

Spring 2011 Great Basin College Student Satisfaction Survey Results

Executive Summary

Overall, students are satisfied with their GBC experience – 89% enjoy being a student here and 87% would recommend GBC to a friend or relative. Students are most satisfied with their academic experiences – 89% agree that the quality of instruction in the majority of their classes is excellent and 86% believe instructors treat them fairly and are genuinely interested in teaching. 84% appreciate the easy use of the campus web portal and 83% are satisfied with campus technology. Results differ when broken down by primary location or GBC center and when broken down by student race/ethnicity – Hispanic/Latino students have the highest satisfaction rates while Native American students have the lowest.

Students identify satisfaction issues in such areas as access to required classes, library services, amount of financial aid, financial aid services, academic and career advising, access to tutors, dining services, student activities and events, and around safety at some locations. Recommendations to address these issues are included although they are made without regard to cost.

Introduction

The office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness surveyed all GBC students enrolled in spring 2011 classes (credit and non-credit) with an email address in the legacy SIS system using SmartEvals Student Satisfaction Survey in April and May, 2011. Students were separated into two groups based on the number of completed credit hours and were given slightly different questions. Students with less than 30 credits were classified as “Freshmen” and those with 30 or more were classified as “Sophomores.” The response rate was low (13.0%) and was probably due to several factors -- not all email addresses were functional, not all students communicate with GBC via email, and the survey was administered late in the semester. Overall, the response rate was 13.0% -- 219 freshmen responded out of 2101 surveyed resulting in a 10.4% response rate and 217 sophomores responded out of 1262 surveyed with a 17.2% response rate.

Below is a summary of those results and recommendations for consideration to improve student satisfaction at GBC follow. The actual questions and responses can be found in Appendix A and student comments are provided in Appendix B. Comments have been edited to delete names. Unedited comments have been provided to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President who also serves as GBC’s Vice President for Student Services.

Student Demographics

Compared to the survey population, respondents are over-represented by women (73% of respondents vs. 66% of population), some minorities (black – 4% vs. 2%; Native American – 5% vs. 3%), full-time (39% vs. 26%) and half-time (34% vs. 29%) students, students taking primarily internet classes (25% vs. 20%) or located in Pahrump (16% vs. 12%) and Ely (5% vs. 4%), and by students whose majors are in business (12% vs. 8%), Computer Technologies (10% vs. 5%), Education (12% vs. 10%), Health and

Human Sciences (16% vs. 14%), Science (3% vs. 2%), and Social Science (10% vs. 6%) and those seeking a transfer degree (20% vs. 17%),

Relatively under-represented students include men (27% vs. 34%), Asian Americans (1% vs. 2%), Hispanics (12% vs. 14%), Whites (73% vs. 76%), students enrolled in less than 6 credits (26% vs. 45%), students located in Battle Mountain (2% vs. 3%), Elko (41% vs. 49%), and Winnemucca (8% vs. 9%), those in CTE majors (2% vs. 5%), and those who are non-degree seeking (9% vs. 11%) or undecided (6% vs. 22%).

Of those students responding to the survey, 23% of the sophomores work more than 40 hours/week, 36% work 21-40 hours per week, 26% work 1-20 hours/week, and 13% do not work at all. Freshmen work similarly: 26% work more than 40, 29% work 21-40, 26% work 1-20, and 17% do not work at all.

Summary of Responses

Questions are categorized as those in Overall Satisfaction with GBC, Academic Affairs, Student Services, Advising, and Safety and one question on Facilities. Students are presented a question and asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. For analysis purposes, responses are grouped into three categories – Agree/Strongly Agree, Neutral, and Disagree/Strongly Disagree. The responses are reported for the overall student body and then broken down by race/ethnicity (black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and white – the remaining categories of unknown, international, and multi-racial had low numbers and were not combined) and by primary location of student classes (Elko, Ely, Pahrump, Winnemucca, primarily internet, and all Other locations).

Overall Institutional Satisfaction, Safety and Facilities

Overall, 89% of the students responding to the survey enjoy being a student at GBC. 87% would recommend GBC to a friend or family member, and 85% are satisfied with their college experience. 82% believe that they are getting a good value for their money. However, 12% did not plan on returning to school fall 2011 and only 69% feel they fit into the institution. In general, students are fairly neutral about safety issues – 81% agree they feel safe at GBC and another 81% agree the parking lots are safe. 70% agree the labs and technology are modern and meet their needs.

Hispanic/Latino students have the highest satisfaction rates overall—94% have found general education (gen ed) courses helpful; 92% would recommend GBC to others; 92% enjoy being a student here; and 91% feel they are getting a good value for their money. Only 62%, however, feel they fit in at GBC. White students are also fairly satisfied—90% enjoy being a student here and 88% would recommend GBC and only 82% feel they are getting a good value for their money. 89% of black students enjoy being a student here and have found gen ed courses to be helpful, however, 17% would not recommend GBC to a friend or family member and 12% disagree that GBC is a good value for their money. Native American students are the least satisfied at GBC—18% of the sophomores are not planning on returning to GBC in fall 2011; 18% have not had an easy transition to GBC; 17% would not

recommend GBC; and another 17% would not choose to enroll at GBC if given the opportunity to make that choice over again.

In general, students at all major location groupings are fairly satisfied with GBC – more than 85% of the students in Ely, Pahrump, Winnemucca, and in internet classes are satisfied with their college experience, while only 81% if the students in Elko are satisfied. Students in Ely seem to have the most disagreement with satisfaction questions – 10% do not feel they fit in with GBC and 14% would not choose to enroll here were they to make that decision over again. 10% of the students enrolled at all Other locations also would not choose GBC and 10% of the students in Winnemucca have not found general education courses to be helpful.

Students in Elko and Ely are the most satisfied with safety while students in Pahrump are the least satisfied as are students in Winnemucca. 26% of the students in Pahrump disagree that the lighting on campus at night is adequate; 20-23% disagree that the parking lots are safe; and 16% disagree that they feel safe walking around campus at night. Students in both Winnemucca and Pahrump disagree that there is adequate surveillance at their centers (19% and 16%, respectively) and students at both locations disagree that there are enough emergency call boxes (25% and 23%).

Academic Affairs Student Satisfaction

Overall, students are fairly satisfied with instruction at GBC – 90% agree that instructor expectations are consistent with those stated in the course syllabi; 89% agree that the quality of instruction in the majority of their classes is excellent; and 86% agree the instructors treat students fairly as well as seem genuinely interested in teaching. Students disagree most (15%) with the statement that they are able to register for all the classes they require; another 12% disagree that classes are scheduled conveniently; and 10% disagree that library resources and services are sufficient. Finally, 11% disagree that their instructors are helpful in guiding them towards employment opportunities or graduate school.

85% or more of black students agree/strongly agree with 12 of 20 questions in academic affairs. 85% or more Hispanic/Latino students agree with 6 of the questions and as to 85% or more of white students. 85% or more Native American students agree with only 3 of the 20 questions. More than 14% of each of the four racial/ethnic groups reported here disagreed that they are able to register for the classes that they require and more than 11% of each of the four groups disagreed that classes are scheduled in convenient time slots. 20% black students and 17% Native American students disagreed that library resources and services are sufficient. Native American students disagreed that their instructors were helpful in guiding them towards employment opportunities or graduate school (17%), another 17% disagreed that online materials were clear and comprehensive, and 13% disagreed that instructors treated students fairly and disagreed that the coursework from their chosen major is satisfactory. 14% Hispanic/Latino students disagreed that instructors were helpful in guiding them towards employment opportunities or graduate school and another 10% disagreed that instructors provided timely feedback.

85% or more of the students in Ely agree or strongly agree with more than 16 out of 20 questions on academic affairs. 85% or more of the students in Pahrump agree with 11 questions while

85% or more of the students in Winnemucca agree with 6 questions on academic affairs. A similar percentage of students from Elko agree with 4 questions, while those students primarily in internet classes and those at other locations agree with 3 questions. 29% of the students in Pahrump disagreed that library resources and services are sufficient as did 23% of the students in Winnemucca. More than 10% of the students at four locations disagreed that they are able to register for the classes they need (Pahrump – 25%, Internet – 16%, Elko – 12%, and Winnemucca – 12%); more than 10% of the students at three locations disagreed that classes are scheduled at convenient time slots (Winnemucca – 18%, Pahrump – 17%, and Elko – 12%); and more than 10% of students at two locations disagreed that instructors provided timely feedback (Winnemucca – 15% and Other locations – 13%).

Student Services

Overall, none of the student services questions have more than 85% of the students indicating that they agree or strongly agree with the statement. 84% agree that the campus web portal is easy to use and 83% are satisfied with campus technology. Students disagree that they have participated in student activities and events (29%) and that they've received information that help to identify extracurricular activities that interest them (18%). Students also disagree that dining facilities meet their needs (12%), that a sufficient amount of financial aid is available to them (11%) and that the number and quality of student activities and events are adequate (10% disagreed on each question).

When reported out by race/ethnicity groups, more than 85% of students agree with three out of 22 questions – 88% black students find the website extremely useful; 87% Native American students find the school's policies on changing, adding, and dropping classes reasonable, and 86% Hispanic/Latino students are satisfied with campus technology. 12-13% of the students in each of the four groups disagreed that dining facilities are meeting their needs. All four groups disagreed that a sufficient amount of financial aid is available (white – 10%, Hispanic/Latino – 14%, black – 24%, Native American – 26%); students in two groups disagreed that they are very satisfied with the quality of financial aid advising (Native American – 13%, black – 12%) and students in the same two groups disagreed that their financial aid advisor contacted them when they had concerns in a timely manner (Native American – 17%, black – 19%). The same two groups disagreed that their financial aid advisor kept all of their appointments with them and any posted walk-in hours (black – 20%, Native American – 13%) and they disagreed that the financial aid staff is knowledgeable and helpful (black – 18%, Native American – 17%). Students in two groups disagree that tutors are available when they need them and at a reasonable charge (Native American – 13%, Hispanic/Latino – 10%). 13% of Native American students disagreed that student activity groups allow equal access and opportunity to all students and another 13% disagreed that cultural and extracurricular activities are well-planned and interesting while 19% of the black students disagreed with the same statement. Students in almost all groups disagree that they have participated in activities and events, that they have received information that helped them to identify extracurricular activities, and that the number and quality of activities and events are adequate.

When reported out by location, more than 85% of the students in Ely are satisfied with several statements – 94% are satisfied with technology; 90% could find their way around campus within the first month; 86% find the campus portal easy to use and another 86% find GBC's policies on changing, adding

or dropping classes reasonable. 94% of the students in Winnemucca are satisfied with technology and another 87% find the campus portal easy to use. 88% of the students in primarily internet classes find the web portal easy to use as do 91% of the students at other locations. Students in every location disagreed that they have participated in activities and events (from 21% in Pahrump to 45% in Winnemucca) and they all disagree that they've received information that helped them identify extracurricular activities that interest them (from 13% of the students in primarily internet classes to 33% of the students in Ely). 15% of the students in Ely disagree that student government pay attention to student needs as well as 13% of the students in Winnemucca. Students in Winnemucca (16%) and in Pahrump (12%) disagreed that tutors were available to them and at a reasonable charge. Students disagreed that dining facilities met their needs (Pahrump – 34%, Winnemucca – 19%, Elko – 10%, Ely – 10%) and 13% of students in Winnemucca disagreed that student activity groups allow equal access and opportunity to all. Financial aid was an issue to students in Winnemucca, Pahrump, and other locations and 10% or more of students at all locations but Winnemucca disagreed that a sufficient amount of financial aid is available.

Academic Advising

Overall, student satisfaction with the quality of academic advising at GBC is very weak – 71% of the students agree with that statement. 16% disagreed that their advisor helped them find internships and job placement, another 14% disagreed that their advisor helped them gain job search strategies, and another 11% disagreed that their advisor helped them explore career opportunities.

When reported by race/ethnicity, 18-20% of the black students disagreed with all nine questions on advising; 12-24% of the Hispanic/Latino students disagreed with eight out of nine questions; 13-17% of the Native American students disagreed with six questions; and 12-14% of white students disagreed with two questions. Most of the disagreement was regarding advising and help with job placement and finding internships as well as help with job search strategies and exploring career opportunities.

86% of the students in Ely are satisfied with the quality of academic advising at GBC although 16% of the students in Pahrump and 14% of the students in Other locations disagree with that statement. 15% of the students Pahrump disagreed that their advisor is knowledgeable and helpful; another 18% disagreed that their advisor helped them gain job search strategies; 19% disagreed their advisor helped find internships; 12% disagreed their advisor contacts them in a timely manner and the same percentage disagreed their advisor is concerned about their college success and personal growth. Students in Winnemucca and at Other locations also disagreed that their advisors were timely, and knowledgeable and helpful. 16% of the Elko students disagreed their advisor helped them gain job search strategies; another 17% disagreed their advisor helped them gain job search strategies; and 11% disagreed their advisor helped them explore career opportunities.

Recommendations for Consideration

Even though the overall response rate is low (13%) and the number of students responding in certain categories is small, some of the question responses support the need for improvement. Those same areas are highlighted in student comments at the end of the survey as well as in a 2007 student satisfaction survey.

Safety

- 1) Increase lighting, if not security, in Pahrump and Winnemucca.

Academic Affairs

- 2) Address the availability of required courses and how students know when they are offered – this was also an issue in a 2007 student satisfaction survey. At a minimum, publish a schedule of classes over a 2-4 year period and consider: 1) finding out what times are convenient to students and offering required courses at those times; 2) offering classes more often (every other semester vs. every other year); or 3) offering classes both onsite and via internet. Students commented that they were told to call instructors to find out when courses would be offered next.
- 3) Consider increasing library resources and services.

Student Services

- 4) Partner with the Student Government Association (SGA) to connect students to activities and events -- consider using PeopleSoft and/or student email to address the lack of participation and perceived lack of communication about activities and events, especially with minority students and students outside of Elko.
- 5) Increase the amount of institutionally available financial aid. A 2007 student satisfaction survey identified adequate finances as an issue as well.
- 6) Review financial aid processes and financial aid advising, especially with minority students and students outside of Elko, and implement plans for improvement.
- 7) Address the lack of dining services -- at a minimum, consider installing vending machines that are available in the evenings. Could the Elko campus library be open in the evenings and house the vending machines there? Could the library serve as a proxy student union at night? Could there be such a place at the centers?
- 8) Review the availability of tutors, especially for minority students and students at locations outside of Elko.

Academic Advising

- 9) Review advisor assignments and the advising process and implement a plan for improvement – is this a good way to connect with students? Incorporate information about job searches, careers and graduate schools with academic advising. Consider advising training to improve the quality of advising and its consistency across locations. Consider offering minority student advisors or advising mentors.