

And the survey says... We're happy!



Seniors Karen Klabzuba and Leesa Rosebrook at the 2004 Moundbuilding ceremony.

An annual survey of Southwestern College students was an early Christmas present for faculty and administrators.

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), conducted each year by associate dean of students Tami Pullins, revealed that the Moundbuilders now on campus are an unusually satisfied bunch. In almost every area that was important to them, the students reported they are happy with their Southwestern College experience.

The statistical results confirmed what administrators had suspected—this has been a feel-good year on campus.

“I guess I expected for the results to primarily be positive,” Pullins says. “It’s just been such an incredible year—the students seem to be really happy. Our early drop-outs, the ones we usually have after a couple of weeks, didn’t happen, so I guess I expected it to be close to what it turned out to be.”

The college also inserts some institution-specific questions into the survey, questions that essentially prod subjects that tend to be perennial sore spots.

“That was the only thing that surprised me,” Pullins admits. “Even those questions were positive. They obviously get asked because we have some concern there, and it’s so specific to Southwestern that some troubles could show up and we just didn’t have that.”

Students are able to identify which issues are important to them. SC responses highlighted instructional effectiveness, financial aid, academic advising, campus climate, and student-centeredness.

“These results are consistent with what we see and hear day in and day out at the college: Our students care about their academic experience, they are concerned about managing the expense of attending SC, and they want to be treated well by people who care about them,” says President Dick Merriman.

Because the SSI is used at hundreds of colleges and universities, the results reveal how satisfied students are and compare their responses to national satisfaction scores. On every measure, SC students are more satisfied than the national average at similar institutions, often by large margins.

The SC-specific questions covered such topics as laptop usage, internships, liberal arts and studies classes, employment opportunities, and the plus/minus grading system.

Although results were overwhelmingly positive, Pullins will continue to work on the lower-rated issues. Safety and security, a perennial concern on college campuses, will be topic of student focus groups as Pullins continues to listen and respond to student concerns.

Four-year degree? It can happen here.

According to recently released data, Southwestern College is the leader, among reporting Kansas colleges and universities, in graduating students on time.

This report, published by the Education Trust from information filed with the U.S. Department of Education, follows a freshman cohort—a group of students who start full-time study at the same college at the same time—and reports the percentage of each cohort who graduate from that same school four years, five years, and six years later.

- Southwestern College and the University of Saint Mary (Leavenworth) have the highest four-year graduation rates in Kansas, 42.9% and 47.5% respectively.
- Southwestern has the highest five-year graduation rate in Kansas at 53.7%. The University of Kansas and Washburn University were next with five-year graduation rates of 52.4% and 51.6% respectively.
- Southwestern College has the highest four-year and five-year graduation rates for minority students among colleges and universities in Kansas.
- Looking at five-year graduation rates, Southwestern College has the smallest “graduation gap” between male and female students, meaning that roughly equal percentages of male and female students graduate. Nationally, many higher education institutions are experiencing graduation rates for males that are significantly lower than those for females.

“For students who want to derive the full benefit of attending college, graduation is the name of the game,” says Southwestern president Dick Merriman. “For cost-conscious families, minimizing college costs by graduating on time is also crucial.”

Collegian student newspaper in cyberspace

After years without an online edition, *The Collegian* is once again joining the digital age.

Through a partnership with CollegePublishers.com, future issues of *The Collegian* will be posted online for 24-hour access from anywhere in the world with internet access.

Like other Web sites, *The Collegian* can be accessed by simply entering its url—www.scCollegian.com—no password or special code is required. Readers can register, however, to have e-mail notifications sent to them when a new issue or breaking stories are posted.

“We are really excited about what this means for *The Collegian*,” says Christy Hopkins, editor. “Not only will we be able to reach a wider audience, including SC friends and family, but an online edition will allow us to have more timely coverage.”

The Web site can be updated any time and staff anticipate that future sports results and other coverage will be posted shortly after event completion. The Web site also provides a direct line of communication between readers and staff members.

SC opens center in Oklahoma City area

Southwestern College Professional Studies is now helping adults in the Oklahoma City area achieve their goals of completing bachelor’s degrees. The college has opened a Professional Studies Center at 1140 S. Douglas Blvd. in Midwest City.

The first students enrolled in classes in January, and a ribbon-cutting and open house at the facility are set for Thursday, March 10.

The Midwest City center offers classes in its facility leading to majors in business administration, business quality management, human resource development, and security management. Southwestern College learners also can complete these same majors online, as well as online majors in computer programming technology, criminal justice, operations management, pastoral studies, and security management.

The new location was chosen because of its convenience for learners, says Karen Pedersen, vice president for professional studies at Southwestern.

“One of our top priorities is to allow our learners to focus on their educational experience, and to do this we make the logistics as simple as possible,” says Karen Pedersen, vice president for professional studies.

Established in 1885, Southwestern has become a leader in adult education, with its professional studies centers featuring practical, career-oriented majors leading to bachelor’s degrees. Adults with some college education (typically at least 30 hours) enroll in classes that meet once each week for six weeks.

Other professional studies centers are located in East Wichita, West Wichita, McConnell Air Force Base, and downtown Winfield.

For more information, contact professional studies personnel at prostudy@sckans.edu.

SC joins Visioneering Wichita project

Southwestern College Professional Studies and SC Online have been accepted as a partner in the **Visioneering Wichita** project. This effort, which been in progress for nearly a year, has resulted in a bottoms-up plan developed by hundreds of Wichita and South Central Kansas leaders and citizens.

The plan includes more than 100 goals broken out into six foundations with the purpose of improving all aspects of life for this regional area. The six foundations include economic development, education, quality of life, government, infrastructure, and private sector leadership.

Professional study contacts are Mary Bulla, director of academic programs; and George Heinrich, technical advisor.



SC basketball teams closed out their seasons as over-achievers.

Doug Hall’s men’s team, picked in pre-season polls to finish seventh, ended up second in KCAC regular season standings, before bowing out in the league tournament. The Lady Builders, under the leadership of Dave Denly, completed the season in fifth in the KCAC.

Listen to archived games on the Web at www.moundbuilder.com.