

# **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA STUDENT SATISFACTION 1995 – 2001**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In Spring 2001 the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), an established survey developed by Noel-Levitz Inc., was administered to a representative sample of students enrolled at the UCF Main campus, the UCF Brevard campus, and the UCF Daytona Beach campus. Twenty supplemental questions addressing issues specific to UCF were also included. The SSI was previously administered at UCF in 1995 and 1998.

### **Organization of the Report**

This report contains summary results from the 2001 SSI survey on the levels of importance and satisfaction students reported regarding various student services. Findings are presented in several formats:

- A comparison of 2001 results to a national benchmark; a National Comparison Group (NCG) of four-year public institutions that participated in the 2001 SSI survey.
- 2001 findings are compared to results from the 1995 and 1998 SSI, to assess improvement in student services over time.
- An analysis of perceived importance, satisfaction and performance gaps by campus, college, class status and demographic groups.
- An analysis of the SSI composite scale items for negative and positive impact on performance gap.
- An analysis of the supplemental questions added to the main inventory.

## Methodology and Sample

Of the 32,529 enrolled at UCF in the 2001 academic year, 609 students participated in the survey. Surveys were administered in randomly selected classes based on the distribution of students' class level, time of day, course offering and major. The composition of the student respondents was generally similar to that of the UCF student population when stratified by age, gender, ethnicity, class level, and campus attended.

## Description of the SSI survey

**Composite Scales** - The SSI survey consists of twelve composite scales (Noel-Levitz, 1997). Each scale is comprised of several items. A detailed description of each scale is found in Section 1. The composite scales are as follows:

- Academic Advising Effectiveness
- Campus Climate
- Campus Life
- Campus Support Services
- Concern for the Individual
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness
- Registration Effectiveness
- Responsiveness to Diverse Populations
- Safety and Security
- Service Excellence
- Student Centeredness

**Seven Point Rating of Importance and Satisfaction** - Students rate each item on a scale using a seven-point rating system. For each item the respondent assesses two constructs: Perceived importance (not important at all to very important) and perceived satisfaction (not satisfied at all to very satisfied).

**Performance Gap** - A performance gap is computed for each scale and for each item. The performance gap is computed by finding the difference between importance ratings and satisfaction ratings. The larger the positive gap between importance and satisfaction, the greater the opportunity for improvement. A performance gap that is less than 1.50 is generally regarded as an indication that the university is meeting students' expectations. A performance gap greater than 1.50, indicates that the university is not meeting the students' expectations. A negative performance gap indicates that the university is exceeding students' expectations. Areas where students assign high importance and have low satisfaction are areas in which the university may want to concentrate efforts.

## **Summary of Report Findings Comparing UCF to the National Comparison Group**

- Overall, UCF satisfaction ratings were in line with those of the National Comparison Group (NCG). UCF has higher satisfaction ratings than the NCG in six areas: Instructional Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Campus Climate, Campus Support Services, Campus Life and Responsiveness to Diverse Populations. **(Refer to Section 5.1)**
- The five areas where UCF satisfaction ratings were significantly lower than the NCG were in the Areas of Academic Advising, Registration Effectiveness, Concern for the Individual, Recruitment and Financial Aid, and Service Excellence. **(Refer to Section 5.1)**
- UCF respondents indicated higher importance ratings than the NCG on nine scales. Instructional Effectiveness ranked as having the highest importance to students. The only scale that had lower importance was Campus Life. Student Centeredness had an importance rating not significantly different from the NCG, while Responsiveness to Diverse Populations was not assessed for importance. **(Refer to Section 6.1)**
- Overall, UCF performance gaps were significantly different than the NCG. The areas where the UCF out-performed the NCG were Safety and Security, Campus Climate, Campus Support Services and Campus Life.
- In two areas, Concern for the Individual and Student Centeredness, the UCF performance gap was not statistically different from the NCG.
- The areas where UCF performance gap was higher than the NCG were Instructional Effectiveness, Academic Advising, Registration Effectiveness, Recruitment and Financial Aid and Service Excellence. This higher Performance Gap was primarily due to the higher importance ratings assigned to these areas by UCF students. In all these areas, except Academic Advising (where the mean scale rating for importance was still higher than the NCG), the UCF mean scale importance ratings were significantly higher than importance ratings of students in the NCG. **(Refer to Section 7.1)**

## **Summary of 2001 SSI Results Compared to Previous Years**

To examine trends across time, the SSI 2001 results were compared to the 1995 and 1998 administrations. Major findings are summarized below:

- The 2001 students reported higher mean satisfaction ratings for every scale as compared to the 1995 respondents. The greatest improvements

were found in Safety and Security and Student Centeredness and the least improvements were in Service Excellence and Academic Advising. **(Refer to Section 5.2)**

- Performance gaps (the difference between importance ratings and satisfaction ratings) significantly decreased from 1995 to 2001. **(Refer to Section 7.1)** indicating improvement in meeting student expectations. Satisfaction measures increased more than importance measures over the 1995 – 2001 time span, indicating that UCF is better meeting the need of its students. **(Refer to Section 6.2)**
- Compared to 1998, there were smaller differences in the 2001 mean satisfaction ratings. **(Refer to Section 5.2)** Slight improvements were observed for four areas (i.e., Instructional Effectiveness, Campus Climate, Student Centeredness and Responsiveness to Diverse Populations).
- In 2001, there was an increase in mean importance in eleven scales. **(Refer to Section 6.2)** This increase in mean importance increased the performance gaps for eight scales from the 1998 to 2001 time period. **(Refer to Section 7.1)**

### **Summary of 2001 SSI Results Stratified by Demographics**

**By Campus** – 2001 respondents' mean ratings of composite scales on satisfaction, importance and performance gap were compared across campus locations. The major findings are given as follows:

- Overall, respondents from the branch campuses (Brevard and Daytona) reported that they are generally more satisfied than respondents from the UCF Main campus. But Daytona campus respondents are less satisfied with Campus Support Services and Campus Life. **(Refer to Section 5.3)**
- The importance ratings indicate that respondents from the Main and Daytona campuses assigned higher importance to all the composite scales, compared to the respondents from the Brevard campus. **(Refer to Section 6.3)** Therefore, the performance gaps for the respondents from the Brevard campus tended to be the lowest. **(Refer to Section 7.2)**
- The highest performance gaps were observed for the Main campus respondents. Specifically, these areas showed the greatest need for improvement: Safety and Security, Recruitment and Financial Aid, Registration Effectiveness, Academic Advising, Service Excellence, and Concern for the Individual. **(Refer to Section 7.2)**

**By College** - 2001 respondents' mean ratings of composite scales on satisfaction, importance and performance gap were compared across College. The major findings are summarized as follows:

- In general, students from the College of Education are most satisfied with campus services (**Refer to Section 5.4**), but also express a higher expectation (importance rating) of campus services than students from other colleges. (**Refer to section 6.4**) The resulting performance gap is relatively lower, compared to the other colleges. (**Refer to Section 7.3**)
- Conversely, students from the College of Engineering were the least satisfied with campus services (**Refer to Section 5.4**), but also expressed the lowest expectation (importance rating) of these services. (**Refer to section 6.4**)
- A comparison of performance gaps by College shows that the value of the performance gap is mostly homogeneous across colleges in the following areas: Concern for the Individual, Campus Climate, Campus Support Services, Recruitment and Financial Aid, Student Centeredness and Campus Life.
- The performance gap for some areas was relatively high (greater than 1.5) across most colleges. These areas include Academic Advising, Registration Effectiveness and Recruitment and Financial Aid
- Service Excellence had a performance gap ranging from 1.3 – 1.7.
- In almost all the colleges, for all the areas with higher values on performance gaps, the level of importance was greater than six (out of a seven-point scale) indicating that students give these areas a high level of importance that is only partially met. (**Refer to Section 7.3**)

**By Class Status** - 2001 respondents' mean ratings of composite scales on satisfaction, importance and performance gap were compared across respondent class status. The major findings are summarized as follows:

- Freshmen are the most satisfied students and said that their service needs are better met than students from other class levels. (**Refer to Section 5.5**) Freshmen and Juniors report higher importance ratings when compared to the other class levels. They placed the highest emphasis on Safety and Security, Academic Advising, Registration Effectiveness, and Instructional Effectiveness. (**Refer to Section 6.5**) In all these specific areas, except for Safety and Security, the performance

gap was less than 1.5 indicating that the students' expectations are being met. **(Refer to Section 7.4)**

- Overall, as students progress at UCF they report less satisfaction and report that their service needs are not being effectively met. Each class level beyond the freshman level had progressively lower satisfaction rating on many of the scale areas. Satisfaction ratings tended to be the lowest for seniors. **(Refer to Section 5.5)** Seniors also reported lower to average importance ratings for the scales. **(Refer to Section 6.5)**
- The performance gap increased for Academic Advising as students progressed through UCF starting at 0.90 (as freshmen) to 1.76 (as seniors). A high performance gap was noted for sophomores, juniors and seniors for Recruitment and Financial Aid. **(Refer to Section 7.4)**

### ***By Racial and Ethnic Background***

- Students who identified themselves as Caucasian generally reported higher satisfaction ratings specifically for Instructional Effectiveness, Campus Support Services, Student Centeredness, and Campus Climate. **(Refer to Section 5.8)** These students placed the highest importance on Instructional Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Academic Advising, and Registration Effectiveness **(Refer to Section 6.8)**, resulting in large performance gaps for most of these areas. **(Refer to Section 7.7)**
- The satisfaction ratings for respondents who identified themselves as either Hispanic or African American were generally parallel to the National Comparison Group, but often lower than students who identified themselves as Caucasian.
- Asian students tended to have the lowest importance ratings **(Refer to Section 6.8)** and lowest satisfaction ratings. **(Refer to Section 5.8)**

### **Analysis of the SSI Composite Scale Items**

Items within composite scales were analyzed to determine which items contributed the largest positive and negative impact on the performance gap. The analysis focused on items where a statistically significant difference was observed between the UCF respondent and the NCG item satisfaction mean rating.

- For the *Instructional Effectiveness* scale, the statement “The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the

statement “I am able to experience intellectual growth here” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.

- For the *Safety and Security* scale the statement “The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “The campus is safe and secure for all students” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Academic Advising* scale, the statement “My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Major requirements are clear and reasonable” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Registration Effectiveness* scale, the statement “I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Concern for the Individual* scale, the statement “My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Campus Climate* scale, the statement “I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “I feel a sense of pride about my campus” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Campus Support Services* scale, the statement “There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Bookstore staff are helpful” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Recruitment & Financial Aid* scale, the statement “Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Admissions counselors accurately

portray the campus in their recruiting practices” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.

- For the *Service Excellence* scale, the statement “I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Library staff are helpful and approachable” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Student Centeredness* scale, the statement “This institution shows concern for students as individuals” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statement “Most students feel a sense of belonging here” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.
- For the *Campus Life* scale, the statement “Student activities fees are put to good use” had the largest negative impact on the UCF performance gap ratings. By contrast, the statements “A variety of intramural activities are offered” and “Residence hall regulations are reasonable” had the largest positive impact on the UCF performance gap ratings.

### **Supplemental Question Results**

In addition to the questions authored by Noel-Levitz, twenty supplemental questions were included in the 2001 survey.

- Questions measuring Academic Advising and Financial Aid showed the highest performance gaps. More specifically, the two questions related to the helpfulness of Academic Advising for the transition and progress through UCF, had a performance gap greater than 1.5, as did the questions on the help received from the Financial Aid office and timely financial refunds. These questions had an importance rating of more than 6 (on a seven-point scale) and a satisfaction of only between 4 and 5. These data suggest that the university may want to concentrate improvement efforts on these areas. **(Refer to Section 9)**
- Questions covering access to electronic information, electronic communication, and electronic registration (POLARIS) had very low performance gaps. Also, areas pertaining to Campus Life and student lifestyle showed low performance gaps. **(Refer to Section 9)**