

Research in BRIEF

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2006 NOEL-LEVITZ STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY (SSI) Vol. 3, No.7

**Orange Campus
Executive Summary
(Administered Spring 2006)**

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 approximately 3,065 Orange Campus students during the Spring 2006 semester¹. The survey was conducted on-line and sent to student's Chapman University email address. Exactly 864 SSIs were completed on-line, resulting in a final response rate of 28 percent.

Sample Representation and Demographics

The survey sample accounts for about 18% of Chapman University's Spring 2006 undergraduate and graduate full-time and part-time student population (excluding law). Approximately 15% of the undergraduate and 27% of the graduate student population is represented in the sample. As can be seen in the table below, the characteristics of the student survey respondents do *not* match in every instance

	ORANGE CAMPUS SPRING '06			
	PERCENT			
	Chapman Population~ (n=4,919)	All Respondents (n=864)	Undergraduate Respondents (n=538)	Graduate Respondents (n=326)
GENDER				
Male	39.8%	37.7%	35.7%	32.8%
Female	60.2%	62.3%	64.3%	67.2%
RACE/ETHNICITY				
International	2.5%	4.3%	2.2%	7.8%
African-American	2.4%	2.7%	2.6%	2.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.7%	9.3%	8.9%	9.9%
Native American/Alaska Native	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Latino/Hispanic	10.8%	9.4%	8.9%	10.3%
White	64.3%	62.9%	69.1%	52.5%
Unknown/Other*	11.4%	10.8%	7.7%	16.1%
CLASS LEVEL				
Freshman	15.9%	13.2%	21.2%	---
Sophomore	16.1%	11.9%	19.1%	---
Junior	18.9%	12.8%	20.6%	---
Senior	23.9%	23.8%	38.3%	---
Graduate	24.6%	37.6%	---	99.7%
Non-Degree Seeking	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.3%

~ Excluding Professional (LAW) students
* Includes multiethnic, unknown, and decline to state

those of the general student population of Chapman University for Spring 2006.

As would be expected, given the student demographics of the Orange Campus, the majority of the survey sample is composed of female and white students.

FINDINGS

Highlighted here are some of the most salient findings from the 2006 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). Undergraduate and graduate student findings are reported and discussed separately.²

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 for undergraduate and graduate students.

The top 5 services/activities rated as *most* important by Chapman University students in 2006 were:

Undergraduates:

- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.84)
- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (6.81)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (6.80)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (6.80)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (6.79)

Graduate:

- The instruction in my major field is excellent. (6.91)
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (6.90)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (6.84)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (6.82)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (6.76)

Undergraduate students were more likely to report that “faculty knowledge in their field” was most important, compared to graduate students who were more likely to report that the “quality of the instruction they receive” was most important to them. Findings show that the top five important services/activities were the same for undergraduate and graduate students. Taken together, findings suggest that above any other service or activity, the “quality” of faculty, instruction, and courses is

important to all Chapman students. However, findings show that graduate students rated all of these services/activities much more important to all Chapman students. However, findings show that graduate students rated all of these services/activities much more important.

The top 5 services/activities rated as *least* important by Chapman University students in 2006 were:

Undergraduate:

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (4.94)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (5.16)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (5.27)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (5.64)
- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (5.64)

Graduate:

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (4.18)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (4.66)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (4.72)
- I can easily get involved in campus organizations. (5.28)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (5.33)

Almost all of the activities that undergraduate students found least important were the same for graduate students. Findings suggest that when compared to other services or activities the university can offer a student, intramural activities and weekend activities are not as important to Chapman University students as the academic services/activities.

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.

The top 5 services/activities rated as *most* satisfactory by Chapman University students in 2006 were:

Undergraduate:

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (6.32)
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (5.96)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (5.93)
- The campus is safe and secure for all students. (5.83)
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible. (5.81)

Graduate:

- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (6.43)
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (6.15)
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (6.05)
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (5.93)
- The campus is safe and secure for all students. (5.91)

Findings show that both undergraduate and graduate students were most satisfied with how well the campus is maintained, the availability of faculty after class and during office hours, and how safe and secure they feel on campus. Undergraduate students also reported being most satisfied with the knowledge faculty displayed in their field and the adequacy and accessibility of the computer labs, while graduate students reported being most satisfied with the intellectual growth they experienced at Chapman and the quality of instruction they were receiving in most of their classes.

The top 5 services/activities rated as *least* satisfactory by Chapman University students in 2006 were:

Undergraduate:

- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (2.75)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (3.47)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (4.31)
- My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward. (4.39)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (4.41)

Graduate:

- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (3.86)
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit. (4.09)
- Student activities fees are put to good use. (4.66)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students. (4.69)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (4.70)

Data show that while the “amount of parking on campus” continues to be rated as least satisfactory it appears that undergraduate students are much more dissatisfied with the current parking situation than graduate students. Undergraduate students also noted being dissatisfied with the help they get from their academic advisor with goal setting, as well as with the channels that are available to express student complaints. On the other hand, graduate students reported being dissatisfied with the use of student activity fees and the availability of weekend activities for students.

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 students as the most important and least satisfied) in 2006.

Undergraduate:

- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (3.81)
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (2.32)
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (2.04)
- There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria. (1.94)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (1.89)

Graduate:

- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (2.62)
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (1.61)
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (1.38)
- Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available. (1.29)
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students. (1.27)

Given students' dissatisfaction with parking, it is no surprise to find that the largest performance gap difference was for the item focused on the amount of student parking spaces. The parking item was rated high in importance by most students but rated very low in satisfaction. Undergraduate and graduate students also rated the following items as important but low in satisfaction: "tuition is a worthwhile investment," and "channels for expressing student complaints are readily available." The following items had large performance gaps for undergraduate students: "I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts" and "there is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria." On the other hand, graduate students had large performance gaps for the following items: "nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field" and "adequate financial aid is available for most students."

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 highly important and very satisfied) in 2006.

Undergraduate:

- Library staff are helpful and approachable. (0.05)
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (0.11)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (0.12)
- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (0.17)

Graduate:

- A variety of intramural activities are offered. (-0.74)
- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics. (-0.10)
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (-0.09)
- There are a sufficient number of weekend activities. (0.03)

Scales

Using factor analysis³, Noel-Levitz reduced data to 12 scales in order to provide an overall picture of various service areas. 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. Also covers parking availability on campus.
- **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 (e.g. faculty, advisors, etc.) 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; students with disabilities; commuters; and 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.

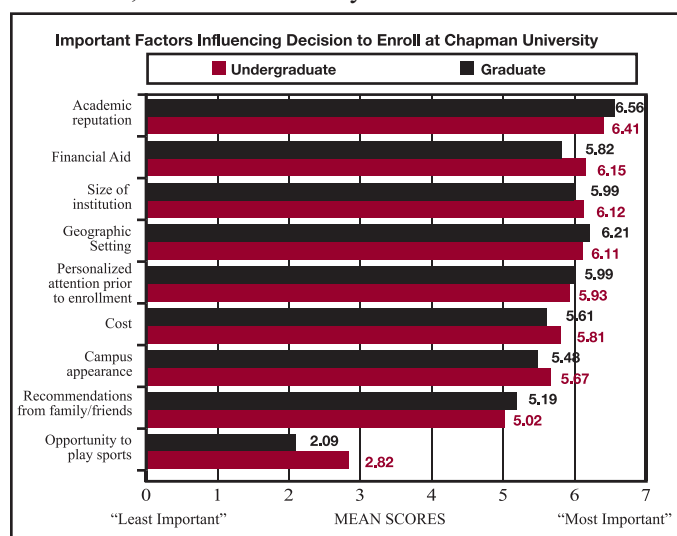
2006 Student Satisfaction Inventory Scales						
Scale	Chapman University Undergraduates			Chapman University Graduate Students		Significant Mean Differences UG v GR
	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Import	Satis / SD	
#1 Student Centeredness	6.39	5.31 / 1.14	1.08	6.28	5.66 / 1.11	0.62 ***
#2 Campus Life	5.82	4.89 / 0.99	0.93	5.49	5.10 / 1.17	0.39 *
#3 Instructional Effectiveness	6.59	5.53 / 0.89	1.06	6.65	5.82 / 0.94	0.83 ***
#4 Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.31	5.19 / 1.08	1.12	6.21	5.35 / 1.17	0.86 *
#5 Campus Support Services	6.06	5.39 / 0.89	0.67	6.03	5.42 / 1.05	0.61 ***
#6 Academic Advising	6.45	5.00 / 1.60	1.45	6.47	5.49 / 1.36	0.98 ***
#7 Registration Effectiveness	6.33	4.98 / 1.05	1.35	6.30	5.40 / 1.07	0.90 ***
#8 Safety and Security	6.46	4.72 / 1.03	1.74	6.48	5.14 / 1.16	1.34 ***
#9 Concern for the Individual	6.41	5.22 / 1.11	1.19	6.39	5.57 / 1.12	0.82 ***
#10 Service Excellence	6.16	5.43 / 0.85	0.73	6.04	5.60 / 0.91	0.44 *
#11 Responsiveness to Diverse Populations		4.91 / 1.34			5.34 / 1.39	0.43 ***
#12 Campus Climate	6.35	6.00 / 0.61	0.35	6.30	6.08 / 0.60	0.22

*p ≤ .05, ***p ≤ .001

Findings show that there are many significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students' level of satisfaction. For example, the largest significant difference between undergraduate and graduate students in satisfaction was in the area of academic advising, followed by responsiveness to diverse populations. In other words, graduate students report being more satisfied than undergraduates with academic advising and how the campus is responsive to diverse populations on campus. However, findings show that graduate students appear to be more satisfied in all of the areas when compared to undergraduate students. While the Safety and Security scale produced the largest gap score individually for each population, it is important to keep in mind that the availability of parking item which is included in that scale may be responsible for widening the gap between importance and satisfaction for both undergraduate and graduate students.

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 the academic reputation of the institution, financial aid, and the size of the institution. Findings suggest that Chapman

University's academic reputation is growing and becoming an important attracting factor influencing the decision to enroll for both undergraduate and graduate students.

SUMMARY

The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is one of the various tools used by Chapman University to identify our strengths as a university as well as to identify areas that warrant further investigation.

The SSI identified various areas in which students felt that Chapman University was not meeting their expectations (i.e., items with large performance gaps). The amount of parking on campus was the item with the largest performance gap for undergraduate and graduate students. However, with the new underground parking structure now open, future assessments in this area are necessary to see if the new structure will alleviate students' concerns in this area.

In addition to parking availability, data suggest that further attention may be warranted in exploring the reasons why there are large gap scores for the following items: “tuition paid is a worthwhile investment” and “channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.” Academic advising may also warrant further investigation given the significant mean difference between undergraduates and graduate students in the satisfaction scale on academic advising. While an Academic Advising Task Force is already in place focusing on undergraduate advising, it is important to continue assessing students' concerns in this area. The mean differences in satisfaction in the “Responsiveness to Diverse Population” scale also suggests that further research is necessary to understand why undergraduates reported being less satisfied in this area when compared to graduate students.

While this study highlighted areas which may warrant further investigation, there were also many encouraging findings. Data suggest that Chapman University's academic reputation is growing. Findings reveal that for both undergraduate and graduate students, the university's academic reputation was an important factor influencing their decision to enroll at Chapman. Findings also show that students are very satisfied with how well the campus is maintained, the availability of faculty after class and during office hours, and how safe and secure they feel on campus. All of these can be important factors when choosing a college.

Overall, findings show that graduate students appear to be more satisfied than undergraduate students on a number of items. However, since undergraduate students tend to spend more time on campus and have more contact with the various services on campus, graduate students' perceptions may be based on limited experiences with the various services and activities identified in the survey. Regardless, this interesting finding may also warrant attention.

¹ A random sample of half of the Orange Campus undergraduate population and all of the graduate population enrolled in the Spring 2006 was selected to participate in the SSI.

² Since most graduate students live off campus, items focused on the residence halls are not discussed in this summary report.

³ According to Noel-Levitz, final scales were tested for homogeneity by calculating coefficient alpha. The overall coefficient alpha for the importance was .79 and .83 for satisfaction.