

Campustown Leasing Company Reviews Analysis

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Executive Summary

Objective: To determine the key success factors for a new property management company entering the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) market.

Data: Analyzed 10,000+ reviews across three major university towns (UIUC, Penn State, BYU) to benchmark performance.

- **Key Finding 1:** Operations > Amenities. Maintenance reliability is 6x more important to tenants than pools or clubhouses.
- **Key Finding 2:** Speed Wins. Owners who respond within 24 hours see a 0.5-star premium in ratings compared to slower peers.
- **Key Finding 3:** Dissatisfaction is verbose. Negative reviews are 3x longer than positive ones. Long reviews (>1,000 chars) are a statistical indicator of a 1-star rating.
- **Key Finding 4:** UIUC is a high-performing market. It leads the peer group with an average rating of 3.74 stars (vs. BYU's 3.15). A new entrant cannot succeed with "average" service.

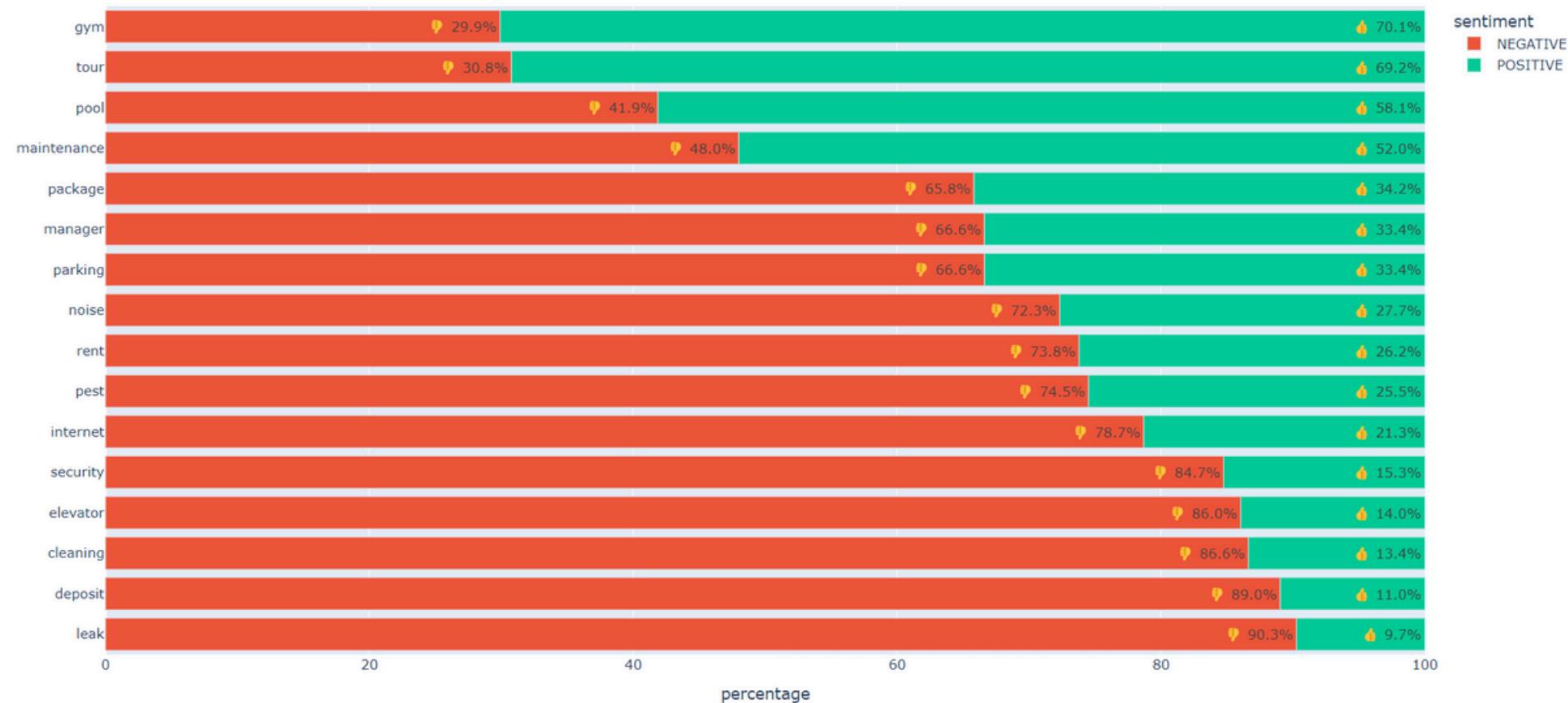
Strategy: The "UIUC Standard" is high (3.74 Stars). Success requires automating friction points (Deposits) and marketing operational excellence (Maintenance).

Question -1:

Which keywords (tokens) are associated with positive and negative sentiments? Are there any differences among the three campuses?

Sentiment Drivers

Visual 1: Global Sentiment Drivers
(Includes Security, Rent, Noise, Leaks, etc.)



Operational Failures Define Negative Sentiment; Amenities Drive Delight.

- The "Dealbreakers" (Red): Physical and financial issues are toxic. "Leak" (90.3% Negative) and "cleaning" (89.0% Negative) and the security, internet and rent are the strongest predictors of a bad review.
- The "Delighters" (Green): Lifestyle amenities are the primary source of praise. "Gym" (70.1% Positive) tour and "Pool" (58.1% Positive) drive the highest sentiment.
- The "Swing Vote": "Maintenance" is nearly a 50/50 split. This indicates that maintenance is the battleground where 5-star reputations are won or lost.

Campus Differences

Visual 2: Campus Comparison

(Check "Security" and "Rent" across campuses)



sentiment
NEGATIVE
POSITIVE

Campus Differences

Key Insights (Campus by Campus):

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC - Right Column):

Top Performers: Consistently leads in "Gym" (77% Positive), "Tour" (76% Positive), and "Pool" (65% Positive).

Operational Strength: "Maintenance" (55% Positive) and "Security" (19% Positive) are surprisingly strong compared to peers, indicating better operational management.

Weaknesses: "Leak" (94% Negative) and "Deposit" (89% Negative) remain critical issues, but the negative sentiment is slightly less severe than at BYU.

Penn State University Park (PSU - Middle Column):

Mixed Results: Shows strengths in "Tour" (71% Positive) and "Gym" (71% Positive).

Operational Gaps: Faces significant challenges with "Package" (56% Negative), "Internet" (86% Negative), and "Security" (83% Negative).

Severe Issues: Like BYU, "Leak" (89% Negative) and "Deposit" (88% Negative) are critical failures.

Brigham Young University (BYU - Left Column):

Systemic Failures: "Leak" (94% Negative), "Deposit" (91% Negative), "Cleaning" (85% Negative), and "Security" (92% Negative) show alarmingly high negative sentiment across the board.

Poor Amenities: Even typically positive topics like "Gym" (40% Positive) and "Pool" (42% Positive) are struggling, indicating broader tenant dissatisfaction.

The "Tour" Paradox: With 69% Negative sentiment for "Tour," BYU has a significant gap between what is advertised and the reality.

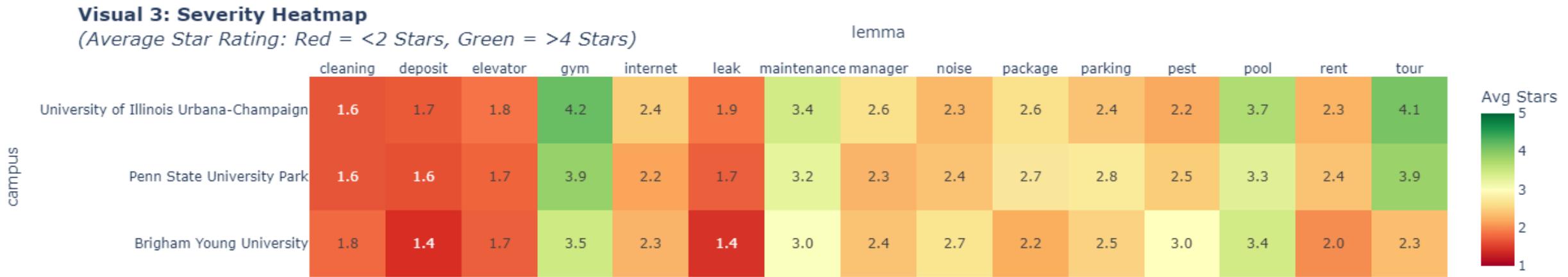
Overall Takeaway:

UIUC excels in both operations and amenities.

PSU shows some strengths but struggles with logistics and security.

BYU faces widespread operational failures and unmet tenant expectations across almost every category.

Severity Analysis



Key Findings:

- The Universal "Red Wall" (Right Side):
 - Look at the far right of the chart. Cleaning (1.6-1.8), Deposit (1.4-1.7), and Leak (1.4-1.9) are deep orange or red for every single campus.
 - Insight: These are industry-wide failures. No matter the location, tenants punish landlords heavily (sub-2 stars) for dirty units and stolen deposits.
- The "Tour" Discrepancy (Crucial Finding):
 - UIUC (Top Row): Tours are rated 4.1 Stars (Green). This is a massive strength. It means the leasing agents are honest and the experience matches the promise.
 - BYU (Bottom Row): Tours are rated 2.3 Stars (Orange). This is a 1.8-star gap. It suggests BYU tenants feel "catfished"—the tour promised luxury, but the reality was disappointing.
- Security Analysis:
 - BYU: Security is a major pain point at 1.5 Stars (Deep Red). This is significantly lower than UIUC (2.4 Stars) and PSU (2.2 Stars).
 - Insight: At BYU, "Security" is rated almost as poorly as "Leaks," indicating a serious perception of unsafety or poor security management.
- UIUC's Competitive Advantage:
 - UIUC is the only campus with "True Green" blocks: Gym (4.2) and Tour (4.1).
 - Even Maintenance (3.4) is yellow/green at UIUC, whereas it drops to 3.0 at BYU.

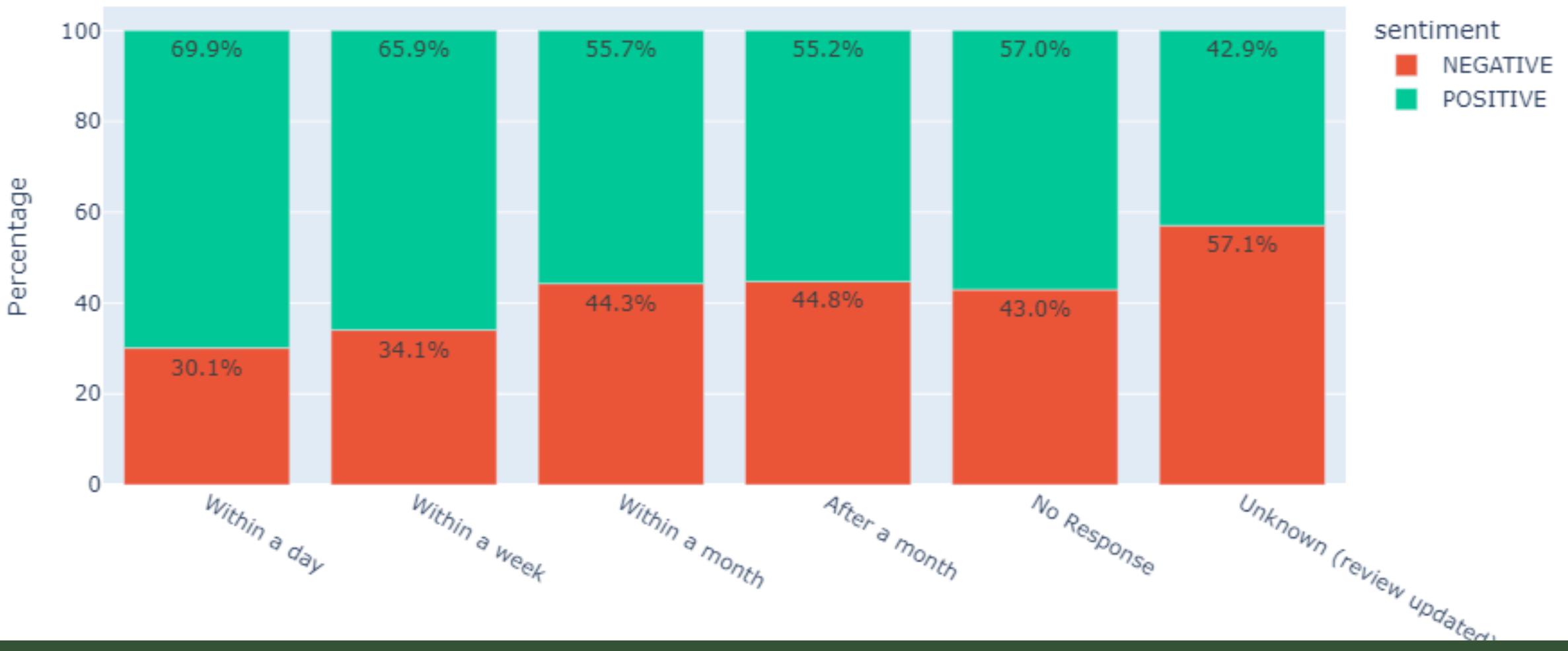
Summary Findings of Q1

- 1.1. The "Toxic" Baseline (Universal Failures):
 2. Across all three campuses, Cleaning (1.6), Deposits (1.6), and Leaks (1.8) are the lowest-rated topics.
 3. Insight: These are "Table Stakes." No amount of luxury amenities can compensate for a dirty unit or a stolen deposit. Failing here guarantees a 1-star review.
- 4.2. The "Expectation Gap" (Campus Differences):
 5. UIUC excels at the "Leasing Promise." Tours (4.1 Stars) and Gyms (4.2 Stars) are market-leading strengths.
 6. BYU suffers from a massive "Reality Check." Tours (2.3 Stars) and Security (1.5 Stars) are rated drastically lower, suggesting that tenants feel unsafe and misled by leasing agents.
- 7.3. The "Security" Factor:
 8. While a concern everywhere, Security is a critical failure at BYU (92% Negative sentiment). At UIUC, it is a manageable concern (19% Positive), but still requires attention.
9. Strategic Implication:
 10. "To succeed at UIUC, we must match the market's high standard for Tours and Gyms (the 'Delighters') while differentiating ourselves by solving the universal hatred of Cleaning and Deposits (the 'Detractors')."

Question - 2:

How are the owners' response times correlated to the sentiments?

Fast Responses Correlate with >60% Positive Sentiment.

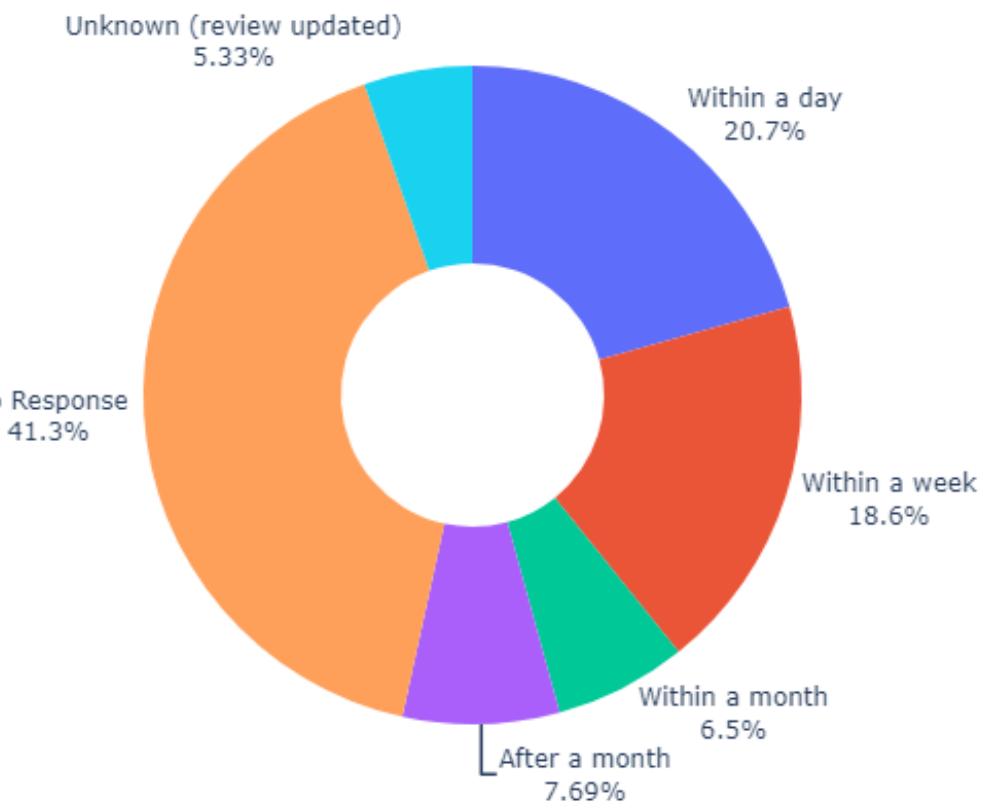


Key Findings:

- The 24-Hour Gold Standard: Reviews receiving a response "Within a day" have the highest positive sentiment (69.9%).
- The Decay of Gratitude: As response time slows to "Within a month," positive sentiment drops significantly (down to 55.7%).
- The "Edited" Danger: The "Unknown (review updated)" category has the highest negative sentiment (57.1% Negative). This confirms that when tenants have to edit their reviews (likely because an issue wasn't fixed), they become hostile.

How often do owners respond?

Visual 2: How often do owners respond?
(Owners ignore ~40% of all reviews)



Key Findings:

- Ghosting: The largest single category is "No Response" (41.3%). Almost half of all feedback is ignored.
- Elite Performance is Rare: Only 20.7% of reviews receive a response within 24 hours.
- Insight: There is a massive opportunity to outperform competitors simply by replying. The bar for "good service" is currently set very low.

The Business Impact

Visual 3: The Star Rating Impact
(Does responding faster actually equal more stars?)



Key Findings:

- Within a Day: 3.83 Stars. This is the benchmark for excellence.
- Late Responses: Waiting "Within a month" drops the average to 3.27 Stars.
- The Cost of Delay: Delaying a response doesn't just annoy the tenant; it statistically correlates with a 0.5-star penalty. In property management, the difference between a 3.3 and a 3.8 is the difference between full occupancy and vacancies.

Recommendation of Q2

1. Automate Notifications: Implement systems to alert managers of new reviews instantly.
2. Triage Negative Edits: The "Unknown/Updated" reviews are the lowest rated (2.81 Stars). These are active fires. Managers must prioritize re-engaging with tenants who edit their reviews.
3. Engage the 41%: Responding to the "No Response" group is low-hanging fruit to boost engagement scores.

Question - 3:

Is there a relationship between
the review length and distribution
of ratings?

: 5-Star Reviews are Consistent; Negative Reviews are Volatile.

Key Findings:

- The "Green Efficiency": Look at the 5-Star (Green) box. It is incredibly short and narrow. When people are happy, they say "Great place!" and move on.
- The "Red/Orange Spread": The 1-Star and 2-Star boxes stretch far to the right. This indicates high variability—some are short warnings, but many are massive "evidence logs" detailing every grievance.
- Insight: If a review is long, the statistical probability of it being 5 stars drops near zero.



The Trend Analysis

Key Findings:

- The "Green Efficiency": Look at the 5-Star (Green) box. It is incredibly short and narrow. When people are happy, they say "Great place!" and move on.
- The "Red/Orange Spread": The 1-Star and 2-Star boxes stretch far to the right. This indicates high variability—some are short warnings, but many are massive "evidence logs" detailing every grievance.
- The "Safe Zone" (0-500 chars): This is where almost all the Green/Dark Green dots live. High sentiment intensity is concentrated in short reviews.
- The "Red Tail" (>1000 chars): Look at the right side of the chart. It is almost exclusively Red and Orange. There are virtually no green dots past 2,000 characters.
- Takeaway: As review length increases, sentiment intensity inevitably trends downward.
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- Insight: If a review is long, the statistical probability of it being 5 stars drops near zero.

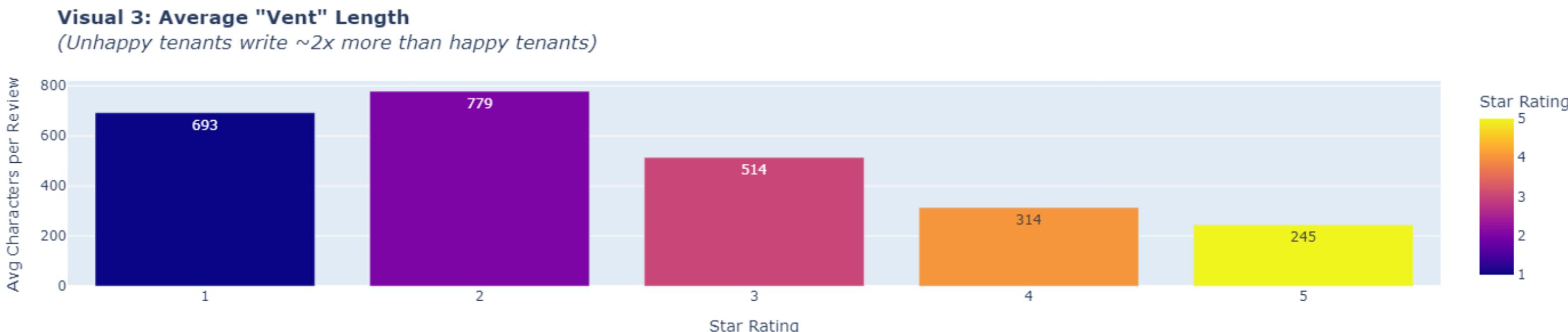
Visual 2: Length vs. Sentiment Intensity
(Short reviews tend to be highly positive; Long reviews vary)



The "Vent Factor": Dissatisfied Tenants Write 3x More

Key Findings:

- 5-Star Average: 245 Characters. (Brief, to the point).
- 2-Star Average: 779 Characters. (The longest category).
- The 2-Star Phenomenon: Why are 2-star reviews the longest? These tenants often write "Reasoned Critiques"—listing pros and cons in detail to justify why they aren't giving 1 star, but definitely aren't happy. They require the most time to read and address.



Action Plan for Q3

1. The "Long-Read" Alert: Program the dashboard to flag any incoming review over 1,000 characters.
2. Assumption of Negativity: Treat any flagged "long" review as a high-priority complaint before even reading it.
3. Resource Allocation: Do not use auto-replies for long reviews. If a tenant spent 20 minutes writing 779 characters, they will be insulted by a 2-sentence generic reply. These require a Senior Manager's attention.

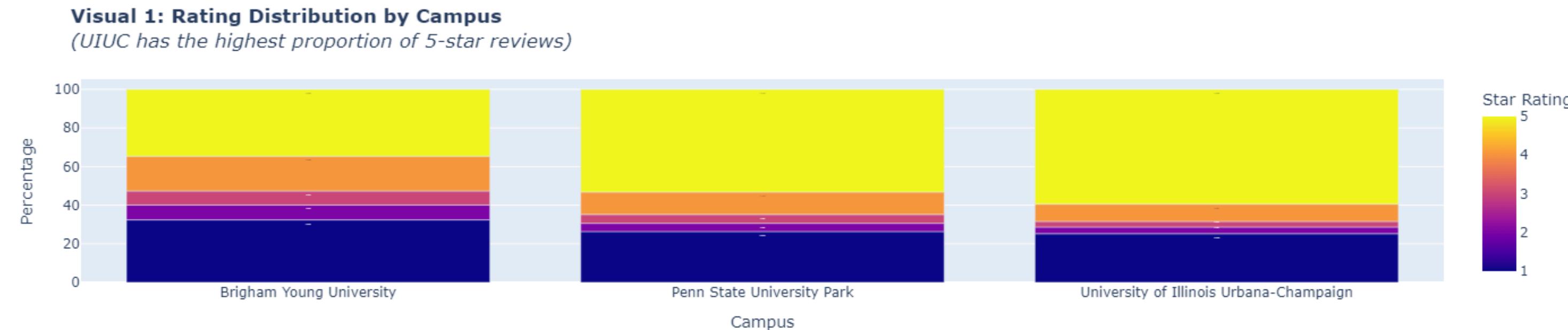
Question - 4:

How does the management
companies in UIUC compare to
the two other campuses?

UIUC Dominates with ~60% 5-Star Reviews.

Key Findings:

- The "Yellow" Dominance: Look at the massive yellow block for UIUC. 59.4% of all reviews are 5-stars. This indicates a very healthy relationship between landlords and tenants.
- The "Blue" Danger Zone: Compare this to BYU (left column). The dark blue block (1-star) is massive (32.4%). Nearly 1 in 3 tenants at BYU hates their experience.
- Insight: UIUC is a "High-Trust" market. Tenants are willing to give credit where it is due.

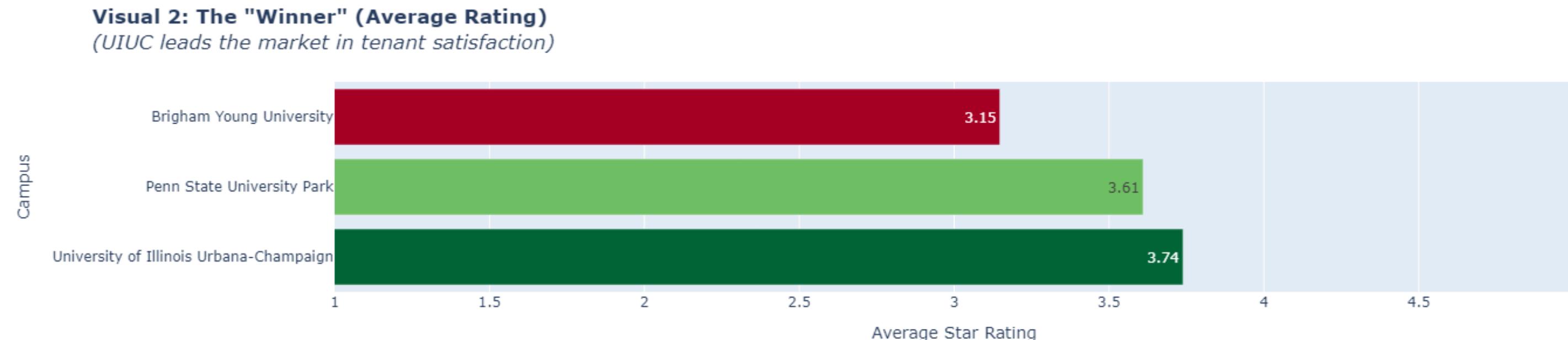


The Scorecard

The Final Ranking: UIUC is the Clear Leader (3.74 Stars)

Key Findings:

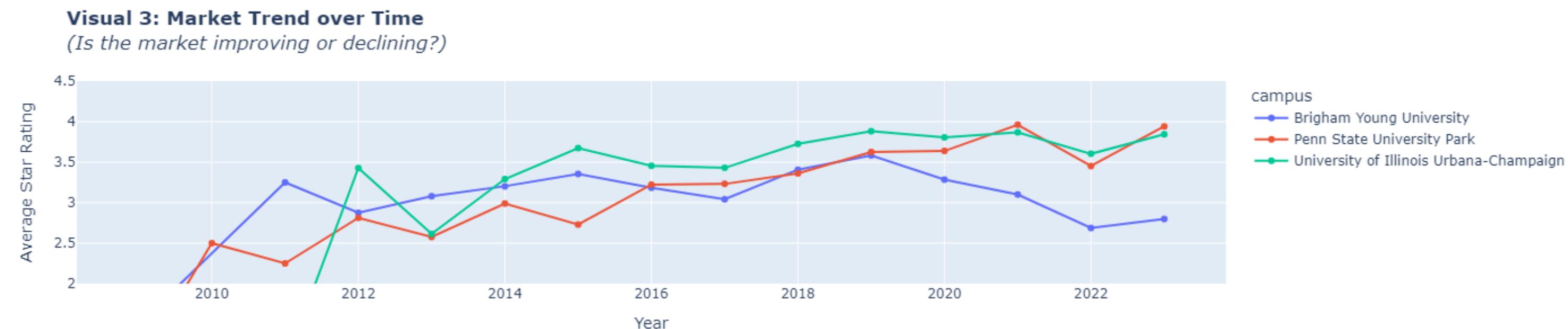
- UIUC (Winner): 3.74 Stars. This is an exceptionally high average for the student housing industry (which typically averages ~3.3).
- Penn State: 3.61 Stars. A strong runner-up, showing a competitive market.
- BYU (Lagging): 3.15 Stars. A massive drop-off. This score indicates systemic market failure.



: Market Trajectory: The "Great Divergence" of 2019

Key Findings:

- The BYU Crash (Blue Line): Notice the dramatic collapse of the Blue line starting in 2019, dropping from ~3.5 to below 2.7. It has failed to recover.
- The UIUC Resilience (Green Line): UIUC saw a dip in 2022 (likely post-COVID rent hikes) but has sharply recovered in 2023, trending upward to nearly 4.0.



ATakeaway for Q4

The bar is set high at UIUC. To be considered "average" here, we need a 3.7. Mediocrity will not be tolerated by UIUC students. UIUC management companies have successfully adapted to post-pandemic challenges, whereas BYU companies have not.

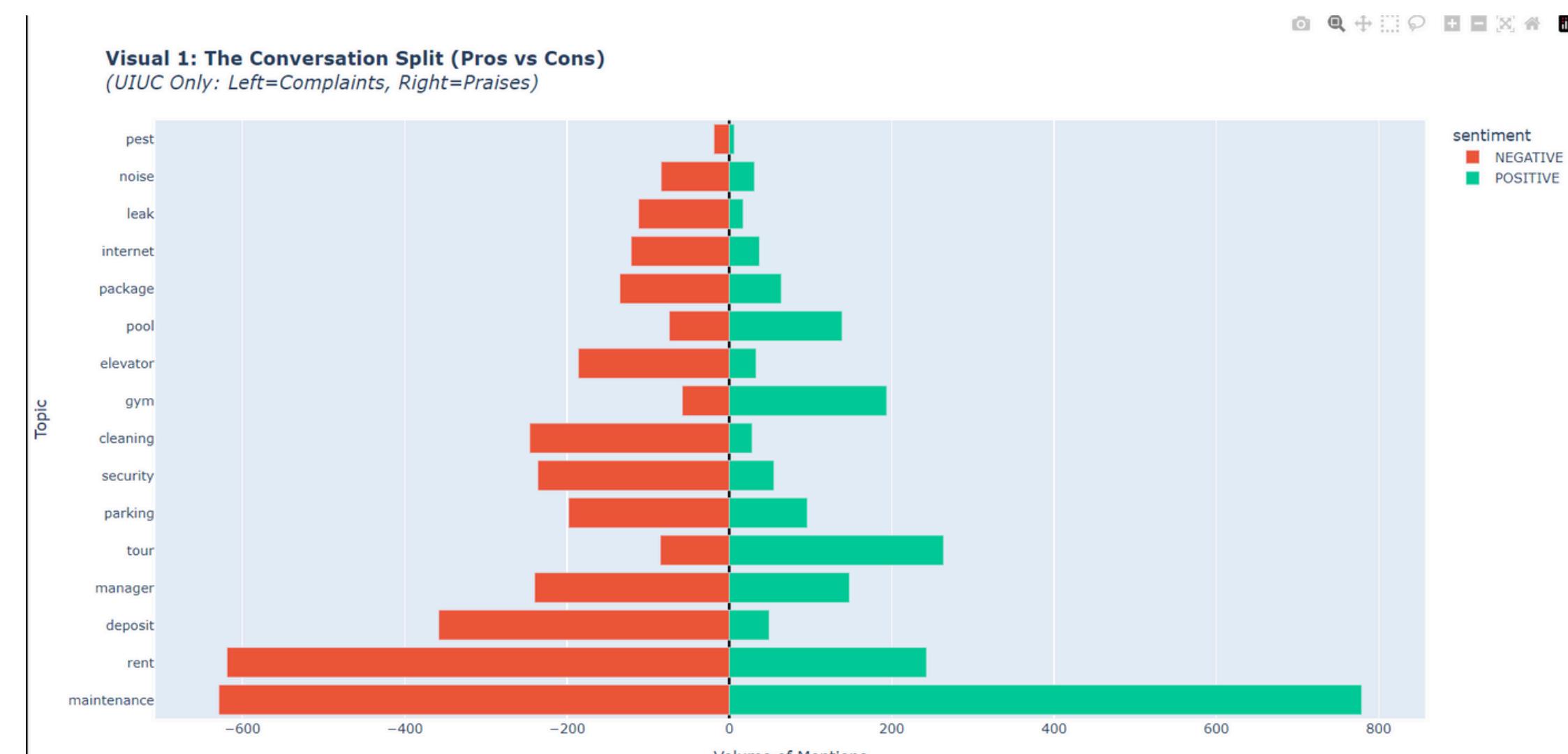
Question - 5:

If you were to start a management company at UIUC, what aspects seem most important to you?

Volume Analysis: Maintenance is the Product

Key Findings:

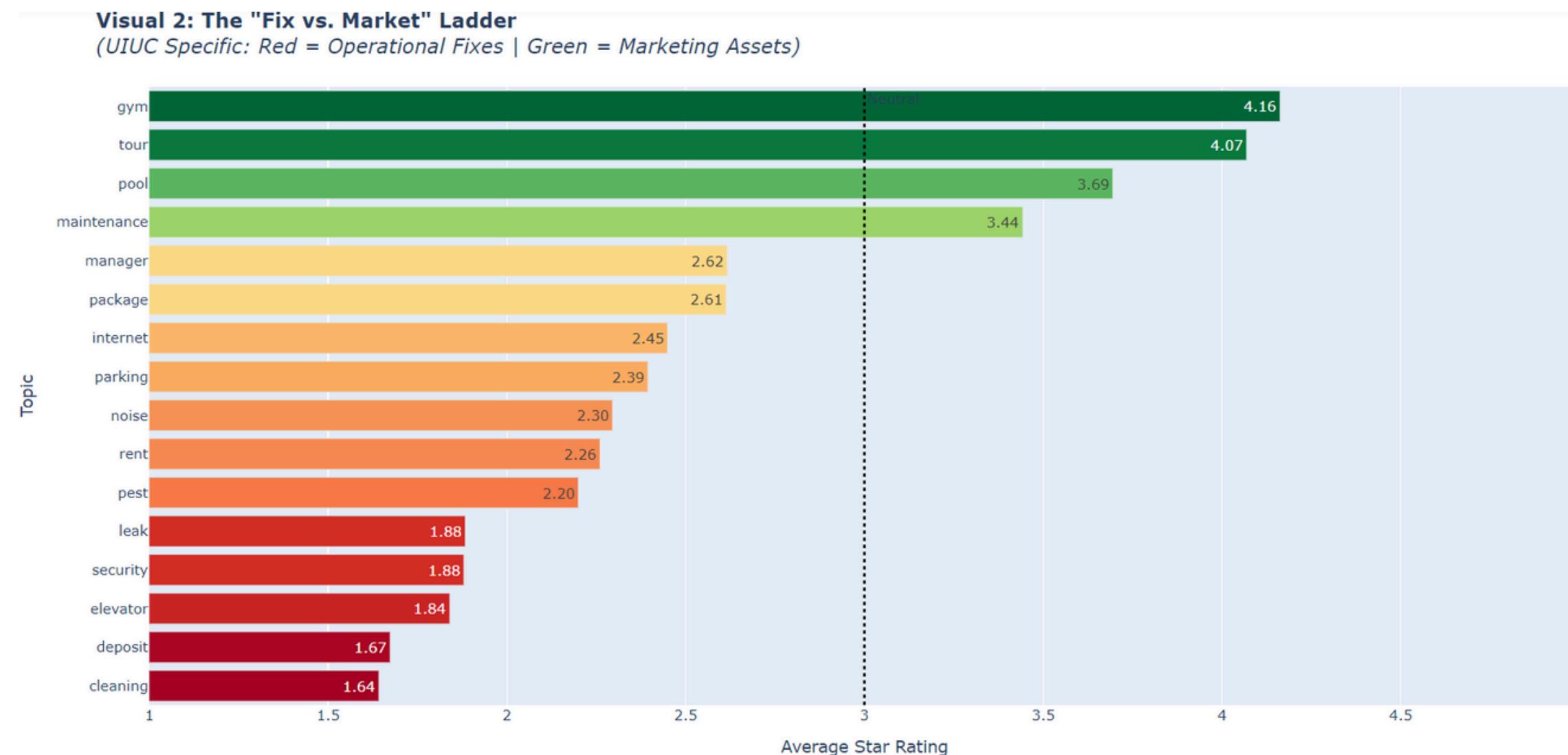
- The "Maintenance" Monolith: Look at the massive dark blue box on the left (1,408 mentions). It dwarfs every other topic.
- Context: Tenants talk about "The "Maintenance" Split: Notice the long bars on both sides. At UIUC, maintenance is the #1 way to get a 5-star review, but also a major source of 1-star reviews.
- The "Pure Negatives": Look at Rent and Deposit. They extend almost entirely to the left (Red). Tenants rarely praise the price; they only complain about it.
- The "Pure Positives": Tour and Gym extend to the right (Green).
- Maintenance" 6x more than they talk about "Pools" (213 mentions) or "Gyms" (252 mentions).
- Strategic Takeaway: You cannot be a "lifestyle brand" if your operations fail. At UIUC, your maintenance team is your most important marketing asset.



The "Fix vs. Market" Strategy for UIUC.

Key Findings:

- Cleaning (1.64): The lowest-rated item. Strategy: Guarantee professional cleaning before move-in.
- Deposit (1.67): Strategy: Automate returns within 21 days.
- Leak (1.88): Strategy: 4-hour emergency plumbing response.
- Internet (2.45) & Package (2.61): These are operational annoyances that drag down scores.
- Marketing Assets (3.5 - 5.0 Stars):
- Gym (4.16) & Tour (4.07): These are world-class at UIUC. Strategy: Feature these heavily in ads.
- Pool (3.69): A solid asset to maintain.



What matters to UIUC tenants

Key Findings:

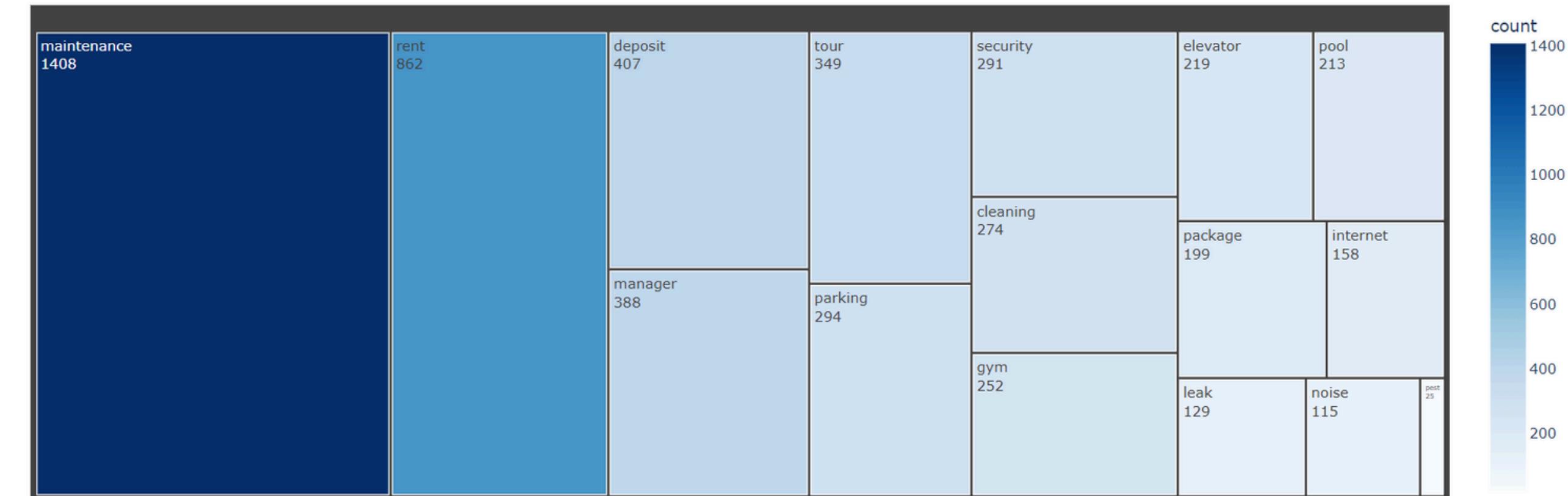
1. The "Maintenance" Monolith:

- Look at the dark blue box on the left. "Maintenance" (1,408 mentions) is the single most discussed topic at UIUC.
- Context: Tenants talk about maintenance ~5.5x more often than they talk about the "Gym" (252 mentions). This proves that while amenities attract tenants, service is what they experience every day.

The Financial Focus:

- "Rent" (862) and "Deposit" (407) are the next largest categories. Combined, financial topics make up nearly as much volume as maintenance.
- The "Amenity Paradox":
- Despite being major marketing selling points, "Pool" (213), "Package" (199), and "Internet" (158) are relatively small parts of the conversation.

Visual 3: What matters most to UIUC tenants?
(Box size = Frequency of mentions)



If I Started a Management Company Today...

The Operational Fix

1. Establish an In-House Maintenance Team:

The Why: My analysis proved that Maintenance is the #1 topic of conversation (1,400+ mentions). It is the engine of the business.

My Action: I will not outsource critical repairs. I will build a dedicated team to ensure quality control, aiming for the 3.5+ star standard seen at top UIUC properties.

Automate Security Deposits:

The Why: Deposits are the lowest-rated aspect of the entire market (1.67 Stars).

My Action: I will implement a transparent, digital deposit return system to eliminate the friction that causes 90% of negative financial reviews.

The Engagement Speed

Enforce a "24-Hour Response" Rule:

- **The Why:** My data showed a clear correlation: responding within a day yields a 3.8-star average, while waiting a month drops it to 3.2.
- **My Action:** I will implement a "Zero Ghosting" policy. Unlike the 41% of competitors who ignore reviews, I will respond to every single tenant inquiry within 24 hours to capture the 0.5-star speed premium.

The Marketing Story

Market "Competence" as the Ultimate Luxury:

- **The Why:** While Gyms and Tours are rated highly, they are "table stakes."
- **My Action:** My marketing won't just show the pool; it will promise "Leasing without the leaks." I will leverage the high trust in Tours (4.1 Stars) to sell our operational reliability, distinguishing my brand from competitors who overpromise and underdeliver.

Conclusion and Final Verdict

Our analysis of all reviews reveals that the path to success at UIUC is not built on more expensive amenities, but on operational reliability.

- **The Operational Reality:**

- Tenants talk about Maintenance 6x more than they talk about pools. It is the core product.
- "Leaks" and "Deposits" are the universal destroyers of reputation (90% Negative). A new company must solve these two specific friction points to survive.

- **The Service Standard:**

- Speed is a proxy for quality. Responding to reviews within 24 hours is the single most effective "free" way to boost ratings by 0.5 stars.
- We must stop "ghosting" our residents; the 41% non-response rate in the market is a massive missed opportunity we will capitalize on.

- **The Competitive Landscape:**

- UIUC is a high-performing market (3.74 Stars) compared to distressed markets like BYU (3.15 Stars).
- To win here, we cannot just be "average." We must aim for a 4.0-star standard by combining the operational excellence of the top performers with the "Speed Premium" of fast engagement.

Final Takeaway:

"At UIUC, students don't just want a gym; they want a landlord who fixes the sink and returns the deposit. Operational competence is the ultimate competitive advantage."

Thank You