



Senior Exit Survey

Academic Year 2019

Report prepared by the Office of Student Learning & Institutional Assessment

September 19, 2019

Characteristics of the Stephen F. Austin State University Class of 2019

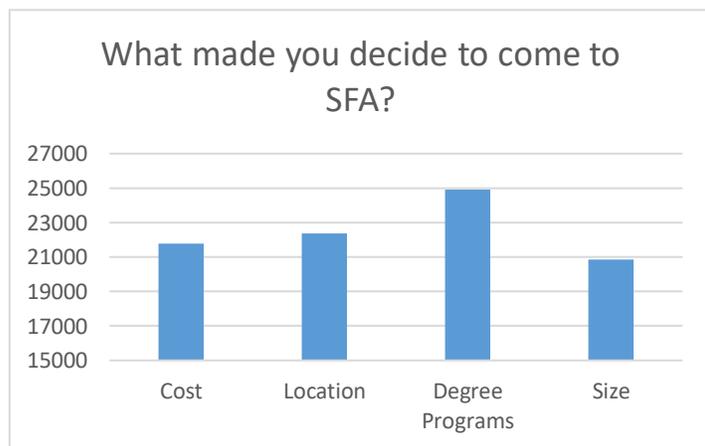
While no one student likely meets all these criteriaⁱ, it may be helpful to consider the typical SFA 2019 graduate as a single person:

They studied an average of 18.2 hours per week and worked at a paying job an average of 21.3 hours per week. They are female (mostly). They don't have children (but 11% do). They're (almost exactly) half-interested in helping the Alumni Association soon.

Why They Came and Why They Stayed

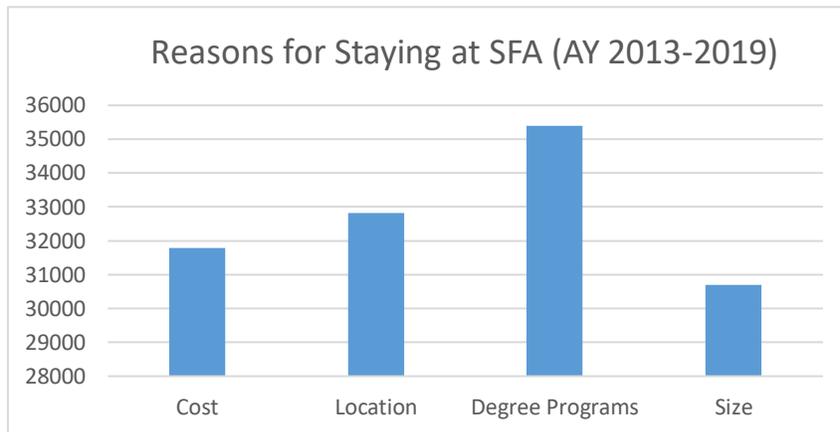
Unlike previous versions of the Senior Exit Survey, the question set below has been adjusted to answer questions posed from SFA's Flexible Strategic Compass. Previous iterations couched these questions in terms of what made graduates *stay* at SFA.

A negligible number of students listed something else as their reason for matriculating. The small response set was fractured to the point that it did not need to be listed.



This new question focused on the initial decision to attend SFA. This question also offers the benefit of four to five years' distance (elapsed time) to place that first matriculation decision in reflective context. Instead of using a standard five-point Likert Scale, students were given slider bars and could set them anywhere from 0-100. Reaction scores in the related bar chart indicate the cumulative score from all respondents; thus, the very high numbers.

This reaction set runs a very similar pattern to the previous version of the question. The scale of the questions may be different, but the relative importance remains consistent. Over six years of administration, these four variables account for the supermajority of reasons students came to SFA (AY 19 version) and stayed (previous versions).



The chart to the left reflects the sum of six years of scores detailing why students *stayed* at SFA. This data may prove useful when recruiting new students, and it may provide insight for campus initiatives designed to increase the retaining of current SFA students.

Future Plans for Graduates

When asked about future plans, responses were career focused. Just over 68% planned to begin a new job, while another 6% plan to continue in a current position. Graduate school was indicated by 22% of graduates. Other responses were fractured and accounted for very few of the respondents.

Previous experience has led the OIE to adjust the question to be more exclusive. Previous versions allowed multiple choices, and the data were much less clear. This response set gives a clearer indication of future plans and priorities.

Looking Back

The next ten questions focused on the parting mindset of seniors. The prompts are listed in the top line in each chart. The first chart includes all responses. These questions are perhaps the closest picture of graduates' mindsets at the very end of their academic career at SFA.

It should be noted that the Mode for *all* questions is 10, so differences are a matter of degree. Means are not the best indicators in ordinal data derived from surveys; however, when the median and the mean run closely together, it lends the results greater confidence. The two lowest means match the lowest median score. Thus, these two areas would be the weakest answer sets of this panel.

Reactions to Looking Back Questions: Mean Scores

	Overall, I had a satisfying educational experience at SFA.	I had access to an advisor when I needed one.	I had access to information when I needed it.	Courses were available, so I could finish my program in a timely manner.	I would recommend SFA to others.	I felt a sense of community at SFA.	I consider myself a Lumberjack/Ladyjack for life.	SFA staff care about my success.	If I could start college over, I would choose the same major.	If I could start over, I would choose SFA again.
Mean	7.9	8	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.4	7.9	7.8	7.5	7.3
Median	8	9	8	9	9	8	10	9	9	8
Mode	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Of special concern regarding these scores is the response set from the Hispanic respondents. Unlike previous administrations of the SES, Hispanic students have rated SFA much lower in terms of both of the marked responses. Consider the Hispanic-only response set to these same questions:

Looking Back Questions: Mean Scores (Hispanic)

	Overall, I had a satisfying educational experience at SFA.	I had access to an advisor when I needed one.	I had access to information when I needed it.	Courses were available, so I could finish my program in a timely manner.	I would recommend SFA to others.	I felt a sense of community at SFA.	I consider myself a Lumberjack/Ladyjack for life.	SFA staff care about my success.	If I could start college over, I would choose the same major.	If I could start over, I would choose SFA again.
Mean	7.5	8	7.9	7.7	7.5	6.9	8	7.6	7.1	6.6
Median	8	10	8	9	8	8	10	9	8	7
Mode	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

A key component of *SFA Envisioned* revolves around our Hispanic students. SFA is working to become a Hispanic-serving institution, or HSI. These data may provide insight into improvements that can help reach the 25% threshold, as set by the U.S. Department of Education.

SFA services were assessed this year, as in previous years. Responses were structured using a scale of 1-5, with 1 being fully satisfied and 5 indicating deep frustration. Students responded in line with previous years' graduates. Parking remains the biggest issue among graduates, with campus dining services and residence halls receiving some suspicion.

Note the non-responses to some questions, highlighted in blue. Disability Services, Counseling Services, and Library Holdings each had more than 30 students not responding. A non-response could be the result of disinterest or non-interaction. Some students did not use Disability Services or Counseling Services. In such cases, respondents were instructed to leave those blank.

Mean Student Ratings of Services

SERVICE	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE		BLANKS
Registrar	2.0	2	2		19
Disability Services	2.0	1.5	1		41
Counseling Services	2.0	2	1		33
Library Staff	1.9	2	1		20
Library Facilities	1.9	2	1		16
Library Holdings	2.1	2	1		32
SFA Campus Dining	2.9	3	2		14
Residence Halls	2.8	2	2		18
Campus Bookstore (Barnes & Noble)	2.3	2	2		8
Student Health Services	2.1	2	1		18
Parking	4.2	5	5		9
Campus Security	2.1	2	1		19
Admissions	1.9	2	1		19
Business Office	2.0	2	1		17
Career Services	1.9	2	1		22

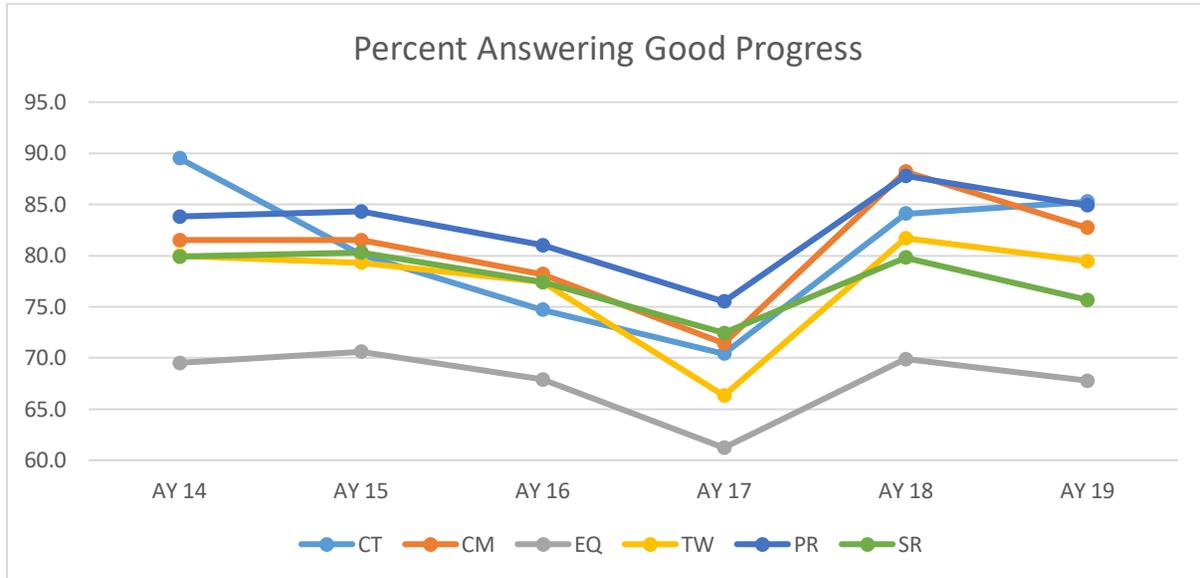
The blanks serve as another indicator of the severity toward the services with the three highest scores. Only the campus bookstore had fewer blanks than the parking assessment. Nearly every graduate had opinions about these two student services.

Core Curriculum Responses

For the past six years, students have been asked to rate the progress they felt they had made in each of the six objectives of the Texas Core Curriculum. Students were asked to rate their progress from 1 (No Progress) to 5 (“For purposes of Core assessment, answers of four (4-I made good progress) and five (I REALLY made progress at SFA.) were considered as positive indicators. The percentages of those answering 4 or 5 on a five-point Likert scale are shown by Core Component Area (color) by Year of SES Administration (x-axis data points).

In all six administration years, Empirical and Quantitative Skills were given the least support. Through AY 2017, responses were continuing a downward pattern. Student self-assessment has been more positive in the past two administration years. Of special note is the Critical Thinking

response set, which indicates a positive trend line over the past two years. Overall, graduates felt they progressed the most in Personal Responsibility.



Open-Ended Questions

The final set of questions was open-ended. Student could enter any text that matched the prompt. For purposes of visualization, graphic representation is provided in word clouds. The more a word was entered, the larger and bolder the text. The answers to these four questions are visualized on the following pages.

Unproductive Questions

One set of 16 questions was presented as eight paired questions. Essentially, the question pattern mimicked the Ruffalo-Noel Levitz approach: *how do you feel about x* and *how important is x to you*. In all cases, the results showed both high satisfaction and high significance. That is, everything is important, and everything is good. These questions did not discriminate among the presented options, and they will be removed from the next iteration of the SES.

ⁱ LeBron James, in his entire NBA career, averages 27 points, 7 rebounds, and 7 assists per game. He has *never* posted these three result tallies in a single game.