

**Non-Returning Student Survey of
First-Time Freshmen with an ACT
Composite of 24 or Higher**

Fall 2003

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Executive Summary

In Fall 2003, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment conducted a telephone survey of students who were first-time freshmen in Fall 2002 with an ACT of 24 or higher, but were not enrolled in Fall 2003. The goal of the survey was to gather information on why they left Southeastern, and if they plan to return in the future.

Thirty-one 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:

- More than 70% 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” and “had family responsibilities to take care of” were most often cited as a reason.
- Of the thirty-seven possible reasons presented to respondents who left Southeastern permanently, “decided to attend a different college” and “the major you wanted was not available at Southeastern” were most often indicated as a reason.

Method

Participants

The survey sample included all eighty-nine first-time freshmen in Fall 2002 with an ACT Composite of 24 or higher who did not return in Fall 2003 and had not been suspended. Of the sample, 37.1% (n=33) had bad telephone numbers, 2.2% (n=2) were currently enrolled after the 14th class day, and 22.5% (n=20) were unable to be contacted. Of those contacted, 8.8% (n=3) refused to complete the survey. Thirty-one participants completed the survey, for a response rate of 91.2% (n=31).

Fifty-two percent (52%) of the respondents were female, and 48% were male. Eighty-seven percent (87%) were White, Non-Hispanic, 7% were Hispanic, 3% Black, Non-Hispanic, and 3% had an unknown ethnicity.

Procedure

The survey was administered by telephone, using trained and experienced IR staff. The survey was conducted Monday-Thursday, 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 thirty-seven 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, 77% (n=24) of the respondents are Drop-Outs, and 23% (n=7) are Stop-Outs. These are considerably different percentages compared to the Fall 1999 Non-Returning Student Survey results, when 49% (n=178) were Drop-Outs, 49% (n=179) were Stop-Outs, and 3% (n=10) were respondents who never intended to obtain a degree.

Stop-Outs

The majority of the Stop-Outs (57%, n=4) plan on returning to Southeastern in Spring 2004, with 29% (n=2) planning on returning within the next year and 14% (n=1) planning on returning in the next two years.

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" (72%, n=5) and "Had family responsibilities to take care of" (72%, n=5).

Table 1 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 1
Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Needed to earn more money	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%
Had family responsibilities to take care of	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%
Academic Problems	57.1%	0.0%	42.9%
Need a break from school	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%
Health reasons	14.3%	14.3%	71.4%
Work interfered with school	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%
Could not schedule the classes you needed	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Military obligation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Religious obligation	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Drop-Outs

Most of the Drop-Outs (92%, n=22) intend to finish their education elsewhere, although only 55% (n=12) of the those respondents have already enrolled in another school. When asked what school they have or will enroll in, the most commonly cited school was Louisiana State Univeristy. Table 2 provides the schools respondents identified as having enrolled in or planning to enroll in.

Table 2
Schools Where Respondents Have or Plan to Enroll

School	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Undecided	5	22.7%
Louisiana State University	4	18.2%
University of New Orleans	3	13.6%
Holy Cross of New Orleans	2	9.1%
North Oakes School of Radiologic Technology	2	9.1%
Southwest Mississippi Community College	2	9.1%
Louisiana Tech	1	4.5%
National EMS Academy	1	4.5%
Nicholls State University	1	4.5%
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	1	4.5%

Respondents were then asked what was the main reason they decided to attend another school. Seventeen percent (17%, n=4) of the respondents indicated they wanted to attend a school closer to home, with an additional 17% (n=4) of the respondents signifying they decided to attend another school because the major or program they were interested in was not available at Southeastern.

Next, Drop-Outs were asked to indicate whether each of thirty-seven 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 75.0% (n=18) of the respondents indicating it was the reason they left Southeastern. This was followed by “The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern” which 45.8% (n=11) of respondents endorsed as a reason they left.

Table 3 provides the percentage of endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason for each item.

Table 3
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	54.2%	20.8%	25.0%
The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern	25.0%	20.8%	54.2%
Dissatisfied with you major	20.8%	16.7%	62.5%
Wanted a break from college studies	16.7%	20.8%	62.5%
Dissatisfied with your grades	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%
Wanted to get work experience	16.7%	12.5%	70.8%
Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern	4.2%	25.0%	70.8%
Moved to a new location	16.7%	8.3%	75.0%
Southeastern was too small for you	16.7%	8.3%	75.0%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school	8.3%	16.7%	75.0%
Too much stress	8.3%	16.7%	75.0%
Health-related problem (family or personal)	20.8%	0.0%	79.2%
Could not find part-time work	12.5%	8.3%	79.2%
Tired of commuting to Southeastern	12.5%	8.3%	79.2%
Accepted a full-time job	8.3%	12.5%	79.2%
Courses were not challenging	8.3%	12.5%	79.2%
Academic advising was inadequate	4.2%	16.7%	79.2%
Did not feel like you fit in	0.0%	20.8%	79.2%
Lost your TOPS Scholarship	12.5%	4.2%	83.3%
Encountered unexpected expenses	8.3%	8.3%	83.3%
You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern	8.3%	8.3%	83.3%
Family responsibilities were too great	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%
Had problems scheduling classes	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%
Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school	4.2%	12.5%	83.3%
Could not get into the program you wanted	8.3%	4.2%	87.5%
Suspended or placed on probation	4.2%	8.3%	87.5%
There were too many required courses	4.2%	8.3%	87.5%
Did not receive enough financial aid	8.3%	0.0%	91.7%
Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff	8.3%	0.0%	91.7%

Percentage of Endorsement for Major Reason, Minor Reason, and Not a Reason cont.			
	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations	4.2%	4.2%	91.7%
Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit	4.2%	4.2%	91.7%
Courses were too difficult	0.0%	8.3%	91.7%
Southeastern was too large for you	4.2%	0.0%	95.8%
Could not find affordable housing you liked	0.0%	4.2%	95.8%
Could not find and/or afford child care	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

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. Twenty-nine percent (29%, n=9) of the respondents lived on campus, while an additional 29% (n=9) commuted more than 30 miles (one way) to Southeastern's main campus. Thirty-nine percent (39%, n=10) of those who worked, spent 21-30 hours a week working, while 35% (n=9) spent 11-20 hours a week working. Twenty-three (23%, n=7) of the respondents are first-generation college students, which is a student who has no parent with any college or university experience.

Table 4
Demographic Characteristics of Stop-Outs and Drop-Outs

	Drop-Outs	Stop-Outs
Sample Size	7	24
Distance Traveled (one way) to Southeastern's Main Campus		
Live on Campus	33.3%	14.3%
Less than 5 Miles	12.5%	14.3%
Between 5 and 10 Miles	16.7%	0.0%
Between 11 and 20 Miles	8.3%	0.0%
Between 21 and 30 Miles	8.3%	14.3%
More than 30 Miles	20.8%	57.1%

Table 4
Demographic Characteristics of Stop-Outs and Drop-Outs continued

	Drop-Outs	Stop-Outs
Where Students Work		
Did Not Work	16.7%	14.3%
Work On Campus	8.3%	0.0%
Work Off Campus	66.7%	71.4%
Worked Both On and Off Campus	8.3%	14.3%
Number of Hours Per Week Worked (Only for those who worked)		
1-10 Hours	0.0%	0.0%
11-20 Hours	40.0%	16.7%
21-30 Hours	35.0%	50.0%
More Than 30 Hours	25.0%	33.3%
Highest Level of Parental Education		
No High School Diploma	0.0%	0.0%
High School Diploma/GED	25.0%	14.3%
Some College	33.3%	57.1%
Associate Degree	8.3%	14.3%
Bachelor's Degree	12.5%	14.3%
Graduate/Professional Degree	20.8%	0.0%

Appendix A
Non-Returning Student Survey

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from 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, and 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.

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. Health-related problem (family or personal)
2. Wanted a break from college studies
3. Moved to a new location
4. Tired of commuting to Southeastern
5. Could not find and/or afford child care
6. Family responsibilities were too great
7. Southeastern was too small for you
8. Southeastern was too large for you
9. Did not feel like you fit in
10. Your parents and/or other relatives influenced you to quit
11. Dissatisfied with your grades
12. Suspended or placed on probation
13. Courses were too difficult
14. Courses were not challenging
15. There were too many required courses

16. You were disappointed with the quality of instruction at Southeastern
17. The major you wanted was not available at Southeastern
18. Could not get into the program you wanted
19. Dissatisfied with your major
20. Academic advising was inadequate
21. Had problems scheduling classes
22. Lost your TOPS Scholarship
23. Could not find affordable housing you liked
24. Unhappy with Southeastern's rules and regulations
25. Impersonal attitudes of college faculty and/or staff
26. Dissatisfied with the social life at Southeastern
27. Experienced racism, prejudice or sexism
28. Inadequate facilities for physically handicapped students
29. Encountered unexpected expenses
30. Did not receive enough financial aid
31. Decided to attend a different college
32. Could not find part-time work
33. Wanted to get work experience
34. Accepted a full-time job
35. Too much conflict between the responsibilities of work and school
36. Too much conflict between the responsibilities of family and school
37. 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.

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