



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**ATTENTION** Dr. Jon Driver, Vice President-Academic and Provost  
**DATE** April 23, 2013

**FROM** William G. Lindsay, Director  
**PAGES** 1/4

**RE:** Report Answering SFU Senator Sam Black's Questions

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Dear Dr. Driver:

This report answers questions recently posed by SFU Senator Dr. Sam Black. Please find attached an Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) fact sheet concerning Aboriginal student recruitment/retention/graduation rates at Simon Fraser University.

Senator Black's specific questions are as follows:

**1. Currently, how many Aboriginal students are there at SFU?**

While this question would seem straightforward to answer, it is not. I will provide some background and then provide an answer based on the data available. In March of 2007, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Intergovernmental and Community Relations established Government Standards for Aboriginal Administrative Data. Both the K-12 and the post-secondary systems in BC worked to implement the standard, but those changes have taken some time to implement. In the interim it is evident that not only have there been differences across the system related to the identification of aboriginal students, there have been inconsistencies of practice within SFU. Until recently, the only way to identify Aboriginal students was by self-report. While self-report remains an important part of identifying these students, some data does follow students from the BC K-12 system based on Personal Education Number (PEN).

In summer 2012, Student Services and IRP met to discuss how to better identify and track our aboriginal/indigenous students, acknowledging that the historical data we have for this group of students is not robust and consequently of limited value. With additional information now reported on the PEN for HS students, and some discussion, a shared definition for what constitutes an aboriginal student at SFU was arrived at (previously IRP and Student Services had used different measures). The attached IRP report is a result of these efforts and therefore is the first institutional level report that provides baseline measures in we have some confidence. The updated version of it will be available early May 2013 (once we get this year's high school data). The attached report refers to the 2010/11 incoming cohort as our "most recent". We have greater numbers of aboriginal students currently at SFU than reported here but must await next month's downloads from the Ministry so that Institutional Research & Planning (IRP) to update with the 2011/12 cohort data. As a point of interest we are expecting our largest incoming cohort of Aboriginal students ever at SFU this fall 2013, so clearly these 2 year old numbers will be quite different going forward.

Student Services and IRP are working together to refine this report and the next version will have a few additional categories that will be important to monitor for the purposes of ensuring student success. We are confident that the data in these reports going forward will be both valid and reliable and this tracking will actively inform recruiting and retention efforts in Student Services.

For the current information on the number of aboriginal students at SFU please refer to the attached IRP fact sheet. The latest formal and complete statistics for Aboriginal student headcount at SFU are from 2010-11. As of that year, there were 547 self-declared Aboriginal students attending SFU. As outlined above, concomitant data from the provincial government - to be added to SFU data - will soon be received for 2011-12, allowing for revised and complete figures for that year. Unofficial reports indicate that our Aboriginal student numbers have been increasing at SFU over the past two years.

## **2. Funding:**

**A) Two years ago \$150, 000 was allocated to Indigenous Service Programs (to be paid out at \$50, 000 per year). Will further funds be allocated after March 1st, 2014 when the original 3-year allocation is spent?**

Several programs resulted from the \$150k allocated from the University Priority Fund (UPF) some of which have now been embedded into regular programming and others that will require new funds in order to continue and/or develop. Every effort will be made to secure the funds needed to continue this work through base and/or alternative sources. Included in these new services/programs are:

- Residence and housing bridging fund to enable band funded students to secure residence through a deposit “loan”, while awaiting their funding
- Enhanced access to centre for disabilities resources
- Enhanced access to academic advising
- An aboriginal career advisor and related programming and online web presence at <http://www.sfu.ca/olc/indigenous>
- Staff cultural competency training

**B) Are other funds available for Aboriginal strategic initiatives?**

Yes. For example:

- The operating budget of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples at SFU provides position salary and funding for the pursuit of Aboriginal initiatives according to the University’s Aboriginal Strategic Plan.
- The operating budget of the Indigenous Student Centre at SFU also provides position salary and funding for the pursuit of Aboriginal student services initiatives according to Student Services strategic planning and the Aboriginal Strategic Plan for SFU.
- An Indigenous Recruiter works from Student Services to increase the numbers of Aboriginal students at SFU.
- The Vice President, Academic (VPA) funds two entrance scholarships annually for Aboriginal graduate students (one for a master’s, the other for a PhD student). The VPA also has provided three years of core funding support – through the University Priorities

Fund - to the Aboriginal Pre-University Bridging Programs (through to 2013-14).

### **3. Relative GPA and Retention Rates**

#### **A) How do the GPA's of Indigenous students compare to those of non-Indigenous students?**

Early analysis of aggregate numbers seems to indicate that there is no significant difference between these cohorts of students.

#### **B) How do the degree completion rates of Indigenous students compare to those of non-Indigenous students?**

Early analysis suggests they are comparable given the relatively larger number of indigenous students that transfer from college. More indigenous students come through that route than non-indigenous so adjusting for that they appear to be comparable.

#### **C) What are the main pathways for indigenous students to enter SFU (e.g. secondary education, college transfer, something else)? What are the respective GPA and degree completion indicators for students in each pathway?**

For main pathways, please see pages 3-4 of accompanying IRP fact sheet.

Note: GPA and degree completion data for each pathway are currently unavailable.

#### **D) Are these GPA's and retention rates acceptable to the Administration, and if not then what plans are there to improve them?**

All academic and administrative units strive to support all students in earning the credential they are seeking. Retention/attrition (academic standing, completion rates, time to completions, etc.) is monitored for many groups of students (indigenous, international, athletes, scholarship, college transfer, HS, etc.). When any of these groups show indications of academic struggle, further analysis is conducted and interventions are designed and implemented in attempts to better address and support particular needs. For example, the back on track program is an example of a very successful Institutional response to poor retention rates noted first in international students. Similar initiatives would be taken as needed based upon report data.

Student Services at SFU continues to devote more resources to improve Aboriginal student success, including funding such as that mentioned above in Question 2. The Indigenous Student Centre continues to devote resources and programming specific to Aboriginal students, including mentoring programs and tutoring services.

The Elders Program – funded by the Office for Aboriginal Peoples – continues to assist students in their journeys of education. The program has been expanding and improving since its inception two years ago.

An Indigenous Graduate Student Support Coordinator and an Assistant are jointly funded by the Office for Aboriginal Peoples and Graduate Studies. They network with and provide support in various ways to Aboriginal graduate students at SFU e.g. promotion of the Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) program and the establishment of relevant workshops.



The creation of the Institutional Research and Planning document, which accompanies this report, was created with the specific purpose of seeing where improvements are needed regarding Aboriginal student retention and to follow up on such. This report will be updated annually.

**Alternatively, if the relevant data is not yet available, will it be made available to Senate, and if so then when?**

Institutional Research and Planning office, says that the IRP office will be able to provide the GPA and retention comparison data for sub-questions 1 to 3 (above) in May 2013.

#### **4. Faculty Resources**

**The staff at Student Services is given free access to an 8-hour module on Indigenous Cultural Competence (created by the Provincial Health Authority). Can all fulltime staff and faculty be given free access to that module?**

The Indigenous Cultural Competency (ICC) is an on-line, self-directed program offered at a cost of \$250 per person. The program has been well received in Student Services and is currently being evaluated by Student Services both from the perspective of participants as well as that from aboriginal members of the SFU community. More information about the course may be found at the following URL: <http://www.culturalcompetency.ca/>. It is advisable that the pilot in Student Services conclude prior to making a recommendation for expanding access.

**Would the Administration consider funding joint positions in order to allow smaller academic units – who cannot devote an entire position to hiring a specialist – to acquire teaching and research competence on Indigenous issues?**

There have been some initial, and largely informal, discussions between members of the University community about the possibility of future growth of this kind i.e. the hiring of Aboriginal-oriented support positions jointly shared amongst Faculties. For example, Aboriginal coordinator positions who would be shared between two Faculties until such a time as there would be a need for one coordinator in each Faculty.

As well, there has been some discussion with the Teaching and Learning Centre at SFU about the possibility of establishing workshops for faculty/staff which would deal with Aboriginal cultural and historical competencies. Teaching and research could certainly be a part of such an endeavor.

An existing committee – chaired by Dr. Mary-Ellen Kelm, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies – is currently examining Indigenous research ethics and templates for such at SFU. The goal is to share existing/future templates for such research with the University community.

This concludes this report. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!

Kind regards,



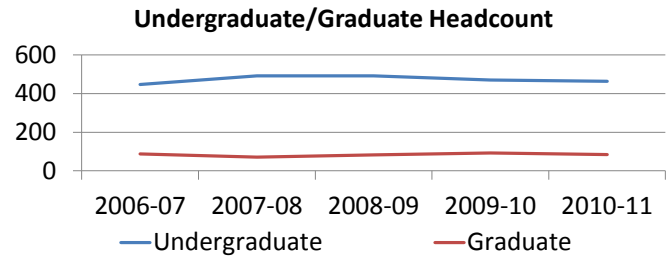
William G. Lindsay (Cree-Stoney)  
Director  
Office for Aboriginal Peoples

### Profile of Aboriginal Students

The following report provides information about Aboriginal students who were enrolled at SFU in program or course activities.

#### Undergraduate/Graduate Headcount

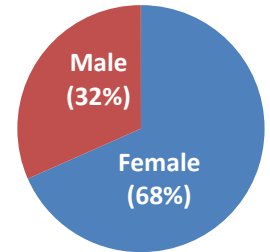
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Undergraduate	446	491	491	470	463
Graduate	87	71	83	92	84
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>547</b>



#### Gender

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Undergraduate</b>					
Female	314	340	331	319	310
Male	132	151	160	151	153
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>463</b>

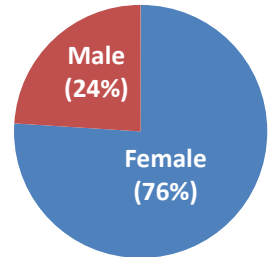
Average 5 Year Undergraduate Gender Breakdown



#### Graduate

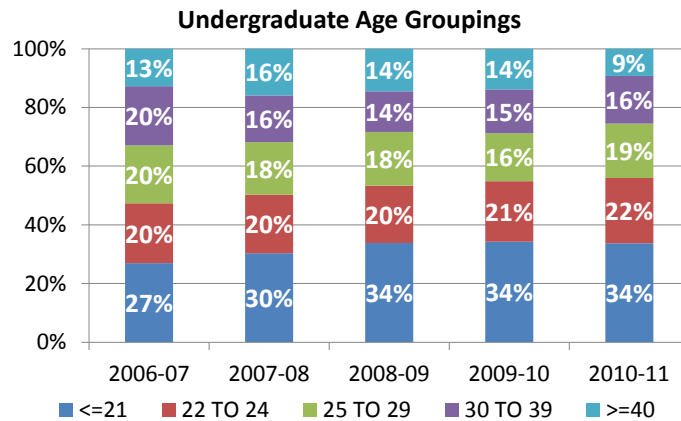
Female	68	55	62	69	63
Male	19	16	21	23	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>

Average 5 Year Graduate Gender Breakdown



#### Age Groupings

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Undergraduate</b>					
<=21	120	149	166	161	156
22 TO 24	91	98	96	97	103
25 TO 29	88	88	90	77	86
30 TO 39	90	78	68	70	75
>=40	57	78	71	65	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>463</b>

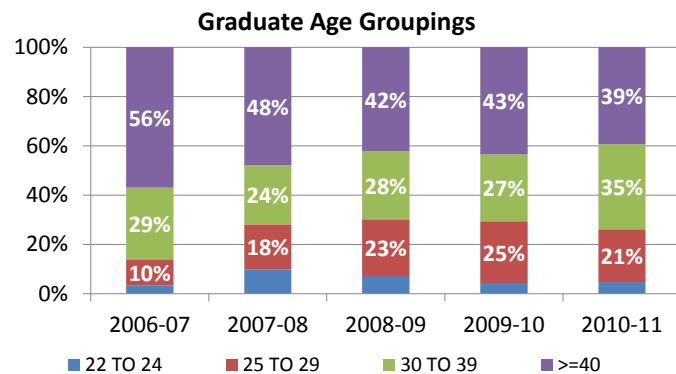


#### Undergraduate Average

Age	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Age</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>26.4</b>

#### Graduate

22 TO 24	3	7	6	4	4
25 TO 29	9	13	19	23	18
30 TO 39	25	17	23	25	29
>=40	49	34	35	40	33
Unspecified	1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>



Graduate Average Age	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Graduate Average Age</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>38.0</b>

**Enrolment by Faculty**

2006-07 2007-08 2008-09 2009-10 2010-11

**Undergraduate**

Applied Sciences	8	11	14	17	21
Arts and Social Sciences	301	330	314	293	258
Beedie Sch. of Business	12	17	24	21	19
Comm., Art & Tech.	25	26	28	30	29
Education	48	42	39	38	56
Environment	14	16	23	17	21
Health Sciences	-	4	11	15	18
Science	38	44	38	40	40
Unspecified	-	2	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>463</b>

**Graduate**

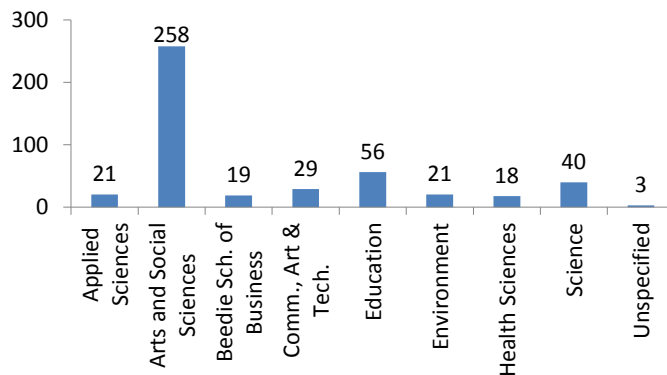
Applied Sciences	3	4	2	3	3
Arts and Social Sciences	15	18	16	16	16
Beedie Sch. of Business	5	3	7	8	7
Comm., Art & Tech.	1	2	2	2	2
Education	52	31	43	49	42
Environment	5	5	2	3	3
Health Sciences	1	4	5	5	5
Science	5	4	6	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>

**Credentials Earned**

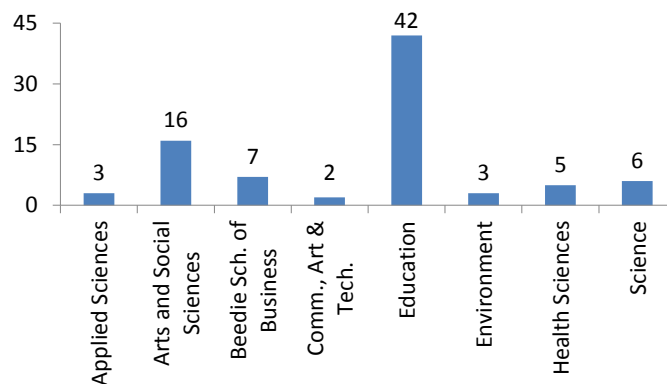
2006-07 2007-08 2008-09 2009-10 2010-11

Bachelors	61	87	61	82	67
Masters	23	11	8	8	19
Doctorates			4	3	
Post Baccal. Diplomas	2	2	2		4
Graduate Diplomas	4	1	3	2	1
Certificates	17	16	23	23	20
PDP Completed	23	29	19	17	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>120</b>

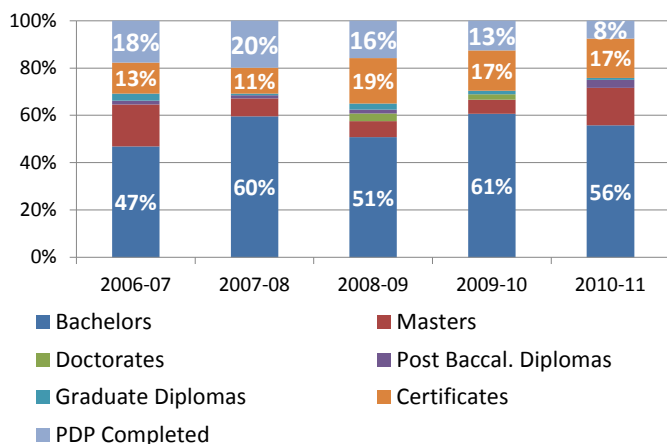
**Undergraduate Aboriginal Enrolment for 2010-11**



**Graduate Aboriginal Enrolment for 2010-11**



**Credentials Earned**



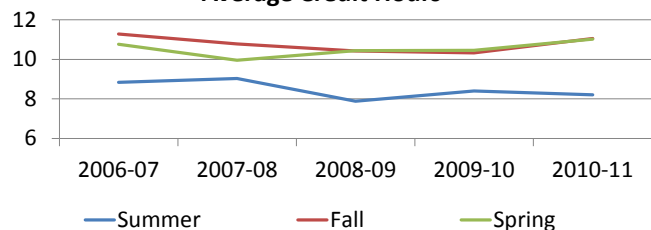
**Undergraduate Aboriginal Students**

**Average Course Load (credit hours)**

2006-07 2007-08 2008-09 2009-10 2010-11

Summer	8.8	9.0	7.9	8.4	8.2
Fall	11.3	10.8	10.4	10.3	11.1
Spring	10.8	10.0	10.4	10.5	11.0

**Average Credit Hours**



**Retention Rate**

Admission Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
<b>Retention Rate</b>					
yr 1 to yr 2	69%	81%	74%	78%	77%
yr 1 to yr 3	59%	64%	64%	69%	
yr 1 to yr 4	55%	62%	58%		
yr 1 to yr 5	56%	61%			

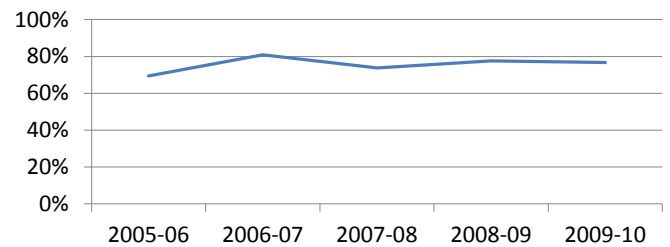
Note: Please see footnote 4 at the end of this report for interpretation of retention rate.

**Rolling Retention Rate**

Admission Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
<b>Retention Rate</b>					
yr 1 to yr 2	69%	81%	74%	78%	77%
yr 2 to yr 3	78%	79%	85%	88%	
yr 3 to yr 4	93%	90%	92%		
yr 4 to yr 5	96%	92%			

Note: Please see footnote 4 at the end of this report for interpretation of rolling retention rate.

**Retention Rate (yr 1 to yr 2)**

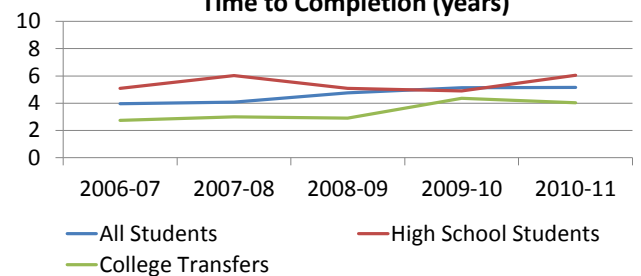


**Time to Completion (years)**

Completion Year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Basis of Admission Group</b>					
All Students	4.0	4.1	4.8	5.1	5.2
High School Students	5.1	6.0	5.1	4.9	6.1
College Transfers	2.7	3.0	2.9	4.3	4.0

Note: Please see footnote 5 at the end of this report for interpretation of time to completion.

**Time to Completion (years)**

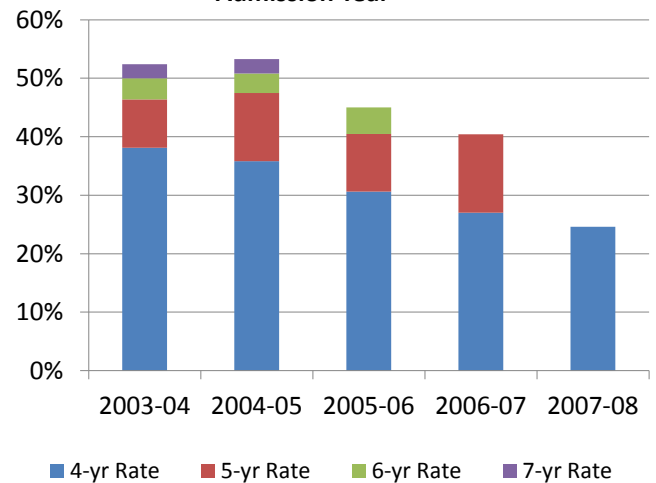


**Graduation Rate**

Admission Year	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
<b>High School Students</b>					
4-yr Graduation Rate	12.0%	11.5%	11.5%	3.2%	9.3%
5-yr Graduation Rate	24.0%	50.0%	42.3%	29.0%	
6-yr Graduation Rate	32.0%	57.7%	46.2%		
7-yr Graduation Rate	40.0%	65.4%			
<b>College Transfer Students</b>					
4-yr Graduation Rate	58.7%	48.7%	43.1%	39.6%	40.4%
5-yr Graduation Rate	67.4%	52.6%	47.7%	47.2%	
6-yr Graduation Rate	69.6%	53.9%	53.8%		
7-yr Graduation Rate	69.6%	55.3%			
<b>All Students</b>					
4-yr Graduation Rate	38.1%	35.8%	30.6%	27.0%	24.6%
5-yr Graduation Rate	46.4%	47.5%	40.5%	40.4%	
6-yr Graduation Rate	50.0%	50.8%	45.0%		
7-yr Graduation Rate	52.4%	53.3%			

Note: Please see footnote 6 at the end of this report for interpretation of graduation rate.

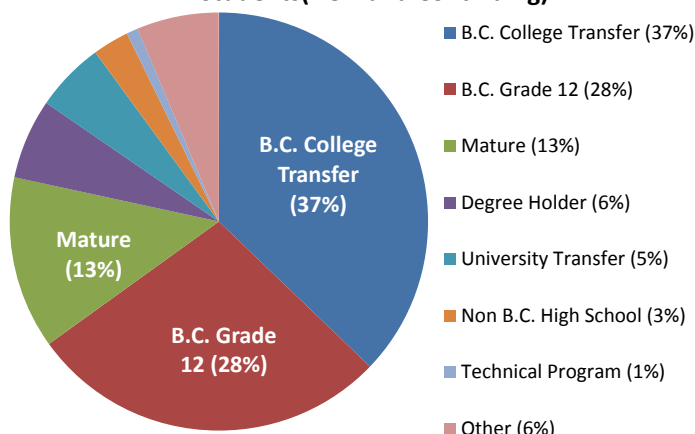
**Graduation Rate for All Students by Admission Year**



**Basis of Admission for All Students (New and Continuing)**

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
B.C. College Transfer	182	176	184	172	164
B.C. Grade 12	109	132	133	142	142
Mature	71	81	67	54	42
Degree Holder	29	24	26	29	38
University Transfer	18	29	26	27	27
Non B.C. High School	11	16	17	12	10
Technical Program	3	4	5	5	4
Other	23	29	33	29	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>463</b>

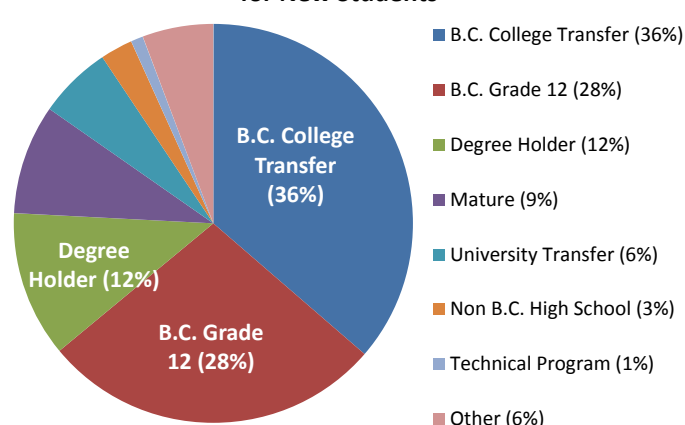
**Average 5 Year Basis of Admission Breakdown for All Students (New and Continuing)**



**Basis of Admission for New Students**

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
B.C. College Transfer	46	44	45	50	36
B.C. Grade 12	30	47	32	32	27
Degree Holder	12	8	16	16	20
Mature	6	14	13	9	12
University Transfer	7	13	7	2	7
Non B.C. High School	1	7	3	4	1
Technical Program	-	4	2	-	-
Other	-	10	11	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>111</b>

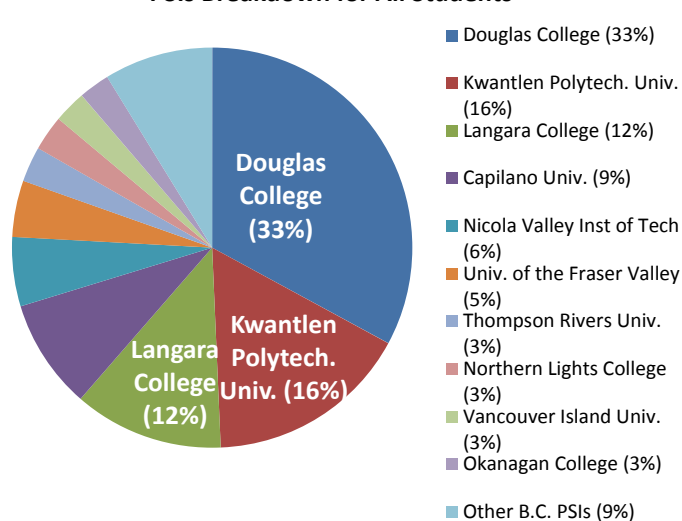
**Average 5 Year Basis of Admission Breakdown for New Students**



**Top Ten Post-Secondary Institutions Where All BC College Transfers are Enrolling From**

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Douglas College	54	51	65	57	62
Kwantlen Polytech. Univ.	28	28	30	31	27
Langara College	22	25	22	19	18
Capilano Univ.	19	14	14	15	16
Nicola Valley Inst of Tech	10	11	11	9	8
Univ. of the Fraser Valley	7	11	8	9	5
Thompson Rivers Univ.	11	5	4	3	2
Northern Lights College	7	4	6	5	3
Vancouver Island Univ.	5	6	2	4	6
Okanagan College	4	6	4	3	5
Other B.C. PSIs	15	15	18	17	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>164</b>

**Average 5 Year Top Ten PSIs Breakdown for All Students**



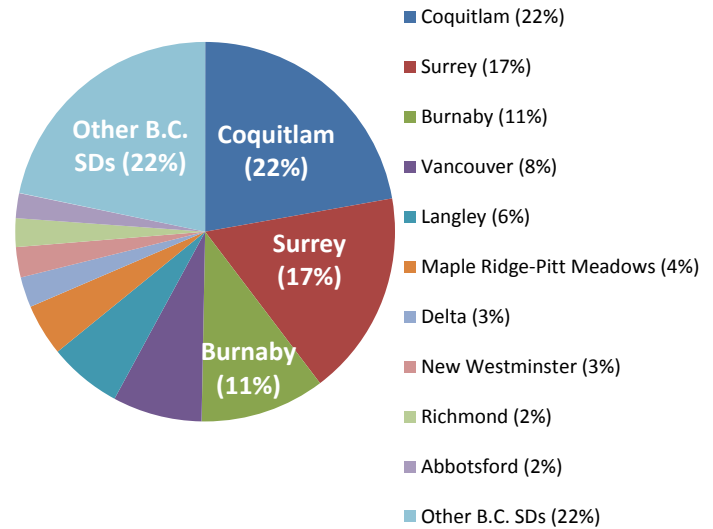
Note: The numbers for Nicola Valley Inst of Tech include those from Institute of Indigenous Government as well.



**Top Ten School Districts  
Where All Aboriginal High School Students are Enrolling From**

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Coquitlam	25	28	31	31	31
Surrey	15	24	21	26	29
Burnaby	11	14	14	15	16
Vancouver	9	8	11	10	12
Langley	3	7	11	10	10
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	3	3	4	9	10
Delta	3	3	4	4	3
New Westminster	4	5	4	2	2
Richmond	1	4	4	4	3
Abbotsford	1	2	3	5	3
Other B.C. SDs	34	34	26	26	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>142</b>

**Average 5 Year Top Ten School Districts  
Breakdown for All Students**



## Notes:

1. The numbers in this report are based on the most recent available data from self-declaration and other sources. Therefore, numbers may change slightly when new report is published.

2. International students are excluded from this report.

3. The latest report is one year behind current fiscal year since one of our sources is one year behind. This report is updated on October 2, 2012.

4. Retention Rate and Rolling Retention Rate: The methodology is the same for each year, but using 2006-07 as an example, the following applies: the cohort under consideration consists of all new undergraduate students admitted in the 2006-07 fiscal year (Summer 2006, Fall 2006, Spring 2007), who were in a degree program in their first term (exchange and irregular students are excluded.) The "Year 1 to Year 2 Retention Rate" or "Year 1 to Year 2 Rolling Retention Rate" is then the percentage of these students who either registered at SFU during their second year (terms 4, 5, and 6 following admission), or else graduated with an SFU undergraduate degree by the end of their second year (term 6 following admission). For subsequent years:

i) the "Retention Rate" always looks at the original cohort (new undergraduate students who were admitted in the 2006-07 fiscal year), and then gives the percentage of that group who were still retained in subsequent years. For example, the "Year 1 to Year 4 Retention Rate" answers this question: of the new 2006-07 admits, what percentage were still retained in year 4 (either registered at SFU during their fourth year -- terms 10, 11, and 12 following admission, or else graduated with an SFU undergraduate degree by the end of their fourth year -- term 12 following admission)?

ii) the "Rolling Retention Rate" looks at the students who were retained (registered or graduated) up to a certain year, and then gives the percentage of that group who were still retained in the following year. For example, the "Year 3 to Year 4 Rolling Retention Rate" answers this question: of the new 2006-07 admits who were retained to year 3 (either still registered or graduated), what percentage were still retained in year 4?

Note that students admitted later than 2009-10 have not yet been here long enough to report on their retention rates.

5. Time to completion: the average elapsed years from students' first term as an undergraduate student at SFU to their completion term. Time to completion is calculated separately by students' bases of admission: i) high school admits, ii) college transfer students and iii) students of all admission bases, including high school admits, college transfers and other groups. The average time to completion is calculated on students who received their first SFU undergraduate degree within a given fiscal year.

6. Graduation rate: the percentage of students who graduated within a given time frame. Taking 4-year graduation rate for 2006-07 as an example, the cohort under consideration consists of all new undergraduate students admitted in the 2006-07 fiscal year (Summer 2006, Fall 2006, Spring 2007), who were in a degree program in their first term (exchange and irregular students are excluded.) The 4-year graduation rate is then the percentage of these students who graduated with an SFU undergraduate degree by the end of their fourth year (term 12 following admission). Graduation rate is calculated separately by students' bases of admission: i) high school admits, ii) college transfer students and iii) students of all admission bases, including high school admits, college transfers and other groups. The graduation rate is calculated on students who received their first SFU undergraduate degree within the given time frame.