

Introduction

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION EVALUATION

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In July 2007 the University of Arkansas at Little Rock engaged MGT of America, Inc. to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Evaluation for the Chancellor's Office. MGT is a national research and management consulting firm specializing in providing services that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government.

The primary objective of the project was to evaluate the level of customer service that is provided to the University's students through the student service units including Admissions, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Academic Advising, Student Accounts and Cashiers, Counseling and Career Planning Services, Library, Extended Programs, and International Student Services. The evaluation has several primary tasks:

- Evaluate customer satisfaction and appropriate service.
- Complete process re-engineering in priority areas.

MGT completed the study through tasks that included:

- *Finalize Work Program and Apply Industry-Standard Project Management Principles to Ensure High-Quality Deliverables on Time*
- *Determine Customer Satisfaction Levels through Surveys, Interviews, etc.*
- *Determine Performance Metrics and Develop Benchmarks as Needed*
- *Complete Process Re-engineering in Areas Needing Improvement*
- *Report(s) on Findings*

This report presents the findings of the customer satisfaction study. The report is divided into chapters on the survey results, process re-engineering of the admissions and transfer credit articulation processes, and an appendix that gives details on the survey.

Student Satisfaction Survey

STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) engaged MGT of America, Inc. to evaluate the quality of services provided to students, determine the degree to which students receive high quality services throughout their UALR experience and identify ways in which processes can be improved to increase customer service. In late fall 2007, MGT conducted a survey of all University of Arkansas Little Rock students to determine their satisfaction with the quality of 25 different campus services. The 25 campus services examined in the study were identified by UALR administrators based on internal assessments and priorities. This chapter provides the results of that survey.

The 25 campus services/offices/units included in the survey are listed in **Exhibit 1**. Respondents were asked to note the services that they used or contacted in the past 12 months. The most frequent interactions reported were with the campus bookstore (42.1%) and the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (29.0%).

EXHIBIT 1
Services Used by Percent of Total Respondents

Services Used in Past 12 Months	Frequency of Use	Percent of Total Respondents
Bookstore	842	42.1%
Admissions & Financial Aid	580	29.0%
Ottenheimer Library	481	24.1%
Your Assigned Faculty Advisor	413	20.7%
Your Academic Department Office	375	18.8%
Other Faculty Member	369	18.5%
Dining Services	358	17.9%
Academic Advising	321	16.1%
DSC Fitness Center	254	12.7%
Student Computer Labs	246	12.3%
Office of Records & Registration	159	8.0%
Health Services	130	6.5%
Parking Services	113	5.7%
Extended Programs	89	4.5%
Writing Center	73	3.7%
Public Safety Office	55	2.8%

EXHIBIT 1 (Continued)
Services Used by Percent of Total Respondents

Services Used in Past 12 Months	Frequency of Use	Percent of Total Respondents
Student Housing	52	2.6%
Disability Support Services	35	1.8%
Office of Counseling & Career Planning	34	1.7%
Office of Campus Life	29	1.5%
New Student Orientation Sessions	17	0.9%
Office of Testing Services	13	0.7%
Student Technology Support Services	11	0.6%
Office of Recruitment	7	0.4%
Cyber Orientation Web-Site	5	0.3%
None Listed	2	0.1%
Total	5,063	1,999 respondents

Students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the service and with the courtesy and friendliness of staff, on a scale of 1 to 5, where “5” represented “very satisfied” and “1” represented “very dissatisfied.” A score of “3” is considered neutral. For the purposes of analysis, only ratings made by 10 or more respondents are included in the analyses. Offices/services/units are considered to be in need of improvement if the service had less than a 75 percent “satisfaction” rating (ratings of 4 and 5 on the survey) or if there was more than 10 percent “dissatisfaction” (ratings of 1 and 2 on the survey).

UALR should be proud that, in general, students are satisfied with their interactions with UALR services and staff providing those services, especially in academic areas. Academic areas had a dissatisfaction rate of 2.8 percent; therefore, MGT has little concern regarding the level of customer service in the academic departments. **Exhibits 2 and 3** respectively display the satisfaction with staff and with services, from high to low satisfaction. Students gave total satisfaction ratings for **staff** of less than 75 percent and more than 10 percent dissatisfied to only five offices/services/units: Public Safety, Student Housing, Parking Services, Admissions and Financial Aid, and Dining Services. All rankings of the courtesy and friendliness of staff were

above 60 percent satisfied. Highlighted items in the exhibits are indicators of areas that merit further analysis, or are “areas to watch.”

There is marked dissatisfaction with seven offices/services/units related to the **services** provided: Dining Services; Admissions and Financial Aid; Parking Services; Student Housing; Public Safety Office; Student Technology Support Services; and Academic Advising. In this context, “marked dissatisfaction” means that less than 75 percent of students responding indicated “satisfaction” (a rating of 4 or 5 on the survey) **AND** more than 10 percent of students responding indicated “dissatisfaction” (a rating of 1 or 2 on the survey) with the service provided. Academic Advising and Student Technology Support Services are the only offices/services/units where satisfaction with staff was above 80 percent, but dissatisfaction with services exceeded 10 percent.

It is important to note that UALR students are like students at other urban universities in that they are not as satisfied with Dining Services, Parking Services, Student Housing, and Public Safety Offices as they are with other campus services. Parking and public safety, housing, and dining are three areas of general dissatisfaction on most campuses, but especially on campuses in urban locations. There never is enough parking (even when lots are empty), public safety officers may have had unfortunate meetings with students, food is never good enough nor are there enough choices, and housing is inadequate no matter how new or what amenities campus housing has.

Of special concern is the level of dissatisfaction with Academic Advising, Student Technology Support Services, and Admissions and Financial Aid. To determine if all or only a few types of students were dissatisfied with the services, the data also were segmented by student type or class standing: new freshmen, new transfer students, new graduate students, all graduate students, law students, returning students, “other” students, full-time students, and part-time students. Levels of satisfaction by these groups are shown in **Exhibit 4**. Across all groups there

is significant dissatisfaction with Academic Advising, Admissions and Financial Aid, Dining Services, Parking Services, and Public Safety; dissatisfaction with other services may be greater than 10 percent for only some of the student groups.

More complete data tables by student classification may be found in the appendix, as well as descriptive data on the 1,999 students participating in the survey. Caution is advised when interpreting the results by student classification when fewer than 10 students evaluated an office/service/unit. Small sample sizes likely are not representative of all students in this group.

EXHIBIT 2
Satisfaction with Staff: All Respondents

How courteous & friendly were staff?	Ratings 1 & 2 (Low)	Rating 3	Ratings 4 & 5 (High)	No. of Responses
Health Services	1.5%	3.3%	95.2%	460
New Student Orientation Sessions	0.6%	4.8%	94.6%	167
Disability Support Services	1.1%	4.6%	94.3%	87
Other Faculty Member	1.9%	4.1%	93.9%	1,088
Writing Center	2.0%	5.8%	92.2%	295
Office of Recruitment	2.9%	5.7%	91.4%	35
Your Assigned Faculty Advisor	2.5%	6.5%	91.1%	1,053
Office of Counseling & Career Planning	1.4%	7.7%	90.9%	143
Office of Campus Life	1.4%	7.9%	90.7%	216
Your Academic Department Office	2.8%	6.6%	90.6%	1,019
Office of Testing Services	4.5%	6.5%	89.0%	154
Bookstore	3.3%	11.4%	85.3%	1,707
Ottenheimer Library	3.2%	12.0%	84.8%	1,190
Extended Programs	5.3%	12.4%	82.2%	169
Academic Advising	5.0%	12.9%	82.1%	954
Student Technology Support Services	6.3%	13.5%	80.2%	126
Office of Records & Registration	4.8%	15.7%	79.4%	851
Cyber Orientation Web-Site	6.3%	16.7%	77.1%	48
Student Computer Labs	6.3%	17.8%	75.9%	937
DSC Fitness Center	7.2%	17.4%	75.4%	621
Public Safety Office	11.0%	16.0%	73.0%	374
Student Housing	16.0%	15.4%	68.6%	175
Parking Services	10.1%	21.7%	68.3%	665
Admissions & Financial Aid	13.6%	20.8%	65.6%	1,421
Dining Services	13.9%	24.5%	61.6%	820
Number of Responses	855	1,907	12,013	14,775

NOTE: Based on responses from 1,999 UALR students.

EXHIBIT 3
Satisfaction with Services: All Respondents

Satisfaction with service	Ratings 1 & 2 (Dissatisfied)	Rating 3	Ratings 4 & 5 (Satisfied)	No. of Responses
Office of Recruitment	5.4%	2.7%	91.9%	37
Disability Support Services	0.0%	8.1%	91.9%	86
Other Faculty Member	2.9%	5.6%	91.5%	1,160
Health Services	5.2%	4.8%	90.0%	462
Office of Testing Services	5.7%	8.9%	85.4%	158
Your Academic Department Office	4.5%	10.1%	85.4%	1,047
Office of Campus Life	2.3%	12.4%	85.3%	218
Your Assigned Faculty Advisor	5.6%	9.6%	84.8%	1,120
Ottenheimer Library	4.0%	11.3%	84.7%	1,284
Writing Center	5.9%	9.6%	84.5%	303
Office of Counseling & Career Planning	4.5%	12.3%	83.1%	154
DSC Fitness Center	5.9%	12.3%	81.7%	624
New Student Orientation Sessions	3.4%	15.2%	81.5%	178
Extended Programs	4.5%	15.1%	80.4%	331
Student Computer Labs	7.3%	13.9%	78.8%	945
Bookstore	8.2%	15.5%	76.3%	1,737
Office of Records & Registration	7.9%	16.6%	75.6%	888
Cyber Orientation Web-Site	6.8%	19.7%	73.5%	147
Academic Advising	11.4%	15.2%	73.4%	1,013
Student Technology Support Services	11.4%	15.9%	72.7%	132
Public Safety Office	14.1%	13.5%	72.4%	377
Student Housing	14.2%	17.0%	68.8%	176
Parking Services	14.9%	22.3%	62.7%	703
Admissions & Financial Aid	21.3%	20.5%	58.2%	1,487
Dining Services	19.1%	25.8%	55.2%	823
Number of Responses	1,396	2,203	11,991	15,590

NOTE: Based on responses from 1,999 UALR students.

**EXHIBIT 4
Dissatisfaction by Student Group**

Satisfaction with service	All	New Freshmen	New Transfers	New Grad Students	All Grad Students	Law Students	Returning Students	"Other" Students	Full-Time Students	Part-Time Students
Academic Advising	11.4%		13.3%	11.8%		11.8%	12.3%		12.3%	
Admissions & Financial Aid	21.3%	16.2%	22.4%	19.0%	21.3%	16.7%	22.8%		23.0%	18.1%
Bookstore				14.3%		10.6%				
Cyber Orientation Web-Site		16.7%								
Dining Services	19.1%		17.1%	20.0%	27.4%		20.8%	26.1%	19.1%	18.9%
Disability Support Services										
DSC Fitness Center								12.5%		
Extended Programs			11.5%							
Health Services										
New Student Orientation Sessions						10.0%				
Office of Campus Life										
Office of Counseling & Career Planning										
Office of Records & Registration										
Office of Recruitment										
Office of Testing Services										
Othenheimer Library								12.5%		
Parking Services	14.9%		14.7%	22.2%	17.1%		16.0%	17.6%	16.1%	13.1%
Public Safety Office	14.1%		14.8%	19.0%	13.0%		16.1%		14.5%	13.4%
Student Computer Labs			10.5%							
Student Housing	14.2%		28.6%				16.9%		14.7%	
Student Technology Support Services	11.4%	25.0%			18.2%				13.6%	
Writing Center					18.8%					
Your Academic Department Office								12.0%		
Your Assigned Faculty Advisor								10.0%		
Other Faculty Member										

NOTE: Based on responses from a total of 1,999 UALR students.

As noted above and highlighted in **Exhibit 4**, significant dissatisfaction exists with seven particular services (dissatisfaction rates are 10% or greater and satisfaction rates are less than 75%):

- Academic Advising
- Admissions and Financial Aid
- Dining Services
- Parking Services
- Public Safety Office
- Student Housing
- Student Technology Support Services

Other services with dissatisfaction noted in **Exhibit 4** are excluded from further analysis because only one or two dissatisfaction ratings are noted (as opposed to four or more for the services listed above), and many of those dissatisfaction ratings are coupled with significant satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction scores greater than 75%).

In the analysis highlighted further in the appendix, the dissatisfaction data are segmented by:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- New vs. returning students
- Full-time vs. part-time students
- Campus (main campus, law school, Benton Center, online)
- Declared or undeclared majors
- Class standing (lower division, upper division, graduate/professional)
- Frequency of contact with the service
- Contact mode (in person, by phone, online)

As a result, dissatisfaction can be examined to determine if there are trends among students based on these variables. Since there is such significant dissatisfaction across these groups, UALR administration may wish to give further attention to the causes of the dissatisfaction. Areas of special note are highlighted below:

Academic Advising – Returning students, declared majors, those aged 25 and under, on the main campus, in upper division, with one-time contact, especially on line, are more dissatisfied with Academic Advising than are other students.

Admissions and Financial Aid – More than 50 percent of the students who had frequent contact with Admissions and Financial Aid reported dissatisfaction with the service. When the data are segmented, whether by age, gender, race, new or returning, full or part time, etc., all subgroups expressed dissatisfaction. This is a very troubling finding and merits additional research which will be carried out in the Business Process Reengineering part of this study.

Students were given the opportunity to respond to four open-ended questions:

- How satisfied are you with (the office/service/unit)?
- Was anything about your encounter with (the office/service/unit) helpful? Please explain.
- Did you have difficulty with (the office/service/unit)? Please explain.
- Do you have additional comments? (Note: this question was the last on the survey.)

About 4,000 comments were made relative to the satisfaction with the service; over 5,000 related to whether or not the encounter was helpful or if there was difficulty; and over 200 other comments were added.

Comments were both positive and negative; positive comments center on helpful staff, especially in academic departments and in the Ottenheimer Library. Negative comments may be classified into the following categories:

- Phone/Email contact issues
- Rude staff
- Unresponsive or unhelpful staff
- Confusing, inconsistent, or wrong information provided
- Other

A major subset of the negative comments related to the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. Although individual staff members in that office were perceived as helpful, the issue of not being able to reach the office was mentioned by over 100 students in addition to their comments on other aspects of the Office. It is noteworthy that students used multiple opportunities to comment negatively on Admissions and Financial Aid, and expressed their negativity in a variety of ways. Typical comments included: (was anything about your encounter with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid helpful?) “No, all my contact with the office has been stressful.” “ Not really.” “Absolutely nothing” “No. I do not look forward to having to contact this office.” “I think having teeth pulled without anesthesia would be only slightly less painful.” A categorized listing of the types of comments by office may be found in Appendix B.

From the results of the survey, **MGT recommends that the processes related to the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid be analyzed further to improve the perceptions of the services offered by the Office.** MGT further notes that Academic Advising processes merit priority additional analysis. The other five offices/services/units identified as having significant dissatisfaction across many student groups merit secondary additional analysis.