RUFFALO℠
NOEL LEVITZ

Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys
Interpretive Guide

Contents

Introduction

This General Interpretive Guide provides you with an overview of how to review and use the results from your administration of any of the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys. This guide walks you through reviewing each segment of the report and provides you with guidance on utilizing the results for data-informed decision making. Recommendations based on Ruffalo Noel Levitz's experience working with hundreds of institutions are included to assist you with making the most effective use of your results.

Separate addendums, specific to the unique survey instruments are also available to download from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz website. These addendums provide you with details on the versions of the survey, the item structure, the description of the scales, reliability and validity, background on the inventory's development, and any specific guidance relevant for interpreting that particular survey. The surveys which are included in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Satisfaction and Priorities Survey family are:

- Student Satisfaction Inventory™ (SSI) for traditional undergraduate students at four-year and two-year institutions;

- Institutional Priorities Survey™ (IPS) for campus personnel at four-year and two-year institutions. This survey is directly parallel to the SSI;

- Adult Student Priorities Survey™ (ASPS) for students 25 years of age and older, primarily at four-year institutions; the survey is appropriate for undergraduate and graduate level students;

- Adult Learner Inventory™ (ALI) for students at four-year and two-year adult-learning focused institutions; this survey was developed in cooperation with CAEL (the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning);

- Priorities Survey for Online Learners™ (PSOL) for students in online distance learning programs; and

- Parent Satisfaction Inventory™ (PSI) for parents of currently enrolled students at four-year colleges and universities.

If you have questions at any time while you are reviewing your results, please do not hesitate to contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz at 800-876-1117 or ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com.

Instructions for Using This Guide

We realize that this is a large document, however it includes a lot of valuable information for guiding you through using your results.

- At a minimum, we recommend that you review pages 7 – 19 to understand the segments included in your basic report and the definitions for the calculations.

- Pages 5 and 6 provide general introductory information about the survey instruments.

- Pages 20 – 23 provide information about optional reporting components.

- Beginning on page 24 and running through page 30, there are recommendations for taking next steps with your data.

- Pages 31 and 32 provide additional information about Ruffalo Noel Levitz and how to contact us.

- The survey-specific addendums include information on unique approaches for analysis and special reports for the IPS and PSI and can be downloaded from here:
www.RuffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides.

General Knowledge Regarding Satisfaction Priorities Surveys

Satisfaction assessments are a key indicator of the current situation for the institution. The data from the assessments provides direction for the campus to make improvements in the areas that matter most to students.

The Ruffalo Noel Levitz family of Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys (including the Student Satisfaction Inventory, the Adult Student Priorities Survey, the Adult Learner Inventory, and the Priorities Survey for Online Learners) ask students to indicate both the level of importance they place on an item, as well as their level of satisfaction that the institution is meeting this expectation. The Ruffalo Noel Levitz Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS) asks faculty, administration, and staff to indicate the level of importance and the level of agreement that the institution is meeting the student expectation. The Parent Satisfaction Inventory (PSI) asks the parents of currently enrolled students about their levels of importance and satisfaction. The combination of importance/satisfaction or agreement data is very powerful, allowing institutions to review satisfaction levels within the context of what is most important.

The results provide a roadmap for next steps that the institution can and should take to respond to the issues that students, campus personnel, and parents have identified.

This Interpretive Guide provides guidance for reviewing your data results and suggestions on ways to utilize the data on campus. It begins with general guidelines for any of the student-based surveys from Ruffalo Noel Levitz that you are utilizing. Specific references and information for individual survey tools are located in the addendums which can be downloaded from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz website. The guide primarily focuses on interpreting your results for student assessments. Additional direction on using the results from an assessment of your faculty, administration, and staff is provided in the addendum specific to the IPS, and likewise for the parents in the PSI addendum.

As you review your results, it is important to keep in mind how you will share the results on campus. The greatest power of the data comes when the findings are shared, discussed, and analyzed by multiple constituencies on campus. Data left on a shelf has no power; data actively used and discussed provides the opportunity to initiate significant change on campus. Populations to consider sharing the results with include:

- President and campus leadership;
- Board of trustees;
- Deans, directors, and other top administrators;
- Student life personnel;
- Admissions and financial aid personnel;
- Faculty;
- Staff, especially those with face-to-face interaction with students;
- Student government leadership;
- General student population;
- Parents of students;
- Alumni; and
- Local community.

Reliability and validity:

The reliability and validity of the survey tools from Ruffalo Noel Levitz are very strong. Refer to the survey specific guide found in the addendums for additional details.

Why is satisfaction surveying important?

Studies have shown that student satisfaction is linked to key institutional metrics including higher student retention at both four-year and two-year institutions, higher institutional graduation rates, higher alumni giving at the institutional level and at some institution types, lower loan default. If you would like to learn more about these links, visit www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark or contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

General guidelines for reviewing your results

Reviewing the Scale Report and Item Report data

The results include a Scale Report and an Item Report. When reviewing scale or item data, the results are read as follows from left to right:

- The scale name or item text;

- The average importance score for your students;

- The average satisfaction score for your students, followed by the standard deviation (SD);

- The performance gap for your students;

- The average importance score for the comparison group;

- The average satisfaction score for the comparison group, followed by the standard deviation (SD);

- The performance gap for the comparison group; and

- The difference in satisfaction between your students and the comparison group, with the statistical significance reflected with asterisks.

Note that the typical report set up is with your institution's data in the first set of columns and the national comparison group data in the second set of columns.

Comparing With the National Comparison Group

The standard campus report provides you with the results for your institution along with the appropriate national comparison group. The national comparison group includes three academic years of data for students who completed the same survey version and/or are at the same type of institution. For details on the number of student records and a listing of the schools included in your comparison group, please refer to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Client Resource website. The national comparison groups are typically updated at the end of the academic year during the month of June, and remain in place for the following academic year.

For some survey types, regional comparisons, specialized comparisons with specifically requested institutions, and nationally segmented data by particular demographic variables are available. In addition, if your institution administered the survey as part of a statewide or corporate administration project, data comparing your results with the participating group as a whole are often available. Please contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz for details.

While it is important to compare your institution-specific results to the appropriate national comparison group, we caution you from focusing on this comparison alone. You will want to be aware of how your students' satisfaction scores match up to the selected comparison group, but this comparison alone does not tell the full story. Students at large institutions or at urban institutions may reflect lower satisfaction scores across the board than students in the comparison group. Trends also indicate that students at eastern institutions tend to have generally lower satisfaction scores than students in other parts of the U.S. If your institution has a larger percentage of a certain demographic groups, such as gender, ethnicity/race, institutional choice, current residence, etc., it may affect how you compare to the national data set. For additional guidance, please refer to the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Client Resource website or contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

Definitions and Calculations

Calculating the Average Scores

Means for importance and satisfaction for **individual items** are calculated by summing the respondents' ratings (for those that responded to that specific item) and dividing by the number of respondents. The item calculation is based on the number of respondents to that item (not the total data set) and is unique for the responses to the importance segment and the satisfaction segment. Only the responses of 1-7 are included; zero responses (for not applicable/not used) and blanks are not included when creating the average score.

Each **scale mean** is calculated by summing each respondent's item ratings to get a scale score, dividing by the number of respondents, adding all respondents' scale scores, and dividing the sum of the scale scores by the number of respondents. Note that the scale score is not the average of the averages.

Students respond to each item on a 1 to 7 Lickert scale, with 7 being high. Averages for importance are typically in the range of 5 to 6 and average satisfaction scores are typically in a range of 4 to 5.

Definition of Performance Gap

A performance gap is simply the importance score minus 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. The smaller the performance gap, the better the institution is doing at meeting student expectations. Note that typical performance gaps vary based on the type of institution and the population surveyed. Refer to the section on the Strategic Planning Overview list of challenges to identify the performance gaps which should capture your immediate attention.

Definition of Standard Deviation

The standard deviation (or SD) appears in the satisfaction score columns. This represents the variability in the satisfaction scores. The larger the standard deviation, the greater the variability in the responses (with some students being very satisfied and some students being very dissatisfied). The smaller the standard deviation, the less variability in the responses. Though generally it is not a number to focus on, it is important to be aware if there is a great variance in the experience of your students in a particular area. If a large standard deviation occurs for a particular item, you may want to review the data by target group demographic segments to identify which student groups are having different experiences.

Definition of Mean Difference

The far right hand column shows the difference between your institution's satisfaction means and the comparison group means. If the mean difference is a POSITIVE number, then your students are MORE satisfied than the students in the comparison group. If the mean difference is a NEGATIVE number, your students are LESS satisfied than the students in the comparison group.

Definition of Statistical Significance

Statistical significance in the difference of the means is calculated when two groups are compared and a mean difference is reflected in the far right hand column. A twin-tailed t-test is used to determine significance. The level of significance is reflected by the number of asterisks which appear behind the mean difference number:

- No asterisks: No significant difference;
- One asterisk: Difference statistically significant at the .05 level;
- Two asterisks: Difference statistically significant at the .01 level; and
- Three asterisks: Difference statistically significant at the .001 level.

The greater the number of asterisks, the greater the confidence in the significance of this difference, and the greater the likelihood that this difference did not occur by chance. For example, statistical significance at the .05 level indicates that there are five chances in 100 that the difference between your institution's satisfaction score and the comparison group satisfaction score would occur due to chance alone. The .01 level indicates a one in 100 chance and the .001 level indicates a one in 1,000 chance. If there are no asterisks for a particular score, then the level of satisfaction is basically the same between your institution and the comparison group.

Items without Satisfaction or Importance

Some survey versions include items which measure only satisfaction or only importance. For a description, please refer to the addendum for the specific survey that you are utilizing.

Using the HTML version vs. the PDF version

Ruffalo Noel Levitz recommends that you conduct most of your analysis using the interactive HTML version of the report deliverable which includes segments that are not included in the PDF version. The PDF version is appropriate if you want to print the results to share with others on campus, but it is not recommended as your primary way to review the data results.

Copying the HTML version items into Excel

You can copy and paste the items and data from the HTML Item Report and Item Percentage Report into Excel. Start from the bottom right corner to select the text and then use "paste special" into Excel.

Standard Reports and Survey Data

The standard reports from Ruffalo Noel Levitz include the following report segments.

Demographic Report

The demographic section (the tab at the far right side of the report) is the first place to begin. This section shows you the demographic overview of the individuals you surveyed. The results of your survey reflect the perceptions of the group that you surveyed. It is important to know and to share on campus the demographic aspects of the students who were surveyed. This allows you to:

- Confirm that the surveyed population is representative of your selected student population.

- Compare the demographics of your population to the national sample (by referring to current demographic information posted on the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Client Resource website). Keep in mind that national trends indicate that a larger representation from certain population segments may influence how your satisfaction levels match up with the national comparison group. For more information on these trends, please refer to the Client Resource website.

- Key demographic areas that may influence satisfaction levels:
  - Gender;
  - Class Level; and
  - Institutional Choice.

- Consider isolating data specific to subpopulations, as identified in the demographic listing. These target group reports can help you to better understand the perceptions of segments of your overall population. It is important that identified subpopulations have a minimum of ten students to be viable for a target group report.

The demographic section presents the actual number of responses for each demographic segment, along with an indication of the percentage of that segment of the overall group of students surveyed. The number of students who did not respond to each item is also indicated. A gold burst indicates the response option that was selected by the majority of survey participants.

The demographic responses include both the standard items on the survey along with any campus-defined items. Major or department codes are represented with four-digit numeric group codes. The campus-defined demographic item with up to six optional responses is reflected as "Institutional Question." Some surveys offer more than one institutional demographic question. Consult your campus administrator for details on how these items were presented to students in order to understand the responses. Note that these campus-defined demographic items are not the responses to the items that are rated for importance and satisfaction, which appear later in the Item Report as "Campus Item One," etc.

All demographic items are available for target group analysis. Target group reports allow you to view the responses of selected demographic groups separate from the surveyed group as a whole. These reports can be requested from Ruffalo Noel Levitz for additional fees. (See the section on reviewing Target Group Reports for additional guidance.) If the institution prefers to analyze the demographic segments itself, the raw data is also available for additional fee. Contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz for details.

When you share the results on campus, be sure to begin by providing an overview of the demographics of your surveyed population. This helps to inform the campus that the survey is representative of your student body, as well as helps to ensure that your campus is fully informed on your student demographics. Cover items such as the percentage of students who are working while going to school, how many are commuting versus living on campus, and educational goals of students (especially at two-year institutions where you

will want to compare the percentage of students who plan to transfer to another institution with those who have a goal of an associate or technical degree).

Another demographic category to review on the SSI and ASPS reports is the "Institution Was My." On this item, students indicate their perception of your institution in their choice to enroll. Ideally, a majority of your students will indicate that you are their first-choice institution; students who are at their first-choice institution tend to feel more satisfied with their educational experience. If you have a large percentage of students who indicate that you are their second or third choice, you may have greater levels of dissatisfaction at your institution. You will want to work to become a first-choice institution in the minds of your currently enrolled students, as well as work with your enrollment management division to improve recruitment activities to position the institution as a first-choice institution.

This is an important perception to track over time, and also to compare with the national comparison group (the national data can be found on the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Client Resource website). One other note on this item: institutions in large urban areas, or in regional parts of the U.S. with high concentrations of college options, may find that they naturally have a larger percentage of second- and third-choice perceptions based on the number of options that are available to students relatively close by. Institutions in more remote locations may have inherently larger percentages of first-choice students.

Scale Report

The items on each of the surveys have been analyzed statistically and conceptually to produce scale scores. The scales provide the big picture overview of what matters to your students. They also provide the broadest view to identify how satisfied students are when comparing to the comparison group.

For a complete description of the scales in your survey tool, please refer to the survey-specific addendum.

To see the items which contribute to each scale when reviewing your reports, expand the view of the Scale Report page by selecting the scale, or with the "Expand/Toggle All" button. In the PDF reports, a section appears after the items in order of importance and before the items in sequential order which reflects the scales alphabetically, and the items within each scale in descending order of importance.

It is important to review and understand the scale scores to see the areas or categories that matter most to students. Typically categories related to instruction, advising, and course access matter most to students. The scale overview also allows you to see at a glance how you compare with the national comparison group. Share these scale scores with your campus constituencies to communicate important areas to students and how you compare nationally.

However, we recommend that when an institution determines specific initiatives to respond to the data, they use the individual item results as a guidance, rather than the scale scores. For example, a scale such as Safety and Security includes statements about how safe students feel on campus, as well as their perceptions of student parking. Students may be very satisfied with the overall feeling of security, but unhappy with parking. This mix of perceptions may not be clear when looking only at the scale score, but becomes more apparent when reviewing individual item scores.

Another approach is to use the scale results to distribute and share the survey findings on campus by scale segments. For example, you may want to share the Campus Life scale (and the items which make up the scale) with individuals in Student Affairs. Or share the items in the Recruitment and Financial Aid scale with the people in your Enrollment Management area. You will still want to have broad campus-based initiatives that respond to the overall strengths and challenges for the institution, but individual departments may want to work to improve their particular areas, and the items within the scale report can assist with this process.

In the HTML report, when the scales are expanded to reflect the items that contribute to each scale, a strength or challenge indicator appears on the left side of the report. A green star is for items that are

strengths and a red flag is for items that are challenges, as listed in your Strategic Planning Overview. This additional indicator allows for better tracking of the items identified as either strengths or challenges to your population as a whole.

Item Report

The item scores reflect your students' responses to individual items on the survey. Since the number of items on each survey type varies, please refer to the survey specific addendum for additional details. It is best to review the items in order of importance to see which items matter most to students. For direction on which items you are performing well in and which items have room for improvement, please refer to the Strategic Planning Overview section later in this document.

To review the item report, select the item listing to sort in sequential order, or by the importance column to see the scores in descending order of importance. You also have the option to select and sort on any of the other columns for additional analysis. In the PDF reports, the items appear in descending order of importance, as well as within the scales, and in sequential order.

The scores for any campus-defined items which were used by the institution appear in the Item Report. If you did a paper administration, the items are stated generically as "Campus Item One," etc. Please refer to your campus administrator for details on the text for these items. If you administered the survey online, the text for the campus-defined item is reflected as it appeared in the survey.

We encourage you to share the items in order of importance with your institution. You will want to review them as either strengths or challenges, which is done for you in the Strategic Planning Overview. In addition, a strength or challenge indicator appears on the left side of the Item Report in the HTML versions. A green star appears next to the items that are strengths and a red flag is next to items that are challenges, as listed in your Strategic Planning Overview. As mentioned in the Scale Report description, this additional indicator allows for better tracking of the items identified as either strengths or challenges to your population as a whole.

You may observe that most items have average importance scores of 6 or 5 on a 7-point scale. This indicates that most items have some level of importance to students. It seems to be human nature to indicate importance on the majority of items, however, some items are still relatively more important than others. These higher importance items are the top priority for institutions to focus on.

You may also observe that many items have average satisfaction scores of 5 or 4 on a 7-point scale. This reflects that most items have some level of satisfaction to students, but you are still performing relatively better in some areas than others. Your goal should be to continue to improve satisfaction in the areas that students care most about. This will be further discussed in the Strategic Planning Overview section later in this document.

Enrollment Factors/Information Sources

Items that indicate students' factors in their decision to enroll (and in some survey versions, information sources) are included in the item report. They appear at the end of the items in sequential order. These items only reflect an importance score and are not counted in your rankings for the strengths and challenges.

It is important to be aware of the motivational factors in students' decision to enroll at your institution. This information is useful for your recruitment and marketing staff when they are determining how to best position the institution.

It is also interesting to see how your students' factors to enroll compare with the comparison group. For information on the national enrollment factors by institution type, please refer to the current National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report on the Ruffalo Noel Levitz website.

One note: if financial aid is a primary factor in your students' decision to enroll, you may want to reexamine your financial aid policies. If financial aid is more important than your academic reputation, your students may not truly value the education you are providing to them, and they may not be satisfied with their experience. You also run the risk if students do not receive adequate financial aid for their second or third year as students, they may not feel compelled to stay at your institution.

Strategic Planning Overview

The Strategic Planning Overview provides a top-line executive summary of your results. This report identifies the areas that matter most to your students, where you are meeting their expectations, and where you have room for improvement. It also highlights how you compare with your comparison group.

The Strategic Planning Overview provides you with the best summary of your results for immediate action planning. This segment identifies the areas at your institution that you can celebrate and the areas that need attention. The overview identifies your top strengths and your top challenges.

Use the matrix below to conceptualize your results.
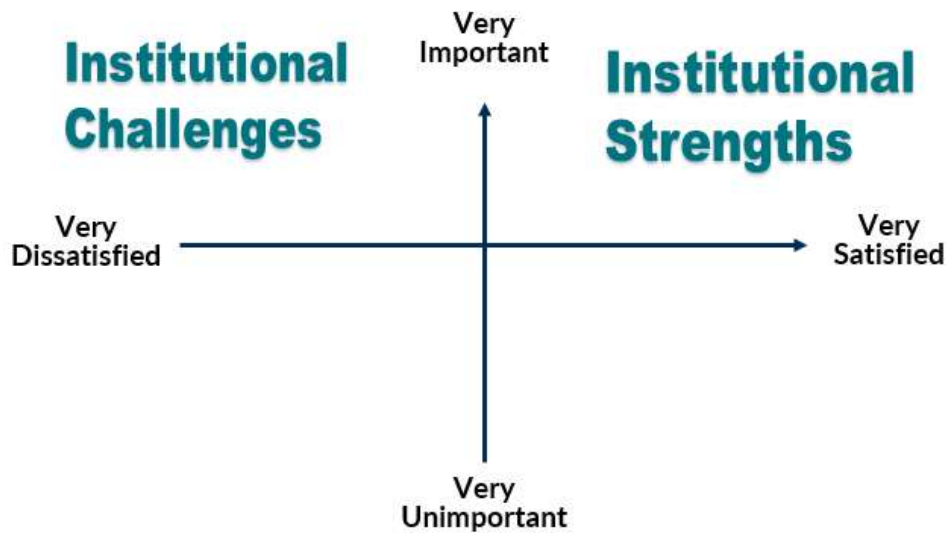
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Strengths

Strengths are items with high importance and high satisfaction. These are specifically identified as items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and in the upper quartile (25 percent) of your satisfaction scores. The strengths are listed in descending order of importance.

You can determine your cut-off scores in the item report of the HTML document by first sorting on the importance column and finding the mid-point in the ranking of your items; make a note of this importance score. Then, sort your document by the satisfaction column and find the top 25 percent of items in the rank order; make a note of this satisfaction score. Your strengths are identified as items at or above this importance score and at or above this satisfaction score. Note: only items that include both an importance score and a satisfaction score should be counted in your rankings. Campus items are included in the rankings. Example: An institution using the SSI community college Form A version with ten campus items would have 80 items total. The mid-point is the rank position of 40 and the upper quartile is the rank position of 20.

It should be noted that the strengths are determined on the ranking of the items based on their average

score and not their percentage score. The Item Percentage Report will be described later in this guide.

In the HTML reports, in addition to your strengths being listed in the Strategic Planning Overview, you will see a green star for the items of strength in the Item Report, the Scale Report and the Item Percentage Report, as well as in any Target Group Reports you have requested. This designation helps you to stay aware of your institutional strengths in all of the various reports.

Celebrate your strengths!

When you are sharing information on campus, always lead with the positive; inform the campus of your strengths and provide the appropriate positive feedback.

Identification of institutional strengths is a powerful component of the assessment process that should not be overlooked. Knowing and sharing institutional strengths can further deepen the excellent service being provided to students in these highly regarded areas.

Strengths should be communicated and celebrated. Everyone on campus should be aware of the areas that are highly valued by students, and where the institution is also performing well. An institution's strengths provide positive feedback to the campus constituencies on what is working effectively. There is also the potential to model the positive activities in one area of strength in order to emulate it in another area which may have less positive perceptions.

Institutional strengths also provide excellent guidance for areas to feature in promotional materials. If you are performing well in highly-valued areas, you will want to recruit students who value the same things; you also have a higher likelihood of satisfying new students in these areas since you are satisfying currently enrolled students. Strengths should be highlighted in view books, on the college website, in parent and alumni newsletters, and in other direct mail pieces to prospective students. Citing a nationally-normed satisfaction instrument provides credibility to the claims, and builds trust between the institution and the prospective students and their families.

You can also highlight strengths to the local and national media with press releases in order to build a more positive reputation within the community.

Institutions may want to further highlight those areas that are unique strengths to their particular institution, as compared with the national data, or by their type of institution. These unique strengths help to distinguish you from the competition.

For details on the strengths specific to institution type, please refer to the appropriate institution-specific sections in the current Ruffalo Noel Levitz National Satisfaction and Priorities Report. You can find current national reports here: www.RuffaloNL.com/Benchmark.

Challenges

Challenges are items with high importance and low satisfaction or a large performance gap. These are specifically identified as items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and in the lower quartile (25 percent) of your satisfaction scores **or** items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and in the top quartile (25 percent) of your performance gap scores. The performance gap score is likely the reason the item has been identified as a challenge. The challenges are listed in descending order of importance.

Again, you can determine your cut-off scores in the item report of the HTML document by first referring to the importance score you identified for your strengths. Now sort by the satisfaction column, with the lowest satisfaction scores at the top to identify the bottom 25 percent of your scores and make a note of this number. Sort your report again by the performance gap column with the largest gaps at the top and note the top 25 percent of items in the rank order for the performance gap. Your challenges are identified as the items at or above the importance score and at or below the satisfaction score **or** as the items at or above

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the importance score and at or above the performance gap score. Again, count only the items with both an importance score and a satisfaction score. See the details under the strengths segment in this document for more information on identifying these cut-off scores.

Note that the challenges are determined on the ranking of the items based on their average score and not their percentage score. The Item Percentage Report will be described later in this guide.

In the HTML reports, in addition to your challenges being listed in the Strategic Planning Overview, you will see a red flag for the items of challenge in the Item Report, the Scale Report and the Item Percentage Report, as well as in any Target Group Reports you have requested. This designation helps you to stay aware of your institutional challenges in all of the various reports.

Respond to your challenges!

Most institutions conduct student satisfaction assessment in order to identify areas for campus improvement. These improvement priorities are highlighted in the list of challenges. Challenges are the areas that student's care the most about, which they also feel can be further improved upon by the campus. These areas need to be discussed, explored, prioritized, and responded to. If you ignore these areas, you run the risk of increasing student dissatisfaction and ultimately impacting the retention of your students.

Involving students and the appropriate campus personnel in discussions about these challenges is a critical step. Focus group discussions can enlighten all involved regarding the current processes and procedures and the overall perceptions of the students. The topics for discussion should be the items that are in the top challenges identified by students. Key questions for focus groups include:

- What does this item mean to you?
- What have you specifically experienced?
- What do you suggest to improve the situation?

The feedback in these discussion groups can provide the direction that the institution needs in order to improve the situation. Campus leadership should be careful not to assume they know what students mean on each particular issue from the data alone. Focus group discussions guided by satisfaction assessment data can provide powerful insights. The institution can have confidence that they are discussing the areas that matter most to the majority of the students, while having the focus groups address specific issues, as opposed to becoming general gripe sessions.

College and universities can approach responses to their challenges in three primary ways:

1. Changing perceptions through information and communication.
2. Implementing easy and quick actions that resolve the issues.
3. Planning for long-term, strategic adjustments in the delivery of the service.

With responses two and three, it is still important to incorporate communication into the responses so that students are appropriately informed of any immediate resolution, or can be made aware of the issues that require more time and resources.

Actively reviewing and discussing the challenges widely on campus is critical to taking the next steps toward positive change. For suggestions on possible ways to respond to top challenges, contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz for a discussion 1-800-876-1117 or visit the Ruffalo Noel Levitz website www.RuffaloNL.com. Short tutorials on conducting focus groups and taking action with the data can also be found here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials.

Items Appearing as Both a Strength and a Challenge

Occasionally, one or two items may appear on both your strengths list and your challenges list. This occurs when an item has very high importance, relatively high satisfaction as well as a fairly large performance gap. The satisfaction score may qualify it as a strength, while the performance gap qualifies it as a challenge. In these circumstances, we recommend you disregard it as a strength, and stay focused on it as a challenge, since students care so much about it and feel that there is still room for improvement. You may also want to further investigate the item with target group reports since different subpopulations may have different experiences with the item. Note that these items will only reflect a red flag in the performance column.

Benchmarking with the Comparison Group

The Strategic Planning Overview also summarizes how your results compare with the comparison group by listing items with higher satisfaction, lower satisfaction, and higher importance under the section titled "Benchmarks". This provides you with a quick overview to see how your students' perceptions compare nationally. This list only includes items in the top half of importance.

In the HTML reports, there is an indicator on the right side of the strengths and challenges, in a column labeled "vs. Comparison." These indicators allow you to easily see if the item is significantly higher in satisfaction (reflected with a green plus sign for significantly greater) or if the item is significantly lower in satisfaction (shown with a red minus sign for significantly less) as compared with your comparison group.

Keep in mind that your students may be relatively more satisfied when compared with the national group on an item that still may be a challenge for you, as well as significantly less satisfied on an item that may be a strength for you. Be aware of this, but still use your particular strengths and challenges to determine how you respond to this item at your institution.

Item Percentage Report

This report provides an additional way to review your results. The percentage responses may be better understood on your campus than the average scores reported in the other segments of the results. This reports provides a look at the percentage of responses that indicated an answer of 6 or 7 to the items on the survey: 6 is considered "important" or "satisfied" and 7 is considered "very important" or "very satisfied." The gap percentage equals the importance percentage minus the satisfaction percentage. The difference column provides the difference between the first column satisfaction percentage and the second column percentage for each item. You may sort on any of the columns, as described previously.

Indicators are included in this report with a green star for items that are strengths or a red flag for items that are challenges as originally identified in the Strategic Planning Overview. Keep in mind that the Strategic Planning Overview definition of strengths and challenges is based on the average score for the items, as reported in the Item Report. The Item Percentage Report may reflect a different order of importance or satisfaction for items.

The data in this section allow you to say things like, "96 percent of students said that the institution having a good reputation was important or very important to them and 92 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with this item." Ruffalo Noel Levitz recommends that you still use the identification of the institutional strengths and challenges as your primary guide for items to celebrate or improve, but the item percentage scores provide you with a way to communicate the data in a manner that may be more readily understood by the broader campus population.

The data for the enrollment factor items and sources of information are also best communicated with the percentage scores since these can be readily understood without additional context.

Summary Items

Typically, three summary items appear in this section of the report. Students respond to these questions with a 1 to 7 value:

So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?
1 - Much worse than I expected
2 - Quite a bit worse than I expected
3 - Worse than I expected
4 - About what I expected
5 - Better than I expected
6 - Quite a bit better than I expected
7 - Much better than I expected

Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.
1 - Not satisfied at all
2 - Not very satisfied
3 - Somewhat dissatisfied
4 - Neutral
5 - Somewhat satisfied
6 - Satisfied
7 - Very satisfied

All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?
1 - Definitely not
2 - Probably not
3 - Maybe not
4 - I don't know
5 - Maybe yes
6 - Probably yes
7 – Definitely yes

The number and text of the items vary slightly by survey version. Please refer to the survey specific addendum for details.

The summary report presents the average scores and the percentage of students who responded to each of the possible responses. This summary provides a good bottom line overview of how your students feel about their experience. We recommend identifying the combined percentages of responses to "6" (satisfied) and "7" (very satisfied) on the overall satisfaction item, and the combination of "6" (probably yes) and "7" (definitely yes) to the question of if you had to do over again, would you enroll here. Compare these percentages to the national percentages in your main report and for internal trends in the year-to-year reports. You can also compare percentages across demographic groups.

You may noticed that the percentages do not equal 100 percent. This is because the decimal points are truncated rather than rounded.

This summary can be valuable to review and monitor, but the primary way to change student perceptions is to actively work on responding to your identified challenges and by widely promoting your strengths.

While these summary items do not provide specific direction on what needs to be changed, they do have strong correlations to institutional success and retention rates. Nationally, institutions with higher scores on these three items also experience higher graduation rates, lower loan default rates, and higher alumni giving. The studies which document these links can be found here: www.RuffaloNL.com/Benchmark.

Standard deliverables with online administrations

Open-Ended Comments

For institutions with online administrations, the open-ended comments requested at the end of the survey provide a starting place to better understand what the individuals completing the survey are thinking. These open-ended comments are delivered as a separate Excel file with the text of the statements, verbatim, as they were provided in response to the statement: "Please enter any comments you would like to share with this institution." No individual identifiers are provided with the comments.

After you have reviewed the quantitative responses in your reports, we recommend that you read through the open-ended comments to better understand the perceptions on your campus. Keep in mind that these comments are individual opinions. We encourage you to consider these comments within the context that they are shared.

The open-ended comments may be considered precursors to conducting focus groups and may point you in the right direction for next steps. The comments can also provide helpful suggestions of quick "just do it" fixes and other longer-term ideas that might require more resources and planning. The comments can provide insights into problem areas that may need further investigation.

It may be important to highlight any suggestions that are implemented that came from the individual comments, to show that the survey results were used and helpful.

Recommendation Score

For institutions with online administrations, a recommendation score is requested at the end of the survey. The survey responses to this item are included in an Excel file in the zipped folder with the other survey results delivered by Ruffalo Noel Levitz. This survey item appears as follows:

How likely is it that you would recommend our institution to a friend or colleague?

    0 - Not at all likely
    1
    2
    3
    4
    5 - Neutral
    6
    7
    8
    9
    10 - Extremely likely

This item can be used to gauge the students' loyalty to your institution, similar to how customer loyalty may be identified. When reviewing the scores for this item, you may want to follow the recommendation for calculating net promoter score type items. General recommendations are to identify individuals who respond with a score of 9 or 10 as one set of responses. They are the individuals who are most likely to make positive referrals to your institution. Individuals who respond with a 7 or 8 are a second set of responses while individuals with a score of 0 to 6 are the third set. To determine your recommendation score, you can subtract the percentage of individuals who are in the third set (0-6) from the percentage of individuals who are first set (9 and 10). The second set of responses (7 and 8) should be counted in the total number of respondents.

An example of this recommended calculation is as follows:

> 100 total responses
>
> 70 of the responses were a 9 or 10 = 70%
>
> 20 of the responses were a 7 or 8 = 20%
>
> 10 of the responses were 0 through 6 = 10%.

Calculate your recommendation score by subtracting 10% from 70% to equal a score of 60. A score of 50 or better is your target based on the general guidelines.

National guidelines (i.e. national norms) on recommendation scores from the Satisfaction and Priorities Survey instruments for different types of institutions and different national data sets have not been calculated. This activity will be considered following the 2017-18 academic year when additional data points have been gathered in this area.

This item is provided as an additional point of reference to understand the experience of the individuals you are surveying. It offers another perspective on how they feel about your institution. It is not recommended to focus solely on this item but to consider the responses along with the Summary Scores and identified strengths and challenges as you determine how to make improvements at your institution.

Additional Reporting Options

Target Group Reports

Optional Target Group Reports, if requested by your institution, appear in either a multi-column Comparative Summary Analyses format or a two-column Single Group Analysis format. These targeted reports isolate student responses based on requested demographic variables. Generally the results are isolated for just one demographic variable at a time, but it is also possible to combine multiple variables into one data set. The Comparative Summary Analysis provides an opportunity for internal comparisons; the Single Group Analysis provides the opportunity for external demographic comparisons. Target Group Reports can be ordered at any time, before or after your initial results are delivered.

Comparative Summary Analyses

These reports are presented in a multiple column format with a column for the institution results as a whole and up to four columns of target group data sets. The scale scores, item scores, summary item scores, and item percentage scores are included in the report. A Strategic Planning Overview and Demographic Report are not included with the Comparative Summary Analyses.

Comparative Summary Analyses are valuable when comparing student experiences across demographic variables. By reviewing these reports, you can determine how you are performing based on the experiences of subpopulations. If a performance gap is smaller for a particular item for one group, you are doing a better job at meeting the student expectations of this group. If the performance gap is larger, you have room for improvement on this item for this demographic group. It is especially helpful to track your top challenges across target groups to see where an item is more or less of an issue. In the HTML reports, the addition of the performance indicator of a green star for items that are strengths and a red flag for items that are challenges for the institutional data set as a whole will assist you with this review across subpopulations.

Key groups to review include class level, gender, ethnicity/race, and major or departments (if defined by the institution). Targeted responses can be identified for these groups in order to improve the student experience. Other target groups may also be valuable. For suggestions or direction on appropriate groups to review, please contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz.

Single Group Reports

These reports allow you to compare a single demographic group to the same demographic group nationally. For example, you can look at the perceptions of Hispanic students at your institution compared with Hispanic students at your type of institution nationally. These reports are two-column reports, and the guidelines provided previously for reviewing your general campus report apply. The demographic report for the Single Group Report will be for the requested demographic target group at your institution. A Strategic Planning Overview is included.

This external comparison perspective is most helpful when you have a dominant demographic group that is different from the dominant group in the national comparison group, or if you focused on surveying just one segment of your student population (example: first-year students) because it will provide you with the appropriate corresponding national comparison group for that same demographic variable.

Custom Reports

Custom Reports can be created as either Comparative Summary Analysis or the Single Group Analysis. The selected target groups can be cross-tabulated (freshman females vs. freshman males) or multiple variables (all students of color compared with Caucasian students). Contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz for more information.

Year-to-Year Reports

To get the most value from student satisfaction studies, we recommend that you compare your students' perceptions over time. Annual or every other year surveying allows you to provide systematic feedback to your internal and external constituents on the effectiveness of all campus programs and services. You will have the information needed to assess the effectiveness of your special initiatives and to determine priorities for current student populations.

Year-to-Year Reports allow for easy comparison between the current survey administration and a previous survey administration. You may select from any two administrations. Please note that we are not able to prepare Year-to-Year Reports with more than two data sets at a time, but you may request more than one report to compare over multiple years (example: Fall 2017 vs. Fall 2016; Fall 2017 vs. Fall 2015; Fall 2017 vs. Fall 2014, etc.)

The format for the Year-to-Year Report is similar to the Main Campus Report. Note that in the report files, two Demographic Reports are included, one report for each year. The structure of the Scale Report and the Item Report are the same as they appear in the Main Campus Report, but instead of comparing the data set to the national comparison group, the second column of data is the institution's requested previous administration data set.

The emphasis in reviewing the Year-to-Year Reports should be on the difference column. This allows you to identify where there have been significant improvements in satisfaction over time, as well as to identify where satisfaction levels may be slipping in critical areas. (Refer to the description of mean difference and statistical significance in the "General guidelines for reviewing your results" segment of this Interpretive Guide for additional information.)

Celebrate where satisfaction levels have improved and be sure to discuss where satisfaction levels may be decreasing. Ideally, you will see satisfaction improvements in those areas where you have focused time and resources. In those areas with decreases in satisfaction, you may need to invest additional efforts to turn the tide.

Note that a Strategic Planning Overview is included with the Year-to-Year Reports. The list of strengths and challenges will be the same as they appear in the Main Campus Report for the same administration data set. The trends section will highlight where satisfaction and importance levels have changed over time. Use this report as an opportunity to compare how particular items may have shifted on and off your lists of strengths and challenges from one year to the next. Have you been able to move a challenge to a strength? Have your students identified new priorities for celebration or attention? Are there items that remain on your list of challenges which will require additional attention? You may have improved satisfaction on a particular item, but it may still remain on your list of challenges. You will want to continue to look for opportunities for improvement.

In the HTML reports, the performance indicators of a green star for items that are strengths and a red flag for items that are challenges for the current year's institutional data set are reflected in your Scale Report, Item Report and Item Percentage Report. In addition, the indicators on the Strategic Planning Overview "vs. Comparison" column show a green plus sign for significantly greater satisfaction versus the comparison year or a red minus sign for significantly lower satisfaction versus the previous year.

Raw Data

The raw data from the survey results are available and allow you to conduct your own in-depth analysis of the results. The raw data includes all of the individual responses to each survey item as well as all of the demographic responses. The raw data file is also the one place that provides the individual record identifier (i.e. student ID, or unique passcode from the web administration). If needed, this field can be matched back to the file loaded into the SPS web administration site, using the passcode for the crosswalk. This will allow you to append the file with institutionally-captured variables (typically demographic) for additional analysis.

The raw data is delivered electronically as part of your Zip file. The raw data includes text files with the data in both a fixed width format and a tab delimited format. Also included are a Word document with the file format reference, SPSS syntax, and an Excel file with the header for the tab delimited data. The data can be loaded into Excel or SPSS to conduct the analysis.

Additional documentation on using the data is found in your raw data file. This includes how to transfer your data from the .txt files into Excel and calculating your averages. Refer to the document found with your raw data for additional detail, but we have included here are few important notes for calculating results with the raw data files:

Calculating Items

There are three types of data: data within 1-7, data that is zero, and data that is missing. Ruffalo Noel Levitz calculate averages based only on the first group. In other words, we do not count zero as a valid response. Zeros should be treated as blanks or invalid responses, and are not used to calculate averages. The averages for the importance score are calculated separately (based on just the number of responses of importance) from the satisfaction score (which is based on the number of responses of satisfaction). The performance gap is the importance average minus the satisfaction average.

Important: Averages are calculated excluding any blanks, N/A and asterisks. Importance and satisfaction is calculated independently of each other.

Calculating Scales

All valid responses to items within the scale, divided by the number of responses, equals the scale score. It is NOT the average of the averages. The importance and satisfaction scores are calculated separately.

Example for calculating the importance score for a scale:
      55 responses to item one
      110 responses to item two
      80 responses to item three
      105 responses to item four
If the 350 responses equals 2290, divided by 350 = 6.54 importance score

Example for calculating the satisfaction score for a scale:
      50 responses to item one
      100 responses to item two
      75 responses to item three
      100 responses to item four
If the 325 responses equals 1740, divided by 325 = 5.35 satisfaction score

Calculating Scale Performance Gap

The performance gap is NOT the average of the performance gaps. It is the importance scale score minus the satisfaction scale score.

Reviewing the Data in Excel

The easiest way to open the file in Excel is to:

1. Save the file to your desktop

2. Open your Excel

3. Go to File – Open

4. Find the file on your desktop (you might need to change the file format to 'All Files"

5. Select the File and Select Open

Excel will guide you through the transfer from .TXT to Excel from here.

General Direction on Using the Raw Data

Institutions often work with the Institutional Research office to conduct the additional analysis. The raw data makes it possible for an institution to do its own target group analysis, to do additional cross-tabbing, or to append the data up with additional information from campus records.

Please keep in mind that Ruffalo Noel Levitz does not recommend analysis of the data on an individual basis, nor should you use the responses to the survey for any individual follow-up with a person who indicates low satisfaction. The Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys are designed for analysis on an aggregate or subpopulation basis, and not individually. You are expected to keep individual responses confidential.

Please contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz if you need technical support with the raw data.

Next steps

Consider these next steps to enhance the use of your data:

▪ Review the survey specific addendum for the survey your institution used. Download the appropriate addendum from here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides.

▪ Take time to watch the series of short tutorials (7 to 10 minutes in length) on topics such as reviewing your results and using the data on campus, found here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials.

▪ Request a **free** phone consultation to review your data with an experienced Ruffalo Noel Levitz consultant. (**This step is highly recommended**!) This conversation can be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and can be one-on-one or include a group of individuals on your end. The conversations are typically one hour in length and will provide you with guidance on reviewing your reports and will include brainstorming on next steps for your campus.

▪ Invite a retention consultant to your campus to assist you with turning the data into action

▪ Visit www.RuffaloNL.com to learn more about the additional services available from Ruffalo Noel Levitz to support your recruitment, retention and alumni services.

Systematic Assessment Cycle

Assessing student satisfaction can be approached as a five-step cycle of activities:

1. Survey your students.
2. Review and share the results.
3. Explore the data.
4. Respond to the data with new initiatives.
5. Inform the campus.

More details on how to approach each of these steps can be found in the short tutorials located here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials.

Systematic Assessment Cycle
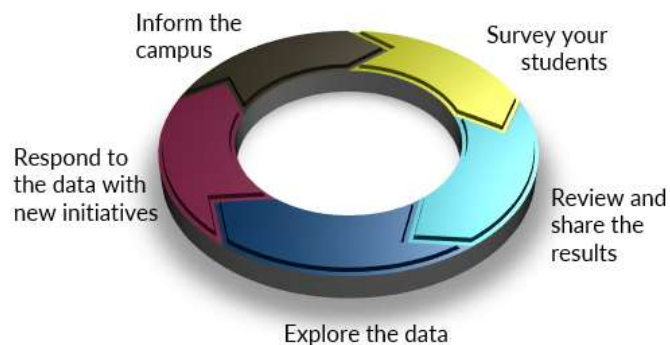
Review and Share the Results on Campus

Communicating the results from your survey is critical to making changes at your institution. We encourage you to develop your own presentation and summary of the results to help highlight key results. You will need to use your best judgment regarding how much of the results (depth and breadth) to share at your institution, depending on the audience. You may want to consider the following outline for developing your own presentation or summary:

- Why your institution is assessing student satisfaction.

- When the survey was conducted; how it was administered; the response rate.

- An overview with percentages of the students included in the results (from the Demographic Report).

- The scales in order of importance (from the Scale Report). We suggest that you do NOT include any numbers with this list. The importance scores, satisfaction scores, and performance gap scores themselves are not critical; what they tell you about your students' priorities is important. Simply list the scales in descending order of importance.

- Before sharing your strengths and challenges, share how Ruffalo Noel Levitz defines these categories. A visual of the Matrix for Prioritizing Action is also helpful and is available at the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Client Resource website.

- Lead with your strengths. List the items in descending order of importance, without any number scores, just as they appear in the Strategic Planning Overview.

- Then share the challenges. Again, list them in descending order of importance, without number scores, as they appear in the Strategic Planning Overview.

- Compare your results with the national comparison group. Point out that this is not the focus of your analysis, but it is important to not operate in a vacuum, so you need to know how relatively satisfied your students are. Refer to the Strategic Planning Overview Benchmark Section to list where your students are significantly more satisfied than the national group as well as where they may be significantly less satisfied. Remember that your students may be relatively more satisfied when compared with the national group on an item that still may be a challenge for you, as well as significantly less satisfied on an item that may be a strength for you. Be aware of this, but still use your particular strengths and challenges to determine how you respond to this item at your institution.

- If you have results from multiple years, share these. Identify where satisfaction levels have improved (and identify the specific initiatives that may have contributed to satisfaction level improvements). Also identify where satisfaction levels have declined and add these to your list of items which should be further explored.

- Share the percentage responses for your items of strength and challenge to help the campus community understand importance and satisfaction levels. These percentages can help to emphasize and enhance your audience's understanding of the data points.

- Highlight the importance percentages for enrollment factors so your campus constituencies understand why your students are choosing to attend your institution. For example, a high importance percentage for financial aid as an enrollment factor may provide additional context for understanding why financial aid related items are considered challenges on your campus.

- As a bottom-line indicator, share the summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores, highlighting the percentage of students who indicated an answer of 6 or 7, compared with the national comparison data and with any previous administration results. Remember that these items have been linked to higher to higher institutional graduation rates, higher alumni giving and lower loan default rates.

- If you have also analyzed target group results, you may want to include some overview of these findings. One caution – be careful to not overwhelm your audience with too much analysis on these subgroups at this time. You may want to give a very top-line overview on these findings, or report that you will share additional findings from these analyses at a later date. In addition, you may want to do follow-up presentations or reports focusing on a particular demographic variable which may be of interest to a certain group on campus. Ideas include:

  – First-year students for your freshman year experience staff;

  – Residential students for your residential hall staff;

  – Ethnicity/race analysis for groups responsible for diversity/multi-cultural affairs; and

  – Analysis by majors or departments for leadership in those areas on campus.

Be sure to conclude your presentation or report with identified next steps, such as the formation of a committee to further respond to the data, conducting focus groups to gather more information, the establishment of timelines for responding to top issues and plans for future survey administrations. It is important for the campus to be aware of what you plan to do with the data and to have everyone apprised of the next steps.

We encourage you to share the data with the following groups:

  – President and campus leadership;

  – Board of trustees;

  – Deans, directors, and other top administrators;

  – Student life personnel;

  – Admissions and financial aid personnel;

  – Faculty;

  – Staff, especially those with face-to-face interaction with students;

  – Student government leadership;

  – General student population;

  – Parents of students;

  – Alumni; and

  – Local community.

Examples of data sharing used on campuses can be found at: www.RuffaloNL.com/SSIresources

Explore the Data

Before you identify specific initiatives to improve the student experience, you may want to consider exploring the data further through a combination of target group reporting (isolating the data by demographic variables) and by conducting focus groups on campus. Conversations with students and faculty/staff based on the identified institutional challenges is a valuable way to understand what these items actually mean on your campus and to get individuals involved in the problem solving. You don't have to make the focus group process complicated; just identify opportunities for groups of individuals to have conversations about what the key items on the survey mean to them. More ideas and suggestions for effective ways to explore the data and conduct focus groups can be found in the short tutorials available here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials.

Respond to the Data with New Initiatives

As shared earlier, college and universities can approach responses to their challenges in three primary ways:

1. Changing perceptions through information and communication.

2. Implementing easy and quick actions that resolve the issues.

3. Planning for long-term, strategic adjustments in the delivery of the service.

With responses two and three, it is still important to incorporate communication into the responses so that students are appropriately informed of any immediate resolution, or can be made aware of the issues that require more time and resources. Additional suggestions are available here: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials.

Multiple Ways to Use the Data

Campuses report that they use the data from the Satisfaction and Priorities in multiple ways in order to get the best return on the investment. Be sure you are sharing your results with the teams at your institution working on the following initiatives.

Four primary ways to use satisfaction data

Use the Data for Strategic Planning

The results from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys support strategic planning efforts. The data serve to identify institutional strengths and challenges for the SWOT analysis from the student perspective. When combined with the results from the Institutional Priorities Survey, the results provide a broader view of the current situation at the institution. Institutional challenges should be addressed in the strategic planning activities to identify appropriate responses for the short-term and the long-term. Institutional leadership can have confidence in the decisions they are making for the strategic plan because the identified issues are ones that matter to students and ones that students feel are priorities for improvement.

Use the Data for Retention/Student Success Efforts

Actively responding to your identified challenges is one of the most effective ways to improve student satisfaction and ultimately student success at your institution. When you show students you care about their experience and you are working to make it even better, students are going to recognize that your institution is where they want to be. As noted earlier, there is a link between student satisfaction and individual student retention as well as institutional graduation rates. You may want to focus particular attention on campus climate related items (how students feel on campus) to make the most impact. In addition to making improvements on your challenge items, be sure to celebrate your strengths and communicate intentionally on campus to let everyone know what has been done and why.

Use the Data for Accreditation Purposes

Satisfaction surveys are often conducted as part of a self-study process or in anticipation of an accreditation visit. The results from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys allow you to document areas of strength and areas of challenge. Surveying over multiple years allows you to track trends and to document areas where satisfaction levels have improved significantly. Accreditation agencies often expect to see student satisfaction documentation. Based on feedback from hundreds of institutions, the survey tools from Ruffalo Noel Levitz are well-recognized and accepted by accreditation agencies. You can have confidence in your results when you are submitting data obtained through the administration of these nationally-normed, reliable, and valid instruments used by institutions across North America over many years.

Ruffalo Noel Levitz encourages you to establish a systematic assessment process in order to capture your students' perceptions regularly over time, rather than just surveying because the accreditation process is coming up. Institutions are more likely to perform better, be more aware of the perceptions of their students, and be more involved in continuous quality improvements when satisfaction surveying is conducted regularly.

Support documents for accreditation are available on the RNL website for all regional accreditors. Visit www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation to learn more. These documents match the individual items on the surveys to the appropriate accreditation criteria. Mapping documents for the following regions are available:

- HLC
- SACSCOC
- Middle States (MSCHE)
- NEASC
- WASC
- ACCJC
- Northwest Commission (NWCCU)

Use the Data for Recruitment

You can highlight your institutional strengths as areas where you are performing well to attract new students who are going to value the same things. Be sure to celebrate your strengths on campus to increase positive word-of-mouth and feature these items in your marketing materials. You can also examine the enrollment factors to better understand where current students are placing a priority on what is influencing them to select your institution. In addition, the items within the Admissions/Recruitment and Financial Aid scale may provide valuable direction to your enrollment management team.

Relevant Data for Departments across Campus

The data from the Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys provide relevant data for a variety of campus departments across campus.

Data for Enrollment Managers

- Percentage of students indicating the institution is their first choice
- Admissions and financial aid items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
- Key areas of higher satisfaction versus the national comparison group
- Top strengths for marketing materials

Data for Academic Affairs

- Instruction and academic advising items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
- Factor in the decision to enroll: Academic reputation
- Item: Institutional commitment to academic excellence
- Data sliced by students' indicated major or program

Data for Student Affairs

- Campus climate items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
  - Sense of belonging, students made to feel welcome; tuition paid is a worthwhile investment
- Campus life items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
  - Residence halls, cafeteria, campus activities
- Support service items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
  - Career services, orientation, tutoring

Data for Directors of Retention

- Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores (because these items are linked to individual retention and institutional graduation rates)
- Overall strengths to celebrate and overall challenges as priorities for response
- Campus climate items (strengths and challenges and comparisons to the national averages)
  - Sense of belonging, students made to feel welcome; tuition paid is a worthwhile investment
- Perceptions of institutional choice (because students who perceive themselves to be at their second or third choice institution have lower satisfaction scores)

Data for the Accreditation Team

- Satisfaction trends over time
- Survey items mapped to regional accreditation criteria
- Satisfaction levels compared with national regional groups
- Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores

Data for Institutional Researchers

- Program level review data
- Satisfaction trends over time
- Data points on satisfaction as compared with engagement data points
- Student voice data for strategic planning efforts

Inform the Campus

Don't assume that students and the larger campus constituencies will automatically be aware of the improvements you have made. Be intentional in your communication efforts to inform the campus that the survey results indicate a priority and you took this action in response. This follows the model of "You said this, we did that." By informing the students of your activities, you are more likely to see satisfaction levels improve with your next survey administration. For more ideas on how to best communicate your actions to raise satisfaction levels and to change perceptions, view the tutorial on this topic: www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorial.

Survey your students regularly

Student satisfaction assessments are not once and done activities. Be sure to establish a regular cycle for gathering student satisfaction data. Most institutions survey students once every other year in order to maintain a strong momentum with actively using the data and responding to it. Often, they are alternating the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Satisfaction Priorities Surveys with other survey instruments, such as surveys of engagement. Some institutions have found that annual survey administrations work best for them, while the rest of the institutions we work with survey at least once every three years. You will want to determine the survey cycle that works best for your institution.

To assist you with using the data between survey administrations, Ruffalo Noel Levitz has developed a document to guide you through a two-year assessment cycle, with recommendations for activities during each of the 24 months. (This cycle can be condensed for institutions surveying annually). One version of the document is for institutions administering in the fall and one is for institutions surveying in the spring. Visit this site for these handouts: www.RuffaloNL.com/SSIResources.

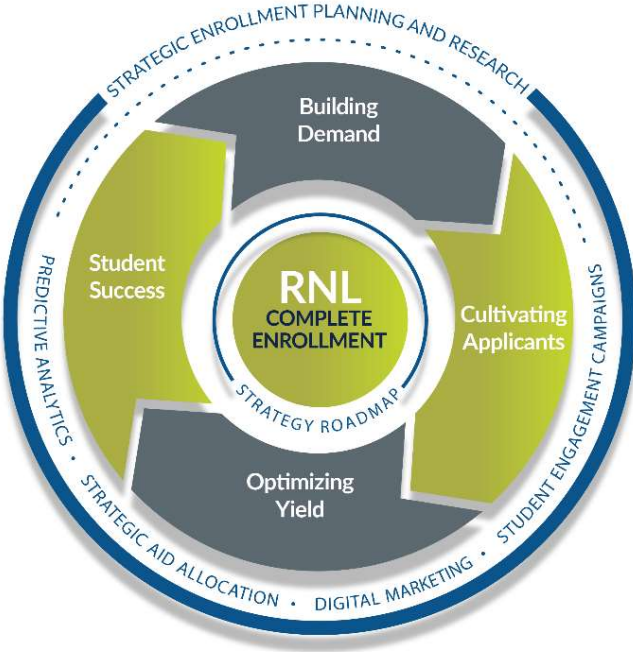# A Word about Ruffalo Noel Levitz

A trusted partner to higher education, Ruffalo Noel Levitz helps institutions reach and exceed their goals for enrollment, marketing, student success and fundraising.

To help with goal attainment, our consultants bring direct experience from their previous and current positions on campuses as consultants, enrollment managers, marketing leaders, retention directors, institutional researchers, financial aid directors, faculty, student affairs leaders, advising directors, and more.

Ruffalo Noel Levitz has developed an array of proven tools including software programs, diagnostics tools and instruments, customized consultations, workshops, and national conferences. With the Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys, the firm brings together its many years of research and campus-based experience to enable you to get to the heart of your campus agenda.

Complete Enrollment Services

The Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys are part of the Student Success component of Complete Enrollment services from Ruffalo Noel Levitz which provide support to institutions throughout the student life cycle.

Contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz if you would like more information on ways that we can assist you.

Contact us

For general questions about reviewing your results or to order additional reports or materials for a future administration, please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Associate Vice President of Retention Solutions, Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com

- Shannon Cook, Director of Retention Solutions, Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com

To schedule an in-depth report discussion phone call at **no charge** or to explore opportunities to have a consultant come to campus to present your results (additional fees apply), please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Associate Vice President of Retention Solutions, Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com

For questions regarding analyzing the raw data, please contact:

- Scott Bodfish, Vice President of Market Research, Scott.Bodfish@RuffaloNL.com

For More Information

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Email: ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com
Website: www.RuffaloNL.com

Visit the Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys Client Resource Site

To visit the Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys Client Resource Site, log into your MyRuffaoNL.com account from the RNL homepage: www.RuffaloNL.com. Enter your email address and password. If you have forgotten your password, you can request that it be resent to you.

Resources include:

- National group demographic details and lists of participating institutions

- Links to the current National Satisfaction and Priorities Reports

- Recent presentations on satisfaction assessment topics

- Links to the tutorials

- Example worksheets and presentations shared by client institutions

- And more...

Download this document and the separate addendum documents for the specific survey versions from this location: www.RuffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides.

Updated October 2017