

# Assessment of Strategic Processes by Student Feedback

Graduate Business Program, Economics and Business Department

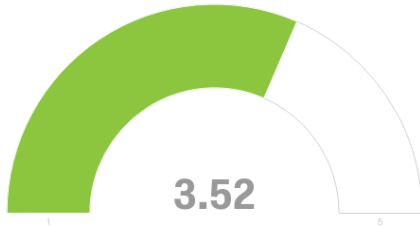
ACBSP STANDARD #6. Educational and Business Process Management

## 2018 Snapshot of Key Measures from the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey

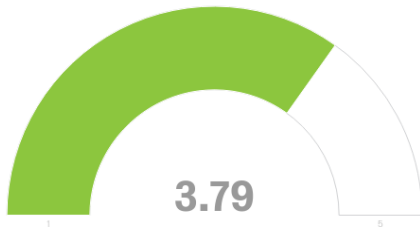
Measured on a 5-point scale (1) Extremely Dissatisfied to (5) Extremely Satisfied

[Click on image to go to report details](#)    [Table of Contents is on the next page](#)

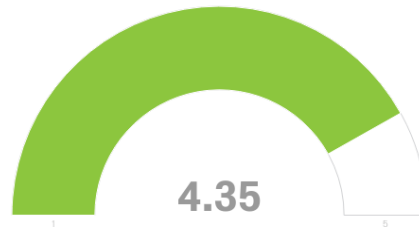
How satisfied are you with the availability of the course offerings in the past year?



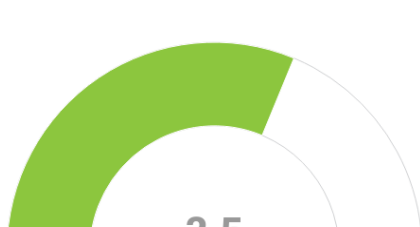
How satisfied are you with the quality of the faculty that you had for your classes?



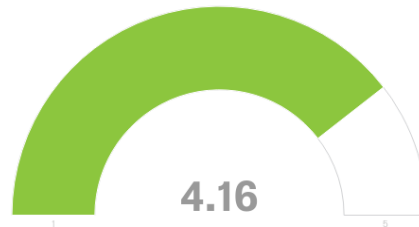
How satisfied are you with your interactions with faculty?



How satisfied are you working with your student experience mentor (SEM)?



How satisfied are you with your interactions with your advisor?



# NPS 16

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January 2, 2018

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## Introduction

Annually graduate students are asked to provide feedback about the various offices and processes with which they interact in their programs of study while at Moravian College. Feedback was requested about their satisfaction with processes and activities in which they are involved from the start of their time at Moravian through their graduation. This report focuses on the time people are active students in a graduate business program at Moravian College.

Below key indicators of student satisfaction with the Graduate Business Program are provided over a five year period for certain functions and three years for other functions. The data was collected via survey questionnaires distributed electronically to students. The survey process for the years 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017 were described in [previous reports](#) and will not be repeated here.

This report provides a brief description of the survey process, a breakout of quantitative results by strategic area with specific student feedback, an overview of other student qualitative feedback, and suggestions for focusing efforts to improve the delivery of services to students in the identified strategic areas.

## Survey Process

The 2018 survey was designed to provide similar data to that collected in previous years. Changes in the structure of the admissions process required changes in questions in 2016. For the most part those changes were carried forward. New questions have been added in the latter years; they will be discussed below.

The 2018 questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics with email notification to students that the instrument was available. The questionnaire was open to completion beginning September 17 and closed October 15, 2018. Active graduate business students as defined in graduate student advisor lists from AMOS were emailed a request to participate in the survey process. The email was sent to their Moravian College email account. Two follow-up emails were sent to students in an effort to maximize the response rate. The response rate for this survey administration was 54%, 44 students responded, an increase over the last two years when the response rate was 37% and 33% in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Nine of the respondents (20%) started the program in the summer or fall of 2018.

Unless noted otherwise in the discussion below, respondents answered individual questions using a five-point scale ranging from (1) Extremely dissatisfied to (5) Extremely satisfied. Results were summarized as weighted averages for each question calculated as the number of responses for each item on the scale divided by the total number of responses for the item.

## Student Satisfaction within Strategic Areas

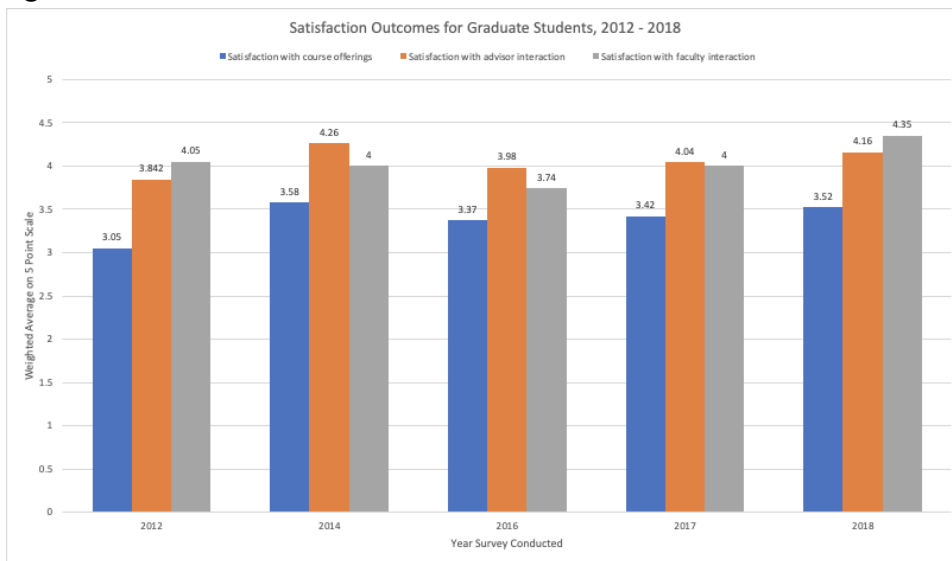
### *Academic Program*

Student satisfaction with course offerings, advisor and faculty interaction were collected over five administrations of the survey. Figure 1 shows results for these areas. This data was gathered using a five point satisfaction scale ranging from “Not at all satisfied” to “Extremely Satisfied”. Results were summarized as weighted averages for each area calculated as the number of responses for each item on the scale divided by the total number of responses for the question. Figure 1 displays survey results for student satisfaction with course offerings, advisor interaction, and faculty interaction.

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of courses offered in the graduate program. Students want to complete their program of study quickly and will advocate for courses to be offered frequently, especially core courses. Students satisfaction with the availability of course offerings has ranged from 3.05 in 2012 to 3.52 in 2018 with a peak of 3.58 in 2014. The average over the five survey administrations was 3.39. This year's results suggest that the program is doing about the same as last year in terms of course offerings and remaining above the historic average response to this item.

Students were also asked about their satisfaction with their interactions with advisors and faculty. Those responses averaged above 4 on the five-point scale for the five year period. A new advising structure was put in place in the Spring 2018 semester. This is the first feedback cycle since that change. Student satisfaction is slightly higher this year than last but not significantly so. Similarly student satisfaction with their faculty interactions is higher than last year and above the five year average.

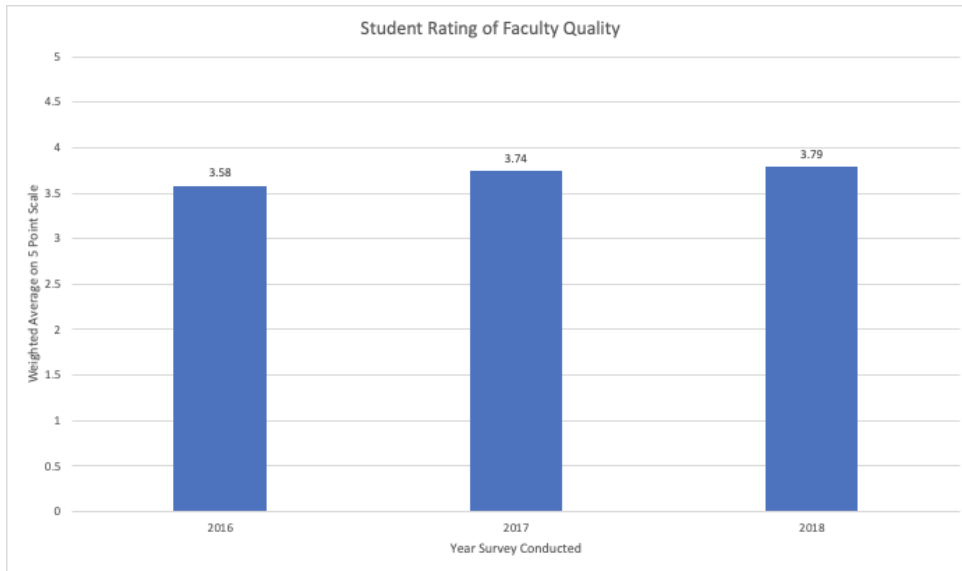
Figure 1.



The highest score that a student could give as a satisfaction rating is a five. Figure 1 reports the average score across all respondents for each year.

Related to faculty interactions is students' rating of faculty quality. Figure 2 provides that measure for the last three years when students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of the faculty in the program. The three-year average for this measure is 3.70. This year's rating was the highest yet measured though not significantly higher. The positive trend in faculty satisfaction suggests we are continuing to improve the quality of instruction yet tells us we still have room to grow.

Figure 2.



#### Student's Assessment of the Graduate Business Program

Three questions are asked of students that focus on the overall graduate program. One addresses students' satisfaction given their original expectations of the program, another whether they would recommend the program to others, and, new this year, the net promoter score (NPS).

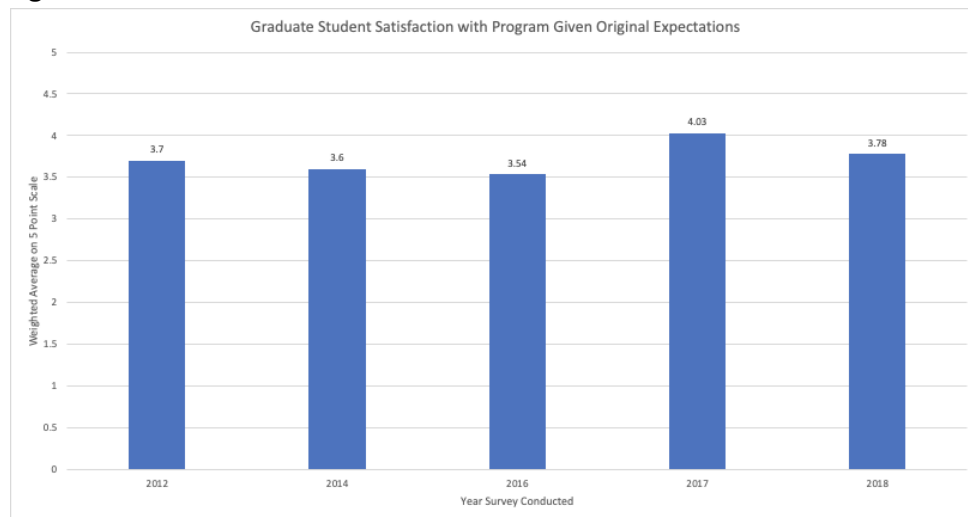
Students were asked each year in the last five to express their satisfaction with the program given the expectations they held when they entered. Figure 3 provides the results from this question. On average students rated their program satisfaction at 3.73 on the five-point scale over the five years. The response this year of 3.78 is down slightly from last year's rating of 4.03 which is the current high point.

In the four previous administrations of this survey, active students were asked if they would recommend their program of study to others with a simple yes or no response. On average over the four years, 94% of the respondents said they would. In last year's responses, 100% of students said yes they would recommend the program. While seemingly raising the program to an exalted level, closer reflection suggests that the simple binary response does not tell us enough about students' true perceptions of the program.

This year we chose to ask the question differently. Respondents were asked to respond to this question on a ten point scale -- Would you recommend your graduate program to someone else? The responses were used to create a net promoter score (NPS) by taking the percentage of promoters (those responding with a 9 or 10) and subtracting the percentage of respondents who were detractors (those responding with a 6 or less). The result of this calculation falls in the range -100% to 100%. The NPS for the graduate business program was 16.1% suggesting

that active students are more likely than not to recommend our program to others. The median NPS for businesses was found to be 16% (Reichheld, 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3.



### Qualitative Feedback

**New Courses:** Students suggested the following new course ideas:

- Non-profit management
- More leadership courses
- Classes in marketing or social media marketing
- Classes on how to make strategic decisions based upon data
- Crisis management
- More analytics courses
- Marketing, management, consulting, strategy, financial leadership, entrepreneurship`
- Organizational leadership, organizational skills
- Customer Service- how to put your customers first without jeopardizing your budget, conflict resolution/crucial conversations, diversity, and inclusion, etc.
- HR practices, do's and dont's And procedures and policies
- A technology based class regarding advances in healthcare technology
- Grant writing, more women in business classes
- Handling Employee Relations Issues, FMLA & Worker's Compensation
- Not really new, but I want HR analytics!

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<sup>1</sup> Caution should be exercised when using the NPS in a higher education environment. Some have suggested the NPS isn't a good fit in higher education because so many different services affect students, including housing, meal service, counseling services, etc. Those comments mostly focus on traditional undergraduate programs not graduate programs for working adults such as our program. Our graduate program is more similar to a retail purchase of a service by a consumer than is a traditional undergraduate program. However, a student will be more likely to stick to our program once they have advanced beyond two classes. They may, however, be more likely to respond passively, a response of 7 or 8 on the scale, than respond as a detractor; 14 students were passive responders in the survey.

- project management, small business planning

**Additional comments about course offerings:**

- Selecting and getting into courses has been very simple and easy.
- I'd love a class on government relations in the business world
- More core leadership courses, rather than in specific fields
- Hoping to see flexible options for winter 2019
- I think there's a good variety of courses offered for each field.
- course offerings are not conducive to students looking to complete their degree in 1 year.
- It would be nice to have an outline of classes needed and an idea of when they will be offered, especially if they are only offered once a year
- Just in general, it would be helpful if each professor utilized a rubric. One of my professors did not and it was confusing to determine his criteria for a project as well as how we were graded. It was very frustrating.
- I would like more HR focused courses in the MSHRM program. From my perspective, it seems like the MSHRM is essentially an MBA with a few ancillary HR focused courses. I may be wrong, but that's the way it feels.
- Courses are not all offered in order, prerequisites are not offered each term.

**Comments about advising and faculty:**

- The faculty themselves are generally great and very accommodating which is the most important component of an accelerated course load however it is the content that needs to be updated.
- I truly enjoy taking classes at Moravian, so much so that it makes me want to continue to further my education into a doctorate eventually.
- I haven't had any bad experiences. I loved all my professors even if some of the classes weren't for my concentration. I've learned something important in each of them. They each have diverse backgrounds and bring a lot to the table. I hope the program continues to grow!
- I am taking 2 courses in the Fall I session. One professor I enjoy very much, the other I am less than enthused by. I will delve into that deeper in my course evaluation, but I have made my concerns known on several levels.
- Expert in the workplace does not always equate to an expert in the classroom.
- Adjuncts can speak to their work and experience but is not knowledgeable about policies or real world applications besides their experiences.

**Comments and recommendations about the program:**

- I understand the need for a financial background/understanding, but the class felt so intense and difficult. It's a class everyone fears to take. Do we really need that much background if we are not going to be working in finance?
- I think an internship opportunity for students like me who are changing career paths would be very helpful. I do not have any experience in Health Administration but I'm pursuing my master in Health Administration. I think it would be highly useful to have a

program where in Moravian helps it's grad students network with and gain internships prior to or just after graduation.

- Great program for someone looking to check a box that says MBA. If you are looking to learn and grow maybe not the best option.
- I am relatively new to the Moravian Graduate program (began 2nd half of Spring 2018), however, I do look forward to my evening class every week. It is one of the highlights of my week!
- I hope the program continues to grow and expand. I know other schools offer students the ability to skype/"zoom" into every class. My classes have allowed this if someone is absent. I think this option would increase the number of students in the program. However, I enjoy going to class and having the face-to-face interactions with my professors and classmates. Overall, great job!!!! (-a former GA)
- Some classes don't carry conversations throughout the week and it could be so much more if this concept was enforced.
- The program I am has added additional class requirements while I am in it which has extended the time I expected my degree to take.

#### Takeaways

A new course schedule was put into place for the Fall 2018 semester in consideration of student feedback on course offerings. All core courses are now offered every semester instead of part in Fall and part in Spring as indicated in the posted [three-year preliminary course schedule](#). This is the first feedback since that change and it is too early to determine if the schedule change made a difference for students although as a first result the change would appear to be favorably accepted by students.

A new advising structure was created beginning in the Fall 2018 semester by bringing in an experienced individual to assist the director of the graduate programs with student advising. There may be some impact of the change in these responses. It is more likely, however, that we will need to wait until next year's survey to determine the impact of the change from the students' perspective.

In summary, student satisfaction with course offerings, advising, and faculty has increased over the last three years with satisfaction with faculty measured at its highest point in five years. Respondents to the 2018 survey indicated their highest level of satisfaction with their interaction with faculty. The NPS score reported here is a positive result when compared to results for businesses. However, the NPS and the other satisfaction ratings clearly indicate there is room for improvement.

Student feedback indicates that the following needs further attention:

1. Continued communication to students at the time of their admission and throughout their tenure about the availability of the preliminary course schedule on the Department's website on the [Graduate Advising](#) page is needed. The preliminary schedule is updated regularly by the Director of the Graduate Program. Many students may not know this schedule is available for their use. A communication plan to inform them of the



schedule's existence and how they can view it would help alleviate the problem of insufficient information about course schedules. Incoming students should be told and shown how they can access the preliminary schedule. The program director could ask faculty to post an announcement in the Canvas shells about the availability of the schedule to students.

2. New and continuing students need to be shown that the outline of classes they will need to complete their degree is available on the [Graduate Advising](#) page of the Department's website. Some students appear not to know the availability of this resource. This resource would answer students' questions about the courses they need to take, as well as the courses comprising their program of study. New students should be introduced to those outlines; faculty could be asked to post an announcement in their Canvas shells about the availability of the outlines.
3. Care is needed in selecting adjunct faculty who are both work experienced and knowledgeable about the theory of the topics they are teaching. Some student feedback suggests faculty with a practitioner background may not communicate fully theory students need to understand the topics in their classes. This could be an item of discussion in an adjunct faculty training program.
4. Faculty, particularly adjunct faculty, need training in the use of discussions in Canvas as a tool for meeting students' communication requirements, communicating course content, and meeting coursework hours requirements of the college. Offering support to faculty in creating rubrics, including information on how to use rubrics, would be beneficial to students and also for the assessment process.
5. Internships are an ongoing effort at the college. A process for undergraduate internships is in place. That effort is now being extended to the graduate program and should be a continued focus this year.

### *Admissions and SEM Support*

The survey identified 36% of the students responding as new students to the program who started in the Spring 2018 semester or more recently. Only those 16 respondents were asked questions about the admission process and their satisfaction with the support they received from their student experience mentor.

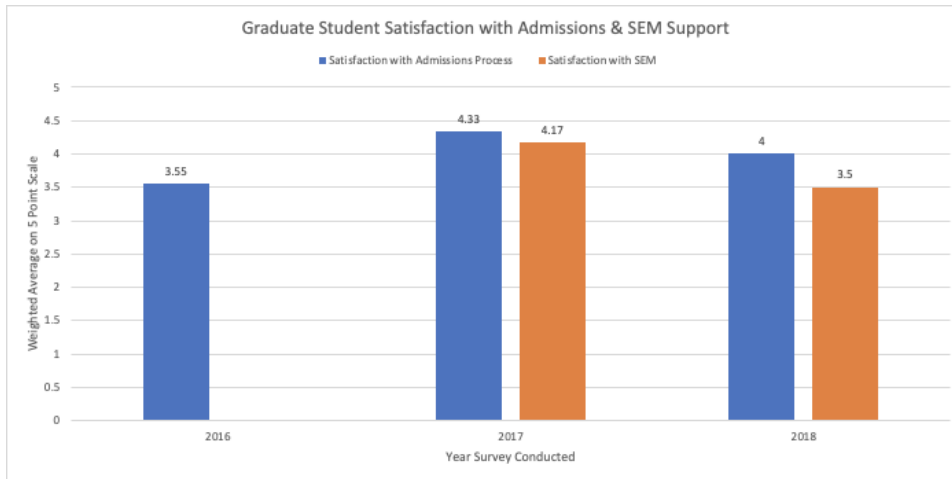
Figure 4 shows three years of responses to the question about their satisfaction with the helpfulness of the Admissions staff. The three year average is 3.96 out of 5. The average response dropped to 4 this year from 4.33 last year.

Beginning with the 2017 survey, students were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the student experience mentor with whom they worked in the admissions process and for initial course registrations, financial aid, and student accounts. Figure 4 shows the last two years of those results. This year new students indicated their average satisfaction with their SEM support was 3.5, down from 4.17 last year.

One written comment was provided by a student related to the admissions process. The student wrote:

- I felt the onboarding process could have been a little more smoothly[sic] and there could have been things in place to make it a smooth transition. I felt a little lost and things were rushed to be put together and I was nervous i wasn't doing everything right. A little more guidance would have helped.

Figure 4.



### Takeaways

Responses to the admissions process questions by new students were generally positive, although satisfaction with the process and with SEMs decreased year-over-year from last year's survey. The written comment suggests that the onboarding process, including the handoff from admissions to academic advisors needs to be improved.

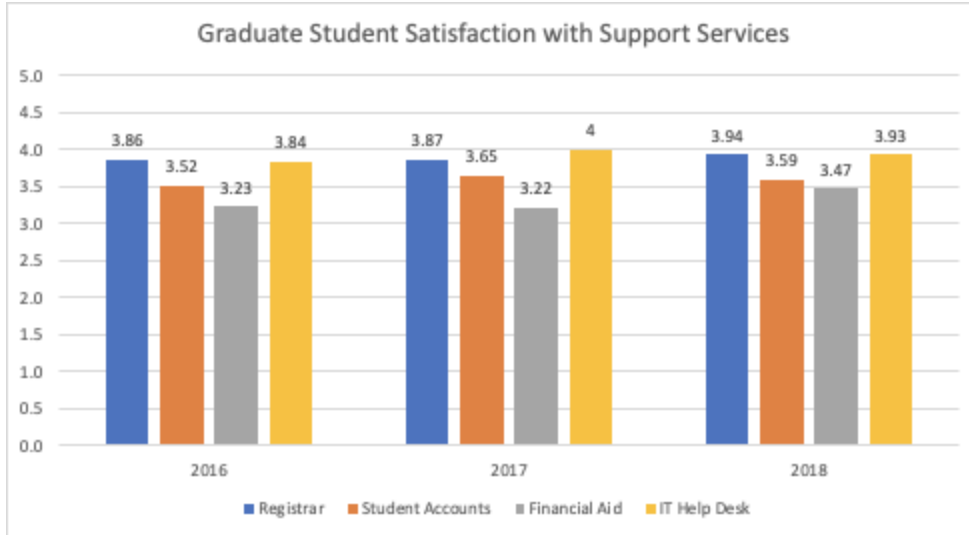
Student feedback indicates that the following needs further attention:

- An assessment of the onboarding process should be conducted to determine where uncertainty is created for new students and a plan created and implemented to improve the admission process outcomes for new students.

### *Student Support Services*

The student support category in this survey includes graduate students' satisfaction with the services they received from the Registrar's Office, Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and the IT Help Desk. Three years of survey data exists for this data. Figure 5 provides a graphical summary of students' responses to these items over the past three years.

Figure 5.



Generally the survey results are flat for all four areas of student support over the three years. IT Help Desk satisfaction received the highest satisfaction scores on average followed closely by the Registrar's Office. There was improvement in the satisfaction scores over last year's survey for Financial Aid and a slight improvement for the Registrar's Office. The highest score that a support service could achieve is a five.

#### Takeaways

Support services for students indirectly affect their learning and have a strong influence on their overall satisfaction with their degree program. Student feedback shows that there is much room for improvement in the delivery of these support services for adult learners who have jobs and are unable to use support services during working hours but would outside of those hours.

#### Recommendations

1. A meeting with the Director of the Graduate Business Program, Director of Assessment and Accreditation, the Graduate Program Academic Advisor, and the Dean of Graduate & Adult Enrollment should be held to review the survey results, determine which areas of focus are most critical for the Graduate Business Program, then develop a process improvement project to focus on the most critical areas of concern. The project plan should include objectives and milestones for completion.
2. The satisfaction survey points to areas of concern of students. A deeper examination of those concerns through focus groups could provide a greater level of understanding of student concerns. A focus group of students from the MGMT 513 class that went to Disney World in January 2017, for instance, surfaced that students were frustrated by their lack of knowledge of Canvas and assumptions by faculty that they knew how to use Canvas. That feedback led to an email to faculty requesting each to review their Canvas shell in depth with students at the first class meeting. Students in the focus group also explicitly stated that holding meetings, such as orientation meetings, during normal

business hours did not work for those students who were working during those hours and that the college should hold orientations at other times, later in the evening or even weekends.

3. In some areas we now have five years worth of data to analyze. Deeper analysis is now possible to determine the relationship of individual services to the overall student satisfaction score. Using the data in this way would provide deeper understanding of what students value in the program and how what they value leads to the program's success.

## Reference

Reichheld, Frederick F. 2003. "The One Number You Need to Grow. (Cover Story)." *Harvard Business Review* 81 (12): 46–54.  
<http://moravian.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bsh&AN=11587407&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.