



## Fall 2009 Freshman Cohort Non-returning Students: What do we know?

### Executive Summary

The following report provides an analysis of 584 first-time full-time degree seeking freshmen in the University of South Alabama (USA) Fall 2009 freshman cohort who did not return to USA in Fall 2010. Of these non-returning students, 216 (37%) transferred to another institution prior to Fall 2010 and 368 (63%) “stopped out” or did not enroll in another college or university.

- Results indicated a large majority of students that transferred to another institution with one or more of the following characteristics: public, a two year institution, and/or located in Alabama, with the majority (65%) transferring to a community college.
- Findings showed a large percentage based differential between students who “stopped out” with a USA GPA of 2.0 or lower (26%) or students with less than six hours earned at USA (22%) and students who transferred and had a similar USA GPA or a similar number of USA earned hours.
- Indicators for students at greater risk to “stop out” instead of transferring to another institution included students of local origin from Mobile or Baldwin County (23%), living off campus (19%), attendance at the August session or a Transfer new student orientation session (15%), male (15%), 20 years old or older (10%), and no freshman scholarship (10%).
- 49% of non-returning students who “stopped out” attended the August session, Freshman Session 5, or a Transfer<sup>1</sup> new student orientation session. Students attending one of these orientation sessions should be targeted early with interventions to help them persist and return to USA.

### Overview

The following report provides an analysis of 584 first-time full-time degree seeking freshmen in the University of South Alabama (USA) Fall 2009 freshman cohort who did not return to USA in Fall 2010. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) was used to identify whether non-returning students transferred to another institution or “stopped out” and did not enroll in another higher education institution in Fall 2010. While the preference is for students to return and persist at USA, a student who transferred to another institution could be considered a secondary measure of student success. With the NSC receiving data from over 3,300 (92%) of all colleges and universities in the United States, students who were not identified as transfer students by the NSC were unlikely to be enrolled at another college or university and had “stopped out” of higher education. This report provides comparisons between 216 non-returning students who transferred to another institution prior to Fall 2010 and 368 non-returning students who “stopped out” and did not enroll at another college or university.

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<sup>1</sup> 13 of the 1,711 students in the 2009 freshman cohort attended a transfer orientation since the evening Adult freshman student orientation session is no longer offered. Based on a small number of students attending a transfer student orientation and those attending a transfer orientation having similar retention rates as students attending the August orientation as well as feedback from the Office of New Student Orientation the Transfer and August orientation session attendees were combined into one group.

### Profile of Non-returning Student Who “Stopped Out”

- No other scholarship<sup>2</sup> (84%)
- USA GPA of 2.0 or lower (79%)
- No freshman scholarship<sup>3</sup> (76%)
- From Mobile or Baldwin County (66%)
- 18 years old (65%)
- White (63%)
- Lived off-campus (58%)
- Male (57%)
- Earned zero to six USA credit hours (43%)
- High school GPA between 2.51-3.0 (34%)
- Composite ACT score of 18 or lower (29%)
- Attended the August or a Transfer new student orientation session (29%)

### Profile of Non-returning Student Who Transferred

- No other scholarship (86%)
- 18 years old (81%)
- No freshman scholarship (66%)
- White (64%)
- Lived on-campus (61%)
- Female (58%)
- USA GPA of 2.0 or lower (53%)
- From Mobile or Baldwin County (43%)
- High school GPA between 3.01-3.5 (32%)
- Composite ACT score of 21-23 (31%)
- Earned 12.5-18 USA credit hours (24%)
- Attended the Freshman Session 5 new student orientation session (20%)

### Where Non-returning Students Transferred

Of the 216 non-returning students who transferred, a large majority transferred to an institution with one or more of three characteristics (see Table 1 and Table 2). The transfer institution was likely: 1) public (92%), 2) a two year institution (65%), and/or 3) located in Alabama (60%). Mississippi (17%) was also a likely transfer destination of the non-returning students.

**Table 1: Control and Type of Institution Where USA Students Transferred**

<b>Public or Private Institution</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2 or 4 Year Institution</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Public Institution	199	92%	2 Year Institution	141	65%
Private Institution	17	8%	4 Year Institution	75	35%

<sup>2</sup> Military/ROTC, vocational rehab, employment funded, prepaid AL, MS, or FL tuition, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Bay Area, Honors, Mitchell, Presidential, or Starnes merit based scholarships

**Table 2: Top States Where USA Students Transferred**

Rank	State	Count	%
1	Alabama	130	60%
2	Mississippi	37	17%
3	Florida	16	7%
4	Illinois	3	1%
4	North Carolina	3	1%
4	Ohio	3	1%
4	Texas	3	1%

The most common two year transfer institutions of choice were Faulkner State Community College (41), Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (25), and Bishop State Community College (19). Of the four year universities, the University of Alabama (12) and Auburn University (8) were the most common transfer destination (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Top Institutions Where USA Students Transferred**

Rank	College	Count	%
1	Faulkner State Community College	41	7
2	Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	25	4
3	Bishop State Community College	19	3
4	University of Alabama	12	2
5	Auburn University	8	1
6	University of West Florida	7	1
7	Pensacola State College	6	1
7	Southern Union State Community College	6	1
9	University of Mississippi	5	1
10	Alabama Southern Community College	4	1
10	Auburn University at Montgomery	4	1
10	Calhoun Community College	4	1

### **Comparison of Non-returning Transfer Students to Students Who “Stopped Out”**

Multiple characteristics of non-returning students were compared to determine what characteristics showed large percentage based differentials between 368 non-returning students who “stopped out” compared to 216 non-returning students who transferred. The following table displays characteristics with percentage based differentials of 10% or greater between students who transferred and students who “stopped out” (see Table 4 or complete data tables found in the Appendix). The USA GPA (first) and number of USA earned hours (third) were two of three characteristics with subgroups that showed the greatest differential between non-returning students who “stopped out” and students who transferred.

- 79% of the non-returning students who “stopped out” had a USA GPA of 2.0 or lower (285) compared to 53% of non-returning students who transferred (111). Conversely, 16% of students who transferred had a USA GPA between 2.51-3.0 (33) compared to 6% of students who “stopped out” (21).
- 43% of non-returning students who “stopped out” had zero to six USA earned hours (154) compared to 21% of non-returning students who transferred (44).

**Table 4: Greatest Differentials Between Non-Returner Transfers and Stop Outs**

Top within Group Characteristics	Transferred (n=216)	% Transferred	Stopped Out (n=368)	% Stopped Out	% Difference Between Transferred & Stopped Out
<i>USA GPA (Note: n=360 Stopped Out; 208 Transferred)</i>					
2.0 or lower	111	53%	285	79%	-26%
2.51-3.0	33	16%	21	6%	+10%
<i>Region</i>					
Mobile/Baldwin County	92	43%	243	66%	-23%
<i># USA Earned Hours</i>					
0-6 hours	44	21%	154	43%	-22%
<i>Housing</i>					
Off-Campus	85	39%	215	58%	-19%
<i>Age</i>					
18 years old	175	81%	238	65%	+16%
20 years old or older	7	3%	49	13%	-10%
<i>Orientation Session</i>					
August/Transfer Orientation	30	14%	107	29%	-15%
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	91	42%	210	57%	-15%
<i>Composite ACT Score (Note: n=296 Stopped Out; 195 Transferred)</i>					
21-23	60	31%	58	20%	+11%
<i>Freshman Scholarship</i>					
No	143	66%	280	76%	-10%
Note: Cells are shaded in yellow where % transferred compared to % stopped out was positive and greater or equal to 10% while cells are shaded in red where % transferred compared to % stopped out was negative and greater than or equal to 10%.					

Results showed the region where the student originated from had the second greatest percentage based differential between non-returning students who “stopped out” and non-returning students who transferred. Students from Mobile or Baldwin County were much more likely to “stop out” than to transfer to another institution.

- 66% of non-returning students who “stopped out” came from Mobile or Baldwin County (243) compared to 43% of non-returning students who transferred (92).

Six other comparison groups showed percentage based differentials greater than or equal to 10% between students who “stopped out” and students who transferred. These other six comparison groups were: 1) housing, 2) age (included two sub groups), 3) orientation session, 4) gender, 5) composite ACT score, and 6) freshman scholarship.

- 58% of non-returning students who “stopped out” lived off-campus (215) compared to 39% of non-returning students who transferred (85).
- 81% of non-returning students who transferred were 18 years old (175) compared to 65% of non-returning students who “stopped out” (238). In addition, 13% of non-returning students who “stopped out” were 20 years old or older (49) compared to 3% of non-returning students who transferred (7).
- 29% of non-returning students who “stopped out” attended the August or a Transfer<sup>4</sup> new student orientation session (107) compared to 14% of non-returning students who transferred (30).

<sup>4</sup> 13 of the 1,711 students in the 2009 freshman cohort attended a transfer orientation since the evening Adult freshman student orientation session is no longer offered. Based on a small number of students

- 57% of non-returning students who “stopped out” were male (210) compared to 42% of non-returning students who transferred (91).
- 31% of non-returning students who transferred had a composite ACT score between 21-23 (60) compared to 20% of non-returning students who “stopped out” (58).
- 76% of non-returning students who “stopped out” did not have a freshman scholarship (280) compared to 66% of non-returning students who transferred (143).

### **Implications**

Results showed a large percentage based differential between students who “stopped out” with a USA GPA of 2.0 or lower (26%) or students with less than six USA earned hours (22%) compared to students who transferred. These students may have benefited from programs such as intrusive advising and peer mentoring to improve their odds of persistence at USA or to prepare them to transfer to another institution. While the preference is to encourage USA freshmen students to continue and persist at USA, a student who successfully transfers to another institution could also be considered a secondary measure of success compared to a complete “stop out” from higher education.

Early indicators for students at greater risk to “stop out” instead of transferring to another institution included students of local origin from Mobile or Baldwin County (23%), living off campus (19%), attendance at the August or a Transfer new student orientation session (15%), male (15%), 20 years old or older (10%), and no freshman scholarship (10%). Students with these characteristics were less likely to transfer to another institution.

Of non-returning students who “stopped out”, 49 percent attended the August session, Freshman Session 5, or a Transfer new student orientation session. Students attending one of these new student orientation sessions should be targeted early with interventions to help them persist and return to USA.

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attending a transfer student orientation and those attending a transfer orientation having similar retention rates as students attending the August orientation as well as feedback from the Office of New Student Orientation the Transfer and August orientation session attendees were combined into one group.

## APPENDIX

## Crosstabs of Fall 2009 Freshman Cohort Non-returning Students

USA GPA \* Transferred from USA Cross tabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
USA GPA	2.0 or lower	Count	285	111	396
		% within Transferred from USA	79.2%	53.4%	69.7%
	2.01-2.5	Count	31	25	56
		% within Transferred from USA	8.6%	12.0%	9.9%
	2.51-3.0	Count	21	33	54
		% within Transferred from USA	5.8%	15.9%	9.5%
	3.01-3.5	Count	13	20	33
		% within Transferred from USA	3.6%	9.6%	5.8%
	3.51-4.0	Count	10	19	29
		% within Transferred from USA	2.8%	9.1%	5.1%
Total		Count	360	208	568
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Region \* Transferred from USA Cross tabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Region	Mobile or Baldwin County	Count	243	92	335
		% within Transferred from USA	66.0%	42.6%	57.4%
	Rest of Alabama	Count	65	55	120
		% within Transferred from USA	17.7%	25.5%	20.5%
	Mississippi Service Area	Count	21	33	54
		% within Transferred from USA	5.7%	15.3%	9.2%
	Florida Service Area	Count	14	11	25
		% within Transferred from USA	3.8%	5.1%	4.3%
	Rest of United States	Count	22	24	46
		% within Transferred from USA	6.0%	11.1%	7.9%
	International	Count	3	1	4
		% within Transferred from USA	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

USA Hours Earned \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
USA Hours Earned	0-6 hours	Count	154	44	198
		% within Transferred from USA	42.8%	21.2%	34.9%
	6.5-12 hours	Count	74	42	116
		% within Transferred from USA	20.6%	20.2%	20.4%
	12.5-18 hours	Count	57	49	106
		% within Transferred from USA	15.8%	23.6%	18.7%
	18.5-24 hours	Count	46	21	67
		% within Transferred from USA	12.8%	10.1%	11.8%
	24.5-30 hours	Count	20	31	51
		% within Transferred from USA	5.6%	14.9%	9.0%
	30.5 or more hours	Count	9	21	30
		% within Transferred from USA	2.5%	10.1%	5.3%
Total		Count	360	208	568
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Housing	No	Count	215	85	300
		% within Transferred from USA	58.4%	39.4%	51.4%
	Yes	Count	153	131	284
		% within Transferred from USA	41.6%	60.6%	48.6%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

HS GPA \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
HS GPA	2.5 or lower	Count	57	28	85
		% within Transferred from USA	18.4%	13.7%	16.6%
	2.51-3.0	Count	106	53	159
		% within Transferred from USA	34.3%	26.0%	31.0%
	3.01-3.5	Count	82	66	148
		% within Transferred from USA	26.5%	32.4%	28.8%
	3.51-4.0	Count	64	57	121
		% within Transferred from USA	20.7%	27.9%	23.6%
Total		Count	309	204	513
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Age \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Age	18 years old	Count	238	175	413
		% within Transferred from USA	64.7%	81.0%	70.7%
	17 years or younger	Count	25	13	38
		% within Transferred from USA	6.8%	6.0%	6.5%
	19 years old	Count	56	21	77
		% within Transferred from USA	15.2%	9.7%	13.2%
	20 years or older	Count	49	7	56
		% within Transferred from USA	13.3%	3.2%	9.6%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Orientation \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Orientation	August/Transfer Orientation	Count	107	30	137
		% within Transferred from USA	29.1%	13.9%	23.5%
	May Orientation	Count	25	12	37
		% within Transferred from USA	6.8%	5.6%	6.3%
	Freshman Session 1	Count	34	30	64
		% within Transferred from USA	9.2%	13.9%	11.0%
	Freshman Session 2	Count	31	31	62
		% within Transferred from USA	8.4%	14.4%	10.6%
	Freshman Session 3	Count	49	31	80
		% within Transferred from USA	13.3%	14.4%	13.7%
	Freshman Session 4	Count	49	39	88
		% within Transferred from USA	13.3%	18.1%	15.1%
	Freshman Session 5	Count	73	43	116
		% within Transferred from USA	19.8%	19.9%	19.9%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Composite ACT Score \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Composite ACT Score	18 or lower	Count	86	46	132
		% within Transferred from USA	29.1%	23.6%	26.9%
	19-20	Count	78	39	117
		% within Transferred from USA	26.4%	20.0%	23.8%
	21-23	Count	58	60	118
		% within Transferred from USA	19.6%	30.8%	24.0%
	24-26	Count	52	38	90
		% within Transferred from USA	17.6%	19.5%	18.3%
	27-29	Count	15	12	27
		% within Transferred from USA	5.1%	6.2%	5.5%
	30 or higher	Count	7	0	7
		% within Transferred from USA	2.4%	0.0%	1.4%
Total		Count	296	195	491
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

College \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
College	AH	Count	36	35	71
		% within Transferred from USA	9.8%	16.2%	12.2%
	AS	Count	158	84	242
		% within Transferred from USA	42.9%	38.9%	41.4%
	BU	Count	47	29	76
		% within Transferred from USA	12.8%	13.4%	13.0%
	CS	Count	10	5	15
		% within Transferred from USA	2.7%	2.3%	2.6%
	ED	Count	31	10	41
		% within Transferred from USA	8.4%	4.6%	7.0%
	EG	Count	43	22	65
		% within Transferred from USA	11.7%	10.2%	11.1%
	NU	Count	43	31	74
		% within Transferred from USA	11.7%	14.4%	12.7%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Freshman Scholarship \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Freshman Scholarship	No	Count	280	143	423
		% within Transferred from USA	76.1%	66.2%	72.4%
	Yes	Count	88	73	161
		% within Transferred from USA	23.9%	33.8%	27.6%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Other Scholarship \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Other Scholarship	No	Count	309	186	495
		% within Transferred from USA	84.0%	86.1%	84.8%
	Yes	Count	59	30	89
		% within Transferred from USA	16.0%	13.9%	15.2%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Race \* Transferred from USA Crosstabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Race	White	Count	232	139	371
		% within Transferred from USA	63.0%	64.4%	63.5%
	African-American	Count	100	55	155
		% within Transferred from USA	27.2%	25.5%	26.5%
	Asian	Count	7	4	11
		% within Transferred from USA	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
	Hispanic	Count	7	3	10
		% within Transferred from USA	1.9%	1.4%	1.7%
	Non-Resident Alien	Count	3	1	4
		% within Transferred from USA	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%
	Other	Count	19	14	33
		% within Transferred from USA	5.2%	6.5%	5.7%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Gender \* Transferred from USA Cross tabulation

			Transferred from USA		Total
			Stopped Out	Transferred	
Gender	Female	Count	158	125	283
		% within Transferred from USA	42.9%	57.9%	48.5%
	Male	Count	210	91	301
		% within Transferred from USA	57.1%	42.1%	51.5%
Total		Count	368	216	584
		% within Transferred from USA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%