

Research Results

September 2007

BC University Outcomes for Direct Entry and Transfer Students

Comparison of the Class of 2000 and Class of 1996 Five Years after Graduation

Prepared by Jean Karlinski

Background

The University of British Columbia's Planning and Institutional Research office prepared a research report¹ for the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) on the BC university graduating class of 1996 five years later. The report compared the outcomes for those students who were admitted to SFU, UBC, UNBC, and UVic as BC direct entry² with those admitted as BC college transfer students. The report was published in April 2003 and was based on a survey conducted through a partnership of the four research universities, The University Presidents' Council, and the Ministry of Advanced Education.

The results of the study showed "no major differences between direct entrants and college transfer graduates on most key outcomes, including satisfaction with the university experience, continuation of studies, unemployment rates, salaries, and social engagement". The differences that emerged between the two groups were in the area of student financing and debt.

A similar outcomes survey was conducted on the university graduating Class of 2000, five years after graduation.³ This brief report examines the similarities and differences in outcomes between direct entry and transfer graduates within the Class of 2000 to test if the findings for the Class of 1996 noted above hold true for the two groups in a subsequent graduating class. This paper also reports on the extent of any differences between the Classes of 1996 and 2000 on the various outcomes.

Class of 2000 Findings Compared with the Class of 1996

The Sample

The number of direct entry and transfer graduate respondents to the Class of 2000 survey totalled 3,080 (48% were transfer graduates, n=1,465). This compares with 3,468 such students surveyed from the Class of 1996, with similar proportions of direct entry and transfer graduates. The gender mix between the two Classes of respondents increased marginally in favour of females in 2000 (by 1% to 60% females among direct entry graduates and to 62% among transfer student graduates). While the mean age of direct entry respondents was 29.7 for both the Class of 1996 and Class of 2000, the mean age of Class of 2000 transfer respondents was slightly higher (33.1) than that of the Class of 1996 group (32.5).

Academic Program

The largest proportion of both Class of 1996 and Class of 2000 respondents completed degrees in Social Sciences (up 2% for the Class of 2000 to 30% of direct entry graduates and to 39% of college transfer graduates). As was the case for the Class of 1996, Class of 2000 direct entry graduates were far more likely than transfer graduates to complete degrees in Computing Science, Life Sciences, or Physical Sciences (more than twice as likely for the Class of 2000 compared to almost three times as likely for the Class of 1996). More Class of 2000 transfer graduates pursued Business degrees than their Class of 1996 counterparts (11% versus 7%) while the proportion of direct entry graduates completing these degrees remained fairly stable (12% for the Class of 2000).

¹ *The Class of 1996 Five Years After Graduation: Comparing BC University Outcomes for Direct Entry and Transfer Students at:*
www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/univoutcomes.pdf.

² Direct entry students entered university within one year of BC high school graduation.

³ Class of 2000 results by basis of admission used for this analysis are available at:
www.tupc.bc.ca/student_outcomes/publications/graduate_outcomes/graduate_followup_survey_2005/boa_direct_entry_vs_transfer.pdf.

Program Satisfaction

The level of program satisfaction was higher for both the Class of 2000 direct entry and transfer graduates compared to their counterparts in the Class of 1996 (see **Table 1**). Those who said they were satisfied or very satisfied rose from 96% to 98%. There was a very small increase in the proportion of graduates who would select their program again (73% for Class of 2000 direct entry graduates, and 74% for Class of 2000 transfer graduates).

“Little or no career opportunities” was cited as the top reason why graduates would not select the same program again by both Class of 1996 and Class of 2000 graduates. Thirty-two percent of Class of 2000 direct entry graduates cited this reason (compared with 30% of 1996 such graduates) along with 35% of Class of 2000 transfer graduates (compared with 33% of 1996 such graduates). The secondary reason for not selecting their program again (“interests have changed”) was much more prominent for Class of 2000 graduates (31% of direct entry graduates compared to 26% of Class of 1996 counterparts, and 28% of transfer graduates compared to 21% of Class of 1996 counterparts).

Table 1 - Program Satisfaction

	Class of 1996		Class of 2000	
	%	Number	%	Number
Satisfied or very satisfied				
Direct entry graduates	96%	1,761	98%	1,576
Transfer graduates	96%	1,563	98%	1,432
Would select program again				
Direct entry graduates	71%	1,269	73%	1,140
Transfer graduates	73%	1,150	74%	1,037
Top reasons would not select program again				
<i>“Little or no career opportunities/hard to find job”</i>				
Direct entry graduates	30%	150	32%	159
Transfer graduates	33%	146	35%	160
<i>“Interests changed”</i>				
Direct entry graduates	26%	129	31%	156
Transfer graduates	21%	92	28%	126

Further Education

Comparing the extent of further education pursued by the two Classes of baccalaureate graduates is of interest; however, due to changes in the survey question asked, the results for each Class must be examined separately. Class of 1996 graduates were asked if they had pursued “any other education or training – including programs, courses, workshops, seminars, correspondence, or tutorials”, to which 91% of direct entry respondents (n=1,674) said “yes” compared with 89% of transfer respondents (n=1,457). This question was further narrowed for the

Class of 2000 graduates who were asked if they had “taken any other formal post-secondary education or training” since graduation. Not surprisingly, the proportion who responded in the affirmative (73% of direct entry graduates, n=1,174; and 59% of transfer respondents, n=864) was lower than that of 1996 graduates whose question included a broader scope of education.

A direct comparison of the types of further formal education pursued by the Class of 2000 versus Class of 1996 is not possible, as such a question was asked only of Class of 2000 respondents. The Class of 1996 survey asked respondents for their reason for further education and training (e.g., to “pursue Masters studies, pursue Doctoral studies”) and location of further education (e.g., university vs. college, university college, or institute, etc.). Looking at the responses, one can still say that direct entry graduates in both graduating classes had a somewhat higher tendency toward Masters and Doctoral studies compared to transfer graduates. The most significant reason for further education cited by 1996 graduates was that it was “career/job/employment related” (65% of transfer graduates vs. 60% of direct entry graduates).

Table 2 - Full/Part-Time Status of those Enrolled

Class of 1996: Took any other education or training					
	Direct entry graduates		Transfer graduates		
	%	Number	%	Number	
Full-time	47%	275	Full-time	33%	148
Part-time	53%	316	Part-time	67%	296
Total	100%	591	Total	100%	444
Class of 2000: Took any other formal post-secondary education					
	Direct entry graduates		Transfer graduates		
	%	Number	%	Number	
Full-time	65%	295	Full-time	50%	151
Part-time	35%	160	Part-time	50%	150
Total	100%	455	Total	100%	301

Table 2 (above) indicates that of those graduates who pursued further education or training and were currently enrolled, direct entry graduates had a greater tendency compared to transfer graduates to study full-time. Part-time study was more prevalent for both groups in the Class of 1996 where the scope of education and training referred to was broadened to include informal education and training. Among the Class of 2000 respondents, direct entry graduates pursued full-time post-secondary education over transfer graduates by a ratio of 1.3 (65% vs. 50% studying full-time).

Education Financing and Debt

The same proportion (55%) of transfer graduates in both the Class of 1996 and Class of 2000 reported incurring some financial debt to pay for their education program (n= 867 and n=799 respectively). A somewhat higher proportion (39%, n=625) of Class of 2000 direct entry graduates reported incurring some debt compared to their 1996 counterparts (35%, n=634). The Class of 1996 outcomes analysis indicated that the differences between direct entry and transfer graduates was in the area of student financing and debt, with transfer graduates incurring higher average levels of debt and relying on student loans to a far greater extent. This is also the case for Class of 2000 graduates.

Table 3a - Debt Levels

	Class of 1996	Class of 1996 (in 2000 \$)	Class of 2000	Percentage Change
Total average debt				
Direct entry graduates	14,931	15,528	17,904	15%
Transfer graduates	20,465	21,284	24,373	15%
Difference	5,534	5,755	6,469	
Average government student loan debt				
Direct entry graduates	14,023	14,584	14,772	1%
Transfer graduates	18,379	19,114	20,076	5%
Difference	4,356	4,530	5,304	

Table 3b - Average student debt remaining as % of total average student debt

	Class of 1996	Class of 2000
Direct entry graduates		
Aver. gov't debt remaining	\$6,297	\$8,327
Aver. gov't loan debt	\$14,023	\$14,772
% gov't loan remaining	45%	56%
Transfer graduates		
Aver. gov't debt remaining	\$8,783	\$11,161
Aver. gov't loan debt	\$18,379	\$20,076
% gov't loan remaining	48%	56%

According to **Table 3a** (above), not only did Class of 2000 transfer graduates incur higher average levels of debt overall, but the average total debt level for both direct entry and transfer graduates was 15% higher than for their Class of 1996 counterparts, taking inflation into account. Interestingly, only a small proportion of this increase can be attributed to average government student loan debt. While 1996 transfer graduates had a somewhat higher proportion of average student loan debt left to repay five years later compared with direct entry graduates (48% vs. 45%), the proportion left to repay for the two groups in the Class of 2000 (56%) was the same and significantly higher than for their 1996 counterparts (see **Table 3b**).

These increases could perhaps be explained in part by higher living costs for the Class of 2000 graduates⁴ and higher tuition fee totals over the course of their program even with a tuition fee freeze in effect between 1996 and 2000.

The Class of 2000 respondents' reliance on employment, student loans, and family/friends to fund their baccalaureate education was significantly higher than for that of their Class of 1996 counterparts, although employment was cited as the primary funding source for both graduating classes. Reliance on family/friends increased the most for direct entry graduates (cited by 28% of 1996 graduates and 45% of 2000 graduates) while for transfer graduates reliance on employment increased the most (cited by 33% of 1996 graduates and 54% of 2000 graduates). These findings could be a reflection of the age of the two groups, with the older transfer graduates expected to be more self-reliant (thus looking more to employment earnings for income) while the younger direct entry graduates are still able to count on family for financial support. More detail is found in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Top Education Funding Sources Cited*

	Class of 1996		Class of 2000	
	(%)	Number	(%)	Number
Employment				
Direct entry graduates	36%	666	50%	809
Transfer graduates	33%	532	54%	784
Student loans				
Direct entry graduates	16%	294	29%	476
Transfer graduates	32%	519	49%	722
Family/friends				
Direct entry graduates	28%	520	45%	726
Transfer graduates	22%	354	33%	483

*Note Each respondent was asked to cite their top two funding sources.

Labour Market Outcomes

Table 5 (next page) shows that while the proportion of Class of 1996 direct entry and transfer graduates who were in the labour force at the time of the survey was high and roughly equal, the proportion of Class of 2000 direct entry graduates in the labour force was less (86% compared with 90% for 1996). The proportion of those working who held more than one job was less for Class of 2000 transfer graduates (13% compared to 17% for the Class of 1996) while it remained about the same for Class of 1996 (12%) and Class of 2000 direct entry graduates (13%).

⁴ The BC Consumer Price Index rose 12 points between 2000 and 2005, but only 6.3 points between 1996 and 2001. (Source: Statistics Canada prepared by BC Stats.)

A higher proportion of Class of 2000 graduates felt that their main job was very related or somewhat related to their program of study (70% vs. 68% for direct entry graduates); this was more so the case for transfer graduates (76% vs. 70%). While an equal proportion (66%) of Class of 2000 direct entry and transfer graduates were in professional occupations requiring university education, this represents a 3% drop over 1996 direct entry graduates and a 3% increase over 1996 transfer graduates.

Respondents from both graduating classes who chose not to work at the time of the survey cited full-time study as the top reason for not being employed. This was cited by 59% of Class of 2000 direct entry graduates (up 5% over 1996 graduates) and by 26% of that year's transfer graduates (down from 32% of 1996 graduates). Caring for children full-time was no longer among the top three reasons for transfer graduates not working (down from 19% to 7%) while leave of absence continued to be a significant reason for not working, for direct entry and transfer graduates.

Table 5 - Employment Status

	Class of 1996		Class of 2000	
	(%)	Number	(%)	Number
In Labour Force*				
Direct entry	90%	1,587	86%	1,389
Transfer graduates	92%	1,483	91%	1,330
Held > 1 Job				
Direct entry	12%	192	13%	169
Transfer graduates	17%	237	13%	168
Job very or somewhat related				
Direct entry	68%	1,081	70%	940
Transfer graduates	70%	1,007	76%	968
In professional occupation requiring university education				
Direct entry	69%	1,087	66%	892
Transfer graduates	63%	904	66%	840

*Includes those working or seeking work at time of survey.

Social Engagement

As stated in the *Class of 1996 Five Years after Graduation* newsletter, "graduates' level of social engagement can be considered an important outcomes measure for our higher education system". A somewhat higher percentage of Class of 2000 graduates reportedly made charitable donations in the year prior to the survey compared to their Class of 1996 counterparts (79% of direct entry graduates and 81% of transfer graduates compared to about 76% of both groups in the Class of 1996). Furthermore, about half of the Class of 2000 graduates felt that their entire university experience, including extra-curricular and social activities, motivated them to undertake volunteer work "to some extent" or "to a great extent" (50% for direct entrants and 46% for transfers). Thirty-eight percent of Class of 1996 direct entry graduates attributed their university education to motivating them to volunteer "to some extent" or "to a great extent" compared with 44% of transfer graduates in that year. Due to the subtle difference in the question that was asked in each survey on this topic, it is not surprising that the figure cited for Class of 2000 graduates is somewhat higher.

Conclusion

While the above comparison shows differences in the outcomes of direct entry and transfer graduates between the two graduating classes of 2000 and 1996, what stays constant for the Class of 2000 are the similarities and differences between the direct entry and transfer graduates that were found in the Class of 1996 report. These include similar levels of program satisfaction, greater likelihood of direct entry students to study full-time, higher average debt levels and reliance on student loans to fund education for transfer graduates compared to greater reliance by direct entry graduates on family and friends, roughly equal levels of professional employment, and comparable levels of social engagement. Overall, the findings confirm the favourable impact of a baccalaureate education on university graduates no matter what their entry route to university, albeit at a higher financial cost for Class of 2000 students.

BC Council on Admissions & Transfer
709 – 555 Seymour Street
Vancouver BC Canada V6B 3H6
bccat.ca | admin@bccat.ca
t 604 412 7700 | f 604 683 0576



BCTRANSFERGUIDE.CA



EDUCATIONPLANNER.CA

© 2007 BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

This newsletter is also available on BCCAT.ca in PDF format. Printed in Canada.