

May 2008

Lakehead University Highlights of the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS), 2007

In 2007, the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) was conducted by 15 Ontario universities to assess graduate students' views and experiences. The areas covered included: general satisfaction; satisfaction with program; satisfaction with thesis advisor, faculty and staff; satisfaction with teaching, research and learning; preparation for future work / scholarly endeavours; financial status; quality of facilities and quality of student life. Lakehead University participated in this survey, and the following provides a summary of key findings.

At Lakehead University, all 550 graduate students enrolled in the 2006/2007 fall and winter terms were invited to participate in the CGPSS. The response rate was 44% (244 responses), slightly higher than the Ontario average (42%). Data were collected from both master's and doctoral students. However, because of small sample sizes, only the responses of master's thesis students (master's students pursuing a thesis-based degree) can be generalized to that population (accurate to within +/- 5.4%, 19 times out of 20) and compared to students at other institutions.

General Satisfaction

A comparison of Lakehead University master's thesis students with master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario revealed that on most items the experiences of Lakehead students are similar to the experiences of students at other universities. Specifically, Lakehead University master's thesis students rated the quality of their program, the quality of their student life experience and the quality of their overall experience as highly as students elsewhere in Ontario.

- 81% of master's thesis* and 93% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the quality of their program as high (excellent, very good or good).
- 81% of master's thesis* and 85% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the quality of their student life experience as high.
- 84% of master's thesis* and 89% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated their overall experience as high.

However, compared to students elsewhere in Ontario, Lakehead University students were less satisfied with the quality of their academic experience, are less likely to select the same university if they were to start their graduate /professional career again and are less likely to recommend their university to someone considering their program.

* Indicates results not statistically different to results from students across Ontario.

- Only 84% of master's thesis and 92% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the quality of their academic experience as high compared to 89% of master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario.
- Only 55% of master's thesis and 59% of doctoral students at Lakehead would definitely or probably select Lakehead if they were to start their graduate / professional career again, compared to 71% of master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario who would definitely or probably select their university again.
- Only 68% of master's thesis and 77% of doctoral students at Lakehead would definitely or probably recommend Lakehead to someone considering their program, compared to 77% of master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario who would recommend their university to someone considering their program.

Satisfaction with Faculty and Thesis Advisors

Students at Lakehead University rated the faculty and staff highly. Master's thesis students rated the intellectual quality of faculty, the quality of instruction, the helpfulness of staff members and the relationship between faculty and graduate students as highly as students elsewhere in Ontario.

- 95% of master's thesis* and 96% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the intellectual quality of faculty as excellent, very good or good.
- 86% of master's thesis* and 96% of doctoral students at Lakehead thought the quality of the instruction in their courses was excellent, very good or good.
- 89% of master's thesis* and 89% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the helpfulness of staff members in their program as excellent, very good or good.
- 90% of master's thesis* and 96% of doctoral students at Lakehead felt the relationship between faculty and graduate students was excellent, very good or good.

However, Lakehead University master's thesis students rated the quality of academic advising and guidance lower than master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario.

- 69% of master's thesis and 70% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the quality of academic advising and guidance in their program as excellent, very good or good; lower than the percent of master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario (76%).

Students at Lakehead University rated the performance of their thesis advisors highly. On many items, including selecting the same faculty supervisor again, the ratings of Lakehead master's thesis students were similar to those of master's thesis students across Ontario. Lakehead master's thesis students also had more frequent communication with their thesis advisors than did students elsewhere in Ontario.

- 85% of master's thesis* and 89% of doctoral students at Lakehead strongly agreed or agreed that their advisor promoted their professional development.

* Indicates results not statistically different to results from students across Ontario.

- 90% of master's thesis* and 89% of doctoral students at Lakehead strongly agreed or agreed that their thesis advisor gave them constructive feedback on their work.
- 87% of master's thesis* and 78% of doctoral students at Lakehead strongly agreed or agreed that their thesis advisor was available for regular meetings.
- 76% of master's thesis* and 71% of doctoral students at Lakehead would definitely or probably select the same faculty supervisor if they were to start their graduate career again.
- 32% of Lakehead master's thesis* students met with their advisor four or more times per month to discuss writing of their dissertation draft, compared to only 23% of students elsewhere in Ontario. In addition, 47% of Lakehead master's thesis students met or communicated with their advisor about their ongoing research and results four or more times per month.¹

However, overall ratings were not as high as those given by students across Ontario.

- 85% of master's thesis and 85% of doctoral students at Lakehead strongly agreed or agreed that overall their thesis advisor performed the role well. But, fewer master's thesis students at Lakehead strongly agreed or agreed that overall their thesis advisor performed the role well (85%) than master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario (90%).

Academic and Research Experience

Many aspects of research, including opportunities to conduct independent research, training in research methods and research collaboration with faculty members were as good as or better than the research opportunities available to master's thesis students elsewhere in Ontario.

- 81% of master's thesis* and 92% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the quality of support and opportunities for conducting independent research highly
- 79% of master's thesis* and 88% of doctoral students at Lakehead rated the opportunities for research collaboration with one or more faculty members highly.
- 75% of Lakehead master's thesis students rated the quality of support and opportunities for training in research methods before beginning their research highly (excellent, very good or good). This is superior compared to 65% of master's thesis students across Ontario.

Finances

The amount of graduate education debt accumulated by Lakehead University master's thesis students is no different from the amount of debt accumulated by graduate students in the rest of Ontario. The percent of master's thesis students who consider financial or work commitments to be an obstacle to academic progress is similar to that in the rest of Ontario.

¹ In this analysis we assume that more communication is better.

* Indicates results not statistically different to results from students across Ontario.

- 46% of master's thesis* and 33% of doctoral students at Lakehead expect to have no graduate education debt to repay at the completion of their graduate degree.
- 38% of Lakehead master's thesis students expect to have to repay some debt but less than \$20,000. Only 16% expect to have to repay more than \$20,000.
- 34% of Lakehead master's thesis* students considered work / financial commitments a major obstacle to their academic progress.

Areas of Excellence

For the following items, a comparison of master's thesis students at Lakehead to master's thesis students in the rest of Ontario indicates superior performance at Lakehead.

- Frequent communication between student and thesis advisor
- Training in research methods before students begin their own research
- Flexibility of courses / programs:
 - Course scheduling is less of an obstacle to academic progress.
 - More opportunities to take coursework outside of home department.
- Professional skills development
 - advice on preparing for candidacy exams
 - advice on writing grant proposals
 - advice about ethics in human subject research
- High quality health care services, athletic facilities and housing assistance:

Areas for Potential Improvement

For the following items / areas a comparison of master's thesis students at Lakehead to master's thesis students in the rest of Ontario indicates that there is potential for improvement at Lakehead.

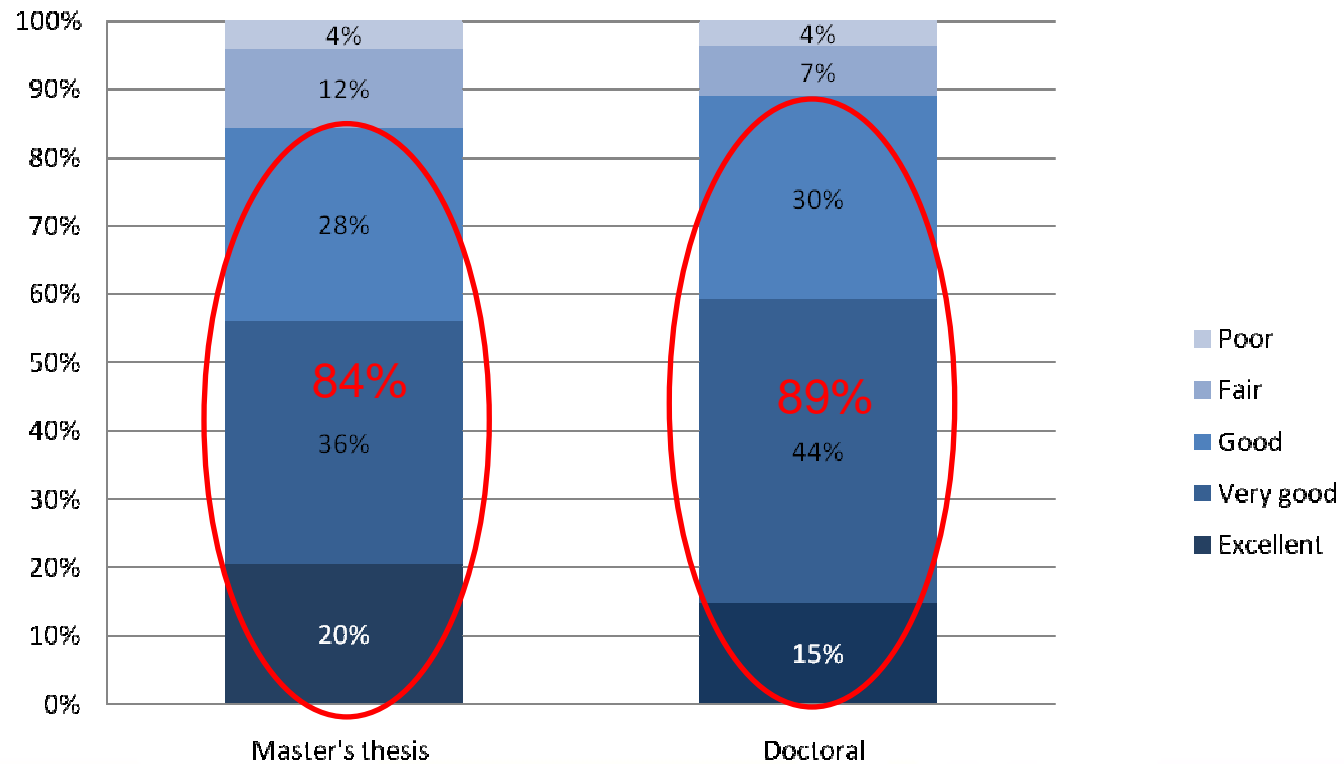
- Quality of academic advising / guidance
- Overall quality of academic experience
- Number of students who would select Lakehead again
- Number of students who would recommend Lakehead to someone considering their program
- Performance of thesis advisor
- Intellectual quality of fellow students
- Quality of 'career services' as a resource
- Opportunities to attend national scholarly meetings
- Quality of library facilities, research laboratories and information technology services

* Indicates results not statistically different to results from students across Ontario.

General Satisfaction

High ratings for *overall experience*

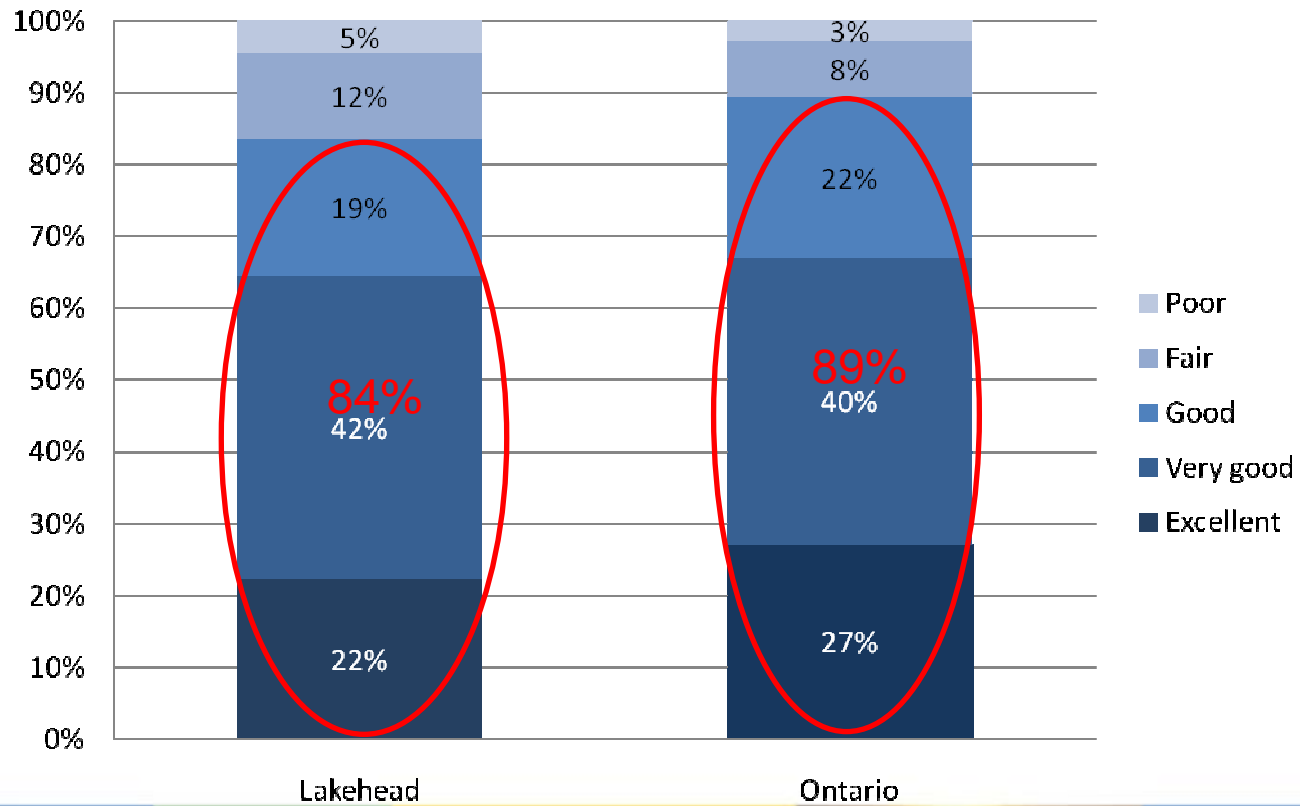
Overall experience at Lakehead University



General Satisfaction

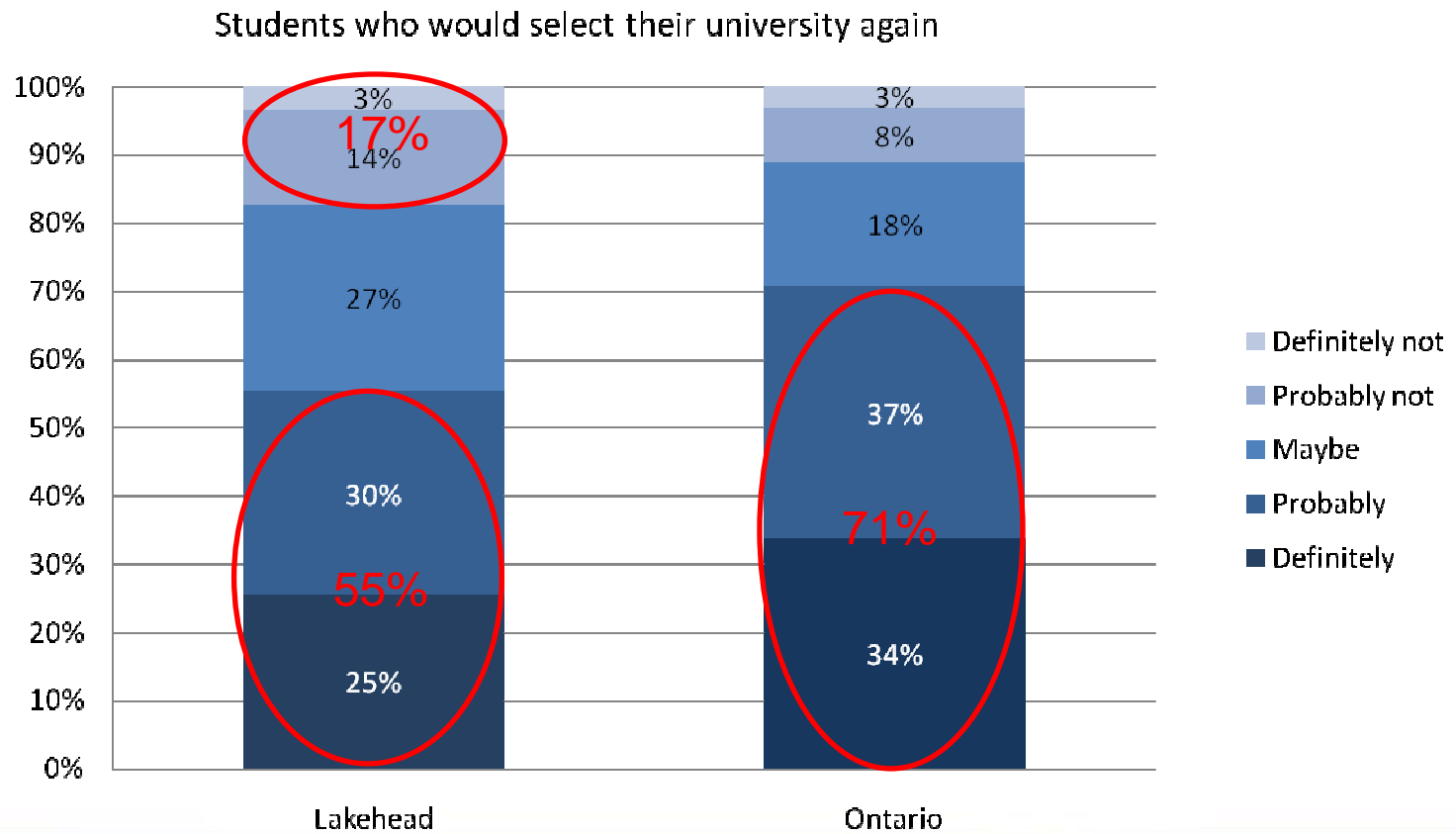
Satisfaction with *academic experience*

Quality of academic experience



General Satisfaction

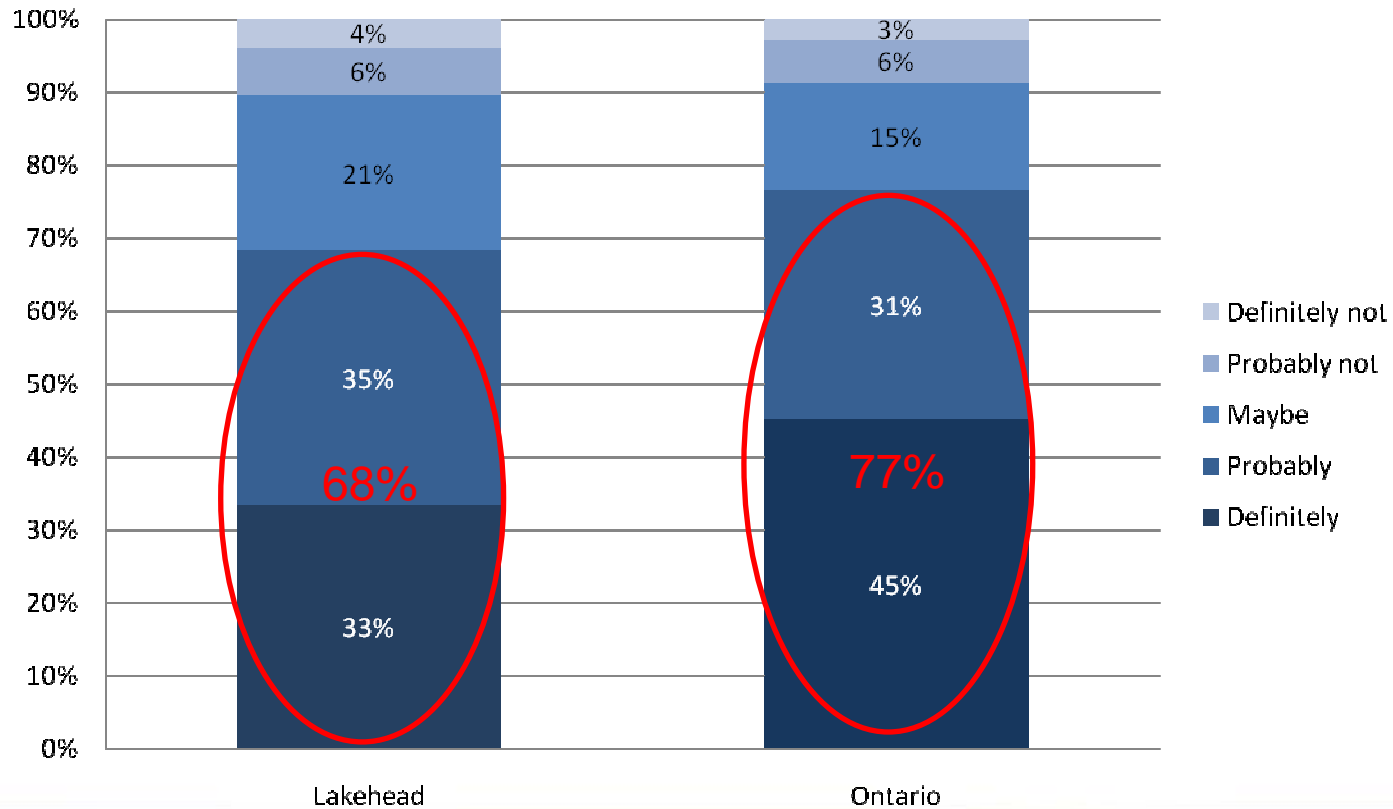
Students who would *select Lakehead again*



Recommend to others

Students who would *recommend their program*

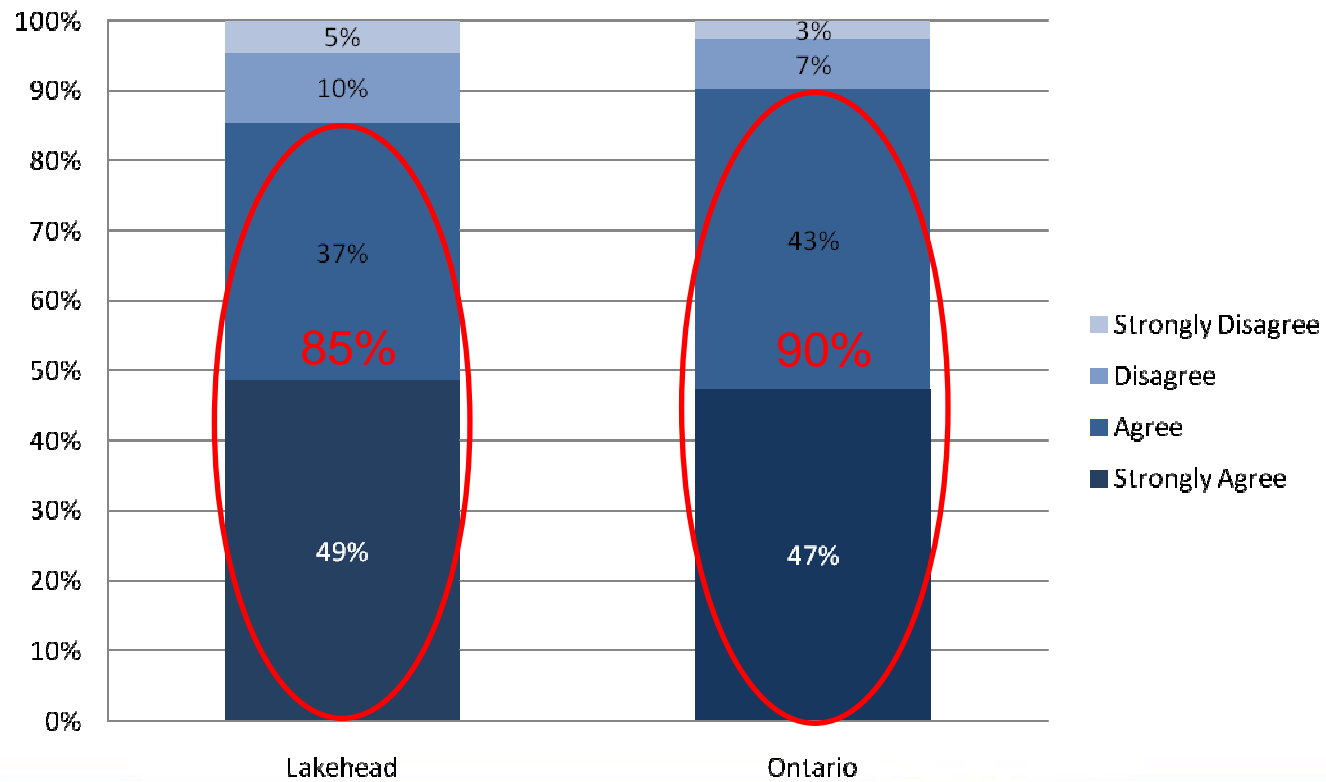
Recommend this university to someone considering your program



Satisfaction w/ Advisor

Overall *satisfaction with advisors*

Overall, thesis advisor performed the role well



Finances

Graduate education *debt*

Student estimates of the amount of graduate education debt they will have to repay

