









# Executive Summary

In the 2011 BC Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS), respondents were asked to provide information on their educational experiences, participation in further education, and labour force outcomes. A special set of questions focussed on social engagement, to gauge the extent to which students felt their educational experiences had influenced their social, environmental, and cultural engagement after graduation.

Of the 14,694 graduates who were eligible to participate in the 2011 web survey, 3,377 responded—a response rate of 23 percent. Eighty-seven percent of respondents were from the province's three large research-intensive universities: the University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), and University of Victoria (UVIC). The remaining

### *Labour Force Outcomes*

Eighty-nine percent of survey participants were in the labour force (either working or seeking employment) at the time of the survey. The unemployment rate for respondents was 4.8 percent, considerably lower than the overall provincial population (7.5 percent) at the time of the survey. Of those respondents employed at the time of the survey, nine out of ten were working full-time.

More than two-thirds (71 percent) of working graduates said their job was *very* or *some-what related* to their program of study.

### *Income*

The median total annual income of graduates working full-time was \$57,000, though there was significant variation by program area. For example, graduates from applied program areas such as Law, Engineering, Health Professions, Computing Science, and Business were earning between \$67,000 and \$97,000, on average, while graduates from Fine and Performing Arts programs had the lowest annual full-time income (median: \$39,000).

### *Civic Engagement*

Voting in elections, making purchasing decisions based on values and using the Internet to raise awareness were among the most common civic engagement activities in which respondents participated.

Half of respondents said their education had affected their engagement in value-based purchasing (50 percent either *to a great extent* or *to some extent*). Although 89 percent of respondents reported having voted in elections, only 43 percent said their education had impacted their likelihood of voting.

### *Volunteering and Philanthropy*

Overall, female respondents were more likely than their male counterparts to have contributed either time or money to charitable causes.

Nearly half of graduates (44 percent) stated that they had donated (either *a great deal* or *somewhat*) money and/or time to poverty organizations. Contributing to health and community organizations was also common.

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### *Civic Engagement*

Despite the fact that over half of graduates (59 percent) maintained that civic engagement is important in their lives, only 39 percent said their educational experiences led to an increase in their level of engagement. Some respondents from certain program areas seemed to have been more influenced than others.

### *Environmental Sustainability*

Most of the graduates surveyed (78 percent) indicated that it was important to be engaged in environmental sustainability. Many (50 percent) also claimed that their experiences at their respective institutions increased their level of engagement.

### *Social Diversity*

About half of survey participants (52 percent) stated that their educational experience increased their level of engagement in social diversity. This was particularly true for Social Sciences graduates (61 percent).

### *Lifelong Learning*

Perhaps the most notable finding of this section of the survey was that nearly all of respondents (95 percent overall) said that lifelong learning was important. Most (76 percent) also agreed that their level of engagement increased as a result of their educational experiences. In general, graduates from all institutions and all programs reported similarly positive levels of engagement in lifelong learning.



# Introduction

In 2011, B.C. graduates who obtained their bachelor's degrees in 2006 were given an opportunity to participate in the BC Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS) to provide feedback and comments on their educational experiences. The information provided by the graduates is vital to the institutions in their educational planning and also provides a basis for policy development and accountability for the government. Prospective students and academic advisers can also benefit from this information for their own educational programs and planning.

In the 2011 survey, baccalaureate graduates were asked to provide information on their satisfaction with their degree program, skills and abilities acquired, participation in further post-secondary education, labour force outcomes, and education financing and debt. New to the survey in 2011 was a special set of questions pertaining to social engagement and the importance of being actively engaged. These new questions aimed to gauge the extent to which students felt their educational experiences had influenced their social, environmental, and cultural engagement after graduation.

Social and civil engagement, whether it is as simple as voting or as multifaceted as the various forms of involvement in social and civil issues measured in this survey, is essential for the social and economic success of a nation. This survey of the class of 2006, five years after graduation begins the process of providing metrics toward a new era in B.C. post-secondary education. The graduates of 2006 experienced most of their university education in the early years of the 21st century. As B.C. universities prepare to move forward into this new century, they are currently in the process of implementing strategic plans that dramatically re-envision the nature of undergraduate education. Part of this process includes a renewed emphasis on social and civil engagement as part of every undergraduate's education. One of the primary purposes of this survey is to provide a baseline for these broad and difficult-to-measure outcomes as we move forward with our 21st century strategic plans.

## Response Rates and System Overview

The eligible cohort for the 2011 survey was composed of baccalaureate graduates from 2006 who earned their degrees from the University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of Victoria (UVIC), University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Royal Roads University (RRU), or Thompson Rivers University (TRU).



## Demographic breakdown

At the time of the survey, respondents ranged in age from 25 to 79. Only 18 percent of respondents were older than 34. The median age of the eligible cohort (30) was slightly higher than the median age of respondents (29).

As in past surveys, women were slightly more likely to have responded (24 percent) than men were (22 percent).

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) were female, though there were variations by program area. Only Business and Physical Sciences programs had approximately equal numbers of male and female respondents. Females made up a smaller proportion of Engineering (19 percent) and Computing Science (20 percent) graduates, but were a majority in Education (77 percent), Fine and Performing Arts (80 percent) and Health Professions (83 percent). Most Health Professions graduates had taken nursing—a program that traditionally attracts a female majority.

**Median age by program area and institution**

Program and Institution	Respondents	Cohort
Health Professions	34	33
Natural Resources	30	30
Computing Science	29	29
Health, Fitness and Kinesiology	29	29
Social Sciences	29	29
Physical Sciences	29	29
RRU	34	33
SFU	30	31
UVIC	30	30
Overall	29	30



# Core Survey Results

## Satisfaction

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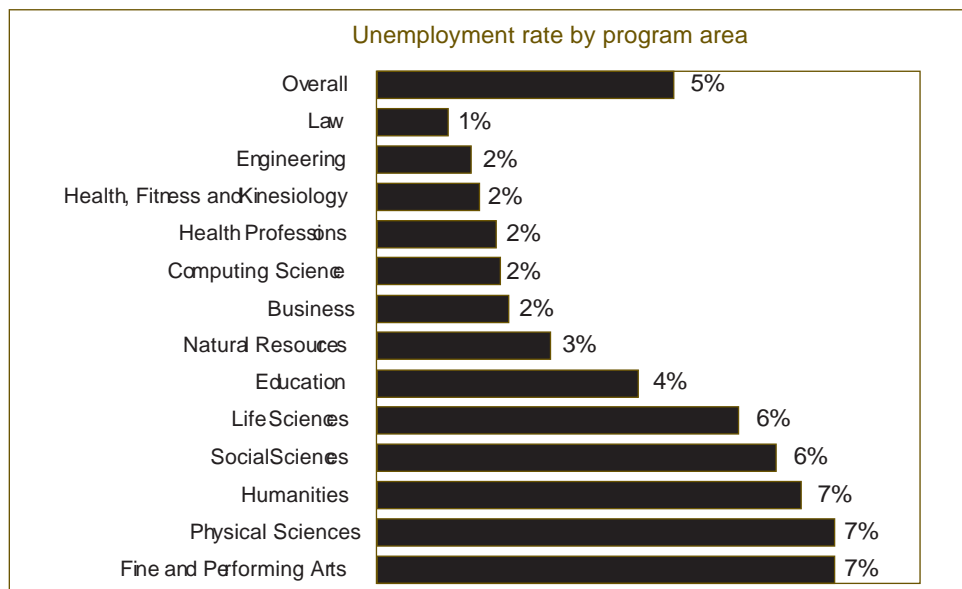
Results varied by program area. Graduates from Natural Resources (98 percent) and Business programs (95 percent) were the most likely to report being *very satisfied* or *satisfied*. Law graduates (84 percent) and Education graduates (84 percent) have the lowest combined percentage of those saying they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied*; however, Law graduates are the most likely to say they were *very satisfied* with their programs.



## Labour Force Outcomes

Eighty-nine percent of respondents were in the labour force—working or looking for work—at the time of the survey. Overall, the unemployment rate of respondents was 4.8 percent compared with 7.5 percent for the general population in B.C. and 7.4 percent for all of Canada (Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey prepared by BC Stats February 2012).

Unemployment rates varied by program area, but they were lower than the B.C. and Canada rates in every case.

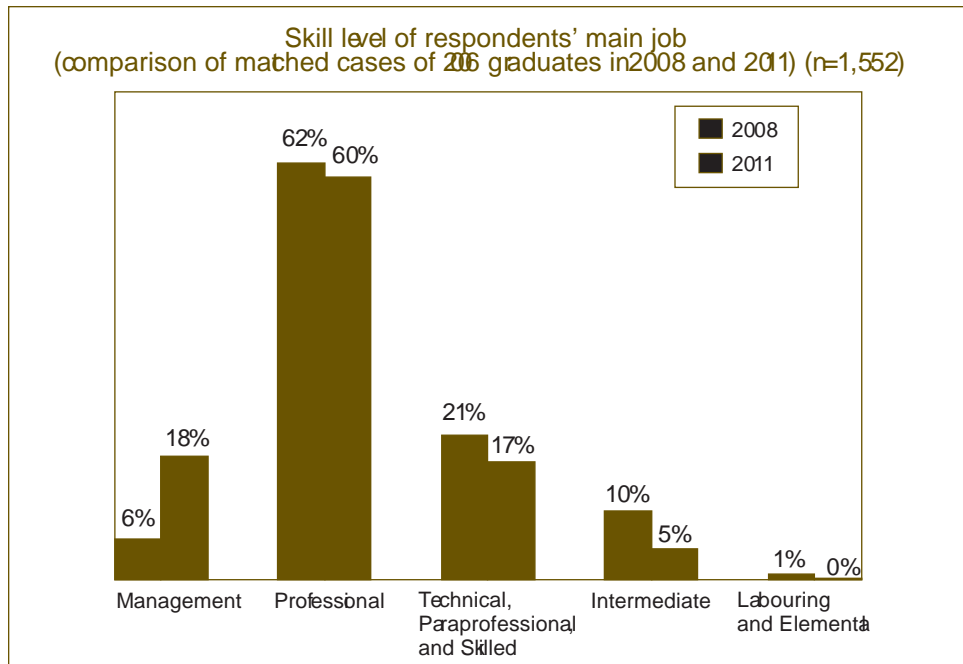


Graduates from six of the thirteen program areas had unemployment rates of 2 percent or lower, five years after graduating. Those who were most likely to be unemployed were

Program Area	(n)			
Fine and Performing Arts	12	\$38,500	\$44,234	15%
Computing Science	37	\$45,360	\$73,000	61%
Engineering	58	\$60,000	\$77,000	28%
Education	80	\$45,500	\$55,000	21%
Law	37	\$70,000	\$100,000	43%
Health Professions	86	\$60,160	\$71,134	18%
Health, Fitness and Kinesiology	13	\$45,000	\$55,000	22%
Business	113	\$50,000	\$70,000	40%
Natural Resources	23	\$48,667	\$63,000	29%
Social Sciences	263	\$45,000	\$52,000	16%
Humanities	86	\$43,918	\$49,700	13%
Life Sciences	59	\$437		



## Skill Level and Skill Type of Jobs



Almost half of those in the comparison group (47 percent) were in Professional occupations in both 2008 and 2011. More than half (51 percent) of those in Management positions in 2011 had been in Professional positions in 2008.

## Remaining Debt

Of the 3,377 graduates who completed the survey, only 875 (26 percent) reported outstanding student loan debt from the program they leave years before. The percentage who still had debt, and the amount owing, varied by program area.

**Outstanding student loan debt by program area**

Program Area	Outstanding Debt (n)	No Debt Remaining (n)	Outstanding Debt (%)	Median Outstanding
Fine and Performing Arts	34	65	34%	\$17,500
Computing Science	15	103	13%	\$12,000
Engineering	29	122	19%	\$10,000
Education	109	217	33%	\$15,000
Law	26	61	30%	\$19,500
Health Professions	53	165	24%	\$20,000
Health Fitness and Kinesiology	17	54	24%	\$12,500
Business	55	292	16%	\$14,000
Natural Resources	23	60	28%	\$19,000
Social Sciences	292	692	30%	\$18,000
Humanities	112	291	28%	\$20,000
Life Sciences	73	256	22%	\$15,000
Physical Sciences	37	124	23%	\$20,000

Graduates from Health Professions, Physical Sciences, and Humanities programs had the most debt remaining, on average (median: \$20,000), while Engineering graduates had the least (median: \$10,000). Computing Science graduates were the least likely to have outstanding debt (13 percent) while Fine and Social Sciences graduates were the most likely to have outstanding debt (38 percent).



# Social Engagement

This section of the report presents the social engagement findings of the 2011 BC Baccalaureate Graduates Survey. The 2011 Survey introduced new measures of assessment to evaluate social engagement among university graduates in British Columbia. In future years, it will be possible to monitor these key measures and to document changes in response to trends over time.

The survey used five key measures to evaluate respondents' educational experience as it pertains to social engagement: educational engagement, civic engagement, volunteering and philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and goal achievement.

Not surprisingly, older respondents were more likely to have participated in social engagement activities. Indeed, respondents aged 50 and over were the most likely to report all types of engagement as being important in their lives. This factor can influence results by program type, as well as by institution. For example, since older people are more likely to be actively involved in all types of social engagement, it makes sense that respondents from institutions with graduates of higher median age, such as Royal Roads University, have elevated engagement rates. The same could be said for graduates of particular programs where the median age is higher than others (e.g., Law). Although older respondents are more likely to be involved in social engagement activities and to consider them more important than their younger counterparts, the extent to which respondents felt that their educational experience influenced their social engagement did not differ considerably by age.

Social engagement appears to differ little by gender; however, female respondents were more likely to participate in social engagement activities, particularly those involving donating time or money to charitable organizations. Interestingly, there is less variation among male and female respondents when it comes to the influence of their education on their level of social engagement.

## Educational Engagement

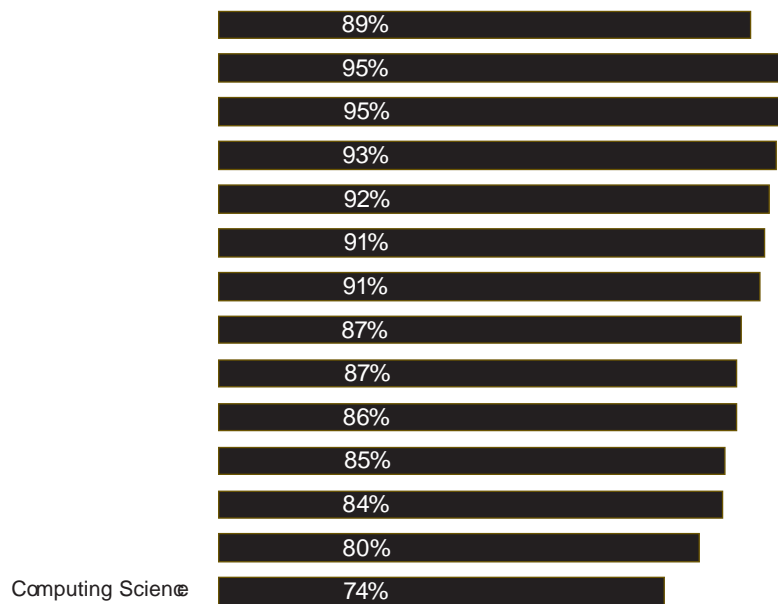
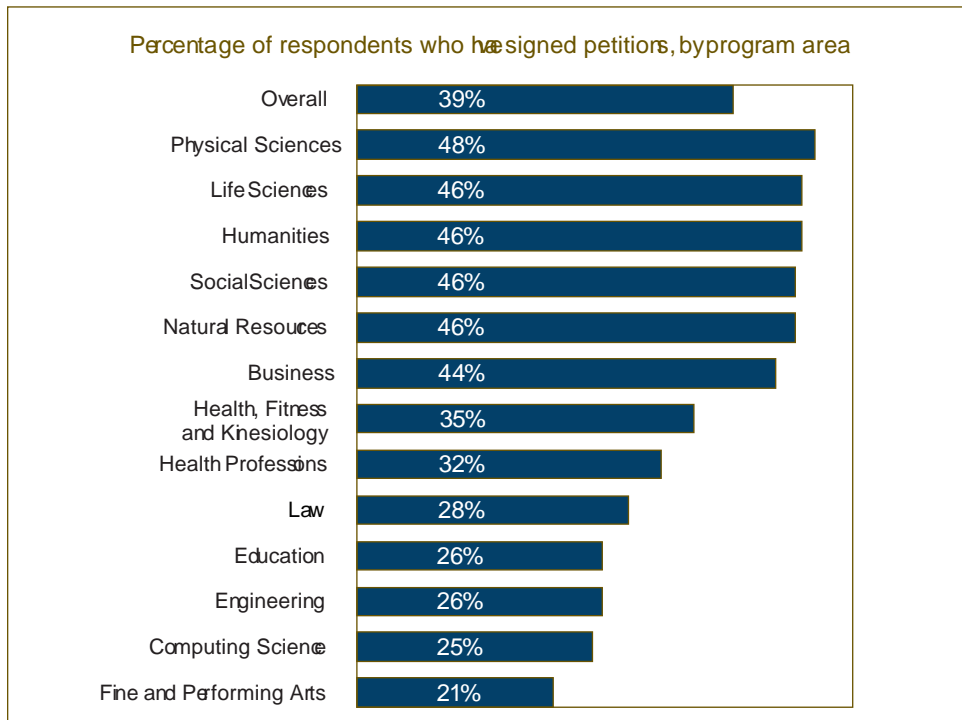
The first questions pertaining to social engagement dealt with sources of educational engagement. Specifically, participants were asked which aspects of their educational experience had the most impact on their life after graduation. The aspects most commonly mentioned as influential included course work, friendships and peer interactions, and interaction with faculty. On the other hand, even when factoring in the lower rate of participation in certain

activities, involvement in things such as student clubs, study abroad, and teaching assistantships appear to have been somewhat less influential.

The majority (85 percent) of respondents agreed that course work had *a strong impact* or *some impact* on their lives, while a little over three quarters (76 percent) said the same of friendship/peer interactions, and over half (56 percent) found interaction with faculty

Activity	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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The charts below illustrate the program area variations of two of the top issues of public importance mentioned by respondents: petition signing and voting.





Although it is important to measure participation in civic activities, it is of equal value to determine the degree to which the respondents feel their educational experience influenced their involvement in such activities.

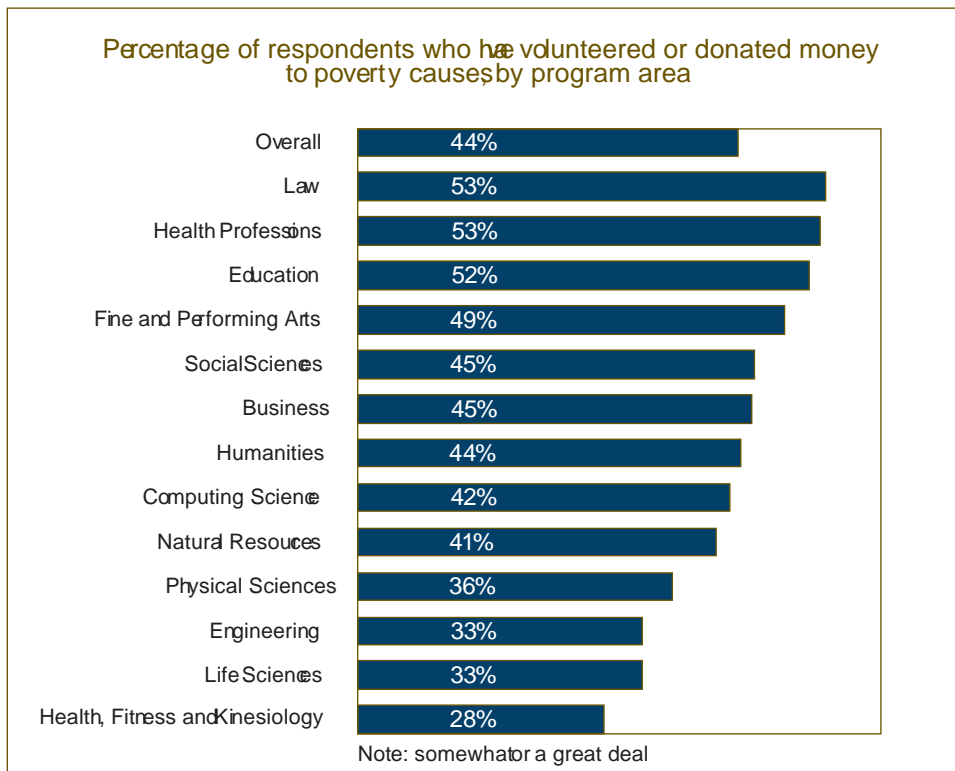
There was notable variation in responses. The largest percentages of respondents maintained that their educational experiences had an impact on their involvement in voting in an election (43 percent either *to a great extent* or *to some extent*) and value-based purchas-



Extent to which respondents have volunteered or donated money,  
by type of charitable organization

Type of charity	A Great Deal	Somewhat	A Little	None
Arts	5%	13%	22%	60%
Community	13%	30%	29%	28%
Education	10%	23%	24%	43%
Environmental	5%	19%	27%	49%
Health	12%	28%	25%	35%
Human Rights	6%	17%	19%	57%
International Development	7%	16%	17%	61%
Natural Disasters	7%	26%	29%	38%
Political Parties	1%	5%	8%	86%
Poverty	10%	34%	33%	24%
Religion	7%	7%	9%	77%
Social Justice	6%	12%	16%	66%
Youth Organizations	7%	17%	26%	50%

Not surprisingly, graduates were more likely to have donated money to a charitable organization specifically related to their field of study. Natural Resources graduates, for example, had the highest rate of donation to environmental groups, while graduates from Health Professions and Life Sciences most commonly contributed to health charities. Similarly,



Further to exploring respondents' charitable activities, the survey asked to what extent participants' educational experience influenced their involvement in these activities. There is considerable disparity among graduates from different programs in terms of the perceived impact of their educational experience on their participation in volunteering and philanthropy. Over one-third (37 percent) of graduates from Natural Resources

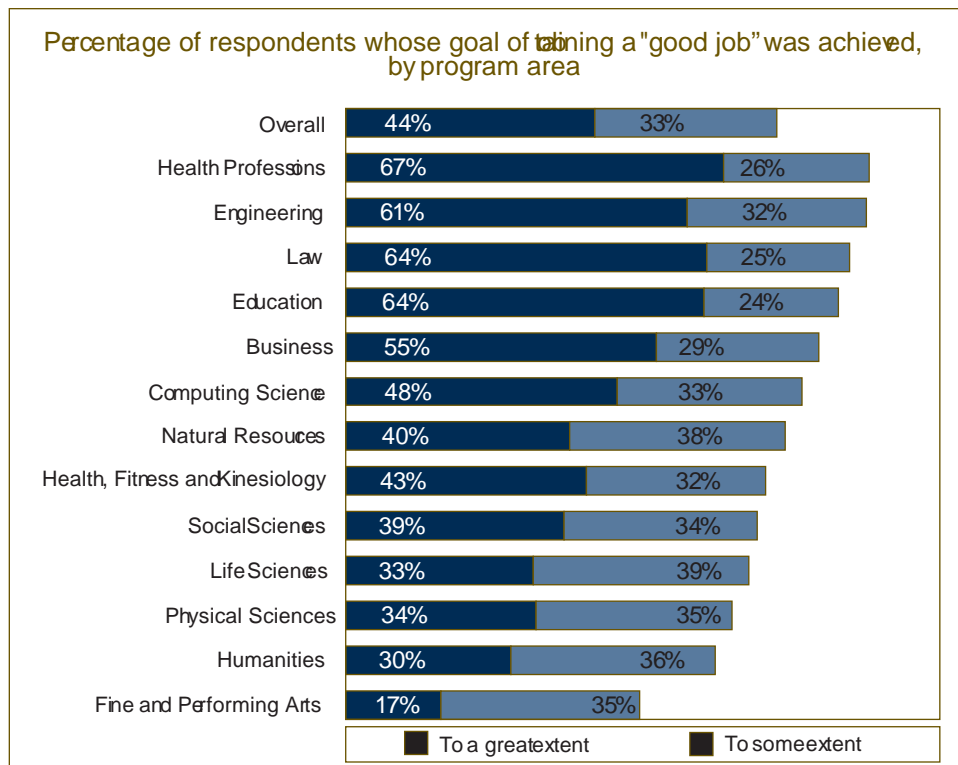
**Percentage of graduates who do or do not consider themselves to have been a social entrepreneur by program area**

Program Area	No	Yes	Yes%
Fine and Performing Arts	59	22	27%
Natural resources	59	12	17%
Law	62	12	16%
Social Sciences	711	132	16%
Life Sciences	237	46	16%
Humanities	289	51	15%
Education	229	38	14%
Business	253	36	12%
Physical Sciences	124	17	12%
Health, Fitness, Kinesiology	54	7	11%
Health Professions	168	18	10%
Engineering	125	10	7%
Computing Science	100	4	4%
Overall	2,470	405	14%

## Goals

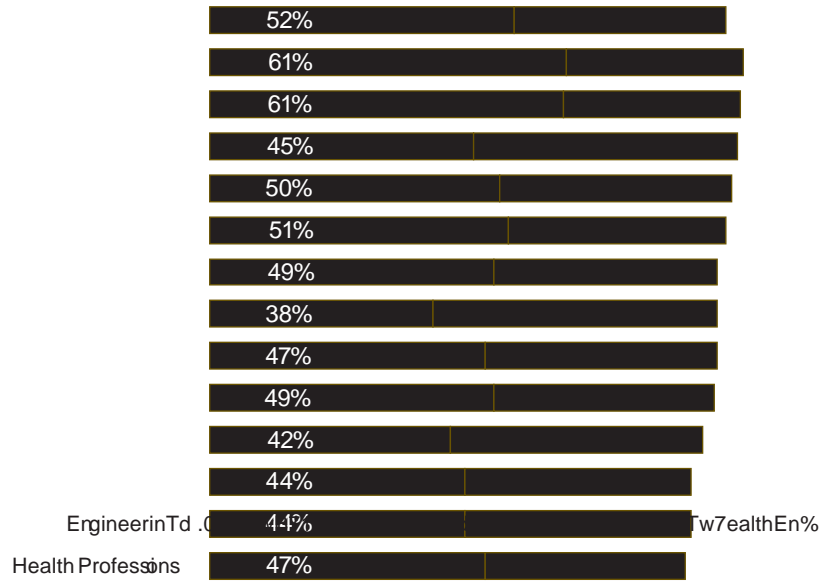
There are some notable connections between goals achieved after graduation and social engagement. Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to gauge the types of goals they set for themselves, as well as the extent to which they felt their educational experience had helped them to achieve these goals.

Generally speaking, the most commonly-achieved goals included to be able to get a good

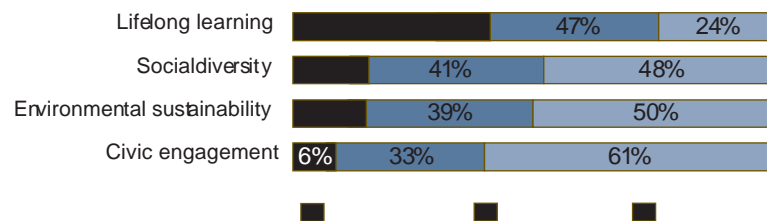


Job placement is not the only important goal that drives student success. Somewhat more qualitative aspirations, such as fostering personal interest and an appreciation of ideas, also play a role. A large majority of graduates (88 percent) reached the goal of obtaining a general education and appreciation of ideas (*to a great extent* or *to some extent*). The proportion of students who had succeeded in this particular goal was 66% (n=404) (f g)-5(rad)

The following two figures show the variation of these somewhat qualitative goals. A more detailed breakdown is available in a table in the Appendix.





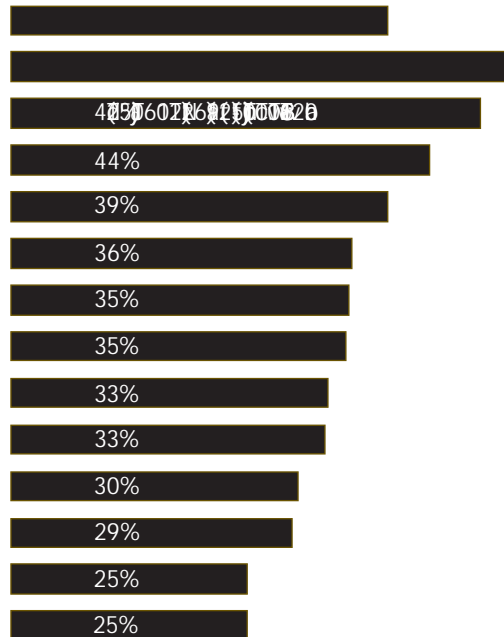


Percentage of graduates who consider it important to be civically engaged and those whose educational experience increased this engagement, by institution

Institution	Important	Increased
RRU	63%	40%
SFU	57%	36%
TRU	58%	38%
UBC	58%	38%
UNBC	58%	44%
UVIC	67%	45%
Overall	59%	39%

Note: Very important or somewhat important and increased to some extent or to a great extent

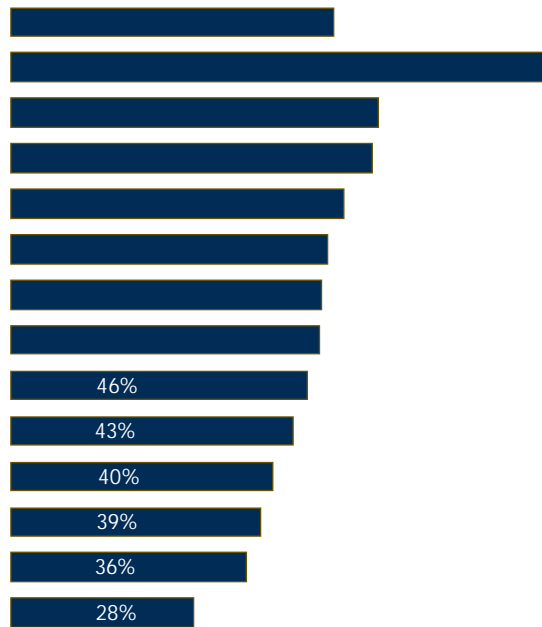
Certain program areas seem to have been more likely to have influenced graduates in their civic engagement. Natural Resources and Social Sciences graduates were, by far, the most likely to attribute an increase to their educational experience. On the other hand, graduates from Computing Science and Health, Fitness and Kinesiology found their studies to have had less of an impact in this capacity.

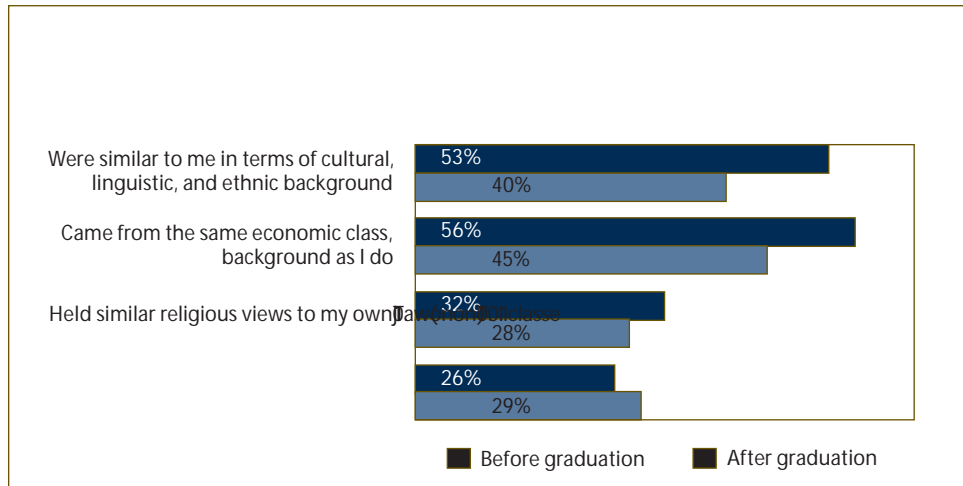


## Environmental Sustainability

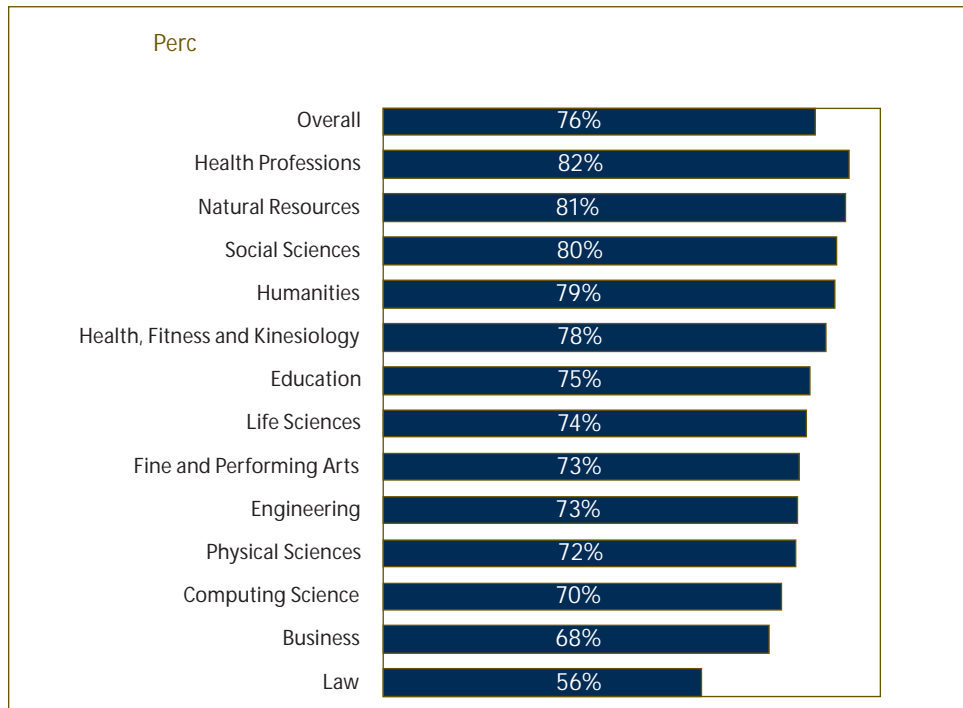
Respondents were asked a series of questions intended to measure their perceptions of environmental sustainability. The majority of graduates (78 percent) stated that it was important to be engaged in environmental sustainability and many (50 percent) also claimed that their experiences at their respective institutions increased their level of engagement.

Institution	Important	Increased













# Conclusion

These graduates of British Columbia's baccalaureate programs acquire considerable benefits

The largest impact, by far, has been on lifelong learning. This finding has several policy implications. First, lifelong learning is closely related to economic growth and productivity: a university education not only provides students with the education needed for the current labour market but also provides an essential foundation for continued progress and participation in a changing knowledge-based economy.

Second, graduates from all program areas indicated that their educational experience encouraged their drive for lifelong learning—a successful outcome that goes beyond the

Program Area	Be able to get a good job	General education	Become a more cultured person	Make more money	Learn about things of interest	Training for a		
Fine & Performing Arts	52%	90%	80%	35%	86%	47%	50%	26%
Computing Science	81%	85%	51%	73%	87%	71%	31%	44%
Engineering	93%	83%	55%	86%	88%	78%	44%	49%
Education	88%	83%	55%	74%	85%	93%	57%	28%
Law	89%	87%	42%	84%	83%	91%	32%	32%
Health Professions	93%	82%	54%	84%	85%	90%	60%	29%
Health, Fitness & Kinesiology	75%	87%	41%	57%	86%	51%	49%	29%
Business	84%	87%	61%	81%	78%	66%	53%	49%
Natural Resources	78%	88%	55%	56%	88%	59%	42%	28%
Social Sciences	73%	92%	71%	64%	90%	48%	55%	44%
Humanities	66%	91%	77%	56%	91%	41%	55%	41%
Life Sciences	72%	91%	56%	58%	88%	60%	68%	45%
Physical Sciences	69%	87%	59%	60%	88%	56%	51%	42%
Overall	77%	88%	63%	67%	87%	61%	54%	40%

