



**Destinations and Aspirations of Fraser Region  
Secondary School Graduates of 2003/04  
Who Did Not Pursue  
Public Post-Secondary Education in 2004/05  
in British Columbia**

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**For the Fraser Region  
Consortium**

**August 21, 2006**





## Executive Summary

The Fraser Region Consortium (FRC), including Douglas College, Kwantlen University College, University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) wanted to gain a better understanding of the further education destinations, intentions and attitudes of recent high school graduates by speaking directly to the students via a telephone survey in March, April and May of 2006. The FRC, through Malatest and Associates, surveyed roughly 2,300 Fraser Region secondary school graduates of 2003/04 who were not registered at a BC public post-secondary institution in the 2004/05 registration year.

### Major Findings:

From the survey of Fraser Region students who graduated in 2003/04 and were not registered in a BC public post-secondary institution in 2004/05, we learned that:

- a) Approximately 80% of all secondary school graduates of the Fraser Region in 2003/04 pursued some form of further education by May of 2006:
  - 64% registered in a BC public post-secondary institution,
  - 8% registered in BC private institutions,
  - 2% sought additional secondary school upgrading,
  - nearly 4% left BC to attend other Canadian or American institutions, and
  - roughly 1% attended another institution.
- b) All but 2% of the respondents pursued or intended to pursue some form of further education: 13% had applied, 29% intended to apply and 57% registered.
- c) Of those who applied, 81% subsequently registered in further education somewhere; 13% have been accepted, but have not yet registered, 3% were denied admission and the remaining 3% are still awaiting a decision.
- d) Of those who registered, 27% completed their short program, 62% are still actively registered, and 11% are no longer registered.
- e) Application and registration destinations were mainly in British Columbia (50% in BC public institutions, 22% private and 5% secondary school upgrading). A further 7% applied, intend to apply or registered elsewhere in Canada, 2% in the United States, and 3% elsewhere.
- f) Only 20% of Fraser Region graduates of 2003/04 have not yet registered in a further education program:
  - 6% applied,
  - 13% will probably apply sometime in the future, and
  - only 1% will probably never apply.
- g) By integrating the survey results with prior research conducted by the Student Transitions Project (Research Question #2)<sup>1</sup>, this study was able to quantify the

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<sup>1</sup> The Student Transitions Project (Research Question #2) links information from students in the K-12 system to the BC public post-secondary institutions through the Provincial Education Number in a way that protects personal privacy, yet provides information on the transition of students from BC secondary school graduation to registration in a BC public post-secondary institution. More information may be found at [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports).

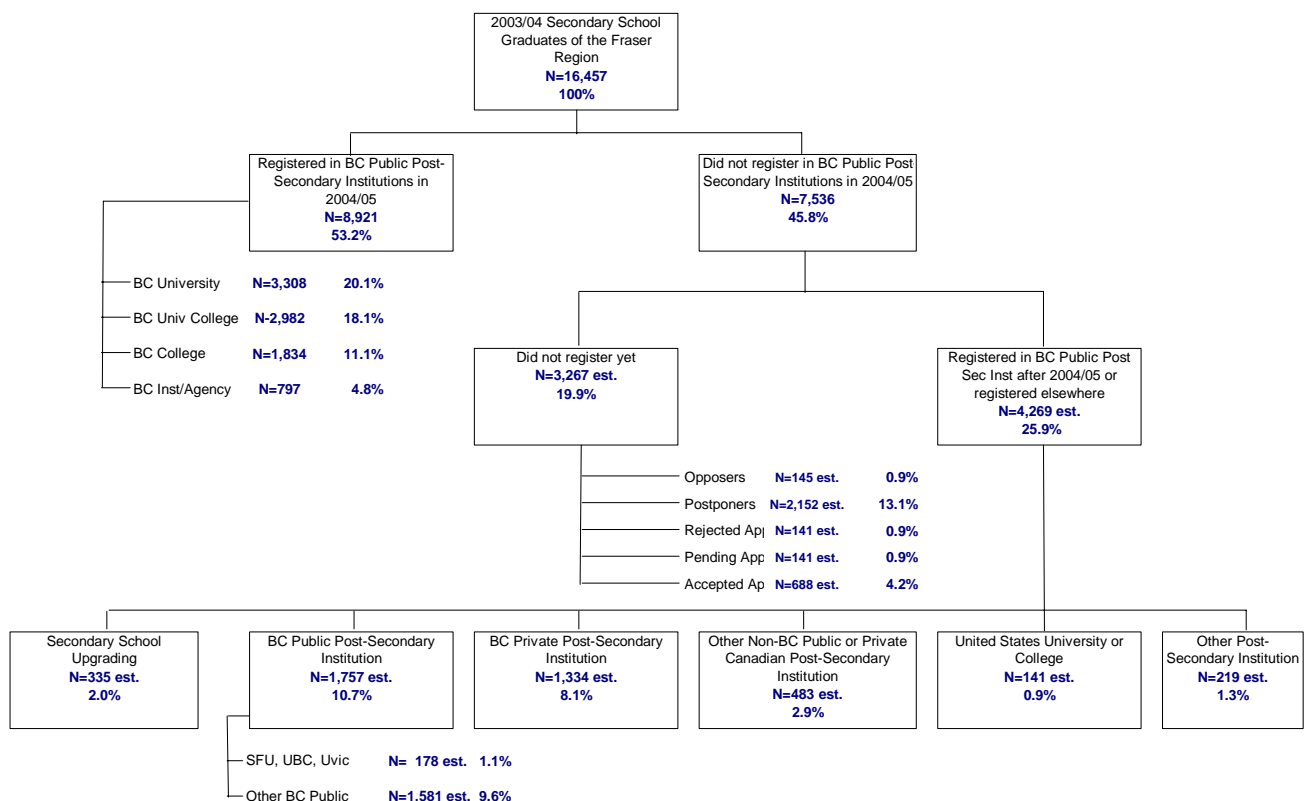
post-secondary destinations of 16,457 Fraser Region graduates of 2003/04.

A total of 8,921 (54.2%) entered BC public post-secondary institutions in 2004/05 and a further 25.9% registered later or registered in post-secondary institutions elsewhere, including 10.7% in BC public post-secondary institutions, 8.1% in BC private institutions, 2.9% elsewhere in Canada, 2.0% in a BC secondary upgrading program, 0.9% in the United States and 1.3% elsewhere. In other words, 3.8% of the Fraser Region's secondary school graduates left the province to pursue their further education. Students with high GPA's (above 85%)

were often found among those who left BC to attend other institutions in Canada or the United States (see Figure A).

h) Although a high proportion of respondents applied or registered for further education, less than one-third took an academic route to graduation, completing English 12 and at least three other academic courses. Only half of all respondents were interested in what they were learning in class and an equal proportion felt they did not have a clear academic direction. The main reasons why some have not applied for further education yet include financial reasons, procrastination and general uncertainty of what they want to do.

**Figure A: Post-Secondary Destinations of 2003/04 Secondary School Graduates of the Fraser Region**



**Notes:**

1. Where N's are indicated with "est.", the values have been estimated from the 2,136 students who were surveyed in May/June of 2006, of whom 1,210 registered in a post-secondary institution.
2. 53.2% of post-secondary destinations occurred in the 2004/05 academic year in BC public post-secondary institutions; the remaining post-secondary transitions occurred in the 2004/05 academic year in institutions other than BC public post-secondary institutions, such as BC private or non-BC public and these transitions occurred up until the time of the survey in April/May of 2006.
3. All %'s are expressed as a proportion of the 2003/04 population of Fraser Region graduates.
4. Although the STP research question #2 included graduates of both public and private secondary schools, the survey only included one private secondary school graduate.

Source: Student Transitions Project, Research Question #2, June 2006 and 2006 Survey of 2003/04 Fraser Region Non-Transitioning Students.

- i) Trades, apprenticeship and industry training programs were surprisingly popular program choices among many survey respondents, especially among those who postponed their further education to sometime in the future (29%) or applicants accepted to programs that have not yet begun (33%). By comparison, more than 40% of active and former registrants pursued academic programs in Arts/Social Sciences, Business or Science, with only 10% seeking trades training.
- Fraser Valley secondary school graduates felt they were doing well without further education. Proportionately fewer graduates from this region were active registrants (25%), compared to the more urban regions of Douglas and Kwantlen at 36% and 39% respectively. As a result, a larger share of the Fraser Valley high school graduates has deferred their further education (35%), compared to graduates from the Douglas or Kwantlen regions (28% and 26% respectively).
- j) Several regional variations in survey responses were found:
- Compared to Douglas and Kwantlen regions at 76%, secondary school graduates in the Fraser Valley region were less interested in pursuing further education after high school (71%). These same graduates in the Fraser Valley districts also felt less strongly about the importance of further education to their future goals (84% versus 88 to 89% for the other two regions).
  - Slightly more graduates from the Fraser Valley region were employed (87%), compared to 82% for each of Douglas and Kwantlen regions.
  - Grade 12 graduates from the Kwantlen College region were less sure of what and/or where to study.
  - More of the Douglas college region respondents would prefer to do other things right now and they are more concerned about finding a job when they finish school.

### **Further Education Attitudes, Actions and Intentions – Classifying Respondents**

Each of the 2,136 respondents to the survey were classified into one of eight mutually exclusive post-secondary states or respondent groups, depending on their further education attitudes, actions and intentions derived from the survey responses. These eight groups of respondents are defined in the text box on the following page.

The attitudes, actions and intentions of each of these respondent groups in relation to their further education activities and other activities beyond high school graduation are described in greater detail in this report, but the prominent similarities within and differences between these groups are summarized here.

#### Opposers:

Opposers are a male-dominated group of 41 high school graduates with somewhat unfavourable views and experiences in high school. While many in this group disliked

school, the majority did not take an academic course load in their grade 12 year and they were the least interested group in further education beyond graduation. Their fathers or male guardians had relatively low

participation rates in further education and they were less likely to consult their parents or attend a recruiting/advisor information session for further education advice.

Since completing high school, virtually all of these graduates were employed full-time in relatively well-paying jobs, mainly in the trades, business or the sales/service sector, earning \$15.30 per hour. The vast majority (91%) of opposers are satisfied or very satisfied with what they are doing, so much so that 42% expect to still be working in the same job five years from now – the most stable group of respondents in terms of employment. As a result, they are least likely at 28% to agree that education is important to achieving their future goal.

<b>Respondent Groups – Post Secondary States (N=2,136)</b>
1. Opposers – Never seriously considered enrolling in further education since graduating from high school and probably never will (N=41 or 2%).
2. Postponers – Considered or might consider enrolling in further education at some point in the future, but did not apply (N=610 or 29%).
3. Rejected Applicants – Applied for further education, but not accepted for admission (N=40 or 2%).
4. Pending Applicants – Applied for further education, but still awaiting acceptance or denial of admission (N=40 or 2%).
5. Accepted Applicants – Applied and accepted in a further education program, but did not register (N=195 or 9%).
6. Former Registrants – Pursued further education, but did not complete the program and no longer attending (N=137 or 6%).
7. Active Registrants – Pursued further education and still attending (N=751 or 35%).
8. Completed Registrants – Pursued and completed a further education program (N=322 or 15%).

### Postponers:

The postponers are a male-dominated group who considered or might consider enrolling in further education at some point in the future, although they have not applied anywhere. This group of 610 high school graduates was somewhat motivated in school, but took relatively few academic courses in grade 12. Ultimately, they encountered some academic challenges and were not completely satisfied with their high school grades.

While opting out of attending school for now, the overwhelming majority of these respondents are currently employed in sales and service, trades and business occupations, earning an average wage rate of \$11.30 per hour. Earning lower wages than opposers, the postponers are less satisfied with their current employment, such that many see themselves working in another job or attending school within five years, with the vast majority (91%) agreeing that further education is important to their future goals.

These respondents primarily attribute financial reasons and a lack of academic direction or personal motivation as the reasons for postponing their further education. When they are ready to apply for further education, about a third will apply to trades/apprentice or industry training programs, likely at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).

### Rejected applicants:

The group of 40 rejected applicants wanted to pursue further education after graduation, but applied and were not admitted to a post-secondary institution. These primarily male students had a clear academic direction and, although they had some academic difficulties and achieved the lowest GPA on average among all respondent groups (75.7), they were not discouraged from applying for further education. Very few of these students

actually took an academic course load in high school and they typically did not consult their parents, siblings or friends about their education plans. These students applied mainly to three institutions for trades and apprentice programs at BCIT, Douglas College and Kwantlen University College.

Since they were denied admission, the majority of these graduates are now working in sales and service jobs or trades occupations, earning an average of \$12 per hour. They are least satisfied of all respondent groups with their current situation and the most likely to say they'll be attending school in five years. If these rejected applicants eventually do get accepted and register for further education, they look forward to the benefits of increased self-esteem and the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and credentials, although they are concerned about the additional workload and stress.

#### Pending Applicants:

The small group of 40 pending applicants are still waiting to find out if they were accepted or denied admission to a post-secondary institution. These applicants had very positive academic experiences in secondary school and typically consulted their parents, siblings and recruiter/information sessions about further education options.

While they wait for an admission decision, the vast majority of these graduates are working in sales, service, trades and clerical positions, earning an average of \$11.30 per hour, but only two-thirds are satisfied with this situation. These respondents do not view their current employment as a permanent situation and feel strongly that further education is important. These applicants mainly applied to Kwantlen, BCIT, Douglas and UCFV in trades, business and medical/dental programs. Unfortunately,

while they waited for a decision on their application, 17% have changed their mind about further education and do not expect to register.

#### Accepted Applicants:

Accepted applicants have applied and been accepted in a further education program, but have not registered, mainly because their program has not yet begun accepting registrations (75% said this was one of the reasons; 10% are on a waiting list). This group of 195 applicants, dominated by females, had fairly positive non-academic experiences in secondary school (friendships, teachers, desire for further education), but they also experienced a number of academic challenges with their homework, grades, motivation and academic direction.

The vast majority of these applicants are employed in sales, service, trades and clerical positions, earning \$11.60 per hour, on average. They do not view their employment situation as permanent and they feel strongly that further education is important to their future goals. Once registered, these students will be primarily attending BCIT, UCFV, other BC private institutions, Kwantlen University College and Douglas College. Approximately one-third will be in a trades/apprentice or industry training program and the remainder will primarily be in arts, social sciences, business and general studies.

#### Former Registrants:

Former registrants had registered in a further education program, and although they did not complete their program yet, they are no longer attending. They often mentioned academic difficulty, financial issues and changing their institution or program as the reasons for leaving early. Like accepted applicants, these 136 respondents had a positive non-academic experience in secondary school (enjoyed friendships, got on

well with teachers), but they had some academic difficulties with learning, motivation, homework and academic direction. Almost one-third of former registrants pursued an academic program in high school, achieving an average academic GPA of 75.7. Nearly 10% achieved a university-eligible GPA and just over 6% registered at a BC university. Other institutions attended were mainly other BC private post-secondary institutions (i.e. Trinity Western University and bible colleges), UCFV, Kwantlen University College and Douglas College and some secondary school upgrading. Former registrants were less inclined than the other non-registrant groups to register in trades or apprenticeship programs – they were more often found in business, arts, social sciences and general studies.

Since leaving their further education program, 89% of former registrants are currently employed, but compared to all respondents they are less satisfied with this activity. These high school graduates with some further education are earning a median hourly wage of \$11.30 (about \$1 per hour more than active registrants) and are mainly working in sales, service, trades and clerical positions.

#### Active Registrants:

Active registrants comprise the largest group of respondents to the survey. These students had the strongest desire of all respondents to pursue further education after graduation. They had a positive academic experience in high school and the majority consulted their highly educated parents and attended post-secondary recruitment sessions in planning their further education. In preparation for further education, nearly half (46%) of active registrants pursued an academic route to high school graduation, achieving the highest average GPA of all respondent groups (78.0) and the highest proportion (28%) with

university eligible GPA's. This group also had the highest representation at other non-BC institutions (15% went to a public or private post-secondary institution elsewhere in Canada and 4% in the United States). These students are primarily registered in four program areas: arts and social sciences, business, science and trades training.

Given that these students are attending school, it is not surprising that they have lower rates of employment and higher rates of part-time work. They are also earning the lowest median wage rate at \$10.60 per hour for sales, service, trades and clerical jobs and they are more likely than any other respondent group to think they would change jobs within the next five years.

#### Completed Registrants:

Completed registrants graduated from high school less than three years ago and subsequently finished a short-term further education program. While in high school, almost one quarter of these 322 respondents took an academic course load and 10% achieved a university eligible GPA, averaging 73.4. The vast majority of these completed registrants attended a private institution in BC, including bible colleges. This is by far the largest proportion of any other registered respondent group to enrol at a private BC institution (52% of completed registrants versus 23% of former registrants and 19% of active registrants). Roughly one-fifth of this group completed a secondary school upgrading program and the remaining 10% completed programs at BCIT, UCFV, Douglas College and Kwantlen University College. Many of the completed programs were in personal care, science, computer science, travel, tourism restaurant and hospitality. Now that they have completed a further education program, they are concerned about paying for their education. They also have less positive views about school and

studying and are not certain about their ability to succeed if they pursued more education.

Having completed their programs, ninety percent of these respondents are now

employed and earning a median wage rate of \$11.10 per hour, working mainly in sales, service, trades and clerical jobs. They are about as equally satisfied with what they are now doing as all other respondents, at 81%.

It is hoped that results from this survey will provide valuable information to the Fraser Region Consortium, post-secondary institutions, parents, school districts and the BC Ministries of Education and Advanced Education in helping them gain a better understanding of the further education destinations, intentions and attitudes of recent high school graduates in the Fraser Region. A number of additional questions may be raised by readers of this report. Some such questions may be answered from the survey responses directly and others will require additional research. The Fraser Region Consortium welcomes any questions or comments on this research. Please contact:

Kathleen Bigsby, Kwantlen University College  
Dale Box, University College of the Fraser Valley  
Bob Cowin, Douglas College  
Joanne Heslop, Simon Fraser University

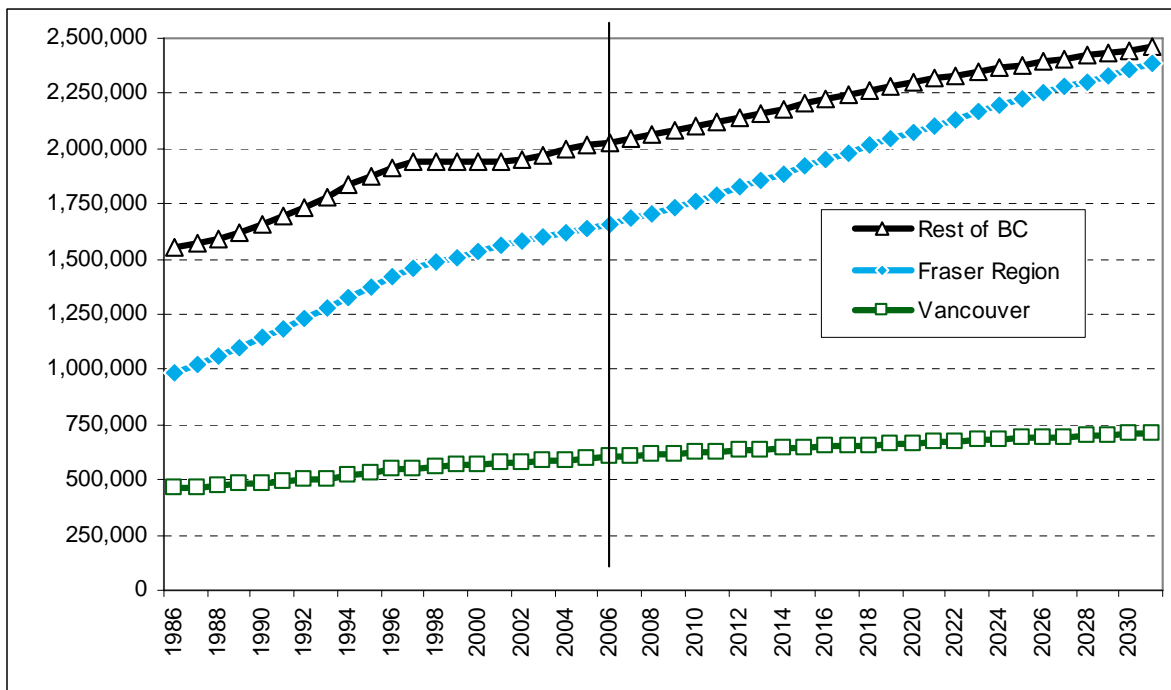
## Introduction:

The population of the Fraser Region is growing rapidly and students wanting to pursue further education in the immediate area have a number of public post-secondary institutions to choose from: Douglas College, Kwantlen University College, University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) and Simon Fraser University (SFU). In 2004, the four public post-secondary institutions in this region were allocated 8,000 additional post-secondary spaces by 2009/10. As a result, it has become much more important for enrolment planning at these institutions to understand the motivations, destinations and transition patterns of secondary school students beyond high school graduation.

### Population Growth:

In recent years, the population of the Fraser Valley region has been growing faster than the Province as a whole. Forecasts for this region predict a further increase of close to 45% over the next 25 years as people and business are moving east up the Fraser Valley from the Lower Mainland urban core in search of lower cost housing and a higher quality of life (see *Figure 1*). All of this growth and development is expected to lead to an increase in the demand for further education in the region.

**Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population Growth of the Fraser Region (1986 to 2031)**



Source: BC Stats, PEOPLE 29 Population Projection released September, 2004

### Low Participation Rates in Further Education:

Adding to the complexities of projecting the demand for education in the Fraser Region is the fact that students in this area have historically had lower participation rates in post-secondary education than students in other Lower Mainland areas. It is therefore important to post-secondary institutions in the region to understand the barriers and possible reasons for low participation rates of the local residents. A recently released study by the Student Transitions Project indicated that 70% of the high school graduates of 2001/02 in the entire Fraser Region entered a BC public post-secondary institution within

three years of graduation<sup>2</sup>. Although this transition rate exceeds the provincial average of 67%, it pales to the 80% 3-year transition rate of graduates in the Vancouver region. For each of the college regions, the three-year transition rates from secondary school to post-secondary education are: Douglas (74%), Kwantlen (71%) and Fraser Valley (60%) (see *Table 1*).

**Table 1: Three-year Transition Rates of 2001/02 Secondary School Graduates to BC Public Post-Secondary Education**

College Region	Immed Entry	1 Yr Delay	2 Yr Delay	3-Yr Trans %	No Trans Yet	# HS Grads
Camosun	42.0%	14.4%	5.7%	62.1%	37.9%	2,978
Capilano	55.8%	11.6%	4.7%	72.1%	27.9%	2,441
Cariboo	48.5%	11.8%	5.4%	65.7%	34.3%	1,855
<b>Douglas</b>	<b>60.7%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>5,369</b>
East Kootenay	32.8%	12.7%	7.1%	52.7%	47.3%	981
<b>Fraser Valley</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>59.9%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>2,675</b>
<b>Kwantlen</b>	<b>55.9%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>8,469</b>
Malaspina	43.6%	13.8%	5.7%	63.0%	37.0%	2,450
New Caledonia	47.1%	10.7%	5.2%	63.1%	36.9%	1,646
North Island	46.0%	13.3%	5.4%	64.7%	35.3%	1,633
Northern Lights	36.9%	12.1%	7.7%	56.6%	43.4%	597
Northwest	46.8%	11.0%	6.2%	64.0%	36.0%	874
Okanagan	36.3%	11.0%	4.9%	52.2%	47.8%	3,613
Selkirk	48.8%	12.8%	5.6%	67.2%	32.8%	966
Vancouver	67.4%	8.9%	3.2%	79.5%	20.5%	4,612
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>67.1%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>41,164</b>

Source: [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports)

Another indicator of the low participation in post-secondary education in the Fraser Region is the relatively low proportion of residents in the region holding a university degree. At roughly 31% in 2001, degree holders in the City of Vancouver represent a significantly higher proportion of the population than those with the same credentials in the Fraser Region, including Fraser Valley (10%), Kwantlen (16%) and Douglas (19%)<sup>3</sup>.

Even when we look at all forms of post-secondary credential completion (certificates, diplomas and degrees) in the Fraser Region, we see lower completion rates<sup>4</sup>: Fraser Valley (50%), Kwantlen (49%) and Douglas (53%). By comparison, the completion rates are 50% for the rest of BC and 56% for Vancouver.

The Fraser Region will likely see rising participation rates, especially as many new businesses and residents to the region relocate from the Lower Mainland urban core areas where further education participation is higher. The continuing demand for further education will likely persist among the new residents, thus raising the participation rate of the Fraser Region. A report prepared by the Fraser Region Consortium in October, 2003 suggests that we will likely see rising participation rates across the industrialized world in the near future<sup>5</sup>. If this is in fact the case in the Fraser Region, then it is

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports)

<sup>3</sup> Source: BC Stats, % of population 20+ with university degree (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Source: BC Stats, % of population age 20+ with post secondary qualifications (certificate, diploma, university degree) (2001).

<sup>5</sup> *At Our Doors: The Demand for Post-Secondary Education in the Fraser Region of Southwestern B.C.*, a collaborative report to the Ministry of Advanced Education from: Douglas College, Kwantlen University College, Simon Fraser University and University College of the Fraser Valley.

important that access to post-secondary education in the area can keep up with the anticipated population growth and simultaneous participation rate increases.

Survey Objectives:

The Fraser Region Consortium (FRC), including Douglas, Kwantlen, UCFV and SFU wanted to gain a better understanding of the access issues faced by recent high school graduates by speaking directly to the students via a telephone survey in March, April and May of 2006. The FRC, through Malatest and Associates, surveyed roughly 2,300 Fraser Region secondary school graduates of 2003/04 who were not registered at a BC public post-secondary institution in the 2004/05 registration year. The objectives of the survey were to find out:

- a) what proportion of Fraser Region secondary school graduates pursued further education;
- b) whether these secondary school graduates applied for or planned to apply for admission to a further education program in BC or elsewhere;
- c) whether applicants received an offer of admission and subsequently registered, or whether they were denied admission and subsequently pursued other activities;
- d) whether registrants are still registered, completed the program or dropped out;
- e) whether registrants attended a BC public or private institution or an institution outside of BC;
- f) whether non-registrants applied or intend to apply for further education in the future;
- g) what is the volume and proportion of all post-secondary destinations of 2003/04 graduates from the Fraser Region occurring from the time of their time of graduation to May, 2006 (by integrating the survey results with previous research from the Student Transitions Project);
- h) whether students see any barriers or other reasons for not enrolling in a post-secondary education program in BC.
- i) what program areas are registrants, applicants and future applicants interested in;
- j) whether there are any regional differences in post-secondary education perceptions and aspirations of graduates from different college regions;
- k) whether the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of Fraser Region high school graduates influences their post-secondary application, registration and persistence patterns.

Results of the study are important to the participating institutions, particularly for the colleges and university colleges who are faced with unanticipated declining enrolments in recent years, but also for Simon Fraser University, still in the early stage of developing its Surrey campus and a recipient of many transfer students who flow through the Fraser Region colleges and university colleges. It is in the interest of all members of the consortium to seek and provide greater post-secondary opportunities for students in the Fraser region. Understanding the reasons why students did not enrol or persist in

their post-secondary studies will help these institutions design better programs and student support services for other potential and existing students.

This report summarizes the results of the survey, beginning with some background information on the Fraser Region and a discussion of the survey methodology, sample and response rate. The remainder of the report is dedicated to a descriptive analysis of the survey results by grouping and comparing respondents with similarities or differences in their perceptions, attitudes, actions and intentions to pursue further education. An overview of the survey results accompanied by high level frequency tables are provided in *Appendix A*. Detailed frequency tables are also provided in *Appendix B*.

## **The Fraser Region:**

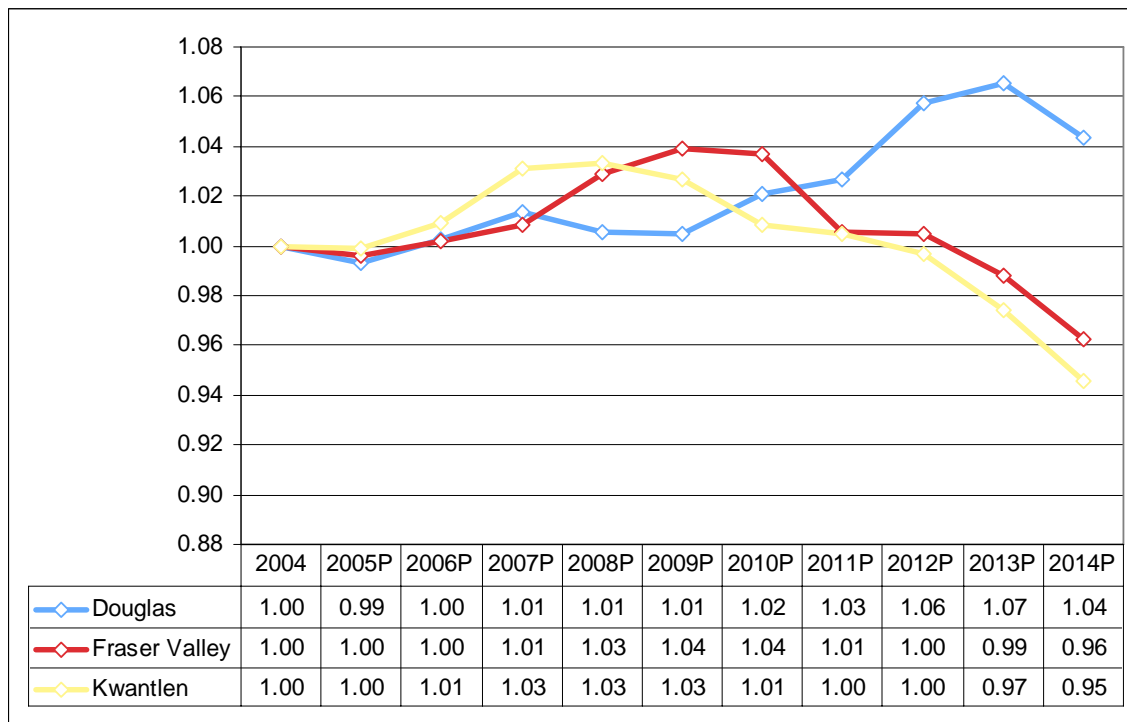
The Fraser Region, located east of Vancouver, British Columbia, is a sub-region of the Lower Mainland and includes the following suburban and rural communities: New Westminister, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Coquitlam, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Langley, Surrey, Delta, Mission, Hope and Agassiz. While not normally included in the Fraser Region, Richmond and Burnaby were also included in the survey at the request of Kwantlen University College and Douglas College to gain full representation from all school districts in their respective college regions. As mentioned, four public post-secondary institutions reside in the Fraser Region: Douglas College in New Westminister, Kwantlen University College in Surrey, University College of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford and SFU's Surrey campus in Surrey.

Throughout this report, the twelve school districts will frequently be aggregated into three college regions, as follows:

- a) Fraser Valley – Chilliwack (33), Abbotsford (34), Mission (75) and Fraser Cascade (78).
- b) Douglas - New Westminister (40), Burnaby (41), Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows (42) and Coquitlam (43).
- c) Kwantlen – Langley (35), Surrey (36), Delta (37), Richmond (38).

Grade 12 enrollments in each of these regions are expected to rise over the next few years, with the largest and longest sustained increases in the Douglas region. Enrollment increases in each region are expected to be followed by enrollment declines, starting in 2008 for the Kwantlen region, 2010 in the Fraser Valley Region and 2013 in the Douglas region. The enrolment declines in the Kwantlen and Fraser Valley region are expected to lead to grade 12 enrollment levels dipping below 2004 enrollment levels by the year 2013. (see *Figure 2*).

**Figure 2: Projected Changes in Grade 12 Enrollment by College Region, 2004 to 2014**



Source: 2005 Ministry of Education September GRXII Public School Enrollment Projections (Report 1558A).

## Survey Methodology:

R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. were contracted by the Fraser Region Consortium to assist in project management and administration of the telephone surveys. Malatest was charged with the following activities:

- ◆ Review and modification of survey instrument designed by the Consortium;
- ◆ Sample management;
- ◆ Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) programming of the survey instrument;
- ◆ Field-testing and subsequent modification of the survey instrument;
- ◆ Survey administration (including tracking of respondents throughout North America);
- ◆ Cleaning of the survey data, and coding of the majority of open-ended responses;
- ◆ Preparation of a Methodology Report and Statistical Tables.

Refer to Malatest & Associate’s Methodology Report in **Appendix C** for additional information on the survey methodology. The survey instrument is provided in **Appendix D**.

## The Sample:

The sample for the survey was defined to include students who graduated from a BC secondary school between October 1, 2003 and September 30, 2004 from one of the following Fraser Region school districts: 33, 34, 75, 78, 40, 41, 42, 43, 35, 36, 37 or 38. These students, according to records obtained from the Ministry of Education and the Student Transitions Project, did not register at a BC public post-secondary institution between September 1, 2004 and August 31, 2005.

Due to a technical difficulty with the Ministry of Education's sample extraction, a number of students were inadvertently included in the sample even though they had transitioned to BC public post-secondary education in the 2004/05 post-secondary registration year. Roughly 10% or 235 of the total 2,372 responses were not qualified for the survey and are excluded from the results presented in this report.

A second issue with the sample was identified during the analysis of the results – the virtual absence of independent school graduates in the sample. Although graduates of public and private secondary schools were part of the target population and both types of students were expected to be in the sample, independent school graduates were virtually non-existent in the survey results: 31% of non-transitioning public school graduates were surveyed, but only one independent school respondent was surveyed (or less than 1% of independent non-transitioning graduates). The Ministry of Education was unable to identify a reason for this apparent problem with the sample<sup>6</sup>. Although the sole independent school graduate remained in the file for the analysis presented in this report, readers should be cautioned that these survey results essentially describe the application, admission and registration behaviours of public school graduates of the Fraser Region only.

## **Response Rate:**

Between March 14, 2006 and May 21, 2006, a total of 2,372 Fraser Region secondary school graduates of 2003/04 were surveyed, out of a total gross sample of 4,679 students or a valid sample of 3,469 students<sup>7</sup>. Excluding not-in-service/invalid phone numbers, deceased students and students living outside of North America, an overall 68.4% valid response rate was achieved. Refusals accounted for 14.1%, while incomplete call-backs, communication problems and other miscellaneous exclusions accounted for the remaining 17.6% of the valid sample.

Valid response rates ranged from a low of 61.1% in Surrey school district #36 to a high of 83.7% in the Fraser-Cascade school district #78. Gross response rates, based on the gross populations of students who graduated from each school district were only 27.7% in Surrey and 50.0% in Fraser-Cascade.<sup>8</sup> Response rates by school district are provided in the Malatest Methodology report in *Appendix C*.

## **Classification of Respondents by Post-Secondary Status:**

In order to better understand the further education attitudes and motivations of secondary school graduates, each of the survey respondents is classified in this analytical report into one of eight

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<sup>6</sup> A total of 1,312 students graduated from a Fraser Region independent school in 2003/04 and 664 did not enter a BC public post-secondary institution, but only one student was surveyed, representing 0.2% of the target population. By comparison, 15,145 students graduated from Fraser Region public schools in 2003/04, of which 6,872 did not appear in BC public post-secondary institutions and 2,136 (or 31% of these students) were surveyed.

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports)

<sup>7</sup> Gross sample includes all students in the Ministry of Education cohort. Valid sample excludes not-in-service numbers, travel/moved out of North America, fax/modem/business phone number and deceased students.

<sup>8</sup> Valid response rate = survey completions / valid sample = 2,372 / 3,469 = 68.4%.

Gross response rate = survey completions / gross sample = 2,372 / 4,679 = 50.7%.

mutually exclusive respondent groups or post-secondary education states. Each of these states represents a different level of appreciation for post-secondary education attainment, ranging from outright personal rejection to the pursuit of post-secondary education (opposers) to successful application, registration and completion of a post-secondary program (completed registrants). Survey respondents were self-selected into these logical groupings, based on their responses to a number of questions in the survey. The eight respondent groups will be referred to throughout this report to compare and understand the attitudes and behaviours of survey respondents (see **Figure 3**)<sup>9</sup>. In increasing order of post-secondary education acceptance, the eight different states are:

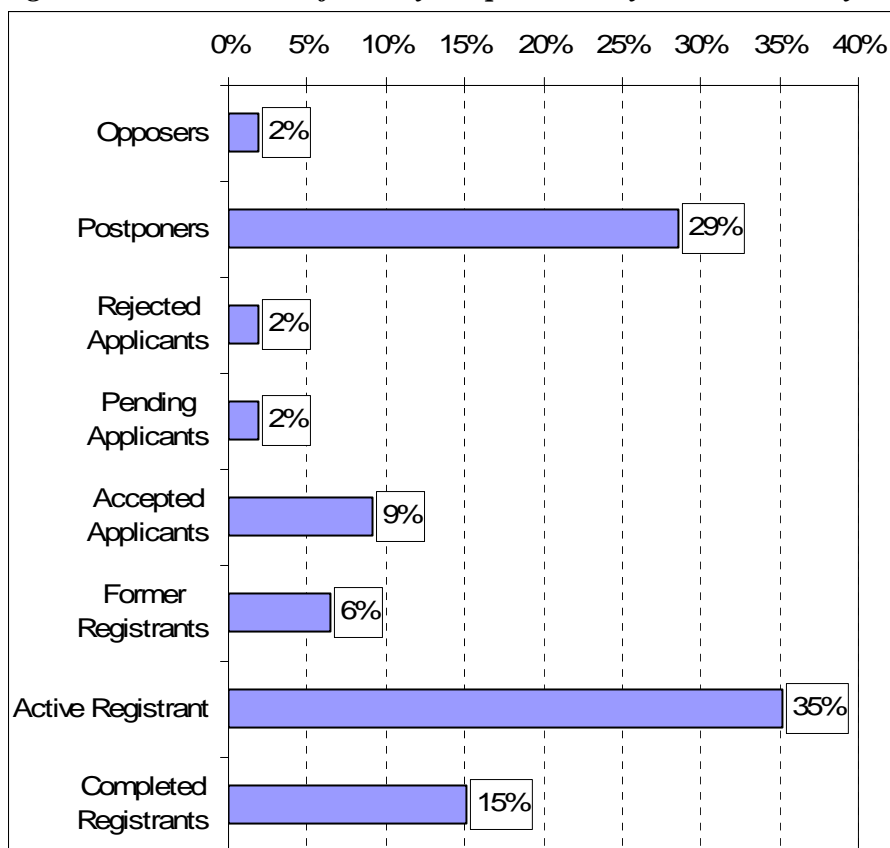
1. Opposers – Never seriously considered enrolling in further education since graduating from high school and probably never will (N=41 or 2%).
2. Postponers – Considered or might consider enrolling in further education at some point in the future, but did not apply (N=610 or 29%).
3. Rejected Applicants – Applied for further education, but not accepted for admission (N=40 or 2%).
4. Pending Applicants – Applied for further education, but still awaiting acceptance or denial of admission (N=40 or 2%).
5. Accepted Applicants – Applied and accepted in a further education program, but did not register (N=195 or 9%).
6. Former Registrants – Pursued further education, but did not complete the program and no longer attending (N=137 or 6%).
7. Active Registrants – Pursued further education and still attending (N=751 or 35%).
8. Completed Registrants – Pursued and completed a further education program (N=322 or 15%).

When the Fraser Region Consortium entered into this survey research project, participating institutions were not expecting to discover that 57% of respondents had in fact registered in a post-secondary program, nor did they expect to find so few opposers (2%) or rejected applicants (2%). Another surprise in the results is the relatively low proportion of accepted applicants who did not make a subsequent post-secondary registration (9%). These accepted applicants are mainly awaiting their program start date and will soon appear as registrants in a post-secondary education program. Even among the postponers (29%), many students have real intentions to pursue further education in the near future. In other words, the vast majority of survey respondents are pursuing, did pursue or show strong inclinations to pursue, post-secondary education in the near future.

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<sup>9</sup> The post-secondary states represent the education state or attitude of survey respondents at the time of the survey. While opposers have currently made up their mind not to pursue further education, some of the postponers might ultimately become opposers in the long-term. Alternatively, opposers who currently reject the notion of further education might change their views over time and could become postponers, applicants or registrants.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Survey Respondents by Post-Secondary State**



Note that respondents in this survey are limited to those who completed their secondary school graduation in the 2003/04 graduation year (October 1, 2003 thru September 30, 2004) and did not register in a BC public post-secondary institution in the 2004/05 post-secondary registration year (September 1, 2004 thru August 31, 2005). As constrained by this cohort definition, any respondent who registered in a BC public post-secondary institution did so on or after September 1, 2005 – one year or more following their secondary school graduation<sup>10</sup>. Survey respondents who pursued further education in the 2004/05 post-secondary education year did so outside of the BC public post-secondary system, including BC private training institutes and any other public or private institution outside of British Columbia.

## **Demographics:**

### Gender:

Males dominated the pool of all survey respondents at 54%, but not consistently across respondent groups. Young men were more dominant among the non-registrant respondent groups: opposers (68%), postponers (63%), rejected applicants (80%) and accepted applicants (80%). Females were

<sup>10</sup> According to research conducted by the Student Transitions Project in May of 2006, 11% of 2001/02 secondary school graduates in British Columbia delayed their entry to the BC public post-secondary education system by one year and 5% delayed their entry by two years. [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports)

more dominant among pending applicants (60%), active registrants (53%) and completed registrants (53%).

#### Aboriginal:

Aboriginal students, representing 3.1% of survey respondents, were not represented among the opposers or rejected applicants group. However, aboriginal students were more prominent among pending applicants (5.0%), postponers (4.8%), former registrants (4.4%) and accepted applicants (3.6%). Compared to all respondent groups, aboriginal students were less prominent among active registrants (1.9%) and completed registrants (2.8%).

#### Primary Language Spoken at Home:

Of all survey respondents 85% primarily speak English at home and 15% primarily speak some other language, mainly Punjabi, Chinese (including Mandarin or Cantonese) and Korean. Similar to other research findings in British Columbia, secondary school graduates who primarily speak a language other than English were more likely to register for further education than those who mainly speak English. Those who primarily speak English at home (85% of all respondents) were found more often among non-registrants, including pending applicants (93%), postponers (92%), opposers (90%) and rejected applicants (88%). Primarily non-English speakers (15% of all respondents) were found more often among the registrant groups, including active registrants (20%), former registrants (19%) and completed registrants (17%).

#### Origin and School Type:

Virtually all respondents to the survey were domestic students from public secondary schools. Only two respondents were from offshore and one was from a private or independent school.

#### Further Education of Family Member(s):

Much of the higher education research has shown that the level of education of one's parents is positively correlated with the likelihood that one will pursue further education. Survey responses also indicate that the further a student progresses down the post-secondary application or registration path, the greater the proportion whose father or male guardian pursued post-secondary education, ranging from 38% among opposers to 65% among active registrants. A similar observation can be made with mothers/female guardians, sisters and brothers.

#### Current Residence and Living Arrangements:

At the time of the survey, 85% of all respondents were still living in the same city as when they were in high school. Students were more likely to be living in their high school community if they were still in the application stage (at 94 or 95%). By comparison, only three-quarters of active registrants were still living in their high school community.

In terms of living arrangements, 81% of all respondents were living at home with their parents, although opposers and active registrants did so at lower rates (73% and 74% respectively). A further 5% were living on their own and 13% were living with roommates or a partner. Opposers were more likely to be living on their own (10%) and active registrants were more likely to be living with roommates or a partner (18%).

College Region and School District:

By college region, 32% of respondents are from the Douglas region, 22% from Fraser Valley and 46% from Kwantlen.

By school district, the proportion of students represented in the survey range from 1.8% from the smallest school district in the, Fraser-Cascade (SD 78), to 21.2% from the largest school district, Surrey (SD36). The distribution of respondents by college region and school district is provided in **Figure 4**.

**Figure 4: Distribution of Survey Respondents by College Region and School District**

College Region	School District	Total	%
Douglas	SD40 New Westminster	66	3.1%
	SD41 Burnaby	149	7.0%
	SD42 Maple Ridge	157	7.4%
	SD43 Coquitlam	303	14.2%
	Subtotal	675	31.6%
Fraser Valley	SD33 Chilliwack	136	6.4%
	SD34 Abbotsford	191	8.9%
	SD75 Mission	110	5.1%
	SD78 Fraser-Cascade	38	1.8%
	Subtotal	475	22.2%
Kwantlen	SD35 Langley	213	10.0%
	SD36 Surrey	452	21.2%
	SD37 Delta	185	8.7%
	SD38 Richmond	136	6.4%
	Subtotal	986	46.2%
Fraser Region Consortium		2,136	100.0%

A distribution of survey respondents by post-secondary state and by college region is provided in **Figure 5**. While the proportions of graduates in each group are roughly similar across regions, it is interesting to note that the more rural Fraser Valley college region has a proportionately smaller group of active registrants (25%) than the more urban regions of Douglas and Kwantlen at 36% and 39% respectively. As a result, there are also more postponers found in the Fraser Valley (35%) than the college regions of Douglas (28%) or Kwantlen (26%).

**Figure 5: Distribution of Survey Respondents by Post-Secondary State and College Region**

Post-Secondary State	College Region				Grand Total
	Douglas	Fraser Valley	Kwantlen	Grand Total	
1. Opposer	1.9% 13	1.7% 8	2.0% 20	1.9% 41	
2. Postponer	27.6% 186	35.4% 168	26.0% 256	28.6% 610	
3. Rejected Applicant	2.4% 16	1.9% 9	1.5% 15	1.9% 40	
4. Pending Applicant	1.6% 11	1.5% 7	2.2% 22	1.9% 40	
5. Accepted Applicant	9.0% 61	11.6% 55	8.0% 79	9.1% 195	
6. Former Registrant	4.9% 33	8.2% 39	6.6% 65	6.4% 137	
7. Active Registrant	36.4% 246	24.6% 117	39.4% 388	35.2% 751	
8. Completed Registrant	16.1% 109	15.2% 72	14.3% 141	15.1% 322	
Grand Total	100.0% 675	100.0% 475	100.0% 986	100.0% 2,136	

## Views and Experiences in Secondary School:

It is important to understand the views and attitudes of students before graduation, as this might provide some insight into the reasons for the choices that students make upon secondary school graduation. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with various statements characterizing their high school experience.

### Opposers:

Although small in number, the high school views and experiences of the 40 opposers (or 2% of respondents) were less favourable than they were for students who applied or registered in a post-secondary program. Opposers have rejected further education and are unlikely to take any further education beyond high school. Compared to all other survey respondents, opposers were less likely to:

- say they were interested in what they were learning in class (34% vs. 50%),
- complete their homework on time (48% vs. 60%),
- take challenging courses (29% vs. 46%),
- have a clear academic direction (39% vs. 51%),
- indicate they were motivated students (42% vs. 52%),
- say their work was graded fairly (71% vs. 82%), and
- surprisingly more satisfied with their grades (71% vs. 60%), although more likely to have some failing grades (12% vs. 3%).

### Postponers:

Although postponers did not apply for further education after graduation, they might consider enrolling in further education at some point in the future. Postponers and opposers have something in common – neither group applied for further education. However, there are several differences in the views and high school experiences of these two groups:

- Postponers were more interested in what they were learning in class (51% vs. 34%) and they were much more interested in pursuing further education after graduation (59% vs. 10%).
- Postponers took more challenging courses (37% vs. 29%) and despite receiving fewer failing grades (4% vs. 12%) and feeling their work was graded fairly (82% vs. 71%), they were less satisfied with their grades (53% vs. 71%).

However, when postponers are compared to all respondents, their views and experiences were less encouraging – they experienced numerous academic challenges, perhaps leading to a postponement of further education. Compared to all respondents, postponers were less inclined to complete their homework on time (50% vs. 60%), had a less clear academic direction (44% vs. 51%) and were less motivated (43% vs. 52%). They also took fewer challenging courses (37% vs. 46%) and were less satisfied with their grades (53% vs. 60%).

### Rejected applicants:

Rejected applicants applied for further education, but unfortunately, they were not accepted for admission. These 40 respondents had many similar views and experiences in high school as all respondents, but they also had a slightly greater desire to pursue further education after graduation (80% vs. 75%), they had a more clear academic direction (59% vs. 51%) and were more likely to complete their homework on time (65% vs. 60%). Unfortunately, they had some academic difficulties, but this did not dissuade them from applying for further education. Rejected applicants had indicated that they had some failing grades at rates almost as high as opposers (10% vs. 12%) and significantly

higher than all respondents (3%). In addition, rejected applicants were the least satisfied respondent group with respect to their grades (50% for rejected applicants vs. 60% of all respondents and 67% of active registrants were satisfied).

#### Pending Applicants:

Pending applicants have already applied for further education, but they are still awaiting acceptance or denial of admission. Compared to all respondents, the 40 pending applicants had very positive academic experiences in secondary school. Pending applicants:

- got on well with their teachers (90% vs. 83%),
- were interested in what they were learning (63% vs. 50%),
- completed their homework on time (68% vs. 60%),
- wanted to pursue further education (80% vs. 75%), and
- were motivated students (65% vs. 52%).

#### Accepted Applicants:

Accepted applicants have been accepted in a further education program, but they have not registered. Similar to all survey respondents, these 195 respondents (9% of the sample) had a fairly positive experience in secondary school:

- 87% enjoyed their friendships in school,
- 86% got along well with their teachers, and
- 74% wanted to pursue further education.

Although they had generally positive non-academic experiences, accepted applicants also experienced more academic challenges in high school than those who are currently registered. They were less inclined to agree with the following statements:

- I completed my homework on time (56% vs. 68%),
- I took challenging courses (43% vs. 64%),
- I felt my work was graded fairly (74% vs. 90%),
- I was a motivated student (50% vs. 61%).
- I was satisfied with my grades (60% vs. 67%),
- I was interested in what I was learning (46% vs. 51%),
- I had a clear academic direction (51% vs. 56%).

#### Former Registrants:

Former registrants did pursue some further education, but they did not complete their program and they were no longer attending at the time of the survey. Similar to all respondents, these 136 respondents (6% of the sample) had a positive experience in secondary school. The top four statements characterizing their views and experiences in high school were:

- I enjoyed my friendships in school (85%),
- I felt my work was graded fairly (83%), and
- I got on well with my teachers (83%).

Compared to the group of active registrants, these respondents had a more difficult time learning course material while in high school (9% vs. 3%) and were less inclined to agree with the following statements about their academic focus in high school:

- I was a motivated student (51% vs. 61%),
- I wanted to pursue further education (73% vs. 90%),

- I completed my homework on time (61% vs. 68%),
- I took challenging courses (42% vs. 54%),
- I had a clear academic direction (47% vs. 56%).

#### Active Registrants:

Active registrants pursued further education after high school graduation and were still attending at the time of the survey. This is the largest group of survey respondents, numbering 751 in total or 35% of the total respondents. A desire to pursue further education was the view held more so by this group than any other (90% vs. 75% for all respondents and 40% for opposers). Compared to all respondents, active registrants had a good work ethic and a positive academic experience, as characterized by their stronger agreement with the following statements:

- I had a clear academic direction (56% vs. 51%),
- I took challenging courses (54% vs. 46%),
- I completed my homework on time (68% vs. 60%), and
- I was satisfied with my grades (67% vs. 60%).

#### Completed Registrants:

This final group of 322 respondents pursued and completed a short-term further education program. While in high school, the views and experiences of these students were very similar to all respondents. Their top four views in high school are provided below:

- I enjoyed my friendships in school (88%),
- I felt my work was graded fairly (78%),
- I wanted to pursue further education (77%), and
- I got on well with my teachers (77%).
- This group did have some academic challenges, however. When compared to active registrants, this group of students who completed short programs were less satisfied with their grades (57% vs. 67%), were less motivated as students in high school (51% vs. 61%) and had a difficult time learning course material (9% vs. 3%).

The results from this survey are consistent with Adelman's conclusions that the academic intensity or rigour of a student's high school curriculum is a good predictor of their future success in higher education<sup>11</sup>. For example, the proportion of students who "took challenging courses" in high school was much higher among active registrants (54%) than former registrants (42%) or postponers (37%).

### **Advice on Further Education:**

While in high school, students have a variety of sources from which they can seek further education advice. Among all respondents, more than half (56%) sought advice from their parents, 51% from guidance counsellors, 43% from teachers and 19% from friends and 16% from siblings. Numerous other sources were sought, but none were used by more than 4% of respondents (see *Appendix B*). Just fewer than 4% of respondents received no advice at all. The primary resource for further

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<sup>11</sup> Adelman, C., Answers in the Toolbox: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Completion, 1999. <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevist/index.html>.

education advice varied, depending on the respondent's level of interest and aspiration for further education.

#### Parents or guardians:

Parents or guardians were most frequently used as a source for further education advice by former or active registrants (60% each) and pending applicants (64%). By comparison, rejected applicants and opposers were least likely to seek advice from their parents, at 35% and 42% respectively.

#### Guidance Counsellors and Teachers:

While still attending secondary school, guidance counsellors are a valuable source of advice and they were sought more often by opposers (60%) and rejected applicants (58%) than any other respondent group. In addition, opposers were also more inclined to seek the help of teachers (60%) than any other respondent group. The advice of guidance counsellors or teachers and the subsequent lack of successful post-secondary application or acceptance should not be seen as a cause-effect relationship – students wanting help on academic matters or other difficult decisions often seek the informed advice of their teachers or counsellors.

#### Friends:

The advice of friends was sought more often by active registrants and pending applicants (at 23% each) and least often by opposers and rejected applicants (at 13% each).

#### Bothers/Sisters:

Seeking further education advice from siblings occurred less often among opposers (8%) and rejected applicants (10%) and more often among pending applicants (21%).

#### Post-secondary recruiter/advisor information session:

In total 62% of all respondents attended a post-secondary recruitment or advising information session for further education advice, of which two thirds felt the information was adequate. By respondent group, these sessions were attended more often by rejected or pending applicants (75% each) and active registrants or accepted applicants (at roughly two-thirds each). Opposers were least likely to attend a recruitment session (42%), perhaps indicating that they had decided earlier on in high school not to pursue further education. Overall, two-thirds of respondents said the information provided in the recruiting sessions was adequate; 14% said it was inadequate and 16% felt it was neither adequate nor inadequate.

## **Further Education Preparation:**

Students intending to pursue further education normally attempt to meet the necessary requirements for admission to the post-secondary program they wish to attend. One way of measuring the level of preparation for further education is to identify the proportion of students who chose the “academic route” to graduation – they completed English 12 and three or more academic grade 12 courses. Those who achieved an academic GPA<sup>12</sup> of 75% or higher on these courses are deemed “university eligible”,

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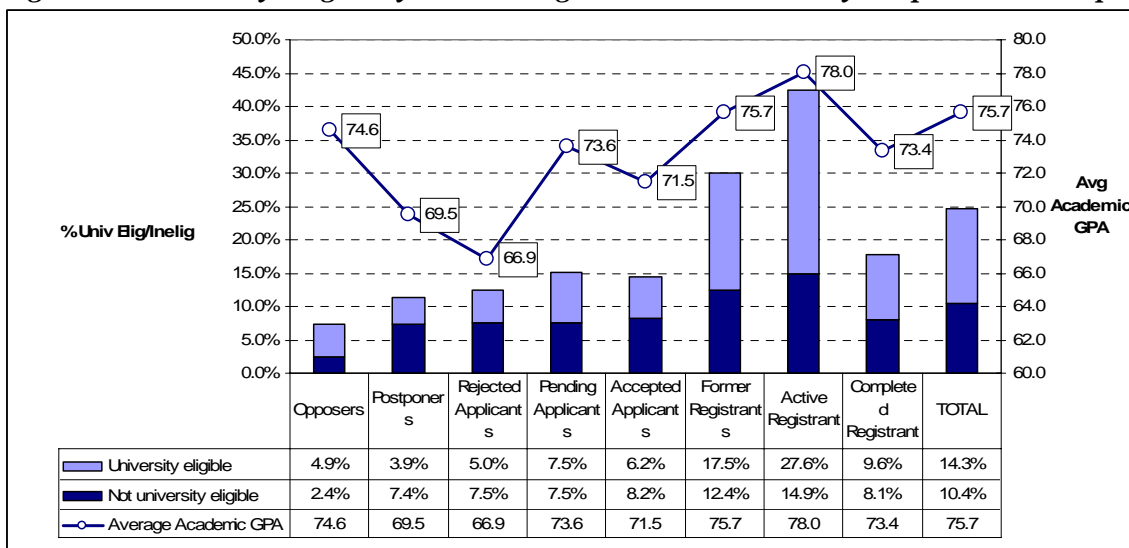
<sup>12</sup> Academic GPA is the average of four blended grades in high school: EN12 (or university-recognized equivalents), plus 3 academic grade 12 courses. Blended grades are a 60%-40% average of school course grades and provincial exam scores.

or technically qualified for admission to a B.C. public university, barring no quotas or limits on university spaces.

In total, 28% of all survey respondents pursued the academic route to graduation. Registrant respondent groups were more inclined to take the academic route to graduation: 46% of active registrants, 32% of former registrants and 23% of completed registrants. Opposers (9%), postponers (14%) and rejected applicants (15%) were least inclined to take the academic route, thus limiting their choices and chances for university admission.

Only 14% of all respondents achieved a sufficiently high GPA for university eligibility, ranging from 4% of postponers to 28% of active registrants.<sup>13</sup> On average, the academic GPA of all respondents with a GPA<sup>14</sup> was 75.7. There was some variation in academic GPA's across respondent groups, with rejected applicants receiving the lowest academic GPA at 66.9 and active registrants achieving the highest at 78.0 (see **Figure 6**).

**Figure 6: University Eligibility and Average Academic GPA's by Respondent Group**



The average academic GPA's of registrants by college region are shown in **Figure 7**. Completed registrants in the Douglas and Kwantlen regions had lower average academic GPA's than other active or former registrants, while the academic GPA's of graduates from the Fraser Valley region are very similar across registrant groups.

Some of the literature<sup>15</sup> on the risk factors associated with educational attainment indicate that mathematics test scores in high school were significantly related to subsequent educational attainment

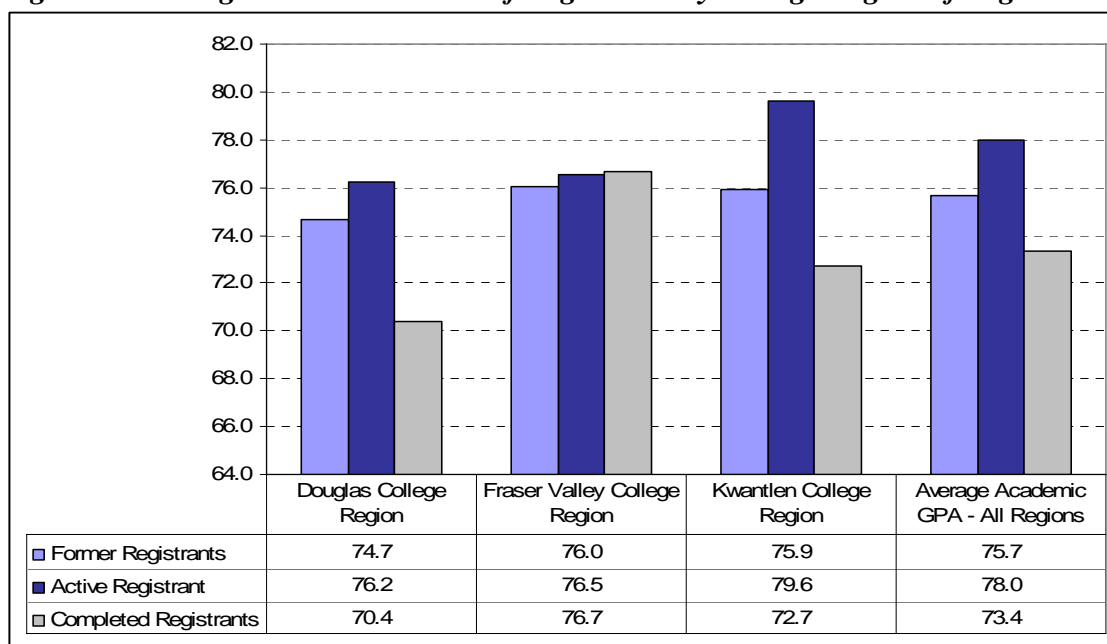
<sup>13</sup> By comparison, 45% of all Fraser Region secondary school graduates of 2003/04 pursued an academic route to graduation; 31% achieved university eligible GPA's and their average GPA was 79.4 (Source: *Student Transitions Project Research Question #2*, <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/planning/STPQ2%20Pivot%20Table-2006.04.25.xls>).

<sup>14</sup> The academic GPA is not calculated for those with insufficient courses – English 12 (or a university-recognized equivalent) and the best three other academic courses.

<sup>15</sup> National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS72), Murnane, Willett, and Levy (1995).

and earnings. By examining the relationship between Math 12<sup>16</sup> provincial exam scores and the post-secondary state of the survey respondents it was found that, similar to academic GPA, completing the Math 12 provincial exam and achieving higher Math 12 provincial exam scores was associated with a greater propensity to apply, successfully register and persist in a further education program. For example, 37% of active registrants completed the Math 12 provincial exam, compared to a 24% of all respondents, 12% of opposers and 13% of postponers. Rejected applicants achieved an average Math 12 score of 55.1 and active registrants achieved an average score of 71.0.

**Figure 7: Average Academic GPA's of Registrants by College Region of High School**



## Further Education Applications and Destinations:

The top five institutions where students registered, applied or intend to apply for further education were:

- Other BC private institutions (20%) – a common choice among completed registrants (52%),
- British Columbia Institute of Technology (13%) – more frequently mentioned by rejected applicants at 30%,
- Kwantlen University College (10%),
- University College of the Fraser Valley (8%),
- Douglas College (8%).

For the protection of privacy of the survey participants, a detailed breakdown by college region or school district of the institutions and programs to which students applied or registered cannot be provided in this report. However, the following frequency distributions are provided for each respondent group in **Appendix B**:

<sup>16</sup> Grade 12 math scores were obtained from the Ministry of Education, only if the score was, in addition to English 12, among the top 3 exam scores. For this reason, the average exam scores in Math 12 may be inflated as a result of the exclusion of some lower grades.

- Institutions and geographic locations attended/applied to/will apply to;
- Registration destinations and geographic locations of grade 12 graduates in all school districts of the following college regions:
  - Douglas,
  - Fraser Valley, and
  - Kwantlen;
- Programs registered in/applied to/will apply to;
- Registrants reason(s) for choosing institutions;
- Registrants top 3 reasons for choosing institutions, by institution location.

More details are provided in *Appendix B*, but the top four programs where students registered, applied or intend to apply were:

- Trades, apprenticeship, industry training (18%),
- Arts, social sciences (14%),
- Business (12%), and
- Science (8%).

Trades, apprenticeship and industry training programs were surprisingly popular program choices among many survey respondents, especially among those who postponed their further education to sometime in the future (29%) or applicants accepted to programs that have not yet begun (33%). By comparison, more than 40% of active and former registrants pursued academic programs in Arts/Social Sciences, Business or Science, with only 10% seeking trades training.

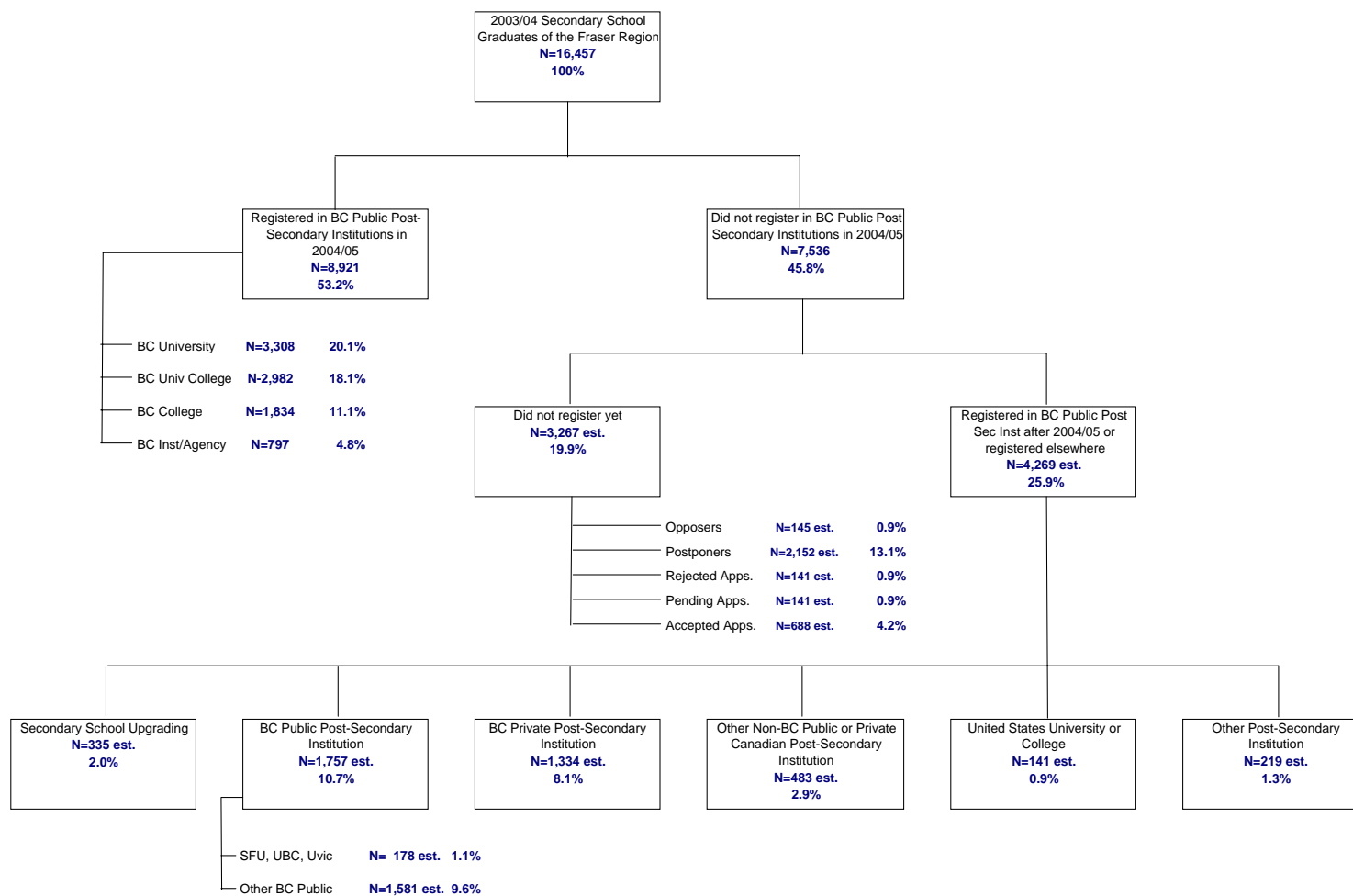
Of those respondents who did register in a further education program, the proportion of students who attended institutions outside of British Columbia was highly correlated with their academic GPA: 63% of respondents with an academic GPA at 85.0 or higher registered at another Canadian or American post-secondary institution, while only 22% of registrants with academic GPA's below 85 did the same.

By integrating the survey results with prior research conducted by the Student Transitions Project (Research Question #2)<sup>17</sup>, this study was able to quantify the post-secondary destinations of 16,457 Fraser Region graduates of 2003/04. A total of 8,921 (54.2%) entered BC public post-secondary institutions in 2004/05. Of the remaining 7,536 (or 45.8%) of graduates who did not register, we were able to survey 2,136 of them, of which 1,210 had in fact pursued further education. Among these 1,210 registrants, 119 attended other public post-secondary institutions in Canada, 18 attended other Canadian private institutions and 40 attended institutions in the United States. We can extrapolate from this that ***the proportion of the Fraser Region's secondary school graduates who left the province is roughly 3.8%*** (see *Figure 8*). Roughly 36% of students who left BC to attend other institutions in Canada or the United States had academic GPA's of 85.0 or higher, more than double the proportion of other students in the active registrant group with GPA's in that range (roughly 15%) (see *Figure 9*).

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<sup>17</sup> The Student Transitions Project (Research Question #2) links information from students in the K-12 system to the BC public post-secondary institutions through the Provincial Education Number in a way that protects personal privacy, yet provides information on the transition of students from BC secondary school graduation to registration in a BC public post-secondary institution. More information may be found at [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/welcome.htm#reports](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/welcome.htm#reports).

**Figure 8: Post-Secondary Destinations of 2003/04 Secondary School Graduates of the Fraser Region**



**Notes:**

- Where N's are indicated with "est.", the values have been estimated from the 2,136 students who were surveyed in May/June of 2006, of whom 1,210 registered in a post-secondary institution.
- 53.2% of post-secondary destinations occurred in the 2004/05 academic year in BC public post-secondary institutions; the remaining post-secondary transitions occurred in the 2004/05 academic year in institutions other than BC public post-secondary institutions, such as BC private or non-BC public and these transitions occurred up until the time of the survey in April/May of 2006.
- All %'s are expressed as a proportion of the 2003/04 population of Fraser Region graduates.
- Although the STP research question #2 included graduates of both public and private secondary schools, the survey only included one private secondary school graduate.

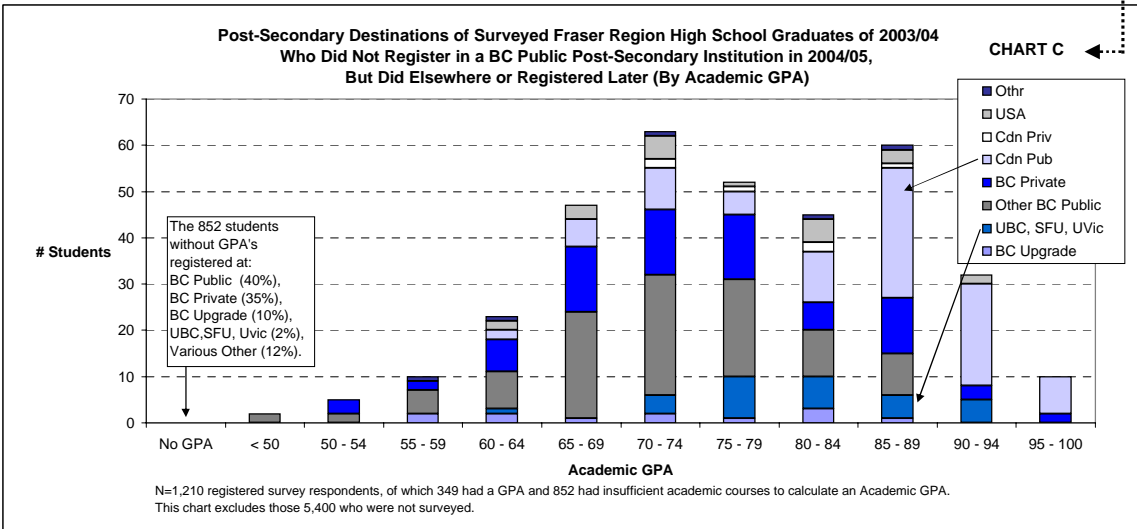
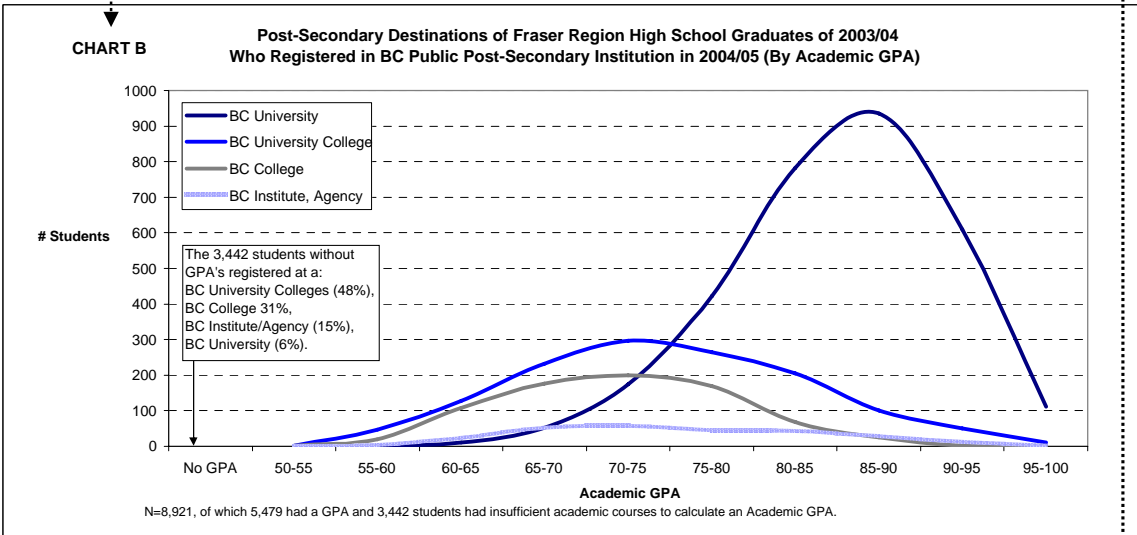
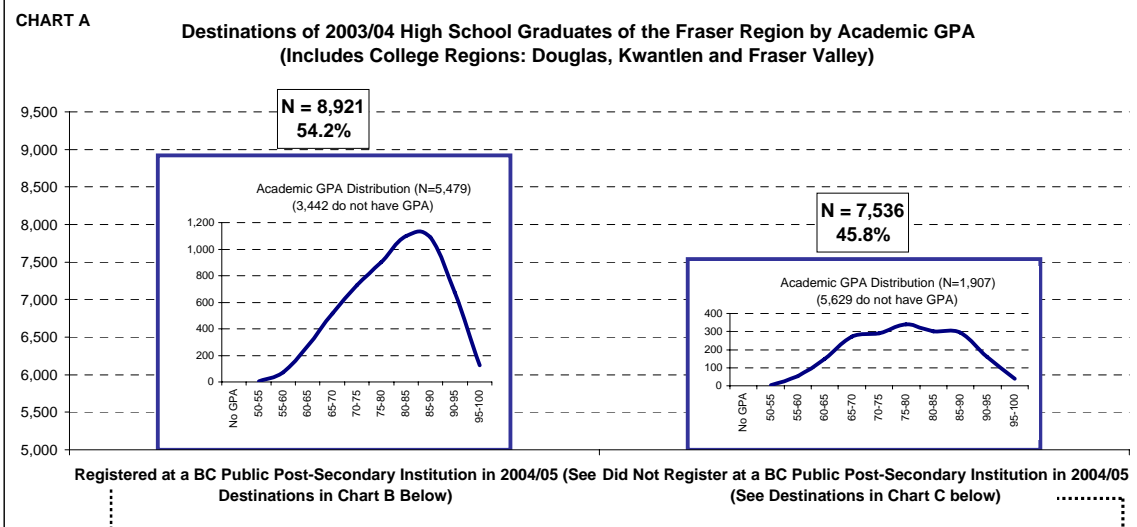
Source: Student Transitions Project, Research Question #2, June 2006 and 2006 Survey of 2003/04 Fraser Region Non-Transitioning Students.

Figure 9: Post-Secondary Destinations by Academic GPA

A total of 16,457 students graduated from BC secondary schools in 2003/04 in the Fraser Region, of which 54.2% registered at a BC Public Post-Secondary Institution in 2004/05 (see Chart A). The BC public post-secondary destinations of these 8,921 graduates is shown in chart B.

A further 7,536 or 45.8% of 2003/04 Fraser Region graduates did not show up in a BC Public Post-Secondary Institution in 2004/05, the majority whom did not take academic courses in high school. In May of 2006, we surveyed these graduates to find out where they went. We were able to reach 2,136 of these students (virtually all in public schools), and learned that 1,210 (or 56.6%) had pursued some further education, either in BC after 2004/05 or at any time outside of BC. Their destinations are shown Chart C and note that the majority of high-GPA students left the province.

When we scale these numbers up to the population, we estimate that 483 (or 2.9%) of the high school grads of 2003/04 in the Fraser Region registered for post-secondary education elsewhere in Canada and 141 (or 0.9%) did so in the USA.



Source: Student Transitions Project, Research Question #2 Pivot Table and Fraser Region Consortium Survey of Non-Transitioning Students, 2006.

### Opposers:

By definition, opposers had no intention of applying to post-secondary education and did not apply nor register in post-secondary education. Only 40 respondents were classified as opposers.

### Postponers:

Postponers have not applied or registered in further post-secondary education and when asked for all the reasons why not, the top three reasons mentioned by this group of 610 respondents were: financial reasons (28%), unsure of what I want to do (27%) and lazy, procrastinating, not ready (15%). More than half (53%) of postponers intend to apply for further education within the next year, 28% within two years, 13% in three or more years. Six percent did not know when they would apply.

When asked where they would apply, the largest proportion indicated BCIT or the British Columbia Institute of Technology (17%). The next most popular choices were Kwantlen University College (9%), University College of the Fraser Valley (8%), Douglas College (7%) and other BC private institution(s), including Bible colleges (7%).

The top three programs postponers intend to apply for are:

- Trades/apprentice/industry training (30%),
- Business (15%), and
- Arts and social sciences (10%).

### Rejected Applicants:

The top four institutions that this small group of forty rejected applicants applied to were BCIT (30%), UCFV, Douglas College, and Kwantlen University College (at 18% each).

Rejected applicants were much more likely than any other respondent group to have applied for trades and apprentice programs (42% versus 18% for across all respondents). The top four programs selected by rejected applicants were:

- Trades/apprentice/industry training (42%),
- Business (21%), and
- Fine and performing arts
- Arts and social sciences (8%).

### Pending Applicants:

Although these forty pending applicants applied for further education and are still awaiting acceptance or denial of their application, 17% have changed their mind about post-secondary education or their career plans, 15% have financial concerns and 12% are on a waitlist. Compared to accepted applicants at 3%, pending applicants were more inclined to change their minds while waiting (17%) than those who have already been accepted, perhaps suggesting to post-secondary institutions to make admission decisions as quickly as possible, before applicants change their mind.

The top four institutions to which the pending applicants applied were Kwantlen University College (20%), BCIT (20%), Douglas College (15%) and UCFV (13%).

The top five programs selected by pending applicants were:

- Trades/apprentice/industry training (28%),

- Business (14%),
- Medical/dental programs (14%),
- Arts, social sciences (10%), and
- Travel, tourism, restaurant, hospitality programs (10%).

#### Accepted Applicants:

The primary reason why the 195 accepted applicants have not registered is mainly a timing issue – their program has not yet begun accepting registrations. Among the 195 accepted applicants surveyed, this is the main reason for 75% of them for not registering. Only 10% are on a waiting list, 5% have financial reasons for not registering, 3% changed their mind and 13% have other reasons for not registering.

The top five institutions accepted applicants plan to attend are:

- British Columbia Institute of Technology (23%)
- University College of the Fraser Valley (20%),
- Other BC private institutions (20%),
- Kwantlen University College (17%),
- Douglas College (10%).

The top four programs selected by accepted applicants were:

- Trades/apprentice/industry training (33%),
- Arts, social sciences (14%),
- Business (11%), and
- General Studies (11%).

#### Former Registrants:

The primary post-secondary destinations of former registrants were:

- Other BC private post-secondary institutions, including Bible Colleges (23%),
- University College of the Fraser Valley (20%),
- Kwantlen University College (15%), and
- Douglas College (12%).

Also included in this group of 137 former registrants were ten students (roughly 7% of respondents) who said they attended a secondary school or other institution for secondary school upgrading.

Although this type of education is not typically classified as further education because it is still at the secondary school level, it is still of interest to this research. It should also be noted that an additional 85 high school upgrades were included in this survey (18% of completed registrants and 4% of active registrants).

Although they have subsequently left their post-secondary institution, the top four reasons why former registrants enrolled were<sup>18</sup>:

- Proximity to home (26%),
- Reputation, recommended by others (19%),
- Availability of program (19%), and

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<sup>18</sup> Respondents were asked to provide all reasons.

- Financial considerations (inexpensive, received scholarship) (18%).

These reasons were roughly similar across the various institutions chosen, with the following exceptions:

- Students who formerly registered at a BC university-college, college or institute were more inclined to say proximity (41%).
- Those who registered elsewhere in Canada or the United States did so mainly because of financial considerations, such as scholarships, or they wanted to get out of the lower mainland (39% each).

While trades or industry training programs were common choices among the aforementioned non-registrant respondents to the survey, the top four programs that former registrants enrolled in were primarily academic programs, as follows:

- Business (17%),
- Arts, social sciences (16%),
- General studies (13%),
- Trades/apprentice/industry training (9%), and
- Science (9%).

Half of the former registrants were enrolled for only a short time, entering and exiting their program during the nine-month period immediately preceding the survey. The remaining students primarily began their program in the 2004/05 academic year. The survey did not seek information on how long these former registrants remained in their program before exiting, but we did learn why they left.

When asked why they were no longer registered, three reasons accounted for 75% of all responses, including:

- Dropped out, academic difficulty (29%),
- Financial issues (23%), and
- Changed institution or program (23%).

Another 9% mentioned “other reasons” and 7% indicated they would return in future. Some of the lesser mentioned reasons included health issues, family reasons (5%), traveling (4%), and moved (4%).

#### Active Registrants:

Nearly half of all active registrants (46%) took the academic route to high school graduation, achieving the highest average academic GPA of all respondent groups (78.0) and the highest proportion of university eligible graduates (28%). The high achievement in secondary school is also consistent with the strong desire of this group to pursue further education after graduation (90% indicated they felt this way “all the time” or “most of the time”). These 232 students with an academic focus entered BC universities at higher rates (6%) than the other two registrant groups (less than 1% each). This group also had the highest proportion of registrants at non-BC institution (nearly 15% attended other Canadian public or private institutions and 4% attended American post-secondary institutions).

Active registrants are registered mainly in the following institutions:

- Other BC private institution, including Bible Colleges (19%),
- Canadian (non-BC) public post-secondary institution (14%),
- Kwantlen University College (12%),

- British Columbia Institute of Technology (10%),
- Douglas College (9%), and
- University College of the Fraser Valley (8%).

Simon Fraser University is virtually absent among the top application and registration destinations in this report – only 3.2% of active registrants are attending Simon Fraser University at the time of the survey. In addition, SFU was a potential destination for only 1.6% of postponers, 2.5% of rejected applicants and 1.0% of accepted applicants; SFU was not mentioned as a destination for pending applicants, former registrants or completed registrants. The main reason for this is because the majority of 2003/04 Fraser Region secondary school graduates who registered at SFU did so immediately after high school graduation and therefore did not participate in this survey.

Of the 107 students who registered at another Canadian public post-secondary institution, the top institutions selected were:

- University of Waterloo (13 students),
- University of Toronto (13 students),
- McGill University (10 students),
- University of Alberta (10 students),
- University of Calgary (10 students),
- Queens University (9 students).

When asked for all reasons why they chose to register at the institution they did, the top four reasons were:

- Proximity to home (31%),
- Reputation, recommended by others (34%),
- Availability of program (22%), and
- Financial considerations (inexpensive, received scholarship) (14%).

The programs in which active registrants are currently enrolled are spread across a variety of disciplines, but the top four most popular programs are:

- Arts, social sciences (20%),
- Business (13%),
- Science (12%), and
- Trades, apprentice, industry training (11%).

Similar to former registrants, active registrants are pursuing more programs in more academic fields than trades/apprenticeship training programs.

**Sample of Reasons  
Why Students Registered at  
Post-Secondary Institutions Outside of BC**

**University of Toronto:**

- *Because it's famous and is a big university and I like it.*
- *Ranked top for the university list.*

**University of Waterloo:**

- *Because of their reputation and strong co-op program.*
- *It has a very strong cooperative study program and is a very well respected engineering university.*

**McGill University:**

- *I wanted to get out of BC for a little while. I liked what I knew about Montreal. McGill is a good school. I liked the idea of living in a big city vs. the suburbs.*
- *It's the best in Canada.*

**University of Alberta:**

- *They offered me a pretty good scholarship.*
- *I didn't want to go to UBC. I wanted a change.*

**University of Calgary:**

- *It was a direct entry program whereas University of British Columbia, University of Alberta and University of Victoria did not have direct entry programs.*
- *Wanted to go away for school but still be close enough to visit. I was also interested in their architecture program.*

**Queens University:**

- *Good reputation and good welcoming community, above average amenities located nearby, excellent ambience.*
- *The school has an excellent reputation and offered a generous scholarship.*

Nearly three-quarters of all active registrants began their program within the last nine months (September 2005 or later). The remaining active registrants began in the 2004/05 academic year (September, 2005 to August, 2005).

### Completed Registrants:

The vast majority of completed registrants attended a private institution in BC, including bible colleges. This is by far the largest proportion of any other registered respondent group to enrol at a private BC institution (52% of completed registrants compared to 23% of former registrants and 19% of active registrants attended private BC institutions). A further 18% of completed registrants attended a secondary school upgrading course or program and the remainder primarily attended other BC institutions, including BCIT (3%), University College of the Fraser Valley (3%), Douglas College (2%), Kwantlen University College (2%), etc.

When asked why they chose the institution they did, the top three reasons were:

- Reputation or recommended by others (30%),
- Availability of program (29%), and
- Proximity (21%).

Compared to former and active registrants, completed registrants were more inclined to choose their institution for the availability of the program and less inclined to attribute their choice to its location or proximity.

The top five programs completed by these respondents were:

- Trades/apprentice/industry training programs (13%),
- Personal care programs (13%), and
- Science (10%),
- Computing science (7%), and
- Travel, tourism, restaurant, hospitality (7%).

Of all registrant groups, completed registrants were more likely at 61% to begin their program in the 2004/05 academic year or earlier; 37% began in the 2005/06 academic year. Only 25% of active registrants began their program in the same time period.

### **Further Education Cost:**

Do recent high school graduates have realistic expectations about the cost of further education in British Columbia? When asked what they think it would cost for annual tuition in a BC public post-secondary institution (excluding books and living expenses), the largest group of respondents (23%) did not know, but of those who provided an estimated cost, they felt it would be approximately \$5,500 per year, on average. While tuition rates vary across institutions, in the 2005/06 academic year, the average annual tuition cost for a full-time liberal arts education in a BC public university was roughly \$4,400 per year and roughly \$3,100 at a public college, university college or institute. The lowest estimate, on average, was provided by opposers at \$4,000 per year and the highest estimate was provided by rejected applicants and completed registrants at \$6,400 per year.

## Further Education Importance:

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) published a report predicting that 70% of all new jobs created in Canada will require some form of post-secondary education, and 25% of all new jobs will require a university degree. Only 6% of new jobs will be held by those who have not finished high school<sup>19</sup>. From a list of possible percentages (10, 30, 50, 70 and 90), roughly 40% of respondents selected the often-quoted HRDC value of 70% when asked if they knew what proportion of new jobs in Canada are expected to require further education. Only 10% selected a higher proportion and 46% under-estimated the proportion. Only the rejected applicants, former registrants and active registrants had slightly more accurate perceptions of the expected requirement for further education in new Canadian jobs. ***Opposers and postponers were more inclined to underestimate the proportion of jobs that will require further education.*** These two groups who had not yet applied to a post-secondary institution in BC (opposers and postponers) were also most likely to respond “don’t know” to this question.

## Main Activity in the Last Six Months:

### Employment:

When asked for their main activity in the past six months, roughly 80% of all non-registrants and 46% of registrants<sup>20</sup> indicated that they were working full-time; 8% of all survey respondents were primarily working part-time in the past six months. Due to their recent or current participation in further education, full-time work was less common among former registrants (47%), completed registrants (49%) and active registrants (12%).

Of those working full-time, opposers were more satisfied<sup>21</sup> with full-time work (91%) and more inclined to say they’ll continue this activity for more than ten years (47% vs. 13% for all respondents). By comparison, pending applicants and former registrants were least satisfied, at 63% each, with full-time work as their main activity.

### Attending School:

In total, 36% of survey respondents indicated their main activity was attending school: 26% full-time and 10% part-time. Active registrants were most satisfied with full-time school attendance (93%), while former registrants were less satisfied (81%).

### Other Activities:

Among other activities since high school, 1.8% were primarily traveling in the last six months, 1.3% were unemployed and looking for work, and the remaining respondents (at fewer than 1% each) were doing other things, such as volunteering, caring for family, playing sports, etc. The group of postponers (at 3.0%) were more inclined to mention unemployment than any other group.

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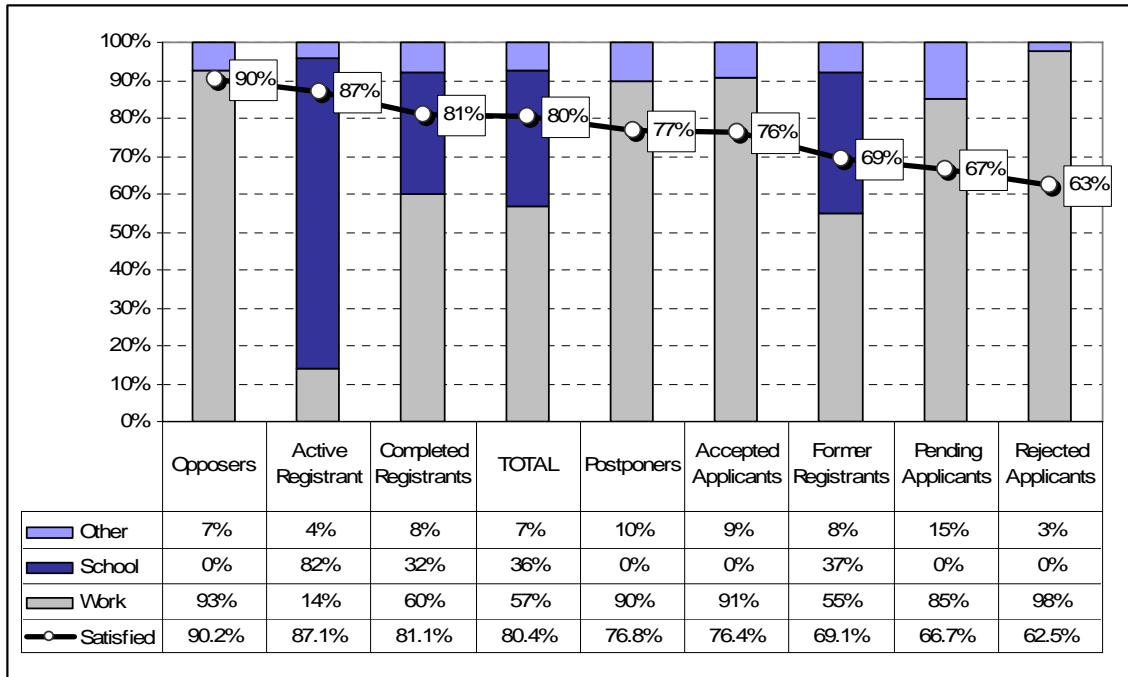
<sup>19</sup> Applied Research Branch, Human Resources Development Canada, Job Futures (2000) World of Work: Overviews and Trends.

<sup>20</sup> “Registrants” includes the three groups of registrants - former, active or completed registrants.

<sup>21</sup> Satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

Across all main activities for all respondents, 80% were satisfied with what they have been doing, with the highest satisfaction among opposers (90%) and active registrants (87%) and the lowest satisfaction among rejected applicants (63%) (see **Figure 10**). Judging by the low satisfaction rate of rejected applicants, it is quite possible that this group would rather be attending school.

**Figure 10: Satisfaction With Main Activity in the Last Six Months**



### Current Employment and Future Plans:

At the time of the survey, 83% of all respondents were employed and earning a median income of \$11.20 per hour. Excluding active registrants, of whom two-thirds were employed, 89% of other respondent groups were employed, with each respondent group working a median of 40 hours per week. Only the active registrant group was working fewer hours and earning less income (25 hours per week for \$10.60 per hour).

Just over half of all respondents expect to be working in another job within five years and 20% attending school. The vast majority (87%) felt that further education is important to their future goal. Those who expect to be working in another job within five years put more value in education (92% feel it is important) than those who expect to be working in the same job (58%).

#### Regional Variations:

Regional variations in employment were examined and it was found that slightly more graduates from school districts in the Fraser Valley region were employed (87%) compared to 82% for graduates from each of the Douglas and Kwantlen college regions. Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of grade 12

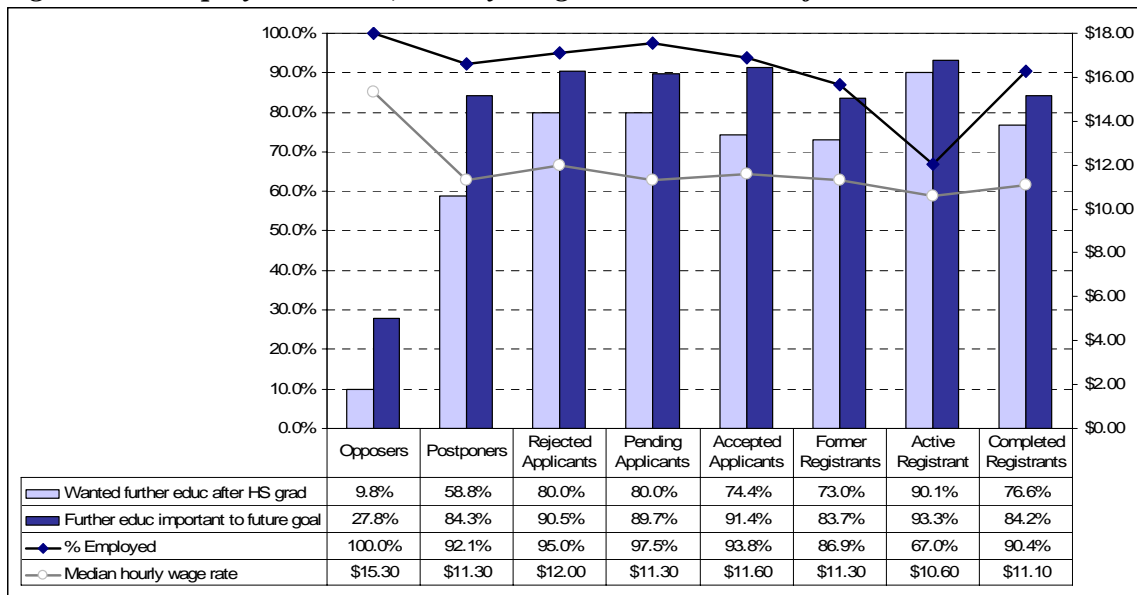
graduates (35%) from the Fraser Valley region were earning more than \$13 per hour (compared to 27% for Douglas and 26% for the Kwantlen region).

With the higher employment rate and higher wage rate of Fraser Valley graduates, it is not surprising that these respondents (at 71%) were less interested in pursuing further education after high school (compared to 76% in each of Douglas and Kwantlen regions). High school graduates of the Fraser Valley were also less likely (at 84%) to indicate that further education is important to their future goals (versus 88 or 89% for graduates of the other two regions).

Opposers:

Virtually all opposers were employed or self-employed at the time of the survey. Opposers are earning the highest hourly rate of all respondent groups, at \$15.30 per hour. Given the lucrative employment situation experienced by opposers, it is not surprising that these high school graduates have been lured into the job market with high rates of employment, high rates of pay and low motivation for further education (see **Figure 11**).

**Figure 11: Employment Rate, Hourly Wages and the Desire for Further Education**



According to the National Occupation Classification (NOC), a widely used classification structure of jobs and occupations, these high school graduates are primarily working in higher-paying construction, trades, and heavy equipment operations, unlike all other respondent groups who are primarily working in sales and service jobs.

When asked where they expect to be in five years, roughly 71% expect to still be working, with 42% working in the same job and 29% working in another job. Opposers view their employment situation as much more stable than all other respondent groups, with 42% (vs. 4%) expecting to continue working in the same job and 29% (vs. 53%) in a different job.

Opposers are least likely (at 28%) to agree that education is important to achieving their future goal (vs. 87% for all respondents and 93% for active registrants).

### Postponers:

The majority of postponers (92%) were employed at the time of the survey for a median hourly wage rate of roughly \$11.30. By definition, opposers had no interest in further education, while postponers have considered it for the future. Survey results also show that postponers are less satisfied with working than opposers (91% vs. 84%). The differences in employment satisfaction might suggest that opposers secured more satisfying employment, or that postponers perceive working as a compromise to a more desirable activity, such as further education or a better job.

Judging by their future plans, postponers have higher career aspirations than opposers, but lower aspirations than active registrants. Five years from now, the future plans of postponers are:

- 41% working in another job (compared to 29% of opposers and 66% of active registrants);
- 4% working in the same job (compared to 42% of opposers and 2% of active registrants);
- 25% in school (compared to 2% of opposers).

Postponers also place more value in further education as a means to achieve their goal. Among those postponers who expect to be working in another job, 91% think further education is important to their goal (compared to 25% of opposers).

### Rejected Applicants:

In total, 95% of rejected applicants are currently employed, earning a median income of \$12 per hour. Satisfaction with full-time work is lower among rejected applicants than it is among accepted applicants (59% vs. 76%).

Although rejected applicants were not successful in earning a spot in a post-secondary institution, 40% still expect they will be attending school five years from now. This is double the proportion predicted by all respondents (20%). Another expectation among rejected applicants is that in five years they will be working in another job (40%). Regardless of their goal in five years, 91% of all rejected applicants feel that further education is important to achieving their goal.

### **Top 3 Occupation Areas and Typical Jobs of Opposers and Postponers**

#### **Opposers:**

- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (37%) – sheet metal work, bricklaying, drywall, painting, labour, long shore work and mining operations.
- Business, Finance and Administration (20%) – insurance clerk, administrative or general office work, desktop publishing, and banking.
- Sales and Service Occupations (17%) – retail salesclerk, animal care workers and food counter attendants.

#### **Postponers:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (37%) – retail sales clerk, food counter attendants, cashiers and food/beverage servers.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (29%) – labourers/helpers, material handlers, carpenters and residential or commercial installers/servicers.
- Business, Finance and Administration (13%) – shippers/receivers, customer service or information clerks and receptionists or switchboard operators.

Pending Applicants:

Virtually all (98%) of the pending applicants were employed or self-employed at the time of the survey, earning a median income of \$11.30 per hour.

When asked where they see themselves in five years, 23% expect to be attending school and 63% expect to be working in another job. Pending applicants see the value of further education in their future goals – of those who expect to be working in another job in future, 90% agree that further education is important to achieving that goal.

Accepted Applicants:

Roughly 94% of accepted applicants were employed or self-employed when surveyed and they were earning a median hourly income of \$11.60 per hour.

More than half (52%) of all accepted applicants see themselves working in another job in five years, 21% expect to be attending school and 11% will be promoted within their current job. Of those expecting to be working in another job in future, 94% feel that further education is important to achieving this goal.

Former Registrants:

Among former registrants, 89% were employed at the time of the survey and earning a median hourly wage of \$11.30 while working mainly in three occupational areas:

When asked where they expect to be in five years, roughly half expect to be working in another job, of which 91% feel that further education is important to this goal. Among those who expect to be promoted or working in the same job, roughly two-thirds think that further education is important to this goal.

**Top 3 Occupation Areas and Typical Jobs of Rejected, Accepted and Pending Applicants**

**Rejected Applicants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (37%) – retail sales clerk, food counter attendants, cashiers and food/beverage servers, cooks and grocery clerks.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (29%) – carpenters, heavy equipment operators and material handlers.
- Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities (13%) – concrete forming, lumber and wood processing.

**Pending Applicants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (41%) – retail sales clerk, food counter attendants, cashiers and food/beverage servers, airline sales agents and grocery clerks.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (23%) – plumbers, ironworkers, carpenters, truck drivers, materials handlers and construction labourers.
- Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities (15%) – wood, plastic, metal, photographic/film processing and machine operators.
- Business, Finance and Administration (15%) – receptionists or switchboard operators, general office clerks, library clerks and customer service or information clerks.

**Accepted Applicants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (31%) – retail sales clerks, cooks, food counter attendants, cashiers and food/beverage servers, and grocery clerks.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (31%) – carpenters, electricians and construction labourers.
- Business, Finance and Administration (13%) – shippers/receivers, customer service or information clerks and general office clerks.

Active Registrants:

Compared to all other respondent groups, active registrants are least likely to be employed (67% vs. 83% for all respondents). They are typically part-time workers trying to balance work and school, with 72% working less than 35 hours per week, compared to 45% of all respondents. These students, earning the lowest median wage rate of \$10.60 per hour, are more likely than any other respondent group to be working in sales/service positions (compared to 44% of all survey respondents).

When asked where they expect to be in five years, 66% of active registrants indicated they would be working in another job and 15% said they would be in school. Since these respondents are currently in school and many are earning low wages in low skilled part-time jobs, it is not surprising that they were more likely than any other respondent group to say they expect to be working in another job in five years. These students were about as likely as completed registrants at 15% to say they would be attending school in five years, but less likely than former or non-registrants at 25%.

Completed Registrants:

The proportion of completed registrants who were employed or self-employed at the time of the survey was 90%. They were earning a median wage rate of \$11.10 per hour.

When asked where they expect to be in five years, just over half expect to be working in another job (53%) and 16% attending school. Now that they have completed their program, completed registrants view further education in a similar way as opposers and former registrants – 84% said it is important in order to meet their future goals.

**Top 3 Occupation Areas and Typical Jobs of Former, Active and Completed Registrants**

**Former Registrants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (38%) – retail sales clerks, cooks, food counter attendants, cashiers, food/beverage servers, and grocery clerks.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (22%) – construction labourers, carpenters and residential/commercial installers or servicers.
- Business, Finance and Administration (17%) – shippers/receivers, customer service or information clerks, production clerks and general office clerks.

**Active Registrants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (60%) – retail sales clerks, food counter attendants, food/beverage servers, cashiers, grocery clerks and cooks.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (22%) – delivery and courier service drivers, construction labourers, plumbers and carpenters.
- Business, Finance and Administration (17%) – receptionists/switchboard operators, customer service or information clerks and financial customer service representatives.

**Completed Registrants:**

- Sales and Service Occupations (46%) – retail sales clerks, hairstylists and barbers, food/beverage servers, cashiers, food counter attendants, grocery clerks, cooks and food service supervisors.
- Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators (18%) – construction labourers, plumbers, carpenters delivery and courier service drivers.
- Business, Finance and Administration (12%) – receptionists/ switchboard operators, shippers/receivers, general office clerks, customer service or information clerks and financial clerks/officers/analysts.

## Further Education Perceptions:

Respondents were asked for the extent to which they agree to a series of statements about their perceptions of post-secondary education<sup>22</sup>. The top five statements that respondents agreed to or strongly agreed to were:

- I want to earn money right now (88%),
- I am concerned about paying for my education (62%),
- I would prefer to do other things right now (53%),
- I want a break from school (47%), and
- I seem to be doing well without further education (46%).

### Regional Variations:

Education perceptions were consistent across college regions with only a few exceptions (see *Figure 12*).

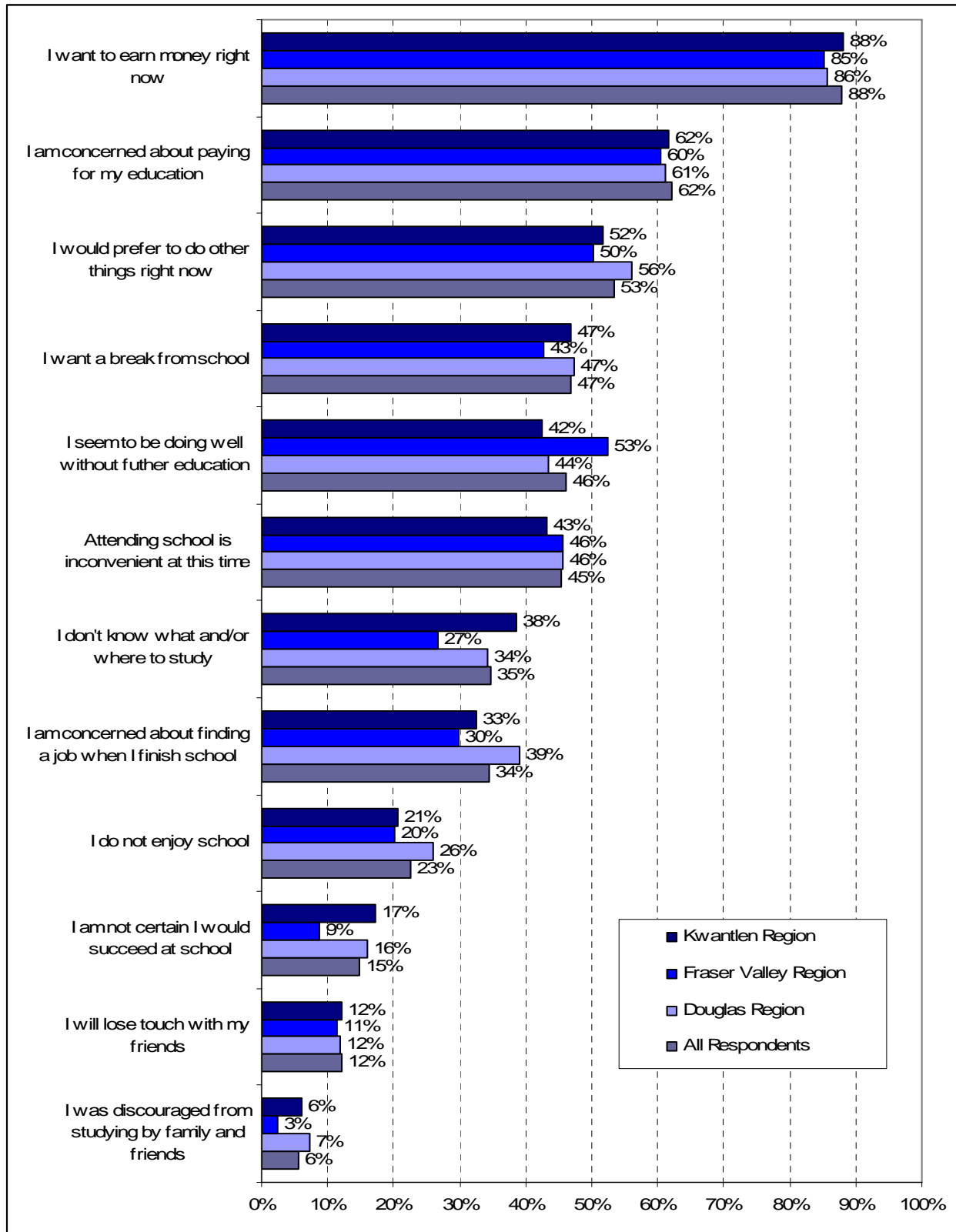
Compared to high school graduates of other college regions,

- Grade 12 graduates from the Kwantlen College region were most likely to be unsure of what and/or where to study.
- Respondents from the Fraser Valley college region were relatively sure of what and/or where to study and less concerned about their ability to succeed at school. However, they also felt they were doing well without further education, perhaps contributing to the fact that proportionately more graduates from this region have chosen to postpone their further education.
- Douglas college region respondents were more inclined to say they would prefer to do other things right now and they are more concerned about finding a job when they finish school.

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<sup>22</sup> Opposers were not asked for their perceptions of further education, since it was already determined that these students were not interested in pursuing further education now or in the future. Active registrants were also excluded from this question because they are currently registered.

**Figure 12: Further Education Perceptions by College Region of High School**



### Opposers:

Since opposers had rejected further education for now and in the future, these respondents were not asked for their further education perceptions.

### Postponers:

Postponers include the students who have not applied or registered in further education, but may consider doing so in the future. They are more negative about further education than the three applicant groups combined (rejected applicants, pending applicants and accepted applicants). They were more inclined to agree with the following statements:

- I am concerned about paying for my education (67% vs. 50%),
- I want a break from school (50% vs. 40%),
- I would prefer to do other things (59% vs. 44%),
- I do not enjoy school (24% vs. 13%),
- Attending school is inconvenient at this time (49% vs. 40%),
- I don't know what and or where to study (40% vs. 25%),
- I am not certain I would succeed at school (18% vs. 9%).

### Rejected Applicants:

Compared to all other respondents, the 40 rejected applicants were:

- less concerned about paying for their education (50% vs. 62%), and
- less inclined to say they wanted a break from school (38% vs. 47%).

### Pending Applicants:

Pending applicants have many positive views of further education. These students have applied for further education and are currently awaiting an acceptance or denial of their application. Their further education perceptions indicate that they are quite interested in pursuing further education and are probably hoping to receive positive news of their acceptance into a program. Compared to all respondents, these 40 pending applicants had fewer financial concerns and were less inclined to agree with the following statements:

- I am concerned about paying for their education (51% vs. 62%),
- I would prefer to do other things right now (39% vs. 53%),
- I want a break from school (36% vs. 47%),
- I do not enjoy school (8% vs. 23%), and
- I am concerned about losing touch with my friends (5% vs. 12%).

### Accepted Applicants:

Like pending applicants, accepted applicants have many positive views of further education. The majority of these respondents have been accepted into a further education program and are awaiting their program registration date or start date. Compared to all respondents, accepted applicants seem to be looking forward to attending school and have a relatively positive outlook toward their imminent education plans. They were less inclined to agree with the following statements:

- I am concerned about paying for their education (50% vs. 62%),
- I would prefer to do other things right now (43% vs. 53%),
- Attending school is inconvenient at this time (36% vs. 45%),
- I do not know what and/or where to study (21% vs. 35%),

- I do not enjoy school (13% vs. 23%), and
- I am not certain I would succeed at school (7% vs. 15%).

#### Former Registrants:

The further education perceptions of former registrants are less positive than other applicant groups. When these respondents are compared to the three applicant groups combined (rejected applicants, pending applicants and accepted applicants), former registrants are more likely to agree with the following statements:

- I am concerned about paying for their education (65% vs. 50%),
- I want a break from school (50% vs. 40%),
- I would prefer to do other things right now (50% vs. 44%),
- I do not enjoy school (34% vs. 13%), and
- I do not know what and/or where to study (35% vs. 25%),
- I was discouraged from studying by family and friends (7% vs. 2%), and
- I am not certain I would succeed at school (16% vs. 9%).

Former registrants are those who pursued some further education, did not yet complete their program and are no longer registered. This respondent group had similar perceptions of further education as completed registrants, but with two notable exceptions that characterize a more disheartened group of former students. Former registrants were:

- more interested in a break from school (50% vs. 44%), and
- more likely to say they do not enjoy school (34% vs. 25%).

#### Active Registrants:

The perceptions of further education from active registrants were not sought in the survey.

#### Completed Registrants:

Similar to former registrants, the further education perceptions of completed registrants are also less positive than they are for the three applicant groups. Compared to rejected, pending and accepted applicants combined, completed registrants were more inclined to agree with the following statements:

- I am concerned about paying for their education (63% vs. 50%),
- I would prefer to do other things right now (63% vs. 44%),
- I do not enjoy school (25% vs. 13%), and
- I do not know what and/or where to study (33% vs. 25%),
- I was discouraged from studying by family and friends (9% vs. 2%), and
- I am not certain I would succeed at school (14% vs. 9%).

## **Further Education – What are the best and worst things about it?**

Respondents who were not currently registered in a further education program were also asked the following two questions:

*“What would be the worst thing about continuing your education?”*

*“What would be the best thing about continuing your education?”*

### Worst Things About Further Education:

When asked for the worst things about continuing their education, the top two suggestions were consistent across all respondent groups: More than half of the respondents (56%) mentioned “financial hardship, debt, the inability to work and wasting money” and a further 10% mentioned “time wasted, time required, and interferes with other activities”. The negative perceptions of further education were similar across respondent groups, with a few notable exceptions:

- Although financial hardship was, by far, the most commonly cited negative consequence of further education, completed registrants, who are now faced with paying off any education debt, were more likely at 63% to mention financial hardship and rejected applicants were least likely at 43% to mention financial hardship.
- A much larger share of opposers than any other respondent group mentioned a lack of interest or dislike for school as one of the worst things about continuing their education (24% vs. 6% of all respondents).
- The increased workload/stress anticipated by rejected applicants at 16% is significantly higher than it is among all respondents (5%) or any single respondent group.
- When former registrants and completed registrants are compared, the negative views of former registrants are more dominant:
  - Former registrants feel more strongly that further education is a waste of time or it interferes with other activities (13% vs. 8%).
  - They are less concerned about finding employment (3% vs. 8%); perhaps indicating that finding employment might have been a factor in their decision to leave school.

Random selections of responses to the question “What would be the worst thing about continuing your education?” are provided below:

#### Opposers:

- *There is no worst thing. It is a positive thing to do, but I don't have the drive for it.*
- *The worst thing about continuing my education is the horrendous cost involved.*

#### Postponers:

- *Focusing on one subject and then finding out halfway through that you're not interested in it.*
- *I would have to have a source of income, and it would be hard to attend school and work.*
- *Spending the money, as I have worked really hard for it and there are no guarantees that it will pay off.*

#### Rejected Applicants:

- *The worst thing would be the dedication involved. It would be hard to work full time and do school. I wouldn't have an outside life.*
- *The worst thing about continuing my education would be to take courses that I would not end up using.*

#### Pending Applicants:

- *Ending up in debt.*
- *Not having an income or having a smaller income because I would have to work part time.*

Accepted Applicants:

- *Getting up early to attend class.*
- *It might not work out.*
- *Not being able to travel and do other things.*
- *It may interfere with my goals of becoming a professional lacrosse player.*
- *Wasting money and time on something that I'm not sure will work out.*
- *The worst thing about continuing my education would be completing the degree and finding no jobs available for that particular field.*

Former Registrants:

- *Failing again and having to start from scratch.*
- *Having the school cancel my course again.*
- *Getting caught up in school (finishing the whole degree four years in a row) and missing out on other parts of life.*
- *It depends on the school. In a trade school you could still make money, but in something like nursing, you can't make money.*
- *I am concerned that my learning disability would affect my ability to learn in a class without supports. I had a lot of trouble with a certain teacher in high school who told me I was too stupid to finish French Immersion, which I was in from Grade until Grade 11. At this point, I was harassed by this teacher until I quit French.*
- *Just finding the time to do it, and finding enough money so that I don't have to take loans out.*
- *Just time, and not being able to give it my all because of work, want to be able to not have to work and to focus on school.*
- *Not having any money, not doing well in courses*

Active Registrants:

- *Excluded from this question.*

Completed Registrants:

- *The stress level with studying.*
- *Nothing.*
- *Financial issues, being broke and not being able to pay back loans.*
- *The worst thing would be the cash flow, because I would have to take time off work and it would be hard to do both things.*
- *I'm afraid of spending money on something because I don't know what I want to do yet.*
- *More courses, heavy work-load.*

### Best Things About Further Education:

When the same group of respondents was asked for the best thing about continuing their education, the vast majority (72%) mentioned better job or career opportunities and 31% mentioned new skills/knowledge/credentials.<sup>23</sup> The positive perceptions of further education were similar for all respondents combined, with the following exceptions of interest:

- Opposers were the least inclined to mention better job or career opportunities (59% vs. 72%) and more apt to credit social possibilities as a benefit to further education (13% vs. 2%).
- Former registrants and rejected applicants, at 44% and 43% respectively, were much more likely to mention the acquisition of new skills, knowledge or credentials as a benefit (vs. 30%).
- The perceived benefit of “increased self-esteem, respect and self-improvement” mentioned by 10% of rejected applicants is not anticipated as often by all respondents combined (3%) or by any single respondent group.

Random selections of responses to the question “What would be the best thing about continuing your education?” are provided below:

#### Opposers:

- *Doing something you like.*
- *Potential for a higher-paying job*
- *Learning about stuff that I'm interested in.*

#### Postponers:

- *The best thing would be getting a good career afterwards.*
- *I could help people with the career path I'm choosing.*
- *Earn more income when finished.*
- *Even if you don't end up using it in a career, it is interesting and keeps your mind stimulated.*

#### Rejected Applicants:

- *I kind of enjoy learning new things, and I would feel satisfied that I was bettering myself.*
- *The best thing about continuing my education would be that it would provide me with a good, financially secure future.*

#### Pending Applicants:

- *Brings me closer to my career goals.*
- *The best thing would be advancing my knowledge about film, meeting new people, and going down a new path.*

#### Accepted Applicants:

- *Not having to deal with it later in life.*
- *I would become smarter and earn more money later on in life.*
- *The best thing would be getting on with my life, because I feel like I wasted two years.*

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<sup>23</sup> Multiple items were recorded for the best and worst things about continuing their education, thus percentages will exceed 100%.

#### Former Registrants:

- *The fact that you are one step closer to the dream, basically.*
- *You'd have an early start after you were done school. You could have a job afterwards, depending on what you were doing.*
- *To not have to do construction any more, to go somewhere in life and not live paycheque to paycheque.*
- *Doing what I love, making more money. Also the experience itself.*

#### Active Registrants:

- Excluded from this question.

#### Completed Registrants:

- *Working toward a degree and a good career.*
- *Knowing that once you get out of school, you will get a job that pays more than minimum wage.*
- *I would be furthering my education. I would have something to do and it would fill my days instead of working.*
- *Succeeding and making it all the way, getting a proper job, making good money.*
- *Achieving the goal of owning my own business.*

## Conclusion

The results from this survey should provide valuable information to the Fraser Region Consortium, post-secondary institutions, parents, school districts and the BC Ministries of Education and Advanced Education in helping them gain a better understanding of the further education destinations, intentions and attitudes of recent high school graduates in the Fraser Region. For instance, by combining some of results from the recent STP research with these survey results, we are able to estimate that:

- Approximately 80% of all secondary school graduates of the Fraser Region in 2003/04 pursued some form of further education by May of 2006:
  - 64% registered in a BC public post-secondary institution,
  - 8% registered in BC private institutions,
  - 2% sought additional secondary school upgrading,
  - nearly 4% left BC to attend other Canadian or American institutions, and
  - roughly 1% attended another institution.
- Only 20% of Fraser Region graduates of 2003/04 have not yet registered in a further education program:
  - 6% applied,
  - 13% will probably apply sometime in the future and
  - only 1% will probably never apply.

- Although just 3.8% of Fraser Region graduates left the province to pursue their further education elsewhere in Canada or the United States, many of those who left are bright students with high grades.

This survey also revealed a wealth of information about the further education perceptions and attitudes of Fraser Region high school graduates.

- Many of those who have postponed their further education are currently attracted to the job market, but their job dissatisfaction will likely attract them to further education in the near future. Many of these students did not expect to pursue further education initially and thus did not pursue an academic route to high school graduation, thus limiting their further education choices. Very few students are opposed to further education and likely will not pursue further education.
- Rejected and pending applicants in this survey are small in number, but post-secondary institutions should consider that delays in processing applicants may result in students changing their mind and choosing to pursue other activities.
- The vast majority of accepted applicants that we surveyed fully intend to register or start their program as soon as it begins. Their attitudes and perceptions of their upcoming further education are positive.
- The registrants that we surveyed had three very different experiences: One group was disheartened by the experience and left their program, another group completed their short-term program and a third group is actively registered. The different attitudes and experiences of these three registrant groups should help institutions understand the risk factors contributing to the length of a stay at a post-secondary institution.

A number of additional questions may be raised by readers of this report. Some such questions may be answered from the survey responses directly and others will require additional research. The Fraser Region Consortium welcomes any questions or comments on this research. Please contact:

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