The University of Saskatchewan: A Survey of Public Perceptions in Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver

December 2017
About the Social Sciences Research Laboratories

Founded in 2011, the Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) represents a major investment in social science research infrastructure and research supports at the University of Saskatchewan, and across Canada. Comprised of eight complementary and interrelated research laboratories (Community-Based Observation Laboratory; Experimental Decision Laboratory; EEG Hyperscanning Laboratory; Qualitative Research Laboratory; Spatial Analysis For Innovation in Health Research Laboratory; Survey and Group Analysis Laboratory; Social Network Laboratory; and Video Therapy Analysis Laboratory), the SSRL has three objectives:

1. To provide researchers access to shared research infrastructure and technical and administrative support.
2. To enable hands-on research training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in the social sciences.
3. To enable and support investigator-driven and community-engaged research.

Uniquely developed as a ‘public utility,’ the SSRL provides access to specialized research infrastructure (computers, equipment and software) and research space (specific and multi-purpose research space that facilitates mixed-methods research). Additionally, the SSRL provides access to research supports in the form of methodologists/specialists (SSRL operations staff) with backgrounds and training in specific social science research methodologies (e.g., quantitative/survey research; qualitative research; experimental research; mapping, GIS and spatial analyses). The SSRL and its component laboratories are available on a fee-for-service model to faculty, staff and students at the University of Saskatchewan, other academic institutions, and community partners outside of the university setting.

As a unit, the SSRL benefits from what is described as a ‘collective capacity,’ i.e., shared infrastructure, shared space and shared operational and administrative support provided across seven diverse, yet related research laboratories. The benefits of this collective capacity are substantial, allowing for shared theoretical and methodological explorations through mixed-methods research; facilitating community-engaged scholarship with individuals and organizations outside of the University of Saskatchewan; and providing student opportunities for experiential learning through practical, hands-on research and employment opportunities.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Public Perceptions Survey is to gather insights from a representative sample of Canadians living in Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver to determine how the University of Saskatchewan is perceived across these four regions on various topics. This report summarizes the findings from the fourth iteration of the survey, conducted in 2017, and compares the results to the preceding three years to observe trends and determine strong and weak points in the University’s reputation. The survey was conducted over the telephone, and was facilitated by the Social Sciences Research Laboratories. In total, 1,538 people participated in the telephone survey, with 386 respondents from Saskatchewan, and 384 from the other three regions.

Perceptions of the University of Saskatchewan remain generally positive when the regions are considered together, with 50-85% of agreement that the University of Saskatchewan is a contending institution that offers high quality student experience at a reasonable cost. Over half of the respondents would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to a close friend, someone living in their province, and to someone living within Canada, while nearly half would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone living outside of Canada. Most respondents consider the University of Saskatchewan to be equal to, or better than, other institutions in their province.

Trends across time reveal that the University of Saskatchewan’s reputation may not be as strong as in 2016, but still tend to show an increase from earlier years. However, 56% of respondents indicate that, over the last five years, the University of Saskatchewan’s reputation has stayed about the same.

Overall, there were lower levels of agreement on most survey items from respondents living in Vancouver as compared to the other regions, as well as lower levels of familiarity with the University of Saskatchewan. However, over time, familiarity of the University of Saskatchewan has generally remained the same or increased across all regions. Notably, exposure to the University of Saskatchewan through social media has increased markedly from past years, making it the most common source from which respondents have seen or heard advertisements.
Methodology

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) conducted the University of Saskatchewan Public Perception Survey on behalf of the University of Saskatchewan from October 13th to November 1st, 2017. Deployed using WinCATI software, the University of Saskatchewan Perceptions Survey was administered as a 10-minute telephone survey.

The survey generated a response rate of 20.0% and resulted in 1,538 completed interviews among randomly-selected residents (18 years of age and older) from the province of Saskatchewan (386 respondents), as well as the metropolitan areas of Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver (384 respondents from each of the three metropolitan regions). Results of the survey are generalizable to the total population of the four surveyed regions (18 years of age and older) ± 2.50% and for the individual regions ± 5.00%. Both total and regional margins of error were calculated for the 95% confidence interval (19 times out of 20). Data from 2017 was weighted by age (using Census data) to account for a sample that skewed older.

Presentation of Findings

Stacked bar graphs presented in this report depict unrounded percentages generated by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), by region (Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver) and year (2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017) whereas percentages presented in the text are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Word frequency results are presented as word clouds, which were developed using NVivo11 software. Comparisons are made by region and year.

Although results from previous years are reported, most of the detail provided in this report will be on the 2017 results with generalized comparisons made to previous years.
Findings

2017 Respondents

Of the 1,538 respondents, 41.3% were male and 58.7% were female. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 97, with a mean age of 56.5 years (SD=16.0). The sample was well-educated: 59% completed at least some university education, 21% completed at least some technical schooling or college, 14% completed high school, and 6% had less than a high school education. A portion of the sample (13%) had attended or currently attend the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). Of the sample, 60% were working for pay, including students, retirees and those caring for children or family members who also work part-time. Only 3% of the sample identified as a First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Among the Saskatchewan respondents, 1% were employees of the U of S.

Familiarity and Associations with the University of Saskatchewan

In order to learn about respondents’ familiarity with the University of Saskatchewan, they were asked to provide up to five words that immediately come to mind when they hear the name University of Saskatchewan.

In total, 11% of the sample refused or were unable to contribute any words, while an additional 4% stated they did not know anything about the U of S. The remaining respondents were able to provide at least one word that came to mind when thinking about the U of S. Familiarity in 2017 increased from all previous years (Figure 1).

Similar to previous years, familiarity with the U of S decreased slightly with distance from the university’s location. For example, 96% of Saskatchewan respondents could provide at least one word, whereas 82% of respondents in Edmonton, 84% of respondents in Calgary, and 76% of respondents in Vancouver could provide at least one word associated with the U of S. Figures 2 through 5 display familiarity with the U of S among the four regions. Familiarity with the U of S was higher among those with higher levels of education and income.
Familiarity with the U of S increased across all regions from last year. Calgary respondents had the largest increase from by 8 percentage points. The lowest percentage of respondents that were familiar with the U of S was in 2014. Whether or not the gained familiarity is favourable will be discussed further in the sections that refer to messaging content and changed perceptions the U of S as a result of the media.

Word Associations

The words mentioned by the 1,301 respondents that were able to provide one to five words associated with the U of S are presented in a number of word clouds. Word clouds are a graphical way of illustrating the frequency of words used in a particular text by showing words used more often in a bigger size than words used less frequently.

Figures 6 to 10 show the responses from all respondents and from each of the four different regions. All figures use the same scale for word size frequency. The word clouds provide insight into the major word associations and differences between the four different spatial regions in those associations. Figure 6 displays the top 100 responses of those survey respondents who provided at least one response. In these top 100, words displayed are mentioned by at least seven respondents. This number was then used to create the word clouds for the four separate regions, with Saskatchewan (Figure 7) having 45 words that fulfill this criteria (of a minimum of seven references), Edmonton having 33 (Figure 8), Calgary (Figure 9) with 34, and Vancouver (Figure 10) with 27. Word clouds are presented on pages 8 through 12).

Media and the University of Saskatchewan

In order to learn about the influence of media on the perceptions people have about the U of S, respondents were asked about their exposure to advertisements and news coverage related to the U of S in the past six months.

Advertisements for the U of S

2015-2017 only

The following questions were asked about advertisements related to the U of S:

- “Have you seen, or heard any advertisements for the University of Saskatchewan in the media in the last six months?”

Those respondents answering yes to this question were also asked:

- “In what type of media did you hear or see any advertisements about the University of Saskatchewan in the past six months?”
- “Based on what you saw or heard about the University of Saskatchewan in the advertisement, did it change your perception of the university positively, negatively, both positively and negatively, or neither positively or negatively?”
- “Can you briefly describe for me what you recall seeing or hearing about the University of Saskatchewan in the advertisement?”
Figure 6—Word clouds from all respondents, top 100 words, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Figure 7—Word clouds from Saskatchewan respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Figure 8—Word clouds from Edmonton respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Figure 9—Word clouds from Calgary respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Figure 10—Word clouds from Vancouver respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Only 16% of respondents in 2017 recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S, while 83% stated not observing or hearing any advertisements about the U of S in the last six months. A small percentage (1%), could not recall. Similarly, in 2015 and 2016, 16% and 17% of respondents, respectively, saw or heard advertisements for the U of S.

Among Saskatchewan respondents, 38% saw or heard advertisements, while only 8% of Edmonton respondents, 10% of Calgary respondents, and 11% of Vancouver respondents recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S in the last six months. In comparison to previous years, seeing and hearing U of S advertisements has remained fairly stable in Saskatchewan, has decreased in Calgary and Edmonton (decrease in Edmonton only since 2016), and has steadily increased in Vancouver.

Figure 11 depicts the percentage of respondents who recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S in the past six months. Rates were generally lower across all years in areas outside of Saskatchewan.

In 2017, social media was the most commonly reported medium for advertisement exposure. This was a shift from previous years in which the most popular source was television. Following social media, other sources which included brochures, posters, e-mails, the U of S website, word of mouth, and job fairs were most often mentioned, and then television (Figure 12).

When asked if the advertisements had changed their perceptions of the U of S, 32% responded that it changed their perceptions positively (compared to 44% and 41% in 2016 and 2015, respectively). Only 1% stated that their perceptions changed negatively from the advertisements, while 2% stated that advertisements had changed their perceptions both positively and negatively. A large portion (61%) stated that their perceptions of the U of S were not changed positively or negatively as a result of the advertisements. This percentage is higher than in past years, in which 47% (2016) and 50% (2015) reported no positive or negative changes in their perceptions of the U of S. Figure 13 displays the results on changed perceptions across years and regions. There was a decrease in positively changed perceptions from 2016 to 2017. Saskatchewan respondents had the largest decrease in positive perceptions (15% decrease) followed by Edmonton (14% decrease).

When asked if they were able to briefly describe what they recalled seeing or hearing about the U of S, the following topics emerged from 2017:

- Promoting the U of S and portrayals of positive images (35% coverage)
- Programing and course content (24% coverage)
- Sports content (i.e., Huskies) (17% coverage)
- Various announcements (12% coverage)
- Funding issues (6%)
- Content aimed at alumni (4% coverage)
- Fundraising (2% coverage)

Those who are current/former students of the U of S as well as younger people more commonly reported hearing or seeing advertisements in the past six months. It should be noted that there was no relationship with any other variable.
The following questions were then asked about news coverage:

- “Have you seen, or heard any mentions of the University of Saskatchewan in the news in the last six months?”

Those respondents answering yes to this question were also asked:

- “To your recollection, was the message(s) about the University of Saskatchewan in the news positive, negative, both positive and negative, or neither positive nor negative?”

- “Based on what you saw or heard about the University of Saskatchewan in the news, did it change your perception of the university positively, negatively, both positively and negatively, or neither positively nor negatively?”

- “Can you briefly describe for me what you recall seeing or hearing about the University of Saskatchewan in the news?”

In 2017, 16% noticed some news coverage, down slightly from the previous year. The proportion of respondents who saw or heard news coverage about U of S across years and regions is presented in Figure 14.

Among 2017 respondents, 50% recalled positive media messages, 16% recalled negative media messages, 12% recalled media messages that were both positive and negative, and 19% recalled messages that were neither positive or negative about the U of S in the past six months. Three percent could not recall the message in the news and media coverage. The percentage of respondents who recalled positive media messages decreased in all regions since 2016, except for Vancouver which showed a small increase in positive messages across the years (Figures 15-19).

The results revealed that the majority of respondents (60%) who recalled seeing or hearing news coverage, reported not having their perceptions about the U of S changed (positively or negatively) by the news story. In comparison, 25% reported that the news coverage positively changed their perceptions about the U of S, while 9% reported that news coverage negatively changed their perceptions. An additional 3% reported having their perceptions changed both positively and negatively. Compared to previous years, fewer respondents had their perceptions changed positively in Saskatchewan and Edmonton. However, a greater number of respondents from Calgary and Vancouver had their perceptions changed positively.

Among Saskatchewan residents who recalled news coverage of the U of S, 21% reported positive changes in their perceptions as a result of news coverage, which is up from previous years (Figure 20). Among Edmonton respondents, 15% reported positive changes, and 40% of Calgary respondents, and 39% of Vancouver respondents reported positive changes in their perceptions. A small percentage of Edmonton (2%) and Calgary (4%) respondents negatively changed their perceptions, while 15% of Saskatchewan residents negatively changed their perceptions.
There were no significant differences by any demographic variable related to whether respondents’ perceptions changed as a result of news coverage.

The content of the media stories recalled by 2017 respondents included (in order of most commonly mentioned):

- Research news (18%)
- Loss of funding for WCVM (17%)
To compare to previous years, the news stories recalled by 2016 are as followed:

- Sports/Huskies (31% coverage)
- Research news (17% coverage)
- Administrative personnel updates and announcements (13% coverage)
- Academic programming excellence (11% coverage)
- Infrastructure (10% coverage)
- Social/cultural events and movements (5% coverage)
- Safety issues on campus (5% coverage)
- Funding issues and cuts (4% coverage)
- High tuition fees (4% coverage)

The content of the media stories recalled by 2015 respondents:

- President replacement (29% coverage)
- College of Medicine accreditation (17% coverage)
- Sports/Huskies (17% coverage)
- Promoting enrollment, programming, and courses (10% coverage)
- Research news (9% coverage)
- Safety issues on campus (8% coverage)
- Funding and tuition issues (4% coverage)
- Social/cultural events and movements (4% coverage)
- Indigenous students (4% coverage)

The content of the media stories recalled by 2014 respondents:

- Release and reinstatement of Executive Director of School of Public Policy/subsequent firing of U of S president (71% coverage)
- TransformUs (21% coverage)
- Sports/Huskies (4% coverage)
- Research (3% coverage)

Benefits of Education at the University of Saskatchewan

To determine perceptions surrounding the personal costs and benefits of an education from the U of S, respondents were asked to determine the extent to which they agreed with three critical questions. Respondents were asked if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements:

- “The University of Saskatchewan offers students a high-quality education”
- “The cost of an education at the University of Saskatchewan is worthwhile.”
- “A University of Saskatchewan degree helps one secure a successful career.”

High Quality Education

Overall, 2017 respondents agreed that the U of S offers students a high quality education (strongly agree = 38%, somewhat agree = 33%). Figure 21 depicts the extent of agreement among respondents from all years.

The proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S increased (92% of Saskatchewan respondents, 60% of Edmonton respondents, 69% of Calgary respondents, and 57% of Vancouver respondents). Regional differences across years can be viewed in Figures 22-25. Overall, there were few differences across years in Saskatchewan and Calgary. However, Edmonton showed a marked decrease in agreement from past years and Vancouver evidenced an increase.

A higher percentage of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agreed) that the U of S offers a
high-quality education among older people, those not working for pay, and those with lower levels of education and income. There was no significant differences between males and females. Those who are current or former students of the U of S had high agreement about the quality of student experience (98% of students strongly or somewhat agreed compared to 64% of non U of S students).

Costs of U of S Education Worthwhile

Similarly, the majority of 2017 respondents felt the cost of an education at the U of S is worthwhile (strongly agree = 25%, somewhat agree = 32%) (Figure 26). Saskatchewan respondents had the highest level of agreement (75%), and Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver garnered similar levels of agreements at 50%, 52%, and 51%. Across Saskatchewan, agreement increased slightly from last year, but decreased among Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver respondents. Figures 27-30 depict regional differences across years.

A higher proportion of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agree) that the costs at the U of S are worthwhile among older people, those not working for pay, and current or former U of S students. There were no significant differences in responses by gender, education, or income.

A University of Saskatchewan Degree Helps to Secure a Successful Career

Most 2017 respondents felt that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career (strongly agree = 37%, somewhat agree = 41%) (Figure 31).

In Saskatchewan, agreement (87% somewhat or strongly agree) increased slightly from last year and agreement in Vancouver (73%) was the highest of all four years. Agreement decreased from last year in Calgary (78%), and particularly, in Edmonton (71%).

A higher percentage of respondents agreed (strongly or somewhat) that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career among older people, those not working for pay, and current or former U of S students. There were no significant differences by gender, education, or income level.
Across all three questions related to the benefits of a U of S education, Saskatchewan residents either increased in their level of agreement or stayed relatively similar. Vancouver had increased agreement compared to all years on the items on the quality of a U of S education and the contribution of a U of S degree on securing a successful career, and only a slight decrease since last year on education costs. Calgary and Edmonton both demonstrated decreased agreement, on average, across all questions and years.

**Broader Societal Benefits of University of Saskatchewan Activities**

The survey also explored to what extent U of S activities are perceived as beneficial for the broader community. To measure this, respondents were asked if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:
• “University of Saskatchewan research is important to the growth and well-being of Canada.”

• “The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research.”

Residents of Saskatchewan were also asked about the statement that:

• “The University of Saskatchewan provides good value for taxpayer investment.”

University of Saskatchewan Research is Important to the Growth and Well-being of Canada

Among 2017 respondents, 85% agreed that U of S research is important to the growth and well-being of Canada. This percentage is the same as last year (Figure 36). The highest percentage of strong agreement came from Saskatchewan respondents, where 68% of respondents strongly agreed that research at the U of S contributes to the growth and well-being of Canada. An additional 29% somewhat agreed. Figure 37 displays the percentage of agreement that U of S research is important to the growth and well-being of Canada from regions across years.

The proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S increased (97% of Saskatchewan respondents, 83% of Edmonton respondents, 85% of Calgary respondents and 72% of Vancouver respondents strongly or somewhat agreed). Figures 37-40 display the percentage of agreement that U of S research is important to the growth and well-being of Canada from regions across years.
There was a higher proportion of agreement about the importance of research conducted at the U of S among older people, those not working for pay, current or former U of S students, and those with lower levels of education and income. There were no significant differences between males and females.

The change across years in the four regions were quite variable. Saskatchewan and Calgary residents showed the highest increase in agreement across all years; however, agreement among Edmonton residents decreased since last year and was the lowest of all years for Vancouver residents.

University of Saskatchewan Provides Social and Economic Benefit through Teaching and Research

Among 2017 respondents, only 27% of respondents strongly agreed and 28% somewhat agreed that the U of S provides a social and economic benefit to their community through teaching and research. The extent of agreement increased steadily from 2014 to 2016, but decreased in 2017 from last year as shown in Figure 41.

Among respondents from Saskatchewan, 86% somewhat or strongly agreed that the U of S is providing a social or economic benefit to the community. This percentage is the same as last year (Figure 42). Forty-nine percent of Edmonton respondents and 46% of Calgary respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while only 37% of Vancouver respondents somewhat or strongly agreed (see Figures 43-45).

Strong disagreement was highest among Vancouver respondents (10%). Moreover, 18% of Vancouver
respondents did not know or refused to answer this survey question, did not answer this survey question. There was more agreement among current or former U of S students and respondents with lower incomes. There was no significant differences by gender, education level, age, or employment status.

In 2016, slightly more respondents (57%) were in agreement that the U of S was providing a social and economic benefit to their community through teaching and research. In 2015, the percentage of respondents was the same as 2017 (55%). Fifty-three percent of respondents in 2014 agreed that the U of S was providing a social and economic benefit to their community through teaching and research.

The University of Saskatchewan Provides Good Value for Taxpayer Investment (SK respondents only)

Respondents living in Saskatchewan were asked if they believed that the U of S provides good value for taxpayer investment. Overall, 73% of Saskatchewan respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with this statement. This percentage was the same as last year. All years had higher rates of agreement than 2014, in which 62% agreed somewhat or strongly with this statement. The lower level of agreement in 2014 may be attributed to the fact that many respondents were recalling negative coverage in the media related to TransformUs and restructuring, as well as the College of Medicine’s announced probation. Responses across years are depicted in Figure 46.
Recommending the University of Saskatchewan

In order to understand how the U of S fares in comparison to other universities, respondents were asked if they would recommend the university to a range of different people. Specifically, they were asked if they strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements:

- “I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to a close friend as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education.”
- “I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in my province as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education.”
- “I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives within Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education.”
- “I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone from outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education.”

The University of Saskatchewan Among Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to a close friend

Overall, 26% of 2017 respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend, while 28% somewhat agreed. Only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. The overall percentage of agreement (strongly and somewhat agree) has increased slightly throughout the years (Figure 47). There was very high agreement among Saskatchewan residents that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend (88%), which was an increase from last year (Figure 48).

A higher percentage of respondents from Calgary and Edmonton agreed with this statement (approximately 45%), as compared to Vancouver respondents (34%). Scores in Edmonton decreased from 2016, hovering around the level of agreement that was found in 2014 and 2015. The level of agreement among Calgary respondents was the lowest of all four years, While 2017 Vancouver respondents evidenced the highest level of agreement of all years. Figures 48-51 depict the level of agreement with the statement across years and regions.

Higher percentages of agreement on recommending the U of S to a close friend were found among older respondents, current or former U of S students, those who are not working for pay, those with lower levels of education and income, as well as those who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. There was no statistical difference between males and females.

Figure 47—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to a close friend as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. All regions, 2014-2017

Figure 48—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to a close friend as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. SK, 2014-2017
Overall, 57% strongly or somewhat agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone living in their province. Fourteen percent somewhat disagreed with this statement while 6% strongly disagreed, and 17% remained neutral. These responses are very similar to those of the previous questions (recommending to a close friend). The combined responses across all regions and years are displayed in Figure 52.

Across regions, Saskatchewan respondents had the highest level of agreement (68% strongly agreed, 25% somewhat agreed). This was substantially higher than the agreement from other regions, where 45% of Edmonton respondents agreed with the statement, 48% of Calgary respondents agreed, and 38% of Vancouver respondents agreed. Agreement among Edmonton and Calgary respondents decreased from last year, but increased 5% in Vancouver (Figures 53-56).

Higher percentages of agreement on recommending the U of S to someone in their province were found among older people, current or former U of S students, those with lower levels of education and income, as well as those who are not working for pay. There were no differences observed between males and females.
but up from 2015 (55%) and 2014 (52%) (Figure 57).

Agreement among Saskatchewan and Vancouver residents was the highest of all four years (Figures 58 and 61), while Calgary evidenced the lowest level of agreement across all four years. (Figure 60) Agreement among Edmonton respondents increased from 2014 to 2016, but dropped to 48% in 2017 (Figure 59).

Higher percentages of agreement on recommending the U of S to someone in Canada were found among older people, current or former U of S students, those who are not working for pay, those with lower levels of income and education, as well as those who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. There were no statistical differences between males and females.

**University of Saskatchewan Among Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone outside Canada**

Half (50%) of the respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone living outside of Canada. Across regions, agreement among Saskatchewan residents was the highest (78%), and 2017 levels of agreement in Saskatchewan and Vancouver (35%) were highest across the four years. Agreement decreased since last year among Edmonton (43%) and Calgary residents (40%), after increasing steadily from 2014 to 2016 (Figures 62-66).

The percentage of agreement on recommending the U of S outside of Canada was higher among older respondents, current or former U of S students, those with lower levels of education and income, as well as those who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. There were no differences by gender or employment status.

In recommending the U of S as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education, the highest level of agreement overall was in recommending it to someone who lived in their province, followed closely by recommending to someone in Canada. The levels of agreement generally increased in Saskatchewan and Vancouver from last year, but decreased among respondents in Edmonton and Calgary.

**University of Saskatchewan Among Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone in Canada**

Among all respondents, 56% strongly or somewhat agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone who lived in Canada. This was down slightly from 2016 (57%),
I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education.

All regions, 2014-2017

Figure 57

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. SK, 2014-2017

Figure 58

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Edmonton, 2014-2017

Figure 59

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Calgary, 2014-2017

Figure 60

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. All regions, 2014-2017

Figure 61

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. SK, 2014-2017

Figure 62

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Edmonton, 2014-2017

Figure 63

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Vancouver, 2014-2017

Figure 64

I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives outside of Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Calgary, 2014-2017

Figure 65
Overall Reputation of the University of Saskatchewan

Finally, to determine how respondents perceived the overall reputation of the U of S, and how it has changed throughout the years, respondents were asked:

- “Compared to other post-secondary institutions in your province, how would you rate the University of Saskatchewan? Would you say it is significantly better than other post-secondary institutions in your province, better than other post-secondary institutions in your province, equal to other post-secondary institutions in your province, worse than other post-secondary institutions in your province, or significantly worse than other post-secondary institutions in your province?”

- “In the last five years, do you think the University of Saskatchewan’s reputation has become stronger, weaker or stayed about the same?”

Comparing the University of Saskatchewan to Other Post-secondary Institutions

When comparing the U of S to other post-secondary institutions, over half (55%) of the respondents felt that it was equal to those in their province. Twelve percent of respondents rated the U of S as better, while 8% rated it as worse. Only a small percentage of respondents rated the U of S as significantly better (6%), and less than 1% rated the U of S as significantly worse. The ratings were very similar to previous years (Figure 67).

Half of Saskatchewan respondents rated the U of S as better than other institutions in the province: 18% rated the U of S as significantly better and 32% rated it as better. These rates were substantially higher than 2016 and 2014 and slightly higher than agreement in 2015. The majority of Edmonton and Calgary respondents (63%) rated the U of S as equal to post-secondary institutions in Alberta. Slightly more than half (52%) of Vancouver residents rated the U of S as equal to post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. Very few non-Saskatchewan respondents rated the U of S as better than institutions in their own province. In Edmonton, 14% rated the U of S as worse or significantly worse than other institutions in their province, and so did 11% of Calgary respondents, and 14% of Vancouver respondents. This question received relatively high levels of “Don’t know” and “Refused” responses: 8% in Saskatchewan, 18% in both Edmonton and Calgary, and 27% in Vancouver (Figures 68-71).

The U of S received lower ratings among respondents between the ages of 35 and 49 years. Ratings were higher among current or former U of S students and those with lower levels of education and income. No significant differences between gender or employment status were observed.

University of Saskatchewan Reputation Over the Past Five Years

When asked if they felt that the reputation at the U of S has changed over the past five years, 20% of respondents felt that the U of S has a stronger reputation than it previously had, while 56% felt it was about the same, and 5% felt that it was weaker. The percentage of respondents who felt that the reputation of the U of S was weaker
decreased from 2014 (11%) to 2015 (7%) to 2016 (4%), but increased slightly in 2017 (5%). However, the percentage of respondents who have felt that the U of S reputation has grown stronger has remained more or less the same over the years (20-21%). Figure 72 displays the responses for all regions across years.

Among respondents from Saskatchewan, 23% felt that the reputation of the U of S had grown stronger over the past five years, 60% felt that it stayed the same, and 11% felt that it had grown weaker. The percentage of respondents who felt that the reputation of the U of S was stronger increased slowly over the years, while the percentage of those who felt it had grown weaker decreased from 2014 to 2016, but increased in 2017 (Figure 73).

Nineteen percent of Edmonton respondents felt that the reputation of the U of S is stronger now than it was five years ago. This percentage was the lowest across all four years (Figure 74). Similarly, 23% of Calgary respondents felt that the reputation of the U of S is stronger now than it was five years ago, which is also the lowest across all four years (Figure 75). A higher percentage of respondents from Vancouver felt that the U of S reputation was stronger than that of the past five years. The percentage has increased over previous years (up to 17.1% in 2017, 16.7% in 2016, 15.5% in 2015, and 14.1% in 2014) (Figure 76).
Conclusions

The results from this year suggest a number of things about the perceptions of the University of Saskatchewan among people living in Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver:

1. Positive perceptions of the University of Saskatchewan are common. When the regions are considered together, approximately 50-80% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with most statements on the survey. However, public perceptions have become more negative since last year, with the percentage of respondents who “strongly agreed” with the various survey statements having decreased from 2016 rates across all items.

2. Familiarity with the U of S increased from 2016 to 2017 among the four regions. Saskatchewan and Edmonton showed greater familiarity than any previous years. Calgary and Vancouver showed greater familiarity as compared to all other years except 2015. Greater familiarity may have contributed to this year’s decrease in “Don’t know” and “Refused” responses across the whole survey.

3. The University of Saskatchewan is commonly associated with the words “education” and “Saskatoon.” The U of S was also commonly associated with “Veterinary” in the Alberta regions. Vancouver residents associated the U of S with more environmental words, including “cold” and “prairies.”
4. Contrary to previous years in which television was the most common medium in which respondents saw or heard U of S advertisements, social media was the most common source for 2017 respondents.

5. Among 2017 respondents, U of S advertisements resulted in fewer positive perception changes than in previous years.

6. Mentions in the news about the U of S were perceived to be more negative, and less positive, than last year across all regions except Vancouver, which were perceived more positively than any previous years. As a result of these news stories, more Saskatchewan, Edmonton, and Calgary residents reported negative perception changes than last year. More Vancouver residents had their perceptions changed positively than any previous years.

7. Several new media content topics earned high coverage ratings in 2017, including the loss of funding for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, budget cuts, and the Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital.

8. Younger respondents, those who are working for pay, and those with lower levels of education and income had lower proportions of agreement to many statements compared to those of older ages, those who are not working for pay, and those with higher levels and education and income.

9. Respondents who are current or former students of the University of Saskatchewan tend to perceive the U of S more positively than those who have never attended.

Overall, the University of Saskatchewan is positively perceived by people living in Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. Increasing knowledge and awareness of impactful research stemming from the University of Saskatchewan may help to address some gaps in familiarity among those who struggled to associate words or had never heard of the University of Saskatchewan. Increased media or news stories, particularly transmitted through social media, may also lead to more positive perceptions of the U of S.