Igniting Your **Passion** to Serve

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Prairie View A & M University
Customer Service has a place in higher education.
A. Yes
B. No
C. I’m not sure

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I consider students to be “customers.”
A. Yes
B. No
C. I’m not sure

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Naysayers’ Arguments

• Students can’t be customers because they don’t “pay” for good grades;

• Students and Parents aren’t customers because education isn’t a commodity;

• Donors and community-members aren’t “customers” because our services can’t be bought;

• Higher education is unique… it cannot be compared to companies in the “service sector.”
Addressing the Elephant in the Room
Addressing the Elephant in the Room...

The Customer is Always Right
Addressing the Elephant in the Room...

The Customer is Always Right

[Diagram of a red 'X']
Higher education is unique... it cannot be compared to companies in the “service sector.”
Why NOW?

- Competition for students has never been so strong

The Changing Business Model For Colleges And Universities

Lucie Lapovsky Contributor
I write about strategic financial issues in higher education.

Colleges and universities face daunting challenges to long-established business models. The cost of providing higher education continues to rise with fewer students either able or willing to pay the price. Competition among institutions for students has increased especially between public and private institutions; this is exacerbated by the demographic changes in the country whereby the number of high school graduates has decreased in most of the country and will not increase again until 2024. Compounding this problem is that the decrease in graduates from religious and private high schools is projected to be much greater than from public high schools. In addition, competition for students will further increase at private colleges and universities with the adoption of “free college programs” in various states and localities which are spreading like wildfires; there are now more than 200 such programs around the country with New York being among the most recent and the largest.
Why NOW?

- “…the number of high school graduates has decreased in most of the country and will not increase again until 2024.” ~ Forbes

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Why NOW?

• We must think differently to be competitive

• Universities must provide “value” without significantly raising tuition and fees
Why NOW?

• We must enhance the value of the education we provide… but the only commodity isn’t a “major” it’s an “experience”

• Meeting “customer” expectations isn’t enough anymore… we must exceed them in order to attract and retain students

• Look to “service excellence” role models
Aim Higher

• We must look to industries known for providing service excellence... because our customers compare us to them!

• The bar has been set higher than ever and competition is fierce!
Igniting a Vision

What do your customers want?

- To be treated with respect;
- To have you value their time;
- For you to listen to them;
- To apologize when things don't go as promised;
- To get the experience that was advertised;
- Care;
- To understand why specific decisions were made.
In Your Daily Work, Consider...

How can you ignite service excellence at Prairie View A & M University?
Your Toolkit

- Philosophy (of Service Excellence)
- Value (What makes you different)
- Amazing Spaces
- Messaging
- It all begins with “U”
Your Toolkit

Philosophy (of Service Excellence)
Your Voice Poll

Does your department have a written “service” philosophy?
A. Yes
B. No
C. I’m not sure

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Learn From the Experts

1. Creating a culture of warmth and belonging, where everyone is welcome.
2. Acting with courage, challenging the status quo.
3. Being present, connecting with transparency, dignity, and respect.
4. Our commitment to creativity, technology, and innovation generates unparalleled experiences that drive long-term value.
5. We do the right thing, all the time.
6. We care about the well-being and success of every person.
7. We make a difference in every community we serve.
8. We respect and listen to our people.
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Learn From the Experts

1. Take good care of your staff; they’ll take good care of customers.
2. Celebrate your team’s successes—not your own.
3. Know what you’re good at and use those competencies repeatedly.
4. Do it... and do it now. Take action.
5. Communicate. Listen to your staff and customers.
6. See and be seen. Get out of your office!
7. Success is in the details.
8. View every problem as an opportunity to learn.
Learn From the Experts

• Define and refine
• Empower through trust
• It’s not about you
• Deliver wow!
• Leave a lasting footprint
Your Toolkit

Value (What makes you different)
Value
Who assigns value to your services?
A. You and your office staff (experts)  
B. Your customers (students, staff, etc.)  
C. Both A & B  
D. Not sure

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Value

How do you know if you’re offering a program and/or service that adds value?

Ask your customers

Track your numbers

Are you getting any “buzz?”
Value

How do you know if you’re offering a program and/or service that adds value?
How do you know if you’re offering a program and/or service that adds value?

Be creative

What would happen if you stopped a specific service?

What are the possibilities?
Your Toolkit

Amazing Spaces
Your Voice Poll

Consider your current office space, seating/waiting area, lounge, etc. What is most important?

A. Functionality  
B. Appearance  
C. Both A & B  
D. Not sure

vote at drheath.participoll.com
Spaces

The utility of a space can hinge on one thing... but more on that shortly.
Spaces

Are your spaces really customer-friendly?
Spaces
Spaces

But then...

[Image of a tissue box with used tissues scattered around]
Spaces

You are not the best judge of your space... ask a colleague to conduct a “service-scape” audit.
Your Toolkit: Messaging
How do you deliver service excellence in your messages... in person, in signage, on the phone... and more?
Messaging-signage
Messaging-signage

SAU, Floor 2
Offices 2140 Suite
Office for Student Development

Monroe, Floor 2
Academic Support Center
English Language Center
Messaging-signage
Messaging-signage

OUT FOR LUNCH!

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE SOILED DIAPERS IN OUR WASTEBASKETS!
TAKE THEM WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE.

PLEASE, NO FOOD IN EXAM ROOM.
PLEASE SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONE.
Messing-signage
Messaging-language

A great service interaction can be ruined by a poor ending.

"Have a good one."

"No Problem."
Your Toolkit

It all begins with U
Your Toolkit

It all begins with "U"

- What is your role to play?
- YOU know your area, but are not a customer in it.
- Listen.
- Act to make positive change.
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