The Surveys Say...

Highlights from UND’s 2008-2009 Surveys

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
JULY 2009
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The College Student Inventory (CSI) is a retention management tool that asks students to reflect on issues pertinent to their college preparedness and success. It is administered to UND’s incoming first-year students during the Getting Started program.

The CSI provides each student with a report summarizing their responses, helping them to maximize their college experience. Advisors also receive a report to assist them in identifying potential academic concerns. An institutional report provides UND with overall information regarding the incoming class, their preparedness and motivations for attending.

Students are asked to rank the importance of 25 items in which they might receive advice or need help in successfully completing their first college year. At UND, first-year students have a definite focus on job-seeking and career advice.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Mean Priority Scores</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Mean Priority Scores</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Mean Priority Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss job market for college graduates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss the qualifications for occupations</td>
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<td>6.31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get help with study habits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.89</td>
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<td>5.84</td>
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<td>Get help in meeting new friends</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get help in selecting an occupation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In 2008, 79% of UND’s incoming first-year students perceive their academic ability as being extremely high (3%), considerably above average (36%) or slightly above average (40%). This is the highest proportion since UND began implementing the CSI.
Research shows working many hours while attending college is detrimental to student success and retention. Working a few hours, however, is shown to improve student engagement and success. Looking at historical patterns, it is evident that UND students are on the right track, with the proportion of students planning to work less than 10 hours per week is increasing.

The CSI asks students to respond to 100 items on a 7-point Likert scale. The 100 items are summarized to predict behaviors by the individual students. Particularly, each student receives a score from 0 – 100 on the summary scales of dropout proneness, perceived level of academic difficulty, level of educational stress, and receptivity to institutional help.

In a follow-up study of 2007 CSI test-takers, OIR proved there is a strong relationship between CSI summary scale scores and student retention. This affirmation is all the more reason that CSI results should be more broadly utilized by the campus in order to provide students with the services CSI indicates they require for success.

On the positive side, the trends for dropout proneness and predicted academic difficulty are on decline. Conversely, students predicted level of educational stress appears to be increasing and students’ receptivity to institutional help is decreasing.

Areas of greatest positive change between 2007 and 2008 CSI results:
- Academic motivation - Math and science confidence (↑ 5.8 points)
- General coping skills - Opinion tolerance (↑ 4.9 points)
- Receptivity - Career counseling (↑ 3.3 points)

Areas of greatest negative change between 2007 and 2008 CSI results:
- General coping - Sociability (↓ 7.3 points)
- Receptivity – Social enrichment (↓ 6.0 points)
- General coping – Career closure (↓ 3.5 points)
The Student Information Questionnaire (SIQ) is a tool designed by UND’s Office of Institutional Research to collect demographic and enrollment management-related data from incoming first-year students. This 22-item questionnaire is completed during the Getting Started program every-other year.

In addition to measuring the responses of all incoming first-year students, the SIQ looks at the first-year Community of Learners Scholarship (CLS) recipients. The CLS was instituted to promote student engagement.

When asked to rate their competence on 6 items, the 2008 first-year students rate themselves slightly higher than the 2007 students. They are most confident in their ability to make choices. CLS recipients rate themselves as having higher levels of confidence than the incoming class as a whole.

Just one out of five incoming students have decided to attend UND in their junior year of high school. Nearly half decide early in their senior year. Nearly one-third of students decide late in their senior year or after high school graduation.

According to responses, UND incoming freshmen have the option of being more selective. Increasing numbers of students have been accepted by multiple institutions when compared to 2004.
Typically, just under one-half of UND first-year students (44%) report scholarships as being a factor in their decision to enroll here.

A much larger percentage (70%) of CLS recipients report scholarships as being an important reason in their decision to enroll. As these students also bring high academic achievement as indicated by ACT score and high school GPA, it will be interesting to watch the effectiveness of this program.

Freshmen were asked in an open-ended question about why they decided to attend UND. Those most frequently stated reasons include:

- Program reputation (28%)
- Location (13%)
- Campus/Like the campus (11%)
- Overall reputation (7%)
- Athletics (6%)

It appears that the reputation of UND and its programs is a strong motivator in attracting students. This indicates that any efforts toward maintaining a strong reputation in the public’s eye will pay off in recruiting additional students.
The North Dakota University System contracts with Noel-Levitz to conduct the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). The SSI is a series of questions asking students to rate both the importance they place on 73 items and their level of satisfaction with those same items.

Overall, UND results are quite positive when compared to both NDUS institutions and national 4-year institutions. Of the 73 satisfaction items asked, UND scores statistically significantly higher than national 4-year results on 61 items; when compared to NDUS institutions, UND students rate significantly higher on 32 of the 73 items. UND ranks statistically significantly lower on none of the 73 items when compared to national institutions, and lower on just 6 when compared to NDUS institutions. Those where UND ranks lower include:

- Administrators are approachable to students.
- Billing policies are reasonable.
- The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students
- I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.
- This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- Student activity fees are put to good use.

The items are also grouped into 11 composite scales summarizing campus life. Campus Support Services ranked the highest in both 2006 and 2008.
The SSI ranks items as being challenges when students place high importance and relatively low satisfaction. Items rated as being challenges for UND include:

- The instruction in my major field is excellent.
- Able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- Content of courses within major is valuable.
- The quality of instruction in most of my classes is excellent.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

Strengths are items where students rate high satisfaction on an item with relatively high importance. These include:

- I am able to achieve my educational goals at this institution.
- Academic advisor is knowledgeable about my major.
- Faculty are knowledgeable in their field.
- My academic advisor is approachable.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.

In 2008, cost is ranked as the item most important when deciding to enroll at UND. This differs from 2006 and 2004, when academic reputation was the most important deciding factor.

**Overall Satisfaction**

The SSI measures overall satisfaction by using 3 summary questions. Mean scores are calculated on a 7-point response scale with 1 representing low satisfaction and 7 representing high satisfaction. After showing declines from 2002 through 2006, the results from the 2008 administration show UND is on an upward swing. As occurred historically, UND mean scores are higher than their counterparts.
In conjunction with the SSI, the North Dakota University System also contracts with Noel-Levitz to conduct the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL). The PSOL rates the overall satisfaction of students taking online courses at UND. It is a series of questions asking students to rate both the importance they place and their level of satisfaction on 26 items pertinent to online learning.

The items are also grouped into 5 composite scales summarizing campus life. In 2008, UND ranked significantly lower than the national and NDUS norms in the areas of Student Services and Enrollment Services.

Who are the online learners completing the PSOL at UND? A summary shows
- 59% are female, which is the same proportion of on-campus students taking the SSI.
- 85% are between the ages of 25 and 54. Just 8% are the age of a typical college student under age 24.
- 82% report working full-time.
- 90% take classes primarily online.
- 61% are working toward a graduate degree.
- Three-quarters (77%) are taking courses part-time.
- 74% are planning to complete an online degree program.

### Satisfaction Means for 5 Composite Scales For Online Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2008 National</th>
<th>2008 NDUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Services</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Services</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Perceptions</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Services</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>5.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked to rank their level of satisfaction, UND online learners generally report lower levels of satisfaction when compared to national 4-year institutions and NDUS institutions. Of the 26 items scored, none were statistically significantly higher than the norms. Nine items were significantly lower than the national 4-year institutions and 8 were significantly lower than NDUS averages. The largest statistical differences where UND scores lower than the national averages are seen in the areas of:

- The bookstore provides timely service to student needs.
- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Online career services are available.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- Online career services are available.

Online learners cite convenience as being the most important reason for enrolling at UND. This is different from on-campus students who report cost as being the most important.

**Overall Satisfaction**

The PSOL measures overall satisfaction by using 3 summary questions. Mean scores are calculated on a 7-point response scale with 1 representing low satisfaction and 7 representing high satisfaction. When asked to rate their overall experience, UND online learners are more satisfied than their on-campus counterparts. They also tend to rank UND equally to national online learners. This is interesting considering that when looking at item-to-item satisfaction, UND online learners report lower results than the national averages.
NDUS accountability measures dictate that UND attempt to identify key reasons students opt to no longer attend this institution. Each fall, the ACT Withdrawing/Non-Returning Student Survey is administered to those students who enrolled the prior fall semester but failed to enroll for the subsequent spring or fall term.

The response for this survey is low – just 9% for 2008. These students have minimal motivation for completing this paper-and-pencil survey. It is also difficult to obtain current contact information for these students.

The top reason students give for not returning to UND is that they decided to attend a different college. This has been the primary reason stated by survey respondents since it was implemented in 2003. Wanting to move to a new location has been the second most important reason for students leaving since the survey inception as well.

Deciding to attend a different institution and wanting to move to a new location are also the top reasons when results from all NDUS institutions are evaluated.

Students are given five categories for leaving the institution. The top reason in each category is listed below. The mean score following each reason is represented on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 = not a reason, 2 = minor reason, and 3 = major reason for leaving UND.

- **Personal Reason**: Decided to attend different college (2.46)
- **Institutional Reason**: Desired major was offered, but course content was unsatisfactory (1.49)
- **Academic Reason**: Disappointed with the quality of instruction (1.47)
- **Financial Reason**: Tuition and fees were more than I could afford (1.23)
- **Employment Reason**: Accepted a full-time job (1.10)
In conjunction with UND’s Career Services, the Office of Institutional Research surveys recent UND graduates to gather information regarding their current employment. This short survey is mailed to graduates one year after graduation and yielded a 40% response rate in 2008.

With the current economy, it is encouraging to note that 97% of UND’s recent graduates report being either employed or a full-time student.

Recent graduates are asked their opinions on employment within the state of North Dakota. Some key findings:

- 59% of respondents believe there are job opportunities for them within North Dakota in their area of interest.
- 41% responded they would want employment in North Dakota if a job were available to them in their area of interest.
- Of the respondents who graduated from a North Dakota high school, just 48% are currently employed in North Dakota. The percentage of high school graduates being retained appears to be declining.
- Respondents indicating they would want employment in North Dakota cite reasons such as close to family, liking the community or state, and it is a good place to raise a family.
- Respondents indicating they would not want employment in North Dakota cite reasons such as proximity to family, low salaries, climate, preference for another state, and preference for metropolitan area.
To comply with state accountability measures, UND, along with other NDUS institutions completes a survey of recent graduates to determine the value they place on their educational experiences. The Alumni Outcomes Survey measures alumni levels of satisfaction with their education received as well as current employment information.

As this survey is mailed to graduates, current contact information is not always available. This makes it difficult to garner large response rates. It should be noted that just 8% of graduates returned this survey.

As a general rule, UND alumni are reporting increasingly positive results to the above key factors in an educational experience. Faculty interaction and student diversity are two areas with declining positive results.

How well did your college experience prepare you for your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UND</th>
<th>Public Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequately</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Adequately 39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How closely is your current job related to the field in which you received your degree?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UND</th>
<th>Public Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Slightly 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Moderately 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Highly 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you could begin again, would you attend this school? (Percent responding yes)

Overall, how would you rate this school? (Percent responding excellent or good)

Would you recommend this school to a friend or acquaintance? (Percent responding yes – without reservation)

When compared to their counterparts at public colleges across the United States, UND alumni have more favorable overall perceptions. They are more likely to again attend UND if given the chance to start over. Higher percentages of alumni rank UND as being excellent or good, and higher percentages of alumni would recommend UND without reservation to others. In 2008, no alumni reported they would not recommend UND to a friend or acquaintance.

When asked which skills learned in their education have the greatest impact on their current employment, alumni state the following:
- Defining and solving problems.
- Recognizing and using effective written communication.
- Working cooperatively in groups.
- Accessing and using a variety of information sources.

When asked which skills are the most important, alumni rate highly:
- Recognizing and using effective verbal communication.
- Living my life according to my own standards and ethics.
- Developing and using effective leadership skills.
As alumni see these areas as being important, UND may want to align instruction and student services to support and develop these skills.

When evaluating satisfaction with service areas, all means are on the positive side of neutral (mean score greater than 3.0). Library services continue to record high levels of satisfaction. Financial aid counseling and registration procedures show the largest decline from 2006.

Satisfaction with Service Areas
(1 = very dissatisfied through 5 = very satisfied)
The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles coordinates a national survey of faculty and administrators every three years. This survey asks faculty to report their attitudes, experiences, job satisfaction, workload, and teaching practices. UND has participated in the HERI faculty survey in 1992, 2001, and 2008.

The survey primarily focuses on full-time, undergraduate (FTUG) faculty. This group of faculty is generally considered to be most connected to teaching students in the classroom and therefore has the greatest effect on a student’s college experience.

UND undergraduate faculty are more focused on teaching than their national counterparts. A slightly higher percentage of UND faculty report teaching as being personally very important or essential than national faculty (99% compared to 96%), while a slightly lower percentage of UND faculty report research as being personally very important or essential (74% compared to 78%).
Some general survey findings:

- 36% of faculty report having received an award for outstanding teaching. 43% of male FTUG faculty report such compared to 26% of female FTUG faculty.
- 80% of faculty report *Institutional procedures and “red-tape”* and *Self-imposed high expectations* as being extensively or somewhat a source of stress.
- UND faculty tend to be younger than their counterparts at national public universities. The 2008 survey however shows UND faculty are getting older.
- Fewer faculty report working with undergraduates on research in 2008 than in 2002 (49% compared to 66%), yet faculty report increasing the amount of time being spent on research and scholarly work (8.3 hours now versus 6.6 hours in 2002).
- Most faculty (88%) feel UND’s paramount priority should be the intellectual development of students.

**On Teaching...**

Over one-half of faculty report using the following methods in most of their undergraduate courses:

- Class discussions (85%)
- Cooperative learning/small groups (63%)
- Using real-life problems (60%)
- Competency-based grading (54%)

Few faculty report using:

- Community service as part of coursework (6%)
- Electronic quizzes with immediate feedback in class (10%)
- Grading on a curve (13%)
- Student-selected topics for course content (18%)
- Teaching assistants (18%)
- Reflective writing/journaling (19%)

**If you were to begin your career again, would you be a college professor?**

**UND**

- Definitely yes 57%
- Probably yes 28%
- Not sure 10%
- Probably no 3%
- Definitely no 2%

**Public Universities**

- Definitely yes 61%
- Probably yes 26%
- Not sure 14%
- Probably no 9%
- Definitely no 1%

**Total YES Response**

- UND: 85%
- Public Universities: 87%

**If you were to begin your career again, would you come to this institution?**

**UND**

- Definitely yes 29%
- Probably yes 43%
- Not sure 14%
- Probably no 9%
- Definitely no 5%

**Public Universities**

- Definitely yes 32%
- Probably yes 35%
- Not sure 17%
- Probably no 11%
- Definitely no 6%

**Total YES Response**

- UND: 72%
- Public Universities: 67%
The North Dakota University System requires UND to participate in the Performance Horizons Campus Quality Survey (CQS) every two years to determine the levels of employee satisfaction. 2008 was the fourth time UND participated in the CQS.

The CQS measures areas of satisfaction by asking employees to rate their level of agreement with 50 items twice: first as to “how it should be” and second as to “how it is now” on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The difference between the mean “how it should be” score and the mean “how it is now” score calculate a performance gap indicating how close UND is meeting the expectation of its employees. The 50 items are then combined into 8 summary scales to look at overall areas of satisfaction.

In general, UND employees are reporting lower levels of satisfaction with items asked on the CQS when 2008 results are compared to earlier surveys. They are reporting greater levels of agreement with “how it should be” and less agreement with “how it is now”, leading to larger performance gaps on most items. Larger gaps are seen on 37 of the 50 items when 2008 results are compared to 2006 results.
Programs, Services, and Activities

Employees are asked to rate a list of services, programs, and activities commonly seen on university campuses. The top rated programs include health and nursing services, student activities, payroll services, security and police services, and library and learning resources. On a scale of 1 through 5, these items scored means of 3.9 to 3.8, a rating just below “Very good and continually improving”. The lowest rated items include communication with other departments and parking for faculty and staff. These both scored means just under 3.0 which represents “Good but still needs improvement”.

Overall Satisfaction

The CQS measures overall satisfaction in two ways – first by asking employees to rate their overall satisfaction with their employment and secondly by asking them to rate their overall impression of quality at the institution. At UND, staff members, both classified staff and professional staff, have satisfaction levels that are quite high. Faculty, on the other hand, have much lower levels of satisfaction and took a downward step from 2006– a signal that things may be deteriorating and require attention.

Overall Satisfaction With Employment
(Percentage of employees responding Satisfied or Very Satisfied)

Overall Impression of Quality
(Percentage of employees responding Excellent or Good)
NDUS accountability measures dictate that UND should periodically evaluate employers of its graduates to ensure the institution is providing them with knowledgeable and capable employees. The Employer Satisfaction Survey is mailed to employers of recent graduates, and it asks them to evaluate employee performance in four general areas: knowledge and understanding, qualities generally expected of employees, general skills, and specialized skills. A total of 129 employers completed a survey in 2008 for a response rate of 24%.

Employers report generally positive attitudes regarding their employees who are UND graduates. UND exceeds means for all NDUS institutions when overall satisfaction is concerned. Mean scores are typically above the “satisfied” level for items as well.

Employers are very likely to hire other graduates of UND based on their previous experience. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), employers of UND graduates reported a mean of 4.30 in 2008. This is higher than the mean of 4.27 reported by employers of UND graduates in 2006. It is also higher than the mean of 4.17 reported by employers of graduates from all NDUS institutions.