Non-Returning Student Survey

Fall 2004

Executive Summary

In Fall 2004, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment conducted a telephone survey of students who were in the Fall 2003 cohort, but were not enrolled in Fall 2004. The goal of the survey was to gather information on why these students left Southeastern, and if they plan to return in the future.

Ninety-six participants were contacted and agreed to complete the survey. The survey covered four general areas of questioning: whether students plan on returning, reasons why students might stop attending Southeastern for a while, reasons why students might permanently leave Southeastern and demographic information not readily available in PeopleSoft.

Some highlights of the Non-Returning Student Survey are:

- Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents plan on continuing their education elsewhere.

- Of the nine possible reasons presented to respondents who stopped attending Southeastern for a while, "needed to earn more money," "had family responsibilities to take care of" and "needed a break from school" were most often cited as a reason.

- Of the forty possible reasons presented to respondents who left Southeastern permanently, "decided to attend a different college," "moved to a new location" and "tired of commuting to Southeastern" were most often indicated as a reason.

- Fifty-three percent (53%) of Drop-Outs had to commute more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, compared to 23% of the Stop-Outs.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of the Drop-Outs were female, compared to 56% of the Stop-Outs.

- Nineteen percent (19%) of the Drop-Outs were Black, non-Hispanic females. None of the Drop-Outs were Black, non-Hispanic males. In contrast, 9% of the Stop-Outs were Black, non-Hispanic females and 7% were males.

- In general, Stop-Outs worked more while at Southeastern than did Drop-Outs. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the Drop-Outs did not work, compared to 18.6% of the Stop-Outs. Of the Stop-Outs who worked, 50% worked more than 30 hours per week, while only 25% of the Drop-Outs worked more than 30 hours per week.

- The average ACT composite for Drop-Outs was 21.1, compared to 20.1 for Stop-Outs. Most (47%) of the Stop-Outs had an ACT composite of 20-23, with 28% of Drop-Outs having an ACT score in the same range. On the other hand, a majority (32%) of the Drop-Outs had an ACT composite of 24 or higher, while 16% of Stop-Outs had an ACT in the same range.

Method

Participants

The survey population was 686 students in the Fall 2003 cohort who did not return in Fall 2004 and had not been suspended. Of the population, 10.5% (n=72) had bad telephone numbers and 74.5% (n=511) could not be contacted. Of the 103 contacted, 6.8% (n=7) refused to complete the survey. Ninety-six participants completed the survey, for a response rate of 93.2%.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the demographics between the survey sample and the population.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample and Population

	Sample	Population
Group Size	96	686
Gender		
Male	40.6%	47.7%
Female	59.4%	52.3%
Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	*75.0%*	*77.2%*
Male	30.2%	37.8%
Female	44.8%	39.4%
Black, Non-Hispanic	*17.7%*	*17.7%*
Male	3.1%	7.1%
Female	14.6%	10.6%
Other Minority	*3.1%*	*2.5%*
Male	3.1%	1.6%
Female	0.0%	0.9%
Not Reported	*4.2%*	*2.7%*
Male	4.2%	1.2%
Female	0.0%	1.5%
Age		
Under 25	97.9%	99.0%
25 or Older	2.1%	1.0%

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample and Population, Continued

	Sample	Population
ACT Composite		
17 or Below	21.9%	28.9%
18 – 19	16.7%	18.8%
20 – 23	36.5%	41.7%
24 or Higher	25.0%	10.6%
Campus Housing		
On-Campus	26.0%	24.1%
Off-Campus	74.0%	75.9%
TOPS		
Received TOPS	35.4%	27.3%
Did Not Receive TOPS	64.6%	72.7%

Procedure

The survey was administered by telephone, using trained and experienced IR staff and student workers. The survey was conducted Monday-Friday, during the day and evening.

Instrument

The survey first asked a series of questions to determine if students planned on returning to Southeastern in the future. Respondents who indicated they did not plan on returning to Southeastern were given a list of forty 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. Respondents 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 nine 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 part of the application or registration process, such as how far they had to travel (one way) to Southeastern's main campus. The entire survey can be found in Appendix A.

Results

What are Students' Intentions?

The first portion of the survey obtained information on respondents' current intention. Based on these responses, students can be classified into two groups: 1) Drop-Outs, those respondents who no longer plan on continuing their education at Southeastern, including those who plan on or have transferred elsewhere; 2) Stop-Outs, those respondents who plan to return to Southeastern to complete their degree. Based on these definitions, 55.2% (n=53) of the respondents are Drop-Outs, and 44.8% (n=43) are Stop-Outs.

Stop-Outs

The majority of the Stop-Outs (55.8%, n=24) plan on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2005 (66.7%, n=16, actually returned), with 27.9% (n=12) planning on returning within the next year, 4.7% (n=2) planning on returning in the next two years and 11.6% (n=5) not sure when they will be returning.

Stop-Outs were then 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. The two most cited reasons for their decision not to return to Southeastern were "Needed to earn more money" (51.2%, n=22) and "Had family responsibilities to take care of" (51.2%, n=22).

Table 2 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 2
Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Needed to earn more money	37.2%	14.0%	48.8%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	32.6%	18.6%	48.8%
Needed a break from school	18.6%	23.3%	58.1%
Military obligation	14.3%	11.9%	73.8%
Religious obligation	14.3%	11.9%	73.8%
Work interfered with school	11.9%	11.9%	76.2%
Academic problems	7.1%	14.3%	78.6%
Health reasons	7.0%	2.3%	90.7%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	0.0%	7.1%	92.9%

Drop-Outs

Most of the Drop-Outs (84.9%, n=45) intend to finish their education elsewhere. Of these students, 75.5% (n=40) have already enrolled in another Institution. When asked what institution they have or will enroll in, the most commonly cited was Louisiana State Univeristy. Table 3 provides the institutions respondents identified as having enrolled in or planning to enroll in.

Table 3
Institutions Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll

Institution	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Louisiana State University	7	15.6%
Delgado Community College	5	11.1%
Baton Rouge Community College	4	8.9%
Louisiana Tech University	3	6.7%
Southern University	3	6.7%
University of New Orleans	3	6.7%
Our Lady of the Lake	2	4.4%
Pearl River Community College	2	4.4%
Cabrillo College - California	1	2.2%
Emporia State University in Kansas	1	2.2%
Greensburg Votech College	1	2.2%
International Academy of Design & Technology	1	2.2%
Louisiana Technical School - Bogalousa	1	2.2%
Loyola University	1	2.2%
Medical Training College-Baton Rouge	1	2.2%
Miami-Dade Community College	1	2.2%
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	1	2.2%
Mississippi University for Women	1	2.2%
Nunez Community College	1	2.2%
Our Lady of Holy Cross	1	2.2%
Southwest Mississippi Community College	1	2.2%
Stevens Academy	1	2.2%
University of Louisiana-Lafayette	1	2.2%

Respondents were then asked what their main reason was for deciding to attend another school. Fifteen percent (15.1%, n=8) of the respondents indicated they decided to attend another school because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern, with an additional 7.5% (n=4) of the respondents signifying they wanted to attend a school closer to home.

Next, Drop-Outs were asked to indicate whether each of forty possible reasons was a Major Reason, a Minor Reason, or Not a Reason in their decision to leave Southeastern. "Decided to attend a different college" was the item with the largest endorsement, with 84.9% (n=45) of the respondents indicating it was the reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by "Moved to a new location," which 45.3% (n=24) of respondents endorsed as a reason they left.

Table 4 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 4
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	66.0%	18.9%	15.1%
Moved to a new location	26.4%	18.9%	54.7%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	24.5%	17.0%	58.5%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	26.4%	11.3%	62.3%
Encountered unexpected expenses	20.8%	9.4%	69.8%
Too much stress	17.0%	9.4%	73.6%
Did not receive enough financial aid	15.1%	9.4%	75.5%
Dissatisfied with your grades	9.4%	13.2%	77.4%
Health-related problem (family or personal)	11.3%	9.4%	79.2%
Wanted to get work experience	5.7%	15.1%	79.2%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	9.4%	9.4%	81.1%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	7.5%	11.3%	81.1%
Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere that was conducive to learning	3.8%	15.1%	81.1%
Had problems scheduling classes	3.8%	15.1%	81.1%
Courses were not challenging	7.7%	9.6%	82.7%
Could not get into the program you wanted	15.1%	1.9%	83.0%
Wanted a break from college studies	9.4%	7.5%	83.0%
Family responsibilities were too great	9.4%	7.5%	83.0%

Table 4

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

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college	9.4%	7.5%	83.0%
Academic advising was inadequate	5.7%	11.3%	83.0%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	1.9%	13.5%	84.6%
There were too many required courses	9.4%	5.7%	84.9%
Dissatisfied with you major	9.4%	5.7%	84.9%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	9.4%	5.7%	84.9%
Could not find part-time work	7.5%	7.5%	84.9%
Could not find affordable housing you liked	5.7%	9.4%	84.9%
Did not feel like you fit in	5.7%	7.5%	86.8%
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	3.8%	9.4%	86.8%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school	5.8%	5.8%	88.5%
Could not find and/or afford child care	5.7%	5.7%	88.7%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	5.8%	3.8%	90.4%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	0.0%	9.6%	90.4%
Southeastern was too small for you	5.7%	3.8%	90.6%
Southeastern was too large for you	1.9%	7.5%	90.6%
Courses were too difficult	1.9%	7.5%	90.6%
Accepted a full-time job	7.7%	0.0%	92.3%
Placed on probation	5.7%	1.9%	92.5%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	5.7%	1.9%	92.5%
Did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern	1.9%	3.8%	94.3%
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	1.9%	1.9%	96.2%

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 PeopleSoft system. Answers to these questions help give a better understanding as to what type of student will leave Southeastern either temporarily or permanently. Forty percent (39.6%, n=38) of the respondents commuted more than 30 miles (one way) to campus, while an additional 15.6% (n=15) commuted between 21 and 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus. Of those who worked, 37.1% (n=26) spent more than 30 hours a week working, while 28.6% (n=20) spent 11-20 hours a week working. Thirty-three

percent (33.3%, n=32) of the respondents are first-generation college students, which is a student who has no parent with any college or university experience.

Tables 5 and 6 provide a comparison of the demographic characteristics of Stop-Outs and Drop-Outs.

Table 5
Demographic Characteristics of Stop-Outs and Drop-Outs

	Drop-Outs	Stop-Outs
Sample Size	53	43
Distance Traveled (one way) to Southeastern's Main Campus		
Live on Campus	15.1%	14.0%
Less than 5 Miles	11.3%	14.0%
Between 5 and 10 Miles	7.5%	9.3%
Between 11 and 20 Miles	1.9%	16.3%
Between 21 and 30 Miles	11.3%	20.9%
More than 30 Miles	52.8%	23.3%
Where Students Work		
Did Not Work	32.1%	18.6%
Work On Campus	5.7%	2.4%
Work Off Campus	60.4%	74.4%
Worked Both On and Off Campus	1.9%	2.3%
Number of Hours Per Week Worked (Only for those who worked)		
1-10 Hours	11.1%	5.9%
11-20 Hours	30.6%	26.5%
21-30 Hours	33.3%	17.6%
More Than 30 Hours	25.0%	50.0%
Highest Level of Parental Education		
No High School Diploma	3.8%	7.0%
High School Diploma/GED	26.4%	30.2%
Some College	22.6%	16.3%
Associate Degree	9.4%	9.3%
Bachelor's Degree	24.5%	30.2%
Graduate/Professional Degree	9.4%	2.3%
Unknown	3.8%	2.3%

Table 6

Additional Demographic Characteristics of
Stop-Outs and Drop-Outs

	Drop-Outs	Stop-Outs
Sample Size	53	43
Gender		
Male	37.7%	44.2%
Female	62.3%	55.8%
Ethnicity		
White, Non-Hispanic	77.4%	72.1%
Male	34.0%	25.6%
Female	43.4%	46.5%
Black, Non-Hispanic	18.9%	16.3%
Male	0.0%	7.0%
Female	18.9%	9.3%
Other Minority	1.9%	4.7%
Male	1.9%	4.7%
Female	0.0%	0.0%
Not Reported	1.9%	7.0%
Male	1.9%	7.0%
Female	0.0%	0.0%
Age		
Under 25	98.1%	97.7%
25 or Older	1.9%	2.3%
ACT Composite		
17 or Below	17.0%	27.9%
18 - 19	22.6%	9.3%
20 - 23	28.3%	46.5%
24 or Higher	32.1%	16.3%
Campus Housing		
On-Campus	26.4%	25.6%
Off-Campus	73.6%	74.4%
TOPS		
Received TOPS	39.6%	30.2%
Did Not Receive TOPS	60.4%	69.8%

Appendix A
Non-Returning Student Survey

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at Southeastern Louisiana University. May I please speak with _____? We need to get opinions from students who were previously enrolled at Southeastern but are not enrolled this semester. Your participation is entirely voluntary, you are free to not answer any question, and you may quit at any time. Your opinion is very important to us, and your answers will be completely confidential. This survey will only take a few minutes of your time.

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 Questions
                If yes continue to intro 2

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=Major Reason, 2=Minor Reason, 3=Not a Reason)**

1.   Health-related problem (family or personal)
2.   Wanted a break from 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

Go to Demographic Questions

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=Major Reason, 2=Minor Reason, 3=Not a Reason)

2. Needed to earn more money
3. Had family responsibilities to take care of
4. Needed a break from school
5. Military obligation
6. Religious obligation
7. Work interfered with school

8.   Academic problems
9.   Health reasons
10.   Could not schedule the classes you needed

Demographics

1.   How far did you have to travel (one way) to Southeastern's main campus?
                1-Live 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

2.   Did you work on or off campus?
                1-Did not work   **(Skip to Question 4)**
                2-Worked on campus
                3-Worked off campus
                4-Worked both on and off campus

3.   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

4.   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

5.   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

Appendix B
Reasons Students Stated for Deciding to Attending Another University

1. Athletics.
2. Because I changed my major.
3. Changed my major to engineering.
4. Changing major to Radiology.
5. Cheaper to live at home.
6. Cheaper.
7. Closer to home.
8. Did not want to be away from home.
9. Didn't have the major I wanted.
10. Different schools have more to offer.
11. Going to get an associate degree, then coming back here to get my bachelor degree.
12. I am a nursing major and I want to intern at Charity Hospital. At Southeastern, I could not intern in New Orleans.
13. I had problems with my roommate and no one would help me, so I decided to leave Southeastern.
14. I live in New Orleans and accepted a job in the summer and decided to keep the job and attend UNO.
15. I wanted to be closer to home.
16. I was on placed on probation.
17. It's is cheaper and I can get my degree faster.
18. It provided more courses that we didn't have.
19. Just liked it better. Feel like I can get a better education.
20. Liked the school better.
21. Location.
22. More hands on.
23. More prestegious.
24. No engineering degree at Southeastern.
25. Physical Therapy.
26. Program is faster. Can finish quicker and go straight into a job as a medical asst.
27. Refused to answer.
28. Southeastern didn't offer my major in Massage Therapy.
29. Southeastern is expensive.
30. Southeastern doesn't offer my major in Chemical Engineering.
31. They had a bridge program from LPN to RN.
32. They have a major in Computer Science with an emphasis in game design.
33. Too far a compute to Southeastern.
34. Too much travel and I work full-time in Baton Rouge. LSU is more convenient. I loved Southeastern.
35. Two year degree program in Bio Medical Repair.
36. Was majoring in Kinesiology at Southeastern. Changed major to Pre-Law and I am from Baton Rouge. Thought it would be better to at LSU. I didn't leave because I didn't like Southeastern.
37. Will be closer to girlfriend. Has a good graduate program.