

# Priorities Survey for Online Learners

2019

Ruffalo Noel-Levitz

## Executive Summary

During fall 2019, 229 students (142 undergraduates, 78 graduates, and 9 students who did not indicate class level or indicated special student) completed the web-based Priorities for Online Learners Survey produced by Ruffalo Noel-Levitz. This is a 23% response rate (988 students were asked to complete the survey). This measures students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences, programs, and services. This survey provides information on how satisfied students are with DSU and what is most important to them.

This survey was administered to all degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students who are taking 100% of their courses online in the 2019 fall semester. This report includes data from three groups: (1) all DSU students (all degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students taking 100% of their courses online and completed the survey), (2) graduate students (degree-seeking graduate students taking 100% of their courses online and completed the survey), and (3) undergraduate students (degree-seeking undergraduate and "other" students taking 100% of their courses online and completed the survey). The undergraduate population includes the first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year, and students who selected "other class level".

DSU students gave very high satisfaction ratings on advisor knowledge, institution response time, and billing/payment procedures. The top ranked items based on average satisfaction are:

DSU Students:

1. Faculty respect my viewpoints.
2. This institution responds quickly when I request information.
3. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
4. Library staff provide timely and helpful assistance.
5. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
6. Academic advisors have the knowledge to meet my needs.

DSU Graduate Students:

1. Faculty respect my viewpoints.
2. DSU staff respond to my D2L questions in a timely manner.
3. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
4. Academic advisors have the knowledge to meet my needs.
5. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
6. Registration for online courses is convenient.
7. Library staff provide timely and helpful assistance.

DSU Undergraduate Students:

1. Computing services are adequate to support my course work.
2. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
3. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
4. This institution responds quickly when I request information.
5. Faculty respect my viewpoints.

Students also rated the importance of various factors in their decision to enroll at DSU. The majority of the students indicated that work schedule, convenience, and flexible pacing for completing a program were most important in their decision to enroll at DSU.

The Priorities for Online Learners Survey allows students to rate both the importance of specific items and their satisfaction with those items. A performance gap is then calculated by taking the difference in the importance rating and the satisfaction rating. A large performance gap score for an item (e.g., 1.5) indicates that the institution is not meeting students' expectations. A small or zero performance gap score (e.g.,  $\leq 0.50$ ) indicates that an institution is meeting student's expectations. A negative performance gap score indicates that an institution is exceeding students' expectations.

## Top 5 Areas of Strength: High Importance and High Satisfaction (Low Performance Gap)

The following areas had an average Importance rating of greater than six (on a scale of one to seven). Satisfaction with these areas was also high with an average Satisfaction rating of greater than or equal to 5.75. The Performance Gap was less than or equal to 0.5. There may be more items that qualify as an “area of strength”, but only the top five with the lowest performance gaps were included in the lists below.

*Listed in order of Performance Gap:*

DSU Students:

1. Faculty respect my viewpoints. *(Performance Gap: 0.08)*
2. Appropriate technical assistance is readily available. *(Performance Gap: 0.24)*
3. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail. *(Performance Gap: 0.26)*
4. DSU staff respond to my D2L questions in a timely manner. *(Performance Gap: 0.28)*
5. This institution responds quickly when I request information. *(Performance Gap: 0.31)*

DSU Graduate Students:

1. Library staff provide timely and helpful assistance. *(Performance Gap: -0.12)*
2. Faculty respect my viewpoints. *(Performance Gap: 0.00)*
3. Faculty present diverse perspectives in course materials. *(Performance Gap: 0.06)*
4. DSU staff respond to my D2L questions in a timely manner. *(Performance Gap: 0.09)*
5. This institution responds quickly when I request information. *(Performance Gap: 0.17)*

DSU Undergraduate Students: 6 listed due to a tie for the 5<sup>th</sup> item.

1. Faculty respect my viewpoints. *(Performance Gap: 0.10)*
2. Computing services are adequate to support my course work. *(Performance Gap: 0.23)*
3. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me. *(Performance Gap: 0.28)*
4. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail. *(Performance Gap: 0.31)*
5. Appropriate technical assistance is readily available. *(Performance Gap: 0.35)*
6. DSU staff respond to my D2L questions in a timely manner. *(Performance Gap: 0.35)*

## Top 5 Areas of Concern: High Importance and Lower Satisfaction (high Performance Gap)

The following areas were rated high in importance (average importance rating of greater than six on a scale of one to seven) and lower in satisfaction with a performance gap that was greater than 0.75 (with the exception of Graduate Students due to low number of items with a gap score of greater than 0.75. The top 5 gap scores above 0.50 and average importance rating greater than six were listed for Graduate Students). In addition, DSU’s average satisfaction ratings on all of the items below are lower than the national norms. There may be more items that qualify as an “area of concern”. However, only the top five with the largest performance gaps were included in the lists below.

*Listed in order of Performance Gap:*

DSU Students:

1. The quality of online instruction is excellent. *(Performance Gap: 1.20)*
2. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress. *(Performance Gap: 1.02)*
3. Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframe they specify. *(Performance Gap: 0.96)*
4. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content. *(Performance Gap: 0.92)*
5. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. *(Performance Gap: 0.79)*

#### DSU Graduate Students:

1. Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframes they specify. *(Performance Gap: 0.99)*
2. The quality of online instruction is excellent. *(Performance Gap: 0.94)*
3. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress. *(Performance Gap: 0.91)*
4. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content. *(Performance Gap: 0.79)*
5. Instructors respond to emails within 24 hours. *(Performance Gap: 0.74)*

#### DSU Undergraduate Students:

1. The quality of online instruction is excellent. *(Performance Gap: 1.35)*
2. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress. *(Performance Gap: 1.16)*
3. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content. *(Performance Gap: 1.00)*
4. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. *(Performance Gap: 0.97)*
5. Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframes they specify. *(Performance Gap: 0.95)*

### Trends: Comparing Year-to-Year

The following lists are comparing results from 2017 to the results received in 2019. Keep in mind, the items listed below may also be listed in the Areas of Strength and Areas of Concern sections. The Trends sections is strictly comparing 2019 results to 2017 results.

#### Top 5 most significant Performance Gap Decreases from 2017 to 2019 (Improvements):

1. Campus Item: Academic advisors have the knowledge to meet my needs. *(-0.37 Performance Gap Improvement)*
2. Channels are available for providing timely responses to student complaints. *(-0.20 Performance Gap Improvement)*
3. Campus Item: Computing services are adequate to support my course work. *(-0.18 Performance Gap Improvement)*
4. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment. *(-0.16 Performance Gap Improvement)*
5. Campus Item: I received adequate information to guide me through the registration process. *(-0.15 Performance Gap Improvement)*

#### Top 5 most significant Performance Gap Increases from 2017 to 2019 (Declines):

1. Tutoring services are readily available for online courses. *(+0.41 Performance Gap Change)*
2. Campus Item: DSU staff responds to my D2L questions in a timely manner. *(+0.38 Performance Gap Change)*
3. Adequate financial aid is available. *(+0.26 Performance Gap Change)*
4. Student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me. *(+0.26 Performance Gap Change)*
5. I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services. *(+0.24 Performance Gap Change)*

## Recommendation Scores:

**“How likely is it that you would recommend our institution to a friend or colleague?”**

Students were asked to rate how likely it is that they would recommend DSU to a friend or colleague on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is not likely at all, 5 is neutral, and 10 is extremely likely.

Scores	# of Responses
0 - Not Likely At All	3
1	1
2	2
3	6
4	1
5 - Neutral	15
6	13
7	23
8	49
9	32
10 - Extremely Likely	82

## Results

The following table provides the results from 2019, 2017, and 2015. The difference in mean satisfaction between 2019 and 2017 appears in the November 2019 column for quick comparison. The 6 highest importance (6 included because there is a tie for 5<sup>th</sup>) and 6 highest satisfaction (6 included because there is a tie for 5<sup>th</sup>) items are highlighted in yellow in the table below. The 5 lowest satisfaction items are highlighted in red in the table below.

Item		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
1	This institution has a good reputation.	6.30	5.96	1.14	0.34	-0.02	6.19	5.98	1.12	0.21	5.99	5.88	1.09	0.11
2	My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.	6.41	6.15	1.31	0.26	0	6.33	6.15	1.31	0.18	6.19	5.73	1.36	0.46
3	Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.	6.65	5.73	1.31	0.92	-0.03	6.56	5.76	1.34	0.80	6.42	5.72	1.15	0.70
4	Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.	6.47	5.45	1.56	1.02	0.01	6.47	5.44	1.49	1.03	6.38	5.38	1.42	1.00
5	My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.	5.99	5.40	1.70	0.59	0.14	5.95	5.26	1.72	0.69	5.96	5.30	1.64	0.66
6	Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.47	5.68	1.48	0.79	0.07	6.56	5.61	1.49	0.95	6.58	5.53	1.42	1.05

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
7	Program requirements are clear and reasonable.	6.58	5.86	1.28	0.72	0.06	6.41	5.80	1.34	0.61	6.48	5.71	1.32	0.77
8	Student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me.	4.56	4.98	1.59	-0.42	0.13	4.17	4.85	1.70	-0.68	4.44	5.05	1.49	-0.61
9	Adequate financial aid is available.	6.09	5.45	1.71	0.64	-0.05	5.88	5.50	1.68	0.38	6.00	5.36	1.67	0.64
10	This institution responds quickly when I request information.	6.47	6.16	1.12	0.31	0.06	6.45	6.10	1.35	0.35	6.25	6.02	1.03	0.23
11	Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.	6.47	5.71	1.34	0.76	0.11	6.48	5.60	1.57	0.88	6.37	5.55	1.37	0.82
12	There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.	6.48	5.86	1.24	0.62	0.06	6.46	5.80	1.30	0.66	6.43	5.57	1.36	0.86
13	The frequency of student and instructor interactions is adequate.	6.21	5.75	1.25	0.46	0.14	6.10	5.61	1.39	0.49	5.85	5.53	1.28	0.32
14	I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.	6.04	5.66	1.55	0.38	0.05	5.97	5.61	1.59	0.36	5.94	5.62	1.35	0.32

		November 2019					November 2017					November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	
15	Channels are available for providing timely responses to student complaints.	5.83	5.25	1.65	0.58	0.05	5.98	5.20	1.81	0.78	5.88	5.35	1.50	0.53	
16	Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.	6.12	5.88	1.29	0.24	-0.06	6.08	5.94	1.17	0.14	5.91	5.79	1.26	0.12	
17	Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.	6.37	5.90	1.24	0.47	0.13	6.28	5.77	1.35	0.51	6.27	5.53	1.42	0.74	
18	Registration for online courses is convenient.	6.52	5.91	1.54	0.61	-0.15	6.61	6.06	1.40	0.55	6.49	5.99	1.30	0.50	
19	Online career services are available.	5.76	5.57	1.52	0.19	0.03	5.79	5.54	1.52	0.25	5.55	5.08	1.60	0.47	
20	The quality of online instruction is excellent.	6.66	5.46	1.45	1.20	0	6.69	5.46	1.61	1.23	6.61	5.28	1.52	1.33	
21	Adequate online library resources are provided.	5.97	5.75	1.44	0.22	0.07	5.85	5.68	1.52	0.17	5.91	5.57	1.38	0.34	
22	I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.	6.23	5.57	1.67	0.66	-0.15	6.14	5.72	1.51	0.42	6.11	5.66	1.33	0.45	



		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
23	Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.	6.44	6.12	1.25	0.32	-0.01	6.38	6.13	1.32	0.25	6.36	6.20	1.00	0.16
24	Tutoring services are readily available for online courses.	5.58	4.94	1.88	0.64	-0.15	5.32	5.09	1.79	0.23	5.52	4.92	1.55	0.60
25	Faculty are responsive to student needs.	6.51	5.85	1.24	0.66	0.07	6.48	5.78	1.49	0.70	6.42	5.65	1.29	0.77
26	The bookstore provides timely service to students.	5.70	5.42	1.60	0.28	0.11	5.53	5.31	1.87	0.22	5.58	5.29	1.64	0.29
27	Campus item: Course and program information is easy to find and use.	6.48	5.87	1.21	0.61	0.07	6.37	5.80	1.28	0.57	6.27	5.59	1.39	0.68
28	Campus item: Instructors respond to emails within 24 hours.	6.53	5.90	1.37	0.63	0.12	6.45	5.78	1.55	0.67	6.38	5.65	1.49	0.73

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
29	Campus item: <i>Academic Advisors</i> 2019 Question: Academic advisors have the knowledge to meet my needs. 2015/2017 Question: Academic advising is available and helpful.	6.52	6.12	1.30	0.40	0.65***	6.24	5.47	1.66	0.77	6.26	5.25	1.59	1.01
30	Campus item: Faculty respect my viewpoints. New Question in 2019	6.27	6.19	1.07	0.08									

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
31	<p>Campus item: <i>Computing Services</i>                      2019 Question: Computing services are adequate to support my course work.                      2015/2017 Question: Computing and networking services are adequate to support my class work.</p>	6.41	6.09	1.24	0.32	0.34*	6.25	5.75	1.43	0.50	6.30	5.97	1.00	0.33
32	<p>Campus item: <i>D2L Response Time</i>                      2019 Question: DSU staff respond to my D2L questions in a timely manner.                      2015/2017 Questions: My questions on how to use D2L were answered in a timely manner by the DSU staff.</p>	6.38	6.10	1.18	0.28	0.01	5.99	6.09	1.14	-0.10	6.09	5.97	1.18	0.12

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
33	Campus item: Faculty present diverse perspectives in course materials. New Question in 2019	5.99	5.91	1.35	0.08									
34	Campus item: <i>Faculty Feedback</i> 2019 Question: Faculty provide feedback on my work within the timeframes they specify. 2015/2017 Question: Feedback is provided on assignments, tests, and projects within the timeframe specified by the instructor.	6.42	5.46	1.66	0.96	-0.01	6.43	5.47	1.58	0.96	6.46	5.40	1.57	1.06
35	Campus item: Library staff provide timely and helpful assistance.	5.93	6.14	1.26	-0.21	0.42*	5.58	5.72	1.55	-0.14	5.79	6.03	1.16	-0.24

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
36	Campus item: I received adequate information to guide me through the registration process.	6.42	5.95	1.45	0.47	0.36*	6.21	5.59	1.62	0.62	6.28	5.68	1.39	0.60
37	Source of information: Catalog and brochures (printed)	4.31					4.56				4.02			
38	Source of information: Catalog (online)	6.35					6.27				6.01			
39	Source of information: College representatives	4.95					4.88				4.05			
40	Source of information: Web site	6.36					6.35				6.10			
41	Source of information: Advertisements	3.92					3.89				3.17			
42	Source of information: Recommendation from instructor or program advisor	5.74					5.77				4.94			

		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
Item		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
43	Source of information: Contact with current students and / or recent graduates of the program	5.13					4.78				4.52			
44	Factor to enroll: Ability to transfer credits	5.99					5.85				5.70			
45	Factor to enroll: Cost	6.30					6.25				6.19			
46	Factor to enroll: Financial assistance available	5.56					5.66				5.62			
47	Factor to enroll: Future employment opportunities	6.04					6.13				6.12			
48	Factor to enroll: Reputation of institution	6.08					6.05				6.06			
49	Factor to enroll: Work schedule	6.51					6.49				6.41			
50	Factor to enroll: Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.39					6.51				6.36			
51	Factor to enroll: Convenience	6.48					6.55				6.70			

Item		November 2019					November 2017				November 2015			
		Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Difference 2019-2017	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	SD	Gap
52	Factor to enroll: Distance from campus	4.93					5.01				4.97			
53	Factor to enroll: Program requirements	6.18					6.18				6.07			
54	Factor to enroll: Recommendations from employer	4.69					4.62				3.99			

\*Difference statistically significant at the .05 level

\*\*Difference statistically significant at the .01 level

\*\*\*Difference statistically significant at the .001 level