

Summary Results from the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory

UNA Exceeds National and Southern Averages on Key Indicators

The University of North Alabama scored higher than both the national and southern averages on specific key indicators of the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory. The survey, which includes over 100 questions, was administered to students this past spring semester and almost 550 students participated. Results of the survey were provided by RNL early this summer. Among the Scale Items, which are groupings of individual questions within the survey, UNA out performed both national and state averages on everything except Safety and Security where no difference was indicated. Two parking questions, specifically one relating to the adequacy of parking, were included within the Safety and Security grouping and

RNL Scale Items and UNA's Comparison to National and Southern 4-Year Institutional Averages			
Scale Item	Gap	National Public 4-Year Comparison	Southern Public 4-Year Comparison
Academic Advising	.68	Better	Better
Instructional Effectiveness	.69	Better	Better
Safety and Security	1.65	No Sig. Difference	No Sig. Difference
Concern for the Individual	.71	Better	Better
Campus Climate	.60	Better	Better
Student Centerdness	.58	Better	Better
Recruitment and Financial Aid	.78	Better	Better
Registration Effectiveness	.64	Better	Better
Service Excellence	.63	Better	Better
Campus Support Services	.38	Better	Better
Campus Life	.53	Better	Better

were responsible for the lower grouping scale. Other questions within the Safety and Security grouping scored better than both national and southern averages.

Performance Gap Measures

As part of the results, RNL's SSI uses two measures

for each question. The first measure rates the level of importance a respondent places on a particular question. The second measure is the level of satisfaction of that question. The mathematical difference between the importance and satisfaction measures is called the performance gap. Smaller gaps indicate where the institution is doing a better job. Larger gaps indicate areas of challenge or where the institution needs to improve. In addition to the Scale Item analysis, RNL also provided individual question analysis and indicates those areas of strength. Again, UNA surpassed both national and southern averages within these strength areas.

Questions Identified by RNL as UNA's Strengths					
Question	National 4-Year Comparison	Southern 4-Year Comparison	Question	National 4-Year Comparison	Southern 4-Year Comparison
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major	Better	Better	It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus	Better	Better
My academic advisor is approachable	Better	Better	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus	Better	Better
The instruction in my major field is excellent	Better	Better	Students are made to feel welcome on this campus	Better	Better
The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent	Better	Better	There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus	Better	Better
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field	Better	Better	This institution has a good reputation within the community	Better	Better
I am able to experience intellectual growth here	Better	Better	Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students	Better	Better
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours	Better	Better	Library resources and services are adequate	Better	Better
On the whole, the campus is well-maintained	Better	Better	Student disciplinary procedures are fair	Better	Better

Significant Results

As with all surveys, not all students will participate. Therefore, how many students must participate in order for the survey results to apply to the entire campus? Based on a nationally recognized statistical formula, UNA's sample size had to contain at least 364 students. Almost 550 participated in the survey.

It is also important to ensure the demographic make-up of the sample resembles UNA's student body. A demographic comparison concluded there were no significant differences within most factors including race, housing status, residency, or classification.

There was a higher percentage of women and Asians who took the survey as compared to the general population. However, these differences were not enough to invalidate the results of the survey.

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Areas of Improvement for UNA

In its individual question analysis, RNL also indicated areas of challenge as compared to both national and southern averages. Essentially, these were areas where there were higher performance gaps. While RNL recommends that UNA focus on these questions over the others, it is interesting to note that, even though these are classified as challenges, UNA still out-performed both the national and southern averages in all but three questions. Two of these questions involve parking and clearly indicate that it is a significant issue nationally. The other question concerned adequate food selection within the cafeteria. On these three questions, UNA's scores were statistically equal to the national and southern averages.

By looking at individual questions where the performance gap is close to 1.0 or greater, UNA can get a better idea where it may need to prioritize its challenges. Clearly, the highest performance gap of 3.55 is in

Questions Where Performance Gap Was Close to 1.0 or Higher	
Question	Gap
Billing policies are reasonable	1.02
Adequate financial aid is available to most students	1.21
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate	3.55
Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable (adequate space, lighting, heat, air, etc.)	1.35
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	.95
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure	1.36
There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria	1.68
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course	1.18
I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus	1.02
Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment	.98
Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available	1.00
The First Year Experience Program provided me with information that assisted my transition to UNA (UNA Item)	.98
Food service vendors are open during hours that are convenient for most students (UNA Item)	1.10

the area of adequate parking, while well-lighted and secure parking indicated a gap of 1.36. Other larger gaps concern residence halls, food service, and financial aid. The questions, concerning food service

vendors and the FYE Program were two of 10 questions that UNA could add to the survey. Because these are unique to UNA, there were no national or southern institutional comparisons.

These data will be reviewed by UNA's administrators and a prioritization plan will be created to address each one of the challenges indicated by RNL, while paying particular attention to those performance gaps of close to 1.0 or greater.

Questions Identified by RNL as UNA's Challenges		
Question	National 4-Year Comparison	Southern 4-Year Comparison
The content of the courses within my major is valuable	Better	Better
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts	Better	Better
Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment	Better	Better
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course	Better	Better
Billing policies are reasonable	Better	Better
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate	No Sig. Difference	No Sig. Difference
There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria	No Sig. Difference	No Sig. Difference
Adequate financial aid is available for most students	Better	Better
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	Better	Better
Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning	Better	Better
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure	No Sig. Difference	No Sig. Difference
My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward	Better	Better
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate	Better	Better
Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course	Better	Better
Financial aid counselors are helpful	Better	Better
Billing policies are reasonable	Better	Better
I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus	Better	Better

Better Performance With Fewer Faculty and Staff Than Alabama Peers

While it can be assumed that higher scores on the RNL SSI may be attributed to having more faculty and staff within an institution, this is not the case with UNA. Based on the most recent report from the Digest of Education Statistics by the U.S. Department of Education (2013), UNA has significantly fewer faculty and staff than the average for all 4-year institutions within Alabama. According to the report, the average Student to Faculty Ratio among 4-year Alabama institutions is 15 to 1, the Student to Faculty Ratio at UNA is 21 to 1. Among staff, the average Student to Staff Ratio among 4-year Alabama institutions is 4 to 1. At UNA the Student to Staff ratio is 12 to 1. While this indicates that UNA has tried to provide good resources to its students in an efficient manner, those challenges indicated by RNL's results to the SSI survey may be, in part, due to the need for additional faculty and staff within the institution.