

# BETHEL UNIVERSITY STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY

October 2017

## Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)

**Background:** CAS students were asked to complete the Ruffalo Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) during Advising/Assessment Day (October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017). We had 559 students complete the survey. This survey asks students to rate how important an item is to them and then how satisfied they are with that item using a 1 to 7 scale (higher score more important or satisfied). The typical pattern is for students to give a higher importance rating than satisfaction rating. The difference is what Noel-Levitz labels as the “Gap.” We are able to compare our results with those from the National Four-Year Private College pool of institutions that participated in the survey and with participating institutions from the Coalition of Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU).

### Elevator Ride Summary

- Compared to students in the National Four-Year Private College pool, **Bethel students were significantly more satisfied in 72 of the 79 areas surveyed. These are very strong results** and similar to what we had in 2015. Bethel students were also significantly more satisfied than CCCU students on 57 of the areas surveyed. This is impressive, as well. CCCU schools tend to do very well on this survey.
- Most of the highest **importance AND satisfaction** ratings for Bethel students are related to **faculty and academics**.
- Compared to students at Private Colleges Nationally, Bethel students are significantly **more** satisfied with many aspects of **student life** (e.g., athletic programs, health services, residence halls, career services, etc.), **food services**, and the **academic atmosphere of the institution (see Table 1 below)**.
- Compared to students at Private Colleges Nationally, Bethel students are significantly **less** satisfied with the **availability of parking**, with the **protection of freedom of expression on campus**, the **convenience of the Business Office hours**, and with the **commitment to racial harmony on campus**.
- Compared to 2015, in 2017 there were significant **increases** in satisfaction with the following:
  - **Security staff** respond quickly in emergencies,
  - **Males and females have equal opportunities** to participate in intercollegiate athletics,

- Institution's commitment to **older, returning learners**,
  - The staff in **the health services** area are competent,
  - **Library resources** and services are adequate,
  - **Student disciplinary** procedures are **fair**,
  - A variety of **intramural activities** are offered, and
  - There is a **good variety of courses** provided on this campus.
- Compared to 2015, in 2017 students were significantly **less satisfied** with the following items:
    - There are a sufficient number of **weekend activities** for students,
    - The amount of student **parking space** on campus is adequate,
    - There is an **adequate selection of food available** in the cafeteria (though their satisfaction ratings are significantly higher, much higher, than the national average and the CCCU average),
    - My **understanding of God** is being **strengthened by classroom and/or campus experiences**,
    - Faculty, administrators, and/or staff are helpful to me in **processing issues related to my faith**, and
    - The **quality of instruction** I receive in most of my classes is excellent (though their satisfaction ratings are significantly higher than the national average and the CCCU average).
  - Similar to 2015, **Financial Aid** and **Academic Reputation** were the two highest rated reasons for enrolling at Bethel.

### Area of Concern

- To reiterate, the overwhelming majority of the results from the SSI are quite positive. One area of concern, especially given that we consider “community” to be a vital aspect of the Bethel experience, is the relatively low ratings for the item “**Most students feel a sense of belonging here.**” Our mean rating of 5.37 is slightly higher than the national mean rating of 5.27 but it is not statistically significant. Given that we almost always have significantly higher ratings on SSI items, this is a little disconcerting. And the Bethel mean rating was similar to the 2015 rating (M = 5.36).

### Higher Satisfaction Compared to other Institutions

One way to think about our distinctions compared to other institutions is to look at areas where our students are much more satisfied compared to other students (see Table 1 below). Bethel CAS students have consistently given much higher satisfaction ratings to the **selection of food in the dining center** compared to students nationally. This has been one of our highest rated item *compared to national ratings* since 2011. Many of the other highly rated areas relate to **Student Life: athletic programs, health services, commitment to students with disabilities, residence hall staff**, etc. Interestingly, the living conditions in the **residence halls** received much higher ratings compared to national averages. It’s surprising because many think of our residence halls as aging and unattractive. It is also promising to see three items related to academics (**intellectual growth, faculty are knowledgeable, and academic excellence**) on this list. Kudos as well to **financial aid** and **safety & security** for their high satisfaction ratings compared to national norms.

**Table 1: Top 15 Areas where Bethel Students' Satisfaction was Much Higher Compared to Students at National Four-Year Private Institutions.**

Rank	Item	Bethel Satisfaction	National 4-year Privates Satisfaction	Effect Size
1	There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.	<b>5.32</b>	<b>4.26</b>	0.55
1	The staff in the health services area are competent.	<b>5.85</b>	<b>5.12</b>	0.55
3	On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.	<b>6.40</b>	<b>5.72</b>	0.48
4	The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.	<b>5.42</b>	<b>4.58</b>	0.46
4	Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?	<b>6.21</b>	<b>5.51</b>	0.46
6	Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.	<b>6.04</b>	<b>5.34</b>	0.44
7	This institution has a good reputation within the community.	<b>6.22</b>	<b>5.59</b>	0.41
7	There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	<b>6.13</b>	<b>5.51</b>	0.41
9	Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable (adequate space, lighting, heat, air, etc.)	<b>5.43</b>	<b>4.75</b>	0.39
10	I am able to experience intellectual growth here.	<b>6.26</b>	<b>5.74</b>	0.38
10	Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.	<b>6.38</b>	<b>5.89</b>	0.38
12	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	<b>6.12</b>	<b>5.61</b>	0.36
12	This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	<b>5.96</b>	<b>5.38</b>	0.36
12	Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.	<b>5.71</b>	<b>5.11</b>	0.36
12	Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.	<b>5.73</b>	<b>5.14</b>	0.36
12	The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.	<b>5.80</b>	<b>5.18</b>	0.36

All mean differences are statistically significant,  $p < .001$ .

Effect size is the mean difference divided by the population standard deviation. It tells us how large the mean difference is in standard deviation units.

### Highest Overall Satisfaction Ratings

The highest satisfaction rating was for **the maintenance of the campus**. When the HLC peer evaluators came to campus in 2010 they went out of their way to mention how clean and well-maintained the campus was. A close second is the satisfaction with how **knowledgeable faculty are in their field**.

**Table 2: Top 15 Areas with the Highest Satisfaction Ratings for Bethel Students**

Item	Bethel University - SSI			National Four-Year Privates			Difference
	Importance	Satisfaction / SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction / SD	Gap	
1. On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.	6.34	6.40 / 0.82	-0.06	6.32	5.72 / 1.43	0.60	0.68 ***
2. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.	6.62	6.38 / 0.85	0.24	6.54	5.89 / 1.29	0.65	0.49 ***
3. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.	6.63	6.26 / 0.95	0.37	6.48	5.74 / 1.36	0.74	0.52 ***
4. This institution has a good reputation within the community.	6.42	6.22 / 1.11	0.20	6.24	5.59 / 1.54	0.65	0.63 ***
5. Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?		6.21 / 1.13			5.51 / 1.52		0.70 ***
6. The campus is safe and secure for all students.	6.65	6.18 / 1.11	0.47	6.47	5.73 / 1.41	0.74	0.45 ***
7. Library resources and services are adequate.	6.10	6.14 / 0.95	-0.04	6.09	5.65 / 1.33	0.44	0.49 ***
8. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.	6.54	6.13 / 1.23	0.41	6.50	5.77 / 1.52	0.73	0.36 ***
8. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	6.48	6.13 / 1.03	0.35	6.41	5.51 / 1.50	0.90	0.62 ***
10. There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	6.46	6.12 / 1.02	0.34	6.37	5.61 / 1.41	0.76	0.51 ***
11. Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics.	6.00	6.10 / 1.10	-0.10	5.79	5.58 / 1.52	0.21	0.52 ***
12. Campus item: Males and females are treated with equal respect on this campus.	6.54	6.08 / 1.22	0.46				
13. The staff in the health services area are competent.	6.25	6.05 / 1.11	0.20	6.06	5.15 / 1.63	0.91	0.90 ***
14. My academic advisor is approachable.	6.46	6.04 / 1.26	0.42	6.42	5.78 / 1.53	0.64	0.26 ***
14. The instruction in my major field is excellent.	6.67	6.04 / 1.06	0.63	6.57	5.67 / 1.37	0.90	0.37 ***
14. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.	6.46	6.04 / 1.09	0.42	6.39	5.34 / 1.60	1.05	0.70 ***

\*\*\*Mean differences are statistically significant,  $p < .001$ .

## Highest Importance Ratings

The majority of items that had the highest importance ratings were related to **academics**, including 4 of the 5 highest rated items in the survey. Noticeably, **equal treatment of females and males** is in the top 10. Two items related to **safety and security** are on the list. *The campus is safe and secure for all students* increased in importance for students this year. For the first time there were no items related to **spiritual growth** on the list.

**Table 3: Top 15 Areas for Importance Ratings of Bethel CAS Students**

Item	Bethel University - SSI			National Four-Year Privates			Difference
	Importance	Satisfaction / SD	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction / SD	Gap	
1. The content of the courses within my major is valuable.	6.68	6.01 / 1.07	0.67	6.59	5.68 / 1.34	0.91	0.33 ***
2. The instruction in my major field is excellent.	6.67	6.04 / 1.06	0.63	6.57	5.67 / 1.37	0.90	0.37 ***
3. The campus is safe and secure for all students.	6.65	6.18 / 1.11	0.47	6.47	5.73 / 1.41	0.74	0.45 ***
4. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.	6.63	6.26 / 0.95	0.37	6.48	5.74 / 1.36	0.74	0.52 ***
5. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.	6.62	6.38 / 0.85	0.24	6.54	5.89 / 1.29	0.65	0.49 ***
6. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	6.57	5.92 / 1.29	0.65	6.43	5.44 / 1.57	0.99	0.48 ***
7. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.	6.55	5.86 / 1.06	0.69	6.50	5.58 / 1.38	0.92	0.28 ***
8. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.	6.54	6.13 / 1.23	0.41	6.50	5.77 / 1.52	0.73	0.36 ***
8. Campus item: Males and females are treated with equal respect on this campus.	6.54	6.08 / 1.22	0.46	6.54	5.96 / 1.38 (CCCU Norm)	0.58	0.12 *
10. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.53	5.30 / 1.40	1.23	6.45	4.92 / 1.74	1.53	0.38 ***
11. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	6.52	5.86 / 1.32	0.66	6.35	5.62 / 1.45	0.73	0.24 ***
12. The campus staff are caring and helpful.	6.50	6.02 / 1.05	0.48	6.37	5.60 / 1.35	0.77	0.42 ***
13. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	6.48	6.13 / 1.03	0.35	6.41	5.51 / 1.50	0.90	0.62 ***
14. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	6.47	5.35 / 1.34	1.12	6.38	5.01 / 1.65	1.37	0.34 ***

15. My academic advisor is approachable.	6.46	6.04 / 1.26	0.42	6.42	5.78 / 1.53	0.64	0.26 ***
15. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.	6.46	6.04 / 1.09	0.42	6.39	5.34 / 1.60	1.05	0.70 ***
15. There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	6.46	6.12 / 1.02	0.34	6.37	5.61 / 1.41	0.76	0.51 ***

--

**Joel Frederickson, Ph.D.** | Professor & Chair | Psychology Department  
Associate Dean of Institutional Assessment & Accreditation  
Bethel University | 3900 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, MN 55112