

University of Wyoming Student Satisfaction: 1994 to 2008

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Report compiled by the Data Analysis and Special Projects Team of the Enrollment Management Committee

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I. Overview

The University of Wyoming conducts three student surveys on a biennial basis. The Noel-Levitz (NL) Student Satisfaction Inventory is administered to roughly half the student sample while another half completes the ACT Student Opinion Survey. A third survey, the University of Wyoming Student Opinion Survey (UWSOS), composed of items developed largely by Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, is administered to the entire student sample (around 1500 respondents per survey year).

The Noel-Levitz questionnaire was first administered in 1998 while the ACT was first used by UW in 1994. Both Noel-Levitz and the ACT provide us with comparative results from national samples of public universities. The results have been examined by a subcommittee of the University's Enrollment Management Committee and the following report is based on the results from 1994 to 2008. The full results of each survey can be found on the web at http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/a&s/Policy/Admin_Info.asp.

Highlights reviewed on the following pages include:

- On the whole, UW students remain very satisfied with the education they are receiving. Of 144 items on the ACT and Noel-Levitz surveys, UW averages were significantly more positive than national averages on 74 items and significantly lower on only 5. Of the remainder, UW student averages are not significantly different from those at other public universities.
- Since 1994, there has been a steady increase in satisfaction with how students are treated as individuals—37 percent to 55 percent in 2008. Only 11 percent indicated dissatisfaction in 2008.
- Eighty-six percent of UW students indicated that they are able to experience intellectual growth while only five percent expressed dissatisfaction in 2008.
- As in the past, students indicated that instruction and advising are of greatest importance to them and very large majorities are satisfied with both.

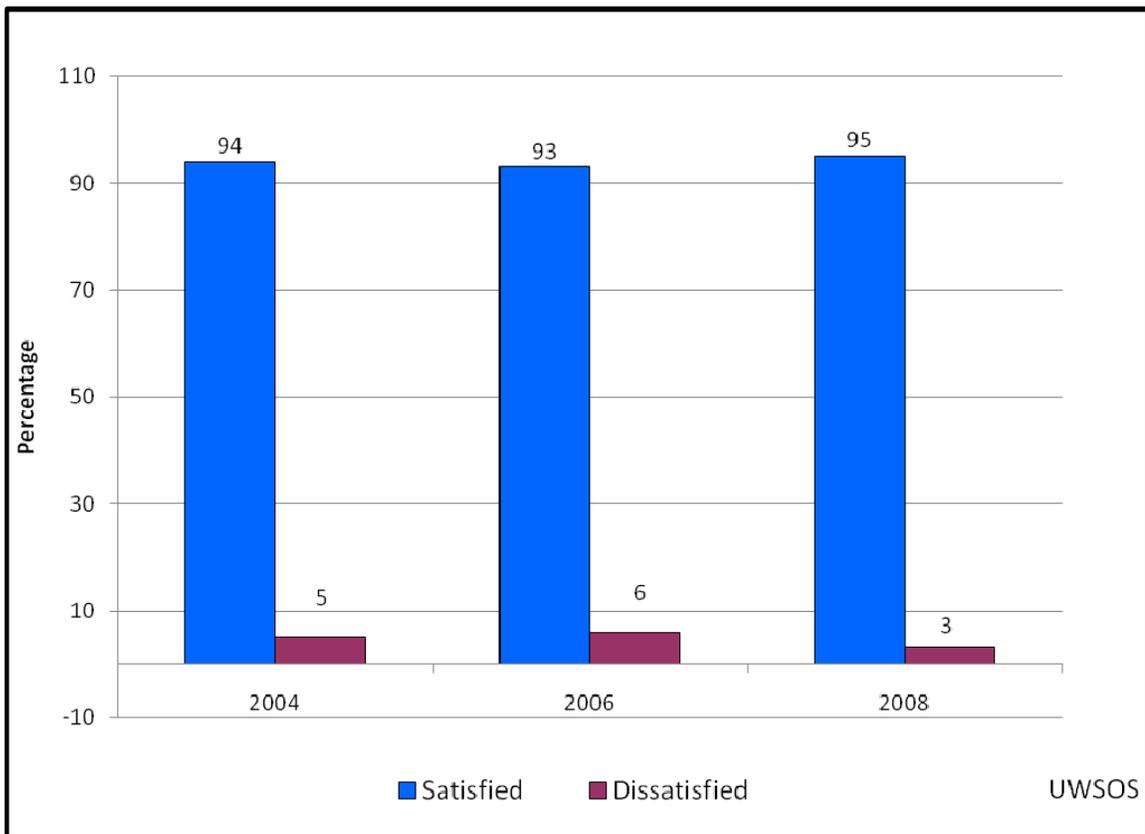
- Students also rated campus safety as of being of great importance to them and UW's satisfaction was significantly higher than the national averages.
- Satisfaction with tuition and student fees are also higher than the national average.
- Satisfaction with classrooms and other instructional facilities rose sharply in 2008 probably because remodeling of the Classroom Building was completed.
- In comparison to students at other public universities, UW students are significantly more satisfied with the computer facilities available to them.
- Since 1994 satisfaction with financial aid services has increased from 60 percent to 77 percent, a figure significantly higher than national averages.
- UW students are very satisfied with library facilities and services—UW's students are far more likely to use the library than their counterparts at other public universities and they are significantly more satisfied.
- UW students are far more likely to be involved in recreational or intramural activities than students at other public universities and 95 percent expressed satisfaction with these programs and services.
- Satisfaction with food services in the residence halls has risen from 37 percent in 2002 to 64 percent in 2008.
- Satisfaction with the Student Union has increased substantially since the completion of the remodeling and now stands at 90 percent.
- As a whole, the percentage of students who believe that the general climate for diversity is improving increased from 61 percent in 2006 to 74 percent in 2008.
- Depending upon the specific question, 25 to 40 percent of transfer students express dissatisfaction with the process, a level of dissatisfaction that should decrease given the number of modifications we have made in the transfer process.
- As in the past, lack of adequate parking remains the students' most strident complaint—only 12 percent expressed satisfaction in 2008.
- A substantial number of students felt they received the “run-around” when seeking information on campus. This item was second only to parking in terms of dissatisfaction.
- Students expressed dissatisfaction with the service received in the bookstore and the perceived competence of staff in the student health center.
- On the open-ended items, the most frequently cited positive feature of UW, nearly half of the comments, was its “friendliness.”

Note that many questions in these surveys contain a “neutral,” or “don't know” response. Thus, the percentages reported here seldom add to 100 percent. Also, when the narrative states that UW's satisfaction levels are significantly above or below the national average, it indicates that the difference between UW's level of satisfaction and the national level is **statistically significant** (with 95% confidence).

II. Satisfaction with the University in General

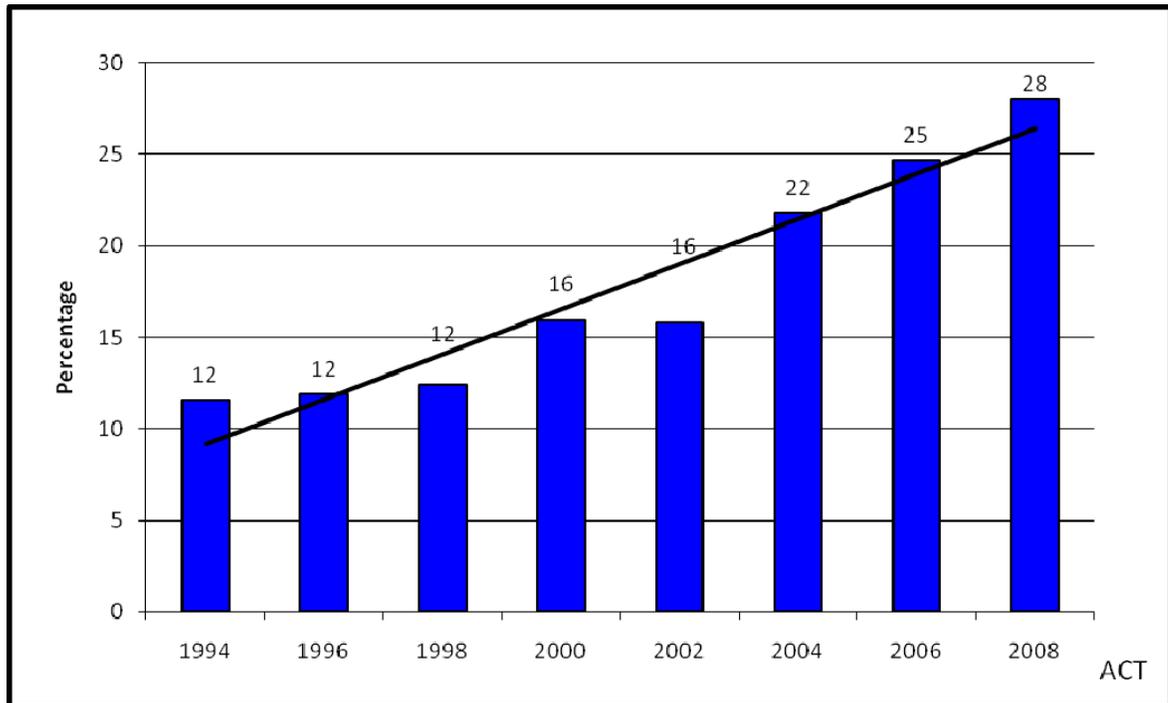
Overall, satisfaction with the University remains strong. The UWSOS-1 asks students to report their agreement or disagreement with the statement: “Overall I am pleased with the education I am receiving at UW.” Results are found in the following graph:

Graph 1
Pleased with Education at UW



The ACT survey asks students how satisfied they are with “This college in general.” (ACT III-42) The results are similar to those in the UWSOS. **Most impressive is that from 1994 to 2008 the percentage who indicated that they were “Very satisfied” with UW more than doubled.**

Graph 2
Satisfaction with UW: Percent Very Satisfied



Several other items from the surveys bear on the overall level of satisfaction. Noel-Levitz includes three such items. **On all three, UW satisfaction levels are significantly higher than the national average (NL-1, 29, 45).**

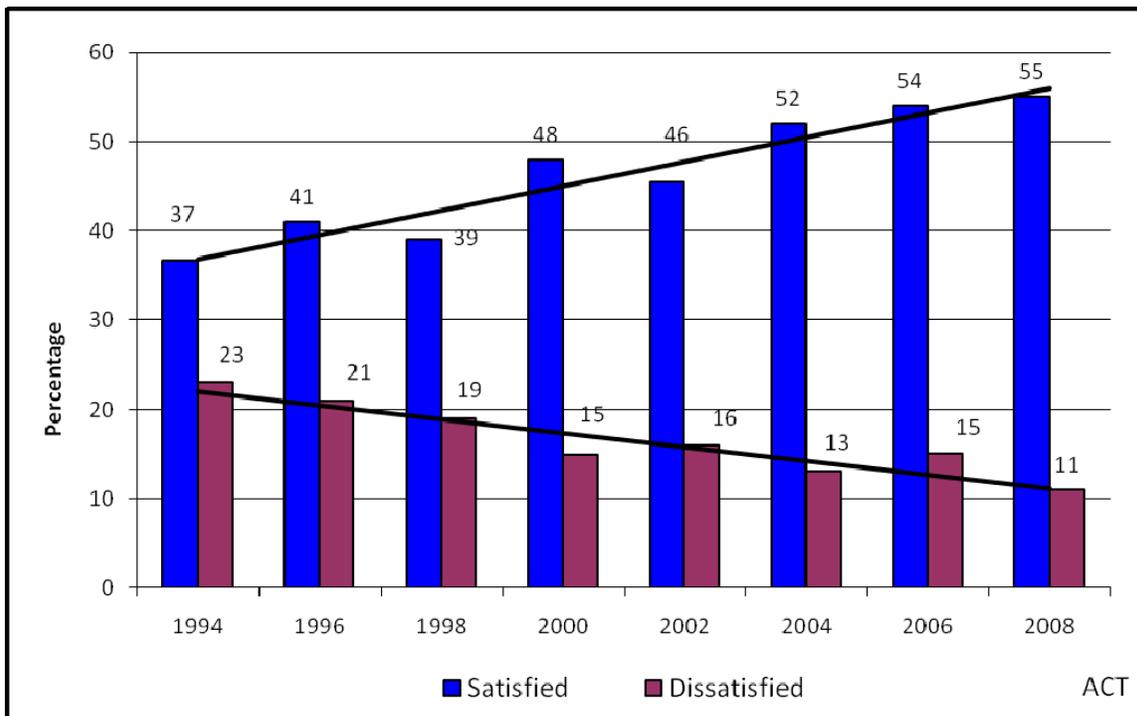
Table 1
UW Responses to General Satisfaction Items

	Percent Satisfied	Percent Dissatisfied
It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	80*	9
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	78*	8
Most students feel a sense of belonging on this campus.	74*	9

* Significantly higher than at other public universities.

Additionally, a very positive trend in campus climate is found in the responses to the ACT item which questions students on “Concern for you as an individual” (ACT III-34).

Graph 3
Concern for You as an Individual



The UWSOS devotes a number of items to social climate. **Nearly 89 percent characterize the campus as friendly vs. 2 percent who characterize it as hostile. Eighty percent view it as respectful while 6 percent characterize the UW campus as disrespectful (UWSOS-8a, c). Finally, 91 percent of our students would recommend that a friend or relative attend UW (UWSOS-1a).**

Most items in all three surveys are closed-ended; that is, students are asked to choose from several item responses. We did, however, ask a number of open-ended questions for which students could supply their own answers. One of these asked students what they liked and disliked about UW (UWSOS-21). The challenge of such items is to organize the responses into meaningful categories. Categorized responses are discussed in detail below in Section VI. Here we simply note that 43 percent of the positive open-ended responses cited the friendly environment at UW as what they liked about UW. This was the most frequently given response in the survey.

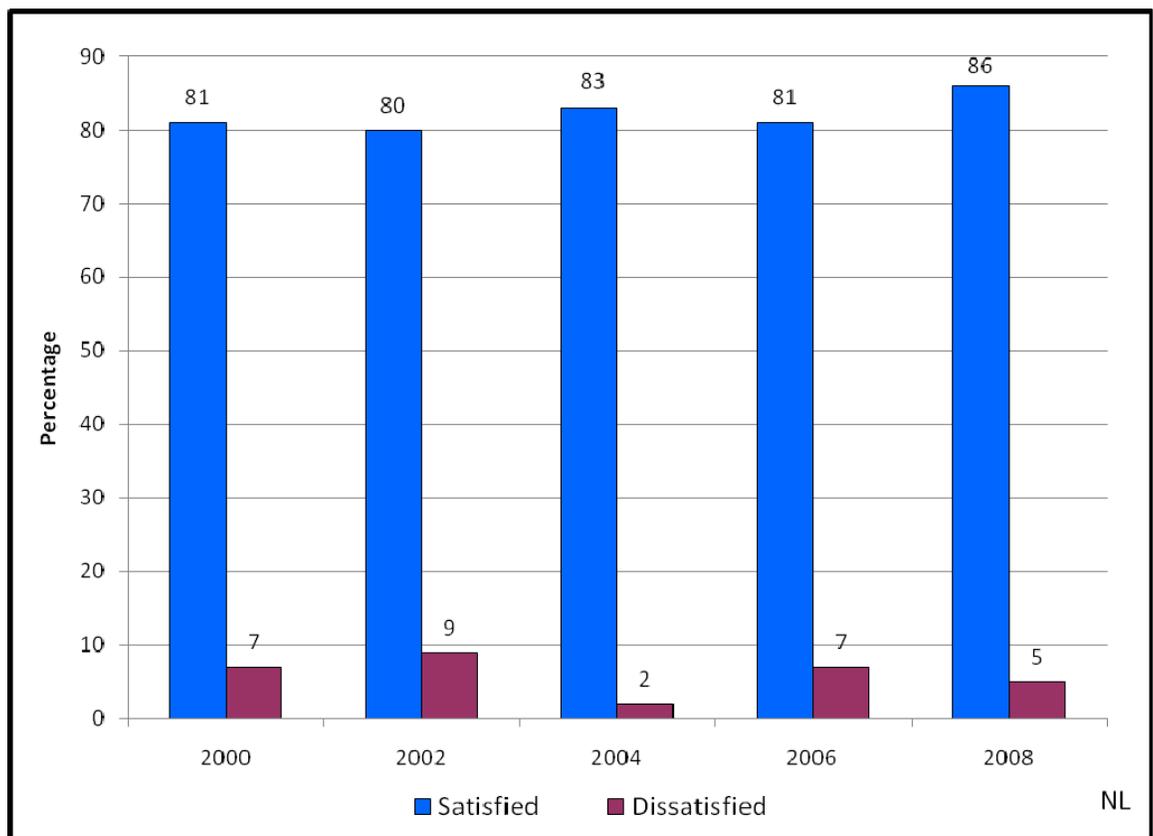
Comment: The University, particularly Student Affairs, has made it a high priority to treat students as individuals rather than as numbers, a common problem in large state universities. Clearly, these efforts have met with success.

III. Academic Climate

Whatever else occurs on a university campus, its **primary purpose** is to foster intellectual growth. In this regard, UW students are very positive:

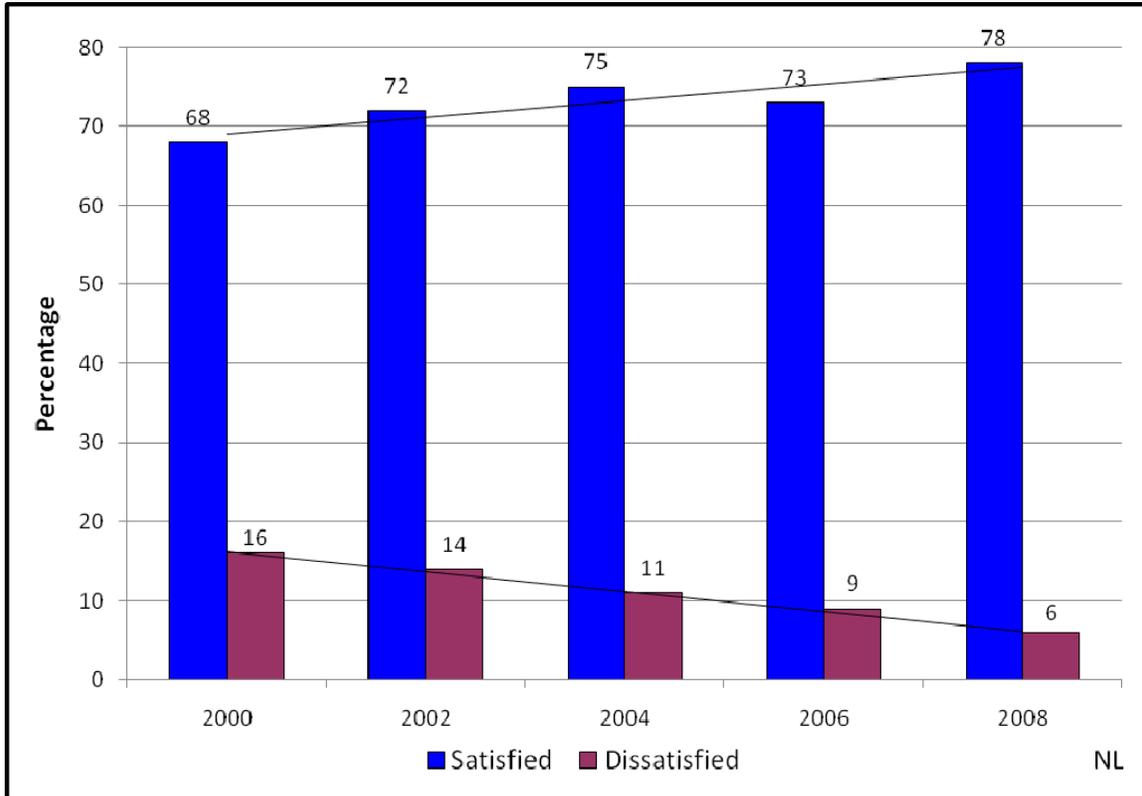
- The Noel-Levitz survey poses the following statement to students: “I am able to experience intellectual growth here.” **Results show that the vast majority of students agree with this statement and that the percentage of satisfaction reached its highest point in 2008 (NL-39). Note that this percentage is significantly higher than the average of other public universities.**

Graph 4
“I am able to Experience Intellectual Growth Here”



- Noel-Levitz also asks students whether they perceive that UW has a commitment to “academic excellence.” **Here again, a large majority answer in the affirmative, with a noticeable uptick in 2008 (NL-41). UW’s percentage is significantly higher than that at other public universities.**

Graph 5
**“There is a Commitment to Academic Excellence
on this Campus.”**



IV. What is Most Important to Students?

For each of the 79 items in the Noel-Levitz survey, students were questioned on both the importance of the item as well as their level of satisfaction. The following table lists the ten items most important to students, their level of satisfaction, and how UW’s percentages compare to national figures. Six of the top ten items involve instruction (those ranked 1, 2, 7, 8, 10); two involve academic advising (ranks 3, 4); one concerns safety (6) and another, the value of the tuition investment (9). The UW average satisfaction levels are significantly higher than the national averages on four of the ten, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Ten Most Important Items to UW Students
and Level of Satisfaction

Area	Ten items most important to students	Average Importance (1=Not important, 7=Very important)	Percent satisfied	Percent dissatisfied	Comparison with other public universities
Instruction	1. The content of the courses within my major is valuable (NL-8).	6.64	81	11	No significant difference
Instruction	2. The instruction in my major field is excellent (NL-16).	6.62	81	9	No significant difference
Advising	3. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major (NL-33).	6.54	78	14	No significant difference
Advising	4. My academic advisor is approachable (NL-6).	6.52	75	14	UW significantly more positive than national sample
Course availability	5. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts (NL-34).	6.52	63	26	No significant difference
Safety	6. The campus is safe and secure for all students (NL-7).	6.51	86	4	UW significantly more positive than national sample
Instruction	7. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field (NL-68).	6.48	83	8	No significant difference
Instruction	8. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent (NL-58).	6.44	76	13	No significant difference
Tuition	9. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment (NL-66).	6.41	76	12	UW significantly more positive than national sample
Instruction	10. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus (NL-69).	6.39	80	9	UW significantly more positive than national sample

Instruction (Table 2: Importance Ranks 1, 2, 7, 8, 10)

- **The great majority of students evaluated instruction or teaching very positively. Although high in absolute terms, judging by the Noel-Levitz results, UW’s satisfaction levels with teaching are not, in general, significantly different from the national average at public universities.**
- In addition to the Noel-Levitz items, several other questions in the three surveys pertained to teaching. Thirty-nine percent of the responses for the UWSOS open-

ended like/dislike question said that what they liked about UW was the quality of instruction and another 28 percent cited the faculty (See Section VI, below). These were the second and third most frequently mentioned likes.

- **ACT also contains several items pertaining to teaching and all paint a very positive picture of satisfaction with teaching (ACT III-2, 3, 4, 5). Besides the overall level of satisfaction, it should be noted that on all four of these items, UW’s percentages are above the national average.**

Table 3
UW Responses to ACT Items Pertaining to Teaching

	Percent Satisfied	Percent Dissatisfied
Course content in your major field.	82*	6
Instruction in your major field.	84*	3
Out-of-class availability of your instructors.	81*	4
Attitude of the faculty toward students.	84*	6

*Significantly higher than at other public universities.

Comment: As we would hope, teaching is viewed as most important in student evaluation of UW. The fact that students are overwhelmingly positive about this aspect of their university experience, explains in large measure their overall positive evaluation of the university.

Academic Advising (Table 2: Importance Ranks 3, 4)

- Academic advising in the major is ranked second most important to students. **Nearly every item pertaining to advising in both surveys finds that UW students are more satisfied with advising than are students at other public universities**(NL-6, 14, 19, 33 and ACT II-1, III-9, 10).

Comment: These results are encouraging. The University has placed considerable emphasis on advising in recent years and it is, therefore, gratifying that we exceed the satisfaction levels at other public universities.

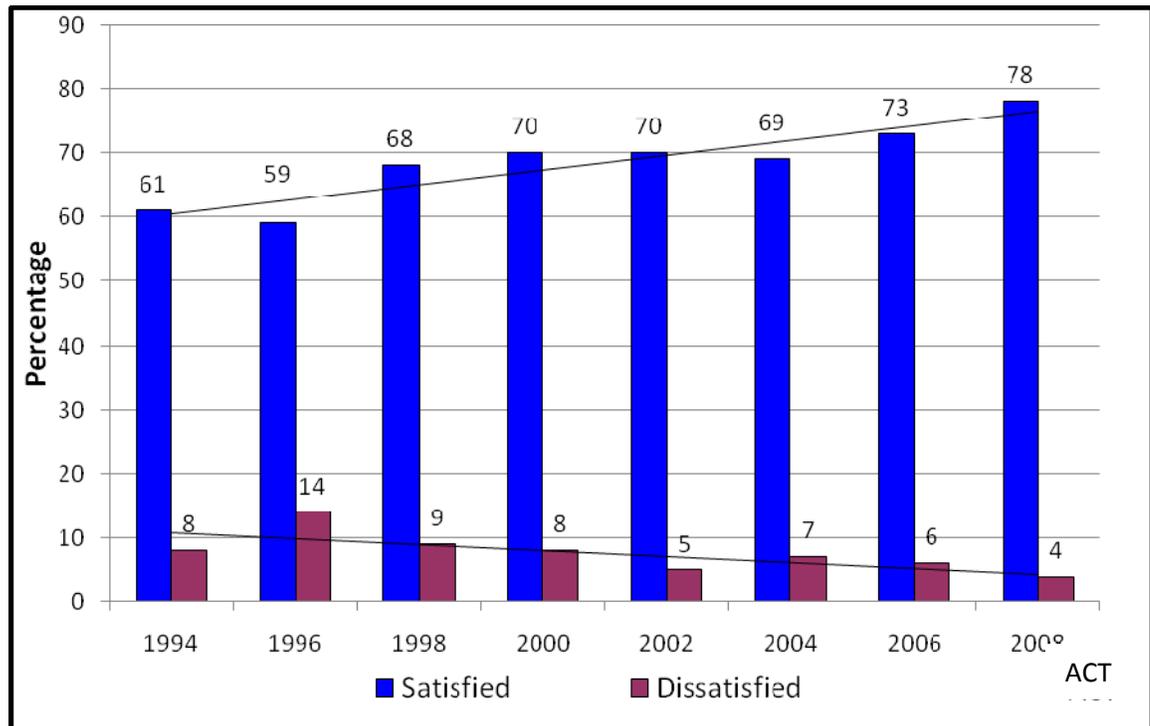
Course Availability (Table 2: Importance Rank 5)

- Course availability is quite naturally important to students. Although most are satisfied, the fact that one-in-four are dissatisfied is a matter of some concern.

Campus Safety (Table 2: Importance Rank 6)

- Given events at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University, it is not surprising that students are more concerned with safety and security than in the past. **Overwhelmingly, students are satisfied with UW’s level of safety (See Table 2 above).**
- The ACT survey results are consistent with Noel-Levitz. Nearly 78 percent of UW students indicate they feel safe and secure on campus vs. 4 percent who are dissatisfied with the level of security (ACT III-21). **As the following graph demonstrates, UW students are increasingly positive.**

Graph 6
Personal Security/Safety at UW



Comment: Since the Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois tragedies, UW has instituted a whole series of measures to increase campus safety. This, plus the fact that objectively UW has had a very safe campus, has increased student satisfaction.

Value of the Tuition Investment (Table 2: Importance Rank 9)

- For the first time, UW students ranked tuition among the ten items most important to them. Seventy-six percent of UW students indicated that they believe UW tuition to be a “worthwhile investment” while only 12 percent expressed dissatisfaction. On this item, UW satisfaction is significantly above the national average for public universities.

Comment: UW has one of the lowest tuition rates in the nation for public universities, a rate that for in-state undergraduates has not increased in the past few years. The Hathaway Scholarship program lowers the effective in-state tuition even further. It is encouraging that students recognize the value of their tuition investment. It should be noted that for the open-ended items on like and dislike of UW, the fifth highest like was the affordability of UW—17 percent. However, there are still some students who disagree: third highest dislike was the cost of attending UW—11 percent (See Section VI).

V. Support Processes and Services

Academic Help Centers

In addition to faculty teaching, the University operates four centers devoted to providing academic assistance to students: the Math Lab, the Writing Center, Washakie Learning Center and the Oral Communications Lab. The last two were established in 2003 while the other two have much longer histories. Perhaps not surprisingly, given their newness, student awareness of Washakie and the Oral Communications Lab increased markedly from 2004 to 2006. However, awareness of both seems to have leveled off by 2008, and neither is as well-known as the Math Lab or the Writing Center.

- **For all four of these help centers, eight out of every ten students who sought assistance indicated they received the help they sought.**
- **A large majority of those who did seek help indicated that it improved their course grade.**
- On three related items in the national surveys, UW students reached all-time highs in their satisfaction with tutoring and academic support services. On two of these items (NL-32, 44), UW's score in 2008 is essentially equal to the corresponding national figure, and on the third (ACT II-9) the UW score is significantly higher.

Table 4
Awareness and Satisfaction with Academic Help Centers

	Percent aware of the program	Percent of those aware of program who used it	Percent of those who used program who received help sought	Percent who believed help improved course grade
Washakie Student Learning Center	66	21	78	63
Math Lab	77	48	92	81
Writing Center	80	24	89	81
Oral Communications Lab	48	45	91	75

Comment: All four help centers are designed to supplement in-class instruction. The data indicate that, at least from the students' perspectives, the funding of these centers has been a wise investment.

Admissions

- Overall satisfaction with admission procedures has increased slowly, but steadily since 1994 (ACT III-12). **Satisfaction levels are now significantly above the comparable national figures.**

Athletics

- In 2008, UW students reached an all-time high in their endorsement of the statement (NL-24) that “intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.” In all, endorsement of this statement was significantly higher than the average for public universities. However, it should be noted that in terms of importance, UW students ranked athletics 71st out of 79 Noel-Levitz items.
- Satisfaction with all kinds of university facilities reached all-time highs in 2008, significantly above national levels. **Nationally, 63 percent of students express satisfaction with athletic facilities. At UW the figure is 80 percent (ACT III-24)!**

Bill and Fee Payment

- Satisfaction with billing policies, despite a slight downturn in 2008, is significantly above the national average (NL-11). Satisfaction with billing and fee payment procedures is on par with the national average (ACT III-33).

Bookstore

At UW, 72 percent of the students indicate satisfaction with the bookstore vs. 66 percent nationally (ACT III-27).

- However, **agreement that “bookstore staff are helpful” (NL-54) has declined substantially since 1998, and is now significantly below the national average.**

Career Planning and Job Placement Services

- Student satisfaction with career services has shown no consistent increase or decrease since 1994 (ACT II-3, 4; NL-49) and is generally comparable to that at other public universities.

Classrooms, Laboratories, Study Facilities and General Condition of Buildings and Grounds

- **Satisfaction with classroom facilities rose sharply in 2008 and is now significantly above the national average (ACT III-22). In 2006, 66 percent of UW students expressed satisfaction compared to 81 percent in 2008.**
- Satisfaction with laboratory facilities and study areas rose sharply and is significantly above the national average (ACT III-23, 25).
- For items pertaining to satisfaction with the general condition of buildings and grounds (ACT III-29, NL-72), UW is significantly above the national averages, with a substantial increase in satisfaction since 2006.

Comment: In 2006, we attributed dissatisfaction with classroom facilities to the closing of the Classroom Building and remodeling of several other buildings. We anticipated a reversal in 2008. That prediction is amply supported by the present survey data. It is puzzling why satisfaction with laboratory facilities should have increased. **There are no student laboratory facilities in the Classroom Building and only minor improvements have occurred for student teaching labs in other University facilities.** Nevertheless, the glow created by the remodeling and refurbishment appears to have improved overall satisfaction with University facilities.

Computer Facilities

- **UW students are very positive about the computer facilities open to them. On both the ACT and the Noel-Levitz, the average level of satisfaction with these facilities is at any time since we initiated the surveys (ACT II-19, NL-26).**

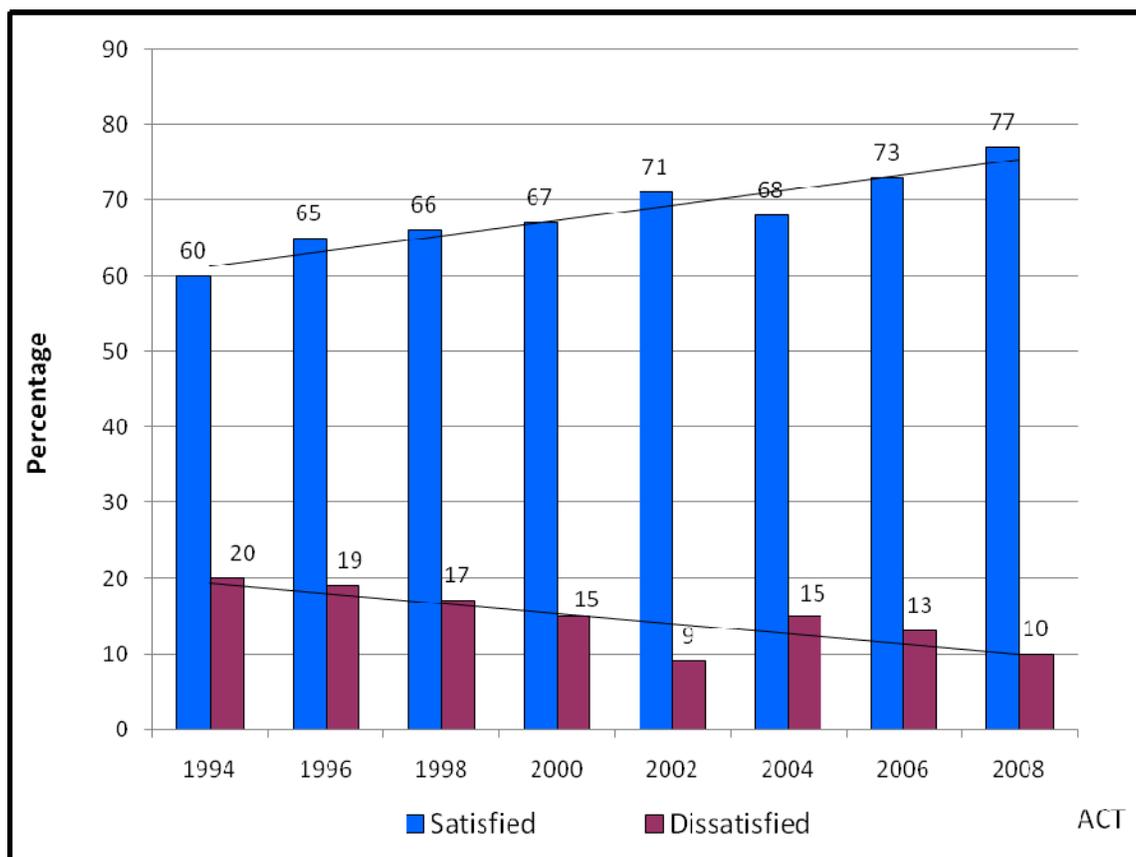
Daycare Services

- In 2008, only three percent of our respondents indicated they had used University daycare. Of this group 70 percent expressed satisfaction, the highest level of approval since 1994. We have seen that new or remodeled facilities increase student satisfaction, and the increased satisfaction with daycare can likely be attributed to the new daycare facility. Overall, UW average satisfaction is comparable to the national average (ACT II-23).

Financial Aid

- **Satisfaction with financial aid services increased notably in 2008, and is significantly higher than national figures (ACT II-10).**
- Agreement that “adequate financial aid is available for most students” is significantly above the national average (NL-17).

Graph 7 Financial Aid Services



Comment: The Financial Aid office seems to be doing a good job of communicating the complexities of the financial aid process. The transition to a new student information system may have resulted in the ability to provide better financial aid services. It should also be noted that the increase in satisfaction in this area may be due, in part, to improvements in the amount of aid available as a result of the Hathaway Scholarship and Peak Achievement programs.

Honors Program

- Satisfaction with the Honors program reached an all-time high in 2008, up 10 percentage points from 2006 to 74 percent. (ACT II-18). UW's satisfaction level is on par with other public universities.

Library Facilities and Services

- **Satisfaction with the library has risen noticeably in recent years and the level of satisfaction with UW libraries is among the highest satisfaction at UW (93%, ACT II-6, 81% NL-18).**
- In all, UW's satisfaction with the library is significantly higher than the national averages. It should also be noted that UW students are also significantly more likely to use the library than their counterparts

at other public universities (90% vs. 78%). **Only one percent of our students indicated that they were dissatisfied with the library!**

- Seventy-seven percent of students felt the library staff were “helpful and approachable” (NL-13), a percentage that is higher than the national average, but not significantly so.

Mass Transit Services

- Use of University mass transit has increased strikingly since 2002 (13% to 36%). Current use is over twice as high as the national average (ACT II-20).
- UW satisfaction (74%) with mass transit is significantly higher than the national average (ACT II-20).

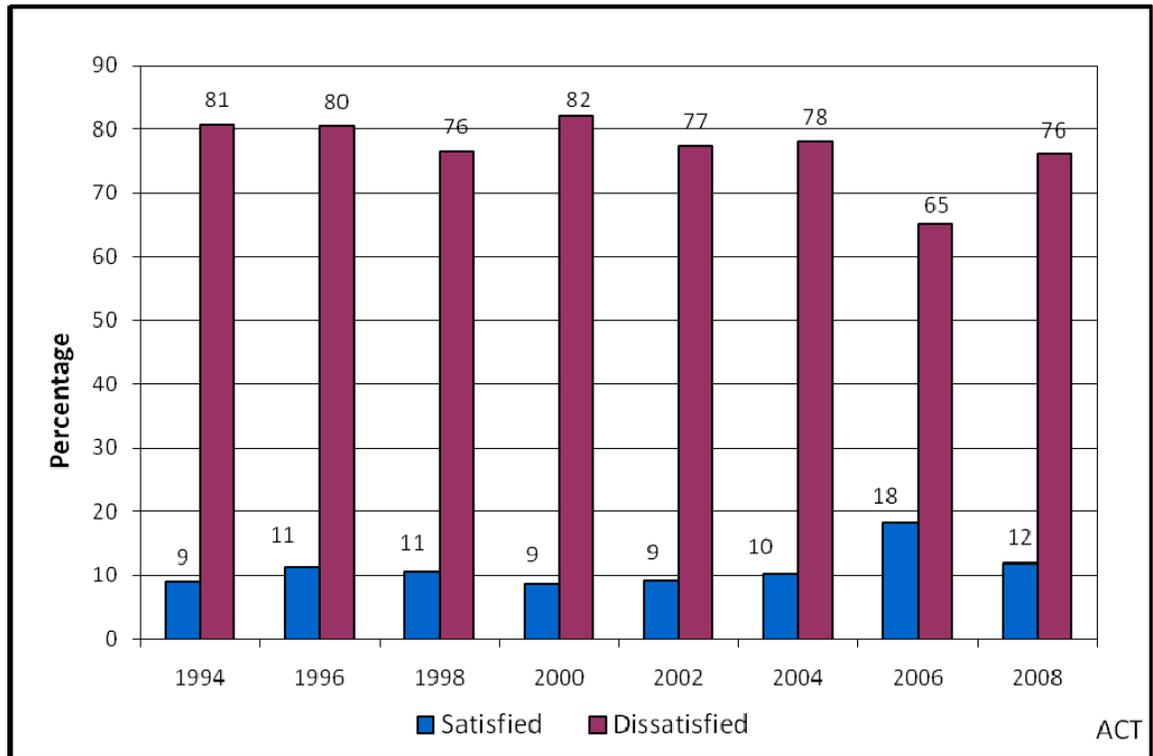
Comment: Beginning this fall, UW substantially expanded its mass transit service and we expect student usage and, hopefully, satisfaction to increase in the 2010 survey.

Parking Facilities and Services

- **From the initial student satisfaction survey in 1994 to the present, dissatisfaction with parking availability is greater than for any other UW feature; moreover, satisfaction is far below the national average (ACT II-21).**
- Noel-Levitz includes two parking items in its questionnaire. One asks whether parking lots are well-lighted and secure. Encouragingly, satisfaction on this item has increased markedly since 2000 although our students are significantly less satisfied than the national average (NL-28). The second item asks whether student parking on campus is adequate. Here, satisfaction is lower than at any time since we began using Noel-Levitz in 1998, at only 8 percent (NL-21).

Comment: Increased dissatisfaction with parking from 2006 to 2008 can, we believe, largely be explained by the loss of student parking resulting from on-going campus construction.

Graph 8
Parking Facilities and Services



Personal Counseling Services

- Student satisfaction in this area (67%) is similar to national averages. Thirteen percent of UW students indicated they had used this service, a percentage not significantly different from the national average (ACT II-2).

Recreational & Intramural Programs and Services

- **UW students are much more likely to be involved with recreation and intramurals than are those at other public universities (67% vs. 34%) (ACT II-5).**
- **Moreover, UW students are significantly more satisfied (95%) with the range of these services than the national average.**

Comment: Those responsible for the intramural and recreational opportunities for students should be complimented for providing students with a broad range of high quality opportunities.

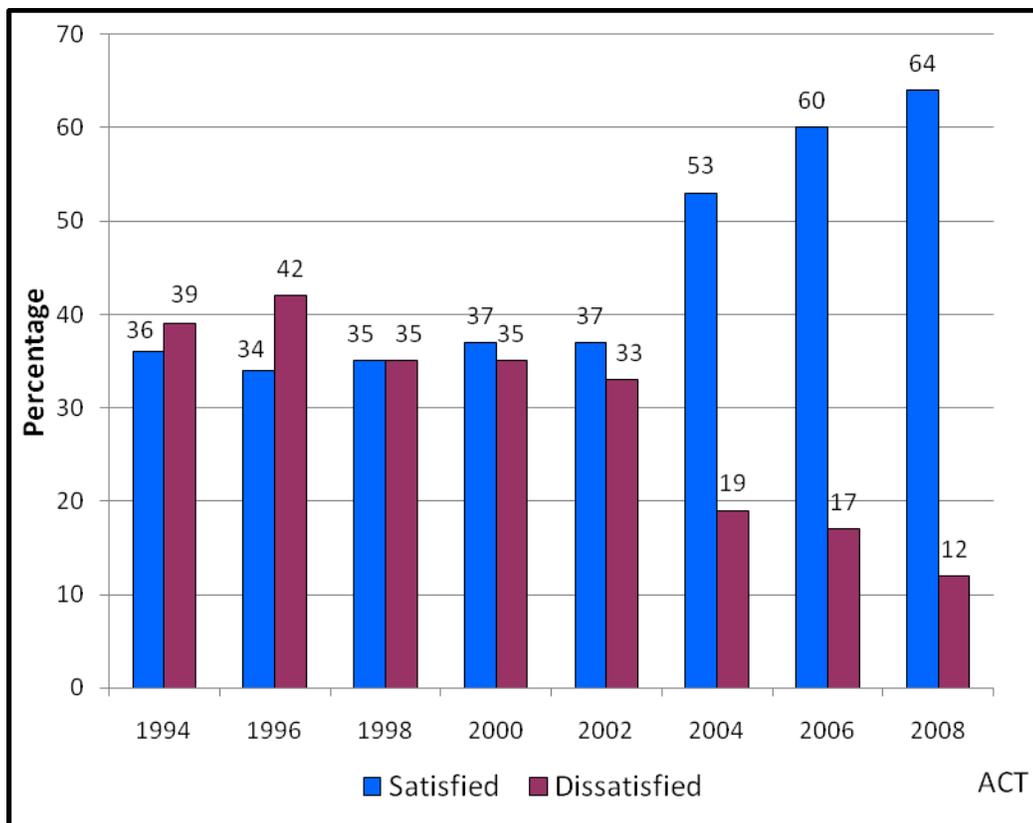
Registration

- Sixty-eight percent of students expressed satisfaction with the registration process and only 10 percent were dissatisfied, not significantly different from national averages (ACT III-30).

Residence Halls and Food Services

- UW students are significantly more likely to have lived in the residence halls than the national average (54% vs. 32%)(ACT II-12). Satisfaction with residence hall services and programs is significantly above the national average (67% vs. 55%).
- **With the remodeling of Washakie Center, there has been a major increase in satisfaction with the residence hall food service since 2002, and satisfaction is now significantly above the national average (ACT II-13 and NL-38).**
- Satisfaction with residence hall regulations is significantly above the national average (NL-40).

Graph 9
Food Services in Residence Halls



Student Health Services

- **Far more UW students indicated they used the University's student health services than students at other public universities (68% vs. 37%) (ACT II-7).**
- Although a substantial majority of students expressed satisfaction with these services (70%), satisfaction has fallen somewhat in the last couple of years. Moreover, when students were presented with the following Noel-Levitz item, "The staff in the health services area are competent," the percentage of Wyoming students expressing

satisfaction was significantly lower than the national figures (NL-15). **This was one of the few items in either both ACT or Noel-Levitz on which UW students were significantly less satisfied than students at other public universities.**

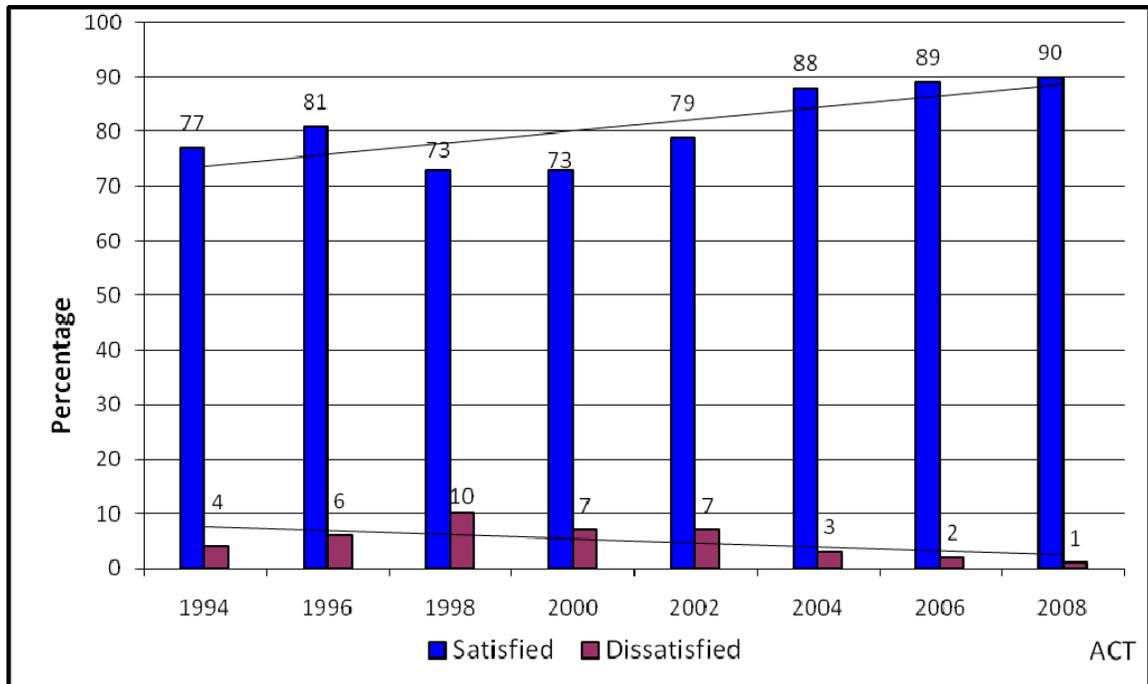
Student Health Insurance

- Only 13 percent of UW students indicated that they used UW’s student health insurance. Forty-one percent expressed satisfaction, a percentage not significantly different from national figures (ACT II-8).

Student Union

- **Satisfaction with the Student Union has risen substantially since 2002 and presently stands significantly higher than the national average (90% vs. 60% nationally) Remarkably, only one percent were dissatisfied (ACT III-26).**

Graph 10
Student Union Satisfaction



Student Access to Information

- Seventy percent of students expressed satisfaction in response to an item which asked about knowing “what’s happening” on campus, significantly higher than the national average (NL-60).
- On the other hand, when asked whether they received the “run-around” in seeking information on campus, 32 percent expressed dissatisfaction (NL-57) that is, they believed they received the “run-around.” This was a substantial **decrease** in satisfaction from the 2006

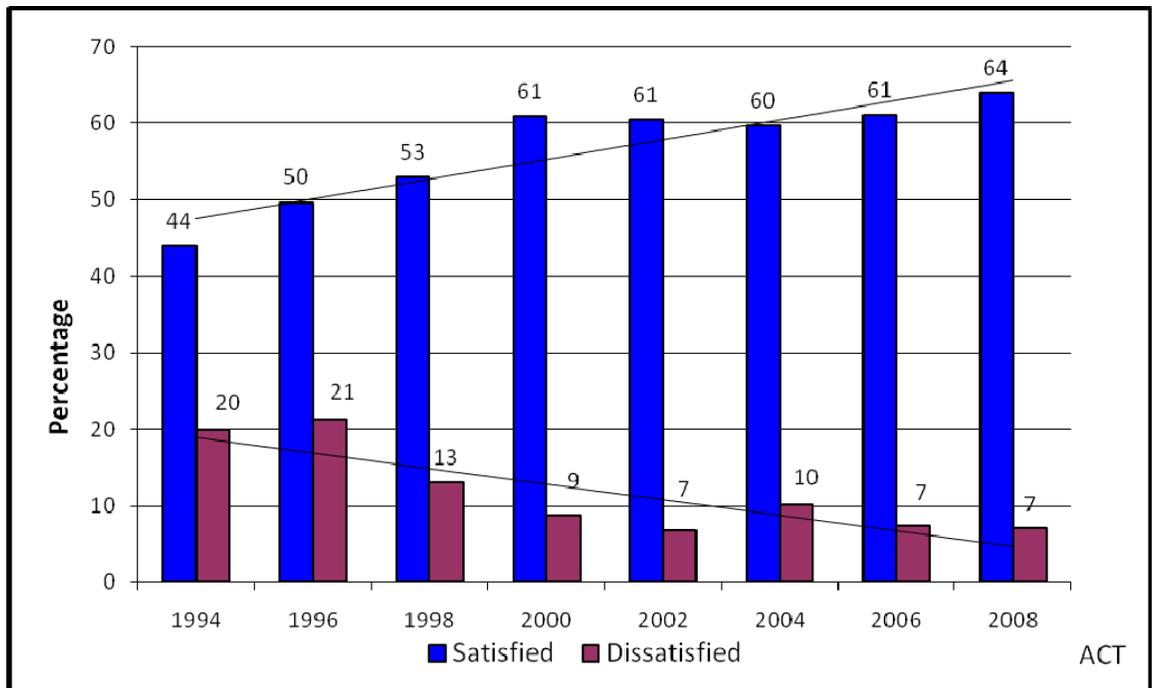
figures. This item receives the second highest levels of dissatisfaction in our surveys (See Table 12).

Comment: Although UW’s figures are not significantly different from national percentages, we should be concerned that one out of every three students finds it difficult to acquire information and believe they receive the “run-around” when they attempt to do so.

Non-Teaching Staff

- Satisfaction with the non-teaching staff has improved over time and is now significantly above the national average (ACT III-35).

Graph 11
Satisfaction with Non-Teaching Staff



Racial Harmony and Tolerance of Diversity

- In terms of racial harmony, there has been an increase in satisfaction since 1994 (ACT III-36 and NL-62) although UW’s figures are not significantly different from national figures. The ACT survey found that 64 percent of students were satisfied with race relations while only 4 percent were dissatisfied. The Noel-Levitz results are much the same.
- When asked to characterize racial tolerance on campus, 63 percent judged it to be closer to “non-racist” while 12 percent characterized it as closer to “racist”(UWSOS-8d). It should be noted that the “non-racist” characterization increased by nine percentage points between 2006 and 2008 (See Table 5).

Table 5
Perception of Racism on Campus 2006-2008

	Percent believing campus climate is non-racist	Percent believing campus climate is racist
2006	54	13
2008	63	12

Because of their small number, it is difficult in a general survey to gauge the attitudes of non-Caucasian students with any statistical reliability. There are simply too few members of any ethnic group other than Caucasians that would allow us to make statistically valid comments. However, one can divide the students into Caucasian and non-Caucasian categories.

Table 6
Perception of Racism on Campus for Caucasians and Non-Caucasians

	Caucasian (%)	Non-Caucasian (%)
Campus environment closer to non-racist	65	53
Campus environment closer to racist	11	21

- Non-Caucasians are almost twice as likely as Caucasians (21% v. 11%) to view the campus environment as “closer to racist.” Still, a majority of non-Caucasians (53%) agree with almost two-thirds of their Caucasian fellow students that the campus environment is “closer to non-racist.”

Comment: It is disconcerting that one in five non-Caucasians view the campus environment as “racist.” This is a perception we must recognize and confront.

- Perceptions of campus attitudes toward gays and lesbians were split with 29 percent who characterized the campus as “homophobic.” Thirty-three percent judged it to be “non-homophobic.” As with the question of race, there was a substantial increase in the “non-homophobic” perception of the campus climate (See Table 7) (UWSOS-8g).

Table 7
Perception of Homophobia on Campus: 2006-2008

	Percent believing campus climate is non-homophobic	Percent believing campus climate is homophobic
2006	27	36
2008	33	29

Comment: That almost three in ten of our students view the campus environment as homophobic is a matter of continuing concern. **During the past decade, the University has made major efforts to make all students and faculty, regardless of their sexual preferences, feel welcome. We have made progress but have a way to go.**

- Twelve percent judged the social climate as “sexist” while 59 percent characterized it as “non-sexist.”(UWSOS-8i)
- Almost 39 percent rated the social climate as “conservative” while 16 percent found it “liberal.” (UWSOS-8e).
- **Overall, 74 percent indicated that the campus climate for diversity was improving vs. 2 percent who thought it was worsening. On an encouraging note, perception of improvement increased considerably between 2006 and 2008 (UWSOS-8m).**

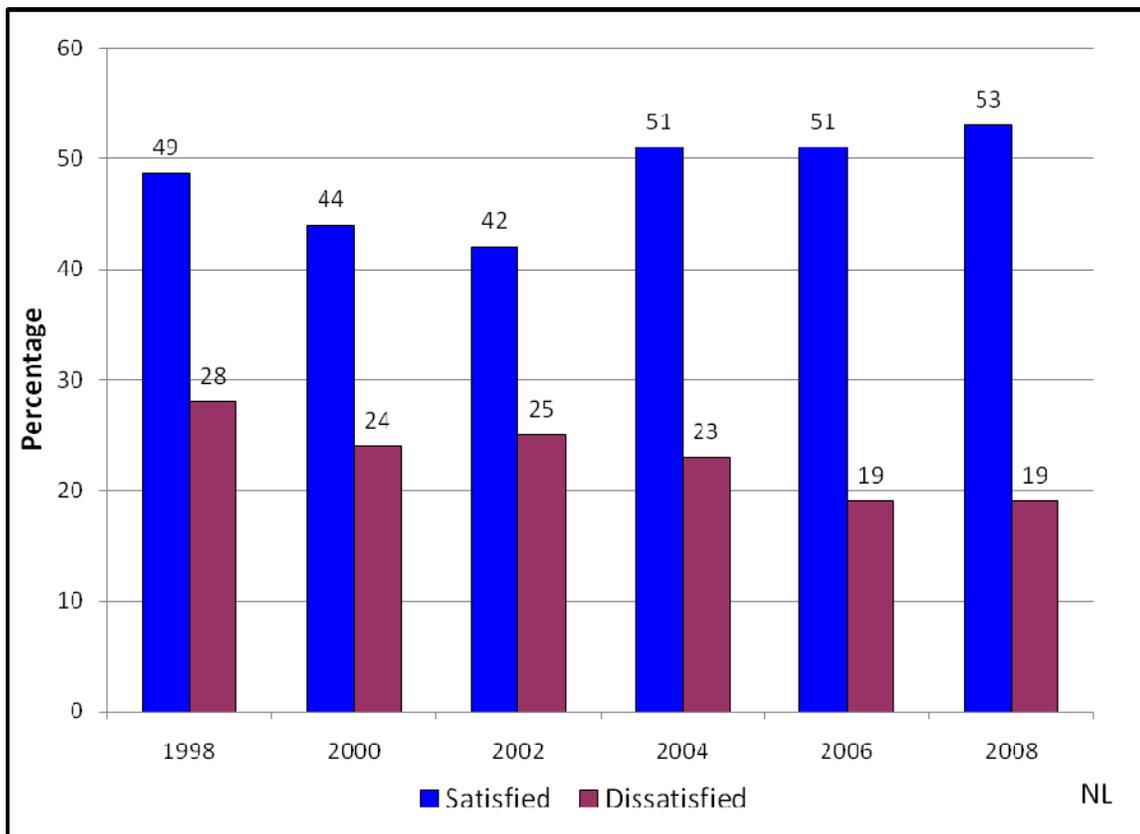
Table 8
Perception of Improvement in Climate of Diversity:
2006-2008

	Percent believing general climate for diversity is improving	Percent believing general climate for diversity is not improving
2006	61	6
2008	74	2

Student Government/Voice in Policy

- UW students have not been particularly positive about their voice in determining UW policies—only 41 percent expressed satisfaction. On the other hand, this is a major increase in satisfaction when compared to 1994 when only 25 percent of our students said they were satisfied (ACT III-16).
- On an even more positive note, when asked about their satisfaction with the availability of channels for expressing student complaints, the mean satisfaction level has increased markedly and is now at the national average (See Graph 12)(NL-71).

Table 12
Channels for Expressing Student Complaints are Readily Available.



- **Between 1994 and 2004, satisfaction with student government hovered at around one-third of the sample. However, in 2006 and 2008 there occurred a substantial increase in satisfaction. In 2008, 49 percent of students indicated satisfaction with student government and only 4 percent said they were dissatisfied (ACT III-39).**
- **Sixty-four percent of students expressed satisfaction with the degree to which UW administrators are approachable—8 percent were dissatisfied (NL-10). These figures are significantly higher than those at the national level.**

The Student Transfer Process

- One-quarter to over 40 percent of transfers express dissatisfaction with some part of the process. Four out of ten students experience difficulty transferring courses into the University Studies Program and nearly 35 percent found it difficult to transfer courses into their majors (UWSOS-12).

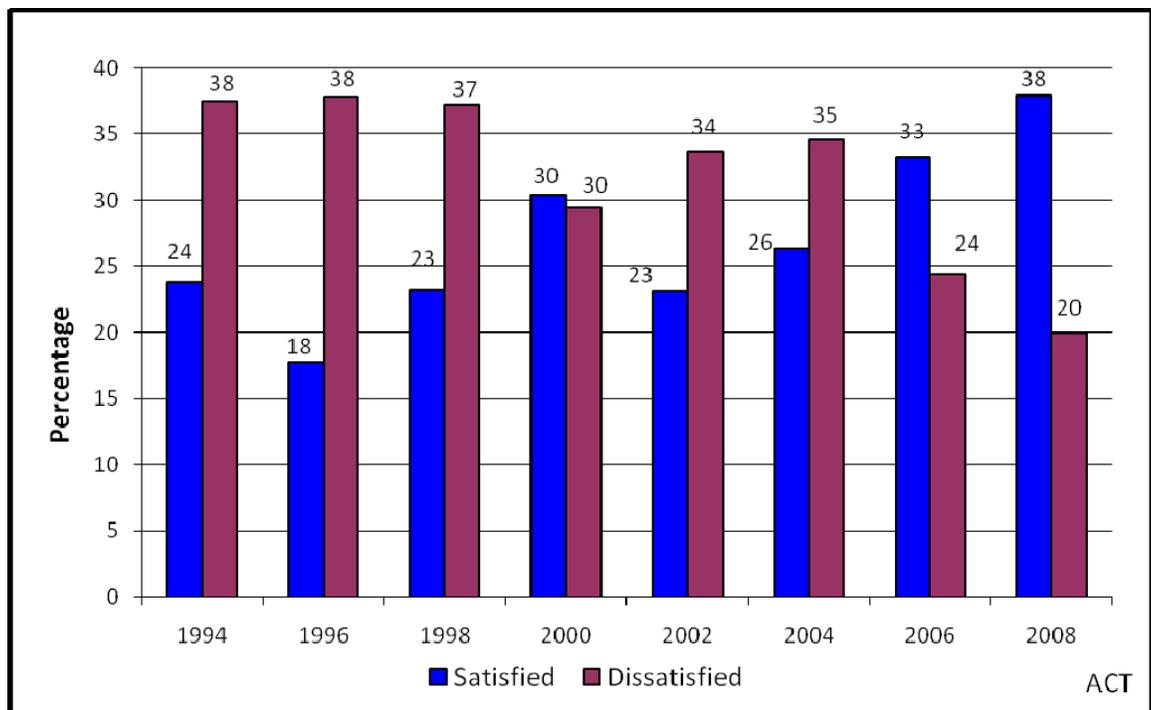
Comment: During the 2006-2007 academic year, UW instituted a number of changes in the transfer process; therefore, it is a bit early to judge whether these modifications will improve satisfaction. Most transfer students

answering the survey would have transferred before those changes took effect. We must, however, continue to monitor our transfer process.

Student Fees

- Satisfaction with the purposes for which student fees are used has varied considerably over the years. In five of eight ACT surveys, those dissatisfied outnumbered the satisfied. However, in 2006 and 2008, those satisfied were in the ascendency (38%) and those dissatisfied were less numerous than at any other time (20%). **It should be noted that UW students are significantly more positive on this item than are students at other public universities (ACT III-20).**

Graph 13
Satisfaction with How Student Fees are Used



VI. Open-ended Likes and Dislikes

As discussed in Section I, students were asked an open-ended question about their likes and dislikes of UW. There were 2,158 positive comments and 1,367 negative comments (students could make multiple comments).

For purposes of discussion, the comments have been classified into about 20 categories each for the “likes” (Table 9, below) and the “dislikes” (Table 10). There was much more clustering of likes than of dislikes. The top five categories of likes each included more than one-sixth of the students responding, whereas only the single most frequent category of dislikes (parking) was mentioned by that large a fraction of respondents. Many of the dislikes appeared to be idiosyncratic to a relatively small number of students; indeed, more than a quarter of the

negative comments could not sensibly be grouped into categories, compared to less than 8% of the positive comments that were left uncategorized. We note, too, that the same attributes cited by many students as among the things they like best about UW were mentioned by other students as things they like least.

Table 9
What Students Like about UW

	Frequency	Percent*
1. Friendly People/Experience /Environment/Atmosphere	451	42.8%
2. Quality of Education / Programs / Courses / Classes	412	39.1%
3. Professors / Faculty / Advisor	298	28.3%
4. Size of Campus / Size of Classes	243	23.0%
5. Affordability	179	17.0%
6. Events / Activities	86	8.2%
7. Beautiful Campus / Scenery / Mountains / Area	61	5.8%
8. Opportunities on Campus and in Laramie	54	5.1%
9. Laramie, Small Town	51	4.8%
10. Outdoor Activities / Recreation	51	4.8%
11. Variety of Courses	45	4.3%
12. Facilities	42	4.0%
13. In Wyoming, West, Location	38	3.6%
14. Near Home / Close to Home	37	3.5%
15. Safe	23	2.2%
16. Climate/Weather	7	0.7%
17. Uncategorized	80	7.6%

*Students making a comment classified in each category, as a percentage of all students making a positive comment. Percentages total more than 100 because some students made comments classified into more than one of the categories.

Some general themes and examples drawn from these two tables:

Likes:

- 1. The answers confirm our reputation as a friendly campus. The top category of things liked best, friendliness, includes almost half of the students who made positive comments.**

Examples: “Everyone at UW is very friendly and down to earth. I have had some amazing classroom experiences, but also through the social activities UW has to offer. I am in a sorority and another club on campus. Both groups are based around agriculture, my career interest, which is not only helping me learn more but also helping with networking.”

“Everyone is always friendly, helpful and fairly accepting of all students.”

“I really enjoyed the laid back, small town atmosphere. Laramie is very supportive of the university and university athletics since I am on an athletic team. I really enjoyed that. Everyone here is very nice.”

“Pleased and surprised by genuine, warm nature of many of my teachers and my advisor.”

- 2. If one were to combine categories 2 and 3, and possibly 11, the most frequent positive comments center upon the quality of education and the faculty, a result one would certainly desire for an institution of higher learning.**

Examples: “I am pleased mostly by the instructors and the level of instruction at UW. The instructors want to work with students. The instructors also let students know about different tutoring programs around UW. The instructors teach at a level that most students understand and will explain more if a student has a question”.

“I have always had great professors that would work with the students. This was very helpful.”

“I love the Theatre department and how close I have become to the students and faculty. I feel like I have grown so much in my field and am fully prepared to go off to grad school and later get a job. I feel like I have received a substantial education.”

- 3. A large percentage of students commented positively about UW’s location (categories 7, 9, 13, 14).**

Examples: “I like the non-humid cold climate.”

“I would say that Laramie is what makes UW so pleasing. The size of Laramie is perfect in my eyes because even though the campus is large I’m not intimidated by the total population which makes me very comfortable.”

“It’s close to home.”

“It’s in Wyoming!”

“I like Laramie and the mountain community.”

- 4. Size was cited positively by a large percentage of students:**

Examples:

“Small campus, small town.”

“Small, safe campus.”

“The small town atmosphere and how agriculture related everything is. The campus is the right size and because there are not a lot of students I can have more interaction with my teachers.”

5. Affordability was also cited by a large percentage of students:

Examples: “Low cost and ease of obtaining financial aid. UW is a bargain.”

“Many aspects of the university have pleased me. The first and foremost is the affordable cost for an equal education comparing the other four schools in the Western region.”

**Table 10
What Students Dislike about UW**

	Frequency	Percent*
1. Parking	208	20.7%
2. Faculty / Professors / Teachers	152	15.1%
3. Cost / Tuition / Money / Price / Expense	112	11.2%
4. Cold Weather / Climate/Wind	111	11.1%
5. Laramie / Small / Isolated / Location / Area	79	7.9%
6. University Studies / Requirements	62	6.2%
7. Admissions / Registration	57	5.7%
8. Advising / Advisors	54	5.4%
9. Financial Aid / Scholarships	48	4.8%
10. Too much Construction	39	3.9%
11. Athletics	36	3.6%
12. Dorms / Dorm Living	32	3.2%
13. Lack of Diversity	27	2.7%
14. Transfer Process	23	2.3%
15. Food	17	1.7%
16. Foreign Teachers / Foreigners	14	1.4%
17. Books / Bookstore	9	0.9%
18. Drinking / Alcoholism	6	0.6%
19. Teaching / Graduates Assistants	6	0.6%
20. Transportation	4	0.4%
21. Lack of Student Involvement	3	0.3%
22. Uncategorized	268	26.7%

*Students making a comment classified in each category, as a percentage of all students making a negative comment. Percentages total more than 100 because some students made comments classified into more than one of the categories.

Dislikes:

1. Not surprisingly, parking dominated the dislike comments.

Examples: “Parking is horrible!”

“Parking sucks!”

“Parking! There is no place to park and parking has made me late for classes not to mention how much we pay to go here and then pay to park. I pay \$10 per week on average just to come to school. Parking should be a student service, not a luxury.”

“Parking. For off-campus students it is extremely difficult to find parking that is near campus.”

2. Dislikes about faculty, advisors and/or graduate assistants (category 2, along with categories 8,16, 19) comprise the next most frequent group of negative comments.

Examples: “I don’t feel like all of the teachers are the best quality, and some need more experience in their area of teaching.”

“All of the foreign teachers who are here to work on research and not to teach. They have a language barrier that makes it difficult for students and don’t put time into their teaching.”

“I don’t like how hard it is to find someone who cares. If I’m struggling in a class and the teacher doesn’t care, and the various help centers don’t care, they expect me to pass or take the class again and maybe that will work. Even having a consistent advisor would be nice.”

“I think some faculty is lazy and not helpful. I also think it is way too liberal.”

3. Location and weather factors were frequently cited.

Examples: “I feel as though Laramie wasn’t the smartest choice to put a college in, mainly because of the bad weather.”

“Being isolated from the rest of the world when the roads close.”

“Honestly, the weather disappoints me the most, but UW has no control over that!”

“I am disappointed in Laramie’s lack of entertainment for college students leaving us to find trouble out of boredom.”

4. Cost and financial aid comprised another substantial group of the negative comments.

Examples: “I do not agree with how they give out scholarships through the university. I received the Trustee’s Scholarship and also a 4-H Scholarship, but instead of being added to the Trustee’s Scholarship the 4-H one was used to fulfill the Trustee’s. If you earned the Scholarship, you should receive the money for it.”

“I hate the amount of money spent on books. I’ve had to pay so much some semesters it’s really overwhelming.”

“It costs too much for the amount I’m getting out of it. There are not enough financial aid opportunities.”

“Rising tuition costs.”

5. **Clearly some students are not happy with the liberal arts approach to a college education, as is evidenced by comments concerning the University Studies program and other comments focused upon classes the students do not believe are essential.**

Examples: “Many courses non-practical education. Things I will never use.”

“Some of my university studies classes were useless and a complete waste to time.”

“Some of the general UW required classes like PE and public speaking. Some students aren’t going to need these things so they shouldn’t have to take them.”

“Some of the graduation requirements that really seem unnecessary such as government, public speaking and language. I am trying to fulfill honors program requirements, Psychology major requirements and pre-med requirements. With classes such as these a lot of time is taken away from an already busy requirement schedule. It will take me 14 years to become an independent licensed child psychiatrist and extra classes make it longer than that because I won’t graduate in 4 years with my requirements.”

VII. Ranking of Most and Least Satisfactory Items

Finally, we have ranked the 145 items in ACT and Noel-Levitz according to their overall averages. Table 11 lists the ten most positive responses and Table 12 lists the ten least positive from Noel-Levitz. Tables 13 and 14 provide the same listings from the ACT survey.

For the most part, the Noel-Levitz rankings replicate previous discussions in this report. However, please note an item not discussed earlier: “This institution has a good reputation within the community.” It is gratifying that our students perceive that UW is well regarded among its constituency.

Of the Noel-Levitz most negative items, parking once again dominates. But what is most interesting about Table 12 is that only the two parking items are significantly below national averages.

Quite surprisingly, on two of the ten items with the lowest UW means (NL-23 and 73), the UW means are nevertheless significantly above the national averages!

Table 11
Noel-Levitz Ten Most Positive Items

26. Computer labs are adequate and accessible.	5.76*
7. The campus is safe and secure for all students.	5.75*
51. This institution has a good reputation within the community.	5.71*
72. On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.	5.68*
39. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.	5.62*
68. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.	5.59
6. My academic advisor is approachable.	5.54*
18. Library resources and services are adequate.	5.54*
33. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.	5.52
9. A variety of intramural activities are offered.	5.51*

* Significantly above the national average of public universities.

Table 12
Noel-Levitz Ten Least Positive Items

21. The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	1.98**
57. I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.	4.32
28. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.	4.56**
23. Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.	4.59*
30. Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.	4.62
71. Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.	4.64
5. Financial aid counselor are helpful.	4.68
73. Student activities fees are put to good use.	4.72*
34. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.	4.72
53. Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.	4.73

* Significantly above the national average of public universities.

** Significantly below the national average.

With the exception of veteran’s benefits and cultural programs, the ACT top ten also reflect previously discussed items. Please note that for nine of the ten, UW’s averages are above the national averages.

On the negative side, parking again leads the way. Here again, however, only two items are significantly below the national average (II-21 and III-41). And for three of the bottom ten, UW’s averages are significantly above the national average!

Table 13
Ten Most Positive ACT Items

II-5	Recreational and Intramural programs and services	4.41*
II-6	Library facilities and services	4.35*
II-22	Veterans services	4.29
II-19	Computer services	4.25*
II-15	Cultural programs	4.22*
III-26	Student union	4.19*
III-7	Class size relative to the type of class	4.19*
II-11	Student employment services	4.13*
II-9	College sponsored tutorial services	4.12*
III-5	Attitude of faculty toward students	4.12*

* Significantly above the national average of public universities.

Table 14
Ten Least Positive ACT Items

II-21	Parking facilities and services	1.92**
III-20	Purpose for which student activity fees are used	3.20*
III-31	Availability of courses you want at times you can take them	3.23*
II-8	Student health insurance program	3.33
III-16	Student voice in college policies	3.34
III-18	Residence hall rules and regulations	3.40*
III-19	Academic probation and suspension policies	3.50
III-39	Student government	3.51
III-34	Concern for you as an individual	3.52
III-41	Campus media (student newspaper, campus radio, etc.)	3.53**

* Significantly above the national average of public universities.

** Significantly below the national average.