



# Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys (SPS) Guide: Sharing and Using Your Results

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## Introduction

This guide provides you with ideas and suggestions for actively sharing and using your results from the Encoura+RNL Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys (SPS).

The surveys which are included in the Satisfaction and Priorities Survey family are:

- **Student Satisfaction Inventory™** (SSI) for undergraduate students at four-year and two-year institutions.
- **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.
- **Priorities Survey for Online Learners™** (PSOL) for students in online learning programs.
- **Institutional Priorities Survey™** (IPS) for campus personnel at four-year and two-year institutions. This survey is directly parallel to the SSI.

If you have questions at any time while you are reviewing your results, please do not hesitate to contact [StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com).

## Why it is important to share and use your results

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



Data left on a shelf has no power; data actively used and discussed provides the opportunity to initiate significant change on campus.

As you review your data, it is important to keep in mind how you will share the results on your campus. **The greatest power of the data comes when the findings are shared, discussed, and analyzed by multiple constituencies on campus.**

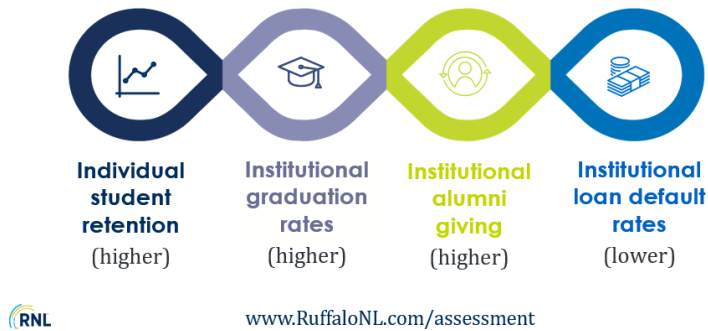
Here are a few examples of the many ways campuses use their satisfaction-priorities data:

- Determining which student success resources could be most effective.
- Maintaining a quality student experience.
- Benchmarking the student experience against competing institutions.
- Improving campus efficiency and collaboration among departments.
- Prioritizing campus development projects.
- Documenting improvements year over year for accreditation purposes.
- Identifying campus strengths to promote in recruitment communications.

## Student satisfaction is linked to institutional metrics

Student satisfaction has been linked to higher individual student retention, higher institutional graduation rates, higher institutional alumni giving, and, in some cases, lower institutional loan default rates.

### Student Satisfaction is linked with:

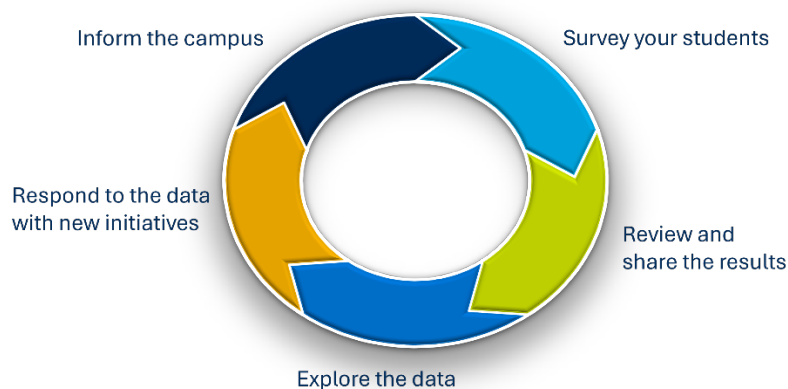


These are critical metrics that are regularly tracked by institutions. As you make the case to continue to assess student satisfaction regularly on your campus, be sure to highlight the research in this area.

In order to improve student satisfaction on your campus, you must intentionally take action with your data and - communicate with students about what has been done and why.

## Take a systematic approach to using your data

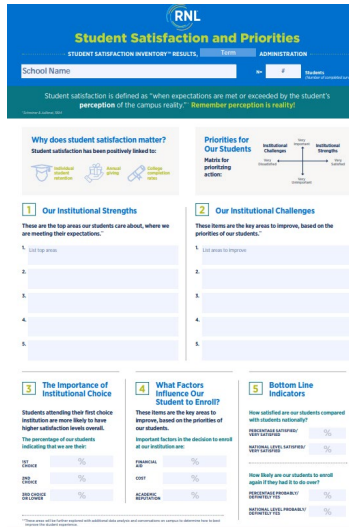
It is important to follow all five of these steps between survey administrations.



## Resources

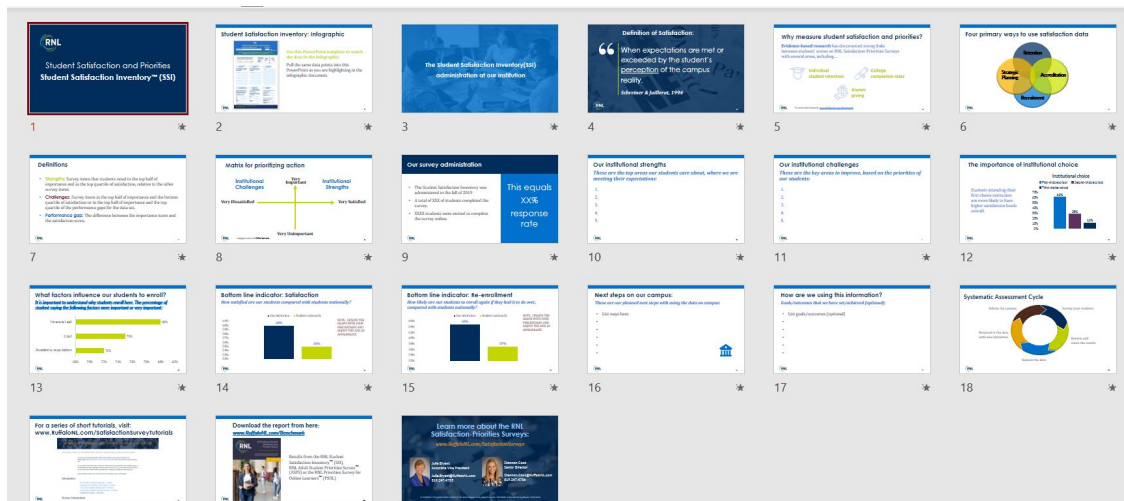
There are a variety of resources available on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site to assist you with sharing your results on campus. Be sure to review the following templates found on the [Data Sharing webpage](#):

## Customizable Infographic



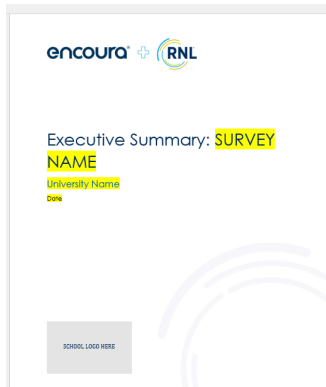
This infographic is an attractive way to highlight your key data points. You can pull in your data from the Executive Summary tab of the Main Report. Campuses have shared that they use the Infographic as a poster on campus, as handouts for meetings with leadership, and for social media posts. You can also consider doing separate versions of the Infographic for data specific to your majors/programs or by unique campus locations.

## PowerPoint Template



The PowerPoint template helps you to identify and organize the critical data points to present to groups on campus.

## Executive Summary Word Document



The Executive Summary Word document provides a suggested outline of the data points you may want to summarize from your results to document your administration and share with your leadership, accreditation committee, or other groups on campus who are interested in an overview of the results. This template provides suggestions for you on what you want to cover, but you can add to or eliminate anything that you do not think is relevant.

All of the templates can be found in this location: [satisfaction-priorities-surveys-result-interpretation \(ruffalonl.com\)](https://ruffalonl.com/satisfaction-priorities-surveys-result-interpretation)

Please note that they are specific to the survey version you are using: SSI, ASPS, and PSOL.

## Excel Template: Download Your Results

Your results can be downloaded from the Client Portal by exporting each of the tables into an Excel document. A template to assist with this process can be found here on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site.

## Excel Template: Recommendation Score / Net Promoter Score

**Calculation spreadsheet:** The Recommendation scores are found at the end of your raw data file. These responses are in response to the following item: “How likely is it that you would recommend our institution to a friend or colleague? (0-Not at all likely → 10 – Extremely Likely)”. For additional context on reviewing and calculating this item, see the Interpretive Guide. An Excel document is available to calculate the Recommendation Score / Net Promoter Score (NPS) for you. This can be found on the [Reporting Resource page](#) under the "Raw Data Support" section.

## Executive Summary Tab: PPT / PDF to Print

An Executive Summary Export Template has been created (found on the [Report Resource](#) page *within SPS Report Export*) to walk you through easily creating a PDF document of the Executive Summary tab that can be printed or saved. This is another option for sharing this Executive Summary view, in addition to the customizable [Infographic](#) that is referenced earlier in this section.



## Recommended Check List for Sharing and Using Your Data

Task	Completed
Review Main Report, Year to Year Report (as appropriate)	
Share high-level results with leadership	
Meet with departments to review data that is relevant to them (academic affairs, student affairs, registrar, enrollment management, etc.)	
Communicate strengths and challenges to students (posters, social media, campus gatherings, email), as well as planned next-step action items	
Prepare a press release for local media to emphasize the positive results	
Review data by key demographic subpopulations	
Meet with program level departments to review relevant data	
Review open-ended comments for additional context around the results	
Have brainstorming discussions with campus leaders and staff regarding strengths and challenges	
Conduct focus groups or listening sessions for more qualitative data from students	
Identify ways to respond to the data: immediate action items, longer-term plans, communication priorities	
Implement new initiatives	
When a new policy/procedure is implemented, communicate to the students: "You said this, we did that in response."	
Track and document initiatives between survey administrations	
Use data to provide the student voice in strategic planning	
Use the data to document areas of improvement for accreditation	
Highlight institutional strengths when recruiting new students	
Revisit data subsets and potential initiatives on a regular basis	
Before your next survey administration, communicate with students about what has been done based on their previous feedback	

## Sharing the Results on Campus

Communicating the results from your survey is critical to making changes at your institution. In addition to the templates provided, you are also welcome to develop your own presentation and summary. 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.

### Suggested outline for sharing your results

You may want to consider the following outline for developing your own presentation or summary:

- Why your institution is assessing student satisfaction; what are your goals and what do you hope to accomplish with this data.
- When the survey was conducted, how it was administered, and the response rate.
- A demographic overview of the students who completed the survey, using the percentages or N counts from the Demographic Tab. **Note:** The data points reflected in the Executive Summary tab of the Main Report highlight the most critical information to share from your results. You may want to use this as a guide.
- The scales are in order of importance (from the Scale Summary tab). 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; Simply list the scales in descending order of importance, to highlight your students' top priorities.
- Before sharing your strengths and challenges, explain how the categories are defined. You may want to include our Matrix for Prioritizing Action, which is a helpful visual available in the [PowerPoint template](#).
- 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 tab.
- Then share your challenges. Again, list them in descending order of importance, without number scores, as they appear in the Strategic Planning Overview tab.
- Compare your results with the national comparison group. Point out that this is not the focus of your analysis, but it is also important to not operate in a vacuum, so you need to know how relatively satisfied your students are. Refer to the Strategic Planning Overview indicators of green or red triangles to show where your students are significantly more or less satisfied than the national group on items that matter to students. 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 that should be further explored.

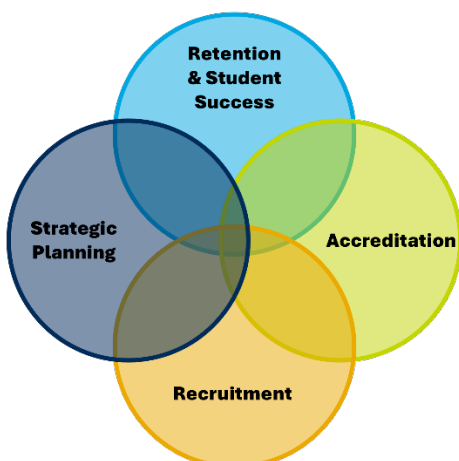
- Share the item percentage responses for your items of strength and challenge to help the campus community understand the importance and satisfaction levels. These percentages can help to emphasize and enhance your audience's understanding of the data points (located in the Item Percentage tab).
- Highlight 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. These scores can be found in the Item Percentage tab.
- As a bottom-line indicator, share the summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores from the Summary tab, 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. These scores reflect well in the bar charts. Remember that these items have been linked to higher individual student retention, higher institutional graduation rates, higher alumni giving, and, in some cases, lower loan default rates. The way you will move the needle on these items is with the actions you take to celebrate your strengths and respond to your challenges.
- Be sure to conclude your presentation or report with identified next steps, such as forming a committee to further respond to the data, conducting focus groups to gather more information, establishing timelines for responding to top issues, and when you are planning to survey students again in the future. 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.
- Note: The data reflected in the Executive Summary tab of your Main Report is the most critical information to share with your leadership. Use this view as your guide when sharing your results.

## Audiences to share the results with

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
- Marketing team
- Faculty
- Staff, especially those with face-to-face interaction with students
- Student government leadership
- General student population
- Parents of students
- Alumni and
- Local community

## Multiple Ways to Use the Data



Campuses report that they use the data from the SPS instruments 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.

### Use the Data for Strategic Planning

The results from the 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, providing the student voice for the planning process. 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.

- 1. Incorporate challenges that cannot be fixed immediately.**
- 2. Align budget dollars on top priority issues.**
- 3. Compare externally with aspirant institutions.**

### 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. There is a link between student satisfaction and individual student retention as well as institutional graduation rates. You may want to focus 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 on campus to let everyone know what has been done and why.

- 1. Focus on campus climate items.**
- 2. Celebrate your strengths.**
- 3. Improve items that students care about.**
- 4. Communicate regarding the changes made.**

## 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. Regional accrediting agencies expect institutions to regularly gather data from students. The results from the 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 document areas where satisfaction levels have improved significantly. Based on feedback from hundreds of institutions, these survey tools 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.

You are encouraged to establish a systematic assessment process in order to capture your students' perceptions regularly over time, rather than just surveying because the accreditation or re-affirmation 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 Encoura+RNL website for all regional accreditors. Visit [www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation) to learn more. These documents match the individual items on the surveys to the appropriate accreditation criteria.

- 1. Match satisfaction survey items to the accreditation criteria.**
- 2. Respond to your challenge items.**
- 3. Document your strengths.**
- 4. Show improvements over time.**

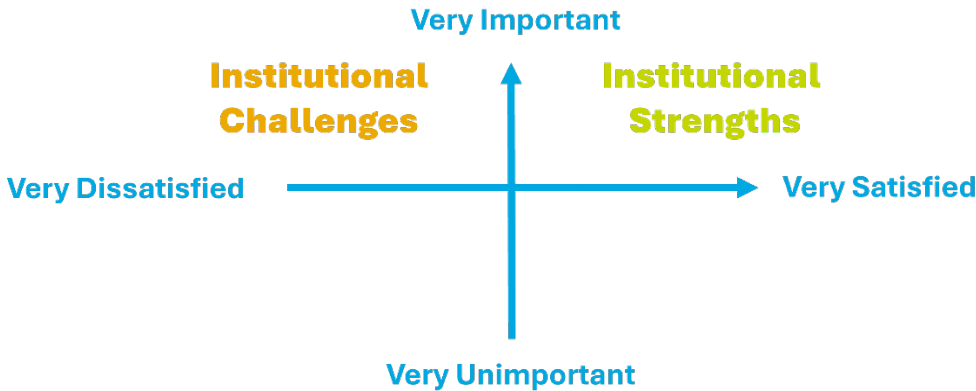
## Use the Data for Recruitment

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 you are able to deliver. 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.

- 1. Identify factors in the decision to enroll.**
- 2. Highlight your strengths in your recruitment materials.**
- 3. Understand perceptions of admissions and financial aid.**

## Using Your Strengths and Challenges

**Matrix for Prioritizing Action:** Use the matrix below to conceptualize your results.



*See the SPS Interpretive Guide for the definitions of strengths and challenges.*

### 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.

#### *Ideas for using your strengths:*



1. **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.
2. **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 on the college website, in parent and alumni newsletters, and in other direct mail pieces and social media interactions with 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.
3. 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. (Refer to the press release template that is found later in this document for an example of what to share).
4. 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. Refer to the current National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report for more information.

## Respond to your challenges!

Most institutions conduct student satisfaction assessments to identify areas for campus improvement. These improvement priorities are highlighted in the list of challenges. **Challenges are the areas that students 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.

### Conduct focus groups to better understand your challenges



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 among 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. A resource to help guide the brainstorming sessions is located on the [SPS Client Resources site](#).

Another option, rather than conducting formal focus groups is to hold **listening sessions** on campus. You can station people outside of high traffic areas like the library or student center and ask students to provide you with brief feedback on an item or two from the list of challenges. This information may help you to quickly identify a theme or to better understand an area of concern. You can invite students to be with you as you gather this information, so it feels like students are seeking information from other students.



### *Colleges and universities can approach responses to their challenges in three primary ways:*

- 1. Changing perceptions through information and communication.**
- 2. Implementing quick and easy actions that resolve the issues by changing policies or procedures or what is available.**
- 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.

## Relevant Data for Departments/Populations Across Campus

The findings from the Satisfaction and Priorities Surveys provide relevant information for a variety of campus departments. Outlined below are the data points to share with each specific area.

### Data for Everyone

- Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores
  - These data are linked to individual student retention and graduation rates.
- Top strengths and challenges
  - They are your top priorities for attention.
- Scales in order of importance
  - To make everyone aware of the value placed on each area.
- General comparison to the national comparison group
  - It's important to know how your institution stacks up externally.
- Trends in satisfaction over time (as appropriate)
  - To highlight where satisfaction has improved as a result of actions taken in the past and to guide actions going forward.

*Set the stage for using your satisfaction data by providing all campus constituencies with an understanding of your results.*

### Data for Enrollment Managers

- Percentage of students indicating the institution is their first choice.
- Admissions and financial aid items (strengths and challenges, comparison to the national).
- Key areas of higher satisfaction versus the national comparison group.
- Top strengths for marketing materials.
- Factors in the decision to enroll to see if they line up with current messaging or if anything else should be emphasized.
- Data sliced for in-state and out-of-state students; data for just first-year students.

*Recruiting the right students, with a focus on fit, may lead to better retention in the long term.*

### Data for Academic Affairs

- Instruction and academic advising items (strengths and challenges, comparison to the national).
- Item: Institutional commitment to academic excellence.
- Factor in the decision to enroll: Academic reputation.
- Data sliced by class level and by students' indicated major/program.

*Sharing relevant data will help to get your faculty and deans interested in the results.*



## Data for Student Affairs

- Campus climate, campus life and support service items (strengths and challenges, comparison to the national).
- Items: Sense of belonging, Student made to feel welcome, Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Items related to residence halls, cafeteria, campus activities, career services, and orientation.
- Data sliced by class level, for students living on campus and commuters.

*How do students feel on campus and what support do they need outside of the classroom?*

## Data for Directors of Retention / Student Success

- Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores (because of links to individual student retention and institutional graduation rates).
- Overall strengths to celebrate.
- Overall challenges as priorities for response.
- Campus climate items (strengths and challenges, comparison to the national).
- Items: Sense of belonging, Student made to feel welcome, Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Perception of institutional choice.
- Data sliced by class level and institutional choice.

*Showing students you care about their experience is an excellent way to keep them enrolled at the institution.*

## Data for Accreditation Team

- Satisfaction trends over time, especially tied to any actions that have been taken.
- Survey items mapped to the regional accreditation agency criteria ([www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/accreditation)).
- Satisfaction levels compared with regional comparison groups (SSI only).
- Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores.
- Data sliced by enrollment status and class levels.

*Institutional success and student success go hand in hand. Accreditors want to know that you are regularly gathering and using data on your campus.*

## Data for Directors of Institutional Research

- Program-level data for program reviews.
- Satisfaction trends over time.
- Data points on satisfaction as compared with engagement data points (documentation on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site).
- Student voice data for strategic planning efforts.

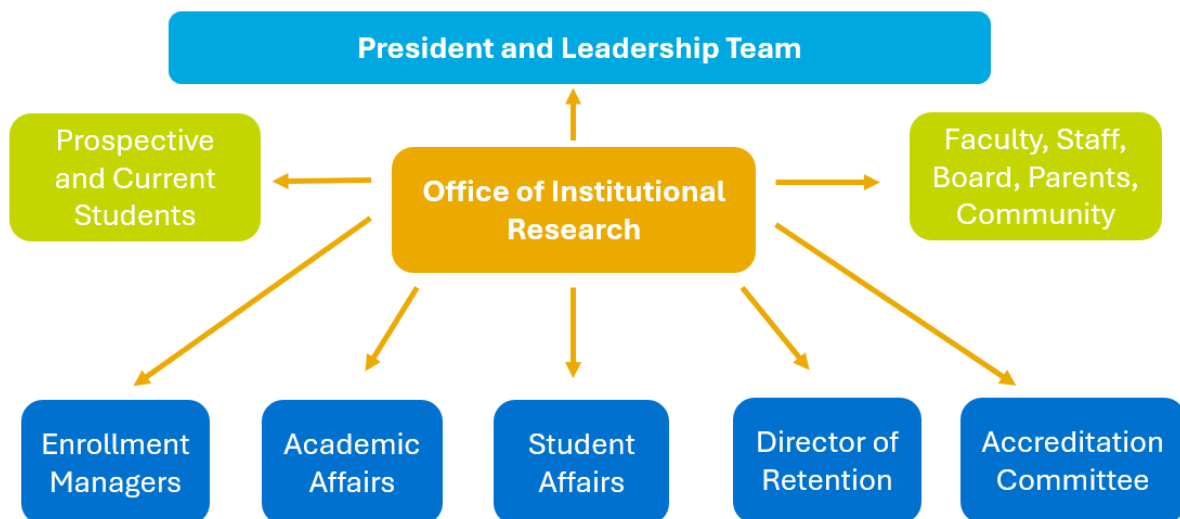
*Student satisfaction data can be a key performance indicator for many institutional efforts.*

## Data for Students

- Celebrate your strengths! Let students know what they think you are doing well.
- Highlight your challenges and what you plan to do about them.
- Share where satisfaction levels have increased as a result of actions taken.
- Review the summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores compared with past years and external comparison groups for a bottom-line indication of the overall student experience.
- Invite students to participate in follow-up discussions about the results and how to make improvements going forward.

*Students care about the results and will want to see how your institution is performing. Keep them informed with the initial results and throughout your process to review and respond to their feedback.*

## Student satisfaction is relevant across campus



## Recommended Demographic Data Slicing

### General guidelines

- Before you launch your survey administration, consider what campus-defined demographic items are going to be most valuable and be sure these are captured (campus location, student athlete, majors/programs, etc.).
- While your survey administration is underway, monitor your response rates in priority demographic areas and encourage participation in certain groups as necessary.
- When you receive your results, confirm you have enough representation in a data set to warrant looking at the demographic subset. (The recommendation is a minimum of 10 students).
- Prioritize demographic variables which reflect the perspectives of minority populations which may not be as apparent in the larger, overall data set. (Example: if you are 80% full-time and 20% part-time, be sure to view the responses of your part-time students).
- To analyze crosstab (Example: Female Sophomores) and collapsed data variables (Example: 25 and older), use the raw data files in Excel or in another data management program.
- Find the right balance between having data that will best inform the work you need to do and not overwhelming yourself and others by trying to look at the data in too many ways.

### Reporting formats options

#### 1. Versus Report

The Versus Report compares two demographic subpopulations to each other from the same administration or as a year-to-year comparison. ***This report format is the best location where majors/programs and campus-defined demographic items can be isolated for review.***

Versus Reports are valuable when you want to focus on one particular subpopulation as compared with another subpopulation internally. These reports highlight where one group is significantly more or less satisfied than another group. These reports will also identify the strengths and challenges in the Strategic Planning Overview tab for the data that is in the left column only.

**IMPORTANT:** The gold star strengths and red flag challenges reflected in the report and in the Strategic Planning Overview tab are for the subpopulation in the **left column of the report**. In addition, two Executive Summary tabs appear, noted with the left column and the right column. These summarize the critical data points for the population that appears in each respective column. Be aware of which population you have selected for the left and right columns accordingly.

#### 2. Single Group Report

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 your Part-time students at your institution compared with Part-time students nationally for your institution type.

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 (for example: first-year students)

because it will provide you with the appropriate corresponding national comparison group for that same demographic variable.

Keep in mind that the campus defined demographic items, including the majors/programs, *should not* be viewed in the Single Group Report since there will be no corresponding national data for these items. You will want to use the Versus Report to isolate data for the campus defined items.

**IMPORTANT:** The gold star strengths and red flag challenges reflected in the report and in the Strategic Planning Overview are for the single subpopulation in the **left column of the report**. The Executive Summary tab in the Single Group Report highlights the relevant data for the demographic subset selected for the left column of the report.

### 3. Comparison Report

Comparison Reports are valuable when comparing student experiences across demographic variables. These reports are presented in a multiple column format with a column for the institution results as a whole and then multiple columns for the demographic subsets you have selected. Comparing and contrasting performance gaps across the different demographic variables is one approach to better understanding different student experiences.

**IMPORTANT:** The strengths and challenges that are identified are for **the data set as a whole and are not specific to any of the demographic subsets**. On the item report segment, you can filter for just the challenges and then compare the responses across the demographic subpopulations.

Key for the chart below:

SSI: Student Satisfaction Inventory

ASPS: Adult Student Priorities Survey

PSOL: Priorities Survey for Online Learners

### Recommended Priority Data Slicing

Data Slice	Survey Versions	Value
<b>Class Level</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	Target initiatives for first-year students and second year students to improve retention; respond to students before they graduate to set the stage for better alumni engagement. Especially helpful for four-year institutions.
<b>Class Load</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	Understand how the experience may be different for full-time and part-time students, especially with course access, availability of services, and financial aid assistance. This data slice may be of greater value to two-year institutions than the class-level slicing.
<b>Major/Programs</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	Capture this campus defined item with the programs you offer and then review the data to identify student perceptions of quality of instruction, timely responses from faculty, course access, and advising.
<b>Campus-defined demographic items</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	These items are for any other data point you want to gather about your students and may be valuable for data slicing. Examples include campus location, student-athlete designations, college affiliation, first-generation student, etc.

## Data Slicing that May Support Targeted Initiatives

Data Slice	Survey Versions	Value
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	Isolate data for underserved populations.
<b>Gender</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	Helpful to understand perceptions of particular gender populations.
<b>Age</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	If serving both traditional-age students as well as those 25 and older, identify unique needs and priorities by age.
<b>Current Enrollment Status</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	If there is a population of students taking evening courses, it can be helpful to isolate data to understand perceptions of safety, access to faculty and support services. On the PSOL, this item identifies students primarily online and primarily on campus, which can be helpful for institutions with on-campus students also taking online courses to see specific challenges from this perspective.
<b>Current Residence</b>	SSI	Especially helpful for residential campuses where a portion of the population may also live off campus, to target activities for residence hall students or commuters.
<b>Residence Classification</b>	SSI, ASPS	May be of value to Enrollment Management to understand perceptions of students from in-state and out-of-state as part of Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) activities.
<b>Employment</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	It may be helpful to identify the priorities of students based on whether they are working full-time, part-time or are not employed, especially with financial aid, billing, and course access. Institutions may also want to identify the perceptions of the students employed part-time on campus, since they are in a unique position as both students and employees.
<b>Institutional Choice</b>	SSI, ASPS	Isolate data to see overall satisfaction levels and identified strengths for students who indicate the institution is their first choice, compared with students who respond with second or third choice. This data can be valuable to Enrollment Management to help position the institution as a first-choice institution. Students at their first choice tend to have higher satisfaction levels.
<b>GPA</b>	SSI, ASPS	It can be beneficial to identify challenges for students with lower GPAs to be sure the institution is in the best position to assist them with being academically successful, especially with advising and faculty interactions.

## Data Slicing for Targeted Initiatives, continued

Data Slice	Survey Versions	Value
<b>Disabilities</b>	SSI	Isolate students with self-identified disabilities to be sure the institution is adequately serving them.
<b>Educational Goal</b>	SSI, ASPS, PSOL	If the institution is serving student populations with different degree tracks, isolating the data by educational goal can inform perceptions of their experience accordingly.
<b>Marital Status</b>	ASPS, PSOL	Needed support services for students with children may be identified with data slices in this area.
<b>Current Plans</b>	PSOL	Can clarify perceptions of students who plan to obtain their degree online as compared with students who are only taking a few online courses to see how satisfaction may vary.
<b>Current and Previous Online Enrollment</b>	PSOL	Provides institutions with a sense of comfort levels for students with the online environment based on current and previous online experiences and can identify challenges that may require better communication for less experienced students.

## Suggested approach for comparing responses across populations

You may want to create an Excel document with all of the items on the survey along with the indication of the item being a strength or a challenge for the total population. The subsequent columns can reflect different demographic variables and if the item is a strength or challenge for just that subpopulation. This is a manual process but can be a valuable way to compare and contrast perceived strengths and challenges to better identify where to target initiatives. An Excel template is available on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site to provide you with step by step guidance on how to use the Versus Report or the Single Group Report to identify specific strengths and challenges for the subpopulations and paste them into a newly created Excel.

### Example:

No	Item	Total Population	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
1	Most students feel a sense of belonging here.				Challenge	
2	The campus staff are caring and helpful.		Strength			
3	Faculty care about me as an individual.					
4	Admissions staff are knowledgeable.				Challenge	
5	Financial aid counselors are helpful.	Challenge		Challenge	Challenge	
6	My academic advisor is approachable.	Strength		Strength	Strength	Strength
7	The campus is safe and secure for all students.	Challenge	Challenge		Challenge	Challenge
8	The content of the courses within my major is valuable.	Challenge	Challenge	Strength	Challenge	Challenge
9	A variety of intramural activities are offered.					
10	Administrators are approachable to students.					
11	Billing policies are reasonable.					
12	Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.	Challenge			Challenge	

## Questions to Help Move You to Action

This section provides a variety of questions to assist you with getting the conversations started on your campus as you review the different segments of your results in the dashboards of the Client Portal. These questions may assist your campus with better understanding your results and determining how to best take action to improve the student experience.

### Your Main Report

#### The Executive Summary Tab

- Who needs to see this information on campus?
  - Executive Leadership
  - Deans/Directors
  - Faculty
  - Students
- How are you going to present and distribute these results?
- Have you accessed the customizable Infographic on the SPS Client Resources site to plug these data into for an even more visually attractive way to share the high-level data?

#### Your Demographics

- Are the results representative of your student population or do you need to review the student feedback within the context of who completed the survey?
  - Example: Are your Full-time students overrepresented, so the results may not reflect the experience of the Part-time students?
- Which populations will be priorities for data slicing and who will you want to share those results with? (It is recommended that you have at least 10 students in a subpopulation data set for the results to be worth reviewing). A few priority areas at most campuses:
  - Class level
  - Enrollment Status
  - Majors/programs
- What is your percentage of students indicating you are their first-choice institution? (For the SSI and ASPS).
  - Has this number increased or decreased from your last administration?
  - How does this perception compare with your national comparison group? (You can see the demographic details for the national norm groups on the SPS Client Resources site).

## Your Strategic Planning Overview

- As you review your strengths, do they feel reflective of the student experience?
  - Are there any surprises with your strengths?
  - Who needs to see and celebrate your strengths?
  - How can these strengths be incorporated into your marketing and recruitment communications?
- As you consider your challenges, are they reflective of the student experience?
  - Are there any surprises?
  - Are there areas where you may have already prioritized a response by the institution, and students may just not be aware?
  - Are there places where you need more information in order to know how to best respond?
    - Use data slices, review the qualitative comments, conduct conversations on campus with students and with faculty/staff to unpack the challenges.
  - Who needs to see this information and be a part of the discussion to make improvements?
  - Where can actions be potentially addressed within a department or a division on campus?
  - Can you communicate better or differently with students about any of the challenge items to possibly change their perceptions?
  - What is one thing you can do to change the student experience on a challenge item?
  - After you address one item, what is the next item you want to focus on?
  - Using the year to year report, identify how the perceptions on these challenge items have changed over time? (Significantly higher satisfaction = you are going in the right direction; significantly lower satisfaction = you may need to further prioritize how you are responding).

## Your Scale Report

- When the data is sorted by level of importance at your institution, what category is at the top?
- How do your students' levels of satisfaction compare with your national comparison group (or other external comparison groups available to you)?
- Are there any surprises with the areas that matter to your students or where they are significantly more or less satisfied than students externally?
- Who on campus needs to see the data for particular categories?
  - Note: you can see the items within the scales on the Item Report tab, using the filter at the top to select categories. The identified results can be exported from this view to be distributed to the appropriate divisions on campus.



### Your Item Report

- What data cut-offs determine why something is a strength or a challenge?
  - Note: Follow the instructions in the SPS General Interpretive Guide to sort the data to see your mid-point in importance, upper quartile in satisfaction and upper quartile in performance gaps.
- How are the items of priority (gold stars and red flags) aligned within particular categories?
  - Note: as indicated above, use the filter in the upper left corner to isolate the items within the scales/categories.

### Your Item Percentage Report

- How do your importance and satisfaction percentages match up with the external comparison group?
- How can you use these numbers to help people make more sense of the results? (They are often more intuitive than the average scores in the Item Report tab.)
  - Where do you want to use these percentages in bar graphs or with sharing the results on campus?
- How do the items rated for importance only, the factors in the decision to enroll, align with how you currently market and position the institution?
  - Are there areas where you may want to work to increase or decrease students' levels of importance on various items?

### Your Summary Report

- How do your average scores match up with the external comparison group?
  - Are your students significantly more or less satisfied?
  - Are your students significantly more or less likely to enroll?
- Based on your current retention rates and graduation rates, are the results in this tab a surprise or do they confirm what you suspected? (The research shows a link between student scores here and their likelihood to be retained as individuals, as well a link with overall institutional graduation rates.)
- What are your plans to maintain or improve these scores based on the actions you are taking to celebrate your strengths and respond to your challenges?

## **Your Year-to-Year Report**

### **Your Demographics**

- Is the number of total students in each data set comparable or do you have a lot more (or less) in one year compared with the other?
- Are there any demographic variables where participation rates have shifted?
  - Example: Do you have more Full-time students this year than you did last year?  
This is important to note because shifts in particular demographic representation can influence satisfaction levels.

### **Your Strategic Planning Overview**

- Have any of your gold star strengths or red flag challenges from your current administration shifted significantly compared with your previous administration?
  - Green triangles indicate significantly higher satisfaction with the comparison group.
  - Red triangles indicate significantly lower satisfaction with the comparison group.

### **Your Scale Report**

- At the big picture level, how have your satisfaction levels shifted over time?
- Are there any areas that are more important now than they were the last time you administered the survey?

### **Your Item Report**

- When looking at the far right difference column, where have you seen the greatest shifts in satisfaction, positively or negatively, compared with the previous year? (Be sure to note if the shift is significant with a star indicated in the SS column and using the legend at the bottom of the page for level of significance).
  - Can you tie these shifts to anything that is different on campus since the last administration?

### **Your Summary Report**

- How do your average scores match up with the previous year?
  - Are your students significantly more or less satisfied?
  - Are your students significantly more or less likely to enroll?
- What actions are you planning as a result?

## **Your Data Slicing Reports**

### **Your Demographics in the Single Group Report or the Versus Report**

- Do you have enough students in this data set to make it worth reviewing? (It is recommended you have a minimum of 10 students.)

### **The Executive Summary Tabs – Left and Right in the Versus Report and just one in the Single Group Report**

- How do the overall satisfaction and likelihood to re-enroll percentages compare to your population as a whole?
- How do the factors in the decision to enroll compare to your overall population?
- Is the institutional first-choice percentage higher or lower (for the SSI and ASPS) than the overall population?
- Are there unique strengths and challenges for each population?
  - Note: you will need to manually compare and contrast the strengths and challenges for each subpopulation. An example of an Excel format is provided earlier in this document and the template can be found on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site.
- How will you respond to the identified strengths and challenges for each targeted population?
  - How can the strengths be celebrated at the subpopulation level?
  - Are there lessons to be learned for a unique strength that could be expanded to improve the student experience for another subpopulation where the same item may be a challenge?
  - Can you communicate better or differently with students in the demographic subgroup about any of the challenge items to potentially change their perceptions?
  - What is one thing you can do to change the student experience on a challenge item?

### **Your Item Report in the Single Group or Versus Report**

- When looking at the far right difference column, where are your students significantly more or less satisfied than students in the national comparison demographic population in the Single Group Report or as compared with students internally between the two populations you selected in the Versus Report? Or alternatively, how has the satisfaction shifted for the same demographic population compared with a previous administration in the Versus Report?
- How does this information inform your priorities and the actions you want to take?

We hope these questions help guide your next steps with the results from your Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys. Please contact [StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com) if additional direction is needed.

## Presentation Suggestions

You may have opportunities to present the data in various settings and to different constituencies on campus (see recommended data points by department/population earlier in this document). Be sure to use the PowerPoint template located on the [SPS Client Resources site](#).

Here are some suggestions on what to cover, depending on the time you have available to present to the group.

Time available	Data to Highlight
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share when the survey was conducted.</li> <li>• How many students completed the survey.</li> <li>• Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores compared over time and externally.</li> <li>• Offer the opportunity to discuss the results further.</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share when the survey was conducted.</li> <li>• How many students completed the survey.</li> <li>• <i>High level demographic indicators (gender, class level, institutional choice).</i></li> <li>• <i>Strengths and challenges for the population overall.</i></li> <li>• Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores compared over time and externally.</li> <li>• Offer the opportunity to discuss the results further.</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share when the survey was conducted.</li> <li>• How many students completed the survey.</li> <li>• High-level demographic indicators (gender, class level, institutional choice).</li> <li>• Strengths and challenges for the population overall.</li> <li>• <i>Trends over time with the results (items on and off the list of strengths and challenges, satisfaction increases and decreases).</i></li> <li>• Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores compared over time and externally.</li> <li>• Offer the opportunity to discuss the results further and to meet with individual departments.</li> </ul>
60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share when the survey was conducted.</li> <li>• How many students completed the survey.</li> <li>• High-level demographic indicators (gender, class level, institutional choice).</li> <li>• Strengths and challenges for the population overall.</li> <li>• Trends over time with the results (items on and off the list of strengths and challenges, satisfaction increases and decreases).</li> <li>• Summary satisfaction and re-enrollment scores compared over time and externally.</li> <li>• <i>Results for key demographic subpopulations (class level, class load, and depending on the group, large majors/programs).</i></li> <li>• <i>Allow time for brainstorming on possible ways to respond to the data.</i></li> <li>• Offer the opportunity to discuss the results further and to meet with individual departments.</li> </ul>

## Establish a Group/Committee to Work with the Data

You may want to establish a Student Survey group on campus to collaborate on working with the data and identifying potential action steps.

### Recommended Representation

We encourage you to have representation in this group from:

- Institutional Research
- Student Affairs
- Academic Affairs
- Enrollment Management
- Faculty
- Students

### Be sure this group has:

- Decision makers
- People with respect and clout on campus
- Doers (not just talkers)
- A budget

### Potential responsibilities:

- Gather additional feedback from students, faculty, and staff.
- Identify potential responses.
- Prioritize where and how you will respond.
- Determine who is responsible for implementation.
- Establish action plans to hold people accountable.
- Set a timeline.
- Identify dollars where needed.
- Track what has been done between survey administrations.

### Important questions to consider:


- What is actionable?
- What is perception?
- What is beyond your control, so you just need to be aware of it?
- What can you do as an individual?
- What can you do within a particular department?
- What can you do to support the institution as a whole to improve?

## The Power of Communication

Communication is a powerful way to impact perceptions. Sometimes you don't need to make a change in a policy or procedure, you just need to be willing to talk about the issue and provide more context. You may want to work with your marketing department for communication steps.

### When and what to communicate

#### *When and What to Communicate*

- When receiving results  communicate about the current satisfaction levels and areas of importance
- When gathering information  communicate to change perceptions about the ways things currently are
- When making changes  communicate that the change was made
- When preparing for the next survey administration  communicate what has been done since the last survey administration

### Potential communication vehicles

- Announcements on campus by faculty, leadership and other students
- Email announcements to students and to their families
- Posting on your website
- Meetings with student government and activity groups
- Social media
- Posters on campus, table tents in the student center

## Poster examples

Suggestion: Use the SPS Infographic (found on the [Data Sharing Webpage](#) in the SPS Client Resources site) to create your own poster or use the following examples.

**RNL Student Satisfaction and Priorities**  
STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS | 2023 | ADMINISTRATION

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student satisfaction is defined as "when expectations are met or exceeded by the student's perception of the campus reality." *Remember perception is reality!*

**Why does student satisfaction matter?**  
Student satisfaction has been positively linked to:

- Retention
- Academic Success
- Financial Aid
- Employment

**Priorities for Our Students**  
Institutional Challenge | Institutional Strength | Institutional Priority

**1 Our Institutional Strengths**  
These are the top areas our students care about, where we are meeting their expectations.

1. List top areas
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**2 Our Institutional Challenges**  
These items are the key areas to improve, based on the priorities of our students.

1. List areas to improve
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**3 The Importance of Institutional Choice**  
Students attending their first choice institution are more likely to have higher satisfaction levels overall. The percentage of our students indicating that was as follows:

Year	Percentage
2021-2022	%
2020-2021	%
2019-2020	%

**4 What Factors Influence Our Student to Enroll?**  
These items are the key areas to improve, based on the priorities of our students. Important factors in the decision to enroll at our institution are:

Factor	Percentage
Academic Reputation	%
Financial Aid	%
Location	%
Campus Environment	%
Faculty/Staff	%

**5 Bottom Line Indicators**  
How satisfied are our students compared with similar institutions?  
2022-2023 Survey

Indicator	Percentage
Academic Reputation	%
Financial Aid	%
Location	%
Campus Environment	%
Faculty/Staff	%

How likely are our students to enroll again if they had to do so?  
2022-2023 Survey

Indicator	Percentage
Academic Reputation	%
Financial Aid	%
Location	%
Campus Environment	%
Faculty/Staff	%

For more information, contact: \_\_\_\_\_



## Press Release Outline and Sample

As you consider your communication opportunities, keep in mind that you can also share your SPS results with constituencies outside of the institution. It is especially important to best position the positive results from the data you collected if you draw enrollment from your local area.

Here is an outline and an example to follow when working with your marketing and public relations office to create a press release about your satisfaction survey results.

### Press Release Outline

- Begin with an overall positive statement about the survey results. Ideas include how you match up nationally, how your satisfaction levels have improved since your previous administration or an area where there is especially high satisfaction levels that are also highly valued by students.
- Provide additional information on the results, including details on which areas were higher in student satisfaction or improved over time. Use the item percentage report and the percentages from the summary report to provide numbers that will make sense to people.
- Note: you can find the details about your national comparison group on the [SPS Client Resources Site](#).
- Include information on the number of students who completed the survey, your overall response rate, when the survey was conducted and, if you have administered the survey before, share a reference to your previous administration and indicate your typical survey cycle. You can also provide a link to more information about the survey you administered on the [Website](#).
- Include a quote from your president or a member of your top leadership team about why you are excited about these results and why you feel it is important to gather student feedback data. Share how these data support other efforts at the institution.
- Highlight a couple of your top strengths, along with the satisfaction percentage (gold star items with data from the item percentage report).
- Mention a couple of areas where there is room for improvement (your red flag challenges) and how the institution plans to address those areas in the future. This can be as simple as a general reference to exploring the issues further in the future.
- You may want to mention the percentage of students who indicated your institution as their first choice (if that is a strong number) and any key factors students indicated for choosing to enroll at your institution.
- Be sure to provide a contact person at the institution for more information about the survey results.
- You can also provide the survey methodology with the additional details about your administration.



## Press Release Sample

### **The University shows consistent high satisfaction among students in survey findings**

*Student satisfaction instrument from Encoura+RNL found University students indicating higher satisfaction than the 2024 national benchmark*

The University is pleased to share findings from its recent administration of the Encoura+RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) revealing high satisfaction scores among currently enrolled students at the University. The survey is administered every two years and students completing the survey this year indicated higher satisfaction than the national benchmark comprised of more than 200 private institutions across the U.S. This higher level of satisfaction with the University stretched across many of the benchmark items – covering areas such as Instructional Effectiveness, Academic Advising, Recruitment and Financial Aid and Campus Climate by as much as 10 percentage points.

Sixty-five percent of the University students indicated being either satisfied or very satisfied overall with their college experience, a gain of five percentage points from the previous survey conducted in the spring of 2024, and twelve percentage points higher than the national benchmark of 53%.

“Our students’ satisfaction with their learning experience at the University helps to validate the work and initiatives we have undertaken to ensure support of that positive trajectory for their academic journey,” states the Provost. “We are delighted with the findings of the survey showing an overall increase in student satisfaction, and how we compare favorably to other institutions. Over the last few years, we’ve undertaken transformational work through our student support initiatives and our on-going commitment to meeting students where they are and to providing them with what they need.”

The [SSI instrument from Encoura+RNL](#) measures the satisfaction and priorities of students enrolled in undergraduate programs at public and private four-year institutions. The survey, which was completed by more than 90,000 students from over 200 participating four-year private institutions over the past three academic years, identifies what is important to students and examines their satisfaction with these items. The University Institutional Research office administered the SSI to University students in the spring of 2026. Over 600 University students participated in the survey for a 20% participation rate, well within the response rate expected for this survey and up three percentage points over the previous administration.

“Our students are responding to the survey in greater numbers and they’re placing importance on more aspects of their higher education experience,” shares the Provost. “This tells us that our students know that we’re listening to them and that we are responsive to these survey findings.”

The results showed high student satisfaction with areas they indicated as important or very important to their student experience. High priorities for students included:

- “Nearly all of my faculty are knowledgeable in their fields” (76% student satisfaction).
- “My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major” (75% student satisfaction).
- “Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours” (74% student satisfaction).
- “I am able to experience intellectual growth here” (73% student satisfaction).

Students also indicated high satisfaction with items including the commitment to academic excellent (66% satisfaction), major requirements being clear and reasonable (65% satisfaction) and the campus being well maintained (64% satisfaction).

In addition, the survey identified areas of opportunity; a crucial set of insights tailored to each institution that participates in the survey. The University will further explore and respond to these top priority areas including addressing student perceptions with the ability to register for classes with few conflicts, providing adequate financial aid and faculty providing timely feedback about student progress in a course. These are all common issues among students at four-year private institutions nationally as well. The recommended approach to these results is one of continuous quality improvement where every institution has areas to celebrate and priority areas for improvement.

“The survey is a critical tool for informing ongoing efforts to strengthen the aspects that support our students and assess areas of opportunity to improve,” states the Provost. “We are dedicated to students’ success, and we will continue our work as a community to further enhance the educational journeys of our students.”

The survey noted that 70% of the students responding to the survey considered the University to be their first-choice institution, as compared with 64% of students in the national comparison group. In addition, students noted that cost, financial aid, and academic reputation were key factors in their decision to enroll in the University.

For a more detailed overview of the survey findings, please contact [IR@University.edu](mailto:IR@University.edu).

**Survey Methodology:** The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) from Encoura+RNL was administered by the University IR office, and was open for student submissions beginning January 30, 2026, through February 28, 2026. The entire population of 3000 actively enrolled undergraduate students were invited to complete the survey. The survey closed with 600 respondents for an overall completion rate of 20%.

## Ideas for Responding to Challenge Items

It's not necessary to respond to every item on your list of challenges, however, you may want to target key areas where you can get something done. There may be multiple approaches to the areas identified as challenges and these are some ideas to consider. You will be able to identify additional ways to respond at your campus based on the feedback from your students, faculty, and staff and based on the unique situation at your institution. These suggestions are shared for your consideration.

### Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.

**Explore:** Data by class level; by program; by enrollment status.

**Focus group question:** What does tuition being worthwhile mean to you?

**Just do it:** Work to improve "little" but important areas that may be highly visible to students (i.e., Wi-Fi, printer access, sidewalk repair, etc.)

**Future plans:** Conduct price sensitivity research to assess how students feel about the cost to attend.

**Change perceptions with information:** Track and publish employment outcomes for graduates, invite alumni to campus to share their experiences in person, and use social media to highlight student success, educational quality, and other points that demonstrate your institution's value.

### I am able to register for classes with few conflicts.

**Explore:** Data by class level; by program.

**Focus group question:** What conflicts have you experienced with registration?

**Just do it:** Add online seats for hybrid course options.

**Future plans:** Add sections of high-demand courses with additional faculty.

**Change perceptions with information:** Let students know the registration process for who gets access to courses and when; Inform them of improvements made.

### Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.

**Explore:** Data by class level; by program.

**Focus group question:** What do you consider timely feedback?

**Just do it:** Work with faculty to identify consistent response times.

**Future plans:** Utilize appropriate platforms to share student progress.

**Change perceptions with information:** Frequently inform students of the expected response times for emails and returned phone calls and include it as a footer on all faculty signature lines. In addition, make sure to highlight in the syllabus, the turnaround times for grades on quizzes and papers. Announce these times again when assignments are due.

## Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

**Explore:** Data by class level; by program.

**Focus group question:** What does faculty being fair and unbiased mean to you?

**Just do it:** Meet with faculty to share student perceptions and explore what it means to them and how they could potentially change student perceptions.

**Future plans:** Implement online platforms for reporting grades and expand opportunities for faculty to communicate with students about why they are receiving the grades they are.

**Change perceptions with information:** Share grading rubrics and metrics with students as appropriate.

## The quality of instruction in most of my classes is excellent.

**Explore:** Data by class level; by program.

**Focus group question:** What does quality instruction mean to you?

**Just do it:** Work with faculty in particular departments to determine where there are opportunities for improvement.

**Future plans:** Implement training programs for new faculty members to help them learn how to best teach in their subject area.

**Change perceptions with information:** Help students to understand different teaching methods and why certain ones are best for particular types of content being taught.

## Financial aid counselors are helpful.

**Explore:** Data by class level; current class load (full-time, part-time)

**Focus group question:** What are your experiences with financial aid?

**Just do it:** Implement customer service training for front-line staff and remind them of the important role they play in initial and continued student enrollment.

**Future plans:** Budget for additional staff and systems to handle financial aid inquiries at key times.

**Change perceptions with information:** Be transparent and clear in your financial aid communications. Break down complex information into easier sections and be sure students know who they can talk to with questions.

## Financial aid awards are announced in time.

**Explore:** Data by class level; current class load (full-time, part-time).

**Focus group question:** What are your experiences with financial aid?

**Just do it:** Identify gaps in service and streamline.

**Future plans:** Add financial aid staff as needed.

**Change perceptions with information:** Share with students (and families) their responsibility for meeting financial aid deadlines; break financial aid information down into smaller nuggets.

## Billing policies are reasonable.

**Explore:** Data by class level; current class load (full-time, part-time).

**Focus group question:** Are the billing policies reasonable?

**Just do it:** Change policies so payments are not due until after financial aid has been dispersed.

**Future plans:** Add automatic withdrawal options for monthly payments.

**Change perceptions with information:** Send a communication to students (and parents of traditional-age students) regarding payment options six weeks prior to the start of the semester in the fall and the spring.

## I seldom get the run-around on this campus when seeking information.

**Explore:** Data by class level; current class load (full-time, part-time).

**Focus group question:** Where/when have you experienced run-around here?

**Just do it:** Create good FAQs on your website.

**Future plans:** Consider establishing a one-stop resource in your student center; review your processes and be sure they are streamlined.

**Change perceptions with information:** Widely communicate with students about where they can get answers to their questions.

## The campus is safe and secure for all students.

**Explore:** Data by enrollment status (day, evening); current class load (full-time, part-time); class level; gender

**Focus group question:** Are there locations/situations where you feel unsafe on campus?

**Just do it:** Improve the security staff's presence on campus.

**Future plans:** Increase lighting; implement a security response app for students to use; add security staff.

**Change perceptions with information:** Keep students informed regarding security incidents that are handled quickly; share data points on how safe the campus is and how leadership is focused on keeping students safe. Share this information with students' families as well.

## It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.

**Explore:** Data by class level, program, race/ethnicity, current residence.

**Focus group question:** What does it mean to have an enjoyable experience?

**Just do it:** Add activities of interest to students.

**Future plans:** Look for ways to create a positive culture on campus for students, faculty, staff, and administration.

**Change perceptions with information:** Highlight stories on social media about students who love being at your institution, sharing what they find to be enjoyable.

## What are other institutions saying about satisfaction assessment?

It may be helpful to hear what other client institutions are saying about why they feel satisfaction assessment is important and how they are responding. Feel free to share these quotes below, or to gather some from specific individuals on your campus, as you are positioning your next steps with the data to build momentum and motivation with being responsive.

### Client quotes

“The feedback our students provide to us with the student satisfaction data is a gift that we need to take seriously and use wisely.”

President of an SSI Client Institution

“The more you pay attention to students, the more likely they are to be satisfied.”

SSI Client

“Don’t try to do everything on your challenges list. Target key areas where you can get something done.”

SSI Client

“Focus groups can be very eye opening. What you think an item means to students may not be how they interpret it at all.”

SSI Client

“When we just look at the data at the aggregate level, we don’t know how to move forward, so we get stuck. We need to dive deeper into the subpopulation data to be able to identify specific initiatives.”

SSI Client

## A Word About Encoura+RNL and Additional Resources to Assist You

As of the fall of 2025, Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) has joined Encoura.

By pairing RNL's decades of expertise in student engagement and completion with Encoura's advanced technology and analytics, we can help campuses keep more students engaged, supported, and on track to complete their degrees.

Our mission has always been to help higher education thrive. Now, with greater innovation and resources, we can deliver even more impact.

The combined organizations are distinguished by their powerful portfolio of solutions on the entire lifecycle of enrollment and fundraising, assuring students find the right college or university, graduate on time, secure their first job, and give back to support the next generation. Conferences, research reports, papers, and articles help clients stay on top of current trends.

If based on the feedback from your students on the satisfaction assessments, you feel it would be helpful to improve particular services on your campus, we invite you to contact us for a conversation with one of our experts: [ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com). You can also learn more on our website: [www.RuffaloNL.com](http://www.RuffaloNL.com) or by calling us at 800.876.1117.

### Enrollment Services

- Enrollment Marketing
- Yield and Financial Aid
- Graduate and Online Enrollment
- Consulting and Market Research
- CRM Implementation and Organization

### Student Success

- Motivational Survey Instruments
- Student Retention Predictor
- Satisfaction Assessments: traditional, adult and online learners
- Retention Consulting

### Fundraising

- Donor Engagement Solutions
- Digital Giving
- Major and Planned Giving
- Advancement Services
- Fundraising Consulting
- Lifelong Learning Certificate Program

## Professional Development

- Conferences, Workshops, Webinars
- Research Reports and Blog Articles

## Next steps

1. Review the additional resources that are available on the [SPS Client Resources](#) site.
2. Request a **free** one-hour report review to discuss your data with an experienced 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 campus. The conversations will provide you with guidance on reviewing your reports in the Client Portal and brainstorming on possible next steps for turning your data into actionable initiatives. y
3. Intentionally/Purposefully share and use your results before surveying your students again in the future! Most institutions survey at least once every two years.

## Contact Us

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

- Shannon Cook, Executive Consultant, Student Success Solutions, [Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com)

To schedule an in-depth report discussion at **no charge**, please contact:

- Julie Bryant, Vice President for Student Success, [Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com)

For questions regarding the raw data, or any additional assistance, please contact:

- [StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:StudentSuccessTech@RuffaloNL.com)

## For More Information:

Phone: 800-876-1117

Email: [ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com)

Website: [www.RuffaloNL.com](http://www.RuffaloNL.com)

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