitality/Recreation/Tourism	5%
Information Technology	5%
Liberal Arts and Science	4%
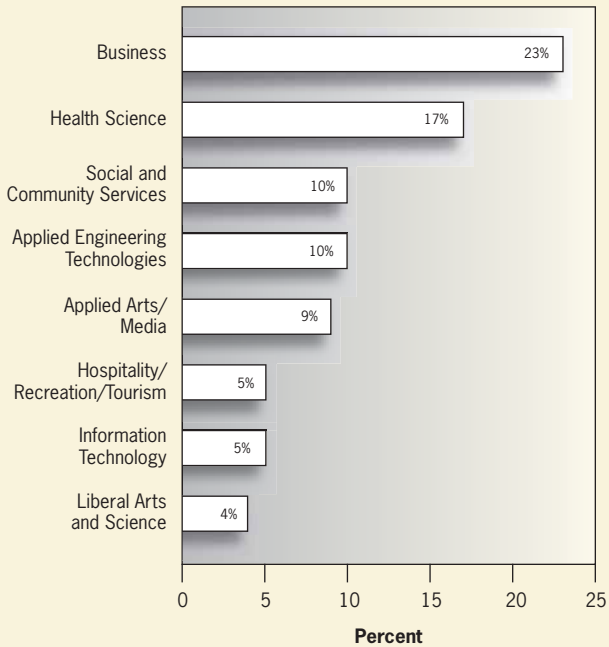
Percent

Up to 60 percent of respondents were enrolled in programs that included an on-the-job component.

4.3 **Workplace Components of College/Institute Programs**

Many programs offered by colleges and institutes offer various types of workplace experience that expose students to the type of work they will experience once they begin their careers. The results from both the entry and end of term surveys were consistent in that about 60 percent of respondents confirmed that they were enrolled in a program that included an on-the-job component, either through a co-op arrangement or through a work placement.

5 Registration Characteristics of Respondent Students

The demographic and family background of survey respondents confirms that students attending colleges and institutes are diverse on many levels. This section provides an overview of the demographic and family background characteristics of the survey respondents from both the College Entry and End of Term Surveys.

5.1 Age of College/Institute Students

For both the College Entry and End of Term Surveys, slightly less than one-half of respondent students were 19 years of age or younger (47 percent and 44 percent respectively) and roughly one fifth were mature students, defined as 25 years of age or older.

5.2 Gender

Sixty-one percent of respondents from the College Entry Survey were female and 63 percent of respondents from the End of Term Survey were female.

5.3 First Language

Most respondents had English as a first language – 80 percent from the College Entry Survey and 82 percent from the End of Term Survey. Only six percent of respondents at college entry and four percent of respondents at the end of the first term identified French as their first language. In addition, 13 percent of respondents at college entry reported having another language as their first language, and almost the same percentage of respondents from the end of term survey (14 percent) , indicated that another language was their first language.

5.4 Family Situation

Four in five respondent students were single, and somewhat more than one in ten had financial dependents, whether children or adults. The vast majority of those in the latter category reported spending many hours caring for these individuals. In terms of living arrangements, only one-half were living with their parents and almost one-fifth reported living with a partner/spouse or children.

5.5 Education Level of Parents

As confirmed in a study released by Statistics Canada in January 2005, family background, particularly levels of parent education, has both a direct and indirect influence on whether young people go on to postsecondary education. Policy and decision-makers responsible for postsecondary education are increasing efforts to support first generation postsecondary students – young people whose parents did not participate in postsecondary education and do not have postsecondary credential including a certificate or diploma from a college/institute, apprenticeship or journey-person certification or a university degree. At the federal level, the Canada Access Grants introduced in 2004 are grants for first time, first year students from low income families. In 2006, the Ontario government announced $5 million in programs aimed at encouraging potential first generation students to pursue postsecondary education and apprenticeships by offering valuable information and advice, as well as $1 million in bursaries for first generation students.

Well over one third of respondents came from families with fathers and mothers who had no postsecondary education – with high school completion as the highest level of education attained.

The survey results provide some insights into the highest levels of education attained by the parents of respondents to the entry and end of term surveys. Figure 3 shows the highest levels of education attained by respondents' fathers and mothers based on entry survey results. In terms of fathers' education levels, well over a third of respondents

came from families whose father had no postsecondary education, with less than high school or high school completion as the highest level of education, that is 36 percent of respondents from the College Entry Survey and 38 percent of respondents from the End of Term Survey. The same is true for maternal education of respondents, with 39 percent of College Entry Survey respondents and 41 percent of End of Term Survey respondents reporting the highest level of their mothers' education being high school completion or less.

The College Entry Survey also asked students how important it was to their parents that they pursue further education after high school. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported that their parents strongly emphasized the importance of continuing education after high school.

Figure 3
Highest Level of Education Attained by Parents of College/Institute Students, 2005

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005

5.6 Students with Disabilities

Nine percent of respondent students from both the entry and end of term surveys reported having a disability. Of those declaring a disability, the results from both surveys were more or less the same with up to 61 percent reported

having a learning disability, ten percent had mobility-related disabilities, six percent cited a sensory disability, and 24 percent had disabilities falling within the "Other" category.

5.7 Aboriginal Students

Almost one in ten respondents identified themselves as a person of Aboriginal or Native ancestry, that is: First Nations, North American Indian, Inuit or Métis. More specifically, 1,818 Aboriginal students (seven percent) responded to the College Entry Survey, and 1,005 Aboriginal students (ten percent) responded to the End of Term Survey. As mentioned previously, a more detailed look at the differences in the profile and experiences of Aboriginal students, as well as visible minorities and new Canadians will be provided in the second report in this series.

5.8 Visible Minorities

Visible minorities from a variety of cultural backgrounds were present in the student sample, with 18 percent of entry survey respondents and 19 percent of end of term respondents confirming that they consider themselves to be a member of a visible minority group. In the survey questionnaires, the term "visible minorities" was defined as being those, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are because of their race or colour, a visible minority.

Respondents were also asked to specify the visible minority group they considered themselves to be a part of. The largest percentage from both surveys, almost one-quarter (23 percent of entry respondents and 24 percent of end of term respondents) was Black, an approximately equal percentage was either South Asian (18 and 21 percent respectively) or Chinese (19 and 16 percent respectively), and an additional 17 percent indicated they belonged to a group not listed as a response choice.

5.9 New Canadians

While almost two-thirds (61 percent) of respondents from both the entry and end of term surveys were born in Canada and had Canadian-born parents, 20 percent would be considered second generation immigrants with only one or neither parent born in Canada. A total of 4,744 students (19 percent of respondents) who completed the College Entry Survey were not born in Canada, among these up to ten percent had their Canadian citizenship, just over six
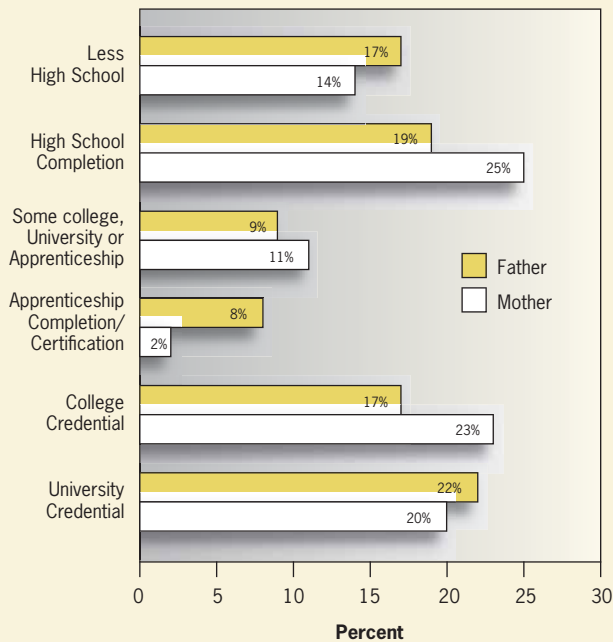
Just as many students attending colleges and institutes come from the workplace (29% of respondents) as from high school (30 percent of respondents).

percent had landed immigrant or permanent resident status, almost three percent were visa students and .2 percent identified themselves as having refugee status.

The College Entry Survey also asked students not born in Canada to identify in what year they first came to Canada to live. Of the 4,744 students who indicated that they were not born in Canada, 4,354 responded to the item that asked year of arrival in Canada. Most of these respondents were recent immigrants, as 45 percent arrived in Canada in the year 2000 or later, 38 percent arrived between 1990 and 1999, 15 percent arrived between 1980 and 1989, and only two percent arrived before 1980.

5.10 **Main Activity Prior to College**

First year college/institute students were asked to identify the main activity during the 12 months prior to attending their current college or institute. The results from the entry and end of term surveys were consistent in confirming that equal numbers of college/institute students are drawn from high school and the workplace. The entry survey results showed 30 percent of students were attending high school full time and 29 percent were working full time, and the end of term survey results were more or less the same, with 28 percent of students coming from high school and another 28 percent from full-time work. Table 3 shows the full range of activities reported by respondents of both the college entry and end of terms surveys, including attending a college or university, working and studying part-time, seeking employment and being a homemaker.

Table 3. Main Activity of Students Prior to College, 2005

Main Activity	Entry Survey Respondents Percent	End of Term Respondents Percent
Attending high school full time	30	28
Attending college full time	13	15
Attending university full time	5	5
Working full time	29	28
Working part time only	6	6
Both working part time and studying part time	6	7
A full time homemaker	2	2
Unemployed and seeking work	3	3
Unemployed and not seeking work	1	–*
Other	6	6
TOTAL	**100**	**100**

*This activity was not included in the end of term survey.

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

6 Academic Background and Preparation at College Entry

While the majority of respondents (61 percent) reported their highest level of education at entry as high school completion or GED, a substantial percentage (18 percent) had some college/university credits, 11 percent had a certificate or diploma from a college or institute, and six percent had an undergraduate university degree. In addition, three percent had less than a high school diploma and under two percent had an apprenticeship or trades background. This range of educational levels creates a picture of Canadian colleges and institutes as institutions that deliver a wide range of academic programming and catering to the educational needs of a broad range of learners.

6.1 Secondary School Background at College Entry

Three-quarters of the College Entry Survey respondents had been out of high school less than five years and the secondary school profile of the sample was based on this group.

6.1.1 High School Leaving Average

Tinto's (1975) model of student departure emphasizes the importance of academic and social integration typically defined by measures such as grade average, academic behaviour and interaction with peers and faculty. With regard to the first, slightly more than one-third of respondents, the highest percentage, reported their high school leaving average to be between 70 to 75 percent. In terms of the higher ranges, 21 percent of respondents reported high school leaving average of 80 to 84.99 percent, and 17 percent between 85 and 100 percent. As for the lower ranges, more than one in ten respondents had an average of 65 percent or lower.

6.1.2 Academic Behaviours and Student Engagement in High School

Academic behaviours such as frequency of studying, attending class and homework completion are classic indicators of academic involvement and are often cited as key determinants of academic achievement.

Frequency of Studying in High School

Overall, the findings suggest that high school study time for new college/institute students is quite low since almost three-quarters of respondents indicated they spent less than eight hours per week preparing for classes while in high school. The next largest group, 20 percent, reported they studied between eight and 14 hours. Similar results have been obtained in other studies. In a U.S. study (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001), more than one-half reported spending less than four hours per week on homework in high school.

Homework Completion in High School

Despite that students were not spending significant amounts of time studying in high school over 85 percent confirmed that they usually or always completed their high school homework assignments on time.

Skipping Classes in High School

Class absenteeism was fairly prevalent as over one-third of respondents reported they skipped class three times per month or more. One-half, however, said they almost never or never skipped class.

Overall, survey results confirm that college and institute students had a relatively strong sense of academic and social integration during high school.

Sense of Academic Integration in High School

The research literature on retention clearly shows that the academic and social integration of students in the learning environment is critical (Tinto, 1975). It may be that weak integration at the high school level transfers to the college/institute venue and contributes to student departure.

Students' study habits and class absenteeism rates may give the impression that college/institute students were not engaged during their secondary school career. The college entry survey also explored student attitudes toward their high school experience, and the results suggest otherwise. More than one-half (56 percent) of respondents reported they were often or always interested in what they were learning in high school, and up to 86 percent of students indicated they often or always got along well with teachers. Almost half (49 percent) confirmed that they received extra help from their teachers if they needed it. Similarly, less than one in six reported they did just enough work to get by or thought high school was a waste of time.

Social Integration during High School

In terms of social integration, less than one-tenth felt that they were an outsider and over seven in ten indicated they participated in extracurricular activities during their high school years.

Overall, students who attend colleges and institutes appear to have been both academically and socially integrated during their secondary school years. While this study did not collect similar data on the secondary school habits of those who progress to other postsecondary destinations, the results described here are consistent with those obtained via the Youth in Transition Survey (Lambert. et. al., 2004).

> **Respondent** students clearly identified a need to enhance study and time management skills.

6.2 Self-reported Skill Proficiency at College Entry

Students were asked to evaluate themselves on the skills that are typically associated with academic success in college/institute programs, namely proficiency in the language of instruction, writing, reading and math skills, as well as time management, note taking and study skills. Table 4 shows the how respondents rated their skills proficiencies when they were beginning their college/institute program.

Respondents' self-assessments suggest that at college entry, only relatively low percentages of first-year students at colleges and institutes see themselves as very proficient in these skills. While more than one-half saw themselves as 'very good' in comprehending the language of instruction, significantly fewer felt the same about their ability level in the "3Rs":

- only one quarter of respondents reported being very good in math skills;

Table 4. Self-Reported Skill Proficiency of Students at College Entry, 2005

Skill Area	Self-Reported Proficiency Rating			
	Poor %	Fair %	Good %	Very Good %
Comprehend language of instruction	1	6	40	53
Writing ability	2	16	49	33
Reading ability	1	11	44	44
Mathematical ability	8	28	39	25
Time management	4	25	48	24
Note / test taking	3	19	52	26
Study skills	5	29	50	16

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005

- 33 percent reported being very good in writing; and

- 44 percent reported being very good in reading.

The lowest self-reported skill ratings were in the area of study skills and time management skills where only 16 percent and 24 percent of respondents respectively said they were very good. These findings confirm the need for the academic support services offered through college and institute learning centres and peer tutoring.

6.3 College and Institute Preparatory Programs

Many colleges and institutes develop and implement specific programs, courses or workshops designed to help new students make a smooth transition to college learning. The results from this study help to understand the degree to which students participate in college/institute preparatory programs. Survey results confirmed that three in four respondents did not participate in these types of programs. Of those who did, the length of the college/institute preparatory program varied, however one in ten was in a program for more than ten hours.

7 Career Preparation and Certainty at College Entry

Canadian colleges and institutes are typically more career focused in their programming compared to universities. In addition, high school graduates who decide to attend colleges or institutes typically begin the application process by selecting a specific program or two as their top choices (Acumen Research, 2003). While this is best accomplished if one has a clear understanding of the occupational destination upon completion of the program, research suggests that many applicants are making choices based on little information and the results of this study are consistent.

7.1 Career Exploration Activities

The College Entry Survey assessed student involvement in various types of career exploration activities in high school and at home, including courses or workshops, co-op experiences, high school guidance services, career exploration questionnaires, computer programs and websites and discussions with parents.

Overall, the results indicated that students who attend college have not undertaken significant career exploration activities or, if they have, it is relatively infrequent. Anywhere between 20 and 30 percent have never engaged in career conversations with a high school counselor, completed a questionnaire or visited an internet site to explore job interests or potential postsecondary programming or taken classes in career planning.

Students seem to rely mostly on parents for career guidance and advice.

The most prevalent career exploration activity that occurred during this period was discussions with parents. Over one third of respondents indicated they had done this more than 20 times during high school and very few (less than one in ten) reported they had never done this. However, an analysis by socioeconomic status, defined as highest level of education attained by the father, demonstrated that the frequency of discussions varied dramatically. For example, slightly more than one-quarter of respondents whose fathers had not achieved secondary school graduation had discussed possible careers 20 times or more. In comparison, 40 percent of those whose father held a graduate degree had done so.

7.2 Awareness of Career Expected after Graduation

The relatively infrequent participation in structured career exploration activities by students in secondary school is exacerbated further by the low level of self-directed career exploration activity, especially in younger first-year college/institute students. Overall, one-half of the sample reported spending less than eight hours exploring the specific duties of the occupation they would likely obtain upon graduation. This percentage grew to between 55 and 60 percent for younger students, aged 17 or 18 years, entering a college/institute directly from high school.

8 Expectations of College at Entry

The results of the College Entry Survey also provide a sense of the types of expectations first year students have of their programs at colleges and institutes. This section provides an overview of respondent students' reasons for attending their college or institute, how much time students expected to spend studying and preparing for class in college, and the types of support they anticipated they will need and their receptivity to using the support services offered by their colleges or institutes.

8.1 Reasons for Attending Colleges and Institutes

Colleges and institutes are generally recognized as having labour market oriented programs that align as much as possible with the needs of employers in the communities and regions served. Survey results confirm that students at colleges and institutes are largely aligned with this profile, as shown in Figure 4 which highlights the top reasons students identified for attending their college or institute.

The top three reasons identified by respondents confirm that most students are job-focused by either seeking to gain the skills and knowledge for a specific occupation (90 percent), for career advancement (62 percent) or to increase earnings (56 percent). However, a significant proportion of students identified more personal reasons for attending their college or institute, namely to broaden their knowledge about the world or for personal development.

In addition, Figure 4 shows that significant numbers of students viewed college/institute programs as a pathway to university studies by either helping them to prepare for university, in particular in jurisdictions such as Quebec and British Columbia whose postsecondary systems facilitate this progression, or by 'stacking' credentials, first obtaining a diploma and then a degree.

Most students view college/institute programs as a way to get a good job or for career advancement.

Figure 4
Top Reasons for Attending a College or Institute, 2005

Reason	Percent
Acquire knowledge & skills for future occupation	90%
Improve chances for career advancement	62%
Make more money	56%
Broaden knowledge about world	45%
Prepare for university studies	42%
For personal development	41%
Plan future education plan	38%
Obtain college diploma then university degree	38%
Retrain for a new career	35%
Help decide on a career	34%
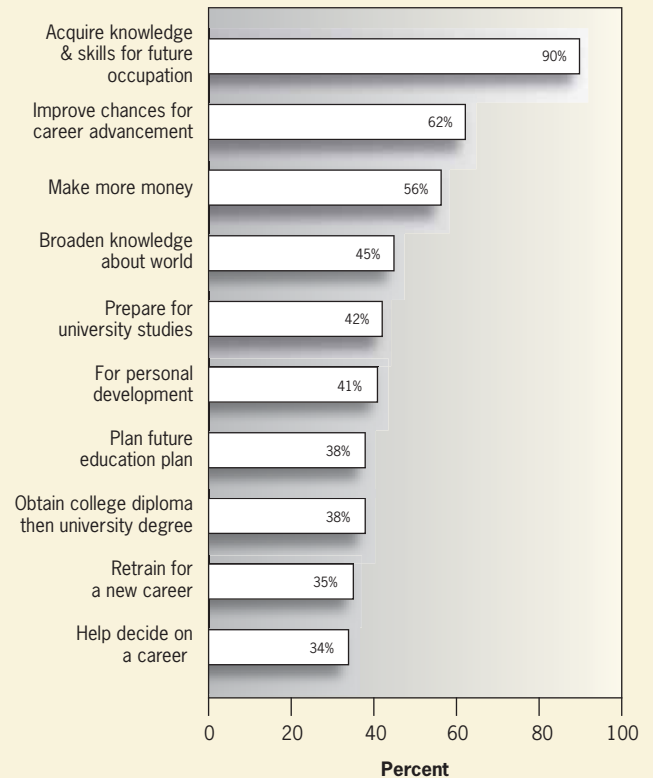
Source: College Entry Survey, 2005

Finally, career exploration or career change was reported by one-third as a major reason for attending a college or institute. The former was more likely to be cited as a major reason to attend a college/institute by younger students while the latter was cited more often by older students. For example, only 20 percent of those younger than 20 cited career retraining as a major reason for attending college while 80 percent of those over 40 did so.

8.2   Expected Time on Studying and Preparing for Class

While first-year college/institute students appear to have not studied extensively in secondary school, it seems they were aware that they needed to study more in college in order to be successful. While three-quarters of the respondents reported they studied less than eight hours per week in high school, just over one quarter said they would do the same in college. The largest percentage of respondents (38 percent) indicated that they studied four to seven hours per week in secondary school, whereas the largest percentage (36 percent) said they would spend eight to 14 hours per week preparing for class in college. Clearly, students beginning their programs at colleges and institutes understood that they would have to spend a greater amount of time preparing for class.

8.3   Needs and Use of Support Services at Colleges and Institutes

The findings regarding students' self-perception of their proficiency in various skills suggest they might benefit from the development services offered by most colleges and institutes. The results form the College Entry Survey help to explain the main types of services students expect to benefit from and their openness to accepting such support. The tables summarizing students' responses to areas of perceived benefit from extra support and their receptivity to college support services at college entry are provided in Appendix 4.

8.3.1   Students' Expected Needs for Extra Support

When asked about the degree to which they could benefit from extra support to be successful in their college/institute program, the highest reported need for support was in the areas of study and test taking skills, with 84 percent indicating they would benefit from support to improve study habits and 79 percent for test taking skills. These findings are consistent with those discussed earlier for study habits in high school and self-perceived levels of study skills proficiency.

In the areas of basic skills, 62 percent of respondents reported they could benefit from support in the area of reading skills, 68 percent for writing skills, and up to 67 percent reported the same for math skills.

Another significant area of need, confirmed by 73 percent of respondents is financial aid, as will be further substantiated in the next section of this report on how college/institute students are financing their education.

Two other needs that stood out related to students' plans for future studies or career entry. Up to 73 percent of respondents indicated they would benefit from help to plan future studies, confirming that colleges and institutes are frequently viewed as a step to further PSE.

In addition, 65 percent of respondents reported they could benefit from support in selecting a career. This means that while many students had committed to a program leading to a specific career, a significant proportion appeared uncertain about what the career would be. This is also related to the low level of career exploration activity during high school and, no doubt, to their stage of life-span development (Erikson,1959; Chickering, 1969).

Some other areas of need to note include, support to improve in a second language or their skills in the language of instruction for 40 percent of respondent students.

8.3.2   Receptivity to Using College/Institute Support Services

First year students were also asked how likely they would be to accept support in the same areas they confirmed they would benefit from, if offered by their college or institute. In most cases, the percentage of students who reported they would be highly likely to avail themselves of the relevant support service paralleled the percentage of students who reported they could benefit from this support. In general, first-year students expressed openness to using the support services offered by many colleges and institutes to support their skills and personal development needs.

At the same time, overall when areas of need were compared with receptivity to college/institute support services, a greater percentage of respondents said they could benefit from special support from college services than reported they would likely use these services. It was evident then, that a higher percentage of new college/institute students recognized they could benefit from help

developing various skills or coping with particular situations than were willing to avail themselves of the services. Perhaps these students wanted to assess whether they were able to cope with the demands of their college or institute program of studies first, before accessing the on campus supports.

The exception was for respondents with support needs to deal with a disability or to meet child care requirements as the percentage of respondents who said they could benefit from support and would be receptive to college services was essentially identical. This finding might suggest that, from the student perspective, both child care and disability needs can neither be easily denied nor done without.

9 Financing College

The study examined how college/institute students are financing their college education. The survey results confirmed that obtaining adequate funding to cover the various expenses associated with going to college was an ongoing concern. The College Entry Survey gathered students' perspectives on the different sources of funds they access to finance their college education, as well as their concerns about finances. The End of Term Survey also asked about students' concerns about finances and about how much students were working for pay during the semester.

9.1 Sources of Funding for College

As shown in Figure 5, the entry survey results confirmed that most respondent students (68 percent) relied on money from personal savings to finance their college/institute program. Loans were a source of funding for 55 percent of respondents, and almost 37 percent indicated money from parents that does not need to be repaid. Scholarships and awards were also sources of funds for a significant percentage of respondents, 27 percent, and 19 percent identified money from grants and contributions.

Figure 5
Sources of Funding to Finance College, 2005

Source	Percent
Personal Savings	68%
Loans	55%
Parents	37%
Scholarships & Awards	27%
Grants & Contributions	19%
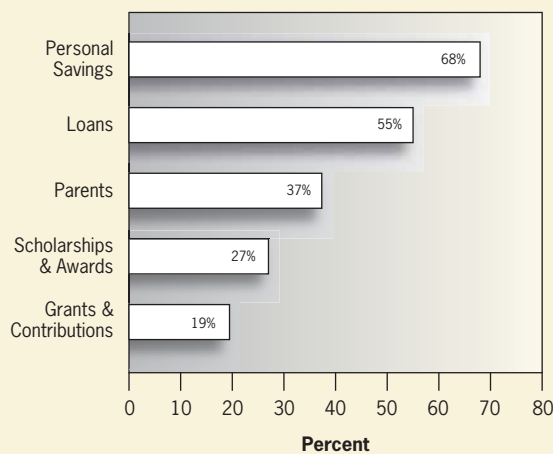
Source: College Entry Survey, 2005

> **"I wish** I could have been better prepared financially."

When asked about the largest source of money to finance college, survey results confirmed that the sources that provided the largest amount of money for college studies were loans for up to 37 percent of students, followed by parents (28 percent) and personal savings (21 percent). In terms of the loans which students are accessing, the largest percentage of students (30 percent) confirmed that their loan was a government-sponsored loan, about one in ten held a bank loan or line of credit, and a small percentage (five percent) received a loan from parents for family.

9.2 Students' Concerns about Finances at Entry and End of First Term

At the beginning of the first term, up to 47 percent of respondents reported that they were very concerned with having enough money to pay for their studies and living expenses, and 43 percent were very concerned about the amount of debt they might accrue during their college studies. In addition, one-third indicated they were very concerned about their ability to repay the debt following graduation. This is further confirmed in *Chapter 5 Student Debt: Trends and Consequences of The Price of Knowledge 2006* (Berger, Motte, Parkin, 2006) recently released by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, which concluded that the number of college and institute students with high levels of debt has grown during the last four years. It is quite alarming that one third of college/institute students will graduate with debt levels more often associated with university graduates.

It is also important to note that a large proportion of respondents' written survey comments on what they wish they had known better when they started college and their

> **"I wish** I had known how this would impact me financially, I find it difficult to make ends meet. Also, balancing working, and school and a family is quite difficult."

biggest challenge in the first year of college related to concerns about finances, as shown in the students' comments included in this section.

As shown in Table 5, at the end of the first term, students continued to be concerned about the financial aspects of their college studies. The results of the End of Term Survey confirmed that 39 percent, almost two in five respondent students, were very concerned about both having enough money to pay for their studies and living expenses, and the amount of debt they will have accumulated by the end of their postsecondary studies. In each case, an additional one-quarter reported they were 'moderately' concerned. In addition, over one quarter (27 percent) was very concerned about their ability to repay this debt within a reasonable time after graduation.

9.3 **Working for Pay while going to College**

Students working for pay while studying in college or university is a well documented phenomenon (Usher and Junor, 2004). There is ample evidence that first year students who work too many hours are more likely to have academic difficulty and to leave (Nora & Cabrera, 1996).

At college entry, up to 70 percent of respondent students confirmed they expected to work during the academic year. As shown in Table 6, the largest percentage, slightly over one-third, said they would be working between 10 and 20 hours per week, and an additional 16 percent indicated they would work 20 to 30 hours. Clearly, very high percentages of first-year college students expected to work at a job while studying.

Results from the end of term survey were slightly different as it would seem that as the term progress, fewer students reported working for pay while studying. Just over one-half of students reported they would not be working while studying, almost one-quarter indicated they would work between 10-20 hours per week and an additional one-sixth said they would work 20 hours or more.

Table 5. Students Very Concerned about Finances, 2005

Financial Concern	Very Concerned at College Entry (%)	Very Concerned at End of Term (%)
Having enough money for studies and living expenses	47	39
Amount of debt at end of PSE	43	39
Ability to repay debt	33	27

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

Table 6. Hours Expected to Work for Pay While Studying, 2005

Hours of Work	At College Entry (%)	At End of Term (%)
None	30	53
Less than 10 hours	11	9
10 to 20 hours	36	23
20 to 30 hours	16	9
Over 30 hours	7	6

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

''**Balancing** work and school in order to get good grades but also finance my education. This has been a serious problem because lately I have only been getting 3–4 hours of sleep on school nights as I work every week day from 6pm-8pm and it's a 1.5 hour commute from work to home. And from there I have to eat and get prepared to do school work which won't occur till about 10:30pm-11:00pm and I have 8am classes where I have to wake up around 5:30am.''

10   Student Attitudes

Student attitudes can be powerful indicators of future behaviour. If a student has a positive attitude about their educational experience they are likely to continue their studies, if not, they are more likely to leave college (Tinto, 1975). The College Entry and End of Term Surveys used in this study contained Likert-type items drawn or adapted from previous research on students at colleges and institutes (Dietsche, 1990). These items were clustered into the factors listed below that provide insight into student attitudes toward their college education drawn largely from Tinto's (1975) theoretical framework of attrition. The following factors were included in both the college entry and end of term surveys so that changes in their magnitude from entry to end of term could be assessed:

- educational commitment;
- confidence in success;
- occupational uncertainty;
- preference for job;
- financial concern;
- value of postsecondary education;
- intent to change program/leave.

The end of term survey also examined the following attitudinal factors that provide more insight into students' attitudes towards their college education based on their experiences during the first term:

- peer interaction;
- faculty interaction;
- perception of institution;
- perception of program.

10.1   Educational Commitment

Educational commitment measures students' desire to graduate which is an important influence on decisions to persist or drop out. In order to measure the strength of this attitude, the college entry and end of term surveys asked students about their intent to complete their programs and how important program completion was to them.

Table 7 shows that the vast majority of students who responded to both the college entry and end of term surveys confirmed a strong educational commitment. At college entry, 96 percent agreed that they were determined to finish their college education and 95 percent agreed that it was important to complete their program and obtain a credential. At college entry students were also asked of their intent to quit their studies before finishing their program. Only a small percentage (5 percent) agreed that they might quit their studies before they finished their program.

At the end of the first term, the respondents showed a slightly lower level of educational commitment although it remained very high as 92 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were determined to finish their program and that completing their program and obtaining a diploma/certificate was important to them. In addition, at the end of first term, 87 percent of students also agreed or

Table 7. Students' Educational Commitment, 2005

Student Intentions	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)			
	At College Entry		At the End of Term	
	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am determined to finish my college education	19	77	25	67
It is important that I complete my program and obtain a diploma or certificate	18	77	19	73

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

strongly agreed that they always do the best they can in whatever they do, and 79 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their studies were one of the most important things in their life.

Overall, at the end of the first term, the majority of respondents remained committed to their completing their college/institute program.

80 to 90 percent of students starting college, agreed that they were well prepared and had the ability to succeed in their college/institute programs.

10.2 Levels of Confidence in Succeeding

In terms of students' level of confidence to succeed in college, at the beginning of the first term, the vast majority, 93 percent of respondents, agreed/strongly agreed that they have the ability to succeed in college-level studies. In addition, up to 86 percent of students starting at a college or institute, agreed/strongly agreed that they were well prepared to be a successful student, and 83 percent of respondents agreed/strongly agreed they were capable of a B+ average of 78 percent or better.

This is not overly surprising for two reasons. First, the College Entry Survey was conducted in the first month of classes, before the results of tests and other performance assessments might have been received by students. Second, on most college/institute campuses this time is associated with orientation activities designed to engender positive attitudes and feelings on the part of first-year students. This creates a type of 'honeymoon period' with attendant positive attitudes.

However, no significant change was reported by students who responded to the End of Term Survey. Once again, the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed high levels of confidence for succeeding in their studies. Up to 91 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they have the ability to succeed in college level studies, and 89 percent were certain they would obtain a college diploma, certificate or degree. Most respondent students (83 percent) also confirmed agreement that they were

capable of attaining a "B+" average or better in their courses, and 82 percent agreed that they were well prepared to be a successful student at their college or institute.

10.3 Occupational Uncertainty

Other research (Dietsche, 1990, Hardesty, 1991) has highlighted the importance of occupational certainty as an influence on student success, persistence and completion, particularly in career-oriented college programs. The College Entry and End of Term Surveys assessed students' degree of certainty about their occupational future and the relevance of their program of study for their future career.

"I wish I had known exactly what it was that a technician does and what exactly a technologist does."

Overall, the results from both the College Entry and End of Term Surveys show that many students who enroll in colleges and institutes view their programs as a pathway to a specific job or career. As shown in Table 8, the majority of respondent students (62 percent at college entry and 79 percent of End of Term survey respondents) chose their program because they had a particular career or job in mind. In general, students also agreed that their program was directly related to their work after graduation, confirmed by 84 percent of college entry survey respondents and 73 percent of end of term survey respondents. At the same time, about one quarter of respondents at both college entry and at the end of first term agreed that they were undecided about what their career will be after their college/institute program is completed.

"I wish I understood what type of career I was getting into."

Overall, the majority of students at college entry and at the end of term preferred to be studying, rather than working.

Respondents' career uncertainty is further substantiated by other findings from both surveys, first because significant numbers of students did not do much career exploration before starting their program, and one third of students confirmed that they are attending their college or institute to help decide on a career. In addition, student comments on what they had wished they had known when they started their program, also confirm that many are uncertain about their future career.

10.4 Preference for a Job

The findings presented in section 8 on students' expectations of college when they begin their programs, showed that almost all students are attending colleges and institutes to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to access a career. There is a definite 'job' focus to college and institute students and this can create a tension between persisting in a college/institute program of studies and leaving for a job when available. The college entry and end of term surveys examined this tension.

The majority of respondent students at college entry and at the end of first term preferred to be studying rather than working. Only ten percent of college entry survey respondents and slightly more end of term respondents (13 percent) agreed that they would rather be working full

time than studying. Even fewer students (only six percent at college entry and seven percent at the end of term) agreed they would leave college for a full-time job if the opportunity arose. The students indicating some preference for work were generally aged 25 years or more. In order to further substantiate this attitude, up to 76 percent of respondents at college entry agreed that they would decide to remain in college even if offered a full-time job, however fewer respondents of the end of term survey felt this way as 63 percent agreed that they would remain in college if offered a full-time job. At the end of first term, there clearly was some tension between these two options as more students, about one quarter, indicated they were undecided on whether they would take a full time job if one was offered.

At the beginning of the first term, finances were not perceived to be a potential trigger for departure for the majority of students.

10.5 Financial Concern

Student attitudes toward college finances were consistent with the results presented in section 9.2 related to concerns about finances. As shown in Table 9, at the end of the first term, respondents seemed to indicate greater financial concern when compared to respondents from the college entry survey. While 58 percent agreed or strongly agreed they would benefit from special help in securing financial aid at the beginning of the term, this increased to 64 percent of respondents at the end of the term. Similarly, 49 percent of college entry respondents confirmed that paying for their education would not be a problem this semester however

Table 8. Occupational Uncertainty of Students, 2005

Student Intentions	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)			
	At College Entry		At the End of Term	
	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have chosen my program because I have a particular career/job in mind	27	35	32	47
I feel my program is directly related to my work after graduation	31	53	36	37
I feel undecided about what my career will be after I finish college	17	7	19	7

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

this dropped to 41 percent of respondents at the end of the term. In terms of financial concerns as a trigger for departure from students' programs, the results are consistent, in that more students at the end of the term, almost one quarter, agreed that financial difficulties may mean they have to leave college, up from 16 percent at college entry.

In terms of personal development, 84 percent of respondents at college entry and 80 percent at the end of the term agreed that a college education enhances students' understanding of themselves and develops a person's ability to think critically. In addition, 83 percent of respondents at college entry and 74 percent at the end of term agreed that students' writing skills can be improved as a result of a college education.

The overall impression is that the vast majority of first-year college students believe they are making an investment in their future by pursuing postsecondary studies, perhaps as a result of the importance placed on this activity by their parents discussed in Section 5.5.

College /institute programs were seen as providing a good foundation for future learning and job opportunities.

10.6 Value of Postsecondary Education

At the end of the term, respondent students confirmed the results from the college entry survey, in that most students saw enormous value in postsecondary education for future learning and employment and for personal development.

For example, 92 percent of college entry survey respondents and 88 percent of end of term survey respondents agreed that attending college creates a good foundation for future learning. Analysis by program type showed that this was true for students registered in all programs not just university preparatory programs as one might expect. In terms of employment opportunities, 89 percent of respondents at college entry and 87 percent at the end of term agreed that college/institute graduates have a better chance of getting a good job than those who do not graduate.

10.7 Students' Commitment to their Program of Studies and Institution at College Entry

Whether a student persists in his or her college/institute program is, in part, determined by their level of commitment to their institution (Tinto, 1975). The overall results from the College Entry Survey showed that up to 86 percent of respondent students were committed to their college/institute program and were determined to finish their studies and graduate.

The vast majority of students agreed that college/institute staff and faculty were friendly and welcoming and cared about helping students overcome problems.

Table 9. Student Attitudes about Financial Concern, 2005

| Student Attitudes | Agree or Strongly Agree (%) | | | |
| | At College Entry | | At the End of Term | |
	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I could benefit greatly from special help in securing financial aid for my education.	30	28	29	35
Difficulty financing my studies may mean that I will have to leave college.	11	5	14	10
Paying for my education is not going to be a problem for me this semester.	28	21	26	15

Source: College Entry Survey, 2005 and End of Term Survey, 2005

Almost nine in ten respondents considered their college/institute to be an excellent institution.

The College Entry Survey measured students' commitment to their institution by examining students' perceptions of college/institute staff and the specific institution. Positive perceptions equate to high commitment. The results indicated that Canadian colleges and institutes were very successful in creating a positive relationship with their students from the start. Since the entry survey was conducted during the first month of classes, students' responses would largely reflect perceptions based on their experiences up to that time.

Students' attitudes were very positive towards college/institute faculty and their institution overall. For example, 92 percent of respondents agreed that college staff was friendly and welcoming and 78 percent agreed that college/institute staff demonstrated care about helping students overcome problems. In terms of the institution overall, 87 percent agreed they were attending an excellent college or institute and 83 percent agreed that the college/institute is concerned with helping students succeed in their studies.

10.8 Intent to Change Program or Leave at the End of First Term

The first step for any college or institute that is interested in retaining students is to develop the means to identify who is likely to leave the institution, before they do. The end of term survey assessed students' interest in changing their situation, whether this was changing their program or their college.

In terms of students' intent to change programs, the results confirmed that the vast majority of students were not considering a program change. Up to 85 percent of respondents confirmed that they plan to continue in their present program next semester, and ten percent were undecided. About 18 percent of students considered dropping out of their program at least once during the first term, 13 percent were considering transferring to another program at the end of the term, and 11 percent felt that the program is not what they want.

For the most part, the majority of students (85 percent) were intending to remain at their current college or institute and finish the program they were enrolled in. Once again, about one in ten were undecided on whether they will stay on and finish. Only six percent agreed that they may quit their studies before finishing their program.

10.9 Peer Interaction during the First Term

The end of term survey measured the degree to which students interacted with their peers as well as their perceptions about these interactions. Overall, the majority of respondents was engaged in and had positive views about their interactions with peers. For example, up to 86 percent of students agreed that students they know in their program are willing to help each other with problems and two-thirds of students agreed that student friendships in college have helped them cope with stress of college life. In addition, almost four in five respondents agreed that they felt like they "fit in" at their college. A small percentage of students (17 percent) reported experiencing difficulty to meet and make friends with other students.

Two-thirds of students agreed that student friendships in college have helped them cope with stress of college life.

10.10 Students' Interaction with Faculty during the First Term

Students' attitudes towards their experiences with faculty were also assessed by the end of term survey. This was done by examining the degree to which students interacted with faculty and their perceptions of these interactions. An overwhelming majority of respondents confirmed that students were well connected with faculty during the first term. For example up to 82 percent of students agreed that faculty in their program was willing to help with course related problems during the first term. Up to three quarters have developed a good relationship with at least one faculty member and an almost equal number agreed that they received extra help from their teachers when required.

Up to four in five students were very satisfied with their college or institute and would recommend it to other students.

In terms of the impact of faculty on students, well over half of respondents agreed that outside of class discussions with faculty influenced their interest in ideas, and interactions with faculty have helped students better understand their future job. It is clear that faculty had an important influence on first-year college students as early as the end of the first semester.

10.11 Perception of Students' College or Institute

The end of term survey examined students' perceptions of their college or institute overall by looking at students' interactions with college/institute staff as well as their overall satisfaction with their institution.

Overall, students had very positive attitudes about their interactions with college/institute staff as almost nine in ten agreed that college staff have been friendly and welcoming during the first term and 86 percent confirmed that their college or institute is concerned with helping students succeed. More than three quarters of respondents also agreed that college/institute staff care about helping students with problems.

At the end of the first term the vast majority of students also confirmed that they were very satisfied with their institution. Up to four in five students agreed that they considered their college/institute to be excellent and that they would recommend their institution to other students.

10.12 Perception of Program at the End of the First Term

Students' attitudes about their program were also assessed by looking at students perceptions on the usefulness and appeal of their program and confirmation on whether students would recommend the program to other students.

In terms of students perceptions on the usefulness of their program, the vast majority of respondent students confirmed their program to have considerable value for

meeting their goals and their future success. For example, 86 percent agreed that their program provided them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, and 85 percent felt they were making progress in attaining their college goals. Eighty-two percent also confirmed that the topics covered in their courses are important for their future success. To further confirm this attitude, 84 percent of respondents would recommend their program to other students with the same educational goals.

The majority also confirmed their program had appeal as 86 percent of respondents agreed their program was interesting. More than three quarters of respondents also agreed that their program is delivered in a well organized manner. Nonetheless, up to 18 percent of students agreed that they find it hard to pay attention in most of their classes and an equal percentage were undecided. Previous research has (Dietsche, 1990) has indicated students who respond in this way are often struggling in their courses.

The overall impression is that the vast majority of respondent students at college entry and at the end of first term held positive attitudes towards the value of postsecondary education, their college or institute and their specific program. Students clearly were where they wanted to be in terms of their goals and had confidence that they would be successful in their college/institute program. Although about one quarter expressed some uncertainty about the occupation they would hold upon graduation, most agreed that they had a better chance of getting a good job if they graduated. This was further substantiated by the end of term survey results which confirmed respondents' positive experiences with peers and faculty and staff and their overall high level of satisfaction with their institution and program.

Overall, the majority of students felt their college/institute provided the skills and knowledge needed to succeed and would recommend it to other students with the same goals.

11 Skills Self-assessment and Academic Behaviour at the End of First Term

The results of the End of Term survey provide a clearer understanding of college/institute students' perceptions on their skills and academic behaviour over the first term. Students were asked to evaluate their skills, just as they were asked to do on the College Entry Survey. The survey looked at students' academic behaviour by asking students to report on homework practices as well as attitudes on engaging in campus life at colleges and institutes.

11.1 Skills Self-Assessment of College/Institute Students at the End of First Term

Respondents' self-assessments of their proficiency in skill areas typically seen as associated with academic success showed that relatively low percentages of first-year college/institute students, even toward the end of the first semester, saw themselves as very proficient. While one-half perceived themselves to be 'very good' in comprehending the language of instruction, less than one-half felt the same about their ability level in writing (35 percent), reading (45 percent) and math (27 percent). In particular, less than one in five

(18 percent) thought they were very good in study skills. As shown in Table 10, these results are consistent with those from the College Entry Survey and confirm that students perceived that they were particularly weak in study and time management skills.

At the end of the first term, students continued to feel they had weak study and time management skills.

11.2 Dropping College/Institute Courses

One measure of academic integration as defined by Tinto and Astin is whether a student has dropped one or more courses. Those who do are considered to be less integrated. At the end of the first term, the vast majority, up to 88 percent had not dropped a course, almost ten percent had, and another small group (two percent) said they probably would. The major reasons given for dropping a course were reported as poor marks and a lack of fit with

Table 10. Self-Reported Skills Proficiency of Students at Entry and End of First Term, 2005

Skill Area	Self-Reported Proficiency Rating (%)							
	Poor		Fair		Good		Very Good	
	Entry	End of Term	Entry	End of Term	Entry	End of Term	Entry	End of Term
Comprehend language of instruction	1	1	6	8	40	39	53	53
Writing ability	2	2	16	15	49	49	33	35
Reading ability	1	1	11	11	44	44	44	45
Mathematical ability	8	8	28	26	39	39	25	27
Time management	4	6	25	27	48	46	24	21
Note / test taking	3	3	19	18	52	50	26	29
Study skills	5	5	29	27	50	50	16	18

Source: College Entry Survey and End of Term Survey, 2005

Table 11. Academic Behaviour of Students at Entry and End of Term, 2005

Hours / Week of Study			Homework On Time			Skipping Class		
	Expected Entry	End		Entry*	End		Entry*	End
<=3 hours	5%	12%	Never	0.6%	0.2%	>= 1/ wk	17%	10%
4–7 hours	23	32	Rarely	4	0.7	2–3/month	19	18
8–14 hours	36	31	Sometimes	10	3	1/month	13	11
15–20 hours	22	15	Usually	44	25	Almost never	32	31
>20 hours	13	10	Always	42	71	Never	19	30

*At Entry, this is homework completion and skipping class in high school.

Source: College Entry Survey and End of Term Survey, 2005

the course. Course drop is a traditional strategy used by students to deal with weak academic performance, so the above results are not surprising. However, this activity is often an indication of the percentage of students who are struggling with their studies. The results cited above suggest this is the case for approximately one in ten first semester students at colleges and institutes.

11.3 Self-Reported Grades during the First Term

While the percentage grade that defines a 'pass' can vary between colleges and institutes, examining student grades is one way of determining what percentage of students were in trouble academically in the first semester. Since collecting this information directly from colleges was not possible during the period of the second survey, students were asked to self-report their overall average.

Almost one-half chose not to do so by either skipping the question or responding 'don't know'. It is unclear where the truth lies. In any case, very few respondents, less than two percent, reported an average of less than 60 percent, a common pass/fail criterion. Almost half the respondents (46 percent) reported their average to be between 80–89 percent and somewhat more than one third held a B average. It is possible that some inflation occurred in the self reported averages or that students who chose to report their grades were doing remarkably well indeed.

11.4 Academic Behaviour during the First Term

Academic behaviours such as attending class, studying and doing homework have long been associated with overall academic performance (Tinto, 1987). Table 11 compares students' responses at college entry and at the end of the first term, in terms of expected hours of study per week and actual time spent studying during the first term for their college/institute program, as well as how frequently students reported they submitted homework on time and skipped class in high school compared to at the end of first term in college.

11.4.1 Hours Spent Studying

In terms of the hours of study, at college entry the largest percentage of respondents (38 percent) indicated that they studied four to seven hours per week in secondary school, whereas the largest percentage (36 percent) said they expected to spend eight to 14 hours per week preparing for class in college. This confirmed that students were expecting that their college/institute program would require more study time than high school.

At the end of the term, the largest percentage of respondents (32 percent) were studying four to seven hours per week, and almost equal number (31 percent) were spending eight to 14 hours per week studying. Although 22 percent of respondents at college entry indicated they expected to spend 15 to 20 hours per week studying, at the end of first term only 15 percent reported this many hours of study.

The end of term questionnaire also asked students whether they had or intended to change their study habits. The vast majority (66 percent) confirmed they have increased the time spent studying and doing homework in college. Both the entry and end of term surveys confirmed that overall, students at colleges and institutes were studying more hours than they were in high school, but what levels are associated with success and failure remain to be determined. This is one goal of the 'Determinants of First Year Outcomes' report to be published as the third part of this series.

11.4.2 Homework Completion

Table 11 also provides the percentage of respondents reporting homework completion in high school compared to at the end of the first term in college. Overall, by the end of first term, students at colleges and institutes appeared to be quite rigorous in the area of homework completion as almost three-quarters said they 'always' completed their assignments on time. While the research literature provides ample evidence that these behaviours influence academic success and persistence (Tinto, 1987) it is less clear what influences them. The third report in this series will provide more information on this topic.

11.4.3 Skipping Class

The frequency of class absenteeism was widely distributed in the sample. At the end of the first term, one in ten respondents was skipping once a week or more while up to 61 percent were almost never or never skipping class. As shown in Table 11, fewer students reported skipping class in college than in high school.

11.5 Orientation to College

Many institutions assist students in making the transition and adjusting to college studies by offering 'college preparation' workshops, programs or courses of varying duration. Almost two thirds of respondents confirmed that they had not participated in type of activity. For one-quarter of those who had, the experience lasted five hours or less. Only a small percentage (four percent) had spent more than ten hours participating in such a program

11.6 Academic and Social Integration during the First Term

Other research (Dietsche,1990) has indicated that student perceptions of their program and college studies can exert a considerable influence on student academic behaviour. The results of the end of term survey provide some understanding on the degree to which students felt integrated into the academic and social spheres of college life. Overall, the results suggest that the majority of first term students were well integrated in both spheres. For example, on the academic side, a very small percentage of respondents (four percent) indicated they 'did as little work as possible' and the majority (86 percent) reported being 'interested in what they were learning in class'.

In the social arena, once again, more than nine in ten reported they 'got along well with faculty/instructors' and only a very small percentage (five percent) indicated they routinely 'felt like an outsider or left out of things'.

The results showed that the majority of respondents were interested in their studies and got along well with faculty. It is worth noting however, that approximately one-fifth reported they did as little work as possible and one-sixth was not interested in what they were learning. These students would certainly be deemed 'high risk' of failure and/or departure.

12 College Academic Experiences during the First Term

The end of term survey assessed the academic experience of students at colleges and institutes during the first term by looking at the degree to which they felt they needed support services and their receptivity to using such services, difficulties experienced during the first term, interactions with peers and faculty, and students' perceptions of faculty and their institution as a whole. Some of the results from the end of term survey will be compared to college entry survey results in the cases where both areas were examined, in particular in the needs and use of support services.

12.1 Students Perceptions on Needs and Use of Support Services at Colleges and Institutes

The end of term survey results on skills-proficiency were consistent with the college entry survey results in that significant percentages of students could benefit from extra support to enhance study and test taking skills, as well as basic skills such as writing, mathematics, and reading skills. Similarly, the end of term results were consistent with the college entry survey results in terms of students perceived needs for support services and their receptivity to using such services. However, the end of term survey went a little further by asking students to report on actual use of support services.

The tables summarizing students' responses to areas of perceived benefit from extra support, their receptivity to college support services and their reported use of such services during the first term are provided in Appendix 5.

12.1.1 Needs for Support Services and Receptivity to using College/Institute Services

After having experienced college life for about three months, students were asked to indicate the degree to which they believed they could benefit from special support in a variety of areas in order to be successful in their program of studies, as well as how likely they would be to access college/institute services to address these needs. Table 12 shows the areas where students reported they would benefit from extra support paralleled with the highest levels of receptivity to college support services. In addition, it is clear from this table that, as with the college entry survey, the end of term results show that, in most needs areas, a greater percentage of respondents said they could benefit from special support from college services than reported they would likely use these services. At the end of the first term, once again, it was evident that more college and institute students recognized the need for extra help and support services than were open to using such services.

In the area of **basic and learning skills**, up to 79 percent of respondents reported they needed help in improving their study habits and 73 percent indicated they would likely access such services. This is similar but slightly lower than respondents from the college entry survey results, when about 84 percent of respondents indicated a need for such support and 78 indicated they were receptive to using college/institute support services. A significant proportion of respondents (73 percent) also confirmed they would benefit from support to improve test taking skills and 69 percent indicated they would likely access such services.

Another significant area of support, confirmed by almost three quarters of respondent students was **financial aid**, as was the case with the results of the college entry survey.

As shown in Table 12, a relatively high number of students could use extra help in improving their **writing, math and reading skills**. Up to 62 percent confirmed a need for support in writing skills and 61 percent for math skills, and almost equal numbers indicated they would likely use college/institute support services in these areas. This is similar, but once again slightly lower than respondents from the college entry survey.

A significant proportion of students are also thinking about continuing on in postsecondary education as 72 percent of respondents also confirmed that they are seeking **support**

At the end of first term, more students confirmed they would benefit most from support to enhance their study and test taking skills.

to plan for future studies. It is interesting to note that 65 percent reported they would benefit from and use **support in selecting a career**. So, while many students had committed to a career-oriented program, a significant proportion appeared to be uncertain about what the career would be exactly. Not surprisingly, given that survey respondents were just beginning their program, significantly fewer respondents indicated that they could benefit from support in choosing a course or program at their college or institute.

The end of term survey also had similar results as the entry survey for students reporting support needs for dealing with a disability or with child care issues in that the percentage of respondents who said they could benefit from support and would be receptive to college services was essentially identical.

12.1.2 Actual Use of Support Services during the First Term

The end of term survey was able to substantiate further students' willingness to use support services offered by colleges and institutes by confirming whether students had actually used such support services.

The results indicate that few first-term students make use of these services with any regularity. Despite the fact that many students indicated that they would benefit from extra support in the areas of study skills (79 percent of respondents) and test taking (73 percent of respondents), 82 percent confirmed that they had never used learning skills services offered by their college or institute. Math skills development was also identified as a need for a significant percentage of students however 85 percent of respondents confirmed they never used math skills services offered by their college or institute.

The service most frequently used was the library with less than one-third of respondents reporting they had never made use of the facility. The second most frequently used service involved the provision of information on college/university course and programs and was utilized by about two in five respondents.

Table 12. Perceived Level of Benefit from Extra Support and Receptivity to College Services at End of Term, 2005

Area of Development	Confirmed Benefit for Extra Support (%)	Likely to Access Extra Support (%)
Study Habits	79	73
Financial Aid	74	72
Test Taking	73	69
Planning for Future Studies	72	69
Selecting Career	65	65
Writing Skills	62	58
Math Skills	61	58
Reading Skills	53	48
Choosing Course/Program	35	38
Improve in Language of Instruction	37	36
Improve in a Second Language	36	35
Disability	20	20
Child Care	17	18

Source: End of Term Survey, 2005

As with student responses on the college entry survey, significant percentages of respondents indicated they could benefit from college support services to deal with a variety of academic, learning skills and personal needs. Similar percentages expressed willingness to use these services if offered on campus. However, when students were asked to report on the services used during the first term, in general, far fewer students actually availed themselves of college services than declared they could benefit from them. This is consistent with findings from other research (Dietsche, 1999; Kuh and Pace, 1998).

12.2 Difficulties Experienced during the First Term

By the end of the first semester, students have had sufficient experience at their college or institute to make judgments on the difficulties they have encountered with their program and campus life. Figure 6 shows the areas students reported finding quite or very difficult during the first term at their college/institute. As shown in this figure, three areas stand out as presenting the most difficulty for new students and share a time management theme. More students reported they found it quite or very difficult to find time to work and study and balance demands of school and family as confirmed by 41 percent of respondents, as well as dealing with program workload, confirmed by 39 percent of respondents.

In contrast, the actual content of college courses was assessed as quite or very difficult by only one-quarter of the students. At the same time, however, one-third indicated that knowing how to improve their grades was quite or very difficult.

Over one-quarter (27 percent) said that identifying a clear career path was quite or very difficult and the remaining areas were considered to be of equal difficulty by approximately one-in-five respondents.

These results parallel students' responses to an open-ended question on the end of term survey asking students to identify the biggest challenge they faced during the first term. Although a full qualitative analysis of the students' verbatim comments on their challenges has not yet been completed, an initial review of the comments has confirmed that the vast majority of comments were related to the time management related difficulties identified above. Students expressed concerns with balancing and juggling homework,

studying, work and family responsibilities. They also expressed concern about time management issues and coping with heavy workloads. Other challenges of note included financial issues and having to work while going to school to pay for their college/institute program, moving away from home, adjusting to studying again after being in the workplace, commuting and transportation challenges, mature students' issues of being in classes with younger high school entrants, and adjusting to the change from university to college approaches to learning. Some examples of students' comments are provided below.

Figure 6
Areas reported as Quite or Very Difficult by Students at the End of First Term

Dealing with program workload — 28% (Quite difficult), 11% (Very difficult)
Finding time to work and study — 23%, 18%
Balancing demands of school and family — 26%, 15%
The content of college courses — 21%, 5%
Knowing how to improve my grades — 24%, 10%
Meeting with faculty outside of class — 12%, 5%
Identifying a clear career path — 18%, 9%
Knowing who to talk to about problem — 14%, 6%
Knowing how well I'm doing in my courses — 14%, 6%
Methods used by faculty to teach — 13%, 4%

Legend: Quite difficult, Very difficult

Source: End of Term Survey, 2005

12.3 Social Integration during the First Term

Tinto's theory of student departure emphasizes the role of social integration on campus. The greater the level of social integration the more likely a student is to persist. In line with this theory, the end of term survey measured social integration by examining students' interactions with peers and faculty.

12.3.1 Interaction with Peers

Light (2001) has found that students who met in small groups of four to six, even just once a week, to discuss their homework were far more engaged, better prepared and learned significantly more. The end of term survey provides insight into students' experiences with peers during the first term, in particular with regards to the frequency with which students studied with one or more of their colleagues per week. The results show that over one-third (38 percent) had never studied with peers on a weekly basis. The largest percentage (18 percent) studied with peers twice a week on average. Only one in ten respondents studied five to nine times per week equal to once or twice a day for a typical

week. Overall, few students spent time studying with their peers which is not uncommon given that colleges and institutes are in many cases commuter institutions.

12.3.2 Interaction with Faculty

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) have reported that student-faculty non-classroom contact significantly influenced persistence. Student interaction with faculty was measured by the frequency of out-of-class conversations of ten minutes or more over the course of the first semester. The findings in this area are similar to those obtained for frequency of peer interactions. Over one quarter of respondents (28 percent) indicated they had never interacted with faculty outside of the classroom for ten minutes or more. Of those who did, the largest percentage (15 percent) reported having done so twice since they started classes, and 29 percent had met with faculty five times or more since they started classes.

Since the survey was conducted during the month of November, respondents had been on campus for almost three months. Clearly, there was little interaction with faculty beyond the classroom. However, as shown in section 12.2

The Voices of College and Institute Students about Challenges They Face

Balancing having to work and study while being a single parent in a small town with poor child care services.

Coping with the workload. It took me a while to adjust, this was a big change coming right out of high school.

Adjusting to college life after doing 4 years at university…College is a completely different atmosphere.

Finding time to do homework while working to pay for school.

Managing time with family, work and school responsibilities.

Being away from home. Also, not being able to find a job here and having to go home and work every weekend.

Balancing my working hours with studying and saving enough to afford tuition, books, fees etc.

Getting all the assignments done when you have something due from every course in the same week.

Juggling family life and school life, and the costs.

Getting back into school, since I have been working full time for six years.

Keeping up with the constant flow of assignments.

Time and stress management and completing the infinite amount of assignments.

The biggest challenge is trying to adjust to living in a new town away from my family and trying to study and get good marks in school while working part-time.

Being a mature student at the campus, I find it sometimes makes it difficult to fit in and get the level of career-related support I would like.

only 17 percent of students reported having difficulty meeting with faculty outside of class. This suggests that many, for whatever reason, chose not to do so.

The low levels of peer and faculty interaction reported in this study suggest a significant percentage of students new to colleges and institutes are minimally engaged. This finding is not completely unexpected, however, given previous results. As was discussed, many students have commitments to part-time jobs and family members who are dependent upon them. Consequently, students have to balance many demands on their time, and as the findings discussed above indicate, this is very difficult for many and results in little time spent interacting with peers and faculty on campus. In spite of this, those who did interact with faculty, reported positive interactions.

12.4 Students' Perceptions of Faculty

While the results on students' interactions with faculty suggest that students did not frequently engage with faculty outside the classroom, it is clear that it is the group they have the most interaction with on campus, typically within the classroom context. Faculty, therefore, have a profound impact on the student experience in college and student perceptions of faculty are critical.

Based on students' experience over the first term, the results provide insights on student perceptions of faculty in terms of their interactions with students, the teaching methods and evaluation practices faculty use, and an overall assessment of teaching.

12.4.1 Faculty Interactions with Students

As shown in Figure 7, student perceptions of their interactions with faculty are uniformly positive. Up to 78 percent of respondents said that most or all of faculty they interacted with showed an interest in helping students, 73 percent perceived that most or all faculty was available to meet students outside of class and 72 percent felt most or all faculty had a good relationship with their students. In addition, slightly more than one in two (56 percent) indicated that most or all faculty they encountered asked for student feedback during their courses.

12.4.2 Faculty Teaching Methods

Students' perceptions on faculty teaching methods were measured by asking students about the use of active or passive teaching methods by faculty. As illustrated in Figure 8, generally, faculty appear to be engaged in the use of active teaching methods since three-quarters of students reported that most or all faculty encouraged student participation in class and almost two-thirds indicated most or

Most students had very positive perceptions of college/institute faculty – 75 percent of respondents confirmed that faculty were very good teachers and had a good relationship with students.

Figure 7
Student Perceptions of Faculty Interactions with Students

	Percent
Confirmed most/all faculty showed an interest in helping students	78%
Perceived most/all faculty was available to meet students outside of class	73%
Confirmed most/all faculty had a good relationship with their students	72%
Confirmed most/all faculty asked for student feedback	56%
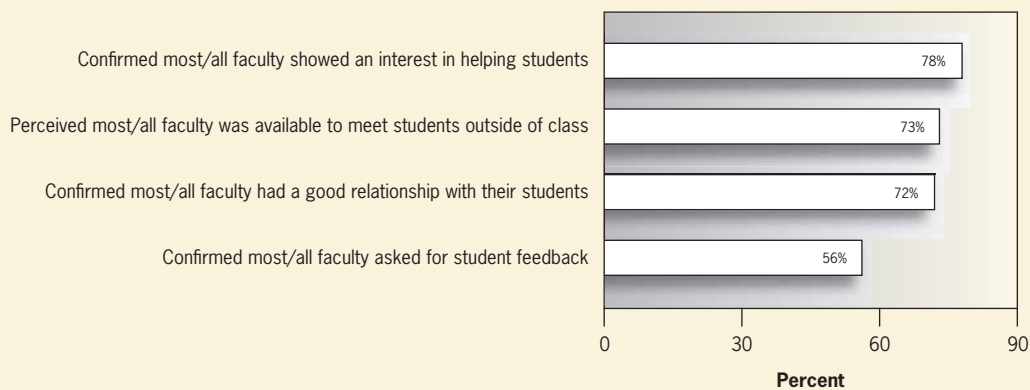
all faculty provided students with opportunities to practice and apply new learning. The use of group work seemed to be less prevalent, however, since just over one-half of respondents reported most or all or their faculty utilized this technique. Similarly, the lecture method continued to be widely used as almost two-thirds of the sample indicated that most or all faculty did this.

Evaluation Methods used by Faculty

Student responses on their perceptions of the evaluation methods used by college/institute faculty confirmed that the majority of faculty used a variety of techniques, as shown in Figure 9. Students reported that most or all included student presentations (43 percent), practical demonstrations/ projects (49 percent), written assignments (50 percent) and multiple-choice tests (52 percent). The majority of faculty also appeared to provide evaluation results in a timely fashion as four in five students said that most or all of their

Figure 8
Student Perceptions of Faculty Teaching Methods
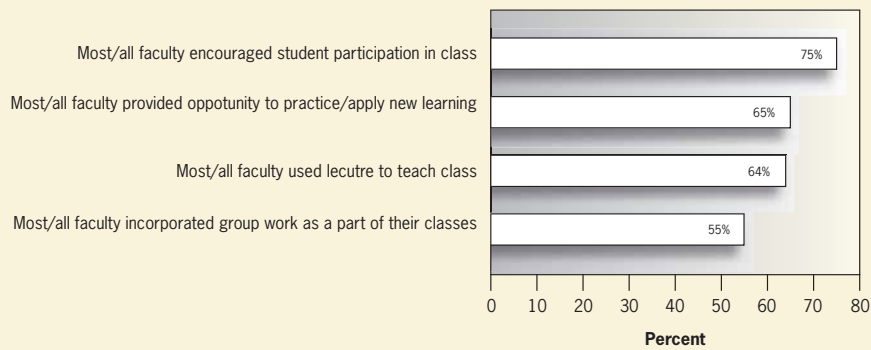
Figure 9
Student Perceptions on Evaluation Methods Used by Faculty
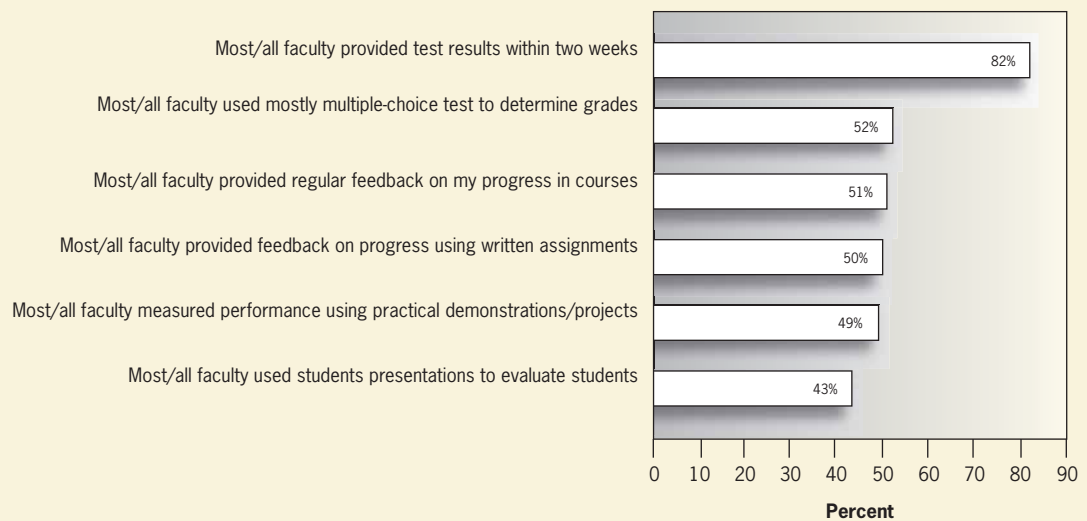
Source for 7 to 9 : End of Term Survey, 2005

faculty provided test results within two weeks and one-half reported they provided regular feedback on their progress in courses.

Overall, students' perceptions of faculty, both in terms of their inter-personal interactions and pedagogy, were very positive. Up to 75 percent of students felt their faculty were very good teachers and had a good relationship with their students. The results indicated that most college faculty utilized a variety of instructional methods including lecture, group work and demonstrations or projects. This is well advised given the diversity of the college/institute student population. Evaluation methods were also varied and included student presentations, written assignments and multiple choice tests. In the latter case, approximately equal percentages of students reported that 'all' faculty used written assignments and multiple choice tests, indicating a balance in the use of assessment techniques.

12.5 Students' Perceptions of their College/Institute

The end of term survey also examined students' perceptions of their college or institute, in particular how the institution interacted with students and provided resources, programs and services that promote student success. Figure 10 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that their college or institute "quite a bit" or "very much" provided the resources, services and had the institutional characteristics which promote student success. It is clear that overall, students' perceptions of their institution were very positive.

In terms of **how colleges and institutes are promoting student success**, up to 82 percent of students confirmed that their college or institute is "quite at bit" or "very much" interested in helping students succeed, and more than three quarters of respondents confirmed that their college or institute has the necessary services to support student learning. In general, towards the end of their first term of college studies most students seemed happy with the services provided as almost three quarters of respondents felt that their institution makes sure that students have the resources they need to learn and provides services to students so that using them is easy. In addition, 63 percent confirmed that their institution provides sufficient space for students to study in groups. Fewer students (60 percent) reported that their college has specific programs or

82 percent of students felt their college or institute is interested in helping students succeed.

strategies to help students adjust to college studies. The results of the Pan-Canadian Inventory of Exemplary Practices in Learning at Colleges and Institutes (2005) showed that most colleges do in fact offer such services. It could be therefore that many students were not aware of these opportunities.

A key approach used by colleges and institutes to integrate students into the learning culture is to encourage **interaction between students and faculty**. At the end of term, up to 62 percent of respondents, slightly less than two in three, believed their college or institute tries "quite a bit" or "very much" to help students and faculty interact regularly. Few students felt that their institution treats students like a number and almost one-half felt that their college included student views when creating policy.

Overall, student responses indicated they believed their institution was not only concerned about their success but also provided the necessary resources. They neither perceived their college as being highly selective nor felt that they were treated 'like numbers in a book'. The picture that emerges is one of Canadian colleges and institutes as institutions that are student and success centred.

Figure 10
Students Perceptions of Their College or Institute, 2005

Perception	Percent
Is interested in helping students succeed	82%
Has the necessary services to support student learning	76%
Makes sure students have the resources they need to learn	73%
Provides services to students so that using them is easy	72%
Provides sufficient space for students to study in groups	63%
Tries to help students and faculty interact regularly	62%
Has specific programs/strategies to help students adjust to college	60%
Considers student views when making policy	50%
Has high selective admissions policy	34%
Treats students like a number in a book	18%

Percent

Source: End of Term Survey, 2005

13 Time use and Extracurricular Involvement during the First Term

The results on students' time use and involvement in extracurricular activities provide a clearer picture of students' experience at their colleges and institutes.

Table 13 shows the results for students reported use of time both on and off campus. On-campus activities that occupied substantial amounts of time included attending classes, with almost 43 percent reporting more than 20 hours engaged in this activity. Some students are also spending significant amounts of time commuting to their college/institute campus. For example, although almost one half of respondents reported spending between one and five hours per week commuting, one quarter reported spending between six and ten hours commuting and 18 percent of respondents were spending 11 to more than 20 hours getting to and from campus. On-campus activities other than classes occupied time for less than one-half of respondents.

Off-campus activities included recreation and leisure activities that occupied between one and five hours per week for approximately one-third of respondents and six to ten hours for an additional one-third. Family responsibilities also consumed a considerable amount of time for a significant percentage of respondents, more than 20 hours per week for one-fifth of the sample. On the other hand, few respondents spent time engaged in volunteer activities.

The end of term survey results also provides some understanding of college/institute students' degree of participation in formal and informal activities on campus during the first term. The highest frequency of activity occurred in informal events and situations such as congregating in the cafeteria, frequenting the student pub or games room or engaged in informal athletic activities. This pattern suggests that first year students are either unwilling or unable to engage in formal activities on campus. An analysis of participation frequency by age showed that older students participate less frequently than younger students, which would support a lack of time hypothesis.

The use of time results indicated students were occupied for the greatest number of hours in a week with classes and labs, leisure activities, commuting to campus and dealing with family responsibilities. Few students reported they spent much time on campus engaged in activities other than classes. This is not atypical of colleges generally, and commuter colleges in particular. These institutions provide educational opportunities for those who cannot afford to attend a residential institution, need to work part time, have family responsibilities and may spend considerable time commuting. These students are often described as 'PCPers', those who drive to the campus parking lot, attend classes, return to their car and leave campus. One implication is that the classroom experience becomes paramount. The college experience for many students is the classroom.

Table 13. Use of Time On and Off Campus during the First Term, 2005

Activity	Hours/Week Participating %					
	Zero	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	> than 20
Community service/volunteer	65	27	5	2	1	1
Attending classes and/or labs	2	6	7	13	29	43
Campus activities other than classes	52	36	6	3	2	2
Dealing with family responsibilities	15	26	20	12	7	20
Recreation/leisure activities	3	31	31	17	9	9
Commuting both ways to campus	12	46	24	10	4	4

Source: End of Term Survey, 2005

14 Conclusions and Policy Implications

This report summarizes the results of the college entry and end of term surveys administered to first semester students in Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) member colleges and institutes in fall 2005. The findings are based on information provided by approximately 29,000 college entry survey respondents and approximately 17,600 end of term survey respondents. While these are large samples for both surveys, it is important to contextualize the results by acknowledging that up to two-thirds of respondents were from Ontario. That said, although the overall project findings should not be considered as representative of first-year college/institute students nationwide, these results are currently the best and most comprehensive available on first year students at Canadian colleges and institutes.

14.1 Meeting the Diverse Needs of College/Institute Students

The college entry survey results provide a first ever profile of students attending Canadian colleges and institutes. The results confirm that colleges and institutes admit students with diverse characteristics, including their demographic and family background and academic, personal and life experiences, particularly since just as many students came to their college or institute from the workforce as from high school.

The Pan-Canadian Study of Exemplary Practices in Learning confirmed that colleges and institutes have different policies, programs and services in place to address the diverse needs of their students. Given the limited resources many colleges and institutes are faced with for the delivery of effective support services, there would clearly be benefits to providing institutions with more opportunities to learn from each other and work collaboratively amongst themselves as well as with secondary schools and school boards in their regions.

14.2 Skills Development Needs of College and Institute Students

Results from both the entry and end of term surveys showed that a significant number of students believed their basic academic and learning skills were weak, in particular for study, test taking and math skills. In addition, an equivalent number reported they could use help in developing these skill areas and would use college services if offered. However, at the end of first term, service use findings showed that a significantly lower percentage of students used services than reported a need.

This could imply that some of the current methods of service delivery are not as effective as they could be to attract students to use these services. One model for colleges and institutes to consider is a more proactive model which involves the assessment of student needs followed by a communication campaign designed to promote the timely use of services by those who could benefit. Preliminary results from jurisdictions in the U.S. indicate this method is much more effective (ACPA/NASPA, 2004). When considering adopting more proactive models, colleges and institutes must also take into consideration that these approaches will likely also require additional resources which may more easily be leveraged with the adoption of an institutional policy framework on student success.

14.3 Career Information and Guidance

In terms of students' educational goals, respondents from both surveys confirmed the labour market focus of college and institute programs as most indicated they enrolled in their program to access a specific occupation or for career advancement. At the same time, significant numbers of students viewed college programs as a stepping-stone to university. Generally, respondent students were decisive in their college goals, were committed to graduating and perceived the benefits of a postsecondary education as many and varied.

Although most students had career-focused goals and reported being moderately engaged academically and socially in high school, a substantial percentage of respondents confirmed that they did not have intensive exposure to career guidance and information prior to beginning their college/institute programs, nor did they spend much time exploring the type of work they would likely be doing upon graduation. Conversations with parents appeared to be the most prevalent activity in this area during the secondary school years. The frequency of these discussions, however, was strongly influenced by level of parental education. Since many attending colleges and institutes are the first in their family to do so, a good proportion has not had this experience either.

This sets the stage for a potential disconnect between student expectations of their college studies and their actual experience and many are surprised by what they learn over the initial few weeks of study. The young woman who abandoned nursing studies shortly after learning that shift work is common in health care is an excellent example. It is then not surprising that, at the end of term, when asked to comment on the one thing they wished they had known better before they began their studies, a large number of the students surveyed cited a desire for more information about their program and eventual work.

Since much of the academic programming offered by Canadian colleges and institutes is career related, students who are not clear about their career direction are at a distinct disadvantage. There is a need for more secondary school-college collaboration and sharing of information to improve students' understanding of career possibilities and selection of college/institute programs. Secondary schools need to become more aware and inform their students better about careers available through college/institute programs. In turn, colleges and institutes need to provide more detail and improve access to information regarding career opportunities. The use of on-line tools is one example of how this might be achieved with a web-savvy generation. Policies and programs at all levels, both institutional and governmental, could be important levers for change in this area. An additional benefit would accrue to governments interested in increasing participation in postsecondary education since one of the main barriers to attending college or university has been shown to be a lack of interest or motivation on the part of high school students (Junor and Usher, 2004).

The findings from the end of term survey provide helpful insights into the experiences of college/institute students during their first semester. The results depict the first term experience as one in which the majority of first year students have positive interactions with other students and faculty. Students also considered their academic experiences to be positive and, overall, survey respondents were very satisfied with their college experience and with their specific institution. Indeed, the majority felt they were gaining the knowledge and skills they needed to be successful in the future even though many felt they were weak in a variety of basic academic and learning skills areas and could use the help of corresponding college services.

Despite students' overall satisfaction with their college experience, survey items that examined the social integration of first semester students showed that many spent little time on campus and interacted infrequently with peers and faculty outside of class. These findings also have policy implications. College and institute students would benefit if efforts to promote social integration on campuses were done through more purposeful approaches and activities rather than leaving them to chance. John Gardner (2005) has described a policy framework that recognizes the importance of approaching the first year of college in this way. Activities and events need to be structured and delivered so that students are drawn in early or they are unlikely to be later on. Previous research has shown that in the face of academic difficulties and multiple demands on their time, students who are less socially integrated will be more likely to leave (Tinto, 1975).

A good example of how a social integration activity could be delivered in a more purposeful way is first year orientation which should ideally be delivered college-wide and include events that promote contact with other students, faculty and college/institute services. The inclusion of information regarding the demands of their program and future jobs will also help promote career clarity and academic integration.

14.5   Difficulties during the First Term

While the largest percentage of students reported their greatest difficulty in college was balancing the demands of their studies with those of work and family, many cited specific difficulties that could have a profound influence on their success. For example, one third reported significant difficulty knowing how to improve their grades. This is substantiated by research that has found a very high correlation between mid term and end of term grades (Dietsche, 1990) in colleges that collect formal mid terms. Generally, if a student is failing at mid term they fail final exams as well. This suggests that little changes between these two points in time. Either the college/institute does not change how it interacts with the student or the student does not change their behaviour, or both. The fact that many students in this study reported they do not know what to do to improve suggests the latter makes a significant contribution to the problem. In addition, one in five students reported they had a difficult time knowing who to talk to about a problem as well as knowing how well they were doing in their courses.

A significant proportion of respondent students were also experiencing financial difficulties as many expressed concerned about financing their studies at college entry and even more expressed this concern at the end of the first term. Although most students did not feel that financial difficulties would be a trigger for leaving their program, over the course of the first term, an increasing number of students indicated that they would benefit greatly from assistance in securing financial aid for their education.
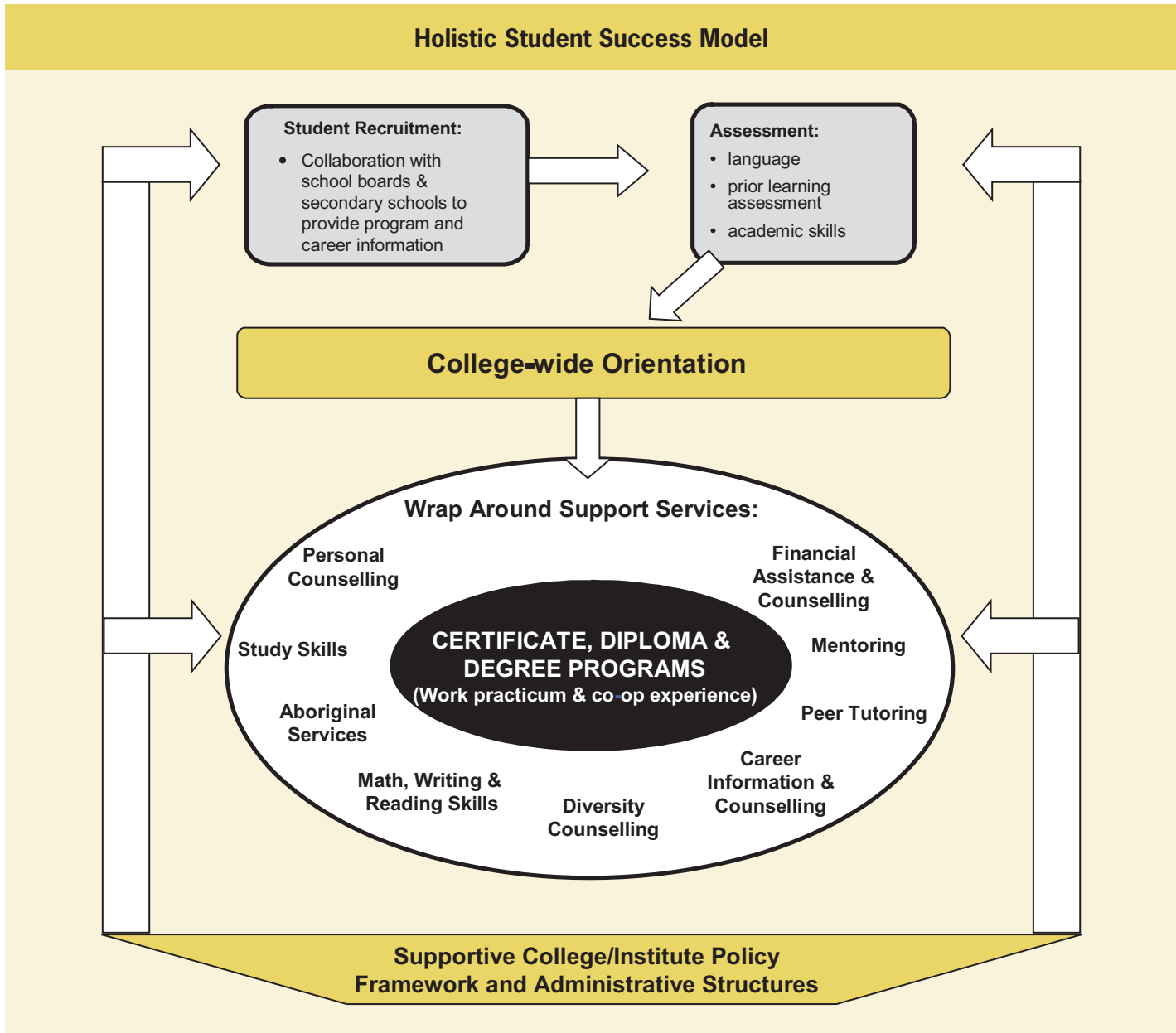
This suggests that policies and procedures are required to help students negotiate the 'mazeway' of a postsecondary education, including access to financial assistance and counseling. As confirmed by ACCC studies, including the Pan-Canadian Study of Exemplary Practices in Learning, more structured and holistic approaches to student orientation and programs such as student ambassador and peer mentoring can be very effective in addressing these types of difficulties.

It is important to note that despite students' lack of confidence in their skills and uncertainty about the career they would hold after graduation, the majority of students began college confident that they would succeed in their studies and achieve a postsecondary credential. The greatest difficulties identified by students were balancing the demands of school, family and studies as well as financing their college education. For many, these external demands meant little time was spent on campus engaged in activities outside the classroom. In spite of this, students had positive experiences with peers and faculty and thus remained committed to their college and to the prospect of graduating with a credential. This was due, at least in part, to the strong perception that a college education was a good investment both in terms of increasing career opportunity and promoting personal development.

The findings of both the entry and end of terms surveys point to some ways in which the ACCC and colleges and institutes can enhance capacity in student success. There clearly continues to be a need for the ACCC to offer colleges and institutes opportunities to share exemplary practices and initiate collaborative approaches. There is also value in developing a holistic student success model which colleges and institutes can refer to and adapt to their needs. This holistic model would begin at the recruitment stage which should include collaboration between colleges/institutes and secondary schools to offer clear career information in addition to program related information. Recruitment efforts would include or would be followed by assessment services including language capacity, prior learning assessment and academic skills. The assessment process identifies appropriate wrap-around support services students would benefit from at program inception, and the college/institute offers a college-wide orientation to ensure students have the information to integrate into college life. The inclusion of work practicum or co-op experience in certificate, diploma or degree programs is an additional element for success at the program level. This must also be supported by a college or institute policy framework and administrative structures that foster student success

This concludes the first of a series of three reports which will be prepared for joint release by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC). The next report will provide further analysis on the differences in profile and experiences of visible minorities, Aboriginal learners and new Canadians attending colleges and institutes.

The third report will provide a longitudinal analysis of the over 6,000 students who completed both the college entry and end of term surveys, as well as an analysis of the determinants of first year outcomes based on grades and other data on these students submitted by participating college and institutes.

Holistic Student Success Model

Student Recruitment:
- Collaboration with school boards & secondary schools to provide program and career information

Assessment:
- language
- prior learning assessment
- academic skills

College-wide Orientation

Wrap Around Support Services:

Personal Counselling

Financial Assistance & Counselling

Study Skills

CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA & DEGREE PROGRAMS
(Work practicum & co-op experience)

Mentoring

Aboriginal Services

Peer Tutoring

Math, Writing & Reading Skills

Diversity Counselling

Career Information & Counselling

Supportive College/Institute Policy Framework and Administrative Structures

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Appendix 1

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c.   Mr. Peter Seto, Director, I.R., Mount Royal College; AB

d.   Mr. Jim Goho, Director, I.R., Red River College; MB

e.   Mr. Bob Cowan, Director, I.R., Douglas College; B.C.

f.   Mme. Diane Chevalier, Directrice, Planification et initiatives stratégiques, La Cité collégiale; ON

g.   Mr. Jon Olinski, General Manager, College Student Alliance; ON

h.   Mr. Sean Junor, Senior Policy Analyst & Researcher, Can. Millennium Scholarship Foundation; QC

i.   Ms. Satya Brink, Director, Policy Research, Learning Policy Directorate, HRSDC, ON

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b.   Ms. Betty Freelandt, V.P. Student Services, Cambrian College; ON

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f.   Mr. Ted James, Dean, Student Services, Douglas College; B.C.

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h.   Ms. Kim Tysick, V.P. Academic, Cégep Heritage College; QC

i.   Mr. Ken Webb, V.P. Academic, Red River College; MB.

Appendix 2

Survey at College Entry–Participating Colleges and Institutes

College Name

British Columbia/Yukon

Camosun College
Capilano College
College of New Caledonia
College of the Rockies
Columbia College
Douglas College
Emily Carr College of Art and Design
Kwantlen University College
Langara College
Malaspina University-College
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
North Island College
Northern Lights College
Northwest Community College
Okanagan College
Selkirk College
Thompson Rivers University
Vancouver Community College

Alberta/Northwest Territories

Alberta College of Art and Design
Bow Valley College
Grande Prairie Regional College
Grant MacEwan College
Keyano College
Lakeland College
Medicine Hat College
Mount Royal College
NorQuest College
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
Olds College
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
Aurora College

Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Nunavut

Cypress Hills Regional College
North West Regional College
Northlands College
Parkland Regional College

Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
Southeast Regional College
Assiniboine Community College
Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface
Red River College
University College of the North
Winnipeg Technical College

Ontario

Collège Algonquin des arts appliqués et de technologie
Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology
Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology
Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology
Collège Boréal
Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology
Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology
Durham College
Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology
George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology
Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology
Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
La Cité collégiale
Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology
Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology
Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology
Niagara College
Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology
Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology
Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology
Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learn
Sir Sandford Fleming College
St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology
St. Lawrence College
The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences

Quebec

Cégep André-Laurendeau
Cégep de Drummondville
Cégep de Jonquière
Cégep de l'Outaouais
Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe
Cégep de Saint-Laurent

Cégep de Sainte-Foy
Champlain Regional College
Collège André-Grasset
Collège de Rosemont
Collège Mérici
Collège Shawinigan
Collège Dawson
Heritage College
John Abbott College
Marianopolis College
Vanier College

NBCC - College of Craft & Design
NBCC – Miramichi
NBCC – Moncton
NBCC - Saint John
NBCC - St. Andrews
NBCC – Woodstock
College of the North Atlantic
Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Nova Scotia Community College
University College of Cape Breton
Holland College
Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Atlantic

CCNB – Campbellton
CCNB – Dieppe
CCNB – Edmundston
CCNB - Péninsule acadienne
Collège Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

Appendix 3

Survey at End of First Term – Participating Colleges and Institutes

College Name

British Columbia/Yukon

Camosun College
Capilano College
College of New Caledonia
College of the Rockies
Douglas College
Justice Institute of British Columbia
Kwantlen University College
Langara College
Malaspina University-College
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
North Island College
Okanagan College
Selkirk College
Thompson Rivers University
Vancouver Community College

Alberta/Northwest Territories

Alberta College of Art and Design
Bow Valley College
Grande Prairie Regional College
Grant MacEwan College
Lakeland College
Medicine Hat College
Mount Royal College
NorQuest College
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
Olds College
Red Deer College
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
Aurora College

Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Nunavut

Cypress Hills Regional College
North West Regional College
Prairie West Regional College
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
Southeast Regional College
Red River College
Assiniboine Community College
Nunavut Arctic College

Ontario

Collège Algonquin des arts appliqués et de technologie
Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology
Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology
Centennial College of Applied Arts and Technology
Collège Boréal
Collège d'Alfred
Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology
Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology
Durham College
Fanshawe College of Applied Arts and Technology
George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology
Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology
Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
La Cité collégiale
Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology
Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology
Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology
Niagara College
Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology
Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology
Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
Sir Sandford Fleming College
St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology
St. Lawrence College
The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences

Quebec

Cégep André-Laurendeau
Cégep de Sainte-Foy
Cégep du Vieux-Montréal
Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu
Champlain Regional College
Collège Ahuntsic
Collège André-Grasset
Collège de Sherbrooke
Collège François-Xavier-Garneau
Collège Mérici
Collège Shawinigan
Heritage College
Institut de technologie agroalimentaire, campus de La Pocatière
John Abbott College
Vanier College

ATLANTIC

CCNB – Campbellton
CCNB – Dieppe
CCNB - Péninsule acadienne
NBCC - College of Craft & Design
NBCC - Fredericton Centre
NBCC – Miramichi
NBCC – Moncton
NBCC - Saint John

NBCC – Woodstock
College of the North Atlantic
The Fisheries and Marine Institute
Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Nova Scotia Community College
University College of Cape Breton
Holland College
Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Appendix 4

College Entry Survey

RESPONDENT STUDENTS' AREAS OF PERCEIVED BENEFIT FROM EXTRA SUPPORT

Areas of Development	Perceived Level of Benefit from Extra Support % (n)				
	No Benefit	Very Little Benefit	Benefit Somewhat	Benefit Greatly	Total
Writing Skills	9.5 (2274)	22.1 (5297)	45.3 (10859)	23.1 (5522)	100 (23952)
Reading Skills	13.6 (3245)	24.8 (5930)	37.9 (9066)	23.7 (5666)	100 (23907)
Math Skills	11.6 (2762)	21.8 (5209)	33.0 (7864)	33.6 (8030)	100 (23865)
Study Habits	4.0 (946)	11.8 (2815)	38.8 (9273)	45.4 (10856)	100 (23890)
Test Taking	5.5 (1300)	15.9 (3788)	38.8 (9231)	39.8 (9470)	100 (23789)
Choosing Course/ Program	38.4 (9167)	29.3 (7000)	22.0 (5262)	10.3 (2464)	100 (23893)
Selecting Career	17.6 (4200)	17.8 (4240)	32.4 (7711)	32.2 (7661)	100 (23812)
Financial Aid	13.7 (3254)	13.6 (3236)	26.7 (6369)	46.0 (10973)	100 (23832)
Disability	68.5 (16317)	11.5 (2738)	11.2 (2662)	8.8 (2094)	100 (23811)
Child Care	74.6 (17746)	8.2 (1960)	8.9 (2107)	8.3 (1978)	100 (23791)
Improve in a Second Language	45.7 (10909)	14.3 (3403)	20.6 (4924)	19.4 (4631)	100 (23867)
Improve in Language of Instruction	38.3 (9134)	19.1 (4547)	26.8 (6387)	15.8 (3778)	100 (23846)
Planning for Future Studies	10.3 (2448)	16.8 (4021)	39.2 (9366)	33.7 (8039)	100 (23874)

College Entry Survey

RESPONDENT STUDENTS' RECEPTIVITY TO COLLEGE SUPPORT SERVICES

Areas of Development	Reported Receptivity Toward Extra Support % (n)				
	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Quite Likely	Highly Likely	Total
Writing Skills	14.7 (3453)	21.5 (5066)	42.4 (9978)	21.3 (5016)	100 (23513)
Reading Skills	17.6 (4127)	26.5 (6204)	36.4 (8537)	19.5 (4581)	100 (23449)
Math Skills	16.0 (3746)	21.6 (5945)	35.0 (8193)	27.4 (6407)	100 (23391)
Study Habits	7.1 (1665)	14.9 (3500)	43.8 (10246)	34.2 (8003)	100 (23414)
Test Taking	8.6 (2010)	17.1 (3992)	41.5 (9692)	32.8 (7646)	100 (23340)
Choosing Course/ Program	36.8 (8616)	28.2 (6602)	22.8 (5344)	12.2 (2865)	100 (23427)
Selecting Career	17.9 (4189)	17.6 (4125)	36.6 (8556)	27.9 (6512)	100 (23382)
Financial Aid	16.1 (3767)	14.5 (3400)	28.6 (6695)	40.7 (9513)	100 (23375)
Disability	64.4 (15014)	14.5 (3375)	12.5 (2910)	8.7 (2031)	100 (23330)
Child Care	68.9 (16085)	12.1 (2829)	10.8 (2511)	8.3 (1932)	100 (23357)
Second Language	44.6 (10427)	17.7 (4131)	21.3 (4983)	16.4 (3833)	100 (23374)
Language of Instruction	39.0 (9123)	19.7 (4603)	26.0 (6086)	15.3 (3585)	100 (23397)
Planning for Future Studies	14.8 (3463)	15.3 (3571)	39.2 (9168)	30.8 (7199)	100 (23401)

Appendix 5

End of Term Survey Results – Needs and Use of Support Services at Colleges and Institutes

AREAS OF PERCEIVED BENEFIT FROM EXTRA SUPPORT AT THE END OF FIRST TERMS

Area of Development	Perceived Level of Benefit from Extra Support % (n)				
	No Benefit	Very Little Benefit	Benefit Somewhat	Benefit Greatly	Total
Writing Skills	12.9 (2035)	24.7 (3906)	44.3 (6988)	18.1 (2859)	100 (15788)
Reading Skills	18.3 (2887)	28.8 (4535)	35.6 (5614)	17.2 (2712)	100 (15748)
Math Skills	15.5 (2438)	23.3 (3666)	34.2 (5381)	26.9 (4228)	100 (15713)
Study Habits	6.5 (1021)	15.0 (2359)	41.0 (6454)	37.5 (5896)	100 (15730)
Test Taking	8.3 (1306)	18.9 (2966)	39.0 (6117)	33.7 (5281)	100 (15670)
Choosing Course/Program	37.3 (5877)	27.7 (4357)	23.1 (3630)	11.9 (1877)	100 (15741)
Selecting Career	18.2 (2854)	17.1 (2691)	32.2 (5049)	32.5 (5099)	100 (15693)
Financial Aid	11.7 (1836)	14.6 (2295)	28.1 (4414)	45.6 (7149)	100 (15694)
Disability	67.4 (10575)	12.4 (1950)	11.9 (1869)	8.2 (1291)	100 (15685)
Child Care	74.4 (11675)	8.5 (1337)	9.4 (1473)	7.7 (1204)	100 (15689)
Improve in a Second Language	49.0 (7707)	14.8 (2319)	20.3 (3195)	15.9 (15.9)	100 (15720)
Improve in Language of Instruction	43.1 (6780)	20.3 (3198)	24.2 (3810)	12.3 (1937)	100 (15725)
Planning for Future Studies	11.1 (1747)	17.2 (2711)	39.8 (6261)	31.8 (5003)	100 (15722)

End of Term Survey Results – Needs and Use of Support Services at Colleges and Institutes

RESPONDENT STUDENTS' RECEPTIVITY TO COLLEGE SERVICES				
Reported Receptivity Toward Extra Support % (n)				
Area of Development	**Very Unlikely**	**Unlikely**	**Quite Likely**	**Highly Likely**	**Total**
Writing Skills	17.4 (2674)	24.4 (3750)	40.3 (6178)	17.9 (2741)	100 (15343)
Reading Skills	21.7 (3312)	29.8 (4558)	33.1 (5066)	15.1 (2360)	100 (15296)
Math Skills	18.8 (2870)	23.7 (3623)	34.8 (5306)	22.7 (3457)	100 (15256)
Study Habits	9.9 (1517)	17.4 (2663)	43.5 (6641)	29.2 (4462)	100 (15283)
Test Taking	11.5 (1743)	19.3 (2933)	40.6 (6173)	28.7 (4358)	100 (15207)
Choosing Course/ Program	34.9 (5335)	27.4 (4185)	24.3 (3714)	13.4 (2048)	100 (15282)
Selecting Career	18.0 (2746)	17.1 (2614)	36.3 (5540)	28.6 (4374)	100 (15274)
Financial Aid	13.6 (2077)	14.8 (2256)	30.0 (4571)	41.6 (6352)	100 (15256)
Disability	63.5 (9662)	16.1 (2454)	12.1 (1848)	8.2 (1246)	100 (15210)
Child Care	68.8 (10488)	12.8 (1958)	10.6 (1613)	7.8 (1184)	100 (15243)
Second Language	47.1 (7173)	17.8 (2713)	21.2 (3230)	14.0 (2127)	100 (15243)
Language of Instruction	42.5 (6491)	21.1 (3219)	23.9 (3649)	12.5 (1900)	100 (15259)
Planning for Future Studies	15.1 (2314)	15.9 (2437)	38.9 (5949)	30.0 (4579)	100 (15279)

End of Term Survey Results – Needs and Use of Support Services at Colleges and Institutes

REPORTED USE OF COLLEGE SERVICES							
Frequency of College Service Use % (n)							
Service	Never	Once	Twice	3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	> 10 times	Total
Academic advising	68.9 (9655)	9.6 (1338)	8.8 (1226)	4.4 (622)	5.5 (772)	2.2 (311)	0.6 (84)	100 (14008)
Personal counselling	83.7 (11686)	5.1 (714)	3.7 (519)	1.9 (266)	3.4 (468)	1.5 (212)	0.7 (103)	100 (13968)
Career counseling	77.6 (10878)	9.1 (1279)	6.3 (883)	2.2 (304)	3.3 (468)	1.0 (145)	0.4 (55)	100 (14012)
Info on college/univ courses, programs	52.9 (7419)	16.2 (2272)	13.7 (1917)	6.4 (897)	7.6 (1069)	2.4 (343)	0.8 (107)	100 (14024)
Language writing service	83.5 (11699)	5.8 (811)	4.1 (571)	2.0 (279)	2.7 (378)	1.4 (193)	0.6 (86)	100 (14017)
Learning skills service	82.0 (11486)	6.5 (904)	4.2 (582)	2.1 (297)	3.4 (479)	1.3 (178)	0.6 (79)	100 (14005)
Math skills service	85.2 (11930)	4.0 (557)	3.4 (474)	1.8 (258)	3.1 (435)	1.7 (232)	0.9 (121)	100 (14007)
Peer tutoring	83.0 (11625)	3.9 (545)	3.3 (464)	2.2 (307)	3.6 (508)	2.4 (337)	1.6 (227)	100 (14013)
Library facilities	30.6 (4296)	6.1 (850)	8.4 (1176)	6.6 (919)	16.8 (2352)	14.4 (2017)	17.2 (2413)	100 (14023)
Cultural events	67.4 (9451)	6.7 (932)	7.7 (1086)	4.4 (612)	7.4 (1035)	4.3 (601)	2.1 (297)	100 (14014)
Career resource centre	69.8 (9773)	9.2 (1291)	7.3 (1029)	3.7 (524)	5.9 (821)	2.9 (402)	1.2 (171)	100 (14011)
Disabilities services	92.1 (12879)	2.4 (332)	1.3 (178)	0.8 (114)	1.7 (235)	0.9 (130)	0.8 (116)	100 (13984)