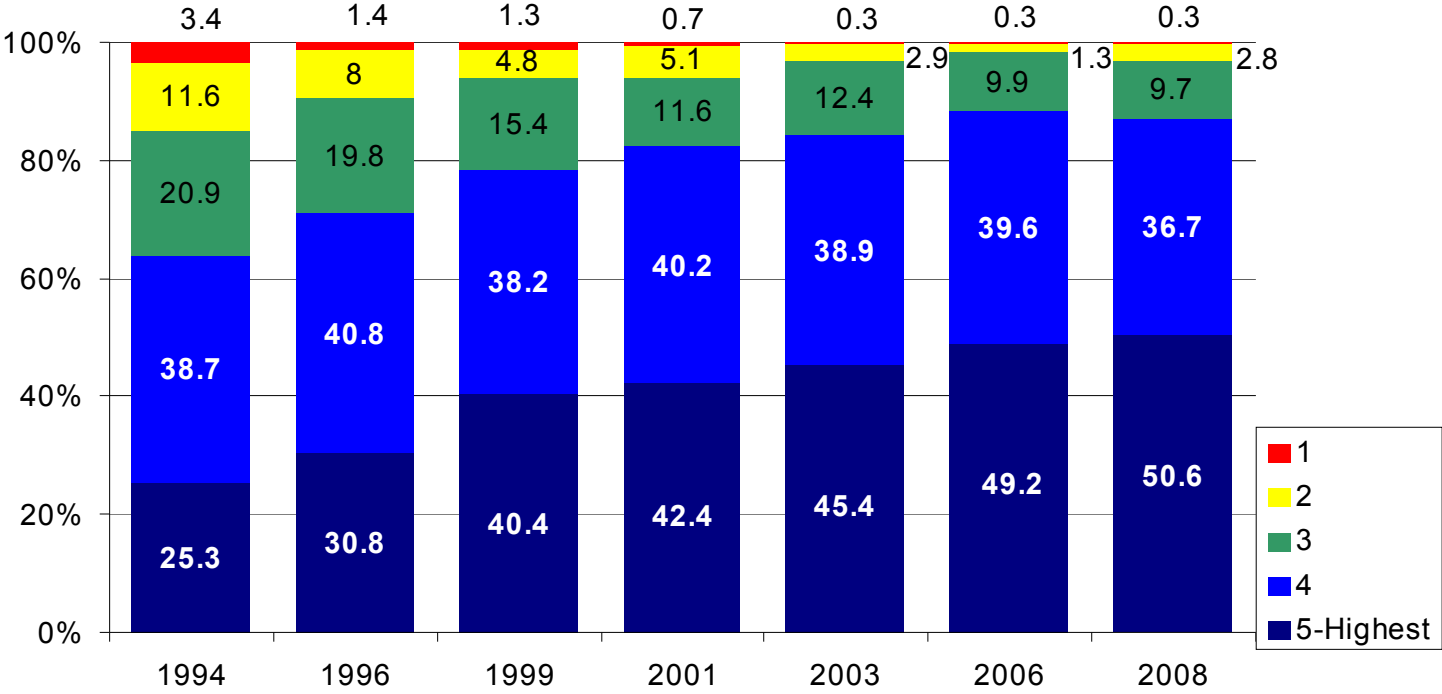


## Executive Summary: Student Satisfaction Remains High

- As the chart below illustrates, student satisfaction with the Financial Aid Office continues to be very high. Half of all students give the Financial Aid Office a 5 (the highest possible rating) – double the proportion when this survey was first taken. Nearly nine in ten give us the two highest ratings. Mean ratings have increased from 3.61 in 1994 to 4.34 today (out of a possible 5).
- Student satisfaction with the speed of service improved significantly since the last survey as a result of cross training and allocating staffing resources toward processing and awarding.
- Our greatest asset is an outstanding staff. Students particularly note our friendliness and helpfulness.
- Student satisfaction with telephone access also improved significantly. We do not use phone trees. There are very few complaints about lines due to our efforts to handle peak periods.
- Student perceptions of our services are *subjective* and colored by *factors outside our control*. Student perception of the fairness of the federal aid system continued to slide this year. Students who feel the federal system is unfair and those who receive less favorable aid (i.e. loans instead of grants) rate our services less favorably. Nevertheless, satisfaction with us held up or improved.

### Student Satisfaction 1994-2008



# Survey Analysis

## GENERAL SATISFACTION REMAINS HIGH

The Financial Aid Office continues its steady improvement in service to USU students. General satisfaction stayed at roughly the same high level as two years ago. **Half of all students (51%) gave Financial Aid a 5, the highest rating possible.** 87% gave us a 5 or 4; fewer than 3% give us a 2 or 1. Mean ratings have increased from 3.61 in 1994 to 4.34 in 2008.

When asked in an open-ended question what they liked least about the Financial Aid Office, three of five students either said they wouldn't change anything or didn't know anything they would change.

## STAFF IS BEST ASSET

When asked what they liked best about the Financial Aid Office, the overwhelming majority singled out the staff for praise. The staff receives high marks in both courtesy and knowledge. 93% gave them a 5 or 4 in courtesy. 85 % gave their knowledge a 5 or 4. Fewer than 5% gave them low scores (2 or 1) in either category. **The two words most commonly used to describe office staffers are "helpful" and "friendly."** Other comments include: "very knowledgeable, best staff of four schools attended, patient, very positive, easy to talk to, honest, concerned with students."

## SPEED & QUALITY OF SERVICE APPRECIATED

**This was a primary area of focus for us since the last survey. Satisfaction improved here significantly.** 86% rated speed of service a 5 or 4 (up from 70% in 1996). We have done extensive cross-training and backup of critical functions to minimize the "not here" problem and to even-out seasonal work loads. Lines are almost unmentioned as a concern. Students describe us as "efficient, alert, and on time, thorough, and organized." They appreciate a "real person to talk to" and that they don't need an appointment to get help.

**Telephone access is improved.** 76% give us highest two ratings- up 10% since 2006. As important as servicing students who come in or phone is, we continue to reduce their need to contact us at all. Our office's implementation of Banner and the regular reports we run to fix problems before students are even aware of them reduces the need for personal intervention. Students appreciate being able to complete most of their business online.

New, poorly-designed federal programs such as ACG, SMART, and TEACH require time-consuming manual review, so this is an ongoing concern, and area of continued focus.

## PERCEPTION OF FEDERAL FAIRNESS CONTINUES SLIDE

**Students are less inclined to view the federal aid system as fair.** Only 25% of students felt the system was very fair (down from a high of 35% in 2003). ACG, SMART, and TEACH grants reach few students and have arcane rules that are difficult to understand and administer.

Student perceptions of fairness strongly correlate with satisfaction with the Financial Aid Office (see below). Rising satisfaction with the Financial Aid Office in light of this external drag is testament to the dedication of a remarkable staff.