

GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE

**EARLY LEAVER SURVEY REPORT
2004**

PREPARED BY:
RONDA BAXTER, RESEARCH ANALYST
STRATEGIC PLANNING DEPARTMENT
SEPTEMBER 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. KEY FINDINGS	1
II. INTRODUCTION	3
III. METHODOLOGY	5
IV. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	11
GENDER	11
AGE	11
MARITAL STATUS	12
UNDERAGE DEPENDENTS	12
NUMBER OF UNDERAGE DEPENDENTS	12
PRIMARY SOURCE OF EDUCATION FUNDING	13
V. CURRENT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT	15
POST-SECONDARY ENROLMENT	15
ENROLMENT BY INSTITUTION	15
RELATED PROGRAM OF STUDY	16
EMPLOYMENT PROFILE	16
VI. PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION	17
ENOUGH COLLEGE INFORMATION	17
ENOUGH PROGRAM INFORMATION	17
COLLEGE ORIENTATION HELPFUL	18
PROGRAM ORIENTATION HELPFUL	18
PROGRAM MEETING EXPECTATIONS	18
COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT	19
ACADEMICALLY PREPARED	19
ACADEMIC GOALS CLEAR	19
ACADEMIC GOALS CHANGED	20
VII. STUDENT SATISFACTION	21
COMPARISON OF STUDENT SATISFACTION	21
COLLEGE RESULTS	22
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE	22
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	23
FACULTY OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY STUDIES	23
CENTRE FOR THE ARTS	24
UNIVERSITY TRANSFER	24
CAREER PROGRAMS	25
SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC ADVICE	26

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF ACADEMIC ASPECTS ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE	33
PREFERRED COURSES NOT AVAILABLE	33
DID NOT LIKE PROGRAM	33
CHANGING INSTITUTIONS	34
LOCATION	34
TUITION AND FEES	34
CLASS SIZE	35
CHOSE TO WITHDRAW DUE TO POOR GRADES	35
REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW DUE FOR ACADEMIC REASONS	35
IX. SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE	37
CARE FOR DEPENDENT CHILD(REN)	37
CARE FOR DEPENDENT ADULT	37
CONFLICT WITH WORK DEMANDS	38
INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES	38
MOVING OUT OF THE EDMONTON AREA	38
PHYSICAL HEALTH REASONS	39
STRESS LEVEL	39
FEELING ISOLATED OR ALONE AT THE COLLEGE	39
X. PRIMARY REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL	41
XI. COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES	43
XII. SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE STUDIES	45
XIII. INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES	47
INTENTION TO RESUME STUDIES	47
INTENTION TO PURSUE RELATED PROGRAM AREA	47
INTENTION TO RETURN TO GRANT MACÉWAN COLLEGE	48
ESTIMATED TIME TO RETURN TO STUDIES	48
XIV. GENERAL COMMENTS	49
XV. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS	51
APPENDIX A RESULTS BY ENROLMENT CATEGORY	53
APPENDIX B EARLY LEAVER SURVEY	79

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>PAGE</u>	
Table 1	SURVEY POPULATION	6
Table 2	NON-RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY	7
Table 3	ELIMINATED RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY	8
Table 4	SURVEY PARTICIPATION BY PROGRAM AND FACULTY/SCHOOL	9
Table 5	PRIMARY SOURCE OF EDUCATION FUNDING	13
Table 6	COMPARISON OF STUDENT SATISFACTION RATINGS FROM COLLEGE SURVEYS	21
Table 7	SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC ADVICE	27-31
Table 8	PRIMARY REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL	42
Table 9	COLLEGE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO CONTINUE STUDIES	44
Table 10	SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE	46
Table 11	RESPONDENTS' GENERAL COMMENTS	49

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- When compared to the general first year student population, early leavers are more likely to be male, aged 21 – 30 and married or living common law.

CURRENT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Approximately one in five (21%) early leavers were enrolled in another post-secondary institution. Of those, 73% had chosen a related program offered at another institution, while 27% were enrolled in a different area of study.
- 54% of early leavers were employed full-time at the time of the survey.

PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION

- Early leavers rated College pre-enrolment information higher than information received from their program. Respondents were more likely to have attended the program orientation than the College orientation.
- 91% felt that the College was a welcoming environment.
- 68% of respondents stated that their academic goals were clear when they entered the program; however, 56% stated that their academic goals changed.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

- 77% of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of their educational experience, but this varied considerably across the different enrolment categories.
- 27% of respondents did not receive academic advice. Of the respondents who had received academic advice, 73% were satisfied with the advice they received. The three most commonly identified sources of academic advice were *program advisors*, *program staff* and the *Student Resource Centre*.

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE

- Based on the ratings of selected academic aspects, the most significant aspect affecting the decision to discontinue was *changing institutions* (24%) followed by the respondent *not liking the program* (20%).
- The most significant personal issue affecting the decision to discontinue was *insufficient financial resources* (22%).

PRIMARY REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL

- When asked to identify the primary reason for withdrawal, the two most common academic reasons were *poor program suitability* and *unclear academic goals*. The two most common personal reasons were *financial resources* and *health*.

COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES

- Approximately one-third of the respondents indicated that the College could have assisted them in continuing their studies.

SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE

- Three-quarters of the respondents were satisfied with their decision to discontinue. When asked to explain why, several respondents indicated that leaving their program allowed them to attend a preferred program or institution, and that they had left a program that was unsuitable.

INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES

- 90% of the respondents expected to continue their education. Of those, 76% expected to continue at MacEwan, but only 53% in a related program area.
- 65% expected to return to their studies within the year.

I. KEY FINDINGS

MACEWAN SUPPORTS ITS STUDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER ENROLMENT

The quality of pre-enrolment information the College provides to potential students, supporting students' transition into the College, academic advice provided subsequent to enrolment and the College environment are all important factors in supporting student success. Early leavers provided positive ratings on many of these aspects. The majority of respondents indicated they received sufficient College and program information (77% and 67% respectively) to make the best enrolment decision. Although 30% of the respondents did not attend the College orientation, and 25% did not attend their program's orientation, the majority of those who did attend orientation considered it helpful. Similar results were reported for academic advice. Although 27% did not receive academic advice, of those who did, 73% were satisfied with the advice that they received. 91% agreed that the College provided a welcoming environment; for only 4% of the respondents was feeling isolated or alone a significant factor in their decision to discontinue.

EARLY LEAVERS WERE SATISFIED WITH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Students' initial positive impressions, as noted above, continued throughout the term. Satisfaction ratings for selected program and institutional aspects ranged from 65% to 77%. Although these ratings are not as high as those provided by students who complete their Career or University Transfer program of study, ratings were similar to or higher than the general first year student population as reported through the Student Experience Survey. Albeit from a much smaller number, 77% of early leavers were satisfied with the overall quality of their educational experience. Additionally, of those respondents who indicated that they intended to continue their education, 76% expected to continue at MacEwan - another positive reflection on the College.

FIRST TERM EXPERIENCE LED STUDENTS TO REASSESS THEIR ACADEMIC GOALS

The underlying question to the research was why do students leave before completing their programs? As noted above, students indicated that overall they were provided with the information they required to choose a program. However, while 68% indicated that their academic goals were clear, 56% indicated that their academic goals changed in their first term of enrolment. An alternative perspective is provided by the findings that 25% did not agree that the program was meeting their expectations and 20% did not like their program. These results foreshadowed the responses to an open ended question asking respondents to identify their primary reason for leaving.

The most common academic reasons (as differentiated from personal reasons) were poor program suitability and unclear academic goals. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that experiencing a program of study has a distinguishable impact on a student's academic goals. This was further supported by responses from those who indicated an intention to resume their studies, with slightly more than half (53%) intending to return to a related program area.

EARLY LEAVER MAY BE A MISLEADING LABEL

Related to the above point, there were very few respondents who had decided to permanently discontinue their post-secondary education. Of those surveyed, 21% were continuing their studies in the Winter 2004 term at another institution. Of those respondents who were not enrolled, 90% intended to resume their studies, more than half of those within the next 12 months. Therefore, while some students may not complete their program, or complete it in consecutive terms of enrolment, there were strong indications that they will continue their education.

THE DECISION TO LEAVE WAS POSITIVE AND OFTEN BEYOND THE COLLEGE'S INFLUENCE

The secondary question in the research was what could the College have done to assist the student to continue? The results, overall, were that many of the factors that contributed to the students' decisions were outside of the College's influence. The survey uncovered the strong influence of the first term educational experience on the student's long term educational goals and plans for achieving them. Although not as strong, but certainly significant, were challenges and barriers in students' personal lives, particularly financial resources and health issues. When respondents were asked if they were satisfied with their decision to discontinue their studies, 75% indicated that they were. When asked to explain, the most common reasons were that leaving their program was necessary to pursue other possibilities (including enrolling in a preferred program or institution), and that they did not want to continue in a program that was unsuitable. However, almost one-third indicated that the College could have assisted them in continuing their studies.

II. INTRODUCTION

Introduced during the 2003/04 academic year, the Early Leaver Survey was conducted to determine the nature and extent of program non-completion among Grant MacEwan College's students. This survey marked the first investigation of its kind for the College. While the College has collected data on its first year students (New Student Survey, Student Experience Survey) as well as former students (Graduate Survey, University Transfer Survey), the Early Leaver Survey was developed to address the lack of information for students who entered, but did not complete a program of study. Such information was deemed critical in supporting the College's mission of inspiring and enabling individuals to succeed in life through career and university studies.

The Student Experience Survey was conducted to identify those factors that put students at risk for non-completion. The Early Leaver Survey was developed as complementary research by taking the inquiry to the next level. Themes and concepts applicable to early leavers were mined from a literature review of the broader categories of student experience and student success. These themes established the areas of interest to be investigated and included the following:

- First year students are at greatest risk of leaving their program
- Full-time students have a higher level of commitment to program completion than part-time students
- Student characteristics (age, gender, educational financing) may put students at greater risk of non-completion
- Students may discontinue their studies for more than one reason
- Challenges in the student's personal life may present barriers to achieving academic goals
- Academic reasons for leaving early may include unclear academic goals, an unsatisfactory educational experience, poor personal suitability to the program or institution of choice, or poor academic performance
- Academic and social integration into the institution are important factors in student success
- A student discontinuing their studies may be considered negative to the institution, but this decision may be either positive or negative for the student
- Leaving a program early may be voluntary or involuntary
- Post-secondary education is not always completed in a linear fashion, as many students discontinue their studies for a period, and resume their education at a later date.

In addition to the literature review, post-secondary institutional research departments from across Canada were consulted regarding their experiences with similar or related research. The survey was further guided by College staff, in particular the Executive Vice-President Academic, Vice-President Student Services, and key personnel from Information and Technology Services (ITS).

As with the Student Experience Survey, the Early Leaver Survey presented an opportunity to collect new information not collected on other survey instruments. However, there was again an interest in the opportunity to compare responses from a different cohort to questions included in other surveys. Therefore, the survey as a whole represented a balance of new and duplicated questions.

Early leavers were asked to provide information on:

- Demographic characteristics
- Current educational and employment activities

- Ratings of program preparation and information
- Satisfaction with educational experience and academic advice
- Significance of educational experience and personal influences on the decision to discontinue
- Assistance the College could have provided in order for the student to have continued their studies
- Satisfaction with the decision not to continue
- Future intentions for resuming studies.

Results are presented at the College level, for each faculty/school, and by University Transfer and Career program categories to observe differences, if any, among enrolment categories. Appendix A includes summaries for each enrolment category, as well as for programs with five or more survey participants.

Where appropriate, comparisons are also made to results from other College surveys. Given the relatively small number of Early Leaver respondents, comparisons should be made with caution.

The Early Leaver Survey not only investigated influences in a student's decision to leave the College, but it also revealed a number of methodological challenges in conducting research of this nature. Defining the questions would prove to be easier than defining the participants. The diversity of MacEwan's students, the College's commitment to providing flexible options for students to begin and complete their post-secondary studies, and student perception of having met their educational requirements ultimately eroded what initially appeared to be a robust participant list. As the Early Leaver Survey was exploratory, this discovery was a valuable research finding itself. Therefore, future considerations pertaining to content and methodology for successive Early Leaver Surveys complete the reported findings.

The Strategic Planning department gratefully acknowledges the contributions of those who assisted in the development of the Early Leaver Survey.

III. METHODOLOGY

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The Early Leaver Survey went through three stages of development:

1. Survey Content

As noted in the introduction, areas for investigation were suggested by early work to develop the Student Experience Survey.

As with the Student Experience Survey, a number of questions were taken directly from other MacEwan surveys so as to capture a new perspective on the same issues of interest.

Finally, overall College objectives and key issues as identified by the Executive Vice-President, Academic, the Vice-President, Student Services, and the Executive Director, Strategic Planning, were the source of several questions not included on other College surveys.

2. Participant Definition

Once the purpose, goals and content of the Early Leaver Survey were determined, the next step was to define which former students were to participate in the survey. The initial participant list was developed with the cooperation and advice of Information and Technology Services (ITS). For the purpose of the study, the student characteristics that defined an early leaver were:

First year students with full-time enrolment in Fall 2003, with no credit enrolment activity in Winter 2004, excluding unclassified students and students enrolled in Preparation for University and College and English as a Second Language.

First year students were the focus as retention research has established that during the first year of studies, students are more vulnerable to leaving their programs than those who persist further into their programs. The exclusion of unclassified, Preparation for University and College and English as a Second Language students was based on the assessment that there is not a “program” for them to withdraw from. And, finally, part-time students were not included based on retention findings indicating that part-time students are often less committed to completing a program when they begin their studies than those who begin a program with full-time status.

It was recognized that by using the above definition of early leaver, the survey would not capture students who changed programs between the fall and winter terms. Likewise, students who shifted from full-time enrolment in the fall to part-time enrolment in the winter would not be contacted.

ITS cautioned that University Transfer programs should be expected to have high numbers of early leavers as there is not a formal exit process for those students, that is, there is no graduation as there is for Career program students.

Of the 6,392 first year, full-time students, based on the early leaver definition, ITS provided a list of 510 potential participants. Strategic Planning’s review of the student

information revealed that further refinement of the participant list would be required in order to survey those who most closely fit with the concept of early leaver developed early in the project. Table 1 illustrates this process.

Table 1 - Survey Population		
Category	Definition	Number
Potential Participants	This was based on the definition provided to ITS: First year students with full-time enrolment in Fall 2003, with no credit enrolment activity in Winter 2004, excluding unclassified students and students enrolled in Preparation for University and College and English as a Second Language.	510
Pilot Test Participants	That the Early Leaver Survey was being implemented for the first time required that a pilot test be conducted to identify difficulties with question wording or overall flow of the survey. The program with the largest enrolment, Bachelor of Arts, was, not surprisingly, the program with the largest number of early leavers. Therefore, ten former Arts students were selected as pilot test, four of whom were contacted in the pilot testing phase.	(4)
Data Cleaning	Despite efforts to clearly define students to be included, a small number of students from programs that were not to participate in the survey were found in the data file, and were removed.	(6)
Contact Information Unavailable	A review of the student information revealed that the telephone contact information fields (home, work, and cellular) did not contain data.	(2)
Management Studies – Ukraine Program	This group primarily had out of country contact information and was therefore removed from the list.	(56)
Off Sequence Graduations	Although the majority of the College’s students graduate April – June, there are a growing number of accelerated programs being offered with different completion dates. For these students, fall enrolment and no winter enrolment activity is a result of program completion. These included Police Studies – Off Campus (13), Nursing – Accelerated (3), and Management Studies – Accelerated (31).	(47)
Short Programs	Similar to the above group, the Residential Aide program is completed within several weeks, with a December completion date. Again, no winter enrolment was due to program completion.	(36)
Number of survey participants provided to contractor:		359

3. Methodology Selection

Survey structure (the balance between quantitative and qualitative type questions) and potential participants (how many participants and their accessibility) were considerations in determining the most appropriate methodology. Based on these two considerations, as well as a desire for a high response rate, a telephone survey was determined to be the most suitable methodology to support the project.

Customer Contact Consulting submitted a successful proposal to conduct telephone surveys on behalf of the College.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

In the early stages of survey administration it became evident that contacting former students would prove difficult. The decision to survey in the Winter term, rather than conducting the survey in Fall 2004 to see if the students returned was made to facilitate successful contacts. Despite the short time between when the students left and when the survey was conducted (March 2004), the contractor was unable to contact a significant number of the potential participants. Table 2 provides details of those potential participants who were not accessible during the survey.

Table 2 - Non-Respondents by Category		
Category	Definition	Number
Initial List of Participants		359
Not Contacted	This group included those former students for whom the College appears to have correct contact information, but 5 – 7 attempts by the contractor resulted in no contact with the student or anyone associated with the student that could assist in contacting them.	(84)
Unable to contact	This category included those attempts that resulted in new information obtained regarding the student's accessibility. Examples included being advised that the student was unavailable due to health reasons, or they were traveling or working elsewhere. It also included unsuccessful research through directory assistance or the internet to obtain an up to date telephone number when the college provided information was no longer current, and new telephone numbers provided by someone associated with the student were incorrect or not in service.	(51)
Refused	Every effort is taken to word survey introductions in a manner that quickly and concisely communicates the importance of the research being conducted. However, a number of former students indicated an unwillingness to participate.	(17)
Total number of students contacted:		207

Analysis of the completed surveys revealed additional unforeseen factors that would affect the amount of usable data. Table 3 illustrates those factors contributing to the further reduced number of relevant responses.

Table 3 - Eliminated Respondents by Category

Category	Definition	Number
Contacted Participants		207
Data Cleaning	Despite efforts to clearly define students to be included, a small number of students from programs that were not to participate in the survey were found in the data file, and were removed. Also, three records were determined to be corrupted.	(11)
Perceived Continuers	This category represented contacts who eliminated themselves from the survey by indicating that they were still enrolled at the College. Further investigation into a small number of student records indicated that these ineligible students were included in the participant list due to the timing of record extraction; some students had returned to their classes before completing their registration for the term, or indicated that they had completed their course work, but still had a practicum requirement to meet.	(30)
Perceived Completers	This group included those who stated they had graduated from their program. There is the possibility that within this group, there are more examples of off sequence graduation dates. Although not eliminated previously, they were eliminated at this stage through the sorting questions that open the survey. This is where the distinction between "completed a program" and "graduated" presented methodological challenges. Some respondents noted that they had completed their coursework but had only their practicum to complete. Although by College definitions these students had not completed their programs, in the students' minds, they had.	(17)
Transfer Students	These students were not eliminated by the initial questions asked to determine eligibility to participate in the survey. They were University Transfer students who had earned the maximum credits allowable (comparable to the Perceived Completers) and had done so by the end of the Fall term (comparable to the Off Sequence Graduates). Therefore, by definition they were not "early leavers", and their responses were deleted from the overall results.	(17)
Total number of relevant records:		132

The distribution of survey participants is presented in the following table:

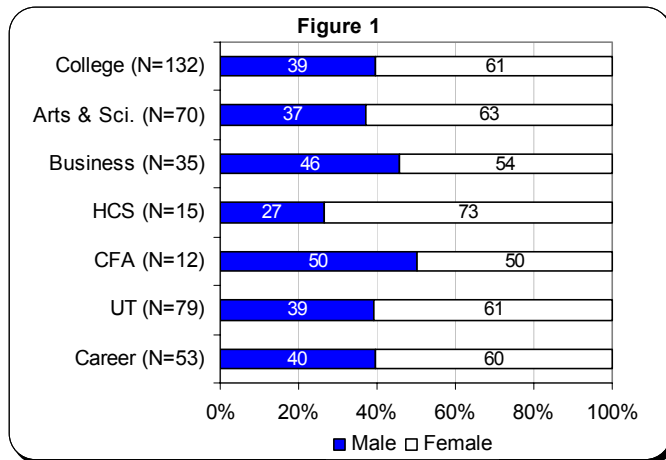
Table 4 – Survey Participation by Program and Faculty/School			
Accounting and Strategic Measurement	4	Human Resource Management	3
Bachelor of Applied Communications in Professional Writing	1	Information Management and Library Technology	
Bachelor of Arts	31	Information Technology and Systems Management	1
Bachelor of Commerce and Management	8	Journalism	1
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	1	Management Studies – Insurance and Risk Management	2
Bachelor of Professional Arts in Criminal Justice	1	Management Studies	3
Bachelor of Science – Computing Specialization	2	Massage Therapy	3
Bachelor of Science	10	Music	5
Bachelor of Science – Engineering	1	Office Assistant – Administration	4
Correctional Services	1	Professional Golf Management	2
Digital Arts and Media	1	Public Relations	1
Dance	1	Police and Security – Investigations and Security	1
Early Childhood Development	2	Rehabilitation Practitioner	1
Fine Art	1	Social Work	1
General Business Studies	1	Therapist Assistant	1
Golf Operations Management	2	Travel	1
General Studies	26	VCD – Design Foundations Certificate	2
Hearing Aid Practitioner	1	Voluntary Sector Management	1
Holistic Health Practitioner	2		
Faculty of Arts and Science			70
School of Business			35
Faculty of Health and Community Studies			15
Centre for the Arts			12
University Transfer			79
Career Programs			53
COLLEGE TOTAL			132

Throughout the report, the number of respondents for each question (N) is presented in brackets. It should be noted that for the smaller enrolment categories, results may be significantly affected by a small number of respondents.

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic information was collected to determine if particular student characteristics put students at greater risk for non-completion. Where possible, results are compared to those collected in the most recent New Student Survey (2002) to observe differences, if any, between the overall first-year student population and those who left their program of study early.

GENDER

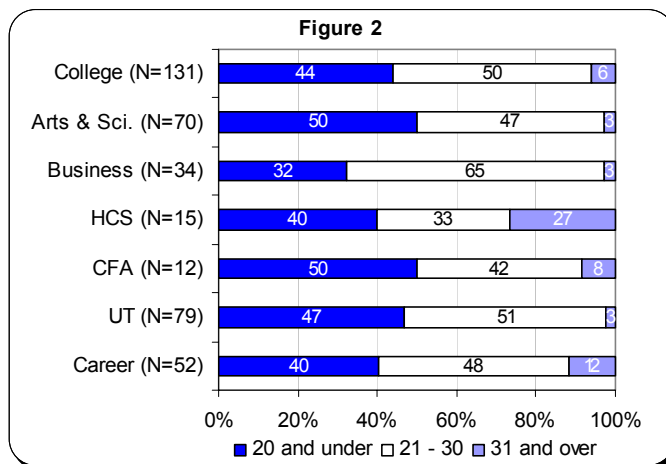


A comparison of the gender distribution reported in the New Student Survey and Early Leaver results indicate that overall, males are more likely than females to leave their program of study early.

The 30% male/70% female distribution of new students at the College is compared to 39%/61% distribution among Early Leaver respondents.

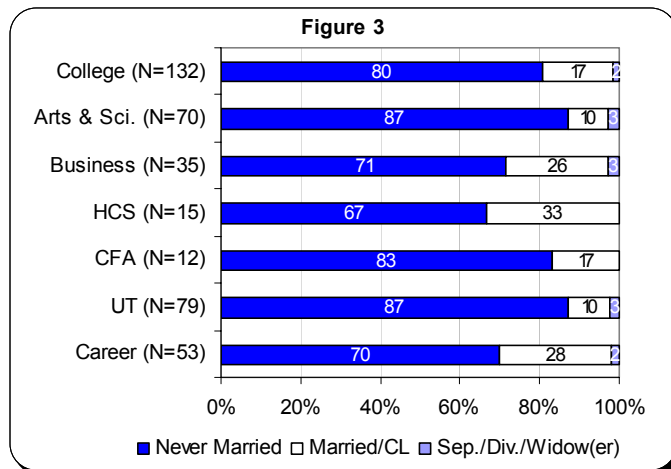
The one enrolment group for which this was an exception was among CFA students; both surveys yielded similar results (48% male/52% female among new students).

AGE



To allow for comparisons to New Student results, the two lowest age categories were combined, as were the 21 – 24 and 25 – 30 age categories. There were no significant differences in survey results for CFA students. HCS students aged 31 and over were more likely to leave early. 55% of new students to the College were 20 or under, 36% were aged 21 – 30 and 9% were 31 or older. Similar differences were reported for Arts & Science, Business, University Transfer and Career program students, indicating that overall, students aged 21 – 30 were more likely to leave their programs early.

MARITAL STATUS

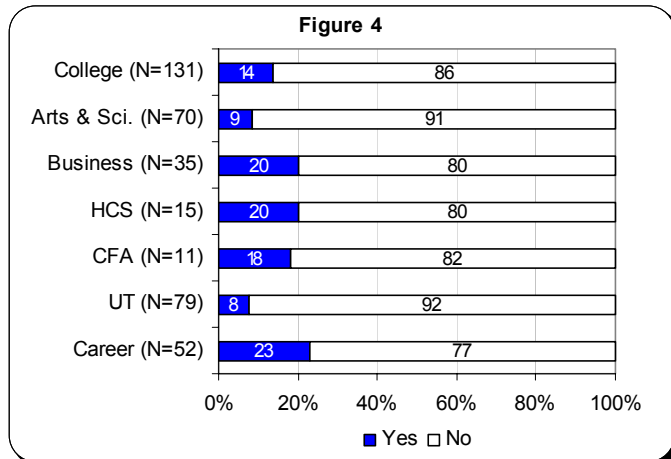


As only 1% of the Early Leaver respondents were widowed, these results were combined with separated/divorced.

Results for University Transfer and Arts & Science students were similar for both surveys.

However, all other results show a greater percentage of married/common law students who discontinue their studies as compared to the general first year student population. For example, while 10% of the College's new students were married or in common law relationships, 17% of the College's early leavers were married or living common law.

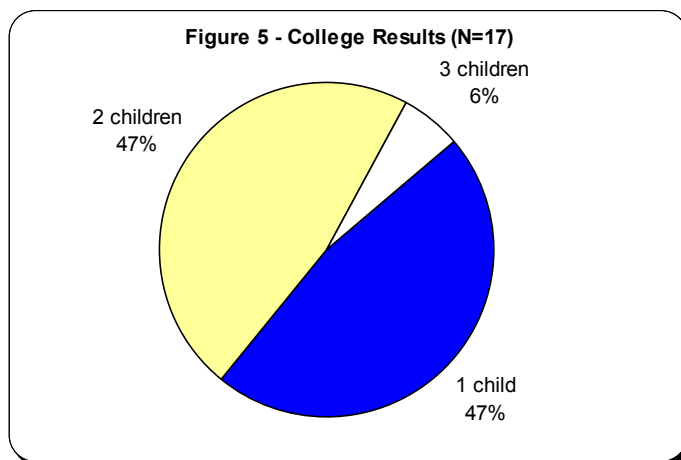
UNDERAGE DEPENDENTS



The Early Leaver Survey was the first survey instrument to include a question regarding underage dependents, so comparison to the general first year population is not possible.

Figure 4 shows that a small percentage of respondents (14%) had underage dependents.

NUMBER OF UNDERAGE DEPENDENTS



Due to the small number of respondents reporting having underage dependents, only aggregate results are presented in Figure 5.

PRIMARY SOURCE OF EDUCATION FUNDING

Although the New Student Survey served as a guide to response categories for the question regarding education funding, differences in question wording and response categories do not permit comparisons of results. The New Student Survey requests that respondents identify all sources of education funding, specifically omitting employment income as a source of education funding.

The Early Leaver Survey, on the other hand, requested that respondents identify their primary source of education funding, including employment income. Also, the Early Leaver Survey distinguished between government student loans and student lines of credit.

	College N=132	Faculty of Arts & Science N=70	School of Business N=35	Faculty of HCS N=15	Centre for the Arts N=12	UT N=79	Career N=53
Spouse/common law partner	3%	3%	3%	7%	-	3%	4%
Parental Aid	32%	36%	29%	20%	33%	35%	26%
Employer Support	1%	1%	-	-	-	1%	-
Savings	14%	16%	11%	13%	17%	15%	13%
Government Student Loan	26%	23%	29%	33%	25%	24%	28%
Student Line of Credit	5%	6%	6%	-	-	5%	4%
Grant/Bursary/Scholarship	4%	3%	6%	-	8%	3%	6%
Employment	10%	11%	9%	7%	8%	13%	6%
Other	6%	1%	9%	20%	8%	1%	13%

When “other” was selected by the respondent, they were asked to specify what that source of financing was. A review of the responses indicates that those who chose “other” primarily did so to reflect more than one source of education funding, that is, they were unwilling or unable to identify a primary source of education funding. Results from the New Student Survey indicate that the majority of students rely on more than one source of funding to support their education. Therefore, in order to obtain a more accurate picture of education funding, future versions of the Early Leaver Survey should permit respondents to identify all education funding sources.

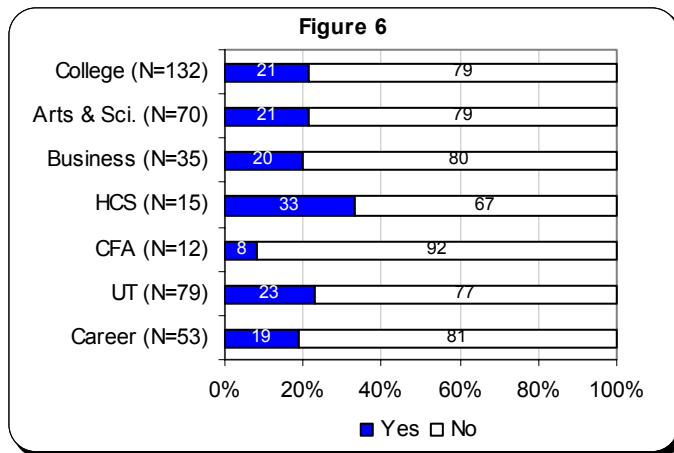
As shown in Table 5, approximately one-third (32%) of the early leavers relied on parental aid as their primary source of education funding, while approximately one-quarter (26%) relied on government student loans.

University Transfer students relied more heavily on parental aid than Career students, who were more likely to finance their education through government student loans. This suggests that the comparatively more costly university studies are possible only if the students’ families are able to provide financial assistance. Another possibility is that students have a level of tolerance with respect to student debt, and are more willing to accumulate debt for a two-year program than for a four-year program.

V. CURRENT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In order to determine reasons for students leaving their programs, respondents were asked to describe their educational and employment activities at the time of the survey. Figures 6 – 9 illustrate student involvement in continuing their studies elsewhere, changing their program of study and participation in the workforce.

POST-SECONDARY ENROLMENT



Overall, approximately one in five former students who left their programs in Fall 2003 were continuing their studies in the Winter 2004 term. Therefore, these students had not discontinued their education, but had chosen to continue elsewhere.

Health and Community Studies students were the most likely to be continuing their education (33%), while Centre for the Arts students were the least likely to have continued (8%). Respondents were not asked to indicate if they were enrolled full- or part-time.

ENROLMENT BY INSTITUTION

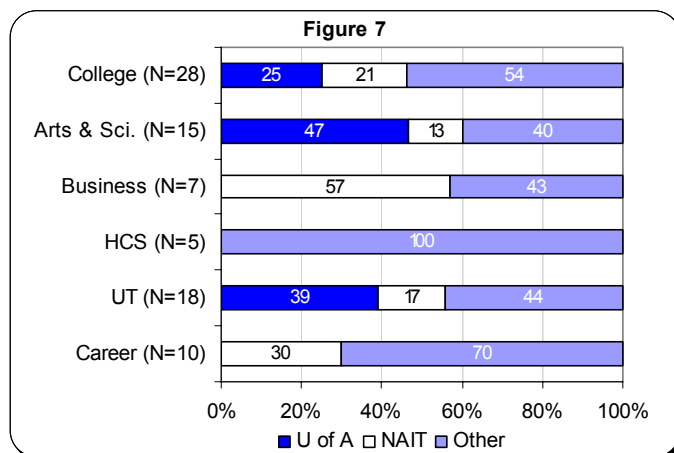


Figure 7 shows that 47% of Arts & Science students were studying at the University of Alberta, and over half of the Business student were enrolled at NAIT.

Of the 15 respondents who identified “other”, three were enrolled at Athabasca University and two were at Lakeland College. One respondent was enrolled in each of the following: University of Lethbridge, University of Regina, University of Winnipeg, Concordia College, Red Deer College, Canadian College of EMS, Alberta Institute of Massage, Estelle Academy, and one respondent was studying bartending (unclear institution of enrolment information was provided by one respondent).

Results are not reported for CFA due to insufficient responses.

RELATED PROGRAM OF STUDY

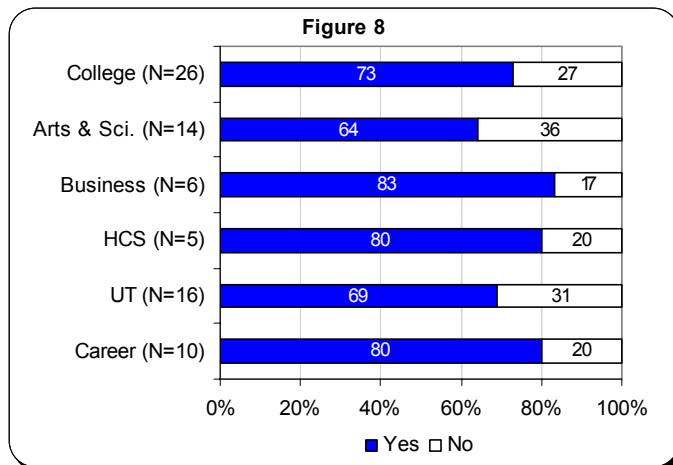
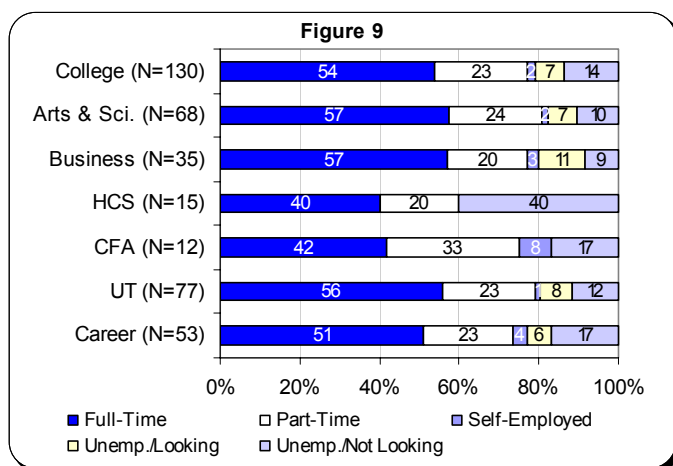


Figure 8 shows that of the 28 respondents who continued their studies at another institution (26 of whom identified if it was related to their previous program of study), 19 continued in a program related to their MacEwan program of study. Therefore, 73% preferred a similar program offered at another institution, while 27% decided to change their area of study.

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE



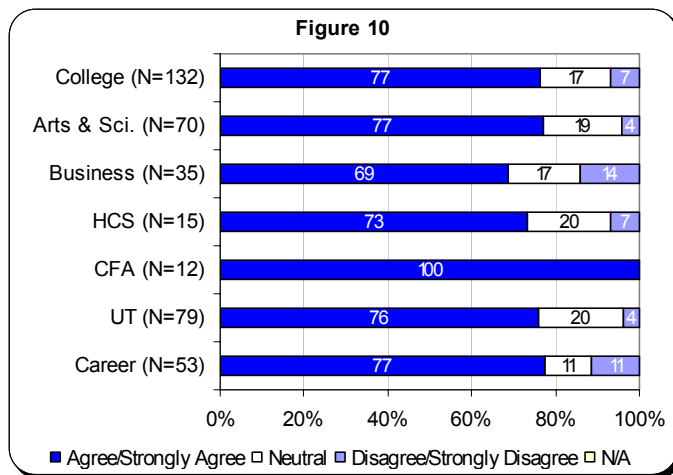
Student Experience Survey results showed that having sufficient financial resources to complete studies was an area of concern for many students, suggesting that finances have the potential to be a significant risk factor for non-completion. This seems to be supported by the results in Figure 9, with over half of the respondents employed full-time shortly after discontinuing their studies, and further supported by comparing results to the employment profile of Student Experience Survey participants, where 41% of respondents were not working and 6% were working full-time. It should be noted that Early Leaver respondents may have been working as well as attending school.

VI. PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION

Pre-enrolment information provided to students is critical in ensuring a successful fit between academic goals and a program of study. Also important to student success is their integration into the institution. The questions in this section were designed to determine how well the College and its programs assist students in choosing a program suitable for achieving their academic goals, and how supported students feel once they have entered the College environment.

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with a variety of statements based on a five-point scale where **5** was **strongly agree**, and **1** was **strongly disagree**, with a “not applicable” option.

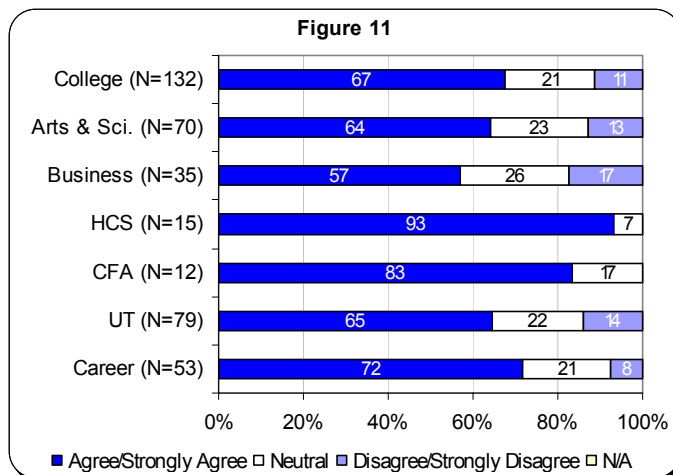
ENOUGH COLLEGE INFORMATION



Overall, more than three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they received enough information about Grant MacEwan College to make an informed decision about enrolling at the College.

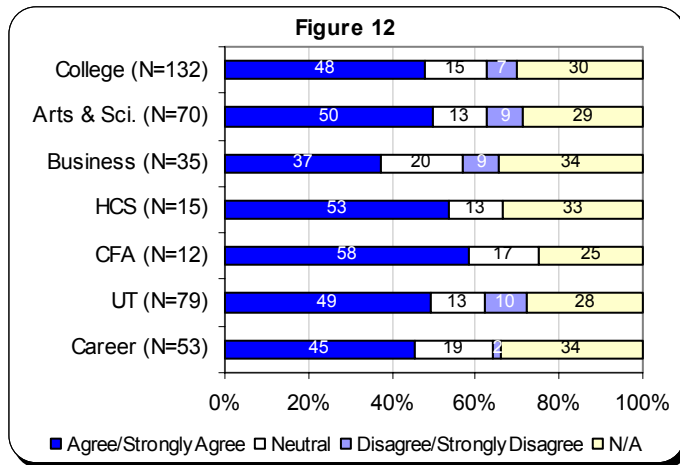
Note: primary sources of information are identified in the New Student Survey.

ENOUGH PROGRAM INFORMATION



Two-thirds of respondents indicated they received enough program information to make the best program choice for them. With the exception of HCS students, program information was rated lower than College information. Interestingly, when comparing results from the Student Experience Survey for the same question, Early Leaver Survey participants rated program information higher than the general first year population. The one exception was for Business students, but the difference was small (61% of Student Experience participants from the School of Business agreed they had enough program information).

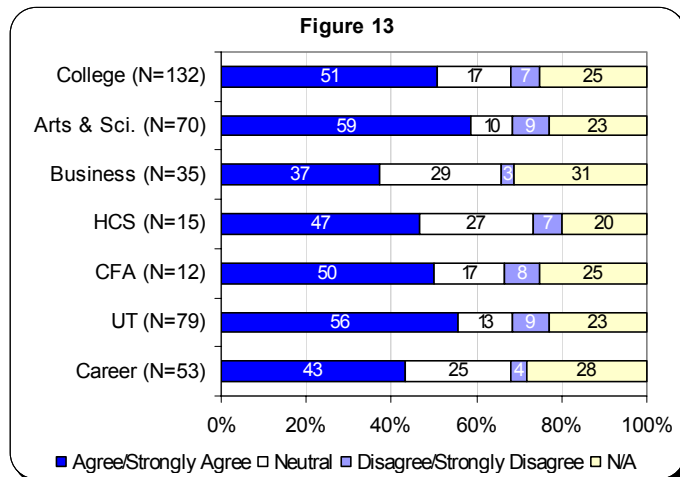
COLLEGE ORIENTATION HELPFUL



76% of Student Experience Survey participants did not attend the College's orientation session. However, of the Early Leaver respondents, only 30% indicated that the College orientation was "not applicable", implying that they had not attended.

Therefore, early leavers appear more likely to have attended the College orientation than first year students overall, and the majority of those who did attend found the orientation to be helpful.

PROGRAM ORIENTATION HELPFUL

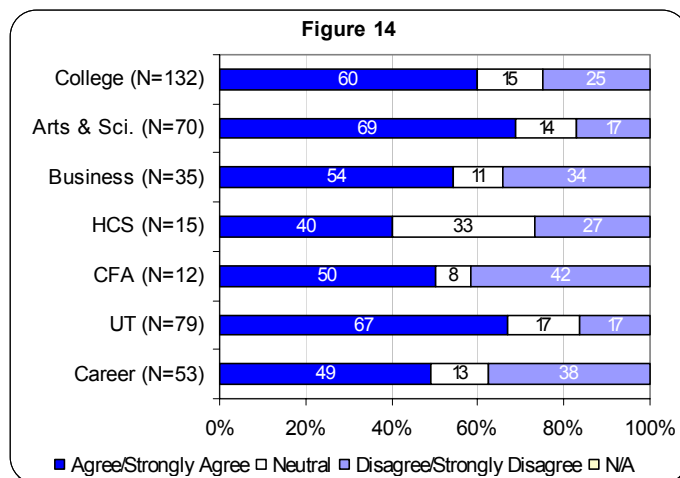


Overall results were similar for College and program orientation.

Based on the "not applicable" responses, more students attended their program orientation than the College orientation.

Results by enrolment category show that HCS, CFA and Career program students rated their program orientation as less helpful than the College orientation, whereas the opposite was true for Arts & Science and University Transfer students.

PROGRAM MEETING EXPECTATIONS

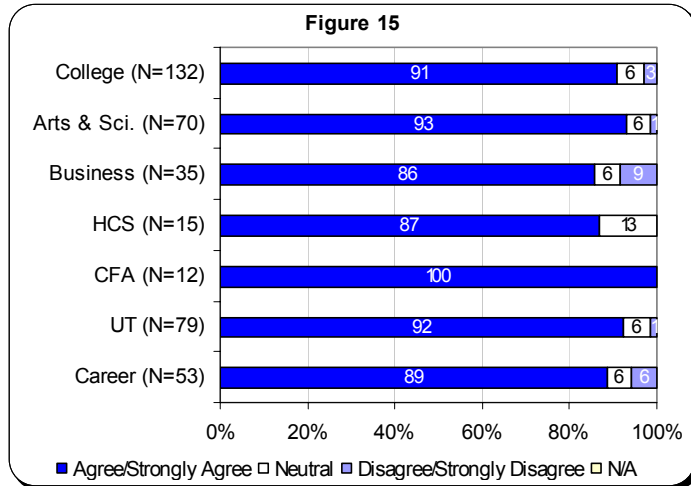


A program not meeting a student's expectations would be considered a risk factor for non-completion.

Figure 14 illustrates a range of results among the enrolment categories.

Comparisons to the results for the same question on the Student Experience Survey show that overall, a greater percentage of early leavers indicated that their program did not meet their expectations.

COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

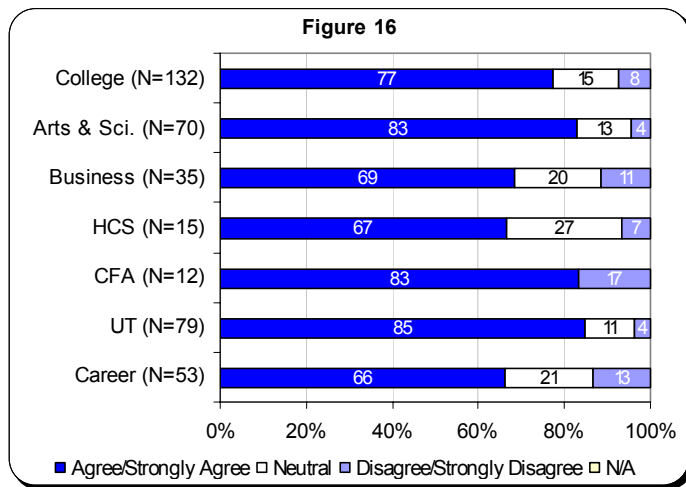


Perceptions regarding the College environment are important since for the majority of students, their first year at MacEwan is their first experience in a post-secondary setting.

Respondents were asked if they agreed that the environment at the College was a welcoming one.

Although there are variances in the results between areas of the college, the majority of students who left their programs early agreed that the College environment was welcoming.

ACADEMICALLY PREPARED



Admission requirements ensure that students have the academic foundation necessary to succeed in their program.

Results from Arts & Science, CFA and University Transfer students overall show the highest self-assessment of academic preparedness, with lower results for Business, HCS and Career program students overall. The most significant difference among the results was between the University Transfer and Career program students.

When compared to the results for the same question on the Student Experience Survey, a smaller percentage of early leavers felt academically prepared.

ACADEMIC GOALS CLEAR

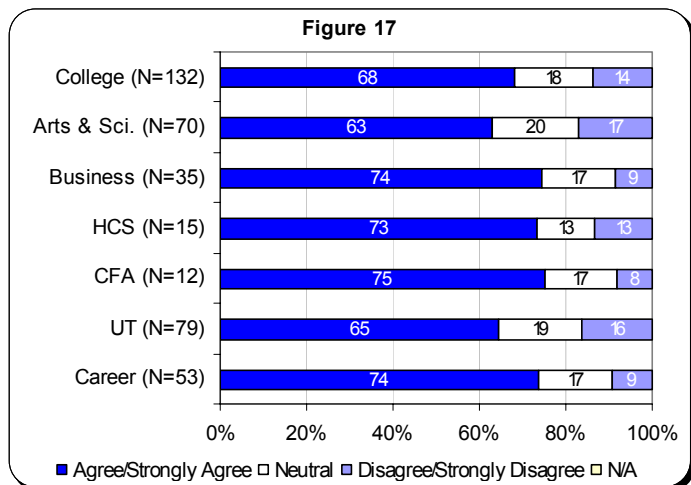
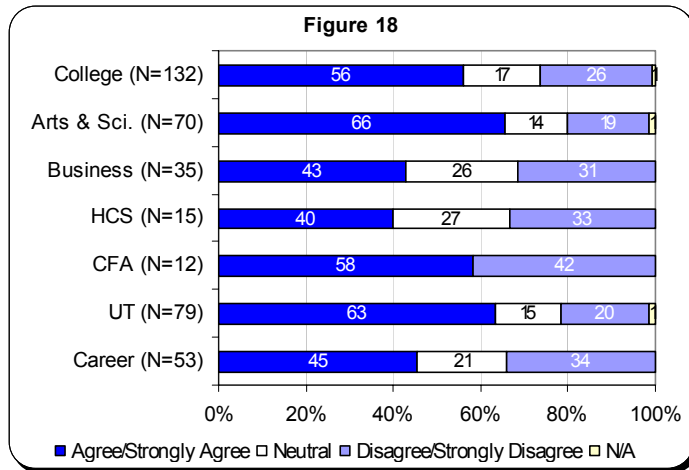


Figure 17 shows that students entering a program have a relatively high degree of confidence about their academic goals.

As no other student cohort is asked to rate the clarity of their academic goals, there is no way to identify if this is a risk factor for non-completion.

Although a student's goals may be clear, it does not necessarily follow that those goals are realistic.

ACADEMIC GOALS CHANGED



A comparison of the results in Figures 17 and 18 indicate that one term of educational experience influences students' academic goals, with a small majority of respondents indicating that their academic goals had changed.

VII. STUDENT SATISFACTION

Selected aspects of student satisfaction are now rated on a number of College surveys. This enables the College to identify differences in results among different student cohorts, and at various points in students' progression through their program.

On all of the surveys, respondents rated their satisfaction using a five-point scale where **5** was **very satisfied** and **1** was **very unsatisfied**, with the option of "not applicable". It should be noted that there are slight wording differences on the University Transfer Survey that may affect comparability of results. University Transfer students rate *required equipment* (equipment in program labs), *necessary technology available in the program* (equipment in computer labs) and *LRC – Materials* (LRC - Collections).

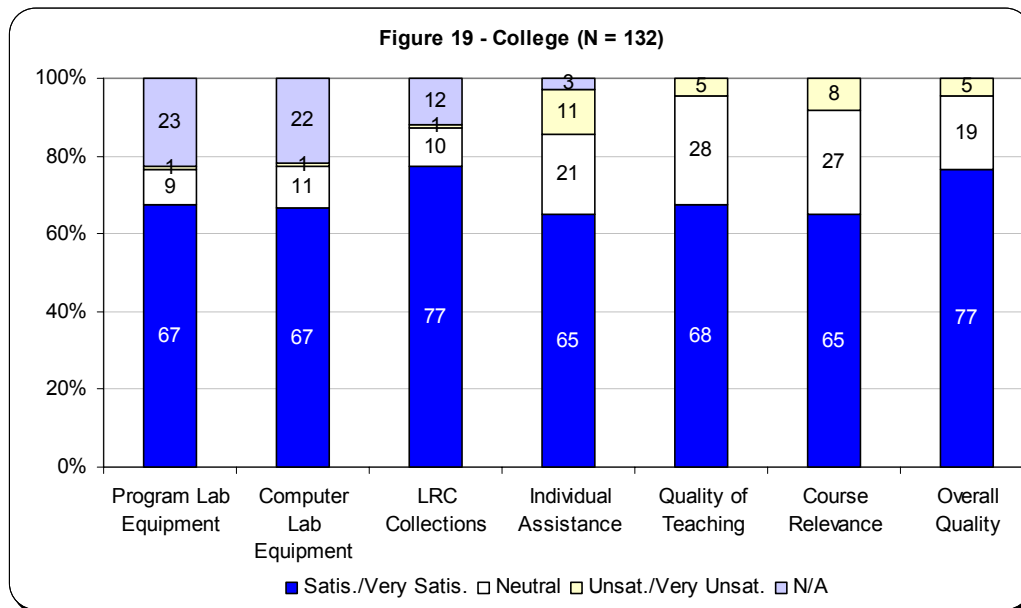
Table 6 compares the combined percentages of respondents who provided a rating of 4 or 5.

Table 6 – Comparison of Student Satisfaction Ratings from College Surveys				
	Student Experience	Early Leaver	Satisfaction Survey (Career Programs)	University Transfer Follow Up Survey
Equipment in program labs	50%	67%	72%	93%
Equipment in computer labs	54%	67%	74%	93%
LRC – Collections	59%	77%	73%	89%
Individual assistance provided by instructors	58%	65%	78%	85%
Quality of teaching	69%	68%	77%	88%
Relevance of courses	-	65%	79%	86%
Overall quality of educational experience	78%	77%	77%	93%

Table 6 illustrates three significant findings:

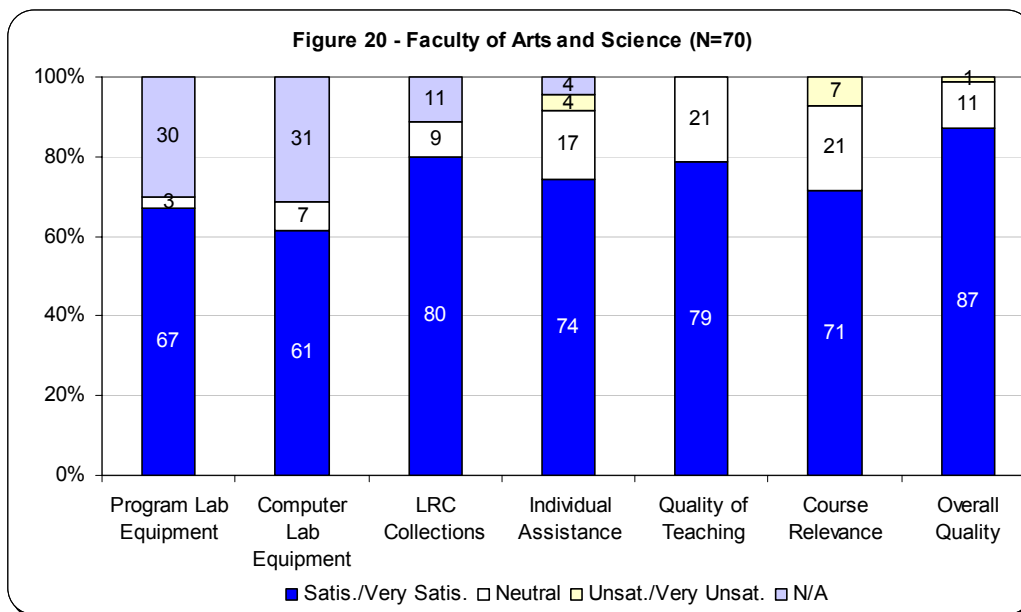
- Participants in the University Transfer Follow Up Survey report very high levels of satisfaction
- The remaining three student surveys indicate similar satisfaction ratings for overall quality of educational experience
- It could be assumed that the more satisfied a student is the more likely they may be to complete a program of study. While this assumption is supported when comparing Student Experience and Satisfaction Survey results, early leavers are more satisfied with their programs than the first year student population overall. This suggests that at least for the rated aspects of the educational experience, students do not discontinue primarily as result of dissatisfaction with the program.

COLLEGE RESULTS



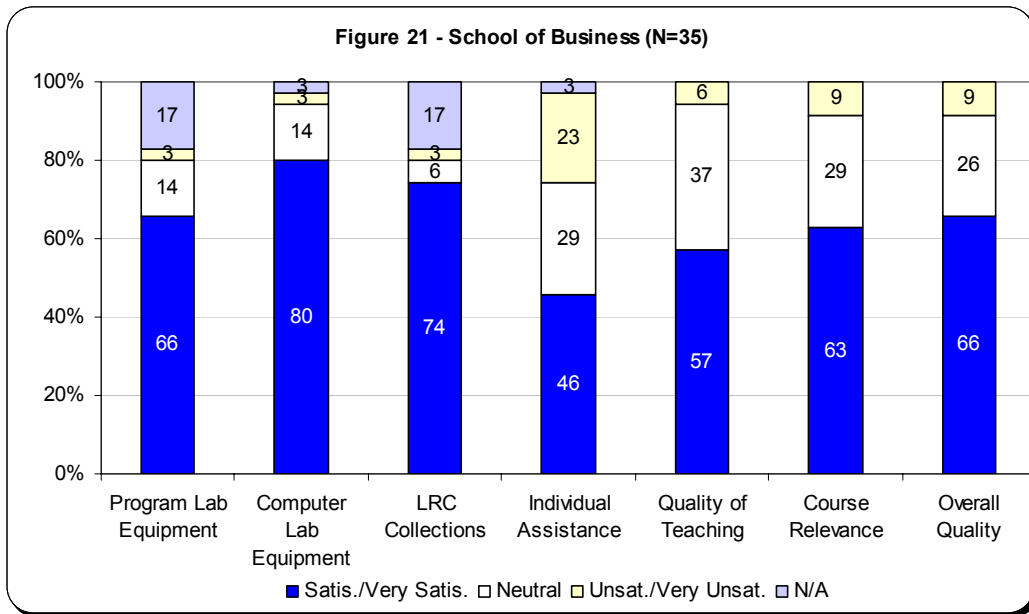
The lower satisfaction ratings shown in Figure 19 for program and computer lab equipment are largely attributable to significant percentages of respondents who did not use these program resources. While individual assistance, quality of teaching and course relevance were rated lower, more than three-quarters of the respondents were satisfied with their educational experience.

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE



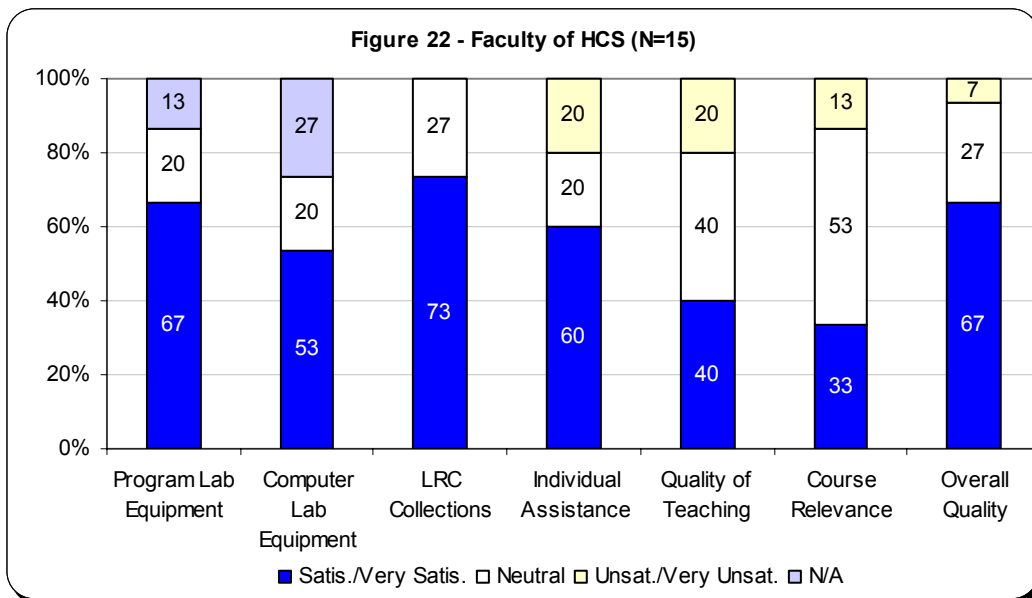
Former Arts and Science students were slightly less satisfied than MacEwan students overall with computer lab equipment, but were significantly more satisfied with individual assistance, quality of teaching, course relevance and overall quality of educational experience.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

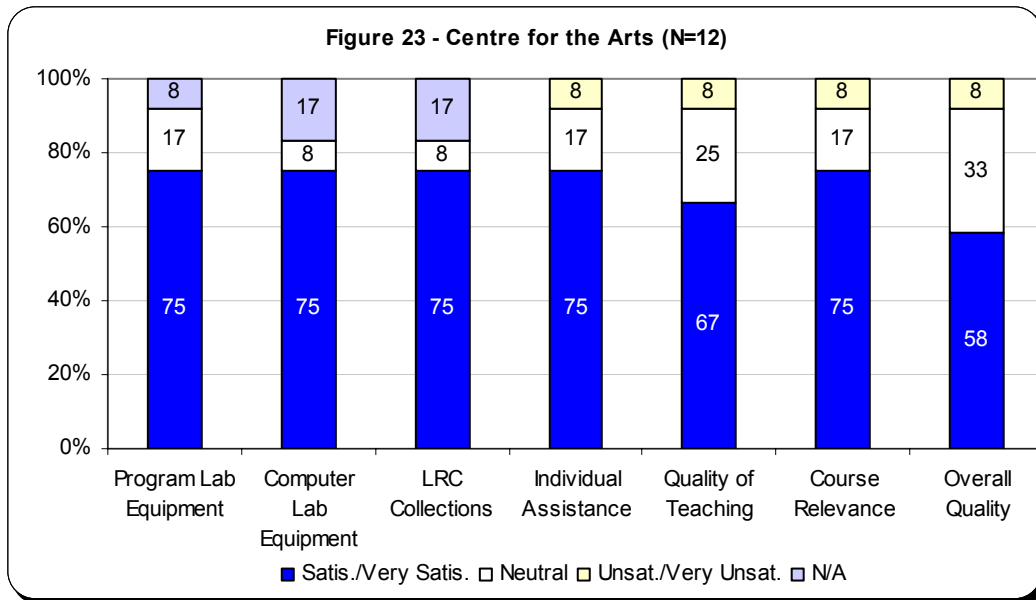


Former Business students provided significantly higher ratings for computer lab equipment but significantly lower ratings for individual assistance, quality of teaching and overall quality.

FACULTY OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

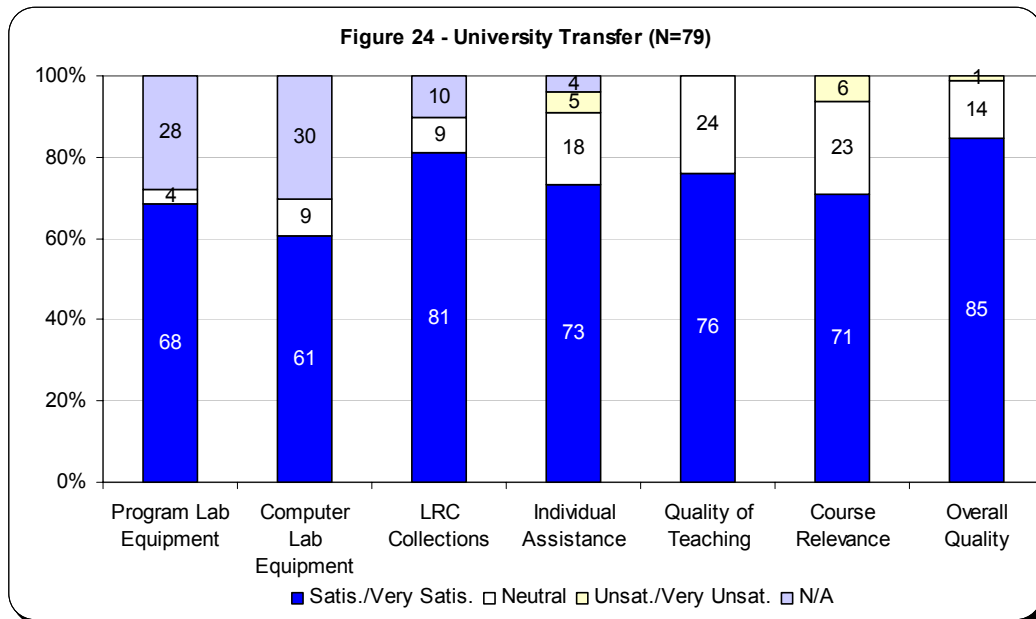


Early leavers from HCS programs provided significantly lower ratings for quality of teaching, course relevance and overall quality of educational experience.



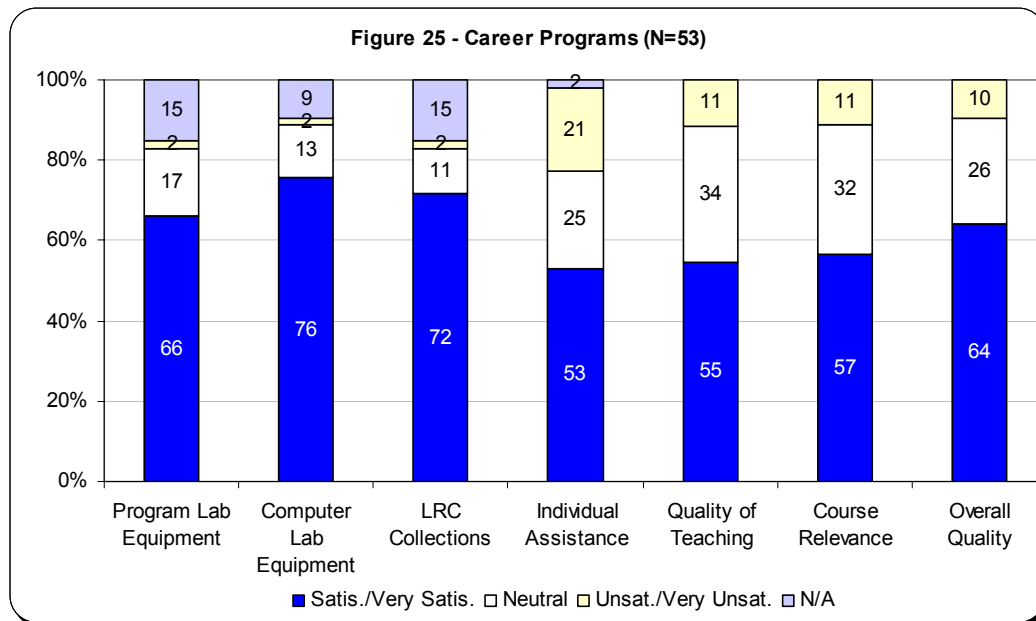
Compared to College results, early leavers from the CFA programs were significantly more satisfied with program lab equipment, computer lab equipment, individual assistance and course relevance, but significantly less satisfied with the overall quality of educational experience.

UNIVERSITY TRANSFER



Ratings from former University Transfer students were higher than overall College results for computer lab equipment, individual assistance, quality of teaching, course relevance and overall quality. However, in comparison to the results in Table 6, early leavers from University Transfer programs were not as satisfied as those who completed their programs.

CAREER PROGRAMS



Early leavers from Career programs rated computer lab equipment higher than for the College overall, but provided lower ratings for their satisfaction with individual assistance, quality of teaching, course relevance and overall quality of educational experience.

As with the University Transfer programs, early leavers from Career program were more satisfied than first term students, but not as satisfied as those who completed their program of study.

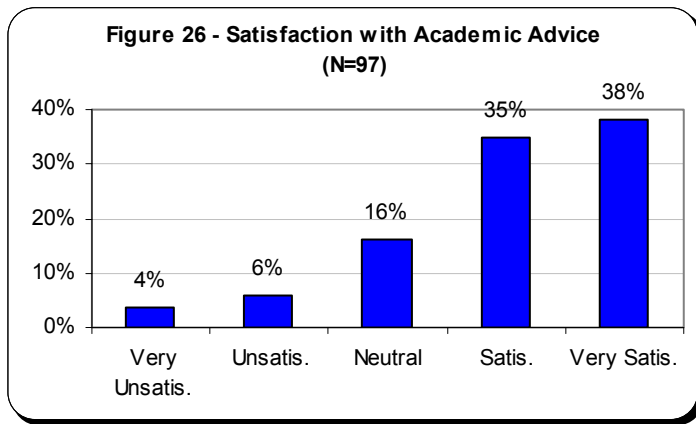
SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC ADVICE

The previous section of the report presented results for ratings of pre-enrolment College and program information, as well as program and College orientation. Once students have begun a program of studies, one of the ongoing supports they receive is academic advice provided by College and program staff.

Questions in this section were included to determine where or from whom students received academic advice, their satisfaction with the advice they received and the reasons for their ratings.

Those participants who indicated they received academic advice were asked to rate their satisfaction using a five-point scale where **5** was **very satisfied** and **1** was **very unsatisfied**.

Ratings for each of the faculties or schools, and for University Transfer and Career program categories, did not vary significantly from the College results. There was some variance in the results from the Health and Community Studies and Centre for the Arts respondents; however, these represented a very small number of respondents as only eight HCS respondents and ten CFA respondents provided ratings. Therefore, only aggregate results are shown in Figure 26.



73% of the respondents indicated that they had received academic advice. Of those, 73% were satisfied with the advice that they received.

New Student Survey participants are also asked to rate the academic advice they received. The rating categories were poor, fair, good and very good, so comparisons should be made with caution. In the most recent New Student Survey, 34% rated the advice as *very good*, and 48% rated the advice as *good*.

Some respondents identified more than one source of academic advice, but were provided with the opportunity to provide only one rating. Where possible, the comments and ratings are attributed to the appropriate source of academic advice. Also, not all respondents provided an explanation for their rating. Therefore, the ratings in Table 7 are provided on a frequency rather than a percentage basis.

When respondents identified a “counselor” as their source of academic advice, the assumption was made that they were referring to Student Resource Centre staff rather than program staff. Some respondents identified “program staff” as their source of academic advice, but did not specify who the staff person was or their position.

Unsatisfied is the combined results for a rating of **1 or 2**; **satisfied** is the combined results for a rating of **4 or 5**.

Table 7 – Satisfaction with Academic Advice

Source	Rating	Frequency	Comments
Program Advisors	Satisfied	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good advice but took a long time to get an appointment • Fully explained transfer process • Always available and knowledgeable about the program • Helpful in all areas • Helpful but student only required a small amount of assistance • Had to research beyond the information provided by advisor • Did not provide information on transferring to other programs • Most of the information provided was correct but transfer information regarding the University of Lethbridge was incorrect • Helpful, but could have provided more information • Assisted in choosing appropriate courses to reach academic goals • Provided a great deal of information and were very helpful • Very helpful (4) • Great help in changing programs • Very thorough; good advice (2) • Very clear • Helpful and assisted in making decisions • Knowledgeable and willing to help • Helpful and non-judgmental • Helpful and approachable
	Neutral	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave inappropriate advice • Helpful and knowledgeable, but led the student in the wrong direction • Received clear explanations, but had to make several appointments to get all the necessary information
	Unsatisfied	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When requesting information was referred to professors by advisor • Provided incorrect information regarding transfer requirements and noted they were unsure of the requirements • Gave incorrect information regarding admission requirement and deadlines • Advised the student to enrol in courses that were not relevant to academic goals

Table 7 – Satisfaction with Academic Advice con't.

Source	Rating	Frequency	Comments
Program Staff	Satisfied	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided only requested information but did not provide detail or additional information that would have helped; did not seem like they cared enough to help • Responded to all questions • Generally helpful, but student had to research personally relevant information on their own • Provided answers to questions and solutions to problems • Staff were always available and helpful • Instructional assistant was very helpful with registration and field placement • Staff were approachable • Staff did not return phone calls and were late for appointments • Staff were very helpful and gave good direction on which courses to take • Helpful in making program decisions • Gave precise information about the program • Helpful and supportive • Extremely helpful and eager to help
	Neutral	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites were not clear • General information was good, but did not receive information for personal needs and situation • Not convenient
	Unsatisfied	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave false information about the lab requirement • Almost prevented from registering because staff was so slow to provide necessary information • Expected that the staff would have information that they did not; very rushed through the process

Table 7 – Satisfaction with Academic Advice con't.

Source	Rating	Frequency	Comments
Instructors	Satisfied	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very helpful • Sometimes instructor's schedule conflicted with student's work schedule • Gave good advice but it was difficult to get an appointment with them • Received good information • Answered questions very well • Instructors explained courses well but gave discouraging employment advice • Unable to use advice • Friendly and knowledgeable • Instructors were great
	Neutral	-	
	Unsatisfied	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors were not helpful
Program Chair	Satisfied	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spent a lot of time with the student and assisted with choices
	Neutral	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful in some situations, but not in others • Advice was helpful but received too late • Should have had more options • Advice was good but a family issue affected the student; the instructor was willing to be flexible, but the program chair overrode the instructor
	Unsatisfied	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidating • Gave poor advice

Table 7 – Satisfaction with Academic Advice con't.

Source	Rating	Frequency	Comments
Student Resource Centre	Satisfied	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally helpful, but the student had to research personally relevant information on their own • Provided guidance on many decisions • Good advice, but hard to get in to see • Staff appeared knowledgeable • Were friendly and provided quick, efficient advice • Was able to get the advice needed • Provide excellent advice on which courses to take • Good advice • Helped decide best career options • Student with Disabilities staff assisted in getting student into program • Very helpful but late • Assisted with student loan • Provided motivation and a plan to achieve goals
	Neutral	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidating; pushed the student away from a program of study they wanted • Some staff were helpful, others were incompetent
	Unsatisfied	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave false information about the lab requirement • Gave incorrect information regarding admission requirement and deadlines
Registrar's Office	Satisfied	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided with only requested information but did not provide detail or additional information that would have helped; did not seem like they cared enough to help • Generally helpful, but the student had to research personally relevant information on their own • All questions were answered • Assisted in choosing appropriate courses to reach academic goals
	Neutral	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information was good, but did not receive information for personal needs and situation
	Unsatisfied	-	
Website	Satisfied	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not contain specific information • Answered questions • Hard to find and information was unclear and too general
	Neutral	-	
	Unsatisfied	-	
Coach	Satisfied	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses and job opportunities were well-defined
	Neutral	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not seem to be well informed
	Unsatisfied	-	

Table 7 – Satisfaction with Academic Advice con't.

Source	Rating	Frequency	Comments
Other	Satisfied	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family and friends (2)• Students association; were helpful in making program decisions
	Neutral	-	
	Unsatisfied	-	

General positive themes included that College staff were knowledgeable, helpful, approachable, thorough, and provided clear explanations.

General negative themes throughout the comments included that College staff were poorly informed, gave incorrect information and did not seem motivated to assist the student.

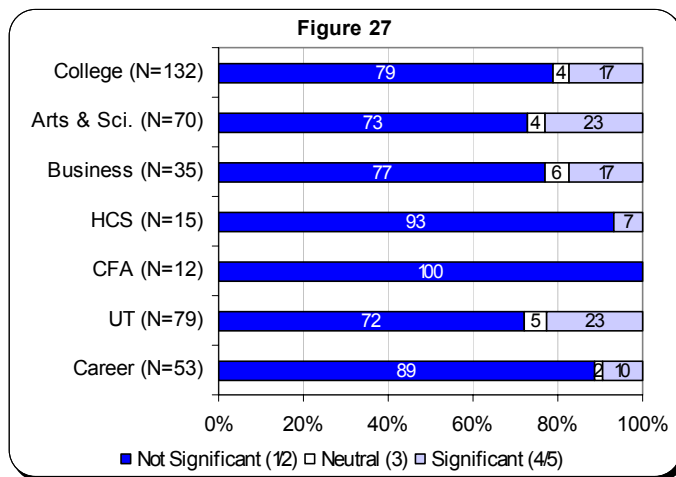
One theme that emerged across all satisfaction levels was that students received good general information, but indicated they could have been provided with either more information, or information that was specific to their concerns or situation, and were left to seek out such information on their own.

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF ACADEMIC ASPECTS ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE

As noted in the Introduction, students may choose to discontinue their studies for more than one reason. This section of the survey incorporated a number of academic aspects that were considered to be potentially influential in the decision to discontinue. They ranged from questions about the program (preferred courses not available, did not like the program), to other options for meeting academic goals (changing institutions). Also included were some of the reasons that New Student Survey participants indicated were influential in their decision to enrol at the College (location, tuition and fees, class size). Finally, the section ended with questions to determine to what extent academic performance led to a voluntary or involuntary discontinuation of studies.

Respondents rated the significance of each aspect on a five-point scale, where **5** was **very significant** and **1** was **not at all significant**.

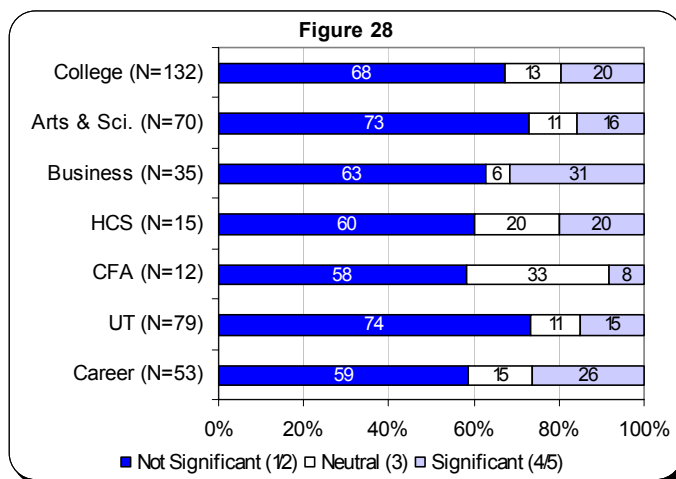
PREFERRED COURSES NOT AVAILABLE



Course selection was of greater significance for Arts and Science students and for University Transfer students overall.

Generally, course selection was not a significant factor in the decision to discontinue. This is an interesting finding when comparing results to those for a similar question posed on the Satisfaction Survey, concerning variety of electives, which has consistently been among the lowest rated aspects of educational experience. This is perhaps due to broader course offerings earlier in the program.

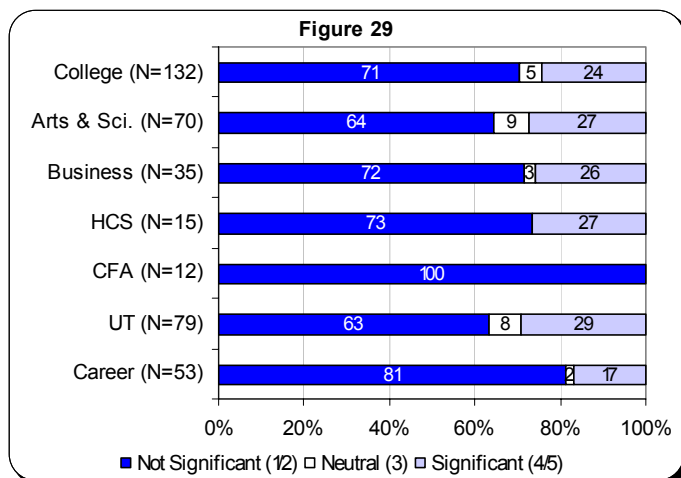
DID NOT LIKE PROGRAM



This question is an indicator of program/student fit. The results for former Business (31%) and Career program students overall (26%) stand out among the results.

A comparison of results for this question to those for *program meeting expectations* shows consistent findings. There were similar percentages of respondents who did not agree that the program met their expectations and indicated that not liking the program was a significant reason in their decision to discontinue. The one enrolment category that was an exception to this pattern was CFA respondents, 42% of whom did not have their expectations met.

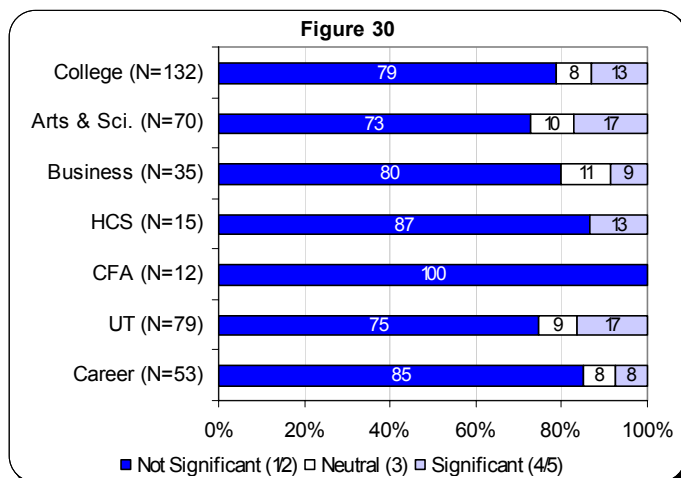
CHANGING INSTITUTIONS



Respondents indicating that changing institutions was significant does not necessarily mean they were enrolled at the time of the survey. However, approximately one-quarter of former University Transfer students indicated that they were, or would be, continuing their education at another institution.

Given the nature of the program, it is not surprising that the highest percentage of those changing institutions was among University Transfer students. As noted in the Methodology section, transfer students who earned all the credit they could, and changed institutions for that reason, were eliminated from the results.

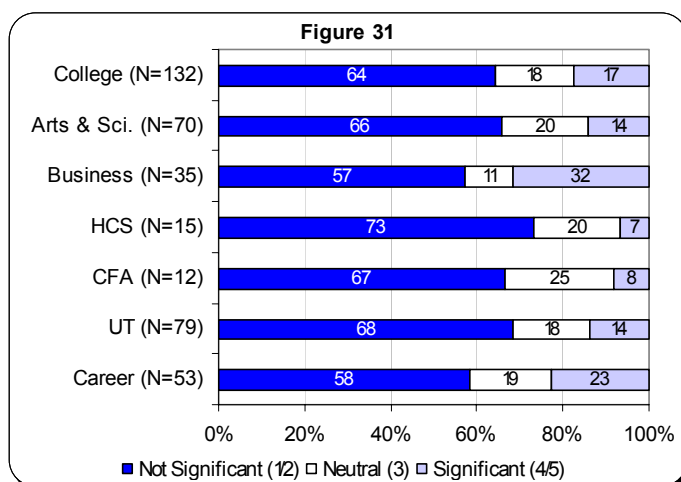
LOCATION



Location is reported among new students as one of their reasons for choosing Grant MacEwan College.

Location was not a significant factor in the decision to leave.

TUITION AND FEES

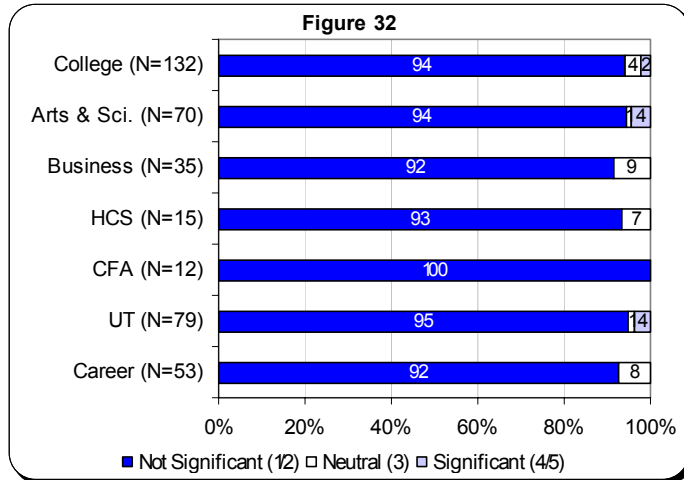


Tuition and fees are also a reason new students choose the College.

What cannot be determined from the Early Leaver responses was if tuition and fees were a factor because students felt they were too high when compared to the quality of education they received, or if the cost of education was beyond their financial means at the time.

The most noteworthy result was for former Business students, with tuition a factor for almost one-third of the early leavers.

CLASS SIZE

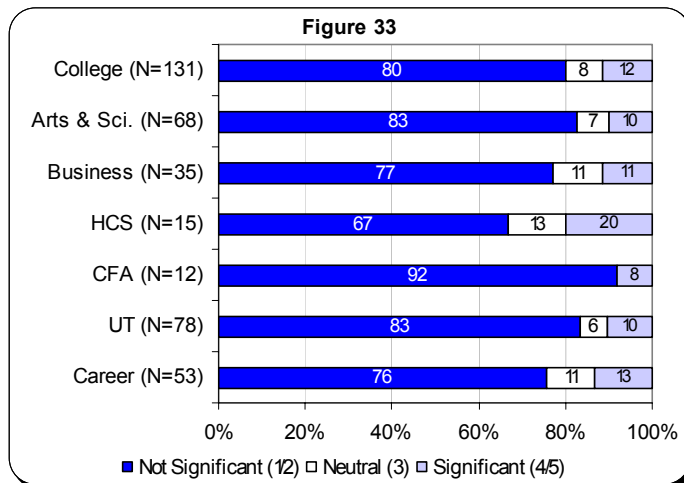


Class size is also influential for new students choosing to enrol at MacEwan.

This question was included based on the possibility that class sizes may be too large for some early leavers, many of whom were experiencing post-secondary education for the first time.

This was clearly not the case among survey respondents.

CHOSE TO WITHDRAW DUE TO POOR GRADES

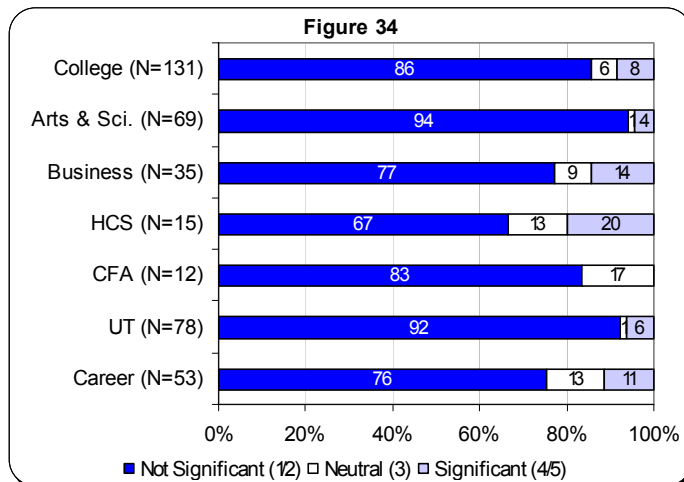


If a student chose to withdraw due to poor grades, it indicates that they may not have been meeting the academic expectations they had for themselves. For some of those who considered this to be a significant factor, they may have been meeting the College's academic standards.

The Student Experience Survey demonstrated that less than half (45%) of first term students were getting the marks that they expected to.

The choice to withdraw due to poor grades was made more often among HCS students when compared to the other enrolment categories.

REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW DUE TO POOR GRADES



This question identifies the extent to which leaving the College was involuntary. As first noted in the Student Experience Survey report, failure may be due to personal challenges affecting academic performance.

As with the previous question, withdrawal due to academic performance was highest (20%) among HCS students.

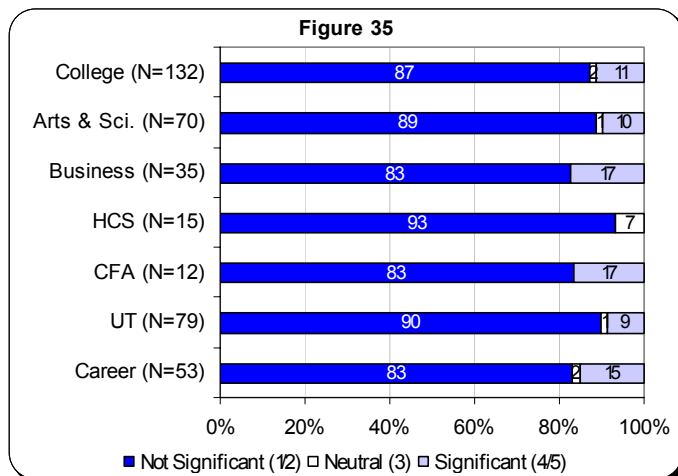
IX. SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE

Student success research indicates that barriers to reaching academic goals may not be academic in nature. Personal circumstances and competing priorities, whether they affect academic performance or not, may require a student to withdraw from their studies. Questions from this and the previous section were intended to provide a complete picture of these influences affecting program completion.

As with academic aspects, a variety of possible influences were provided for respondents to rate in terms of their significance on the decision to discontinue their studies. These aspects reflected the challenges of family responsibilities, financial resources and personal health.

The same five-point scale described in the previous section was used to rate the significance of personal influences.

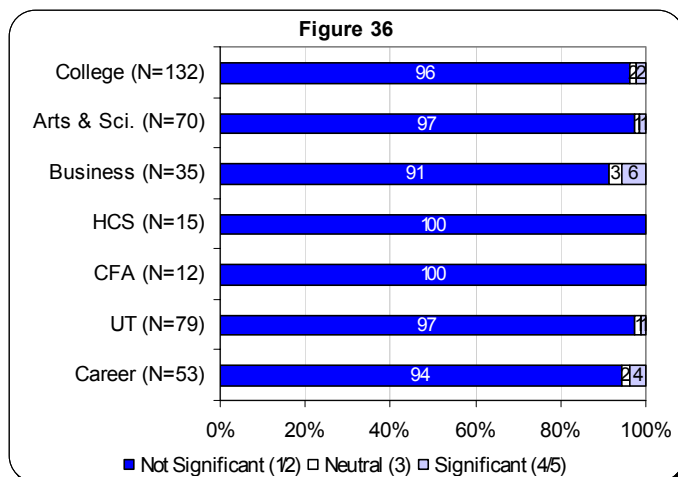
CARE FOR DEPENDENT CHILD(REN)



The demographic profile of respondents showed that only 14% of respondents had dependent children. It is recognized that some of those children, while dependent on their parents, may be of an age that they do not require a great deal of parental care.

Therefore it is not a surprising finding that care for dependent children was not a significant issue among the respondents.

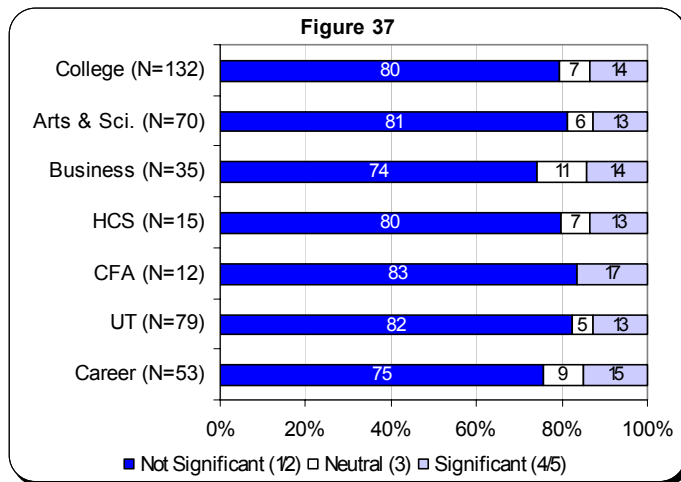
CARE FOR DEPENDENT ADULT



Care for a dependent adult was also not a significant factor among the respondents.

These results would be expected for participants who were generally quite young and unmarried.

CONFLICT WITH WORK DEMANDS

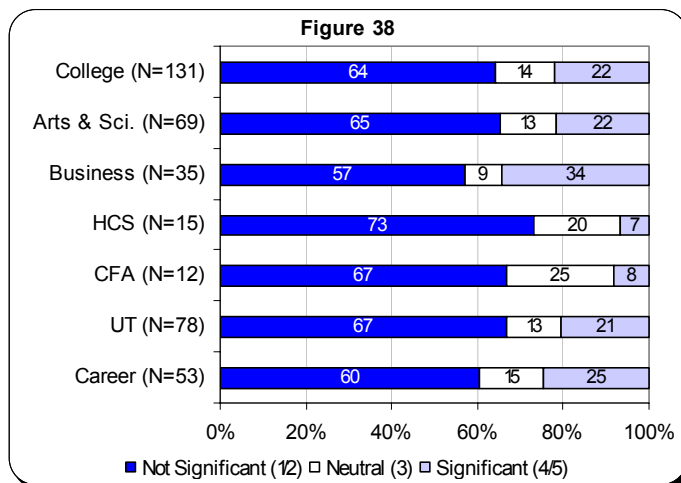


Results for this question indicate whether working was a higher priority than education, but that may have been due to either financial requirements or personal priorities.

The employment profile of respondents indicated that 54% of respondents were working full-time in the Winter term.

These responses suggest that most early leavers were able to balance the demands of study and work while in their programs.

INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

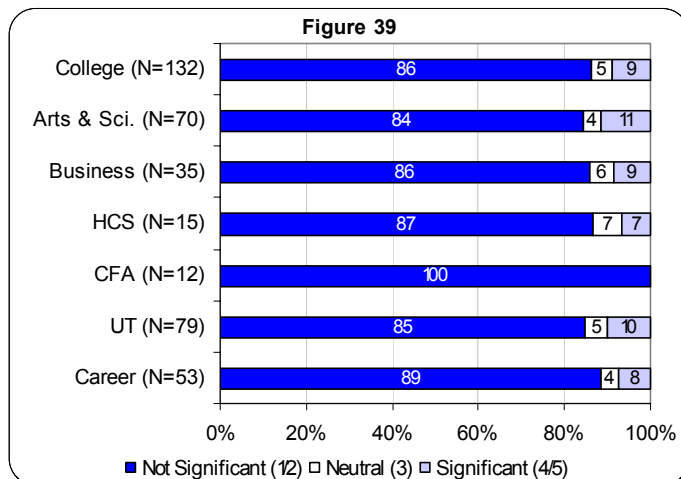


Insufficient financial resources emerged as the most significant personal influence with 22% of the respondents rating it as significant.

As Figure 38 shows, the results varied considerably across the enrolment categories.

Although differences in primary source of education funding were noted between University Transfer and Career students, both groups provided similar ratings for insufficient financial resources.

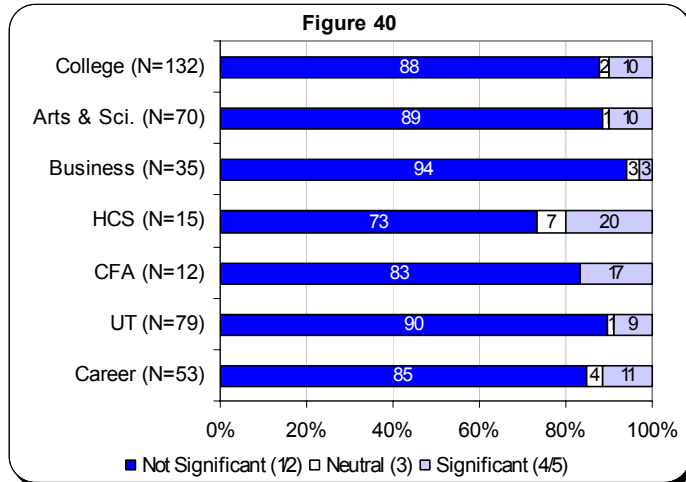
MOVING OUT OF THE EDMONTON AREA



Student populations are often transient, moving frequently during the course of their post-secondary studies.

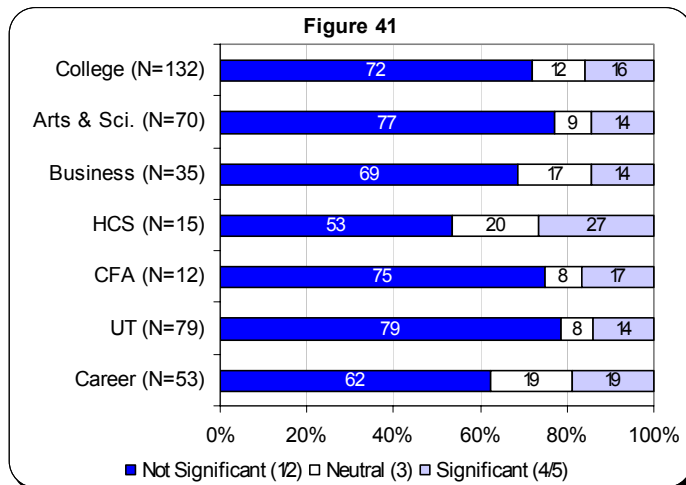
Moving out of the Edmonton area was not a significant personal factor in the decision to discontinue. However, the Methodology section noted that a large number of potential participants could not be reached, therefore, the results for this question may be skewed.

PHYSICAL HEALTH REASONS



Former students' physical health generally did not interfere with program completion. However, for one in five HCS respondents, physical health was a significant barrier to completing a program of study.

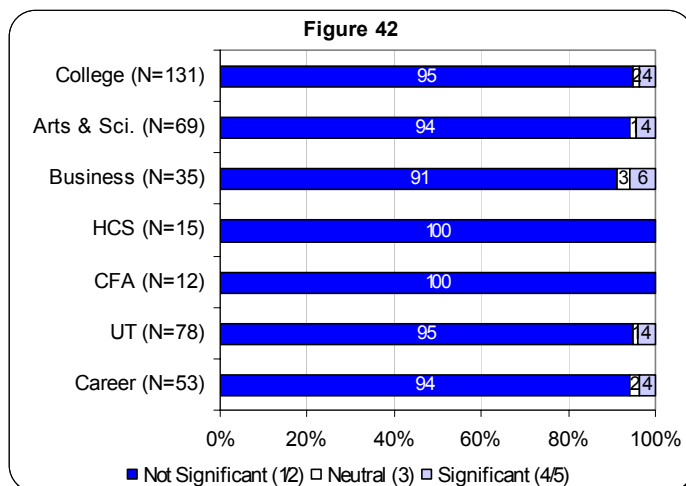
STRESS LEVEL



The challenges of pursuing a post-secondary education can be very stressful for students.

As with physical health, former HCS students indicated that stress was of greater significance in their decision to discontinue than it was for the other enrolment categories.

FEELING ISOLATED OR ALONE AT THE COLLEGE



This question was included as a measure of integration into the College, which the literature suggests is an important factor in student success. The results are consistent with those in response to the College providing a welcoming environment.

The results from these two questions show that the College performs well with respect to new student integration.

X. PRIMARY REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL

The two previous sections presented results for the significance of a range of academic and personal factors that may have contributed to their decision to discontinue their studies. A question asking participants to identify their primary reason for withdrawal was included to ensure that the most significant reason for withdrawal was captured even if it had not been identified elsewhere in the survey.

Although respondents were asked to provide their primary reason, for a small number of respondents more than one reason was provided. In these cases it was common for one reason to have contributed to another. For example, a respondent may have experienced health issues, which led to poor academic performance.

As with any qualitative analysis, the distinction between categories may be difficult to define. This was particularly true of ***unclear academic goals***, ***poor program suitability***, and ***program of choice not offered***. Definitions are provided to indicate the nature of comments attributed to each category:

Unclear academic goals: The category represents comments such as, “I’m not sure what direction I want to go in,” and “I changed my mind about my career goals.” That is, comments that indicated that the student’s decision to leave a program was not due to dissatisfaction with the program, but a lack of focus or direction on a personal level.

Poor program suitability: This category included comments where the student may have had clear academic goals, but through their educational experience, they decided that they were not interested in the subject area, they did not like the program, the program was not meeting their expectations, or they discovered a different area of interest that they preferred to pursue (see Figures 17 and 18). This category included those comments where a respondent indicated that their primary reason for withdrawal was that they had changed programs, the assumption being that they expected that their new program would be more suitable.

Program of choice not offered: These were clear statements by participants that MacEwan did not offer the student’s program of interest. Whether the preference existed before beginning studies at MacEwan, or discovered during a term of studies, is unclear.

The results in Table 8 are presented on a frequency rather than a percentage basis.

Table 8 – Primary Reason for Withdrawal					
	Faculty of Arts & Science N=70	School of Business N=35	Faculty of HCS N=15	Centre for the Arts N=12	Total
Academic					
Poor program suitability	8	7	5	2	25
Unclear academic goals	13	2	1	2	18
Changing institutions	7	2	-	-	9
Academic performance	3	1	-	1	5
Course selection	4	-	-	-	4
Program delivery (wanted distance delivery, scheduling)	1	2	1	-	4
Instructors		3	1	-	4
Academic policies	3		1	-	4
Program of choice not offered at MacEwan	2	-	-	-	2
Personal					
Financial	11	7	1		19
Health	6	1	2	3	12
Employment	2	5		1	8
Personal/family issues	1	2	1	2	6
Wanted to take a break	3	-	1	-	4
Moving	1	-	1	-	2
Travel	2	-	-	-	2
Other	7	2	-	1	10

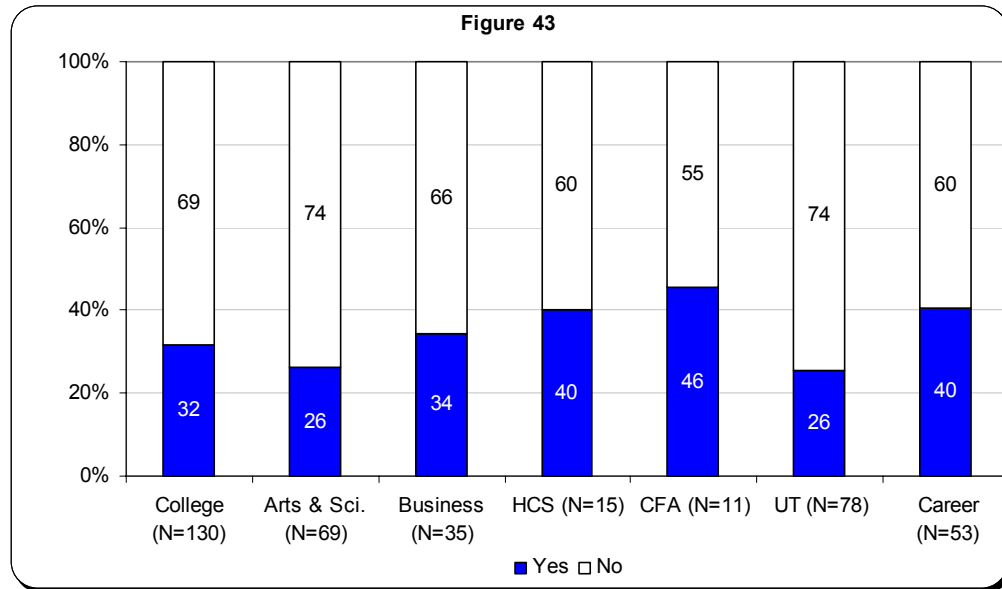
Highlights from Table 8 include:

- **Poor program suitability** was the most common reason provided as the primary reason for withdrawal, with **insufficient finances** emerging as a close second.
- Issues regarding finances were even more strongly represented when combined with the employment category. Employment was included as a separate category as it was not known if the conflict was due to financial necessity, or if employment had a higher priority than education for the student for reasons other than as source of income.
- **Unclear academic goals** and **health** also received a notable number of responses.
- That **changing institutions** was comparatively of greater significance for **Arts and Science** students is consistent with these respondents having been enrolled in University Transfer programs.
- Although the number of respondents from the **School of Business** was half that of the Faculty of Arts and Science, almost the same number indicated that **poor program suitability** was their primary reason for withdrawal.
- **Poor program suitability** was the primary reason for withdrawal for a third of former **Health and Community Studies** students.
- One in four **Centre for the Arts** respondents cited **health** as their primary reason for withdrawal.

XI. COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES

All College-wide surveys are administered to enhance understanding of student needs in order to provide better a quality educational experience and support student success. Further to this goal, Early Leaver Survey participants were asked, in the context of their reason or reasons for withdrawal, if the College could have done anything to assist them in continuing their studies.

Figure 43 shows that almost one-third of respondents indicated they could have benefited from further College support in continuing their studies.



For those who indicated College assistance would have been helpful, they were asked to specify the nature of the support they would have liked from the College. Due to the number of comments and the diversity of the themes, results are provided at the aggregate level only.

As shown in Table 9, improvements in **academic advising** and **quality of instructors** were the most frequently identified areas of support for student success.

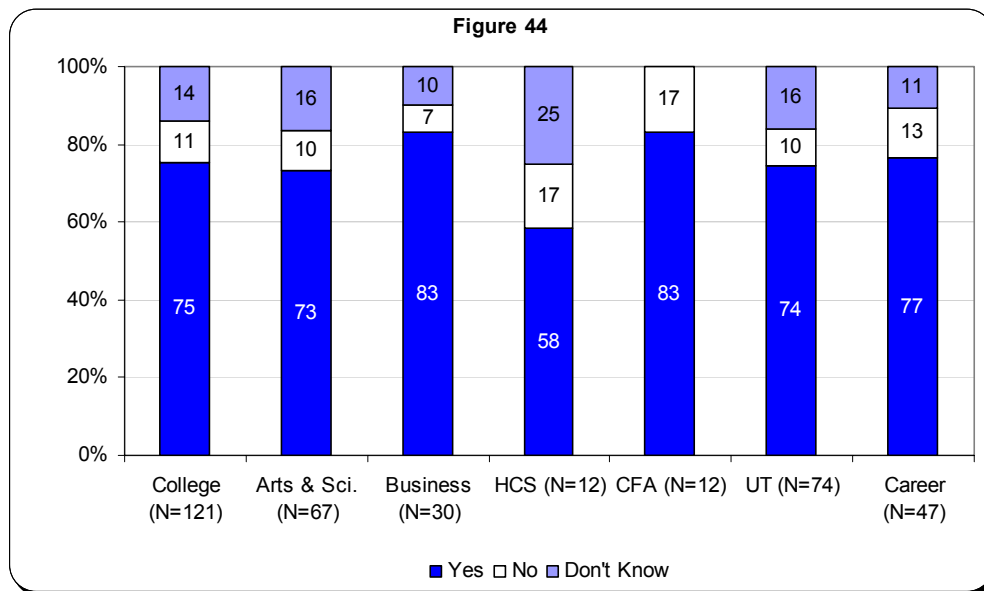
Table 9 – College Assistance Required to Continue Studies

<i>Support required:</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Improved academic advising	8
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would have liked to been advised of alternative programs • Took credit courses that were not necessary • Overloaded with courses in one term when it was not necessary • Make sure advisors aware of policies 	
Quality of instructors	8
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marks returned after long delays • Poorly organized • Consistently poorly rated instructors are retained in the program 	
Increased course offerings	6
Improved financial aid advising	3
Increased flexibility to meet student needs	4
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster acceptance to program • Despite health issues, could have completed with the program's assistance 	
Increased flexibility in program delivery (distance delivery, year round intakes)	2

XII. SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE

As noted in the Introduction, although a student's decision to withdraw is interpreted as negative by the institution, it may be either a positive or a negative choice for the student. The question regarding respondents' satisfaction with their decision was included to probe this concept among former MacEwan students. It should be noted that this question was not asked of those who indicated that they had been required to withdraw due to academic performance.

The previous section demonstrated that for more than two-thirds of respondents, there was nothing the College could have done to assist them to continue their studies. Responses to the question of satisfaction with their decision to leave bear this out, as almost three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their decision to discontinue.



Respondents were also requested to explain their response.

Not all respondents provided a reason for their rating. For those who did, Table 10 shows that the explanations provided were for the most part reiterations of the primary reasons for withdrawal. One new theme to emerge out of the responses was that some respondents provided an unprompted indication that they intended to return to their studies in the future.

Table 10 – Satisfaction with Decision to Discontinue

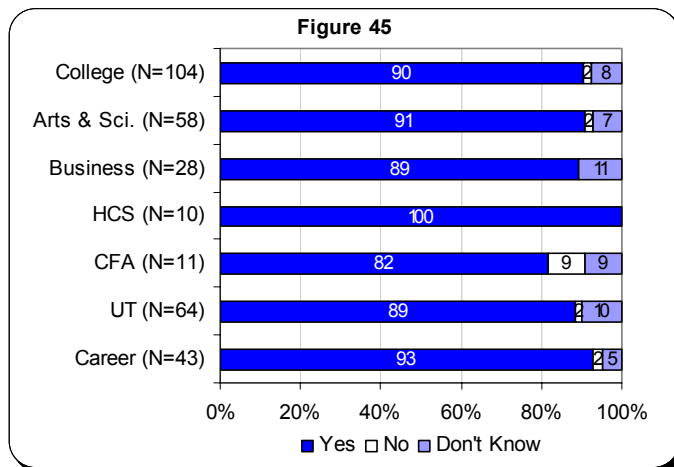
	<i>Frequency</i>
Satisfied	
Examples:	
• Leaving allowed the student to attend a preferred program/institution	14
• Did not want to continue in a program that was not suitable	12
• Have intentions of returning to studies	12
• Leaving allowed the student to pursue other options (did not specify if that included a different program/institution)	8
• Leaving was in the student's best interests	5
• Student wanted/needed to take a break from studies	5
• Insufficient financial resources required the student to leave	4
• Health reasons required that the student discontinue	4
• Student needed time to assess their personal or academic goals	3
• Unspecified reason that made continuing impossible	3
• Student had recently had a child, or by leaving school could spend more time with their child(ren)	3
Not Satisfied	
Examples:	
• Would have preferred to continue their education	5
• Continuing was not a possibility at this time	3
• Insufficient finances required that the student leave	3
• Have intentions of returning to studies	2
Unsure	
Examples	
• Still need to get an education	1
• Plan on returning in the future	1

XIII. INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES

This section reflects research findings that many students complete part of a program, temporarily leave their education and continue their studies later. These students are often referred to as “stop outs”. The questions in this section were designed to determine what proportion of those who had left their program of study before completion might be considered “stop outs”.

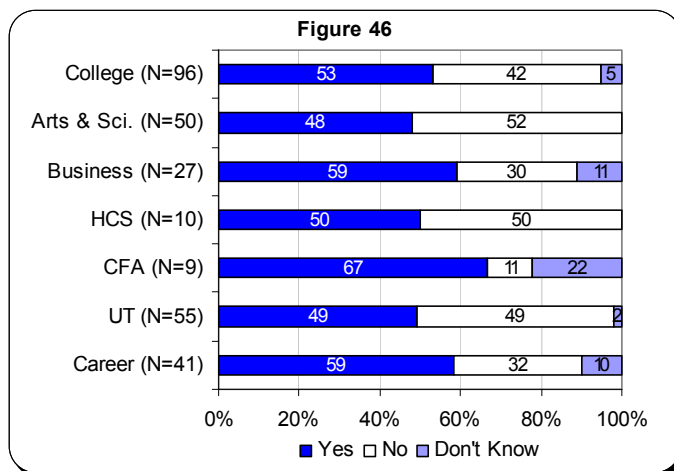
These questions were not asked of those who reported current enrolment.

INTENTION TO RESUME STUDIES



A significant majority of the survey participants intended to resume their studies, demonstrating a strong “stop out” phenomenon among MacEwan’s students.

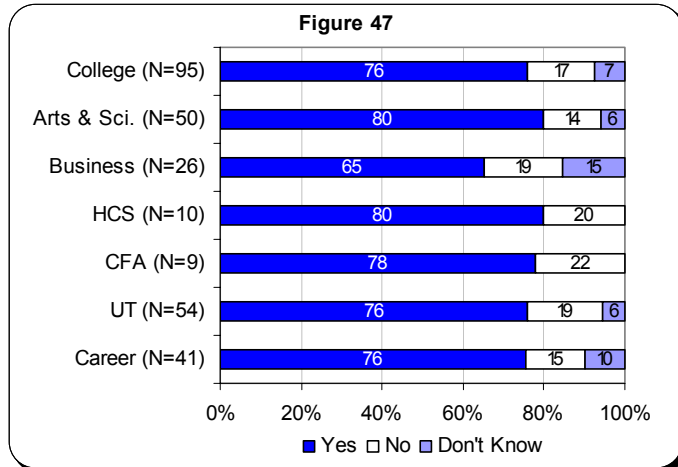
INTENTION TO PURSUE RELATED PROGRAM AREA



Further to several earlier indications of poor program suitability, only a small majority of the respondents intended to continue in a related area of study.

Two-thirds of HCS students intended to continue in a related program area. University Transfer students were more likely than Career program students to change their program of study.

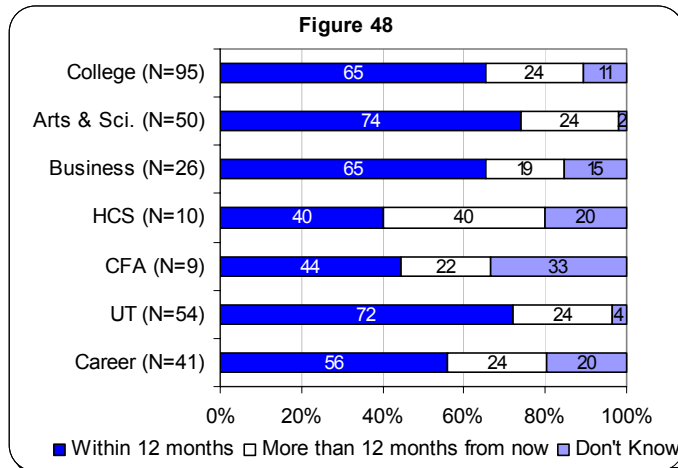
INTENTION TO RETURN TO GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE



Survey respondents were much more likely to return to MacEwan than to stay in the same program, an indicator that they were not dissatisfied with the institution or its program offerings.

The one outstanding result was from former Business students, 15% of whom were unsure if they would return to the College.

ESTIMATED TIME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



Almost two-thirds of respondents anticipated a break in their studies of a year or less.

Former University Transfer students were more likely to return within the year than Career program students.

CFA respondents were the least sure of when they might be able to resume their studies.

XIV. GENERAL COMMENTS

The Early Leaver Survey closed with an opportunity for respondents to voice concerns or provide suggestions.

Several respondents choose not to provide comments, while others provided more than one comment. In some cases, comments were a combination of positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Table 11 – Respondents’ General Comments	
Comments	Frequency
Positive	
• General comments about the College	12
• General comments about the program	11
• Instructors	6
• Liked the practicum component	1
• Good stepping stone to university	1
• Liked the downtown campus	1
• Liked the south campus	1
Negative	
• Instructors	2
• Poor academic advising	1
• Program and College disorganized with respect to student records	1
• Website is difficult to use	1
• Tuition fees are high	1
• Did not like the program	1
• Expectations regarding integration seminar unclear	1
Suggestions	
• Increase course offerings	4
• Offer four year degrees	2
• Hold tutorials for students who need individual assistance	1
• Need to be more flexible in response to special personal circumstances	1
• Increase student awareness of available support services	1
• Offer courses during the day	1
• Condense courses into one part of the day	1
• Provide a welcoming committee to help mature students	1
• Increase campus social activities	1

Themes in the general comments resembled reasons for withdrawal and College assistance that would have supported student success. Overall, the balance of the comments were positive.

XV. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As noted in the Introduction, the Early Leaver Survey was exploratory in nature. A summative evaluation of the process is presented here to enhance the value of future surveys.

SURVEY CONTENT

While the survey content was constructed to reflect the complexity of the student's decision to discontinue their studies, the underlying question to the research was: "why do they leave?" The following observations regarding survey content are offered:

- Developing a demographic profile allowed for comparisons of student characteristics between early leavers and the general first year student population. In some cases, the results revealed differences between the two groups, adding to what is known about early leavers.
- The Early Leaver Survey is the only source of information regarding educational and employment activities of program non-completers, providing the College with some indication of its place among competing student priorities and educational opportunities.
- There is an argument to be made for retaining questions that yield satisfaction ratings in order to continue to contribute to what has become a solid base of comparative data among student cohorts.
- Ratings of academic and personal influences provided new data. However, generally, there were not high levels of significance indicated for these aspects. This suggests that the selected list, while comprehensive, may not be representative. At the very least, these two groups of questions should be more focused in future versions of the survey.
- Further to the above point, questions regarding students' primary reason for leaving and their satisfaction with their decision most directly addresses the central research question.
- Feedback on how the College might have assisted the student in continuing studies not only provided new data, but is also strongly supportive of the College's commitment to responsive planning.

It is worth noting that none of the questions had a poor response rate, which would suggest that questions were clearly worded, and not too sensitive for respondents to answer.

PARTICIPANT DEFINITION

Through the process of defining those who were to participate in the survey, the first steps were taken towards addressing the extent of non-completion among MacEwan students. It was hoped that this would either confirm or challenge the completion statistics tracked through the program performance reports.

The most obvious suggestion to ensure the success of future surveys is that the accuracy of the survey population size needs to be verified. The quality of data extracted from the student information systems is determined by two factors: the definition of the data to be extracted, and the quality of the information system itself. The extent to which either or both of these factors contributed to the small number of completed surveys needs to be evaluated.

Suggestions for increasing participation:

- Based on Strategic Planning's definition, the number of potential participants, which at first appeared adequate, severely restricted the number of potential participants and therefore the number of completed surveys. It could be that by comparing a fall enrolment/winter absence that there are very few students who fit within that definition.

- Future surveys could be conducted with students who left later in their programs as well as those who left after one term.
- Timing likely influenced the outcomes of the survey. Feedback received in the planning stages of the survey included suggestions of a comparison of a Fall 2003 to a Fall 2004 enrolment to identify early leavers. This could result in a more accurate sampling frame, reducing the likelihood of contacting those who were truly stop outs. This is supported by the large percentage of respondents indicating that they expected to return to their studies within the next 12 months and expected to return to Grant MacEwan College.
- However, it should be noted that with a Fall 2003/Winter 2004 comparison, there were significant numbers of students that were not accessible by telephone.

It is recognized that the number of participants was significantly reduced by participant perception, which is of course beyond the control of the research. Increasing the number of respondents in future surveys is necessary to increase confidence in the findings and their generalizability.

METHODOLOGY

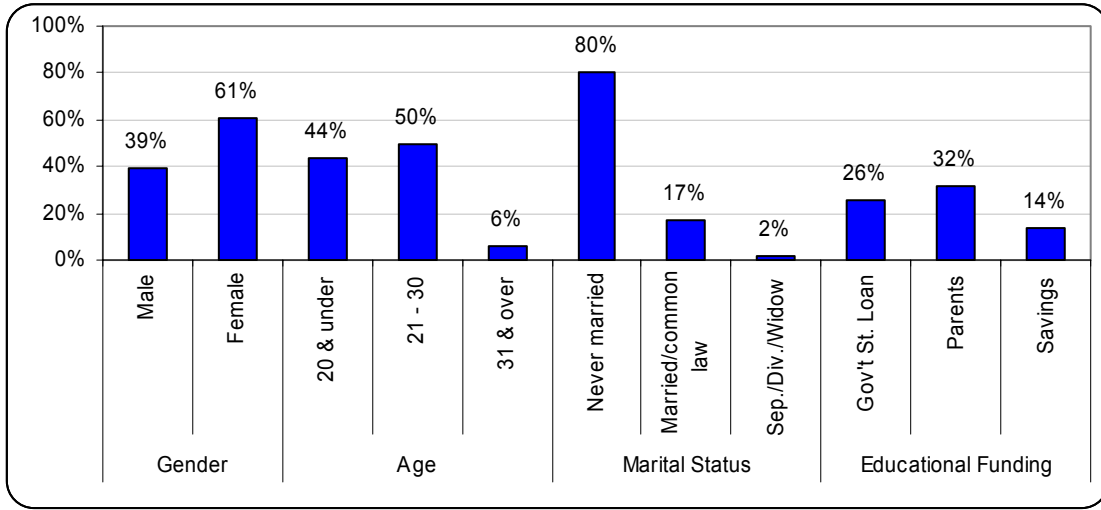
As with the 2003 survey, future methodology should be guided by survey content and number of participants. The primarily quantitative approach was selected in part due to a preliminary participant list of over 500 respondents. If the smaller number derived out of institutional definition and participant perception is truly representative of the early leaver population, it may well be worth considering a shift in research approach. Smaller numbers of participants would permit a more flexible interview approach, allowing participants to volunteer what factors or influences were significant for them.

Other sources of early leaver data are worth considering as well. For example, an “exit interview” with students who are withdrawing has merit, as does a written Early Leaver Survey for the same students. However, these approaches are not without their challenges, namely that not all students who leave their program complete a formal withdrawal process.

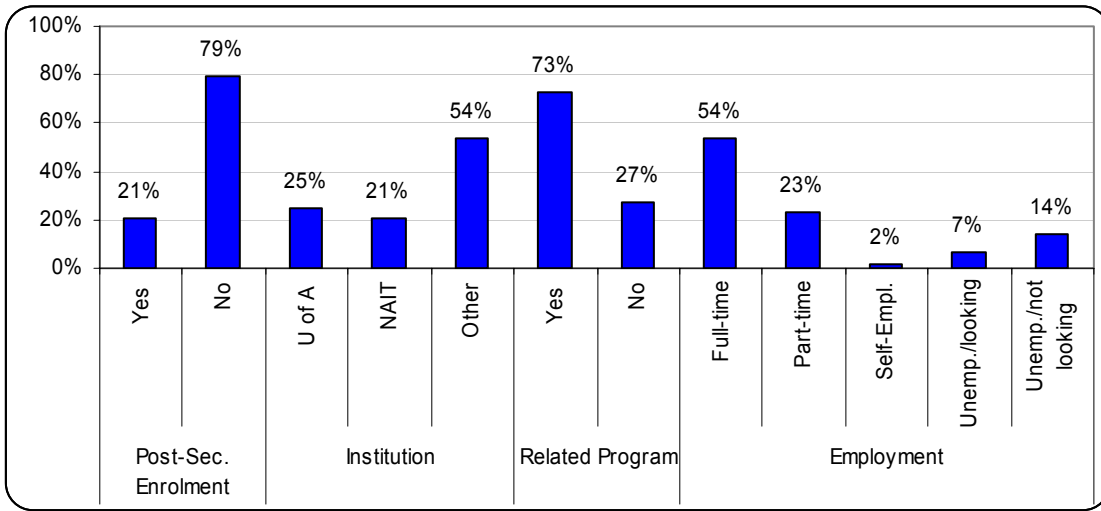
APPENDIX A

RESULTS BY ENROLMENT CATEGORY

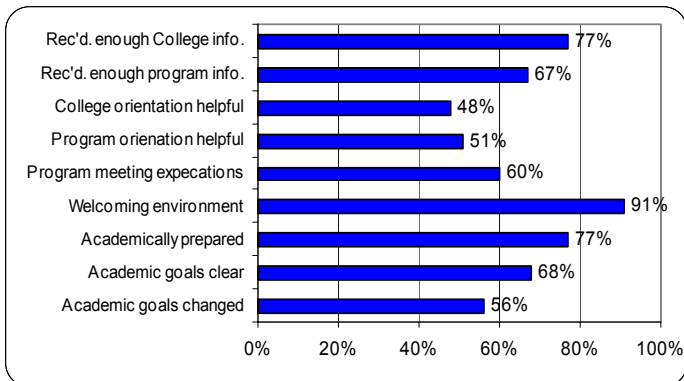
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



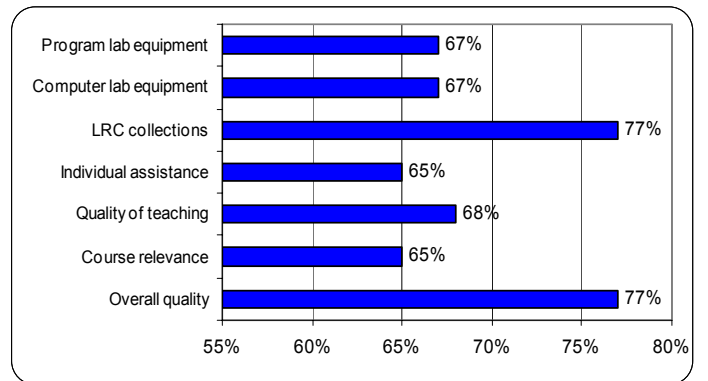
CURRENT ACTIVITY



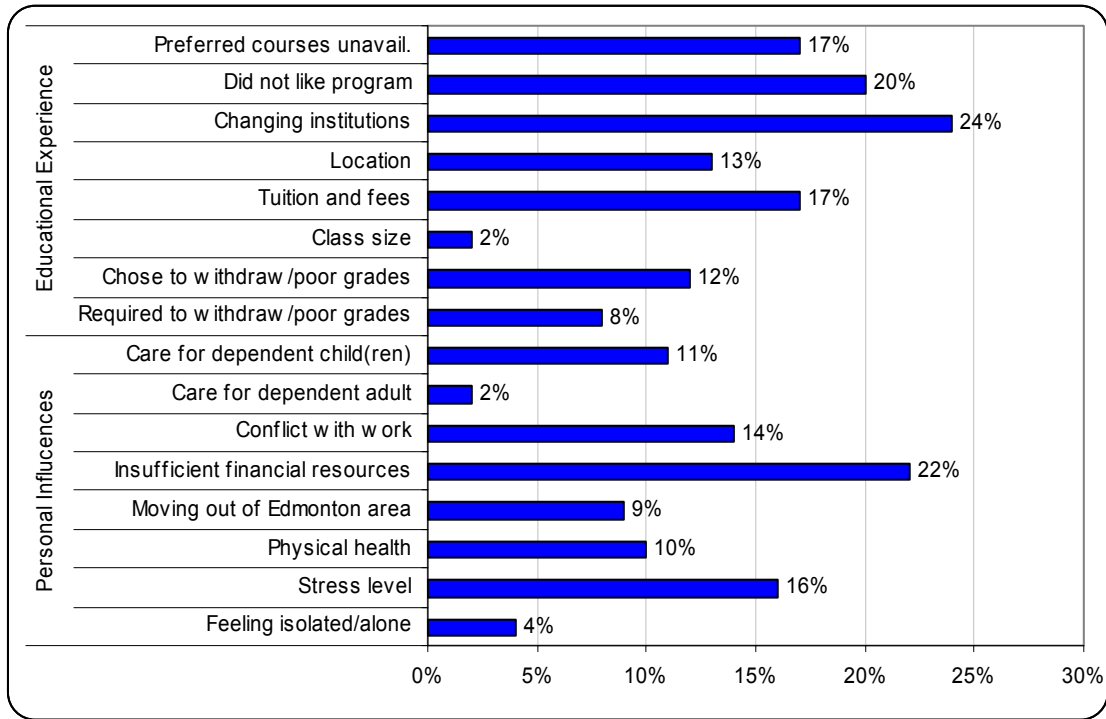
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



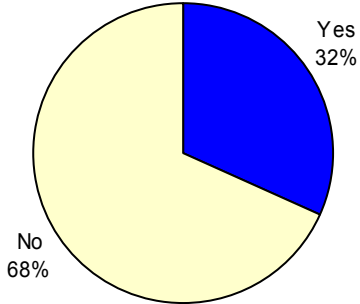
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



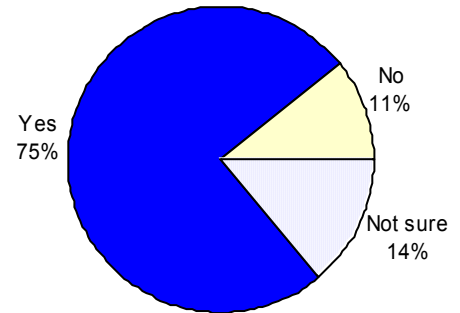
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
 (COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



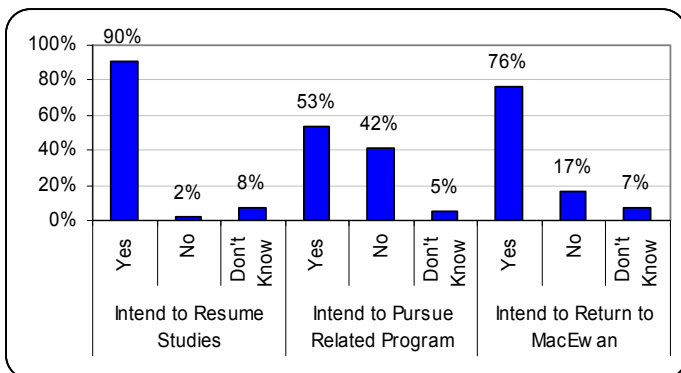
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



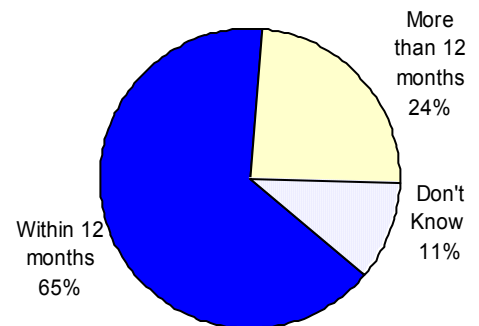
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



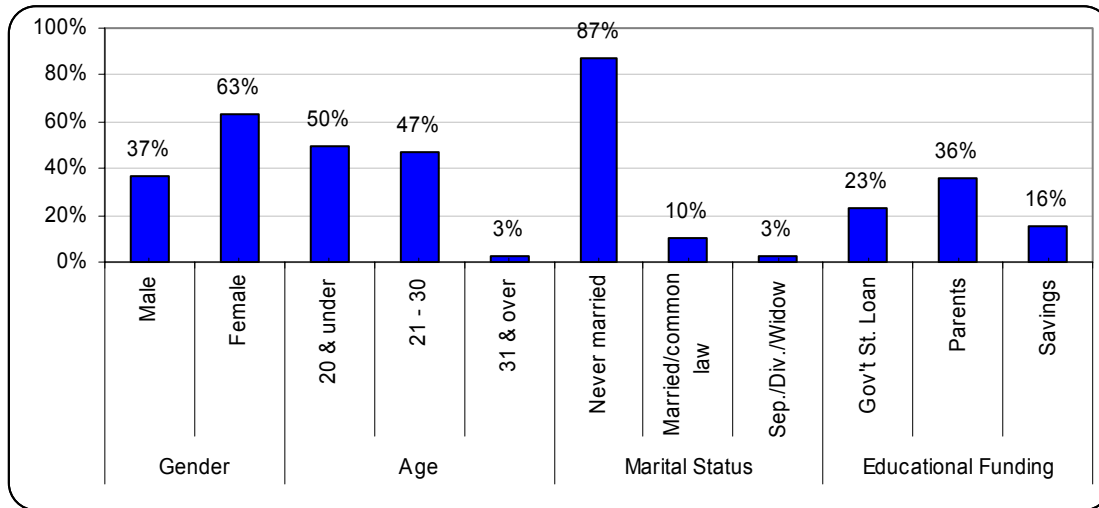
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



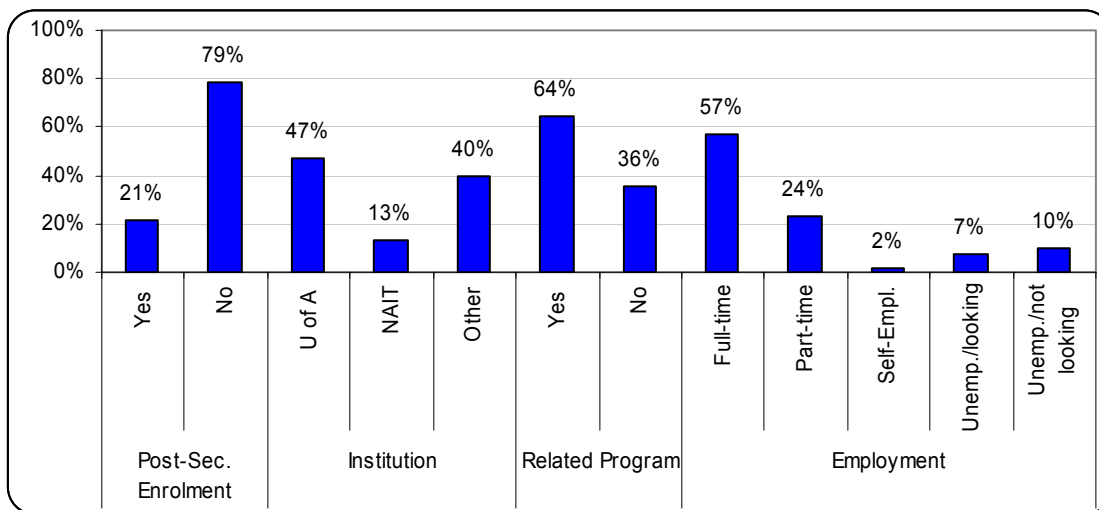
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



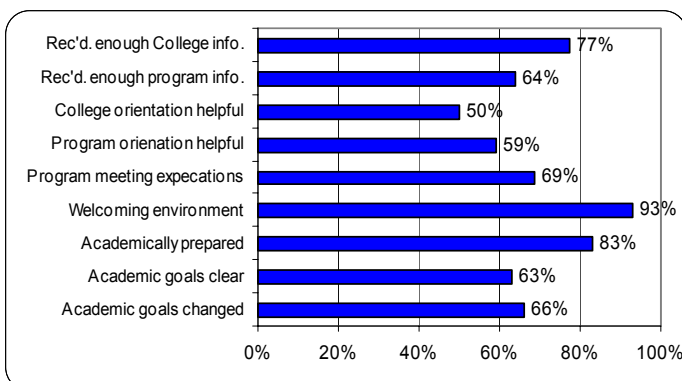
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



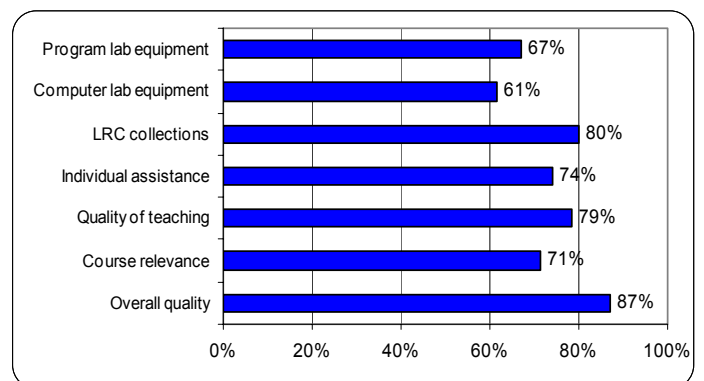
CURRENT ACTIVITY



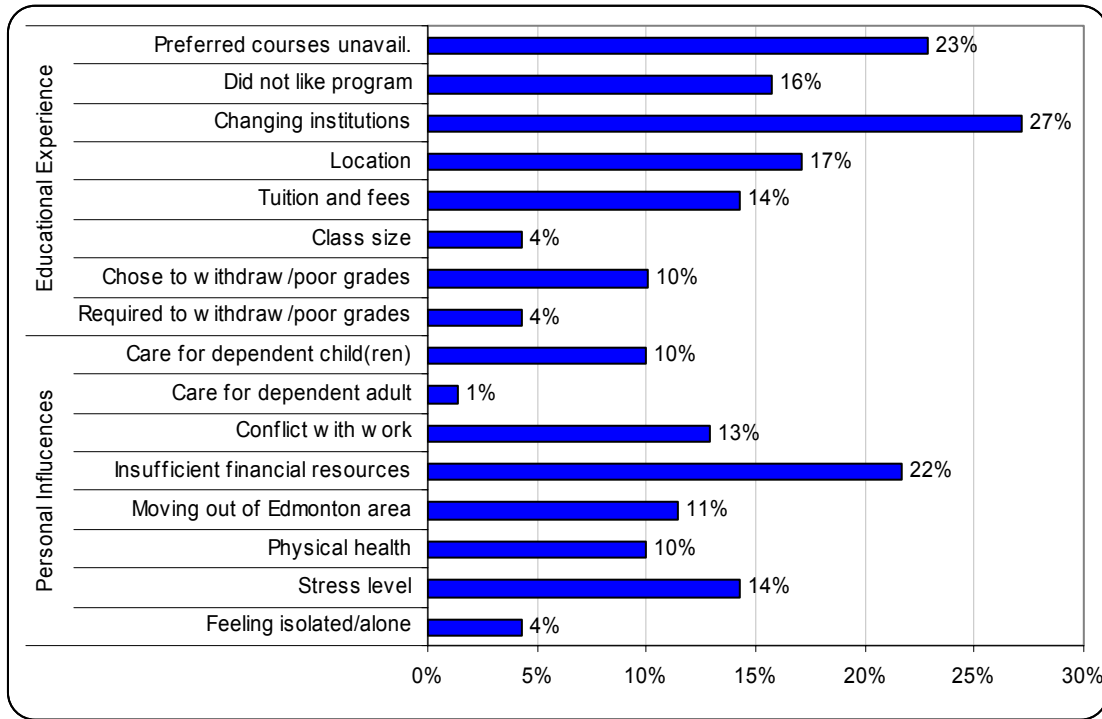
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



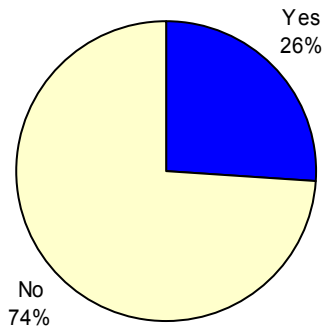
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



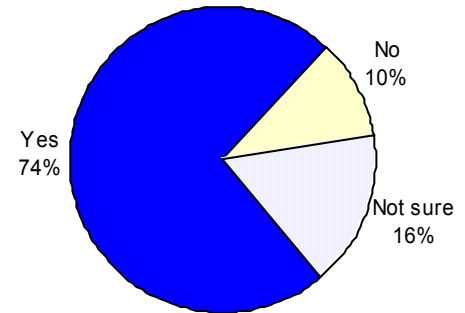
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
(COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



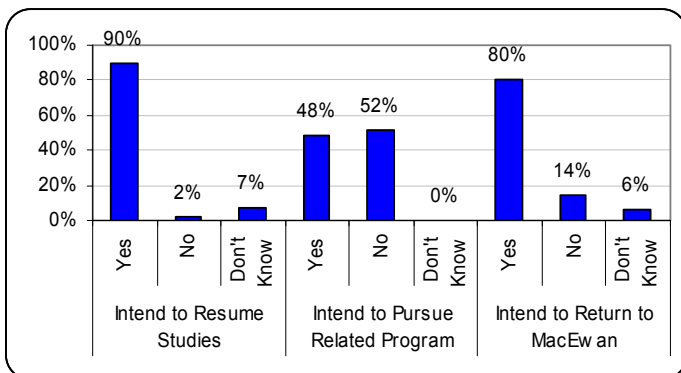
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



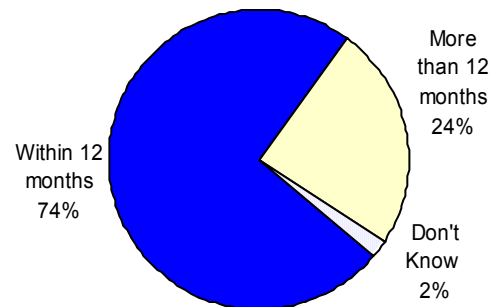
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



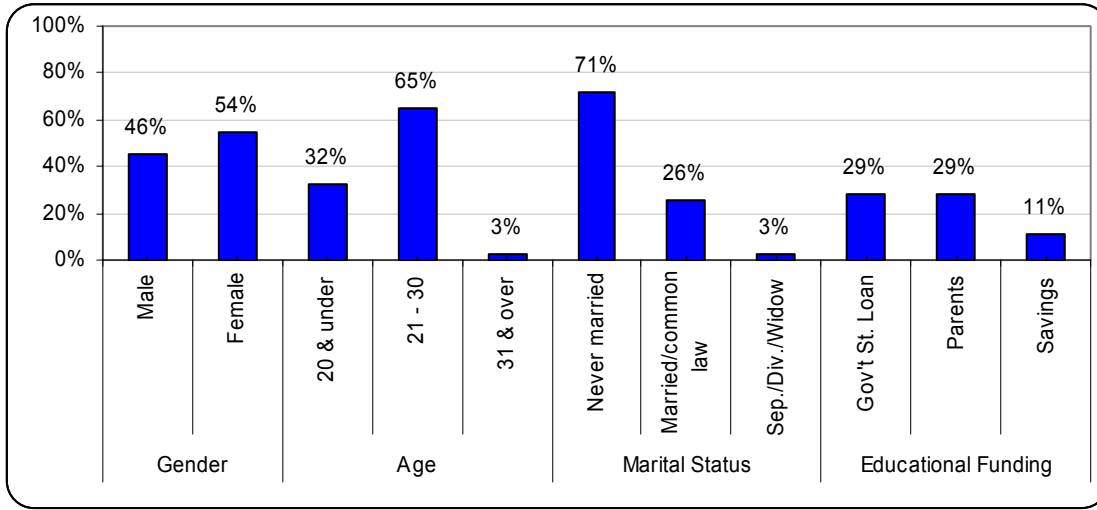
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



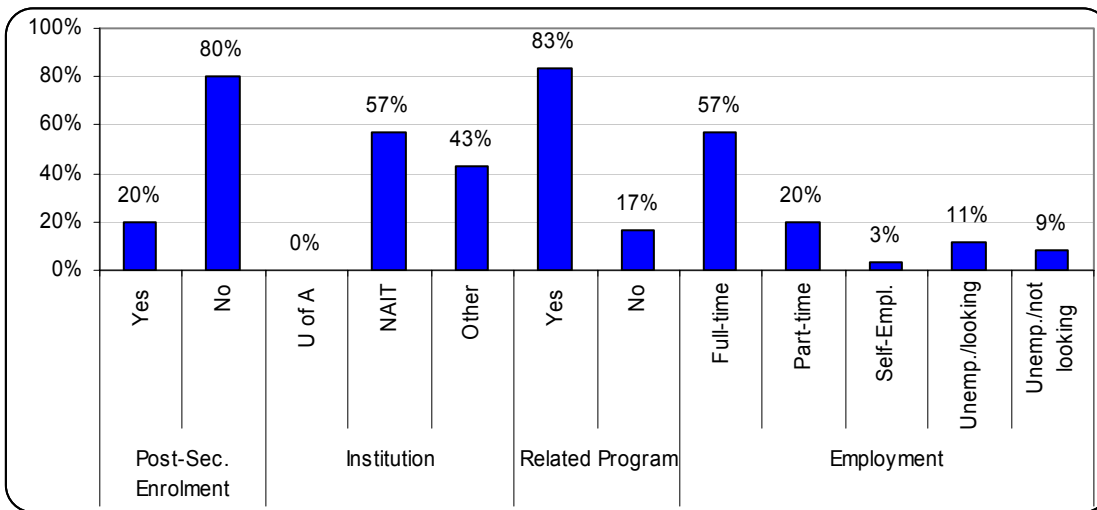
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



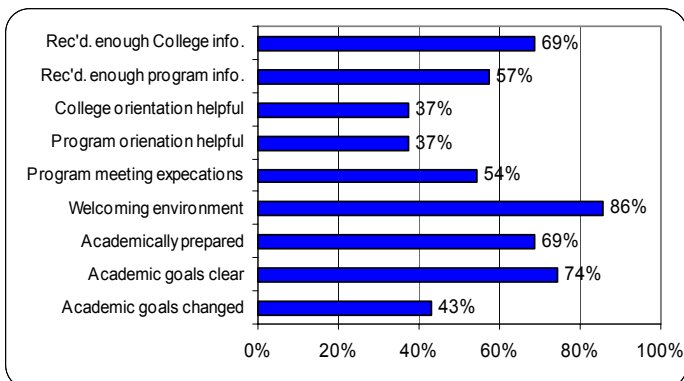
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



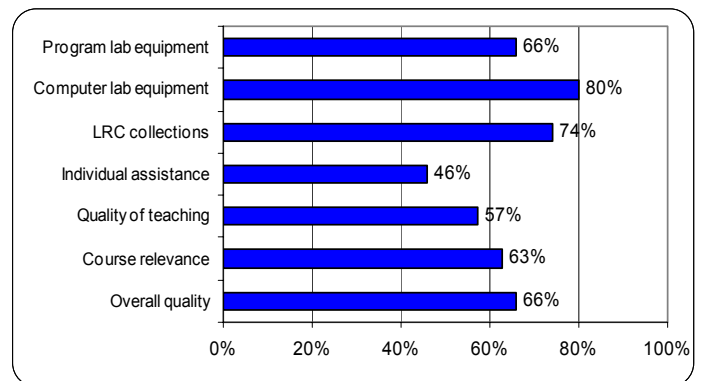
CURRENT ACTIVITY



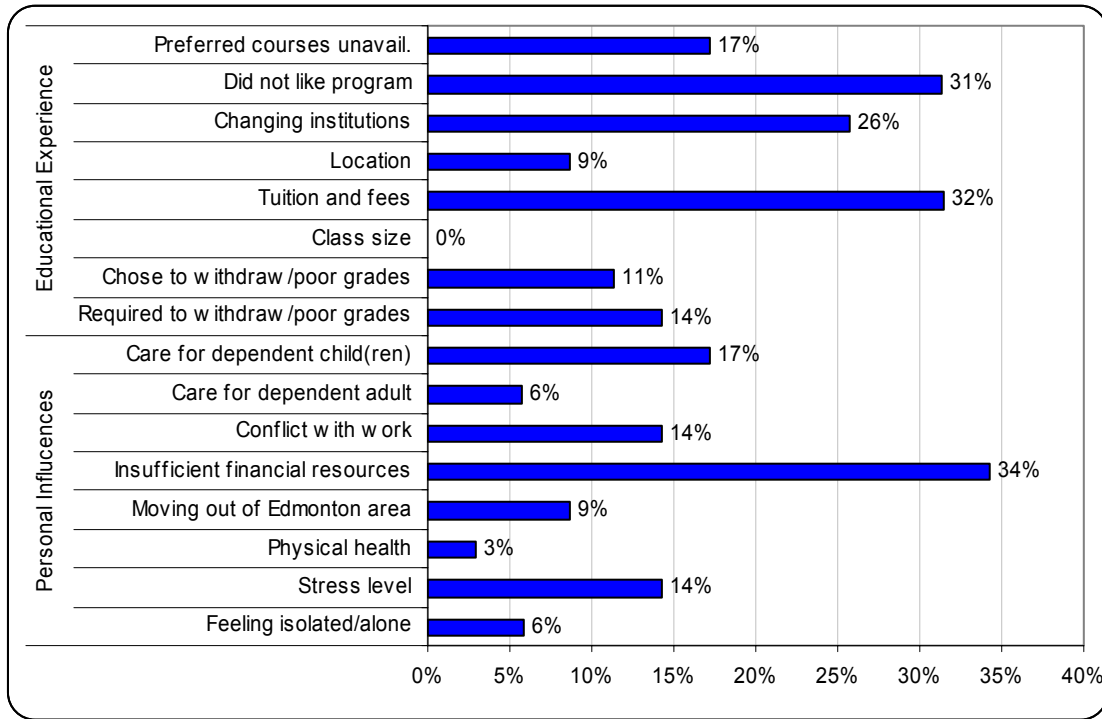
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



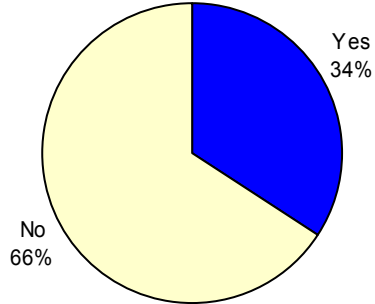
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



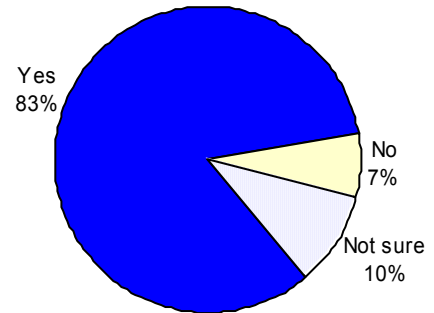
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
(COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



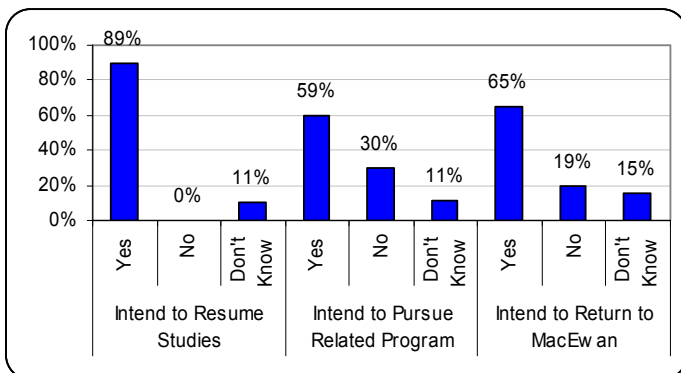
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



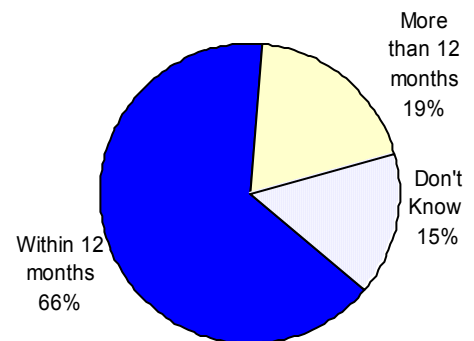
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



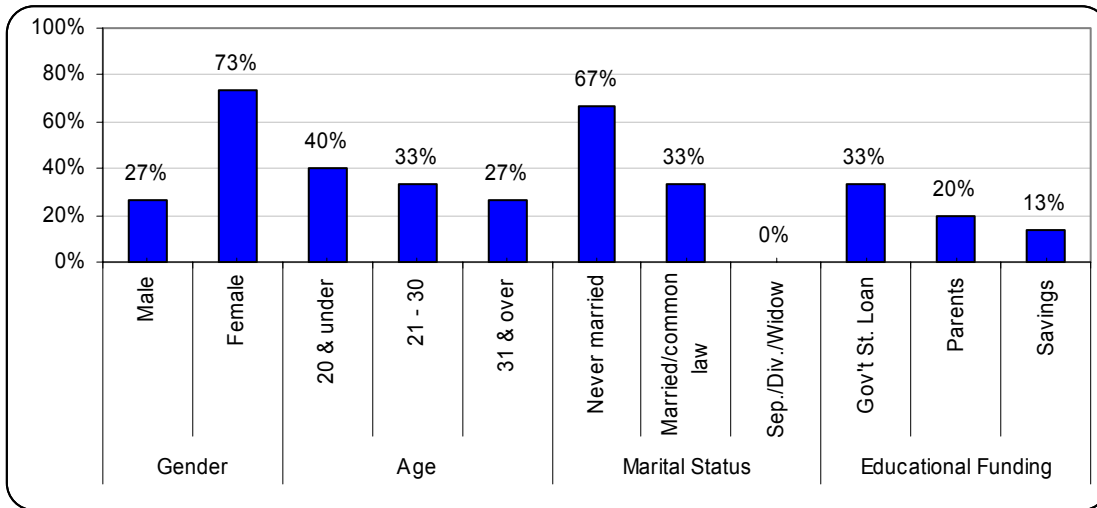
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



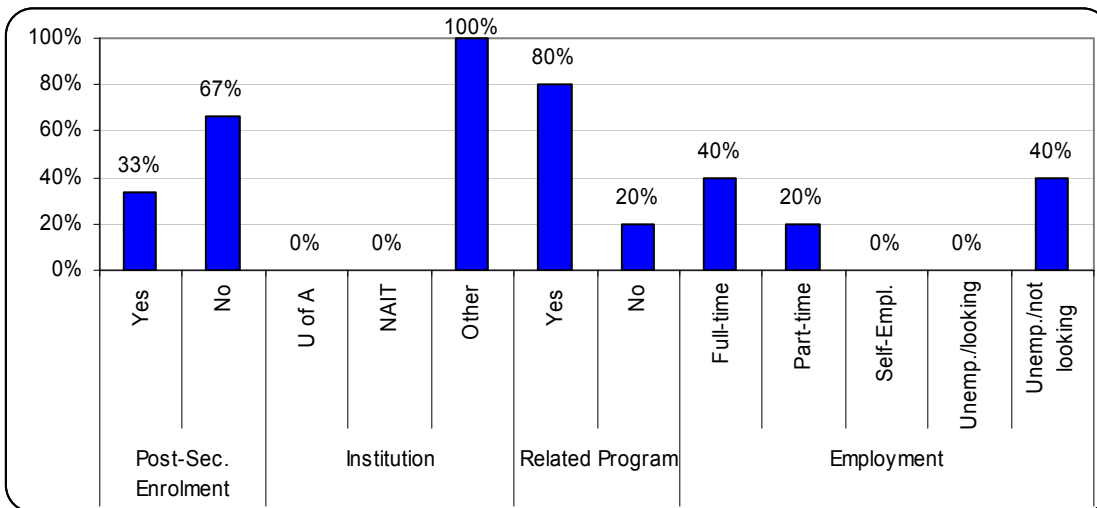
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



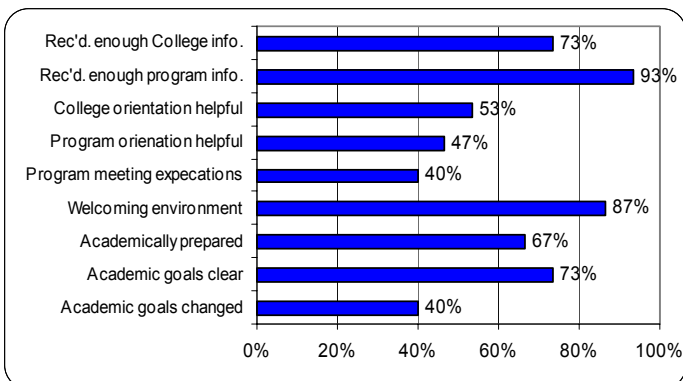
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



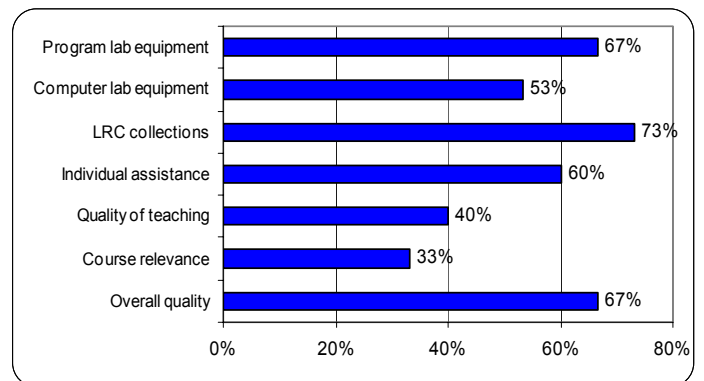
CURRENT ACTIVITY



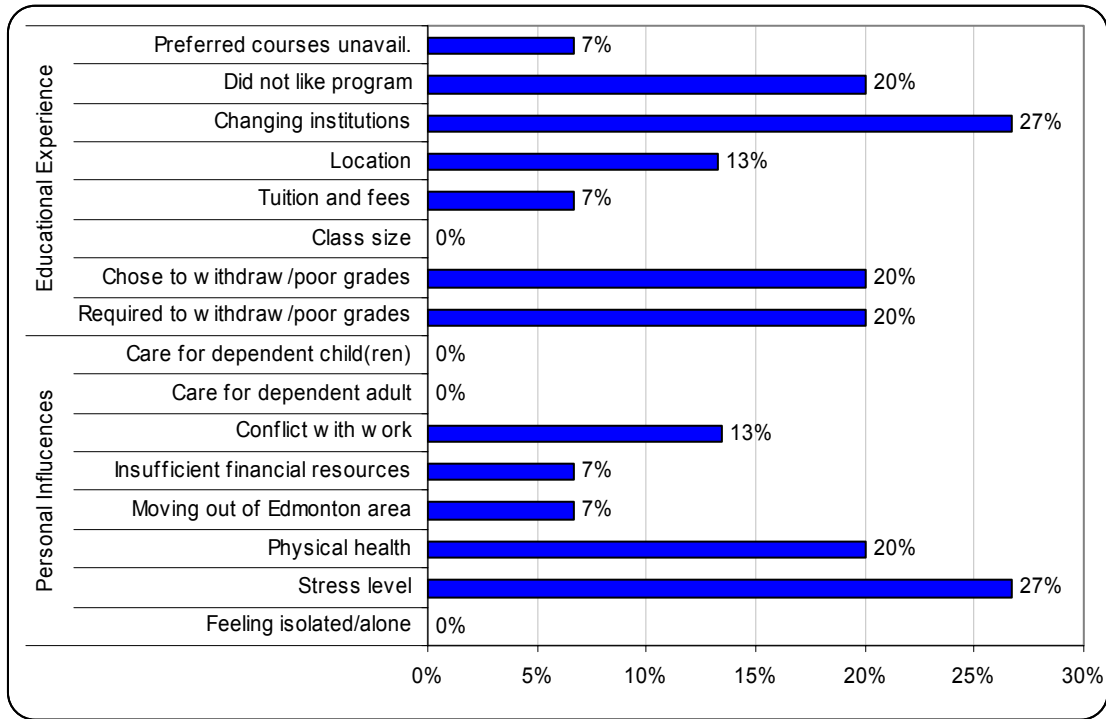
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



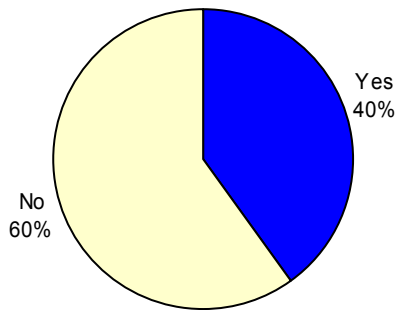
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



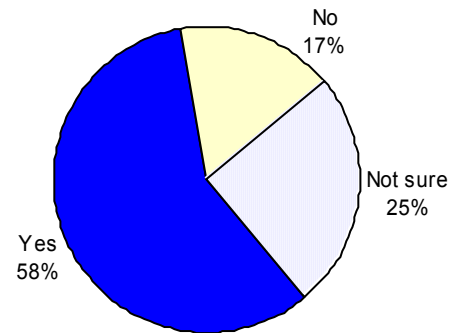
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
(COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



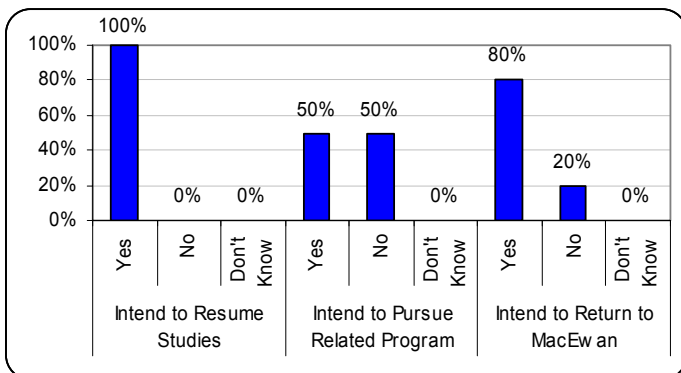
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



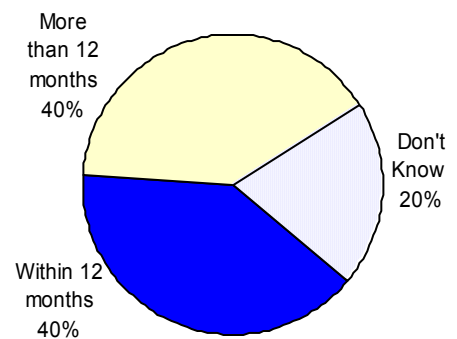
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



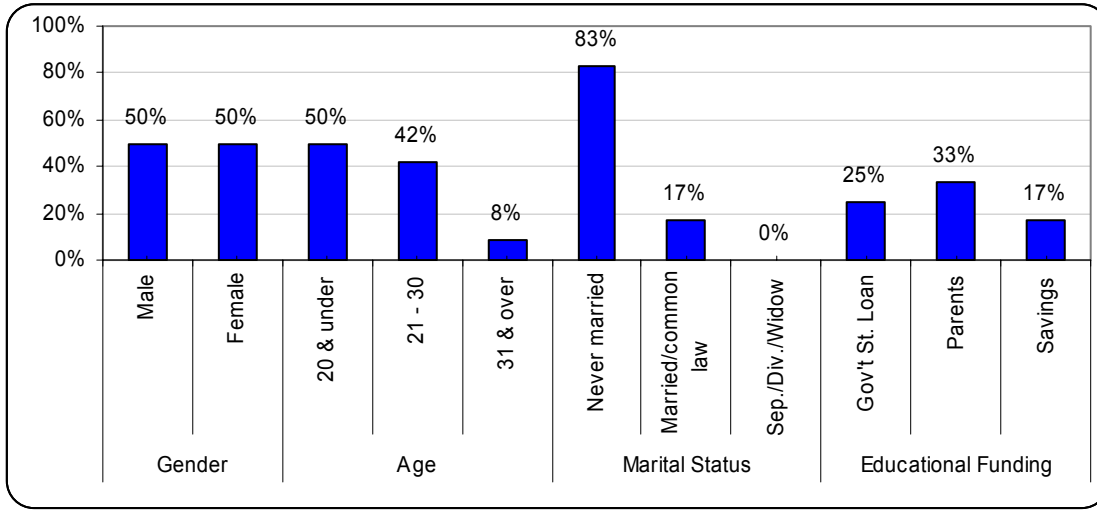
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



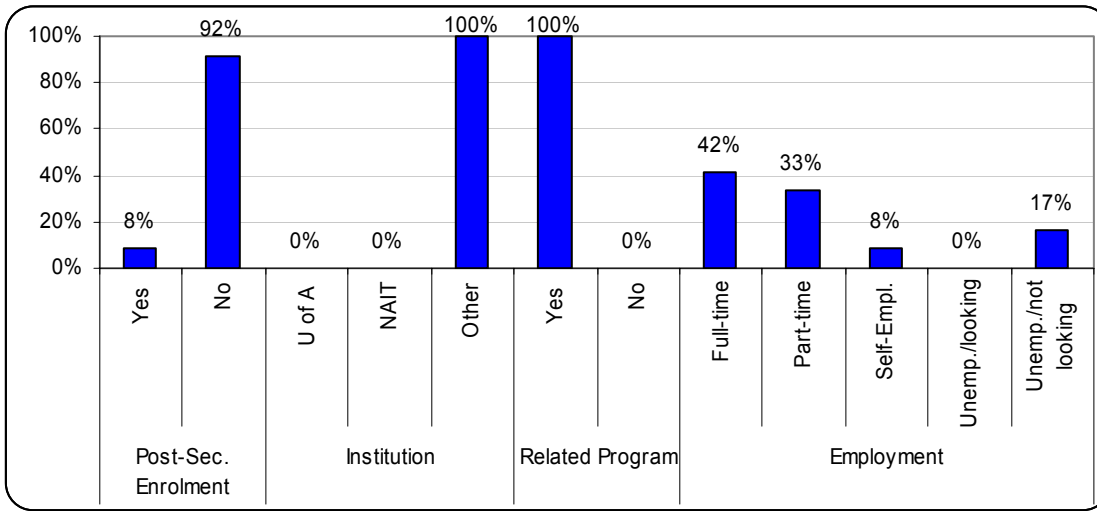
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



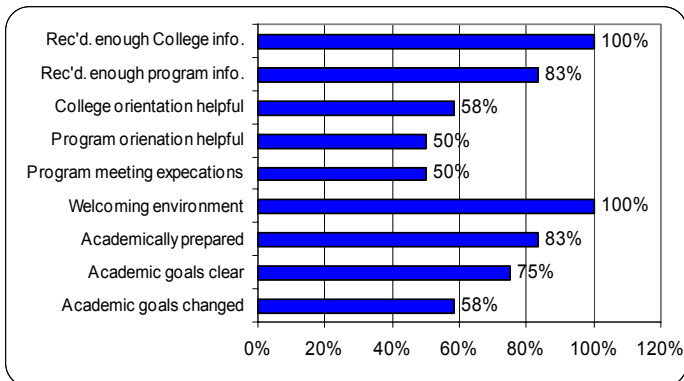
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



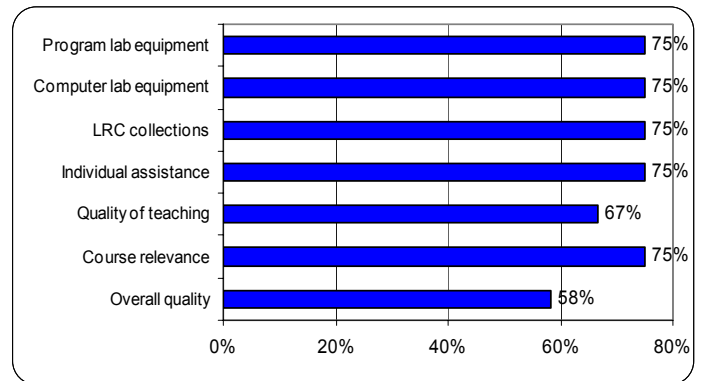
CURRENT ACTIVITY



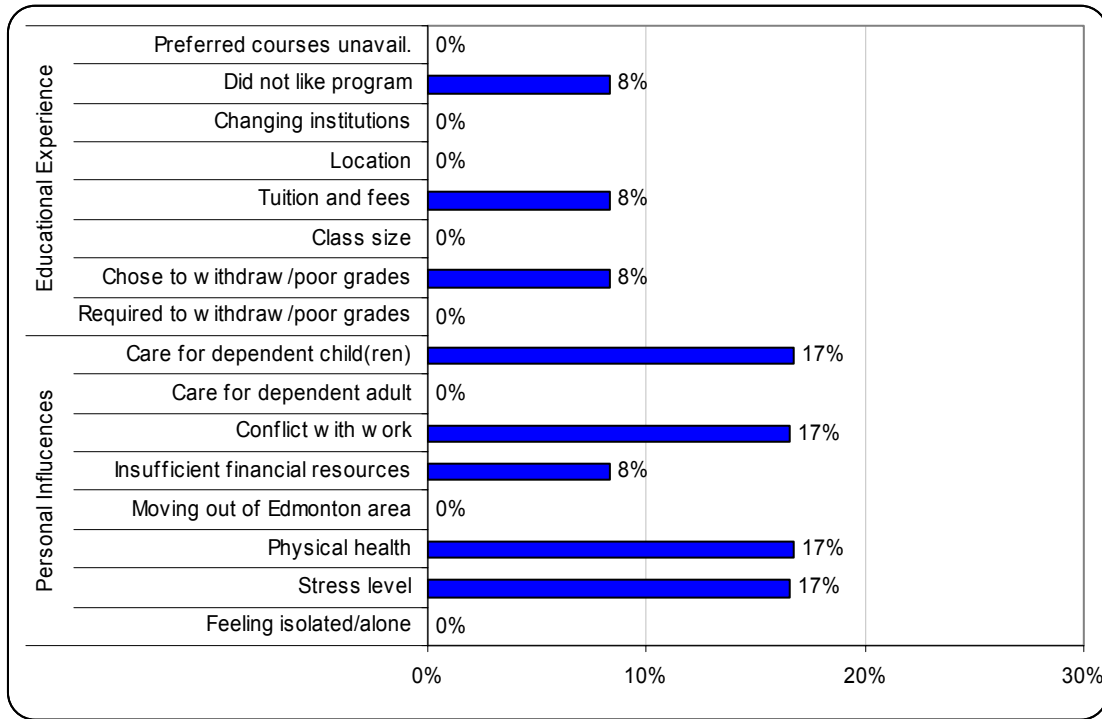
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



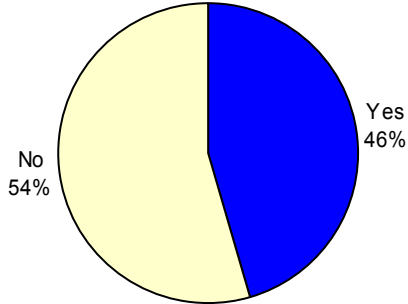
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



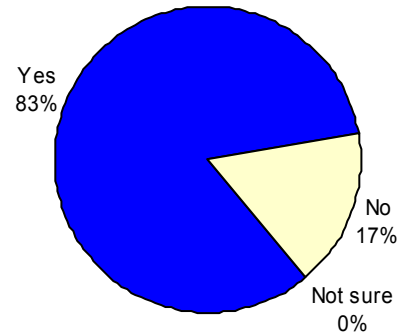
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
 (COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



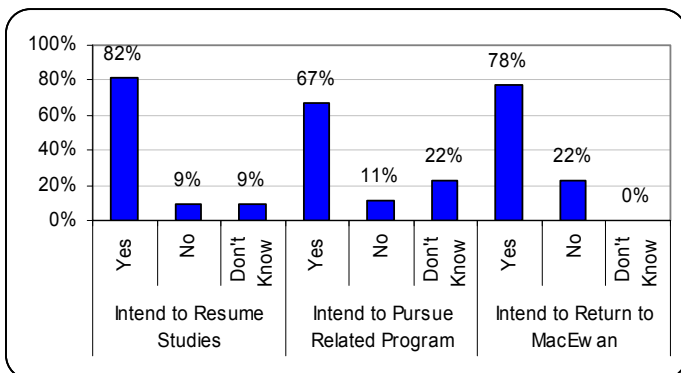
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



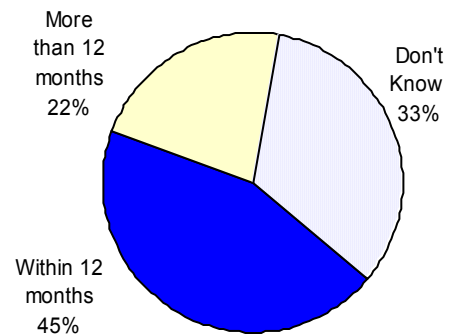
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



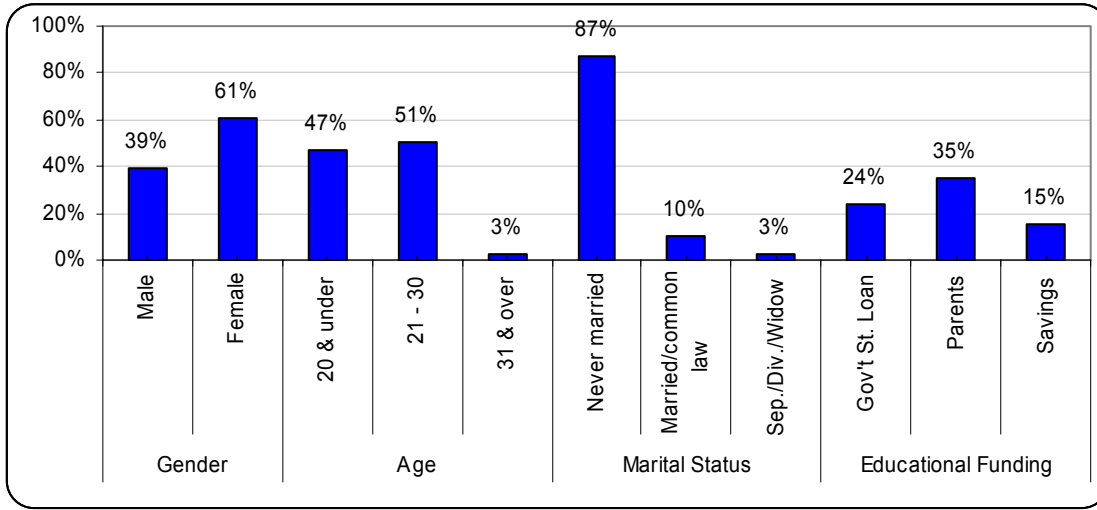
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



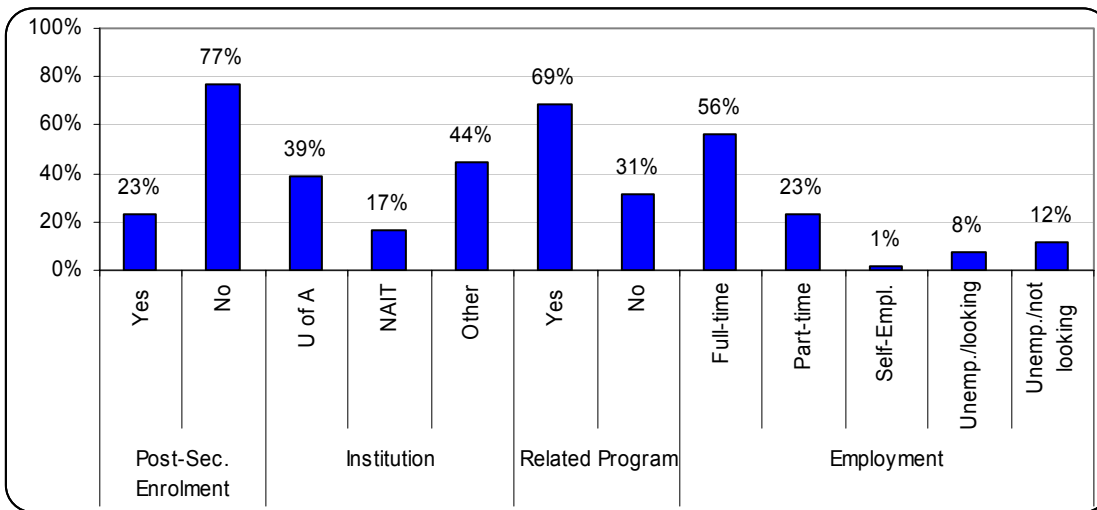
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



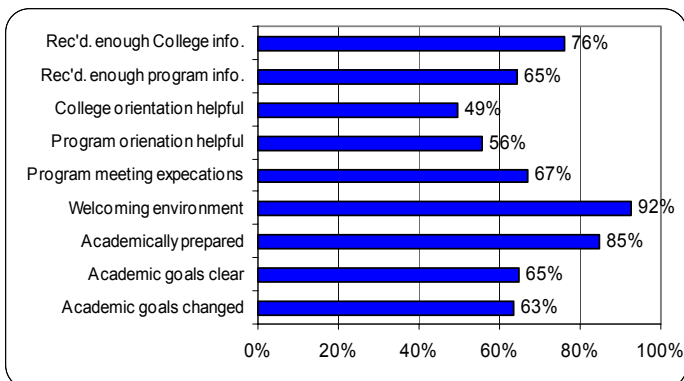
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



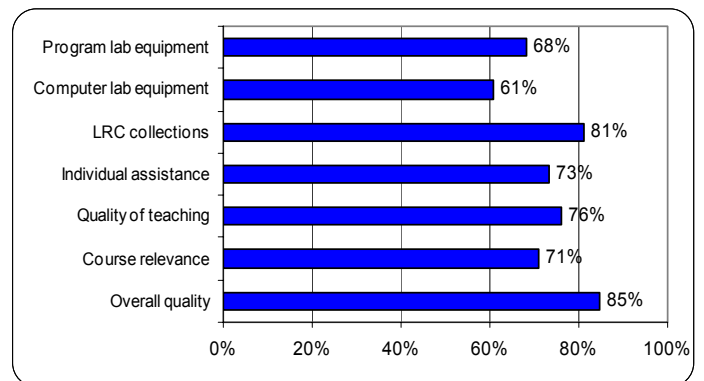
CURRENT ACTIVITY



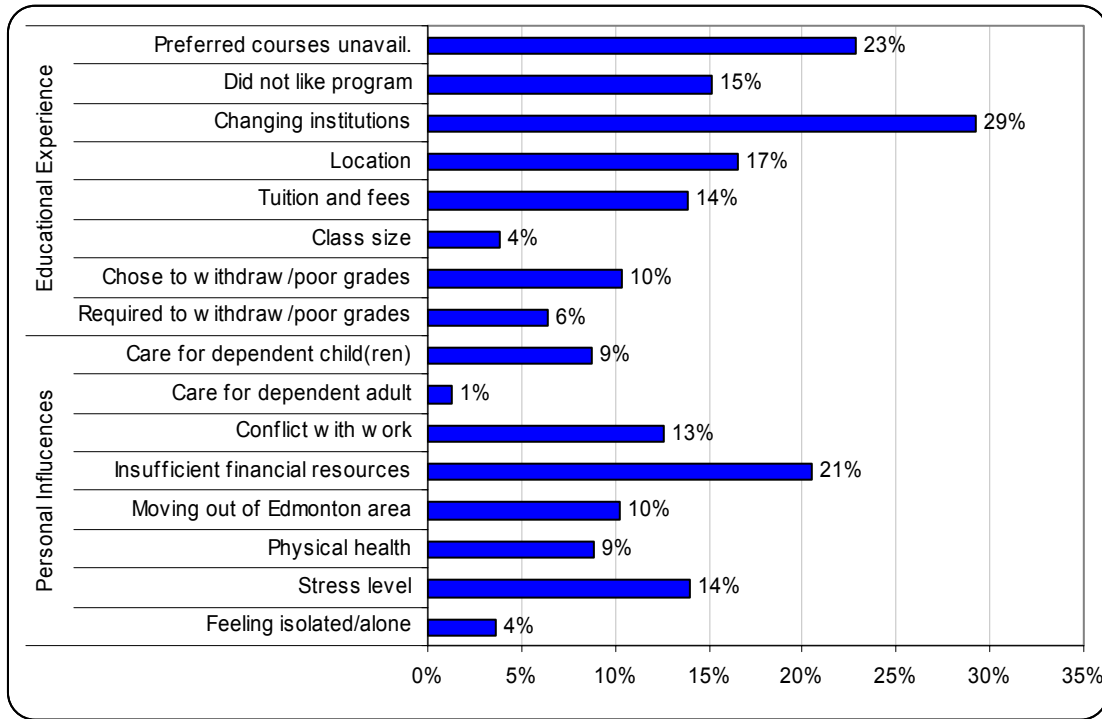
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



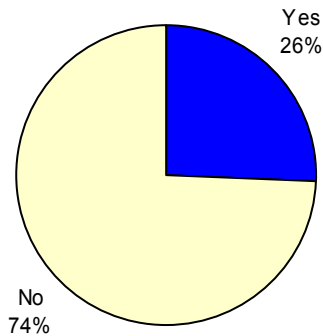
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



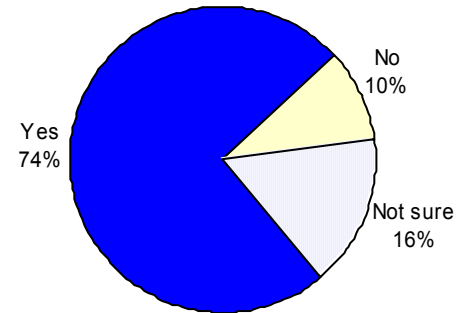
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
 (COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



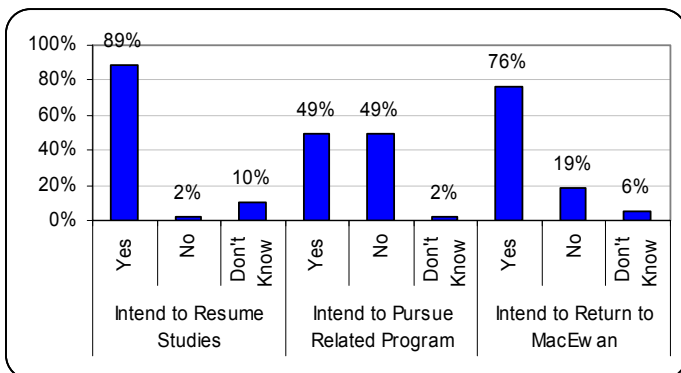
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



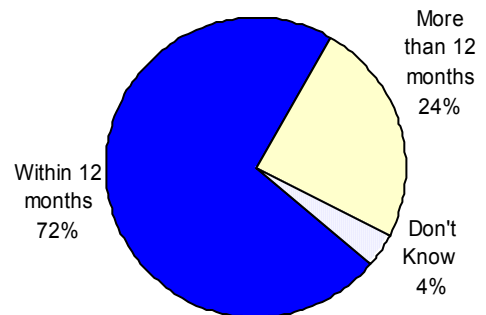
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



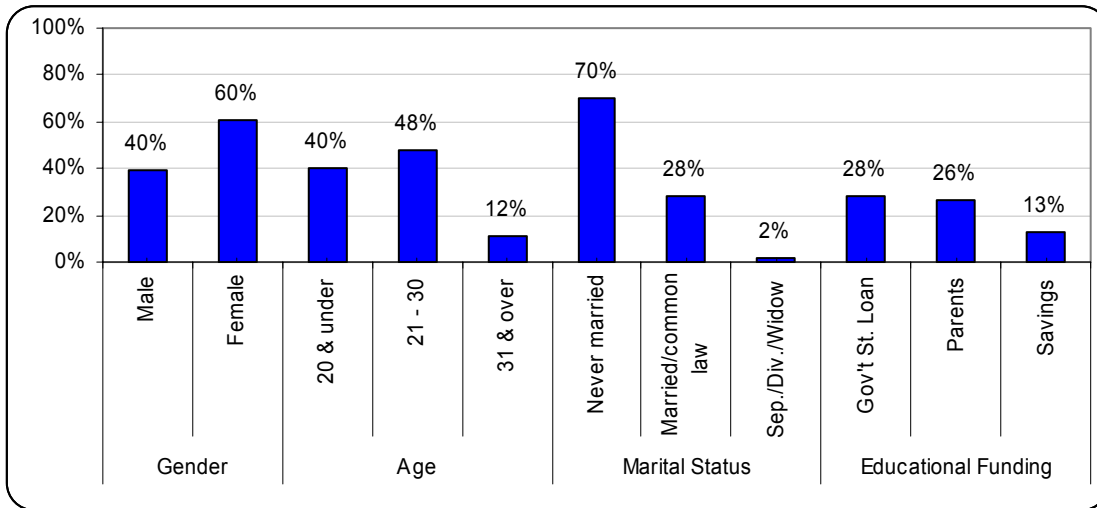
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



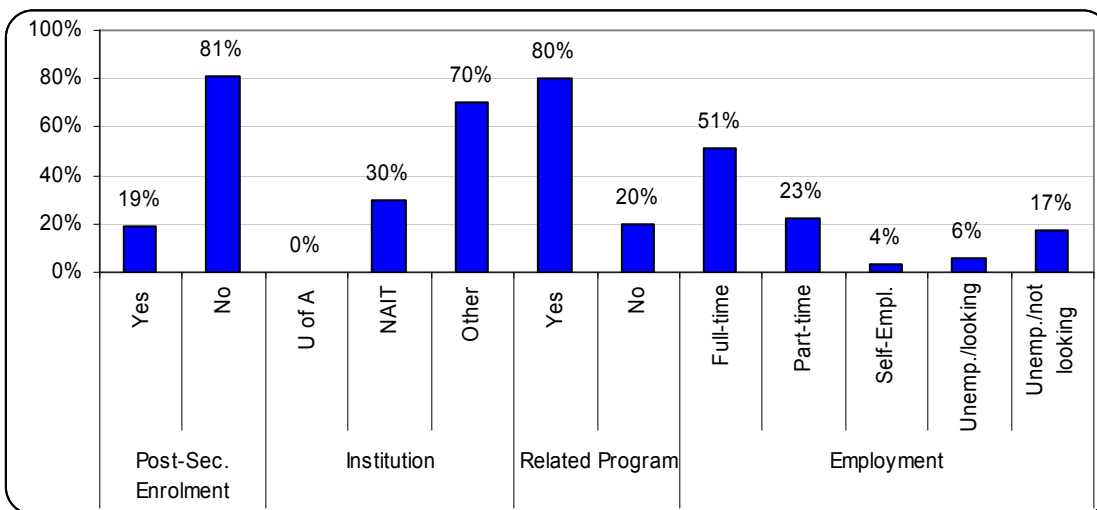
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



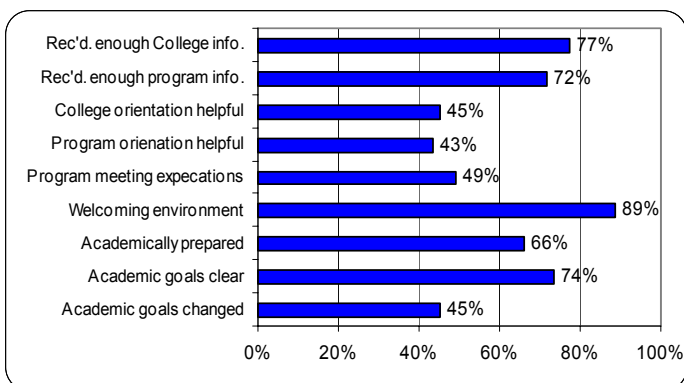
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



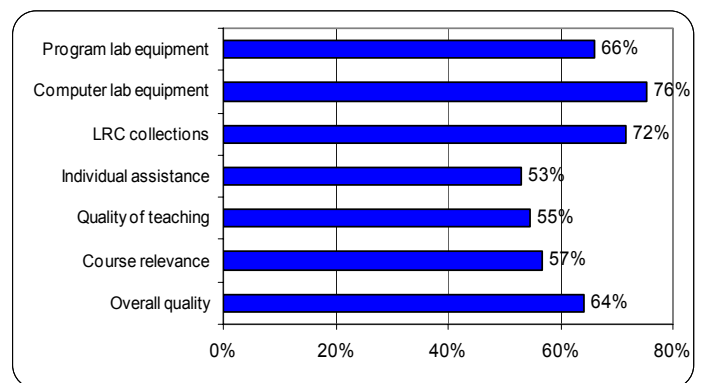
CURRENT ACTIVITY



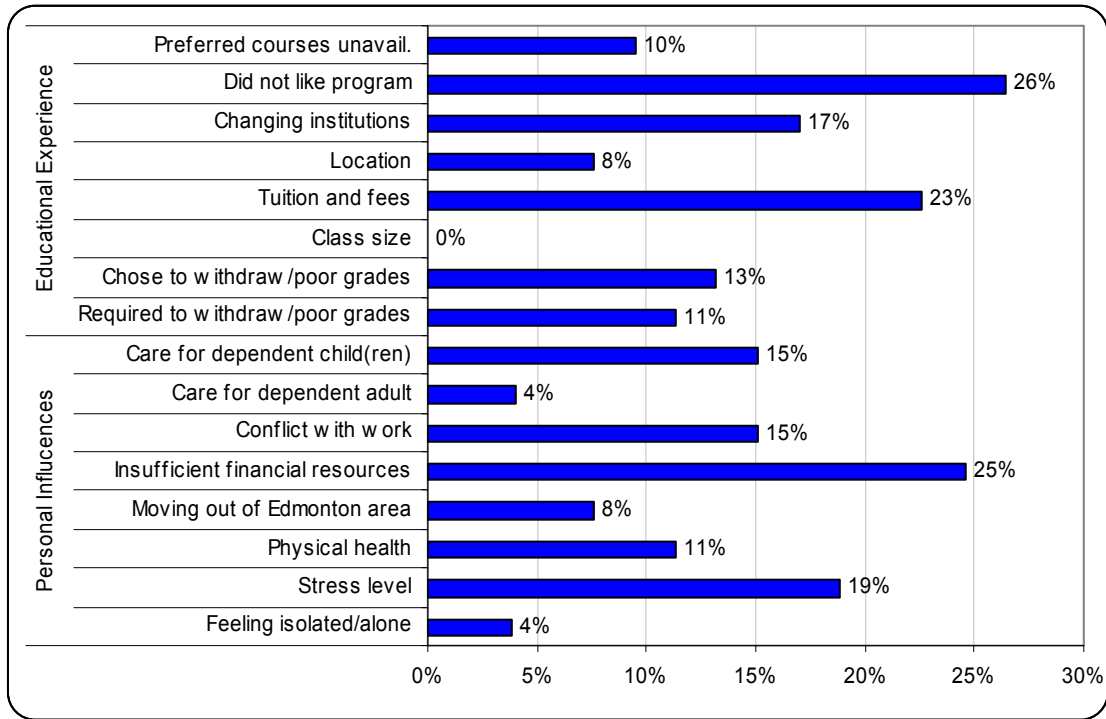
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



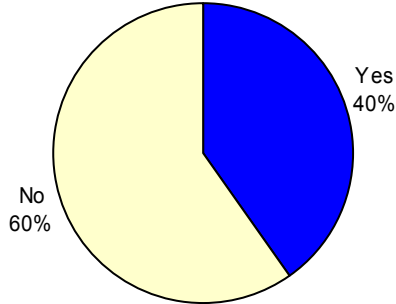
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



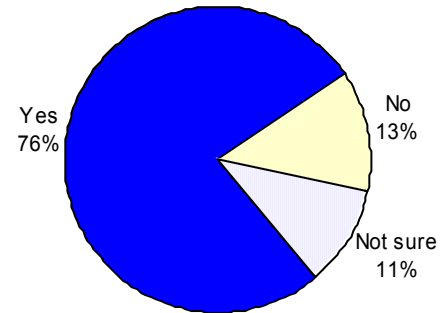
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
(COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



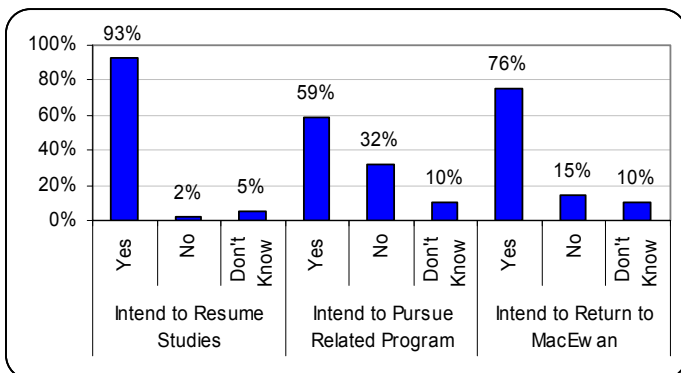
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



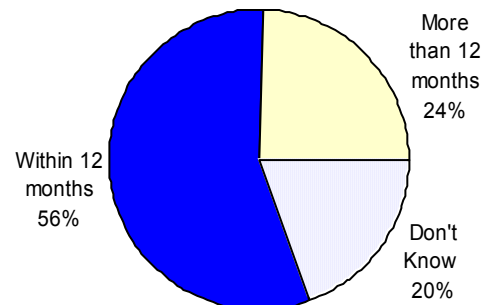
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



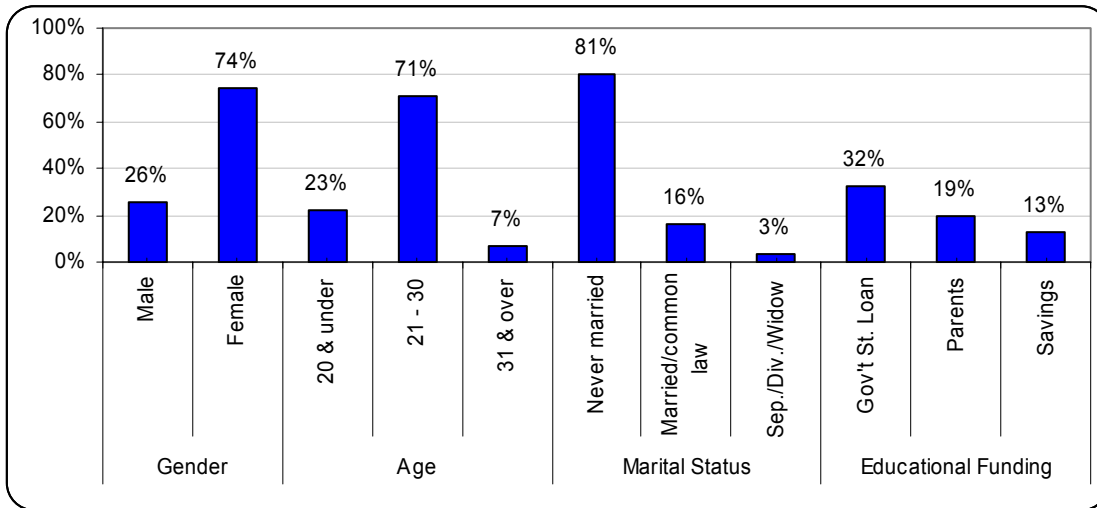
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



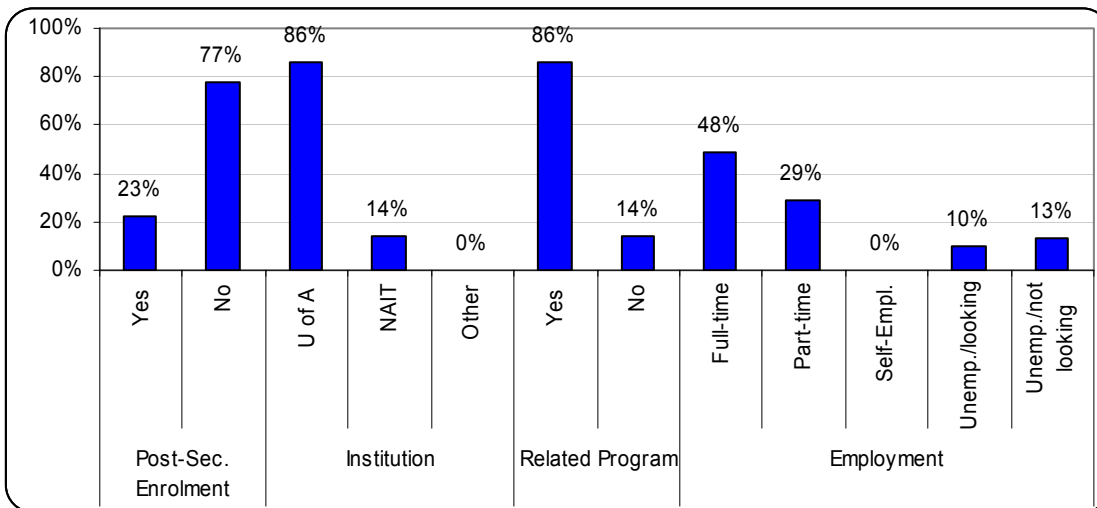
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



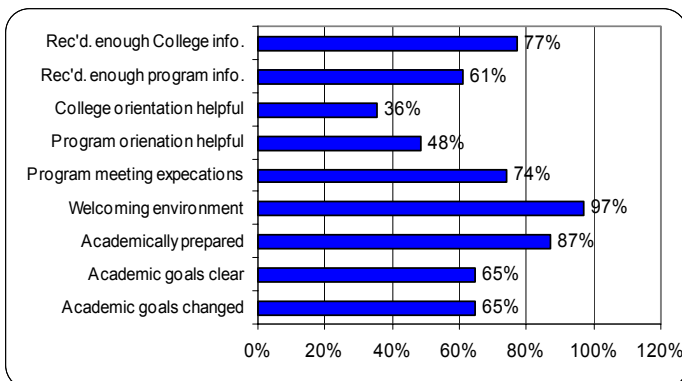
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



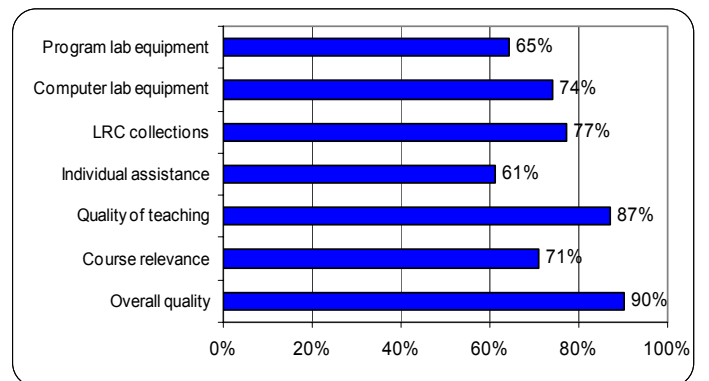
CURRENT ACTIVITY



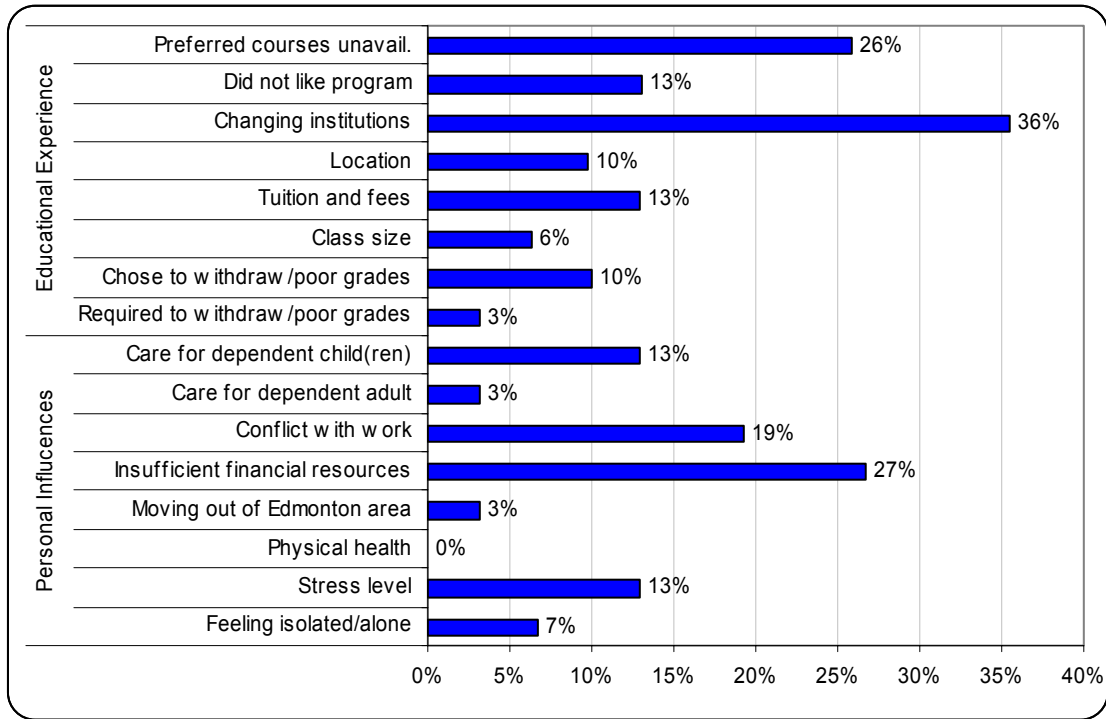
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



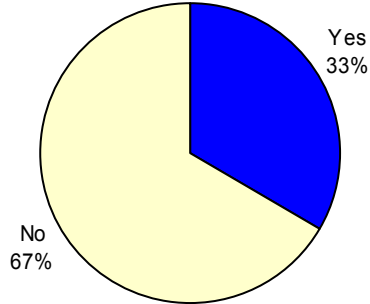
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



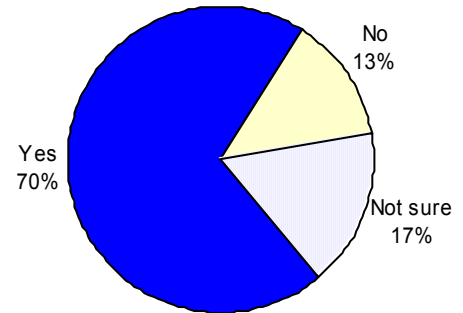
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
 (COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



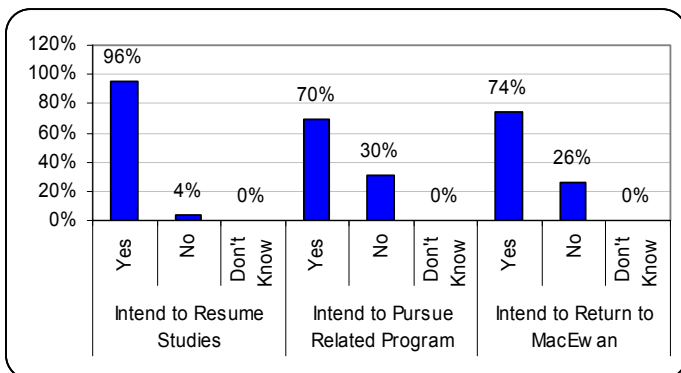
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



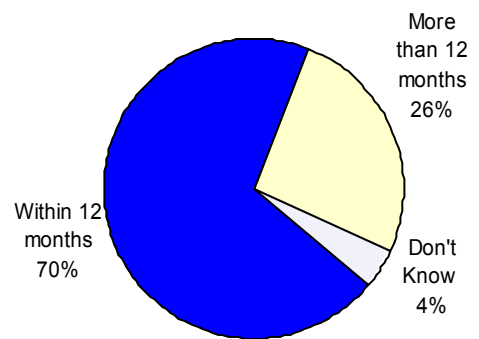
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



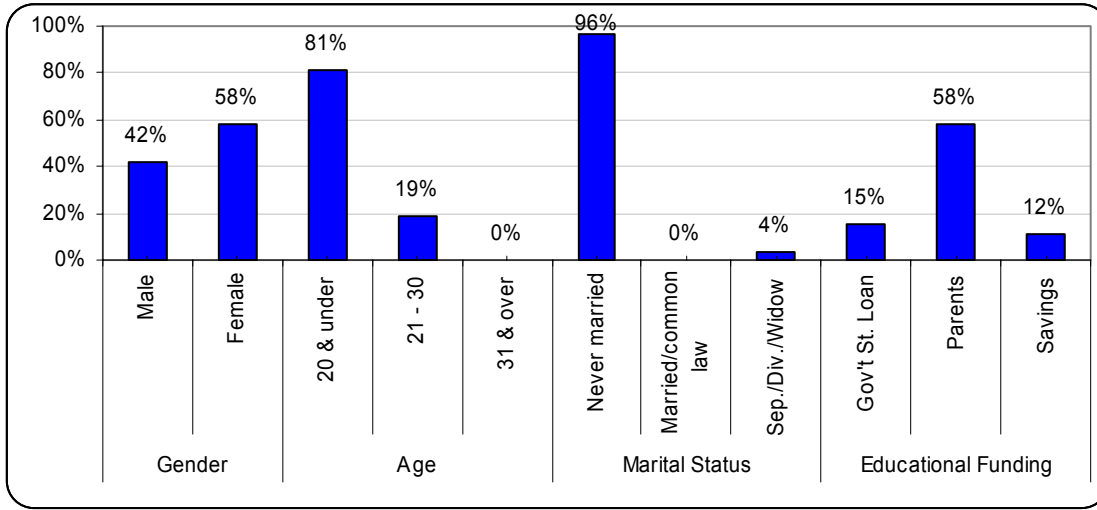
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



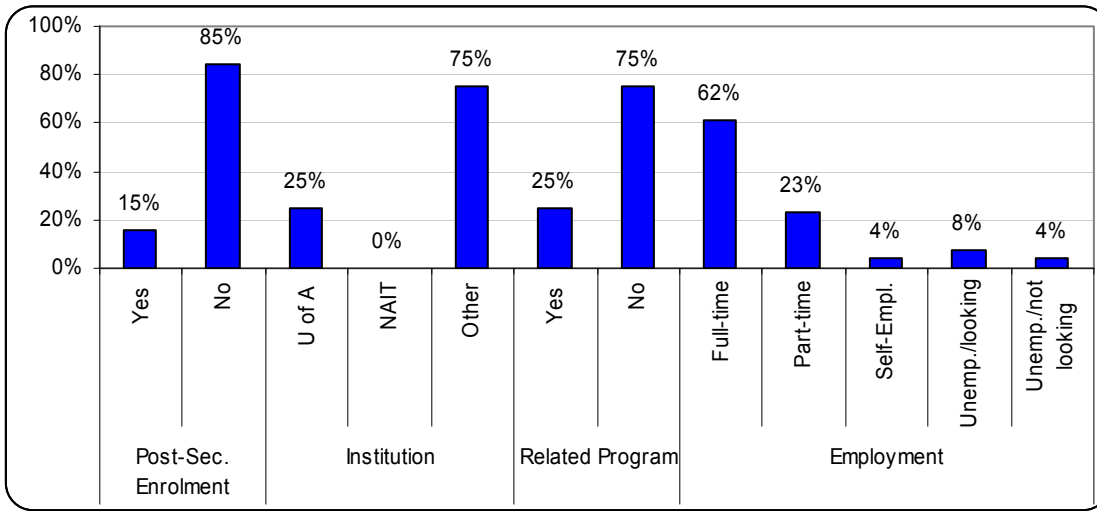
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



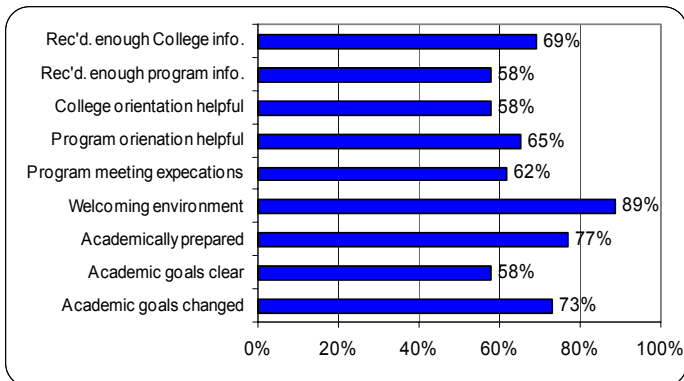
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



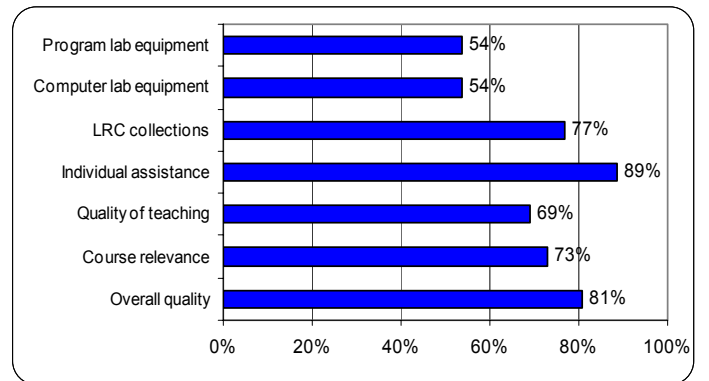
CURRENT ACTIVITY



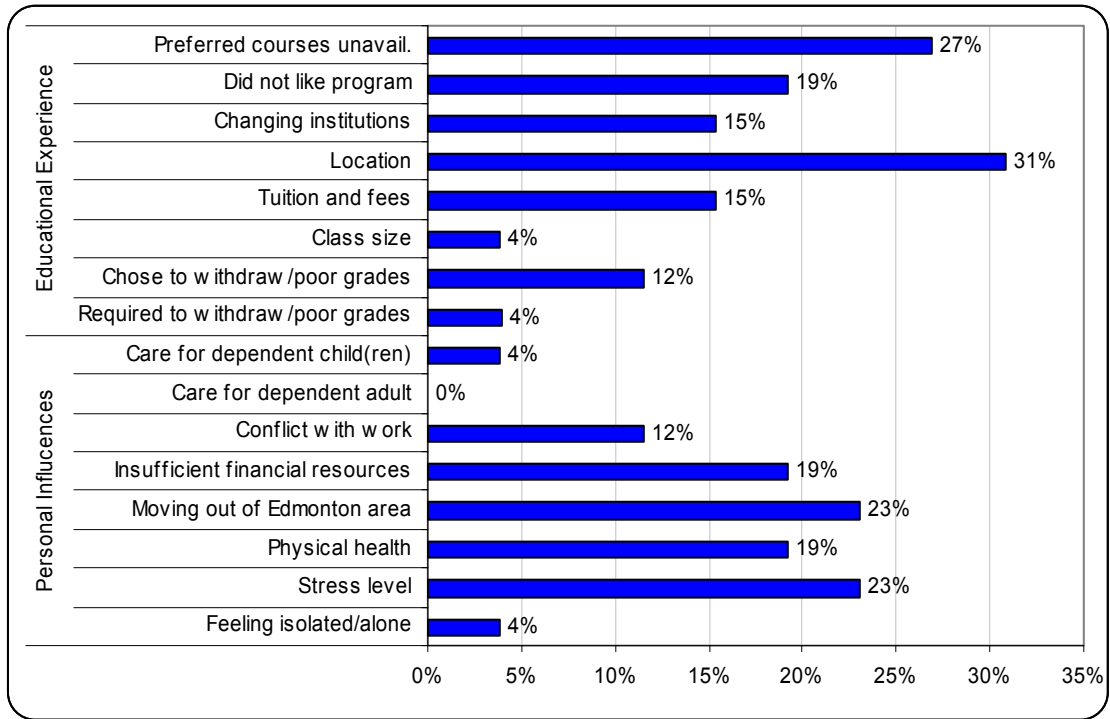
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



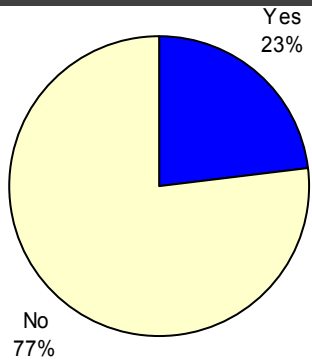
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



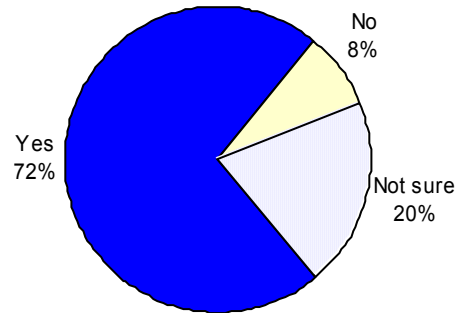
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
 (COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



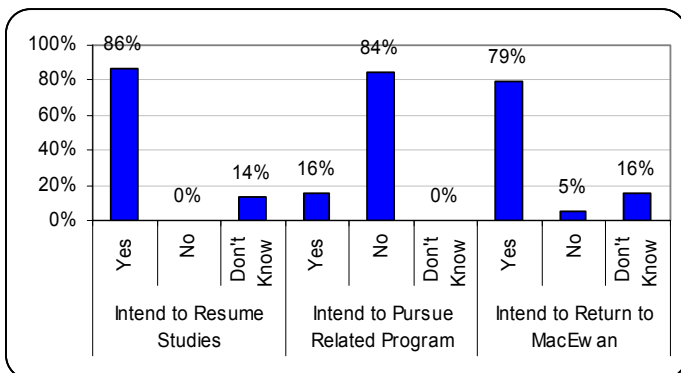
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



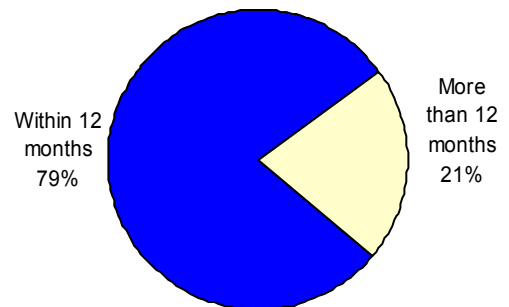
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



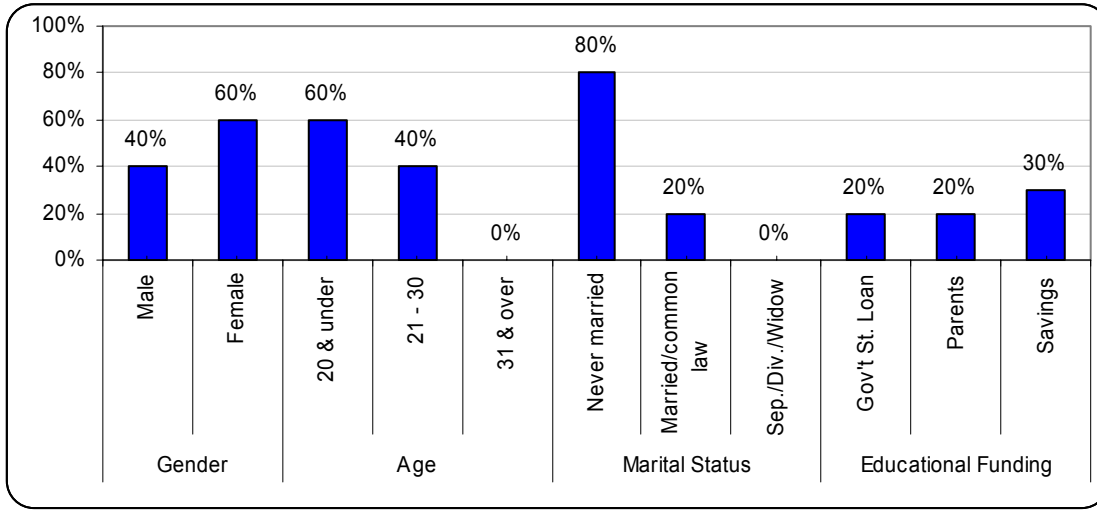
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



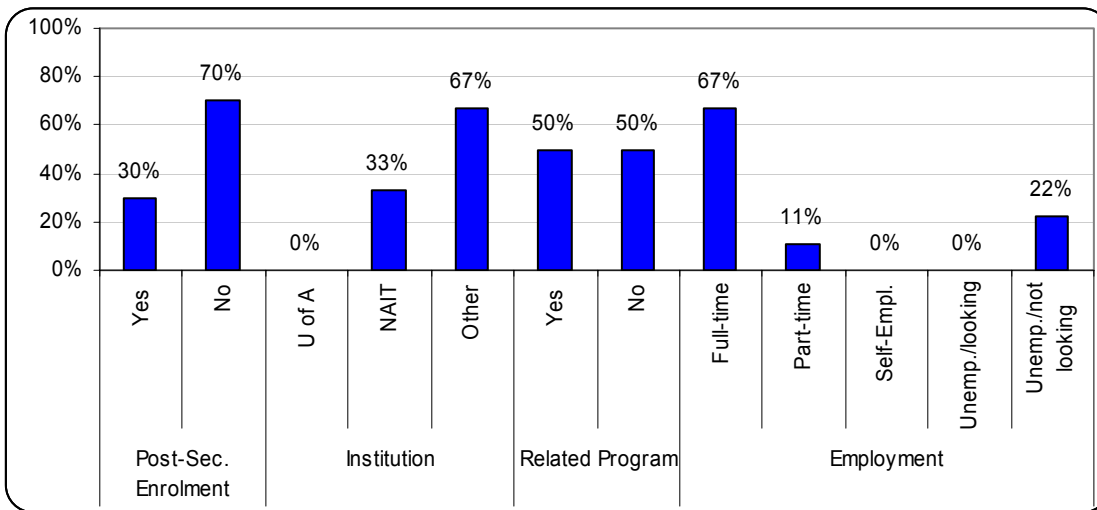
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



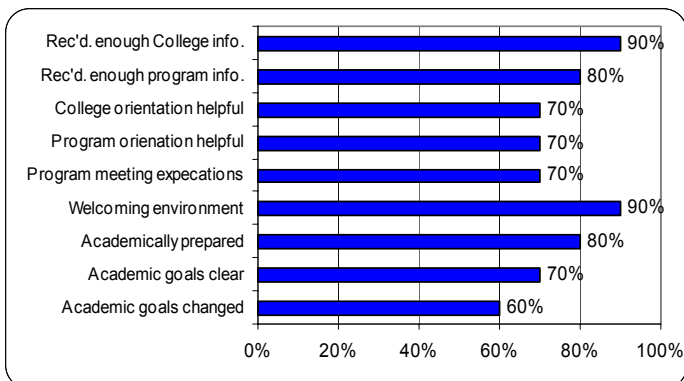
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



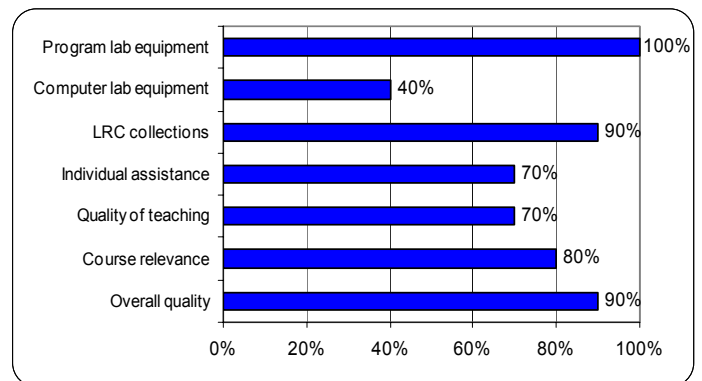
CURRENT ACTIVITY



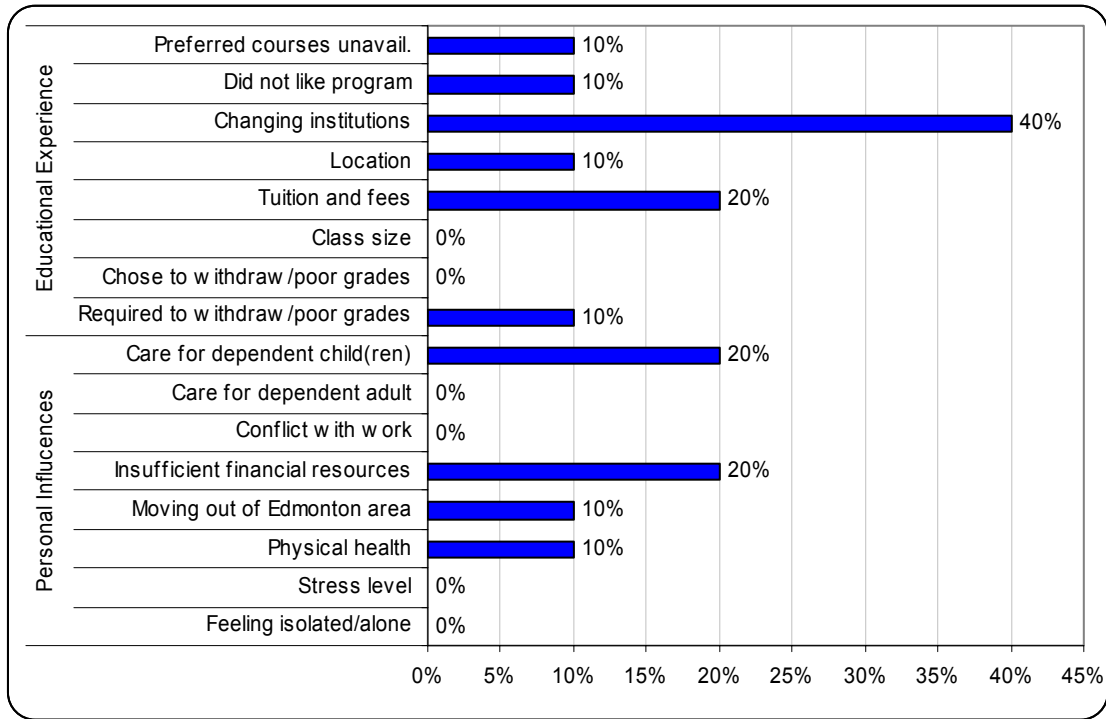
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



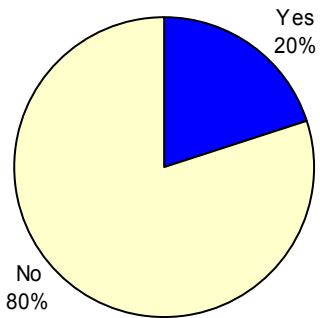
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



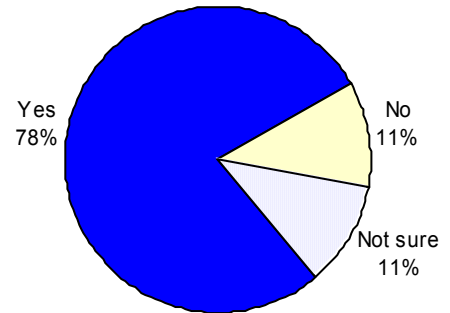
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE
(COMBINED SIGNIFICANT/VERY SIGNIFICANT)



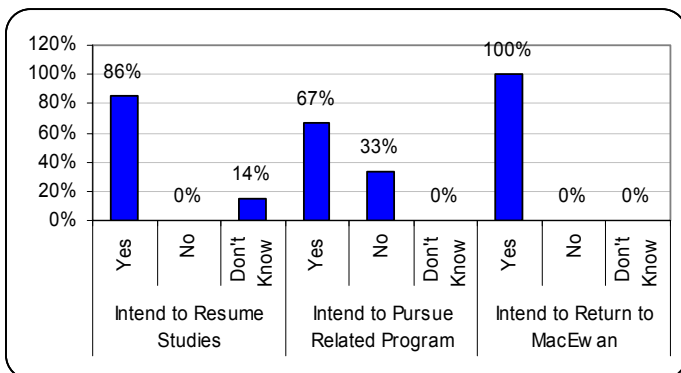
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



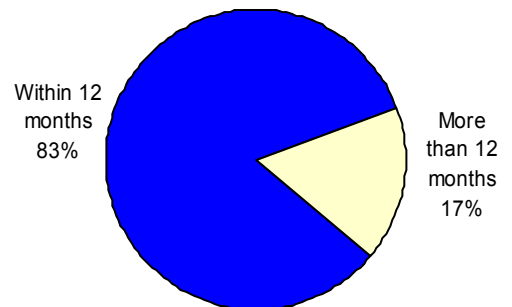
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



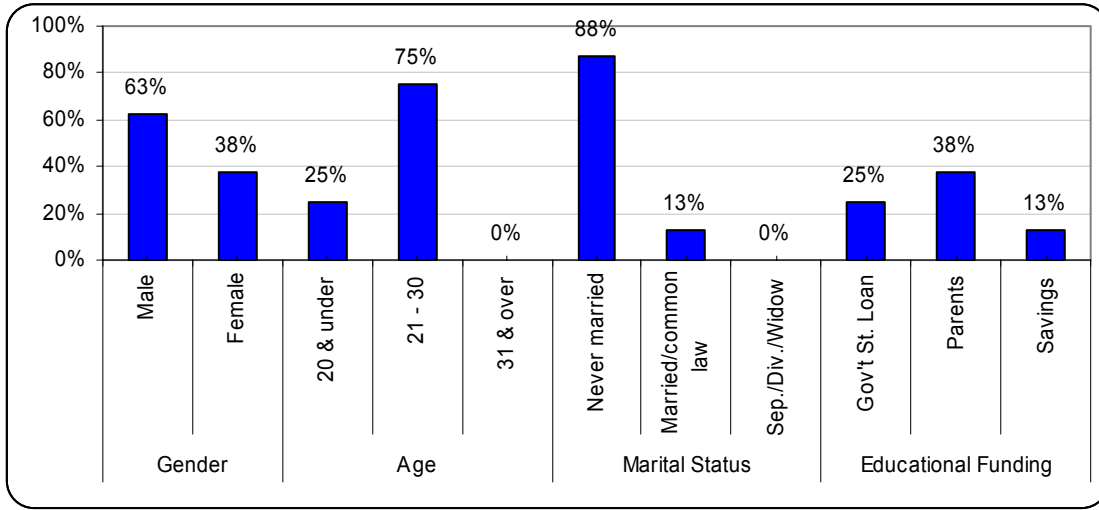
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



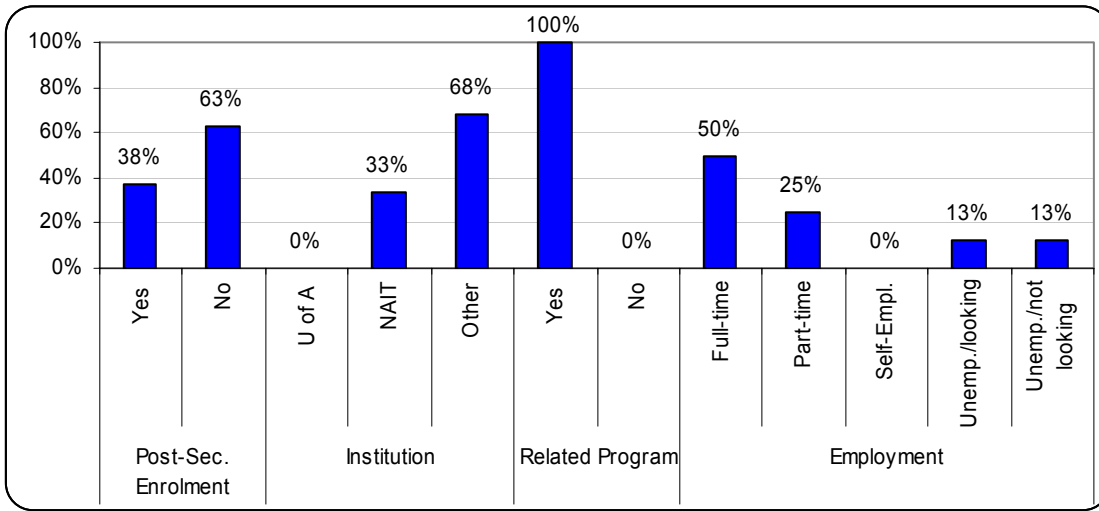
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



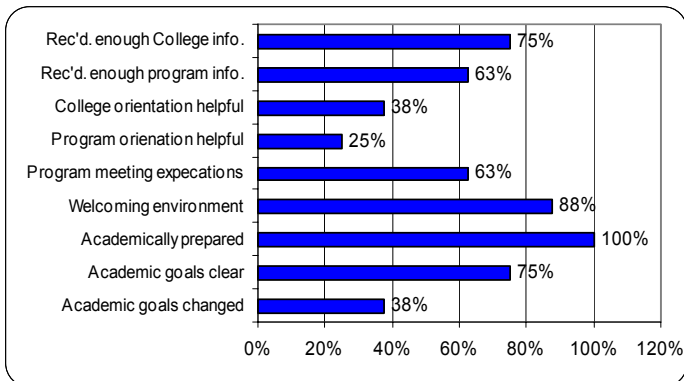
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



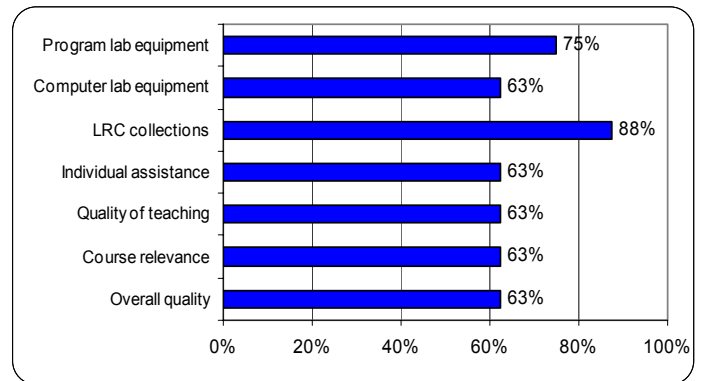
CURRENT ACTIVITY



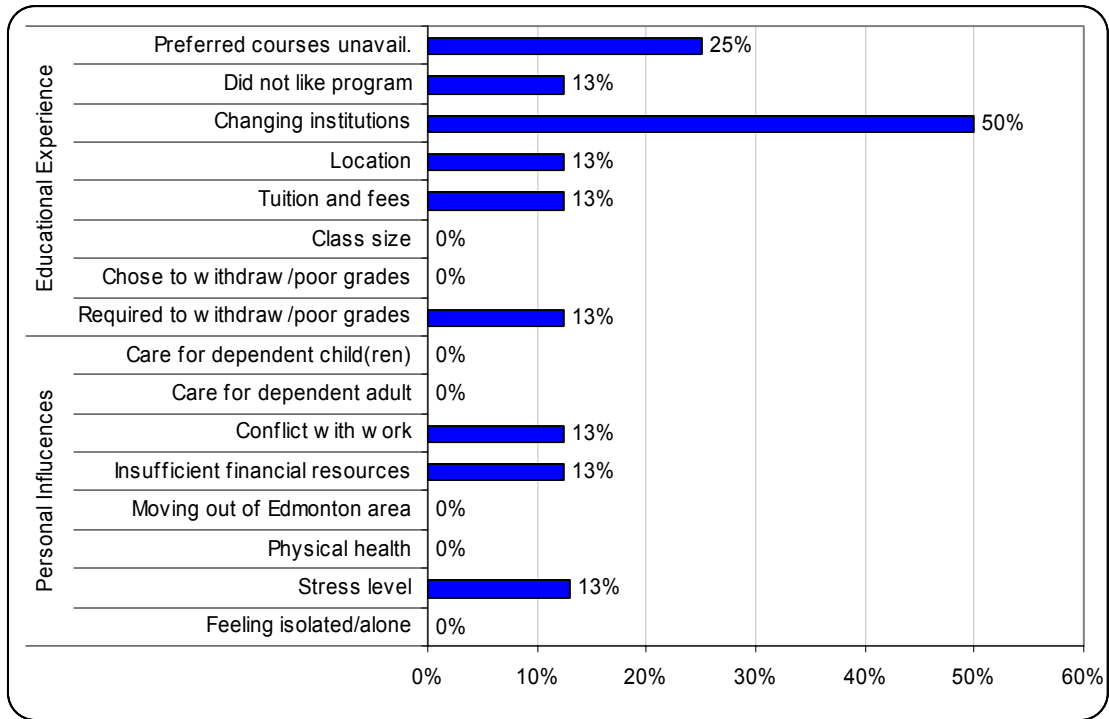
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



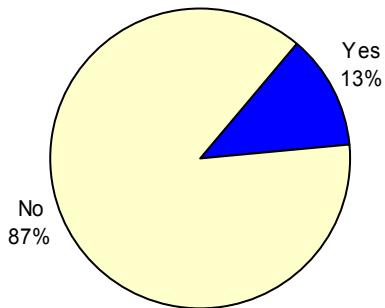
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



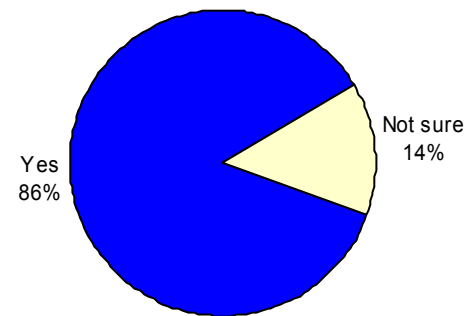
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



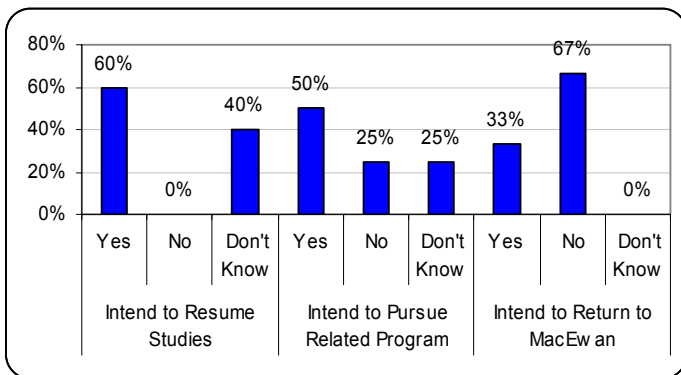
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



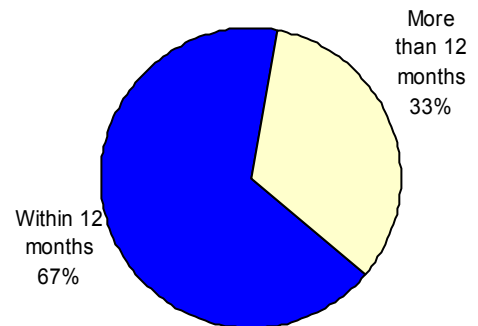
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



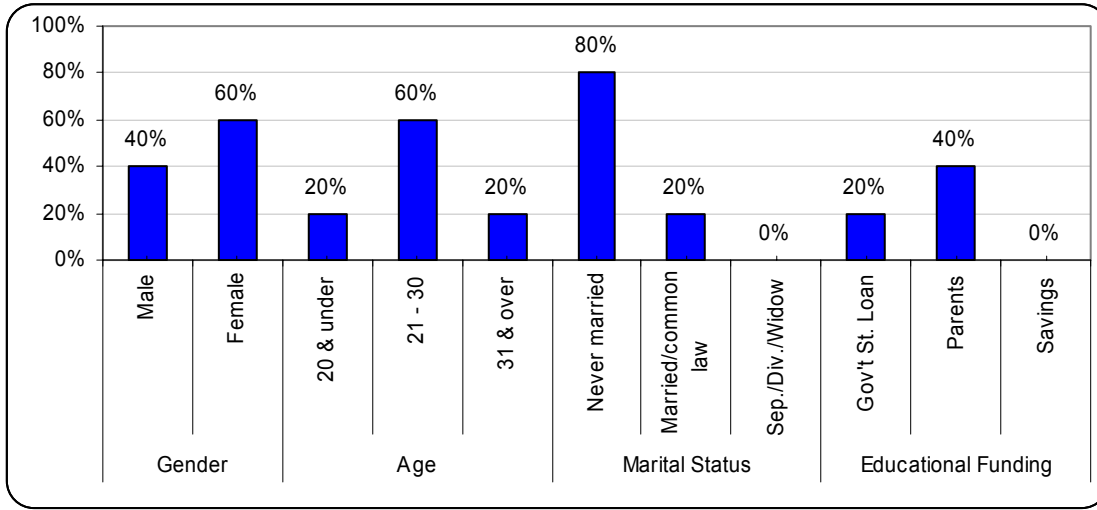
INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



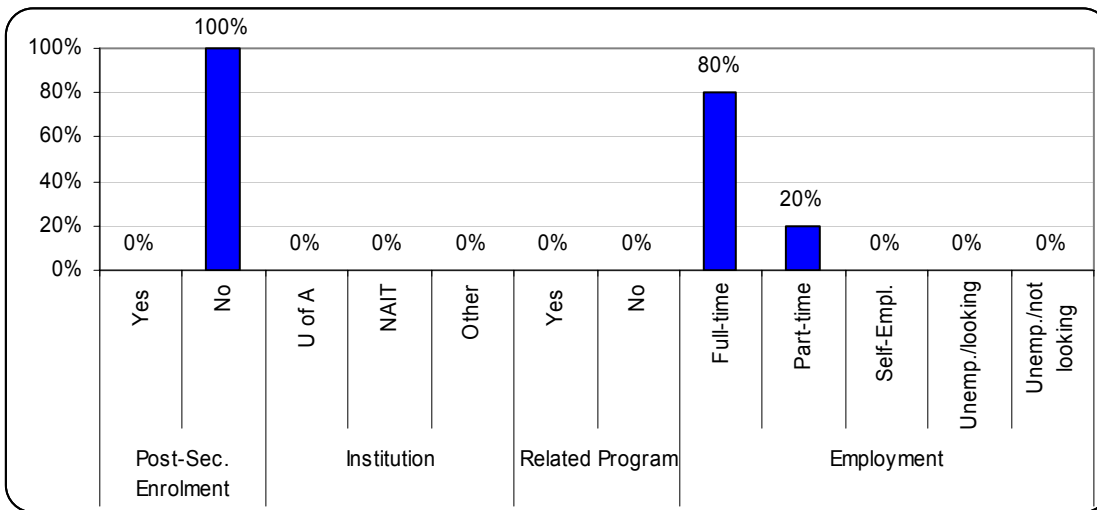
ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



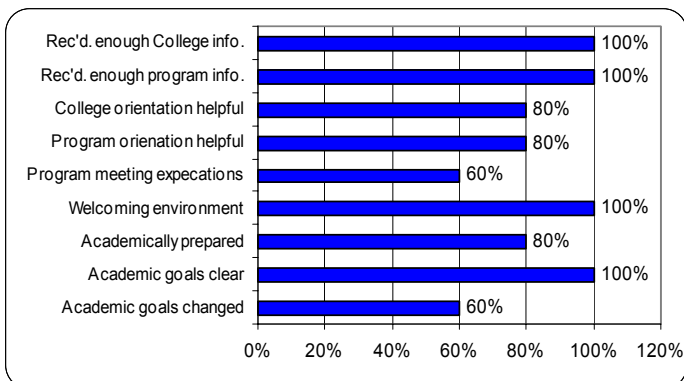
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



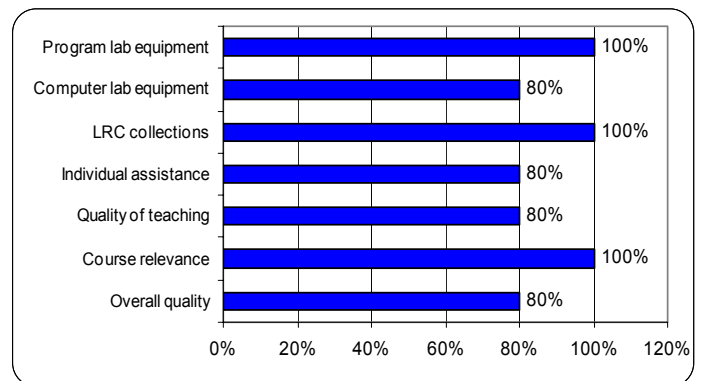
CURRENT ACTIVITY



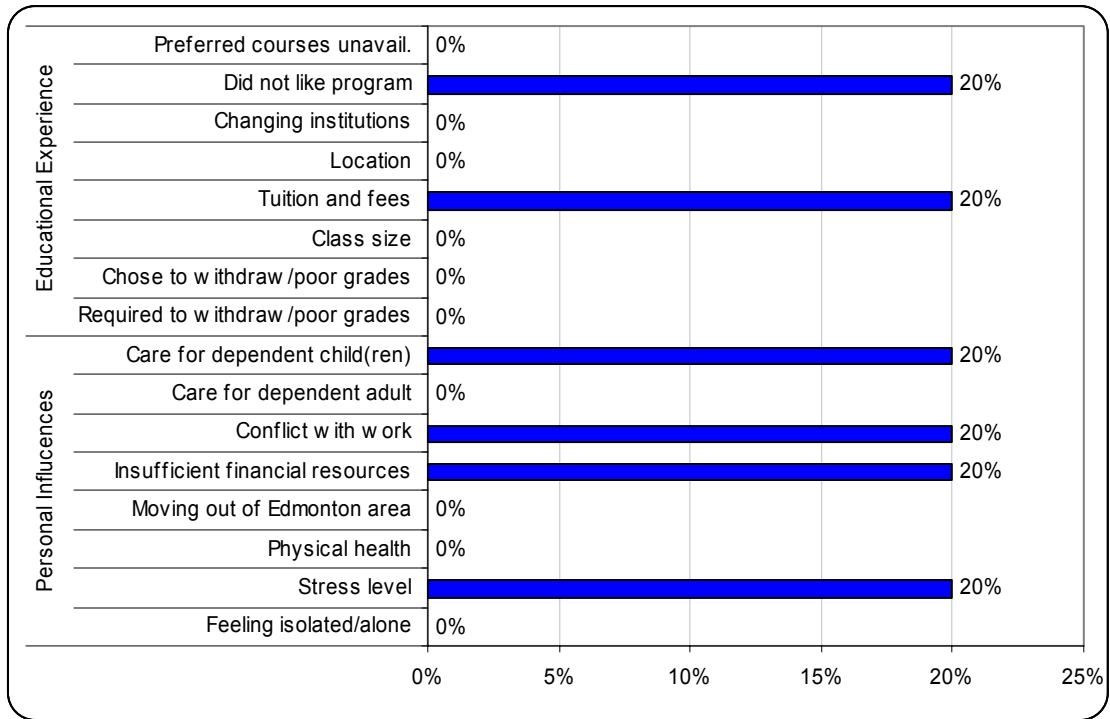
PROGRAM PREPARATION AND INFORMATION
(COMBINED AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE)



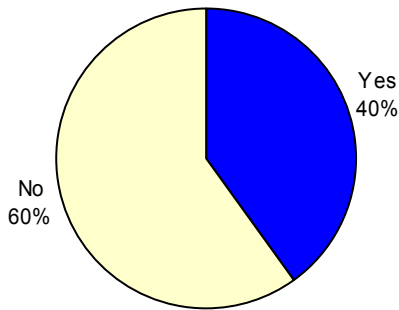
STUDENT SATISFACTION
(COMBINED SATISFIED/VERY SATISFIED)



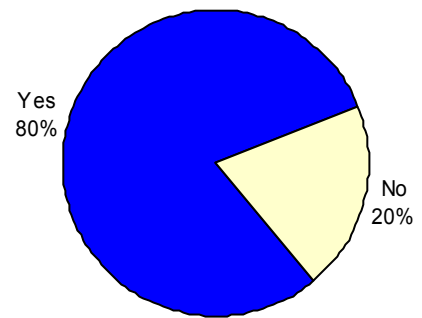
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



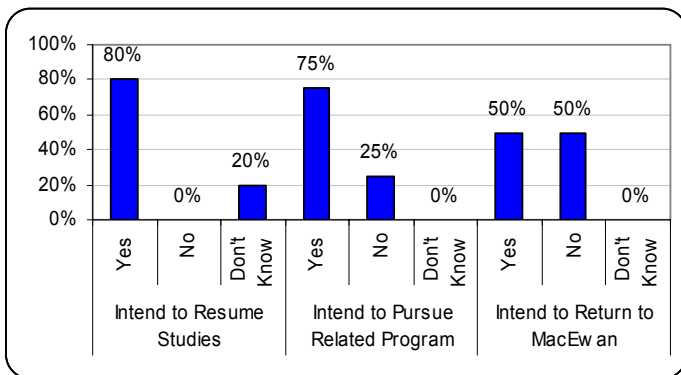
COLLEGE ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE STUDIES



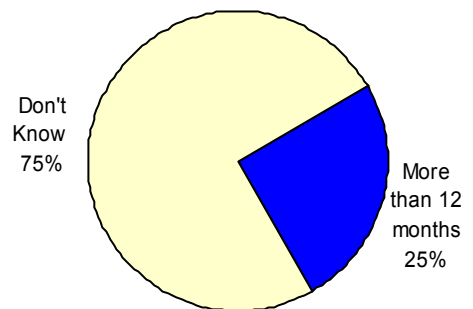
SATISFACTION WITH DECISION TO DISCONTINUE



INTENTION TO CONTINUE STUDIES



ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME TO RETURN TO STUDIES



APPENDIX B
EARLY LEAVER SURVEY

**GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE
EARLY LEAVER SURVEY 2004**

1. Program Verification

1a. I would like to verify that you were enrolled in the _____ program. Is that correct?

Yes ①

Go to Question 1b.

No ②

If NO, Program of enrolment _____

1b. Were you a full time student, full time meaning 9 credits or more?

Yes ①

Go to Question 2a.

No ②

If NO,

This survey is intended for students who were enrolled full time. Our database has selected you as a participant in error, so we won't continue with the survey. Thank you for your time.

2. Current Activity

2a. Our records show that you are not enrolled in any credit courses at Grant MacEwan College this term. Is that correct?

Yes ①

Go to Question 2b.

No ②

If NO, Program of enrolment _____

This survey is intended for students who are not enrolled in any Grant MacEwan College programs. Our database has selected you as a participant in error, so we won't continue with the survey. Thank you for your time.

2b. Are you currently enrolled in another post-secondary institution?

Yes ①

Go to Question 2c.

DO NOT ASK QUESTION 7

No ②

Go to Question 2e.

2c. Which institution are you enrolled at?

- ① University of Alberta
- ② NAIT
- ③ Other _____

2d. Are you taking courses related to the Grant MacEwan College program you were enrolled in?

- ① Yes
- ② No

2e. Which best describes your employment situation? (read all of the options, including definition of full/part time)

- ① Full-time (more than 30 hrs/wk)
- ② Part-time (30 hrs or less/wk)
- ③ Self-employed
- ④ Unemployed and looking for work
- ⑤ Unemployed and not looking for work

3. Program Preparation and Information

The College is interested in knowing if it is assisting students in making the best program choices for them and helping them adjust to the College environment.

For the next group of question, using a five point scale where **5 is strongly agree** and **1 is strongly disagree**, please state your agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Did not use/Not applicable
3a. Prior to registration, I received enough information about the College.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3b. Prior to registration, I received enough information to make the best program choice for me.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3c. I found the College orientation helpful.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3d. I found the program orientation helpful.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3e. My program was what I expected it would be.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3f. I was academically prepared for my program.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3g. My academic goals were clear when I came to Grant MacEwan.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3h. My academic goals changed while I was at Grant MacEwan.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥
3i. I found Grant MacEwan College to be a welcoming environment.	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑥

4. Satisfaction

Now I would like you to rate your level of satisfaction with aspects of your program.

Using a five point scale where 5 is very satisfied and 1 is very unsatisfied , how do you rate your satisfaction with:		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	Did not use/ Not applicable.
4a.	Equipment in program labs	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4b.	Equipment in computer labs	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4c.	Learning Resource Centre Collections (books, magazines, audiovisual, electronic, etc.)	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4d.	Individual assistance provided by instructors	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4e.	Quality of teaching in your program	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4f.	Relevance of your courses	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨
4g.	Overall quality of your educational experience	⑤	④	③	②	①	⑨

Now I have a couple of questions specific to **ACADEMIC ADVISING**.

4h. Where or from whom did you receive academic advice while you were at the College?

Examples of academic advice: program planning, course selection, transfer requirements and opportunities
Examples of sources of academic advice: instructor, Student Resource Centre (SRC), Registrar's Office, program staff, website, no one/nowhere

If respondent received academic advice:

4i. Using a five point scale where **5** is **very satisfied** and **1** is **very unsatisfied**, how satisfied were you with the academic advice you received? ⑤ ④ ③ ② ①

4j. Please explain your rating:

5. Reasons for Leaving

There are many reasons that students leave a program of study. To start, I'm going to read a list of common EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES students may have had that led them to discontinue their studies.

Using a five point scale, with **5** being **very significant** and **1** being **not at all significant**, please rate the significance of each of the following factors in your decision to leave the College.

	Very significant				Not at all significant
5a. Could not get the courses you wanted	⑤	④	③	②	①
5b. Did not like the program	⑤	④	③	②	①
5c. Changing institutions	⑤	④	③	②	①
5d. Location	⑤	④	③	②	①
5e. Tuition and fees	⑤	④	③	②	①
5f. Class size	⑤	④	③	②	①
5g. Chose to withdraw because of poor grades	⑤	④	③	②	①
5h. Required to withdraw for academic reasons (DO NOT ASK QUESTION 6 if this response is 4 or 5)	⑤	④	③	②	①

Now I'm going to read a list of common PERSONAL reasons for students being unable to complete their program.

Using the same five point scale, with **5** being **very significant** and **1** being **not at all significant**, please rate the significance of each of the following factors in your decision not to continue your program.

5i. Care for dependent child or children	⑤	④	③	②	①
5j. Care for dependent adult	⑤	④	③	②	①
5k. Conflict with work demands	⑤	④	③	②	①
5l. Insufficient financial resources	⑤	④	③	②	①
5m. Moving out of the Edmonton area	⑤	④	③	②	①
5n. Physical health reasons	⑤	④	③	②	①
5o. Stress level	⑤	④	③	②	①
5p. Feeling isolated or alone at the College	⑤	④	③	②	①
5q. If you were to identify the primary reason for not continuing in your program, what would it be?	_____				
5r. Keeping in mind your reason or reasons for leaving, is there anything the College could have done to help you continue your studies at Grant MacEwan?	If YES, please explain:				

Yes ① No ②

6. Satisfaction with Leaving

****DO NOT ASK IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 5h is 4 or 5.**

6a. Overall, are you satisfied with your decision to leave Grant MacEwan College?

- ① Yes Go to Question 6b.
- ② No Go to Question 6b.
- ③ Not sure Go to Question 7 (if not currently enrolled) or Question 8 (if enrolled).

6b. Please explain: _____

7. Future Intentions

DO NOT ASK ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS IF CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A POST-SECONDARY.

7a. Are you planning on continuing your studies in the future?

- ① Yes Go to Question 7b.
- ② No Go to Question 8.
- ③ Not sure Go to Question 8.

7b. Within the same or a related program area?

- ① Yes
- ② No

7c. At Grant MacEwan College?

- ① Yes
- ② No

7d. When do think you will continue your studies (*read the first two options*)?

- ① Within the next 12 months OR
- ② More than 12 months from now
- ③ Not sure

8. Comments

Are there any comments or suggestions you would like to make about the College or your program?

9. Demographic

I would like to ask some questions about you personally that may help the College provide more responsive services for a wide range of student needs.

- 9a. Gender (DO NOT ASK – JUST RECORD) ① Male ② Female
- 9b. I am going to read categories of marital status. Please stop me when I reach the category that applies to you.
① Never married ② Married/Common law ③ Separated/Divorced ④ Widow/widower
- 9c. I am going to read a list of age categories. Please stop me when I reach the category that your age falls into.
① Under 18 ② 18-20 ③ 21-24 ④ 25-30 ⑤ 31 and over
- 9d. Do you have any dependents under the age of 18? ① Yes ② No
If YES, how many? ① 1 ② 2 ③ 3 ④ Four or more
- 9e. What was the primary source of funding for your education (choose only one)?
- ① Spouse/common law partner
 - ② Parental aid (room&board and/or money)
 - ③ Employer support
 - ④ Savings
 - ⑤ Government student loan
 - ⑥ Student line of credit
 - ⑦ Grants/bursaries/scholarships
 - ⑧ Employment
 - ⑨ Other (please specify) _____