

Student Satisfaction Survey - Financial Aid Office

January 2000

Executive Summary

In December, 1999, the Financial Aid Office conducted a telephone survey to gauge the current level of satisfaction with our operations. Evaluations were on a scale of 1-5 (translated into letter grades for this summary).

Students Give Financial Aid a Strong "B"

GENERAL SATISFACTION

USU students continue to give high ratings to the Financial Aid Office. Scores improved in nearly every area. Over 40% of students gave Financial Aid an A (up from 31% in 96 and 25% in 95) 78% give us an A or B (up from 72% in 96 and 65% in 95). Only 6% give us the equivalent of a D or F (down from 9% in 96 and 15% in 95). Translating the mean score into GPA, Financial Aid received an overall 3.11. This is up from a 3.0 in 96 and a 2.8 in 95.

The continued improvement is largely due to a dedicated staff, who have the resources (organization, time, and equipment) to improve knowledge, skills, and service.

COURTESY AND KNOWLEDGE OF COUNSELORS

Counselors continue to receive high marks in both courtesy and knowledge. Over 8 out of 10 gave counselors an A or B. Less than 5% in both categories gave them lower than average grades (down from 10% in 96).

COURTESY AND KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL STAFF

Staff members are rated nearly as high as counselors. Approximately eight out of ten gave general staff the highest two ratings. Less than 7% gave lower than passing marks.

SPEED OF SERVICE

Continued improvement. Over 60% us an A or B (up from 50% in 96 and 43% in 95). Over 8 out of 10 give us passing marks. 14% are dissatisfied (down from 18% in 96 and 28% in 95).

Improved speed results from:

- Coordinated teams cut processing time in our office.

- Two staff members dedicated to running SIS have continually improved computer service.
- 100% verification encourages student accuracy on applications.

PHONE ACCESS

Slight improvement. 67% give us an A or B. Only 10% gave us a D or F (down from 18% in 96). On the bright side, nearly 40% of students report *never having tried* to access our office through the phone, reflecting the lower incidence of unsolved problems and the ready availability of other information sources.

INFORMATION MATERIALS

Over 70% of students rely on information provided by the staff or by printed materials. Only 11% report using the Internet as their primary source of information. (We do not know how fast this is growing, but we have made information available on the Internet since just after the 1996 survey.)

41% found our informational materials very helpful. 93% found materials at least somewhat useful. Only 3 % did not find printed material useful.

Will we ever get an A?

Student satisfaction continues to improve. We continue to provide incremental improvement in service to students with improved staff training, clearer materials, and automation. However, student perceptions are *highly subjective* and significantly influenced by factors outside our control. As a result, there will always be some dissatisfied students. Student perception of the fairness of the federal system and the type of aid received were strongly correlated with student satisfaction with the Financial Aid Office. This relationship is basically unchanged from past surveys.

FAIRNESS and STUDENT SATISFACTION

Approximately 1 in 5 students doesn't think the **federal** system for awarding financial aid is fair. This perception dramatically colors student perception of office operations. In general the **fairer** a student perceives the federal system is:

- the **higher** their satisfaction with our office;
- **and** the more knowledgeable student thinks staff and counselors are;
- **and** the faster service seems;
- **and** the better they think phone service is!

AID RECEIVED and STUDENT SATISFACTION

Students receiving grants felt much better about our office than those receiving loans. (If only we could give out more grants, we could dramatically improve our image!)

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Random sample of all current recipients of any form of aid. Sample of 228 students gives us 85% confidence level that results are + or - 5% of views of population. Students were contacted by phone at home. Survey instrument attached.