

# **Community Relations Study 2004**

## ***Overview of Results***

Results of the Memorial University Community Relations Survey conducted by  
Omnifacts Bristol Research

Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning  
September 2004

## BACKGROUND

This report presents an overview of the results obtained from a public opinion survey of Newfoundland and Labrador residents concerning Memorial University of Newfoundland. This is a repeat of the Community Relations Study first conducted in 1997 by Omnifacts Research who was commissioned by the University to conduct a province-wide survey. The purpose of the survey was to “solicit perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of a random cross section of the adult portion of the population concerning Memorial University.” This purpose applies to the current survey as well, and additionally will be used to make a comparison to the 1997 results and collect further information in the form of new questions.

## METHODOLOGY

Implementation of the survey, including sampling, interviewing and data entry, was carried out by Omnifacts Bristol Research. A stratified sampling method, based on geographic region of the province, was used to generate a random sample with the same regional proportions as found in the population of Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey was conducted by telephone, during the week of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

The original questionnaire used in the 1997 study was used again in the current survey, to allow for comparisons to be made between the two administration times. In addition, several new questions were added to the questionnaire to collect information on current areas of interest. A copy of the questionnaire that was used is appended to this report.

A total sample size of 504 was obtained for this survey (margin of error of +/-4.5%, 95% confidence level), as detailed in the table below.

<b>Sample Size by Geographic Region</b>		
<i>Region</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Population Proportions</i>
St. John's CMA	176	35.0%
Eastern	109	21.8%
Central	98	19.5%
Western & Labrador	121	23.8%
Total	504	100%

## RESULTS

Survey results are presented in summary form, by question, and organized according to each section of the questionnaire. The results for the overall survey sample are presented along with a breakdown of responses by geographic region.

### Section 1: Perceptions of Memorial

<b>Q1. When you think of Memorial University, what first comes to mind? (Total mentions)</b>					
<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Provides an education	74.0%	71.6%	77.1%	77.6%	71.9%
Don't know/not sure	10.1%	11.9%	8.3%	9.2%	9.9%
Cost/prices (i.e. expensive)	9.3%	8.0%	12.8%	10.2%	7.4%
St. John's/Newfoundland and Labrador	6.0%	6.8%	1.8%	5.1%	9.1%
Students (i.e. diversity of student population)	4.0%	2.8%	4.6%	4.1%	5.0%
Provides access to future employment	3.6%	0.6%	3.7%	9.2%	3.3%
Reputation (i.e. established university)	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	3.1%	0.0%
Student loans/debts	1.6%	1.1%	2.8%	2.0%	0.8%
Good location	1.4%	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%	3.3%
Variety of programs offered	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%	1.7%
Cheap tuition	1.0%	1.7%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%
University social life (i.e. Breezeway)	1.0%	1.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%
Other	6.2%	7.0%	5.4%	5.0%	6.4%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

*Note: Since respondents could make more than one response, the sum of percentages will exceed 100%. The response category "Other" combines responses that were each mentioned infrequently.*

Community Relations Study 2004 - Overview of Results

**Q2a. A degree from Memorial University is not as valuable as a degree from other Canadian universities.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	59.9%	65.9%	56.9%	59.2%	54.5%
Somewhat disagree	22.0%	17.0%	24.8%	22.4%	26.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	6.2%	6.8%	6.4%	7.1%	4.1%
Somewhat agree	9.3%	9.1%	9.2%	7.1%	11.6%
Strongly agree	2.6%	1.1%	2.8%	4.1%	3.3%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

**Q2b. I think that Memorial is operated in a cost-effective manner.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	6.2%	8.0%	8.3%	4.1%	3.3%
Somewhat disagree	11.1%	11.9%	11.9%	13.3%	7.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	20.8%	20.5%	22.9%	14.3%	24.8%
Somewhat agree	46.4%	46.0%	41.3%	51.0%	47.9%
Strongly agree	15.5%	13.6%	15.6%	17.3%	16.5%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

**Q2c. The research and development conducted at Memorial produces many cultural benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	2.4%	4.5%	1.8%	1.0%	0.8%
Somewhat disagree	5.2%	5.7%	6.4%	3.1%	5.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.3%	10.8%	6.4%	12.2%	11.6%
Somewhat agree	43.8%	43.8%	46.8%	40.8%	43.8%
Strongly agree	38.1%	35.2%	37.6%	42.9%	38.8%
Refused	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

Community Relations Study 2004 - Overview of Results

**Q2d. I think that public funding for Memorial University should be decreased.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	58.5%	62.5%	54.1%	61.2%	54.5%
Somewhat disagree	16.7%	15.3%	19.3%	10.2%	21.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	4.2%	4.5%	7.3%	3.1%	1.7%
Somewhat agree	7.7%	6.3%	3.7%	13.3%	9.1%
Strongly agree	12.9%	11.4%	15.6%	12.2%	13.2%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

**Q2e. The research and development conducted at Memorial produces many economic benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	1.4%	1.7%	1.8%	0.0%	1.7%
Somewhat disagree	3.8%	2.8%	5.5%	4.1%	3.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	6.2%	8.5%	6.4%	4.1%	4.1%
Somewhat agree	45.4%	40.9%	54.1%	46.9%	43.0%
Strongly agree	43.3%	46.0%	32.1%	44.9%	47.9%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

**Q2f. Memorial University's academic programs are amongst the best in the world.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	1.4%	2.3%	1.8%	1.0%	0.0%
Somewhat disagree	3.6%	5.1%	1.8%	3.1%	3.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	11.3%	14.2%	9.2%	9.2%	10.7%
Somewhat agree	43.7%	41.5%	45.0%	43.9%	45.5%
Strongly agree	40.1%	36.9%	42.2%	42.9%	40.5%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

Community Relations Study 2004 - Overview of Results

**Q2g. Memorial University's research capabilities are amongst the best in the world.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Strongly disagree	0.8%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Somewhat disagree	5.8%	8.0%	3.7%	4.1%	5.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	12.9%	15.3%	13.8%	11.2%	9.9%
Somewhat agree	44.4%	40.9%	46.8%	42.9%	48.8%
Strongly agree	36.1%	33.5%	35.8%	41.8%	35.5%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

## Section 2: Likelihood of Recommending

### Q3a. If one of your family or friends was seeking a university to attend, which university would you recommend?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Memorial University of Newfoundland	84.9%	85.2%	84.4%	88.8%	81.8%
Don't know/not sure	8.3%	6.3%	12.8%	3.1%	11.6%
Other University	6.0%	8.0%	2.8%	7.1%	5.0%
Depends on their field of study	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.0%	1.7%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

### Q3b. Why would you recommend Memorial University? (Total mentions)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Location	56.5%	55.3%	56.5%	56.3%	58.6%
Reputation	32.5%	26.7%	39.1%	31.0%	36.4%
Quality of programs offered	23.1%	31.3%	20.7%	16.1%	19.2%
Quality of teaching	17.5%	16.0%	19.6%	16.1%	19.2%
Cost/price of tuition	10.0%	12.0%	8.7%	6.9%	11.1%
Variety/selection of programs available	8.9%	10.7%	7.6%	5.7%	10.1%
Cost/price (general)	8.6%	12.7%	6.5%	6.9%	6.1%
Institution provides quality education	4.9%	3.3%	3.3%	8.0%	6.1%
Testimonials (i.e. I have degrees from the institution)	4.4%	7.3%	3.3%	2.3%	3.0%
Research facilities/reputation	4.2%	4.0%	7.6%	3.4%	2.0%
Diversity of student population	2.8%	2.7%	6.5%	1.1%	1.0%
Don't know/not sure	2.1%	1.3%	0.0%	5.7%	2.0%
Cost/price of accommodations	1.9%	3.3%	2.2%	1.1%	0.0%
Other	4.1%	6.2%	0.0%	5.5%	4.0%
Total N	428	150	92	87	99

Note: Since respondents could make more than one response, the sum of percentages will exceed 100%. The response category "Other" combines responses that were each mentioned infrequently.

Community Relations Study 2004 - Overview of Results

**Q3b. Why would you recommend another University? (Total mentions)**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Reputation	44.1%	60.0%	33.3%	25.0%	37.5%
Quality of programs offered	29.4%	26.7%	66.7%	37.5%	12.5%
Quality of teaching	11.8%	6.7%	33.3%	25.0%	0.0%
Don't know/not sure	11.8%	6.7%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%
Location	8.8%	6.7%	33.3%	12.5%	0.0%
Variety/selection of programs available	8.8%	6.7%	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Research facilities/reputation	5.9%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Institution provides quality education	5.9%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Other	23.2%	46.9%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Total N	34	15	3	8	8

*Note: Since respondents could make more than one response, the sum of percentages will exceed 100%. The response category "Other" combines responses that were each mentioned infrequently.*

**Q3c. How likely would you be to recommend Memorial to your friend or family member?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Very unlikely	7.9%	7.7%	5.9%	18.2%	4.5%
Somewhat unlikely	6.6%	19.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Neither likely nor unlikely	1.3%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Somewhat likely	51.3%	50.0%	41.2%	63.6%	54.5%
Very likely	26.3%	19.2%	41.2%	9.1%	31.8%
Don't know/Not sure	6.6%	3.8%	5.9%	9.1%	9.1%
Total N	76	26	17	11	22

**Q4. Which campuses of Memorial University can you name? (Total mentions)**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
St. John's campus	56.7%	65.3%	54.1%	40.8%	59.5%
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College	48.8%	60.2%	35.8%	35.7%	54.5%
Don't Know/Not Sure	37.3%	26.1%	41.3%	52.0%	38.0%
Marine Institute	10.3%	15.9%	7.3%	6.1%	8.3%
Harlow Campus, UK	9.7%	16.5%	6.4%	5.1%	6.6%
Other	14.0%	15.2%	12.8%	19.3%	8.3%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

*Note: Since respondents could make more than one response, the sum of percentages will exceed 100%. The response category "Other" combines responses that were each mentioned infrequently.*

**Q5. In comparison to what you know of other Canadian universities, how would you rate the quality of education provided by each campus? (mean rating on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent")**

<i>Response</i>		<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
St. John's campus	Mean	7.92	7.89	8.04	7.81	7.96
	N	266	107	55	36	68
SWGC	Mean	7.39	7.02	7.45	7.83	7.55
	N	161	59	20	24	58
Marine Institute	Mean	8.57	8.57	9.50	8.00	8.00
	N	42	21	8	4	9

*Note: Mean ratings for each region should be interpreted with caution as they are based on a small number of respondents; as well, 34.6% and 19.2% of respondents who named the SWGC and Marine Institute campuses, respectively, could not provide a rating of quality when asked.*

**Q6a. In terms of number of students, which of the following universities do you think is the largest?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Memorial	44.4%	50.0%	40.4%	38.8%	44.6%
Dalhousie	39.1%	38.6%	38.5%	41.8%	38.0%
University of New Brunswick	4.4%	3.4%	2.8%	6.1%	5.8%
Don't know/not sure	12.1%	8.0%	18.3%	13.3%	11.6%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

**Q6b. How do the tuition fees at Memorial University compare to tuition fees at other universities that you may know of in Atlantic Canada?**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
Higher	11.3%	8.5%	12.8%	14.3%	11.6%
Lower	40.1%	52.8%	32.1%	32.7%	34.7%
About the Same	28.0%	25.0%	23.9%	34.7%	30.6%
Don't know/not sure	20.6%	13.6%	31.2%	18.4%	23.1%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

\* Sig .05

**Q6c. Please estimate what percentage of Memorial's 55,000 graduates live in the province.**

<i>Response</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>St. John's</i>	<i>Eastern</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>Western &amp; Labrador</i>
About 20%	37.7%	29.5%	43.1%	42.9%	40.5%
About 50%	43.5%	52.3%	38.5%	37.8%	39.7%
About 70%	17.3%	17.6%	16.5%	18.4%	16.5%
Don't know/not sure	1.6%	0.6%	1.8%	1.0%	3.3%
Total N	504	176	109	98	121

## SUMMARY

In addition to the overall and regional summary results presented here, additional cross-tabulations were carried out between the survey questions and several demographic variables to provide further insight into the survey results.

The results of this survey indicate a generally positive perception of Memorial University among the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. The “top of mind” impression of the university for the majority of people is that Memorial provides an education, and this was a consistent result across the four regions of the province.

Analysis of the respondents’ agreement with the various statements about Memorial revealed the following points:

- 81.9% of the overall sample disagreed that a degree from Memorial is not as valuable as a degree from other Canadian universities (respondents with an affiliation to Memorial were more likely to disagree with this statement than those with no affiliation, 87.1% vs. 69.2%).
- 61.9% of the overall sample agreed that Memorial is operated in a cost-effective manner.
- 81.9% of respondents agreed that the research and development conducted at Memorial produces many cultural benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador (male respondents showed slightly higher disagreement to this item compared to female respondents, 11.2% vs. 4.7%).
- 75.2% of respondents disagreed that public funding for Memorial University should be decreased (disagreement was more frequent among urban respondents compared to rural respondents, 77.8% vs. 71.3%, and among those affiliated with Memorial compared to those with no affiliation, 79.0% vs. 65.8%).
- 88.7% of the overall sample agreed that the research and development conducted at Memorial produces many economic benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador (a slightly higher proportion of rural respondents agreed with this statement compared to urban respondents, 91.1% vs 87.1%).
- 83.8% of the sample said they agreed that Memorial University’s academic programs are amongst the best in the world, and 80.5% agreed that Memorial University’s research capabilities are amongst the best in the world.

A high percentage of respondents said they would recommend Memorial to family or friends (84.9%), and this recommendation was consistent across regions of the province. The three main reasons for recommending Memorial were location, reputation, and quality of programs. Respondents who said they would recommend another university indicated reputation and quality of programs were the main reasons. When these people were asked how likely they would be to recommend Memorial, 77.6% of this group said they would be somewhat or very likely to do so.

When participants were asked about the campuses of Memorial, a surprising 37.3% said they did not know or weren't sure what campuses they could name. Just over half the sample (56.7%) named the St. John's campus, and 48.8% named the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College campus in Corner Brook. Only a small proportion of the sample named the Marine Institute (10.3%) or the Harlow campus (9.7%), and there were some people who named another town or location as having a campus. Those participants who could name one of the campuses were asked to rate the quality of education it provides, and the overall mean ratings of quality were high, ranging from 7.39 to 8.57 (note though that for SWGC and Marine Institute there were many respondents who could not provide a rating of quality).

Only 44.4% of respondents believed that Memorial was larger than Dalhousie University and University of New Brunswick in terms of number of students, and many respondents in the overall sample (39.1%) selected Dalhousie as the largest university out of the three (responses to this question were found to vary among subgroups, with a slightly larger proportion of urban respondents, male respondents, university graduates and those affiliated with Memorial selecting Memorial for this question, compared to their counterparts). A total of 40.1% of the overall sample thought that tuition fees at Memorial were lower than other Atlantic Canadian universities, while 11.3% thought they were higher and 20.6% did not know (a slightly larger proportion of rural respondents, female respondents and those with an affiliation to Memorial thought Memorial's tuition was higher, compared to their counterparts). Estimates of the percentage of graduates living in the province are interesting to note, as 37.7% of the overall sample believe this proportion to be around 20%.