

In the fall of 2015, Toronto’s four universities collaborated on a massive data collection effort - [StudentMoveTO](#) – with the goal of collecting detailed data about where students live and travel throughout the day, as well as what factors influence how they schedule work, studies, and daily activities.

OCAD U, Ryerson U, York U and UofT account for over **184,000 post-secondary students**.

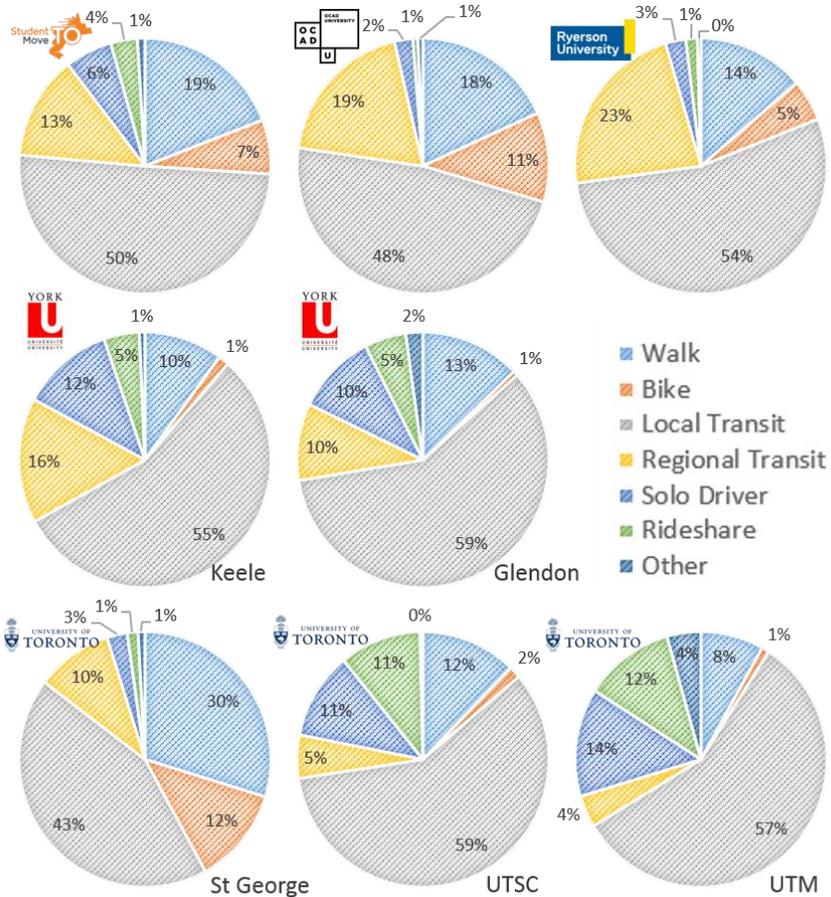
The survey received **15,226 complete responses**, with an overall response rate of 8.3%. Students recorded over **36,000 trips** in a single-day travel diary, of which the vast majority were made on foot, on bike or using transit.

For obvious reasons, student travel surveys typically report on trips made to school. That being said, **trips to school only make up 36.8%** of all the travel logged in StudentMove. A significant share, but the remaining 63.2% matters as well, and before now, very little information was available regarding these trips.

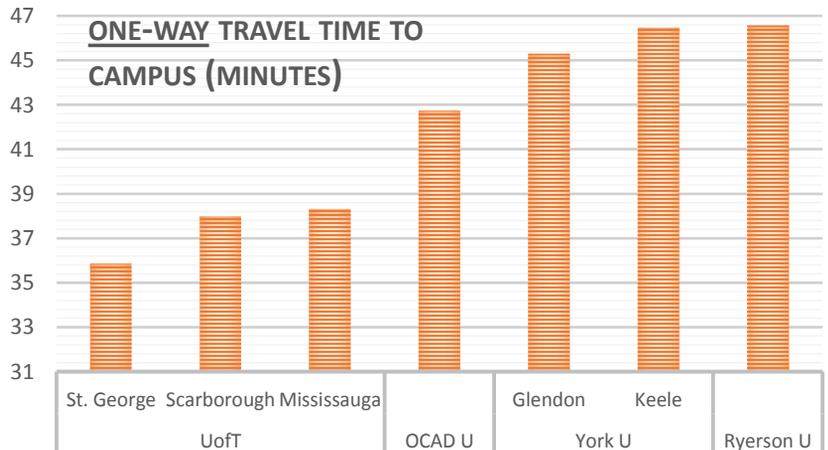
In building StudentMove, we tried to focus on including questions whose responses would allow universities, transportation agencies and students to **make better, evidence-based decisions** regarding infrastructure and programs that reduce the burden of commutes and increase accessibility.

As shown on the right, travel times and use of different means of transportation varies from campus to campus. This is to be expected, but more interestingly the differences aren’t as clear cut as downtown versus more suburban settings. More nuanced differences emerge based on where students live in relation to their schools, their household structure, age, part-time status, etc. Overall however, **33% of all respondents spend 2 hours or more per day traveling to and from campus**.

MODE SHARE, TRAVEL TO CAMPUS



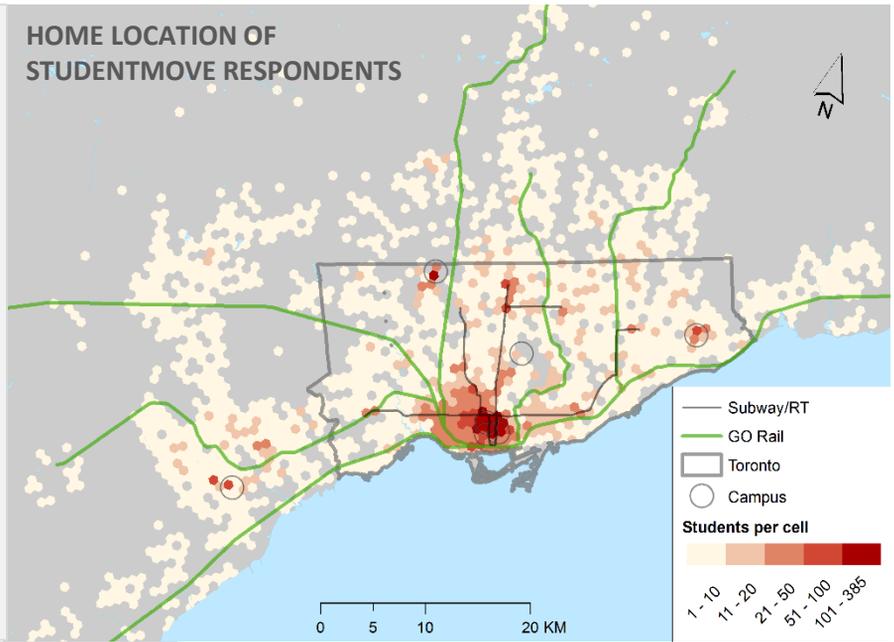
ONE-WAY TRAVEL TIME TO CAMPUS (MINUTES)



The highest concentration of students is found, as expected, near campuses. A large number of students also live along the region's higher order transit lines, but despite StudentMove being merely a sample, **almost every inch of the city, aside from parks and Pearson, is included.**

There are significant differences between universities however, with UofT students living closest to campus on average (12 km), while OCAD U students live the farthest (22 km). Overall, **1 in 4 students live 20 km or more from school.**

HOME LOCATION OF STUDENTMOVE RESPONDENTS



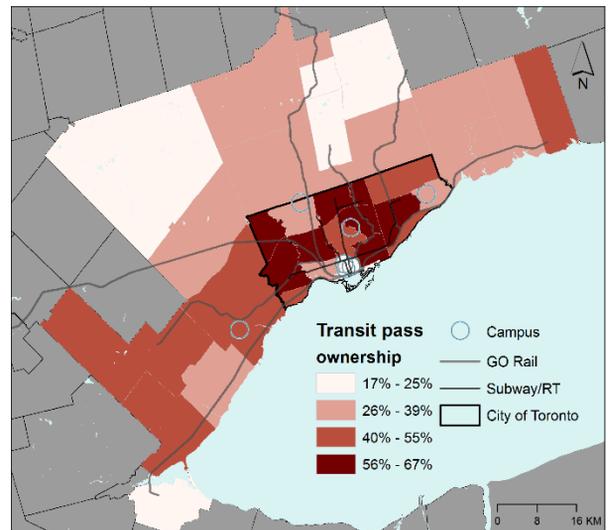
While responses vary somewhat from one campus to another, **cost of housing** is almost always reported as the most important factor when choosing a home. For a large number of students (mostly those still living with parents), the choice is outside their control, but for those who do play a role in the decision, the **ability to walk or cycle to campus** is overwhelmingly chosen as next most important factor, despite the fact that combined walk & bike rates (26%) are significantly lower than transit rates (63%). This may simply reflect the wider availability of transit-accessible options when compared to the scarcity of homes near campuses however.

Interestingly, **in every planning district where a university campus is found, the percent of transit pass owning students is lower than in surrounding districts.** While logical, given that proximity to campus reduces the need for a pass, in less activity-dense areas, this may have broader implications.

Finally, **regional fare integration may be an issue for students**, or so it would appear given the significant decrease in the rate of transit pass ownership just outside the TTC-served City.

REASON FOR MOST RECENT MOVE

Cost of housing	24.1%
The decision was out of my control	20.7%
Ability to walk or bike to campus	15.9%
Housing qualities (space, yard, ...)	9.2%
Proximity to public transit	8.1%
Being near friends and family	7.4%
Amenities of neighbourhood (shops, parks, houses, ...)	6.3%
Other	4.4%
Walkability of neighbourhood	2.4%
Crime and safety	1.4%



Commute distance has a strong influence on whether or not students come to school. Clearly, **on any day of the week, the further a student lives from campus, the less likely they are to travel to campus.**

Likewise, **as travel time from home to school increases, so does the likelihood that a student picks their courses based on their commute** – this ranges from a low of 23% to a high over 65% for those commuting an hour or more each way. Students may be grouping courses together or avoiding early mornings and late nights, but while these behaviours reduce the burden of travel, they are not ideal from an academic perspective. More generally, post-secondary school travel is more common between Tuesday and Thursday.

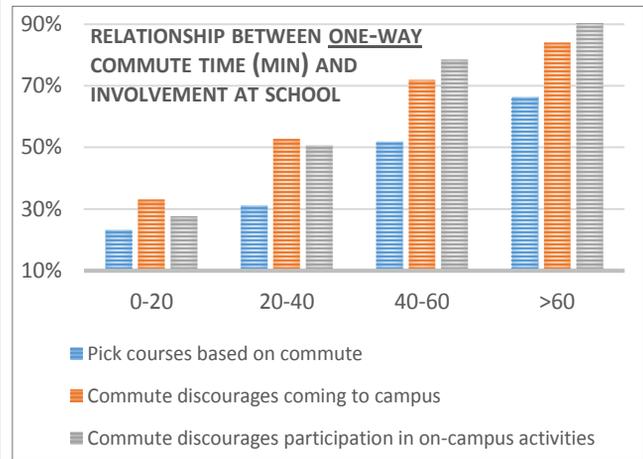
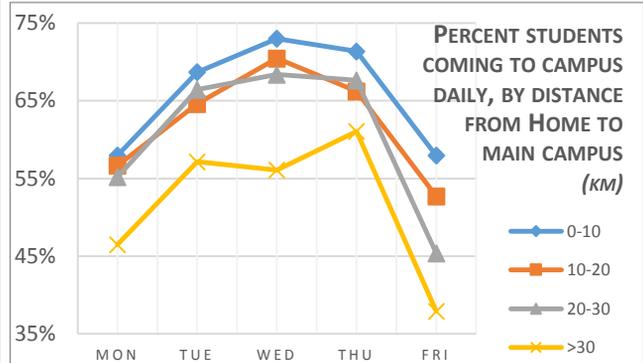
Students also have a life outside of school and often have to work in order to pay for university. **Nearly 55% of student respondents indicated working, 14.5% of whom work more than 20 hours per week.** Data gathered using StudentMoveTO’s online travel diary will enable us to look more closely at how work trips fit in with the rest of students’ lives, and better understand the challenges faced when balancing school and other responsibilities.

We asked students what could motivate them to change their main mode of transportation to campus. A few high level takeaways:

- the most important motivator across all seven campuses was a change in home location, a sign students understand the relationship between transportation and housing;
- **26% said an improvement to transit services would motivate them to change** their main mode to campus – notable given that quality came in ahead of cost;
- students are however also **highly sensitive to both increases and decreases to transit costs;**
- finally, **universities can have a direct impact on travel behaviour** without pressing for long term transit improvements or infrastructure around campus by modifying parking policy, implementing campaigns related to health and the environment and providing additional bike storage.

While these may seem to have only minor effects, it’s important to keep in mind that a low cost solution that can attract **3 or 4% of a 184,000-person student population** to adopt desirable travel patterns, potentially means shifting the behaviour of 5,500 to 7,300 students.

While more detailed analysis is required before any policy can be drafted to improve the sustainability of travel to campus or decrease the effect of long commutes on university participation, StudentMoveTO data clearly shows promise in helping to better understand, and then tackle these and other issues in a targeted and evidence-based manner.



PERCENT STUDENTS WORKING

Do not work	46%
Work part time (<10 hours per week)	20%
Work part time (11-20 hours per week)	19%
Work part time (21-30 hours per week)	7%
Work 31-40 hours per week	4%
Work > 40 hours per week	3%

MODE CHANGE MOTIVATIONS

Change in household location	59%
Improvements to transit	26%
Decreased transit costs	21%
Increased transit costs	20%
Worse congestion	15%
Decreased parking costs	15%
Nothing, Will not change	14%
Improved bike lanes	9%
To improve health	7%
Environmental concerns	6%
Roadwork disruptions	6%
Improved pedestrian environment	4%
Increased parking costs	3%
Added bike storage	3%