



3 3398 00010 2193

Survey Highlights No. 11
Nov. 1992

The Gambling Attitudes and Behavior of Albertans

(1992 Alberta Survey)



Gambling Behavior in Alberta

The fact that Alberta is a hotbed of legal gambling activity is borne out by (1) the wide assortment of games available; (2) Albertans' yearly per capita gambling rate (\$440) is the highest in Canada; and (3) legal gambling in Alberta is more than a \$1 billion per year industry. Yet we have relatively little information on exactly who gambles, and how much. The survey results reported below are from the 1992 Alberta Survey, a random sample, province-wide survey of Alberta adults, conducted by the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta.

In this survey, 89% of the sample reported gambling at least once in the past year. However, as Table 1 shows, some types of gambling were much more common.

Table 1
Reported Gambling Behavior

	%
Bought a lottery ticket	75
Bought a raffle ticket	63
Involved in a sports pool or draft	30
Bet with a friend	29
Attended a bingo	16
Bet on a horse race	11
Played Sports Select	10
Travelled to Nevada to gamble	10
Attended an Alberta casino	7
Played a video slot machine in Alberta	4
Bet with a bookmaker	<1

Albertans' Reasons for Gambling or Not Gambling

The 11% of the sample who don't gamble at all provided a number of different explanations for their behavior (Figure 1). The most common answer had to do with personal principles or beliefs.

Figure 1
Main Reasons for Not Gambling

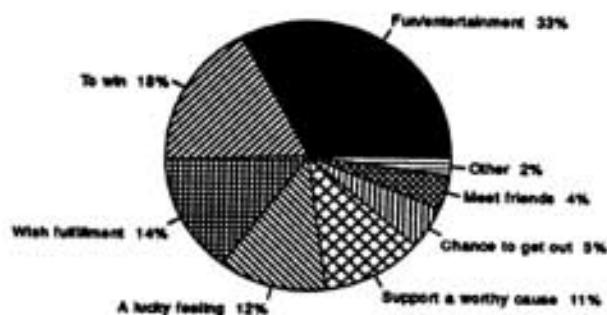


1992 Alberta Survey

The reasons given by those who do gamble are often related to their game preference (Figure 2). For example, many lottery players are attracted by the possibility of a life-transforming win and since there is no skill element in lottery play they are more inclined to act on impulse, believing it could be their lucky day. Raffle players are similar to lottery players with the notable exception that many see a raffle ticket purchase as a charitable act. Gamblers interested in games with a skill dimension

(poker, blackjack, horse racing, sports betting) are more likely to be seeking fun and entertainment. In bingo where jackpots are relatively small and no expertise is required, players are motivated more by the chance to get out of the house and enjoy the company of friends.

Figure 2
Main Reasons for Gambling



1992 Alberta Survey

Gambling Frequency

A gambling frequency score was tabulated based on the number of times respondents reported trying various legal forms of gambling in the past year. The sample was then subdivided into three groups; infrequent gamblers (18%), moderate gamblers (58%), and frequent gamblers (24%). Listed below are the significant factors associated with gambling frequency:

Gender - Males are more likely than females to be frequent gamblers (30% to 18%).

Age - Gambling frequency decreases with age, 27% of respondents under 40 were frequent gamblers versus 20% of those over 40. Respondents in the oldest age category (over 65) were nearly twice as likely to be infrequent gamblers as any other age group.

Education level - The lower educated are more frequent gamblers than the higher educated. The percentage of frequent gamblers in each education category were:

Not completed high school	27%
High school completion	24%
Education beyond high school but no degree	24%
University degree	17%

Religion - The most frequent gamblers were those who reported no religious affiliation (29%) and Catholics (28%) versus the Protestant sample (22%) and the "other" religion category (9%).

Household Income - Frequent gamblers are more likely to be found in the middle and upper income groups (27%) than in the lowest income group (19%).

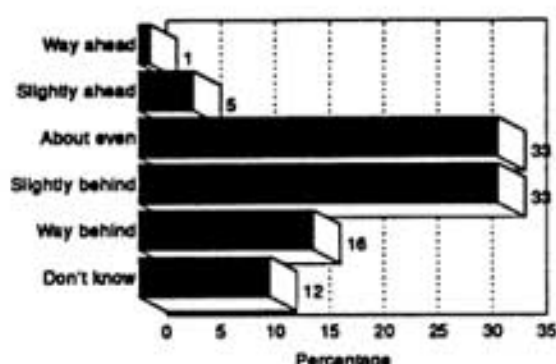
There is a marked difference between frequent and infrequent gamblers in the reasons they give for gambling. The most frequent gamblers did it mostly for the fun and entertainment value (56%) and to win money or a prize (17%), whereas the infrequent gamblers overwhelmingly said they did it to support a cause (61%). The more individuals gambled, the less likely they were doing it to support a cause.

The Differential Between Gamblers' Wins and Losses

Respondents who gambled were asked to estimate where they stood in terms of being ahead or behind over the years they had gambled (Figure 3).

The fact that only 6% of the respondents reported being ahead in their gambling ventures is not surprising given the one-sided odds they face. It should also be noted that respondents typically exaggerate on the positive side when answering this type of question, which could mean the losses are more extreme than reported.

Figure 3
Gamblers' Win-Loss Percentages



1992 Alberta Survey

Who is Playing What: The Demographics of Alberta Gambling

LOTTERY

Buying a lottery ticket is by far the most popular form of gambling in Alberta despite the fact that it offers the poorest percentage return to the consumer. Significant social characteristics of lottery players include:

Gender - Males and females play the lottery in near equal proportions (76% of males and 73% of females); males, however, tend to be the most frequent players. Among those playing the lottery at least once a week, 58% were males versus 42% females.

Education Level - Lottery play is relatively even across education levels with the exception that the highest educated (a minimum of a university degree) were only half as likely to be frequent lottery players compared to those in the lowest educational categories.

Religion - The sample was collapsed into four groupings; Catholic, Protestant, other, and no religion. Catholic respondents were the most likely to be frequent players. Comparisons of the lottery playing habits of these groups are as follows:

Table 2
Lottery Play by Religious Preference

	No Religion %	Catholic %	Protestant %	Other %
Never play	21	20	30	31
Moderate Player (1-19 times a year)	38	31	32	39
Frequent Player (20 or more times per year)	41	49	38	30

Household Income - Lottery play in Alberta is spread across all income levels but most pronounced among middle income groups and less frequent in the lowest income group.

Table 3
Lottery Play by Household Income

	Never Play %	Moderate %	Frequent %
Under \$24,000	31	40	29
\$24,000-39,999	23	33	44
\$49,000-54,999	24	26	50
\$55,000-74,999	21	32	47
\$75,000+	24	34	42

RAFFLES

There is a wide variety of raffle opportunities in the province ranging from a \$1 ticket for the chance to win a small prize to \$100 tickets for mega-prizes like luxury cars and dream homes. Lower priced raffles are generally perceived as the softest form of gambling in that the purchasers, while hoping to win, are also supporting a worthy cause.

Gender - Males are more likely than females to buy a raffle ticket (58% to 42%).

Household Income - Raffle ticket buying is closely associated with household income — the higher the income, the more likely the person will buy a ticket. The highest income group was twice as likely as the lowest income group to be involved in a raffle.

BINGOS

The appeal of bingo is mainly for lower income, lower educated, females in the over 50 age category. Females outnumber males by a 4 to 1 ratio among the most frequent bingo players.



Table 4
Bingo Play by Education Level

	Not completed High School %	High School Grad %	Some education beyond High School %	University Degree %
Never play	73	81	88	94
Moderate Player	17	14	9	5
Frequent Player	10	5	3	1

Table 5
Bingo Play by Household Income

	Under \$24,000 %	\$24,000-39,999 %	\$40,000-54,999 %	\$55,000-74,999 %	\$75,000+ %
Never play	77	82	83	90	90
Moderate Player	14	13	12	7	8
Frequent Player	9	5	4	3	2

CASINOS

Only 7% of the sample reported playing at an Alberta casino in the past year, with slightly less than 2% of the sample playing five or more times.

Gender - Males outnumber females 2.5 to 1 in overall casino attendance and are eight times more likely than females to be frequent casino goers.

Age - The 18-39 age group contains the highest percentage of casino players (84% of the most frequent players and 73% of the moderate players are in this age category).

Religion - Casino players reported having no religious affiliation by more than a 2 to 1 margin over all other religion categories.

Household Income - There were only slight differences in casino attendance among the middle income groups but casino attendance was more frequent in the highest income group and least frequent in the lowest income group by a 3 to 1 ratio.

TRAVEL TO NEVADA

Nearly 10% of Albertans reported travelling to Nevada to gamble in the past year. The demographic highlights of the Nevada gamblers include, (a) almost a 2 to 1 proportion of males to females; (b) an over representation of respondents in the 40 to 64 age grouping; and (c) a link between household income and travelling to Nevada (4% of the lowest income group versus 21% of the highest earners said they had gambled in Nevada in the previous year).

SPORT SELECT

This is a relatively new lottery product that features parlay betting on various professional sporting

events. Social characteristics of Sport Select players include: (a) The players are predominantly male, there is a 9 to 1 male to female ratio among those who play the game regularly; (b) The game overwhelmingly appeals to individuals in the 18-39 age category; 80% of respondents who say that have tried the game and 86% of the most frequent players are between 18 and 39 years old; (c) Education level is not a critical factor in Sport Select play, but the game does draw more adherents from the middle educational groups than it does from the extremes; (d) Household income is a factor in Sport Select play in that the two highest income groups are twice as likely to be involved than the two lowest income groups.

HORSE RACING

Horse racing is the only form of legal gambling to show a marked decline in public interest over the past decade. In an effort to reverse this trend the Alberta government has recently allowed teletheatre and simulcast wagering, thus making it possible to bet on horse races without being at the track where the race is being run. The demographic highlights of horse race bettors include: (a) A higher percentage of the male sample (13%) bet on a horse race at least once last year than did the female sample (9%). Among the most frequent horse race bettors, males outnumber females by a 5 to 1 ratio. (b) Neither age nor education level were significant determinants of horse race betting. (c) The likelihood of a respondent playing the horse races increases as household income increases.

VIDEO SLOT MACHINES

Data were also gathered on video slot machine play. But because video slots had only been introduced on a trial basis at the time of the 1992 survey, it is likely the data are not a true reflection of what is occurring now that video slots are permanent and more widespread. In this survey only 4% of the respondents had played the video slots; of this group 60% were males, 70% were age 39 or under, and play was spread evenly among all income groups.

GAMBLING OVERLAP

An ongoing concern among those responsible for legal gambling is the extent to which the markets for various gambling products do, or do not, significantly overlap. This is a pertinent issue for the horse racing industry because they have long held that lottery and legal sports betting is cutting into their profits. The introduction of video slot machines has also threatened the operators of other legal gambling forms who believe their slice of the gambling pie will be reduced. Table 6 depicts the extent of gambling overlap in the province among frequent gamblers. The table is to be read horizontally; for example, reading across from lottery it is noted that 41% of the frequent lottery players are also frequent raffle players. Similarly, 63% of the most frequent raffle buyers are also frequent lottery players. A notable feature of the data in Table 6 is the tendency of those preferring games with a skill dimension to gravitate to other games where skill is also a factor. Likewise, respondents partial to games of pure luck seek out other games governed solely by chance.

Gambling opportunities in this survey that have a prominent skill element include horse racing, playing cards for money, casino games such as blackjack, and a sports pool if it features a draft or fantasy league format. Some gamblers have the false impression that skill is a salient feature in playing Sport Select and video slot machines. In reality, skill is negated in Sport Select by virtue of the payoffs being far below the real odds of making a successful play, while video slot players are competing against a randomly programmed microchip. Lotteries, raffles and bingo require no application of skill.

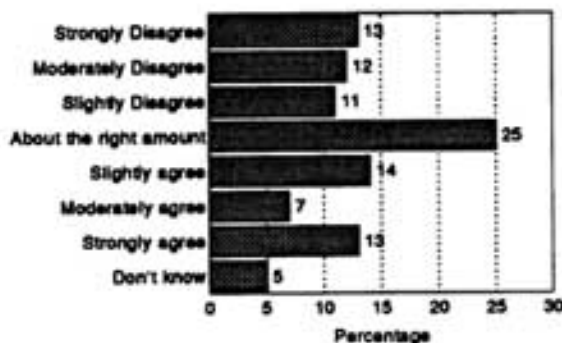
Table 6
Gambling Overlap Among Frequent Gamblers

<i>Most Frequent Players</i>	<i>% who also frequently play other games</i>									
	Lottery	Raffle	Sports Pool	Bingo	Horse Race	Sport Select	Travel to Nevada	Alberta Casino	Alberta video slot	Cards for money
Lottery	100	41	38	12	6	11	15	12	7	14
Raffles	63	100	46	11	5	10	16	11	6	13
Sports pool	51	41	100	5	9	16	14	12	6	13
Bingo	70	40	21	100	10	6	14	16	14	17
Horse race	63	37	71	18	100	27	24	31	8	33
Sports Select	74	42	78	6	17	100	19	29	9	32
Travel to Nevada	63	46	43	11	10	12	100	16	10	19
Alberta Casino	68	40	49	15	17	26	21	100	28	30
Alberta Video Slot	66	36	43	25	8	13	23	47	100	25
Cards for money	63	39	43	13	14	22	20	23	11	100

Attitudes Toward the Amount of Legal Gambling

Responses to the statement — *there is too much legal gambling in Alberta* — broke down as follows:

Figure 4
There is Too Much Legal Gambling in Alberta



1992 Alberta Survey

Albertans' attitudes about the extent of legal gambling in the province are divided with 34% maintaining there is too much, 25% indicating there is about the right amount, and 35% who don't think the saturation point has been reached yet. Given that feelings on this issue are split down the middle, it may be worth publicly debating future gambling expansion proposals. At present, decisions about introducing new forms of gambling, or liberalizing the present offerings, are made behind closed doors with no public input.

SUMMARY

Albertans are robust gamblers as nearly 9 out of 10 played at least once in the past year. Gambling activity is spread throughout the province with the main difference being more casino, bingo, and horse race betting in Calgary and Edmonton because of easier accessibility to the games. Rural Albertans compensate with a heavier involvement in lottery and raffle play.

The fact that 24% of the sample were frequent gamblers and the fact that only 6% reported being ahead of the game may indicate that gambling causes problems for some Albertans. People who bet more than they can afford to lose compromise,

disrupt, or damage personal, family, or vocational pursuits. This could be particularly distressful in Alberta because there are no formal treatment facilities in the province for problem gamblers and few, if any, certified health professionals with an expertise in problem gambling. Social policy analysts who are studying legal gambling contend that because the government is an interested party in gaming — both because of its claim on gaming revenues and because it licenses and sanctions gaming activities — the government also has a special responsibility to protect the welfare of these citizens who become problem gamblers.

Research Design

A total of 1,277 Alberta adults (18 years of age and older) were interviewed in February and March of 1992. A random sample of this size is accurate within plus or minus three percent nineteen times out of twenty.

Professional interviewers conducted the interviews by telephone (from Edmonton), with telephone numbers selected via a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) procedure. A quota system was used to select female or male respondents within the households selected in this manner. Multiple call-backs were used to obtain a final response rate of 75%. Comparisons of the final sample to census data demonstrate that this sample is representative of the population from which it was drawn.

Compared to their share of the provincial population, both Edmonton and Calgary were over-sampled to allow more precise city estimates. The data were subsequently 'weighted' to reflect the actual share of the total provincial population in each city. Weighted estimates are presented in these Highlights, which combine towns, villages and rural areas into a single 'rural' category.

By Garry J. Smith Ph.,D.
Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies
University of Alberta

For more information on the 1992 Alberta Study or on the upcoming 1993 Alberta Survey please contact the Population Research Laboratory, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Tory Bldg T1-62 T6G-2H4

ph.(403)-492-4659 Fax (403)-492-2589



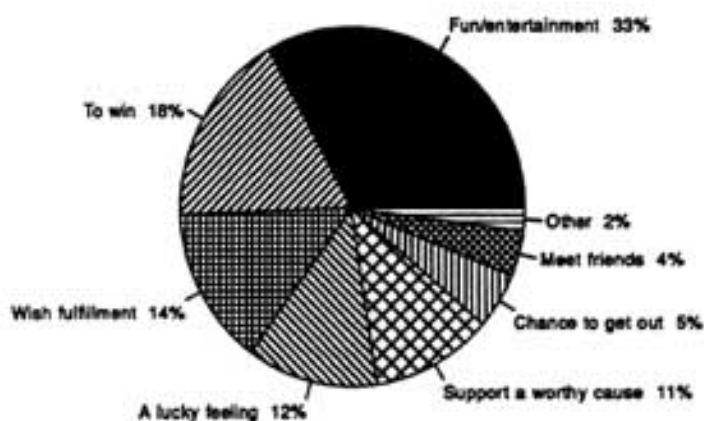
Tory Building, The University of Alberta



In Summary

GAMBLING IN ALBERTA

Main Reasons Given for Gambling



1992 Alberta Survey

Almost nine out of ten (89 percent) Albertans participated in some form of gambling during the past year. Three-quarters bought at least one lottery ticket, and almost two-thirds (63 percent) purchased at least one raffle ticket. Other forms of gambling were somewhat less common. For example, 30 percent had been involved in a sports pool or draft, while 16 percent had attended a bingo. One in ten reported having travelled to Nevada to gamble.

Albertans gamble for a variety of different reasons. Lottery players typically hope to "win big", as do many raffle ticket purchasers, although the latter frequently also see their gambling as a charitable act. Bingo players are more often motivated by the desire to get out of the house and see friends. Gamblers interested in games involving skill (poker, blackjack, horse racing) tend to view their gambling as entertainment.

Only 6 percent of Alberta's gamblers estimate that they are financially ahead as a result of their gambling. One-third think they are about even, about one half (49 percent) report that they have lost more than they have won, and 12 percent are unsure.

For further discussion of "the gambling attitudes and behaviors of Albertans", see the PRL's Survey Highlights No. 11, written by Professor Garry Smith of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies, University of Alberta.

Research Projects

■ 1993 Alberta Survey

PRL staff are currently involved in pretesting the telephone questionnaire for the 1993 Alberta Survey which will be completed in February and March. The special topic for this survey is Employment Prospects in an Aging Society. Data collected in the 1992 Alberta Survey will become publicly available in January, 1993.

■ Youth Employment Project

In June, the roughly 900 individuals who had been surveyed in the Youth Employment Project surveys in 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1989 were sent another questionnaire asking about their school and work experiences in the previous three years. Close to 90 percent of these individuals completed and returned the questionnaire. Preparation of the Final Report for the funding agency (Alberta Career Development and Employment) will begin in January.

■ Graduate Students' Finances Survey

The PRL has been assisting the University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association in completing a survey of its membership about student finances. Questionnaires were distributed in early fall, and data processing is now underway.

■ University of Alberta Graduatand Survey 1992

PRL staff were involved in all phases of the 1992 University of Alberta Graduatand Survey, from design of the questionnaire to production of the Final Report. Over 1400 of the approximately 4000 individuals who received an undergraduate degree at the June, 1992 Convocation ceremonies completed and returned a questionnaire asking about their educational experiences at the University of Alberta. Response to the project and the Final Report has been very positive, and it appears that the University will continue to survey its graduates in this manner.

■ Recreational Hunting in Alberta

Dr. W.L. Adamowicz (Rural Economy, U of A) is involved with Forestry Canada in a research project examining the quality of recreational hunting in Alberta. PRL staff are currently assisting Dr. Adamowicz in a telephone survey of moose hunters in north-western Alberta.

■ Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation Alumni Survey

This past summer, the Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation (U of A) conducted an *Alumni Employment Survey*. Individuals who had graduated from the faculty over the past several decades were surveyed by mail. The PRL provided assistance in processing and will assist in analyzing the data collected in this study.

■ Alcohol/Drug Use & Families

The Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation has awarded a major research grant to a research team involving the PRL, Professor T.L. Burton (Associate Dean, Physical Education & Recreation), and Dr. Judy Sefton (Director, Alberta Centre for Well-Being). The study of *Alcohol and Drug Use and Family and Social Relationships in Alberta* will involve secondary analysis of data collected in several national surveys of alcohol/drug use and health-related behaviours.

■ University Students at Risk

A committee reporting to the Dean of Student Services, University of Alberta, is currently designing a study of students at risk of dropping out of university. A major part of the study will involve a telephone survey (conducted by the PRL) of individuals who, for whatever reason, began but did not finish the 1991-92 university year.

Secondary Data Analysis

Every year since 1977, the PRL has completed the Edmonton Area Study, a random-sample survey of over 400 Edmonton adults. Beginning in 1987, the PRL broadened this study into the Alberta Survey in which over 1200 randomly-selected adults are interviewed (by telephone) on a variety of different subjects. Over the years, many different academic researchers, community groups and government departments have included questions on these two surveys. The data collected in each survey become publicly available in the following year. For further information on secondary analysis possibilities, contact the PRL.



Elder Care and Labour Market Activity in Alberta

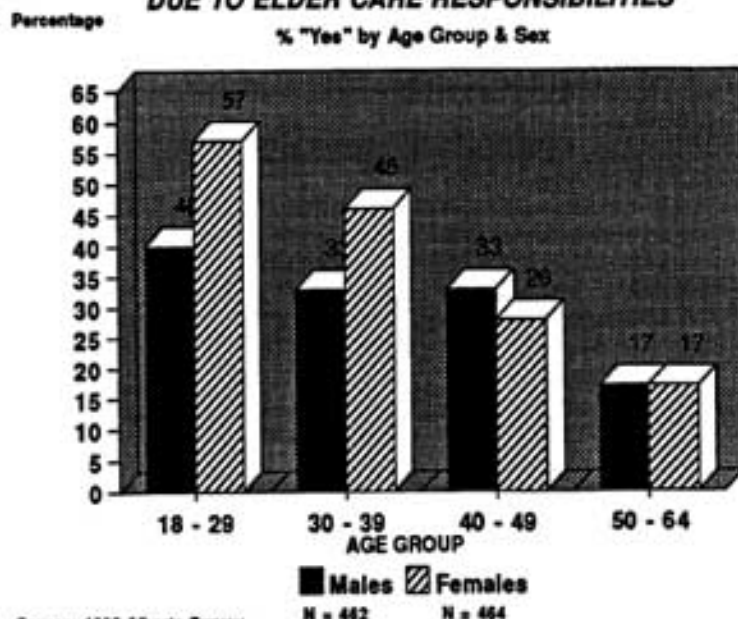
About one-third (30 percent) of adult residents of Alberta report that they are currently providing some type of assistance to an elderly relative. Emotional support is the most common form of assistance, followed by transportation, assistance with house cleaning, financial aid, home maintenance, grocery shopping, and yard work. Roughly half of these care-givers have taken some time away from work to assist an elderly relative.

More than one-third of employed Albertans (including some who are not currently assisting elderly relatives but who anticipate doing so in the future) state that they may have to change their hours of work in the future to

allow them to fulfill elder care responsibilities. Younger Albertans, particularly women, are most likely to anticipate such changes in employment.

A more detailed discussion of this topic appears in *Elder Care and Labour Market Activity in Alberta*, a recent PRL report prepared for the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta by Professor Allison McKinnon, Educational Centre for Aging and Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University.

IN FUTURE MAY CHANGE WORK HOURS DUE TO ELDER CARE RESPONSIBILITIES



Source: 1992 Alberta Survey

Call for Papers

1993 Warren Kalbach Population Conference
March 3, 1993

The theme for this year's conference is **Canada: A Mosaic?** Abstracts of presentations should be addressed to P. Krishnan, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2H4 (FAX 403-492-7196). Abstracts must be submitted by February 1, 1993.

The Thirteenth Summer Institute on Quantitative

Analysis of Social Data

June 14 -25, 1993

From June 14-25, the Summer Institute will be offered for the thirteenth consecutive year. This two week session presents an ideal opportunity to develop and upgrade statistical and computing skills needed to analyze social data. A balanced presentation of statistical instruction and computing applications, providing hands-on experience with statistical software, is offered. Attention is given to a broad range of social research issues, allowing discussion with instructors experienced in data analysis. No previous experience with microcomputers or statistical software is required. For further information, please contact Fran Russell at the address given on page 4.



1992 University of Alberta Graduan Survey

A large majority (75 percent) of a sample of individuals receiving undergraduate degrees at the June, 1992 Convocation agreed that "the University of Alberta is a university of which its graduates can be proud." Seventy percent stated that, if given the choice, they would again choose to attend the University of Alberta.

About three-quarters of the graduands surveyed in this study stated that their University of Alberta education had led to considerable improvement in critical judgement and in the ability to work independently. Over half reported considerable improvement in writing skills, while about one in two were this positive about improvements in creative thinking and in career prospects.

Evaluating the University of Alberta Undergraduate Experience



1992 Graduan Survey

The 1992 Graduan Survey was initiated by the central administration of the University of Alberta. PRL staff were involved in the design of the study, the processing and analysis of the data, and the writing and preparation of the final report titled *Undergraduate Experiences at the University of Alberta 1992*.

Recent Publications

■ Research Discussion Papers

RDP #92 - *The Linkages Between Education and Employment in Canada and the United Kingdom: A Comparative Analysis* by D. Ashton, F. Green & G. Lowe.

RDP #93 - *An Alternative to the Life Table Model* by P. Krishnan and Yan Jin.

RDP #94 - *Labour Market Problems and Mental Health: A Panel Study of Canadian Youth in Transition from School to Work* by T. Hartnagel & H. Krahn.

■ Survey Highlights

#11 - *The Gambling Attitudes and Behavior of Albertans*

■ Canadian Studies in Population

Volume 19 (2)

■ Other Publications

Elder Care and Labour Market Activity in Alberta by A. McKinnon.

Season's Greetings from

Lalu

Cliff

Kelly

Harvey

Fran

Kerri

Sheila

Dave



In Summary

Please contact:
Fran Russell, Administrative Assistant
Population Research Laboratory
Department of Sociology
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4

Phone: (403) 492-4659
Fax: (403) 492-2589
E-Mail: USERFMRB@UALTAMTS

