Priorities Survey for Online Learners

2023
Ruffalo Noel-Levitz

DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY®

Executive Summary

During spring 2023, 244 students (147 undergraduates, 73 graduates, and 24 students who did not indicate class level or indicated special student/other) completed the web-based Priorities for Online Learners Survey produced by Ruffalo Noel-Levitz. This is a 25% response rate (989 students were asked to complete the survey). This survey was administered to all degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students who were taking 100% of their courses online in the 2023 Spring semester. This measures students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences, programs, and services. This survey provides information on how satisfied students are with DSU and what is most important to them.

DSU students gave very high satisfaction ratings on advisor knowledge, registration, and technical assistance. The top ranked items based on average satisfaction are (highest on top):

1. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major
2. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
3. Registration for online courses is convenient.
4. My academic advisor provides timely responses to my questions.
5. Technical assistance from DSU is responsive and useful.

Students also rated the importance of various factors in their decision to enroll at DSU. Those who completed the survey indicated that flexible pacing for completing a program, work schedule, and convenience were most important in their decision to enroll at DSU.

The Priorities for Online Learners Survey allows students to rate both the importance of specific items and their satisfaction with those items. A performance gap is then calculated by taking the difference in the importance rating and the satisfaction rating. A large performance gap score for an item (e.g., 1.5) indicates that the institution is not meeting students' expectations. A small or zero performance gap score (e.g., <=0.50) indicates that an institution is meeting student's expectations. A negative performance gap score indicates that an institution is exceeding students' expectations.

Areas of Strength: High Importance and High Satisfaction (Low Performance Gap)

The following areas had an average Importance rating of greater than six (on a scale of one to seven). Satisfaction with these areas was also high with an average Satisfaction rating greater than or equal to 5.75. The Performance Gap was less than or equal to 0.5.
Listed in order of Performance Gap (lowest on top):

1. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
2. Technical assistance from DSU is responsive and useful.
3. Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.
4. Adequate online library resources are provided.
5. Registration for online courses is convenient.
6. This institution has a good reputation.
7. Campus item: My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major
8. This institution responds quickly when I request information.
9. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
10. Campus item: I received adequate information to guide me through the registration process for my program.
11. Campus item: My academic advisor provides timely responses to my questions.
12. My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.
13. The frequency of student and instructor interactions is adequate.

14. Campus item: My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
15. I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.
16. Campus item: D2L is easy to navigate and provides useful information to complete coursework.

Areas of Concern: High Importance and Lower Satisfaction (high Performance Gap)

The following areas were rated high in importance (average importance rating of greater than six on a scale of one to seven) and lower in satisfaction with a performance gap that was greater than 0.75.

Listed in order of Performance Gap (highest on top):
1. The quality of online instruction is excellent.
2. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
3. Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframes they specify.
4. Adequate financial aid is available.
5. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
6. Instructors respond to emails within 24 to 48 hours.

Trends: Comparing Year-to-Year

The following lists compare results from 2019 to the results received in 2023. Keep in mind, the items listed below may also be listed in the Areas of Strength and Areas of Concern sections. The Trends section is strictly comparing 2023 results to 2019 results.

Top 5 most significant Performance Gap Decreases from 2019 to 2023 (Improvements – lowest on top):

1. Tutoring services are readily available for online courses.
2. *Registration for online courses is convenient.*
3. *The bookstore provides timely service to students.*
4. *My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.*
5. *The quality of online instruction is excellent.*

Top 5 most significant Performance Gap Increases from 2019 to 2023 (Declines – highest on top):

1. I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.
2. Adequate financial aid is available.
3. There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
4. Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.
5. Faculty are responsive to student needs.

Recommendation Scores:

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

Students were asked to rate how likely it is that they would recommend DSU to a friend or colleague on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is not likely at all, 5 is neutral, and 10 is extremely likely.

Scores	# of Responses
0 – Not Likely At All	1
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	3
5 - Neutral	12
6	14
7	28
8	57
9	28
10 – Extremely Likely	98

Results

The following table provides the results from 2023, 2019, and 2017. The mean difference in satisfaction between 2023 and national online learners appears next to the 2023 column for comparison. Due to significant changes to the campus-specific questions over the last three administrations, most campus questions do not list historical data. The top five (or six if tied) importance and satisfaction averages are highlighted in yellow.

		Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
Item		**Importance**	**Satisfaction**	**SD**	**Gap**	**Difference to National Average**	**Importance**	**Satisfaction**	**SD**	**Gap**	**Importance**	**Satisfaction**	**SD**	**Gap**
1	This institution has a good reputation.	6.38	6.14	1.1	0.24	0.03	6.3	5.96	1.1	0.34	6.19	5.98	1.1	0.21
2	My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.	6.52	6.39	1.2	0.13	0.22*	6.41	6.15	1.3	0.26	6.33	6.15	1.3	0.18
3	Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.	6.61	5.87	1.2	0.74	-0.19*	6.65	5.73	1.3	0.92	6.56	5.76	1.3	0.8
4	Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.	6.48	5.52	1.4	0.96	-0.43***	6.47	5.45	1.6	1.02	6.47	5.44	1.5	1.03
5	My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.	6.25	5.91	1.5	0.34	0.15	5.99	5.4	1.7	0.59	5.95	5.26	1.7	0.69
6	Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.49	5.7	1.5	0.79	-0.16	6.47	5.68	1.5	0.79	6.56	5.61	1.5	0.95
7	Program requirements are clear and reasonable.	6.57	6.01	1.2	0.56	-0.05	6.58	5.86	1.3	0.72	6.41	5.8	1.3	0.61
8	Student-to-student	4.67	5.26	1.5	-0.6	-0.17	4.56	4.98	1.6	-0.4	4.17	4.85	1.7	-0.7

		Apr-23				Nov-19				Nov-17			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
	collaborations are valuable to me.													
9	Adequate financial aid is available.	6.08	5.28	1.8	0.8	-0.47***	6.09	5.45	1.7	0.64	5.88	5.5	1.7	0.38
10	This institution responds quickly when I request information.	6.5	6.19	1.1	0.31	0.12	6.47	6.16	1.1	0.31	6.45	6.1	1.4	0.35
11	Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.	6.51	5.83	1.4	0.68	-0.25**	6.47	5.71	1.3	0.76	6.48	5.6	1.6	0.88
12	There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.	6.53	5.85	1.4	0.68	-0.16	6.48	5.86	1.2	0.62	6.46	5.8	1.3	0.66
13	The frequency of student and instructor interactions is adequate.	6.19	5.84	1.3	0.35	-0.1	6.21	5.75	1.3	0.46	6.1	5.61	1.4	0.49
14	I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.	6.17	5.49	1.7	0.68	-0.41***	6.04	5.66	1.6	0.38	5.97	5.61	1.6	0.36
15	Channels are available for providing timely responses to student complaints.	6.09	5.55	1.6	0.54	-0.15	5.83	5.25	1.7	0.58	5.98	5.2	1.8	0.78
16	Appropriate technical	6.27	6.1	1.2	0.17	-0.08	6.12	5.88	1.3	0.24	6.08	5.94	1.2	0.14

	Item	Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
	assistance is readily available.													
17	Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.	6.44	5.93	1.3	0.51	-0.18*	6.37	5.9	1.2	0.47	6.28	5.77	1.4	0.51
18	Registration for online courses is convenient.	6.59	6.36	1.1	0.23	0.03	6.52	5.91	1.5	0.61	6.61	6.06	1.4	0.55
19	Online career services are available.	5.8	5.77	1.5	0.03	-0.14	5.76	5.57	1.5	0.19	5.79	5.54	1.5	0.25
20	The quality of online instruction is excellent.	6.7	5.7	1.4	1	-0.16	6.66	5.46	1.5	1.2	6.69	5.46	1.6	1.23
21	Adequate online library resources are provided.	6.26	6.07	1.2	0.19	-0.18*	5.97	5.75	1.4	0.22	5.85	5.68	1.5	0.17
22	I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.	6.41	5.93	1.4	0.48	-0.04	6.23	5.57	1.7	0.66	6.14	5.72	1.5	0.42
23	Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.	6.46	6.15	1.3	0.31	-0.09	6.44	6.12	1.3	0.32	6.38	6.13	1.3	0.25
24	Tutoring services are readily available for online courses.	5.76	5.62	1.6	0.14	-0.21	5.58	4.94	1.9	0.64	5.32	5.09	1.8	0.23

		Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
25	Faculty are responsive to student needs.	6.62	5.95	1.3	0.67	-0.1	6.51	5.85	1.2	0.66	6.48	5.78	1.5	0.7
26	The bookstore provides timely service to students.	5.88	5.88	1.5	0	-0.25*	5.7	5.42	1.6	0.28	5.53	5.31	1.9	0.22
27	Campus item: My academic advisor provides timely responses to my questions.	6.67	6.35	1.3	0.32									
28	Campus item: Instructors respond to emails within 24 to 48 hours.	6.59	5.83	1.5	0.76									
29	Campus item: My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major	6.74	6.46	1.2	0.28									
30	Campus item: Faculty explicitly invite diverse perspectives and viewpoints.	5.99	6.03	1.3	-0.04									
31	Campus item: Technical assistance from DSU is responsive and useful.	6.36	6.23	1.1	0.13									

Item		Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
32	Campus item: D2L is easy to navigate and provides useful information to complete coursework.	6.61	6.11	1.2	0.50									
33	Campus item: My online course was interactive, allowing me to connect with my peers.	5.35	5.55	1.5	-0.20									
34	Campus item: Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframes they specify.	6.42	5.62	1.6	0.80		6.42	5.46	1.7	0.96	6.43	5.47	1.6	0.96
35	Campus item: My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	6.33	5.89	1.5	0.44									
36	Campus item: I received adequate information to guide me through the registration process for my program.	6.46	6.15	1.3	0.31		6.42	5.95	1.5	0.47	6.21	5.59	1.6	0.62
37	Source of information:	4.53					4.31				4.56			

	Item	Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
	Catalog and brochures (printed)													
38	Source of information: Catalog (online)	6.23					6.35				6.27			
39	Source of information: College representatives	5.12					4.95				4.88			
40	Source of information: Web site	6.4					6.36				6.35			
41	Source of information: Advertisements	4.42					3.92				3.89			
42	Source of information: Recommendation from instructor or program advisor	5.78					5.74				5.77			
43	Source of information: Contact with current students and / or recent graduates of the program	5.17					5.13				4.78			
44	Factor to enroll: Ability to transfer credits	6.11					5.99				5.85			
45	Factor to enroll: Cost	6.26					6.3				6.25			
46	Factor to enroll: Financial	5.77					5.56				5.66			

	Item	Apr-23					Nov-19				Nov-17			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference to National Average	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
	assistance available													
47	Factor to enroll: Future employment opportunities	6.27					6.04				6.13			
48	Factor to enroll: Reputation of institution	6.19					6.08				6.05			
49	Factor to enroll: Work schedule	6.47					6.51				6.49			
50	Factor to enroll: Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.48					6.39				6.51			
51	Factor to enroll: Convenience	6.47					6.48				6.55			
52	Factor to enroll: Distance from campus	5.17					4.93				5.01			
53	Factor to enroll: Program requirements	6.21					6.18				6.18			
54	Factor to enroll: Recommendations from employer	5.02					4.69				4.62			

*Difference statistically significant at the .05 level
**Difference statistically significant at the .01 level
***Difference statistically significant at the .001 level