

**SURVEY OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA GENERAL PUBLIC:
KNOWLEDGE OF, AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARD, THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM**

**Prepared for
The Advanced Education Council of British Columbia
and
The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

The University Presidents' Council of BC (TUPC) and the Advanced Education Council of BC (AECBC) represent BC's public universities and the public college-institute sector respectively. Both councils communicate with post-secondary institutions in other provinces; with the BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training; and with the individuals and organizations comprising the British Columbia general public. TUPC and AECBC jointly commissioned a survey of the BC general public in late 1997 in order to assess public knowledge of the BC post-secondary education sector, and public attitudes toward such key education issues as post-secondary tuition levels, student access, and post-secondary quality. Over 750 adult British Columbians throughout the province were interviewed by telephone during November and December 1997; the sample results are accurate to within 4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. (See Appendix 1.)

1.2 Overall Finding

The BC general public holds the BC public post-secondary system in high regard. The majority of British Columbians have had some contact with a BC post-secondary institution in the past two years. The general public is aware of some of the key issues facing the post-secondary sector, and considers post-secondary education to be a high public priority and to be of generally high quality. The BC public supports increased access to post-secondary education, in part because of the considerable economic and social benefits it associates with it.

1.3 Public Involvement with BC's Post-Secondary Education System

BC's post-secondary institutions fulfill an important community role: over one-half of adult British Columbians have had contact with a public post-secondary institution over the past two years. British Columbia adults enrol in both credit and non-credit courses at BC's universities, university-colleges, colleges and technical institutes; they attend artistic and sporting events, lectures, and other events; and they utilize library, athletic and advising/support services offered by post-secondary institutions. Younger adults (age 18 to 29) and those with higher levels of education are more likely to be involved with BC's post-secondary institutions; these groups also have the greatest knowledge of post-secondary issues.

1.4 Media Coverage of BC's Post-Secondary Education System

BC's public post-secondary institutions have met with limited success communicating key educational issues to the general public through the media. While the majority of BC adults can identify recent media coverage related to post-secondary education, the main issues recalled – the APEC protest at UBC and the sexual harassment case at Simon Fraser University – dominate such ongoing post-secondary concerns as tuition levels, government funding, and student demand for post-secondary places.

1.5 Public Knowledge of BC's Post-Secondary Education System

Knowledge of the BC public post-secondary system varies widely. Some BC adults are quite knowledgeable about the differing roles of BC's universities, university-colleges and colleges; about the cost of teaching in relation to other areas; and about historic changes in enrolment and government funding. Others showed a much lower level of knowledge of these issues. In general, there exists widespread public recognition that post-secondary institutions have accommodated more students in recent years, without corresponding government funding increases.

1.6 Public Perceptions Toward Selected Post-Secondary Education Issues

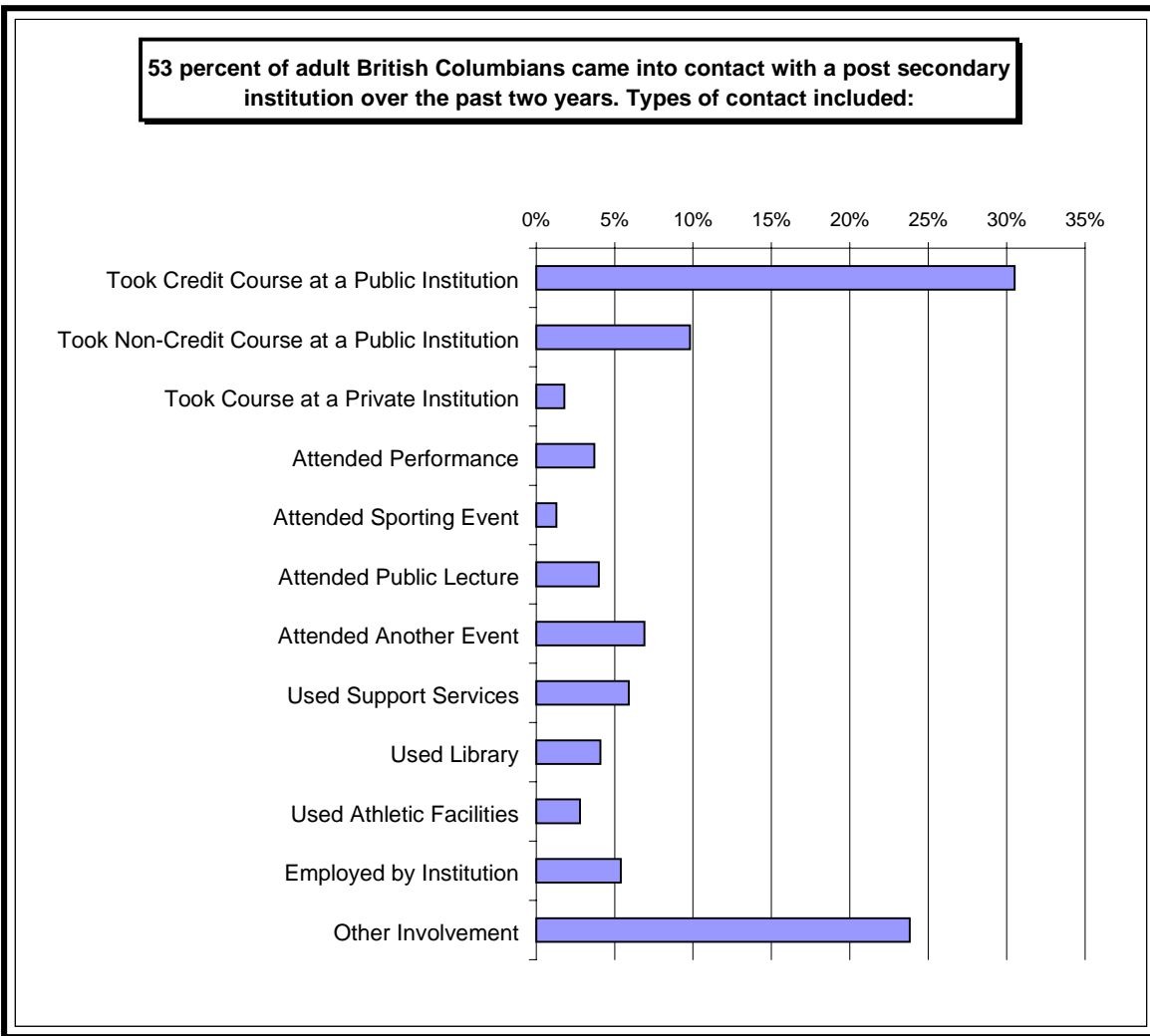
The BC public places a high priority on post-secondary education: it is viewed as the third highest priority for government funding, following health care and hospitals, and elementary and secondary education. Other financial and funding-related perceptions include general support for the current freeze on post-secondary tuition fees, and for the current proportion of post-secondary costs covered by student tuition. Post-secondary institutions are generally viewed as operating efficiently; there exists no consensus on the desirability of such possible cost-cutting strategies as limiting post-secondary enrolment, eliminating or reducing academic programs or services, or increasing student fees.

BC's public post-secondary institutions are seen by most as being of "high" or "very high" quality. BC adults equate "quality" with good instructors, a good learning environment/modern facilities, small classes, good student preparation, and a wide range of high quality and relevant programs. Universities are considered to be of higher quality than other institutions in terms of instructional and library/facility quality; colleges and institutes are viewed as being of higher quality with respect to appropriate class sizes and providing graduates with skills for a changing job market. There is no public consensus on whether the quality of the post-secondary system has improved, stayed the same or deteriorated during the past five years. Post-secondary courses delivered via correspondence, computer, and TV are generally seen as being of lower quality than conventional classroom courses.

Almost two-thirds of the BC adult public believes access to BC's post-secondary institutions is "difficult" or "very difficult", and attributes this difficulty to the costs of post-secondary education (30 percent), high entrance requirements (27 percent), and a shortage of student spaces (26 percent). Ninety percent of the public believe that every qualified student should have access to post-secondary education, regardless of income.

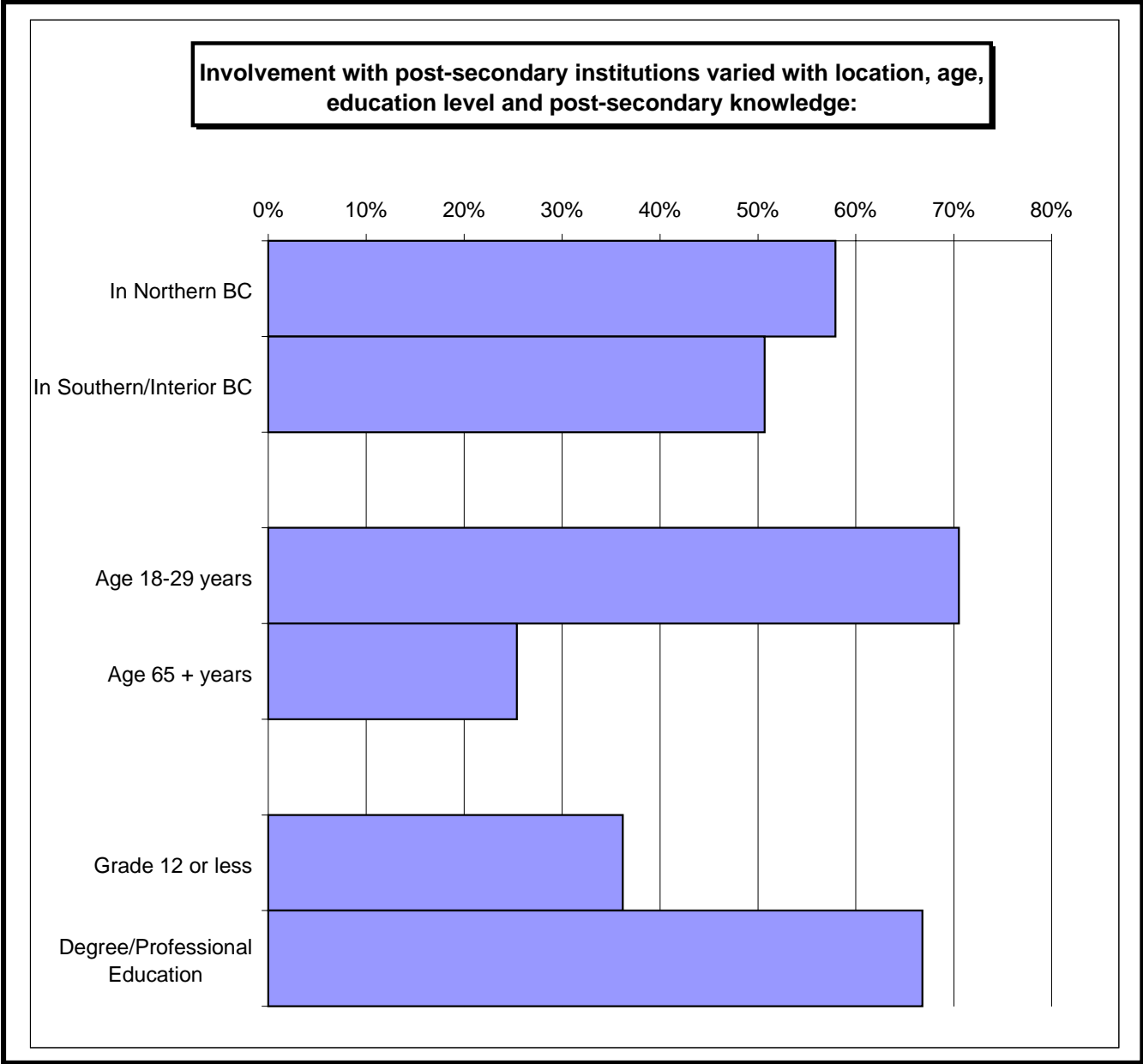
Virtually every member of the general public associates BC's public post-secondary education system with a wide range of economic and social benefits including a skilled workforce, increased employment, better jobs, BC's ability to compete globally, an enriched population, and better citizenship.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT WITH BC'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM



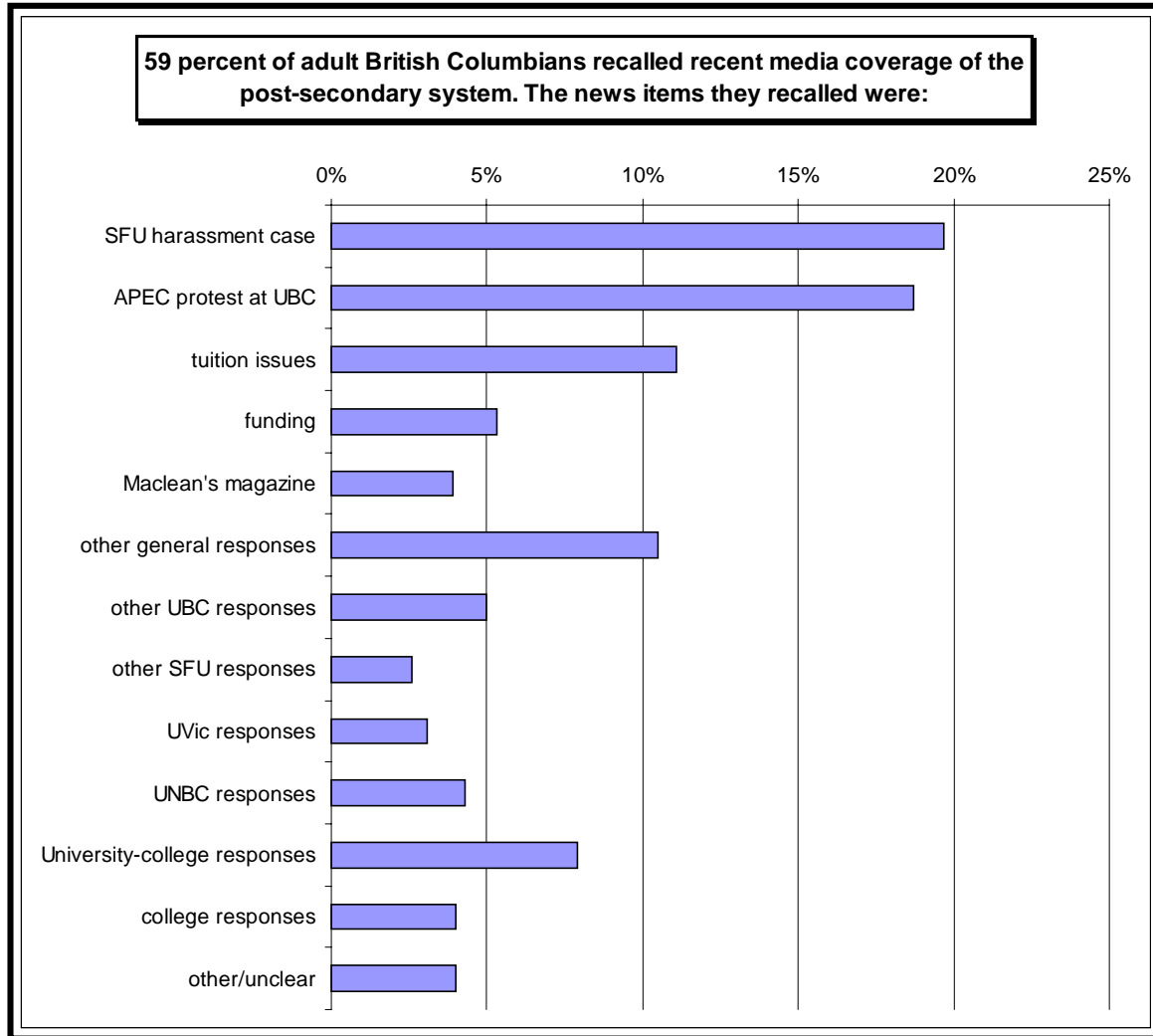
Over one-half (53 percent) of adults in British Columbia have been in contact with one or more of the Province's post-secondary institutions during the past two years. They enrolled in credit courses (31 percent) and non-credit courses (10 percent); they attended musical and theatrical performances (4 percent), public lectures (4 percent), sporting events (1 percent) and other events (7 percent); and they used such institutional services as advising and support services (6 percent), the library (4 percent), and athletic and recreational facilities (3 percent). Twenty-four percent had various other forms of contact or involvement with post-secondary institutions. Five percent reported having been employed by a post-secondary institution (public or private) at some time during the previous two years.

Involvement with BC's post-secondary institutions is highest in Northern BC, among adults aged 18 to 29 years old, and among those who have earned university degrees.



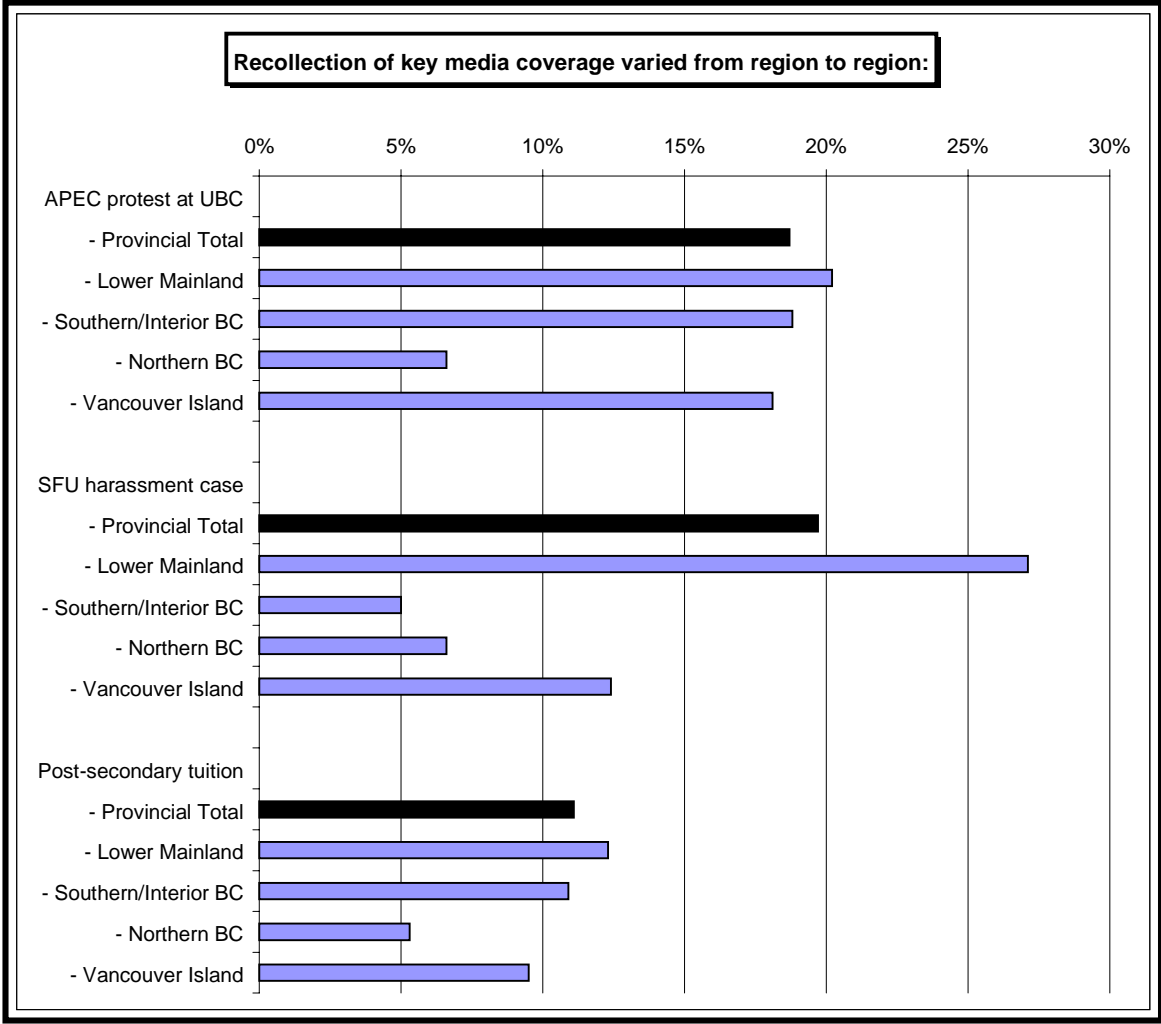
3. MEDIA COVERAGE OF BC'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Fifty-nine percent of all respondents were able to recall media coverage of post-secondary education in BC during the previous few months; many were able to recall coverage of two or more post-secondary news issues.



The harassment case at Simon Fraser University and the APEC protest at the University of British Columbia dominated public recollection of media coverage of the post-secondary sector. Post-secondary tuition issues, post-secondary funding levels, and the Maclean's magazine "Universities Issue" were the only other major media stories mentioned. Other media items covered a range of general issues, as well as issues specific to each of the universities, university-colleges, colleges and technical institutes.

Recollection of key media issues showed substantial regional variation. The APEC protest appears to have made only a small impression in Northern BC, while the SFU harassment case was much more dominant in the Lower Mainland than in other regions. Recollection of media coverage related to tuition and funding levels was much more consistent throughout all areas of the Province. Respondents with higher levels of education and higher incomes were more likely than others to recall media coverage of post-secondary issues.



4. PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF BC'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Public knowledge of BC's post-secondary education system was measured in four areas: the differing roles of public universities, university-colleges and colleges; the percentage of institutional spending allocated to the teaching function; changes in post-secondary enrolment levels over the past five years; and changes in government grants to the post-secondary sector over the past five years.

4.1 The Differing Roles of BC's Public Post-Secondary Institutions

The general public is knowledgeable of some of the differing roles of post-secondary institutions:			
<u>Educational Function</u>	<u>Percent Stating Function is Performed By</u>		
	<u>Universities</u>	<u>Univ-Colleges</u>	<u>Colleges</u>
Training people for specific technical careers and trades (All three types of institutions perform this function)	31.7%	63.4%	85.8%
Providing professional schools (Law, Medicine, etc.) (Only universities have professional schools)	96.0%	41.6%	19.8%
Providing a variety of undergraduate degree programs (Universities and university-colleges offer degree programs)	85.2%	65.4%	34.1%
Conducting research (Only universities have research mandates)	93.1%	52.6%	32.1%

Survey respondents were asked which type(s) of public post-secondary institutions performed each of four different functions: (a) training people for specific technical careers and trades, (b) providing professional schools such as law, medicine, dentistry and engineering, (c) providing a variety of undergraduate degree programs, and (d) conducting research. For example, responsibility for "training people for specific technical careers and trades" was considered a university function by 32 percent of respondents; a university-college function 63 percent of respondents; and a college function by 86 percent. (In fact, all three types of institutions perform this function to a varying, but significant degree.) Public knowledge of the differing roles of public post-secondary institutions can be summarized as follows:

- Universities are widely acknowledged for conducting research (93 percent), for providing a variety of undergraduate degree programs (85 percent), and for providing professional schools (96 percent). They are much less widely recognized (32 percent) for offering technical career training.
- About two-thirds of the public acknowledges the role of university-colleges in offering technical career/trades programs and undergraduate degree programs (which they do, in reality, provide). However, about one-half of respondents indicated the university-colleges had responsibility for providing professional schools (which they do not) and for conducting research (which they are not formally mandated to do, and which therefore occurs on a very limited scale). University-colleges appear to be the least well-understood of the three types of institutions.

- BC's colleges are widely (and correctly) viewed as providers of technical training (86 percent). Less than one-third of the public associate colleges with professional schools, undergraduate degree programs and conducting research (none of which are mandated college responsibilities).
- Overall, the differing roles of universities, university-colleges and colleges are only "moderately" understood by the BC public. Generally, a sizeable minority (and in some cases, a majority) of respondents believe each type of institution performs functions that it is not, in fact, performing.

4.2 Institutional Spending on the Teaching Function

The majority of the public are not aware of the cost of the teaching function in BC's post-secondary institutions:

<u>Percent of Spending Allocated to Teaching</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
less than 20% of total spending	4.8%
20-29%	9.8%
30-39%	11.3%
40-49%	8.7%
50-59%	12.3%
60-69%	10.4%
70-79%	8.4%
80% or more of total spending	6.4%
don't know	28.1%
providing responses of between 50% to 70% inclusive	28.2%

Knowledge of the percentage of post-secondary institution spending allocated to the teaching function (defined in the survey as the salaries of professors and other instructors) is relatively low. Over one-fourth of all respondents indicated they did not know what percentage of spending went on teaching; 35 percent believed less than one-half of all institutional spending was allocated to teaching. Teaching costs in most post-secondary institutions generally represent about 60 percent of total spending. About 28 percent of survey respondents assigned the teaching function a "reasonably accurate" allocation of between 50% and 70% of total post-secondary institutional expenditures..

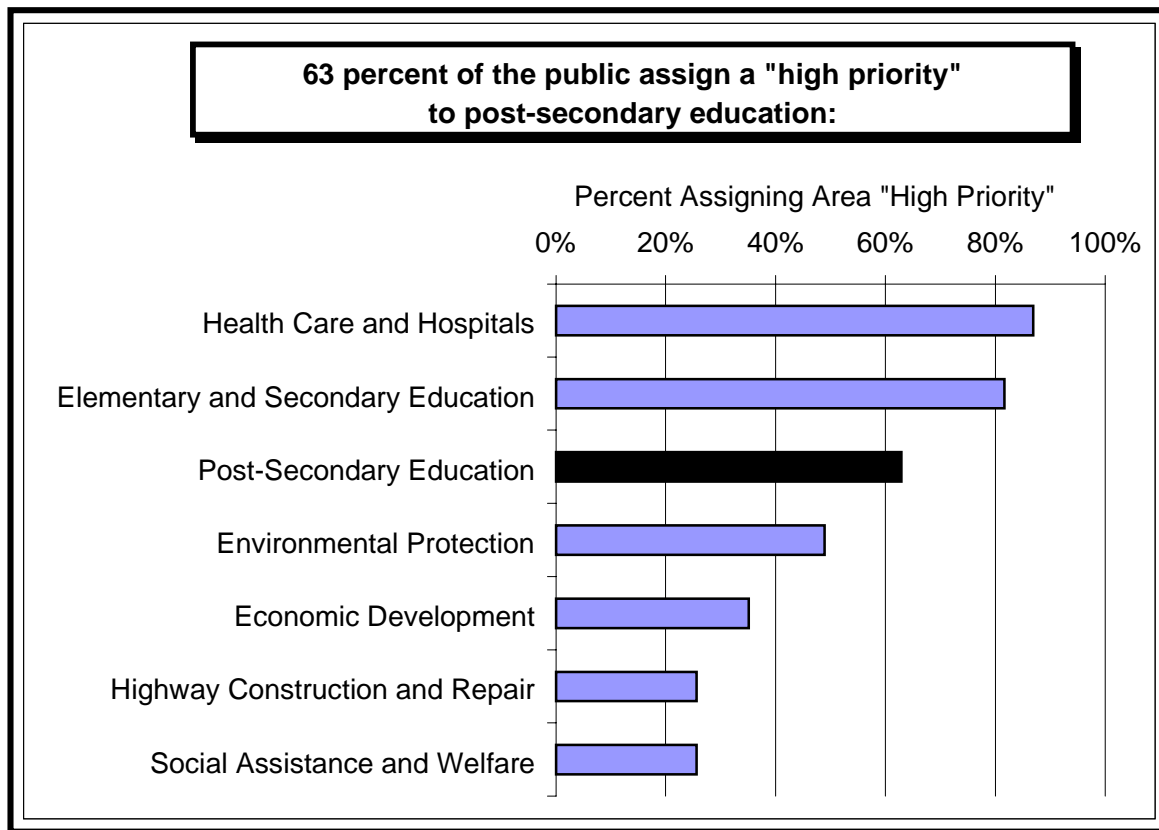
4.3 Changes in BC Post-Secondary Enrolment and Funding Over the Past Five Years

The public is generally aware of changes in enrolment, but less knowledgeable about changes in funding for post-secondary institutions in BC:				
	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Remained the Same</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Post-Secondary Enrolment	73.0%	10.4%	10.7%	5.8%
(Between 1992/93 and 1996/97, enrolment increased about 15%.)				
Post-Secondary Government Funding	15.4%	25.0%	52.3%	7.3%
(Operating grants to post-secondary institutions increased about 12% (actual) or about 2% (inflation adjusted) between 1992/93 and 1996/97, suggesting funding has remained about the same or increased slightly.)				

The public is much more knowledgeable about changing post-secondary enrolment levels. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73 percent) correctly stated that post-secondary enrolment has increased over the past five years. (Actual full-time equivalent or FTE enrolment in the university and college-institute sectors combined has risen about 15 percent since 1992/93.) Knowledge of changing government funding to BC's post-secondary institutions is more sporadic. Since 1992/93, total provincial government grants to BC's public post-secondary institutions have increased about 12 percent in actual dollars, but only 2 percent in constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars. However, 52 percent of respondents believe total funding has decreased over the past five years; 25 percent believe it has stayed about the same; and 15 percent believe it has increased. Depending on whether inflation is taken into account, government funding could be said to have either remained stable or increased, suggesting a correct response by about 40 percent of respondents. It seems likely that the reduction in federal transfer payments to the provinces has led to confusion within the public about actual provincial grants to post-secondary education.

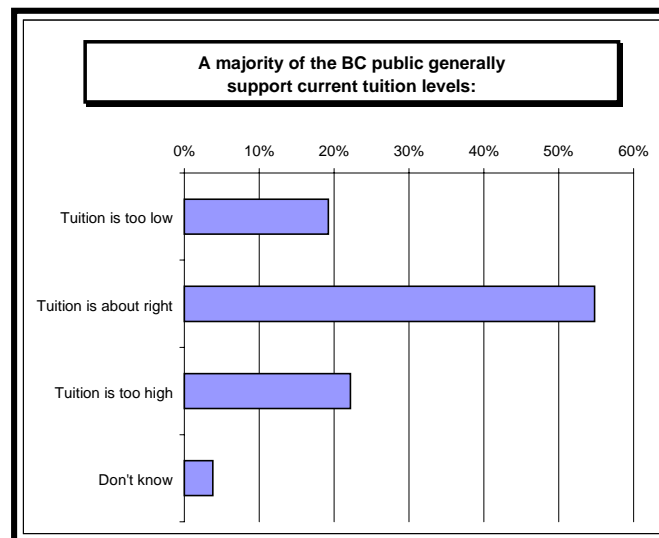
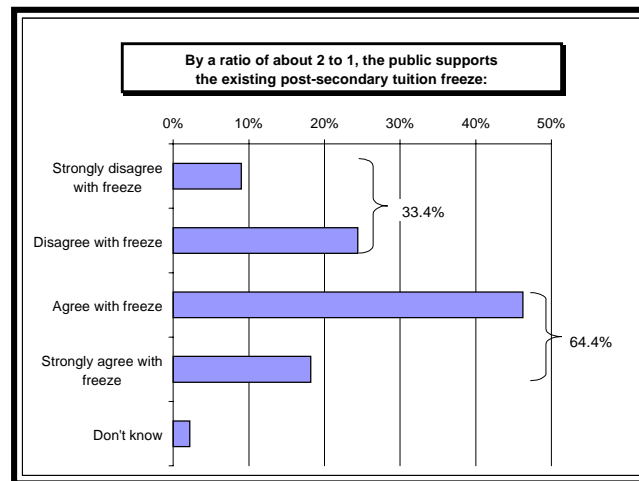
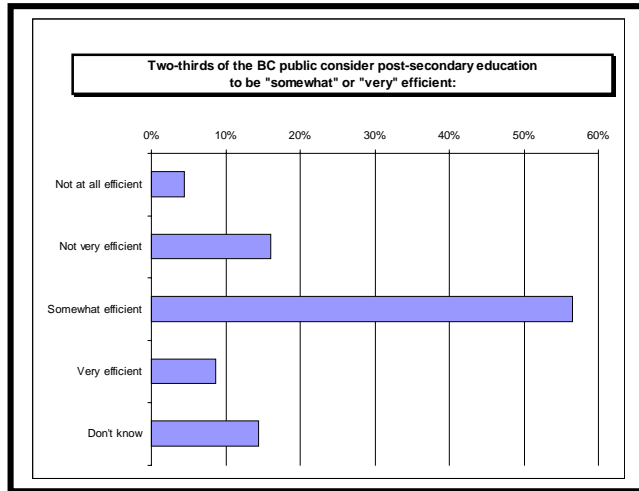
5. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS TOWARD SELECTED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ISSUES

5.1 Funding and Financial Issues

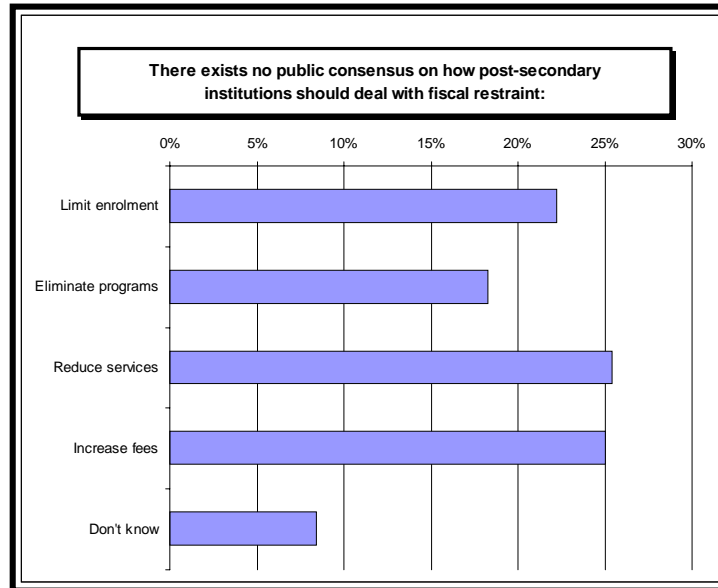


The BC public places a high priority on post-secondary education. When asked to rank spending in various areas as being "high", "medium" or "low" priority, 63 percent of respondents assigned post-secondary education a high priority. This places post-secondary education third behind health care and hospitals (to which 87 percent of respondents assigned a high priority) and primary and secondary education (82 percent). Other public expenditure areas ranked by respondents were environmental protection (49 percent), economic development programs (35 percent), highway construction and repair (26 percent) and social assistance and welfare programs (26 percent). The priority assigned to post-secondary education was relatively consistent across all regions, respondent ages, education and income levels, etc.

BC's post-secondary institutions are seen as being "very efficient" by 9 percent of the public, "somewhat efficient" by 57 percent, and "not very efficient" or "not at all efficient" by 21 percent. Older respondents tended to assign institutions a lower efficiency rating; those with higher income and education levels tended to assign post-secondary institutions a higher level of efficiency.



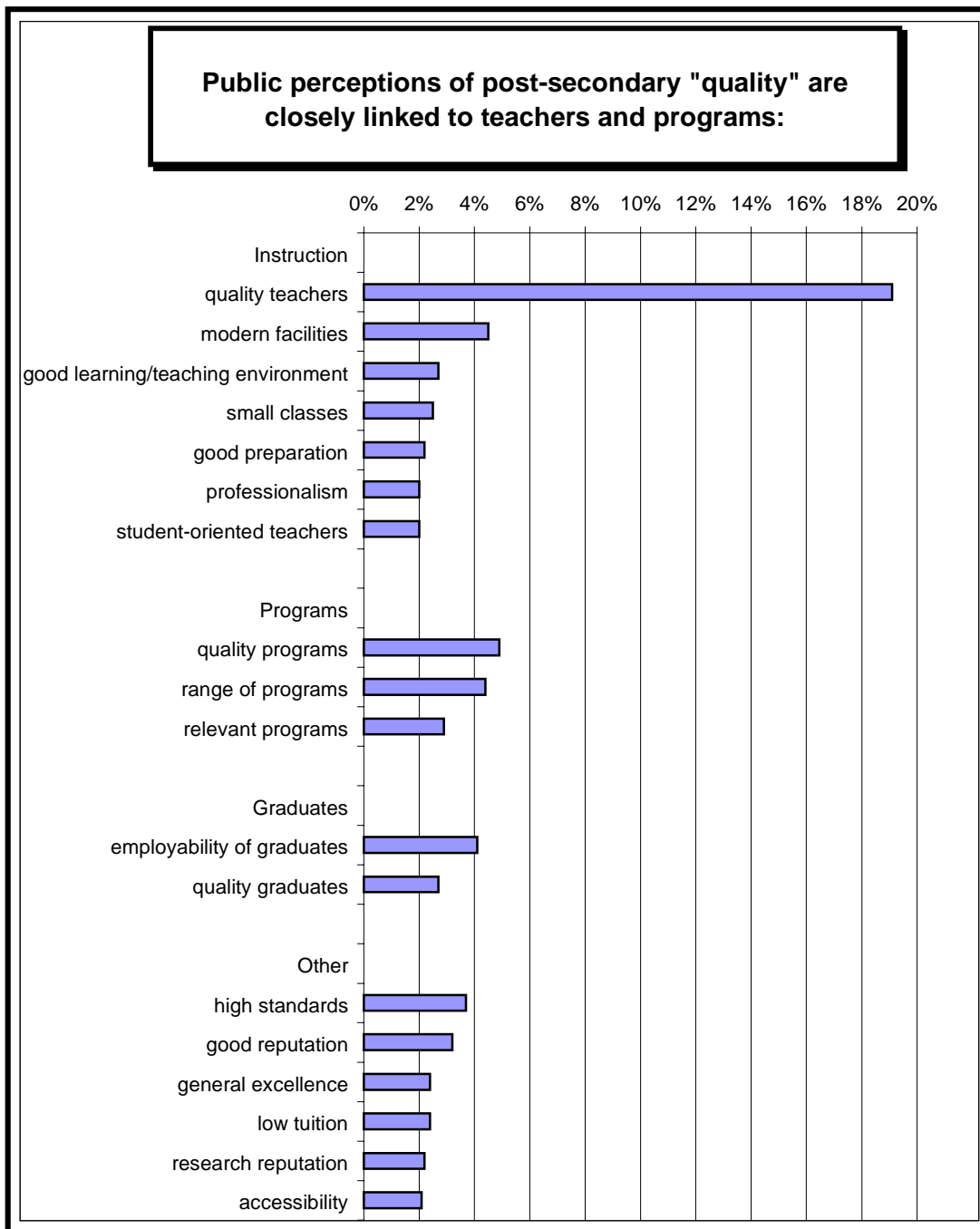
Over one-half (55 percent) of British Columbia adults believe that at about 18% of total costs, post-secondary student tuition contributes “about the right proportion” to the costs of post-secondary education. The remainder are almost evenly split between those stating that tuition is too high (22 percent) and those believing it is too low (19 percent). There is generally strong support for the current provincial government mandated freeze on post-secondary tuition: 46 percent “agree” and 18 percent “strongly agree” with the freeze, while only 33 percent oppose it.



There is no consensus within the general public about how post-secondary institutions should “balance their budgets” during this period of funding restraint. Such potential cost-cutting strategies as limiting enrolment, eliminating programs of study, reducing services and facilities, and increasing tuition fees all received roughly equal support overall; no single option was supported by more than 25 percent of the public. However, significant differences in opinion toward these strategies existed across different age groups. Adults in the 18 to 29 age group expressed relatively greater support for limiting enrolment; middle aged adults (aged 30 to 64) tended to support reductions in programs of study; and older adults (aged 65 or more) supported reductions in services.

5.2 Educational and Institutional Quality

The majority of respondents define “quality” in post-secondary education in terms related to instruction and academic programs.



In terms of instruction, the public associates post-secondary “quality” with teachers (19 percent), modern facilities (4 percent), and the learning/teaching environment, small classes, good [student] preparation, professionalism and student oriented teachers (each at about 2 percent). Respondents also cited the quality, range and relevance of programs; the employability and quality of graduates; and various general issues (standards, reputation).

**BC's public post-secondary institutions
are considered to be high quality:**

<u>Type of Institution</u>	<u>High Quality</u>	<u>Very High Quality</u>	<u>Combined "High" and "Very High" Quality</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Mean*</u>
BC colleges	54.6%	8.4%	63.0%	17.1%	2.85
BC university-colleges	52.8%	9.5%	62.3%	24.1%	2.94
BC universities	55.8%	25.7%	81.5%	10.1%	3.19
BC institutes	47.3%	25.3%	72.6%	16.7%	3.17
BC private institutions	26.8%	8.0%	34.8%	38.2%	2.60

* Where 1=very low, 2=low, 3=high and 4=very high, and excluding "don't know" responses.

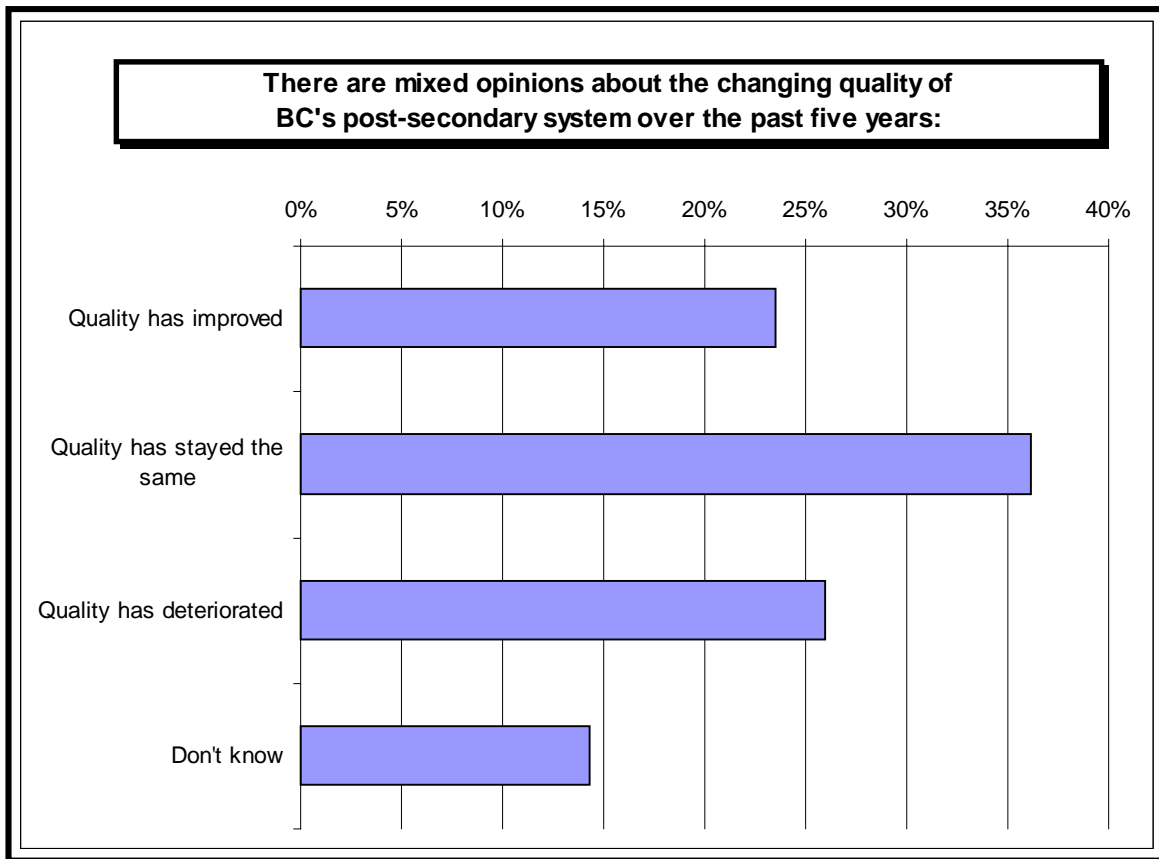
BC's public post-secondary institutions are generally considered to be of high quality. Colleges and university-colleges are viewed as having "high" or "very high" quality by about 63 percent of the public; BC's public universities by about 82 percent of the public; and BC's institutes by 73 percent of the public. By comparison, private training institutions were rated as having "high" or "very high" quality by only 35 percent of the general public. Many respondents indicated they didn't know about the quality of BC's public post-secondary institutions (from a low of 10 percent of the public for universities, to a high of 24 percent for university-colleges).

**Universities and other institutions are viewed
as being different in several respects:**

<u>Areas of Difference</u>	<u>% Believing:</u>		
	<u>Universities and Other Post-Secondary Institutions Are the Same</u>	<u>Universities Are Better</u>	<u>Other Institutions Are Better</u>
Quality of instruction	29.7%	42.0%	14.3%
Appropriate class sizes	17.3%	14.8%	40.7%
Quality of libraries, labs and other equipment	11.5%	70.7%	2.1%
Graduate skill level for the job market	33.3%	19.8%	34.1%

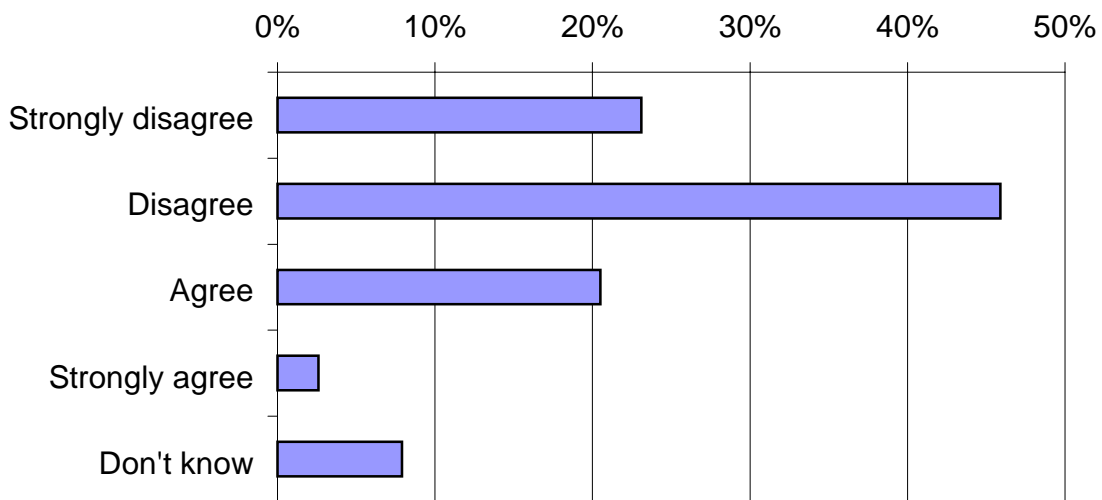
Note: rows do not sum to 100% because of some "don't know" responses.

Only a minority of the public consider universities and other institutions to be similar with respect to instruction, class sizes, equipment, and graduate skill level. Universities are generally seen as being better in the areas of instruction and equipment, while other institutions receive higher ratings for appropriate class sizes and graduate skill level.

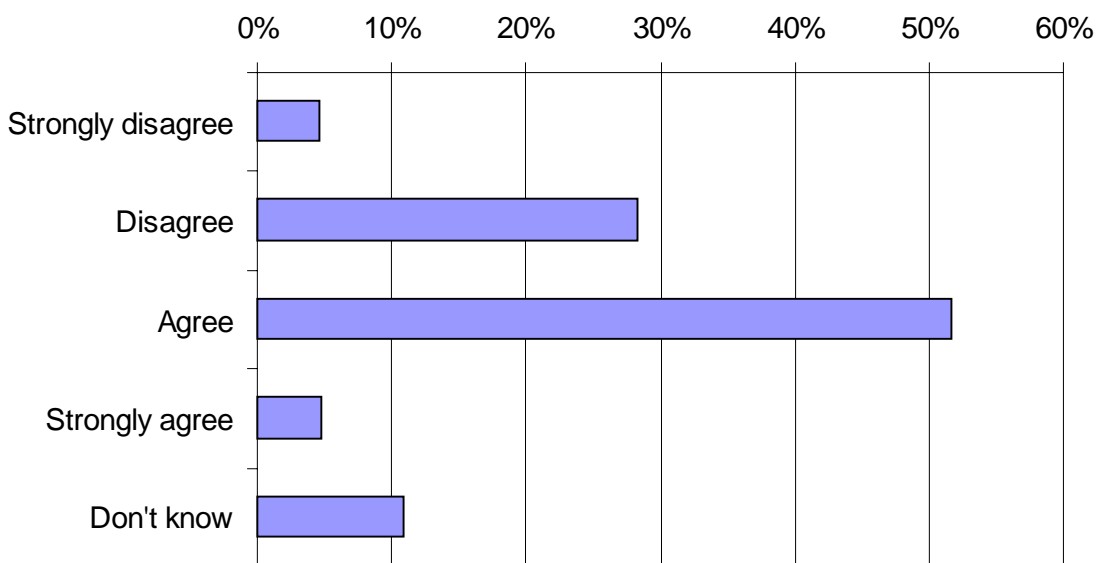


Over one-third of all respondents (36 percent) believe the quality of BC's post-secondary education system has not changed over the past five years; about one-fourth believe it has improved in quality and about one-fourth believe quality has deteriorated. Fourteen percent did not know whether quality had changed. In Northern BC, a greater percentage of respondents believed post-secondary education quality had improved than was the case in other regions.

Courses taught through correspondence, via computer networks, or on TV, are the same quality as those taught in campus classrooms:



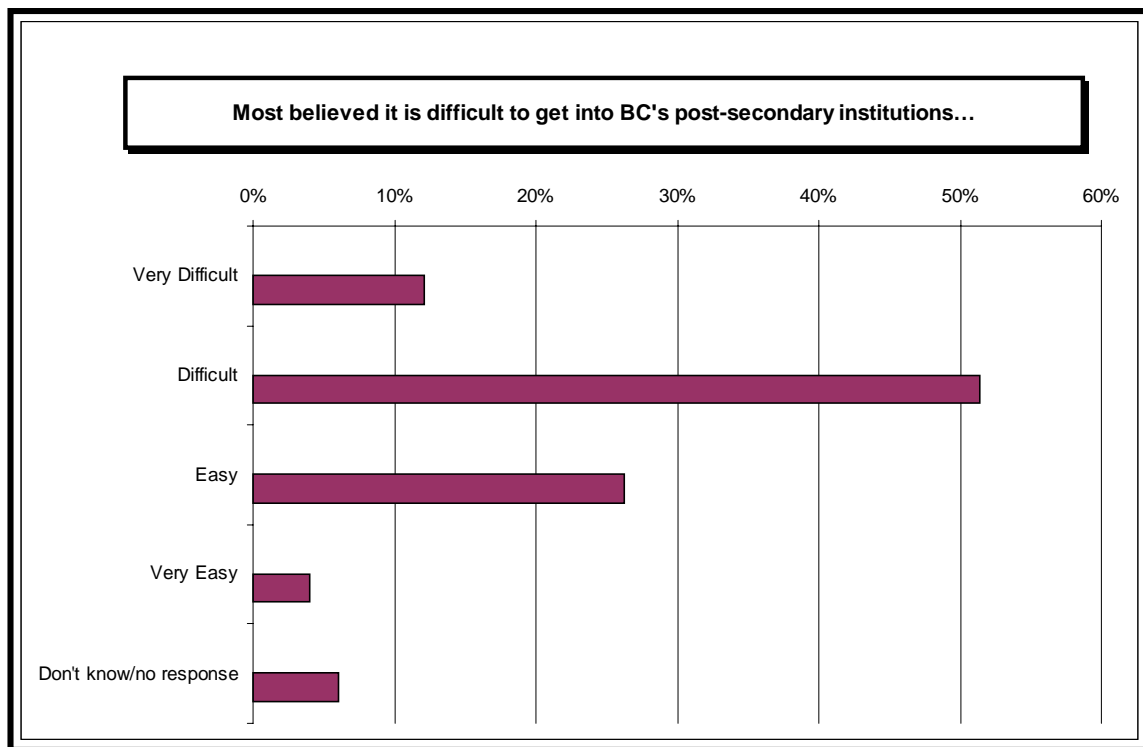
BC's post-secondary institutions are adapting to the changing demands of the job market:

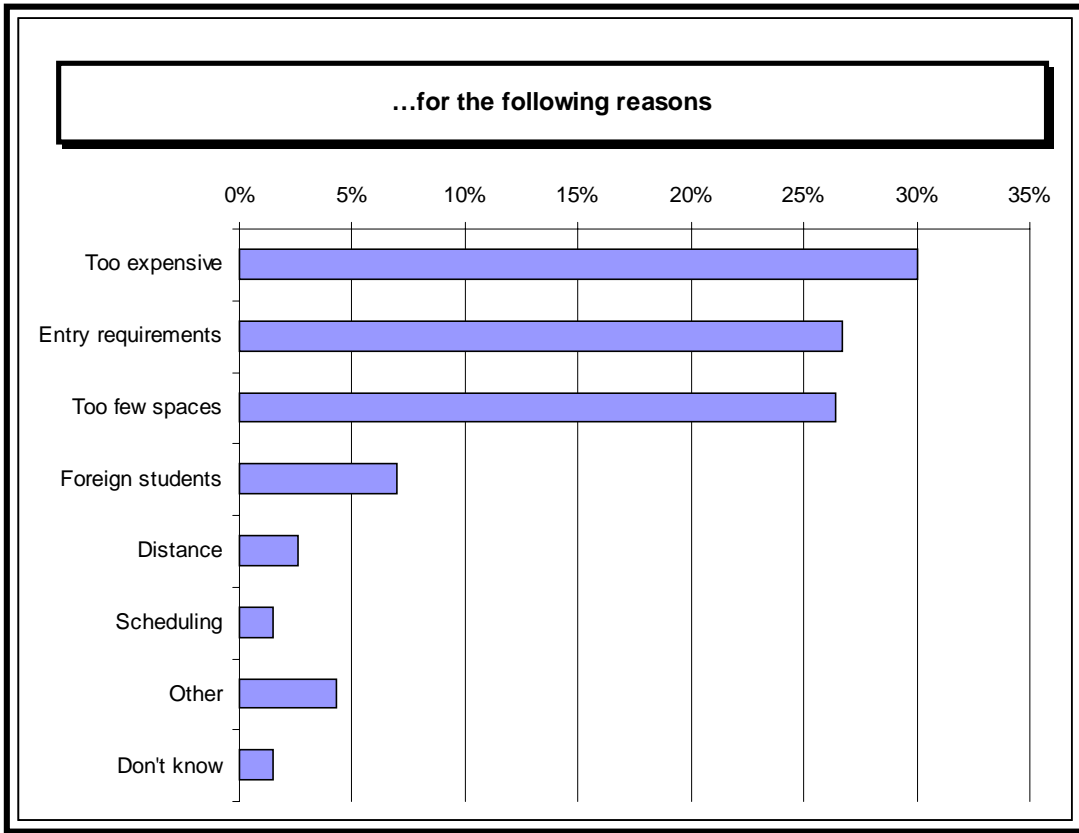


Two other quality-related questions are of particular interest within post-secondary institutions. The first is that post-secondary institutions are being encouraged to increase the number of courses delivered through "alternative" means (e.g. correspondence, and via computer and other media). However, over two-thirds of the public believe that such courses are of inferior quality to those offered in a conventional classroom setting. The second issue is that a majority (67 percent) believe that post-secondary institutions are adapting to the changing demands of the job market. (The minority view – that they are not – is reflected in several of the comments directed by respondents toward college and university presidents.)

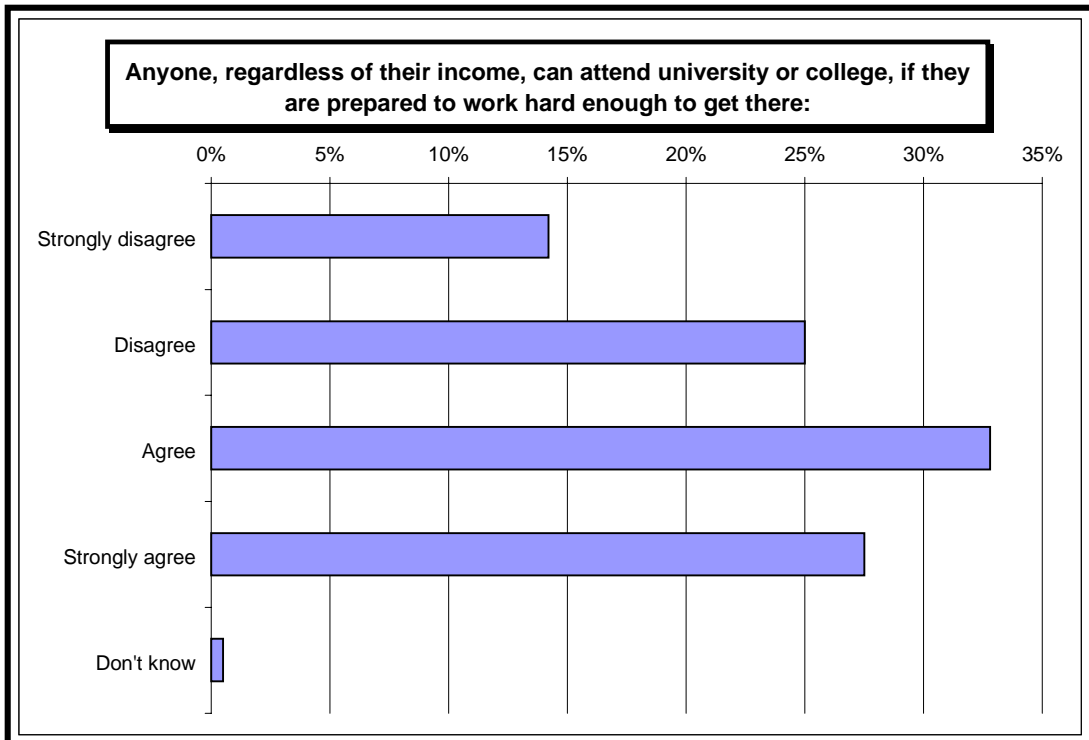
5.3 Student Access

About two-thirds of the BC public consider access to BC's post-secondary institutions to be either "difficult" (51 percent) or "very difficult" (12 percent). This assessment was consistent across all regions, age groups and education/income levels. Respondents attribute access difficulties to three main factors: the cost of post-secondary education (30 percent), high entry requirements (27 percent), and a shortage of spaces in the system (26 percent). Seven percent of respondents attributed access difficulties to international students; these responses were concentrated in the Lower Mainland and Southern/Interior BC regions.

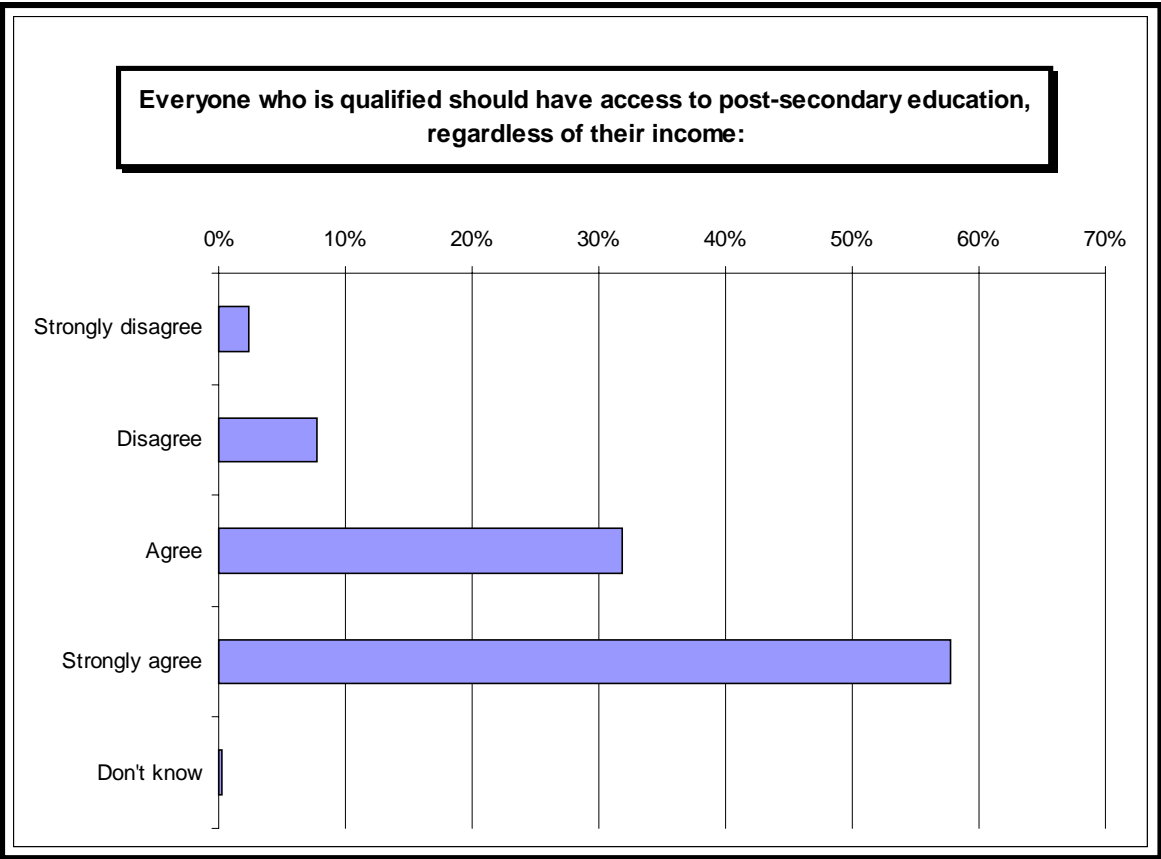




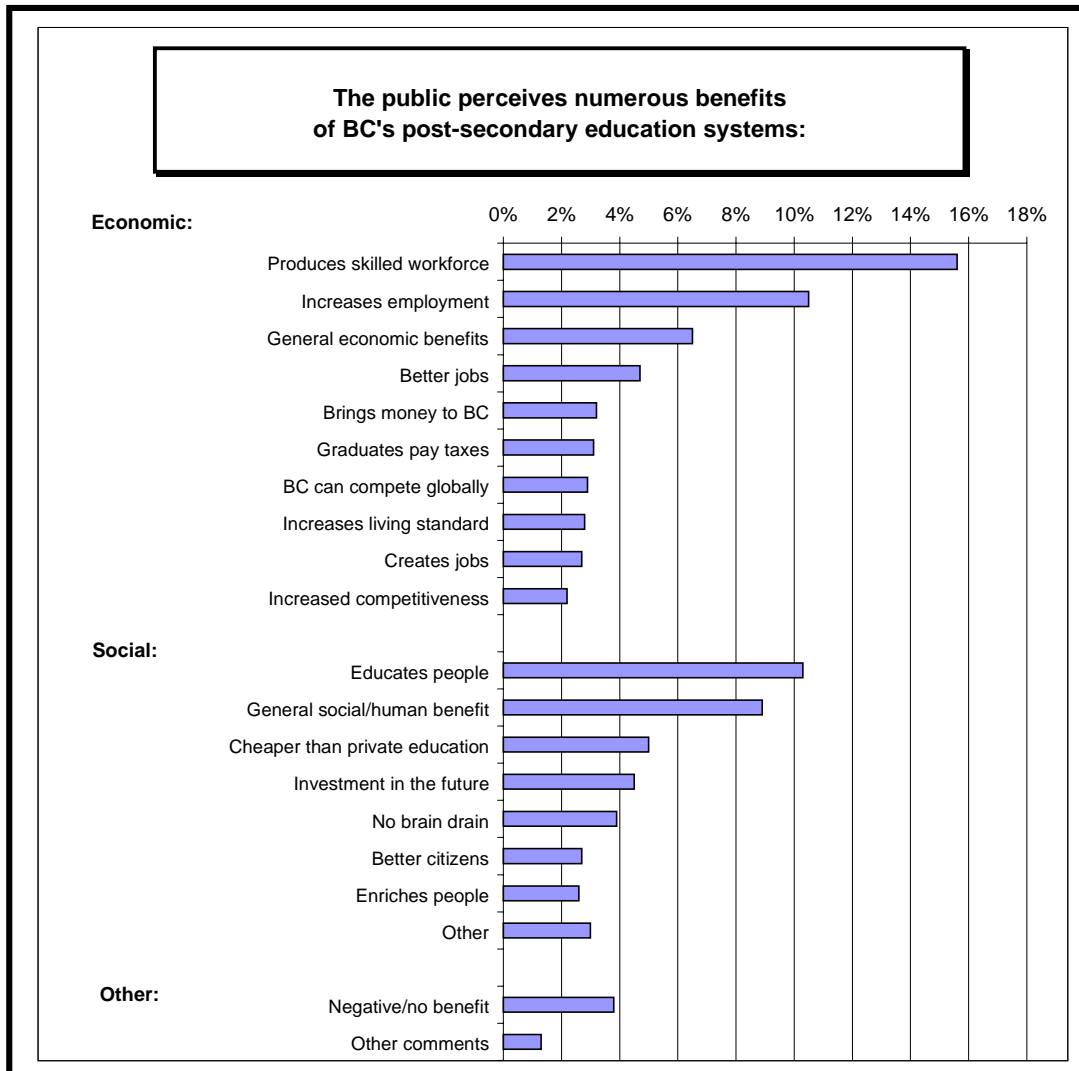
Sixty percent of the public believe that “anyone, regardless of their income, can attend university or college if they are prepared to work hard enough to get there”. By extension, about 40 percent believe that low income acts as a barrier to post-secondary education even if one works hard.



And 90 percent believe that “everyone who is qualified should have access to post-secondary education, regardless of their income”. The overall thrust of public opinion appears to be that (most) hard working students can qualify for access to the post-secondary system, and that having done so, space for them should be reasonably assured.



5.4 The Economic and Social Benefits of the Public Post-Secondary Education System



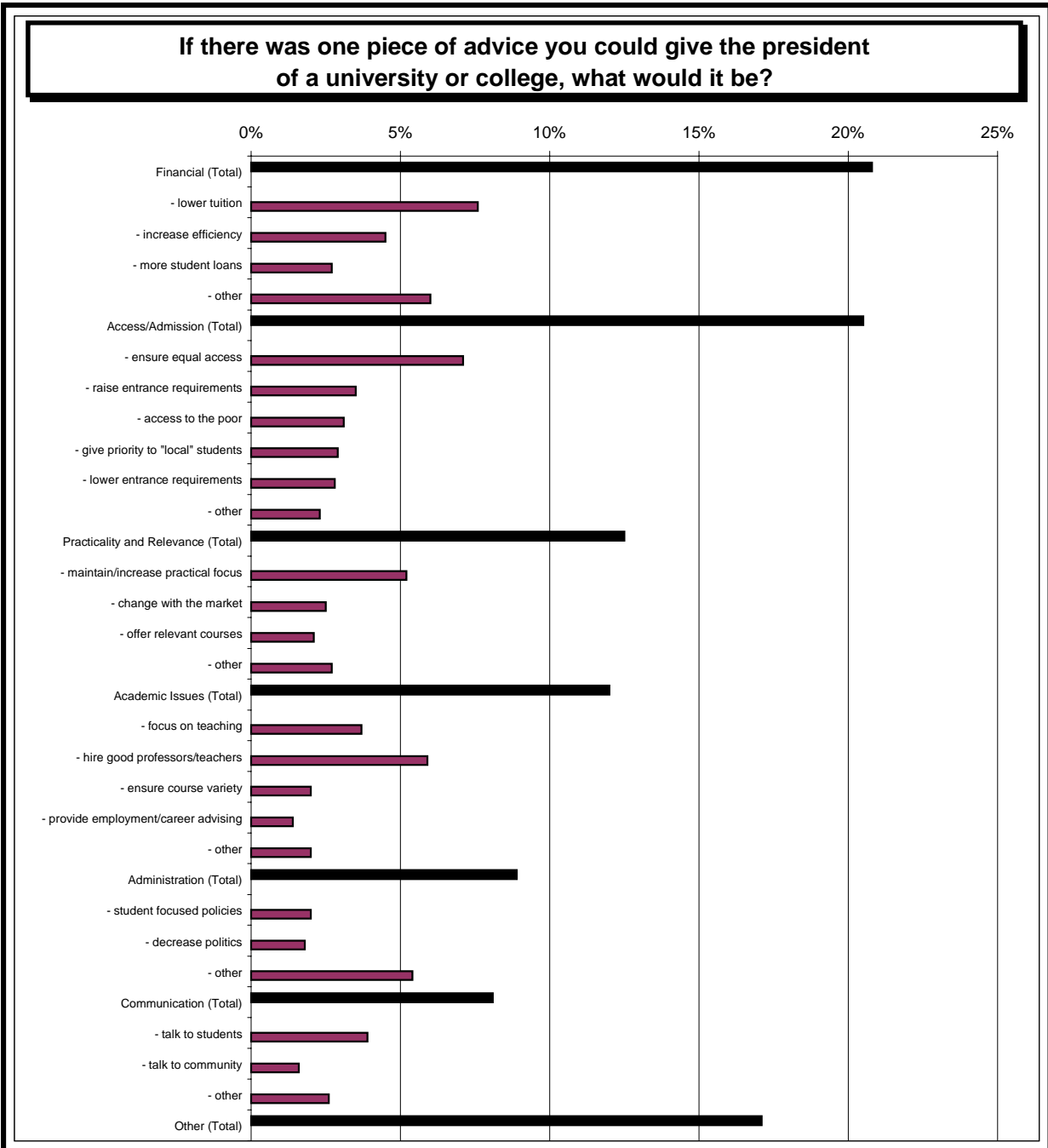
Virtually every survey respondent (well over 90 percent) believed that BC's post-secondary education system generated positive social and economic benefits for the province. In terms of economic benefits, respondents cited such factors as a skilled workforce (16 percent), increased employment (11 percent), and general economic benefits (7 percent), in addition to such things as better quality jobs, global competitiveness, and increased tax revenue from [employed] graduates. Identified social benefits included a better educated population (10 percent), general social and human benefits (9 percent), and such other benefits as prevention of the "brain drain", the enrichment of people, and better citizens. Only 4 percent of all respondents indicated that negative or no benefits accrued to the Province as a result of the post-secondary system.

The following survey responses capture a cross-section of identified social and economic benefits:

- A public post-secondary education system provides an educated and skilled work force. It also provides educated citizens who can understand something about public affairs and possibly, history. A post-secondary education enriches your personal life. The more educated people are, the more likely they will contribute to their communities.

- It provides opportunities to lots of people. Not only people who live in BC but other countries. It brings a lot of income into BC. It provides us with the location to stay in BC and get educated here.
- Through education we are going to form a more active community and a better society. This will increase and better our economy but decrease the need to spend on social welfare.
- Post-secondary education systems benefit British Columbia by providing students with training for jobs, giving students personal and communication skills, helping students deal with real-life problems and issues. It also gives you an example of the work you will have to do and the discipline you will need for life.
- It adds to the qualifications of people looking for work. It brings in new money. Jobs which require trained people improve the quality of life of people overall. There are advantageous economic spin-offs. An educated work force can bring about change because they question things and are adaptable to changing environments.
- In the long term, they [post-secondary institutions] provide skilled people for future and present industries, a good quality income and tax base and good overall growth of the province. They ensure our social infrastructure by preventing the emigration of good quality people from the province to go elsewhere for their careers and employment.
- An educated workforce means economic, social, and technological growth. Even in terms of human potential and understanding, being educated is probably one of the most important things we have going for us.
- It broadens the range of human experience. The advantages of a post-secondary education can't be more strongly stressed: qualifications, self-esteem, the realization that anything worth doing is worth the work. It helps the economy. It gives young people an accomplishment, and that can't be underestimated. We all need goals, and that's a wonderful goal to achieve.

5.5 Advice to a University or College President



Respondents provided a wide variety of comments, criticisms and suggestions to the presidents of BC's post-secondary institutions. The main areas of comments related to funding and finances (21 percent), access and admission (18 percent), relevance and practicality of programs (13 percent), other academic concerns (14 percent), and administrative issues (9 percent).

The comments made to institution presidents included:

- ... I would like to see easier access for those without funding. I am also concerned about how students are able to pay off their loans. I would like to see more counselling in which jobs are available compared to which courses are selected.

- I would advise him/her to be open to the students' needs, be flexible, be aware of modern trends, be open to suggestions, have the courage of your convictions, and to involve parents.
- Try to make adjustments to the entrance standards. There are so many students who fall through the cracks. The academic standards are not being met so these students cannot continue with their education. I am sure there must be a better way to decide on who gets into university and who doesn't. It is unfortunate that the standards are so high. It doesn't give a fair opportunity to everyone who wants to study at university.
- Hang in there. It's got to get better. The wheel does turn. Education is just too important to give up. Society has to realize that it has to pay its way if we are going to have any future in education, highly trained and skilled people. Education should be a top priority.

5.6 Summary

Several of the public perceptions discussed above highlight a central dilemma confronting BC's post-secondary institutions. There exists widespread support for maintaining and even increasing student access, and for limiting student tuition costs. At the same time, there is general agreement that post-secondary institutions are [already] operating efficiently, and (perhaps as a result), there exists no public consensus as to which cost-cutting strategies should be employed by institutions.

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT ADMINISTRATION, FIELDWORK AND SAMPLE INFORMATION

1. Steering Committee

- Ms. Kathleen Bigsby, Advanced Education Council of British Columbia
- Mr. Chris Conway, University of Victoria
- Ms. Paula Martin, University of British Columbia
- Mr. Lee Owen, Advanced Education Council of British Columbia

2. Consultant

- R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd.
- Participation with steering committee in instrument design; development of sampling methodology; field testing and fieldwork; data post-coding; data entry and data set production; preparation of top line report

3. Fieldwork Details

- Fieldwork dates November 23, 1997 to December 18, 1997
- Calling times Mondays to Thursdays (6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.); Saturdays (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); Sundays (1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.); limited calling and callbacks Mondays to Thursdays (1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
- Survey administered in English, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi and German

4. Sample Summary

Region	Actual Sample n	Actual Sample %	Estimated Population %	Ratio of Percentages	Adjusted Ratio (1)	Weighted Sample n (2)	Sampling Error at 95% (3)
Lower Mainland	340	44.68%	55.7%	1.25	1.00	340	5.3%
Vancouver Island	145	19.05%	19.5%	1.02	0.82	119	8.1%
Interior/Southeast BC	150	19.71%	16.5%	0.84	0.67	101	8.0%
Northern BC	126	16.56%	8.3%	0.50	0.40	51	8.7%
Total	761	100.00%	100.0%			610	4.0%

- Notes:
1. All ratios were adjusted downward to achieve a Lower Mainland base ratio of 1.0.
 2. Rounded to nearest integer value.
 3. Sampling errors for each region apply only to analyses conducted for that region; for the entire weighted sample, the sampling error is 4.0%.

AECBC/TUPC

Survey of the B.C. General Public:

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of the Advanced Education Council of B.C. Our firm, R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. has been contracted to conduct a survey on their behalf.

We are calling to obtain your opinions about, and attitudes towards the post-secondary education system in B.C. While participation is completely voluntary, your answers are important. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for statistical purposes.

May I do the survey with you at this time?

We are required to fill certain quotas in terms of region of B.C., age and gender of the respondent. Therefore, could you please tell me into which of the following age categories you fall?

- Age:
1. 18 to 29 years
 2. 30 to 44 years
 3. 45 to 64 years
 4. 65+ years

(DO NOT ASK) Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Could we please confirm the first three digits of your postal code? ____ ____ ____

Region of B.C. will be automatically checked by the CATI as it is coded on the basis of the first three digits of the telephone number.

Thank you very much for your time, but we have filled our quota for your age category/region/gender!

A. Knowledge/Awareness Questions

The first set of questions on the survey is to measure public awareness of the post-secondary education system in B.C. Please do not worry if you find you cannot answer some of them.

- A1. Thinking back over the past few months, can you remember any media coverage relating to post-secondary education generally, or to any college or university in particular?
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Yes (GO TO A2) | 8. Don't Know/Unsure (GO TO A3) |
| 2. No (GO TO A3) | 9. No Response (GO TO A3) |

A2. If yes, what was the coverage about/what issue?

- A3. Have you had any contact with or been on the campus of a B.C. post-secondary institution over the past two years?
- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Yes (GO TO A4) | 8. Don't Know/Unsure (GO TO A5) |
| 2. No (GO TO A5) | 9. No Response (GO TO A5) |

A4. If yes, what kind of contact have you had with the institution(s)?
 (SURVEYOR NOTE: DON'T READ ANSWERS ALOUD.)

- _____ 1. taken a credit course at a public university or college in the past two years
- _____ 2. taken a non-credit/general interest/continuing education course at a public university or college
- _____ 3. taken any courses offered by a private institution in the past two years
- 4. attended a music or theatre performance at a college or university in the past two years (can be both university events or events where other groups rent university facilities)
- 5. attended a sporting event at a college or university (can be both university events or events where other groups rent university facilities)
- 6. attended a public lecture at a college or university
- 7. used athletic/recreational facilities
- 8. used university, college or institute library
- 9. attended another community event at a college or university (e.g., open house, art show, science fair)
- 10. employed by post-secondary institution
- 11. used the employment, counselling or advising centre at a post-secondary institution
- 12. other _____ (please specify)
- 88. Don't Know/Unsure
- 99. No Response

A5. In this next question I have a list of things that post-secondary institutions do. For each could you please tell me whether you think this is something universities do, something university-colleges do or something that colleges do.

	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Response
a) <i>training people for specific technical careers and trades</i>				
i) Is this something universities do?	1	2	8	9
ii) Is this something university-colleges do?	1	2	8	9
iii) Is this something colleges do?	1	2	8	9
b) <i>providing professional schools, such as law, medicine, dentistry, engineering</i>				
i) Is this something universities do?	1	2	8	9
ii) Is this something university-colleges do?	1	2	8	9
iii) Is this something colleges do?	1	2	8	9
c) <i>providing a variety of undergraduate degree programs</i>				
i) Is this something universities do?	1	2	8	9
ii) Is this something university-colleges do?	1	2	8	9
iii) Is this something colleges do?	1	2	8	9
d) <i>conducting research</i>				
i) Is this something universities do?	1	2	8	9
ii) Is this something university-colleges do?	1	2	8	9
iii) Is this something colleges do?	1	2	8	9

B. Funding/Financial Questions

The questions in this next section deal with the funding of post-secondary education and other related financial issues.

- B1. Based on your perceptions or knowledge, what percentage of a post-secondary institution's budget goes to teaching (e.g., salaries of professors and teaching assistants)? _____%
- B2. To the best of your knowledge, has enrollment in post-secondary institutions increased, remained about the same, or decreased in the past five years?
 - 1. Increased
 - 2. Remained the same
 - 3. Decreased
 - 8. Don't Know/Unsure
 - 9. No Response
- B3. To the best of your knowledge, in dollar terms, has government funding to post-secondary institutions increased, remained about the same, or decreased in the past five years? (SURVEYORS: TOTAL FUNDING, NOT PER-STUDENT FUNDING!)
 - 1. Increased
 - 2. Remained the same
 - 3. Decreased
 - 8. Don't Know/Unsure
 - 9. No Response
- B4. The following question contains a list of programs and services on which government spends money. For each of them could you please tell me whether **you** feel it should be a high funding priority, a medium funding priority or a low funding priority. **RANDOMIZED**

	High funding priority	Medium funding priority	Low funding priority	Don't Know	No Response
a) highway construction and repair	1	2	3	8	9
b) environmental protection	1	2	3	8	9
c) elementary and secondary education	1	2	3	8	9
d) post-secondary education	1	2	3	8	9
e) health care and hospitals	1	2	3	8	9
f) social assistance and welfare programs	1	2	3	8	9
g) economic development programs	1	2	3	8	9

B5. How efficiently do you feel that B.C. post-secondary institutions use the funding available to them? Would you say they use the funding . . .

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Not efficiently at all | 8. Don't Know/Unsure |
| 2. Not very efficiently | 9. No Response |
| 3. Somewhat efficiently | |
| 4. Very efficiently | |

B6. On average students contribute 18% of the actual cost of their education through tuition. In your opinion is this proportion too high, too low, or about right?

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Too high | 8. Don't Know/Unsure |
| 2. About right | 9. No Response |
| 3. Too low | |

B7. The provincial government has frozen post-secondary tuition at current levels for the next two years. How much do you agree or disagree with this tuition freeze? Would you say you . . .

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Strongly disagree | 8. Don't Know/Unsure |
| 2. Disagree | 9. No Response |
| 3. Agree | |
| 4. Strongly agree | |

B8. With government budgets tight, universities and colleges may have to choose between limiting enrollment, eliminating programs of study, reducing services to students (e.g., counselling, library hours, computing equipment) or increasing fees. Which choice do you favour?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Limiting enrollment | 8. Don't Know/Unsure |
| 2. Eliminating programs of study | 9. No Response |
| 3. Reducing services to students | |
| 4. Increasing fees | |

C. Quality of Post-Secondary Institutions

The questions in this next section are designed to gather your opinion about the quality of the various post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

C1. When you think of the “quality” of a post-secondary institution, what words or phrases come to mind? What words would you use to describe a “high quality” institution?

C2. On a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means very low quality and 4 means very high quality, how would you rate the quality of the following B.C. post-secondary institutions? **RANDOMIZED**

	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Don't Know	No Response
a) B.C. public colleges	1	2	3	4	8	9
b) B.C. university-colleges	1	2	3	4	8	9
c) B.C. public universities	1	2	3	4	8	9
d) B.C. public institutes (e.g., BCIT)	1	2	3	4	8	9
e) B.C. private training institutes	1	2	3	4	8	9

C3. In each of the following areas, could you please tell us whether you believe there is a difference between universities and other post-secondary institutions (such as colleges, university-colleges, etc.):

- a) Is there a difference in terms of quality of instruction?
 - 1. Yes 2. No 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
 - If yes, which one do you feel is better?
 - 1. Universities 2. Colleges 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
- b) Is there a difference in terms of appropriate class sizes?
 - 1. Yes 2. No 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
 - If yes, which one do you feel is better?
 - 1. Universities 2. Colleges 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
- c) Is there a difference in terms of quality of libraries, laboratories and other learning-related equipment?
 - 1. Yes 2. No 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
 - If yes, which one do you feel is better?
 - 1. Universities 2. Colleges 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
- d) Is there a difference in terms of providing graduates with the skills for today's job market?
 - 1. Yes 2. No 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response
 - If yes, which one do you feel is better?
 - 1. Universities 2. Colleges 8. Don't Know/Unsure 9. No Response

- C4. Compared to five years ago, would you say B.C.'s post-secondary education system has improved, stayed the same, or deteriorated?
1. Improved (gotten better)
 2. Stayed the same
 3. Deteriorated (gotten worse)
 8. Don't Know/Unsure
 9. No Response

D. Access to Post-Secondary Education in B.C.
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The next question addresses the issue of access to post-secondary education in British Columbia.

- D1. At the present time, how difficult or easy would you say it is to get into B.C.'s colleges and universities? Would you say it was. . .

1. Very difficult (GO TO D2)
2. Difficult (GO TO D2)
3. Easy (GO TO E1)
4. Very easy (GO TO E1)
8. Don't Know/Unsure (GO TO E1)
9. No Response (GO TO E1)

- D2. To what do you attribute this difficulty? (SURVEYORS: DO NOT LIST OPTIONS)

- _____ 1. too few spaces available
- _____ 2. too expensive
- _____ 3. distance (students live too far away from the institutions)
- 4. entry requirements are a barrier for most students
- 5. scheduling is not convenient
- 6. foreign students taking too many spaces
- 7. other _____ (please specify)

E. Other Issues

The following questions are to determine your opinion about a few other issues related to post-secondary education.

E1. I'm going to read you a series of statements about the B.C. post-secondary education system. Using a four point scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 4 is strongly agree, please indicate how much you agree with each of the statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	No Response
a) Anyone, regardless of their income, can attend university or college, if they are prepared to work hard enough to get there.	1	2	3	4	8	9
b) Everyone who is qualified should have access to post-secondary education, regardless of their income.	1	2	3	4	8	9
c) Generally, courses taught through correspondence, via computer networks, or on TV, are of the same quality and value as those taught in campus classrooms.	1	2	3	4	8	9
d) B.C.'s post-secondary institutions are adapting to the changing demands of the job market.	1	2	3	4	8	9

E2. How does having a public post-secondary education system benefit British Columbia?

F. Demographic Questions

To finish up the survey, there are just a few more demographic questions to ask. Again, all information you provide is treated as confidential and if you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, please just say so.

F1. Do you have any children under the age of 18 years?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 8. Don't Know/Unsure
- 9. No Response

F2. What is the highest level of education that you have completed to date?

- 1. Less than Grade 12
- 2. High school diploma
- 3. Some trade certificate/diploma
- 4. Trade certificate/diploma
- 5. Some university/college
- 6. Bachelor's degree
- 7. Professional certification (e.g., Teacher's certificate, etc.)
- 8. Master's degree
- 9. Doctoral degree
- 10. Professional degree (LL.B., MD, DDS, etc.)
- 11. Other
- 88. Don't Know/Unsure
- 99. No Response

F3. What is your current occupation?

- 1. Employed by PSE system
- 2. Employed by K-12 system
- 3. Managerial
- 4. Professional and technical
- 5. Clerical
- 6. Sales
- 7. Construction
- 8. Processing, machining, material handling and other crafts
- 9. Agriculture and resource-based (e.g. fishing, forestry, mining, etc.)
- 10. Transportation
- 11. Human Service Industry
- 12. Business Service Industry
- 13. Full-time PSE student
- 14. Other _____(please specify)
- 88. Don't Know/Unsure
- 99. No Response

F4. Into which category does your total pre-tax 1996 household income fall?

- 1. Less than \$20,000
- 2. \$20,000 to \$29,999
- 3. \$30,000 to \$39,999
- 4. \$40,000 to \$49,999
- 5. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- 6. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- 7. More than \$100,000
- 8. Don't Know/Unsure
- 9. No Response

G. General Comments

G1. If there was one piece of advice you could give the president of a university or college, what would it be?
