

**A summary of the results from the
Adult Student Priorities Survey
administered in March 2005**

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The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings of the Adult Student Priorities Survey that was administered in March 2005.

Background

The **Noel-Levitz Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS)** measures adult students' satisfaction with a wide variety of college experiences. The students rate each experience based on its importance to them and also their level of satisfaction with that particular experience. A gap score is calculated by subtracting these two ratings. Thus, three scores result from the student ratings. The importance rating reflects the student's expectation and the satisfaction score indicates how satisfied the student is with that item. The gap measure indicates how well that expectation is being met.

The 50 items on the ASPS are summarized in eight scales which include:

- **Academic Advising Effectiveness** assesses the academic advising program, evaluating advisors on their knowledge, competence, approachability, and personal concern for student success.
- **Academic Services** assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring, and study areas.
- **Admissions and Financial Aid** effectiveness assesses your institutions 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.

- **Campus Climate** evaluates how the institution promotes a sense of campus pride and belonging. This scale also assesses the effectiveness of your institution's channels of communication for students. .
- **Instructional Effectiveness** measures students' academic experiences, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence. This comprehensive scale covers areas such as the variety of courses offered and the effectiveness of the full-time and adjunct faculty in and out of the classroom.
- **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.
- **Safety and Security** measures the campus' responsiveness to students' personal safety and security. The scale measures the effectiveness of both security personnel and campus facilities.
- **Service Excellence** measures the attitude of the staff toward students, especially frontline staff. This scale pinpoints the areas of campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably.

The survey also gathers demographic information and allows for the inclusion of local questions to be added to the instrument.

The ASPS was administered to 172 students during class time in randomly selected graduate courses that had a preponderance (66%) of students over 25 years of age. Of these, 166 completed the survey, for a return rate of 97%.

Results

What do AU adult students consider most important in their college experience?

The ranking of the scales from most important to least important, with the ratings in parentheses, follows:

1. Academic Advising (6.46)
2. Instructional Effectiveness (6.44)
3. Registration Effectiveness (6.38)
4. Campus Climate (6.33)
5. Safety and Security (6.27)
6. Service Excellence (6.24)
7. Admissions & Financial Aid (6.19)
8. Academic Services (6.02)

Which areas receive the highest satisfaction ratings from adult students?

The ranking of the scales from most satisfied to least satisfied, with the ratings in parentheses, follows:

1. Instructional Effectiveness (5.28)
2. Academic Advising (5.10)
3. Campus Climate (5.02)
4. Registration Effectiveness (4.95)
5. Admissions & Financial Aid (4.91)
6. Academic Services (4.83)
7. Service Excellence (4.63)
8. Safety and Security (4.26)

How well are we meeting our adult students' expectations (gap scores)?

The ranking of the scales from largest gap to smallest gap, with the gap scores in parentheses, appear below:

1. Safety and Security (2.01)
2. Service Excellence (1.61)
3. Registration Effectiveness (1.43)
4. Academic Advising (1.36)
5. Campus Climate (1.31)
6. Admissions & Financial Aid (1.28)
7. Academic Services (1.19)
8. Instructional Effectiveness (1.16)

What is the relationship between the ranking of the scales and the three scores of importance, satisfaction, and gap?

The rank order correlations of the scales on each of the scores resulted in the following values:

- Importance-Satisfaction $r = .738$ ($p=.037$)
- Importance-Gap score $r = .048$ ($p=.911$)
- Satisfaction-Gap score $r = -.595$ ($p=.120$)

There was a statistically significant relationship between the scales on rankings of the importance and satisfaction ratings. This indicates that those scales that are more important also tend to receive higher rankings in satisfaction. Neither importance nor satisfaction rankings were related to how well the expectations (gap scores) were being met.

What are AU's strengths and challenges as identified by the ASPS?

Noel-Levitz defines institutional strengths as those **items** with ratings above the median in importance and in the upper quartile in satisfaction. Challenges are defined as those **items** with ratings above the median in importance and in the upper quartile of gap scores.

AU strengths 2005 (important/high satisfaction)

1. Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in their field.
2. The content of courses within my major is valuable.
3. Major requirements are clear and reasonable.
4. When students enroll at this institution, they develop a plan to complete their degree.
5. Faculty are usually available for adult students outside the classroom by phone, by e-mail or in-person.
6. My academic advisor is accessible by phone and e-mail.
7. Part-time faculty are competent as classroom instructors.
8. Faculty care about me as an individual.
9. My main motivation in returning to school relates to career advancement (LOCAL QUESTION).
10. Classroom locations are safe and secure for all students.
11. I am able to complete most of my enrollment tasks in one location.
12. The size of most of my classes is appropriate (LOCAL QUESTION).
13. The institution's proximity to my workplace and home is close (LOCAL QUESTION).

AU Challenges (important/low satisfaction).

1. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me
2. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
3. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
4. My academic advisor is available at times that are convenient for me.
5. I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information at this institution.
6. The amount of student parking is adequate.
7. I receive complete information on the availability of financial aid.
8. Adequate financial aid is available for most adult students.

Conclusions/Recommendations

In general, the scales that the adult student ranks as important are also ranked high in satisfaction. However, neither of these measures, importance or satisfaction, are related to how well the student's expectation (gap score) is being met. The gap scores of the scales on the ASPS are generally larger than the gap scores on the scales of the Student Satisfaction Inventory. This would support the conclusion that, the expectations of adult students at AU are not as well met as the traditional student's expectations. It may be beneficial to investigate further, why this may be the case and which areas of concern are involved.

Adult students value being able to attend AU because of its proximity to their homes and work and the competence, caring attitude, and availability of the

faculty. They also consider the accessibility of advisors a strength of the institution.

The institutional challenges identified include, the availability of financial aid, inadequate parking, and getting the “run-around” when seeking information.

Tuition costs, some advising concerns, and inconvenient scheduling of courses also should be addressed.