

Non-Returning Student Survey Fall 2011



**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 2010 cohort students who were not enrolled in Fall 2011. Students who had been suspended were excluded from the sample. This report details the results of the Non-Returning Student Survey.

Method

Participants

The population for this study were the 562 students of the Fall 2010 cohort who were not enrolled in Fall 2011 and had not been suspended. After repeated attempts, 270 students remained unreachable by the available phone numbers, 176 refused to be part of the survey, and 116 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 40%. Table 1 provides a demographic comparison of the population and the sample.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample vs. the Population

	Sample	Population
Size	116	562
ACT Range		
17 or Below	3.4%	5.9%
18 or 19	13.8%	17.1%
20-23	61.2%	52.8%
24 or Higher	21.6%	24.0%
Housing		
Off Campus	61.2%	63.2%
On Campus	38.8%	36.8%
Gender		
Female	56.0%	53.6%
Male	44.0%	46.4%
Race		
Asian	1.7%	3.2%
Black or African American	18.1%	14.1%
Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	3.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.7%	0.7%
Two Or More Races	0.0%	0.5%
Unknown	1.7%	1.1%
White	75.0%	76.7%

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, 60% (n=70) of the respondents are Drop-Outs and 40% (n=46) are Stop-outs.

Stop Outs

The majority of the Stop-outs (41%, n=19) planned on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2012, while 24% (n=11) planned on returning to Southeastern within the next year. Nine percent (9%, n=4) plan on returning within the next two years, and 20% (n=9) are not sure when they will return.

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 70% of respondents indicating it was a reason they stopped attending Southeastern. This was followed by "Had family responsibilities to take care of" which 67% 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	37.0%	23.9%	30.4%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	32.6%	26.1%	32.6%
Academic problems	17.4%	30.4%	45.7%
Needed a break from school	21.7%	19.6%	50.0%
Work interfered with school	17.4%	15.2%	58.7%
Health reasons	8.7%	17.4%	65.2%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	8.7%	15.2%	67.4%
Military obligation	10.9%	8.7%	71.7%
Religious obligation	2.2%	13.0%	76.1%

Respondents were then asked what was the main reason they decided to attend another school. Thirty-eight percent (38%) said they decided to attend another school because it is closer to home. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the respondents indicated Southeastern did not have the major in which they were interested. An additional 14% transferred because of financial reasons. All the responses can be found in Appendix B.

Next, Drop-outs were asked to indicate whether each of thirty-eight possible reasons was a Major Reason, a Minor Reason, or Not a Reason for their decision to leave Southeastern. “Decided to attend a different college” was the item with the largest endorsement, with 72.9% of respondents indicating it was a reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by “Moved to a new location” (41.4%) and “The cost of gas was too high to commute” (41.4%).

Table 7 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 7
Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Decided to attend a different college	62.9%	10.0%	18.6%
Moved to a new location	27.1%	14.3%	47.1%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	15.7%	25.7%	51.4%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	17.1%	12.9%	58.6%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school	11.4%	15.7%	60.0%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	12.9%	15.7%	61.4%
Dissatisfied with your grades	7.1%	21.4%	61.4%
Did not receive enough financial aid	10.0%	18.6%	61.4%
Family responsibilities were too great	12.9%	14.3%	62.9%
Dissatisfied with your major	10.0%	15.7%	62.9%
Wanted to get work experience	8.6%	14.3%	65.7%
Accepted a full-time job	15.7%	10.0%	65.7%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	10.0%	10.0%	67.1%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	14.3%	11.4%	67.1%
Family or personal health-related problem	10.0%	11.4%	67.1%
Too much stress	8.6%	12.9%	68.6%

**Table 7
Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason cont.**

Difficult Course(s)

Students were asked if they had problems with any particular course. Twenty-four respondents (21%) identified a particular course or courses with which they had problems. Math was the

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. To better serve our students, we are conducting a confidential and voluntary survey

16. Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere 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 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?
If yes, which course(s)?
2. What is your marital status?
 - 1-Never Married
 - 2-Married
 - 3-Divorced
 - 4-Separated
 - 5-Widowed
 - 6-Refused
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)**
 - 2-Worked on campus
 - 3-Worked off campus
 - 4-Worked both on and off campus

6. How many hours did you work a week?
 - 1-No more than ten hours
 - 2-Eleven to twenty hours
 - 3-Twenty-one to thirty hours
 - 4-More than thirty hours

7. What was your Mother's highest level of education?
 - 1-No high school diploma
 - 2-High School diploma/GED
 - 3-Some college
 - 4-Associate Degree
 - 5-Bachelor's Degree
 - 6-Graduate or Professional Degree
 - 7-Unknown or refused

8. What was your Father's highest level of education?
 - 1-No high school diploma
 - 2-High School diploma/GED
 - 3-Some college
 - 4-Associate Degree
 - 5-Bachelor's Degree
 - 6-Graduate or Professional Degree
 - 7-Unknown or refused

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact:

Dr. Michelle Hall
in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
(985) 549-2077

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

- ! That felt more of need for you
- ! Moved
- ! Family moved
- !

- ! Thirty minutes away from her house.
- ! No specific reason
- ! They just wanted to go there.
- ! She had to move home.
- ! To study music.
- ! They had the major they needed.
- ! It was closer to home.
- ! I had some family issues. It is near to home.

Appendix C
Did you have problems with any particular course?

- ! English 101
- ! Biology
- ! Math 92
- ! Math
- ! Chemistry 161, Trig, Pre Calc
- ! Math 161
- ! Cell biology
- ! Algebra 161
- ! Math 155, doesn't think that the internet is good way of teaching.
- ! Any math course
- ! English 102
- ! Math
- ! ENG 101
- ! Remedial math 155?
- ! General Biology
- ! Math 155
- ! Math 165 classes on computer.
- ! Math 92
- ! Math
- ! Math 163
- ! Biology 105, 151, library science
- ! Math 92
- ! History 201H
- ! History 201