

Research in BRIEF

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CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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2008 NOEL-LEVITZ STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY (SSI)

Orange Campus

Executive Summary

(Administered Spring 2008)

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 1,987 Orange Campus undergraduates during the Spring 2008 Semester. A random sample of half of the undergraduate population was invited to take the SSI. The survey was conducted on-line and sent to each student's Chapman University email address. Exactly 442 SSIs were completed, yielding a response rate of 22.2 percent.

Sample Representation and Demographics

The survey sample accounts for about 11.1% of Chapman University's Spring 2008 undergraduate full-time and part-time student population. As the table shows, the class level characteristics of the survey respondents reasonably mirror the population, but females are overrepresented in the sample. Female overrepresentation in the sample is not surprising given the gender demographics of the Orange Campus. A comparison of the racial demographics is not presented due to incompatible racial categories between the SSI and Chapman's student records.

Undergraduate Population and Survey Respondents

	ORANGE CAMPUS SPRING '08	
	Chapman Population (n = 3,974)	Undergraduate Respondents (n = 442)
GENDER		
Male	40.8%	30.7%
Female	59.2%	69.3%
CLASS LEVEL		
Freshman	20.9%	23.4%
Sophomore	22.8%	21.5%
Junior	24.5%	28.8%
Senior	30.8%	25.7%
Other	1.0%	.7%

FINDINGS

Highlighted in this *Research in BRIEF* are some of the most salient findings from the 2008 SSI.

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 10 services/activities rated as most important by Chapman University undergraduates in 2008 were (two items tied for tenth):

- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (6.82)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (6.81)
- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (6.80)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.78)
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (6.77)
- It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus. (6.72)
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (6.72)
- I am able to register for classes that are convenient for me. (6.72)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (6.71)
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major. (6.66)
- There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus. (6.66)

While ease of class registration and instruction quality are the top concerns among undergraduates, it should be noted that the level of variation in the top 10 services/activities is quite small. The difference between the 1st and 10th item is only .16. Course content, knowledgeable faculty, and academic advising were other services/activities that scored over the "important" threshold of 6.0.

The top 10 services/activities rated as *least* important by Chapman University undergraduates in 2008 were:

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (5.07)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (5.30)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (5.45)
- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (5.62)
- I am able to get help with my writing on campus. (5.71)
- Bookstore staff are helpful. (5.75)
- The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life. (5.77)
- The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time. (5.79)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (5.80)
- Tutoring services are readily available. (6.01)

Even though these items were deemed the least important, all of the items scored in the “somewhat important” range (5.0) or higher. Many of the items fall under athletic, social, or staffing issues.

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 10 services/activities rated as *most* satisfactory by Chapman University undergraduates in 2008 were (two items tied for 10th):

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (6.37)
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (6.07)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (5.98)
- The campus is safe and secure for all students. (5.95)
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible. (5.91)
- Parking lots are well-lighted and secure. (5.84)
- This institution has a good reputation within the community. (5.81)
- Tutoring services are readily available. (5.77)
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (5.73)
- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (5.70)
- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (5.70)

Overall campus maintenance and faculty availability were the only services in the “satisfied” range. The rest of the services/activities in the top ten scored in the “somewhat satisfied” range. Faculty also scored high marks on “instruction” and “faculty knowledge”. Campus facilities and

services achieved high satisfaction scores in several respects such as parking, computer labs, library staff, tutoring services, and campus safety (which is partially attributable to campus facilities like lighting). Satisfaction with Chapman’s reputation within the community is also high.

The top 10 services/activities rated as *least* satisfactory by Chapman University students in 2008 were:

- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (3.82)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (4.06)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (4.14)
- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (4.38)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (4.53)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (4.56)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (4.58)
- Student activities fees are put to good use. (4.63)
- I am able to register for classes that are convenient for me. (4.64)
- Billing policies are reasonable. (4.66)

Undergraduates were “somewhat dissatisfied” with the role of intercollegiate sports towards contributing to school spirit. The rest of the items in the top ten scored in the “neutral” range. These items dealt with a variety areas including: food services, class registration, amount of parking, student activities, billing policies, and channels for expressing student complaints.

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 (i.e., items rated by Chapman University undergraduates as the most important and least satisfied) in 2008:

- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (2.68)
- Food service restaurants on campus are open during hours which are convenient for me. (2.43)
- I am able to register for classes that are convenient for me. (2.08)

- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (2.00)
- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (1.99)
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students. (1.78)
- I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus. (1.75)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (1.73)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (1.72)
- Billing policies are reasonable. (1.65)

Dissatisfaction with class registration convenience stands out as a top concern among undergraduates. The rest of the items in the top ten reflect a variety of areas including parking availability, financial aid, food service, communication avenues, and billing policies.

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 (i.e., items rated by students as important and satisfied) in 2008:

- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (-.08)
- I am able to get help with my writing on campus. (.03)
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (.08)
- Bookstore staff are helpful. (.23)
- Tutoring services are readily available. (.24)
- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (.30)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (.35)
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible. (.37)
- Parking lots are well-lighted and secure. (.39)
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (.47)

The findings show that satisfaction with library staff exceeded the reported importance among undergraduates. Other items that show a close match between stated satisfaction and importance include faculty and staff services (e.g., tutoring, faculty availability), computer availability, parking security, intramural availability, gender equality in athletic opportunities, and overall campus maintenance.

SSI 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.

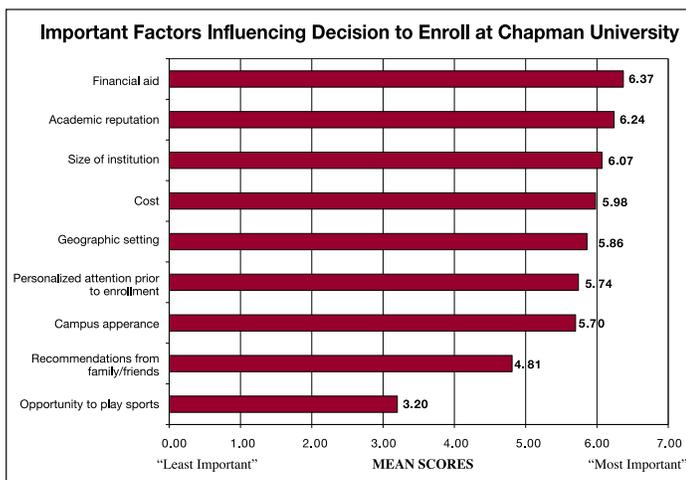
The gap scores for the Student Satisfaction Inventory Scales are another avenue for detecting potential improvement points in meeting student expectations. Unlike the item gap scores, the scales combine several items to allow for a more robust measure of the concept of interest. With the exception of Campus Support Services (.51 gap score), all of the reported gap scores range between .96 and 1.41. Registration Effectiveness yielded the largest gap score for all scales (1.41). The small SSI scale gap scores suggest that Chapman University is servicing students reasonably close to their perceived importance in a variety of services/activities. But the item gap scores suggest there is still room for improvement in specific areas.

2008 Student Satisfaction Inventory Scales

Scale	CU Undergraduates		
	Import	Satis / SD	Gap
Registration Effectiveness	6.38	4.97 / 1.12	1.41
Academic Advising	6.47	5.21 / 1.41	1.26
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.35	5.18 / 1.13	1.17
Concern for the Individual	6.43	5.33 / 1.06	1.10
Campus Climate	6.42	5.33 / 1.00	1.09
Safety and Security	6.45	5.38 / 1.04	1.07
Student Centeredness	6.44	5.39 / 1.07	1.05
Instructional Effectiveness	6.59	5.58 / 0.92	1.01
Campus Life	5.95	4.96 / 1.07	0.99
Service Excellence	6.22	5.26 / 0.97	0.96
Campus Support Services	6.09	5.58 / 0.88	0.51
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	N/A	5.17 / 1.40	N/A

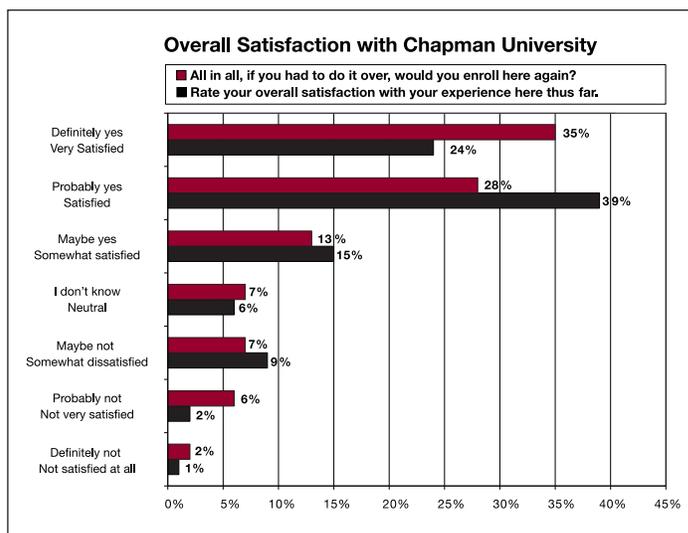
Factors Influencing the Decision to Enroll

Using a scale from 1-“not important” to 7-“very important,” students 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 the size of the institution. After the top three, four other factors scored within .67 of the top factor and were deemed “somewhat important” by undergraduates. These factors include cost, geographic setting, personalized attention prior to enrollment, and campus appearance.



Overall Satisfaction with Chapman University

The bar chart reports two measures of overall satisfaction with Chapman University. The black bars show that 63% of undergraduates were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their overall experience. And the red bars show that 76% of undergraduates reported yes when asked if they would attend Chapman again.



SUMMARY

According to the SSI Scale gap scores, registration effectiveness and academic advising represent two potential areas of improvement. In particular, the items “I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts,” and, “I am able to register for classes that are convenient for me,” represented two out of the three highest item gap scores. The positioning of these items may have been influenced by a change in the registration procedures in the Fall of 2007. Freshmen were allowed to register first, resulting in vocal displeasure from students. Dissatisfaction over class registration conflicts also reinforces findings from the Fall 2007 Student Services Satisfaction Survey.

Financial aid is another issue that may warrant closer attention. The availability of “adequate financial aid” ranked as the sixth highest item gap score, but undergraduates ranked it as the most important factor in deciding to come to Chapman University. Improving the gap score for this item is clearly important towards attracting undergraduates. The Recruitment and Financial Aid scale gap score (1.17) also shows that this area could be improved.

The SSI also reveals many positive findings. Faculty scored high student satisfaction marks on “instruction” and “faculty knowledge”. As a whole, the majority of undergraduates reported satisfaction with their overall Chapman experience, and only a very small minority of students expressed regret in deciding to enroll at Chapman University. The SSI Scale gap scores show that the level of satisfaction experienced by undergraduates closely matches their expectation concerning campus services and instructional effectiveness. Undoubtedly these factors will help draw future students.