

Green Survey Summary

August 2008

This spring, UNBC conducted a survey designed to assess a) the value of the Green initiative to student recruitment and b) the usefulness of Facebook as a university marketing tool, and c) the extent to which high school students are considering UNBC as a post-secondary destination. The survey was developed by the Office of Communications and the School of Business (primarily Marketing profs Sungchul Choi and Xin Ge) with input from Student Recruitment. The survey was directed to high school students in western Canada and 300 students completed the survey.

Findings

Demographics

Just over one-third of respondents were from Metro Vancouver, with 17% of respondents from Southern Alberta and 12% each from Vancouver Island, the Southern Interior of BC, Northern BC, and Northern Alberta. Nearly half of the respondents were in Grade 12 and 73% of all respondents were women. The most popular outdoor activity was walking/hiking, followed by camping.

University

The roster of programs/courses was identified as the most important factor when students are choosing a university. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being not at all important and 5 being very important), programs and courses had a mean of 4.76, followed by admission requirements (4.03) and location (3.96). In terms of UNBC specifically, respondents were moderately familiar with the University (a mean of 2.88 on a scale where 1 was not at all familiar and 5 was very familiar). The response to students' likelihood of considering UNBC among their post-secondary options was better, with a mean of 3.16 on a scale that ranged from 1 not at all likely to 5 very likely.

The Value of Canada's Green University

A number of questions attempted to gauge the importance of various environmental activities and values. The most popular environmental activity undertaken by students was recycling and only one respondent indicated that he/she was not at all concerned about the environment. Only four respondents indicated they were less concerned about the environment now than a year ago. Among the things a university should have/do to be environmentally responsible, the most popular response was recycling (78%), followed by transit discounts, and energy efficiency.

In assessing the value of the University's green initiative to student recruitment, we asked respondents whether a university's level of environmental responsibility would be a factor in their decision to attend that university. 24% indicated that it would; significantly, more than half (53%) indicated that it could be a tie-breaker between universities.

Facebook as a Marketing Tool

Our experience with the green survey clearly illustrates how much advertising is required before a consumer takes action. We achieved our goal of 300 completed surveys only after our Facebook advertisement appeared 5.8 million times (and nearly 2000 people actually clicked on our ad). The total cost of this exposure was \$1900 and we provided \$600 worth of prizes (gift certificates from Mountain Equipment Co-op, lululemon, and iTunes) as incentives.