2012 Student Satisfaction Survey Shows Trends in Student Perceptions of College Services

In the spring of 2012, we conducted our Student Satisfaction Survey. This survey has been done using essentially the same methods three times now (2007, 2009 and 2012) allowing for us to compare results over time. A total of 764 surveys were completed for the spring 2012 version.

The full report on the survey can be found here on the research web page. Here are a few highlights.

- Only 3.4% of our students have two 4-year college graduates for parents. Another 12.8% had one college graduate parent. The remaining 83.8% are first-generation college students. As a side note, this survey has so far been the only way we’ve been able to gather information on parental education. In the future, we will have this information from our application and update forms. This was supposed to start in summer 2012, but has been delayed a bit.
- Students in 2012 were more likely to be familiar with the college mission statement: 28.8% versus 23.1% in 2009.
- A slightly smaller (but still high, 82.5%) percentage of students say they would recommend Porterville College to others compared to the past. This is a lesson in how question order can affect survey responses. This question is asked almost right after the questions about students being able to get the classes they need. This has become much more of a problem since 2009 (see below).
- The survey asks students to rate 34 of the college’s services on a 5-point scale ranging from “excellent” to “poor”. This time, in order to show results over time, we provide the percentage of students who answered “excellent” or “good” for each of those 34 questions. These questions were grouped into 10 related categories so that we can examine related areas together. These categories were as follows (number of questions in parentheses):
  - Direct instruction & general (3)
  - Public Information (2)
  - Counseling/Advising (3)
  - Library (3)
  - Student Services Programs—General (6)
  - Student Services Programs for Special Populations (7)
  - Auxiliary Services (2)
  - Facilities (4)
  - Security (2)
  - Extracurricular & Community (2)
- While student rating of instruction remained high, they are not as positive about textbooks used in classes. Those rating textbooks highly dropped from 70.5% in 2009 to 59.3% in 2012. Note that this is not a rating of the bookstore, which can be found below.
Students rate the college web site more highly than in the past, with an improvement from 75.2% in 2009 to 81.0% in 2012.

In the counseling/advising area, academic advising has been rated similarly on all three surveys. Career advising ratings dropped between 2007 and 2009 and remained the same this time. Student ratings for personal advising have dropped a small amount over the course of the three surveys, but the difference is not statistically significant.

The library has improved its ratings on all three questions: books, online resources and staff service.

Most general student services have shown small, though not statistically significant improvements over time. Financial aid had a drop between 2007 and 2009, but improved this year.

CalWorks showed a decline in ratings between 2007 and 2009, but recovered part of that decline in 2012. EOP&S showed a decline in 2012. Both the Learning Center and Child Care Center showed small, though not statistically significant improvements.

The fitness center was in the midst of a remodel in 2009 and thus suffered a decline in student ratings from 63.8% rating it positively in 2007 to 54.4% in 2009. However, with a new location and new equipment, it more than made up the difference in 2012 with 78.5% of students rating it as excellent or good.

Both the bookstore and cafeteria were outsourced recently and both showed improved ratings from 2009.

All four questions regarding facilities have shown improvements over the survey period. The level of improvement for classroom facilities was significant and that for the computer labs was quite substantial, from 68.5% positive in 2007 to 86.9% in 2012.

The two security-related questions have been among the lowest rated in the past and remain so, but both showed improvement.

Extracurricular activities and campus events & cultural activities were rated positively by a majority of students for the first time in the survey.

We ask a series of nine questions about how well the college prepares students in a number of areas. These are similar to our institutional student learning outcomes (ISLOs) and thus can be used as an indirect measure of progress. However, student ratings on these questions have been very stable, with no statistically significant differences. Though not significant, there has been a slight improvement in student ratings of how the college prepares them in the use of technology and slight declines in how well we prepare them for both transfer and employment.

We also asked two questions on course availability and whether the college had the programs students need. Not surprisingly, both of these showed declines from previous surveys as the number of sections offered has been reduced while demand has increased.

There were demographic and other differences in a number of questions with female students rating several areas more positively than males, Hispanic students more positively than white
students, first generation students more positively than students whose parents had college degrees and students familiar with the college mission statement more positively than those not familiar with it.

The current plan is to conduct this survey every three years, so our next cycle would be in the spring of 2015. Most questions will likely remain the same for consistency, but some changes are possible.

Again, the survey results can be found here. Other survey reports, as well as demographic information and other research reports can also be found at the Porterville College research web page at http://www.portervillecollege.edu/research.

Questions, as always, are welcome. You can contact the research office at mcarley@portervillecollege.edu.