

# FVSU LISTENS



FALL 2011

**REGISTRATION, FINANCIAL AID, AND RESIDENCE LIFE SURVEY**

A study was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness for first-time freshmen college students of FVSU. There were 330 participants. The study is a part of an effort to increase retention, progression and graduation rates at the university.

## METHODOLOGY

### INSTRUMENT

Initially an electronic application of the survey was developed and was to be administered to the students on laptops, but the Office of Institutional Research decided to use a different approach to increase the response rate. The FVSU Student Government Association met with OIRPE to help to develop the survey. The freshmen students are mandated to attend an orientation session every Thursday. This gave the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness the opportunity to hand deliver, proctor, and collect the survey. By using this approach, 67% of these students responded. The first section of the survey included 18 demographic questions (1-18). The second section was registration. This section had three parts. Part 1 was a combination of nine Registration questions (19-27), part 2 was three questions related to Online Registration (28-30), and part 3 was four questions related to Learning Support (31-34). The third section was 16 questions related to Financial Aid (35-50). The fourth section was 13 questions related to Residence Life (51-63). The fifth and final section consisted of three qualitative questions on each subject area.

The survey took place October 6, 2011. The first-time freshmen were surveyed in an open forum during freshman orientation class that is held every Thursday at 11:00 am in the Pettigrew Center on the campus of Fort Valley State University. The participants responded to the survey anonymously and the data were collected by the staff of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness and the Academic Success Center. A descriptive data analysis was conducted on the quantitative portion of the survey and Vivo was used to illustrate the recurring themes for the qualitative analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

The FVSU Listens survey was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness for first-time freshman college students of FVSU. There were 330 participants. The study was part of an effort to increase retention, progression and graduation rates at the university.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The demographics section of the survey yielded a wealth of information; however, it is important to note that within the survey, there are instances where students either did not answer or neutral answers were given. The survey depicts African- Americans making up 90% of the survey population that was 67% female, 30% male and 3% not addressing gender. Almost 90% of the respondents were less than 20 years old. The majority of the students (89%) came directly from high school to FVSU. Residence Life houses over 86% of the respondents and fewer than 13% live off campus. Approximately 80% of the respondents don't work while attending school and 95% of the students are full-time. The fathers of the students had a 13% higher high school graduation rate at 53.69% while the mothers of the students came in at 40.27%. Nearly 60% of the respondent's family annual income was less than \$40,000.00 and conversely less than 9% reached \$75,000.00. Over 85% of the respondents were single. The respondents primarily matriculated from single parent homes at a whopping 57% while 37% lived in dual-parent homes. The urban setting commanded 63% of the respondents and less than 32.89% lived in rural communities. The In-state student rate was almost 92%. Almost 50% of the students had a High School GPA of 3.0 or higher. SAT scores ranged from 1050-2000 for 65% of the students and less than 20% ranged below 1050.

## **REGISTRATION**

The registration area had three components to include: Registration, Online Registration and Learning Support. In the registration area, more than 56% of the respondents believed the registration process met their needs. An alarming 13% stated they had registration processing issues. Approximately 50% said the registration staff was patient with them. Over 52% believed the office staff was receptive to their requests. Nearly 32% responded that all documents

submitted were not processed in a timely manner. More than 53% of the students believed that the staff displayed excellent knowledge of their office. The Online Registration process had 49% of the students stating banner web was helpful to them. More than 19% of the respondents stated they did not receive adequate instructional help to complete the online process. The Learning Support area had nearly 43% of its respondents to state the office staff was receptive to their needs. More than 52% of the respondents agreed that the office staff was friendly and easy to work with. And fewer than 27% of the respondents do not check their FVSU E-mail daily.

*“My registration was instantly processed letting me know I was accepted.”*

**The Qualitative section of Registration for FVSU Listens included the following questions:**

**(1) What did you like most about the Registration Process?**

**(2) What did you like least about the Registration Process?**

**(3) What improvements would you suggest in the Registration Process?**

The emerging themes for these questions were students believed everything was in order in the office, information was processed in a timely manner, advisors were helpful to the students and the students felt informed of class schedules and registration issues. Additionally students had the following concerns: the office processes in some areas were flawed, felt contacting advisors was an issue, and in many cases the staff was not courteous or timely. Moreover, students suggested additional online assistance was needed and issues should be addressed in a timely manner.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

The Financial Aid Office received mixed reviews from respondents. This section of the survey only assessed the Financial Aid Office. Only 57% of the respondents believed the financial aid package met their basic needs for the academic year. An alarming 57% of the respondents stated their parents completed their financial aid package for them. Almost 60% of the students submitted all documents to financial aid before the March 1 deadline. Over 25% of the respondents stated that financial aid funds were not available by August 5 payment deadline. An alarming 28% stated that all documents submitted were not processed in a timely manner. Even more alarming nearly 27% believed the office staff was not receptive to their requests. However, approximately 68% of the respondents agreed that the advisors were friendly and easy to work with. More than 26% did not take advantage of resources for financial aid on FVSU website. Moreover, 43% agreed that the financial aid staff displayed excellent knowledge of the Financial Aid Process.

*“The Financial Aid department is very slow. You wait an hour to talk to an advisor for 3 minutes and you are still clueless.”*

**The Qualitative section of Financial Aid for FVSU Listens included the following questions:**

- (1) What did you like most about the Financial Aid Process?**
- (2) What did you like least about the Financial Aid Process?**
- (3) What improvements would you suggest in the Financial Aid Process?**

The emerging themes consisted of students having the following concerns: the Financial Aid process was slow, issues were not addressed in a timely manner and the courtesy of the staff was not encouraging to students. However, some students felt that they were informed and items were processed. Moreover, students suggested workshops for the staff, friendlier service, and more institutional aid for all students.

## **RESIDENCE LIFE**

The Residence Life office had varied responses from recipients. Almost 56% of the respondents believed that residence life staff was very organized. Over 51% of respondents agreed that the Resident Assistants were friendly and easy to work with in the process. Alarming, 36% of the respondents stated that all documents submitted were not processed in a timely manner. More than 51% of the respondents believed the office staff was receptive to their requests. Approximately 63% agreed that Residence Life staff displayed excellent knowledge of the Residence Life Process. More than 44 % stated the overall process worked well for them.

*“The people they placed me with are friendly people, the residence is comfortable, and any need that me and my roommates have had, have been rapidly handled.”*

**The Qualitative section of Residence Life for FVSU Listens included the following questions:**

- (1) What did you like most about the Residence Life Process?**
- (2) What did you like least about the Residence Life Process?**
- (3) What improvements would you suggest in the Residence Life Process?**

The emerging themes for these questions were the happiness with apartment style housing and the convenience of its location to walk to campus activities, everything close to Commons area, and most students found nothing wrong with the Residence Life area. The results show a great collegiate community atmosphere that can breed the retaining of students. However, students had concerns of feeling some rules and procedures were “crazy.” The improvements centered on the rule adjustments for problem residents, additional “Dorms” constructed like Wildcat Commons and more training for Resident Life.

## **ANALYSES**

The FVSU Listens survey portrays the demographic make up of the first-time freshman class of students. It illustrates some major findings that relate to the ongoing pursuit of better retention, progression, and graduation rates of FVSU students. The survey highlighted strengths and weaknesses of the departments evaluated. Some of the strengths were good knowledge of the office procedures and good skills sets of the people who manage the various offices. Overall, Registration, Financial Aid and Residence Life rated good in knowledge of their offices, however; there were some major concerns that need to be addressed. The Registration area had respondents to feel that their needs were not met. Students believed that all documents submitted were not processed in a timely manner. Many of the respondents stated they did not receive adequate instructional help to complete the online process. The Financial Aid section had an alarming number of the respondent's state that all documents submitted were not processed in a timely manner. Several respondents believed the office staff was not receptive to their requests. Some students felt their financial aid package met their basic needs for the academic year. An alarming 57 % of the respondents stated their parents completed their financial aid package for them. More than 26% did not take advantage of resources for financial aid on FVSU website. In the Residence Life area, over 27% of the respondents stated that all documents submitted were not processed in a timely manner and 20% stated the overall process did not work well for them.