



# Senior Exit Survey

Fall 2015-Summer 2016

Report prepared by the Office of Student Learning & Institutional Assessment

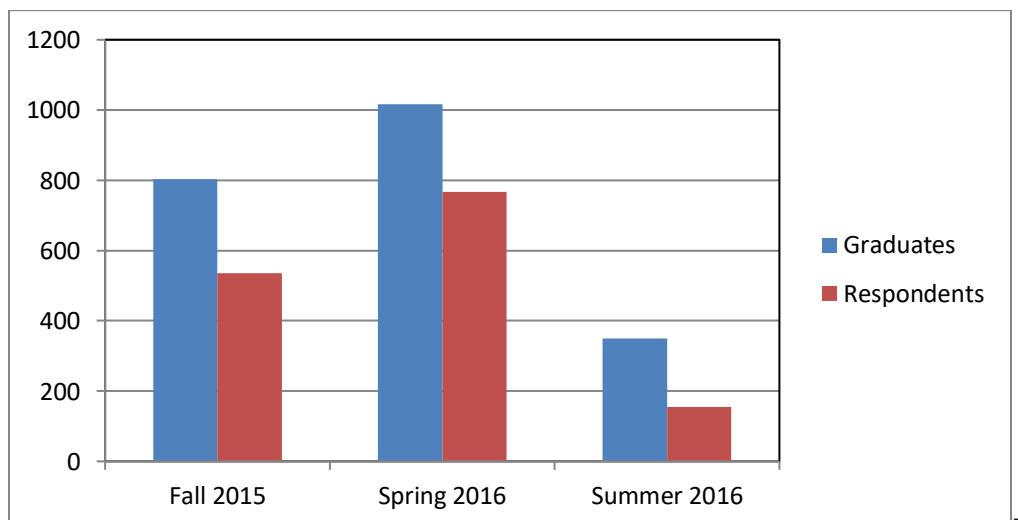
March 27, 2017

The 2015-2016 Senior Exit Survey was administered to all students who were approved for graduation<sup>i</sup> with the Office of the Registrar. Separate survey groups emanated from the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters at Stephen F. Austin State University. This report attempts to find meaningful patterns from three full years of data provided by the SES. Table data may be accessed from within each chart.

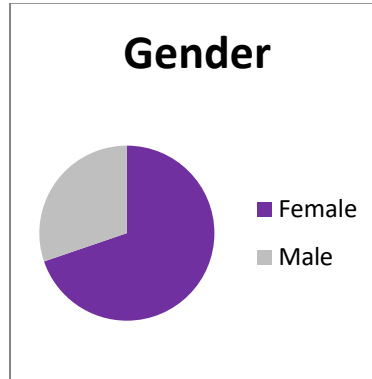
## **Participants**

During Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, the Senior Exit Survey was delivered electronically to students' SFA e-mail address via Qualtrics. The survey was sent to all students. A total of 1460 graduating seniors attempted the survey, with 1412 completing the survey. A total of 48 started but did not complete the survey (3.3%). This figure is similar to AY 2015.

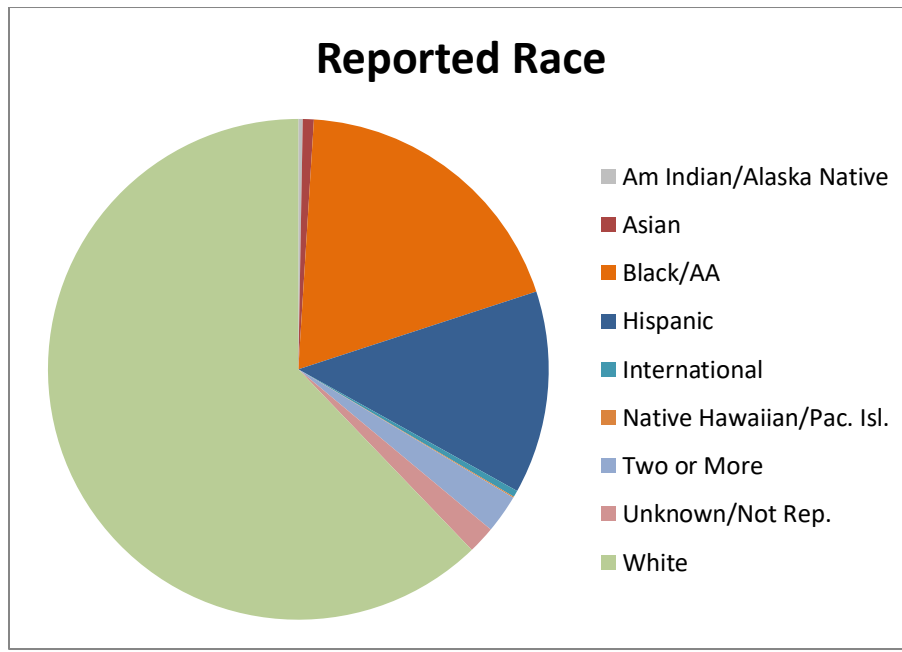
The overall response rate was 67%, and the response rate varied by semester. Specifically, only 44% of graduates responded to the Senior Exit Survey during the summer of 2016, while response rates for Fall and Spring were 66% and 75%, respectively. This continues a pattern of lower response rates from summer graduates.



Demographically, respondents showed similar patterns to previous survey administrations. A total of 427 males (30.2%) and 985 females (69.8%) took the survey.

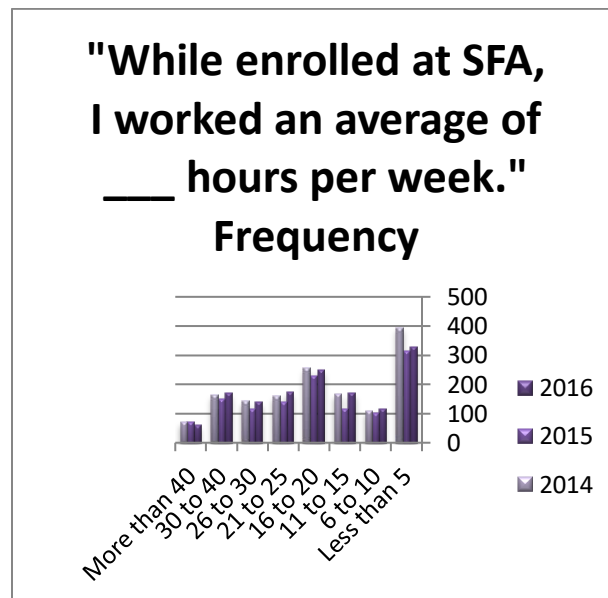
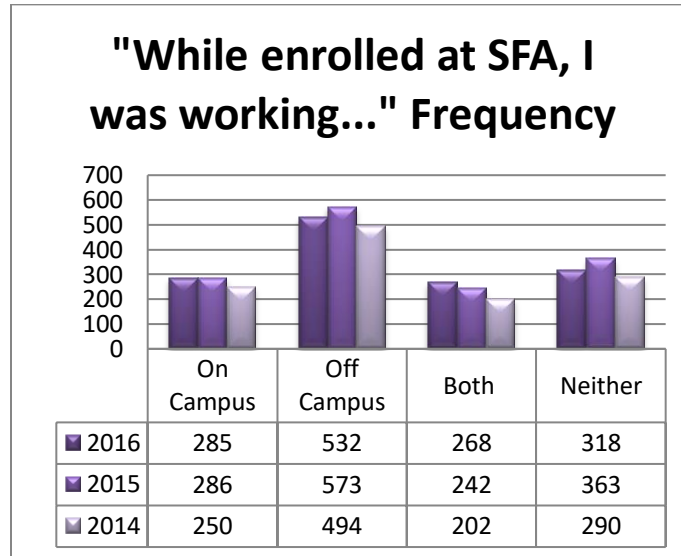


The three largest reported races were White (62%), Black/African American (19%), and Hispanic (13%), while 2.4% of students listed Two or More and 25 students did not provide information. Other listed races each comprised less than 1% of the graduate population.



## Working Students

Respondents were given a set of questions regarding their on-campus and off-campus work schedules. The results are presented in the two following charts:



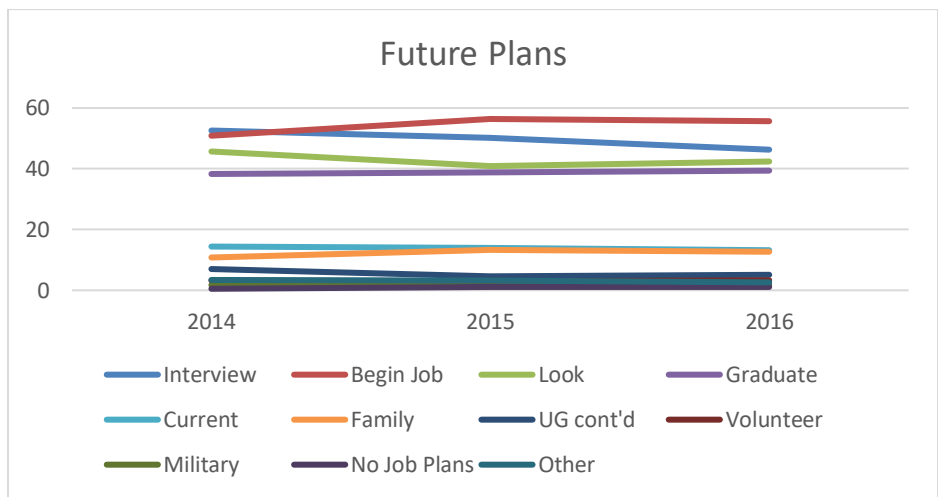
## Plans after graduation

<b>“What are your plans after graduation (check all that apply)?”</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (N = 1412)</b>
Continue a current job	186	13.2%
Begin a new job	786	55.7%
Interview for jobs	653	46.3%
Begin looking for a job	600	42.5%
Pursue additional undergraduate education	74	5.2%
Attend graduate school	557	39.4%
Volunteer service (Peace Corps, Red Cross, Americorps, etc)	47	3.3%
Serve in the military	26	1.8%
No plans for a job at this time	15	1.1%
Start or raise a family	178	12.6%
Other (please specify)	37	2.6%

This question provided a series of non-exclusive answers, allowing students to choose more than one option as an answer. Thus, there is a total of 3159 answers from 1412 students (2.23 answers per student). Among results, the top four answers were (1) interviewing for jobs; (2) looking for a job; (3) beginning a new job, and (4) attending graduate school. This question does not specify a time frame, so it is unclear whether the same students plan to look for new jobs, interview for new jobs, *and* begin new jobs. This uncertainty is similar to responses from the 12.6% of respondents that plan to start or raise a family. Longitudinal data over three years that SFA graduates *may* be finding employment before graduation, with the percentage of

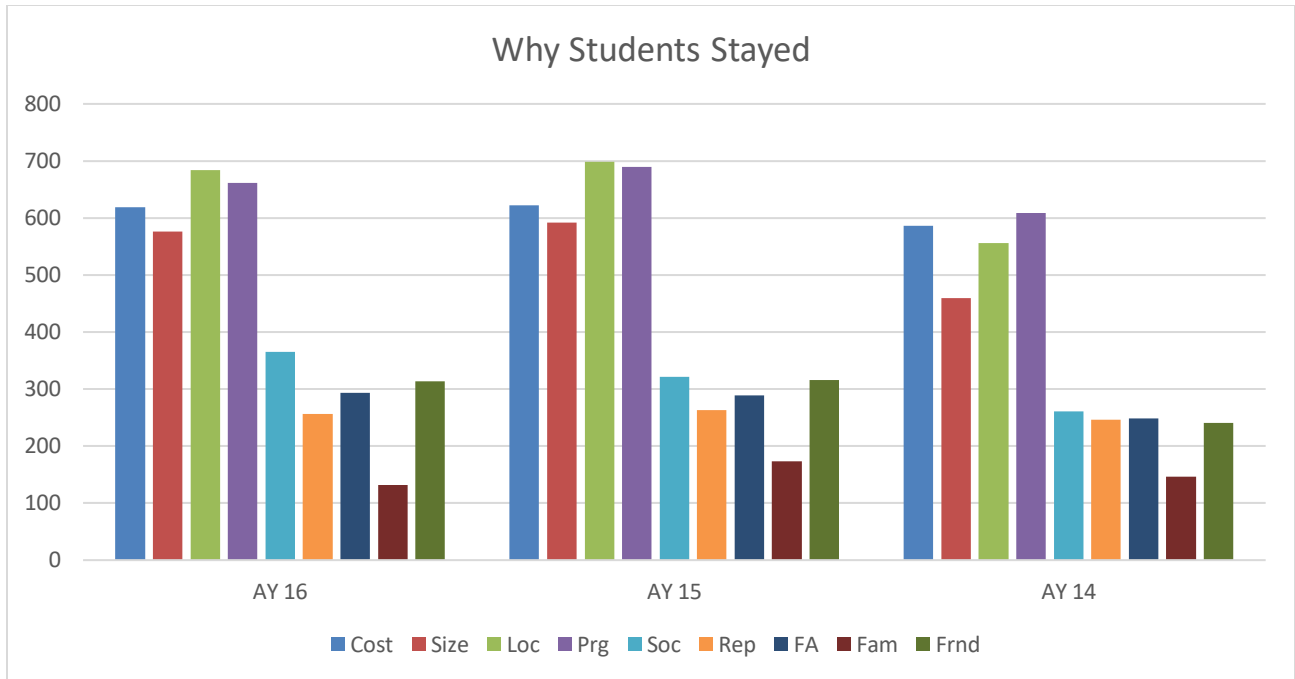
students planning to “Begin a new job” increasing while the percentage of students planning to “Interview for jobs” steadily decreasing.

Of graduates, 186 (13.2%) indicated they would be continuing in their current job. It should be noticed that over 40% of these respondents (n=77) indicated in a previous question that they were working at least 30 hours per week. Of graduates working more than 40 hours per week (n=61), 46% will *not* be continuing in their current job.



### Why Students Stayed

The survey posed eight potential options as reasons students continued their studies at SFA. This question may provide insight into what students like about the University. Students listed Location, Program Offerings, Cost, and Institution Size as the most important reasons for staying at SFA. This is in keeping with previous administrations of the survey. Less significant were Social Atmosphere, Academic Reputation, Financial Aid, Friends, or Advice from Parents/Relatives.



## Overall SFA Experience

Seniors were asked a series of questions designed to determine their overall feelings about their experiences at SFA. Responses were recorded via a five-point Likert Scale with the following categories:

- 1—Strongly Disagree
- 2—Disagree
- 3—Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4—Agree
- 5—Strongly Agree

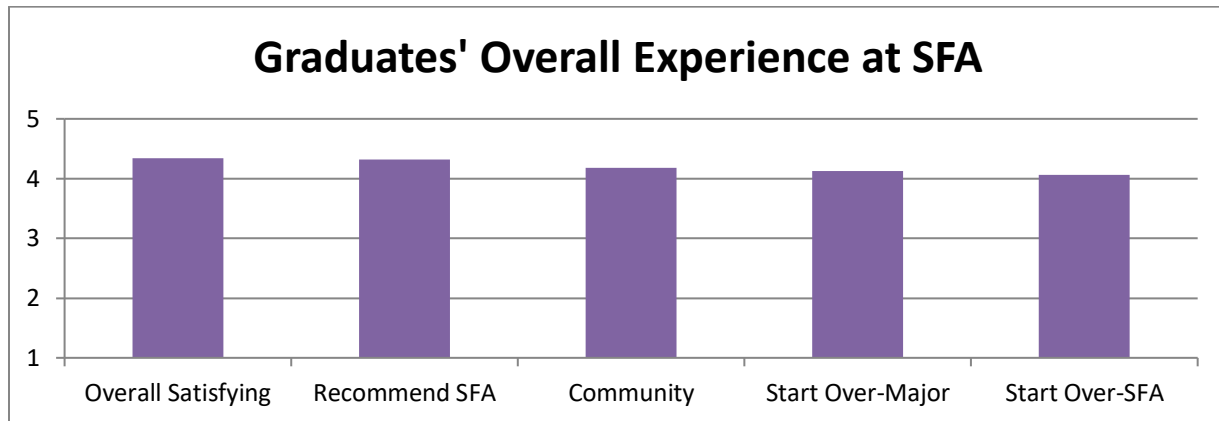
Positive statements about SFA were used as prompts for this section of the survey.

Higher scores indicate stronger agreement with each positive statement. The respondents used these options to indicate their agreement with the following five statements:

- a) Overall, I had a satisfying educational experience at SFA. (1)
- b) I would definitely recommend SFA to others. (2)
- c) I felt a sense of community in my time at SFA. (3)

- d) If I could start college over, I would choose to graduate with the same major. (4)
- e) If I could start college over, I would still choose SFA. (5)

A. Overall Results

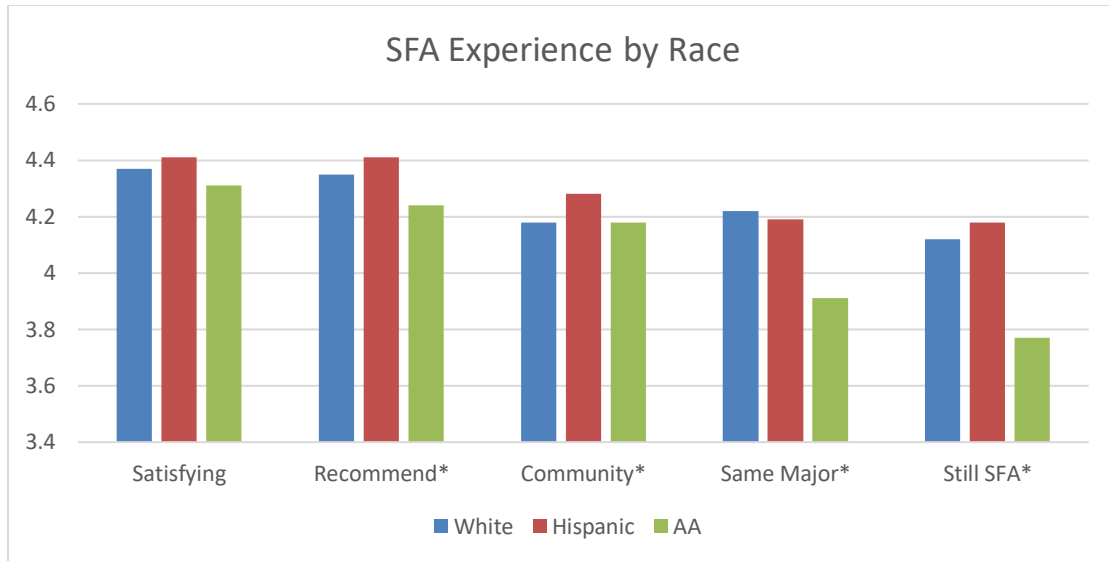


Overall responses remained high for the third consecutive year, with all means rated below 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). However, in such a question, the true knowledge may come from those that did *not* rate highly, and (more specifically) which question(s) were rated lowest. Differences between respondents of different races and genders are detailed below. For analysis purposes, only the three largest race identities are used for analysis. This avoids skewed data within smaller categories. Significant differences are marked within the charts using asterisks.

B. Responses to Prompts by Major Race Category

In each of the responses, the Black/African American students agreed less than students from other major race categories. With the exception of choosing the same major, Hispanic students agreed more strongly with the prompts, though not to a point of statistical significance. Prompts marked with an asterisk indicated significant race differences between the Black/African American respondents and at least one other group.

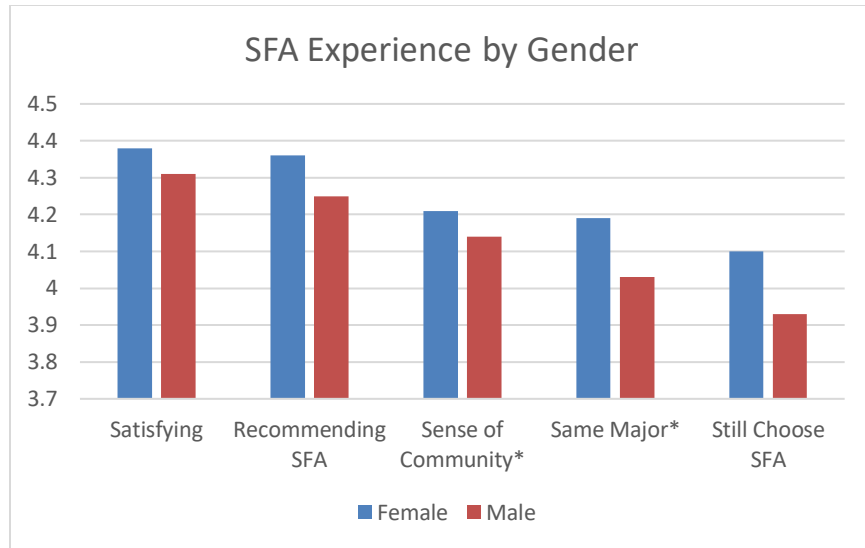




Prompts four and five showed the largest differences among races. To put these responses in the perspective of the student experience, White students and Hispanic students fluctuated between agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement, while Black/African American students fluctuated between agreeing or indicating neutrality toward statements.

### C. Responses to all prompts by gender

Response differences between genders was also prevalent throughout these responses, with statistically significant results in prompts three and four. Males indicated a lesser level of community and less assuredness regarding chosen major. Hispanic males, overall, seemed to feel a stronger sense of community at SFA, rating it higher than White males.



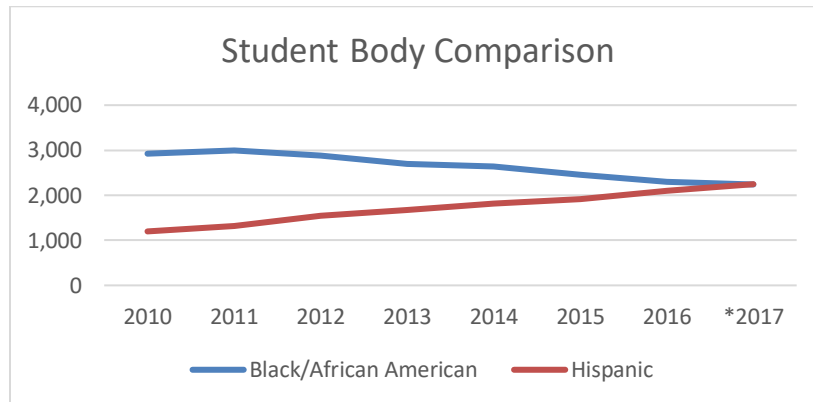
#### D. Analysis of Final Prompt

Of all questions in the Senior Exit Survey, Prompt 5 in this question may tell the most.

Assuming the chance to revisit the decision to attend SFA, most students indicated they would choose SFA again (and strongly so). Resultant ratings were generally high, and that should allow for a sense of pride in what SFA is doing for students. However, these results do indicate differences between genders and races; this is especially true if the two factors are combined.

- Black/African American males rated this prompt lower than Hispanic males and White females.
- Black/AA females respond lower than White females.
- Black/African American females and Hispanic females differ on responses, but this response sets at a probability level that is slightly below the threshold for statistical significance ( $p < .053$ ).
- Black/AA females rated this prompt lower than all other groups, though Black/AA males were nearly identical in overall means.

Fast Facts for Lumberjacks 2016-2017 reports a 6.2% drop in Black/African-American students over the past year (p. 4). In fact, predictive analysis indicates that Hispanic students will become the largest minority population at SFA in Fall 2017 or Fall 2018. This may be a survey result to consider for future efforts.



Note: Predictive analytics indicate six more Hispanic students than Black/AA students in Fall 2017.

### **Senior Students' Perceptions of Peers**

Students rated their peers on a scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). In this section, a rating of 3 was neutral. The table is presented on the following page. This data is interesting, in that each year so closely mirrors the other years.

<b>Please Tell us about your experience with fellow students in your major during your study at SFA.</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
·Students in my major are motivated to learn.	4.21	4.23	4.25
·Students in my major are competitive with each other.	3.94	3.98	3.91
·Students in my major are supportive and help each other meet the academic demands of the program.	4.26	4.26	4.25
·Students in my major are interested in a broad range of ideas from many disciplines.	4.12	4.12	4.15
Students in my major are career oriented.	4.32	4.31	4.28
Students in my major communicate effectively.	4.13	4.16	4.17
·Students in my major are academically honest.	4.19	4.23	4.23
·Students in my major are willing to contribute to group work.	4.19	4.19	4.17

## **Student Perceptions of Faculty**

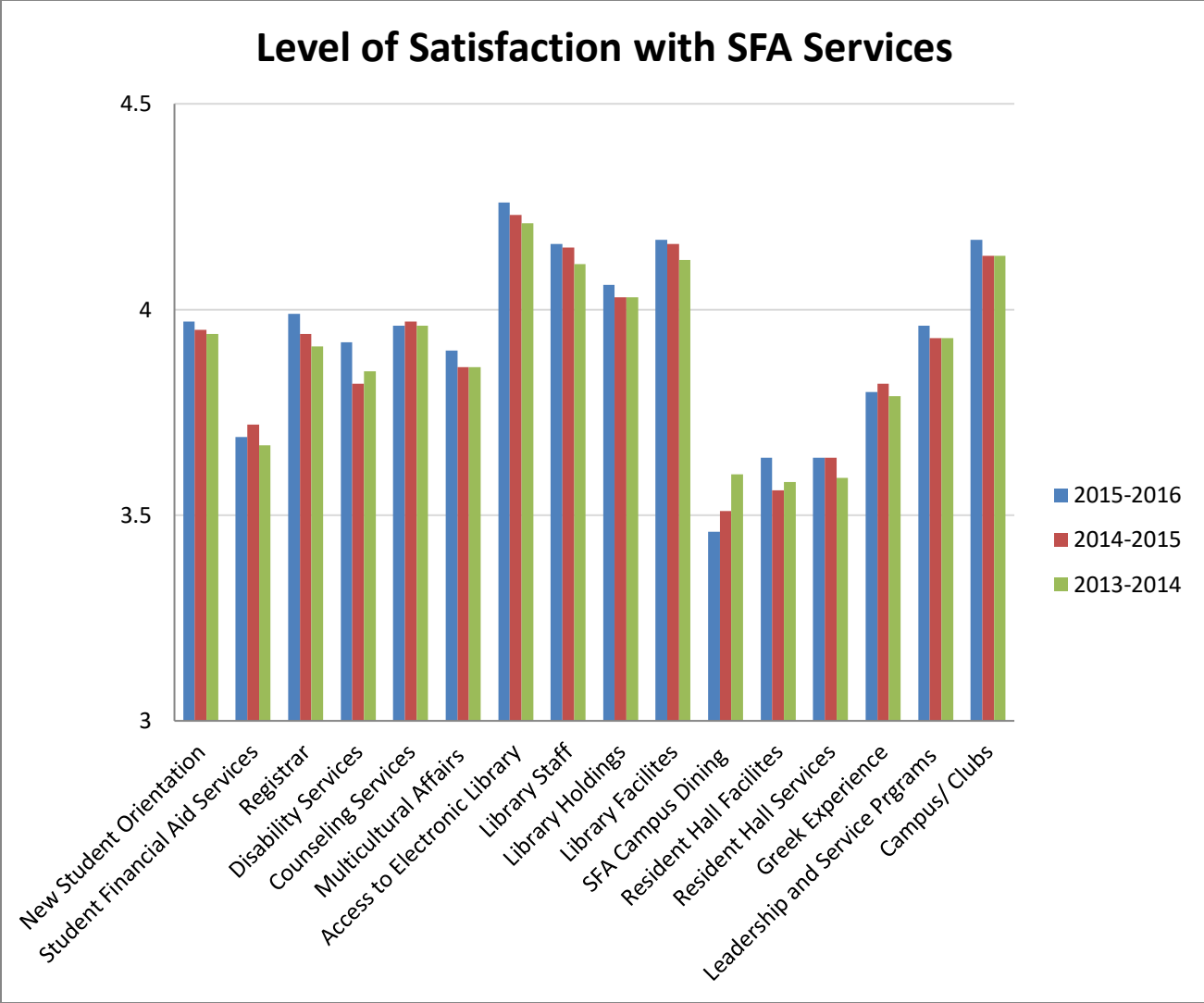
Respondents expressed thoughts regarding faculty in their chosen major, using the same five-point scale. The prompt was as follows: Please tell us about your experience with faculty in your major at SFA.

<b>Please tell us about your experience with faculty in your major at SFA.</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
Faculty are knowledgeable about what they are teaching.	4.45	4.46	4.49
Faculty have good instructional skills.	4.24	4.28	4.29
Faculty are effective teachers.	4.27	4.3	4.33
Faculty are interested in the personal development of students.	4.32	4.33	4.32
Faculty are interested in the academic development of students.	4.38	4.39	4.37
Faculty are interested in the professional, and career development of students.	4.34	4.36	4.35
Faculty introduce students to a broad range of ideas, perspectives and worldviews.	4.29	4.33	4.33
Faculty respond to undergraduate students regarding their needs, concerns, and suggestions.	4.26	4.28	4.28
Students are encouraged to become acquainted with the department's faculty.	4.21	4.24	4.23
Students are encouraged to participate in professional clubs and organizations.	4.25	4.28	4.22

Students are encouraged to attend professional seminars and presentations.	4.26	4.29	4.24
Students are encouraged to become familiar with current and emerging technology.	4.18	4.23	4.2
Students are encouraged to participate in research or creative projects with faculty or other students.	4.12	4.17	4.16
I found my major to be characterized by mutual respect between undergraduate majors and professors.	4.31	4.33	4.34
I found my major academically stimulating.	4.40	4.44	4.42

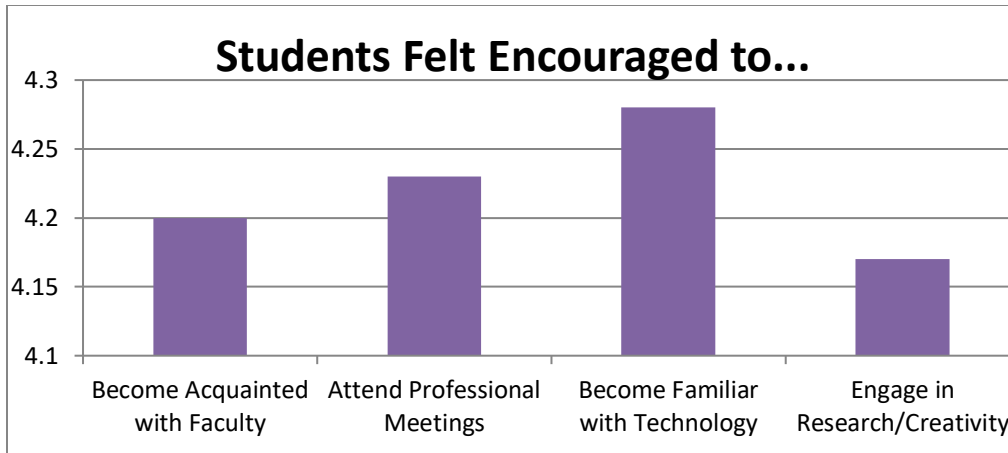
## **Student Services**

Student services were rated by graduates on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). In this section, a rating of 3 was neutral. Results indicate that students have generally positive opinions about SFA Services, with the library services most satisfactory. Dining and Residence Hall prompts received the lowest ratings.

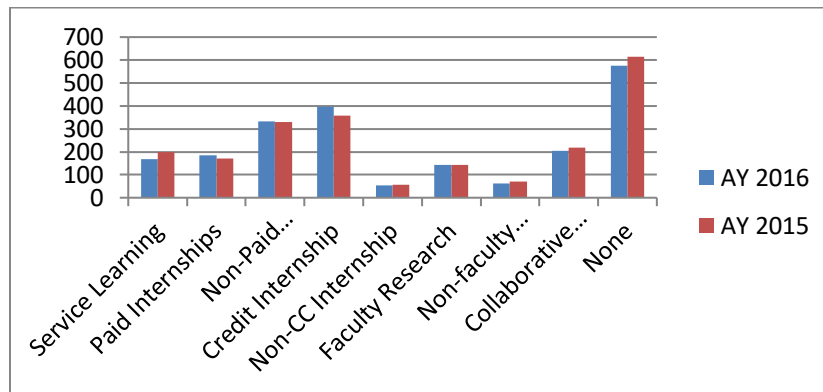


**Student Participation in Certain Programs and Career-Related Experiences**

Seniors were asked to indicate participation in the programs given below. They could check all that applied to them. Responses were positive. The results were so similar that a fine-grained chart was needed to indicate any differences, whatsoever (4.1 to 4.3). The question asks whether they were *encouraged* to participate; students may or may not be indicating actual participation.



Graduates were asked a series of questions regarding their pre-career experiences. A total of eight options were given. Results are listed below for the most recent two years of data. For all years of data, over one-third of graduates reported no internships or special research experiences at SFA.



## **Core Curriculum Self-Report**

One means of assessing the Texas Core Curriculum at SFA is a series of questions on the SES. Students were asked the following prompt for each of the six core components: “As a result of studying at SFA, how much progress do you feel you have made in the following areas?” Core component areas and their definitions are listed below:

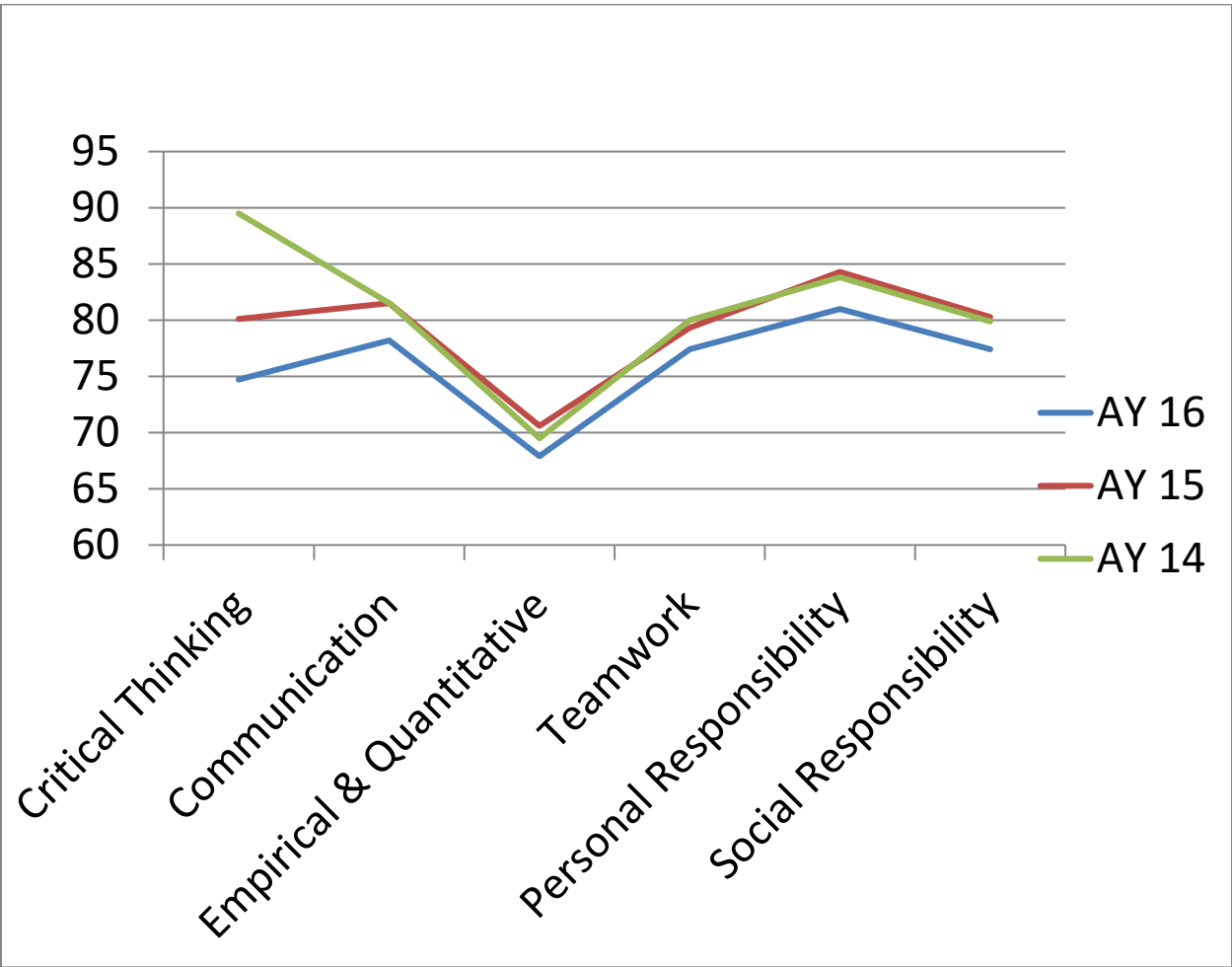


Senior Exit Survey Questions Asked for Core Assessment
<b>As a result of studying at SFA, how much progress do you feel you have made in the following areas?</b>
Critical Thinking Skills - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
Empirical and Quantitative Skills - the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts in informed conclusions
Teamwork - the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
Personal Responsibility - the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
Social Responsibility - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Students were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 (1=Poor; 2=Fair; 3=Good; 4=Very Good; 5=Excellent). The performance criteria for core assessment states that, “The institution expects that 80% of graduating seniors will rate their critical thinking skills/communication skills/empirical & quantitative skills/teamwork skills/social responsibility/personal responsibility as very good to excellent.” This statement is demonstrated when students rate their learning as either 4 or 5 on the Likert Scale.

The percentages of students rating their learning as very good or excellent is listed in the chart below. Responses for all three years were very similar, with AY 2016 graduates indicating slightly less progress than the previous two years. Self-reported progress in Empirical & Quantitative Skills rated lowest, while Personal Responsibility rated highest. *It should be noted that only Personal Responsibility responses met the established criteria in AY 2016.* One significant change to consider is the percentage of students who self-report strong progress in Critical Thinking skills. This figure has decreased from 90% to 75% in three years.

### Core Component Results



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