

Non-Returning Student Survey Fall 2008



**Southeastern Louisiana University
Office of Institutional Research and Assessment**

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Introduction

The first Strategic Priority for Southeastern is “To provide competitive educational opportunities that attract diverse well-prepared students who progress and graduate.” In order to better understand the reasons why students leave Southeastern before graduating, Institutional Research & Assessment contracted with the Southeastern Social Science Research Center to conduct the Non-Returning Student Survey, a phone survey of Fall 2007 cohort students who were not enrolled in Fall 2008. Students who had been suspended were excluded from the sample. This report details the results of the Non-Returning Student Survey.

Method

Participants

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Procedure

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment contracted with the Southeastern Social Science Research Center to conduct the Non-Returning Student Survey. The survey was administered by phone, using trained and experienced student interviewers.

Instrument

The survey first asked a series of questions to determine if students planned on returning to Southeastern in the future, and if they had intended to obtain a degree when they began at Southeastern. Respondents who indicated they did not plan on returning to Southeastern were given a list of possible reasons why a student might leave college, and were asked to rate whether it was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason at all in their decision to leave Southeastern. Students who indicated that they did plan to continue their education at Southeastern were first asked when they planned to return to Southeastern. They were then given a list of possible reasons why a student might stop attending Southeastern for a while, and were asked to rate whether each item was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason at all in their decision to “stop-out.” The final section asked for demographic information that is not collected as a part of the application or registration process, such as the number of children a student has and how far they have to travel to campus. The entire survey can be found in Appendix A.

Results

The first set of questions was to determine whether students were: 1) Drop-Outs, those students who no longer plan to continue their education at Southeastern, including those who plan on or have transferred elsewhere; 2) Stop-outs, those students who plan to return to Southeastern at some point. Based on these definitions, 62% (n=93) of the respondents are Drop-Outs, and 37% (n=55) are Stop-outs.

Stop Outs

The majority of the Stop-outs (46%, n=25) plan on returning to Southeastern within the next year. Thirty-three percent (33%, n=18) planned on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2009, and 44% (n=8) did return. Fourteen percent (14%, n=8) plan on returning within the next two years, 2% (n=1) plan on returning within the next five years, and 6% (n=3) are not sure when they will return to Southeastern.

Next, Stop-outs were asked to indicate whether each of nine possible reasons was a Major Reason, a Minor Reason, or Not a Reason for their decision to stop attending Southeastern for a while. “Need to earn more money” was the item with the largest endorsement, with 64% of respondents indicating it was a reason they stopped attending Southeastern. This was followed by “Had family responsibilities to take care of” which 47% of respondents indicated was a reason they stopped attending.

Table 1 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 1
Stop-Out Reasons

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Need to earn more money	43.6%	20.0%	36.4%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	16.4%	30.9%	52.7%
Academic problems	23.6%	21.8%	54.5%
Work interfered with school	21.8%	21.8%	56.4%
Needed a break from school	10.9%	29.1%	60.0%
Health reasons	7.3%	14.5%	78.2%
Religious obligation	1.8%	7.3%	90.9%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	1.8%	12.7%	95.5%
Military obligation	1.8%	1.8%	96.4%

Drop Outs

Most of the Drop-outs (86%) intend to finish their education elsewhere, although only 63% of the Drop-outs had already enrolled in another school. When asked what school they have or will enroll in, the most commonly cited school was Delgado. Table 7 provides the schools students identified as having enrolled in or planning to enroll in.

Table 7
Schools Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll

School	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Amega Institute of Cosmetology	1	1.3%
Baton Rouge Community College	8	10.4%
BCC	1	1.3%
Blue Cliff College	1	1.3%
Culinary School in Paris	1	1.3%
Delgado	17	22.1%
Denham Springs Beauty College	1	1.3%
Dillard University	1	1.3%
Higher Vascular Training	1	1.3%
ITT Tech	2	2.6%
Leavell College	1	1.3%
Louisiana State University	8	10.4%
Louisiana Technical College	2	2.6%
McNeese	1	1.3%
Nicholls	2	2.6%
Our Lady of Holy Cross	1	1.3%
Our Lady of the Lake	2	2.6%
Pearl River Community College	1	1.3%
South Louisiana Community College	1	1.3%
Southern	3	3.9%
SUNO	2	2.6%
Tulane	2	2.6%
Table 7 Schools Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll cont.		

University of Louisiana - Monroe	1	1.3%
University of Wisconsin	1	1.3%
University of New Orleans	6	7.8%

Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason cont.			
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Could not find affordable housing you liked	1.1%	9.6%	83.0%
Dealing with hurricane related problems	1.1%	9.6%	83.0%
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	2.1%	8.5%	84.0%
Southeastern was too large for you	1.1%	9.6%	84.0%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	1.1%	8.5%	84.0%
Credit card debt was too much	0.0%	8.24 re	44.88 ..3(A8.98 632.7 .95

Comparison to Previous Year

The results of this year's survey were compared to the survey conducted last year of the 2006 cohort. There were some differences that should be noted between the two surveys. This year a much higher percentage of students indicated that the need to earn money was a reason for stopping out. Last year a total of 40.7% of the students cited it as a reason for stopping out, while this year 43.6% cited it as a major reason and an additional 20.0% cited it as a minor reason. This year the need to earn money was the most commonly cited reason for stopping out, while last year needed a break from school was the most commonly cited reason.

Last year students who transferred to another institution indicated that the decision was made mainly because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern. This year tired of commuting or needing to be closer to home/work was the most commonly cited reason for transferring.

For all drop-outs, the main reason for not returning to Southeastern was decided to attend a different college, which was the same as last year. However, after the top rated reason, there are significant changes. The second most commonly cited reason this year was too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school (46.8% of respondents), this was ranked 15th in percent of endorsement last year (18.8%). Too much stress remained third on the list, but the percent of students who indicated it was a minor reason increased by 12.7%.

References

Terenzini, P.T., Springer, L. Yaeger, P.M., Pascarella, E.T., & Nora, A. (1996). First-generation college students: Characteristics, experiences, and cognitive development. Research in Higher Education, 37(1), 1-22.

Appendix A
Non-Returning Student Survey

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Southeastern Louisiana University. May I please speak with _____. To better serve our students, we are conducting a confidential and voluntary survey of former Southeastern students who are not

14. Courses were too difficult
15. Courses were not challenging
16. Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere that was conducive to learning
17. There were too many required courses
18. You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern
19. The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern
20. Could not get into the program you wanted
21. Dissatisfied with your major
22. Academic advising was inadequate
23. Had problems scheduling classes
24. Lost your TOPS Scholarship
25. Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college
26. Could not find affordable housing you liked
27. Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations
28. Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff
29. Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern
30. Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism
31. Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students
32. Encountered unexpected expenses
33. Did not receive enough financial aid
34. Decided to attend a different college
35. Could not find part-time work
36. Wanted to get work experience
37. Accepted a full-time job
38. Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school
39. Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school
40. Too much stress
41. Dealing with hurricane related problems
42. The cost of gas was too high to commute
43. Credit card debt was too much

Stop-Out questions

1. When do you plan to return to Southeastern
 - Next semester
 - Within the next year
 - Within the next two years
 - Within the next five years
 - Not sure at this time

For the following reasons I read, please tell me if they were a minor reason, a major reason, or no reason at all for why you decided to stop attending Southeastern for a while.

1. Needed more to earn more money

2. Had family responsibilities to take care of
3. Needed a break from school
4. Military obligation
5. Religious obligation
6. Work interfered with school
7. Academic problems
8. Health reasons
9. Could not schedule the classes you needed

Demographics:

Southeastern is looking for ways to help students remain in school. The following information may help us better meet the needs of students like yourself.

1. Did you have problems with any particular course?
2. What is your marital status?
 - 1-Never Married
 - 2-Married
 - 3-Previously Married
 - 4-Separated
 - 5-Widowed
 - 6-Refused
 - 7-Divorced
3. Do you have any children under the age of 18 living with you?
 - 1-None
 - 2-One
 - 3-Two
 - 4-Three
 - 5-Four or more
4. The last time you attended Southeastern, how many miles did you have to travel (one way) to reach Southeastern's main campus, or did you live on campus?
 - 1-Lived on campus
 - 2-Less than 5 miles
 - 3-Between 5 and 10 miles
 - 4-Between 11 and 20 miles
 - 5-Between 21 and 30 miles
 - 6-More than 30 miles
5. Did you work on or off campus?

1-Did not work **(Skip to Question 6)**

Appendix B
What is the main reason you decided to attend _____?

- dietetics program
- it was closer to home and grades were bad
- major wasn't offered at Southeastern
- Closer to home
- Financial reasons
- better nursing program
- couldn't go back to Southeastern until grades were back up
- Just decided to go out there in spring
- A baby can't complete
- cheaper
- more convenient
- convenient
- I moved back with parents
- cause of the commute
- closer to home convenience cost
- did not like majors offered at Southeastern
- Closer
- convenience
- much simpler much much easier
-

- It is closer to home
- Back home
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