Expected Outcomes: Graduate School –Admissions

Graduate students who enroll will be satisfied with the enrollment process and the helpfulness and responsiveness of the admissions staff.

Assessment methods

Method: Survey

A new survey was developed to be administered to newly enrolled graduate students. Less than 10% of students surveyed will be dissatisfied with the enrollment process and the helpfulness and responsiveness of the admissions staff.

Findings:

The survey was first administered in Fall 2011 to recently enrolled graduate students. 416 out of 1,180 recently enrolled students responded for a 35% response rate. The survey was again administered in Spring 2012 to recently enrolled graduate students. 93 of 203 recently enrolled students responded for a 46% response rate.

On a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied), students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Graduate School’s Admissions Office. The helpfulness of the personnel who assisted with admissions received the highest ratings (3.37), followed by ease of submitting application materials (3.32); ease of completing the admissions application (3.32); promptness (notification that application materials had been received) [3.31]; and overall satisfaction with the Graduate School’s admissions process (3.28). The Graduate School’s web-site received the lowest ratings (3.11).

Most of the newly admitted students were satisfied with the Graduate School’s admission process (91%) and the helpfulness of the personnel who assisted them (92%). Likewise, newly admitted students were satisfied with the ease of submitting application materials (92%) and the ease of completing the admissions application (92%). More than 10% of newly admitted students, however, were dissatisfied with the Graduate School’s promptness (notification that application materials had been received) [12.8%]; promptness (notification of acceptance to Auburn University) [11.1%]; and with the helpfulness of the Graduate School’s web-site (12.6%).

When asked to comment about positive or negative experiences working with the Graduate Admission’s process and staff, students frequently mentioned that their experience with staff was quite positive. Apart from positive experiences with the staff, students frequently mentioned that the admission process is very
easy. Negative comments about staff and admission processes were rare. At the same time, there were recommendations to improve the on-line admissions process, the handling of transcripts, and the web-site.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The Graduate School expects to use a new online application system beginning in Fall 2013 (implementation was delayed because of technical problems). The new system will address many of the concerns raised by newly admitted students; for example, the new system will allow students to check their application status online, and to monitor the submission of application documents.

The Graduate School filled a vacant position among the admissions staff, which will enable the staff to process applications (including transcripts) more promptly.

A newly hired Communications specialist has begun making changes to the Graduate School web-site to enhance its ease of use for applicants and currently enrolled students. The directory of programs and the directory of forms were among the first pages to be modified. Some pages have also been translated into Chinese and Arabic to make it easier for international applicants to find information.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Graduate School – Matriculation

Graduate students who complete their studies will be satisfied with the matriculation process and the helpfulness and responsiveness of the matriculation staff. Less than 10% of the students surveyed will be dissatisfied with the matriculation process and the helpfulness and responsiveness of the matriculation staff.

Assessment methods

Method: Survey

The exit survey administered to graduating students was modified to include items about satisfaction with graduate student services. No more than 10% of the students surveyed will be dissatisfied with Graduate School services.

Findings:

Survey results from Spring, Summer, and Fall terms in 2012 indicate that graduate students completing their studies are generally satisfied both with the matriculation process and the helpfulness and responsiveness of the
matriculation staff. 1262 students completed the exit survey. When asked to rate their overall experience with the Graduate School’s matriculation office and staff, 95.1% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied. 93.9% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the responsiveness of the matriculation staff. Similarly, 93.4% of respondents were satisfied with the helpfulness of their graduate school advisor.

Students completing their studies were also satisfied or very satisfied with the helpfulness of the thesis/dissertation checklist (93.2%) and the availability of online forms (94.1%). While the number of students satisfied or very satisfied with the graduation check process was very high (89.7%), 10.3% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Some of the dissatisfaction with the process may be attributed to the Graduate School’s web-interface (GSPOST) by means of which students complete and submit their plans of study. 10.4% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this web interface. Students expressed greater satisfaction with other Graduate School web interfaces: for electronic theses/dissertations (94.9%); for the graduation application and approval process (92.8%); for admissions (94.8%); and the website (93.2%)

How did you use findings for improvement?

The Graduate School decided to transition from “home-grown” web interfaces to commercial products that serve the university as a whole. Within the next year, DegreeWorks will likely replace GSPOST. Apply Yourself will replace GWAAP. These products should result in improved service to both students applying to graduate programs and to currently enrolled students. The Graduate School also streamlined the graduation check process and aims to incorporate benchmarks within DegreeWorks that will enable students to monitor their progress towards degree completion.

Additional comments:

None