

## 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement

### Summary of UWindsor Results Prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis

Along with all Ontario universities, The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to UWindsor first-year and final year undergraduates in the Winter 2014 term. The overall UWindsor response rate was 29.3% with 876 first-year and 896 final year students completing the online survey. The resultant sampling errors are +/- 2.8% and +/- 2.7% for first-year and final year respondents respectively.

The selection of results in this report was guided by the indicators and related metrics outlined in the university's SMA 2014-2017. These include general satisfaction with the undergraduate experience, opportunities for service learning and internship opportunities, teaching practices and the perceived support for students.

#### Respondent Profile

Fifty-nine percent of respondents were female, slightly higher than the actual 53% of the UWindsor population. About 9 in 10 (91%) first-year respondents and more than three-quarters (78%) of final year respondents were full-time students in Winter 2014. About 7 in 10 (71%) first-year respondents had no prior postsecondary experience. Ten percent of first-year and 5% of final year respondents were international students.

Twenty-six percent of first-year respondents lived in a university residence compared to 43% of those in the Ontario universities group. Fifty-two percent of respondents are from families where neither parent holds a university degree. Nearly 4 in 10 (37%) expect they will go on to a Master's degree while 22% expect their highest level of education will be a Doctoral or professional degree

#### General Satisfaction

NSSE asks two questions to gauge students' general satisfaction with their university: 'how would you evaluate your entire educational at your university?' and "if you could start over, would you attend the same institution you are now attending?". When compared with the 2011 NSSE results, there is no appreciable difference in the general satisfaction of first-year respondents, however senior students reported somewhat lower levels of satisfaction. Specifically in 2014, 72% of final year respondents rated their educational experience as excellent or good and 71% said they would start over at UWindsor compared to 78% and 76% respectively in 2011 (**Figure 1 and Figure 2**).

When considering individual fields of study, there are a number where respondent satisfaction was high. For example, more than 8 in 10 first-year respondents in Drama, Social Work, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Music, Human Kinetics and Nursing rated their entire educational experience at UWindsor as good or excellent. In terms of fourth-year UWindsor respondents, at least 8

in 10 in Communication Studies, Political Science, Human Kinetics, Nursing and Chemistry would select UWindsor if they were to start their university education over again.

Figure 1:

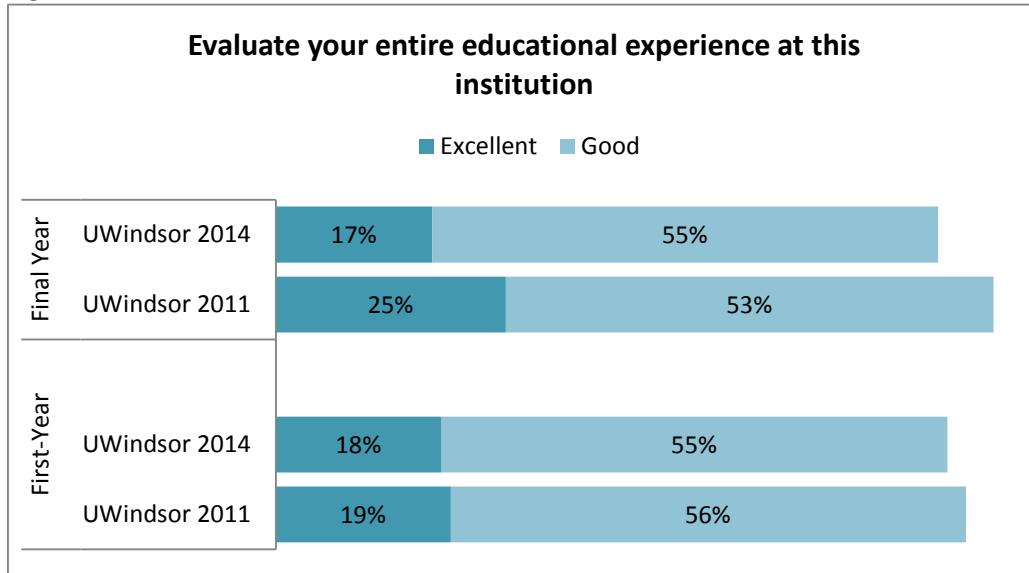
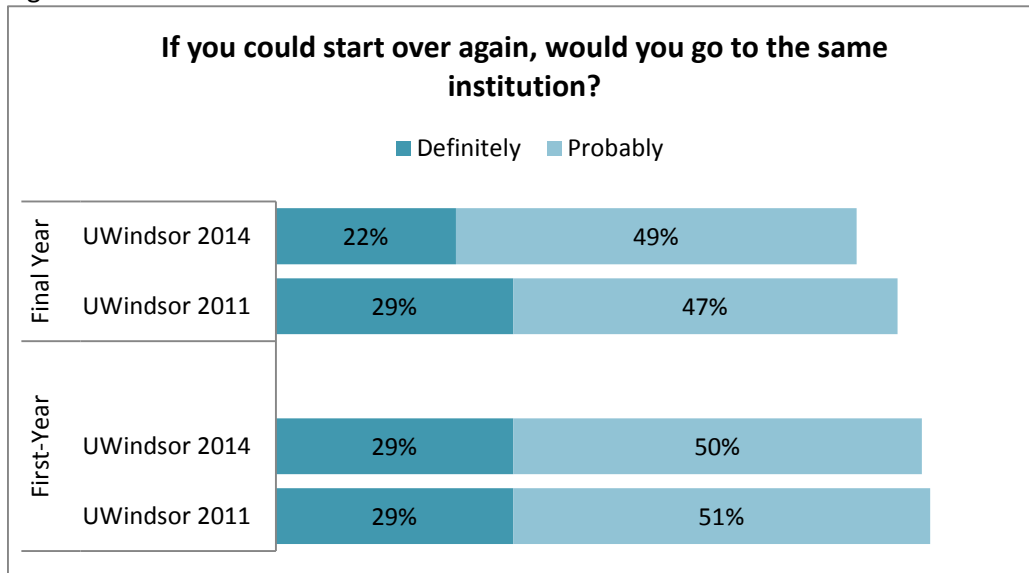


Figure 2:



## Areas Most in Need of Improvement

From a list of items, students were asked to select two in the classroom and two outside the classroom that the university most needed to address to improve the academic and learning experience. Unchanged from the 2011 NSSE, the top areas in the classroom most in need of improvement were to:

- Improve quality of instruction by professors
- Improve quality of classroom/lecture halls
- Increase number or variety of course offerings in their major
- Ensure better fit between course content, assignments and exams

The top areas needing improvement outside the classroom were:

- Improve quality/availability of study spaces
- Provide a better social environment for students
- Increase contact with professors outside of class
- Provide more opportunities to undertake research with faculty

## Obstacles to Academic Progress

Consistent with the 2011 NSSE findings, the most common obstacle to academic progress for respondents was financial pressures or work obligations, reported by 79% of first-year and 81% of final year respondents. Forty-five percent of first-year and 57% of senior students were employed off campus in the 2014 Winter semester. Among senior students, course availability and scheduling was cited as an obstacle by 79%.

Three-quarter of first-year respondents said their academic performance was interfering with their progress towards a degree. Nearly half (47%) of first-year respondents said that their primary source of advice regarding their academic plans was friends, other students or family. Only 30% said their primary source was an academic advisor or a faculty or staff member not formally assigned as an advisor.

## High-Impact Practices

NSSE asks students about their participation in six high-impact practices. These practices are opportunities provided by universities which are positively associated with undergraduate success. NSSE founding director, George Kuh, recommends that students participate in at least two high-impact practices during their undergraduate studies - one in their first year and one that is connected to their major (NSSE, 2007). The six practices are participation in:

- Formal learning community where students take 2 or more courses together
- Courses that included a community-based project or service learning
- Work with a faculty member on a research project
- Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement
- Study abroad
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, thesis, portfolio etc.)

**Note that first-year respondents are only asked about their experiences in the first three high-impact practices while final year respondents are asked about all six opportunities.**

Towards the end of their first year at university, 44% of first-year UWindsor respondents had participated in at least one high-impact practice including 8% who participated in 2 or more. One-half of senior UWindsor respondents had participated in two or more high-impact practices and 28% participated in just one.

Although differences in high-impact practice participation rates are undoubtedly influenced by program mix, a significantly higher percentage of UWindsor senior respondents had taken a course that included a community-based project (service learning) compared with their counterparts in the Ontario universities group. See **Table 2**.

Table 2: Participation in High-Impact Practices

	First-Year		Final Year	
	UWindsor	Ontario Universities	UWindsor	Ontario Universities
Learning community	10%	10%	17%	18%
Service learning	39%	43%	52%	45%
Research with faculty	5%	3%	22%	23%
Internship or field experience	-	-	43%	46%
Study abroad	-	-	6%	10%
Culminating senior experience	-	-	30%	33%

## Engagement Indicators

In 2013, NSSE moved from five engagement benchmarks to ten engagement indicators as a way to summarize student responses. The ten indicators are organized into four themes as shown in **Table 3**. Both first-year and final year UWindsor respondents gave high scores on average for 'learning strategies' and 'student-faculty interaction'. Examples of learning strategies used were reviewing notes after class and summarizing course materials. Student-faculty interaction includes talking with faculty about career plans, discussing academic performance and working with faculty on activities other than coursework.

Table 3: NSSE Theme and Engagement Indicators

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Engagement Indicator</b>
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning
	Reflective & Integrative Learning
	Learning Strategies
	Quantitative Reasoning
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning
	Discussions with Diverse Others
Experience with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction
	Effective Teaching Practices
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions
	Supportive Environment

Areas of engagement where UWindsor students did not score as well were in the ‘discussions with diverse others’ and the university’s perceived ‘supportive environment’. Contributing factors were fewer discussions with people from another race or ethnicity and from different economic backgrounds. Respondents as well noted that less emphasis was put on using learning support services and on attending campus activities such as social or political events.

If you would like more detail or have any questions about NSSE or the university’s results, please contact the Office of Institutional Analysis at [uia@uwindsor.ca](mailto:uia@uwindsor.ca) or 519-253-3000 ext. 2162.