

### REASONS FOR NOT RETURNING TO ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE REPORTED BY FALL 2001 FIRST-TIME-IN-COLLEGE STUDENTS

Data from the 28 Community Colleges showed 72.9% first-time-in-college (FTIC) students attending St. Petersburg College in Fall 2000 returned in Spring 2001 (Research Brief Volume 11 Number 4). SPC Fall to Spring retention rate decreased the following year. Accordingly, the Office of Institutional Research surveyed all Fall 2001 non-returning FTIC students asking three questions:

1. What was the reason(s) you did not return in Spring term?
2. Do you plan on returning to St. Petersburg College at a later date?
3. Would you like a college representative to contact you?

Table 1 shows by gender, ethnicity and program those FTIC students enrolled in the Fall term compared to those who re-enrolled and those who did not re-enroll in the Spring. The majority of students enrolled for the Fall term and who re-enrolled in the Spring term were white and female. Students enrolled in the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in Applied Science programs had a higher return rate in Spring term than those enrolled in Other Technical Programs, which include certificate and diploma programs. Other technical programs generally require fewer than 60 credit hours and are designed to provide a mechanism for quick entry into the work environment or enhancement of current skills for job improvement.

**Table 1**  
**SPC FTIC Student Demographics**

	Number Enrolled Fall 2001		Number Re-Enrolled Spring		Number Not Re-Enrolled	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male	1322	46.9%	900	45.4%	422	50.7%
Female	1494	53.1%	1083	54.6%	411	49.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2816</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
White	2196	78.0%	1527	77.0%	669	80.3%
Black	261	9.3%	189	9.5%	72	8.6%
Hispanic	191	6.8%	136	6.9%	55	6.6%
Asian	118	4.2%	99	5.0%	19	2.3%
American Indian	23	0.8%	17	0.9%	6	0.7%
Unknown	27	1.0%	15	0.8%	12	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2816</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
AA	2110	74.9%	1507	76.0%	603	72.4%
AAS/AS	472	16.8%	349	17.6%	123	14.8%
Other Technical Programs	234	8.3%	127	6.4%	107	12.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2816</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Surveys were mailed to 833 non-returning FTIC students. Nine (9) were returned as undeliverable; five (5) from A.A. degree students, two (2) from A.S./A.A.S. students and two (2) from students in Other Technical Programs. One hundred and two (102) surveys were returned. Of the returns, 12 were completed by students enrolled in Other Technical Programs. This small number of returns would preclude generalizing the reported reasons to the entire group of students in certificate and diploma programs. Additionally, it was noted that students in these programs are typically older and often working full-time and their reasons for not returning might be different from students enrolled in degree programs. For example, one student did not return because of involvement in building a new home; a second was enrolled in the Operation Paycheck retraining program; a third enrolled in a single course at the employer's request; another changed goals and found college level courses were not required. Thus, the 107 Other Technical Program students were eliminated from the population of non-returning students, as were their responses. The analysis contained herein is based on the population of degree seeking students and the 90 responses from the group shown on Table 2.

**Table 2**

Surveys	Degree Seekers	Other Technical	Total
Number Sent	726	107	833
Number Undeliverable	7	2	9
Number Returned by AA/AAS/AS	90	12	102
Percent Returned	12.55%	11.43%	12.4%

Table 3 describes the demographics of the 726 degree seeking students who did not return in Spring term. The majority of Fall term degree seeking students were female, white and seeking the A.A. degree. The same was true for those who did not return in Spring term.

Ninety (90) surveys were returned by these students for a return rate of 12.5%. Although there were Asian and American Indian students in the pool, no responses to the survey were received from them.

**Table 3**  
**SPC Degree Seeking FTIC Student Demographics**

	Number Not Re-Enrolled	
	Number	Percent
Male	351	48.3%
Female	375	51.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
White	582	80.2%
Black	64	8.8%
Hispanic	46	6.3%
Asian	17	2.3%
American Indian	6	0.8%
Unknown	11	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
AA	603	83.1%
AAS/AS	123	16.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 4 shows the reasons the degree-seeking students reported for not returning to the college. The primary reason students gave for not returning the next term was insufficient financial aid (21). The next three reasons for not returning were given by almost the same number of students. They were: fees too high (14), transferred to another institution (14) and change in family status (12). The reasons cited the fewest times were: courses too hard (1), classes too large (1) and preferred programs not offered at SPC (1).

**Table 4**  
**Fall 2001 SPC Degree Seeking FTIC Student Retention**  
**Reasons for Not Returning Spring 2002**

Reasons for Not Returning	Total	White		Black		Hispanic		Other	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Not sufficient financial aid	21	5	10	2	4	0	0	0	0
Fees too high	14	4	8	1	1	0	0	0	0
Transferred to another institution	14	5	6	0	0	1	2	0	0
Change in family status	12	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Health reasons	9	1	7	0	1	0	0	0	0
Courses not meeting work schedule/time constraints	7	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lacked transportation	6	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0
Changed long term goal	5	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Job required too much overtime	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Could not get day care for children	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Courses too hard	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classes too large	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Preferred program not offered	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Courses needed not offered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	21	11	6	1	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The reasons stated by students who indicated "other" are listed in Table 5. The most frequent reason given in this group was that the student was in the military.

**Table 5**  
**Other Reasons Stated by Students for Not Returning Spring 2002**

Reasons for Not Returning	Total	White		Black		Hispanic		Other	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
In military	6	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Transient Student	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Not ready for college work	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Various financial reasons	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other personal issues	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Took semester off returning next fall	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Courses for employer	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Sixty-three (63) of the 90 respondents indicated they planned on returning to the college at a later date. Thirty-five (35) of the 63 students who planned to return to SPC asked to be contacted by a College representative. The names and phone numbers of these respondents have been forwarded to Enrollment Management.