

Student Life Studies Customer Service Surveys 2016-2017

Background

According to its website (<http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/about>), Student Life Studies “provides leadership in assessment and planning to the Division of Student Affairs and to student organizations, maximizing program effectiveness and emphasizing student learning.” Furthermore, the vision of the department is to “create a culture in the Division of Student Affairs that values meaningful assessment, uses results to guide improvement, and articulates contributions to student success.” One goal for Student Life Studies is to provide quality assessment services to facilitate client planning and decision-making.

Student Life Studies wanted to assess clients who utilized the department’s services to understand their satisfaction and use of assessment results in making program improvements. Student Life Studies has conducted various forms of a client assessment since 2005.

Method and Sample

Student Life Studies developed two surveys using Qualtrics®, survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The customer satisfaction survey consisted of 20 questions: 15 were quantitative and five were qualitative. Not all respondents saw all the questions due to branching technology. The electronic survey link was sent to clients approximately one month after completing a project with the department. Emails with the survey link were sent to 95 clients between September 2016 and August 2017, and 39 responded to some part of the survey, for a 41% response rate (a 14% decrease from the previous year).

The nine-question use of results survey consisted of four quantitative questions and five qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all the questions. The survey link was emailed to 93 clients approximately two or three months after the project was completed. The survey had a 53% response rate with 49 respondents completing some part of the survey; which was the same response rate as the previous year.

Student Life Studies evaluated the results of surveys using SPSS®, statistical software packages, and Microsoft Excel®.

Results

Results include means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are included within this report; the full qualitative responses can be found in separate documents. Comparisons to the results from the 2015-2016 year will be made. This report is divided into two sections: Customer Satisfaction Survey and Use of Results Survey.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Clients were asked a series of statements about their experience working with Student Life Studies on their project. The response options provided were yes, no, maybe, and not applicable (NA); however, the NA response were removed from the analysis. Table 1 shows that clients were generally positive regarding all statements, especially the assessment being designed in the timeframe and the timeline of the process being clearly explained. Similar to the previous year, fewer clients felt that the Assessment Questionnaire form helped them define their assessment project. Yes responses for all statements decreased compared to the previous year.

Please respond to the following statement based on your experience working with Student Life Studies on your project.	2016-2017				2015-2016 Yes
	Yes	No	Maybe	n	
The assessment was designed in the time frame explained to me.	97%	--	3%	34	98%
The timeline of development, data collection, analysis, and receiving results was clearly explained.	94%	--	6%	33	96%
I understood the summary information (quantitative output/qualitative comments) provided.	90%	--	10%	10	100%
I understood the steps in the assessment process.	89%	--	11%	35	100%
The results (quantitative output/qualitative comments/report from SLS) was provided in the time frame explained to me.	85%	6%	9%	34	93%
The Assessment Questions form helped me define the project.	82%	4%	15%	27	83%

Table 1: Experience with Student Life Studies

When asked if they learned about assessment through working on their assessment project, 54% of the respondents said yes, 24% said no, and 22% said maybe (in 2015-2016, 46% said yes, 28% said no, and 26% said maybe). Those who indicated they learned about assessment (n=20) were asked to explain what they learned. Respondents commented that they learned about survey design such as good questions to ask, the order of questions, and response options to provide. Additionally, clients stated they learned about the overall assessment process, what Student Life Studies can do for departments, the value of collecting qualitative data, and the benefits of collecting demographics to fully understand the students utilizing services and programs.

Clients who received a written report from Student Life Studies were asked if they read the report. A majority (81%) stated they had read the report and 19% said they had not read the report yet, but planned to. Nobody selected the option that they did not plan to read the report. In 2015-2016, 96% stated they had read the report and 4% had not read it but planned to read it. Those who read their report (n=17) were asked about the usefulness of each section in the report. Table 2, on the following page, reveals that all sections were helpful to some degree and that the results section was most helpful. Compared to the previous year, all statements increased slightly in clients feeling the section was helpful. However, last year the not helpful option was not selected for any section and this year one person indicated that the background section was not helpful. There was a follow-up question for anyone reporting a section as not being helpful to understand what would make that section more helpful. The respondent who felt the background section was not helpful indicated that he/she was already familiar with the background of the program.

How useful was each section of the report?	Very Helpful (3)	Somewhat Helpful (2)	Not Helpful (1)	2016-2017 Mean (sd) [n=16]	2015-2016 Mean (sd) [n=25]
Results	100%	--	--	3.00 (.00)	2.96 (.20)
Conclusions and Recommendations	94%	6%	--	2.94 (.25)	2.88 (.33)
Method and Sample	69%	31%	--	2.69 (.48)	2.48 (.51)
Background	69%	25%	6%	2.63 (.62)	2.52 (.51)

Table 2: Usefulness of the Assessment Report

Furthermore, respondents who received a report from Student Life Studies were asked if they had shared or planned to share the report with others. Just over two-thirds (69%) reported they had already shared the report and 31% indicated that they planned to share the report, but had not done so yet. Nobody said that they did not plan share the report. Compared to 2015-2016, 76% reported they had already shared the report and 24% responded that they planned to share the report, but had not done so yet.

All clients were asked about their timeline for implementing changes based on the results from their assessment project. Table 3 illustrates that a majority of the clients plan to make changes based on the assessment results and that most of those will be within a year. The results were fairly similar to the previous year. Respondents who indicated they did not plan to use the information were asked a follow-up question to explain why the information would not be used. The one person stated that the data was informational rather than actionable.

What is your timeline for implementing changes based on your project?	2016-2017 Frequency Percentage [n=36]	2015-2016 Frequency Percentage [n=46]
0-3 Months	36%	39%
4-8 Months	19%	15%
9-12 Months	28%	24%
More Than One Year	--	9%
Do Not Know	14%	11%
Do Not Plan to Use the Information	3%	2%

Table 3: Timeline for Implementing Changes

Respondents were asked how their assessment project provided evidence of their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or contribution to student learning and provided a wide range of responses. Several clients talked about understanding the students' perceptions and experiences to have a clearer picture of what is provided for students. Some talked about being able to understand responses between demographic populations of students and understand the differences in experiences for certain populations. Others talked about learning they were effective in reaching the intended outcomes, what students were learning, and growth opportunities.

When asked if they were satisfied working with Student Life Studies staff on their project, for the second year, 100% of respondents said yes (n=36). On the final question, clients were provided the opportunity to share any comments or concerns about their experience working with Student Life Studies. Clients were mostly positive in their overall experience with the department and used words such as amazing, helpful, responsive, professional, excellent communication, quick in responding, and answers questions. One person reported that the results were not provided in the timeframe initially established.

Use of Results Survey

Clients were initially asked if they made changes or improvements based on their assessment results. Over half (55%) indicated they had made changes, 34% said they had not made changes yet, but planned to, and 11% said no. Compared to 2015-2016, 42% reported they had made changes, 53% stated that they had not made changes yet, and 6% said no. Those who made changes (n=26) or planned to make changes (n=19) were asked to explain. A wide range of changes were shared including increasing resources, adjusting date, time, or hours, reworking content for trainings/workshops/curriculum, modifying seating arrangements, adding a mentoring program, changing the speakers/schedules, making policy adjustments, marketing to different students, improving communication with participants, and enhancing food options. Alternatively, clients who indicated they were not making changes (n=5) were asked to share their reasons. Some said this was the beginning of the process and that the data was to track or see trends, and not necessary to make changes yet. One person stated he/she did not receive sufficient data to make changes. One person reported that a decision had not been made if the program would continue and if programmatic changes would be needed.

When asked if they had shared the results from their assessment project with others, 77% said yes, 19% said not yet, and 4% said no. In 2015-2016, 69% said yes and 31% indicated not yet. Clients who shared (n=36) or planned to share (n=9) the results were asked to indicate where the results were shared through a select-all-that-applied question. Table 4 demonstrates that staff meetings continue to be the most common place clients share assessment results. For a second year, nobody selected the options of sharing results through articles. Those selecting the “other” response option were provided the opportunity to write in a response. Those who provided a comment indicated sharing with supervisors, different types of meetings, colleagues, facilitators, parents, students, and through trainings. Furthermore, clients who reported that they were not sharing their assessment results (n=2) received the follow-up question to elaborate on reasons they were not sharing. One respondent included that the data contained sensitive information and another respondent reported he/she did not know who to share the results with.

Where did you share the results (or plan to share the results)? (Check all that apply)	2016-2017 Frequency Percentage [n=45]	2015-2016 Frequency Percentage [n=34]
Staff meeting	71%	62%
Other	38%	38%
Department assessment plan/WEAVEonline	24%	27%
Student organization	22%	29%
University committee	20%	15%
Conference	9%	3%
University community	7%	3%
Division meeting	2%	6%
Article	--	--

Table 4: Sharing Assessment Results

Clients were asked if working with Student Life Studies on their assessment project helped them tell their story. Over half (60%) said yes, 21% were unsure, and 19% said no. Compared to 2015-2016, clients were less positive that working with Student Life Studies helped them tell their story (69% said yes, 22% were unsure, and 8% stated no). All respondents were asked to explain their response. Those who said yes (n=28) explained the data helped them make a change, communicate with external stakeholders, understand students who use and do not use the services, and know the value of the work that is done. Those who were unsure (n=10) felt they needed more data, had not had the time to tell others, and that the project was ongoing. Those who said no (n=9) indicated the project was not about telling a story by to gather baseline data or internal department use.

The final question asked clients how Student Life Studies could assist them in the future. Many of the comments were about the department continuing to offer advice, to provide services, to support to staff with assessment needs. Others shared praises for the department in what they do and describe the work as awesome and great. One person suggested guiding staff on what should be done with the results.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Action Plans

Overall, clients are highly satisfied with the services provided by Student Life Studies. Clients appreciate what the department provides for them and helping others with their assessment efforts. Additionally, many clients expressed praise for individual staff members within the department. Furthermore, clients reported learning about assessment through working with Student Life Studies.

The department staff may want to explore the purpose of the Assessment Questionnaire form, both for Student Life Studies and the clients. Is the form accomplishing this purpose, especially in terms of helping clients develop their assessment project? Student Life Studies may want to consider the questions asked on the form and how it explains to clients why completing the form is important.

Student Life Studies is encouraged to continue to pay attention to the timeline of projects and when results will be provided back to clients. There were very few suggestions or constructive criticisms, but the few that were shared focused on project timelines.

It may be valuable for the department to investigate ways to help departments walk through a process for using and sharing assessment results. What does it mean to tell their story, and how do clients' data help them do this? Additionally, maybe focusing on this stage of the assessment cycle at the beginning would help clients know what do with the results to make improvements and share information with stakeholders.

Department staff members are encouraged to share the results from this assessment with stakeholders. While qualitative themes were summarized, staff are also encouraged to read comments to have a complete understanding of responses.

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