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

December 2016
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.

For More Information about the SSRL

To learn more about the SSRL, please contact us or visit our website:

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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 various regions on a number of topics. This report summarizes the findings from the third iteration of the survey, conducted in 2016, and compares the results to the preceding two 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, 1,536 people participated in the telephone survey, with 384 respondents from each region.

Perceptions of the University of Saskatchewan remain generally positive, with 50-80% of agreement that the University of Saskatchewan is a contending institution that offers high quality student experience at a reasonable cost. Overall, there were lower levels of agreement from respondents living in Vancouver, as well as lower levels of familiarity with the University of Saskatchewan. Topics within the media related to the university have been perceived more positively in 2016 in comparison to 2014/15, and the breadth of coverage recalled by participants was wider. 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. The overall reputation of the University of Saskatchewan has remained about the same as the previous five years, according to approximately 47% of respondents.

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 with the institution or had never heard of the University of Saskatchewan. Increased familiarity may also lead to more agreement on recommending the University of Saskatchewan (among respondents from outside of Saskatchewan).
Methodology

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) conducted the University of Saskatchewan Public Perception Survey on behalf of the University of Saskatchewan from October 24th to November 10th, 2016. 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 22.3% and resulted in 1,536 completed interviews among randomly-selected residents (18 years of age and older) from the province of Saskatchewan, as well as the metropolitan areas of Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver (384 respondents from each of the four regions). Results of the survey are generalizable to the total population of the four surveyed regions (18 years of age and older) ± 2.66% 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).

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, Vancouver) and year (2014, 2015, and 2016) whereas percentages presented in the text are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Questions on the survey which collected qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo11 Software, and word frequency results are presented as word clouds. 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 2016 results with generalized comparisons made to previous years.
Findings

2016 Respondents

Of the 1,536 respondents, 666 (43.4%) were male. The mean age of the sample was 56.4 years (SD=16.4), with 72% of the sample reported being over the age of 45 (as calculated by reported year of birth). The sample was well-educated: 53% completed at least some university education, 25% completed at least some technical schooling or college, 16% completed high school, and only 6% had less than a high school education. A portion of the sample (15%) attended or currently attend the University of Saskatchewan. Over half the sample were working for pay (57%), and this included self-employed, employees, as well as students, retirees and those caring for children or family members who also work part-time. Only 47 respondents (3% of sample) identified as a First Nations, Metis or Inuit, and among the 384 Saskatchewan respondents, only 2% 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 (U of S), they were asked to provide up to five words that immediately come to mind when they hear the name University of Saskatchewan.

There were 256 respondents (16%) who refused or were unable to contribute any words, while an additional 70 respondents (5%) stated they did not know anything about the U of S. The remaining 79% of respondents were able to provide at least one word that came to mind when thinking about the U of S. Familiarity with the U of S in 2016 remained comparable to previous years, although was slightly reduced from 2015 (Figure 1).

Familiarity with the U of S decreased slightly with distance from the university’s location. For example, 94% of Saskatchewan respondents could provide at least one word, whereas 77% of respondents in Edmonton, 76% of respondents in Calgary, and 69% 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. Similar to previous years, familiarity with the U of S was higher among those with higher levels of education, higher income ($100,000 or more), and some form of paid employment.
In 2015, a higher percentage of respondents in all regions were able to provide words associated with the U of S compared to the previous and the subsequent years (with the exception of Saskatchewan, which increased slightly from 2015 to 2016). Vancouver respondents had the largest decrease from 2015 to 2016, by 9%.

The lowest percentage of respondents were familiar with the U of S in 2014 compared to 2015 and 2016. Whether or not the gained familiarity is favourable to the U of S will be discussed further in the sections that refer to messaging content and changed perceptions about the U of S as a result of the media. Comparisons can be viewed in Figures 2 through 5.

**Word Associations**

The words mentioned by the 1,230 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 with the U of S and into differences between the four different spatial regions in those associations. Figure 6 displays the top 100 responses of those 1,230 survey respondents that 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 31 words that fulfill this criteria (of a minimum of seven references), Edmonton having 13 (Figure 8), Calgary (Figure 9) with 14, and Vancouver (Figure 10) with 14. Word clouds are presented on pages 6 through 10.

<table>
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<td><strong>All respondents 2015 &amp; 2016:</strong></td>
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Figure 6—Word clouds from all respondents, top 100 words, 2014, 2015, 2016 (minimum 7 references)
Figure 7—Word clouds from Saskatchewan respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016 (minimum 7 references)
Figure 8—Word clouds from Edmonton respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016 (minimum 7 references)
Calgary respondents, 2014

Calgary respondents, 2015

Calgary respondents, 2016

Figure 9—Word clouds from Calgary respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016 (minimum 7 references)
Figure 10—Word clouds from Vancouver respondents, 2014, 2015, 2016 (minimum 7 references)
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 & 2016 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?”

Only 17% of respondents in 2016 recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S, while 82% stated not observing or hearing any advertisements about the U of S in the last six months. A small percentage (1%), could not recall. Comparatively, in 2015, 16% of respondents saw or heard advertisements for the U of S.

Among Saskatchewan respondents, 37% saw or heard advertisements, while only 8% of Edmonton respondents, 14% of Calgary respondents, and 8% of Vancouver respondents recalled seeing or hearing any advertisements for the U of S in the last six months. In 2015, an even smaller percentage of respondents from Edmonton (5%), Calgary (13%), and Vancouver (6%) recalled seeing or hearing any advertisements for the U of S.

Figure 11 depicts the percentage of respondents who recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S in the past six months (2015 and 2016), and reported rates were generally low for both years outside of Saskatchewan.

Television was the most commonly reported media for experiencing advertisements for both years, followed by newspapers, social media, and magazines (Figure 12). In 2016, 62 respondents (24%) also mentioned other sources, such as brochures and letters, alumni materials, emails, friends/family, and job fairs.

When asked if the advertisements had changed their perceptions of the U of S, 44% responded that it changed their perceptions positively (compared to 41% in 2015). 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 (47%) stated that their perceptions of the U of S were not changed positively or negatively as a result of the advertisements. This is
slightly lower than 2015, in which 50% 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 higher percentage of positively changed perceptions for 2016, when compared to 2015 (with the exception being Calgary; 42% decreased to 40%). Respondents from Edmonton had the largest increase in positive perceptions (23% increase). In 2016, approximately half of respondents from all regions did not change their perceptions about the U of S as a result of advertisements.

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 2016:

- Promoting the U of S and portrayals of positive images (38% coverage)
- Programming and course content (21% coverage)
- Sports content (i.e., Huskies) (19% coverage)
- Various announcements (14% coverage)
- Content aimed at Alumni (8% coverage)

Those who are current/former students of the U of S or a current employee more commonly reported hearing or seeing advertisements in the past six months. Age, education level, and income level were not associated.

News Coverage on the U of S

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 questions 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 2016, 18% noticed some news coverage, up slightly from the previous year. The proportion of respondents who saw or heard news coverage about the U of S across years and regions is presented in Figure 14.

Among those in 2016, 65% recalled positive media messages, 7% recalled negative media messages, 9% recalled media messages that were both positive and negative, and 15% recalled messages that were neither positive or negative about the U of S in the past six months. Four percent could not recall the message in the news and media coverage. The percentage of respondents who recalled positive media messages increased since 2014 and 2015 across all regions, most notably in Vancouver (35% increase from 2014 to 2015, and 26% increase from 2015 to 2016 (Figures 15-19).
Among Saskatchewan residents who recalled news coverage of the U of S, 36% reported positive changes in their perceptions as a result of new coverage, which is up from previous years (Figure 20). A third (33%) of Edmonton respondents, 32% of Calgary respondents, and 36% of Vancouver respondents reported positive changes in their perceptions. A small percentage (10%) of Vancouver respondents and Saskatchewan respondents (2%) negatively changed their perceptions.

Over half (56%) of those respondents 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, 36% reported that news coverage positively changed their perceptions about the U of S, while only 2% reported that news coverage negatively changed their perceptions. An additional 3% reported having their perceptions changed both positively and negatively.
Respondents from Vancouver had the largest increase in positively changed perceptions over the previous year (11%).

Those who were employed and had higher incomes more commonly reported having their perceptions negatively changed by news coverage.

The content of the media stories recalled by 2016 respondents (in order of most commonly mentioned):

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

Similar to 2016, only 17% of respondents in 2015 recalled seeing or hearing any media coverage for the U of S in the past six months. Many recalled the message in the media being positive for the U of S (47%), while 14% recalled the message being negative. Twenty-one percent reported the message was both positive and negative, and 15% recalled the message being neither positive nor negative. Half of respondents (50%) who recalled media coverage stated that it neither positively nor negatively changed their perception of the U of S. Nearly a third (31%) reported that the media coverage resulted in a more positive perception of the U of S, while 8% reported that it negatively changed their perception.

In regards to news exposure in 2015, only 44% of Saskatchewan respondents recalled news coverage on the U of S, while only 8% of Edmonton and Calgary respondents, and 9% of Vancouver respondents recalled news coverage on the U of S in the past six months. The media coverage positively changed perceptions for 48% of Saskatchewan respondents, 55% of Edmonton respondents, 47% of Calgary respondents and 39% of Vancouver respondents.

The content of the media stories recalled by 2015 respondents (in order of most commonly mentioned):

- 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)

In 2014, 553 (36%) respondents recalled seeing or hearing some news coverage about the U of S. Among those, 48% stated it was a negative message, and approximately 17% remember the media coverage as a positive message while 25% described the message as both positive and negative and 9% recalled the message as neutral. Half (52%) of the respondents who recalled a media story stated that it neither positively nor negatively changed their perception of the university, a quarter felt that it negatively changed their perception and 12% reported that it improved their perception.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Saskatchewan respondents recalled a university-related news story. In contrast, 28% of respondents in Edmonton, 25% of respondents in Calgary, and 20% of respondents in Vancouver recalled hearing a news story about the U of S in the past six months.
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”
- “A University of Saskatchewan degree helps one secure a successful career”
- “The cost of an education at the University of Saskatchewan is worthwhile.”

High Quality Education

Overall, 2016 respondents agreed that the U of S offers students a high quality education (strongly agree = 41%, somewhat agree = 28%). 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 (88% of Saskatchewan respondents, 69% of Edmonton respondents, 68% of Calgary respondents, and 50% of Vancouver respondents). Regional differences across years can be viewed in Figures 22-25. Overall, there were few differences across years and regions on opinions of high-quality student experience at the U of S.

A higher percentage of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agreed) that the U of S offers a high
quality student experience among those with lower education levels, males, older age (older than 65), and those who were not working or working as a student, retiree, or caregiver. Additionally, those who are current or former students of the U of S had high agreement about the quality of student experience (92% of student strongly or somewhat agreed compared to 63% of non U of S students).

Costs of U of S Education Worthwhile

Similarly, 2016 respondents felt the cost of an education at the U of S is worthwhile (strongly agree = 29%, somewhat agree = 31%) (Figure 26). Again, the proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S increased (73% of Saskatchewan respondents, 57% of Edmonton respondents, 55% of Calgary respondents, and 54% of Vancouver respondents). Figures 27-30 depict regional differences across years.

Across Saskatchewan and within Calgary, agreement dropped slightly from the previous year, but increased slightly among Vancouver and Edmonton respondents.
A higher proportion of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agree) that the costs at the U of S are worthwhile among those with lower education levels, current or former students, current employees, those of older age, and those who were not working or working part-time as a student, retiree, or caregiver. There were no significant difference between males and females.

### U of S Degree Helps to Secure Successful Career

Most 2016 respondents felt that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career (strongly agree = 41%, somewhat agree = 37%) (Figure 31).

Similarly to student experience and costs, the proportion of agreement regarding U of S degrees helping to secure a successful career decreased as distance from the U of S increased (86% of Saskatchewan respondents, 78% of Edmonton respondents, 82% of Calgary respondents, and 68% of Vancouver respondents). Figures 32-35 depict regional difference across years.

Overall, extent of agreement has stayed fairly stable over time, with slight decreases observed in strong agreement from Edmonton and Calgary respondents from 2015 to 2016.

A higher percentage of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agree) that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career among those of older age (46 or older), among those with lower education levels, current or former U of S students, and lower income levels. There were no significant differences
between males and females.

In 2015, the majority of respondents agreed that the U of S offers students a high quality education (strongly agree = 37%, somewhat agree = 33%), that the cost of an education at the U of S is worthwhile (strongly agree = 25%, somewhat agree = 34%), and that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career (strongly agree = 36%, somewhat agree = 41%).

There was substantially higher agreement among Saskatchewan residents on all three questions in 2015. For example, 90% of Saskatchewan respondents agreed the U of S offers students a high quality education, compared to 67% of Edmonton respondents, 69% of Calgary respondents, and 70% of Vancouver respondents. The smallest portion of respondents agreed that the costs of an education at the U of S were worthwhile (77% of Saskatchewan respondents, 55% of Edmonton respondents, 54% of Calgary respondents, and 59% of Vancouver respondents).

Responses in 2014 were very similar to those in 2015 and 2016. Sixty-nine percent strongly or somewhat agreed that the U of S offers students a high quality education, 55% strongly or somewhat agreed the cost of an education at the U of S is worthwhile, and 76% strongly or somewhat agreed that the a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career.

Residents of Saskatchewan were also asked about the statement that:

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

Research at U of S Important to Growth and Well-being of Canada

Among 2016 respondents, 85% agreed that research conducted at the U of S is important to the growth and well-being of Canada. This is up very slightly from previous years (Figure 36).

The highest percentage of strong agreement came from Saskatchewan respondents, where 73% of respondents strongly agreed that research at the U of S contributes to the growth and well-being of Canada. An additional 22% somewhat agreed. Figure 37 displays the percentage of agreement among Saskatchewan residents to this statement across years.

As with many previous questions, the proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S

Broader Societal Benefits of University of Saskatchewan Activities

The survey also explored to what extent the activities of the U of S 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.”

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As with many previous questions, the proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S
increased (95% of Saskatchewan respondents, 87% of Edmonton respondents, 83% of Calgary respondents and 73% of Vancouver respondents strongly or somewhat agreed). Figures 38-40 display the percentage of agreement that research from the U of S 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 the research conducted at the U of S among different age categories. Those 18-25, and those older than 65 had the highest level of agreement. Those with lower levels of education also had a higher percentage of agreement, as well as current and former U of S students, other students, retirees or carers who are also working for pay and those with lower incomes. There were no significant differences between males and females.

In 2015, 82% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that research at the U of S is important to the growth and well-being of Canada. Ninety-five percent of Saskatchewan residents agreed with this statement, while smaller proportions of respondents from other regions agreed (84% of Edmonton respondents, 79% of Calgary residents, and 72% of Vancouver residents).

Again, in 2014, the percentage of respondents who agreed that research at the U of S is important to the growth and well-being of Canada (82% overall) was most strongly distributed among Saskatchewan respondents, where 94% agreed. The lowest percentages of agreement in 2014 were observed among Vancouver respondents at 73%, while 81% of respondents from both Alberta cities agreed.

U of S Provides Social and Economic Benefit through Teaching and Research

Among 2016 respondents, there was a more divisive response as to whether the U of S provides a social and economic benefit to my community through teaching and research. Only 28% of respondents somewhat agreed and 29% strongly agreed with this statement. However, the extent of agreement has increased from 2014 and 2015 (Figure 41). In addition, the percentage of respondents who are unable to respond (refuse or don’t know) has decreased since 2014.

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 comparable to previous years, although slightly decreased from 2015 (Figure 42).

Forty-nine percent of respondents from both Edmonton and Calgary somewhat or strongly agreed, while only 40%
of Vancouver respondents somewhat or strongly agreed. Strong disagreement was highest among Vancouver respondents (10%). A full quarter (25%) of Vancouver respondents did not answer this survey question, while 20% of Calgary respondents, 16% of Edmonton respondents, and only 5% of Saskatchewan respondents did not answer. Figures 43-45 display responses across regions and years.

A higher percentage of older respondents (those older than 65) agreed that the U of S was providing a social and economic benefit to their community, compared to other age groups. Similarly, those with lower education levels, current or former students of the U of S, those not working full-time, and those with lower income levels had higher proportions of agreement. There were no significant differences between males and females.

Responses in 2015 were comparable to those of 2016. A little over half of the respondents (55%) were in agreement that the U of S was providing a social and economic benefit to their community through teaching and research. A higher percentage of respondents remained neutral (neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement) in Calgary and Vancouver in 2015.

In 2014, the fewest respondents were in agreement with this statement (43%), and the highest percentage of respondents were unable (refused or did not know) to answer the question. For example, over a third (34%) of Vancouver respondents and 30% of Calgary respondents were unable to provide an answer. Even within Saskatchewan, 8% of respondents were unable to, or refused to provide a response.
U of S 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 somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement. This proportion was down slightly from 2015, at 77%. Responses across years are depicted in Figure 46. However, both 2015 and 2016 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. However, both 2015 and 2016 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.

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 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.”

U of S as One of the Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to a close friend

Overall, 28% of 2016 respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend, while 26% somewhat agreed. Approximately 15% did not know or refused to answer. Only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. The overall percentage of agreement (strongly and somewhat agree) increased slightly from 2015, which was up from 2014 (Figure 47). There was very high agreement among Saskatchewan residents that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend (83%), which was a bit of a decrease from 2015, but up from 2014 (Figure 48).

Overall, 28% of 2016 respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend, while 26% somewhat agreed. Approximately 15% did not know or refused to answer. Only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. The overall percentage of agreement (strongly and somewhat agree) increased slightly from 2015, which was up from 2014 (Figure 47). There was very high agreement among Saskatchewan residents that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend (83%), which was a bit of a decrease from 2015, but up from 2014 (Figure 48).
A higher percentage of respondents from Calgary agreed with this statement (52%), as compared to Edmonton (48%) and Vancouver (33%) respondents. This was an increase in agreement from 2015 for Calgary and Edmonton, but Vancouver remained unchanged from 2015, although increased slightly from 2014. Figures 49-51 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 those respondents who were older (older than 65 years), had lower levels of education, were a current or former student, and those with lower income levels (less than $50,000/year). Gender, employment level, and being an employee of the U of S were not associated.

U of S as One of the Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone in my province

Within all regions, 57% somewhat or strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone living in their province. Ten percent somewhat disagreed to this statement while 5% strongly disagreed, and 16% remained neutral. These responses are very similar to those of the previous questions (recommending to a close friend). The response rates across all regions and years are displayed in Figure 52.

Across regions, Saskatchewan respondents had the highest level of agreement (67% strongly agreed, 23% somewhat agreed). This was substantially higher than the agreement from other regions, where 51% of Edmonton respondents agreed with the statement, 52% of Calgary respondents agreed, and 33% of Vancouver respondents agreed. Thirteen percent of both Edmonton and Calgary respondents did not give a response (refused or did not know), while 23% of Vancouver respondents did not provide a response (Figures 53-56). Those aged older than 65 years had the highest proportion of agreement compared to those of younger
ages. Similarly, those with lower education levels had a higher proportion of agreement (high school or less) than those with higher levels of education. Current/former U of S students had a higher proportion of agreement. Finally, those who are not working and those with lower incomes also had a higher proportion of agreement that they would recommend the U of S to someone who lived in their province. There were no differences observed between males and females.

Figure 53—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone in my province as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. SK, 2014-2016

Figure 54—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone in my province as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Edmonton, 2014-2016

Figure 55—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone in my province as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Calgary, 2014-2016

Figure 56—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone in my province as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Vancouver, 2014-2016

U of S as One of the Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone in Canada

Among all respondents, 57% somewhat or strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone who lived in Canada. This was up slightly from 2015 (55%) and 2014 (52%). Figure 57 displays the level of agreement among all regions across years.

The increasing trend of agreement was also observed in individual regions, with the exception of Saskatchewan respondents (Figure 58).

Among Edmonton respondents agreement increased from 46% in 2014 to 47% in 2015, and then climbed to 53% in 2016 (Figure 59). Among Calgary respondents, agreement increased from 50% in 2014 to 52% in 2015 to 55% in 2016 (Figure 60). Finally, among Vancouver respondents, agreement increased from 34% in 2014 to 35% in 2015 to 37% in 2016 (Figure 61).
Among those of older ages (older than 65 years), was the highest percentage of agreement. There was also a higher proportion of agreement among those with lower education levels compared to those who have gone to university. As with other survey questions, there was a higher proportion of agreement among current and former U of S students that they would recommend the U of S to someone who lived in Canada. There were no differences among gender, or those with different levels of employment or income levels.

**U of S as One of the Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone outside Canada**

Nearly half (49%) of all respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone living outside of Canada (Figure 62). Among Saskatchewan residents, the proportion of agreement was highest (76%), which was the same as 2015, but had increased from 2014 (Figure 63).

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**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. SK, 2014-2016

**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. Edmonton, 2014-2016

**Figure 60**—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, 2014-2016

**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. All regions, 2014-2016

**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. SK, 2014-2016
Agreement also increased among Albertan respondents from 2015 to 2016. Among Edmonton respondents, agreement increased from 40% in 2014 to 43% in 2015 to 46% in 2016 (Figure 64). Calgary respondents were similar, with agreement increasing from 40% in 2014 to 43% in 2015 to 45% in 2016 (Figure 65). The percentage of agreement decreased slightly among Vancouver respondents. In 2014, the agreement was 28% which increased to 34% in 2015. However, agreement decreased slightly to 32% in 2016 (Figure 66).

The percentage of agreement was higher among those who were older (older than 65 years), current or former U of S students, those with lower levels of education, those who are working part-time, and those with lower incomes.

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 have gradually increased from 2014 to 2016.

### 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 U of S to Other Post-secondary Institutions

When comparing the U of S to other post secondary institutions, over half (54%) of the respondents felt that it was equal to those in their province. One in ten (10%) rated the U of S as better, while 6% rated it as significantly worse. Only a small percentage of respondents rated the U of S as significantly better (4%), and less than 1% rated the U of S as significantly worse.
The ratings were very similar to previous years, but the percentage of those who felt that the U of S was worse than post-secondary institutions in their province did decrease from 8% in 2015 to 6% in 2016. (Figure 67).

Saskatchewan respondents rated the U of S as better than other institutions in the province: 12% rated the U of S as significantly better and 29% rated it as better. These rates decreased from 2015, in which 16% rated the U of S as significantly better, and 32% rated it as better. (Figure 68).

The majority of Edmonton respondents (64%) rated the U of S as equal to post-secondary institutions in Alberta (Figure 69), and Calgary respondents rated it similarly, with 62% feeling that the U of S is equal to other post-secondary institutions in Alberta (Figure 70). Very few Vancouver respondents rated the U of S as better than institutions in British Columbia. Only 47% felt that the U of S was equal to other institutions in B.C. and 10% rated it as worse (Figure 71). Regional differences did not vary much from year to year.

More respondents aged 26-35 years rated the U of S as better or significantly better than post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. Those with lower levels of education also rated the U of S as better or significantly better than other post-secondary institutions. U of S employees did not rate the U of S as better or equally better compared to non-employees, but current or former U of S students did rate it as better in comparison to non-students. No significant differences between gender were observed.
U of S Reputation Over Past Five Years

When asked if they felt that the reputation at the U of S has changed over the past five years, 21% felt that the U of S has a stronger reputation than it previously had, while 47% felt it was about the same, and 4% felt that it was weaker. The percentage of respondents who have felt that the reputation of the U of S was weaker, decreased from 2014 (11%) to 2015 (7%) to 2016 (4%). 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 previous years (20-21%). Figure 72 displays the responses for all regions across years.

![Figure 72](image-url)

Among respondents from Saskatchewan, 22% felt that the reputation of the U of S had grown stronger over the past five years, 54% felt that it stayed the same, and 10% felt that it had grown weaker. Thirteen percent felt they did not know enough or refused to answer the question. 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 27% in 2014 to 16% in 2015 to 10% in 2016 (Figure 73).

Twenty-two percent of Edmonton respondents felt that the reputation of the U of S is stronger now than it was five years ago. This was a slight increase from 2015 and 2014 (Figure 74). The opposite was observed among respondents from Calgary (Figure 75), in which a lower percentage of respondents felt that the reputation of the U of S was stronger than that of previous years. In 2016, 23% of respondents felt the reputation of the U of S was...
stronger, which was a decrease from 2015 (26%) and 2014 (27%).

Although a lower percentage of respondents from Vancouver felt that the U of S' reputation was stronger than that of the past five years (Figure 76), the percentage had increased over previous years (up to 17% in 2016 from 16% in 2015 and 14% in 2014).

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. Approximately 50-80% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with most statements on the survey, with the exception of Vancouver respondents in regards to costs of education at the U of S.

2. Generally, familiarity of the U of S tends to be more centralized within Saskatchewan and Alberta when compared to those respondents from Vancouver.

3. Respondents outside of Saskatchewan commonly associate the University of Saskatchewan with veterinarian medicine and agriculture.

4. Respondents living in Saskatchewan had higher percentages of agreement with all statements, but the increase in agreement from 2015 to 2016 on most statements was minimal.

5. Messages within the media do not often impact perceptions about the University of Saskatchewan. However, more respondents reported being positively impacted than negatively impacted.

6. The percentage of respondents recalling positive message content from the media on the University of Saskatchewan increased significantly in 2016 compared to 2015 and 2014 across all regions.

7. Saskatchewan respondents had experienced more advertisements for the U of S and more news coverage than respondents from other regions.

8. Positive news messages increased substantially in 2016 from 2015 and 2014, with more focus on research initiatives, Huskies sports, and academic programming excellence.

9. Increases in positive perceptions as a result of media from 2015 to 2016 was highest among Edmonton respondents.

10. Those with higher levels of education, and those in the middle age ranges (36-65 years) had lower proportions of agreement to many statements compared to those of younger ages, older ages (older than 65), and those with lower levels of education.

11. Those 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 familiarity may also lead to more agreement on recommending the University of Saskatchewan (among respondents from outside of Saskatchewan).