

TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
Houston, Texas



ACT Student Opinion Survey: 1996-2009
A National and Institutional Comparison

The Office of Institutional Research
2009

Executive Summary

The student's voice is a very powerful tool for change in higher education. Their voice also serves as a gauge to measure the value of university wide changes. Satisfaction ratings of key areas received the highest means score during this survey period than all prior years. These areas are: *Classroom Facilities, Laboratory Facilities, Class Size Relative to Type of Course, Admissions Procedures, Availability of Financial Aid Prior to Enrolling, Residence Hall Rules & Regulations, General Registration Procedures and Academic Calendar at This University*. Although all of these aforementioned variables fall below the National satisfaction ratings, these improvements are still noteworthy successes at the university level. The *Campus Bookstore* variable was the only survey item that received the lowest satisfaction rating during the most recent survey period, when compared to all prior years.

Fifty percent or more of the 2009 survey population report using such services as *Academic Advising (50%), Library Facilities (64%), Financial Aid (59%), Parking Facilities (54%) and Computer Services (63%)*. Ten percent or less of the survey population indicated they use such services as *Student Health Insurance Program (10%), Credit-By-Examination Programs (8%), Veteran's*

Services (7%), and Day Care Services (6%).

In comparing the current year's survey responses with the initial survey distribution in 1996 and again comparing responses at the midpoint of the survey distribution, in 2003, several survey items have not yielded any statistically significant changes throughout the years. These variables and their 2009 satisfaction ratings are: *Academic Advising Services (3.63), Personal Counseling Services (3.60), Job Placement Services (3.47), Student Health Insurance Program (3.44), Student Employment Services (3.51), Residence Halls Services (3.09), Food Services (3.35), Cultural Programs (3.68), Credit-By-Examination Program (3.51), Honors Program (3.95), College Mass Transit (3.24), Variety of Courses Offered (3.45), Rules Governing Student Conflict (3.42), Academic Probation & Suspension Policies (3.39), Personal Security/Safety at This College (3.18), Laboratory Facilities (3.35), Study Areas (3.43), Student Union (3.29), Availability of Courses You Want at Times You Can Take Them (3.01), and Academic Calendar (3.59)*. This indicates that the student's satisfaction level with these variables has remained somewhat constant throughout the years.

Level Of Satisfaction



1-Very Dissatisfied 2-Dissatisfied 3-Neutral 4-Satisfied 5-Very Satisfied

Survey Background

Texas Southern University's (TSU) Office of Institutional Research administers the Student Opinion Survey each Spring semester. The survey is administered to all classifications of students and is designed to assess student usage rate and mean satisfaction score of various services provided by the university. The survey also provides insight concerning student's satisfaction with the college environment. The college environment is measured from these specific areas:

- Academic
- Admissions
- Rules & Regulation
- Facilities
- Registration
- General

The satisfaction scale for the survey is measured as followed:

- 1=Very Dissatisfied
- 2=Dissatisfied
- 3=Neutral
- 4=Satisfied
- 5=Very Satisfied

Relevance of Survey Results

TSU survey data is an essential component of university planning and functioning. This report presents the survey results from a 13 year longitudinal perspective. The Office of Institutional Research serves as a channel through which valuable information is transmitted from the students to the university administration. The survey analysis is perhaps even more essential because of TSU's unique status among other higher institution agencies. Although TSU is a 4-year public institution, it is also considered an open admissions university. Therefore, when comparisons are made between TSU and other populations these considerations must be taken into account. It is this unique position of the university that not only grasps the attention of university administrator's, but external entities as well. In 2008 American College Testing (ACT) contacted the TSU's Office of Institutional Research to conduct a Case Study to determine how the survey results have assisted in university planning (see [Appendix A](#)).

It is essential that when reviewing survey results that TSU not only be compared with the National and other Public Institution data, but a self-study must also be performed. This form of internal evaluation allows the university to determine how the campus-wide changes have impacted the student's perspectives throughout the years. The survey results for the percent usage and all means scores variables for all TSU populations as well as the most current survey data for the Public Colleges and National populations are included in [Appendix B](#).

Overview of Demographics: TSU, Other Public Colleges & National Comparison

During the Spring 2009 semester 1,030 Texas Southern University students completed the Student Opinion Survey. This represents 12% of the total student population. The

exact figures as well as other relevant demographic variables are included in Table 1. The 2009 survey population sufficiently resembles the total population in most of the demographic variables. The most underrepresented population is the part-time students; therefore the survey results are more associated with a full-time student's perspective than a part-time student.

Table 1. Demographics

Variable	TSU Actual Population	TSU Survey Population	Public Colleges	National
	Percent			
Age				
20 or Under	20	22	37	44
21-22	18	22	26	25
23 or Over	62	56	36	29
Missing Data	-	<1	2	2
Gender				
Male	41	44	38	38
Female	59	56	61	60
Missing Data	-	<1	2	2
Enrollment Status				
Full-time	74	92	89	91
Part-time	26	7	10	8
Missing Data	-	1	1	1
Ethnicity				
African-American	85	79	20	15
Caucasian	3	3	63	66
Asian	5	5	3	3
Latino/Hispanic	4	5	5	6
Other	3	5	4	4
Missing Data/ Prefer Not to Respond	-	3	5	6
Classification				
Freshmen/Sophomore	42	30	38	45
Junior/Senior	35	50	52	47
Graduate/Professional	23	18	8	6
Special Student/Other	-	1	1	1
Missing Data/ Does Not Apply	-	1	1	1
Total N	8,513	1,030	47,341	92,767

Other notable survey and total population distinctions should be considered in reference to the classification variable. Collectively, the survey population was composed of 80% undergraduates and 19% graduate/ professional students. The TSU total population was composed of 77% undergraduates and 23% graduate/professional students. However, the survey population of freshmen/sophomore was composed of 30%, while the total population was composed of 42 percent. This infers that the survey results are more reflective of students that are upper-class as opposed to first or second year students.

Table 1 also table displays that TSU has more similarity in comparison to other Public College and the Nation in such variables as enrollment status and gender. All populations are represented by majority female and most surveyed students were enrolled full-time. Distinct differences are displayed in the ethnicity, age and classification variables. TSU's population is composed of 79% African American, while the other Public colleges (20%) and the Nation (15%) reflected significantly fewer. Another distinction is that the TSU's population is composed of older students. Twenty-two percent of the TSU population is 20 years old or younger, while the Public College and National percentages are clearly higher, 37% and 44% respectively.

Key Findings: Percent Usage of Services-TSU & National Comparison

The percent usage portion of the survey requests that the students indicate if they “Have Used” specific services offered by university. Interestingly, in comparison to the National population, TSU has a larger percent of students that use such services as *Personal Counseling* (+4%), *Career Planning* (+9%), *Job Placement* (+10%) and *College-sponsored Tutorial Services* (+6%). These survey results can perhaps best be explained

by the fact that TSU has historically enrolled many nontraditional students, who would have a greater need for the aforementioned services. In reference to TSU having percent usage scores below the National percentages the survey results again highlights some interesting findings. The TSU population yielded lower percentages in usage of services such as *Residence Hall* (-24%), *Food Service* (-23%) and *Parking Facilities* (-15%). It is likely that these survey findings are associated with the fact that TSU enrolls a high number of students that are commuters. Students that fall into this category are less likely to actively seek to use these services. Another interesting finding is that a lower percentage (-15%) of TSU students reported using *Academic Advising Services*. This could be attributed to the aforementioned age and classification disparity between the populations. Perhaps the younger students surveyed by the Nation are actively more in need of academic advising in comparison to the TSU population. This survey finding definitely warrants further investigation to better determine the source of the disparity.

Key Findings: Percent Usage of Services-TSU Institutional Comparison

In comparison to the 1996 population, students surveyed in 2009 reported a higher percent usages of such services as *Career-planning* (+8%), *Recreational and Intramural Programs* (+13) and *Student Health Services* (+8%). Throughout the years there have been enhancements made to the health and career placement centers. Additionally, a student Recreation and Wellness Center has been built during this period. These university changes are reflected in the reported increase in usage.

Students surveyed in 2009 reported a decrease (-13%) in percent usage of *Library Facilities* when compared with the 1996 population. Throughout this period of review there has been an increase in online technologies. Students now have the ability to access

many online journals, periodicals and the like through the Internet. Additionally, TSU has expanded in the number of computer labs beyond the library, which provides students with other locations of using computer services to complete academic projects. The 1996 to 2009 increase in *Computer Services* usage (+5%) further supports this conclusion.

Key Findings: Noteworthy Percent Usage Fluctuations

As previously mentioned, a lower percent (-15%) of TSU students use *Academic Advising Services* when compared to the National population. In considering this same service from an institutional perspective there has been some variability throughout the years. Although the 1996 population reported similar percent usage as the 2009 population, 55% and 54% respectively, there were more salient differences in the interim years. During the first 5 years of the survey distribution, 50% or more students reported using *Academic Advising Services*. During the majority of the years that followed just under 50% of the population used this service. This is most likely due to the technological advancements that allow students to register for classes online. Previously, the student would be required to consult an advisor to register for courses. However, in 2002-03 academic year students began using online registration services. The usage of *Academic Advising Services* decreased from 55% in 1996 to 47% in 2003.

Another variable that has shown significant changes is the percent usage of college mass transit services. In 2005 the *Tiger Express* was introduced at TSU. This shuttle service provided transportation to students around the campus and the surrounding residence halls. The use of this *College Mass Transit Service* was clearly reflected in the survey responses. During the 1996 to 2004 only 7% or less of the students reported using this service. The percent usage escalated quickly in 2005 to 27 percent. The percent usage

peaked at 30% in 2007. However, by the following survey period in Spring 2008 this service was no longer available, due to funding restraints. In 2008 the percent usage decreased (-17%) to 13 percent.

Key Findings: Satisfaction of University Services-TSU, Public Colleges & National Comparison

Texas Southern University’s survey population was more satisfied in three types of services offered at the University when compared to the Nation. These areas were *Student Health Insurance Program, Honors Program and Food Services*. The mean scores and differences are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Top Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Nation & Public Colleges

Top 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on National Comparison)	TSU 2009		Public Colleges -v- TSU		National -v- TSU	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	
Student Health Insurance Program	3.44	3.36	+.08	3.36	+.08	
Honors Program	3.95	3.95	0.0	3.90	+.05	
Food Services	3.35	3.45	-.10	3.32	+.03	
Student Health Service	3.72	3.78	-.06	3.75	-.03	
Parking Facilities	2.57	2.52	+.05	2.66	-.09	

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

The largest mean difference scores between the National and TSU were reflected in the *Computer Services, Veteran’s Services, Library Facilities, Day Care Services and College Mass Transit Service* variables. These score reveal that National and Other Public College students surveyed were more satisfied with these services at their local schools (Table 3.)

Table 3. Bottom Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Nation & Public Colleges

Bottom 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on National Comparison)	TSU 2009	Public Colleges -v- TSU		National -v- TSU	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Computer Services	3.28	4.02	-.74	3.91	-.63
Veteran's Services	3.29	3.97	-.68	3.80	-.51
Library Facilities	3.57	4.13	-.56	4.06	-.49
Day Care	3.16	3.72	-.56	3.63	-.47
College Mass Transit	3.24	3.66	-.42	3.67	-.43

**Mean difference scores with a "+" indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

Key Findings: Satisfaction of University Services -TSU Institutional Comparison

The largest areas of improvements throughout the years at TSU were *Financial Aid Services, Student Employment Services, Student Health Insurance Program, Food Services* and *Honors Program*. In particular, the *Student Health Insurance, Program Food Services* and *Honors Program* were also rated higher than the Nation scores, which clearly indicate that these are the current services at TSU that are most satisfactory to the student body. Table 4 displays the means scores and the differences associated with each.

Table 4. Top Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Prior Years

Top 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on TSU 1996 Comparison)	TSU 2009	TSU 2003 -v- TSU 2009		TSU 1996 -v- TSU 2009	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Financial Aid Services	3.43	3.53	-.10	2.59	+.84
Student Employment Services	3.51	3.48	+.03	3.04	+.47
Student Health Insurance Program	3.44	3.44	.00	3.04	+.40
Food Services	3.35	3.45	-.10	3.12	+.23
Honors Program	3.95	3.98	-.03	3.73	+.22

**Mean difference scores with a "+" indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

The satisfaction level decreases in service areas are displayed in the Table 5. The 1996 population was more satisfied with the following areas: *Computer Services, Credit-By-Examination Programs, Veteran’s Services, Cultural Programs* and *College Sponsored Tutorial Services*. Interestingly, the *Computer Services* and *Veteran’s Services* areas were also rated least favorable in the National comparison. This consistency shows that student’s are least satisfied with these service areas.

Table 5. Bottom Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Prior Years

Bottom 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on TSU 1996 Comparison)	TSU 2009	TSU 2003 -v- TSU 2009		TSU 1996 -v- TSU 2009	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Computer Services	3.28	3.41	-.13	3.60	-.32
Credit-By-Examination Programs	3.51	3.82	-.31	3.72	-.21
Veteran’s Services	3.29	3.27	+.02	3.49	-.20
Cultural Programs	3.68	3.88	-.20	3.81	-.13
College Sponsored Tutorial Services	3.67	3.79	-.12	3.78	-.11

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

Key Findings: Satisfaction of University Environment-TSU, Public Colleges & National Comparison

The *College Environment* comparison yielded more distinct satisfaction ratings than the previously discussed *College Services* portion of the survey. *College Services* satisfaction ratings of the TSU population exceeded the scores of the Nation in three categories. The *College Environment* satisfaction scores of the TSU population were consistently lower than the National scores, with the exception of one variable (*Residence Halls Rules & Regulations*) that was equivalent to the National rating. The top rated variables as well as the scores are included in Table 6. The least amount of variation between TSU & the

Nation was in the following variables: *Rules Governing Student Conflict at School*, *Racial Harmony At This College*, *Course Content In Your Major Field*, and *Flexibility To Design Your Own Program of Study*.

Table 6. Top Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Nation & Public Colleges

Top 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on National Comparison)	TSU 2009	Public Colleges -v- TSU		National -v- TSU	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Residence Halls Rules & Regulations	3.26	3.25	+.01	3.26	.00
Rules Governing Student Conflict at School	3.42	3.53	-.11	3.49	-.07
Racial Harmony At This College	3.69	3.74	-.05	3.77	-.08
Course Content In Your Major Field	3.84	3.93	-.09	3.95	-.11
Flexibility To Design Your Own Program of Study	3.48	3.60	-.12	3.61	-.13

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

The data clearly shows that TSU students are not satisfied with the *Campus Bookstore*. Not only does this survey item have the largest distinction when compared with the National rating, but it also received the lowest mean score in survey history during the 2009 survey period. Also it is interesting that two of the bottom rated items relate to the manner in which faculty and staff interact with students. In comparison to the Nation, TSU students are much less satisfied with the *Attitude of Faculty* and the *Attitude of College Nonteaching Staff Toward Students*. Table 7 displays the remaining bottom rated variables.

Table 7. Bottom Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Nation & Public Colleges

Bottom 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on National Comparison)	TSU 2009	Public Colleges -v- TSU		National -v- TSU	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Campus Bookstore	2.91	3.65	-.74	3.60	-.69
General Conditions of Buildings & Grounds	3.01	3.60	-.59	3.65	-.64
Personal Security & Safety at College	3.18	3.67	-.49	3.73	-.55
Attitude of Faculty Towards Students	3.54	3.96	-.42	4.05	-.51
Attitude of College Nonteaching Staff Toward Students	3.21	3.60	-.39	3.70	-.49

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

Key Findings: Satisfaction of University Environment -TSU Institutional Comparison

The most favorable results of the satisfactions rating of the TSU population yield very distinct improvements. All of the variables included in the Top 5 means difference scores are included in the Enrollment Services division. During the initial survey period, none of these areas received a satisfaction rating above 3.0, but all scores have since surpassed this midpoint. Overall, student’s satisfaction ratings have changed most regarding the *General Registration Procedures*.

Table 8. Top Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Prior Years

Top 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on TSU 1996 Comparison)	TSU 2009	TSU 2003 -v- TSU 2009		TSU 1996 -v- TSU 2009	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
General Registration Procedures	3.34	3.18	+.16	2.04	+1.30
Availability of Financial Aid Info Prior to Enrolling	3.47	3.44	+.03	2.64	+.83
Billing & Fee Payment Procedures	3.23	3.24	-.01	2.51	+.72
General Admissions Procedures	3.54	3.48	+.06	2.97	+.57
Accuracy of College Information you Received Before Enrolling	3.44	3.43	+.01	2.89	+.55

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

Students surveyed in 1996 were more satisfied with the *Campus Bookstore* and the *Academic Probation & Suspension Policies*. Many of the remaining variables that reveal the least favorable changes throughout the years actually yielded mean scores that were higher in 2009 than in the 1996 population. These scores represent the variables that had the least amount of change in satisfaction rating throughout the years.

Table 9. Top Rated TSU Mean Scores Compared With Prior Years

Bottom 5 Mean Difference Scores* (Based on TSU 1996 Comparison)	TSU 2009	TSU 2003 -v- TSU 2009		TSU 1996 -v- TSU 2009	
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Diff.	Mean Score	Mean Diff.
Campus Bookstore	2.91	3.17	-.26	3.04	-.13
Academic Probation & Suspension Policies	3.39	3.41	-.02	3.41	-.02
Value of the Information Provided by Your Advisor	3.63	3.59	+.04	3.54	+.09
Availability of Your Advisor	3.57	3.55	+.02	3.46	+.11
Availability of Student Housing	3.07	2.99	+.08	2.94	+.13
Religious Activities & Programs	3.32	3.29	+.03	3.19	+.13

**Mean difference scores with a “+” indicate that the 2009 TSU population was more satisfied than the comparison group.*

Summary

Throughout all years of the survey distribution most students report using services such as *Academic Advising, Library Facilities, Financial Aid, Parking Facilities* and *Computer Services*. Conversely, a minimal portion of the survey population indicated using services such as *Student Health Insurance Program, Credit-By-Examination, Veteran's Affairs* and *Day Care Services*. TSU students yielded higher satisfaction ratings than National level students in the areas of *Student Health Insurance Program, Honors Program* and *Food Services*. As noted, only 10% of the TSU population indicated usage of *Student Health Insurance Program*. It would be of interest to determine if the low participation in this program is due to a lack of student need or a lack of student awareness. The *Honors Program* has shown some variations throughout the years in the percent of students using the program's services. However, in the 2009 period 19% of the survey population indicated that they use this service, which was the highest percent in survey history. In regards to TSU's *Food Services* 40% of the student population indicated using these services. This increase in usage throughout the years can be contributed to the increase in food options on-campus throughout the years. Although the 2009 satisfaction rating (3.35) is not as high as some prior years, the mean score did exceed the national population's rating.

TSU students are most satisfied with *Academic* services provided by the university. This portion of the survey gauges satisfactions with most services that are available at the academic department level. This includes such variables as course content, instruction, variety of courses offered, academic advisor availability and class size relative to course type. Students have expressed the least satisfaction with services associated with *Rules & Policies* and *Facilities*. Survey items within the *Rules & Policies*

include variables such as use of student activity fees, on-campus personal security, and academic probation/suspension policies. The *Facilities* component of the survey measures satisfaction with variables such as student housing availability, building and grounds conditions and the campus bookstore.

Table 10. College Environment Categories: TSU All Years

	Rules					
	Academic	Admissions	& Policies	Facilities	Registration	General
<i>Number of Respondents</i>	16119	18037	11353	11053	18676	13469
<i>Missing/No Response</i>	4937	3019	9703	10003	2380	7587
<i>Mean Satisfaction Rating</i>	3.6037	3.3547	3.1869	3.1895	3.1536	3.2995

Conclusion

Students have taken note of changes that have occurred at the university. In some instances these changes were received favorably, such as in the case of Enrollment Services. This area includes offices such as Admissions, Financial Aid and Registrar. In 1996 the *General Registration Procedures* variable received a satisfaction rating of 2.04, this mean increase to 3.34 in 2009, which is a statistically significant increase.

Statistically significant increases were also present in the *General Admissions Procedures* and *Availability of Information Financial Aid Information Prior to Enrolling* variables. It is very likely that a combination of factors have led to the increase in satisfaction with these areas. One prominent enhancement is due to technological advances. Many of the admissions, financial aid and registration functions are now completed online. In addition to these enhancements Enrollment Services has also improved their method of sharing

information with students. Some of the improvements throughout the years include the institution of a call center to address student questions or make referrals, placement of computers in the areas near these offices so that online student needs can be met immediately. Furthermore, these offices actively submit emails to students informing them of any additionally needed documents and/or to inform students of their application progress. These areas have also made a concerted effort to make deadlines easily visible by posting info on the website and creating pop-up reminders that appear when student login to their student accounts. It is apparent that this sharing and initiation of communication with students has led to the increase in satisfaction throughout the years.

Some visible campus wide changes have not been well received by students. TSU has undergone a beautification project, which included the alteration of the landscaping, repavement of bricked areas, and the addition of lighting and benches on campus. The variable that measures the student's satisfaction of the *General Conditions of Buildings & Grounds* has frequently been rated below the neutral level (3.0). The satisfaction of this variable minimally exceeded the 3.0 level in only three of the thirteen years of survey distribution. When the *General Conditions of Buildings & Grounds* variable is considered with another survey item, *Classroom Facilities*, it gives a more precise understanding of the buildings the student's are least satisfied with. The students have indicated a significant increase in satisfaction with *Classroom Facilities*. The means satisfaction rating of the 1996 population was 3.15, but this means score increased to 3.51 in the 2009 period. Therefore, the additions of the new Sciences & Technology building and the Public Affairs building have been agents in the increase of student satisfaction with *Classroom Facilities*. It is likely that the student's low degree of satisfaction of *General Conditions of Buildings & Grounds* refers to non-academic buildings, such as the library,

residence halls, student center/bookstore, etc. It is also likely that the *General Conditions of Buildings & Grounds* is more heavily weighted by “grounds” portion of this survey item.

Additional campus wide enhancements include the instillation of security/emergency call boxes on campus and video surveillance cameras. However, the survey item *Personal Security & Safety on Campus* has also failed to show any significant increases throughout the years.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this comprehensive evaluation the following recommendations are suggested to improve student satisfaction. The university should:

- Conduct focus group with students to determine what needs are not being met concerning personal security & safety on campus
- Reassess the university budget to determine if funds can be allocated for a college mass transit system
- Be transparent and share information regarding the purpose and use of student activity fees using practical examples
- Improve the visibility of the offerings of the student health insurance program and credit-by-examination program
- Create additional course sections during nonconventional times of day to increase enrollment options for students
- Survey students to determine what their suggestions are in reference to campus beautification

- Establish a pipeline between the career planning, student employment and job placement services offered
- Increase the number of cultural programs on campus to accommodate the increase in student diversity

[Appendix A](#)

[Appendix B](#)