

**Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI): 2018
Collin College**

Executive Summary

Prepared by
Nasreen Ahmad
Director, Institutional Research

September 25, 2018

Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI): 2018

Collin College

Executive Summary

Prepared by
Nasreen Ahmad
Director, Institutional Research

To understand and monitor what matters most to its students and how satisfied they are with various aspects of their educational experience, Collin College administers the Ruffalo Noel Levitz's Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to a representative sample of students every other spring semester. In February 2018, utilizing the Ruffalo Noel Levitz online services, an electronic survey was administered to 10,511 randomly sampled students using their Cougarmail addresses. The survey was sent to every other student enrolled in spring excluding freshman, first-time transfers, dual credit and home-schooled students. Since 2016, students have the option to answer via mobile devices. Answering dual scale questions probably makes it cumbersome and more time consuming on small screens, which could discourage response. Hence extra reminders had to be sent to solicit adequate number of responses. A total of 985 completed responses were received yielding a response rate of 9.4 percent. This represented a 2.4 percentage point increase compared to the 2016 administration¹. A completed sample of 985 allows one to generalize the sample parameters to the overall student population with a 95 percent confidence of 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 each. 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



Figure 1. Performance gap.

¹Like the previous administrations, efforts were made to improve the response rate. In collaboration with the Public Relations Office, prior to the survey, an email message was sent via Cougarmail informing all students about the upcoming survey, about its importance, and requesting students to respond if they were selected in the sample. Reminder emails were also sent to the non-responders via Snap Surveys. Instead of five timed contacts suggested by Dillman's methodology, in 2018 eight contacts were made to solicit adequate number of responses.

between the importance and the satisfaction scores produces what Ruffalo Noel Levitz refers to as the “performance gap.” The smaller the gap—i.e., the smaller the difference between how important students rate an item and their satisfaction level—the better the institution, presumably, is doing in meeting students’ expectations. Larger gaps suggest areas where institutions can focus their improvement efforts, especially when larger gaps are associated with areas that students deem relatively important.

Sixty-four percent of the respondents were females, and 49 percent were between 19 and 24 years of age. In terms of their educational goals, 47 percent were interested in obtaining an associate’s degree and another 40 percent intended to transfer to a university. One-third of the respondents were employed either full-time or part-time. An overwhelming majority of the respondents were classified as In-State students (93%) and a little less than half reported attending the Plano (Spring Creek) Campus (47 percent).

Collin College prides its efforts to keep higher education affordable. Cost continues to be the most important factor in the decision to enroll at Collin. Eighty-three percent of the respondents were motivated by tuition cost (mean importance score of 6.36. on 7-point scale). Academic reputation as a factor in the decision to enroll has had a

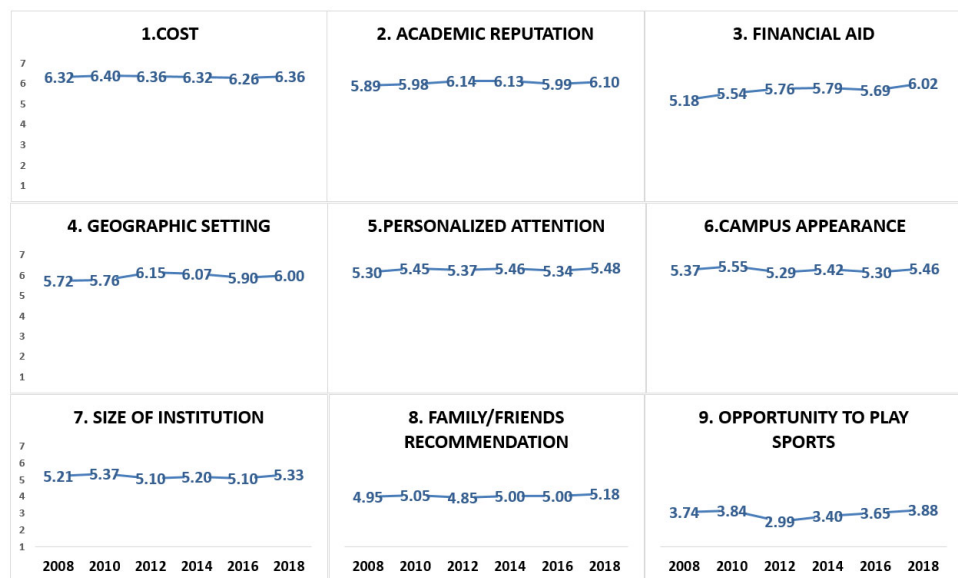


Figure 2. Factors in decision to enroll at Collin (mean importance scores on 7-point scale).

Note. The factors in the decision to enroll are presented in 2018 descending order of importance sequentially from 1 till 9.

rising trend till 2012; it dipped from 6.14 in 2012 to 5.99 in 2016 and rose to 6.10 in 2018. Nevertheless, it is the second most important factor in the decision to enroll. Seventy-five percent of students enrolled at Collin because of its academic reputation compared to 72 percent for national peers². Other important factors in the decision to enroll at Collin were Financial Aid and Geographic Setting. Overall, the average importance score for Financial Aid has had an increasing trend from 2008 till 2018 with the exception of 2016 when the score slightly dipped. Despite the rising trend, in terms of percentages, Financial

² The means for the national peer group are based on 162,081 records.

Aid as a factor in the decision to enroll is 3 percentage points lower compared to peers (75 percent vs. 78 percent). Personalized attention prior to enrollment as an enrollment decision factor increased from 5.34 in 2016 to 5.48 in 2018; Collin is at par with peers in providing personalized attention prior to enrollment (61 percent for both). Interestingly, opportunity to play sports as a motivation of enrollment at Collin increased by 3 percentage points between the 2016 and 2018 administrations (31 percent vs. 34 percent); at 3.88, the mean importance score is at its highest ever. Higher percentages of students enrolled at Collin for the opportunity to play sports compared to peers (34 percent vs. 29 percent), a difference of 5 percentage points. It is possible that this increase reflects Collin’s decision to initiate an intramural sports program.

The percentage of respondents selecting Collin as their first choice institution increased from 69.6 percent in 2008 to 81 percent in 2012 after which the percentage continued to decline from 79 in 2014 to 78 in 2016 to 74 in 2018. The declining trend following 2012 could likely be a result of the economic recovery after the recession which may have enabled recession-impacted students/families to go elsewhere. Despite the declining trend, three-fourths of the students still identified Collin as their first choice institution in 2018. Considering the numerous college options that exist in the area, the fact that 74 percent selected Collin as their first choice is positive; it is four percentage points higher than the peers (70 percent).

Figure 3 presents the three SSI summary items (96, 97 & 98) that gauge the bottom line overview of how students feel about their overall college experience. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of 2016, average response scores for the three items were significantly higher for Collin than counterparts at other junior and technical colleges in the

	2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Collin	Peers	Collin	Peers	Collin	Peers	Collin	Peers
96. So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	5.03	4.81	4.98	4.86	4.83	4.87	5.05	4.92
97. Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.	5.71	5.46	5.64	5.51	5.47	5.52	5.67	5.55
98. All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?	6.21	5.72	6.05	5.74	5.83	5.75	6.09	5.78

Dark green fill indicates significantly higher than peers.
 Light green fill indicates higher than peers but not significant.
 Pink fill indicates lower than peers but not significant.

Figure 3. Average scores for response to how students’ college experience has met expectations, rating of their overall satisfaction with college experience, and whether they would re-enroll by year for Collin and peers.

comparison group, (dark green cells in Fig 3). A comparison of Collin’s 2016 and 2018 data indicates statistically significant³ improvement in the average scores for the three items:

- Item 96: So far, how has your college experience met your expectations (0.22**)
- Item 97: Rate you overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far (0.20**)
- Item 98: All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again (0.26***)

³ Two asterisks (**) indicate significance at .01 level and three asterisks (***) indicate significance at .001 level.

The increase in the satisfaction scores for the three summary items viewed in the context of a decline in the percentage of students reporting Collin as their first choice institution suggests that Collin is still increasingly meeting the expectations of students despite a decline in Collin preference.

The items on the SSI are grouped to form 12 scales.⁴ Students' ratings on these scales provide an overview of what matters to students. Figure 4 compares the mean satisfaction scores for Collin for 2016 and 2018; the means were higher for every scale in 2018 compared to 2016, and all of the 12 scales experienced statistically significant increases in their mean satisfaction scores.

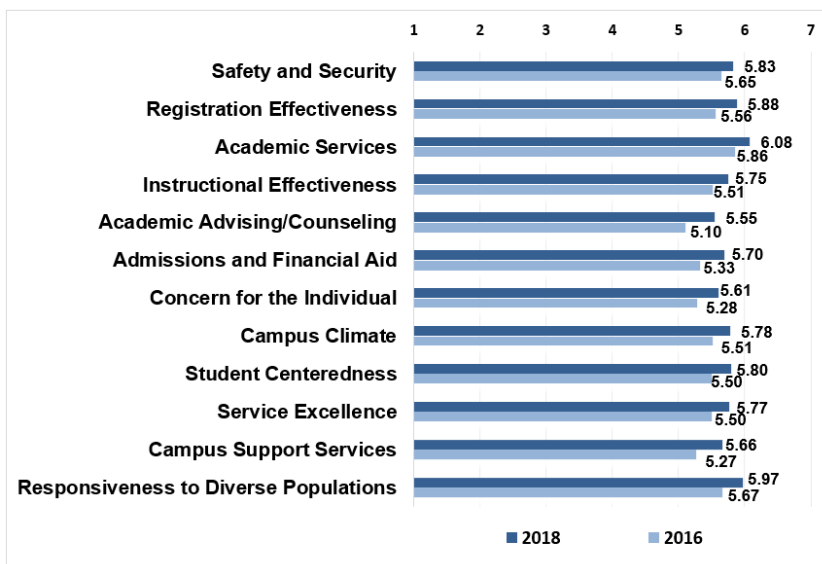


Figure 4. Comparison of 2018 and 2016 mean satisfaction scores for 12 scales.

The students' perceived importance and satisfaction placed on each scale in 2018 is visualized in Figure 5. The perceived importance (mean importance score) placed on each scale is presented in a descending order of importance on the left side of the

⁴ **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.
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.

diagram, whereas the right side of the diagram presents the satisfaction levels (mean satisfaction score) in descending order. The thickness of the lines indicates the scale which had the most change in rank. For instance, the widest line is for Academic Advising/Counseling which was rated 5th on importance but was 11th on satisfaction. The Registration Effectiveness has the thinnest line; it was ranked 2nd on importance and 2nd on the satisfaction scale.

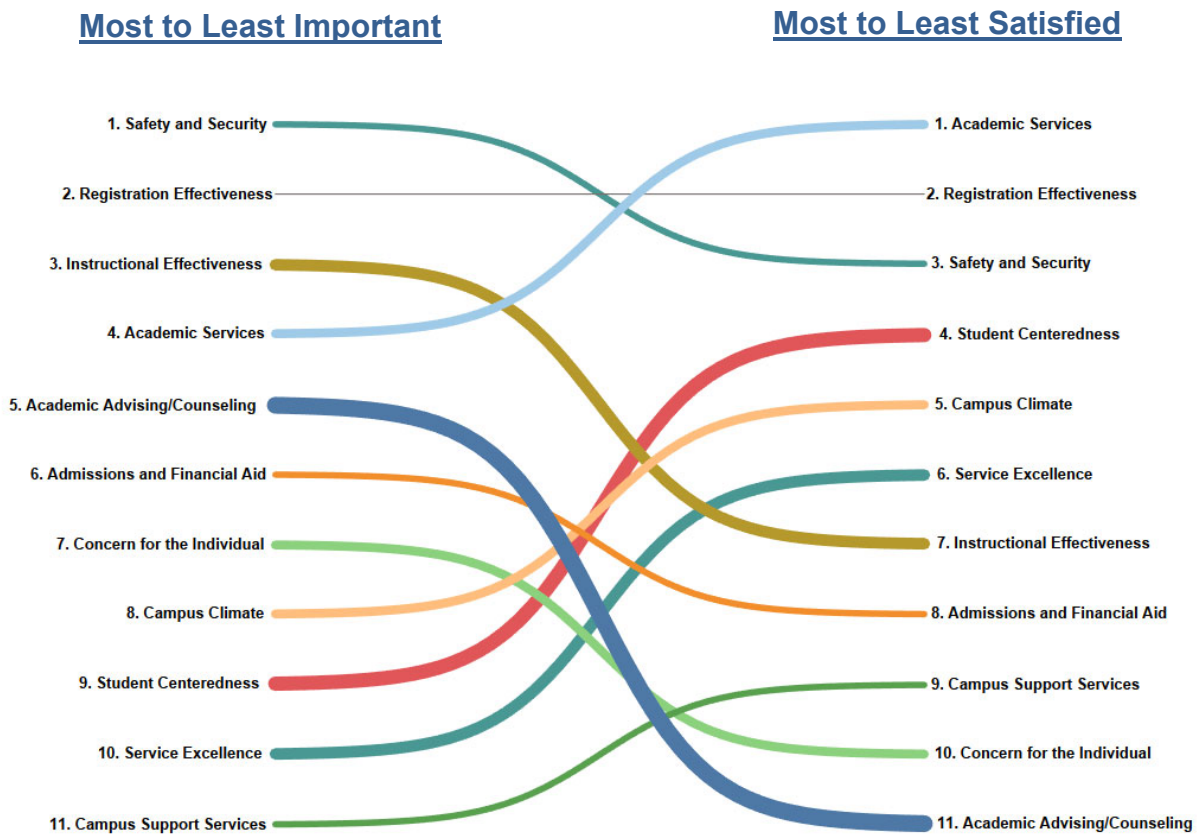


Figure 3. 2018 Collin’s importance (left) and satisfaction scales (right) in descending order of students’ perceived importance and satisfaction.

Note. The above Sankey diagram visualizes only 11 scales because SSI captures data only for on one dimension (Satisfaction) for the scale, “Responsiveness to diverse population.” Therefore, this scale is not included in the above visualization.

Safety and Security was deemed most important by Collin students in 2018 (6.44). In terms of satisfaction, Safety and Security was ranked as number three (5.83). The items considered most important under this scale were that “Campuses were safe and secure for all students” and that “Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.” Compared to 2016, not only has the importance of these two items under this scale gone up, but there is also a statistically significant increase in the satisfaction with these items. As a matter of fact, these two items have been highlighted as strengths for Collin College (see page

8). Compared to peers, Collin students give much higher importance to Safety and Security (6.44 vs. 6.18 for peers). Collin students also express higher levels of satisfaction with the Safety and Security at Collin compared to counterparts at peer institutions (5.83 vs. 5.41); statistically, the difference in satisfaction was significantly higher.

Students were most satisfied with the Academic Services (6.08) and least satisfied with the Academic Advising/Counseling (5.55).

An important result, in terms of satisfaction, is the big picture obtained by comparing the scales for Collin to those of national peers.

- In 2014, 10 out of 12 scales had higher student satisfaction scores for Collin compared to peers and the differences were statistically significant for eight scales.
- In 2016, six scales showed higher satisfaction scores for Collin compared to peers and the differences were statistically significant for three scales.
- **In 2018, all 12 scales showed higher satisfaction scores for Collin and the mean satisfaction scores for Collin were statistically significantly higher than the peers.**

Hence, the results from 2018 survey indicate that Collin students were more satisfied with their College experiences, activities, and services as measured by these 12 scales than were students, in aggregate, at the comparison institutions.

Out of the 12 scales, Collin's Academic Advising had the lowest mean satisfaction score. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note that the satisfaction score for Advising has been improving⁵. Figure 4 plots the difference between the mean satisfaction scores for Collin and peers for Advising Scale. A negative value (below the red line) indicates that the peer's satisfaction with Advising was higher than that of Collin students and a positive value (above the red line) indicates vice versa. Students

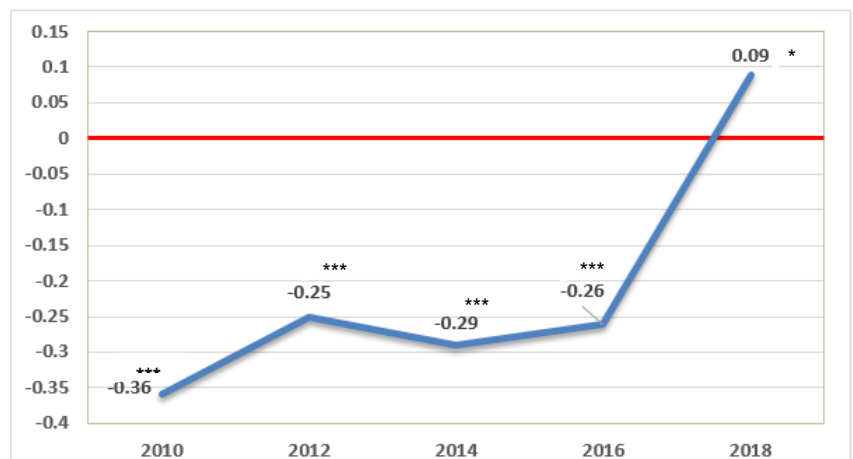


Figure 4. Differences between Collin and peer's mean satisfaction scores by year of SSI administration.

Note. Three asterisks indicate that the differences were statistically significant at .001 level. One asterisk indicates that difference was statistically significant at .05 level.



⁵ Because the area of Advising has consistently been viewed relatively negatively by students over the years since SSI has been administered; one of the key reasons it became the focus of College's SACS COC quality enhancement plan (QEP) in 2014.

at peer institutions were significantly more satisfied with their Academic Advising, however, it is noteworthy that overtime the gap in satisfaction scores for Advising between Collin and peers has been narrowing (from -0.36 in 2010 to -0.26 in 2016). In 2018, not only did the gap narrow further but Collin students were more satisfied with their Academic Advising (0.09*) compared to peers. **For the first time the mean satisfaction score for Collin (5.55) was higher than that of peers (5.46) and the difference was statistically significant at .05 level.**

To improve satisfaction with advising and to meet or exceed the mean satisfaction scores of peers is one of the summative outcomes of Collin's Quality Enhancement Plan⁶ (QEP); Collin seems to have attained that goal at least in 2018. The overall improvement in the satisfaction with Advising scale could be a manifestation of initiatives under the umbrella of QEP such as connecting students early on in their first term with faculty advisors, and training the faculty coaches and advisors via numerous professional development activities for better advisement. The number of items identified as challenges under Advising were five in 2014, three in 2016 and four in 2018. Though erratic, but still it is encouraging to note a declining trend.

The following section presents individual items which were identified as Collin's strengths or challenges⁷ for each scale. Collin's strengths are reflected in those items which were rated by students as having high importance and high levels of satisfaction with them. These are assigned a green star below. The challenges are posed by items with high importance and low satisfaction scores; 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. In all, there are 18 strengths and 11 challenges in 2018 (items appearing under more than one scale are counted once only).

Instructional Effectiveness

-  The quality of instruction I receive in most classes is excellent. (91% importance vs. 65% satisfaction)
-  Nearly all the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields. (91% importance vs. 74% satisfaction)

⁶ It is worth mentioning the SSI was administered to QEP's fall cohorts of full-time, first-time-in-college degree seeking students for the first time in Spring 2015 and for the second time in 2017.

⁷ **Strengths** are items with high importance and high satisfaction. They are specifically identified as items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and upper quartile (25 percent) of the satisfaction score. **Challenges** items with high importance and low satisfaction or large performance gap. Challenges are identified as items above the midpoint in importance (top half) and in the lower quartile (25%) of satisfaction scores or items above the midpoint in importance (top half) and in the top quartile (25%) of the performance gap scores. The performance gap score is likely the reason the item has been identified as a challenge. 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, 2018)

- ★ There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus. (90% importance vs. 77% satisfaction)
- ★ I am able to experience intellectual growth here. (89% importance vs. 77% satisfaction)
- 📖 Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course. (86% importance vs. 61% satisfaction)
- ★ Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours. (86% importance vs. 73% satisfaction)
- 📖 Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances. (84% importance vs. 62% satisfaction)

The last item became a challenge in 2018:

Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.

Registration Effectiveness

- 📖 Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me. (88% importance vs. 64% satisfaction)
- ★ There are convenient ways of paying my school bill. (87% importance vs. 78% satisfaction)
- ★ Class change(drop/add) policies are reasonable. (86% importance vs. 74% satisfaction)
- ★ Billing policies are reasonable. (85% importance vs. 74% satisfaction)

The following was a challenge in 2016, but not in 2018:

I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.

Academic Advising/Counseling

- 📖 My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements. (88% importance vs. 63% satisfaction)
- 📖 My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools. (88% importance vs. 62% satisfaction)
- 📖 My academic advisor is approachable. (87% importance vs. 66% satisfaction)
- 📖 This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals. (86% importance vs. 64% satisfaction)

The third item was not a challenge in 2016 but became a challenge again in 2018:

1. My academic advisor is approachable.

Safety and Security

- ★ The campus is safe and secure for all students. (91% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)
- ★ Security staff respond quickly in emergencies. (88% importance vs. 71% satisfaction)
- 📖 The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. (84% importance vs. 55% satisfaction)

The following was no longer a strength in 2018:

Parking lots are well-lighted and secure

Academic Services

- ★ The library resources and services are adequate for my needs. (88% importance vs. 82% satisfaction)
- ★ Computer labs are adequate and accessible. (88% importance vs. 79% satisfaction)
- ★ The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date. (87% importance vs. 74% satisfaction)
- ★ There are a sufficient number of study areas on campus. (85% importance vs. 76% satisfaction)

The following was a strength in 2016 but not in 2018:

Library staff are helpful and approachable.

Concern for the Individual

No strengths or challenges for any item.

Service Excellence

- ★ The campus staff are caring and helpful. (83% importance vs. 73% satisfaction)

The following was a strength in 2016 but not in 2018:

Library staff are helpful and approachable.

The following was a challenge in 2016 but not in 2018.

The personnel involved in registration are helpful.

Campus Climate

- ★ The campus is safe and secure for all students. (91% importance vs. 80% satisfaction)
- This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals. (86% importance vs. 64% satisfaction)
- ★ Students are made to feel welcome on this campus. (85% importance vs. 76% satisfaction)
- ★ This institution has a good reputation within the community. (85% importance vs. 81% satisfaction)
- ★ The campus staff is caring and helpful. (83% importance vs. 73% satisfaction)

The following was a strength in 2016 but not in 2018.

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.

Student Centeredness

- ★ Students are made to feel welcome on this campus. (85% importance vs. 76% satisfaction)
- ★ The campus staff are caring and helpful. (83% importance vs. 73% satisfaction)

The following was a strength in 2016 but not in 2018.

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.

Campus Support Services

No strengths or challenges for any item.

Admissions and Financial Aid

No strengths or challenges for any item.

The following was a challenge in 2016, but not in 2018:



Admissions staff are knowledgeable.

Out of the ten institutional items added to Ruffalo Noel Levitz's SSI by Collin, there was an improvement in the satisfaction scores for all 10 items between 2016 and 2018, and the increases in the mean satisfaction scores were statistically significant for all items with the exception of "The new student orientation session I attended during my first semester was beneficial." Overall, students expressed more satisfaction in 2018 with: the ease of finding information about tuition charges; the resources Collin provides to support students who face academic challenges; the ease of finding information on Collin website; their knowledge of academic and career planning resources on Collin website; their ability to select necessary courses for degree without advisor support; their clarity about the next steps in completing their degree requirements; their desire to consult a faculty advisor as part of their academic advising process; veteran services; and the adequacy of academic advising space to meet with the advisor.

In line with 2016, the following institutional item continues to be a strength for Collin.

- ★ I can easily find information about my tuition charges each semester. (89% importance vs. 81% satisfaction)

The highest performance gaps amongst the institutional items were observed for the following three, but, only two were flagged as challenges. In 2016, only item number (1) was flagged as a challenge but in 2018 item (2) was also flagged as a challenge:

-  1) I am clear about the next steps for completing my degree/certificate requirements (89% importance vs. 66% satisfaction)
-  2) I can easily find the information I need at the Collin College website. (88% importance vs. 62% satisfaction)
- 3) I know about the academic and career planning resources available on the Collin website. (80% importance vs. 60% satisfaction)