

Non-Returning Student Survey Fall 2010



**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 2009 cohort students who were not enrolled in Fall 2010. 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 830 students of the Fall 2009 cohort who were not enrolled in Fall 2010 and had not been suspended. After repeated attempts, 429 students remained unreachable by the available phone numbers, 254 refused to be part of the survey, and 147 surveys were completed, for a response rate of 37%. Table 1 provides a demographic comparison of the population and the sample.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample vs. the Population

	Sample	Population
Size	147	830
ACT Range		
17 or Below	8.2%	8.2%
18 or 19	21.1%	21.0%
20-23	46.3%	50.6%
24 or Higher	24.5%	20.2%
Housing		
Off Campus	60.5%	62.4%
On Campus	39.5%	37.6%
Gender		
Female	52.4%	63.4%
Male	47.6%	46.6%
Race		
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.4%	3.4%
Black, Non-Hispanic	19.0%	17.6%
Hispanic	1.4%	1.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.8%
Unknown	3.4%	3.3%
White, Non-Hispanic	72.8%	73.6%

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, 46% (n=68) of the respondents are Drop-Outs and 54% (n=79) are Stop-outs.

Stop Outs

The majority of the Stop-outs (52%, n=41) planned on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2011, and 37% (n=29) did return. Twenty-seven percent (27%, n=21) planned on returning to Southeastern within the next year. Ten percent (10%, n=8) 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. “Academic Problems” was the item with the largest endorsement, with 75% of respondents indicating it was a reason they stopped attending Southeastern. This was followed by “Need to earn more money” which 57% 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
Academic problems	40.5%	27.8%	25.3%
Need to earn more money	34.2%	19.0%	43.0%
Needed a break from school	17.7%	29.1%	48.1%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	26.6%	16.5%	51.9%
Work interfered with school	22.8%	21.5%	51.9%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	5.1%	21.5%	67.1%
Military obligation	11.4%	12.7%	69.6%
Religious obligation	6.3%	17.7%	70.9%
Health reasons	6.3%	13.9%	73.4%

Drop Outs

Most of the Drop-outs (79%) intend to finish their education elsewhere, and 59% 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
Baton Rouge Community College	2	3.9%
City College of New York	1	2.0%
Culinary School	1	2.0%
Delgado Community College	9	17.6%
Loyola University	1	2.0%
Louisiana State University	7	13.7%
Louisiana Tech	2	3.9%
Millsaps College	1	2.0%
Nicholls State	1	2.0%
Northshore Technical College	3	5.9%
Our Lady of the Lake	3	5.9%
Park Place Barber College	1	2.0%
Parkland Community College	1	2.0%
River Parishes Community College	2	3.9%
ULL	4	7.8%
University of Louisiana - Monroe	1	2.0%
University of Nebraska Lincoln	1	2.0%
University of New Orleans	5	9.8%
Undecided	5	9.8%

Respondents were then asked what was the main reason they decided to attend another school. Thirty-five percent (35%) said they decided to attend another school because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the respondents indicated they wanted to attend a school closer to home/work, or they were

tired of commuting to Southeastern. An additional 11% transferred because of financial reasons, and 9% transferred because to be an athlete or they received an athletic scholarship. 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 67.6% of respondents indicating it was a reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by “Moved to a new location” (39.7%) and “Encountered unexpected expenses” (32.4%).

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	54.4%	13.2%	19.1%
Moved to a new location	26.5%	13.2%	48.5%
Encountered unexpected expenses	20.6%	11.8%	55.9%
Wanted a break from your college studies	13.2%	17.6%	58.8%
Accepted a full-time job	13.2%	16.2%	58.8%
Too much stress	13.2%	14.7%	60.3%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	16.2%	11.8%	60.3%
Wanted to get work experience	16.2%	13.2%	60.3%
Dissatisfied with your grades	17.6%	10.3%	61.8%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	19.1%	8.8%	61.8%
Family responsibilities were too great	11.8%	14.7%	64.7%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	11.8%	11.8%	64.7%
Could not get into the program you wanted	16.2%	7.4%	64.7%
Dissatisfied with your major	11.8%	13.2%	66.2%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	11.8%	11.8%	66.2%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	4.4%	17.6%	66.2%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	7.4%	13.2%	66.2%
Did not receive enough financial aid	8.8%	13.2%	66.2%
There were too many required courses	10.3%	10.3%	66.2%

Table 7			
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 family and school	10.3%	10.3%	67.6%
Had problems scheduling classes	4.4%	11.8%	69.1%
Courses were too difficult	2.9%	14.7%	70.6%
Suspended or placed on probation	5.9%	11.8%	72.1%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	10.3%	7.4%	72.1%
Family or personal health-related problem	11.8%	5.9%	72.1%
Could not find affordable housing you liked	8.8%	5.9%	72.1%
Could not find part-time work	8.8%	8.8%	73.5%
Southeastern was too small for you	7.4%	8.8%	73.5%
Did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern	7.4%	8.8%	75.0%
Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college	4.4%	7.4%	75.0%
Academic advising was inadequate	2.9%	8.8%	75.0%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	1.5%	8.8%	76.5%
Southeastern did not promote an atmosphere that was conducive to learning	2.9%	8.8%	76.5%
Credit card debt was too much	4.4%	5.9%	76.5%
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	5.9%	5.9%	77.9%
Did not feel like you fit in	1.5%	10.3%	77.9%
Courses were not challenging	0.0%	7.4%	79.4%
Dealing with hurricane related problems	0.0%	7.4%	79.4%
Southeastern was too large for you	4.4%	5.9%	79.4%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	1.5%	5.9%	80.9%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	2.9%	5.9%	80.9%
Could not find and/or afford child care	0.0%	5.9%	85.3%
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	0.0%	2.9%	88.2%

Difficult Course(s)

Students were asked if they had problems with any particular course. Thirty-six respondents (24%) identified a particular course or courses with which they had problems. Math was the

most commonly cited course, with 24 respondents (67%) indicating a particular math course or just math in general. Specific courses cited included MATH 155 (6 respondents - 17%) and MATH 92 (4 respondents - 11%). The next most commonly cited type of course was science (9 respondents - 25%), with 3 (8%) indicating a biology course and five (14%) indicating a chemistry course. Four (11%) had problems with an English. 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 (82%) have never been married, and do not have children (77%). A fourth (26%) of the respondents traveled more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, while another 16% lived on campus. Approximately 50% of the respondents worked off campus. An additional 11% worked on campus. Twenty-six percent (26%) of those who worked, spent more than 30 hours a week working, with an additional 36% spending 21-30 hours a week working. Twenty-seven percent (27%) 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 2008 cohort. There were some differences that should be noted between the two surveys. This year a much higher percentage of students indicated that academic problems were a reason for stopping out. Last year a total of 52.1% of the students cited it as a reason for stopping out and it was the third highest reason, while this year 68.3% cited it as a reason and it was the top reason.

For all drop-outs, the main reason for not returning to Southeastern was decided to attend a different college with moved to a new location second, which was the same as last year. There was a change in the third ranked reason, with more students this year (32.4%) indicating it was a reason they dropped out as compared to last year (25.6%) when it was ranked 16th.

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
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?
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 _____?

- Dorm fees are too high
- Work
- Closer from his house
- Closer to home
- He like to cut hair
- Southeastern had not got the program I wanted to go
- She had her major
- More convenient location
- For the radiology program
- Because of engineering program
- To get out of Hammond
- Closer to home
- SELU does not have my degree
- To play football
- Did not like music program in SELU
- Got depressed in SELU
- Has the degree wanted
- Just closer to home
- Cheaper, tuition
- Obtained a baseball scholarship
- Boyfriend was there
- It's a shorter program
- Liked the school
- Has the course she wants
- Have his major
- Don't like Hammond
- The classes are overwhelming here at SELU
- To play football
- Cheaper to live at home
- Volleyball scholarship
- Nursing Program
- No engineering in SELU
- It is cheaper
- Because they offered a radiology program and SELU does not
- Cheaper
- Pre-vet courses
- Close to your home
- She moved
- Closer to home
- Was getting homesick. Her GPA was dropping at Southeastern.
- Nursing program
- It has networking
- Close
- LSU is a lot closer

- It's expensive and I need to make money
- For its program

Appendix C
Did you have problems with any particular course?

- Anatomy , physiology and chemistry
- BIOL 152
- CHEM 101
- CHEM 121
- Chemistry
- ENGL 101
- English 102
- English.
- GBIO101, ENGL 92
- Math 101
- Math 151
- Math 151 College Algebra
- Math 152
- Math 155
- MATH 155
- Math 155
- Math 155
- Math 155
- Math 200
- MATH 241
- Math 92
- Math 92
- MATH 92
- MATH 92, MATH 155(use online program and it is a problem) Once you fail out of it, all you can schedule is electives because it is a prereq.
- Math and chemistry
- Math lab, Art class
- Math161 Gbio101
- Math92
- Math92
- Math92 online
- Maths
- Maths
- Maths
- Statistical physic one that music major had to take
- The string department