

CUSC Survey: 2005 Executive Summary

Students are supposed to be at the center at Brock. How do we know whether or not students are satisfied with the programs and services that Brock provides? How do we compare with other universities in Canada? In the spring of 2005, Brock participated in the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC) Survey. A total of **28,000** undergraduate students from **twenty-eight** universities across Canada were randomly selected to participate in the survey. A total of **12,783** students completed and returned the survey, a response rate of **45.7%**. For comparison purposes, the twenty-eight universities were categorized in terms of three groups. Brock and eight other universities (hereinafter referred to as “peer institutions”) were put in a group characterized as “offering both undergraduate and graduate studies and tending to be of medium size in terms of student population”.

Among the **1,000** students randomly selected from Brock’s undergraduate population, **409** responded by the designated timeline. The following is an extract from the summary report provided by CUSC in June of 2005.

I. Satisfaction with academic facilities

We asked students to rate their satisfaction with the services they typically used and with a number of academic facilities on their campus. In each case, a majority of students are satisfied with each of the items tested.

- **73%** of Brock students indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the **process of registering for courses**, the average for peer institutions and for all participating institutions are **74%** and **76%** respectively.
- When asked about the **availability of courses** for students’ program, **68%** of Brock respondents indicated that they are satisfied (**51%**) or very satisfied (**17%**); while, on average, **61%** of the students from peer institutions and **63%** students from all participating institutions are satisfied (**47%**, **49%**) or very satisfied (**14%**, **16%**).
- **95%** of Brock respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with **the average size of classes**, in comparison to **87%** for peer institutions and **88%** for all participating institutions.
- With **library facilities**, the percentage of Brock respondents who are satisfied or very satisfied is **82%** -- the same as for peer institutions and for all participating institutions.
- Compared with **78%** for peer institutions and **80%** for all participating institutions, **87%** of Brock respondents indicated that they are satisfied or very satisfied with **the instructional facilities** (e.g., **classrooms, labs, equipment**).

- When asked about satisfaction with the **general condition of buildings and grounds**, **85%** of Brock respondents reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied, while the percentages are **72%** and **78%** for peer institutions and for all participating institutions.
- **72%** of Brock respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with **study space** at Brock, while the results are lower for both peer institutions (**64%**) and for all participating institutions (**68%**).

Except for library facilities and class registration process, higher percentages of Brock students indicated that they were satisfied with academic facilities compared with the averages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions.

II. Satisfaction with general facilities and services and special services

Students who had used particular facilities or services provided satisfaction ratings.

- Generally, students were satisfied with **personal safety on campus**. On average, **89%** of respondents for both peer institutions and all participating institutions reported that they are very satisfied (**36%** and **39%**) or satisfied (**53%** and **50%**). At Brock, the percentage of students reporting satisfaction with personal safety on campus is **95%**, with **56%** being very satisfied.
- Higher percentages of Brock students (**93%**, **80%**) reported that they were satisfied with athletic facilities and university residences than the average for peer institutions (**81%**, **71%**) and for all participating institutions (**79%**, **74%**). However, the percentage of Brock students who indicated satisfaction with computer facilities, facilities for student associations (clubs, etc.), campus book store, food services, and parking facilities are marginally lower than the averages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions, as can be seen in the following table.

Facility/Service	Brock	Peer Institutions	All Institutions
Computer facilities	80%	83%	85%
Student Assoc.	75%	79%	80%
Bookstore	55%	66%	72%
Food services	54%	59%	62%
Parking facilities	36%	38%	39%

As for campus medical services and university-based social activities, the percentages of Brock students who reported that they are satisfied (**83%**, **82%**) are similar to the average percentages for peer institutions (**83%**, **79%**) and for all participating institutions (**84%**, **83%**).

- The most commonly used special services at Brock are:

Service	% of Students Who Used the Service
Academic Advising	64%
Financial Aid	29%
Counseling Services	17%
Employment Services	14%
Study Skills & Learning Support	14%

Among these, Brock respondents reported higher satisfaction rates with career counseling services (**85%**) and services for students in need of financial aid (**71%**) than the averages for peer institutions (**76%**, **68%**) and for all participating institutions (**75%**, **68%**). WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER 3?

- Students were asked to identify the top three areas that require the most improvement at their university in the general and special service area. The top three most frequently mentioned areas include parking facilities, food services, and campus bookstore. While an average of **40%** students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions indicate that parking facilities and food services are two of the top three areas requiring improvement, the percentages of Brock respondents indicating such needs are **49%** and **45%**; An average **30%** and **28%** students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions identify campus bookstore as one of the three top areas requiring improvement, **49%** of Brock respondents list campus bookstore as a top priority area for improvement.

Overall, parking facilities, food services, and campus bookstore are the three areas students have identified as areas requiring improvement in university general operation. The need for Brock to improve these areas is even greater because higher percentages of Brock students cited these areas as top priorities for improvement.

III. Satisfaction with faculty and staff

We ask students to rate their satisfaction with faculty, teaching assistants, staff, and the way their university treats students.

- Generally, students tend to report positive experiences with faculty. For example, almost 90% of all respondents report that they agree or strongly agree with “most of my professors encourage students to participate in class discussions” and “most of my professors are accessible outside of class to help students.” Reports from Brock students are consistently more encouraging in each and every aspect. For example, **75%** of Brock respondents reported that they agree or strongly agree that “Some professors at this university have had a major positive influence on my academic career”, while the average percentages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions are **69%** and **70%**. When we ask students to what extent they agree or disagree with “at this university, professors treat students as

individuals, not just numbers”, **79%** Brock respondents reported they agree or strongly agree, while the average percentages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions are **71%** and **75%**.

The fact that Brock students report more positive experiences with faculty is consistent with their perceptions on the overall quality of teaching. When we ask students to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement: “Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received”, **87%** of Brock students reported they agree or strongly agree, while the average percentages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions are **81%** and **83%**.

- Not only Brock students have more positive experiences with faculty, they also report more positive experiences with teaching assistants, university support staff. **88%** of Brock respondents reported that they agree or strongly agree “most university support staff (e.g. clerks, secretaries, etc.) are helpful, while the average percentages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions are **81%** and **83%**. While an average **55%** of students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions reported that they agree or strongly agree “teaching assistants have been helpful in my academic program”, **73%** of Brock respondents agree or strongly agree this statement. Brock students also reported more positive experiences with the way they are treated by the university. Almost **95%** of Brock students agree that “the university treats students fairly, independent of their gender and race”, while the average percentages of students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions who agree or strongly agree the above statement are lower (about **90%**).
- Majority (**92%**) of Brock students as well as all other students reported that they had been given the chance to evaluate the course in most of their classes. And majority of Brock students (**87%**) and all students (**86%**) agree that their learning experiences at their university had been intellectually stimulating. However, only about 2 in 3 students, of Brock or of peer institutions and of all participating institutions as a whole, agreed that “grading is consistent and fair at this institution”.
- We ask students about their satisfaction with concern shown by the university for students as individuals. **69%** Brock respondents are satisfied (**54%**) or very satisfied (**15%**); **59%** respondents from peer institutions as a whole are satisfied (**48%**) or very satisfied (**11%**); and **60%** respondents from all participating institutions are satisfied (**47%**) or very satisfied (**13%**).
- We also ask students whether or not they agree: “I feel as if I am part of the University.” **75%** of Brock’s respondents indicated that they agree (**60%**) or strongly agree (**15%**); the percentage for students from peer institutions are **68%**, with **10%** indicate they strongly agree; **70%** respondents from all participating institutions indicated they agree (**59%**) or strongly agree (**11%**).

Brock students report more positive experiences with our people and with the way they are treated at Brock. In other aspects, although Brock students tend to be more satisfied with grading, the concern shown by university for students as individuals, and with sense of belonging at the university, the percentages of students indicating satisfaction with these aspects are lower across the board.

IV. University experiences and overall satisfaction

We ask students to report on their personal growth and development and their overall satisfaction with their university.

- Students were asked to “grade” their university in 24 skill areas in terms of contributing to their personal growth and development. The 24 skill areas are grouped into broader categories of academic skills, communication skills, analytical and learning skills and life skills. The average “grade” Brock received from our students in each category falls **in the upper scale between “fair” and “good”**, which is the same or slightly higher compared with peer institutions and with all participating institutions,
- We ask students to what extent they agree with the statement: “I am satisfied with my decision to attend this university”, **93%** of Brock respondents indicated that they agree (55%) or strongly agree (**38%**); while the average percentages are **87%** (**28%** strongly agree) and **89%** (**31%** strongly agree) for students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions.
- When asked about satisfaction with overall quality of education, **89%** of Brock respondents indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied; the percentages are **85%** and **86%** for students from peer institutions and from all participating institutions. While 20% and 21% from the two groups indicate that they are very satisfied with overall quality of education, **26%** of Brock’s respondents indicated that they are very satisfied.

While students are generally satisfied, comparing with averages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions, Brock students tend to be more satisfied with our university.

V. Top priorities for improvement

We ask students to rank the top three in terms of requiring the greatest need for improvement. The most often cited areas by Brock students, as well as other students from participating institutions, are: emphasis on teaching excellence (ability), university spending on financial aid, balance between academics and social life, sense of community among students, and work opportunities on campus.

- Despite the fact that most Brock students indicate they are satisfied with the overall quality of teaching and education, many (33%) cite **teaching excellence** as an area requiring improvement.
- Many Brock students (33%) say that **university spending on financial aid** needs improvement. Relating this to students' response to the question about their concern for funding, about 2 in 3 Brock students report that they have at least some concerns about having sufficient funding to complete their university education.
- 30% of Brock respondents name sense of **community among students** as an area needing improvement. Relating to students' report on their involvement in campus activities, this is not surprising. The survey shows that, at Brock, only 13% students participated in student clubs, 8% attended campus cultural events, and 13 % attending campus social events.
- Many Brock students (27%) identify **balance between academic and social life** as an area that needs improvement. On average, Brock students reported that they spend 29 hours studying in and outside of class. In addition, 53% of Brock respondents reported that they are employed during the academic term, and they spend an average of 19 hours a week on paid jobs. In addition, many Brock students (31%) report that given their studies and work, they have little or no time for leisure activities. Consistent with this, **35%** of Brock respondents reported that they are dissatisfied with the amount of time that they can devote to leisure activities. However, compared with the averages for peer institutions and for all participating institutions, the situation is not bad at Brock, because **40%** of all students report that they have little or no time for leisure activities and **47%** say that they are dissatisfied with the amount of time that they can devote to leisure activities.

Besides the above, Brock students also call for improvement on work opportunities on campus, use of technology in the classroom, work study opportunities, student employment services, and course accessibility for mature and part-time students.

Please contact the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis at pbeard@brocku.ca or jxu@brocku.ca for the detailed summary report.

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