

OSU Perspective

Understanding the 'Facts' & 'Figures' about our students and their learning . . .

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SPECIAL EDITION

The involvement of a number of departments within Student Affairs in assessment efforts has presented us with a rather unique dilemma—that is, having more information and data than can easily fit into one Fall issue of the OSU Perspective. In order to insure that this information is available to the OSU community, we have chosen to publish a special edition highlighting assessment results from a variety of departments. May we always have more information than can comfortably fit into a 4-page quarterly assessment newsletter!

Rec Sports-An Excellent Place To Workout and Play!

The Department of Recreational Sports bi-annually surveys a random sample of OSU students concerning their knowledge, use, value, and results of participating in the services and programs of that unit. Of the 4,000 students who were surveyed during Spring term, 2002, 20% responded.

Key findings:

- 98% of students reported using Recreational Sports programs, facilities, or services while at OSU. This was 19% more than was reported in the 2000 results.
- Dixon Recreation Center was the most frequently used facility (90%) followed by Stevens Natatorium (49%) and the Intramural Fields (43%).

- 88% rated the Department of Recreational Sports as *excellent* or *good* at providing a safe environment in which to workout and play.

The top activities that students reported engaging in two or more times per week were:

Cardio Machines Fitness Classes
Weight Machines Basketball
Free Weights

Importance of recreational sports facilities and programs:

- 39% very important/somewhat important in deciding to attend OSU;
- 59% very important/somewhat important in deciding to continue at OSU;
- 87% very important/somewhat important after graduation.

Top 5 reasons student users reported using fewer services or not using services any longer included:

- * 65% lack of time due to class and coursework
- * 51% overcrowding
- * 21% parking
- * 14% participate off campus
- * 12% condition of facilities

Student reported benefits from participation in recreational sports and fitness activities:

Physical fitness
Stress reduction
Feeling of well-being
Physical strength
Weight control
Self-confidence

The Department of Recreational Sports will be conducting this survey again in Spring, 2004.

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For a complete report or information about the up-coming survey, contact Lisa Hoogesteger, Associate Director, 541-737-3343.

Students Rate MU as One of the Best!

The MU has been one of the primary gathering places for students, faculty, staff and visitors for the last 75 years. It has a rich history of service to OSU and the many people who have used its services and facilities.

As a result of engaging in a national benchmarking study hosted by the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) two years ago, the MU was able to identify and implement changes desired by users of the MU. In 2003,

the MU had the opportunity to participate in another benchmarking study sponsored by ACUI. This study measures student perspectives about the MU (continued on page 3)



How Do Students Rate OSU Student Health Services Quality?

Student Health Services annually conducts an internal survey of its student clients as well as an external survey of the OSU general student population. Students respond to a questions addressing a variety of areas including quality of care. The following chart reports how students who used the OSU Student Health Services rated the quality of care they received.

% Excellent/Good	Quality Dimension
97%	Time spent visiting with clinician
97%	Professional manner of clinician ¹
95%	Technical skills of clinician ²
97%	Clarity of explanations and instructions
97%	Overall quality of care

¹referred to courtesy, respect, sensitivity, and friendliness of clinician.

²referred to thoroughness, carefulness, and competence of clinician.

In addition students indicated that the services had helped them to be more academically successful by:

- Treating illness and injury (81%)
- Providing easy access to medical care (74%)
- Providing someone to talk to about health concerns (66%)

Overall, students are very positive about Student Health Services!

For more information about students' views of the OSU Student Health Services, contact Dr. Lora Jasman, Director or Dr. Pat Ketcham, Associate Director, Health Promotion at 541-737-WELL.

Use of External Resources for Conducting Assessment

Submitted by Michael Henthorne, Director, Memorial Union

The Division of Student Affairs has learned a great deal about assessment of programs and services over the past few years. No matter how much we've grown in our understanding of assessment, there are times when we need more expertise to carry out our assessment plan. Most of the assessment activity that we've been conducting in the Memorial Union we consider to be self-administered assessment. By this, I mean it is assessment activity that we both design and administer. However, when is it appropriate or useful to use outside resources for conducting assessment activities? The answer to that is likely, when we need more expertise, or when we want our assessment results to be benchmarked against a cross-section of college union organizations. In the case of the Memorial Union's most recent survey, the assessment activity offered by Educational Benchmarking, Inc. fit both of these criteria. This particular study has been conducted twice in the past and was repeated in Spring, 2003. Those results are reported elsewhere in this issue.

This study offers the Memorial Union a comprehensive view of student perceptions of our facilities, programs and services. The Association of College Unions International, who is working in conjunction with Educational Benchmarking Incorporated, or EBI, makes the survey available to the MU. This year, there were fifty institutions participating across the U.S.

So why did we chose EBI? EBI analyzes the survey results and then compares them using a number of benchmarking methods. First, our results are referenced to a two-year history of results for OSU. (How have OSU student perceptions changed over time?) Second, there is a benchmarking component. We are compared to a group of six institutions that are most like OSU's institutional profile. Finally, we are compared to all Carnegie Research institutions and all institutions in the study that completed the benchmarking component.

Questions in the survey are analyzed in two ways. Students are asked to rate the program, service, or facility, and to rate how important this element is to the student. EBI provides a "priority matrix" in the report that clearly displays the results in a manner that can help us to determine how to best improve our operations to satisfy students to the greatest degree. The priority matrix plots

those factors that are rated for high/moderate/low performance and high/moderate/low importance. A cross-referencing of these elements will result in a table that identifies those items that should be our top priority (low performance, high importance), as well as those that are moderate priority to maintain/improve (high/moderate performance, high importance). We are also provided information on which aspects of our programs, facilities, or services to monitor, (low performance, low importance) and maintain (high performance, low importance).

This type of study can provide extremely valuable information that can be used to direct our improvement efforts. The information from EBI assists our efforts at making the greatest impact for improving student satisfaction by directing us toward those items most needing improvement and that are of greatest importance to OSU students. It also lets us know how we're doing compared to other institutions most like Oregon State. While EBI works with college unions, it also offers assessments for a number of other areas within higher education. For more information, contact Michael Henthorne, Director, 541-737-6256.

Students Rate MU As One of the Best! (continued from page 1)

and then compares OSU's results with results from other participating institutions in the following categories: Carnegie class, All institutions, and the "Select 6"—a group of six institutions selected by OSU. The "Select 6" are those institutions that participated in the study and that have comparable profiles to that of OSU. OSU's "Select 6" included: University of Arizona, University of Washington, Florida State University, Colorado State University, Indiana University, and the University of Montana.

Questions on the study focus on 12 factors linked to successful college union operations and programs. These include:

Publicizes the Union and Promotes Campus-1st in "Select 6"—5th in Carnegie group

College Union has a Positive Environment-2nd in "Select 6"—3rd in Carnegie group

College Union is Student Oriented-2nd in "Select 6"—5th in Carnegie group

College Union is Source of Entertainment-2nd in "Select 6"—5th in Carnegie group

College Union Enhances Life and Leadership-1st in "Select 6"—1st in Carnegie group

Union Food Variety, Quality, and Price-3rd in "Select 6"—3rd in Carnegie group

Aspects of Dining Service (cleanliness, ambiance, seating, customer service, hours)-1st in "Select 6"—1st in Carnegie group

Bookstore Staff (courteousness, availability)-2nd in "Select 6"—2nd in Carnegie group

Bookstore Items Variety and Price-2nd in Select 6—2nd in Carnegie group

Union Cleanliness-2nd in Select 6—3rd in Carnegie group

Union Staff-(courteous, knowledgeable, available)-1st in "Select 6"—1st in Carnegie group

Overall Satisfaction with College Union-1st in "Select 6"—2nd in Carnegie group



The study also ranks the importance of each factor to students and provides a matrix of those areas that should be maintained and those that should be top priority for improvement. High importance and high performance were registered for the Union Staff Factor, the 2nd highest predictor of student overall satisfaction and importance.

Areas in which the study suggested opportunities for MU development included increased food and menu choices and greater possibilities for social interaction, understanding of others, volunteerism, and leadership training.

In the coming months the MU staff and students will be examining these results closely and targeting those areas of high importance. For more information on students' ratings of the MU, contact Michael Henthorne, Director, at 541-737-6256.



What Do Students Who Use the OSU Counseling and Psychological Services Tell Us?

Students come to University Counseling and Psychological Services (UCPS) with a variety of concerns. Of students who use the services:

- * 70% say they are struggling with sadness or depression
- * 66% report notable concern with mood swings
- * 63% report moderate or significant anxiety
- * 61% report notable difficulty concentrating
- * 39% indicate they experience financial difficulties
- * 36% report indecision about career choice
- * 23% report thinking of dropping out of school
- * 20% indicate too frequent absence from class
- * 15% report thinking about ending their life.

Most students who go to UCPS report that counseling has helped them. In particular, students say that counseling helped:

- * 83% clarify their issues
- * 69% feel less depressed
- * 65% develop healthier relationships
- * 61% manage stress more effectively
- * 58% make decisions
- * 47% improve their motivation
- * 24% stay at OSU.

During 2002-03, UCPS saw 1,104 students for counseling. About 3,200 students participated in presentations on topics such as Study Skills, Time Management, Stress Management, and Developing Healthy Relationships.

For more information about the services and student reports about their counseling experience, contact Dr. Ellen B. Taylor, Director, at 541-737-2131.

**OSU
 Perspective:
 What is it?**

The **OSU Perspective** was developed to provide assessment and other information about our students and programs. We hope that by making this information available to OSU faculty and staff, we can stimulate conversation that helps to keep students and student learning at our core.

The **Perspective** is published quarterly both in print and on the web: http://oregonstate.edu/student_affairs/research/perspective.html

Ideas and suggestions for subsequent **OSU Perspective** publications are welcomed.

Please contact Rebecca Sanderson, Ph.D., Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Office, 102 Buxton Hall, 541-737-8738, or email: rebecca.sanderson@oregonstate.edu.

Faculty and staff involved in looking at the educational value of living in a university residential environment have suggested for some time that students who "live in" will tend to report better grades and will also tend to persist from first year to second year more frequently than those who have not "lived in." OSU's Housing and Dining Services regularly tracks the GPA of residence hall and cooperative house students. The following reports the GPA of first year students and all students in residence compared to all first year students and all OSU students for 2002-2003.

GPA Comparison for First Year Students

Year	Term	OSU in General	Residential Housing	Off Campus
2001	Fall	2.86	2.98	2.74
2002	Winter	2.90	2.96	2.80
2002	Spring	2.86	2.90	2.80
2001-02	Year	2.87	2.95	2.77
2002	Fall	2.87	3.02	2.72
2003	Winter	2.79	2.87	2.65
2003	Spring	2.74	2.77	2.66
2002-03	Year	2.83	2.90	2.72

Clearly, first year students who live in a residential environment made better grades overall than the first year class in general, and both did better than those who lived off campus. For further information about students who live on campus, contact Eric Hansen, Assistant Director of UHDS at 541-737-7709.

START SOARS!!

The Student Orientation and Retention Office (SOAR) annually coordinates the summer START program where new OSU students and family members get officially introduced to OSU. It is at this time that students meet with their academic advisor, develop academic plans, register for courses, and begin their transition to the OSU community of scholars.

The faculty, staff, and current students involved in the START program are aware that the impression that students and parents develop during this program can impact a student's decision to actually "show up" in the Fall. Thus, SOAR staff assess the experience of these students and parents with their START program. The data is

divided, based upon date of attendance, specific type of program, and other factors which enable the SOAR office to continuously improve the experiences of participants.

Some of the highlights from the 2003 START program evaluation include:

- Over 95% of all participants reported that START met or exceeded their expectations.
- Overall START received high marks (>90% satisfied or very satisfied) for:
 - Helpfulness of OSU students, staff, and faculty
 - Welcome and opening session
 - Degree to which START assisted in

easing the transition to OSU
 —Overall organization and content.

- Transfer students tended to rate their experiences a bit higher than first time students. This was particularly true for satisfaction with:
 - Academic presentation (100%)
 - Academic advising appointment (98%),
 - Web registration (95%)
- Over 82% felt that the number of activities during START was just right.

For further information about START and students' experiences, please contact Rick DeBellis, Marcus Langford or Kris Winter in the SOAR office at 541-737-7627.