

**Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory  
Collin College  
2014**

***Executive Summary***

Prepared by  
Nasreen Ahmad  
Assistant Director of Institutional Research

To understand and monitor what matters most to its students and how satisfied they are with various aspect of their educational experience, Collin College administers the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to a representative sample of students every other spring semester. During spring 2014, the SSI was administered to a random sample of 13,981 students enrolled at Collin. Utilizing the Noel-Levitz online services, an electronic survey was administered to the sampled students using their Cougarmail addresses. A total of 1,092 completed responses were received yielding a response rate of eight percent. This represented a two percentage point improvement (380 more responses) over what was obtained during the 2012 administration, the first time the survey was administered electronically.<sup>1</sup> Assuming that the sample was representative, a sample of 1,092 students from a student population of about 26,000 allows one to generalize sample parameters to the overall population with 95 percent confidence plus or minus about 3 percent.

Using just over 100 items, the SSI asks students to indicate the levels of importance they placed on specific educational experiences, activities, and services along with the degree of satisfaction they associated with those experiences, activities, and services. Students rated each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 7 represented the most positive ratings. The use of dual importance-satisfaction scales allows institutions to rate satisfaction within the context of importance. The difference between the importance and the satisfaction scores produces what Noel-Levitz refers to as the “performance gap.” The smaller the gap—i.e., the smaller the difference is between how important students rate an item and their satisfaction level—the better the institution is, presumably, doing in meeting students’ expectations. Larger gaps suggest areas where institutions can focus improvement efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014, efforts were made to improve the response rate. Prior to the survey, in collaboration with the Public Relations Office, email messages were sent via Cougarmail informing all students about the upcoming Noel-Levitz survey, telling about its importance, and requesting them to respond if they were selected in the sample. Cougar News also carried information about the survey. Also, in line with Dillman’s methodology, five timed contacts were made with the respondents.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents were females and 41 percent were between 19 and 24 years of age. In terms of their educational goals, 45 percent were interested in obtaining an associate's degree and another 42 percent intended to transfer to a university. A majority of the respondents attended Spring Creek Campus (51 percent). Cost was the most dominant factor in the decision to enroll at Collin. Academic reputation as a factor in the decision to enroll has steadily risen: the average importance score for this item rose from 5.78 in 2006 to 5.98 in 2010 to 6.13 in 2014. Seventy-nine percent of students enrolled at Collin because of its academic reputation compared to 71 percent for national peers. Financial aid was another important factor in the decision to enroll at Collin. The average importance score for financial aid increased from 5.11 in 2006 to 5.79 in 2014. Personalized attention prior to enrollment as a factor in the decision to enroll at Collin also increased from 5.10 in 2006 to 5.46 in 2014.

An important perception about Collin that warrants attention was an increase in the percentage of students identifying Collin as their first choice institution. In 2008, 70 percent of respondents identified Collin as their first choice, 74 percent in 2010, 81 percent in 2012 and 79 percent in 2014. This overall trend is in line with students' increasingly positive views of Collin's academic reputation. The two percentage point decline (compared to 2012) in identifying Collin as the first choice institution may be associated with a two percentage point decline in the respondents (from 81% in 2012 to 79% in 2014) who still would enroll at Collin if they had to do it over. It could also be associated with a two percentage point decline in respondents who were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their college experience thus far, going from 70 percent in 2012 to 68 percent in 2014. Despite modest declines since 2012, when Collin's scores were compared to the average satisfaction scores for 208 community, junior and technical colleges in the comparison group,<sup>2</sup> the mean differences between Collin and comparison group were statistically significant indicating that Collin students were more satisfied with their college experiences, that Collin met their expectations to a greater degree, and to a greater extent they would be more likely to enroll at Collin if they had it to do over again.

The items on the SSI are grouped to form 12 scales<sup>3</sup>. Students' ratings on these scales provide an overview of what matters to students. Among the most important results, in

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<sup>2</sup> The total number of students in the comparison group was 185,186.

<sup>3</sup> **1. Academic Advising/Counseling:** assesses the comprehensiveness of 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.

**2. Academic Services:** assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring, and study areas etc.

**3. Admissions and Financial Aid:** assesses the ability to enroll students in an effective manner. It includes competence and knowledge of admissions staff as well as effectiveness and availability of financial aid programs.

terms of satisfaction, is the big picture obtained by comparing the scales for Collin to those of national peers. Eight scales showed statistically significant and positive differences. This means that Collin students were more satisfied with the experiences, activities, and services measured by these scales than were students, in aggregate, at the comparison institutions. The eight scales are presented in the order of students' perceived import: *Registration Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Academic Services, Service Excellence, Campus Climate, Student Centeredness, Campus Support Services, and Responsiveness to Diverse Populations.*

Two scales, *Academic Advising/Counseling* and *Concern for Individuals*, had negative differences compared to community colleges nationwide; however the difference was only statistically significant for *Academic Advising*. This suggests Academic Advising as an area of challenge on which Collin may wish to focus. Over the years in which the SSI has been administered, this area consistently has been viewed relatively negatively by students; one of the key reasons it is now a focus of the College's evolving SACS COC quality enhancement plan.

The individual items under each scale provide detailed information about the College's strengths and challenges. Collin's strengths are reflected in those items which were rated by respondents as having high importance as well as high levels of satisfaction. These are assigned a green star, below. The challenges are posed by items with high importance and low satisfaction;<sup>4</sup> i.e., those with large performance gaps. These are flagged in red and represent challenges that Collin may wish to address in some fashion. The percentage of students who gave a 6 or 7 (6 is considered "important" or "satisfied" and 7 is considered "very important" or "very satisfied") are presented in the parenthesis following each item under each scale. Some items appear under more than one scale.

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**4. Campus Climate:** assesses the extent to which the College provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging.

**5. Campus Support Services:** assess the quality of support programs and services which students utilize to make their educational experiences more meaningful and productive.

**6. Concern for the Individual:** assesses commitment to treating each student as an individual.

**7. Instructional Effectiveness:** assesses students' academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence

**8. Registration Effectiveness:** assesses issues associated with registration and billing.

**9. Responsiveness to Diverse Populations:** assesses commitment to specific groups of students enrolled at the College; e.g., under-represented populations; students with disabilities; etc.

**10. Safety and Security:** assesses the College's responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on campus.

**11. Service Excellence:** assesses the perceived attitude of the College's staff, especially front-line staff, toward students.

**12. Student Centeredness:** assesses the College's efforts to convey to students that they are important to the College. This scale measures the extent to which students feel welcome and valued.

<sup>4</sup> "Challenges are identified as items above the midpoint in importance and in the lower quartile (25%) of satisfaction scores or items above the midpoint in importance and in the top quartile (25%) of the performance gap scores (this is the difference between the importance score and the satisfaction score). The larger the performance gap, the greater the discrepancy between what students expect and their level of satisfaction with the current situation." (Noel-Levitz Campus Report, 2014)

### Instructional Effectiveness

- ★ Nearly all the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields. (92% importance vs.71% satisfaction)
- ★ I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (91% importance vs. 78% satisfaction)
- ★ There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus. (91% importance vs. 75% satisfaction)
- ❑ Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course. (89% importance vs. 56% satisfaction)
- ★ Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (86% importance vs. 72% satisfaction)
- ❑ Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class. (85% importance vs. 43% satisfaction)

### Registration Effectiveness

- ❑ Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me. (91% importance vs. 60% satisfaction)
- ❑ I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts. (93% importance vs. 59% satisfaction)
- ❑ The personnel involved in registration are helpful. (88% importance vs. 51% satisfaction)
- ★ There are convenient ways of paying my school bill. (86% importance vs.79% satisfaction)

### Academic Advising/Counseling

- ❑ My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements. (90% importance vs. 52% satisfaction)
- ❑ My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools. (89% importance vs. 50% satisfaction)
- ❑ This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals. (87% importance vs. 56% satisfaction)
- ❑ My academic advisor is approachable. (88% importance vs. 50% satisfaction)
- ❑ My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual. (88% importance vs. 43% satisfaction)

### Safety and Security

- ★ The campus is safe and secure for all students. (92% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)
- ★ Security staff responds quickly in emergencies. (86% importance vs. 69% satisfaction)
- ★ Parking lots are well-lighted and secure. (85% importance vs. 70% satisfaction)
- ❑ The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (86% importance vs. 53% satisfaction)

### Academic Services

- ★ The library resources and services are adequate for my needs. (86% importance vs. 82% satisfaction)
- ★ Computer labs are adequate and accessible. (86% importance vs. 78% satisfaction)
- ★ The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date. (85% importance vs. 68% satisfaction)

★Library staff are helpful and approachable. (84% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)

### Concern for the Individual

☒ My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual. (84% importance vs. 43% satisfaction)

### Service Excellence

☒ The personnel involved in registration are helpful. (88% importance vs. 51% satisfaction)

★ Library staff are helpful and approachable. (84% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)

### Campus Climate

★The campus is safe and secure for all students. (92% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)

☒ This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals. (87% importance vs. 56% satisfaction)

★ Students are made to feel welcome on this campus. (83% importance vs. 71% satisfaction)

★ It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus. (83% importance vs. 71% satisfaction)

### Student Centeredness

★ Students are made to feel welcome on this campus. (83% importance vs. 71% satisfaction)

★ It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus. (83% importance vs. 71% satisfaction)

### Campus Support Services

☒ There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career. (84% importance vs. 55% satisfaction)

A comparison of 2014 and 2012 survey results indicate significant increases in mean satisfaction scores for *Safety and Security* and *Campus Support Services*. It is encouraging to note that increases were observed in satisfaction scores for *Academic Advising/Counseling*, and *Admissions* and *Financial Aid*, though the increases were not significant. Despite improvement in satisfaction for *Academic Advising/Counseling*, this area still poses a challenge for Collin College. There was no change in the mean satisfaction score for *Academic Services*. There were declines in mean satisfaction scores for *Instructional Effectiveness*, *Registration Effectiveness*, *Concern for Individual*, *Service Excellence*, *Campus Climate*, *Student Centeredness*, and *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations*, but the declines were nonsignificant, which means that they could be attributable to random variation.

To obtain baseline data for Collin's QEP, ten institutional questions were developed in consultation with the Student Development Office for the 2014 SSI administration. Results for the 10 items found the highest performance gaps for the following three items:

- 1) I am clear about the next steps for completing my degree/certificate requirements. (91% importance vs. 59% satisfaction)
- 2) I know about the academic and career planning resources available on the Collin Web site. (80% importance vs. 52% satisfaction)
- 3) I can easily find the information I need at the Collin College Web site. (89% importance vs. 60% satisfaction)