

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Noel-Levitz  
Student Satisfaction Inventory  
Institutional Priorities Survey  
Gap analysis

June 2009





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# 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

## Diff

### 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).

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## 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 | Description   |
|------|---|
| 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

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).

|               | Student Centeredness | Safety and Registration |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Security      | 1                    | 1                       |
| Effectiveness | 2                    | 2                       |

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 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.



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

| S                           | M    | SD          | C    | M    | SD          | C    |
|-----------------------------|------|-------------|------|------|-------------|------|
| Instructional Effectiveness | 6.49 | 5.53 / 0.93 | 0.96 | 6.49 | 5.75 / 0.84 | 0.74 |

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**A**

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.

**B**

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

On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

**B**

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

**A**

**A**

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.

**B**

**B**

**B**

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

**B**

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 i ure

