



CAMPUS QUALITY SURVEY SUMMARY

CSUSB was one of the three CSU campuses this year that participated in the Campus Quality Survey, previously known as Students Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS). The 30-minute online survey was administered during Spring 2012 term to 16,825 enrolled students, of which 1,304 (8%) participated. Chi-Square tests indicated that survey respondents were significantly different from the student population. More specifically, there were more female, more Caucasian, less Hispanic, less Freshmen, less Sophomores, more Seniors, and more Masters students that responded to the survey compared to the student population during Spring 2012 term. Thus, respondents were not representative of the student population in terms of gender, ethnicity, and class level.

The full report online shows results on all items from all respondents, by Underrepresented Minority (URM), Non-Underrepresented Minority (non-URM), Lower Division undergraduate, Upper Division undergraduate, and Graduate/PostBac students.

This document highlights important findings and discusses potential implications relevant to the campus community. Data from the SNAPS Survey administered in 1999 are also presented for comparison purposes.

Decision to Attend CSUSB

Eighty-one percent of students in 1999 and 68% of students today reported CSUSB to be their first and only choice, indicating a slight decrease in CSUSB being the top choice. Seventy-seven percent of Caucasian students, 66% of African American students, 61% of Hispanic students, and 56% of Asian students report that CSUSB was their first and only choice. Although Caucasian students top that list, they also had the lowest rate of third year retention.

The five most important factors that students reported to influence their decision to attend CSUSB are:

1. Availability of major 95%
2. I was admitted 93%
3. Costs were affordable for me and/or my family 92%
4. Academic reputation of the campus in my major 77%
5. Opportunity to obtain need-based financial aid 77%

Two of the above items (availability of majors, academic reputation of the campus in my major) highlight the importance of particular majors to students at CSUSB. Results suggest that featuring particular majors might be a powerful recruitment and marketing tool for new students.

Two of the other items pertain to cost and finances in obtaining a degree. Since cost and finances were important factors in choosing CSUSB, a recent reduction in financial aid puts a significant amount of CSUSB students at risk. This risk was already demonstrated when CSUSB lost close to 700 students during the Summer 2012 when an announcement of financial aid cuts was made.

Since being admitted was one of the top factors influencing student decisions to attend CSUSB, early admission decisions might also be beneficial as a strategy of attracting new students.

Learning Environment Factors

When students were asked to rate learning environment factors at CSUSB, the availability of

required courses and convenience of class scheduling emerged as needing improvement. Twenty-nine percent of students rated the availability of required courses as “Poor” or “Very Poor”, 45% for lower division and 29% for upper division undergraduates. Twenty-two percent of students rated convenience of class scheduling as “Poor” or “Very Poor”, 24% for lower division and 23% for upper division undergraduates.

Further analysis of “availability of required courses” by class level showed that Freshmen and Sophomores had more trouble finding required courses than Seniors. We also found that Nursing, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Liberal Studies, Sociology, Biology, Management, and Accounting & Finance majors had more trouble finding required courses than other majors. These majors are also among the most popular majors on campus. Further exploration of these factors especially with students may give us a more targeted approach to programmatic improvements that would enhance degree completion.

Research Competency

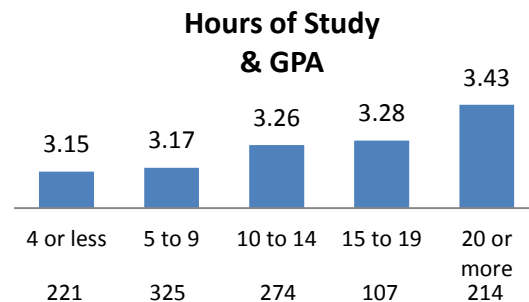
The need for improved research and presentation skills is salient in the results. Twenty-seven percent of students reported that they “Rarely” or “Never” formulated a topic or a research question, 43% of lower division, 25% upper division undergraduates, and 20% of Graduate/PostBac students. In preparing and delivering an oral presentation, 25% of students reported “Rarely” or “Never” having done it, 27% of lower division and 28% of upper division undergraduates.

For students who have performed these activities, one in four (25%) find it difficult or very difficult to formulate a topic or a research question and one in three (29%) find it difficult or very difficult to prepare and deliver an oral presentation. Also, it appears that lower division and upper division do not differ in the level of difficulty as we might expect which suggest a weakness in research competency in general and most particularly for undergraduates.

It may be important to reexamine key courses intended to impart these skills and reexamine when these courses are taken in their educational program. We might consider taking steps that would ensure that courses in the basic skills category of general education (written communication, oral communication, mathematics, and critical thinking) are taken as early as possible, ideally in the first year. One way this might be achieved would be to envision this category as an “inner core” serving as a basis for all other GE and university requirements.

Study Hours

On the average, students study about 11 hours per week, 10 hours for lower division, 12 hours for upper division, and 13 hours for Graduate/PostBac students. Further analysis show that a higher number of study hours correspond to higher grade point average.



Advising

When students were asked to rate the importance of academic advising services, the four most important services were:

1. Faculty in my major department 87%
2. Campus catalog/class schedule and other department/school publications 85%
3. Advising from my major department 84%
4. Fellow students 78%

While these were the most important to students, more than three quarters of the students also reported that they were pleased with the services. Eighty-three percent of the students rated faculty in my major department, 77% rated campus catalog/class schedule and other department/school publications, 78% rated

advising from my major department, and 70% rated fellow students as “Excellent” or “Good”.

Eighty-four percent of respondents agreed with the statement “I feel I know what requirements (e.g., courses, paperwork, tests) are needed and when I need to complete them in order to graduate from this university”. Further analysis using class level revealed significant differences between Freshmen and Seniors. More Freshmen (17%) seemed to disagree with the statement than Seniors (8%). While Freshmen undoubtedly experience some uncertainty regarding their future paths, the notion that Seniors might be uncertain in regards to graduation requirements is an issue that may need attention. Clearly, there is room for improvement with regard to students’ understanding of university requirements, particularly in their first two years. Students could also be encouraged to engage in advising and become more comfortable with the full array of requirements. Findings also highlight the importance of faculty, departments, and friends in understanding requirements.

Perceived Obstacles to Completion

Campus related factors (including course variety, availability of courses, instructors, advising, and support services) emerged as primary obstacles to completion for all students, followed by financial factors. This finding is consistent with “availability of required courses” as being “Poor” or “Very Poor” for 29% of students who rated learning environment factors. Additional examination of campus related factors would be beneficial. It seems that campus related factors perceived by students as obstacles are factors that our campus could improve and impacted by the allocation of resources to support students.

Further analysis with class level also showed differences between Freshmen and Seniors in academic and educational factors (such as lack of adequate preparation for college, lack of proper motivation, poor choice of major, etc.) as an obstacle. Freshmen tended to see academic and educational factors as more of an obstacle than Seniors. It is possible that programs like

Early Start which require early action on remediation may have a positive impact on perceived levels of academic preparation for college.

Finances and Employment

Students reported using a variety of financial aid packages to finance their education. Most students fund their education through grants (48%), student loans (47%), and family assistance (40%). When examined by ethnicity, 56% of Hispanic students rely more on grants, 58% of African American students and 49% of Caucasian students rely more on student loans, and 55% of Asian students rely more on family assistance. When this survey was administered in 1999, students then reported that they financed their education through family assistance (40%), part-time job (35%), and student loan (35%). It appears that financial aid packages have changed in the last 13 years with more reliance on financial aid today than in the past.

For students who currently work, 34% said they are employed and work off-campus, and another 29% said they are not employed and are looking for work. In 1999, 62% said they were employed and work off-campus, and 13% said they were not employed and were looking for work which suggest that more students were working and going to school simultaneously a decade ago. On the average, students are currently working 26 hours per week. Perhaps this reflects the change in our economy and the shortage of jobs in California in that students now rely less on employment and more on financial aid. On the other hand, more students today are eligible for a larger amount of Pell Grant than 13 years ago which could also explain the increased reliance on financial aid.

Campus Environment and Treatment

Approximately a quarter (22%-24%) of the students reported to have “occasionally” or “frequently” experienced or observed insensitive behavior in the classroom in terms of foreign nationality/country of origin, gender, age, language, political opinions, and race/ethnicity. Of those, over half (57%-63%) reported

that they “never” or “rarely” observed faculty efforts in reducing or eliminating such behavior.

Outside of the classroom, between 20%-23% reported to have “occasionally” or “frequently” experienced or observed insensitive behavior in terms of race/ethnicity, age, foreign nationality/country of origin, gender, language, and political opinions on campus. Over half (59%-67%) reported that they “never” or “rarely” observed campus efforts in reducing or eliminating such behavior. These results suggest that more efforts need to be made to address insensitive behavior throughout our campus.

Student Services and Facilities

When students were asked which student services were important in achieving their educational goals, the five most popular responses were:

1. Library services 88%
2. Parking 85%
3. Bookstore 85%
4. Financial aid services 84%
5. Computing services 73%

About three out of every four students reported being pleased with the quality of the library (83%), bookstore (73%), financial aid services (74%) and computing services (75%). However, only 58% of students indicated being pleased with parking.

In terms of facilities, 15% of the students reported being dissatisfied with dining facilities.

Skills and Abilities

According to students, CSUSB was effective in improving several skills and abilities, including:

1. Critical thinking and analytical reasoning 78%
2. Problem-solving skills 75%
3. Ability to evaluate information 74%
4. Motivation to be an independent learner 74%
5. Written communication 74%
6. Verbal communication 73%
7. Academic writing ability 71%
8. Ability to work in a team 69%

The two skills and abilities ranked lowest by students in terms of CSUSB’s effectiveness in helping them to improve were reading comprehension 67% and computer and information technology skills 63%. Moreover, decreases in CSUSB’s effectiveness were observed from lower division to upper division undergraduates in academic writing ability, reading comprehension, critical thinking, ability to work in a team, verbal and written communication.

Satisfaction with CSUSB

When asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with particular statements, 87% of the students agreed that “This university is equally supportive of all genders,” followed by 84% of students who agreed with the statement “I am proud of my accomplishments at this university.” It is interesting to note that these two statements that received the highest ratings in 2012 were the same top two statements in 1999, at 78% and 76% respectively.

When we examined the basis of admission for survey respondents, it appeared that those students who entered as upper division transfer and Graduate/PostBac students reported being more proud of their accomplishments than those who entered as First Time Freshmen. Also, more students who entered as upper division transfers reported that CSUSB was a good fit for them than those who entered as First Time Freshmen.

Summary

- Students decided to attend CSUSB because of a major they were interested in, because they were admitted, because of CSUSB's affordability, because of the academic reputation of the major, and because of financial aid. It was suggested to showcase particular majors as a recruitment and marketing tool for new students. Also, early admission decision might be beneficial in attracting new students. A reduction of financial aid puts a significant amount of students at risk for completing their degree.

- Learning environment factors such as the availability of required courses and convenience of class scheduling emerged as needing improvement. Further exploration of these factors especially with students may give us a more targeted approach to programmatic improvements that would enhance degree completion.
- Weaknesses in research competency were found particularly in undergraduates. It is suggested that key courses intended to impart these skills and when these courses are taken are reexamined.
- Students find faculty in their major, campus catalog and materials, departmental advising, and fellow students as important in getting advising services and students appear to be generally pleased with them. More can be done especially in advising during the first two years.
- Campus related factors and financial factors were found to be obstacles in degree completion. These factors can also be greatly improved through support of students in terms of course availability, advising, and the like.
- Some students experienced insensitive behavior in the classroom and around campus. Students also perceived that there was very little effort in mitigating such behavior. More efforts are needed to address insensitive behavior on campus.
- Students seemed pleased with the library services, bookstore, financial aid services, and computing services, except parking. Dining facilities also received low satisfaction rates.
- CSUSB seemed effective in several skills and abilities with the exception of reading comprehension and computer and information technology skills.

By: Muriel C. Lopez-Wagner

August 2, 2012

CSUSB Office of Institutional Research

With assistance from Qiana Wallace (Retention Specialist), Kimberly Keller Clarke (Retention Specialist), and Lisa McElvaney (Institutional Effectiveness Associate).