

Study on Affordability and Accessibility

Prepared by Institutional Planning and Analysis

Report to the Provost and Vice-President Academic

Results to be presented to

Strategic Plan Objective 2: To actively recruit and retain outstanding students from diverse regions and backgrounds and **to remove all barriers to admission and retention other than academic and creative potential.**

In 2002, the provincial government lifted a six-year tuition freeze at BC's public

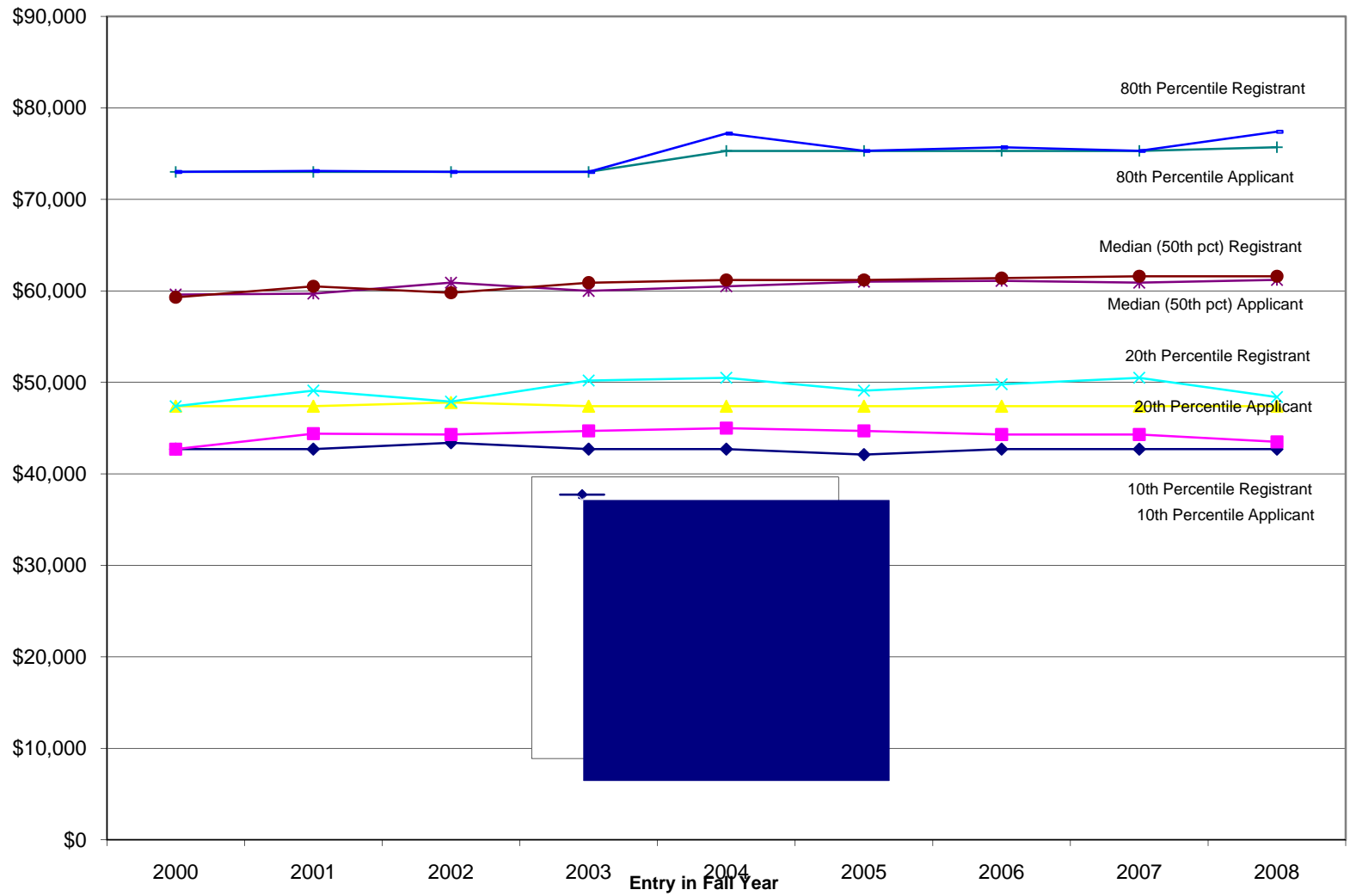
approximate family income of applicants and registrants. Statistics Canada data on median family income by neighbourhood (postal code forward sortation area) is used as a proxy for the distribution of household incomes of UVic applicants and registrants.

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)

Table 1

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2001-2008 Change
<i>Change in UVic Tuition</i>	0%	0%	30%	30%	16.6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	
10th Percentile Applicant	\$ 42,700	\$ 42,700	\$ 43,400	\$ 42,700	42,700	42,100	42,700	42,700	42,700	0.0%
10th Percentile Registrant	\$ 42,700	\$ 44,400	\$ 44,300	\$ 44,700	45,000	44,700	44,300	44,300	43,500	-2.0%
20th Percentile Applicant	\$ 47,400	\$ 47,400	\$ 47,800	\$ 47,400	47,400	47,400	47,400	47,400	47,400	0.0%
20th Percentile Registrant	\$ 47,400	\$ 49,100	\$ 47,900	\$ 50,200	50,500	49,100	49,800	50,500	48,400	-1.4%
Median (50th pct) Applicant	\$ 59,600	\$ 59,700	\$ 60,900	\$ 60,000	60,500	61,000	61,100	60,900	61,200	2.5%
Median (50th pct) Registrant	\$ 59,300	\$ 60,500	\$ 59,800	\$ 60,900	61,200	61,200	61,400	61,600	61,600	1.8%
80th Percentile Applicant	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000	75,300	75,300	75,300	75,300	75,700	3.7%
80th Percentile Registrant	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,100	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000	77,200	75,300	75,700	75,300	77,400	5.9%

Figure 1: Neighborhood Family Income of BC Grade 12 Applicants and Registrants to UVic



There are only slight variations 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 six years.

As the survey results that follow 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.

2. Student Survey on University Affordability and Accessibility

In December 2004, undergraduate students from UVic, UBC, SFU and UNBC were invited to complete a web-based survey. Questions focused on parental background and income, student income, the means by which students funded their educational costs, steps taken by students to control their educational costs, means by which students might handle increased tuition fees, and feedback on where students would like their tuition fees spent. Survey participants were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended comments.

Over 3,400 UVic students responded to the survey (16,925 UVic undergraduate students were sent up to three email reminders inviting them to participate) for a response rate of 20.3%. The survey was directed at the entire undergraduate population and includes students from all year levels.

Students were asked a series of questions to determine the means by which they fund their university education. Respondents indicated that employment income and savings were the most common sources of funding followed by help from parents/family and scholarships and bursaries. For those that reported using that funding, median amounts suggest that government student loans were the largest single source of funds (\$9,000 is the median amount) although this type of financing was reported by only 30.7% of respondents.

How are you paying for your year at University (including tuition, living, books and transportation expenses)?	% using source	Median \$ of those using source
Income from work/employment	78.9%	\$5,000
Savings	60.8%	\$3,000
Gift from parents/family providing direct funds	48.7%	\$4,000
Borrowing from parents/family	36.5%	\$3,000
Scholarships/bursaries	32.1%	\$2,000
Government Student Loans	30.7%	\$9,000
Additional Debt (loans, lines of credit, etc.)	22.5%	\$2,000

Survey participants were asked to indicate the steps they have taken to control their living and educational costs in order to meet their expenses. The step most commonly cited by students is to cut back on extras (78.6%), such as entertainment, followed by summer employment (68.9%), and then by employment during the school term (53.3%).

What steps have you taken to control your living and education costs and meet your expenses?

%

When asked how university costs should be distributed, students responded that on average 82.9% should be paid by government, 16.8% by students and families.

Finally, students were asked how they would like to see their tuition fees spent. The largest single response (57.6%) was that UVic should put on new courses, followed closely (57.1%) by bursary and scholarship programs. Additional course sections (54.9%), increased student financial assistance (53.6%), and reduced class sizes (48.1%) all followed closely.

These survey results have been used to inform where new tuition revenues are spent at UVic – please see the report, “General and Tuition Revenue Funded Expenditures” available at the university’s accountability web page (<http://web.uvic.ca/president/accountability/>).

Where do you want to see your tuition fees spent?	
Addition of new courses	57.6%
Bursary/Scholarship Programs	57.1%
More course sections	54.9%
Student financial assistance	53.6%
Reduce class sizes	48.1%
Improve instructional technology and equipment	36.7%
Technology improvements	35.8%
Library improvements	28.6%
Building improvements	25.4%
Teaching assistants	24.7%
Curriculum improvements	24.6%
Student Health	23.4%
Research	18.8%
Recycling programs	18.8%
Student Housing	16.1%
Transportation	14.9%
Student Parking	14.9%
Food Services	12.6%
Recreation	12.2%
Student Societies and Clubs	11.8%
Safety on campus	10.3%
Other curriculum improvements	7.6%

3. Debt load and debt repayment by baccalaureate graduates

4. Conclusions

Despite tuition increases which have lately been limited, 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 further cost increases would prevent them from completing their studies. This provides some guidance to the university in the continued formulation of appropriate financial assistance policies. Students access a wide variety of sources of income to pay for their education – while student income and parental/family contributions play a key role, scholarships, bursaries and loans are also major contributors.

5. References

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