

ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Noel-Levitz
Student Satisfaction Inventory
Institutional Priorities Survey
Gap analysis**

June 2009



THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OFFICE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction:.....	3
Instrument:	3
Methodology:.....	3
Results:.....	4
Strengths:	4
Strengths for Both Students (SSI) and Employees (IPS): Table 1:	4
Challenges:.....	5
Challenges for Both Students (SSI) and Employees (IPS): Table 2:.....	5
Comparisons:	5
Challenges for Students but Strengths for Employees:.....	5
Performance Gap:	6
Scales: In Rank Order of Performance Gap: Table 3:	6
Appendix.....	8
The Scales	8
Scales: In Rank order of Importance: Figure 1:.....	9
Ven Diagram Instructions for University of Scranton Strengths and Challenges	9
University of Scranton Areas of Greatest Strengths: Figure 2:	10
University of Scranton Areas of Challenges: Figure 3:	11

Introduction

The Institutional Research Office was engaged at the request of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to administer the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI) and the Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS). The purpose of the survey administration was to inform planning activities in both the enrollment management and academic affairs areas.

Student satisfaction assessment is an integral part of assessment regularly conducted by higher education institutions. By collecting satisfaction data from students, campuses are able to determine where they are best serving students and where there are areas for improvement. Satisfied students are more likely to be successful students. Research indicates that institutions with more satisfied students have higher graduation rates, lower loan default rates, and higher alumni giving. Satisfaction with an institution includes a combination of academic factors as well as areas related to student life.

This report will focus on the gap analysis between the SSI and the IPS survey results. The gap analysis will help to identify strengths and challenges for both students and employees based on the perceptions of the students' experiences and the employees' perceptions about the students' experiences on this campus. This analysis may serve as a guide for directing the focus of planning improvements on campus.

Instrument

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) asked students to indicate both the level of importance they place on specific attributes of the institution, as well as their level of satisfaction that the institution meets this expectation. The Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) asked faculty, administrators, and staff to indicate the level of importance and their level of agreement that the institution is meeting its students' expectations. Both surveys contained the same items; the only variation in the survey was the directions. The students were asked to rate the importance and their expectations and the employees were asked to rate the importance of and their expectations about the students' experiences on campus. Some of the topics included in both surveys are the effectiveness of academic advising, campus climate, concern for the individual, instructional effectiveness, and safety and security. The responses for the surveys range from 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important) and 1 (not satisfied at all) to 7 (very satisfied). The combination of importance/satisfaction or agreement data is "very powerful," (Noel-Levitz General Interpretive Guide, 2008) allowing institutions to review satisfaction levels within the context of what is most important. The results provide a roadmap for next steps that the institution can take to respond to the issues that students/campus employees have identified as strengths and challenges.

Methodology

Both the SSI and the IPS were administered via the Web. The Noel-Levitz Company hosted the survey and email invitations were sent out by Noel-Levitz; however, the University of Scranton's Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Joseph H. Dreisbach personalized the email invitations. Two thousand eight hundred and one (2801) students were invited to complete the SSI. These students represented the sophomore, junior and senior classes. Three hundred and ninety-four (394) students completed the SSI. Seven hundred and two (702) full-time employees were invited to complete the IPS. Two hundred and ninety-six (296) employees completed the IPS.

Results

Results are presented in four sections:

Strengths

Strengths for both students and employees
 Strengths for students
 Strengths for employees

Comparisons for Students and Employees

Challenge for Students but Strength for Employees

Challenges

Challenges for both students and employees
 Challenges for students
 Challenges for employees

Rank Order of Performance Gap Based on Student Satisfaction Inventory

Importance
 Satisfaction
 Performance Gap
 (importance score minus the satisfaction score)

Strengths

Individual items on the SSI and the IPS were analyzed to determine institutional strengths (high importance and high satisfaction). The Noel-Levitz Company suggests that institutions often incorporate their strengths into their marketing activities, recruiting materials, internal and external public relations opportunities, as well as provide positive feedback for the campus students and personnel. *Strengths* are defined as those items above the midpoint in importance and in the top quartile of satisfaction. See figure 1 on page 11 for an overview of the strengths (students, employees, and the combination).

Strengths for Both Students and Employees

These items are areas everyone can celebrate. They have the full support of the entire campus and provide strong opportunities for positive feedback and for marketing activities (Noel-Levitz General Interpretive Guide, 2008).

Table 1
 Strengths for Both Students (SSI) and Employees (IPS)

Item Number	Questions
1	The campus staff are caring and helpful.
31	Students are made to feel welcome here.
40	Faculty are usually available to students outside of class (during office hours, by phone or by e-mail).
44	On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

Challenges

Individual items on the SSI and the IPS were analyzed to determine key challenges (high importance and low satisfaction). The Noel-Levitz Company suggests that campuses that have surveyed themselves look at these crucial areas to address and improve retention. *Challenges* are defined as being above the midpoint in importance and in the bottom quartile of satisfaction and/or the top quartile of performance gaps.

The institution has the “green light” to move forward with initiatives in the areas that qualify as challenges for both students and staff because the entire campus is on board with identifying them as areas that require improvement (Noel-Levitz General Interpretive Guide, 2008). See figure 2 on page 12 for an overview of the challenges (students, employees, and the combination).

Table 2
Challenges for Both Students (SSI) and Employees (IPS)

Item Number	Questions
3	The Campus is safe and secure for all students.
14	Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
17	There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term
28	Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance
35	I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus

Comparisons

Challenge for Students but Strength for Employees

These items provide an opportunity for discussion since different campus constituencies view them differently. The Noel-Levitz family of satisfaction surveys are based on the perceptions of the students’ experiences on the campus, the emphasis here is on the students seeing each area as a challenge. Noel-Levitz suggests that additional efforts need to be made to improve the experience for the students. More of an effort will need to be made to build support in this area since employees already see this as a strength. The only item the students’ perceived as a challenge that our employees perceived as a strength was *tuition paid is a worthwhile investment*.

Performance Gap

This section of the report will present the definitions of the survey scales and rank order of these scales using the student data for the nine scales. The rank ordering is based on the mean for importance, satisfaction, and as a result the performance gaps scores. The survey responses are averaged to produce an importance score and a satisfaction score for each item. A performance gap is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score. A larger performance gap indicates that the university is not meeting students' expectations. A smaller performance gap indicates that the institution is adequately meeting students' expectations. The university can compare the performance gaps for the scales where there are different perceptions of performance. **NOTE: The number one ranking for the performance gaps is actually the top area where, according to the perceptions of the students, the university is not meeting expectations of the students. The students perceive the number one performance gap as the area that least meets their perceived expectations.**

Table 3
Scales: In Rank Order of Performance Gap
Based on Student Satisfaction Inventory

Scale	University of Scranton SSI Ranked Means			University of Scranton IPS Ranked Means		
	Importance	Satisfaction/SD	Performance Gap	Importance	Satisfaction/SD	Performance Gap
Safety and Security	6	9	1*	3	9	1*
Registration Effectiveness	4	8	2*	9	8	4
Campus Climate	5	6	3	5	4	6
Academic Advising Effectiveness	2	4	4	4	6	2/3
Campus Life	8	5	5*	8	3	9*
Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness	9	7	6	6	7	2/3
Instructional Effectiveness	1	2	7	2	4	5
Student Centeredness	3	3	8	1	1	7
Campus Services	7	1	9*	7	2	8*

* Noel-Levitz General Interpretive Guide suggests it is appropriate to take notices of scales differing by three or more places

The critical aspects of Table 3 are the performance gap. The larger the performance gap the greater the discrepancy between students' expectations and employees' perceptions of their expectations and their level of satisfaction with the current situation. The smaller the performance gap, the better the University is doing at meeting the students'/employees' expectations. Importance, satisfaction, and the performance gap were ranked

on a scale of one to nine with one indicating the largest gap and nine the smallest. The rank order in Table 3 is based on the performance gap ranking of the student data. The number one ranked scale is the biggest discrepancy between the perceived importance and the expectations for both students and employees (Safety and Security). **NOTE: Both students and employees perceive *Student Centeredness* as most closely meeting their level of importance with their satisfaction. Similarly, both groups perceive *Safety and Security* as not meeting their level of importance with their satisfaction. Students perceive *Registration Effectiveness* as least closely meeting their level of importance with their satisfaction.**

The other noteworthy results are the performance gaps that are separated by more than three rankings. These areas are denoted with an asterisk in Table 3. The students' mean item score for the *Instructional Effectiveness* scale is ranked higher in importance and satisfaction and has a lower performance gap ranking (smaller gap). Basically, the students perceive that the University is more effective in meeting their expectations in this area than do the employees. The Campus Services scale has low importance ranking and high satisfaction ranking for both students and employees. This scale also has a low performance gap ranking indicating that the expectations for this scale are being met. To better understand the rank ordering of the scales, please consult Figure 1: in the Appendix.

This report was an overview of the 2008 Noel-Levitz data and is designed to provide usable, quick access of information for departments. The data may help to inform departments regarding institutional decision-making. Copies of the web-based survey instrument are available. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Institutional Research Office.

Appendix

The Scales

The short forms of the Noel-Levitz surveys administered are organized into nine scales. The items on the SSI and IPS have been analyzed statistically and conceptually to form the scales. Some items do appear on more than one scale.

Academic Advising (and Counseling) Effectiveness: Academic Advisors are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence, and personal concern for student success, as well as on their approachability.

Campus Climate: Assess the extent to which the campus provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging. This scale also assesses the effectiveness of the university's channel of communication for students.

Campus Life: Assesses the effectiveness of your student life programs offered by the university, covering issues ranging from athletics to residence life. This scale also assesses campus policies and procedures to determine students' perception of their rights and responsibilities.

Campus Services: Assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring, and study areas.

Instructional Effectiveness: Assesses your students' academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence. This comprehensive scale covers areas such as the effectiveness of the faculty in and out of the classroom, content of the courses, and sufficient course offerings.

Recruitment (or Admissions) and Financial Aid Effectiveness: Assesses the university's ability to enroll students in an effective manner. This scale covers issues such as competence and knowledge of admissions counselors, as well as the effectiveness and availability of financial aid programs.

Registration Effectiveness: Assesses issues associated with registration and billing. This scale also measures the university's commitment to making this process as smooth and effective as possible.

Safety and Security: Assesses the university's responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on your campus. This scale measures effectiveness of both security personnel and campus facilities.

Student Centeredness: Assesses the university's efforts to convey to students that they are important to the university. This scale measures the extent to which students feel welcomed and valued.

Figure 1:
Scales: In Rank Order of Importance
Based on Student Satisfaction Inventory

Scale	University of Scranton Student Satisfaction Inventory Means			University of Scranton Institutional Priorities Inventory Means		
	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Import	Agree / SD	Gap
Instructional Effectiveness	6.49	5.53 / 0.93	0.96	6.49	5.75 / 0.84	0.74
Academic Advising Effectiveness	6.41	5.29 / 1.26	1.12	6.45	5.63 / 0.99	0.82
Student Centeredness	6.38	5.51 / 1.12	0.87	6.51	5.96 / 0.83	0.55
Registration Effectiveness	6.36	4.87 / 1.16	1.49	6.20	5.42 / 1.06	0.78
Campus Climate	6.33	5.17 / 1.00	1.16	6.44	5.75 / 0.79	0.69
Safety and Security	6.31	4.28 / 1.28	2.03	6.46	5.10 / 1.17	1.36
Campus Services	6.25	5.61 / 0.87	0.64	6.36	5.91 / 0.73	0.45
Campus Life	6.23	5.18 / 1.12	1.05	6.23	5.85 / 0.99	0.38
Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness	6.08	5.04 / 1.17	1.04	6.41	5.59 / 1.19	0.82

Figure 1: Includes the SSI and IPS means for each scale. The items in the scales (ex. Safety and Security scale includes items 3,12,18,and 28) are averaged for the importance score and satisfaction score and then the performance gap is calculated. Therefore, the rank ordering is based on the mean for each specific scale.

Ven Diagram Instructions for University of Scranton Strengths and Challenges

Figure 1:

The areas of greatest institutional strength

A. Items of highest importance/highest satisfaction (based on the student satisfaction data)

B. Items of highest importance/highest agreement (campus personnel data)

C. Intersect of A & B= area of greatest strength (strengths for both students and employees)

Figure 2:

The areas of greatest institutional challenges

A. Items of highest importance/lowest satisfaction (based on student satisfaction data)

B. Items of highest importance/lowest agreement (campus personnel data)

C. Intersect of A & B= areas of highest priority (challenges for both students and employees)

Ven Diagram for University of Scranton Areas of Greatest Strengths
Figure 2:

Students

The campus staff are caring and helpful.

The content of the courses within my major is valuable.

This campus provides online access to services I need.

Students are made to feel welcome here.

The quality of instruction I received in most of my classes is excellent.

Faculty are usually available to students outside of class (during office hours, by phone or by e-mail).

On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

Both

The campus staff are caring and helpful.

The quality of instruction I received in most of my classes is excellent.

Faculty are usually available to students outside of class (during office hours, by phone or by e-mail).

On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

Employees

The campus staff are caring and helpful.

Admissions staff provide personalized attention prior to enrollment.

Library resources and services are adequate.

Residence hall staff are concerned about students as individuals.

Counseling services are available if students need them.

Students are made to feel welcome here.

Faculty are usually available to students outside of class.

Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

The University fulfills its goal of the education of the whole person

Ven Diagram for University of Scranton Areas of Challenges

Figure 3:

Students

Registration processes and procedures are convenient.

The campus is safe and secure for all students.

Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.

Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term

I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.

Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance

I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus

Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

Both

The campus is safe and secure for all students.

Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term

Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance

I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus

Employees

The campus is safe and secure for all students.

Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful in college planning.

Financial aid counseling is available if students need it.

Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

There are sufficient courses within my program of study available each term.

Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.

Academic advisors are knowledgeable about requirements in each major.

Security staff respond quickly to calls for assistance.

I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.

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