

Memorandum

To: Members of the Saint Mary's College Community
From: Mark Figueroa, Director of Institutional Research
Date: April 11, 2008
Subject: Undergraduate First-Year Student Attrition Report, Fall 2007

As a means of monitoring first-year student enrollment trends, the following report on new first-year (non-transfer) students is offered here. As noted last year, attrition data is usually reviewed and reported on a year-to-year basis (from fall term to fall term). However, we again elected to study characteristics of first-year, non-transfer students who enrolled for the fall term and did not re-enroll for the spring term. Of 611 new first-year students (NFYS) who enrolled for the fall 2007 semester, 47 did not re-enroll for the spring. Of those 47, 10 left campus prior to completing the fall term – 8 left before our IPEDS census date, and 2 left after the census date, but did not complete the term (1 took a leave of absence and 1 had a medical withdraw). Taking this into account, the number of “non-returners” is 39.

Utilizing standard reporting procedures, the retention/attrition rate should be calculated using the number of enrolled students “counted” after our Fall census date: $611 - 8 = 603$. With this, we see an attrition rate ($39/603$) of 6.5%, a decrease of 1.2% from last year’s rate (7.7%).

The chart below contrasts background characteristics of non-returning students to those who returned for the Spring semester.

	Non-returning NFYS Characteristics (N=39)	Overall NFYS Class Characteristics (N=611)
% Residing on campus	84.6%	92%
% Female	64.1%	61%
% Male	35.9%	39%
Average High School GPA	3.15	3.33
Average Combined SAT Score	1015	1079
African American	5.1%	4.7 %
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.1%	11 %
Latino	20.5%	21.1 %
Native American	0%	1.2 %
White	66.7%	56.3 %

In addition to the above characteristics, the following is descriptive of those 37 non-returning students who completed the term:

- 2 were admitted with Honors at entrance, 4 were admitted through the HP program, and 1 was a “FastApp” applicant
- 2 received disciplinary sanctions
- 6 were on academic probation, 5 were academically disqualified at the end of the Fall 07 term
- A greater proportion of White students chose not to return for the Spring 08 term.

Questions for Discussion:

- What rate of attrition is acceptable for first-year students at SMC?
- What other information would be needed in order to make an informed decision about how we should respond?

Please feel free to contact me at x4754 or via email at mfigueroa@stmarys-ca.edu with any questions.