



## SLS1103 and SLS0001 Scholarship Survey Spring 2006

### **Background**

Effective with the Fall 2005 semester, students who place into two or more areas of college prep are required to take a Student Life Skills (SLS) course. Research shows that the course offers academic benefits for students who need college prep classes, and data also indicate that FCCJ students who take these courses stay in college longer and succeed in completing their degrees more often. The SLS course prepares students for college-level academic work, increases the success of college students, helps at-risk students brush up on academic skills, and helps returning adult students who have been out of school for a period of time. Scholarships are available to pay for the tuition and books for students who qualify. Scholarships were awarded to 72 students in 2005-2006.

### **SLS Survey**

During the Spring 2006 semester, SLS faculty members were invited to participate in the SLS Student Survey by having their students complete a two-page questionnaire. The survey collected information about the content of the SLS course and was not intended as a measure of the quality of instruction. Completed surveys were returned to the Project Renaissance Instructional Officer for processing.

Students rated 24 skill areas covered in the SLS curriculum on a scale of 1 to 7 (not at all useful to very useful), and answered questions about the SLS Scholarship, overall benefit of the course, and plans to continue studies at FCCJ. Three open-ended questions asked about topics not included in the course, other classes the student was taking, and obstacles to college education.

There were 32 sections of SLS offered college wide during Spring 2006 and 654 students enrolled in those sections. A total of 140 completed SLS surveys were returned, representing about 20% or one in five SLS students.

### **Results**

#### *Usefulness of SLS Course Content*

Overall students rated goal setting as the most useful area, followed by learning skills and learning styles (Table 1).

*Table 1. How useful were the following areas of the SLS class?*

	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Goal Setting	6.34	0.99
Learning Skills	6.30	0.97
Learning Styles	6.29	1.02
Communication Skills	6.26	1.01
Listening	6.22	1.11
Study Skills	6.21	1.14
Test Taking	6.16	1.15
Majors and Careers	6.13	1.21
Time Management	6.12	1.15
Critical Thinking	6.11	1.12
Note Taking	6.09	1.19
Managing Money	6.03	1.20
Stress management	6.00	1.26
The Course Textbook	5.97	1.35
Problem Solving	5.97	1.21
Values	5.97	1.30
SQ3R	5.97	1.28
Memory	5.95	1.29
Group Projects	5.93	1.26
Managing Career	5.93	1.16
Researching Skills	5.89	1.27
Reading Skills	5.88	1.31
Writing Skills	5.81	1.34
True Colors	5.64	1.47

*Note: Rated on scale of 1 to 7, not at all useful to very useful.*

#### *Scholarship and Financial Aid*

Only 19 (14%) of the 140 students responding to the survey received an SLS scholarship, and 18 of those said they would have enrolled at FCCJ even without the scholarship. While most students were aware that scholarships were available even to students who did not qualify for grants, almost one in three (31%) was not aware.

#### *Benefit of Requirement and SLS Course*

Among students responding to the survey, three-fourths agreed with the SLS requirement policy, and 84% said they would recommend the course to a friend.

#### *Retention*

An overwhelming majority (94%) said they planned to continue their studies, and of those planning to continue, 77% had already registered for the summer or fall term.

## Summary

Overall, students rated the SLS course content as very useful. The most beneficial topic areas were those that addressed generalized study skills, specifically goal setting, learning skills, learning styles, communication skills and listening. The True Colors content area scored the lowest (5.64), and specific subject skills, e.g. reading skills and writing skills, also scored low. However, even the lowest content areas were rated between 5 and 6, indicating that students felt they were more useful than not useful. SLS scholarships did not seem to be a major factor influencing students' enrollment in the course.

*L. Martin*  
*Research Analyst*  
*Project Renaissance*