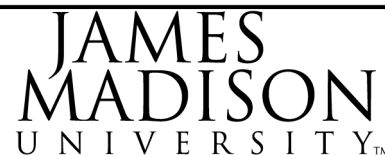


INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS



REPORT ON NON RETURNING STUDENTS JUNE 2000

During the Fall Semester 1999, there were numerous discussions on campus about possible changes recently in the reasons why students were not returning to James Madison University. In response to these discussions, the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness (IE) extended an offer to interested individuals in other divisions to join IE staff in researching this issue. Representatives from Student Affairs, University Relations and IE formed a committee to construct a non-returning survey and to establish a survey process.

The primary purpose of the survey was to learn students' most important reasons for not returning to JMU. The Office of Institutional Research staff identified for the committee those former students whose first semester of non-attendance was from Fall Semester 1998 through and including Fall Semester 1999.

The committee decided that the survey would be mailed. Members believed that the most accurate addresses that the University had were the former students' permanent addresses. Consequently, mailings were addressed to the parents. The mailings included a cover letter to the parent, a Parent Survey, a cover letter to the former student, and a Student Survey. Parents were asked to forward the Student Survey to their child. Stamped forwarding (if necessary) and return envelopes were provided. Approximately 900 packets were mailed in February 2000; a second mailing of 618 was mailed to non-respondents in March 2000. It was believed that the 900 included approximately 100 individuals who for a variety of administrative reasons did not fit the committee's definition of non-returning. The committee received back 194 usable student responses and 261 usable parent responses; a return rate for students of around a quarter of the actual sample and for parents around a third.

Summary statements that can be made from the results include:

- Former student respondents were, in general, representative of all JMU students in regard to gender, race, native/ transfer, residency and place of residence at JMU.
 - Reasons selected most often as the most important reason for not returning were: transferred to another institution; family issues; JMU was not what I thought it would be; medical/psychological reasons; unsatisfactory grades; and desired major not offered.
 - Approximately seven out of ten former student respondents are currently attending college elsewhere and are not planning to return to JMU.
 - Nearly three-fourths of the parents of former students stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's educational experience at JMU and would recommend JMU to others.
 - Approximately one-half of the parents were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's personal development at JMU.
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- Former student respondents were significantly more likely than parent respondents to indicate that the following was the most significant reason for not returning: family issues; college not worth their time and money; and courses were not challenging.
- Parent respondents were significantly more likely than student respondents to indicate that the following was the most significant reason for not returning: JMU not what my child thought it would be; loneliness/I did not fit in; advising inadequate and course availability.

More specific results include:

**TABLE 1
Gender**

Female	61%
Male	38%

**TABLE 2
Race or Ethnic Origin**

Caucasian-American (White)	90%
African-American (Black)	4%
Asian-Pacific Islander	2%
Other	2%
Multiracial	1%
Latino	0%

**TABLE 3
Last Semester Attended JMU**

Fall 1998	39%
Spring 1999	44%
Summer 1999	4%
Fall 1999	10%
Other	2%

**TABLE 4
Number of Semesters Attended JMU**

One or less	24%	Seven	2%
Two	28%	Eight	1%
Three	14%	Nine	1%
Four	14%	Ten	0%
Five	9%	Eleven	1%
Six	6%		

**TABLE 5
Percentage Indicating JMU Was First Choice as College to Attend**

Yes	64%
No	36%

**TABLE 6
Percentage of Respondents First in Family to Attend College**

Yes	21%
No	78%

**TABLE 7
JMU Major (Five or More Respondents)**

Undeclared	29
Art	10
Business	9
English	9
Health Sciences	9
Computer Science	8
Psychology	8
Accounting	7
Biology	7
ISAT	7
Computer Information Systems	6
History	5

**TABLE 8
Number of Times Major Changed**

Zero	70%
One	21%
Two	7%
Three	1%

**TABLE 9
JMU Grade Point Average**

3.50 – 4.00	19%
3.00 – 3.49	23%
2.50 – 2.99	20%
2.00 – 2.49	17%
1.50 – 1.99	12%
Less than 1.50	6%
No response	4%

TABLE 10
JMU First College Attended or Transferred

JMU	78%
Transfer	22%

TABLE 11
Residency

In-state	67%
Out-of-state	33%

TABLE 12
Place of Residence While Attending JMU

Residence halls	49%
Apartment	34%
Other	9%
Parents or relatives	5%
Fraternity/Sorority	4%

TABLE 13
Hours Per Week Worked

	<u>On-Campus</u>	<u>Off-Campus</u>
1-10	13%	6%
11-20	11%	11%
21-30	2%	5%
31-40	0%	8%
I did not work	73%	69%

TABLE 14
Currently Attending College Elsewhere

Yes	68%
No	31%

TABLE 15
Level of Involvement (Percentage of Respondents Who Were Very Involved With Each of the Following)

Class assignments	73%
Attending class	69%
Class participation	50%
Interaction with students	45%
Recreation	26%
Interaction with faculty and staff	16%
Clubs	14%
Activities outside of JMU in community	10%
Religious activities	8%

TABLE 16
Percentage of Respondents Who Considered Reasons Very Important in Deciding to Leave JMU

Transferred to another institution	46%
JMU not what I thought it would be	35%
Lack of personal attention	26%
Loneliness/I did not fit in	26%
Family issues	25%
Course availability	24%
Course instruction in major	24%
Desired major not offered	21%
Medical/psychological reasons	21%
Major advising	20%
Unsatisfactory grades	20%
Quality of course instruction	19%
On/Off campus living difficulties	17%
Financial support from JMU	16%
Financial support from other sources	16%
Roommate/friend difficulties	15%
Accepted full-time job	14%
Courses not challenging	14%
College not worth time/money	13%
Freshman advising	13%
Study skills	13%
Parents wanted me to leave	12%
Transfer advising	12%
Suspension/probation	11%
Not enough social activities	10%
Unable to get into desired major	10%
Racial/ethnic tension	9%
Unable to get into desired minor	9%
Courses too challenging	7%

TABLE 17
Most Significant Reasons for Deciding to Leave JMU (Five or More Responses)

	<u>first</u>	<u>second</u>	<u>third</u>
Transferred to another institution	24	16	11
Family issues	20	7	5
JMU not what I thought it would be	16	15	20
Medical/psychological reasons	15	8	
Unsatisfactory grades	15		8
Desired major not offered	14	9	5
College not worth time/money	8		
Accepted full-time job	7	5	5
Courses not challenging	7		
Lack of personal attention	6	7	12
Loneliness/I did not fit in	6	22	9
Financial support from JMU	5		5
Course instruction in major		9	5
Study skills		9	
Roommate/friend difficulties		8	
Course availability		6	7
Financial support from other sources		6	
Parents wanted me to leave		6	
Suspension/probation			6
Not enough social activities			5

TABLE 18
Plans to Return to JMU to Complete Degree

Yes	11%
No	71%
Undecided	17%

TABLE 19
Percentage Who Would Still Come to JMU if They Knew What They Know Now

Yes	50%
No	47%
No response	3%

TABLE 20
Institutions To Which Students Transferred (Three or More Responses)

Virginia Commonwealth University	11
Old Dominion University	6
George Mason University	5
Northern Virginia Community College	5
Blue Ridge Community College	4
College of William & Mary	4
University of Virginia	3
Virginia Tech	3

TABLE 21
Parents' Level of Satisfaction With JMU's Educational Experience

Very satisfied	21%
Satisfied	45%
Dissatisfied	18%
Very dissatisfied	9%
No basis to judge	5%
No response	2%

TABLE 22
Parents' Level of Satisfaction With Students' Personal Development at JMU

Very satisfied	15%
Satisfied	37%
Dissatisfied	26%
Very dissatisfied	12%
No basis to judge	7%
No response	4%

TABLE 23
Comparison Between Students and Parents - Most Significant Reasons for Deciding to Leave JMU (Five or More Responses)

	<u>Students</u>	<u>Parents</u>
Transferred to another institution	24	27
Family issues	20	11
JMU not what I thought it would be	16	26
Medical/psychological reasons	15	18
Unsatisfactory grades	15	18
Desired major not offered	14	14
College not worth time/money	8	
Accepted full-time job	7	7
Courses not challenging	7	
Lack of personal attention	6	10
Loneliness/I did not fit in	6	19
Financial support from JMU	5	5
Advising inadequate		11
Course availability		10
Roommate/friend difficulties		7
Financial support from other sources		6

TABLE 24
Parents' Who Indicate that JMU was Interested/Concerned About Student Success

Yes	52%
No	38%
No response	11%

TABLE 25
Parents' Who Would Recommend JMU to Others

Yes	75%
No	16%
No response	9%

SELECTED CROSS TABULATIONS

TABLE 26
Top Reasons for Not-Returning

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Family issues	15	5
JMU not what I thought it would be	13	3
Medical/psychological reasons	12	3
Unsatisfactory grades	5	10
College not worth time/money	1	7

TABLE 27
Top Reasons for Not-Returning

	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Other</u>
Financial support from JMU	2	2	1
JMU not what I thought it would be	1	15	0
Financial support from other sources	0	3	0
Unsatisfactory grades	0	12	3

TABLE 28
Top Reasons for Not-Returning

	<u>3.00- Above</u>	<u>2.00- 2.99</u>	<u>Under 2.00</u>
Transferred to another institution	22	1	1
Family issues	8	9	1
Desired major not offered	7	5	2
Medical/psychological reasons	2	9	2
Unsatisfactory grades	1	7	7

TABLE 29
Top Reasons for Not-Returning

	<u>In-State</u>	<u>Out-of-State</u>
JMU not what I thought it would be	9	7
Courses not challenging	4	3
Course availability	2	1

For additional information about this survey and its results, please contact Dr. Al Menard, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness at 568-6287.