

**2010
Student Satisfaction Inventory
and
Priorities Survey for Online Learners**

**University of North Dakota
Institutional Report**

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University of North Dakota

Student Satisfaction Inventory & Priorities Survey for Online Learners

2010 Executive Summary

In an effort to gauge the efficacy of the higher education system in North Dakota, state accountability measures require institutions to survey all students every two years with regard to their satisfaction with the education they are receiving. To facilitate this measure, institutions participate in the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which measures satisfaction of resident, on-campus students, and the Noel-Levitz Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL), which measures satisfaction for students taking online courses.

In the spring of 2010, UND invited 10,471 resident students to participate in the SSI while 2,151 online students were invited to participate in the PSOL. Upon completion of the survey, 1,636 students completed the SSI for a response rate of 16%; 375 students completed the PSOL for a response rate of 17%.

As a general rule, UND respondents, both resident and online, are satisfied with their overall educational experience at UND. For resident students, 81% indicate they are satisfied overall with their experience here thus far; for online students, 82% indicate they are satisfied overall.

State entities are particularly interested in two questions on the survey: whether students can achieve their educational goal at given institutions and whether students can complete a 4-year degree in a timely manner. When asked if they plan to complete a four-year degree in six years or less, 84% of resident students indicate this is their plan. When online students are asked, 57% agree they plan to complete their 4-year degree within six years; 78% of online students report being part-time. When asked to rate their satisfaction with their ability to attain their educational goal at UND, respondents score satisfaction means of 5.87 and 6.13 on the SSI and PSOL respectively on a 7-point scale (1=very dissatisfied, 4 = neutral, 7 = very satisfied).

The SSI and PSOL present a list of student expectations and ask respondents to rank items on two 7-point scales: the first asking the student how important it is for the institution to meet the expectation and the second asking how satisfied the student is that the institution has met the expectation. By looking at those items rated highest in importance by respondents and the corresponding levels of satisfaction on these high-importance items, Noel-Levitz develops lists of strengths and challenges for each institution.

UND's top strengths with regard to resident students as indicated by the SSI include *I am able to achieve my academic goals here*, *My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major*, *Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field*, and *My academic advisor is approachable*. Challenges facing UND with regard to resident students include *The instruction in my major field is excellent*, *The content of the courses within my major is valuable*, *The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent*, *I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts*, and *tuition paid is a worthwhile investment*.

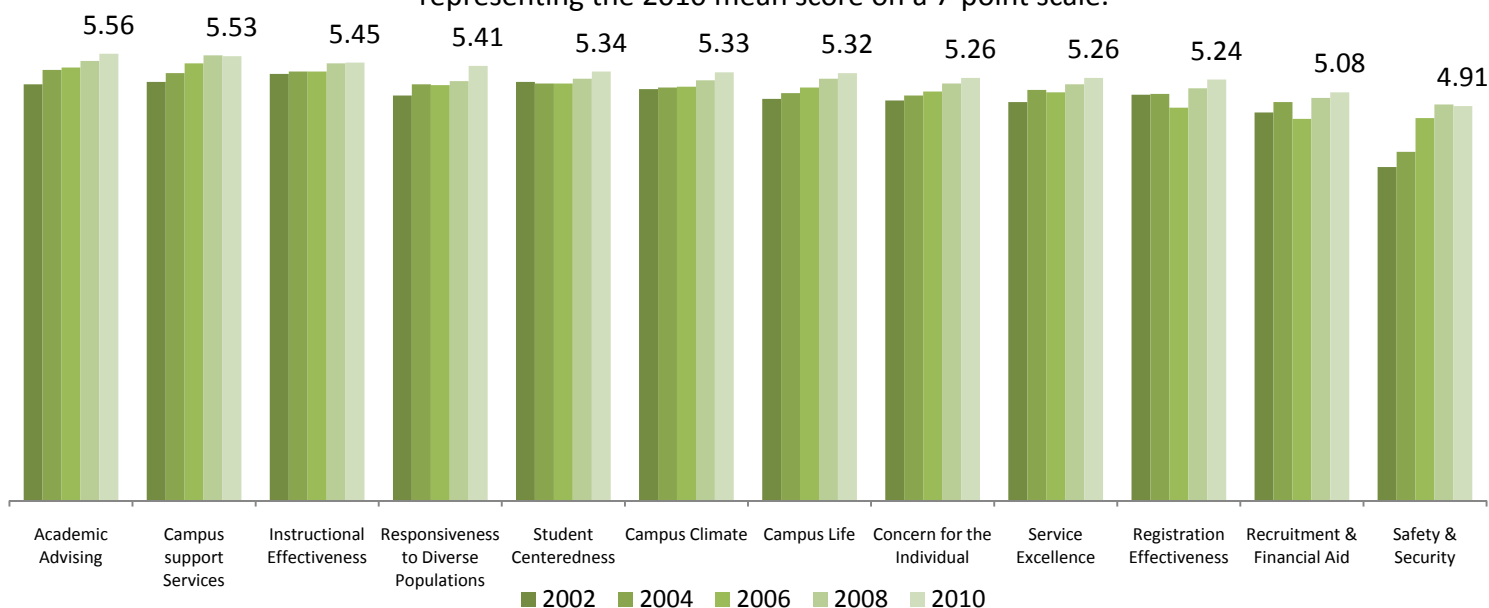
Online programming strengths as indicated on the PSOL include *I am able to achieve my educational goals at this institution*, *Registration for online courses is convenient*, and *Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus*. Challenges facing online students include *The quality of online instruction is excellent*, *Faculty are responsive to student needs*, *Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment*, and *There are sufficient offerings within my program of study*.

University of North Dakota 2010 Student Satisfaction Inventory

SSI Scale Mean Satisfaction Scores

UND shows increasing satisfaction on all 12 scales in 2010 over 2008!

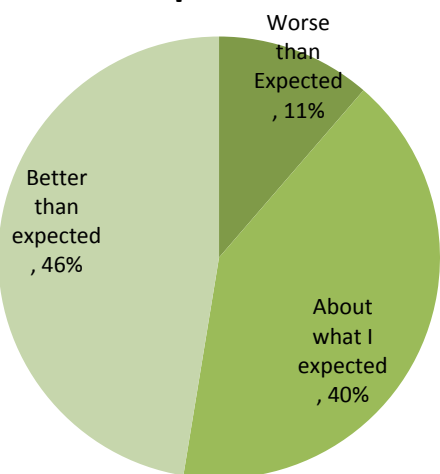
Scales are ordered decreasing according to 2010 satisfaction mean, with the number representing the 2010 mean score on a 7-point scale.



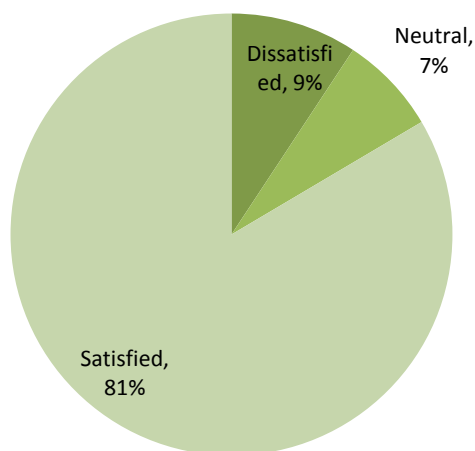
UND scores significantly higher than both national 4-year public universities and NDUS 4-year institutions on all 3 summary satisfaction questions.

Totals below do not equal 100% due to rounding and missing responses.

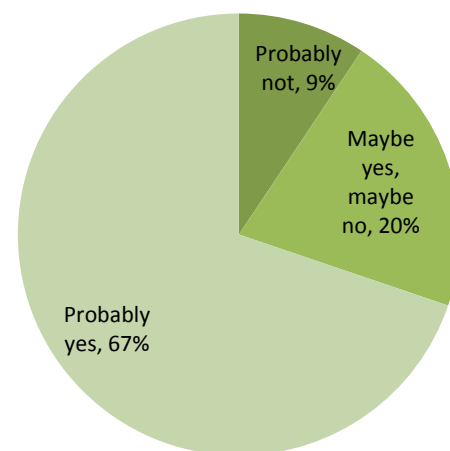
How has your college experience met your expectations?



Rate your overall satisfaction



Would you enroll here again?



Mean Scores for Summary Questions (Scores on 7-point scale where 1 = low, 4 = neutral, 7=high)

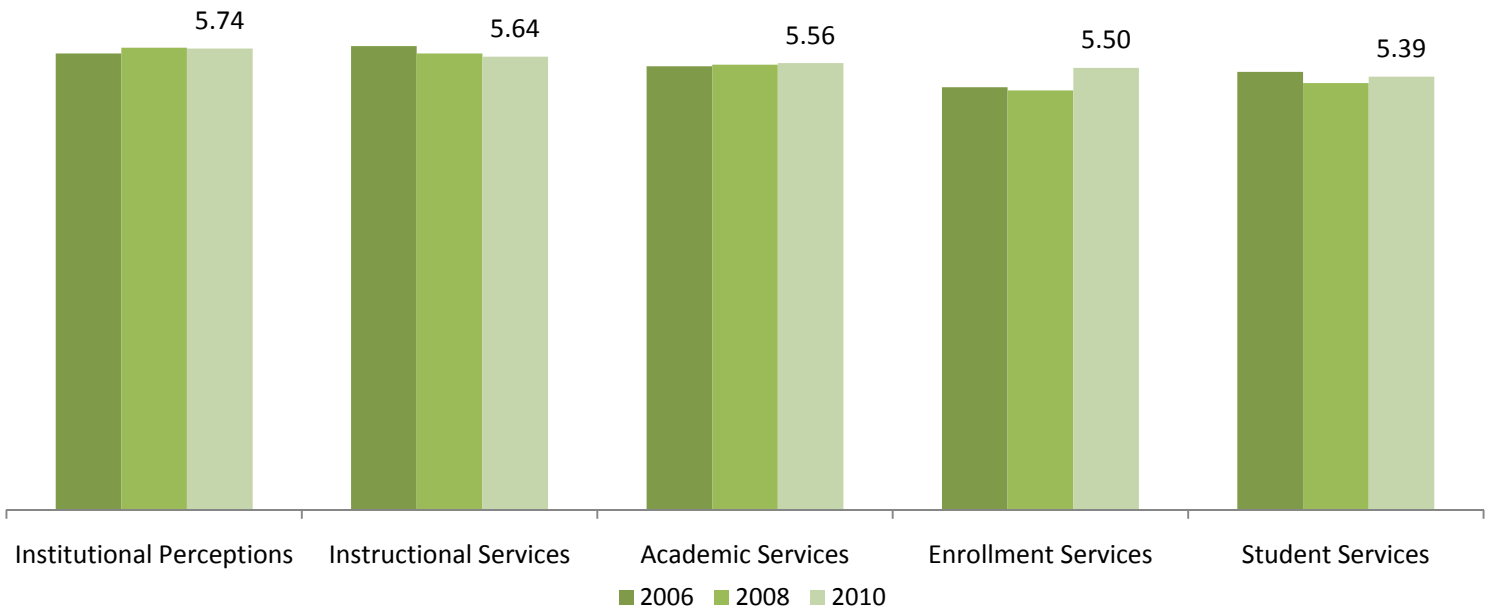
	UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr		UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr		UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr
2010	4.57	4.49	4.47	2010	5.47	5.20	5.28	2010	5.56	5.29	5.32
2008	4.52	4.49	4.52	2008	5.38	5.21	5.29	2008	5.47	5.29	5.30
2006	4.46	4.45	4.45	2006	5.34	5.17	5.24	2006	5.37	5.24	5.35

**University of North Dakota
2010 Priorities Survey for Online Learners**

PSOL Scale Mean Satisfaction Scores

UND shows increasing satisfaction on 4 of 5 PSOL Scales

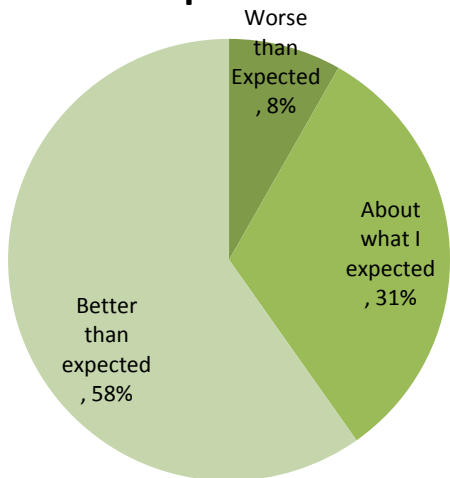
Scales are ordered decreasing according to 2010 satisfaction mean, with the number representing the 2010 mean score on a 7-point scale.



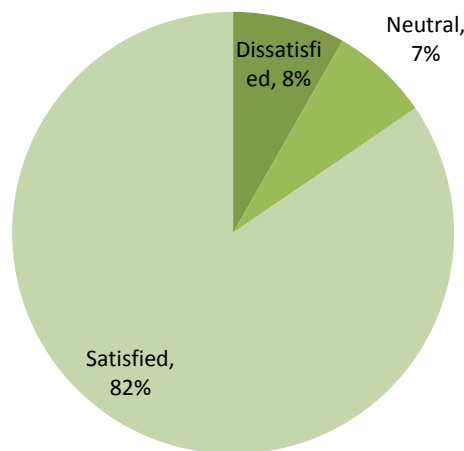
UND scores similarly to national 4-year institutions and NDUS 4-year institutions.

Totals below do not equal 100% due to rounding and missing values

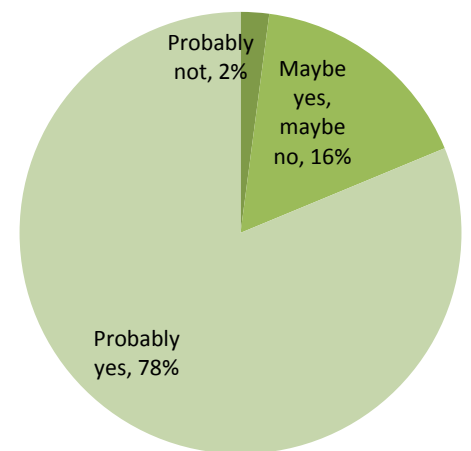
How has your college experience met your expectations?



Rate your overall satisfaction



Would you enroll here again?



Mean Scores for Summary Questions (Scores on 7-point scale where 1 = low, 4 = neutral, 7=high)

	UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr		UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr		UND	National 4-Yr	NDUS 4-Yr
2010	4.93	5.05	4.95	2010	5.64	5.75	5.70	2010	6.03	5.89	5.95
2008	5.02	5.06	5.00	2008	5.81	5.76	5.76	2008	6.24	5.90	6.00
2006	4.87	5.06	4.99	2006	5.66	5.78	5.77	2006	6.16	5.95	5.98

**University of North Dakota
2010 SSI & PSOL
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2010 Student Satisfaction Inventory and Priorities Survey for Online Learners

I. Introduction

Student satisfaction takes into account many aspects of university life. While academics is the main reason students attend college, many other pieces play a part in the overall student experience. In order to measure the broad-ranging scope of student satisfaction, the North Dakota University System has contracted with Noel-Levitz to administer the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) to all students attending North Dakota's institutions of higher learning, and the Priorities Survey for Online Learners (PSOL) to those students taking online coursework through one of the institutions.

The SSI and PSOL are based on the assumption that students have definite expectations on what they want from a campus experiences. Borrowing principles of consumer theory, Noel-Levitz postulates students make the choice to attend a particular institution based on that institutions ability to meet these expectations. The SSI and PSOL are designed not only to measure student satisfaction with all aspects of the university experience, but to measure that satisfaction within the context of student expectation.

The results of these surveys demonstrate how satisfied students are with their experiences and what issues are really important to them. The goal is to use the results of this survey to drive action toward continuing successful programs, fixing urgent problems, and directing resources to ensure a positive experience for all college attendees.

II. Response Rate

UND first administered the SSI in the Fall of 2002. Subsequent administrations occurred in 2004, 2006, 2008, and this year in 2010. The PSOL has been administered since 2006 in place of the SSI to those students registered for online coursework.

For the SSI, 10,471 students were invited to participate with 1,636 completing the survey. This nets a response rate of 16%.

For the PSOL, 2,151 students were invited to participate and 375 responded to the survey for a response rate of 17%.

Documentation of the survey administration, including survey invitation verbiage and a timeline of mailings and reminders can be found in Appendix A.

III. Respondent Characteristics

On the SSI, graduate students were more likely to respond (22% response rate), while freshmen tended to under-respond (12% response rate). Law and Medical students also had a lower response rate, with 12% and 8% responding respectively. As follows typical survey

response, females were more likely than males to complete the survey. The survey respondents represent the survey population with regard to race, full time/part time attendance, residency, and age. On-campus students were more likely to respond than off-campus students, with on-campus students responding at 20% compared to 13% for off-campus students.

Some similar trends are seen in the respondents to the PSOL: Graduate students responded at 22% while freshmen had only an 8% response rate. Online students from the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering and Mines responded at over 20%, while online students from the Colleges of Business & Public Administration and Education & Human Development responded at rates less than 10%. Online students who are over 30 years old respond at a higher rate (24%) than those 24 and younger (10%). The survey respondents mirror the survey population with regard to race and residency. It is noteworthy that the vast majority of online students are part-time (78%), off-campus (99%), and older than age 25 (74%).

A summary of respondent characteristics is found in Appendix B.

IV. Survey Methodology

The Student Satisfaction Inventory and Priorities Survey for Online Learners are both designed to measure student satisfaction by measuring students' expectations against their perceptions of reality on college campuses. This is accomplished by presenting students with a list of items related to campus satisfaction, and asking students to score each item twice: first as to how important the particular item is to the student and secondly their level of satisfaction. Both importance and satisfaction are scored on a 7-point Likert scale.

Noel-Levitz calculates mean scores for both importance and satisfaction. A performance gap is then calculated by subtracting the satisfaction mean from the importance mean. This performance gap theoretically measures how an institution "measures up" to student expectation.

Noel-Levitz also uses the results to determine strengths and weaknesses of each campus. Strengths are identified as areas of high importance and high satisfaction, while weaknesses are those areas of high importance with either low satisfaction or a large performance gap.

Lastly, Noel-Levitz develops 12 scales for the SSI and 5 scales for the PSOL. These scales combines survey items of similar nature to give a benchmark score for areas on campus including academic advising effectiveness, campus climate, campus support services, and service excellence.

V. Student Satisfaction Inventory

A. SSI Scales

Looking at the big picture, UND scores relatively well on the twelve summary scales provided by the SSI. Table 1 outlines the scales in order of importance, and reveals that students feel items relating to academic advising and effective instruction are most important to them, while campus life activities and campus support tend to be slightly less important.

Table 1. UND 2010 Student Satisfaction Inventory Scales

SCALE	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	Performance Gap Mean
Academic Advising	6.38 (1)	5.56 (1)	0.82
Instructional Effectiveness	6.37 (2)	5.45 (3)	0.92
Safety and Security	6.26 (3)	4.91 (12)	1.35
Student Centeredness	6.19 (4)	5.34 (5)	0.85
Concern for the Individual	6.18 (5)	5.26 (8)	0.92
Campus Climate	6.17 (6)	5.33 (6)	0.84
Registration Effectiveness	6.17 (7)	5.24 (10)	0.93
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.16 (8)	5.08 (11)	1.08
Service Excellence	6.04 (9)	5.26 (8)	0.78
Campus Support Services	5.95 (10)	5.53 (2)	0.42
Campus Life	5.79 (11)	5.32 (7)	0.47
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	NA	5.41 (4)	NA

When the scales are evaluated for satisfaction, academic advising again tops the list, indicating UND does a good job at advising its students – something they tell us is very important to them. The satisfaction scale is lowest for safety and security, which is a red flag as students rate this the third most important scale. Safety and security also scores the largest performance gap of the twelve scales.

UND scores significantly higher satisfaction means for all twelve scales when compared to national four-year public institutions. This is not surprising, as Noel-Levitz reports higher levels of satisfaction are reported by students in the Midwest and by Caucasian students. Since UND is located in the Midwest and has a very high percentage of white students, their overall reported satisfaction will tend to be higher than national norms.

When compared to other four-year institutions in North Dakota, UND scores satisfaction means that are significantly higher on six of the twelve scales. The greatest differences are in the areas of Campus life, Instructional effectiveness, and Academic advising. UND does not score significantly lower on any of the satisfaction means. Appendix C shows UND compared to NDUS and national 4-year institutions.

When compared to the 2008 SSI results, five of the twelve scales have significantly higher satisfaction means in 2010: Responsiveness to diverse populations, Registration effectiveness, Campus climate, Student centeredness, and Service Excellence. There were no scales scoring significantly lower in 2010 than 2008. A comparison of SSI scores from 2002 through 2010 can be found in Appendix D.

B. Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Institutional strengths are those areas scoring high in both importance and satisfaction. These strengths represent areas UND can celebrate as meeting the expectations of our students. In descending order of importance, strengths at UND include:

- I am able to achieve my educational goals at this institution
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.
- Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.
- My academic advisor is approachable.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.
- It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
- There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
- I feel comfortable with the atmosphere of this campus.
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
- This institution has a good reputation within the community.

UND's strengths focus around student satisfaction with faculty competency and advising, and they are appreciative of the campus atmosphere and physical appearance.

Most of these items were also identified as strengths on the 2008 SSI. Two items, *It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus* and *This institution has a good reputation within the community*, are new strengths in 2010. Two items were identified as strengths in 2008 that were not in 2010: *There are opportunities in co-ops, internships, student teaching, or other experiential learning experiences* and *Gender equity and equal opportunity exist in the classroom..*

Challenges

Institutional challenges are those areas scoring high in importance, while scoring either low in satisfaction or scoring a large performance gap. Challenges represent those areas where UND should work to improve the student perception of how things are on campus. In theory this will increase student retention. In descending order of importance, challenges at UND include:

- The instruction in my major field is excellent.
- The content of the courses within my major is valuable.
- The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
- This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.

- Graduate teaching assistants are competent as classroom instructors.
- Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.
- I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.
- Billing policies are reasonable.
- Financial aid counselors are helpful.
- Faculty care about me as an individual.

In looking at challenges facing UND, it is apparent that students want assurance that their tuition is a worthwhile investment and that they are receiving a high-quality and comprehensive education. The items related to excellent instruction tend to be those with the highest ranked importance scores, and therefore create large performance gap scores and lead to them being placed on the challenge list, even when their satisfaction mean scores are relatively positive in the grand scale. Students would like faculty to be fair and show concern for all students equally.

The other item presenting itself on the list of challenges is financial aid, its adequacy and the ease of the financial aid process. The Financial Aid Office may want to look at ways they can make their services more user-friendly to students at UND.

When compared to the 2008 SSI, three items are new to the 2010 challenge list: *Graduate teaching assistants are competent as classroom instructors*, *Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable*, and *Faculty care about me as an individual*. Three additional items were identified as challenges in 2008 that no longer make the list in 2010: *Security staff respond quickly in emergencies*, *Admissions staff are knowledgeable*, and *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate*.

C. Overall Satisfaction

As in prior iterations of the SSI, UND students continue to show high levels of overall satisfaction. Just under one-half of respondents (46%) indicate their college experience at UND has been better than they expected, while 11% say it has been worse than they expected.

Eight of ten respondents (81%) indicate they are at least somewhat satisfied with their overall experience at UND, while 9% are at least somewhat dissatisfied.

If given the chance to do things over again, over three-quarters (77%) indicate they would again enroll at UND, while 6% don't know and 13% would not re-enroll.

Table 2 outlines the mean scores for these summary questions along with national and North Dakota mean scores. UND scores significantly higher satisfaction means than national 4-year public institutions for all three summary questions. UND also scores significantly higher satisfaction means for all three summary questions when compared to NDUS 4-year institutions.

UND's 2010 satisfaction scores on these summary questions are not statistically different from the scores recorded in 2008. Appendix D includes year-to-year totals for UND responses on these items.

Table 2. UND 2010 Student Satisfaction Inventory Summary Questions

SSI Summary Questions	UND Mean	National 4-Year Mean	North Dakota 4-Year Mean
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations? ¹	4.57	4.49	4.47
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far. ²	5.47	5.20	5.28
All in all, if you had it to do over, would you enroll here again? ³	5.56	5.29	5.32

1. Scales of 1=much worse than expected, 4 = about what I expected, 7 = much better than expected.
2. Scales of 1 = not satisfied at all, 4 = neutral, 7 = very satisfied
3. Scales of 1 = definitely not, 4 = I don't know, 7 = definitely yes

D. Enrollment Factors

When asked about nine factors that play a part in a student's decision to enroll at a particular institution, UND respondents' top factor is cost. This is followed closely by academic reputation and financial aid. Similar trends are seen at national 4-year public institutions and NDUS 4-year institutions. There is no change in the top enrollment factors from 2008 to 2010 (Appendix D).

E. Changes Since 2008

UND scores satisfaction means significantly higher in 2010 than were scored in 2008 on twenty-one of the eighty-nine satisfaction items asked on the SSI. The largest satisfaction increases are seen in the areas of:

- Institution's commitment to part-time students.
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- Student activity fees are put to good use.
- Institution's commitment to older, returning learners.
- This institution has a good reputation within the community.
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.

UND scores one satisfaction mean significantly lower in 2010 than was scored in 2008: The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate. Increasing student parking fees may play a part in their increasing dissatisfaction with parking in general.

A complete listing of scores from the 2010 SSI and prior survey years can be found in Appendix D.

VI. Priorities Survey for Online Learners

A. PSOL Scales

Noel-Levitz combines PSOL answers into five scales evaluating the overall performance of universities meeting the needs of their online students. Table 3 summarizes these results.

Table 3. UND 2010 Priorities Survey for Online Learners Scales

SCALE	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	Performance Gap Mean
Institutional Perceptions	6.32 (1)	5.74 (1)	0.58
Instructional Services	6.21 (2)	5.64 (2)	0.57
Academic Services	6.16 (3)	5.56 (3)	0.60
Enrollment Services	6.09 (4)	5.50 (4)	0.59
Student Services	5.87 (5)	5.39 (5)	0.48

Institutional perceptions are most important for online learners at UND, which includes the fact they are looking at tuition paid is a worthwhile investment and the institution has a good reputation. Services related to online learning are also important to these students.

It is interesting to note that the scale items rank in the same order with regard to importance and satisfaction. This tells us that UND is apparently focusing on the right priorities with regard to online learning, in that those things having the greatest important to students also receive the highest satisfaction scores.

While it appears UND's priorities are in line with student expectations, there may be more that needs to be done regarding service to online learners. Of the five PSOL scales, UND scores significantly lower satisfaction means on three scales when compared to national online learners; these scales include enrollment services, student services, and academic services.

UND also scores significantly lower scale scores for the same three items when compared to NDUS PSOL participants (Appendix H).

B. Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Institutional strengths are those areas scoring high in both importance and satisfaction. The PSOL identified the following strengths in UND's online learning education:

- I am able to achieve my educational goals at this institution.
- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- Online course designs are easy to navigate.
- I feel comfortable with the online atmosphere of this campus.
- Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.

Three items are new strengths when 2010 PSOL results are compared to 2008 results: *Registration for online courses is convenient, Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus, and Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.* Three items were identified as strengths in 2008 that are no longer on the list in 2010: *The quality of online instruction is excellent, Faculty are responsive to student needs, and Adequate online library resources are provided.*

Challenges

Institutional challenges are those areas scoring high in importance, while scoring either low in satisfaction or high in performance gap (the difference between importance and satisfaction).

UND faces the following challenges as indicated by PSOL scores:

- The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- Faculty are responsive to student needs.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
- My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
- I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.

The above list of items point to possible issues with online students interacting with faculty, advisors, and staff.

Of particular note, in 2008, the item *Faculty are responsive to student needs* was considered a strength based on PSOL results. In 2010, this item has moved to being a challenge. This result would indicate some changing expectations with regard to online students and the response they expect from their instructors.

Appendix I shows mean scores for all survey items from 2006, 2008, and 2010.

C. Overall Satisfaction

UND online learners show high levels of overall satisfaction, as is indicated by the mean scores displayed in Table 4. The mean scores reported by the online learners are significantly higher than those reported by resident students. On the other hand, UND's PSOL scores are lower on two of the three summary questions when compared to national 4-year and NDUS 4-year online learners. Summaries of overall responses on the PSOL can be found in Appendix I.

Table 4. UND 2010 Priorities Survey for Online Students Summary Questions

PSOL & SSI Summary Questions	UND SSI Mean	UND PSOL Mean	National 4-Year PSOL Mean	North Dakota 4-Year PSOL
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations? ¹	4.57	4.93	5.05	4.95
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far. ²	5.47	5.64	5.75	5.70
All in all, if you had it to do over, would you enroll here again? ³	5.56	6.03	5.89	5.95

1. Scales of 1=much worse than expected, 4 = about what I expected, 7 = much better than expected.

2. Scales of 1 = not satisfied at all, 4 = neutral, 7 = very satisfied

3. Scales of 1 = definitely not, 4 = I don't know, 7 = definitely yes

D. Enrollment Factors

The PSOL presents respondents with eleven different factors that play into a student's decision to enroll in online programs. For UND students, the item scoring the highest is convenience, followed by work schedule, program requirements, and flexible pacing for completing a program.

While resident students indicate cost as being the major factor in deciding to enroll at UND, cost ranks sixth out of the eleven options presented to online respondents. Financial assistance also appears to play little in online student's deciding to attend, as it is ranked tenth out of the eleven items.

Similar trends were seen in the 2008 administration of the PSOL at UND. The same factors tend to lead the way at NDUS institutions and nationally, however national online learners are more likely to indicate financial assistance plays a more important factor in their decisions to enroll.

E. Changes Since 2008

When the PSOL scores from 2010 are compared to those from 2008, five items record significantly higher satisfaction means. These include:

- Registration for online courses is convenient.
- Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
- Online career services are available.
- Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.
- Assistance is available when I have problems utilizing required technology.

These responses indicate online students are becoming accustomed to using the Campus Connection portal, as they are satisfied with registration and fee payment. Students are also increasingly satisfied with the technical assistance they are receiving.

PSOL respondents indicated no significantly lower satisfaction means in 2010 than were recorded in 2008.

Appendix I contains survey responses for all items from 2008 and 2010.

VII. Summary

In general, it appears UND students are generally satisfied with the education and services provided by the institution.

The most important challenge facing both resident and online students is their feeling the quality of instruction is excellent. UND faces a big task in improving this area, as student expectation is always quite high with regard to the quality of instruction they receive.

It is also important for all students, both resident and online, to receive timely feedback from faculty. This may be an ever increasing challenge, as students today communicate in ways faculty and staff may not be accustomed to.

VIII. Appendices

The appendices to this report are outlined in the table of contents. If not included at the end of this report, they can be found on the UND Office of Institutional Research webpage at www.und.edu/dept/datacol. Printed copies of the appendices can be obtained by contacting the Office of Institutional Research.