

Extender Student Survey

Fall 2004

**Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
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Executive Summary

In Fall 2004, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment conducted a survey of students who are taking longer than four years to complete a baccalaureate degree at Southeastern Louisiana University. The intent of the survey is to gather information on “Extender Students” (students who take more than four years to graduate) and why it is taking them longer to graduate.

The telephone survey included 126 students in the Fall 2000 cohort who were enrolled as an undergraduate at Southeastern in Fall 2004. The survey covered four general areas of questioning: student satisfaction with various aspects of the University, reasons why it was taking longer than four years, whether it was a problem to take more than four years to complete their degree, how extender students spent their time, and demographic information not readily available in PeopleSoft.

Some highlights of the Extender Student Survey are:

- Overall, extender students are satisfied with the services provided by the university such as library resources, campus response to crime and friendliness of faculty and staff. The area extender students appeared least satisfied with was “Availability of courses needed for graduation.”
- Of the thirty-five possible reasons presented to participants, “You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because some of them are/were not offered during the semesters you needed them” was the reason most cited (69.3%) for not graduating in four years. Other reasons that received a high percentage were “You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because of scheduling conflicts” and “You had to drop courses because you were dissatisfied with the teachers.”
- Thirty-six percent (36%) of the participants stated that taking more than four years to graduate was “Not at all a Problem,” and ten percent (10%) stated it was a “Major Problem.”
- Extender students, in a typical week, spend a majority of their time working for pay. Other activities engaged in during the week are time spent interacting with and caring for their family, classes/labs and studying/homework. Many respondents also indicated that they spent much of their week socializing with friends.

Method

Participants

The survey cohort was 728 students in the Fall 2000 cohort who were enrolled as an undergraduate in Fall 2000. Of the 728 students in the cohort, 542 were sampled. Of the sample, 3.1% (n=17) had bad telephone numbers and 72.1% (n=391) could not be contacted. Of the 134 contacted, 6.7% (n=9) refused to complete the survey. One hundred twenty-six participants completed the survey, for a response rate of 94.0%.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the demographics between the survey participants and the cohort.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants and the Cohort

	Participants	Cohort
Group Size	126	728
Gender		
Male	27.8%	35.3%
Female	72.2%	64.7%
Ethnicity		
<i>White, Non-Hispanic</i>	<i>84.9%</i>	<i>84.9%</i>
Male	26.2%	31.2%
Female	58.7%	53.7%
<i>Black, Non-Hispanic</i>	<i>12.7%</i>	<i>10.6%</i>
Male	1.6%	2.2%
Female	11.1%	8.4%
<i>Other Minority</i>	<i>1.6%</i>	<i>2.7%</i>
Male	0.0%	1.6%
Female	1.6%	1.1%
<i>Not Reported</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>
Male	0.0%	0.3%
Female	0.8%	1.5%
Age		
Under 25	99.2%	95.9%
25 or Older	0.8%	4.1%

Table 1 cont.
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants and Cohort

	Participants	Cohort
ACT Composite		
17 or Below	26.2%	23.5%
18 – 19	19.0%	19.8%
20 – 23	37.3%	44.1%
24 or Higher	17.5%	12.6%
Campus Housing		
On-Campus	8.7%	5.2%
Off-Campus	91.3%	94.8%
TOPS		
Received TOPS	4.8%	3.4%
Did Not Receive TOPS	95.2%	96.6%

Procedure

The survey was administered by telephone, using trained and experienced IR staff. The survey was conducted Monday-Friday, during the day and evening, with a majority of the interviews completed in the evenings.

Instrument

The survey contained four sections. The first section addressed the level of student satisfaction with the university in areas such as friendliness of faculty and staff and sense of community. The second section gave a list of thirty-five possible reasons why a student might take longer than four years to graduate and asked the participant to rate whether it was a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason at all. This section included items such as having to drop courses because of dissatisfaction with the teachers and taking classes unrelated to their major because of general interest. The third section asked participants how much time they spent on activities such as working, attending classes/labs, studying/homework, and commuting in a typical week. The final section asked for demographic information that is not collected as 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

Who are Extender Students?

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 take more than four years to graduate.

Approximately 85% of the respondents have never been married, and 86% did not have children under the age of 18. Slightly more than 45% of the respondents travel more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, while only 6% live on campus. Approximately 71% of the respondents work off campus. An additional 2% work both on and off campus, and 7% work on campus. The majority of the extender students (64%) receive financial aid, with the average award being \$2,154 per semester. Most of the financial aid is in the form of loans and Pell grants, with 79% receiving a loan and 47% receiving a Pell Grant. Also, 33% received a scholarship, 9% received a grant other than a Pell, and 4% received tuition and fee waivers. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the respondents are first generation college students, which is a student who has no parent with any college or university experience.

Table 2
Characteristics of Fall 2004 Extender Students

	Fall 2004 Extender Students
Sample Size	126
Marital Status	
Never Married	84.9%
Married	7.1%
Previously Married	0.0%
Children Under the Age of 18	
None	85.7%
One	6.3%
Two	2.4%
Three	0.0%
Four or More	0.0%
Distance Traveled (one way) to Southeastern's Main Campus	
Live on Campus	6.3%
Less than 5 Miles	12.7%
Between 5 and 10 Miles	9.5%
Between 11 and 20 Miles	6.3%
Between 21 and 30 Miles	14.3%
More than 30 Miles	45.2%
Where Students Work	
Do Not Work	13.5%
Work On Campus	7.1%
Work Off Campus	71.4%
Work Both On and Off Campus	2.4%

**Table 2 cont.
Characteristics of Fall 2004 Extender Students**

	Fall 2004 Extender Students
Highest Level of Education	
No High School Diploma	0.8%
High School Diploma/G.E.D.	33.3%
Some College	20.6%
Associate Degree	6.3%
Bachelor's Degree	21.4%
Graduate/Professional Degree	11.1%

Student Satisfaction

Participants were asked how satisfied they were with fourteen different aspects of the university on a 5-point scale, with 1 being "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 being "Very Satisfied." Overall, the participants expressed satisfaction with the university's performance in the various areas presented. Participants expressed the most satisfaction with "Library Resources" (mean = 4.51) and the least satisfaction with the "Availability of courses needed for graduation" (mean = 3.51). Table 3 presents the percentages and means for each of the satisfaction items.

**Table 3
Percentages and Means for Satisfaction Items**

Item	1 – Very Dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 – Very Satisfied	Mean
Library resources	0.0%	0.8%	10.6%	25.2%	63.4%	4.51
Clarity of rules governing student conduct	0.0%	2.4%	8.8%	30.4%	58.4%	4.45
Campus response to crime	0.9%	0.0%	18.9%	26.1%	54.1%	4.32
Diversity of the campus community	0.8%	5.6%	8.9%	30.6%	54.0%	4.31
Sense of community	0.0%	3.2%	20.2%	21.8%	54.8%	4.28
Opportunities available for personal improvement	0.8%	4.1%	15.7%	27.3%	52.1%	4.26
Friendliness of faculty and staff	2.4%	0.8%	17.5%	28.6%	50.8%	4.25
Amount of information received on academic policies	0.8%	4.8%	16.1%	29.8%	48.4%	4.20
Technology resources for student use	1.6%	3.2%	16.7%	38.1%	40.5%	4.13
Resources available to help deal with personal problems	1.9%	7.4%	17.6%	32.4%	40.7%	4.03
Condition of buildings	0.0%	1.6%	26.2%	42.9%	29.4%	4.00

Table 3 cont.
Frequencies and Means for Satisfaction Items

Item	1 – Very Dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 – Very Satisfied	Mean
Academic advising	5.6%	5.6%	24.0%	24.0%	40.8%	3.89
Students' voice in campus policies	2.5%	9.1%	24.8%	29.8%	33.9%	3.83
Availability of courses needed for graduation	0.8%	21.0%	23.4%	36.3%	18.5%	3.51

Reasons Why Students Take More Than Four Years to Graduate

In the second section, students were asked to indicate whether each of 35 possible reasons was a Major Reason, a Minor Reason or Not a Reason in their taking more than four years to graduate. There are two straightforward ways to look at this data. One method is to rank the items in terms of the highest percentages of participants indicating that it was a Major Reason in taking more than four years to graduate. If this approach is used, then the item “You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because some of them are/were not offered during the semesters you needed them” is the highest ranked item, with just under 42% of the respondents indicating it was a Major Reason. Along the same lines, the item “You did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern” was the lowest ranked item, with less than 1% of the respondents indicating this as a Major Reason.

The second method is to rank the items in terms of the highest percentages of participants indicating it was a reason (major or minor). In this approach, the highest and lowest ranked items are the same as in the first method.

Items that were ranked in the top five reasons, despite the approach used were “You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because some of them are/were not offered during the semesters you needed them” (Major Reason = 41.9%, a Reason = 69.4%), “You changed majors” (Major Reason = 39.0%, a Reason = 55.7%), “You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because of scheduling conflict” (Major Reason = 38.7%, a Reason = 66.9%), “You did not know what to major in when you started at Southeastern” (Major Reason = 30.1%, a Reason = 55.3%) and “You had to drop courses because you were dissatisfied with the teachers” (Major Reason = 21.1%, a Reason = 59.3%),

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
You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because some of them are/were not offered during the semesters you needed them.	41.9%	27.4%	30.6%
You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because of scheduling conflicts.	38.7%	28.2%	33.1%
You had to drop courses because you were dissatisfied with the teachers.	21.1%	38.2%	40.7%
You changed majors.	39.0%	18.7%	42.3%
You did not know what to major in when you started at Southeastern.	30.1%	25.2%	44.7%
You had to commute, which took time away from studying or working.	20.7%	33.1%	46.3%
You took classes which were unrelated to your major because you were interested in them.	17.9%	30.9%	51.2%
Work did not allow you to take more than 12 hours per semester on a regular basis.	17.9%	23.6%	58.5%
You did not spend enough time studying.	15.4%	24.4%	60.2%
Family responsibilities did not allow you to take more than 12 hours per semester on a regular basis.	18.7%	19.5%	61.8%
You had trouble registering for general education courses, for example, math, science, history, English, because section were closed.	10.5%	23.4%	66.1%
You changed catalogs.	9.8%	22.8%	67.5%
You decided not to take classes for one or more semesters.	18.7%	10.6%	70.7%
It took you more than one semester to complete developmental courses.	12.0%	15.2%	72.8%
When you started at Southeastern, you did not have the study skills you needed to succeed.	6.6%	18.9%	74.6%
You had to drop courses because you were not academically ready to take them.	11.4%	13.8%	74.8%
You spent too much time on extracurricular activities.	5.7%	18.7%	75.6%
You could not contact faculty when you needed to.	4.1%	19.5%	76.4%
You had problems with your financial aid.	13.0%	9.8%	77.2%
You had trouble getting your GPA up to the level required for graduation.	10.6%	10.6%	78.9%
You had problems with your math proficiency.	7.3%	11.4%	81.3%

Table 4 cont.
Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
You frequently skipped class.	5.7%	13.0%	81.3%
You were suspended or dismissed for one or more semesters.	8.9%	8.9%	82.3%
You were misinformed concerning the graduation requirements for your degree program.	6.5%	10.6%	82.9%
You were misinformed about your General Education requirements.	0.8%	13.8%	85.4%
You were not challenged academically in your classes.	3.3%	9.8%	86.9%
You have a disability.	5.7%	5.7%	88.6%
You had problems with your English proficiency.	4.1%	5.7%	90.2%
You are completing a double major.	2.4%	7.3%	90.2%
You did not have the personal support of your family.	3.3%	5.7%	91.1%
You had military obligations that caused you to take time off.	3.3%	1.6%	95.1%
You had government obligations, such as the Peace Corps, that caused you to take time off.	2.4%	0.8%	96.7%
You had religious obligations that caused you to take time off.	0.8%	2.4%	96.7%
You did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern.	0.8%	0.8%	98.4%

Is Taking More than Four Years to Graduate a Problem?

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how much of a problem it is for them to take more than four years to graduate, with 1 meaning “Not at all a Problem” and 5 meaning a “Major Problem.” Ten percent (10%) indicated taking more than four years to graduate rated a 5, a “Major Problem.” Eleven percent (11%) rated it a 4, twenty-three percent (23%) rated it a 3, and twenty-one percent (21%) rated it a 2. Thirty-six percent (36%) rated a 1, “Not at all a Problem.”

Respondents were also asked if they planned on graduating this year. If they indicated that they did not intend to graduate this year, they were then asked if they planned on graduating next year. Forty-eight percent (48%) of the participants indicated that they are planning on graduating this year, while 30% indicated that they are planning on graduating next year.

How Students Spend Their Time?

Respondents were asked to indicate how much time they spend on various activities in a typical week. Over 53% of the respondents indicated they spend more than 20 hours per week working for pay, with 27% indicating they spend more than 30 hours per week working for pay. Nearly 53% spend 11-20 hours a week in classes or labs, while almost 35% spend 1-10 hours.

The majority (64%) of students spend 1-10 hours studying or doing homework, and 27% spend 11-20 hours. Respondents also spend a good deal of their week interacting with and caring for their families, with 26% indicating they spend more than 20 hours per week in this activity. Most (74%) of the students spend 1-10 hours per week commuting, with another 8% spending 11-20 hours commuting. Table 5 provides the participants' responses to how they spend their time.

Table 5
How Students Spend Their Time in a Typical Week

	None	1-10 Hours	11-20 Hours	21-30 Hours	More than 30 Hours
Classes/Labs	1.7%	34.7%	52.9%	7.4%	3.3%
Working for pay	15.0%	11.7%	20.0%	26.7%	26.7%
Studying/Homework	1.7%	64.2%	26.7%	4.2%	3.3%
Commuting	16.7%	74.2%	8.3%	0.0%	0.8%
Volunteer Work	71.4%	24.4%	3.4%	0.8%	0.0%
Socializing with friends	5.0%	70.8%	17.5%	3.3%	3.3%
Clubs or other groups	57.5%	38.3%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Watching TV	8.3%	80.8%	10.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Exercising/Sports	20.8%	67.5%	10.8%	0.8%	0.0%
Interacting with and caring for your family	6.0%	45.3%	23.1%	6.8%	18.8%

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 started school during Fall 2000. 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. I will begin the survey now.

My supervisor may call once our interview is completed to insure that I am conducting it properly.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means Very Dissatisfied and 5 means Very Satisfied, please indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects of Southeastern.

- A. Condition of buildings
- B. Students' voice in campus policies
- C. Library resources
- D. Academic advising
- E. Technology resources for student use
- F. Diversity of the campus community
- G. Friendliness of faculty and staff
- H. Campus response to crime
- I. Availability of courses needed for graduation
- J. Clarity of rules governing student conduct
- K. Amount of information received on academic policies
- L. Sense of community
- M. Opportunities available for personal improvement
- N. Resources available to help deal with personal problems

There are many reasons why a student might take longer than four years to graduate. For each of the following reasons, please tell me whether it was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason for you to take longer than four years to graduate.

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

- A. It took you more than one semester to complete developmental courses.
- B. You had trouble registering for general education courses, for example, math, science, history, English, because sections were closed.
- C. You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because of scheduling conflicts.
- D. You had trouble completing all of your major field courses because some of them are/were not offered during the semesters you needed them.
- E. You were suspended or dismissed for one or more semesters.
- F. You decided not to take classes for one or more semesters.
- G. Family responsibilities did not allow you to take more than 12 hours per semester on a regular basis.
- H. Work did not allow you to take more than 12 hours per semester on a regular basis.
- I. You had to drop courses because you were dissatisfied with the teachers.

- J. You had to drop courses because you were not academically ready to take them.
- K. You had trouble getting your GPA up to the level required for graduation.
- L. You changed majors.
- M. You lost credits because you transferred to Southeastern.
- N. You are completing a double major.
- O. You were misinformed concerning the graduation requirements for your degree program.
- P. You did not know what to major in when you started at Southeastern.
- Q. You did not intend to get a degree when you started at Southeastern.
- R. You did not spend enough time studying.
- S. You took classes which were unrelated to your major because you were interested in them.
- T. You had problems with your financial aid.
- U. You frequently skipped class.
- V. You did not have the personal support of your family.
- W. You were misinformed about your General Education requirements.
- X. You have a disability.
- Y. You had problems with your math proficiency.
- Z. You had problems with your English proficiency.
- AA. You had military obligations that caused you to take time off.
- BB. You had religious obligations that caused you to take time off.
- CC. You had governmental obligations, such as Peace Corps, that caused you to take time off.
- DD. You changed catalogs.
- EE. You could not contact faculty when you needed to.
- FF. You spent too much time on extracurricular activities.
- GG. You were not challenged academically in your classes.
- HH. When you started at Southeastern, you did not have the study skills you needed to succeed.
- II. You had to commute, which took time away from studying or working.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all a problem and 5 means a major problem, how much of a problem is it for you to take more than four years to graduate?

Are you planning on graduating this year?

Are you planning on graduating next year?

For each of the following activities, please tell me how much time you spend on them in a typical week. Do you spend no hours, 1-10 hours, 11-20 hours, 21-30 hours, or more than 30 hours? (None = 1, 1-10 = 2, 11-20 = 3, 21-30 = 4, more than 30 = 5)

- A. Classes/Labs
- B. Working for pay
- C. Studying/Homework
- D. Commuting
- E. Volunteer work
- F. Socializing with friends
- G. Clubs or other groups
- H. Watching TV
- I. Exercising/Sports
- J. Interacting with and caring for your family

Southeastern is looking for ways to help students graduate more quickly. The following information may help us better meet the needs of students like yourself.

What is your marital status?

- 1-Never Married
- 2-Married
- 3-Previously Married
- 4-Separated
- 5-Widowed
- 6-Refused

How many children under the age of 18 do you have?

- 1-None
- 2-One
- 3-Two
- 4-Three
- 5-Four or More

How far do 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

Do you work on or off campus?

- 1-Do not work
- 2-Work on campus
- 3-Work off campus
- 4-Work both on and off campus

Do you receive any financial aid?

1-No (*Skip next two questions*)

2-Yes

For each of the following types of Financial Aid, please tell me whether or not you receive it.

(1 = No, 2 = Yes)

- A. Scholarship
- B. Loan
- C. Pell Grant
- D. Grant other than Pell Grant
- E. Tuition and Fee Waivers

On average, how much financial aid do you receive per semester?

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

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 at (985) 549-2077.