

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RETENTION AT SIMON
FRASER UNIVERSITY: A 2005/2006 CASE STUDY**

by

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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate student retention is an issue that affects everyone involved in post secondary institutions due to the instability it causes. Simon Fraser University (SFU) is statistically vulnerable to low retention, losing up to 25% of students after first year and 40% over 14 years. This research includes a document and literature analysis and a survey of leavers after the 2005/2006 academic year in order to determine common characteristics or other related data.

This study will show that while demographically there are few overriding similarities between SFU undergraduate leavers there are similarities in factors that affect them including low service usage and the inability to register in most or all of their desired courses. In addition, the literature review will demonstrate that SFU struggles to outline their policies, philosophy or goals surrounding their vision for student retention. The paper concludes with four recommendations to assist in increasing student retention at SFU.

DEDICATION

To the persisters in my life: Andrew, Callum, and Grace

&

To Mom and Dad who taught me to be a persister.

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GLOSSARY

College/University	A post secondary institution. These two terms are used interchangeably throughout this paper often in relation to the author being discussed and their choice of wording.
Retention	The action of retaining or the state of being retained. Often used interchangeably with persistence, leaver and attrition by researchers.
Persistence	Persisting or having the tendency to persist. Often used interchangeably with persistence, leaver and attrition by researchers.
Attrition	A reduction or decrease in numbers or size; gradually wear down through sustained attack or pressure. Often used interchangeably with retention, leaver or persistence by researchers.
Leaver	Go away from or cease attending. Often used interchangeably with retention, persistence or attrition by researchers.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Simon Fraser University (SFU) has admitted over 4,000 undergraduate students each academic year since 2002. These undergraduate students will either persist in their studies and graduate with a degree or diploma or will become early leavers, leaving the institution before completing their degree or diploma. Between 19% and 24.5% of all SFU undergraduate students will leave the institution after their first year of attendance, and after four years approximately 30-40% of SFU undergraduate students will have left the university before completing a degree (SFU Analytical Studies, 2007). SFU's Analytical Studies Office reports that of the students admitted directly from a British Columbia high school approximately 30% will not complete degrees within seven years. At the time of the 2006 statistics (August 2006), of all students admitted into the Fall 1992 semester, only 60.4% completed degrees, 39.1% were early leavers and 0.6% were persistent registrants (SFU Analytical Studies, 2007).

Undergraduate student retention at universities is a problem that affects students, administration, faculty, and departments. Low student retention provides a transient environment for students where social networks are unstable, affecting the sense of belonging, familiarity and consistency within the campus environment. Unstable student enrolment offers challenges for faculties

in terms of program and course offerings. Students are often affected by this due to a potential reduction in course offerings or the removal of elective courses, thereby limiting a student's ability to complete long-term course planning or limiting the breadth of knowledge achievable within a student's degree. Low student retention is also costly and time-consuming problem for university administration, faculty and departments' long-term planning for staffing levels, enrolment quotas, admission averages, program development, capital planning in terms of classroom allocation and funding requirements. High student turnover requires additional work in areas of recruiting, admissions, records, advising and registration. Each student who leaves the university must be replaced in order to maintain full-time equivalent (FTE) levels required by the funding government body, which in the case of SFU and all other Canadian public post secondary institutions is the Provincial Government. On-going budget restrictions due to tight budget constraints from the government will continue to pressure post secondary institutions to keep a close eye on how and where money is spent.

As the demographics in Canadian society shift to an aging population and there are fewer students in the traditional university-age group, there are fewer potential students competing for spots at post secondary institutions. Total student numbers will be lower and universities will have to be more aggressive in their recruiting and retention activities in order to maintain enrolment numbers. Since these prospective students will therefore have more choices about which university to attend there will be an increase in their ability to 'shop around' for

universities. This shopping around will require universities to be able to respond to the shoppers with more staff in all service areas to be able to respond to the needs of the prospective students. Additional university-provided enticements will be required including scholarships, funding, residence, innovative programs and services, and an increased ability to show that the university is responsive to student-driven demands.

University reputations are also at stake when there is a low level of student retention. Canada's *Maclean's* magazine has been publishing a University Rankings Special Issue since 1994 reporting on a wide variety of areas of interest to prospective students when considering which university they will consider applying to and potentially attending. On August 15, 2006, a coalition of 11 Canadian University presidents (including SFU President Michael Stevenson) sent *Maclean's* magazine a letter indicating that they would no longer be participating in the yearly rankings. The presidents indicated that due to the "oversimplified" and "arbitrary" methodology used by the magazine that the universities would no longer be supplying data for the survey (Alphonso, 2006). The yearly report includes data on areas such as library holdings per student, operating budget, percentage of faculty with PhD's, percentage of students in each class size range, percentage of classes taught by tenured faculty, student retention rates, percentage of students who graduate, class size, student services – percentage of budget, and a wide variety of other factors. It is important to note that *Maclean's* reports directly on student retention as one of their components for Canadian university rankings. In the 2006 edition of the

University Rankings Special Issue, Simon Fraser University ranked 9th out of 11 universities for Student Retention in the Comprehensive University group (University Issue '06, 2006, p.76) and 32nd out of 47 for all Canadian universities in the same category (University Issue '06, 2006, p.82). If the level of retention at SFU continues at its current level or declines further, the effect of this ranking could pull SFU out of the top three in Overall Ranking in the Comprehensive Category.

Issues such as 'library holdings per student' may be relatively clear cut when determining which departments hold the responsibility for influencing any change in that area. However, retention is a factor that has been and continues to be a more malleable since it is affected by a wide variety of issues, circumstances and situations. This variety can be clearly seen in the wide variation of subgroups within the leaver group. The early leaver group, or non-persisters, is complex and diverse based on the educational intentions of the university students when they are admitted to the university. Some students who attend are interested only in academic upgrading to improve their job prospects; others transfer to another university or college that specializes in their area of focus; others stop their studies to focus on career opportunities; while others leave the institution due to problems with finances, fitting into the institution or dissatisfaction with the educational experience.

This variation of subgroups suggests that the service needs of these students may be as diverse as the groups. Student Services at Simon Fraser University is an umbrella organization that falls under the authority of the

Associate Vice President-Students and International, under the Academic Vice-President & Provost (SFU, Administration – SFU President's Office, 2006).

Student Services is home to a variety of service departments that share the responsibility of ensuring students are given the information and attention needed from the time of recruitment, through their registered student life right up until the moment that they cross the stage at convocation. Some of the departments included in Student Services at SFU are Student Recruiting, Admissions, Academic Resources, Records, Health, Counselling and Career Centre, Student Development and Learning and the latest department to be developed within the Student Services group is the Student Learning and Retention Office. Each department has its own budget, staff and vision and, while Bean and Eaton (2002) argue that every member of each department and faculty in the University (faculty, staff and administrators) is responsible for student retention, the university community tends to look to Student Services as the area that shoulders this responsibility. Over the past several years SFU Student Services has been working through an external review that has provided feedback in a number of areas and has driven the area into a re-organization. One aspect of the re-organization is the development of an office named Student Learning and Retention Office. In the early spring 2006 there was a public search for a Senior Managing Director of this office (SFU, Learning and Instructional Development Centre, 2006). With the appointment now in place there will be an increased level of discussion over the next few years surrounding SFU student retention with a high emphasis placed on immediate results in

response to the previously mentioned shift in demographics and its impact on potential admission numbers.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to complete an in-depth survey and analysis of Simon Fraser University student leavers from the 2005/2006 academic year in order to provide a more accurate profile of SFU student leavers, including valuable demographic and profile information such as average age, financial status, residential information, service needs, satisfaction levels, future goals and overall experience at SFU. The expectation is that these results could prove valuable for future policy development at SFU in terms of student retention. This project will be based partially on The 2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey (Conway, 2001), narrowing both the scope and breadth of that survey to focus more closely on the current state of SFU student retention.

The data collected in this project through an electronic survey of SFU leavers will be used to provide a more accurate profile of student leavers at SFU. In addition, the survey results will be used in an attempt to ascertain if there are trends or commonalities in student experiences that have been involved in students' decision-making process when they were evaluating their decision to persist at SFU. Information from these trends may be useful in determining target areas for improvements in or changes to current policies and procedures at SFU.

British Columbia and Canadian Education System

A general understanding of the British Columbia educational system is important as a basis for understanding the educational background of BC university students and the options that are available for them in the post secondary phase of their education. The variety of options available to students at the post secondary level may have an impact on retention in several ways. Variety may increase retention as students have the ability to choose between a wide range of post secondary options. Alternatively, it can be viewed as potentially reducing retention by providing students who are not satisfied with their current institution alternative options.

The British Columbian school system is set up in a linear fashion with students beginning their education by attending Kindergarten in the year that they turn 5 years of age. Students remain at the elementary education level until the end of Grade 7 at which time they transition into the secondary school system that takes them through to secondary school graduation after Grade 12. The minimum mandatory education level in British Columbia is from age 5 to age 16 (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 16). Funding is provided to the schools based on a funding per student formula for district student population estimates (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 86). Upon successful graduation from grade 12, or, in the case of post secondary institutions including Douglas College where students can be accepted lacking one course from graduation. Students may apply to continue their education in a variety of post secondary institutes in British Columbia and elsewhere (Douglas College General Admissions).

One of the choices for students is the Technical Institute System.

Technical institutes provide career training for students through a wide range of programs. These programs offer certificates, diplomas, and other credentials that allow students the credentials required for employment, and range widely in completion time and cost. The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) is arguably the most well-known technology institute in British Columbia, offering programs such as Broadcast and Media Communications - Broadcast Journalism Certificate, Geographic Information Systems Diploma, and Gasfitting Apprenticeship program (British Columbia Institute of Technology, n.d.). Access to technical institutions could affect university retention due to their relatively short programs that prepare students for an immediate career opposed to longer university programs that may not be as career focused.

Another option for students looking to further their education after secondary school is the British Columbia College System. The college system also provides a wide variety of professional and non-professional courses and programs. There is a wide variety of colleges in BC including private, public and denominational schools servicing cities and towns across British Columbia. Due to the smaller size of colleges (generally under 15,000 full time and part time students), they are often the only post secondary educational facility that is available close to home. Programs are available either full-time, part-time or both and offer credentials such as citations, certificates, diplomas, associate degrees and over the past few years some have begun offering full Bachelors degrees. Program options include Nursing, Special Education Training, Applied

Business Technology Certificate, Basic Occupational Educational Program, Certified Dental Assistant Certificate, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adult Program, Independent Living Program and an extensive variety of other options (Education Planner BC, 2004). Similar to the technical institutes the college system could affect university retention by offering career focused programs in addition to smaller, less expensive university-transfer courses as well as an increasing number of degree programs. As costs rise, the ability for students to complete their degrees at a lower cost and in smaller classrooms could draw university students back to colleges or to colleges for the first time.

The British Columbia University-College System is a third option for secondary school students. The University-College has grown out of the College System but has expanded to degree granting status. This development began in the early 1990's to provide increased access to British Columbian students seeking degrees by increasing the overall number of seats in degree granting institutions and with the potential to have that closer to home. These institutions offer many of the same programs as the colleges in British Columbia; however, they also offer a limited variety of degree granting programs. University-Colleges could influence university retention in BC by providing a similar product but at a lower cost, in smaller classrooms and potentially closer to home. Increased access to post secondary institutions provides increased options in type, size and location of institution all of which have the potential to impact retention.

The British Columbia University System provides a wide variety of university level programs that lead to four-year Baccalaureate degrees, Master's,

and Doctorates. These programs are open to students from British Columbia, the rest of Canada and international students from around the world. There are several universities in British Columbia including Simon Fraser University with campuses in Burnaby, Vancouver and Surrey; The University of British Columbia in Vancouver; The University of British Columbia – Okanagan in Kelowna; The University of Victoria in Victoria; The University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George; and Royal Roads University in Victoria (mainly online programs with short residencies).

British Columbia provides a transfer system that is unique in Canada and North America. This widespread and well-used transfer credit system provides a seamless and accessible transferability of courses and credits between post secondary institutions. Due to its online format, students are guaranteed to that courses listed in the transfer guide are transferable from one institution to another as indicated on their site. The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) is designed to facilitate admission, articulation, and transfer agreements between the post secondary institutes in BC (British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, 2007). This transfer system allows students confidence and flexibility in moving between institutions without losing courses or credits along the way. The transfer credit program allows students to stockpile academic course work until they have determined where and when they would like to complete their program and then use their accumulated coursework for that purpose. While the transfer credit system in British Columbia cannot be held solely responsible for the number of student

leavers, it does provide a sense of assurance to post secondary students in British Columbia that course work completed at one institution can be easily transferred to a variety of other institutions over a period of time. It can also allow students attending one institution to step out to another institution to take a specific course and transfer that course back to their home institution without interrupting their program stream. This allows students to more comfortably sit in the 'driver's seat' of their education by allowing them to move between institutions with relative ease and without the risk of falling behind in their overall academic plan.

Simon Fraser University Profile

The history, structure and political organization of SFU is an important part of what makes SFU the university that students are currently encountering. It is the experience of the current day SFU that students are interacting with during their education and their decision regarding completing their degree or leaving prior to completion. The university, named after the 17th century explorer Simon Fraser is relatively young; however, it carries a name that ties itself to an older Canadian history. SFU is a geographically dispersed university in the BC lower mainland over three campuses and through distance education delivery on sites throughout the province. The main campus, located in Burnaby, British Columbia, opened in September of 1965 with 2,628 students and sits on 174 hectares of land (SFU Timeline, n.d.). The second campus is located in a leased building on the waters edge in downtown Vancouver first known as Harbour Centre because it was located in the Harbour Centre tower building. In 2006, the

downtown campus was renamed Simon Fraser University Vancouver due to the expansion of the downtown campus into two other buildings where the Business Faculty and the Contemporary Arts department are located. Simon Fraser University Surrey was established in 2002 but was not officially opened until 2006 (SFU Surrey website, n.d.). The variety of campus locations should allow for increased retention by providing options in location, however, the data provided by the SFU Office of Analytical Studies does not indicate an increase in retention with the opening of the two satellite campuses.

SFU's Burnaby campus architectural design was provided by Arthur Erickson, a world-famous architect. Erickson's design was chosen through a competitive design process that was guided by the directive of Dr. Gordon Shrum, SFU Chancellor (1963-1968). Dr. Shrum's 1963 directive stated that the design must allow for the students to be able to move from one part of the university to another without going outside, and that the large lecture theaters should be grouped together rather than scattered over the whole campus. Dr. Shrum indicated that the most important criterion was that SFU should appear in 1965 essentially as it would look in 1995. In other words, it should look like a finished university, but also be designed for expansion. The quadrangle building was designed to bring all faculties together in one large, interconnected building thereby creating community and a transference of knowledge across departments and faculties (SFU Archives and Record Management, 2004).

The SFU student population is currently approximately 27,788 students (SFU President's Report, 2006). SFU currently employs approximately 823

faculty members (SFU President's Report, 2006), 1400 staff (SFU, Public Affairs and Media Relations, 2005), has conferred over 67,000 undergraduate degrees, and has over 91,000 alumni (SFU Alumni, 2006).

SFU governance is structured with the University Secretariat coordinating the Board of Governors and the Senate. The Board of Governors is the senior governing body at the university and is responsible for the business of the university in areas such as property, revenue, and policies. The Board has 15 members including the Chancellor, the President, two elected faculty members, two elected students, one elected staff member, and eight individuals appointed by the Provincial Government in British Columbia (SFU, Governance, 2006). The academic governance is vested in the Senate. The Senate is the senior academic governing body at SFU and its responsibilities include the approval of degree programs and the granting of degrees. The Senate has 60 members including the Chancellor, the President, three Vice-Presidents, the Faculty Deans, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Dean of Continuing Studies, the University Librarian, 26 elected faculty members, 13 elected students, four individuals elected by Convocation, and four individuals appointed by the Provincial Government of British Columbia (SFU, Governance, 2006). Each member of these governing bodies has a significant role to play in retention at the university. In addition to providing the framework for budgets and policies, governance is responsible for overseeing the vision and mission of the institution and retention is an aspect of these statements.

The SFU library has a budget of \$8.7 million (2005/6) and has libraries on each of its three campuses (SFU Library Budget, 2006). Faculty, students and staff at SFU have access to more than 2,000,000 books, articles in 8,000 journal subscriptions, and a large variety of electronic information resources in the SFU Library collections (SFU Library Collections Management, 2006).

SFU provides on-campus housing in residence at the main campus for up to 1,837 students (SFU President's Report, 2006). Residence accommodations range from single room, co-ed, and tower residences for first year students only, to furnished townhouses that can each house three students, and unfurnished family residences (SFU Residence & Housing, 2006).

Simon Fraser's academic year is structured on a three-semester calendar year. The largest student intake semester is the Fall Semester that runs in the period from the day after Labour Day in September until the end of December. Semesters are 13 weeks long with the only Fall Semester breaks occurring on Statutory Holidays including Thanksgiving Day and Remembrance Day. Spring Semester starts in January and ends in April. This semester is also 13 weeks long and breaks for Statutory Holidays including Good Friday and Easter Monday. Summer Semester begins at the beginning of May and continues for 13 weeks, ending in August with breaks for Statutory Holidays including Canada Day, Victoria Day and BC Day (SFU 2006-2007 Calendar). The trimester system provides the opportunity for flexibility in course delivery and scheduling and could therefore provide additional flexibility for students to take courses at times that fit

their schedule. This can be beneficial for those students with off campus demands including work and family.

Simon Fraser is a four-year comprehensive university where undergraduate students can enrol in 4 years of 30-credits per year thereby potentially successfully completing an undergraduate degree in 4 years. In most programs there is the availability for students to reduce their course load to a part time level. This reduction in course load would have an impact on program length; extending the length of degree completion in proportion to the reduction of course load. The university also offers a wide range of graduate degrees at both the Masters and Doctoral levels. In addition, students can complete diploma, post-baccalaureate diplomas, and the Professional Development Program certification in Education.

At the beginning of the research for this thesis, there were five faculties at SFU: Faculty of Science, Faculty of Applied Science, Faculty of Arts and Social Science (formerly known as the Faculty of Arts), Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Business. Since that time, a sixth faculty, the Faculty of Health Science has become operational at SFU thereby increasing the total number of faculties to six.

SFU in its entirety, with all the complexity of its governance system, its academic structure, support services, and its student body, all work in conjunction to offer the SFU 'experience' to students. With the many features indicated above that provide structure, diversity, support, and flexibility for students, it would be expected or assumed that SFU would have a high retention

rate; however, that is not the current situation. It is essential to have an understanding of the workings of SFU to begin to understand the factors that could and do affect students when making their decision to complete their degrees at SFU or to leave the university before completion. To date, there has been no significant research at SFU to determine what factors impact their retention rate and what, if any, changes could be made to improve retention.

The following chapters will provide more in-depth information on relevant research literature on student retention, how the researcher progressed through the survey and its analysis with the summary of its outcome and the subsequent recommendations presented in the final chapter. Chapter Two reviews several bodies of scholarly literature for the purpose of a historical summary of student retention research as well as current theories and debates regarding the effect of various factors on the success of students at the undergraduate post secondary level. This chapter will also identify relevant educational leadership and organisational theory literature that has a bearing on this topic. Chapter Three outlines the approach that this project has taken in regards to its study of student retention at SFU and an outline of the methodology that was used. Chapter Four presents summaries and analysis of the data collected through the research to determine why retention is low. Chapter Five offers conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected combined with the knowledge gained through the literature in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER 2: RELEVANT LITERATURE

This chapter reviews several areas of literature related to student retention including student retention studies, technical reports, educational leadership literature, and organisational theory literature.

Student Retention Studies

Published research in the field of student retention at the university level began in earnest approximately 70 years ago with an article by Johnson (1926). He discussed the ability to predict success of students in university at the beginning of their first year of university. However, it wasn't until the early 1970's that student retention studies began appearing with more frequency in research journals. One of the first noteworthy articles was written in 1970 by Spady who used a sociological theory to link multiple variables in a longitudinal model. Bean and Eaton (2002, p. 74) state that Spady based his theory on Durkheim's 1961 model of suicide which indicates that "some people commit suicide because their values are not congruent with those of their social group or they lack support from this group". Bean and Eaton (2002) continue indicating that Spady also suggests that leaving university is analogous to committing suicide because in each case the individual withdraws from a social system. Therefore, Spady is suggesting that students withdraw from university because they lack value

congruence or social support in the university environment (Bean & Eaton, 2002).

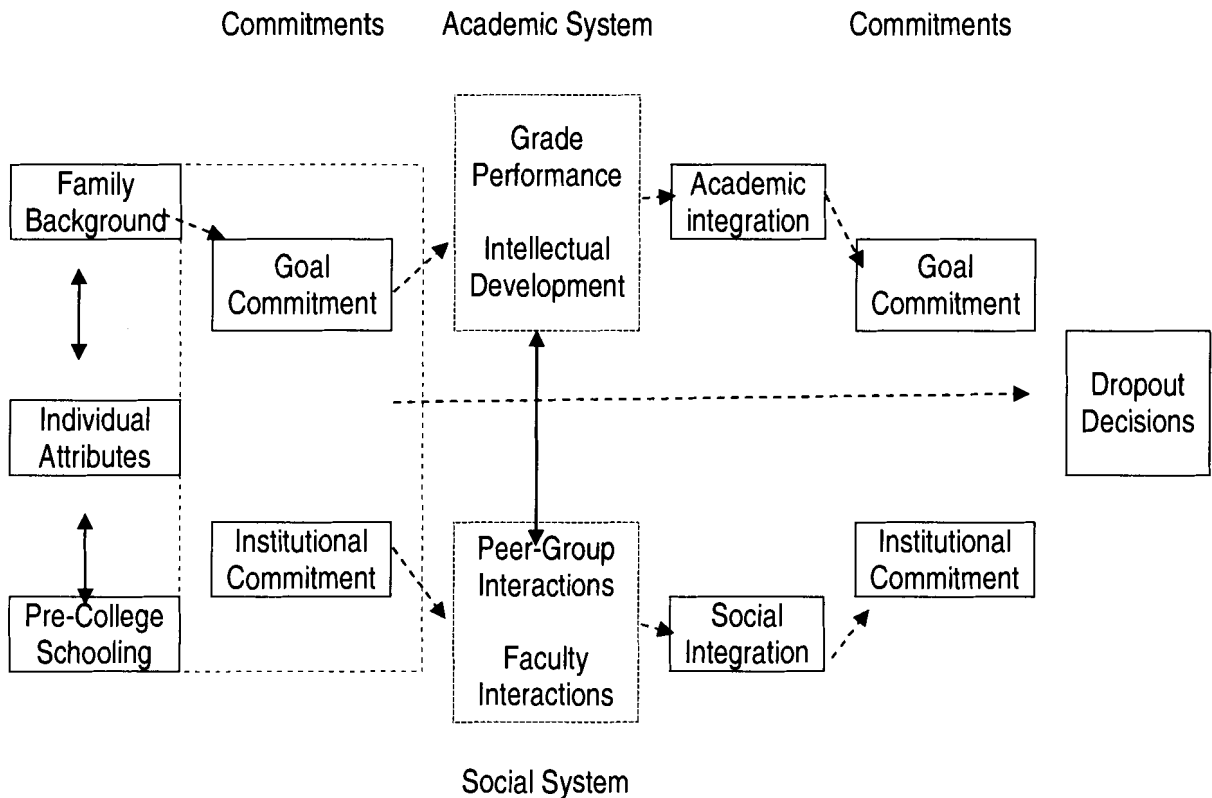
Tinto (1975, 1982, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1997, 1999), whose research has been described as pivotal in the study of student retention, is an authority in retention studies and is cited in the majority of them (e.g., Bean & Eaton, 2002; Berger, J., & Braxton, J.M., 1998; Braxton, 2000; Nora, 2002; Stage, 1988; Cabrera et al., 1992). He adapted Spady's theory to reflect his belief that retention issues stemmed from two major sources – academic and social. Tinto states that academic integration includes both grade performance as well as intellectual development where as social integration comes from “informal peer group associations, semi-formal extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty and administrative personnel” (Tinto, 1975, p. 107). Tinto tied his research to Spady's theory by linking value congruence to academic integration and social support to social integration. Tinto has based more than 25 years of extensive study using sociological modeling on the academic integration and social integration factors of student retention.

Tinto's (1975) integration model theory argues that personal attributes and background characteristics are factors that are involved in determining a student's initial educational and institutional goal development and commitment to those goals (Figure 1). These attributes and characteristics include, but are not limited to, socioeconomic status, gender, social support, parents' educational background, and high school grade point average (GPA). Tinto states that if one were to remove all other variables, then an individual's goal commitment would

be in direct relation to their persistence at college. The example used in his discussion is that of an individual who has a goal of completing a doctoral program being more likely to complete his/her 4-year undergraduate degree than an individual with a goal of upgrading his/her knowledge (Tinto, 1975, p. 93).

When discussing institutional commitment, Tinto states that this commitment can be either to a specific institution such as an alma mater that has family meaning or to a type of institution (eg. university rather than technical institute or public versus private school) that has meaning or value to the individual.

Figure 1: Conceptual Schema for Dropout from College. Tinto (1975, p. 95).



Tinto (1975) argues that this model is a longitudinal process where interactions that occur between the individual student and both the academic and social systems of the college or university have an impact on the individual's goals. Individuals' goals are modified by these interactions and will lead to either the individual's persistence at the institution or their decision to leave the institution. This argument does not exclude the potential impact of interactions with external sources or those not within the college environment; however, Tinto (1975) suggests that external interactions would also be reflected in the individuals' ongoing evaluation of their commitment to their goal and institution. Therefore, theoretically, for two students with similar backgrounds and similar levels of initial commitments, the student with a higher degree of integration would be more likely to have a continued higher degree of commitment to both their goal of persistence and a higher degree of commitment to the institution.

A number of researchers investigated the importance of other attributes and their roles in student retention. Nora (2002) discusses the attribute of social support for the student and the importance of individuals such as family and friends and groups such as community in the potential success of the student in not only their transition to university but also their goal commitment. Nora argues that a supportive base of friends, family and teachers are often essential for students since they can provide them with the encouragement to incorporate new perspectives and interests that are often an important part of their university learning. Sewell and Shah (1968) and Coleman (1988) support this argument stating that encouragement from family, friends and high school counselors has

an impact on the initial development of educational aspirations providing a significant advantage in educational and occupational attainment. In addition, Giddan (1988) has argued that the first year at college is often the most difficult period of adjustment for students. Berman and Sperling (1991) agree demonstrating from their research findings that a large number of first year college students will experience varying levels of acute loneliness, isolation and a longing for parents and their home. Indeed, Paul and Brier (2001) found that those students who experienced friendsickness, that is, students who were preoccupied with their pre-college friendships, had a much more difficult transition to university and also more often reported that they were lonely. These feelings of loneliness affected their social decisions at university thereby prolonging their social integration period. Paul and Brier (2001) argue that most transition research examines forward-looking transitions and either disregards or minimizes the “glance backs” to pre-college experiences. The neglect of “glance back” research does not allow for the consideration of the importance of previous experiences and relationships and how the transition either from those experiences or within those experiences may influence the transition and development of the college student and the students’ persistence at college. Paul and Brier (2001) argue that both “friendsickness” and the separation anxiety involved in parental separation are a normative challenge for college transition and should therefore not be neglected in evaluation and research.

The educational background of the students’ parents also has been evaluated as an attribute in previous attrition studies. Stage (1988, 1989) states

that academic and social integration has long been considered to be positively affected by the parents' educational attainment, suggesting that students whose parents have a higher level of education were more likely to register in and be successful at university and therefore have an increased rate of degree completion. Stage's (1989) study indicates, however, that for males only their father's education level was a significant predictor of academic integration suggesting that the impact of parental education levels may not always be consistent.

Spady's (1971) work addresses the impact of gender on retention behavior. His research examines retention factors such as high school GPA, friendship support, social integration, grade performance and then completes a comparative analysis between females and males to determine if there are any variations and where those variations may exist. His research suggests that while gender may have an impact in specific situations that on its own gender does not exert an impact on persistence. Spady states that long-term survival at the post secondary level depends, not on gender, but on the student's ability to meet the challenge of the academic system.

Students' socioeconomic status has also been examined in several studies to determine its impact on post secondary retention. Several studies have shown that family income was positively associated with an individual's goal development and commitment in terms of deciding to attend a post secondary institution (Jackson 1982; Stage & Hossler 1989). A 2002 Statistics Canada study reports that over 80% of Canadian school-aged children had parents who

expected them to continue their schooling into the post secondary level. Of these parents, those in the lower income range (less than \$30,000); only one-fifth were saving money for their children's education; while about two-thirds of parents whose incomes were above \$80,000 were saving for that purpose (Drolet, 2005). Studies by Cabrera, Nora, and Castañeda (1992) and Braxton, Milem, and Sullivan (2000) suggest that students with a higher socioeconomic status had a positive effect on their academic and social integration that then positively affected their chance to complete university. While increased socioeconomic status may not provide a direct causal relationship to increased student retention, the correlational impacts including the reduced chance of the student being required to work during university or leave university to acquire funds may provide an indirect increase in retention. Some findings show that students who receive financial assistance during their post secondary education may end up comparable to those more affluent non-funded students (Nora & Horvath 1989); however, Bean and his associates (Bean 1982, 1985; Bean & Metzner 1985) as well as Cabrera, Stampen and Hansen (1990) indicate that financial factors extend indirectly through a variety of other variables including academic and social integration, satisfaction with the institution, and perceptions of fitting in or belonging. Bean (1985) found that finances, both the attitude surrounding finances and self-reported family income, played a significant role on the student's persistence.

High school GPA continues to be the most common main entrance requirement for undergraduate studies at SFU and most Canadian universities.

While still a valid influence on university retention, high school GPA is no longer accepted as the sole predictor of college success; however, research by Tinto (1975) still supports the correlation between high school and university GPA achievement. Tinto's (1975) work demonstrates that high school academic performance is also a predictor of academic integration which has a by-product of increased or positive GPA. Smith (2005), in his research, also found a direct positive correlation between high school GPA and university GPA.

Once the initial goal development and commitment have been made and the student has enrolled at a university, Tinto (1975) then argues that their initial commitments interact with the academic and social components of the university and result in different levels of academic and social integration. In 1987 Tinto incorporated a 'student's rights of passage' theory into his study of retention. The 'rites of passage' theory states that there are three separate stages students move through during their transition to university, separation, transition, and incorporation. He states that in order to make the transition or passage successful the student must, to some degree, separate themselves from the first community in order to adjust to the second community. This separation is more exaggerated for students who are attending school outside of their hometown than it would be for a student attending their local university and continuing to live at home. The transition stage occurs when the students finds themselves in the evolution between the life that they knew before university and the secure position in their new life. They may feel that they lack a bond with either reality and can often find this transition stage difficult as they have yet to adopt fully the

norms and patterns of behaviour of their new life but they have separated from their old life to the degree that they have removed themselves from their previous norms and patterns of behaviour. The third stage is described as incorporation, one that can prove to be quite a difficult stage for many students. There are often few formal ritual or ceremonial settings in place to assist with incorporation. Many universities offer first year orientation, residence orientation, student union meetings, faculty socials and public lecture series as a way for students to have a formalized, short term or long-term ability to establish and maintain contact with other individuals sharing similar interests. However, most new students are left on their own to successfully incorporate themselves in their new environment.

In essence, Tinto's (1987) rites of passage theory states that students withdraw from university because they have failed to successfully pass through each of the three stages by failing to separate from a previous socializing agent, failing to negotiate a transitional period, and/or failing to become incorporated into their lives at school. Due to the fact that these stages are considered lineal, failure to successfully pass through any one of these stages preempts the student from moving on to the next stage.

In addition to the 'rites of passage', several researchers (Bean & Eaton, 2002; Braxton, 2002; Cabrera, Amaury, & Castañeda, 1992; Reason, 2003; Tinto, 1975) agree that some of the additional components involved in retention include support of family, friends, finance, institution size and type, and community. While not all factors will be involved in every student's decision to

stay in university or to leave, some students may have several factors involved in their decision.

Finances have a variety of impacts on students in terms of their goal definition and their commitment (Ishitani & DesJardins, 2003). As previously indicated, students who do not have the finances to begin university may base their educational goals on these circumstances. Students, however, whose educational goal includes attending university and who enrolled in university but are affected by low financing may consider paid work or increasing the number of hours of paid work, thereby decreasing the hours available for study. The amount of, and access to financial assistance is another aspect of the finance factor that works in conjunction with the paid work decision process for students. Access to financial assistance at levels appropriate to make a significant impact may provide an alternative to paid work for students requiring additional funds (Cabrera, Amaury, & Castañeda 1992).

The institution type and size also has an impact on student retention (Mallette & Cabrera 1991). Commuter campuses face challenges that live-in campuses do not face. Social integration is much more challenging when students spend less time on campus. As well, small colleges have different challenges than larger campuses including ability to offer a wide variety of academic and social programming and access to on campus residence (Mallette & Cabrera 1991).

Kuh (2002, p.27) states that universities that have a “coherent educational philosophy and value structure and set forth clear expectations for student

performance will exert a stronger 'cultural pull' by teaching students what is important and inducing them to act in ways that will help them succeed academically and socially". Kuh (2002) argues that an institution expresses its philosophy through its policies and operating standards thereby making official its statement of commitment to its philosophy. The development and expression of the institution's philosophy is the responsibility of the governance level of the university.

Factors, including individual characteristics, prior experiences and external commitments all have an impact on students and therefore student retention. Tinto (1975) argues that ultimately it is the interplay of students' goal commitment and institutional commitment that will be the determining factors for them deciding to stay or leave. His theory states that dropout from the institution is a longitudinal process of interactions between students and the social and academic systems during which their experiences, which are measured by their integration into these systems, continually modify their goal and institutional commitment. The ways in which students' goals and commitments are modified will lead to either their persistence or dropout from the institution. Tinto (1975) indicates that students employ the cost-benefit analysis theory in which individuals will make decisions on any activity, including remaining at or leaving a university, based on the perceived cost and benefit for these actions. In terms of university persistence, students will continually evaluate the benefits and costs of staying at the institution over the benefits and costs of leaving. Rummel et al. (1999) argue that not all retention is good. They suggest that some reasons for

leaving are positive for both the student and the university. Their research indicates that while universities should program and plan for assisting students in achieving their educational goals the university must focus their efforts on those students who can be both academically successful and socially successful at their university.

Rummel et al. (1999) show in their findings that students are continually evaluating their life at school and during this process are either affirming or disconfirming their reasons for staying. Bean and Eaton's (2002) research uses a psychological model that aligns itself with Rummel et al.'s re-evaluation theory. Bean and Eaton state that there are three aspects to understanding academic and social integration: self-efficacy assessment; coping behaviour; and locus of control. Self-efficacy is defined as an "individual's perception of his or her ability to act in a certain way to assure certain outcomes" (Bean & Eaton, 2002, p. 75). The authors state that over time individuals develop a sense of how effective they are at handling certain situations or tasks and that if they believe that they are effective or competent they gain self-confidence; however, the opposite is also true. Bean and Eaton (2002) conclude that if a student's academic and social self-efficacy increases then their academic and social integration will also increase. Coping behaviour theory indicates that coping is the mechanism that individuals use to adjust to a new situation regardless of whether or not they believe that they fit in. In this theory, academic and social integration is part of the outcome of the adjustment process. The loci of control are the internal or external forces that cause the experiences and are the outcomes of the

experiences. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that past successes and failures are based on their own actions and ideas while an individual with an external locus of control believes that experiences or outcomes are caused by chance or fate (Bean & Eaton, 2002).

Each of these psychological responses will assist the student in determining if they will persist at university. If the student has a high level of self-efficacy, good coping behaviours and an internal locus of control then there is a higher probability of post secondary success. If one then combines the sociological theory with the psychological theory a variety of other outcomes are still possible. Tracing these theories back to Durkheim's theory of suicide and Tinto's adaptation of it to student retention, it becomes more evident that individual outcomes may not be successfully summarized in a group context. Individual attributes and the sociological responses to those attributes provide almost endless possibilities for each student; however, there are just two main routes available for students: completing their degree or leaving the institution prior to degree completion.

Technical Reports

In 2001, in response to increased concern surrounding retention issues in British Columbia's universities, the 2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey was completed in conjunction with The University President's Council (TUPC) of BC, the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the Centre for Education Information (Conway, 2001). Previous surveys of BC University baccalaureate degree graduates have been completed

one, two and five years following graduation but with approximately one-third of undergraduate students not completing their degree it was considered appropriate to compile information on the leaver group. The graduate surveys have “provided a variety of system-, institution-, and program-level information about services and programs and have increased the universities’ level of accountability by providing empirical labour market and satisfaction information on graduates” (Conway, 2001, p.11). The survey demonstrates that it was the hope that the leavers survey could increase university accountability and provide a perspective not normally found in the graduate survey and provide information that could be deemed useful by the universities to assist with service, and with program and policy development (Conway, 2001).

Based on the preliminary analysis of data the Leavers were divided into several types: Stopouts, Pre-Planned Transfers, Students Preparing for Graduate Programs, Students Pursuing Professional Upgrade Studies, Students Pursuing Other Non-Degree Studies, Short-Stay Registrants and True Leavers.

The TUPC survey describes *Stopouts* as students who indicate that it is ‘very likely’ they would return within 12 months to the university from which they departed. This group continues to have the commitment to complete their university degree program but for a variety of reasons is taking a break from school for a short period of time.

Students who indicate that they had planned to transfer to another institution from the outset of their university studies are called *Pre-Planned*

Transfers. This group, like the *Stopout* group, continues to have a commitment to completing a university degree but not at the initial university.

Students who are completing a few courses in order to satisfy graduate school admission requirements or as refresher courses before graduate school commences are labeled *Students Preparing for Graduate Programs*. This group had no intention of completing an undergraduate degree but instead to pursue graduate school.

The fourth group includes those students who are pursuing post-degree or professional accreditation and are only intending to complete a few courses. These students do not intend to complete a degree at the institution but do hope to receive some sort of non-degree credential such as a post-baccalaureate certificate. This group is called *Students Pursuing Professional Upgrade Studies*.

The fifth group are those students who are completing a few courses. They have no intention on completing a degree, transferring to another institution, attending graduate school, or completing a professional upgrade. These students would be registering in courses out of personal interest but with no intention of degree completion or other areas as listed above. Student in this group are called *Students Pursuing Other Non-Degree Studies*.

The next group is the group of students who registered in courses, never attended but failed to withdraw from classes. As well, there are those who registered for classes and attended for less than six weeks. This group does not intend on completing a degree. They may have registered in more than one university to 'hold' their spot and then forgot to deregister or were keeping their

options open and at the last minute decided to work, travel or take time away from school and did not withdraw before the deadline for refunds so didn't bother to withdraw at all. Members of this group are called *Short-Stay Registrants*.

The last group of student leavers are the *True Leavers* and include those who registered for classes with the intention to complete all their courses and graduate but did not follow through on this intention. This group of leavers has no intention of returning to complete their degree in the near future and is not considering, at this time, the possibility of transferring to another institution to complete their degree. True Leavers account for the majority (almost 60%) of students leaving university without a degree therefore it is this group that could potentially benefit from the most focus.

The TUPC survey is an in-depth survey with 85 questions. The results detail student leaver typology as indicated above as well as demographics for each leaver group. It provides descriptive analysis of data in all areas of the survey including reasons for leaving (e.g., financial, academic, social, personal and institutional). The survey lists some selected comments provided by leavers in the areas of academic performance, financial issues, personal circumstances, transfer, employment, program and course unavailability, social fit and motivation, dissatisfaction with specific services, and program design and program fit. The Leavers Survey concludes with several pages of conclusions that include University Policy and Service Interventions as well as suggested accountability obligations that BC universities should consider acting upon. These suggested actions include a commitment by the BC universities to conduct

a second leavers survey. To date, neither a second comprehensive BC university leavers survey nor a SFU specific leavers survey has been completed.

While this survey provides extensive amounts of province-wide data, it is difficult to clearly determine how SFU's statistics fit within their results as the survey encompasses all four of the universities that were operating in 2000 (University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, University of Northern British Columbia and Simon Fraser University).

The SFU Office of Analytical Studies completes retention statistics each year and publishes its findings on the public web site. The statistics are divided into two groups: Retention By Year and Retention By Year and Admission Average. The groups are subdivided into three subgroups: All Students, BC12 Direct Entry Students, and BC College Transfer Students. The statistics are quantitative data only and while the report is thorough, timely, easy to read, and covers data for the past ten years, it only documents student status (completed, persistent registrant, and non-persister) and cannot indicate factors involved in the students decision-making process. The limitations of these data make it difficult to make many direct inferences from their data.

Retention studies and reports, like many other areas of focus, have terminology that is specific to its area. Research into student retention reveals a variation in terminology describing those students who leave university before completing a degree. Researchers seem to alternate, with no stated reasoning, between 'retention', 'persistence', 'attrition' and less often 'leaver'. Definitions found in the Oxford Dictionary (AskOxford.com) for these terms are as follows:

Retention: the action of retaining or the state of being retained

Persistence: persisting or having a tendency to persist

Attrition: gradual wearing down through sustained attack or pressure

Leaver: go away from; cease attending

These terms, by definition, offer a variation on how individuals or institutions may perceive the issue of student retention. Language use or the reasons behind word choice can potentially reveal bias of the author and it is, therefore, important to be alert to these variations. Calling the act of a student discontinuing their students 'retention' suggests that it is the responsibility of the institution to retain the student. That somehow the student may play a lesser role in determining if the student will stay at the institution or leave. Retention or the 'state of being retained' can even be perceived to be acted out against the will or benefit of the individual being retained.

Persistence, on the other hand, may suggest that it is the sole responsibility of the student to persist, despite any barriers, to remain at the institution. This term may also suggest that the institution plays a lesser role in determining if the student will stay at the institution or leave.

The term attrition is removed from the polarized terminology of retention and persistence, however, it suggests that there is a wearing down of students in the institution that is regardless of policies implemented by the institution or the goals and commitments of the students, some students will leave and that the

decision on who leaves and the reasons behind leaving are somehow of little or no consequence.

The term leaver is a term that has started to appear more recently. The BC Early Leavers Survey is one notable example of its use. Its appearance suggests to the researcher of an awareness of the meaning behind the other terminology and desire to present a more politically correct front in the retention field.

Researchers in this field use a combination of all four terms and this researcher will present the terminology as reflected by the researcher in question. By conclusion, however, it should be noted that while no professional bias is indicated by the researcher the term of choice for this research will be 'leaver'.

Educational Leadership Literature

Addressing a problem at an organisation as large and diverse (faculty, staff, and students) as SFU, especially with a problem that affects and is affected by arguably every employee of the organisation, requires some knowledge of leadership theories. SFU has a large governance structure (SFU, Governance, 2006) organised in two leadership models. The collegial model is employed within departments and is characterized by egalitarian and supportive behaviour between colleagues where the group works together in a committee-based environment to produce policies and procedures that fulfil the needs of the department. These are common attributes of a collegial system (Stetson, 1990). Most other groups on campus (including administrative departments such as

Student Services) employ the hierarchal bureaucratic model that requires significant leadership direction to ensure that directives are successfully disseminated to affected areas. Inwood (1999) states that bureaucratic organisations are ubiquitous and are often viewed in a negative light by those individuals who are 'customers' of that organisation due to the 'red tape' that usually accompany them.

The structure of hierarchy in that model suggests that there is also an extensive reporting and approval structure. An example of this structure is seen in the Three Year Planning process where individual departments within Student Services wrote and then submitted their Three Year Plans to the Dean of Student Services for approval (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, 2004). The Dean then compiled those reports into a Student Services Three Year Plan for submission to the VP Academic for approval (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, 2004b). The VP Academic, in turn, compiled all reports received under their portfolio for submission to the Board of Governors with whom, within this hierarchal model, the responsibility ultimately lays for approval or rejection of the plan.

Stogdill (1997, p. 123) states "leadership exists only in so far as individuals, as members of organizations, are differentiated as to the influence they exert upon the organization; and the leadership influence of any one member will be determined to a large degree by the total leadership of the organization." This definition describes the organisational model of universities and the combination of both collegial and hierarchal bureaucratic leadership

involved as each member plays a role but depending on their position and whether or not they are involved in the collegial group or within the bureaucratic group will reflect their ability to influence the total leadership.

Gronn (1999) states that there is a difference between headship/figureheads and leadership and that these two roles are often confused. Headship refers to the highest position in office including CEO or president but individuals in these roles are not necessarily or automatically leaders. He indicates that a common mistake involves the expectation that headship and leadership are synonymous and that individuals in senior administrative roles will provide leadership when their roles may in fact reflect the need for headship instead of leadership. Within a hierarchal bureaucratic leadership model, as the one found at SFU, there needs to be a clear definition between the senior administrators who are meant to provide leadership and those that are defined in terms of headship. This clarity is necessary for ensuring that lower level administrators are not reliant on the headship individuals for guidance in leadership areas. Seeking guidance from non-leaders is misguided and can affect those trying to respond to the directives of those individuals.

Kets de Vries (1994) states that leaders fulfil two roles: the charismatic role and the instrumental role, encompassing the leader's ability to envision, empower and energize their followers as well as an organisational designer who can control and reward behaviour. The complexity of leaders, and successful leadership within an organisation is dependent on a variety of factors as Barnard (1997) states that leadership requires three things: the individual (the leader), the

followers, and the conditions and each is interdependent and all are required for successful leadership. The relationship between these three factors relies on the strength of each area and once one area is weak, the others may suffer. With the current low retention rate, SFU may find that both the followers and the conditions may be weak and this may necessitate that the strength of the leader be greater to compensate for the weakness in the other areas.

Based on Kets de Vries (1994) theory all members of an organisation are vulnerable to the affects of a lack of leadership or a breakdown in leadership and in the case of a university these members include students. A lack of campus unity due to a breakdown in leadership could present students with an unstable academic environment affecting their ability to successfully transition to and integrate with the university. This loss of connection or inability to connect could potentially reduce retention creating an increasing level of instability on campus.

Organisational Theory Literature

Organisational theory speaks a lot about metaphors as a way of clarifying a potentially complex situation into a more simplified model. Morgan's (1986) book outlines eight organisational metaphors: organisations as machines, as organisms, as brains, as cultures, as political systems, as psychic prisons, as flux and transformation, and as instruments of domination. Organisations as machines occur when managers arrange each area of the organisation into interlocking parts with a clearly defined function set within the whole, as with the bureaucratic leadership model. This common organisational structure works well within many environments but could restrict creativity or growth in other situations

by restricting individuals' ability to see the entire picture of what the organisation is trying to achieve. Universities have the ability to fall into this type of organisational structure due to the potential for individual groups (faculty, staff, administration and students) to lose their ability to see where they fit within the larger structure.

The organisations as organisms metaphor describes the organic ebb and flow of organisations and how interconnected individuals are with each other, their organisation, and technology. This metaphor urges the organisation to be viewed as a living entity that can shift and change over time transforming inputs into outputs. This model may be found in collegial groups, such as individual faculties, where a change in membership or with the interaction between members can produce a dynamic organisational structure.

As a brain, organisations focus on learning and the processes that allow the organisation to grow or to perish. This metaphor argues that organisations are information systems, communication systems and decision-making systems that together resemble an information-processing brain (Morgan, 1986, p. 74). An academic environment, such as a university, can arguably be described as a brain organisation due to its focus on learning by students, its information and communication systems by faculty research and the decision-making system by administration members.

Organisations as cultures is a metaphor that suggests that individual organisations have their own culture. These cultures may be unified across the group or there may be several allowing for a fragmentation of the whole.

Individuals who view organisations as cultures will also view organisational change as cultural change with the corresponding enormity and sensitivity of the task. Universities, in particular ones that have a broad range of faculty focus such as SFU with programs ranging from Contemporary Arts, Business, Archaeology, Computer Science, Languages and Technology programs, may well fit into the organisation as a culture metaphor. These cultural differences found in the various faculties, and often within faculties, do not end with the differences between faculties and their research focuses. Universities bring together a broad base of groups from undergraduate students, graduate students, unionized cleric members, highly educated administrators, senior administrators, and research-focused and/or teaching-focused professors. This cultural diversity has the potential of dividing a campus into 'camps' or 'silos' which could potentially impact student retention through the development or lack of development of an overriding campus culture that may provide students with a stronger sense of belonging.

Organisations may shift between each of these metaphors or they may remain within one for the length of their history but when evaluating the efficiency of an organisation or an issue within the organisation it is important to keep these metaphors in mind. The use of each of these metaphors may enlighten or bring focus to the organisation but they are not without their limitations and these limitations should not be overlooked.

In addition to the organisation metaphors, Inwood (1999) outlines the structuralist and humanist theories in organisations. Structuralist theorists regard

employees as interchangeable parts within the organisation who are expected to take on the goal of the organisation with no regard for personal interests, needs or desires. This theory is based on the belief that individuals are motivated by material gain and are agreeable to work within the confines of strict rules and regulations as outlined by their employers. By contrast, the humanist theory, argues that by focusing on the individual needs of the employees the employer will gain in productivity. The sensitivity of the employer is paid back by the highly efficient employee who feels apart of the system; as a valued member of the organisation who is allowed to participate in decision-making process. A basic understanding or awareness of these theories can assist individuals in an evaluation of process and issues that involve organisations.

When evaluating the issue of student retention at SFU and the possible resolutions to that issue both the structuralist and humanist perspective must be included to ensure full cooperation of campus members. Cooperation may be gained by describing the need to increase retention as a goal for improvement of the university as a whole (structuralist). Whereas speaking to the impact of student retention on the individual employee and their personal success (humanist) may be more effective in gaining those individuals cooperation. If both methods are employed there could potentially be a buy in by staff, faculty and administrators to affect policy development within the area of student retention.

CHAPTER 3: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide explanation and discussion on the approach adopted for this project. It will also describe the methodology and design used to produce appropriate information for the desired analysis.

Approach

This project was undertaken based on the researcher's 17 years of professional experience in Student Services positions at universities in British Columbia and on the feedback received during a relatively short (3 year) position at SFU that involved, among a variety of other responsibilities, advising students who were in academic distress. The researcher found that students often described similar situations involving their personal decisions in relation to persisting at the university or leaving prior to degree completion. While the researcher understood that this contact was limited to a very small sampling of students, it suggested the potential for a larger problem that lead to the researcher's desire to ask the research question: What characteristics best describe SFU leavers? Are there similarities in their demographics (e.g., do they tend to be young, in a particular faculty or program, do they use the services available to them, etc.). Tinto's (1975) sociological theory of student retention and Bean and Eaton's (2002) psychological theory both indicate that there are many attributes involved in a student's ability to complete their academic plan. These attributes are represented by support both internal to the university setting

and external. They include financial support, academic support from professors and TAs, support from family, and support from internal services including orientations and academic advisors.

The desired outcome of this project is to accurately describe the basic characteristics of an SFU leaver. This research question dictates that the research be descriptive in nature. Best and Kahn (2006, p.118) explain that descriptive studies interpret what *is* and that they focus on trends, opinions or conditions that currently exist. They also argue that the survey method of data collection provides the best method for collecting data from a large population, providing statistical results from the participating population, however, is not concerned with individuals as individuals (Best & Kahn, 2006, p.121). Ary, Jacobs and Razabieh (1990, p.451) state that when the focus of research is an in-depth investigation of a discrete social unit then it can be described as a case study. Therefore, this research was conducted as a case study, focusing on SFU leavers and was conducted in a predominately quantitative method with some qualitative aspects from the open-ended questions included in the survey instrument. This research method was decided upon based on the fact that SFU has to date not completed an in-depth analysis of undergraduate student departure and therefore a full, descriptive study would be essential in providing an overview of the characteristics of the SFU leavers. The decision to combine methodologies is supported by Brewerton and Millward's (2001, p. 55) statement that "combining of quantitative and qualitative data offers the promise of getting

closer to the 'whole' of a case in a way that a single method study could not achieve".

In 2001 The University President's Council of British Columbia (TUPC) completed an extensive 'Leavers' survey entitled *The 2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey*. It examined all four public universities that were operating in 2000: Simon Fraser University, University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, and the University of Northern British Columbia. This survey provides a useful identification and definition of subgroups within the early leaver group including: Stopouts, Pre-Planned Transfers, Students Preparing for Graduate Programs, Students Pursuing Professional Upgrade Studies, Students Pursuing Other Non-Degree Studies, Short-Stay Registrants, and True Leavers (Conway, 2001). These groups are defined in detail in Chapter Two. While the BC Early Leavers Study provided some general information regarding early university leavers for British Columbia there has been no detailed information on SFU students and the reasons behind their decisions to leave.

A number of researchers (Bean, 1985; Braxton et al., 1995; Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Packard, 2005; Pascarella, 1980) have conducted studies at universities in the United States; however, this researcher was unable to locate any published reports on institutions in British Columbia or Canada. The United States results coincide in demonstrating that while there are similarities in undergraduate students and universities, each university will offer differences that affect their student body. Some of these differences are noted in the

literature review in Chapter Two and include the average age of the students, whether the university is a residential institution or a commuter school, and if the students tend to be part time or full time. While many of the conclusions that researchers have drawn regarding undergraduate student retention may hold true for SFU and its students, without at least one detailed case study, it would be inappropriate to make these same generalizations.

The design of the survey will be described in detail later in this chapter however; overall, the survey was used to compile SFU student specific data in a variety of areas. The data would allow for an overview of the factors that affect SFU students and their decision either to persist at the university or to leave before completing a degree.

The document analysis section in this project will compile and analyze current SFU student retention documents as an integral component of this project with the goal of understanding current philosophy, policy and procedures that have been established and are practiced at SFU. An evaluation of both the number of documents available at SFU on retention policy as well as the breadth and depth of these documents will assist the researcher in establishing what focus, if any, the university current has on undergraduate student retention.

Methodology

The student retention survey is a seven section survey with a total of 44 questions (see Appendix 1). Each section has a separate focus in an attempt to compile basic information on a variety of areas of student life that researchers in the literature review have proven to be key variables in student retention.

The first section is demographic including 15 questions on age, gender, residential information, program of registration, length of time of enrolment, academic goal, and academic intention to provide an overview of student leavers. These questions are included to provide standard demographic information on the students involved in the study. The second section is entitled "Student Financial" and includes four questions designed to determine how students paid for their education and what, if any financial assistance they received and its impact on their decision to leave university. Questions about how a student finances their education and the potential impact that the lack of funding can have on academics are important as researchers including Bean (1985) and Ishitani and DesJardins (2003) indicate (see Chapter Two). The third section, entitled "Program and Registration", included three questions on the availability of their program and courses of choice as well as the outcome of transfer credit. These questions were included in the survey as a method of determining if there is a correlation between students who indicate that they left SFU for the same program at another institution and those who indicate that they were not successful in obtaining the courses that they desired. The fourth section asked five questions about "Teaching and Courses" including their satisfaction with their instructions and teaching assistants and the appropriateness of the level of difficulty of their courses. They were included as a means to determine the student satisfaction level surrounding activities that occurred within the classroom. The fifth section was entitled "Student Services" and contained five questions asking about their participation in Orientation, other information

sessions and services. These questions were selected in the hope that they would assist with ascertaining whether or not students who left the university took advantage of services that are offered by the university. These services range from orientation services to both academic and personal advising and are designed to provide students with assistance in their transition to the university as well as assistance throughout their education. The “Decision to Leave” section was the sixth composed of six questions including the only two short answer/comment box questions. These questions centred on the factors that were involved in their decision to leave and how that decision was made. This section was designed to determine the process that students went through during their decision making in an attempt to ascertain if they used services provided by the university during that process or if they gained guidance from non-university individuals (e.g. parents). The final section, entitled “Life After SFU” asked six questions about what the individual has done since leaving SFU and whether they would consider returning to the university. These questions are important as a way of determining if the leavers are true leavers or if they fit in the variety of other categories (e.g. stop outs) discussed in the Approach section of this chapter above.

The survey combines Likert five-point scale; choose the most appropriate answer; and two short answer/comment box questions. The combination of answer styles were employed to allow for triangulation and generalizations to be made from the Likert scale questions and for some more detailed explanations to be drawn out of the short answer questions. The number of short answer

questions was kept to two mainly to maintain a manageable analysis component of the research. While an abundance of detailed personal comments can be deemed valuable, the time involved in both the coding and the evaluation of these types of questions would prove to be too onerous for the scope of this research. In addition, there was an effort to keep the survey short in length in an attempt to achieve a higher return rate.

A web-based survey was used for this project for a number of reasons. First, students are a very transient group. Therefore, to initiate a mail-out survey would not only be costly but would miss many of the participants thereby reducing the potential return rate of the survey and in turn the usefulness of the results. With the ability of the user to easily forward email messages automatically between email accounts there is the potential of reaching students who have moved but are still receiving email at their previous email account. SFU allows students to maintain their student email addresses for three semesters after their last semester in which they are enrolled thereby guarantying that all students eligible for this research would still have active SFU email addresses. For example, if one of the student leavers completed a course in Fall 2005 but did not register in either Spring 2006 or Summer 2006 then the email account would be active until the end of Fall 2006 (three semesters after their last registration of Fall 2005).

Secondly, it is the perception of the researcher that students tend to be technologically adept and may be more willing to complete a short web-based survey than a paper-based or telephone survey as the web survey may take comparatively less time on-line and could be completed at any time of day in any

location that has internet access. It was hoped that the relative ease in completing a web survey would increase the return rate.

Third, an electronic survey reduces the financial costs for the researcher. The budget for a paper-based version of this survey would include paper, photocopying, envelopes and postage and would have required a budget close to \$4,000.00. As indicated above, the transient nature of students and potentially this group of student leavers in particular could have seen a large portion of surveys returned due to incorrect or not updated mailing addresses.

Fourth, the tabulation of data is much quicker and greatly reduces the risk of lost data due to either misreading data that can occur when data is transcribed by the researcher or lost in the mail delivery process. The SFU Websurvey tool that was used for this survey allows data to be compiled from the participants and then downloaded directly into Excel then into SPSS for statistical analysis.

Site and Participant Selection

The decision to use SFU as the site of the case study was based on several factors, the first being that the researcher had recently worked in Student Services at SFU and was aware of the concern and frustration that some employees expressed about the level of retention at the university. In addition, as a SFU Masters student making the decision to use SFU as the case study site was a good fit as both the researcher and the supervisory committee would be more in touch with the data and the university organisational structure. The last factor in the decision making process was that there was a chance that the researcher would receive a higher level of support from individuals across

campus due to the relatively high level of first-hand knowledge that the researcher had of SFU both as a student and an employee. This assumption proved correct as every individual approached for assistance with this research was highly accommodating and often went out of their way to assist with the process.

This survey was distributed to SFU Student Leavers. For the purposes of this survey "Student Leaver" is defined as an undergraduate student who was registered at SFU in at least one of the Fall 2005, Spring 2006, or Summer 2006 semesters but did not registered at SFU in the Fall 2006 semester. Students are excluded from the group if they have graduated or had applied to graduate since the Fall 2005 semester. For example, a student could have completed their final courses in the Summer 2006 semester and applied to graduate at the next graduation ceremony which would be held in October 2006. English Bridge Program students, exchange students, and irregular students are excluded from this survey as they are registered in programs designed in a non-degree completion format. "Student leavers" for whom we have no email address were also excluded from this file.

Research Ethics – Confidentiality and Anonymity

It was important to the researcher, and required by the Office of Research Ethics at SFU, that confidentiality and anonymity of the survey participants be secured. Potential participants were presented with an introductory web page that outlined the confidentiality and anonymity precautions taken within the survey and indicated that by proceeding to the first survey question they

voluntarily agree to participate with the study (Appendix 4). The housing of the survey on the SFU Websurvey site ensured that all information gathered remained in Canada. Other survey tools often export the data to a non-Canadian site but this is not allowed within the research ethics guidelines for university research. The SFU Websurvey tool can be set up to require participants to enter their SFU ID and password to gain access but the ID and password are not stored and therefore guarantee that that information can not be linked to gathered data.

Great effort was made in the development of the survey and in particular, the link between the survey and the prize entry to ensure that there was no way to link the contact information provided in the prize entry to a survey entry. The ethics application was thorough and found that the survey questions and design ensured confidentiality and anonymity.

While the individuals who emailed the researcher with additional questions or comments allowed their identity to be known, it is still impossible for researcher to link that information to a specific set of answers in the survey.

Conduct of the Study

SFU's Dean of Student Services supported this project by approving the researcher's request for access to student contact information stored on the SFU Student Information Management System (SIMS). The Office of Analytical Studies also supported this project and survey process by running a complex report designed to pull this group of eligible participants off SIMS and providing the researcher with the information in an Excel spreadsheet. No student names

or numbers or any other identifying information were listed anywhere on the spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was set up in a five-column format. Each column provided potential email addresses for each individual from at least one of the five email address-types including Primary Email, Campus Email, Work Email, Alumni Email, Other Email. The Campus Email and Alumni Email addresses are automatically assigned to students by SFU. The Campus Email address is assigned to the student when the student is initially admitted to the university and the Alumni Email address is assigned to the student upon completion of a SFU credential. The other email addresses must be provided to the SFU goSFU student information system by the student. Most students on the spreadsheet had two email addresses with only a few having three or more addresses or only one email address.

SFU's Office of Analytical Studies produced the report on September 26, 2006 and emailed the information to the researcher via the secure SFU webmail system. The spreadsheet contained a total of 7305 email addresses from 3720 former students. Email addresses were missing from 28/3748 students, or 0.7%. The remaining data was divided in the following manner:

Table 1: Email Statistics

Email Address Type	Number of Email Addresses Provided
Primary Email	3720
Campus Email	87
Work Email	137
Alumni Email	49
Other Email	3312
Total Number of Email Addresses	7305

It was decided by the researcher to complete a full survey of each of the 3720 possible participants instead of a random sample for two main reasons. The first is that SFU has never had a survey of this nature completed and that the importance of these findings alone would support the desire to have as much information as possible from the participants. Secondly, although the participant group had on average two email addresses there was a strong possibility that due to the fact that these individuals no longer have a tie to SFU, their email addresses could be non-active meaning that while the email may be safely delivered that the individual is not checking that email account and would therefore, never receive the email. Having made the decision to do a full survey and given the transient nature of the participant group and the ease at which individuals start and stop using email addresses it was determined that in an attempt to contact as many participants as possible the researcher would send the same email to all possible email addresses. This would mean that each individual would receive between one and three emails requesting their participation in the survey.

The Helpdesk at SFU Academic Computing Services expressed some concern that an email sent from the researcher's SFU email address to 7,305 recipients could crash the SFU server therefore the researcher decided to divide the emails into smaller groups and send the email out over the course of several hours. Using the SFU Online Services group email list option 49 email groups were created. Each email group contained between 87 and 171 individual email addresses. The email groups were labeled `retentionsurvey-1@sfu.ca` through to

retentionsurvey-49@sfu.ca. The email groups were set up with the restriction that only the researcher would be allowed to send emails to the email groups in order to prevent SPAM emails from going to the groups and to prevent members of the group from responding to all individuals in the email group. In addition, the development of email groups ensured that recipient lists were hidden so that individual recipients would only see the email group name to which they belonged and no other email addresses.

The first email was sent out to potential participants in email groups #1 to #40 on October 1, 2006 and email groups #41 to #49 on October 2, 2006. The emails were sent between two and thirty minutes apart to provide time for the researcher to prepare the next email and to ensure that the SFU server did not become overloaded. The email message's subject line stated "SFU Student Retention Survey" and requested the assistance of the individual in filling out the survey with the potential of winning a prize for completing the survey. A second email sent as a reminder was sent to each of the 49 email groups on October 15, 2006 with the subject line of SFU Student Retention Survey. In this email the researcher thanked those who had already completed the survey and urged others to complete it. The information regarding the prize draw was also included in the reminder email.

The SFU Websurvey tool allows for customization of administration procedures. This survey was customized to allow only members of the email groups to gain access to the survey. Participants were required to login to the survey using their SFU ID and password. Once they had logged in and

submitted a survey they were blocked from logging back into the survey again. Once the individual had submitted their survey they were directed to a link to a separate survey where they could enter contact information to enter themselves into the draw for one of 40 \$25 gift certificates from Silver City Movie Theatres. The surveys were designed as completely separate entities to ensure that there was no way to get into the prize draw without having completed the survey and so that it was impossible to link the individuals from the prize draw list to answers in the survey. The researcher closed the survey on November 1, 2006 with a total of 544 entries. The survey data was exported from the Websurvey tool to Excel, was formatted into an SPSS legible format, and was exported into SPSS for analysis.

The survey emails were sent twice to each email address provided by the SFU Office of Analytical Studies. Students are responsible for maintaining up to date information on the goSFU system however, as all of these students are not currently registered and for reasons noted above regarding ease access to opening and closing emails there were a total of 381 emails returned after each emailing session. The reasons for the returned emails included email boxes over quota, discontinued email accounts and email accounts with "Permanent Fatal Errors".

In addition to the returned emails the researcher also received 39 emails from students directly. These emails ranged widely in content. One individual indicated that he would like to speak to the researcher personally to share his story regarding why they decided to leave the institution; while another used

profanity to express their frustration with having received an email from an institution that they were no longer attending; several individuals thanked the researcher for taking on this kind of research as it is needed; and others indicated that they would like to complete the survey but could not remember their SFU ID and password. A full listing of these email comments with all identifying markers removed can be found in Appendix 5.

Delimitations and Limitations

This research has several embedded delimitations that were determined by the researcher to be appropriate for the nature, scope, purpose and design of this survey. The discussion surrounding the decision to limit the survey to SFU occurs in several sections of this research with the decision founded on the need for a SFU specific follow-up survey to the BC University Early Leavers Survey. The decision to survey all undergraduate student leavers from the 2005/2006 academic year allowed for the possibility of a large sample size with the hope that even a potentially low return rate would still allow for a significant number of surveys. While the return rate may be lower than desired the researcher can still provide data, descriptions, conclusions, and recommendations based on the sample number. The timeframe was restricted due to the reasonable potential for contacting individuals. SFU email addresses are valid for one year after the last semester of registration and former students often do not update email addresses and other contact information; therefore, limiting the potential for accurate information in the SFU database. The focus of the survey was purposely restricted to provide an overview of a wide variety of issues faced by

students. While there was an interest by some individuals to focus on specific areas within the survey the researcher determined that this may present data that focused on preconceived perceptions instead of an overarching viewpoint.

The methodology chosen for this research brings with it certain limitations. The ability to use survey results for generalizations is impacted by several factors including return rate, representative issues, and comparative limitations. Each of these factors affects this survey. The return rate for this survey is arguably low; however, with the consideration of several research-specific factors including the transient nature of the participants and the potential of unused or unchecked email addresses the return rate is acceptable to provide descriptive statistics and to draw conclusions and recommendations. The participants of this survey are generally representative of the entire SFU undergraduate student body. Some areas; however, have a questionable level of representation. For example, it is unclear from the results of this survey if the use of Orientation as an introductory service by leavers is representative of the student leaver group or of all SFU undergraduate students. The ability to draw comparative conclusions is limited in this research because comparative data is not presented within the research or the survey results. It is the hope of the researcher that groups within SFU impacted by this data (e.g. Orientation program representatives for Orientation data) have the opportunity to view the data collected in this survey and compare it to data held by their offices for the entire student body.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of data in this project was conducted in a two-phase process due to the division between the document analysis and the survey data analysis. As indicated in the Approach and Methodology chapter, the document analysis will examine those currently available at SFU related to undergraduate student retention. These documents include policy statements, statistics, SFU's philosophy on retention and other documents that pertain to undergraduate student retention at the university. The survey data analysis portion will focus solely on the results of the survey completed for this research. The results are both quantitative and qualitative in nature and will be examined and evaluated accordingly. The division of analysis of data is beneficial to this research for a variety of reasons. Researchers, including Best and Kahn (2006) and Gall, Gall and Borg (2005), recommend that both quantitative and qualitative research are good methods of evaluation; however combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods to describe phenomena within a case study greatly exceeds the benefits of just using one research method.

Document Analysis

Student Services

All available SFU documents were compiled relating to retention. After a thorough investigation to find policy documents and after discussions with the

Managing Director of Student Learning and Retention Office at SFU it was determined that the university does not currently have written policies regarding undergraduate student retention. While SFU does not have any formalized student retention policy, the topic is referenced in several places in the SFU Student Services Three Year Plan 2004 – 2007 (2004). The directors of departments within SFU Student Services produced this 177-page document as a collaborative project. The 16 departments included in this document are: Admissions and Records, Centre for Students with Disabilities, Childcare Society, Communication Services, Co-operative Education, First Nations Student Centre, Health Counselling and Career Centre, Interfaith Centre, Recreation and Athletics, Recruitment and Retention, Residence and Housing, Harbour Centre Information and Registrar Services, Student and Registrar Services – Surrey Campus, Student Academic Affairs, Student Academic Resources, Student Development and Programming Centre.

A search of this document provided 23 hits on the word “retention” of which several can be discounted as they either pertain to staff retention, document retention or were titles within the document. Six points of interest regarding retention were located. Of these, several were inclusions of retention in the departmental vision or mission statements. For example, the Department of Residence and Housing state that the third point in their vision is “To play a key role in creating positive relationships with students that supports the University’s goals of student development, retention, school-spirit and alumni relations” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, p. 111). Student Academic

Resources state that their mission statement “is to facilitate retention and success by helping students to define and achieve their academic and lifestyle objectives” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, p. 147). In addition, three departments list retention as part of their goals for the three-year period. One of The First Nations Student Centre’s goals is “to enhance the overall educational experience of current and future Aboriginal students at SFU, and by doing so, increase retention, academic and personal success, and educational satisfaction rates” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, p. 55). Student Academic Affairs indicate that one of their goals is to “support student development and retention activities” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, p.143). Each of these departments can be commended for including retention within their three year plan; however, none of the departments provide specific targets for retention. The First Nations Student Centre, the Department of Residence and Housing, Student Academic Affairs, Student Academic Resources and the Student Development and Programming Centre all indicate through the listing of goals and objectives how they anticipate tackling retention with the First Nations Student Centre and the Student Development and Programming Centre providing the most detailed listing of projects and programs designed to increase retention (five and three project or programs respectively). Surprisingly, in their three year plan the Recruitment and Retention division speak only of recruitment in their goals and objectives. Their plan includes the SFU Senate approved recruitment objectives and goals and then goes on to list how the department plans to meet those objectives and goals. Following this section is a list of

possible impediments of which one includes the only mention of retention stating “Lack of Senate approved retention goals” as a barrier (p.108). This impediment notation is echoed in the Student Development and Programming Centre plan under ‘challenges’ where it states “There is no agreed upon plan or target for student retention at SFU” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, p. 160).

The Dean and Associate Dean of Student Services evaluated each departmental plan and then included them in the Dean’s final seven-page plan and presented to the Vice-President, Academic in February 2004 (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, 2004b). The plan that the Dean submitted to the VP Academic only mentioned student retention in two instances; however, these instances are suggestive of the importance that Student Services places on retention issues. This Three Year plan specifies that during the Student Services re-organization five working groups were established to “focus on specific areas that would inform our planning and activities related to student development and services” (SFU, Student Services Three Year Plan, 2004b, p. 2). The focus of one of these five working groups was Recruitment and Retention implying that these two areas are of significant importance to the Three Year plan for the area, however, there is a lack of a specific mention of retention in the list of initiatives with the focus on recruitment without the correlation of retention. This suggests that while retention is mentioned in various spots throughout the individual departments three year plans the importance of this issue is lost or devalued in the final version. This omission supports the departments’ impression that SFU lacks an agreed upon plan for undergraduate student retention.

In discussions with the Managing Director of Student Learning and Retention, whose position was developed in 2006 in conjunction with the development of the Office for Student Learning and Retention, she indicated that while there are no formalized policies at SFU regarding student retention there are on-going discussions at the university and that two summits are planned for the Spring of 2007 (February 2 and February 24) to discuss the issues surrounding student retention within the university. One of the objectives of these summits is to develop ideas and objectives that could be investigated through a working group or committee. Due to the timing of the summits, their outcomes can not be included in this project.

Office of Analytical Studies

SFU's Office of Analytical Studies web site offers statistical information on student retention and provides links to a total of 45 reports, external web sites and BC University Fact Books. Approximately one half of these links include SFU specific information containing statistical reports on a wide range of topics including the goSFU Feedback Survey, Tuition Affordability Survey, and the SFU Student Retention Reports. The Retention Reports link connects the reader to a Dynamic Retention Reports link that is accessible only to 'Authorized Staff' and to six publicly available statistics sheets that break retention at SFU into the following categories:

1. Retention By Year
2. Retention By Year for BC 12 Direct Entry Students
3. Retention By Year for BC College Transfer Students

4. Retention By Year and Admission Average
5. Retention By Year and Admission Average for BC 12 Direct Entry Students
6. Retention By Year and Admission Average for BC College Transfer Students (SFU Analytical Studies, 2006)

Each of the first three reports follows the entire body of undergraduate students from the time of admission to the most recent year. At the time of this research the statistics begin with the Fall 1992 admission intake and end with the Fall 2006 semester. For each intake year the report indicates the number of students admitted to the university and then for each year of potential registration the report divides the students into one of three groups: RP for Registered Persisters indicating that the student had registered in at least one of the three semesters available that year; CM for Completers defined as students who graduated during that year; and NP for Non-persisters/non-attendeess indicating that the student had failed to register in any of the three available semesters during that year and had not completed a degree. Each of these three reports indicate that “over time, the proportion of registered persisters (RP) declines as the proportion of degree completers (CM) and non-persisters (NP) increases”. The data provided in these three reports is extremely valuable in the interpretation of the retention issue at SFU. Several very important generalizations can be drawn from the statistics. The first is that over the past 14 years SFU has consistently lost approximately 20% of its undergraduate students

between first and second year although for both BC grade 12 direct entry and BC College transfer students the average loss is closer to 16%. There is another substantial loss of students between second and third year but then the retention rate stabilizes with rate of non-persisters growing by only a few percentages each year to a high of almost 40% (30.5% for BC grade 12 direct entry and 25.8% for BC College transfer students) at the end of 14 years. These data can be compared to other Canadian institutional data available on their Analytical Studies or Institutional Analysis web sites. A comparison finds that SFU falls below all other institutions where data could be found.

Table 2: Comparative Retention Rates

University	Stated Retention Rate	Date of Data
Simon Fraser University	77.4% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004
University of British Columbia	88.8% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004
Royal Roads University	90%	n/a
Brock University	90.3% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004
University of Alberta	85.1% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2005
University of Calgary	84.9% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004
University of Manitoba	80.5% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004
University of Waterloo	89% from 1 st to 2 nd year	2004

The next three reports on the Office of Analytical Studies' web site use the same data from the first three reports but tabulate and format the information based on admission average (GPA). The admission averages are divided into the following groupings: less than 3.00, 3.00 to 3.24, 3.25 to 3.49, 3.50 to 3.74, and 3.75 and higher. These GPA groupings are reported for each academic year beginning with Fall 1999 and ending with Fall 2003, tracking for a maximum of seven years. Each GPA grouping includes the total number of admitted students for the specific year and, as with the previous groups, tracks the percentage of

students who fall into the categories of completers (CM), registered persisters (RP), and non-persisters/non-attendees (NP). The same definitions are used for these statistics, however, in addition to the statement regarding the proportional shift between groups over time that can be seen in the previous set of statistics, these sheets also include the statement “it is generally observed that students with higher admission GPA’s tend to have higher registered persistence rates.”

The stated observation regarding variations between persisters and non-persisters across admission GPA groups can be quite dramatic as seen in group of students admitted in Fall 1999. After seven years those admitted in Fall 1999 with an admission GPA of less than 3.00 62% were non-persisters/non-attendees and 34.2% were completers, however, those admitted the same year but with an admission GPA of 3.75 or higher had a much different outcome with only 18.4% as non-persisters/non-attendees and 78.1% were completers. The remaining students in both groups are registered persisters in their seventh year of study.

This second set of statistics supports the long held belief that high school grades are a strong determinant for success in post secondary institutions. However, as outlined in Chapter Two, a wide variety of other factors may interact within the GPA variable for incoming students. These statistics are therefore limiting in their ability to decipher the impact of factors such as parental education levels, commitment to education, access to financial assistance and funding, and family support. The statistics provided by the Office of Analytical Studies do not narrow the scope of their analysis to that level and therefore, while being helpful

in providing a solid base of retention data for SFU, may lead the unfamiliar reader to a conclusion that may not accurately reflect the reality of the situation.

Survey Analysis

Gall, Gall and Borg (2005) state that there are three purposes for case studies: description, explanation, and evaluation. The purpose for this case study is mostly descriptive in nature, however, some patterns among that data which may be more closely aligned with explanatory purpose of case studies will also be evaluated. Through the descriptive analysis of the data it is hoped that the emic perspective of the participants will be represented.

The survey was delivered by email in the Fall of 2006 to a total of 3720 student leavers. There were 381 returned or undeliverable emails indicating that the total number of potential participants who received the email request and were therefore available for participation in the survey totaled 3339. A total of 544 completed surveys were received by the cut off for survey returns which was set at one month (31 days) after the first email notification was sent. This provides a return rate of 16%.

Table 3: Email Distribution

Number of Individuals Sent Emails	3720
Emails Returned	381
Total Number of Delivered Emails	3339
Surveys Returned	544
Participation Rate	16%

It was hoped that the return rate would be higher; however, due to the impediments mentioned in Chapter Three and the return rate viewed on other electronic surveys compiled by both SFU's Office of Analytical Studies and other on-line surveys, the return rate can be considered satisfactory and allows the researcher to make generalizations that are applicable to the population group. The data will first be presented for each section of the survey individually and then will be consolidated and outlined in its entirety.

Demographics

The demographic section provided some baseline data on the participants including which faculty they had been registered in during the academic year prior to leaving. The results were compared to university wide statistics on faculty enrollment for the same academic year of those involved in the survey. The only notable variation was found in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences where the percentage of survey participants was slightly higher than the total university percentage and in the Faculty of Business who were less represented than across the university in total. Overall, the strength of these findings supports the ability of the researcher to offer generalizations for the entire population.

Table 4: Respondent Distribution by Faculty

Faculty	Survey Frequency	Survey Percentage	University Total Percentage	University Total Percentage	Difference between Survey and Total Population
Applied Science	77	14.1	4,099	16.8	-2.7
Arts and Social Science	335	61.6	12,962	53.2	+8.4
Business	26	4.8	2,468	10.1	-5.3
Education	21	3.9	1,279	5.3	-1.4
Science	82	15.1	3,485	14.3	+0.8
Missing (survey only)	3	.5			
Other (university only)			75	.3	.3
Total	544	100	24,368	100	100

The consistent spread of participants across the faculties suggests that no one faculty is experiencing an abnormally large percentage of retention issues. Faculties may take solace in this fact in that the retention issue is more a university-wide issue than an issue that could be specific to their faculty in particular. The argument could also be reversed suggesting that no particular faculty is achieving remarkable results in retaining students.

A large number of students indicated that they knew which program area they were interested in studying. Only 25% of participants reported that when they first registered in courses at SFU they did not know what area of study that they wished to pursue. This statistic may be in part due to the high number of transfer students that are accepted into SFU every year. In Fall 2005, approximately 35% of new students to SFU transferred from a BC College (SFU,

Office of Analytical Studies, 2005). While previous post secondary experience does not guarantee that students have identified their desired program of study, it can be assumed that there is a greater chance that their academic history will have provided them with some opportunity for discovery. However, it is important to be aware that the students' desired areas of study may not be their final area of study and that there could be several changes in programs throughout their academic careers.

Almost 88% of participants indicated that it was their intention to receive a degree when they first enrolled at SFU. This number is higher than expected based on the data received in the 2000 BC University Early Leavers Survey where it was concluded that approximately 70% of student leavers had originally intended to complete their degree.

Participants indicated that educational achievement was the main reason (32%) for originally attending SFU with the other given choices falling below with percentage of reasons as follows: personal satisfaction (23%), career improvement (19%), family encouragement (10%), family pressure (8%), required by employer (2%), and other reasons not stated (6%). For this survey question participants were allowed to choose all the reasons for studying that applied to their specific situation. Of the seven options provided, the 544 participants chose 1313 of these reasons for studying with a mean of 2.4 reasons per participant (see Appendix 1).

When participants were determining which post secondary institution to attend, 68% of them indicated that SFU was their first choice of possible

institutions. Within that group 31% indicated that not only was SFU their first choice but they only applied to SFU leaving them no other options if they were not admitted to SFU. The remaining 24% of participants within that group indicated that SFU was not their first choice and they had applied to other institutions leaving the researcher to presume that most of these participants were not accepted by their first choice institution and therefore accepted SFU's admission offer as an alternative. The reasons for choosing SFU ranked as follows: program of study was available (18%), geographic location (17%), quality or reputation of SFU (14%), quality or reputation of program (12%), close to family (11%), family and/or friends were at SFU (7%), entry requirements were easier (7%), not accepted elsewhere (4%), campus lifestyle (3%), other reasons not stated (7%).

Almost one half (45.4%) of the participants began their studies the year prior to this survey. This supports, yet far exceeds, the SFU Office of Analytical Studies statistics that state that approximately 20% of students leave between their first and second year. While this statistic may appear to be out of proportion with the annual one provided by the Office of Analytical Studies, it does not necessarily suggest that there has been a large increase in leavers over the past year. What they do suggest is that of the participant leavers who felt inclined to respond to the survey were those who had a shorter stay at the university and may, therefore, feel more strongly about their experiences. However, if this is the situation it is important to be aware that the leaving situation is one that

individuals want to share therefore making the timing of this type of questioning crucial.

The Office of Analytical Studies retention statistics also indicate that second to the loss of students between first and second year, the next greatest loss is between second and third year. This is reflected in the results of this survey where an additional 19.5% left after second year. Interestingly, the total loss after the transition between second and third year is 31.3% thereby indicating that after beginning third year the retention rate drops dramatically.

The statistics surrounding starting semester are not particularly noteworthy but do suggest that although SFU admits students three times a year to most programs that the largest intake still occurs during the Fall semester. This would not come as a surprise to administrators at the university but should not be dismissed as irrelevant either as orientation and introductory sessions still should be designed to accommodate those whose first registration is Spring or Summer as 21% of leavers began their studies in the Spring and 13% began in the Summer semester. The leaver statistics by semester align almost exactly with the intake statistics for the same semester suggesting that start semester does not affect leaver rates (Table 5). This is an interesting statistic based solely on the fact that most introductory type sessions are either only offered in the Fall semester or are offered more frequently, thereby, potentially servicing more students.

**Table 5: Respondent Distribution by Semester
(SFU, Office of Analytical Studies, n.d.B)**

	Percentage of Students	
	Admitted Students	Student Leavers
Fall 2005	66%	65%
Spring 2006	21%	21%
Summer 2006	13%	14%

The total number of semesters participants registered at SFU supports the researcher’s earlier findings that the largest number of students will leave between first and second year. This statistic again clearly shows that trend with a total of 54.4% of leavers completing a maximum of three semesters after which point the numbers drop off dramatically to 10.9% after four semesters and then less than 10% for each semester after that.

The data for living arrangements of participants demonstrates that slightly more than one half (53%) were living at home during their studies (See Appendix 1). This supports the participants earlier reported reasons for choosing SFU which included geographic location and the ability to be close to their family as some of their top reasons. The second most common living arrangement fell well below the first with only 14% of participants indicating that they were living with their spouse. After that, living in residence, living alone off campus, and living with roommates off campus all received between 7-9% of responses. The dramatically high number of respondents who indicate that they live at home may suggest that their ability to become incorporated into SFU culture is hampered by their residential situation and make them more vulnerable to “friendsickness” as described by Paul and Brier (2001) and parental separation anxiety. However,

living off campus can not be the sole variable in their ability to become integrated because of the equal results shown by those living in residence, those living alone off campus, and those living with roommates off campus. These results may in fact support the theory that students need to separate themselves from their pre-university life and lifestyle before they can become successfully integrated into the university.

Females comprised 63% of the leavers in this survey compared to the 57% of the total SFU undergraduate population (SFU, Office of Analytical Studies, n.d.). This may reflect less the reality of leavers and more the reality of individuals who normally complete surveys. The mean age of the respondents (24.5 years) was slightly higher than the university undergraduate mean of 22.9 years. Ninety percent of participants indicated that they did not suffer from a long term health problem.

Self-identified aboriginal leavers accounted for 2.2% of respondents with an additional 1% preferring not to answer that question. In 2006, 1.6% of the total SFU population were aboriginal students. These results included both undergraduate and graduate students at the university (SFU, Office of Analytical Studies, 2006b). Identification of aboriginal status is a challenging issue at the university as well as with most other post secondary institutions in the Lower Mainland because although most institutions request aboriginal status information as a part of their application for admission, institutions regularly find that the number of self-identified aboriginal students is not reflective of the true population of aboriginal students at their institutions.

Student Financial Section

Financial assistance was applied for by 40% (222) of the survey respondents. Twenty-one percent of applicants applied for four or five types of financial assistance with the mean application number of 1.8 applications.

Table 6: Respondent Distribution by Financial Assistance – Applied

Type of Financial Assistance	Applied	Received	Percentage Received	Percentage of Overall Respondents (n=544)
Any Financial Assistance	222	188	84.6%	34.5%
Government Student Loans	164	151	92%	27.7%
Bursaries	94	63	67%	11.5%
Scholarships	63	63	100%	11.5%
Grants	34	23	67.6%	4.2%
Workstudy	34	25	73.5%	4.6%
Bank Sponsored Student Loan	20	18	90%	3.3%

In Fall 2003, SFU completed a Tuition Affordability Survey for direct entry secondary school students. While this survey is not restricted to the same population, there are similarities in data between the numbers of individuals who received government student loans and other financial assistance (Tuition Affordability Survey, 2003). The Tuition Affordability Survey indicated that 29% of respondents had received assistance through a government student loan which is comparable to the 27.7% on government student loans who responded to this survey. Of those participants who had applied for but did not receive

financial assistance 6% indicated that the lack of financial assistance prevented them from continuing their studies and additional 10% indicated that it was part of the reason for not continuing at SFU. Cabrera, Stampen and Hansen (1990) state that while finances may act as factors on their own in student persistence it can also exacerbate other factors.

When asked about their three main sources of funding for their schooling 25% of respondents indicated that parents were there one of their main source of financial support with additional 24% relying on paid work, 16% were using savings and 13% relied on government student loans. All other sources were each 8% or less.

Program and Registration Section

When asked about their ability to register in their program of choice, 71% indicated that they were successfully able to complete the process. Sixty-three percent of the successful program registrants who had the potential to receive transfer credit were satisfied with the outcome of their transfer credit articulation. Students have indicated in previous surveys that the lack of course availability has been a problem that has had an impact on their ability to register in either all the courses that they wanted or in the specific courses that they were interested in. In this survey, respondents indicate that 25% were able to register in all of the courses that they wanted and almost 60% were able to register in either all or most of the courses that they were interested in.

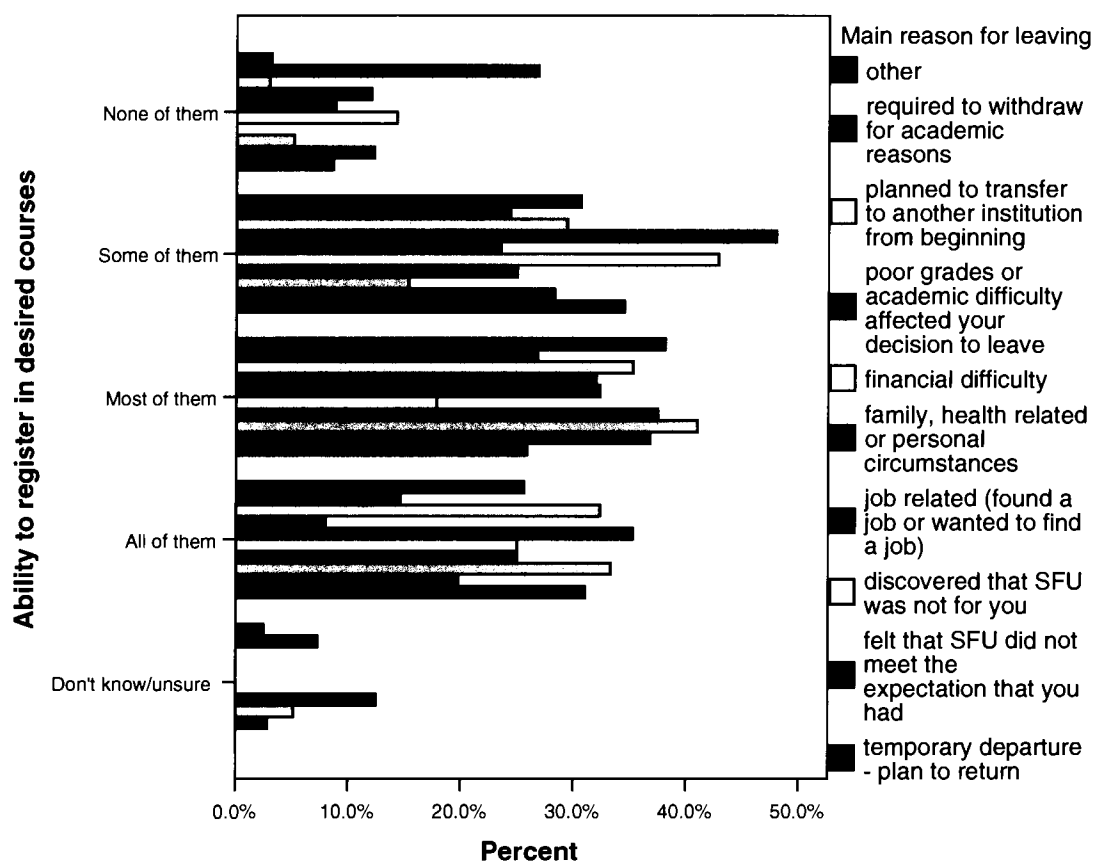
Table 7: Respondent Distribution by Ability to Register in Desired Courses

Number of Desired Courses Student Registered in	Frequency	Percentage
ALL of them	135	24.8
MOST of them	184	33.8
SOME of them	162	29.8
NONE of them	47	8.6
Don't know/unsure/missing	16	3

These results are quite a bit lower than those found in the 2005 Undergraduate Student Survey. That survey found that 88% were able to register in the number of courses they wanted and 56% were able to register in the specific courses that they wanted. One possible reason for this discrepancy is that students with higher GPAs have the ability to register earlier in the registration period thereby providing them with a better course selection. However, when examining the satisfaction level of respondents who were required to withdraw for academic reasons and would therefore had low GPAs and a late registration data, their satisfaction with the ability to register in the courses they wanted is almost identical to the total respondent population (All of them 20%, Most of them 37%, Some of them 28%, None of them 12%, Don't know/unsure/missing 3%). The inability to register in courses of choice can have a variety of impacts on students. They may choose to register in less desirable courses in an attempt to remain qualified for government student loans (they must be registered in nine credits/semester). Others could delay their graduation by waiting for the specific courses required for their degree. In fact, in the 2005 Undergraduate Student Survey, 53% of respondents attributed course availability

and scheduling problems as the reason why their degree completion had been delayed. A respondent in this researcher’s survey stated “I was not able to get into the classes required for my degree” and another wrote that they “...are being a visiting student at UVIC because they offer some very interesting upper-level psyc classes that SFU doesn’t offer” and another respondent indicated that in the Gerontology department “they usually offer few courses for Fall semester; and most courses are offered during the Spring term. I wish some of the courses [that I need for PBD program in Gerontology] would be offered during the Fall term!!!”

Figure 2: Respondent Satisfaction Regarding Course Registration vs Respondents’ Reasons For Leaving



Teaching and Course Section

The 2005 Undergraduate Student Survey concludes that overall a significant proportion of students expressed that they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their teaching assistants (TA’s) (74%) and with their course instructors (88%). The statistics from this survey do not reflect that level of satisfaction, although this survey asked more specifically if the respondents were satisfied with the availability of instructors/professors and TAs outside of the classroom. The comparable percentages from this survey are 64% for TAs and 69% for instructors that indicates a drop of 10% for TAs and 19% for instructors between overall satisfaction and the satisfaction level outside the classroom. Comments received in this survey from respondents tended to be more negative. One comment that was included in the “What could SFU have done, or what more could SFU have done, to assist you at the time you were deciding to leave?” stated “Reconsider the criteria of selecting an appropriate chemistry 100 level teacher. During the time I had Chem 121 (instructor name removed) and 122 (instructor name removed), both were inconsiderate ignorants who cannot teach or communicate their materials properly”. Another respondent wrote “some TAs I previously had were disappointing i.e. unfair grading among different TAs within the same class” and another stated “had professors that actually cared about their students. First year science teachers are the worst”.

Table 8: Respondents Satisfaction Levels for Instructor and Teaching Assistant Availability Outside the Classroom

Level of Satisfaction	Instructors (frequency)	Instructors (percentage)	Teaching Assistants (frequency)	Teaching Assistants (percentage)
Very Satisfied	76	14%	67	12%
Satisfied	297	55%	282	52%
Dissatisfied	77	14%	58	11%
Very Dissatisfied	22	4%	22	4%
Don't know/unsure or missing	72	13%	70	13%
Didn't have TAs	n/a	n/a	45	8%

In addition, students were generally either satisfied (59%) or very satisfied (13%) with the fairness or the grading in their courses and with the course design and structure (satisfied 57%, very satisfied 9%). In each of these groups the very dissatisfied levels were low with the course design and structure having 6% of respondents' very dissatisfied and grading fairness with 4%. Course difficulty level was considered appropriate by 45% of respondents with an additional 43% indicating that courses were difficult or challenging. Only 8% considered courses to be very difficult or very challenging and 4% indicated that courses were easy or less challenging.

Support Services Section

Orientation at SFU has increased in magnitude over the past several years incorporating a wide variety of sessions that are available to incoming students of all backgrounds (secondary school students, transfer students, aboriginal students, international students, and graduate students) as well as parent orientation sessions. The respondents in this survey indicate that 43%

attended orientation of which 60% indicated that orientation assisted them in their transition to SFU. In addition to orientation, SFU offers several other introductory sessions that are available to students free of charge to assist them in their transition to the university. A total of 147 of the respondents indicated that they attended at least one of these additional introductory sessions.

Student Academic Resources offer Blueprints sessions in the summer to incoming students. These faculty-specific sessions assist students in program planning and registration system questions as well as touching on a variety of other issues that are important for incoming students. Blueprints sessions were attended by 61 respondents. Student Services offer campus tours throughout the year either on a drop-in basis or through booking. These tours are sometimes coordinated for groups coming to campus as part of their activity, offering some historical information as well as a walking tour of the campus pointing out areas of interest to prospective students, parents and anyone else interested in partaking in the experience. Respondents indicate that 77 of them went on a campus tour at some point during their SFU experience. Library tours are also offered at a variety of times and can be very beneficial in learning the set up of the library as well as the diversity of services offered. They are sometimes scheduled as a part of academic courses but most often are up to the individual to attend on their own time. 46 of the respondents indicate that they took part in a library tour. Departments provided tours to 43 of the respondents to the survey. These tours would be developed within each department and would

incorporate information and activities that the departments see fit, they may or may not incorporate information provided in the other information sessions.

Overall, 60% of respondents described their first month at SFU as positive, with 15% indicating that it was a negative experience and the remaining 25% stating that it was neither positive nor negative.

In addition to introductory sessions that SFU offers there is a plenitude of ongoing services offered to students. These services range from Health, Counselling and Career services to Disability services and Financial Assistance services. Our respondents indicated that 93% of them had used at least one of these services during the Fall 2005 to Summer 2006 timeframe with 52 respondents having used only one service, 134 using two services, 109 using three services, 106 using four services, 39 using five services, 40 using six services, 22 using seven services, and two respondents using eight services providing a mean usage of three services per student.

Quite a few comments made by the respondents included statements about the level of or quality of services available to them while they were registered at SFU. Similar to those comments for instructors and TAs most of these comments present a high level of dissatisfaction. One respondent wrote that SFU should “have the staff informed enough to know what is going on, and care enough to help”. Another stated “I found the wait times way to long when calling Student Services thus most of the time just gave up, and dint know where else to call for help”, and another claimed that “dept is super disorganized, and different depts. And registrars office do not communicate – students pay the

price...". Yet other students were more willing to take responsibility for the outcome of their situation. One respondent stated "well, can't blame the institution, other than for having rules that did not work for me. I should have known better" and another respondent states "There is nothing SFU could have done ins addition. The professors and advisors were very helpful in helping me withdraw from my courses due to extenuating circumstances..."

Tinto's (1987) 'Rites of Passage' theory speaks directly to the importance of transition and incorporation as the second and third stage of adjustment to students' new community. The low rates of attendance and usage of orientation services by respondents supports the findings that a large number will not be challenged in completing their transition phase and therefore, are not successfully incorporated.

Decision to Leave Section

The outcome of all the respondents' experiences is their decision to leave the university. The largest percentage (29.4%) of leavers are temporary leavers who plan to return to SFU at some point to continue their education. The second largest group (19.5%) of leavers are those that have been required to withdraw for academic reasons. Some of these leavers may have the intention to return to SFU once they the completed the necessary upgrading that is required before they are permitted to return. Many of the comments provided by respondents who were required to withdraw for academic reasons stated that they wished that the GPA requirements for remaining in good academic standing were more clear and not flexible enough to accommodate personal situations. One respondent

indicated that SFU could “be more understanding to personal problems...I was not aware of such harsh penalties...make it more aware to students” while another states “Why I had to leave was entirely fair. And the advisors where extremely pleasant and very helpful”.

Table 9: Respondents Main Reason For Leaving

Respondents Main Reason For Leaving	Frequency	Percent
required to withdraw for academic reasons	106	19.5
planned to transfer to another institution from beginning	39	7.2
poor grades or academic difficulty affected your decision to leave	16	2.9
financial difficulty	28	5.1
family, health related or personal circumstances	34	6.3
job related (found a job or wanted to find a job)	25	4.6
discovered that SFU was not for you	34	6.3
felt that SFU did not meet the expectation that you had	41	7.5
temporary departure - plan to return	160	29.4
Missing	3	.6
other	58	10.7

In the process of making their decision to leave the university 300 of the respondents used at least one of the services provided to students to assist in their decision with the 142 respondents using only one service and 13 respondents using five or more services during their decision making process. While university services were used by a great proportion of leavers (55%) the

respondents also sought advice from individuals outside the standard university student services. These additional areas of advice included faculty members, staff members, residence advisors, parents, friends/spouses, or former/present employers. A total of 333 respondents sought the advice of these individuals during their decision making process with 249 individuals seeking the advice of friends and 199 seeking the advice of their parent(s) and 134 seeking the advice of two individuals.

The perception of SFU at the time of leaving was generally quite positive with 9% indicating they had a very positive perception, 36% indicating a positive perception, 24% had a neutral perception, 19% had a negative perception and 10% indicate their perception was very negative. These perceptions can be compared to the perception that the respondents had of their first month at SFU. The comparison reveals that perceptions have shifted toward the negative side with the neutral perception remaining consistent.

Table 10: Shift in Respondent Perception of SFU

Perception	1st month at SFU	At time of leaving	
Very Positive	60%	9%	45%
Positive		36%	
Neutral/Neither	25%	24%	
Negative	15%	19%	29%
Very Negative		10%	

Life after SFU Section

After leaving SFU, a total of 247 respondents indicate that they are not enrolled at any other institutions but of those (297) that were enrolled 49% (145)

were enrolled in the same program as they had been enrolled in at SFU. Many of these (32.6%) were required to withdraw for academic reasons and so may be attempting to complete courses at another institution in the hope of transferring those credits back to their SFU program to continue to progress through to degree completion.

For those not attending another institution there were a variety of activities that they were involved in both immediately following their leaving and again at the time that they completed the survey which would have ranged from between two and nine months later.

Table 11: Respondent Main Activity Since Leaving SFU

Main Type of Activity	Main activity in first 3 months since leaving		Main activity at time of survey	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Working full time	234	43%	191	35.1%
Working part time	70	12.9%	41	7.5%
Seeking work	21	3.9%	17	3.1%
Traveling	33	6.1%	13	2.4%
Caring for own children, parents, family members	23	4.2%	16	2.9%
Going to school	115	21.1%	223	41%
Family obligation	10	1.8%	7	1.3%
Other	33	6.1%	32	5.9%
Missing	5	.9%	4	.7%

There is a discrepancy between those who indicated that they were attending another post secondary institution and those who indicated that attending school is their main activity. This suggests that while the additional 74

respondents are currently attending another post secondary institution it is not their main activity.

The last two questions in the survey dealt with the possibility of the respondents either returning to SFU or going on to another post secondary institution within the next 12 months from the time of the survey.

Table 12: Respondents Likelihood of Returning to SFU or Any Post Secondary Institution

	Likelihood of returning to SFU		Likelihood of going to any post secondary institution	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very likely	163	30%	308	56.6%
Likely	94	17.3%	93	17.1%
Not likely	88	16.2%	43	7.9%
Not at all likely	134	24.6%	40	7.4%
Don't know/unsure	62	11.4%	49	9%
Missing	3	.6%	11	2%

Almost 50% of respondents indicated that they were either likely or very likely to return to SFU within 12 months of the time of the survey while almost 75% indicated that they were likely or very likely going to attend any post secondary institution. These numbers reflect the perception that respondents had at the time of leaving SFU. In that question respondents stated that 45% had either a positive or very positive perception of SFU at the time of leaving and this same percentage 47.3% indicate that they may return to SFU within 12 months. Another 25% would attend another institution within the same timeframe, and 40.8% of respondents were not likely or not at all likely to return to SFU within 12 months of the time of the survey and the remaining were unsure

or didn't know. One respondent recommended that SFU should "find the best way for student to come back to SFU. For example, assist personally and give an real advise what courses the student need take in other colleges." Another respondent stated "I fully intend on coming back. I have 3 courses to complete in order to graduate" and another stated "leaving is too final a word – I look at it as a "temporary" leave. When I am well I will be back".

In summary, the analysis of this data shows that this project presents a proportional representation of the student population across faculties. Respondents indicate that for a large portion of them SFU was their university of choice, however, the reasoning behind that decision could be described as muted in the sense that SFU does not seem to have a strong pull in any one area but their reasons support their needs that are expressed in other parts of the survey. For example, students are choosing SFU due to its location allowing the majority of them to remain living at home. Others chose SFU because their program of choice is offered there. This factor is important as a large proportion of respondents knew which program they intended to register in when they began their studies and a large percentage were able to register in that program. However, the satisfaction level for course availability falls dramatically short of acceptable in terms of student perception. The statistics demonstrate that 60% were able to register in either all or most of the courses that they were interested in registering but the comments provided by the respondents repeatedly mention the frustration in course availability in particular for non-peak time course offerings including evenings and distance education course offerings. This

frustration may be compounded by the need for students to work to support their education. Respondents reported that 50% were supported equally by either paid work or their parents.

Access to or use of university services appeared to peak during the orientation phase with a good number of respondents participating in Orientation or other introductory sessions. Respondents also indicated that their perception of SFU was generally positive during their first month of enrolment. Participation rates fell after this initial orientation phases as did perception of SFU. While 93% of respondents indicated that they had used at least one service during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 time frame the mean number of services used was 3. These numbers appear quite strong; however, it is important to consider the nature of these services as they include services such as the library, athletic facilities and computing labs. The participation rate drops even further by the time of departure with only 55% of respondents seeking any assistance from university services at that time and within that group the majority used only one university offered service. Some respondents indicated in their comments that there was a lack of access to university services or that they felt that these services would not or could not assist them with their issues. In addition, a greater proportion of respondents relied on the assistance of friends and family when making their leaving decision. While the general perception of SFU remained quite positive at the time of departure, it had dropped substantially from their arrival perception with the neutral category remaining stagnant.

Although a significantly large percentage of respondents (73.7%) will return to post secondary studies it appears that those who left SFU with a neutral or lower perception of the institution will choose to either attend a different institution or will not continue their studies in the near future. This may suggest that the 'damage' once done either cannot or will not be easily undone.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

There are five main conclusions drawn from this research with three recommendations coming from the conclusions. The conclusions are outlined below and state that first, there is no clearly definable at-risk for leaving student group. Second, the university has been negligent in not providing support for student retention through policy statements. Third, there is a shift in students' academic goals. This shift is seen in not only which institution students are attending but also whether or not they continued to attend any post secondary institution. Fourth, services for students may not be available, used or trusted by the students who need them. Fifth, that course availability is negatively affecting students' ability to register in the courses that they need or desire at the time (both within semesters and across semesters) and manner (on-line, in person) that works for the student.

The recommendations involve the development of a positioning statement by senior administration; promoting the utilization of student services; improved course availability, and continued data collection.

Conclusions

The results of this project confirms that SFU is challenged by undergraduate student retention in the sense that students entering SFU have approximately a 80% chance of continuing from first year to second year and

then only a 60% chance of completing their degree within 14 years. The other 40% will either leave the university prior to degree completion or will still be registered at the university. SFU's retention rate is lower than the majority of other Canadian universities (see Table 2). This fact is reported annually in the Maclean's University Issue as well as through comparisons of retention rates on the universities statistics web sites. Rummel et al. (1999) suggest that not all retention is good agreeing with Tinto (1975) that students are constantly re-evaluating their life at school to determine if they should persist or leave. Rummel et al. (1999) indicate that while universities should make every effort to determine why their students are leaving and then address those issues with targeted programs, both universities and students must accept that some reasons for leaving are positive for both the student and the university.

The first conclusion of this project is that the results of the survey suggest that there is no one defined 'high risk' student group that would have an increased chance of becoming a leaver. Some similarities within the leavers group are of value to acknowledge. The majority of respondents (68%) chose SFU as their first choice of post secondary institutions with their top three reasons for this choice being geographic location, reputation of SFU, and the reputation of their intended program. They also chose or were required to live at home with their families and their education tended to be funded by either their parents or through paid work. The leavers tended to know which program they intended to register in and the vast majority of respondents indicated that they were intending to complete their degree.

The second conclusion stems from the analysis of documents including the Student Services Three Year Plan as well as the Office of Analytical Studies statistics, combined with the development and implementation of the Office of Learning and Retention, all of which strongly suggest that SFU administrators are aware of and are focused on the undergraduate student retention issue at Simon Fraser University. However, the lack of mention of student retention in Student Services policy documents and other university policy documents suggests that the focus on retention may not be a collaborative, holistic effort and may therefore lack the direction and support required for the Office of Learning and Retention to begin to fulfill its perceived role within the institution.

The third conclusion derives the fact that the high number leavers do not reflect the student's initial academic plans which indicate that 75% of the students knew which program they intended to register in and 88% of the students began their studies with the intention to complete a degree. This suggests that students' academic plans change during the time that they are registered at SFU. This shift in academic plan could happen for a number of reasons. While the data from the survey does not explicitly identify this the statistics may suggest that students are becoming more aware of their ability to move between institutions in a relatively controlled and safe fashion due to the well-facilitated British Columbia Transfer Credit system that is managed by the British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer (BCCAT). BCCAT manages a web based transfer guide that lists guaranteed transfer credit arrangements between British Columbia post secondary institutions. Students

are able to check this web site to determine which courses they can take at a wide variety of institutions and then how those credits will move or transfer between institutions. The transfer credit system allows for students to mix and match courses and different institutions before settling into a final institution for graduation purposes. The main considerations for students, with respect to university policy, are the residency requirements of the institution at which they intend to complete their degree. The residency requirement for SFU is that at least one half of the total credit hours in the program must be earned through study at SFU and at least two thirds of the total upper division credit hours in the program must be earned through study at SFU (SFU, Calendar, 2006). This may affect SFU retention by providing students with the opportunity to transfer to another institution to complete a number of courses at either a more convenient schedule or cost structure or with a particular instructor. Students then either transfer those courses back to SFU or to take those courses and the courses completed at SFU and transfer them all to a third institution. This conclusion seems to be supported by the Office of Analytical Studies which indicates that SFU admits approximately 35% of its students as Transfer Students and by the survey respondents from this current survey that indicate that more than 50% will go on to attend a post secondary institution, either SFU or otherwise, within 12 months and 27% will continue on in the same degree program at that institution.

For the less than 50% who indicated in the survey that they will not be attending a post secondary institution within the 12 months following the survey it should be asked at what point did these students change their academic goals

and what factors were involved in these changes? Are there similarities in their background or with their experiences at SFU? While the results of this research do not provide a direct response to this question, they do suggest that the first year at SFU can be challenging for students with several key factors attributing to the challenge including service use and accessibility and course availability.

The fourth conclusion is that service use at SFU proved to be a factor for leavers in several ways. A relatively low number of respondents attended orientation (40%) or any other introductory session (27%) and only 60% of those who indicated that they attended orientation stated that orientation assisted with their transition to SFU. While the introductory services were accessed by a relatively small number of respondents this same group stated that during their stay at SFU 93% used at least one other service provided to students on campus. It is important to note, however, that the majority of the services (50%) used by the respondents were the computing lab and the library and therefore may not accurately reflect the respondents use of interactive transition-assisting services. At the time when respondents were making decisions about leaving SFU, 42% indicated that they did not meet with any service providers to discuss their situation. While there is an abundant variety of services available to students that may be of great value to them in making such a significant decision, this project strongly suggests that they are not making use of these services. There is a broad range of potential reasons for students not using these services and, while these reasons are not reflected in the quantitative data from the survey, they do appear in the qualitative data presented in the comment

questions. Several respondents mentioned a lack of knowledge of available resources, mistrust of information provided by the service providers, and the unavailability or apparent disinterest of the providers. Other respondents indicated that they had a number of questions regarding what to do next. These questions included how to get back in to SFU and for some students who were “required to withdraw” they had questions surrounding why they were required to leave. So, while students had questions to which they were looking for answers they were unable or unwilling to seek out the assistance that they required.

Course availability is the last conclusion, as it is an important factor in the successful and timely completion of degrees. The results of this project indicate that course availability is an important factor in both perceptions of the institution but also retention. Of the respondents who were able to register in all of their desired courses almost 60% had a ‘very positive’ perception of SFU when leaving compared to those able to register in only some of their courses and left SFU with a ‘negative’ or ‘very negative’ (almost 40% for each) perception of the institution. Only 25% of respondents indicated that they were able to register in all of their desired courses with 63.6% able to register in ‘most’ (33.8%) and ‘some’ (29.8%) of their desired courses. SFU’s course availability has also been addressed through the statistics provided by the Office of Analytical Studies in their Full Course Turn Away Reports (2003). These reports consistently show that students are experiencing difficulty registering in courses that are required for degree completion. The respondents in this survey confirm those findings with the majority (63.6%) not being able to register in at least some of their

desired courses and 8.6% not being able to register in any of their desired courses. The respondents' comments support these statistics and their frustration is evident. One respondent wrote that "all the courses I need are offered only during the Spring Semester, however, it was much easier for me [and more satisfying], if some of the courses that I need to graduate were offered during the summer & fall semester as well!!!". Several respondents commented that the on-line or distance education course (print based courses will be referred to as distance education courses) selection was very limited and evening course offerings were also very limited. Course availability and scheduling is paramount in importance to students. This factor provides the most straight forward explanation that if students are unable to register in their courses they will not or can not attend the institution. Offering required courses or the more popular courses at times outside of the more standardized time blocks (eg. evening courses, on-line or distance education) allows an increased opportunity for enrollment options for students intending to complete the courses and then their degrees.

Tinto's (1987) 'Rites of Passage' theory indicates that students withdraw from university because they have failed to successfully pass through each of the three stages by failing to separate from a previous socializing agent, failing to negotiate a transitional period, and/or failing to become incorporated into their lives at school. The separation from previous socializing agents is challenged by the sheer number of students who live at home with their families and maintain tight bonds to that arena through funding ties. The negotiation of the transitional

period was affected by lack of attendance at orientation and introductory sessions and the incorporation was mainly limited to use of the library and computing labs. Tinto (1987) indicates that the 'Rites of Passage' is a linear process requiring that students successfully pass through each stage before proceeding to the next one. The data from the respondents in this survey suggest that each of these stages presents a potentially large hurdle for SFU undergraduate students.

Recommendations

The research question adopted for this project, "What characteristics best describe SFU student leavers", did not include providing a resolution for the undergraduate student retention issue at SFU. However, the conclusions listed above provide the opportunity for recommendations to be included. There are four main recommendations suggested by the data and conclusions of this project. These recommendations are for SFU to determine first for itself, and then for its students and the academic community, what its role should be within that community and how that role should be reflected in its policies on student retention. Once this has been defined, then the policies must be clearly defined and supported across campus and within service units as a model for those units to build their strategies and service options. The second recommendation follows from the first by stating that the service providers must ensure that their services are accessible, offered in a timely fashion, and that they must ensure that students are receiving them at the critical stages of their education. The third recommendation addresses course availability at SFU and the need of

students to have access to courses within a reasonable timeframe to allow them to progress through their degree and graduate. The final recommendation is for a continuation of data collection through a repetition of a survey similar to the one used for this project or for other in-depth data collection and analysis. This type of data collection ensures that there is an on-going 'finger-on-the-pulse' of student retention and the factors involved in the retention issue.

First, SFU, through a collaborative process of discussions with representatives from the academic and non-academic service areas and senior administrators, and with a realistic evaluation of current facts including restrictions based on budget and physical space, should outline what their retention goals are for undergraduate students at the university. Indeed, Conger and Kanungo (1998) state that effective leaders must be capable of making realistic assessments of the environment before dictating the shape of initiatives and their timing. Before SFU begins to determine what their retention goal should be, there must be extensive evaluation and dialogue regarding what role SFU should play within the British Columbia post secondary system with respect to expectations the university has for its students. Berger (2001) recommends to universities to allow for clear lines of communication about campus goals, values, policies and procedures and to provide opportunities for students to participate in organizational decision-making. Therefore, the dialogue regarding SFU's positioning statement must be public and open for members of all campus and community.

This recommendation also supports Kuh's (2002, p. 27) statement that universities must provide a "coherent educational philosophy and value structure and set forth clear expectations for student performance" to increase a "cultural pull" for students. This provides clarity to students in regards to the expectations for their actions both socially and academically.

If SFU determines that it wants to provide the academic foundation for students to move through SFU to other institutions then retention expectations and goals may play a very different role than they would if SFU determines that it wants to be the academic terminus for students in degree programs. This means that students who are intending to complete their degrees would come to SFU and be able to better actively pursue and complete that goal at SFU. Mobility of students in British Columbia is a fact that SFU must accept and accommodate, however, determining the best way to align university programs within the mobile student framework may be a challenging activity and it may need to be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The process by which the university comes to the decision may be fruitful in its own regard. The process of self-evaluation can promote team building and leadership that would both prove to be beneficial in the organization. This researcher holds out hope that the two Summits organized by the Office of Learning and Retention, scheduled to take place in the Spring of 2007, may be the launching pad for this type of discussion.

A unified vision of the university and its retention goals are required for consolidated effort and 'buy-in' from the diverse groups on campus. The vision

of this goal should be included as an academic goal in the next Institutional Service Plan and Report and the implementation of the service plan must be supported with financing in key action areas. Kuh (2002) states that an institution expresses its philosophy through its policies and operating standards thereby making official its statement of commitment to its philosophy. SFU lacks this official statement of philosophy and consequently lacks a commitment to operating standards or the establishment of policies surrounding retention of its undergraduate students.

The second recommendation is that SFU must ensure that students are aware of and actively involved in the services available to them and that these key services are available at crucial points in the students' enrolment. This goal can only be achieved if service providers are allocated resources to effectively and efficiently offer timely services to students. Tinto (1987) states that incorporation is a key component within the 'Rites of Passage' however, the data from the respondents indicate that only a small percentage participated in orientation or introductory sessions thereby dictating that the individual student had more responsibility for incorporating themselves through individual action. The potential for a lack of bonding by new students to the new environment has an impact on their transition to the institution. A 2006 study of transfer students in British Columbia indicates that transfer students are more engaged inside the classroom but are less engaged outside the classroom (Pendleton, 2006). SFU's undergraduate student body consists of 35% transfer students which can

potential impact the effectiveness of transition activities such as orientation, if these transfer students are not interested in engaging in the sessions.

Students, especially those deciding to leave SFU, must be able to access services in a timely fashion as delays in this service availability will only strengthen potential disillusionment regarding 'fit' within the institution. Proactive services may be successful in reaching the respondents who were surprised by the reality of their situation. Students who were unable to register in their desired courses may respond well to course planning sessions that are designed for their program and can outline how departments schedule their courses throughout the year. Students who were affected by poor academic standing by either being required to withdraw or who were struggling with less than satisfactory academic standing may benefit from proactive advising that clearly sets out potential scenarios based on their past academic performance. The proactive nature of these services may assist in removing the feeling that some respondents described as not being cared for by the service providers.

The third recommendation is that course availability must be addressed with a commitment to understand the needs of the students and the financial and space restrictions departments and faculties face. It cannot be deemed satisfactory to have the majority of students unable to register in their desired courses. Course diversity is an important aspect of academic programs; however, the desire for diversity cannot be achieved at the expense of the requirement of the students to meet university-driven degree requirements. SFU's Course Scheduling Policy (30.01), written in November of 2005, speaks to

the juggling of producing “an effective course schedule that maximizes access for students within the constraints of classroom space and the number of instructional hours available, and accommodates a range of pedagogies” (SFU, Policies and Procedures, 2005). The results of this research and the ongoing collection of data from the Course Turn Away surveys suggest that the Course Scheduling Policy has yet to maximize satisfactory access for students. In addition, they suggest that there may be more work to be done to reduce the constraints of classroom space and instructional hours with the goal of increasing access for students, especially in non-traditional hours and methods (including evenings, on-line, distance).

In addition, follow-up surveys should be completed in a number of areas. A repetition of this survey would be beneficial on a regular basis either annually or every second year to determine if there are shifts in perceptions and in retention levels. A variety of changes could become clearer and could be affected by shifts or changes in SFU policy and procedures, reorganizations and by the impact of the development of the Office of Learning and Retention. Based on the results of this survey, additional surveys could be produced to narrow in on some areas from within this data. A survey on the desire for orientation services as well as access to the services and the impact made by the services could shed some additional light on how to improve the transition of students to the university. A survey on the impressions of services such as advising (both Registrar’s Office and departmental advising), counseling, financial assistance and a variety of other university-based services as well as access levels,

confidence levels and outcome impacts should be completed in an attempt to determine why students appear to not be using these services during crucial decision-making times in their student life and why there appears to be a wide spread feeling of confusion in areas such as poor academic performance and registration status. Student satisfaction surveys should also be completed on a regular basis making reference to the interaction of levels of satisfaction and importance based on work by Roszkowski (2005)

It is important to note that 44.5% of respondents indicated that they had either a 'very positive' (9%) or 'positive' (35.5%) perception of SFU when they left the university. This perception was also apparent in many comments provided in the survey. One respondent indicated "SFU has done very well. No complaints" and another indicated that they "loved SFU academically, they provided tons of services and most of the courses I took were great". Recognizing that the university does a good job in a variety of areas can provide confidence and assurance that the university has the capacity to achieve a higher level of undergraduate student retention through an increase in student satisfaction and achievement.

The capacity of SFU to rise to that higher level must first be acknowledged by the highest level of administration at the university. Leadership is essential in this area as seen by Conger and Kanungo's (1998) statement that to promote change successfully a charismatic leader must effectively articulate four scenarios:

1. the nature of the status quo and its shortcomings

2. a future vision
3. how the future vision, when realized, will remove existing deficiencies and fulfill the hopes of followers; and
4. the leader's plan of action for realizing the vision.

informed of the focus and determination with which it has been presented. The formation of the Office of Learning and Retention should be applauded but cannot be left to fend for itself. The office requires ongoing support from all areas on campus; the success of the students and the university depend on it.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Summary

Results	
Demographics:	
Q.1 What faculty were you registered in during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 timeframe?	
Applied Sciences (App Sci)	77
Arts and Social Sciences (Arts)	335
Business (Bus)	26
Education (Educ)	21
Science (Sci)	82
Q.2 What department or School were you registered in during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 timeframe?	
App Sci – School of Communication	29
App Sci – School of Computing Sci	18
App Sci – School of Engineering	10
App Sci – General Studies Program	25
App Sci – Geographic Information Science Program	0
App Sci – School of Interactive Arts and Technology	4
App Sci – School of Kinesiology	14
App Sci – TechOne Program	19
Arts – Department of Archaeology	4
Arts – Asia-Canada Program	0
Arts – Centre for Canadian Studies	4
Arts – Cognitive Science Program	5
Arts – School for the Contemporary Arts	12
Arts – School of Criminology	37
Arts – Department of Economics	30
Arts – Department of English	30
Arts – First Nations Studies Program	1
Arts – Department of French	7
Arts – Department of Geography	16
Arts – Department of Gerontology	5
Arts – Department of History	15
Arts – Department of Humanities	5
Arts – School of International Studies	1
Arts – Centre for Latin American Development	2
Arts – Department of Linguistics	7
Arts – Mathematics Program	1
Arts – Department of Philosophy	6
Arts – Department of Political Science	17
Arts – Department of Psychology	45
Arts – Department of Sociology and Anthropology	12
Arts – Statistics Program	0
Arts – Centre for Sustainable Community Development	1
Arts – Department of Women's Studies	2
Business	30
Education	22
Sci – Department of Biological Science	38
Sci – Department of Chemistry	8

Results	
Sci – Department of Earth Sciences	4
Sci – Environmental Science Program	2
Sci – Management and Systems Science Program	0
Sci – Department of Mathematics	6
Sci – Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry	13
Sci – Physical Geography Program	2
Sci – Physics	3
Sci – Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science	2
Q. 3 Did you know what area of study you wanted to pursue prior to enrolling at SFU?	
Yes	389
No	141
Don't remember	13
Q.4 Did you intend to receive your degree/diploma when first enrolling at SFU?	
Yes	476
No	60
Don't remember	7
Q.5 What were your goals for attending SFU when first enrolling? Select all that apply.	
Educational achievement	444
Personal satisfaction	325
Family pressure	120
Family encouragement	135
Required by employer	21
Career improvement	268
Other	84
Q.6 Was SFU your first choice of post secondary institutions to attend?	
SFU was my 1 st choice, but I also applied to other institutions	198
SFU was my 1 st choice and I only applied to SFU	171
SFU was not my 1 st choice and I also applied to other institutions	131
SFU was not my 1 st choice but I only applied to SFU	33
Don't remember	8
Q. 7 What were your main reasons for selecting SFU? Select all that apply.	
Close to my family	166
Family and/or friends were there	103
The campus lifestyle	43
My program of study was available there	267
The quality or reputation of the program	170
The quality or reputation of SFU	202
Not accepted elsewhere	56
Geographic location	250
Entry requirements were easier at SFU	107
Other	99
Q.8 What was the first year that you were a registered SFU student?	
2005	247
2004	106
2003	49
2002	37
2001	21
2000	21
1999	13
1998	4
1997	2
1996	5
1995	5
1994	1
1993	1
1992	1
1991	1
1990 or prior	16

Results	
Q. 9 In your first year what was the first semester that you were a registered SFU student?	
Fall (September – December)	370
Spring (January – April)	105
Summer (May – August)	66
Q. 10 How many semesters did you actively attend classes at SFU?	
1	84
2	97
3	97
4	59
5	33
6	40
7	16
8	24
9	13
10	14
11	6
12	14
13	2
14	6
15	8
16	2
17	0
18	3
19	1
20	3
21	0
22	0
23	0
24	0
25	0
26	1
27	0
28	0
29	0
30 or more	2
Don't remember	17
Q. 11 At the beginning of your courses during the September 2005 – August 2006 timeframe which statement best describes your living arrangements?	
Living at home	293
Living with relatives	21
Living in residence	38
Living alone off campus	48
Living with roommates off campus	45
Living with spouse/partner	79
Other	19
Q. 12 What is your gender?	
Female	344
Male	197
Other	1
Q. 13 What is your year of birth?	
1990	0
1989	0
1988	3
1987	80
1986	70
1985	59
1984	51
1983	34

Results	
1982	42
1981	33
1980	18
1979	17
1978	16
1977	17
1976	6
1975	7
1974	11
1973	4
1972	11
1971	10
1970	6
1969	3
1968	2
1967	4
1966	3
1965	4
1964	2
1963	1
1962	2
1961	2
1960	3
1959	2
1958	2
1957	2
1956	1
1955	2
1954	0
1953	4
1952	1
1951	1
1950	0
Before 1950	6
Q.14 Do you have a long-term health problem or disability?	
Yes	29
No	489
Don't know/unsure	15
Prefer not to answer	9
Q. 15 Are you an Aboriginal person? (Inuit, Metis, North American Indian – either status or non-status)	
Yes	12
No	522
Don't know/unsure	3
Prefer not to answer	5
Q/ 16 Did you APPLY for financial assistance for your schooling at SFU? If yes, please select all that apply.	
No, I did not apply for financial assistance	322
Government Student Loans	164
Bank Sponsored Student Loans	20
University Scholarships	63
Bursaries	94
Workstudy	34
Grants	34
Q. 17 Did you RECEIVE financial assistance? Please select all that apply.	
I applied but I did not receive financial assistance	34
I did NOT apply for financial assistance	289
Government Student Loans	151

Results	
Bank Sponsored Student Loans	18
University Scholarships	63
Bursaries	63
Workstudy	25
Grants	23
Q. 18 If you were NOT awarded financial assistance, did this prevent you from continuing your university studies?	
Yes	33
No	267
Partly	58
Don't know/unsure	19
Not applicable – I was awarded financial assistance	158
Q. 19 What were the main sources of funding for your university education? Choose up to three.	
Employment Income (other than co-op)	261
Co-op Income	9
Bursary/Grants	49
Scholarship/Awards/Prizes	84
Parents/Relatives	274
Personal Savings	176
Spouse/Partner	22
Government Student Loan	143
Employer Subsidy	7
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs	0
First Nation/Band Assistance	4
Friend	3
Other	27
Q. 20 Were you successful in registering in the program you wanted to take at SFU?	
Yes	388
No	121
Not applicable	25
Don't remember	9
Q. 21 If you transferred to SFU from another institution, were you satisfied with the number of credits you were able to transfer?	
Yes	164
No	97
Not applicable – didn't transfer from another institution	281
Q. 22 Thinking of the courses you wanted to register in during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 timeframe, would you say you were able to register in ...	
All of them	135
Most of them	184
Some of them	162
None of them	47
Don't know/unsure	15
Q. 23 How satisfied were you with the availability of your professors outside the scheduled class time (class time does not include office hours) during the timeframe of September 2005 – August 2006?	
Very satisfied	76
Satisfied	297
Dissatisfied	22
Don't know/unsure	71
Q. 24 How satisfied were you with the availability of your Teaching Assistants (TAs) outside of the scheduled class time (class time does not include office hours) during the timeframe of September 2005 – August 2006?	
Very satisfied	67
Satisfied	282
Dissatisfied	58
Very dissatisfied	22
Don't know/unsure	69

Results	
Not applicable – courses didn't have TAs	45
Q. 25 How satisfied were you that your tests, assignments and examinations were graded fairly at SFU?	
Very satisfied	69
Satisfied	319
Dissatisfied	107
Very dissatisfied	31
Don't know/unsure	17
Q. 26 How satisfied were you with the design and structure of the courses you were enrolled in during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 timeframe?	
Very difficult/very challenging	41
Difficult/challenging	233
Appropriate	243
Easy/less challenging	20
Very easy/not challenging	5
Q. 28 Did you attend the Orientation provided by SFU?	
Yes	231
No	301
Don't remember	11
Q. 29 Did Orientation assist you in your transition to SFU?	
Yes	141
No	94
Don't remember	23
Did not attend orientation	285
Q. 30 Did you attend any other introductory sessions offered by the university? Select all that apply.	
Blueprints	61
Campus tours	77
Library tours	46
Department information sessions/tours	43
Did not attend any other introductory sessions	391
Q. 31 Overall, how would you describe your first month at SFU? Would you say it was...	
Positive	324
Negative	80
Neither	138
Q. 32 Please indicate which services you utilized during the Fall 2005 – Summer 2006 timeframe.	
University library	469
Computing labs	361
Science labs	97
Health, Counselling and Career Centre	125
Academic Advising in Registrar's Office	160
Academic Advising in your Department	176
Residence Advisor	19
Co-op	23
Disabilities Office	15
First Nations Office	5
International Student Office	25
Financial Assistance Office	74
Athletics and Recreation	127
None of the above	39
Q. 33 What was your main reason for leaving SFU?	
Required to withdraw for academic reasons	106
Planned to transfer to another institution – planned from when you first attended SFU	39
Poor grades or academic difficulty affected your decision to leave	16
Financial difficulty	28
Family, health related or personal circumstances	34
Job related (found a job or wanted to find a job)	25

Results	
Discovered that SFU was not for you	34
Felt that SFU did not meet the expectations that you had	41
Temporary Departure – I plan to return	160
Other	58
Q. 34 Please comment on your main reason to leave SFU.	
Comments included as Appendix 2	
Q. 35 SFU offers a variety of services to students. Please select all services that you used prior to making your decision to leave SFU.	
Academic Advising (in Student Services)	178
Academic Advising (within your program/department)	161
Personal Counselling Services	52
Learning or Study Skills Services	17
Career Counselling Services	31
Financial Assistance	46
First Nations Office	2
Disabilities Office	10
Athletics and Recreation Office	59
International Students Office	22
None of the above	228
Q. 36 Did you seek advice from anyone else about your decision to leave SFU? Select all that apply.	
Faculty member	52
Other member of university staff (not including residence advisor)	38
Friend or spouse	249
Parent	199
Coach	6
Residence Advisor	4
Former or present employer	39
Other	48
Did not seek advice from anyone else	208
Q. 37 At the time of your departure what was your overall perception of SFU? Would you say that it was...	
Very positive	49
Positive	193
Neutral	129
Negative	101
Very negative	55
Don't know/unsure	11
Q. 38 What could SFU have done, or what more could SFU have done, to assist you at the time you were deciding to leave?	
Comments included as Appendix 3	
Q. 39 Since leaving SFU are you now attending another educational institution on a full or part time basis?	
No, I am not attending an educational institution	247
University of British Columbia	43
University of British Columbia – Okanagan	2
University of Victoria	10
University of Northern British Columbia	0
University College of the Fraser Valley	6
Langara College	24
Douglas College	45
Kwantlen University College	34
Capilano College	8
British Columbia Institute of Technology	20
Another British Columbia institute	28
An Alberta institute	14
A Saskatchewan institute	2
A Manitoba institute	0

Results	
An Ontario institute	7
A Quebec institute	4
A Maritime institute	4
Other	39
Q. 40 Did you transfer to the same/similar program at your new institution?	
Yes	145
No	141
Don't know/unsure	11
Not applicable – not attending an institution	239
Q. 41 What was/is your main activity in the first 3 months since leaving SFU?	
Working full-time	234
Working part-time	70
Seeking work	21
Travelling	33
Caring for own children/parents/family member	23
Going to school	115
Family obligation	10
Other	33
Q. 42 What is your main activity now?	
Working full-time	191
Working part-time	41
Seeking work	17
Travelling	13
Caring for own children/parents/family member	16
Going to school	223
Family obligation	7
Other	32
Q. 43 How likely is it that you will return to SFU within the next 12 months?	
Very likely	163
Likely	94
Not likely	88
Not at all likely	134
Don't know/unsure	62
Q. 44 How likely is it that you will go to any post secondary institute in the next 12 months?	
Very likely	308
Likely	93
Not likely	43
Not at all likely	40
Don't know/unsure	49

Appendix 2: Comments from Survey

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
1	The exams were kind of unfair and couldn't take the amount of work in ENSC program; which result in RTW.
2	I quit the Co-op job becuase ¹ that job duty was not what I expected. The more terrible thing is, I can't register any course after that. So, I have to leave SFU for one term.
3	did not get all the courses i wanted and for the courses that i did get, i heard the instructors were not that good. so i decided to take a semester off.
4	I have a letter of permission to attend Langara as a visiting student to SFU. SFU was too far of a drive.
5	International tuition is terrible!!
6	I didn't find that there were enough programs with an attainable career goal at the end. The atmosphere was stuffy and stuck up, and I learned much more getting an Associates of Arts at Capilano College, then I felt I learned at SFU.
7	I am very upset by SFU/UBC adding a mandatory U-Pass fee to all students. It's not about not being able to afford the cost of the pass but rather the fact that for someone my age, taking one or two courses a semester (while working, raising a family), SFU clearly does not value student diversity (i.e., people who are not studying full-time in their early twenties). I have been making every effor to ensure that I only take distance education courses. This semester, no courses were available that met my criteria. I do, however, plan to return but the university really needs to explore its policy regarding the U-Pass and whether it wants to solicit a variety of students.
8	First semester I didn't make the grades and I didn't have enough motivation to pick myself up in second semester so I pretty much packed it in and applied for Kwantlen's journalism program.
9	To study for a standardized test.
10	Being too busy with my political activities for democracy in Vietnam, I have decided to temporarily stop my studies. I'll return to my studies at SFU.
11	I wanted to complete a fourth co-op term, prior to graduation so that I would have a co-op designation on my degree, as opposed to just a co-op certificate, however, the co-op office would not allow me to register for a fourth co-op term.
12	I came to SFU as a visiting student from another institution. My student loans were held up by SFU beuracracy who were cold, and at times hostile towards me when I asked for clarification. This, combined with mental health problems made the whole experience unbearable. I didn't see my student loan money until about five weeks after classes started and by that time it was too late, I'd already come undone. The hell with admissions, registration and financial aid combined with their blinding incompetence, hostility and ambivalence made for a very unpleasant semester. The constant anxiety and uncertainty literally sent me over the edge. SFU drove me crazy. I was unable to work or function properly for about four months. I certainly dont' blame SFU for all of this, but had the administration been a little bit more sensitive and forthcoming with information I certainly would have been able to function for that period.
13	Felt burnt out and that I could not devote enough effort required for good grades to move on. Also, because of the ever increasing student loan debt. I was worried I did not have enough loans left to finish school at my current rate.
14	Unsure about career goals.

¹ Sic. All errors by survey respondents are uncorrected in all tables.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
15	The School of contemporary Arts was going through some changes. everything was in upheaval. Nobody knew what courses you needed to graduate. There was some accidents in the faculty that led to instability in the department. I found a new university that had built a new arts department with a new theatre that was far superior to the one at SFU. They aggressively pursued me because of my grades.
16	I need to take four history classes to meet the social studies requirement for the PDP, and only one course is available via correspondence. I currently live in Japan and am unable to complete my prerequisites with SFU via distance learning, and so I will be forced to go to school as a full-time student as of September 2007 for a single semester before I hopefully start the PDP in Jan of 2008. I wish that there was a more comprehensive selection of undergrad distance education courses.
17	It was a combination of me feeling that my life and personal development were in a huge slump, and my perception that SFU was a second rate school (compared to UBC) was contributing to that. Overall I wasn't at all excited with continuing to live at home and attending SFU. I had the money saved up, so I transferred to UBC and am now living in residence.
18	autism and depression
19	My mom was diagnosed with cancer. Although it shouldn't kill her for several years, it is untreatable. I transferred to UBC Okanagan to complete my studies closer to her.
20	Felt burnt out after so many consecutive semesters
21	required to withdraw for the 2nd time
22	I didn't know what i wanted to do so even when i got bumped into arts instead of my first choice (business), I still tried to get back into business so I took economics and accounting and did soo bad i was required to withdraw. If i have know i wouldn't of taken those courses.
23	I flunked out.
24	could not take courses due to time constraints
25	Had to attend sister's wedding for one month in another country. I would have missed too many classes/exams.
26	starting to work to save some money to study.
27	Planned to enter the electrical trade rather than pursue degree at SFU
28	SFU in my opinion is a research based institution that is not geared toward academic excellence. The academia at SFU is based on reading a book and writing a exam. There is no real interaction between professors and students and not much is learned outside of what you teach yourself. However, I think SFU puts a lot of effort to support students, which is great.... but what about professors. They all seem to be more interested in their research rather than to actually teach. The only profeessor out of eight i had, that was helpful and felt like he wanted to teach was a Phd student at SFU. Overall I think SFU was awsome, but the quality of education in my opinion (being critical and comapring to other institutions) is one that is based on not learning but writing exams and getting your marks. As a student myself working on research projects I hope i have helped you out on your project and understand how hard it is to get participants sometimes... all the luck to ya!!
29	SFU was not offering the program that I wanted. Felt I was wasting time with classes irrelevant to many career choice.
30	Main reason why I 'failed' at completing a degree is because I started to work too much and not focus on school enough. If I had the finances to take full time course loads I would not work and focus on that. But because my parents, brothers and sisters and I depend on my income I started to work more and started to fail courses because my load was too big.
31	Pursued the Nursing Program at UBC, SFU obvioulsy does not offer a nursing program, so I had to leave
32	I no longer wish to continue in the Engineering Science program at SFU.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
33	am completing degree at kwantlen
34	but there were so many! depressing; cold; horrible teachers; ridiculous expectations; too far away; even my classmates i sometimes couldnt stand (mostly first years); more expensive than its worth; wouldnt get me too far (what will a BSc really get me? besides min wage at a boring job as a result of 4-6 years of torture); wanted a different education at a closer school where the program actually made me interested to learn (i found this by the way, and its a shorter program and surprisingly much easier but very related-- in other words, basically same subject but they know how to teach it); i didnt feel like i was learning anything, just memorizing pointless details. i also just decided that if i didnt like something why do it. oh and SO DIFFICULT to actually reach anybody. they dropped me out of my classes one semester because the semester before one teacher didnt get the grades in on time, so they took that as a fail and i got dropped out, spent hours on hold with the same people swtiching me back and forth because no one wanted it to be their problem. i didnt end up going that semester.
35	I began looking for a new job and so at over \$700 a course, could not see the wisdom in taking a course while unemployed.
36	Program I became interested in was not offered at SFU
37	Now at BCIT in program not offered by SFU
38	I am being a visiting student at UVic because they offer some very interesting upper-level psyc classes that SFU doesn't offer.
39	I was Required to withdraw
40	I am an employee taking courses one at a time. If my employment situation gets too busy I do not take a course that semester.
41	UBC has a better reputation.
42	RTW
43	no pharmacy program
44	Transfer to another University
45	Accepted to the UBC Teacher Education Program for September 2006.
46	Got a job offer to work as a Software Engineer for Electronic Arts and although that is not my main goal or desired employer, I just know that in the year contract I have I will learn much more on the job and become more marketable in the job forscce then finishing my degree at SFU Surrey which seems to always find a way to destroy good learning oppurtunities with poor course development and delivery.
47	Found a job that allowed me to travel the world for 1-3 years. I plan to return to finish my degree after this period.
48	I discovered in my time at SFU, that although I did enjoy he university and the opportunities available to me to get involved there, that there was not a program that interested me for the future. This influenced me to leave.
49	Wanted to do some travelling and take a bit of time of. I am spending a year in Australia. I plan to return to SFU in Fall 2007.
50	I was required to withdraw from SFU, but I plan to come back soon.
51	I was RTW as I was suffering from personal family related issues and did not seek out or utilize the proper help that I needed. Therefore, I was not in the right state to attend school but did so anyways.
52	Langara is now offering a BBA and they accept all my credits towards the program no matter what order they were taken in.
53	Go into medical laboratory science at bcit. Comming out of that program I know I can get started on my career. With just a B.sc in Biology its difficult to find jobs nowadays...in fact half of my program at bcit now is degree holding
54	I changed my mind about what I wanted to study, from psychology to nutrition, and since SFU doesn't offer a nutrition degree I had to transfer to UBC.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
55	I transferred from SFU because I wanted to attend UBC.
56	Extremely dissatisfied in all areas of help and reasonable grading available, I had many disputes while using the distance learning program over seas, I found that there was little cooperation when situations arised and it made it very negative and difficult for me. I find SFU burnaby campus depressing and very negative place to be while studying. The staff is less than acceptatble and help is hard to find
57	I was at SFU on an exchange.
58	my main reason was that i was required to withdraw. I have full intentions of returning next Fall.
59	I suggest to inform students about the RTW more, warn them prior time, and inform the reality about the RTW so that they won't make any mistake when they take courses and survive in the courses. Sepicific and real information about how to survive in the course is needed.
60	Finished BGS in Spring '05, and was taking further courses for interest and because I hoped to do grad studies... was not accepted to grad program, so have not returned.
61	Stubbornly refused to withdraw from courses in which I had no aptitude. By the time I figured out what I was good at, I was RTW.
62	It has taken me longer to complete my program because of a new demanding job, and health reasons.
63	required to withdraw, thats the only reason
64	Main reason for temporarily leaving is the tuition costs, my housing and raising my 10 year old. I relied heavily on distance ed.
65	I did not plan to leave the University but was not able to register in the courses I still needed to take before proceeding to my upper divisions. Since I was inactive for two semester I have since then last my standing as a SFU student. I dislike this policy and probably because of this reason and the inflexibility of the university to allow full time workers to continue their education, probably will not return to SFU as the return policy requires same high grades as in the initial application.
66	A serious illness in my immediate family. This meant moving to Victoria. However, I was much more excited at getting the chance to attend UVic after having spent a year at SFU.
67	Given the fact that I am already 37 years old and that I want to be available to my kids until they are older, thus taking classes part time only, it would have taken me too long to complete the education required at a university in order to translate that into a job situation. Also, I realized that my finances do not allow for such a long course of study in order to become employable, which was my main objective.
68	Just taking a semester off
69	I can only stay registered as a SFU student and not take classes for 3 semesters and this is the last semester. I have to either take a class or I will have to reapply to SFU.
70	I was in a car accident in the middle of the semester. I was hit by a vehicle and injured my left knee, hip, and lowerback. I had a difficult time with two of my courses and was seeking assistance from TA's because I did not do well on the first midterm and was determined to do better on my second midterms. The weekend before midterms I was hit by the car and I could not attend my classes or tests, and in order for my professor(for both of my classes) to let me out of the test he allowed me to take the percentage of my first exams count and use it as a grade for my second exams as well. This was the most difficult decision I had to make because I did poorly on the first midterms. At the time I was unable to walk properly, sit or even lay down for long periods of time without being in pain so I knew that I could not bear to write the exams because I couldn;t even concentrate on studying. And I was still traumatized about the hit and run. I entered SFU with a 3.21 GPA and left on Academic Probation. I am used to getting good grades and was unhappy with my GPA at SFU. I was only one class awayfrom getting into the degree program that I wanted, and was unable to enter the program because of my low GPA. So I left to attend another institution

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
	that would count credit for the classes that I took at SFU, and disregard my GPA from SFU, and count my old GPA of 3.21, as well as be able to enter the degree program that I desired.
71	need some prerequisite courses in order to apply to PDP but due to my work schedule, classes i needed were not available at sfu during the evening therefore, i needed to take these courses at another institution
72	Personal Reasons, which include me having to be out of the country for more than a month
73	Not the friendliest environment especially by teachers. Also some personal issues.
74	poor performance
75	Had I have the option, I would have finished my program somewhere else. I do not consider SFU as a student friendly university.
76	I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to SFU or UBC, but since UBC only accepted students in the Fall or Summer time, I decided to go to SFU for the spring semester. It was gloomier than I expected it to be and that really affected me personally, so I transferred to UBC.
77	i got kicked out..
78	As an international student I found a good job in my country, so I plan to return next September. By this way I expect to finish my degree with one year working experience.
79	I started my family. I attended school while pregnant with my first child and afterwards. When I became pregnant for the second time, I decided to stay at home for an undetermined amount of time.
80	Being a non-practising teacher for several years I need to do the recertification program. I took a course in the summer as unclassified and I would like to continue at SFU as I currently live in Burnaby, but I find the application requirements for the HEART program extremely time-consuming. I have a degree from UBC, which accepted me back just by answering a few short questions.
81	too busy out of school to dedicate enough time/effort
82	Currently Financial difficulty is my main reason to leave SFU temporary
83	I was accepted into a program at a another institution (program that was my main goal for being at SFU
84	Travelling right now. Plan to return.
85	SFU only gives one chance to pull up the SGPA or GPA for students who were required withdraw students which it was very challenging and difficult to pull up the GPA to above 2.0.
86	I took one semester off to do a 6 month internship in Italy. I will be back in January.
87	Didn't get into the Business Faculty, which was my first choice... Due to personal problems during the fall semester, I did poorly in that semester and was unable to raise my grades high enough to make it into the business faculty.
88	After being mislead into thinking transfer into my program was all but assured, I attended classes thinking I needed to take a few courses to bridge the requirement gap between educational institutions. In reality I had been duped in that my transfer GPA was dropped 0.3 thus rendering me ineligible for admission into my program. Further, I saw the department for what it truly was, a profit maximizing entity operating within the deceptively altruistic intentions of a University. I was surrounded by people who memorized information but couldn't explain it in their own words, who couldn't speak english well enough to convey a point and who paid through the nose to cover tuition costs to earn a degree they would never use in Canada. I was disillusioned with the atmosphere and environment of my intended program.
89	I don't really know what to say. My marks were low for 2 consecutive semesters, I was too foolish to do anything about it, and eventually was required to leave.
90	temporary departure

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
91	Required to withdraw for academic reasons
92	did not work hard enough
93	As a mature student with considerable work experience I was enrolled in an undergraduate program but had subsequently applied for two Masters level programs which were open to "non-traditional" (i.e. non-BA holding) students -- one at SFU, one elsewhere. Acceptance at the latter meant I could effectively "skip" a step (and save money!) by going directly into a graduate program. Although I was eventually accepted into the SFU Masters program I to which I had applied, I was forced by a deadline to choose the other institution. I did not find out that I had been accepted into the SFU Masters program until well after the expected response date and after I had already given my confirmation to the other institution.
94	Health reasons...i want to finish my last semester in full health.
95	Required to withdraw from SFU due to the low GPA
96	Attending UBC
97	I am traveling abroad and living in Europe for a year.
98	I wanted to pursue Middle Eastern History/Studies, SFU does not offer at this time a sufficient program to do so. There is only 1st year Farsi being taught and no Arabic, two languages crucial to understanding the Middle East. Also, not much variety in courses being offered.
99	Could not get into the only class I could enroll for. The others have pre-requisites, and were during the day at the Burnaby campus (whereas Vanc. campus is much more convenient, given that I work in this area).
100	Now studying at U of Toronto. Felt like it's a more pretigious and betterknown university
101	I moved to Europe with my husband and worked there.
102	Was studying through Distance Education. Found TM unorganized, no direction or contact with TM, no response to questions or inquiries until AFTER my final exam. The courses I was interested in are not available Distance Learning, just 400 level course with high credit requirements. Too long of a mailing distance to send assignments out of province and too expensive. cannot afford to quit full time job, move to burnaby and be a poverty stricken student for 4 years.
103	I was given the run around by admissions and was unable to get a single course relevent to my degree
104	Too much money, not enough reward!
105	It was a long commute and I questioned my intentions for my future. I wasn'r sure what program I wanted to continue with. I didn't want to waste money if I wasn't sure.
106	Lost interest in the engineering options offered. Wanted to study other engineering options.
107	i was a visiting student for the summer 2006 semester, thus i knew i was going to leave after that time.
108	1) I wasn't accepted into the school of business so applied to BCIT's BBA Program and was accepted there. 2) Since I was accepted into BCIT's program I chose to complete my general education studies at SFU. 3) The number of credits SFU transfered from BCIT was 0. I have over 120 credits from BCIT.
109	Taking courses part-time in the eveings because I have a full time job. This semester the timing was just not working out. Will probably register for Jan 2007.
110	I felt that SFU was too large and impersonal for me. Also I felt that the building itself was very depressing to be in during school. I wanted to be a name not just a student number.
111	Have an extended deferral for the summer 2006 semester, due to an ongoing disability. Plan to return for the spring 2007 semester.
112	I had 2 family members pass away and it affected me in many ways, unfortunatley i was not able to bring my grades back up before I was required to withdraw

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
113	I am a mature student interested in taking a few courses, perhaps to work towards a degree. In some terms, such as this one, I need to be away and would prefer to take a non-paced distance course, but this is not available through SFU. I also found the examining of the distance course I took in the fall of 2005 to be poor and somewhat arbitrary. I would still like to take more courses at SFU in future.
114	I am leaving SFU because I am currently taking a high demand broadcasting program at SAIT in Calgary. I am still going to attend SFU either by distance next semester or in the summer while I am in this 2 year diploma program. I am trying to finish my education in the most efficient way I see fit.
115	Difficult personal circumstances. Lack of time; too much stress; far commute.
116	-initially health issues caused cessation of loans etc.so I could no longer afford to study - now I work full-time (at SFU) and, despite now having free tuition and a desire to continue, there are not enough 3rd and 4th year psychology courses offered eith
117	I had a baby, and found I couldn't care for a newborn and take courses. I plan to enroll in one class in Jan, 2007.
118	I needed to get credits at SFU, so I can graduate else where. Now, i am a graduate at Kwantlen University College. My goal was to get a bachelor in applied journalism. I needed 12 more upper-level credits in political science in order to get a degree in journalism
119	Financial - I support my spouse, child, and academic development
120	The _main_ reason I left SFU is because I am employed full-time and the hours to the courses I am required to take is available only in the mornings, spread out throughout the week. I find this unreasonable and difficult while trying to hold down a full-time job.
121	needed a break from school and work, prolonged period (about 3 years) without such a break was affecting my ability to focus
122	I wanted to see if my career choice really interested me. I went to a career college and took a Pharmacy Assistant program. I didn't want to spend so much time and effort and in the end hate what I was doing. After knowing that I was for sure leaving, I started to slack off and my grades then started to suffer. I knew that I kind of needed a break.
123	Was charged a fee for dropping a course two days past the due date due to family problems (death and displacement) and am unable to afford to pay the fee (\$500+) and was denied appeal. I cannot pay it off and cannot get a student loan until it is paid off. I also do not qualify for financial assistance (bursaries etc.) at SFU but was qualified for financial assistance at Capilano College which is a smaller institution.
124	Financial shortage regarding : -the course's fees -daycare for my kids -I'm unemployed
125	Financial strain was my main reason for not attending this semester; however, I plan on returning in the immediate future after working for a few months.
126	I don't think I really wanted to be there. I wasn't ready for it. I had medical difficulties in Secondary School and just began to open up and started making friends but then it was over and I didn't know anybody in SFU. I hated the one hour commute by skytrain and bus. Everything about SFU Surrey was drastically out of my comfort zone. I even joined the TechOne program because it was the only way to get into a university despite the fact that I was terrible at computers and technology. The main reason I left though is probably in the first month when it all started to go downhill. I recieved a C- on a one page paper. I had been an english honours student who had gotten Bs without trying. I got a C- without even trying.
127	I want to work to earn enough money to finish my time with only having to work weekends, so that I may concentrate on my studies
128	It was forced upon me due to my inability to maintain a CGPA of 2.0
129	Interference from spouse & family members
130	I was put into the general arts program however i wanted to persue a degree in business and was not allowed to get into that program.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
131	was accepted to law school before finishing my degree at SFU
132	Didn't have Pharmacy Degree or Nursing? SFU is more ARTS than Science!
133	Health issues made it so I couldn't even finish my course. Not strong enough to reapply.
134	I had another type of study in mind and chose not to pursue a post-baccalaureate at this time.
135	financial difficulties prevent me from taking classes each semester and i am often limited in the nnumber of classes i can take in any given semester because of finances
136	I could not handle the work load. I did not prioritize my courses. There were too many for me and they were all demanding.
137	i do not have enough money. i do not qualify for financial aid- i was not registered for enough credits. In order to take more courses, i need more money- but if i take more courses i would have to work less hours and have LESS money.
138	I could not imagine myself spending another 3 years there to finish my degree. I also didn't like the large classes and tutorials. I found it more helpful at college when all the classes were small and we didn't have a need for tutorials.
139	i was required to withdraw but am planning on continuing my degree at sfu as soon as i can.
140	tuition fees are too high. I am struggling to pay last semester's tuition fees, and therefore I cannot register in the current semester. I am currently working, and paying off my student loan from previous studies, and am not eligible for a student loan because I can only do part-time studies. Because tuition fees are so high, I don't feel that it would be wise to leave my job and go to school full time.
141	I wanted to go to UCFV for dental hygiene. The prereq's are more convenient there (KPE 270 then KPE 370). Whereas at SFU you take Kin 105 and then you need a lot of other courses to take Kin 205.
142	I'm taking some time to save more money through my job to pay for the remaining classes that I need to complete the program. While I'm not all that happy with the program, I do intend to finish it as I'm using it as a stepping stone to other programs at other institutions.
143	I wants to take PQP and it starts in january. Now, i have applied for PQP.If i get admission in PQP i will be back in january.
144	I played on the varsity volleyball team at SFU and decided to transfer to UBC because they have a much better volleyball program.
145	it would take me much longer to complete my BBA
146	athletics - to move to europe had zero academic motivation
147	I'm not leaving SFU. I'm just writing my honours thesis and not taking any classes at the moment. I did not make the deadline to convocate in Fall 2006 so I'm planning on graduating in Summer 2007. I'm also looking for a full-time job to transition from being a student to a working-adult.
148	family moved away from BC, I left with them, and for financial reasons decided it was best to transfer to a university close to home
149	I hated Burnaby and it was either stay there alone to finish uni or move to the island and be near family and my love
150	Have "left" SFU because I have taken the required numbers of credits to graduate. Now finishing some final projects before I apply to graduate.
151	From the start I knew that SFU is not the kind of school I wanted to attend. It felt very unfriendly and too large to get noticed or feel accepted. Also, a lot of the courses were not offered on a regular basis, and there were too many elective requisites that had nothing to do with majors.
152	I decided I wanted to go into Nursing and SFU doesn't have a nursing program. As well, the atmosphere at SFU was getting to me, and I don't think I would have returned for a 3rd year even if they had a nursing program.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
153	For this term, Fall 2006, there was no class in the department of Gerontology that I wanted to take. They usually offer few courses for Fall semesters; and most courses are offered during the Spring term. I wish some of the courses [that I need for PBD program in Gerontology] would have been offered during the Fall term!!!
154	RTW- I tried my best to study chemistry, but I realized chemistry or science wasn't my strength. My grades did not reflect my effort.
155	I am planning to go back to SFU next semester but found this year overwhelming with moving away from home and out of the province. Other personal circumstances made me decide to take some time off.
156	no courses being offered by distance ed that were part of my post bach in ECE. Only courses I had already taken
157	i got accepted by other uni which is much closer to where i live.
158	gpa was below 2.0 for 2 consecutive terms
159	I transferred to UVic because it is cheaper, has health benefits, provides a nicer environment, and has smaller classes. I didn't like the TA program because I didn't like the quality of marking and instruction from TAs. At UVic my profs mark my work.
160	Lack of motivation to finish studies.
161	There was an illness (one of my parents) and wanted to be near family, so I transferred to another institution.
162	I originally attended Kwantlen University College, and I attended SFU to explore my career and educational options given its reputation. However, I eventually decided that Kwantlen's Applied Psychology degree is more suitable to me than SFU's traditional psychology degree.
163	Required to Withdraw as I was on Academic Probation
164	I graduated in 2005, and returned to take a few more classes until I got into UBC
165	I moved out over the summer and promptly ran out of money. I have no interest in being burdened with a student loan and would prefer to take more time and fewer courses and work my way through my final semesters.
166	extended withdraw with lots of credits, going back is unresonable
167	I feel the classes are not adequately preparing me for a job in my chosen profession. I am learning about very unrelated concepts, just to get the piece of paper to get a better job. I am taking a break from school but may return to finish my degree at some point.
168	Required to withdraw for academic reasons
169	I was not able to get into classes required for my degree.
170	I am in New Zealand on an exchange program outside of school. I have been here for the Summer and Fall 2006 semesters, but will be returning in Jan 2007
171	I did not like the atmosphere (in the lectures/classes or outside of them) at SFU, I transferred over from Capilano College and I preferred it much better there. If I needed help I did not know where to look or what to do which pushed me even more to leave.
172	course schedule was too inflexible. no night time science classes offered, and i needed to keep my job in order to pay for school. transfered to another institution.
173	I want to pursue nursing and sfu does not have a nursing program.
174	A combination of medical reasons, needing sugery, and a desire to see what else the world has to offer. I miss SFU a lot, however.
175	Had to withdraw due to work commitments but planned to take another course in the fall (now I will be attending UBC). I was one day late from withdrawing but the individual responsible for reviewing my 'case' had no concept of what real life and a real job mean and denied my withdrawl.
176	Did not CHOOSE to leave, was required to withdraw due to unsatisfactory grades and lack of attendance.
177	I got accepted into another program

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
178	My parents wanted me to transfer to UBC. As for myself, I didn't really mind staying or leaving because I think both universities are equally good.
179	The classes I took were wrong for what I wanted to do.
180	Friends
181	The general depressing nature of going to school on a dark cloudy mountain inside a cement box.
182	asked to withdraw
183	Realized it wasn't for me. It is way too big for me. I felt like a number.
184	i changed my degree..instead going to BCIT for medical radiology
185	I am finishing my degree elsewhere
186	I completed my degree in 2005. I am just taking courses purely for interest until I go back full time for Graduate studies.
187	I entered SFU as a mature student. Before applying, I called SFU to ask about availability of evening courses. It was very frustrating because you cannot see any schedules until you actually get accepted. I was assured that SFU caters to mature students and that there were many evening course choices. This turned out to be absolutely incorrect. There are very few 1st year evening choices. It is impossible to work a full-time career and attend school 3 days per week just to take one first year course. Many of the courses would require 3 visits to campus just for one course - this is crazy. I work downtown and most of the first year courses are on the mountain. If the courses had been downtown, it may have been doable but adding the time to commute to the time for the classes would mean that I would have to quit my career in order to attend school. I would still like to pursue a degree in anthro/socio but I am not willing to sacrifice my career. I tried to get some advise through the various service offices at SFU but the answer was simply too bad, so sad. I was told to check out the online options.
188	as a mature student and working during the daytime and very much wanting to study evenings SFU offers almost NO evening classes appropriate to what I was studying
189	I only attended SFU in the Spring 2006 to take a course I needed to apply to the teacher education program(PDP). I applied to both SFU and UBC teaching program. Ideally, UBC had the middle school program I wished to take.
190	I had failed one more class and was required to leave, even though i thought i was slowly doing better.
191	Unable to get off AP
192	Travel time was too long. Also I was not able to get any courses that I wanted during second semester.
193	I applied and was accepted into a more career-focused program at another institution.
194	I was accepted into UBC's medical school and was not required to finish 4th year. I started med school on Aug 28th.
195	Was RTW stemming from personal issues with academic work.
196	I am just taking a semester off due to family and financial issue. I will be back during Spring 2007
197	did not offer the program i wanted to pursue; the faculty i wanted to switch to was difficult to be accepted into
198	I was unable to receive my student loan, and live on my own. I am taking this semester off and will finish as much as I can through distance ed.
199	Moved to Downtown and going to UBC is closer. Both parents graduated from UBC so it seems more natural for me to go to UBC.
200	required to withdraw
201	my desired program" civil eng" doesnt offer at sfu.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
202	First semester three courses all failed, second and third semesters OK, I didn't know the first semester failed would affect to require withdrawal. otherwise I would drop all courses of the first semester earlier.
203	I work part time. It takes me over an hour to get to SFU from Downtown Vancouver where I live. It is extremely inconvenient to have staggered class times 2 or 3 times a week during the day and schedule work around it. There are not enough evening classes or downtown classes that take place once or even twice a week. It is not feasible for someone who is working to go to school 3 times a week and try to find classes that they need which will fit together nicely side by side each day for their schedule. It also takes far too long to get to SFU and the SFU express bus from downtown has far too many stops. I am seriously considering switching to UBC, simply because the transit to UBC is far more efficient. Class times should be more convenient for students, rather than when teachers want to teach. Not all students are wealthy enough or have the family support to be able to live at home and go to school at their convenience; for those who have to work to survive, Universities in general, create too many barriers for poor students to be able to finish their degrees. I was not eligible for student loans or financial help precisely because I was only interested in taking 1 or 2 courses and working at the same time. I have no interest or desire to increase my already significant student loan debt by taking out more loans and returning to school full time, but it seems unrealistic if not impossible to finish my degree while working part time unless I find a very flexible job, that is willing to make allowances for staggered class times and with travel time added on, it leaves me with very little time to actually study or work.
204	Family reason
205	nothing much...just required to withdraw
206	I am taking the fall semester off to travel to Nepal and will return for the spring 2007
207	-lack of sense of belonging -course material/homework assignment lack of attraction -a big jump btw the lower/upper course material/expectations -some upper level courses are too challenging and it's hard to manage over three/four of them at the same time
208	I am taking time off in order to deal with my problems with depression and anxiety. I would like to regain some of the enthusiasm I used to have for school.
209	I need to take a semester break and my father needs me to help him during the break.
210	A promotion that did not allow me to schedule classes in between work hours.
211	attended UBC at the same time, was only at SFU to take one specific class for one semester.
212	the TA's told me to try harder, they didn't speak english. there was no motivation to do the work or try hard if no one was there to encourage you or help you along the way
213	Ran out of money. Because I was forced to attend school on a part-time basis, I eventually became ineligible for the Open Scholarship I had been receiving (which requires 24 sem hrs over a 3 semester period).
214	Financial difficulty was the largest reason. It was just too expensive to pay through P/T work. I also could not get the courses required to move through my degree, making my education process that much longer.
215	financial difficulties led to poor grades which led to academic withdrawal
216	My brother died. I am taking fall 2006 off.
217	not enough money to stay
218	I was somewhat dissatisfied with my professor who came across as arrogant and disinterested in my goals for his course.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
219	I found that most courses I wanted were not offered in the evening. I work full time and find taking courses that begin 6pm onwards easier for me to attend. I think more women course studies should be offered in the evening to accommodate people who work full time. Unfortunately at this time I can not afford to attend the courses since they do not meet my time requirements and hope this does change in the future to allow other full time working students the opportunity to take evening courses.
220	I was planning on moving to Kelowna and so I registered at UBC Okanagan Campus
221	i wasn't happy with the all around attitude and environment of SFU
222	no comment, personal confidential
223	Decided to return back to the university that I transferred from because SFU didn't meet my expectations. Campus life was nonexistent, course selection wasn't varied, and the number of papers/assignments made me question if I would even survive university.
224	financial difficulties
225	I got accepted into a full time nursing program at UBC
226	The cost of living, and the competitiveness among the students were a major factor. Also, the enormous class sizes.
227	I have a disability and my condition worsened.
228	There are actually two reasons; one, like everyone, I needed money. However I don't believe in using student loans, therefore I am going to go work for the semester. The second reason is that I was unable to get even half of the classes I wished to have, so I thought it would be a good chance to get more money.
229	since I was returning to University after 10 years I hoped I would be able to finish off my degree within a couple years. Unfortunately most of the course I needed were required courses to get into Pdp. However it seemed I never got an early enough enrollment appointment, by the time I went to enroll very few courses(in any area) were available for me. I needed to reconsider my goals of becoming a teacher because I am not prepared at 32 years old to spend the next 5-10 years in school in order to become a teacher. I cannot for my family's sake be out of the work force for that long a period of time and that's the way I seemed to be headed.
230	Due to a back injury that affected me from April to August of 2006, my Spring and Summer semester grades were bad enough to require me to withdraw. SFU had denied my applications for retrospective withdrawal for extenuating circumstances.
231	I was on a letter of permission from another institution. I finished at SFU when the courses I was attempting to attain were completed. I am currently graduating from my 'home' university in Ontario.
232	Friends not attending SFU
233	I am unable to take any classes at this time b/c I do not have any savings and no funding. I live on my own and have alot of expenses and I had to get a full time job to pay for my expenses. Government loans did not fund enough to pay for my schooling and living expenses so I am waiting to return to SFU once I have money saved up.
234	I was offered a full-time position with the youth movement that I currently volunteer with. I would have like to keep one course, but with the student fees, the cost did not seem worth it. I am also finishing correspondence courses from a private college.
235	cheaper to complete last courses elsewhere, no reason to do it at SFU and so frustrated with registrar, dept. advisor, bureaucratic nightmares I could scream. eventually plan to get degree from SFU. also had to return to work full-time as savings had run out.
236	I got married, moved, was out of town , and had a very busy upcoming season at work, so I took the semester off.
237	Without the funds to pay for my last semester's tuition, I was unable to register for the next semester or graduate.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
238	I do plan to return but right now I know it is not for me. I spent 2003 in Australia on a student exchange and 2005 in Shanghai on a year Co-op work "term" and it has changed my views on alot of things. My degree (psychology) no longer works for me and I am not sure what I want to do. Courses and studying were too difficult when I got back and I realised I was wasting time being at school just drifting around. So I am taking a year out of studying to see if I want to go back to SFU or do a child/youth counseling diploma at Douglas, or something else all together. I loved SFU when I was first there and I do miss it now, but the tone of classes and the narrow view of alot of profs sort of turned me off towards the end.
239	I am now enrolled in BCIT's broadcast and media tv program which SFU does not offer.
240	i wanted to get into coop but then couldn't so i decided to take 4 months break
241	I had some family problems. And Also SFU didn't give me a time ticket for registering. although I called them many times and they said that I can register.
242	I got a full time job in my field, which took most of my time. My wife and I also bought our 'first home' (condo) in Vancouver. I want to see how I am financially before committing to courses again. So far things have gone well and I will be registering to complete my final credits in the Jan-2007 session.
243	traveling
244	UBC has a better reputation.
245	I'm a single parent and find it extremely difficult to attend university financially. I've had many, many pitfalls regarding this issue and at the moment find it impossible to return to my studies.
246	I was in the Arts with the plans to transfer into the Business Admin program but could not bring up my GPA to meet the requirements. I felt that I should not waste my time taking other classes to bring up my GPA there
247	I did poorly in my classes because I was forced into the area of study by my parents and did not care about my grades.
248	I was only there for a summer field school
249	work related
250	Needed money, took one semester off to work full-time
251	I was RTW but looked at it in a positive way. I was not happy during my time @ SFU mainly because the classes were not enjoyable and I didnt study and my grades reflected this. I am currently enroled @ Douglas College and I have never looked back. The teachers are better @ Douglas and the atmosphere is the same.
252	i was drained from too many semesters in a row and needed some time off
253	I was attending SFU in the distance education program, as a mature student. I came to SFU with 90 post secondary credits. All at the college level. I was originally told that I would be considered for many transfer credits and that i would have to apply in order to find out how many exactly I would get. Very long story short, I went through about 20 hoops in order to find out how may credits I was entitled to. Including submitting a full detailed course outline for all 90 credits twice because the first one was lost. As they were being looked at, they made me take an introductory class which i got nothing out of and was a waiste of time. I was told after about 6 months of calling and going to the school, that I was only going to get 3 credits transferred. This would be fine but I would have liked to know much much sooner so i didn't waiste that much time. Noone would answer any questions. Everyone I spoke with put me off to someone else. So my SFU experience was terrible and I wish I had never even applied.
254	Withdrew from PDP, reapplying for Jan 2007
255	I spent my school year and my summer working to save up for a trip to Europe with 3 friends for the summer of 2006, and lam now saving up to come back to SFU for the Spring term. I will hopefully not be taking anymore breaks.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
256	I only needed to take 3 courses for my career upgrade. When I finished the 3 courses I had no reason to continue studying at SFU.
257	got into a better program
258	Not enough evening courses to accommodate my work schedule.
259	program at Masters level not offered on line
260	Started working full-time and courses were not available. Registration was frustrating because there were no courses I wanted to register for and BCIT offered a better program and course availability. BCIT is much more flexible and understanding to coordinate with work and outside activities. The majority of students these days are not only going to school. Because tuition is so expensive, the majority of us are working to pay for school.
261	temporarily away for fall semester, will return spring semester. I wanted to take a break from 3 years of consecutive schooling.
262	SFU does not offer the courses I need to complete my program when I can take them. I work full time to support my wife and 3 children. I could afford the tuition but couldn't work my work schedule around the courses I needed to take. These courses are never offered during the evening, when I can attend classes and there are not enough distance education courses--not very progressive. This caused me to take courses that I did not really need or had no interest in, just for the sake of getting a credit and keeping my student status active. I have determined that SFU is not an equal opportunity institution, that it caters to those who are recently graduated from high school and not to those who want to better themselves and grow an already established career.
263	PDP is for future teachers, people who do not suffer from stage fright, like crowds, and have leadership ability,
264	I wanted to pursue entry to professional school. SFU's unfair grading system that allows different standard for same class depending on whomever taught the course, inadequacy and unfairness of some of the professors, a unbelievably ridiculous CMPT 110 course in which honest students got lower mark than those who cheated..and overall indifferent atmosphere, that were evident at times, made me leave.
265	family circumstance caused poor performance and eventually resulted in Required to Withdrawl.
266	i have to work at least 25 hours a week to maintain full time studies at sfu and be qualified for financial assistance, which hardly covers anything. sfu is also very far from where i live and work. i also could not get into the courses i wanted and needed. i do like sfu as a university, but it's just not right for me
267	I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, and felt that spending a lot of time, effort, and money on classes I wasn't sure I was passionate about seemed wasteful.
268	found a job and plan on taking 1 course in the Winter semester and 1 course per semester after that until I get requirements for graduation.
269	my GPA was not high enough to stay.All because I was .5% away from a grade in one class and the teacher would not bump me up.
270	got probation
271	I was offered a job opportunity in Europe that required I take a semester off of classes.
272	I haven't left. I'm taking a semester off. A non-summer semester. CRAY-ZEE.
273	I had an excellent job opportunity which will not be available to me again, and I am recovering from a medical problem. I plan to return in the future to SFU.
274	It happened so sudden, I was running out of money plus I was disillusioned about not being able to transfer all of my credits to get the standing in the program I wanted to do. In my first semester, Summer 2005, I tried to ease my way into university life by taking one course, but I was also taking courses at another college with the plan to transfer the credits over to SFU when I became a full-time student in Fall 2005; however, this is not allowed unless the university approves your request to take courses at other institutions and I was unaware of this, so I basically felt like an academic outlaw.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
275	financial reasons. I cannot afford to quit my job to go to school full time, and the courses I require for the program I'd like to take are not offered outside of my work hours. I am saving up.
276	because I was not able to enroll in the courses I wanted, I had to enroll in courses that were not my interests and didnt do as well as I would have liked. I figured that transferring to a college where there is less stress and smaller class sizes will aide in my confidence level and I will get the courses that I want. It is also less expensive as I do not know what career path I want to continue on, so I will be able to experiment with a variety of courses for a smaller cost.
277	1. SFU did not have development studies 2. I did not want to live on residence with all the pressures, but living on my own sucked 3. I felt that you throw together a bunch of random courses and do not leave with any real practical skills. I wanted a more practical approach to development studies, in a place where other people share the same interest. 4. Did not enjoy the atmosphere very much. I knew people from my sports team which was great, but that was pretty much it. In classes people keep to themselves and sit by themselves - very isolating. 5. I found some classes quite disappointing. People teaching who had no teaching skills (no clarity on basic frameworks / concepts), a couple of classes with terrible books to read, and some teachers/TAs marking out of emotion. 6. The architecture and the view. Not a great atmosphere
278	Medical reasons.
279	An insufficient amount of credits transferred in from Bishops and there were too many prerequisite "hoops" to jump through- I was a 3rd year but had to take 1st year courses. All in all, I would have wasted way too much time and money if I had chosen to stay at SFU.
280	Poor grades, forced to withdraw.
281	Found the atmosphere and community at SFU very dismal and uninteresting.
282	Found classes very difficult to manage and so grades suffered and was required to withdraw.
283	Just missed the required semester GPA (2.0) to continue at SFU, was really stressed in one course and most of the focus went that course, which affected my other three course marks.
284	Haven't had time to take another course since last fall
285	Needed to take time off from school because I had not taken a break in two years and I was getting burnt out from it and as a result my grades were suffering and it was a waste of money and time.
286	required to withdraw under extenuating circumstances
287	A position opened with the company I worked for during fall 2005 semester and I felt it was a very good opportunity for me, so I took it and withdrew temporarily from school. I also wanted some time to experience "real life" as I felt I was just going through the motions at school and being up at SFU can be very depressing if you don't have focus for why you're there. I needed time away to regain my focus.
288	Courses I needed on days I'm available not offered, and no distance classes available.
289	Two critical factors affect why I did not take another course at this time. First, I did not have the finances. Secondly, my fulltime job is extremely stressful. However, if I would have had the money, I would have taken at least one course.
290	1: dissatisfaction in professors 2: Not adequate courses. 3: Some courses doesn't care whether people cheat or not. 4: Some courses are extreme hard giving average of 50 5: Horrible food service. 6: Utility is short 7: Does not help me pursuing my career
291	Left to do some traveling overseas
292	Completed all of the schooling that was required of me for my career!
293	Wanted more practical knowledge.
294	Personal matters (my Mother's death) affected my studies causing poor grades leading to RTW

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
295	I only intended to take a few classes to gain personal knowlege. I found however, that I was not motivated to work hard in those classes and took the bare minimum out of them. I knew that I needed to be gaining experience in my field (Film) by working instead.
296	I changed my mind about what program of study i wanted to embark on. Realizing that SFU does not have a strong fine arts department influenced me to apply and eventually attend classes at Emily Carr Institute.
297	I had to leave SFU due to being a high risk pregnancy that will be leading to my child being born with a malformation of his left heart chamber. Due to this circumstances, I am unable to attend school until he is older and has had the surgeries needed to repair his heart. Allowing him to lead a healthy life.
298	I was accepted to UBC Law.
299	Got the required courses I needed.
300	It's too expensive so I only take a course when i have enough low cash to throw away on school.
301	Am not registered in the fall 2006 semester because my cooperative education placement finished at the end of september, thus I would have to miss 1 month of class time.
302	I didn't know what i was doing there so I took time off to find a job and find out
303	Taking time off for personal reasons.
304	Health reasons - unable to continue at this time.
305	I struggled to find courses I was interested in, and when I found some, I couldn't get into most of them. Also, I did not enjoy the teaching style in the majority of my classes.
306	i just took a semester off to travel and will be back for the spring 2007 semester
307	Going through a divorce, not able to concentrate on studies. Plan to return within the next year.
308	Financial difficulty, so short-term leave to catch up on some pressing bills. There are not enough financial resources available for families that include a husband, wife and four children. We would have had more support if I had been a single mother, aboriginal person, lesbian couple, or a particular special needs student. Single income large families (with the expenses of tuition/living/etc.) are overlooked when being offered scholarships and other finacial assistance. A family our size requires two incomes to sustain itself; that is why I was forced to go back to work full-time while attending SFU full-time during the summer semester. It's too demanding for everyone to pull up the slack when my schedule is that tight, so I am taking a time away from university to work full-time and have the ability to be there for my family.
309	Left because my wife and I had our first child, I found employment and plan on coming back part-time.
310	i found a job, i took 2 semesters off (instead of doing co-op, i did it on my own)
311	I feel SFU was not preparing me at all for what I wanted to do in the future. It was all theory and no applied skills where being taught
312	Probably because I slacked off too much. Since some of the courses were surprisingly not time consuming I found myself not bothering to do any work for that class, and hence got poor grades.
313	The name Simon Fraser is does not ring a bell with almost no one outside Canada, not even the United States. Unlike Province/city named schools or names that people are familiar with worldwide due to past events or classical sounding like Victoria, Queen's, or York. On the CV, it is all about the first impression.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
314	I was a distance education student. I live in Saskatchewan and was told I could complete my program through correspondance. However, SFU does not offer enough classes by correspondance for me to complete the program through (I am two classes short). I already have one degree and I have a great job that I did not want to give up to move to BC to take two classes. I check the website every semester to see if SFU is offering the courses I need to finish through correspondance, if they ever offer them I intend to re-apply and finish the program.
315	SFU lies.
316	taking a break
317	Forced to withdraw due to poor grades from poor planning.
318	The timings of the course are not satisfactory. I found not enough sections of the courses I wanted were available and I'm extremely dissatisfied with the schedule of courses only being available during the day. I am a mature student and need to work during the day. Night courses are extremely necessary and nothing is being done to resolve this.
319	Chose to take a program at another institution not offered at SFU
320	1. Have almost run out of Distance Education courses available. Have 2 jobs and work 7 days/week. Courses I need in Psch and Crim only available during working hours. 2. Angry about having my request for retroactive withdrawal from a course for medical reasons denied. The "Arbitrator" clearly does not recognize the degree of disability presented by constant migraine headaches. Don't want to risk negative effects on GPA if I can't complete a course.
321	I decided to relocate to Toronto and explore the opportunities out here. I will be commencing with school in one or two years of time.
322	goal change, since enrolling into the courses I needed to get into pdp was not easy I had to re-evaluate my goals of becoming a teacher and look for a career that would not take me years to accomplish. considering I am already 32 I would like to be established in a career before I am 40 and with not being able to get any of the required courses I needed because by the time my enrollment appointment came around most of them were already full with a long waitlist.
323	Unplanned move to another city (Calgary)
324	i have health concerns where support was not available in vancouver and personal circumstances where i needed a change of city temporarily
325	Working fulltime only able to take a course or two a semester. Have 15 credits still to complete
326	My temporary departure is motivated primarily by economic necessity. Increasingly the student loans program has been barely sufficient to cover tuition costs, requiring that I have to work longer hours. In addition to this, the inconsistency and seeming arbitrariness of SFU's financial assistance (i.e. bursaries/work study) has proven to be unreliable, despite my consistent financial standing. This means that while some semesters I have recieved healthy financial assistance there are others in which I have mysteriously been denied and without any kind of explanation. The financial difficulty has forced me to take on an increasing work load in my paid employment in order to obtain a promotion and subsequent wage increase. The increasing work load combined with more than 15 semesters of full time study has also resulted in several health issues arising or being exacerbated. While I plan to return to finish my honours degree at SFU, it is the assistance of specific individuals within my own department that have proven most helpful, and not the institution's approach to student retention, which appears to be non-existent.
327	I am an international student. I pay my tuition from my savings. Because of good Canadian economy these days, the exchange rate has been tough on me because most of my savings is in a japanese bank. So I am right now taking courses at a community college and transferring the credits I took there. This way is much cheaper.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
328	I want to graduate at the same time as my husband but he has a bit more schooling to do. I am holding off graduation so my family can attend both my husband's and my convocations without making the trip twice.
329	I haven't left SFU - the courses I need to take to finish my program were not offered in the Summer / Fall semesters. Hopefully they will be in the Spring which i've been told they will be.
330	I could not get a single class I needed. After already being forced into Explorations the year previous, resulting in me taking a year of classes I was not interested in, I left to take classes at another institution where I could get the classes I wanted and needed. Also, every first year English class was full with no room on the waitlist.
331	i have not left
332	May be back ... found it difficult to manage study, family and full time job. Attended semesters at night.
333	I failed my courses at fall 2005 and it affected my cumulative gpa and I didnt really plan well for taking courses during summer 2006. I didnt meet the minimum gpa requirement of 2 to stay in sfu.
334	My academic life was being effected by my mental health situation. I've been required to take medication for mental health reasons that significantly effect my ability to focus and succeed.
335	I did 6 semesters straight, was struggling with one particular aspect of my program, I have a history of mental illness and my father got diagnosed with cancer. I needed to put the brakes on my life.
336	required to withdraw because of poor gpa. im taking credits from other college to continue my education
337	I am doing a post-bac in Education and so few courses I would like to take are offered at times I can attend. Most start at 4:30 or earlier in Burnaby, and I live in Surrey and my job goes until 3:30 (min). I need to eat, drive and the rush is incredibly stressful. An accident or traffic jam and I am way too late. There have been few courses that I need for my program that are available at Surrey campus. And, the book store hours at Surrey are not designed for working students. At 40 years of age I had to ask my retired parents to make a special arrangement with security and the book store to get my books last year. This is ridiculous. I am a BC College of Teachers certified teacher and I am under obligation to stay at my work place until 3:00 pm--and I have staff meetings, parent conferences, coaching, and committments to colleagues and students which keep me busy until 4:00 each day. Then I have to prep for my next day's lesson. SFU expects me to get to its campuses by 4:30 and this is unsuitable. When I got my BA in English and History, the campus night classes started at 5:30 or 6:30, but now it seems most start before 4:30. Had I realized the slim pickings and times available, I may have chosen to attend some other alternative program. There is a Fine Arts Graduate Diploma through SFU that meets in Surrey, but the fees for that were almost double the program I am in, and my employer doesn't provide financial incentive or reimbursement to take the more expensive option. I regret that I didn't take the Fine Arts option now, as my peers who started a year behind me, are now finished. I am not sure if I can finish now and I will likely have to pay to re-register I imagine.
338	care not to disclose
339	I am planning to return next semester. I am 5 classes short of a degree. The biggest problem for me is the limited number of online classes. I'm at the end of the courses I am able to take through distance education. My only other choice are night time classes and although I can complete 1 more, those are also limited. I think it's necessary to re-evalute your history classes to enable adults with full time jobs to complete degrees while still working full time during the day.
340	job training until december 2006, also because SFU took \$700 worth of tuition that they refused to refund.
341	I was asked to withdraw and reapply once my GPA was improved.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
342	I am travelling for 3 months during fall semester and work full time in the summer. I have recently declared my major and am looking forward to continuing my studies in the winter 07 semester.
343	i got accepted in medical school
344	I suffer from bizzare allegeries and can not attend classes in the Portables on the Kamloops campus. Plus the student loans are mounting up, and it seems that I will never be able to repay them.
345	I got accepted into a program in Calgary for Boradcasting
346	Have not really left; I am using this semester to complete practicum requirements and have applied to graduate after fall 2006 semester.
347	i hated living on campus, i felt it very isolating. there was nothing for underage students to do. everyone seemed to somehow be of age (fake id's) and they would go to the pub and to bars off campus and those few of us who didn't, had nothing to do. on weekdays res was too loud and on weekends it was too quiet. there were absolutely no facilities available. a lot of universities provide rooms open until 2am or so with a snack bar, tv's, pool tables and other activities. sfu res was very isolating and depressing (sorry for being cliché, but it's true). it's too much of a hassle to live off campus because it takes a long time to get anywhere by bus and there are many places the bus does not go and parking on campus is too expensive. i am now at a different university and i love it because it's very central, lively, and offers students many services on campus!
348	I was able to get a full-time teaching job before completing my B. Ed. Thus, I have chosen to work full-time and take the remaining courses at college in the evening, so that in the next year I will finish my degree.
349	had to leave-RTW....didnt' want to
350	Desire to attend a school closer to home (Alberta), as well as gain a more technical background in my desired area of study.
351	I was offered a job that was better than the job I was studying for (teaching). I was also having financial difficulty.
352	I did not fulfill the requirements to remain at SFU. I am currently working my way back to SFU.
353	I am taking a break from study, and pursuing other goals in life. I plan to return to SFU in the Spring semester 2007.
354	I got accepted to a better School. PreMedical Program elsewhere in the world, with a better science program that SFU could offer.
355	Transferred with high grades from another institution and was unable to enroll in any of my numerous course choices.
356	better program in calgary
357	sfu is the worst school in canada! fuck off
358	Require to Withdraw because the difficulty of Engineering Science.
359	At 75 years old, I find one course a year is enough for me to handle.
360	disapointment with the teaching, with the campus.
361	I am in Africa. I will return but first I must earn money.
362	I was accepted into the nursing program at BCIT. SFU does not offer nursing.
363	I had to leave under extenuating circumstances, and now it almost seems impossible to get back in. If my retroactive withdrawal is not approved, i must get a 3.5 gpa to get back in.
364	Discovered that the types of courses werent what i wanted for a career even though i found them fascinating... I wanted to work with animals and so have Transferred to Douglas College for a veterinary Assitant program and hopefully later on a Veterinary Technician program which arent offered at SFU... I may however one day take courses slowly bit by bit and try and completely my degree but that is undecided yet.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
365	Did not find that it suited my goal to become a physiotherapist. It felt like I was just going in circles and not getting anywhere closer to my degree. The administration also affected my decision..they made my time at SFU even more stressful
366	SFU does not have a nursing program and that is what i would like to do.
367	I currently have two seperate diplomas with another institution and neither of those was properly recognized. One of the programs was a business program, of which I was attending SFU to obtain a degree in, and the credits that I received basically did not reflect the work that was required to complete that program at the other institution. Basically it was as though I was a first year student at SFU even though I have both experience and education already. Also I would not have been able to persue my education objects while working full time. I was unable to continue working full time and also purue my education at SFU at the same time.
368	Was required to withdraw, failed three course in two semesters.
369	It did not have a Art History BA program. UBC does, so I went there.
370	I required a semester off in order to work full time and save money to pay for the next semester I intend to register in (Spring 2007). I am in no hurry to finish my degree and I would prefer to do so with out incurring any debt.
371	Personal and health reasons
372	completion of program
373	I wished to take courses by distance education, but could not get the one(s) I wanted, so enrolled in U.B.C. Will return to S.F. U. when courses I want are offered by Dist. ED. There are definitely not enough such courses available, and I cannot access them when my registration time comes up.
374	Realized I want to get my career pursual underway before I continue with recreational studies.
375	I needed a break from the lifestyle, and decided to travel and then come back to commit to a future.
376	To study for a standardized test and begin applications for post-graduate studies.
377	Sucked, expensive drawn out courses not related to my intrests or even later planned courses.
378	I decided to change what I wanted to major in, so I am now doing upgrades at another institution.
379	The high international fees with no financail assistance from the university and lack of job opportunites on campus!!! I basically went broke
380	SFU has a bad overall atmosphere; depressing place. I could never get courses I wanted at registration time which was extremely frustrating and stressful. As a result, I took courses I wasn't particularly interested in in hope that I would get courses I wanted/needed next term (which didn't happen). A lot of time and money was wasted and I was left with an overall negative view of SFU, so I am now moving on to a different post secondary institution..
381	Program is too hard and not sufficient funding.
382	The cost of education is too high. I couldn't take full time studies, and now my student loans are seeking payment. Now I have to work to pay it off.
383	Because there were no social work programs, needed more variety of courses and programs
384	I acheived my degree
385	Grades were too low so I was put on academic probation.
386	I have responsibility of entering military in my country.
387	I still ket my high school study habit to SFU so that i failed classes and got with drawn.
388	I did a teaching practicum and was considered "not ready" for certification.
389	I needed to boost my grades, and doing so at a local college was cheaper.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
390	Decided to transfer to another institution overseas because of having a boyfriend there.
391	academic decline due to health problems
392	took a semester off to work full time and there were not any courses i could take in the evening or through correspondence that i needed
393	I was attending two institutions. I'm on my graduating semester on another, and I would like to focus on my studies until the graduation.
394	had to leave, to earn some money, so i could eventually come back and take more courses. And because of the fact that i wanted to get a start on my career.
395	I needed a break from studying because taking continuous course for 2 years straight without break was driving me crazy and i felt that there were other things that i needed to find time to do. For example: learning to drive, working, my art interests etc. Also cause i needed to make some money before continuing my studies to reduce my future debt as much as possible.
396	I didn't know whether I got withdraw.
397	The 2 prior semesters I was working and attending full-time classes. I was burnt out and was having hard time trying to make ends meet with student loan income. I am just taking this semester off and will return part-time, while working full-time.
398	Work & Study, too tired. But have to work to support my family.
399	I take a training course outside of Canada, but I will return after the training course is finished!
400	Bad guidance by sfu surrey's academic advisor
401	admission to med school
402	I wasn't too sure whether to leave or not. At the very beginning of attending sfu, i thought i would transfer, but as the year passed on, i grew to like sfu more and thought that i would stay. However, my application to a different university closer to home accepted me, and family pressure came in. After discussing with my family over the matter, i saw no particular up or down in staying or leaving, so i decided that if i transferred everyone would be happier than if i hadn't. if i hadn't transferred i knew i wouldn't do it later due to the transferable courses being limited, and admission to other institutes may not occur all the time. Also, i knew that family matters would become less optimistic so i decided against staying at sfu.
403	I decided to go backpacking Southeast Asia for a semester. I fell in love with scuba diving and the lifestyle that goes along with it and decided that I would keep travelling/diving until my money ran out. To finance this, I became a PADI dive instructor and have no concrete plans for the future. I DO intend to finish my degree sometime in the not so distant future, but I also plan to continue working in the dive industry.
404	maternity reason Adding that, the most reason why sometimes i feel hard or not satisfied with school life is from problem with language, since my first language is not English and still not fluent with using it.
405	Withdrew from PDP during 401/402. BAD experience with placement at school (no peer support as I was placed in a school by myself, and one of my SAs was a dept. head so little time to work with me) led to excessive stress and potential for medical problems. Will not be reapplying for the program.
406	Not enough money to support myself for tuition and living expense
407	I am overseas playing basketball and take distance courses. I was not registered for the last 2 semesters one because I was playing with the national team and was in Brazil until the end of september and two because none of the courses I needed were offered during the fall semester. I hope to register for 2 courses during the spring 2007 semester.
408	I had an opportunity to go to Austria and work as an intern. It is low paying but it's a great way to see how this continent works and I get to travel.
409	i will finish my studies back home in switzerland. just came to do an exchange.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
410	Too much stress! I needed to take a semester off to work and relax.
411	I was unaware of the criminology diploma program in which i had to take the majority of courses by distance, and my grades were horrible in distance education so i left sfu for douglas college where they have a diploma program that i can take in class.
412	I was living in Vancouver and needed to finish credits to graduate. I have since moved back to Victoria to complete the last semester. My degree was going to be from Victoria whether I finished a whole year at SFU or not.
413	I was under personal emotional stress and did seek counseling from an SFU counselor, however my grades suffered and I was asked to withdraw. I sent a letter explaining my reason for low grades and it is being reviewed. I plan to reapply if my letter is accepted.
414	I found that I did not have the required motivation to get the grades i needed to persue the career path i had chosen.
415	I didn't do well during my two semesters because I did not know exactly what I wanted to go to school for, causing me to have little or no determination to do well.
416	Ongoing medical issue affecting my ability to remain active in my courses. Several attempts have resulted in the need to withdraw post-deadline, leaving me with imcompletes that affect my GPA. I will continue to try to complete my degree but would prefer to be able to undertake these studies online or via distance. This alternative, however, is not really offered for 3rd and 4th year courses.
417	Got kicked out for not having the grades SFU wanted.
418	I transfered to another university in Canada that better suited my needs
419	I have a keen passion for environmental issues, and felt in order to pursue a career in this field, I would need a degree in Enviro Science. Because I live close to SFU, I applied there, and took 3 classes Calculus, Chemistry and Biology. Clearly the sciences were not for me, the classes were very difficult and I was just passing. I opted to switch from SFU to a college where I now study Enviro Studies, and my averga ehas gone from a C- to and A. Also SFU was too big, I like smaller schools with far less people.
420	You must learn on your own.
421	I am planning to only register in every second or third semester as I have a baby and must also work full time.
422	I have withdrawn from classes for the time being because I seem to never to be able to register in the class that I want. There are not enough distance education or evening classes available and I am frustrated because I am not able to attend during the day.
423	Course not available during the time I can take it.
424	i think that students should be given a chance to make up for their poor efforts, it was unfortunate that i recieved a rtw, but it's not likei didn't try? the system's messed
425	found a job
426	Too much time between JAPN 1 and JAPN 2 -5 yrs. Brain unable tocope.
427	I did not feel motivated after my first month at SFU, and over my three semesters there, my grades steadily dropped from the 3.5 GPA that I had prior to my transfer, and I was required to withdraw. Bummer.
428	Education was getting to expensive, and I couldn't get into the program I want, so temporary found a job overseas
429	I was required to withdraw from SFU due to poor grades. But, I think somehow something should be done to help these students with improving their GPA and getting back into SFU
430	I was very dissatisfied with the professor and TM of one of my Distance Education courses. I sought out help due to a poor grade on an assignment and was declined assistance from both the TM and supervising professor.
431	I was required to withdraw because of poor academic achievement
432	Decided to take courses through correspondance, hence, I am currently enrolled in BCOU.

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
433	I have moved to Prince George but only have 28 credits to get my B.A. and plan on graduating thru SFU. I am currently taking TRU-OL courses to transfer because I couldn't take the distance ed courses I needed thru SFU. In Jan., I plan on taking SFU distance ed.
434	Spring 2006 was a horrible, horrible semester. I withdrew from both courses, forfeited the tuition because both instructors, and the courses they were teaching, were awful! I took a break, learned that I really enjoyed it and decided to extend that break for a further year.
435	I had no stable incioeme at the beginning of summer 2006, however after applying for bursary because I DO NOT qualify for BCSAP at the same time I was denied refused SFU Bursary . Second time in the FALL 2006 I did apply for bursary I was denied again and I had no way of paying for tuition. Therefore I was blocked from enrolment for the fall 2006.
436	Currently, I looking for another employment. However, I plan to return to SFU for my interests in education courses, or attend BCIT.
437	the school required me to withdrawl because of my grade point average is low
438	part time student working full time. Although I have a flexable work schedule, courses in biological sciences are not scheduled at convenient times.
439	My mother had brain surgery in Seattle and requires my time and attention.
440	Taking some time away from school.
441	I did not want to go further into debt and also found a good job so decided to eventually complete my studies part time.
442	not offering enough of the classes that I need to grad in the fall semester. Not going to take only two classes at a time to make requirements to grad
443	I was having personal difficulties that affected my grades and decided to take a leave for up to two years.
444	Having already accumulated 15,000 dollars in debt and having found a good job with growth opportunity, I decided it made more sense to work and finish my degree part time.
445	because of family problems and obligation to work, I was distracted from the studies. Also English is my second language and it took me longer to study. All these made me frustrated.
446	I work full-time at the university and it is difficult for me to balance full-time work, school and my life.
447	I was required to withdraw for academic resons. My health was affecting my performance and the lack of knowledged to adress the situation made me get to that point.
448	LOW GPA
449	To teach Sept to May and take summer course at SFU
450	I changed career paths and am interested in going into Nursing but SFU does not offer the program.
451	I took a summer job designed to help pay for a full year of studies. This job did not turn out and left me in debt. This debt needs to be paid off before I can return to full time studies.
452	I was forced to withdraw after I had several personal problems which kept me from going to class and being interested in the classroom experience.
453	my job requires me to travel and I was not happy with my program
454	Way too depressing. Students are so far detached from reality. I found it impossible to focus on my studies given the current enviroment.
455	poor grades in most of the courses and required to withdraw after Fall 2005 semester
456	Combined personal reasons with terrible experiences with residence and a ridiculous amount of red tape (from the financial aid office, primarily).

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
457	The faculty for the program I wanted to register in (PDP) told me that all of my classes from the previous institution I attended would transfer over for the program. Then I later recieved a letter saying that I did not fulfill the requirements. This happened to me twice. I got sick of this happening so I enrolled in another institution and now I am very happy doing what I am doing.
458	2 times of AP and got a RTW
459	temporary leave to do CGA courses and work to make money for tuition.
460	Grades were too low to get into certain programs.
461	location and environment of the school caused major depression, did not want to stay at institution anymore
462	I had expected to be graduating this semester. I had checked with my department advisor and was told that I had all the requirements to graduate with my BA Honours but 3 weeks before graduation was told I could graduate with my BA but not Honours. Will be repeating a course in the spring to finish my Honours requirements and have summer graduation.
463	Getting married.
464	I prefer to do real work in position that doesn't fully utilize my skills rather than waste my time and money studying something I don't need
465	I am finishing my degree through distance ed. and the history department does not have courses at the upper levels that will enable this.
466	Was not accepted into program of choice put into arts changing student status; 0.3 deducted from GPA even harder to get into dept. Course availability tried to reg for 5 classes 1 success 4 errors
467	To finance my education at SFU I have had to work full-time which, due to the tuition fee increases, has led to increased challenges in maintaining a strong GPA due to a limited time frame within which to complete course work and study, in addition to a very limited availability within which I have been able to schedule any classes. Now only in my dreams will I ever be able to acheive the various academic degrees I have worked so hard for until recently when I became really burned out mentally and physically, thus no longer able to continue driving myself towards my longtime held educational goals.
468	Unfortunately, the upper levels business courses are usually unavailable, and I was getting a little tired of having to jostle my way into each course-I'd spend eleven hours per semester trying to get into a course and I'd rather spend it studying. Perhaps SFU isn't for my situation though-I am F/T employeed with a permanent employer and I am dedicated to finishing the specific courses I need for a CGA. U of T has a good correspondence program-so I'm considering my options.
469	no comments
470	I decided I didn't want to pursue a bachelor's in science because I wasn't sure where i wanted to go from there. I then settled at VCC for the dental hygiene program.
471	Apart from actual lectures, I did not enjoy my time at sfu. Any moment i was not in lecture but at the campus I felt very isolated and alone. I had to learn my way around the campus and all procedures on my own and had no helpful guidance in course planning. I found fellow students very unhelpful in lending advice as well as profs. Also, in all 6 semesters i was never able to get any the courses I wanted or needed. In fact, there was one course that I tried to enroll every semester and was never successful because they were always full. The dismal environment at SFU, paired with the utter isolation I felt amongst 1000's of students every day, quickly sent me into a depression worse than i ever known. It was my depression that eventually won over, and I was not able to care about assignments exams, and eventually lectures (my favourite part of my sfu experience). Now, that I have been out for 3 semesters, my depression has been overturned and I am anxious to get back to school. Regardless, I will never set foot at any SFU campus again... Perhaps UBC is my next stop. PS - As for your first section of questions regarding demographics, you had no option for students who had not declared an area of study. Although my main focus was

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
	within the sociology department I was never registered with them. I spent my time at SFU enrolled for a bachelor of general studies. Perhaps you could make that an option.
472	I was having some personal difficulties and health issues which affected my academic performance. I decided to take some time off and return at a later date to complete my degree.
473	In the beginning it had a lot to do with my poor grades. But as I re-evaluated what I wanted out of my studies, I realized SFU could not provide that for me. I have decided to pursue nursing instead. That is why I have not returned to SFU.
474	<p>IN 1994 I began my XX in XXXXX in at SFU, under supervisor XXXX. Two women had left our lab, for the reason that they had been harassed by XXXX, a friend of XXX's, who worked in our lab for only 5 months, but resided in our lab from before 1993, until mid-1996 when I first left SFU. (XXXX advised me that XXXX would remain in his lab for as long as XXXX was at SFU, because XXXX gave XXXX free help with his statistical analyses. XXXX was on UI and Welfare during most of 1994 and 1995.) When I was working as a Co-op student, an independent Researcher, a T.A. and, finally, a Graduate student in the XXX Dept., I was harassed (personally and sexually) by XXXX. XXXX was advised repeatedly, but did nothing. XXXX threatened me that if I continued to bother XXXX with my efforts to have XXXX correct this problem (which I did)--or to take these concerns to others--that XXXX would ruin my career. I worked graveyard shift (and became extremely isolated from staff and resources, while becoming viciously sleep-deprived, just so that I could try to minimize the harassment, while maintaining my work/study obligations). XXXX also engaged in plagiarism of the long-term research project upon which I was working (and why I put up with the harassment!), of which I have proof. I switched supervisors. My new supervisor solicited info from me about the harassment and plagiarism. (XXXX asked me!) XXXX then sent me to the chair, XXXX. In response to a long letter outlining these problems (including my growing concerns about the impact the 2 years of harassment was having upon my health = depression), XXXX threatened me that the University would give XXXX a lawyer to fight me, and that the whole Dept. would unite with XXXX against me. (XXXX assured me XXXX had already spoken with many of them to this effect.) XXXX refused to arrange any kind of help with the harassment situation, XXXX wouldn't even arrange a meeting with the parties involved. XXXX told me I could go to the Harassment Office, but warned me that my career would be over, because I would be unlikely to win a "my word against a 25-year-tenured-Professor". When my depression problem worsened (big surprise) over the next couple of months, I was told by my new supervisor (who used to be a Clinical Psychologist) that I should consider "Manic Depression" to describe my sleep-deprivation and depression symptoms. I was devastated and began to blame myself for everything. I went on leave for a semester. Then, the Dept. Chair (and the GSC Chair) demanded that I produce letters from a medical doctor and a mental health professional, giving me a written "guarantee of success"/"health guarantee" for the rest of my program. I couldn't provide this. WHO CAN??? The Chair made me withdraw from the program for a year; XXXX wouldn't let me go on leave, or enrol. (I have these demands in writing, also.) I worked for another professor for several months. XXXX was very happy with me. But, when I started making arrangements to re-enter the program, this employer fired me from XXXX lab and sent vile e-mails to the Harassment Office, accusing me of harassment! The Chair of the Dept. did pretty much the same, but sent XXXX memos to XXXX, and the Harassment Office, claiming that they had exhausted all their resources trying to work with me. They simply didn't want someone with a depression disability in their program--let alone, someone who had made a complaint that would have affected the Dept.'s accreditation status. They accused me of filing a harassment complaint. I hadn't done anything like that. (I'd gone to the Dean of Student Services, for assistance in being re-admitted.) Later, I had no choice but to write to the President of the University to ask for an informal resolution to this problem (through the Harassment Office--because this was the only Human Rights avenue available at SFU at the time). President XXXX refused to let me make a complaint because I was suffering from depression. XXXX demanded a letter</p>

Question 34: Please Comment on Your Main Reason For Leaving SFU	
	from a Psychologist stating that I was capable of taking a legal position. This was not something XXXX was allowed to ask for as a condition for allowing me to make a complaint. My Psychologist--who turned out to be employed, in part, by the XXX Dept--refused to write the letter. And, Pres. XXXX dismissed everything that happened to me. I tried again, when XXXX came to SFU. But, XXXX refused to even allow me to meet with her. Once again, because I was someone with a disability. I needed the study room I had in the library to stay at SFU. The Centre for Students with Disaiblities took it away. It was the only way I can stay safe from XXXX. That is why I withdrew. Why does SFU get away with such aggregious acts? I have much more information, but no-one will listen. Please help me. XXXXX
475	I suffered from depression (later diagnosed as having Major Depressive Disorder) which lead to a decline in my academics and was then required to withdraw.
476	I cannot find a program that I am interested in at SFU.
477	left to take courses at another campus because its not offered at SFU, nursing
478	Too busy with work. Will come back when things settle down.

Appendix 3: Comments from Survey

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
1	Allowing me to study for another semester taking different courses other than engineering.
2	Financial Aid
3	Nothing
4	I have not officially left, rather, I've taken a semester off. SFU needs to widen the scope of their education offerings to include people who are working full-time, raising families, but want to enrich their lives through gaining a degree (perhaps at a snail's pace).
5	
6	I didn't think there was much they could've helped me with. My decision was made and there wasn't much to do besides accept that and move on.
7	Nothing.
8	Nothing.
9	The staff in the business co-op office could have been more understanding of me, not judged me so harshly and negatively and allowed me to register for a fourth co-op term.
10	Very simply, they could have spoken to me as an adult. As a human. They could have been a bit more forthcoming with the information. They could have listened, like any courteous human being.
11	Nothing. It was my problem. I felt SFU was more or less fair in what it was doing.
12	not much, my mind was made up.
13	Add more distance ed courses to enable Canadian students who don't live near the campus to continue their education.
14	Not much. It was a very personal decision, and related to SFU only insofar as my very subjective perceptions of it, and emotional associations with a not so stable period of my life.
15	none
16	Short of finding a cure for cancer or opening a branch in Kelowna, I can't think of anything SFU could have done to assist me. I have nothing but positive things to say about the institution.
17	I did not require assistance
18	don't know...
19	Sfu couldn't have done anything because even if they told me not to take accounting (after i failed econ) i would ignore cuz i thought i'd do really well. in highschool i aced accounting. sfu could've given me another chance to stay in the school and i can do just as well if i avoid econ and accounting courses which i am aware of now.
20	I don't know, but the SFU res is extremely lame.
21	Have a website to tell me the process. I don't even know if I can get back in next semester. I don't know where to get info if I wanted to leave for one semester only. Will i still be able to enroll next semester?
22	Not much, I was fixed on my decision
23	I think nothing, its too large of an organization to change its system for a single person.
24	I had basically made my decision to pursue a program elsewhere that would meet my career goals

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
25	I just read in your options that there is career advising. I saw the academic advisors multiple times b/c i wanted to switch to something more applicable to my current career (as well make sure that I followed all the rules while on academic probation) but found that there was no support from SFU in making those choices. I also felt that the advisor did not give me accurate information about what I had to do to remain a student. I received a C- instead of a C and in my last course and was shocked to hear that I was required to withdraw, and upset that with the advisor for not telling me good standing means a C in the grade. Basically there is no getting around the financial difficulties of being a student, but I would have benefited from advisors that really cared about what happens to their students, and were 100% honest and aware of how they are providing their advice. When I asked about programs from other schools that are friendlier in terms of distance education for people who work, they did not want to support me in that decision because that would mean they would lose me as a customer.
26	Department was not overall helpful in allowing me to get the pre-reqs i needed for the nursing program. Werent all that understanding with the fact i needed to leave.
27	Nothing. I realized that I wanted to leave.
28	helped me figure out what i was doing to begin with... career advisors i didnt go to but i heard they just give you a couple websites and tell you to go home and look at them. if they made it easy to see where id go once i got my degree i might have been more motivated. also if there would have been a time when i could have called the school and actually talked to someone about anything that would have been less frustrating. but really i dont think anything would have kept be there too much longer unless they completely changed everything about themselves. i can see why it has the highest suicide rate.
29	N/A -- I plan to return in January.
30	Nothing it was just a matter of not having the program I was interested in other than that I think I would have stayed.
31	Nothing, really. It was all laid out very well, and the people I emailed about questions got back to me very quickly.
32	I would like to see SFU offer more online/distance ed courses. As an SFU employee taking courses I need more flexibility.
33	I didn't decide to leave, I was required to withdraw.
34	Reconsider the criteria of selecting an appropriate chemistry 100 level teacher. During the time I had chem 121(XXXX) and 122 (XXXX), both were inconsiderate ignorants who cannot teach or communicate their materials properly.
35	Offer a wider selection of courses, offer a wider selection of times for tutorials, better food and facilities, better bus routes, build more lecture halls, better professors
36	Nothing
37	Nothing other then the quality of the program and courses being offered would have helped me to stay. The worst is I am 3 courses away from a degree but the courses I have to take are all a waste of time and energy when compared to real world work experience. Team based projects are absolutely ridiculous Every team project Ive ever had has had 1-2 people who float by and do nothing while everyone else picks up the slack. And for the past 2 years most of the courses Ive been taking have been 1st time offerings and they are not very organized or very useful, they are pretty much intro courses but labeled as 4th year courses.
38	I found the availability of the counsellors, particularly the departmental ones, very limited. I TRIED to speak with them but never got a chance to.
39	I felt as though there weren't programs that interested me at SFU. Although my grades were exceptional, I did not feel that a good enough reason to stay. I believe that the university could have done little without the addition of a more experience-oriented program within education and the outdoors to keep me there.

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
40	It was a personal choice, I don't think this question applies.
41	Nothing.
42	Could have been more accommodating of my situation, accepted credits not done in the order laid out for program
43	A guranteed employment? But that's asking too much ;) I like SFU a lot and I do miss it but I will return in 2.5 years and with my transfer credits from BCIT I will only need 5 courses to graduate.
44	Offer a nutrion degree!
45	I do not feel there was anything more SFU needed to do to assist me in leaving. The administration was awesome in helping me to obtain transcripts and mail them to UBC.
46	I would have remained positive if help was made available to me while i studied over seas, instead i was told..you should have thought of that before leaving canada, unfortunately i was not at fault for situations i could not prevent or could have fathemed.
47	Make it more clear to me that i was in poor academic standings. It felt as though i was told to leave with no real explanation. Was not untill i spoke to the academic advisor that i understood what was happening
48	Find the best way for student to come back to SFU. For example, assist personally and give an real advise what courses the student need take in other colleges.
49	Not much, apart from accepting my application for grad studies... would be nice if there was more support at that level, as it is extremely difficult to go on - even powerful motivation doesn't count for much at the graduate level, whereas it's hardly even necessary at undergrad level. Frustrating!
50	Nothing really. It was my own fault.
51	help me plan appropriate classes or counselling as i was feeling depressed
52	The tuition is quite high, compared to another university I was registered in. Per class at the other university the cost was about \$250.00 at SFU it is much higher. Mind you my classes were in Arctic Studies, but still the price to go to school now is very expensive.
53	Have more spots available for corresponsdeance students or have a more lenient policy then the two missed semesters and you are automatically take off teh school roster. Unfortunately, it is only through this survey that I have found out that I am no longer considered an SFU student. Correspondence from the school or a warning would have been definitely welcomed. Since I am not registered because there was no room in the courses necesarry it seems silly to be no longer considered to be a student.
54	SFU could not have assisted me in my decision to leave. However, my time spent there does not encourage my thoughts to make me want to go back to SFU. If there was more campus life, I would be thrilled to go back... if there was any campus life at all really.
55	nothing I am coming back
56	Not have a 3 semester deadline for students before they have to reapply. It puts too much of a pressure on them to come back and quickly finish their classes.
57	I did not like the commute, the atmosphere is dreary and one of my professors was a complete arrogant dick...Exuse my language.
58	had more evening classes available
59	None, i plan to return.
60	GPA policy
61	change grading system to percentage instead of GPA
62	i dont know

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
63	Right now I am working for an accounting company which has a branch in Vancouver as well. If I were sure that I could find a coop placement in the same company, I would stay. Although I did not apply for the Vancouver branch, I felt that it would be easier to start in my country.
64	Nothing
65	Relax requirements for students like me who already have degrees and need to update their skills.
66	forwarn more
67	advice from International Steudnt Office
68	made my program easier to get classes in
69	My temporary leave has nothing to do with the quality of SFU.
70	SFU should give students at least 2 chances to pull up their GPA grades, otherwise it was very use less and unfair for students who work so hard at other instituiiton try to transfer back to SFU, but then their acadmic standing is still continue on acadamic probation and then SFU give student only one semster chance to pull up their grades, which it was very difficult and challenging for some students who were still in probation.
71	Nothing!
72	They didn't help much to begin with... I had a very hard time with transferring my transcripts because they kept losing it or failed to update my records.
73	There was nothing to do. The problem is so interwoven on the culture of the department that to solve the problem there would need to be radical change (surprise! SFU's so called raison d'etre!!) to the faculty, curriculum and policies.
74	Nothing. Why I had to leave was entirely fair. And the advisors where extremely pleasant and very helpful.
75	shorter lineups faster service
76	I may have decided to remain at SFU and take the aforementioned Masters program if I had received a timely response. (The acceptance letter came about 1 month after I was originally told it would arrive; subsequent follow-ups were unproductive.)
77	perhaps offered me some sort of financial aid to help me finish, since i only have 1 course left before i can convocate. i'm in the top 5% of my program but have never received any sort of scholarships. working 3 jobs and school do not a happy student make!
78	After I received AP from SFU I went to a college to earn credits so that I could return to SFU, which I did, however I had one course which I had an F after i returned to SFU, and that made me not be able to stay at SFU. I think this is not a ideal way to let students go. Completely frustrated~! TO ME, This was not just an academic failure. I feel like i have to waste more time and money at college to return to SFU again. But i did not decide repeat the same thing again because it will take lot of time and effort to just return to SFU and also it does not gurantee any thing more than that. SFU could offer some alternative ways to deal with this problems. Ex. SFU could allow me to repeat the course that i had an F so that i can stay at SFU if i do better.
79	Award me more credits (fewer credits, fewer courses to finish at SFU to obtain my Second Degree)
80	Nothing, it was a personal decision to travel for a bit. I plan to come back and finish my degree,
81	Attained better and more professors for the program I chose. Offered more courses and created a schedule that did not overlap with other courses of the same department ie. for Middle East history do not offer Ottoman history at the same time as say the History of Israel and Palestine.
82	offer better range of classes for business students at the Vancouver campus.

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
83	some TA's i previously had were disappointing. i.e. Unfair grading among different TA's within the same class
84	nothing. I moved out of the country
85	Distance Learning student. lots of room for improvement for out of province students.
86	Have the staff informed enough to know what is going on, and to care enough to help
87	Nothing. It was a decision I had to make. I plan to come back to SFU or go to UBC when I move out, depending on where I move to.
88	Not much.
89	I felt that the student programs could have been more helpful with adjustments of questions for students that are not from the area. I came from a large universtiy(uofa). I found the wait times way too long when calling Student Services thus most of the time just gave up, and dint know where else to call for help.
90	Probably nothing.
91	Nothing, except keep offering the evening courses.
92	Nothing really. I was just unhappy and found that I never wanted to go to school because the area made me feel depressed.
93	Provide more financial support and flexible deadlines for finishing coursework and/or withdrawals for students with disabilities.
94	I did not decide to leave I was required to leave. I would have liked to continue my studies and have the chance to bring my grades up but even if I was to have told them about my situation they would have told me that the time and semester I was on academic probation was enough time to save my grades but I was not able to do so considering the second family member had passed away at that time. I struggled but it was not enough and therefore I believe SFU could not have done anything.
95	I haven't left. It would be helpful to have advising and encouragement to slot into a department to focus towards a degree. Also, non-paced distance ed. courses would be advantageous. (like TRU offers- could an arrangement be made with them to receive SFU credits for their courses?)
96	nothing. I have my career ambitions and since I got into this program the only choice was to leave SFU
97	Nothing.
98	provided more options for continuing to take course at the upper division level via distance and/or evening courses.
99	Nothing.
100	Nothing -- unless the institution is willing to pay for tuition, books, and support my family
101	I would consider attending classes if they were available in the evenings and/or downtown Vancouver.
102	my decision to leave was not affected by the institution, it was a personal decision
103	There wasn't much to do. I was leaving and that was it. Knowing that I could come back made it a little bit easier to leave.
104	Be more understanding to personal problems. The process of the appeal was messed up because someone lost my appeal form for like a month. I was not aware of such harsh penalties... make it more aware to the students. Financial assistance should be more widely dispursed because at such a big institution I was suprised. (I have no outside financial aid-both parents are on disability and are divorced) Teaching was good tho.
105	I needed: -Available spots at the SFU daycare during the time of my courses -Subsidized daycare
106	The main reason was financial, so (although this is unrealistic) lower tuition costs.
107	I was RTW.

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108	Offered more programs at SFU Surrey, the commute takes less time and it is a nicer, more inviting campus. It isn't so dark and cold feeling.
109	Nothing.
110	My FA helped me to leave my practicum experience with my dignity intact.
111	Encouraged me that i would get into the department of busniess as soon as possible. They were asking me to change my department and change my major from business to some atrs that i wasnot interested in.
112	nothing
113	Had more science degrees!
114	I didn't really give them enough information for there to be options.
115	Nothing. I believe I may not be the type of subject you are looking for as I completed my degree in 2004 but returned in 2005 for a post-baccalaureate. Therefore, I have answered the questions about when I first arrived at SFU accurately but what I did not complete was anything after 2005.
116	more options/financial assistance for students who are only taking one or two courses at a time. what else would help- free or pro/rated parking passes. reduced/pro-rated rates on service fees- since i am only in one course and was only on campus for 3 hours a week, during the day.
117	It was more me than anything else. I didnt like the go-getter attitude of my classmates.
118	nothing, i didn't have a choice in whether or not to leave.
119	the summer course selection is terrible. I wanted to study on campus in face-to-face enviroments, but was only able to get into online courses. These course were not very challenging or engaging
120	The information I got from faculty about the dental hygiene program prereq's were accurate. I just wanted to go to UCFV to pursue dental hygiene because SFU doesn't have a dental hygiene program. There's nothing more SFU could have done.
121	My program has very little structure, so some sort of contact from the Dept would have been nice. It's good that SFU offers PBDs and other options for those who already have BAs, but aren't yet doing an MA, however they could provide a lot more support and staff could be a lot more knowledgeable about these options. I barely feel like I was an SFU student at all. Some possibilities for financial assistance in these programs would be nice as well.
122	NA
123	Nothing, it was a personal decision and I enjoyed everything about SFU other than the poor varsity volleyball program.
124	not make it so hard for me to get into the faculty i deserved and not give me full credit for my previous courses taken
125	my mind was made. nothing could change it
126	there was nothing lacking, I didn't leave for any specific reason to do with SFU
127	Helped me transfer- explained the process- alert the school that I was transferring to that I was in courses that were prereqs here
128	SFU has done very well. No complaints.
129	I believe SFU had little to do with my decision to go to a different school. SFU was just too large for my taste. I do think that the orientation week could have been more intriguing because from what I can remember, my group was quite uneventful and had a lack of enthusiasm. Also, I found certain people at the academic advising to be quite unhelpful and plainly rude.
130	honestly there was nothing really. I can't think of a service or anything they should be responsible in making my transition easier. I'm kind of confused by this question

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131	I were unable to register for Summer 2006 and Fall 2006; because i need only five more courses for PBD in Gerontology; and all the courses that i need are offered only during the Spring Semester; so i will be back next semester; however, it was much easier for me [and more satisfying], if some of the courses that i need to graduate, were offered during the summer & fall semester as well!!!
132	Nothing, I was required to withdraw.
133	Nothing. Personal circumstances made me decide to take some time off.
134	Offered more distance ed courses, courses at Surrey and evening courses
135	improving the big classes size. and the concrete building
136	nothing
137	Nothing - it was a cumulative problem.
138	I am not sure as I did not approach the faculty with my decision. I guess if I decide to return to SFU, then streamlining the application/acceptance procedure
139	SFU needs to put more focus in developing programs that are career-oriented, like technical degrees/diplomas offered in BCIT, Kwantlen, etc. In my opinion, the traditional degrees are outdated in terms of their potential in developing skills for graduates to compete in today's ever-changing market.
140	I only left because I graduated and then upgraded some classes. So I would have left no matter what anybody said or did
141	Not doubled my tuition fees.
142	Don't know. I just think the whole curving grading method does totally not fit me
143	Included more psychology courses that were practical, useful and leading toward a career instead of just gaining knowledge that I will likely never use in my lifetime.
144	Offering more course sections would have been very helpful!
145	Allowed me to maintain my registration status after I graduated. I received my degree in Spring 2005, and wanted to take some additional courses to get into a different program, but I was unable to get the courses I wanted due to the poor registration date I was given now that I had graduated.
146	If the websites and information was easier to access before I became a student so I knew where I could get help and how to get started in all my classes.
147	had professors that actually cared about their students. first year science teachers are the worst.
148	Nothing
149	Making distance education courses more available. I wouldn't have withdrawn for at least this semester if there had been distance ed courses available.
150	Don't treat everyone like they're a high school student just coming to university, every situation for withdrawal is different and should be dealt individually. Also, the people responsible for reviewing a withdrawal should have had a 'real' job at some point other than at the university.
151	Nothing. I was completely satisfied with SFU's services. My leaving was the decision of my parents, a decision which in the end, I decided to give my full consent. I did this because I respect my parents, not because SFU was lacking in any way.
152	No choice
153	Get better profs.
154	more warning and lower GPA requirement to withdraw from the faculty
155	Nothing. It's not SFU's fault. SFU is a fantastic university, but just not for me. I was going through a lot of emotional and family stuff during the time of my departure, which made things even harder. Leaving SFU was best for me.
156	nothing at all..really had nothing to do with sfu at all

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157	N/A
158	I needed someone to help me figure out how to make this work with a full-time career. Someone to help me with some long-term planning. It is very difficult to do any long-term planning when you have absolutely no idea of which day of the week or time of the day courses will be offered. If I could have had some faith that I could successfully complete my first year courses, I may have felt more motivated to stick around for the second and third year courses that actually interest me.
159	give more time to students to improve their grades
160	I did not leave. SFU did not meet my needs to offer more evening classes. Next semester I am hoping something will be offered. SFU is great BUT again, I was disappointed at the very few evening sessions
161	SFU could not have done anything. I obtained my Bachelor of Arts degree from SFU (1994). I was very satisfied with the university when I graduated. My interests were in the education program at UBC which is not carried by SFU. I was waitlisted by SFU's PDP program and eventually received a call from them with acceptance. However, it was 2 weeks before school started and I was committed to UBC. UBC's teacher education program provides a Bachelor of Education whereas SFU only gives a certificate. SFU is a better location for me, but the benefits of UBC's program has more advantages in the long term.
162	I could have done with more information on why i had to leave and when i could come back.
163	Offered me a different way to stay in SFU other than attending another institution
164	I found SFU to be a very snobby and depressing atmosphere and that made me not want to stay even more.
165	I don't think that SFU could have done anything, as the course I was looking for was job-focused and not just degree-focused and SFU does not specialize in those programs.
166	Nothing.
167	Could have and provided more help for students adjusting to university straight out of high school, and made withdrawal policies clearer, including course withdrawal deadlines (before go.sfu.ca was implemented). Nothing else could have really rectified the circumstances.
168	I am not leaving SFU
169	too much emphasis on GPA a lot of unrelated courses were necessary to complete a degree
170	Nothing, it came down to money, and I didnt have any.
171	At least to let me stay longer for getting used to this different and harsh studying environment.
172	offering civil eng or at least granted me to applied science dept
173	In my case, SFU could let me continue to study, could not ask me " why did you drop your courses earlier?". If I know, of course I did it.
174	I think I covered it in my other post. If there were classes available downtown that were suitable to my degree and were scheduled in the evenings or at the very least, once a week, even if they were daytime instead of short classes numerous times throughout the week, then I would have been able to register for something this semester. Create more evening classes, create more classes that take place once a week or at the most twice at the same time each day, hold more classes downtown. Don't waste student's time by making them travel back and forth for short classes at staggered times throughout the week.
175	not sure
176	nothing really except maybe for better class availability in the summer so I could have taken a few more courses I needed.

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177	-to provide its students a sense of belonging -to help students understand ways to utilize its student services -to help students out of the struggles and frustrations -retain more friendly faculty advisors/undergraduate staff as they are usually the first
178	It would be nice if the process for withdrawing from courses due to extenuating circumstances was less stressful, but I don't think there is anything SFU can do about that.
179	None, I just take a temporary leave
180	Nothing, my decision was based on the potential that I saw with my current employer. I felt that I could grow and learn new skills by taking the promotion that would be as useful as those I would receive from a post secondary degree.
181	nothing. I decided I would rather go to UBC because the campus there is better and they have better programs offered to students.
182	Had the scholarship been tied more directly to academic performance, I might have been able to stay. I do understand the reasons, though, and am not upset with the regulations. I do plan to return.
183	Clarity about programs and courses would be a huge help. I found little help online trying to determine just what I needed to do to get my degree, and then trying to register for those classes was a challenge all its own.
184	nothing
185	Nothing. I was disenchanted with a faculty
186	They could offer more evening courses to full time working students.
187	Nothing, I was planning on moving to Kelowna.
188	nothing
189	Nothing.
190	nothing... SFU does not have a nursing program, so i had to go elsewhere
191	Asked why i was planning to leave when i decided to.
192	nothing
193	Decide to drop tuition prices???" ^_ ^"
194	More courses available to me in order to achieve my goals. More of the specific courses (Kin, Eng, Geo, His etc.) necessary to be accepted in the pdp program.
195	In my opinion, SFU should have approved my requests for retroactive withdrawal.
196	If courses that I was interested in had been more available and affordable I would have stayed and continued to take courses at SFU.
197	Have some kind of program that would assist those students who work full time but want to take part time classes. Financial assistance for part time students or enough funding to pay for living and educational costs.
198	dept is super disorganized, and different depts and registrars office do not communicate - students pay the price in unnecessary tuition costs, time wasted, bad feelings. help make processes clear to students and to profs and advisors who give wrong info and act as barriers either inadvertently or otherwise. nix dumb rules. bureaucracy navigation to graduate is a nightmare - not just for me. lower costs. adopt PLA or more transparent transfer processes.
199	Nothing- sfu had nothing to do with my decision. It was personal. I didn't have enough time to devote to my studies.
200	Nothing; cost was the only factor.

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201	I can't think of anything really. I tried to get in to see an academic advisor but because I was a 5th year student they did not want to talk to me, figured I should go talk to my program advisor. Unfortunately I was not really a part of the psychology faculty yet...it would be nice if the Ac Advisors would talk to anyone instead of making me fight to get in to see them - in the end I left it. Other than that, it was a personal decision and I can't think of anything SFU could have done to change it. It is no longer where I need to be
202	there is nothing that could have been done. I was in communications program and discovered that I did not want to work in magazines and/or newspapers. I wanted to work within television so I enrolled with an institution that has a very good reputation and that offered the program I wanted.
203	nothing really it was my decision
204	I didn't want to leave. their mistakes caused me to leave
205	I fully intend on coming back. I have 3 courses to complete in order to graduate. SFU could not do anything, unless far fetched, like free tuition.
206	To be offered SOME solution (which I am aware doesn't exist at this time). There could have been other helpful things offered on the university's part which may have helped greatly to avoid my departure. Example: being heard by the university that there were NO courses available to fulfill my fulltime status during one particular semester which resulted in my defaulting on a Canada student loan!!
207	I don't know if anything could have been done. It was more of a grades issue
208	Nothing. Leaving was the thing that happened to me, not in terms of my hating SFU but more in Career planning, I gave me the chance to change paths and I'm now upgrading in order to do what I want, and may even return to SFU in the future.
209	Less red tape...more assistance to students ie advisors
210	Nothing, it was fine
211	Me being RTW was not really SFU's fault. However, having spent time at other institutions I have enjoyed other schools much better.
212	Nothing. I just needed some time to myself. Unless there's some way they could have reduced the work necessary to achieve my grades in my classes.
213	I would have liked more administrative help. Everyone I spoke with kept putting me off to someone else.
214	Been more flexible in allowing me more time to obtain my goal of completing the program
215	Not much, the only reason I am not there is because I spent all my savings on my trip, and I didn't think that it was a wise decision to take out another student loan.
216	nothing.
217	N/A
218	offer masters programs online/distance ed
219	Offer more support and personal touch. The way SFU contacts their students is inefficient if the most crucial information is only given thru snail mail or in 1 email notification. These things get lost or corrupted so easily and then there is no follow-up. Since I left SFU, it's been over a year now and this is the first point of contact I've had from a SFU representative.
220	Offer the required courses at a variety of times or offer more distance education courses in Communications.
221	I had no courses left to take so I did not enroll.
222	no comments
223	offer more courses in downtown location -give me opportunities to get a better registration date -accept more transferable credits

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224	Nothing. Figuring out what I want to do with my life is something I needed to do by myself. I wasn't at a stage where I felt I could reasonably take advice from anyone.
225	It was more specifically the one teacher. I went for help on multiple occasions and he could have seen that I put in an effort and bumped me up 0.5% so I would be able to stay in SFU and continue my education.
226	Having more immediate academic support network.
227	There is nothing SFU could have done to change my decision, as I will be returning to full time classes in Spring 2007.
228	I was disappointed by the lack of support I received regarding my transfer credits from my 2-year technology diploma. I recieved no trasfer credit, and there was no appeals process. This gave me a negatvie start to my beginning at SFU.
229	Well I can't blame the institution, other than for having rules that did not work for me. I should have known better.
230	offered more flexible course hours.
231	allow for 1st year students more priority instead of sticking them at the bottom of the list - it would be an easier transition, especially coming straight from high school.
232	Nothing I can think of
233	The withdrawal procedures are quite invasive and I have not been up to the challenge of applying as the forms and questions are daunting. I'll need to file them in order to reapply at sfu.
234	The English department could have been a bit more relaxed about their requirements for exemption. Although none of my courses from Bishop's directly matched those I "needed" to take at SFU, I had already studied many of the same topics.
235	N/A
236	Been more helpful in transferng credits.
237	I would have liked my TAs to explain options as to how I could get better grades.
238	Set the semester GPA to at least 1.67 for students taking 4 courses or more.
239	I don't actually consider that I've left... I plan to continue my studies when I have the time.
240	i would've liked for them to check up on new students and to make the their options more apparent so that more would take advantage of them. I was not aware of the counselling and health department for example.
241	For my myself, probably nothing. I was in a place where I wanted to work for a while and not much was going to change my mind. However, I am only returning because it is easy and convienent. While SFU has an amazing academic reputation, campus life is dull and failry uneventful. The Univer-city concept should help bring some life to campus though.
242	Have more classes available and departmental class schedules available in advance (one year).
243	I never looked into what financial assistance would be available to a part time student. I really didn't even consider it. I thought there'd be nothing - because I was working. I guess, the school could have informed me more about financial aid.
244	University should care for students. It's not easy to satisfy everyone but what I felt about this school is that school doesn't do anything to satisfy the student. Always raising tuition. Making automatic door which seemed pointless and I could figure out million ways to use that money better.
245	n/a - it was my personal decision
246	Nothing!
247	Clearer marking guidelines.

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248	This does not apply as the reason for leaving was my fault entirely (understanding that my Mother's death caused a great deal of stress over the two semesters) as I did not meet the required levels to maintain my status
249	Nothing.
250	There is nothing SFU could have done ins addition. The proffessors and advisors were very helpful in helping me withdraw from my courses due to extuenating circumstances. I only wish I could have known sooner what was going to happen if i was going to recieve my withdraw and what to expect from the govertment concerning my student loan.
251	Lower the tuition. I don't want to be stuck in a bottomless pit of debt in order to learn. I barely make ends meet as it is.
252	Cooperative Education should not be so expensive for the services it provides to the student.
253	It would have been nice to know wether or not i could get my registration deposit back or to know if it could be rolled over to the next sememster
254	I plan to come back next year.
255	Leaving is too final a word - I look at it as a "temporary" leave. When I am well I will be back.
256	If I had gotten into all the classes I wanted I might have stayed, but even then I'm not sure.
257	its not a permanant leave, so this question is not applicable
258	personal circumstances - i don't think there was anything that could be done.
259	More compassionate attitude from staff.
260	Lowered the cost of tuition, and offer bursaries that would be enough to meaningfully assist a large family.
261	Advising-I had a real issue with the advice and incorrect information I recieved from my first academic advisor surrounding credits from other post secondary institutions. It affected my decisions about my academic path and upon reflection I may not have attended SFU at all if I had been given the correct information. gurrrr.
262	NA
263	Nothing, overall completely disappointed with the teachers and the school in general
264	I talked to many ex-SFU or those who turned down admission offers, and the name of the University and the people's reaction to it was a factor in their decision to leave the university. It's time the university understood the hard facts of reality and did something to get an image that suites the local and global market.
265	My education there was a positive expirience. Although I was told more than once that new courses would have been added for me to take by this time. My decision to not enroll was soley based on the fact that I have have taken every class I could have taken, it was not my choice. I took every course there was by correspondance (that is every course relevant to my program). It was SFU that failed to offer additonal courses. Although being so far away from the campus part of the blame does fall to me, because I did have the option to move to BC which I declined because I of my job.
266	Contacted me.
267	Nothing, really. Didn't look for help.
268	Provide more night courses - more course offerings.
269	not very much

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
270	1. SFU has me over a barrel because CRIM is not offered elsewhere in the Vancouver area. Consequently I will be forced to return when I think my migraines are under control. SFU could make it easier to obtain a retroactive withdrawal from a course, for medical reasons. 2. SFU should come into the modern age and start offering courses OTHER than Business courses, IN THE EVENING AFTER MOST ADULTS GET HOME FROM WORK. SFU is making it impossible for me (a mature student) to complete my degree, since most of the courses I need are only offered during the day when I'm at work.
271	have offered me an earlier appointment to enroll so that I could have gotten the course I wanted
272	i think more services are required course specific for students who are struggling academically
273	SFU could go a long way to retaining students by providing a financial assistance program that publishes clear criteria so that students may have a better understanding of what to expect. Currently, you apply for SFA, but do not receive adequate explanation as to the selection process. Moreover, much could be done in the way of recognizing and accommodating working students who have little or no family or other support. I'm a consistently high performer, with professors who support my academic work, and readily accommodate me with regard to deadlines (due to my heavy off campus workload), but this is merely a band aid, and leaves the professors in awkward positions vis a vis their department as well as other students never mind the registrar's office. I know that I am not the only student who is working full time and attending (was attending full time study) and the university needs to come to terms with this 'new' reality of an increasing number of its students. We are not all 18-24 and comfortably supported by a middle-class family. Paying my rent is as necessary and important as achieving my degree. The university could work towards a new set of academic policies regarding deadlines/extensions that do not require the humiliating process of divulging great amounts of personal information. This could be fulfilled by allowing departments to develop slightly less formal processes suited to the students in their domain.
274	not sure
275	n/a.... my only complaint about SFU is that the recent increase in tuition fees has become an extreme burden on my financial future. I have worked the entire time I've been in school because student loans don't cover all my school and living expenses. As a result, I've done more poorly in school than I should have and I'm still in debt. I can see this financial burden deterring students from beginning or continuing their education. It is not accessible to students from working class families.
276	Faculty, advisors could answer their phones and return messages in a more timely fashion.
277	During registration, have more people who can answer more complicated questions in the offices. I found that whenever I needed to talk to a department head or to someone of authority, they were always on holiday and no one else could answer my questions.
278	SFU should take consideration of the language might sometimes be the challenging task for international students to succeed in the courses they take. It should not be bell curved for most of the courses in sfu.
279	provided me with more access to supportive health care and disability center.
280	Well, frankly speaking, because I had already reached the cut off date for withdrawal I had to apply under extenuating circumstances. I was accepted, but the head of that office sent me an email I thought was a bit insensitive reminding me of when the cut off date was. I felt like emailing him back and saying "ok, next time someone in my family plans on dying I'll be sure to ask them to hurry it up before the withdrawal date passes." But I held my tongue.

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281	They need to offer courses in the evenings and have library and books stores on Surrey campus available to support the work for night classes. They can offer more education courses for the PB early childhood education program, and they provide parking passes to Education students. I had to move my car on my only break during the afternoon course so I wouldn't be fined or towed. This is ridiculous. I could not take a bus to campus from my work to arrive at the start of class and so my options for success in the course required me to leave work early, (creating job stress) park unsafely, and involve making arrangements with extended family to acquire course materials. This was not a user-friendly atmosphere. Also, I had intial problems getting a security pass and there was the constant fear of getting fined to prevent me from having conversations with my professor or other colleagues. I also think it would be nice for students to be able to access people during registration-- I initially also had problems getting access after paying and I barely registerd for any course last year because they filled up during my 3-4 day problems. I went personally to Surrey campus twice to rectify a situation I was having with email confirmations. I can's see why student id is not enough for a staff member to solve these sorts of problems. If I can hardly find time to get to campus to deal in person with such issues, how likely is it an imposter will take time out of their day to meddle with my registration?
282	care not to disclose
283	I'm still plan to come back so long as I can complete my degree while working full time.
284	Be more specific about the requirements and limits for admission. I was surprised with the decision they made for me to withdraw.
285	Nothing. I havent left. See you winter 07. travel is important and encouraged.
286	life just changed , god knows for good or bad
287	Well the Kamloops Campus could get its act together. I have had numerous negative experiences with this campus, as compared to main campus, where everyone is more than willing to help. At the Kamloops Campus, the standard response is "that is not in my job description", and at main campus, staff bend over backwards to help you, even if it is not in their "job description". Also, the portables have to go, more permanent buildings are required for the Kamloops Campus, portables harbour mould and this in turn makes me very sick, so much so that I cannot no longer attend classes.
288	nothing
289	Does not apply to me, though based on my experience I have decided to pursue graduate studies elsewhere due to disappointment with aspect of the Gerontology Diploma program.
290	i loved sfu academically, they provide tons of services and most of the courses i took were great. however, there is not much support for student living. i hated res and living on an isolated mountain with a passion. living off campus is too much a hassle because busses take to long and don't go a lot of places. parking is very unaffordable on campus.
291	Offer more courses in the evening, at the downtown campus, so that those of us working can take these courses. It would have been natural for me to take my required courses through SFU, but the colleges are much better set up with evening courses in accessible locations.
292	didn't decide to leave...not sure what else could have been done...
293	I was enrolled in some distance education courses for Fall 2005. When I started working I found that my work load was much higher than I anticipated and I could not complete my courses. I tried to drop them, however I was past the drop date. I applied under special circumstances, but I was still not allowed to drop my courses even without a refund. This caused me to fail all 3 courses, and now if I decide to go back I will be on academic probation, even though in previous semesters I was a very good student. At the time of leaving SFU I did not have any negative feelings toward the university, however this experience has left a very bad taste in my mouth and it is now very unlikely that I will return.

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
294	Nothing, it was purely a personal decision.
295	Nothing, i could see that i had no future up there at that concrete prison.
296	Ensure that at least some desired courses would be attainable.
297	open up a med school
298	not be so bad
299	To offer an alternative for Engineering Science to take one more semester of other faculty courses
300	It was a tough course and I needed a break -- it had nothing to do with SDU -- just my age.
301	Nothing.
302	Have accurate information about transfer credits to BCIT. No one from any department could tell me whether any SFU classes were transferable to BCIT. BCIT was equally unaware of SFU courses. There should be communication between all post secondary education institutions so class so students know which classes will be transferable and which won't be.
303	I should have dropped my classes so i would have received W's instead of F's. I was not attending school due to personal reasons.
304	I dont think there is anything SFU could have done other then offering new courses i was interested in. Such as animal related courses that werent solely part of the sciences or actually bringing in the resligious studies departmant which i wanted but was put on hold for 3 yrs... ect..
305	Nothing...maybe processed my transcripts instead of making me re-apply for them 3 times
306	it could have gotten a nursing program
307	Two things: One, if classes were offered that would allow people to work full time and learn I would have continued at SFU. Two, if my previous eduction was more acknowledged and better credit was put toward them I would have been happy to complete a degree at SFU.
308	Adapt its existing Art history classes, and add a few more to make a BA program for Art history possible.
309	I have not left SFU perminantly as I indicated earlier in this survey this is only a temporary departure.
310	Make more courses available - I found the ones I wanted were already full when my time slot came up.
311	Nothing - it was for reasons totally unrelated with SFU that I left.
312	Nothing
313	Less ripping of monies, better more focused classes, less stupid instructors, removal of TECH 100 and 101 completly
314	nothing.
315	provide financial support priority to internation students and job opporutnites instead of using the same people over and over again without giving chances to other students
316	Something MUST be done about being able to get classes at registration time. I know many, many other students who feel the same way, it is just absolutley ridiculous. We pay all these fees and in the end we do not get classes we need to obtain the degree we want. That place also needs something to make the atmosphere feel less depressing. More places to go to encourage being social too, like cafes, a better bar, etc.
317	NA
318	Many of the courses required were a complete waste of time. These courses should be eliminated.
319	Given me more clear informaton on what I had to do to leave SFU. It was hard to get this information.
320	nothing, I was finished my schooling

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
321	No comment
322	Give more academic help for student
323	Have the services (councelling and others) be more prominant so I wouldn't have to seek them out
324	They did a great job.
325	not really
326	Nothing.I plan to return and do better. As attending two institutions affacted my grades negatively on both institution.
327	the decision would have been more difficult to make if the courses were cheaper, but because of the high tuition fees i had to leave to make more money!
328	Make all the services they offer more visible to the students. I was not aware there were so many.
329	let me know what my academic status is
330	I have found that support for mature students (students who live on their own, etc) lacking at SFU. Also, instructor as well as teaching assistant understanding of the complex nature of being a mature student was sometimes non-existent.
331	More evening classes or distance education classes for work people.
332	None
333	Teach your academic advisors to do a better job, as they were not very informative at all
334	sfu could've offered me more variety and classes of courses. They could have also given me more advice when i had asked about it at the student services. professors are normally fairly detached from the majority of students due to the population, so it was hard to talk to any of the professors especially since they are mostly busy most of the time. the tuition fees have also increased drastically and in comparison to other institutes is much higher. though i dont know waht they could've done in respect to that, this fact reallie did affect my decision
335	Nothing
336	more helping program for international students, especailly for those who need delicate English skill for successful school life.
337	Within the PDP program itself, ensuring that students are not placed in schools without the support of their peers would be a positive step as this would have been a very useful tool. As well, more availability for students who receive a bad placement to speak up and have a transfer when something isn't working for them. I felt that my tuition and the time I invested in the course was a total waste at the end of the semester and not having any recourse available while the course was progressing was something that left a bad taste in my mouth.
338	approve my application for financial assistance
339	Nothing. It's through SFU that I was able to find the internship and the encouragement I needed.
340	nothing
341	Nothing.
342	nothing
343	I was moving. It had nothing to do with the institution
344	Meet with me to discuss my grades to see why I was not acheiving the grades I had previously been able to maintain. this was another emotional blow to be asked to withdraw, especially since I now am very focused and want to continue my education at SFU.
345	They could have provided me with better information on when I would be able to reapply. They just told me I must leave until I can reapply, however they did not specify when reapplication could take place.

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
346	Nothing. My feelings of apathy and neutrality arise from frustration caused by my own situation and not by a failure on the part of SFU.
347	It wasn't a decision
348	nothing
349	I don't think they could have done much, it's a good school and well suited for some people, it just wasn't for me.
350	Not applicable to me.
351	SFU could look at creating more distance education classes, and more evening classes. It is hard, as I work full time, to get to school, however, I still would like to complete my degree. I don't see why the school should cater only to full-time, day students.
352	Nothing
353	when i got my rtw, i could have gotten a warning from sfu. when i told the profs i needed extra help they could have encouraged me to try harder and given me some sort of aid
354	I feel that I would have performed better had I been able to enroll in the classes that I wanted and needed for my major/minor, rather than lower division classes that, while easy, only distracted me from making serious academic progress. Cop out, I know, but MAN no one should have to take American History with that douchebag XXXX just because it was the only history credit available. Bah! So yeah, maybe had SFU helped to make more applicable classes available to me, things may have turned out a bit differently. Also, had the food and beverage service not sucked so bad! there, I could have eaten on campus between classes instead of starving or blowing off class to go home and eat. Goddamn Chartwells.
355	Provide more information and options. The advisors did not really help or assist me. Seems like they lost interest in assisting students.
356	increased availability of advising in Student Services would have been great, as I could not get an appointment in time before I had to leave (within 2 weeks)
357	Provide more friendly TM and professors that are actually willing to assist students in need.
358	when a student is on academic probation he has to achieve a cgpa of 2.00 or higher in the next semester...I think it's unfair; the university should give the student one last attempt before dismissing him/her...for example; first poor achievent (below 2.00) - warning given second - academic probation (maybe -must see academic advisor/counselor?) third - required to withdraw
359	Nothing, I had to take a short departure for personal reasons. It could have been easier to get the distance ed courses I need so I wouldn't have to take them through TRU-OL.
360	There wasn't anything anybody could have done. After the Fall 2005 semester (which was AWESOME), the Spring 2006 Semester was a huge let-down....so, I withdrew.
361	It is very unfair how no one listens to some one with financial problems and offer some assistance elsewhere . Too bureaucratic financial aid system at SFU
362	Career counselling could have helped me decide.
363	an advicer helped me on how to qualify for the readmission to SFU
364	Offer courses in single day blocks.
365	I am returning, and my advisor has assisted me with what I requested. I will return once my mother is independent and I can again focus on school.
366	Nothing, this was my decision.
367	don't really know. I am planning on returning when I can take a full course load to of classes that I actually want to graduate
368	I am sure that I could have received more help in making my decision if I had asked for it. I did not ask anyone at the school for help so I am not sure what more could have been done.

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
369	Well, when I decided to leave my masters program, I was not contacted by the Dean of Graduate studies --- I am probably an anomaly on here, as I had been working on my MA, taken a break and then later on, Fall of 2005, decided to take a French course. So, I fit into a variety of slots here. As for my MA, I left because I did not have the support of my supervisor or my department. I can come back, and I do plan to do so.
370	Give a better orientation.
371	CANNOT HELP AT ALL
372	More flexibility in choosing tutorial times to fit my personal schedule
373	n/a
374	I didn't plan to leave. The summer job opportunity left me in debt so I could not return to school in the fall. I plan to return next fall. SFU could only help by not allowing The Southwestern Company to recruit there. This was the company that I worked for. They only allow the top sellers to finish the summer and leave the rest high and dry.
375	I had tried to get advice about career choices as well as for my personal problems, and what I would do about school, but every time I went they were busy and they were booked up for a few months!
376	n/a - only my faculty could have assisted me... helped plan when I could attend in the future, make registering again more plausible...
377	I don't think it could have undone anything it had already done to make me leave.
378	none
379	Provided more opportunities for students to interact with other students with like interests - rather than students merely interacting with students in order to get drunk. I found SFU an incredibly lonely, isolated school, and a shocking percentage of the student body appeared to be suffering from some degree of major depression. The campus was gorgeous, and the courses themselves were challenging and interesting, but living at SFU became too much of a health risk.
380	Nothing more. I was very happy to leave.
381	don't really know
382	Better advising
383	nothing, just didn't feel right there
384	Better training of student advisors.
385	nothing
386	offer part time options - be more flexible with international credits evaluation (notice that ICES exists, for example)
387	The population of BC does not all reside in Vancouver. SFU has not had new distance courses added to their catalogue in years! There are so many options for conducting course work away from the buildings of SFU, perhaps depts. like history should consider other options for the rest of the province.
388	reply to emails better options for my plan
389	Offer courses created for the working person...meaning available after regular work hours with a curriculum that would be manageable while working full-time. In my experience many of the SA courses at SFU, in terms of the actual class are a waste of time. I would prefer to have the directions and materials available to me with the flexibility to complete the course on my own time frame. This is in contrast with the 4 hr 1day per week evening courses that require immense amounts of text reading that ultimately lead to writing a final paper, which really could have been written without having ever taken the course and only having read the materials.
390	-SFU desperately needs more qualified professors-It looks like there's a lot of construction, however, no substance to the growth. -It seems there is some kind of cap on the 15-30%?? of foreign students at the university, however, it seems like 70% of t

Question 38: What Could SFU Have Done, Or What More Could SFU Have Done, To Assist You At The Time You Were Deciding To Leave?	
391	Nothing. I was pretty content with my decision.
392	By that time it was too late... However, I feel Sfu could have done more when i was starting my education with them. Perhaps mandatory orientation would be nice. I did not know I had to declare a major and register within a department until I was almost ready to leave. When an academic advisor finally did explain how it all works she did so in a condescending attitude which only embarrassed me, and made me feel even more ostracized from the school.
393	better policies for those that are having difficulties. i found that I had passed many of the cut off dates so I was unable to withdraw.
394	Don't think there was anything SFU could have done to prevent me from leaving. It came down to SFU not offering a nursing program. I had to look else where.
395	Give students with disabilities equal access to complaint procedures at SFU. SFU had a second opportunity to act appropriately, with XXXX in the Human Rights Office, but XXXX denied me my right to: represent myself, present evidence, make a complaint, seek an informal resolution, request an appeal, etc. XXXX wouldn't even let me meet with XXXX! (Once again, I have this in writing. And, I think it's quite obvious that this bias occurred because of XXXX view toward me because I was suffering from the mental health disability of depression.) XXXX didn't even give me a copy of the changed SFU Human Rights Policy--which named the V-P, Academic as the person to whom to send appeals. In fact, XXXX told my SFU counselling services counsellor, XXXX (who went to XXXX office merely to acquire general info about time limits for complaints) that the policy HAD NOT CHANGED since 1996, which mislead me greatly when this info was passed along to me. XXXX allowed this counsellor to substitute for me, i.e., to REPRESENT me, in XXXX office, when I had not given legal permission for XXXX to accept XXXX as such. Repeated letters of request to access the Human Rights office sent since that time have been dismissed. Through Professor XXXX, I explained the ENTIRE situation to XXXX (including the fact that XXXX carried a pocket knife around the Dept, and that a couple of months after I made my complaint to the Chair--and nothing was done--I was raped on campus). I emphasized that I had been denied access to the Human Rights Office (twice) and that I was given no Right to Appeal. (I thought that the President was still the person to whom the HRO reported.) XXXX went to President XXXX, who arranged a 30-credit-hour bursary, out of his discretionary funds. XXXX asked me if I was "safe" on campus; I told XXXX that I would be o.k. as long as I could keep the Library Study room that I had through the Centre for Students with Disabilities. I got the impression that XXXX confirmed that XXXX would ensure that I could keep it. I was also assured that I could present information to XXXX (who would present it to Senior Administrators) and that more would be done to help me. XXXX said "If we're going to do more, we're going to need to see proof." XXXX encouraged me to see how things went for a while with just the tuition bursary and not to rush. I came back to XXXX--with the long cover letter and binder full of documents that I gave to XXXX, Dean of Student Services, in 1996, which XXXX refused to keep on file--but XXXX refused to accept it. I came back to XXXX a year later (in 2003), with a letter from my physician, once again asking for more help, and offering to present information--which was presented to XXXX through the SFU Ombudsperson. I was told that XXXX response was: "SFU has done enough for you." I was devastated. The XXXX then told me that "Maybe SFU isn't the right place for you," and escorted me from XXXX office. Although XXXX did assure me that the rest of the bursary would always be here for me if I ever returned. Through XXXX, I finally got a (witnessed) agreement with XXXX that I could present information. I told XXXX it would take me a few months, because, now that I had guaranteed permission to present this information (with expectation that something would be done to compensate me), I had FOIPPA's to do, etc. Within two weeks, the CSD took away my study room. I asked (PLEADED) with the CSD and XXXX not to do it, but they did it anyway. I can't be safe at SFU. (It was like being asked to withdraw from the M.A. program all over again--like being told that it was o.k. to be sexually harassed at SFU all

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	over again.) I went into a deep depression. It took me a year to do what could have been done in a few months. When I asked to meet with XXXX to present the information, a year later, XXXX refused to meet with me. Since then, no-one will help me. They could have let me keep the room.
396	None, but applying for retroactive withdrawal from courses has proven difficult. I am attempting to finish my degree at SFU.
397	The choices of programs are too flexible and often after you are done with your lower division, and you can't get into the program you like, you'll have to do the lower divisions again to meet another program's admission requirement. I think being in a program from the very beginning could provide students a better direction and goal when they study.
398	if there were more courses available by distance ed, I might have been more motivated to stay in. I felt that I didn't get much selection, since I had to do distance ed, and there wasn't much left by my registration date.

Appendix 4: Ethics Form

Student Retention Survey – Ethics Application Number 37675 Karen McCredie

Introduction

To continue with this survey you must meet the following conditions:

- 1 - you WERE registered in one or more of the following semesters: Fall 2005, Spring 2006, Summer 2006;
- 2 - you are NOT registered in the Fall 2006 semester and
- 3 - you did NOT graduate from SFU this year (2006) and have NOT applied to graduate in the Fall 2006 ceremony.

If you meet these three criteria please continue.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your effort will assist my Master's research as well as Simon Fraser University in addressing student retention issues. Your time will benefit future SFU students.

Be sure to follow the link at the end of the survey to a separate site to enter a draw to win one of 10 \$50 gift certificates.

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593 or the Director, Education Graduate Programs (Dr. Tom O'Shea) at oshea@sfu.ca or phone 604-291-3984.

By proceeding to the first question in this survey it will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Results of this survey can be obtained by contacting either the investigator at kmccredi@sfu.ca or the supervisor of the investigator at esamier@sfu.ca.

Confidentiality will be maintained to the best of the investigator's ability. The survey is being housed on a secure SFU website that is maintained in Canada.

Appendix 5: Email Response Comments

Email Responses Sent Directly to Researcher from Participants	
1	because my family in china has something emergency and i have to come back for half year, so i can not registered this and next semesters. can you give me something information to help and continue my studing. thx very much..
2	I would like to help you out with your student retention survey. Can you e-mail it to me?
3	Are you still looking for participants in your survey?
4	Is there a link to the survey? I didn't see one
5	I tried the link to complete the survey and was not able to access it according to the following message:SFU WebSurvey: Authorization Denied a.. You do not have access privilege to use this form. (By Maillist)
6	STOP EMAILING ME I ALREADY DID THE SURVEY FOR YOU!!
7	Sorry. Too busy.
8	Not registered this semester.
9	I quited SFU after the 2 month period limit, and now they classify me as fail. Now I can't go to any other university. You can really help me if you tell me how I can cancel all my records here. I won't go back to SFU because it doesn't have mechanical engineering.
10	Hello,May I ask how you obtained my email address? While it is true I am not currently enrolled in any classes, I am in the process of working on my honours thesis so I'm not actually leaving SFU yet. Is this what my SFU record suggests? Anyways, I've completed the survey but am not sure if your survey had students like me in mind...
11	i left because sfu is ridiculously not worth it. shove your survey.
12	With regard to your SFU Student Retention survey, I am registered at S.F.U. as a Senior Student and am taking both credit and non credit courses.
13	I am going to school in Norway right now, but I'll spend 15 mins with you on Skype answering your survey if you like. My name is XXX - and I'm 9 hours ahead of you
14	Hey I already did the survey!! Hope you got it ok?!
15	I just saw ur email in my mailbox, and I believe I can be a good source for ur research.I will be filling out the survey you mentioned, but I am also willing o meet you in person regarding why I am not an SFU student anymore. My story might help the future students. Just let me know if you are interested, or if you need to know anything as detailed or not. Will be my pleasure to be a little help.
16	Just a quick question.. does it say somewhere that I am no longer registered at SFU? I'm on an exchange program with SFU right now, but if there is something that says I am no longer registered then that is not good for nextsemester...

Email Responses Sent Directly to Researcher from Participants	
17	You sent this survey to me for completion and I would do it, but it asks for my computing id and password, which I would have to go through my records to find. Sorry.
18	if we're no longer registered would we still have log-in IDs for SFU?
19	I did this for you a few weeks ago. Thank you.
20	HOW DID YOU GET THIS E-MAIL ADDRESS?????
21	I will be away on Maternity Leave until May 26, 2007. Please email XXXXX at XXXXX or contact the main switchboard at XXXX. Thank you.
22	I am not retained in SFU. Just that I am pursuing a degree in Japan right now and then heading back later. Please stop bothering me.
23	I would be happy to fill out your survey if you would like to send me a copy.
24	I am still registered at SFU.
25	how am i supposed to login?
26	I'm not currently registered and would be interested in the survey. Can you give me some more information?
27	the reason i did not register is that, sfu has not received my transcrip from my former university.
28	I'm going to register courses for next semester. Do you still want me to do the survey?
29	I filled out your survey. I am a Canadian student living overseas, and took an online distance education course. Because I am not near a campus, I was unable to attend any of the orientation sessions or utilize any of the campus services. I just wanted to point out that I was unable to make it clear as a reason when filling out the survey. Good luck, I hope you get lots of responses!
30	Ok
31	HI. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE SURVEY BUT I CANNOT REMEMBER MY COMPUTING ID. DO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN RETRIEVE IT?
32	Yes I am, but I am awaiting someone to contact me to re-establish my access for the Part Time Liberal Study Program at the Surry Campus. Can you point me in the right direction?
33	I'm still registered.... didn't do the survey.
34	Have to complete BA graduating credits; due to lack of funds and medical issue(s) . . . haven't been able to re-register, but am hoping to in 2007 to complete my BA. Thanks for asking!
35	I wish to do the survey, but I can't remember my computing I.D. do you know where I can get it from, who or atleast the typical format of the user name and p/w. That way I can remember what it could have been. Or if you like I can send in my survey via E-mail for your study - that way you still have the data.
36	Hi I got this email and wanted to confirm that you sent it as it asked for my student login and therefore could possibly be a phishing attack.
37	NO!
38	why are you sending out a survey to ex-sfu students and requiring they use a sfu computing id? Doesn't make any sense!
39	Thank you for your e-mail. Your original e-mail did not have the link so I wasn't sure where to go to do the survey.

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