

**FINAL**

## **Student Survey Results**

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**Report to:**  
**Burck Smith, CEO**  
**StraighterLine**  
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## INTRODUCTION AND MAJOR FINDINGS

The cost of college continues to outpace inflation<sup>1</sup>, even as average household income has declined over the past decade.<sup>2</sup> Since 2008, StraighterLine has offered a new way of reducing the cost of a college degree: self-paced, pay-as-you-go introductory level college courses. The underlying philosophy of the program is that students can get an equivalent, if not superior, educational experience in introductory college courses (e.g., calculus, accounting, English composition) through an individually paced, tutor-supported course than in the large lecture hall setting that is common at traditional colleges and universities. Furthermore, StraighterLine is able to offer these courses at much lower cost than colleges and universities. Depending on the registration option and time spent completing the course, StraighterLine students can potentially pay less than \$30 per credit.

Demand for the program has been substantial, with nearly 2000 registrants since the first courses were offered in 2008. To better understand its clientele, StraighterLine hired Hezel Associates to develop, execute, and analyze an online survey of its alumni. The main foci of the survey were to: determine why students decided to take StraighterLine courses, assess whether they were satisfied with their experience, and learn more about the demographics of the StraighterLine student population.

Based on our analysis of the survey data collected in June 2011, our major findings are:

- **Students register for StraighterLine courses for three main reasons: convenience, cost, and fulfilling a pre-requisite.** When asked to rate the importance of a series of possible reasons for deciding to take a course through StraighterLine, these three reasons were the most highly rated.
- **Students expect StraighterLine courses to be rigorous and find that those expectations are met.** The survey results show that students are not motivated to take StraighterLine courses because they expect the course to be easy. When asked to compare the academic rigor of StraighterLine to other ways of earning college credit, students report that StraighterLine courses are as rigorous as – and sometimes more rigorous than – most other ways of earning college credit.
- **Overall, students are very satisfied with StraighterLine courses.** An overwhelming majority of students would recommend the program to a friend. Even seventy percent of students who did not complete a course would recommend the program. When compared to other means of earning credit on overall satisfaction, StraighterLine was more often favored than all alternatives.

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<sup>1</sup> College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2010*. Accessed on July 29, 2011 at [http://trends.collegeboard.org/college\\_pricing/](http://trends.collegeboard.org/college_pricing/).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, *Table H-6. All Races by Mean and Median Income: 1975 to 2009*. Accessed on July 29, 2010 at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/historical/household/index.html>.

- **More than ninety percent of students who completed courses with StraighterLine were able to get the credit for the courses transferred to a degree-granting institution.** Half of the survey respondents sought credit from partner institutions for their StraighterLine course(s) and therefore were guaranteed to receive credit. Among students who sought credit from non-partner institutions, nearly eighty percent were successful. Most of these students were only required to submit a transcript in order to get the credit applied.
- **Students appear to fail to complete StraighterLine courses due to a combination of factors, rather than one or two predominant factors.** A question asking why course non-completers chose to not finish the course did not reveal any specific factor that was commonly described as extremely important in the decision to drop out. Instead, most of the factors in the list had average ratings in the low to moderate range of the scale.
- **The StraighterLine student population is much more diverse than the traditional college student population.** Only one-third of StraighterLine students are traditional college age. A significant number of StraighterLine students are married, have children, and/or work full time. Taken as a whole, the StraighterLine student population most closely resembles a community college, rather than a four-year school, in that there is a mix of traditional students who are likely to continue on to a four-year school, delayed and part-time degree seekers, and casual course takers.
- **StraighterLine appears to be off to a very successful start in developing courses that meet students' needs.** As the company expands its course roster and the student population grows, we recommend that StraighterLine continue to monitor student satisfaction and demographic profile on a regular basis. We also note that while we have documented that students are generally successful in getting credit for their StraighterLine courses at degree-granting institutions, the question of how students build upon the foundation provided by StraighterLine in terms of follow-on coursework and overall educational outcomes remains unexplored.

## **DETAILED RESULTS**

### **Research Methodology**

The data for this study were collected through a web-based survey that was available from June 10 to June 26, 2011. All students who had either successfully or unsuccessfully completed a StraighterLine course by June 6, 2011 were invited to complete the survey.

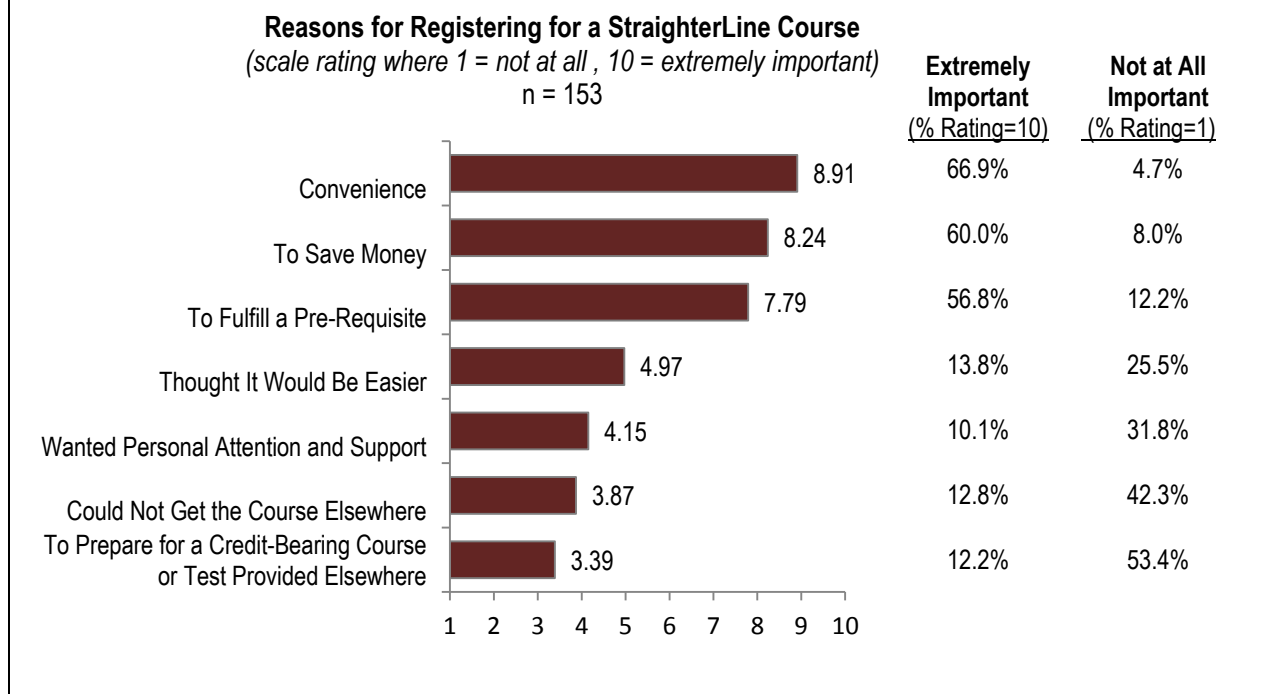
The survey was developed by Hezel Associates researchers and StraighterLine senior management. There were two versions of the survey: one for “course completers” and one for those who had started a course but not completed it (“non-completers”). Both versions of the survey contained a common core of questions about students’ educational history, motivations for taking a StraighterLine course, comparisons between StraighterLine and other methods for earning college credits, and demographic information. Course completers were also asked about whether they received credit for the course at another institution and what was required to get the credit. Non-completers were asked additional questions about why they did not complete the course.

A total of 1334 survey invitations were sent – 895 to course completers and 439 to non-completers. A total of 153 valid responses were collected during the data collection period, for an 11.5% response rate. The respondents consisted of 123 course completers and 30 non-completers.

### **Why Students Take StraighterLine Courses**

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of possible factors that influenced their decision to sign up for a StraighterLine course. All items were rated from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important). Figure 1 shows the average rating given by StraighterLine students for the importance of each factor and what percentage of respondents gave the item either the highest or lowest possible rating.

**Figure 1**



The figure shows that there are three core motivations for students to register for a StraighterLine course: convenience, cost, and fulfilling a pre-requisite. The convenience factor rates the highest of the three but all three were consistently rated highly by students, with at least half of the students giving each item the highest possible rating.

There is little evidence that students place much credence in the idea that StraighterLine courses will be easier than other means of earning credits. Only 13.8 percent of the respondents rated this item as extremely important and no student identified it as the only extremely important reason for taking the course. Therefore, we would characterize the perception of ease as something that some students weigh in to their decision to take a StraighterLine course but we see no evidence that students are taking courses with StraighterLine primarily because they perceive the course to be easier.

The other possible motivations for taking a StraighterLine course were rated even lower on average, indicating that they are on the whole secondary concerns for the student population. Between ten and fifteen percent of students considered personal attention, inability to get the course elsewhere, and preparation for another course or test to be extremely important while between one-third and one-half of the students reported those factors to be not at all important.

## **Student Satisfaction**

### General Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with StraighterLine is very high – 89% of respondents indicated that they would recommend the program to a friend. Among only the course completers, the satisfaction

rate is even higher, at 93.5%. (Approaching the question from the other side, 70% of those students who did not complete their course would still recommend StraighterLine to a friend.)

Nearly three-quarters (71.3%) of the students who completed a StraighterLine course felt that taking it made them more likely to complete college. Only one student reported that it made her less likely to complete college, with the other students reporting that it had no effect. When asked about StraighterLine's effect on preparation for traditional college courses, respondents were evenly split between reporting that they were better prepared (48.0%) and the course having no effect (49.6%). The remaining 2.4% reported that they felt StraighterLine made them less prepared for traditional college courses.

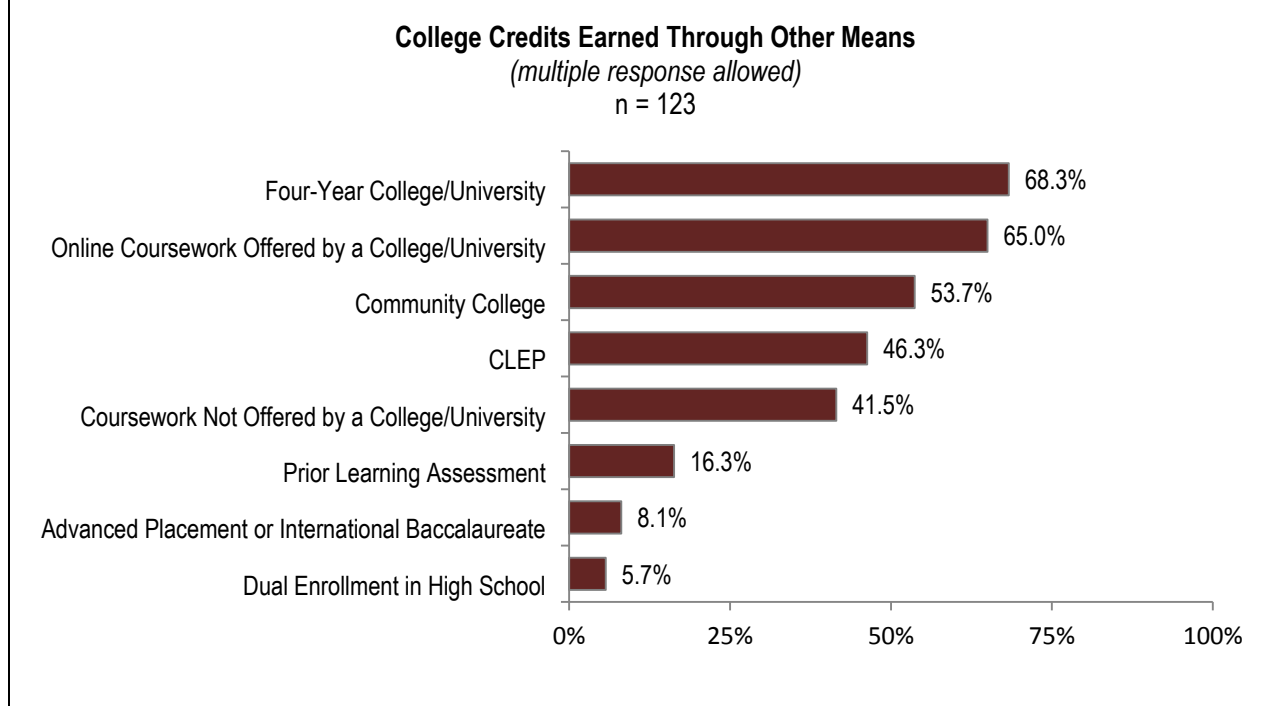
#### *Comparison to Other Means of Earning College Credit*

Course completers were asked to compare StraighterLine to a number of other ways of earning college credit on four criteria: academic rigor, convenience, cost, and overall satisfaction. The alternative methods of earning credit were:

- Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate
- CLEP
- Coursework not offered by a college/university
- Online coursework offered by a college/university
- Prior learning assessment
- Community college
- Four-year college/university
- Dual enrollment in high school

The percentage of students reporting having earned credits through each method is presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**



There are not enough students in the survey who have completed prior learning assessments, AP/IB or dual enrollment classes for analysis of their comparison data so we present the comparisons for the other five methods in Figures 3 through 6.

Figure 3 shows that a larger percentage of StraighterLine students were more satisfied with their StraighterLine experience than with any of the alternative means of earning credit that they had completed. Between 33 and 54 percent of students reported that they were more satisfied with StraighterLine and in all cases, the majority of students who did not report being more satisfied with StraighterLine reported that they were equally satisfied with the two.

StraighterLine's satisfaction rating was greatest when compared to online courses through colleges or universities, with a more than 5-to-1 ratio in favor of StraighterLine (54.3% to 9.9%). While the smallest margin was the comparison between StraighterLine and CLEP, the ratio was still nearly 2-to-1 in favor of StraighterLine (32.8% to 19.0%).



**Figure 3**

**Overall Satisfaction  
StraighterLine vs. Other Ways of Earning College Credit**

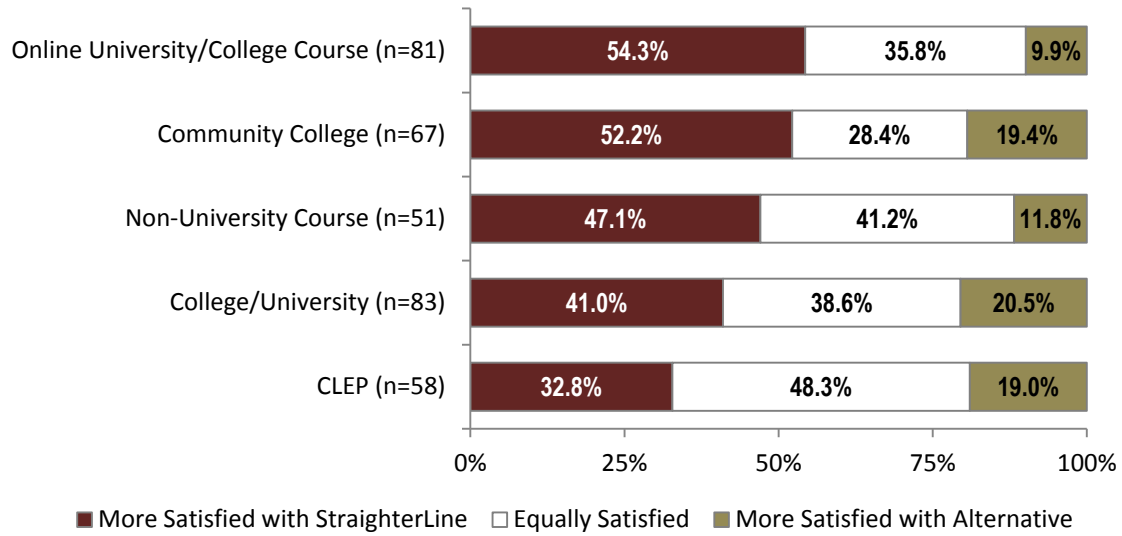
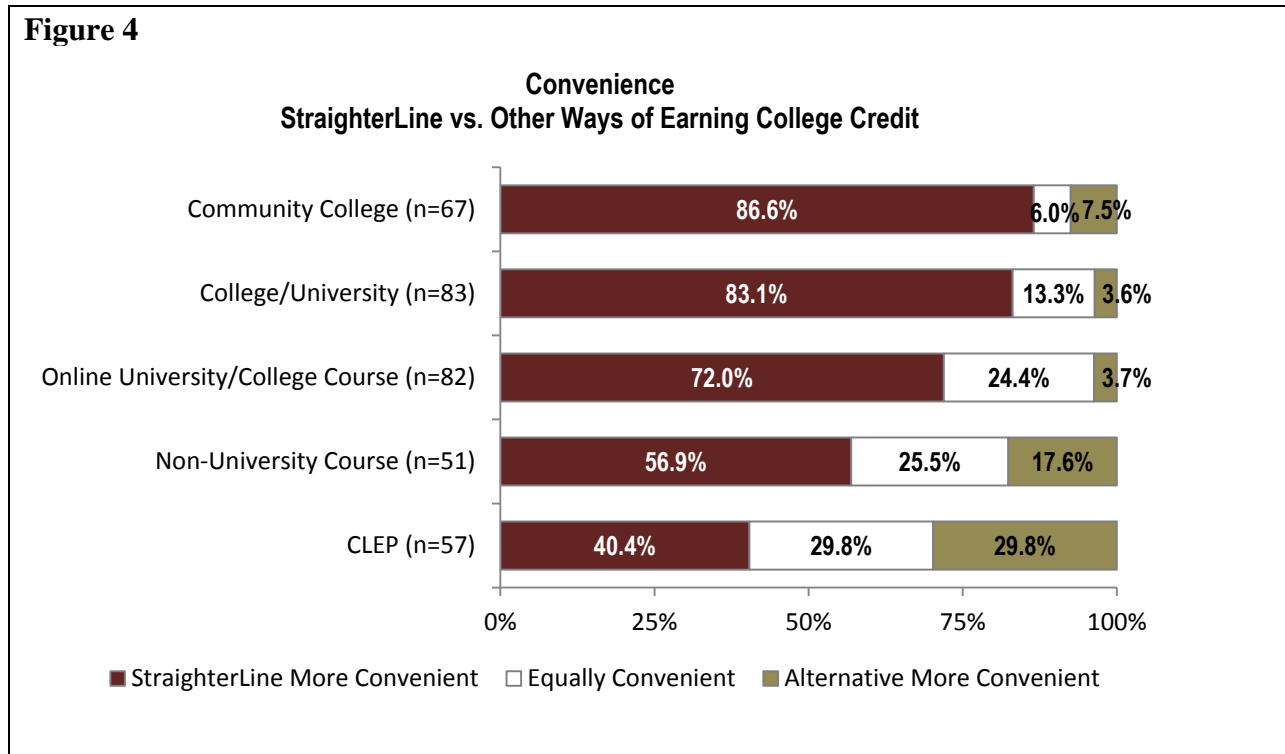
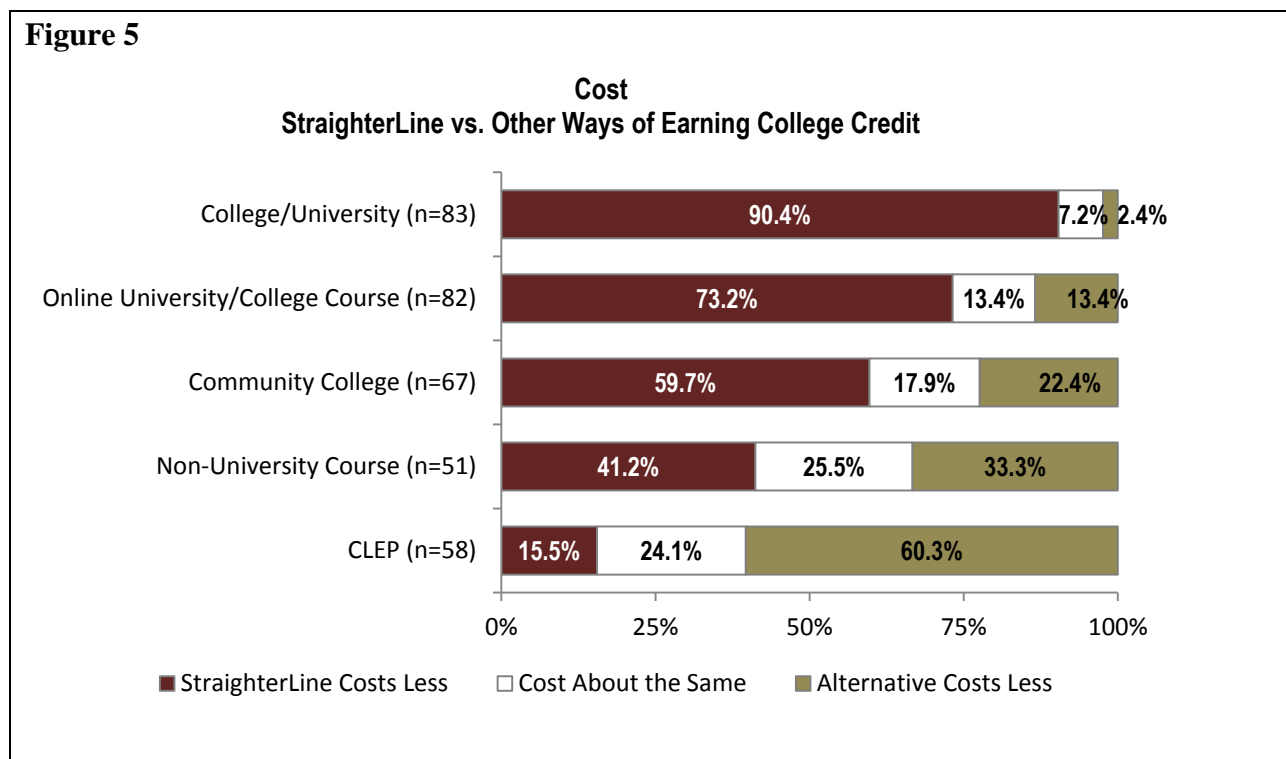


Figure 4 shows the comparison data between StraighterLine and other means of earning college credit on convenience. Here the preference for StraighterLine is dramatic, particularly when compared to traditional college or university courses, community college courses, and online courses offered by colleges and universities. Over eighty percent of respondents rated StraighterLine as more convenient than courses at community colleges or four-year schools. While the percentage rating StraighterLine as more convenient than online courses offered by colleges or universities was lower at 72%, the bulk of the remaining students felt they were equally convenient. While the relative advantage for StraighterLine on convenience is somewhat smaller when compared to CLEP and other non-university/college courses, only 29.8% and 17.6% of respondents preferred these alternatives, respectively.



StraighterLine also generally rated very highly in cost comparisons to the alternative means of earning credit, with the one exception of comparison to CLEP (see Figure 5). Over ninety percent of respondents stated that StraighterLine was less expensive than four-year schools and majorities also rated StraighterLine as less expensive than online courses through colleges or universities (73.2%) and community college courses (59.7%). Students were roughly evenly split on the relative costs of StraighterLine and other non-university courses, with 41.2% reporting StraighterLine was less expensive but 33.3% reporting StraighterLine was more expensive. Considering that this category covers a number of different competitors, these data may simply reflect the variation in pricing both within StraighterLine and across the competitors' offerings.

The one place where students reported that StraighterLine was at a cost disadvantage was in comparison to earning credits through CLEP. A CLEP exam costs only \$77, so these data reflect the simple reality that CLEP is a less expensive way of earning college credit than StraighterLine.

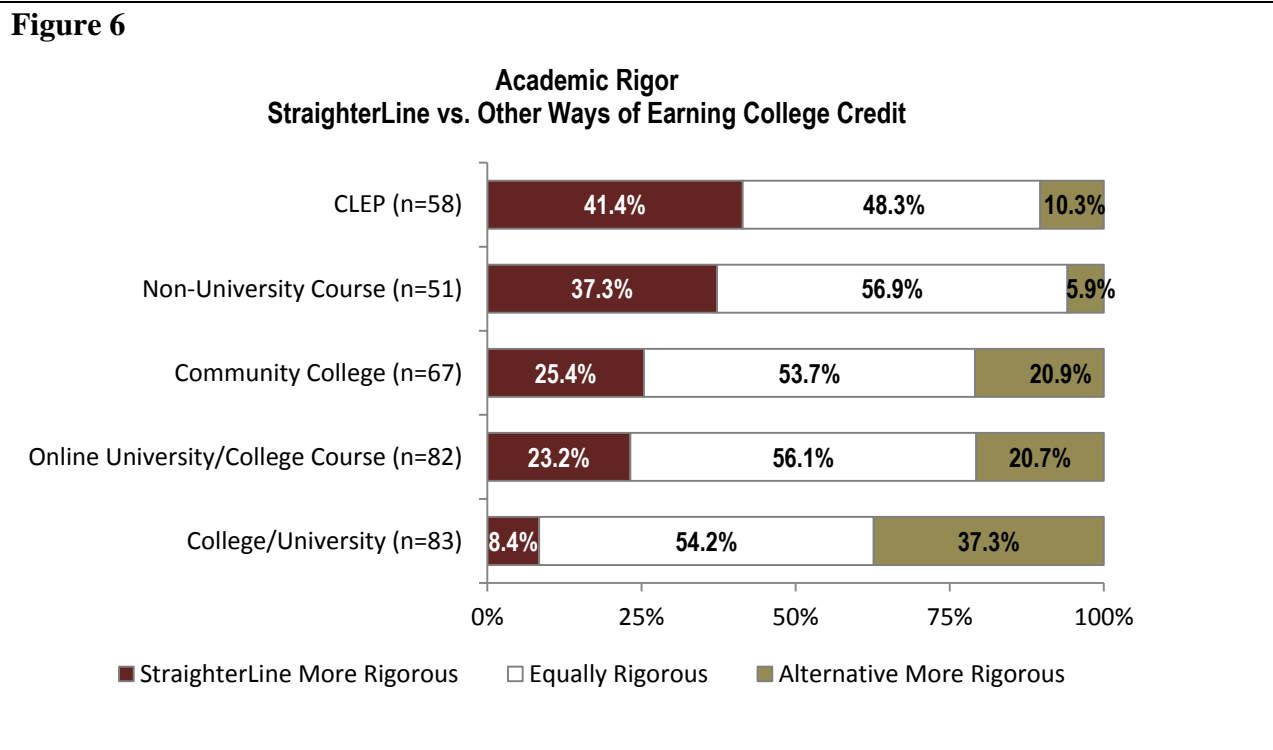


The final dimension on which students were asked to compare StraighterLine to other means of earning college credit was on academic rigor. The most noteworthy aspect of Figure 6 is the predominance of the middle rating – that the two ways are equally rigorous. With the narrow exception of CLEP, a majority of respondents gave an equal rating to StraighterLine and each of the comparison methods of earning credit.

Beyond this large middle, StraighterLine was rated as having greater rigor more frequently than CLEP and other non-university courses by a considerable margin (41.4% to 10.3% and 37.3% to 5.9%, respectively). The percentage of students finding StraighterLine more or less rigorous

than online courses offered by colleges or universities and community college courses were effectively equal, which further reinforces the overall conclusion that students view these ways of getting credit as equally rigorous.

In contrast, the share of students reporting that StraighterLine is less rigorous than traditional courses at four-year institutions was more than four times as large as the share reporting that StraighterLine courses were more rigorous (37.3% to 8.4%). However, it should be kept in mind that the majority of students felt the two were equally rigorous.



Overall, the figures show that StraighterLine compares favorably to the other methods of earning college credit across all four dimensions of evaluation. Out of the twenty total method-dimension combinations used for comparison, StraighterLine was rated as superior to the alternative by more students in eighteen of the comparisons. We take this as strong evidence that students view StraighterLine as equal, and often superior, to other means of earning college credit.

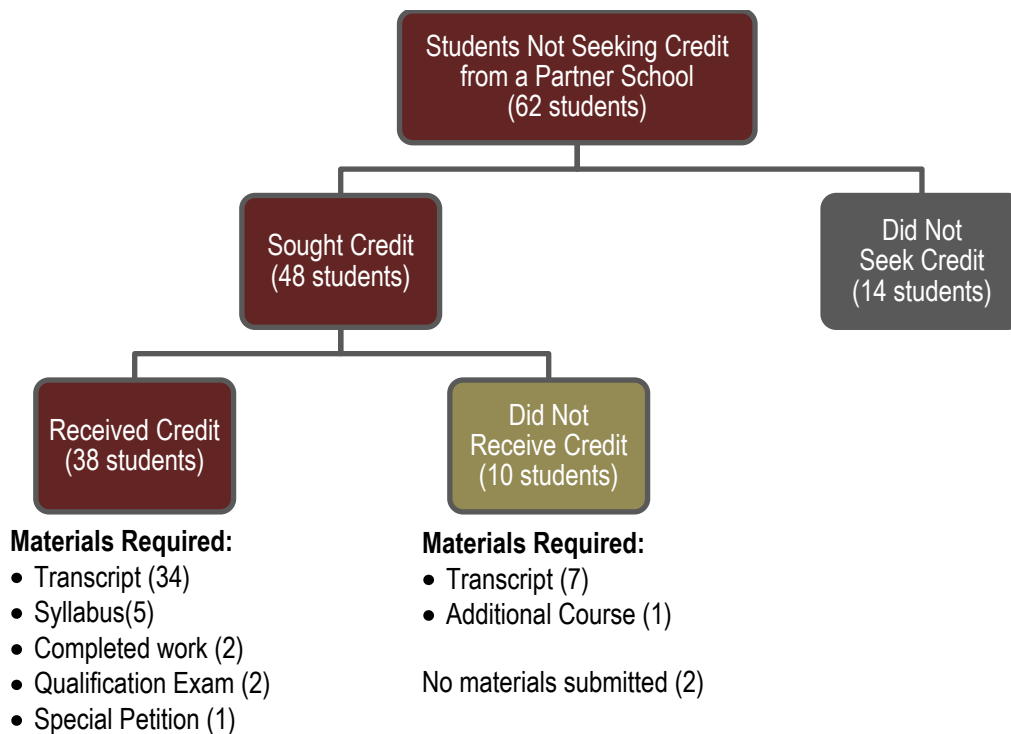
### Do StraighterLine Students Earn Credit for Courses from Degree-Granting Institutions?

Approximately half (49.6%) of the students who completed a StraighterLine course sought credit for it from one of the more than 20 partner institutions that guarantee credit. While most of the other students sought credit from non-partner schools (39.0%), slightly more than one in nine students (11.4%) did not attempt to transfer credit for the course to another institution.

A large majority (90.8%) of students who sought to transfer credit for their StraighterLine course(s) to another institution were successful. Students who did not seek credit from a partner institution were asked a series of questions about whether they were able to get their StraighterLine credits transferred and what was required to apply for the credit. Figure 7 shows the outcomes for these students and the steps required to apply for credit at non-partner schools.

**Figure 7**

#### Credit Status and Required Supplemental Materials for Students Who Did Not Seek Credit from a Partner School



Of the 48 students who sought credit from non-partner schools, nearly 80 percent were successful. Submitting a transcript was by far the most common supporting material required for both those who were successful and those who were not. Nearly all of students who received credit were required to submit a transcript (34 of 38 students). A small minority were also required to submit syllabi (5 students), submit completed work (2 students), take an additional exam (2 students), and/or make a special petition (1 student). Among those who did not receive credit, transcript submissions were also commonly required (7 of 10 students).

## Why Students Do Not Complete StraighterLine Courses

In addition to the questions reviewed above, non-completers were also asked to rate a series of possible reasons for not finishing their course.

**Figure 8**

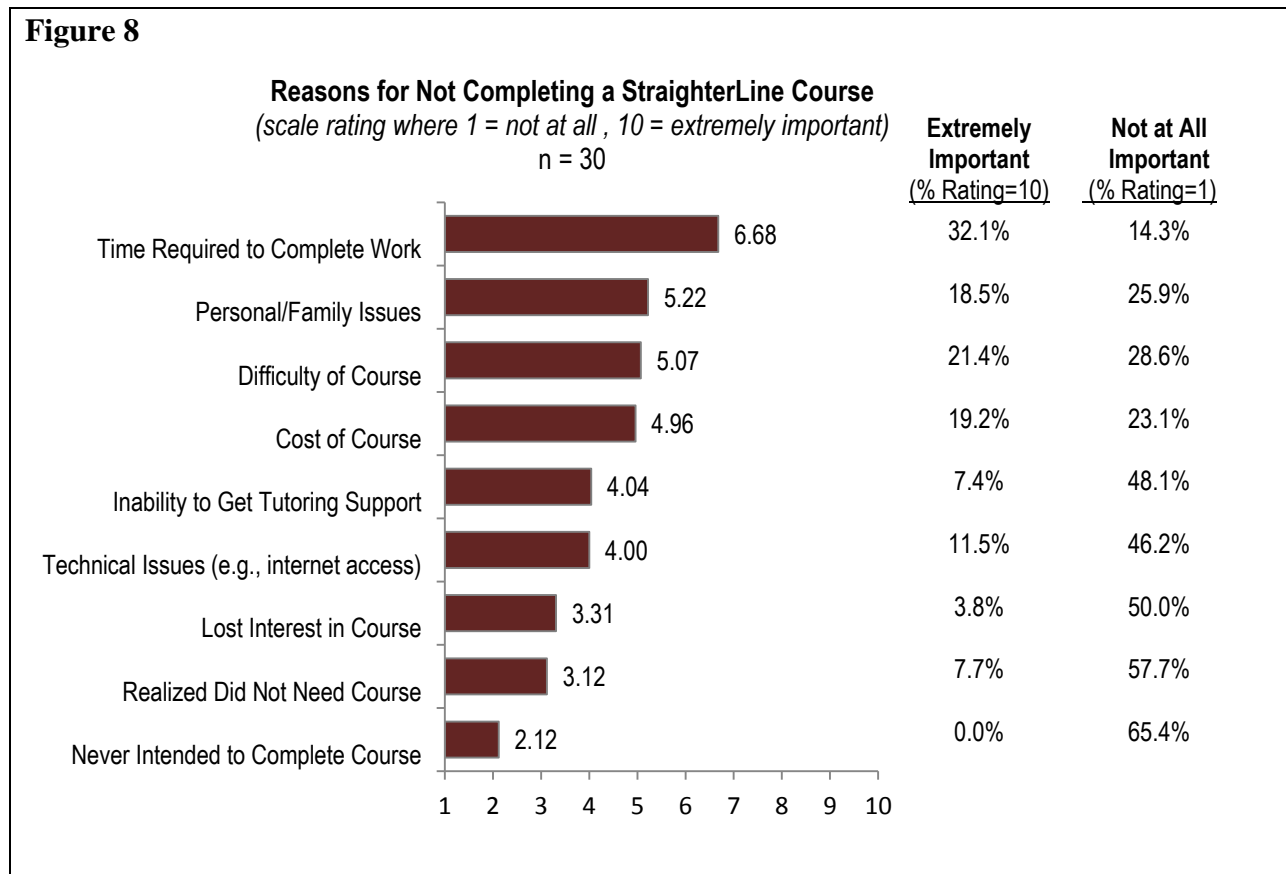


Figure 8 shows that lack of time is the factor that had the highest average importance as to why students do not complete courses, but even it was only rated as extremely important by about one-third of the sample. Personal issues, course difficulty, and cost also commonly played a role in the decision to not complete the course but the data suggest that they too were contributing but not necessarily primary reasons for non-completion. Very few students appear to register without planning to complete the course and technical and support issues appear to be minor factors on average in non-completion. Overall, the data suggest that most students fail to complete the course for a combination of factors, rather than one predominant reason.

## Educational and Demographic Profile of StraighterLine Students

### Educational Status

More than half of the respondents (55.6%) are currently enrolled either as undergraduate or graduate students, with most of the remainder (34.0%) having completed their undergraduate degree and not currently enrolled in school. Approximately one in ten StraighterLine students has neither completed a college degree nor is currently working towards completing one; however, nearly all of them indicated that they intended to complete a college degree in the

future. Only two respondents indicated that they were currently in high school or had just graduated.

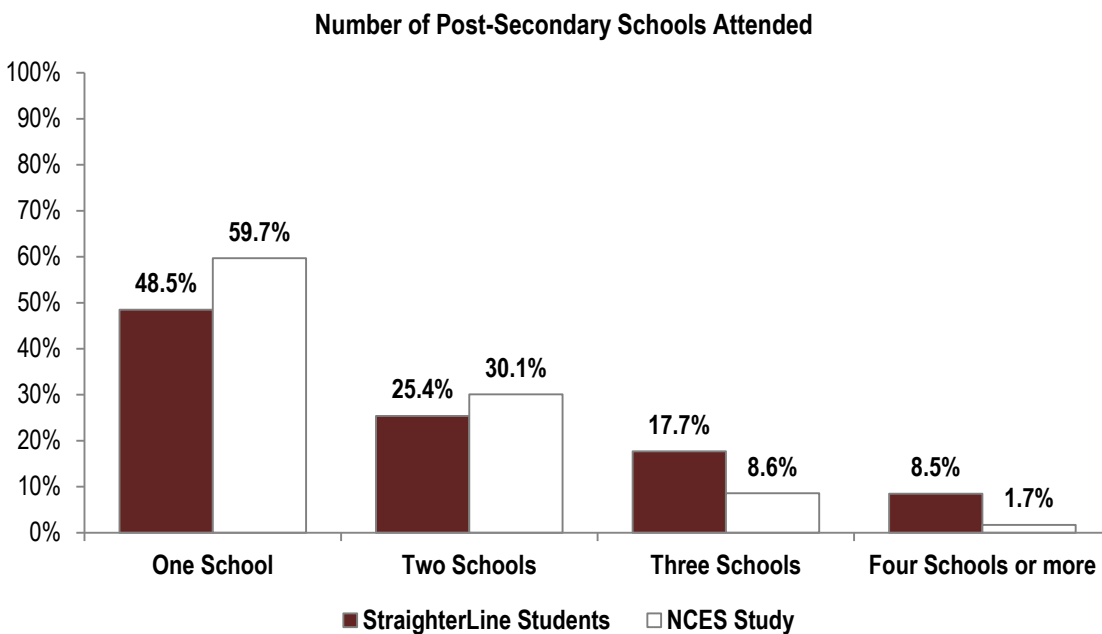
**Table 1. Educational Status of Survey Respondents**

Educational Status Category (n=153)	Total
Enrolled in an undergraduate program	48.4%
Enrolled in a graduate program	7.2%
Not currently enrolled, completed undergraduate degree	34.0%
Not currently enrolled, did not complete undergraduate degree	9.2%
Enrolled in high school or recently graduated	1.3%

**Note:** Total does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Respondents were asked to provide their post-secondary educational history, listing all schools they had attended or were currently attending. This information was provided by 130 respondents. Figure 9 compares the data on number of schools attended by StraighterLine students to data from the National Center for Educational Statistics Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study. The figure shows that StraighterLine students have on average attended more schools than the average American student.

**Figure 9**



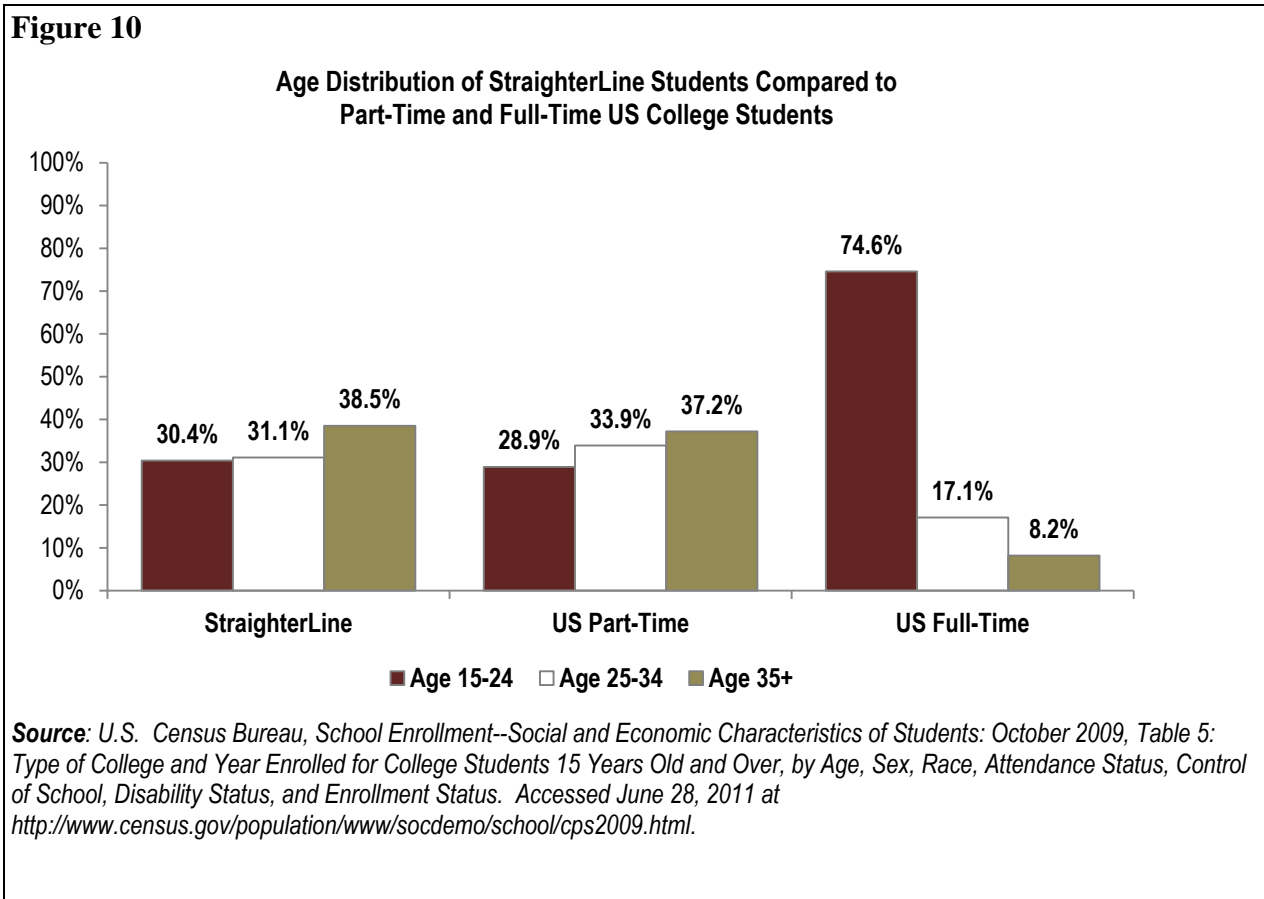
**Source for NCES data:** Peter, K., and Forrest Cataldi, E. (2005). *The Road Less Traveled? Students Who Enroll in Multiple Institutions* (NCES 2005–157). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Accessed August 1, 2011 at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005157.pdf>.

Students reported attending or having attended a wide variety of schools. While a small number listed elite schools (e.g., Berkeley, Georgetown, Oberlin), by far the most common schools reported were state universities and community colleges. Thomas Edison State College was the

most frequently named school, with 24 students having attended, followed by Excelsior College, with 20 students. The only other schools that had been attended by more than three students were Western Governors University (6), Charter Oak State College (5), Brigham Young University (5), and University of Maryland University College (4).

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic data collected from the students in the survey suggest that StraighterLine is attracting a fairly diverse student population. One characteristic that illustrates this broad variation in the StraighterLine population is the age of the survey respondents. The age of respondents ranged from 16 to 69 years old with a median age of 30. Figure 10 shows the distribution of StraighterLine students by age and compares the distribution to the most recent available Census data on the age distribution of full-time and part-time college students.



The StraighterLine student profile in terms of age closely matches the national distribution for part-time students, with approximately equal percentages of students in the 15-24, 25-34, and 35 and over age ranges. In contrast, the full-time student population is predominantly between the ages of 15 and 24 years old.

Slightly more than half (52.3%) of the sample is single with most of the remainder (42.3%) currently married. Approximately one-quarter (26.7%) of the respondents have children in their household and two-thirds of those parents in the sample have children under the age of five. As



would be expected, the marital and parental status of StraighterLine students varies by age, with students under the age of 25 less likely to be married or have children than respondents who are 25 and older.

Table 2 shows that slightly less than half of the respondents are currently employed full-time (defined as 35 hours or more a week). Roughly equal portions of the remainder are employed part-time, unemployed, or not in the labor force.

**Table 2. Employment Status of Survey Respondents**

<b>Employment Status Category (n=153)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employed full time	47.0%
Employed part time	22.8%
Unemployed, seeking work	16.1%
Not in the labor force (unemployed and not seeking work)	14.1%

Looking at the employment status of students by age group, the major difference across the groups is the mix of full and part time employment for people over and under the age of 25. For both groups, approximately 70% of students are working full or part time; however, 81.3% of people over the age of 25 who are employed are working full time while only 20.5% of people under the age of 25 who are employed are working full time. Considering that students under the age of 25 are more likely to be full time students, this difference is not unexpected.

While StraighterLine would appear to be an attractive option for active military, current service members do not constitute a large share of the StraighterLine student population. Most of the survey respondents (85.8%) have never served in the armed forces, while 8.8% reported being inactive veterans and 5.4% are currently in active service. These data are further supported by a review of the e-mail addresses that students used to register for their courses. Of the 1334 e-mails used to contact students for this survey, only 11 were military. It is highly likely that some active military members used non-military e-mail addresses when registering for StraighterLine but the very small number of military addresses still suggests that there is not a very large cohort of active military among the StraighterLine student population.

Additional data were collected from the students regarding the race, gender, parental levels of education and household income. Overall, the demographic profile of the StraighterLine student population generally resembled the larger student and American populations on these characteristics. Therefore, we do not review the results in detail here. Tables 3 through 6 in Appendix B provide summaries of the data for these items.

## APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENTS

### Instrument 1: Course Completer Survey

#### (Page 1)

*As part of an ongoing effort to improve StraighterLine courses and to increase other colleges' willingness to accept StraighterLine credits, Hezel Associates has been contracted to conduct a survey of former students to better understand why they chose StraighterLine and how these courses have impacted their college career. Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey.*

*Please make sure that you complete the entire survey, as you will be asked at the end to provide the contact information that we need in order to enter you in the drawing for a gift card.*

#### (Page 2)

- 1) **[RESPONSE REQUIRED]** Which of the following describes your current status?
  - a) I am currently in high school or graduated from high school this year **(SKIP TO PAGE 14)**
  - b) I am currently enrolled as an undergraduate student
  - c) I am currently enrolled as a graduate student
  - d) I am not currently in school but I have graduated from a college or university
  - e) I am not currently in school and I have not graduated from a college or university

#### (Page 3)

- 2) List all of the colleges and universities you have attended, starting with your current school, if applicable, and working backwards in time. **[TABLE TO FILL IN WITH TEN LINES]**
  - a) Name of school
  - b) Month and year started
  - c) Month and year of last enrollment; if current school, leave blank
  - d) Number of credits completed
  - e) Overall GPA
- 3) Which of the following degrees have you completed or do you plan to complete in the future? **[TWO COLUMNS WITH HEADERS FOR COMPLETED AND PLAN TO COMPLETE – CHECK BOXES FOR ALL OPTIONS]**
  - a) Associate's
  - b) Bachelor's
  - c) Graduate
  - d) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*BRANCHING from PAGE 3:**

- If participant selected “B) I am currently enrolled as an undergraduate student” in question 1 – go on to PAGE 4
- If participant selected “C) I am currently enrolled as a graduate student – skip to PAGE 9
- If participant selected “D) I am not currently in school but I have graduated from a college or university” in question 1 – skip to PAGE 9
- If participant selected “E) I am not currently in school and I have not graduated from a college or university” in question 1 – skip to page 15

**---- FOR CURRENT UNDERGRAD STUDENTS ----**

**(Page 4)**

*We would now like to ask you about the course which you completed with StraighterLine. If you have completed more than one course with StraighterLine, please answer the following questions in reference to the first course you took with StraighterLine.*

- 4) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to take this course through StraighterLine?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) To save money
  - b) Convenience
  - c) Wanted personal attention and support
  - d) Could not get the course elsewhere
  - e) Thought it would be easier
  - f) To fulfill a pre-requisite
  - g) To prepare for a credit-bearing course or test provided elsewhere
- 5) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to take the course through StraighterLine, list them below.

**(Page 5)**

- 6) Is your current school a StraighterLine partner school?
- a) Yes – which school? [PROVIDE DROP DOWN LIST OF PARTNER SCHOOLS] **[IF NOT, SKIP TO PAGE 20]**

**(Page 6)**

- 7) Have you received credit for the course toward the requirements for your degree from your current school?
- a) Yes **[SKIP TO PAGE 8]**
  - b) No

**(Page 7)**

- 8) Did you apply to receive credit for the course?
- a) Yes
  - b) No **[SKIP TO PAGE 20]**

**(Page 8)**

- 9) Which of the following did your school require in order for you to get credit for the course?
- a) Submit a transcript
  - b) Submit a copy of the syllabus
  - c) Submit completed assignments
  - d) Make a special petition
  - e) Take an exam
  - f) Complete additional work
  - g) Complete an additional course
  - h) Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - i) None of the above

**[GO TO PAGE 20]**

**---- FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED UNDERGRAD ----**

**(Page 9)**

*We would now like to ask you about the course which you completed with StraighterLine. If you have completed more than one course with StraighterLine, please answer the following questions in reference to the first course you took with StraighterLine.*

- 10) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to take this course through StraighterLine?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) To save money
  - b) Convenience
  - c) Wanted personal attention and support
  - d) Could not get the course elsewhere
  - e) Thought it would be easier
  - f) To fulfill a pre-requisite
  - g) To prepare for a credit-bearing course or test provided elsewhere
- 11) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to take the course through StraighterLine, list them below.

**(Page 10)**

- 12) Did you graduate from a StraighterLine partner school?
- a) Yes – which school? [PROVIDE DROP DOWN LIST OF PARTNER SCHOOLS] **[IF NONE SKIP TO PAGE 20]**

**(Page 11)**

13) Did you receive credit for the course toward the requirements for your degree?

- a) Yes [**SKIP TO PAGE 13**]
- b) No

**(Page 12)**

14) Did you apply to receive credit for the course?

- a) Yes
- b) No [**SKIP TO PAGE 20**]

**(Page 13)**

15) Which of the following did your school require in order for you to get credit for the course?

- a) Submit a transcript
- b) Submit a copy of the syllabus
- c) Submit completed assignments
- d) Make a special petition
- e) Take an exam
- f) Complete additional work
- g) Complete an additional course
- h) Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- i) None of the above

**[GO TO PAGE 20]**

**---- COURSE COMPLETERS WHO ARE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL ----**

**(Page 14)**

*We would now like to ask you about the course which you completed with StraighterLine. If you have completed more than one course with StraighterLine, please answer the following questions in reference to the first course you took with StraighterLine.*

16) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to take this course through StraighterLine?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) To save money
- b) Convenience
- c) Wanted personal attention and support
- d) Could not get the course elsewhere
- e) Thought it would be easier
- f) To fulfill a pre-requisite
- g) To prepare for a credit-bearing course or test provided elsewhere

17) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to take the course through StraighterLine, list them below. [OPEN-ENDED]

**[GO TO PAGE 20]**

---- FOR NON-GRADUATES NOT CURRENTLY ENROLLED ----

**(Page 15)**

*We would now like to ask you about the course which you completed with StraighterLine. If you have completed more than one course with StraighterLine, please answer the following questions in reference to the first course you took with StraighterLine.*

18) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to take a course through StraighterLine?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) To save money
- b) Convenience
- c) Wanted personal attention and support
- d) Could not get the course elsewhere
- e) Thought it would be easier
- f) To fulfill a pre-requisite
- g) To prepare for a credit-bearing course or test provided elsewhere

19) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to take a course through StraighterLine, list them below.

**(Page 16)**

20) Did you ever attend a StraighterLine partner school? If so, which one? (If you attended more than one partner school, please select the one you attended during or closest after taking your StraighterLine course.)

[PROVIDE DROP DOWN LIST OF PARTNER SCHOOLS] [IF YES, SKIP TO PAGE 20]

**(PAGE 17)**

21) Did you receive credit for the course toward the requirements for your degree?

- a) Yes [SKIP TO PAGE 19]
- b) No

**(Page 18)**

22) Did you apply to receive credit for the course?

- a) Yes
- b) No [SKIP TO PAGE 20]

**(Page 19)**

23) Which of the following did your school require in order for you to get credit for the course?

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- a) Submit a transcript
- b) Submit a copy of the syllabus
- c) Submit completed assignments
- d) Make a special petition
- e) Take an exam
- f) Complete additional work
- g) Complete an additional course
- h) Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- i) None of the above

---- ALL RESPONDENTS RESUME HERE ----

**(Page 20)**

24) Have you earned college credit through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)?

- a) Yes
- b) No (**Skip to page 22**)

**(Page 21)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to AP or IB in terms of...*

25) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

26) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

27) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

28) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 22)**

- 29) Have you earned college credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)?
- a) Yes
  - b) No **(Skip to page 24)**

**(Page 23)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to CLEP in terms of...*

30) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

31) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

32) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

33) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 24)**

- 34) Have you earned college credit through coursework not affiliated with a college or university, other than StraighterLine?
- a) Yes
  - b) No **(Skip to page 26)**

**(Page 25)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to that other coursework in terms of...*

35) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

36) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient



37) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

38) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 26)**

39) Have you earned college credit through online coursework through a college or university?

- a) Yes
- b) No **(Skip to page 28)**

**(Page 27)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to that other online coursework in terms of...*

40) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

41) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

42) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

43) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 28)**

44) Have you earned college credit through a prior learning assessment?

- a) Yes
- b) No **(Skip to question 30)**

**(Page 29)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to the prior learning assessment in terms of...*

45) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

46) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

47) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

48) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 30)**

49) Have you earned college credit through a community college? [OPTION BUTTON]

- a) Yes
- b) No (**Skip to page 32**)

**(Page 31)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to community college in terms of...*

50) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

51) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

52) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

- 53) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 32)**

- 54) Have you earned college credit through a four-year college or university?
- a) Yes
  - b) No **(Skip to page 34)**

**(Page 33)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to a four-year institution in terms of...*

- 55) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 56) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 57) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 58) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 34)**

- 59) Have you earned college credit through a dual enrollment offering in high school?
- a) Yes
  - b) No **(Skip to page 36)**

**(Page 35)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to dual enrollment in terms of...*

- 60) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

- 61) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 62) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 63) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 36)**

- 64) Do you believe that taking a StraighterLine course made you more likely to complete college, less likely to complete college, or had no effect?
- a) More likely
  - b) Less likely
  - c) No effect
- 65) Do you believe that taking a StraighterLine course made you better prepared for traditional college courses, less prepared for traditional college courses, or had no effect?
- a) Better prepared
  - b) Less prepared
  - c) No effect
- 66) Would you recommend StraighterLine to a friend?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

**(Page 37)**

*Finally, we would like to get some basic information about you.*

- 67) How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 68) What is your sex?
- a) Female
  - b) Male

- 69) What is your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.
- a) American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b) Asian/Pacific Islander
  - c) Black/African American
  - d) Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin
  - e) White (non-Hispanic)
  - f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 70) What is your current marital status?
- a) Single
  - b) Married
  - c) Divorced
  - d) Separated
  - e) Widowed
- 71) For how many children, if any, are you a primary caregiver?
- a) \_\_\_\_\_ children under the age of 5
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ children between the ages of 5 and 18
- 72) Have you ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard?
- a) Yes, currently active
  - b) Yes, but I am not currently on active duty
  - c) No
- 73) Which best describes your current employment situation?
- a) Currently employed full time (35 hours a week or more)
  - b) Currently employed part time between 10 and 35 hours a week
  - c) Currently employed part time less than 10 hours a week
  - d) Not employed but seeking employment
  - e) Not employed and not seeking employment
- 74) What are your mother's and father's highest level of education?  
[TWO COLUMNS FOR MOTHER AND FATHER]
- a) Less than high school
  - b) High school
  - c) Some college, no degree
  - d) Associate's degree
  - e) Bachelor's degree
  - f) Master's degree
  - g) Doctoral or professional degree
  - h) I do not know

75) What was the total income for your household in 2010?

- a) Less than \$25,000
- b) \$25,000-\$49,999
- c) \$50,000-\$74,999
- d) \$75,000-\$99,999
- e) \$100,000-\$149,999
- f) \$150,000-\$199,999
- g) \$200,000 or more
- h) I do not know

**(Page 38)**

*Thank you very much for completing this survey. As a thank you for your time, we would like to enter you into a drawing for one of 30 \$25 Barnes and Noble gift cards. So that we can be sure to contact you if you are a winner, please provide us with your preferred contact information. If you do not fill in the items below, you will not be entered in the drawing.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ [PROGRAM FOR TEN DIGIT TEL FORMAT]

## Instrument 2: Course Non-Completers Survey

### (Page 1)

*As part of an ongoing effort to improve StraighterLine courses and to increase other colleges' willingness to accept StraighterLine credits, Hezel Associates has been contracted to conduct a survey of former students to better understand why they chose StraighterLine and how these courses have impacted their college career. Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey.*

*Please make sure that you complete the entire survey, as you will be asked at the end to provide the contact information that we need in order to enter you in the drawing for a gift card.*

### (Page 2)

- 1) **[RESPONSE REQUIRED]** Which of the following describes your current status?
  - a) I am currently in high school or graduated from high school this year (**Skip to page 4**)
  - b) I am currently enrolled as an undergraduate student
  - c) I am currently enrolled as a graduate student
  - d) I am not currently in school but I have graduated from a college or university
  - e) I am not currently in school and I have not graduated from a college or university

### (Page 3)

- 2) List all of the colleges and universities you have attended, starting with your current school, if applicable, and working backwards in time. **[TABLE TO FILL IN WITH TEN LINES]**
  - a) Name of school
  - b) Month and year started
  - c) Month and year of last enrollment; if current school, leave blank
  - d) Number of credits completed
  - e) Overall GPA

### (Page 4)

- 3) Which of the following degrees have you completed or do you plan to complete in the future? **[TWO COLUMNS WITH HEADERS FOR COMPLETED AND PLAN TO COMPLETE – CHECK BOXES FOR ALL OPTIONS]**
  - a) Associate's
  - b) Bachelor's
  - c) Graduate
  - d) Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**(Page 5)**

*We would now like to ask you about the course(s) that you registered for but did not complete with StraighterLine.*

4) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to take a course through StraighterLine?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) To save money
- b) Convenience
- c) Wanted personal attention and support
- d) Could not get the course elsewhere
- e) Thought it would be easier
- f) To fulfill a pre-requisite
- g) To prepare for a credit-bearing course or test provided elsewhere

5) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to take a course through StraighterLine, list them below.

6) On a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important), how important were each of the following factors in your decision to not complete the course(s)?

[LABELS ABOVE 1 AND 10]

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- a) Difficulty of the course
- b) Amount of time required to complete the work
- c) Personal and/or family issues
- d) Never intended to complete the course
- e) Cost of the course
- f) Technical issues (e.g., internet access)
- g) Inability to get tutoring support
- h) Lost interest in the course
- i) Realized I did not need the course

7) If there were any other important factors that contributed to your decision to not complete the course(s), list them below.

**(Page 6)**

8) Have you earned college credit through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)?

- a) Yes
- b) No (**Skip to page 8**)



**(Page 7)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to AP or IB in terms of...*

- 9) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 10) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 11) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 12) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 8)**

- 13) Have you earned college credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)?
- a) Yes
  - b) No (**Skip to page 11**)

**(Page 9)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to CLEP in terms of...*

- 14) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 15) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 16) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive

- 17) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 10)**

- 18) Have you earned college credit through coursework not affiliated with a college or university, other than StraighterLine? [OPTION BUTTON]
- a) Yes
  - b) No (**Skip to page 12**)

**(Page 11)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to that other coursework in terms of...*

- 19) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 20) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 21) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 22) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 12)**

- 23) Have you earned college credit through online coursework through a college or university?
- a) Yes
  - b) No (**Skip to page 14**)

**(Page 13)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to that other online coursework in terms of...*

- 24) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

- 25) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 26) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 27) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 14)**

- 28) Have you earned college credit through a prior learning assessment?
- a) Yes
  - b) No (**Skip to question 16**)

**(Page 15)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to the prior learning assessment in terms of...*

- 29) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 30) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 31) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 32) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 16)**

33) Have you earned college credit through a community college? [OPTION BUTTON]

- a) Yes
- b) No (**Skip to page 18**)

**(Page 17)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to community college in terms of...*

34) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

35) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

36) Cost?

- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less expensive

37) Your overall satisfaction?

- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
- b) They are about the same
- c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 18)**

38) Have you earned college credit through a four-year college or university?

- a) Yes
- b) No (**Skip to page 20**)

**(Page 19)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to a four-year institution in terms of...*

39) Academic rigor?

- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less rigorous

40) Convenience?

- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
- b) They are about the same
- c) StraighterLine is less convenient

- 41) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 42) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 20)**

- 43) Have you earned college credit through a dual enrollment offering in high school?
- a) Yes
  - b) No (**Skip to page 22**)

**(Page 21)**

*In general, how would you compare StraighterLine to dual enrollment in terms of...*

- 44) Academic rigor?
- a) StraighterLine is more rigorous
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less rigorous
- 45) Convenience?
- a) StraighterLine is more convenient
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less convenient
- 46) Cost?
- a) StraighterLine is more expensive
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) StraighterLine is less expensive
- 47) Your overall satisfaction?
- a) I am more satisfied with StraighterLine
  - b) They are about the same
  - c) I am less satisfied with StraighterLine

**(Page 22)**

- 48) Do you believe that taking a StraighterLine course made you more likely to complete college, less likely to complete college, or had no effect?
- a) More likely
  - b) Less likely
  - c) No effect

- 49) Do you believe that taking a StraighterLine course made you better prepared for traditional college courses, less prepared for traditional college courses, or had no effect?
- a) Better prepared
  - b) Less prepared
  - c) No effect

- 50) Would you recommend StraighterLine to a friend?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

**(Page 23)**

*Finally, we would like to get some basic information about you.*

- 51) How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 52) What is your sex?
- a) Female
  - b) Male
- 53) What is your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply.
- a) American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b) Asian/Pacific Islander
  - c) Black/African American
  - d) Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin
  - e) White (non-Hispanic)
  - f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 54) What is your current marital status?
- a) Single
  - b) Married
  - c) Divorced
  - d) Separated
  - e) Widowed
- 55) For how many children, if any, are you a primary caregiver?
- a) \_\_\_\_\_ children under the age of 5
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ children between the ages of 5 and 18
- 56) Have you ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard?
- a) Yes, currently active
  - b) Yes, but I am not currently on active duty
  - c) No

- 57) Which best describes your current employment situation?
- a) Currently employed full time (35 hours a week or more)
  - b) Currently employed part time between 10 and 35 hours a week
  - c) Currently employed part time less than 10 hours a week
  - d) Not employed but seeking employment
  - e) Not employed and not seeking employment
- 58) What are your mother's and father's highest level of education? [TWO COLUMNS FOR MOTHER AND FATHER]
- a) Less than high school
  - b) High school
  - c) Some college, no degree
  - d) Associate's degree
  - e) Bachelor's degree
  - f) Master's degree
  - g) Doctoral or professional degree
  - h) I do not know
- 59) What was the total income for your household in 2010?
- a) Less than \$25,000
  - b) \$25,000-\$49,999
  - c) \$50,000-\$74,999
  - d) \$75,000-\$99,999
  - e) \$100,000-\$149,999
  - f) \$150,000-\$199,999
  - g) \$200,000 or more
  - h) I do not know

**(Page 24)**

*Thank you very much for completing this survey. As a thank you for your time, we would like to enter you into a drawing for one of 30 \$25 Barnes and Noble gift cards. So that we can be sure to contact you if you are a winner, please provide us with your preferred contact information. If you do not fill in the items below, you will not be entered in the drawing.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ [PROGRAM FOR TEN DIGIT TEL FORMAT]

## APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL TABLES

**Table 3. Race/Ethnicity of Respondents**

Race/Ethnicity Category of Respondents (n=153)	Total
White (non-Hispanic)	79.3%
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin	10.5%
Black/African American	9.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.9%
Other	0.7%

*Note:* Total does not add to 100 percent because respondents were allowed to select more than one category.

**Table 4. Sex of Respondents**

Sex of Respondents (n=153)	Total
Male	52.4%
Female	47.7%

*Note:* Total does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**Table 5. Educational Achievement of Respondents' Parents**

Educational Achievement of Respondents' Parents	Mother (n=142)	Father (n=140)
Less than high school	9.2%	7.1%
High school	24.6%	30.0%
Some college, no degree	22.5%	13.6%
Associate's degree	11.3%	7.1%
Bachelor's degree	19.0%	24.3%
Master's degree	9.2%	8.6%
Doctoral or professional degree	4.2%	9.3%

**Table 6. Household Income of Respondents**

Household Income of Respondents (n=133)	Total
Less than \$25,000	14.3%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	18.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.3%
\$100,000 and above	32.3%

*Note:* Twenty survey respondents refused or did not know the answer to the question.