

This information on Wyoming residents' opinions concerning the University of Wyoming is from the Wyoming Election Survey, a statewide telephone poll conducted biennially by the University of Wyoming's Survey Research Center under the sponsorship of the School of Politics, Public Affairs & International Studies, the Health & Education Studies Center of the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center, and other University offices. Interviews are conducted at two time periods. The first wave of interviews are conducted in early October; respondents are interviewed a second time in November, shortly after the election.

The Wyoming Election Survey was started in 1972 by Oliver Walter, currently professor emeritus of political science and dean emeritus of the College of Arts and Sciences. Jim King, professor of political science, directed of the survey in 2018. Respondents are asked a number of questions regarding their views on public officials, candidates for elective office, and selected public policy issues. Interviews are conducted by telephone, with numbers for both landlines and cell phones included in the sampling frame. The random sample is drawn by and the interviews are conducted by staff members of UW Survey Research Center. The survey's margin of error for the complete sample is plus or minus four percent; the margin of error for subsamples are larger and dependent upon the number of respondents to a particular question.

Perceptions of the University of Wyoming

The 2018 and 2016 surveys of Wyoming residents included a set of questions designed to gauge public perceptions of the University of Wyoming regarding the quality of education provided and the university's role in the state. Survey responses in 2018 were similar to those in 2016, indicating no significant changes in how UW is viewed within the state.

It is important to emphasize that on no topic did survey respondents give the University of Wyoming negative ratings. UW is viewed favorably in the state. Differences in citizens' opinions are only about how favorably UW is perceived by Wyomingites, not whether the university is assessed favorably or unfavorably.

Overall, UW is well regarded in Wyoming for the quality of education students receive. Survey respondents gave the university its most favorable rating on providing an excellent undergraduate education:

- 86% survey respondents rated the university favorably in its appeal to Wyoming students and their families (Question #8, below).
- 66% of all respondents and 80% of those with an opinion on the question rated UW as "excellent" or "good" on providing an excellent undergraduate education (Question #5).

- 61% of all respondents and 75% with an opinion about UW gave positive ratings for educating people to participate in the state’s workforce (Question #1).
- 61% of survey respondents and 87% of those with an opinion on the question agreed that UW has improved steadily in recent years (Question #14).
- 57% of all respondents and 79% with an opinion about UW indicated that the university is spending its budget wisely (Question #13).

On no question in the survey did as many as 40% of respondents rate the University of Wyoming negatively (“fair” or “poor”):

- 51% of respondents gave UW positive marks (“excellent” or “good”) for fielding athletic teams that are competitive nationally while 38% gave the institution lower marks (Question #2).
- 56% of respondents rated UW positively (“excellent” or “good”) for having a strong level of engagement in their community while 35% gave the institution lower ratings (Question #6).
- 59% of respondents provided favorable assessments of UW (“excellent” or “good”) for being responsive to the state while 27% provided less favorable assessments (Question #4).

The people most familiar with the University of Wyoming—those who have received degrees from UW—are especially positive in their evaluations:

- 92% of UW graduates in our survey rated the quality of their educational experience as “excellent” or “good” (Question #10).
- 83% of UW graduates rated the relevance of their educational experience as “excellent” or “good” (Question #11).

Survey participants’ responses to questions concerning the University of Wyoming were tabulated against their level of education. Differences in education were apparent on two questions:

- 75% of college graduates (bachelor’s, graduate, or professional degree) rated UW as “excellent” or “good” in trying to keep tuition low while 66% of others gave UW these ratings. Although statistically significant, the differences do not indicate dissatisfaction with UW.
- Respondents’ assessments of UW as providing an “excellent” undergraduate education were directly related to their level of education: 38% of respondents with graduate or professional degrees rated UW as “excellent” followed by respondents with a bachelor’s degree (29%), attending college (22%), and graduating from high school (16%). There were no significant differences across levels of educational attainment in terms of ratings as “fair” or “poor.”

Survey questions pertaining to the University of Wyoming (pre-election wave):

Please rate the performance of the University of Wyoming on the following activities. Is the university's performance excellent, good, fair, or poor.

1. Educating young people to participate in Wyoming's workforce.

	2018*	2016
Excellent	16%	20%
Good	45%	47%
Fair	18%	15%
Poor	3%	3%
Don't know/Not sure	18%	15%
N =	601	716

2. Having athletic teams that are competitive nationally.

	2018	2016
Excellent	10%	10%
Good	41%	40%
Fair	32%	31%
Poor	7%	10%
Don't know/Not sure	11%	10%
N =	587	719

3. Keeping tuition as low as possible.

	2018	2016
Excellent	20%	20%
Good	36%	38%
Fair	20%	23%
Poor	7%	5%
Don't know/Not sure	16%	13%
N =	601	719

4. Being responsive to the needs of the state and its citizens.

	2018	2016
Excellent	13%	14%
Good	46%	52%
Fair	20%	18%
Poor	7%	4%
Don't know/Not sure	15%	12%
N =	600	711

* Column percentages might not sum to 100% because of rounding error.

5. Providing an excellent undergraduate education.

	2018	2016
Excellent	22%	27%
Good	43%	44%
Fair	14%	14%
Poor	2%	1%
Don't know/Not sure	18%	14%
N =	600	712

6. Having a strong level of engagement with your community.

	2018	2016
Excellent	17%	19%
Good	39%	42%
Fair	24%	20%
Poor	10%	9%
Don't know/Not sure	10%	10%
N =	601	714

7. Maintaining a safe campus for students, employees and visitors.

	2018	2016
Excellent	23%	23%
Good	40%	50%
Fair	8%	8%
Poor	2%	1%
Don't know/Not sure	28%	18%
N =	601	712

8. How well do you think the University of Wyoming appeals to Wyoming students and their families as a desirable place to attend college? Extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?

	2018	2016
Extremely well	28%	23%
Quite well	57%	61%
Not too well	8%	8%
Not well at all	2%	2%
Don't know/Not sure	5%	4%
N =	605	716

9. Have you received a degree from the University of Wyoming?

	2018	2016
Yes	17%	14%
No	83%	86%
N =	605	719

10. If yes, what was your perception of the quality of the educational experience? Was it excellent, good, fair, or poor.

	2018	2016
Excellent	44%	35%
Good	48%	53%
Fair	5%	9%
Poor	0%	3%
Don't know/Not sure	2%	<1%
N =	103	104

11. If yes, what was your perception of the relevance of their educational experience? Was it excellent, good, fair, or poor.

	2018	2016
Excellent	42%	21%
Good	42%	62%
Fair	15%	15%
Poor	2%	1%
Don't know/Not sure	0%	1%
N =	103	104

Survey questions pertaining to the University of Wyoming (post-election wave):

In the past few years there has been a discussion about the quality of the University of Wyoming and the size of the University of Wyoming budget. Please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or don't have an opinion on each.

12. Wyoming does not have the resources to pay for a university comparable to the best in the surrounding states such as the University of Colorado, University of Nebraska or the University of Utah.

	2018	2016
Strongly agree	4%	6%
Agree	16%	26%
Disagree	39%	39%
Strongly disagree	24%	17%
Don't know/Not sure	17%	12%
N =	408	518

13. Considering what the University of Wyoming contributes to the state, the University is spending its budget wisely.

	2018	2016
Strongly agree	10%	9%
Agree	47%	54%
Disagree	12%	14%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%
Don't know/Not sure	28%	20%
N =	408	518

14. In general, the University has steadily improved during the last several years?

	2018	2016
Strongly agree	13%	9%
Agree	48%	59%
Disagree	6%	7%
Strongly disagree	3%	1%
Don't know/Not sure	30%	24%
N =	408	518

15 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement or don't you have enough information to have an opinion. The University of Wyoming and the state's community colleges are working together to provide high quality college education for Wyoming students.

	2018	2016
Agree	71%	71%
Disagree	4%	4%
Not enough information	25%	25%
N =	408	518

Grading Wyoming's Educational Institutions

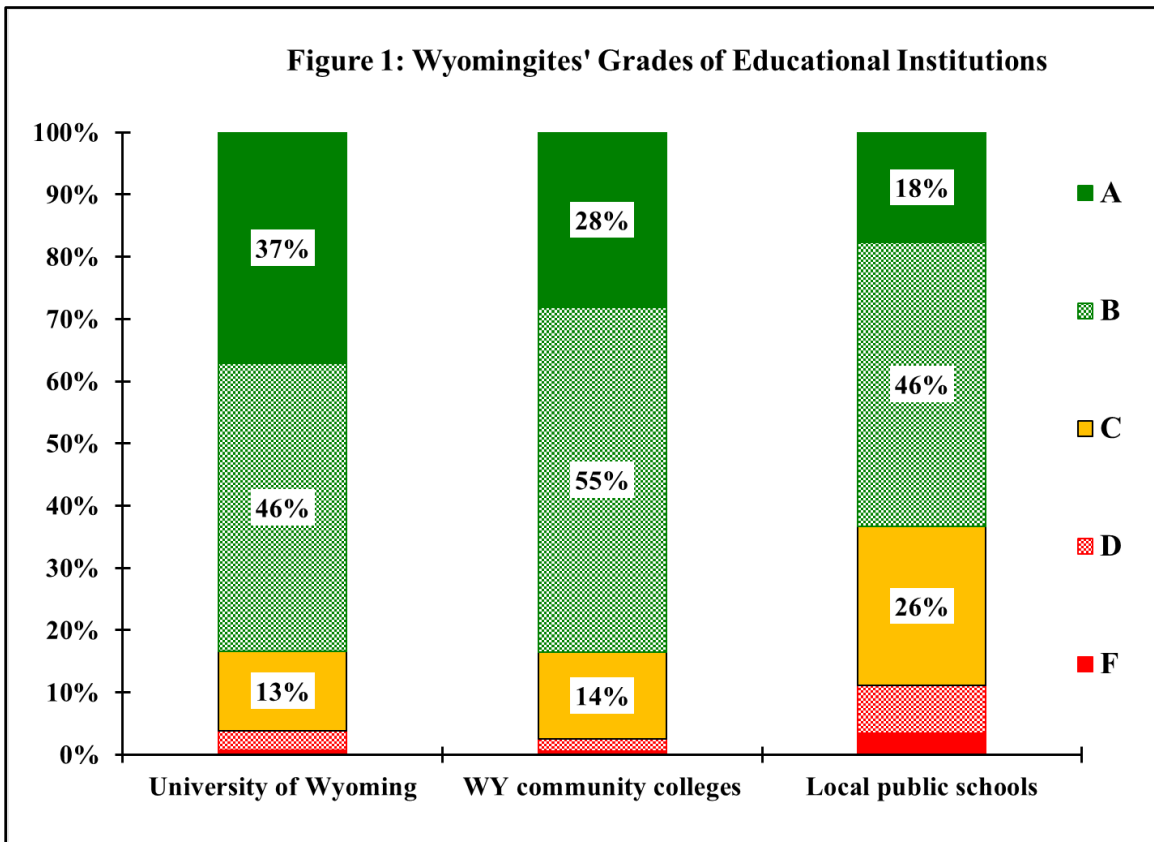
Recent iterations of the Wyoming survey have included the following questions regarding educational institutions:

Students are given grades A, B, C, D and F for the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools in your community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give your local public schools?

What about the state's community colleges? What grade would you give to them?

And finally, what about the University of Wyoming? What grade would you give the University for the quality of its work?

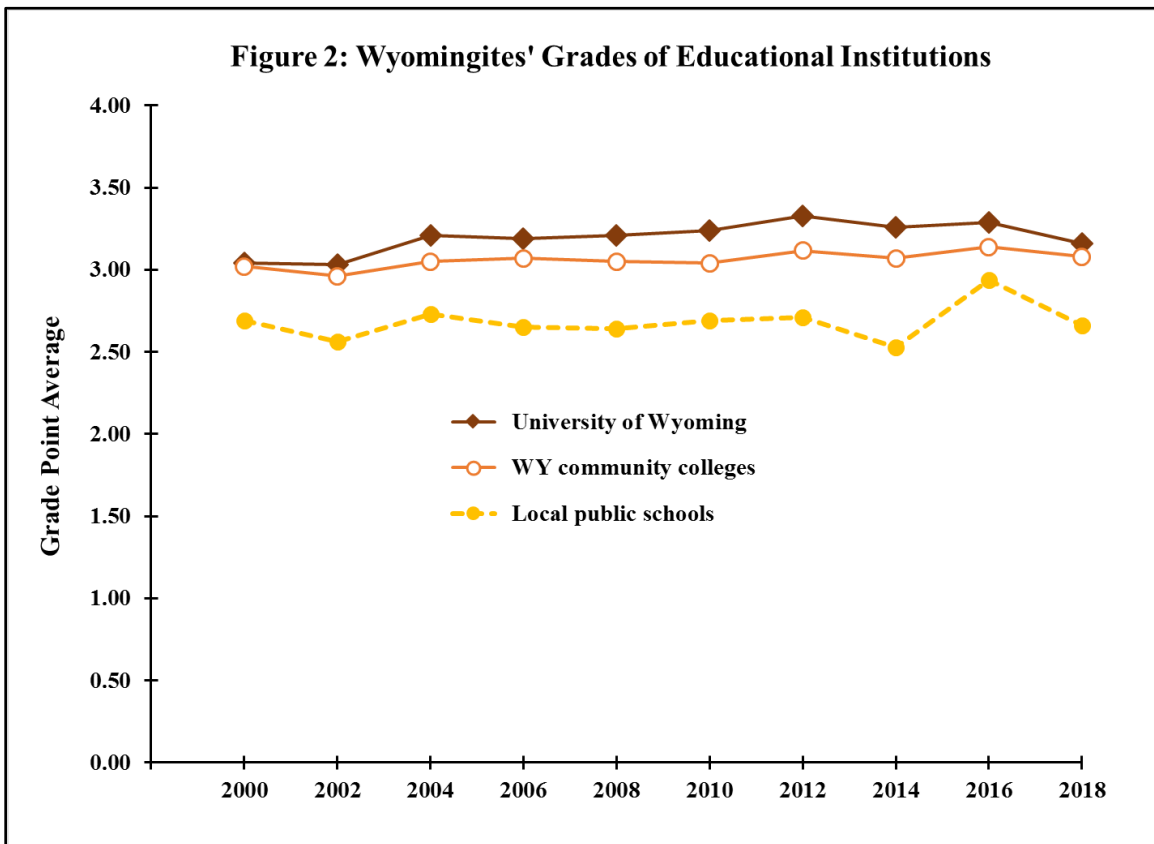
As indicated in Figure 1, Wyoming citizens rate the University of Wyoming more favorably than they do the state's community colleges or their local public schools. More than one third of the 2018 survey's respondents assigned a grade of "A" to the University of Wyoming. In all, five out of six of respondents assigning a grade to UW chose "A" or "B"; only one in one hundred believed UW is failing in its mission.



Wyoming’s community colleges are graded similarly to UW, although fewer survey respondents offered community colleges an “A” grade. Local public schools are generally viewed favorably, with more the three-fifths of survey respondents assigning a grade of “B” or higher. Overall, however, UW receives higher marks than the state’s other educational institutions.

The pattern of responses in the 2018 Wyoming survey reflect those of prior years. To make cross-time comparisons, a Grade Point Average similar to what students receive was calculated for the three institutions over the past ten statewide surveys. As seen in Figure 2, UW consistently receives higher grades, followed by the community colleges and local public schools. Additionally, the twenty-year trend in assessments of UW has been slightly upward.

It is important to note that all levels of educational institutions are evaluated positively. In most years, UW has a B+ average while the community colleges and local public schools have “B” and B-” averages, respectively. None of the state’s educational institutions receives a below average or failing grade.



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