

## **Future Student Diversity: Southeastern Serving its Community**

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**Research Brief # 20**

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Diversity is a significant part of Southeastern's philosophy. Diversity is mentioned in our Core Values and has an important role in our goals. Southeastern strives to meet the needs of our students and the community it serves. Southeastern's constituency is made up of a diverse group from many racial and ethnic groups and from many cultural heritages. How well Southeastern meets the needs of these groups will depend on how well it can adapt to future trends in racial and ethnic mix of its service area. This analysis provides potential trends in the racial make-up of Southeastern's service area.

Data from Louisiana.gov Explore Population Projections was used to look at local population projections. While the nation will be experiencing a large increase in population, Louisiana is projected to have an increase of 10.2% in overall population. Parishes along the I-10/I-12 corridor and parishes in or immediately surrounding the metropolitan areas of New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Alexandria, and Shreveport will experience increases in their population. Whereas, those parishes that are more rural will experience decreases in their population within the next twenty years. (Blanchard,T., 2010)

If we look at the feeder parishes for Southeastern, the majority are predicted to have increases in overall population. The increases for minorities in most of Southeastern's feeder parishes will be substantially greater than their White counterparts. This indicates that Southeastern's pool of potential students will be making a racial shift to include larger numbers of minorities, see figure 1.

Figure 1

<b>For Selected Louisiana Parishes Projected Percent Increase in Population from 2010 to 2030</b>				
<b>Southeastern Feeder Parishes</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Other</b>
Livingston	87.6%	84.4%	150.6%	47.6%
St. Tammany	86.0%	63.1%	240.0%	52.1%
Ascension	79.9%	88.5%	52.5%	47.2%
St. John the Baptist	30.7%	-3.8%	60.6%	47.2%
Tangipahoa	17.6%	15.0%	23.1%	38.0%
St. Charles	12.6%	5.5%	25.6%	48.9%
St. Bernard	7.7%	3.7%	30.9%	32.5%
Jefferson	4.2%	-6.1%	26.5%	13.4%
Orleans	3.4%	-13.4%	11.1%	20.6%
Washington	2.6%	4.2%	-1.9%	56.0%
East Baton Rouge	-2.8%	-29.9%	21.7%	51.7%
<b>Southeastern Feeder Parishes Total</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>
<b>State Total</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>42.3%</b>

Source: Louisiana.gov Explore Population Projections;  
<http://www.louisiana.gov/PopProjections/ExcelFiles/>

Note: The Other race category includes Asians or Pacific Islanders, North American Indian or Alaskan Native. The Hispanic or Latino ethnicity information was not used by Louisiana Explore Population Projections. Therefore, peoples of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity are included in each racial category and not separated into their own ethnic category.

They also state that 33 states will have overall increases in high school graduates while 17 states will see decreases. Unfortunately, NCES predicts that Louisiana will experience a decrease of 8.6% in high school graduates. (Husser and Bailey, 2009)

Southeastern currently reflects the state's racial and ethnic population proportions. As with so many aspects of higher education, for Southeastern to properly serve its every changing constituency, we must be ready for this change in our future racial and ethnic make-up. There is a preponderance of evidence that a big change in racial and ethnic make-up in population will happen at the national, state, and local levels in the not-so-distant future. There will be a shift in potential students to a larger minority base. Southeastern will need to determine how best to serve this new pool of potential students. Southeastern will need to re-tool its methods for student recruitment, student life, financial aid and many other student related functions.

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