

CHANGES IN FRESHMEN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

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University students are changing – their backgrounds, attitudes, aspirations and educational goals. How great is this change? In what direction?

A survey of the freshman class at the University of Guelph was conducted in 1970. This article reports these findings and makes comparisons with data obtained in a smaller, less comprehensive survey conducted in 1969.¹

The surveyed students in 1970 were selected at random from the total freshman class; a total of 298 students were chosen representing approximately 16 per cent of the freshman student population. These students were enrolled in one of the following programs; B.A., B.Sc.(Agr.), B.A.Sc.(B.H.Sc. in 1969), B.Comm., B.L.A., B.Sc. (Eng.), B.Sc. (P.E.), and the Associate Diploma in Agriculture program.

The group of students that were surveyed in the 1970 freshman class varies somewhat from those surveyed in 1969. In the 1970 survey a random sample was taken of freshman students enrolled in all undergraduate programs on the campus, whereas in 1969 only students in four undergraduate programs were surveyed. (These being B.A., B.Sc., B.Sc. (Agr.), B.H.Sc.) In the 1970 survey all of the freshman students were included in the sample whereas in 1969 only those students who had completed Ontario grade 13 in 1969 were interviewed. Consequently, the 1970 survey includes a broader range of academic programs and students (including more mature students, students who have failed first year university courses on a previous occasion, and students from provinces other than Ontario and countries other than Canada).

Demographic Characteristics of Freshmen:

The sex distribution of students by academic program indicated the usual preference of females for arts as opposed to science and a high proportion of males in all science programs and in the Diploma in Agriculture program. The notable exception was the percentage of male students in the B.Sc. program. In 1971, 77 per cent of the students in the B.Sc. were male compared to 91 per cent in 1969. The proportion of male and female students in other academic programs (and in the total survey) was similar to that observed in 1969.

The proportion of rural-reared students was highest in the Diploma and Degree in Agriculture programs and in Family and Consumer Studies (household science). Seventy per cent of the students in the Diploma in Agriculture program were rural-reared. This result was anticipated as practical experience in farming or agricultural industry is a requirement for admission to this program, which appeals primarily to students who have had that experience. The greatest difference between the 1969 and 1970 data was in the proportion of students in the B.A. program coming from communities of a population in excess of 100,000. In the 1970 survey, 34 per cent of the B.A. students were in this group as compared to 16 per cent in 1969.

The size of the high school does not appear to be related to the academic program in which a student is enrolled. This observation was also apparent in the 1969 data. Similarly, the relationship between age and academic program was supported by findings in the 1969 survey. Students enrolled in the B.A.Sc.

(B.H.Sc. in 1969) were younger than students in other programs. One might expect that students in the Diploma program would be younger than those enrolled in any other academic program since one less year of academic work (grade 12) in high school is required for admission. However, the data do not support this expectation. Probable reasons for this are: (1) that approximately 30 per cent of the Diploma students have been enrolled in grade 13, even though it is not required for admission, (2) the possibility that more of the diploma students may have experienced academic difficulties in high school and required five years to complete the four year program.

The fathers of the B.Sc. (Agr.) and Diploma in Agriculture students in the survey tended to have a slightly lower educational attainment. More of the fathers of these students were engaged in farming and fewer were engaged in professional or technical types of employment. Similarly, the net family income tended to be lower among students enrolled in the B.Sc. (Agr.) and Diploma in Agriculture programs. A notable exception was the 28 per cent of students in the B.A.Sc. program whose family income was below \$4,000 per year. This group was 4 times larger than that observed of students in any other academic program. No explanation for this observation is apparent to the authors.

The county of origin of students was more uniform between academic programs in 1970 than 1969. The origin of Diploma students appears to be significantly different from that of students in other academic programs. A suggested explanation is the fact that there are four other colleges of agricultural technology located in the province and that these students attend the college closest to their home (farm).

The analyses of 1970 data included the relationship of home community to the various demographic characteristics. This relationship was not examined in the 1969 survey.

Data between demographic factors and the size of home community in which the students were reared showed that a greater proportion of the students from farms and small communities were male. Data clearly indicated that students from small communities and farms tended to attend high schools with smaller student numbers. This observation was not apparent in 1969 data although this direct relationship was not examined. Although there has been a major effort made to consolidate rural schools in Ontario, these schools tend to have lower student populations.

There was no apparent difference in the age of students as related to their home background. Data indicated that students from small communities came from families with a lower net income and that their fathers had less education than students coming from larger communities. This was also reflected in the observation that 41 per cent of the fathers of students from small communities and rural areas were farmers. A large proportion of students from communities over 100,000 come from the Central Ontario region. This reflects the large number of students at the university who come from Metropolitan Toronto.

It is interesting to note that of the 108 students coming from rural areas, only 46 had fathers whose primary occupation was farming. This observation supports the concept of a changing rural environment and the growing number of urban employed persons now residing in rural areas. The 1969 data supported this finding as there were 54 students from rural areas, 30 of whom had fathers who were farming.

General Attitudes of Freshmen About University:

A higher proportion of students in Science and Agricultural Science compared to those from other programs placed greater emphasis on career training as the main purpose of a university.

Many students in the Diploma in Agriculture program had a similar attitude. Similar observations were apparent in the data which outlined the students' main purpose in attending the University of Guelph. Data obtained in 1969 supported these observations.

The majority of the students surveyed plan to terminate their education when they complete the program in which they are currently enrolled. A significant number of students (22 and 19 per cent respectively in the B.Sc. (Agr.) and B.Sc. program) planned to enter the Veterinary Medicine program leading to the D.V.M. degree. The corresponding data in 1969 was 26 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. Only 7 per cent of the students surveyed in 1970 planned to take graduate work as compared to 14 per cent in 1969. Students were asked to generally indicate the future permanent employment that they might enter upon graduation. Teaching was the largest single area which is of interest to many of the students in B.A. and B.A.Sc. programs.

A notable difference between the 1969 and 1970 surveys occurred in the number of students who were able to indicate some type of employment activity in which they are interested following graduation. The following proportions were unable to identify an occupational goal upon graduation:

Survey date	PROGRAM					
	B.Sc. (Agr.)	B.A.	B.Sc.	B.H.Sc.	Other	Diploma
1969	29%	13%	30%	10%	n.a.	n.a.
1970	8%	32%	15%	8%	17%	10%

With the exception of students in Arts, a higher proportion of students had some employment goal upon graduation as freshmen in 1970 than in 1969. A general observation of the 1970 freshman class made by faculty members and administrators was their greater degree of certainty as to why they enrolled in university and their increased effort in academic activities as opposed to student activities and 'campus issues'.

Data pertaining to the relationship between the general attitudes of freshman students about university and their home background indicated that thirty per cent of the students from farms and rural communities saw the main purpose of the university as one of training students for a career — more than double the proportion of those who lived in larger communities. There was no major difference apparent when students indicated their main purpose in attending this university. A large number of students (240 of 298) saw a university's purpose as one of educating for society needs, in broadening their personal knowledge or facilitating self development. However, a large proportion saw their own

particular reasons for attending the University of Guelph as being related to career training or attaining a degree for a majority of students (202 of 298).

Conclusions:

Although the 1970 survey included a representative sample of all freshmen students and students in all undergraduate programs, there are many similarities in the results of the survey as compared to the results obtained in 1969. In each survey the sample size was 15-16 per cent. However, the 1969 survey included students in 4 academic programs (B.A., B.Sc., B.Sc. (Agr.) and B.H.Sc.) and only those students who had entered the university directly from high school. The total number of students interviewed increased from 156 in 1969 to 298 in 1970.

The observation in 1969 that rural reared students go to high schools of a similar size as urban students is not supported in the 1970 data. The direct comparison of home background and size of high school in the analysis of the 1970 data must outweigh the extrapolation made by comparing academic program and high school size in 1969. Nonetheless, 56 per cent of the rural reared students attended high schools larger than the total community in which the student was reared!

As was the case in 1969, many rural reared students do not indicate farming as the main occupation of their fathers. There is a noticeable movement of urban employed people to rural areas in Ontario at the present time.

The inclusion of students enrolled in the Diploma in Agriculture program was instituted in the 1970 survey in the belief that significant differences in demographic factors and attitudes would be observed. Differences were not as apparent as had been predicted. Even so, the analyses shows that the Diploma Program has the highest proportion of male students, rural-reared students, students whose fathers are farmers and students whose main purpose in attending the University of Guelph and their view as to the main purpose of a university is career training. The origin of Diploma students is more localized (close to Guelph) than of students in any other academic program. A more detailed study of the characteristics of students in the Diploma in Agriculture program is warranted.

Students in various academic programs have similar attitudes towards university and are similar to those expressed in 1969. Although this degree of similarity was not expected initially, it has become apparent in two successive surveys.

¹ Freshmen at Guelph: A Profile of the 1969 Freshmen Class at the University of Guelph. N.A.C.T.A. Journal 15:4 p 109, 1971.

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SUMMARY OF THE STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY THE QUEBEC SECTION OF THE CANADA LAND INVENTORY

Editor's Note: A copy of a manuscript detailing accomplishments of the C.L.I. for the past five years is held on file in the Editor's office. If you desire information on this project, please contact Marcel J. Belzile, Director, Office De Planification et De Developpement Du Quebec, Canada.

At the Resources for Tomorrow Conference held in October 1961, the Federal and Provincial Governments decided to carry out an inventory of renewable resources in Canada.

As early as 1964, working methods based on biophysical characteristics were devised to give Canada a national classification system for the agricultural, forestry, recreational, wildlife ungulate and wildlife waterfowl sectors.

In September 1969, the Québec section of the Canada Land

Inventory published a document on the classification systems land use capability (Les Systèmes de Classement des Possibilités d'Utilisation des Sols), and another one in June 1971 concerning methods of land zoning according to their potential (La Méthodologie du Zonage des Terres selon leurs Potentiels). The latter was based on original potential land use maps.

In May 1972, a land use map of the Outaouais region (south-west of Québec) was printed with a report on an analysis of this region which is considered a pilot region.

The Québec section of the C.L.I. has in its possession 3257 maps: 662 soil-use maps, 440 agricultural maps, 407 forestry maps, 649 recreation maps, 298 wildlife ungulate maps, 550 wildlife waterfowl maps and 251 zoning maps.