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

December 2018
About the Social Sciences Research Laboratories

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) is a unique and leading research network of nine research laboratories made possible by the combined support of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the University of Saskatchewan, including many of its colleges, schools and administrative units. As a research support unit, the SSRL assists faculty, staff and students undertaking research in the social sciences by providing access to specialized research infrastructure (computers, software and equipment) and research space (specific and multi-purpose), and providing access to research supports in the form of specialists with backgrounds and training in specific social science research methodologies (quantitative research; qualitative research; experimental research; surveys; GIS and cartography; social network analysis; among many others).

Our mission:

To provide shared research infrastructure and technical and administrative support to faculty, staff and students at the University of Saskatchewan and beyond, to facilitate the design, delivery and dissemination of cutting-edge social science research.

The SSRL currently consists of the following laboratories:

- Community-Based Observation Laboratory (COL)
- Experimental Decision Laboratory (EDL)
- EEG Hyperscanning Laboratory (EHL)
- Mixed Methods Research Laboratory (MMRL)
- Qualitative Research Laboratory (QRL)
- Survey and Group Analysis Laboratory (SGAL)
- Social Network Laboratory (SNL)
- The Spatial Laboratory (TSL)
- Video Therapy Analysis Laboratory (ViTAL)

The SSRL has three objectives:

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

For More Information about the SSRL

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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 fifth iteration of the survey, conducted in 2018, and compares the results to the preceding four 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, 1,537 people participated in the telephone survey, with 385 respondents from Saskatchewan, and 384 from each of the three other regions.

Perceptions of the University of Saskatchewan remain generally positive when the regions are considered together, with 57%-80% 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, someone living within Canada, and to someone living outside of Canada. Seventy-two percent of 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 has been improving, with 22% of respondents stating that it is stronger than previous years, which is the highest improvement across all years. An additional 53% 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, respondents generally reported being exposed to advertisements and news about the University of Saskatchewan from sources, such as posters, brochures, websites, word-of-mouth, job fairs, through television, or through social media. Exposure through social media was not as common as it had been in 2017.
Methodology

The Social Sciences Research Laboratories (SSRL) conducted the University of Saskatchewan Public Perception Survey on behalf of the University of Saskatchewan from October 12th to November 22nd, 2018. 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 15.6% and resulted in 1,537 completed interviews among randomly-selected residents (18 years of age and older) from the province of Saskatchewan (385 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 and 2018 were 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, 2017, and 2018) 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 NVivo12 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 2018 results with generalized comparisons made to previous years.
Findings

2018 Respondents

Of the 1,537 respondents, 44.9% were male and 55.1% were female. The sample ranged in age from 18 to 93, with a mean age of 57.6 years. The sample was well-educated: 57% completed at least some university education, 24% completed at least some technical schooling or college, 13% completed high school, and 6% had less than a high school education. A portion of the sample (16%) had attended or currently attend the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). Of the sample, 43% were retired, 33% were working for pay, 14% were self-employed, and the remaining 9% were either students, unemployed, or caring for children or family members. Among the Saskatchewan respondents, 1% were employees of the U of S. Only 4% of the sample identified as a First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Number of individuals per household ranged from one to ten, with 90% stating that between one and four individuals lived in their household including themselves. Approximately 70% of participants reported that all household members were over 18 years of age. Household income for 2017 had a wide range, with 4% reporting less than $25,000, 22% reporting between $25,000 and $75,000, 27% reporting between $75,000 and $150,000, and 16% reporting more than $150,000.

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, 15% of the sample refused or were unable to contribute any words, while an additional 3% 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 2018 (83%) increased from 2014 and 2016, decreased from 2017, and remained consistent with 2015 (Figure 1).

Similar to previous years, 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 76% of respondents in Edmonton, 89% of respondents in Calgary, and 72% 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 older respondents and among current/former students at the U of S. Education, gender, and income was not significantly related to familiarity with the U of S.

Familiarity with the U of S decreased across all regions compared to 2017, except for Calgary where it increased by almost 6 percentage points. Across all regions, familiarity with the U of S decreased by almost 2 percentage points, Saskatchewan’s familiarity decreased by 2 percentage points, Edmonton decreased by 6
percentage points, Calgary increased by 6 percentage points, and Vancouver decreased by 4 percentage points. However, the lowest percentage of respondents that were familiar with the U of S still occurred in 2014.

**Word Associations**

The words mentioned by the 1,277 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 12 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 2018. In these top 100, words displayed are mentioned by at least seven respondents. Figure 7 displays the top 100 responses for all regions from 2014 to 2017. This number was then used to create the word clouds for the four separate regions, with Saskatchewan having 52 words that fulfill this criteria (of a minimum of seven references), Edmonton having 36, Calgary with 47, and Vancouver with 31 (Figures 8-12). Word clouds are presented on pages 8 through 14.

**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**

2015-2018 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
All words, all respondents, 2018
Figure 7—Word clouds from all respondents, top 100 words, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017
Figure 8—Word clouds from 2018, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver
Figure 9—Word clouds from 2017, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver
**Reactions from 2016, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver**

Figure 10—Word clouds from 2016, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver
Figure 11—Word clouds from 2015, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver
Figure 12—Word clouds from 2014, top 100 words, Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver
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 16% of respondents in 2018 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. This percentage is similar to previous years, as 16% of respondents in 2015 saw or heard advertisements, 17% in 2016, and 16% in 2017.

Among Saskatchewan respondents, 38% saw or heard advertisements, while only 9% of Edmonton respondents, 11% of Calgary respondents, and 6% 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 increased in Calgary and Edmonton since 2017, and has decreased in Vancouver since 2017.

Figures 13 to 17 depict the percentage of respondents who recalled seeing or hearing advertisements for the U of S in the past six months.
In 2018, other sources of advertisements, including brochures, posters, e-mails, the U of S website, word of mouth, and job fairs were most often mentioned, followed by television and social media (Figure 18).

When asked if the advertisements had changed their perceptions of the U of S, 39% responded that it changed their perceptions positively (compared to 32% in 2017, 44% in 2016 and 41% in 2015). Only 3% 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 (55%) stated that their perceptions of the U of S were not changed positively or negatively as a result of the advertisements. This percentage is lower than 2017 in which 61% reported no change. However, it is higher than 2016 and 2015 where 47% and 50%, respectively, reported no positive or negative changes in their perceptions of the U of S. Figures 19 and 20 display the results on changed perceptions across years and regions.

There was an increase in positively changed perceptions from 2017 to 2018. Edmonton respondents had the largest increase in positive perceptions (20.2% increase) followed by Saskatchewan (6.3% increase) from 2017. Vancouver respondents had a 6.1% decrease in positive perceptions.

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 2018:

- Promoting the U of S and portrayals of positive images (25% coverage)
- Programing and course content (22% coverage)
- Sports content (i.e., Huskies, Merlis Belsher Place rink) (19% coverage)
- Various announcements (17% coverage)
- Research and grants (7% coverage)
- Funding and tuition (5% coverage)
- Content aimed at alumni (4% coverage)
- Fundraising (2% coverage)

Respondents with more education were more likely to report seeing U of S advertisements. Furthermore, respondents who were current/former students (53%) were more likely to report seeing advertisements compared to non-students (11%). It should be noted that there was no significant relationship with any other demographic variable.

Figure 18—What type of media did you hear or see any advertisements about the University of Saskatchewan in the last six months (check all that apply)? All regions, 2018

Figure 19—Based on what you saw or heard about the University of Saskatchewan in the advertisement, did it change your perception about the University? All regions, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

Figure 20—Based on what you saw or heard about the University of Saskatchewan in the advertisement, did it change your perception about the University? By region, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
News Coverage on the University of Saskatchewan

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 2018, 18% noticed some news coverage, up slightly from the previous years. The proportion of respondents who saw or heard news coverage about U of S across years and regions are presented in Figures 21 and 22.

Among 2018 respondents, 61% recalled positive media messages, 9% recalled negative media messages, 12% 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 (Figure 23). Two percent could not recall the message in the news and media coverage.

The percentage of respondents who recalled positive media messages increased in all regions since 2017, except for Vancouver which showed a small decrease in positive messages between 2017 and 2018 (Figures 23-27).

The results also revealed that the majority of respondents (63%) 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, 27% reported that the news coverage positively changed their perceptions about the U of S, while 4% reported that news coverage negatively changed their perceptions. An additional 4% reported having their perceptions changed both positively and negatively. Compared to 2017, there was a 2% increase in respondents who had their perceptions changed positively across all regions (Figure 28).

Respondents with higher education were more likely to report seeing the U of S mentioned in the news.
Furthermore, respondents who were current/former students (42%) were more likely to report seeing the U of S in the news compared to non-students (14%). Younger respondents aged 18 to 24 were more likely to state that the news segment changed their views negatively, while older respondents were more likely to state that the news positively changed their views.

Between 2017 and 2018, there was also an increase in positive perceptions in Saskatchewan and Edmonton and a decrease in positive perceptions in Calgary and Vancouver (Figure 29).

Among Saskatchewan residents who recalled news coverage of the U of S, 27% reported positive changes in their perceptions as a result of news coverage, which is up from previous years. Among Edmonton respondents, 18% reported positive changes. Among Calgary and Vancouver respondents, 32% and 26% reported positive changes, respectively, which is down from previous years.
The content of the media stories recalled by 2018 respondents included (in order of most commonly mentioned):

- Sports/Huskies (24% coverage)
- Research news (16% coverage)
- Promoting enrollment, programming, and courses (13% coverage)
- Budget, funding, and tuition (12% coverage)
- Administrative personnel updates and announcements (6% coverage)
- Academic and programming excellence (6% coverage)
- Safety issues on campus (6%)
- Indigenous students (5% coverage)
- Infrastructure (4% coverage)
- College of Medicine accreditation (4% coverage)
- Jim Pattison Children’s hospital (3% coverage)
- Synchrotron maintenance (2% coverage)

To compare to previous years, the news stories recalled by 2017 are as followed:

- Research news (18%)
- Loss of funding for WCVM (17%)
- Sports/Huskies (14% coverage)
- Budget cuts (13% coverage)
- Academic and programming excellence (5% coverage)
- Jim Pattison Children’s hospital (5% coverage)
- Administrative personnel updates and announcements (5% coverage)
- College of Medicine accreditation (4% coverage)
- Safety issues on campus (5%)
- Indigenous students (4% coverage)
- Funding and tuition issues (4% coverage)
- Social/cultural events and movements (4% coverage)

The content of the media stories recalled by 2016 respondents:

- 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:

- Reinstate Executive Director of School of Public Policy/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, 2018 respondents agreed that the U of S offers students a high-quality education (strongly agree = 40%, somewhat agree = 29%). Figure 30 depicts the extent of agreement among respondents from all years.

The proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S increased (89% of Saskatchewan respondents, 71% of Calgary respondents, 65% of Edmonton respondents, and 50% of Vancouver respondents). Regional differences across years can be viewed in Figures 31-34. Overall, there were few differences across years in the various regions. Saskatchewan and Vancouver had a slight decrease in agreement, while Calgary and Edmonton had a slight increase from 2017.

A higher percentage of respondents were in agreement (strongly or somewhat agreed) that the U of S offers a high-quality education among current/former students. Additionally, there was a significant difference in agreement in regards to age, with respondents aged 85 to 89 and aged 55 to 59 reporting higher agreement compared to respondents aged 30 to 34.
Costs of U of S Education Worthwhile

Similarly, the majority of 2018 respondents felt the cost of an education at the U of S is worthwhile (strongly agree = 25%, somewhat agree = 32%) (Figure 35). Saskatchewan respondents had the highest level of agreement (70%), and Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver garnered similar levels of agreements at 55%, 57%, and 47%. Across Saskatchewan and Vancouver, agreement decreased slightly from last year, but increased among Edmonton, and Calgary respondents. Figures 35-39 depict regional differences across years.

Respondents aged 85 to 89 were more likely to agree that the cost of the U of S is worthwhile, compared to respondents aged 18 to 24, 35 to 39, and 45 to 49. Respondents who had not completed high school had lower agreement compared to respondents who had completed high school or had post-secondary education.
A University of Saskatchewan Degree Helps to Secure a Successful Career

Most 2018 respondents felt that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career (strongly agree = 40%, somewhat agree = 39%) (Figures 40-44).

In Saskatchewan, agreement (89% somewhat or strongly agree) increased slightly from last year, as did agreement in Edmonton (77%) and Calgary (79%). Agreement in Vancouver (71%) decreased slightly from last year (73%).

A higher percentage of current/former students (90%) agreed that a degree from the U of S helps to secure a successful career, compared to non-students (74%). Additionally, respondents with an income of $150,000 or more were more likely to agree that the U of S helps to secure a successful career, compared to respondents with incomes of $50,000 to $125,000.

Across all three questions related to the benefits of a U of S education, Saskatchewan, Calgary, and Edmonton residents either increased in their level of agreement or stayed relatively similar. Vancouver had slightly decreased agreement compared to 2017.
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 2018 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 45). The highest percentage of strong agreement came from Saskatchewan respondents, where 72% of respondents strongly agreed that research at the U of S contributes to the growth and well-being of Canada. An additional 26% somewhat agreed. Figure 45 displays the percentage of agreement among all respondents to this
statement across years.

The proportion of agreement decreased as distance from the U of S increased (97% of Saskatchewan respondents, 79% of Edmonton respondents, 88% of Calgary respondents and 76% of Vancouver respondents strongly or somewhat agreed). Figures 46-49 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 current or former U of S students. Additionally, older individuals were more likely to agree with the importance of research than younger individuals. There were no significant differences between gender, education, or income.

The change across years in the four regions were quite variable. Saskatchewan residents’ agreement did not change between 2017 and 2018. Edmonton residents’ agreement decreased slightly from the previous year. Vancouver and Calgary residents showed the highest increase in agreement across all years.

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

Among 2018 respondents, only 30% of respondents strongly agreed and 27% 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, decreased slightly in 2017, and increased again in 2018 as shown in Figure 50.

Figure 50—The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research. All regions, 2014-2018

Figure 51—The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research. SK, 2014-2018

Figure 52—The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research. Edmonton, 2014-2018

Figure 53—The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research. Calgary, 2014-2018

Figure 54—The University of Saskatchewan provides a social and economic benefit to my community through its teaching and research. Vancouver, 2014-2018
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 2016 and 2017 (Figure 51). Forty-eight percent of Edmonton respondents and 55% of Calgary respondents strongly or somewhat agreed, while only 40% of Vancouver respondents somewhat or strongly agreed (see Figures 51-54).

Strong disagreement was highest among Vancouver respondents (8%). Moreover, 25% of Vancouver respondents did not know or refused to answer this survey question.

There was a higher proportion of agreement about the social and economic benefits at the U of S among females compared to males, as well as among students compared to non-students. Older respondents also reported higher agreement compared to younger respondents and individuals with lower income reported higher agreement compared to those with higher income.

In 2018, there was the highest level of agreement (58%) that the U of S was providing a social and economic benefit to their community through teaching and research, compared to 2017 (55%), 2016 (56%), 2015 (55%), and 2014 (53%).

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, 72% 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 55.

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 2018 respondents strongly agreed that they would recommend the U of S to a close friend, while 27% somewhat agreed. Only 4% strongly disagreed with the statement. The overall percentage of agreement (strongly and somewhat agree) has increased slightly throughout the years (Figure 56), with agreement at 53%-54% since 2014. There was very high agreement among Saskatchewan residents that they would recommend the U
of S to a close friend (86%), which was a slight decrease from last year (Figure 57).

A higher percentage of respondents from Calgary (51%) and Edmonton (42%) agreed with this statement compared to Vancouver respondents (33%). Scores in Edmonton decreased from past years and 2018 has the lowest level of agreement across all years. The level of agreement among Calgary respondents increased by 6% since 2017. And in Vancouver agreement decreased slightly since 2017.

Figures 56-60 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 current or former U of S students, older respondents, and those with lower levels of education and income. There was no statistical difference between males and females.

The University of Saskatchewan Among Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone in my province

Overall, 55% strongly or somewhat agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone living in their province. Thirteen percent somewhat disagreed with this statement while 4% strongly disagreed, and 18% remained neutral. Respondents were slightly more likely to recommend the U of S to someone in their province compared to recommending to a friend. The combined responses across all regions and years are displayed in Figure 61.
Across regions, Saskatchewan respondents had the highest level of agreement (90% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed). This was substantially higher than the agreement from other regions, where 46% of Edmonton respondents agreed with the statement, 54% of Calgary respondents agreed, and 32% of Vancouver respondents agreed. Agreement among Edmonton and Vancouver respondents decreased from last year, but increased 6% in Calgary (Figures 62-65).

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 was also a significant difference between males and female, with females reporting higher agreement on recommending to someone in their province, compared to males.
University of Saskatchewan Among Top Institutions to Pursue Post-secondary Education—Recommend to someone in Canada

Among all respondents, 57% strongly or somewhat agreed that they would recommend the U of S to someone who lived in Canada. This was up slightly from 2017 (56%) equal to 2016 (57%), and up from 2015 (55%) and 2014 (52%) (Figure 66).

Agreement among Saskatchewan and Calgary residents was the highest of all five years at 86% and 55%, respectively (Figures 67 and 69). Agreement was also up slightly compared to 2017 in Edmonton at 50% (Figure 68). Agreement in Vancouver decreased slightly compared to 2017 at 38% (Figure 70).

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, and those with lower levels of income and education. There were no statistical differences between males and females.

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 (76%), followed by

Figure 66—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, 2014-2018

Figure 67—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, 2014-2018

Figure 68—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, 2014-2018

Figure 69—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, 2014-2018

Figure 70—I would recommend the University of Saskatchewan to someone who lives in Canada as one of the top institutions to pursue post-secondary education. Vancouver, 2014-2018
Calgary (49%), Edmonton (39%), and Vancouver (35%) respondents.

Compared to 2017, Saskatchewan agreement decreased slightly, but was still higher than 2016-2014. Calgary agreement in 2018 was the highest of all years and was 9% higher than 2017. Edmonton agreement has been decreasing slightly since 2016. And Vancouver agreement remained fairly stable compared to 2017 (Figures 71-75).

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, and those with lower levels income. There were no differences by gender, education, 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 Canada (57%), followed closely by recommending to someone in the province (55%). This is the reverse of the findings found in 2017, where respondents were more likely to recommend to someone in the province, then to someone in Canada.

Participants were then more likely to recommend to a close friend (53%), and least likely to recommend to someone outside Canada (50%).

Saskatchewan respondents reported the highest level of agreement across all recommendations, followed by respondents from Calgary, then Edmonton, then
Compared to 2017, agreement in 2018 generally decreased or remained the same, with a few notable exceptions. Respondents in 2018 were more likely to agree that they would recommend the U of S to someone in Canada. Additionally, Calgary respondents had higher agreement across all recommendations (i.e., close friend, someone in the province, someone in Canada, and someone outside Canada).

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 (54%) of the respondents felt that it was equal to those in their province. Thirteen percent of respondents rated the U of S as better, while 7% 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 76).

Half of Saskatchewan respondents rated the U of S as better than other institutions in the province: 16% rated the U of S as significantly better and 36% rated it as better. These rates were substantially higher than all previous years, but very similar to the ratings from 2017.

The majority of Edmonton (61%) and Calgary respondents (67%) rated the U of S as equal to post-secondary institutions in Alberta. Slightly less than half (47%) 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, 12% rated the U of S as worse or significantly worse than other institutions in their province, and so did 6% of Calgary respondents, and 12% of Vancouver respondents. This question received relatively high levels of “Don’t know” and “Refused” responses: 5% in Saskatchewan, 22% in both Edmonton, 16% in Calgary, and 37% in Vancouver (Figures 76-80).

The U of S received higher ratings from current/former students compared to non-students. Ratings were higher among those with lower levels of education and income. No significant differences between gender, age, 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, 22% of respondents felt that the U of S has a stronger reputation than it previously had, while 53% felt it was about the same, and 4% 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%). 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 (20-22%). Figure 81 displays the responses for all regions across years.

Among respondents from Saskatchewan, 30% felt that the reputation of the U of S had grown stronger over the past five years, 53% felt that it stayed the same, and 9% 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, increased in 2017, and decreased again in 2018 (Figure 82).

Twenty-one 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 lower compared to 2014 and 2016, but higher than 2015 and 2017 (Figure 83). Approximately 21% of Calgary respondents felt that the reputation of the U of S is stronger now than it was five years ago, which is the lowest across all five years (Figure 84). Similarly, only 13% of Vancouver 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 five years (Figure 85) and down from 17% in 2017.
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 57-80% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed with most statements on the survey. Public perceptions have generally stayed the same as last year.

2. Familiarity with the U of S decreased slightly from 2017, but was still similar to or higher than familiarity in 2016, 2015, and 2014, with the exception of Edmonton where familiarity in 2018 was only higher than 2014. Familiarity in Calgary in 2018 was the highest of all years.

3. The University of Saskatchewan is commonly associated with the words “education” and “Saskatoon.” The U of S was also commonly associated with “Veterinary” or “Agriculture” in the Alberta regions. Vancouver residents associated the U of S with more environmental words, including “cold” and “prairies.”

4. In 2018, the most common medium in which respondents saw or heard U of S advertisements, included other sources, such as posters, brochures, word-of-mouth, and job fairs, or through television, or social media. Hearing about advertisements through social media decreased from 2017.

5. Among 2018 respondents, U of S advertisements resulted in increased positive perception changes compared to 2017, but still lower than 2015 or 2016.

6. Mentions in the news about the U of S were perceived to be more positive and less negative, compared to 2017, with the exception of Vancouver, which was perceived more negatively than the previous year. Following this, Saskatchewan and Edmonton respondents reported an increase in positive perceptions, while Calgary and Vancouver reported a decrease in positive perceptions. However, while Calgary reported a decrease in positive perceptions, this could be partially explained by an increase in “both positively and negatively” and “don’t know/
refused” responses.

7. Several new media content topics earned high coverage ratings in 2018, including increased promotion of Indigenous students, infrastructure additions, synchrotron maintenance, and safety issues on campus (i.e., bomb threat, sexual assault).

8. Older respondents, those with lower levels of education, and those with lower income levels had higher proportions of agreement to many statements compared to younger respondents 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 and educational/workplace outcomes 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 from a variety of sources, such as television, social media, posters, brochures, websites, word-of-mouth, and job fairs, may also lead to more positive perceptions of the U of S.