

TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
Student Opinion Survey
1998 – 2001

Introduction:

Over the past several years Texas Southern University has conducted Student Opinion Surveys in a continuing effort to assess institutional effectiveness. The Student Opinion Survey provides information related to the student's usage of university services and levels of satisfaction with those services. Additionally, satisfaction levels are also obtained for general university activities such as the overall academic enterprise, admissions activities, registration, facilities, and university rules and policies.

What follows is an analysis of these opinions over the last four years (1998 through 2001). The report begins by comparing the 2001 sample with the fall characteristics of the University population. This comparison is intended to provide some understanding of the representativeness of our 2001 sample relative to the general university population.

Additionally, this section includes a comparison of other related background characteristics for the sampled years 1998 through 2001. This information is presented to highlight the general comparability of the various samples.

Following the presentation of this background information, an assessment of service usage is provided. This section not only presents the changes in the level of usage over time, but also provides some insight into changes in levels of satisfaction for the most utilized university services. The report concludes by focusing on student satisfaction relative to major University activities.

Background Information:

Table 1 compares the general Texas Southern University (TSU) population with several background characteristics collected from the 2001 sampled students. Generally speaking, the 2001 sample compares rather favorably with the TSU population as a whole. However, there are several noteworthy differences that should be mentioned.

Table 1
General Background Characteristics

	<u>TSU Population</u>	<u>2001 Sample</u>
Total N	6886	2064
Gender:		
Male	43.5	41.9
Female	56.5	58.1
Enrollment Status:		
Part – Time	26.6	14.4
Full – Time	73.4	85.6
Classification:		
Freshman	35.2	18.4
Sophomore	11.6	12.5
Junior	11.5	18.7
Senior	16.1	16.0
Graduate/Professional	24.4	33.2
Other	1.2	1.2
School / College		
Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Sciences	20.6	17.3
Business	14.4	13.3
Education	14.1	12.1
Pharmacy and Health Sciences	16.6	33.4
Science and Technology	24.1	17.8
Law	9.1	5.5
Undecided	1.1	0.5

The analysis revealed that the 2001 sample contained slightly more full-time students as well as slightly more graduate and professional school students than the general population. Specifically, about 86 percent of the sampled students reported that they were full-time students compared to only 73 percent in the general TSU population. Similarly, just over one-third of the sampled students indicated that they were graduate or professional school students compared to only 24 percent of the general student population.

These findings suggest that one should be cautious about over generalizing the findings reported from this analysis. For the most part, the 2001 sample is slightly skewed toward the more mature TSU student, whereas the general population is somewhat younger.

Given these results relative to the TSU population as a whole, it is instructive to see how the 2001 sample compares to other samples collected over the years (i.e., 1998 through 2000). Table 2 presents this comparison. Regarding age, it was found that just over 45 percent of the 2001 sample was 26 years of age or older. This tends to confirm the general assessment given above that this sample tends to contain more mature TSU students.

This finding is slightly different from the samples noted in 1999 and 2000, but quite similar to what was noted in 1998. Specifically, in 1999 and 2000 just over one-third of the sample was 26 or older compared to just under 50 percent in 1998. Thus, when age is considered, the 2001 sample tends to be more similar to the sample obtained in 1998 than to the samples obtained in 1999 and 2000.

Table 2
Other Background Characteristics

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Total N	2349	1317	975	2064
Age:				
Less than 20	9.6	18.4	20.1	13.5
20-22	20.8	28.7	28.0	22.2
23-25	20.4	18.4	17.0	18.1
26-29	18.1	13.2	12.5	16.0
30 and Above	31.1	21.5	20.7	29.6
Entering Status:				
First Time College Student	42.7	57.3	51.9	44.3
Other College Experience	57.3	42.7	48.1	55.7
Purpose for Enrolling:				
No Definite Purpose	1.5	3.4	2.5	2.3
Non – Degree Seeking	9.7	4.4	7.4	8.1
Degree Seeking	88.8	92.2	90.1	89.6
Financial Aid Status:				
Receive Aid	60.2	66.9	68.0	65.1
No Aid	39.8	33.1	32.0	34.9
Hours Worked Per Week:				
10 or Less	33.4	39.3	41.6	33.6
11 – 20	17.2	19.9	22.0	22.3
21 – 30	14.1	17.2	15.2	15.9
31 – 40	24.9	16.1	16.8	18.7
Over 40	10.4	7.4	4.5	9.5
Living Arrangements:				
Live On – Campus	5.9	12.5	12.6	6.2
Live Off – Campus	94.1	87.5	87.4	93.8

Similar results were noted for the entering status of students (i.e., whether they entered TSU directly from high school or attended some other post-secondary institution prior to enrolling at TSU) and the number of hours they work per week. For each of

these characteristics, the 1998 and 2001 samples were quite similar and reflected more mature students as compared to the 1999 and 2000 samples that tended to be more reflective of an undergraduate population.

On the other hand, the samples were quite similar across the years in terms of the student's purpose for enrolling at TSU, their financial aid status, as well as their living arrangements. In each year, the sample contained primarily students that enrolled in TSU to receive a degree, met their financial needs through financial aid, and lived off-campus.

Thus, the results here also indicate that one must be cautious in one's interpretation of results over these years. It appears that the 2001 sample compares most favorably with the 1998 sample, implying that in both of these years a more mature sample was surveyed.

College Service Usage and Satisfaction:

To assess service usage and satisfaction students were provided an extensive list of university services. They were first asked to indicate whether or not they have used this service. If they had used the service, they were then asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with this service. The analysis begins by first examining levels of usage. This is then followed by an assessment of satisfaction with these services.

Usage

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of service usage. The services listed have been ranked by their 2001 level of usage. Note that the number one service utilized

in 2001 was library facilities and services. What is even more interesting about this finding is that library facilities and services was ranked number one in all years surveyed.

Table 3
Percentage Ranking of
College Service Usage¹

<u>Service</u>	<u>Percent Using</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Library Facilities and Services	77.6	71.4	68.1	65.8
Parking Facilities and Services	67.6	57.6	55.8	59.4
Computer Services	67.2	63.5	62.4	56.5
Financial Aid Services	58.4	54.3	54.7	52.7
Academic Advising Services	56.8	55.8	51.9	50.0
College Orientation Program	44.1	46.2	41.0	39.3
College Sponsored Social Activities	33.8	35.6	33.4	29.7
Food Services	36.9	36.8	37.2	28.0
College Sponsored Tutorial Activities	29.4	26.7	30.6	25.8
Career Planning Services	28.2	22.7	21.4	22.3
Personal Counseling Services	22.4	21.9	21.8	19.8
Recreational and Intramural Programs	19.2	21.3	21.5	19.7
Student Health Services	21.7	22.3	22.3	19.5
Job Placement Services	27.5	23.4	20.3	18.6
Student Employment Services	19.6	20.0	19.9	15.2
Honors Program	15.0	13.6	10.1	14.5
Residence Hall Services and Programs	15.8	19.1	18.1	14.3
Veterans Services	6.1	5.1	5.9	5.5
Day Care Services	3.2	3.0	4.6	4.1

¹ Services are ranked according to their 2001 sample ranking.

It is also interesting to note that the ranking of service usage in 2001 is exactly the same as the ranking in 1998. There were some slight differences observed for 1999 and 2000, however this involved slight changes in ranking rather than major substantive shifts. For instance, computer service ranked number two in 1999 and 2000, whereas it

ranked number three in 1998 and 2001. For the most part, the top ten services used in 2001 were also the top ten services used in 1998, 1999, and 2000. The only exception was in number ten where job placement services replaced career planning services in 1999 and student health services replaced it in 2000.

In this sense, there has been very little change in the types of services most utilized over the years. However, there does appear to be a change in the level of usage of these services. Usage seems to be showing a downward trend over the years, especially among the top ten service areas. For instance, student usage of library facilities and services has decreased by approximately 12 percentage points between 1998 and 2001, going from a high of 77.6 in 1998 to 65.8 in 2001. This is true even when one considers the earlier finding that the 1998 and 2001 samples contain more mature students than the 1999 and 2000 samples. This pattern tends to be evident in almost all areas observed.

Levels of Satisfaction

Although levels of usage seem to be declining, satisfaction with these services seems to be increasing, especially between 2000 and 2001. When the top ten service areas were examined (Table 4), it was found that satisfaction levels increased in eight of the ten areas. That is, only computer services and academic advising did not show increases between 2000 and 2001. However, in each case the level of satisfaction was substantially the same in both years.

There were some rather dramatic shifts in satisfaction observed in the top ten usage areas. Of special note are the results for parking facilities and services and

financial aid services. For parking facilities and services, satisfaction went from just over 29 percent in 1988 to over 42 percent in 2001. Similarly, for financial aid services, satisfaction went from 25.3 percent in 1998 to 48.7 percent in 2001; a rather dramatic shift given the university's recent issues with financial aid.

Table 4
Level of Satisfaction With
Top Ten Services Used in 2001

<u>Top Ten Services Used in 2001</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied by Year</u>¹			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Library Facilities and Services	60.1	61.3	60.6	63.0
Parking Facilities and Services	29.1	37.8	34.5	42.3
Computer Services	58.1	52.0	58.3	57.6
Financial Aid Services	25.3	22.8	42.1	48.7
Academic Advising Services	62.6	61.8	60.7	59.9
College Orientation Program	51.8	52.6	54.0	57.3
College Sponsored Social Activities	48.3	51.4	46.3	53.5
Food Services	32.1	28.0	27.7	35.2
College Sponsored Tutorial Activities	53.3	51.6	52.1	56.3
Career Planning Services	50.2	49.0	47.5	52.1

¹ Percent satisfied is defined as those students that responded either "satisfied" or "very satisfied".

College Activities:

In addition to levels of satisfaction with various university services, students were also asked to indicate their level of satisfaction relative to major university activities. The activities were categorized into six different areas: academics, admissions, rules and policies, facilities, registration, and general university concerns. Each area was composed of a series of concerns, issues, and/or activities that were related in a general

way. For each of the specific concerns, issues, and/or activities the student was asked to indicate their level of satisfaction.

Before addressing each of these specific factors in detail, it was deemed instructive to determine which of these general areas (i.e., academics, admissions, facilities, etc.) students found most satisfying. To do so, a mean scale of satisfaction was created for each of these general areas. That is, the responses to the individual items included in each general area were summed and then divided by the total number of items in the area. The items could range from a low of 1 (very dissatisfied) to a high of 5 (very satisfied).

Table 5
Mean Ranking of Satisfaction
By Major College Activity

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Mean Satisfaction Levels¹</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Academic	3.64	3.62	3.53	3.71
Admissions	3.05	3.13	3.26	3.47
General Concerns	3.13	3.20	3.22	3.34
Rules and Policies	3.01	3.09	3.14	3.29
Registration	2.92	3.00	3.12	3.21
Facilities	3.06	3.12	3.01	3.21

¹ Values for satisfaction levels range from 1 to 5, where 1 is “very dissatisfied” and 5 is “very satisfied”.

For instance, there were ten different items included in the academic area. They asked students their level of satisfaction with such items as “testing/grading system”, “course content”, and “instruction”. Scores on these ten items were summed for each individual student and then divided by ten in order to obtain a mean score for academics.

Means were then determined for the sample as whole to produce the results for each general area given in Table 5.

Given this methodology, it was determined that in 2001 students were most satisfied with the area of academics, followed by admissions. This order is almost identical to 2000, with only slight changes noted for 1999 and 1998. What is interesting throughout the years, is that regardless of the changes that occurred Academics remained the area in which the students were most satisfied.

To gain a better understanding of the students' levels of satisfaction, results from each general area are given in Tables 6 through 11. However, in these tables the percent satisfied is used to determine levels of satisfaction.

Table 6
Levels of Satisfaction With
The Academic Environment

<u>Academic Factors</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Course Content in Major Field	72.1	72.4	66.3	75.6
Class Size Relative to Course	74.4	71.9	62.0	73.1
Instruction in Major Field	71.4	70.1	63.5	72.3
Testing / Grading System	61.8	64.8	56.3	67.4
Preparation Receiving for Future Occupation	59.8	57.2	55.6	63.3
Value of Information Provided by Advisor	61.9	59.6	56.1	61.1
Out of Class Availability of Instructors	63.0	57.7	52.0	60.6
Attitude of Faculty Toward Students	57.2	55.6	49.7	59.2
Availability of Advisor	60.1	57.7	50.8	57.8
Variety of Courses Offered	51.8	53.1	50.2	57.2

For Academics (Table 6) it was found that students were most satisfied with the course content in their major field. Almost 76 percent of the students gave such a

response in 2001. This level is followed by class size (73 percent) and instruction (72 percent). These numbers are quite high and also show a continuing trend of increased levels of satisfaction over the years.

Although satisfaction levels were not as high for admission activities as they were for academics, there is also a noted trend of increased levels of satisfaction over the years (Table 7). It was found that students were most satisfied with the university catalog and other admissions publications (60 percent). This was followed by general admission procedures (56 percent) and the accuracy of information provided prior to enrolling in the University (54 percent).

Table 7
Levels of Satisfaction With
Admission Activities

<u>Admission Factors</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Catalog / Admissions Publications	45.8	45.6	46.0	60.3
General Admission Procedures	50.2	49.6	54.2	56.4
Accuracy of College Information Prior to Enrolling	39.2	40.8	44.4	54.1
Availability of Financial Aid Information Prior to Enrolling	29.6	31.0	43.9	49.6

When the area associated with University rules and policies was considered (Table 8), it was noted that rules governing student conduct had the highest level of student satisfaction. Specifically, just over 50 percent indicated that they were satisfied with this area. This was followed by the rules and policies governing personal security and safety (44 percent) and the rules and policies relating to academic probation and

suspension (41 percent). As was the case with the other areas observed, the levels noted in 2001 were reflective of consistent increases in levels of satisfaction over the years.

Table 8
Levels of Satisfaction With
The Rules and Policies
of The University

<u>Rules and Policies</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Rules Governing Student Conduct	42.2	44.2	43.0	50.5
Personal Security / Safety	35.5	42.3	44.2	43.5
Academic Probation and Suspension Policies	36.3	36.2	37.4	41.3
Student Voice in College Policies	26.6	32.3	31.4	37.2
Residence Hall Rules and Regulations	25.0	30.4	27.6	34.1
Uses of Student Activity Fees	18.2	22.7	24.6	28.9

The patterns observed thus far do not alter when university facilities are examined (Table 9). For this area, students were most satisfied with the student study areas. Just over 52 percent indicated that they were satisfied. This was followed by the campus bookstore (51.7 percent) and campus classrooms (50.7 percent).

Satisfaction levels for the Registration process were also not as high as those noted for the previous areas, with one exception (Table 10). Just over 59 percent of the students indicated that they were satisfied with the academic calendar. On the other hand, only 45 percent indicated that they were satisfied with the billing and fee payment procedures and only 42 percent were satisfied with general registration procedures.

Table 9
Levels of Satisfaction With
University Facilities

<u>Facilities</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Study Areas	49.4	53.4	50.6	52.2
Campus Bookstore	48.8	56.2	53.3	51.7
Classrooms	42.2	45.2	41.5	50.7
Athletic Facilities	37.9	38.5	37.9	41.2
Laboratories	37.3	39.8	36.0	40.3
Student Union	35.5	37.4	36.8	39.1
General Condition of Buildings and Grounds	28.9	27.1	25.4	36.6
Availability of Student Housing	24.7	24.9	24.2	28.3

However, it must be pointed out that even though these levels are considerably lower than those discussed earlier, the 2001 levels for registration activities are well above their levels for 1998. Satisfaction with general registration procedures has gone from just under 28 percent in 1998 to the observed 42 percent in 2001, which is quite a substantial change. Similarly, satisfaction with the billing and fee payment procedures has gone from 32 percent in 1998 to 45 percent in 2001.

The last area considered, addressed issues that did not conveniently fit in any of the above categories. It included such items as the university's concern for the student as an individual, attitudes of non-teaching staff, opportunities for student employment, opportunities for personal involvement in campus activities, student government, religious activities, and the campus media.

Table 10
Levels of Satisfaction With
Registration Activities

<u>Registration Factors</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Academic Calendar	55.6	53.4	51.5	59.2
Billing and Fee Payment Procedures	32.2	32.1	37.6	44.7
General Registration Procedures	27.7	31.5	35.6	42.0
Availability of Courses at Times You Can Take Them	32.5	36.5	35.6	40.1

From among these areas, students were most satisfied with their opportunities for personal involvement in campus activities. Approximately 51 percent of the students indicated that they were satisfied with this area. They were also rather satisfied with the campus media (47 percent) and the attitudes of the non-teaching staff. Again it is worth noting that the levels of satisfaction have continued to rise through the 2001 academic year.

Table 11
Levels of Satisfaction With
Other Related College Activities

<u>Other College Activities</u>	<u>Percent Satisfied</u>			
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>
Opportunities for Personal Involvement in Campus Activities	42.7	48.9	46.4	51.1
Campus Media	40.4	44.3	42.7	46.8
Attitudes of Non-Teaching Staff	32.3	33.2	34.6	44.8
Concern for You as Individual	33.2	35.4	35.3	43.3
Opportunities for Student Employment	34.4	38.1	35.8	42.0
Student Government	30.9	36.5	37.5	40.8
Religious Activities and Programs	31.1	39.8	37.2	38.0

Summary:

The analysis has revealed that in a general sense satisfaction levels throughout the campus have increased. This finding was not only evident for services, but also for major university activities. This finding tended to be true even when one considers the finding that the samples for 1998 and 2001 contained more mature students than the 1999 and 2000 samples. Similarly, it was noted that the utilization of services tends to be decreasing, however this did not significantly negate the finding of increased levels of satisfaction.

Of special note were the findings related to registration, financial aid, and the billing and fee payment procedures. It was found that there were quite substantial positive shifts in the students' attitudes toward these major university activities. This is quite significant given the university's recent history in these areas.