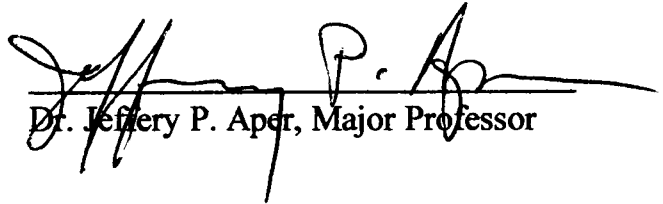
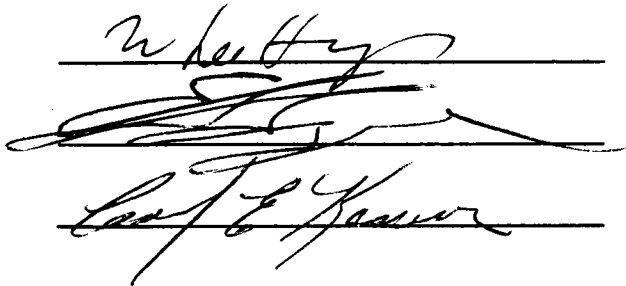


To the Graduate Council:


I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Carolyn Reynolds Jensen entitled "Demographics of Students Enrolled in Post-Secondary Credit Certificate Programs In Selected Public Georgia Institutions With A Follow-Up Survey of Certificate Students at Dalton College." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

  
Dr. Jeffery P. Aper, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation  
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:

  
Associate Vice Chancellor and  
Dean of The Graduate School

**Demographics of Students Enrolled in  
Post-Secondary Credit Certificate Programs  
In Selected Public Georgia Institutions With A  
Follow-Up Survey of Certificate Students at Dalton College**

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

Carolyn Reynolds Jensen  
May, 1998

## DEDICATION

This accomplishment is dedicated to three individuals without whose influence I would not have realized my dream:

First, this is a dedication to the memory of loved ones who were so dear to me and whose early deaths denied them a realization of their own potentials.

To my son, Michael Joseph Jensen, whose young life was so ravaged by disease, but whose indomitable spirit was an on-going inspiration for me to *pick up the pieces* and chase my dream;

and

To my mother, Elizabeth C. Reynolds, who first taught me the joy of learning and who proved that no one is too old to pursue new rainbows.

Finally, I dedicate this study to my husband Joe C. Jensen, the only truly selfless person I have ever known, who has always put aside his own aspirations to cheer me on to new heights.

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The greatest debt I owe is to my family who have sacrificed, encouraged, and guided in a myriad of ways. Most importantly, they have always believed in me.

## ABSTRACT

This descriptive study examined the characteristics of students enrolled in less-than one-year certificate programs taken for college credit. The investigation was performed using enrollment data from four University System of Georgia colleges. The remaining data was collected through surveying a group of 400 certificate students at Dalton College.

The demographic profile generated showed certificate students in the study to be predominantly female, Caucasian, receiving financial aid, attending school part-time, and working 30 hours or more per week. Approximately 29% had a GED, rather than a high school diploma. Over 28% answered affirmatively when queried about previous post-secondary experience, although there was a *no response* rate of 59%. More students were receiving the Georgia HOPE Scholarship than any other type of financial award.

Almost one fourth of the certificate students surveyed believed that certificate programs offered a good beginning to gain confidence in order to complete a longer degree program, while 84% believed they had the ability to finish a longer program. Eight-eight percent reported that they would feel better about themselves after successful program completion, regardless of their employment status. Although *getting a job in a different field* was the choice of

71% of those surveyed, participation in further education was anticipated by 46%.

Beginning in a program of less-than one year in length appears to be a non-threatening starting place for students who might not otherwise have attended college.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

If someone were to produce a snapshot of the typical American higher education student, what would that picture show? The answer might be, "It depends on time and place." Over the last few decades distinct changes have occurred in the demography of post-secondary education (Phillippe, 1997). Once the sole purview of white middle and upper class males, today's colleges are hosts to heterogeneous groups with varied motivations and divergent goals for their educational experiences. To accommodate this evolution the more effective institutions have attempted to sharpen their focus and adjust their processes. Many are reexamining assumptions, delivery systems, and course offerings. However, institutional honing cannot be effective unless first the identity and characteristics of diverse sub-populations can be established. One size education does not fit all.

Although researchers have often targeted educational institutions and their constituents, few have focused exclusively on students who choose short programs requiring less than two years of study (Henderson, 1997; Holt, 1991). This less-than associate degree level training, known variously as certificate or diploma programs, is often located at two-year institutions where career

preparation is closely aligned with the community college mission. In fact, seven in ten students earning certificates in 1993-94 received them from community colleges (Henderson, 1995). Students enrolled in certificate programs encompass a growing percentage of the community college population, yet little is known about their identity, educational goals, sources of support, the barriers they encounter, their aspirations, and the perceived influence which financial aid imposes upon them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

With the increasing popularity of certificate programs more research is needed to identify the characteristics of students choosing these programs of study. Educators searching existing literature for understanding about certificate students are thwarted in two respects: 1) the paucity of data and 2) their lack of specificity (Long, 1991; Holt, 1991). Articles published about certificate students are rare and those which do exist generally include data from a wide array of educational experiences. Following a computer search a decade ago Smith (1987) noted only two studies of certificate programs. Holt (1991) reported no dissertations with *certificate* cited in the title during her search of the 1987-1989 *Dissertation Abstracts International*. Little has changed in the intervening years.

As Lopos (1991) states, the terms *certificate program* and *certificate*

*student* are “a confusing piece of educational nomenclature” (p. 87). Merely encouraging *more* research regarding certificates is not enough. Criteria defining groups to be investigated must be narrowly focused to evoke data useful to the educational practitioner.

The broad parameters historically used to delineate certificate level education have rendered existing data confusing. One researcher (Holt, 1988) expansively defined certificate programs as “a sequence, pattern, or group of courses or contact hours that focus upon an area of specialized knowledge or information and that are developed, administered, and evaluated by the institution’s faculty members or faculty-approved professionals” (p. 5). Research based on such non-specific criteria does little to provide insight into students choosing less-than associate degree level training.

Certificate training may be proffered by appropriate academic units spread throughout the college or by a centralized function, often under the auspices of continuing education department (Holt, 1988). Successful graduates of certificate programs can be awarded college credit, continuing education units (CEUs), or other forms of recognition issued by professional organizations (Holt).

However, a credential is an indicator of far more than completion. Because the endorsement bestowed on a program graduate indicates the level of recognition given by others, the credential itself may influence what type

participant is attracted to attend a program. Research studies which combine credit and non-credit data categories risk mixing not only credentials, but types of participants. For the sake of data clarity, it is important for researchers to define and isolate carefully which instructional guidelines were followed, as well as what credential was bestowed on completers of certificate programs.

An example of problems encountered with such heterogeneity of data occurred in a study conducted by Smith (1987). Smith, one of a very few investigators targeting solely certificate programs, looked at student characteristics of those choosing certificate programs. While using extended parameters to define *certificate*, the researcher concluded that the majority of certificate students had a previous college degree, or at least prior college experience. However, this broad-brush approach yielded rather muddied data. By including students enrolled at several classifications of colleges and universities, as well as non-credit programs heavily professional in nature, the Smith study provided mixed data for investigators wishing to understand the more technically-oriented certificate programs offered by community colleges.

In light of the growing popularity of less-than associate degree level programs, focused research is needed which characterizes discrete sub-populations within the certificate category. This requires that individual types of certificate programs be identified before meaningful research can profile any one

particular group. Specifically, there is a need for targeting college credit programs which are one year, or less, in length and award a certificate, rather than a degree, to successful completers. The resulting data regarding certificate level students can establish an informational base upon which further research can build.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this descriptive study is to provide insight into the characteristics of students enrolled in selected for-credit certificate programs of less than associate degree level. The data stemmed from a two-part investigation. First, a demographic profile was established categorizing individuals enrolled in certificate programs at four University System of Georgia institutions. These data provided a sense of the *who*, *what* and *where* of certificate students within the state's public colleges. Secondly, a questionnaire administered to a sample population of certificate students examined the *why* and *how* of those participating in certificate education.

Specifically the investigator established a overview of students enrolled in certificate programs at four University System of Georgia institutions through enrollment data collected during the fall quarter, 1997, for the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. Secondly, opinions and perceptions were provided through a questionnaire administered during winter

quarter, 1998, to selected certificate students at one of the targeted schools. The questionnaire asked the participants' backgrounds, educational goals, support systems, difficulties encountered, influences affecting educational choices, and their perceptions of financial aid, particularly the recollections regarding program options available to them under the state-funded Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Scholarship.

The University System of Georgia offered an excellent opportunity for a study of certificate programs because of the natural cluster existing among some of its two-year institutions. Through a collaborative effort with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) in the 1960s, four Board of Regents' colleges were authorized to provide occupational courses through their technical divisions. In addition to the traditional transfer function these institutions offer career programs whose primary thrust is immediate employment for graduates.

These four colleges--Bainbridge College in southern Georgia, Clayton College and State University in metropolitan Atlanta, Coastal Georgia Community College on the eastern coastline, and Dalton College in northwest Georgia--represent a cross-section of Georgia populations quite diverse in location and sociology (University of Georgia, 1997). In addition to geographic heterogeneity, this cluster of schools provides students widely diverse post-secondary curricular

choices. Because each institution offers both certificate and associate degree level programs, often in the same discipline, they present an opportunity to study educational choices made by students.

Establishing a demographic database of those enrolled in certificate programs is of interest to educators responsible for planning and marketing new programs, as well as those administering existing ones. Additionally, it is important to discover the understanding certificate students had about the program options available to them under the HOPE Scholarship at the time they made career pathway decisions.

In 1997, President Clinton, using the Georgia Hope Scholarship as a springboard, supported and signed the Federal Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 (H.R. 2014) creating the federal *HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits*. Because the credits will first be available to appropriate taxpayers who incur eligible expenses during the 1998 tax year (Student Financial Aid Services, 1998), little is currently known about the effects of the new policy or the implementation of the statute (American Association of Community Colleges, 1997).

Certainly, there are obvious differences between a *scholarship* program which allows a tax credit for educational expenses already incurred and a state program where aid flows more directly to students through their chosen educational institution. Yet, some similarities do exist between the state HOPE

award for certificate students and the national program. For example, no specific grade point average is required to qualify for either (American Association of Community Colleges, 1997; Georgia Student Finance Commission, 1997).

Because there may be some parallels between the emerging national HOPE system and the Georgia HOPE Scholarship certificate students awards, findings regarding these students may be of interest to those watching the development of a national tax-credit system.

### **Research Questions**

Enrollment data gathered from the targeted population by program type / length, full-time / part-time status, status of disability, age bracket, gender, race, and financial aid received allowed a certificate student profile to emerge. Use of an additional questionnaire provided insight into the opinions and perceptions of certificate participants, particularly concerning their educational choices in light of the financial aid they received. The specific research questions probed in this study were:

- 1) What are the characteristics of students enrolled in certificate programs at four University System of Georgia institutions?*
- 2) What are the recollections of certificate students about the program options available to them under HOPE funding when they began their program of study?*
- 3) What are the backgrounds, educational goals, support systems, needs,*

*perceived abilities, and external influences affecting the educational choices and progress of certificate students?*

### **Significance of the Study**

Educators pride themselves in being familiar with their academic disciplines. Of equal importance is a firm understanding of the students they seek to serve. Certificate students comprise a growing, yet largely unstudied segment of the college community. By carefully defining the investigative parameters this study provides explicit information concerning a specific population of career program students. These certificate student data should furnish a beginning profile upon which other researchers can launch a more intensive study of this special population.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The extent of this study was delimited in several ways. The broader student data profile was excerpted from general enrollment data collected during fall quarter, 1997, using the existing Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education Management Information System (1997). The opinion questionnaire was administered solely to students attending class at Dalton College on the date of survey. No follow-up was made to capture data from those absent during the survey administration.

The targets of both the profiling and the questionnaire were one-year certificate and less-than one year mini-certificate students at the four University System of Georgia institutions having technical divisions. Programs whose length fell between one-year certificate and two-year associate degree were not included because of the variability of the training involved.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Certain factors limited this study. The first limitation involved the institutions targeted for research. The four Regents' colleges were selected because the institutions offered certificate programs with a diverse representation of students. In addition, questions regarding possible HOPE influence on program selection could be compared more meaningfully at institutions which offered students a choice between certificate and degree programs. Although a few technical institutes in Georgia offer both types of programs, most do not. Only the University System institutions offer students clear choices between transfer versus career and certificate versus degree programs.

However, limiting data sources to University System schools, while excluding private colleges and GDTAE Technical Institutes, presented a very limited scope of study. While it is desirable to have a sharply defined source of data, that narrow focus may render suspect the generalization of results to larger,

more heterogeneous groups.

Secondly, locating eligible certificate students for profiling within the total enrollment figures at the Board of Regents schools was difficult. Although the University System collects from all member institutions a total quarterly enrollment including all types of students -- credit, non-credit, career and transfer -- the questionnaire targeted only those students enrolled in credit programs partially funded by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE). Therefore, enrollment data submitted to the DTAE by the four Technical Divisions were used. Compilations of these data, both quarterly and year-to-date are reported as *posts*, with an attached numerical coding indicating the targeted period.

Because DTAE computer reports were generated in different periods during the quarter, the enrollment figures varied from the *Commissioner's End of Quarter Report* (post 1.40, fall, 1997) and the *Credit, Occupational, Post-Secondary School Enrollment for Fiscal Year 97-98* report (post 1.20, fall, 1997). During the questionnaire administration identifying and counting eligible certificate students was equally challenging, especially if certificate students were enrolled only in general education courses at the time of survey.

A third limitation was the use of data collected solely during one particular quarter. The students surveyed may not have been representative of those enrolled

throughout the academic year. Because attrition rates may be high in academically marginal certificate students, a longer study tracking students from pre-enrollment counseling to departure could more accurately capture the true nature of this group.

A fourth limitation lay in the self-reporting nature of student profiles. Even though questions may be phrased clearly, students can and often do answer inaccurately. The status of being physically challenged, for example, is a self-reported category not verified at all schools. Some students actually meeting guidelines for the *disabled* category did not wish to reveal that aspect about themselves.

Difficulty in identifying sources of influences or barriers to education was a fifth limitation. Some students could have been reluctant to admit their true preferences, motivations, or difficulties. Others may not have consciously understood the effects of situations and emotions they have encountered. Still others may not have fully appreciated the amount of influence a third party, such as an academic advisor, had on their decision-making process.

### **Assumptions**

In this study, the following assumptions were made. It was first assumed that certificate students were able to identify their educational status, needs,

support systems, and school-related problems, as well as the financial aid category which allowed them to be funded. Secondly, it was assumed that certificate students could recollect their understanding of the different educational options available to them as they chose a program of study. The third assumption was that those surveyed had identifiable plans and goals for the future.

### **Common Definitions**

In this study selected terms were defined as follows:

**Academically disadvantaged** - a student who is taking remedial or developmental classes, or one who has neither a GED nor high school diploma.

**Adult Learners / Adult Students / Non-Traditional Students** - students who are twenty-two years of age or older.

**Board of Regents** - governing body for the University System of Georgia schools. (University System institutions under this governing body are often called Regents' schools.)

**Career Education / Career Program** - a college credit program of two-years or less duration that targets immediate employment, rather than a transfer function.

**Certificate Program** - a college-credit program offered in specific major field areas which is one year, or less, in length and awards a certificate, rather than a degree, to successful completers.

**Certificate Student** - an individual enrolled in a certificate program.

**Community College** - a multi-mission, two-year institution which embraces both the transfer function and career education.

**Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) of Georgia** - an administrative unit responsible for the activities of Adult Literacy, the Public

Library network, and the public Technical Institutes within the state.

**Diploma** - a designation synonymous with *certificate* used by some institutions when describing career programs of less-than degree status.

**Disabled Student** - a student who has a physical or emotional impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working AND requires accommodations and/or services not standardly available to the general student population.

**Disadvantaged Student** - a student who is academically disadvantaged (student who is taking remedial or developmental classes, or does not have either a high school diploma or GED); economically disadvantaged (receives one or more types of state or federal financial assistance); or uses English as a second language.

**Economically disadvantaged** - a student who receives one or more types of state or federal financial assistance.

**Financial Aid** - funding originating from state or Federal sources which is awarded to students under certain stated guidelines.

**Junior College** - a two-year institution which emphasizes general education preparatory to entering senior institutions.

**Mini-Certificate Program** - a college credit program of less-than one year in length.

**Posts 1.20, 1.40, and 7.01** - reports issued by the Management Information System of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education indicating enrollment in specified categories for a particular period of time.

**Student Profile** - Descriptive demographic data which allow a student to be categorized according to specified parameters.

**Technical Division / Technical Program** - a unit or program which offers career education.

**Traditional Students** - those students, ages eighteen to twenty-two, who enroll at post-secondary institutions soon after high school graduation.

**Transfer Program** - the first two years of general education taken at a community college prior to moving to a senior institution for completion of a four-year degree.

## **Organization of the Study**

### **Chapter One**

Chapter One offers an introduction to the study which includes a brief historical overview of emerging post-second education in the United States, the development of the community college, rising popularity of career education, the significance of certificate programs, and selected aspects of the HOPE Scholarship in Georgia. In addition, the chapter includes Statement of Problem, Statement of Purpose, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Delimitations of the Study, Limitations of the Study, and the Definition of Common Terms.

### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two is a review of related literature dealing with four areas of interest: 1) the emergence of the community college; 2) reasons for the appeal of career education; 3) the nature of certificate education and the students who choose it; and 4) the parameters of the State of Georgia Hope Scholarship Program .

### **Chapter Three**

Chapter Three describes the methodology used to investigate certificate students enrolled in four University System of Georgia institutions. The process of selecting the population surveyed, as well as the methods used to collect and summarize the data were presented.

### **Chapter Four**

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. The intent was to provide a descriptive basis of understanding regarding characteristics and perceptions of certificate students.

### **Chapter Five**

Chapter Five summarizes the study, giving the conclusions made and the recommendations for future investigation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the history of community colleges, the development of career education, and the growing popularity of certificate programs. Of special focus is the HOPE Scholarship program which has funded post-secondary education for thousands of Georgians and, perhaps, also may have influenced their educational choices.

#### **Historic Overview**

In many ways the development of the American educational system has paralleled the growth of the country itself -- untethered by tradition, uneven in its expansion, unorthodox in its methods, widely diverse in nature, and accommodative of variously motivated populations. At the heart of success for both the country as a whole and education in particular have been the twin concepts of open access and strength through diversity (Ratcliff, 1994).

Passage of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 established a concept of public higher education in the United States (Lorenzo, 1994). Yet, in the early twentieth century the educational profile was a homogeneous one, composed of

young males from privileged background (Pederson, 1996). Slowly, the portrait changed to include young high school graduates, both men and women, from upper middle class status (Fields, 1964). A composite during this period generally reflected so-called *traditional students* -- eighteen to twenty-two year old, full-time students who resided on campus. Those outside this traditional mold -- older adults, minorities, the disadvantaged -- were still largely excluded (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

As demands of World War II changed the societal role of women, encouraging them to look beyond household domains, the GI Bill of 1946 concurrently instigated a metamorphosis among thousands of returning soldiers by financing their entry into higher education (Pederson, 1996). American post-secondary education, no longer the sole domain of the young elite, began to explore new ways to embrace an extensive array of cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic strata (Rendon & Valadez, 1994). The orthodoxy which had served so well in the past was not equipped to accommodate students with unprecedented diversity of educational abilities and goals. A new generation of institutions was a necessity (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

### **Development of the Community College**

Today, access to higher education, so restricted in other parts of the world,

has expanded in this country to embrace almost all takers. Perhaps the most significant avenue to this burgeoning gateway has been through two-year colleges. Despite meager beginnings in the early twentieth century, two year colleges began to make inroads into the established educational community through innovative philosophies (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). The original two-year institutions, often referred to as *junior colleges*, offered broad general education to equip students academically for entry into four-year institutions. With appropriate articulation in place between junior and senior institutions, graduates could transfer to four-year institutions with basic learning skills and two years of course credits (Phillippe, 1997).

As the century progressed, public acceptance of and enrollment in two-year institutions broadened dramatically for a variety of reasons (Vaughn, 1983). After World War II draft-deferred status for full-time students, expanded availability of student financial aid, and direct and indirect federal funding through facilities' construction and program enhancements all fostered growth (Phillippe, 1997). The 1963 Vocational Educational Act and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Act of 1984 greatly enhanced federal funding of two-year colleges, especially targeting disadvantaged and disabled students (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). Over time, junior colleges with their preparatory functions were slowly overtaken by institutions exemplifying a more expansive approach to higher education.

During the early 1950s the Truman Commission Report popularized the term *community college* when it proposed a national system of post-secondary institutions which were to be minimal in cost to their students (Phillippe, 1997). The 1960s saw a virtual explosion of community colleges, with a new institution opening, on an average, every week (Phillippe). By focusing on occupational training, as well as providing a two-year preparation for transferring to senior institutions, community colleges offered students a multi-faceted approach to the post-secondary experience.

### **The Attraction of Community Colleges**

A number of factors enhanced the lure of community colleges. Two-year institutions seemed to integrate education and everyday life experiences -- a concept which Hankin (1987) believed essential. In cyclic times of high unemployment those without jobs began to turn to post-secondary education for job skills, a phenomenon begun in the Great Depression (Phillippe, 1997). The public began to view community colleges as student-friendly institutions. There was also recognition that two-year institutions were both affordable (National Center for Education Statistics, 1991) and conveniently located, especially after the expansion of the 1960s (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

Students themselves perceived that community colleges outdistanced four-

year counterparts in convenience of class scheduling, availability of financial aid, ease of registration, and helpfulness of faculty and staff (Coklin, 1993). Because of the low cost, community colleges provided an appropriate atmosphere for undecided students to *try out* various subjects of interest (Grubb, 1996). However, the single most appealing factor differentiating community colleges from other educational institutions has always been their open access, which welcomes individuals from varied educational and economic backgrounds (Cardenas, 1991).

### **Those Attending Community Colleges**

As community college popularity spread, it became evident that participants attracted to them were as unique as the institutions they chose. Gone was the preponderance of traditional students. The typical replacement was likely to be a twenty-nine year old female attempting career transition while juggling single parenthood, under-employment, and near-poverty (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980).

This *new breed* of student often fit the categories of the financially and academically disadvantaged (Cross, 1981). Reisser (1980) characterized them as individuals who were highly motivated, anxious about their abilities, fearful of competition with younger students, easily frustrated by bureaucracy, lacking in communication skills, and having responsibilities which complicated their

academic lives. At community colleges throughout the nation these *non-traditional students* slowly became the norm, bringing with them widely diverse needs, frustrations and abilities.

### **The Modern Comprehensive Community College**

Today's comprehensive community college embracing transfer and career functions, remediation, community education, and economic development, has become an *institution for all seasons*. Popularity of this two-year institution has escalated to the extent that in 1997, community college students accounted for forty-four percent of all undergraduate enrollment (American Association of Community Colleges, 1998). Although the transfer function has remained an important part of the community college function, career education students whose primary goal is immediate employment now outnumber their transfer counterparts (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1996).

### **Emergence of Career Education**

Career education is usually designed to have its terminus at the two-year level or, in some cases, fewer than two years. Progression toward a baccalaureate degree generally is not facilitated through career education, a limitation which has long been criticized by educational purists. Based on a 1986 follow-up to the

National Longitudinal Study (NLS:72) Whitaker and Pascarella (1994) showed that beginning an educational experience at a two-year institution may portend of lower educational attainment rates and ensuing lower income and job status. Such criticism of career programs may ignore the positives which immediate employment opportunities offer to a certain type student. With the avowed objective of career education students being primarily marketability, not transferability, appraisal of educational attainment as measured by a baccalaureate yardstick may be suspect.

A hybrid four-year career degree has emerged which may quiet some criticism about the terminal nature of career education. The Bachelor of Applied Science Degree offers career students in Georgia more feasible transferability of major field courses than allowed in traditional four-year degrees (Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, 1997). This recently developed credential may initiate a bridging of the gap between career education and four-year achievement. Ease of transition to four-year status without loss of marketable skills seems an attractive option to occupational students previously hindered from climbing the career ladder.

### **Increasing Enrollment in Career Education**

Career education enrollment is growing, but is this an absolute increase in

numbers or a shifting of statistical populations? The answer is probably *yes* and *yes*. Cohen and Brawer (1989) attribute the rise in career program enrollment to a variety of factors: 1) increased federal assistance to community colleges which allowed expanded choice of programs; 2) targeted enrollment of those more apt to need quick, focused training (females, part-timers, disabled, disadvantaged, and older students); 3) relocation to the community college campus of adult education and occupational programs formerly offered by secondary schools; and 4) reaction to a changing job market. Baker and Velez (1996) cite two reasons for the popularity of these programs: 1) an attempt by community colleges to define unique missions through the avenue of career education, and 2) articulation difficulties between institutions hindering transferability. Dougherty (1991) and Pincus (1986) credit a conscious decision by two-year institutions to divert students away from transfer programs into occupational areas, a function Clark (1980) refers to as *cooling out*. Karabel (1972) blames the occupational thrust on business interests, citing Arthur Cohen's quote, "Corporate managers... announce a need for skilled workers, ...college administrators trip over each other in their haste to organize a new technical curriculum" (p. 6).

### **The Case For and Against Career Education**

Traditional education has not tolerated this challenger quietly. The

emphasis on career programs has drawn strong disapproval from many educators. Harris and Grede (1977) commented that we “tend to admire the new idea, the theoretical concept, and the complex ‘system’ and to regard with disdain or at best grudging acceptance the more mundane ideas, skills, and mechanisms that... have built a strong nation” (p. 12). Critics, such as Pincus (1980; 1994) and Dougherty (1991), argue that at the least career education has not proved itself to be effective and, at worst, contributes to differences in class. Others view career education as a poor substitute for traditional educational standards with little or no attention to paid to quality of instruction, program completion, or effectiveness of job placement (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

However, other educators, as well as many career students themselves, disagree with much of the criticism regarding career education. In one study Smith (1986) found that in excess of eighty-five percent of certificate students questioned were satisfied with their preparation to enter the job market. Students studied in other research applauded the practicality of their education (Rutkowski, Holt, & Lopos 1991). No less than William T. deBary (as cited in Marland, 1974), a curricular reformer at the prestigious Columbia University, eloquently defended career education:

General education, though a vital part of liberal education, is not the whole of it. Liberal education, most people would agree, aims to liberate the powers of the individual by disciplining them; and that discipline in turn immediately relates him to the values of his culture

and certain social necessities. I do not, then, have any difficulty accepting even professional training or vocational education as contributing to those aims. The educated man, the member of society, even the purported citizen of the world ...must have something that he can contribute of his own to the work of the world, and if he learns to do it well, that will be part of his liberal education. It is not to be scorned as *mere vocationalism* ( p. 217).

In the United States where post-secondary education remains the most effective avenue into the economy, 75.1 % of students acknowledge the criticality of occupational goals for their education, an increase of twenty-six percent from 1971 to 1993 (Grubb, 1996). It seems unrealistic, then, for educators to continue critiquing the success of institutions or programs by counting the number of credentials awarded or the completion rates achieved during an arbitrary five-year cycle. Use of traditional yardsticks to measure educational success ignores the goals and realities of career education (Phillippe, 1997). After all, if a career education student accepts a prime job offer before graduation, should that *drop-out* be counted a failure?

### **The Appeal of Career Education**

Despite their major differences, disciples and critics of career education may agree on one point -- a four-year degree is not for everyone (Gray & Herr, 1997). While overall the percentage of the American population enrolling in higher education has steadily increased over the years, statistics show that a

majority of Americans will not achieve a four-year degree (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). Yet, today's economic realities and social mores continue to pressure Americans to further their education (Cohen, 1997). Parnell (1991) notes the potential social benefits of affording diverse educational choices commensurate with individual abilities and goals. To individuals previously considered not to be *college material*, focused career education may offer an attractive option to traditional fare.

In a complex world where data half-life is incredibly short, furthering one's education goes far beyond *something interesting to do*. Post-secondary education becomes tantamount to survival for those attempting to qualify for new positions or to avoid being outdistanced by technology (Budd, 1990; Lorenzo, 1994). However, those in dire need of training are often the most reluctant to return to school. Often these individuals were traumatized by early educational encounters which left them resistant to learning in a traditional setting (Courtney, 1995).

How and where returning adults achieve job survival skills, more often than not, point away from conventional university fare. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found that adult students choose educational providers, not by the usual reputation of academic prestige, but by judging how useful the learning offered would be. In their study 1994 study Kasworm and Blowers concluded that most adult students had economic goals related to career advancement or re-entry into

the job market. The majority felt increased self-esteem for their efforts. The varied pathways provided by career programs, linked with open access afforded by two-year institutions, offer viable alternatives to prospective students who cannot or will not achieve a baccalaureate degree (Gray & Herr, 1997).

The appeal of career programs appears multi-faceted. First, research has shown that for adult students to be truly motivated to learn, the focus of study must be perceived as personally relevant (Knowles, 1985). Ten years earlier Marland (1974) concluded that the hallmark of career education is its perception of usefulness in application, both for the students themselves and to their society. Because of the applied nature of career education, material covered in these courses may appear to be more immediately useful -- i.e. relevant to everyday life -- than subjects found in long, highly theoretical programs of study. The requirement by many institutions that career program faculty must be current or former practitioners of the field taught contribute to the feeling of relevance. This instills a sense that the instructors understand the application of learning, not just textbook knowledge (Rutkowski et al., 1991). Applicability and relevance, in turn, increase motivation, especially in adult students. An oft heard tone among such students is, "We are here because we choose to be, not because someone made us attend."

Secondly, immediate job availability may enhance the growing preference

of career education over transfer function. In the Bureau of Labor's projections (1997) for the fastest growing occupations for 1994 to 2005, preparation for eight of these top ten *hot job* categories can be completed in two years or less. The relatively quick completion time of career programs, a natural precursor to rapid job qualifying, heightens the popularity.

### **Certificate Program Development**

While many community college students pursue associate degree career programs, others have as their educational goal a certificate program requiring less time to complete. Although certificate programs were first identified in the 1940s, these programs did not gain wide public recognition until the 1970s (Holt, 1991). Today, one-year programs continue to grow in public acceptance (Adelman, 1992).

Currently, almost half the students at community colleges choose to enroll in career programs, many programs requiring one year or less for completion. Career students enrolled in these certificate programs constitute a significant category. National Center for Education Statistics (1996) data from 1991-92 showed that approximately 180,000 students at 1,350 institutions completed requirements for programs lasting less than two years. Post 1.40 enrollment data published by the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (1998)

reports 35,651 credit students enrolled in technical institutes and college programs of less-than associate degree level during fall quarter, 1997. However, little research has been performed targeting certificate students and defining why they choose programs of a particular length (Henderson, 1995). Because of the growing significance of this group, it is of special interest to profile the nature and preferences of this faction.

### **Factors Influencing Certificate Enrollment**

These short programs appear to have gained popularity for a variety of reasons. First, opportunities for career enhancement through updating job skills are appealing (Rutkowski, et al., 1991), as are occasions for self-enrichment (Lopos, Holt, Bohlander, & Wells, 1988). Indeed, statistics show that those enrolled in specialized training programs are more likely initially to be hired and be paid more than those choosing less specialized fields (Henderson, 1995). For those already employed, strong support from employers has been demonstrated for returning to school in focused training (Rutkowski, et al.).

A second reason is related to real or perceived educational abilities. While many individuals enroll in short programs as the preferred vehicle to improve employability potential, others do so because they cannot qualify academically for careers which take longer, more rigorous preparation. For example, educational

attainment levels in Georgia are quite low, with over twenty-nine percent of the 1990 adult population failing to complete high school (University of Georgia, 1997). The high-school drop-out figure exceeds fifty percent in some northwest Georgia counties (Bachtel & Boatwright, 1995).

More demanding disciplines requiring years of preparatory courses prior to enrollment may simply be out of reach for prospective students with poor educational backgrounds. To less confident adult students who, in general, are often reluctant to compete with traditional students (Reisser, 1980), entry into short certificate programs can provide a more manageable goal.

The final group attracted to certificate programs lack personal or financial resources for years of study. They simply cannot afford the time nor the financial investment inherent in associate or baccalaureate degrees (Holt, 1991). Quick employment, and the education which makes it possible, offers the most feasible relief.

### **HOPE Scholarship in Georgia**

As previously noted, a myriad of personal, academic and economic factors may influence the decision to enroll in certificate programs. In Georgia, however, another consideration may be providing a powerful incentive for choosing less-than degree programs. In 1993, with funding afforded by state lottery proceeds the

Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Scholarship was established to aid Georgians seeking post-secondary education. In its brief existence HOPE has become a significant factor in Georgia student financial aid, even though it is generally awarded only to fund financial aid needs not covered by Pell or other Federal grants (Little, 1995). To grasp the import of HOPE dollars on the Georgian educational scene, Little (1995) revealed a startling comparison: the total financial aid awarded in the United States in 1992-93 including all federal, state, and institutional assistance is estimated to have been \$34,554,000,000. In comparison, in its second year of implementation (1994-1995) Hope scholarships alone provided almost \$52,000,000 in aid for Georgia post-secondary students (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 1997).

HOPE is a program with multiple thrusts (Mortenson, 1997). It endeavors to serve Georgians pursuing degrees at public institutions, those seeking certificates or diplomas at public institutions, Grade Equivalency Diploma (GED) recipients who attempt further education, and those enrolled at the state's private colleges and universities (Davis, Hall, & Henry, 1996). As advertising for the popular program states, "With the HOPE Scholarship, a high school diploma is just the beginning!" (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 1997).

## Criticism of the HOPE Scholarship Program

The HOPE Scholarship program is not without critics. Because HOPE regulations stipulate that federal awards displace state aid, the poorest students who are predominantly the recipients of Pell Grants are often ineligible for state assistance (Little, 1995). In contrast, affluent students receive HOPE without regard to their need. HOPE detractors point out that because aid is not tied to financial need, it assists the more stellar students while providing the least aid to the neediest students (Little, 1995; Mortenson, 1997). Critics further charge that the process unfairly penalizes minorities, many of whom are academically disadvantaged and fail to maintain the required grade point average (GPA).

Astin (1993), however, found that the *perception* by a student that he or she is receiving merit-based financial aid is important and “may serve as a motivating force for higher education achievement” (p. 368). Contrary to his earlier findings, Astin concluded that state and federal assistance had no remarkable effect on student development unless that aid was considered by the student to be something *earned*, rather than as an *entitlement*.

## Categories of HOPE Scholarship Awards

The HOPE scholarship was originally established to reward and thus entice academically bright high school graduates to remain “at home” to enroll in

Georgia's public institutions. Under HOPE guidelines Georgia high school graduates who achieved a "B" average or better at the secondary level and maintain this average in college are awarded a HOPE Scholarship. This award provides free tuition and mandatory fees at state higher education institutions, plus a \$100.00 book allowance each term. Although initially there was an income cap on eligibility, the "B" average award category is now solely merit-based (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 1997). Other lottery-funded award categories have been established for different groups as well: 1) vouchers for GED recipients, 2) a \$1,500.00 equalization grant to Georgians attending private colleges, and 3) incentives for prospective teachers (Davis, et al., 1996).

The other two HOPE categories attempt to accommodate adult students. The first such provision permits adults graduated prior to 1993 to achieve HOPE, regardless of their past high school grade-point-average, by accumulating and maintaining a 3.0 grade point average after forty-five quarter credit hours in college. However, because students might not complete this number of hours until well into their sophomore year, such a stipulation requires tremendous personal and financial commitment "up front" by students who already may be unsure of their abilities.

Because adults who were graduated from high school prior to 1993 are not eligible for the "B" average award, the final HOPE scholarship classification

appears quite attractive to adult students. In addition, students with less than stellar academic performance in high school are covered in this category which provides free tuition and \$100.00 book allowance per term. Georgians enrolling in for-credit certificate or mini-certificate at any one of the state's thirty-four technical institutes, or four Board of Regents' colleges having technical components, are eligible with few limitations (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 1997). In addition, merely *satisfactory progress* (overall grade point average of 2.0 or greater on a 4.0 scale) rather than a "B" average, is required of certificate students to maintain their award. Degree students at these same institutions are not eligible for this type HOPE award.

With financial sacrifice and stringent academic requirements attached to other HOPE awards, the "strings-free" provision allowed certificate enrollees is proving to be quite alluring to prospective adult students (Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, 1997). In light of the restrictions on certain types of HOPE Scholarship, choosing a certificate rather than a degree program in Georgia's post-secondary institutions may be as much a function of easily available financial aid as one of dedication toward a specific educational goal.

### **Importance of Financial Assistance To Student Persistence**

The type and availability of financial aid is of paramount importance to the

persistence of students in college ( Donahue, 1992; Lang, 1992; Martin, 1993; Murdock, 1990; St. John, Kirshstein, & Noell, 1991). Grants, such as the HOPE Scholarship, are far more effective than loans (Davis, et al., 1996). It is also of utmost importance that students can continue to rely on the support, even later in their academic progress (Murdock, 1991). In her study Martin (1993) interviewed a number of students who were pointedly critical of what happens when the timing of financial aid is delayed, describing, as an example, whole semesters where financial aid checks for book purchase were delayed. The dependability of the HOPE Scholarship seems to foster perseverance in college, with 83.7 % of recipients persisting over the 1994-95 academic year (Davis, et al., 1996).

### Summary

Not every individual can or will pursue a baccalaureate degree at a four-year institutional setting. Community colleges offer a convenient, relatively low-cost education which many individuals, especially returning adult students, find *user-friendly*. Although the liberal arts transfer function provided by community colleges remains for many enrollees a viable start to the educational process, immediate marketability is the target of others. For the latter group, career programs are a practical approach to job entry. To others, occupational programs extend the promise of career mobility through increased skills attainment. For

those who lack stellar academic abilities or who cannot afford the time and expense of a two-year career degree, certificate programs offer an educational *toe-hold*.

In Georgia, intangible hope for gaining an education has been translated into a very real HOPE Scholarship. The HOPE Scholarship system facilitates the entry into post-secondary career education to many who would not have otherwise have considered *going to college*. However, what do the students understand about their program choices under the readily available funding for career students?

Those targeting career education in general, and certificate programs in particular, have been little investigated. The few studies targeting certificate programs have often included graduate students and non-credit programs, resulting in confusing data for those interested in knowing more about the credit certificate students at community colleges. More insight is needed in this growing population, if it is to be well-served by educators.

This descriptive study sought to provide a clearer picture of those choosing certificate programs at four University System of Georgia institutions. Demographic characteristics of those enrolled in certificate programs, as well as the students' perceptions of what factors influenced their educational choices, have been profiled.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the rationale and the process used to collect data for this study. The purpose of the investigation was to provide specific details about students enrolled in certificate-level career education programs offered for college credit. The investigator, a Technical Division Instructional Coordinator at a public two-year institution in Georgia, was responsible for the daily instructional process of hundreds of such students. When a review of the literature revealed a serious lack of data concerning certificate students, a descriptive study was undertaken to build a database upon which further research could be performed. By identifying the characteristics of this population, educators should be better equipped to serve this important student segment.

This descriptive study of certificate students was designed with two approaches. The first was to assemble broad demographic data from students enrolled in carefully defined certificate programs in Georgia. The second approach was designed to gather in-depth details from a concise population of certificate students.

## **Source Selection for Background Study**

Although certificate-level programs are offered at private schools and technical institutes across Georgia, four University System institution offering certificate programs were chosen to provide a broad base of demographic data. The four University System of Georgia institutions selected -- Bainbridge College, Coastal Georgia Community College, Clayton College and State University, and Dalton College -- are the only Regents' colleges with Divisions of Technology. Career programs offered through these Technical Divisions are a collaborative effort between the Board of Regents and the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE), with partial funding awarded by both systems. Enrollment data for career students within these divisions are collected by both the University System and the DTAE using different computer software and unique program classification methods.

The choice of Regents' institutions as the target for investigation stemmed from two factors. First, these colleges, representing four distinct regions of Georgia, offered a broad representation of typical career education students across the state. The fact that each of the institutions provided a choice between levels of programs was the second reason. The four colleges award both the two-year Associate of Applied Science degree and less-than two year certificate programs in various career education disciplines. This option allowed the study to

investigate the motivation students had for choosing one level of program over another.

All credit certificate students enrolled during fall quarter, 1997, in programs capable of being completed in one year, or less, at these four University System colleges were targeted for this background data collection. The basic demographic information was gleaned from data elements normally collected quarterly for DTAE and published in report called Post 1.20 (Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education Management Information System, Fall, 1997).

### **Demographic Data**

All historical data used for this survey were taken from enrollment data collected for DTAE which uses a standard statewide application of CIP Codes employing supplemental alpha coding for certificate classification. By adding the suffix *N-2* to the standard CIP Code 51.0801 for Medical Assisting, for example, a certificate program is distinguishable from an *N-3* degree program within the same CIP CODE category.

To identify certificate enrollment at each Regents' institution, it was first necessary to access quarterly enrollment data reports (post 1.20, fall, 1997) originating from the DTAE Management Information System (MIS). Technical Division administrative personnel at each of the four colleges provided the

researcher with copies of post 1.20 distributed quarterly to each school by the DTAE Computer Center.

In the second stage of data extraction, certificate-level students in career education programs had to be isolated from their associate degree and non-credit counterparts. Program titles which varied widely from school to school generally were of little help. In place of program titles, the identification was accomplished using CIP Code categorization including supplemental alpha suffixes supplied by the Department of Technical and Adult Education.

No attempt was made to ascertain individual student identities or characteristics. Only group demographic and enrollment figures were targeted. Because the four institutions do not offer the same selection of certificate programs, enrollment and characteristics by technical program types were used in place of grouping by individual programs.

Data elements provided through post 1.20 (fall, 1997) were identifiable by program title, CIP Code, and technologic category of program (industrial, business, agriculture / natural resources, personal / public service, and health technologies). Among the demographics available from program / technologic categories were enrollment status (full-time / part-time), gender, disabled and disadvantaged status, race, and financial aid categories.

Because the enrollment data published in the state MIS reports contained

both degree and certificate program information, all the statistics in the reports were not used. After certificate data were isolated using the CIP Code method previously explained, the data were entered into the computer using Corel Quattro Pro 7 (1996) software for summary.

### **Survey Participant Selection**

The second part of the study was designed to survey a discrete group of certificate students to determine opinions and perceptions about various parameters of their educational process. Dalton College, one of the four institutions already selected for the general statistical survey, was chosen as the location for this in-depth inquiry. Administration of the questionnaire targeted the 624 Dalton College students enrolled in credit certificate and mini-certificate programs during Winter Quarter, 1998.

### **Survey Questions**

The survey technique was designed to gain insight into a community of students choosing certificate programs. Each item on the questionnaire was related to a specific research question posed to frame this study. Excerpts from survey questions are included below. To review the full survey instrument, see appendix A - 1.

## **Research Question Number One**

*What are the characteristics of students enrolled in certificate-level credit programs at four University System of Georgia institutions?*

As previously noted, a general demographic profile of all certificate students at four Regents' colleges was constructed using fall quarter, 1997, data. The variables available for summary from MIS post 1.20 (Georgia Department of Technical And Adult Education, 1997) were enrollment according to gender, race, full-time / part-time enrollment, disabled and disadvantaged status, and type and level of program.

The disadvantaged category included those who were considered:

1) academically disadvantaged (a student taking remedial / developmental classes *or* who does not have either a high school diploma or GED); 2) economically disadvantaged (a student receiving one or more types of state or federal financial assistance); or 3) uses English as a second language.

The disabled category included any student who had a physical or mental impairment which substantially limited one or more major life activities. In addition, the student must have requested services over and beyond those offered to the general student population.

The exact population of Dalton College students providing survey data was established through part one of a questionnaire administered during winter quarter, 1998. Demographics asked for on the questionnaire included items one

through eleven regarding gender, age range, race, marital status, primary living arrangement, disability and disadvantaged status, amount of employment, day or evening class participation, part-time / full-time student status, and type of financial aid awarded. Responses were summarized descriptively using frequencies and percentages.

### **Research Question Number Two**

*What are the recollections of certificate students about the program options available to them under HOPE funding when they began their program of study?*

Questionnaire item twelve sought first to establish the financial aid status of respondents. Those students receiving HOPE scholarship awards were asked additionally a series of questions regarding how they qualified for the award.

In item thirteen, HOPE Scholarship recipients were questioned further about their recollections of the period when they entered their program of study. The response choices given in the question dealt with the student's knowledge about HOPE Scholarship prior to coming to Dalton College, as well as what they understood their options to be under HOPE funding when entering their programs of study. Responses to questions related to research question two were summarized descriptively using frequencies and percentages.

### **Research Question Number Three**

*What are the backgrounds, educational goals, support systems, needs, perceived abilities, and external influences affecting educational choices and progress of certificate students?*

Part one of the questionnaire asked the following items to ascertain a portion of the information targeted in research question three. Questionnaire items fourteen through twenty from part one of the questionnaire are paraphrased below:

**Item # 14.** *Prior to coming to college, did you earn a high school diploma, GED, or neither?*

**Item # 15.** *Before enrolling in your current program, did you have previous post-secondary credit course? From what type program?*

**Item # 16.** *Where were your previous post-secondary courses taken?*

**Item # 17.** *Did you complete a previous program? If no, how many credit hours did you complete? If yes, what type credential did you earn?*

**Item # 18.** *What plans do you have when you finish your current program?*

**Item # 19.** *If you could achieve your ultimate educational goal, how far would you go in school?*

**Item #20.** *If you achieve your educational goals, what resources will you need?*

Items in part two of the survey were grouped to ascertain opinions and perceptions about: 1) encouragement and support the student received while attending school; 2) types of problems the respondent experienced while attending school; 3) personal feelings the individual experienced while a certificate-level

student; 4) reasons the respondent gave for returning to school, enrolling in a particular length of program and choosing a particular subject of study. To gain answers in these areas, respondents were asked to rank statements from one (*strongly disagree*) to four (*strongly agree*). A choice of zero (*not applicable or no opinion*) was also provided. Responses were summarized descriptively using frequencies and percentages.

### **Data Collection**

A pilot study was performed on a randomly chosen class comprised of twelve certificate students. This preliminary administration was performed to identify parts of the instrument which might be misconstrued by respondents. Although no difficulties were experienced with wording of the questions, the presentation of the questionnaire lead to portions being overlooked. Revisions were made to encourage responses to all questions. The instrument was then duplicated for distribution to the entire certificate and mini-certificate population at Dalton College numbering 624 students.

On February 16 and 17, 1998, the final questionnaire and an accompanying instruction sheet were distributed to all instructors teaching career classes which contained certificate students. Appropriate classes had been previously identified from a listing found in the Dalton College *Catalog* (1998). The instructors, in

turn, distributed the questionnaire during each class period of the dates targeted for administration. A two-day administration period was deemed necessary, so that night classes meeting only twice per week could be included. Students were instructed not to complete more than one questionnaire during the administration period.

Because some occupational classes contained both associate degree and certificate students, careful instructions were also given instructors. Directions contained on the questionnaire itself also requested that the survey be completed only by certificate students. Degree students were asked not to participate and were given a short break from classroom activities while other students completed the survey.

The voluntary aspects of the process, the guarantee of anonymity, and the confidential nature of the data reported were thoroughly explained to students prior to distribution of the survey. Students were not pressured in any way to participate.

Completed questionnaires, and those unused, were returned to an envelope provided. The sealed envelope was then delivered to the investigator's office. The completed questionnaires which were returned were kept in a secure file within the researcher's office. No attempt was made to track which students did or did not complete questionnaires.

Four hundred one (71%) of the questionnaires were completed and returned. However, because one questionnaire was found to be essentially blank, it was discarded, bringing the total usable number of respondents to 400 respondents. Data from individual survey instruments were entered using the computer spreadsheet software, Corel Quattro Pro 7 (1996). Each response was coded in a way that kept individual data elements separate, yet able to be compared or joined to other responses.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this descriptive study was two-fold: 1) to provide a demographic profile of certificate students at four University System of Georgia colleges, and 2) to gain insight into the perceptions, opinions, and recollections of a discrete group of certificate students.

Data were extracted from the Department of Technical and Adult Education Management Information System for the baseline demographic profile. A questionnaire was administered to certificate students at Dalton College to obtain further insight into this particular student population. Data gathered by both methods were summarized using Corel Quattro Pro 7 (1996) computer software.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **REPORT OF FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter contains the findings and description of data gathered during this research study. The research design contained two thrusts: 1) a student demographic profile compiled from data available from the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education and 2) a questionnaire administered to selected certificate students determining their backgrounds and perceptions of factors which may have influenced their educational experiences. The discussion of findings will be organized around the three research questions proposed in chapter one.

#### **Findings**

##### **Demographics of Certificate Students at Targeted Schools**

Four University System of Georgia institutions offer certificate and associate degree programs through Technical Divisions operated in a collaborative arrangement with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. These colleges, representing four unique sections of Georgia, present an excellent opportunity to examine the characteristics of certificate students from across the state.

Enrollment during fall quarter, 1997, in the Technical Divisions of the four targeted colleges was 3,081 (Table 1). Certificate program enrollment numbered 1,962 students or 63.7% of the total Technical Division enrollment at the four colleges (Figure 1). Each school varies in the number and percentage of certificate students served, ranging from a high of 68.6% (738 students) at Clayton College to the 56.8% certificate student population (320 students) at Coastal Georgia. One hundred and thirty seven students enrolled in the four programs falling between one and two years in length were counted in the degree category, because these were considerably longer than traditional one-year certificate programs.

Students enrolled in each of the four Technical Divisions varied in total enrollment, part-time / full-time status, gender, racial patterns, and the number of disadvantaged students served (Table 2). However, several trends were evident among certificate students (Table 3): 1) part-time students outnumber full-time enrollees by 65% to 35%, a trend not uncommon in commuter community colleges (Phillippe, 1997); 2) there were more females (58.6%) than males (34.9%); 3) Caucasians (68.4%) dominated enrollment in these programs; and 4) a large number of disadvantaged students (53.2%) are served by these schools (Figures 2 - 5).

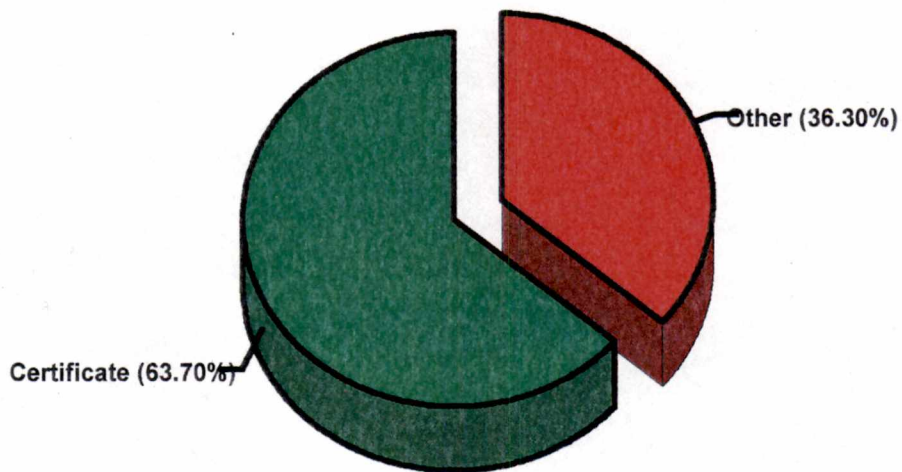
Although Dalton College reported a disabled population of five percent, the other career divisions reported serving one percent or less disabled students.

**Table 1:** Comparison between certificate and total enrollment in four Technical Divisions during fall, 1997.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Certificate Enrollment In Technical Division</b>		<b>Total Technical Division Enrollments (Degree &amp; Certificate)</b>
	<b># of Students</b>	<b>% of Total *</b>	
<b>Bainbridge College</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>64.5 %</b>	<b>484</b>
<b>Clayton College &amp; State University</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>68.6 %</b>	<b>1,076</b>
<b>Coastal Community College</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>56.8 %</b>	<b>563</b>
<b>Dalton College</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>58.7 %</b>	<b>958</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>62.7 %</b>	<b>3,081</b>

\*Percent of students enrolled in certificate programs compared with all Technical Division students enrolled in both certificate and AAS degree programs.

## Certificate Student Enrollment Compared to AAS Degree Enrollment



**Figure 1:** Relationship between certificate and AAS degree program enrollment in the combined student population of targeted Technical Divisions during fall quarter, 1997.

**Table 2:** Percentage of certificate student enrollment in the four Technical Divisions during fall quarter, 1997, according to enrollment status, gender, disabled and disadvantaged status, and racial type.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>I - 1</b>	<b>I - 2</b>	<b>I - 3</b>	<b>I - 4</b>
<b>Enrollment Status</b>				
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Disadvantaged</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Racial Category*</b>				
<b>American Indian</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>&lt; 1%</b>	<b>&lt; 1%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>African American</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Multi-race</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

**\* Percentages have been rounded**

**Legend:**

**I - 1 = Bainbridge College**

**I - 2 = Clayton College and State University**

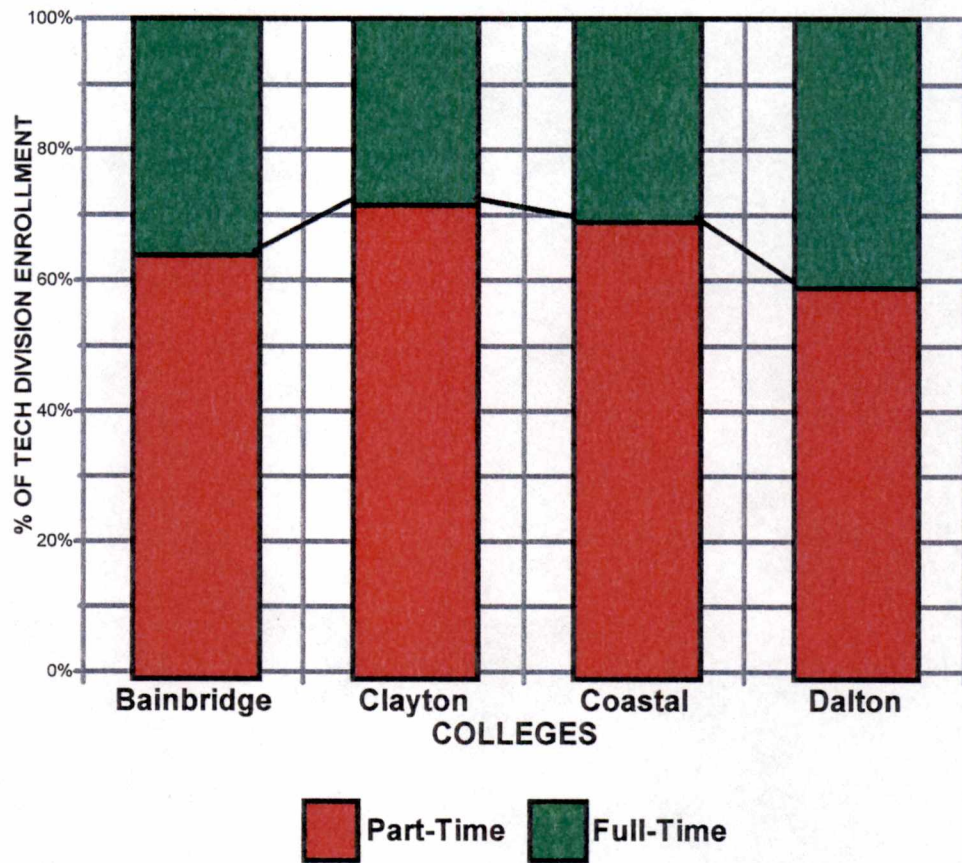
**I - 3 = Coastal Georgia Community College**

**I - 4 = Dalton College**

**Table 3:** Percentage of combined certificate student enrollment in the four Technical Divisions during fall quarter, 1997, according to enrollment status, gender, disabled and disadvantaged status, and racial type.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>TOTAL #</b>	<b>TOTAL %</b>
<b><u>Enrollment</u></b>		
<b>Total Enrolled in Tech Divisions</b>	<b>3,081</b>	
<b>Total Certificate Enrollment</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>62.7%</b>
<b><u>Enrollment Status</u></b>		
<b>Full-Time Student ( 12 or &gt;hrs)</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
<b>Part-Time Student (&lt;12 hrs)</b>	<b>1257</b>	<b>65.1%</b>
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
<b>Male</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>41.3%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>1134</b>	<b>58.7%</b>
<b><u>Disabled</u> - a student with physical or emotional impairment which substantially limits major life activities, such as caring for one's self, walking performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working <u>AND</u> requires accommodations not routinely available to the general student population.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b><u>Disadvantaged</u> - a student who is academically disadvantaged (taking remedial or developmental classes, or does not have either a high school diploma or GED); economically disadvantaged (receives one or more types of state or federal financial assistance); or uses English as a second language.</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>53.2%*</b>
<b><u>Racial Category</u></b>		
<b>American Indian</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
<b>Africa American</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>28.1%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>68.4%</b>
<b>Multi-race</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

## Enrollment by Part/Full-Time Status Technical Division Enrollment



**Figure 2:** Enrollment in the four Technical Divisions by part-time / full-time status during fall quarter, 1997.

## Gender of Certificate Students Technical Division Enrollments

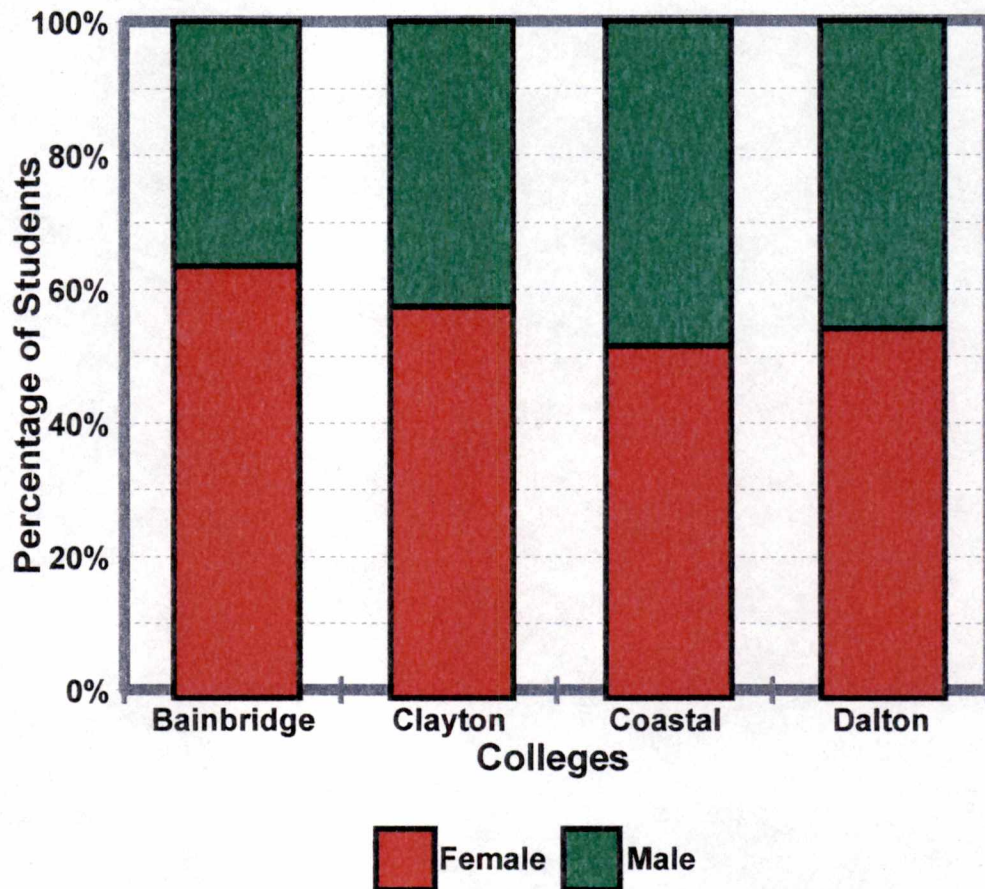
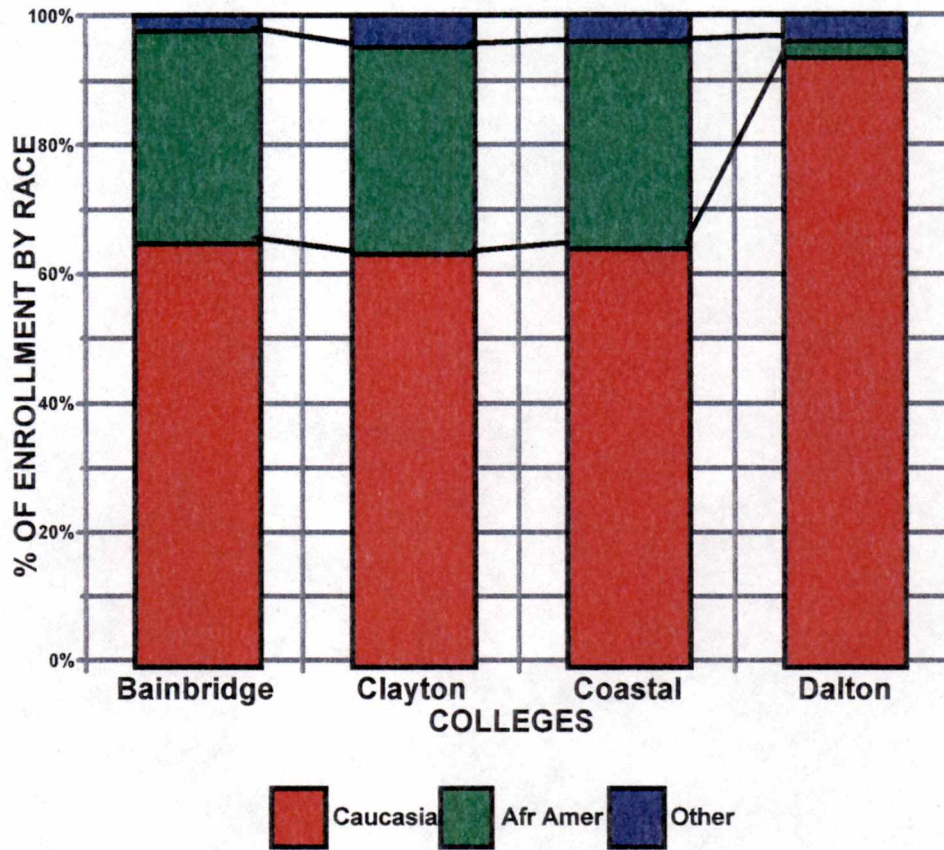


Figure 3: Technical Division enrollments during fall quarter, 1997, by gender.

## Enrollment by Racial Groups Technical Divisions



**Figure 4:** Racial grouping found in fall quarter, 1997, Technical Division enrollments.

## Percentage of Disadvantaged Students Technical Divisions

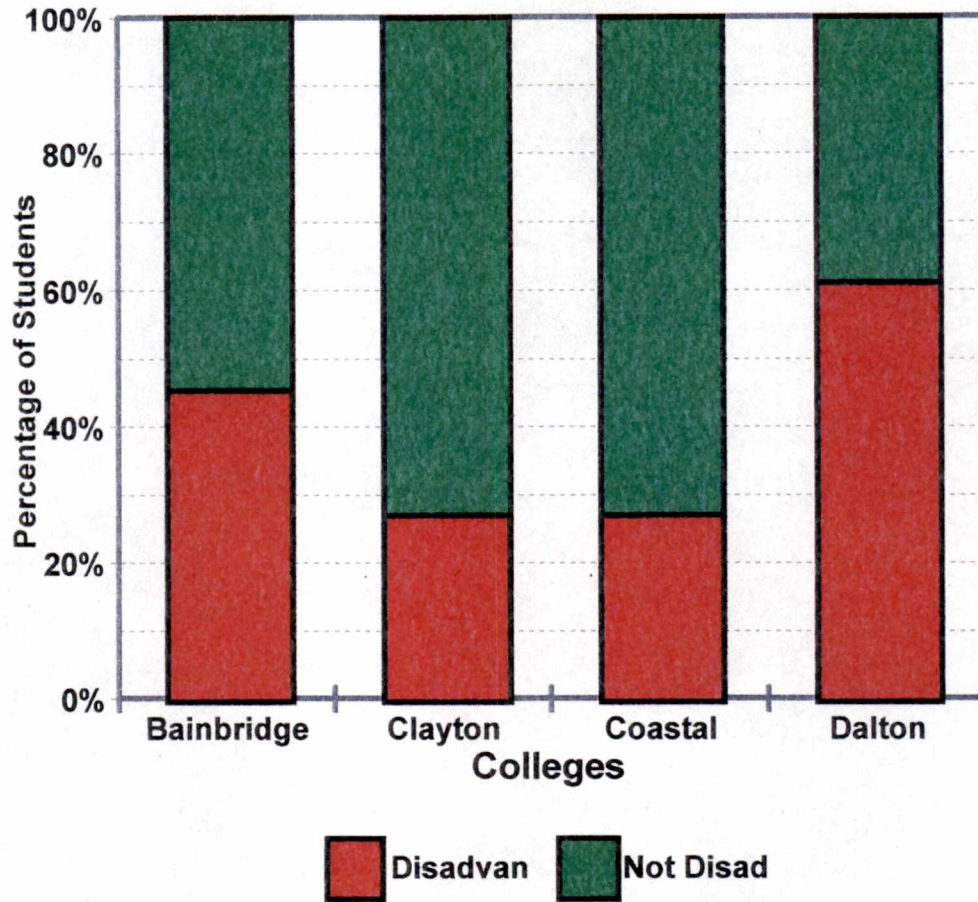


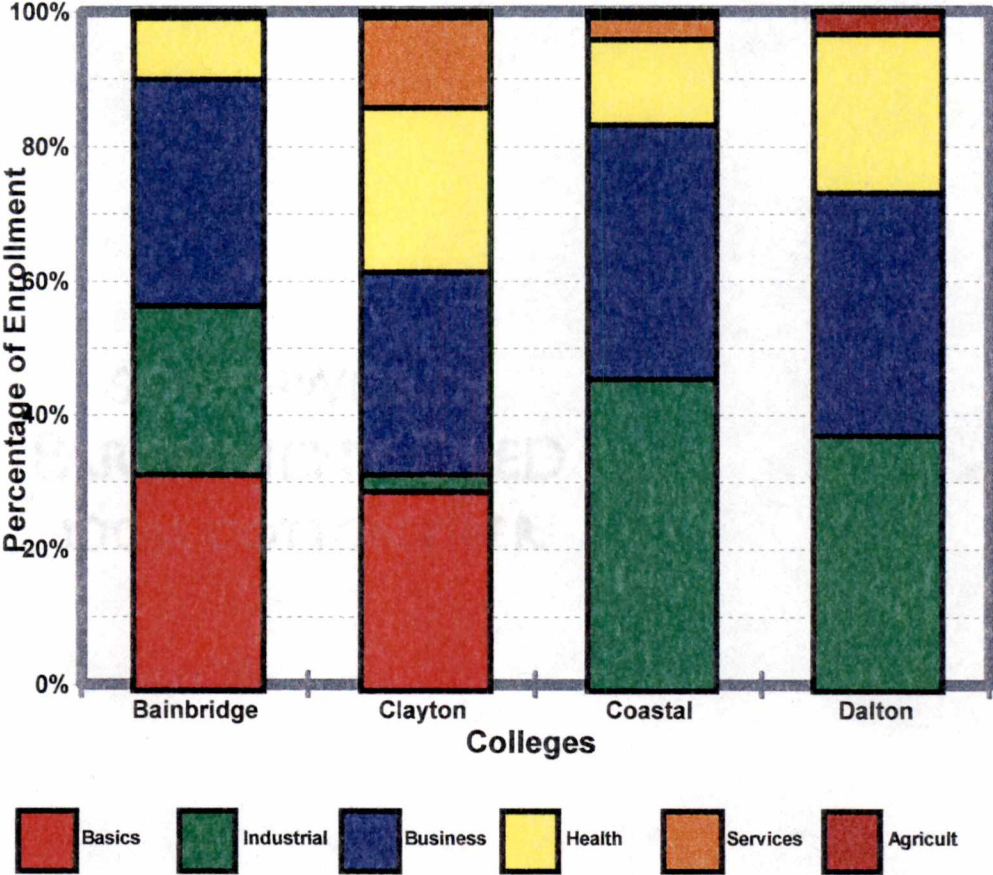
Figure 5: Percentage of disadvantaged students enrolled in Technical Divisions during fall quarter, 1997.

These data may not represent the actual number of disabled certificate students because, to be counted in this category, disabled students must ask for special services not routinely available to other students on campus. Difficulty in identifying disabled DTAE students in the general student population with disabilities may also account for the low figures at three of the schools.

The Technical Divisions at Bainbridge College, Clayton College, Coastal Georgia, and Dalton College offer certificates primarily in three program categories: industry, business, and health (Figure 6). In addition, two institutions -- Clayton and Bainbridge -- offer certificates in personal or public services, while Dalton offers a one-year program in agriculture. True to the mission of the community college, each institution reflects the employment needs of its service area. Industrial-related programs claim a large share of enrollment at Bainbridge, Coastal Georgia, and Dalton, while Clayton College has a greater emphasis on health-related studies. The four colleges are split in their methods of record-keeping of those students enrolled in basic skills courses, such as English and mathematics. Two institutions place the students in a separate category, while the other two count students in their majors, regardless of the type courses enrolled.

Bainbridge, Clayton, Coastal Georgia, and Dalton Colleges are unique institutions serving distinctively different communities and students. One of their common links is the availability of certificate programs on each campus. To gain a

# Certificate Enrollment By Program Category



**Figure 6:** Certificate student enrollment by school and by program category during fall quarter, 1997.

better understanding of certificate programs and the students choosing them, it is important to view them in a larger context. Therefore, in addition to describing the Divisions of Technology in comparative terms, it is useful to examine the individual campuses which offer these courses of study.

### **Overview of Four Regents' Colleges**

**Bainbridge College.** Located in rural southwest Georgia, Bainbridge College is a non-residential campus located on 173 acres (University System of Georgia, 1998). Chartered in 1973, the two-year college is one of the University System of Georgia's youngest institutions. As the only comprehensive community college in southwest Georgia, Bainbridge College draws students primarily from eight rural counties in its service area.

The current University System of Georgia Web Page [Online] describes the student body at Bainbridge College as being predominantly working adults who receive financial aid. The majority are over the age of 20 and female. Many are first-generation students, with approximately 29% of the student body composed of minorities.

The college offers degrees in both transfer and career options. Twenty-three Associate of Arts and seven Associate of Applied Science degrees are provided by Bainbridge College (University System of Georgia, 1998; GDTAE,

post 1.20, 1997). The institution is also associated with Valdosta State University and Albany State University to offer Bainbridge students selected upper division programs.

During fall quarter, 1997, the combined degree and certificate enrollment in the Technical Division of Bainbridge College numbered 484. Three hundred and twelve (64%) of the total divisional enrollment were certificate students. The majority of certificate students were enrolled in three major categories -- Industrial Technologies (25%), Business Technologies (34%), and Health Technologies (9%). In addition, approximately 32 % of the certificate students at Bainbridge College were enrolled solely in General Education / Basic Skills courses. The average Bainbridge College certificate student was female, disadvantaged, attending school part-time, not disabled, and Caucasian.

**Clayton College and State University.** Clayton College and State University is described as “a technological and baccalaureate university located in Morrow, Georgia, ten minutes south of Atlanta’s Hartsfield International Airport [in an area] serving more than one million residents of southern Atlanta suburbs” (University System of Georgia, 1998).

Founded in 1969 as a junior college unit of the University System of Georgia, Clayton College became a four-year institution in 1986 and gained

Georgia, university status ten years later. The institution is unique among Georgia public institutions by offering both associate and baccalaureate degrees through the University System, as well as certificate and Associate of Applied Science degree programs in cooperation with the Department of Technical and Adult Education.

Clayton College and State University serves approximately 5,000 credit students of whom 67 % are women. Average age of the student body is 28 years with 65% of the undergraduates being over the age of 21. Minorities comprise approximately 29% of the student population.

Among the four-year degrees offered by Clayton are Bachelor's Degrees in Arts, Applied Science, Business Administration, Music, Science, and Science in Nursing. Transfer programs are available through both the Associate of Science and the Associate of Arts options. Within the School of Technology sixteen different options are obtainable under the Associate of Applied Science degree category (GDTAE, post 1.20, 1997).

The Technical Division at Clayton College and State University enrolled a combined 1,076 certificate and career degree students during fall quarter, 1997. This count included two programs between one and two years in length which, for reasons previously mentioned, were included in the degree program enrollment.

Those in certificate programs numbered 738 or 68.6 % and were enrolled

in a wide variety of programs. Although the largest percentage (31%) of certificate students chose business-related programs, those taking general education courses (29%) were a close second. Other findings show the average certificate student at Clayton was female, Caucasian, and taking classes part-time. Ten disabled students (one percent) and 300 disadvantaged students (41%) were reported.

**Coastal Georgia Community College.** With a campus located in the *Golden Isles* section of Georgia's seacoast, a two-year institution called Brunswick Junior College was founded in 1961. Originally named for the city of its location, Brunswick College was renamed Coastal Georgia Community College in 1996.

Instruction is offered to approximately 1,900 students at the 193 acre main campus, as well as through centers in area high schools and at Kingsland, Georgia (University System of Georgia, 1998). The average age of Coastal Georgia's student body is 28 years, with females composing 65% of the credit student body. The majority of students on campus are categorized as *taking classes part-time*.

Coastal Georgia draws students primarily from Georgia's southeastern coastal region -- an area dominated by the paper industry. Because the college maintains no dormitories, all students are commuters.

Students at Coastal Georgia are offered a variety of programs, including

Associate of Arts and Associate of Science transfer degrees. In addition, students have access to seven baccalaureate degrees and two master's degree programs through a consortium with Armstrong Atlantic and Georgia Southern Universities. Other degree options in the form of seven Associate of Applied Science degrees are available to students in concert with the Department of Technical and Adult Education.

The 576 Technical Division students enrolled fall quarter, 1997, at Coastal Georgia are almost equally divided between seven degree programs and thirteen one-year certificate programs. Certificate students numbered 320 or 56.8 % of the total career student enrollment.

Like the other three colleges targeted in this study, most of Coastal Georgia's certificate students were enrolled in industrial, business, and health technologies. A small percentage (4%) chose a service-related program (Figure 12). The school was only one of two in which males and females were almost equally divided. Part-time students heavily outnumbered full-time enrollees.

**Dalton College.** When it first opened, Dalton College was the twenty-fourth of what currently numbers thirty-four units of the University System of Georgia (University System of Georgia, 1998). Chartered as Dalton Junior College in 1963, the institution along with the other two-year units in Georgia's University

System deleted the term *junior* from its title in 1987. The simple name, Dalton College, has been retained throughout other system-wide renaming processes to emphasize the college's multi-purpose mission of transferability, career education, and community service.

In keeping with that mission, the two-year institution offers continuing education and community development non-credit programs, both transfer and career programs at the associate degree level, one-year certificates, and less-than one-year mini-certificates. In addition, students may complete selected baccalaureate and master's programs through collaboration with State University of West Georgia.

The community of Dalton, known as the *Carpet Capital of the World*, is host to the largest concentration of carpet manufacturers in the world (Dalton Chamber of Commerce, 1997). Dalton College students reflect the greater Dalton economy, with a large number of students and graduates being employed in carpet-related industry. With the region heavily industrial, the ability to offer career programs is of great advantage to the institution's students, as well as to the community it serves.

Dalton College overlooks Interstate-75 in mountainous northwest Georgia. The school's location on the primary highway corridor between Chattanooga, Tennessee, 30 miles to the north, and Atlanta, 80 miles to the south, is an

attraction to a student body composed entirely of commuters. Fall quarter, 1997, the 136 acre campus was host to approximately 3,100 credit students whose average age was 27 years. Sixty-one percent of the student body were female, sixty-four percent receive some type of financial assistance, and seventy-four percent were full-time students (Codjoe, 1998).

Historically, the student body has generally reflected the racial makeup of the surrounding community (University of Georgia, 1997). During the 1997 fall quarter, 90.6% of the students were Caucasian with few minorities attracted to attend (Codjoe, 1998). However, this mix is expected to change rapidly in the near future. The college's service area has experienced a dramatic influx by Mexican / Cuban Americans during the last decade. The local Hispanic population explosion has already radically changed the ethnicity of area elementary and secondary educational institutions of the Dalton City and Whitfield County school districts (University of Georgia, 1997). Plans for serving these Hispanic students at Dalton College include emphasis on English-as-a-second-language instruction and an intensification of student services' availability in Spanish.

Previous community college research has demonstrated the importance to students of *affordability* (Mortenson, 1996; Center for Education Statistics, 1991) and *convenient location* (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). Dalton College students are no different in their priorities. Those enrolled during fall quarter, 1997, listed

*convenient location (69.9%) and low cost (53%)* to be the major reasons for selecting Dalton College (Codjoe, 1998). When asked in the same survey the purpose of entering Dalton College, fifty-four percent gave the reason *take courses necessary for transferring to a 4-year college or university*. This verifies the historical trend that student enrollment has been, and continues to be, split almost equally between transfer and career programs (Dalton College, 1998).

The college is one of four Regents' institutions operating a Technical Division in cooperation with the Department of Technical and Adult Education. Although Dalton College offers a few Associate of Applied Science degree programs in the Division of Business Administration and Nursing, these programs are not funded by the DTAE and, therefore, not counted in these statistics. Twelve Associate of Applied Science degrees are offered by the Technical Division, along with fifteen one-year certificates and eleven mini-certificates. Two programs requiring between one and two years for completion enrolled eighty-eight students who were included in the AAS degree statistics for reasons previously cited.

Total fall quarter, 1997, enrollment for the Technical Division was 958. Of this total population, 59% (562) were certificate students. Certificate program offerings included selections in industrial, business, health, and agricultural technologies. During fall quarter, 1997, certificate students at Dalton College tended to be primarily attending part-time and almost equally divided between

male and female. The Caucasian population, mirroring the racial mix of the community, heavily dominated racial categories to a much greater extent than found at the other three institutions investigated.

### **Descriptive Survey of Dalton College Certificate Students**

The Dalton College certificate students surveyed during winter quarter, 1998, were asked several questions through an instrument to establish the exact demographic population answering the questionnaire. As previously mentioned, although 401 questionnaires were returned, one was virtually blank and, therefore, unusable. Of the 400 questionnaires tabulated the average respondent was between the ages of 21 and 25, female, Caucasian, in a certificate rather than a mini-certificate program, not disabled, and living with a spouse or significant-other and children, if any (Tables 4 - 5). Other findings were that 45.6 % viewed themselves as being disadvantaged in one or more ways. The majority (58.3%) were employed for 31 hours or more per week. Over sixty three percent were taking classes part-time (fewer than 12 credit hours). The majority (53.6%) were taking day classes (Tables 6 - 7).

**Table 4:** Questionnaire responses by Dalton College certificate students during winter quarter, 1998, regarding gender, age, and race.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Male</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
<b>&lt;21 years</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>21-25</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>26-30</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>31-35</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>36-40</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>&gt; 40 years</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Race</b>		
<b>Amer Indian</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>African Amer</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Multi-race</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>2%</b>

\* Some multiple answers were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 5:** Questionnaire responses by Dalton College certificate students during winter quarter, 1998, regarding marital / family status and primary living arrangement.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Marital / Family Status</b>		
<b>Single</b>	155	38%
<b>Married</b>	185	47%
<b>Divorced</b>	58	14%
<b>Widowed</b>	2	<1%
<b>Have Children</b>	138	34%
<b>One</b>	57	14%
<b>Two</b>	53	13%
<b>Three</b>	21	5%
<b>Four or more</b>	7	<2%
<b>Have No Children</b>	260	34%
<b>No Response</b>	2	<1%
<b>Primary Living Arrangement</b>		
<b>Live alone</b>	36	9%
<b>With parents</b>	106	26%
<b>With friends</b>	2	<1%
<b>With Spouse/ Sig Other/Child</b>	276	69%

\* Some multiple answers were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 6:** Questionnaire responses by Dalton College certificate students during winter quarter, 1998, regarding disabled and disadvantaged status.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n= 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Disabled?</b>		
<b>No</b>	374	94%
<b>Yes</b>	25	6%
<b>Physically</b>	10	2%
<b>Emotionally</b>	2	<1%
<b>Learning</b>	10	2%
<b>Multiple</b>	3	<1%
<b>No Response</b>	1	<1%
<b>Disadvantaged?</b>		
<b>No</b>	217	54%
<b>Yes</b>	182	46%
<b>Academically</b>	8	<1%
<b>Economically</b>	166	41%
<b>Limited English</b>	3	<1%
<b>Multiple</b>	5	<1%
<b>No Response</b>	1	1%

\* Multiple choices were allowed.

\*\*Percentages have been rounded.

**Table 7:** Questionnaire responses by Dalton College certificate students during winter quarter, 1998, regarding employment, class times, part-time / full-time status, and certificate / mini-certificate status.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n= 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Employed?</b>		
No	80	20.0%
Yes	320	80.0%
< 10 hrs/wk	11	2.7%
10 - 20 hrs/wk	19	2.2%
20 - 30 hrs/wk	58	14.5%
31 - 40 hrs/wk	136	34.0%
>40 hrs/wk	97	24.3%
<b>Primary time of classes?</b>		
Day (before 5 pm)	215	53.6%
Night (after 5 pm)	159	39.9%
Combined	26	6.5%
<b>How many hrs enrolled?</b>		
< 12 credit hrs.	255	63.6%
12 or more hrs.	145	36.4%
<b>What length program?</b>		
Mini-certificate	32	8%
Certificate	369	92%

\* Multiple choices were allowed.

\*\*Percentages have been rounded

## **Summary of Findings for Targeted Certificate Programs**

This study found that certificate students are predominantly female and Caucasian. Slightly over forty-five percent consider themselves disadvantaged. The majority (80%) tend to take classes part-time while working at least thirty hours per week. More than 60 % of these students are over 25 years of age. Few claim services for the disabled. The majority (62%) are currently married or have been married in the past. Many (69%) are living with a spouse or significant other.

### **Student Perceptions of Options Under HOPE**

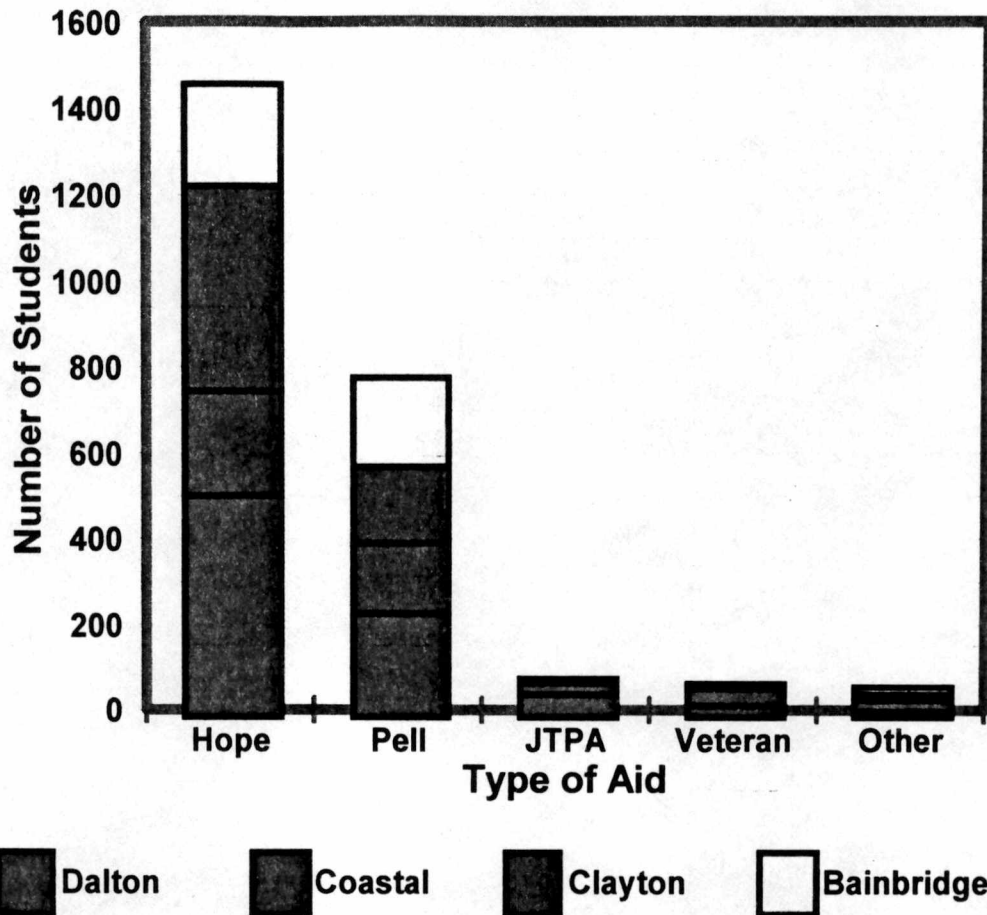
*Research Question Two: What are the recollections of certificate students about the program options available to them under HOPE funding when they began their program of study?*

### **Findings Through DTAE Data**

The HOPE Scholarship has offered opportunities for Georgians to attend college. The Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) report, post 1.20, 1997, revealed that during fall quarter, 1997, a total of 1,456 (47%) out of 3,081 Technical Division students at the four colleges were awarded HOPE Scholarships (Figure 7). Certificate students receiving this aid were not separately identified in the DTAE data. Therefore, the percentage of HOPE awards to certificate students in all four Technical Divisions was not available.

Technical Division students receiving Pell Grants, a federally-funded /

## Enrollment by Financial Aid Categories Technical Division Students



**Figure 7:** Financial aid categories awarded to Technical Division students during fall quarter, 1997.

need-based award, numbered 775 students (25%). The other financial aid categories reported to the state were quite small in comparison, with a total of 183 students (6%) receiving assistance through such avenues as work study, veterans, and local scholarship.

### **Findings Through Questionnaire Administered**

Items twelve and thirteen on the questionnaire administered to certificate students at Dalton College were in regard to financial aid, and the HOPE Scholarship in particular. Respondents were asked if they were receiving any financial aid. If respondents reported receiving aid, they were asked whether the type of aid was received from federal / state, other agencies, or other individuals or groups (Table 8). Twenty-two students (5%) received the Pell Grant. However, the single largest source of aid for certificate students reported was from the HOPE Scholarship (74.8%).

HOPE recipients surveyed were asked a number of questions regarding their knowledge when they enrolled about the HOPE process. They were allowed multiple answers. When asked how they qualified for the HOPE Scholarship, eight and one-half percent did not know how they qualified (Table 9).

Approximately 47 % said they qualified by being *enrolled in a certificate program*.

**Table 8:** Financial aid categories awarded Dalton College certificate students.

<b>FINANCIAL AID RECEIVED</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>No financial aid received</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Received aid from some source</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Aid from federal / state:</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>HOPE</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>JTPA</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Pell Grant</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Veterans Benefits</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Aid from other agencies:</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
<b>Tuition paid by employer</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Tuition paid by other org.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Bank loan</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Aid from others:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>From parents</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>From friends</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

\* Some student received aid from multiple sources

\*\* Percentages have been rounded.

**Table 9:** Dalton College certificate students self-reported methods of qualifying for HOPE Scholarship.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> <b>n = 400</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Maintained a “B” average in high school.</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
<b>Received a voucher after completing GED.</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>Enrolled in a certificate program.</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>46.7%</b>
<b>Have maintained a “B” average through 45 hrs in college.</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>55.2%</b>
<b>I don’t know how I qualified for HOPE.</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

\* Multiple responses were allowed.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

The majority (55.2%) of respondents reported that they qualified for HOPE by *maintaining a "B" average through 45 hours in college*. Because the *"B" average in high school* category is the most widely known of the HOPE awards, respondents may have confused the choices to this question, linking *"B" average* with their high school experience, rather than grade point average achieved during college. If these answers were accurate, this finding may indicate the possibility that academically strong students are often switching to certificate programs after beginning college in another program.

When asked about the perceived influences brought about by being a recipient of HOPE, the respondents were again allowed multiple responses (Table 10). Almost 39% reported that the HOPE Scholarship was the reason they could attend school, while over 30 % felt that HOPE was not adequate to cover their other school-related expenses. Another 23.7 % did not realize they would qualify for HOPE prior to coming to Dalton College. These data, together with 8.5% of the recipients not understanding how they qualified for HOPE, may indicate possible confusion regarding the many facets of HOPE award categories.

Questions regarding a possible influence by HOPE on choice of programs showed that only 6.7 % of the certificate students surveyed would have chosen a four-year program, if funding for it were immediately available through HOPE (Table 11). More than twice as many (16.5 %) would have entered a two-year

**Table 10:** Helpfulness of HOPE Scholarship to Dalton College certificate students.

<b>INFLUENCE OF HOPE SCHOLARSHIP</b>	<b>FREQUENCY AGREEING*</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Not applicable or I don't know.</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
<b>I did not know I was eligible for HOPE until I came to college.</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>23.7%</b>
<b>Before I came to college, I thought only people who did well in high school could receive HOPE.</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>14.7%</b>
<b>I could not attend school if I did not receive HOPE.</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>38.7%</b>
<b>HOPE funding is helpful, but I rely more on other kinds of financial aid.</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>HOPE funding is helpful, but is not enough to cover books and supplies.</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>30.7%</b>

\* Multiple responses were allowed.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 11:** Influences of HOPE Scholarship on the educational experiences of Dalton College certificate students.

<b>QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT</b>	<b>FREQUENCY AGREEING*</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Finding out that HOPE would not pay my tuition if I enrolled in a degree program is the primary reason I am taking a certificate / mini-certificate program.</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>15.2%</b>
<b>When I first started college, I would have enrolled in a two-year degree program, if HOPE would have paid for it.</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>16.5%</b>
<b>When I first started college, I would have enrolled in a four-year program, if HOPE would have paid for it.</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>Receiving HOPE is the primary reason I decided to come to school.</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15.5%</b>
<b>I feel that my options of what program to take were limited by the conditions of the HOPE Scholarship.</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>13.5%</b>

\* These choices continued the multiple responses allowed in question 13.

\*\* Percentages were rounded.

program, if funded. Only 13.5% reported their program options to be limited under HOPE, a seeming contradiction when 23.2% indicated they would have entered either a two or four-year program, if easily funded.

### **Summary of Findings Regarding Financial Aid**

Financial aid was received by 47% of all Technical Division students enrolled at the four targeted colleges. The HOPE Scholarship played a vital role by supplying tuition for almost 75% of the certificate students surveyed at Dalton College. Thirty-eight percent of these students believed they could not attend school without receiving HOPE, although nearly 31% thought the award was not sufficient to cover books and supplies.

Among those surveyed there seemed to be a lack of knowledge regarding qualifying for the HOPE Scholarship. Eight and one-half percent did not know how they qualified, while 23.7% did not realize they could be awarded the Scholarship until attending Dalton College. Forty-seven percent reported qualifying for HOPE by entering a certificate program, while over 55% believed the award came through their maintaining a "B" average through 45 hours of college credit. Almost 15% thought that only those who did well in high school achieved HOPE.

The perception of how HOPE influenced the choice of programs was

mixed. While 16.5% reportedly would have chosen a two year program if available through HOPE, only 6.7% would have entered a four-year program. However, 13.5% reported their options being constricted by the conditions of the HOPE awards.

### **Charateristics of Certificate Students Surveyed**

Research Question Three: *What are the backgrounds, educational goals, support systems, needs, perceived abilities, and external influences affecting the educational choices and progress of certificate students?*

#### **Background of Students**

The educational backgrounds of the targeted certificate student population at Dalton College were profiled by means of a questionnaire. The majority of certificate students (68.5%) graduated from high school (Tables 12- 13). Twenty-nine percent satisfied their secondary school requirements through acquiring a GED. While 28.3% had previous post-secondary experience, 17.8% had not completed their initial program of study (Table 14). Sixteen percent of those who attended college prior to their current program had done so at Dalton College. Completion of fewer than 46 hours was the average. Six percent of the respondents who finished other programs prior to their current major did so in another certificate program.

**Table 12:** Secondary education background of certificate students at Dalton College.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Highest educational attainment prior to attending college.</b>		
<b>GED</b>	117	29.2%
<b>High School Diploma</b>	274	68.5%
<b>Neither</b>	6	1.5%
<b>No response</b>	3	0.8%
<b>Year of graduation or leaving high school.</b>		<b>GED, n = 117</b> <b>Diploma, n = 274</b>
<b>Before 1990</b>		
<b>GED</b>	48	41.0%
<b>H.S. Diploma</b>	23	8.4%
<b>1990 - 1995</b>		
<b>GED</b>	33	28.2%
<b>H.S. Diploma</b>	91	33.2%
<b>1996</b>		
<b>GED</b>	20	17.1%
<b>H.S. Diploma</b>	28	10.2%
<b>1997</b>		
<b>GED</b>	12	10.3%
<b>H.S. Diploma</b>	17	6.2%
<b>Year not indicated</b>		
<b>GED</b>	4	3.4%
<b>H.S. Diploma</b>	115	42.0%

\* Multiple responses were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 13: Prior academic history of Dalton College certificate students.**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Have you enrolled in a previous post-secondary experience prior to this program?</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>12.7%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>28.3%</b>
<b>Another certificate program</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8.2%</b>
<b>Another mini-certif program</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>A degree program</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>14.2%</b>
<b>Program not stipulated</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>No response</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>59.0%</b>
<b>If yes, where were your courses taken?</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
<b>Not applicable</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
<b>Dalton College</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Another GA college</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Ga Technical School</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>School outside GA</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>Multiple choices</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>School not specified</b>		

\* Multiple responses were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 14:** Dalton College certificate students' self-reported completion rates achieved in previous post-secondary programs.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> <b>n = 400</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Did you complete your previous post-secondary program of study?</b>		
<b>No</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>17.8%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>Not applicable</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
<b>If you did complete a previous program, at what level was it?</b>		
<b>Mini-certificate</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>Certificate</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>AS degree</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>AAS degree</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>Master's degree</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>Several program levels</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>If you did NOT complete a program, how many hours did you complete?</b>		
<b>1 - 5 hours</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>6 - 19 hours</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>20 - 45 hours</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
<b>46 - 60 hours</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>&gt; 60 hours</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

\* Multiple responses were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded

Of those high school diploma students who responded to the inquiry concerning *year of high school completion*, almost 50% stated that they had been out of school between one and eight years. Certificate students with a GED background had been away from school longer than their diploma counterparts, with 48 % of them having left high school prior to 1990.

### **Future Plans and Educational Goals**

Those surveyed had varied plans for their futures. Because the thrust of career education is employability, it is not surprising that *getting a job* and *continue working* were two of the primary answers given regarding plans after program completion. The majority were intent on working, in addition to any further schooling planned.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents expressed plans for continuing their education (Table 15) with the remaining 2.2% having no future educational intent (Table 16). While 13.5 % of the respondents were going to continue their education at a later time, 32.5% were staying in school after program completion. The ultimate educational goal expressed by the majority of respondents was achieving an associate degree.

**Table 15:** Dalton College certificate students' plans after program completion.

<b>ITEM: What plans do you have following completion of your program?</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Plan to get a job</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Plan to continue working</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Plan to continue education at a later time</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
<b>Plan to continue my education immediately</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>32.5%</b>
<b>1) by taking another program of same length</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7.6%</b>
<b>2) by enrolling in a longer program</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>29.8%</b>
<b>3) Both</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>4) Specific programs listed</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>No response</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2%</b>

\* Multiple responses were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

**Table 16:** Highest educational attainment planned by Dalton College certificate students.

<b>ITEM: If you could attain your ultimate educational goal, how far would you go?</b>	<b>FREQUENCY*</b> n = 400	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Associate degree</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Baccalaureate degree</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Master's degree</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Doctoral degree</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
<b>Take classes to keep updated in my field, but not for a degree.</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>21.5%</b>
<b>Take classes just for fun.</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>I have no further educational goals.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

\* Multiple responses were given.

\*\* Percentages were rounded.

### **Support Systems Required for Education**

Multiple resources were perceived to be needed for certificate student to realize their educational goals. The needed assistance most often expressed were forms of financial aid both for tuition (71 %) and other expenses (32%), encouragement from family and friends (32.5%) (Table 17). *Approval / assistance from the workplace* was needed by 26.5 % of those surveyed. However, one-fourth of the certificate students planned to achieve their educational goals regardless of the outside assistance available.

### **Sources of Encouragement and Support**

Ninety percent of those responding to the questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that their families encouraged them to attend school. Thirty-eight percent were assisted by their families with other financial obligations, so that they could pursue their educational endeavors (Table 18). A large number of those surveyed (61.3 %) chose *not applicable* when asked questions about child care. Those who did have children reported family support for child care (28.8%). Employers were generally considered helpful in working around class schedules (50.3%).

### **Barriers To Achieving Educational Goals**

Certificate students reported a number of problems encountered while

**Table 17:** Resources needed by Dalton College certificate students to attain their educational goals.

<b>ITEM: If you achieve your educational goals, what resources will you need?</b>	<b>FREQUENCY* n = 400</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE**</b>
<b>Financial aid to pay for my further education.</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Financial help with my other expenses besides tuition and books.</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Help with child care.</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Encouragement from family and friends.</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>32.5%</b>
<b>Approval and encouragement from my workplace.</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>26.5%</b>
<b>Nothing. I plan to achieve my educational goals regardless of what outside assistance I have.</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>25.2%</b>
<b>Other: "time limits"</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>No response</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

\* Multiple answers were given.

\*\*Percentages were rounded.

Table 18: Sources of encouragement reported by certificate students.

**SECTION 1**  
**Encouragement and Support While Attending School**

Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		Mean
	Strongly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Agree Freq.	%	Strongly Agree Freq.	%	Not Applicable Freq.	%	
1 My family encourages me to attend school	8	2.0%	10	2.5%	52	13.0%	308	77.0%	22	5.5%	3.7
2 My family helps me with child care, so I can attend school	28	7.0%	8	2.0%	18	4.5%	101	25.3%	245	61.3%	3.2
3 My family helps me with my other financial obligations, so that I can attend school	77	19.3%	35	8.8%	42	10.5%	110	27.5%	136	34.0%	3.5
4 Overall, my friends have helped me achieve my education more than my family has	146	36.5%	55	13.8%	42	10.5%	21	5.3%	136	34.0%	2.3
5 My employer has worked with me by scheduling around my schedule	53	13.3%	22	5.5%	46	11.5%	155	38.8%	124	31.0%	3.1
6 I have received no help or encouragement from others while attending school	197	49.3%	31	7.8%	29	7.3%	34	8.5%	109	27.3%	1.7

attending school (Table 19). Both family (50.3%) and work obligations (43.3%) reportedly made it difficult to study regularly. However, 45.8% strongly disagreed that family obligations affected class attendance, while 40.5% strongly disagreed that work obligations had the same effect. Although there was a 44.8% *not applicable* rate on dependable transportation, 44.3% strongly disagreed that this was a problem.

### **Perceptions About Abilities and Status**

While 51.8% of the students surveyed disagreed or strongly disagree that they had *felt like a failure most of the time in high school*, almost forty-seven percent *believed that they would never have the opportunity to come to college* (Table 20). Seventy-three percent of the students agreed or strongly agreed that *starting with a short program has given me the confidence that I can succeed later with a longer degree program*. Almost 88% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they *would feel better about myself after program completion, regardless of my employment status after graduation*. Over 84% agreed or strongly agreed that they *had the ability to complete successfully a longer program of study*.

Eighty-three percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they *enjoy learning how "to do" something more than just learning "about things."*

Table 19: Problems reported by certificate students.

**SECTION 2**  
**Problems Experienced While Attending School**

	Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		Mean
		Strongly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Agree Freq.	%	Strongly Agree Freq.	%	Not Applicable Freq.	%	
1												
2	Family obligations make it difficult for me to study regularly	85	21.3%	46	11.5%	113	28.3%	88	22.0%	68	17.0%	2.6
3	Family obligations make it difficult for me to attend class regularly	183	45.8%	58	14.5%	39	9.8%	24	6.0%	96	24.0%	1.7
4	Work obligations make it difficult for me to study regularly	85	21.3%	47	11.8%	100	25.0%	73	18.3%	95	23.8%	2.5
5	Work obligations make it difficult for me to attend classes regularly	162	40.5%	40	10.0%	44	11.0%	31	7.8%	123	30.8%	1.8
6	Finding dependable child care is a major problem for me	97	24.3%	14	3.5%	19	4.8%	10	2.5%	10	2.5%	1.6
	Finding dependable transportation is a major problem for me	177	44.3%	16	4.0%	17	4.3%	11	2.8%	179	44.8%	1.4

Table 20: Feelings and perceptions reported by certificate students.

<b>SECTION 3</b>											
<b>Students Feelings Concerning Certificate/Mini-Certificate Status</b>											
Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		
	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Mean	
1	168	42.0%	39	9.8%	64	16.0%	53	13.3%	76	19.0%	2.0
2	120	30.0%	39	9.8%	65	16.3%	122	30.5%	43	10.8%	2.5
3	23	5.8%	20	5.0%	92	23.0%	200	50.0%	65	16.3%	3.4
4	13	3.3%	16	4.0%	74	18.5%	259	64.8%	38	9.5%	3.6
5	168	42.0%	65	16.3%	57	14.3%	44	11.0%	66	16.5%	1.9
6	11	2.8%	14	3.5%	77	19.3%	257	64.3%	41	10.3%	3.6
7											
8	13	3.3%	39	9.8%	95	23.8%	196	49.0%	57	14.3%	3.4
	12	3.0%	8	2.0%	45	11.3%	305	76.3%	30	7.5%	3.7

Almost 73% agreed or strongly agreed that *the “hands-on” skills would be the more important in getting or keeping a job than the other subjects I have learned.*

Over 58% disagreed or strongly disagreed that *taking academic course like English, Reading, or Math is a waste of my time.*

### **Reasons for Choosing A Program of Study**

When queried about the reasons for enrolling in a certificate program, 62.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they *wanted to qualify for a new job in a different field* (Table 21). Over forty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that they *just enjoy learning something new, even though it might not be useful in my job.* While 61.8% said the statement was not applicable, only 5.1% agreed or strongly agreed that *my employer required me to take this program.* Almost 46% rated as not applicable the item *I want to qualify for a promotion where I am employed,* while 57.5% also reported *I need to update my skills to avoid a layoff from my current job* as not applicable.

Forty-nine percent disagreed strongly that the *short length of the program was more important than the subject,* while 64.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they *would have chosen the same program regardless of its length* (Table 22).

Only 29.8% agreed or strongly agreed that they *chose a short program because I thought it would be easier than a degree program.* A response of agree or

Table 21: Reasons reported by certificate students for enrolling in this program of study.

**SECTION 4**  
**Reasons Why Student Enrolled in this Program of Study**

	Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		Mean
		Strongly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Agree Freq.	%	Strongly Agree Freq.	%	Not Applicable Freq.	%	
1	I want to qualify for a promotion where I am employed	76	19.0%	20	5.0%	43	10.8%	78	19.5%	183	45.8%	2.6
2	I want to qualify for a new job in a different field	44	11.0%	15	3.8%	39	9.8%	212	53.0%	89	22.3%	3.3
3	I need to update my skills to avoid a layoff from my current job	103	25.8%	16	4.0%	19	4.8%	32	8.0%	230	57.5%	1.9
4	My employer required me to take this program	121	30.3%	12	3.0%	9	2.3%	11	2.8%	247	61.8%	1.4
5	I just enjoy learning something new, even though it may not be useful in my job	51	12.8%	23	5.8%	73	18.3%	108	27.0%	145	36.3%	2.9

Table 22: Reasons reported by certificate students for choosing this program.

**SECTION 5**  
**Reasons Why Student Chose this Length of Program**

	Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		Mean
		Strongly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Disagree Freq.	%	Slightly Agree Freq.	%	Strongly Agree Freq.	%	Not Applicable Freq.	%	
1	I chose a short program because I thought it would be easier than a degree program	128	32.0%	54	13.5%	61	15.3%	58	14.5%	99	24.8%	2.2
2	I chose this program because I could finish it quickly and get a job	105	26.3%	48	12.0%	59	14.8%	96	24.0%	91	22.8%	2.5
3	The short length of this program was more important	198	49.5%	46	11.5%	26	6.5%	22	5.5%	108	27.0%	1.6
4	I would have chosen this program regardless of its length	39	9.8%	30	7.5%	74	18.5%	184	46.0%	71	17.8%	3.2
5	My ability to easily receive financial aid for this program was a very important factor in my choice of this program	61	15.3%	29	7.3%	50	12.5%	149	37.3%	109	27.3%	3.0

*strongly agree* was given by 49.8% to the statement, *My ability to easily receive financial aid for this program was very important in my choice of this program.* Importance of *finishing quickly and getting a job* was agreed to by 38.8%, while 38.3% disagreed.

Respondents were asked to consider the amount of influence which high school counselors, college advisors, financial aid officers, family and friends played in selecting a subject of study (Table 23). Although the results were mixed, 40.5% agreed or strongly agreed that *my family was very important in my choosing this subject.* Thirty-six percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that *my high school counselor was very important in my choosing this subject.*

### **Summary of Findings Regarding Characteristics of Certificate Students**

Twenty-nine percent of the certificate students surveyed earned a GED instead of a high school diploma. Twenty-eight percent had previous post-secondary experience, with 16% of the students' previous experiences coming at Dalton College. Only 12.2% completed their previous program, with 6% doing so in another certificate program.

Plans for the future included *getting a job* (71%) and *continuing to work* (32%). Many (46%) plan to continue in their educational pursuits with 29.8% targeting a longer program in the future. The ultimate goal for 20% of those

Table 23: Reasons reported by certificate students for choosing this subject.

**SECTION 6**  
**Reasons Why Student Chose this Subject of Study**

Total Number of Respondents = 400	1		2		3		4		0		Mean
	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Not Applicable		
1 My high school counselor was very important in my choosing this subject	144 36.0%	17 4.3%	17 4.3%	9 2.3%	17 4.3%	213 53.3%					1.5
2 My college advisor was very important in choosing this subject	114 28.5%	23 5.8%	47 11.8%	48 12.0%	168 42.0%						2.1
3 The financial aid officer was very important in my choosing this subject	139 34.8%	26 6.5%	20 5.0%	25 6.3%	190 47.5%						1.7
4 My family was very important in my choosing this subject	76 19.0%	28 7.0%	56 14.0%	106 26.5%	133 33.3%						2.7
5 My friends were very important in my choosing this subject	105 26.3%	30 7.5%	58 14.5%	53 13.3%	154 38.5%						2.2

surveyed was an associate degree, while 21.5% reportedly *wanted to take classes to keep updated in my field, but not for a degree*. To achieve these goals, 71% *required financial aid to pay for my future education*, 32.5% of those surveyed needed *encouragement from family and friends* and 32% need *financial help with my other expenses besides tuition and books*. Twenty five % reported needing nothing, stating that they plan *to achieve my educational goals regardless of what outside assistance I have*.

Problems certificate students experienced while attending school included difficulties in studying regularly because of family obligations (50.3%) and work obligations (43.3%). However, there was strong disagreement that family obligations (45.8%) or work obligations (40.5%) made it difficult to attend class regularly.

Those surveyed revealed several distinct characteristics about themselves. Almost half the students (46.8%) believed they would never have an opportunity to come to college. Almost three-fourths (73%) thought that beginning in a short program had given them confidence that they could succeed in a longer degree program. Eighty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that after program completion, they would feel better about themselves regardless of employment status. In excess of 84% agreed that they had the ability to complete successfully a longer program of study. Eighty three percent enjoyed learning how *to do*

something rather than just learning *about* things, while approximately 73% agreed that the hands-on skills would be more important to their getting or keeping a job than the other subjects they learned.

Reasons why certificate students chose their programs of study brought mixed responses. Almost 70% wanted to qualify for a new job in a different field. Forty-five percent reported wanting to learn something new, even though it might not be useful in their job. Over 64% would have chosen their current program of study, regardless of its length, while almost half the respondents reported the easily available financial aid was very important in their choice of program. The family was the most important influence (40.5%) on choice of a program of study, while the high school counselor was the least important (6.6%).

### **Summary**

Students enrolled in certificate programs are diverse in their demography, needs, perceptions, and goals. While this descriptive study is not a conclusive guide to other campuses or different applications, it should offer some in-sight into a sample population of students enrolled in credit programs of less-than one-year in duration. With this beginning, further research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of this significant group.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the characteristics of selected students enrolled in certificate programs. The study was performed in two parts. A demographic profile was compiled using data collected during fall quarter, 1997, from the Technical Divisions at four University System of Georgia institutions -- Bainbridge College, Clayton College and State University, Coastal Georgia Community College, and Dalton College -- which offer both certificate and Associate of Applied Science degree programs in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE). In addition, a questionnaire was administered to all certificate students enrolled during winter quarter, 1998, at Dalton College. The survey administration was limited to those students taking programs of one-year duration, or less, for which college credit was awarded.

The first part of the study focused on data from the Georgia DTAE Management Information System (MIS), post 1.20 (1997). Enrollment figures collected fall quarter, 1997, from the four colleges were analyzed. The second source of data was a questionnaire administered to all students enrolled in credit

certificate programs offered by the Technical Division of Dalton College during winter quarter, 1998. Four hundred usable questionnaires (71%) were returned out of a total population of 562 certificate students.

Several groups were excluded from the study. Certificate students enrolled in Technical Institutes sponsored by the Georgia DTAE were not included because the majority of these institutions do not offer Associate of Applied Science degree options -- an important aspect of the investigation into choices certificate students make. Those students taking other types of certificate activities resulting in Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit were also excluded, as were students enrolled in certificate programs at private colleges.

### **Discussion**

The certificate student does not represent one type learner. Rather, these students reflect diverse and complex individuals with many backgrounds, characteristics, resources, support systems, abilities, and goals. Although generalizations may be misleading to a particular campus or individual application, it does allow a general understanding to present a profile of this subset of certificate students.

Those choosing certificate programs are generally taking classes part-time (65.1%) while being employed (80%), usually for more than 30 hours per week

(58.3%). Most (53.6%) take classes primarily during the day. The majority (58.7%) are female, Caucasian (68.4%), over 25 years of age (> 60%), who are living with their spouse or significant other (69%). Although similar to the overall 1995 enrollment patterns of public four-year institutions reported by Phillippe (1997) in gender (53.4% female) and racial category (70.6% Caucasian), these figures differ in attendance status (23.5% part-time) and age (49.3% age 25 or older). Community college students in general worked either part-time or full-time (82%) while attending school (Phillippe, 1997), figures which match the employment status of their certificate counterparts (80%).

A large number of certificate students are disadvantaged (45.6%), primarily in the economically disadvantaged category. Although few (< 1%) listed language difficulties as a source of disadvantage, the English-as-a-second-language population is increasing with the influx of Hispanics into Georgia (University of Georgia, 1997).

Although many certificate students (> 68%) had traditional high school diplomas, a significant group of adult certificate students (29.2%) had received GED awards in lieu of a high school diploma. More than a fourth of those surveyed had previous post-secondary experience, ranging from those with bachelors' degrees (1.7%) to those who had earned college credits but not finished a previous program (28.3%).

Future plans made by certificate students include either continuing to work (32%) or getting a job (71%). However, further education is also expected (46%), with a third targeting an associate degree as their ultimate goal. The skills and competencies achieved in certificate programs were deemed very important to their marketability (73%).

Approximately 50% of the certificate students believed they would never have the opportunity to come to college, while 73% felt that beginning in a short program had given them the confidence to succeed in a longer course of study. More than 84% reported believed they could successfully complete a longer program. While almost 30% reportedly chose a certificate program because it appeared easier, many (73%) considered the certificate program a good beginning to gain confidence for longer programs. Indeed, more than 84% believed they had the ability to complete a longer degree program. The motivation for many (21.5%) to continue their education was a desire to keep current in their field.

To continue, however, these students will often need both financial resources and encouragement to achieve their goals. Support from family and friends will be a very important source of encouragement for approximately one-third of those attempting future educational goals. Time for studying is at a premium because of work (43.3%) or family (50.3%) obligations, presenting time management problems for these adult students. However, the resource most

needed to achieve future educational goals is financial assistance (71%).

Eighty-five percent of the certificate students were receiving some form of financial assistance. There appears to be little doubt about the importance of HOPE Scholarship to career students studied. During fall quarter, 1997, there were 1,456 (47%) Technical Division students in the four colleges who received a HOPE Scholarship. Many certificate students (38.7%) reported that, were it not for this award, they could not have attended college. However, there was a determination among 25% of the certificate students surveyed to achieve their educational objectives in the future, regardless of what outside assistance was available.

In regard to financial assistance, there was some understanding that, as certificate students, they were to be awarded the HOPE Scholarship (47%). However, with 8.5% not knowing how they had qualified for HOPE and another 23.7% discovering their award only after entering college, there seemed to be an overall lack of understanding about the various categories of HOPE and the stipulations required to qualify under each.

Data were mixed regarding whether or not students felt constrained in their choices of programs when they enrolled, because of the HOPE Scholarship. Fifteen percent reportedly entered a certificate program primarily because they found that the tuition of a degree program would not be paid by HOPE. There was

a population (16.5%) who responded that they would have entered a two-year degree program if funded through HOPE, while another 6.7% reportedly would have entered a four-year program. Yet, few (13.5%) admitted being restricted in their programs choices by HOPE.

## **Conclusions**

### **Overview**

Certificate program education fulfills many needs. With a disadvantaged population of 72%, certificate programs have met a need for adult students who Reisser (1980) described as highly motivated, anxious about their abilities, and having responsibilities which complicate their academic lives. Programs of this type serve as a springboard for those lacking self-confidence to begin college in a degree program, for those needing employment, and for those requiring easily available financial assistance.

### **Beginning the Educational Journey**

The value of career education in general has been derided by some and lauded by others. Whitaker and Pascarella (1994) demonstrated that beginning an educational experience at a two-year institution may portend of lower educational attainment rates and ensuing lower job status. However, if current figures hold,

the majority of the population will never earn a four-year degree (Gray & Herr, 1997). Yet, this study showed that three-fourths of the certificate students were attaining post-secondary education despite believing previously they would never attend college. Almost 85% believed in their ability to succeed in a longer program, with almost 30% making plans to do so.

Would these same students have entered a four-year program initially, if financial aid were easily available? Less than 7% of those surveyed reported that a four-year degree would have been their choice. However, more in-depth research is needed to discover the answer. Yet, perhaps the most compelling statistic in the survey data was the 88% of certificate students who reported they would feel better about themselves after successful program completion, regardless of their employment status. Is improved self-image, itself, not worthwhile?

When educators measure the success of students by whether or not they achieve a baccalaureate degree, they fail to recognize the importance of providing a educational *starting place*. Many students might never begin a post-secondary experience, if a four-year degree status were their only option.

Students who have less than stellar educational background, or lack the resources to plunge into a traditional four-year program, may be well-served by certificate-level education. Given a chance to begin a journey, however meager, is considerably better than not starting at all. If the seed of learning is planted in this

non-traditional way, should it result in a less-valued plant?

### **Practical Learning**

Knowles (1985) and Marland (1974) both alluded to the need for adults to perceive their learning as useful. Adult students often choose educational providers, not by academic reputation, but with very pragmatic objectives (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). As Hankin (1987) reported, one of the lures of a community college is its ability to integrate education and everyday life experiences. This study confirmed that certificate programs were often chosen for job-related reasons. Sixty-three percent of those students surveyed viewed certificate programs as a vehicle to achieve a job in a different field of work. In addition, the skills provided through these programs were deemed significant to students for increasing their marketability (73%). In excess of 21% realized the potential of further career education as a means to keep updated in their field.

Pincus (1994) and Dougherty (1991) argued that career education may lead to students being funneled into dead-end careers and into ultimately low-paying jobs. This educational pipeline, the researchers say, is a one-way street without an outlet. It is true that career education, whether at certificate or Associate of Applied Science degree level, traditionally has been viewed as terminal programs without educational advancement possibilities. However, with the advent of a new

Bachelor's Degree in Applied Science being implemented, career-ladder mobility is being given to students formerly mired in a non-transferable programs. Career education may now offer both immediate marketability and ultimate transferability. With the determination and motivation strongly indicated by certificate students to aspire to further educational goals, this avenue for career mobility and future educational attainment should be welcome.

### **Financial Assistance**

Donahue (1992) and numerous other researchers have reported the importance of financial aid in the retention of students in college. Grants, such as the HOPE Scholarship, are far more effective than loans (Davis, et al., 1996). In addition, the dependability of financial aid has been shown by Murdock (1991) and others to be critical to students. Thus far, the HOPE Scholarship seems to foster perseverance in college with 83.7% of the recipients persisting over the 1994-95 academic year (Davis, et al., 1996). However, with the program's sponsor, Governor Miller, leaving office next year, the new administration must quickly convey its intent to continue fully funding the HOPE Scholarship. The effect of appearing to vacillate about the future of HOPE may have devastating results on the persistence of current students and the recruitment of new students to higher education.

## Implications

Several areas of concern need to be addressed, if certificate students are given the assistance they need to achieve their educational goals. These should include a concerted effort by Student Services, Financial Aid, Academic Services, and Administration.

With 80% of the certificate students working and 65% attending classes part-time, Student Services should be challenged to increase the overtures to adult students who have job and family obligations. These students have great potential, yet immense personal and academic need. To a population (71%) looking for a job in a different field, an enhanced job placement center may be far more important than the club or organizational activities traditionally offered single, full-time students. Lessening bureaucracy through user-friendly services -- book stores, cafeterias, business offices, and faculty with hours to match adult needs -- is essential to students not used to *the campus way of doing things* (Reisser, 1980).

With one-third of the certificate students having non-traditional educational backgrounds, including GED preparation and years away from any formalized schooling, student-friendly tutoring services become vital. Remedial studies particularly formulated to the needs of certificate students should be established. In addition, an early-warning system geared to alert advisors of grade or

attendance problems, may prove to be the difference in retaining students who themselves (50%) admitted difficulty in finding studying time.

Financial aid was awarded to 85% of the certificate students. The campus departments dispensing this aid operate under strict deadlines and complex guidelines not often understood by the uninitiated. With almost 40% of the certificate students reporting their inability to attend college without this assistance, the financial aid staff must become a readily available life-line to eligible students. More publicity is clearly needed to explain the categories and methods of qualification for the HOPE Scholarship, as demonstrated with the 24% of students who arrived at college unaware that they had qualified for the award. This is especially important for adult students without the benefit of information distributed to high school seniors by guidance counselors. The State of Georgia, in its next campaign to publicize benefits of the state-lottery funded HOPE Scholarship, should particularly target pathways which would make potential adult students aware of their financial aid options.

Those responsible for curriculum development and course scheduling in community colleges sometimes tend to restrict their offerings to traditional programs of study. Yet, traditional programs of study, if not reviewed regularly, may quickly become out-of-sync with the job market. Students in certificate programs need to continue working (32%) and most (71%) want to gain

employment in a field different than the one currently held. By working with local economic development officials, occupational needs can be identified which, with appropriate certificate programs designed to match, can offer skilled graduates to a eager job-market. In addition, by altering class schedules to meet the needs of working adults, students will be more likely to succeed in juggling home, school, and career responsibilities.

Above all, educational administrators need not apologize for offering career education on their campuses, whether it be a two-year course of study or a short certificate program. Certificate students want jobs and certificate programs can furnish jobs. These programs have the capability, however, to be much more than mere training. These certificate students (46%) are eager for future educational endeavors, have gained a sense of self-worth through their studies (73%) and believe they can complete a longer program (84%). This group remains a fertile source of future enrollment.

Educators serving certificate students can be a resource for assistance to this group, or a major hindrance for them. Administrators must give appropriate credence to career education options. The criticism that such programs discourage students from achieving baccalaureate degree education discounts the benefits of getting students *started* in college. Certificate programs offer a non-threatening beginning toward the success for which all of us dream.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study offers a glimmer of insight into the nature of selected certificate students. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to gain a more in-depth understanding of this group. This should include, but not be limited to, tracking certificate students from the time of program entry to completion or withdrawal from school. Follow-up studies should reveal how many actually achieve future educational and job-related goals. Satisfaction with the job preparation offered by certificate education should also be investigated.

In addition, studies should be pursued to clarify the understanding which students have concerning their options and means of qualifying under the HOPE Scholarship awards system. The methods by which students actually qualified for certificate programs should be investigated using financial aid records to compare with the student's perception of how he or she qualified.

## **Future Policy**

The educator privileged enough to work with certificate students knows the rewards gained from this experience. If for no other reason, the future educational potential of this group should earn it the respect of the institutions which host certificate students. The educational profession responsible for designing and approving programs of study, as well as the legislative assemblies responsible for

supplying financial assistance, should do everything in their power not to degrade these programs. Together, they can provide the resources needed to make the certificate experience as encouraging, financially feasible, and barrier-free as possible.

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## APPENDIX



GED)

- Economically disadvantaged ? (receive one or more types of state / federal aid)
- English is a Second Language? (use another language as your primary one)

**8. Are you currently employed?**

- No
- Yes, I work approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week.

**9. This quarter I am taking:  Fewer than 12 cr. hrs.  12 or more cr. hrs.**

**10. While I have been a student at Dalton College, I have taken classes scheduled primarily:**

- During the day (classes beginning prior to 5:00 p.m.)
- During the evening (classes beginning at 5:00 p.m. or later.)

**11. When I complete my current program, I will be awarded a:**

- Mini-certificate (less than a one-year program)
- Certificate (One-year program)

**12. Before coming to college, which of the following did you achieve?**

- High school diploma in \_\_\_\_\_(year)
- GED in \_\_\_\_\_(year)
- Neither a high school diploma nor GED

**13. Before you enrolled in your current program, did you have previous post-secondary credit courses (courses taken for credit after high school)?**

- Yes. **If yes, for what type program did you take these previous courses?**
- Another mini-certificate program
- Another certificate program
- A degree program
- No. **If no, skip to question # 17.**

**14. Where were your previous post-secondary courses taken? (Mark ALL choices which apply)**

- Dalton College
- Another public college in Georgia
- Another public college outside of Georgia

- A private college in Georgia
- A private college outside Georgia
- A public technical school / institute in Georgia
- A private technical school / institute in Georgia
- A public technical school / institute outside Georgia
- A private technical school / institute outside Georgia
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**15. In your previous college or technical school experience did you complete a program?**

- NO, but I took approximately:**
  - 1 to 5 credit hours
  - 6 - 19 credit hours
  - 20 - 45 credit hours
  - 46 - 60 credit hours
  - 61 - 90 credit hours
  - 90 + credit hours
- YES, previously I successfully completed the following:**
  - Earned a credential of less than one-year in length (mini-certificate, technical certificate, or professional certificate)
  - Earned a one-year certificate / diploma.
  - Earned an Associate of Applied Science Degree.
  - Earned an AS or AA Transfer Degree.
  - Earned a Baccalaureate Degree.
  - Earned a Master's Degree.
  - Earned a Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctoral level degree.
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**16. What FINANCIAL AID do you NOW receive? Mark ALL types of aid received.**

**Aid from Federal / State**

- Dislocated Worker     JTPA     Student Work Study
- PEACH     Pell Grant     Scholar. from DC
- Veterans Benefit     Voc. Rehab.
- HOPE Scholarship. **If you receive HOPE funding, how did you qualify for it?**
  - I maintained a "B" average in high school.
  - I received a \$500.00 voucher when I earned my GED.
  - I enrolled in a certificate program.
  - I have maintained a "B" average through 45 cr. hrs in

college.

I don't know how I qualified for HOPE funding

**Aid from other agencies:**

Tuition paid by employer

Tuition paid by other business or organization

Repayable loan from bank or other agency

**Aid from others:**

From parents

From other family or friends

**Other aid, please specify:** \_\_\_\_\_

I receive NO financial aid. I pay for my own schooling. (Skip to question 18.)

**17. How has receiving the HOPE Scholarship influenced your education?**

**Mark ALL answers which apply:**

Not applicable. (I don't receive HOPE Scholarship.)

I did not know I was eligible for the HOPE Scholarship until I came to college, so the funding was a pleasant surprise.

Before I came to college, I thought only people who did well in high school could receive HOPE Scholarship.

I could not attend school, if I did not receive HOPE funding.

HOPE funding is helpful, but I rely more on other kinds of financial aid.

HOPE funding is helpful, but is not enough to cover my cost for books and supplies.

Finding out that HOPE would not pay my tuition if I enrolled in a degree program is the primary reason I am taking a certificate / mini-certificate program.

When I first started college, I would have enrolled in a two-year degree program, if my HOPE Scholarship would have paid for it.

When I first started college, I would have enrolled in a four-year degree program, if my HOPE Scholarship would have paid for it.

Receiving the HOPE Scholarship is the primary reason I decided to come to school.

I feel that my options of what program to take were limited by the conditions of the HOPE Scholarship.

**18. What plans do you have when you finish your current program of study?**

**Please mark ALL answers that apply.**

I plan to get a job.

- I plan to continue working
- I plan to continue my education later on in my life, but not now.
- I plan to continue my education right away
- Continue with another program of the same length in a diff. major
- Enroll in a longer program of study
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_.

**19. If you could achieve your ultimate educational goal, how far would you go in school?**

**(Choose ALL answers that apply.)**

- Earn an Associate Degree
- Earn a Baccalaureate Degree
- Earn a Master's Degree
- Earn a Doctoral Degree
- Take classes in the future to keep updated in my field, but not to earn any sort of degree.
- Take classes just for fun, but not to achieve any sort of degree
- I have no further educational goals.

**20. Achieving the educational goals I listed in question # 19 depend on: (mark ALL answers that apply.)**

- Receiving financial aid to pay for my further education.
- Receiving some financial help with my other expenses besides tuition and books.
- Receiving help with child care.
- Receiving encouragement from family and friends.
- Receiving approval and encouragement from my place of employment.
- I plan to achieve my educational goals, regardless of what assistance I have.

**Other, please specify** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PLEASE CONTINUE WITH QUESTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES**

## PART TWO

**AS YOU CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE RANKING LISTED BELOW. YOU SHOULD FIRST READ THE STATEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR OWN BELIEFS AND SITUATIONS. THEN RANK YOUR AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT. THE HIGHER THE NUMBER, THE MORE YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.**

**1 = I STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement**

**2 = I SLIGHTLY DISAGREE with the statement.**

**3 = I SLIGHTLY AGREE with the statement.**

**4 = I STRONGLY AGREE with the statement..**

**0 = This statement is NOT APPLICABLE / I have NO OPINION.**

### **Questions Concerning Encouragement and Support You Receive While Attending School**

- My family encourages me to attend school.
- My family helps me with child care, so that I can attend school.
- My family helps me with my other financial obligations, so that I can attend school.
- Overall, my friends have helped me achieve my education more than my family has.
- My employer has worked with me by scheduling around my classes.
- I have received no help or encouragement from others while attending school.

### **Questions Concerning Problems You Experience While Attending School**

- Family obligations make it difficult for me to study regularly.
- Family obligations make it difficult for me to attend class regularly.
- Work obligations make it difficult for me to study regularly.
- Work obligations make it difficult for me to attend class regularly.
- Finding dependable child care is a major problem for me.
- Finding dependable transportation is a major problem for me.

**Questions Concerning How You Feel As A Certificate / Mini-Certificate Student:**

- When I was in high school, I felt like a failure most of the time.
- In the past, I believed I would never come to college.
- Starting with a short program has given me confidence that I can succeed later with a longer degree program.
- I believe I have the ability to pass a longer program of study.
- Taking academic courses, like English, Reading, or Math, is a waste of my time.
- I enjoy learning how "to do" something more than just learning "about" things.
- When I apply for a job, the "hands-on skills" I have learned in my program will be more important than the other subjects I have learned.
- If I succeed in this program, I will feel better about myself, regardless of my employment status.

**Questions Concerning The Reasons You Enrolled In This Program Of Study:**

- I want to qualify for a promotion where I am now employed.
- I want to qualify for a new job in a different field.
- I need to update my skills to avoid a layoff from my current job.
- My employer required that I take this program.
- Enjoyment of learning something new is the primary reason I am enrolled.

**Other Reasons, please specify**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Questions Concerning Why You Chose This LENGTH Program.**

- I chose a short program because I thought it would be easier than a degree program.
- I chose this program because I could finish it quickly and get a job.
- The short length of this program was more important than the subject material.
- I would have chosen this program regardless of its length.
- My ability to easily receive financial aid for this program was a very important factor in my choice of this program.

**Other Reasons, please specify**\_\_\_\_\_.

**Questions About Why You Chose This SUBJECT of study.**

\_\_\_ My high school counselor was very important in my choosing this subject.

\_\_\_ My college advisor was very important in my choosing this subject.

\_\_\_ The financial aid officer was very important in my choosing this subject.

\_\_\_ My family was very important in my choosing this subject.

\_\_\_ My friends were very important in my choosing this subject.

**Other Reasons**, please specify \_\_\_\_\_.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS PROJECT.

## VITA

Carolyn Reynolds Jensen was born and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she was graduated from Girls' Preparatory School. She attended the University of Kentucky, Asbury College, and Baroness Erlanger School of Medical Technology before being graduated from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology. Mrs. Jensen worked as a Medical Technologist and Hematology Specialist at West Jefferson General Hospital in New Orleans and Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga.

Mrs. Jensen earned a Master's Degree in Health Care Education while being employed as Clinical Coordinator at Hutcheson Medical Center in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. During that period, she also served as adjunct instructor in Medical Laboratory Sciences at Dalton College in Dalton, Georgia.

While employed, first at Chattanooga State Technical Community College as Coordinator of Continuing Health Education, and finally as Technical Division Instructional Coordinator at Dalton College, Mrs. Jensen pursued the Doctorate of Education in Leadership Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The doctoral degree was achieved in May, 1998.

Carolyn Jensen continues to work with career education students at Dalton

College in both the Certificate and the Associate of Applied Science degree programs.