



CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNVIVERSITY

**NOEL-LEVITZ PRIORITIES SURVEY OF ONLINE LEARNERS
TRENDS FROM SPRING 2013 TO SPRING 2014**

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I. ABSTRACT

Central Washington University (CWU) administers the Noel-Levitz (N-L) Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) survey online via email to all students enrolled in online courses. The surveys were administered during the spring 2013 term (4/29/13 through 5/15/13) and the spring 2014 term (4/20/14 through 5/24/14). The survey is designed to assess the priorities and satisfaction of students enrolled in distance learning and online courses. This report summarizes trends from 2013 to 2014.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CWU improved or held steady on five major categories of Satisfaction measured by the Priorities Survey for Online Learners:

- Institutional Perception
- Academic Services
- Instruction Services
- Enrollment Services
- Student Services

CWU improved on all three “Strategic Planning Overview” questions:

- So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?
- Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.
- All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?

There were some fairly large changes in information used for enrollment and enrollment factors.

The demographics of 2013 and 2014 respondents were similar. There was a higher percentage in 2014 of respondents from the Ellensburg Campus compared to the Centers. The percent of responses from students enrolled in online programs remained constant, 16% of 2014 respondents vs. 15% of 2013 respondents.

Response rates improved in 2014, probably due to promotions. One iPad Air was given to a respondent randomly selected from all respondents. In addition, all respondents received a 10% discount on an item purchased from the Wildcat Shop (in person or online).

Table 1 2014 and 2013 Response Rates to the CWU Priorities Survey for Online Learners

	2014	2013
Surveys emailed	2,785	2,392
Responses	385	253
Response rate	14%	11%

III. STRATEGIC PLANNING OVERVIEW

CWU improved from 2013 to 2014 in all three major “Strategic Planning Areas.” These questions used seven point Likert scales with 7 being the best possible rating. See Table 3.

Table 2 Strategic Planning Overview

	2014	2013	% Improvement
55. So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	4.47	4.31	+3.5%
56. Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.	5.17	4.97	+4.0%
57. All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?	5.48	5.42	+1.1%

Table 3 Scales Used for “Strategic Planning Overview” Questions

	- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -	- 7 -
55.	Much worse than expected	Quite a bit worse than 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
56.	Not satisfied at all	Not very satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
57.	Definitely not	Probably not	Maybe no	I don't know	Maybe yes	Probably yes	Definitely yes

IV. IMPORTANCE AND SATISFACTION

Noel-Levitz uses the first 36 questions of the PSOL to measure five main categories, or what they call “scales.” CWU student satisfaction has trended up on all “Major Question Scales” from 2013 to 2014.

Table 4 Major Scale Report

Scale / Item	----- 2014 RESULTS -----			----- 2013 RESULTS -----			'14 less '13 Satisfaction Difference
	Importance	Satisfaction / StDev	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction / StDev	Gap	
Institutional Perceptions	6.29	5.45 / 1.19	0.84	6.24	5.26 / 1.43	0.98	0.19
Academic Services	6.24	5.29 / 1.1	0.95	6.18	5.27 / 1.18	0.91	0.02
Instructional Services	6.25	5.37 / 1.07	0.88	6.24	5.3 / 1.24	0.94	0.07
Enrollment Services	6.34	5.53 / 1.21	0.81	6.36	5.39 / 1.31	0.97	0.14
Student Services	6.12	5.28 / 1.13	0.84	6.14	5.19 / 1.32	0.95	0.09

Both Satisfaction and Importance questions used a seven point Likert scale.

Table 5 Important Scale

- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -	- 7 -	0
not important at all	not very important	somewhat unimportant	neutral	somewhat important	important	very important	not used

Table 6 Satisfactions Scale

- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -	- 7 -	0
not satisfied at all	not very satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	neutral	somewhat satisfied	satisfied	very satisfied	not used

Table 8 summarizes the first 36 Importance and Satisfaction questions on the Priorities Survey for Online Learners. CWU improved or remained the same on 27 of the 36 items. CWU’s rating dropped on 9 items.

The questions with the largest improvement in Satisfaction (0.2 or more) were:

- 6. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- 10. This institution responds quickly when I request information.
- 12. There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- 18. Registration for online courses is convenient.
- 20. The quality of online instruction is excellent.

There was one question that decreased by more than 0.2 in Satisfaction:

- 17. Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.

CWU decreased (improved) the gaps in importance minus satisfaction in four of five major categories from 2013 to 2014.

Table 7 Change in “GAPS” in Importance less Satisfaction






Scale / Item	2014	2013	Change	Difference
	Gap	Gap		+/- 0.2
Institutional Perceptions	0.84	0.98	-0.14	
Academic Services	0.95	0.91	0.04	
Instructional Services	0.88	0.94	-0.06	
Enrollment Services	0.81	0.97	-0.16	
Student Services	0.84	0.95	-0.11	

Table 8 Importance and Satisfaction Ratings 2014 and 2013

Item	Spring 2014			Spring 2013			Difference ('14-'13)	
	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Satisfaction Difference*	Data bars*
1. This institution has a good reputation.	6.00	5.62 / 1.24	0.38	5.95	5.51 / 1.38	0.44	0.11	
2. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.	6.36	5.62 / 1.52	0.74	6.29	5.67 / 1.54	0.62	(0.05)	
3. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.	6.43	5.59 / 1.30	0.84	6.46	5.56 / 1.43	0.90	0.03	
4. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.	6.44	5.23 / 1.49	1.21	6.46	5.06 / 1.70	1.40	0.17	
5. My program advisor helps me work toward career goals.	6.25	5.15 / 1.73	1.10	6.12	5.06 / 1.75	1.06	0.09	
6. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.	6.59	5.28 / 1.40	1.31	6.53	5.01 / 1.77	1.52	0.27*	
7. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.	6.55	5.50 / 1.42	1.05	6.52	5.51 / 1.49	1.01	(0.01)	
8. Student-to-student collaborations are valuable to me.	4.99	5.06 / 1.38	-0.07	4.92	4.92 / 1.53	0.00	0.14	
9. Adequate financial aid is available.	6.37	5.29 / 1.75	1.08	6.29	5.18 / 1.80	1.11	0.11	
10. This institution responds quickly when I request information.	6.44	5.54 / 1.36	0.90	6.37	5.32 / 1.65	1.05	0.22	
11. Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus.	6.57	5.58 / 1.35	0.99	6.56	5.49 / 1.53	1.07	0.09	
12. There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.	6.54	5.22 / 1.61	1.32	6.44	5.00 / 1.66	1.44	0.22	
13. The frequency of student and instructor interactions is adequate.	6.17	5.35 / 1.40	0.82	6.08	5.33 / 1.54	0.75	0.02	
14. I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.	6.23	5.15 / 1.64	1.08	6.26	5.06 / 1.76	1.20	0.09	
15. Channels are available for providing timely responses to student complaints.	5.94	4.80 / 1.70	1.14	6.00	4.78 / 1.82	1.22	0.02	
16. Appropriate technical assistance is readily available.	6.14	5.37 / 1.46	0.77	6.22	5.43 / 1.56	0.79	(0.06)	
17. Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.	6.31	5.45 / 1.34	0.86	6.33	5.62 / 1.30	0.71	(0.17)	
18. Registration for online courses is convenient.	6.47	5.81 / 1.44	0.66	6.57	5.55 / 1.66	1.02	0.26*	
19. Online career services are available.	5.71	4.9 / 1.53	0.81	5.81	4.95 / 1.63	0.86	(0.05)	

Table 8 Importance and Satisfaction Ratings 2014 and 2013 – continued

Note: Items 27 through 36 are CWU defined items

Item	Spring 2014			Spring 2013			Difference ('14-'13)	
	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Import	Satis / SD	Gap	Satisfaction Difference*	Data bars*
20. The quality of online instruction is excellent.	6.52	5.25 / 1.56	1.27	6.54	5.03 / 1.78	1.51	0.22	
21. Adequate online library resources are provided.	6.11	5.43 / 1.47	0.68	6.03	5.53 / 1.47	0.50	(0.10)	
22. I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.	6.26	5.23 / 1.64	1.03	6.29	5.11 / 1.79	1.18	0.12	
23. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.	6.28	5.81 / 1.36	0.47	6.29	5.73 / 1.48	0.56	0.08	
24. Tutoring services are readily available for online courses.	5.62	4.57 / 1.67	1.05	5.54	4.53 / 1.79	1.01	0.04	
25. Faculty are responsive to student needs.	6.53	5.46 / 1.43	1.07	6.56	5.42 / 1.54	1.14	0.04	
26. The bookstore provides timely service to students.	6.19	5.78 / 1.32	0.41	6.15	5.74 / 1.37	0.41	0.04	
27. Campus item: Help desk services and technical support are adequate to meet my needs.	6.06	5.61 / 1.27	0.45	6.11	5.43 / 1.42	0.68	0.18	
28. Campus item: Student-to-student interaction is fostered and encouraged in my online course(s).	5.05	5.25 / 1.44	-0.2	5.07	5.14 / 1.51	-0.07	0.11	
29. Campus item: Faculty-to-student interaction is fostered and encouraged in my online course(s).	6.03	5.23 / 1.5	0.8	6.05	5.18 / 1.67	0.87	0.05	
30. Campus item: The online course management system is easy to use.	6.51	5.45 / 1.41	1.06	6.46	5.43 / 1.53	1.03	0.02	
31. Campus item: General academic advising is available to online learners.	6.08	5.07 / 1.67	1.01	6.18	5.09 / 1.72	1.09	(0.02)	
32. Campus item: I feel I am a member of the Central Washington University community.	5.57	4.95 / 1.63	0.62	5.45	4.88 / 1.85	0.57	0.07	
33. Campus item: The organization and design of my online course(s) is conducive to learning.	6.43	5.46 / 1.42	0.97	6.43	5.31 / 1.67	1.12	0.15	
34. Campus item: Orientation to university systems and support resources is provided to online learners.	5.93	5.06 / 1.58	0.87	5.94	5.12 / 1.69	0.82	(0.06)	
35. Campus item: A fair and equitable learning environment exists in my online course(s).	6.39	5.63 / 1.45	0.76	6.34	5.55 / 1.59	0.79	0.08	
36. Campus item: Courses necessary to meet my degree objectives are offered online.	6.42	5.34 / 1.55	1.08	6.46	5.35 / 1.67	1.11	(0.01)	

* means that the difference is statistically significant at the .05 level

* Data bars extend from negative 0.3 to positive 0.3.

V. PROGRAM ENROLLMENT: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Table 9 summarizes responses to questions that ask: “Tell us how important each of the following sources of information was in your decision to enroll in this program.” The increase from 2013 to 2014 in important of advertisement seems to be offset by the decrease in importance of college representatives.

Table 9 Enrollment Information Sources

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION	2014	2013	2014 less '13	Data bars
37. Source of information: Catalog and brochures (printed)	4.32	4.29	0.03	
38. Source of information: Catalog (online)	5.88	5.81	0.07	
39. Source of information: College representatives	4.53	4.69	(0.16)	
40. Source of information: Web site	6.14	6.07	0.07	
41. Source of information: Advertisements	3.69	3.39	0.30	
42. Source of information: Recommendation from instructor or program advisor	5.53	5.53	0.00	
43. Source of information: Contact with current students and / or recent graduates of the program	4.84	4.74	0.10	

Table 10 A Seven-point Likert Scale was used for Enrollment Questions.

- 1 -	- 2 -	- 3 -	- 4 -	- 5 -	- 6 -	- 7 -
Not important at all	not very important	somewhat unimportant	neutral	somewhat important	important	very important

VI. PROGRAM ENROLLMENT: FACTORS

Changes were even greater from 2013 to 2014 in: “...tell us how important each of the following factors were in your decision to enroll in this program.”

Table 11 summarizes changes from 2013 to 2014. Data bars range from -0.3 to +0.3.

Table 11 Factors Important in Enrollment

ENROLLMENT FACTORS	2014	2013	2014 less '13	Data bars
44. Factor to enroll: Ability to transfer credits	6.09	6.32	(0.23)	
45. Factor to enroll: Cost	6.14	6.03	0.11	
46. Factor to enroll: Financial assistance available	6.06	5.86	0.20	
47. Factor to enroll: Future employment opportunities	6.16	5.88	0.28	
48. Factor to enroll: Reputation of institution	5.86	5.8	0.06	
49. Factor to enroll: Work schedule	6.02	6.16	(0.14)	
50. Factor to enroll: Flexible pacing for completing a program	6.09	6.15	(0.06)	
51. Factor to enroll: Convenience	6.46	6.53	(0.07)	
52. Factor to enroll: Distance from campus	5.57	5.75	(0.18)	
53. Factor to enroll: Program requirements	6.19	6.25	(0.06)	
54. Factor to enroll: Recommendations from employer	4.6	4.54	0.06	

VII. DEMOGRAPHICS OF 2014 AND 2013 RESPONDENTS

The largest shift in demographics from 2013 to 2014 was the number of students completing the PSOL survey who were enrolled on the Ellensburg campus vs. the Centers. The proportion of students completing the survey who were enrolled online only increased from 15% to 16%. It is not clear if the moderate shift of respondents from the Centers to the Ellensburg campus affected other demographics and enrollment trends. The data bars in the charts below range from negative 0.3 to positive 0.3.

Demographic Tables

DEMOG1 Item 58 – Gender

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Female	70%	71%	-1%	
2 – Male	30%	29%	1%	
Did not answer	6	5		

DEMOG2 Item 59 – Age	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – 18 and under	2%	2%	1%	
2 – 19 to 24	39%	28%	11%	
3 – 25 to 34	26%	29%	-3%	
4 – 35 to 44	19%	19%	0%	
5 – 45 to 54	10%	18%	-8%	
6 – 55 to 64	3%	4%	-2%	
7 – 65 and older	0%	0%	0%	
Did not answer	6	7		

DEMOG3 Item 60 – Ethnicity / Race

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – African-American	3%	5%	-2%	
2 – American Indian or Alaskan Native	3%	1%	2%	
3 – Asian or Pacific Islander	10%	12%	-2%	
4 – Caucasian/White	66%	67%	-2%	
5 – Hispanic	11%	6%	5%	
6 – Other	5%	4%	1%	
7 – Prefer not to respond	3%	5%	-2%	
Did not answer	7	7		

DEMOG4 Item 61 – Current enrollment status

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Primarily online	56%	64%	-8%	
2 – Primarily on-campus	44%	36%	8%	
Did not answer	7	6		

DEMOG5 Item 62 – Current class load

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Full-time	80%	79%	2%	
2 – Part-time	20%	21%	-2%	
Did not answer	8	6		

DEMOG6 Item 63 – Class level

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – First year	6%	5%	1%	
2 – Second year	9%	3%	6%	
3 – Third year	34%	37%	-3%	
4 – Fourth year	37%	39%	-2%	
5 - Special Student	1%	1%	0%	
6 - Graduate / Professional	8%	9%	0%	
7 - Other	5%	6%	-2%	
Did not answer	7	6		

DEMOG7 Item 64 – Educational goal

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 - Associate degree	0%	1%	-1%	
2 –Bachelor's degree	71%	76%	-4%	
3 - Master's degree	20%	15%	5%	
4 - Doctorate or professional degree	5%	3%	2%	
5 - Certification (initial or renewal)	2%	3%	-1%	
6 - Self-improvement / pleasure	0%	0%	0%	
7 - Job-related training	1%	0%	1%	
8 - Other	1%	1%	-1%	
Did not answer	7	7		

DEMOG8 Item 65 – Employment

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Full-time	36%	46%	-10%	
2 – Part-time	30%	30%	0%	
3 – Not employed	34%	24%	10%	
Did not answer	10	8		

DEMOG9 Item 66 – Current residence

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Own house	31%	39%	-8%	
2 – Rent room/apartment/house	48%	46%	2%	
3 – Relative’s house	12%	8%	4%	
4 – Residence hall	8%	4%	4%	
5 – Other residence	1%	3%	-2%	
Did not answer	7	6		

DEMOG10 Item 67 – Marital status

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Single	55%	46%	9%	
2 – Single with children	11%	12%	-1%	
3 – Married	16%	16%	-1%	
4 – Married with children	16%	24%	-7%	
5 – Prefer not to respond	2%	2%	0%	
Did not answer	8	7		

DEMOG11 Item 68 – Current plans

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – Complete online degree program	48%	52%	-5%	
2 – Complete degree on campus	45%	37%	8%	
3 – Transfer credits	1%	2%	-1%	
4 – Complete this course	7%	9%	-2%	
Did not answer	16	7		

DEMOG12 Item 69 – Current online enrollment

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – 1 to 3 credits	12%	9%	3%	
2 – 4 to 6 credits	36%	30%	7%	
3 – 7 to 9 credits	12%	15%	-3%	
4 – 10 to 12 credits	17%	15%	2%	
5 – 13 to 15 credits	16%	23%	-7%	
6 – More than 15 credits	7%	8%	-1%	
Did not answer	8	8		

DEMOG13 Item 70 – Previous online enrollment

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 – No classes	22%	17%	5%	
2 – 1 to 3 classes	27%	24%	3%	
3 – 4 to 6 classes	14%	14%	0%	
4 – 7 to 9 classes	11%	9%	2%	
5 – 10 to 12 classes	9%	12%	-3%	
6 – 13 to 15 classes	8%	12%	-4%	
7 – More than 15 classes	9%	13%	-4%	
Did not answer	13	7		

DEMOG14 Item 71 - My intended degree is:

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
Online undergraduate degree	34%	41%	-7%	
Online graduate degree	14%	14%	-1%	
Face-to-face undergraduate degree	42%	35%	8%	
Face-to-face graduate degree	10%	10%	0%	
Did not answer	13	6		

DEMOG15 Item 72 - My home CWU campus is:

	2014	2013	Difference	Data bars
1 - Ellensburg	42%	31%	11%	
2 - Des Moines, Kent, or Pierce County	17%	19%	-2%	
3 - Lynnwood or Everett	19%	27%	-8%	
4 - Moses Lake, Wenatchee, or Yakima	6%	8%	-2%	
5 - Online: a fully online degree program	16%	15%	1%	
Did not answer	10	5		

VIII. MAJORS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The “group codes” (majors) were similar from 2013 to 2014. There was an increase in the number of students who were not enrolled in an online degree program. See Table 12.

Table 12 Majors of Survey Respondents

N-L PSOL 2013 Group Codes	2014	2013	Difference
1063: Health and Physical Education: Athletic Administration (MS)	2	1	1
1087: Information Tech & Admin Mgt (BAS)	46	47	-1
1088: Information Tech & Admin Mgt (BS)	33	27	6
1089: Instructional Leadership (MED)	2	NA	NA
1090: Interdisciplinary Studies: Social Sciences (BS)	36	48	-12
1092: Specialized Studies (BA/BS)	9	NA	NA
1094: Law & Justice (BA)	29	20	9
1107: Paramedicine (BS)	4	3	1
1125: Psychology (BA)	23	16	7
1137: School Administration (MED)	4	2	2
1145: Sociology (BA)	11	7	4
1151: Special Education (MED)	3	5	-2
1153: English Creative Writing (BA)	9	NA	NA
1165: Health and Physical Education: Teaching Physical Education and Health (MS)	3	2	1
1166: Higher Education (MED)	18	4	14
1167: Literacy (MED)	1	1	0
1168: Not enrolled in an online degree program	139	59	80
Total	372	242	130
No Answer	13	11	2

