

6.1

McMaster Students Union

MSU



YOUR CITY SURVEY

HAMILTON, ON

Retaining Knowledge Workers

Promoting Arts & Culture

Redefining (Mis)Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

The McMaster Students Union (MSU) seeks to draw into a true society all students at McMaster University. In pursuit of this goal, the MSU fosters activities and events which enhance the University experience, we facilitate communication between the student body and the University, and organize and regulate student self-government.

All full-time undergraduate students are members of the MSU and we offer more than 30 student services, as well as employment and volunteer opportunities. The MSU provides funding and assistance to more than 300 clubs on campus, and we work with all levels of government to enhance **community relations** and increase the accessibility, affordability and quality of post-secondary education.

The "**Your City Survey**" was created in response to a number of misconceptions that students tend to form in regards to the City of Hamilton, throughout their time at McMaster University. Hamilton is a boundless city with a growing knowledge-based economy, strong service sector, affordable suburban housing, vibrant arts and culture scene, and a lot of natural beauty. Yet while this is the case, there is a prevailing opinion that Hamilton is incapable of competing with other large metropolises such as Toronto or Vancouver which are considered by most to be "premier" cities.

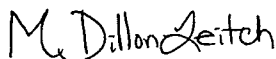
To preface the document, it is important to note that only 24% of respondents were Hamilton natives. Furthermore, 54% of students surveyed were unlikely to recommend Hamilton as a city to anyone considering Hamilton for school or permanent residence, however that number decreases to 30% when the option is coupled with recommending McMaster University as a school. Based on this data, it is safe to say that people would choose McMaster before Hamilton.

As you peruse this document, it will become very clear that there is a lot of work to be done to revive the economy and provide sufficient job opportunities to retain students. This survey is in part, an effort to quantify the unsubstantiated opinions and myths that have circled campus for years. Also, our efforts can act as a means of determining new and innovative ways where a partnership could facilitate various initiatives and strategies that would hopefully transform the Hamilton into a place where students not only want to reside, but recommend to others.

The survey takes an in-depth look at student opinions on the job market, city aesthetics, and retention issues to name a few. The MSU is committed to a partnership with the City of Hamilton, where we would work alongside the University to implement potential recommendations and ultimately transform our city into a place in which students will be proud to call home after they finish their studies. The MSU is cognizant of the beauty and culture that Hamilton can offer its constituents, but it is time to give students that same impression. We look forward to your thoughts and opinions with the ultimate aim of achieving this goal.

For more information, as well as a complete list of our business, services and volunteer opportunities, please visit www.msu.mcmaster.ca.

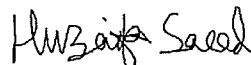
Sincerely,



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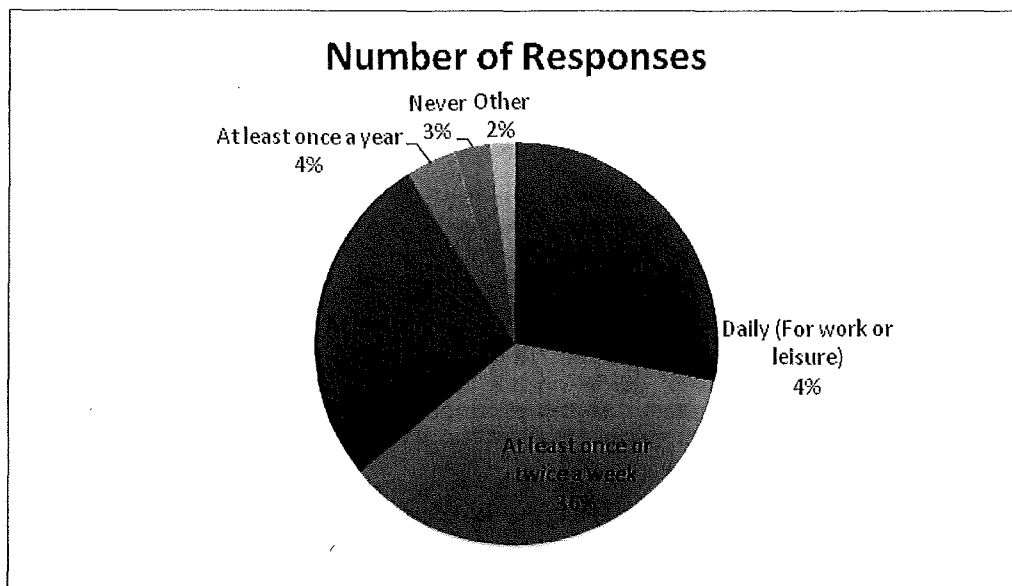


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SURVEY RAW RESULTS

BASIC INFORMATION

1. How often do you travel into Hamilton outside the McMaster Bubble?



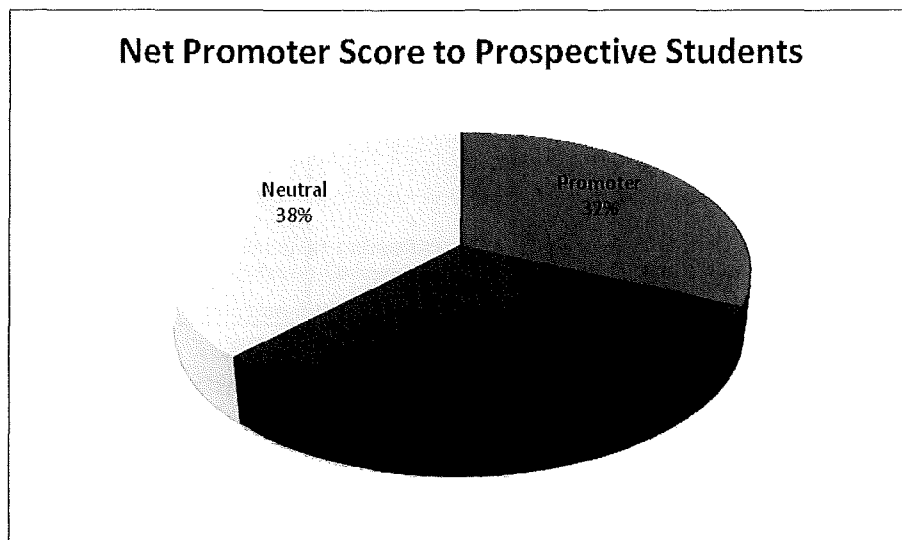
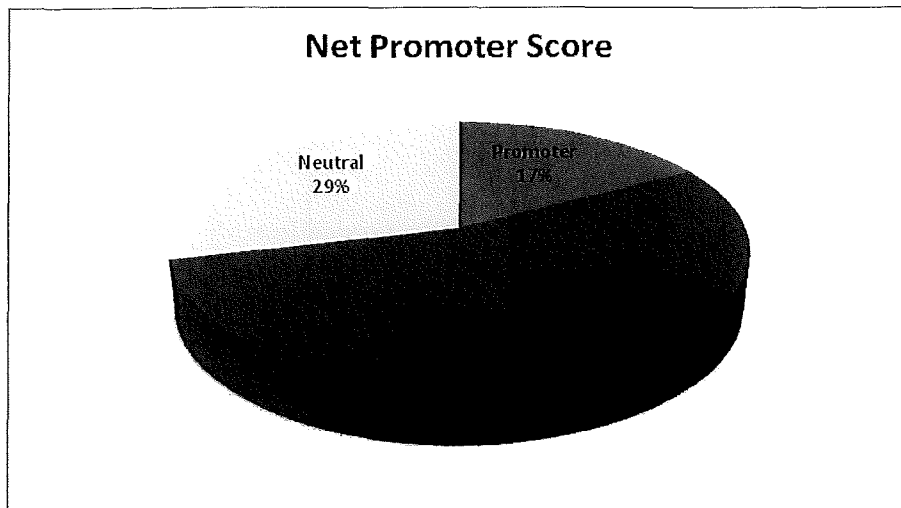
A diverse group of students answered the survey, with most of them making an effort to escape the McMaster bubble.

2. How likely are you to recommend Hamilton as a city to your social networks?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends	9%	5%	9%	7%	15%	10%	15%	17%	7%	7%
Family & Relatives	12%	9%	9%	9%	15%	12%	14%	10%	5%	5%
Prospective Students	4%	2%	3%	5%	9%	7%	16%	22%	16%	16%
" Adult Residents	11%	8%	9%	10%	15%	13%	13%	10%	6%	5%

Based on the Next Generation survey, this would indicate whether students are promoters (likely to promote Hamilton), detractors (likely to not promote Hamilton) or neutrals. A score of 9 or 10 is considered promoter, scores of 7 and 8 are neutral and everything below is a detractor. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated as follows: $NPS = \% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors}$.

The majority of McMaster students seem to be detractors, or individuals who fail to promote the city to others. However, when it comes down to prospective students only, an even spread out is observed, which makes it questionable whether the discrepancy in the total NPS and the prospective students NPS is due to McMaster University being a huge incentive for prospective students.



VALUE VS. PERCEPTION

3. On a scale of one to ten how much do you “value” each of the following attributes in your ideal city?

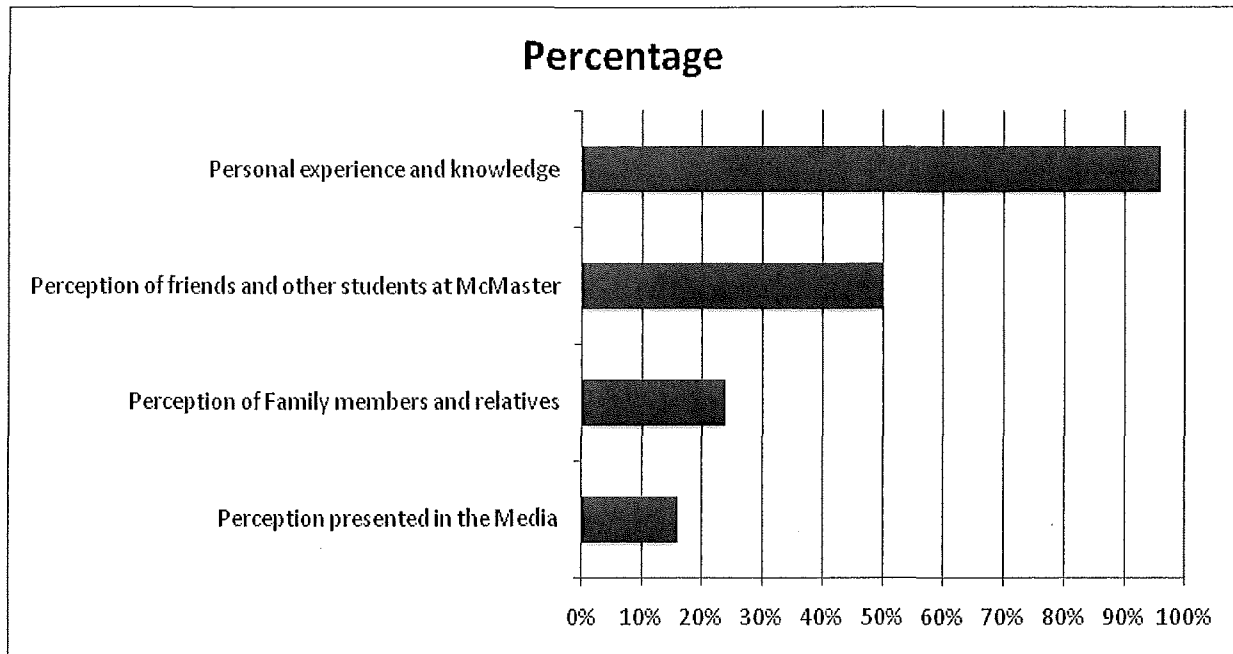
4. On a scale of One to Ten how well does Hamilton provide these attributes?

These questions were asked to gauge the perception of students on Hamilton's efforts as a city. Answers of 7+ were considered to be valued/perceived as highly desirable. It is evident that students don't believe that Hamilton offers the opportunities that they think it should offer. With 58% being the biggest discrepancy, it is evident that student believe that not enough job opportunities are available to them.

Recommendation: Increase job opportunities available for students or place more effort in advertising current positions to the McMaster campus.

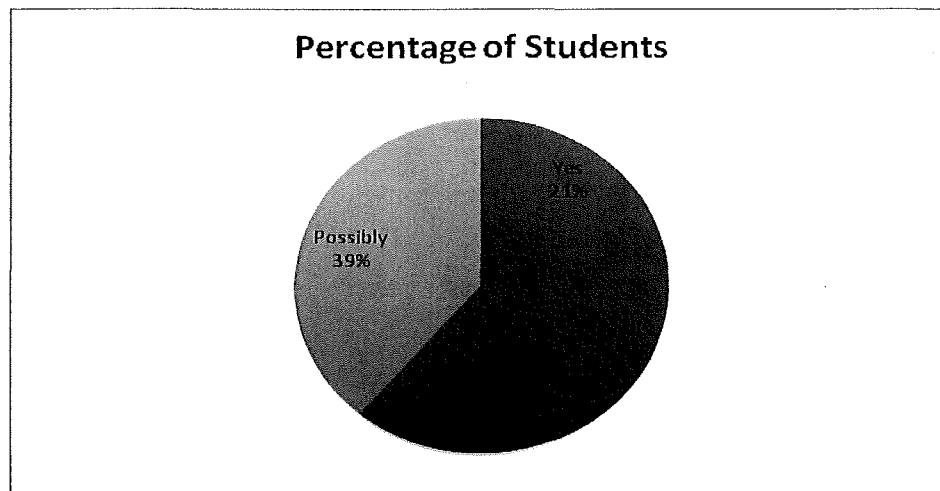
VALUE VS. PERCEPTION	VALUE	PERCEPTION	DIFFERENCE
A vibrant community where people are 'out and about' using public parks, trails and recreation areas, attending farmer's markets and living in a healthy environment.	88%	41%	-47%
A Broad choice of places to work, professional job opportunities and an environment that is friendly to entrepreneurs.	89%	31%	-58%
Authentic local places to have dinner, meet for coffee, hear live music, or just hang out as well as the ability to attend art openings, theater, and cultural festivals.	90%	57%	-33%
A community that offers life-long learning and values being 'smart'.	79%	30%	-49%
I want to live in a community that's easy to get around in; I don't want long commute times.	92%	49%	-43%
I want a community where I can afford to live, work, and play.	95%	62%	-33%

5. How did you come to form your opinion and perception of Hamilton?



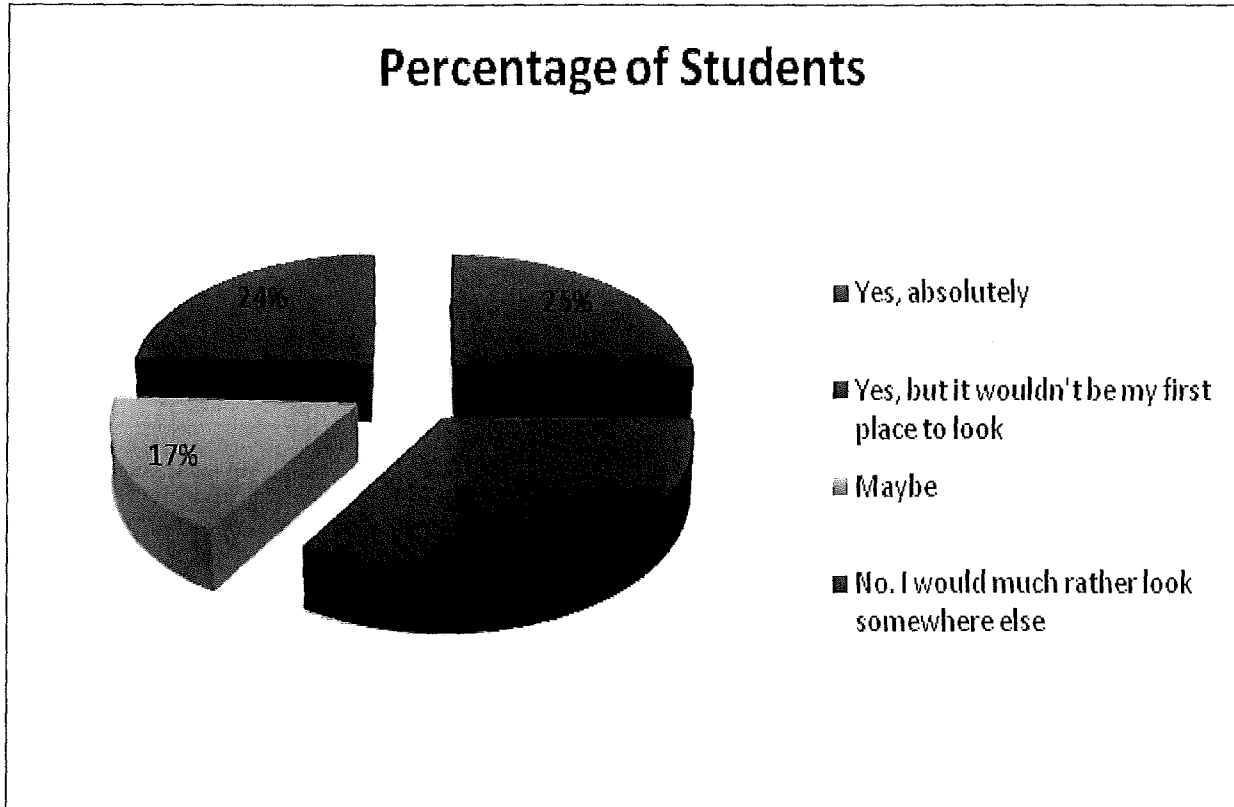
Since many students base their perception of Hamilton based on their experiences and knowledge, the City of Hamilton in conjunction with McMaster University should strive to increase awareness of the types of things that students can experience in the Hamilton community.

6. Would you consider living in Hamilton and commuting to study or work after graduation



OUTSIDE OF CLASSROOM LEARNING

7. Upon graduation, would you consider applying for job opportunities in Hamilton?

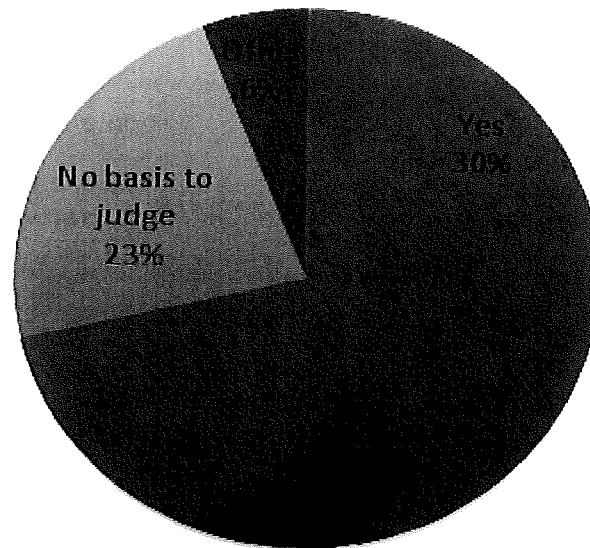


With >50% of students stating that they would look elsewhere for jobs (yes, but it wouldn't be my first choice and no, I'd much rather look somewhere else), it is evident that something is deterring graduating students and recent graduates from remaining in Hamilton. If the job opportunities and salary range would be extremely desirable, we might be able to convince young adults to try living in the city post-graduation.

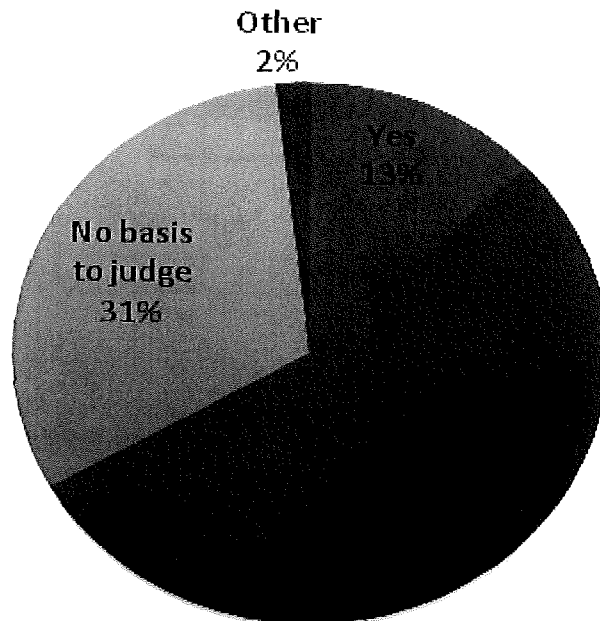
8. Do you feel that McMaster does a good job at providing and advertising opportunities for students to get involved in the city of Hamilton (such as co-ops, internships, volunteer placements, job shadows, etc)?

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McMaster University



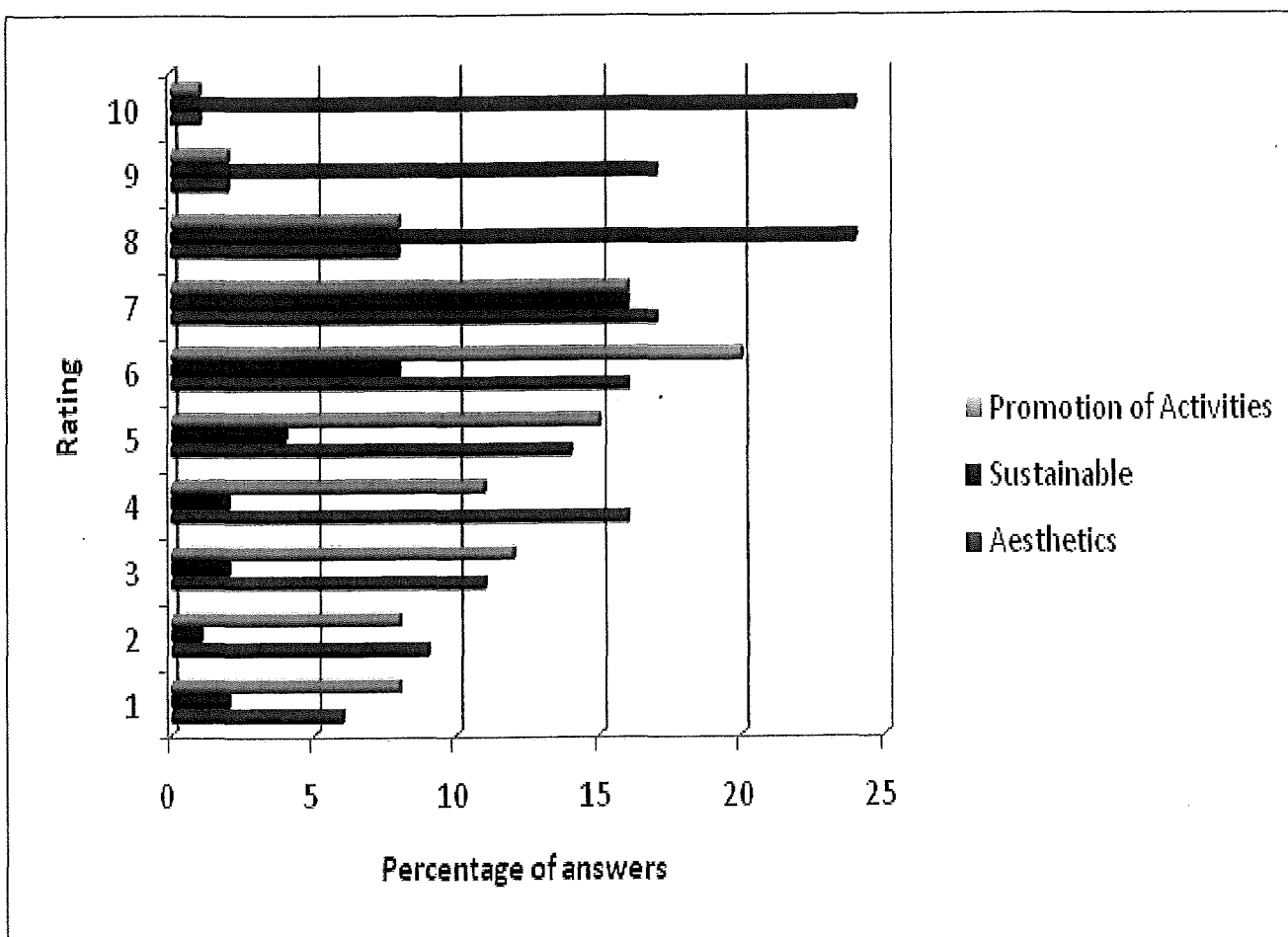
City of Hamilton



Overall, McMaster university seems to be promoting their job openings more so than the City of Hamilton with double the amount of students testifying to this. Unfortunately, a big chunk of students don't seem to be aware of the opportunities available either at the university or throughout the city.

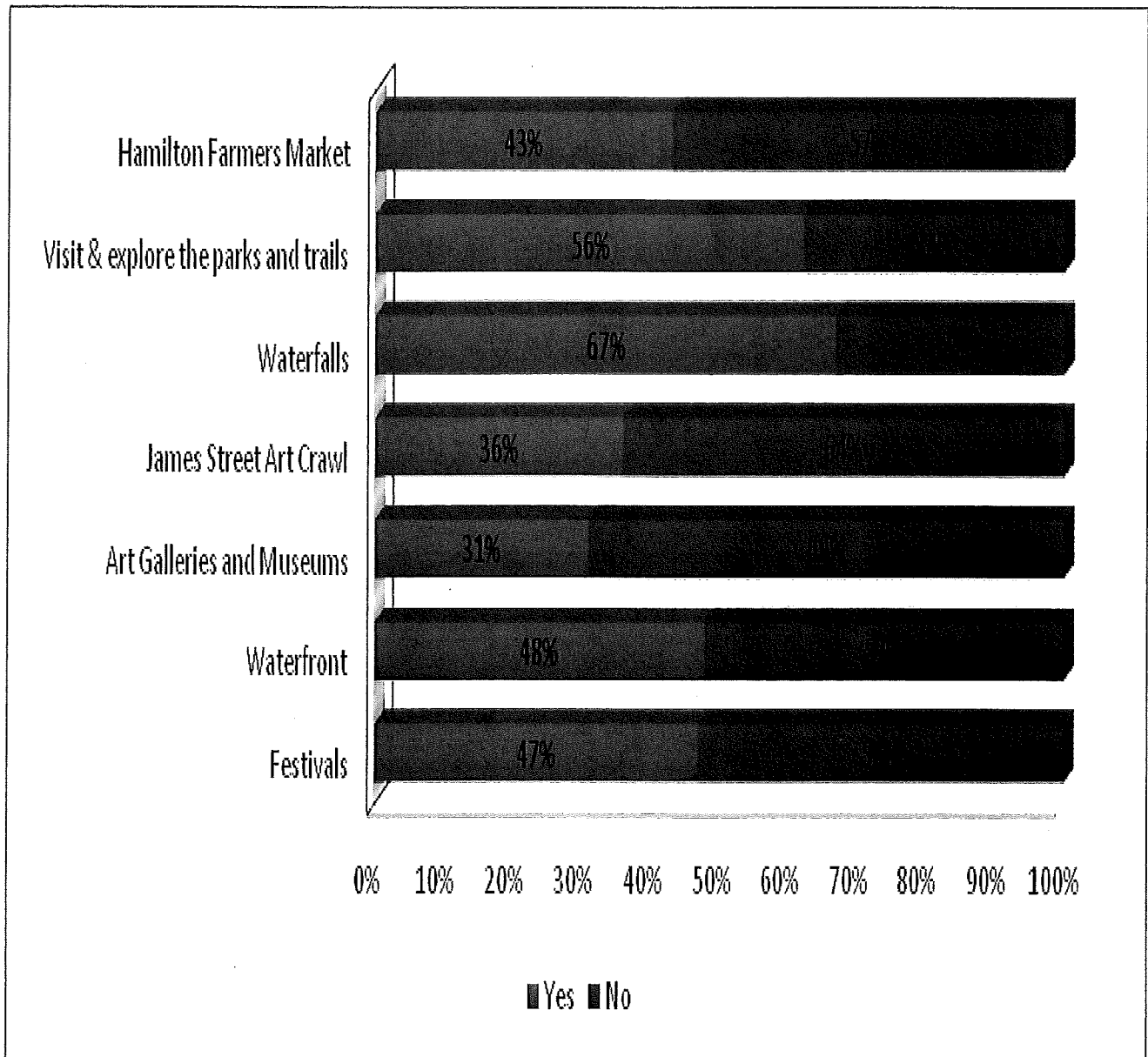
AESTHETICS AND CULTURE

10. *On a scale of one to ten in your opinion and experience how aesthetically pleasing is the city of Hamilton*
11. *How Important is it to you that the city is "green" and/or follows a sustainable philosophy?*
12. *On a scale of one to ten how effective do you think Hamilton is in promoting the experiences mentioned below?*



It is evident that a lot of students believe that Hamilton should follow a sustainable philosophy, but unfortunately, not many find it aesthetically pleasing. Students are fairly well divided when it comes down to promotion of activities within the city, although most of responses got fairly low ratings.

13. Before you graduate, which of the following would you like to experience in Hamilton?



6% of students mentioned the following:

Football and Hockey games

Copps Coliseum

Historical landmarks

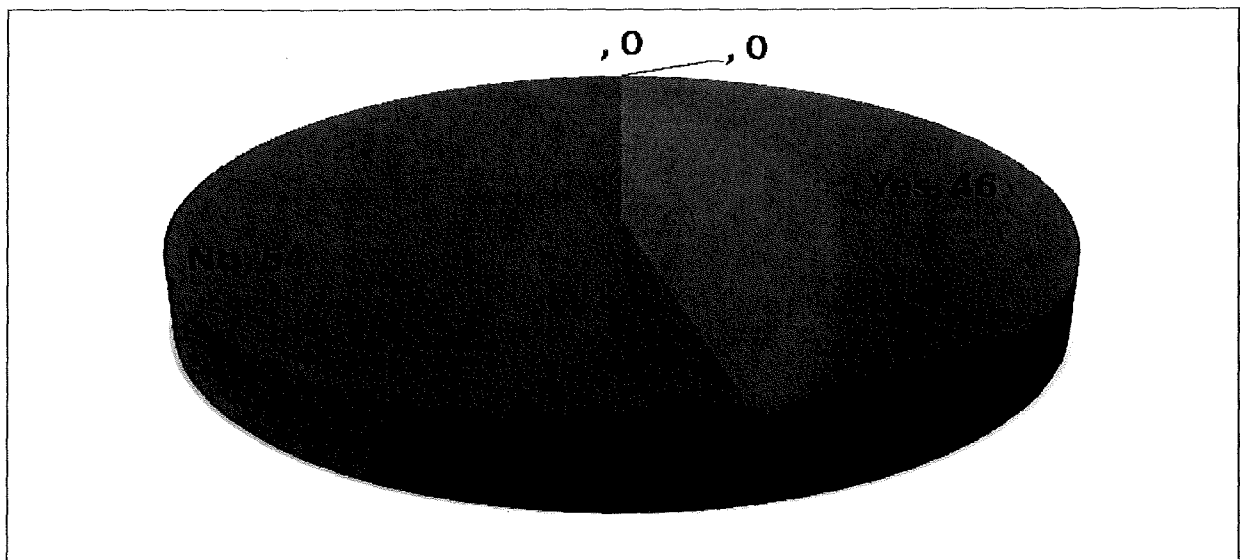
Get Cultured Program affiliates

I have already visited all of these locations

I live in Hamilton so these places will be available for me even post-graduation

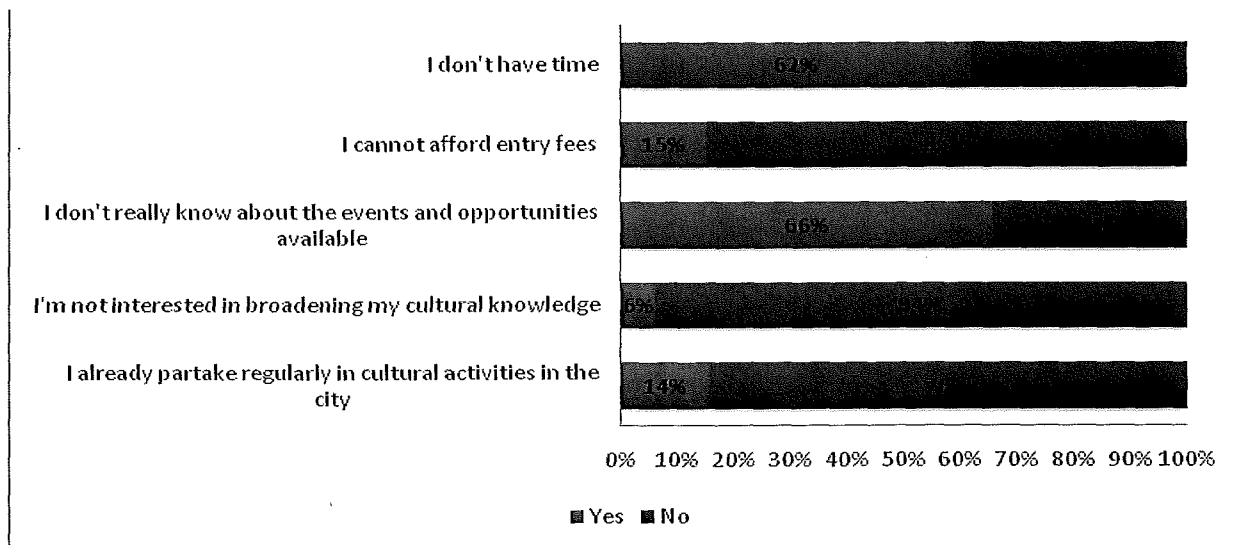
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The City of Hamilton and the MSU should focus on promoting the parks, trails and waterfalls as those seem to be the most desirable locations to visit in the city.



These numbers are not surprising when compared with the experiences that people placed a lot of interest on in the previous question. Not many students placed a lot of interest on the arts crawl or museums around the city, which may be why a lot of them are also not aware of the program offered by the MSU. The MSU and the Get Cultured coordinator next year should continue to promote the program to interested students and increase awareness to those who haven't heard about it yet.

15. What deters you from enhancing your cultural experience in the city?



3% of students also identified the following as possible factors:

- Public Transport Inefficient, especially on weekends**
- I experience cultural activities in my home city**
- Hamilton is not safe to explore, especially at night.**
- I can't find friends to keep me company for these ventures or events.**
- I don't know where everything is located.**

Since a lot of students mention not being aware of opportunities available, the city in conjunction with the MSU should work on increasing promotions of these "cultural activities across the city, especially under the Get Cultured Program.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, there are a number of items that can be done to retain students, but it begins first with engaging these people in their own surroundings. The following is a list of recommendations stemming from the results of our survey:

- **Recommendation One: Creation of new jobs by the City, possibly in collaboration with the provincial government.** *By directly involving students in internships, projects and summer jobs, economic incentives can be used to help create a connection with the city that disappears when students move home for the summer to work in their respective communities.*
- **Recommendation Two: Better promotion of the natural beauty and aesthetics.** *This could easily take the form of subsidized shuttle tours to the multitude of waterfalls, the waterfront, or even the escarpment, which are seen as inaccessible to students without a vehicle.*
- **Recommendation Three: Providing students with free, advertised shuttles to the large-scale events, like the Art Crawl.** *Arts and culture, which have already gained a strong foothold in the city, could be better reinforced, perhaps by providing advertised shuttles to the art crawl (**similar in nature to Hamilton Tiger-Cats home games**). Please note, through a partnership between tourism Hamilton and the MSU, students currently have free entrance to Hamilton Museums.*
- **Recommendation Four: Work with the university to promote employment opportunities and recreational/cultural aspects of the city.** *Being an active presence on campus - students strongly felt that the City itself wasn't doing a good job of promoting both the current and future employment opportunities, as well as the recreational or cultural aspects of the Hamilton. While certain departments have visited the McMaster University Student Centre (for example the LRT Open House in 2010) a lot more needs to be done, especially in conjunction with groups like the MSU who have direct access to student communication networks.*
- **Recommendation Five: Increased accessibility to job fairs.** *Companies should also be encouraged to hold more and better promoted job fairs on campus for student's convenience. Apart from physical presence, social media can be utilized through various means, including You Tube videos, showcasing the city. Similarly, one can incentivize students to register for for twitter or Facebook pages by providing prizes, deals, information, etc.*

SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

The Survey was distributed and promoted to the student body through various means. Social media including Facebook, the MSU Website and Twitter were used extensively, classroom announcements were conducted and posters were put up throughout campus. The questions were created through a basic framework and strategy laid down by the Commissioner and included the input of six committee members and three students at large. The Hamilton Next Generation Survey from 2010 was consulted as a basic philosophical guideline for our question creation. Our sample population includes the responses of X independent students, comprising a X% of the current campus population.

