

Summary of Survey Results for Shasta College Leavers – June 2012

Background

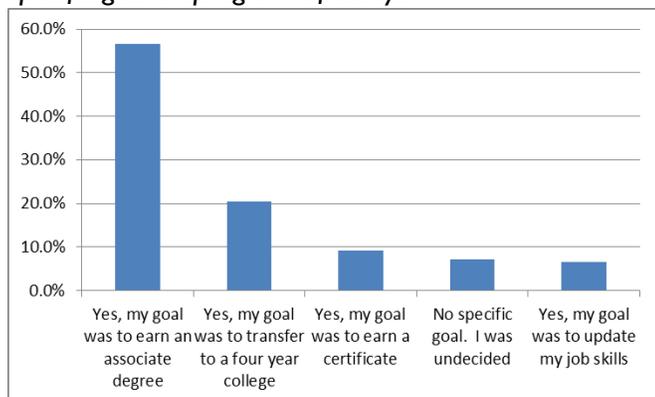
We identified 463 students that were taking classes in the 2010-11 academic year, and surveyed those students that discontinued their courses in 2011-12 academic year. Leavers are defined as those students leaving coursework without earning an AA/AS degree or certificate in that current year, as opposed to completers (previously surveyed) who did earn their certificate or associate degree. The college allocated Perkins funding for a student worker to make telephone calls and follow-up emails for this survey.

The Research and Planning office provided sample surveys to the VTEA committee for their input, and approval. Interviews were held to select the student worker for this assignment, and training was provided for consistency in using a call script and data entry. The survey opened on April 30, 2012. Follow-up emails and reminders were sent to those not responding.

On June 20, 2012, the leaver's survey closed with 152 responses for a 32.5% response rate.

Results

Figure 1 show results for the question: "When you were enrolled at Shasta College, did you have a specific goal or program of study?"



- Based on survey responses, 56.6% of leaving students said their goal was to earn an associate degree when they enrolled at Shasta College. Another 20.4% of respondents said they had a goal of transferring to a four-year institution, 9.2% said

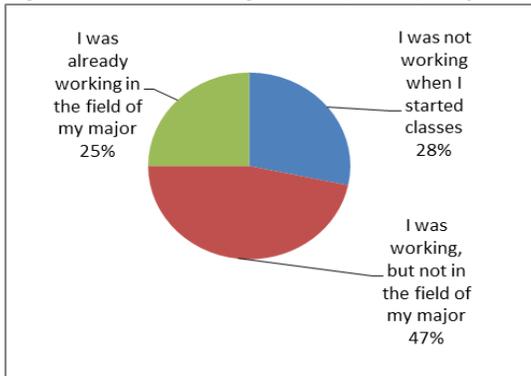
their goal was to earn a certificate at Shasta College, and 6.6% simply planned to update their job skills. Only 7.2% of leaving students said they were undecided and had no specific goal when they enrolled.

- Of the 152 leaving students surveyed, 85 (65.9%) responded, "No, I do not plan to return to Shasta College." However, 34.1% of surveyed students said "yes, they do plan to return to Shasta within one year." Of those not returning to Shasta College in the next year, a few said they would return sometime in the future to continue courses needed to obtain their degree or certificate. One student responded they would return to classes if the Forest Service required them to, and others said they would return if specific courses were offered again.
- When asked, "What were the main reasons you decided to stop attending Shasta College," students gave varied responses; however, over half commented they had earned a previous award and/or transferred to another institution. Many of these students had earned an award and returned to Shasta College after graduation. Some students earned awards that were not identified when leavers were surveyed. A few students reported leaving because they "met their educational goal," meaning they completed a required course by their union or employer, or "I learned everything I need to know for now." Several students gained employment or had job commitments preventing them from continuing their courses; several reported they had financial aid or other funding issues preventing them from continuing their coursework; and several had health or family issues that prevented them from continuing. A few students moved from the area, and several others left because their class(es) or program is not offered or has been cancelled. Only a couple students reported they left school because of a SC teacher or other staff member. A few left for other miscellaneous reasons; i.e. retired, joined the military, or didn't have time. Only one student reported leaving because they thought the college lost its accreditation.

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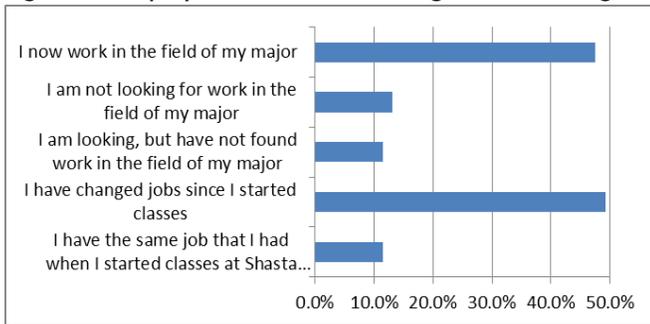
- Based on survey responses, 49 students (32.2% of respondents) transferred to another college after leaving Shasta College. Most students transfer to CSU Chico, Simpson or Sacramento State. The next most popular two-year institution choices for students to transfer are College of Siskiyous, and American River College.

Figure 2 Not working in the field of major



- The chart above indicates that, of the 152 respondents to our leavers survey, almost half (46.7%) were working while taking classes but not in the field of their major. Another 25.0% reported they were already working in the field of their major, and 28.3% were not working at all when they started taking classes at Shasta College.
- Of the leavers surveyed who were not working when they started classes (n=43), almost half (48.8%) report they are still not working, 34.9% are working in the field of their major, and 16.3% are now working but not in their field.

Figure 3 Employment after attending Shasta College



- The above table demonstrates that almost half of students not working in their field prior to taking classes at Shasta College (49.2%), have since changed jobs; and 47.5% of them are now working in the field of their major. Of the same sixty-one respondents, 11.5% report they have the same job, another 11.5% say they are looking but have not found work in their field, and 13.1% are not looking for work in their field.
- Still others report they now own their own business, are full-time students, have health or family issues preventing them from working, or are simply unemployed.
- Of 152 respondents, only 41 answered the question “Did your Classes make a Difference for you on the Job? Of those who did respond, almost half (48.8%) reported they did learn skills to improve in their current position, 41.5% have received an increase in their wage or salary, and 41.5% work more hours. There were 22.0% who reported they learned skills to change jobs. Another 46.3%, however, reported they have the same job as when they started classes and only 2.4% said they did not learn enough in their classes to make a difference. One student commented, “I am much more qualified to complete different positions within my field of study,” one is retired, and others remain unemployed.
- Almost all respondents (149) answered the question “How Important was your Education in your Program of Study?” with a resounding, “Very important.” Only a few students made comments like, “Some of it was good, some of it I won’t use again,” or “a 5 out of 10.” The majority of responders made favorable comments like, “Very important. I wouldn’t be where I am today without it,” and “Life changing experience.”

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- When asked, “Did our classes help you find employment?” a total of 87 (58.8%) responded yes. Similar comments were made as in the previous question, such as “Yes, I wouldn’t be working in the field that I am now without Shasta College.” There were 62 (41.9%) who responded no. Some of their comments included, “I am a full-time student,” or “I have the same job as when I started,” or “It is helping with my volunteer work as a Volunteer Fire Fighter.”
- A total of 110 students responded to the question “If you are currently Working, What is your Job Title?” and provided their current job title. Of those responding, the largest number indicated they are currently employed in the healthcare industry. The second largest group was working in the business field, followed by fire fighting. There were also several responses in the agriculture, education, food services, and mechanics, as well as the “other” category. Only a few are in social work, retail, do manual labor or are business owners and self-employed. A few responded no comment.
- There were 111 responses to the question “What is the ZIP Code where you Work?”, with the vast majority working within our tri-county service area. A few students work in Chico, Sacramento, Sonoma County, Fresno, and San Diego, as well as Idaho, Washington, Nevada, or as far away as Tennessee, Nebraska, Florida and even Egypt.
- The survey asked this open-ended question of SC leavers, “How can we improve?” Of those students responding, many responded, “I think Shasta College is great!” Others said, “I had no problems at SC,” and “I’ve always enjoyed my classes.” There were several who commented they had financial aid or other financial issues, and many reported that their class and/or programs were cancelled. Several expressed dissatisfaction with counseling at Shasta College. Still several others said they’d make no changes, and made comments like, “There was nothing I was unhappy with,” and “Everything was relatively simple and easy.” Some leavers made miscellaneous comments, such as, “Have a job placement

specialist,” and “maybe better technology.” Several also reported having an issue with a teacher or staff member at Shasta College. There were 39 respondents out of 141 who simply said, “No comment.”

This survey was developed and summarized by Marc Beam, Director Research and Planning, Shasta College on June 25, 2012. For further information contact the office of Research and Planning, at (530) 242-7670.

Prepared by Marc Beam
Shasta College office of Research and Planning
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