

# 2009 Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC): Graduating Undergraduates

Prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

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## **Introduction**

Carleton University regularly participates in a number of surveys in order to better understand its students' needs and perceptions. In March 2009, Carleton was one of 34 institutions that participated in an undergraduate survey co-ordinated by the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC)<sup>1</sup>. This was Carleton's 12th year participating in a CUSC survey.

CUSC operates on a three-year survey cycle. Each year in the cycle a random sample is selected from a different group of undergraduates: either all undergraduates, graduating students or first-year students. In 2009, the survey focused on graduating students.

## **Methodology**

An invitation to participate in this online survey was emailed to all students who had applied for graduation by the February deadline, a total of 2,456 graduating students. 1,116 students responded to the survey, resulting in a 45 percent response rate<sup>2</sup>.

This report is meant to highlight selected results from the 2009 CUSC survey related to student's satisfaction with their university experience. Results for Carleton will be presented along with a comparison with similar universities. CUSC uses three institutional groupings that are based on the type of programs offered, as well as the size of the student population. Group 1 includes universities which have primarily undergraduate programs and they tend to be relatively small. Group 2 institutions are more comprehensive, offering undergraduate and graduate programs, and have a medium-sized student population. The largest institutions that participated in CUSC tend to be in group 3: they also offer a wide range of programs, including professional programs. Carleton University is conceptually situated between groups 2 and 3, and so for the purpose of this report, 'comparable universities' will be a simple average for each of the 15 institutions in groups 2 and 3<sup>3</sup> (excluding Carleton).

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for CUSC's Protocol for Data Use and data use permissions.

<sup>2</sup> Response rate reported here is calculated using only those who completed at least half of the survey questions. Actual response rates for individual questions will vary.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for a list of universities included in this grouping for 2009.

In order to get a sense of how Carleton is doing over time, the 2009 results have been compared to the results from 2006 and 2003 throughout this report. Any differences discussed in the text of this report are deemed to be statistically significant, unless otherwise noted<sup>4</sup>. Please note that percent totals may not add up to 100 since proportions are rounded. More detailed results for some of the information included in graphs and discussions can be found in the appendices.

### **Profile of Carleton Respondents**

A profile of the Carleton students who responded to the 2009 CUSC graduating student survey is presented in **Table 1**. The profile of respondents at comparable institutions (groups 2 and 3) can also be found in this table, along with the range of proportions across these universities.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents from Carleton were female. This is a higher proportion than the population at Carleton (55 %), but is not significantly different than average female representation when compared to institutions in groups 2 and 3.

<b>Table 1: Proportional Profile of Respondents</b>				
	<b>Carleton (n=1,458)</b>	<b>Group 2 and 3 (n=6321)</b>		
		<b>Average</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
Female	63%	65%	53%	78%
Under 23 years of age**	67%	59%	47%	85%
Studying in Canada on a Student Visa	7%	6%	1%	31%
Visible minority	28%	27%	9%	60%
Aboriginal	2%	3%	0%	8%
Students with a disability**	10%	7%	3%	10%
Living in rental accommodations**	56%	45%	27%	67%
Living with parents**	36%	40%	23%	62%
Living in on-campus housing	3%	4%	1%	16%
Came from a community of 500,000+**	52%	40%	13%	63%
Students who work while studying	61%	62%	49%	73%
Average number of hours worked per week (all respondents who worked)	18	18	15	21
Median grade (self-reported) so far at university	B+	B+	B	B+

\*\* denotes statistically significant difference between Carleton and the G2 and G3 average

<sup>4</sup> T-test, Chi-square and Somers'd statistical tests of significance (unless otherwise noted).  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

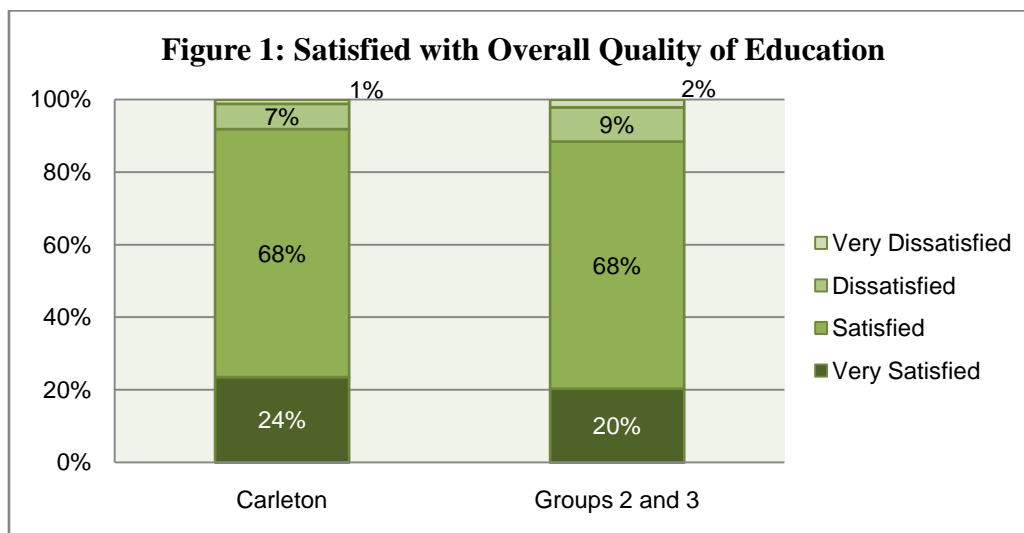
As with gender, Carleton respondents' demographic profile tended to be very similar to the average of comparable institutions. The graduating students who responded at Carleton and those at comparable institutions are similar, on average, in the proportion of respondents who reported holding a student visa, being a visible minority, being aboriginal, living on campus, and working while studying.

Carleton respondents tended to be somewhat younger than those at comparable institutions with 67% under the age of 23, compared with 59% at the other institutions. They were also more likely to live in rental accommodations and somewhat less likely to live with parents. As might be expected, few graduating students lived in on-campus housing in their final year. Graduating students from Carleton were more likely to have lived in an urban centre with a population of 500,000 or more before starting university.

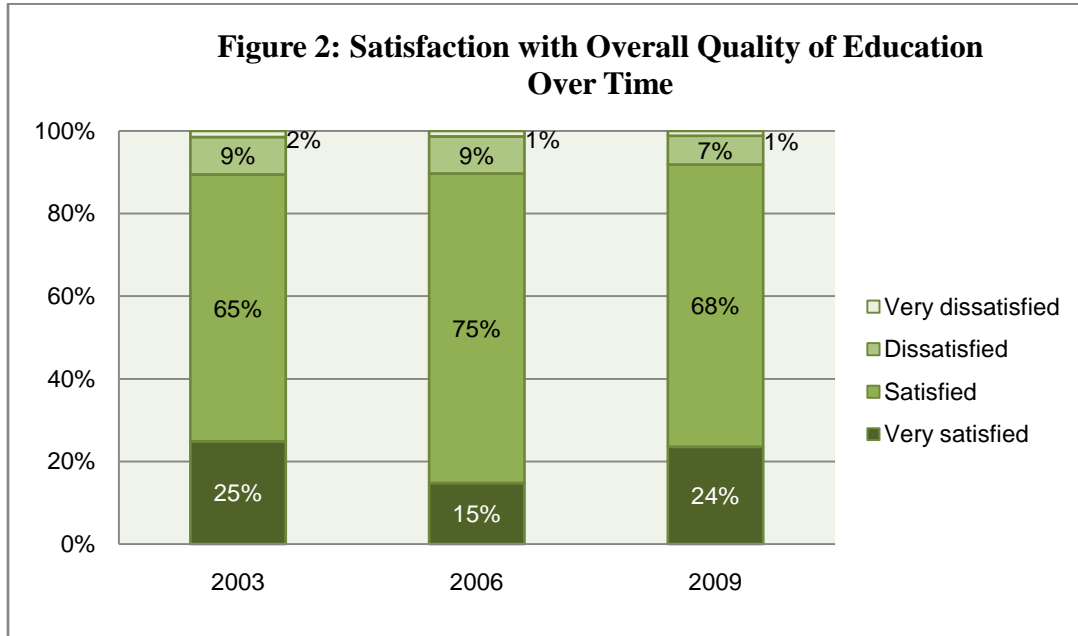
The proportion of those working, the average number of hours worked per week, and the self-reported median grade so far, were also similar between the respondents at Carleton and those in group 2 and 3 universities.

### **Satisfaction Levels and Perceptions of the University**

When final-year undergrads were asked how satisfied they were with the overall quality of education, 92 percent of Carleton respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied. Carleton respondents were more satisfied than the average for respondents at similar institutions. (**Figure 1**).



Following a decrease in satisfaction levels in 2006 (likely arising at least in part from the effects of the double cohort), Carleton’s 2009 respondents had similar satisfaction levels to 2003 (**Figure 2**).

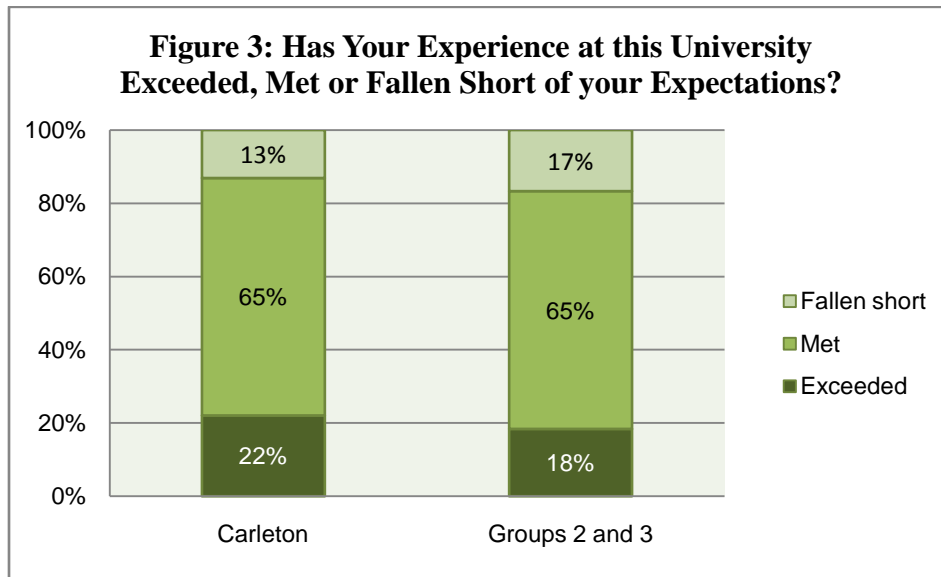


When asked if they would recommend their university to others, 90 percent of Carleton students answered ‘yes’. This is slightly higher than the proportion for the average for groups 2 and 3 (88%). This also marks an increase over previous years (e.g., 86% in 2006).

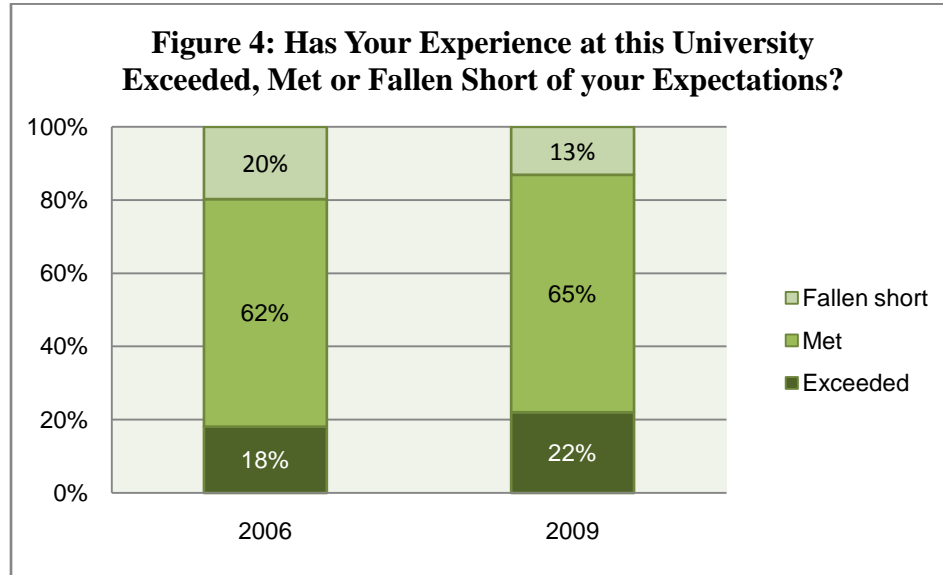
Respondents were then asked to select from a list why they responded that they would or would not recommend their university. **Table 2** shows the distribution of these responses for Carleton (2009, 2006 and 2003), as well as the average for groups 2 and 3. Please note that the responses could add up to more than 100 percent since respondents could mark all that applied. It should also be noted that since only 10 percent of Carleton respondents said that they wouldn’t recommend their university, the proportions presented in the columns to the right in Table 2 are based on a relatively small number of respondents (for example, 96 respondents in 2009 at Carleton).

Table 2: Why Would You Recommend or Not Recommend Your University to Others?								
	Would recommend their university to others				Would <u>not</u> recommend their university to others			
	Carleton 2009	Carleton 2006	Carleton 2003	Groups 2 and 3	Carleton 2009	Carleton 2006	Carleton 2003	Groups 2 and 3
The program	78%	83%	76%	75%	46%	36%	42%	49%
The professors	71	69	56	67	44	34	63	49
Student services	29	24	20	23	38	47	42	34
Relevance of my program for job opportunities	30	33	33	37	44	36	29	34
Relevance of my program for growth and development	32	30	31	36	30	23	15	26
Quality of student/campus life	48	41	37	41	36	36	45	43

In the 2009 CUSC survey, respondents were asked: Has your experience at this university exceeded, met, or fallen short of your expectations? Almost nine in ten respondents at Carleton reported that their experience had met or exceeded their expectations (**Figure 3**). This is statistically significantly higher compared to the average for group 2 and 3 institutions.

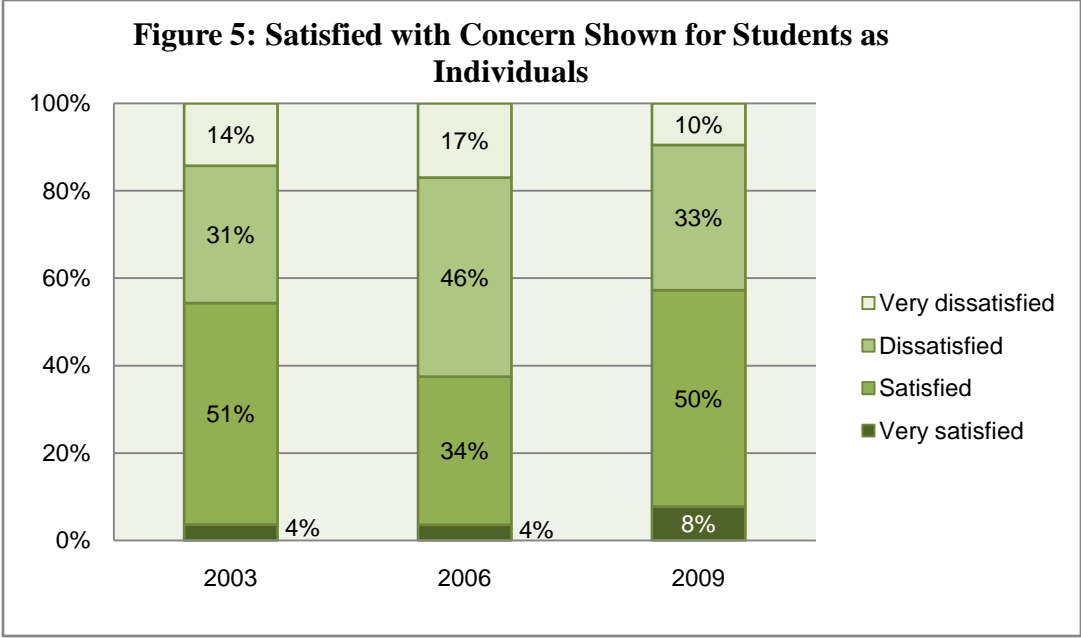


Carleton respondents in 2009 were also more likely to report that their expectations were ‘met’ or ‘exceeded’ than their 2006 counterparts (**Figure 4**). This question was not asked on the 2003 CUSC survey.

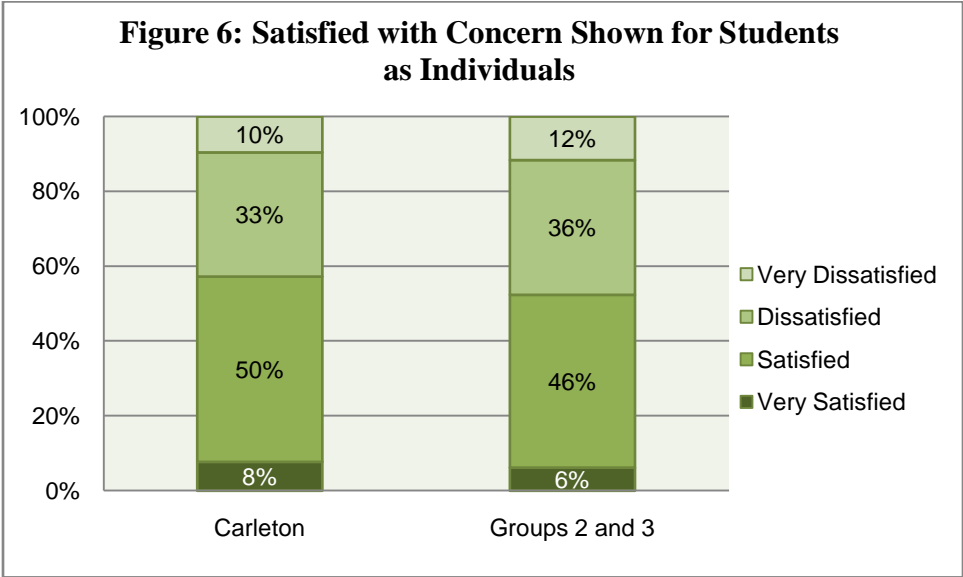


Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction levels with the ‘concern shown for you as an individual’. In 2009, 58 percent of respondents at Carleton gave this item either a ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ rating.

The pattern of responses from 2003 to 2009, shown in **Figure 5**, illustrates a dip in satisfaction levels with the concern shown for students as individuals in 2006, with a return in 2009 to higher satisfaction levels. This pattern mirrors the levels of satisfaction over time seen in other questions (e.g., Figure 2). This trend can likely be partly explained by a considerable increase in enrolment at Carleton in a relatively short period of time (in order to accommodate the double cohort coming from Ontario high schools, primarily in the fall of 2003).

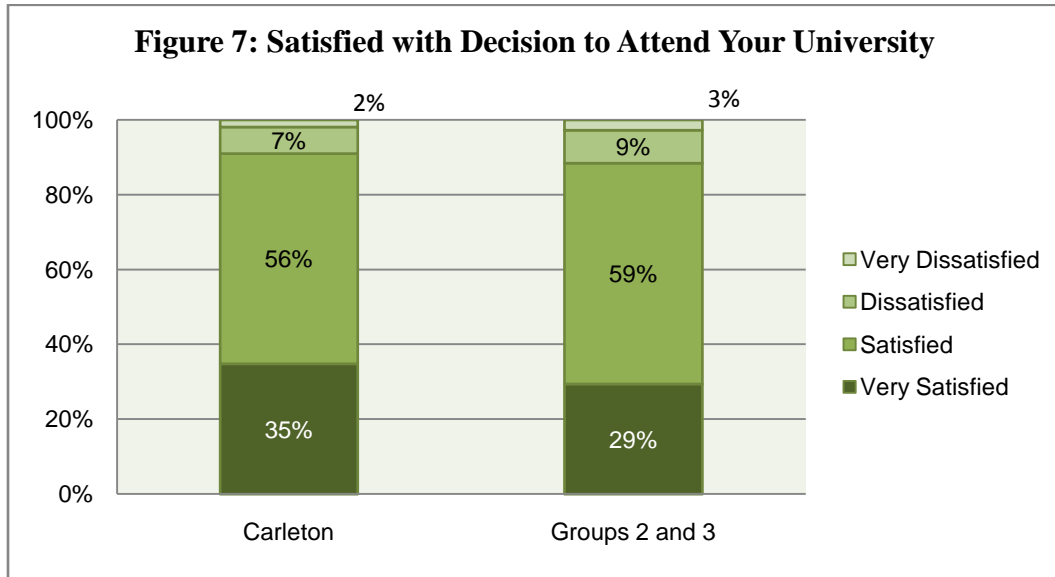


Comparing the results for ‘concern shown for you as an individual’ with other institutions shows that 2009 Carleton respondents were more likely to be ‘satisfied’ with the concern shown for them than the average of groups 2 and 3 (Figure 6).

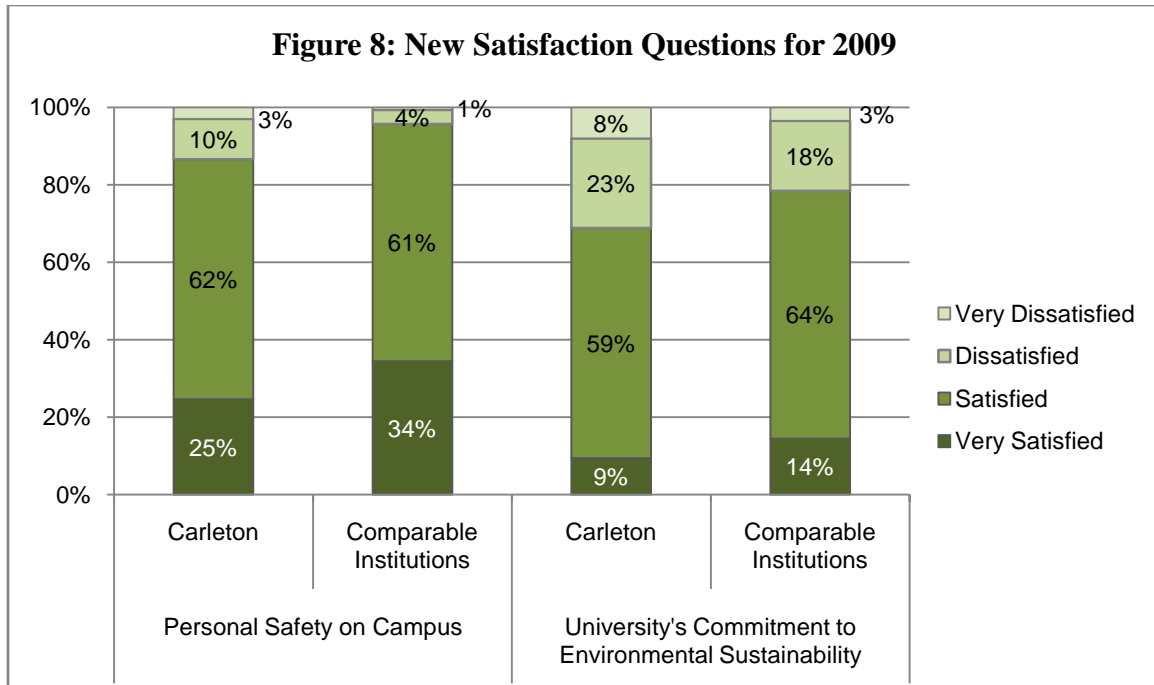




The graduating students in this survey were asked about their satisfaction with their decision to attend Carleton: 91 % reported being ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their decision. The level of students’ satisfaction with their decision to attend their university is higher amongst Carleton respondents, compared to their counterparts at group 2 and 3 institutions on average (**Figure 7**). Satisfaction levels in 2009 were similar to those in 2003, following a dip in satisfaction in 2006 (a now familiar pattern).



Two new satisfaction questions were added to the 2009 graduating student survey: one about personal safety on campus, and the other about the university’s commitment to environmental sustainability. Figure 8 below shows the results for these two questions, where Carleton’s satisfaction levels are lower than those for respondents from the average comparable institution.



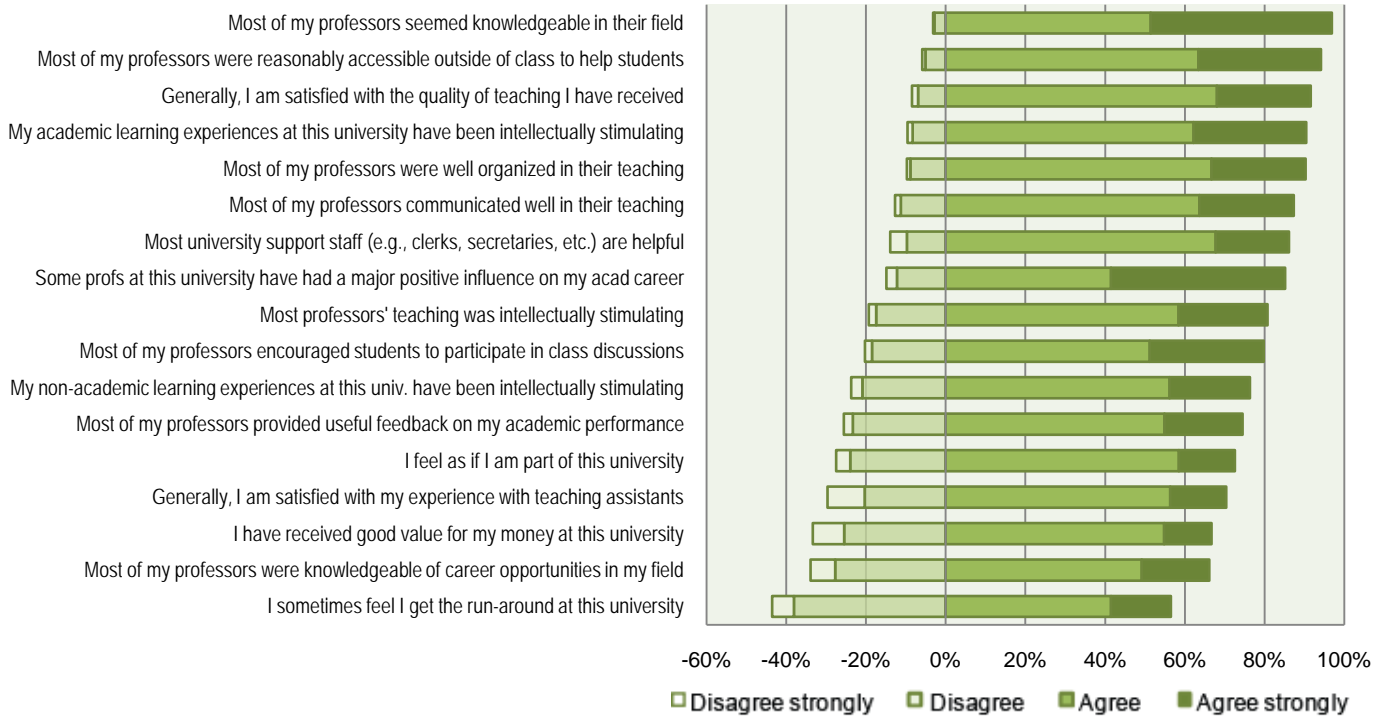
In the graduating student survey, there are a number of questions about student perceptions of teaching and other academic experiences at their university. Figure 9 illustrates that respondents perceive that most of their professors at Carleton are knowledgeable and accessible, and are generally satisfied with the quality of teaching they have received.

With a few exceptions, the level of agreement has increased to most of the statements on teaching and academic experiences between 2006 and 2009. No item saw a decrease in agreement, except for the statement 'I sometimes feel I get the run-around at this university' which is a positive trend. This is especially encouraging, since it continues a trend from 2006 where any changes over 2003 were also in a positive direction. More specifically, the items in Figure 9 that saw increased levels of agreement from 2006 to 2009 were:

- Most of my professors seemed knowledgeable in their field
- Most of my professors were reasonably accessible outside of class to help students
- Most of my professors were well organized in their teaching
- Most of my professors communicated well in their teaching
- Some profs at this university have had a major positive influence on my academic career
- Most professors' teaching was intellectually stimulating
- Most of my professors provided useful feedback on my academic performance
- Most of my professors were knowledgeable of career opportunities in my field
- Generally, I am satisfied with my experience with teaching assistants
- Most of my professors encouraged students to participate in class discussions

Please see **Appendix B** for a more detailed look at differences over time.

**Figure 9: Perceptions of the University**



In comparison to the average group 2 and group 3 results, Carleton had statistically significantly different levels of agreement on the following items:

Lower Levels of Agreement (CU vs. G2 and G3)

- Most of my professors were knowledgeable of career opportunities in my field
- Generally, I am satisfied with my experience with teaching assistants

Higher Levels of Agreement (CU vs. G2 and G3)

- Most of my professors provided useful feedback on my academic performance
- Most of my professors were reasonably accessible outside of class to help students
- Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received
- I feel as if I am part of the university
- I have received good value for my money at this university
- Most university support staff are helpful

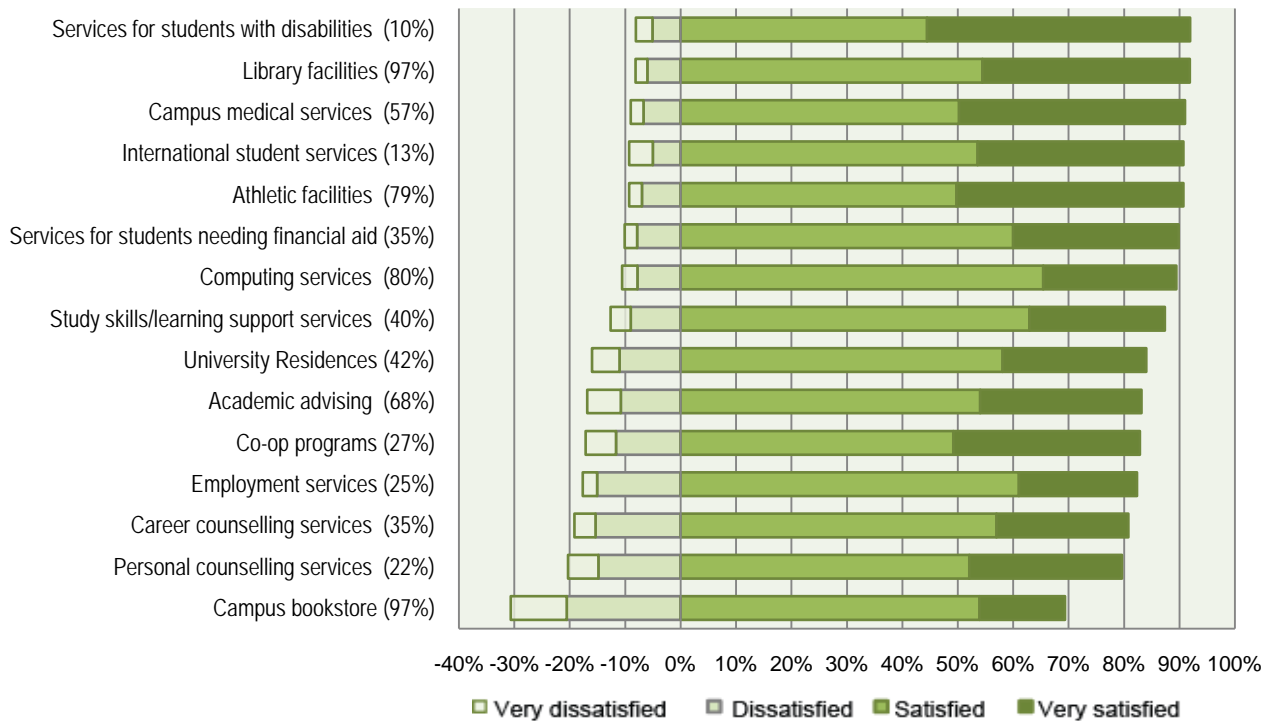
Please see **Appendix C** for a more detailed look at differences between Carleton and an aggregate of similar institutions for this set of questions.

**Satisfaction with Services and Facilities**

There was an opportunity on the CUSC survey for respondents to rate a number of services and facilities at the university (**Figure 10**). They were first asked if they personally used each service or facility, the proportion of users being shown in the chart in parentheses beside each item. For example, 97 percent of respondents had used library facilities. The most widely used services and facilities on campus were the bookstore, the library, and computer facilities. Keep in mind that the smaller the proportion of students who reported using a service or facility, the less reliable the results may be for the satisfaction rating portion of the question.

Satisfaction ratings were provided by those who had used the service or facility. At Carleton, with the exception of campus bookstore, each service or facility was rated ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ by more than eight in ten respondents.

**Figure 10: Student Satisfaction Ratings of Services on Campus**



In comparison to the average satisfaction levels at comparable institutions, Carleton's results were higher for academic advising, athletic facilities, and services for students needing financial aid, and were lower for campus bookstore and computing services.

Any statistically significant changes from 2006 to 2009 were positive ones. The Carleton services or facilities that saw increased satisfaction in 2009 were: library facilities, athletic facilities, computing services, academic advising, employment services, and campus bookstore. This set of questions was not asked on the 2003 CUSC survey.

Please see **Appendix D** for a more detailed summary of results, including Carleton results over time and a comparison with similar institutions.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, there is a general trend of increased satisfaction from 2006 to 2009 amongst Carleton respondents. In some cases, the 2009 improvements reflect a return to 2003 satisfaction levels; while in other instances, the increase is part of a continuing trend towards increased satisfaction.

When compared to the aggregated results from similar universities, Carleton results were comparable or better on most items. Some highlights include: Carleton respondents reported higher levels of overall satisfaction, were more likely to report that their experience exceeded their expectations, and reported higher levels of satisfaction with their decision to attend Carleton. On the other hand, Carleton students were less satisfied than their counterparts at similar institutions with their personal safety on campus and with Carleton's commitment to environmental sustainability. In addition, despite the progress being made, Carleton respondents were still less satisfied with their experience with teaching assistants.

Results from this survey, along with others, will help Carleton provide an outstanding learning experience for its current and future students. The next CUSC survey is scheduled for February 2010, focusing on first-year undergraduate students.

For further information on Carleton University, and the results of the surveys in which it participates, go to [www.carleton.ca/oirp](http://www.carleton.ca/oirp).

## APPENDIX A

Please note that this report contains material copyrighted by the Canadian University Survey Consortium. In order to use the data from this report, permission is required from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Carleton University. Also note that according to the protocol below, no ranking or inter-university comparisons are permitted.

# PROTOCOL FOR DATA USE

## CANADIAN UNIVERSITY SURVEY CONSORTIUM (CUSC)

Members of the consortium are bound by the following protocol for the control of survey data.

It was agreed by the participants that data are owned collectively and will be distributed only by collective agreement.

1. The purpose of the survey is to produce data that will allow participating institutions to assess their programs and services. Comparisons with other institutions are made to assist in these assessments. Ranking of institutions is not, in itself, a purpose of the survey.
2. The survey data are owned collectively by the participating institutions.
3. The report that has been prepared may be reproduced and distributed freely on the campuses of participating institutions. However, use of the institutional code key is restricted to members of the steering committee and senior administration at the various campuses on a confidential basis.
4. Institutions will receive a data package that includes data for all participating institutions along with the institutional identifiers so that appropriate institutional comparisons can be made by each institution. This must be done in a way that protects the confidentiality of the institutional identities and respects the absolute right of each institution to decide what portions of its data should be disclosed.
5. Rankings may not be used for institutional promotion, recruiting, or other public dissemination. However, an institution's mean results, the aggregate mean results, and mean results for the comparable group of institutions in the survey report may be used, although the names of other institutions may not be used.
6. Access to the aggregate data for research purposes may be granted to interested persons provided that the intended use is a legitimate, non-commercial one, and the researcher is qualified and agrees to acknowledge the ownership of the data by participating universities and provide the consortium with a copy of any report or publication that is produced. Decisions on such requests will be made by a subcommittee consisting of Michael O'Sullivan, Dan Pletzer, Tim Rahilly, and Lynn Smith in consultation with members of the full CUSC committee (all participating institutions) in the case of requests that seem problematic.

**List of Group 2 and Group 3 Institutions Participating in 2009 CUSC survey**

- Brock University
- University of Regina
- Ryerson University
- Simon Fraser University
- University of Victoria
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- University of Alberta
- University of British Columbia (Vancouver Campus)
- University of Calgary
- Dalhousie University
- University of Manitoba
- McGill University
- Université de Montréal
- University of Ottawa
- University of Saskatchewan

<b>Detailed 2009 results for Carleton, and statistically significant differences found over time and compared to the average of comparable institutions</b>			
	2009 Carleton	2006 Carleton	2009 Comparable Institutions
<b>Most of my professors seemed knowledgeable in their field</b>			
Agree Strongly	45%	35%	
Agree	51%	62%	Similar
Disagree	3%	3%	
Disagree Strongly	<1%	1%	
<b>Most of my professors were reasonably accessible outside of class to help students</b>			
Agree Strongly	31%	23%	28%
Agree	63%	67%	64%
Disagree	5%	9%	7%
Disagree Strongly	1%	2%	1%
<b>Generally, I am satisfied with the quality of teaching I have received</b>			
Agree Strongly	24%		21%
Agree	68%	Similar	68%
Disagree	7%		9%
Disagree Strongly	1%		2%
<b>My academic learning experiences at this university have been intellectually stimulating</b>			
Agree Strongly	28%		
Agree	62%		
Disagree	8%	Similar	Similar
Disagree Strongly	1%		
<b>Most of my professors were well organized in their teaching</b>			
Agree Strongly	24%	17%	
Agree	67%	72%	Similar
Disagree	9%	10%	
Disagree Strongly	1%	1%	
<b>Most of my professors communicated well in their teaching</b>			
Agree Strongly	24%	17%	
Agree	64%	66%	Similar
Disagree	11%	15%	
Disagree Strongly	1%	2%	
<b>Most university support staff (e.g., clerks, secretaries, etc.) are helpful</b>			
Agree Strongly	18%		15%
Agree	68%		69%
Disagree	10%	n/a	12%
Disagree Strongly	4%		4%
<b>Some professors at this university have had a major positive influence on my academic career</b>			
Agree Strongly	44%	31%	
Agree	41%	47%	
Disagree	12%	19%	Similar
Disagree Strongly	3%	4%	



**Detailed 2009 results for Carleton, and statistically significant differences found over time and compared to the average of comparable institutions**

	2009 Carleton	2006 Carleton	2009 Comparable Institutions
<b>Most professors' teaching was intellectually stimulating</b>			
Agree Strongly	22%	14%	
Agree	58%	61%	
Disagree	17%	22%	Similar
Disagree Strongly	2%	3%	
<b>Most of my professors encouraged students to participate in class discussions</b>			
Agree Strongly	29%	17%	
Agree	51%	58%	
Disagree	18%	23%	Similar
Disagree Strongly	2%	2%	
<b>My non-academic learning experiences at this university have been intellectually stimulating</b>			
Agree Strongly	20%		
Agree	56%		
Disagree	21%	Similar	Similar
Disagree Strongly	3%		
<b>Most of my professors provided useful feedback on my academic performance</b>			
Agree Strongly	20%	13%	17%
Agree	55%	54%	57%
Disagree	23%	29%	23%
Disagree Strongly	2%	5%	4%
<b>I feel as if I am part of this university</b>			
Agree Strongly	14%		12%
Agree	58%		59%
Disagree	24%	Similar	24%
Disagree Strongly	4%		5%
<b>Generally, I am satisfied with my experience with teaching assistants</b>			
Agree Strongly	14%	6%	17%
Agree	56%	48%	63%
Disagree	20%	33%	16%
Disagree Strongly	9%	13%	5%
<b>I have received good value for my money at this university</b>			
Agree Strongly	12%		9%
Agree	55%		56%
Disagree	25%	Similar	27%
Disagree Strongly	8%		8%
<b>Most of my professors were knowledgeable of career opportunities in my field</b>			
Agree Strongly	17%	10%	18%
Agree	49%	55%	54%
Disagree	28%	31%	24%
Disagree Strongly	6%	5%	4%
<b>I sometimes feel I get the run-around at this university</b>			
Agree Strongly	15%	19%	
Agree	41%	45%	
Disagree	38%	32%	Similar
Disagree Strongly	5%	4%	

## Detailed Summary of Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities

<b>Detailed 2009 results for Carleton, and statistically significant differences found over time and compared to the average of comparable institutions</b>			
	2009 Carleton	2006 Carleton	2009 Comparable Institutions
<b>Services for students with disabilities (10%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	47%		
Satisfied	44%		
Dissatisfied	5%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	3%		
<b>Library facilities (97%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	37%	28%	
Satisfied	54%	59%	Similar
Dissatisfied	6%	10%	
Very Dissatisfied	2%	3%	
<b>Campus medical services (57%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	41%		
Satisfied	50%		
Dissatisfied	7%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	2%		
<b>International student services (13%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	37%		
Satisfied	54%		
Dissatisfied	5%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	4%		
<b>Athletic facilities (79%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	41%	30%	33%
Satisfied	50%	52%	55%
Dissatisfied	7%	14%	8%
Very Dissatisfied	2%	4%	3%
<b>Services for students needing financial aid (35%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	30%		22%
Satisfied	60%		61%
Dissatisfied	8%	Similar	13%
Very Dissatisfied	2%		4%
<b>Computing services (80%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	24%	19%	30%
Satisfied	65%	56%	63%
Dissatisfied	8%	20%	6%
Very Dissatisfied	3%	5%	1%
<b>Study skills/learning support services (40%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	24%		
Satisfied	63%		
Dissatisfied	9%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	4%		

**Detailed 2009 results for Carleton, and statistically significant differences found over time and compared to the average of comparable institutions**

	2009 Carleton	2006 Carleton	2009 Comparable Institutions
<b>University residences (42%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	26%		
Satisfied	58%		
Dissatisfied	11%	n/a	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	5%		
<b>Academic advising (68%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	29%	21%	22%
Satisfied	54%	58%	55%
Dissatisfied	11%	12%	16%
Very Dissatisfied	6%	10%	7%
<b>Services for Co-op, internship programs (27%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	34%		
Satisfied	49%		
Dissatisfied	12%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	6%		
<b>Employment services (25%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	21%	10%	
Satisfied	61%	68%	
Dissatisfied	15%	13%	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	3%	8%	
<b>Career counselling services (35%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	24%		
Satisfied	57%		
Dissatisfied	15%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	4%		
<b>Personal counselling services (22%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	28%		
Satisfied	52%		
Dissatisfied	15%	Similar	Similar
Very Dissatisfied	6%		
<b>Campus bookstore (97%)</b>			
Very Satisfied	15%	11%	23%
Satisfied	54%	47%	60%
Dissatisfied	21%	27%	13%
Very Dissatisfied	10%	15%	5%

\*\* Note: number in parenthesis denotes the proportion of 2009 Carleton respondents who reported using the service or facility.