

University of Northern Iowa
Maucker Union

**Student Perceptions of Maucker Union Gathered Through
The ACUI/EBI, Inc. College Union/Student Center Survey**

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Abstract

Maucker Union administered the web-based College Union/Student Center Survey through EBI, Inc. in March of 2011, in accordance with the Maucker Union assessment plan, which calls for this survey to be done every two years. Responses to the survey designed to gather student perceptions on aspects of the Maucker Union were received from 462 students (13% response rate). Results were broken down by several different “factors” related to overall student satisfaction with Maucker Union.

Executive Summary

Purpose

The survey was administered to gather student perceptions about Maucker Union. The bench-marking aspect of the survey compares Maucker Union results with results from six participating peer institutions selected by Maucker Union, all participants in the UNI Carnegie class, and all participants in general. Maucker Union staff also developed 10 institution-specific questions designed to gather more detailed information about what students were hoping to see in the Maucker Union.

Methodology

The survey was administered to a stratified (by class standing) random sample of 3,500 UNI under-graduate and graduate students in March, 2011. The administration was web-based, with students being invited to participate and complete the survey via a web site. The results were analyzed according to the following “factors:”

1. Maucker Union publicizes the Union and promotes campus activities
2. Maucker Union has a positive environment
3. Maucker Union is student-oriented
4. Maucker Union is a source of entertainment
5. Maucker Union enhances life and leadership
6. Satisfaction with Maucker Union food variety, quality and price
7. Satisfaction with other aspects of Maucker Union dining service
8. Satisfaction with Bookstore staff
9. Satisfaction with Bookstore item variety and price
10. Maucker Union cleanliness
11. Maucker Union staff
12. Overall program effectiveness

Findings

Results for each factor were tabulated and communicated according to the performance descriptors provided in the table below.

Table 1. Performance Descriptors for Factors

Performance Descriptor	Mean Range
Superior	Mean >6.5
Excellent	Mean 5.5-6.5
Good	Mean 4.5-5.5
Fair	Mean 3.5-4.5
Poor	Mean 2.5-3.5
Very Poor	Mean 1.5-2.5
Extremely Poor	Mean <1.5

For the purposes of this summary, it was decided that it would be useful to review the results in the context of the results of the last three surveys, conducted in 2005, 2007 and 2009. In the 2007 and 2009 renditions of the survey, regression analysis revealed that the top three predictors of overall satisfaction with Maucker Union were:

- Factor 5: Maucker Union enhances life and leadership (rated “Fair”)
- Factor 11: Maucker Union staff (rated “Good”)
- Factor 6: Maucker Union food variety, quality and price (rated “Good”).

The top predictors identified in the 2011 rendition of the survey are:

- Factor 6: Maucker Union food variety, quality and price
- Factor 1: Maucker Union publicizes the Union and promotes campus activities
- Factor 5: Maucker Union enhances life and leadership
- Factor 4: Maucker Union is a source of entertainment
- Factor 11: Maucker Union staff

A longitudinal view of the ratings for these factors is given in the table below.

Table 2. Longitudinal Comparison of Ratings for the Top Five Predictors of Overall Satisfaction with Maucker Union, with Performance Descriptions

Predictor Rank	Predictor Factor Title	2005 Rating	2007 Rating	2009 Rating	2011 Rating
Top Predictor	Factor 6: Maucker Union food variety, quality and price	baseline “Good”	6% decline “Good”	steady “Good”	2% improvement “Good”
Second Predictor	Factor 1: Maucker Union publicizes the Union and promotes campus activities	baseline “Good”	steady “Good”	1% improvement “Good”	1% improvement “Good”
Third Predictor	Factor 5: Maucker Union enhances life and leadership	baseline “Fair”	4% Improvement “Fair”	10% improvement “Fair”	2.5% improvement “Good”
Fourth Predictor	Factor 4: Maucker Union is a source of entertainment	baseline “Excellent”	2% improvement “Excellent”	steady “Excellent”	steady “Excellent”
Fifth Predictor	Factor 11: Maucker Union Staff	baseline “Good”	1% improvement “Good”	2% improvement “Excellent”	3.5% improvement “Excellent”

Since it was launched in the fall of 2007, the Student Leadership Center (SLC) has been steadily building a record of successful programs, contributing to the improvement of student ratings for “Factor 5: Maucker Union enhances life and leadership.” For the 2010-2011 academic year, the programming was focused on leadership development through community service with the Volunteer Tuesdays program. There were 294 individual students who contributed 2,103 hours of service in this first year of Volunteer Tuesdays. The data signal that progress is being made in refining the purpose and mission of the SLC. However, the data from this survey shows that there is still work to be done to improve the promotion of the SLC; in the 2009 survey, 75% of the respondents indicated that they were unaware of the SLC, or didn’t really know what it was, and that number increased to 78% in the current administration of the survey.

One of the strategic priorities identified in the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan and the Maucker union Strategic Plan is the fostering of student engagement in campus life at UNI. The responses to two of the institution-specific questions that Maucker Union developed for the survey provide some evidence that this is an appropriate area of focus.

- The first of these institution-specific questions asked how many student organizations the respondent belonged to. Approximately 37% of the respondents chose an answer indicating that they didn't belong to any student organizations, up from 25% in the 2009 survey.
- The second institution-specific question asked students to describe the importance of getting involved in campus organizations. Approximately 39% of the respondents indicated that while they believed involvement was important, they didn't know how to get involved. This response percentage is unchanged from the percentage reported in the 2009 survey.

The data indicate that promoting student organization involvement and making the process of finding information about involvement opportunities more user-friendly are specific areas on which the Student Involvement and Activities Center (SIAC) should focus.

One new aspect of the survey this year was the linking of specific survey questions to criteria from the standards of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for student unions. One of these criteria is "appreciating Diversity," which is directly relevant to the priorities identified in the University of Northern Iowa Strategic Plan, the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan, and the Maucker Union Strategic Plan. Two specific questions from the survey were linked to the criterion "appreciating Diversity":

- "To what extent do college union activities expand understanding of others whose backgrounds differ from yours?"
- "To what extent do college union activities expose you to new and different ideas?"

Maucker Union received rankings of "Good" for each of these questions, and Maucker Union's rankings for these two questions were higher than the mean for each of the benchmarking comparison groups mentioned in the paragraph below.

The results indicate that students continue to have strong positive feelings about Maucker Union in general:

- For Question 73, "Overall level of satisfaction with Maucker Union," the response rating has improved 2.5% since 2005, and remains "Excellent."
- The longitudinal survey results for "Factor 12: Overall program effectiveness" also demonstrate increasing student satisfaction with Maucker Union; the rating for this factor has improved approximately 8% since the 2005 survey.

The benchmarking function of the survey provides for a comparison of Maucker Union's results to the results of 6 selected peer institutions, all participating institutions in UNI's Carnegie classification, and all institutions participating in the survey. Maucker Union's ranking is first for each factor (Factors 8 and 9, which pertain to Bookstores, were not applicable) within every comparison group.

Discussion

The results of the 2011 ACUI/EBI, Inc. College Union/Student Center Survey will be particularly useful as the staff of Maucker Union implements their new strategic plan. The area of student engagement is one of the strategic priorities in the plan. With the SIAC and the SLC as key resources, Maucker Union is poised to lead initiatives that promote and facilitate student involvement and engagement in campus life. The development of productive partnerships with other departments will be the foundation upon which these initiatives can be established.

The promotion of diversity in all aspects of campus life, from staffing to student organization participation, is another strategic priority in the Maucker Union strategic plan. Developing a more intentional focus on diversity will help Maucker Union find solutions to issues such as how best to provide support and resources to multiculturally-based student organizations, in order to ensure their sustained success. The current survey provides a baseline for the monitoring of progress in this area.

The benchmarking aspects of the survey show that student satisfaction with Maucker Union continues to be strong when compared with the three benchmarking groups identified earlier in this document. It is incumbent upon the Maucker Union administration to continue to work closely with the Maucker Union Advisory Board and other key student advisory groups to insure that the student voice remains a guiding force in the life of Maucker Union.