

# Social Engagement Outcomes: Summary Results of a Survey of 2006 and 2007 Canadian University Baccalaureate Graduates

## The Project

During the spring and summer of 2013, 41 Canadian universities conducted a survey of their baccalaureate graduates six to seven years following graduation (i.e. 2006 and 2007 graduates). Over 21,000 graduates provided information about their current employment situation, educational activity following their bachelor's program and their current social and civic involvement; and they assessed various elements of their academic program and university experience overall and the impacts these have in their lives today.

This report is the second in a series that will report the key findings of the survey. Future reports are expected to deal in detail with the relationship between current occupation and academic program; educational activity following baccalaureate graduation; graduates' assessments of the strengths, weaknesses and impacts of their academic program; and discipline-specific analyses (e.g. for the STEM disciplines, Humanities and Liberal Arts, etc.).

The Canadian University Five-Year Out Baccalaureate Graduate Outcomes Project began at the University of British Columbia under the direction of Walter Sudmant, Director of Planning and Institutional Research. Following pilot-testing at UBC, the survey instrument was revised for web-based administration at multiple universities. Mosaic Research Solutions built the online survey interface and conducted fieldwork. Several universities were involved in project setup, response post-coding (for NOC and NAICS) and data validation.

This second report in the series was prepared by Joyce Bai and Nathasha Macdonald at Carleton University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning. Questions can be addressed to either [jie.bai@carleton.ca](mailto:jie.bai@carleton.ca) or [nathasha.macdonald@carleton.ca](mailto:nathasha.macdonald@carleton.ca). This and other reports in the series are (or will be) available online at [www.queensu.ca/irp](http://www.queensu.ca/irp).

## Key Findings

11% of university graduates considered themselves to be "social entrepreneurs".

In general, respondents reported that the university experience contributed to increased social engagement, particularly with respect to lifelong learning.

40% of graduates reported volunteering or donating "a great deal" to at least one charitable cause. 60% reported that the university experience had contributed to increased involvement in charitable and philanthropic activities to at least a small extent.

Many demographic characteristics were strongly associated with differences in social engagement and the impact of the university experience. In general, graduates who were visible minority, Aboriginal, mature, or who reported a health condition were more likely to be involved in various aspects of social involvement, and those who were Aboriginal or currently living outside Canada and USA were more likely to report having been impacted by their university experience.

## Notes on the Analysis

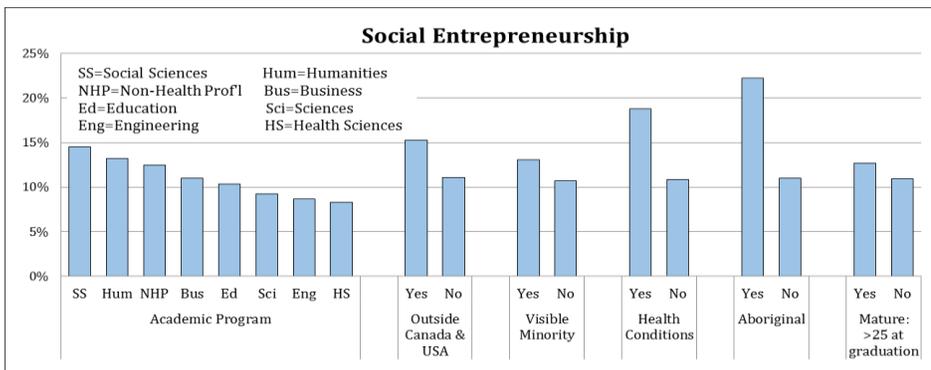
All response differences noted in this report are statistically significant ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

Observed differences in this report do not account for interactions between variables. For example, since Engineering respondents are mostly male, the results for Engineering programs are likely to reflect both program and gender differences. Please interpret such differences with caution.

Since many of the survey questions deal with university impact, it is important to note that some respondents had completed, and responded with respect to, a second-entry program (eg. Education, Law). As a result, they had completed two degrees, were likely to be older than first-entry program graduates, and provided responses that were possibly atypical of first-entry program graduates.

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## Social Entrepreneurship

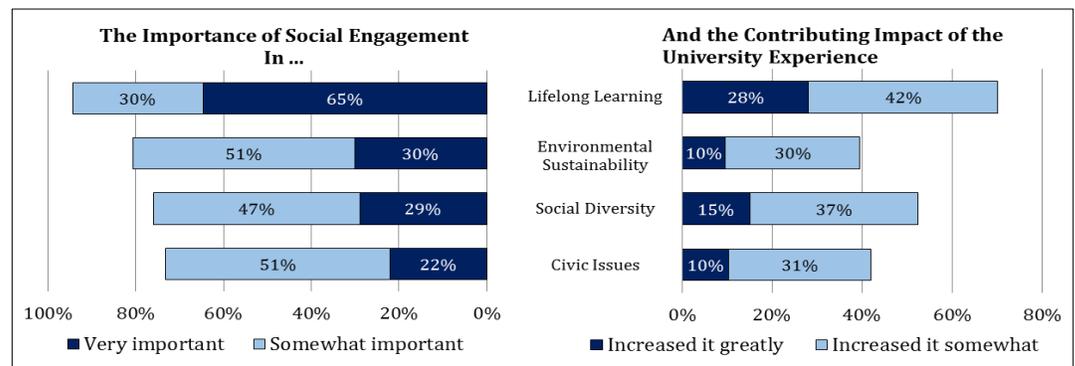


"Social entrepreneurship" is defined as involvement in the creation of new organizations that have social, environmental, or other public interest issues as their primary goal; and/or influencing a for-profit organization to channel more of its revenues for the good of these public issues. Overall, 11 percent of graduates considered themselves as "social entrepreneurs". Those from Social Sciences programs

were most likely to report social entrepreneurship activities; those from Health Sciences least likely. Several demographic characteristics were associated with higher levels of social entrepreneurship, particularly health conditions and Aboriginal status.

## Social Engagement

More than 70% of graduates considered their engagement in the four specified areas as being "very" or "somewhat" important; most notably, involvement in lifelong learning was rated as being "very important" by roughly two-thirds of all respondents. Aboriginal, mature graduates, and those with



health conditions assigned the highest importance ratings across all four areas. Many graduates indicated that their university experience positively contributed to their current level of engagement in civic and environmental issues (roughly 40%), social diversity issues (52%) and once again notably, lifelong learning (70%). Aboriginal, first generation graduates, and those living outside Canada and USA assigned generally higher ratings to the contributing impacts of their university experience.

### Variations in the Perceived Importance of Personal Engagement and the Contributing Effect of the University Experience

Student Characteristic	Civic Issues		Environmental Sustainability		Social Diversity		Lifelong Learning	
	Importance	Impact	Importance	Impact	Importance	Impact	Importance	Impact
Female	—	●	▲	●	▲	▲	▲	▲
Aboriginal	▲	▲	▲	—	▲	▲	▲	▲
Visible Minority	—	●	●	—	▲	▲	▲	—
With Health Conditions	▲	—	▲	—	▲	▲	▲	—
First Generation	—	▲	●	—	▲	▲	—	▲
Living Outside Canada & USA	—	—	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Mature	▲	—	▲	●	▲	—	▲	▲

▲ Higher level of importance or impact than counterparts ● Lower level of importance or impact than counterparts — No difference

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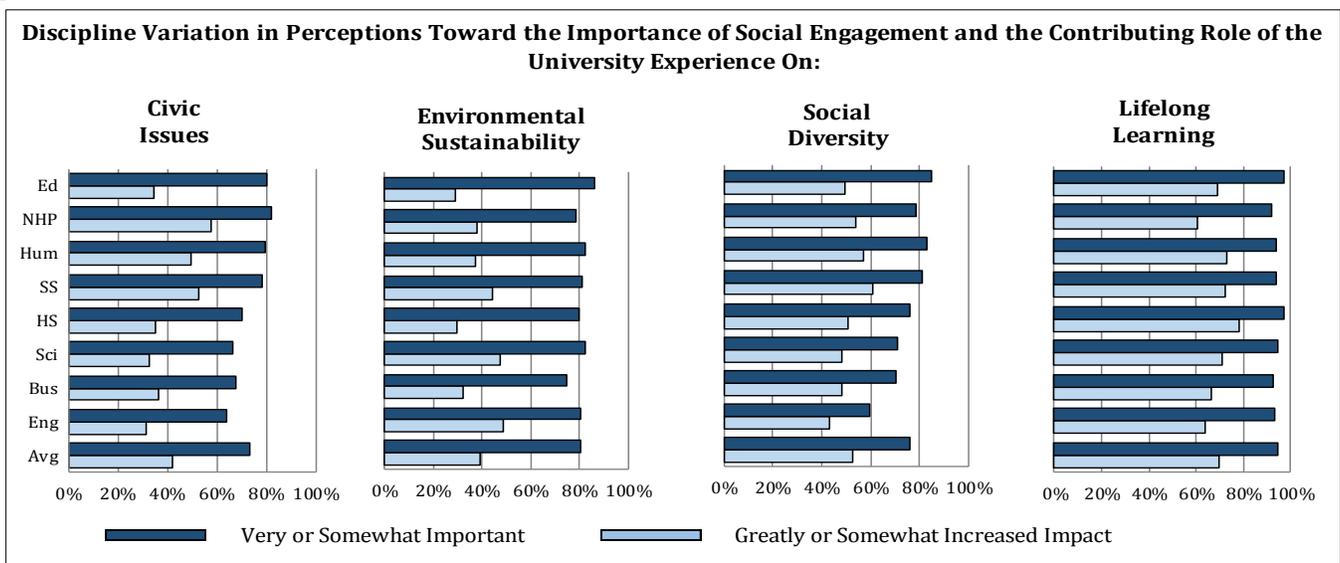
Perceptions of the importance of social engagement and the contributing impact of the university experience also varied by academic discipline:

**Civic Issues:** Graduates of Non-Health Professional programs reported the highest levels of importance and impact; Engineering graduates reported the lowest.

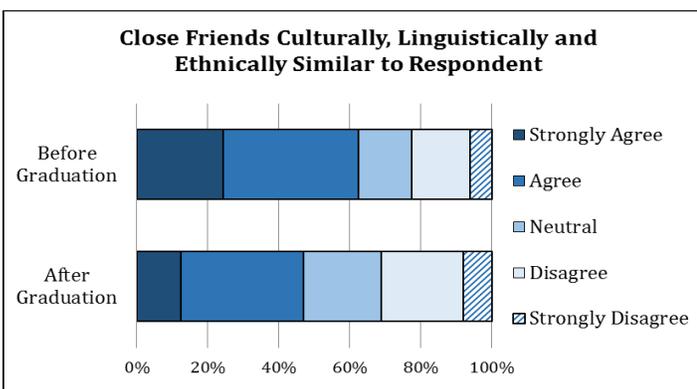
**Environmental Sustainability:** Engineering, Sciences and Social Sciences graduates reported the highest contributing impact of the university experience (> 40%). Education graduates reported the lowest contributing impact (29%) but the highest level of importance (86%).

**Social diversity:** Social Sciences and Humanities graduates reported the highest level of university impact. Engineering graduates reported the lowest levels of both importance and impact.

**Lifelong learning:** More than 90% of graduates across all disciplines reported that involvement in lifelong learning was "very" or "somewhat" important, and well over 60% reported that the university experience "somewhat" or "greatly" impacted their current involvement.



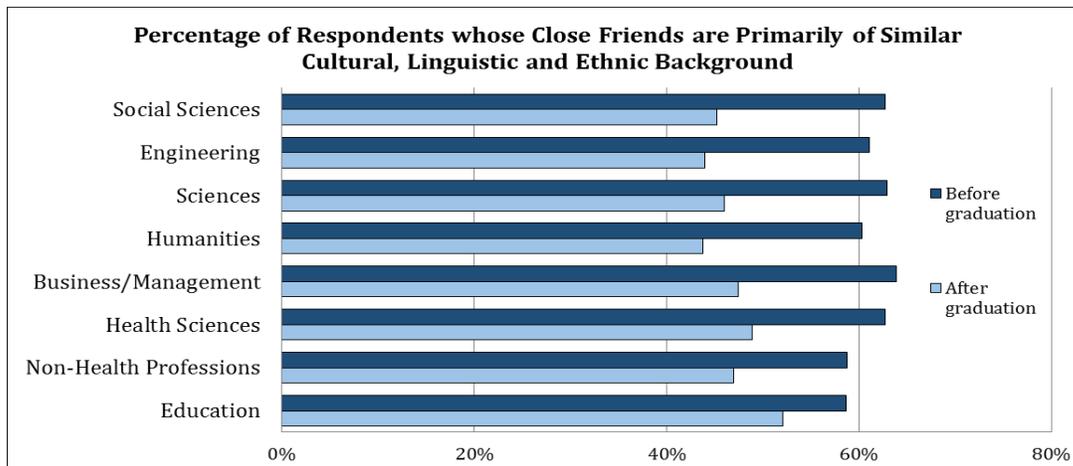
## Social Diversity



Social diversity was also measured by comparing graduates' social circles before and after graduation. Graduates agreeing or strongly agreeing that their close friends were culturally, linguistically or ethnically similar to themselves decreased from 62% before graduation to 47% after graduation. Differences in social circle diversity were strongly associated with demographic characteristics: respondents living outside Canada and USA, members of visible minorities, mature, non-first-generation graduates, and those with health conditions reported a more diverse social circle both before and after graduation than their counterparts. Graduates from all academic disciplines

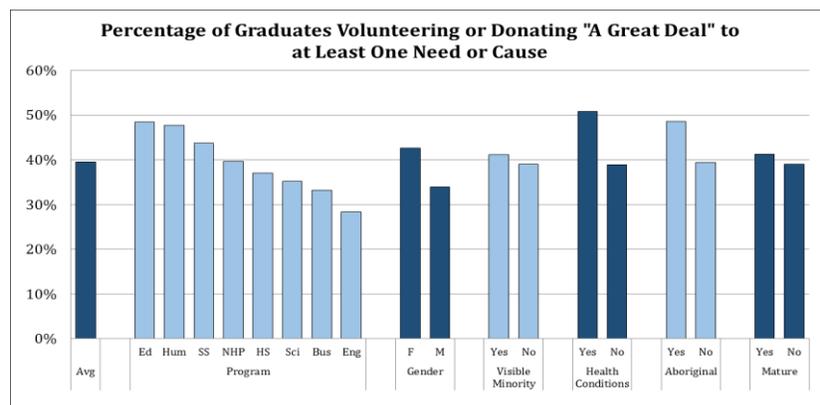
reported that the diversity of their social circle increased after graduation. Interestingly, even though Engineering graduates reported the lowest level of impact of their university experience on social diversity in the section above, the change in their social circle diversity was greater than most of their peers. Education graduates reported the smallest change in the diversity of their social circle after graduation (see below).

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## Volunteering and Philanthropy

Graduates reported on the extent to which they volunteered for or donated money to specified social needs and causes. 94% had contributed at least "a little", and 40% "a great deal" to at least one such cause. The primary foci of graduates' volunteering and philanthropy were health, community, education and poverty. Respondents were least likely to report volunteering with or financially contributing to political parties. Volunteerism and philanthropy show variations across demographic characteristics similar to that for social entrepreneurship. Those who were visible minority, Aboriginal, or who indicated a health condition reported contributing at higher rates. 39% of graduates indicated that their university experience did not have any impact on their involvement in charitable and philanthropic activities, while 35% reported a small impact. For the 25% of graduates who reported that university experience had influenced their involvement either to some or a great extent, education was the most common cause selected, followed by community and health.



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