A Study of the Non-Persisters from the Enrollment of 1975-1976 Fall and Winter Semesters at a Medium Size Midwestern Public University

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A STUDY OF THE NON-PERSISTERS
FROM THE ENROLLMENT
OF 1975-1976 FALL AND WINTER SEMESTERS
AT A MEDIUM SIZE MIDWESTERN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

By

Claude R. Thomas

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Degree of Doctor of Education

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Claude R. Thomas
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

This study was designed to determine why students who were attending a medium size midwestern university during the 1975-1976 academic year did not elect to return for the following fall semester. This loss of student population represents a potential loss of talent to society as well as a change in aspiration by each of the students who has stopped attending. To meet the needs of students who are or will be residents of this campus, the university needs to take a look at the people who invested time, effort, and money to enroll in the university and then dropped out, or transferred to other colleges. It is possible that some had their needs met and have left without graduating. However, some left frustrated and disappointed in higher education and have stopped attending college while some students have enrolled in other colleges.

The retention of students in college is a significant problem in higher education today. The number of students who begin college and eventually leave without graduating accounts for approximately 40% of all students who enter college (Iffert, 1958). In addition, the institutional time and resources are lost. Further, there is an ethical concern in that the students are finding that the institu-
tion lacks the atmosphere or facilities to fulfill their needs and thus makes their educational goals unattainable. The promise of educational opportunity can be strengthened by bringing into alignment greater access with greater retention. The problem of who drops out and why is important for every college to research and understand. Many hurdles are placed in the path of the would-be graduate. College students in the 1970's are attending colleges with more liberal regulations on housing, academic advising, major requirements, as well as general university requirements for graduation. Students have greater access to cars on campus and much greater percentages of undergraduates are working to help support themselves through college. Therefore, a study of this nature becomes paramount if the faculty and staff at colleges are to help those students to achieve their potential and their educational goals.

Trends in Student Retention

Student retention and the problems associated with retention are not new problems on college campuses. A review of the literature on student attrition (retention) indicates that educators have not learned anything new in many years of looking at the problem. In this comprehensive compilation of information regarding college attrition, Summerskill (1962) found that from the period of 1913 to
the present the computed median values for the aggregate of 35 studies indicated that the median percent graduated from all institutions in four years was 37% of the students who began four years earlier. This figure is somewhat higher than has been reported in recent years. However, in studies done on large college populations who are attending many different colleges, the dropout rate in the first four years of college is in the range from 40% to 50% (Panos and Astin, 1966; Dole, 1969). In another study in this field, Iffert (1958) surveyed a sample of 12,667 students who entered 149 different institutions of higher education in 1950. He found the graduation rate to be only 39.5% in four years, with an estimated eventual cumulative graduation rate of 59%. Panos and Astin (1966) conducted a national study of 30,570 freshmen entering 248 colleges and universities in 1961 and found the total attrition rate to be 35% four years later. While the reported graduation rate of 65% is more encouraging than most other surveys, it still reflects a serious loss of human potential.

Frank Newman (1971), who led a federal task force on higher education commissioned by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and supported by the Ford Foundation, has reported the following percentages of students graduating within four years at the college of their initial matriculation: high selective private universities,
80-85%; large state universities, 35-45%; and state colleges, 15-25%. Students graduating within ten years from some college was found to be: highly selective universities, 90-95%; large state universities, 60-70%; and state colleges, 35-50%.

In his research, Astin (1976) has shown that the period in which the largest number of students withdraw was during the first two years, with freshmen most subject to withdrawal. Howitt (1972) found that of those students who withdraw, about one-third transfer to other institutions. Approximately one-fourth of those who withdrew, but did not transfer, had no plans to continue their education, while about one-third indicated an interest in continuing their education in the future. It should be pointed out that those who are withdrawing are doing so in good academic standing. They are students who have been successful and are capable of continuing on in college toward graduation.

Hammond (1971) discovered that 50% of the attrition population in his study had grade point averages of C or better, which indicated that many of the students within the attrition population were capable of doing college work successfully. Baier (1974), in his study at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU-C), found that of the 4,435 undergraduate students that entered SIU-C in Fall Quarter, 1970, 47% of the high school entries and 45%
of the college transfer entries withdrew or were suspended from the university by the end of Spring Quarter, 1973. Of these students, less than one-half were "academically suspended" or on "academic probation or warning" at the time they withdrew. Over one-half of the students who withdrew from SIU-C in the population studied did so voluntarily while they were in "good academic standing." This clearly indicates that SIU-C's high attrition rate is accounted for by as many non-academic as by academic variables.

This review of some recent findings in attrition points to the fact that many students are not staying in the colleges they have selected and are dropping out even when they have acceptable G.P.A.'s. Even the transfer student who is entering a different college after an initial college experience is withdrawing from the second college. A closer analysis of the literature and attrition will be developed in Chapter II.

A Medium Size Public Midwestern University

The university in this study is a medium size university composed of seven undergraduate colleges. The university has a Graduate College; however, since it is not involved in this study it will not be included in this discussion of the university setting. The university is located in a medium size town with a total population of
approximately 86,000 people. The suburbs of the city and adjacent communities within a 30-minute driving distance of the campus boost the population of the area to an excess of 200,000 people.

The university is located ten blocks west of the center of the city. In the fall of 1975, the student population comprised 4,536 freshmen; 4,093 sophomores; 3,890 juniors; and 3,860 seniors. During this time there were also 687 unclassified students. The total undergraduate population for Fall Semester, 1975, was 17,066 students (Asher, 1975).

The freshman class included 508 black students or 11% of the freshman class. There were 303 black students or 7.4% of the sophomore class; the junior class had 201 black students or 5.1%; and the senior class had 182 black students or 4.7% of the class. The other minorities consisted of American Indian students, Oriental Americans, and students with Spanish surnames. The total minority population within the undergraduate enrollment at the university for the Fall Semester, 1975, was 8.43% (Asher, 1975).

Of the total student population at this public university, 90.45% were in-state residents. Students from other states totaled 6.4% and 3.1% were from foreign countries.

The College of Arts and Sciences had 6,518 students or 38.1% of the student population. The College of Applied Sciences had 2,980 students or 17.46% of the undergraduate
student population. The College of Business had 3,316 students enrolled for a 19.43% of the total student enrollment. The College of Education enrolled 1,081 students or 6.3% of the student population (Boyle, 1975). This quick look at the breakdown of the student population will be referred to further in the data analysis within Chapter IV.

The university is a multi-purpose university with 140 different major areas available. A student can enter directly into a major field of study when he or she enters as a freshman. Unlike many universities, there is no general college which encompasses the totality of the first two years of undergraduate enrollment. Similarly, if a student withdraws, it is after he or she has had some contact with the department in which he or she wishes to study.

The scholarship policy of the university is written so that a student must maintain a 2.0 or C average on a 4.0 scale. If a student drops below a 2.0 average, he or she is placed on probation. If the student's grade point average increases but is still below a 2.0, he or she will be placed on continued probation. At the end of the enrollment period while on continued probation, the student must achieve a 2.0 overall grade point average or be dismissed.

Since this study involves students who voluntarily withdrew, students who have been dismissed are not included. There will be students on probationary conditions within the survey population.
Definition of Terms

A **persisting student** is one who enrolled in the college for the Fall and/or Winter Semester of the academic year 1975-1976 and who re-enrolled for the Fall Semester 1976.

A **non-persisting student** is a student who attended the university during Fall, 1975, and/or Winter, 1976, who enrolled for six or more hours during that year and who did not enroll for the Fall Semester, 1976. A dropout, for the purpose of this study, is a non-persisting student.

A **transfer student** from the university is a student who was enrolled Fall and/or Winter, 1975-1976, and who enrolled at another college or university for the Fall of 1976 or the Winter, 1977.

The **student master** refers to the official listing of students and their demographic data which is kept by the Data Processing Department in the Administration Building at the university.

In **good standing** refers to a student whose overall grade point average for all classes taken is above 2.0 average on a 4.0 scale.

**Warning** refers to a condition assigned to a student when the grade point average for any enrollment period is less than 2.0, but the overall grade point average is 2.0 or above.
Probation is the status on which a student is placed when he or she has been in good standing and the overall grade point average falls below a 2.0.

A student is placed on continued probation when his or her grade point average increases while still on probation, although the student's average is still below a 2.0 average. Once on continued probation the student must be at or above a 2.0 at the end of the next enrollment or face dismissal.

For dismissal a student would have to be on probation and the overall grade point average not increase, or a student who is on continued probation and does not reach the 2.0 level at the end of the next enrollment period.

A freshman is a student who has earned less than 26 semester hours of credit.

A sophomore is a student who has earned between 26 and 55 semester hours of academic credit.

A junior is a student who has earned between 56 and 87 semester hours of credit.

A senior is a student who has earned 88 hours or more of credit.

An unclassified student is a student who is granted permission to take classes on- or off-campus. The permission to take classes is not degree admission to the university. Therefore, such students are unclassified.
as to department or major as they are not seeking a degree at the university.

Summary

One of the main reasons universities are organized and maintained is for the purpose of serving the educational advancement of the population. Each university is a unique mixture of academic faculty, support staff, administration, board of control, and student population. Traditionally the faculty, administration and board of control set the policies by which universities are governed and managed. The rules and regulations of the universities and the manner in which they are implemented set the tone for each university.

Each year colleges and universities encourage students who qualify for admission to enroll in higher education. The selected student population then enters the environment of the campus to take classes and satisfy the goal each student has set, to receive an education and to perhaps eventually graduate. A decision to enter college has been made over a long period of time and has had input from many people. The decision to apply to college involves making application, submitting transcripts and talking with counselors. The financial problems of attending college must also be worked out with parents as
well as financial aid officers. Selecting a college is a lengthy process and has involved many people; family, friends and counselors. The new student involves himself or herself and his or her family in heavy expense, in cash outlay for both the student and the parents.

Each year some students in college make decisions not to return the following year. For one or many reasons the relationship between the student and the institution has not been fostered. The number of students who withdraw from college without graduating has become an issue of widespread concern. Student attrition carries implications for society, for the individual student, and for the colleges and universities that are not meeting the needs of their student populations. When a student elects not to continue his or her education, the institution and the student have lost the potential for development and growth. The individual makes the decision not to return and faces the problem of explaining to his or her family, friends and peers. The potential talent that is lost to advanced training is of importance to the individual and to society.

This study was designed to gather information about people who have voluntarily decided not to return to a midwestern university. Some of the people represent a group that has faced frustration and disappointment, plus a loss of time, energy and self-esteem. They have invested trust, hope and effort and yet have left for other educa-
tional settings or dropped out. To serve the needs of a university population it is paramount that the institution understands who is dropping out and why.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The phenomenon of the college dropout is not a new problem in American universities. Every system of higher education has its problems with students who voluntarily withdraw from college.

One of the most complete compilations of information regarding college attrition was done by Summerskill (1962), who reviewed 35 different studies which dated as far back as 1913. The studies cited attrition rates for classes entering hundreds of colleges and universities. Summerskill noted that "median values were computed for the aggregate of these studies with results as follows: median loss in four years, 50%; median percent graduated in four years, 37%.”

Classic studies which have been done would include Iffert's (1958) benchmark study of 149 colleges and universities. Iffert found that 27.3% of freshmen did not return for their sophomore year. He further found that there was a median dropout rate of 50% in four years. The median loss compares with Summerskill's but the significant point here is the finding that half of the attrition occurs during the freshman year. The cumulative attrition rate for the last three years of college is 28.3%. The graduation
rate that Iffert found after four years was 39.5%, with an eventual cumulative graduation rate of 59%.

In a more recent study Fanos and Astin (1967) conducted a longitudinal national study of 30,570 freshmen entering 248 colleges and universities in 1961. They found the total attrition rate to be 35% four years later. While the reported graduation rate of 65% is more encouraging than some of the other studies it still reflects a great loss of human potential.

In a study of 1,792 freshmen entering the University of Hawaii, Dole (1969) found that within three years 49.9% were no longer attending the University. This attrition rate compares with the report of Summerskill and Iffert.

Trent and Medsker's (1967) study of 10,000 high school seniors who attended colleges found, as Iffert had, that the attrition rate was 48% four years later.

Goetz and Leach (1967) conducted a study at the University of New Mexico to determine the percentage of entering freshmen who completed their degrees within four years. The data indicated that 37% completed their degrees in four years.

Frank Newman (1971), who led a federal task force on higher education which was commissioned by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and financed by the Ford Foundation, has reported the following percentage of students graduating within four years at the college of their initial
matriculation: highly selective private universities, 80-85%; large state universities, 35-45%; and state colleges, 15-25%. The percentage of students graduating within ten years at some college was found to be: highly selective universities, 90-95%; large state universities, 60-70%; and state colleges, 35-50%.

The number of students completing four years of college within four years seems to be from 35-40% as reported by numerous studies. Goetz and Leach (1967) at the University of New Mexico, reported 33% graduate in four years. Pervin, Reik and Dalrymple (1966) found a completion rate of 40% within four years of the student's original matriculation into the freshman year.

The freshman attrition rate reported by researchers seems to be around 30%. Demos (1967) found a 35% freshman attrition rate at California State College at Long Beach. This is somewhat higher than was found in Iffert's massive survey.

This finding of student attrition was also documented by Howitt (1972), who indicated that the period in which the largest number of students withdraw is during the first two years, with freshmen the most subject to withdrawal. Summerskill (1962), in his survey of attrition in college, also found that approximately half the total withdrawals occur before the sophomore year. Iffert reported similar data with the information that by the end of the first
registration period more than 10% of the entering students had withdrawn. By the close of the first year 27% had withdrawn. By the close of the second year, an additional 15% withdrew (Iffert, 1958).

Of those who withdrew, about one-third of the students transferred to other institutions. Approximately one-fourth of those who withdrew but did not transfer had no plans to continue their education, while about one-third indicated their intention to continue their education in the future (Howitt, 1972).

The percentage rate of degree completion was found to be at 55% over the past decade for four year degree completion (Bynnes, 1970). This compares well with the estimation made by Iffert who indicated that it is probable that not more than 60% of those who go to college ever graduate (Iffert, 1953).

Comparison of Attrition Rate Between Males and Females

In his impressively large survey, Iffert found little significant difference between the sexes when he discovered the male freshman attrition rate to be 27.4% and the female rate 27%. He also found that 38.8% of the men and 40.5% of the women graduated on schedule (Iffert, 1958). Summerskill (1962) summarized many years of research studies with the conclusion that little sex difference in attrition
rates has been demonstrated.

Trent and Medsker (1967) did identify some difference in persistence and graduation on the basis of sex. They found that a higher percentage of men than women persisted in college for four years, but that percentage-wise, more women than men obtained their degrees in this time. The end result of their findings was that 45% of the males would drop out and 51% of the female population would drop out in four years. Demos (1967) reported that significantly more males than females left California State College at Long Beach, California.

There seems to be some disagreement between individual studies and the research done by Summerskill and Iffert. However, most research findings place the male and female dropout rate within 2.0% over a four year period.

In reviewing attrition studies most researchers have not separated those academically dismissed students from those who withdrew in good standing. Baier (1974) found in a three year study, that of the 4,435 undergraduate students who entered Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in the Fall Quarter, 1970, 47.4% of the high school entries and 45.2% of the college transfer entries withdrew or were suspended from the University by the end of Spring Quarter, 1973. He further found that less than one-half were "academically suspended" or on "academic probation or
warning" at the time they withdrew. This means that over one-half of the students who withdrew from the population studied did so voluntarily while they were in good academic standing. This compares with a study done at Arkansas State University where a study of 1,381 students enrolled in Fall of 1972 and did not return for Spring Semester of 1973. More than half of the non-returning students were in the lower division. The mean grade point average for non-returning students was equal to or greater than the grade point average required for satisfactory progress toward a degree. Of more importance is the fact that there is no significant difference between the grade point average of those eligible students who did not return in the Spring Semester of 1973 and those who made up the Fall 1972 student population. They found that attrition was independent of academic classification, college, major and degree (Womack and McCluskey, 1973). Hammond (1971) also found that 50% of the attrition population had grade point averages of C or better.

Institution Type and Dropout

It is evident after reviewing the studies in attrition that public institutions of higher education tend to have higher dropout rates than private institutions. Astin (1971) further found that the quality of the college also has been found to influence college persistence. This was
also confirmed by the research done in the state of Wisconsin where Wagner and Sewell (1970) found that the higher quality institutions have higher rates of graduation than do lower quality institutions. Kamens noted in his findings that larger institutions have lower dropout rates. He further noted that even after the quality of the institution and characteristics of the students are taken into account, larger institutions tend to have lower dropout rates than do smaller ones (Kamens, 1971).

It could be speculated that more selective admissions policies at larger institutions would offset this situation; however, the University of California, which admits only the top 15% of high school graduates, reports that 45% of its students leave before completing the requirements for a degree.

High School Grades and Attrition

There have been numerous prediction studies completed on the relationship of college success and results of high school grades, test scores, and personality tests. Astin (1976) indicates that the students' high school grades are the best and most consistent predictor of college attrition. Research has also consistently shown that students' high school grades are the best predictor of college grades.

Summerskill (1962) also found that in 10 of 11 studies,
specifically concerned with success in college versus success in high school, college non-persisters had lower average grades in high school than did college graduates. It should be pointed out that in most of the earlier research, no attempt was made to differentiate between non-persisters and students who were dismissed for academic reasons. Research is rather consistent on the fact that high school grades are the single best predictor of college success. Panos and Astin (1968) reported that the college student most likely to not complete four years of college on schedule is the one who had relatively low grades in high school.

College Admission Tests

Entry into colleges and universities in most cases requires an entrance test of one kind or another. The two most common entrance tests are the American College Placement Test (ACT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). These two instruments are designed to give colleges and universities a vast array of information about the student, the student's interests, strengths and his predictive success in each college he is applying to. It has been pointed out by Astin (1976) that while the students' scores on the SAT and ACT contribute to predicting estimates of dropout possibilities, the predictive correlation of these test scores is consistently less than
Again, it must be pointed out that much of the research in attrition has not separated those forced to leave from those who choose to leave the institutions of their own free will. Daniel (1967) studied 1,263 students at the University of Alabama and found that SAT scores were significantly different between persisters and those who left for academic reasons. But more importantly, no significantly different characteristics were found between persisters and voluntary withdrawals. This was also found to be the case by Sidwell and Cope (1968) in their research. When dropouts are separated from dismissals it appears that the mean grade point average and aptitude test scores between the persisters and the non-persisters are not significantly different.

College Achievement Level

In Astin's (1976) comprehensive studies, he found that the student's undergraduate grade point average has a stronger relationship to dropping out than any other single variable. The data indicate this even when the student's prior academic background and ability are taken into account. Thus, Astin indicates that anything that can be done to enhance a student's chances for good grades will also tend to reduce attrition rates.

In Summerskill's (1962) comprehensive review of 35 studies on college grades and attrition, he found that there

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high school grades. He further indicates that this is particularly pronounced for black students.

Measures of ability as shown on a standardized test and as demonstrated by grades in high school are measures of different aspects of an individual's competence. Of the two, past grade performance tends to be the more consistent and best predictor of success in college. It may be because it corresponds more closely to the individual's ability to achieve in an educational setting which has social and academic requirements not too different from that of the college (Astin, 1972).

However, aptitude test scores can still give much insight into the complexities of the attrition problem. Colser (1968) investigated the diversity of intellective and non-intellective factors that existed among full-time undergraduate persisters versus non-persisters within the Wisconsin State University system. The findings indicated that persisters achieved significantly higher scores on the American College Test (aptitude), higher high school grade averages and higher college achievement than did non-persisters, regardless of the institution they attended. The data support Summerskill's (1962) findings that in 16 of 19 studies which investigated the relationship between scholastic aptitude test scores and subsequent college attrition, average scores were found to be lower for non-persisters than for graduates.
was a significant relationship between grades and college attrition, and further that prediction of attrition is better at the lower end of the grade scale. Students with poor grades are highly likely to leave. He also points out that some students with excellent grades may leave. Iffert's (1958) findings closely parallel those cited above in that 39% of the male and 17% of the female attrition group left college because of low level college achievement. Updating these findings, Iffert and Clarke (1965) reported that 23% of non-persisters left because of poor grades and that 45% cited academic related concerns as the most important reason for leaving college. Cope (1971) also cited academic concerns when he reported that the typical academic suspension rate is 15% for college freshmen, and that one-third of college dropouts leave for academic reasons.

Academic reasons are of concern to all students who withdraw from an institution. Stordahl (1967) found that the mean grade point average (2.44) of those who left Northern Michigan University to transfer to another college was significantly higher (at the .001 level) than the mean (2.01) for voluntary withdrawals who did not continue their education. Separating out those who are transferring to other institutions from those who are stopping their education is reflected in the differing grade point averages for the two groups.
Rossmann and Kirk (1970) compared the mean grade point averages between persisters and withdrawals at Berkeley and they found the means to be almost identical. They did not separate those who were transferring or those who were dropping out. Sidwell (1968) also reported that he found no significant difference in comparing the grade point average between persisters and voluntary non-persisters at the end of the freshman year.

Even though grade point averages between voluntary withdrawals and persisters are somewhat equal, a student's undergraduate grade point average is more closely related to persistence than any other single variable. Astin (1976) indicated:

Clearly, academic performance is a major factor in college attrition for both men and women, as well as for blacks and whites. Practically every student with an average grade of C- or lower drops. This relationship, of course, is to be expected, since students with GPA's below C usually are not permitted to graduate. However, the association is also strong among students with passing grades: the dropout rate for students with B averages, for example, is nearly twice that for students with A averages. While these results indicate that students' grades substantially affect motivation to stay in college, it should be added that even among students with A
or A+ averages, nearly one in five drops out. High grades are therefore not the only condition for remaining in college.

Astin (1976) continues by indicating that grades in the B average range (G.P.A. between 2.75 and 3.24) seem to have the strongest positive effect on persistence, especially on black students. Astin explains the large dropout rate among students with poor grades by indicating that the poor grades cause the student to have a lack of fit between their own performances and that of most of their fellow students.

The problem of attrition is compounded by the fact that in predicting college success some students who are predicted not to drop out of college actually do. Astin (1976) indicated that about half of those students who drop out with failing grades are predicted not to be dropouts on the basis of their freshman characteristics. Therefore, there must be intervening characteristics which influence the decision not to return that have not been explored as yet.

Financial Factors and Attrition

Finances have a large impact on student attrition. In the past, researchers found a high correlation between finances and attrition as indicated by Summerskill (1962), who found that personal financial difficulties were reported by
students as one of the three most important factors in attrition. Iffert (1958) found that financial problems had some bearing on 41% of male and 36% of female withdrawals. These figures seem somewhat high when compared to the study done by Panos and Astin (1968) who found that finances affected the non-persistence of male students at a rate of 24% and 18% for female students. The findings of Panos and Astin would coincide with the findings of Dole (1969) who found that 21% cited financial problems as the cause of their withdrawal. Bower (1976) also had found that financial need is related to student attrition for a large number of students.

Financial need can be a reason for a student deciding not to return to college but with the system of federal financial aid plus campus employment and campus scholarships, the financial problem must be researched very carefully. Astin (1976) has done exhaustive research to give us new insights into the various effects of differing forms of student financial aid.

Starting with work study, Astin (1976) indicated that when analyzing expected and actual dropout rates, work study programs during the freshman year result in small but significant increases in student persistence. He indicated there is a 2% decrease for men and a 6% reduction rate for women who are on work study. Focusing on the freshman year, there is an 8% decrease in attrition rates for work study
students.

Astin further indicated that the impact of work study for black students is more significant. Black students are more apt to participate in work study programs during the freshman year. He indicated that participation in work study by black students reduces attrition by 14% in predominantly black colleges and by 9% in predominantly white colleges.

The use of employment is another means of decreasing attrition rates. This could be a way to increase the student's involvement with the campus which will decrease his chances of withdrawing and also helps to eliminate some of the financial problems that students face.

Off Campus Vs. On Campus Jobs

A regular job on campus necessarily means that the student will be spending more time on campus and will be interacting with more fellow students and staff. This greater involvement in campus life and activities may help develop a sense of identification with the institution and may serve as a deterrent to dropping out. Astin reports that among white students a 9% reduction in dropout probabilities for both men and women is associated with working on campus.

Even though employment is beneficial it must be monitored quite closely as Astin (1976) indicates that employ-
ment for college credit as part of a departmental program during the freshman year is associated with increased chances of dropping out. He further indicated that a job that has relevance to long range goals increased the student's chances of withdrawal. A summary of Astin's (1976) findings are:

Clearly, the student's chances of finishing college can be significantly influenced by the type and extent of the employment. The data warrant these general conclusions.

1. Having a job usually increases the student's chances of finishing college. If employment is less than full-time (under 25 hours a week), the absolute benefits can be substantial: from 10% to 15% decrease in dropout probabilities. These positive effects of employment are even more pronounced among black students.

2. In general, full-time employment is to be avoided. For most students who work full-time, the positive effects of employment on persistence are not only lost but actually reversed. The only situation in which students appear able to tolerate full-time employment occurs when men hold jobs on campus. This exception may be in part a consequence of the types of full-time jobs normally held by men on college campuses.

3. On-campus work is generally preferable to off-
campus employment. However, if a student holds an off-campus job during the freshman year, the effects are generally positive. Shifting from an on-campus job or no employment to an off-campus job, however, is associated with a substantial increase in dropout probabilities.

4. The negative effects of full-time employment are especially pronounced when the student works off-campus.

5. The degree of relevance of the job to the student's long term career interests is negatively associated with persistence if the student works off-campus. That is, students with off-campus jobs are more likely to drop out the more their work is related to their career goals.

6. The degree of job satisfaction has little effect on persistence.

7. Entering college students who are married have less chance of finishing college if they also work during the freshman year. Employment as a freshman has a positive effect, however, if the student marries after entering college.

Student Loans

Student loans as a means of financing college education seem to have a consistently negative effect on stu-
dent persistence. Astin (1976) indicated that the negative effect of loans on persistence was consistent among all groups of men regardless of their status in terms of grant support.

Grants and scholarships have a positive effect on attrition which can be nullified by combining them with loans. Astin (1976) indicated that institutions should consider financial aid packages very carefully as he found modest support from several sources simultaneously is associated with reduced chances of persistence. He found that support from a single source, with the exception of loans, is generally associated with increased chances of persistence.

Motivation and Interest Factors

Attrition from college cannot be explained easily as there are many students withdrawing and there are many reasons why they wish to leave. Summerskill (1967) found that the average non-persisting student had at least two primary and two contributing reasons for leaving college. Of the many reasons for leaving, Iffert (1958) found that 48% of the male and 33% of the female withdrawals stated that they lacked interest in their studies. In related research, Panos and Astin (1968) found that 28% of male and 20% of female withdrawals stated that they were tired of being students. Even after they have withdrawn,
Pervin (1966) found that those who withdrew because of lack of interest, marriage, or job opportunities had lower rates of return than those who withdrew because of lack of goals, military service or personal adjustment problems.

The percentage of those who leave for lack of interest seems to vary. Dole (1969) reported that 11% of withdrawals in his study left because of lack of interest. Although the percentage changes from a low of 11% to a high of 40%, there is a significant portion who have lost interest in college and therefore withdraw.

**College Involvement**

If the external conditions do not change, a dropout must be the result of the individual's experiences in the academic and social system of the college. The student's persistence in college may be affected by his integration into the social system of the college. Tinto (1975) continues by indicating that social integration seems to imply the development, through friendships and associations, of congruency with some part of the social system of the college.

The social system of the university is composed of other students as well as faculty, administration and staff of the institution. Since faculty have the most direct contact with the student, it does not seem surprising that

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a number of students have found that social interaction with the faculty is related to persistence in college (Centra and Rick, 1971; Gamsen, 1966; Spady, 1971). Tinto (1975) found, in his review of the literature, that student interaction with faculty appears to be more important in the students' major area than it is in the other areas.

Curriculum and Career Choice

Curriculum choice by students has its effect on persistence at an institution. Curriculum choice is closely associated with motivation to achieve the career field of the student's desire. Iffert (1958) found a higher persistence rate for those who changed their college curriculum from an academic to an applied field and for those who were already in an occupationally oriented program. He indicated that "occupationally centered interests promote persistence in college."

Reed (1968) found the same phenomena. In his research he found that students in liberal arts programs had double the attrition rate of students in professional programs.

Much of the research dealing with curriculum has dealt with the commitment to future goals as related to persistence. Boston and Burnett (1970) found those with a commitment to a selected program had a higher completion rate.
than the "undecided" student. This can be in part due to the involvement theory and the socialization process of fit between the student and the campus involvement.

Personal and Psychological Factors

Personal reasons can take on a multitude of dimensions within the reasoning of the student who has not found a fit between himself and the institution in which he is enrolled. Iffert (1958) reported that about 15% of non-persisters reported that they were "lonesome and unhappy" and further that these feelings influenced their leaving without a degree.

Summerskill (1962) after reviewing 11 studies in this area, estimated that about 10% of college attrition is the result of personal dissatisfaction and personal unhappiness. The percentage of students leaving for personal reasons seems to be rather consistent across the studies in this area. Medsker (1967) also found that 16% of the non-persisters cited personal and health reasons for withdrawing from college.

Pervin (1966) investigated the reasons why students had left Princeton. His research on withdrawals spanned a 20 year period. He found that the percentage of withdrawals had not changed. The great shift was in the decrease of withdrawal for academic reasons and the increase in withdrawal for personal reasons.
Housing and its Effect on Persistence

Housing policies and styles affect the student population that reside within them. Astin (1976) found that living in a dormitory during the freshman year increases the student's chances of completing college. He found these positive effects for both men and women, for blacks and whites. Living in a dormitory has a positive effect on attrition rates for all students. He further found that men who must live away from home because of distance can increase their chances of completing college by living in an apartment.

Astin (1976) indicated that "living in a dormitory instead of most alternative residences as a freshman appears to decrease the student's dropout chances by approximately 10%.'"

Astin found that living in a dormitory versus living with parents decreases the chances of dropping out by 12% for men and by 11% for women. When he compared dormitory living with living in a private room or an apartment, living in a dormitory decreased the chances of dropping out by 7% for men and by 16% for women.

The difference between men and women is rather startling. Regardless of type of institution, living away from home is more beneficial to men and detrimental to women unless they are living in a dormitory.
Illness and Medical Factors

The percentage of students that drop out as a result of personal health is less than the other reasons discussed in previous sections.

Summerskill (1962), in his review of attrition studies, found that the attrition rate due to personal health problems was at 8%. Iffert found that the percentage of males that leave for personal health reasons was 7%, and the percentage for women who withdrew for this reason was 10%. The other research in this area would support this finding. Both Iffert and Clarke and Panos and Astin (1968) have reported a 7% withdrawal for personal health reasons.

Summerskill (1962) additionally reported the rate of deaths in student populations. He found that students average one death per 1,000 students. This is typically an accidental death.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify the reasons people gave for not returning to a medium size midwestern public university. The students included in the study were those who had accumulated less than 120 semester hours and who had enrolled in six (6) or more hours for the previous year. Further, the students were either in good academic standing or were on a probationary condition. Students who were asked to withdraw for academic reasons were not included in the study. The study was designed to collect data on those students who voluntarily left the university.

To implement the study the following phases were followed: 1) the parameters of the study were defined, 2) the student population was identified, 3) a questionnaire was developed and used as a mail survey instrument, and 4) the analysis of the data along with the data on the student master was completed. Conclusions on reasons for withdrawal were drawn and reported.

Parameters of the Study

On October 2, 1976, the student master was run comparing the students who had been at the university during...
1975-1976 with the students who were enrolled for the Fall Semester 1976. Omitted from this run were foreign students and students who had been dismissed from the university. From this run a list of 5,278 names and student records was generated.

From reviewing this list it was apparent that there were many people on the list that had completed at least 120 hours. Since it is the feeling of the researcher that these students are completing a final class or two elsewhere and transferring the credits back for graduation, they were eliminated from the study. There were also many people who had taken less than six hours the previous fall and winter. They were also eliminated as the study was designed to include those students who were pursuing degree requirements on an ongoing basis.

On December 14, a list was established with the above parameters in effect and a list of 2,788 records was generated. This list was from the student master file in data processing at the university and is the survey population for this study.

To decide on the sampling from the list, one-third of the names on the list were used as the survey population. Cards were made out with the numbers 1, 2 and 3 on them, respectively. A card was selected at random and the student name in that position on the list, and every third person thereafter, was in the sampling frame.
The card selected was the card with #1 on it. Therefore, the sample frame consisted of the first name on the list and every third name thereafter.

The sampling frame consisted of 930 names. These people were all sent the original survey with a cover letter. (See Appendix.) Those who did not respond to the first survey were sent a second survey with a second cover letter.

Student Characteristics

The student characteristics data used in this study were those included on the student master file by data processing. This information is collected by the Admissions Office on the application for admission as well as the information which is added to the file as the student enrolls at the university.

The file contains name, home address, local address, accumulated hours passed, accumulated hours taken, accumulated grade point average, hours attempted, hours passed for former semesters, status, high school attended, college attended, birth date, entry date, sex, race and marital status.

The survey information was added to the above student information in an attempt to try to identify similar characteristics of students who elected not to remain at this university.
The Instrument

The instrument designed and used for collecting data in the mail survey was a five item questionnaire. (Refer to Appendix Item A.) The design of the survey instrument was based on questionnaires developed by Dresser (1969) and a questionnaire suggested by Bower and Myers (1976). The information on these questionnaires was compared and an original instrument was designed. This instrument was critiqued by the directors of institutional research at the university and was refined by omitting demographic data that was available on the data processing tape.

Finally, the questionnaire items were field tested on a student population in order to limit the information in each of the items of the questionnaire.

Item I was designed to provide information on why students had originally elected to attend the university. Item II was designed to provide reasons why students had chosen to leave. Items III and IV were to provide information on the best features and least attractive features of the university. Item V was designed to find out what the future plans for education were for those who had not returned to this university.

Data Collection

The data collection had a two pronged approach. The"
demographic data used was collected from the student master file from data processing for the year 1975-1976. To this data base was added the data collected from the survey instrument. The survey instrument was mailed to all people on the sampling frame. Each mailing contained a cover letter (Appendix B), the questionnaire and a self-addressed postage paid envelope (Appendix D). The mailings were mailed on presidential stationery with the presidential signature on the cover letter. Both the original and follow-up letters stressed the importance of the information to enable the institution to do a more comprehensive job of meeting the needs of its future student population.

The first mailing of 930 questionnaires were mailed to the permanent home addresses of the students. Since many former students would be home for the holidays, it was felt the best return would be from this timing of the survey instrument. The second mailing was sent out under a cover letter dated February 3, 1977 (Appendix C). No further follow-up was attempted. May 1 was selected as the cut off date for responses being included in the survey.

Response Rate

The rate of return of this survey was 50% with a total of 465 responses out of 930. The method of selection of the sample was through a random sampling procedure.
A response rate of 50% on survey research is termed "adequate" (Babbie, 1973) for analysis and reporting. The return rate for this study is sufficient to generalize to the total population.

Data Analysis

The data collected by this survey was matched to the information on each student that was contained on the student master. The information that was collected was added to the master. Then averages and means of the information was computed for those who responded and grade point averages and means were computed for those students who were at the university for the Winter Semester 1976, minus those who were in the survey population. A "t" test of difference was used to measure the significant differences between class standing and the average grade point of persisters at the university. The "t" test was also used to test for significance between the persisters and racial ethnic background.

Summary

The population parameters of the study were defined and the students who were to be included within the sampling frame were identified by a random sampling procedure. A dual set of mailings was produced and sent to the former students who were within the sample frame. For those who

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did not initially respond, a second questionnaire and cover letter was sent to elicit their response. At the conclusion of the time interval for gathering responses, 50% of the survey population had returned completed questionnaires. Analysis of the data was undertaken and is reported in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to identify the reasons students' were not electing to return to a large public university after enrolling in classes. The data were collected in a two-fold process. First a list of names of people who fit the parameters of the study was produced by computer from the data processing center at the university. From this list, a 33% random sample was selected. A survey questionnaire was sent to each former student identified in the sample. When the surveys were returned they were matched with the student's social security number. A second follow-up questionnaire was mailed to those students who did not respond. When the results of the survey were received, the responses of the survey were entered into a computer file. Then a match was made between the information on the student master and the survey questionnaire. With this procedure match, it was possible to relate the demographic information about students with their academic standing. The information on the student master contained:

a. Social security number
b. Name
c. Class
d. Sex
f. Marital status
g. Veteran status
h. Race
i. Residence status
j. Entry date
k. Status (college)
l. Permanent address
m. High school
n. Year graduated (high school)
o. Rank (high school)
p. Birth date
q. Hours passed
r. Hours attempted
s. Honor points
t. Grade point average

The survey instrument collected information in five areas. The areas included on the survey were as follows:

A. The student chose the three most important reasons for choosing the university from a list of 16 possible reasons.

B. The student chose the three most important reasons for leaving the university from a list of 14 possible reasons.

C. The student chose the three best features at the university from a list of 11 features.

D. The student chose the three least attractive features from a list of 13 features at the university.

E. The students indicated if they were planning on returning to college. If they were attending another college they were to supply the name of that college.
Information on Grades of Drop-Outs

In Table 4.1, the mean grade point average of the survey population was found to be 2.65. The percentage below a 3.0 for the entire survey population was 67.28.

Freshmen averaged 2.07 with 54.7% under a 2.0 average and 82.14% under a 3.0 average. The grade point average of freshmen students is significantly lower at a .001 level of significance than the average grade point of the entire university undergraduate population. The freshmen students who voluntarily withdrew were leaving before they could have been dismissed. Had 53% of the freshmen stayed one more semester after their freshman year, and maintained their current G.P.A., they would have been dismissed at the end of the first semester of their sophomore year.

It is interesting to note that within the survey population, only 19.35% are classed as freshmen. This is due to the fact that at this university, the definition of freshman standing is based upon earning from 1-25 hours, inclusive; sophomore standing is from 26-55 hours; junior standing from 56-86 hours passed; and senior standing is for all students with 88 hours or more. A high percentage of students leave after their first two semesters in college or do not return to college following summer vacation. A full-time student who left college after the first two semesters would be classed as a sophomore. The percentage
## Table 4.1

Mean grade point averages for each class, percentage under 2.0 G.P.A., and percentage under 3.0 G.P.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Mean G.P.A.</th>
<th>% Under 2.0</th>
<th>% Under 3.0</th>
<th>% of Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Survey Population</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>67.28%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>53.57%</td>
<td>82.14%</td>
<td>19.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>15.03%</td>
<td>69.28%</td>
<td>35.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>11.36%</td>
<td>60.60%</td>
<td>30.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>55.38%</td>
<td>14.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of sophomores who then withdrew from the survey population was 35.25. This percentage is also high but as noted above, it contains some of the students who completed between 26 and 30 hours. This group of students in most studies are still classed as freshmen.

In looking at the grade point averages of sophomores who left, their grade point average was 2.72. Using the .05 level of significance there is no significant difference in grade point average between the sophomore dropout and the grade point average of the remaining student population, with only 15.03% under a 2.0 at the time of their withdrawal. This indicates that while 85% of the sophomores left in good academic standing, the sophomores were academically successful students and were making progress towards degree requirements. Twenty-nine percent of the sophomores withdrew with grade point averages above 3.0.

The mean grade point average of juniors was 2.81, with 88.7% in good standing at the university and 39% above 3.0 average. The juniors represented 30% of those students who withdrew. This figure is higher than the national average, but is accounted for in the definition of what constitutes junior standing. Seniors who withdrew had a mean average of 2.93 with 92.3% over a 2.0. Forty-four percent of the seniors who withdrew had 3 averages. The grade point average of seniors who withdrew is significantly higher at the .015 level as compared to the average.
of the general university population.

The grade point averages of students who withdraw continue to increase as the class standing increases. Over 50% of freshmen withdraw while having academic problems, but only 7.7% of seniors appear to have academic problems.

Comparison of the Total Undergraduate Student Population of Winter, 1976, and the Survey Population

In comparing Tables 4.1 and 4.2, it is evident that the survey dropout population has a grade point average two tenths (.2) below the average grade point for all students who were enrolled at the university during the Winter Semester, 1976. This difference may be accounted for by noting that the freshmen who drop out do so with a grade point average significantly below the average of all freshmen. The freshmen who drop out average 2.07 while the total freshman class had a 2.57 average; this difference is significant at the .01 level. The comparison between the grade point averages in other classes is not significant at the .05 level. The sophomores within the survey averaged 2.72 while the total population of sophomores had a 2.73 average. Juniors in the survey population who dropped out of college averaged 2.81 as compared to all juniors who had a 2.88 average. Seniors again showed a minor drop in mean grade point of dropouts versus
Table 4.2

Mean grade point averages of all students at the university for the Winter Semester, 1976, by class and by sex within class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Men's G.P.A.</th>
<th>Women's G.P.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G.P.A.</td>
<td>G.P.A.</td>
<td>G.P.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.81 N=(15,370)</td>
<td>2.61 N=(8,453)</td>
<td>2.96 N=(6,917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>2.57 N=(3,614)</td>
<td>2.47 N=(1,845)</td>
<td>2.67 N=(1,789)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>2.78 N=(3,556)</td>
<td>2.66 N=(1,634)</td>
<td>2.91 N=(1,634)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>2.38 N=(4,044)</td>
<td>2.72 N=(2,269)</td>
<td>3.09 N=(1,775)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2.97 N=(4,156)</td>
<td>2.83 N=(2,417)</td>
<td>3.16 N=(1,739)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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total population with the dropouts averaging 2.93 while the average G.P.A. of those who stayed was 2.97. In comparing grade point averages between those who stay and those who leave, it is apparent that the freshman who is least successful makes the decision to depart before being asked to leave by reason of the low scholarship policy at the university. The other classes do not show this drastic shift in grade point averages. In the analysis which will follow, the study will look at some other factors that affect the dropout rate.

Grade Point Averages by College
for the Survey Population

In looking at the various colleges, there are different averages for those who are withdrawing from each college. The total survey population had a mean grade point average of 2.65. The College of Arts and Sciences had a mean average of 2.40 for those who withdrew with 30.43% under a 2.0 average. The next college in ascending order would be the College of Business with their withdrawals averaging 2.54 and 24.47% below a 2.0. The College of Education had an average of 2.74 for those who withdrew but only 8.07% were below a 2.0 average. This was the lowest percentage below a 2.0 of all colleges at the university. Applied Science averaged 2.75 for the students who withdrew and only 15% were under a 2.0 average. Fine Arts students who withdrew
averaged 2.76 with 24.24% below a 2.0 average. The number of students above a 3.0 average in the College of Fine Arts was 57.58%. In the College of Health and Human Services, the average of the dropouts was 2.91, which was the highest for all the colleges at the university. Only 12.50% were below a 2.0 average and 56.25% were above a 3.0 average. As we look at the various colleges and differing grade point averages within the dropout population, it is apparent that each college is dealing with a slightly different problem within their population. In the College of Fine Arts and in the College of Health and Human Services, the percentage of successful students who had above a 3.0 average is over 50%, and these students are electing not to return for the completion of their education.

Information on Male and Female Students

The male sample that was surveyed had a mean grade point average of 2.52. Males have a significantly lower grade point average than the women dropouts at the .05 level (Table 4.3). The female dropout mean grade point average was 2.77 with only 16.1% below the 2.0 level. The mean grade point average for males was 2.52 with 25.8% below a 2.0.

The percentage of women who withdrew and were above the 3.0 level was 41.95%, while 21.72% of the males who withdrew had above a 3.0 average. The highly successful
Table 4.3

Mean grade point average by college for survey population, percentage under a 2.0 G.P.A., and percentage under a 3.0 G.P.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
<th>% Under 2.0</th>
<th>% Under 3.0</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Survey Population</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td>67.28</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Science</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>66.25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>86.95</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>24.47</td>
<td>71.28</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>21.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>67.74</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>24.24</td>
<td>42.42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>43.75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
female is more likely to withdraw from school than is the successful male student. The difference in grade averages for male and female students is not as great as the differences between those above a 3.0 average who drop out of school.

Black Student Grade Point and Withdrawal

In Table 4.4, there is a large difference in grade point average between the white population versus the non-white dropouts. In this survey, the minority students who were non-black did not comprise a large enough number to draw any significant conclusions. The black students who withdrew from the university had a very low grade point average compared to the average student at the university. The difference in average grade point average is significant at the .01 level. The average of black students in this survey was 1.90, compared to the withdrawn white student who had an average of 2.71. The percentage of black students who were below a 2.0 average was 18.42%. In looking at the students who withdrew and have averages above 3.0, only 4.17% of the withdrawing black students were above the 3.0 average, while 34.35% of the white students who withdrew were above a 3 average. These data indicate that proportionally fewer successful black students withdrew than successful white students.
Table 4.4

Mean grade point averages by sex, race and marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
<th>% Under 2.0</th>
<th>% Under 3.0</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Survey Population</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>67.28%</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>25.76%</td>
<td>78.28%</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>45.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>16.10%</td>
<td>58.05%</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>54.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Students</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>95.83%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Students</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>18.42%</td>
<td>65.35%</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>93.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Minority Students</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Students</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>16.88%</td>
<td>53.24%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>17.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Students</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>21.28%</td>
<td>70.30%</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>82.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Reasons Students Chose This University

It is apparent from the data reported in Table 4.5 that the largest single reasons for selecting the university was because of the academic programs, as expressed in the statement, "it has a good department of . . ." In referring to Table 4.5, the percentage that chose this response was 27.5 as the first choice. It also was the largest category for second choice as the main reason for choosing this university.

The next most important reason for college selection was that students could live at home and commute, with 14.8% choosing this as the number one reason for attending. In this respect, the university serves as a community college for students who wish to stay at home for the first two years and then transfer to a university or college away from their home town for the final two years. This seems to be a fairly standard reason for some junior withdrawals who are from the university area.

The third most important reason for choosing this institution was because the student was impressed by the campus and its facilities, which was chosen by 3.0% as the number one reason for attending the university.

An 8.0% first choice response for selecting this university was "other reasons", which falls outside the 15 other specific categories which the student could select.

Having a relative attend this college is an important
Table 4.5

Listing of the most important reasons by percentage for choosing the university, in order of the first choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It has a good department of</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I could live at home and commute</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I was impressed by the campus and its facilities</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other reasons</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A relative of mine attended</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It has a variety of course and major offerings</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It was a good distance from home</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I was not admitted to my first choice school</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have a good friend attending</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My counselor recommended it</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I was offered substantial financial aid and/or scholarship support</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I was attracted by its social atmosphere</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I could be relatively sure of succeeding academically</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I wanted a large school</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I wanted a small school</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. It has a good athletic program</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = (470) (447) (404) (1331)\]
reason for selection by 7.6% of the survey population.

Six and one-half percent of the students listed "a variety of course offerings and major offerings" as the main reason for their selection. It is important to note, however, that for the second choice this is the second most popular reason for selecting this university. For a third choice, "variety of course offerings and major offerings" is the number one response. This is the only response in the entire listing of 15 reasons that surpassed the response "it has a good department of . . ." Since there is a relationship between departments and course offerings and major offerings, this is by far the most important reason why students elect to attend this university.

"It was a good distance from home," is listed as a first choice response by 6% of those answering the questionnaire and is seventh in ranking as the number one choice. Clearly, the choices of being at home and commuting and going away to college have appeal to a certain percentage of the population. In looking at the data on why students left the university, these two responses become somewhat clearer. Some students chose to live at home and commute to this university for the first year or two of college then transfer to another college for completion of their education. Other students have chosen to attend the university for the college experience, then
after the first year transfer back to a college or community college for the second year.

The response, "I was not admitted to my first choice school," was given by 5.7% of the respondents as their first choice. These students then are attending this college as a second or third choice college. If they are successful college students, they may then be able to transfer into the college that was their number one choice.

Listed as the number one reason for selection was "I have a good friend who attends;" 5.1% responded with this. It is interesting to note that this response becomes more important as a second or third reason for attending the university. As a second choice it is ranked as the seventh in importance and is fifth in importance as a third reason for selection of this college.

In ranking the responses in regard to total responses to first, second and third choices, the list would be as follows:

1. It has a good department of . . .
2. It has a variety of courses and major offerings.
3. I was impressed by the campus and its facilities.
4. I could live at home and commute.
5. A relative of mine attended the university.
6. It was a good distance from home.
7. I was attracted by its social atmosphere.
8. I have a good friend who attends.
9. Other reasons.
10. My counselor recommended it to me.
11. I could be relatively sure of succeeding academically.
12. I was offered substantial financial aid and/or scholarship support.
13. I was not admitted to my first choice school.

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15. I wanted a large school.
16. It has a good athletic program.

Reasons for Leaving the University

The reasons students gave for leaving are listed in Table 4.6. The largest number of former students stated that there were "other" reasons for their leaving the university than listed in this survey. This category encompasses 32% of the respondents. Tabulating the reasons why they checked the "other" category, there are 16 additional reasons students indicated why they had left. These 16 reasons will be discussed at the end of this section.

The ranking of the 13 reasons in Table 4.6 would show that the second most important reason for dropping out of this institution of higher education was because the students did not have enough money to continue their studies. This was the most important reason for withdrawing for 12.6% of those who dropped out. As a second choice, 11% chose this reason. In totaling all responses, 16.5% indicated that finances were of serious enough consequences for them to withdraw from college.

As a third major reason for withdrawing, students indicated that "courses in their major field were not available" at this university.

Students who needed to have some time away from college to explore career options indicated so by having a
Table 4.6

Listing by percentage of the most important reasons for leaving the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Other</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not enough money to go to school</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Courses in my major are not available here</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I was undecided about my major and needed to leave school to decide upon possible careers</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. There was a conflict between studies and my job</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal problems</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I wanted to travel</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Illness; personal, family</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Financial aid was not sufficient</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I accepted a job and did not need more school</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I fulfilled my personal goals in schooling</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Financial help from my family decreased</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Applied but could not obtain financial aid</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I was advised to withdraw by</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= (457) (300) (252) (1017)

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first choice of 10.2% to item 4. This is the fourth in importance for these questions asked for both first and second choice and as far as overall choices are concerned, ranks as the fifth most important reason for withdrawing from the university.

The conflict between working and attending school was a major reason for some of those who withdrew. The percentage increases in importance as a second or third reason for not returning. It is the fifth most important reason with 8.5% of the students selecting this as the reason that they did not return.

Personal problems increase in importance as a second or third reason for leaving college. Personal problems are ranked as sixth with 7.2% of the students selecting this as the most important reason for not returning. The rest of the reasons selected as number one for leaving encompass a small percentage. Some students wanted to travel. Others were ill or had illness in the family.

It should be noted that the second major reason for dropping out of school was because there was not enough money with 12.6% listing this as their number one response. However, only 3% indicated that financial aid was not sufficient and only 1% listed "financial aid from family decreased" as a major reason for withdrawing from college. Federal and state programs and family support are listed less frequently as a major reason for withdrawal than lack
of finances.

When looking at the $3\%$ who found financial aid was not sufficient and comparing this with the response, "applied but could not obtain financial aid," it is apparent that students have had their needs met for educational expenses if they qualify.

The financial picture is one with mixed responses as it is listed as the second major reason why students leave, but the chances of "family resources being withheld" or "financial aid not being available from the university," are low items on the list.

Students are getting their basic educational expenses met, but have financial needs beyond college costs that are important enough to cause withdrawal from college.

The "other" category was selected by $32\%$ of former students in the survey. Their reasons for selecting this choice varied. The following is a tabulation of the responses to this specific question. The largest percentage of those in the "other" category were students who indicated they have transferred to another college or university. Sixty-three students or $43\%$ of the "other" category had elected to transfer to another college and the reasons for transfer ranged from "wanting to move away from home to attend college" to 12 students who transferred because the quality of education at this university was not what they were looking for.
The percentage of students that chose the category "other" (31 students) and dropped out because of new family members, may eventually return to the university for their degree. Some of those who dropped out have married and settled in other parts of the country. Many wives dropped out to go where their husbands had been transferred. One man dropped out of the university to attend another college where his wife was attending law school.

Eleven students indicated they could not get night classes that they wanted and that student services were not available to them as night students. The university seems to be frustrating to some students who wish to pursue a degree during the evening hours because most courses are not offered for night students. Eleven students indicated that they wanted to drop out of college to take a permanent job. Nine students indicated that they now did not like the major they had chosen and did not know what else to choose.

In this university there are a few majors in which it is difficult to enroll. Eight of the students who listed "other" as their number one reason for leaving indicated that they could not get into the major that they wanted so they dropped out.

Eight students (53%) indicated that they did not like the social life of this university and therefore transferred to another college.
For those 32% who responded and listed "other," 41% of this group elected to transfer to another college or junior college and an additional 21% dropped out to move with their marriage partner or to have a baby. Seven and one-half percent dropped out to work and 7.2% could not get the night classes they wanted to continue college at this university. A listing of "other" choices follows with the percentage of their responses.

1. Transferred to another college 43.1%
2. To get married or have a child 20.2%
3. Quality of education at the university 7.8%
4. Couldn't get night classes 7.2%
5. Took a full-time job 7.2%
6. To transfer to a community college 6.5%
7. I did not like my major 5.8%
8. Couldn't get into the major I wanted 5.2%
9. Did not like the social life on campus 5.2%
10. Because their favorite faculty was fired 2.6%
11. Finished a two-year program 1.3%
12. Credits from another college weren't accepted 1.3%
13. Couldn't get classes I wanted 1.3%
14. Not satisfied with my achievements 1.3%
15. Poor living conditions 0.6%

What Students Like About This University

In the survey, students were asked to select the best three features of the university from a list of 11 choices. Of all 11 selections, the number one selection as a first, second or third choice was the location. Approximately 33% of those who left liked the location. In totaling the first, second and third responses, a total of 24% chose the location as the most important item in this section.

The next largest area of selection of the best features
of the university (Table 4.7) is the choice of "the school in general," and 22.3% of the respondents selected this as their first choice of the best features.

Social opportunities was listed as the number three selection of best features. With 7.9% of the students selecting this as their first choice as best feature at the university, as a second and third choice it seems to gain more importance as a major feature of the university.

The library service is a rather consistent choice with 7.6% finding it as the best feature of the university, while 8.9% found it the second most attractive feature and 8.6% listed it as the third most attractive feature.

In the category of "other reasons," many items were mentioned as positive features. Totally, 7.4% listed this as a first choice. Within the comments of "other," eight students mentioned that contact with professors was important and easy to accomplish. Related to this was the comment by six students that the size of the university gave students a large number of majors to choose from, but that the departments are small enough that students could get to know professors and to know the department well. Registration procedures and extension programs were pointed out as positive features by four students.

The people and the professors were perceived as positive forces by some of the students, and the city where the university is located was mentioned by four students.
Table 4.7

Listing by percentage of response of the best features at the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Location</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The school in general</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social opportunities</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Library services</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information you received before enrolling</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cultural opportunities</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Orientation</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Recreational opportunities</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Residence halls</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Extra-curricular opportunities</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= (442) (409) (358) (1132)
as attractive.

In looking at departments, students mentioned the following as being positive features: Business, Music, Education, Psychology and Geology Departments.

Least Attractive Features of the University

When former students ranked the least attractive features of this university, they responded by indicating that the cost of attending was the number one selection with 26.7% choosing this as the number one response (Table 4.8). This selection concurs with the choice made when students indicated why they were leaving the university and 16.5% indicated that there was not enough money to go to school (Table 4.6).

The second feature that the students found unattractive at the college was the drop-add procedure, with 10.7% finding this as the major reason why they disliked this college. This selection increased in percentage as a second or third feature that students did not like. In looking at the total of all choices, the drop-add procedure is ranked as number two with 12.8% of the total choices. This should be compared to the registration procedures which ranked in the tenth position with only 3.4% selecting this as the number one least attractive feature. Students apparently have no problem with the original registration procedure, but when changes are necessary, they have found it a negative
Table 4.8

Listing by percentage of response of the least attractive features of the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
<th>Third Choice</th>
<th>Total Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cost of attending</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Drop-add procedure</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quality of education</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Academic advising services</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Selection of classes (hours offered)</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dormitory food service</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Amount of contact with professors</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Counseling services</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Registration procedures</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Financial aid</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Regulations or rules</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Information you received before enrolling</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= (430) (414) (316) (1160)

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Quality of education is ranked third in this selection and 10.7% found this the number one least attractive feature. Of the total survey population, 32.7% left with better than a B average. This percentage would also account for the students who lived at home and commuted to the university and later transferred to a larger state university in the area for the completion of their degree.

The academic advising services were ranked as fifth with 9.5% of the students choosing this as the least attractive feature of the university. It should be noted that as the selection for second and third choice the percentage choosing this category increases. The total of all choices shows academic advising services is ranked as the third least attractive feature.

Selection of classes (hours offered) was listed as the fifth least attractive feature. This should be compared to the percentage of people who had a conflict between their job and studies. The hours that classes were offered was the least attractive feature (Table 4.8) to 7.2% of the respondents. In comparing this with Table 4.6, 8.5% of the respondents found a conflict between studies and their job as the most important reason for leaving.

Dormitory food service was listed as the number one least attractive feature by 6.7% of the students who withdrew. In the classification of "other," residence halls

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were mentioned as a prime negative feature by four students.

The category of "other" was selected by 6.2% of all choices. Within this selection the largest grouping of responses centered around parking on campus. Sixteen students indicated there were not enough parking spaces. The second response which is in conjunction with parking was the comment that parking tickets were too numerous and meter maids were over-zealous about their jobs.

Five students indicated there were not enough classes to meet student demand. One student indicated that there were not enough business profession classes and a second student felt that the science classes were too large. Two students felt there were not enough business classes at night and during spring and summer sessions.

The other areas in Table 4.8 ranked in order of the first choice are: amount of contact with professors; counseling services; registration procedures; financial aid; regulations or rules and information received before enrolling.

The data from students who had planned on returning but had not returned to college indicated that finances and jobs played an important role in students deciding to drop out of college. Table 4.6 indicates that the most frequently selected reason for not returning to college was the category entitled "other." Thirty-two percent of the
respondents chose this as the most important reason. In organizing this category into the various responses the totals are as follows:

Eight students became pregnant and dropped out to have a baby.
Seven students took full-time jobs and could not get night classes in their major.
Five students got married and family obligations forced them to withdraw.
Two students couldn't get the business classes they wanted.
Two students were dissatisfied with the trivia and withdrew.
One student was dissatisfied with the curriculum he was in.
One student was dissatisfied with the low academic standards and felt that this was a party school.
One student dropped out to study for an HEW exam.
One student was dissatisfied with the firing of good professors.
One student felt that he had received poor academic advising.
One student claimed that the student teaching assignment had been overlooked by the department two successive semesters.
One student didn't receive the medical technology internship.
One student felt the major department was too small.
One student could not get the classes that he desired.

Thirty-eight percent of the above choices deal with getting married or raising a family. This group of students should be followed to help them reach the goal of graduation. They should be in the group of students referred to in Chapter II as some of the students that comprise the 20% who drop out of college but eventually graduate from a four year institution.

The second major reason this group indicated for leaving the university was that there was not enough money to go to school. Twenty-five percent selected this response.
It is interesting to note that even though one-fourth of the students in this category had financial problems, only one student listed "financial aid was not sufficient," and only one student listed "applied but could not obtain financial aid." Apparently the needs of the educational expenses as we compute them are being met by the various financial programs and the federal grant programs. The cars and apartments and recreational needs in excess of educational expenses are factors luring many students from the college campus.

Sixteen percent of the students who plan on returning left because there was a conflict between their jobs and their education. These students have elected with the above category, to concentrate on what the job can offer rather than to sacrifice the extras for the college degree. The above two categories represent some students who may be part of the dropout population who will eventually find the college degree desirable.

Ten percent of these students who plan on returning dropped out because they were undecided about their major and they needed to leave school to decide upon possible career goals. This group of undecided students left the university without advisors or other college officials knowing that they were undecided and that they needed some direction. This group of students could have been identified by a withdrawal interview or by a procedure to follow.
up on students who did not advance register to give them some contact on campus before they exit.

Six percent of the students left because they wanted to travel. Four percent of this group indicated that they had personal problems and had to withdraw.

Four percent of the students who plan to return withdrew for reasons of illness, either personally or within their family.

Only 1.5% of this group indicated that courses in their major were not available at this university. Therefore, if they are still in the area, these students are available for further enrollment. They need to be identified and contacted about their future educational goals and for educational planning.

Two percent accepted a job and didn't need more schooling. This compares with the 1.5% who had fulfilled their personal goals and therefore withdrew.

One student was advised to withdraw by the academic advisor.

Finally, one student indicated that the financial aid could not be obtained.

In evaluating the total of the choices of the students who plan to return to college, the most selected reason in the first, second or third choice was:

1. Not enough money to go to school 21.4%
2. There was a conflict between studies and job 16.4%
3. I was undecided about my major and needed to leave school to decide upon possible careers 12.7%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Personal reasons</th>
<th>10.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Other</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Financial aid was not sufficient</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I want to travel</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Applied but could not obtain financial aid</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I accepted a job and didn't need more school</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Illness, personal or family</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Financial help from my family decreased</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I fulfilled my personal goals in schooling</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Courses in my major are not available here</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I was advised to withdraw by . . .</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparing the overall selection with the number one selection, "not enough money to go to school" is listed as the number one choice in the overall category when first, second and third choice are considered; as the number one selection it is ranked as the second choice. The major difference in the two charts is in the "other" choice. It moves from the first selection when we are only looking at the first choice to the fourth most frequently selected category when all choices are taken into consideration. This moves "finances" into overall first choice, "conflict between studies and my job" into second choice, and "I was undecided about my major and needed to leave school to decide upon possible careers," into third position. It is interesting to note that in all responses, 21.4% indicated that they did not have enough money to go to school. Of this same group of students, only 4% indicated that they could not obtain financial aid. Only 5% indicated that financial aid was not sufficient, and only 3% indicated that financial aid from their family decreased. The basic needs of the students for educational expenses are being met by
the existing financial aid programs. The additional needs above and beyond the expenses of basic educational expenses are placing a block in the path of these would-be graduates.

Transferring to Another College

At the end of the questionnaire, students were asked to list where they had gone or what their plans were regarding continuation of their college careers. This question was designed to find out the percentages of students who would return to this university and the number who had transferred to other colleges, universities or community colleges. In designing this question, information was also gathered on those students who definitely did not wish to return to college and those students who were undecided about returning to college.

When former students responded to this question, only 16 students indicated that they did not plan to return to college. A much larger portion of the students indicated that they were undecided about continuing their education. The total number of former students who indicated they were undecided about returning to college was 55. This number represents 11.8% of those who withdrew from the university in good standing.

Of those who responded to this questionnaire, 43% were enrolled in colleges at the time of the survey admini-
stration. This percentage represents students who have transferred to other colleges, community colleges, and universities or re-entered this university.

Of the students that transferred to other universities, 50 students had transferred to other major universities in the state. This represents 10.8% of the students that withdrew from the university (Table 4.9). The major universities in-state that the students transferred to have a greater variety of programs and larger student populations and the entry standards for beginning students are more selective.

Of these 50 students that transferred to the major state universities, 16 students had indicated on the questionnaire that the other university was their first choice college and that they now were eligible to transfer. Fifteen students within this group indicated that the major they now wished to study was not available at the original college, therefore, they had to transfer to complete their new degree plans. Two of the students indicated that they wanted to move away from home to finish college. Four of the students transferred because the university they transferred into had a better academic reputation than the one they started at. Finally, three students indicated that the department at this university was too narrow in scope and the department in the university they were transferring to had the same department but with broader programs. The
Table 4.9

Colleges that students transferred into after withdrawing from a major midwestern university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Type</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Drop-outs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Major in-state Universities</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other in-state Universities</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public Colleges in other states</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In-state Community Colleges</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Re-entered the original University</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Four-year private Colleges</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other in-state Public Colleges</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
departments mentioned by these students were Biology, Psychology and Creative Writing.

The total number of students that transferred to other state universities within this state was 42. The reasons they indicated for transferring to the other state universities were that 10 of the students could not receive the major they were interested in at the original college selected. Nine students had financial problems and needed to move back home and commute to college to reduce expenses. Four students moved to a new location to be with a spouse, therefore, they transferred to the nearest university. Three of the students in this category indicated that they could not get into their first choice college, so they transferred after building a record that would allow them to transfer. Finally, one student transferred because he felt the department in the first university was weak and the department was much better at the second college.

Thirty-seven students transferred into other public colleges and universities located in other states. This represents 8.2% of those students who withdrew from this university. The reasons students indicated for the switch to new educational situations in other states were to follow a marriage partner, to see new parts of the country while finishing their degree and to pursue a different major than was offered at the original university selected.
In looking at the reasons that students transferred to community colleges, it is important to keep in mind that the community college offers two different academic programs. The first is terminal in nature and is not designed for transfer back into a four year college. The second program is designed as the first two years of a four year degree and is transferrable back into a four year college. The students who transferred back into a community college transferred into both the terminal and the transfer programs. Of the 34 students who returned to the community colleges in the state, five students (15%) had transferred into a terminal program and will complete a program not available at the original college. Eight students indicated that they had to transfer to the community college because of finances. This represents 23.5% of those transferring to community colleges in the state. Another 18% transferred to community colleges because they were undecided about their majors and needed some time to explore careers.

Nine percent of the students had personal problems and went back home to resolve them and attend the community college while at home. Nine percent also dropped out to work and earn money and are now attending a community college and will return to a four year college later. Two students indicated that they could not get into their major and returned to the community college because their chances

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were better from there. These students want to get into the occupational therapy program at the original university and that program is difficult to enter as a cross-campus transfer. They were, therefore, asked to transfer to a community college with hopes of being able to get into the program when they have completed a minimum of 56 hours.

Getting married and moving with the marriage partner was the reason that two students had transferred to a community college. One student could not get the classes he wanted in his major. One student indicated that his academic record at the university was poor so he was forced to withdraw before being dismissed. One student did not like the living conditions in the dormitory and withdrew. One student did not like the major he had selected and transferred to a community college. Finally, one student listed illness as the reason for transferring back to the community college.

Of the students who withdrew from the university, 11.8% or 31 students have re-entered the university. These students had dropped out of the university and have now made arrangements to solve the problems that forced their withdrawal. These students are now working toward completion of their college goals.

Students Who Left the University to Transfer Into Four Year Private Colleges

Many students chose to continue their college at pri-
vate institutions in and out of the state. Totally, 24 students transferred to private four year colleges. Some of the private colleges represent technical schools in fashion design as well as traditional liberal arts colleges. Four of the students transferred to Notre Dame to complete their degrees. Some of these students were part of the 5.6% that chose this university because they were not admitted to their first choice college.

Fifteen students entered other in-state public colleges. Of these fifteen students, seven indicated that the major was not available at the original college. Three students were forced to transfer because of the relocation of a marriage partner and two students could not get the extension classes that they needed, especially at night. Therefore, they were forced to transfer to a college that offered the night program that would allow them to complete their degrees.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of dropouts from the university during the year 1975-1976 was conducted to analyze some basic data on the characteristics of these students. Students who enrolled in more than six hours of credit during the year and were not asked to withdraw for academic reasons or those who had less than 120 academic hours and did not return for the following fall semester were considered dropouts. From that list of students, one-third were drawn for a random sample. This list included 930 names and it was the sampling frame.

Data was gathered by two methods. First, demographic and academic information was available on the student master file at the university's data processing center. To this basic information was added the data that was collected via a questionnaire. This gave a composite picture of information about the students who had left.

Discussion of the Findings

The information gathered for this study showed that for dropouts, grade point averages between classes varied a great deal. The grade point average for freshman dropouts averaged 2.07, which is significantly lower at the .01 level.
of significance than the grade point average for the total student population. Fifty-four percent of the students who were freshmen and withdrew were below a 2.0 average. Had they stayed for the following fall semester and performed at the same academic level, they might have been dismissed from the university. These students may be leaving without consulting an academic advisor or counselor about their achievement at the university.

These data support the conclusion that it could be profitable to monitor the freshman class closely and make contact with freshmen who have below a 2.0 average after their first semester on campus. At this point, tutorial assistance, counseling, reading and study skills programs might be of help to the student and to the university. This could mean retaining some of these students who have demonstrated on the campus that they need assistance to perform at or above a 2.0 average.

Black students who withdrew had a mean grade point average of 1.90 as compared to the general student population which had a grade point average of 2.71. This difference is significant at the .01 level of significance. The black student population had a much lower grade point average than the white population that withdrew. Much closer supervision of the minority population, and black students in particular, should be initiated to ensure their academic success at the university. It appears that many of the stu-
Students that are recruited the hardest find little academic success and are withdrawing before being dismissed from the institution.

The university should take a close look at the academic progress of all the black students on campus. There are special programs for recruited minority students. These programs may be successful while the normally admitted black students may be having severe academic problems and consequently are withdrawing.

There is a problem with academic achievement within the black student population. Further research should be initiated to find solutions to the problems at this campus.

Married students withdrew with a higher grade point average than the survey population. They withdrew to move with their marriage partner or to prepare for a new family member. Those who did not move from the close geographical area should be followed closely to encourage them to continue their education when it is convenient.

Of the students who withdrew from the university, 85% were in good standing, above a 2.0, with 31% above a 3.0 average. Many of the students with a 3.0 who withdrew are from the local area and have used this university as a one or two year college, preparing to transfer for the completion of their college degrees. Others have not been accepted at their first choice institution and after one or two successful years at this university, are transfer-
ring to the college of their first choice for the completion of their program.

The female student withdraws with a significantly higher grade point average at the .05 level of significance than the male dropout. The percentage of women who withdraw and have a 3.0 grade point average is 42%. The male population which withdraws and is at or above a 3.0 is 33%. This indicates that the highly successful male student is persistent in college in greater percentages than the successful female student. With greater numbers of women entering college, it is important to encourage the successful female to degree completion.

Twenty-seven percent of the students who withdrew listed "departmental offerings" as a reason for entering the university, yet these students are electing to withdraw from those same departments. Fourteen percent chose the college because it was close to home and they could commute to campus, and an additional 8% were impressed by the campus and its facilities. Fifty percent of the withdrawing students were impressed by the departments, the campus or its close proximity to home.

The desire to transfer to other institutions headed the list of reasons for leaving. At the time of the survey, 43.4% of the students who had dropped out of this university were enrolled in other colleges. Ten percent had transferred to larger major public universities within the state.
Thirty-two percent of this group indicated that they had not been admitted to their first choice college as a freshman, and 30% indicated that their major was not available at this university.

Data indicates that this university is serving as a two year transfer institution for students who do not get the opportunity to attend their first choice college or for students who wish to live at home for the first two years then transfer for the completion of their degrees from other colleges. Twelve students in this category transferred because the quality of education at the university was not what they were looking for.

Thirty-one students dropped out because of new family members. Those students still in the local area should be encouraged to return for the completion of their degrees.

Not enough money to go to school was the reason 12.6% of the population who withdrew gave for leaving. But of this group, only 1.3% indicated that financial help from their families decreased. Further, only 0.8% indicated that they had applied for but could not obtain financial aid. The costs of the educational programs are being met by the federal and state financial aid programs. However, the additional needs above and beyond housing, books, tuition and nominal spending money are keeping students away from completion of their academic programs.

Eleven percent of those who withdrew indicated that
classes in their major were not available here. This per­
centage encompasses some of the students who transferred
to other colleges and some of the part-time students who
find it difficult to get all of their classes at this uni­
versity as night time students.

Finally, 10.2% of those who withdrew from the univer­
sity indicated that they were undecided about their major
and needed time away from school to decide upon possible
careers.

Exit interviews and contact with students who leave
campus without advance registration could identify those
students who might benefit from career counseling and
could provide assistance for them in enrolling in the in­
stitution for the following year. As was indicated by
Astin's (1976) study, the student's undergraduate grade
point average has a stronger relationship to dropping out
than any other single variable. The data indicate that
the black population at this university are withdrawing
with lower grade point averages than their classmates. The
black population that is withdrawing with greater than a
3.0 average is much less than the percentage of white stu­
dents who are withdrawing and are above a 3.0 average.
Astin (1976) indicated that grades in the B range seem to
have the strongest positive effect on persistence, espe­
cially to black students. This is confirmed by the work
of Summerskill (1962), who indicated that prediction of
attrition is better at the lower end of the grade scale. Students with poor grades are highly likely to leave. He also noted that some students with excellent grades might leave. As the class standing increases the grade point average of the students who withdraw also increases. Only 32% of the students who were freshmen and withdrew were above a 3.0, while as juniors 39.4% were above a 3.0 at the time of withdrawal.

Financial factors and attrition are linked together by 12.6% of the students who withdrew from the university, indicating that there was not enough money to go to school. Both Summerskill (1962) and Iffert (1958) found that financial problems had some bearing on withdrawal. The federal financial aid available has changed the need factor for student withdrawal since most of the research was done. In this study, 12.6% of the students claimed finances as the number one reason for leaving. But these same students could receive the aid necessary to pay the expenses of college. The outside needs of an automobile and an apartment off-campus are financial needs that are luring students away from college.

When students listed the least attractive features of the university, the first selection was cost of attending; 27% chose this as their number one least attractive feature. The university should continue to emphasize jobs on campus for those who do not receive financial aid and the employ-
ment programs both on and off campus must be highlighted during new student orientation, as well as to all students who apply but do not receive financial aid.

The second least liked feature was the drop-add procedure with 11% of the students who withdrew selecting this as their first choice least liked feature of the university. It is important to note that the registration procedure was ninth on the list of least attractive features, while the drop-add procedure is listed as number two. The university community may wish to survey students who are currently enrolled to see how they respond to this issue. There seems to be a significant disenchantment with this administrative procedure.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to one university during the 1975-1976 academic year. It is a cross-sectional study. The study cannot be generalized to other colleges or other situations. It is limited to the special set of circumstances which encompass this university within the 1975-1976 academic year.

The return of the questionnaire was limited by the outdated addresses that were available. Students who drop out seldom leave new forwarding addresses. The questionnaire was mailed to their home addresses just before Christmas to ensure a larger return. The percentage of return
was 50% after the second mailing of the questionnaire and the cover letter.

Finally, the study was limited to students who had voluntarily withdrawn. No attempt was made to contact the students who were asked to leave the university for academic reasons.

Implications

It is apparent that there are three groups that these former students fall into:

1. **Students with below a 2.0 average that have not achieved at this university.** Included within this group are a large number of minority students. There should be a follow-up procedure for at least freshmen to assist them to become successful sophomores.

2. **Transfer students who are using this university as a place to complete the first two years of college.** These students are listed in several categories. The two most outstanding are the local students who commute for the first two years and then move away from home to finish up their college careers. The second is the group of students who have chosen this university as their second choice and have been successful. They are then free to transfer to their first choice institution.

3. **The student who is leaving for new family obliga-**
tions. These obligations take on many different aspects; the student who marries then needs a job to support a new life style. A married person transfers to be with the spouse in a different city, or a person leaves because of the birth of a new family member. The people in this classification should be monitored carefully. Those who live in the immediate area may wish to return to the university for completion of their degree at a later date.

Recommendations for Further Study

The data collected indicate that over 54% of the freshmen that withdrew had grade point averages below a 2.0. It is recommended that further research on students who have a 2.0 average be undertaken. If they entered as freshmen, there would be information available for predictive data on their grade point average at the university. It would seem valuable to have the predicted grade point to compare with the actual grade point average. This could be done on an individual basis for each student.

For students who indicated that they left for financial reasons, only 0.8% had applied for and not received financial aid, and only 1.3% indicated that financial help from their families had decreased. Students who gave this reason should be contacted a second time with an additional survey instrument to determine what those economic factors
are that are luring them away from college completion.

In the dropout population, there was no distinction made on the housing of students. For further research at this university, on-campus versus off-campus housing should be considered as a factor. Finally, in conducting further research, it would be important to find out when students had made the decision not to return to college.
References

Asher, J. Report on Grade Point Averages of Students Enrolled Fall and Winter 1975-76. Western Michigan University, 1976.


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Stordahl, K. *Student Perceptions of Their Voluntary Withdrawal From Northern*. Office of Institutional Research, Northern Michigan University, October, 1967.


APPENDIX A

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In the first four questions rank the three most important reasons for your decisions and mark 1, 2, and 3 in the space which is provided.

I  From the list below rank the three most important reasons for choosing Western.

A. A relative of mine attended Western. Which? 
B. It has a good department of .
C. I was impressed by the campus and its facilities.
D. My counselor recommended it to me.
E. I wanted a small school.
F. I could live at home and commute.
G. I have a good friend who attends.
H. I was not admitted to my first choice school.
I. I wanted a large school.
J. It has a variety of courses and major offerings.
K. I could be relatively sure of succeeding academically.
L. It was a good distance from home.
M. It has a good athletic program.
N. I was attracted by its social atmosphere.
O. I was offered substantial financial aid and/or scholarship support.
P. Other reasons: 

II From the list below rank the three most important reasons for leaving Western.

A. Courses in my major are not available here.
B. I was undecided about my major and needed to leave school to decide upon possible careers.
C. There was a conflict between studies and my job.
D. I accepted a job and didn't need more school.
E. Not enough money to go to school.
F. Applied but could not obtain financial aid.
G. Financial aid was not sufficient.
H. Financial help from my family decreased.
I. Illness, personal or family.
J. Personal problems.
K. I fulfilled my personal goals in schooling.
L. I wanted to travel.
M. I was advised to withdraw by 
N. Other (please specify) 

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III From the following list rank the three Best features at Western.

____ A. Location
____ B. Library services
____ C. Social opportunities
____ D. The school in general
____ E. Orientation
____ F. Extra-curricular opportunities
____ G. Recreational opportunities
____ H. Cultural opportunities
____ I. Residence halls
____ J. Information you received before enrolling
____ K. Other, specify __________________________

IV From the list below rank the three Least attractive features at Western.

____ A. Cost of attending
____ B. Financial aid
____ C. Regulations or rules
____ D. Dorm food service
____ E. Drop-add procedure
____ F. Registration procedures
____ G. Academic advising services
____ H. Information you received before enrolling
____ I. Counseling services
____ J. Amount of contact with professors
____ K. Selection of classes (hours offered)
____ L. Quality of education
____ M. Other, specify __________________________

V Please check the appropriate responses to the following three statements.

I do____/do not____ plan on returning to college. I am undecided ____.

I am attending another college ____ (What college) __________________.
Dear Former Student:

Our institutional records indicate that you did not return to Western this Fall. We are interested in determining the reasons why you left Western and your degree of satisfaction with the various aspects of the University. This information will be particularly helpful in institutional planning as we endeavor to meet the needs of future students.

To help us in this effort we have enclosed a confidential questionnaire for you to complete. Please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible and return it in the enclosed envelope. You may notice that this questionnaire includes personal data about yourself. This is included in order to verify our institutional records and for statistical purposes. This information will remain confidential and your responses will only become part of our total report.

If you have re-enrolled at Western or plan on re-enrolling, the receipt of this questionnaire in no way affects that re-enrollment. You were merely selected to receive this questionnaire because you were not continuously enrolled at Western during the preceding year.

Your cooperation and assistance in completing this questionnaire as soon as possible is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John T. Bernhard
President

Enclosure
January 31, 1977

Dear Former Student:

We recently mailed you a confidential questionnaire in which we asked your reasons for leaving Western and the degree of satisfaction you had with various aspects of the school.

Since we have not received your answers to this questionnaire, I am enclosing a second copy and hope that you will take a few moments to complete the items and mail it back to us in the prepaid envelope. This information is necessary in future institutional planning, and we would appreciate your immediate response.

If you have re-enrolled at Western or plan to re-enroll, the receipt of this questionnaire will in no way affect that re-enrollment. You were selected to receive this questionnaire because you were not continuously enrolled at Western during the previous year.

Your cooperation and assistance in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John T. Bernhard
President

Enclosure