INTRODUCTION

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) is an online survey developed by Noel-Levitz that asks students to rate a number of campus-related items in terms of both importance and satisfaction. Individual survey items are rolled up into the following *survey scales*:

- Academic Advising/Counseling
- Academic Services
- Admissions and Financial Aid
- Campus Climate
- Campus Support Services
- Concern for the individual
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Registration Effectiveness
- Responsiveness to Diverse Populations
- Safety and Security
- Service Excellence
- Student Centeredness

From the survey results, institutions can identify areas where they are, and are not, meeting student expectations. The results may be used to guide strategic action planning, strengthen student retention initiatives, and chart progress toward campus goals.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) was last administered at Lake Superior College during the Spring of 2022. The Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) was administered during the Spring of 2023.

METHODOLOGY

The Student Satisfaction Inventory was administered between February 13 and March 27, 2024 to our Spring 2024 "core" student population, which excludes customized training, continuing education, and College in the Schools (CITS) enrollment. Of the 3,039 students in that group, 284 completed the survey—a response rate of 9.35%. Eight $25 LSC Store credits were offered as an incentive to increase student participation.   The response rate is less than ideal and only slightly increased compared to the most recent student satisfaction survey, the Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL), which was administered during the Spring of 2023, with a response rate of 8.06%.

The Spring 2024 SSI was administered directly by Noel-Levitz, with students self-selecting their program/major by name. Most of the survey items, including ten campus-specific items, were rated by respondents for both importance and satisfaction based on the following Likert scale:

1 – Not Important at all / Not Satisfied at all
2 – Not Very Important / Not Very Satisfied
3 – Somewhat Unimportant / Somewhat Dissatisfied
4 – Neutral
5 – Somewhat Important / Somewhat Satisfied
6 – Important / Satisfied
7 – Very Important / Very Satisfied

The *performance gap* is the importance score minus the satisfaction score. The smaller the performance gap, the better LSC is doing at meeting student expectations. Survey items with a large performance gap score suggest areas for potential improvement.

RESULTS
Demographics

Student responses to the standard demographic items are presented in Table 1.   In addition, LSC administrators included two custom demographic items within the survey, and responses to those items are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Standard demographic items for survey respondents (N = 284)

Gender			Age	
Male	29%		Traditional (<=24)	62%
Female	66%		Non-Traditional (>24)	38%
Other	3%			
Prefer not to respond	1%			
Race / Ethnicity			**Class Load**	
Students of Color	17%		Full-time	61%
White	79%		Part-time	39%
Prefer not to respond	4%			

Residence Classification			Employment	
International (not U.S. citizen)	2%		Full-time	24%
Out-of-state	13%		Part-time	50%
In-state	85%		Not employed	26%
Educational Goal			**Enrollment Status**	
Certification or Vocational/Technical program	16%		Day	91%
Associate Degree	61%		Evening	9%
Transfer to another institution	12%		Weekend	>1%
Other	11%			
Current Residence			**Disabilities**	
Rent room or apt off campus	38%		Yes	16%
Own house	29%		No	84%
Parent's home	26%			
Other residence	7%			

Table 2. LSC Custom Demographic Items (N =284)

I'm enrolled in online classes because:	
I attend elsewhere but needed a class	6%
I'm choosing online due to the pandemic	1%
My class(es) was ONLY available online	23%
I prefer taking classes online	29%
I'm not taking any online classes	41%
I'm enrolled at LSC and intend to:	
Transfer before finishing my program	3%
I'm just taking some classes	8%
Complete transfer program, then transfer	12%
Graduate, then enroll in another program	11%
Graduate from my chosen career program	66%

Institutional Strengths – Survey Items

Ruffalo Noel-Levitz defines *Strengths* as items rated with high importance and high satisfaction. These are specifically identified as items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and in the upper quartile (25%) of the satisfaction scores (Table 3).

Table 3. Institutional *Strengths* in Order of Importance

STRENGTHS In order of Importance
The campus is safe and secure for all students.
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
Campus item: The tutors in the Tutoring and Learning Center are helpful and approachable.
Campus item: Important materials (such as the syllabus, assignments, grades, etc.) for each of my courses are readily available online.
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.*
Admissions staff are knowledgeable.*
Counseling staff care about students as individuals.*
Campus item: The campus classrooms, restrooms, and common areas are clean.
On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
Campus item: Student Services, Library, Technology Help Desk, LSC Store, Payment Office, etc. have adequate hours to meet my needs.
The campus staff are caring and helpful.

* Higher Satisfaction vs National Community Colleges

For each of the strengths from the 2022 survey, other than the campus-defined items, the LSC satisfaction scores were higher than those of the National Community Colleges comparison group, and the differences were statistically significant at the 0.001 level. In comparison, in 2024, all but two of the items, other than the campus-defined items, had higher satisfaction scores than those of the National Community Colleges comparison group. However, only 3 of the items had a difference that was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means LSC strength results in 2024 are comparable to those from the National Community Colleges in 2020-2023.

In addition to the strengths above, the following item are associated with the *highest* satisfaction scores and/or *lowest* performance gap scores:

- Tutoring services are readily available
- Campus item: The campus pursues efforts to make it more inclusive and equitable
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours
- This institution has a good reputation within the community

Institutional Challenges – Survey Items

Challenges are defined as items rated with high importance and either low satisfaction or a large performance gap. These are specifically identified as items above the mid-point in importance (top half) and **either** in the lower quartile (25%) of the satisfaction scores **or** in the upper quartile (25%) of the performance gap scores (Table 4).

Table 4. Institutional *Challenges* in Order of Importance

CHALLENGES In order of Importance
The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible.*
Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
Financial aid counselors are helpful.
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.*
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
Campus item: It is easy to find scholarship information (deadlines, availability, etc.).
Adequate financial aid is available for most students.*
The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date.*

*Lower Satisfaction vs National Community Colleges

In addition to the challenges above, the following items are associated with the *lowest* satisfaction scores and/or *highest* performance gap scores:

- Child care facilities are available on campus.
- This campus provides effective support services for single parents.
- Library resources and services are adequate.

LSC-Defined Survey Items

As noted previously, ten LSC custom items were included in the survey. Table 5 provides the Importance, Satisfaction, and Gap scores for each of those items, in order of importance.

Table 5. Ten LSC Custom Survey Items

Item	Imp	Satis	Gap
Campus item: The tutors in the Tutoring and Learning Center are helpful and approachable. **Strength**	6.62	6.47	0.15
Campus item: Important materials (such as the syllabus, assignments, grades, etc.) for each of my courses are readily available online. **Strength**	6.61	6.33	0.28
Campus item: The campus classrooms, restrooms, and common areas are clean. **Strength**	6.59	6.38	0.21
Campus item: I can usually find what I am looking for on the LSC website.	6.53	6.12	0.41
Campus item: Student Services, Library, Technology Help Desk, LSC Store, Payment Office, etc. have adequate hours to meet my needs. **Strength**	6.52	6.26	0.26
Campus item: Adequate tech support is available for students having trouble with their online accounts.	6.5	6.05	0.45
Campus item: It is easy to find scholarship information (deadlines, availability, etc.).	6.49	5.53	0.96
Campus item: There are adequate food services on campus (selection, hours of service, cost, etc.).	6.34	5.6	0.74
Campus item: There are valuable opportunities for students to connect with each other.	6.27	6.08	0.19
Campus item: The campus pursues efforts to make it more inclusive and equitable.	6.22	6.29	-0.07

Lack of adequate food services, as well as difficulty in finding scholarship information, appear to be student concerns, based on low satisfaction scores and high performance gap scores which were also concerns in the 2022 administration of the SSI. However, importance and satisfaction with both of these have increased in 2024 in comparison to 2022. Four of the LSC custom items are campus strengths, as noted in the table above.

The three items highlighted in Table 5 were also strengths in the 2022 administration of the SSI. In each case, the mean satisfaction score decreased in 2024. In addition, the performance gap score associated with each item increased in 2024.

To put Table 5 figures into context, please refer to the survey item response options below. The overall response ranges and mean scores (based on all survey items) for the three metrics, are also provided:

Response Options

1 – Not Important at all / Not Satisfied at all
2 – Not Very Important / Not Very Satisfied
3 – Somewhat Unimportant / Somewhat Dissatisfied
4 – Neutral
5 – Somewhat Important / Somewhat Satisfied
6 – Important / Satisfied
7 – Very Important / Very Satisfied

Overall Ranges and Means

Importance
    Range: 5.63 to 6.73; mean = 6.46
Satisfaction
    Range: 4.57 to 6.47; mean = 5.99
Gap score
    Range: 1.28 to -0.07 mean = 0.47

Results suggest that we are meeting student expectations with respect to most of the LSC custom items (Table 5). Most have satisfaction values well above the mean (5.99) and/or gap scores well below the mean (0.47). Furthermore, four of the items are among our campus Strengths.

Survey Scales
As noted in the *Introduction*, the individual survey items are rolled up into a number of survey *scales*. The overall importance, satisfaction, and performance gap scores for each is provided in Table 6, both for LSC and the National Community Colleges comparison group.

Table 6. Survey scales for LSC and National Community Colleges comparison group, with mean importance, satisfaction, and performance gap scores.

| Scale	LSC				National Community Colleges				Satis Diff
	Imp	Satis	Gap		Imp	Satis	Gap		
Academic Advising/Counseling	6.52	5.97	0.55		6.45	5.91	0.54		0.06
Academic Services	6.46	5.94	0.52		6.42	6.15	0.27		-0.21*
Admissions and Financial Aid	6.49	5.99	0.5		6.44	5.95	0.49		0.04
Campus Climate	6.42	6.02	0.4		6.36	5.95	0.41		0.07
Campus Support Services	6.26	5.81	0.45		6.22	5.87	0.35		-0.06
Concern for the Individual	6.48	5.92	0.56		6.4	5.87	0.53		0.05
Instructional Effectiveness	6.53	6.04	0.49		6.46	5.96	0.5		0.08
Registration Effectiveness	6.49	6.06	0.43		6.44	6.03	0.41		0.03
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations		6.06				6.09			-0.03
Safety and Security	6.51	5.8	0.71		6.44	6.08	0.36		-0.28*
Service Excellence	6.39	6.02	0.37		6.34	5.96	0.38		0.06
Student Centeredness	6.44	6.03	0.41		6.37	5.98	0.39		0.05

*Statistically significant at $p < .001$

Of the 12 survey scales, *Registration Effectiveness* scale is associated with the highest satisfaction score and *Service Excellence had* the lowest performance gap score. In 2022, satisfaction scores at LSC were higher on all scales in comparison to the National Community Colleges; in 2024 4 or the 12 survey scales had a lower satisfaction score in comparison to the National Community Colleges. The satisfaction scores for *Academic Services* and *Safety and Security* had the largest negative difference when compared to the National Community colleges.
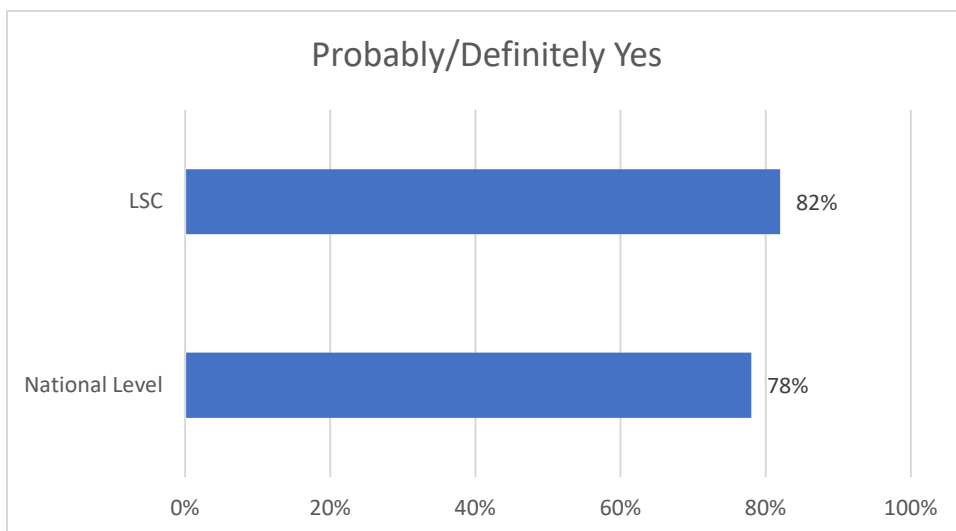
A complete list of the individual survey items can be found in the Appendix, and the scores for each item are available within a separate Excel survey results file.

Bottom Line Indicators

Overall, how satisfied are our students compared with students nationally?

Satisfied/Very Satisfied

LSC	75%
National Level	68%
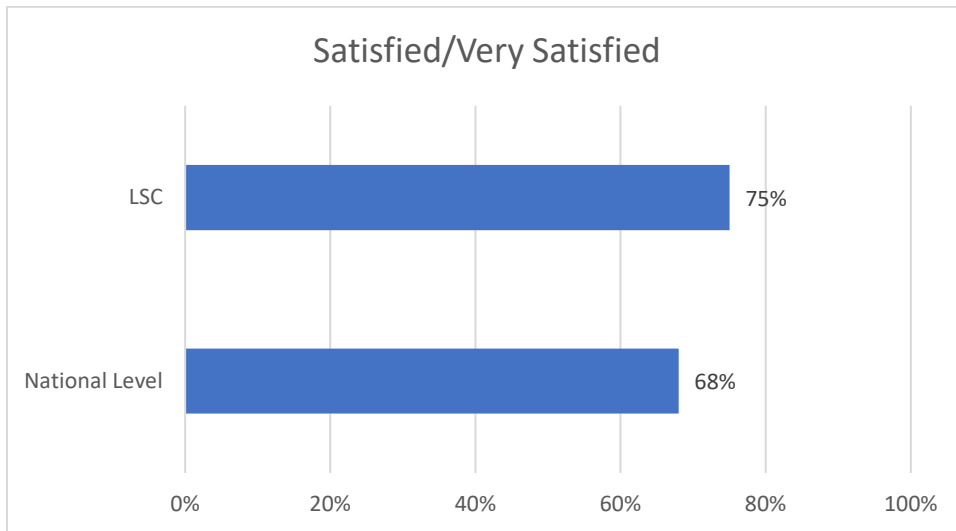
How likely are our students to enroll again if they had it to do over?

Probably/Definitely Yes

LSC	82%
National Level	78%

Appendix – SSI Survey Items

1. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
2. Faculty care about me as an individual.
3. The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.
4. Security staff are helpful.
5. The personnel involved in registration are helpful.
6. My academic advisor is approachable.
7. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
8. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
9. Internships or practical experiences are provided in my degree/certificate program.
10. Child care facilities are available on campus.
11. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.
12. My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.
13. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.
14. Library resources and services are adequate.
15. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
16. The college shows concern for students as individuals.
17. Personnel in the Veterans' Services program are helpful.
18. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
19. This campus provides effective support services for single parents.
20. Financial aid counselors are helpful.
21. There are a sufficient number of study areas on campus.
22. People on this campus respect and are supportive of each other.
23. Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
24. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.
25. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
26. Library staff are helpful and approachable.
27. The campus staff are caring and helpful.
28. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
29. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
30. The career services office provides students with the help they need to get a job.
31. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
32. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.
33. Admissions counselors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices.
34. Computers and/or Wi-Fi are adequate and accessible.
35. Policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection are clear and well-publicized.
36. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
37. Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.
38. The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.
39. The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
40. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.
41. Admissions staff are knowledgeable.
42. The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date.
43. Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.

44. I generally know what's happening on campus.
45. This institution has a good reputation within the community.
46. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
47. There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career.
48. Counseling staff care about students as individuals.
49. Admissions counselors respond to prospective students' unique needs and requests.
50. Tutoring services are readily available.
51. There are convenient ways of paying my school bill.
52. This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.
53. The assessment and course placement procedures are reasonable.
54. Faculty are interested in my academic problems.
55. Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.
56. The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students.
57. Administrators are approachable to students.
58. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
59. New student orientation services help students adjust to college.
60. Billing policies are reasonable.
61. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
62. Bookstore staff are helpful.
63. I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.
64. Nearly all classes deal with practical experiences and applications.
65. Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.
66. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
67. Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.
68. On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
69. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
70. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
71. Campus item: Adequate tech support is available for students having trouble with their online accounts.
72. Campus item: I can usually find what I am looking for on the LSC website.
73. Campus item: The tutors in the Tutoring and Learning Center are helpful and approachable.
74. Campus item: Important materials (such as the syllabus, assignments, grades, etc.) for each of my courses are readily available online.
75. Campus item: It is easy to find scholarship information (deadlines, availability, etc.).
76. Campus item: There are adequate food services on campus (selection, hours of service, cost, etc.).
77. Campus item: Student Services, Library, Technology Help Desk, LSC Store, Payment Office, etc. have adequate hours to meet my needs.
78. Campus item: The campus classrooms, restrooms, and common areas are clean.
79. Campus item: There are valuable opportunities for students to connect with each other.
80. Campus item: The campus pursues efforts to make it more inclusive and equitable.
81. Institution's commitment to part-time students?
82. Institution's commitment to evening students?
83. Institution's commitment to older, returning learners?
84. Institution's commitment to under-represented populations?
85. Institution's commitment to commuters?

86. Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?
87. Cost as factor in decision to enroll.
88. Financial aid as factor in decision to enroll.
89. Academic reputation as factor in decision to enroll.
90. Size of institution as factor in decision to enroll.
91. Opportunity to play sports as factor in decision to enroll.
92. Recommendations from family/friends as factor in decision to enroll.
93. Geographic setting as factor in decision to enroll.
94. Campus appearance as factor in decision to enroll.
95. Personalized attention prior to enrollment as factor in decision to enroll