Non-Returning Student Survey Spring 2021

Southeastern Louisiana University
Office of Institutional Research

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Introduction

The first Strategic Priority for Southeastern is "To engage a diverse population of undergraduate and graduate learners with powerful experiences." In order to better understand the reasons why students leave Southeastern, Institutional Research conducted the Non-Returning Student Survey, a phone survey of Fall 2020 students, who were not enrolled in Spring 2021. This report details the results of the Non-Returning Student Survey.

Method

Participants

The Southeastern Office of the Registrar provided a list of degree-seeking students 18 and older who were enrolled in Fall 2020 and were not enrolled in Spring 2021. Students who were suspended, owed money, or had other holds hindering enrollment were excluded. IR ran the list against the National Student Clearinghouse and excluded those students who were identified as enrolled in a different institution. The population for this study was the 545 students who met the previous criteria. The survey yielded a contact rate of 54.7% and a response rate of 55.6%.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample vs. the Population

	Sample	Population
Size	162	545
Class		
Freshmen	34.6%	33.9%
Sophomore	21.0%	21.8%
Junior	16.0%	18.2%
Senior	23.5%	19.3%
Graduate	3.7%	6.8%
Housing		
On Campus	3.7%	3.9%
Off Campus	96.3%	96.1%
Gender		
Male	54.3%	59.6%
Female	44.4%	40.4%
Race		
Asian	0.6%	0.7%
Black or African American	18.5%	22.4%
Hispanic or Latino	6.8%	8.1%
Two or More Races	3.7%	3.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.2%
Unknown	0.6%	0.6%
White	68.5%	64.8%
Received TOPS		
TOPS (received in Fall 2020)	25.9%	26.4%
No TOPS	72.8%	73.6%
Pell Grant		
Yes (received in Fall 2020)	37.7%	37.2%
No	61.1%	62.8%

Procedure

The Office of Institutional Research worked with Enrollment Services to identify students to conduct the phone survey. These students were trained and supervised by Institutional Research staff.

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.

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, 48.8% (n=79) of the respondents were Drop-Outs and 51.2% (n=83) were Stop-outs.

Stop Outs
The majority of the Stop-outs (54.2%, n=45) planned on returning to Southeastern in Fall 2021, while 25.3% (n=21) planned on returning to Southeastern within the next year. Four percent (n=3) plan on returning within the next two years and 12% (n=10) are not sure when they will return. As of April 21, eleven (24.4%) of the respondents planning on returning in Fall 2021 had enrolled.

Next, Stop-outs were asked to indicate whether each of seventeen possible reasons was a Major Reason, a Minor Reason, or Not a Reason for their decision to stop attending Southeastern for a while. "Needed a break from school" was the item with the largest endorsement, with 36% of respondents indicating it was a major reason and 24% indicating it was a minor reason they stopped attending Southeastern. This was followed by "Needed to earn more money" which resulted in 30% citing the statement as a major reason and 18% citing a minor reason.

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

Table 2
Stop-Out Reasons

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Needed a break from school	36.1%	24.1%	28.9%
Needed to earn more money	30.1%	18.1%	41.0%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	24.1%	24.1%	42.2%
Dealing with COVID related problems	27.7%	14.5%	47.0%
Tuition & fees too high	26.5%	16.9%	48.2%
Did not receive enough financial aid	25.3%	15.7%	50.6%
Academic problems	10.8%	25.3%	54.2%
Encountered unexpected educational expenses	19.3%	16.9%	54.2%
Did not like course delivery formats	18.1%	16.9%	56.6%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	10.8%	22.9%	56.6%
Health reasons	14.5%	18.1%	57.8%
Work interfered with school	14.5%	16.9%	60.2%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	6.0%	20.5%	63.9%
Dealing with hurricane related problems	0.0%	15.7%	73.5%
Dealing with substance use problems for yourself or your family	1.2%	9.6%	78.3%
Military obligation	2.4%	9.6%	78.3%
Religious obligation	1.2%	6.0%	81.9%

Drop Outs

Drop outs represent 48.8% of the sample. When asked what school they have or will enroll in, Northshore (13.0%) and BRCC (13.0%) were the most frequently cited.

Table 3
Schools Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll

School	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Baton Rouge Community College	6	13.0%
Northshore Tech Community College	6	13.0%
Delgado Community College	3	6.5%
Aveda Institute	2	4.3%
Louisiana State University	2	4.3%
Somewhere in New Orleans	2	4.3%
Southern University	2	4.3%
BR General School of Nursing	1	2.2%
Delta College	1	2.2%
Liberty University	1	2.2%
Louisiana Tech	1	2.2%
LSU New Orleans	1	2.2%
Medical School	1	2.2%
Oral Roberts University	1	2.2%
Our Lady of the Lake	1	2.2%
Oebb Fister	1	2.2%
PHD School: University Penn	1	2.2%
RPCC	1	2.2%
Southern Shreveport	1	2.2%
Tech School in Military	1	2.2%
Xavier Pharmacy School	1	2.2%

Respondents were then asked what was the <u>main</u> reason they decided to attend another school. A variety of reasons were cited, all the responses can be found in Appendix A.

Next, Drop-outs were asked to indicate whether each of forty-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 38.0% of respondents indicating it was a major reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by "Too much stress" (24.1%) and "Too much conflict between the responsibilities for work and school" (25.3%).

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
Decided to attend a different college	38.0%	16.5%	32.9%
Too much stress	24.1%	27.8%	32.9%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	25.3%	21.5%	38.0%
Wanted a break from your college studies	22.8%	19.0%	43.0%
Accepted a full-time job	25.3%	15.2%	44.3%
Tuition & Fees too high	20.3%	17.7%	46.8%
Wanted to get work experience	21.5%	15.2%	49.4%
Dealing with COVID related issues	20.3%	13.9%	50.6%
Dissatisfied with your grades	19.0%	13.9%	51.9%
Did not like the course delivery formats	17.7%	16.5%	51.9%
The cost of gas was too high to commute	17.7%	13.9%	53.2%
Did not have the study skills required to succeed in college	2.5%	29.1%	53.2%
Dissatisfied with your major	11.4%	19.0%	54.4%
Family responsibilities were too great	15.2%	12.7%	55.7%
Family or personal health-related problem	21.5%	6.3%	58.2%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	8.9%	20.3%	58.2%
Courses were too difficult	7.6%	17.7%	59.5%
Move to a new location	15.2%	8.9%	60.8%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	12.7%	11.4%	60.8%

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Did not receive enough financial aid	13.9%	11.4%	60.8%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	15.2%	7.6%	62.0%
There were too many required courses	5.1%	17.7%	62.0%
Had problems scheduling classes	3.8%	20.3%	62.0%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	7.6%	11.4%	64.6%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	12.7%	6.3%	65.8%
Academic advising was inadequate	6.3%	12.7%	67.1%
Encountered unexpected educational expense	12.7%	5.1%	68.4%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	5.1%	12.7%	68.4%
Did not feel like you fit in	3.8%	12.7%	69.6%
Could not find affordable housing you like	3.8%	11.4%	70.9%
Could not get into the program you wanted	6.3%	6.3%	72.2%
Southeastern was too small for you	2.5%	10.1%	72.2%
Did not intend to get a degree when you stated at Southeastern	5.1%	6.3%	73.4%
Southeastern was too large for you	1.3%	10.1%	73.4%
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	5.1%	6.3%	74.7%
Placed on probation	5.1%	7.6%	74.7%
Courses were not challenging	0.0%	11.4%	74.7%
Dealing with hurricane related problems	3.8%	5.1%	77.2%
Substance use problems for yourself or your family	6.3%	1.3%	78.5%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	2.5%	6.3%	78.5%
Could not find and/or afford child care	1.3%	6.3%	78.5%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	1.3%	5.1%	79.7%
Dissatisfaction with the residence hall	2.5%	2.5%	79.7%

Unexpected Expenses

Those students who indicated unexpected educational expenses was a reason for dropping out were asked what type of expenses they encountered. A total of thirteen students provided expenses, 30.8% (4) indicated tuition, 23.1% (3) indicated fees and additional 23.1% indicated living expenses, 15.4% (2) indicated textbooks that were not included in the rental fee. All responses can be found in Appendix B.

Difficult Course(s)

Students were asked if they had problems with any particular course. Sixty-two respondents (38.3%) identified a particular course or courses with which they had problems. Math was the most commonly cited course, with 20 respondents (36.4%) indicating a particular math course or just math in general. 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 (79.6%) have never been married, and do not have children (77.2%). A majority (21.6%) of the respondents traveled more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus, while 11.1% lived on campus. Over half (64.2%) of the respondents worked off campus. An additional 10.5% worked on campus. Forty-three percent of those who worked, spent more than 30 hours a week working, with an additional 28.9% spending 21-30 hours a week working. Nineteen percent 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. Thirty-two percent of the students have at least one parent with a baccalaureate degree and an additional 12.0% have at least one parent with a graduate degree.

References

Terenzini, P.T., Springer, L. Yaeger, P.M., Pascarella, E.T., & Nora, A. (1996). First-generation
    college students: Characteristics, experiences, and cognitive development. <u>Research in
    Higher Education</u>, <u>37(1)</u>, 1-22.

Appendix A
What is the main reason you decided to attend _____?

- Completely online cyber security degree.
- Accepted into their nursing program
- Southeastern doesn't offer the major she wanted.
- Closest Pharmacy School
- It was online so she could work more.
- Occupational Therapy
- For chemistry and was a Top 20 school. He was very interested in their program that they offered. He was in between three schools and University Penn was a main one.
- Dental-hygiene school
- Financial aid won't offer any and can't afford
- Shorter classes, flexible with schedule, fast track
- COVID and closer to home in Baton Rouge during Pandemic
- Trade
- freshman parking
- cheaper
- Military
- because southeastern wasn't helpful.
- Felt the Lord was calling me/her to go somewhere else
- Lost TOPS, cant afford SLU
- tired of being in school.
- Taking out student loans but you weren't really committed
- Major was not at Southeastern
- Pre-Reqs were accomplished here
- Closer to home
- To get grades up.
- Cosmetology, and wanted a hands on learning experience because of restrictions with COVID
- cheaper and closer
- change of scenery, grew up in Hammond
- Cosmetology school
- It was closer to home and has NA cert through them. Overall more comfortable and closer to home and not as much pre reqs
- Cheaper
- Decided to be a Vet Tech and they had better geared classes
- Financial scholarship was dropped, so went with a cheaper route
- Location
- Mental health issues
- decided to attend southeastern for animation program
- Primary Interest
- Too much financially and too far away
- Southeastern didn't feel like home.
- Deaths in family
- Closure to home and less class schedule.

- To get better grades
- Closer to home
- For Nursing program (Couldn't attend at SLU)

Appendix B
What type of expenses did you encounter?

- "unnecessary fees" supplemental adds on for classes
- Additional books, gas.
- Fees (Orgs that you weren't a part of, small fees add up), Rec Fees
- Financial aid got dropped 2 days before classes
- Housing, gas, food
- Mostly cost of living away from home, Ascension Hall was expensive, groceries, gas, insurance, etc
- Not being able to pay for classes
- one hour class was charged a lot for it.
- out of pocket for tuition
- Textbooks not used in classes that are not included in SLU's Textbook Rental
- Tickets for parking
- tuition and fees
- Tuition was high which made it difficult to afford books and there wasn't a refund.

Appendix C
Difficult Courses

- Math 151
- Social Work 101 (Dr. Gabe Willis helped them out)
- PHIL 300 / 400
- FIN 381
- College Algebra Course
- First Physics
- math 151
- Intro to Statistics
- Statistics
- Math 98 - Didn't offering tutoring for this class and he needed help
- math 151   statistics
- PSYC 771
- Chemisty classes and biochemistry other teacher to teach it. They only had one teacher and need other teachers in that department.
- IT 405
- Higher level history
- Chem 102
- Sports Media - Kin 332 - was not available in the spring
- biology
- Had to retake an Art History class Had issues with other courses - general education
- Math
- History 101, maybe not sure about section
- math 151 foreign language
- Spanish
- photography drawing English
- Online
- zoology
- math
- Math
- CJ 101
- Math 151
- Math 151
- biology math anatomy zoology
- Chem
- math
- Math 105
- Comm 211 Felt it was racist; forced to write about a man who was a racist and felt uncomfortable writing about it; cites as a big reason for leaving
- IT 100
- Math and Supply Change Management
- Math 241
- Education PYSC

- Micro biology 223: Professor Debra was all over the place.
- First Zoology   Second Chemistry
- English
- accounting 200 and just online in general
- Math & Psychology
- Comm 211, Math 241
- elementary statistics
- Math 105
- Bio 151
- English and science
- Math 105
- MATH 105
- Math
- biology
- 2D Art
- Forget thinking astrology
- sociology
- Math 95
- Finite Math, there was no explaining the information.
- Math 151
- Engineering Technology
- Phonetics