

UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

# CAMPUS POVERTY REPORT

2017/18

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ON BEHALF OF THE UWSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2017-2018

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## Overview

The University of Winnipeg Students' Association (UWSA) launched the Campus Poverty Report to better understand the costs associated with accessing post-secondary education. While one of the major costs to coming to university is tuition, it must also be recognized that there are a wide range of expenses that can act as a barrier to potential and current students.

The preliminary survey questions were drafted by the UWSA President, reviewed by UWSA executive and staff members, as well as Dr. Jino Distasio, (UWinnipeg VP, Research and Innovation). The survey was developed and analyzed in consultation with Jodene Baker (Director, Institutional Analysis) on Qualtrics Survey Software.

The UWSA Campus Poverty survey ran from Monday, September 25 to Wednesday, October 11, 2017 (seventeen active days). The UWSA received 1,388 responses over this time, or approximately 13% of the student body. The survey was distributed through UWinnipeg student emails to all undergraduate and graduate students; PACE program students consented to receiving the survey by sign-up sheets distributed in-class.

For the purposes of this report, the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) 2017 Middle-Years University Student Survey was used to compare results. In the CUSC survey, the University of Winnipeg is classed in Group 1, as a “university that offers primarily undergraduate studies and that have smaller student populations.”

There were three known sources of error in conducting the survey. First, email sign-up by PACE members was introduced during class time, and some students may have been absent. In addition, human error in writing and reading email addresses resulted in several undeliverable surveys.

Second, the original hyperlink sent to students allowing access to the survey page was not active the first time it was sent to students. Though the UWSA President responded to students who noticed this mistake and

another email was sent out to all students, there was concern that students may not participate because of this error.

Third, the transportation section did not display on the active survey. Students whose primary transportation was “personal vehicle” or “Winnipeg Transit bus” were not able to respond to these portions, and as such, the survey is lacking in this information.

In addition, this survey was voluntary, and the responses collected may be influenced by students’ availability to complete the full survey.

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## Demographics

Of the respondents, **88%** were domestic students; **8%** were international students. This is a close representation of the student population as reported by UWinnipeg Institutional Analysis, which sets the international student body as 7% of the total population (*Quick Facts*, 2016-2017).

Respondents ages were varied: **3%** under the age of 18, **66%** between the ages of 18 and 22, **22%** between the ages of 23 and 29, **7%** between the ages of 30 and 40, and **2%** over the age of 40.

**71%** of respondents identified as women, **26%** identified as men, **0.8%** identified as non-binary, **0.4%** identified as agender, **0.7%** identified as genderfluid, and **0.2%** identified as two-spirited. The UWSA could not find any similar data on gender identity beyond the binary (only recognizing male or female gender). The CUSC data (which is reported based on the binary) has similar results for women and men, at 72% and 28%, respectively (CUSC, 2017).

Data provided by UWinnipeg Institutional Analysis reports that **10%** of the student body identifies as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit. Additionally, the CUSC data reported that **28%** of the student population identifies as racialized (those who self-identified as belonging to a group other than “Aboriginal,” “Inuit,” “Métis,” or “White”) (CUSC, 2017). However, the CUSC survey is unclear on whether respondents were able to select more than one identity in this response.

According to the CUSC data, **21%** of UWinnipeg students surveyed identified as students living with a disability. **28%** of those students reported requiring accommodation through the Accessibility Services and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (2017).

**6%** of respondents identified themselves as student-parents in the UWSA = survey. **76%** of student-parents also identified as women. The data provided in the CUSC Survey differs, placing the population at 13% of the student body (CUSC, 2017). However, this can be justified as the UWSA survey’s grouping included students in their first and last years of study, professional programs, and graduate students.

Of those student-parents, **37%** have 1 child, **34%** have 2 children, **16%** have three children, **10%** have 4 children, and **3%** have 5 or more children. The ages of their children varied in ranges: **37%** have children under the age of 5; **40%** have children between the ages of 5 – 11; **13%** have children between the ages of 12-18; and **11%** have children over the age of 18.

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## Academic Profile

Figure 1: Results of Q. 8, Q. 19, Q. 20, Q. 21, Q. 22. (UWSA, *Campus Poverty survey*, 2017.)

Year of Study	
Year 1	36%
Year 2	22%
Year 3	18%
Year 4	14%
Year 5 or higher	10%
Program	
Undergraduate	90%
Faculty of Arts	39%
Faculty of Science	26%
Faculty of Business & Economics	14%
Faculty of Education	13%
Faculty of Kinesiology & Applied Health	6%

	Graduate	5%
Master of Arts		31%
Master of Science		31%
Master in Developmental Practice		4%
Master in Management		2%
Joint Masters Program (with UManitoba)		11%
	Professional Program	4%
Professional, Applied, and Continuing Education (PACE)		64%
Joint Program with Red River College		11%

Approximately 75% of UWinnipeg undergraduates are full-time, taking 9 or more credit hours per term, while 25% are part-time (UW Institutional Analysis, Quick Facts, 2016). **16%** of respondents indicated that they were taking part-time studies in the Fall 2017 term. The largest grouping was 9 credit hours, the minimum amount of credits to meet requirements for full-time status; for undergraduate students, **32%** respondents were enrolled in 9 credit hours.

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## Tuition & Textbook Costs

Figure 2: Current undergraduate tuition fees. (UWinnipeg, *Tuition and Course Related Fees*, 2017. [<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/fees/tuition.html>])

FULL-TIME (30 credits)*	DOMESTIC (\$)	INTERNATIONAL (\$)
Faculty of Arts	3,448.50	12,852.00
Faculty of Business	3,448.50	15,961.50
Faculty of Education	3,448.50	13,377.00
Faculty of Kinesiology	3,448.50	13,686.00
Faculty of Science	3,969.00	15,361.50
*tuition fees only		

The current cost of one year of a full course load (30 credit hours) in the Faculty of Arts at the UWinnipeg is \$4,200 for a domestic undergrad student. That would mean a student would need to work 455 hours at minimum wage to pay for this single year. An international student taking

the same classes is paying nearly four times that amount - \$16,566 (University of Winnipeg, 2017).

Figure 3: Current graduate tuition fees. (UWinnipeg, *Fee Information*, 2017. [<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/graduate-studies/fees/index.html>])

FULL TIME	DOMESTIC (\$)	INT'L (\$)	Continuance
Master of Arts	7,154.44	14,065.72	3,104.10
Master of Science	7,154.44	14,065.72	3,104.10
Master in Developmental Practice	21,045.58	21,320.02	3,104.10
Master in Management (part-time)	10,715.34	12,318.98	3,104.10

Figure 4: Current PACE tuition fees. (UWinnipeg, *Tuition Fee*, 2017. [<http://pace.uwinnipegcourses.ca/tuition-fee>])

FULL TIME	DOMESTIC (\$)	INT'L (\$)	TEXTBOOK (\$)
Educational Assistant	5,7000	N/A	N/A
Human Resources Management	12,200	18,000	2,500 – 3,000
Financial Management	10,500	16,300	2,000
Marketing Management	10,500	16,300	2,000 - 2,200
Network Security	15,700	21,500	2,000
Project Management	12,600	18,400	3,000
Public Relations Marketing Management	13,500	19,300	2,500 - 3,000
Web Development	15,700	21,500	1,000

The average cost for domestic undergraduate students responding to the UWSA survey was **\$4,554.89**; for international undergraduates, it was **\$11,423.14**. The average cost for domestic graduate students was **\$4,780.38**; for international graduates, it was **\$10,583.58**. The average cost for domestic PACE students responding to the survey was **\$13,883.93**. The average cost for international PACE students responding to the survey was **\$19,189.72**.

Despite its reputation as one of the most affordable universities in Canada, only **25%** ranked the affordability of tuition at UWinnipeg as excellent or

good. **45%** ranked the affordability average, **17%** ranked it poor, and **6%** ranked it terrible.

Considering the recruitment strategy focusing on affordability of tuition in Manitoba, only **13%** of international students found the affordability of tuition good or excellent at UWinnipeg.

The average amount that respondents paid on their Fall Term textbooks was **\$300**, with the average student purchasing **three** books. This amount varies based on program, course load, and instructor preference, but the sentiment of students is clear: **55%** of students consider the affordability of textbooks to be poor or terrible.

While **70%** of respondents choose to purchase their textbooks at the campus bookstore, **23%** purchase their books online with services such as Amazon or eBay.

The UWSA has heard anecdotally and in the comments of the survey that the cost of textbooks acts as a deterrent for many. In order to avoid these costs, students resort to accessing materials from the UWinnipeg or public library, borrowing from friends or family who have taken the class before, or can even make a conscious decision to not seek out the material. This impacts their ability to engage in their courses, solely because they are unable to afford this cost.

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## Housing Situation & Living Expenses

CUSC's 2017 Middle-Years University Students Survey shows that **58%** of respondents lived at home with parents, guardians, or relatives; **3%** lived in on-campus housing; **26%** responded that they lived in rented housing off campus (shared or alone); and **12%** lived in a personally-owned home.

The UWSA survey revealed similar results, with **53%** living rent-free with relatives; **11%** paying rent while living with relatives; **3%** living in on-campus housing; **7%** renting off-campus, alone; **18%** renting off-campus, with others; **6%** were homeowners.

While many students choose to live at home for the sake of simplicity, there are those who avoid moving out to save on costs. Many others do not have

a choice to stay at their parents' homes, whether they are international students, non-local students, or students who may not have the support of their families. These students who live on their own face costs their peers may not. Only 7% of respondents rent off-campus, alone, which speaks to the rising costs of renting in Winnipeg.

Figure 5: Average monthly expenditures (UWSA, *Campus Poverty survey*, 2017)

	RENTER (\$)	HOMEOWNER (\$)
RENT/MORTGAGAGE	559.19	860.69
HYDRO	33.59	144.18
WATER	17.73	72.19
PHONE (home/mobile)	69.18	85.94
HOME INTERNET	37.12	69.08
CABLE/SATELLITE	12.90	42.29
GROCERIES	145.09	331.59
ESSENTIALS (non-food)	137.06	191.89
TOTAL	1011.86	1,797.85

These costs do vary based on each students' needs. For example, "essentials" can encompass basic needs such as clothing, household items, or medicine. For students with disabilities, these costs increase for prescriptions and professional services which may not be included in health plans.

In total, **3%** of the students surveyed identified that they access food banks, either on campus or in the community. However, there are several groups which report using food banks: **5%** of on-campus renters are registered clients at the UWSA Foodbank; **6%** of international students have accessed the UWSA Foodbank; and **14%** student-parents report utilizing food banks, whether on campus or in the community.

Of those students surveyed, **50%** indicated that Winnipeg Transit buses were their primary form of transportation; **33%** using personal vehicles, alone; **8%** using personal vehicles, carpooling; **4%** walking; **3%** cycling; and **.25%** using Winnipeg Transit's "Handi-Transit" service.

**85%** of those who identified as transit users are full-time students, and would pay \$132.50 per term for the U-Pass. Part-time students pay \$80.10 per month for the Post-Secondary Monthly Pass.



**55%** of respondents are enrolled in the UWSA Health Plan; **36%** are enrolled in private health insurance, paying an average of \$662.94; and **5%** are uninsured.

Figure 6: Current UWSA Health Plan rates, by plan type, by survey response(UWSA website, 2017)

UWSA Health Plan	Yearly Cost	% of respondents
Full-time Single	233.16	75%
Full-time Couple	463.80	4%
Full-time Family	498.80	5%
Part-time, Single	451.80	3%
Part-time Family	970.92	1%
International Single	274.44	10%
International Couple	505.08	1%
Indigenous Single	157.08	1%

UWSA Health Plan users ranked the service excellent, 13%; good, 35%; average, 39%, poor, 12%; and terrible, 1%.

Student-parents have more expenses than their counterparts. Those who procure childcare services, with **10%** using the UWSA Day Care, have an average monthly cost of \$265; **68%** using childcare centres/homes, have an average monthly cost of \$409.55; and **20%** using family care, have an average cost of \$503.70. Parents accessing the UWSA Day Care considered the affordability excellent, 50%; good, 17%; or average, 33%. The average cost of non-food essential items for student-parents was **\$223**.

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## Income & Employment

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba Office has developed a “bare bones budget” to describe the very basic needs of living expenses in Winnipeg. Their calculation of living wage to meet these needs works out to \$14.54 an hour, or \$26,462.80 (Lynne Fernandez, A Family Living Wage for Manitoba, 2017)

**51%** of all students surveyed report that they make less than \$10,000 annually, with **26%** making between \$10,000-19,000.

Of the international students surveyed, **71%** are making less than \$10,000 annually. For student-parents, **22%** indicate that their annual income is less than \$10,000, and **22%** between \$10,000-20,000.

These students are living outside the bare minimum of what should be expected in the city of Winnipeg.

Figure 6: Q. 69, Q. 60 (UWSA, *Campus Poverty survey, 2017*)

Summer Employment	
Full-time	46%
Part-time	33%
Contract	4%
Un/Under-employed	14%
Current Employment	
Full-time	8%
Part-time	59%
Contract	3%
Un/Under-employed	28%

**69%** of our survey respondents showed that they were currently employed, with **85%** of those working part-time.

About 25% of UWinnipeg undergraduate students are taking part-time course loads. While there is nothing wrong with part-time studies, trends noted by UWinnipeg's Institutional Analysis show that this number is rising. Part-time students take longer to finish their degrees, not only putting their futures on hold, but also spending more money on their degrees in the long run due to recurring fees and the rising cost of tuition.

More and more students are carrying part-time studies because they need to work while they are in school. When students have to work while they are in school, it diminishes the time they are able to spend preparing for classes, doing assignments, studying for exams, and succeeding in their programs. If their GPA is negatively impacted because of this, it could lead to failure to qualify in their academics or for important scholarships or bursaries.

CUSC's survey asked students how their work life impacted their academic performance: **45%** of students responded that it had a "somewhat negative" impact, and **4%** responded that there was a "very negative" impact.

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## Loans, Funding, & Awards

Many students resort to taking out student loans in order to be able to pay for school. **36%** of UWinnipeg students report having any debt during their degree, with **22%** of those respondents accruing an average of **\$12,995** from government student loans; **10%** accruing an average of **\$9,782** from financial institutions; and **14%** accruing an average of **\$4,840** from parents and family (CUSC, 2017). These levels of debt are extremely concerning, and adversely impact recent graduates who are trying to start a new chapter of their lives. In addition, loans often will not cover additional living expenses associated with attending post-secondary, especially for groups such as students with disabilities or student-parents whose living expenses are higher than others.

**27%** of all UWSA survey respondents reported having student loans currently. Of those, **25%** were private, through a bank; **54%** through provincial programs; and **16%** from federal programs. Of those who currently have a student loan, **26%** are employed full-time, and **28%** are employed part-time. This employment speaks to the concerns students have with repayment of their loans, trying to maintain payments so as not to go further into debt.

**3%** of respondents reported receiving funding through INAC's Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), which provides financial assistance to eligible Treaty/Status First Nations students. While the UWSA survey did not incorporate questions around race or ethnicity, the current information from UWinnipeg's Institutional Analysis puts the percentage of indigenous students at 10% of the student body. The PSSSP has a limited amount of funding available to a population that is rapidly growing, which will be stretched thinner with any prospective tuition increase. Individuals applying for support may not be successful or may not receive as much as they may have received before tuition was increased.

**28%** of students report applying for scholarships and bursaries through the UWinnipeg, while **22%** responded that they were not aware that they could access scholarships and bursaries. **26%** of students enrolled in their first year of study reported that they were not aware of accessing awards; **28%** of international students were not aware of accessing awards.

**35%** of students surveyed received Special Entrance Scholarships (SES); **23%** of these students said the SES influenced their decision to attend UWinnipeg a moderate amount, **9%** said this influenced their decision a lot, and **12%** said this influenced their decision a great deal. For many, these SES act as a means of narrowing down which institution to attend, and for others, it means paying for their first year of university.

Both the provincial government and the University administration encourages focusing on scholarships and bursaries to alleviate the cost of tuition increases. However, there are already students struggling to access bursaries. Tuition increases will only exacerbate the need that exists for those students, and make it more competitive as more students need to access funds.

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## UWSA Conclusions

The UWSA strongly condemns any form of tuition increase to any student, regardless of their citizenship or program. Students at the University of Winnipeg are diverse. Our survey was launched to get a better sense of what our students are facing. While we can show you the average, it's not just the "average" student we need to look out for - it's the students who are struggling to make ends meet, who are sacrificing their well-being and health in order to be at university, students who want to be able to succeed in their lives.

The movement away from a publicly-funded education system is alarming.

While this university may be put in a precarious financial position, the students who attend UWinnipeg are also at risk. Increasing tuition fees will prevent students who are already struggling to make ends meet from continuing in their studies, and completely exclude those who wish to enroll in this university. It will mean that more students will be facing personal debt by taking on loans, effectively faulting those who do not have the money up-front to pay for university, and reinforcing systems of oppression that privilege an elite class.

This university holds up examples of “success stories” and “non-traditional students,” yet puts those same students in jeopardy.

The University of Winnipeg has the opportunity to take a stand against austerity and protect the students who choose to study here. The UWSA urges the University of Winnipeg and the UWinnipeg Board of Regents to not increase tuition fees as allowed in the Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act.

## REFERENCES

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