



Non-returning Students Analysis

Fall 2005 – Spring 2006

Institutional Research

August 2007



Executive Summary

This report is the result of a survey that was conducted during Spring Semester 2006. The survey was designed to assess attitudes and demographics of the non-returning students from the previous Fall Semester 2005. These are students who would normally have been expected to return in Spring (i.e., they were seeking a degree and had not graduated in Fall), but at the time of the survey they had not registered for classes.

The primary goal of the research was to understand the non-returning cohort and answer questions related to the larger question of: “How do we improve the retention of degree seeking students at UVSC”?

The responses show that financial, work, and family concerns are the most influential motivations for students’ decisions to discontinue their educational studies at UVSC. About 16% of the sample decided to enroll elsewhere; a further 7.5% went to serve missions for the LDS church.

A large portion (about 21%) of the sample who essentially dropped out of higher education, planned to come back to UVSC at some point in the future—typically these students were unable to balance work and school and perceived that they needed time off in order to save money so they could return to school in the future.

Of the students from the sample who planned on transferring, the most popular desired destination institutions were Brigham Young University (BYU), University of Utah, and Salt Lake Community College (SLCC). Transferees to the first two institutions were in search of perceived better programs or programs not offered at UVSC, while predominantly the grounds for transferring to SLCC were related to location-related reasons (i.e. jobs, or spouse/family relocations).

Other less dominant, but nonetheless substantial, reasons provided for leaving UVSC (temporarily or indefinitely) included: inaccessibility of educational resources (i.e. classes not available at convenient times/places); quality of instruction by faculty; lack of friendliness of staff; and difficulty of using student administrative systems (including registration and online resources).

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Introduction

High retention is a primary objective for leaders in higher education. The following research report summarizes research done by the UVSC Institutional Research Office to help identify the reasons students fail to return to college the following semester after attending the Fall semester.

The report begins by discussing some of the sample and methodology processes used. Next, it considers the non-returning cohort in some detail—the cohort is accounted for by dividing students into groups. The next two sections focus on students' reasons for leaving and purposes for enrolling. Following that, the report discusses transfer students, including where they intended to transfer and what their reasons for transferring were. The second to last section briefly considers various other survey items such as: general attitudes, work burden, parental support, and children at home. Finally, responses to the concluding survey questions—which reference student attitudes to future outreach efforts of UVSC—are discussed.

Sample and Data Sources

The Cohort

The initial non-returning student cohort was drawn from databases at UVSC to include degree seeking students enrolled during Fall 2005 who had not enrolled for Spring 2006 at the time the survey was administered (during the initial weeks of Spring 2006).

Survey and Sample

An existing survey instrument was modified to help answer the main questions in the research problem. A copy of the survey used can be found in the appendix.¹ The survey consists of two sections—section A and section B. Section A includes responses gleaned, in the absence of the student, from a relative or housemate who provided information as to why the student did not return. Section B includes responses by the actual student. The proportion of the sample who answered in section A was 45%, the proportion answering in section B was 53%.²

The survey data were gathered through telephone interviews. Current students at UVSC were hired part-time to interview non-returning students from the cohort. The entire non-returning cohort was used as the survey population. After adjustments were made, 1,986 valid responses were obtained through the survey efforts of the call center team. These valid responses constitute the sample, which is broken out in more detail in the next section of this report.

¹ See Appendix Item 1, included at the end of this report.

² The data show that 2% of the sample had responses in *both* sections A and B. This is ascribed to surveying errors. In such cases valid responses from section B were favored over section A responses.

Analysis and Findings

1. Groups – Accounting for the Cohort

The initial cohort consisted of 4,981 degree seeking students who attended Fall 2005 and had not returned for the semester of Spring 2006 at the time of the survey. After the graduation data from Fall 2005 was finalized, the Fall 2005 graduates³ were excluded from the cohort. Similarly, once Spring 2006 enrollment data was available, the students in the initial cohort who were not surveyed, and who also enrolled in Spring 2006, were excluded from the cohort (193 students).⁴ The adjusted cohort total was 4,136 students. This number represents the total non-returning student population, which is the group of primary concern for this study.

The adjusted cohort represents 21% of all students enrolled in Fall 2005 who did not graduate in Fall 2005.⁵ The sample sizes for each degree level were large enough to extrapolate inferences on the cohort (for each respective degree level) at a 95% confidence level.

Exhibit 1: Cohort and Sample Groups Breakout

	Cohort/Sample Group	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Other	Total
1	Initial Cohort	1965	1048	871	1049	48	4981
2	Graduates (Fall '05)	0	3	189	442	22	656
3	Enrolled in Spring '06 (not surveyed)	82	43	39	27	2	193
4	Adjusted Cohort	1883	1002	645	582	24	4136
5	Effective Sample (Survey Respondents)	801	545	330	302	8	1986
6	Enrolled Spring	43	36	15	46	1	141
7	Transfers	106	100	68	40	1	315
8	Mission/Military/Foreign Aid Service	97	35	11	5	0	148
9	Trans & Miss/Mil/FA Overlapping	4	4	0	0	0	8
10	Dropped Out						
11	Plans to Return	153	129	80	52	2	416
12	Does Not Plan on Returning	34	11	15	45	0	105
13	Others (Dropped Out)						
14	Q. A3 "working"	148	89	47	38	1	323
15	Q. A3 "Other"	140	92	55	45	1	333
16	Q. B1 - indicated enrolled	13	7	9	6	2	37
17	Q. B2 - indicated enrolling	45	30	18	12	0	105
18	Remaining Students	18	12	12	13	0	55

Of the adjusted cohort (4,136), 1,986 students responded to the survey. These students form the sample, which is 48% of the adjusted cohort. The sample has been divided into four main groups: those enrolled in Spring 2006 (row 6 of Exhibit 1); students who planned on transferring (row 7);

³ See row 2 of Exhibit 1—656 students from the initial cohort; these are taken out of the cohort because, having graduated, they would not be expected to return to UVSC in the subsequent semester.

⁴ See row 3 of Exhibit 1.

⁵ The total number of students enrolled in Fall 2005 who did not graduate in Fall 2005 was 19,285.

students entering mission, military, or foreign aid service (row 8); and students who dropped out of school (rows 11 – 18).⁶ Rows 11 – 18 in Exhibit 1 account for the drop out students—indicating whether they planned to return, planned not to return, or rendered other information about their whereabouts or intentions.

Exhibit 2 shows the information from rows 5 – 18 in Exhibit 1 represented as percentages of the sample for each degree level. The differences between the “All Levels” and “Average” columns are accounted for due to the fact that “All Levels” includes sums of all students from every level. Thus freshmen and sophomores—whose categories have the largest numbers of students—are more heavily reflected than juniors and seniors in the “All Levels” column.

Exhibit 2: Sample Groups – Percentages of the Effective Sample⁷

	Sample Group	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	All Levels
1	Effective Sample (Survey Respondents)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2	Enrolled Spring	5.4%	6.6%	4.5%	15.2%	7.1%
3	Transfers	13.2%	18.3%	20.6%	13.2%	15.9%
4	Mission/Military/Foreign Aid Service	12.1%	6.4%	3.3%	1.7%	7.5%
5	Trans & Miss/Mil/FA Overlapping	0.5%	0.7%	-	-	0.4%
6	Dropped Out					
7	Plans to Return	19.1%	23.7%	24.2%	17.2%	20.9%
8	Does Not Plan on Returning	4.2%	2.0%	4.5%	14.9%	5.3%
9	Others (Dropped Out)					
10	Q. A3 "working"	18.5%	16.3%	14.2%	12.6%	16.3%
11	Q. A3 "Other"	17.5%	16.9%	16.7%	14.9%	16.8%
12	Q. B1 - indicated enrolled	1.6%	1.3%	2.7%	2.0%	1.9%
13	Q. B2 - indicated enrolling	5.6%	5.5%	5.5%	4.0%	5.3%
14	Remaining Students	2.2%	2.2%	3.6%	4.3%	2.8%

Observations

- **General Distribution:** Overall, about 7% of the sample returned⁸ later in the semester; 16% decided to transfer; 7.5% entered religious or other service; the rest dropped out—although, about 21% planned to return in the future. These figures represent a drop out rate that is about 70% of the adjusted cohort (See the “All Levels” column in Exhibit 2).

⁶ Row 9 in Exhibit 1 shows students who came under *both* transfer and mission/military/foreign aid groups. These students had decided to transfer *and* were planning on entering religious or other service during the coming year.

⁷ The “Other” Column has been omitted from Exhibit 2 since it does not contain information about the degree levels we are trying to define.

⁸ This number includes students who were contacted as part of this study, which one might argue could have had an effect on their desire to return. The proportion of cohort students (less those who graduated—see lines 1-4 of Exhibit 1) who were not contacted, and who came back, was 4.5% which is comparatively lower than the 7.1% shown here in the “All Levels” column.

- **Transfers:** Comparatively higher proportions of sophomore and junior students⁹ were in the transfer group (row 3). Upon further investigation, the main difference in reasons for transferring between (1) sophomores and juniors and (2) freshmen and seniors was that sophomores and juniors more frequently referred to “better programs elsewhere” as their reason for transferring. This correlation might help to explain why there are proportionally more juniors and sophomores in the transfer group (see row 3 of Exhibit 2).
- **LDS Missionaries:** Students on row 8 of Exhibit 1 were predominantly (i.e. 97%) missionaries for the LDS church.¹⁰ The proportion of freshmen in the “miss/mil/FA” group was about twice as large as the proportion in that group for sophomores. Similarly, the proportion for sophomores was about twice that of juniors, and juniors twice that of seniors. Although, as may be expected, a substantial portion of freshmen left to serve missions, there are also relevant portions of other degree level students who leave UVSC to serve missions.
- **Plans to Return**¹¹: Juniors and sophomores had the highest proportions of drop outs that planned to return to UVSC at some point in the future, at about 24% of their sample portion each. The lowest proportion for this subgroup was seniors, with 17.2% of the sample portion planning to return. Since the main reasons these temporary stop out students give for leaving are related to money problems, it is probable that these students have been unable to handle the stress of work and school; or they have run out of funds, and intend to work in order to return to school in the future.¹²
- **Not Coming Back:** Drop outs who said they did not plan to return were found proportionally higher in the senior respondents by a factor of three or more, compared to other degree

⁹ Students who were sophomores or juniors in Fall 2005.

¹⁰ Utah County, where UVSC is situated has a high concentration of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS Church). A large proportion of the LDS church membership undertakes religious missions for the church between the ages of roughly 19-21. The majority of LDS missionaries leave at the age of 19, which coincides with what would otherwise be the continuation of their freshman year, or the beginning of their sophomore year, at UVSC.

¹¹ The drop out groups represented by rows 11 and 12 in Exhibit 1 are derived from survey question B5. Students who answered “yes” fall under “plans to return”; those who answered “no” fall under “does not plan on returning”.

¹² Earlier analyses of such students indicated that about 50% of such intentions to return are realized within one year.

levels.¹³ The only explanations for this are that the student has simply had enough of school and/or is settled in an occupation.

- **“Working”**: Due to the fact that all degree levels undertake similar weekly work hours¹⁴ while at school, the higher levels of newer students who drop out to work may be indicative that more experienced students have learned to better juggle the pressures of work and school.

2. Reasons for Leaving

Part of section B of the survey asked students to indicate whether any of 20 potential concerns were considered as reasons for not returning to UVSC in Spring 2006. Respondents were given the choice of indicating whether each potential concern was a major reason, minor reason, or “not a reason” for discontinuing at UVSC. Exhibit 3 shows the percentages of question respondents who classed the given reasons as *major* or *minor* for each class level.

Since students were allowed to specify more than one concern as a major or minor reason, the columns do not add up to 100%. Rather, each question is considered separately and the percentages shown indicate the percentage of question respondents who indicated the potential reason was major, and the percentage who indicated the potential reason was minor, for each question, by degree level.¹⁵

¹³ A portion of these students were later found to be graduates in Spring 2006. These graduates had apparently completed all requirements for graduation during Fall 2005 but not yet officially graduated in Fall 2005. However, the number of seniors in this category is still proportionally larger than for other degree levels.

¹⁴ See the row on weekly work hours in Exhibit 8 in this report.

¹⁵ Thus, on row 1, 244 freshmen provided a response to the survey question—8.6% of those 244 respondents indicated course/program unavailability was a major reason for leaving; a further 11.5% indicated it was a minor reason for leaving; the rest of the question respondents indicated that it was not a reason for leaving.

Exhibit 3: Reasons for Leaving—Percentages of Question Responses

	Major Reason				Minor Reason				Total Question Respondents			
	FR	SO	JR	SR	FR	SO	JR	SR	FR	SO	JR	SR
1 Courses/programs not available	8.6%	13.6%	17.8%	11.5%	11.5%	8.4%	12.3%	7.4%	244	191	146	122
2 Courses not available at convenient times/places	7.8%	11.3%	10.3%	11.2%	13.0%	11.3%	13.1%	7.8%	230	186	145	116
3 Dissatisfied with quality of instruction from faculty	7.8%	5.7%	4.1%	4.9%	9.4%	15.5%	12.3%	9.8%	244	193	146	123
4 Dissatisfied with friendliness of faculty/staff	6.4%	3.2%	4.2%	3.3%	9.9%	10.6%	4.9%	8.9%	233	189	143	123
5 Accessibility of instructors	5.4%	2.6%	2.1%	0.8%	9.1%	7.3%	4.9%	9.8%	242	192	144	122
6 Dissatisfaction with accommodations for disabled	0.8%	0.5%	0.0%	1.7%	4.2%	3.2%	3.6%	0.0%	236	186	140	117
7 Dissatisfied with student systems (Banner/UVLink)	2.9%	2.6%	2.7%	4.1%	6.3%	5.3%	11.5%	5.7%	239	190	148	123
8 No jobs available on campus	1.7%	2.2%	0.7%	1.7%	3.7%	1.1%	2.7%	4.2%	242	186	146	120
9 Lack of student housing near campus	0.8%	1.1%	0.7%	0.0%	2.9%	2.1%	3.4%	0.8%	242	189	146	119
10 Dissatisfied with student services	4.2%	3.8%	2.1%	0.9%	7.1%	4.3%	3.5%	1.7%	240	186	144	117
11 Financial/employment concerns	22.8%	23.7%	16.8%	16.4%	11.6%	7.0%	11.9%	4.1%	241	186	143	122
12 Racial/ethnic/gender discrimination	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	1.6%	2.1%	0.8%	234	186	141	119
13 Socially isolated	1.7%	0.5%	1.4%	0.0%	3.8%	3.8%	3.4%	2.5%	236	184	148	121
14 Illness, death or illness in family	6.0%	2.7%	2.1%	3.4%	4.7%	3.8%	2.8%	3.4%	234	186	144	119
15 Change in marital status	7.5%	4.8%	6.1%	1.6%	0.8%	2.7%	3.4%	2.4%	241	186	147	123
16 Family responsibilities or childcare	13.2%	18.2%	13.1%	10.9%	4.3%	9.4%	4.8%	3.4%	234	181	145	119
17 Conflict with job	22.2%	14.1%	15.6%	15.0%	13.0%	13.6%	14.3%	10.0%	239	184	147	120
18 Unsure about educational goals	6.8%	7.0%	4.8%	0.9%	17.9%	9.2%	9.0%	1.7%	234	185	145	116
19 Stress of college	5.1%	5.5%	5.0%	1.7%	14.8%	11.5%	12.8%	5.9%	237	183	141	119

Observations

- **General Reasons Spread:** Exhibit 3 shows students indicating financial (row 11) or job conflict (row 17) concerns as the more dominant major reasons for not returning. The next most popular reason students indicated as major was family responsibilities (row 16). Program availability (row 1) and accessibility (row 2) were also reasons frequently cited as major reasons. Other areas that represented substantial¹⁶ “major” response rates were: dissatisfaction with quality of instruction and/or friendliness of staff, change in marital status, uncertainty about educational goals, and the stress of college.
- **Programs not Available:** Juniors had the highest proportion of question respondents who indicated program unavailability as a major reason for leaving. Freshmen had the lowest proportion in the same category at 8.6%, which is less than half as much as juniors. This probably underlies the trend for juniors to transfer to desired specific programs shown in row 3 of Exhibit 2.
- **Financial/Employment:** Substantially higher proportions of freshman and sophomore students classed financial/employment concerns as a major reason (22.8% and 23.7%) in comparison to proportions of junior and senior respondents (16.8% and 16.4%). Once again, this is most likely due to newer students’ inability to cope with the demands of work *and* school. Freshmen had the highest proportion (22.2%) of responses classing “conflict with job” as a major reason for leaving.
- **Racial/Gender Discrimination:** The respondents represented by row 12 of Exhibit 3 (racial/ethnic/gender discrimination) were profiled, and it was found that about 6% of the

¹⁶ “Substantial” here refers to potential concerns with over 5% of “major” item responses.

non-white respondents indicated racial/ethnic/gender discrimination as a major or minor reason for leaving; about 3% of female respondents to the question indicated it as a major or minor reason for leaving.

- **Desired Times:** When respondents to the item on row 2 were asked what times they preferred, only 26 responded—58% of the respondents wanted classes in the evenings, other requests included: morning, online, and “different days”.

Exhibit 4 shows the frequencies of responses (depicted by Exhibit 3), but instead of being expressed as percentages of all valid question responses the responses are expressed as percentages of all responses in each degree level; therefore, each column’s percentages in Exhibit 4 adds up to 100%. Construing the data in this way enables a comparison of relative popularity of the reasons provided.

Exhibit 4: Reasons for Leaving—Percentages of Column Responses

	Major Reason				Minor Reason			
	FR	SO	JR	SR	FR	SO	JR	SR
Total Responses (n)	316	230	159	108	353	246	198	109
1 Courses/programs not available	6.6%	11.3%	16.4%	13.0%	7.9%	6.5%	9.1%	8.3%
2 Courses not available at convenient times/places	5.7%	9.1%	9.4%	12.0%	8.5%	8.5%	9.6%	8.3%
3 Dissatisfied with quality of instruction from faculty	6.0%	4.8%	3.8%	5.6%	6.5%	12.2%	9.1%	11.0%
4 Dissatisfied with friendliness of faculty/staff	4.7%	2.6%	3.8%	3.7%	6.5%	8.1%	3.5%	10.1%
5 Accessibility of instructors	4.1%	2.2%	1.9%	0.9%	6.2%	5.7%	3.5%	11.0%
6 Dissatisfaction with accommodations for disabled	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	1.9%	2.8%	2.4%	2.5%	0.0%
7 Dissatisfied with student systems (Banner/UVLink)	2.2%	2.2%	2.5%	4.6%	4.2%	4.1%	8.6%	6.4%
8 No jobs available on campus	1.3%	1.7%	0.6%	1.9%	2.5%	0.8%	2.0%	4.6%
9 Lack of student housing near campus	0.6%	0.9%	0.6%	0.0%	2.0%	1.6%	2.5%	0.9%
10 Dissatisfied with student services	3.2%	3.0%	1.9%	0.9%	4.8%	3.3%	2.5%	1.8%
11 Financial/employment concerns	17.4%	19.1%	15.1%	18.5%	7.9%	5.3%	8.6%	4.6%
12 Racial/ethnic/gender discrimination	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.2%	1.5%	0.9%
13 Socially isolated	1.3%	0.4%	1.3%	0.0%	2.5%	2.8%	2.5%	2.8%
14 Illness, death or illness in family	4.4%	2.2%	1.9%	3.7%	3.1%	2.8%	2.0%	3.7%
15 Change in marital status	5.7%	3.9%	5.7%	1.9%	0.6%	2.0%	2.5%	2.8%
16 Family responsibilities or childcare	9.8%	14.3%	11.9%	12.0%	2.8%	6.9%	3.5%	3.7%
17 Conflict with job	16.8%	11.3%	14.5%	16.7%	8.8%	10.2%	10.6%	11.0%
18 Unsure about educational goals	5.1%	5.7%	4.4%	0.9%	11.9%	6.9%	6.6%	1.8%
19 Stress of college	3.8%	4.3%	4.4%	1.9%	9.9%	8.5%	9.1%	6.4%

Observations

- **Top Reasons:** The top major reason¹⁷ for all degree levels except junior is financial/employment concerns. For juniors financial/employment concerns was trumped by “unavailability of programs”. The reason juniors were different in this respect was probably due to the high percentage of transfer students in the sample juniors (see row 3 of Exhibit 2).

¹⁷ Most frequently cited as major

- **Top Three Reasons:** “Conflict with job” featured among the top three concerns for all degree levels. “Family responsibilities” was ranked 3rd and 2nd for freshmen and sophomores respectively, but “unavailable programs” ranked higher than “family responsibilities” for juniors and seniors.
- **Top Five Reasons:** “Courses unavailable at convenient times/places” ranked among the top five concerns for sophomores, juniors, and seniors—for freshman, “dissatisfaction with instruction from faculty” was more predominant.

3. Purpose for Enrolling

Survey question B3 asked students to indicate their purpose for enrolling at UVSC. There were a total of 887 responses and the results of these responses are shown in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5: Self Reported Purpose for Enrolling in Fall ‘05

Purpose for Enrolling	Students	% of Responses
1 Certificate/Diploma	43	4.8%
2 Associates Degree	280	31.6%
3 Bachelors Degree	375	42.3%
4 Gen Ed, then Transfer	74	8.3%
5 Personal Interest	81	9.1%
6 College Credit During High School	5	0.6%
7 Take Courses While Attend Other College	28	3.2%
8 Other	1	0.1%

Although about 79% of respondents said they enrolled to earn a certificate/diploma or a bachelors/associates degree, this still leaves 21% who claim they were not attending UVSC to earn a degree, certificate, or diploma. Additionally, if this table is representative of the entire cohort, then about 9% of the cohort was taking classes for personal interest. These students may have planned—from the outset at their enrollment—on not returning to UVSC in Spring 2006, which could account for a substantial portion ($\approx 9\%$) of the non-returning students. Such students obviously should not be considered “lost” in the same sense as the non-returning students whose goal was to earn a degree.

4. Transfers

There were a total of 123 responses that students provided indicating which institution they intended to transfer to. Exhibit 6 provides a breakout of these responses.

Exhibit 6: Intended Transfer Institutions

	Intended Transfer Institution	Students	% of Responses
1	Brigham Young University (BYU)	31	25.2%
2	Salt Lake Community College	15	12.2%
3	University of Utah	14	11.4%
4	Weber State University	9	7.3%
5	Utah State University	6	4.9%
6	Brigham Young University - Idaho	4	3.3%
7	Dixie State College	2	1.6%
8	LDS Business College	1	0.8%
9	Southern Utah University	0	0.0%
10	Other School	26	21.1%
11	Don't Really Know	15	12.2%

The results show Brigham Young University to be the most popular desired transfer institution with 25.2% of respondents indicating they planned to transfer there. The second most popular single institution, with less than half the responses of BYU, was Salt Lake Community College with 12.2% of the responses. University of Utah came in as a close third with 11.4% of responses. Finally, Weber and Utah State University received 7.3% and 4.9% of the responses, respectively.

Naturally, there are different reasons associated with transfer decisions to the various institutions mentioned. Exhibit 7 provides a cross tabulation of 1) the institutions to which students desired to transfer and 2) the percentage breakout of reasons they gave for wanting to transfer.¹⁸

Exhibit 7: Reasons for Transferring to Specific Institutions¹⁹

		Don't Know/Unknown	Program Unavailable at UVSC	Better Program	Personal Preference	Bad Experience at UVSC	Cheaper/Other Benefits	Moving/Location	Administrative Problems	Total
1	Brigham Young University (BYU)	0.0%	20.0%	35.0%	20.0%	5.0%	15.0%	0.0%	5.0%	100%
2	Salt Lake Community College	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	8.3%	50.0%	0.0%	100%
3	University of Utah	9.1%	45.5%	27.3%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	100%
4	Weber State University	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
5	Utah State University	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
6	Brigham Young University - Idaho	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
7	Dixie State College	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
8	LDS Business College	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
9	Southern Utah University	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
10	Other School	4.2%	20.8%	8.3%	8.3%	4.2%	12.5%	41.7%	0.0%	100%
11	Don't Really Know	na ¹⁹	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
12	All Institutions	7.3%	21%	14%	13%	10%	11%	23%	1%	100%

¹⁸ These reasons were gleaned from open-ended student responses. The responses were evaluated and then categorized into nine distinct groups. These groups are represented in the column headings of Exhibit 7.

¹⁹ Schools with less than 11 responses are omitted from Exhibit 7.

Observations

- **General Pattern:** When all reason responses are considered (see row 12), the most popular category of reasons for transferring is “moving/location” factors. Closely, in second place, is “program unavailability”, followed by “better program” reasons. Moving/location factors typically refers to the student’s family moving to a different state, the student’s spouse getting a job offer elsewhere, or some other non-school factor that entails moving too far from UVSC to commute. Program availability means that the desired program simply was not offered at UVSC.
- **BYU Transfers:** The most popular reason students have for transferring to BYU is “better program”, followed by “program unavailable at UVSC”. The former usually relates to the student’s perception of BYU as being a more prestigious institution with better program facilities and/or faculty.
- **University of Utah Transfers:** The top two reasons for transferring to University of Utah are the same as for BYU, although in University of Utah’s case “program unavailability” is the top reason category and “better program” is second. This indicates that transfer students use UVSC as a stepping stone for admission to their desired programs at The University of Utah; just under half the transferees to The University of Utah transferred to complete a desired program that was not available at UVSC.
- **Salt Lake Community College Transfers:** The most popular reason category for transferring to Salt Lake Community College is “moving/location” factors, followed by “bad UVSC experience” in second place; “unavailability of programs” at UVSC is another substantial reason provided for transferring to SLCC. This represents a drastic shift, from reasons for going to BYU or University of Utah, which is more heavily weighted towards location factors or negative experiences than programs.
- **“Other Institutions”:** The top reasons for students transferring to the various other institutions provided were 41.7% “moving/location” related, with the second highest percentage being “unavailable program at UVSC”. These students are mostly moving to institutions outside of Utah.

5. Other Items

Exhibit 8 shows responses to other survey questions of interest, including: general ratings of UVSC, weekly hours worked, parental support, marital status, children at home, and living arrangements.

Exhibit 8: Other Survey Items

Question	Scale/Criteria					Other Highlights
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	
How would you rate your educational experience at UVSC?	19%	37%	40%	3%	1%	69% of seniors rated as very good or excellent, only 50% of freshmen and juniors rated as very good or excellent.
How would you rate your degree of affinity with UVSC?	11%	38%	43%	5%	3%	Juniors and seniors rated affinity as stronger, with 58% and 61% rating as excellent or very good respectively. Only 40% of freshmen rated at very good or excellent.
	None	1-10 Hrs	11-20 Hrs	21-30 Hrs	Over 30 Hrs	
How many hours per week did you work while attending UVSC?	13%	2%	15%	20%	49%	There was not much variation between degree levels for week work hours.
	Yes	No				
Did your parents of relatives provide financial support for UVSC?	33%	67%				The percentages ranged from 26% using parental support for seniors, to 39% for freshmen.
	single, never married	married	divorced	other		
What is your marital status?	56%	40%	2%	2%		The percentage of married students ranges from 27% for freshmen to 58% for seniors.
	No Children	One	Two	Three	Four or more	
How many children do you support at home?	69%	11%	11%	5%	5%	Freshmen tend to have fewer children than seniors. The percentage of students with no children ranges from 77% for freshman to 60% for seniors.
	off-campus room/apt	parents /relatives home	own home			
What were your living arrangements while attending UVSC?	47%	25%	28%			There was little variance in the percentage of students who rented an apartment from level to level. However, students in parents' homes ranged from 11% of seniors to 34% of freshmen. Students living in their own homes ranged from 20% of freshmen to 37% of seniors.

Observations

- **Affinity with UVSC:** Seniors and juniors were much more likely to rate their UVSC experience and their affinity with UVSC highly. This shows that the length of experience students have with UVSC is generally correlated with their regard and loyalty to UVSC.
- **Work Week:** Nearly 50% of students work over 30hrs per week. There was *not* much variance in work load of students from level to level. Contrary to what may be supposed, the proportions of students weekly work hours for each degree level resembled that of percentages for all degree levels (shown in Exhibit 8).
- **Freshman/Senior Differences:** Newer (freshman and sophomore) students were more often provided financial support by their parents, less likely to be married and/or have any children at home, and more likely to live in their parents' homes. Despite these

observations, the differences are not excessively large (see “Other Highlights” column in Exhibit 8).

6. Future Correspondence

Students were asked questions about their future responsiveness to contact with UVSC. Question B35 asked students if they would like information about weekend or off-campus programs; 704 (35% of the sample) students provided a response, 132 (6.6% of sample) of which indicated they wanted further information. Proportionally, most of these positive responses were from freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Only 6% of seniors who responded to this question were interested in more information.

Question B36 asked if there was anything UVSC could do to help the student continue their education. About 75% of the comments submitted indicated there was nothing UVSC could do to help them. However, 7% wanted classes to be more accessible or available; a further 5% wanted more funding; and 4% asked for improved programs at UVSC.

Question B37 asked students if they wanted someone to contact them regarding the concerns they had raised during the survey. A total of 701 students responded, 12% of which responded “yes”. Proportionately, about twice as many freshmen responded than seniors.

Question B38 asked students to openly provide any recommendations they had for UVSC to improve its services. Overall, about one third of respondents said they had no recommendations; another third had program or course related recommendations; and the last third had recommendations related to administrative issues. When the responses were analyzed by degree level, freshmen were most likely to respond that they had no recommendations; juniors and seniors, however, were most likely to respond with program/course related recommendations.

Conclusions

Several areas of concern are brought to the fore by the research conducted in this study. The following is a list of conclusions based on the research conducted.

Access: About 10%²⁰ of the non-returning cohort would likely have been retained if they would have had more flexible access to quality education. This is both in terms of geographic access (i.e. the proximity to educational facilities) and schedule-based access (i.e. being able to attend classes at convenient times). Many students were unable to balance their work, financial, and educational obligations; and as a result they dropped (or postponed) their educational endeavors. Online educational offerings combined with minimal face to face teaching/counseling may be a non

²⁰ This is based on the number of reasons responses classing “course times/places” as a major reason in Exhibit 3. This number could be greater, considering that an additional 12% classed “course times/places” as a minor reason for leaving.

capital intensive way of achieving this—provided that the courses are of a high quality and do not detract from UVSC’s branding efforts and other services.

Local Employers: “Conflict with Job” was one of the top reasons students gave for leaving UVSC. About 17% of freshmen said it was a *major* reason for leaving; a further 9% indicated it was a *minor* reason for leaving—this cumulatively represents about 26% of the cohort freshmen. If possible, it might be beneficial to work with the local employers of these students to minimize the conflicts between students’ work and study schedules. Alternatively, UVSC might consider offering programs on campus to teach students skills to help in dealing with work and school.

UVU: Retention within UVSC can be enhanced as the institution continues to expand its programs as a university. Although student transfers within Utah do not necessarily represent a direct loss to UVSC, the volume of transfer activity may be curtailed by making a broader base of four year programs (as well as more advanced classes in existing programs) more available in Utah County. The prestige associated with university status may also help to retain students who left because they “wanted to graduate from a university” or who otherwise found it difficult to take pride in their accomplishments at UVSC.

Systems/Website: About 8-10% of students indicated they left, in part, due to the lack of competence and user-friendliness of student services and/or systems. A smoother administrative personal interface (both online, and face to face) between students and their education would help remedy these difficulties.

Students Planning on Coming Back: The sample suggests there is a large contingent (21%) from the cohort who did not intend to transfer, but who planned to return to UVSC in the future—usually within one or two years. These are students who have become familiar with the UVSC environment. The main reason for their discontinuance is due to lack of funds; and in most cases UVSC cannot provide the needed funding. However, these students typically are taking time out to work in order to save enough money so they can return to UVSC in the future. Targeting these students with information on flexible education options (i.e. online, part-time, and/or evening classes) and/or flexible financing options may serve to leverage their latent familiarity and interest in earning a degree at UVSC, and thereby increase the long-term retention of these students.

Were any of the following items a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason for your decision not to enroll for the Spring 2006 semester?

MAJOR REASON MINOR REASON NOT A REASON

	MAJOR REASON	MINOR REASON	NOT A REASON
8. Courses/academic programs not available Which courses/programs? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Courses not available at convenient times/places Desired times: _____ Desired places: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction from faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Level of satisfaction with the friendliness or responsiveness from staff and faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Level of satisfaction with accessibility of instructors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Level of satisfaction with accommodations for the learning or physically disabled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Level of satisfaction with new student systems (Banner, UVLink)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Availability of jobs on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Lack of student housing close to campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Dissatisfaction with student services Which services? _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Financial concerns including employment Please explain: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Racial, ethnic, or gender discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Felt socially isolated or out-of-place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Personal illness/death or illness in the family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Change in marital status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Family responsibilities or child care Mark here if you have neither: <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Conflict between demands of job and college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Unsure about educational goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. The stress of college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Other: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. How would you rate your educational experience at UVSC? Excellent Good Very poor
[read list] Very good Poor

29. How would you rate your degree of affinity (association or kinship) with UVSC? Very strong Moderate Very weak
[read list] Strong Weak

30. How many hours did you work per week while attending UVSC? None 11-20 hours Over 30 hours
 1-10 hours 21-30 hours

31. Did your parents or relatives provide you with any financial assistance for UVSC? Yes No

32. What is your marital status? Single, never married Married Divorced Other

33. How many children do you support at home? 0 1 2 3 4 5 or more

34. What were your living arrangements while attending UVSC? Off-campus room/apartment Parent or relative's home Own home

35. Would you like more information on weekend/off-campus programs that can help you complete your degree at UVSC? Yes No

36. Is there anything we can do to help you continue your education at UVSC? _____

37. Would you like someone to contact you who can help you with anything you mentioned? Yes No

38. What recommendations do you have for UVSC to improve its educational services? _____

Thank you, and as a reminder, Spring registration is still open! We hope to see you back at UVSC.