

Ruffalo Noel Levitz

Student Satisfaction Inventory

2017 Survey Report

University of South Dakota
Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
May 2017

Foreword

The University of South Dakota is committed to offering its student body the most engaging, dynamic, and supportive learning environment possible. Across all aspects of the student experience – from academics to student activities to campus services and beyond – the university strives to ensure that its systems and processes are working as effectively as possible to serve students’ best interests.

But how do we know what’s working and what isn’t? The university undertakes several regular efforts to gather student feedback on its performance. Among these projects is the biennial administration of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory* questionnaire. This survey, which is distributed every other spring term to USD’s on-campus student body, asks students to provide both “importance” ratings and “satisfaction” ratings for a variety of campus offices and services. As a result, the survey produces a comprehensive set of “customer satisfaction” data for a range of campus functions.

The following report summarizes key findings from the university’s Spring 2017 administration of the *Student Satisfaction Inventory*. Analyzing the full scope of data gathered through this survey effort, the summary report is organized into several major sections:

- Analysis at a Glance
- Sample Overview
- Summary Items
- Scale Summary
- Scale Items
- Other Items

While this survey is not the only source of such information, it nonetheless provides insightful data about the way students perceive the effectiveness of campus operations. As such, many campus offices may find these data useful for understanding student views toward the campus community. In the drive toward continuous quality improvement, this kind of user feedback can and should be uniquely influential.

Students are the university’s most important stakeholders.

Let’s listen to what they have to say.

Analysis at a Glance

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory*, a student-focused “customer satisfaction” survey, was administered to all on-campus USD students in March 2017.¹ Key takeaways from this survey include:

Survey Sample

- From a total population of 5,859 on-campus students, 804 surveys were collected. This response rate of 13.7 percent produced a generalized margin of error of ± 3.2 percent. In demographic terms, sample members were roughly representative of students in the sampled population

Summary Items

- Approximately 84 percent of current students reported that the university had met or exceeded their expectations. Likewise, 79 percent expressed “overall satisfaction” with the university. About 75 percent of respondents indicated that – if given the choice to make the decision again – they would be likely to reenroll at USD. Data show that all three of these indicators were especially high for female students, white students, and students considering USD their “first choice” college or university.

Scale Summary

- The SSI instrument asks respondents to provide an “importance” rating and a “satisfaction” rating for approximately 100 survey statements, each related to a particular campus unit, service, or process. These statement ratings are used in the calculation of “scale” scores, which aggregate information from multiple items into single, broad indicators. There are twelve SSI scales altogether.
- “Importance” ratings suggest that the *Academic Advising* and *Instructional Effectiveness* scales represent areas of highest priority for current students. “Satisfaction” ratings for these scales were similarly high. Ratings – both for importance and for satisfaction – on the *Campus Life* scale, in contrast, were relatively low.

Scale Items

- Data from individual survey items indicate broad student satisfaction across several areas, including advising and academics, the student center and co-curricular offerings, the course registration process, and campus safety.
- At the same time, item data are suggestive of several significant student concerns, such as: the use of student activity fees, living conditions in residence halls, the availability of on-campus parking, and the adequacy of student financial aid funding.

Other Items

- The SSI instrument contains several “standalone” items that are not connected to any scale. Among these statements, a survey item related to the caliber of campus maintenance received the highest satisfaction rating among all statements in the 2017 survey.
- Data from a short battery of custom survey items suggest that students perceive a growing sense of tolerance and diversity in university classrooms.

¹ Readers interested in exploring detailed data from this survey are encouraged to visit the Student Satisfaction Dashboard on the USD Data Tools [website](#).

Sample Overview

Under the direction of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment, the SSI was administered to all on-campus USD students in March 2017. Participation was solicited through email distributions coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment and the Office of Student Life. Invitation emails contained a hyperlink to the online instrument, and reminder messages were distributed periodically during the two-week administration window (March 16-30th, 2017).

From a total population of 5,859 on-campus students, 804 surveys were collected. This response rate of 13.7 percent produced a generalized margin of error of ± 3.2 percent at the 95% confidence level.² Consistent with protocols used by the survey developer, all returned surveys were included in the analysis; no screening or purging procedures were implemented.

Subsequent comparison indicates that sample members were roughly representative of students in the sampled population, though with a slight overrepresentation of female students in the final sample.³ For reference, Table 1 displays the general demographic characteristics of the sample. It is important to note that – in a change from past SSI administrations at USD – graduate students were included in the 2017 SSI survey sample. Consequently, any analytic comparisons to data gathered in previous years should be made with this caveat in mind.

Table 1
Student Characteristics⁴

	Group	Number	Percent
Total Participants	-	804	100.0
by Gender	Female	550	69.4
	Male	242	30.6
by Race	White	662	83.3
	Non-white	133	16.7
by Age Group	Age 18 and under	45	5.7
	Age 19-24	586	73.8
	Age 25-34	114	14.4
	Age 35 and over	49	6.2
by Class Level	Freshmen	162	20.4
	Sophomore	127	16.0
	Junior	145	18.2
	Senior	172	21.6
	Graduate	184	23.1
	Other	6	0.8

² The data generated by this project are subject to the same sources of systematic and non-systematic measurement error associated with any form of survey research. Consequently, all data presented in this report should be understood as estimates only.

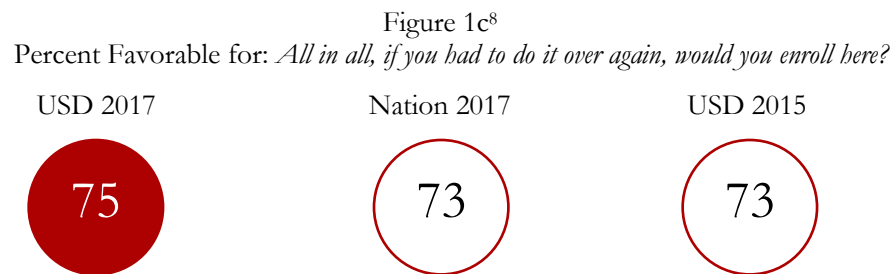
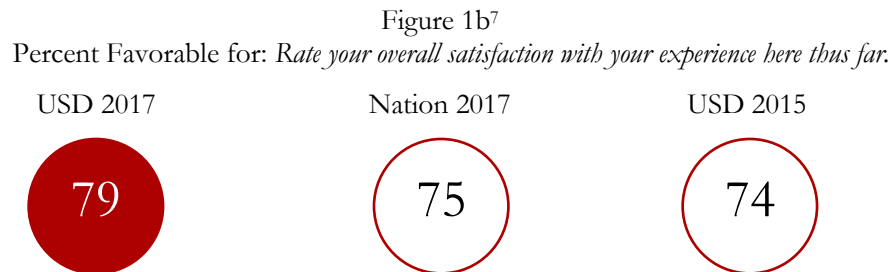
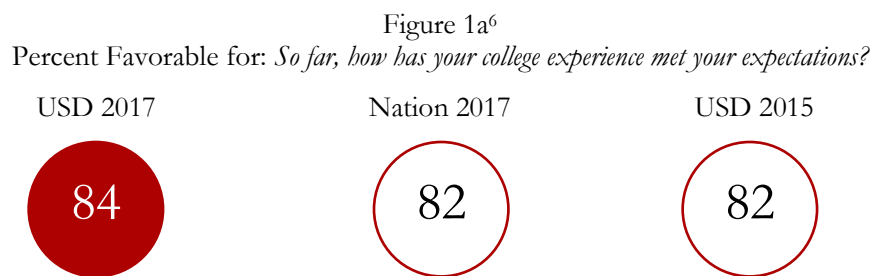
³ The sample and the population were compared by gender, race, and class level. Females constituted 69.4 percent of the sample but only 57.7 percent of the underlying population. By race, white students made up 83.3 percent of the sample, compared to 84.3 percent of the population. Undergraduate students accounted for approximately 76.1 percent of the sample and 77.9 percent of the population.

⁴ The “Percent” column in this table excludes participants not responding to a given survey item.

Summary Items

The SSI instrument includes three summary items that ask respondents to reflect generally on their campus experiences to date. All three items are posited by the survey publisher to correlate with a variety of desired student outcomes, including degree completion, student loan repayment, and alumni giving.

Data for all three overall satisfaction items are shown in Figure 1, and suggest that students at USD are somewhat more satisfied with their campus experiences than students from several comparison groups.⁵ Approximately 84 percent of current students reported that the university had met or exceeded their expectations (see Figure 1a). Likewise, roughly 79 percent offered a positive “overall satisfaction” rating for the university (Figure 1b). About 75 percent indicated that – if given the choice to make the decision again – they would be likely to reenroll at USD (Figure 1c).



⁵ Throughout this report, the “Nation 2017” peer group includes all US four-year public universities administering the SSI in 2016-17.

⁶ Values reflect the percent of respondents answering “4 About what I expected,” “5 Better than I expected,” “6 Quite a bit better than I expected,” or “7 Much better than I expected”

⁷ Values reflect the percent of respondents answering “5 Somewhat satisfied,” “6 Satisfied,” or “7 Very satisfied”

⁸ Values reflect the percent of respondents answering “5 Maybe yes,” “6 Probably yes,” or “7 Definitely yes”

The above data seem to imply a broadly prevalent sense of satisfaction among university students. However, further analysis suggests that such sentiment varies somewhat by a variety of student characteristics. Highlighting several such differences, Table 2 shows “percent favorable” rates for the analyzed sample, segmented by student subgroup. Subgroup comparisons that differ by a statistically significant margin are shown in bold.⁹

As depicted below, favorable responses were more likely to be reported by female students, white students, undergraduate students, students enrolling on a full-time basis, students living in Greek housing, students with no self-reported disabilities, and students considering USD their “first choice” college or university. Several of the cleavages shown in this table appear to mirror similar disparities typically seen in analyses of other student success markers, such as retention rates and graduation rates. This observation signals the likely association between reported student satisfaction and eventual student success.

Table 2
Percent Favorable on Summary Items by Student Characteristic

	Group	Met Expectations	Overall Satisfaction	Enroll Again
Overall	-	84	79	75
by Gender	Female	89	83	80
	Male	82	77	70
by Race	White	88	83	79
	Non-white	80	75	69
By Class Level	Undergraduate	88	83	79
	Graduate	84	76	70
by Enrollment Status	Enrolled Full-time	87	81	77
	Enrolled Part-time	81	79	74
by Housing Type	Greek Housing	96	93	87
	Residence Hall	86	82	76
	Other Housing	86	80	77
by Disability Status	Has Disability	79	71	65
	No Disability	87	82	78
by School Preference	First Choice	89	85	83
	Second Choice	81	73	69
	Third Choice	75	62	38

⁹ Statistical significance is defined as $\alpha=0.05$.

Scale Summary

The SSI instrument asks respondents to provide an “importance” rating and a “satisfaction” rating for approximately 100 statements, each related to a particular campus unit, service, or process. For example, respondents are asked to rate the statement *My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements within my major* with respect to both importance and satisfaction. For both ratings, response options range from a minimum of one (“not at all”) to a maximum of seven (“very”).

Most individual statements in the SSI are used in the calculation of one or more “scale” scores, which aggregate information from multiple items into single, broad indicators. For instance, all five SSI items related to academic advising can be aggregated into an overall *Academic Advising* scale score. There are twelve separate SSI scales altogether.¹⁰

Table 3 displays basic “importance” and “satisfaction” information for all twelve SSI scales.¹¹ In general, importance ratings suggest that survey items related to *Academic Advising* and *Instructional Effectiveness* represent areas of highest priority to current students. In fact, data identify these scales not only as the most important areas to students, but also as the areas producing the highest satisfaction ratings. This alignment of importance ratings and satisfaction ratings would seem to reflect well on campus efforts to align resources with student needs.

Table 3
Scale Scores for Importance and Satisfaction, USD 2017

Scale	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Academic Advising	6.43	5.72	0.71
Instructional Effectiveness	6.42	5.59	0.83
Safety and Security	6.29	4.94	1.35
Student Centeredness	6.28	5.41	0.87
Concern for the Individual	6.27	5.44	0.83
Campus Climate	6.26	5.40	0.86
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.24	5.22	1.02
Registration Effectiveness	6.20	5.50	0.70
Service Excellence	6.12	5.39	0.73
Campus Support Services	6.04	5.55	0.49
Campus Life	5.95	5.22	0.73
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	-	5.48	-

On the other end of the spectrum, the *Campus Life* scale generated relatively low ratings on both the importance dimension and the satisfaction dimension. Among the twelve SSI scales, *Campus Life* was rated lowest for importance and third-lowest for satisfaction.

Additionally, one scale – *Safety and Security* – generated a relatively high “importance” rating but a relatively low “satisfaction” rating. Importantly, it should be pointed out that the relatively low satisfaction ratings generated for this scale owe to the sweepingly unfavorable responses received for one of the four items used in this scale: *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*. This survey item constituted the lowest-rated statement in the 2017 administration, and effectively drug down the scale average for the entire *Safety and Security* scale.

¹⁰ Descriptions of these scales are given in Appendix A.

¹¹ This table is sorted in descending order by mean importance rating. Since respondents are not asked to provide importance ratings for survey items related to the *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations* scale, no scale score can be calculated.

Looking further at scale scores, Table 4 focuses on satisfaction information from the same twelve scales, but also provides analogous data from key comparison groups. For each scale below, three satisfaction values are shown: mean satisfaction by 2017 USD respondents, mean satisfaction by 2017 national respondents, and mean satisfaction by 2015 USD respondents. Values in the “Nation 2017” and “USD 2015” columns that vary by a statistically significant margin from values in the “USD 2017” column are shown in bold.¹² For example, for the *Academic Advising* scale, the mean response by national respondents (5.48) was significantly different than the mean response by USD respondents (5.72).

Overall, USD’s satisfaction ratings exceeded those of both comparison groups across all twelve scales. In particular, several scales (see bolded values below) exceeded comparison norms by a statistically significant magnitude. These gains appear to speak to a generally positive (and improving) state of USD student satisfaction as measured by this survey instrument.

Table 4
Scale Scores for Satisfaction, USD 2017 versus Comparison Groups

Scale	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015
Academic Advising	5.72	5.48	5.61
Instructional Effectiveness	5.59	5.46	5.49
Campus Support Services	5.55	5.54	5.39
Registration Effectiveness	5.50	5.24	5.35
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	5.48	5.36	5.35
Concern for the Individual	5.44	5.25	5.30
Student Centeredness	5.41	5.32	5.30
Campus Climate	5.40	5.32	5.29
Service Excellence	5.39	5.23	5.22
Campus Life	5.22	5.16	5.06
Recruitment and Financial Aid	5.22	5.13	5.12
Safety and Security	4.94	4.90	4.90

Scale Items

The following tables provide item-level detail for each of the above scales.¹³ As with the scales themselves, mean values for individual items range from a minimum of one to a maximum of seven. Again, values in the “Nation 2017” and “USD 2015” columns that differ significantly from values in the “USD 2017” column are shown in bold.¹⁴ One new column, “Percent Satisfied,” is shown as well; this value depicts the percentage of respondents from the USD 2017 sample selecting “Somewhat satisfied,” “Satisfied,” or “Very satisfied” for each item.

Additionally, some statements are notated with an “S” (strength) or “C” (challenge). These designations are given to individual items receiving – in the USD 2017 sample – both high importance ratings and high satisfaction ratings (in the case of strengths) or high importance ratings but low satisfaction ratings (in the case of challenges).¹⁵

¹² This table is sorted in descending order by mean satisfaction rating. Statistical significance is defined as $\alpha=0.01$.

¹³ Note that some survey items are linked to more than one survey scale.

¹⁴ All tables are sorted in descending order by mean satisfaction rating. Statistical significance is defined in all tables as $\alpha=0.01$.

¹⁵ More technically, the “strength” designation is given to items falling above the 50th percentile in importance and above the 75th percentile in satisfaction. The “weakness” designation is given to items falling above the 50th percentile in importance and at or below the 25th percentile in satisfaction (or) above the 75th percentile in performance gap scores.

Table 5a summarizes survey items related to the *Academic Advising* scale. Overall, this scale generated the highest mean ratings among all twelve SSI scales in the 2017 USD sample. Institutional mean scores for all survey items exceeded national mean scores by a significant margin, with four of the five items being identified as institutional “strengths” (implying a combination of high importance and high satisfaction). High mean scores combined with high “percent satisfied” ratings for these items suggest that students are overwhelmingly pleased with the university’s current advising services.

Table 5a
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Academic Advising* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
My academic advisor is approachable. (S)	5.93	5.61	5.85	84
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major. (S)	5.88	5.67	5.70	84
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual. (S)	5.75	5.41	5.64	83
Major requirements are clear and reasonable. (S)	5.69	5.54	5.48	83
My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.	5.35	5.16	5.36	74

Table 5b lists all statements making up the *Campus Climate* scale, which centers on items related to general feelings of campus community and belonging. One notable item from this group is the statement *Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment*, which generated relatively low mean ratings in comparison with the national comparison group, and also was flagged as an institutional “concern” (suggesting high importance but low satisfaction). Responses to this item would seem to imply the need to expand efforts to demonstrate to students the “return on investment” associated with earning a university degree.

Notably, several statements from the *Campus Climate* scale correlated strongly with the summary satisfaction indicators discussed at the beginning of this report. Of the roughly 100 statements in the survey instrument, three items from the *Campus Climate* scale - *It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus*, *I feel a sense of pride about my campus*, and *Most students feel a sense of belonging here* – represented the three highest correlates of all three SSI summary measures. In other words, students’ impressions of campus climate-related issues may tie directly to their overall evaluations of satisfaction.

Table 5b
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Campus Climate* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
This institution has a good reputation within the community. (S)	5.79	5.62	5.54	85
The campus is safe and secure for all students. (S)	5.74	5.59	5.73	87
Freedom of expression is protected on campus.	5.59	5.59	5.55	81
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	5.58	5.41	5.44	82
There is a strong commitment to racial harmony on this campus.	5.58	5.52	5.39	81
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	5.55	5.52	5.48	81
The campus staff are caring and helpful.	5.51	5.35	5.32	82
There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	5.50	5.51	5.47	81
I feel a sense of pride about my campus.	5.40	5.32	5.26	76
Faculty care about me as an individual.	5.38	5.18	5.22	77
Administrators are approachable to students.	5.31	5.21	5.25	76
This institution shows concern for students as individuals. (C)	5.31	5.23	5.19	75
Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	5.20	5.19	5.15	75
I generally know what's happening on campus.	5.15	5.09	5.12	70
Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. (C)	5.14	5.24	5.11	71
Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.	4.99	4.94	4.80	67
I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.	4.95	4.84	4.89	65

Statements for the *Campus Life* scale are shown in Table 5c. On the whole, this group includes some of the lowest-rated items generated by the current survey. While strong ratings can be seen for several items related to the student center and co-curricular offerings, two statements in particular - *Student activities fees are put to good use* and *Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable* – were panned by respondents. Only 56 percent of respondents reported being satisfied with living conditions in the residence halls, and only 54 percent reported being satisfied with the university’s current use of student activity fees. Both items generated mean scores far below those of the national comparison group.¹⁶

Overall, this scale produced the lowest mean importance rating of all twelve SSI scales, and also generated the third-lowest mean satisfaction rating. Combined, these data suggest that campus life-related services may represent a relatively low priority for many students.

Table 5c
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Campus Life* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.	5.84	5.44	5.71	86
Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercoll. athletics.	5.81	5.54	5.47	85
A variety of intramural activities are offered.	5.72	5.30	5.46	84
I can easily get involved in campus organizations.	5.64	5.42	5.41	82
Freedom of expression is protected on campus.	5.59	5.59	5.55	81
Student disciplinary procedures are fair.	5.55	5.47	5.40	80
Residence hall regulations are reasonable.	5.43	5.12	5.22	77
New student orientation services help students adjust to college.	5.30	5.28	5.19	75
The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.	5.27	5.29	5.19	72
Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.	5.00	5.03	4.78	65
The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.	4.84	4.91	4.41	63
There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.	4.78	4.54	4.61	62
There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students.	4.63	4.71	4.50	58
Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable. (C)	4.55	4.89	4.53	56
Student activities fees are put to good use. (C)	4.37	4.81	4.46	54

Campus Support Services scale items, which relate to a variety of frontline campus service providers, are displayed in Table 5d. Statements related to library services generally received praise from students, as evidenced by satisfaction rates at or above 85 percent. However, signals were more mixed for other campus services. Bookstore services, for example, generated markedly lower mean ratings at USD than in the national sample.

Table 5d
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Campus Support Services* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Library resources and services are adequate.	5.81	5.68	5.63	88
Library staff are helpful and approachable.	5.78	5.66	5.53	85
Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.	5.57	5.36	5.43	81
Computer labs are adequate and accessible.	5.55	5.60	5.44	79
Tutoring services are readily available.	5.41	5.59	5.24	76
There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career.	5.39	5.27	5.26	78
Bookstore staff are helpful.	5.29	5.59	5.15	73

¹⁶ In addition, qualitative feedback (gathered through an end-of-survey free-response item) frequently focused on students’ negative appraisals of several campus life-related topics, including a perceived lack of variety in campus dining options and a perceived institutional over-emphasis on intercollegiate athletics.

The SSI poses a series of items that probe the extent to which various campus service providers treat students “as individuals.” The corresponding *Concern for the Individual* scale is summarized in Table 5e. Messages again are somewhat mixed for these statements, with items related to academic advisors and counseling staff receiving strong support, but with items related to other groups – residence hall staff in particular – attracting somewhat less acclaim.

Table 5e
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Concern for the Individual* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual. (S)	5.75	5.41	5.64	83
Counseling staff care about students as individuals. (S)	5.73	5.25	5.47	84
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students. (C)	5.44	5.35	5.37	77
Faculty care about me as an individual.	5.38	5.18	5.22	77
This institution shows concern for students as individuals. (C)	5.31	5.23	5.19	75
Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.	5.00	5.03	4.78	65

The *Instructional Effectiveness* scale, dealing squarely with topics related to instruction and curriculum, narrowly trailed *Academic Advising* as the highest-satisfaction scale in the 2017 data collection. Students generally appear to hold university faculty and curricula in high regard. As shown in Table 5f, overwhelming majorities of students expressed satisfaction with nearly all items from this series. Even those items identified as institutional concerns (flagged with a “C” below) nonetheless elicited mean ratings that exceeded analogous national averages.

The high satisfaction ratings elicited by the survey’s academics-related statements should be seen as especially significant in light of the observation that students also tended to rate these statements as highly important. In fact, of the ten highest-importance survey statements (as rated by the 2017 USD sample), five were from the *Instructional Effectiveness* scale. These data underscore the apparent centrality of academic matters to USD students.

Table 5f
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Instructional Effectiveness* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. (S)	5.98	5.79	5.83	90
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (S)	5.90	5.72	5.80	88
I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (S)	5.88	5.66	5.68	89
There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus. (S)	5.85	5.59	5.73	88
The instruction in my major field is excellent.	5.67	5.55	5.58	85
The content of the courses within my major is valuable. (C)	5.61	5.59	5.53	82
The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent. (C)	5.60	5.45	5.47	84
Adjunct faculty are competent as classroom instructors.	5.55	5.44	5.49	81
There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	5.50	5.51	5.47	81
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students. (C)	5.44	5.35	5.37	77
Graduate teaching assistants are competent as classroom instructors.	5.42	5.32	5.29	78
Faculty care about me as an individual.	5.38	5.18	5.22	77
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course. (C)	5.28	5.16	5.18	76
Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.	5.17	5.07	5.15	70

In contrast to their positive views toward academic matters, students appear markedly less sanguine with respect to campus financial aid services, and in particular, to the availability of financial aid dollars. The *Recruitment and Financial Aid* scale is shown in Table 5g. All three survey items related to financial aid services were identified as institutional concerns (i.e., rated high for importance but low for satisfaction). While two of these items still generated mean satisfaction ratings exceeding the national average, one statement – *Adequate financial aid is available to most students* – fell well below the national norm, and also showed a decline from USD’s 2015 survey administration. Consequently, this topic may represent a significant concern for students.

Table 5g
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Recruitment and Financial Aid* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Admiss. counselors respond to prospective students' unique needs and requests.	5.53	5.24	5.38	80
Admiss. counselors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices.	5.38	5.25	5.25	76
Admiss. staff are knowledgeable.	5.37	5.26	5.16	76
Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful in college planning. (C)	5.23	5.04	5.12	74
Financial aid counselors are helpful. (C)	5.04	4.96	4.92	67
Adequate financial aid is available for most students. (C)	4.81	5.01	4.93	63

As with *Academic Advising* and *Instructional Effectiveness*, the *Registration Effectiveness* scale offers a bright spot for university performance. As shown in Table 5h, all three survey statements dealing directly with the course registration process generated mean satisfaction ratings that were both higher than national mean ratings and higher than mean ratings from USD’s 2015 survey administration. For all three items, more than 80 percent of students reported being satisfied with available services.

Table 5h
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Registration Effectiveness* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.	5.76	5.50	5.60	84
The personnel involved in registration are helpful.	5.67	5.34	5.43	84
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.	5.65	5.14	5.42	82
The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students.	5.59	5.29	5.40	83
Billing policies are reasonable.	4.89	4.92	4.95	64

Table 5i depicts data for statements from the *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations* scale. These items, which underscore the extent to which the campus accommodates various non-traditional student groups, tended to receive mean satisfaction ratings that were at or above national averages. Students appear to hold especially positive views of the university’s efforts to support students with disabilities.

Table 5i
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?	5.74	5.59	5.60	83
Institution's commitment to older, returning learners?	5.54	5.42	5.41	80
Institution's commitment to part-time students?	5.53	5.33	5.33	78
Institution's commitment to under-represented populations?	5.44	5.38	5.30	76
Institution's commitment to evening students?	5.43	5.31	5.29	78
Institution's commitment to commuters?	5.23	5.17	5.21	72

Item ratings for the *Safety and Security* scale appear somewhat bimodal. As shown in Table 5j, two of the three statements dealing explicitly with personal safety generated robust satisfaction ratings, and in fact were designated as university strengths. However, the statement *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate* was widely scoffed by respondents. This item was, by a large margin, the lowest-rated statement on the entire SSI instrument, with only 32 percent of respondents expressing satisfaction with the availability of on-campus parking. Open-ended comments provided by respondents further underscored student displeasure with on-campus parking options. Nonetheless, ratings for this item were on-par with those of both comparison groups.

Table 5j
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Safety and Security* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Security staff respond quickly in emergencies. (S)	5.75	5.43	5.45	84
The campus is safe and secure for all students. (S)	5.74	5.59	5.73	87
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.	5.09	5.08	5.11	70
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	3.45	3.55	3.45	32

The *Service Excellence* scale focuses on perceptions of staff attitudes toward students. Though most items in this series were reasonably well-supported by students, two items – *Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available* and *I seldom get the “run around” when seeking information on this campus* – were among the ten lowest-rated statements in the 2017 survey (see Table 5k). These data suggest that platforms for student communication deserve continued attention at all levels of the university.

Table 5k
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Service Excellence* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
Library staff are helpful and approachable.	5.78	5.66	5.53	85
Counseling staff care about students as individuals. (S)	5.73	5.25	5.47	84
The personnel involved in registration are helpful.	5.67	5.34	5.43	84
The campus staff are caring and helpful.	5.51	5.35	5.32	82
The staff in the health services area are competent.	5.31	5.37	5.13	75
I generally know what's happening on campus.	5.15	5.09	5.12	70
Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.	4.99	4.94	4.80	67
I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.	4.95	4.84	4.89	65

Finally, the *Student Centeredness* scale involves statements that evoke a personal sense of campus inclusion. Table 5l shows that at least three-quarters of respondents reported satisfaction with all statements in this scale, suggesting a reasonable degree of support. Further, all statements in this scale received satisfaction ratings that exceeded national averages, in several cases by a significant margin. As with the *Campus Climate* scale, several of the items in the *Student Centeredness* scale correlated strongly with all three SSI summary satisfaction indicators.

Table 5l
Item Scores for Satisfaction – *Student Centeredness* Scale

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	5.58	5.41	5.44	82
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	5.55	5.52	5.48	81
The campus staff are caring and helpful.	5.51	5.35	5.32	82
Administrators are approachable to students.	5.31	5.21	5.25	76
This institution shows concern for students as individuals. (C)	5.31	5.23	5.19	75
Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	5.20	5.19	5.15	75

Other Items

Two statements from the main SSI instrument – shown in Table 6 – are not incorporated into any scale score, and both of these items rose to the upper echelon of student satisfaction ratings in the 2017 USD sample. In fact, the statement *On the whole, the campus is well-maintained* received the highest satisfaction rating of all statements presented the SSI. This was the only item from the 2017 survey administration that produced an overall satisfaction rating of 6.00 or higher. A striking 89 percent of students reported satisfaction with campus maintenance.

Table 6
Item Scores for Satisfaction – Other Items

Statement	USD 2017	Nation 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
On the whole, the campus is well-maintained. (S)	6.00	5.71	5.82	89
The assessment and course placement procedures are reasonable.	5.66	5.36	5.46	84

Lastly, the university’s 2017 SSI instrument included ten custom survey statements that were designed for use on the USD campus specifically. These items were submitted by USD staff and were not included in other institutions’ SSI administrations. Table 7 highlights year-over-year satisfaction rating changes for these items.¹⁷ Among items for which multiple years of data are available, the statement *Faculty members show tolerance and respect for diversity in the classroom* generated the largest mean response increase from 2015 to 2017. In percentage terms, 86 percent of students in the 2017 sample expressed satisfaction with this idea on the USD campus.

Table 7
Item Scores for Satisfaction – USD Custom Items

Statement	USD 2017	USD 2015	Perc. Satis.
USD has a large number of students from diverse backgrounds.	5.20	-	71
Learning how to talk about diversity with other students is promoted.	5.23	-	72
Faculty members show tolerance and respect for diversity in the classroom. (S)	5.87	5.11	86
Courses include multi-cultural and diversity topics (topics, books, assignments).	5.45	5.78	78
There is a strong commitment to training and educ. regarding sexual orientation.	5.02	-	66
Students with disabilities have access to support services. (S)	5.88	5.72	86
There is adequate lighting on campus for purposes of personal safety.	5.38	-	77
There is a strong commitment to training and education regarding sexual assault.	5.21	5.13	72
Support services for female students are readily available.	5.26	-	72
USD adequately supports online learners.	5.62	-	81

¹⁷ Items in this table are shown in instrument order. Values for “USD 2015” are not shown for items that either were not included on the 2015 SSI instrument or were significantly reworded on the 2017 SSI instrument.

Appendix A

SSI Scale Descriptions

Academic Advising (and Counseling) Effectiveness

Assesses the comprehensiveness of your academic advising program. Academic advisors (and counselors) are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence, and personal concern for student success, as well as on their approachability.

Campus Climate

Assesses the extent to which your institution provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging. This scale also assesses the effectiveness of your institution's channels of communication for students.

Campus Life

Assesses the effectiveness of student life programs offered by your institution, 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 Support Services

Assess the quality of your support programs and services which students utilize to make their educational experiences more meaningful and productive. This scale covers a variety of areas.

Concern for the Individual

Assesses your 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.

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 your faculty in and out of the classroom, content of the courses, and sufficient course offerings.

Recruitment (or Admissions) and Financial Aid Effectiveness

Assesses your institution'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 your institution's commitment to making this process as smooth and effective as possible.

Responsiveness to Diverse Populations

Assesses your institution's commitment to specific groups of students enrolled at your institution, e.g., under-represented populations; students with disabilities; commuters; part-time students; and older, returning learners.

Safety and Security

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

Service Excellence

Assesses the perceived attitude of your staff, especially front-line staff, toward students. This scale pinpoints the areas of your campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably.

Student Centeredness

Assesses your campus's efforts to convey to students that they are important to your institution. This scale measures the extent to which students feel welcome and valued.