

Research in BRIEF

A Newsletter of the Institutional Research Office

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

August 2010
Vol. 7, No. 20

2010 NOEL-LEVITZ STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY (SSI)

Executive Summary

(Administered Spring 2010)

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), a nationally recognized survey developed to assess student satisfaction and the importance of campus issues to students, was administered to 3,293 Chapman students during the Spring 2010 semester. A random sample of half of the undergraduate population was invited to take the SSI. All graduate students were invited to take the survey excluding Law students. The survey was conducted on-line and sent to each student's Chapman University email address. Exactly 925 SSIs were completed, yielding a response rate of 28.1 percent.

Sample Representation and Demographics

The survey sample accounts for about 16.6% of Chapman University's Spring 2010 full-time and part-time student population, or 14.3% of undergraduates and 24.9% of graduate students.

Population and Survey Respondents – Spring 2010				
	Chapman Population (n = 5,587)	All Sample (n=925)	UG Sample (n=624)	GR Sample (n=301)
Gender				
Male	42.6%	35.3%	34.8%	36.4%
Female	57.4%	64.7%	65.2%	63.6%
Race/Ethnicity				
African-Amer.	2.3%	1.6%	1.5%	2.0%
Am. Ind., Alas.	.5%	.5%	.5%	.7%
Asian, Pac. Is.	9.2%	15.3%	13.5%	19.1%
White	61.4%	61.4%	64.6%	54.8%
Latino/Hispanic	11.2%	11.0%	9.7%	13.6%
Other	9.4%	4.3%	4.2%	4.4%
Unknown	5.9%	5.8%	6.0%	5.4%
Class Level				
Freshman	16.3%	19.3%	28.5%	--
Sophomore	17.4%	12.5%	18.4%	--
Junior	18.7%	16.1%	23.8%	--
Senior	25.4%	19.4%	28.7%	--
Graduate	21.5%	32.3%	--	99.7%
Other	.7%	.4%	.5%	.3%

Findings show that females are overrepresented in the sample. The racial demographics of the sample are similar to the

population except students in the "Other" category are underrepresented and Asian students are overrepresented in the sample. It should be noted that the "Other" category is defined slightly different in the two sources. The class composition of the sample over represents graduate students while under represents seniors and sophomores.

FINDINGS

Highlighted in this *Research in BRIEF* are some of the most salient findings from the 2010 SSI survey.

Importance

Students were asked to indicate how important it was to them that the university met the expectations listed, using a scale from 1-"not important" to 7-"very important" ("does not apply" was also an option). Average mean scores were calculated for all items. The top five services/activities rated as *most important* by Chapman University students in 2010 were:

Undergraduates

- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (6.75)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (6.74)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (6.74)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (6.74)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.72)

Graduates

- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (6.79)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.78)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (6.77)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (6.75)
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (6.69)

Instruction quality, course content, and faculty quality all rate as the top concerns among both undergraduate and graduate students. The ease of class registration is of top importance among undergraduates but not graduate students. The level of variation in the top five services/activities is quite small. The difference between the 1st and 5th item is less than .05 for both groups.

The top five services/activities rated as *least* important by Chapman University students in 2010 were:

Undergraduates

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (5.11)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (5.36)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (5.53)
- The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life. (5.58)
- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (5.61)

Graduates

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (4.05)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (4.52)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (4.58)
- Residence hall regulations are reasonable. (4.90)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (5.28)

Intramural activities, weekend activities, and the role of intercollegiate sports in fostering school spirit were commonly viewed as least important among undergraduates and graduate students. But these items still scored in the “neutral” or “somewhat important” range which suggest these are not unimportant concerns.

Satisfaction

Students were asked to report their level of satisfaction with the service or activity listed, using a scale from 1-“not satisfied at all” to 7-“very satisfied” (“not available/not used” was also an option). Average mean scores were calculated for each item.

The top five services/activities rated as *most* satisfactory by Chapman University students in 2010 were:

Undergraduates

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (6.52)
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (6.11)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.08)
- The campus is safe and secure for all students. (6.01)
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (5.96)

Graduates

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (6.49)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.13)

- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (6.09)
- The campus is safe and secure for all students. (6.04)
- This institution has a good reputation within the community. (6.04)

The results are quite similar for undergraduates and graduate students. Among both groups, campus maintenance, safety, faculty competence, and availability all ranked in the “very satisfied” range and satisfaction with campus maintenance was about .4 higher than the second highest item. The mean scores for the rest of the items were tightly clustered in both groups.

The top five services/activities rated as *least* satisfactory by Chapman University students in 2010 were:

Undergraduates

- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (4.04)
- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (4.41)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (4.47)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (4.54)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (4.63)

Graduates

- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (4.59)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (4.67)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (4.69)
- Residence hall regulations are reasonable. (4.74)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (4.86)

All of the above items ranked in the “neutral” range among undergraduate and graduate students. The role of athletic programs in contributing to school spirit scored the lowest satisfaction among both groups. Among undergraduates, student parking and class registration were the next two top concerns. Graduate students identified food services, resident hall regulations, and channels for expressing complaints as the other top concerns.

Performance Gap: Challenges and Strengths

The performance gap score is the mean score difference between student satisfaction and importance items. When the students’ level of satisfaction is subtracted from the strength of the students’ expectation (i.e., level of importance), the result suggests an unmet expectation. According to Noel-Levitz, a large performance gap score for an item indicates that the institution is not meeting the students’ expectations. The services/activities listed below resulted in the largest gap scores in 2010:

Undergraduates

- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (2.27)
- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (1.84)
- I am able to register for classes that are convenient for me. (1.82)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (1.73)
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (1.63)

Graduates

- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (1.38)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (1.30)
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students. (1.26)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (1.17)
- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (1.12)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (1.12)

Class registration convenience and amount of student parking stand out as areas where expectation is falling short among undergraduates. Among graduate students, a variety of items ranked in the top five as shown above. Data suggest that both undergraduate and graduate students would welcome revised or additional hours at the food service restaurants on campus.

According to Noel-Levitz, a small performance gap score for an item indicates that the institution is meeting the students' expectations in that area or that there is little difference between satisfaction and importance. Below are the services/activities with the smallest gap scores in 2010:

Undergraduates

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (-.20)
- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (-.05)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (-.05)
- Bookstore staff are helpful. (-.01)
- Tutoring services are readily available. (.06)

Graduates

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (-.85)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (-.53)
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (-.26)
- Bookstore staff are helpful. (-.10)
- The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life. (-.07)

For several items, the satisfaction score exceeded the importance score among undergraduates and graduate students. In particular, bookstore staff performance and campus maintenance have exceeded the expectations of all students.

Scales

Using factor analysis, Noel-Levitz created 12 scales in order to provide an overall picture of various service areas. According to the Noel-Levitz's SSI Interpretative Guide, the following scales were created:

- *Student Centeredness* scale assesses the extent to which students feel welcome and valued.
- *Campus Life* scale assesses the effectiveness of student life programs offered, as well as policies/procedures to determine students' perception of their rights and responsibilities.
- *Instructional Effectiveness* scale assesses students' academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's commitment to academic excellence. Also covers areas such as the effectiveness of faculty in and out of the classroom, content of the courses, and sufficient course offerings.
- *Recruitment/Admissions and Financial Aid Effectiveness* scale assesses the institution's ability to enroll students in an effective manner, covering issues such as competence and knowledge of admissions counselors, as well as the effectiveness and availability of financial aid programs.
- *Campus Support Services* scale assesses the quality of support programs and services which students utilize to make their educational experiences more meaningful and productive.
- *Academic Advising Effectiveness* scale assesses the comprehensiveness of academic advising programs. Advisors are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence, personal concern for student success, and their approachability.
- *Registration Effectiveness* scale assesses issues associated with registration and billing.
- *Safety and Security* scale assesses responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on campus including parking availability.
- *Concern for the Individual* scale assesses institution's commitment to treating each student as an individual. Those groups who frequently deal with students on a personal level are included in this assessment.
- *Service Excellence* scale assesses the perceived attitude of staff, especially front-line staff, toward students.
- *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations* scale assesses institution's commitment to specific groups of students enrolled (e.g., under-represented populations, older, returning learners).
- *Campus Climate* scale assesses the extent to which institutions provide experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging.

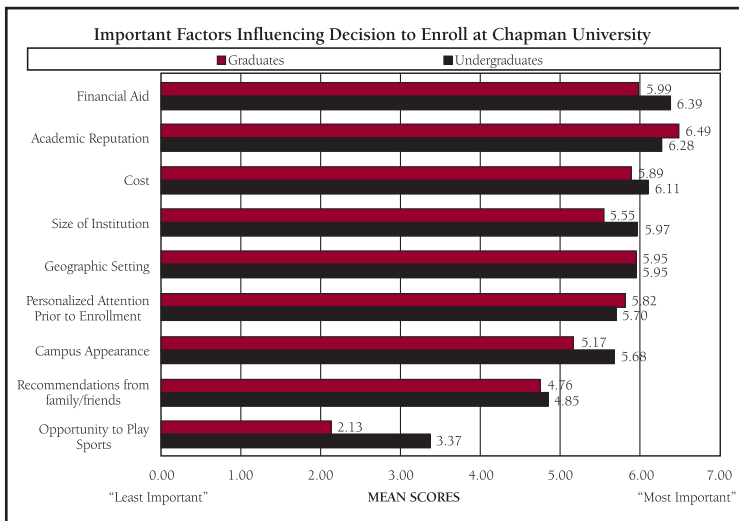
The gap scores for the SSI Scales are another avenue for detecting potential improvement points in meeting student expectations. Unlike the item gap scores, the scales combine several items to allow for a more robust measure of the concept of interest. With the exception of Campus Support Services (.37 gap score), all of the reported gap scores range between .76 and 1.22 among undergraduates. Among graduate students, campus life and campus support services yielded the smallest gap scores (.10 and .37 respectively). The rest of the gap scores ranged between .53 and .74.

2010 Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Inventory Scales

Scale	CU Undergraduates			CU Graduates		
	Import	Satis	Gap	Import	Satis	Gap
Registration Effectiveness	6.30	5.08	1.22	6.23	5.57	0.66
Academic Advising	6.33	5.24	1.09	6.43	5.71	0.72
Safety and Security	6.34	5.37	0.97	6.36	5.76	0.60
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.27	5.32	0.95	6.23	5.50	0.73
Concern for the Individual	6.29	5.41	0.88	6.35	5.61	0.74
Campus Climate	6.35	5.48	0.87	6.24	5.66	0.58
Student Centeredness	6.38	5.52	0.86	6.21	5.66	0.55
Instructional Effectiveness	6.55	5.71	0.84	6.55	5.76	0.79
Service Excellence	6.13	5.29	0.84	6.03	5.50	0.53
Campus Life	5.90	5.14	0.76	5.37	5.27	0.10
Campus Support Services	6.02	5.65	0.37	6.01	5.64	0.37
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	N/A	5.27	N/A	N/A	5.55	N/A

Factors Influencing the Decision to Enroll

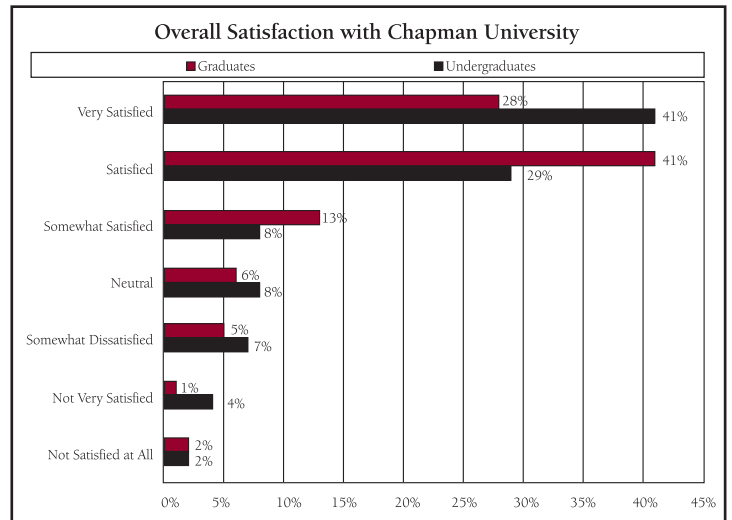
Using a scale from 1-“not important” to 7-“very important,” undergraduates were asked to indicate, from a list of nine items, which factors they believed were most important in their decision to enroll at their institution.



Results show that the top three factors influencing students’ decision to attend Chapman University were financial aid, academic reputation of the institution, and cost. Graduate students expressed similar opinions except location instead of cost ranked in the top three. Personalized attention and size of the institutions were also important pull factors among all students.

Overall Satisfaction with Chapman University

Data show that about 70 percent of undergraduates and graduates expressed satisfaction with their overall experience at Chapman University.



SUMMARY

The findings from the SSI show that undergraduate and graduate student share similar opinions on what is important and their satisfaction with the university. Quality of instruction and course content concern both groups of students. Intramural activities, the opportunity to play sports, and the role of intercollegiate sports fostering school spirit are all viewed as least important by all students. The satisfaction scores show that all students are satisfied with campus maintenance and campus support services.

The main difference between undergraduate and graduate students is that the former group places greater importance on class registration and reports less satisfaction in this area. The Registration Effectiveness scale gap score for undergraduates clearly stands out. Not only is this gap score for this scale the highest, it is almost twice as high as the gap score for graduate students. Parking satisfaction and food services hours also stand out as areas of dissatisfaction among undergraduates. None of the scale gap scores among graduate students stand out like the Registration Effectiveness score. The Instructional Effectiveness yielded the highest gap score (.79) but the score is .26 within most of the scale scores suggesting that several areas rank among the highest concern among graduate students. As a result, it may be instructive to examine the individual item gap scores to identify areas of improvement. The results suggest that channels for expressing student complaints, financial aid, food services, and instruction were the areas that registered the highest level of dissatisfaction when considering their importance.

Prepared by: Chapman’s Institutional Research Office (CIRO)
<http://www.chapman.edu/CHANCELLOR/ciro/>