ECAMPUS PRIORITIES SURVEY FOR ONLINE LEARNERS

2018	Oregon State University Ecampus

Prepared by

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Executive Summary

Oregon State Ecampus partners annually with Ruffalo Noel Levitz[1] (RNL), a technology-enabled services, software, and consulting company, to administer to its students a Priorities Survey for Online Learners[2] (PSOL). The PSOL measures the satisfaction and priorities of students in distance learning and online programs by assessing five areas: Institutional Perceptions, Enrollment Services, Academic Services, Instructional Services, and Student Services (in order of importance rated by Ecampus students). During the spring of 2018, the 74 items PSOL was administered to the Ecampus student population and it net 945 respondents. The majority of respondents were female (62%), 25 to 34 years old (46%), white (74%), part-time students (63%), In their fourth year (27%), seeking a Bachelor's degree (64%), employed full-time (63%), own a home (43%), married (50%), and taking 4-6 credits (30%). Overall, approximately 60% of Ecampus students reported that their online experience was better than expected, 84% are satisfied, and 84% would re-enroll of they had to do it again.

Strengths[3] (in order of importance): 1) Access to information and services outside of work day, 2) convenient online registration, 3) Access to proctoring and testing from a distance, 4) Ecampus Website meets needs, 5) Advisor accessible by phone/email, 6) Convenient billing and payment procedures, 7) OSU has a good reputation, 8) Availability of technical assistance

Challenges[4] (in order of importance): 1) Quality of online instruction, 2) Appropriate instructional materials for program content, 3) Tuition is a worthwhile investment, 4) Sufficient offerings within program, 5) Faulty are responsive to student needs, 6) Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress

National benchmarks highlights
- Two of the Ecampus student identified strengths (2 & 6 above) are also national strengths, and three challenges (1, 3, & 5 above) are also national challenges.
- Ecampus students (84%) were more likely to re-enroll than the national comparisons group (82%)
- Ecampus students top three factors to enroll, convenience, flexible pacing for program completion, and work schedule, match the national comparison group
- Of the 26 nationally benchmarked items, Ecampus has nine lower gap scores (difference between importance and satisfaction) and two positive difference scores (difference between Ecampus and national satisfaction) than the national comparison group

Recommendations
Addressing Challenges, Focusing on Academics and Instruction
The PSOL highlighted that Ecampus' biggest challenges come from Instructional Services (1, 2, 5, & 6 above), Academic Services (4 above), and Institutional Perceptions (3 above). The institutional challenge regarding tuition paid and it seeming like a worthwhile investment, may be addressed by offering transparency around where these dollars go, promoting the value of the services they cover, and how this compares to other online institutions. This may be as simple as preparing a well researched and designed online learners tuition

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[1] RNL: https://www.ruffalonl.com
[2] PSOL: https://www.ruffalonl.com/complete-enrollment-management/student-success/student-satisfaction-assessment/priorities-survey-for-online-learners?from=MegaNav
[3] Strengths: items with high importance and high satisfaction (above mid-point in importance and in the upper 25% of satisfaction scores)
[4] Challenges: items with high importance and large performance gaps (above mid-point in importance and lower 25% of performance gap score)

comparison chart. Next, the Academic Services challenge, sufficient offerings within a program, requires greater program level specificity before strategies are developed. For example, does insufficient offerings hold students back from finishing, registering, switching majors, etc.? Last, the bulk of Ecampus challenges come from Instructional Services. The first two, quality of online instruction and appropriate instructional materials for program content are the two most important items for Ecampus students. Addressing these challenges will require an internal assessment of which programs thrive on instructional quality and the standards by which online materials are provided across courses and programs. The second two, faculty are responsive to student needs and faculty provide timely feedback about student progress, are the two least important challenges for Ecampus students. Setting protocols for how and when faculty reaches out to students may help address these challenges. Creative strategies for engaging faculty and programs will be required.

Fine Tuning Student Success
Ecampus student success appears to be doing well according to the PSOL. However, a few areas could be addressed to help it improve its reach and impact. Begin by developing strategies that get more students involved in tutoring and success counseling – the two survey itmes with the largest indifference scores (Not used/Not sure if needed).

PSOL respondents expressed a need for more opportunities for career development resources (50% satisfied), educational, financial planning (54% satisfied), engaging in extra-curricular, internship, and research experiences (46% yes; 30% maybe), more access to adequate financial aid (47% satisfied), and classes that use low or no cost textbooks (48% satisfied). Therefore, Student Success should develop partnerships with on-campus offices that cater to these needs to help include more opportunities and outreach to online learners.

Develop a Yearly Assessment Strategy: Connecting PSOL and Ecampus Surveys
The PSOL revealed that students want a better understanding of Ecampus' assessment and evaluation plans (87% importance/70% satisfaction). Designing, communicating, and implementing a yearly assessment strategy should significantly improve the satisfaction level of this question next year and encourage more survey respondents. Qualitative studies should be conducted to get a better understanding of the nuances of issues students are facing in the different defined areas of challenges and indifference (first two recommendations). The qualitative data should be used to develop survey questions that will help quantify what seems to be working well or challenging the larger student population. Following the importance and satisfaction model in the PSOL survey will help create a more seamless and effective assessment strategy and help familiarize students with Ecampus' assessment strategies.

Data Use and Further analysis
Program analysis can be conducted by examining differences of programs in strength and challenges, Factors to enroll, and the ten Ecampus items added to the PSOL survey by conducting a set of statistical tests; an analysis can be done assessing if and how some programs differ from others in theses specific areas. For example, challenges like program offerings, appropriate course materials, and faculty responsiveness may be a challenge for some programs and not for others, or maybe even strengths for some. Further, a sub-group analysis can be conducted to see if and to what extent different variable(s) (e.g., demographics) affect importance, satisfaction, and other PSOL scores. Two of the best variables for this type of analysis is marital status (single compared to married) and residence (homeowners compared to renters) because the two groups in each variable have a similar number of respondents.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Oregon State Ecampus surveys its student population twice a year. First, Ecampus administers an 85-item survey via Campuslabs[5] during the winter months. This survey covers specific areas in detail such as advising, tutoring, use of web tools, overall Ecampus satisfaction questions, and a host of biographical and demographic questions. In addition to this survey, Ecampus also works with Ruffalo Noel Levitz[6] (RNL), a technology-enabled services, software, and consulting company, to administer to its students a Priorities Survey for Online Learners[7] (PSOL). Whereas the Ecampus survey offers more detailed findings on specific areas of interest, the PSOL covers a broader overview of what is important and how satisfied students are with all aspects of the online experience. Those overview areas include the following topics.

- Academic Services – advisor, program, online resources, technical assistance, tutoring
- Enrollment Services – financial aid, registration, billing and payment
- Institutional Perceptions – reputation, tuition worthwhile
- Instructional Services – instructional materials, faculty/instructor, assignments, assessment, quality of instruction
- Student Services – response time, career services, whom to contact, bookstore, proctoring
- Ecampus Items – website, staff, access to information, open OSU
- Source of information – catalog, college reps, website, current students, recommendations from instructors
- Factor to enroll – cost, aid, employment opportunities, work schedule, flexibility
- Summary – overall: expectations, satisfaction, re-enrollment
- Demographics – race, class load/level, employment, marital status, current plans, major, success counseling

Further, the PSOL outlines how Ecampus is doing in each of these areas compared to a national comparison group of 127 four-year and 48 two-year participating institutions (as of June 2018). Together, the Ecampus Survey and PSOL offer insights to strategic planning for how each unit within Ecampus should move forward to serve online students better.

The following report outlines the survey and sample of the PSOL by detailing who Ecampus students are, what they are studying, and other biographical details about them. The results section covers the summary and scale reports, which explain how Ecampus students compare to the national comparison group in overall importance and satisfaction. Following those reports, results are shared covering Ecampus strength and challenges, sources of information, factors to enroll, and Ecampus items. Lastly, four recommendations are made for strategic planning to improve the Ecampus online experience.

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[5] Campuslabs – Online survey platform (https://www.campuslabs.com)
[6] RNL: https://www.ruffalonl.com
[7] PSOL: https://www.ruffalonl.com/complete-enrollment-management/student-success/student-satisfaction-assessment/priorities-survey-for-online-learners?from=MegaNav

2.0 SURVEY & SAMPLE

On June 15, 2018, the Oregon State Ecampus Student Success Team surveyed Ecampus students (n=8617) to understand their satisfaction and priorities better. RNL administered the survey over the course of four weeks. There were three reminder emails sent out, and the study yielded 945 responses.

Who are Ecampus Students?
The majority of PSOL respondents are female (62% n=531). However, this number is smaller than the national comparison average, and this is significant because females are typically more satisfied nationally. - Most survey respondents are ages 25 to 34 (46% n=385) and identify as white (74% n=668) – see Figure 1. below.

Figure 1. – Survey respondents by sex, age, and race/ethnicity
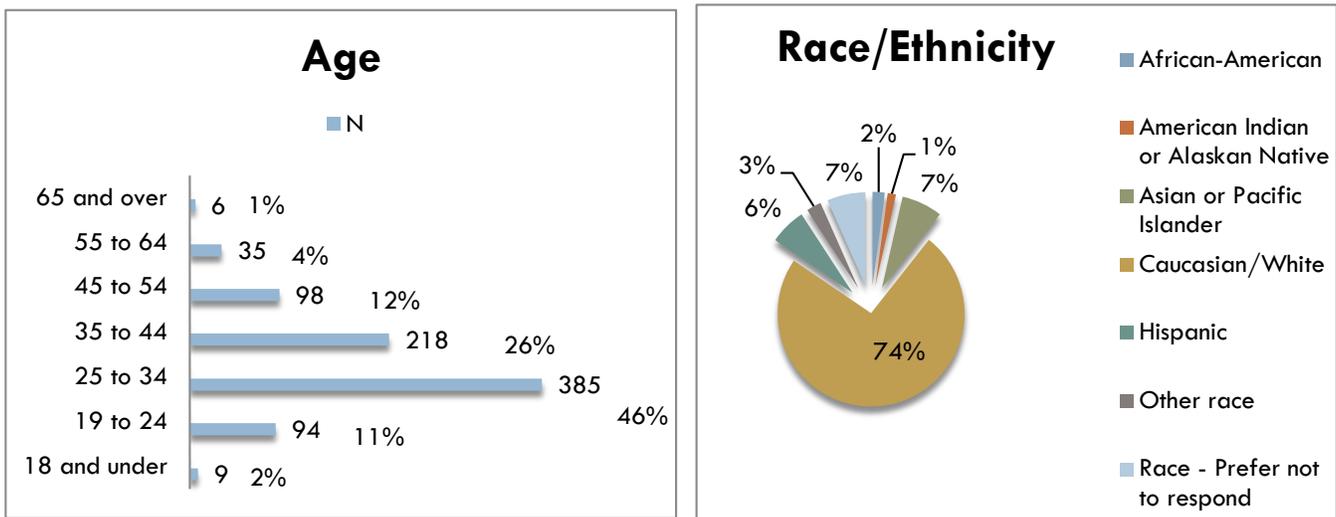
The majority (96% n=875) of surveyed students are primarily enrolled online, while approximately 4% (n=37) are mainly enrolled on-campus. Most of the respondents plan to complete their degree online (87.25% n=814) as opposed to on campus (1.93% n=18). Also, about 11% of these students are only taking online courses to transfer credits (5.25% n=49) or to complete a specific course (5.57% n=52). About 32% (n=295) of survey respondents have only previously taken 1-3 classes online, and (14% n=127) had never taken online courses before.

What are they studying?
The sample of students in this survey is largely taking online classes part-time (63% n=550) while about a third of them (37% n=320) are full-time students. About 12% (n=114) of students are only taking 1-3 credits, 30% (n=276) are taking 4-6 credits, and 26% (n=235) are taking 7-9 credits. The majorities of PSOL respondents are in their fourth year (27% n=248) and are working towards completing a bachelors degree (64% n=572) – see Figure 2. Below.

Figure 2. – Survey respondents by class level and educational goals
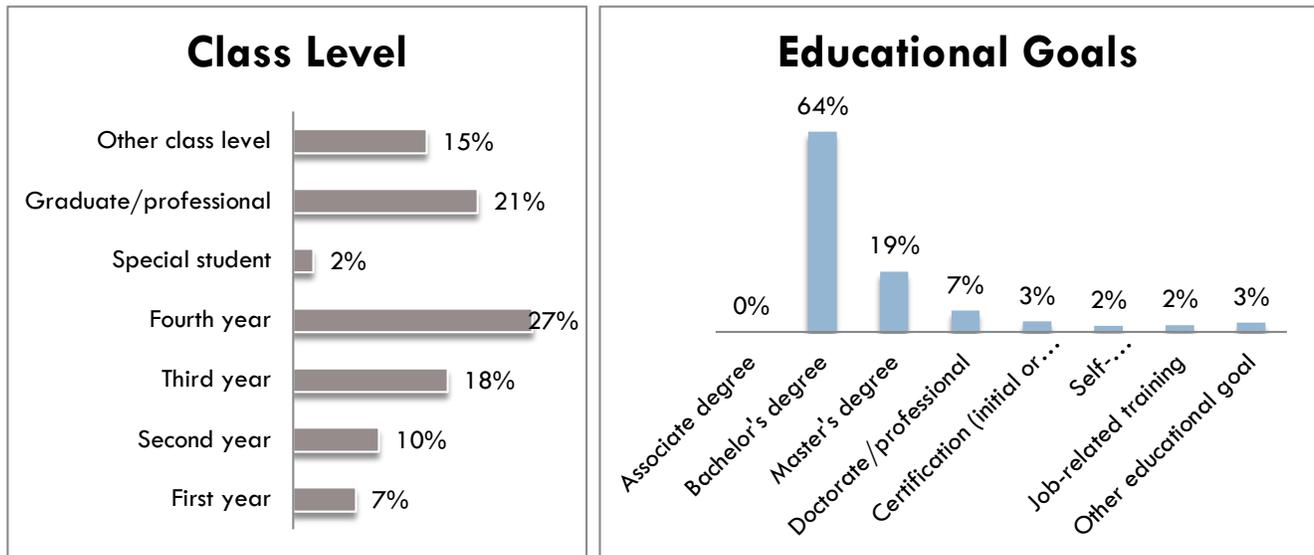
PSOL Survey respondents represented all of Ecampus' 22 programs and 23% (n=217) from other on-campus programs who are taking online courses to meet their degree requirements (see Table 1. Below). Computer Science (13% n=125), Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences (11% n=107), and Natural Resources (10% n=95) make up the top four programs with the most respondents. There were seven programs with less than 1% of survey participation: History (0.95% n=9), French (0.85% n=8), German (0.74% n=7), Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (0.53% n=5), Rangeland Science (0.42% n=4), Environmental Economic Policy (0.32% n=3), and University Exploratory Studies (0.11% n=1).

Table 1. – Survey respondents by program

Program	N	%
Other	217	22.96%
Computer Science	125	13.23%
Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences	107	11.32%
Natural Resources	95	10.05%
Environmental Sciences	55	5.82%
Business Administration	44	4.66%
Psychology	44	4.66%
Agricultural Sciences	41	4.34%
Human Devel and Family Sciences	38	4.02%
Anthropology	30	3.17%
Liberal Studies	25	2.65%
Economics	21	2.22%
Horticulture	19	2.01%
Spanish	18	1.90%
Sociology	18	1.90%
Political Science	11	1.16%
History	9	0.95%

French	8	0.85%
German	7	0.74%
Women, Gender, and Sexuality	5	0.53%
Rangeland Science	4	0.42%
Environmental Econ and Policy	3	0.32%
University Exploratory Studies	1	0.11%
Total	945	100%
No Answer	20	

What else is going on in their lives?

In addition to their student life, 63% (n=550) of survey takers are employed full-time, 18% (n=152) are working part-time, and about 19% (n=166) are not employed. Survey respondents are nearly split in their resident and marital status. While the majority of respondents own a house (43%), nearly as many rent (42%). Also, approximately 50% identify as married and 47% as single – see Figure 3. Below.

Figure 3. Respondent's current residence and marital status
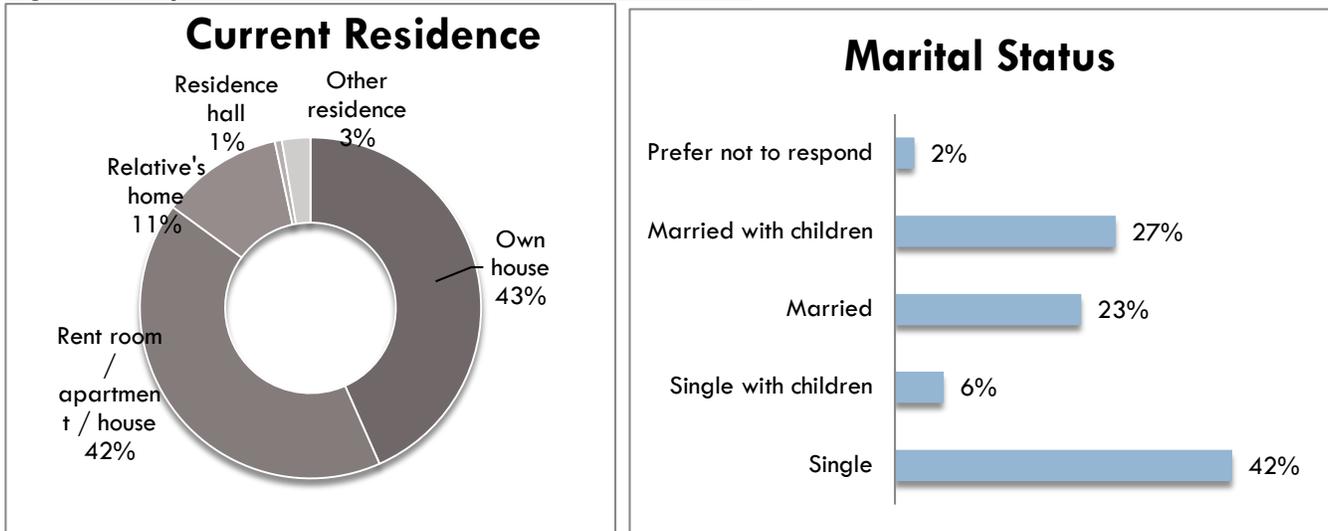
2.1 DATA ANALYSIS

One of the perks of working with RNL on the PSOL is that they provide various electronic reports on these data, all of the cleaned raw data in Excel ready for statistical analysis, and an interpretive guide to help universities assess these data. The electronic reports are shared in an HTML format and reflected in a tabulation view. These reports include the following:

Demographic Report

This report provides the overview of the individuals who completed the PSOL survey and the sixteen demographic and biographical questions. The report also includes an indication of the response option that was selected by the majority of survey participants. These data are reported above in section 2.0 Survey and Sample.

Summary and Scale Report
The summary report includes the average score for the responses to three summary questions on the survey covering expectations, satisfaction, and re-enrollment. This reflects a bottom line on the experience at Ecampus.

In contrast, the scale report provides a top-line overview of PSOL results and shows the items clustered within the scales or categories on the survey (these topics, in addition to other survey topics not included in this report, are outlined in section 1.0 Background). This report consists of the scale name, importance, satisfaction, performance gap, and mean difference columns as described in the item report section below.

Strategic Planning Overview
This report provides a summary of Ecampus' strengths (areas in which respondents indicated high importance and high satisfaction), challenges (high importance and low satisfaction or large performance gap) and lower satisfaction ratings compared to national online learners. It also provides indicators if the items listed in any of three categories are significantly higher in satisfaction or markedly lower in satisfaction as compared with the national comparison group.

Item Report
This report provides the detailed scores for all items on the survey, including Ecampus-defined items. Included in this report are strength and challenge Indicators, importance and satisfaction scores, standard deviations (the amount of variability in the responses), and gap scores – importance minus satisfaction scores. These data include Oregon State Ecampus PSOL respondents and the national comparison group of online learners. Lastly, it also shows a difference score, which represents the difference between OSU and national satisfaction scores for each item, including their statistical significance[8].

Item Percentage Report
This report provides importance and satisfaction percentages of responses that indicated an answer of six or seven to the items in the survey: six is "important" or "satisfied" and seven is "very important" or "very satisfied." Similar to the Item Report, it also includes gap and difference percentages.

Detailed in the following section, 3.0 Results, are findings from the summary and scale report, strategic planning overview (strengths and challenges), and item and item percentage report (sources of information, factors to re-enroll, and Ecampus items). These reports provide all of the data used in this assessment. Lastly, outlined in the recommendation section are opportunities for conducting further useful analysis using the raw survey data.

3.0 Results

Summary
The summary report includes information on PSOL respondents' expectations, overall satisfaction, and decision to re-enroll (see Table 2. Below). The survey revealed that 60% of survey respondents felt like their college experience has been better than expected, while 64% of the national comparison group reported the same. Approximately, 26% of Ecampus students said it was about what they expected (24% nationally), and 10% said it was worse than expected (9% nationally). Next, the majority of Ecampus students (84%) rated their overall college experience as satisfying, matching the national comparison group score. Around 4% of Ecampus students were neutral (5% nationally), and 9% were unsatisfied (8% nationally). While these two scores put Ecampus on par with or slightly below the national comparison group, on the final question (would

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[8] Statistical significance of difference is represented at .05 level, .01 level, and .001 level

you re-enroll here again?) 84% of Ecampus students say yes compared to 82% of the national comparison group.

Table 2. Summary report – compared to national comparison group[9]

Summary	OSU	National	Difference (p value)
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations? (mean)	**4.97**	**5.18**	**-0.21***
1=Much worse than expected	1%	2%	
2=Quite a bit worse than I expected	1%	1%	
3=Worse than I expected	8%	6%	
4=About what I expected	26%	24%	
5=Better than I expected	24%	23%	
6=Quite a bit better than I expected	19%	15%	
7=Much better than expected	17%	26%	
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far. (mean)	**5.69**	**5.82**	**-0.13**
1=Not satisfied at all	0%	1%	
2=Not very satisfied	3%	2%	
3=Somewhat dissatisfied	6%	5%	
4=Neutral	4%	5%	
5=Somewhat satisfied	15%	11%	
6=Satisfied	38%	36%	
7=Very satisfied	31%	37%	
All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again? (mean)	**5.93**	**5.86**	**0.07**
1=Definitely not	1%	3%	
2=Probably not	4%	4%	
3=Maybe not	4%	3%	
4=I don't know	3%	6%	
5=Maybe yes	7%	7%	
6=Probably yes	30%	26%	
7=Definitely yes	47%	49%	

3.1 SCALE REPORT

The scale report compares the five survey themes that are asked in all PSOL nationally (see Table 3. Below). The top three important areas for Ecampus respondents are Institutional Perceptions (6.47), Academic Services (6.29), and Instructional Services (6.29). While Enrollment Management has the most considerable satisfaction difference (-0.32***) from the national comparison group, it also encompasses two of Ecampus' strengths. Student Services (e.g., items like availability of online career services; timely service provided by bookstore; speed at which the institution to requested information) is the only thematic area in the scale report that has neither strengths nor challenges. Institutional Perceptions (0.79) and Instructional Services (0.72) make up Ecampus' most substantial gap scores. The comparison group also shows that Institutional Perception (0.63) and Instructional Services (0.53) have the most significant gap scores nationally.

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[9] National comparison group based off of 126,748 records

Table 3. Scale report – means compared to national comparison groups

Scale / Item	Oregon State University - PSOL			National Online Learners			
	Importance	Satisfaction (SD)	Gap[a]	Importance	Satisfaction (SD)	Gap[a]	Satisfaction Difference [b]
Institutional Perceptions	6.47	5.68 (1.18)	0.79	6.54	5.91(1.22)	0.63	-0.23***
Academic Services	6.29	5.85 (0.97)	0.44	6.47	5.98/1.02	0.49	-0.13***
Instructional Services	6.29	5.57/1.1	0.72	6.43	5.9/1.07	0.53	-0.33***
Enrollment Services	6.3	5.75/1.13	0.55	6.54	6.07/1.11	0.47	-0.32***
Student Services	6.14	5.64/1.19	0.5	6.4	5.91/1.17	0.49	-0.27***

[a] Gap=Importance-Satisfaction
[b] Satisfaction Difference=OSU-National
***Difference statistically significant at the .001 level

It is important to note that the scale report is limited in its assessment of each topic area above as the PSOL offers customizable questions specific to institutions that are not compared across all participating universities. This means that the areas assessed on the scale report only include 26 questions from the 75-item survey and not the additional ten campus items added by Ecampus, which, if included, would change all of OSU's PSOL scores listed above. Therefore, the scale report's findings are limited and should only be considered for these main PSOL questions.

3.2 STRENGTHS

The Ecampus PSOL asks students to rate importance and satisfaction on a seven-point scale (three negative points, one neutral, and three positive points) covering 36 items. Strengths are calculated as items with high importance and high satisfaction (above mid-point in importance and the upper 25% of satisfaction scores). Listed by order of importance are Both Ecampus and National PSOL strengths (See Table 4. below).

Table 4. Strengths and national comparison

OSU Strengths	National Strengths
Access to information/services outside of work day	Convenient online registration
Convenient online registration*	Institution responds quickly when information is requested
Access to proctoring/testing from a distance	Convenient billing/payment procedures
Ecampus Website meets needs	Adequate online library resources
Advisor accessibility by telephone/email	
Convenient billing and payment procedures*	
OSU has a good reputation	
Availability of appropriate technical assistance	

* Represents OSU strengths that are also national strengths

Ecampus' strengths come from Institutional Perceptions (OSU has a good reputation), Enrollment Services (convenient billing and payment; convenient online registration), Academic Services (advisor accessibility; availability of technical assistance), Student Services (access to Proctoring and testing from a distance; access to information and services), and Ecampus items (website meets needs). Three of Ecampus strengths come from Ecampus items (see section below) and are not items scored nationally (access to info, website, proctoring). Also, Ecampus shares two (convenient online registration and billing and payment procedures) of the top four national strengths.

Another way of looking at strengths compared to the national comparison group is by examining gap and difference scores. Gap scores (importance minus satisfaction) represent the gap between importance and satisfaction. Difference scores (Ecampus satisfaction minus national satisfaction), show which items Ecampus students are more satisfied with compared to the national benchmark. The gap and difference scores cover 26 survey items, excluding the ten Ecampus items and eighteen sources of information and factor to enroll items, which are not yet scored nationally. Of the 26 nationally benched marked items, Ecampus has nine smaller gap scores and two positive difference scores (Ecampus higher satisfaction) compared to the national comparison group (see Table 5. below).

Table 5. Smaller importance/satisfaction gaps & higher satisfaction that national comparison group

Items	OSU/National Gap Score[a]
Adequate online library resources are provided	0.09/0.37
Advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail	0.18/0.39
Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me	0.26/0.38
Good reputation of institution	0.28/0.45
Availability of appropriate technical assistance	0.30/0.39
Availability of online tutoring services	0.42/0.43
Advisor helps student work toward career goals	0.50/0.64
Institution responses quickly to requested information	0.50/0.57
Awareness of whom to contact for programs/services questions	0.52/0.53
Items	**Satisfaction Difference Scores [b]**
Good reputation of institution	0.01
Advisor is accessible by telephone/email	0.08

[a] Gap=Importance-Satisfaction
[b] Satisfaction Difference=OSU-National

This means that Ecampus has a smaller gap between importance and satisfaction on approximately 35% of PSOL benched marked items than the national comparison group, and 8% higher satisfaction than the national group.

3.3 CHALLENGES

In contrast to strengths, challenges are items with high importance and large performance gaps (above mid-point in importance and lower higher 25% of performance gap score). Listed by order of importance are Both OSU and National PSOL challenges (See Table 4. below).

Table 6. Challenges and national comparison

OSU Challenges	National Challenges
Quality of online instruction*	Quality of online instruction
Appropriate instructional materials for program content	Student assignments are clearly defined
Tuition is a worthwhile investment*	Faculty are responsive to student needs
Sufficient offerings within program	Tuition is a worthwhile investment
Faculty are responsive to student needs*	Program requirements are clear and reasonable
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress	

* Represents OSU challenges that are also national challenges

Ecampus' challenges come from Institutional Perceptions (tuition paid is worthwhile), Instructional Services (quality of online instruction; faculty provide timely feedback; instructional materials are appropriate; faculty are responsive to student needs), and Academic Services (there are sufficient offerings with my program). Ecampus' top three challenges (quality of instruction, appropriate instructional materials, paid tuition) are also rated by survey participants as the top three most important items on the PSOL. Also, while Ecampus shares three of the top five national challenges (quality of instruction, paid tuition, and faculty responsiveness), all of their challenges have a lower satisfaction rate than the national comparison group.

Of the 26 items with both gap and difference scores, Ecampus has sixteen higher gap scores and negative difference scores, and are listed according to largest difference score (see Table 7. Below). This table shows that these sixteen items have wider gaps between importance and satisfaction scores and lower satisfaction scores for Ecampus students than the national comparison group and are statistically significant.

Table 7. Lower satisfaction & larger importance/satisfaction gaps than national comparison group

Items	OSU/National Gap Score[a]	Satisfaction Difference Scores [b]
Adequate financial aid is available	1.14/0.67	-0.84***
Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment	1.31/0.82	-0.48***
Timely information on the availability of financial aid	0.73/0.59	-0.47***
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress	1.05/0.72	-0.46***
Channels for providing responses to student complaints	0.89/0.72	-0.39***
Online career services are available	0.45/0.36	-0.39***
The quality of online instruction is excellent	1.26/0.80	-0.39***
Adequate frequency of student/instructor interaction	0.66/0.48	-0.38***
Appropriate instructional materials for program content	1.00/0.62	-0.35***
The bookstore provides timely service to students	0.29/0.25	-0.34***
Sufficient offerings within program of study	0.91/0.58	-0.30***
Faculty are responsive to student needs	1.46/0.67	-0.28***
Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus	0.80/0.66	-0.21***
Assessment procedures are clear and reasonable	0.59/0.50	-0.18***
Registration for online courses is convenient	0.28/0.27	-0.14***
Program requirements are clear and reasonable	0.71/0.65	-0.09*

[a] Gap=Importance-Satisfaction
[b] Satisfaction Difference=OSU-National
***Difference statistically significant at the .001 level; *at the .05 level
Note: Item: "student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me" was excluded from this table due to its uniqueness of having a higher satisfaction than importance score for both OSU and the national bench mark.

3.4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND FACTORS TO ENROLL

The Ecampus PSOL asks students to rate the importance of eighteen items, seven items covering sources of information and eleven items inquiring about factors to enroll. Both of these two sections only ask importance,

not satisfaction. Also, that means that there are no national benchmarks for gap or difference scores for these two survey areas.

Ecampus students rated web site (91%) (87% nationally), online catalog (87%) (79% nationally), recommendation from instructor or program advisor (68%) (74% nationally), and contact with current students/recent graduates of the program (45%) (58% nationally) as the top four important sources of information (see Table 8. Below). Ecampus respondents rated the same top three as the national group.

Table 8. Importance of sources of information and national comparison (means)

Source of Information	OSU Importance	National Importance
Source of information: Web site	6.58	6.43
Source of information: Catalog (online)	6.43	6.14
Recommendation from instructor or program advisor	5.64	5.91
Contact with current students/recent graduates of the program	4.8	5.34
Source of information: College representatives	4.7	5.7
Source of information: Catalog and brochures (printed)	3.93	4.89
Source of information: Advertisements	3.24	4.63

Ecampus students rated convenience (92%) (94% nationally), flexible pacing for program completion (88%) (92% nationally), work schedule (86%) (91% nationally), and reputation of institution (79%) (84% nationally) as the top four factors to enroll (see Table. 9 below). Ecampus respondents reported the same top three as the national group.

Table 9. Importance of factors to enroll and national comparison (means)

Factor to enroll	OSU Importance	National Importance
Convenience	6.59	6.71
Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.5	6.61
Work schedule	6.41	6.59
Reputation of institution	6.2	6.35
Cost	6.12	6.37
Program requirements	6.06	6.43
Future employment opportunities	6.04	6.24
Ability to transfer credits	5.87	6.26
Financial assistance available	5.53	6.3
Distance from campus	4.89	5.31
Recommendations from employer	3.88	5.29

3.5 ECAMPUS ITEMS INSIGHTS

The PSOL allows institutions to customize some questions that are not assessed nationally. Listed below in order of importance are Ecampus' ten chosen questions (see Table 10. Below). The top three important items are identified as strengths for Ecampus. Feeling supported by Ecampus staff appears to be close to being strength, while access to financial resources, low/no cost textbooks, and career development resources have the highest gap scores, yet are not quite challenges.

Table 10. – Ecampus items in order of importance

Items	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap (%)
Access of information/services outside of work day*	90%	84%	6%
Access to proctoring/testing services from a distance*	88%	76%	12%
Ecampus website meets my needs as a current student*	87%	77%	10%
I feel supported by Ecampus staff	78%	65%	13%
Access to resources to plan financially for my education	78%	54%	24%
Access to classes that use low/no cost textbooks/course materials	77%	48%	29%
Access to career development resources from a distance	73%	50%	23%
Access to success counseling (academic coaching) from a distance	69%	59%	10%
Connection with one person who helps connected to the institution	67%	57%	10%
I have access to online tutoring from a distance	63%	54%	9%

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Detailed below are four different themes of recommendations put forth from this assessment.

Addressing Challenges, Focusing on Academics and Instruction
The PSOL highlighted that Ecampus' biggest challenges come from instructional services (4 challenges), academic services (1 challenge), and institutional perceptions (1 challenge). Working backward, the institutional challenge, regarding tuition paid and it seeming like a worthwhile investment, may be the hardest to address. While this is also a national challenge, there is both a more significant gap between importance and satisfaction for Ecampus students compared to the national comparison group and a statistically significant difference score between the two groups. Further, it has the most substantial gap and difference score than all of the other challenges. One strategy to addressing tuition dollars value may be offering transparency around where these dollars go, promoting the value of the services they cover, and how this compares to other online institutions. This may be as simple as preparing a well researched and designed online learners tuition comparison chart.

Next, the academic services challenge, sufficient offerings within a program, had the fifth-largest gap and difference scores of the six challenges. While all of these challenges should be examined at the program level (see Data Use and Further Analysis section below for more examples), this challenge requires program level specificity, as it may be a challenge for some programs and not others. Before strategies can be developed to address this challenge, more information around what this means is required. For example, do insufficient offerings hold students back from finishing, registering, switching majors, etc.?

Last, the bulk of Ecampus challenges come from instructional services. The first two, quality of online instruction (national challenge) and appropriate instructional materials for program content are the two most important items for Ecampus students. Addressing these challenges will require an internal assessment of which programs thrive on instructional quality and the standards by which online materials are provided across courses and programs. The second two, faculty are responsive to student needs (national challenge) and faculty provide timely feedback about student progress, are the two least important challenges for Ecampus students. Setting protocols for how and when faculty reaches out to students may help address these challenges. Creative strategies for engaging faculty and programs will be required. Prioritized for Ecampus students are academic and instructional challenges, and Ecampus has an opportunity to help improve these scores by developing strategies to address them.

Fine Tuning Student Success

Ecampus student success appears to be doing well according to the PSOL. However, a few areas could be addressed to help it improve its reach and impact.

The first recommendation is to get more students involved in tutoring and success counseling. Tutoring and success counseling had the largest of indifference scores (Not used/Not sure if needed). The Ecampus survey shows that tutoring helps students succeed in their classes but is overwhelmingly underutilized, and approximately, 41% of PSOL takers believe they would benefit from working with a success counselor. Further, Ecampus students feel supported by Ecampus staff (65% satisfied) and are somewhat unsatisfied (19%) with not having at least one connection with someone who helps them feel connected to the institution. Developing strategies to increase the use of these two services may bolster the success and connection of Ecampus students at OSU.

Second, student success should work to develop partnerships with brick and motor campuses' career, student life, financial aid, and research offices. PSOL respondents expressed a need for more opportunities for career development resources, educational, financial planning, and engaging in extra-curricular, internship, and research experiences. Further, students desire more access to adequate financial aid and classes that use low or no cost textbooks and course materials. Financial aid and low/no cost materials had the most substantial gap scores after items identified as challenges.

Third, student success should continue to ask students what they need and how they are benefiting from their services. The PSOL is limited in understanding the specifics of what students are and are not receiving. One ally in this strategy is to utilize program advisors. The yearly Ecampus survey shows that students are highly satisfied with their advisors, and the PSOL confirms that they believe their advisors help them towards career goals. Developing strategies with program advisors can help lower the gap scores (difference between importance and satisfaction scores) on student success survey items.

Develop a Yearly Assessment Strategy: Connecting PSOL and Ecampus Surveys
Ecampus conducts two large surveys a year, their self-administered student survey and the RNL PSOL. The PSOL is powerful for understanding a top-down view of the strengths and challenges of online programs. However, surveying Ecampus students again allows for a more detailed, bottom-up view of the strengths and challenges identified by the PSOL and other areas of interest to Ecampus units.

Proposed here is a mixed method approach to understanding the needs of Ecampus students. Begin with conducting a host of smaller qualitative studies to get a better understanding of the nuances of issues students are facing in these variously defined areas of challenges and indifference (first two recommendations). Use the qualitative data to develop survey questions that will help quantify what seems to be working well or challenging the larger student population. Following the importance and satisfaction model in the PSOL survey will help create a more seamless and effective assessment strategy and help familiarize students with Ecampus' assessment strategies.

Lastly, advertise this strategy to the entire Ecampus population. Be clear about the assessment steps Ecampus is taking to understand its students' priorities and needs better. The PSOL revealed that students want a better understanding of this process as 87% rated it important or very important and 70% as satisfied. Transparency should significantly drop the gap score (17%) of this question next year and should encourage more survey respondents.

Data Use and Further analysis
This assessment only offers an overarching view of all PSOL respondents. However, there is other uses and further analysis that can be done with these data. Below are a few recommendations.

- Program analysis: While not all programs may be useful to analyze due to smaller sample sizes, there are a few strategies that can help facilitate better understanding around programs and their differences.
  a. Strength and Challenges analysis – by conducting a set of statistical tests, an analysis can be done assessing if and how some programs differ from others in their strengths and challenges. Of particular interest would be the top three programs with the most PSOL respondents – Computer Science (n=125), Fisheries and Wildlife (n=107), and Natural Resources (n=95). With such a high response rate from the Other (n=217) (program) category, there may be some interesting outliers and a better understanding of which programs are less satisfied with which items. Also, it may be beneficial to see which programs have larger gap scores than others to implement strategies for change. For example, challenges like program offerings, appropriate course materials, and faculty responsiveness may be a challenge for some programs and not for others, or maybe even strengths for some.
  b. Ecampus items – there may be students from some programs that need more support than others. By looking at how Ecampus items and a few other related questions compare across programs may point to specific programs with specific needs and vice versa.
  c. Factors to enroll – similarly to examining Ecampus items via programs, factors to enroll are another set of questions that may have some significant statistical variation by a program.
- Variable analysis: a sub-group analysis can be conducted to see if and to what extent different variable(s) (e.g., demographics) affect importance, satisfaction, and other PSOL scores. Two of the best variables for this type of analysis is marital status and residence because the two groups in each variable have a similar number of respondents (see below)
  a. Marital Status: Single/w/Children (n=417) compared to Married/w/Children (n=439)
  b. Residence: Homeowners (n=386) compared to renters (n=371)

Appendix. Online Web Survey

Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your institution to meet this expectation.

On the *right*, tell us how <u>satisfied</u> you are that your institution has met this expectation.

1. This institution has a good reputation.
2. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
3. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
4. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
5. My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.
6. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
7. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
8. Student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me.
9. Adequate financial aid is available.
10. This institution responds quickly when I request information.
11. Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.
12. There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
 About the responses
13. The frequency of student and instructor interactions is adequate.
14. I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.
15. Channels are available for providing timely responses to student complaints.
16. Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.
17. Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.
18. Registration for online courses is convenient.
19. Online career services are available.
20. The quality of online instruction is excellent.
21. Adequate online library resources are provided.
22. I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.
23. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.
24. Tutoring services are readily available for online courses.
 About the responses
25. Faculty are responsive to student needs.
26. The bookstore provides timely service to students.
27. The Ecampus website meets my needs as a current student.
28. Institutional resources such as career services, success counseling (academic coaching), and online tutoring are accessible.
29. I feel supported by Ecampus.
30. The Ecampus support and communication I received after I was admitted was valuable to me.
31. I feel supported by contacts, resources and/or services available to me from a distance.
32. I have made a connection with at least one person who helps me feel connected to the institution.
33. Information and services are available outside of the 8-5 workday.
34. Individualized support is available to develop academic skills.
35. Student success tips and tools on the Ecampus or University website are useful.
36. Assistance is available for planning financially for my education.
 About the responses

Each item below describes an expectation about your experiences with this program.

On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your institution to meet this expectation.

37. Source of information: Catalog and brochures (printed)
38. Source of information: Catalog (online)

39. Source of information: College representatives
40. Source of information: Web site
41. Source of information: Advertisements
42. Source of information: Recommendation from instructor or program advisor
43. Source of information: Contact with current students and / or recent graduates of the program

On the left, tell us how important each of the following factors were in your decision to enroll in this program.
44. Factor to enroll: Ability to transfer credits
45. Factor to enroll: Cost
46. Factor to enroll: Financial assistance available
47. Factor to enroll: Future employment opportunities
48. Factor to enroll: Reputation of institution
 About the responses
49. Factor to enroll: Work schedule
50. Factor to enroll: Flexible pacing for completing a program
51. Factor to enroll: Convenience
52. Factor to enroll: Distance from campus
53. Factor to enroll: Program requirements
54. Factor to enroll: Recommendations from employer
 About the responses
Choose the one response that best applies to you for each of the questions below.
Summary Questions
1. So far, how has your online experience met your expectations?
Much worse than I expected
Quite a bit worse than I expected
Worse than I expected
About what I expected
Better than I expected
Quite a bit better than I expected
Much better than I expected

2. Rate your overall satisfaction with your online experience thus far.
Not satisfied at all
Not very satisfied
Somewhat dissatisfied
Neutral
Somewhat satisfied
Satisfied
Very satisfied

3. If you had to do it over, would you enroll in this program again?
Definitely not
Probably not
Maybe not
I don't know
Maybe yes
Probably yes
Definitely yes

 About the responses
The following demographic items are asked to help us better respond to the data you have provided.
Please indicate the best response for each of the following items.

Demographic Questions

1. Gender
Female
Male

2. Age
18 and under
19 to 24
25 to 34
35 to 44
45 to 54
55 to 64
65 and over

3. Ethnicity/Race
African-American
American Indian or Alaskan Native
Asian or Pacific Islander
Caucasian/White
Hispanic
Other Race
Race - Prefer not to respond

4. Current Enrollment Status
Primarily online
Primarily on-campus

5. Current Class Load
Full-time
Part-time

6. Class Level
First year
Second year
Third year
Fourth year
Special student
tGraduate/Professional
Other class level

7. Educational Goal
Associate degree
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
Doctorate or professional degree
Certification (initial or renewal)
Self-improvement/pleasure
Job-related training
Other educational goal

8. Employment
Full-time

Part-time
Not employed

9. Current Residence
Own house
Rent room / apartment / house
Relative's Home
Residence hall
Other residence

10. Marital Status
Single
Single with children
Married
Married with children
Marital - Prefer not to respond

11. Current Plans
Complete online degree program
Complete degree on campus
Transfer credits
Complete this course

12. Current Online Enrollment
1-3 credits
4-6 credits
7-9 credits
10-12 credits
13-15 credits
More than 15 credits
 About the responses
13. Previous Online Enrollment
no classes
1-3 classes
4-6 classes
7-9 classes
10-12 classes
13-15 classes
More than 15 classes

14. I would benefit from working with a success counselor.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Maybe / not sure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

15. I am interested in engaging in extra-curricular/internship/research experiences.
Yes
Maybe
No

16. Selection of Program/Major:
Agricultural Sciences
Anthropology
Business Administration
Economics
English
Environmental Econ and Policy
Environmental Sciences
Fisheries and Wildlife Science
German
History
Horticulture
Human Devel and Family Science
Liberal Studies
Natural Resources
Political Science
Psychology
Sociology
Spanish
Speech Communication
Sustainability
University Exploratory Studies
Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Other

Final Thoughts....
17. How likely is it that you would recommend our institution to a friend or colleague?
0 - Not at all likely
1
2
3
4
5 - Neutral
6
7
8
9
10 - Extremely likely

18. Please enter any comments you would like to share with this institution.