

Category 3 – Student, Stakeholder and Market Focus

3.1 Student, Stakeholder and Market Knowledge

a. Student, Stakeholder and Market Knowledge

3.1a(1) Market segments are both historical and emerging. Emerging markets include e-learning, certificate programs and programs in the niche areas of nursing and allied health, technology, business and liberal arts. Students enrolling at the College typically come from within a 50-mile radius of campus. Direct competitors were identified in the Organizational Profile P.2a(1). RCTC also has a growing distance education enrollment currently accounting for 7.0% of total headcount (5.2% in FY2004 and 3.9% in FY2003). In the fall of 2004, the College was the fifth largest generator of online credits sold.

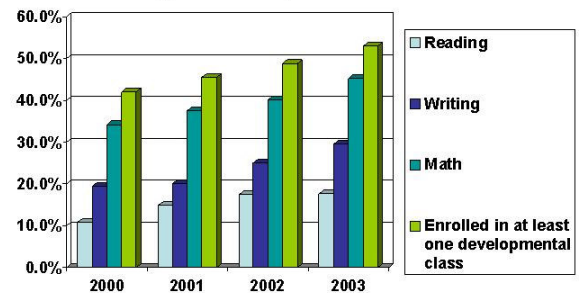
Thirteen key customer segments have been identified (Figure 3.1-1). Students age 18-21 account for nearly 40% of the College’s enrollment base. This group is primarily full-time day students. Demographic shifts and the changing nature of the economy have opened newer markets in recent years. This includes workforce learners, prior college and transfer learners. These segments seek to upgrade, retrain, or enhance their careers. Pre-college learners account for 6.3% of total enrollment. These Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) learners seek a “jump start” on their college education. This market has evolved as high school students and their parents have sought more choices. A unique education-fund recapturing method, developed at RCTC, has made the PSEO an attractive option for students and K-12 partners. This model has proven so successful that other colleges around the state are using RCTC as a model for promoting PSEO in their markets.

As the College brands younger and younger students, more programming like “College for Kids” has been developed and targeted at youth. The goal is to make the campus a destination site for education, recreation, cultural, and social activity. Bringing area youth to campus is a competitive strategy to build awareness and familiarity, given the leveling off of the traditional-age college population in the Rochester area. Workforce development initiatives target key employers and sectors seeking “just-in-time” training. An indication of the growing demand for workforce development initiatives is the 500% increase in the number of students taking non-credit courses.

Increasingly, students come under-prepared. The number and percentage of learners requiring developmental or remedial coursework has steadily increased (Figure 3.1-2). Of all Minnesota high school graduates enrolling at RCTC within two years of graduation, 42.1% of them enrolled in at

least one developmental course in 2000. Fifty-three percent enrolled in at least one developmental course in 2003. These numbers are almost identical for all MnSCU two-year colleges.

MN High School Graduates Enrolled Within Two Years After Graduation Needing Developmental Courses



Source: MnSCU Office of the Chancellor Research and Planning

Figure 3.1-2 Developmental Course Trends

According to projections from the State Demographer’s Office, the population of high school aged persons in the region will decrease 6.6% between 2005 and 2010. Because of this decrease in RCTC’s core student segment, marketing and enrollment management strategies are seeking to increase the market share of area high schools as well as exploring new populations to target RCTC’s services. Currently, RCTC’s market share of Rochester high school graduates is 25% and 17% in the surrounding market. An Enrollment Management Taskforce has been created and established a working set of principles guiding its actions in managing its enrollment. Besides focusing on key learner segments, RCTC actively includes a broad array of stakeholders and partners in its decision-making process. Figure 3.1-3 lists the key stakeholder and partner groups included in a recent (Fall 2004) Survey of Stakeholders to determine the community’s knowledge, awareness, needs, and priorities for RCTC. Results of this survey were disaggregated by the various stakeholder groups to better see their different needs and priorities. For example, it was determined that Business Leaders had very similar responses to Civic Leaders, but very different responses from RCTC alumni.

3.1a(2) RCTC conducts both internal and external assessments to determine current and future needs and expectations of its key stakeholders. Included in the long list of self-assessments are: the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, Campus Quality Survey, the SNG Knowledge & Awareness Survey, MnSCU Economic Impact Study, Student Evaluation of Teaching, Stakeholders Survey, Lost Inquiries/Lost Applicants surveys, other in-house surveys evaluating present and future policy decisions, staff development programming, etc. Survey results are available online through the RCTC intranet.

Student Market Segment	Segment Description	Core Requirements
High School Graduates and Young Adults	Persons 18-24 seeking a degree	Financial aid, few registration conflicts, early notification of poor performance, parking
Employed Learners	Persons 25-44 seeking a degree	Financial aid, few registration conflicts knowledgeable advisors, approachable advisors
Prior College Learners	Persons with prior college experience	Credit transferability
Workforce Learners	Persons employed taking customized training offered by their employer	Registration personnel are helpful, program requirements are clear and reasonable, relevant content, course materials exercises and activities enhanced learning experience
Transfer Learners	Persons enrolling with the specific goal to transfer to a four-year institution	Adequate financial aid, knowledgeable academic advisors, few registration conflicts, fair and unbiased faculty
Pre-College (PSEO) Learners	High school students taking college-level courses	Fair and unbiased faculty, parking, few registration conflicts, library resources are adequate
Life Fulfillment Learners	People seeking education for personal development or enrichment.	Availability of faculty, variety of courses, students made to feel welcome on campus, library resources are adequate, fair and unbiased faculty
Employers/ Organizational Learners	Business, industry or community groups seeking customized or contract training	Quick response to requests, delivery timelines met, organization needs, flexibility Satisfaction with solution, value for investment
Young Learners	Persons participating in programs targeted at youth of the community.	Organized programs, an enriching classroom experience, value for tuition, access to catalog information on the web, timely communications
Reverse Credential Learners	Persons with advanced degrees seeking education and training	Classes scheduled at convenient times
Development-al Learners (underprepared)	Persons taking courses to prepare for college (remedial, ESL)	College preparation and readiness, access to academic support services
Online Learners	Persons taking courses exclusively over the internet	Convenience, accredited programs
Non-Degree Seeking	Persons who enter the College to take classes with no goal of degree completion	Quality instruction, knowledgeable faculty, can register with few conflicts, scheduling convenience, library resources and services are adequate, safe and secure campus, fair and unbiased faculty, and faculty availability after class.

Figure 3.1-1 Market Segments and Requirements

Stakeholder Segment	Core Requirements
Business and Non-Profit Leaders	UCR collaboration, invest in excellent and diverse staff, avoid duplication
Civic Leaders	UCR collaboration, invest in excellent and diverse staff, minimize tuition increases
Advisory and Advocacy Groups (i.e., GRAUC, UCR Council)	UCR collaboration, invest in excellent and diverse staff, avoid duplication
RCTC Faculty, Staff, & Admin.	Invest in excellent and diverse staff, minimize tuition increases, UCR collaboration
RCTC Foundation Board	UCR collaboration, avoid duplication, invest in excellent and diverse faculty & staff
Alumni and Friends of RCTC	Invest in excellent and diverse staff, UCR collaboration, avoid duplication
RCTC Donors	Collaboration with UCR partners, invest in excellent and diverse staff, minimize tuition increases
RCTC Students	See figure 3.1-6 for list of common requirements for all students
UCR and other Higher Education Partners	Lower division undergrad courses, compliance with MN transfer curriculum, facility
K-12 Districts	Effective communication, provider of unique technical educational opportunities
Citizens	
Business and Industry	
MnSCU Board of Trustees and the Office of the Chancellor and other Minnesota Governmental Agencies	Accurate and up-to-date information, timely reporting, adherence to state law and system policies/ procedures
Economic and Community Development Organizations	Workforce training, small business development center expertise, economic development partner

Figure 3.1-3 Key Stakeholder and Partner Segments and Requirements

The College has established a Learner Life-Cycle (LLC), which outlines key phases of the students' experience at the College (Figure 3.1-4). The LLC has five stages: awareness, inquiry, application, enroll and advancement. Listening and learning approaches (Figure 3.1-5) are diverse and capture data and information driving continuous improvement plans.

Awareness Phase: This phase represents all the activities serving to enhance brand equity, the image, and top of mind awareness among target market segments for the College. This includes creative development, image and brand management, advertising, market research, market planning, recruiting and outreach, communications and event management.

Inquiry Phase: The Inquiry Phase is the point at which a prospect initiates contact with the College for the purpose of requesting information. All activities are aimed at converting interest to an application. This includes inquiry management, campus visit programs, data and information management (Recruitment Plus) and designing traditional and electronic communications.

Application Phase: The Application Phase represents all activities that begin once an inquiry applies to the College. The goal of this phase is to convert the applicant to an enrolled student. Activities include admissions, registration, advising, counseling, orientation, data management, assessment/placement, financial aid, and communications with applicants from point of application to actual matriculation.

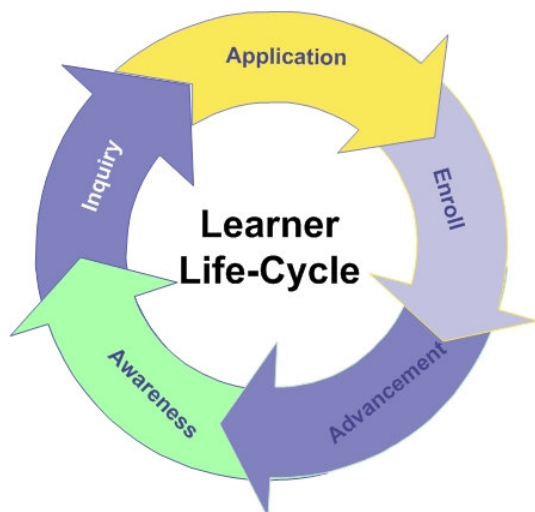


Figure 3.1-4 Learner Life Cycle

Enroll Phase: The Enroll Phase goal is student success. During this phase the goal is to help the student achieve their intended educational goal. Activities include registration, counseling, advising, business management, retention, student life, teaching and learning, assessment,

data and information management, communications, and other key activities supporting the student. Student goals include degree/certificate/diploma completion, transfer, job placement, career enhancement, lifelong learning, etc.

Advancement Phase: The Advancement Phase focuses on lifelong and continuing success for the student and the College establishing loyalty. Activities include transfer, articulation, workforce and continuing education, alumni development, institutional advancement, economic development, communications, etc.

3.1a(3) Listening and learning approaches are reviewed continuously in efforts to improve participation rates, reduce intrusions related to survey administration and better utilize technology. RCTC periodically updates its mission, values, and goals. Key Performance Indicators and Core Measures are reexamined to determine how effective they are as quality measurements. Decisions are made regarding whether to add new measures, change existing measures, or drop measures entirely. Decisions are also made regarding what performance targets should be set for those measures.

To better inform such decisions, RCTC conducts a wide variety of research to listen and learn from key customer, student, stakeholder, and partner segments. These listening and learning tools identify student needs, expectations and satisfaction throughout the LLC. One such tool is the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). RCTC students have participated in the SSI annually since 1998, so there is a wealth of longitudinal data to put yearly results in their proper context. The SSI provides data on student needs, expectations and satisfaction. The aggregated data is further segmented by targeted populations using different demographic variables to understand differences in needs and expectations within the College's diverse population of learners. The 2004 SSI revealed the following needs and expectations for all students (Figure 3.1-6). The SSI asks students to rate 70 items as to their importance. Data is segmented by demographic subgroups to examine key differences. For example, in Figure non-degree students (making up roughly 10% of the survey sample) share many of the same priorities as the campus as a whole. The differences in priorities indicates that non-degree students tend to be on campus during the evening (the desire for well-lit parking lots) and want on-campus resources to meet their immediate needs (library resources are adequate). Other listening and learning approaches are qualitative in nature and include focus groups and meetings. Information flows into the IPP as key performance indicators and core measures to support program and department continuous improvement planning.

Student Needs and Expectations Ranked in Order of Importance	
1.	The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
2.	Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me
3.	Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
4.	I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
5.	Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
6.	There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
7.	The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
8.	The campus is safe and secure for all students.
9.	I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
10.	Program requirements are clear and reasonable.

Figure 3.1-6 Requirements of All Students (from Student Satisfaction Inventory)

In the past 18 months, the College has adopted policy and procedures making email the official form of college communications for all students. Student email accounts are created when registering at the College. Conducting surveys electronically via online tools such as Zoomerang and Survey Monkey offers several benefits over paper-and-pencil surveys: electronic surveys reduce classroom intrusion; electronic surveys can be administered to larger populations at lower costs, and electronic surveys allow for quicker return and segmentation of results.

In the 2004-2005 academic year, the College increased its use of electronic methods to target focused surveys via email communications. Because of concerns over obtaining valid survey samples, the CCSSE and SSI surveys were administered by paper means this year. After this year, these two surveys will be administered in alternating years (CCSSE in odd-numbered years and SSI in even-numbered years). Now that email as the official method of communication, we feel ready to administer the SSI in Spring 2006 electronically, just as we do the CQS and the Survey of Stakeholders. Similarly we have created an online option for recent alumni to take the MnSCU Graduate Follow-Up Survey. Currently, nearly one in five respondents chose to take this survey online.

After survey administration, discussions occur with vendors and educational partners to seek new ways to be more effective and efficient in the collection and use of data and information. For example, RCTC has engaged in conversations with Noel-Levitz to establish best practices

reports that highlight institutions who have the highest satisfaction ratings overall, by category or item level. This would enable sharing and best practices identification and support comparative benchmarking initiatives. Also to have better comparison groups regarding Student Satisfaction, we have initiated a discussion with other MnSCU institutions implementing the SSI survey to pool data for the purpose of creating performance indicators at the state level. (Currently Noel-Levitz only reports individual institution and national aggregate results.)

3.2a(1) A number of relationship building approaches (Figure 3.2-1) are in place to foster and engage key customers and stakeholders. As mentioned, email has been adopted as the official form of college communications. This supports efforts to provide rapid and timely information in a cost efficient and desired manner. Knowledge and Awareness Study findings indicate that nearly fifty percent of the market prefers to receive information in an electronic manner via email or the web. RCTC has launched a new customer relationship software called Recruitment Plus (RP). This enables the College to build traditional and electronic communication flows targeted to prospective students, applicants and other stakeholder groups. Email and electronic collateral and web landing pages will provide the College with an ability to customize communications and build relationships with key populations. This includes the launching of electronic surveys at key decision or transactional points. The Student Advising and Registration (STAR) sessions require students to visit campus and participate in assessment tests, orientation sessions, meet with counselors/advisors and register for classes. One of the largest performance gaps identified in the Student Satisfaction Inventory was “early warning of college performance”. In response, an RRT (rapid-response team) working with other college constituencies created Student Success Days. These have been held in the fall and spring terms and include topical workshops, research opportunities, departmental assessment activities and opportunities to meet with faculty, advisors and counseling staff. Since its inception, student and faculty participation has been increasing.

3.2a(2) Key access mechanisms for students and stakeholders to obtain information or to make complaints include some of the relationship building approaches identified in Figure 3.2-1. Each year over 2,000 high school students from 25 area schools attend the Career Fair in November. The RCTC web site received nearly 882,000 visits in 2004. This was an increase of nearly 250,000 visitors over 2003. The average number of pages viewed by visit increased from 10.2 to 11.6. First time visitors increased 23% with 221, 000 first time visitors in 2004. The increase in web use has resulted in statistical reviews and efforts to design and make the site more contact-friendly to potential students, current students, faculty and staff and stakeholders accessing the site. For example, the student registration web portal was redesigned last winter to improve the navigational structure supporting registration processes. Other recent improvements include a redesigned

prospective student site, an improved “contact us” site, a new site for PSEO students, an improved international student site, and an improved site for enrolled students. The development of an email policy and other electronic approaches are a direct response to survey results indicating electronic mechanisms as increasing in importance to consumers as they access information.

3.2a(3) Students have the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement through the complaint/grievance process. Students are encouraged to seek informal means to have decisions reconsidered before filing a complaint or a grievance. A four-step Student Grievance Process (SGP) is in place if complaints cannot be managed through informal means:

- **STEP 1** – File a written grievance and submit to supervisor of the employee. The matter will be discussed between the supervisor and the student filing the grievance within five days.
- **STEP 2** – If no agreement is reached, the student may present the grievance to a Vice President within five days of the response in step one. Again, the Vice President will meet with the filing student within five days. Following this meeting a written response will be sent to the student.
- **STEP 3** – If no agreement is reached in step two, the student may within five days present the grievance to the College President. The College President and the student will meet within five days of receipt of the grievance. The final decision of the College President is final and binding.

- **STEP 4** – If the grievance involves a board policy or the actions of the RCTC President, a student may appeal to the Office of the Chancellor and the MnSCU Board of Trustees (BOT). The decision by the BOT is final and binding. A record of all grievances and their resolution is logged and maintained by the Executive Assistant to the College President.

If students do not wish to go through a formal complaint process, but still wish to voice concerns, additional avenues for students and stakeholders have been explored. For example, all recent graduates of RCTC are asked to complete a MnSCU Graduate Follow-up Survey. Students responding to the survey are encouraged to include complaints and praises about their experiences at RCTC. Plans for online and paper complaint cards are being discussed, especially regarding to how best to sort, prioritize, and manage informal complaints. The College will be working to implement the comment card procedure for each leadership functional area, in the next year.

3.2a(4) The use of technology and its acceptance by students and stakeholders have resulted in expanding efforts to integrate technology options into all approaches and mechanisms in place to build relationships and promote access. Electronic catalogs, customer relationship software, enhanced web sites and online services are examples of how the College keeps approaches current with the service needs and expectations of students and stakeholders.

Learner Life-Cycle Stage	Listening and Learning Approaches	Student and Stakeholder Segments	Survey Cycle	Core Measures	Figure Ref.
Awareness	Knowledge and Awareness Study	Community Residents	Annual	Community Satisfaction Ratings of Attributes	7.2-13 7.5-9
Inquiry	Survey of Lost Inquiries	Prospects not applying	Periodic	Ratings of Attributes	At site
Applicant	Survey of Lost Applicants	Applicants not enrolling	Periodic	Ratings of Attributes	At site
Enroll	Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)	Enrolled students	Annual	Overall Satisfaction Expectations Met Ratings Would You Enroll Again Service Excellence Benchmark Student Centeredness Benchmark Campus Climate Benchmark Unmet Student Needs-Gaps	7.2-1 7.2-3 7.2-2 7.2-4 7.2-10 7.2-11 Fig. 3.2-2
Enroll	Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)	Enrolled students	Odd Years	Student –Faculty Interaction Ratings of Overall Experience Positive Word of Mouth	7.2-8 At site 7.2-7
Enroll	Campus Climate Survey	Enrolled students	Periodic	Welcoming Campus Climate	At site
Enroll	Client Satisfaction Surveys Participant Satisfaction Surveys	Clients and Workforce Learners	Ongoing	Stakeholder Satisfaction Positive Word of Mouth	7.2 txt 7.2-5
Advancement	Graduate Follow-Up Survey	Graduates	Annual	Student Success	7.1-2 & 3
	Survey of Stakeholders	Key Stakeholders	Annual	Knowledge & Awareness Engagement Needs & Priorities	At site At site

Figure 3.1-5 Key Listening and Learning Approaches

3.2 Student and Stakeholder Relationships and Satisfaction

a. Student and Stakeholder Relationships

3.2b(1) The College uses both nationally normed and locally developed surveys to determine levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with programs, services and other aspects of the RCTC experience. These surveys are identified in Figure 3.1-5. Different survey tools and methods are used with various student and stakeholder segments on differing yearly cycles of administration. Each survey measures levels of satisfaction with the College based on a person’s perceptions or experiences. Some instruments ask participants to rate survey items as to their importance and then rate their level of satisfaction. The difference between the perceived importance of an item and their satisfaction with RCTC’s performance with that same item produces a gap showing either an opportunity for improvement or an area where expectations may have been exceeded. Gap analysis (Figure 3.2-2) may be done on a categorical or item level. Gap analysis also allows RCTC to prioritize strategies for dealing with areas of low satisfaction. For example, an area with a low satisfaction score and a low importance score would be less critical than an area with a low satisfaction score but of high importance. Determining whether or not satisfaction levels are actionable is in part determined by a data point’s context. That is, RCTC has been collecting satisfaction data through the SSI since 1998, so it is clear when an indicator is slipping significantly below historical (local) and national trends.

Additionally, each survey asks core questions related to overall satisfaction, meeting of expectations, likelihood of referral (word of mouth), and if they could do it all over again, would they still choose RCTC. Other satisfaction variables include levels of engagement, and satisfaction with instruction, programs, and college services. Data is aggregated and disaggregated by demographic segments (gender, race/ethnicity, age, full-time/part-time, etc.,) to understand differences among student and stakeholder populations. To clarify or better understand results,

3.2b(2) Student satisfaction determination methods (Figure 3.1-5) measure many aspects of the total college experience. These include ratings of services, utilization of services, ratings of engagement efforts, quality of relationships, and other aspects of college life. Rapid response teams and ad-hoc task forces are formed around feedback findings where gaps between levels of importance and satisfaction are greater than 1.0 on the SSI. Trends in gaps are presented in 7.2a(1).

3.2b(3) Many of the surveys utilized by the College provide comparative benchmarks. This allows the College to compare its performance to a national average. In some cases, subsets of data are available by which to compare performance to that of targeted institutions. The Student

programs may conduct “drill downs” to uncover additional meaning behind results.

Relationship Building Approaches	Targeted Student and Stakeholder Segments	Frequency
Email	All Students and Staff	Ad Hoc
Electronic Communications Flows	Inquiries and Applicants	Planned Intervals
Preview Days	Potential Students and Family Members	Monthly
STAR (Student Advising and Registration) Sessions	Admitted Students	Weekly during registration periods
Student Success Days	Currently Enrolled Students	One to Two Times Annually
Stinger	Currently Enrolled Students	Weekly
The Echo	Currently Enrolled Students	Monthly
Kiosks and Message Boards	Currently Enrolled Students and Guests to the Campus	Daily
Electronic Catalog	Prospective and Currently Enrolled Students	Immediate
Special Events (Career Fairs and Middle School Fairs)	Prospective Students	Periodic
The Internet	All Student and Stakeholder Segments	Immediate
Snacking With the Senate	Currently Enrolled Students	Periodic
Staff Development Days	RCTC Employees	2-3 Days per Semester

Figure 3.2-1 Relationship Building Approaches

b. Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction Determination

Satisfaction Inventory provides comparisons to overall college results, categorical benchmarks and item level comparisons. This year, RCTC has opened discussion with other MnSCU institutions to pool SSI data in order to have state-level benchmarks and/or historical Minnesota data. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) compares the RCTC to the aggregate national sample and to a subset of similar-sized institutions. This year, RCTC helped form a CCSSE Minnesota Consortium which provides state-level comparison data in addition to the national aggregate and “medium-sized” school aggregate data already provided by CCSSE. Partner institutions in the Minnesota Consortium were also allowed to include 20 state-specific questions on the survey. Client and participant satisfaction with customized or contract

training provides for institutional and system-wide comparisons. Where comparative data is available it is charted and used to set targeted performance for key performance indicators and core measures.

Satisfaction is but one of many measures RCTC uses to gauge the overall student experience. For example, an internal study of student performance as a function of when they register for classes showed that students registering for classes just before or after the start of classes were significantly more likely to fail or drop out. Given this information, a policy was implemented requiring students to register at least two weeks prior to the start of term. Subsequent analysis has shown that this new policy has had a positive effect on overall student performance and retention.

Our Lost Inquiries Survey now asks students to complete a short survey about why they did not end up applying to RCTC after inquiring. Respondents are asked if they applied to other institutions and if so, what institutions did they apply to. Being a “disinterested” population (i.e., students receiving this survey had not responded to multiple prior communications), the response rate for the Lost Inquiries survey is expected to be low. To improve the response rate, respondents to the survey are entered in a monthly drawing for a prize. The data provided by the Lost Inquiries survey will hopefully better inform RCTC of who its competitors are and what programs/services they offer that RCTC does not.

and methodologies are increasingly incorporated into targeted data collection opportunities. The College conducted a Campus Climate Survey last past year via a web-based software called Zoomerang (mentioned earlier). This provided for an efficient, low cost and rapid response method with access to instant results. This approach proved successful when the College conducted a pilot Survey of Stakeholders and Key Opinion Leaders this past Fall using another web-based survey software called Survey Monkey. The incorporation of this new survey tool allowed for an innovative survey design that was not possible with Zoomerang. As cited, online catalogs, customer relationship software, enhanced web sites and access to online services are examples of how the College has kept approaches current with the service needs and expectations of students and stakeholders.

2004 Student Satisfaction Inventory Gap Analysis – By Survey Item	Gaps – Unmet Needs: Difference Between Importance and Satisfaction
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	2.70
Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.	1.59
Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	1.38
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	1.38
Counseling staff care about students as individuals.	1.37
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools	1.34
The personnel involved in registration are helpful.	1.33
Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.	1.30
Financial aid counselors are helpful.	1.29
The College shows concern for students as individuals.	1.26

Figure 3.2-2 Student Satisfaction Gap Analysis – Unmet Needs (7-point scale)

3.2b(4) Technology solutions are being developed to keep satisfaction determinations fresh. Web-based survey tools