

Labour Force Statistics ♦ October 2001

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C. seasonally adjusted employment in October fell by 13,500 (down 0.7 per cent) from September, with notable decreases seen in manufacturing and other primary goods.** An increase in the estimated number of unemployed persons pushed up the unemployment rate in October to 8.2 per cent, its highest monthly level since August, 1999.
- **Full-time employment in October was down 15,700 from September and is down 47,700 from October 2000.** Part-time employment was little changed in October from September, and is up by 8,800 from a year ago.
- **Employment by B.C. youth aged 15 to 24 was unchanged in October from September.** Movement of youth from outside of the labour force into active job search increased the number of unemployed youth by 3,200 from September. This pushed up the youth unemployment rate to 14.2 per cent from 13.6 per cent in September.
- **Employment for Canada remained flat in October. Overall it now stands near the same level as seen in April.** The unemployment rate in both B.C. and Alberta rose by half a percentage point in October. In Alberta this occurred as gains in employment was outpaced by labour force growth.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Oct. 2001	Sep. 2001	Oct. 2000
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.2%	7.7%	7.6%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.3%	7.2%	6.9%
B.C. Help Wanted Index - (1996=100)	112.0	120.0	146.0
B.C. Employment - Change from prev. mo.	-0.7%	0.0%	-2.0%
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev. mo.	-0.1%	-0.3%	-1.3%
B.C. Participation Rate	63.5%	63.7%	65.3%

* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Management Services and the Youth and Labour Market Services Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or YLMS (250) 952-6111.

Post-Secondary Education Participation Trends by “Type”

Introduction . . . August’s article reviewed data from Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey (LFS) that captured participation in post-secondary education (PSE) programs for credit, including those in public trade/vocational programs and private training institutions as well as those in public career-technical and academic post-secondary programs. This article expands upon the overall PSE participation rate trends noted in August’s article, by providing further breakdowns by categories or types of PSE participants between provinces. The reference period for the data is the fourth quarter average (October to December) of each year to avoid inconsistencies caused by the summer months when post-secondary programs are often in recess. This article will focus on those individuals aged 18 to 29 participating in college and university level programs.

Challenges in Interpreting Categories of Post-Secondary Education from the Labour Force Survey . . . The LFS has three categories of PSE participants – “college/CEGEP,” “university,” and “other”. A survey respondent who is engaged in a “for credit” PSE program is placed in one of these three categories based on two key questions contained in the survey concerning the type of program and the name of the institution they are attending. The categorization for the first two categories is self-evident; however, the “other” category presents some difficulties.

Statistics Canada defines the “other” category to include those in secretarial schools, barber schools, hairdressing schools and computer training, mainly at private post-secondary institutions, and should not include vocational schools. Therefore, those participating in private post-secondary programs but not included in the “other” category should be included in the college category. However, this may lead to a number of categorization errors. For example, a respondent enrolled in CompuCollege may seemingly belong in the “other” category, but may end up in the college category because of the name of the school.

This is an example of how the categorization is to a certain extent at the discretion of the LFS interviewer and respondent, and is sensitive to inconsistencies in either interpretation of the responses or the degree of detail in the responses.

There are a number of systematic differences in PSE systems between the provinces that must be taken into account when making inter-provincial comparisons of college or university participation. For example, three routes may be taken by students to complete a bachelor’s degree in B.C. First, there is the traditional route of completing a degree from start to finish at a university. Alternatively, most community colleges and university colleges offer university transfer programs. University transfer programs allow student to complete the first year or two of a bachelor’s degree and then transfer completed credits to a university for completion. (The only other provinces that offer university transfer programs [in any significant numbers] are Alberta and Quebec.) The third available option is to complete a degree at a university-college. It can be argued that such students are university-level students taking university-level programs outside of a university. With this in perspective, students in this third group and possibly some university transfer students may be appearing in the “university” category. There is another possible categorization problem specific to B.C. If the respondent is not very clear about the nature of their program, either college or university credit, it may be left up to the LFS interviewer to decide on the categorization. Thus, if the institution they are attending is a university-college or community college, the interviewer might tend to place them in the “college” category.

In contrast to B.C., some of the provinces maintain separate college and university systems. Colleges and college programs are distinct from universities and university programs, with little formal relationship between the two. B.C., on the other hand,

fosters a strong relationship in terms of transferability and articulation between the two systems. The result in B.C. is a more clearly integrated system.

Finally, the PSE system in Quebec is significantly different from the rest of the provinces in Canada. A number of secondary students in Quebec graduate following grade 11 and enroll in CEGEPs (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, Quebec's version of general and vocational colleges) for one or two years prior to entering either university or the labour force. This has the effect of increasing the participation rate for Quebec relative to other provinces, especially for the "college/CEGEP" category. Two types of CEGEP programs are featured: pre-university programs leading to university studies, and technical programs leading to the labour market or certain other university programs.

“College/CEGEP” Participation Rates . . .

When examining inter-provincial differences in post-secondary participation rates, it is useful to separate overall PSE participation into the “college/CEGEP” and “university” categories as defined by Statistics Canada. However, in doing so, it is important to remember the

previously discussed challenges associated with the defined categories.

Figure 1 depicts the “college/CEGEP” post-secondary participation rates of those aged 18 to 29 for B.C. and the three other western provinces. Since 1976, B.C. has had a higher college participation rate than the rest of the western provinces, except for 1984, when Alberta edged just above B.C. Both Alberta and B.C. have had rates well above those of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. A good portion of the growth in B.C. and Alberta occurred during the 1980s, and little growth occurred during the early 1990s. Since 1997, the rates of B.C. and Alberta have begun to diverge as B.C.’s rate continued an upward ascent and Alberta’s rate gently declined. Saskatchewan and Manitoba experienced modest but reasonably steady growth in participation throughout the analyzed period. In 2000, the college participation rates of those aged 18 to 29 for B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were 13.8 per cent, 9.6 per cent, 5.3 per cent and 5.8 per cent, respectively. B.C. was the only western province above the Canadian average of 11.0 per cent.

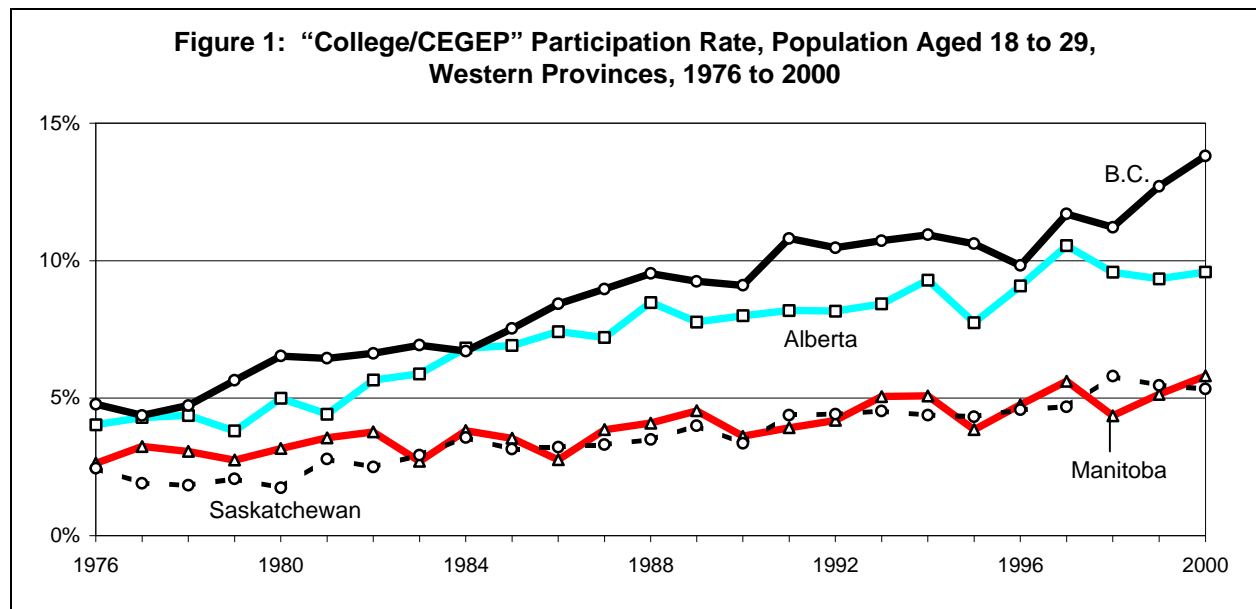
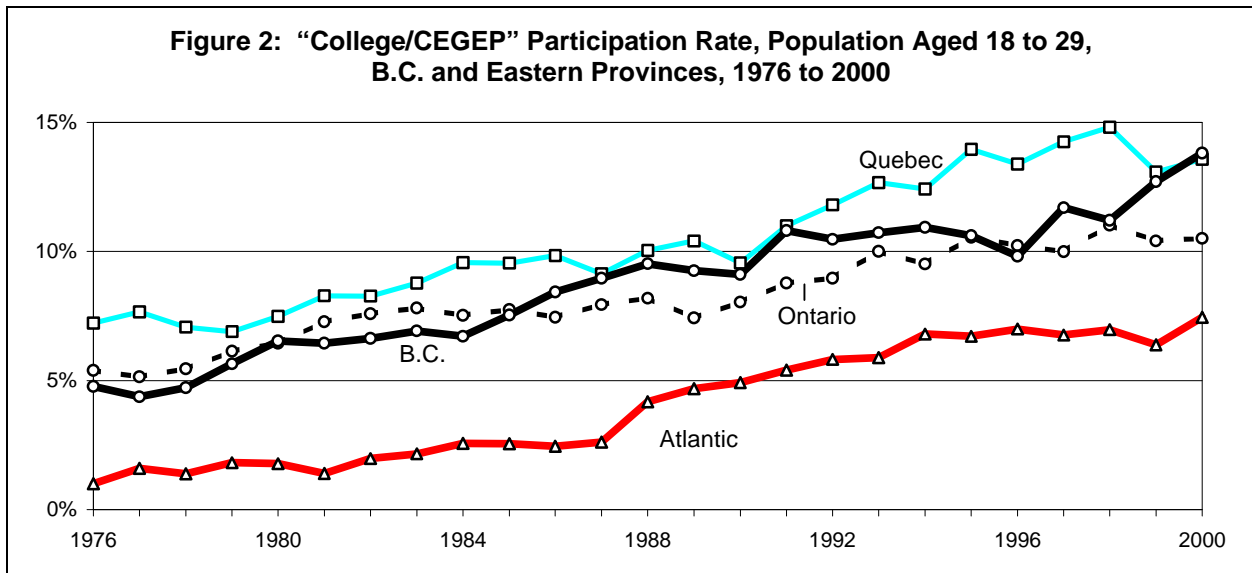


Figure 2 depicts the “college/CEGEP” participation rates of those aged 18 to 29 for

B.C. and the eastern provinces. B.C. has had higher than average college participation rates

compared to Ontario and the Atlantic region. B.C. generally has trailed Quebec but B.C.'s college participation rate in 2000 slightly exceeded Quebec's college participation rate. B.C.'s college participation rate has been above Ontario's since 1986, except in 1996. There was steady growth in Quebec's participation rate between 1990 and 1998, with some fall off in the last few years. Given their unique CEGEP system, Quebec has generally had the highest college participation rate of any province for those aged 18 to 29. The Atlantic

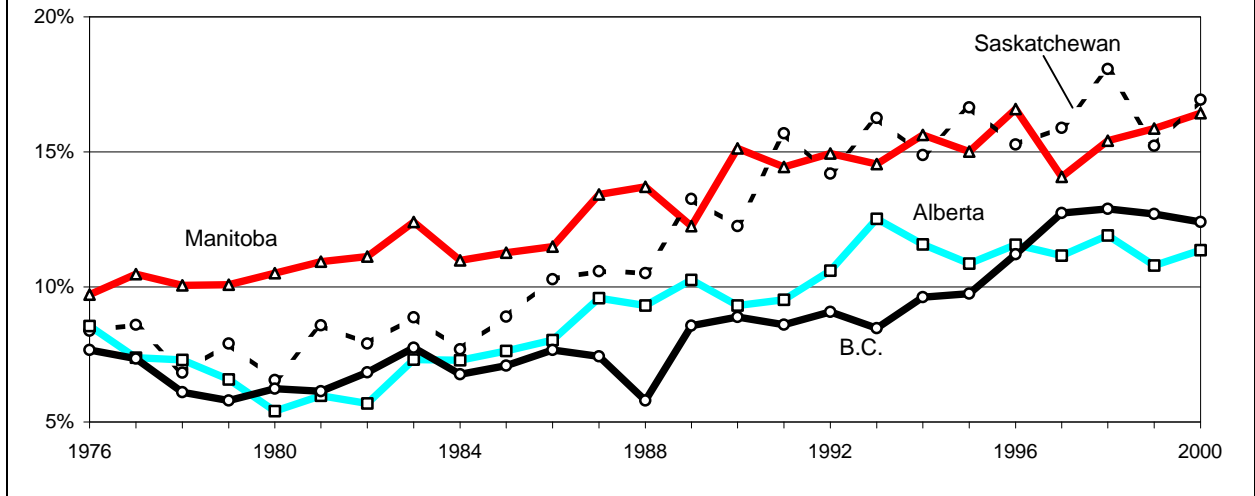
provinces experienced little growth in participation up until the late 1980s. The Atlantic provinces' participation rate increased from 4.2 per cent in 1988 to 6.8 per cent in 1994 before leveling off and remaining still well below B.C.'s participation rate. The college participation rate of those aged 18 to 29 in 2000 was 13.8 per cent in B.C., 13.6 per cent in Quebec, 10.5 per cent in Ontario and 7.5 per cent in the Atlantic provinces. The national average was 11.0 per cent.



“University” Participation Rates . . . Unlike the situation for college participation, university participation rates for those aged 18 to 29 in B.C. have been well below the rest of the western provinces. This result is consistent with other administrative data on post-secondary participation. In contrast to the situation for college participation rates, the university participation rates of Saskatchewan and Manitoba have been above the rates for B.C. and Alberta. The participation rates in B.C. and Alberta were fairly constant until the early 1990s, after which both provinces experienced significant increases in the participation rate. Alberta's university participation rate increased between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, whereas B.C.'s rate increased mostly during the early to mid 1990s. Saskatchewan's university participation rate was just above B.C.'s and

Alberta's until the late 1980s. Then during the early 1990s, Saskatchewan's university participation rate jumped to well above the rates in both B.C. and Alberta and caught up with the rate in Manitoba. Manitoba's university participation rate experienced a gradual increase between 1976 and the mid 1990s, before leveling off at approximately 15.6 per cent. Saskatchewan had the highest university participation rate for persons aged 18 to 29 amongst the western provinces in 2000 at 16.9 per cent. This was followed by Manitoba, B.C. and Alberta at 16.4 per cent, 12.4 per cent and 11.4 per cent, respectively. The average Canadian university participation rate was 14.1 per cent in 2000.

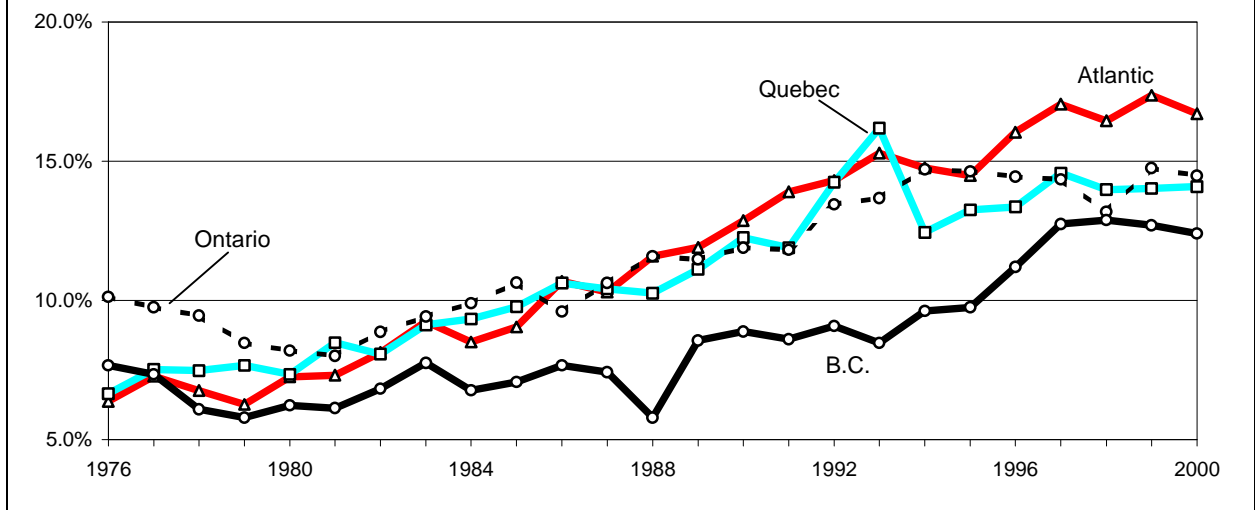
Figure 3: "University" Participation Rate, Population Aged 18 to 29, Western Provinces, 1976 to 2000



The university participation rates of the population aged 18 to 29 for B.C. and the eastern provinces are presented in Figure 4. From 1976 until the mid 1980s, the university participation rate in B.C. was closer but clearly below the rates seen in the eastern provinces. However, with the large growth in B.C.'s participation rate during the mid 1990s and a slight decline in the participation rates of Ontario and Quebec, the large gap, which had emerged in the late 1980s, virtually closed between Canada's three largest provinces in 1998. Since 1998, B.C.'s university

participation rate has leveled off while the rates in Ontario and Quebec have increased slightly. The university participation rate in the Atlantic provinces was similar to the rate in Quebec and Ontario until 1996. From 1996 onwards, the university participation rate in the Atlantic provinces continued upwards and has been the highest of the selected provinces in Figure 4 at 16.7 per cent in 2000. Ontario had the next highest rate in 2000 at 14.5 per cent, followed by Quebec at 14.1 per cent, which was equal to the national average, and B.C. at 12.4 per cent.

Figure 4: "University" Participation Rate, Population Aged 18 to 29, B.C. and Eastern Provinces, 1976 to 2000



Below, in Figure 5, the participation rates of those aged 18 to 29 are displayed for the three categories that comprise PSE participation. This includes “college/CEGEP”, “university” and “other” as well as the “all” PSE participation rate for Canada and the provinces for the years 1990 and 2000.

All of the provinces experienced some increase in participation rates in the college and university categories between 1990 and 2000. Only Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland experienced a slight decrease in the small “other” category.

Newfoundland experienced the largest increase in university participation (up 8.0 percentage points). This was followed by P.E.I. (up 6.9 percentage points), Saskatchewan (up 4.7

percentage points) and B.C. (up 3.5 percentage points).

The largest increase in college participation between 1990 and 2000 occurred in B.C. at 4.7 percentage points. Quebec had the next highest increase in college participation (up 4.0 percentage points), followed by P.E.I. (up 3.8 percentage points), Newfoundland (up 3.1 percentage points) and Nova Scotia (up 2.8 percentage points).

In 2000, B.C. had the third highest overall post secondary participation rate, behind only Quebec and Newfoundland. B.C.’s overall result is due to having the highest college participation rate. In terms of university participation rate, B.C. ranked ninth of the ten provinces.

Figure 5: PSE Participation Rates, Population Aged 18 to 29, Canada and Provinces, 1990 and 2000								
	1990				2000			
	“College”	“University”	“Other”	“All”	“College”	“University”	“Other”	“All”
Canada	7.9%	11.6%	1.4%	21.0%	11.0%	14.1%	2.1%	27.2%
B.C.	9.1%	8.9%	1.0%	19.0%	13.8%	12.4%	2.4%	28.6%
Alberta	8.0%	9.3%	1.1%	18.4%	9.6%	11.4%	2.1%	23.0%
Saskatchewan	3.4%	12.2%	2.0%	17.6%	5.3%	16.9%	1.8%	24.1%
Manitoba	3.6%	15.1%	1.4%	20.1%	5.8%	16.4%	2.2%	24.5%
Ontario	8.0%	11.9%	1.5%	21.4%	10.5%	14.5%	1.6%	26.6%
Quebec	9.6%	12.3%	1.5%	23.3%	13.6%	14.1%	3.1%	30.8%
Atlantic	4.9%	12.9%	1.0%	18.8%	7.5%	16.7%	0.8%	25.0%
<i>New Brunswick</i>	4.6%	11.9%	1.3%	17.7%	6.3%	14.0%	1.0%	21.3%
<i>Nova Scotia</i>	3.8%	15.3%	1.2%	20.3%	6.6%	17.4%	1.0%	25.0%
<i>P.E.I.</i>	4.6%	11.3%	0.0%	16.0%	8.4%	18.2%	0.0%	26.7%
<i>Newfoundland</i>	7.1%	10.8%	0.7%	18.6%	10.1%	18.8%	0.6%	29.5%

Note: The “college”, “university” and “other” categories may not add up to the all-inclusive “all” PSE category due to rounding.

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