

# The 2006 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report

## Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges

### The Source of the Data

The student population for the community, junior, and technical colleges includes 244,677 students from 272 institutions surveyed with the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory™ between the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2006.

The campus personnel population includes 12,292 faculty, staff, and administrators from 92 institutions surveyed with the Noel-Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey™ during the same timeframe.

### Reviewing These Data

Brief highlights regarding the data findings are offered in each section of this report. For a broader view of why assessment is critical in today's higher education environment, see the

Executive Summary. You will also find a perspective on how the experiences of students compare across various demographic segments in the Executive Summary.

### The Scales

The best place to begin is by looking at the big picture and understanding the areas on campus that matter most to students. The following table summarizes the importance, satisfaction, and performance gaps for the 12 areas (scales) for community, junior, and technical colleges nationally. The scales are listed in order of importance. This table is followed by the scale scores for campus personnel at two-year public institutions.

**A list of the participating institutions is included in the appendix.**

### 2006 Scales: community, junior, and technical colleges (students)

Scale	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	Performance Gap Mean
Instructional Effectiveness	<b>6.15</b>	5.34	0.81
Registration Effectiveness	<b>6.13</b>	5.33	0.80
Academic Advising/Counseling	<b>6.10</b>	5.15	0.95
Concern for the Individual	<b>6.06</b>	5.16	0.90
Academic Services	<b>6.01</b>	5.36	0.65
Admissions and Financial Aid	<b>6.00</b>	5.05	0.95
Safety and Security	<b>5.96</b>	4.87	1.09
Student Centeredness	<b>5.94</b>	5.29	0.65
Campus Climate	<b>5.93</b>	5.22	0.71
Service Excellence	<b>5.92</b>	5.18	0.74
Campus Support Services	<b>5.43</b>	4.89	0.54
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.40	—

(7 = very important/very satisfied 1 = not important/not satisfied at all)

**Community colleges continue to see improving satisfaction levels.**

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## 2006 Scales: community, junior, and technical colleges (campus personnel)

Scale	Importance Mean	Agreement Mean	Performance Gap Mean
Concern for the Individual	<b>6.56</b>	5.63	0.93
Instructional Effectiveness	<b>6.53</b>	5.75	0.78
Campus Climate	<b>6.48</b>	5.55	0.93
Academic Advising/Counseling	<b>6.48</b>	5.45	1.03
Admissions and Financial Aid	<b>6.48</b>	5.41	1.07
Student Centeredness	<b>6.46</b>	5.63	0.83
Safety and Security	<b>6.46</b>	5.16	1.30
Academic Services	<b>6.45</b>	5.52	0.93
Service Excellence	<b>6.42</b>	5.38	1.04
Registration Effectiveness	<b>6.37</b>	5.45	0.92
Campus Support Services	<b>6.14</b>	5.17	0.97
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.69	—

(7 = very important/strongly agree 1 = not important/strongly disagree)

### Students place a much higher value on Registration than do campus personnel.

When reviewing perceptions of students and campus personnel, it is helpful to identify the areas the two groups value differently. This can best be seen by comparing rank order of the importance scores. Scales were ranked 1 to 11, with 1 indicating the highest rank in importance.

Scale	SSI Rank	IPS Rank
Instructional Effectiveness	1	2
<b>Registration Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
Academic Advising/Counseling	3	3 tie
Concern for the Individual	4	1
Academic Services	5	8
Admissions and Financial Aid	6	3 tie
Safety and Security	7	6 tie
Student Centeredness	8	6 tie
Campus Climate	9	3 tie
Service Excellence	10	9
Campus Support Services	11	11

At community colleges in this study, students placed a higher value on Registration Effectiveness than did campus personnel. Students also placed a slightly higher emphasis on Academic Services. On the other hand, campus personnel placed a greater emphasis on Concern for the Individual, Campus Climate, Admissions and Financial Aid, as well as Student Centeredness. The areas of Instructional Effectiveness, Academic Advising/Counseling, Safety and Security, Service Excellence, and Campus Support Services had similar importance rankings.

## Strengths and Challenges

### Strengths

The individual items on the inventory were analyzed to determine strengths (high importance and high satisfaction). Institutions often incorporate their strengths into their marketing activities, recruiting materials, internal and external public relations opportunities, as well as provide positive feedback for campus personnel and students. *Strengths are defined as being above the mid-point in importance and in the top quartile of satisfaction.*

The following are the top strengths as identified by students at community, junior and technical colleges. Strengths are listed in order of importance.

- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
- There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.
- Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
- My academic advisor is approachable.
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible.
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
- Library resources and services are adequate.
- Policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection are clear and well-publicized.
- Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date.
- It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.
- The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.
- Nearly all classes deal with practical experiences and applications.

Many of the strengths identified by students at community colleges focused on the quality of instruction and on faculty. Community college students were satisfied with the variety of courses offered. Policies and procedures for registration and dropping/adding classes were also well received by community college students. Students felt generally safe on two-year campuses and they also felt welcome. The accessibility and adequateness of computer labs and the library resources and services were also considered strengths. Community college students had positive perceptions of the quality of the vocational/technical programs. Two additional strengths this year were the equipment in the lab facilities being up to date and classes dealing with practical experiences. Community colleges are making positive strides in these areas.

### Challenges

Inventory items were analyzed to determine key challenges (high importance and low satisfaction). These are the crucial areas to address to improve retention (each institution will have its own list of challenges). Nationally, students have high expectations in these areas, but institutions failed to meet those expectations. Areas of dissatisfaction were prioritized by importance score indicating those areas that mattered most to students. *Challenges are defined as being above the mid-point in importance and in the bottom quartile of satisfaction and/or the top quartile of performance gaps.*

Following, listed in order of importance, are the top challenges as identified by students at community, junior, and technical colleges.

- Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
- The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
- This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.
- Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.
- Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.

**Students at community colleges nationally identified more strengths than challenges.**

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- The college shows concern for students as individuals.
- Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
- My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
- Financial aid counselors are helpful.
- I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.

Access to classes through registration and classes offered at convenient times were the two greatest challenges for students at community colleges. Advising was another critical area for students at two-year institutions as was knowledge of academic advisors in the areas of program requirements and transfer requirements. Students want institutions to help them meet their educational goals and want their advisors to be concerned about them as individuals. Other concerns included parking (a critical issue at commuter campuses where parking becomes a matter of access), security of those parking lots, adequate financial aid, and campus run-around. A new challenge on this year's list was faculty being fair and unbiased.

**Access to classes through registration and classes offered at convenient times were the two greatest challenges for students at community colleges.**

**Helpfulness of personnel in registration was identified as a strength by staff but as a challenge by faculty.**

**Enrollment factors provide valuable insight on student motivation to attend an institution.**

## Enrollment Factors

Institutions should be aware of the factors which influence their students' decisions to enroll at the college. Institutions often use this type of information to shape their marketing activities.

The following table reflects the average of the importance score, based on a 1 to 7 scale, with 7 being high. In this study, students at community, junior and technical colleges placed a high value on the cost of the institution. Financial aid and academic reputation round out the top three influential factors. Geographic setting (often considered to be location) is the next contributing factor. Students at community colleges also valued the personalized attention that they received prior to enrollment.

For 2006, the enrollment factors indicated in descending order of importance for students at community, junior and technical colleges, along with the corresponding rank and average importance score from the campus personnel perspective were as follows:

**Enrollment factors comparison between students and campus personnel**

Item	Student Rank	Campus Personnel Rank	Student Importance	Campus Personnel Importance
Cost	1	1	6.21	6.44
Financial aid	2	2	5.85	6.37
Academic reputation	3	5	5.74	5.69
Geographic setting	4	3	5.37	5.79
Personalized attention prior to enrollment	5	4	5.30	5.72
Size of institution	6 tie	7	5.15	5.17
Campus appearance	6 tie	8	5.15	5.01
Recommendations from family/friends	8	6	4.81	5.51
Opportunity to play sports	9	9	3.46	2.90

Students and campus personnel indicated similar rankings for enrollment factors. The one notable exception is that campus personnel placed a higher value on recommendations from family and friends than did students, and a lower value on academic reputation.

## What Does This Mean for Your Campus?

Survey your students and campus personnel. Effective institutions survey their constituencies regularly, compare their data to their past performance, and then actively respond to the challenges. Also,

- Be aware of national trends for a broader perspective.
- Review the other sections of the national report to compare results with other institution types and to learn how campuses are responding in critical areas.