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Find the Story to Tell in Your Student Satisfaction Data

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@JulieBryantNL • #StudentSatisfaction • #RNLSP5 • #AIRForum2020

I am going to start with a confession . . .

I am an English major who has spent the past twenty-five years of my career working with data.

Which may explain why I am passionate about finding the story in the data that is gathered on campus.



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The key to having data utilized on campus is for the data to be :

- Understood by your leadership and staff
- Relevant to the work that is being done
- Actionable within the departments

Have you found this to be true?


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Remember: Not everyone LOVES data as much as you do!

But many people on campus likely care about:

- Improving student success
- Recruiting more students
- Keeping the campus accredited
- Identifying strategic planning priorities

So it's up to you to show them how student feedback data can help them do that, in a way that they can understand.



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There is no doubt that institutional researchers know how to:

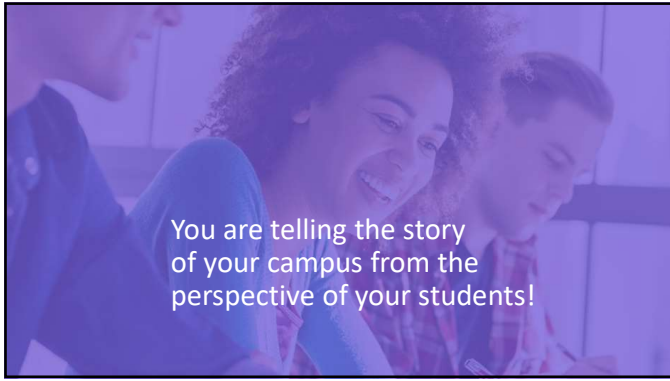
Access, dissect and analyze lots of data to support institutional and student success!

The key is determine the right data points for the right audience at the right time and to share the data in such a way that it can be easily understood, even by people who never took a statistics class!

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It's all about communication!



Why does telling the story matter?


*Even the most accurate data is **useless** if it is not communicated in ways that make sense to **non-data** people.*

You need to help your campus be aware of the data and understand what the data are saying so the data can be used to make good decisions.

Data >> Information >> Knowledge

Decision making happens at the knowledge level, not the data level.




Data are not good or bad. They just are.

It is up to you to provide the right context for understanding your data.




As you craft the story of student satisfaction on your campus

Less is more to share at any given time	Include more words, fewer numbers	Have a beginning, a middle and an end	Have a relatable hook that catches the audience's attention
Don't overwhelm your audience with too much	Be sure to include an interpretation of what the numbers mean	Help everyone understand the process for using the information you are sharing	Why should they care?



When preparing your story, ask yourself these questions

Who is your audience?	What is the right message?	How are you going to share it?	When is the right time?


All of these elements are interconnected



Different audiences will want different views of the results

- **Some people will want and need a broad sweep**
Hit the high level data points to provide the big picture with this group
- **Some people will want a deeper dive**
Have follow up conversations with the people who want to see data slices and want to dig in to the results

And some people need to HEAR it, some need to SEE it, some need REVIEW on their own... it is not one size fits all.




Important audiences to share the student satisfaction story with



- Campus Personnel
- Students
- Parents
- Alumni
- Accreditors
- Community

DON'T just post the reports somewhere and send an email to say "Go look at the data"!



1

Not everyone has the same level of data literacy as you do

2

Spreadsheets and charts don't TELL the story, they inform the story

3

They probably WON'T look at the data on their own



And you need to do more than just present the data . . .

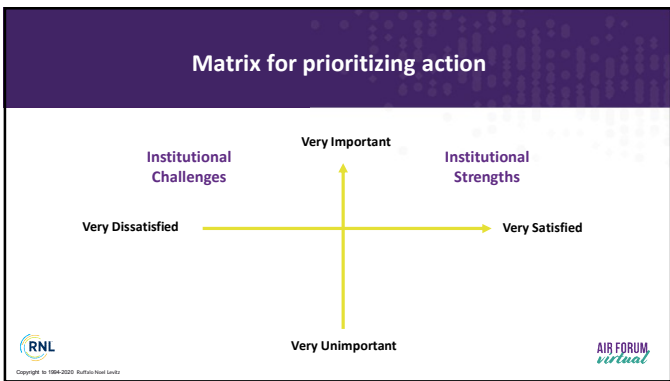
Get people involved with reflecting on the results, asking questions and considering what the data mean to the work they are doing.

You may want to make friends with the Director of Marketing and Communications on your campus

Get the support of the President and the senior leadership to pay attention to the data results



Context on my perspective: Student Satisfaction Data

- Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Satisfaction-Priorities Survey Suite:**
- **Student Satisfaction Inventory™ (SSI)** is for traditional students, primarily enrolled on campus
 - **Adult Student Priorities Survey™ (ASPS)** appropriate for undergraduate or graduate adult students.
 - **Priorities Survey for Online Learners™ (PSOL)** for students in online distance learning programs. (Online only)
 - **Institutional Priorities Survey™ (IPS)** for campus faculty, administration and staff is directly parallel to the SSI.
 - **Parent Satisfaction Inventory™ (PSI)** for parents of currently enrolled students at four-year institutions (Online only)
-  www.RuffaloNL.com/SPSOversight 



Data Available From These Instruments



- Institutional strengths and challenges
- Satisfaction levels versus external national comparison groups
- Items clustered by categories / themes
- Demographic indicators and overviews
- Segmented data by demographic responses
- Factors in the decision to enroll at the institution
- Summary level satisfaction and re-enrollment scores
- Year to year comparisons when administered more than once

How could you organize these data points to tell the story about your student population and their priorities?



Examples of how to frame student satisfaction data results

- **Who are our students?**
Demographic highlights to establish the context for the rest of the results and to confirm the student population
- **Why do our students enroll here?**
Factors in the decision to enroll with percentage of importance scores
- **What areas matter most to our students?**
Scales/categories listed in descending order of importance




Examples of how to frame student satisfaction data results (continued)

- **Where do our students think we are doing well?**
Strengths listed in descending order of importance
- **Where do our student think we could be doing even better?**
Challenges listed in descending order of importance




Examples of how to frame student satisfaction data results (continued)

- **How do we compare nationally?**
Highlight items where satisfaction is significantly higher or lower than the comparison group, with more focus on the items than on the level of significance. Provide context on your institution as it compares with the national comparison group by location and demographic factors.

Examples of how to frame student satisfaction data results (continued)

- **Where have we improved over time?**
Highlight items with significant shifts in satisfaction year over year, and connect these observations with improvements that have been made.



Relevant data elements have been identified for various departments, including:

- Data important for everyone on campus
- Enrollment management
- Academic affairs
- Student affairs
- Directors of retention/student success
- Accreditation
- Institutional research



Data Elements: Enrollment Management

- 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
- Data sliced for in-state and out-of-state students and data for just first-year students



Data Elements: Academic Affairs

- Instruction and academic advising items (strengths and challenges, comparison to the national)
- Item results: Institutional commitment to academic excellence
- Data sliced by class levels and by students' indicated major/program



SPS Data Elements for Campus Departments

- Data important for everyone on campus
 - Enrollment management
 - Academic affairs
 - Student affairs
 - Directors of retention/student success
 - Accreditation
 - Institutional research
- Email me at Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com to request:
SPS Data Elements for Campus Departments




Be sure to tell people what next steps are planned with the data

- Exploring the data with data slices and qualitative feedback
- Implementing new initiatives to change the student experience
- Communicating with students to close the feedback loop




Be sure everyone knows when the survey will be administered again




So they are motivated to make changes between now and then!


Help campus staff and faculty think about their role in changing the student experience based on the data



Immediate changes that can be implemented



Places where more time and resources are needed



Ways that perceptions can be changed with information

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Examples of ways to present and share satisfaction data

Resource: Customizable Infographic

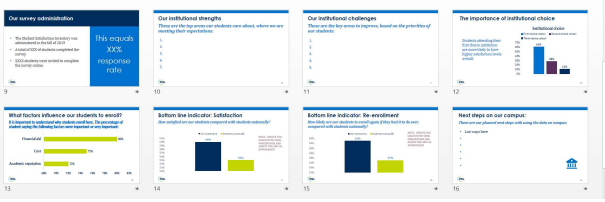
Assists you with identifying important data points and sharing these data in an easy to read format.

www.RuffaloNL.com/InfographicSSI



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Resource: PowerPoint Template



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Resource: Brainstorming Worksheets

Student Satisfaction

Information to be gathered (data files, student/faculty discussion):

Communication options to change perceptions:

Immediate response activities:

Long-term/strategic planning opportunities:

Satisfaction Priorities

Information to be gathered (data files, student/faculty discussion):

Ways to celebrate positive student feedback:

Ways to use high performing areas as models:

Ways to use for recruiting new students/communicating with community:

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Feedback to students is critical

- Use posters on campus
- Social media posts
- Email messages to students and their families
- Data points for faculty and staff to share with students
- Announcements in class

We're Listening to U

In November 2019, students responded to a U.C. assessment about student satisfaction. This is what you said and what U.C. is doing to improve your experience.

You Said...

- 85% of students said MC is the best place to go.
- Academic Advising is #1 in satisfaction.
- M.C.'s Academic reputation is excellent.
- MC is nationally ranked similar schools.

Your Campus Challenges

- Connecting to the internet is difficult.
- The work is too much.
- Students have difficulty with reading campus info.
- You want more information about campus info.

What is Being Done

- INTERNET: Planning a grant to improve technology.
- SSA AGENCIES: Share quality social networking for recruitment.
- FINANCIAL AID: "Fees" article published 2019.
- RUN-AROUND: Share Group details about faculty/staff Committee formed.

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Five Key Take-Aways

1 ACCESSIBLE AND RELEVANT

Make the data accessible, not just by posting the full report and saying "go look at it"

Most people won't know how to read the data and will be overwhelmed with even trying

Instead, parse out the data points that are most relevant and meet with groups to review and discuss the data with them

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2 GUIDANCE AND CLARIFICATION

Provide guidance with how to look at the data and encourage requests for more information to clarify the data points

These may include relevant data slices (not too many!) and qualitative sources (written comments, focus group /listening session feedback)

The numbers don't tell the whole story so help people unpack the priority areas to better determine what actions need to be taken

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3 BRAINSTORMING

Encourage brainstorming about possible ways to respond to challenge items

Use the data points to spark conversations to identify creative approach in response

The results from a survey administration are the starting point not the ending point

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4 KEEP TOP OF MIND

Revisit the data at least four times a year with campus departments

What has been done recently to change the student experience? What else is planned going forward?

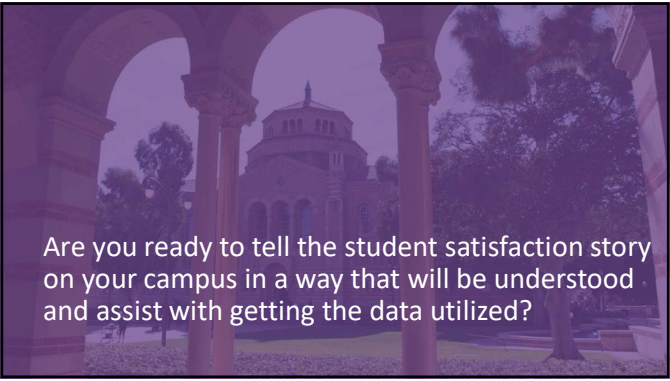
This will help keep the data and the identified actions top of mind for you and for them

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5 ONGOING MONITORING
 Monitor and track improvements so they are available to highlight prior to the next survey administration

Be the keeper of the action steps along the way rather than trying to recall and track down years later

Students may be more willing to complete surveys if they know the data is actually guiding decision making and actions at the institution

Are you ready to tell the student satisfaction story on your campus in a way that will be understood and assist with getting the data utilized?



Student Satisfaction Data: Overcoming Barriers and Facilitating Use

Panel Session, featuring:
 Michael Smith from Gateway Tech and Tracy Polinsky from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Thank you for joining me



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