



**NATIONAL SURVEY OF
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
2011 RESULTS SUMMARY**

Office of Institutional Research & Analysis
March 2012

BACKGROUND

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (IUCPR) in the late 1990s and has been used throughout the U.S. since 2000. Although several Canadian universities have participated in the past, all 19 publicly-assisted Ontario universities took part in the NSSE survey in 2011 as part of their commitment to the Ontario government to improve accountability and focus on the quality of the student's learning experience.

NSSE focuses on the nature of first-year and senior students' undergraduate experience. The questions allow institutions to measure how successful they are at engaging students in activities and programs that they provide for students' academic and personal development.

NSSE provides data for specific comparison groups including the Ontario Consortium (combined results of all Ontario universities, excluding UOIT), a selected U.S. peer group (public institutions in selected U.S. states that compete with Ontario) and the entire NSSE population (consisting of 740 institutions in Canada and the U.S.).

This summary will look at the results for UOIT, including; the characteristics of respondents, NSSE benchmark performance and other notable findings.

RESPONDENTS

Response Rate

In the spring of 2011, students were e-mailed a survey invitation. All UOIT first-year students (2,175), and all UOIT fourth-year students (1,133), were e-mailed an invite. Of the survey population, 752 first-year students and 493 fourth-year students responded, resulting in an overall response rate of 38%.

Characteristics

For both first-year and fourth-year students, the typical UOIT respondent was male, 23 years of age or younger, residing off-campus and full-time. **Table 1** provides a comparison of UOIT's respondent characteristics to those of their Ontario peers. The amount of males responding at UOIT was distinctly different than that of other Ontario universities (54% of first-year students and 55% of fourth-year students).

It was also found that first-year UOIT students were far less likely to reside on-campus. Only 29% of respondents indicated that they lived on-campus, well below the 47% rate for the Ontario group. It should also be noted that 50% of first year students self-identified themselves as non-white. Compared to other Ontario universities (39%), the number is significant.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics	UOIT				Ontario	
	Respondents		Total UG at UOIT			
	First Year	Fourth Year	First Year	Fourth Year	First Year	Fourth Year
Gender						
Female	46%	45%	41%	42%	63%	63%
Male	54%	55%	59%	58%	37%	37%
Enrolment Status						
Full-time	92%	90%	98%	91%	94%	83%
Less than full-time	8%	10%	2%	9%	6%	17%
Place of Residence						
On-campus	29%	6%	24%	3%	47%	5%
Off-campus	71%	94%	76%	97%	53%	95%
Age						
Non-traditional (24 or older)	14%	24%	12%	28%	6%	21%
Traditional (less than 24)	86%	76%	88%	72%	94%	79%

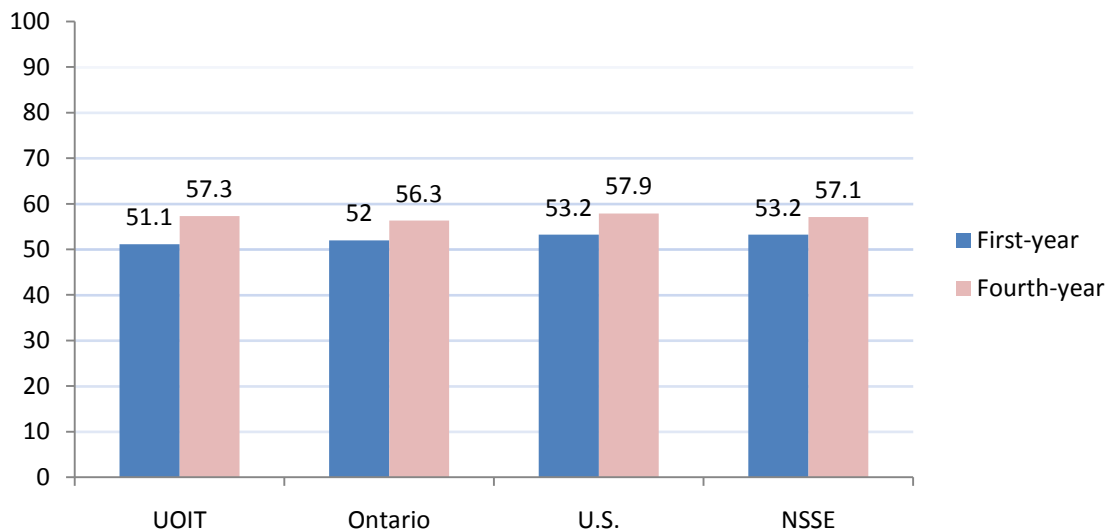
BENCHMARKS

NSSE groups a number of key questions into five broad categories called the Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice.

Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)

The nine questions included in the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark measure students’ academic effort and institutional expectations of students. First year students at UOIT scored lower than the Ontario Consortium, their U.S. Peer group and NSSE as a whole on this benchmark. Fourth year students finished higher than the Ontario and NSSE groups, but lower than the U.S. peer group.

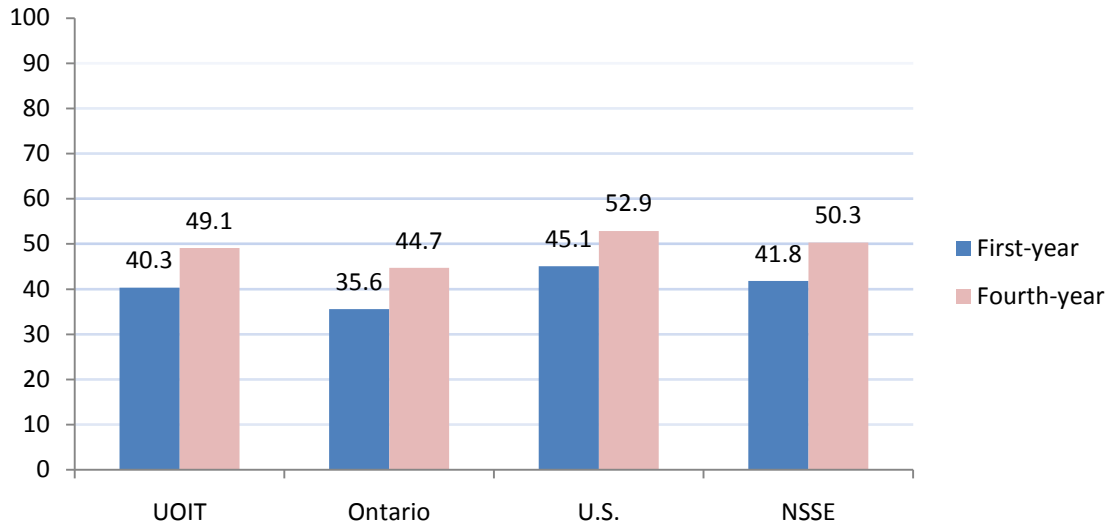
Figure 1 – Level of Academic Challenge



Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)

This benchmark measures the extent to which students are participating in their education including the degree to which students are collaborating with others. Both first year and fourth year students at UOIT had notably higher scores on this benchmark compared to Ontario, but lower than both the U.S. and overall NSSE groups.

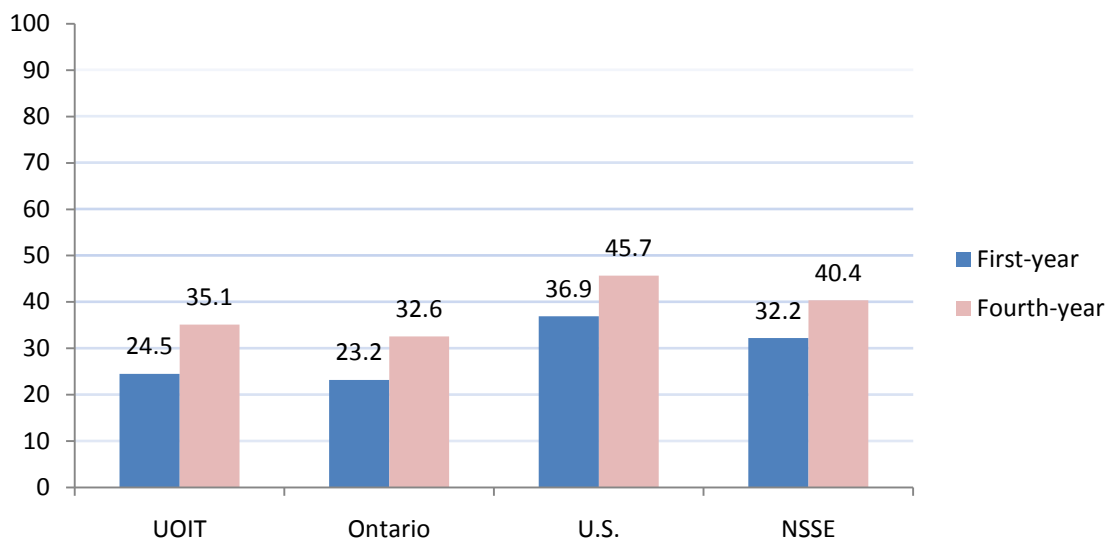
Figure 2 – Active and Collaborative Learning



Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)

The Student-Faculty Interaction benchmark measures the extent to which students engage in discussions with faculty members and work with faculty members on activities outside of their coursework. Both first year and fourth year students at UOIT reported higher scores for Student-Faculty Interaction than the Ontario Consortium. However, UOIT was significantly below the average score for Student-Faculty Interaction in the U.S. and NSSE group as a whole.

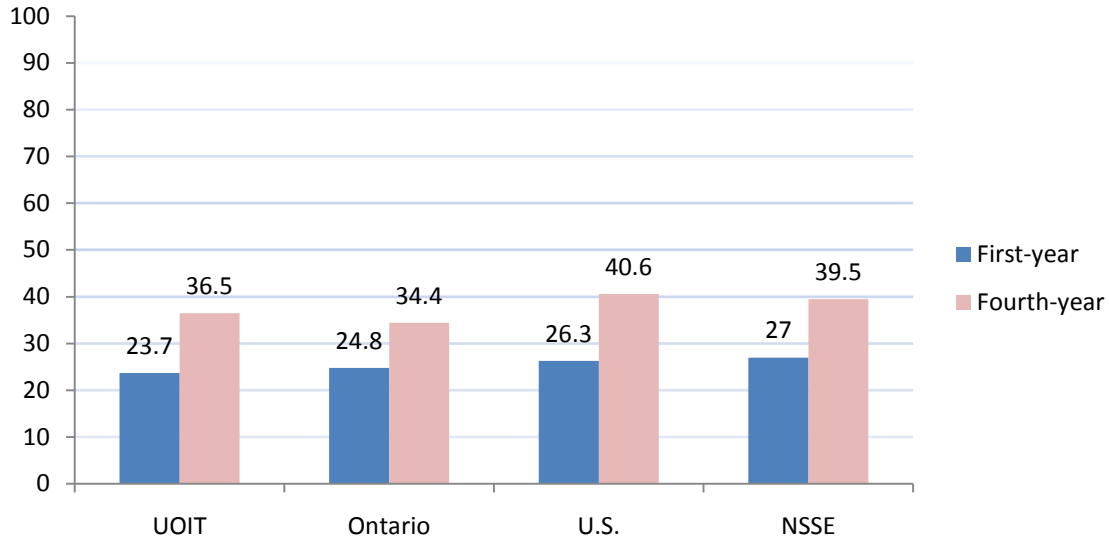
Figure 3 – Student-Faculty Interaction



Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)

The Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark looks at complementary learning activities. First year students at UOIT rated lower than Ontario, U.S. and the NSSE peer group. Fourth year UOIT students rated higher than Ontario, but lower than the U.S. and NSSE.

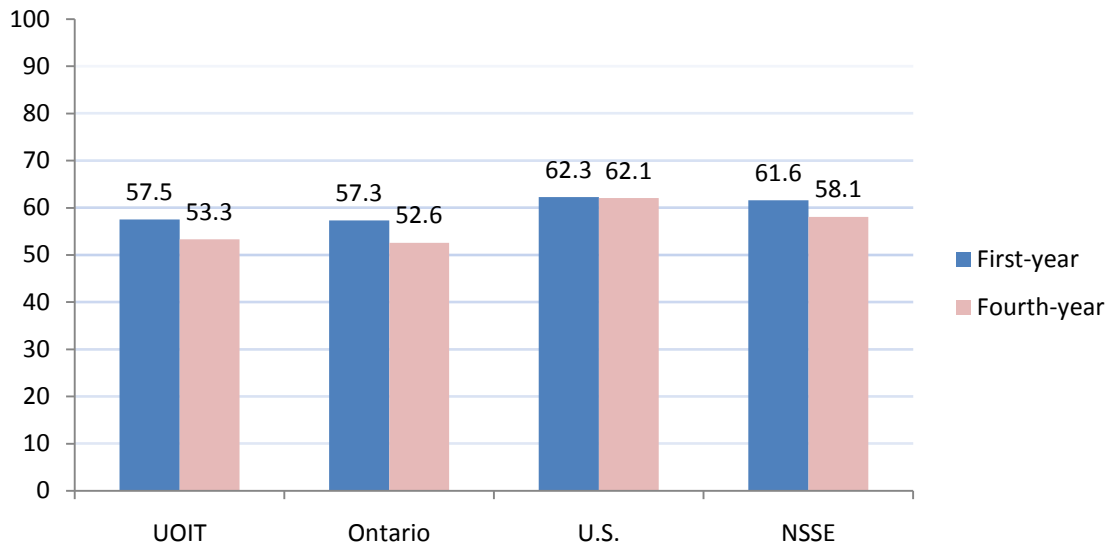
Figure 4 – Enriching Educational Experiences



Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)

The Supportive Campus Environment benchmark measures the quality of relationships that students have with those around them and whether the University supports them academically and socially. According to both first-year and fourth year students, UOIT provides a more supportive campus environment compared to other Ontario universities. UOIT’s results compared to the U.S. and NSSE as a whole are lower.

Figure 5 – Supportive Campus Environment



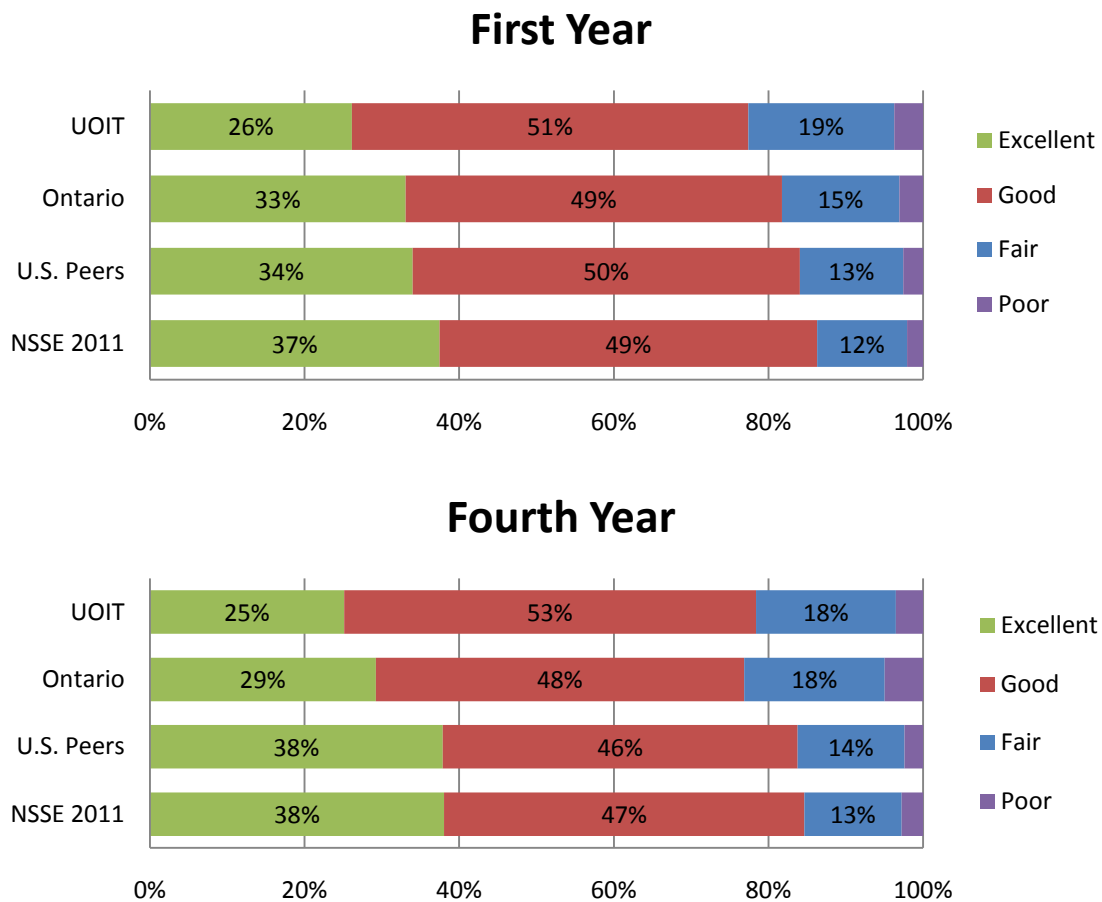
NOTABLES

In addition to the questions that comprised the five benchmarks, students were also asked a number of other questions dealing with various levels of engagement. Presented here are the findings for selected survey items, beginning with respondents overall impressions of UOIT.

Overall Satisfaction

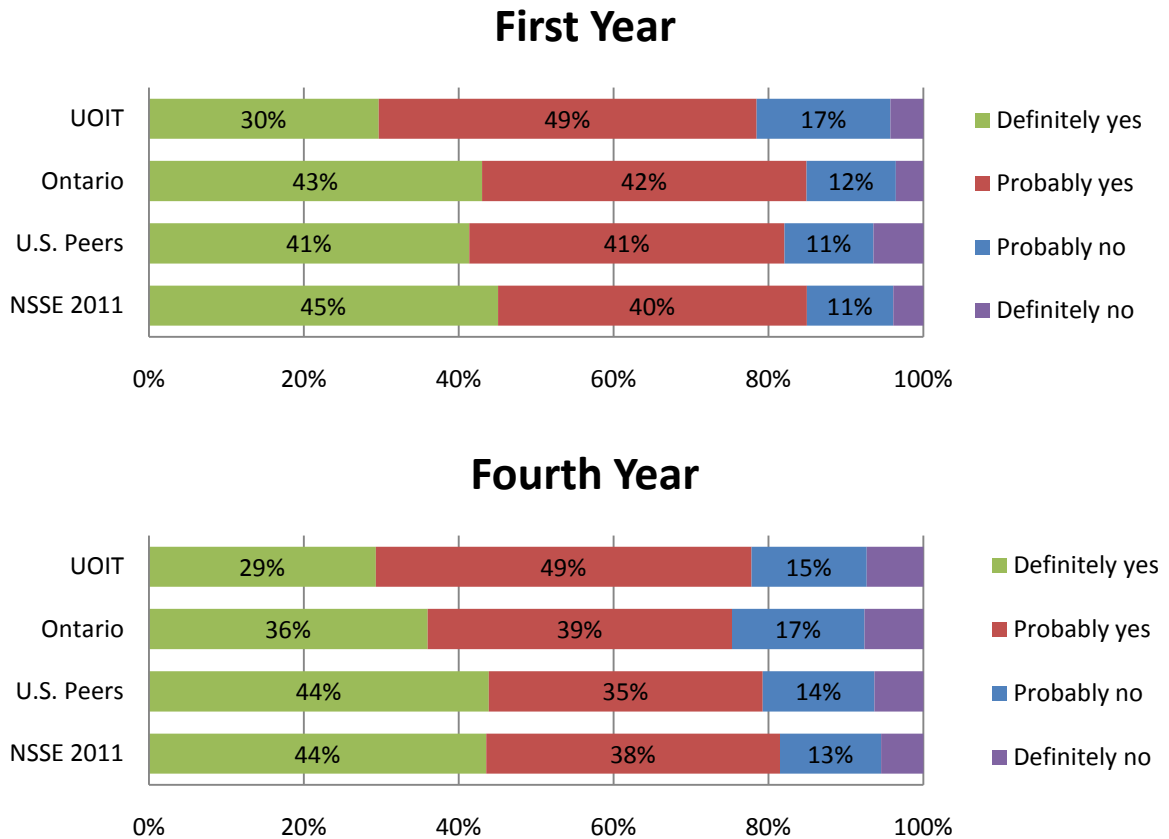
Students were asked two questions in relation to their overall satisfaction. The first asked them to evaluate their entire educational experience. As seen in **Figure 6**, 77% of first-year respondents and 78% of fourth-year respondents rated their entire educational experience at UOIT as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. These numbers are slightly lower compared to other Ontario universities for first-year respondents and in line with Ontario for fourth-year respondents.

Figure 6 - Entire Educational Experience (‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’)



As a follow up question, students were then asked if they could start over again, would they attend the same institution they are currently attending. **Figure 7** shows that the results for first-year UOIT respondents that said ‘Probably yes’ or ‘Definitely yes’ (79%) was in lower than the average for Ontario (85%). Fourth-year respondents displayed a bit more confidence when asked the same question compared to respondents at other Ontario universities.

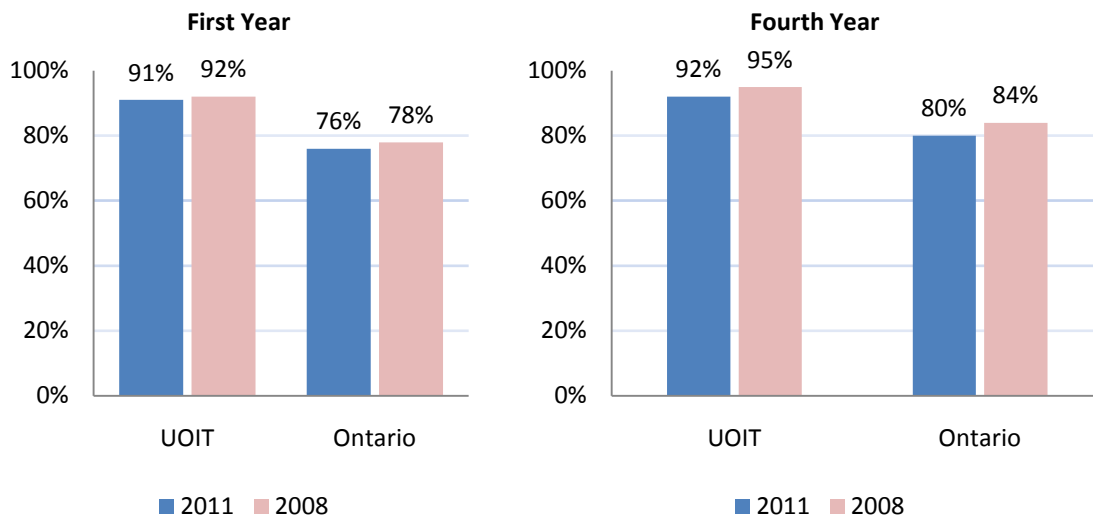
Figure 7 – Same Institution Again (‘Definitely Yes’ or ‘Probably Yes’)



Prominent Use of Technology at UOIT

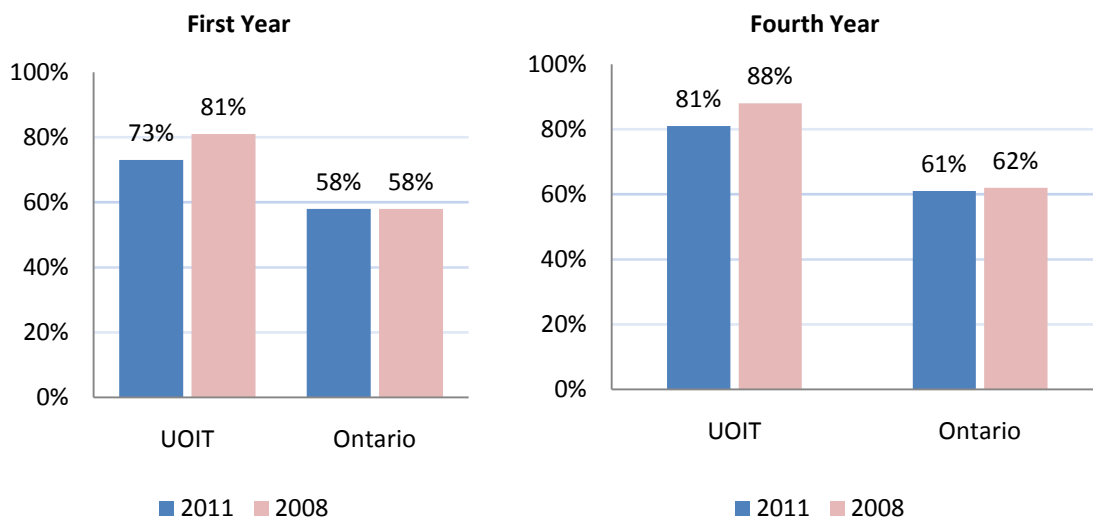
Students were asked several questions that revolved around the use and influence of computers and information technology. When asked to what extent their institution had emphasized the use of computers in academic work, 91% of first-year students indicated that UOIT did ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’, while 92% of fourth-year respondents said the same (**Figure 8**). These numbers exceeded the measures for Ontario (76% for first-year, 80% fourth-year).

Figure 8 – Use of Computers in Academic Work (‘Very much’ or ‘Quite a bit’)



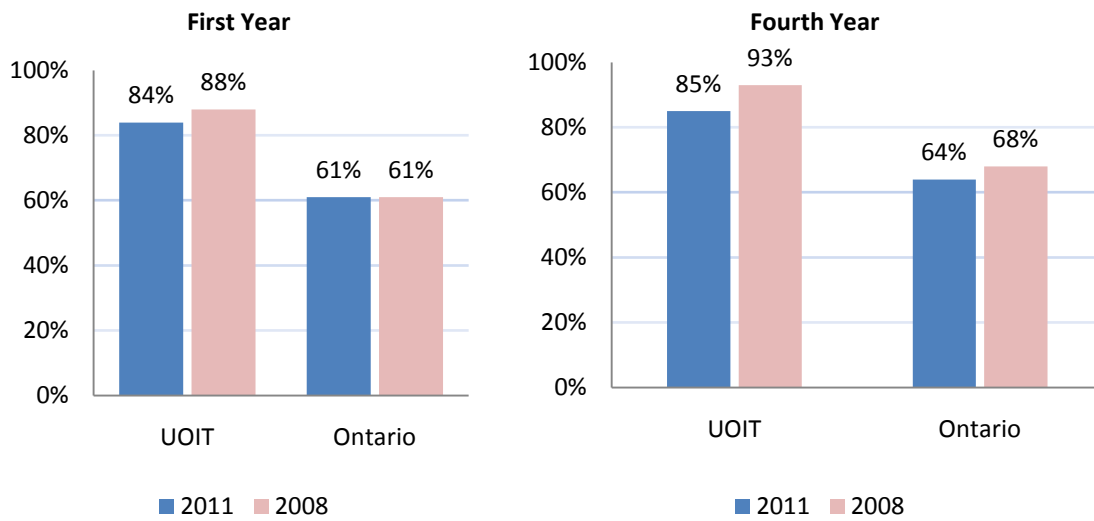
In terms of the actual use of computers and IT, students were asked if they had used an electronic medium (chat group, internet etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment. **Figure 9** reveals that 73% of first-year and 81% of fourth-year students indicated that they ‘very often’ or ‘often’ used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment. Again, these numbers significantly outperformed the rates for other Ontario universities.

Figure 9 – Used an Electronic Medium (‘Very often’ or ‘Often’)



The lasting influence of computers and IT at UOIT was evident in the response to a question on the role institutions played in skills and development. As shown in **Figure 10**, 84% of first-year and 85% of fourth-year students indicated that their experience at UOIT had ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in computing and IT. These results significantly outperformed the mark for Ontario (61% for first-year, 64% for fourth-year).

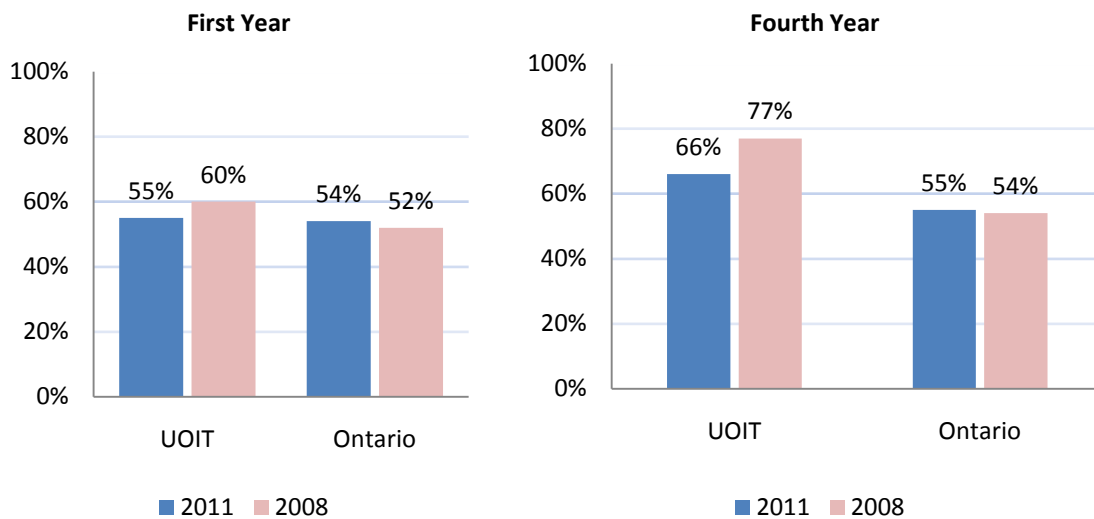
Figure 10 – Lasting Effect of Computing and IT ('Very much' or 'Quite a bit')



UOIT’s Programs Prepare for the Real World

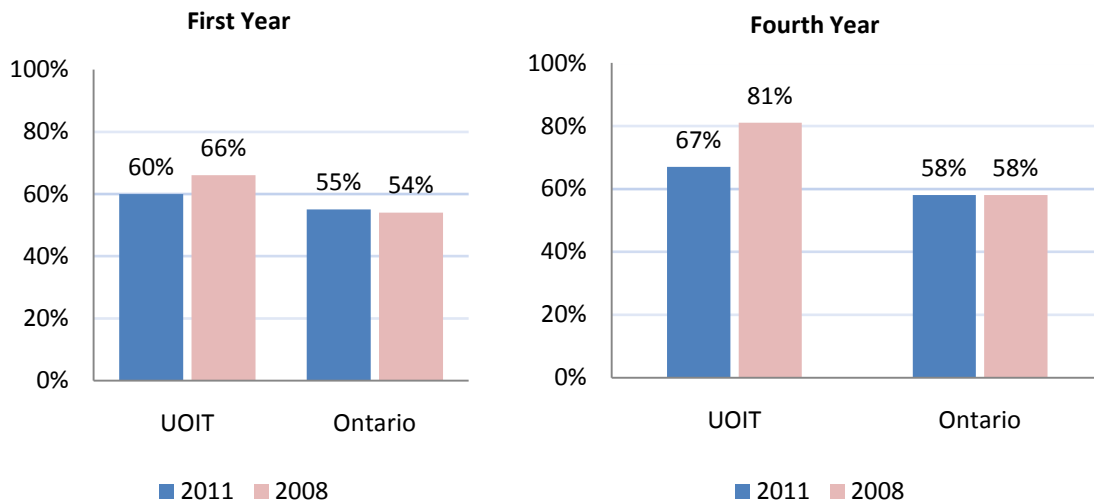
A number of questions dealt with student impressions of not only the practical application of their work at university, but their institution’s ability to prepare them for relevant careers or ‘real-world’ work. **Figure 11** shows that 55% of first-year and 66% of fourth-year respondents felt that UOIT ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ contributed to their knowledge, skills, and development in solving real-world problems. The gap between the rate for UOIT and Ontario fourth-year respondents was significant.

Figure 11 – Solving Complex Real-World Problems ('Very much' or 'Quite a bit')



Students were asked to what extent their experience at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development at acquiring a job or work-related knowledge and skills. **Figure 12** reveals that 60% of first-year respondents and 67% of fourth-year respondents felt that their experience at UOIT had ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ contributed. These measures significantly outperformed the indicators for Ontario.

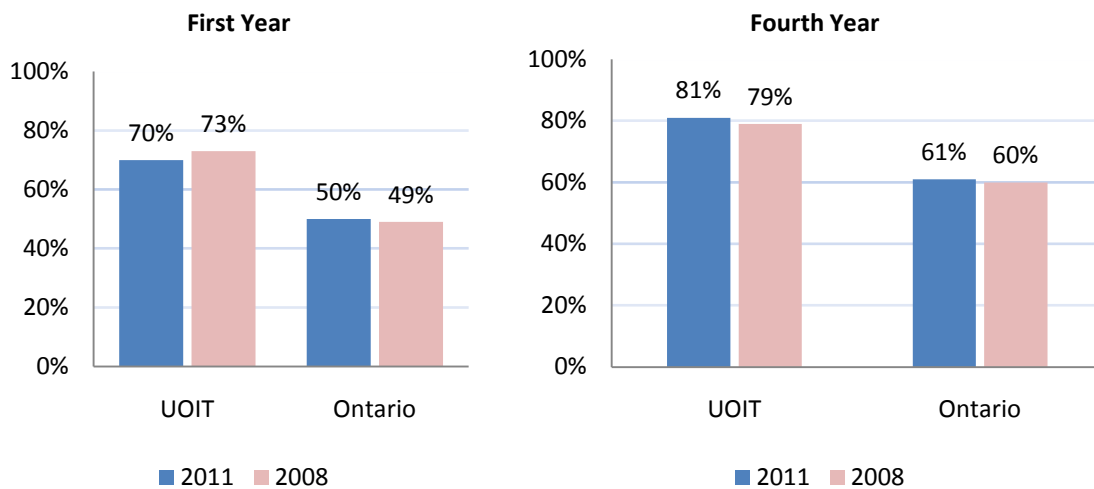
Figure 12 – Acquiring a Job and Work-Related Skills (‘Very much’ or ‘Quite a bit’)



UOIT Students Continue to Work Together

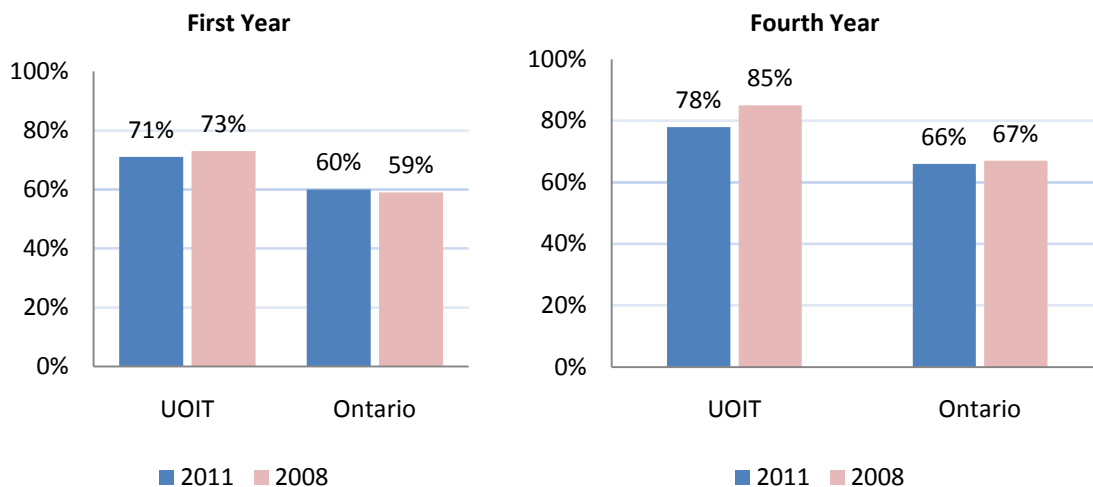
Students were asked a series of questions about their work with others. In **Figure 13**, it can be seen that 70% of first-year respondents and 81% of fourth year respondents indicated that they had worked ‘very often’ or ‘often’ with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments. Both results outperformed the measures for Ontario.

Figure 13 – Worked Together Outside of Class (‘Very often’ or ‘Often’)



Similarly, the question was posed to students about the contribution their institution had made to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in working with others. **Figure 14** illustrates that 71% of first-year respondents and 78% of fourth-year respondents felt that their experience at UOIT had ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ contributed to their abilities with respect to working with others. Those rates outperformed the indicators for Ontario (60% first-year and 66% fourth-year).

Figure 14 – University Contribution to Collaborative Abilities (‘Very much’ or ‘Quite a bit’)



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM 2008

In 2008, UOIT participated in NSSE for only the second time. In fact, 2008 marked the first time UOIT surveyed fourth-year level students. With such early datasets, it is still enlightening to track changes from one year to the next. The following takes a brief look at some of the significant changes from 2008 to 2011.

Growth in Diversity... The ethnic diversity on UOIT’s campus continues to grow. In 2008, 45% of first-year respondents identified themselves as ‘non-white’. In 2011, the number rose to 50%.

Financial Pressure Increasing... UOIT students are feeling financial pressures. In 2008, 32% of first-year and 39% of fourth-year indicated that ‘financial pressures’ posed the biggest obstacles to academic progress. In 2011, almost half of first-year respondents (46%) and 42% of fourth-year respondents, indicated it as ‘major obstacle’.

Time Spent on Campus... UOIT students are spending less time on campus outside of class. In 2008, 35% of first-year respondents and 38% of fourth-year respondents spent

5 hours or less, per week, on campus outside of class. In 2011, those numbers grew to 42% for both first and fourth-year.

Going, and Coming, Greener... Increasing numbers of UOIT students are finding alternative modes of transportation to and from campus. In 2008, 41% of first-year respondents and 48% of fourth-year respondents took a 'private automobile' to and from campus. In 2011, the number shrunk to 31% for first-year and 38% for fourth-year.

Starting at UOIT... More students are arriving in their first year having initiated their university career at UOIT. In 2008, 77% of first-year respondents indicated that they began their university career at UOIT. In 2011, the measure was 90%.

Instructor Discussions... UOIT students are having fewer discussions with instructors. In 2008, only 16% of first-year students and 8% of fourth-year students indicated that they had 'never' discussed grades or assignments with an instructor. In 2011, each rate rose to 22% and 11% respectively.

CONCLUSION

In many areas, 2011 marked a 'bringing into line' of the institution's NSSE results against the province. Where traditionally UOIT had outperformed Ontario on all benchmarks, 2011 saw the first time that UOIT fell back to Ontario levels and was even slightly below the provincial mark on some (Level of Academic Challenge & Enriching Educational Experiences).

Although many indicators did drop from 2008, UOIT maintained a continued strength, and an outperformance against Ontario, in a number of areas (computing & IT, collaboration, career preparedness etc.).

Generally, first-year respondents had lower engagement scores than fourth-year respondents. This tendency was especially evident in the benchmark results (with the exception of Supportive Campus Environment). The fact that upper year students were more engaged is not too surprising given the amount of time spent on campus, and level of comfort, that fourth-year students would have compared to their newly arrived first-year peers.

UOIT, along with all other Ontario universities, continues on a 3-year cycle to administer NSSE. The survey will be run again in the winter of 2014.

For more information on NSSE or the survey itself, please visit nsse.iub.edu.

For more information on UOIT and other survey results, please visit www.uoit.ca/oira.

The 2011 Ontario Consortium

Algoma University (Sault Ste. Marie)
Brock University (St. Catharines)
Carleton University (Ottawa)
Huron University College (London)
King's University College (London)
Lakehead University (Thunder Bay)
Laurentian University (Sudbury)
McMaster University (Hamilton)
Nipissing University (North Bay)
Ontario College of Art & Design (Toronto)
Queen's University (Kingston)
Ryerson University (Toronto)
Trent University (Peterborough)
University of Ottawa (Ottawa)
University of Guelph (Guelph)
University of Toronto (Toronto)
University of Waterloo (Waterloo)
University of Western Ontario (London)
University of Windsor (Windsor)
Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo)
York University (Toronto)

U.S. Peer Group (Carnegie Classification)

The following is a list of the participating U.S. institutions that made up the 'U.S. peer' comparison group:

Belmont Abbey College
Bloomfield College
Concordia University-Saint Paul
CUNY Medgar Evers College
Defiance College
Dickinson State University
Flagler College
Florida Southern College
Illinois College
Indiana University East
LaGrange College
Lyndon State College
Millikin University
Missouri Western State University
Ohio Northern University
Saint Josephs College
Southern Adventist University
Unity College
University of Maine at Farmington
University of the Ozarks
Voorhees College