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 conducted 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

The population for this study were the 723 students of the Fall 2007 cohort who were not enrolled in Fall 2008 and had not been suspended. After repeated attempts, 415 students remained unreachable by the available phone numbers, 120 refused to be part of the survey, and 149 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 55%. Table 1 provides a demographic comparison of the population and the sample.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample vs. the Population

	Sample	Population
Size	149	723
ACT Range		
17 or Below	9.4%	7.6%
18 or 19	20.8%	22.4%
20-23	51.7%	53.4%
24 or Higher	18.1%	16.6%
Housing		
Off Campus	52.3%	59.6%
On Campus	47.7%	40.4%
Gender		
Female	57.0%	50.3%
Male	43.0%	49.7%
Race		
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.7%	1.2%
Black, Non-Hispanic	18.8%	17.3%
Hispanic	1.3%	2.2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3%	1.1%
Unknown	1.3%	3.0%
White, Non-Hispanic	76.5%	75.1%

Procedure

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment contracted with the Southeastern Social Science Research Center to conducted 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%
Undecided	8	10.4%

Respondents were then asked what was the <u>main</u> reason they decided to attend another school. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents indicated they wanted to attend a school closer to home/work, or they were tired of commuting to Southeastern. Eighteen percent (18%) said they decided to attend another school because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern. An additional 4% indicated they had moved, and 6% transferred because attending would be cheaper for them. 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 72.3% of respondents indicating it was a reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school" (40.4%) and "Too much stress" (39.4%).

Table 8 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 8
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	52.1%	20.2%	23.4%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school	21.3%	19.1%	53.2%
Too much stress	11.7%	27.7%	54.3%
Moved to a new location	23.4%	11.7%	59.6%
Dissatisfied with your grades	20.2%	13.8%	59.6%
Family or personal health-related problem	19.1%	13.8%	60.6%
Family responsibilities were too great	16.0%	16.0%	61.7%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	13.8%	17.0%	62.8%

Table 8 Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason cont.			
	Major Reason	**Minor Reason**	**Not a Reason**
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	8.5%	20.2%	64.9%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	20.2%	9.6%	64.9%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	13.8%	12.8%	67.0%
Dissatisfied with your major	9.6%	17.0%	67.0%
Wanted a break from your college studies	5.3%	21.3%	67.0%
Accepted a full-time job	16.0%	8.5%	69.1%
Encountered unexpected expenses	10.6%	10.6%	72.3%
Wanted to get work experience	8.5%	14.9%	72.3%
Did not receive enough financial aid	6.4%	14.9%	72.3%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	5.3%	14.9%	73.4%
There were too many required courses	5.3%	14.9%	73.4%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	8.5%	10.6%	74.5%
Could not find part-time work	5.3%	13.8%	74.5%
Suspended or placed on probation	6.4%	11.7%	75.5%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	4.3%	16.0%	75.5%
Courses were too difficult	1.1%	18.1%	75.5%
Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college	4.3%	12.8%	76.6%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	1.1%	14.9%	77.7%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	4.3%	9.6%	79.8%
Courses were not challenging	3.2%	10.6%	79.8%
Academic advising was inadequate	2.1%	11.7%	79.8%
Had problems scheduling classes	1.1%	13.8%	80.9%
Could not get into the program you wanted	4.3%	9.6%	81.9%
Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere that was conducive to learning	1.1%	12.8%	81.9%
Southeastern was too small for you	1.1%	10.6%	81.9%
Did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern	0.0%	11.7%	81.9%
Did not feel like you fit in	3.2%	7.4%	83.0%
Table 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%	6.4%	88.3%
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	1.1%	4.3%	89.4%
Could not find and/or afford child care	1.1%	3.2%	90.4%

Difficult Course(s)

Students were asked if they had problems with any particular course. Fifty-eight respondents (38.9%) identified a particular course or courses with which they had problems. Math was the most commonly cited course, with 42 respondents (72.4%) indicating a particular math course or just math in general. Specific courses cited included MATH 155 (9 respondents - 15.5%), MATH 92 (5 respondents - 8.6%), and MATH 161 (9 respondents - 15.5%). The next most commonly cited type of course was science (10 respondents - 17.2%), with 5 (8.6%) indicating a biology course (1 specifically cited GBIO 106), three (5.2%) indicating a chemistry course (1 specifically cited CHEM 101), and one (1.7%) indicating astronomy. Four (6.9%) indicated they had problems with English courses, two ENGL 102 and one ENGL 232. Two (3.4%) had problems with SE 101, and two (3.4%) had problems with history. Other courses were only indicated as a problem by one student (1.7%) and include: SPAN 101, computer science, political science, the first nursing course, the structure of ART courses, an on-line psychology course because it was Pass/Fail, and GBBT 210.

Demographics of Drop-Outs and Stop-Outs

The last portion of the survey asked participants for demographic information that is not readily available as part of the student record system. Answers to these questions help give a better understanding as to what type of student will leave Southeastern either temporarily or permanently. The vast majority of students (93%) have never been married, and do not have children (81%). Slightly more than a third (36%) of the respondents traveled more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, while another third (33%) lived on campus. Approximately 64% of the respondents worked off campus. An additional 3% worked on campus. Thirty-five percent (35%) of those who worked, spent more than 30 hours a week working, with an additional 31% spending 21-30 hours a week working. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the respondents are first-generation college students, which according to Terenzini et al (1996) is a student who has no parent with any college or university experience.

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. <u>Research in
    Higher Education</u>, <u>37(1)</u>, 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 enrolled here this semester. The survey will take only a few minutes. Keep in mind that all answers are strictly confidential. Your participation is voluntary. You may stop at any time without penalty, and if you wish not to answer a particular question, please say so. For quality control, your call may be monitored. All questions pertaining to this survey should be addressed to Dr. Michelle Hall. My supervisor may call once our interview is completed to insure that I am conducting it properly.

Intro questions

1. Do you plan to continue your education?
    If no, go to Non-Returning
    If yes continue to intro 2
    If Don't Know, go to Non-Returning

2. a. Do you plan to continue your education at Southeastern or somewhere else?
        If Southeastern, go to Stop Out questions
    b. Have you enrolled in another school yet?
            1=No 2=Yes
    c. What school have/will you enroll(ed) in?

    d. What is the main reason you decided to attend _____ ?
        Go to Non-Returning Questions

Non-Returning:

I am now going to read some reasons why a student might leave college. For each reason, please tell me whether it was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason that you decided to leave Southeastern.
1. Family or personal health-related problem
2. Wanted a break from your college studies
3. Moved to a new location
4. Did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern
5. Tired of commuting to Southeastern
6. Could not find and/or afford child care
7. Family responsibilities were too great
8. Southeastern was too small for you
9. Southeastern was too large for you
10. Did not feel like you fit in
11. Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit
12. Dissatisfied with your grades
13. Suspended or placed on probation

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)**
                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 _____?

- 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
- More student involvement in sports   more stuff to do off campus
- Because Training they offer her major
- personal reasons
- Classes are free if you are on staff at the church of brookhill
- Just more well known
- closer to home
- my sister lives up here and I moved up here to live with her
- Because that is where the degree I want is at
- because they have radiology program
- closer to home
- Nursing School
- wanted something to do
- Because she would like to continue her education
- business program, live in baton rouge and want to go to big school
- Convenience
- Because she is in the Marine Core and she cannot go to a school right now
- actually the campus its really nice
- Transfer to LSU
- had child and moved back home
- smaller college and will take less amount of time to get degree
- closer to home because mother is sick and disabled, same prerequisites
- Just needed to get back into LSU
- Likes Lafayette better and better for career
- not enrolled in one yet
- closer to home

- It is closer to home
- Back home
- closer, easier for transportation
- Parents moved to Lafayette and needs to go with them
- Closer to home
- Know a lot more people
- Changed majors and needed to go the for the major.
- For their culinary program
- Job is in New Orleans near the school
- nursing program is shorter
- Have to pay for school and not eligible for grants.
- closer to home
- Takes way too long finish there
- Because of late registration
- Closer to home
- Close.
- more hands on
- wants to open a Bakery
- More opportunities than Southeastern
- Major of Massage Therapy
- Closer to hometown
- Failed out at Southeastern
- It was closer to home
- closer to home
- This is wanted she want to do originally.
- didn't do good at Southeastern
- Little closer.