



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COURSE ATTENDANCE MODE COULD AFFECT THE LEARNING
EXPERIENCE**

Pilot study finds evidence of a connection.

Toronto, ON April 9, 2025 - A pilot study by Prisma Research of public relations and government relations students at Seneca Polytechnic found a possible connection between how students attend a course and how they feel about the learning experience. Students attending classes in-person appear to have a more favorable view of their experience than students attending online.

Of particular note, 100 per cent of students surveyed who attended classes in-person agreed it provided value for the tuition paid as opposed to 74.2 per cent who attended online. Another striking difference was in the effect on the learning experience. One hundred per cent of students attending in-person felt it had a positive effect, whereas that number dropped to just 61.3 per cent of students attending online. A full 38.7 per cent felt online attendance had a neutral to adverse impact on the learning experience.

“These findings suggest a phenomenon educators have long suspected,” said Joe MacDonald, program manager of the Government Relations department at Seneca Polytechnic. “If these findings are followed up by more in-depth research, it could have significant implications on the course attendance options Seneca chooses to make available in the future.”

The differences in the perception of the in-person versus online learning experiences suggested by this study are in line with findings from other studies, such as a 2022 study of University of Illinois computer science students that found students attending in-person were more likely to feel a greater sense of belonging than students attending online.

“Since the Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions around the world have increased the availability of online attendance options, with many students never setting foot in a brick-and-mortar classroom,” said Mehakpreet Kaur, president of Prisma Research. “The findings suggest they may be missing out on the quality of the learning experience when compared to their in-person peers. As more educational institutions offer online learning, there is an urgency to look into this matter further.”

About Prisma:

Prisma is a Canadian research firm specializing in public policy analysis and educational innovation. Offering extensive research and strategic advisory services, we support governments, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations in creating policies and programs based on the best evidence available. Our team combines policy development, program evaluation and education research expertise to address complex societal challenges. Committed to equity, sustainability, and change, Prisma is a trusted partner in advancing solutions within Canada and worldwide.

Spencer Doraty, Prisma Research

Communications Coordinator

sdoraty@prisma.ca

647-234-5678

###

