



## AGENDA REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2014

Item:	Strategic Plan Survey: Preliminary Insights
Presenters:	Andrew Lalka, Vice-President Finance, Strategic Plan Project Lead Scott Courtice, Managing Director, Government Services
Purpose of Report:	For Information
Item #:	7 d)

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### Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors receive this report for information.

### Background:

The USC conducted a student survey as part of the strategic plan process. The intention of the survey was to do a high level environmental scan of student satisfaction related to their educational experience and quality of life. The survey does not gauge satisfaction with specific USC or Western University services or operations, but we will be doing more detailed survey work as we get into business planning.

### Report:

The following details some initial insights from the survey. Raw results have been attached to this report for information. A more detailed analysis, including patterns from the qualitative questions from the survey, will be done in the weeks ahead and shared with the Board.

### Survey Insights:

#### *Educational Experience*

Exec Summary: Students report an above average level of satisfaction with their educational experience at Western. While there is room for improvement in several areas, the data show that Western is doing a good job when it comes to the student learning experience.

#### Q5: Satisfaction with In-Class Learning

- Average 7.1/10; an above average level of satisfaction with the in-class learning experience.

Q6: Priorities for improving In-Class Learning

- Top 3: Enhanced training for TAs and Profs, Smaller Classes, and Wider Breadth of Courses.
- Enhanced training for teachers was *by far* the highest priority, which is aligned with other recent student surveys conducted by OUSA.

Q7: Out of Classroom Learning

- Average 6.8; an above average level of satisfaction with the out of classroom learning experience. Slightly better result than In-Class satisfaction.

Q8: Priorities for improving Out of Classroom Learning

- Top 3: Apply learning through Co-Ops and Internships, Build a Social and Professional Network through Clubs, Athletics, Student Government, and Leadership Skills development.
- Applying learning through Co-Ops and Internships was a clear priority, with over 50% of students selecting that as their first choice. Building Social and Professional Networks was a clear second choice for most respondents.

**Quality of Life**

Exec Summary: Students are generally happy about their housing and safety, but students are far more comfortable on campus than within the London community. Students demand additional health and wellness services, particularly within the UCC, but aren't interested in paying additional fees to support new services. Students are heavy users of the bus, and believe improvements to the LTC should be a priority. The Clubs system is almost a universal service, and is viewed by students as an essential part of their life at Western. Many students are concerned about their personal financial situation, hold part-time jobs during the school year, and are concerned about securing employment post-graduation. The student pocket book has always been an issue in past surveys, but appears to be a growing concern.

Q9: Satisfaction with Health and Wellness Services

- Average 6.8/10; moderately above average level of satisfaction.

Q10: Priorities for improvement to Health and Wellness Services

- Top 3: Near equal priority for improving access to on campus doctors, bringing more health and wellness services to the UCC, and improving supports for mental health.
- Introducing a new vision plan or enhancing the current health and dental plans are not seen as priorities relative to the top 3.

Q11: Support for an additional student fee to support health and wellness enhancements.

- 40% would not support a fee increase for health and wellness services that they prioritized in the previous question; of the remaining 60%, there was almost an even split between yes and unsure. That suggests that fee increases would be palatable if students perceive value for the service because those who selected unsure could be open minded to a fee increase, but would require convincing.

Q13: Satisfaction with quality of housing.

- Average 7.8/10; high level of satisfaction with quality of housing. This suggests that students generally live in safe and comfortable housing, both on and off campus.

Q14: Affordability of housing.

- Average 6.4/10; moderate satisfaction with affordability of housing, lower satisfaction relative to most other issues we polled. This could align with an overall unease over students' financial situations.

Q15: On Campus Safety

- Average 8.4/10; students feel very safe on campus

Q16: Off Campus Safety

- Average 6.8/10; students feel less safe off campus than on campus, which warrants further exploration and advocacy.

Q17: How respectful and inclusive is campus?

- Average 7.5/10; above average satisfaction, but less than satisfaction with safety.

Q18: How respectful and inclusive is London?

- Average 6.6/10; suggests a Town and Gown divide. Students feel less welcome in the community than they do on campus. This warrants further investigation and advocacy. Should be a concern to London because it runs contrary to their stated strategy of retaining more students post-graduation.

Q19: How students get to campus?

- Almost an even split between the LTC (45%) and walking (39%). 12% of students drive to campus, suggesting that parking may be an issue for a small few but certainly not for the majority of students. A very small percentage cycle, although it is a safe assumption that a number of students who walk as a primary means of getting to campus may cycle during good weather.

Q20: How do student get around London to run errands, eat, go to mall?

- 64% use the LTC to get around London; students who don't use the bus to get to campus derive value from the pass in other ways.

- Cars are used by 30% of students to run errands. 1 in 3 students have access to a car to run errands but only 1 in 10 use a car to get to campus, which means that students' decision to walk or use transit isn't necessarily due to a lack of access to a vehicle.

Q21: Satisfaction with LTC service.

- Average 5.6/10. This suggests very moderate satisfaction with the service, especially when compared against other satisfaction rankings in this survey. Student may use the bus in large numbers, but this is likely due to lack of other transportation options rather than satisfaction with the quality and convenience of service.

Q22: Spending to improve transportation in London.

- Improving the LTC service was the #1 choice of over 78% of students. Given that only 64% of students use the bus regularly, this suggests students 'get' the importance of transit even if they don't personally use it. For our demographic, transit is clearly seen as a public good that must be improved upon – this suggests it should be a key priority for the USC at the local and provincial level.

Q23: Satisfaction with Arts and Culture on and off campus.

- Average 6.6/10. Moderate satisfaction. A significant percentage of Western's student population comes from larger urban centres, so students inevitably compare London's cultural offerings against amenities they have at home. It could also be due to a lack of awareness of off-campus cultural amenities in London.

Q24: Club membership.

- 79% of students have been a club member, suggesting that this is a near 'universal' benefit for students and may be the highest utilization of a service that the USC provides.

Q25: Importance of club system to educational experience and quality of life.

- Average 7.6/10. High utilization and high ranking of importance. This suggests the club system is one of the most essential services that the USC provides.

Q26: Source of funding for clubs system – balance between universal fees and user fees.

- 48% selected an even balance, but 34% selected user fees. That suggests students are comfortable with the current funding framework, but if the revenue model were to change there is a strong preference for additional user fees as opposed to universal fees.

Q27: Concern for personal financial situation.

- The survey suggests that many students are facing financial pressures; almost half of students surveyed were 'concerned,' with almost 31% being close to 'very concerned.'

Clearly, the affordability of education is still an important issue to the students the USC represent.

Q28: Satisfaction with sports and recreation services.

- Average 7/10. Students are satisfied with sports and recreation services.

Q29: Part-time job during the year.

- 38% of students work a part time job during the year. Given the concerns about affordability, it is not surprising that many students maintain a part time job to supplement their income.

Q30: Summer job?

- 84% of students had a summer job. That suggests that the summer job market is improving for students.

Q31: Confidence in finding suitable work post-graduation?

- Average 6/10. This suggests students are concerned about their employment prospects; this reality combined with concern for their current financial situation is likely resulting in a high degree of stress for many students.

Q32: Prioritization between quality of life and educational experience.

- 56% believe equal attention should be paid to both. For those not selecting an even balance, a focus on enhancing the educational experience is given a higher weight by students than quality of life.

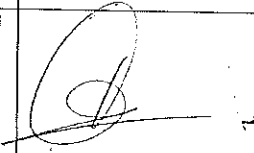
#### **Legislative History:**

- Council initiated a strategic planning process at the September meeting as per the advice of the Board of Directors.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Survey results will be used to formulate a draft strategic plan, and will also inform the budget process.

**Sign-Offs:**

Board Chairperson Review:	Isaac Jacobi, Chairperson	
USC General Manager Review:	Cathy Clarke, General Manager	
Strategic Plan Project Lead Review:	Andrew Lalka, Vice-President Finance	
Survey Analyst Review:	Scott Courtice, MD Government Services	