

# **Non-Returning Student Survey Fall 2009**



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

**May 2010**

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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 2008 cohort students who were not enrolled in Fall 2009. 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 852 students of the Fall 2008 cohort who were not enrolled in Fall 2009 and had not been suspended. After repeated attempts, 532 students remained unreachable by the available phone numbers, 157 refused to be part of the survey, and 163 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 51%. Table 1 provides a demographic comparison of the population and the sample.

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of the Sample vs. the Population**

	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>Size</b>	173	852
<b>ACT Range</b>		
17 or Below	12.1%	11.9%
18 or 19	20.2%	23.4%
20-23	52.6%	48.8%
24 or Higher	15.0%	16.0%
<b>Housing</b>		
Off Campus	57.2%	57.2%
On Campus	42.8%	42.8%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	49.1%	52.8%
Male	50.9%	47.2%
<b>Race</b>		
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.2%	0.7%
Black, Non-Hispanic	22.5%	21.7%
Hispanic	4.0%	2.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.4%
Unknown	4.0%	4.6%
White, Non-Hispanic	68.2%	69.8%

## **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, 45% (n=78) of the respondents are Drop-Outs, 41% (n=71) are Stop-outs, and 14% (n=24) were unsure of their plans.

### Stop Outs

The majority of the Stop-outs (63%, n=25) plan on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2010, and 38% (n=17) did return. Thirty-one percent (31%, n=22) planned on returning to Southeastern within the next year. Four percent (4%, n=3) plan on returning within the next two years, and 1% (n=1) plans on returning within the next five years.

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 62% of respondents indicating it was a reason they stopped attending Southeastern. This was followed by "Had family responsibilities to take care of" which 59% 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**

	<b>Major Reason</b>	<b>Minor Reason</b>	<b>Not a Reason</b>
Need to earn more money	35.2%	26.8%	35.2%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	26.8%	32.4%	38.0%
Academic problems	32.4%	19.7%	45.1%
Work interfered with school	22.5%	28.2%	45.1%
Needed a break from school	19.7%	32.4%	45.1%
Health reasons	11.3%	18.3%	67.6%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	7.0%	12.7%	76.1%
Religious obligation	4.2%	5.6%	85.9%
Military obligation	4.2%	5.6%	87.3%

## Drop Outs

Most of the Drop-outs (82%) intend to finish their education elsewhere, and 68% 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
Art Institute of Jacksonville	1	1.3%
Baton Rouge Community College	8	10.1%
Baton Rouge General School of Radiologic Technology	1	1.3%
Cal state university	1	1.3%
Cosmetology	1	1.3%
Delgado Community College	13	16.5%
Delta college	1	1.3%
Fletcher Com College	1	1.3%
Fort Louise Community College in Durango, Colorado	1	1.3%
In New Orleans	1	1.3%
Laney college	1	1.3%
Lee College	1	1.3%
Loyola University	1	1.3%
Louisiana State University	8	10.1%
Louisiana Tech	2	2.5%
Louisiana Technical College	3	3.8%
Lynn University	1	1.3%
a medical school	1	1.3%
Mississippi Valley State	1	1.3%
Nevada	1	1.3%
New Orleans Baptist Seminary	1	1.3%
Newness community college	1	1.3%

<b>Table 7 cont. Schools Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll Cont.</b>		
<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Nicholls State	1	1.3%
Nunez community college	1	1.3%
Nursing	1	1.3%
Our Lady of Holly Cross	1	1.3%
Our Lady of the Lake	1	1.3%
out of state	1	1.3%
Paul Mitchell hair school	1	1.3%
Peidmont VA College	1	1.3%
Prairieville Community College	1	1.3%
River Parish	1	1.3%
school for continuing studies	1	1.3%
South Louisiana community college	1	1.3%
Southern	1	1.3%
ULL	1	1.3%
University of New Orleans	3	3.8%
University of Pennsylvania	1	1.3%
Xavier	1	1.3%
Undecided	9	11.4%

Respondents were then asked what was the main reason they decided to attend another school. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the respondents indicated they wanted to attend a school closer to home/work, or they were tired of commuting to Southeastern. Twenty-seven percent (27%) said they decided to attend another school because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern. An additional 8% 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 70.5% of respondents indicating it was a reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by “Moved to a new location” (38.4%) and “Too much stress” (37.2%).



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**

	<b>Major Reason</b>	<b>Minor Reason</b>	<b>Not a Reason</b>
Decided to attend a different college	44.9%	25.6%	25.6%
Moved to a new location	20.5%	17.9%	57.7%
Too much stress	15.4%	21.8%	59.0%
Dissatisfied with your grades	9.0%	29.5%	59.0%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school	9.0%	24.4%	64.1%
Dissatisfied with your major	14.1%	16.7%	65.4%
Family responsibilities were too great	9.0%	20.5%	66.7%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	10.3%	20.5%	66.7%
Wanted a break from your college studies	9.0%	20.5%	66.7%
Suspended or placed on probation	9.0%	20.5%	66.7%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	6.4%	21.8%	67.9%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	10.3%	17.9%	67.9%
Accepted a full-time job	12.8%	16.7%	67.9%
Family or personal health-related problem	12.8%	12.8%	69.2%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	16.7%	11.5%	69.2%
Encountered unexpected expenses	11.5%	14.1%	71.8%
Wanted to get work experience	12.8%	11.5%	73.1%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	6.4%	17.9%	73.1%
Could not find affordable housing you liked	2.6%	19.2%	74.4%
Could not find part-time work	7.7%	12.8%	75.6%
Courses were too difficult	5.1%	16.7%	75.6%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	5.1%	15.4%	75.6%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	2.6%	17.9%	75.6%
Did not receive enough financial aid	6.4%	12.8%	76.9%

	<b>Major Reason</b>	<b>Minor Reason</b>	<b>Not a Reason</b>
Did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern	6.4%	11.5%	78.2%
Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college	6.4%	11.5%	78.2%
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	2.6%	15.4%	78.2%
Academic advising was inadequate	1.3%	15.4%	78.2%
Had problems scheduling classes	1.3%	17.9%	78.2%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	7.7%	9.0%	79.5%
Courses were not challenging	2.6%	14.1%	79.5%
Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere that was conducive to learning	2.6%	14.1%	80.8%
There were too many required courses	1.3%	12.8%	82.1%
Dealing with hurricane related problems	2.6%	11.5%	83.3%
Southeastern was too large for you	5.1%	9.0%	83.3%
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	1.3%	10.3%	83.3%
Southeastern was too small for you	2.6%	11.5%	83.3%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	2.6%	9.0%	84.6%
Credit card debt was too much	2.6%	9.0%	84.6%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	0.0%	10.3%	85.9%
Could not get into the program you wanted	1.3%	9.0%	85.9%
Did not feel like you fit in	1.3%	7.7%	88.5%
Could not find and/or afford child care	0.0%	7.7%	89.7%

### **Difficult Course(s)**

Students were asked if they had problems with any particular course. Fifty respondents (29%) identified a particular course or courses with which they had problems. Math was the most commonly cited course, with 36 respondents (72%) indicating a particular math course or just math in general. Specific courses cited included MATH 155 (5 respondents - 10%), MATH 92 (14 respondents - 28%), and MATH 161 (7 respondents - 14%). The next most commonly cited type of course was science (9 respondents - 18%), with 7 (14%) indicating a biology course (1 specifically cited GBIO 106 and two cited GBIO 151) and two (4%) indicating a chemistry course. Four (8%) had problems with a history course, three (6%) indicated they had problems with English courses, and three (6%) had problems with SE 101. All courses and any comments made about them can be found in Appendix C.

## **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 (86%) have never been married, and do not have children (84%). A fourth (25%) of the respondents traveled more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, while another fourth (22%) lived on campus. Approximately 57% of the respondents worked off campus. An additional 6% worked on campus. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of those who worked, spent more than 30 hours a week working, with an additional 35% spending 21-30 hours a week working. Twenty-four percent (24%) 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 2007 cohort. There were some differences that should be noted between the two surveys. This year a much higher percentage of students indicated that family responsibilities was a reason for stopping out. Last year a total of 47.3% of the students cited it as a reason for stopping out, while this year 59.2% cited it as a reason.

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 moved to a new location (38.4% of respondents), this was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in percent of endorsement last year (35.7%). Too much stress remained third on the list, but the percent of students who indicated it was a major reason increased by 3.7%.

## 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. 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 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?
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 \_\_\_\_\_?**

- Offer the major I decided on
- Closer to home
- Just something i really wanted to do. Just rolls with my life a bit better than a four year school
- interest
- Because I live in New Orleans and decided and felt like I needed to be closer to home.
- Fees
- transferred to get out of the dorm.
- pre-pharmacy and pharmacy school
- closer to job
- convenient
- Two year program
- location
- SLU didn't have major
- Still living in Baton Rouge and the commute got kind of hard for me.
- Moved
- Closer to home, I live in Baton Rouge
- 3rd best film school in the nation. SLU doesn't offer film
- The size and the major better. A private university.
- Realized wanted to do hair.
- unfair treatment SLU
- Where I am living now and closer to home.
- The school of business
- closer to home
- closer to home
- lost tops. moved back home. in covington.
- Wanted to move back home because of cost.
- distance
- Nice art school and more appropriate
- to improve grades
- Pass math
- location
- has the major wanted
- Southeastern doesn't have radiology
- Career Change
- didn't like Hammond
- math was at Southeastern was not nice
- smaller,
- Closer to home
- was late for registrations
- To attend school and play baseball
- Smaller
- electrical program didn't want to attend four year university
- its closer to home

- financial reasons
- closer
- Closer to my home residence and for the nursing program.
- Closer
- close to house
- close to home
- not sure
- Didn't like SLU Math
- Financial reasons
- new environment, try something new
- Home town
- wanted to go home
- Shorter EMT program
- Commute was too hard to attend SLU
- Campus is closer to home.
- It was cheaper and I was commuting
- because is had my major.
- doesn't like Louisiana
- Degree program in the music industry
- change of major
- closer to home
- because he wants to take firefighter training
- liked campus
- Not accepted in southeastern
- fire training school
- Better offers
- change location
- living arrangements
- closer to home
- closer to home
- new environment
- Paramedic
- a lot faster, and offered program he needed
- have the major she wanted fiancee there

**Appendix C**  
**Did you have problems with any particular course?**

- online math course
- Math
- History 202 withdrew
- Math 92
- Biology Intro
- english 101
- chemistry
- math 92A, biology lab,
- MATH 92 (did not agree with the curriculum base) SE101 (should not have been required)
- Math 165
- Math College Algebra had problems with the course being centered on online assignments.
- Math 92 (the computer thing)
- Biology Online
- math 161
- English and Math
- History
- english 102
- math 92
- Math 161
- Math-092
- math 155
- math 161
- math 161
- Math 092, General Biology 106,
- math 92
- biology151
- math 161
- math 155
- math92
- college algebra
- computer program for math 161.
- math
- chemistry
- se 101
- Math 92
- math 155
- Biology
- remedial Math
- biology 151 history 101
- college algebra
- History
- Math 161

- math 155
- Math 92
- math 155
- Math 92
- math 92, professor wasn't involved, he taught the history of math instead of teaching, computers were hard to work with.
- math
- Online math classes.
- SE101 didn't apply to her bc she's a music major (she hears it from others) felt overlooked because of her major and she was putting out alot unable to prove herself