

## SURVEY OF ENTERING FRESHMEN FALL 2000 SEMESTER

### Executive Summary

A four page, 53 item questionnaire was sent to 2,345 entering freshmen prior to their participation in SOAR. They were asked to return them at SOAR check-in; 1,137 (48 percent) responded. The following is a summary of selected responses. In all cases, responses represent percentages of the valid responses received. A copy of the questionnaire and a complete summary of responses are available from the Office of Enrollment Services.

- Students were asked to indicate which other college they would have been most likely to attend. The top five responses were:

**Top responses:**

University of Missouri-Columbia	24.9
Central Missouri State University	5.7
Drury	5.1
Truman State University	5.0
Southeast Missouri State University	4.8

- Students were asked to rate the importance (very important, somewhat important, not important) of 13 factors in their choice of a college and to indicate how SMS rated in that factor (best, better than most, about the same, worse than most). The factors are listed in descending order based on the percentage of students that ranked them as very important.

COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS	IMPORTANCE			SMS RATING				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little to No Importance	Best	Better than Most	About the Same	Worse than Most	Can't Compare
Quality of major	70.2	26.8	2.2	17.3 (7)	51.6	25.9	0.8	4.4
Success of graduates in getting jobs	62.5	32.4	5.1	10.2 (11)	38.8	38.7	0.7	11.5
Cost of attendance	62.1	32.8	5.1	25.0 (5)	45.7	24.8	2.1	2.3
Quality of residence halls	57.7	28.7	13.6	32.9 (1)	38.5	20.6	0.8	7.2
Level of technology available	51.3	45.1	3.7	16.8 (8)	47.2	29.9	0.6	5.5
Safety of the campus	47.6	44.2	8.2	14.1 (9)	39.0	36.9	1.5	8.4
Overall academic reputation	44.0	53.2	2.8	9.3 (12)	44.6	40.8	1.7	3.6
Quality of social life	41.1	49.4	9.5	18.4 (6)	43.2	30.1	0.9	7.4
Size and appearance of campus	39.2	51.4	9.4	30.0 (3)	41.8	23.9	1.2	3.0
City in which the college is located	37.4	46.0	16.6	31.3 (2)	38.2	24.7	1.7	4.1
Ease of getting home on weekends	32.3	47.8	19.9	26.5 (4)	28.9	28.5	10.2	6.0
Quality of recruitment materials	13.1	52.1	34.9	11.4 (10)	31.7	45.1	1.2	10.6
Quality of athletic program	9.1	31.6	59.3	8.5 (13)	29.9	38.6	3.0	20.0

\*Number in parenthesis in "Best" column represents rank based on percent of respondents that rated factor as best.

- Students were given a list of 14 sources of information about SMSU that they may have received/used. They were asked to indicate if they had received or used them, and if yes, to rank their importance (very, somewhat, little to no). The following are their responses. The items are listed in descending order based on the percent who received/used. The number in parenthesis in the third column indicates the rank of the item based on the percent who rated it very important.

Information Source	Percent who received/used	Percent of those that used that ranked as very important
Admissions guide	84.4	60.4 (7)
Scholarship/financial aid guide	81.7	70.4 (5)
Catalog	77.5	60.6 (6)
Frequently Asked Questions	75.1	45.4 (10)
Brochure on academic program	64.0	54.1 (8)
SMSU Website	62.9	40.8 (11)
Campus visit	58.4	85.1 (1)
Information from a friend	55.7	74.0 (3)
Information from school counselor	47.4	51.3 (9)
Call from SMSU student	43.2	24.3 (14)
Visit with SMSU representative at school or college fair	38.9	40.1 (12)
Destination SMSU newsletter	38.4	25.6 (13)
Conversation/correspondence with SMSU faculty	36.1	70.7 (4)
Showcase	12.6	76.5 (2)

- Students were asked how frequently their parents reviewed the information we sent to them (to students). 31.6 percent said more frequently than they did, 38.5 percent said most of the time, 20.2 percent said some of the time, and 9.4 percent said rarely to never.
- Students were asked if they used web-based college search services. 9.3 percent said they used them and considered them important. 24.2 percent said they used them but did not consider them very important. 66.5 percent had not used them.
- Students were asked to describe their use of CD's with college information. 82.5 percent had never received them. Of those who had received them, 17.3 percent said they had used them.
- 33.5 percent of the students said they had attended camps, contests, or special programs at SMSU while in high school.
- 16.2 percent had a parent attend SMSU.
- Students were asked to rate their agreement with statements regarding service they received from Office of Admissions.

Statement	Percent with opinion who responded "strongly agree" or "agree"
I received my letter of admission on a timely basis	95.9
Staff in Admissions have been helpful	97.3
Information I received following my admissions has been timely and helpful	97.0

- 46.0 percent of the students said they had received a scholarship from SMSU. (Note: About 35 percent of our entering freshmen received scholarships; thus, the representation of scholarship recipients is disproportionately high.) Of those who received scholarships, 33.8 percent said they received a better scholarship offer from SMSU than from others, 32.3 percent said they received a similar offer from others, 16.2 percent said they received a better offer from others, and 17.6 percent said they did not receive an offer from others. 27.0 percent of the scholarship recipients said they would have been very likely to attend without the scholarship, while 37.6 percent said somewhat likely, 20.7 percent said somewhat unlikely, and 14.7 percent said highly unlikely.

- 82.0 percent said they would live in a residence hall their first year. Of those with an opinion, 96.7 percent said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with service they had received from Residence Life and Services.
- 71.0 percent of the students said they applied for financial aid. Of those, 84.1 percent had received a financial aid award letter. When asked to compare their award with others they had received, 44.7 percent said they had not received an award from another institution. Of those who had received an award from another institution, 19.8 percent received a better offer from us, 56.0 percent said they received a similar offer from both, and 24.2 percent said they received a better offer from another institution.
- Of those with an opinion, 83.1 percent said they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with service they received from the Financial Aid Office. *(Note: Based on comments received, it is evident that some of the dissatisfaction is based at least in part on the amount of aid they received.)*
- When asked about the frequency of their use of e-mail, 53.1 percent said they used it often, 33.3 percent said they used it sometimes, and 13.6 percent said they didn’t use it.

**MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS OF STUDENTS**

We ran crosstabulations analyses based on geographic origin, other institution mostly likely to attend, gender, and scholarship status (i.e., whether student received a scholarship from SMSU). The following sections summarize some of the major differences between groups. It should be pointed out that, in many cases, the lack of differences between groups is equally important.

By Geographic Origin

The following are some notable differences in response to “which other college would you have been most likely to attend” question.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Top responses (5 percent or more)</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Greene County	UMC	24.4
	Drury	18.9
	OTC	7.9
Other southwest MO	UMC	21.3
	Missouri Southern	10.4
	Drury	9.8
	CMSU	5.5
St. Louis	UMC	32.9
	SEMO	12.5
	Truman	7.3
Kansas City	UMC	27.0
	CMSU	12.9
	NMSU	11.0
	Truman	6.1

- 8.3 percent of students from Greene County ranked SMSU as “best” in quality of major, compared with 17.3 percent of all respondents.
- Cost of attendance was rated as “very important” by about 72 percent of students from Greene County and southwest Missouri, compared with under 60 percent of students from the rest of Missouri. The region from which cost of attendance was least likely to be rated “very important” was St. Louis (54.6 percent). We were ranked “best” in this factor by 40 percent of students from Greene County, compared with 25 percent statewide.

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- 49.7 percent of the students from St. Louis rated “size and appearance of campus” as “very important” compared with 35.6 percent of other students.
  - 49.6 percent of the students from St. Louis rated “quality of social life” as “very important” compared with 38.2 percent of other students.
  - 71.1 percent of St. Louis students, 65.0 percent of Kansas City students, and 67.6 percent of students from other parts of Missouri outside of southwest Missouri ranked “quality of residence halls” as “very important.” About 40 percent of the students from these three regions rated us as “best” in this category.
  - “Ease of getting home” on weekends was ranked as “very important” by 33.1 percent of students from the St. Louis area and 26.4 percent of students from the Kansas City area. While we were ranked “best” by 14.4 and 12.0 percent, respectively, of these two groups, we were ranked “worse than most” by 11.2 and 15.8 percent. This is the only case in which we were ranked “worse than most” by more than 3 to 4 percent of the respondents in any category.
  - Only 42.0 percent of students from Greene County had used the SMSU website, compared with more than 60 percent of other students.
  - Information from the website was more likely to be rated as “very important” by students from St. Louis (42.1 percent) and Kansas City (46.2 percent).
  - 90 percent of students from St. Louis and Kansas City who had visited campus rated their visit as “very important” in their decision.
  - 64 percent of students from southwest Missouri had received information from their high school counselors, compared with about 45 percent of students from the rest of the state.
  - Students from the Kansas City area were more likely to have received CD’s with college information (28.1 percent), but only 13 percent of those who did said they used them. (*Note: Northwest Missouri State uses CD’s in recruitment and recruits heavily in the Kansas City area.*)
  - 64.7 percent of students from southwest Missouri had attended camps or conferences on campus, compared with about 20 percent from the remainder of the state.
  - 45 percent of the students from Greene County had at least one parent who attended SMSU, compared with 21.0 percent from other parts of southwest Missouri, 8.7 percent from St. Louis, 7.3 percent from Kansas City, and 10.6 percent from the remainder of Missouri.
  - 24.3 percent of students from St. Louis who received scholarships said they received better offers from other institutions, compared with only about 15 percent of other students.
  - 25.5 percent of students from Greene County and 67.2 percent of students from other parts of southwest Missouri said they planned to live in a residence hall.
  - 80 percent of students from southwest Missouri outside of Greene County said they planned to apply for financial aid, compared with 71 percent overall.
  - Students from outside of southwest Missouri were about twice as likely to report that they had received a better financial aid offer from another institution than from SMSU.

By other school most likely to attend

*Note: We did a crosstabulation only for UMC, CMSU, SEMO, Truman State, and “all others” combined.*

- Percentages rating our “cost of attendance” as “best” were as follows:

UMC	20.5
CMSU	12.7
SEMO	12.0
Truman	24.5
All others	32.0

- Students who listed MU were less likely to rate us as “best” on quality of major and city in which college is location.

- We were rated “worse than most” in terms of “ease of getting home on weekends” as follows:

UMC	11.5
CMSU	21.3
SEMO	19.6
Truman	12.0
All others	6.6

- 23.8 percent of the students who listed SEMO and received a scholarship from us said that they received a “better offer from other institutions” compared with about 8 percent of those who listed UMC, CMSU, and Truman.

- Of students who received financial aid offers, the percentages who said they received better offers from others were as follows:

UMC	10.4
CMSU	10.0
SEMO	30.0
Truman	22.9
All others	13.6

By Gender

- Safety was rated as “very important” by 59.3 percent of females, compared with 28.2 percent of males. We were rated “best” in this category by 17.7 percent of females and 11.1 percent of males.
- Quality of residence halls was rated as “very important” by 61.0 percent of females and 52.2 percent of males.
- Ease of getting home on weekends was rated as very important by 35.1 percent of females and 28.0 percent of males.
- Females were generally more likely to rate publications (e.g., Admissions Guide, Scholarship and Financial Aid Brochure, catalog) as “very important” sources of information. On average, the percentage of females rating these as “very important” was about 10 to 15 percent higher than the percentage of males.
- Females were generally more likely to report a high level of satisfaction with services. The only exception is satisfaction with service received from Financial Aid.

By Whether Student Received SMSU Scholarship

- Percentage of students from each region who are receiving SMSU scholarship
 

Southwest Missouri	60.9
St. Louis	24.8
Kansas City	40.9
Other Missouri	44.3
Other state	68.3
  
- 57.4 percent of the students who listed Truman State and 58.9 percent of the students who listed Drury as the other institutions they would have been most likely to attend said they received scholarships from us, compared with about 40 percent overall.
- Students who received scholarships were only slightly more likely (71.8 percent to 68.7 percent) to rate “quality of major” as very important in their choice of a college. 46.7 percent of recipients rated “overall academic reputation” as very important, compared with 41.9 percent of non-recipients.
- 47.5 percent of non-recipients rated “quality of social life” as very important, compared with 33.7 percent of recipients.
- 70.4 percent of scholarship recipients rated “cost of attendance” as very important, compared with 55.2 percent of those who didn’t receive scholarships. 32.9 percent of recipients rated us as “best” in this category, compared with 19.3 percent of non-recipients.
- Scholarship recipients were more likely than non-recipients (39.7 to 31.1) to rank “quality of recruitment materials” as being of “little to no importance.”
- 41.8 percent of the scholarship recipients had participated in camps or contests at SMSU, compared with 26.4 percent of non-recipients.
- The percentage of recipients and non-recipients who applied for need-based aid was almost equal (71.8 and 70.4, respectively).
- A slightly higher percent of scholarship recipients (57.1 percent) than non-recipients (49.7 percent) said they use e-mail often.