Memorial University's Public Engagement Survey 2019: Public Findings

THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To expand on a previous evaluation of Memorial University's Public Engagement Framework (PEF) using data collected from faculty and staff, the Office of Public Engagement (OPE) administered a survey to the general public of Newfoundland and Labrador. Available through the online platform Qualtrics, the survey was open from March 4-19, 2019. It was promoted on social media and shared through the networks of units and community groups that were contacted by OPE.

Of the 743 people who opened the online survey, 602 completed it. Separate streams of questions were created for members of the public, current students, and staff and faculty. There were 335 respondents who completed the public section, 105 respondents who completed the student section, and 162 responses from faculty and staff. The demographic characteristics of this public sample were similar to the general population of Newfoundland and Labrador in their place of residence, age, and gender, but varied in the level of education they have attained. Almost 70% of the sample were alumni of Memorial, indicating previous affiliation with the University.

Many public respondents stated that they knew someone they could contact if they were looking for information on Memorial University, and the preferred method for this communication was by email. Regarding previous levels of engagement with the University, many respondents stated that they had done a range of engagement activities in the past, and the majority reported wanting to engage in the future. The primary motivation for respondents' existing and potential engagement was to learn something for personal interest, but the most common barrier to doing this was a lack of awareness of Memorial events and activities.

Almost all public participants expressed agreement that Memorial has a responsibility to engage with the public, and many also agreed that the work Memorial is doing is valuable and that they would like to engage with the University in the future. Fewer respondents (58%) expressed agreement that the University is doing a good job engaging with the public, indicating the potential for improvement in this area. When asked to provide suggestions for how Memorial can improve its public engagement, many emphasized the need to advertise and promote the events, activities, and research of the University. Other common suggestions were to increase Memorial's public presence, provide more resources to the public, and to make the information that is available to the public more accessible.

Further analysis of specific subgroups of the public sample elucidated that alumni and those that have never been involved with Memorial differed from the rest of the public in their responses. This was an important consideration for alumni given their large representation in the public sample. Additionally, people with a disability and Aboriginal/Indigenous people reported certain barriers to engagement more frequently than the rest of the public.

This survey presents a diagnostic of Memorial's engagement work through an innovative lens. Mobilizing the results of this public data collection can help pave the way to a more mutually beneficial relationship between Memorial University and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

2. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

As the only University in Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University of Newfoundland has a unique responsibility to the citizens of this province. To provide institutional structure to support this mandate, Memorial created the Public Engagement Framework (PEF), which outlines the core public engagement vision, values and goals of the University and also provides a guiding document to focus efforts and measure success in achieving those objectives. Public engagement, in this case, is defined as collaboration and interaction between people and groups within Memorial and people and groups outside the University, relating to the University's academic mission. A key component of public engagement is that mutual respect, mutual contributions and mutual benefits must be garnered for all participants. The PEF establishes public engagement as a core priority at Memorial, together with teaching and learning, research, scholarship and creative activity, that combined serve as core tenets of the University's overall mission.

To determine the efficacy of the PEF in facilitating and enabling public engagement for staff and faculty, the Office of Public Engagement (OPE) conducted an evaluation of the framework in 2017 (Krajewski, 2017). Including interviews with senior administration and an online survey sent to all academic staff and senior administration, this project shed light on the current state of public engagement at Memorial and the challenges to its implementation. Referring back to the definition of public engagement, this research investigated the University's experience in engagement, but the people and groups outside Memorial (the public) were outside the scope of that project. To fully understand the quality of and potential for a collaborative relationship between the University and the public, data needs to be obtained from outside Memorial's walls.

Some measures of the public's perception of Memorial are routinely collected for the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU). The most recent data, collected in fall 2018, show promising results for Memorial University ("Overview of AAU Public Opinon Polling," n.d.). Foremost of these findings is that 79% of NL respondents agree that Memorial is fully-engaged with the community in which it is located, the highest rating of all Atlantic Canadian provinces. NL responses exceeded the average of all other Atlantic provinces on all of the main measures, including the University's capacity to provide a well-prepared workforce for the future (80%) and that Atlantic Canadian universities are powerful contributors to the region's economic prosperity (84%). Additionally, 85% of NL respondents and their immediate families did not currently attend university, indicating that those sampled were representative of the public, being those outside the university. These findings point to a positive public perception of Memorial University. However, with only one item measuring public engagement capacity, further data is required to fully evaluate public engagement at Memorial.

Turning to the scholarship of public engagement to investigate community measures of public engagement, one quickly realizes there is no substantial precedent. A recent publication from a European project titled "Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education" (TEFCE) reviews many well-known tools for assessing an institution's public engagement efforts (Benneworth et al, 2018). A key theme of this review is that all mainstream public engagement evaluation tools rely on internal self-assessments by university staff and senior administration. Only one tool that was outlined in the report included some community-based measure, this being a partner perceptions survey administered by the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA; Garlick and Langworthy, 2008). Although this measure was a small-scale survey only distributed to community partners, the TEFCE report praised AUCEA for its "inspiring and compelling" inclusion of stakeholder perceptions. The infancy of external measures in public engagement assessment is thus apparent.

Having very little academic literature to draw on, it was determined that a novel tool would have to be created to expand the understanding of Memorial's public engagement by collecting data from the public. To reach as many members of the public as possible in a short timeframe, an online survey was chosen as the appropriate method. The process of creating this tool is described in the following section.

3. METHODOLOGY

A committee of students and staff was formed to create the public survey and plan its administration. This committee consisted of two OPE staff, one PhD student and a Master's student. The diversity of this team enabled meticulous scrutiny of the wording of each survey question, as well as a multitude of ideas about what items should be chosen for the final product. It was decided that although public responses were the focus, separate streams of questions would be developed for students as well as faculty and staff, ensuring that anyone could complete the survey and that the data of willing respondents would not be lost. After many drafts, the survey was piloted to a small group of students, staff and faculty, and members of the public, and changes were made to the wording of some questions based on their suggestions.

The survey was available online from March 4, 2019 to March 19, 2019 through the online platform Qualtrics. It was advertised on the OPE Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as on the social media sites of other University units and groups. Additionally, email invitations to complete the survey and disperse it through networks were sent to Memorial faculty, staff, and students, community partners, former OPE conference attendees, and Memorial University alumni. An entry to win a $100 Amazon gift card was offered as incentive to participate.

Most quantitative data analysis was performed in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive analysis was used for most items, depicting the number of respondents who selected each response option. For the qualitative analysis of open-ended data, inductive thematic analysis was used to determine the main themes present in the responses. For some of the broader themes, further analysis drew out subthemes from the responses. This coding was completed in Microsoft Excel. To compare the responses of participant subgroups to the rest of the public, inferential statistical tests were performed using SPSS Statistics software. Chi-square tests were used to compare the proportion of the subgroup that gave a particular response to the proportion of the rest of the public that gave the same response. Additionally, t-tests were used to compare average values, such as ratings and demographic variables like age. The alpha value was not corrected for these multiple tests as an exploratory-data-analysis-like process was used to uncover these between-group differences.

4. FINDINGS

In total, 743 respondents opened the survey link, with 602 completing it. Of these 602 complete responses, 335 respondents filled out the public stream of questions. The findings presented in this report pertain exclusively to this group of 335 public respondents, with analyses of the student (n=105) and staff/faculty (n=162) streams of the survey forthcoming in future documents. Note that for the following summary of findings, any items or figures with percentages that do not add to 100% reflect participants'

ability to select or openly state multiple responses. In these cases, the percentages indicate the proportion of respondents reporting a specific response, not the proportion of total responses.

4.1. Demographics

Participants were asked several questions to allow the determination of various characteristics of the sample. These included respondents' current place of residence, age, gender, identification with specific groups, previous involvement with Memorial, and highest level of education. Many of these questions were not mandatory and participants were instructed to omit questions if they felt they could be identified by their responses. As such, many of the below findings have sample sizes lower than the 335 total public responses that were received. Such instances are noted in the corresponding figure titles.

The first question of the survey asked about respondents' previous affiliation with Memorial University. This question was intended to route respondents to the appropriate stream of questions (public, student, or staff/faculty), but data was also gathered on the extent to which participants were previously involved with the University. Figure 1 depicts the breakdown of respondents' previous affiliation with Memorial. An important point evident from this graph is that the majority of this public sample consisted of Memorial University alumni (69%). This

Figure 1. Previous involvement with Memorial.
A large majority of public participants are Memorial alumni.
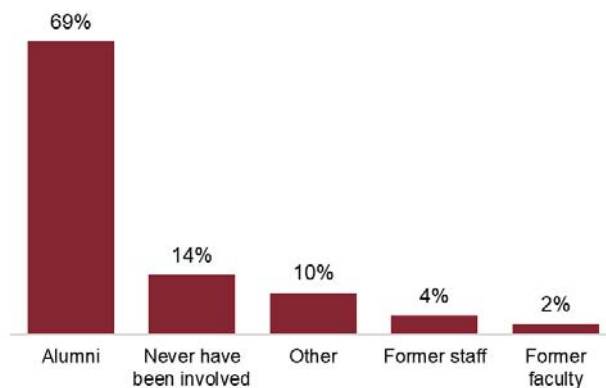
was somewhat expected as email invitations for the survey were sent to a list of Memorial alumni, as previously mentioned. Additionally, it was anticipated that many of those who would be interested enough to complete the survey would have attended the University at some point, as a substantial portion of the public have. However, it is still imperative to note that these public survey results are largely influenced by the alumni responses. See section 4.8.1 for an investigation of the differences between alumni responses and those of the rest of the public.

The "Other" response option (10%) mostly consisted of respondents who did not fit into just one category, stating that they were any mix of previous students, staff, or faculty. Additionally, some current students, staff, and faculty selected this option and were thus incorrectly routed to the public stream of questions. These responses were left in the "Other" category because they were so few (n=9). Other respondents who selected this category stated that they were alumni or that they had family who attend or work at Memorial. These responses were recoded to the appropriate group.

All major regions of Newfoundland and Labrador were represented in the public sample. Figure 2 depicts this distribution, with darker-coloured regions representing areas with a higher proportion of the public respondents. As evident from this figure, the St. John's Metropolitan area constituted a large percentage of the public sample (62%), but this was expected considering the population density of St. John's Metro compared to the rest of NL and the fact that Memorial's largest campus is in St. John's. Additionally, this geographic distribution is similar to the relative regional population estimates from Statistics Canada (2016a).

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of respondents

Most respondents currently live in the St. John's Metropolitan area, similar to the actual NL population.
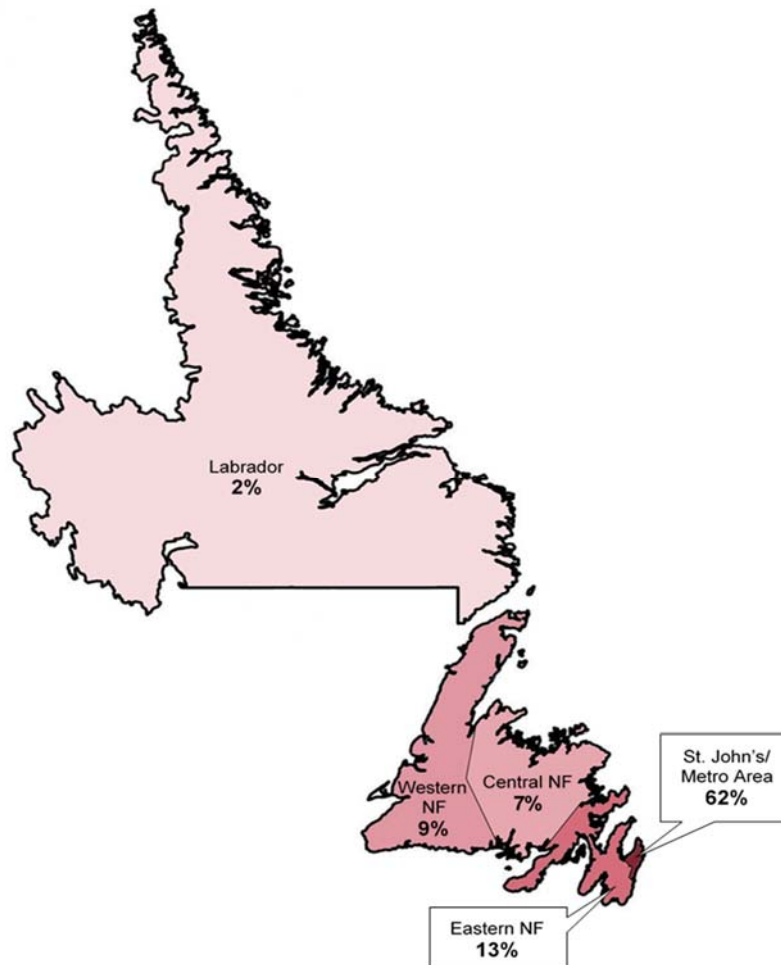
People from outside NL also completed the survey. Nineteen residents of other Canadian provinces responded (6%), including ten from Ontario, four from Nova Scotia, two from Quebec, two from British Columbia, and one from Prince Edward Island. Additionally, three respondents are currently living in countries other than Canada (1%), with one from Mexico, one from the United Kingdom, and one who did not state which country.

Figure 3 displays the age groups of respondents, with 55-64 years old being the most common range. Again, this distribution is similar to that of the NL population as Statistics Canada estimates the largest age group in NL to be between 45-54 years old, followed closely by this 55-64 range (Statistics Canada, 2016b).

Figure 4 depicts the percentages of the public sample by gender identity. Most of the respondents were female (61%), as is typical for online survey data collection (Smith, 2008). Some respondents did not wish to answer the question (4%), and a few preferred to self-describe their gender (1%) with one person identifying as nonbinary.
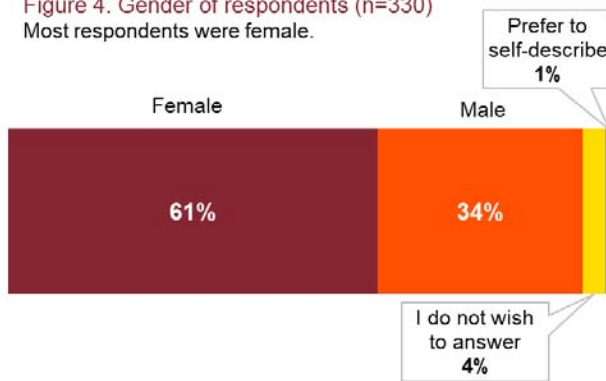
Figure 3. Age of respondents (n=328)

The most common age group was 55-64 years old
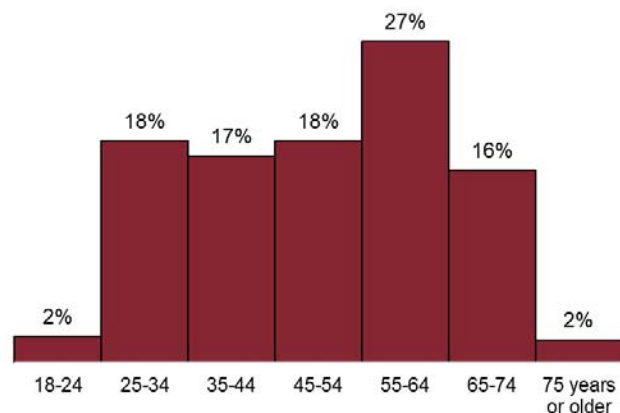
Figure 4. Gender of respondents (n=330)
Most respondents were female.

To determine whether specific groups faced particular challenges in engaging with Memorial, respondents were asked if they identified as a person with a disability, a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community, an Aboriginal/Indigenous person, a racialized person, or a member of any other group that may experience engagement differently. Figure 5 depicts the percentages of the public sample that identified as each of these groups, and it is evident that all groups were represented in some capacity, albeit small in some cases. "Other" responses mostly consisted of respondents stating they are Caucasian or white, or expressing contempt for the question, but some stated they are retired citizens, and another stated they are female. See section 4.8.3 for an analysis of specific barriers to engagement that were reported more for these groups than for the rest of the public sample.

Figure 5. "We want to make sure our programs and services are inclusive. Please select any options that are relevant to you: (optional)"
All groups were represented in some capacity.

The final demographic question asked participants about the highest level of education they have completed. As depicted by Figure 6, most respondents have completed a bachelor's degree (41%) or a master's degree (31%), which was to be expected with the large proportion of alumni in this sample.
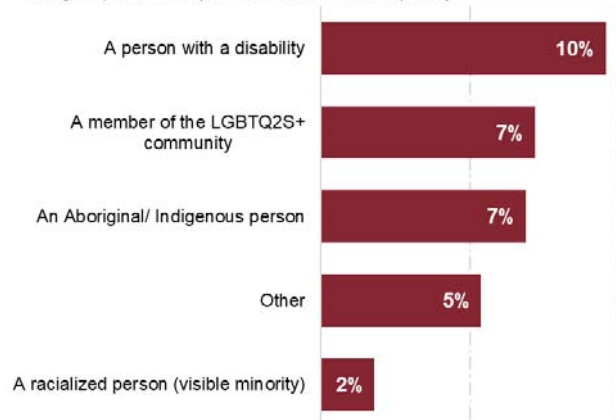
Figure 6. "What is your highest level of education?" (n=331)
Almost all respondents had post-secondary education, most with a university degree.
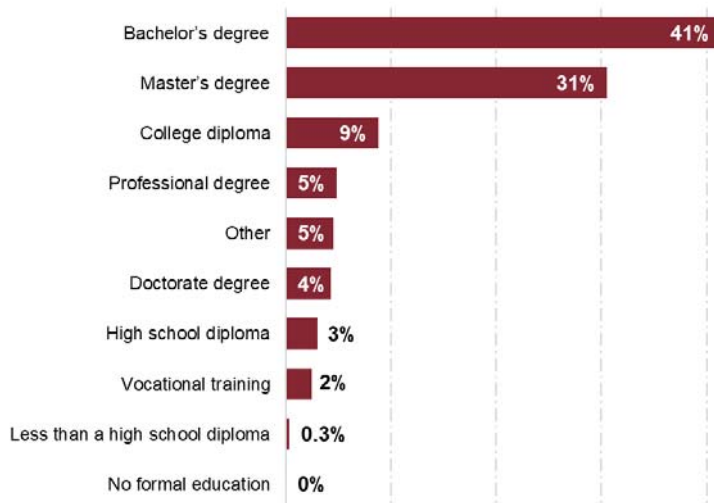
Many participants have completed other forms of post-secondary education as well, such as college diplomas (9%), professional degrees (5%), doctorate degrees (4%), or vocational training (2%). This distribution provides evidence that education attainment is the characteristic of this sample that may differ most from actual NL rates, as 48% of the province is estimated to have not attained any post-secondary education (Statistics Canada, 2016c) compared to less than 4% of this sample.

"Other" responses consisted mostly of respondents who stated they have more than one degree or that they have completed courses but have not yet earned a degree.

4.2. Contact with Memorial

To further gauge respondents' social proximity and involvement with Memorial, they were asked whether they know at least one person they could contact at the University if they had a question. Figure 7 depicts the distribution of responses to this question. A large majority of public respondents reported that they do know somebody they can contact (87%), with only 11% reporting they do not have a contact at Memorial. Most of those who responded "Other" (2%) stated that although they do not know a specific person they could reach out to, they are comfortable searching for and contacting the appropriate person through email or telephone.

Figure 7. "Do you know at least one person at Memorial (student, faculty or staff) that you can contact if you are looking for information on the University?"
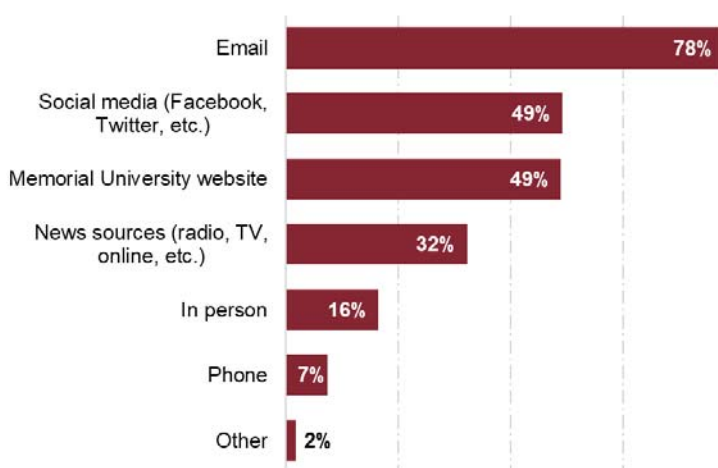The large majority know someone they can contact.

Although this level of contact reported by public participants may be conflated with the numbers of alumni (who may have connections left over from their time at Memorial), it is clear that the baseline level of connectedness these respondents have is substantial. This may indicate that the network of those who are affiliated enough with Memorial to offer information is widespread, serving as a good foundation on which to build public engagement efforts in the future.

Participants were also asked which ways they would prefer to get information about the University. Figure 8 shows the responses to this item, with the large majority of respondents choosing email (78%). Other online means were commonly selected as well, such as social media (49%) and the Memorial website (49%). The least desired form of communication with the University was by telephone (7%). "Other" responses were mostly mixed, with some answers mentioning mail, in person communication at events, and other online platforms like Youtube.

Figure 8. "In which way(s) would you prefer to get information about the University?"
Email was preferred by the majority of participants and other online methods were popular as well.

|	
Email	78%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	49%
Memorial University website	49%
News sources (radio, TV, online, etc.)	32%
In person	16%
Phone	7%
Other	2%

4.3. Previous and potential engagement

Two major outcomes of this survey were to determine the extent to which the public currently engages with the University and the extent to which they would like to engage in the future. To measure this, the survey included an item that asked participants whether they have done specific engagement activities in the past and whether they would like to do them in the future. As evident in Figure 9, previous engagement levels were high for many activities, but the desire to engage was substantially lower for all but two activities. This discrepancy may have been partially due to the wording of the question, as it may not have been clear to participants that they could select both "I have done this" and "I would like to do this" for all activities. Indeed, only 53 respondents (16%) selected both options for a single activity, and there were multiple comments at the end of the survey that expressed frustration with the lack of a response option to indicate that they did not want to do the activity (which the survey planning team felt was implied by leaving "I would like to do this" unchecked.) In short, the levels of desired engagement for each activity were likely underestimated because it was not clear to participants that they could select multiple options for each activity. However, see section 4.6 for another (and likely more accurate) measure of respondents' intention to engage with Memorial in the future.

Figure 9. "Please indicate any of the following activities you have done or would like to do:"
For most activities, more people expressed having done the activity before than wanting to do it in the future.
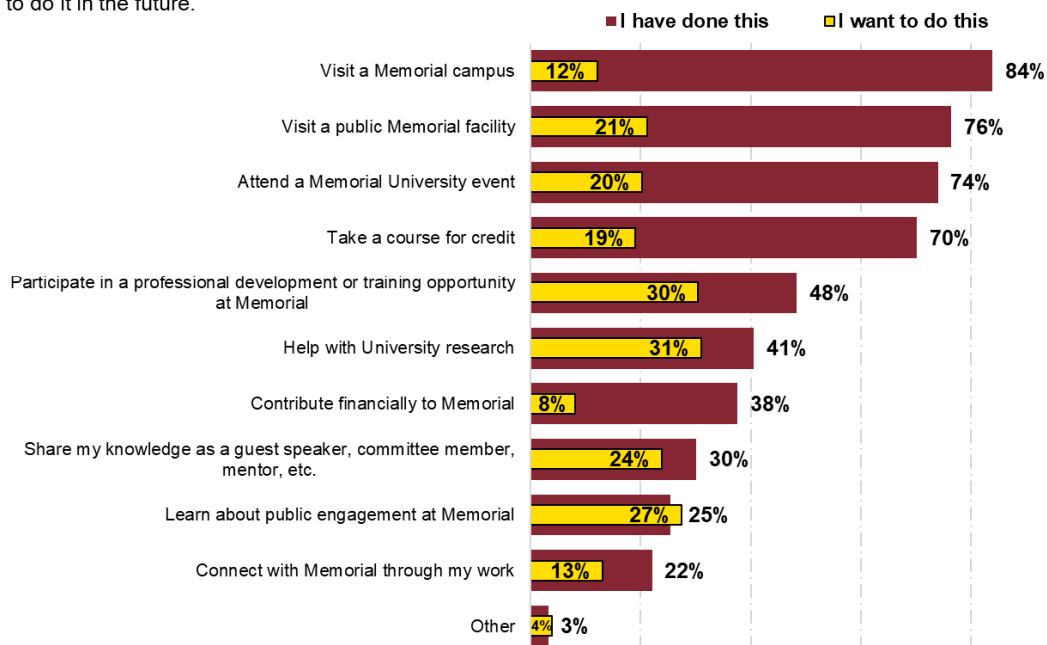
A particularly interesting outcome of this measure is that it is clear which engagement activities the public would most like to participate in, namely helping with University research (31%), participating in a professional development or training activity (30%), and learning about public engagement at Memorial (27%). These desired activities would be useful in guiding the future efforts of OPE.

Another fact made clear by Figure 9 is that all of the most common engagement activities that respondents have done are activities that would have been performed as a student at Memorial, signifying the high representation of alumni in the public sample. A further analysis of the differences between alumni and the rest of the public on this measure can be found in section 4.8.1.

Open-ended responses of other public engagement activities participants have done mostly included statements that participants have done some work or volunteering with Memorial before. Comments of general positivity about Memorial's engagement efforts were also common. "Other" activities that respondents would like to do included general public engagement activities, as well as taking a course for personal interest.

4.4. Motivations for engaging

Before developing or enhancing programming, it is important to understand the reasons why people are interested in engaging. As such, respondents were asked to select all the motivations they had for engaging or wanting to engage, the results of which are depicted in Figure 10. The most commonly cited motivation for the public to engage with the University was to learn something for personal benefit (68%). Such learning could take many forms, such as taking specific courses or attending events like public lectures, but it is clear that the public values the knowledge Memorial has and how it can benefit them personally. Other than personal benefit, many respondents were also motivated to engage by the potential resources it would give them to help their community (42%). Other commonly cited motivations were career development (37%), to meet new people and network (37%), and to receive updates about the University (34%).

Figure 10. What is your motivation for engaging with Memorial?
Learning something for personal interest was reported as a motivation for most participants to engage.
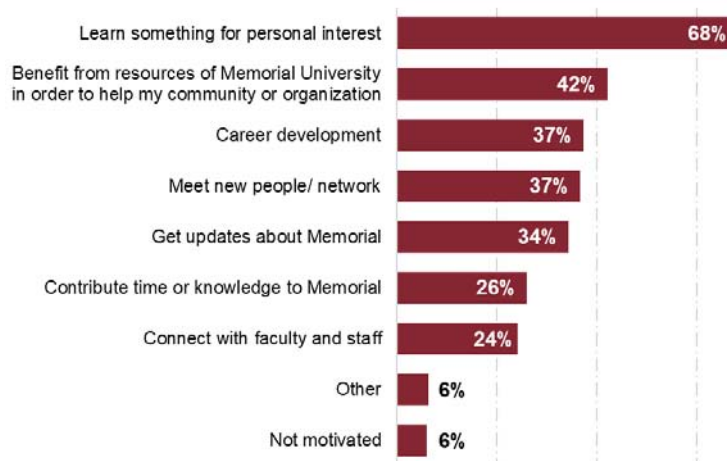
Many respondents provided "Other" motivations they had for engaging, and these responses were varied and specific. Many of these statements were specific examples of the other response options, such as benefitting from certain Memorial resources, but others mentioned the desire to grow Memorial's public engagement efforts, to get involved because a family member is involved with the University, and to give back to Memorial.

4.5. Barriers to engaging

Along with determining previous and desired levels of engagement, an exploration of the main barriers to engagement was a key outcome of the survey. Figure 11 visualizes the results of this inquiry. As depicted by the figure, none of the response options were reported by a large number of respondents, but all were selected to a substantial degree. A lack of awareness of events and activities organized by Memorial was the leading barrier to members of the public becoming engaged (39%), and lack of time (30%) and the cost of participating (25%) were also frequently cited.

Many of those who selected "Other" stated specific programs or events that they would like Memorial to offer, such as the lifelong learning program. Other responses mentioned that information about how to engage is not easy to access and that there is a need to enhance general engagement capacity and quality. Some also stated that they would not like to engage with the University because of a negative perception or previous experience.

It is worth noting that some of the selected barriers can

Figure 11. "What is currently preventing you from engaging (more) with the University?"
Lack of awareness was the biggest barrier for participants, but many barriers are experienced to similar degrees.

be directly addressed by Memorial and some may be difficult to circumvent. For example, a lack of awareness of Memorial's engagement activities may be remedied by enhanced advertisement and promotion of events or programs. However, barriers such as a lack of time or living too far away are more difficult to address. In this manner, some of these barriers will be present regardless of Memorial's efforts, but others may be alleviated with targeted public outreach.

4.6. Memorial's engagement activity

Useful and intuitive measures from the previous PEF Evaluation were the ratings that faculty members gave on various items related to Memorial's engagement activity (Krajewski, 2017). To get a similar measure of public ratings, respondents to this survey were asked how much they agreed with various statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). These statements, and the distribution of responses and mean rating for each, are displayed in Figure 12. As evident from this figure, all statements received positive average levels of agreement, with the University's responsibility to engage with the public (Figure 12B) receiving the highest average rating (6.32). Fifty-three percent of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that the public firmly supports this aspect of Memorial's mandate. Additionally, the average agreement with the statement "The work Memorial is doing to engage with the public is valuable," (Figure 12A) was high as well (5.67). This furthers the claim that the public values Memorial's role in engaging with them.

Contrary to the high rating of Memorial's engagement responsibility, ratings of the University's current engagement work (Figure 12C) were considerably lower at an average of 4.72. Although 58% of respondents expressed some level of agreement with this statement, it is clear that there is room for improvement. This gap was expected, and the positive level of agreement indicates that the work Memorial has done is worth building on.

Figure 12. "Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements"
Memorial's responsibility to engage received the highest average agreement and
Memorial's current engagement efforts received the lowest.

Scale
1 (Strongly disagree) - 7 (Strongly agree)

A. "The work Memorial is doing to engage with the public is valuable."

Mean = 5.67

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
2%	1%	3%	10%	13%	37%	28%	5%

B. "Memorial has a responsibility to engage with the public."

Mean = 6.32

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
1%	0%	1%	3%	7%	33%	53%	2%

C. "Memorial is doing a good job engaging with the public."

Mean = 4.72

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
3%	5%	8%	18%	28%	24%	6%	7%

D. "I am likely to engage with Memorial in the future."

Mean = 5.46

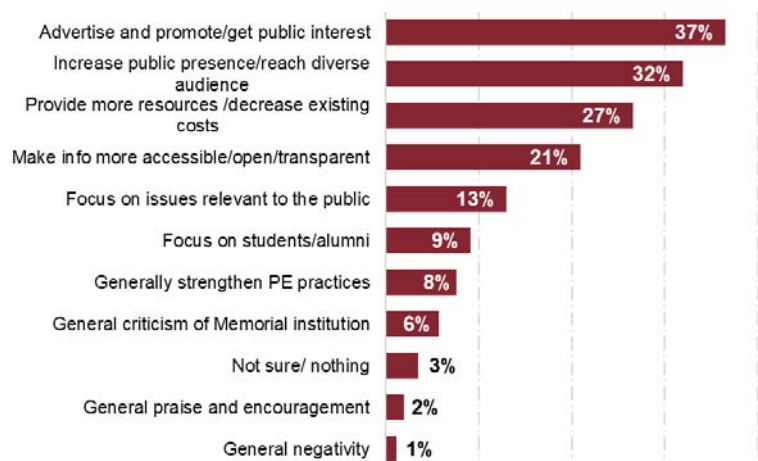| Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
1%	1%	2%	15%	24%	33%	18%	6%

Another noteworthy takeaway from this measure is that the public generally agreed that they would like to engage with Memorial in the future (Figure 12D). This result is in direct contradiction with participants' desire to engage in specific engagement activities, as discussed in section 4.3. This supports the idea that participants were not sufficiently informed of how to respond to that "desired activities" question, and indicates that the public may actually have a reasonably high interest in engaging with the University, contrary to that previous finding.

4.7. Suggestions to improve engagement

To gather respondents' thoughts and opinions about the best way for Memorial to improve its engagement capacity, they were asked to offer their input in an open-ended format. Through inductive thematic analysis, several prominent messages emerged from the data. These themes are portrayed in Figure 13. Although there was no theme that was overwhelmingly prevalent, the top four were especially diverse and complex in the answers they encompassed, so the following sections will present thorough descriptions of them.

Figure 13. What is the single most important thing Memorial can do to improve how it engages with the public? (n=263)
Tactics that involve reaching out to the community and distributing more information were mentioned most often.

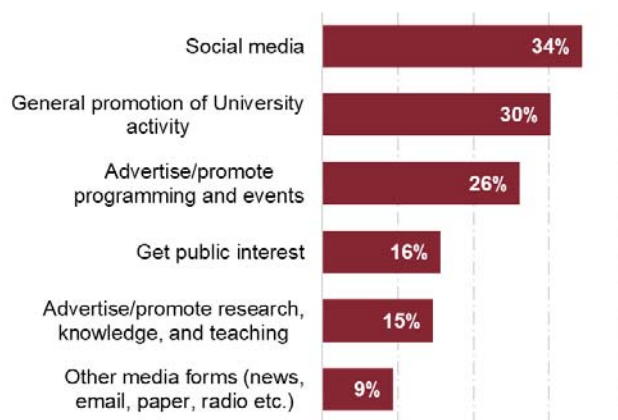|	
Advertise and promote/get public interest	37%
Increase public presence/reach diverse audience	32%
Provide more resources /decrease existing costs	27%
Make info more accessible/open/transparent	21%
Focus on issues relevant to the public	13%
Focus on students/alumni	9%
Generally strengthen PE practices	8%
General criticism of Memorial institution	6%
Not sure/ nothing	3%
General praise and encouragement	2%
General negativity	1%

Note that subtheme percentages reflect the frequency of that subtheme relative to the number of comments within that larger theme (indicated by the sample size in parentheses), not relative to all comments in general. Additionally, some subthemes are broader than others, reflecting the fact that many suggestions offered by respondents were broad and unspecific.

4.7.1. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

This theme, consisting of 37% of responses, included suggestions that Memorial should more adequately reach out to the public with information and generally increase efforts to get the public interested in the activities of Memorial. As shown in Figure 14, some responses suggested expanding specific avenues of communication ("social media" and "other media forms") while others suggested what type of content Memorial should promote. The most prominent subtheme was "social media," including suggestions that Memorial should use more social media platforms and generally increase the amount these platforms are used. Overall, this theme indicated that the public would like more outward communication and promotion from Memorial to get members of the public interested in the University.

Figure 14. Breakdown of "Advertise and promote" responses. (n=96)
Some responses suggested how to promote and others suggested what to promote.

Subtheme	Percentage
Social media	34%
General promotion of University activity	30%
Advertise/promote programming and events	26%
Get public interest	16%
Advertise/promote research, knowledge, and teaching	15%
Other media forms (news, email, paper, radio etc.)	9%

"Advertising and Promotion" Quotes

Highlight interesting things Memorial is responsible for, or a part of.

Demonstrate and celebrate how its research/teaching betters the community in which it exists.

You want reasons for people to want to be seen and known that they are connected to MUN.

Make the public aware of how it can engage with Memorial.

Keep the public informed about what is happening at MUN - make sure the good news stories get out there...

Communicate in a variety of formats on a variety of platforms.

I am an alumna and a former staff member and would love to know more about what MUN is doing to engage with the public. Perhaps include upcoming events in the alumni newsletter?

Focus more on the social events and use social media as a primary tool for engagement.

Consistent public service announcements about events on campus that are or could be open to the public.

4.7.2. INCREASE PUBLIC PRESENCE

Many open-ended responses proposed that Memorial should generally increase their public presence (32%). This included many specific suggestions, as shown in Figure 15. The most common method was to diversify the audience that Memorial

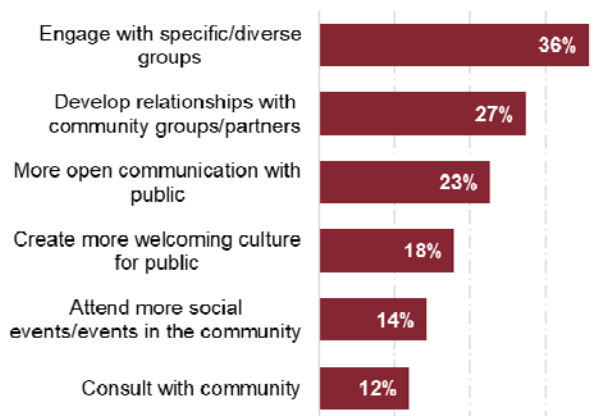**"Increase Public Presence" Quotes**

Do earlier involvement with youth - Junior High perhaps to get them thinking of MUN as an option.

Foster and promote a culture of openness and community.

reaches (36%). These comments mentioned some specific groups that need to be reached by Memorial, such as rural and remote communities, seniors, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal and Indigenous groups. Other ways that Memorial could increase public presence were to develop new and existing relationships with community partners (27%) and provide more open lines of communication with the public (23%). The comments in this overall theme generally suggested that if Memorial can become more publically involved and welcoming to the public, people's desire to engage with the University will grow.

Go off campus, into rural communities, to share expertise that would improve conditions there.

Learn to communicate with those outside the university community.

[...] on the ground roadshows that visit the nooks and crannies of the province.

Listen first then form policy and engagement directives.

Make research activities more engaged with businesses in the province and country.

Host events in and with community partners, i.e. outside the University's walls.

Continue to inform the public that the doors are open and show what is offered.

More work promoting the needs of disabled students, workers, and entrepreneurs.

Seek additional partnerships at the local level

Figure 15. Breakdown of "Increase public presence" responses. (n=84)
Reaching out to specific groups and community members were common suggestions.

Category	%
Engage with specific/diverse groups	36%
Develop relationships with community groups/partners	27%
More open communication with public	23%
Create more welcoming culture for public	18%
Attend more social events/events in the community	14%
Consult with community	12%

4.7.3. PROVIDE MORE RESOURCES

Another recommendation that was commonly written was to offer more events, programs, and other resources to the public (27%). As depicted in Figure 16, a large portion of these comments stated a need for more events hosted by the University and open to the public (39%). Many of these suggestions mentioned specific events they would like to see, while others felt that Memorial should host more events off campus to enhance accessibility. Specifically increasing the number of knowledge dissemination events like public lectures and workshops (20%) was requested by enough people to become a separate subtheme. Other commonly occurring subthemes were to offer more course and program options of interest to the public (16%), general requests for more resources available to the public (16%), and to create more programming specifically for the public (16%).

"Provide More Resources" Quotes

More lectures and gatherings held in the community as opposed to on campus.

Online courses for general public.

Offer adult education programs again and promote public lectures a lot more.

Make resources more readily available.

Better understand how its resources can be helpful to individuals and the community.

I would like to see the Dept. for Lifelong Learning reinstated.

Offer more graduate programs online.

More info, seminars etc. for high school students

Figure 16. Breakdown of "Provide more resources" responses. (n=70)
The most common suggestion was to host more events open to the public.
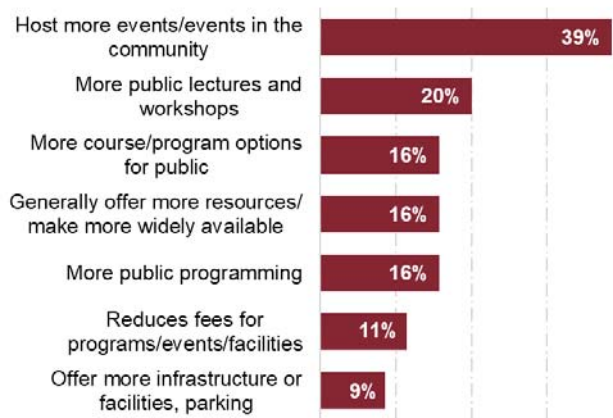
Keep the public informed. Invite them to events and promote the free parking permits when you do.

Offer a series of presentations using university resources to non-urban centers.

Have more tickets available for non-students to seminars, advertise more in advance and have parking options.

Offer more evening and weekend courses, conferences, workshops, etc. and invite the public to attend at a low cost or even free.

4.7.4. MAKE INFO MORE ACCESSIBLE

The fourth most common suggestion for how Memorial can improve public engagement was to make information more accessible to the public (21%). Whereas the "advertise and promote" theme involved wanting Memorial to broadcast information to the public, this theme encapsulates recommendations for the University to make information easier to obtain when the public is looking for it. Shown in Figure 17, many of these responses stated a desire for greater access to the expertise of the University (36%). Additionally, many suggested making the information that is already available more accessible and user-friendly (27%), and also more tailored to specific groups, such as lay audiences and rural communities (24%).

Figure 17. Breakdown of "Make info more accessible" responses. (n=55)
A common suggestion was to enhance the sharing of Memorial's expertise with the public.
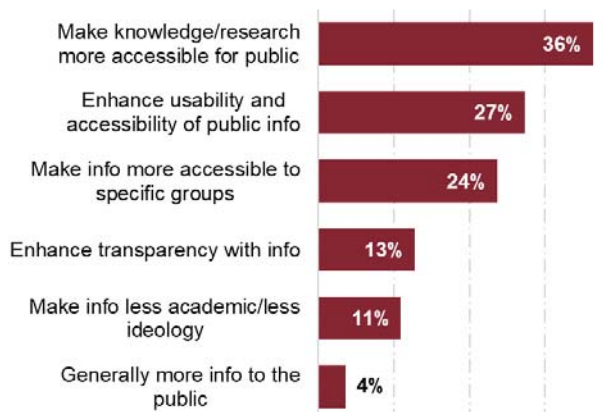
"Make Info More Accessible" Quotes

Keep the lines of communication open and transparent

Friendly, accurate, frequent opportunities to access information and contact.

Do more to offer accessible versions of research, open access.

Create opportunities that draw in the public that are accessible for non- or less-academic folks and children/ youth/ elders.

Continue to be direct and honest with the information shared with the public.

Have an easily accessible and searchable and up-to-date website.

Be open and upfront about any issues that arise.

More openness and public education.

Make the knowledge base of Memorial more accessible to the public.

Needs to be easy to... show someone how they can take previous education and build on it to complete and obtain higher education.

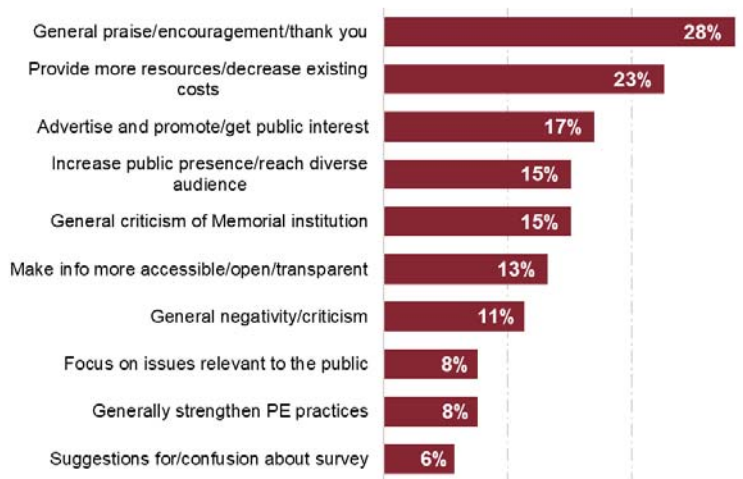Ensure a user-friendly website to access additional information.

4.7.5. OTHER RESPONSES

Aside from the four main themes common across many responses, some other themes emerged. Thirteen percent of respondents mentioned that Memorial should focus more on issues of public concern and further apply its wealth of knowledge in practical ways. Additionally, nine percent of respondents focused on the interests of students or alumni in their responses, possibly due to the high proportion of alumni in the sample. Other responses recommended a general strengthening of public engagement practices and mutual knowledge transmission (8%), or included general comments about the University, be they criticism (6%), praise and encouragement (2%), or general negativity (1%).

Many of the more common themes amongst respondents' suggestions to improve public engagement were present in the additional comments left by participants, as depicted in Figure 18. However, some themes exclusive to this question were general encouragement and appreciation of Memorial's public engagement activities (28%), and confusion about the survey, along with suggestions for how it could be improved (6%).

Figure 18. Additional comments. (n=53)
Many offered praise while other comments provided additional suggestions to improve engagement.

General praise/encouragement/thank you	28%
Provide more resources/decrease existing costs	23%
Advertise and promote/get public interest	17%
Increase public presence/reach diverse audience	15%
General criticism of Memorial institution	15%
Make info more accessible/open/transparent	13%
General negativity/criticism	11%
Focus on issues relevant to the public	8%
Generally strengthen PE practices	8%
Suggestions for/confusion about survey	6%

"Other" Quotes

I would like to see MUN spend some time looking directly at this province and how it can improve it.

Provide students more opportunities to get involved in the community

More involvement in problems with Democracy and transparency in government.

Make sure the offerings add value to the community. Work on viewing the community as a source of knowledge for the university.

Present easy to understand information on social media and news outlets.

Become more inclusive and welcome public input.

Thank you for all the exceptional events and engagement efforts that MUN is enriching the whole province with.

Memorial should be a focal point and leader for public policy issues.

4.8. Subgroup analyses

Although all respondents were members of the public with no current involvement with Memorial, several sub-groups of this sample were distinct enough to warrant investigating. Three of these non-mutually exclusive subgroups include alumni, people who have never been involved with the University, and groups that have historically been marginalized by society, hereinafter referred to as under-served groups. Alumni responses, because of their large representation in the sample, were tested to determine if they differed from the rest of the public responses. The same procedure was conducted with

respondents who selected "no, I never have been" as their level of involvement with Memorial. This group was interesting because they likely represent the largest portion of the public population and they are the people that will need to be reached for public engagement to experience substantial growth. Under-served group responses were explored in depth specifically for the barriers to engagement that they selected, as understanding these barriers will ideally help in facilitating inclusion in future engagement activities. The following sections will describe the significant differences that were found between these groups and the rest of the public. Please refer to Appendix A for the statistics corresponding to each difference, demarcated by superscript numbering.

4.8.1. ALUMNI

Making up 69% of this sample, the views and experiences of alumni had substantial representation in the findings. To determine whether the findings would have been different if a smaller portion of the sample was former Memorial students, alumni responses were compared to those of the rest of the public. Figure 19 depicts some of the differences that were found. Regarding the engagement activities that participants had done, alumni were predictably more likely to have taken a course for credit[1], but less likely to have shared knowledge as a

Figure 19. Differences between alumni and the rest of the public in activities they have done.
Alumni were more likely to have taken a course, but less likely to have shared knowledge or learned about PE.

guest speaker or mentor[2] and less likely to have learnt about public engagement in the past[3]. There was less variation in the activities that alumni would like to do, but they were more likely to want to participate in professional development at Memorial than the rest of the public[4].
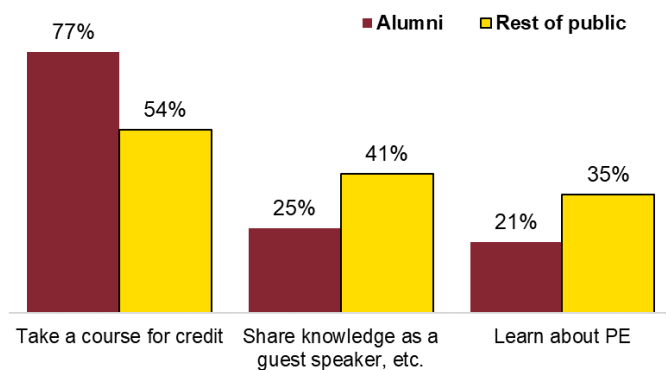
Additionally, alumni were less likely to see the opportunity of contributing their time or knowledge to the University as a motivation to engage[5]. They were more likely to see a lack of interesting engagement opportunities being offered [6] as a barrier, and less likely to feel that engagement would be intimidating[7]. Alumni also expressed lower levels of agreement that they would like to engage with the University in the future[8]. These former students tended to be younger than the rest of the public respondents[9], were more likely to have a bachelor's degree[10] and less likely to have either a college diploma[11] or a doctorate degree[12].

4.8.2. THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN INVOLVED

The analysis of alumni responses came about as a result of the large proportion of alumni responses in the public sample, and was thus unplanned. However, targeting the responses of those who have never been involved with Memorial was a predetermined outcome of interest for this survey. As expected, the responses of this group differed from the rest of the public in many respects. The most prominent contrasts arose in the engagement activities this group has participated in before, as shown in Figure 20. As expected, those who have never been involved with Memorial were less likely to have: helped with research[13]; participated in professional development at the University[14]; taken a course for credit[15];

contributed financially to Memorial[16]; visited a Memorial campus[17]; or attended a Memorial event[18]. Despite these differences in previous engagement experience, this group expressed similar levels of desire to participate in various types of engagement activities in the future. However, they were more likely than the rest of the public sample to want to take a course for credit[19], which may be attributable to the large proportion of alumni (who have taken courses before) in the rest of the public.
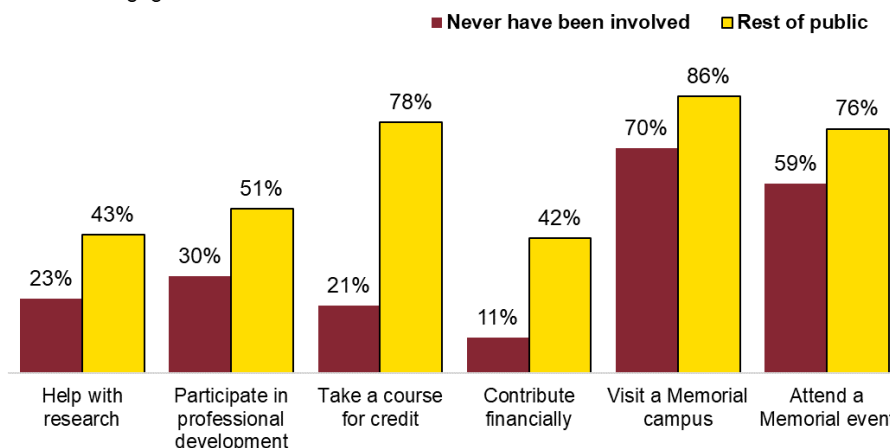
Respondents who have never been involved with Memorial differed in other respects as well. They were less likely to prefer email as a way to receive information from the University[20] and less likely to see receiving updates about Memorial as a motivation to get engaged[21].

Regarding barriers

Figure 20. Differences between those who have never been involved and the rest of the public in activities they have done.
Those who have never been involved were less likely to have done many different engagement activities.

to engaging, they were less likely to report a lack of interesting engagement offerings[22] and more likely to see engagement as intimidating[23]. This group contained a higher proportion of Aboriginal/Indigenous people[24], were less likely to have a bachelor's[25] or master's degree[26], and more likely to have a college diploma[27], vocational training[28], or a maximum education attainment of a high school diploma[29].

4.8.3. BARRIERS FOR UNDER-SERVED GROUPS

The groups that reported specific barriers at different rates than the rest of the public were people with a disability and Aboriginal/Indigenous people. These differences are shown in Figure 21. People living with a disability were more inhibited by feeling like they won't know anyone[30] and by the cost of engaging[31], and they were less likely to state that nothing is preventing them from engaging[32]. People who identified as Aboriginal/Indigenous were more likely to state that they did not have the time to engage[33] and also

Figure 21. Barriers experienced more by under-served groups than the rest of the public
Cost was a prevalent barrier for both groups, experienced significantly more by people with a disability and Aboriginal/Indigenous people than the rest of the public.
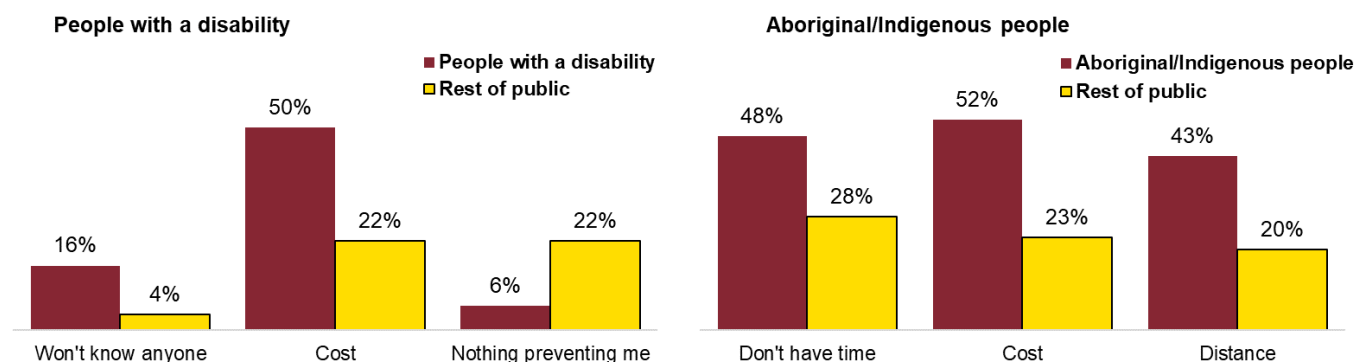
reported distance[34] and cost[35] as substantial barriers to engagement. It should be noted that 12 of the 23 respondents who identified as Aboriginal /Indigenous currently live in western Newfoundland, possibly contributing to the perceived barrier of distance.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This survey, open to all members of the public, provides a snapshot of the capacity of Memorial's public engagement activities to facilitate meaningful engagement with the public. Current engagement levels, although relatively high for some activities, can be improved. Likewise, the public's perception of Memorial's responsibility to engage the public is favourable, but the fulfillment of this responsibility is less positively rated. It is thus clear that although the University has made many steps since introducing the PEF in 2012, there is work yet to be done.

As of yet, the development of the engagement process has been led internally, but the public, as an integral beneficiary and benefactor of engagement, has much to offer in this regard. From this survey, many of their suggestions for improving public engagement recommend an improved flow of information both to and from the University. This may take the form of improved advertisement and promotion of activities, enhanced accessibility of public information, or the cultivation of a more welcoming culture within Memorial. These recommendations, if implemented, would go a long way toward reducing the main barrier to engagement experienced by the public, a general lack of awareness of Memorial's events and activities. Future efforts to involve the public in University activities should account for this need for communication.

Any effort to expand the public engagement efforts of the University would be in vain if there was no interest or desire from the public. This is, fortunately, not the case, as most respondents expressed agreement that they would like to engage with Memorial in the future. It is also evident that Memorial has a sufficient network of people who can provide information about the University, indicating that the desire and means are there to truly improve the mutual contributions and benefits between Memorial University and the public. Internal efforts to make these improvements should consider that the main motivation people have for engaging with Memorial is to learn something for personal interest, so focusing on activities that appeal to this motivation would be an effective first step.

Going forward, this survey tool would be beneficial to implement on a routine basis to continuously measure and assess public engagement at Memorial. Some improvements could be made by clarifying certain questions and reaching a larger and more diverse cross-section of the NL population, especially among those who have never been involved with the University. Additionally, deeper data collection methods like interviews or focus groups could be utilized to gather more detailed information, personal accounts, and expert opinions from the public on Memorial's current and potential engagement capacity. Ultimately, this is the beginning of a process of gathering public perceptions that, if expanded and regularized, will enrich Memorial's duty-bound connection with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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APPENDIX A: STATISTICAL VALUES FOR SUBGROUP ANALYSES

Table 1: Statistical values for differences between alumni responses and the rest of the public.

Question	Response	Alumni %	Rest of public %	$\chi^2_{(df)}$	p	Fisher's adjusted p	φ
[1]Activities – Have done	Take a course for credit	77%	54%	$17.687_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.230
[2]Activities – Have done	Share knowledge as a guest speaker, etc.	25%	41%	$7.976_{(1)}$	0.005		0.154
[3]Activities – Have done	Learn about PE at Memorial	21%	35%	$7.206_{(1)}$	0.007		0.147
[4]Activities- Want to do	Participate in PD	34%	22%	$4.628_{(1)}$	0.031		0.118
[5]Motivations	Contribute time/ knowledge to Memorial	21%	37%	$9.230_{(1)}$	0.002		0.166
[6]Barriers	Nothing offered of interest	18%	4%	$11.663_{(1)}$	0.001		0.187
[7]Barriers	Seems intimidating	6%	14%	$4.582_{(1)}$	0.032		0.117
[10]Education attainment	Bachelor's degree	53%	14%	$45.870_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.370
[11]Education attainment	College diploma	6%	16%	$8.896_{(1)}$	0.003		0.163
[12]Education attainment	Doctorate degree	2%	9%	$7.719_{(1)}$		0.014	0.152

Statement/Question	Alumni average (SD)	Rest of public average (SD)	t	df	p	Cohen's d
[8]"I am likely to engage with Memorial in the future."	5.37(1.23)	5.67(1.07)	2.027	312	0.044	0.252
[9]Age group	3.863 (1.44) 45-54 years old	4.426 (1.48) 55-64 years old	3.242	326	0.001	0.388

Table 2: Statistical values for differences between responses of those that have never been involved and the rest of the public.

Question	Response	"Never have been involved" %	Rest of public %	$\chi^2_{(df)}$	p	Fisher's adjusted p	φ
[13]Activities – Have done	Help with research	23%	43%	$6.701_{(1)}$	0.010		0.141
[14]Activities – Have done	Participate in PD	30%	51%	$7.550_{(1)}$	0.006		0.150
[15]Activities – Have done	Take a course for credit	21%	78%	$62.360_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.430
[16]Activities – Have done	Contribute financially	11%	42%	$16.951_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.225
[17]Activities – Have done	Visit a Memorial campus	70%	86%	$7.553_{(1)}$	0.006		0.150
[18]Activities – Have done	Attend a Memorial event	59%	76%	$5.942_{(1)}$	0.015		0.133
[19]Activities- Want to do	Take a course for credit	38%	16%	$13.031_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.197
[20]Preferred contact methods	Email	60%	81%	$10.680_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.179
[21]Motivations	Get updates about Memorial	17%	37%	$7.264_{(1)}$	0.007		0.147
[22]Barriers	Nothing offered of interest	2%	15%	$6.009_{(1)}$	0.014		0.134
[23]Barriers	Seems intimidating	28%	6%	$24.967_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.273
[24]Under-served group status	Aboriginal/ Indigenous	17%	5%	$8.818_{(1)}$		0.008	0.162
[25]Education attainment	Bachelor's degree	15%	46%	$15.085_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.213
[26]Education attainment	Master's Degree	15%	33%	$5.895_{(1)}$	0.015		0.133

[27]Education attainment	College Diploma	28%	6%	$25.412_{(1)}$	<0.0005		0.277
[28]Education attainment	Vocational training	13%	1%	$25.579_{(1)}$		<0.0005	0.278
[29]Education attainment	High school certificate	13%	1%	$18.316_{(1)}$		0.001	0.235

Table 3: Statistical values for differences between barriers experienced by under-served groups and the rest of the public.

Under-served group	Barrier	Under-served group %	Rest of public %	$\chi^2_{(df)}$	p	Fisher's adjusted p	φ
[30]People with a disability	Won't know anyone	16%	4%	$9.156_{(1)}$		0.012	0.165
[31]People with a disability	Cost	50%	22%	$11.700_{(1)}$	0.001		0.187
[32]People with a disability	Nothing is preventing me	6%	22%	$4.591_{(1)}$	0.032		0.117
[33]Aboriginal/ Indigenous people	Don't have time	48%	28%	$3.961_{(1)}$	0.047		0.109
[34]Aboriginal/ Indigenous people	Cost	52%	23%	$9.653_{(1)}$	0.002		0.170
[35]Aboriginal/ Indigenous people	Distance	43%	20%	$7.075_{(1)}$		0.015	0.145