

LOCAL BRILLIANCE: THE ATTRACTION- RETENTION OF THE UBC OKANAGAN
CAMPUS GRADUATES IN KELOWNA

by

Emma Marie Talbott

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2010

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The College of Graduate Studies

(Interdisciplinary Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Okanagan)

January 2012

© Emma Marie Talbott, 2012

Abstract

One of the many challenges faced by recent graduates is finding a job. The problem becomes increasingly difficult in small and medium sized cities (cities possessing a population of fewer than 700,000 people). This study focuses on the challenges and barriers students who have recently graduated face in both one of Canada's most expensive housing markets and a city where there is an aging demographic. In addition, this study explores possible incentives for keeping the younger educated demographic in Kelowna following graduation.

Data for this study were obtained from questionnaire surveys administered to both final-year students (those that graduated in June 2011 from the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus) and all past students (alumni that graduated from the UBC Okanagan Campus from 2006 to 2010) in which 48 final-year students and 42 alumni participated. The questionnaire surveys focussed on the respondents' desire to either remain in or leave Kelowna following graduation and what factors encouraged these decisions. Supplementary data were acquired from 10 structured key informant interviews in Kelowna which assessed the aging population of the city and programs aimed to assist recent graduates or youth.

Results from the case study indicate the majority of graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus do leave Kelowna after graduation. Graduates had a variety of reasons for leaving Kelowna, and the majority cited a severe lack of jobs within their chosen career field. Respondents sought opportunities in other cities to gain workplace experience, well-paid jobs and have the affordable housing that Kelowna does not possess.

This study expands on existing literature by emphasizing the importance of young adults in a growing city and the need for a population mix. This case study reveals that students

who have recently graduated experience a multitude of factors when determining where to reside and work following graduation. Recommendations from this study suggest a need for increased social assistance in career services offered by the UBC Okanagan Campus, more affordable housing, and the need for a mixed population and more culturally diverse community.

Preface

This research was conducted with approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia on May 31, 2011 (UBC BREB Number H10-03447).

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Preface	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Acknowledgements	x
Dedication	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	2
1.3 The Structure of the Thesis	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review	5
2.1 Overview	5
2.2 Universities and Their Impact on Economic and Regional Development	5
2.2.1 Internal University Programs	5
2.2.2 University-to-Work Transition	6
2.3 Importance of Knowledge Workers and Their Impact on Regional Economic Development	8
2.3.1 Importance of Occupation and Human Capital	8
2.3.2 Importance of Geographic Location for Knowledge Workers	10
2.4 Students and Youth as Important Factors in Economic Regional Development	12
2.4.1 Importance of Student/Youth Demographics	12
2.4.2 Student/Community Engagement	15
2.5 Student Exodus in Kelowna Due to Unaffordable Cost of Living	17
2.5.1 Local News Media	17
2.5.2 Reports	18
2.6 Policy	19
2.6.1 Attraction and Retention	19

2.6.2 Retention.....	22
2.7 Summary	24
2.8 Current Gaps in the Literature and Avenues for Further Research	27
Chapter 3: Methodology	28
3.1 Overview	28
3.2 Study Area.....	29
3.3 Sample.....	39
3.4 Data Collection	39
3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey	39
3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews.....	43
3.5 Questionnaire Design.....	44
3.6 Limitations	44
3.7 Summary	45
Chapter 4: Should I Stay or Should I Go?.....	47
4.1 Overview	47
4.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Questionnaire Respondents	48
4.2.1 Final-Year Student Respondents.....	50
4.2.2 Alumni Respondents	51
4.3 Final-Year Students Decide to Leave	54
4.3.1 Overview	54
4.3.2 The Key Issues: Employment, Housing and Living	55
4.3.3 Is Relocation an Option?	61
4.3.4 Summary.....	62
4.4 Employment Sends Alumni Packing, Initially... ..	63
4.4.1 Overview	63
4.4.2 Barriers and Challenges--A Mirror Image: Employment, Housing and Living Cost.....	64
4.4.3 Is Relocation an Option?	68
4.5 Summary	69
Chapter 5: Recommendations for Reducing Student Retention Barriers	71
5.1 Overview	71

5.2 Recent Graduates: Necessary for Kelowna's Economic Development	72
5.3 The City of Kelowna: An Attractive Place	74
5.4 The Greatest Challenges: Employment, Services and Attitude	78
5.5 Current Service Knowledge	82
5.5.1 Services: Are They Known?	83
5.5.2 Key Informants: Knowledge of Services	84
5.6 Recommendations.....	87
5.6.1 The UBC Okanagan Campus Students	87
5.6.2 Key Informants	91
5.7 Summary	94
Chapter 6: Conclusion	97
6.1 Overview	97
6.2 Research Findings.....	98
6.3 Limitations of the Study.....	103
6.4 Avenues for Further Research	104
Bibliography.....	106
Appendices	113
Appendix A: Map of the City of Kelowna.....	113
Appendix B: Contact Letter to Key Informants	114
Appendix C: Consent Letter for Key Informants	116
Appendix D: Structured Interview for Key Informants.....	118
Appendix E: Questionnaire-Survey to Final-Year Students.....	120
Appendix F: Questionnaire-Survey for Alumni.....	132

List of Tables

Table 1. City of Kelowna Share of Population by Age Group 1991 to 2006.....	30
Table 2. Employment by Industry for BC Development Regions--Thompson Okanagan	38
Table 3. Barriers and Challenges Preventing Final-Year Students from Remaining in Kelowna after Graduation	56
Table 4. Labour Force by Occupation--2006.....	61
Table 5. Barriers and Challenges Preventing Alumni from Remaining in Kelowna after Graduation.....	65
Table 6. Importance of Factors Contributing to the Attractiveness of Kelowna: Final-Year Students	75
Table 7. Importance of Factors Contributing to the Attractiveness of Kelowna: Alumni	77

List of Figures

Figure 1. Principles of Local Engagement	16
Figure 2. 2006 Census--Age and Sex Population Comparisons	31
Figure 3. Proportion of the Population Aged 65 Years and Over in Census Metropolitan Areas in 2001 and 2006	32
Figure 4. Proportion of Population Aged in 5-Year Breaks, and 65 Years and Above	33
Figure 5. Population Growth Projections 2008 to 2036	34
Figure 6. Impact of Growing Cities in Determining Economic Development	35
Figure 7. Population Growth (%) by Age Group, Central Okanagan LHA (2011 to 2016) ...	47
Figure 8. Student Demographics--Where are the Respondents From?	49
Figure 9. Ages of Final-Year Student Participants	51
Figure 10. Ages of Alumni Participants	52
Figure 11. Current Location of Alumni Respondents	53
Figure 12. Alumni Income in 2010	54
Figure 13. Breakdown of Graduating School of Final-Year Students	58
Figure 14. Breakdown of Graduating School of Alumni	67
Figure 15. Kelowna City Sector Map.....	113

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Carlos Teixeira for his guidance through different stages of this master thesis. Dr. Shirley Chau and Dr. Susan Wells, thank you for your input, suggestions and positivity through the course work and thesis writing. Thank you to Alumni Relations who played an integral role in the research. Brenda Tournier, Erica Triggs and everyone that in Alumni that helped- thank you very much for your hard work and dedication. I would like to thank Dr. Sebastian Darchen and Dr. Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay who provided me with much appreciated information and expertise. In addition, I would like to thank all the students and key informants who participated in this study. You were instrumental in the completion of the thesis and I just hope I did your responses justice!

A special thank you to my office buddies, who let me rant, provided me with suggestions and kept me going. You provided the laughs, support and random food items and I thank you. Thank you to my boyfriend; you kept me grounded, provided me with more coffees than I can count and made me smile. I am very grateful to my editor Angela Dew who despite living half a world away and having to make sense of my made-up words, still managed to edit and return the thesis in two days. Finally, thank you to my mum and sister for all of their support through both my undergraduate and graduate degrees and their ability to make me laugh even during the tough times.

Dedication

To my family and friends, we did it.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

The city of Kelowna is a fast-growing municipality in British Columbia that has experienced rapid development in manufacturing, technology, health care, tourism and post-secondary education sectors (Central Okanagan Development Commission, 2010). Along with the development of its business sectors, Kelowna is continuing to attract retired seniors and its population is thus rapidly aging. According to the 2006 Census, the percentage of seniors¹ rose to 19% of Kelowna's population, rendering it the oldest Census Metropolitan Area in Canada (BC Stats, 2011).

The establishment of the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus (the UBC Okanagan Campus) in 2005 produced a demographic shift that saw a 15.5% increase in the age group consisting of 15-24 year old individuals in 2006 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009). The UBC Okanagan Campus had a total campus population of 7,004 in 2010-- roughly double the 3,516 from when the campus was first opened in 2005 (Ridge, 2010). The university was not only established to entice students to the region, but also act to as the foundation for a changing demographic in Kelowna. However, many students who graduate from the university with a bachelor's degree do not choose to remain in the city and this creates problems in times of economic development.

Despite the rapid growth of the municipality, Kelowna experiences increasing problems in terms of its continuous economic development and sustainability. Kelowna has demographic dynamics that create severe problems in reduced economic development stemming from a combination of both youth exodus and an aging community. Despite the

¹Seniors are defined as those individuals aged 65 and over for the purpose of this paper.

creation of the UBC Okanagan Campus, there is still a severe youth exodus creating a domino effect on Kelowna's population and economic growth (Plant, 2011).

Population projections predict the 18-24 age group will decrease in subsequent years and only return to current growth levels in the year 2032 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009). During this same time period, the population of individuals over the age of 65 will double from 32,000 in 2008, to approximately 63,000 by 2032 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009). Kelowna cannot afford to lose recent graduates if economic development is desired.

Existing research regarding student retention conducted in Montreal and Ottawa revealed that criteria related to the quality of place² does not have a major impact on the attraction or retention of graduated students in comparison to opportunities for employment or a students' social network (Darchen and Tremblay, 2010). Results such as these have implications for the types of policies created in order to retain youth after graduation. One of the issues in Kelowna currently is housing affordability. The median price for a single detached house in city of Kelowna was \$338,000 in September 2010 while the median household income was only \$57,500 (Demographia, 2011). Similarly high rental rates and low rental vacancies could compound the problem of recent graduated students deciding to remain in or leave Kelowna.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the decisions made by degree recipients from the UBC Okanagan Campus regarding whether to remain in or leave Kelowna following

² In this context, 'quality' is referring to the amenities, low crime rate, amount of green-space, proximity to the city centre and other preferences, in comparison to essentials, that individuals consider when relocating.

graduation. This study identifies retention strategies, and the social and economic forces that influence why students who graduate with a bachelor's degree from the UBC Okanagan Campus choose to leave or remain in Kelowna. This research focuses on the need to retain students in Kelowna after graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus as an instrumental component of the city's continued economic growth.

It is imperative to identify what university graduates value when deciding whether to leave or remain in Kelowna so local municipal governments can create retention policy strategies.

Three research questions guide this study to understand the underlying reasons for student exodus after university graduation:

1. What are the forces behind students' decisions to leave Kelowna after obtaining an undergraduate degree at the UBC Okanagan Campus?
2. What are the implications of this exodus of students moving away from the city of Kelowna?
3. What policy strategies can be made to attract and retain those students who have graduated to stay in Kelowna?

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 provides a review and discussions of the relevant literature pertaining to youth retention, economic development impact, university-to-work transition, student exodus, and policy. This chapter provides contextual information to the subsequent chapters and conceptualizes the main issues of student exodus. Chapter 3 reviews this study's methodology including study area, sampling strategies and data collection. Data collection procedures are explained

details of the questionnaire-survey design given the interview method used. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the results of the research and answer the key research questions of this study.

Chapter 4 explains the experiences of both final-year students and alumni starting with their decisions to leave or remain in Kelowna following graduation. Challenges for both final-year students and alumni are identified and discussed in addition to the respondents' relocation potential. Chapter 5 is dedicated to recommendations for reducing barriers to youth retention following graduation. This chapter discusses the views of key informants, the importance of the UBC Okanagan Campus in Kelowna's economic development and the recommendations suggested by final-year students, alumni and key informants. Solutions are sought for problems of employment, housing and graduate services. The final chapter (Chapter 6) contains a summary of the research findings and limitations of the study. This chapter also concludes with avenues for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to identify major trends within the literature dealing with population geography, particularly those focussing on student retention and potential economic impact issues. The chapter begins with the discussion of the impact of a university on economic and regional development, then develops ideas about the importance of knowledge workers, student and youth impact, student exodus, and finally concludes with a discussion of policy development.

Peer-reviewed literature grounds the issue of student exodus within a larger national and international context emphasizing the need for further research on this subject. Studies conducted in larger cities, both within Canada and the United States, have been beneficial in furthering our understanding that education and demographics have on larger metropolises. Local reports by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as well as the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission have been instrumentally informative in identifying Kelowna as a mid-sized city with high housing prices.

2.2 Universities and Their Impact on Economic and Regional Development

2.2.1 Internal University Programs

The contribution and effects that universities have on the local and regional economic dynamic is greater than has been previously established (Bramwell & Wolfe, 2008). Bramwell and Wolfe (2008) completed a case study of the University of Waterloo, Ontario, as it possessed Co-op and Entrepreneur education programs, and an innovative intellectual Property Policy. Interviews were conducted with local businesses and students to identify their views on the impact of the university on the local economy. Interviews concluded that

about half the firms in the region have formal and informal links with the university, while others report they only have tangential or non-existent ties to the institution. Many firms that possessed strong ties to the university hired students, with some hiring only students.

Societal benefits increase with the presence of university/industry interaction. These benefits are created from the transfer of knowledge by the students who applied their education to research, or the problems and issues of surrounding communities. For example, a student studying civil engineering could then apply their knowledge to study problems regarding their city's transit patterns. The central finding was the inestimable benefits of combining a world-class academic reputation for teaching and research with an 'entrepreneurial attitude of mind' amongst faculty and students and the University of Waterloo. Local high-tech companies reported that their business is in its current location with close proximity to the university because it wanted to be close to the innovative and active environment of students.

2.2.2 University-to-Work Transition

The university-to-work transition for recent graduates is difficult (Le Maistre & Paré, 2004) and universities play an integral role in the readiness, both educational and social, of students to find work. Le Maistre and Paré (2004) conducted interviews with students in their last year of university, new professionals in their first year of practice, and experienced practitioners who supervised both these groups. There is an identified need for both university training (in terms of disciplinary knowledge and crisis training) and on-the-job training (in order to use practical knowledge) to move more smoothly from the theoretical 'book knowledge' to more applicable knowledge as they transition from the institution to the

workplace. This difficult transition can be made easier by the relationship and collaboration between the university and community.

A two-year graduate follow-up survey from 1993 baccalaureate graduates from British Columbia's public universities found that 63.0% of graduates who made the transition to the labour market indicated that the transition was either 'somewhat easy' or 'very easy' (University Presidents' Council of British Columbia, 1996). Graduates who had a relatively easy transition into the labour market are more likely to have pursued further education than graduates who experienced a relatively difficult transition to the labour market. Regarding employment, over one-third (35.7%) of BC system graduates had a permanent job prior to graduating with a baccalaureate degree from a BC Public University (University Presidents' Council of British Columbia, 1996). Most graduates are able to settle into the workforce within two years from the time they graduate although this can be a very slow transition.

A study completed by MacDonald (2007) examined the role of career portfolios in new graduate hiring within Atlantic Canada. Students from the University of Atlantic Canada's programs in Business Administration, Education, Human Nutrition and Nursing took part in a questionnaire designed specifically to capture the opinions of student career readiness, the transition from school-to-work, and individual portfolio development. Employers were asked to comment on recruitment and retention of new graduates within their business. Results from the mixed-methods questionnaire confirmed the value of portfolios as a tool to enhance both self-discovery and self-awareness; they can also be a useful tool to organize the learning that students experience throughout their university career. In addition, companies assert that career portfolios can be used as a recruitment tool in the hiring of new graduates. This tool is effective in enhancing the relationship between not only students and potential employers,

but also between the university and the community. This link between the university and community must be fostered in order to continue the collaboration in terms of hiring and the retention of students. Although difficult to make mandatory for all faculties at the UBC Okanagan Campus, this tool, or a similar adaption, would be helpful in student career choices after graduation.

A study of Halifax, Nova Scotia, attributed the successful attraction and retention of a young population to favourable social dynamics, e.g., a strong music scene, good universities, and positive collaborative social networks (Grant & Kronstal, 2010). Partnerships were created to promote growth in the region and marketing programs were initiated identifying Halifax as a ‘smart city’ from the 2006 Census that established the city as the largest population of post-secondary educated individuals in Canada. Interviews conducted with workers, employers and businesses determined they were attracted to Halifax because of its natural beauty, laid-back lifestyle, the size of the city, low housing cost and efficient public transportation (Grant and Kronstal, 2010).

2.3 Importance of Knowledge Workers and Their Impact on Regional Economic Development

2.3.1 Importance of Occupation and Human Capital

By targeting occupations and industries, economic development is more productive (Markusen, 2004). A study completed by Markusen (2004), analyzes why and how economic development planners might target occupations and industries when developing economic strategy. A qualitative analysis from Minneapolis was completed by interviewing a subject who was first trained as a nurse then changed careers to become a writer. Statistical data was obtained for Minneapolis as well as Pittsburgh, Albuquerque, Cleveland, Dallas, San

Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York. From the results of these studies, a cross-over potential was established i.e., many employees in the field of performing arts possess skills not related to acting e.g., scenery design, construction, electrical skills, and management. The results of this study indicate that planners could complement industrial targeting by identifying and targeting occupations that appear to: be highly skilled, show growth potential, cluster spatially, cross-fertilize with other sectors, encourage entrepreneurship and, finally, match the potential of the area workforce.

As discussed, career opportunities can have profound effects on the economic development of a city (Markusen, 2004). Brown, Newbold and Beckstead (2010) further examine education in relation to the growth pace of a city in relation to human capital. Statistical analysis from the 1996 and 2001 Canadian Censuses shows the importance of migratory flows and growth of human capital. An accounting framework for degree holders employed a number of equations that helped determine the impact of those with a degree, including the effects of migration. Results from this study indicate that rates of degree attainment increase with the size of the city. A gradient in human capital exists in both urban and rural locations regardless of age. The highest degree of attainment existed in large urban settings, and the lowest attainment occurred in rural areas. In 1996 the working-age population that held a degree was 13.2% while in 2001 it rose to 15.3% (Brown, Newbold, & Beckstead, 2010). The loss of degree holders from small- and medium-sized urban areas suggest that these communities are unable to retain these individuals as the attraction of a larger city is too appealing. The author cautions that one of the limitations of this study are that these results are difficult to interpret as some of these cities might be university towns and therefore do not specialize the retention of students and intend for them to leave.

2.3.2 Importance of Geographic Location for Knowledge Workers

The importance of knowledge workers and their impact on an economy is a modern concept addressing human and population geography. Stolarick, Florida and Musante (2005) conducted a study in Montreal focussing on the attraction and mobility of the creative class and its impact on economic development. Stolarick, Florida and Musante (2005) conducted their study by using focus groups and interviews to collect qualitative data from individuals in education, business, arts and government sectors of the Montreal Region (the Census Metropolitan Area of Montreal). A second method of this study utilized a comparative analysis of Montreal compared to 24 of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. Results of the interviews indicate that language and geographic connections do not completely represent the international identity of the Montreal region. Results indicates that Montreal's capacity for creative connectivity can also be attributed to the high ranking Montreal obtained in multiple indexes. Montreal proved very high in tolerance measures (e.g., tolerant of homosexuals, visible minorities, bohemian culture and cultural mosaic components). Montreal was found to be an international competitor when it came to percentage of work force in the creative class. A shift from a traditional view of global competition has occurred; global competition is no longer simply the trade of goods and services and flow of capital, but also the competition for people. The attraction, retention and mobility of the creative class are now important factors for many cities that wish to advance their economic development.

Brown and Męczyński (2009) continue the discussion of the creative class by addressing questions related to the location choices of those individuals possessing creative knowledge conducted studies in Birmingham, United Kingdom and Poznan, Poland. A two-fold

approach governs the study: the first goal determined the importance of ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ factors in the decision to relocate. This author defines ‘hard factors’ such as the availability of jobs, higher wages or the affordability of housing while ‘soft factors’ include the ‘look and feel’ of the city, family and friends. The authors looked at factors such as job availability but also recognized and accounted for the ‘look and feel’ of the city itself. The authors provided insight into the quality of place and which they addressed in the following research questions: What are the main factors that shape the location decisions of creative knowledge workers in these two cities? How do these cities currently compare in terms of ‘quality of place’ indicators and how might this affect their potential to attract and retain the ‘creative class?’ What are the implications of ‘quality of place’ for the future competitiveness of post-industrial European cities? The authors sought to fill the gap in the literature that deals with empirical research to determine why individuals, rather than firms, decide to locate in specific cities or the extent to which ‘quality of place’ affects the ability of cities to attract and retain talented individuals.

Brown and Męczyński (2009) compare the importance of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors in the location choices of the creative and knowledge-intensive workers in the two countries. Indicators compare the ‘quality of place’ in both cities and show how each affects the attraction and retention of the ‘creative classes are assessed in both Birmingham and Poznan. Results indicate that Poznan has above the national average of ‘human talent’ (defined as individuals holding a university degree or higher) while Birmingham struggles to meet the national average of education levels. Poznan’s population might not attract the mobile ‘creative class’ whilst Birmingham has a diverse population with an extensive transit

network; Birmingham is also perceived as the more accepting of the two cities in terms of religion, ethnic background and lifestyle.

Darchen and Tremblay (2010) conducted one of the most influential studies in regards to graduate student retention in Canadian cities. They hypothesize that knowledge workers would be more attracted to urban environments as they have greater potential in terms of creativity. A mixed methodology approach uses quantitative and qualitative material to examine the influence of criteria related to quality of place. This approach also looks at career opportunities concerning the mobility of students in science and technology who will soon be part of the professional category of knowledge workers. Closed-ended questionnaires provided quantitative data for statistical analysis that ranked the quality of factors. The results of this research suggest that the quality of place is not as important a factor as career opportunities. A major distinction in this study between Montreal and Ottawa is that Ottawa attracts and retains more students than Montreal for reasons such as better employment opportunities. The research also suggests that Montreal acts as a magnet for students in Quebec; the science and technology programs in addition to the work opportunities in those fields were a major attraction for students and graduates.

2.4 Students and Youth as Important Factors in Economic Regional Development

2.4.1 Importance of Student/Youth Demographics

The importance of youth and their impact on economic regional development is a topic that has not been greatly covered by current literature; however, career impact has been studied in depth. Caputo (2000) conducted a study on behalf of Health Canada designed to gather information on Canadian communities in respect to youth. The research questions in this study asked: (1) What are the most important concerns currently being expressed by

young people in your community? (2) How does your community identify the concerns of its young people? (3) Do young people from all sectors of the youth population, including marginal and high risk youth, have an opportunity to participate? and (4) What would be the best way to involve young people in your community? The methodology adopted a three-step process consisting of a literature review, an in-depth telephone interview with knowledgeable individuals in 30 communities across Canada including municipal officers and youth serving agencies, and finally, site visits to 15 communities with interviews and focus sessions with youth (Caputo, 2000). Findings from both the quantitative data and qualitative responses showed that young people found it difficult to have their concerns heard and substantial frustration was felt by youth because of a lack of progress regarding youth issues. Most participants identified that local, interagency and political level involvement is needed in order to sustain a youth population within the city.

Non-peer reviewed articles and media sources were essential in this study in order to understand the problems Kelowna experiences regarding its aging demographic and youth exodus. In terms of issues concerning youth exodus in Kelowna, a local report by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (2010a) details the strategic plan to be adopted for the year 2010. This report acknowledges many of the issues that face Kelowna in terms of demographics, and attempts to establish a basic plan to rectify the youth exodus. The regional district outlines the lack of population mix and recognizes that Kelowna's fertility rate, and thus growth rate, could be compromised due to the aging nature of Kelowna. Over 19% of Kelowna's population is already over age 65 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010b). An immediate concern exists because by 2019 Kelowna's death rate is predicted to greatly exceed birth rate. In British Columbia alone,

695,000 students will graduate by 2018; however at the same time close to one million workers will retire (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010b). One of the solutions identified by the Economic Development Commission is to change its focus on whom it actively seeks to attract. The Region should focus its efforts on attracting entrepreneurs and a skilled workforce from across the country and from around the world with the aim of permanency rather than temporary residence. The largest demographic decline in the Kelowna Census Metropolitan Area between 1991 and 2006 was the 25 to 34 age group (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010b). In response to the aging demographic, the commission recommends that connections and relationships be established and strengthened between School District 23 and the UBC Okanagan Campus. In addition, partnerships should be identified and created between local industries and the university not only for potential funding and expanded research development, but also to encourage the exchange of knowledge and possible development of ideas.

In an article by a local online media news source, Moore (2010) reiterates the Okanagan's current aging demographic and identifies this as a major issue. A report presented to the Kelowna City Council by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, shows that the Okanagan is experiencing no net population gain and has the lowest fertility rate in the country. Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission representative Laurel Douglas states the current demographic problems: "As we all know, people can move freely around the world now, but in the Okanagan right now, we are not attracting that many people of working age" (Moore, 2010). In order to combat this issue of the aging demographic, Douglas explains the need to recruit those businesses and individuals in careers such as "scientists, engineers, professors, poets, novelists, artists, entertainers and

designers, people who generate wealth, not through manufacturing but through idea creation” (Moore, 2010). By focussing on the creative sector as a sub-set of the population which rates quality of life over cost of living, Douglas hopes to encourage younger individuals and families to the region and by doing so increase the fertility rate and economic development. This demographic shift could become the catalyst for social change and economic growth. New graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus fit the age demographic that the Economic Development Commission hopes to attract to Kelowna (Moore, 2010) and as a result further action should be taken to retain students, rather than focus on the attraction of young professionals and youth.

2.4.2 Student/Community Engagement

The relationship between students and the community is an integral factor in creating a foundation for student retention. A relational component is important in order for the younger demographic to feel a part of and included in a city. See (2010) addresses problems with living an urban lifestyle: diverse social conditions, environmental concerns, health care, and education problems all exist in this geographical area. See identifies potential ‘pull’ forces the city has upon prospective residents and questions whether there is a general solution capable of contributing toward alleviating some of the aforementioned diverse problems. As a youth activist, See (2010) desires a solution that can be implemented in order to excite and entice youth into living in city areas.

Locally Engaged Education Institutions is a theoretical construct developed by See (2010) created in order for his four principles to succeed. Principle 1 asserts that in order for educational institutions to have an effect on cities, they must be established in urban areas. Principle 2 identifies that research and education missions of academic institutions should

align with local and community goals. Principle 3 seeks to align research and education missions with local community goals through solving ‘global problems manifested locally.’ Finally, Principle 4 encourages youthful enthusiasm to be channelled towards local problem solving. See (2010) uses a literature review to create these solutions, to promote students to participate and take an active role in leadership.

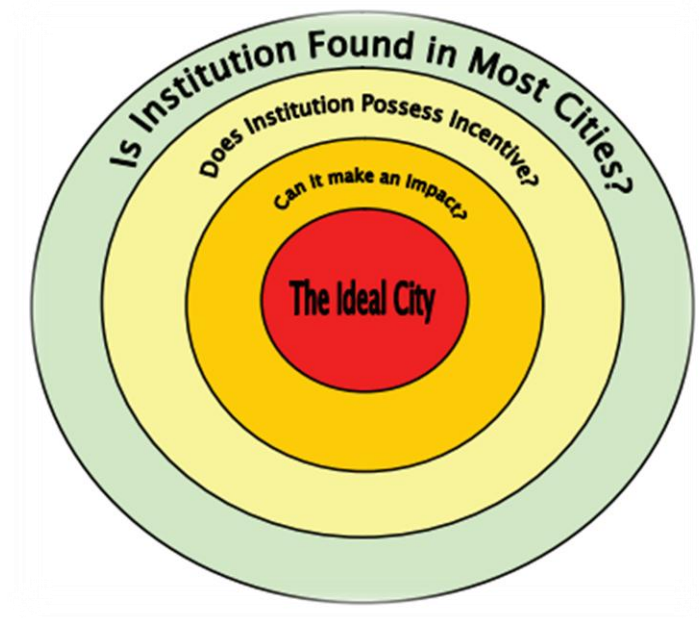


Figure 1. Principles of Local Engagement

(Source: See 2010, 548)

See (2010) presents three questions, defined as the principles of local engagement, which need to be answered in order of progression from the outer circle inward as each outer circle acts as the foundation for the inner circles. See (2010) explains the meaning of the questions in Figure 1:

The first question, “Is Institution Found in Most Cities?” asks whether the institution is found in most cities around the world. Without being present in a large number of cities, the selected institution cannot act as a global solution. The second question,

“Does Institution Possess Incentive?” asks whether the institution can align its core mission to create incentives for being locally engaged. Without aligned incentives, the involvement of the institution in its urban environment cannot be sustained or widespread. The last question, “Can it make an Impact?” examines the existence of mechanisms that allow these institutions to effectively change its urban environment (p.548).

The importance of local institutions in building an ‘ideal city’ can help develop solutions by engaging entrepreneurship and the talent of educated youth (See, 2010).

2.5 Student Exodus in Kelowna Due to Unaffordable Cost of Living

2.5.1 Local News Media

As explained previously, non-peer reviewed articles have been instrumental in obtaining literature written at a provincial, national and international level, and for our understanding of the issues surrounding youth exodus at a municipal level. A newspaper article written by Gerding (2009) addresses the youth exodus from Kelowna and attributes this to the high cost of living, including high rental prices. Gerding (2009) recognizes Kelowna is one of the most expensive markets in Canada and the increasing aging population has a detrimental effect in terms of retaining students and youth. Gerding (2009) comments:

Being a playground for the rich and famous, and gold-plated pensioners lucky enough to be safe from seeing their retirement savings eroded, is all great, but it doesn’t help much for younger people in Kelowna. Maybe that’s why they are moving away because there is little opportunity to get ahead in their hometown (Gerding, 2009, p.28).

In another local article, Michaels (2010), presents statistics that rank Kelowna the 38th most expensive place to live in the world. Multiple factors contributed to this rank including the high price of housing and rent.

In addition to Kelowna's high cost of living, there is a lack of desirable jobs in Kelowna (Squire, 2007). This deficient job market could be another reason why graduate students may opt to leave Kelowna following university graduation. Squire (2007) asserts that more careers in the technology industry and specialized services are needed in order to entice individuals to relocate to or remain in Kelowna.

2.5.2 Reports

A report by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2011) complements the media sources by providing the statistical evidence for the selected media reports. The report by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2011) provides data and statistics on Kelowna's rental market including: rental availability, and housing and rental costs. This report is enhanced with secondary rental market information, providing a more comprehensive overview of the housing market for the benefit of a variety of housing market participants. Results conclude that Kelowna is still a very unaffordable city to live in given the variables addressed in the report. In 2009, in the core area of Kelowna the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$920 a month; in Rutland, on the periphery of the core of Kelowna, the cost of the same type of apartment rental unit costs \$836 a month (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011). Despite a slight growth in vacancy rates, Kelowna still maintains one of the lowest rates in Canada. In addition, the majority of vacant properties are located in the core of Kelowna-- a much more expensive area in which to both buy and rent. The report details that Kelowna's apartment vacancy rate increased to 5.5% in October 2011

from 3.5% from October the previous year (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011). Slower employment growth, combined with strong competition from investor-owned rental units and home ownership markets, has been the cause of the increase in vacancy rates.

2.6 Policy

2.6.1 Attraction and Retention

Policies concerned with the attraction and retention of students have already been established in areas of Canada and the United States due to concern over the youth exodus. Expertise, income and innovation that recent graduate students have the potential to bring to a community, are now being sought after.

Canadian Policy Research Network (2008) produced a summit report derived from the findings of the Provincial Youth Summit which took place in November 2008. Project goals, from which the report is based, included identifying ways to encourage young people to remain in Newfoundland and Labrador; additional goals focussed on creating ways to attract those individuals that left the province and are considering returning, as well as attracting newcomers.

A youth advisory panel included 19 youth from across the province that provided advice on issues and themes to consider when developing a strategy for attraction and retention of youth (Canadian Policy Research Network, 2008). Core values that participants held were identified and addressed in terms of trade-offs related to policy outcomes. Thirteen dialogue sessions took place across Canada in order to identify those individuals that had left Newfoundland and Labrador and relocated. The exodus equated to a loss in economic development and prosperity with the collapse of the fishery being the primary catalyst in 1990 and 2000 (Canadian Policy Research Network, 2008). In subsequent years, the exodus

of the general population, particularly the youth population, escalated and continues to be high.

Results from many months of dialogue and participation between the research council, youth, and previous inhabitants of the province, found a number of recommendations that were forwarded to the provincial and federal governments. The summit affirmed the following needed to occur in order to attract and retain youth in Newfoundland and Labrador: affordable education, good quality jobs, economic development that is sustainable over the long-term, building a diversified economy so that there is no dependence on any one resource, better access to services and a ‘comfortable wage.’ Although it is acknowledged that continuous efforts need to be made by both the population and the government, these key factors have begun a process that will hopefully ensure the province’s success in future years.

The recognition that youth play a key role in the Canadian economy has been identified by the government who in turn have created its own strategies on a national level to combat student exodus. The Government of Canada (2001) produced an innovation strategy that focussed on investing in people, knowledge and opportunity from a macro to a micro level. Regarding Canada’s innovation in a global context, significant investments have been made from the government, academia and the private sector.

At the World Economic Forum, Canada’s future economic prospects indicate it is significantly more promising than current performances indicate. The rapid increase in innovation over the past few years can be attributed to this conclusion. In addition, given the aging population, it is imperative to recruit post-secondary students in order to fill the gap in the labour market that will be created in the next 10 years due to retirements (Government of Canada, 2001). Innovative opportunities in smaller communities can have a significant

impact as these smaller communities possess knowledge and entrepreneurial resources. More employees are needed in the area of research for Canada to be globally innovative and competitive; however, more jobs must be created to satisfy the need for innovation at a time when a large population is retiring.

Mease (2008) presents on behalf of the city of Roanoke, Virginia, United States, seven steps for attracting and retaining the city's 'creative class.' In the presentation, Mease (2008) acknowledges the impact of losing youth and young professionals in the city of Roanoke, and gives examples of qualitative stories of people returning to the city. He also notes the influence of the media, the political issues of retention, the employers taking notice of this trend, and the students recognizing the efforts of the city and its subsequent decisions. The creation of a 'young professionals' group for youth was fundamental in the retention process and resulted in a member of the 'young professionals' being elected to Roanoke's City Council. Programs such as reverse job fairs and regular panel discussions in relation to youth attraction and retention, allow this age group to have significant input into policies and strategies. The city developed innovative strategies and implemented creative policies in order to attract and retain young professionals and was identified as one of the most innovative regions. The city of Roanoke is continuing to develop and emerge as one of the nation's leading cities in terms of student attraction and retention. Roanoke is striving to become carbon-neutral by the year 2030 by increasing the spirit of tolerance and art in the region by developing YEA! Youth Experiencing Amenities (Pedigo, 2010).

2.6.2 Retention

The retention of individuals in a community is the initial step before policies on attraction can be developed. A concrete foundation is needed for the retention of individuals before the attraction of a new population is to be considered.

In an article detailing the prevention of a skilled university graduate exodus, Hartman (2010) focuses on the brain drain issue currently plaguing Pennsylvania. The state currently loses educated, technical and skilled individuals after students graduate from university. The central problem defined by the author is there are not enough jobs in Pennsylvania to retain the students that graduate from university.

This paper includes statistical data analysis and case studies that determine where the educated individuals relocate to after graduation. Results suggest that the state needs to find effective ways for its graduates to stay, which include associating academic programs, with industries to guarantee job creation and working with university career services. Hartman (2010) discusses the importance of internships that may help colleges attract and keep young, skilled individuals. Internships as well as co-operative partnerships established between the university and community are currently being established to help solve this problem.

The author suggests that the state needs to develop ideas to retain students after graduation and currently encourages graduate students to stay in Pennsylvania by promoting working with the university upon graduation and providing career services that link academic programs with local industries.

A similar study was conducted in Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (2009). However, in comparison to the city of Roanoke, Milwaukee has already established a 'young professional' group, plans for youth retention and had successes of the previously

developed programs aiming to retain youth. The City developed a ‘young professionals’ program which has grown to become the largest in the United States and has established an annual national conference.

In terms of goals, due to the rapid growth of the retention programs, Milwaukee has become home to the largest number of ‘best companies to work for’ (Gunn, 2008) per capita in the nation and also ranks third in concentration of flexible employers. In terms of community engagement, the city currently ranks seventh in the United States for volunteerism. In terms of regional image, Milwaukee ranks in Forbes’ top ten in three categories: best cities for young professionals, best places to make a living and best place to raise a family. In the seventh year of the city’s redevelopment program to attract and retain youth, the program has over 6,000 members including individuals, businesses and university chapters. The continued growth of Milwaukee’s retention and attraction program has been the catalyst for other cities to base their own programs on. The initiatives Milwaukee undertook in order to retain students have had a positive result and the City’s goal of student and youth retention has been met. As programs continue to expand, the City’s strategy may eventually include attraction methods; however, a successful retention strategy currently exists.

The University of Michigan launched a program to help retain students in Michigan upon completion of their undergraduate degree. New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan awards three-year, \$450,000 grant to harness talent and economic potential of foreign-born students at Michigan's colleges and universities (Rhoads, 2011). With the state of Michigan having more than 23,000 international students, the benefit of retaining them is a contribution of nearly \$600 million annually to the local economy (Rhoads, 2011). The

\$450,000 grant is set to be spent on marketing the region to international students from the moment of first contact to graduation, recruiting employers to hire international students, navigating immigration barriers and developing an ongoing presence and relationships with participating universities, international students, and related international organizations (Rhoads, 2011).

Michigan understands the benefit of retaining recent graduates; funding is given to programs in the effort to keep students in Michigan was an initiative developed in 2011 with the expectation of harnessing talent and retaining it within the region. This program is intended help continue economic growth in the region in addition to the recently trained students.

2.7 Summary

The literature provides minimal understanding of the forces behind the decision of students to leave Kelowna following graduation, and the implications of this exodus on regional economic development.

Non peer-reviewed literature was fundamental in this study, and demonstrated the necessity for research on mid-sized cities. Peer-reviewed literature was much broader in scope and addressed tangential issues, mainly within the United States and internationally.

Five major themes emerged during the review of the literature. First and foremost, universities have a considerable impact on economic regional development. The contribution that universities has on the local economic region is more than first thought, with programs such as cooperatives and portfolios (MacDonald, 2007) contributing to a beneficial relationship between institutions and industry (Bramwell & Wolfe, 2008). Inestimable benefits arise from university-industry interaction. It is recognized that the university-to-

work transition can be viewed as difficult and an emphasis on the need for students to experience a smooth transition from theoretical ‘book knowledge’ to applicable and practical knowledge is required (Le Maistre & Paré, 2004). Despite this finding, a study conducted by the University President’s Council of British Columbia (1996) found that 63% of graduates indicated the transition into the labour market from university was either ‘somewhat easy’ or ‘very easy.’ However, this high percentage could be reflective of the positive condition of the labour market at the time of the study. In the case of Kelowna, an increase in university participation in the community and its consequential positive impact on the regional economy is a relationship that must be fostered. Le Maistre & Paré (2004) and MacDonald (2007) suggest that student exodus is caused by the lack of jobs in the large metropolises studied.

The second major theme is the importance of knowledge workers and their impact on regional economic development. Researchers acknowledge there is a positive correlation between the percentage of degree attainment and human capital within a Canadian urban city (Brown, Newbold & Beckstead 2010; Markusen 2004; Stolarick, Florida & Musante 2005). By targeting specific occupations and industries, economic development has the potential to be more productive. If it does become possible to attract knowledge workers a second question that arises is how to aid in their decision to relocate (Brown and Męczyński 2009; Darchen & Tremblay 2010). The attraction to larger urban environments is a considerable ‘pull’ factor for knowledge workers; in order for Kelowna to attract this knowledge class the city has to develop significant ‘pull’ factors as it is not a large urban centre.

Third, students and youth are important factors in economic development. Caputo (2000) identified the importance of youth in guiding municipal and provincial policies. Kelowna’s

own Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (2010a) and Moore (2010) acknowledge the shifting demographic and population increase of those over the age of 65. Recognizing this, attraction efforts have been redirected towards attracting entrepreneurs and skilled workers, with the aim towards permanency rather than temporary residence. In addition, collaboration between School District 23 and the UBC Okanagan Campus has been strengthened as have partnerships between local industry and the university.

Canadian graduate 'brain drain' is problematic as students not only leave their graduating city but occasionally leave the country to seek careers. See (2010) addresses problems with living an urban lifestyle: diverse social, environmental, health care, and education problems all exist in this geographic area. See (2010) identifies the potential 'pull' forces that the city has upon prospective residents and questions whether there is a general solution capable of alleviating some of the aforementioned problems.

A fourth theme derived from the literature exposes the possibility that student exodus in Kelowna could be attributed to unaffordable cost of living and the lack of desirable jobs (Gerding 2009; Squire 2007). Kelowna is ranked the 41st most expensive place to live in the world and therefore has extremely high rental and housing costs (Demographia, 2011; Michaels 2010; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2011). Combined with a low housing vacancy rate--3% in October 2009 and 0.3% the year before--graduate students are unable to afford to live in Kelowna following graduation.

The fifth and final theme obtained from the literature is that policies are being established in areas in which youth exodus is presenting a problem. 'Brain drain' is a major problem in cities where not enough jobs exist (Hartman, 2010). The Canadian Policy Research Network (2008) identified the importance of youth in guiding municipal and

provincial policies. Both the cities of Roanoke, Virginia and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, both in the United States, have successfully developed an attraction and retention strategy for their graduates (Mease, 2008; Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, 2009). These different models were developed with the participation and input of youth in the respective cities and these programs and initiatives have benefited both cities.

2.8 Current Gaps in the Literature and Avenues for Further Research

Major gaps currently exist concerning the impact of youth in the area of economic development. An additional gap in the present literature concerns the lack of studies conducted on small-to mid-sized cities. This study aims to produce a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes of youth towards living in Kelowna for the long-term. Until now, statistics have provided the only evidence demonstrating Kelowna's youth exodus.

Research on graduate student exodus requires further study due to substantial gaps in current Canadian literature. Research is significantly lacking on the economic development impact on small to mid-sized cities. Kelowna in particular has an aging population with more people retiring from the workforce each year in addition to the exodus of university graduates, economic development and growth could decline. This study will extend our current understanding of issues related to youth exodus and retention strategies. Special attention will be paid to understand the reasons why graduates are leaving and will consequently try to establish retention strategies.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the research design of this study including the procedures and instruments used in the collection of the data. The main objective of this exploratory research is to understand the underlying reasons for students' decisions to either remain in or leave Kelowna after graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Data for this study was collected between May 2011 and September 2011 through 10 key informants, 48 final-year students³ and 42 alumni⁴.

What students decide to do and where they choose to live after graduation in Kelowna are unstudied topics that could help economic development and city planning. The study of student exodus in Kelowna is significant for several reasons. First, this study will help the City of Kelowna and the Economic Development Commission identify possible incentives to keep a younger demographic residing in Kelowna following post-secondary graduation. Second, this study will help determine how to nurture and expand Kelowna's regional economic development by understanding the potential workforce currently residing in the city having completed their education locally. Third, researchers have often studied similar effects on larger cities (Canadian Policy Research Network, 2008; Darchen and Tremblay, 2010; Pratt, 2008); however, the impact felt amongst mid-sized cities has not been a focus.

³For the purpose of this study, final-year students are defined as any student that graduated from the UBC Okanagan Campus in June 2011. This takes into account all students that may have taken more than the traditional four years to complete their undergraduate degree including those on a Co-op term, Go-Global overseas education, and individuals having taken a semester off.

⁴alumni are defined as a graduate and a previous student from an institution. In this particular context, an Alumnus from the UBC Okanagan Campus is someone that has graduated from any faculty during the years 2006-2010.

In order to create successful retention strategies it is imperative for local municipal governments to identify what graduate students value when deciding whether to leave or remain in Kelowna. Three research questions guide this study in an effort to understand the underlying reasons for student exodus after university graduation: (1) What are the forces behind students' decisions to leave Kelowna after obtaining an undergraduate degree at the UBC Okanagan Campus? (2) What are the implications of this exodus of students moving away from the city of Kelowna? (3) What policy strategies can be made to attract and retain those graduated students in Kelowna?

3.2 Study Area

The study area for this research project is the city of Kelowna. This was chosen for three reasons: (a) the city of Kelowna has experienced an increasing student population since the establishment of the UBC Okanagan Campus in 2005 wherein the population of students climbed from 3,516 to 7,004 from 2005 to 2010 (Ridge, 2010); (b) the city of Kelowna is currently the oldest Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in Canada with seniors over the age of 65 accounting for 19% of the population (BC Stats, 2011); and (c) given the current population projections of the city, there is a major concern as to the continuation of economic development in the region (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010b). The study population for this research project is restricted to past⁵ and present students attending the UBC Okanagan Campus.

The city of Kelowna has experienced tremendous population growth in the past two decades. From 1991 to 2006, Kelowna's population grew from 75,950 to 106,705 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009). Despite this overall growth,

⁵ Past students consist of students already graduated from the classes of 2006 to 2010.

numerous age groups experienced a decline. Between 1991 and 2006, the population share of those aged 0 to 14 decreased by a combined 2.7% emphasizing Kelowna's declining fertility rate (Table 1).

Table 1. City of Kelowna Share of Population by Age Group 1991 to 2006

	1991	1996	2001	2006	Change 1991 to 2006
Total Population	75,950	89,445	98,288	106,705	
0 to 4 years	5.9%	5.7%	5.0%	4.4%	-1.5%
5 to 14 years	12.2%	12.5%	12.0%	11.0%	-1.2%
15 to 24 years	12.7%	13.0%	12.8%	13.5%	0.8%
25 to 34 years	14.6%	14.1%	11.8%	11.1%	-3.5%
35 to 44 years	11.4%	15.1%	15.2%	13.6%	2.2%
45 to 54	10.8%	12.1%	14.0%	15.0%	4.2%
55 to 64	10.3%	9.1%	9.9%	11.9%	1.6%
65 years and over	19.1%	18.4%	19.1%	19.4%	0.3%

(Source: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009)

In addition, the percentage of young professionals and recent graduates aged 25 to 34 years decreased substantially (3.5%) demonstrating the declining youth population. The study area for this research was restricted to the boundaries of the city of Kelowna (see Appendix A for a map defining the boundaries city of Kelowna). The broader geographic area defined by the city of Kelowna encompasses the larger area of impact graduates could potentially have in regional economic development.

The following Figure 2 shows the population pyramids of both Canada and Kelowna; Canada is denoted by the red line and Kelowna by the blue shaded area. The population pyramid for the city of Kelowna is continuing to diverge from the national pyramid, with two

noticeable differences. First, at approximately 13%, the City of Kelowna has a much smaller percentage of individuals aged between 20 and 40 years; second, Kelowna has 19% of the population over the age of 65--a much larger percentage of people than Canada's national average at 14% (Sustainability Reporting Program, 2004).

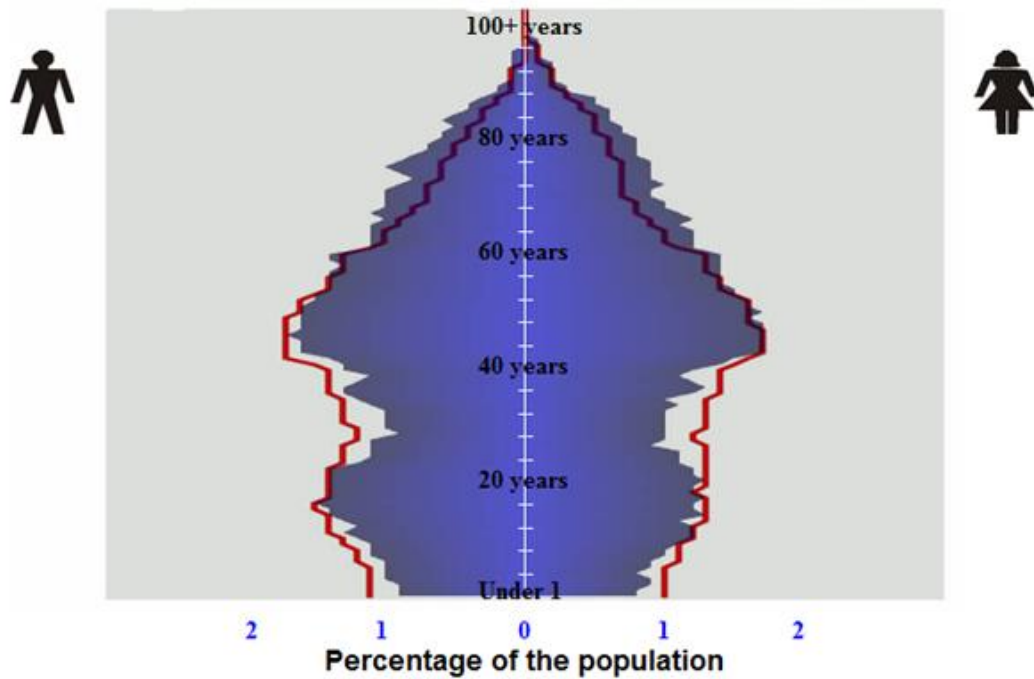


Figure 2. 2006 Census--Age and Sex Population Comparisons

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006)

According to the last Canadian Census (2006), the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Kelowna increased from 2001 to 2006 and follows a national trend in which the baby-boomers are retiring and fertility rates are declining (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010a). In 2001, 18.5% of Kelowna's CMA population was above the age of 65; however, this increased in 2006 to 19% (Figure 3).

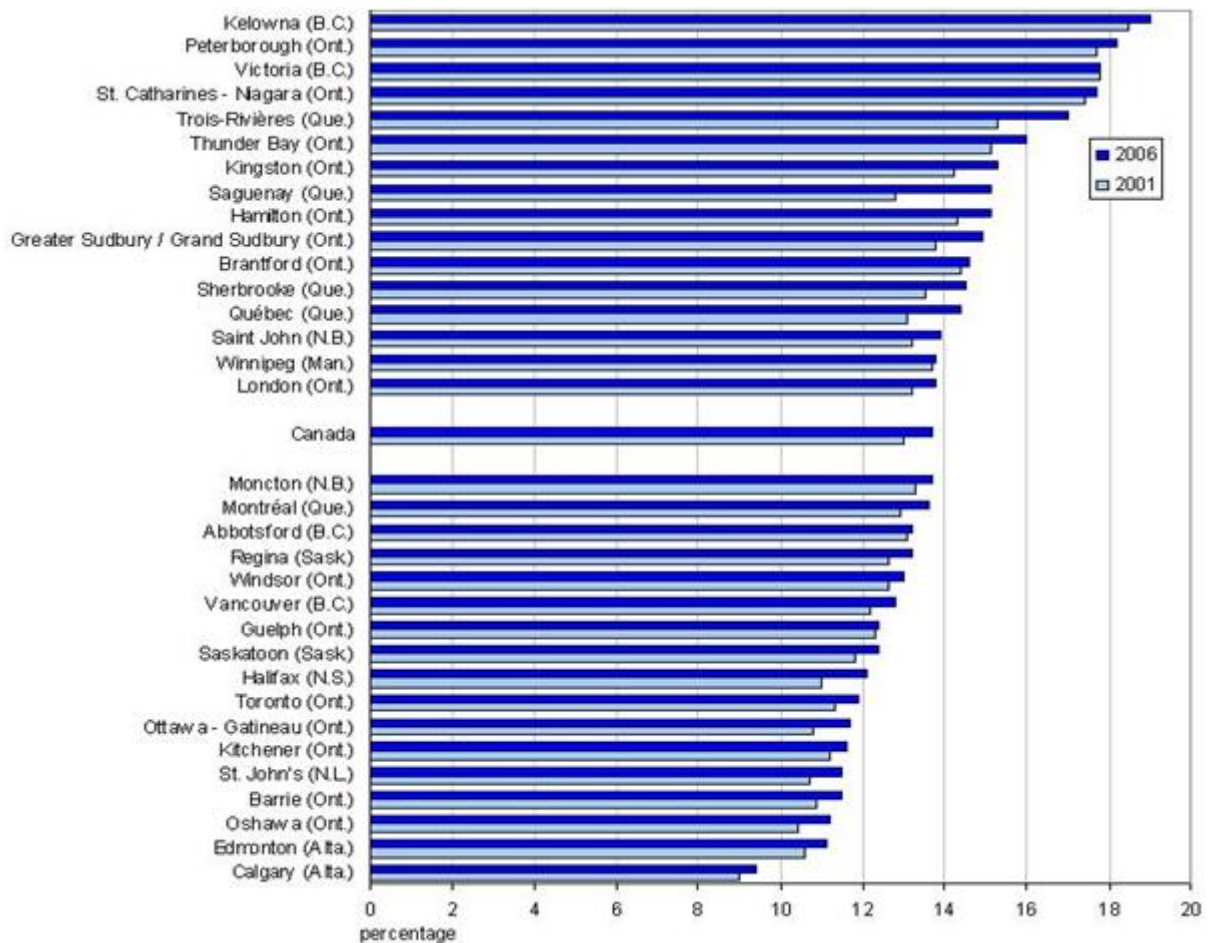


Figure 3. Proportion of the Population Aged 65 Years and Over in Census Metropolitan Areas in 2001 and 2006

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006)

The city of Kelowna experienced steady growth and has undergone many business, population and cultural changes over the past two decades consequently altering the city's demographic trend. Despite the rapidly aging population, there has not been the same observable trend within the younger population. Figure 4 shows this aging population increasing significantly from 1996 to 2010; however, during this same period the percentage of children aged 0 to 14 years only increased negligibly, reflecting the low fertility rate in Canada and the Central Okanagan (Interior Health, 2009). The share of the population aged

between 25 and 34 decreased approximately 3% between 1991 and 2006, whilst the percentage of the population over the age of 65 years never went below 18%.

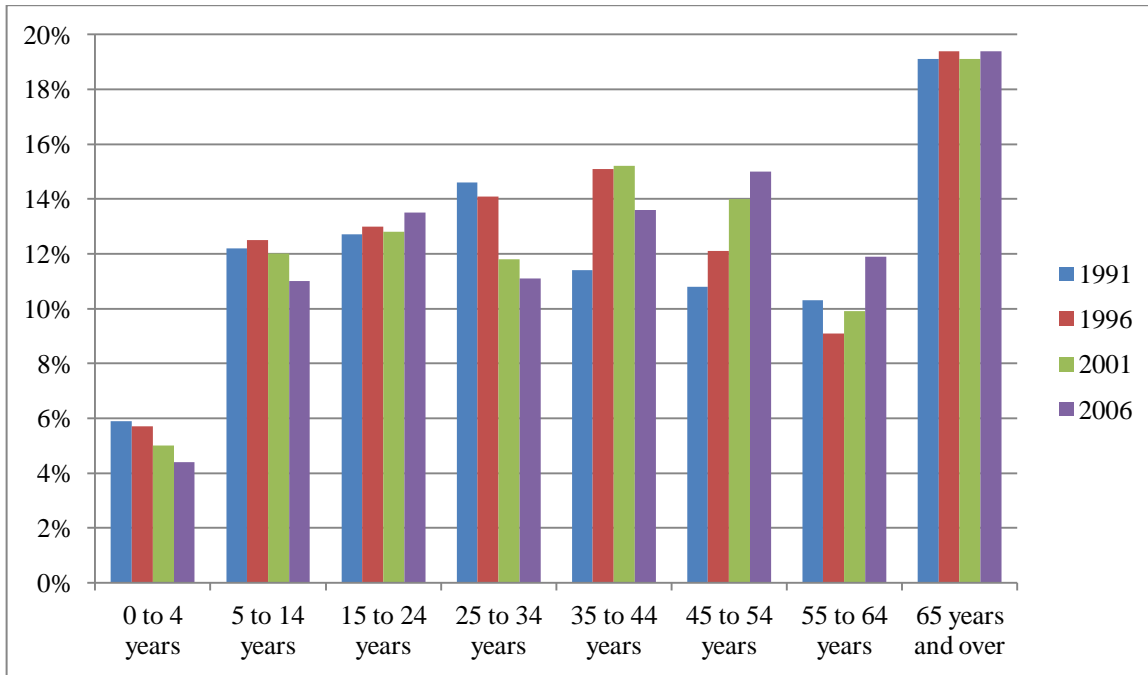


Figure 4. Proportion of Population Aged in 5-Year Breaks, and 65 Years and Above

(Source: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009)

The combination of an aging population and the current student exodus has led to a decline in Kelowna's growth rate (Figure 5).

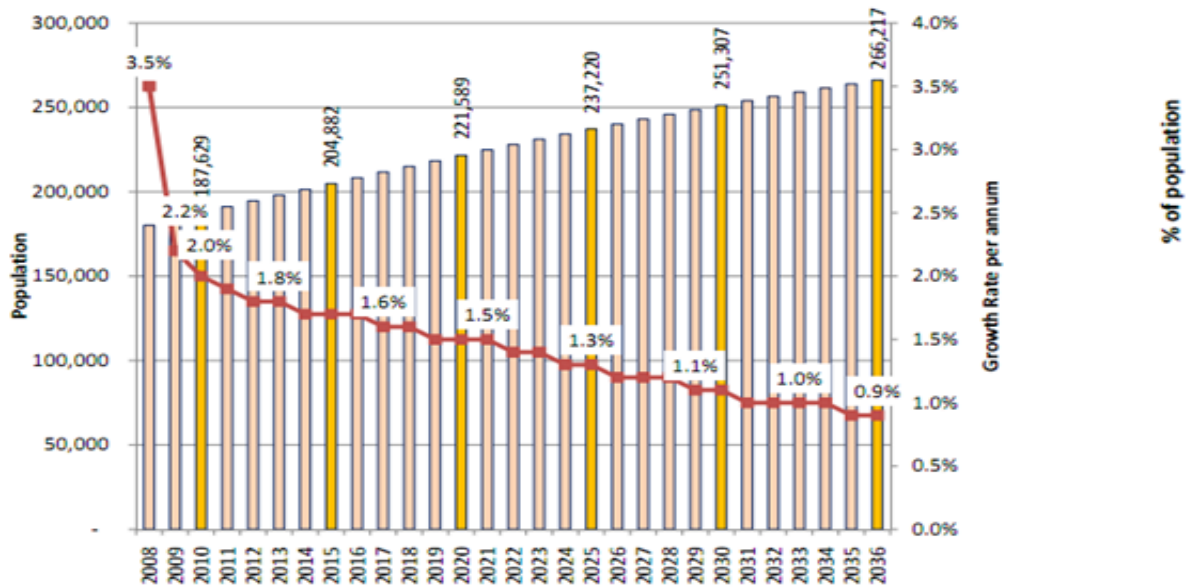


Figure 5. Population Growth Projections 2008 to 2036

(Source: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010b)

As demonstrated in Figure 6, growth rate is necessary to ensure the continual economic development of a city. In the diagram below, a growing city attracts new businesses to produce a strong labour force which then generates more tax revenue. This attracts business to the region after these companies review the labour forces' potential success, and retains current business because of their continued success. The money generated by these companies in the region equates to a larger profit from which the city continues to grow.

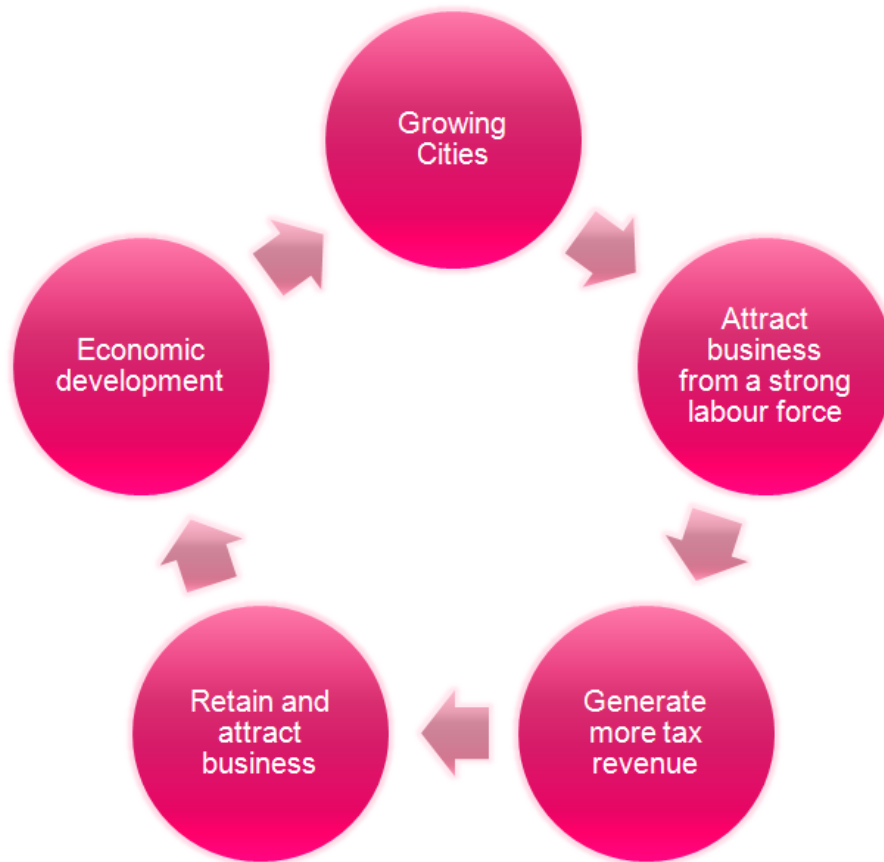


Figure 6. Impact of Growing Cities in Determining Economic Development

As previously stated, the current demographic state of Kelowna equates to a slow population growth and could have a detrimental effect on economic development within the region. The economic development concern stems from the current demographic imbalance Kelowna experiences and demonstrates the need to understand why students leave Kelowna and then determine possible incentives for their retention.

Multiple factors could be causing this population imbalance i.e., increasing housing costs, high rental prices and low vacancy rates, high cost of living and few skilled and professional employment opportunities. All these factors may be the contributing reasons for

youth exodus and also reasons why the city of Kelowna is unable to attract a younger demographic.

The housing market in the city of Kelowna has experienced drastic changes in the past decade as the city is increasingly becoming internationally recognized as both a retirement destination and a vacation resort. The increased attention received by the city from both a national and international market has impacted the housing market; the price to both purchase and rent a property in Kelowna increased dramatically (Aguiar, L., Tomic, P, and Trumper R., 2005; Teixeira, 2011).

As previously noted, the median price for a house in city of Kelowna was \$338,000 for the third (September) quarter of 2010, while the median household income was only \$57,500 (Demographia, 2011). If a younger population is desired in city of Kelowna, it is essential that house prices decrease to allow young families and individuals the chance to live without having excessive mortgages and debt.

Kelowna's rental market has seen similar changes and does not favour the younger demographic or those individuals with a lower income. The average rental price for a two-bedroom apartment in the Kelowna CMA in October 2010 was \$890 with a low 4% vacancy rate (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011). Kelowna's apartment vacancy rate increased to 3.5% in October 2010 from 3.0% one year before (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011). While Kelowna's vacancy rate did rise, the increase was smaller than 2009. Stronger employment growth combined with an increase in enrolment at the UBC Okanagan Campus and Okanagan College has helped place pressure on Kelowna's apartment vacancy rate (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011). Despite this, it is accurate to say that young professionals and new graduates are unlikely to want to rent

shared accommodation and therefore this presents further problems in terms of housing availability (McEwan, 2010).

According to the latest Demographia study (2011), the city of Kelowna is ranked the 41st most “severely unaffordable housing market” out of the 325 globally ranked. From the 325 markets, 115 were affordable, 94 moderately unaffordable, 42 seriously unaffordable and 74 severely unaffordable; the last category included three Canadian cities Vancouver, Victoria and Kelowna. The median income in 2005 for all families taking part in the 2006 Census was \$59,087 in Kelowna compared to British Columbia’s median income of \$62,346 (Statistics Canada, 2010). Given the high price of housing in the city of Kelowna, this could be a major factor discouraging individuals and families from living in Kelowna.

Finally, Kelowna’s job market could be a reason for youth exodus. The job market in Kelowna may not be suited to the students graduating from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Several key changes impacted industry employment between 2008 and 2009 the total number of employed individuals in all industries shrank by 3.1% from 265,000 down to 256,700 (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010). This drop in job availability has affected recently graduated students and has inhibited their ability to find a job.

In order for the UBC Okanagan Campus graduates to remain in Kelowna after obtaining an undergraduate degree, skilled and professional jobs in their related career field are needed. It is even harder for those graduates with more specialized degrees to find jobs in Kelowna. Currently, students that possess a degree in education are entering into a career field experiencing declining employment. As indicated in Table 2, from 2008 to 2009 education service jobs, i.e., school district administration jobs and teaching positions decreased by 120,000 and have consistently experienced wavering growth levels. This lack of jobs is also

experienced by those graduating from the Faculty of Management. Those wishing to pursue careers in finance or business are entering into a field that has experienced both wavering and declining from 2003 to 2009 in the Okanagan.

Table 2. Employment by Industry for BC Development Regions--Thompson Okanagan

	Employment in 000's						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total employed, all industries	218.8	229.7	244.0	253.7	256.7	265.0	256.7
Goods-producing sector	52.7	59.1	65.0	69.8	67.9	72.0	65.1
Agriculture	7.0	7.6	7.0	7.8	7.7	7.0	9.4
Forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas	6.9	5.5	5.5	8.0	6.7	7.8	5.6
Utilities	-	-	-	1.5	-	1.9	1.7
Construction	13.6	18.8	24.1	27.3	26.4	32.4	28.7
Manufacturing	23.9	26.3	27.1	25.2	25.8	23.0	19.7
Services-producing sector	166.1	170.6	179.0	183.9	188.7	193.0	191.6
Trade	38.9	37.4	39.7	42.2	44.4	41.6	40.1
Transportation and warehousing	12.2	12.0	11.6	10.9	9.8	11.5	10.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	10.4	11.3	14.6	15.5	15.1	11.9	14.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	10.4	9.0	14.2	13.4	12.6	12.0	14.5
Business, building and other support services	8.3	10.9	7.2	9.1	10.3	11.1	9.7
Educational services	14.1	13.8	12.1	14.1	15.4	16.6	15.4
Health care and social assistance	26.2	26.2	29.4	32.1	30.6	35.1	35.1
Information, culture and recreation	9.3	13.2	10.5	10.6	9.5	12.1	11.2
Accommodation and food services	19.5	19.5	23.0	19.0	21.3	22.1	19.9
Other services	10.1	10.6	8.2	8.4	10.8	10.0	11.0
Public administration	6.7	6.7	8.4	8.6	8.9	9.0	10.2

(Source: Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010)

A major concern for students is the inability to find a job in their related career field following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. This is a very realistic concern given data that shows there are not enough jobs to gainfully employ graduates from specific faculties such as Management and Engineering. Graduates do not want to be unemployed following the completion of an undergraduate degree, nor do they want to be underemployed.

This could be another reason why recent graduates may choose to leave Kelowna following graduation.

3.3 Sample

The sample for this study consisted of all final-year students and alumni from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Questionnaire surveys were sent to 1,170 final-year students and 2,800 alumni. Eligible participants in this study met two criteria. First, in order to be eligible to participate in this study the participants needed to either be: (a) graduating in June 2011, or (b) alumni--already graduated from the UBC Okanagan Campus from the graduating classes of 2006 to 2010. Second, the participants needed to have their email address registered with the UBC Okanagan Campus in order for the online questionnaire survey to be sent to participants. Subjects (final-year students and alumni) excluded from this study included: (a) any final-year students and alumni that have not given their email address to the UBC Okanagan Campus, or (b) any under the age of 19.

3.4 Data Collection

An interview is a crucial component in the data collection procedure. Questions for both the questionnaire survey and key informant interviews were generated from topics and themes discovered in the literature regarding factors surrounding student exodus. Questionnaire surveys occurred before and then continued simultaneously to the structured interviews.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Survey

The design of this exploratory case study relied on the use of online questionnaire surveys to obtain the most information from a diversified group of past and present students at the UBC Okanagan Campus. Questionnaire surveys were the primary method of data

collection and range in question format; included were multiple-choice, rank-order, open-ended and closed-ended questions. This range of question types enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth perspective on not only students' demographics but also their ideas, experiences, and opinions concerning the city of Kelowna. Thus, this portion of the study is both quantitative and qualitative.

Because little research has been conducted within the context of graduate student exodus in Kelowna, questionnaire surveys were chosen for several reasons. First, the responses were gathered in a standardised way so questionnaires were more objective; second, questionnaires allowed for the collection of information from a large number of individuals relatively inexpensively; third, this method contributed to reliability by promoting greater consistency achieved through eliminating the variation in questioning that can occur when a number of different interviewers are used; and finally, the questionnaires reduced the introduction of bias by eliminating the ability of interviewers to influence answers either intentionally or inadvertently.

Data collection for the questionnaire survey was acquired through an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey and was permitted by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board for use with data storage in the United States of America. According to the Web information company Alexa, SurveyMonkey is the leading on-line survey tool. Custom questionnaires are easy to create and once ready to distribute and provide a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) to be attached or included in an email. This is pivotal to ensure the highest level of security. In addition, SurveyMonkey has many levels of security to ensure that data and information remains private (Oh, 2010).

For this research project, the UBC Okanagan Campus alumni department agreed to help in the distribution of questionnaire surveys to final-year students and alumni. The alumni department possessed a list of students who were both in their final year and who had previously graduated and those who still wished to still be in contact with the UBC Okanagan Campus.

The questionnaire survey was emailed to 1,170 final-year Students and 2,800 alumni. It was noted that although it is not possible to calculate the specific number of returned emails, it is estimated that 75 to 100 recipients never received the survey because their email addresses were invalid. This was not the case with final-year students as email addresses were provided by Enrolment Services close to the beginning of the study and were up-to-date. The online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, gathered 48 responses from final-year students and 42 from alumni. Using the analysis tool provided by SurveyMonkey, statistical data derived from the questionnaire surveys were filtered and cross-tabulated to create data reports, graphs and charts. After the email was sent, final-year students and alumni were contacted three times each after the initial email was sent containing the link as a follow-up reminder to complete the survey. For alumni, this follow-up was not limited to simple email message reminders but also mentioned in publications such as newsletters sent from the Alumni Department. The response rate to the questionnaire surveys for both final-year students and alumni was low--4% and 2%, respectively. Despite follow-up email reminders, a low response rate for internet surveys is common (Dillman, 2007). The utilization of a multiple contact strategy was used in this study but despite this method, response rates were still low. Response rates can be increased if an immediate incentive, such as a monetary

benefit, or the use of mail-in surveys were also used; however, due to time and funding constraints these options were unfeasible for this study.

The questionnaire survey was first uploaded and formatted to SurveyMonkey (the external survey tool for administration of the questionnaire survey) by the researcher. An external link to the website was then sent to the alumni department to be included in an email sent to all final-year students and alumni. Personal information from the database of students was not seen by the researcher as the alumni department sent the email with the link to the questionnaire survey to ensure the maximum security and privacy of past and present students.

The questionnaire was administered by email for several reasons. It has been found that web survey application achieves comparable response rates to a mailed hard copy; however, results are achieved at less cost to the researcher and less inconvenience for most potential participants (Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine 2004; Michaelidou and Dibb 2002). In general, a web survey application can produce a bias in the average age of respondents given the large amount of institutional teaching and learning that youth and students experience on the computer today (Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine 2004); however, given the age of the UBC Okanagan Campus final-year students and alumni, this was not a major concern for this study. Current final-year students were expected to be confident in using the internet and email as students are required i.e., to use the internet to communicate with instructors and submit assignments; in addition the oldest alumni class is from 2006 and would be proficient in using a computer. As this research is an exploratory case study, it would be hard to generalize the findings to other individuals or communities outside the boundaries of this study.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews

A second research component was using interviews conducted on key informants. Ten key informants were questioned using standardized interviews. Interviews were conducted with ten key informants in order to gain an understanding of future directions, goals and development objectives for Kelowna concerning youth and their role in regional economic development. Key informants are individuals assumed to have special knowledge about a population's goals and desires, as well as current gaps in services affecting the population in question (Babbie, 2009).

The key informants for this research consisted of city officials, community leaders, employees of the Economic Development Commission, representatives from the UBC Okanagan Campus, a representative from BC Housing, and individuals from service organizations in Kelowna that provide social assistance or programs to youth. Key informants were recruited through the researcher's personal contacts as well as contacts developed through the researcher's work with local not-for-profit groups in the city of Kelowna.

Key informants were first contacted by email to introduce the researcher and the purpose of the study, and ask for their participation in the study. Participants were then given a contact letter that informed them of the research purpose, methodology, and intended outcomes (See Appendix B). Having the key informants agreed to participate in the interview, the time and location was then arranged upon at the discretion of the interviewee and took place at the workplace office of the participant. Face-to-face interviews took approximately 30 to 40 minutes and consisted of standardized questions which were tape-

recorded, transcribed verbatim, coded, organized by theme, and then analyzed by the researcher who selected significant quotes.

3.5 Questionnaire Design

A survey of identifying factors affecting the retention of final-year students and alumni in Kelowna was conducted using a questionnaire sent to eligible participants. The questionnaire was developed from themes generated from the literature review and consisted of structured questions of varying type e.g., multiple-choice, rank-order, closed-ended, agreement scale and text open-ended questions (See Appendices E and F).

The questionnaire consisted of six sections to be answered by respondents:

1. Educational Attainment and Information
2. Career and Future Careers/Job
3. After Graduation
4. Attributes Valued in a City
5. Recommendations for Retaining Students after Graduation in the Kelowna CMA
6. Demographic Information

The six sections of the questionnaire were prefaced by an explanation of the objectives of the study and the rights of the participants. In addition, this letter served as the consent for the participants.

3.6 Limitations

A few limitations were addressed when considering this study. First, a volunteer bias might have occurred as the number and diversity of respondents might not truly represent the study population; there were more individuals that respond from one faculty than others. Second, as a limited number of previous studies have been completed on mid-sized

populations such as that of Kelowna, results cannot be generalized and compared to other cities. Additionally, the results are not comparable to other cities or universities for varying factors such as their urban layout; results may vary depending on city-specific factors such as housing density and the usability of transit as factors that determine student exodus or retention. Third, a sampling bias may have occurred as this study did not include those final-year students and alumni that did not allow the UBC Okanagan Campus access to their email address, thereby not allowing the entire sample frame equal opportunity to participate in this questionnaire. In addition, despite all current students having access to on-campus computers, this questionnaire did not take into account those students and alumni that do not have access to computers or possess low computer skills (Babbie, 1998; Creswell, 2009). Finally, this study did not take into account students from other post-secondary institutions in Kelowna. The UBC Okanagan Campus was the intended focus for the study because it is the largest post-secondary institution in Kelowna and its creation in 2005 intended to bring students to the Okanagan in order to complete their studies. In addition, data for the study was easily attainable from on-campus services.

3.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review and discuss the methods used to collect data and the procedures taken during the sampling process whilst justifying the study area and target population. This chapter explained the structured interview process with key informants and the design of the survey questionnaire that was administered to final-year students and alumni from the UBC Okanagan Campus.

The collection of the data for this study began in May 2011 and concluded in September 2011 with the questionnaire surveys occurring before and then continuing simultaneously to

the structured interviews. In total, the data gathered for this study included ten structured interviews with key informants including community leaders, housing officials, community service providers and local and provincial government officials. 48 final-year students, 42 alumni, and ten key informants participated in the study.

Further studies need to be completed in order to fill additional gaps in the literature dealing with graduated students' career decisions. Studies of smaller urban areas, including mid-sized cities like that of Kelowna, are a significantly misrepresented group in Canadian geographical literature. This study complements current research completed on youth and university impact and the study of mid-sized cities in Canada.

Chapter 4: Should I Stay or Should I Go?

4.1 Overview

As discussed in the preceding chapters, Kelowna's population is aging and is occurring more rapidly for Kelowna than other cities across Canada. Despite the creation of the UBC Okanagan Campus and subsequent youth population increase, Kelowna's aging demographic and low fertility rate ensure that net population growth in the region from 2009 to 2036 will result solely from positive net migration (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010a). Although the Central Okanagan, and in particular Kelowna, will see a net gain in population, those individuals in the age category of 65 and over will make up the largest percentage of the population by 2016 (Figure 7).

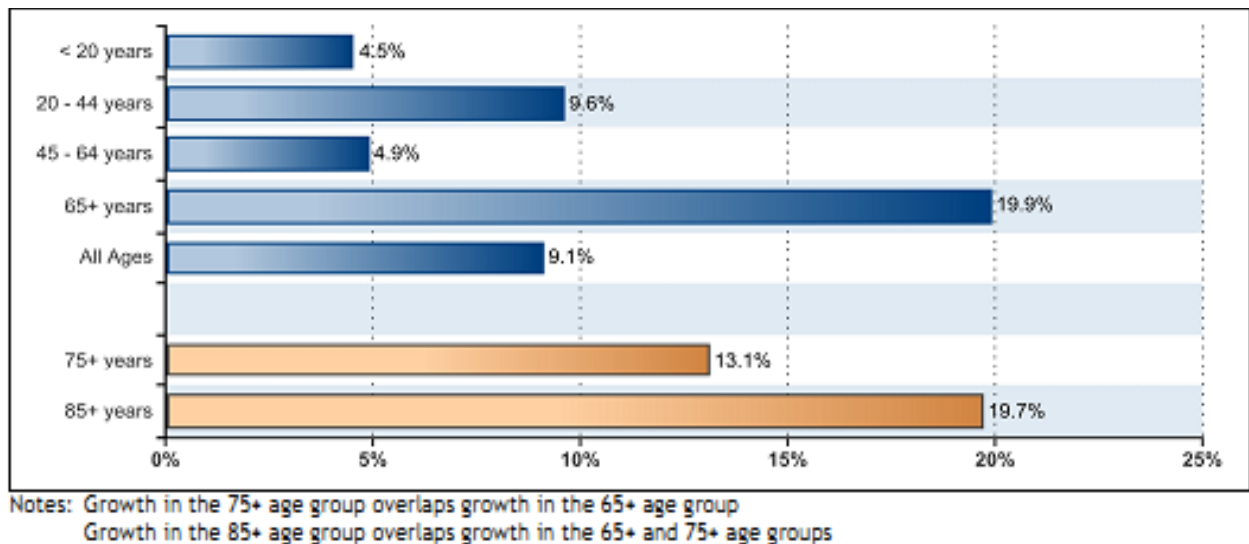


Figure 7. Population Growth (%) by Age Group, Central Okanagan LHA (2011 to 2016)

(Source: Interior Health Authority, 2010)

A few studies have noted this demographic importance of creating a mixed population and their impact on local economy (Darchen & Tremblay, 2010; Canadian Policy Research Network, 2008; Florida, 2006). This aging population issue is becoming increasingly

important and common in certain mid-sized cities across Canada where these communities are seen as retirement destinations. Some of these cities are experiencing demographic issues which many other Canadian cities will not see for the next 10-20 years. Abbotsford, British Columbia, has a population similar in size to that of Kelowna and has only 13.3% of the population over the age of 65 with a projected percentage of only 15.4 in 2020 (BC Stats, 2010). Regina, Saskatchewan, possesses a population similar to that of Kelowna and in 2006, 13.5% of the population was over the age of 65 (Statistics Canada, 2010). The purpose of this chapter is to examine the forces behind why recently graduated students and youth are choosing to leave Kelowna following graduation. This chapter examines the decisions of 48 final-year students and 42 alumni from the UBC Okanagan Campus to either leave or remain in Kelowna following their post-secondary graduation. Results from this case and exploratory study are not to be generalized to include other populations and simply depict some respondents' attitudes towards life after graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. This chapter provides a summary of how many of these individuals have decided to leave or remain in Kelowna and the reasons for their decisions.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Profile of Questionnaire Respondents

This section analyzes the socio-demographic profiles of the final-year and alumni respondents. First, the location where both final-year students and alumni moved from to attend the UBC Okanagan Campus is examined in a map.

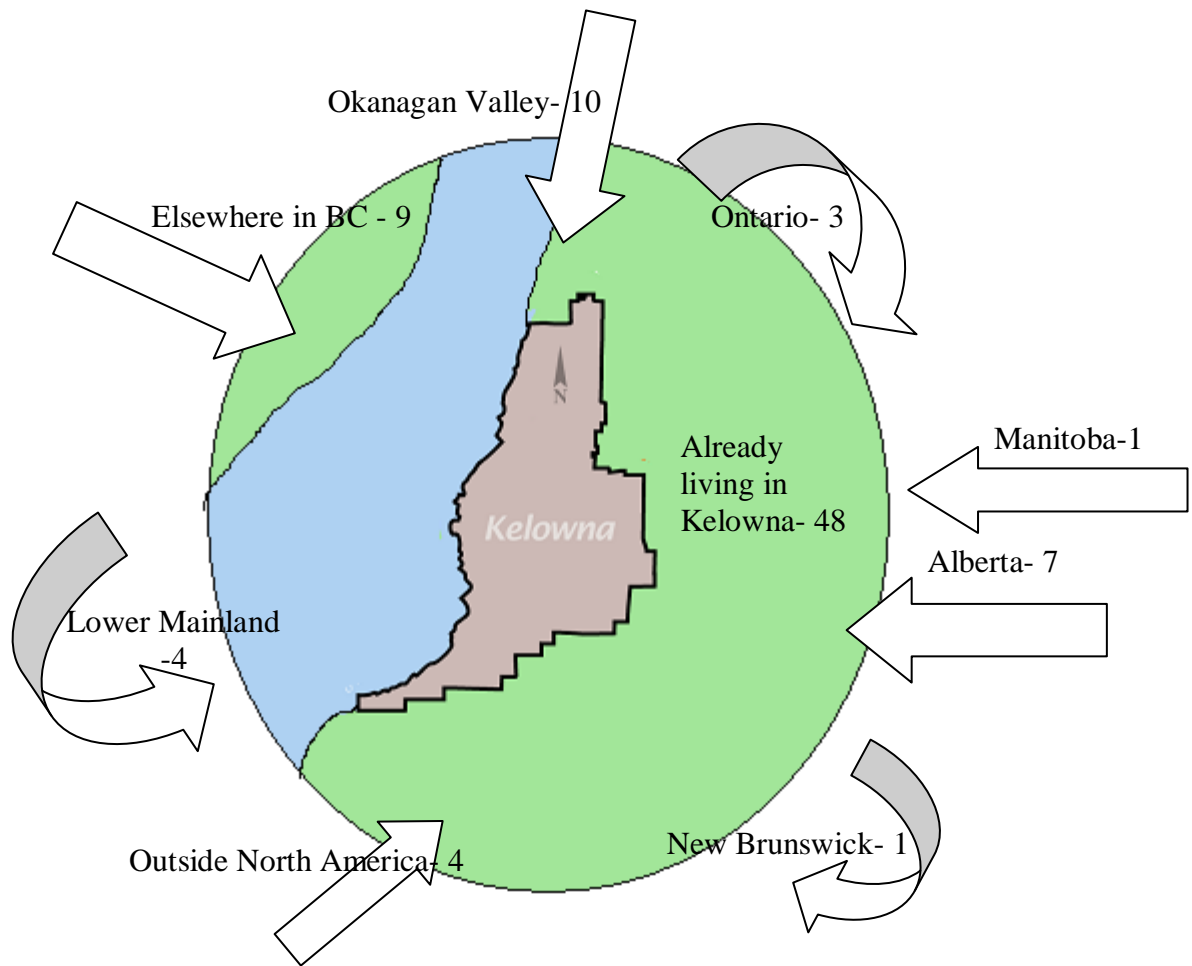


Figure 8. Student Demographics--Where are the Respondents From?

(Source: Final-Year and Alumni Questionnaire-Surveys, 2011)

The map in Figure 8 identifies where both final-year students and alumni moved from in order to attend The UBC Okanagan Campus. Forty-eight students were already living in Kelowna when they decided to attend The UBC Okanagan Campus; the second largest number of students (10) moving from elsewhere in the Okanagan Valley. This demonstrates that the university may need to attract students from elsewhere so that more have a chance to experience the Okanagan and then potentially remain after graduation. The majority of final-year students and alumni reported living locally did not need to relocate to Kelowna in order to attend university. A much higher percentage of final-year students reported wanting to

leave Kelowna following graduation and the majority of alumni (66.7%) did not live in the city of Kelowna after graduation for a period of over one year because of a lack of career opportunities. This suggests the majority of graduate students need to seek employment elsewhere right after graduation from The UBC Okanagan Campus; however, most are willing and want to relocate back once experience has been gained and a job opportunity is found.

The following socio-demographic profiles are examined individually for both final-year students and alumni and include: (a) age, (b) ethnic origin for final-year students (c) ethnic origin, (d) current location and (e) income for alumni.

4.2.1 Final-Year Student Respondents

Among the 48 respondents for the final-year students' questionnaire-survey, 58.5% were female while the remaining 41.5% were male. A significant age range represented those students that opted to participate in the study (Figure 9).

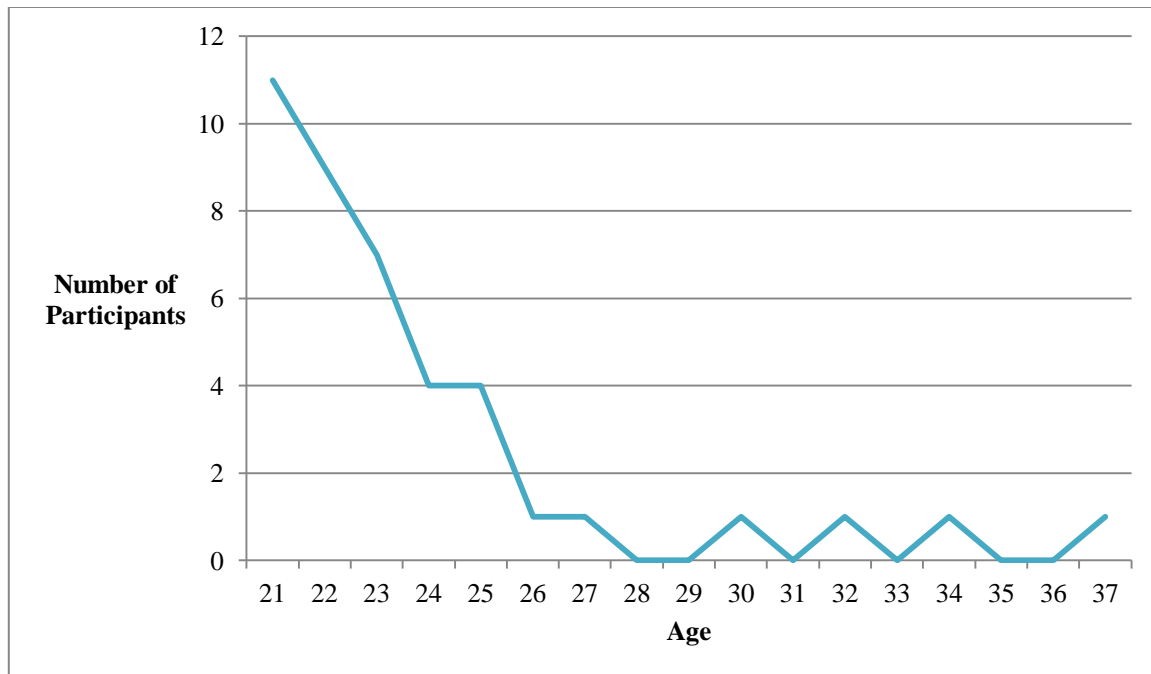


Figure 9. Ages of Final-Year Student Participants

(Source: Final-Year Student Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

Although over 60% of respondents were aged 21 to 23 years of age, there was a diverse age range of participants, ranging from 21 to 37 years of age; the average age for final-year students was 23.7 years with a standard deviation of 3.6. The 48 respondents were not so diverse in their ethnic origin with 87.5% having a white ethnic origin, while one respondent each identified as Chinese, Black, Latin America, Southeast Asian or West Asian. This ethnically biased population echoes the lack of ethnic diversity in Kelowna having the city been described as a “white city” (Bahbahani, 2008).

4.2.2 Alumni Respondents

Similar to the gender distribution in the final-year student questionnaire-survey, out of 42 alumni participants, 80.0% were female while the remaining 20.0% were male. As expected with the alumni population, there was a much more diverse age range of

participants compared to that of the final-year students (Figure 10). The average age of alumni participants was 28.0 years of age with a standard deviation of 8.3.

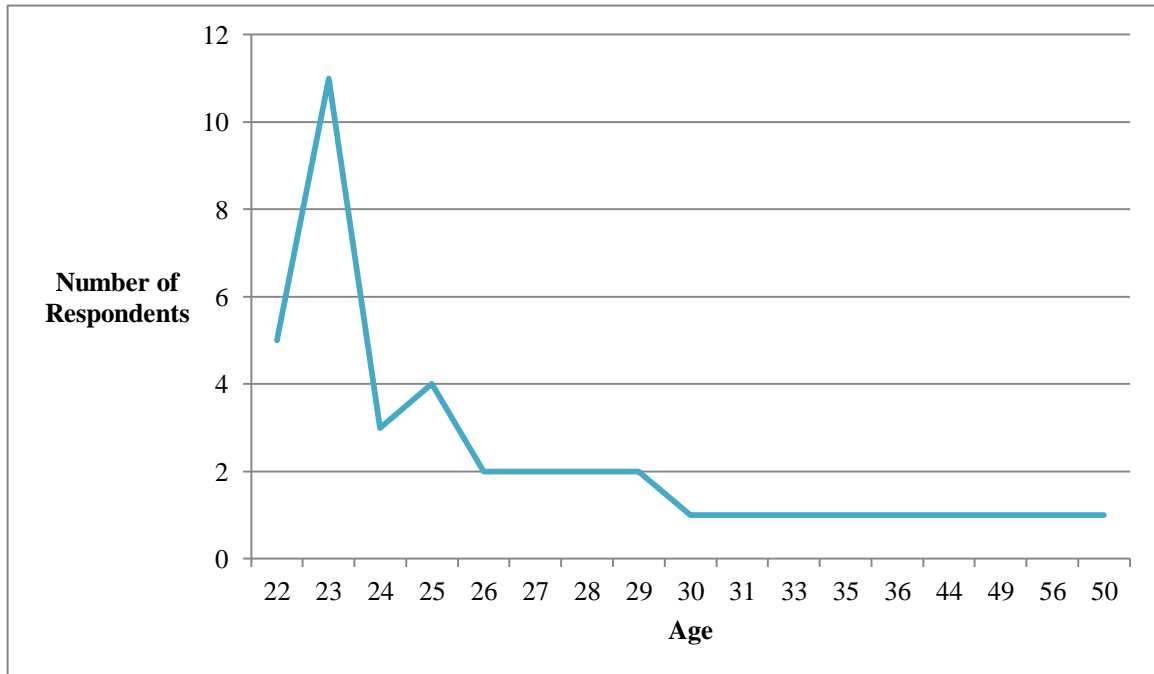


Figure 10. Ages of Alumni Participants

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

The age range of alumni respondents helps this study achieve greater diversity with some participants having spent more time in the workforce than others. Alumni respondents were not as ethnically diverse as final-year students with 97.4% of respondents being of white ethnic origin followed by 2.6% of respondents being of Latin American origin. Given this lack of ethnic diversity compared to that of final-year students, it is hopeful that Kelowna is actually moving forward to become a more ethnically diverse city. The university strives to recruit individuals the world over; in conjunction with the work the Economic Development Commission does to recruit families and individuals to come and live in Kelowna, will hopeful help the city diversify ethnically.

It was important for this study to understand the current location of alumni that left Kelowna following graduation from The UBC Okanagan Campus (Figure 11).

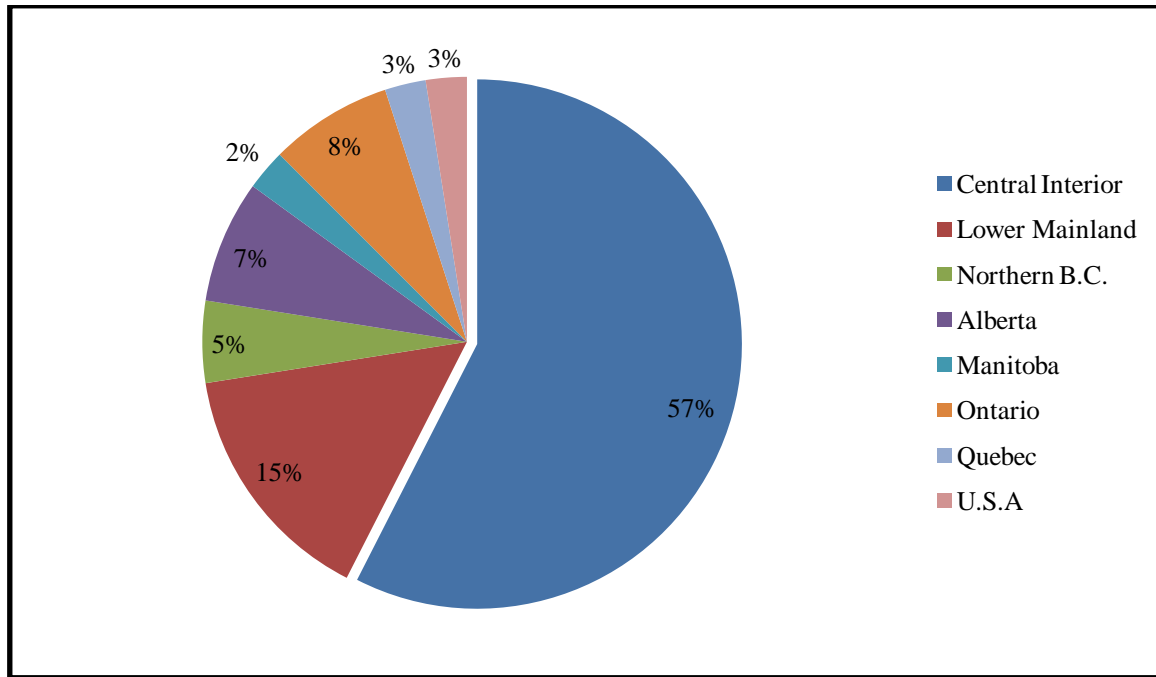


Figure 11. Current Location of Alumni Respondents

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

Most alumni that responded to this questionnaire-survey are located within the Central Interior, with the second largest population of UBC Okanagan alumni living in the Lower Mainland. Only a few people moved to Eastern Canada and one to the United States of America. This shows the majority of alumni are currently living in the Central Interior and close to the university they graduated from. This is in contrast to the attitudes of final-year students where the majority wish not to remain in Kelowna following graduation.

When asked about their income, alumni responded with varying answers. 52.1% of respondents indicated that they each made under \$20,000 during 2010 (Figure 12).

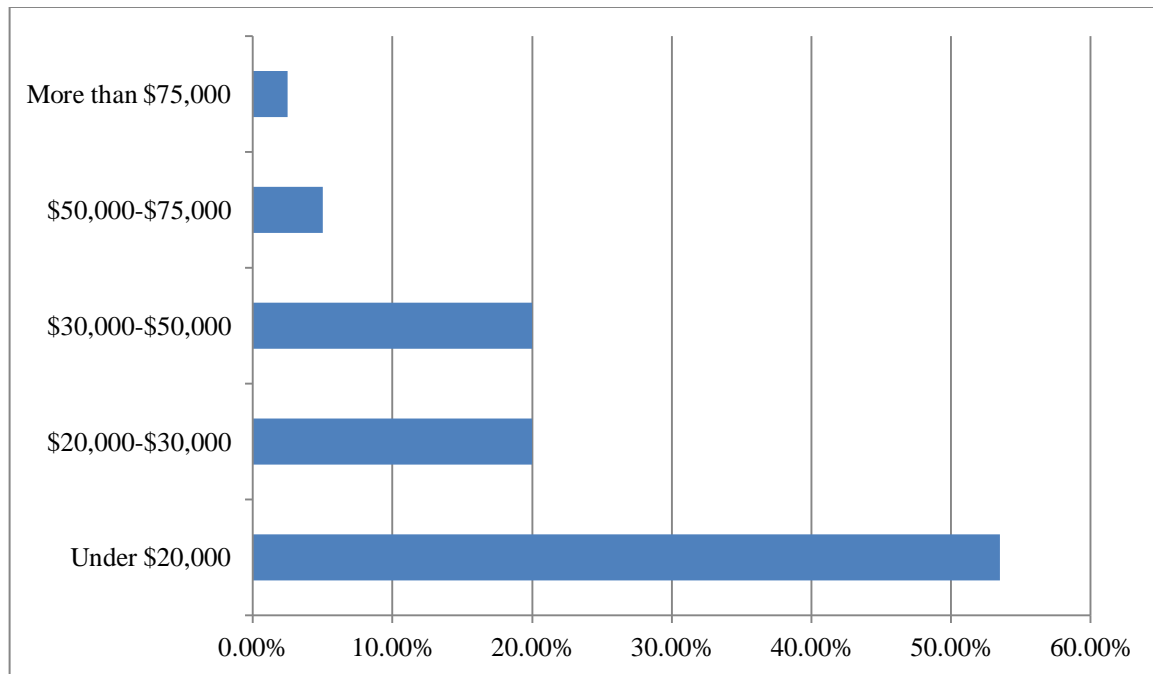


Figure 12. Alumni Income in 2010

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

Figure 12 shows the distribution of income amongst the alumni respondents. While the largest percentage of respondents earned under \$20,000 in 2010, 20% earned between \$20,000 to \$30,000 and 30,000 to \$50,000.; only a combined 7% earned greater than \$50,000. This collection of income data could be surprising given the higher cost of living in Kelowna and with over 50% living in the central interior with the majority of respondents making under \$20,000. As to whether individuals possessing a lower income have a financial strain is unknown, although income and living could be studied further to see if there is a disparity between income and liveability in Kelowna.

4.3 Final-Year Students Decide to Leave

4.3.1 Overview

Final-year students are defined as those students that were in their final year of studies during the period of this study at the UBC Okanagan Campus and would graduate in the June

2011 convocation ceremony. Forty eight final-year students completed the online questionnaire survey. This group's decision whether to remain in or leave Kelowna following graduation has a direct impact on the demographics of the mid-sized and aging city. When asked if they intended to remain living in the city of Kelowna after graduation for a period of over one year, over two-thirds of respondents (72.1%) reported that they did not. Only 27.9%, or 12 respondents, agreed that they intended to remain in Kelowna for over a year following graduation. It Students attending the UBC Okanagan Campus from other areas of British Columbia could be more prone to leaving the region to return home after graduation; however, this study indicated that nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.2%) did not move to Kelowna from outside the Okanagan for the specific purpose to attend the UBC Okanagan Campus and were instead local students to begin with. In addition to those that moved to Kelowna to attend the UBC Okanagan Campus an additional 13.3% of respondents moved from within the Okanagan Valley.

4.3.2 The Key Issues: Employment, Housing and Living

Respondents identified three recurring issues throughout the questionnaire survey that they considered barriers and challenges preventing them from remaining in Kelowna following graduation: the lack of employment opportunities and the high cost of purchasing a home and the high cost of living (Table 3).

Table 3. Barriers and Challenges Preventing Final-Year Students from Remaining in Kelowna after Graduation

	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Experienced	Response Count (N=43)
Lack of Employment Opportunities	76.7% (33)	11.6% (5)	0.0% (0)	11.6% (5)	43
The Cost of Purchasing a Home is Too High	67.5% (29)	2.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	30.2% (13)	43
High Cost of Living	66.7% (28)	16.5% (7)	4.8% (2)	11.9% (5)	42
Rental Costs are Too High	60.5% (26)	14.0% (6)	4.7% (2)	20.9% (9)	43
Lack of locations to socialize and attend it terms of bars, clubs, and meeting people	44.2% (19)	23.3% (10)	18.6% (8)	14.0% (6)	43
Family Elsewhere	38.1% (16)	23.8% (10)	16.7% (7)	21.4% (9)	42
Lack of amenities (e.g., swimming pool, libraries)	32.6% (14)	25.6 (11)	30.2% (13)	11.6% (5)	43
Attending University Elsewhere	32.6% (14)	9.3% (4)	11.6% (5)	46.5% (20)	43
Acceptance to Grad School elsewhere	28.5% (12)	7.1% (3)	14.3% (6)	50.0% (21)	42
Lack of sense of 'belonging' to the community	26.2% (11)	33.3% (14)	16.7% (7)	23.8% (10)	42
Weather	7.0% (3)	39.5% (17)	41.9% (18)	11.6% (5)	43

(Source: Final-Year Student Questionnaire Survey, 2011)

The lack of employment opportunities combined with housing issues, both in terms of Kelowna being too expensive to purchase a home and the high cost of living, is a major

concern for final-year students. 76.7% of final-year participants expressed a lack of employment opportunities exists in Kelowna. One final-year participant in this study simply added the comment “no jobs” while another commented on the lack of a specific career field adding, “availability of nursing jobs”.

Many barriers preventing final-year students from remaining in Kelowna were determined to be monetary issues; however, 11 out of 42 respondents (26.6%) strongly agreed that there was a lack of a sense of ‘belonging’ to the community. Two respondents commented on this saying, “Kelowna lean[s] towards being conservative; not as diverse as larger cities; community is ‘white’ majority” and “Kelowna born/raised people are not welcoming”.

The lack of job opportunities in Kelowna in the career of the graduating student also emphasizes the severe problem of employment opportunities. 81.4% (35 out of 43 respondents) felt there were not enough job opportunities in Kelowna in their chosen career fields. Respondents from this study represented all faculties and schools at The UBC Okanagan Campus (Figure 13).

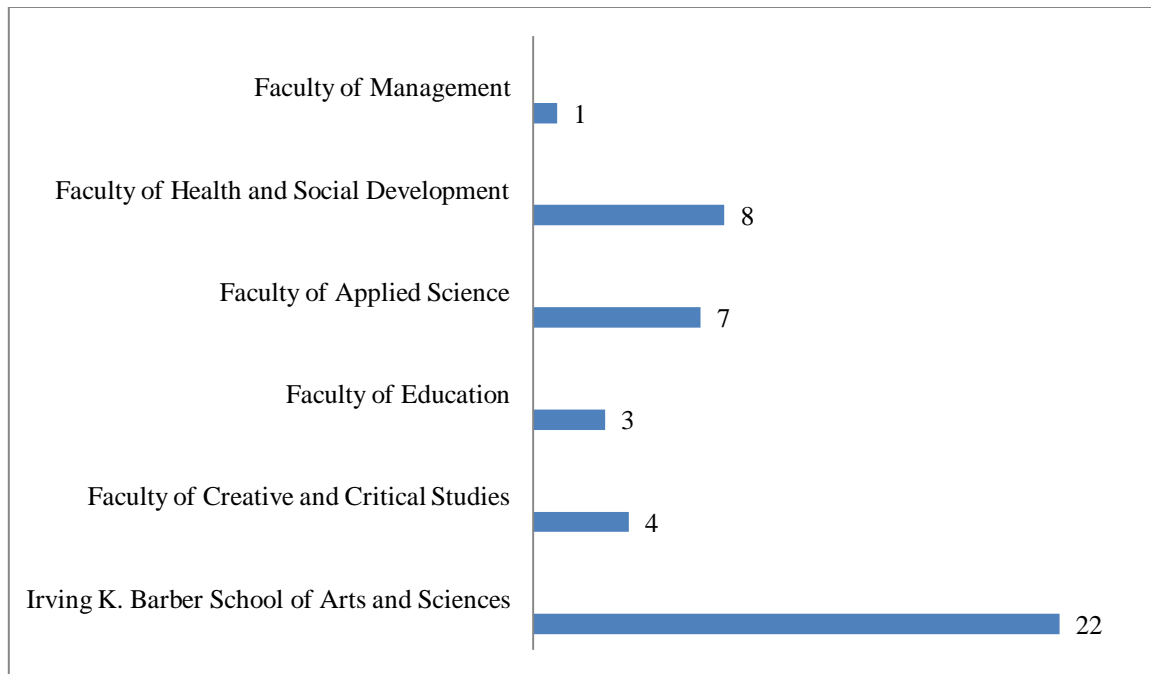


Figure 13. Breakdown of Graduating School of Final-Year Students

(Source: Final-Year Students Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

Despite the diverse degrees of final-year students, over three quarters do not believe there will be sufficient jobs in their career field following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Currently 72.7% of respondents are employed; however, this is not enough of a pull factor to keep respondents in Kelowna. When asked what their current occupation was, many respondents were working in restaurants and grocery stores with a few working as research assistants and similar university positions. The same group also reported that over two-thirds of Final- Year students (67.4%) do not have long-term jobs after graduation. For the 32.6% of students that did have a long-term job for after graduation, 100% reported that employment was with their current employer, with only 38.5% of these individuals having these long-term jobs within Kelowna; 61.5% of respondents said they would be leaving Kelowna following graduation to pursue employment already secured elsewhere. This was also true for the three international students that responded to the

questionnaire survey; all students did not intend on remaining in Kelowna following graduation.

Many final-year students had already decided by graduation whether or not they had intentions to remain in or leave Kelowna. 51.3% of respondents reported they planned to leave Kelowna within the next 6 months, with another 5.1% wanted to leave within the next year and 10.3% within the next three years. When asked about the number one problem preventing recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna, one student commented that graduate school was a major push factor and one respondent detailed “The UBC Okanagan Campus does not offer accelerated programs let alone a diversity of graduate programs”. Other individuals stated “you [can’t] find a job in my field in Kelowna” and a “lack of job opportunities”. Although many respondents noted jobs and graduate school as specific reasons for leaving Kelowna, many individuals detailed a “lack of culture and lack of career prospects” as well as “more culture, entertainment, social life [and] community” needed.

Throughout the study it became apparent that Kelowna does not possess the jobs that students from the UBC Okanagan Campus are looking for. Furthermore, many students are realizing that remaining in Kelowna following graduation could mean that they will not be able to find a job in their career field. When asked about the number one problem preventing recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna, one student commented, “I don’t know about other people but there is no job in Kelowna that would allow me to fulfill my potential”. This demonstrates (although not indicative of all respondents) that some final-year students feel that if they were to stay in Kelowna following graduation, they would need to expect to be underemployed and possibly in a career field in which they were not educated. Within the

same question, other individuals commented on the lack of “job opportunities (appropriate for degree earned)” and a “lack of potential career opportunities”.

Currently, major gaps exist between the degrees offered at the UBC Okanagan Campus and the degrees and educated individuals that are needed in Kelowna. One key informant mentioned that a better relationship and increased collaboration between the university and Employment Insurance could help to ensure that degrees align better with the work and education that is needed in the community. In emphasizing this lack of jobs in specified career areas one key informant identified this as a major problem:

I think UBC should be providing updates--I graduated years ago--as to what fields are needed right now. You know I took the human service worker program years ago and I met my husband which was a good thing but really there was very little work available. And when I did a survey only 4 out of 30 workers were working in the field. And so why were they paying for that when there was little or no need for those people?

Engineering graduates represented one of many faculties that experience issues in job hunting upon graduation. In 2010, 56 engineers out of 930 students (6%) graduated from The UBC Okanagan Campus (CITE). As demonstrated in Table 4, in 2006 only 4.4% of Kelowna’s labour force is natural and applied science related occupations, equating to 2,499 jobs.

Table 4. Labour Force by Occupation--2006.

Total experience labour force 15 years and over	Kelowna
Sales and service occupations	27.0%
Business, finance and administration occupations	17.3%
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	16.6%
Management occupations	11.0%
Occupations in social science, education, government service and religion	6.8%
Health occupations	5.9%
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	4.4%
Occupations unique to primary industries	4.1%
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	3.8%
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	3.1%

(Source: Adapted from Economic Development Commission, 2010c)

As the School of Engineering continues to grow, there are two actions that need to occur: more jobs need to be created and engineering companies need to relocate to Kelowna. If students are not able to find a job in which they do not feel underemployed and can use their education, they will leave Kelowna to find jobs elsewhere in order to feel valued and to feel that they are working to their full potential.

4.3.3 Is Relocation an Option?

Relocation back to Kelowna following an initial move after graduation could be a way to potentially have people come back to Kelowna to help the economy later in life. When respondents were asked if they intended to leave Kelowna, or planned to relocate back in the future, 41.0% of final-year students said they intended to return to Kelowna whilst 38.5%

said they did not. Many respondents agreed that there will still not be the career choices needed for their desired career in the future, stating “I don’t believe there will be the opportunities for me given my choice of career” and “I don’t think I can have a job in Kelowna.” Other respondents did not agree that Kelowna will change and therefore have no plans to return with one respondent stating, “[There are] no careers now and [I] do not want to raise kids here in the future”. Other final-year respondents commented on the lack of culture with one saying:

Culture--it’s not a fun city to live in. The city was designed for suburbs and doing so created a culture dependent on cars. I would like to walk and cycle to the places I’m interested in. It’s not realistic to do that in Kelowna. Furthermore, the nightlife in Kelowna sucks. The city caters to old people and people who vacation here, not young intelligent urbanites.

4.3.4 Summary

Kelowna’s demographics create severe problems in terms of retaining and encouraging young individuals to return to Kelowna later in life as many respondents do not think sufficient changes will have occurred to be employed or potentially raise families.

Employment barriers, in addition to living and housing cost barriers, are the key issues that were identified as inhibitors to final-year students in their decision whether to remain in or leave Kelowna following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Although these are the concerns of recent graduates, it is also important to understand if this is a trend amongst the UBC Okanagan Campus graduates, and if decisions have changed dramatically from past students.

4.4 Employment Sends Alumni Packing, Initially...

4.4.1 Overview

As mentioned in previous chapters, the UBC Okanagan Campus is a new campus of a very well-established institution. The UBC Okanagan Campus was created in 2005 with the first graduating class being in 2006. Since then, not only has the university continued to administer programs in the already established faculties created by Okanagan University College, but has also established new faculties and schools to allow students a wider range of choice for careers. For this research alumni students are defined as those previous UBC Okanagan Campus students that graduated from any faculty during the years 2006-2010.

Many alumni demonstrated the same pattern as The UBC Okanagan Campus final-year students in terms of leaving Kelowna following graduation. Forty seven alumni completed the online questionnaire survey. When alumni were asked if they remained living in the city of Kelowna for over a year following graduation, 66.7% of respondents said no whilst only 33.3% said yes. Many alumni cited the reasons for remaining in Kelowna was friends, family, graduate school, and employment. For those alumni that did not remain in Kelowna following graduation, many of their reasons for their decisions to leave were similar to the responses by final-year students who did not intend to remain in Kelowna. Many alumni moved to pursue graduate studies in other locations as their desired programs were not offered in Kelowna, and many students lived in other cities and commuted to Kelowna to attend university and so wanted to return home following graduation. The lack of graduate possibilities such as medical school and law school, as well as a longer Bachelor of Education program at the UBC Okanagan Campus compared with UBC Vancouver, turned students away from Kelowna. Another of the major reasons why alumni did not remain in

Kelowna following graduation was that there were few job opportunities for them if they were to stay. Some individuals had jobs lined up in other cities following graduation, but the majority of people left in the hope that they would find a job elsewhere. One respondent noted: “There was a lack of career opportunities in my field. Additionally, salaries in the Okanagan are much lower than other cities”. A few respondents admitted to simply not wishing to remain in Kelowna noting that there were flaws in the city itself: “I grew up there and was tired of living in a place with such a small-town feel, where people were largely closed-minded, conservative, and religious to the point of fanaticism”.

4.4.2 Barriers and Challenges--A Mirror Image: Employment, Housing and Living Cost

The second major barrier was the cost of purchasing a house. Many individuals upon graduation want to acquire a job and settle down, whether this is buying a house or simply securing a permanent residence. For those individuals who wish to have a family, buying a house is a number one priority. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s Housing Market Outlook, the median price for a single-detached house is \$675,000 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2011) while Demographia reports that median family income is only \$57,500 (Demographia, 2011). Depending on the monthly income of the family and down-payment, currently for a 25-year mortgage for \$575,000 at the rate of 4.19%, the monthly payment would be \$3,084.13 (Canada Trust, 2011). This is made increasingly difficult by projected housing cost increase in the next few years threatening to return prices to similar high levels seen before the global economic downturn. Alumni had similar responses to final-year students in terms of barriers and challenges that prevented alumni from remaining in Kelowna after graduation (Table 5). A lack of employment opportunities was the largest barrier that respondents had to overcome (82.9%).

In this questionnaire survey 41.5% of respondents mentioned that graduate school was keeping them from remaining in Kelowna following graduation (Table 5).

Table 5. Barriers and Challenges Preventing Alumni from Remaining in Kelowna after Graduation

	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Experienced	Response Count
Lack of Employment Opportunities	82.9% (34)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	14.6% (6)	41
The Cost of Purchasing a Home is Too High	70.7% (29)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	26.8% (11)	41
High Cost of Living	68.3% (28)	17.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	14.6% (6)	41
Rental Costs are Too High	58.5% (24)	7.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	34.1% (14)	41
Acceptance to Grad School elsewhere	42.8% (18)	11.9% (5)	11.9% (5)	33.3% (14)	42
Lack of sense of 'belonging' to the community	44.7% (17)	28.9% (11)	13.2% (5)	13.2% (5)	38
Attending University Elsewhere	41.5% (17)	9.8% (4)	12.2% (5)	36.6% (15)	41
Family Elsewhere	34.2% (14)	24.4% (10)	29.3% (12)	12.2% (5)	41
Lack of locations to socialize and attend it terms of bars, clubs, and meeting people	34.2% (14)	29.3% (12)	17.1% (7)	19.5% (8)	41
Lack of amenities (e.g., swimming pool, libraries)	14.6% (6)	43.3% (19)	31.7% (13)	7.3% (3)	41
Weather	2.4% (1)	26.8% (11)	58.5% (24)	12.2% (5)	41

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

One respondent commenting that the difference in length of graduate program was enough to persuade them to move from Kelowna: “The Bachelor of Education program at UBCO for elementary is 2 years, compared to 12 months in Vancouver.” The extra money saved by completing the shorter program in Vancouver is seen as a benefit for students and a factor that helps decides them that they should be leaving Kelowna. Depending on the economic climate and the individuals in the graduating class, more may choose to pursue graduate studies in any given year. Economic climate does have an impact that helps determine if individuals choose to go out into the workforce or if they choose to seek employment. The past couple of years have seen an economic downturn which is only just starting to right itself. Given that most of the alumni from this questionnaire survey were from the graduating class of 2009 and 2010 (a combined 72.1%) it is understandable why they chose to attend graduate school, making it the third most agreed statement, with determining barriers preventing recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna. One respondent commented that a major barrier was the “financial cost with student loan and no supports to integrate into Kelowna”. Both final-year students and alumni do not know or recall any services that financially helped recent graduates remain in Kelowna following graduation. When asked if there were enough job opportunities in Kelowna in their potential career field 92.9% of respondents said no while only 7.1% said yes. As determined in Figure 14, the majority of the students graduated from the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Science (72.1%) whilst 9.3% of respondents were from the Faculty of Management (Figure 14).

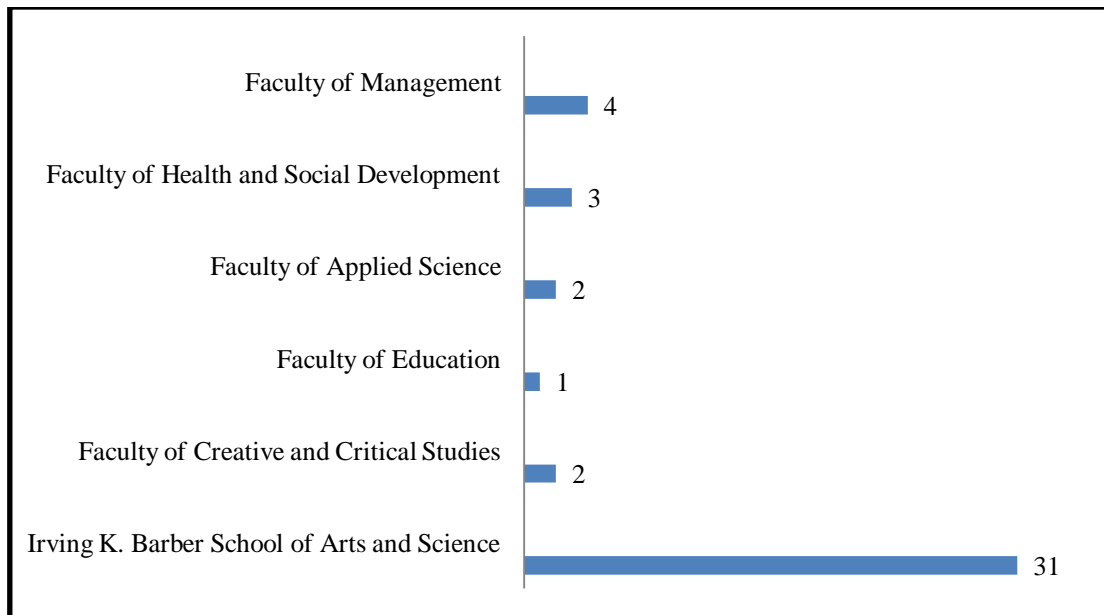


Figure 14. Breakdown of Graduating School of Alumni

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

One respondent was from the Faculty of Education, whilst two were from the Faculty of Applied Science, three from the Faculty of Health and Social Development and two from the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies. As mentioned before, many individuals reported the lack of jobs in Kelowna; no one faculty that felt they had an advantage when it came to finding jobs in the city following graduation.

Regarding employment, of the alumni respondents 74.4% (32 respondents) are currently employed, while 25.6% (or 11 respondents) are not. Only 67.6% of those alumni employed work full-time while 32.4% work part-time. Unlike final-year students, alumni currently have jobs that are more suited to their degree attainment from university such as economics researcher, Intern Just Governance Group, teacher, city planner, chemical analyst, registered nurse and social worker, to name a few. Of these alumni, 65.6% (21 respondents) currently have these jobs within the Central Interior, 9.4% (3 respondents) are employed within the

Lower Mainland; the remaining respondents are employed one each in Northern BC, Manitoba, and elsewhere in BC, three are employed in Alberta and two in Ontario.

A similar trend for final-year students is seen with alumni respondents regarding employment following graduation. 64.3% of alumni respondents reported not having a long-term job of more than four months following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus and only 60.0% of these individuals reported their job being in Kelowna. This lack of employment immediately following graduation is a major problem and significantly restricts the possibility of remaining in Kelowna for most graduates. Individuals cannot afford the high cost of housing in Kelowna and without a job they need to move elsewhere to gain employment and security.

When asked how their job was attained following graduation the majority of respondents said they went through the standard application and interview process: only one person said they attained their job through the continuation of a program created by the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (employed student nurse program).

4.4.3 Is Relocation an Option?

On the subject of returning to Kelowna, when alumni were asked if they intended to relocate back to Kelowna after leaving, only 12.5% of respondents said they did not intend on returning, meaning that more than half of those that left Kelowna following graduation did want to return to Kelowna in the future. The reasons why alumni did not want to return to Kelowna were similar to the reasons that pushed them to leave following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. While a couple of people cited that Kelowna is too expensive to live in, too small, and not culturally diverse enough, many respondents agreed that career and education prospects were not as bright as in other larger cities. One respondent noted that “it

is unlikely that the city will be able [to] provide jobs that are semi-related to my degree-- being my BA in international relations and my MA in poli sci". Another responded in a similar way suggesting it was the city itself that provided a reason for graduates to not return: "The city is overpopulated (and it is unsustainable due to water shortages)... and geographically the city is too spread out, making transportation for kids, work etc difficult, compared to say Victoria or Vancouver."

4.5 Summary

Alumni identified three major problems that prevent university graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus remaining in Kelowna following graduation. The lack of job and career opportunities is the biggest hindrance, with many graduates leaving because they cannot find a job or career in their career field. Many graduates noted that moving to a larger city offered opportunities in their career field that Kelowna could not. Employment was difficult to find within the graduates' career field and over two-thirds did not have a full-time job upon graduation.

The cost of living and purchasing a house was the second identified problem. National housing studies currently rank Kelowna 32nd in the national affordability ranking out of 35, with only Abbotsford BC, Victoria BC, and Vancouver BC ranking higher in housing market price. Alumni felt with the jobs and the potential pay the cost of housing in Kelowna would be too high for them to live comfortably.

A third factor for alumni was the prospect of graduate studies. Given the lack of jobs and the potential pay, alumni felt the cost of housing in Kelowna would be too high for them to live comfortably. Medical school, law school and pharmacy programs, were noted as programs that made it completely necessary for students to leave Kelowna, while others also

identified the education program at UBC Vancouver as a reason to leave Kelowna. The education program in Vancouver has an option for a twelve month elementary program option--a full year shorter than that offered at the UBC Okanagan Campus. For some alumni the prospect of saving a year's tuition made it a major pull factor to move to another city to complete their education (University of British Columbia: Faculty of Education, 2011).

Chapter 5: Recommendations for Reducing Student Retention Barriers

5.1 Overview

Kelowna is renowned for its beautiful surroundings, amenities, and is often branded as a tourist destination. However, despite its success in the area of tourist attraction, Kelowna suffers economically and demographically from a rapidly aging population. With a rapidly aging population comes a larger retiring population, a need for continued services and a thriving work force. With the creation of the UBC Okanagan Campus in 2005, the Okanagan now possesses a pool of qualified well-educated individuals from which employment in the local region can be drawn.

As illustrated by previous chapters, and despite Kelowna possessing this educated population, after graduation most students are deciding to leave the city and look for employment in other geographic areas. For these individuals that are choosing to leave Kelowna following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus, the largest barrier to overcome, and the reason why most are leaving, is the lack of “good” jobs in the city. Students referred to “good” jobs as ones that well-paid in their career field. Many respondents, both final-year students and alumni, determined the number one problem preventing young individuals and recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna was jobs; the second most common reason for both groups was cost of living. In the questionnaire-surveys administered to final-year and alumni, respondents reported that the cost of living was a major concern to them.

Two factors emphasize the need for the retention of recent graduates in Kelowna following graduation: (1) the importance to the city of young professionals and those between the ages of 24 to 35 years, and (2) that these highly educated recent graduates

cannot find work in Kelowna in their career field is an indicator that collaboration needs to exist between the UBC Okanagan Campus, the Economic Development Commission, the City of Kelowna and other levels of government.

This chapter offers potential solutions to help with the graduate and youth exodus in Kelowna. More specifically, this chapter recounts the largest barriers and offers suggestions from final-year students as well as alumni and key informants to help retain some of the young educated population from the UBC Okanagan Campus.

5.2 Recent Graduates: Necessary for Kelowna's Economic Development

The UBC Okanagan Campus's recent graduates have a significant role in Kelowna's future growth and economic development, and this is why it is important to understand why they are choosing to leave Kelowna. There are two major concerns that stem from the rapidly aging population of Kelowna: (a) Who will replace those that retire from the work force? and, (b) Who are going to provide for the retirees? Both concerns lead back to the population that is leaving Kelowna—namely the large youth exodus. Those that recently graduated and are well-educated individuals need to be replacing those that are retiring. It is those same people that can help provide for the retirees. An example of the potential workforce is from the UBC Okanagan Campus Medical School. It was designed not only to train medical students, but also give them experience in a location that desperately needs physicians.

There is major concern in the community about the aging population and youth exodus. Many key informants identify this problem in Kelowna as a major cause for concern with one saying:

... [First] we are where Canada will be about in 15 years, so we are ahead of the country by 15 years. Second, if you look at what is happening, we lost population last

year in our region as a whole. We [Kelowna] are the only development region that grew. Kelowna grew by 5% and the rest [of the BC regions] didn't. If we don't generate economic activity, we don't generate people coming into the region and this notion that we can attract people is not working provincially. Provincially we lost about 1,000 people--they already moved to other provinces.

Another key informant commented on the "talent pool" that the UBC Okanagan Campus brings to the region and the importance of attracting new businesses to the region. Until businesses are developed in the region that enable the university graduates to use their education, graduates will move elsewhere to be employed in their desired career. The survey conducted with final-year students and alumni shows that recent graduates do not want to be unemployed or underemployed following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. As one key informant mentioned: "they [the students] are coming out with highly marketable degrees" and have "a lot of highly desirable characteristics". A degree from UBC, a university ranked 22 among world universities, is a highly employable and well recognized degree (University of British Columbia, 2011). Students know what this degree is worth and they are willing to relocate to find a company that will hire them for their talent and education and will not simply settle for a job where they feel underemployed or not able to progress in their chosen field. One key informant went on to explain that recent graduates possess new innovative ideas with the potential to significantly help move a company in a direction not previously considered.

Key informants also noted that the attitude of Kelowna as a whole may have to change to allow new and young entrants to the work force to remain in Kelowna. One key informant

noted that graduates could only play a role if there are opportunities for them to stay. Another agreed by stating:

I see the recent graduates playing a small role in so far as attracting smaller businesses. I think until we can find this employment base that is needed for recently graduated students, they will have a minimal impact. In the future, I think their role will be a lot larger. They are needed to keep the economy going and are pivotal for future economic development.

What is evident from key informants is that the impact of recent graduates on Kelowna's economic development could be significant, but until the city can retain more graduates, their impact will remain minimal.

Individuals do see the value of having students remain in Kelowna following graduation, but for Kelowna it starts to become a race against time as the city continues to age. Kelowna needs to attract companies that will hire them for their attained degree with a reasonable wage so that they will remain in Kelowna and continue to attract companies to the region for future graduates and continue the cycle of economic growth. A threshold could appear within the next few years that marks the point at which companies will see the aging population and decreasing workforce as a major hindrance allowing successful relocation of their business to Kelowna.

5.3 The City of Kelowna: An Attractive Place

The city of Kelowna is known as one of the most beautiful places in Canada to live, with lakes, beaches and mountains it is hard to argue (Aguiar, Tomic and Trumper, 2005). With a playground at their fingertips it is no wonder why graduates try to find a career in Kelowna before choosing to move elsewhere. In order to understand what young individuals seek out

in a city, the questionnaire-survey asked both the final-year students and alumni to rate suggested factors in order of importance (Table 6).

Table 6. Importance of Factors Contributing to the Attractiveness of Kelowna: Final-Year Students

	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Response Count
Job Availability	100% (41)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	41
Desired Career	97.5% (40)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	41
Quality of Housing	92.7% (38)	4.9% (2)	2.4% (1)	41
Recreational Activities	87.9% (36)	9.8% (4)	2.4% (1)	41
Affordability of Housing	86.1% (39)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)	41
University	85.4% (35)	12.2% (5)	2.4% (1)	41
Weather	80.0% (32)	15.0% (6)	5.0% (2)	40
Culture (existence of art and music)	78.0% (32)	12.2% (5)	9.8% (4)	41
Amenities (e.g., swimming pools, libraries)	73.2% (30)	22.0% (9)	4.9% (2)	41
Cultural Diversity	73.2% (30)	9.8% (4)	17.1% (7)	41
Family Proximity	70.8% (29)	22.0% (9)	7.3% (3)	41
Population of People My Age	68.3% (28)	26.8% (11)	4.9% (2)	41
Variety of Restaurants	51.2% (21)	39.0% (16)	9.8% (4)	41
Nightlife	43.9% (18)	29.3% (12)	26.8% (11)	41

(Source: Final-Year Questionnaire-Survey, 2011).

Job availability was the most important factor that final-year students took into account when reviewing the attractiveness of Kelowna. One hundred percent of respondents felt that job availability was an important consideration in their decision to remain in Kelowna following graduation. Desired career was the second most important factor determining their decision to remain in or leave Kelowna at 97.5%. Quality of housing was regarded as the next most important factor at 92.7% that contributed to the attractiveness of Kelowna.

A very similar trend is seen with the alumni participants where the same three factors identified as the most important factors in attracting them to Kelowna (Table 7).

Table 7. Importance of Factors Contributing to the Attractiveness of Kelowna: Alumni

	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Response Count
Desired Career	100% (41)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	41
Job Availability	100% (41)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	41
Affordability of Housing	97.6% (40)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	41
Recreational Activities	97.6% (40)	2.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	41
Weather	87.8% (36)	7.3% (3)	4.9% (2)	41
Quality of Housing	87.8% (36)	9.8% (4)	2.4% (1)	41
University	87.5% (35)	12.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	40
Culture (existence of art and music)	86.2% (35)	12.2% (5)	2.4% (1)	41
Population of People My Age	83.2% (34)	17.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	41
Amenities (e.g., swimming pools, libraries)	80.5% (33)	19.5% (8)	0.0% (0)	41
Family Proximity	75.6% (31)	24.4% (10)	0.0% (0)	41
Variety of Restaurants	62.5% (25)	25.0% (10)	12.5% (5)	40
Cultural Diversity	61.0% (25)	34.1% (14)	4.9% (2)	41
Nightlife	46.3% (19)	43.9% (18)	9.8% (4)	41

(Source: Alumni Questionnaire-Survey, 2011)

Tables 6 and 7 show some of the factors contributing to the attractiveness of Kelowna.

Some of the factors presented in the tables were ones that could not be controlled such as

family proximity and weather, while some factors can be controlled such as amenities and affordable housing. These choices were designed to test the importance of the factors to recent graduates. By knowing what factors are important to this age group, there could be a greater likelihood of them staying if other factors they deem important were to be more accessible to them.

Knowing the important factors that attract people of this age group to Kelowna is necessary as it identifies why they come to the region but also what improvements could be made to attract others.

5.4 The Greatest Challenges: Employment, Services and Attitude

The emphasis in the importance retaining younger people in Kelowna is noted in the opinion of one key informant with another agreeing that you cannot have a “sustainable economy on retirees”. Another major concern regarding the future population and youth exodus arising from the aging demographic is how Kelowna is perceived by prospective businesses.

Big companies looking to establish themselves either in Canada or the province of British Columbia may have a harder time choosing the Okanagan and, in particular, Kelowna as a place for them to set-up their company. The majority (more than 80%) of companies in the Central Okanagan have fewer than 20 employees emphasizing the small-city feel that Kelowna still possesses (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2010c).

This again could deter companies from moving to Kelowna. One key informant commented:

Big companies are looking to establish themselves either in Canada or BC. I think it can hinder Kelowna as a place of choice because it's beautiful but they don't have the

population and the opportunities to grow to companies here so they have to choose a different market to up their business sales.

Without a large labour force to choose from, businesses do have the potential to fail if they move to Kelowna and cannot hire people or do not have the right consumers for their products or services. Kelowna is trying to entice more businesses to the region; however, it is important to attract the businesses and organizations that are most suited to the region in order to encourage and help economic development as well as the retention of young individuals. Kelowna has been known to attract high-technology organizations, and the film industry has been successful in attracting some business to the region. Increased cooperation and partnerships between the film industry and Kelowna could help in the retention of some of the graduated students. However, most film companies coming into the region bring employees from their original locations and do not use any qualified students from the Okanagan. In the example of a major motion picture being filmed entirely in the Okanagan, the whole crew was from Vancouver, many of whom had originally lived in Kelowna but had to move to acquire a job in the film industry. Coordination between companies and local institutions to hire qualified graduates or final-year students--in the hope they could remain in Kelowna following graduation--could significantly help with retention.

Not only could increased communication and cooperation between companies and qualified students be helpful, but Kelowna needs to be selective on the types of industries it tries to attract to the region. High-technology firms can be very successful and generate revenue; however, if the local workforce does not comprise of individuals in this career field there is no reason why these firms would remain in Kelowna. The UBC Okanagan Campus is not a large producer of high-technology degrees; there are other institutions in Kelowna with

the ability to educate and grant technology degrees, but the largest one cannot. The UBC Okanagan Campus educates many individuals in the Arts, Science, Engineering and Management faculties to name a few; however, there are few companies to support many of these education fields. Jobs in Kelowna are not tailored to employ many in these more specialized degrees, such as education, engineering, and management. One key informant commented on the issue of educated individuals without relevant careers in Kelowna following graduation:

I think UBC should be providing updates--I graduated years ago--as to what fields are needed right now. You know, I took the Human Service Worker program years ago...And when I did a survey only 4 out of 30 workers were working in the field. And so why were they paying for that when there was little or no need for those people? So I think UBC needs to be working with EI to make sure that they are in alignment and see where the deficiencies lie in terms of education. Especially like electrical and plumbing and those kinds of fields because you kind of lose the people to Alberta.

If individuals choose to stay here following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus without a well-paying job, they could be unable to live comfortably; that is why so many choose to leave Kelowna in the hopes of finding a job in their career field.

The challenges that key informants encounter in accommodating post-secondary students' needs and preferences were different with each respondent. Giving graduated students the opportunity to gain experience was one of the most difficult challenges that key informants must face. One noted that there is no longer any incentive for many people to hire recent graduates as cooperation between the federal, provincial and municipal governments

has dwindled. This reduction has been accompanied by a lack of funding that was used in the past to help subsidize wages so students and recent graduates could gain work-related experience. The key informant believed that “it would be helpful to have some kind of bridge because at the end of the day for us we hire a person because of the collective agreement unless it’s through a co-op program....there is no real incentive to us”. A potential solution was to mitigate the cost of a new graduate employee and was suggested to help the students and the employers. Unfortunately, this is usually at the discretion of economic climate and also the government in power, so the financial backing could never be guaranteed.

Services are offered in Kelowna particularly to help recent graduates; however, most are found at the UBC Okanagan Campus. Other organizations have services but help the community as a whole and are not specifically designed for recent graduates. As mentioned previously, there are groups in Kelowna aiming to provide social networking opportunities for young professionals (those usually in their 20s and 30s); however, the success of these groups is dependent on the number of young individuals that remain in Kelowna following graduation. It is doubtful these social groups will be the lone factor when deciding to remain in or leave Kelowna following graduation, but instead will assist in young people feeling a sense of belonging to the community. If it is not possible to obtain a well-paid job in Kelowna, people will leave regardless of the social networking opportunities.

A variety of services are currently offered in Kelowna to help with employment opportunities: the YMCA-YWCA Employment Services helps individuals create resumes and cover letters and have numerous resources designed to help individuals find work: Service Canada is designed to help with employment, CBC Network is a full-service career management and employment resource centre, and some services are offered by Kelowna

Community Resources. As far as housing resources are concerned, not a lot is available to individuals in Kelowna if the only difficulty is low or no income. Housing help in Kelowna exists for subsidized family housing, subsidized seniors' special needs housing, housing for people with mental disabilities or illnesses, addictions recovery housing, housing for non-seniors with physical disabilities or illnesses, and emergency shelters.

Some organizations offer subsidized housing for individuals with financial difficulties. NOW Canada, the Society of Hope, Columbian Centennial Housing Society, Evangel, Family Manor, Father Delestre Housing Society, Okanagan Métis and Aboriginal Housing Society, all offer low-income housing; however, these are all targeted to women, or low-income families, or those with cultural heritage association and ancestry. Services currently exist in Kelowna to help with employment, housing and socializing; however, the question remains to what extent these services are known.

5.5 Current Service Knowledge

Knowledge about the services offered is pivotal in making sure that they are assisting as many people as possible. With reference to the first research question, if no services or help is offered to encourage graduates to remain in Kelowna following graduation, this could compel them to leave. These services are in danger of closing if they do not supply help to individuals and without knowledge that these services exist it is possible they could be forced to close. Part of this study was also used to question if participants knew services that exist in Kelowna to help with the retention of graduate students. The information received will be a good indicator as to the awareness of people for whom those services could play a significant.

5.5.1 Services: Are They Known?

Final-year students and alumni offered great insight into provided services that may help them remain in Kelowna. When asked if they were aware of any services (from the community of The UBC Okanagan Campus), organizations, or community groups that were currently available to help with the transition, from post-secondary education to the workplace, 75% (30 respondents) of final-year students said no. For those 25% of students that know of a service, many identified the UBC Okanagan Campus services such as CareerConnect, career fairs and Career Services; others reported knowing of the Employment Resources Centre. When alumni were asked the same question, a lower 65.9% of respondents said “no” while 34.1% of alumni reported knowing a service offered to help with transitioning into full-time work from post-secondary education. Similar to final-year students, many respondents reported The UBC Okanagan Campus services such as the UBC Career Centre, and the UBC Okanagan Campus Alumni Affairs. Alumni commenting on the services provided by the institution found it had a “very limited perspective” with “[no job] positions of interest through this service”. Three external programs were mentioned: the New Graduate Program offered through Interior Health, government employment services, and Service Canada. The New Graduate Program by Interior Health offers employment in the Interior region of British Columbia to recent graduate nurses. Both government employment services and Service Canada offer employment services to help the general public find jobs.

This lack of knowledge about services available suggests that services provided in Kelowna and by the university designed to help with employment opportunities are not well-known to students at the university; if known, programs are thought of as ineffective. An analysis of known services also reveals that students only know or remember employment

services and not others such as social programs and housing opportunities even when prompted by the initial question for housing, youth networks, or community groups as suggestions.

5.5.2 Key Informants: Knowledge of Services

Key informants were chosen for their expertise on the topics of economic development, student attraction and retention and also because their organization or businesses provide key services for the younger demographic within Kelowna. Participants recognize services that provide social, housing and employment opportunities to residents. Many respondents dealt directly with the UBC Okanagan Campus and worked and collaborated with the career services department in order to post jobs or provide co-op education opportunities. The Economic Development Commission provides services for employment opportunities. The Foreign Worker Service Program was created to both attract and retain foreign workers of all ages to Kelowna while they also help graduates and individuals with aspirations to be entrepreneurs by providing both programs and funding. The City of Kelowna provides infrastructure support services which directly impact the city--for example, requests for the transit system from the university help the entire city and this can be a deciding factor whether a person chooses to remain or leave in Kelowna following graduation. Those services provided by the UBC Okanagan Campus departments include co-op services, mentoring--as offered by the alumni department, workshops to both current and graduated students on resume writing, interview skills and job search tools.

In order to gain an understanding about shared community knowledge, the ten key informants participating in the study were each asked the following question: What services currently exist that aim to retain youth residing in Kelowna? The answers to this question

from key informants were very similar to final-year students and alumni, with many not knowing of services being offered with this aim. Some key informants recounted the cultural service division, youth employment opportunities and aid, the recreation leagues, CBD Network, Young Professional Networks, and entrepreneur programs offered by the Economic Development Commission. Another respondent noted the use of youth forums in Kelowna “as this was to give the youth a feel for a community because [they] feel that often the youth don’t think they have any say in decision making.” The inclusion of youth helps them feel involved in decision making and not overlooked. A sense of belonging to the community is a tie that could assist in deciding whether to leave or remain in Kelowna following graduation. Other key informants noted the YMCA-YWCA Employment Services and Parkinson Recreation Centres play a role in providing key services to help retain students in Kelowna. One particular informant agreed that services were difficult to recall and also questioned their awareness:

So there’s services geared towards employment, yeah-- some geared towards housing, some towards cultural opportunities but I do wonder about how effective we are ensuring or creating awareness of these services. Because it’s one thing to have services, it’s another thing to have the people that need it being linked up to it.

Key informants questioned not only the existence of services but also their use. Slightly different from the answers given by final-year students and alumni, Key Informants recognized housing services that the city provides, especially those administered through local not-for-profits and also BC Housing.

Attitudes were a challenge mentioned by several key informants. Kelowna’s attitude was suggested as needing to change. Key informants recognize that until employment structures

in Kelowna change, recent graduates may only have a minimal impact on the city. An issue that was addressed by one key informant was that of small-city attitudes:

... [U]ntil Kelowna has some of that old-school boys club mentality, and you know there is old money and particular families that have been here for so long that there will have to be some changes. There will have to be more opportunities created. I don't know if that means more businesses coming to Kelowna, and it's going to have to mean a lot of employers taking on a lot of young, inexperienced people and I have a hard time envisioning that as that is a daunting task--but that's the way it is.

Another key informant elaborated on the attitude of Kelowna: "Kelowna really seems to be for lack of better terms old-school and stuck to experience and I think it's an older way of thought as Kelowna is not really used to having a university and educated individuals". The key informants' views on "attitude" were similar to that of final-year student and alumni participants; many of these regarded Kelowna as an "old city" in which many old attitudes still remain and cultural diversity and integration does not occur. With a new generation comes the need for change, and Kelowna needs to adapt. While there is a significant population that is of retirement age, there are many young families that also make Kelowna home. If Kelowna wants to retain graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus, attitudes regarding culture and needs will have to change. Kelowna transit is an example of a service that those that wish to remain in the city following graduation need. Individuals that are trying to make Kelowna their home may not want to pay a large expense by buying a car and will instead rely on transit. However, if the service is not convenient they will be forced to buy a car making it a significant purchase and therefore, again, may prefer to move to a city with reliable transit and therefore a lower cost of living as a car will no longer be necessary.

5.6 Recommendations

Many recommendations were put forward by final-year students, alumni and key informants about what could be better done to retain students in Kelowna that graduate from the UBC Okanagan Campus. These recommendations, particularly from final-year students and alumni, give some insight as to what could entice them to stay and what they value in the community. In the questionnaire-surveys distributed to final-year students and alumni, three questions asked about recommendations that could help retain students in Kelowna following graduation.

5.6.1 The UBC Okanagan Campus Students

Final-year students and alumni identified reasons why they would choose to leave Kelowna but also suggested recommendations and services that would help them remain in the city. When the question was asked if there are any additional services that would help recent graduates remain in Kelowna, many responses simply replied “no”, indicating their strong feelings and an attitude of fatigue and tiredness. In terms of services however, of those that answered the question “job placement” was the number one most common response. Individuals want to be able to receive their education and then be employable in a field relevant to their education background; they do not want to be underemployed.

The second most common service that final-year students suggested was “programs”. By this, many respondents suggested programs related to job placements and career fairs. One key informant noted that many of the career fairs that take place at The UBC Okanagan Campus are directed towards the specialized faculties such as engineering and particularly management. They specified that many banking firms and civil engineering firms attend the career fairs, but included very few companies seeking to hire graduates from arts, sciences,

and human kinetics. Another suggestion was continued co-op programs or apprenticeship-type programs to help with the gap between education and the lack of experience for the job market.

Alumni identified the same service needs as final-year students: an increase in available jobs and the lack of career opportunities in Kelowna. Firstly, alumni agreed with final-year students that more jobs are needed in Kelowna. As previously discussed, alumni were concerned about the lack of coordination between the degrees offered at the UBC Okanagan Campus and the jobs available in the community. If the UBC Okanagan Campus was established in Kelowna to entice individuals to stay after graduation and thereby helping create more of a population mix, jobs within the city need to align with the degrees offered at the university. This problem was echoed by alumni as many said they had to leave the region following graduation because of a lack of job opportunities.

The third major service that alumni suggested was not so much a change in service but a change in attitude. Many alumni identified the general attitude of Kelowna as a serious factor that contributes to the decision of youth and graduates not to remain in Kelowna. One alumni respondent commented, “other than job availability, probably the lack of a “big city mentality” that so many people need”, while another agreed, “Kelowna isn’t a great place for young people, unless they are uber-conservative and have connections that help them to get jobs.” Respondents’ determined that the attitude of Kelowna is a factor preventing young people from remaining in the city following graduation. The conservative style and attitudes in Kelowna are negative factors for respondents as they say many services are geared towards those individuals over the age of 65 or close to retirement. This also translates into the workforce with respondents noting the lack of a technology sector; also the many family

businesses within Kelowna define it as a difficult place to gain employment following graduation.

Students also noted some incentives that would make them consider remaining in Kelowna following graduation. The most popular of these incentives was housing help. Recent graduates do not feel, given the wages they would receive from being employed in Kelowna, that they could afford to live in the city. Given the high rental prices and the high cost of housing, graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus do not feel they can afford to live comfortably in Kelowna. Therefore, many leave to pursue the possibility of higher paying jobs elsewhere in order to afford a place to live. Final-year students suggested that help with affordable housing help in the form of subsidies to target lower wages and escalating housing costs would be an incentive that would enable them to consider remaining in Kelowna following graduation. If there was subsidized housing to help recent graduates or youth between the ages of 23 to 30, many feel this would be a major pull factor as there is currently very little housing focussed towards this demographic.

Some respondents identified tax incentives that could allow them to remain in Kelowna following graduation. Some respondents noted the benefits of a program by the Government of Saskatchewan. The Graduate Retention Program rewards students for deciding to pursue their futures and careers in Saskatchewan by providing a rebate of up to \$20,000 of tuition fees paid by eligible graduates. Originally this program was designed to keep those that graduated from a post-secondary institution in Saskatchewan to remain in Saskatchewan. However, the program has now been expanded to include and attract those from outside the province who decide to move to the province in order to pursue careers (Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). Although this program is administered by the province, respondents

suggested perhaps the municipal government could create one to target youth in Kelowna. Respondents suggested a retention bonus--graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus could gain employment with a company in Kelowna and then be eligible for either a tax rebate or a retention bonus come tax time.

Fourth, students commented on wanting more programs. There were many respondents who commented that an increased variety of programs at the UBC Okanagan Campus would help to retain students for graduate school. More professional programs at the university such as pharmacy and law, as well as increased graduate programs and course options, have the potential to keep graduates in Kelowna for another one or two years whilst they complete a specialized or graduate degree. Upon finishing graduate programs, the additional education might enable these more qualified graduates to gain employment in Kelowna. Many students reported having to leave Kelowna in order to pursue graduate work elsewhere because of the limited and non-specific programs offered at the UBC Okanagan Campus. Respondents suggest that if the university offered more specific and specialized graduate programs, there would most definitely be the possibility of them remaining in Kelowna for at least one to two additional years.

Final-year students and alumni identified very similar issues regarding the retention of graduated students in Kelowna following their education at the UBC Okanagan Campus. In order to combat this problem, the solutions suggested were also very similar with jobs, programs and attitudes, as the changes needed to keep this young population in Kelowna following graduation. Key informants identified additional services that could be created or extended to stop the issues of youth exodus.

5.6.2 Key Informants

Key informants noted recommendations for services and incentives that could have the potential to keep the young demographic in Kelowna and were similar to that of final-year students and alumni. The three most common suggestions given by key informants were the improvement of programs, increased collaboration between the university, government and the community, and monetary incentives.

Key informants commented most on programs and emphasized the need for increased employment opportunities. Employment partnerships in terms of internships were mentioned frequently as informants understand the unique job market that Kelowna possesses. Although newly graduated students may possess a degree from one of the top universities in Canada, the lack of experience which most graduates leave university with is hindering their chances of finding a job in their career field. One key informant commented on the need to move away from rigid job specifications and pay more attention to the individual: how they work as part of a group and what innovative ideas or perspective they can bring to the job. In addition, one recommendation advocated by many key informants included adding an incentive to employers for hiring graduates. One key informant elaborated on this incentive by commenting:

I wonder if it's a case of needing to work with employers maybe and with the federal, provincial governments to provide tax incentives to businesses or credit for hiring recent grads and have even more impetus to create positions for those grads.

Kelowna, being a mid-sized city, does not possess many large companies in which people can gain experience and work their way up within the company. Because of this, many employees have to be hired already possessing the attributes, education, or experience needed

in order to ensure their small business or organization survives. One other suggestion was the possibility of work contracts whereby the new graduate employee signs on for a three-year contract with the company thereby keeping them within Kelowna and also guaranteeing the workers contract for a three-year term.

Flexibility is another incentive that one key informant suggested. Noting Kelowna as a city that possesses many amenities, recreation opportunities and good weather, it was suggested that one incentive might be individual businesses helping recent graduates. If companies would consider hiring recent graduates, it was suggested that innovative strategies could be used to entice recent graduates to stay. Instead of working from 9:00am to 5:00pm, it was suggested maybe individuals could ski or snowboard in the morning and come in to complete a half-day, whilst possibly spreading the work week across six days instead of five. In this way, incentives could be given by individual businesses and need not to involve the government.

The second suggestion mentioned by key informants was the need for increased collaboration. Key informants believe increased collaboration between the university and City of Kelowna need to be fostered including other potential partnerships--such as those that would exist with businesses. One key informant commented on the research being conducted at the UBC Okanagan Campus, stressing many are researching and trying to solve real-world problems that may also be on the city's agenda. Engineering or transport research is good examples of this: the city can really benefit from the primary research being conducted at the UBC Okanagan Campus. In this way, research can be targeted to real problems that need solving and the city will benefit from the results. Other informants recognized the need for more networking opportunities beyond unprofessional groups. The opportunities for

graduated students to meet not only each other, but also working individuals from the community, would be an additional help to recent graduates that try to find work in the Okanagan.

Finally, monetary incentives were suggested by key informants, understanding that this may not be feasible but would probably entice more recent graduates and youth to remain in Kelowna. One key informant commented on a program in Quebec in which there is a five-year tax break granted to certain new graduates in particular professions. He noted that this could greatly encourage the UBC Okanagan Campus graduates to stay in Kelowna and find work. Tax incentives were mentioned as having the potential to significantly impact the percentage of graduates that remain in Kelowna following graduation; however, all respondents that mentioned this method noted that with the current economic strain, this would most likely not occur. There was also some debate as to whose responsibility the tax incentive would fall under: the municipal, provincial or federal government. Subsidized living was a suggestion by a key informant who identified major problems for those who are unable to gain full-time experience or employment. Lack of part-time opportunities and subsidized housing could result in graduates leaving following graduation. Subsidized living for those unable to gain full-time employment such as teaching and nursing would be beneficial for the region. Once formal education has been completed, many individuals need to begin working on a part-time basis to gain on the job experience. For someone involved in teaching, often they will have to be employed as a Teacher-On-Call (TOC) list and only then may they progress to become fully employed in the school district. The key informant notes “it’s the same with nursing, there are not a lot of full-time positions and people just have to wait in limbo to get those shifts”. Subsidized housing would benefit those that are unable to

gain full-time employment in Kelowna following graduation by allowing them to live in the city whilst gaining the experience needed through part-time employment, which if unable to do, could result in their leaving Kelowna for employment elsewhere to secure a good standard of living and good pay.

Key informants identified many of the same recommendations as both final-year students and alumni but caution that some solutions need the support of the provincial and federal governments. Many of the recommendations were directed towards the municipal government; however, others such as increased career services could be implemented at the UBC Okanagan Campus. The suggested solutions are only informal ideas but could be feasible if research into their implementation and success is completed.

5.7 Summary

Youth exodus is a primary concern to Kelowna. The creation of a world-famous institution of higher education should have alleviated some concerns due to attracting more students to the region. Kelowna has significant challenges and barriers that prevent students from staying to work in the city following their graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. At the same time, these graduates are being labelled one of the most important factors determining Kelowna's future economic development. Currently their role remains small due to the lack of an employment base for recently graduated students; however, they have the potential to significantly expand if it is possible to keep a larger population in Kelowna after their formal education. Under or unemployment, a lack of affordable housing, few jobs and Kelowna's conservative attitude are push factors for many recent graduates from the university, with many of them leaving for larger cities to be employed in their chosen career

field. Kelowna's small-city mentality pushes youth away from the city, because many youth want a more diversified culture, social opportunities and better public transportation.

Final-year students, alumni and key informants all agreed that the most serious problem preventing the retention of students from the UBC Okanagan Campus after graduation is the lack of jobs available. Final-year students and alumni asserted that they would not remain in Kelowna to be underemployed or unemployed and would travel to another city to seek gainful employment. Recommendations for this primary problem were focused on increasing collaboration between the university, businesses and the municipality, with additional services from the UBC Okanagan Campus being made available for career fairs, co-op opportunities or internships so that some experience could be gained before graduation. Possible tax incentives were also suggested to encourage businesses to hire recent graduates who may lack experience but have a world-class education.

Programs were also a major concern for both final-year students and alumni, with both showing concerns over the current program selection at the UBC Okanagan Campus. Although their entrance into graduate school at the university would not ensure their remaining in Kelowna following their graduate degree, it would enable them to remain in Kelowna for another one to two years to complete their graduate studies. In addition, this demonstrates the attitudes of these students: they like Kelowna. If given the change, they would remain in Kelowna to pursue graduate studies but they recognize that the UBC Okanagan Campus does not offer the programs that would make them stay. The lack of specialized graduate degrees, including very few professional degrees such as law, concerns students and forces them to leave Kelowna. Also noted was that program offering does not match up to the jobs or career fields in Kelowna, with many having to leave Kelowna in

order to remain in their desired career. Housing programs were also suggested, with possible tax incentives for recent graduates remaining in the region to work following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Again, collaboration and increased community ties were suggested to make it clear to the university which degrees are in high-demand in Kelowna, as many are educated in a career field in which no jobs exist in Kelowna.

Attitude was the final major concern mentioned by final-year students, alumni and key informants. Kelowna is stereotyped as being a very conservative “white” city with little multiculturalism and diversity. Many sought out a more accepting city after graduation with some noting they do not wish to raise children in a predominantly conservative and ‘white’ city such as Kelowna. Given the conservative attitudes, respondents did not see Kelowna changing policies and practices in the foreseeable future and catering to younger populations, but instead saw the city remaining focussed on the retiring population and their needs. Although recommendations to change a city’s attitude are not too feasible, it is necessary to begin at one focussed point. If more businesses were to hire recent graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus, attitudes towards youth and services would change and might create a domino effect throughout different services in Kelowna. Change in Kelowna has never been fast, but as times change and economic development and population growth slows, it is necessary to adapt to current circumstances.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Overview

Kelowna's youth will be an integral part of the city's future growth and success, with the recent graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus being prime candidates to help the city maintain a mixed population. Kelowna's population has been expanding in recent years, resulting in 19% of the population over 65 years of age and retired, or soon to be retiring. With an expected decline in population growth, it is pivotal that youth and young professionals be attracted to or retained in Kelowna.

Kelowna attracts many tourists and retirees, but with the creation of the UBC Okanagan Campus it was hoped that this would be an incentive for students to come to the region. Since opening in 2005, over 7,000 students now study at the UBC Okanagan Campus; however, the hope that the university would encourage youth to remain in the region following graduation has never really come to fruition, with many choosing to leave Kelowna after completing their education at the UBC Okanagan Campus. The percentage of the population aged 25 to 34 years experienced a significant decline between the years 1991 to 2006 with a 3.5% drop of that age group. Despite the creation of the UBC Okanagan Campus in 2005, there was still a severe drop in that age group emphasizing Kelowna's need to retain graduates (Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, 2009).

As identified the literature review, there are few studies on student retention in cities. Those that have been completed occur in Eastern Canada (Darchen and Tremblay, 2010). Little is known about student retention in large or mid-sized cities, particularly a city with such an unusual population mix as that of Kelowna. The goal of the present study is to examine the decisions of degree recipients from the University of British Columbia

Okanagan, Kelowna, in whether to remain or leave Kelowna following graduation. This study identified the main reasons for the youth exodus following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus, and ascertained what would enable or encourage them to remain living in Kelowna following graduation. In addition, this study explored the role of recent graduates in Kelowna's economic development, understanding that this demographic group is essential for the continued growth of the city.

This study concluded with a section on recommendations for the successful retention of recent graduates from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Understanding the demographic bias of Kelowna and its mid-sized status in comparison to other major cities, the recommendations provide unique solutions customized to Kelowna's specific needs. The data for this study was comprised of 10 key informant interviews, a questionnaire-survey completed by 42 of the UBC Okanagan Campus alumni, and a questionnaire-survey completed by 48 final-year students at the UBC Okanagan Campus.

6.2 Research Findings

The retention of students in Kelowna following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus was low amongst respondents. The majority of final-year students do not intend to remain in Kelowna following graduation. Similarly, over two-thirds of alumni did not remain living in Kelowna after obtaining a degree from the UBC Okanagan Campus. Many respondents moved from or intend to move out of Kelowna within 6 months following graduation in search of employment.

In response to the first research question regarding the forces behind students' decisions to leave Kelowna after obtaining an undergraduate degree at the UBC Okanagan Campus, respondents noted four major barriers preventing them from remaining in Kelowna following

graduation: lack of job opportunities, high cost of housing, Kelowna's conservative 'ageist' attitude and finally a lack of program options at the university. Students from the UBC Okanagan Campus are fully aware of the power of their degree. Four years at a high-standing, world-ranked institution gives them an education better than many other individuals: an education which they are not willing to compromise when it comes to finding employment. Many respondents noted a lack of jobs in their chosen career field and would rather leave Kelowna to seek gainful employment in their educated field than be unemployed or underemployed by remaining in Kelowna. Surveyed final-year students and alumni concluded that there are no jobs available here in their chosen career field.

Respondents also addressed the lack of affordable housing in Kelowna. If they wished to purchase a house or a condominium, many respondents felt that they would need to move elsewhere. A lack of desirable jobs and low wages were contributing factors that created financial constraints on the respondents, many noting that following graduation they need to pay-off student loans and lines of credit, thus making it nearly impossible and certainly undesirable to remain in Kelowna with a part-time job paying less money in a non-desired career position.

Kelowna's attitude was considered a barrier for youth retention in the city with respondents commenting on Kelowna's conservative and "ageist" attitude. Respondents commented they did not wish to remain in a city in which they felt unwelcomed. Many commented wanting to raise children in a more culturally diverse environment with services aimed at the general population and not just seniors.

The need for programs to help final-year students and alumni integrate into the workforce, particularly in Kelowna, were the final barrier preventing the retention of the UBC

Okanagan Campus graduates in Kelowna. Two program recommendations were identified: the need for graduate programs at the UBC Okanagan Campus, and the need for programs that help graduates find employment in Kelowna. Final-year students and alumni both commented that more variety in graduate programs at the UBC Okanagan Campus might see them remain in Kelowna to complete graduate studies. Alumni in particular noted that the lack of graduate and professional programs forced them to leave Kelowna following graduation. Key informants also noted the lack of alignment between programs at the UBC Okanagan Campus and what is needed in the community in terms of education and degrees. One key informant in particular stressed the need for collaboration between the university and the city to make students aware of the job opportunities and the relevant education needed to fill these positions; this may be possible to prevent large numbers of unemployed or underemployed graduates. Programs to help final-year Year students and alumni integrate into the work-force, particularly in Kelowna, were stressed by respondents. Career fairs that include all faculties, résumé writing, interviewing skills workshops, and workshops that can help students find jobs in Kelowna following graduation were recommended by respondents.

Regarding the second research question, determining the implications of student exodus from the city of Kelowna, there are major implications resulting from youth leaving Kelowna. The youth exodus, combined with the aging population Kelowna currently experiences, is producing a diminishing workforce resulting in a decrease in economic development. Businesses will not relocate to Kelowna if there is not the workforce to keep them in operation; this in turn will not allow the city to grow both in population and economic prosperity. With Kelowna's aging demographic being ahead of Canada's by 15 years, if economic activity is not generated, people will not remain or relocate to Kelowna.

The notion no longer exists that economic development and population can be derived from attracting people from other areas of the province, as many of them are choosing to leave British Columbia to pursue careers elsewhere in Canada. Kelowna's need for continued economic development and future growth resides largely in the power of the local university. The UBC Okanagan Campus was established in Kelowna to attract students to the region and retain some of them following graduation. The university has the potential to attract diverse organizations to the region and collaborate in a way that benefits the students, the organizations and the city.

In response to the third research question regarding the implementation of policy strategies to retain graduated students, strategies were recommended by final-year, alumni and key informants. In addition to final-year students and alumni, key informants in this study offered recommendations to improve student retention in Kelowna and addressed the barriers and challenges that prevent recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna. Key informants cited that major issues exist and improvements need to occur in the areas of jobs, collaboration and attitude.

The selection of jobs available needs to be improved for graduate students. Many key informants indicated that the types of jobs available for graduate students do not take into account their lack of experience. In lieu of the little experience attained by well-educated students, key informants noted that businesses need to start hiring younger employees on the basis of personality, how well they would adjust to the given work environment, what ideas and innovation they could bring to the company, and how well they would collaborate with individuals. Increased co-op terms and internships were also suggested as a means to give university students work experience by the time they complete their degree. Tax incentives

were also mentioned by many key informants as a way to encourage businesses and organizations to hire recent graduates that may be less experienced than other applicants. In this way the organization would benefit from the tax incentive and potentially the new, innovative ideas brought by the recent graduates, and the graduate student would benefit from being employed and gaining relevant experience. Key informants noted working with the federal, provincial and municipal governments, will be needed in order to employ this strategy for student retention.

Key informants also noted the need for increased cooperation and collaboration between the UBC Okanagan Campus and the city of Kelowna. Programs in sustainability tie the City of Kelowna to the research conducted by students and faculty with funding provided for research. The need to solve real-world problems is an area in which the UBC Okanagan Campus is gradually entering and still needs to expand. Collaboration between the university, the City of Kelowna and the Economic Development Commission is needed in order to understand the types of jobs that could be introduced to the region and what qualifications are needed to be employed in these fields. As one key informant noted, it is not beneficial to educate students and then send them out into the workforce with no hope of being hired as their career does not require employees. Careers needed in the region should be identified and then made evident to students at the UBC Okanagan Campus so they do not enter the workforce with no hope of obtaining a job and then be forced to move.

Similar to final-year students and alumni respondents, key informants noted that Kelowna's attitude is a factor that pushes recent graduates and youth away from Kelowna. Many noted an ageist attitude that did not enable recent graduates to feel connected to the

community which is why the relationship and communication between the university and the community is so important.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Due to constraints in time and resources, this study was limited to a sample size of 42 alumni, 48 final-year students and 10 key informants. The response rate for the final-year and alumni questionnaire surveys were 2% and 4% respectively. The results from this study provide only a small investigation into why recent graduates are not remaining in a mid-sized city following graduation and thus cannot be generalized to other youth populations in other cities. However, this study does provide an exploratory examination into the various problems that recent graduates encounter when deciding whether to remain in Kelowna following graduation that can then be addressed more thoroughly with further research.

Limitations of this study include a sampling bias as the sample was not a random sample of the study population but instead relied upon the students to have given their email address to the UBC Okanagan Campus (Babbie, 1998; Creswell, 2009). In addition, the number and diversity of respondents might not truly represent the study population; there might be overrepresentation from one faculty; however, some may remain underrepresented. As a limited number of previous studies have been completed on mid-sized populations, the results cannot be generalized and compared to other cities. This questionnaire did not take into account those students and alumni that do not have access to computers or possess poor computer skills.

This study focussed on a number of barriers and challenges that prevent recent graduates from remaining in Kelowna following graduation. Although the barriers and challenges faced by students graduating from the UBC Okanagan Campus in their attempt to remain living in

Kelowna was the central aim of the study, other issues such as the housing market were also discussed. It is necessary to remember that Kelowna is only one case study; other cities may have similar problems in areas of youth retention, employment and housing. It can be argued that the experiences of recent graduates in Kelowna cannot translate to other mid-sized cities in Canada. This exploratory study offers a more in-depth knowledge in this area by providing a sample of the experiences of recent graduate students from the UBC Okanagan Campus in an understudied mid-sized city.

6.4 Avenues for Further Research

Avenues for further research were identified at the end of this study. The way in which the questionnaire surveys were administered was a barrier that could be made better for future studies. It is suggested that the ease of an internet survey can act both positively and negatively on the response rate (Dillman, 2011). An internet survey can be faster for respondents to complete, but on the other hand just as fast to delete. A mail survey may provide a higher response rate as surveys become more personalized and therefore may be more likely to complete the study (Dillman, 2011). Incentives, monetary or otherwise, may be another way to improve the response rate if a similar study is completed in the future.

Findings of this study identify further avenues for future research:

1. Larger samples of final-year students and alumni are needed in future studies to increase the generalizability of the findings to other recent graduates.
2. In order to see if the expansion of services is beneficial, further studies could be conducted after their implementation to see if this has an effect on recent graduates' decisions to remain in or leave Kelowna following graduation from the UBC Okanagan Campus.

3. Studies that include other post-secondary institutions in Kelowna would create a more comprehensive understanding on the decisions of graduates to remain in or leave Kelowna. This may also create a better understanding as to the types of educated individuals e.g., recent graduates from Okanagan College with a diploma in Civil Engineering Technology Diploma may not experience difficulty in finding a job following graduation.
4. Further research should be conducted on policy recommendations and practices that may be applicable within the context of this study population to try and ensure the retention of some of Kelowna's recent graduates.
5. Research into the feasibility of creating programs such as internship opportunities and tax or hiring incentives for businesses in order to hire recent graduates, should be studied. Companies do not want to be disadvantaged by hiring well-educated but inexperienced recent graduates so a bridge is needed between institutional education and entrance into the workforce.
6. Studies into the actions of other municipalities in Canada to retain a younger demographic could be useful as some services, programs or processes could be adapted to help with Kelowna's youth exodus problem.

These avenues for future study are key ideas that would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of reasons for student exodus. As the population is always changing, demographic issues will occur for many regions across Canada and there must be steps taken to ensure the continued success, growth, and development of these cities.

Bibliography

- Aguiar, L., Tomic, P., & Trumper, R. (2005). Work hard, play hard: selling Kelowna, BC, as year-round playground. *Canadian Geographer*, 49(2), 123-139. doi: 10.1111/j.0008-3658.2005.00084.x
- Babbie, E. (1998). *The Practice of Social Research*. Toronto: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Bahbahani, K. (2008). *The changing face of Kelowna: Report on ethnicity and ethnic relations*. Retrieved from <http://www.interculturalkelowna.com/docs/changing-face.pdf>
- BC Stats. (2011). *Definition and Data Sources, BC Socio-Economic Indices and Profiles*. Retrieved from <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/sep/glossary.pdf>
- Bramwell, A., & Wolfe, D. (2008). Universities and regional economic development: The entrepreneurial University of Waterloo. *Research Policy*, 37(8), 1175-1187. doi:10.1016/j.respol.2008.04.016
- Brown, J., & Męczyński, M. (2009). 'Complexities': Locational choices of creative knowledge workers. *Built Environment*, 35(2), 238-252. doi: dx.doi.org/10.2148/benv.35.2.238
- Brown, W. M., Newbold, K. B., & Beckstead, D. (2010). Growth and change in human capital across the Canadian urban hierarchy, 1996-2001. *Urban Studies*, 47(7), 1571. doi: 10.1177/004209800935362
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2011). *Housing Market Outlook, Kelowna CMA* (Report No. 64359). Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/schl-cmhc/nh12-54/NH12-54-2011-1-eng.pdf

- Canada Trust. (2011). Mortgage Payment Calculator. Received from
http://www.tdcanadatrust.com/docs/mortCalc/MortgageCalculator.jsp?locale=en_CA
- Canadian Policy Research Network. (2008). *Making Newfoundland and Labrador a province of choice for young people*. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Retrieved from
<http://youth.gov.nl.ca/strategy/pdf/Youth-Retention-and-Attraction-Strategy.pdf>
- Caputo, T. (2000). Hearing the voices of youth: Youth participation in selected Canadian municipalities. Ottawa: Health Canada.
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission. (2009). *City of Kelowna 2009 demographic profile*. Retrieved from
http://www.investkelowna.com/documents/CityofKelownaProfile-EDCFinal_000.pdf
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission. (2010a). *2010 Strategic plan: economic development commission regional district of Central Okanagan*. Retrieved from <http://www.investkelowna.com/documents/2010StrategicPlan.pdf>
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission. (2010b). *2010 Economic profile: Regional district of the Central Okanagan*. Retrieved from
http://www.investkelowna.com/documents/2010RegionalEconomicProfile_Final.pdf
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission. (2010c). *Business statistics*. Retrieved from http://www.investkelowna.com/business_statistics.html
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dillman, D. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: the tailored design method*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons.

- Demographia. (2011). *7th annual Demographia international housing affordability survey: 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>
- Darchen, S., & Tremblay, D. (2010). What attracts and retains knowledge workers/students: The quality of place or career opportunities? The Cases of Montreal and Ottawa. *Cities*, 27(4), 225-233. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2009.12.00
- Florida, R. (2006). Regions and universities together can foster a creative economy. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(4), B6. Retrieved from <http://creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/Regions%20and%20Universities%20Together%20Can%20Foster%20-%20Chron%20of%20Higher%20Ed.pdf>
- Gerding, B. (2009, October 23). Sustaining high real estate prices hard to figure. *Kelowna Capital News*, pp.8.
- Grant J. and Kronstal K. (2010). The social dynamic of attracting talent in Halifax. *Canadian Geographer*, 54(3), 347-365. doi: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2010.00310.x
- Government of Canada. (2001). *Achieving excellence: investing in people, knowledge and opportunity- Canada's innovation strategy*. Government of Canada. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/C2-596-2001E.pdf>
- Government of Saskatchewan. (2007). *Graduate retention program*. Retrieved from <http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/grp>
- Gunn, E. (2008, April 1). Best places to work. *Inside Milwaukee*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidemilwaukee.com/Article/242011-BestPlacestoWork>
- Hartman, C. T. (2010). Fighting flight. *Central Penn Business Journal*. 26(35), 17- 19.
- Interior Health. (2009). *Central Okanagan local health area 23: P.E.O.P.L.E. 34 population projections (2010-2025)*. Retrieved from

http://www.interiorhealth.ca/uploadedFiles/Information/Reports/Population_Profiles/013%20OK%20HSA%20P34.pdf

Kaplowitz, M., Hadlock, T., and Levine R. (2004). A Comparison of web and mail survey response rates. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68(1), 98-101. doi: 10.1093/poq/nfh006

Le Maistre, C., & Paré, A. (2004). Learning in two communities: The challenge for universities and workplaces. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 16(1), 44-52. doi: 10.1108/13665620410521503

MacDonald, J. (2007). *The role of career portfolios for new graduates*. (Masters Thesis). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database. (MR34801).

Markusen, A. (2004). Targeting occupations in regional and community economic development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(3), 253-268. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=ff2574ce-7811-465e-8fb6-408bbe119b1d%40sessionmgr112&vid=2&hid=126>

Michaelidou, N., and Dibb S. (2006). Using email questionnaires for research: Good practice in tackling non-response. *Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing* 14(4), 289-296. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jt.5740189

McEwan, J. (2010). In Tuition: A case study of UBCO student youth rental housing experiences in the City of Kelowna. (Master's thesis). Available from <https://circle.ubc.ca/>

Mease, S. (2008). *Attracting and retaining the creative class in non-metro areas*. Roanoke, Virginia.

- Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. (2009). *Putting the Milwaukee region on the worldwide map in a whole new way*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Retrieved from <http://www.iedconline.org/Downloads/08Annual/Biddle.pdf>
- Michaels, K. (2010, January 26). Study ranks Kelowna 38th most expensive place to live world-wide. *Kelowna.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.kelowna.com>
- Moore, W. (2010, February 16). Kelowna needs to get younger. *Castanet*. Retrieved from <http://www.castanet.net/>
- Oh, J. (2010). Barriers to immigrants seeking housing in a mid-sized city: A case study of visible minorities in Kelowna's housing market. (Master's thesis). Available from <https://circle.ubc.ca/>
- Pedigo, S. (2010). Creative Roanoke. Retrieved from: http://www.creativeclass.com/_v3/creative_class/2010/04/16/creative-roanoke/
- Plant, D. (2011, September 25). White not so hot. *Kelowna Daily Courier*. Retrieved from <http://kelownadailycourier.ca/>
- Pratt, A. (2008). Creative cities: The cultural industries and the creative class. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90(2), 107-117. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0467.2008.00281.x
- Rhoads, N. (2011). *URC to launch Global Detroit International student retention program*. Media Release. Retrieved from <http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/8428>
- Ridge, J. (2010). *Sixth year of Okanagan campus growth increases opportunities for UBC degree*. Media Release. Retrieved from <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2010/08/30/sixth-year-of-okanagan-campus-growth-increases-opportunities-for-ubc-degree/>

- See, G. K. (2010). Locally engaged education institutions: Four principles for engaging the urban environment. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(5), 545-571. doi: 10.1177/0013124510366207
- Squire, J.P. (2007, January 10). Charting the boom. *The Daily Courier*, pp. A3.
- Statistics Canada. (2006). *2006 Census - Age and Sex Population Comparisons*. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-551/figures/index.cfm>
- Statistics Canada. (2010). *Census tract profile for 0005.00 (CT), Kelowna (CMA) and British Columbia*. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-597/P3.cfm?Lang=E&CTuid=9150005.00#Note24>
- Stolarick, K., Florida, R., & Musante, L. (2005). *Montreal's capacity for creative connectivity: Outlook and opportunities*. Retrieved from <http://pages.videotron.com/featek/Montreal.pdf>
- Sustainability Reporting Program. (2004). *Canada's aging population*. Retrieved from http://www.sustreport.org/signals/canpop_age.html
- Teixeira, C. (2011). Finding a home of their own: Immigrant housing experiences in Central Okanagan, British Columbia, and policy recommendations for change. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, (12), 173-197. doi: 10.1007/s12134-011-0181-9
- University of British Columbia (2011, October 6). *UBC ranks 22nd among world universities, jumping eight spots*. Retrieved from <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2011/10/06/ubc-ranks-22nd-among-world-universities-jumping-eight-spots/>

University of British Columbia: Faculty of Education. (2011). *The bachelor of education (BED) program*. Teacher Education Office. Retrieved from

<http://teach.educ.ubc.ca/programs/bed-program.html>

University Presidents' Council of British Columbia. (1996). *Two year graduate follow-up survey of 1993 baccalaureate graduates from BC's public universities: Major findings. Victoria the Council*. Retrieved from

http://www.rucbc.ca/student_outcomes/publications/graduate_outcomes/graduate_follow_up_survey_1995/Major.pdf

Appendices

Appendix A: Map of the City of Kelowna

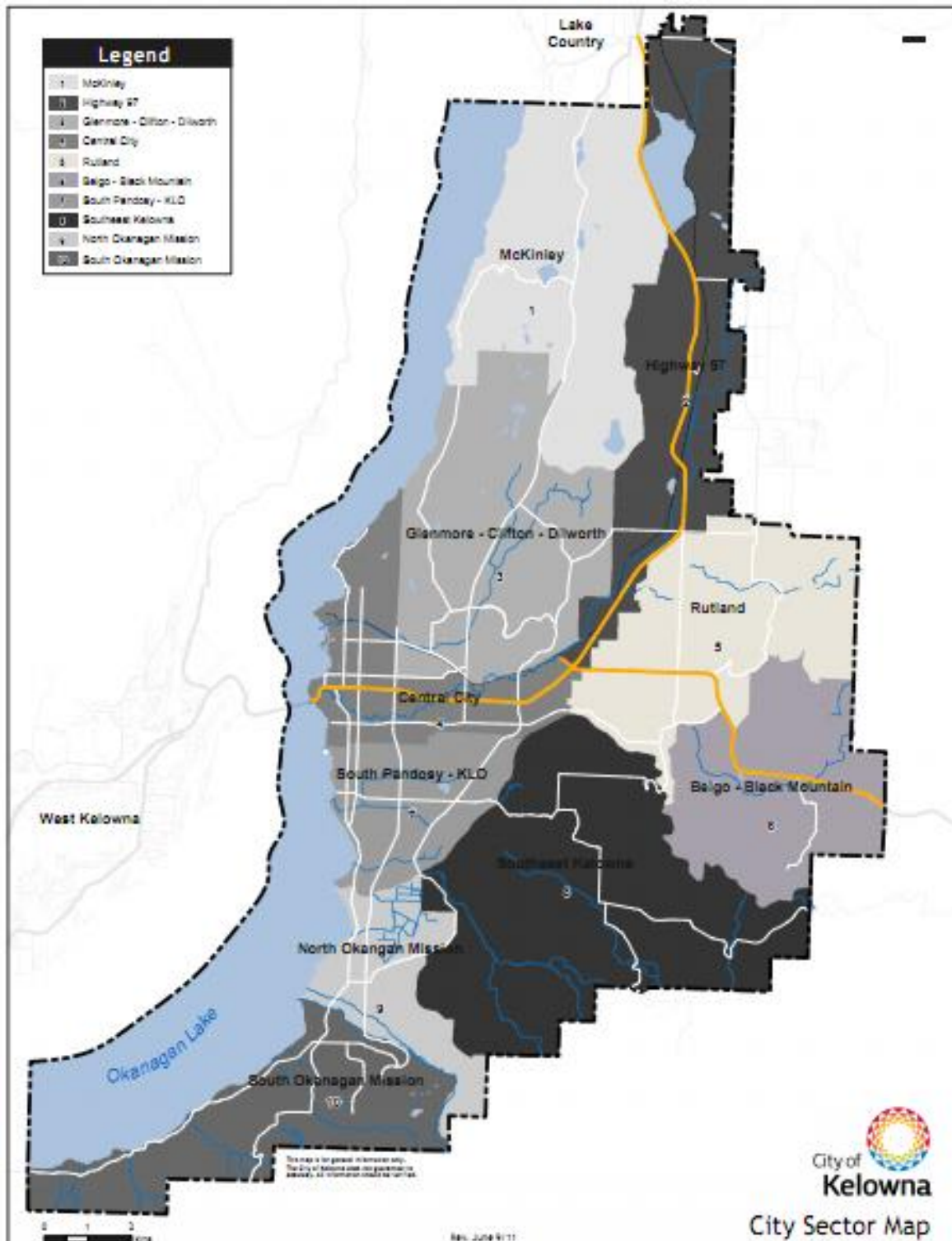


Figure 15. Kelowna City Sector Map

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

OKANAGAN

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Emma Talbott. Presently I am Master's student at the University of British Columbia - Okanagan. The research project I am performing intends to identify and understand the underlying reasons for student exodus after graduation from the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBC-Okanagan).

Kelowna is fast becoming recognized in the international community as a retirement destination and demographic statistics are confirming this. The percentage of seniors living in Kelowna rose to 19% of the total population in 2006, rendering it the oldest Census Metropolitan Area in Canada. With low fertility levels and a net population growth projection from 2009 to 2036 that will only result from migration, the retention of graduated students from UBC-Okanagan could help population growth as well as economic growth. Currently, Kelowna is facing demographic and economic barriers. Local post-secondary students are leaving Kelowna and choosing to reside elsewhere for numerous reasons, many of which hope to be identified during the course of the research. The reason for writing this letter is to ask for your participation and help in this study, which will allow for a greater understanding of this issue. Your help will be greatly appreciated. The results of this study will be used to support initiatives aimed at increasing student retention following graduation, in addition to providing information to local government on reasons for why students leave Kelowna and what incentives could allow them to remain in the city.

If you choose to participate, I will invite you to take part in a structured interview and share with me your experiences dealing with youth related population demographic issues in Kelowna. I am interested in knowing more about the challenges facing current local demographics, and graduated students' roles if they choose to remain in the city following graduation. The structured interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and be audio-recorded with your consent, if you do choose to participate. Please be assured that all the information you provide is highly confidential. The data will be recorded, analyzed, and reported in ways that guarantee anonymity. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point with no consequences.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I would appreciate it if you contact me. At that time, more information will be provided about the main objectives of the study and the consent process.

Thank you for considering this request for your participation. I may be reached on my mobile at 250-215-1592 or email: emmatalbott@hotmail.com or etalbott@interchange.ubc.ca.

Sincerely,

Emma Talbott

Master's Candidate
University of British Columbia – Okanagan

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



OKANAGAN

Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7

May, 2011

**Research Project:
Local Brilliance: The Attraction- Retention of UBC-Okanagan
Graduates in Kelowna**

Principal Investigator: **Carlos Teixeira**, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC, V1V 1V7 (carlos.teixeira@ubc.ca).

Co-investigator: **Emma Talbott**, MA Candidate, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences, 3333 University Way, Kelowna, BC, V1V 1V7 (emmatalbott@hotmail.com; etalbott@interchange.ubc.ca).

The main objective of this exploratory research is to understand the underlying reasons for students' decisions to either remain in or leave Kelowna after graduation from UBC-Okanagan. There is very little data and literature published on the topic of graduated student exodus in Kelowna, and even less regarding reasons for why they choose to move away. The City of Kelowna continues to face an aging population and thus uncertain economic development.

This study will focus its attention on a study population that has not been researched by scholars and public officials from the perspective of UBC-Okanagan. The results of this study will be used to support initiatives aimed at increasing student retention following graduation, in addition to providing information to local government on reasons for why students leave Kelowna and what incentives could allow them to remain in the city.

I understand that Emma Talbott (UBC-Okanagan) is conducting research in order to better our understanding of the graduated student exodus and potential problems this causes the City of Kelowna.

I know that I am participating in a structured interview that will last from 45 to 60 minutes. I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without explanation. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded and that I can ask that the audio recorder be turned off for a period of time while I make a point that I do not want recorded. I understand that the tape recording of the interview

is for note taking use only by the main researcher and her supervisor (Dr. Carlos Teixeira). There will be no further use of the tapes in any fashion. No one except the principal researcher based at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and her supervisor will ever listen to the tapes.

Any questions that I have about the study have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that all benefits of participating in the study – that is, from my responses to questions – will help inform our understanding of graduated student exodus and the underlying reasons for students' decisions to either remain in or leave Kelowna after graduation from UBC-Okanagan.

These research findings are intended to reveal recommendations that could be used to benefit recently graduated students from UBC Okanagan in Kelowna. I understand that I may ask, now or in the future, any questions that I have about this study. I have been assured that no information will ever be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity and that my responses will be kept completely confidential.

I understand that my participation in the study is completely voluntary and that my decision to participate or not to participate will have no effect on my organization nor myself. I further understand that I may withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

I understand that if I have any questions about this research project, I may contact Emma Talbott at any time – telephone number/cell: 250-2151-1592 or via e-mail: emmatalbott@hotmail.com or etalbott@interchange.ubc.ca.

I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding my rights as a research participant, I may contact the Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia Okanagan at the Research Services Office: 1-250-807-8150.

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

My signature indicates that I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant Print Name

Date

*If you wish to receive an executive summary of the completed research, please complete the following contact information and a copy will be sent to you by mail.

Address: _____

Appendix D: Structured Interview for Key Informants

Section 1: Introduction and Socio-demographic profile of “key” informants/service providers

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself and your line of work.

1. Socio-demographic profile of “key” informants/service providers –Who are you?
Where do you work and what is your job?

2. What are the types of services you provide to recent UBC-Okanagan post-secondary graduates?

3. How effective are these services? (e.g., Do a lot of new graduates use these services?)

4. What are the major challenges you face in accommodating post-secondary students’ needs and preferences?

5. How do post-secondary graduates know about your services?

Section 2: Aging Population and Student Exodus

Next, I would like to ask you a few questions about the aging population and youth exodus in Kelowna.

1. What are your major concerns regarding the future population and economic growth of Kelowna that arise from Kelowna’s aging demographic?

2. What do you think are the major barriers (employment, housing, education, etc.) in the retention of graduate students from UBC-Okanagan in Kelowna?

3. Do you see UBC-Okanagan's recent graduates playing a role in Kelowna's future growth and economic development? If so, how?

4. What is your organization/business currently doing to help attract and retain recent graduates?

Section 3: Youth and Recent Post-Secondary Graduate Services

Now I would like to ask you about the youth and recent post-secondary graduate services that are currently offered in the City of Kelowna.

1. What services currently exist that aim to retain youth residing in Kelowna?

2. What is the role of UBC-Okanagan in helping post-secondary students remain in Kelowna following graduation?

Section 4: Recommendations

Finally, I would like to ask for your ideas about possible recommendations to help retain graduated students in Kelowna following their graduation from UBC-Okangan.

1. What do you think could be some possible incentives to retain new graduates from UBC-Okanagan in Kelowna?

2. What policy changes are recommended to improve student retention in Kelowna?

THANK YOU!!

Appendix E: Questionnaire-Survey to Final-Year Students

Questionnaire Outline

1. Educational History
2. Current and Future Careers/Jobs
3. After Graduation
4. Attributes Valued in a City
5. Recommendations for Retaining Students after Graduation
in the Kelowna CMA
6. Demographic Information

Educational History

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your post-secondary educational history.

1. Did you move to Kelowna, from outside the Okanagan, to attend UBC-Okanagan?
 - a) Yes ☐
 - b) No ☐

 2. If you moved to Kelowna in order to attend UBC-Okanagan, where did you move from?
 - a) Not Applicable ☐
 - b) Okanagan Valley ☐
 - c) Lower Mainland (Greater Vancouver area) ☐
 - d) Northern BC ☐
 - e) Elsewhere in BC ☐
 - f) Alberta ☐
 - g) Saskatchewan ☐
 - h) Manitoba ☐
 - i) Ontario ☐
 - j) Quebec ☐
 - k) Nunavut ☐
 - l) Northwest Territories ☐
 - m) Newfoundland & Labrador ☐
 - n) Nova Scotia ☐
 - o) New Brunswick ☐
 - p) United States of America ☐
 - q) Outside of North America (please specify) ☐
-

3. Are you an international student?
 - a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

4. Why did you choose to attend UBC-Okanagan? Please select **ALL** that are applicable.

- a) Academic reputation ☐
- b) Location ☐
- c) Cost ☐
- d) Size of School ☐
- e) Flexibility in class scheduling ☐
- f) Academic offerings ☐
- g) Athletic programs ☐
- h) Financial aid/scholarships/bursaries ☐
- i) Social opportunities ☐
- j) Flexibility in degree credits ☐
- k) It was the one that accepted me ☐
- l) Smaller classes ☐
- m) Other (please specify) ☐

5. What faculty/school are you graduating from?

- a) Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences ☐
- b) Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies ☐
- c) Faculty of Education ☐
- d) Faculty of Applied Science ☐
- e) Faculty of Health and Social Development ☐
- f) Faculty of Management ☐

6. Prior to attending UBC-Okanagan, did you attend another post-secondary institute? (this **DOES NOT** include a Go Global/Learning Exchange)

- a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

If **YES**, where was this institution located?

a) Canada ☐

b) United States of America ☐

c) Other (please specify) ☐

7. What services and resources could UBC provide to you as new alumni that would be most helpful to you at this stage of your career/life?

Current and Future Careers/Jobs

Now, I would like to ask you about current jobs and future career aspirations.

8. Are you currently employed (job)?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

If **YES**, is this job:

a) Part-time ☐

b) Full-time ☐

If **YES**, and you are currently employed (either part-time, or full-time), what is your current occupation (job)? (Please specify below).

9. Do you have a long-term job for after you graduate? (does not include a summer job with no possibility for continued employment after August)

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

If **YES**, is this with your current employer?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

If **YES**, is this in Kelowna?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

10. Do you actively volunteer in Kelowna?

- a) Yes (if so, for what organizations?)

☐

- b) No

☐

11. Are you interested in getting involved with other UBC alumni and students to ‘make a difference’ and address community issues?

- a) Yes

☐

- b) No

☐

If **NO**, why?

After Graduation

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about your intentions after graduation from UBC-Okanagan.

12. Do you intend to remain living in City of Kelowna after graduation for a period of over **ONE (1)** year?

- a) Yes

☐

- b) No

☐

13. The following **barriers** and **challenges** are possible factors preventing you from remaining in Kelowna after graduation from UBC-Okanagan. Please indicate your response for each **barrier** from your experience. If you have had no experience with these barriers/challenges, check Not Experienced.

	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly	Not
--	----------	-------	----------	----------	-----

	Agree			Disagree	Experienced
Rental costs are too high					
The cost of purchasing a home is too high					
Lack of employment opportunities					
Family elsewhere					
Weather					
High Cost of Living					
Lack of amenities (e.g., swimming pool, libraries)					
Attending University Elsewhere					
Lack of locations to socialize and attend in terms of bars, clubs and meeting people					
Acceptance to Grad School Elsewhere					
Lack of sense of 'belonging' to the community					
Other (please specify)					

14. Do you feel there are enough job opportunities in Kelowna in your potential career field that you would look to apply for?

a) Yes

☐

b) No ☐

15. If you are an international student, do you plan on remaining in Kelowna to find a career/job after graduation from UBC-Okanagan?

a) Not Applicable ☐

b) Yes ☐

c) No ☐

Attributes Valued in a City

Next, I would like to ask you a few questions about what factors you value in a city

16. The following are some **factors** contributing to the **attractiveness** of Kelowna as a place to live. Please rate the following issues in order of **importance** to you following your graduation from UBC-Okanagan.

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Quality of Housing				
Affordability of Housing				
Culture (existence of art and music)				
Desired Career				
Job Availability				
Cultural Diversity				
Nightlife (clubs, concerts, dances)				
Weather				

Amenities (e.g., swimming pools, libraries)				
University				
Family proximity				
Variety of restaurants				
Population of people my age				
Recreational Activities				
Other (please specify)				

17. In your opinion, what would you say is the number **ONE (1)** problem preventing younger individuals and recent graduated students from remaining in Kelowna?

18. Are you aware of any services (from the community or UBC-Okanagan), organizations, or community groups, currently available to help with the transition from post-secondary education to the workplace? This can include help with finding a job, housing, youth networks etc.

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

If **YES**, please give an example of a service

19. Are there any additional services that you think would help recently graduated student remain in Kelowna?

Recommendations for Retaining Students after Graduation in Kelowna

20. The following **recommendations** might be solutions or help avoid students leaving Kelowna following graduation from UBC-Okanagan. Please indicate the importance of the following recommendations.

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
More community services that help with new graduate specific employment				
Should introduce a larger high tech sector to Kelowna				
Increased cooperation and communication between UBC-Okanagan and the City-opportunity of joint projects and research whilst completing An undergraduate degree				
Better public transportation				
More low cost housing				
More assistance to international graduate students				
Incentives for those that remain in Kelowna for over a year after completing an undergraduate degree from UBC-Okanagan				
More amenities (e.g., swimming pool, libraries)				

Other (please specify)				
------------------------	--	--	--	--

21. What **incentives** would make you stay in Kelowna (e.g., tax incentives, more subsidized housing, more jobs in the agriculture industry...)?

22. If you plan to leave Kelowna, when do you plan to leave?

- a) Not Applicable ☐
- b) Within the next 6 months ☐
- c) Within the next year ☐
- d) Within the next 3 years ☐
- e) After 3 years ☐

If **YES**, what are your reasons for leaving Kelowna?

23. If you intend to leave Kelowna, do you plan to relocate back in the future?

- a) Not Applicable ☐
- b) Yes ☐
- c) No ☐

If **NO**, why?

24. Do you have any specific recommendations for the City of Kelowna that would help to retain more graduates from UBC-Okanagan after graduation?

City of Kelowna:

Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. All information will remain confidential.

25. What is your gender?

- a) Female ☐
- b) Male ☐
- c) Other ☐

26. How old are you?

_____ years

27. Are you a member of a visible minority (persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour)?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

28. Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

29. What is your ethnic origin?

- a) White ☐
- a) Chinese ☐
- b) South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.) ☐
- c) Black ☐
- d) Filipino ☐
- e) Latin American ☐
- f) Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.) ☐
- g) Arab ☐
- h) West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.) ☐

- i) Korean ☐
 - j) Japanese ☐
 - k) Other (please specify) ☐
-

30. Finally, if you have any other comments or opinions please feel free to me know.

THANK YOU!

Appendix F: Questionnaire-Survey for Alumni

Questionnaire Outline

7. Educational History
8. Current and Future Careers/Jobs
9. After Graduation
10. Attributes Valued in a City
11. Recommendations for Retaining Students after Graduation
in the Kelowna CMA
12. Demographic Information

Educational History

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your post-secondary educational history.

31. Did you move to Kelowna, from outside the Okanagan, to attend UBC-Okanagan?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

32. If you moved to Kelowna in order to attend UBC-Okanagan, where did you move from?

a) Not Applicable ☐

b) Okanagan Valley ☐

c) Lower Mainland (Greater Vancouver Area) ☐

d) Northern BC ☐

e) Elsewhere in BC ☐

f) Alberta ☐

g) Saskatchewan ☐

h) Manitoba ☐

i) Ontario ☐

j) Quebec ☐

k) Nunavut ☐

l) Northwest Territories ☐

m) Newfoundland & Labrador ☐

n) Nova Scotia ☐

o) New Brunswick ☐

p) United States of America ☐

q) Outside of North America (please specify) ☐

33. Were you an international student?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

34. In what year did you graduate from UBC-Okanagan? (please select one)

a) 2006 ☐

b) 2007 ☐

c) 2008 ☐

d) 2009 ☐

e) 2010 ☐

35. Why did you choose to attend UBC-Okanagan? Please select **ALL** that are applicable.

a) Academic reputation ☐

b) Location ☐

c) Cost ☐

d) Size of School ☐

e) Flexibility in class scheduling ☐

f) Academic offerings ☐

g) Athletic programs ☐

h) Financial aid/scholarships/bursaries ☐

i) Social opportunities ☐

j) Flexibility in degree credits ☐

k) Smaller classes ☐

l) It was the only one that accepted me ☐

m) Other (please specify) ☐

36. What faculty/school did you graduate from?

a) Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences ☐

b) Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies ☐

- c) Faculty of Education ☐
- d) Faculty of Applied Science ☐
- e) Faculty of Health and Social Development ☐
- f) Faculty of Management ☐

37. Prior to attending UBC-Okanagan, did you attend another post-secondary institute?
(this **DOES NOT** include a Go Global/Learning Exchange)

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

If **YES**, where was this institution located?

- a) Canada ☐
- b) United States of America ☐
- c) Other (please specify) ☐

38. Are you interested in getting involved with other UBC alumni and students to ‘make a difference’ and address community issues?

- c) Yes ☐
- d) No ☐

If **NO**, why?

Current and Future Careers/Jobs

Now, I would like to ask you about current job and future career aspirations.

39. Are you currently employed (job)?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

If **YES**, is this job:

- c) Part-time ☐
- d) Full-time ☐

If **YES**, and you are currently employed (either part-time, or full-time), what is your current occupation (job)? (Please specify below).

40. If **YES**, where is your job located?

- a) Central Interior ☐
- b) Lower Mainland (Greater Vancouver Area) ☐
- c) Northern BC ☐
- d) Elsewhere in BC ☐
- e) Alberta ☐
- f) Saskatchewan ☐
- g) Manitoba ☐
- h) Ontario ☐
- i) Quebec ☐
- j) Nunavut ☐
- k) Northwest Territories ☐
- l) Newfoundland & Labrador ☐
- m) Nova Scotia ☐
- n) New Brunswick ☐
- o) United States of America ☐
- p) Outside of North America (please specify) ☐

41. Did you have a long-term job (more than 4 months) lined-up after you graduated from UBC-Okanagan?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐

If **YES**, was this in Kelowna?

- l) Yes
- b) No

☐
☐

If **YES**, how was this job attained? (e.g., through Co-op continuation, connections through family or friends, application and interview etc.)

- 42.** What further services, and resources could UBC-Okanagan provide to you as an alumnus that would be most helpful to you at this stage of your career/life?

After Graduation

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about your intentions after graduation from UBC-Okanagan.

- 43.** Did you live in the City of Kelowna after graduation for a period of over one year?

- a) If **YES**, why?

☐

- b) If **NO**, why?

☐

- 44.** Did you feel there were enough job opportunities in Kelowna in your potential career field for you to apply for?

- a) Yes
- b) No

☐
☐

- 45.** If you are an international student, did you remain in Kelowna to find a career/job after graduation from UBC-Okanagan?

- a) Yes

☐

- b) No

☐

- c) Not Applicable

☐

- 46.** The following **barriers** and **challenges** are possible factors preventing youth from remaining in Kelowna after graduation from UBC-Okanagan. Please indicate your

response for each **barrier** from your experience. If you have had no experience with these barriers/challenges, check Not Experienced.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Experienced
Rental costs are too high					
The cost of purchasing a home is too high					
Family Elsewhere					
Weather					
High Cost of Living					
Lack of Amenities (e.g., swimming pools, libraries)					
Attending University Elsewhere					
Lack of sense of 'belonging' to the community					
Lack of locations to socialize and attend in terms of bars, clubs and meeting people					
Acceptance to Grad School Elsewhere					
Other (please specify)					

47. What would you say is the number **ONE (1)** problem preventing younger individuals and recent graduated students from remaining in Kelowna?

Attributes Valued in a City

Next, I would like to ask you a few questions about what factors you value in a city

48. The following are some **factors** contributing to the **attractiveness** of Kelowna. Please rate the following issues in order of **importance** to you following your graduation from UBC-Okanagan.

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Quality of Housing				
Affordability of Housing				
Culture (existence of art and music)				
Desired Career				
Job Availability				
Cultural Diversity				
Nightlife (clubs, concerts, dances)				
Weather				
Amenities (e.g., swimming pools, libraries)				

University				
Family proximity				
Variety of restaurants				
Population of other people my age				
Recreational Activities				
Other (please specify)				

49. Are you aware of any services (from the community or UBC-Okanagan), organizations, or community groups, currently available to help with the transition from post-secondary education to the workplace? This can include help with finding a job, housing, youth networks etc.

- a) Yes
b) No

☐
☐

If **YES**, please give an example of a service.

50. Are there any additional services you think would help recently graduated student remain in Kelowna?

Recommendations for Retaining Students after Graduation in Kelowna

51. The following **recommendations** might be solutions to help avoid student exodus following graduation from UBC-Okanagan. Please indicate the importance of the following recommendations.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
More community services that help with new graduate specific employment				
Should introduce a larger high tech sector to Kelowna				
Increased cooperation and communication between UBC-Okanagan and the City- to complete joint projects and research whilst completing an undergraduate degree				
Better public transportation				
More low cost residences				
More assistance to international graduate students				
Incentives for those that remain in Kelowna for over a year after completing an undergraduate degree from UBC-Okanagan				
Other (please specify)				

52. What **incentives** would make you remain in Kelowna (e.g., tax incentives, more subsidized housing, more jobs in the agriculture industry...)?

53. If you have left Kelowna, do you plan to relocate back in the future?

- a) Not Applicable
- b) Yes
- c) No

☐
☐
☐

If **NO**, why?

54. Do you have any specific recommendations for the City of Kelowna that would help to retain more graduates from UBC-Okanagan after graduation?

City of Kelowna:

Demographic Information

Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. All information will remain confidential.

55. What is your gender?

a) Female

☐

b) Male

☐

c) Other

☐

56. How old are you?

_____ years

57. Are you a member of a visible minority (persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour)?

a) Yes

☐

b) No

☐

58. Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?

a) Yes

☐

b) No

☐

59. What is your ethnic origin?

a) White

☐

m) Chinese

☐

n) South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)

☐

- o) Black ☐
 - p) Filipino ☐
 - q) Latin American ☐
 - r) Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.) ☐
 - s) Arab ☐
 - t) West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.) ☐
 - u) Korean ☐
 - v) Japanese ☐
 - w) Other (please specify) ☐
-

60. In which town, province and country are you currently living?

- a) Central Interior ☐
 - b) Lower Mainland ☐
 - c) Northern BC ☐
 - d) Alberta ☐
 - e) Saskatchewan ☐
 - f) Manitoba ☐
 - g) Ontario ☐
 - h) Quebec ☐
 - i) Nunavut ☐
 - j) Northwest Territories ☐
 - k) Newfoundland & Labrador ☐
 - l) Nova Scotia ☐
 - m) New Brunswick ☐
 - n) United States of America ☐
 - o) Outside of North America (please specify) ☐
-

61. What was your income from all sources in 2010? (This question refers to your own income, not to your household income, in case you live in a multi-income household.)

- a) Under \$20,000 ☐
- b) \$20,000-\$30,000 ☐
- c) \$30,000-\$50,000 ☐
- d) \$50,000-\$75,000 ☐
- e) More than \$75,000 ☐

62. Finally, if you have any other comments or opinions about this survey, please feel free to me know.

THANK YOU!!