

University Center & Special Events Customer Satisfaction Survey 2015-2016

Background

University Center & Special Events (UCEN) provides facilities and event services to enhance the education, business, social, and cultural experiences of students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Furthermore, according to its website (<http://ucenter.tamu.edu/about/>), University Center & Special Events “manages the Memorial Student Center, Rudder Theatre Complex, J. Earl Rudder Tower, John J. Koldus Building, All Faiths Chapel, Albritton Bell Tower, and the University Center Guest Suites. Our experienced staff can provide a full range of professional services which include event coordination and setup, equipment rentals, AV services, event staffing and lodging accommodations. With a focus on superior customer service, UCEN will ensure your next event is a success!”

University Center & Special Events values high quality customer service and wanted to administer a customer satisfaction survey throughout the year to gather feedback from clients and understand their experiences. The department worked with Student Life Studies to assess customer satisfaction starting in 2009. However, after taking a break for the past year, the survey and process were changed for the 2015-2016 academic year to provide more useful results.

Method and Sample

The survey was developed using Qualtrics®, survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The 19-question survey contained 16 quantitative questions and three qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

University Center & Special Events sent the open survey link to customers after events were held in any of the facilities the department oversees. Between October 2015, when the survey link started being used, until June 1, 2016 when the data was analyzed, 351 people completed some part of the survey. It is not known how many survey links were sent out to determine a response rate.

Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are reported in descending order for the mean or frequency percentage. Results from respondents reporting “Not Applicable” were removed from the analysis for that question. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document.

Customers were asked about their association with the University in the context of their event. Over half (52%) were from an academic/administrative unit, 39% were student organizations, and 9% were from an external group. Using a check all that applies format, customers were asked about the location of their event. Table 1 demonstrates that half of all events reported were held in the MSC. Those selecting the “other” response option were given the opportunity to write in a comment. Some of the locations mentioned included the AgriLife Center, Equine Center, Kyle Field, Vice President for Student Affairs Residence, and Duncan Dining Center.

Where did your event take place? Select all that apply.	Frequency Percentage
Memorial Student Center (MSC)	50%
Rudder Tower	26%
Other	13%
Koldus	7%
Rudder Plaza	6%
Rudder Theatre Complex	5%
All Faiths Chapel	1%

Table 1—Event Location (n=349)

Customers were asked about their level of satisfaction on various areas related to University Center & Special Events. Table 2 illustrates that customers were very satisfied in all areas, especially staff friendliness and facility cleanliness.

Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following areas of University Center & Special Events:	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very Dissatisfied (1)	Means (sd) [n]
Staff friendliness	77%	20%	2%	1%	1%	4.72 (.59) [339]
Facility cleanliness	76%	22%	1%	1%	<1%	4.72 (.56) [327]
Staff knowledge	72%	23%	4%	--	1%	4.66 (.62) [338]
Non-technical equipment (i.e. staging, chairs, tables, pipe and drape, etc.)	72%	23%	2%	1%	1%	4.64 (.70) [329]
Scheduling process	70%	26%	2%	1%	1%	4.64 (.65) [349]
Billing process	68%	27%	4%	1%	--	4.63 (.59) [309]
Event planning process	70%	25%	3%	2%	1%	4.62 (.70) [318]
Overall satisfaction	69%	27%	2%	2%	<1%	4.62 (.65) [346]
Staff support during the event	70%	22%	4%	3%	1%	4.58 (.79) [317]
Value in relation to cost	69%	23%	6%	2%	1%	4.57 (.73) [331]
Ability to meet technological needs	66%	26%	4%	3%	2%	4.50 (.85) [301]
Technical equipment (i.e. sound, lighting, projection, etc.)	65%	26%	4%	5%	1%	4.48 (.87) [296]

Table 2—Satisfaction

When asked how they heard about the services provided by University Center & Special Events, 204 customers wrote in a comment. Some talked about learning of the services through other people such as students, friends, advisors, or colleagues; while others heard from groups, such as student organizations or departments. Many reported that they had used the facilities in the past or attended events in the buildings. A few mentioned learning about the services through emails, websites, or Event Management System (EMS). Student organizations were most likely to learn about the services through their student organization, other students, and friends. Academic or administrative units were more likely to have used services in the past or learned of services through their department or colleagues. Online and friends were the most common ways external groups learned about available services.

Respondents were asked if they visited the University Center & Special Events website. The results were fairly split with 48% reporting they had been to the website and 52% indicating they had not. Those who had visited the website (n=169) were asked if the information provided on the website was helpful. Almost all (96%) stated that they found the information helpful. The 4% reporting that the information on the website was not helpful (n=7) were asked to explain their response. Respondents indicated having trouble finding the information, not finding phone numbers, the website not working, that the information on the website was different from the information received when talking with a staff member, and having difficulty requesting a booth.

The final question asked for any additional feedback and 150 respondents wrote in a wide range of responses. There were numerous praises for the staff, facilities, and having pictures of the rooms on the website. Alternatively, some expressed frustration over the reservation process in MaroonLink, lack of information available on the website, specifically related to costs, room set up, temperature, doors being locked, and noise. There were also many comments related to technology, cables, audio systems, lighting, and not having connectors for Mac computers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, customers seem to be very satisfied with the services and facilities provided by University Center & Special Events. Many mentioned specific staff members who were helpful or that they consistently have positive experiences. However, there were a few areas where UCEN staff may want to explore options for making improvement. Technology seemed to be the most common area of less satisfaction from both the quantitative and qualitative feedback. Staff may want to look at the current process for understanding technology needs when rooms are reserved and how those needs are met. The department may also want to check equipment to determine if some items need to be replaced, specifically bulbs in projectors and sound systems. A few customers who use Mac computers indicated wanting connectors to be provided, and the department may want to consider the feasibility of offering those.

There were some comments about the department website and UCEN staff could consider conducting focus groups with users and non-users to gather further feedback. The focus groups could entail general questions about what participants would want to see for the content and the overall feel of the website. Additionally, participants could be asked to look up basis information and focus group facilitators could observe if participants look in the correct area where information is found or if different navigation or language would be helpful.

University Center & Special Events may want to make a change to the question about how customers heard about the services provided. Based on the responses written in, these could be provided to the respondent to select from using a select all that apply question. An “other” response option could be included for the less common responses. This would make it easier for the respondent to answer the question, and might make it easier to see the differences in how customers heard about services and the most common marketing methods.

University Center & Special Events staff are encouraged to read all the comments to gain a fuller understanding of the themes provided. Additionally, staff are encouraged to share the results of the survey with all department staff and student employees, as well as other stakeholders.

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