

**Survey of Adult Learners:
A perspective of four Northern Alberta colleges**

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ADULT LEARNER REPORT

1. Introduction

The “Survey of Northern Alberta High School Students” looked at the choices and motivations of one portion of the students coming into the Clearinghouse partner colleges. This report looks at another portion of the college student community - the growing number of older learners entering the Clearinghouse partner colleges after several years outside of the education system.

This research report was possible thanks to the efforts of Marylea Jarvis of Keyano College, Monica Kreiner of Northern Lakes College, Darlene Mievre of Fairview College and Terry Welker of Lakeland College.

2. A Perspective from the Literature

The average non-traditional adult learner is 25 years of age or older and has returned to school on a full-time or part-time basis. These adults typically balance family, employment, and financial commitments which leave them no time for extra-curricular campus activities (Ely, 1997). These learners generally achieve better grades than younger students but may take a long period of time to complete their studies.

Adult learners often require basic academic skills, information about career opportunities and to develop their ability to identify their individual strengths and abilities (Ely 1997). Many adult learners also need to improve their decision making and stress management skills.

Research has indicated that academic and social integration are important to non-traditional student retention both for those who reside at a post-secondary institution and those who commute (Johnson, 1997). Successful adult learners integrate school into their lives by focusing on goals, pacing themselves, balancing multiple responsibilities, celebrating achievement and using their personal support system (Kaplan and Saltiel, 1997).

In making their choice of a post-secondary institution, students consider what they want to study relative to what is available at different institutions, institutional admission procedures, their financial resources, the availability of financial assistance, and how family or work responsibilities may affect their class schedule (Choy & Ottinger, 1998).

The approach that students use to choose a post-secondary institution has been described by researchers as a three-stage process. The process starts with a broad search of available post-secondary opportunities, followed by a detailed review of possible institutions that results in a set of criteria that will help make the choice. The last stage in the process is when the student selects one institution based on these criteria.

Choy and Ottinger (1998) developed four general categories that described factors influencing at student's choice of a postsecondary institution as follows:

- Location related (close to job, can live at home, close to home, liked the campus, other location reason);
- Reputation and/or school related (good reputation of school, job placement opportunities, facilities/equipment, faculty reputation, other reputation/school reason);
- Price related (shorter time to finish, less cost for attendance, more financial aid, low tuition, other price reason); and,
- Influence-related (parents went there, friends/spouse went there, parents wanted student to attend, teacher/guidance counsellor recommended, other influence factors).

3. Approach to Research

Strict controls were not established for the determination of population samples for the four post-secondary institutions. As a result, bias may exist in the pool of respondents.

Fifty questionnaires were forwarded to each of the four colleges for distribution. Lakeland College distributed additional questionnaires and received 66 completed questionnaires.

Colleges distributed the questionnaires using a variety of mechanisms. Several colleges gave the questionnaires to Program Chairs for distribution to students 25 years or older. Some colleges used measures to increase the randomness of this distribution.

Northern Lakes College distributed the questionnaires to several campus sites to capture the geographic diversity of their student population.

4. Adult Learner Respondent Population in Four Colleges

A total of 168 completed questionnaires were received. Forty questionnaires were received from Fairview students, thirty-four from Keyano students, sixty-six from Lakeland students and twenty-eight from Northern Lakes students.

A. Attendance Patterns

The respondent population was enrolled in one of five types of programs – Academic Upgrading (29 percent), Apprenticeship (10 percent), Diploma or Certificate (52 percent), Applied Degree (4 percent) and University Transfer (5 percent).

As the data provided in Table 1 indicates the number of respondents by college and program type varied. Northern Lakes College had the highest proportion of Academic Upgrading respondents, Keyano College had the highest percentage of Apprenticeship respondents and Fairview College had the highest percentage of Diploma or Certificate respondents.

Table 1 - Profile of Respondents by College and Program Type

College/Program	Fairview	Keyano	Lakeland	Northern Lakes
Academic Upgrading	25.00%	18.75%	27.27%	50.00%
Apprenticeship	12.50%	15.63%	10.61%	0.00%
Diploma or Certificate	62.50%	40.63%	56.06%	39.29%
Applied Degree	0.00%	12.50%	3.30%	0.00%
University Transfer	0.00%	12.50%	3.03%	10.71%

The majority of respondents were attending classes on a full-time basis (86 percent).

Only 24 percent of respondents planned to graduate this year.

Respondents varied in the number of years since they had last attended an educational institution before enrolling in their current program. Forty-four percent of the group indicated that it had been more than ten years since they had enrolled in an educational program. The remaining respondents report 0 to 2 years (19 percent), three to five years (14 percent) and six to ten years (23 percent).

B. Respondent Characteristics

(i) Age

Thirty-three percent of the respondents were aged 25 to 29 years of age. The next largest subgroup of the population was aged 30 to 34 (20 percent) and 35 to 39 (21 percent) years of age. The number of respondents older than 40 years of age was lower (16 percent aged 40-44 years and 11 percent older than 45 years).

Table 2 provides more detailed data on the ages of respondents for each college.

Table 2 - Profile of Respondents by Age

College/Age	Fairview	Keyano	Lakeland	Northern Lakes
25-29 years	42.11%	18.18%	37.88%	25.00%
30-34 years	18.42%	21.21%	19.70%	21.43%
35-39 years	21.05%	24.24%	18.18%	21.43%
40-44 years	10.53%	18.18%	19.70%	10.71%
45+ years	7.89%	18.18%	4.55%	21.43%

(ii) Gender

Sixty-nine percent of the respondent population was female and thirty-one percent were male. Table 3 provides more detailed information about the gender of this population by college.

Table 3 - Profile of Respondents by Gender

College/Gender	Fairview	Keyano	Lakeland	Northern Lakes
Female	63.89%	60.61%	72.73%	75.00%
Male	36.11%	39.39%	27.27%	25.00%

(iii) Aboriginal or non-aboriginal

Thirty-five percent of respondents self-reported as aboriginal and 65 percent self-reported as non-aboriginal. Further details are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 - Profile of Respondents by Aboriginal or Non-Aboriginal

College/Status	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal
Fairview	21.05%	22.86%
Keyano	12.28%	23.81%
Lakeland	31.58%	45.71%
Northern Lakes	35.09%	7.62%

(iv) Highest level of education upon enrollment

Twenty-five percent of respondents entered their program of study without a high school diploma. A further 15 percent entered with some college or technical institute courses to their credit while 13 percent entered with a college diploma or certificate.

Table 5 – Highest Level of Education before Enrolling in Current Program

Level of Education/Percentage	
Grade 9 or less	18%
Grade 10-12 (no diploma)	17%
High School Diploma	17%
Apprenticeship	4%
Some college/institute courses	15%
College Certificate or Diploma	13%
Some University Courses	5%
University Degree	4%
Other	7%

A detailed listing of the ‘other’ category is provided in Appendix B (page 18).

5. Analysis of Findings

A. Factors Influencing Decision to Attend College

The following factors were rated by respondents in terms of their importance in deciding to attend college:

- To improve my chance of getting a better job (96 rated this factor as important with 81 percent rating it very important)
- To develop skills and/or knowledge needed for a specific job (95 percent rated this factor as important with 69 percent rating it very important)
- To improve my knowledge (92 percent rated this factor as important with 71 percent rating it very important)
- Transfer opportunities to other institutions (67 percent rated this factor as important). As Table 6 indicates transfer opportunities were most important to Academic Upgrading and University Transfer students.

Table 6 - Importance of Transfer Opportunities by Program Type

Program Type/Rating	Academic Upgrading	Apprenticeship	Diploma or Certificate	Applied Degree	University Transfer
(1) Not at all important	9.76%	43.75%	22.22%	16.67%	11.11%
(2)	7.32%	18.75%	12.35%	16.67%	11.11%
(3)	21.95%	0.00%	23.46%	33.33%	11.11%
(4)	19.51%	12.50%	13.58%	16.67%	11.11%
(5) Very important	41.46%	25.00%	28.40%	16.67%	55.56%
Average Rating	4	3	3	3	4

Other factors that were reported by several respondents as influencing the decision to attend college were the need to retrain for a new career due to a medical reason and a desire for self-improvement. A detailed listing of these comments is provided in Appendix B (page 19).

B. Factors Influencing Decision to Attend a Specific College

(i) Cost of tuition

Respondents varied considerably in their opinions on the importance of tuition costs on their decision to attend a particular college. This factor was analyzed further in relation to program type and age of respondent.

The data presented in Table 7 indicates that tuition costs are of least importance to university transfer students. This is probably attributable to the lower tuition costs for university transfer programs at colleges compared to tuition costs for the same programs

at universities. Tuition costs appear to be of greater concern to Applied Degree program students.

Table 7 - Importance of Tuition Costs by Program Type

Program Type/Rating	Academic Upgrading	Apprenticeship	Diploma or Certificate	Applied Degree	University Transfer
(1) Not at all important	18.60%	11.76%	16.67%	0.00%	33.33%
(2)	6.98%	17.65%	15.48%	16.67%	11.11%
(3)	30.23%	11.76%	28.57%	33.33%	22.22%
(4)	16.28%	35.29%	19.05%	0.00%	33.33%
(5) Very important	27.91%	23.53%	20.24%	50.00%	0.00%
Average Rating	3	3	3	4	3

The data presented in Table 8 shows that tuition costs are of least concern to students aged 45 and over. This could be attributed to two factors – these students may be earning income while attending college on a part-time basis or they may be enrolled in academic upgrading courses and receiving financial support.

Table 8 - Importance of Tuition Costs by Age of Respondent

Age/Rating	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45+ years
(1) Not at all important	20.75%	16.13%	17.65%	12.50%	25.00%
(2)	16.98%	16.13%	5.88%	4.17%	25.00%
(3)	20.75%	45.16%	26.74%	25.00%	12.50%
(4)	24.53%	3.23%	14.71%	25.00%	31.25%
(5) Very important	16.98%	19.35%	35.29%	33.33%	6.25%
Average Rating	3	3	3	4	3

(ii) Ability to live at home

Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated that this factor was not at all important in their choice of a college while 51 percent indicated this was very important. Further analysis of the data assisted in clarifying this profile.

Table 9 shows that the majority of students at the four colleges rated the ability to live at home while attending college as important. Northern Lakes College students placed the highest importance on living at home while attending college.

Table 9 - Importance of Ability to Live at Home by College

Location/Rating	Fairview	Keyano	Lakeland	Northern Lakes
(1) Not at all important	28.95 %	32.35%	31.75%	7.4%
(2)	2.63%	0.00%	6.35%	0.00%
(3)	15.79%	8.82%	6.35%	11.11%
(4)	5.26%	11.76%	12.70%	3.70%
(5) Very important	47.37%	47.06%	42.86%	77.78%
Average Rating	3	3	3	4

As the data in Table 10 indicates, students aged 40 and over placed the highest importance on the ability to live at home while attending college. It is likely that these students have family and or job responsibilities while attending college.

Table 10 - Importance of Ability to Live at Home by Age of Respondent

Age/Rating	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45+ years
(1) Not at all important	28.85%	38.71%	23.53%	20.00%	23.53%
(2)	3.85%	0.00%	5.88%	4.00%	0.00%
(3)	13.46%	6.45%	11.76%	8.00%	5.88%
(4)	7.69%	9.68%	11.76%	16.00%	0.00%
(5) Very important	46.15%	45.16%	47.06%	52.00%	70.59%
Average Rating	3	3	4	4	4

The data presented in Table 11 indicates that aboriginal students placed a higher importance upon the ability to live at home while attending college. Northern Lakes College had the highest number of aboriginal students who participated in this study.

Table 11 - Importance of Ability to Live at Home – Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal

Status/Rating	Aboriginal	Non-aboriginal
(1) Not at all important	24.53%	29.13%
(2)	1.89%	3.88%
(3)	11.32%	8.74%
(4)	5.66%	11.65%
(5) Very important	56.60%	46.60%
Average Rating	4	3

(iii) Reputation of college

While 87 percent of respondents rated this factor as important only 25 percent rated it as very important. By comparison 89 percent of the study participants rated reputation of their chosen program as important in selecting a college with 42 percent of this group rating this factor as very important.

(iii) Campus amenities

Location of the college was rated as important by 83 percent of respondents with more than 50 percent of this group indicating that location was very important in their choice of college.

The quality of campus facilities was of lesser influence in choosing a college. Seventy-seven percent of respondents rated this factor as important.

The availability of student housing on campus was not at all important to 56 percent of the students responding to the survey.

(iv) Student services

Access to student services was a lesser consideration in choosing a college.

- Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated that the availability of child care was not at all important.
- Forty-eight percent of respondents reported that access to counselling and other student services was not very important (14 percent) or not at all important (34 percent).
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents considered access to student life and social activities as not important with 42 percent of this group rating these services as not at all important.

Further review of the data demonstrated that the importance of counselling and other student services was less important for a significant number of students over age 40. Some respondents in the forty and over age group did place considerable importance on counselling and other student services.

Table 12 - Importance of Counselling and Other Student Services by Age

Age/Rating	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45+ years
(1) Not at all important	28.30%	32.26%	38.24%	40.00%	43.75%
(2)	26.42%	12.90%	5.88%	0.00%	6.25%
(3)	28.30%	22.58%	17.65%	36.00%	31.25%
(4)	13.21%	19.35%	20.59%	20.00%	6.25%
(5) Very important	3.77%	12.90%	17.65%	4.00%	12.50%
Average Rating	2	3	3	2	2

The data presented in Table 13 illustrates that females place a higher important on counselling and other student services.

Table 13 - Importance of Counselling and Other Student Services by Gender

Gender/Rating	Female	Male
(1) Not at all important	27.03%	52.17%
(2)	13.51%	10.87%
(3)	31.53%	15.22%
(4)	17.12%	15.22%
(5) Very important	10.81%	6.52%
Average Rating	3	2

Opinions about the importance of the availability of scholarships and bursaries in choosing a college varied. While 62 percent rated this factor as important, 27 percent indicated that it was not at all important.

(v) Employment after graduation

Survey responses underscored the importance of perceived potential for employment upon graduation in selecting a college. Ninety-three percent of students who completed the survey rated this as important with 67 percent rating it as very important.

C. Sources of Information about College

When asked what was the most important source of information about the college, sources were ranked as follows:

- Catalogue calendar (29 percent)
- Recommendation of a friend (15 percent)
- Other (12 percent)- see Appendix B page 20 for details
- Career Development Centre (10 percent)
- Recommendation from a family member (10 percent)
- Recommendation from social worker or employment counsellor (9 percent)
- Recommendation from employer (7 percent)
- Brochures (3 percent)
- College web site (2 percent)
- Radio/television advertising (1 percent)
- College Open House (1 percent)
- Posters (1 percent)

It is important to note that respondents were asked to only report one source of information. Students probably used multiple information sources such as college calendar and program brochures or personal recommendation and calendar or program brochure.

D. Factors Influencing Decision to Return to College

Seventy-six percent of survey respondents indicated that they would be returning to their studies in the fall of 2000. Students assessed a number of factors in relation to their decision to return to college as follows:

(i) Tuition/costs of attendance

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that tuition/costs of attending college would influence their decision to return to their program of study.

(ii) Location

Sixty-four percent of the students surveyed stated that the ability to live at home was important in their decision to continue their college studies.

For thirty-three percent of respondents it was not at all important to be able to live at home. Thirty-two percent of respondents indicated that distance from home would not influence their decision to return to college.

(iii) Quality of program/educational experience

Clearly, the quality of program or educational experience was a critical factor in a student’s decision to return to college (97 percent reported this factor to be important).

(iv) Employment opportunity

Academic Upgrading and Diploma or Certificate program students placed a high importance on finding employment before graduation. Given the small sample size of Applied Degree (6) and University Transfer (9) respondents the representativeness of the sample may be in question.

Table 14 - Importance of Getting a Job before Graduation by Program Type

Program Type/Rating	Academic Upgrading	Apprenticeship	Diploma or Certificate	Applied Degree	University Transfer
(1) Not at all important	8.33%	45.45%	6.9%	33.33%	0.00%
(2)	0.00%	0.00%	12.07%	33.33%	16.67%
(3)	22.22%	9.90%	22.41%	0.00%	16.67%
(4)	27.78%	27.27%	17.24%	0.00%	33.33%
(5) Very important	41.67%	18.18%	41.38%	33.33%	33.33%
Average Rating	4	3	4	3	4

(v) Transportation

Transportation difficulties would affect the decision of whether to return to school for 56 percent of respondents.

(vi) Child care

Only 35 percent of the students surveyed indicated that access to child care would affect whether they returned to school the following year.

(vii) Student housing

The availability of student housing was of strong concern to 16 percent of respondents while 69 percent of those surveyed indicated that it would not affect their decision to continue their studies.

(viii) Counselling/student services

The quality of counselling/student services available to students was of relatively low concern. Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated it would not be an important factor in their decision to return to school. Only fourteen percent of the group viewed this as a very important factor in their choice to continue their studies.

(ix) Commitments to family and friends

Seventy-two percent of respondents suggested that commitments to family and friends would affect their decision to return to school.

E. Recommendation of College to Others

An overwhelming 89 percent of respondents indicated that they would recommend the college they were attending to their friends. A complete listing of their comments is provided in Appendix B (page 21).

6. Discussion and Implications of Research Findings

Choy and Ottinger's 1998 study which used data on 1995-1996 beginning post-secondary adult students in the United States is used as a comparison to the results from this study.

A. Factors Influencing Decision to Attend College

The top three factors identified in the study of Northern Alberta learners were:

- To get a better job
- To gain the knowledge and/or skills for a specific job
- To improve one's knowledge

Choy and Ottinger (1998) also found that students enrolled in college programs with the specific intention of gaining knowledge and skills for a career.

B. Factors Influencing Decision to Attend a Specific College

Two-year colleges tend to serve a local population (Choy and Ollinger, 1998).

Both the northern Alberta study of adult learners and Choy and Ollinger's study found the following factors significantly influenced the choice of a specific college:

- Reputation of college
- Reputation of chosen program
- Employment potential after graduation

- Location of college
- Ability to live at home
- Opinions of friends, family, spouse, teacher, counsellor

In both studies the following factors were found to have less influence:

- Tuition/attendance costs
- Access to counselling/student services and
- Financial aid opportunities

C. Sources of Information about the College

In this study, the top two sources of information about a college were:

- College calendar
- Recommendation from a friend, Career Development Centre, family member or guidance counsellor

A recent research study conducted for Alberta Human Resources and Employment indicated that high school aged youth use web sites as one of the top three ways to gain information about careers and education. A similar study conducted in the United States, indicated that a post-secondary institution's web site ranked third as source of information for perspective students after a campus visit and a conversation with a current student.

D. Factors Influencing Decision to Return to School

This study of Northern Alberta students identified several factors that influenced a student's decision to continue his/her studies including:

- Quality of program and/or educational experience
- Tuition and/or costs of attendance
- Location of college
- Other responsibilities including family, friends and work

Choy and Ollinger did not include this perspective in their 1998 study.

E. Recommending College to Others

The comments provided by respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their chosen post-secondary institution and a willingness to share their opinion with others.

7. Recommendations

As adult learners face the challenge of updating their skills to meet the expectations of jobs in the new millennium, colleges are in an excellent position to provide quality, timely re-training opportunities.

Research suggests that the number of adult learners over the age of 25 will continue to increase. Many of these learners will be attending classes while working.

The challenge for colleges is to find programs and services that meet the needs of these learners providing them with the intellectual stimulation and knowledge they require as well as a supportive environment in which to learn and grow.

Survey of Adult Learners in Northern Alberta

This survey is intended to gather information from adult learners (over 25) enrolled in northern Alberta colleges regarding their choices and motivation for attending.

The survey is completely confidential. No one will ever know how you responded to any question. We hope that the results of the survey will lead to a better understanding of what influences adult students in deciding to enroll in post-secondary education, and the things that affect their decision or ability to complete their studies. Your answers to the following questions will help provide better programs and services for adult learners in northern Alberta.



1. Which of the following best describes the type of program in which you are enrolled? (*please check one only*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Upgrading | <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma or Certificate (1-2 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Applied Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University Transfer | |

2. Are you attending Full-time Part-time

3. Before enrolling in your current program, how many years had it been since you last attended an educational institution (school, college, university, etc.)?

- 0-2 3-5 6-10 More than 10

4. What best describes the highest level of education you had achieved before enrolling in your current program? (*please check one only*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 or less | <input type="checkbox"/> Some college/institute courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 10-12 (no Diploma) | <input type="checkbox"/> College Certificate or Diploma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Some university courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship | <input type="checkbox"/> University degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify:</i> _____) | |

5. Please indicate how important each of the following reasons was in deciding to attend a college (*using a scale from 1 -“ not at all important” to 5 - “very important”*).

		<i>Not At All</i>				<i>Very</i>
		<i>Important</i>				<i>Important</i>
a..	To improve my knowledge	..	1	2	3	4 5
b.	Better chance of getting a good job	1	2	3	4 5
c.	Skill/knowledge needed for a specific job		1	2	3	4 5
d.	Transfer opportunities to other institutions		1	2	3	4 5
e.	Other (<i>please specify</i> _____)					

6. Please indicate how important each of the following factors was in deciding which college to attend (*using a scale from 1 -“ not at all important” to 5 - “very important”*).

		<i>Not At All</i>				<i>Very</i>
		<i>Important</i>				<i>Important</i>
a.	Cost of tuition		1	2	3	4 5
b.	Ability to live at home.		1	2	3	4 5
c.	Reputation of the college overall		1	2	3	4 5
d.	Reputation of your chosen program		1	2	3	4 5
e.	Quality of campus facilities		1	2	3	4 5
f.	Location of the college (town or city).		1	2	3	4 5
g.	Availability of student housing		1	2	3	4 5
h.	Availability of child care		1	2	3	4 5
i.	Counselling/other student services		1	2	3	4 5
j.	Student life/social activities		1	2	3	4 5
k.	Scholarships/bursaries available		1	2	3	4 5
l.	Employment potential after graduation		1	2	3	4 5

7. What was your most important source of information about the college you are attending?

(please check one only)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Catalogue/calendar | Recommendation from: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Career Development Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Radio/TV advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker or |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Brochures | Employment |
| | Counsellor | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College Open House | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>(please specify</i> _____ <i>)</i> | |

8. Please indicate how important each of the following factors is/could be in determining whether you will return to this college next year *(using a scale from 1 - "not at all important" to 5 - "very important")*.

(I intend to graduate this year - *skip to question 9*)

		<i>Not At All</i>			<i>Very</i>
		<i>Important</i>			<i>Important</i>
a.	Tuition/costs of attending	1	2	3	4 5
b.	Ability to live at home	1	2	3	4 5
c.	Quality of program/educational experience .	1	2	3	4 5
d.	Chance to get a job before graduating. ..	1	2	3	4 5
e.	Location/distance from home	1	2	3	4 5
f.	Transportation difficulties	1	2	3	4 5
g.	Availability of child care	1	2	3	4 5
h.	Availability/quality of student housing .	1	2	3	4 5
i.	Quality of counselling/student services .	1	2	3	4 5
j.	Commitments to family and friends	1	2	3	4 5

9. Would you recommend this College to your friends?
 Yes Briefly explain your answer

No

Not sure

10. What is your age?

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45+

11. Gender Female Male

12. Do you consider yourself to be aboriginal or non-aboriginal?

Aboriginal

Non-Aboriginal

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

Additional Comments Provided on Surveys
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4. What best describes the highest level of education you had achieved before enrolling in your current program?

Fairview College

- GED (3 responses)

Lakeland College

- GED Prep. course
- Landed immigrant - G.C.E.
- Nursing diploma
- Grade 12 certificate
- Bachelor of Christian Studies
- Academic upgrading
- Trades related

Northern Lakes College

- AVC Certificate

5. Please indicate other reasons for your decision to attend a college.

Fairview College

- Retrain due to disability, previous trade too physical
- Best college to learn something in that field
- Common knowledge
- Interpersonal skills, knowledge from other students
- Get a better paying job

Keyano College

- Retraining due to injury
- Keeping up with industry requirements
- Check course relevance to Barrow Gas Employers

Lakeland College

- To have a good career to raise my son.
- Health reasons, have to retrain (2)
- Offered what I wanted - Agriculture
- Self-satisfaction (2)
- More education - more money
- To better myself.
- Improve my skills.

Northern Lakes College

- Being able to remember everything I learn.
- Finish my high school to reach my goal.
- Self-esteem
- Advancement in nursing field

7. What was your most important source of information about the college you are attending?

Fairview College

- College reputation (2 responses)
- School counsellor
- Grouard

Keyano College

- Newspaper
- Only GFO in N. America

Lakeland College

- CGA Canada recommendation
- I had the College in mind
- Phone book
- Counsellor of upgrading
- Newspaper
- Western Producer
- Already in Academic Upgrading in Lloydminster
- Professionals in field
- In my class at British Columbia Institute of Technology

Northern Lakes College

- Personal knowledge of Northern Lakes College
- Newspaper
- My choice (in town) (2)
- To get trades tickets, learn on the job

9. Why would you or would you not recommend this College to your friends?

Fairview College

- The College is good
- I feel that there is an extremely high quality to this course.
- The programs are extensive enough to make the transition to job market
- It has a good program and instructors
- It is a place to learn at, if you want to. Class sizes are not real big, so there's more time for instructors to work with you if you have problems.
- Close to home (Grande Prairie) and very nice institution
- Nice that it is small. More one on one with instructors. Courses are more "in depth" than bigger institutions. Very close knit.
- Program is great but the school is too far north.
- The course is excellent, but in the wrong location. Should be in Okanagan area. (2)
- Nothing to do.
- Fairview is lower cost, better convenience and is basically close in programs/courses as other colleges.
- The whole of the nature of humans, buildings, etc. is excellent for accommodation, interaction, resources, etc.
- It is practical to attend.
- It's a pretty relaxed surrounding for learning, instructors are basically good.
- Helpful instructors. Friendly staff. Calm & quiet place easy going.
- It is close to home and the instructors are friendly and helpful.
- The teachers are very dedicated and caring individuals.
- Smaller classes, therefore more help if needed and more chance to ask questions.
- Smaller classrooms, teacher interaction.
- It's a nice small college. Easy to get around.
- I had misconceptions about the program that were not cleared until my second month of attending. I would have attended a different campus if I had known.
- Close knit college, student activities.
- I would tell them it's good to go here in Peace River College. Teachers help a lot here.
- Teachers are very biased toward favourites, should not be this way.
- This is a really nice college. The instructors are very helpful to the students.
- I will tell my friends about this college because this school is very good.
- Has excellent program and instructors
- This college has been very understanding (of) personal circumstances pertaining to school.

Keyano College

- Wide variety of programs available.
- Best
- Yes, because this is a pretty good college with tons of friendly people.
- What Dene service[s] are there
- What aboriginal support? From whom?
- Benefit of small class.
- Very personalized, good instruction, support and encouragement
- Great instructors, great counselling and help.
- Because I received good quality teaching
- Keyano is a great college. The courses offered are excellent for a person to get skills for a job, and the instructors are excellent. They know their stuff!
- Low student/teacher ratio.
- Quality education. Ability to attend school in home town.
- Good course range
- Good facilities and practical courses.
- Cost of living is too high.
- But would also include negative features such as open book tests, buddy system tests, talking in class.

Lakeland College

- Very personal help from instructors. LAC was fantastic.
- High quality instruction, well laid out campus, family housing available.
- It was a wonderful experience, mostly because of its size and friendliness of staff.
- I would recommend [to] my friends because it is a really good "community" college.
- I have enjoyed it and have found the teachers most helpful.
- The instructors are great and fair.
- It has many services. The atmosphere is very nice and it is not so crowded.
- Services are readily available.
- I've experienced more trouble with teachers and practicums than ever before in my life. The college instructors contradict what they teach and are not fair and considerate of environmental influences that affect school functioning.
- Students in this course were very unprofessional.
- It offers a strong support from staff and they encourage success in their students.
- Friendly atmosphere, not very crowded classes.
- The instructors are very approachable & classes are small.
- The instructors are an excellent source for my program.
- Friendly atmosphere, great instructors, great opportunity
- Prepares you for the schedule and time for college studies/upgrading.

- Because it has very good academic (sic), and a very friendly, helpful atmosphere where all instructors and support staff are always willing to help you succeed.
- I feel it is a very good course.
- It's a great start for people who have been out of school for more than 10 years.
- Because it helps to learn, the instructors are very nice and help a lot when needed.
- Lakeland College has a lot to offer anyone.
- I like the campus and the instructors are great! The atmosphere is comfortable and it is not too large.
- The atmosphere is relaxed and the instructors are encouraging as well as friendly.
- Friendly environment, excellent staff and many courses to choose from.
- This college gave me the opportunity to learn more about myself while getting my education. I've met a lot of people and made new friends.
- The college has small class sizes, instructors are supportive and encouraging.
- I feel the college will and is progressing. I will be keeping close tabs on its progress!
- But I have concerns with having alcohol available on campus. Also the weekday evenings it is available.
- Depends what they want to do.
- This college is more than I expected.
- Very helpful, student services, clean
- Only place for A & A
- It's a wonderful college as it has great family housing, facilities, great programs and most importantly, wonderful understanding instructors. I couldn't put in words what Lakeland has done for me. The education I have received is superb!
- Good programs, excellent instructors.
- Only if they wanted a degree, but did not want to go to university or do graduate work in the future.
- From what I have encountered first hand in the program I am (making) most definite recommendation.
- If it was a career choice that was offered at L.C. then I would say that L.C. was a good experience for me.
- But this course is very difficult.
- It has a very pleasant atmosphere, plus it is a non-smoking facility.
- If they have the same interest in attending a school.
- Very knowledgeable and friendly staff - help whenever you need it.
- Instructors want to teach, and always will help students. But it is unorganized and they struggle to cover material, and note packages that we buy are always mixed up and incomplete.
- I find the trades staff learned and helpful.

- Small classes, more one on one with teaching.
- Small classes, more one on one.
- Good instructors, smaller classes.
- I found it very instructional, well organized, very good program and instructors.
- College has great instructors and location is close to home need more people involved in the program.

Northern Lakes College

- Personal attention and care shown by college staff.
- To get a better education and a good paying job, to support your families.
- It is in a good location, have good instructors.
- I like the school, the course, and my instructor. I think it's a very good experience to have, returning to school.
- Friendly service, friendly atmosphere and you know everyone.
- It is a good transition on going into a big university.
- It depends on what really interests them or if they are committed.
- I believe this is a very good course.
- The location of the College enhances students to learn (sic). The staff is friendly and the quality of education is just as good as any other educational institution.
- After completion of my law course in Bus. Admin. I found that the instructor really doesn't know how to teach. The feedback that the class is getting from Fairview College is not very positive. Very frustrating, since I made the Dean's list
- Because we have good instructors.
- This is a great college and the instructors are also great.
- If they want a small atmosphere of a few people.
- Close to home, instructors are helpful, friendly environment.
- When you have been at home for some time this college is like home - it is not too big or too small.
- Because the college is a good school and has an excellent staff and great teachers.
- Yes, because this college is close to home, and students wouldn't have to move from the community.
- Very interesting and beneficial.
- It is a very friendly college and everyone tries to help one another if in a difficult situation.
- Good atmosphere
- I believe without an education a person will go nowhere.
- Many people prefer the distance education delivery system, it's feasible to those who can't leave their own community/job. I will strongly recommend these course: Personal Support Worker, Practical Nurse program.
- It is a great opportunity to benefit your life.

- Not enough instruction on sight (sic) which makes it very difficult
- To finish their education and to get a good job.
- I have learned so much in the past year, from computers to accounting, and instructors are there no matter what.

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