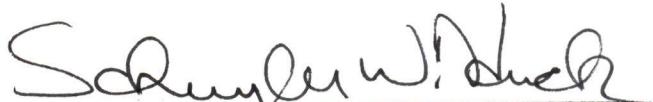
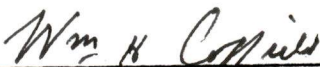
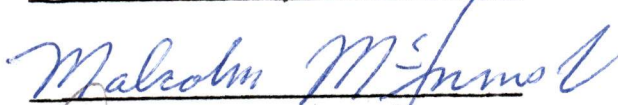
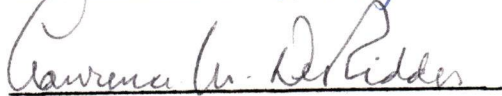


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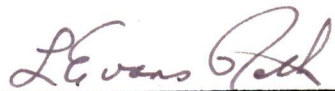
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Thomas Chandler Wilbourn, Jr., entitled "What Are Selected Appalachian Colleges Doing About Attrition?" I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Psychology and Guidance.

  
Schuyler W. Huck, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation  
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

  
Vice Chancellor  
Graduate Studies and Research

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WHAT ARE SELECTED APPALACHIAN  
COLLEGES DOING ABOUT ATTRITION?

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Education  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Thomas Chandler Wilbourn, Jr.

December 1979

**1406130**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of completing a degree program and of finishing this particular study has been made a reality through the contributions of many individuals.

The unwavering support of my family (Joella, Cindy, Ricky, Parkey, Kathy Jo) looms uppermost on the list of thanks owed. My numerous other kinfolk have also been patiently waiting for this day. Deep gratitude is felt for a friend, Joe Keller, who kept encouragement coming continuously. My fellow workers, both in Florida and in Tennessee, have offered support and encouragement at critical times over the last few years.

Finally, my doctoral committee has been very patient with a student who stumbled frequently, but finally made it.

## ABSTRACT

Attention has been focused on retention/attrition both in national conferences and in numerous studies over the years by Alexander Astin, Tom MacMillan, Dorothy Knoell, Ida Long Rogers, Carol Shulman, Patrick Terenzini, and others.

National figures in higher education such as Clark Kerr, Jack Magarrell, and Robert L. Jacobson have been predicting static or declining enrollment in higher education since 1972. In light of all the attention and concern on the problem of enrollment, it is justifiable to ask, "What are colleges actually doing to improve retention?"

The present study focused on the twenty-eight private four-year colleges of Central Appalachia, eastern Kentucky, east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and West Virginia. The following questions were dealt with in the project:

1. According to college administrators, why do students leave their college?
2. What are college administrators' evaluations regarding the impact of various programs aimed at retention?
3. According to students, what retention programs are available and beneficial?
4. Do overall programs of colleges with high attrition differ from overall programs of colleges with low attrition?
5. What programs can any college institute or improve to decrease the student drop-out rate?

The findings for Question One indicates that administrators feel that financial problems, insufficient academic preparation, and lack of interest or commitment are the three leading reasons for dropping out.

The results of Question Two show that administrators are somewhat varied in their evaluations of programs. However, a developmental or basic studies program and a "good" advising program received the most support.

For Question Three the researcher found that a majority of the students expressed a need for helpful information about their previous academic records, comparisons of their abilities with other college students, and information on how to improve their study skills. Findings show needs for counseling in the area of personal problems and job placement; instruction in arts, crafts, and hobbies; and an improved student-faculty relationship. Much less than one-half of the students participated in many of the activities listed on the students' questionnaire, even though the students reported that these activities were available on campus. A majority of those participating were generally satisfied with their participation.

The findings for Question Four indicate that discernable differences between the high attrition and low attrition colleges were observed in the orientation programs, faculty tutoring programs, identification of high risk students in the admissions process, the formulation of study schedules, information on financial aid, general administrator-student communication, class scheduling complaints, counseling programs, and faculty support.

Question Five can best be dealt with by listing the more important recommendations brought out in the study.

1. Supply adequate pre-enrollment information regarding finances, curriculum, and social activities.

2. Institute a well-organized developmental studies program.

3. Improve faculty-student communication and interaction.

4. Improve the counseling program.

5. Begin a faculty and peer tutoring program.

Further research on a local level is a prerequisite for establishing any new programs. Pre-college data, in-college surveys, compulsory exit interviews, and periodic follow-ups are suggested in order to compile a base of information.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. PROLOGUE

Kerr, in an address to a private college gathering in Claremont, California in 1972, concerning college enrollment prospects, said,

First of all, we have reached the end of spectacular growth for American higher education. The 1980's are going to be a particularly strange time. In that decade, as far as we can see, there will be no net additions to enrollment whatsoever; in some years there will be an absolute decrease (Kerr, 1972, p. 1).

Magarrell (1976), Jacobson (1977) and others have focused national attention on the probability of a declining enrollment in higher education. These writers have frequently referred to enrollment patterns over the last few years in The Chronicle of Higher Education, and have constantly encouraged serious consideration for ways to deal with the hard times ahead.

The main factor supporting predictions of hard times ahead was emphasized by Silber, president of Boston University, when he said,

They (institutions) cannot wait until, say, 1990 to adjust to the size of that year's freshman class. That class was born in 1972, and we know that it will come from a pool no more than three-quarters the size of that of the freshman class of 1978 (Silber, 1977, p. 16).

The predictions of static or declining enrollment in institutions of higher education, though missing their mark for exactness, are finally becoming a reality. Demographic factors cannot be changed. Even now some sectors of higher education have experienced a loss in enrollment since 1976. Magarrell reported: "University enrollments, public and

private combined, lost 1.7 percent, while enrollment declined 0.1 percent at other four-year institutions and 0.6 percent at two-year institutions" (1977, p. 7). Facing a decrease in the absolute numbers of available eighteen-year-old freshmen, what are higher education institutions going to do?

## II. BACKGROUND

Butler, associate dean for student affairs at North Carolina State, is quoted recently as saying, ". . . we began to look down the road toward enrollments in the future, and we are suddenly jolted into saying, 'Hey! Are we doing everything we could be doing in terms of retention?'" (Middleton, 1978, p. 1). MacMillan and Kester reported similar attitudes as early as 1973. The dropout rate has been documented as being between 40 and 50 percent for the past forty-five years by Cope and Hannah (1975), Iffert (1958), and the U.S. Office of Education (1967). However, the enrollment trends continued to grow, until the fall of 1976, thus partially obscuring the need for concern regarding attrition (Magarrell, 1977). With the realities of static and decreasing freshman class possibilities, the need to retain the students who enroll has become a primary thrust on the part of many administrators, according to MacMillan and Kester (1973).

However, to bring about a decrease in attrition rate, a need for research to determine what is effective in reducing the loss of students is apparent. Pedrini and Pedrini pointed out, "Attrition rates also indicate, in part, the extent to which these institutions are not meeting student needs" (1976, p. 30). Cohen and Brawer commented, "One of the first things a university must do is to acquire some base rates of infor-

mation about its own individual situation" (1970, p. 4). However, Astin found that in spite of available information

Administrators in several institutions are so inaccurate in their estimates of basic facts that their lack of information raises serious questions about the efficacy of the institutional planning and decision-making process (1977, p. 400).

Thus, the need is not only for an organized approach for obtaining vital information but also for a systematic dissemination of information to all key personnel.

### III. PROBLEM

Shulman (1976) reported that colleges which have acknowledged the problem of declining enrollments have made changes to broaden their role, to expand their recruitment efforts, to save money, and to adapt their programs. However, Shulman pointed out,

. . . there still remains a significant loss in investment of personal, institutional and governmental resources in higher education when students do not achieve their degree objectives. With downward or stable enrollment trends forecast for the future, the continuing problem of attrition has become a more pressing concern for educators because of its relationship to enrollment problems (1976, p. 1).

The purpose of this study is to observe and report what certain colleges in Appalachia have done about attrition. The study deals specifically with the following questions:

1. According to college administrators, why do students leave their college?
2. What are college administrators' evaluations regarding the impact of various programs aimed at retention?
3. According to students, what retention programs are available and beneficial?

4. Do overall programs of colleges with high attrition differ from programs of colleges with low attrition?

5. What programs can any college institute or improve to decrease the student drop-out rate?

#### IV. ASSUMPTIONS

The first assumption is that retention/attrition information obtained from the Education Directory, Colleges and Universities, Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study, and The College Blue Book gives a reasonably accurate representation of the actual retention/attrition rate at the selected school for the years under consideration.

The second assumption is that the data obtained from questionnaires and interviews gives a reasonably accurate picture of what the schools in question were actually doing to combat attrition, according to the respondents.

#### V. DELIMITATIONS

The researcher acknowledges the shortcomings of the questionnaire method in obtaining a complete picture of the situation on any particular campus. Thus, the information obtained by questionnaires has been augmented by statistical information available in Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study, The College Blue Book, and the Education Directory, Colleges and Universities. Four colleges were selected for further data collection through on-site visits by the researcher to supplement the questionnaire information.

Another delimitation was the confined area of the subjects. This group was chosen because of national recognition of the unique geographic

and economic plight of the area. The results of the study have been generalized to colleges in this particular area of Appalachia, but schools outside the immediate region should be able to benefit from suggestions generated by this study.

The study was also biased toward student development activities. Some financial or academic situations have become apparent, but no attempt has been made to give a complete picture of activities which would be true for all colleges.

Finally, some colleges which have fairly good retention/attrition figures and steady enrollment may not have participated in the study due to their confidence in present programs. Other colleges with poor retention/attrition figures may have been reluctant to further publicize their predicament and thus contribute to their problems.

## VI. DEFINITIONS

Attrition Rate. For the purpose of this study, attrition rate will be used to refer to the percent of entering freshmen who did not return the following year.

Retention/Attrition Program. Any concentrated effort, formal or informal, aimed at reducing the attrition rate.

Dropout-Non-Persister/Withdrawer. Any student who withdraws from an institution before the completion of a course of study.

Persister. Any student who continually re-enrolls.

## VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter I includes the introduction, background, purpose, assumptions, delimitations, definitions, and organizational scheme. In this

chapter the writer attempts to generate the reader's interest in the national problem of attrition.

Chapter II contains a review of the literature, including major studies, reports, conferences, and dissertations. These divisions are further divided into the following categories: describing dropouts, predicting who will drop out, and describing programs aimed at preventing dropping out.

Chapter III discusses the methodology of the study including the selection of the sample, the development of the survey instruments, and the on-site visitations. Finally, the procedures for examining the data are discussed.

Chapter IV presents the results of the study, both for the administrative portion and for the on-site visitations. The administrators' responses are considered in one division, and then each college in the visitation stage is discussed individually, as well as a member of a high attrition or low attrition group.

Chapter V summarizes the findings and recommendations for each of the five questions in the study. The recommendations are briefly described, and suggestions for further research are offered.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### I. OVERVIEW

National conferences have been conducted and are continuing to be held on the subject of dropouts. In 1964, "The Research Conference on College Dropouts," directed by Montgomery, was held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The participants in this conference ". . . reviewed completed studies of college dropouts, looked over studies now in process and programs being tried to reduce dropouts, and considered possibilities for future studies" (Montgomery, 1964, p. 1). This conference recommended continued research along the categories of, "census, evaluative, analytical, and descriptive studies" (Montgomery, 1964, p. 45). In this conference, Knoell reported a review of literature in the field which revealed,

Attrition occurs among both good students and poor--among students with a good prognosis who earn good grades but drop out anyway, those with a poor prognosis who do no better than expected, and those who should have succeeded but did not. Both individual characteristics and institutional factors thus appear to be necessary foci in the study of attrition, e.g., quality of student input, educational process, and outcomes or payoff (Montgomery, 1964, pp. 55-56).

Another conference dealing with a similar topic was held at The University of Tennessee in 1966. This conference was entitled "Student Retention in Tennessee Colleges and Universities." The following areas were examined: "1) Faculty Contribution to Dropouts; 2) Administrative Contributions to Dropouts; and 3) Steps to Reduce Dropouts" (Milton, 1966). Irvine comments,



Institutional self-studies are needed to bring together many autonomous aspects of a college or university. Data about students as well as direct "feedback" from students are vitally important in this regard. Unfortunately, research personnel do not have the authority--and in many cases the broad perspective--to implement or revise policies. Although student withdrawal is a major institutional and national problem in itself, it is hoped that all efforts to make instruction and other aspects of the college experience more meaningful will reduce unnecessary and undesirable departure prior to graduation (Irvine in Milton, 1966, p. 31).

An extensive review of the literature by Cope and Hannah (1975) provides a reference listing of 445 entries dealing with all aspects of the dropout problem and furnishes suggestions aimed at reconciling the opposing conclusions of various researchers. This particular review of the literature deals with the following major divisions:

1. Research describing characteristics and motives of non-persisters.
2. Research dealing with ways of predicting drop out proneness.
3. Research dealing with programs designed to prevent dropping out.

## II. STUDENTS WHO DROP OUT

An important study dealing with dropouts was reported by Iffert in 1957. This study involved 13,700 students in 146 institutions. He found that almost 40 percent of the students entering institutions of higher education actually graduated in four years from the school they originally entered. However, allowing for transfers and later returnees, Iffert concluded that almost 60 percent of the students eventually completed a program. Iffert further concluded that the first year of college was the most important, a majority of students who dropped out did so because of personal factors rather than institutional factors, and that no pattern of relationships could be clearly identified between reasons for going to college and reasons for leaving college.

MacMillan and Kester described a more recent study involving an even larger number of students: "In the fall of 1968, 23 community colleges in northern California agreed to form a consortium for research on issues the members considered important" (1973, p. 45). Determining the characteristics of dropouts as contrasted to persisters was the first phase of the NORCAL study. The group collected data on more than 75,000 students in carrying out the study. Combining factors on their initial prediction device, the researchers found that the students who received little parental encouragement and who considered college of little importance were the ones most likely to drop out.

Another major study was undertaken by the Tennessee College Association when it investigated the freshmen class of 1968 as to their status in the fall of each succeeding year after entering college. Nineteen variables were originally considered. The most frequently stated reason for dropping out of college was financial difficulty. Military enlistment, marriage, and academic problems were also given as major factors. (Tennessee College Association, 1972).

Morrissey (1971) reported a study at the University of Missouri--Kansas City in which he attempted to identify differences between persisters and dropouts of first time freshmen. He found a reliable difference between the two groups on such factors as high school rank and fall grade point average. Morrissey concluded,

. . . it appears that once the first-semester grade point average is known, knowledge of the other variables considered in this study, alone or teamed with high school rank, would not contribute any greater accuracy to the prediction of persistence. These results would indicate that those non-intellective variables do not have as much effect on a student's persistence as does his first-semester grade point average (Morrissey, 1971, p. 283).

An examination of recent dissertations indicates that several researchers have looked at the problem of attrition. Stallings (1976) reported a study at Arkansas Polytechnic College in which recipients of financial aid, possessors of a high school grade point average of 2.00 or above, accomplishment of an ACT score of seventeen, decision on a major area of study upon entering, major area of study, students attending private high school, and students who entered college at age nineteen and above were found to influence college persistence (Stallings, 1976).

Nutt (1974), in analyzing a group of students at Shoreline Community College in Seattle, Washington, found that dropouts were older, less confident of their academic ability, reliant on peer groups, dependent on parental attitude and less active in high school activities. Nutt recommended a prevention program which was designed to accommodate sex and ability differences.

Lawry (1973) compared fourteen characteristics of community college graduates and dropouts in New York State. She found three significant variables: sex, age, and grade point average, and recommended expansion of community college counseling programs on the basis of comments received from the participants in the survey.

Howitt (1972) found significant differences in sixteen non-intellective factors between persisting and non-persisting college students in Nebraska. Sex, age, type of high school, class load, classification, sibling educational experience, marital status, mother's educational level, father's educational level, employment, sources and amount of financial support, degree plans, educational expectations, program of study, vocational aspirations, and sources consulted about future college plans were significant.

In considering intellectual factors, Howitt found dropouts more frequently came from the lower quartile of their high school class.

A study of Manhattan Community College students by Colozzi (1973) revealed that a large proportion of dropouts had been doing well in college but had vague expectations about attending college and expressed concern regarding a lack of academic challenge. He recommended initiation of career development and job referral programs for dropouts.

A Kentucky Community College study reported by Bacon (1976) also examined the problem of the loss of students. Significant factors found were age, sex, college grade point average, and attitude toward: required courses, the college, career choice, and instructors. Bacon recommended the identification of potential dropouts and the development of programs in motivation, career decision-making, and academic tutoring.

### III. PREDICTING WHO WILL DROP OUT

The Northern California Research Group examined various instruments and procedures for predicting which students were most likely to drop out of college. In the second phase of the NORCAL study the researchers developed a prediction model which was tested and ". . . found to be workable for the purpose: 67% of all students in the record phase were correctly identified as persisters or withdrawers on the basis of their discriminant scores" (Kester, 1971).

Pedrinì and Pedrinì (1976) studied prediction possibilities with 1972 and 1973 freshmen at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. They examined such variables as race, sex, socio-economic status, financial aid, employment, test scores, and grade point average. They conclude,

. . . college GPA, high school grades, and achievement/aptitude scores have been identified as variables strongly related to college attrition, but no one or two neatly packaged predictors of attrition have been found (Pedrini and Pedrini, 1976, p. 25).

Astin (1972) suggested that a student's high school grades and ability tests were major predictors of college success and, when used in a multiple regression equation, could predict success at particular institutions.

Greenberg (1972) studied several factors at Miami-Dade Junior College and found a prediction accuracy of 65 percent when using all available information about a student. High school grades were found to be the most important predictors of success in college if other test information was missing, but non-academic data such as family background was not helpful in the absence of academic data such as high school grades.

A group at Drake University (1974) dealt with exit-prone students as predicted by high school records and scores on the ACT. Students were assigned to tenured faculty members for regular counseling sessions. The sessions resulted in a 77 percent return rate of the participating students as sophomores.

Holstrom (1973) took a different approach and tried to predict characteristics of colleges which affect attrition. In studying 252 institutions, he concluded, ". . . low achievers should be encouraged to attend small, highly selective four-year colleges" (Holstrom, 1973, p. 18). Cross, in her book *Beyond the Open Door*, also referred to college characteristics when she stated, "To date, we have concentrated on molding new students over into the image of traditional students so that they can be served by traditional education" (1974, p. 4). Additionally, Cope and Hannah pointed out the importance of the characteristics of the college when they wrote, ". . . lower dropout rates at private colleges is partially the result of

students selecting colleges with values that are congruent with their own" (1975, p. 3).

The following reports are used as representative of the many dissertations on the issues of prediction. Baier (1974) studied Southern Illinois University undergraduates and obtained favorable results in predicting academic success from the application of multiple regression techniques on twenty-two variables concerning available demographic, academic, institutional and socio-economic data. However, he found that voluntary withdrawal of students in good standing was the most difficult status to predict. The most helpful predictive factors were: 1) first quarter grade point average, 2) ACT scores, 3) high school records, 4) race, 5) high school location, 6) type of college previously attended, 7) receipt of financial aid, 8) marital status at entry, and 9) college of enrollment.

Berg (1973) studied freshmen at Queens College in New York in 1969 and 1970 using as factors age, sex, high school rating, time proximity to college, high school grade point average, rank in graduating class, freshmen performance, major, advisement, remediation, financial aid, and residence in poverty areas. She found important prediction results for participation in remediation, for younger students, and for college grade point average.

Berger (1973) studied Columbia University freshmen on several predictor variables including seventeen goals for attending college. His most important finding was that the students who perceived their parents as supporting them in their college goals were the least likely to drop out.

#### IV. PROGRAMS TO PREVENT DROPPING OUT

Cross drives to the heart of the problem of attrition when she stated, "The first business of education programs for new students should be to provide a reorientation to learning itself" (1974, p. 168). In other words the colleges need to revise their approach to the educational process rather than trying to make students conform to their traditional teaching/learning techniques.

The third phase of the Northern California study provided extremely helpful data pertaining to programs designed to reduce attrition. Kester reported that eleven colleges of the NORCAL group conducted true experimental programs and several others conducted quasi-experimental studies (1971). The approaches used included individual counseling, group counseling, learning skills courses, controlled course selection, special English classes, recruitment practices, pre-college workshops, and special student services. These programs were designed as the final stage of the NORCAL project (developing and testing experimental programs). The results obtained indicated:

1. fewer students withdrew who were in treatment groups,
2. treatment students re-enrolled in greater numbers,
3. treatment students had higher grades,
4. all successful treatment programs included counseling and
5. most colleges have within their present course structure and student services the potential to reduce attrition (Kester, 1971, p. 15).

Kester concluded finally, "The problem of attacking attrition is one of will, not means" (1971, p. 43).

Another major effort to reduce attrition known as the Thirteen College Curriculum Program was begun through a joint venture by a group of thirteen black colleges and the Institute for Services to Education in 1967

(Humphries, 1972). Humphries reported, "The program is designed to reduce the attrition rate of entering freshmen through well thought-out new curricular materials, new teaching styles, and new faculty arrangements for instruction" (1972, p. 10). He concluded, ". . . greater than 60 percent of the Program students are in their senior year while only slightly more than 45 percent of the regular college students have reached the same point" (Humphries, 1972, p. 12). Humphries also pointed out that the program was successful in colleges having a rather select clientele, as well as those with open-door admissions.

A project limited to one campus was conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1976) as they examined informal contact between faculty and students at Syracuse University. They found a significant relationship between the amount of informal contact and persistence in college and concluded,

. . . informal faculty-student contacts beyond the classroom may be an important factor in enhancing--and perhaps integrating--the impact of the academic and non-academic experiences of college during the critical freshman year (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1976, p. 11).

Stegman (1969) reported the results of an experimental program at Southwest Missouri State College. An experimental group was provided with academic advisement, tutorial help, small group counseling sessions, and social and economic assistance when necessary. Stegman concluded that subjects with borderline grades in the control group were more likely to drop out than subjects with borderline grades in the experimental group.

Garneski (1966) described a pilot program at Phoenix College in counseling prospective freshmen and found significantly higher grades



for experimental students. He also suggested that a summer program was financially sound in making use of slack time for the college staff.

Van Bluit (1973) reported a project working with students identified as high risk freshmen at the University of Oklahoma. Students receiving special assistance produced a higher grade point average and a lower drop out rate than students not in the special programs.

A project conducted by Brown (1972) at California State College at California, Pennsylvania, examined the effects of counseling versus non-counseling and participation in self-awareness classes versus non-participation. Brown designed the study to allow for effects of volunteers and non-volunteers while ensuring the inclusion of both groups in both treatment procedures. The results indicated a lower attrition rate for both treatments. Counseling and self-awareness classes both provided beneficial results in dealing with volunteers and selected participants.

Edwards (1976) also conducted a project using career guidance counseling and career planning at two colleges in South Carolina. He found an improved retention rate with several categories of the 2,000 students studied, but recommended a longitudinal study involving ability and interest scores for future research.

A project conducted at North Carolina State University by Vander Wall (1972) examined differences in attrition rate for participants in a special living-learning residence arrangement versus students living in conventional residence situations. Vander Wall found a reduction of one-half in the expected attrition rate when comparing the experimental group with the control group.

Finally, a project conducted by West (1976) examined the role of reading ability in attrition at the University of Southern California.

Students enrolling in the developmental reading class made up the population, and those completing the course composed the experimental group as compared to the control group of non-finishers. West found not only improved reading ability for finishers but also a success rate in college courses four to six times greater than non-finishers.

In expressing his concern for the freshman and sophomore students in higher education, Topp, (1970) suggested some measures for reducing attrition: 1) academic counseling, 2) proper orientation, 3) assistance with registration, 4) individual degree planning, 5) separation of the lower division into a general college, 6) responsibility for freshman and sophomore classes by experienced and outstanding professors and 7) reduction in class sizes. In decrying the waste of human resources among dropouts, Topp urged, ". . . if a large educational institution cannot provide acceptable educational opportunity for its lower-division students it should get out of the business" (1970, p. 27).

## V. SUMMARY

The literature indicates a continuing national interest in attrition as shown by studies designed to determine characteristics of those who drop out as compared to those who stay, characteristics of colleges having favorable attrition rates compared to those colleges who have poor attrition rates, and characteristics of successful programs directed toward reducing attrition as compared to programs not so successful.

Thus, according to the recent research, the main characteristics of dropouts include: low high school grades or standing, low entrance exam scores and poor support or encouragement from home. This literature also indicates that the most reliable indicators of attrition are low high

school grades, low entrance exam scores and lack of commitment to a career choice. Academic improvement and personalized counseling programs have been instituted most frequently to help combat attrition.

The NORCAL study combined several aspects of attrition in its ongoing attempt to improve the retention rate in California colleges as compared to other efforts not quite as comprehensive.

Several conferences dealing specifically with attrition and of national scope have taken place. The Chronicle of Higher Education publishes articles almost weekly discussing the enrollment prospects for higher education and how colleges can remain viable in the face of such changes. Even major universities are beginning to study retention on their campuses, such as the study underway by Gaston at The University of Tennessee.

However, reviewing the conclusions regarding predictability of college success, the declining pool of available freshmen, and the abundant research into programs designed to improve retention, it is justifiable to ask, "What are colleges doing about attrition today?" In light of the availability of voluminous research on this topic, is there any reason why today's colleges cannot use the experiences of the past to build towards a better future?

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The basic premise of the study is that the colleges' efforts toward retaining their students can be noted and described by the researcher through the use of questionnaires designed to elicit student, faculty, and administrative perceptions concerning retention/attrition efforts. While the study examined the variety of programs of student counseling, tutorial assistances, developments/studies, and other services aimed at retention which are often advertised or publicized by colleges, the actual effectiveness of such retention programs is the prime interest for the study.

#### II. SETTING

The colleges studied were located in the geographical district referred to as Central Appalachia by the journal published by the Appalachian Regional Commission (Stevens, 1967). This area included counties in eastern Kentucky, eastern Tennessee, southwestern Virginia, and West Virginia. Critical reasons for concentrating on this area are because ". . . Central Appalachia is isolated physically, socially, and economically from the rest of the country" (Stevens, 1967, p. 1); and the private colleges of this area have an extremely critical relationship between the enrollment level and the ability to remain financially operational. None of the colleges enroll more than 2,200 nor less than 325 students.

Within the Central Appalachia area, there were twenty-eight privately controlled schools. Geographically, five were located in Kentucky, thirteen in Tennessee, three in Virginia and seven in West Virginia. All These schools were asked to participate in the study, but only sixteen colleges eventually returned the administrative questionnaire (see List of Eligible Colleges, Appendix A).

### III. PARTICIPANTS

Initially, administrative questionnaires were sent to the president, the academic vice-president, and the dean of students, or their local equivalent, at each of the twenty-eight colleges. Follow-up letters with additional questionnaires were mailed to those colleges not responding. Phone calls and visits were also made in an attempt to improve the response rate. Responses had been obtained from sixteen of the twenty-eight colleges by March 15, 1979.

The colleges were divided into high, average, and low groups, based on data pertaining to returning freshmen as collected from Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study and The College Blue Book. Two schools from the high and the low groups were then chosen for an on-site visit by the researcher. A contact person on each campus was asked to help arrange the visit so that at least 5 percent of the students and faculty could be utilized for further research. The interviews and questionnaire were designed to measure the interviewee's perceptions of what his or her college was doing about student retention and whether the program was satisfactory (see Appendix B). In order to assure a representative sampling of students and faculty, those asked to participate in the survey were faculty members currently teaching general education type courses, such as psychology,

history, and education, and students who were also currently enrolled in those same classes.

The purpose of the campus visits was twofold. First, the visit sought to clarify and confirm the information obtained from the administrative questionnaire; and secondly, the student faculty questionnaire sought perceptions from two additional groups of the college community-- faculty and students.

#### IV. INSTRUMENTATION

The literature review, especially a paper presented by Beeler at the Michigan College Personnel Association Convention in May, 1977, furnished suggestions and material to construct a proposed questionnaire for students, faculty and administrators. The subjects dealt with in the proposed instruments included: use of predictors of success, academic support services, counseling services, orientation programs, job placement services, cultural-social events and faculty-student interaction. The open-ended portion of the questionnaire dealt with such questions as why do other students drop out, what are the most helpful programs of the college, and what else could the college do to ensure success.

A packet consisting of an administrative questionnaire (see Appendix D), a student-faculty questionnaire (see Appendix B), and an abstract of the proposed study was sent to a panel of well-known researchers in the field of student personnel services (see Appendix E). This panel examined the materials and returned the questionnaires with several questions and comments related to improving the study.

The main suggestions for continuing the study were to send out the administrative questionnaire and to conduct a pilot study using the student-

faculty questionnaire at one of the colleges in the sample. Therefore, the administrative questionnaire was sent to three chief administrators (president, academic vice-president, and dean of students) at each of the twenty-eight colleges in the study. Arrangements were made to carry out the pilot study of the student-faculty questionnaire at Johnson Bible College in Knoxville, Tennessee. Upon examining the results of the pilot study, a need for more explicit directions became apparent and the directions were revised for the final version of the student-faculty questionnaire as seen in Appendix B.

## V. DATA COLLECTION

The primary sources of data for the study came from the responses of the administrative and student questionnaires. In the summer of 1978, packets were mailed to eighty-four administrators at the twenty-eight private colleges previously referred to and listed in Appendix A. The packet contained an introductory letter, an abstract of the proposal for the study, and the administrative questionnaire which included a section giving permission for a possible visit to the campus to conduct further research (see Appendix D). Additional letters were mailed, with another packet to the dean of students at those colleges that had not replied by October of 1978. In February, 1979, administrators, who had not responded, were contacted by telephone to encourage additional returns of the questionnaires. By late March, a total of sixteen colleges, or 57 percent, had responded to the administrative questionnaire. The colleges were then ranked for retention on the basis of the highest percent of freshmen re-enrolling as sophomores for years 1974 to 1976 according to Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study and the Blue Book of Higher Education

(see ranking columns on page 41). Six of the colleges responding had retained over 78 percent of their freshmen; six had retained less than 70 percent of their freshmen; and the remainder were between these two groups.

To help validate the research instruments, Johnson Bible College agreed to administer the questionnaires as a pilot project with the provision that the researcher would discuss the results obtained with the entire faculty. Later in April, the researcher visited two colleges in the upper group and two colleges in the lower group on attrition, which had expressed a willingness to participate in further research. The contact person (see Appendix A for contact persons) helped arrange for the student questionnaires to be administered and for faculty responses to be obtained.

College C provided 90 (15 percent) student questionnaires, College K provided 75 (13 percent) student questionnaires, College B provided 116 (7 percent) student questionnaires, and College G provided 73 (7 percent) student questionnaires. Thus, a total of 354 student questionnaires, a 9 percent representation of the total enrollment of the four colleges, were obtained. Additionally, Colleges B and C furnished three faculty questionnaires each, and Colleges G and K provided two faculty questionnaires each. However, the faculty questionnaires returned dealt mainly with the open-ended portion of the survey instrument and were incomplete for the forced-choice questions which pertained to student reactions.



## VI. DATA EXAMINATION

Tables have been constructed to show the responses of the administrators as a group, opinions of administrators, responses of students by item and by group at each college, open-ended responses of students by college, and college responses by group in comparison with the other colleges visited. All student charts portray the percent of responses for that particular aspect of the study, while the responses of the administrators are recorded as both actual numbers and percents.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### I. THE FINDINGS BASED ON ADMINISTRATOR'S REPLIES

##### Introduction

The administrators who returned the questionnaires (see Appendix A) responded to most of the items requested. The replies to Part I, questions 3 and 6, will be discussed first; and the various questions on the other parts will be discussed in the order they appeared. Discussions about some items dealing with statistical facts (i.e. classrooms and dorm space) were omitted because of incompleteness of the replies from which to draw conclusions. Observations comparing responses in three categories of open-ended questions have been included at the end of this section.

##### Reasons for Attrition

Question 3 on Part I asks administrators for their opinion regarding the main reasons for freshman attrition at their particular college (see Table I). Forty-four percent of the administrators who replied stated that the students who dropped out were not well prepared academically or did not have sufficient interest or commitment to remain in college. Thirty-eight percent suggested that financial reasons contributed most to attrition. Twenty-five percent of the administrators listed "did not like this particular college," and "desire to get closer to home" as reasons. Nineteen percent of the administrators replied that students

TABLE I

OPINIONS OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS REPORTED  
IN THE ADMINISTRATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

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|                                                                                                                                                               | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Part I, 3. Please give your opinion regarding the main reason(s) for freshman attrition at your college.                                                      |                |               |
| a. Not well prepared academically                                                                                                                             | 44%            | 7             |
| b. Lack of interest or commitment                                                                                                                             | 44%            | 7             |
| c. Financial reasons                                                                                                                                          | 38%            | 6             |
| d. Did not like this particular college                                                                                                                       | 25%            | 4             |
| e. Desired to go back closer to home                                                                                                                          | 25%            | 4             |
| f. Program or major not offered                                                                                                                               | 19%            | 3             |
| g. Emotional maturity                                                                                                                                         | 19%            | 3             |
| h. Limited choice of activities                                                                                                                               | 13%            | 2             |
| i. Did not like facilities                                                                                                                                    | 6%             | 1             |
| j. Personal or family reasons                                                                                                                                 | 6%             | 1             |
| k. Open-door admissions policy                                                                                                                                | 6%             | 1             |
| l. Lack of family encouragement                                                                                                                               | 6%             | 1             |
| m. Total percent of aid in loans                                                                                                                              | 6%             | 1             |
| Part I, 6. Briefly describe any programs or activity you would like to initiate with the specific purpose of decreasing attrition and of improving retention. |                |               |
| a. More individual attention                                                                                                                                  | 44%            | 7             |
| b. Better advising arrangement                                                                                                                                | 25%            | 4             |
| c. Developmental skills program                                                                                                                               | 6%             | 1             |
| d. More individualized instruction                                                                                                                            | 6%             | 1             |
| e. Better publication of opportunities                                                                                                                        | 6%             | 1             |
| f. More social activities                                                                                                                                     | 6%             | 1             |
| g. Better identification of potential dropouts                                                                                                                | 6%             | 1             |
| h. More career planning                                                                                                                                       | 6%             | 1             |
| i. More programs for non-traditional students                                                                                                                 | 6%             | 1             |

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leave because of their program or major was not offered or that the students lack emotional maturity. Thirteen percent of the administrators mentioned, "limited choice of activities," and "did not like the facilities" as reasons for withdrawal. Other reasons mentioned were: personal or family reasons, open-door admissions policy, lack of family encouragement and the percent of college costs covered by financial loans (related to financial reasons above).

Thus, according to administrators, the three most important factors contributing to attrition were lack of sufficient academic preparation, lack of commitment to a goal, and lack of financial support. Reasons related to the emotional and social maturity of the student were also considered to be an important aspect of attrition by the administration.

Question 6 in Part 1 asked administrators what program or activity they would like to initiate to help deal with the attrition problem. Forty-four percent of the administrators indicated more individual attention would be desirable. Better student advising, also closely related to individual attention, was suggested by 25 percent of the administrators. Other activities mentioned include: a developmental skills program, more individualized instruction (also related to individual attention above), better publication of opportunities, more social activities, better identification of potential dropouts, more career planning opportunities, and more programs for non-traditional students.

Several administrators seem to feel that more individual attention for students would help improve their attrition rates. This feeling is later substantiated by the student replies in this chapter.

### Kinds of Programs Presently in Operation

Administrators indicated that faculty advisement and freshman-and-transfer-student orientation were the most frequently present programs in the area of counseling and advisement (see Table II). A freshman-orientation course and peer-and-small group counseling programs were not present as often as student replies indicate they should be (e.g., more individual attention as indicated above in response to Part I, question 6).

In the area of informal education programs, college sponsored events was a frequent response by the administrators. Student responses indicated this to be a justifiable reply as observed in the student answers to, "What cultural-social programs have been most enjoyable for you?" (see Appendix C). However, more attention is needed for the area of faculty-student interaction as recorded by the students when they replied "none."

In the area of academic improvement programs, many administrators indicated the presence of developmental reading programs, study skills improvement programs, and peer tutoring. However, the students indicated much more work was needed in the area of study skills programs and peer tutoring.

Although over 50 percent of the administrators indicated the presence of developmental reading courses, special scheduling and special counseling for high risk students, this area still needs more attention. Students indicated a need for more detailed information in comparing their abilities to other students and considering their chances for graduation as seen in items 28, 29, and 32 in the student questionnaire. Only 25 percent of the administrators indicated that they used biographical information in predicting success, a practice already proven effective by the NORCAL study.

TABLE II

RESPONSES OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS TO FORCED-CHOICE  
ITEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

| <u>PROGRAMS IN OPERATION</u>                                                                             | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| A. Counseling and Advisement Programs                                                                    |                |               |
| Peer counseling                                                                                          | 44%            | 7             |
| Small groups counseling program                                                                          | 50%            | 8             |
| Faculty advisement program                                                                               | 94%            | 15            |
| Career planning program                                                                                  | 56%            | 9             |
| Freshman orientation program                                                                             | 88%            | 14            |
| Freshman orientation course                                                                              | 19%            | 3             |
| Transfer orientation program                                                                             | 81%            | 13            |
| Program for survival in college                                                                          | 56%            | 9             |
| Other--Counseling network (staffing)                                                                     | 6%             | 1             |
| Other--Counseling through study skills                                                                   | 6%             | 1             |
| B. Informal Education Programs                                                                           |                |               |
| A program or activity encouraging systematic<br>faculty and student interaction outside<br>the classroom | 56%            | 9             |
| College sponsored educational-cultural<br>events, i.e. guest lecturers                                   | 88%            | 14            |
| Living-learning program for freshmen,<br>transfers, or high risk students                                | 13%            | 2             |
| Other--Faculty getting to know students<br>as individuals                                                | 6%             | 1             |
| Other--Residence Hall program                                                                            | 6%             | 1             |
| C. Academic Improvement Program                                                                          |                |               |
| Peer tutoring programs                                                                                   | 69%            | 11            |
| Faculty tutoring program                                                                                 | 19%            | 3             |
| Developmental reading program open<br>to any students                                                    | 81%            | 13            |
| Developmental math program open to<br>any students                                                       | 31%            | 5             |
| Program for study skill improvement                                                                      | 75%            | 12            |
| Other--Prescribe courses                                                                                 | 6%             | 1             |
| Other--Special English                                                                                   | 6%             | 1             |
| Other--Writing lab                                                                                       | 6%             | 1             |

TABLE II (continued)

|                                                                                                 | <u>NUMBERS</u> | <u>PERCENT</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| D. Financial Aid Programs                                                                       |                |                |
| Federally funded financial aid programs (BEOG)                                                  | 94%            | 15             |
| Federally funded campus jobs program                                                            | 94%            | 15             |
| Local financial aid program not using federal funds                                             | 88%            | 14             |
| Local campus jobs program not using federal funds                                               | 75%            | 12             |
| Federal grants for program(s) to improve retention                                              | 44%            | 7              |
| Other--Alumni scholarships--loans                                                               | 13%            | 2              |
| E. Dealing with High Risk Students                                                              |                |                |
| Use of biographical information in prediction of success                                        | 25%            | 4              |
| Advisement and counseling for high risk students                                                | 56%            | 9              |
| Programming or class-scheduling for high risk students                                          | 69%            | 11             |
| Developmental reading program for high risk students                                            | 69%            | 11             |
| Developmental math program for high risk students                                               | 38%            | 6              |
| Other--Contract                                                                                 | 6%             | 1              |
| Other--Encourage use of study center                                                            | 13%            | 2              |
| F. College Procedural Changes                                                                   |                |                |
| A procedure for systematic identification of high risk students in the admissions process       | 69%            | 11             |
| Revised housing regulations such as curfew, visitation, assignment to freshman or transfer dorm | 13%            | 2              |
| Formulation of a committee studying attrition and making recommendations for changes            | 31%            | 5              |
| Requiring students to complete academic improvement courses when necessary                      | 56%            | 9              |
| Other--Probation committee                                                                      | 6%             | 1              |

The responses to the section on college procedural changes suggest that much more can be done than is presently being attempted in this area. Sixty-nine percent of the administrators indicated a systematic procedure for identification of high risk students in the admissions process. Another 56 percent required high risk students to sign up for special classes.

In summary, it would seem that the items receiving the lowest percentage of administrative responses are the very ones needing attention. More counseling programs, more developmental skills programs, more faculty-student interaction, more tutoring, and more attention to personal background, both academic and biographical are called for.

#### Frequency of Programs Presently in Operation

In Part II of the questionnaire, administrators indicated programs or practices already in operation on their individual campuses (see Table III). Ninety-four percent of the administrators indicated that they already had a faculty advisement program, a federal financial aid program, and a federally funded campus jobs program.

Eighty-eight percent of the administrators responded positively for a freshman orientation program shorter than a term, college sponsored educational-cultural events, and a locally supported financial aid program. Eighty-one percent of the administrators indicated that they had a transfer-orientation program and a developmental-reading program.

Additionally, 75 percent marked the presence of a program for study skills improvement and a locally supported campus jobs program. Programs in peer tutoring, class scheduling for high risk students, developmental reading for high risk students, and systematic identification of high risk students in the admissions process were reported as operating on 69 percent



TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF RETENTION PROGRAMS IN OPERATION  
AS REPORTED BY COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS

|                                                                                              | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER<br/>(N=16)</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Faculty advisement program                                                                   | 94%            | 15                       |
| Federal funded financial aid program                                                         |                |                          |
| Federal funded campus jobs program                                                           |                |                          |
| Freshman orientation program shorter than term                                               | 88%            | 14                       |
| College sponsored educational-cultural events                                                |                |                          |
| Local financial aid program not using federal funds                                          |                |                          |
| Transfer orientation program                                                                 | 81%            | 13                       |
| Developmental reading program                                                                |                |                          |
| Program for study skills improvement                                                         | 75%            | 12                       |
| Local campus jobs program not using federal funds                                            |                |                          |
| Peer tutoring program                                                                        | 69%            | 11                       |
| Programming or class scheduling for high risk students                                       |                |                          |
| Developmental reading program for high risk students                                         |                |                          |
| A procedure for systematic identification of high risk<br>students in the admissions process |                |                          |
| Career planning program                                                                      | 56%            | 9                        |
| Program for survival in college                                                              |                |                          |
| Program encouraging faculty-student interaction outside classroom                            |                |                          |
| Advisement and counseling for high risk students                                             |                |                          |
| Requiring students to complete academic improvement courses                                  |                |                          |
| Small groups counseling program                                                              | 50%            | 8                        |
| Peer counseling program                                                                      | 44%            | 7                        |
| Federal grants for program to improve retention                                              |                |                          |
| Developmental math program for any student                                                   | 31%            | 5                        |
| Formulation of a committee studying attrition                                                |                |                          |
| Use of biographical information in prediction of<br>success                                  | 25%            | 4                        |

TABLE III (continued)

|                                                                           | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER<br/>(N=16)</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Freshman orientation course lasting a full term                           | 19%            | 3                        |
| Faculty tutoring program                                                  |                |                          |
| Living-learning program for freshmen, transfers,<br>or high risk students | 13%            | 2                        |
| Special English programs                                                  |                |                          |
| Alumni scholarships and loans                                             |                |                          |
| Encourage use of a local study center                                     |                |                          |
| Revised housing regulations                                               |                |                          |
| Counseling network                                                        | 6%             | 1                        |
| Counseling through study skills course                                    |                |                          |
| Residence Hall program                                                    |                |                          |
| Faculty getting to know students                                          |                |                          |
| Prescribed courses for high risk students                                 |                |                          |
| Writing lab                                                               |                |                          |
| Contract schedule for high risk students                                  |                |                          |
| Probation committee                                                       |                |                          |

of the campuses. Fifty-six percent of the colleges reported programs in career planning, survival-in-college, faculty-student interaction outside the classroom, advisement and counseling for high risk students. Fifty percent of the campuses indicated a program in small-group counseling. However, only 44 percent of the administrators reported the presence of peer-counseling programs and federal grants for programs to improve retention.

Developmental math programs for high risk students were indicated at 38 percent of the campuses, and another 31 percent of the colleges reported programs in developmental math open for any student. A formal committee studying attrition was reported by only 31 percent of the colleges.

Only 25 percent of the colleges used biographical information in predicting success in college. Nineteen percent of the colleges had a freshman orientation course lasting a full term and a faculty tutoring program. Thirteen percent of the campuses had a prescribed schedule of courses for high risk students, special English classes, alumni scholarships and loans, a formal study center, and recently revised housing regulations.

Finally, programs mentioned by 6 percent of the administrators include: a counseling network, a study skills course which includes special counseling, a special residence hall program, an informal faculty-student interaction activity, a writing lab, and a probation committee.

In summary, a high proportion of the administrators reported heavy emphasis on financial aid, faculty advisement, orientation programs, and special attention for high risk students. However, there

is still much room for improvement as noted in the previous discussion on "Kinds of Programs Presently in Operation." There does not seem to be any reason why 100 percent of the colleges could not properly identify high risk students in the admissions process. Similar conclusions could be made concerning many other items on the administrator's questionnaire.

### Evaluative Judgments

In Part IV of the administrative questionnaire, the administrators were asked to name certain programs or features meeting the qualifications listed below. These value judgments are discussed and then summarized in chart form in Table IV.

Most Efficient Programs. The developmental or basic studies program was mentioned by 31 percent of the administrators as having the best cost-benefit ratio, or as being the most efficient program. Thirteen percent of the administrators indicated that their most efficient programs were academic advising, peer tutoring, and an early warning referral system. Also suggested by 6 percent of the administrators were programs of student aid, orientation, more selective admissions criteria, faculty-student interaction activities, work programs, retention committees, peer advising program, and better student activities.

Influential Factors. Fifty-six percent of the administrators felt that their campus atmosphere was the most important environmental or extra-curricular factor in persuading students to continue at that particular college. The physical setting of the campus was considered important by 25 percent of the administrators. Nineteen percent of the administrators thought the athletic program was important. Thirteen percent of the

TABLE IV

SUMMARY OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS  
CONCERNING RETENTION EFFORTS

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER</u><br><u>(N=16)</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Part IV, C. In examining the cost-benefit ratio for programs designed to improve retention, on the basis of producing the highest enrollment rate for the least amount of time and money invested (efficiency), which program has the best cost-benefit ratio? |                |                                |
| a. Developmental basic studies program                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 31%            | 5                              |
| b. Academic advising                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 13%            | 2                              |
| c. Peer tutoring                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 13%            | 2                              |
| d. Early warning referral                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 13%            | 2                              |
| e. Student aid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 6%             | 1                              |
| f. Orientation program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 6%             | 1                              |
| g. Selective criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 6%             | 1                              |
| h. Faculty-student interaction                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 6%             | 1                              |
| i. Special services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 6%             | 1                              |
| j. Work program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 6%             | 1                              |
| k. Retention committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 6%             | 1                              |
| l. Peer advising                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 6%             | 1                              |
| m. Good student activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 6%             | 1                              |
| Part IV, D. In terms of environmental or extracurricular factors, such as campus appearance, athletic programs, and friendly atmosphere, which factor is most influential in persuading students to continue their studies with you?                           |                |                                |
| a. Campus atmosphere                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 56%            | 9                              |
| b. Campus setting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 25%            | 4                              |
| c. Athletic program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 19%            | 3                              |
| d. Low faculty-student ratio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 13%            | 2                              |
| e. Development of personal relationships                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 13%            | 2                              |
| f. Spiritual emphasis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 13%            | 2                              |
| g. Student government activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 6%             | 1                              |

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TABLE IV (continued)

|                                                                                                                                    | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>NUMBER<br/>(N=16)</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Part IV, E. On the basis of your own experience,<br>which two programs would you recommend to<br>administrators at other colleges? |                |                          |
| a. Developmental or basic studies program                                                                                          | 56%            | 9                        |
| b. Good advising program                                                                                                           | 44%            | 7                        |
| c. Early warning referral system                                                                                                   | 19%            | 3                        |
| d. Tutoring program                                                                                                                | 13%            | 2                        |
| e. Faculty input into admissions requirements                                                                                      | 6%             | 1                        |
| f. Informal interaction                                                                                                            | 6%             | 1                        |
| g. Retention committee                                                                                                             | 6%             | 1                        |
| h. Orientation program                                                                                                             | 6%             | 1                        |
| i. Familiarity with students                                                                                                       | 6%             | 1                        |
| j. Good student activities program                                                                                                 | 6%             | 1                        |
| k. Research at local level                                                                                                         | 6%             | 1                        |

administrators suggested low faculty-student ratios, development of personal relationships, and spiritual emphasis as important influential factors. Lastly, 6 percent of the administrators thought that student government activities were important factors in keeping students enrolled.

Thus, the perceived atmosphere seems to hold the position of highest importance in influencing students to stay at a particular college, according to the administrators. Although the campus setting gained 25 percent of the responses, it would be difficult to actually separate the campus setting from the perceived atmosphere.

#### Recommended Programs

Fifty-six percent of the administrators recommended developmental or basic studies programs for consideration by other administrators. Forty-four percent of the administrators recommended effective advisement programs. An early referral system was recommended by 19 percent of the administrators. Thirteen percent of the administrators recommended an organized tutoring program. Recommended by 6 percent of the administrators were programs for faculty input to the admissions process, informal faculty-student interaction, orientation, familiarity with students, student activities, local research and a retention committee.

Thus, a developmental or basic studies program emerges as the most highly recommended program. An effective advisement system received strong support, but other suggestions were rather scattered.

#### Administrative Table Review

The responses as indicated by Tables I, II, III, and IV emphasize the need for individual attention and good advisement. These two areas could be handled within the structure of most colleges without additional outlay

of funds. However, a developmental skills program, heavily emphasized as one method of increasing individual attention, would probably require extra funding.

Another area receiving considerable attention and probably not requiring extra funding is an early warning referral system whereby students experiencing academic difficulty are identified and provided with special counseling and extra support. Although only a few report it, this procedure could be easily activated within the present academic reporting network of more colleges.

### Summary

The administrators responded generally that previous academic preparation, commitment to a goal, and financial support were the most important factors affecting freshman attrition. Indicated as already present on most campuses were extensive programs for financial aid, for faculty advisement, for orientation, and for high risk students. Many of the administrators designated developmental or basic studies as both the best program on a cost-benefit ratio and the most highly recommended program for other administrators. The most important non-academic factor related to persistence in any college was considered to be the perceived atmosphere on campus. An effective advising system appeared second only to the basic studies program in terms of recommendations for other administrators.

Finally, the emphasis on individual attention and effective advising appears prominently in the recommendations of many administrators. The stress on developmental or basic studies is also heavily emphasized, but should be considered an extension of the emphasis on individual attention. Areas for administrative concern include an obvious need for more work in



the counseling programs, faculty-student interaction, tutoring programs, use of all available information to identify high risk students and a formal and concentrated effort to reduce attrition generally. Other possible areas for administrative emphasis will appear in the following sections of the chapter and in the recommendations throughout Chapter V.

## II. THE FINDINGS AT HIGH ATTRITION COLLEGES

### Introduction

The researcher visited two colleges considered to have a serious retention/attrition problem. College C ranked sixteenth in percentage of returning freshmen, and College K ranked fifteenth in percentage of returning freshmen (see Table V). The purpose of the on-site visits was to obtain more detailed information from students and faculty to support previously obtained statistical data and perceptions from administrators.

Student and Faculty Responses. The forced-choice portion of the student questionnaire (see Appendix B) is subdivided into groups for easier understanding (see Appendix C, Table VI for specific items in each group). Group I consists of seven items dealing with the use of predictors of success. Group II contains seven items pertaining to academic support services. Group III has seven items pertaining to counseling services. Group IV consists of six items dealing with student orientation programs. Group V has four items relating to job placement services. Group VI contains four items pertaining to cultural-social activities, and Group VII has three items relating to faculty-student interaction.

The open-ended portion of the student questionnaire has a variety of responses, but these responses have been compared among the colleges

TABLE V

## RANK ON VARIOUS MEASURES FOR PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

| College | Programs<br>Checked by<br>Administrators<br>Rank/Actual | Percent of<br>Returning<br>Freshmen<br>Rank/Actual | Annual Cost<br>Rank/Actual | Enrollment<br>Rank/Actual |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| A       | 1/30                                                    | 7/76                                               | 15/1924                    | 3/1458                    |
| B       | 3.5/22                                                  | 2/92                                               | 13/2825                    | 2/1668                    |
| C       | 3.5/22                                                  | 16/57                                              | 11/3350                    | 12/593                    |
| D       | 6/21                                                    | 12/67                                              | 12/3300                    | 14/435                    |
| E       | 11.5/16                                                 | 8.5/75                                             | 7/3780                     | 16/325                    |
| F       | 13/15                                                   | 14/65                                              | 14/2790                    | 4/1313                    |
| G       | 9/18                                                    | 6/78                                               | 10/3370                    | 6/1006                    |
| H       | 14/12                                                   | 4/80                                               | 9/3655                     | 11/786                    |
| I       | 16/6                                                    | 10/70                                              | 16/1630                    | 5/1100                    |
| J       | 11.5/16                                                 | 5/79                                               | 8/3731                     | 15/421                    |
| K       | 8/20                                                    | 15/58                                              | 5/3955                     | 13/576                    |
| L       | 15/11                                                   | 8.5/75                                             | 6/3900                     | 9/857                     |
| M       | 10/17                                                   | 13/66                                              | 2/5035                     | 10/811                    |
| N       | 2/24                                                    | 1/93                                               | 1/5650                     | 8/993                     |
| O       | 6/21                                                    | 11/68                                              | 4/4330                     | 7/998                     |
| P       | 6/21                                                    | 3/82                                               | 3/4744                     | 1/1769                    |
| Highest | 30                                                      | 93                                                 | 5650                       | 1769                      |
| Lowest  | 6                                                       | 57                                                 | 1924                       | 325                       |
| Median  | 19                                                      | 75                                                 | 3693                       | 925                       |

in order to point out only the differences between the high attrition and low attrition colleges (see Appendix C, Table VIII). Low scoring areas among any of the colleges without regard to attrition have also been identified at the end of this chapter.

#### College C--Forced-Choice Questions by Group

Predictors of Success. Forty-three percent of the students surveyed considered the use of predictors of success as generally not available but needed; 39 percent thought these services were available, but only 14 percent had participated in the services, 11 percent of which were satisfied with their participation. Thus, a high percentage of participants was satisfied; however, many of the students did not perceive predictors of success to be adequately utilized. The highest rated item in this group was one dealing with information about correcting English deficiencies and the lowest rated item dealt with comparing overall ability to other college students.

Academic Support Services. Seventy-three percent of the College C students generally rated academic support services to be available, but only 22 percent had participated with 18 percent satisfied with the services. Here again, as in predictors of success, a high percentage of the service participants had been satisfied, but only a small percentage had actually taken advantage of the services offered. The highest rated item among academic support services, according to the students, was one dealing with improving basic English skills and the lowest rated item dealt with help or tutoring from other students.

Counseling Services. College C students rated counseling services fairly low since only 56 percent viewed the services as available, with 29 percent having participated and 20 percent having been satisfied. Thirty-five percent of the students did not consider the counseling services as available but felt that they should have been. The highest rated item among counseling services was one dealing with the availability of career counseling, while the poorest item dealt with obtaining help with personal problems.

Orientation Programs. Fifty-nine percent of the College C students perceived orientation programs as being available, while 33 percent felt they were needed but not available. Twenty-nine percent of the students said they had participated in such programs and 23 percent had been satisfied with such participation. Here again, a high percentage of orientation program participants had been satisfied after having taken advantage of the services offered. The highest degree of availability among orientation programs was accorded the item dealing with help getting registered for classes and the lowest item pertained to designing an effective study schedule.

Job Placement. The area of job placement is somewhat biased in that mainly upperclassmen might be really knowledgeable about the various items. However, 54 percent of the College C students responding perceived these services to be available, while 13 percent had participated. Only 7 percent were satisfied with job placement services. The highest rating of availability appeared for the item dealing with preparing job placement credentials while the lowest item was one dealing with finding part-time work during the school year.

Cultural-Social Activities. Thirty-seven percent of the College C students reported being dissatisfied with their programs in the area of cultural-social activities. Fifty-two percent of the students perceived activities as being available. Only 23 percent had actually participated and 15 percent had been satisfied with the activities. The most popular item in the group was one dealing with inexpensive entertainment, while the poorest rating was given to the item related to learning arts, crafts, or hobbies.

Faculty-Student Interaction. Fully 45 percent of the College C students felt more work was needed in the realm of faculty-student interaction with only 40 percent feeling that this area was adequately covered. Twenty-one percent said they had participated in such activities, while only 13 percent had been satisfied with their participation. Apparently, the most desired item was a need to get along with instructors in the academic setting, as they indicated by 51 percent of the students.

#### College C--Open-Ended Questions

Question One. This question, asking why other students drop out, assumes that students know why most other students leave and that they will respond with reasons they themselves feel important in making the decision to leave college. Forty-one percent of the College C students indicated that the rules were too strict; 38 percent stated that financial reasons were important; and 24 percent blamed the poor social environment. Tied for fourth place with an 11 percent response were poor facilities or food, lack of communication, and lack of attention to academic or counseling needs.

Question Two. This question, asking about which academic support services had been helpful, drew an unusual response of "no help available" from 28 percent of the students. Ten percent of the students felt that special skill improvement courses had been helpful.

Question Three. The question asking which cultural-social programs had been enjoyable produced another unexpected response. Twenty-two percent of the students indicated "none" of these programs had been enjoyable to them. However, 21 percent of the students had enjoyed presentations by groups within the college and 16 percent had enjoyed participating in recreational type activities.

Question Four. In response to the question asking which counseling services had been most helpful, 36 percent of the students indicated they had received help from a faculty member and 16 percent had received help in career planning sessions. However, 20 percent of the students indicated that they had received no help from any counseling services.

Question Five. Many College C students (18 percent) responded "none" to the question asking which programs of faculty-student interaction had been most helpful. Nevertheless, 10 percent of the students indicated that the faculty open house at the beginning of the year had been received favorably.

Question Six. Responding to this question concerning the length of service for advisors, 11 percent of the students indicated a tenure of two years or less for their advisors while 24 percent indicated that their advisors had worked at the college for three to five years. Thus,

35 percent of the students had been assigned to advisors with under six years experience at the college.

Question Seven. In answer to this question about financial aid, 18 percent of the College C students responded that they were receiving 50-74 percent of their expenses, 17 percent were receiving no help, and 12 percent were receiving the total financial aid needed. The rest of the students were receiving various amounts of aid to help finance the cost of their education.

Question Eight. The College C students made several suggestions regarding things the college should do to improve the situation there. The most popular suggestions dealt with improving communication and offering more majors. The third most common suggestion dealt with expanding the choice of classes to allow greater flexibility with work schedules and more accessibility to courses required for graduation.

#### Faculty and Administrative Responses

The faculty responses generally supported the student responses to the forced-choice items on the questionnaire. However, the response of the administrator to the number of programs marked as present at College C did not agree with a ranking of last among the responding colleges in percentage of returning freshmen. Thus, the students' suggestions pertaining to improving communications between administrators and students appears to be a valid one.

#### Summary of Specifics for College C

Strong points for College C include good availability of information on correcting English deficiencies, help in registering for classes,

assistance in preparing job placement credentials, and obtaining faculty counseling.

Weak points include poor opportunity to compare ability to other college students; no tutoring help, no help available for students in dealing with personal problems; little help in designing a study schedule; difficulty in finding part-time work; minimum help for students in participating in arts, crafts, or hobbies; problems in getting along with instructors in the academic setting; difficulty in dealing with school rules; not much encouragement in finding social activities; and inadequate communication between administrators and students.

#### Discussion for College C

Over 55 percent of the College C students perceived services were available in three of the seven groups (academic support services, counseling services, and orientation programs). Few students felt that programs in the use of predictors of success and in faculty-student interaction were available. The other two groups, job placement and cultural-social activities, were just average in the students' perceptions of availability. Student satisfaction rated highest for orientation programs and lowest for job placement services. The chief complaints included communication problems, the variety of majors offered, and class scheduling.

#### College K--Forced-Choice Questions by Group

Predictors of Success. Forty-eight percent of the College K students felt that prediction factors were available from the college. However, only 19 percent took advantage of the services. Seventeen percent of these students had been satisfied when using such services, but 30 percent of the students felt that prediction factors were needed but not available. The



best rating in this group was given to the item pertaining to explaining college entrance exam scores, with the poorest response given to the item pertaining to explaining the high school grades.

Academic Support Services. The group of academic support services was rated fairly high according to College K students, with a 64 percent availability score. Twenty-six percent of the students had used the services. Nineteen percent of the total group had been satisfied. The item dealing with improving basic math skills received the highest response in academic support services with improving study skills rated the lowest in the group.

Counseling Services. Sixty-seven percent of the students from College K perceived services in counseling as available, with a comparatively high usage rate of 30 percent. Twenty-two percent had been satisfied with their participation in the counseling services. Career counseling received the highest rating in this group of services, but help in dealing with personal problems received the poorest response.

Orientation Services. Sixty-five percent of the College K students perceived orientation services as being available, again, with a high participation rate of 32 percent and a satisfied group of 20 percent. Introduction to library resources received the highest rating in this group; however, orientation sessions were rated much lower than expected.

Job Placement. Sixty-three percent of the students perceived job placement services as being available. Only 17 percent had used such services, and 13 percent of these had been satisfied. The poor rate of participation probably relates to the fact that upperclassmen are usually the only ones that would have need of such services. Preparing job placement

credentials received the best overall rating, but finding a job after graduation obtained the lowest response from College K students.

Cultural-Social Activities. Sixty-six percent of the College K students felt that cultural-social activities were readily available, with 39 percent of the students indicating that they had participated in such activities. Twenty-two percent of the students had been satisfied with their participation in these activities. The item dealing with obtaining help in getting involved in social activities obtained the highest rating, but the item dealing with help in arts, crafts, and hobbies received the lowest rating in the group.

Faculty-Student Interaction. Only 44 percent of the students viewed faculty-student interaction activities as being available, and 38 percent of the College K students indicated a need in this area. Twenty percent indicated that they had participated in these activities, but only 11 percent had been satisfied with this participation. All of the faculty-student interaction items came out very low, but the item dealing with getting better acquainted with the college staff and administrators was last.

#### College K--Open-Ended Questions

A variety of answers was suggested for each of these questions. Only the most frequently suggested answers have been discussed in this section. Other responses can be examined in Appendix C, Table VIII.

Question One. College K students indicated that the main reason for other students dropping out was a lack of communication between students and administrators followed by a lack of majors available and academic difficulty. An excessive number of policy changes was also mentioned as a contributing factor.

Question Two. This question asked for the students to respond with the names of helpful academic improvement programs. Nineteen percent of the students from College K indicated that no academic improvement programs had been helpful to them.

Question Three. In answer to which cultural-social activities had been most enjoyable, 32 percent of the College K students had enjoyed fraternity or dorm parties the most, followed by general recreational type activities. These particular activities were closely followed by a choice for presentations by groups within the college such as the drama club.

Question Four. The most popular counseling service appeared to be career planning and personal counseling with a faculty member. However, 16 percent of the students indicated that none of the counseling services had been helpful.

Question Five. The most popular answer to what faculty-student interaction programs have worked was "none." Placing a distant second was a response referring to joint participation in faculty-student games. This response supports the results obtained from the items in the forced-choice section indicating a lack of faculty-student interaction activities.

Question Six. Fifty-eight percent of the students had advisors who had been with the college less than six years. This situation could be caused by a high turnover among instructors, but is definitely at variance with the usual condition at low attrition colleges.

Question Seven. The largest group of College K students responding (39 percent) indicated that they were receiving between 50-74 percent of

their college costs in some form of financial aid. Only 6 percent received no help at all while 10 percent received all their college expenses.

Question Eight. In response to the question asking what the college should do to help students succeed, College K students responded that improving communication was their chief concern; class scheduling problems and curriculum advising also received a high number of responses. A suggestion to improve the faculty was offered by 10 percent of the students.

#### Faculty and Administrative Responses

Generally the faculty agreed with the students in their assessment of the situation at College K. However, the faculty did not report on the importance of communication, which received considerable student attention. The statistical data placed College K in fifteenth position in the percentage of returning freshmen, but the number of programs checked as present by the administrator produced a ranking of eight on that aspect of the study. This apparent discrepancy lends credence to the comments concerning communication.

#### Summary of Specifics for College K

Strong points for College K include the provision of help in understanding college entrance exam scores, remediation of basic math skills, offering of career counseling, instruction for using library resources, preparation of job placement papers, availability of dorm parties and other informal social activities.

Weak areas include poor help in explaining high school records; little help in improving study skills; no help in dealing with personal problems; insufficient help in finding a job after graduation; little

provision of help in learning arts, crafts, and hobbies; no opportunity for getting acquainted with college staff and administrators; too many policy changes; and too little curriculum advising and communicating in general.

#### Discussion for College K

Over 60 percent of the College K students perceived services to be available in five of the seven areas. Less than 50 percent of the students rated services in the area of predictors of success and faculty-student interaction as being available. Student satisfaction was highest for cultural-social activities and counseling services other than for personal problems. The least satisfactory rating was accorded to faculty-student interaction programs.

#### Summary for High Attrition Colleges

The students from both high attrition colleges gave low ratings for the items dealing with explaining academic background and potential, improving study habits, dealing with personal problems, developing hobbies, communicating with and getting to know faculty, staff, and administrators, and understanding the curriculum. In the open-ended portion of the questionnaire, many of the students from these two schools also suggested that improvements should be undertaken in overall communication, curriculum advisement, and class scheduling.

### III. THE FINDINGS AT LOW ATTRITION COLLEGES

#### Introduction

The two low attrition colleges will be discussed individually and then compared as a group with the high attrition colleges. College B ranks

second in the group of sixteen responding colleges in the percentage (92 percent) of returning freshmen. Thus, the information from College B carries more weight than sixth-ranked College G, which traditionally has a 78 percent return rate for freshmen continuing as sophomores.

#### College B--Forced-Choice Questions by Group

Predictors of Success. College B students indicated that more work was needed in the use of predictors of success when 41 percent stated the services were needed but not available. Only 36 percent saw the services as being available, with 10 percent actually participating in the services. The item receiving the best response was one dealing with correcting English deficiencies. On the other hand obtaining information about what high school grades indicate in relationship to college studies obtained the poorest response.

Academic Support Services. Students responded more positively to the area of academic support than for the preceding group. Seventy-three percent indicated the services were available, but only 22 percent of the students had actually used the services. Seventeen percent had been satisfied with the help received. Thus, many (77 percent) of the students who actually used the help were pleased with the results. Tutoring by other students received the most favorable response in the area of academic support services. Preparing written reports and improving study skills had fewer participants but was still rated high when compared to responses in the previous group of questions dealing with predictors of success.

Counseling Services. The College B students responded favorably to items dealing with counseling services. Sixty-eight percent saw these

services as being available, and 32 percent actually used the services provided. The items dealing with career counseling and selecting an academic field of study received the most favorable responses, while the item dealing with help in dealing with personal problems received the poorest response.

Orientation Programs. Items related to orientation programs received a 69 percent positive response from College B students. Thirty-three percent had used the services, and 25 percent had been satisfied. This indicates that a fairly large percentage of the participants had been satisfied with the results. In the area of orientation programs, learning how to make good use of the library received the best response while designing an effective study schedule received the fewest positive responses.

Job Placement. Perceptions about the availability of job placement services was also rated as favorable, but a small group of only 14 percent had actually participated in such services. These results were probably due to the senior or upperclassman bias mentioned in discussions for other colleges. The most popular item was one dealing with help finding part-time summer jobs and finding full-time jobs after graduation rated as the lowest item in the group, even though 63 percent of the students still perceived this service to be available.

Cultural-Social Activities. The College B students again responded favorably to the cultural-social section as a whole, with 64 percent perceiving these activities as being available. The most positive response was given to the item dealing with attending inexpensive entertainment. Learning arts, crafts, and hobbies was the least popular item, receiving only a 30 percent response of availability.

Faculty-Student Interaction. The students gave faculty-student interaction programs a very low rating of availability. Thirty-five percent of the students felt that more work should be done in this area, overall, with emphasis on helping them learn how to get along with instructors on a social basis.

#### College B--Open-Ended Questions

Question One. According to College B students presently enrolled, the main reasons for other students dropping out were strict rules, social boredom, and lack of interest or commitment. Financial difficulty and academic problems were also considered important factors in making the decision to drop out of college.

Question Two. Seventeen percent of the College B students indicated "none" of the academic support programs had been helpful to them. However, 13 percent indicated that faculty tutoring had been helpful and 11 percent liked the skill improvement courses.

Question Three. Twenty-eight percent of the College B students enjoyed presentations by groups within the college, while 11 percent enjoyed the general recreational activities. Dormitory or club parties were suggested by 8 percent of the College B students.

Question Four. Personal counseling with a faculty member of counselor was the most popular category in the area of counseling services as mentioned by 32 percent of the College B students. Orientation and career planning were suggested by over 10 percent of the students.



Question Five. Faculty-student interaction is an area needing attention as previously indicated by faculty-student interaction results in the forced-choice part of the survey. Sixteen percent of the students at College B indicated none of the programs in this area had worked, but 9 percent favored the faculty-student games.

Question Six. College B had a broad distribution in the assignment of advisors (a plus factor). Fewer advisors were assigned who had been with the college less than six years as compared to the other colleges visited by the researcher. This practice stabilized the advisement program and helped students make a successful transition to college life.

Question Seven. College B held the distinction of having the highest percentage of students receiving all their college expenses through some form of financial aid. The number of students receiving financial aid in all of the other categories was fairly evenly distributed.

Question Eight. The students at College B were evenly divided in the kinds of suggestions concerning things the college could do to help them succeed. Better curriculum advising (11 percent) and upgrading the faculty (9 percent) were frequent responses. However, better courses and teachers or teacher assignments were mentioned by 15 percent of the students.

#### Faculty-Administrative Results

The faculty responses generally supported the student responses on the forced-choice portion of the questionnaire, and agreed with the students on the open-ended questions. The exceptions were student displeasure with their social environment and a frequent response of "no help" for academic support services with which the faculty responses failed to concur.

Preliminary statistical data gave College B a ranking of two in the percent of returning freshmen. The number of programs checked by the administrator as operational gave College B a ranking of three and one-half among the sixteen colleges. More effective advisement programs was a recommendation of both the administration and the students.

#### Summary of Specifics for College B

Strong points for College B include information on correcting English deficiencies, tutoring by other students, career counseling, the selection of an academic field of study, instructions on how to use the library, part-time job placement, inexpensive entertainment, faculty tutoring, presentation by college groups, and faculty counseling.

Weak points include lack of information on what high school grades indicate, little help dealing with personal problems, poor help in designing an effective study schedule, little opportunity for learning arts, crafts, and hobbies, not enough faculty-student interactions, too many rules, too much social boredom outside campus activities, too little curriculum advising, and poor faculty assignments and quality.

#### Discussion for College B

Student perceptions of availability rated above 60 percent for all of the groups in the forced-choice portion of the questionnaire except for the use of predictors of success and faculty-student interaction. The latter two groups appeared to be very low, and to need improvement at College B. Student satisfaction rated highest for counseling services (although some students objected to the use of preachers as counselors), orientation programs, and cultural-social activities.

In the open-ended portion of the questionnaire, the most frequent complaints pertained to strict rules and poor social environment outside of campus activities. Frequent suggestions included attention for the quality of instruction and better advising.

#### College G--Forced-Choice Questions by Group

Predictors of Success. Fifty percent of the College G students perceived predictors of success as being available services. Although this does not seem to be a very high number, it places this college above the other colleges in the study in the use of predictors of success.

The item receiving the most positive response was one dealing with correcting English deficiencies. The poorest response was recorded for the item dealing with receiving information about high school grades. Fifty-four percent of the students indicated a need in this area related to prediction of success in college.

Academic Support Services. Seventy-two percent of the College G students indicated an awareness of the availability of academic support services. Only 22 percent had actually used the services and 15 percent had been satisfied with the help received in this area. The most popular item in this group was one dealing with getting tutoring help from other students. The least favorable response was given to the item dealing with help in improving study skills.

Counseling Services. Counseling services were perceived as being available by 60 percent of the students, with 27 percent having participated and only 14 percent having been satisfied with the help received. Information on how to get scholarships and loans received the most

positive response while help in dealing with personal problems received the poorest response.

Orientation Programs. Sixty-five percent of the College G students felt that orientation programs were available and 29 percent had participated in the programs. Only 13 percent reported satisfaction with their participation in orientation programs. The most favored item was one dealing with getting registered for classes, while the least popular item was one dealing with orientation sessions before school began.

Job Placement. All the items came out very low in the group of job placement services. Help finding part-time work during the school year was the lowest item, according to student perceptions of availability.

Cultural-Social Activities. Students at College G felt that opportunities were generally available in the area of cultural-social activities (67 percent); however, only 26 percent of the students had actually taken part, and only 11 percent had been satisfied with their participation. Attending a variety of inexpensive entertainment was the most commonly noted item while developing social relations with other students received the poorest response.

Faculty-Student Interaction. The area of faculty-student interaction was rated very low overall because 39 percent of the students felt the programs were not available at all, and only 43 percent felt that these programs were available. Twenty-two percent of the students actually participated in faculty-student interaction activities, but only 5 percent were satisfied with such participation. All of the items in this area received very poor ratings of availability.

College G--Open-Ended Questions

Question One. Even though College G placed in the middle of the sixteen colleges concerning the cost of attending college, financial problems received the highest percentage of responses in answer to the question concerning the main reasons for dropping out. Following financial problems was poor social environment, poor academic instruction, and a lack of interest or commitment.

Question Two. Twenty-three percent of the College G students answered, "the skill improvement program" in replying to which academic improvement programs had been most helpful. Another 13 percent thought faculty tutoring and support had been helpful, but 8 percent indicated "none" of the programs in this area had been helpful.

Question Three. The responses for enjoyable cultural-social programs produced a variety of answers. Twenty-one percent of the students felt that none of the activities in the area had been enjoyable, but another 21 percent felt that activities in a behavioral science class had been very helpful. Eighteen percent of these students also expressed satisfaction with their participation in social gatherings of an informal nature.

Question Four. Thirty-three percent of the College G students favored personal counseling with a faculty member, and 15 percent appreciated their participation in orientation sessions in response to which counseling services had been most helpful. However, 10 percent indicated dissatisfaction with all of the counseling services.

Question Five. Twenty-three percent of the students indicated that none of the programs designed to promote faculty-student interaction had

worked. Eighteen percent favored faculty-student games, and 13 percent enjoyed small group meetings with faculty advisors.

Question Six. College G had a high percentage of advisors (33 percent) assigned with three to five years of experience. However, the actual situation there was difficult to establish since 18 percent of the students were not sure how long their advisor had been working at the college.

Question Seven. The students receiving financial aid were widely scattered among the different categories. No apparent differences were noted for this college in comparison with the other colleges visited.

Question Eight. Offer better courses was the most frequent response to what else should the college do to help one succeed (15 percent). This suggestion was followed by statements related to improving communications and improving the faculty or faculty assignments (8 percent). Other items mentioned by at least 5 percent of the students included better advising, easier access to academic standing, faculty encouragement, and improving job placement while attending school.

#### Faculty-Administrative Results

Faculty responses at College G were in agreement with student responses with the exceptions of the faculty failing to note the need for better courses and better faculty assignments. The number of programs in operation at College G as indicated by the administrator ranks this school in ninth place for the sixteen schools. This compares to a sixth place ranking obtained on the percentage of returning freshmen for College G. Developmental studies and orientation programs were favored by the administrator as ways to help improve the retention rate.

### Summary of Specifics for College G

Strong points for College G include tutoring help from other students, scholarship and loan information, help in registering for classes, inexpensive entertainment, skill improvement program, behavioral science class activities and faculty counseling/advising.

Weak points include too little information about what high school grades indicate, no help in improving study skills, poor help in dealing with personal problems, inadequate orientation sessions before school, not enough help in finding part-time work, no help in developing social relations with other students, too few faculty-student interactions, poor social environment, poor instruction, poor course offering and poor communications.

### Discussion for College G

Sixty percent or more of the College G students perceived services to be available in four of the seven groups, with one group receiving a 50 percent response (predictors of success). Student satisfaction rated highest for academic support services but even this high rating was only 13 percent. Least satisfactory groups at College G were job placement services and faculty-student interaction.

### Summary for Low Attrition Colleges

Students from the low attrition colleges, like their high attrition college counterparts, criticized their schools in the use of academic predictors of success, use of leisure time, faculty-student interaction, social activities, and faculty delivery. Effective programming for dealing with personal problems also appeared to be lacking at these colleges.

However, in contrast with the suggestions of students from high attrition colleges, students from low attrition colleges had a scattered group of suggestions with very low totals for the different entries. The exceptions were that 11 percent of the College B students suggested better curriculum advising, and 15 percent of the College G students suggested better course offerings.

#### IV. THE FINDINGS AT ALL OF THE COLLEGES

##### Summary of Item Responses for all Colleges

The forced-choice portion of the student survey identified four items which appeared to show marked differences between responses of students from high attrition and low attrition schools. Item 10, dealing with designing an effective study schedule, pointed out differences both in need and usage in favor of low attrition schools. Item 35, obtaining information through orientation sessions, also showed a difference favoring low attrition schools. Item 36, helpful information on obtaining federal scholarships and loans, also showed low attrition schools with an advantage. However, item 4, preparing job placement credentials, gave the advantage to high attrition schools, a totally unexpected development.

Several other items brought out various needs at the different colleges. Over half of the respondents from College C, College B, and College G indicated a need for information concerning high school grades, in item 24, along with almost half of the students from College K. Over half the students from College C indicated a need on item 28, comparison of overall abilities to other college students, as did almost half of the students from College B. Over 60 percent of the College G students stated a need for improving study skills, item 14. Well over half the students from



all the colleges surveyed felt a need for small group counseling in dealing with personal problems as stated by item 19. Just over half of the students from College G indicated a need for help finding full-time positions after graduation as shown by item 2. Over half of the students from College C and College G indicated a need for finding part-time work during the school year as stated in item 38. According to the results for item 23, almost one-half of the students from College C and College B marked that arts, crafts, and hobbies are needed. A majority of the College C students also indicated a need for the improvement of student-faculty relations on an academic basis in item 30.

Actual participation scored rather low on many items, with only 12 items obtaining more than a one-third participation rate. Thirty-eight percent of the College C students had participated in career counseling services, item 1. Over 33 percent of the students from College K, College B, and College G had sought help in selecting an academic field of study, item 5. Almost 50 percent of all the students had sought help in advising and registration, items 6 and 7. Over 33 percent of the students from College C and College B and over 50 percent of the students from College K had taken part in making use of library resources, item 8. Item 10 reveals that 33 percent of the College G students had sought help in designing an effective study schedule. Thirty-three percent of the College K students had sought student help in dealing with problems, item 18, and developing social relations, item 20. Over 33 percent of the students from both College K and College B had participated in campus social activities, item 21, and inexpensive entertainment, item 22. Information obtained through orientation sessions had helped over 33 percent of the College B students, according to item 35. More than 33 percent of the students from

College B and College G had taken part in sessions providing information on scholarships and loans, item 36.

For most of the objective items, a majority of the students who had taken advantage of the services had been satisfied with their participation. Exceptions can be observed for College G students who were not satisfied on fourteen of the items (6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38) and for College K students on items 33 and 38.

#### Summary of Open-Ended Responses for all Colleges

Students from the four colleges visited by the researcher entered a variety of responses to each of the open-ended questions. However, comments referring to a need to improve communications were made more frequently by students at the high attrition colleges than by students at the low attrition colleges. More students from high attrition colleges than students from low attrition colleges also responded "none" in answer to questions asking which academic improvement programs had been helpful, which counseling services had been helpful, and which faculty-student interaction programs had worked.

The frequency of responses in the open-ended section of the student questionnaire without regard to high attrition or low attrition classifications were examined for the most prominent answers given to the question asking why other students drop out. Financial reasons, strict rules, social environment and communication respectively, were the most frequently offered responses. The question asking which academic improvement programs had been helpful elicited answers of "none," skill improvement programs, and faculty tutoring or support, in that order.

The most enjoyable cultural-social programs listed were college group presentations, participation in recreational activities, parties, and "none." Personal counseling with a faculty member was the most frequent response to which counseling services have been most helpful, followed by "none," orientation programs and career planning. The most frequent answer concerning which faculty-student interaction programs had worked from all colleges was "none."

Suggestions about what else the college should do to help one succeed varied, but the most popular response pertained to improving communications followed by better advising, better class scheduling, and improving the faculty. Better advising thus turned out to be a frequent suggestion by both administrators and students.

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The data for the different groups of questions and colleges has been reviewed; the findings are compared to the questions prompting the study and suggestions for future action will be made.

#### II. QUESTIONS

##### Question One

According to college administrators, why do students leave their colleges?

Finding. Several reasons were suggested by the administrators for students leaving their school. However, the three most frequent suggestions were financial need, lack of academic ability, and disinterest or lack of commitment. Other reasons stated include: the students' wanting to get closer to home, their major not being offered, the students' emotional maturity, the lack of social activities and poor facilities. These conclusions by administrators coincide very closely with those of the students with the exceptions of references to the need to improve communication and the enforcement of too many rules.

The major findings for this question agree with findings by other research as reported by this researcher in Chapter II. As reported earlier financial need was found to be the major reason for dropping out of college by the Tennessee College Association (1972). The Association's survey

also found academic problems to be a major factor influencing dropouts as did several researchers such as Stallings (1976), Baier (1974), and Howitt (1972) as reported by this researcher. However, interest in college was found to be a major factor affecting persistence by MacMillan and Kester in their report concerning the NORCAL study in 1973.

Recommendations. The implication seems to be that, if everyone agrees on the reasons for attrition, then a program to remediate those reasons designated as major ones should immediately be undertaken. Many of the suggestions below can be met through the use of a very thorough orientation program before classes begin and a continuation of these programs for the first term, along with more opportunities for individual counseling in the areas of academic background, career plans, and personal problems.

1. Better pre-enrollment information on college expenses and the various ways to meet those expenses should receive a priority emphasis in recruitment plans by administrators.

2. Academic support programs should be well planned and advertised. A method of matching programs to the specific needs of entering students as well as an on-going system of referral to such programs should be implemented.

3. Recruitment efforts should seek to bring about a better match between student interests and background and the available programs and campus life at the college. If no clear indication of student career interest is available, a career planning laboratory should be mandatory in order to resolve the problem.

4. The college should assume a major role in planning and supporting a full-time, not just fall quarter, social activities program which would provide choices for the use of leisure time by college students.

#### Question Two

What are college administrators' evaluations regarding the impact of various programs aimed at retention?

Finding. A basic studies or developmental studies program received the most positive support from the administrators. An effective advisement program also received good support, followed by peer tutoring, faculty tutoring, an early warning referral system, and faculty-student interacting programs.

These findings also agree with those noted in Chapter II by West (1976) and others who examined the role of special skill programs and found positive results. Topp (1970) suggested special academic counseling and career planning for freshmen and sophomores to help them continue in college, and Stegman (1969) referred to positive results from the use of special tutoring assistance by faculty. Pascarella and Terenzini (1976) also found significant results when comparing informal student-faculty contact and continuing in college.

Recommendations. Administrators again seem to be in agreement with students in suggesting extra attention and more effective advisement for academic needs. However, more specific actions are needed to alleviate some problem areas.

1. Much more work should be done in the area of basic studies. This is shown by the number of students indicating that "none" of the academic improvement programs had been helpful to them (see Appendix C, Table VIII).

2. The advisement program should include counselors as well as faculty advisors. The faculty advisors should be well trained in interpersonal relations and have enough years of experience at a particular college to be thoroughly familiar with the curriculum requirements and offerings. Every effort should be made to give students complete and accurate information.

3. An effective tutoring program should be designed to use both faculty and students. This system could also be tied in with the next suggestion.

4. A method of focusing immediate attention on students who are having problems should be a college wide effort receiving the support of the total campus staff. These students should be referred to the appropriate center, depending on whether the problem is personal, academic, or behavioral.

5. The faculty and administration should be ready, willing, and able to meet students in a non-academic setting in order to develop a team approach to learning. This concept is not new, but may be considered radical by some professors with a European background. The students need to feel that they have someone to guide and support them in their quest for knowledge.

### Question Three

According to students, what retention programs are available and beneficial?

Finding. The overall results by group as observed in Table VII indicate that more emphasis is needed concerning the use of predictors of success for entering students and more effort needs to be made to bring faculty and students together in both academic and social settings. The

levels of student satisfaction were lower for the use of predictors of success and faculty-student interactions than any of the other groups. The following recommendations deal with more specific observations, but fewer students perceived these two groups of services as being available to them than the other services considered in the study.

Recommendations. The same research studies mentioned for Questions One and Two also pertain to this question, but the results from students are especially important for the purposes of the researcher. Some college administrators have lost sight of the student as an individual and the vital role of the student in the attrition rate of the college. The success rate in life as it relates to an individual student is a far more important goal than the success rate in college and college administrators will do well to help students pursue success whether it lies within or without the ivy-covered walls.

1. Improve communications, both formal and informal, between administrators and students. A systematic and concentrated effort at opening channels of communication and helping students see results of this communication should be an immediate concern of the high attrition schools. This step could solve several other problems mentioned by students.

For example, the complaints about facilities, faculty assignments, scheduling, and rules could be resolved by better communication between administration and students. Of course, better communication could benefit low attrition schools as well, but the problem appears to be more critical for high attrition colleges.

Most schools should take steps to improve the orientation process. One item which received a poor response and which could be handled in the



orientation process, was "availability of help in designing an effective study schedule." Another reason for including this particular recommendation is the fact that inadequate academic preparation was given by both students and administrators as one of the three main reasons for dropping out from college.

The orientation sessions should also include a means for introducing new students to all administrators, faculty, and staff. In bringing these groups together, not only would several aspects of the orientation process be improved, but also a vital contribution would be made to the need for improving communication.

An efficient orientation program is a chief means of warding off problems before they occur. Introduction of administration, staff, and faculty should be done at the beginning of the year. Students should be given information on dealing with such items as developing study skills and habits, examining their own abilities in comparison with other college students, and using the various college resources, both human and material. Serious planning and effort should go into the orientation program, and follow up sessions should be monitored carefully.

2. Improve social climate and leisure time activities on campus. In small towns, much more attention to free time activities is necessary. Many students indicated a need for more opportunity to develop individual skills in arts, crafts, and hobbies, which reflects a need to engage in activities of a skill nature outside the classroom. Although the students at low attrition schools marked social activities as strong points, they also mentioned the social climate as one of the main reasons for students leaving school. Thus, students seem to be dissatisfied, whether the social activities sponsored by the school are few or many. Dissatisfaction

with social activities could be an expression of incongruence with a student's previous style of life rather than a serious complaint against the college's role in providing social activities. An attempt to match a student's social background to the college's social activities appears to offer much in the way of student satisfaction with a college.

3. Improve the relationship between education and jobs within the curriculum. The area of actual job placement also needs more attention at all of the colleges studied, either in part-time or full-time placement. This change should also facilitate on-the-job training while in college. More attention to a systematic process of focusing on actual job skills, job training, supervised job experience, part-time or summer jobs related to career goals, and permanent job placement would enhance the program at all colleges.

4. Improve availability of counseling for personal problems on campus. The present procedures for using faculty members as advisors and counselors seem to be functioning to a limited extent at all of the schools in the study. However, since the administrators all indicated a need for better advising and the students expressed a need for better personal counseling and a need for help in understanding their records, a full-time counselor seems advisable for both individual and group counseling activities.

Thus, more effective use of counselors could remedy the shortage in dealing with personal problems, examining high school records and abilities and better academic and curriculum planning. This improvement could even lighten the load on the regular faculty by removing the personal counseling responsibilities from their assignment.

#### Question Four

Do overall programs of colleges with high attrition differ from overall programs of colleges with low attrition?

Finding. The programs checked as presently in operation do give some information as to possible differences between high attrition and low attrition colleges. Administrators from both low attrition colleges indicated the presence of an orientation program for entering students lasting at least one full term, while their high attrition counterparts indicated no such program. Low attrition college administrators also indicated the presence of a faculty tutoring program and a procedure for identifying high risk students in the admissions process. Administrators recommended new efforts in attacking the attrition problem, such as a retention committee to focus on problems after enrolling, or some type of early warning referral system.

The statistical data from Peterson's Guide to Undergraduate Study does reveal that both of the low attrition colleges have student bodies at least twice as large as the high attrition colleges. However, in examining the enrollment figures at other colleges in the study, it is apparent that a small enrollment does not necessarily bring about high attrition (see College H and College J in Table V, p. 41).

The student responses do indicate some areas which seem to differ between the two groups of colleges. As brought out in the reply to Question Three, in this chapter, items 10, 35, and 36 show an advantage for low attrition colleges. Thus, help in designing a study schedule, obtaining information through orientation sessions, and getting information on scholarships and loans seem to be emphasized more strongly at low attrition colleges.

In the open-ended portion of the student questionnaire, students from high attrition colleges more frequently complained about the lack of communication than did students from low attrition colleges. More students from high attrition colleges also suggested better or more flexible class scheduling was needed and indicated "none" of the academic improvement or counseling programs had been helpful to them. The low attrition students responded more favorably to items dealing with faculty support and orientation sessions than did students from high attrition colleges.

Research pertaining to differences within colleges based on different programs, such as the NORCAL research and various studies in Chapter II is readily available. This work generally concluded that students who receive special attention of almost any kind are more likely to succeed than students left to the normal course of studies (see MacMillan and Kester, 1973, Humphries, 1972, Garneski, 1966, and Van Bluit, 1973). However, research comparing different colleges along these lines is not readily available.

Recommendations. The following suggestions are based on both administrative responses and student responses, which may not necessarily supplement each other. Administrators may indicate programs as present, while students may indicate the programs as missing and needed. This illustrates the overall complaint regarding communication on the campuses.

1. Administrators, faculty, and staff need to become more communicative with students. The concept of student as "customer" has been mentioned in the literature and this approach could change the atmosphere drastically. All college employees should "mix and mingle" with students before classes begin, during orientation or start of school activities. Then an on-going

effort at remaining in constant communication with students during the year should be established. Communication with staff counterparts at low attrition colleges could help solve the problem of communication through a mutual exchange of ideas.

2. A comprehensive faculty tutoring program, perhaps in conjunction with a peer tutoring program, should be established, along with a referral system to give help where needed. It seems obvious, but should be mentioned, that the faculty taking part in such a program must be wholly supportive of both the program and the students who come to them for help.

3. The orientation programs, as presently being practiced on high attrition campuses, appear woefully inadequate. A complete overhaul is in order which would present not only the usual "get acquainted with our college" indoctrination, but even more needed information to students. Such additional information should include: how to design and implement appropriate study schedules, how to obtain information on scholarships and loans, how to locate and use academic improvement centers, and other helpful information.

4. A more flexible class schedule should be implemented, both to help students who need to work and to help students meet graduation requirements on time.

#### Question Five

What programs can any college institute or improve to decrease the student drop out rate?

The following discussion should be considered an addition to the preceding suggestions, especially Question Four. In general the findings also support the recommendations by Topp (1970), Terenzini (1976), and many

other researchers as previously referred to in both Chapter II and this chapter.

Finding. A program of faculty advisement exists on almost all the campuses. Several of the administrators recommended a good program of faculty advisement for other administrators to consider and rated faculty advisement their most efficient program. However, according to the responses in Appendix C, Table VIII, the students felt that they needed better advising about the curriculum.

Therefore, much attention needs to be given to a properly designed system of advisement at all the colleges studied. While some colleges may only need to improve their advising process, others need to completely redesign their programs of faculty advisement. The need for more effective advisement programs is clearly related to the need for better communications mentioned by the students.

A basic studies or developmental type program to help the students correct weaknesses, mainly in math and English, also received frequent mention by the administrators. The administrators perceived academic preparation to be a major factor in attrition, and many of the students presently enrolled felt the same way. An early warning referral process also seems worthy of consideration for those colleges not already using such a program.

Finally, a program recommended because of its prominent absence from many campuses is that of personal counseling. The student responses also support this recommendation in that students at all of the campuses visited indicated a need for additional services in dealing with personal problems.

Recommendations. 1. Students need to be given a separate listing of courses needed over the four-year program, with the various options clearly explained. Students need to be taught to check off their courses as they progress and then should have easy access to their academic stand- to monitor their progress.

The burden for the advisement program should be entrusted to the faculty members who are most familiar with the requirements of the school and who relate well to their students. To do otherwise is to contribute to the problems mentioned in this section.

2. In spite of the fact that a developmental program necessitates additional expenditures and personnel, a concentrated effort is recommended. Any program of this nature should include not only attention to academic deficiencies, but also considerable emphasis on study skills and use of available human and material resources. Some overlap with orientation programs is expected, but proper planning could help cover all the aspects of deficiency correction as well as facilitate progress towards the acquiring of new knowledge.

3. The use of computer reporting systems by even the smallest college makes an early warning system very easy to initiate. Any one of several approaches could be utilized with a mid-term notation being probably the most common, though it may be too late. Under this system, any instructor simply reports the names of students not doing acceptable work or missing class excessively to the appropriate clearing center (computer or otherwise), and a procedure of focusing immediate attention on the problem begins.

The administrator from College A described what looks to be the most comprehensive early warning system of any college in the study. Various instructors, counselors, deans, residence assistants, work supervisors and

the student are assembled to direct attention to the student's situation in order to help solve any problems.

4. The fourth recommendation is not simply that a qualified counselor be employed but that a program of counseling be supported which the college can use to help improve its overall educational purpose. This counselor needs to be a neutral on campus, that is, one who is there strictly to serve students and not to be an extension of the administration, faculty, or church. Counselors often help counsel faculty members in many instances, a factor which should help decrease the faculty turnover rate, a problem at some colleges, as evidenced by a high number of advisors with very few years experience.

### III. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CHAPTER

Several recommendations have been made for each question involved in the study. Many of these are duplications or overlapping in nature and may not apply to all the colleges in the study. However, the researcher feels that an abbreviated listing of the different suggestions is now in order.

Recommendation One. Students should be provided with adequate information concerning the financial situation, local social climate, and specific curricular offerings before enrollment.

Recommendation Two. A more comprehensive orientation program should be established to include both activities taking place during registration and activities lasting at least one full term for all new students.



Recommendation Three. An advising program should be instituted which involves both faculty members and counselors. Faculty members taking part should be knowledgeable about the curriculum and be able to provide the students with easy access to both academic standing and the status of their progress towards a curriculum goal.

Recommendation Four. A well-publicized and organized developmental or basic studies program should be designed and operated to meet specific needs.

Recommendation Five. Administrators should take immediate steps to improve communication among all members of the college community through the fostering of viable interaction programs on both formal and informal levels.

Recommendation Six. Social or leisure-time activities should receive constant attention from the college staff so that excessive idle time can be avoided.

Recommendation Seven. The counseling program should be improved to include qualified counselors capable of conducting individual, small group, or large group counseling sessions, of dealing with personal problems and career decisions as well as of developing and supervising a program of peer counseling.

Recommendation Eight. An early warning alert system for quickly identifying students in any trouble should be immediately put into action.

Recommendation Nine. A program of both faculty and peer tutoring sessions should be implemented.

Recommendation Ten. The relationship between the college curriculum and careers should be emphasized early and supervised job training experience should be incorporated into the student's program.

Recommendation Eleven. A more flexible class schedule should be arranged so that students will have maximum opportunity to enroll in appropriate classes without having to spend extra time at the college.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study has concentrated on a particular kind of college (private four-year) in a specific geographical area (Central Appalachia) using an instrument with a large variety of responses (132 items on the student questionnaire). Attention has been focused on student responses, since the students actually compose the statistics dealt with in the study (attrition). However, in comparing student responses with administrators' responses, administrators do not seem to be aware of many student complaints, a situation which indicates a need for a future study dealing with administrators and reality.

Further research is suggested for different types of colleges in different locales, using this study's items which seem to show differences between high attrition and low attrition colleges. Other items indicating low student satisfaction and expressions of high student need should be considered.

Hopefully, the concept of asking students what they need and want in college can help the colleges diminish their attrition rates. Because of the individual nature of college campuses, each college is encouraged to engage in studies of its own on a more comprehensive scale to include

research before students enter college, each year students are in attendance, before they exit prematurely, and after they graduate. Thus, having established a comprehensive data base, wise decisions can be made which will be beneficial to both the college and its students in the future.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

LIST OF ELIGIBLE COLLEGES WITH NAMES  
OF RESPONDING ADMINISTRATORS

KENTUCKY

Berea College  
Dean of Labor and Student Life  
William R. Ramsey

Cumberland College  
Director of Admissions  
Michael Colegrove

Kentucky Christian College

Pikeville College

Union College  
Director of Career Planning  
Ed Black

Milligan College  
Dean  
Dr. Kenneth W. Oosting

Southern Missionary College

Steed College  
President  
Howard S. Steed

Tennessee Wesleyan College  
Director of Placement--  
Dean of Students  
James Cheek

Tusculum College  
Dean of Students  
Richard Mullendore

University of the South

TENNESSEE

Carson-Newman College

Johnson Bible College  
Academic Dean  
Dr. William R. Blevins

King College  
Dean of Student Affairs  
Mr. Edgar C. Torbert

Knoxville College

Lee College  
Dean of Students  
Mr. Paul Duncan

Lincoln Memorial University  
Upward Bound Director  
Bill Howard

Maryville College

VIRGINIA

Bluefield College

Emory and Henry College  
Dean of Men  
Mr. Ron Dunbar

Virginia Intermont College  
Dean of Students  
Miss Anita W. Withers

WEST VIRGINIA

Alderson Broaddus College

## LIST OF ELIGIBLE COLLEGES (continued)

WEST VIRGINIA (continued)

Bethany College  
Dean of Students  
John S. Cunningham

Davis and Elkins College

Morris Harvey College  
(University of Charleston)

Salem College  
Dean of Student Development  
Dr. Nell C. Bailey

West Virginia Wesleyan College  
Asst. to Vice-President for Academic Affairs  
Judith Siewert

Wheeling College

## APPENDIX B

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

## PART I

## FORCED-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Directions: Please place an "X" in the appropriate circle to the right of the following items. Do not sign your name on this form.

Faculty

Staff

Student

|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                               |                                                  |                                               |                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Below are statements used to identify student needs and concerns. Place a check in the columns which are true as far as you are personally concerned. | Help is<br>not<br><u>available</u><br>but<br><u>should be</u> | Help is<br><u>definitely</u><br><u>available</u> | I took<br><u>advantage</u><br>of this<br>help | The help<br><u>received</u><br>was<br><u>satis-</u><br><u>factory</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

1. Obtaining career counseling
2. Finding full-time positions after graduation
3. Finding part-time summer jobs
4. Preparing job placement credentials
5. Selecting an academic field of study
6. Obtaining adequate advising before registration
7. Getting registered for needed classes
8. Learning how to make good use of library resources
9. Finding adequate place to study
10. Designing an effective study schedule

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY (continued)

|                                                               |                                                  |                                               |                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Help is<br>not<br><u>available</u><br>but<br><u>should be</u> | Help is<br><u>definitely</u><br><u>available</u> | I took<br><u>advantage</u><br>of this<br>help | The help<br>received<br>was<br><u>satis-</u><br><u>factory</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|

11. Getting help with  
class work--tutoring  
by other students
12. Getting help with  
class work--tutoring  
by staff
13. Preparing written  
reports and projects
14. Improving study  
skills--note-taking,  
reviewing materials
15. Improving basic math  
skills
16. Improving basic  
English skills
17. Improving basic  
reading skills
18. Help from peers in  
dealing with all types  
of problems
19. Help for personal  
problems through  
college or dorm-  
sponsored small  
group counseling  
(rap) sessions
20. Developing social  
relations with other  
students



## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY (continued)

|                                                                      |                                                  |                                               |                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Help is<br><u>not</u><br><u>available</u><br>but<br><u>should be</u> | Help is<br><u>definitely</u><br><u>available</u> | I took<br><u>advantage</u><br>of this<br>help | The help<br><u>received</u><br>was<br><u>satis-</u><br><u>factory</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

21. Getting involved in campus social activities
22. Attending a variety of inexpensive entertainment (concerts, movies, plays, lectures)
23. Learning arts, crafts, and other hobbies
24. Obtaining information about what high school grades indicate
25. Obtaining information about what college entrance exam scores indicate
26. Obtaining information about how to correct any math deficiencies
27. Obtaining information about how to correct any English deficiencies
28. Comparing overall abilities to other students attending college
29. Weighing chances to graduate from college
30. Learning how to get along with instructors on an academic basis

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY (continued)

|                                                                      |                                                  |                                               |                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Help is<br><u>not</u><br><u>available</u><br>but<br><u>should be</u> | Help is<br><u>definitely</u><br><u>available</u> | I took<br><u>advantage</u><br>of this<br>help | The help<br><u>received</u><br>was<br><u>satis-</u><br><u>factory</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|

- 
31. Learning how to get along with instructors on a social basis
  32. Comparing background to other college students
  33. Getting better acquainted with the general college staff and administrators
  34. Obtaining general information about the college and college community through orientation sessions or classes before classes begin
  35. Obtaining general information about the college and college community through orientation sessions or classes during first term
  36. Getting information on how to obtain federal money for education--scholarships, loans
  37. Getting information on how to obtain local money from college or local bank--scholarships, loans

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY (continued)

|                                                                      |                                                  |                                               |                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Help is<br><u>not</u><br><u>available</u><br>but<br><u>should</u> be | Help is<br><u>definitely</u><br><u>available</u> | I took<br><u>advantage</u><br>of this<br>help | The help<br>received<br>was<br><u>satis-</u><br><u>factory</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|

38. Getting help finding  
part-time work during  
the school year

39. Other--

## PART II

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What are the main reason(s) that students give for dropping out from this college?
2. Which academic improvement programs, designed to help students succeed in this college, are most helpful to you?
3. Which cultural-social programs have been most enjoyable for you?
4. Which counseling services (personal counseling, career planning, rap sessions, orientation, etc.) have been most helpful to you?
5. Which programs which are designed to promote faculty-student interaction have worked?
6. How many years has your advisor been working at this college?

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS SURVEY (continued)

7. What percent of your college expenses are covered by any type of financial aid?
8. What else should this college do to help you to graduate?

## EXPLANATION AND CONSENT FORM

The questionnaire is part of a research project dealing with college dropout programs. In this phase of the project your opinions about desirable and undesirable aspects of the college are being sought. Your participation will be greatly appreciated, but if you do not choose to fill in the questionnaire, simply turn in the form and no penalty will be imposed in any way. If you begin filling in the form and change your mind, you may withdraw from the project, again with no penalty.

Please use no names in any of your answers and do not write your name anywhere except on this page.

Sign below indicating you understand the purposes of the questionnaire and are willing to participate. After you turn in the completed questionnaire, this page will be separated from your answers to guarantee complete anonymity. Thank you.

---

Signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX C

TABLE VI

## RESPONSES OF STUDENTS TO FORCED-CHOICE ITEMS BY GROUP

|                                    |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Predictors of Success              |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 24.                                | C | 56               | 29              | 11           | 10           |
| Explain<br>H.S. grades             | K | 43               | 40              | 18           | 14           |
|                                    | B | 53               | 24              | 11           | 8            |
|                                    | G | 54               | 30              | 6            | 6            |
| 25.                                | C | 41               | 46              | 16           | 12           |
| Explain<br>entrance<br>exam scores | K | 21               | 63              | 22           | 22           |
|                                    | B | 43               | 35              | 10           | 7            |
|                                    | G | 31               | 48              | 23           | 19           |
| 26.                                | C | 32               | 53              | 12           | 11           |
| Correct<br>math<br>deficiency      | K | 20               | 52              | 23           | 17           |
|                                    | B | 39               | 40              | 6            | 5            |
|                                    | G | 22               | 62              | 23           | 9            |
| 27.                                | C | 26               | 58              | 14           | 10           |
| Correct<br>English<br>deficiency   | K | 22               | 52              | 17           | 17           |
|                                    | B | 28               | 51              | 9            | 8            |
|                                    | G | 20               | 67              | 26           | 2            |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                           |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|---------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 28.                       | C | 59               | 24              | 11           | 10           |
| Comparing<br>ability      | K | 36               | 40              | 18           | 15           |
|                           | B | 47               | 28              | 9            | 6            |
|                           | G | 27               | 49              | 26           | 15           |
| 29.                       | C | 45               | 32              | 13           | 9            |
| Chances to<br>graduate    | K | 37               | 48              | 19           | 19           |
|                           | B | 34               | 44              | 11           | 8            |
|                           | G | 27               | 51              | 22           | 12           |
| 32.                       | C | 42               | 35              | 22           | 13           |
| Compare<br>background     | K | 29               | 41              | 20           | 15           |
|                           | B | 42               | 32              | 12           | 6            |
|                           | G | 36               | 45              | 21           | 11           |
| Academic Support Services |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 11.                       | C | 35               | 58              | 18           | 14           |
| Student<br>tutoring       | K | 30               | 66              | 29           | 17           |
|                           | B | 8                | 88              | 26           | 16           |
|                           | G | 4                | 92              | 11           | 6            |
| 12.                       | C | 22               | 68              | 30           | 27           |
| Staff<br>tutoring         | K | 18               | 66              | 25           | 18           |
|                           | B | 23               | 70              | 17           | 10           |
|                           | G | 17               | 74              | 17           | 13           |



TABLE VI (continued)

|                            |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|----------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 13.                        | C | 35               | 59              | 30           | 18           |
| Preparing<br>reports       | K | 34               | 58              | 30           | 22           |
|                            | B | 27               | 65              | 25           | 23           |
|                            | G | 19               | 72              | 18           | 11           |
| 14.                        | C | 24               | 69              | 24           | 20           |
| Study<br>skills            | K | 45               | 45              | 19           | 17           |
|                            | B | 27               | 65              | 28           | 22           |
|                            | G | 62               | 36              | 19           | 13           |
| 15.                        | C | 9                | 82              | 20           | 18           |
| Basic<br>math<br>skills    | K | 10               | 74              | 30           | 23           |
|                            | B | 21               | 69              | 17           | 13           |
|                            | G | 14               | 80              | 28           | 23           |
| 16.                        | C | 5                | 89              | 18           | 14           |
| Basic<br>English<br>skills | K | 12               | 68              | 24           | 20           |
|                            | B | 15               | 75              | 21           | 17           |
|                            | G | 17               | 77              | 27           | 18           |
| 17.                        | C | 11               | 85              | 18           | 16           |
| Basic<br>reading<br>skills | K | 8                | 73              | 23           | 19           |
|                            | B | 10               | 81              | 25           | 16           |
|                            | G | 25               | 71              | 32           | 23           |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                                                    |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Counseling Services                                |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 1.                                                 | C | 15               | 80              | 38           | 30           |
| Career<br>counseling                               | K | 2                | 91              | 30           | 23           |
|                                                    | B | 14               | 82              | 25           | 21           |
|                                                    | G | 23               | 74              | 31           | 28           |
| 5.                                                 | C | 23               | 70              | 31           | 20           |
| Choosing<br>academic<br>field                      | K | 20               | 70              | 38           | 28           |
|                                                    | B | 11               | 82              | 33           | 29           |
|                                                    | G | 25               | 69              | 34           | 17           |
| 6.                                                 | C | 25               | 70              | 49           | 34           |
| Advising<br>before<br>registration                 | K | 23               | 63              | 43           | 31           |
|                                                    | B | 28               | 69              | 50           | 38           |
|                                                    | G | 40               | 57              | 43           | 16           |
| 18.                                                | C | 37               | 54              | 28           | 15           |
| Help from<br>peers for<br>problems                 | K | 12               | 79              | 35           | 19           |
|                                                    | B | 22               | 72              | 32           | 25           |
|                                                    | G | 35               | 59              | 11           | 6            |
| 19.                                                | C | 64               | 23              | 11           | 7            |
| Counseling<br>sessions for<br>personal<br>problems | K | 52               | 38              | 19           | 15           |
|                                                    | B | 54               | 32              | 10           | 10           |
|                                                    | G | 63               | 29              | 11           | 4            |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                                |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 36.                            | C | 32               | 53              | 25           | 18           |
| How to get<br>federal<br>money | K | 19               | 70              | 31           | 23           |
|                                | B | 7                | 72              | 44           | 28           |
|                                | G | 4                | 81              | 41           | 21           |
| 37.                            | C | 45               | 43              | 22           | 15           |
| How to get<br>local<br>money   | K | 25               | 60              | 18           | 14           |
|                                | B | 13               | 66              | 29           | 20           |
|                                | G | 32               | 53              | 16           | 9            |
| Orientation                    |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 7.                             | C | 17               | 79              | 46           | 32           |
| Getting<br>registered          | K | 15               | 85              | 56           | 35           |
|                                | B | 23               | 76              | 48           | 35           |
|                                | G | 24               | 76              | 42           | 11           |
| 8.                             | C | 27               | 69              | 43           | 31           |
| Using the<br>library           | K | 4                | 90              | 54           | 35           |
|                                | B | 18               | 79              | 38           | 34           |
|                                | G | 30               | 68              | 23           | 15           |
| 9.                             | C | 38               | 58              | 32           | 17           |
| Places<br>to study             | K | 15               | 74              | 28           | 14           |
|                                | B | 25               | 71              | 26           | 18           |
|                                | G | 37               | 61              | 29           | 6            |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                                 |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 10.                             | C | 46               | 48              | 11           | 10           |
| Designing<br>study<br>schedule  | K | 43               | 49              | 15           | 11           |
|                                 | B | 38               | 56              | 20           | 17           |
|                                 | G | 23               | 75              | 33           | 28           |
| 34.                             | C | 35               | 54              | 26           | 22           |
| Orientation<br>before<br>school | K | 39               | 47              | 22           | 14           |
|                                 | B | 19               | 62              | 31           | 22           |
|                                 | G | 31               | 49              | 21           | 11           |
| 35.                             | C | 38               | 49              | 18           | 16           |
| Orientation<br>during<br>school | K | 37               | 45              | 15           | 13           |
|                                 | B | 10               | 70              | 38           | 25           |
|                                 | G | 22               | 64              | 27           | 7            |
| Job Placement                   |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 2.                              | C | 26               | 54              | 7            | 2            |
| Job after<br>graduation         | K | 13               | 54              | 15           | 15           |
|                                 | B | 20               | 63              | 6            | 5            |
|                                 | G | 54               | 38              | 2            | 2            |
| 3.                              | C | 26               | 63              | 14           | 9            |
| Summer job                      | K | 22               | 56              | 22           | 17           |
|                                 | B | 19               | 71              | 19           | 16           |
|                                 | G | 46               | 34              | 10           | 5            |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                                  |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 4.                               | C | 14               | 68              | 12           | 6            |
| Job placement<br>papers          | K | 7                | 71              | 20           | 17           |
|                                  | B | 19               | 64              | 9            | 5            |
|                                  | G | 47               | 38              | 6            | 6            |
| 38.                              | C | 55               | 31              | 17           | 12           |
| Part-time<br>work during<br>year | K | 21               | 71              | 11           | 4            |
|                                  | B | 16               | 64              | 22           | 17           |
|                                  | G | 51               | 30              | 6            | 0            |
| Cultural-Social                  |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 20.                              | C | 38               | 53              | 28           | 18           |
| Developing<br>social<br>contacts | K | 24               | 69              | 35           | 18           |
|                                  | B | 25               | 67              | 31           | 25           |
|                                  | G | 34               | 57              | 28           | 6            |
| 21.                              | C | 35               | 54              | 23           | 15           |
| Campus<br>social<br>activities   | K | 18               | 80              | 51           | 31           |
|                                  | B | 19               | 73              | 36           | 29           |
|                                  | G | 31               | 66              | 24           | 11           |
| 22.                              | C | 20               | 67              | 32           | 19           |
| Cheap<br>entertainment           | K | 15               | 77              | 58           | 29           |
|                                  | B | 10               | 86              | 51           | 37           |
|                                  | G | 19               | 78              | 30           | 23           |

TABLE VI (continued)

|                                                  |   | Not<br>Available | Is<br>Available | Used<br>Help | Satisfactory |
|--------------------------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 23.                                              | C | 53               | 33              | 8            | 7            |
| Arts, crafts<br>hobbies                          | K | 44               | 38              | 11           | 11           |
|                                                  | B | 50               | 30              | 9            | 7            |
|                                                  | G | 16               | 68              | 21           | 4            |
| Faculty-Student Interaction                      |   |                  |                 |              |              |
| 30.                                              | C | 51               | 37              | 18           | 11           |
| Get along<br>with teachers<br>academically       | K | 33               | 51              | 18           | 12           |
|                                                  | B | 32               | 44              | 16           | 11           |
|                                                  | G | 35               | 44              | 24           | 4            |
| 31.                                              | C | 42               | 41              | 21           | 13           |
| Get along<br>with teachers<br>socially           | K | 36               | 44              | 23           | 15           |
|                                                  | B | 40               | 35              | 11           | 9            |
|                                                  | G | 44               | 41              | 18           | 4            |
| 33.                                              | C | 42               | 42              | 24           | 14           |
| Get along<br>with staff<br>and<br>administrators | K | 44               | 37              | 20           | 7            |
|                                                  | B | 33               | 45              | 15           | 12           |
|                                                  | G | 37               | 44              | 24           | 7            |

TABLE VII

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY GROUP FOR EACH COLLEGE

|                       | Help is not<br>Available but<br>Should be | Help is<br>Definitely<br>Available | I used<br>This<br>Help | The help<br>Received was<br>Satisfactory |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Predictors of Success |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                     | 43                                        | 39                                 | 14                     | 11                                       |
| K                     | 30                                        | 48                                 | 19                     | 17                                       |
| B                     | 41                                        | 36                                 | 10                     | 7                                        |
| G                     | 31                                        | 50                                 | 21                     | 11                                       |
| Academic Support      |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                     | 20                                        | 73                                 | 22                     | 18                                       |
| K                     | 24                                        | 64                                 | 26                     | 19                                       |
| B                     | 19                                        | 73                                 | 22                     | 17                                       |
| G                     | 23                                        | 72                                 | 22                     | 15                                       |
| Counseling            |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                     | 35                                        | 56                                 | 29                     | 20                                       |
| K                     | 22                                        | 67                                 | 30                     | 22                                       |
| B                     | 21                                        | 68                                 | 32                     | 24                                       |
| G                     | 32                                        | 60                                 | 27                     | 14                                       |
| Orientation           |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                     | 33                                        | 59                                 | 29                     | 23                                       |
| K                     | 26                                        | 65                                 | 32                     | 20                                       |
| B                     | 22                                        | 69                                 | 33                     | 25                                       |
| G                     | 28                                        | 65                                 | 29                     | 13                                       |

TABLE VII (continued)

|                             | Help is not<br>Available but<br>Should be | Help is<br>Definitely<br>Available | I used<br>This<br>Help | The help<br>Received was<br>Satisfactory |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Job Placement               |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                           | 30                                        | 54                                 | 13                     | 7                                        |
| K                           | 16                                        | 63                                 | 17                     | 13                                       |
| B                           | 19                                        | 65                                 | 14                     | 11                                       |
| G                           | 50                                        | 35                                 | 6                      | 3                                        |
| Cultural-Social             |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                           | 37                                        | 52                                 | 23                     | 15                                       |
| K                           | 25                                        | 66                                 | 39                     | 22                                       |
| B                           | 26                                        | 64                                 | 32                     | 24                                       |
| G                           | 25                                        | 67                                 | 26                     | 11                                       |
| Faculty-Student Interaction |                                           |                                    |                        |                                          |
| C                           | 45                                        | 40                                 | 21                     | 13                                       |
| K                           | 38                                        | 44                                 | 20                     | 11                                       |
| B                           | 35                                        | 41                                 | 14                     | 11                                       |
| G                           | 39                                        | 43                                 | 22                     | 5                                        |



TABLE VIII

## RESPONSES OF STUDENTS TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

|                                                                                                                     | COLLEGES<br>(Percentage) |    |    |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|
|                                                                                                                     | C                        | K  | B  | G  |
| 1. What are the main reason(s) that students give for dropping out from this college?                               |                          |    |    |    |
| a. Financial                                                                                                        | 38                       | 3  | 18 | 44 |
| b. Poor facilities or physical environment                                                                          | 11                       |    | 10 | 3  |
| c. Lack of communication                                                                                            | 11                       | 39 | 10 | 10 |
| d. Poor academic delivery                                                                                           | 5                        | 10 | 3  | 15 |
| e. Lack of attention to special academic or counseling needs                                                        | 11                       |    |    |    |
| f. Rules too strict                                                                                                 | 41                       | 10 | 31 | 5  |
| g. Social environment                                                                                               | 24                       | 6  | 30 | 23 |
| h. Major or career goal not offered                                                                                 | 8                        | 29 | 8  | 13 |
| i. Academic difficulty                                                                                              | 4                        | 19 | 15 | 13 |
| j. Lack of adequate interest                                                                                        |                          | 6  | 27 | 15 |
| k. Problems back home                                                                                               | 1                        | 13 | 3  | 5  |
| l. Marriage                                                                                                         |                          |    | 5  | 5  |
| m. Cannot adjust to college life                                                                                    | 2                        | 13 | 1  | 8  |
| n. Get a job                                                                                                        |                          |    | 3  | 8  |
| o. Health reasons                                                                                                   |                          |    |    |    |
| p. Completed educational plans                                                                                      |                          |    |    |    |
| q. Policy changes                                                                                                   |                          | 16 |    |    |
| 2. Which academic improvement programs, designed to help students succeed in this college, are most helpful to you? |                          |    |    |    |
| a. None                                                                                                             | 28                       | 19 | 17 | 8  |
| b. Development of special skill improvement programs                                                                | 10                       | 3  | 11 | 23 |
| c. Peer tutoring                                                                                                    | 1                        |    | 2  |    |
| d. Faculty tutoring/support                                                                                         | 2                        | 3  | 13 | 13 |
| e. Study skills                                                                                                     | 1                        |    |    | 3  |
| f. Summer program                                                                                                   | 1                        |    |    |    |
| g. College adjustment courses                                                                                       |                          | 3  | 2  | 5  |
| h. Career planning                                                                                                  | 2                        |    |    |    |
| i. All                                                                                                              |                          |    |    | 3  |

TABLE VIII (continued)

|                                                                                                                                       | COLLEGES<br>(Percentage) |     |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|----|-----|
|                                                                                                                                       | C                        | K   | B  | G   |
| 3. Which cultural-social programs have been most enjoyable for you?                                                                   |                          |     |    |     |
| a. Movies                                                                                                                             | 6                        | 10  | 5  |     |
| b. Presentations by outside speakers or groups                                                                                        | 9                        |     | 1  |     |
| c. Presentations by college group                                                                                                     | 21                       | 19  | 28 | 3   |
| d. Participation in recreational type activities/dances                                                                               | 16                       | 29  | 11 | 5   |
| e. Participation in religious programs/ Behavioral Science                                                                            | 1                        |     | 3  | /21 |
| f. College clubs or fraternities/dorm parties                                                                                         | 1                        | /32 | 8  | 8   |
| g. Old Oak Festival                                                                                                                   |                          | 23  |    |     |
| h. Coffee House                                                                                                                       |                          |     | 3  | 18  |
| i. All                                                                                                                                | 6                        | 10  | 5  |     |
| j. None                                                                                                                               | 22                       |     | 6  | 21  |
| 4. Which counseling services (personal counseling, career planning, rap sessions, orientation, etc.) have been most enjoyable to you? |                          |     |    |     |
| a. None                                                                                                                               | 20                       | 16  | 5  | 10  |
| b. Personal counseling with faculty member                                                                                            | 36                       | 16  | 32 | 33  |
| c. Personal counseling with friend                                                                                                    |                          | 10  |    | 5   |
| d. Rap sessions                                                                                                                       | 9                        |     | 6  |     |
| e. Orientation                                                                                                                        | 8                        | 10  | 12 | 15  |
| f. Career planning                                                                                                                    | 16                       | 19  | 10 |     |
| g. Dorm devotions                                                                                                                     |                          |     |    |     |
| h. Peer counseling                                                                                                                    | 1                        |     | 1  |     |
| i. Summer Internship                                                                                                                  |                          |     |    |     |
| j. R. A. Program                                                                                                                      |                          | 6   |    |     |
| k. Small groups                                                                                                                       |                          |     | 3  |     |
| l. All                                                                                                                                | 2                        |     |    |     |
| m. Advising                                                                                                                           | 4                        |     |    |     |
| 5. Which programs which are designed to promote faculty/student interaction have worked?                                              |                          |     |    |     |
| a. Faculty/student meals                                                                                                              |                          |     |    | 3   |
| b. Faculty/student games                                                                                                              | 4                        | 13  | 9  | 18  |
| c. Faculty/student open house/reception                                                                                               | 10                       | 3   | 4  | 5   |

TABLE VIII (continued)

|                                                                                       | COLLEGES<br>(Percentage) |    |    |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|
|                                                                                       | C                        | K  | B  | G  |
| 5. (continued)                                                                        |                          |    |    |    |
| d. Faculty/student forum                                                              |                          |    | 1  | 3  |
| e. Faculty/student as one-to-one                                                      | 1                        | 3  |    | 3  |
| f. Joint participation in Chapel                                                      |                          |    | 1  |    |
| g. Faculty living on campus                                                           |                          |    |    |    |
| h. Small group meetings with advisor/faculty                                          |                          | 3  |    | 13 |
| i. Orientation                                                                        |                          |    |    |    |
| j. Parents weekend reception                                                          | 3                        |    |    |    |
| k. None                                                                               | 18                       | 26 | 16 | 23 |
| l. Lincoln Day                                                                        |                          |    |    | 13 |
| 6. How many years has your advisor been working at this college?                      |                          |    |    |    |
| a. 1-2 years                                                                          | 12                       | 10 | 22 | 13 |
| b. 3-5 years                                                                          | 24                       | 23 | 6  | 33 |
| c. 6-9 years                                                                          | 7                        | 6  | 12 | 3  |
| d. 10-15 years                                                                        | 6                        | 3  | 17 |    |
| e. 15 years or more                                                                   | 7                        |    | 10 |    |
| f. Unsure                                                                             |                          | 16 | 11 | 18 |
| 7. What percentage of your college expenses are covered by any type of financial aid? |                          |    |    |    |
| a. 100%                                                                               | 12                       | 10 | 22 | 13 |
| b. 90+%                                                                               | 7                        |    | 2  | 5  |
| c. 75%-90%                                                                            | 8                        | 6  | 18 | 18 |
| d. 50%-74%                                                                            | 18                       | 39 | 19 | 13 |
| e. 25%-49%                                                                            | 9                        | 6  | 8  | 5  |
| f. 1%-24%                                                                             | 9                        | 6  | 7  | 3  |
| g. 0%                                                                                 | 17                       | 6  | 11 | 10 |
| 8. What else should this college do to help you to graduate?                          |                          |    |    |    |
| a. Better advising on curriculum requirements                                         | 3                        | 16 | 11 | 5  |
| b. Need full-time counselor                                                           | 2                        |    | 3  |    |
| c. Better career planning                                                             |                          | 3  | 1  |    |
| d. Offer evening or independent study courses                                         | 11                       | 16 | 4  | 3  |

TABLE VIII (continued)

|                                                                | COLLEGES<br>(Percentage) |    |    |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|----|---|
|                                                                | C                        | K  | B  | G |
| 8. (continued)                                                 |                          |    |    |   |
| e. Offer practical supervised job experience                   | 2                        |    | 3  | 3 |
| f. Offer more majors                                           | 12                       | 6  | 3  |   |
| g. Easier access to academic standing                          |                          |    |    | 5 |
| h. Do not change requirements                                  |                          | 3  | 3  |   |
| i. Change Chapel requirements                                  |                          |    | 1  |   |
| j. Constant faculty support and encouragement                  |                          | 3  | 3  | 5 |
| k. Mid-term break                                              |                          |    |    |   |
| l. Improve communication                                       | 12                       | 19 | 3  | 8 |
| m. Make library more accessible                                | 1                        |    |    | 3 |
| n. Provide more freedom                                        | 1                        | 3  | 3  | 3 |
| o. More help with financial aid planning                       | 6                        |    | 3  | 3 |
| p. Improve job placement program for graduates                 | 4                        | 3  | 4  | 3 |
| q. Improve job placement while attending<br>school and summers |                          |    | 3  | 5 |
| r. Upgrade faculty                                             | 2                        | 10 | 9  | 8 |
| s. Improve facilities                                          | 7                        |    | 1  |   |
| t. Better courses                                              |                          |    | 15 |   |

## APPENDIX D

## ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Person completing questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Position \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

## PART I

A. Please list your statistics for the following categories of information:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                    | a.    | b.    | c.    | d.    | e.    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1972  | 1973  | 1974  | 1975  | 1976  |
| 1. Number of freshmen enrolled in fall:                                                                                                                                            | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Number of these same freshmen who continued in school and enrolled as sophomores:                                                                                               | 1973  | 1974  | 1975  | 1976  | 1977  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3.. Please give your opinion regarding the main reason(s) for freshman attrition at your college.                                                                                  | _____ |       |       |       |       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | _____ |       |       |       |       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | _____ |       |       |       |       |
| 4. On the basis of facilities for housing resident undergraduates, married and single, approximately how many additional students could you have accommodated in the fall of 1977? | _____ |       |       |       |       |
| 5. On the basis of classroom facilities for undergraduates, approximately how many more students could you have accommodated in the fall of 1977?                                  | _____ |       |       |       |       |
| 6. Briefly describe any program or activity you would like to initiate with the specific purpose of decreasing attrition and of improving retention.                               |       |       |       |       |       |

## PART II

Listed below are examples of pro-rams and activities being used in various colleges to decrease attrition and improve retention. Please check those items currently being practiced on your campus. If others are in operation, please add them in the spaces provided.

## A. Counseling and Advisement Programs

- ☐ Peer counseling program
- ☐ Small groups counseling program
- ☐ Faculty advisement program
- ☐ Career planning program
- ☐ Freshman orientation program (shorter than a term)
- ☐ Freshman orientation course (lasting a full term)
- ☐ Transfer orientation program
- ☐ Program for survival in college (such as how to take notes, how to organize time, how to use college resources)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Informal Education Programs

- ☐ A program or activity encouraging systematic faculty and student interaction outside the classroom
- ☐ College sponsored educational-cultural events, i.e. guest lecturers
- ☐ Living-learning program for freshmen, transfers, or high risk students
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Academic Improvement Programs

- ☐ Peer tutoring program
- ☐ Faculty tutoring program
- ☐ Developmental reading program to any students
- ☐ Developmental math program open to any students
- ☐ Program for study skills improvement
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## D. Financial Aid Programs

- ☐ Federally funded financial aid programs (BEOG)
- ☐ Federally funded campus jobs program
- ☐ Local financial aid program not using federal funds
- ☐ Federal grants for program(s) to improve retention
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II (continued)

## E. Dealing with High Risk Students

- ☐ Use of biographical information in prediction of success
- ☐ Advisement and counseling for high risk students
- ☐ Programming or class-scheduling for high risk students
- ☐ Developmental reading program for high risk students
- ☐ Developmental math program for high risk students
- ☐ Other ☐

## F. College Procedural Changes

- ☐ A procedure for systematic identification of high risk students in the admissions process
- ☐ Revised housing regulations such as curfew, visitation, assignment to freshman or transfer dorm
- ☐ Formulation of a committee studying attrition and making recommendations for changes
- ☐ Requiring students to complete academic improvement courses when necessary
- ☐ Other ☐

## PART III

In the spaces provided below, please identify and elaborate on the programs and activities specifically designed to improve retention at your school. Please supply the information below and send any pamphlets or descriptive materials which would help me to better understand the activities. Also, please indicate that such materials are being sent by checking the box beside the appropriate entry.

Name of Program or Activity:

Additional materials enclosed

- a. Name and title of director
- b. Number of years in operation
- c. Number of students participating per term
- d. Cut-off score to participate (if any) (ACT, SAT, GPA)
- e. Method of referral (such as self-referred, college referred, combination, other)
- f. Other comments (studies of success of participants, feeling of faculty towards program or other institutional research)



## PART III (continued)

Name of Program or Activity:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

Name of Program or Activity:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

Name of Program or Activity:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

## PART IV

Now that you have identified (Part II) and elaborated (Part III) on the programs and activities being used to improve retention, please respond to the following evaluative questions.

- A. On the basis of the percentage of special program students who continued in college as compared to regular students, which is the most effective program for improving the number of continuing and re-enrolling students?

Which is the next most effective?

- B. On the basis of dollars spent per student on any programs designed to improve retention, which is the most expensive program per student?

Which is the next most expensive program?

- C. In examining the cost-benefit ratio for programs designed to improve retention, on the basis of producing the highest re-enrollment rate for the least amount of time and money invested (efficiency), which program has the best cost-benefit ratio?

Which program has the next best cost-benefit ratio?

- D. In terms of environmental or extracurricular factors, such as campus appearance, athletic programs, and friendly atmosphere, which factor is most influential in persuading students to continue their studies with you?

Which is the second most influential factor?

- E. On the basis of your own experience, which two programs would you recommend to administrators at other colleges?

(1)

(2)

## PART V

- A. Could your college be utilized for further data collection regarding this topic? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Would you be willing to help arrange for a campus visit for interviewing faculty members, staff members, and a representative group of students? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

LETTER TO ADMINISTRATORS  
REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

5440 Colonial Circle  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37918

The retention of students is emerging as one of the major factors affecting college enrollments for the next 10 to 20 years. Many studies have been conducted on various aspects of the retention/attrition problem. Retention is especially critical for the small private colleges of rural or mountainous America. My study attempts to answer these questions: "What are colleges actually doing to improve retention?" and "What programs have been successful in the retention of students?"

Key administrators in private colleges of the Central Appalachian Region are being asked to respond to the enclosed survey. Input from all these private colleges regarding good retention programs is vital. Your participation is encouraged in order to help me better understand successful retention programs at your college as well as others. The results of the study will be sent to all participants, indicating those programs which could be of benefit to you in the future.

Please return the completed survey and other information to the above address. Thank you for your valuable time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Wilbourn, Jr.  
Doctoral candidate  
University of Tennessee

Enclosure

SECOND LETTER REQUESTING  
ADMINISTRATIVE PARTICIPATION

Sometime during the past summer, one of my doctoral advisees sent you a questionnaire concerning methods of combatting attrition. Possibly Mr. Wilbourn's mailout never reached your office. Or maybe you simply had too many other items or urgency which prevented you from responding. In any event, I am now writing to see if you might have a few free minutes to fill out the original or enclosed copy of the questionnaire.

I fully suspect that you are bombarded with requests, similar to this one, to participate in educational surveys, and I also suspect that time limitations allow you to participate in only a fraction of the studies in which you are identified as a "lucky member of the random sample." In other words, I realize that you may initially be inclined--for legitimate reasons--to drop this letter and the accompanying questionnaire into your circular file. I must admit that this is usually my inclination when I open the mail and find another damn survey.

With regard to this particular questionnaire, could I please request that you think about a couple of facts before you decide to become an official nonrespondant. First of all, Mr. Wilbourn's questionnaire constitutes the main data source for his doctoral dissertation. His survey is not being sent simply to fulfill the requirements of an academic course. Second, his topic--ATTRITION--is as timely as any that are now being investigated. Our Chancellor's 1979-80 Report to the Faculty at UT-Knoxville will support this contention. Third, only a small number of individuals have responded as of this point in time. And unless Mr. Wilbourn receives additional forms, he will not be in a position to draw useful and valid conclusions. Fourth, a summary of his dissertation will be sent to all those who participate, and it is anticipated that the content of this report may well benefit your own institution.

For the above reasons--especially the first and third, can I respectfully ask that you try to find a few moments to answer Chan's questions. We've enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the hoped-for return of the questionnaire. And if it weren't for low faculty salaries and inflation, I would be sending a monetary incentive or some token of appreciation. All I can do is say thanks for considering our request.

Cordially,

Schuyler W. Huck  
Professor of Education

Enclosure

## PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Attention has been focused on retention/attrition both in national conferences and in numerous studies over the years by Alexander Astin, Tom MacMillan, Dorothy Knoell, Ida Long Rogers, Carol Shulman, Patrick Terenzini, and others. In reviewing the literature, major divisions consist of: 1) research aimed at describing some characteristics and motives of those who drop out; 2) research dealing with ways of predicting who will drop out; and 3) research dealing with problems designed to prevent dropping out.

National figures such as Clark Kerr (1972), Jack Magarrell (1976), Robert L. Jacobson (1977), and others have been predicting static or declining enrollment in higher education since 1972. However, enrollment did not in fact become static or decline until the fall of 1976. The picture for the future was graphically presented by John R. Silber when he pointed out that for demographic reasons the freshman class of 1990 can be no larger than three-fourths the size of the freshman class of 1972.

With fewer eighteen year olds to recruit, colleges must expand programs to meet the needs of adult education or community service and attempt to improve their retention/attrition figures. In light of all the attention and concern on the problem of enrollment, it seems justifiable to ask, "What are colleges actually doing to improve retention?"

This study will focus on the private four-year colleges of Central Appalachia, numbering 28, in eastern Kentucky, east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and West Virginia. It will attempt to

answer the following questions:

1. How do programs and activities of colleges with high retention rates differ from programs of colleges with low retention rates?
2. Which programs and activities seem to be most effective in high retention colleges?
3. To what extent are these colleges making use of non-academic programs and activities to assist in the improvement of retention?
4. Which academic predictors are utilized to help plan programs and activities to improve retention?

A questionnaire will be sent to top level administrators in each of the colleges. With the information obtained on the questionnaires plus enrollment information from Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study and The College Blue Book, the colleges will be placed on a continuum. Colleges with lowest retention and colleges with highest retention will be visited by the researcher. The purpose of the visits will be to obtain first hand perceptions of the efforts to improve retention. By interviewing some faculty members, by asking a representative group of students to respond to specific questions and by talking with administrators, additional perceptions can be further reported in the study.

Hopefully, the study will reveal those things the colleges with favorable retention rates are doing which can be implemented by colleges with unsatisfactory retention rates and reveal new programs and perceptions regarding retention.

## APPENDIX E



## PANEL OF EXPERTS

Carol Shulman  
Educational Resources Information Center  
Clearinghouse on Higher Education  
The George Washington University  
Suite 630  
One Dupont Circle  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Alexander W. Astin  
Laboratory for Research on Higher Education  
Graduate School of Education  
University of California  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90024

Patrick T. Terenzini  
School of Education  
Department of Higher/Postsecondary Education  
Syracuse University  
229 Huntington Hall  
150 Marshall Street  
Syracuse, New York 13210

Dorothy M. Knoell  
California Postsecondary Education Commission  
1020 12th Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

## VITA

Thomas Chandler Wilbourn, Jr., was born on July 13, 1938, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He grew up "on the road" in Tennessee and Kentucky with a family employed in road building skills and TVA dam building operations. After attending Cocke County High School for two years, he moved back to Knoxville to graduate in the upper 10 percent of his class at Central High School in Knoxville. He attended The University of Tennessee until his graduation from the College of Liberal Arts with a major in Latin and a minor in history in 1961. He earned a Master in Arts Degree in Guidance from the University of South Florida in June of 1971, and a doctorate in education from The University of Tennessee in 1979.

He has been working as a teacher and counselor in the public high schools of Knox County, Tennessee, and Brevard County, Florida, since receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree. He has been employed at various construction sites during the summers and worked for three years as a part-time evening counselor for the Brevard Community College in Melbourne, Florida.