

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND EFFECTIVENESS

**Administration of the Parent Satisfaction Survey
*Spring 2015***

Summary of Key Findings

A majority of respondents:

- Were parents of first-year/freshmen students (36.32%)
- Their student lived on campus (56.06%; largest residence hall Heritage 18.41%)
- Hold a bachelor's degree (35.68%)
- Are in the age range of 41-50 (52.53%)
- Have a household income of \$96K-\$120K (26.14%)

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being "Not Important/Satisfied at all" and 5 being "Very Important/Satisfied", there is a:

- -1.32 gap between the *M* importance (4.70) and satisfaction (3.38) in communication about the status of financial aid award ($d = -.88$)
- -1.00 gap between the *M* level of importance (4.72) and satisfaction (3.72) of "not getting the run around" with inquiries ($d = -.83$)
- -.21 gap between the *M* importance (4.63) and satisfaction (4.42) of experiencing a campus tour ($d = -.27$)
- The most important aspects were Tarleton caring about the success of my student & not getting the "run around" while seeking information on campus. ($M = 4.72$)
- Parents were most satisfied with experiencing a campus tour ($M = 4.42$)

Introduction

In partial fulfillment of a 2015 strategy (ES1.c) associated with the Tarleton State University 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) developed and administered a parent satisfaction survey. Under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Wallace, representatives from various Tarleton divisions/departments developed questions to not only measure parent levels of satisfaction with, but also importance of, areas including housing, financial aid, billing services, and student life.

Methodology

Participants

The population for this survey research was all parents who had at least one student enrolled at Tarleton for the spring 2015 semester and had an emergency contact email address on file in the Banner student information system (N = 3,820). An email detailing the purpose of the survey, instructions on how to access the survey via Qualtrics, and an informed consent were sent to each address.

In total 3,820 emails were initially sent with 258 emails returning as undeliverable. Thus a net of 3,562 valid emails were utilized. The survey was available April 9-April 30, 2015. Five reminders were sent to individuals not having completed the survey. The dates of the reminders were April 13, 16, 20, 24, and the final reminder on April 30. In total 799 individuals participated in the survey for a response rate of 22% and +/- margin of error of 3.09%.

Instrument

The instrument used in this assessment project was homegrown and developed through feedback from representatives of enrollment management, financial aid, business services, residential living and learning, and student life. Questions were developed to measure the importance of, as well as the level of satisfaction associated with Tarleton's enrollment/payment processes. Questions related to student's classification/place of residence and parent's education level/age/income were also included.

The instrument was pilot tested with approximately 18 individuals that represented higher education faculty/administrators, and parents with college going students at other universities. The final survey was comprised of 26 questions, including one open-ended question. The survey & email invitation to participate may be accessed at the following link:

[Parent Satisfaction Survey](#)

Pilot testing was utilized to ensure question clarity and content validity. Additionally, the internal consistency of the questions was measured by obtaining Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.0 to 1.0 with values above .70 suggesting that survey/index items are consistently measuring the same theme/construct.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal components analysis extraction method was employed to determine how well the questions measured the areas of interest (housing, financial aid, campus environment etc...). Utilizing SPSS 22.0 (IMB Corp. Released 2013. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0 Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.) components (synthetic dependent variables) were generated which identified the questions with the highest loadings, or structure coefficients, associated with each component. The number of components generated will always equal the number of items, but one goal of EFA is to retain the fewest number of components that explain the greatest amount of variance in the total survey

responses. Using the eigenvalues greater than 1.0 retention method, 4 of 18 components for the questions associated with “importance” and 4 of 18 components for the questions associated with “satisfaction” were retained. The eigenvalues and unique and cumulative variance accounted for by importance and satisfaction component are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Variance Explained by Principal Component and Cumulatively

Importance

Component	eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.403	0.5224	0.5224
2	1.453	0.0807	0.6031
3	1.283	0.0713	0.6744
4	1.064	0.0591	0.7335

Satisfaction

Component	eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.3	0.4611	0.4611
2	1.786	0.0992	0.5604
3	1.454	0.0808	0.6411
4	1.027	0.0571	0.6982

A review of Table 1 indicates that the majority of the variance in the total “importance” responses is associated with the components labeled *Campus Encounters* and *Financial Assistance* (60.31%). In the responses associated with “satisfaction”, the components labeled *Residential Living & Learning* and *Financial Assistance* account for 56.04 of the total variance. Not only do these constructs of importance/satisfaction account for the majority of the variance in this administration of the survey, it is arguable that future administrations could be limited to these questions in order to gain an understanding of what is most important to parents and how satisfied they are with the service received. However, it is of utmost importance that administration determines if these “importance” and “satisfaction” constructs are what the institution is attempting to improve.

Next, the rotated component matrix was reviewed to label the latent constructs associated with each of the retained components. Stevens (2002) proposes guidelines on the component coefficient cut-off based on one and two tailed critical values based on the sample size. For the present study, that two-tailed critical value for a sample of 799 is approximately .182. After a

review of each matrix and associated questions, the components, or latent constructs, for the “importance” and “satisfaction” were labeled as to what they best represented or measured. The labeled components, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients, means, standard deviations, and associated questions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Rotated Component Matrices for Importance and Satisfaction Questions

Importance ($\alpha=.944$)	Components			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Campus Encounters</i> ($\alpha=.819$; $M=4.52$; $s=.728$)				
Accuracy in recruiting practices	0.773			
Experiencing a campus tour	0.772			
Admissions staff are knowledgeable	0.755			
Orientation/registration	0.733			
Opportunities for Family Weekend	0.678			
Business Office hours	0.595			
Ease of payment website	0.542			
<i>Financial Assistance</i> ($\alpha=.942$; $M=4.57$; $s=.765$)				
Communication about FA award		0.870		
Ease in completing FA application		0.865		
FA counselors are helpful		0.838		
Payment options		0.485		
<i>Valuing of Relationships</i> ($\alpha=.750$; $M=4.39$; $s=.876$)				
My feeling a part of the TSU community			0.794	
TSU cares about my student's success			0.772	
TSU cares about my involvement			0.759	
Not getting the "run around"			0.690	
<i>Residential Living & Learning</i> ($\alpha=.869$; $M=4.47$; $s=.851$)				
Living conditions in residence halls				0.834
RH staff concerned about my student				0.815
Ease in completing RH application				0.749

Satisfaction ($\alpha=.928$)	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
Residential Living & Learning ($\alpha=.835$; $M=4.04$; $s=1.01$)					
Living conditions in residence halls	0.900				
Ease in completing RH application	0.863				
RH staff concerned about my student	0.809				
Opportunities for Family Weekend	0.489				
Financial Assistance ($\alpha=.907$; $M=3.51$; $s=1.14$)					
Ease in completing FA application		0.903			
FA counselors are helpful		0.897			
Communication about FA award		0.888			
Valuing of Relationships ($\alpha=.792$; $M=3.88$; $s=1.03$)					
My feeling a part of the TSU community			0.806		
TSU cares about my involvement			0.788		
TSU cares about my student's success			0.732		
Not getting the "run around"			0.691		
Campus Encounters ($\alpha=.792$; $M=4.26$; $s=.827$)					
Accuracy in recruiting practices				0.802	
Admissions staff are knowledgeable				0.726	
Experiencing a campus tour				0.713	
Orientation/registration				0.619	
Payment Processes ($\alpha=.783$; $M=4.10$; $s=.868$)					
Ease of payment website					0.883
Payment options					0.883
Business Office hours					0.655

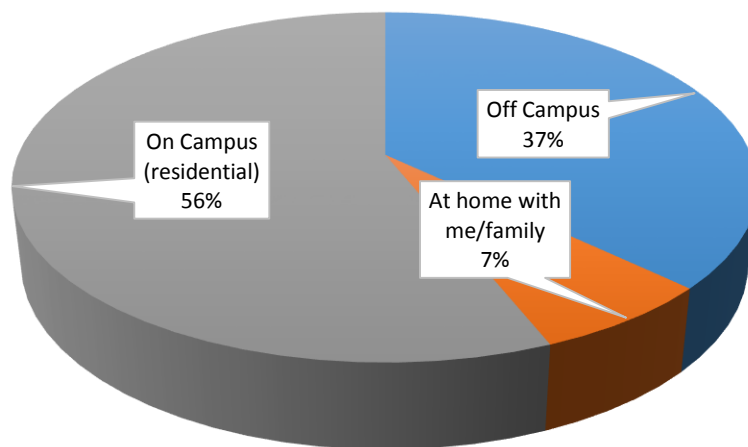
Table 2 indicates that the questions associated with all constructs demonstrated high levels of internal consistency. The component labeled *Financial Assistance* was deemed the most “important” aspect of the survey with a mean response of 4.57 on a scale of 1-5. The questions associated with the construct *Valuing of Relationships* were the least important with a mean of 4.39. Therefore, it could be concluded that parents are more concerned with the financial resources available to pay for their student’s education than feeling like a part of the Tarleton experience.

With regard to “satisfaction”, the component associated with *Campus Encounters* garnered the highest mean of 4.26. *Financial Assistance* demonstrated the lowest mean score of 3.51. These findings suggest that parents are more satisfied with the aspects of the college choice/matriculation process while their experience with the financial aid process was not as satisfying. However, it is highly possible that the majority of this sample’s dealing with the financial aid office occurred under a previous regime. Since 2013, strides have been made and evidence suggests improvements in the areas of customer service and applicant processing.

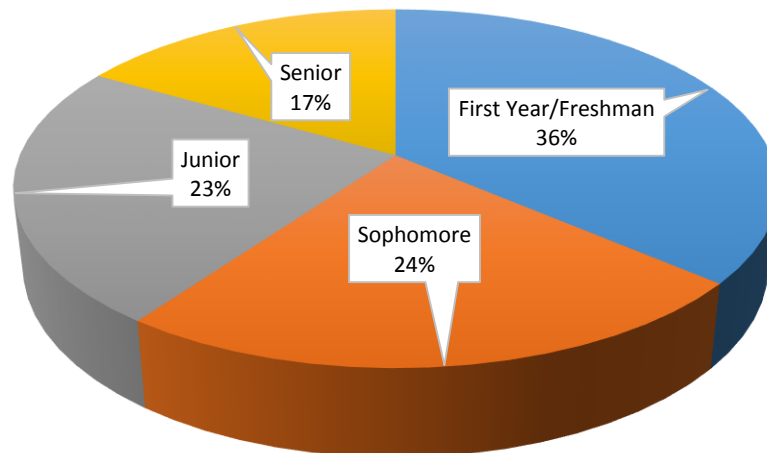
Findings

General & Demographic Questions

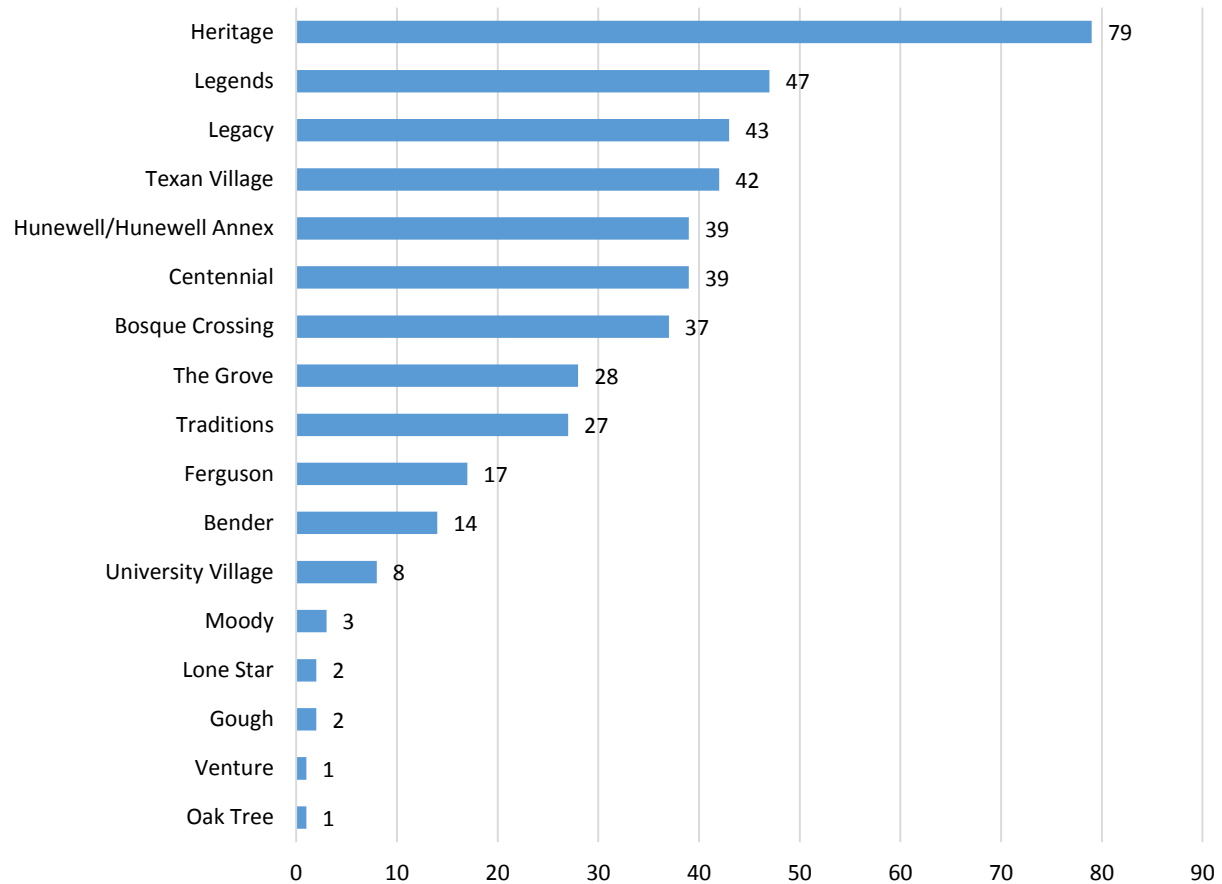
Where does your student live? (n=792)



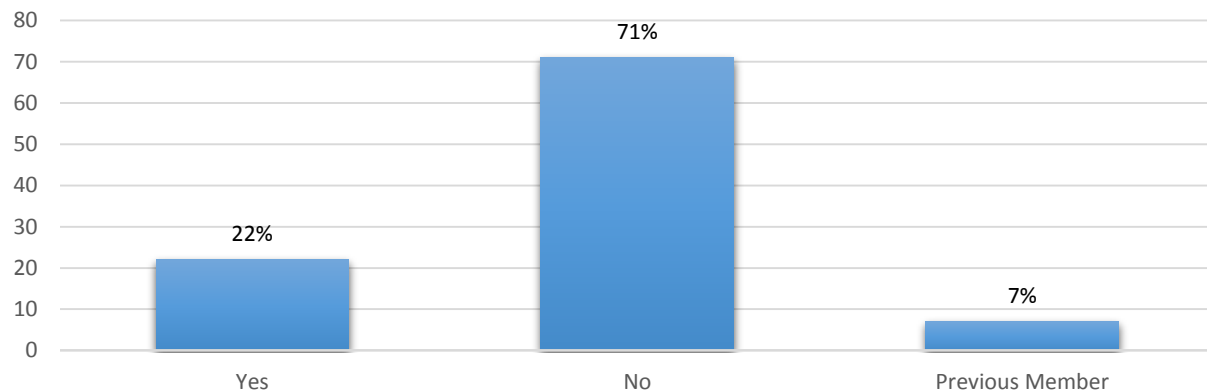
What classification is your student? (n=739)



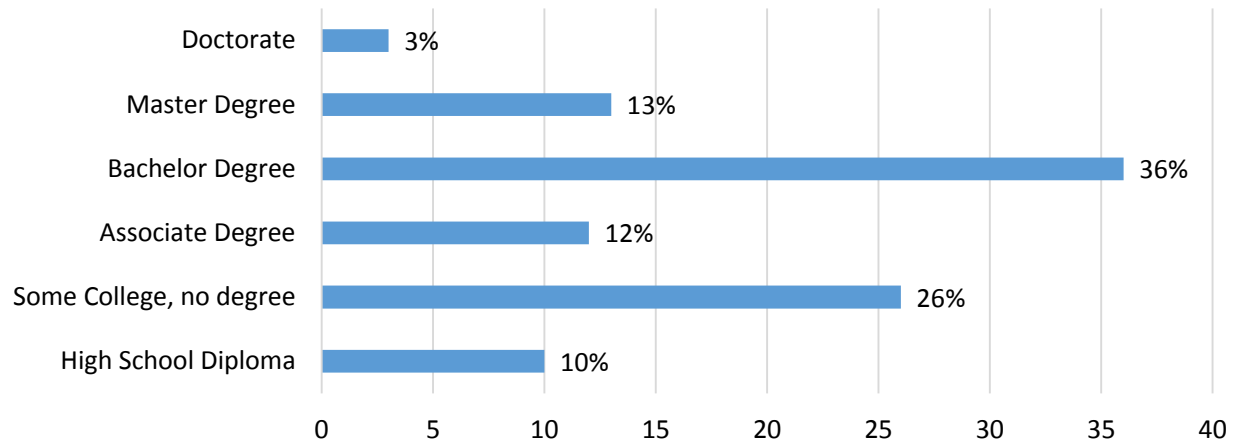
If living on campus, where does your student live? (n=429)



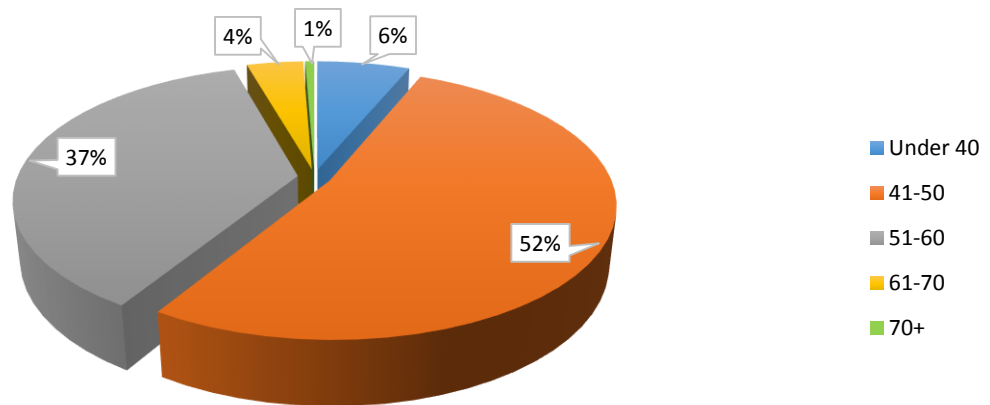
Are you currently a member of the Tarleton Parent Association? (n=662)



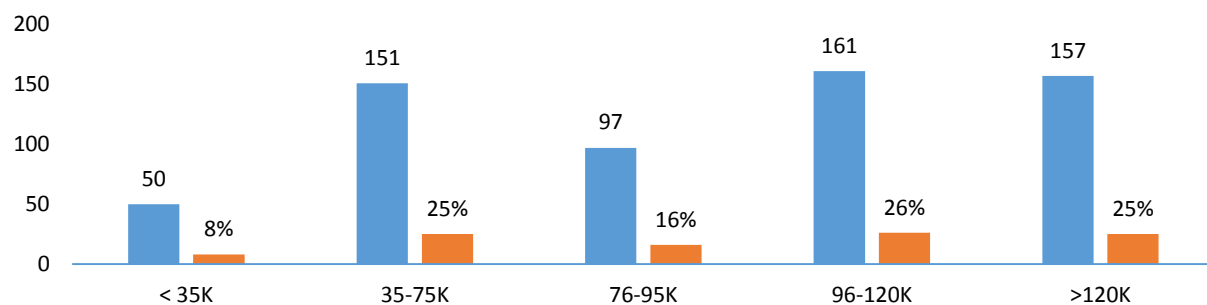
Highest Level of Parent Education (n=653)



Parent Age (n=653)

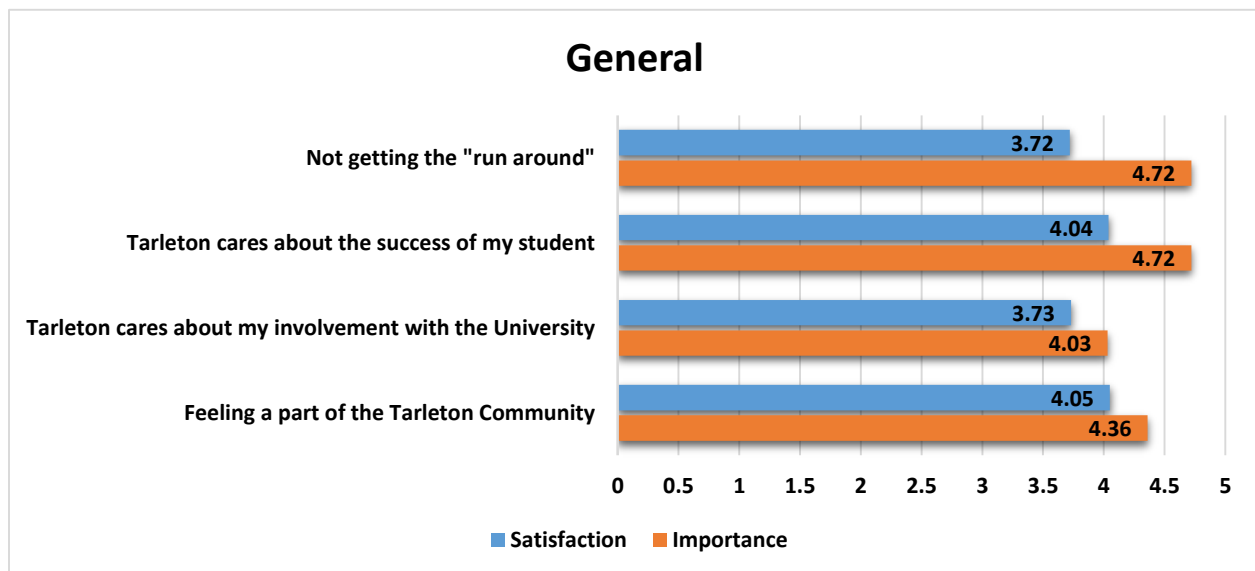


Household Income Ranges (n=616)



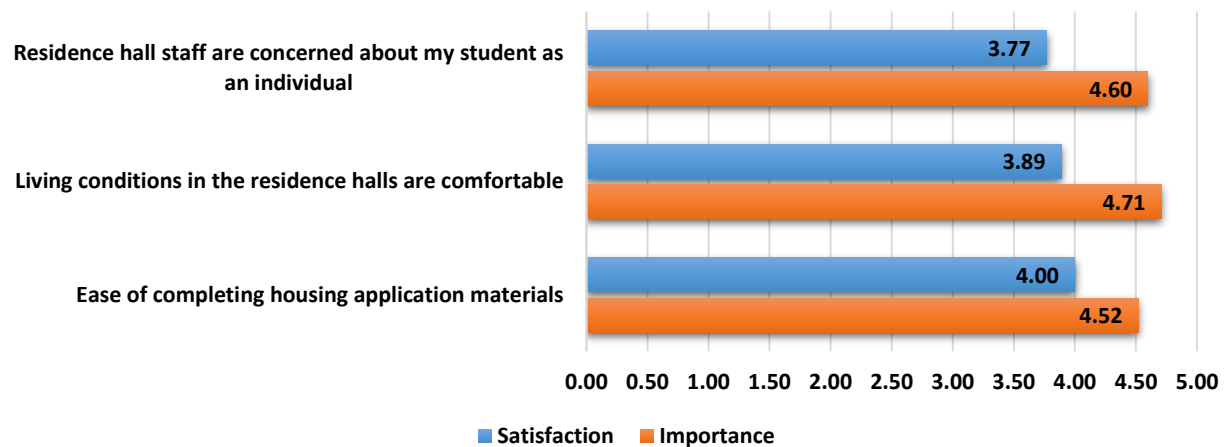
Analysis of Data

The core of the survey questioned respondents on the level of satisfaction with a specific topic as well as the level of importance that topic held to the individual. Below are tables that present the mean response to each importance and satisfaction question, the mean difference (or “gap”), the effect size, and correlation coefficient of the paired questions. Where indicated (* $p < .05$), the difference and/or correlation is statistically significant.



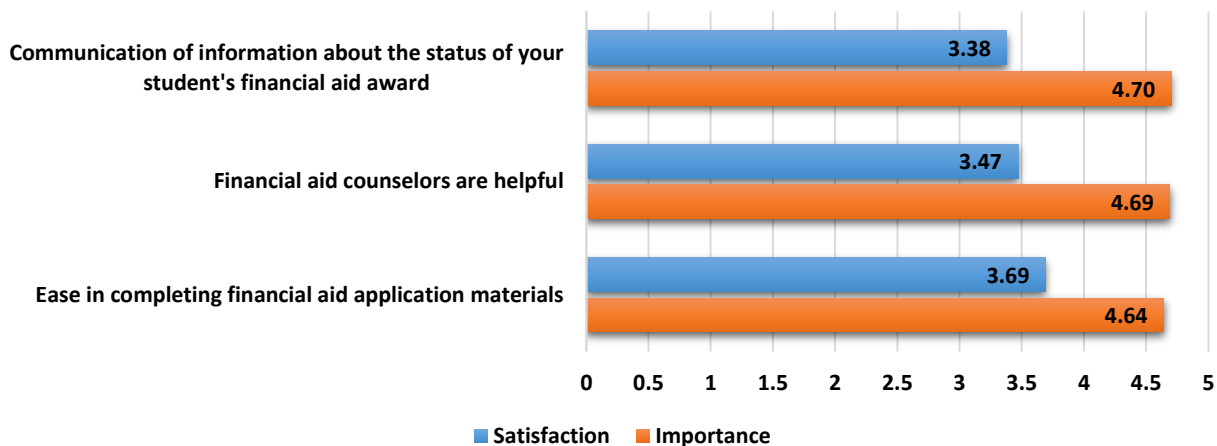
Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Not getting the "run around"(n=508)	3.72	4.72	-1.00*	-0.83	.200*
Tarleton cares about the success of my student (n=531)	4.04	4.72	-0.68*	-0.72	.393*
Tarleton cares about my involvement with the University (n=517)	3.73	4.03	-0.30*	-0.28	.394*
Feeling a part of the Tarleton Community (n=528)	4.05	4.36	-0.31*	-0.34	.420*

Housing



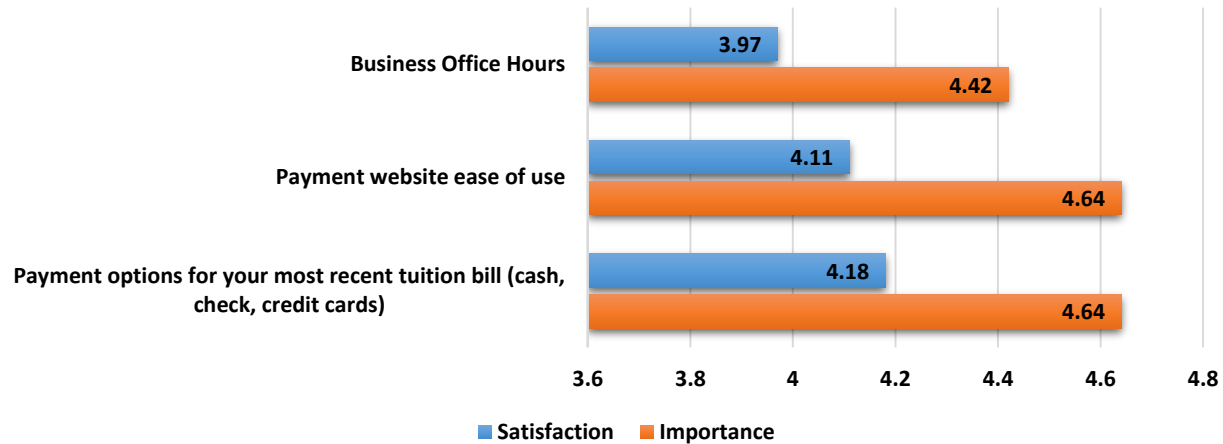
Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Residence hall staff are concerned about my student as an individual (n=362)	3.77	4.60	-0.83*	-0.74	.236*
Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable (n=411)	3.89	4.71	-0.82*	-0.72	.193*
Ease of completing housing application materials (n=419)	4.00	4.52	-0.52*	-0.49	.134*

Financial Aid



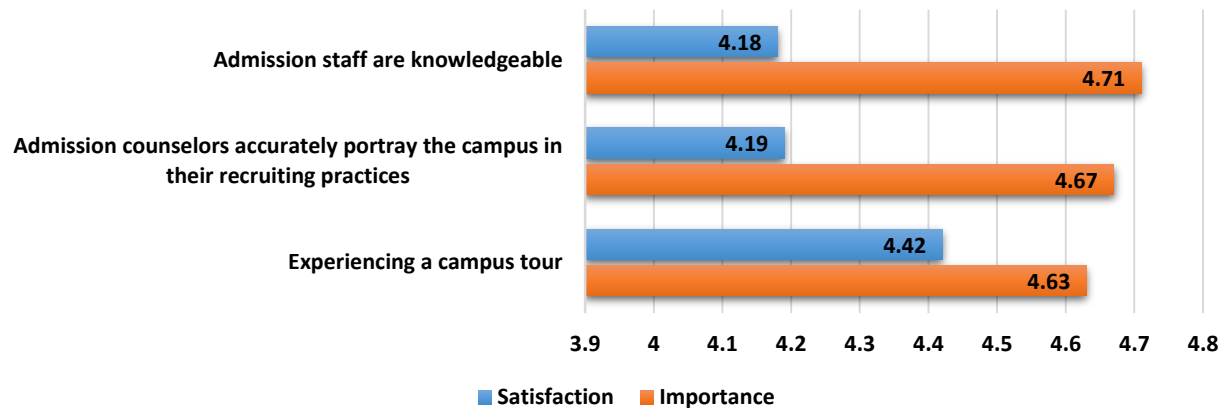
Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Communication of information about the status of your student's financial aid award (n=449)	3.38	4.70	-1.32*	-0.88	.048
Financial aid counselors are helpful	3.47	4.69	-1.22*	-0.94	.072**
Ease in completing financial aid application materials	3.69	4.64	-0.95*	-0.83	.103**

Business Services



Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Business Office Hours (n=488)	3.96	4.42	-0.46*	-0.47	.204*
Payment website ease of use (n=507)	4.11	4.63	-0.52*	-0.53	.215*
Payment options for your most recent tuition bill (cash, check, credit cards) (n=531)	4.18	4.64	-0.46*	-0.51	.248*

Admissions Office



Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Admissions staff are knowledgeable (n=524)	4.18	4.71	-0.53*	-0.64	.280*
Admission counselors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices (n=490)	4.19	4.67	-0.48*	-0.58	.316*
Experiencing a campus tour (n=510)	4.42	4.63	-0.21*	-0.27	.372*

Orientation Experience



Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small<.20; moderate .50; large .80 or greater	Satisfaction	Importance	Mean Diff	Effect Size	<i>r</i>
Orientation/Registration Experience (n=516)	4.24	4.69	-0.45*	-0.51	.328*
Opportunities for Involvement in Family Weekend (n=454)	3.96	4.29	-0.33*	-0.34	.410*

Comments

Below is a brief sampling of comments submitted via the open ended question, “What can Tarleton do to increase your satisfaction as a parent?”

A full listing of all comments may be found via this link: [Comments - full listing](#)

SATISFACTION

- You all are awesome; 2 of my children have graduated from Tarleton,...my satisfaction is, when I see my children, I see how they have grown and excelled from their experience at Tarleton. I am pleased with Tarleton but the more important thing is my daughter is very happy and enjoying her time at Tarleton.

ACTIVITIES

- Have opportunities for networking in cities where the students are from. Example we live in San Antonio and it would be nice to know other Tarleton families from our area.
- More school sponsored spirit activities and schooling social gathering opportunities

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Give students more employment opportunities on campus and more ways to learn about the job market.
- Sometimes I feel like an outsider because my daughter is legally grown, however I pay for her tuition. The calendar is not always user friendly. Everything else is great.

PARENT ASSOCIATION

- I was not aware of the Parent Association and would love to become a member. ...it might be helpful to provide similar information to the parents so that we can help make sure the students know what is going on.
- Was unaware of the parent association. Send more info out on that.

PARKING ISSUES

- I think Tarleton is a good school. I am struggling with your current plan for building new dorms without an adequate parking plan. I understand that the University is growing, but the lack of parking spaces for off campus students is a real hardship. My daughter has almost missed class on occasion, not because she skipped or was late, but because she drove around for 20-30 minutes looking for a parking spot.

HOUSING ISSUES

- While the Bosque crossing apartments were excellent in quality, the issues with abnormal roommates was difficult. My daughter said one roommate came in the first meeting and stated "hello! I've been kicked out of my last three apartments." And she turned out to be very troublesome
- My husband and I are satisfied, no, thrilled with Tarleton University. There is one bone of contention we have, however. We do not think it is appropriate or ethical to demand, to force students to live in on-campus housing for the second year.

DINING ISSUES

- The cafeteria food is not that great and is too crowded during peak times. / It needs to be open more hours, my son was unable to eat very much in the cafeteria because it was either closed or too crowded. Students in school Apartments with kitchens should not be mandated to purchase a meal plan.

WEBSITE ISSUES

- When trying to pay tuition online, we had some problems. / We used a Savings account because I was told by the Business Office we could. It turned out to be a RETURNED CHECK AND THE FEE. We didn't discover this until he needed to register for classes and was denied. Very stressful for us.
- The billing aspect of the website is difficult to read and understand. It's more like an accounting spreadsheet than user-friendly.

ADVISING/DEGREE PLANNING/CLASS OFFERINGS

- Counseling. The biggest issue we have had is getting good information on degree plans and settling on majors. / The first year was good, then the next year some miscommunication and a change of major that didn't need to take place.
- My daughters (2011 and current) have been well taken care of by XXXXXX from the Honor Society as far as degree plans and registering for classes.

ACADEMIC ISSUES

- Some positive feedback: Faculty and staff are student centered. Degree offerings are amazing! New academic facilities are wonderful. The campus is beautiful. Institutional leadership is good
- Hold your professors accountable for their teaching and ensure those professors actually care about the success of their students. We have been extremely dissatisfied with a few of the professors this year who obviously do not want to see their students be successful and have no desire to help them.

ACCESS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- Provide note services for students of special needs. The current system of having the student ask other students to share does not work.. Other places like TCCC/ the disability office find a note taker who emails the notes to the student
- Our daughter, is in Accommodations program, as she has Dyslexia. There have been repeated issues with professor not getting tests to center, and honestly believe there is much more that could be done to ensure tests are there as promised, and some accountability to ensure Professors and Accommodations

COMMUNICATION

- At orientation parents were/are encouraged to let the students grow up and do for themselves - which I have done, so I have not had much experience with the Tarleton staff, offices or practices... I have not received any negative comments from my student.
- I continue to be very impressed with the communication from the departments and I have been very impressed with the school of business and the rodeo coach XXXXX.

FINANCIAL/BUSINESS PROCESS/TUITION/PAYMENT/SCHOLARSHIPS

- Better communication regarding financial aid
- Find a way to get the Admissions office and financial aid office on the same page. That has been the only problem my daughter has had at Tarleton. Other than that, my daughter is having a wonderful experience and getting a good education at the same time. Thank you.