



# Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys

Interpretive Guide Addendum:  
Parent Satisfaction Inventory™



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## Addendum: The Parent Satisfaction Inventory™

The Parent Satisfaction Inventory (PSI) closely parallels the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory™ (SSI). The majority of its items are carefully worded to mirror the items on the SSI. While the SSI is designed to measure students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences, the PSI assesses the priority parents (or guardians) place on the same range of experiences.

By administering the PSI along with the SSI, your institution can determine the areas of priorities for parents and compare them with the perspective of the students, to identify where issues may be viewed differently and to help your campus determine what messages need to be targeted to parents to help impact retention. With the results in hand from the PSI, you can target areas for intervention with greater confidence and be alerted to areas in need of further examination.

The Parent Satisfaction Inventory asks parents or guardians to respond with a level of importance and a level of satisfaction. A performance gap is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score.

The Parent Satisfaction Inventory is available for online completion only. Parents/guardians are typically invited to complete the inventory through an email invitation and two reminder messages. Response rates for parents/guardians average 25 percent.

### Versions of the PSI

The Parent Satisfaction Inventory is currently available in two versions, the four-year college and university, Form A version and the four-year college and university, Form B version. Each version is parallel to the respective Form A or Form B version of the four-year college and university Student Satisfaction Inventory.

### Item Structure on the PSI

- The number of standard items rated for importance and satisfaction is 54 on the Form A version and 50 items on the Form B.
- There is room for up to ten optional items which may be defined by the institution and rated for importance and satisfaction. The text for these items are included in your report.
- The Parent Satisfaction Inventory also includes ten enrollment factors which only ask individuals to respond with an importance rating and do not include satisfaction or performance gap scores.
- Three summary items are included on the PSI, Form A.
- There are a total of 17 standard demographic items; the first seven focus on the child/student and the remaining items focus on the parent/guardian.
- The inventory includes room for two optional demographic items with up to six possible responses (individuals may only select one response). The text for these items is included in your results.
- There is a campus defined item which utilizes four-digit codes which has an unlimited number of responses. The text for these responses is included in your report.

## The Scales

The items on the PSI have been analyzed statistically and conceptually to form comprehensive scales. Note that some items appear on more than one scale. The number of scales for each version is as follows. A description of the scales follows.

### Form A: 11 scales

- Academic Advising Effectiveness
- Campus Climate
- Campus Life
- Campus Support Services
- Concern for the Individual
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness
- Registration Effectiveness
- Safety and Security
- Service Excellence
- Student Centeredness
- *Items not on a scale: 48, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54*

### Form B: 9 Scales

- Academic Advising Effectiveness
- Campus Climate
- Campus Life
- Campus Services
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness
- Registration Effectiveness
- Safety and Security
- Student Centeredness
- *Items not on a scale: 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50*

## Description of Scales

The items on the PSI follow the scale structure of either the SSI, Form A or Form B, as appropriate. Some items appear on more than one scale. The PSI scales and their descriptions are as follows:

**Academic Advising Effectiveness:** Assesses the comprehensiveness of your academic advising program based on the perceptions of the parents. Academic advisors are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge, competence and personal concern for student success, as well as on their approachability.

**Campus Climate:** Assesses the extent to which your institution provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging, as perceived by parents regarding their child's

experiences. This scale also assesses the effectiveness of your institution's channels of communication.

**Campus Life:** Assesses the effectiveness of student life programs offered by your institution as identified by the parents. This scale covers issues from student activities to residence life, as well as campus policies and procedures to determine perceptions of students' rights and responsibilities.

**Campus Support Services/Campus Services:** Assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals, as perceived by parents. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring and career services.

**Concern for the Individual:** Assesses your institution's commitment to treating each student as an individual, as identified by parents. Those groups who deal with students on a personal level (e.g. faculty, advisors) are included in this assessment.

**Instructional Effectiveness:** Assesses the academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence, as perceived by parents. This comprehensive scale covers areas such as the effectiveness of your faculty in and out of the classroom, content of the courses and sufficient course offerings.

**Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness:** Assesses your institution's ability to enroll students in an effective manner, as identified by parents. This scale covers issues such as competence and knowledge of admissions counselors, as well as the effectiveness of financial aid availability.

**Registration Effectiveness:** Assesses issues associated with registration and billing. This scale also measures your institution's commitment to making this process as smooth and effective as possible, as perceived by parents.

**Safety and Security:** Assesses your institution's responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on your campus, as perceived by parents. This scale measures the effectiveness of security personnel and campus facilities.

**Service Excellence:** Assesses the perceived attitude of your staff, especially front-line staff toward students, as identified by parents. This scale pinpoints the areas of your campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably.

**Student Centeredness:** Assesses your campus's efforts to convey to students and families that they are important to your institution. This scale measures the extent to which parents feel that students are welcome and valued.

The items which contribute to each scale can be viewed within your results. Use the filter in the upper left on the Item Report segment to see the items within each scale.

## Interpreting Your Results

General guidelines for reviewing and interpreting your results are provided in the SPS Interpretive Guide. This section provides additional suggestions for reviewing and interpreting your PSI results specifically.

The power for the Parent Satisfaction Inventory is in comparing the perceptions of your parents/guardians with the perceptions of your students, and where applicable with the results from your assessments of your faculty, administration and staff with the Institutional Priorities Survey. You will want to identify areas that may be perceived similarly across the groups and be prepared with an understanding of the areas that may be perceived differently.

## An Approach to Analyzing the Data

One approach to analyzing the SSI and PSI results is to compare the lists of strengths and challenges provided in each data set's Strategic Planning Overview. You will want to identify items which are:

1. **Strengths for both students and parents:** These items are areas that everyone can celebrate and receive positive feedback on. They have full support from students and their families and provide strong opportunities for marketing activities.
2. **Challenges for both students and parents:** The institution should be especially committed to move forward with initiatives in these areas because they are of concern to both students and their families. There are reasons from multiple perspectives to make improvements.
3. **Strengths for students but challenges for parents:** These are areas that provide opportunities to share with the parents/guardians that as an institution, you are actually performing well, based on the perceptions of the students. An institution may want to explore further why parents believe the areas are challenges, but you don't want to spend as much time here as you will with areas indicated as challenges by students.
4. **Challenges for students but strengths for parents:** These are another area which provide an opportunity for dialogue since they are viewed differently by different populations. The emphasis should be on the fact that students see the area as a challenge and additional efforts need to be made to improve the experience for students. Parents/guardians may be advocates for you in these areas and further communication with families to determine their perceptions and how best to share these perceptions with the students may be worthwhile.
5. **Strengths or challenges for one group but not for the other:** These areas present opportunities for further discussion and education about why certain areas are more valued by one group than the other, or why satisfaction levels may be higher or lower in one segment than the other. Areas that are viewed as challenges by parents/guardians, but not by students should be explored to determine if improvements in communication or services need to be implemented for families. However, the challenges identified by students should still be the primary focus of significant resource allocation since the students are the ones with the daily contact with the institution.

## The Combination Report

With an administration of the PSI, a Combination Report is included automatically in your RNL Client Portal. Please review the guidelines in the SPS Interpretive Guide for how to read the results in the Combo Report to best understand how to utilize your student and parent data sets together.

## Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the Parent Satisfaction Inventory was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha which tests how well a collection of items agree with one another. The commonly accepted rule is that a value above .70 is acceptable as proof of reliability among items. All values but two (Campus Life for satisfaction and Student Centeredness for importance) were above .70. Even those two are just slightly below .70. In both cases, factor analysis was performed among the scale items to determine if there was any multidimensionality but none was detected. This supports the claim that the items within each scale are measuring like concepts. It should be noted, however, that despite the high value for Cronbach's Alpha for the Campus Climate importance scale, factor analysis found questions 1, 2, and 5 to be somewhat unrelated to the rest of the items in that scale.

Due to the absence of another instrument to compare to the parent satisfaction inventory, validity was measured by checking the correlation between the individual scales and the question regarding overall satisfaction. All correlations were positive and significant at the .01 level, an indication that each of the scales are associated with overall satisfaction.

## The Inventory Development

The Parent Satisfaction Inventory was modeled on the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory and the RNL Institutional Priorities Survey. The text of the items was modified by RNL to be appropriate for parents and guardians of currently enrolled students.

The PSI was available beginning in 2009.

The Form B version of the PSI was developed following the initial pilot project and became available in the fall of 2010.

## Contact us

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

- Shannon Cook, Senior Director of Retention Solutions, [Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com)

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

- Julie Bryant, Associate Vice President of Retention Solutions, [Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com)

For questions regarding the raw data, please contact

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

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Download this document and the separate addendum documents for the specific survey versions from this location: [www.ruffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides](http://www.ruffaloNL.com/SPSInterpretiveGuides).

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