

Research Brief

A publication from Rowan University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning to provide targeted information to the Rowan community

September 2003

Volume FY 2004: Brief 1

Student Satisfaction at Rowan University - Part 2 Rowan's Challenges

Introduction

This is the second in a series of *Research Briefs* that summarize the findings of *Student Satisfaction Inventory*, administered to Rowan undergraduate students in the spring 2003 term.

The *SSI* is a survey consisting of **98 items** regarding many experiences of college life.¹ Students rate these 98 items in the inventory by the importance of the specific expectation as well as their satisfaction with how well that expectation is being met. A performance gap is then determined by the difference in the importance rating and the satisfaction rating. Items with large performance gaps indicate areas where students perceive their expectations are not being met adequately. These items are collapsed into **eleven scales** (or dimensions) of campus life.

The first Research Brief summarized student satisfaction at Rowan on these eleven dimensions of campus life. Highlights of the preliminary findings were:

- Students are more satisfied with their Rowan experience than students who attend other four-year public institutions in the Eastern United States on ten of eleven scales

- The only scale on which Rowan students reported less satisfaction than their peers was the scale labeled "Safety and Security" (driven by the scale item related to parking)

This *Research Brief* will focus on the performance gap scores of the 98 items in the *SSI*. A large performance gap score for an item indicates that Rowan is not meeting students' expectations, whereas a small gap score indicates that Rowan is meeting students' expectations, and a negative gap score indicates that Rowan is exceeding students' expectations. When an *SSI* item has a performance gap score of 1.50 or greater, that item is defined, for this report, as an **institutional challenge**.

Institutional Challenges

Eleven items from the *SSI* qualified as "institutional challenges." **This number has decreased** each time the *SSI* has been administered.

	number of <i>SSI</i> items having a performance gap score of 1.50 or greater
1993 administration	43
1998 administration	25
2003 administration	11

¹ Adopted from Campus Report, Rowan University, 2003, Student Satisfaction Inventory, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Institutional Challenges - SSI Items that recorded Performance Gap scores of 1.50+

(Methodology: Gap = Mean Importance - Mean Satisfaction)

ITEM	IMP Mean	SAT Mean	GAP Mean	Ranked IMP	Ranked GAP
21. The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate	6.53	2.00	4.53	2	1
34. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts	6.54	4.29	2.24	1	2
23. Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable	5.92	3.84	2.09	10	3
73. Student activities fees are put to good use	6.03	4.08	1.95	9	4
57. I seldom get the run-around when seeking information on this campus	6.12	4.29	1.83	6	5
66. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment	6.43	4.73	1.70	3	6
17. Adequate financial aid is available for most students	6.11	4.45	1.66	7	7
38. There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria	5.82	4.19	1.63	11	8
11. Billing policies are reasonable	6.04	4.46	1.57	8	9
28. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure	6.23	4.68	1.55	4	10
36. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies	6.20	4.68	1.52	5	11

Eleven items qualified as institutional challenges under this definition. (See table above.) Leading the list is “the amount of student parking space is adequate.” The performance gap for this item is 4.53, the largest gap of the eleven. The next item, “I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts,” has a gap mean of 2.24, followed by the item, “Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable,” with a mean gap score of 2.09. These items, using this definition, were identified as the most important institutional challenges for this *SSI* cycle. The remaining items had gap scores between 1.50 and 2.00.

Two points will be made. First, **these eleven items identified as institutional challenges are also the top ranked items as being most important to Rowan students.** Nine of these eleven items were identified as being “important” to “very important” by Rowan students (on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is “not important at all,” 4 is

“neutral,” and 7 is “very important”). The other two items were labeled as being between “somewhat important” and “important” on this 7-point scale.²

The second point is that nine of these eleven institutional challenges had satisfaction scores between 4.0 and 5.0 (where 4 is “neutral” and 5 is “somewhat satisfied”). **While these nine items have relatively large performance gap scores (over 1.50), the level of student satisfaction is not markedly negative.** What drives the performance gap score is more the relative importance of the item, rather than the low satisfaction with the item. The item about parking (satisfaction mean of 2.0) was the only item that was rated by students as being dissatisfied. “Living conditions in the residence halls” was rated only slightly below “neutral.”

Additional information about the Student Satisfaction Inventory will include differences in importance and satisfaction levels between native Rowan students and transfers and between lower division and upper division students.

For more information visit our web page at
<http://www.rowan.edu/open/irp>
 Our listing is under Professional and Academic Service -
 Institutional Research and Planning or contact us
 at 256-4146

Institutional Research and Planning
Rowan University
Bole Hall Annex
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028
(856) 256-4146

² Note: 47 of the items rated an importance score of 6.0 or greater. Students identified half of the SSI items as being “important” to “very important.”