



## Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), Spring 2004

### Executive Summary

#### Introduction

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), a standardized survey instrument from Noel-Levitz, is designed to measure students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences, programs, and services. It allows institutions to set priorities that are closely aligned with those of the students, pinpoint institutional strengths, and identify challenges in need of improvement.

The version of SSI administered at St. John's University in Spring 2004 is designed specifically for four-year colleges and universities. The survey consists of 73 standard items and 10 additional ones supplied by St. John's University. Each item is expressed as a statement of expectation. For each item, students are asked to rate both the level of importance (a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL and 7 as VERY IMPORTANT) and level of satisfaction (a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as NOT SATISFIED AT ALL and 7 as VERY SATISFIED). The difference in the importance and satisfaction ratings is considered as a performance gap. (The median performance gap for Queens Campus is 1.5, and for Staten Island is 1.1.)

In spring 2004, three separate sample groups were randomly selected at St. John's University. They were undergraduates on Queens campus (946 participants, 10% of student population), undergraduates on Staten Island (429, 25%), and graduate students of both Queens and SI campuses (331, 7%). Two similar studies were conducted in 1997 and 1999, but for undergraduates only.

Both strengths and challenges have been identified in this summary. Strengths are the areas of high importance, high satisfaction, and small gaps. (Appendix VI provides the formulas used to identify strengths and challenges.) Challenges are the areas of high importance, low satisfaction, and large gaps, and they are the areas in need of improvement.

This executive summary consists of five parts. Part One, An Overview, highlights the results at the scale level (the 83 items are grouped into 12 scales with one scale having satisfaction ratings only) and the overall satisfaction. Part Two, Strengths, summarizes areas of strength by campus. Part Three, Challenges, identifies areas in need of improvement. Part Four, Comparison with Spring 1999 and with private institutions, compares the data at the item level. Part Five is the conclusion.

#### Part One: An Overview

For undergraduates on Queens campus, the importance ratings in 2004 are consistent with the ratings in 1999, while the satisfaction ratings are slightly lower in 2004, resulting in a broader performance gap in some of the scales, especially in the two scales of Campus Life (a gap from 0.9 in 1999 to 1.4 in 2004) and Campus Climate (from 1.4 to 1.7). The data indicate that the enlarged gaps resulted from the fact that resident students (living on campus) became part of the sample in 2004 (no residents on Queens campus in Spring 1999) and the satisfaction ratings by residents are lower than by commuters for the majority of the scales. The satisfaction ratings by commuters remained almost the same from 1999 to 2004.

For undergraduates on Staten Island, performance gaps slightly decreased from 1999 to 2004 for all the scales except Campus Life and Safety and Security, while the gap in Safety and Security was enlarged from 1.6 to 1.9. It is also true that satisfaction ratings by residents are lower than those by commuters, for each of the 12 scales. Performance gaps in such scales as Campus Life and Campus Climate on Staten Island from 1999 to 2004, however, did not increase probably because residents were part of the sample in both 1999 and 2004.

The importance ratings by graduate students are very close to the ratings by undergraduates, while satisfaction ratings by graduates are higher than the ratings by undergraduates on the same campus, resulting in the fact that the performance gap for graduates is smaller than for undergraduates on the same campus for almost every scale.

The performance gaps for the four-year private institutions remained almost unchanged from 1999 to 2004 for each of the 11 scales. The data also indicate that there is practically no difference in the performance gaps for residents and for commuters.

**The overall satisfaction rating, one of St. John’s institutional success measures, decreased from 4.8 in 1999 to 4.4 in 2004 for Queens undergraduates (decrease from 4.8 in 1999 to 4.5 in 2004 for commuters, and for residents in 2004 the overall rating is 4.2), but remained the same (4.8) for SI undergraduates. St. John’s 2007-08 target is 5.3. This rating for the four-year private institutions decreased slightly from 5.2 in 1999 to 5.1 in 2004.**

## Part Two: Areas of Strength

### I. Undergraduates on Both Queens and SI Campuses

For students on both campuses, the areas of strength are:

(I = Importance mean score; S = Satisfaction mean score)

	Queens		Staten Island	
	I	S	I	S
1) Campus as a safe and secure place for all students	6.4	5.1	6.3	5.4
2) St. John’s Central being easy and convenient to use	6.2	5.1	6.0	5.1
3) Campus providing an environment for students to socialize	6.1	5.1	6.0	5.2
4) Faculty being available after class and during office hours	6.3	5.0	6.1	5.3
5) Reasonable class change (drop/add) policies	6.1	4.9	6.1	5.2
6) St. John’s reputation within the community	6.1	4.8	6.1	5.3

On Queens campus, additional areas of strength are:

	Queens	
	I	S
1) Campus being well-maintained	6.2	4.9
2) Campus with quiet areas for students to study	6.3	4.9
3) Adequate library resources and services	6.1	4.8

On Staten Island campus, additional areas of strength are:

	Staten Island	
	I	S
1) Academic advisors being approachable	6.4	5.6
2) Academic advisors being concerned about success of each individual student	6.2	5.3

## II. Graduate Students on Both Queens and SI Campuses

The areas of strength for this group are:

	Both Campuses	
	I	S
1) Academic advisors being approachable	6.3	5.4
2) Academic advisors being knowledgeable about requirements in major	6.4	5.4
3) Campus being well-maintained	6.0	5.1
4) Reasonable class change (drop/add) policies	6.0	5.0

### Part Three: Areas of Challenge

#### I. Undergraduates on Both Queens and SI Campuses

For students on both campuses, the areas of challenge are:

	Queens		Staten Island	
	I	S	I	S
1) Student parking spaces on campus	6.0	2.7	6.3	2.6
2) Getting “run-around” when seeking information on campus	6.1	3.6	6.0	4.3
3) Reasonableness of billing policies	6.1	3.6	6.0	4.0
4) Worth of tuition as an investment	6.4	3.7	6.2	4.2
5) Use of student activity fees	6.0	3.7	5.9	4.2
6) Availability of channels for students to express complaints	6.0	3.9	5.9	4.5
7) Availability of adequate student financial aid	6.3	4.0	6.1	4.5
8) Conflicts that students have when registering for classes	6.5	4.2	6.4	4.6
9) Consideration of student differences when faculty teaching a course	6.1	4.3	6.0	4.8
10) Experience of being a student on the campus	6.1	4.4	6.0	4.7
11) Fairness and unbiasedness of faculty in treatment of individual students	6.4	4.5	6.3	4.8
12) Security staff’s response in emergencies	6.2	4.5	6.1	4.8

On Queens campus, additional challenges include:

	Queens	
	I	S
1) Timeliness of announcing student financial aid awards	6.2	4.1
2) Availability of an adequate selection of food in the cafeteria	5.9	4.1
3) Institution’s concern for students as individuals	6.2	4.2
4) Financial aid counselors being helpful	6.1	4.3
5) Academic advisors helping students set goals to work toward	6.2	4.4
6) Timeliness of faculty feedback about student progress in a course	6.2	4.4
7) Campus staff being caring and helpful	6.1	4.4

On Staten Island campus, additional challenges include:

	Staten Island	
	I	S
1) Variety of courses provided	6.2	4.6
2) Lighting in the parking lots	6.0	4.6
3) Students being made to feel welcome	6.0	4.7

## II. Graduate Students on Both Queens and SI Campuses

Graduate students share the following areas of challenge with undergraduates:

	Both Campuses	
	I	S
1) Student parking spaces on campus	6.1	3.3
2) Use of student activity fees	5.7	4.0
3) Getting “run-around” when seeking information on campus	6.0	4.1
4) Availability of channels for students to express complaints	5.8	4.1
5) Reasonableness of billing policies	6.0	4.1
6) Availability of adequate student financial aid	6.0	4.1
7) Worth of tuition as an investment	6.3	4.3

The following areas are specific to graduate students:

	Both Campuses	
	I	S
1) Business office hours	5.9	4.5
2) Personnel involved in registration being helpful	6.0	4.5
3) Quiet places to study on campus	6.1	4.6
4) Adequacy of library resources and services	6.1	4.7

## III. Resident Students on both Queens and SI Campuses

Areas of challenge specific to residents on both campuses are:

	Queens		Staten Island	
	I	S	I	S
1) There are a sufficient number of weekend activities for students.	5.7	3.3	5.4	3.6
2) Availability of an adequate selection of food in the cafeteria	6.2	3.4	5.5	3.5
3) Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable(adequate space, lighting, telephones, etc.).	6.6	4.1	6.4	3.7

For resident students on Queens campus, additional areas of challenge include:

	Queens	
	I	S
1) Residence hall regulations are reasonable.	6.3	3.2
2) Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	6.1	4.1

For resident students on SI campus, additional areas of challenge include:

	Staten Island	
	I	S
1) The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.	5.8	3.6
2) There is a strong commitment to racial harmony on this campus.	5.9	3.8
3) Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	6.0	3.9
4) Freedom of expression is protected on campus.	6.2	3.9
5) Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.	5.9	4.0
6) There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.	6.0	4.1
7) There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	6.1	4.2
8) I have been able to socialize with other students on campus.	6.1	4.3

**Part Four: Comparison with Spring 1999 and with Private Institutions at the Item Level**

**I. Comparison between St. John's Spring 2004 and Spring 1999**

Top areas with satisfaction ratings becoming higher in 2004 than in 1999 (Difference in satisfaction  $\geq 0.3$  & difference in gap  $\leq -0.3$ ):

	Spring 2004		Spring 1999	
	I	S	I	S
<b>SI Campus</b>				
1) Financial aid counselors are helpful.	5.9	4.8	6.2	4.3
2) Tutoring services are readily available.	5.8	5.3	5.9	5.0
3) There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.	5.4	4.1	5.5	3.8
4) My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.	6.2	5.1	6.2	4.8

For Queens Campus, there are no areas with satisfaction ratings becoming higher in 2004 than in 1999.

Top areas with satisfaction ratings becoming lower in 2004 than in 1999:

	Spring 1999		Spring 2004	
	I	S	I	S
<b>Queens Campus</b> (Difference in satisfaction $\geq 0.5$ & difference in gap $\leq -0.5$ )				
1) There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.	5.7	4.5	5.9	4.1
2) Student disciplinary procedures are fair.	5.8	4.9	6.0	4.5
3) I feel a sense of pride about my campus.	5.8	4.9	5.8	4.3
4) Computer labs are adequate and accessible.	6.4	5.3	6.3	4.8
5) On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.	6.2	5.4	6.2	4.9
6) Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.4	4.3	6.4	3.7
7) This institution has a good reputation within the community.	6.2	5.5	6.1	4.8
8) The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.	5.8	5.3	5.7	4.5
9) The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.	5.3	4.8	5.1	4.0
<b>SI Campus</b> (Difference in satisfaction $\geq 0.3$ & difference in gap $\leq -0.3$ )				
1) The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.	5.1	4.3	5.1	4.0
2) Bookstore staff are helpful.	5.9	5.1	5.8	4.8
3) The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.	5.7	5.2	5.5	4.8
4) The campus is safe and secure for all students.	6.5	5.9	6.3	5.4
5) I have found the Public Safety staff helpful and approachable.	6.1	5.2	5.9	4.7
6) Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.	6.3	5.1	6.0	4.6

## II. Spring 2004 Data Comparison: St. John's vs. Four-Year Private Institutions

Top areas with St. John's satisfaction ratings lower than four-year private institutions (Difference in satisfaction $\geq 0.9$ & difference in gap $\leq -0.7$ )	St. John's		4-Yr Private	
	I	S	I	S
<b>Queens Campus</b>				
1) I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.	6.1	3.6	6.1	4.5
2) Billing policies are reasonable.	6.1	3.6	6.1	4.4
3) Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	6.1	4.4	6.2	5.3
4) This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	6.2	4.2	6.3	5.1
5) The campus staff are caring and helpful.	6.1	4.4	6.3	5.3
6) Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.4	3.7	6.5	4.7
7) Faculty care about me as an individual.	6.0	4.3	6.2	5.2
8) The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	6.0	2.7	6.0	3.8
<b>SI Campus</b>				
1) The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	6.3	2.6	6.0	3.8

There are no areas with St. John's satisfaction ratings higher than four-year private institutions.

### Part Five: Conclusion

While there is practically no difference in performance gaps for residents and for commuters in other four-year private institutions, larger performance gaps were found for St. John's residents than for commuters. The overall satisfaction ratings from SSI 2004 are consistent with those from ACUHO-I Resident Satisfaction Survey (RSS) of Fall 2003. St. John's started using RSS in Spring 2001, and its longitudinal data do indicate that there has been a steady increase in overall satisfaction ratings in the past several years. The mean score, on a 7-point scale, increased from 3.4 in Spring 2001 to 4.4 in Fall 2003 for Queens campus, and from 4.5 in Spring 2002 to 4.9 in Fall 2003 for Staten Island campus.

In general, there is not much difference in performance gaps among ethnic groups except that satisfaction ratings by Hispanic students are slightly higher than average, while satisfaction ratings by Asian students are slightly lower (they are not satisfied especially with the food in the cafeteria). Students whose first choice was St. John's are more satisfied than other students. Importance ratings by female are higher than by male, and satisfaction ratings by female are also higher. Therefore, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that female students are more satisfied than male students.

There are a few areas of which students in different groups have different perceptions. For instance, for undergraduates on Queens campus, quiet places to study on campus and library resources and services are strengths, but for graduate students they are challenges. For such areas, further investigations, including qualitative approaches, are needed in order to better understand the issues.

Strengths should be publicized to prospective students, alumni, and external constituencies as well as the University community, and challenges should be targeted for intervention.

Appendixes I to III present data at the scale level by campus and for residents and commuters, and Appendixes IV and V provide details for strengths and challenges by campus, college/school, and ethnicity. Appendix VI has the values in the formulas for identifying strengths and challenges. Appendixes VII and VIII carry item mean scores by campus. Following this executive summary, results will be analyzed by campus, college/school, and ethnic group where appropriate.