

Analysis of Student Expectation Survey

Surveys were conducted with students as part of the summer 2006 orientation process. This survey does not represent the total population of entering students at SSU. Rather, it represents a sampling of 245 students that submitted the survey during the orientation activities through July 31, 2006. It does represent approximately 20 percent of the incoming freshman class.

Survey tabulations were conducted by using Scantron scoring machines. Some tabulations were performed manually which represents some margin of error.

It appears that a sizable majority of students plan to come to Shawnee State University (SSU) due to its location (53%). When compared to entering student survey data from 2003 this data has remained relatively consistent. In 2003, 49 percent of entering orientation students reported they selected SSU due to location. Academic program offerings followed (18%). Cost, reputation, and athletics were the third, fourth and fifth selections, respectively. It should be noted that 23 percent of the respondents in 2003 reported costs as their reason for choosing SSU which was the second ranking indicating that costs may not be as important to the class of 2006-2007 when compared to the class of 2003-2004. SSU ranked as the first choice of college selection with 56 percent of the respondents. This factor has remained relatively unchanged over time.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents plan to pursue a bachelor's degree (63% in 2003). Fourteen percent plan to pursue an associate degree or certificate. Nine percent have no definite goal. Based upon limited August, 2006, data, it does appear that during the later orientation sessions indecision increased with regard to major. As the calendar progressed, there were also more students pursuing an associate degree as opposed to a four-year program.

Forty-five percent of the respondents appear to be at least somewhat undecided. Fifty-five percent appeared certain of a major area of study. It is important to note that although significant numbers of students exhibit variability in their degree choice, degree choice appears to be more firm among the class of 2006 when compared to 2003.

By a large margin, students responded they would need assistance with math skills (40%). Response to this prompt has remained consistent over time including the 2003 comparison group. This response may also indicate a need for institutional resources targeted to mathematics study such as supplemental instruction. Study, time management, and writing skills were other selections that approached the twenty percent level.

Most respondents in the 2006 survey plan to work as did most respondents to the 2003 survey. Forty-one percent reported they plan to work between 21-30 hours per week. Eleven percent reported they plan to work between 31-40 hours per week. According to

national studies, working many hours while attending college may pose a risk factor for attrition.

A majority plan to study seven to twelve hours per week (38%). Twenty-five percent plan to study between 13-18 hours per week. It is interesting to note 65 percent of the respondents plan to earn between a 3.0 and 4.0 grade point average. No respondent expected to receive below a 2.0 grade point average. Of course, it should be noted that some new student expectations are incongruent with both national and local data.

Eighty-one percent plan to graduate from SSU while seven percent plan to transfer. Eleven percent plan to attend graduate school.

Seventy-seven percent plan to graduate in four years.

A slight majority of students expressed confusion about how they will pay for college and financial aid. When coupled with the fact that significant number of students withdraw due to financial reasons, the whole issue of financial aid may merit further consideration.

Additional studies will need to be performed to gauge changing student expectations. This will undoubtedly provide guidance and baseline data for future institutional strategies.

Submitted by
Dale Taylor, Director
Student Success Center 9/5/06