

# CONESTOGA LISTENS,

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

## ANNUAL STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY Fall 2023/Winter 2024 Report Back to Students

October 18 to November 5, 2023

13,299 students participated in the survey

31.1% Response Rate

February 27 to March 13, 2024

4,645 students participated in the survey

10.4% Response Rate

### Marketing & Recruitment (Incoming Students Only)



Among domestic students, **OCAS (49%)** and the **Conestoga website (42%)** were the primary channels for learning about Conestoga. For international students, **social media services (48%)** and **international agents (47%)** emerged as the most frequently cited sources.



**59%** of incoming students had at least one other acceptance offer to consider.



**Almost three-quarters (72%)** of students reported that they were **more-than-somewhat committed** to attending Conestoga prior to receiving their offer of admission.



When students were asked about the **single most important reason for attending** Conestoga, three common themes emerged:

- 1 Programming / Curriculum
- 2 Reputation and Word-of-Mouth Recommendations
- 3 Campus Facilities/Services/Environment

### Actions

*The marketing and recruitment team has made several enhancements to the Conestoga virtual tour, including an Anishinaabemowin translation, audio options, expanded campus imagery, and points of interest. Our commitment to improving the website user experience remains a top priority, alongside ensuring compliance with AODA and accessibility standards. Additionally, we've introduced a new feature: prospective students can now chat directly with current students through the Unibuddy plug-in. Since November 2023, we've observed impressive engagement including 455 signups, over 350,000 unique visitors, 516 conversations and 3,606 messages sent.*

### Orientation Actions

*To improve the overall student journey, Conestoga is implementing several key initiatives. First, we're conducting Point-of-Service Surveys, gathering feedback from new students immediately after their online academic sessions and campus welcome days. Second, we're restructuring CON101 based on student and stakeholder feedback. The revamped course will focus on student development concepts and integrate relevant information from various departments to support the first-year student experience. Additionally, we launched a Directional Signage Campaign at the Doon campus, creating floor decals to guide new students efficiently. To further support students, we're increasing volunteer engagement capacity and Alumni Transition Ambassador Support through additional student-staff positions. Lastly, in collaboration with various departments we're rolling out an Enhanced Pre-Arrival E-Campaign to demystify essential orientation processes.*

### Orientation (Incoming Students Only)



**69%** of incoming students attended their **Program Orientation Session - 90%** were satisfied.



Students were most interested in learning more about the following services through live webinars: **Student Health and Wellness (46%)**, **Career Services / Talent Hub (41%)**, and **International Services (36%)**.



**55%** of incoming students attended the **Campus Welcome Event - 88%** were satisfied.



**Less than 3%** expressed dissatisfaction with **any of the orientation services** offered.



About **7 of 10** students responded positively about their experience in preparation for the Fall term.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiative



**80%** of students believe understanding generative AI is important for their success and future careers.



**56%** of students at Conestoga have used generative AI at some point in their academic or school work.



**61%** of students believe their professors are knowledgeable about generative AI.

## Actions

Over the past year, Conestoga's Teaching and Learning department has offered two micro-credentials and numerous workshops for faculty. These initiatives promote the effective, efficient, and ethical use of generative AI and explore the opportunities and challenges that AI presents to teaching, learning, and assessment.

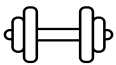
## Athletics & Recreation (A&R)



Approximately **half (49%)** of students attending Doon or Cambridge campuses have used the Recreation Centre.



**70%** of students reported they participate in **90 minutes or less** of fitness, recreation, or sports per week.



The top-3 barriers to accessing the Student Recreation Centre were:

- 1 I don't have the time (53%)
- 2 I am unfamiliar with the programs offered (35%)
- 3 I am uncomfortable using the facility (17%)

## Actions

The Athletics and Recreation team are working hard to improve awareness of services and programs through additional social media resources and hallway promotion strategies. We will be hiring a satellite campus recreation coordinator (to circulate between satellite campuses) to educate students of healthy living behaviours and practices, in addition to facilitating recreation and sporting events and opportunities for Conestoga students. Additionally, we will develop female-only programs and spaces to increase the comfort that female students have in accessing the Student Rec Centre.

- Increased promotion of A&R services and programs

## Study Abroad



**52%** of Conestoga students report they are very interested or extremely interested in study abroad opportunities. Only 13% report they are not interested.



The country domestic students were most interested in was the **United Kingdom (52%)** whereas international students were most interested in the **United States (69%)**.



"**Work abroad**" opportunities had the highest level of interest from students while "virtual exchanges" was the least popular option.



By far the most cited barrier from participating in a study abroad experience was the **cost (60%)**. Approximately 1/3 of students also reported delaying graduation and needing to work as barriers.



Email was the top-choice to learn about study abroad opportunities at Conestoga.

## Actions

After the pandemic, it was essential for us to know what direction we need to take with respect to global initiatives and study abroad programming and knowing what students want is key to understanding how we should move forward. These results have clearly shown us that students are ready to get moving again! We will be focusing on building capacity to increase study abroad programming and opportunities for Conestoga students.

## Student Demographics



**23%** indicated having some **type of disability** – mental/emotional health being the most frequently mentioned.



**16%** indicated a sexual orientation other than heterosexual or straight (**57%**), or prefer not to answer (**28%**).



**Hinduism (34%)** and **Christianity (24%)** are the most common **religious affiliations**.



Approximately **1%** of respondents identified as a gender other than man (**55%**), women (**40%**) or prefer not to answer (**4%**).

## Housing & Ancillary



**62%** of students reported living in an **off-campus rental unit**, with **60%** reporting the rental property offers **2-3 bedrooms** for rent.



**58%** indicated satisfaction with their current living situation.



**Average** monthly cost of **rent** for students not living with spouse/partners or dependents was **\$555**, with an additional **\$155** for utilities.



**7** of **10 domestic** students reported living within **50km** of their primary campus prior to attending



**65%** indicated using **Public Transit** as their most common method of transit to commute to campus.



**Average commute** to campus across all modes of transportation was **42 minutes**.



**19%** indicated they came to campus **5 days** a week or more and **65%** came **3-4 days**.

## Housing & Ancillary Action

*Conestoga is a key part of downtown revitalization projects in several communities including Brantford, Kitchener, Waterloo and Guelph. Conestoga has bought or leased seven new residences over the last three years to increase accommodation options for both our domestic and international students.*

## Information Technology



Use of **campus Wi-Fi** has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, with roughly **27%** of students connecting only one device, and another **57%** reporting they connect two.



Outside of class time, approximately **62%** of students reported using a **campus computer** during a typical week.



**47%** reported accessing IT technical support over the last year.



**47%** of respondents reported accessing IT technical support over the last year. **31%** of respondents preferred interacting, in-person, with technical support, at campus IT Service Desk locations.



Of those who had used IT technical support, **74%** said they **received the solution they needed**, and average satisfaction ratings for each IT offering range from **73-82%**



Well over half of respondents (**62%**) would be interested in **Security Awareness training**, if made available to them online and **52%** of respondents would like a **remote access** option for special labs.

IT  
Priorities

- 1 Outdoor WiFi Coverage
- 2 Security Awareness Training
- 3 Availability of After-Hours IT Support

## Actions

*The Information Technology & Systems (IT&S) department is actively enhancing outdoor Wi-Fi coverage across our existing campuses. Additionally, for new campuses, outdoor Wi-Fi coverage is now an integral part of the IT requirement planning process, ensuring seamless connectivity as these campuses open. Given that Wi-Fi network usage has returned to pre-pandemic levels, IT&S remains committed to implementing measures that enhance internet reliability and security. Our goal is to provide uninterrupted connectivity for all students and staff across all campuses and sites. Survey respondents have expressed interest in Security Awareness training. Our team is currently in discussions with our cyber security training service provider to explore available options for rolling out this training to students. The availability of remotely accessing lab software is being expanded through Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), which allows students to access program required software both on-site and remotely as needed. Our teams will continue to work with faculty to introduce more virtual lab options through AVD. Student feedback has highlighted the need for increased After-Hours IT support. To address this, IT&S is currently reviewing evening and weekend class schedules. Our goal is to align in-person IT Service Desk support at our campuses with the highest volumes of student activity during these times. Presently, extended coverage is available at IT Service Desk locations at the Doon, DTK, and Milton Parkhill campuses.*

## Student Awards



Most respondents (79%) had heard about the General Awards Application while only 40% had submitted a form during the Fall term.



78% of students indicated they would complete the General Awards Application if it was available before the start of term.



Top 3 themes from comments or suggestions about the form or awards process:

1. Communication related issues (not hearing back, not receiving status updates or knowing about timelines).
2. General positive comments about the form or their experience using the form.
3. Wanting details on award criteria or eligibility

## Actions

Where possible, Student Financial Services (SFS) is working toward implementing user-experience improvements for the General Awards Application that were suggested by respondents. SFS is working to improve the searchability of awards and their criteria on the website and will explore options to improve communication to students regarding awards timelines and processing status.

## Suggestions for Improvement

Students were asked: "Finally, how could Conestoga improve student services, facilities and/or activities to better meet your needs" The top themes and sample comments are included below:

### 1 Housing/Medical/Childcare

"Conestoga can improve student services by providing affordable housing in or around the school environment."

"Better support for accommodation"

"Housing is a big issue with students, so providing options or collaborating with landlords or property developers to create options specifically for students at the start of every session."

"Housing, special programs and daycare for students coming to study with their children"

"It would be great if we get services on insurance in order to know how exactly works and explain about emergency situations like accidents what we should do next which hospital should we go to, and when we should go to the clinic or pharmacy. As an international student it difficult to understand this process"

### 2 Positive Feedback

"Conestoga is very creative and does its job effectively. With these efforts, students feel at home. Keep up the great work."

"As far as the services and facilities are concerned, I think Conestoga has done a great job. Providing and helping students with everything within their reach."

"Thank you Conestoga for the remarkable and invaluable support for students encouraging them, supporting them for enhancing their student journey."

### 3 Parking/Transportation

"By reducing the monthly bus fees or semester bus fee."

"Making parking more affordable."

"Shuttle buses around cities and between campus."

"Add more buses the whole week till 11 pm. The college works till 11 pm so it is important to have buses till that time"

"Improve parking payment time options. Just too short for a long lecture requiring me to pay for a full day, when I'm just there for 3 hours."

### 4 Communication / Awareness of Services & Events

"Better websites that have more direct links to services I'm looking for. Currently I feel like I have to dig to find support emails and phone numbers and the generic info on websites is usually unhelpful."

"By giving more information about their services through various sources."

"I would suggest increasing the visibility and promotion of student services through various channels, such as social media, email newsletters, posters, flyers to create more awareness."

"Better response time would always be the priority for the things to be improved."

## Actions

Students' suggestions for improvement have been shared with the appropriate service areas and college departments for in-depth review and response planning.