



Santa Ana College Non Re-Enrollment Telephone Interviews Study

February 2006

Prompted by a drop in enrollment, the RSCCD Research Department identified a group of 1,367 students who were enrolled in classes at Santa Ana College (SAC) in Fall 2004 and/or Spring 2005, had completed at least 12 units of transfer-level classes, had not graduated, had not transferred to the universities, but did not return to SAC at the beginning of Fall 2005 semester. This group of students is considered “serious” and/or “committed,” those who have made a conscious choice about obtaining a college education. In other words, they would be expected to return to SAC, yet did not.

In October 2005, a survey was mailed to these students to identify their reasons for not returning to SAC. 84 (6%) completed questionnaires were returned. Overall respondents were very positive in their assessment of SAC, student life and the social and campus environment, and extremely satisfied with their experience with SAC. The responses also revealed what we already know about students who don't return to college: work schedule conflict, family or personal problem, transfer to another community college, financial conflict, etc.

In January 2006, telephone interviews were conducted with the same 1,367 students to probe further and allow the students to openly elaborate their reasons for not returning to SAC. 42 students took time to talk with district staff and though the majority of students gave “finances” (personal and tuition) as their reason for not re-enrolling, many shared the extenuating circumstances which prevented them from attending college at this time. A large majority of students voiced their appreciation for the personal call.

Highlights of the telephone interviews:

- One-third of the students contacted cited financial reasons for not re-enrolling (employment needs to help family and/or cost of tuition).
- 33% of the students commented on the lack of proper maintenance of campus and restrooms.
- 14% of the students transferred to another community college after an inordinate amount of time on the Fire Technology/ Nursing waiting lists (2 years or more)
- Approximately 36% of the respondents had met with a counselor at least two times during the semester; EOPS students (14%) met with their counselor on a monthly basis
- More than one-third (38%) of the students have met individually with their instructors two or more times.
- Half of the students stated that they were doing “Very well” academically and were prepared to meet the academic challenges.

When asked about their worst experience at SAC, the majority of responses were:

- Being on an unclean campus (43%)
- Unclean restrooms (26%)
- Parking (29%)
- Cancelled classes (especially evening) (18%)

When asked what could be done to make SAC more student-friendly, the majority of responses were:

- Nothing (43%) “Great instructors”; “Friendly and helpful staff”
- Clean up campus to make it more inviting (33%) “It is not enjoyable to hang out on campus because of all the filth”; “Didn’t like being on campus because of all the litter”; “Great college but need to clean it up”; “ Restrooms are littered before 8 o’clock classes”
- Lower tuition (38%)
- Ban smoking on campus (29%) “All the smoking on campus was disturbing”; “Restrictions on smoking are not enforced”; “Cigarette butts litter the campus”