



September 2008

Corporate Initiatives on Campus

A 2008 Snapshot

In summer 2007, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Polaris Institute designed a survey to help determine the commercial and corporate presence on university campuses, including exclusive beverage marketing on campus, and the perceived effects of some of these deals (including access to water fountains on campus).

The results of the survey are divided into the following sections:

1. Survey methodology
2. The general commercial or corporate presence on campus
3. Contracting out on campus
4. Exclusive beverage marketing on campus—what are you drinking?
5. Access to drinking fountains/tap water on campus
6. Campus action in response to these trends
7. Conclusions

Appendix I: Survey questions

Appendix II: Respondent affiliation list

Appendix III: Participating institutions

Survey methodology

The survey (Appendix I) was posted on-line in the fall of 2007, in English (corporatecampus.org) and French (campusinc.ca). Notices encouraging people to fill it out were circulated through a variety of member-based organizations (listed in Appendix II). By winter 2008, in order to ensure cross-Canada representation, students, workers or faculty at unresponsive institutions were directly contacted and encouraged to respond. Survey results were automatically entered into Excel, data was cleaned and the results calculated. The percentages listed throughout the results represent percentages as *a total of those who responded to the question*, not as a total of those who responded to the entire survey (in all or in part).

On-line surveys tend to be more qualitative because they are based on the perceptions of individual respondents to the questions asked and to the situation on each campus. While this report focuses on the survey responses, upcoming analysis will focus on the institutional results.

In total, 85 responses were submitted on-line, representing 48 institutions¹ across Canada (listed in Appendix III).

The general commercial or corporate presence on campus

This portion of the survey was designed to explore the general state of the commercial and corporate presence on university campuses across Canada. Anecdotally, we know that this presence is growing as corporations become involved in innumerable branding initiatives on campus, making optimal use of this marketing environment to reach their target audience: young adults. However, the responses to this survey provide a much more detailed description and demonstration of the ways in which corporations are targeting the university environment, as well as the degree to which these activities have been replicated on campuses across the country.

Commercial or corporate presence	Percentage who said yes
Corporations running campus book store	16.7%
Fast food suppliers on campus	79%
Sponsored activities on campus	79%

The section of the survey that dealt with respondent awareness of corporate-sponsored research or corporate representatives on university boards of governors was illuminating, particularly because many of these initiatives and relationships are taking place with greater frequency and have often become normalized as part of campus culture.² There appeared to be a very clear split in levels of awareness between those who knew little of such arrangements and those who were extremely aware of them.

Level of awareness among respondents about:	Percentage who said yes
Corporate sponsored research on campus	50%
Corporate representatives on board of governors	29.7%

However, some respondents were extremely aware of the degree to which corporate representatives were present on boards of governors, or the amount of corporate-sponsored research taking place at their institutions.

Roshi Chadha—Agri Foods (Balcorp Ltd); Darren Entwistle—TELUS; Jan Peeters—Olameter Inc; Robert Rabinovitch—CBC; Jeremy Reitman—Reitmans (Canada) Ltd.; Thierry Vandal—Hydro Quebec...

McGill University, QC

Peter Lukasiewicz, Board Chair (Managing Partner, Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP) Phyllis Yaffe, Board Vice Chair (CEO of Alliance Atlantis) Lori-Ann Beausoleil (Partner, PricewaterhouseCooper's Global Risk Management Solutions) Robert Cockerill (President, Schawk Canada Inc.) Jack Cockwell (Chair, Brookfield Asset Management) Jocelyne CÔTÈ-O-Hara (President, The CORA Group; Former CEO, Stentor Telecom Policy) Janice Fukakusa (CFO, RBC Financial Group) Nadir Mohamed (COO, Rogers Communications) Bob Richards (CEO, William Osler Health Centre—a P3 hospital in Brampton) Harry Rosen (Chairman, Harry Rosen Inc.) Ravi Seethapathy (Manager of Distributed Generation, Hydro One) **Ryerson University, ON**

Many of our buildings are being sponsored by corporations like RIM and other research-based companies. Quantum computing and Nanotechnology are the most recent examples. UW is run like a business, not a school. **University of Waterloo, ON**

Not sure of the specific corporations, but tobacco companies are funding research on campus, and De Beers was trying to get a diamond lab built on campus a few years ago with their company in the name of the building; Shell is also present. **University of Alberta, AB**

In addition to the survey's specific questions about the commercial/corporate presence, respondents were asked to list other ways in which they experienced corporate influence on their campus. Some of the most noted examples included: bathroom ads, inscriptions on buildings, recruiting on campus (job fairs, etc), ads on phones, media terminals and information screens in high-traffic areas.

Ads in washrooms, promotion tables by various companies, private ATMs on campus, and booths set up including internet and telephone companies targeting students. Private firms are allowed...around tax time to help students do their taxes... **Concordia, QC**

Bathroom stalls are especially annoying....[C]ell phone companies (TELUS) and ad companies are common. There will often be reps on campus handing out free stuff with a small booth set up to entice students to consume. We actually have "vendor's row" in the Student Life Centre which is usually for local vendors but more recently for businesses like Rogers and Bell.

University of Waterloo, ON

Commercial advertising is everywhere, especially noticeable on start-up and home screens of student computer lab - advertising from major computer suppliers. The School of Business has a big "stock ticker" screen sponsored by an investment company.... About four years ago, the administration purchased fast food franchises such as Tim Horton's, A & W and replaced a bunch of the cafeteria-style food outlets with these junk food suppliers. The staff of these franchises are still university employees. The On Campus newspaper (run by the administration) is filled with adverts from all kinds of companies.

University of Saskatchewan, SK

Every single bathroom stall has an ad, as do most walls that don't have bulletin boards. (A LOT of Alesse ads...), televisions playing ads in the info service help desk/waiting area, an exclusivity contract with a food service provider that provides fast food...all in throw-away, disposable containers.... **University of Ottawa, ON**

Contracting out on campus

Contracting out of jobs that were once provided by the institution itself has become increasingly noticeable on campuses, along with the growing presence of corporations on campus. Respondents were asked if they were aware of any instances of contracting out taking place in various sectors of their campus.

Contracting out on campus	Percentage who said yes
Campus food services	85%
Cleaning/custodial services	40.3%
Tutorial services	6.8%

Respondents were particularly aware of contracting out in the areas of food services and cleaning services on campus.

Campus food services provided by Chartwells; cleaning done by Bee-Clean. **University of Winnipeg, MB**

ARAMARK Food Services [has] an external contract on this campus for food services...cleaners on campus are external contractors...along with security.

University of New Brunswick, Saint John, NB

Fast food has just about decimated all the mom and pop restaurants on campus...there is creeping privatization in janitorial services. **University of Alberta, AB**

Our food services is contracted to Sodexo. Our cleaning contract is with a smaller company, but it changes every 2 years or so. In the past, it has been both Sodexo and Novacos. Workers for these organizations have both formed unions on campus, however, as soon as the contract is up for renewal, the university does not renew the contract citing higher wages as one of the reasons for the higher bids offered by the companies.

University of King's College, NS

Subway and Tim Horton's are both on our campus. Sodexo is the food contract company that runs the cafeterias. **Queen's University, ON**

Respondents were also asked about the presence of alternatives to contracting out of food services on their campus. Twenty-three percent indicated that there were student-run food services on campus, 47% were aware of student union-run food services, and 28% were aware of university-run student services.

Exclusive beverage marketing on campus— What are you drinking?

Since the mid-1990s, corporations including Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, two of the big four bottled water producers, have been aggressively pushing beverage exclusivity contracts in many public institutions such as schools, colleges and university campuses. A marketing strategy geared at capturing the youth market to ensure long-term gains, beverage exclusivity contracts give exclusive rights to a company to sell their products within agreed upon spaces on campus. In exchange, universities receive cash, computer software and hardware or financial incentives, such as scholarships.³ Questions have been raised about the implications of exclusivity contracts on public education, particularly in the current context of increasing government cut-backs and privatization.

Over 90% of survey respondents indicated their campus had an exclusive beverage arrangement with a corporation. Of those, the Coke/Pepsi breakdown was as follows:

Exclusive beverage marketing	Percentage
Yes, Coca-Cola	54%
Yes, Pepsi	40%

Other respondents reported exclusivity contracts signed between their university administration and other large corporations including food service giants such as Chartwells and Sodexo. In addition, some respondents noted more complicated exclusivity deals that existed between corporations, rather than between the university administration and the company:

We have no access to these contracts because they are between Sodexo, our university's food service, and Pepsi, and not directly with the university.

University of King's College, NS

We have an exclusivity agreement with Chartwells, which has an exclusivity agreement with Coke.

Simon Fraser University, BC

The duration of the beverage exclusivity contracts, as reported by many respondents, was set for three, five or 10 years, with some extended or renewed. One response highlighted the strict conditions often tied to exclusivity contracts:

10 years with an extra 2 years if targets were not met—which they were not. **University of British Columbia, BC**

Some respondents reported that they had access to a complete or partial copy of the contract, while many respondents indicated that they did not have any access at all. Several respondents noted the strictly confidential nature of the contract.

No access, as a student I have a terrible time trying to find info on this. **University of Northern British Columbia, BC**

Some respondents remarked that they were attempting to access the contract and at least two respondents stated that a copy had been obtained through an access to information request.

In terms of what beverages and other products were available on campus, while some respondents indicated that local beverage options were available, many noted that most, if not all products were Coke or Pepsi supplied—illustrating the monopoly control that beverage exclusivity contracts guarantee the corporation:

We have no other options but to consume Coke products. **Capilano College, BC**

Most products are stocked from Pepsi-Cola including beverages and snacks. **University of Calgary, AB**

Access to drinking fountains/ tap water on campus

This section is designed to help determine if exclusive beverage deals have had any perceived or actual impact on access to tap water (through fountains or other sources) on campus.

Has the following been noticed:	Percentage who said yes
Reduction in number of water fountains	33%
Delays in making repairs to fountains	43%

As many as 33% of respondents noted a reduction in the number of water fountains on campus, while 43% cited delays in repairing them. These results echo earlier findings by CUPE maintenance staff at the University of British Columbia, where the first beverage exclusivity contract was signed (in 1995) on a campus in Canada. They found that 44% of water fountains were removed or disabled during the first three years of the exclusivity contract.⁴

In new buildings on campus, there are no water fountains, only Pepsi machines, and the water fountains that do exist are sparse and in inaccessible places.

Brock University, ON

Water fountains are often not working. Some have been removed. Cold water taps have been removed from bathrooms as well. **Capilano College, BC**

Water fountains have been removed from washrooms and ones in halls often run rusty for some time, and, when they are broken, take a long time to be repaired. **University of Alberta, AB**

The issue is not entirely that water fountains have been reduced; many of the buildings on campus predate the exclusivity contract and continue to have water fountains—however, when they break they are rarely repaired. There are water fountains on campus that appear to be literal cesspools. It should also be noted that in the newer buildings on campus, water fountains are exceptionally rare or not present at all...

Ryerson University, ON

There have been vending machines placed in places that make water fountains difficult to access, and many water fountains are out of order or have very poor water pressure. **Queen's University, ON**

Pas de pression aux abreuvoirs. Ce n'est pas une priorité pour l'Université.

Université du Québec a Trois-Rivières, QC

Twenty seven percent of respondents indicated there was an active campaign on their campus to get rid of their university's beverage exclusivity contract. Many respondents noted that they were unsure if there was an active campaign. Other respondents expressed interest and support in beginning a campaign to challenge the contract.

Campus action in response to these trends

Finally, respondents were asked if they were aware of any actions that had been taken on campus in response to some of the issues raised in this survey.

Response to commercial/ corporate presence	Percentage
Concerns raised about corporate-sponsored research	62.7%
Campus campaign to eliminate exclusivity contracts	27%
Centralized recycling strategy on campus	82%

Conclusions

While we cannot present institutionally-based analysis of levels of university commercialism and corporatization at this point, the responses submitted to the survey provide an illuminating picture of the current commercial and corporate presence on campus and how it is perceived by staff, students and workers at educational institutions across the country.

The detailed comments provided by respondents raise questions about the effects of university-corporate linkages, through exclusivity contracts, infrastructure or research sponsorship, or more generally the commercial culture on campus. Is the face of campus changing as corporations continue to find new ways—and new advertising venues—to market to this highly profitable age cohort? What are the implications for academic freedom when research is funded or boards of governors increasingly populated by the private sector? And what are the tangible effects of creeping commercialism, contracting out of services and corporatization on campus, at water fountains, in hallways, student centres, bathrooms, libraries and cafeterias?

Perhaps most significantly, this survey has allowed us to explore the spinoff effects of exclusive beverage marketing on something very basic—access to clean, potable tap water, which most Canadians consider something to be taken for granted in public institutions. But, as many survey respondents noted, this is often no longer the case.

Appendix I: Survey questions

Section 1

Exclusive beverage marketing on campus

1) Does your university have an exclusivity contract with Coke or Pepsi?

Yes, PEPSI _____

Yes, COKE _____

NO _____

If yes (Pepsi or Coke):

When was your contract signed? _____

What is the duration of the contract? _____

Do you have access to a complete or partial copy of the contract? (Please specify, and, if possible, include a copy.) _____

If no:

Do you have a beverage exclusivity contract with another company? (Please specify company name) _____

(NOTE: if you have a student union, this information can usually be obtained through your VP Finance)

2) If you do not have an exclusive contract with Coke or Pepsi, how are your beverage vending machines stocked: for example, does a local provider stock with local beverages in addition to Coke and Pepsi?

3) The University of British Columbia's support staff noticed a 44% reduction in the number of water fountains on campus after their university signed an exclusivity deal with a beverage company. Have you noticed a reduction in the number of water fountains on your campus?

YES _____ NO _____

Have you noticed delays in repairing broken water fountains?

YES _____ NO _____

If the answer is yes to either or both, please elaborate.

4) Does your campus have an active campaign aiming to get rid of beverage exclusivity contracts?

YES _____ NO _____

Please feel free to explain your answer.

5) Does your campus have a centralized recycling strategy?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, who is responsible?

(Please feel free to elaborate.)

Section 2

Corporate initiatives on your campus

1) Please indicate if you are aware if any of the following initiatives are taking place on your university campus. (Please answer yes or no. If the answer is yes, please provide the name of the corporation, and, if possible, a description of the arrangement.)

a) Corporations running book stores

YES _____ NO _____

b) Fast food suppliers on campus

YES _____ NO _____

c) Contracting out of food services on campus

YES _____ NO _____

d) Contracting out of cleaning/custodial services on campus

YES _____ NO _____

e) Contracting out of tutorial services on campus

YES _____ NO _____

f) Sponsored activities on campus (Welcome Week, Spirit Week)

YES _____ NO _____

g) Are you aware of any corporate representatives on your university board of governors?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please provide their names and corporate affiliation (usually available on your school web site).

h-1) Many universities openly promote their high-profile research sponsored by one or more corporate partners. Are you aware of any corporate sponsored research at your university?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes:

h-2) Please specify the corporations active in your university's research.

h-3) Have any concerns about corporate sponsored research been raised (by yourself, other students, teachers, professors, support staff etc) on your campus?

YES _____ NO _____

Please elaborate.

i) Other commercial presence (ads in bathrooms, interactive ad terminals)

YES _____ NO _____

Please list and, if possible, describe.

2) Are you aware of any student-run, student union-run, or university-run (ie. not contracted-out) food services on campus? (Please check those that apply, and feel free to elaborate.)

Yes, student-run _____

Yes, student union-run _____

Yes, university-run _____

No, all campus food services are contracted-out

CONTACT INFORMATION

University name _____

Campus name (if different from university) _____

Organizational affiliation of survey respondent _____

Name and address of respondent (will be kept confidential by survey partner organizations) _____

Would you be willing to act as a media contact after the release of this data?

YES _____ NO _____

Appendix II: Respondent affiliation

CUPE Union representative on Labour Council, NSPIRG; 2081 CUPE; Algoma University Students Union; Alma Mater Society–student society of UBC; Cap students union; Cape Breton University Students’ Union; CFS Liaison; CUPE; CUPE 116; CUPE 1975; CUPE 3287; CUPE 3339; CUPE 3911; CUPE 4600 and GSA; CUPE Local 1001; CUPE Local 1870; CUPE Local 3799; CUPE member; Education; Faculty member; Grad student; Grad Student/Student Employee; Graduate Student; Graduate Student Association; Graduate Students’ Association; GRCGED/ Sierra Youth Coalition; GSA; SYC, Sustainable Campuses; King’s Students’ Union; Kwantlen University College Student Assoc.; LAMPS Local 104 CFS; Library; MUNSU, CFS local 25; OPIRG-Brock; PGPIRG; Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS) President Student Government; Principal Professor; Progressive Action Network, student clubs; QUAKC; Sault College Student Admin. Council; Sierra Youth Coalition; Social Justice Committee–Secretary; Staff; Student; Student Society University Relations Officer; Student Union; Student Union; Student Union President; Student/Staff; student; member of SYC; Students’ Association; United students against sweatshops; U of Alberta, Athabasca U; U of Regina employee; U of Saskatchewan Students’ Union; university worker, CUPE member; UVic Students’ Society Chairperson; UW Students’ Association; Working Students’ Centre (Ryerson Students’ Union)

Appendix III: Participating institutions

Algoma University College; Athabasca University; Brandon University; Brock University; Camosun College; Capilano College; Cape Breton University; Carleton University; Concordia University; Dalhousie University; Emily Carr Institute; Grande Prairie Regional

College; Kwantlen University College; Lakehead University; Langara College; Laurentian University; Loyalist College; McGill University; Memorial University of Newfoundland; Queen’s University; Ryerson University; Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology; St. Lawrence College; Simon Fraser University; Université de Sherbrooke; Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières; University of Alberta; University of Alberta, Athabasca; University of British Columbia; University of British Columbia, Okanagan; University of Calgary; University of Guelph; University of King’s College; University of Manitoba; University of New Brunswick, Fredericton; University of New Brunswick, Saint John; University of Northern British Columbia; University of Ottawa; University of Prince Edward Island; University of Regina; University of Saskatchewan; University of Toronto; University of Victoria; University of Waterloo; University of Windsor; University of Winnipeg; Wilfrid Laurier University; York University

Notes

1. A small number of respondents from colleges are represented in this data; however, the vast majority are from universities and provide broad representation from institutions in all provinces.
2. See for example the Canadian Association of University Teachers’ Corporation-University Linkages project, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives’ *Missing Pieces: An Alternative Guide to Canadian Post-secondary Education* series, Neil Tudiver’s *Universities for Sale: Resisting Corporate Control over Canadian Higher Education 1999*, etc.
3. Clarke, Tony. *Inside the Bottle: Exposing the Bottled Water Industry*, CCPA 2007.
4. *ibid*

This report was written by Erika Shaker, Director of the Education Project at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Research department (national post-secondary education), Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Research department, Polaris Institute.

