

2007 Graduating Student Survey

Report on UOIT Results

April 2007

Office of the Provost
www.uoit.ca

Introduction

The Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) coordinates a set of undergraduate satisfaction surveys across Canada based on a three year cycle. The three surveys include graduating students, first-year students and all undergraduates.

In 2006, 25 institutions across Canada participated in the Graduating Student Survey. In order to measure the satisfaction of UOIT's first graduating class the Graduating Student Survey was conducted at UOIT in 2007. The data from other institutions in this report are based on the data from 2006. The graduating student survey asks students about their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the university experience including academic experiences, the university's contribution to skill development and how students finance their education.

A total of 537 students who were deemed eligible to graduate were surveyed with a response rate of 55%. The average response rate for participating universities in 2006 was 45%.

CUSC provides data for specific comparison groups including primarily undergraduate studies and smaller student populations (Group 1), undergraduate and graduate studies and medium student populations (Group 2) and undergraduate, graduate and professional schools and the largest student populations (Group 3). Data is also provided for all 25 institutions that participated in 2006, totaling almost 10,500 students (All students).

The following report provides an overview of UOIT's results with some results from Group 1 and from all students.

Respondent Characteristics

The first table compares characteristics of UOIT's survey population to Group 1 and all students. More females (55%) responded to the survey than males (42%). However, it should be noted that UOIT's actual gender breakdown of all students is almost the reverse of those figures found in Table 1. Currently, the student population of UOIT is 56% male and 44% female. This pronounced bias for women to complete this survey has been observed more broadly.

More than half of the UOIT respondents are 21 years of age or younger. This represents a significant difference from the ages of the respondents in Group 1 universities (36%) and all students surveyed (30%). Such a young student population for graduating students is undoubtedly a reflection of UOIT's recent establishment and it will be interesting to monitor this phenomenon in the future.

Also of note in Table 1 is that 22% of UOIT respondents self-identified as a visible minority. This figure is more than double the total for Group 1 and is considerably greater than the total for all students surveyed. As most of the Group 1 universities in the survey are situated outside of larger and ethnically diverse urban areas, the UOIT number may be due to the university's geographical situation in the GTA. The number of students of aboriginal status may also be accounted for by location with fewer aboriginal students attending university in urban areas, where only 1% of UOIT respondents self-identified. Both findings are important considerations when assessing the future demographics of UOIT students. As UOIT continues to function as a small university in a large urban centre, the profile of a UOIT student is more like that of a large (Group 3) university, rather than that of a small (Group 1) one.

Table 1: Personal Profile

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Gender			
Female	55%	70%	65%
Male	42%	27%	32%
Age			
20 or younger	11%	12%	8%
21 years of age	40%	24%	22%
22 years of age	24%	23%	24%
23 years of age	7%	10%	14%
24 years of age	1%	7%	7%
25 to 29	8%	13%	13%
30 or over	4%	8%	8%
Average age	22.5	23.8	23.8
Disability (Total self-identified)	6%	6%	6%
Visible Minority (Total self-identified)	22%	10%	17%
Aboriginal Status (Total self-identified)	1%	4%	3%

Note: The no response category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

Table 2 summarizes student academic status. Almost all of UOIT graduating students consider themselves full-time. More than three-quarters of students reported beginning their post-secondary education in 2003. This finding is not surprising given that the university began operations in the same year. Only 4% of UOIT graduating students reported interrupting their studies. This number is in sharp contrast to the 21% and 22% respectively for Group 1 and all surveyed, and may be a bi-product of such a young student population that have likely not yet faced the external factors that cause students to interrupt their studies.

35% of UOIT students reported receiving an academic scholarship. This number is comparable to the 36% reported by all students surveyed. However, it is

significantly lower than the 46% that received scholarship from Group 1. A closer look at the amount of scholarships awarded by UOIT, in comparison to other small universities, is warranted.

Table 2: Academic Profile

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Student Status			
Full-time	100%	85%	85%
Part-time	<1%	15%	14%
Year began post-secondary education			
2006/2005	<1%	<1%	<1%
2004	2%	<1%	<1%
2003	79%	11%	6%
2002	7%	39%	35%
2001/2000	7%	32%	40%
1999 or earlier	4%	17%	18%
Average year	2002	2001	2000
Interrupted studies - YES	4%	21%	22%
Received scholarship from UOIT	35%	46%	36%

The survey asked students to indicate their living arrangements while attending university (Table 3). 58% of UOIT students reported that they lived with their parents, while 30% indicated that they rented. Both numbers illustrate significant differences from other universities. Students at Group 1 universities are mostly renters (51%) and less than a third live at home. In the all student group, 43% rent and 39% live at home. UOIT's situation as a local university that is in easy commuting distance for those in Durham and York Regions undoubtedly accounts for this phenomenon. The small number of UOIT students reporting living in residence (2%) may be a reflection of the lack of residence space available to this cohort of students in 2003.

Table 3: Living Arrangements

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Rented Home/Apt/Room (shared/alone)	30%	51%	43%
Living with Parents	58%	30%	39%
Personally Owned Home	6%	9%	8%
On-Campus Residence	2%	5%	4%
Other	1%	2%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore columns may not sum up to 100%. The 'don't know/no response' category is not shown.

Overall Satisfaction

The CUSC survey asks students several questions about their overall satisfaction with the university. Figures 1-3 show the high levels of satisfaction that UOIT students have with the overall quality of education, overall quality of teaching and their decision to attend UOIT. Almost 90% of students surveyed reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied on each indicator. These findings are almost identical to those of Group 1, except for a slightly smaller percentage of UOIT students saying that they were very satisfied with their choice of university. The percentage of UOIT students in the very satisfied category significantly exceeded those on the all student category across all three indicators.

Figure 1: Satisfied with the overall quality of education

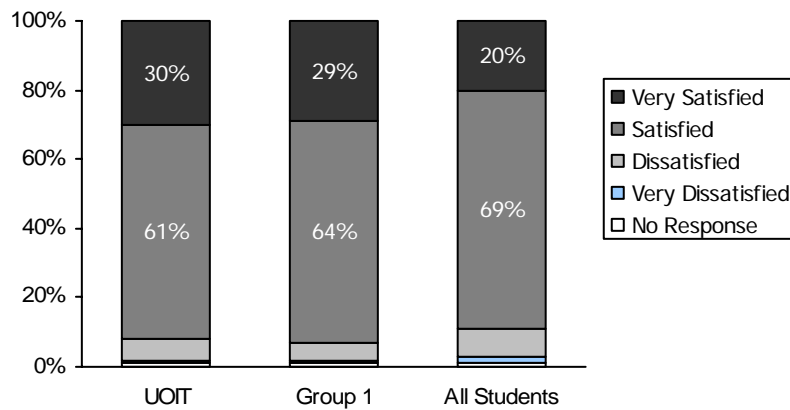


Figure 2: Satisfied with the overall quality of teaching

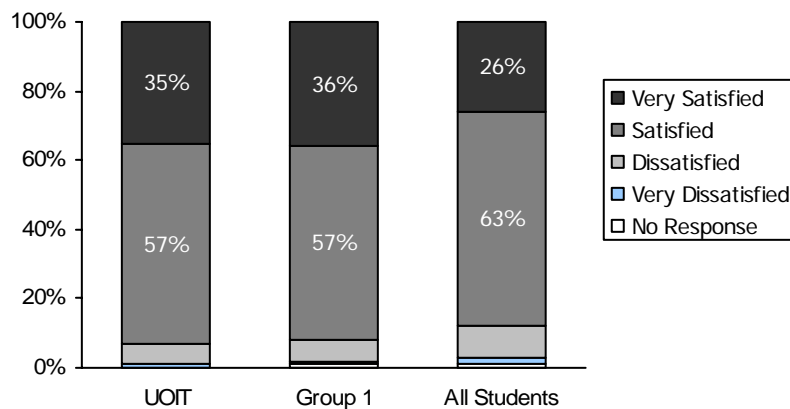
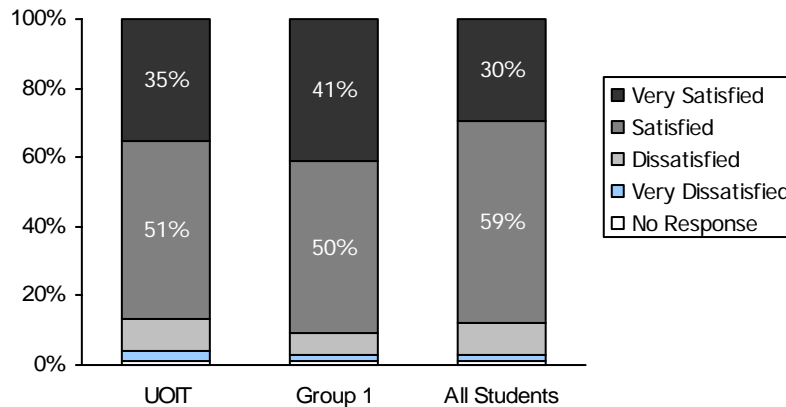


Figure 3: Satisfied with the decision to attend this university



Contributions to Personal Growth & Development

The survey asked students to indicate whether or not their learning activities contributed to their personal growth and development. Overall, UOIT graduating students rated their educational experience very highly.

Class-based Activities

The survey asked students to assess the contribution that class-based activities made to their personal growth and development. More than half of the graduating students at UOIT indicated that online instruction contributed very much to their personal growth and development. This figure was more than double the amount for Group 1 and all students. As a laptop based university, this number is to be expected, but is gratifying to see all the same.

24% of UOIT graduating students rated their interaction with teaching assistants as contributing very much to their personal growth and development much higher than Group 1 or all students. As well, almost half the UOIT students surveyed indicated that laboratory experiences contributed to their growth and development. Both activities notably outperformed Group 1 and all students surveyed. Initially, it would appear that the findings would stem from the small class sizes at UOIT; however, the measure for other small universities is closer to that of all students, rather than UOIT. The quality of instructors and the teaching atmosphere may make the difference in this regard.

The number of UOIT graduating students that marked participation in classroom discussion as a source of growth and development was 37%. This was in line with the total for all students surveyed (38%), but underperformed against Group 1 (46%). As a technology institution, this gap at UOIT was likely due to the

greater amount of labs and field work sections over discussion-oriented tutorials. The latter may be greater at other Group 1 universities.

Table 4: In-class Activities: contributed very much to personal growth and development

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Online instruction	55%	20%	22%
Interaction with teaching assistants	24%	15%	16%
Classroom instruction	63%	63%	57%
Participation in classroom discussions	37%	46%	38%
Laboratory experiences	46%	27%	31%

Note: Percentages are based on those reporting experience.

Faculty Activities

Students were asked to rate the contribution of certain activities to their personal growth and development. In all five areas, UOIT outperformed the other primarily undergraduate institutions with smaller populations as well as all students who participated in the survey. In 2007, three quarters of UOIT students responded that faculty knowledge of their discipline contributed very much to their personal growth and development and almost the same number reported that faculty were enthusiastic for the subject material.

30% of UOIT students believed that faculty research activities contributed very much to their personal growth and development, compared to 20% for Group 1 and 19% for all students.

Table 5: Faculty Activities: contributed very much to personal growth and development

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Faculty knowledge of their discipline	75%	68%	60%
Faculty enthusiasm for subject material	71%	64%	58%
Personal interactions with faculty	59%	55%	43%
Faculty feedback on assignments or projects	52%	49%	41%
Faculty research activities	30%	20%	19%

Note: Percentages are based on those reporting experience.

On-Campus Activities

Table 6 outlines the results of student responses to the contribution of on-campus activities to their personal growth and development. Most notably, 78% of UOIT graduating students that were teaching assistants indicated that having such a role contributed to growth. This result compares to 56% in Group 1 and 49% for all students surveyed.

Students were also asked if having other on-campus employment contributed to personal growth and development. 56% reported that they felt it did, which outperformed the measures for both Group 1 and all students.

Interestingly, of the UOIT students that indicated that they had attended a campus cultural event, only 12% felt it contributed to personal growth; a much lower figure than Group 1 (20%) and all students (23%).

Table 6: On-campus Activities: contributed very much to personal growth and development

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Living on campus	57%	54%	51%
Being a teaching assistant	78%	56%	49%
Having other on-campus employment	56%	45%	42%
Participation in fraternities/sororities	56%	39%	37%
Participating in on-campus student recreation and sport programs	25%	33%	28%
Being involved in campus media (e.g. radio, TV, newspaper)	20%	32%	26%
Attending campus lectures (in addition to regular classes)	34%	26%	25%
Attending campus cultural events (e.g. theater, concerts, art exhibits)	12%	20%	23%
Attending campus social events	19%	19%	17%
Attending home games of athletic teams	17%	16%	14%

Note: Percentages are based on those reporting experience.

Facilities and Services

The survey gives us some insight into student satisfaction with general facilities and services. Students who had experience with services were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each. UOIT graduating students generally rated the services highly.

General Services

UOIT students rated computer facilities slightly more positively than Group 1 or all students. Student ratings of athletic facilities were much lower at UOIT compared to the other groups. The completion of the new Athletic Centre should impact on this result in the future.

Table 7: Satisfaction with general facilities/services (%very satisfied/satisfied)

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Library facilities	89%	80%	88%
Campus medical services	89%	86%	87%
University support staff	88%	88%	86%
Computer facilities	90%	85%	86%
Athletic facilities	66%	82%	84%
Campus book store	80%	78%	80%

Note: Percentages are based on those who have used the service.

Special Services

The survey also asked students to rate their satisfaction with special services at UOIT. In 2007, 91% of UOIT students surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with their co-op programs. This is much higher than the figures for Group 1 (74%) and all students surveyed (77%). The options for co-op are currently few at UOIT, but this may be seen as a good sign for the growth of this area.

Employment services and career counseling also rated quite highly. UOIT student satisfaction with both services significantly exceeded the measures for Group 1 and all students. Student satisfaction with financial aid services also exceeded both comparator groups.

Table 8: Satisfaction with special services (%very satisfied/satisfied)

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Study skills/learning support services	84%	86%	85%
Employment services	87%	77%	79%
Personal counseling services	82%	82%	79%
Co-op programs	91%	74%	77%
Financial aid services	84%	78%	77%
Academic advising	79%	78%	76%
Career counseling services	82%	74%	73%

Note: Percentages are based on those who have used the service.

Feelings of Inclusion

Figures 4-6 outline the student responses to questions about their feelings of inclusion in the university community. UOIT students align with Group 1 respondents when it comes to their satisfaction with the concern shown by the university for students as individuals, which is much higher than all students. Figure 5 shows that two-thirds of students agreed or strongly agreed that they sometimes felt they got the run-around at UOIT, compared to 59% for Group 1 and 52% for all students. Nevertheless, 80% of UOIT students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt part of the university, compared to 76% for Group 1 and 71% for all students (Figure 6).

Figure 4: Satisfied with concern shown by university for students as individuals

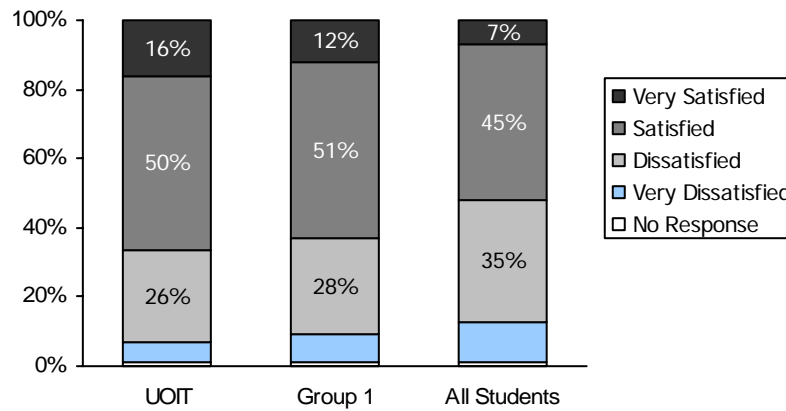


Figure 5: I sometimes feel I get the run-around at this university

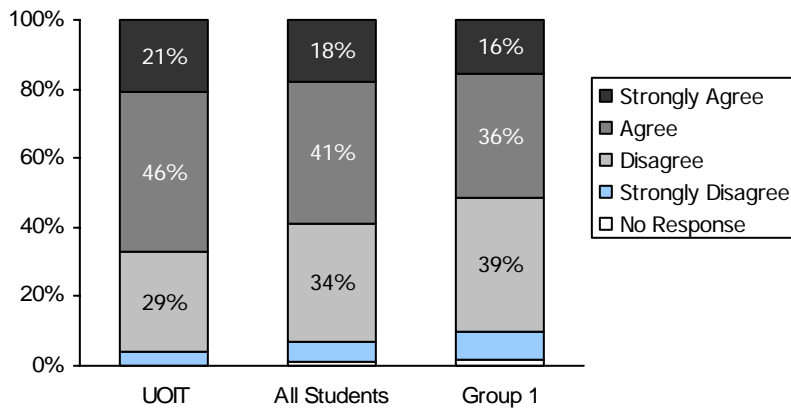
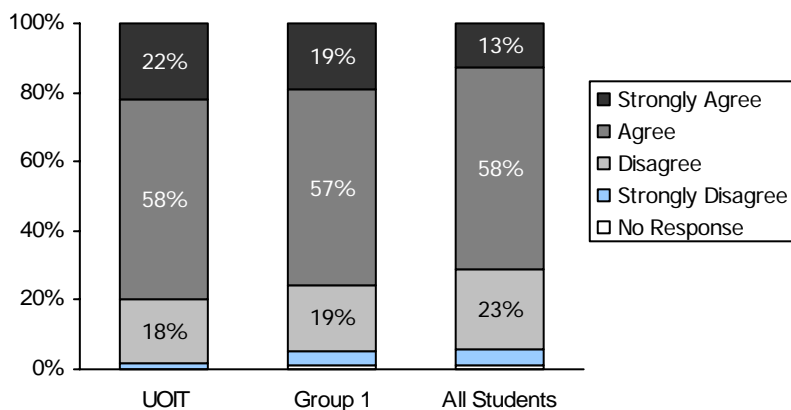


Figure 6: I feel as if I am part of this university



Education Finance and Debt

The survey provided an opportunity to look at how graduating students financed their education, as well as the total amount of debt they had acquired. Table 9 outlines the accumulated debt of graduating students. 45% of UOIT graduating students are carrying a debt load of \$20,000 or more. This amount is significantly higher than students in Group 1 (32%) and the overall group (30%), where less than one third in each case had similar debt loads. Also conspicuous is the median debt load for UOIT graduating students. At \$13,000 it is more than double the amount for all students surveyed, and is \$5,000 higher than Group 1. There are undoubtedly many explanations for these results. We do know that a higher population of UOIT students receive OSAP (40%) than the provincial average for universities (32%).

With tuition fees in line with other universities, the reasons for dramatic difference in debt load is unclear. One of possible reasons for a difference with UOIT students may be the additional cost of the mobile learning program.

Table 9: Accumulated Debt

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
No debt	33%	37%	41%
Less than \$4,000	4%	4%	4%
\$4,000 to \$7,999	4%	6%	6%
\$8,000 to \$11,999	6%	7%	6%
\$12,000 to \$19,999	4%	10%	9%
\$20,000 or more	45%	32%	30%
Average	\$18,538	\$14,472	\$13,763
Median	\$13,000	\$8,000	\$5,500

Note: The 'don't know/no response' category is not shown. Therefore, columns may not sum up to 100%.

Students were also asked to indicate the number of sources they had to rely on to finance their education. Almost half of the UOIT respondents indicated that they had four or more sources of financing, compared to 31% for Group 1 and all students.

Table 10: Number of sources of financing

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
One	12%	22%	23%
Two	16%	21%	21%
Three	20%	24%	22%
Four or more	49%	31%	31%
No response	3%	3%	3%
Average	3.6	2.9	2.9

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Recommending the University

Of the UOIT graduating students surveyed, 85% said that they would recommend the university to others. This figure is slightly lower than Group 1 (90%) and in line with that of all students (86%). The two strongest factors that would lead UOIT students to recommend the university are program and professors. These factors are higher than the competitor groups. More than half of the students rated the relevance of the program for job opportunity as a reason for recommendation; again much higher than Group 1 and all students. UOIT did not fair well in relation to the quality of student/campus life when compared to Group 1 and all students.

Table 11: Reasons for recommending the university

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
The program – flexibility/quality/availability	87%	72%	73%
The professors	82%	78%	68%
Quality of student/campus life	33%	45%	38%
Relevance of program for growth and development	39%	35%	32%
Relevance of program for job opportunities	51%	30%	32%
Student Services	22%	23%	22%
Other	8%	17%	14%

Note: The base reflects those students that would recommend their university to others. Respondents could provide more than one answer. Totals may not sum up to 100%.

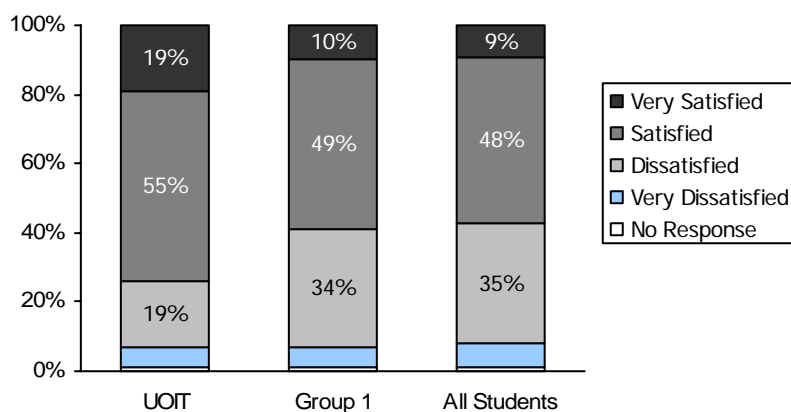
Future Education and Employment

The survey asked students a number of questions about their future education and employment.

Information about Career Options

Figure 7 outlines student responses when asked to rate their level of satisfaction with information pertaining to career options in their area of study. 74% of UOIT students were satisfied or very satisfied with career information they had received, significantly greater than the results for both comparison groups.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with information about career options in my area of study



Future plans

More than half of UOIT graduating students stated they had no immediate plans for further education, although a third of respondents did indicate that they may take future university studies. 27% of UOIT students indicated a plan for graduate studies, compared to 19% for Group 1 and 22% for all students.

Table 12: Future educational plans

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Have no immediate educational plans	54%	48%	51%
- will take future university studies	15%	19%	17%
- may take future university studies	31%	23%	26%
Plan more education after graduation	42%	48%	46%
- Graduate school	27%	19%	22%
- Professional school	12%	10%	9%
- Another Bachelor's Degree	5%	12%	9%
- Community College	3%	4%	3%
- Other education	7%	9%	9%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Totals may not sum to 100%.

Students were asked about their future employment prospects, specifically, whether they have employment (other than a summer job) arranged after graduation. Only 24% of UOIT graduating students had a job secured beyond graduation. This figure is significantly lower than the measure for other universities (33%). Of the respondents that indicated that they did not have a job secured, UOIT had a greater number of students that were seeking work, compared to other universities (62% vs. 47%).

Table 13: Future employment

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Have a job	24%	33%	33%
- Yes, a full-time job	16%	20%	21%
- Yes, one part-time job	5%	8%	8%
- Yes, two or more part-time jobs	3%	3%	3%
- Yes, self employment or contract work	<1%	2%	2%
No, but I am seeking work	62%	47%	47%
No, and I am not seeking work	10%	19%	17%
No response	4%	2%	3%

Note: Respondent could provide multiple answers. Totals may not sum to 100%.

Job Prospects

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the Canadian job market for students in their area of study. 81% of UOIT students felt that there were many or some jobs available in their field; a much higher number than the comparator groups (64%).

Table 14: Job prospects

	UOIT	Group 1	All Students
Many jobs	42%	27%	27%
Some jobs	39%	37%	37%
Few/very few jobs	12%	22%	25%
Not sure	4%	11%	8%
No response	4%	3%	3%

Note: Responses may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Implications and Next Steps

The survey results show that graduating students at UOIT are satisfied with their university experience. According to the survey results, UOIT often outperforms other universities in terms of student satisfaction.

The survey revealed some key findings that should be noted:

- 22% of the UOIT population is self-identified as a visible minority. UOIT's ethnic composition differs from other small universities. Given UOIT's location, this diversity is not unexpected.
- Only 35% of UOIT students reported receiving a scholarship from UOIT. This result is significantly lower than the 46% that reported receiving one from similar small universities. In terms of maintaining a competitive balance, if not edge, with other universities, the number of scholarships that are awarded yearly needs attention.

- Only 2% of UOIT graduating students are living in residence. This figure differs significantly from the 5% for other Group 1 universities. This finding confirms UOIT's status as a commuter institution.
- 55% of UOIT students felt that online instruction contributed very much to their personal growth and development. This result was more than double what was reported for other universities and provides solid feedback to UOIT's emphasis around online learning.
- Only 66% of UOIT students are satisfied with the athletic facilities on campus. This result reflects the current facilities and the construction that has provided recent inconveniences. These shortcomings should be alleviated once the new Campus Athletic Centre opens this year.
- Only 33% of UOIT students were satisfied with the quality of student and campus life. As with athletic facilities, this dissatisfaction is a major impediment to student recruitment.
- One of the more significant findings of the survey was the amount of debt load that UOIT students are carrying. UOIT students are carrying an average debt load that is almost \$5000 more than all other universities.
- Only 24% of graduating students had a job arranged upon graduation. This is much lower than the numbers for other universities. The explanations for this phenomenon are undoubtedly complex and deserve further investigation.

In the 2009 winter semester, UOIT will likely be participating in the CUSC graduating student survey again.