Rationale

The reason for taking a “sounding” of student satisfaction is that it provides an understanding of the forces and factors that form the foundation for institutional effectiveness. Students are asked to rate the importance of each expectation to their overall satisfaction with FSU by responding to the question “How important is it to you?”

Student satisfaction provides a qualitative reading of the extent to which students’ actual experiences measure up to what they expected or perceived to be important in their college experience. Not only does the SSI measure satisfaction, which by itself, can be misleading, but it measures satisfaction within the context of importance to the student. Measuring these two dimensions – importance and satisfaction – provides a way to get to the heart of students’ concerns. This can be useful in helping campus leaders to make informed decisions.

The Source of Data

This report represents data from 387 freshmen enrolled in freshman seminar classes at FSU in the Spring 2000 semester. Students’ responses and the resulting scores are based on comparisons with a national comparison group of students from institutions similar to FSU.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The Spring 2000 Student Satisfaction Inventory was administered to 387 (54% participation rate) first-time freshmen enrolled in Freshman Seminar classes during the Spring 2000 Semester. Most of the students completing the survey were currently enrolled, full-time, day students. Sixty-one percent of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 24 years. Eighty-six percent (86%) described themselves as African-American. The number of minority students (9%) completing the survey was proportionately lower in Spring 2000 than in the previous three years. Females comprised 64 percent of the sample.

Educational Goals and Employment Status

A significant number of students (61%) indicated that their educational goal was to obtain the bachelor’s degree. About 19% aspired to a master’s degree and 14% to a doctorate or professional degree. Approximately 44 percent of the students were employed either full-time or part-time (24%) off campus. Nearly one-half of the freshmen reported that they spend, on average, 1 – 10 hours per week studying or completing out-of-class assignments. Only 1 percent of the students surveyed reported spending 31 or more hours studying.

Residence Classification

Considerably more freshmen (79%) lived on campus, in residence
halls in fall 1999 than in either fall 1997 (63%) or fall 1998 (74%). Eighty-five percent were North Carolina residents. International students comprised about 2% of the total group and out-of-state students made up about 14 percent of the cohort.

**FSU as Choice to Attend**

FSU was the 1st choice for 25% of the students in the 1999 freshman class. An equal number of freshmen (37%) indicated that FSU was their 2nd or 3rd choice of an institution to attend. Just over half the students surveyed (51.4%) indicated they would re-enroll at FSU if they had to do it over again.

**Reasons for Decision to Attend FSU**

Cost and financial aid continue to be the top reasons students cite for attending FSU. Of the 171 students responding to an institutional specific question concerning the Chancellor’s Scholarship as a major factor in choice to attend FSU, approximately 84% indicated that it was a major factor. Other determining factors for the 1999 cohort were:

- Personalized attention received prior to enrollment
- Academic reputation
- Campus appearance
- Size
- Geographic setting
- Recommendations from family and friends

**Expectations that Students Found Most Satisfying**

Students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with a particular expectation. Responses reflect how strongly students felt that FSU was meeting that expectation:

1. The Chancellor’s Scholarship was a major factor in my deciding to come to FSU.

2. My University Studies class was a positive academic experience.
3. I am proud of my accomplishments at FSU.
4. Tutoring services are readily available.
5. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.

**Where are we failing to meet students’ expectations?** (Expectations with Greatest Performance Gaps):

1. There is an adequate selection of food in the cafeteria.
2. The amount of student parking on campus is adequate.
3. Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.
4. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.
5. Computer labs are adequate and accessible.

**Scrutinizing the Data**

So that we do not overlook areas of the FSU experience that students value the most, it is important to consider a combination of scores, rather than focusing only on one area.

- **High importance/low satisfaction** identifies areas that should get our attention.
- **High importance/high satisfaction** showcases our areas of strength that should be highlighted in marketing strategies.
- **Low importance/low satisfaction** provides an opportunity for us to examine areas that have low status with our students.
- **Low importance/high satisfaction** suggests areas from which it might be beneficial to redirect resource commitments to higher areas of importance.