



**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNVIVERSITY**

**NOEL-LEVITZ PRIORITIES SURVEY OF ONLINE LEARNERS**

**TRENDS FROM FALL 2011 TO SPRING 2013**

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## I. ABSTRACT

Central Washington University has administered the Noel-Levitz (N-L) Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) survey during the fall 2011 term \*from 10/28/11 through 11/26/11) and the spring 2013 term (4/29/13 through 5/15/13). This report summarizes broad trends from 2011 to 2013.

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CWU has trended down in all major question “scales” from 2011 to 2013. Averages for both Importance and Satisfaction have decreased. The one scale that decreased significantly is Enrollment Services. CWU has also trended significantly downward in two of the three summary questions.

**Table 1. Summary Questions - Significant Trends (\* = significantly different at 0.5 level)**

	May 2013	November 2011	Mean Difference
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	4.31	4.63	-0.32*
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.	4.97	5.33	-0.36*

Part of the reason for the broad trend downward may be the timing of the surveys. Spring term tends to have a higher number of students taking courses 100% online as well as a higher percentage of those students that are matriculating “primarily online.” It is possible that “primarily online” students have different expectations and standards than students who are “primarily on-campus.” Demographic question #4 asks students their “Current Enrollment Status.” There were major differences between 2011 and 2013.

**Table 2. “Current Enrollment” 2013 vs. 2011**

	2013	2011
Responses	247	184
Primarily online	64%	49%
Primarily on-campus	36%	51%

Another factor may be the low response rate to both surveys. The sample sizes are not large enough to infer population statistics. The two samples may have varied in demographics or attitudes not reflected in the survey which may have affected sample averages.

**Table 3. 2013 and 2011 Response Rates to the CWU Priorities Survey of Online Learners**

	2013	2011
Surveys emailed	2,392	1,733
Responses	253	189
Response rate	11%	11%

Despite the differences in enrollments and small sample sizes the downward trends in Importance and Satisfaction are troubling.

### III. TABLES of RESULTS and TRENDS

The PSOL survey consists of 73 questions. The first 54 questions are grouped into major scales.

- 26 standard items rated for both importance and satisfaction
- 10 campus defined items rated for both importance and satisfaction
- 18 items assessing pre-enrollment factors – only rated for importance
- 3 summary questions
- 15 demographic questions
- 1 question asking students their general major, or “group code”

**Table 4. CWU Strategic Strengths and Challenges**

#### Strengths

- 18. Registration for online courses is convenient.
- 7. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
- 3. Instructional materials are appropriate for program content.
- 35. Campus item: A fair and equitable learning environment exists in my online course(s).
- 17. Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable.
- 2. My program advisor is accessible by telephone and e-mail.
- 23. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.

#### Challenges

- 25. Faculty are responsive to student needs.
- 20. The quality of online instruction is excellent.
- 6. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- 4. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress.
- 12. There are sufficient offerings within my program of study.
- 33. Campus item: The organization and design of my online course(s) is conducive to learning.
- 22. I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.

**Table 5. Major Trends from 2011 to 2013**

#### Higher Satisfaction vs. Nov 2011

- 36. Campus item: Courses necessary to meet my degree objectives are offered online.

#### Lower Satisfaction vs. Nov 2011

- 18. Registration for online courses is convenient.

**Table 6. CWU Institutional Summary – Trends in Major Scales (\* = significantly different at 0.5 level)**

	2013 CWU PSOL			2011 CWU PSOL			Mean difference
	Import.	Satis./StDev	Gap	Import.	Satis./StDev	Gap	
<b>Institutional Perception</b>	6.24	5.26 / 1.43	0.98	6.31	5.50 / 1.27	0.81	-0.24
<b>Academic Services</b>	6.18	5.27 / 1.18	0.91	6.36	5.39 / 1.19	0.97	-0.12
<b>Instructional Services</b>	6.24	5.30 / 1.24	0.94	6.32	5.46 / 1.24	0.86	-0.16
<b>Enrollment Services *</b>	6.36	5.39 / 1.31	0.97	6.48	5.65 / 1.21	0.83	-0.26 *
<b>Student Services</b>	6.14	5.19 / 1.32	0.95	6.19	5.29 / 1.30	0.90	-0.10

**Table 7. Detailed Trends in Enrollment Services (\* = significantly different at 0.5 level)**

	2013 CWU PSOL			2011 CWU PSOL			Mean difference
	Import.	Satis./StDev	Gap	Import.	Satis./StDev	Gap	
9. Adequate financial aid is available.	6.29	5.18 / 1.80	1.11	6.54	5.35 / 1.77	1.19	-0.17
14. I receive timely information on the availability of financial aid.	6.26	5.06 / 1.76	1.20	6.37	5.45 / 1.63	0.92	-0.39 *
18. Registration for online courses is convenient.	6.57	5.55 / 1.66	1.02	6.59	5.94 / 1.49	0.65	-0.39 *
23. Billing and payment procedures are convenient for me.	6.29	5.73 / 1.48	0.56	6.39	5.81 / 1.48	0.58	-0.08

**Table 8. SUMMARY TRENDS (\* = significantly different at 0.5 level)**

	<b>May 2013</b>	<b>Nov. 2011</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>
<b>So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>4.63</b>	<b>-0.32 *</b>
1=Much worse than expected	4%	3%	
2=Quite a bit worse than I expected	5%	3%	
3=Worse than I expected	11%	9%	
4=About what I expected	35%	35%	
5=Better than I expected	24%	19%	
6=Quite a bit better than I expected	9%	14%	
7=Much better than expected	8%	13%	
<b>Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>5.33</b>	<b>-0.36 *</b>
1=Not satisfied at all	5%	3%	
2=Not very satisfied	10%	6%	
3=Somewhat dissatisfied	7%	6%	
4=Neutral	8%	4%	
5=Somewhat satisfied	14%	18%	
6=Satisfied	38%	37%	
7=Very satisfied	16%	22%	
<b>All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?</b>	<b>5.42</b>	<b>5.55</b>	<b>-0.13</b>
1=Definitely not	6%	5%	
2=Probably not	7%	4%	
3=Maybe not	4%	5%	
4=I don't know	6%	5%	
5=Maybe yes	9%	11%	
6=Probably yes	31%	25%	
7=Definitely yes	35%	41%	