

Canadian Universities Public Reputation & Expectations

By Bruce Anderson, Chairman, Abacus Data

Background

On behalf of Universities Canada, Abacus conducted an extensive online nationwide study of Canadians' views of universities. The sample size was 2,000 adult Canadians, between June 18th and June 25th.

Reputation of Canada's Universities

The large majority of Canadians have a good impression of Canada's universities. 77% say their view is positive, 20% are neutral, and only 2% have a negative view. Positive feelings are also the norm for polytechnics, community colleges and CEGEPs.

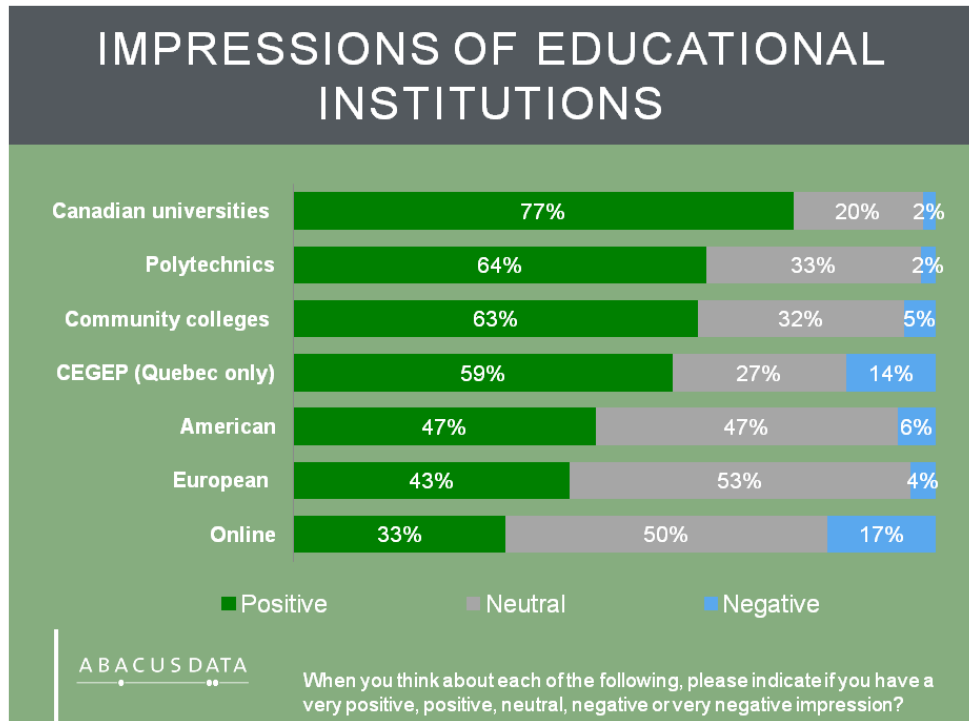
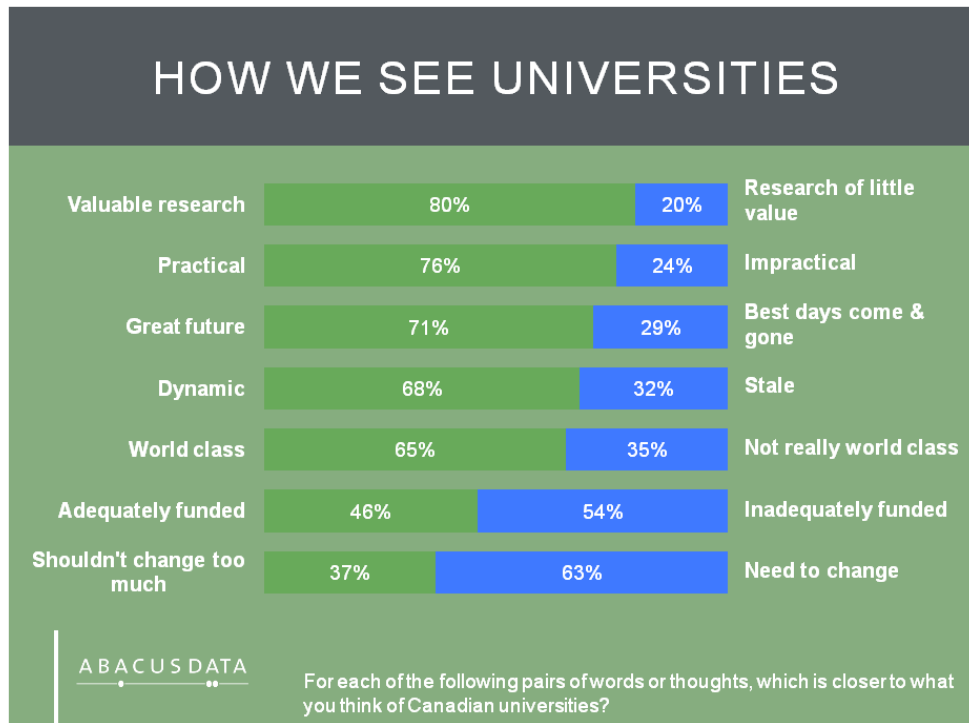


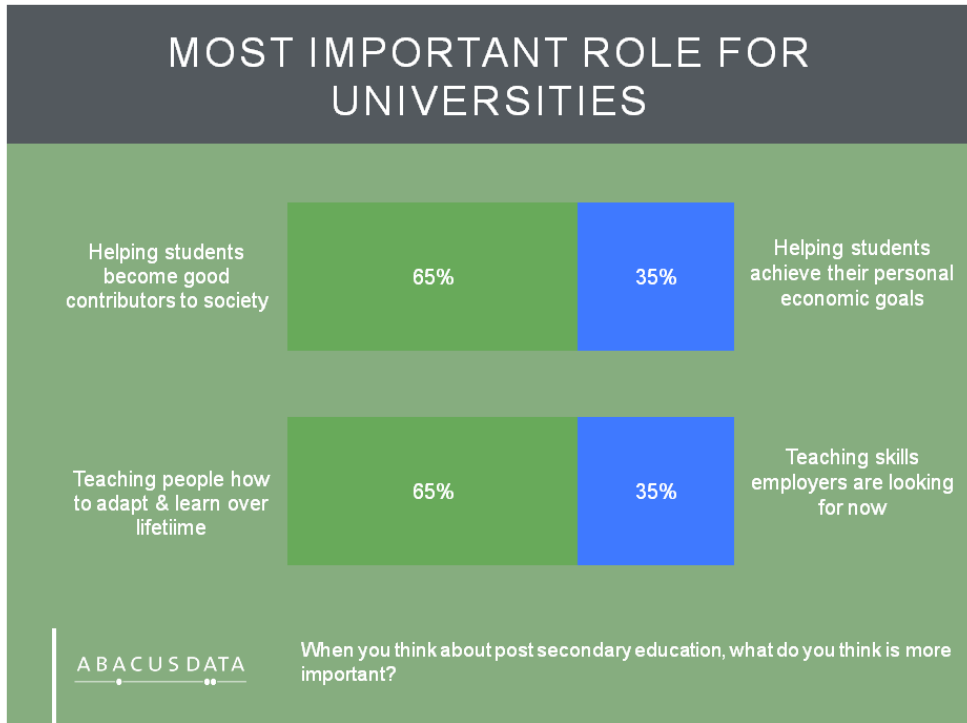
Image of Universities

In our survey we used a word association technique to explore impressions of universities in somewhat more detail. The results reveal that the large majority sees our universities as doing valuable research, being practical, dynamic and world-class. Fully 71% say our schools have a great future. There is a feeling that universities must always continue to change and adapt to the times.

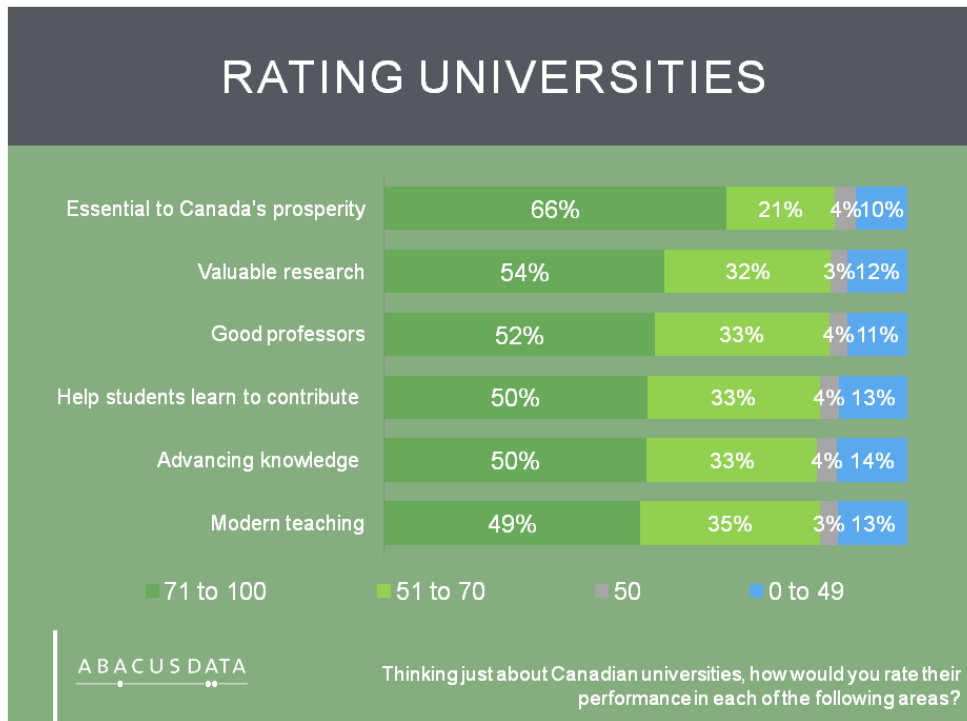


The Most Important Role of Universities

While a university education is expected to play a positive role in the economic future of students, when we test for the most important role of a university education, the majority see it as helping people adapt and learn over a lifetime, and be good contributors to society. Roughly a third feel that the most important role is helping students achieve their economic goals, and teaching skills employers are looking for now. Universities are seen to bring benefits to students, to Canadian society and to the economy.



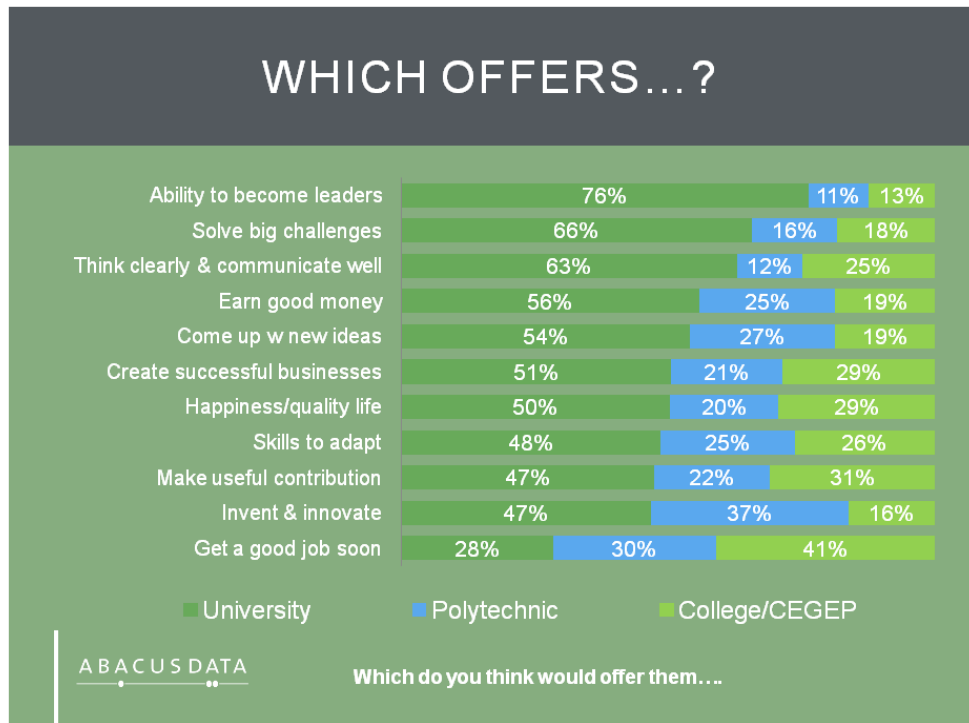
When asked to rate the performance of Canadian universities on a range of items, a large majority give them positive ratings when it comes to their impact on the economy, the value of the research they conduct, their teaching methods, and their ability to help students learn how to contribute to society.



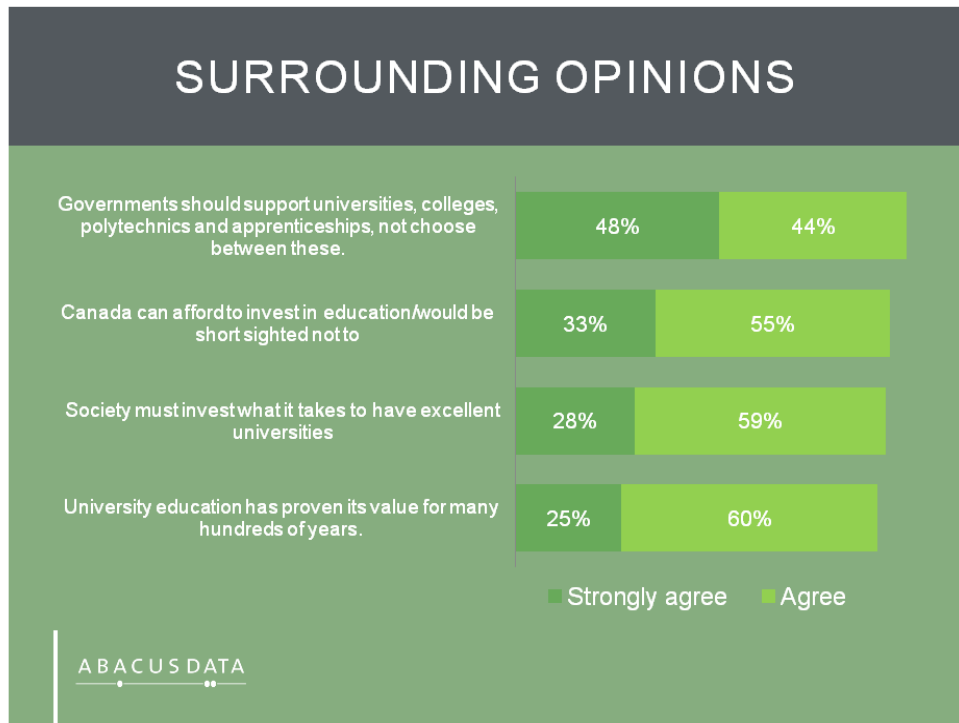
Canada's Postsecondary Institutions

Our research shows that the large majority (92%) of Canadians think governments should support a variety of forms of postsecondary education, not choose between these. Probing on the perceptions of different types of postsecondary education reveals that people see slightly different advantages for each.

Universities are seen as making a large contribution when it comes to helping solve big challenges, shaping leaders, and developing thinking and communications skills.



An overwhelming majority of Canadians also agree that governments should invest in universities, can afford to do so, and that universities provide good value for the money governments spend on them.



The Upshot

Canadians have a good impression of their universities and strongly believe that the country should continue to invest what it takes to offer world class education to our students. Most people see plenty of value in a variety of forms of postsecondary education and believe all merit policy support.

There is a belief that our universities do research that is practical and valuable for our economy and society and that with adequate funding and an eye on the need for continuous change, the best days of our universities lie ahead.

Methodology

The survey, commissioned by Universities Canada, was conducted online with 2,000 Canadians aged 18 and over from June 18 to 25, 2015. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of over 500,000 Canadians, recruited and managed by Research Now, one of the world’s leading provider of online research samples.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada’s population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Abacus Data Inc.

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