



**Strategic Plan Objective 2:** To ensure that outstanding students from diverse regions and backgrounds have the opportunity to attend the University of Victoria and that ***there are no hurdles to admission except academic and creative potential***

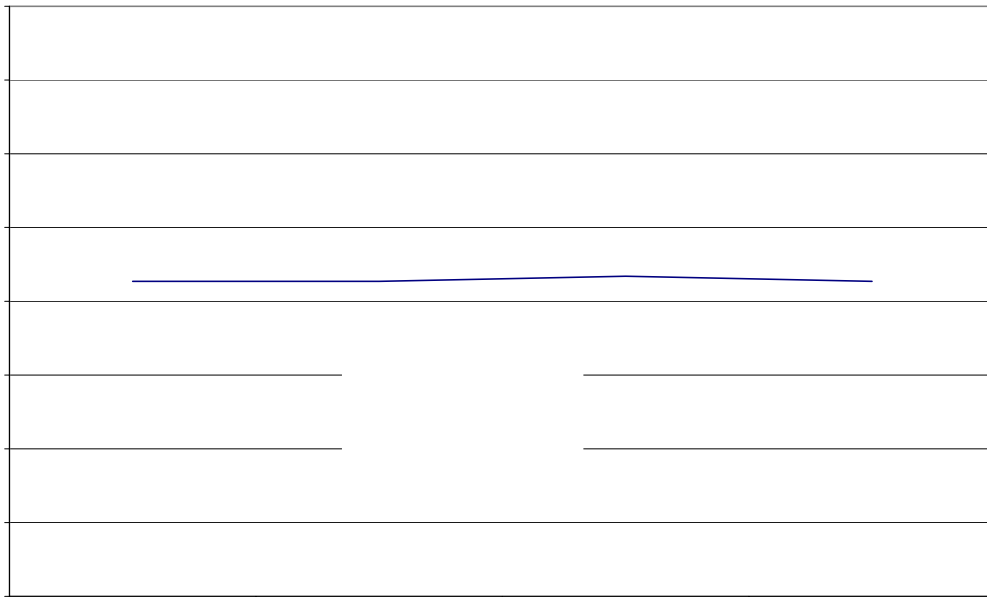
In 2002, the provincial government lifted a six-year tuition freeze at BC's public post-secondary institutions. In each of the

is used as a proxy for the distribution of household incomes of UVic applicants and registrant.

The data for this study was drawn from two sources: a combined data file of BC grade 12 applicants and registrants to BC universities; and, a special tabulation file from Statistics Canada of 2001 BC Tax Filer data that includes median income (of families with children) by postal code Forward Sortation Area (FSA's) along with the number of families (with children) within an FSA. It is important to realize that the data results in a correlation, not an actual measure of income. Our study makes use of the relatively safe assumption that university participation will be correlated with median family income of the FSA.

Over the four years that applicant and registrant family income has been tracked, income levels have remained stable. In fact, at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> percentiles, median family income levels of applicants and registrants are never more than \$2,800 apart and in most cases are virtually identical. Furthermore, over time, we see little variation in median income at any income-band (Figure 1.) As such, there is little to suggest that the socio-economic make-up of our entering undergraduate population has changed over the last four years.

Figure 1:



participation is correlated by changes in median family income over time. A highly predictive regression model is presented that demonstrates that the interaction between income and year on university participation is not statistically significant over a period of time in which tuition fees increased (2000 to 2003). Consistent with all the literature on university participation, BC university participation is largely a function of income and location but increases in tuition have not altered the extent to which income predicts participation.

As the survey results will reveal, many students do suffer economic hardship during the route to their degree, but they appear to be making the necessary adjustments and sacrifices to accommodate current higher tuition. Only 5.8% of students claimed it was very likely that they would stop their studies if tuition increased even further in the future.



What steps have you taken to control your living and education costs and meet your expenses?		
	#	%
Cut back on extras (entertainment, etc.)	3026	85.6%
Summer employment	2627	74.3%
Employment during school term	1716	48.5%
Share accommodation	1645	46.5%
Cut back on necessities	1567	44.3%
Took fewer courses	1065	30.1%
Live at home	910	25.7%
Attended local Univ. rather than preferred Univ.	886	25.1%
Other	447	12.6%
Took cheaper program	176	5.0%
None	6	1.9%
<i>Total answering question</i>	3535	

In order to ascertain how students might manage increased tuition fees, a number of possible actions were posed to survey participants. According to the responses, the greatest percentage of students are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to cut back on extras (82.2%), followed by ask for/borrow more money (72.5%) and cut back on living expenses (70.2%). The action students anticipated being least likely is to quit their studies.

If tuition increased, how likely would you be to:	Earn more money		Ask for or borrow more money		Take fewer courses	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Very unlikely	1322	37.8%	462	13.2%	986	28.2%
Somewhat unlikely	590	16.9%	232	6.6%	576	16.5%
Neither likely nor unlikely	348	9.9%	185	5.3%	445	12.7%
Somewhat likely	621	17.7%	758	21.7%	730	20.9%
Very likely	453	12.9%	1774	50.8%	670	19.2%



### **3. Debt load and debt repayment by baccalaureate graduates**

Evidence from the annual survey of baccalaureate graduates suggests that just over half of UVic grads complete their program with debt. Two-years after graduation, UVic grads have repaid 35% of their outstanding debt. Five-years after graduation, they have repaid 71% of their outstanding debt. Differences in debt-loads between UVic graduates and grads from the other BC universities are largely attributed to the fact that 70% of UVic students have come from outside the Greater Victoria region in order to study, thereby incurring higher living costs



#### **4. Conclusions**

Despite recent tuition increases, most students are meeting their financial needs by reducing their expenses and accessing additional income. Most also expect that they will find a way to cope with further increases. There is, however, a small group of students who are at the margin where