





This is to certify that the

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INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF
POTENTIAL HOPE COLLEGE FRESHMEN
AS A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING
RECRUITING MATERIAL
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INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF

POTENTIAL HOPE COLLEGE FRESHMEN

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FRESHMEN
AS A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING
RECRUITING MATERIAL

By

Thomas D. LaBaugh

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The general purpose of the study was to define the items that prospective Hope College students would like to know when selecting a college. The results may serve as a guide in developing a better communication program with prospective students with the hope of improving freshman enrollments in light of a shrinking applicant pool. Responses from two groups were analyzed, i.e., those students who inquired about Hope College but did not make application for admission and those who inquired and made application for admission (accepted).

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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College of Education

1977

The populations for the survey consisted of 1054 inquired students and 1014 applied students for a total of 1168. Sample sizes numbered 631 for the inquired and 537 for applied for a total sample size of 1168. The confidence interval was ninety-five percent with an error rate of five percent. The survey instrument was mailed with a followup mailing to non-respondents three weeks after the initial mailing and a reminder postcard two weeks after that. Information was

processed on a Xerox Sigma 6 computer utilizing the program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

ABSTRACT

Generally the findings suggest that students have definitive information needs assessment of potential Hope College freshmen as a guide for developing recruiting material.

Over two-thirds of the students making plans for college between the middle of their junior year and their senior year and ninety-five percent of the students finalized their plans during their senior year.

The general purpose of the study was to define the items that prospective Hope College students would like to know when selecting a college. The results may serve as a guide in developing a better communication program with prospective students with the hope of improving freshmen enrollments in light of a shrinking applicant pool. Responses from two groups were analyzed, i.e., those students who inquired about Hope College but did not enroll (inquired) and those who inquired and made application for admission (applied). The study pursued answers to the communication formula of who says what to whom, when and how, as it applied to high school seniors selecting a college.

The populations for the survey consisted of 10614 inquired students and 1014 applied students for a total of 11628. Sample sizes numbered 631 for the inquired and 502 for applied for a total sample size of 1133. The confidence interval was ninety-five percent with an error rate of five percent. The survey instrument was mailed with a followup mailing to non-respondents three weeks after the initial mailing and a reminder postcard two weeks after that. Information was

processed on a Xerox Sigma 6 computer utilizing the program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Generally the findings showed that students have definitive information needs. Of thirty-nine items listed, respondents clearly identified their information needs by selecting those they preferred. Over two-thirds of the students began making plans for college between the middle of their junior year and early in their senior year and ninety-five percent of the students finalized their plans during their senior year in high school. The college catalog was the item which most attracted their attention and was the most used piece in reviewing information about a college. A brochure from current students and other student-to-student contact, in terms of letters, phone calls and postcards, dominated other choices.

The data suggested that Hope College was adequately meeting student information needs and positively influenced student decisions to apply and enroll.

There were statistically significant differences in the information preferences of men and women, and between the groups bound for Hope College, other four-year colleges, and the junior college.

Over eighty-two percent of the students surveyed found Hope College materials superior or good when compared with that of other colleges and when the respondents voting "average" were added the number jumped to 96.1%. Parents were the major influence in college decision making for 53.9% of the respondents, i.e., other than the students themselves, and friends were the next major influence.

Ninety percent of the students surveyed had a grade point average of C+ or better and over ninety percent of the respondents were college bound. These two facts reinforced the validity of the mailing list as a valuable tool which contained good prospects for enrollment as these were the types of students Hope wanted to attract.

The positive influences of Hope material from the responses suggested that drastic changes should not be made in the Hope information program, however, the modifications indicated by the study should be made.

Dr. Richard Featherstone, chairman, whose gentle method and concern for the author kept him on the road to completion; Dr. William Sweetland whose inspiration as a teacher and caring as a friend makes him deeply missed; Dr. Edward Hickey whose professional career gave sound direction and support to the author yet allowed room for a personal follow-up; Dr. Van Johnson who generously guided the author during the preliminary development of the dissertation as a manifestation of his generosity in helping others; and Dr. James McKee who offered time and counsel in pursuing the research area of Sociology.

The inquired and applied students with whom the author corresponded to receive the results of the survey; without their positive response and support this study would not have been possible.

Thanks Vanderlaan for her many long hours of tedious typing and astute observations of needed changes in the layout of the study.

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Dr. Van Johnson who generously joined the committee during the preliminary development of the dissertation as a manifestation of his generosity in helping others; and Dr. James McKee who offered time and counsel in pursuing the cognate area of Sociology.

The inquired and applied students with whom the author corresponded to receive the results of the survey; without their positive response and support this study would not have been possible.

Diane VanderLaan for her many long hours of tedious typing and astute observations of needed changes in the layout of the study.

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¹ "The Coming Shakeout in Higher Education," *Higher Education*, November 15, 1974, XXIV, No. 6, p. 40.

² Jack Magarell, "Colleges in the Red," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, XI, No. 15 (December 22, 1975), p. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, Magarell, "Colleges in the Red," p. 4.

severe for private institutions than it has for the public. In another article, The Chronicle of Higher Education states that "A report of the financial health of private colleges and universities has found more than a fourth of them in serious distress with their survival in doubt."⁴

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problems in American Higher Education

As higher education closes its books on 1975-76 and opens them again for a new chapter in its history, the 1976-77 academic year reveals a myriad of problems. These difficulties transcend the concerns of the late 60s of student unrest and faculty unions to a new, more serious combination of difficulties which threaten the very survival of many institutions. Inflation, a problem for all of America, has not spared higher education, in fact, Raymond Finn tells us that "higher education is one of the hardest-hit victims of inflation."¹ A recent edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education also reports "... massive evidence of widespread retrenchment in higher education under the impacts, during the past three years, of the extraordinary combination of soaring inflation with deep recession in the national economy."² In fact "The American Council on Education estimates that thirty-four percent of our nation's colleges and universities operated in the red in the past fiscal year."³ But the problem has been more

¹"The Coming Shakeout in Higher Education," Forbes, September 15, 1974, CXIV, No. 6, p. 40.

²Jack Magarrell, "Colleges in the Red," The Chronicle of Higher Education, XI, No. 13 (December 8, 1975), p. 4.

³Op. cit., Magarrell, "Colleges in the Red," p. 4.

the first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The second is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the parts are constantly changing and evolving. The third is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The fourth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The fifth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion. The sixth is that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the parts are interrelated and interdependent. The seventh is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the parts are constantly changing and evolving. The eighth is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The ninth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The tenth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion.

severe for private institutions than it has for the public. In another article, The Chronicle of Higher Education states that "A report of the financial health of private colleges and universities has found for more than a fourth of them in serious distress with their survival in doubt."⁴

In all fairness other related evidence reveals that "... private higher education as a whole is described as in basically good condition -- a little leaner and perhaps even a little stronger as a result of recent hard times."⁵ Thus, even though the financial concerns are not so foreboding as to imply imminent doom for most of higher education it is no secret that this combination of high inflation and deep recession is a difficult problem for colleges. They are concerned about finances, particularly revenues, which for most colleges, are equated to student enrollments. These can account for 50-90% of total incomes for private colleges and, should this revenue source be tampered with, it could have a devastating effect upon an institution of higher education.

Enrollments

Historically, it is well documented that college enrollments have enjoyed prosperity during the 50s, 60s, and early 70s. But as the sun rose on the fall of 1976 dark clouds gathered as enrollment figures

⁴ Jack Magarrell, "Private Higher Education: Leaner, Perhaps Stronger," The Chronicle of Higher Education, XI, No. 13 (December 8, 1975), p. 7.

⁵ Op. cit., Magarrell, "Colleges in the Red," p. 4.

stopped short of their annual gains of the previous decade. Indeed, Garland Parker, a renowned figure in documenting and projecting enrollment statistics in American higher education recently reported that for 1976 "College enrollments appear to have declined nationwide about one percent this fall . . . (and) . . . if the early findings are born out in the final report it will be the first such decline since 1951."⁶ As the Executive Director of enrollment policy in educational research at the University of Cincinnati, Parker went further to express "surprise and shock"⁷ at the findings.

In his earlier writings Parker had reported:

Indeed, this writer has predicted all along that overall enrollments would increase through the 1976-77 period of the 1970s, begin to level off in the late 1970s, peak at the end of the decade or the beginning of the 1980s, and then, probably, start a slow decline that would accelerate throughout the 1980s.⁸

No wonder Parker expressed shock at the knowledge that his predictions of declining college enrollments had already come true.

The College Board News forecasts a continued decline in college enrollments in the next decade as they estimate that " . . . the pool of high school graduates moving on to post-secondary education would probably shrink 15% by 1984, . . . and 22% by 1990."⁹ The news is most

⁶"Nationwide Decline in College Enrollment Shocks Expert," Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 21, 1976, p. 1-B.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Garland G. Parker, Collegiate Enrollments in the U.S., 1975-1976 (Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program Publications, 1976), p. 11.

⁹"College Admissions, Marketing, Topics of Board Colloquium," The College Board News, V, No. 1 (September, 1976), p. 7.

[illegible]

grim for the state of Michigan as College Board executive Steven H. Ivens reports that " . . . the 1975 graduating class in the state of Michigan was its largest ever and a decline of 32% is expected over the next 15 years."¹⁰ Further, Frankel and Beamer reporting for the U.S. Office of Education state:

The latest USOES estimates indicate that 1976-77 will be the peak year for total number of high school graduates, with 3,199,000 projected. Thereafter, high school graduates are expected to decline each year, so that by 1982-83 the estimated number will be 2,835,000 or a decrease of about 11.3% over the figure for 1976-77.¹¹

The U.S. Census Bureau confronts the probable impact of this shrinking high school population on college enrollments by stating that they " . . . are expected to fall by 502,000 students between 1974 and 1991. This would mean a 28% reduction in the current level."¹²

The projections give rise to a grave future in overall college enrollments but data for private institutions are showing an already decreasing ability to attract students. As seen in Table 1-1 in a report on educational trends by Howard Bowen and W. John Minter for the Association of American Colleges, the applications in private higher education nationally have declined for the past six years. A look at Table 1-2 shows the consortium of the Great Lakes Colleges Association

¹⁰ Steven H. Ivens, "A Strategy for Survival," address delivered at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education conference, Stouffer Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, October 19, 1976.

¹¹ Martin M. Frankel and Fred Beamer, Projections of Educational Statistics 1982-83 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1974), p. 6.

¹² U.S. Bureau of Census, HEW, as quoted in "Trends in Higher Education Affecting the Admissions Process." By David S. Crockett, Vice-President for ACT. July, 1976, p. 4.

EXPERIENCE OF PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE RECRUITMENT AND
ADMISSION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, 1969-70 THROUGH 1975-76¹

	Autumn of Each Year									
	1969- 1970	1970- 1971	1971- 1972	1972- 1973	1973- 1974	1974- 1975	1975- 1976			
1. Number of completed applications received for admission to freshman class ¹	100	102	98	96	91	91	92			
2. Number of applicants offered admission to the freshman class ¹	100	102	102	97	95	94	95			
3. Number of full-time equivalent students admitted to the freshman class ¹	100	98	96	92	90	90	94			
4. Number of full-time equivalent undergraduate transfer students admitted ¹	100	115	131	134	135	134	127			
5. Number of full-time equivalent undergraduate students, freshman and transfer, admitted ¹	100	100	101	101	98	98	100			
6. Offers of admission to the freshman class as percentage of completed applications received	70%	72%	73%	73%	75%	76%	73%			
7. Entering freshmen as percentage of admissions offered	53%	51%	50%	50%	51%	51%	51%			
8. Average Combined Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Scores of entering freshmen ²	1063	1054	1046	1033	1023	1010	1005			
9. Percentage of entering freshmen by rank in high school class:	51%	49%	49%	51%	53%	51%	50%			
Top fifth	27	27	25	26	24	25	23			
Second fifth	15	15	16	14	15	15	15			
Third fifth	7	9	10	9	8	9	10			
Lowest two-fifths										

¹Index numbers: 1969-70 = 100.

²In interpreting these figures, it should be noted that the average SAT scores declined for all students taking the test.

¹Howard R. Bowen and W. John Minter, Private Higher Education, (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, May, 1976), p. 13.

with a similar decline in its ability to attract applicants. Table 1-3 shows Hope College begins Total Freshman Applications and a two year

Applications for Member Schools* of the Great Lakes Colleges Association

20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0

Year

1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976

the decreasing numbers of high school graduates a picture begins to emerge of a difficult time in attracting reasonable numbers of freshmen to private college campuses to which established enrollments and budgets.

the decreasing numbers of high school graduates is not the only problem plaguing college enrollments. The continually rising tuition makes it difficult for families to afford a college education. Sylvia Porter in her syndicated column of April 7, 1974, writes as follows:

(These figures) confirm, as we all know, a general picture of the extent to which the high cost of college has forced beyond the middle-income family a reality as grim as for millions the dream of college has been a financial nightmare.¹³

Compounding the problem of enrollment decline is the low value of higher education held by the public at large. "Continually, we will find the college degree less and less valued for the particular competencies." ¹⁴ He writes that Henry Ford, who founded the University Journal and he continues by saying:

... the degree itself may come to mean little as a person acquires a series of lesser qualifications which indicate his specific capacity to conduct certain kinds of

Survey of GLCA Admissions Directors, September-November, 1976, by Thomas D. LaBaugh
*Member Schools: Albion, Antioch, Denison, DePauw, Earlham, Hope, Kalamazoo, Kenyon, Oberlin, Ohio Wesleyan, Wabash, Wooster

¹⁴ Lynn A. Glenny, "Pressures on Higher Education," College and University Journal, XIV, No. 3 (September, 1973), p. 3.

with a similar decline in its ability to attract applicants. Table 1-3 shows Hope College beginning a drop in applicants and a two year decline in freshmen enrollments. Combining these data of past performance in private higher education applications with the projection of decreasing numbers of high school graduates a picture begins to emerge of a difficult future in attracting reasonable numbers of freshmen to private college campuses to maintain established enrollments and budgets.

But the decreasing numbers of high school seniors is not the only problem plaguing college enrollments. The continually rising tuition makes it difficult for families to afford a college education. Sylvia Porter in her syndicated column of April 7, 1976, writes as follows:

(These figures) confirm, as no elaborately phrased conversation could, the extent to which the cost of college has soared beyond the middle-income family's ability to pay. For millions the dream of college has indeed become a financial nightmare.¹³

Compounding the problem of enrollment decline is the low image of higher education held by the public at large. "Increasingly, too, we will consider the college degree less and less as certification for particular competencies."¹⁴ So writes Lyman Glenny in the College and University Journal and he continues by saying:

. . . the degree itself may come to mean little as a person acquires a series of lesser certificates which indicate his specific capacity to conduct certain kinds of

¹³ Sylvia Porter, in her syndicated column of April 7 as quoted in Walden C. Irish, "Shrinking Enrollments," College and University, XLIX, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), p. 345.

¹⁴ Lyman A. Glenny, "Pressures on Higher Education," College and University Journal, XIV, No. 4 (September, 1973), p. 8.

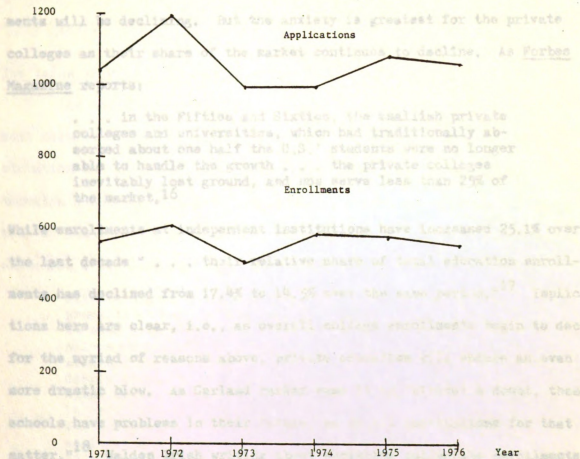
Table 1-3

tasks. This can be inferred by the prediction of the U.S. Department of Labor that only 20% of all jobs in the 1980's will require college training.¹⁵

One can anticipate then, from a shrinking applicant pool, already declining applications, and a waning image, that future college enrollments will be declining. But the anxiety is greatest for the private colleges as their share of the market continues to decline. As *Forbes* Magazine reports:

... in the Fifties and Sixties, the smallest private colleges and universities, which had traditionally absorbed about one half the U.S. students were no longer able to handle the growth. . . . The private colleges inevitably lost ground, and now serve less than 25% of the market.¹⁶

While more independent institutions have increased 25.1% over the last decade . . . their relative share of total education enrollments has declined from 17.8% to 16.3% over the same period.¹⁷ Implications here are clear, i.e., as overall college enrollments begin to decline, for the myriad of reasons above, private education will suffer an even more drastic blow. As *Carland* noted some 25 years ago, "At best, these schools have problems in their future as well as in their past."¹⁸



¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, "The Coming Collapse in Higher Education," p. 37.

¹⁷ Weston H. Agar, *Financing Independent Higher Education in Michigan: A Staff Report Analyzing Recent Enrollment Data and Economic Trends, with Projections to 1980 and 1985* (2nd ed.; Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Education Management Services, December, 1973), p. 11.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, Parker, *Collegiate Enrollments in the U.S., 1971-1976*, p. 5.

further tasks. This condition will be reinforced by the prediction of the U.S. Department of Labor that only 20% of all example jobs in the 1970's will require college training.¹⁵

One can anticipate then, from a shrinking applicant pool, already declining applications, and a sagging image, that future college enrollments will be declining. But the anxiety is greatest for the private colleges as their share of the market continues to decline. As Forbes Magazine reports:

... in the Fifties and Sixties, the smallish private colleges and universities, which had traditionally absorbed about one half the U.S.' students were no longer able to handle the growth . . . the private colleges inevitably lost ground, and now serve less than 25% of the market.¹⁶

While enrollments at independent institutions have increased 25.1% over the last decade " . . . their relative share of total education enrollments has declined from 17.4% to 14.5% over the same period."¹⁷ Implications here are clear, i.e., as overall college enrollments begin to decline, for the myriad of reasons above, private education will endure an even more drastic blow. As Garland Parker sums it up, "Without a doubt, these schools have problems in their future, as do all institutions for that matter."¹⁸ Walden Irish writing about shrinking collegiate enrollments

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Op. cit., "The Coming Shakeout in Higher Education," p. 37.

¹⁷ Weston H. Agor, Financing Independent Higher Education in Michigan: A Staff Report Analyzing Recent Enrollment, Cost, and Revenue Trends, with Projections to 1980 and 1985 (2nd ed.; Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Education Management Services, December, 1975), p. 11.

¹⁸ Op. cit., Parker, Collegiate Enrollments in the U.S., 1975-1976, p. 5.

further clarified the dilemma when he says, "Thus we find a classic example of the kind of situation that makes any corporate president shiver: a dwindling market (fewer people in the appropriate age groups), and increasing costs (up goes the tuition, room and board, and every other item)."¹⁹

The Value of Private Higher Education

As the above conditions of tight finances and declining enrollment combine to paint a bleak picture of the future of private higher education one does not sound alarm unless the impending doom will threaten something of value. In seeking a direct response to the question of what private colleges and universities bring to American higher education a statement by Bowen and Minter responds succinctly:

Private higher education is an important -- even indispensable -- part of the American higher education system. It adds diversity, it offers competition to an otherwise all-embracing public system, it provides a center of academic freedom removed from political influence, it is deeply committed to liberal learning, it is concerned for human value and individual personality, it sets standards, it provides educational leadership, and it saves money for tax payers. Not every private college or university achieves all of these results, but enough institutions do achieve some of them to make survival of the strong private sector a major goal in the broad public interest.²⁰

Private liberal arts colleges do have value. Those of the Christian character, such as Hope College, have a unique perspective that broadens its base and offers even more diversity to the educational scene.

¹⁹Walden C. Irish, "Shrinking Enrollments," College and University, XLIX, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), p. 345.

²⁰Howard R. Bowen and W. John Minter, Private Higher Education, (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, May, 1976), p. 1.

Statement of the Problem

Changing enrollments in private higher education can have a significant impact on an institution as it affects so many elements of operation. Garland Parker amplifies this reality when he states, "The fact remains, therefore, that full-time enrollments continue as the mainstay of most collegiate-level institutions in terms budget, program, housing, facilities and faculty planning."²¹ But the decreasing applicant pools make attracting the new freshmen a tough job as "... the competition for students has intensified and the task of maintaining enrollments has become more onerous each year."²²

Dr. William Ihlanfeldt, the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid at Northwestern University takes the question of student recruitment a bit further as he states "Increasing costs and less consumer demand would require that each institution ask how effectively it is communicating what it is all about, and how systematically it has been approaching the whole concept of student recruitment."²³ Steve Iven of the College Board focuses more directly on a solution to the problem of enrollments by stating, "... the ability to identify markets and communicate effectively with those markets is the key to survival."²⁴ He allows that

²¹ Op. cit., Parker, Collegiate Enrollments in the U.S., 1975-76, p. 3.

²² Op. cit., Magarrell, "Private Higher Education: Leaner, Perhaps Stronger."

²³ William Ihlanfeldt, "A Management Approach to the Buyer's Market," The College Board Review, No. 96 (Summer, 1975), p. 22.

²⁴ Op. cit., Ivens, "A Strategy for Survival."

the inability to attract sufficient numbers of freshmen to the campus may be due to unrealistic enrollment projections or unattractive offerings or location of the college, but states that " . . . a more likely factor may be the institutions inability to describe its programs and offerings to those most likely to apply, to enroll, and to say, and to do so through effective communications techniques."²⁵ Drawing together the concerns of enrollments and good communication Phillip Kotler of the Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University states that " . . . marketing research and communications with selected audiences on a systematic basis are essential to any well run institution."²⁶ It is clear, then, that one solution to the problem of shrinking enrollments is to improve the communication process between the college and potential enrollees.

But this is only part of the problem. Dr. Walter Lindenmann, a researcher with Hill and Knowlton Inc., transcends the recruitment function as a solution to small enrollments as he states "You are trying to convey the needs and interests of your organization to a distant audience out there and you have to know what their needs and interests are."²⁷ In short he is focusing on communicating best with an audience by first identifying their information needs. He continues:

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Op. cit., "College Admissions, Marketing, Topics of Board Colloquium," p. 7.

²⁷ Walter K. Lindenmann, "Using Research for Greater Communications Import," address delivered at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education conference, Stouffer Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, October 19, 1976.

In connection with recruitment; how can you possibly design a student view-book, prospectus, brochure and other literature if you don't know, really know, the prospective students you are trying to reach and what their needs and interests are. How can you respond to them if you don't know them.²⁸

A coinciding view comes from Barnett Pearce, a communication researcher, who states, " . . . when communication serves to foster intimate relationships, we become more attuned to the unique needs and goals of the participants and better able to be guided by conventions rather than by norms."²⁹ This is the objective of communication in a student recruitment program, i.e., to develop intimate relationships. To do so one must be attuned to the unique goals and needs of the student. Further he mentions, "The best communicator is the one who knows what is required in specific situations and can fulfill the requirements."³⁰

But how does one identify the requirements to be fulfilled?

Dr. Lindenmann suggests that the answer lies in research when he says:

I believe that in public relations, communications or marketing you have to work backwards. You have to talk to your target audiences, work backwards and develop your programs in effect, based on what you find out about your target audience; taking into account again their needs.³¹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ W. Barnett Pearce, "An Overview of Communication and Interpersonal Relationships," Modules in Speech Communication (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1976), p. 33.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

³¹ Op. cit., Lindenmann, "Using Research for Greater Communications Impact."

Ibid., p. iv.

³² Walter K. Lindenmann, Attitude Research -- Essential First Step Toward Improved Communications (New York: Hill and Knowlton, Inc., 1976), p. 1.

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Recommending research specifically he continues:

It is vitally important; the single most important thing, I feel, that you can do to improve your communications for student recruitment. Market research in my view is the essential first step in the communications process; without it you are dead.³²

In his book on audience analysis, Theodore Clevenger Jr., addresses the question of speaking to an audience. His recommendations for public speaking find application to written communication as he states, " . . . the speaker will become more helpful to his audience . . . by speaking relevantly, he will help his auditors (listeners) make better decisions about controversies significant to them."³³ One such controversy is a student's decision on selecting a college. Clevenger continues that "An important audience characteristic in most of the situations with which we are here concerned is 'plurality'; that is there is more than one listener who must be taken into account."³⁴

The concern is now a step beyond good communication for better recruitment to identifying student information needs prior to designing a communication program. Dr. Lindenmann points the way toward a methodology for such a venture by suggesting that when

. . . communicating with prospective students as part of a college or university recruitment effort, you're at a serious disadvantage if you haven't surveyed your target audience -- the new students you're trying to enroll.³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Theodore Clevenger, Jr., Audience Analysis (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. vii.

³⁴ Ibid., p. iv.

³⁵ Walter K. Lindenmann, Attitude Research -- Essential First Step Toward Improved Communications (New York: Hill and Knowlton, Inc., 1976), p. 1.

This brings a direct statement of the problem: To identify information needs of potential Hope College freshmen as a guide to developing recruiting material a survey must be performed. A survey of information needs of potential freshmen, on a regular basis, may lend new direction to the development of a communication strategy for recruiting students. To follow a less exacting method is folly for as Dr. Lindenmann says "If you don't (survey), you're flying by the seat of your pants."³⁶

Statement of Purpose

A thorough review of the literature reveals little effort made in researching the information needs of high school seniors regarding college selection. The purpose of this study is to develop a body of new information which can lend direction to a communications strategy for the Office of Admissions at Hope College. It will provide a guide, a body of new knowledge to aid in the decision-making process for communicating with potential enrollees. It allows for information not before known, currently available nor able to be guessed. It will allow Hope College to more accurately address the information needs of students than the current program of guessing their interests. Ultimately, the final products implied by the results of the study will improve the potential enrollees' ability to make decisions on college selection. The approach departs from the communications approach of telling high

³⁶Op. cit., Lindenmann, "Using Research for Greater Communications Impact."

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school seniors what the College wants to tell them to one of telling the students the things they want to know and from whom they want to hear. In short the purpose of the study is to:

- 1) Provide a body of new knowledge to serve as a guide for developing Hope College admissions material.
- 2) Allow Hope College to more accurately meet the information needs of potential freshmen than the current form of guessing what students want to know.
- 3) Improve the potential enrollee's ability to decide on which college to enroll.

The dependent variable becomes a change in direction for the decision-making process in the development of a communication program for student recruitment by Hope College. The ultimate impact of the study's affect on enrollment is not a logical dependent variable as a student's decision to enroll includes too many outside variables to allow the specific results of this dissertation to be measured in those terms. The concern is not, therefore, with the resulting impact of this study on enrollment. The study seeks information for new directions in decision-making for the development of a communication strategy as a part of student recruitment at Hope College, again, information not now available.

Objectives

This proposal suggests a survey of the informational needs of potential freshmen to aid the Hope College Admissions Office in applying to their materials the " . . . standard communication formula of who

says what to whom, when, and how, with what effect."³⁷ The difference here is that the last statement "with what effect" is not a part of this study since, as stated earlier, many factors enter into the decision-making process of a student enrolling in college and it is impossible to specifically isolate the causes. The task here is to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Determine the information needs of prospective Hope College freshmen.
- 2) Learn how Hope College has been meeting those needs with current materials.
- 3) Determine the quality of Hope College material when compared to materials of other colleges.
- 4) Compare information needs of college bound students to non-college bound students and junior college students.
- 5) Determine who, other than the student himself, influences the student's decisions on college selection (to help identify the need to communicate with these groups).
- 6) Learn what potential freshmen desire to know about a college when they are making a decision.
- 7) Determine if sex influences the need to know.
- 8) Find if Hope College's information influences positively, negatively or not at all.
- 9) Ascertain the types of printed pieces of correspondence that a high school senior will review in learning about a college; for example, photos, written copy, letters, brochures.
- 10) Determine what groups the potential freshmen would like correspondence from, e.g., students, administration, faculty, alumni.

³⁷Op. cit., Clevenger, Audience Analysis, p. 25.

- 11) Determine when high school seniors begin to seek assistance in making their college plans, e.g., sophomore, junior or senior year in high school.
- 12) Determine when high school students finalize their plans for college enrollment.
- 13) Determine if those who apply to Hope College have different informational needs from those who do not apply.

Design of the Study

The study utilizes a survey of two populations: a) students already enrolled as freshmen at a particular college or university; the who inquire about Hope College but do not apply and b) students who study proposed here will gather information from high school seniors, both inquire and apply to Hope College for admission. The survey employs a closed answer survey so that it can be easily tabulated. It draws a systematic random sample of students currently in the Hope College inquiry and applied lists which consist of 10,614 inquiring students and 1,014 applying. The sample size drawn has a 95% confidence interval with a 5% error requiring 626 inquiring students and 401 applying students.

Evaluation of the survey utilizes chi square techniques and straight summary and percentage computations. The survey data is tabulated on a Xerox Sigma 6 computer utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The survey questionnaire is a product of the author, relative project developed in December 15, 1974, stated as one of its main objectives: with reviews by members of the faculty from the Department of Educational Research, College of Education at Michigan State University, and Dr. David Myers, a psychologist at Hope College. Testing of the instrument takes place on four focus groups

in Western Michigan prior to printing. The initial mailing of the survey is followed by a second mailing two weeks later and a third mailing of a reminder postcard two weeks after that.

Related Work

A review of the literature reveals two survey attempts on the part of researchers which have a similar basic purpose but with major differences. Dr. Walter Lindenmann performed research on students already enrolled as freshmen at a particular college or university; the study proposed here will gather information from high school seniors. The questions used by Lindenmann were more general in scope than those proposed here and asked for different information. The results of the Lindenmann study give information applicable to recruiting a class the following year. Its results, then, direct communication to a group of students who were in their junior year of high school at the time the survey was taken, resulting in a two year gap. The survey suggested in this proposal will be given to high school seniors which will shorten the gap to only one year.

The Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, under the direction of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) is also concerned with better information for Student choice. The project developed in December 16, 1974, stated as one of its main objectives:

While many elements are involved in the making of effective choices, no choices can be better than the quality

of information on which they are based. The need to improve the nature of this information, and the form in which it is presented, is compelling.³⁸

It further states, " . . . prospective students need better information about the probable value of attending various kinds of institutions."³⁹ " . . . new assurances are needed that information provided by institutions meets minimum standards of quality and reliability."⁴⁰ "Existing sources of information running the gamut from college catalogs and information bulletins to commercially published reference guides do not at present fulfill these increasing needs."⁴¹ "Many efforts, from many sources, must be made to improve the information available to prospective students."⁴²

Although the objectives of the HEW study are to improve the quality of information available to prospective students (which, incidentally, is another manifestation of the need for such a study as this), the grant money is awarded to colleges only for the production of a prospectus which the student is able to read for better understanding the nature of a particular institution. HEW states explicitly in the application procedures for the grant, " . . . it is not our intention to underwrite extensive or costly data-gathering activities. Nor is it our

³⁸ Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, FY 1975 Program Information and Application Procedures, National Projects Competition, Better Information for Student Choice National Project I (December 16, 1974), p. 7.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 9.

intention to support institutions beyond the design and testing of the prospectus concept and consideration of the national issues involved."⁴³ In short the Federal Government through the Health, Education and Welfare Department has identified the need of colleges to better communicate with prospective students but allows grant monies only for developing a prospectus. They do not want research which gives direction to improving the communication process as with this proposal.

Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to a survey of the information needs of high school seniors inquiring about Hope College or applying for admission. The term "Information needs" is explained in the section titled "Definition of Terms." The effect of changes in the communication program on freshmen enrollment at Hope College will not be measured as the ultimate decision of a student in selecting a college contains too many variables and influences to allow the specific impact of this study to be measured in those terms.

The populations studied are selected as they have provided a lucrative source of freshmen in recent years and thus have opinions of likely candidates for enrollment. A national survey of all high school seniors would provide unusable information since Hope College does not have the resources to communicate with all high school seniors. Further, the group in this study has some familiarity with the College and is thus more inclined to respond in numbers beyond that of the overall national population of high school seniors.

⁴³Ibid., p. 18.

The project is limited to concerns about correspondence through the mails as this is the one single element which all of these students have in common. It does not include evaluation of performance by members of the Admissions staff as they visit high schools and talk to prospective students. Neither does it provide a means of determining how to improve the effectiveness of recruiters in communicating with students. The survey contains requests for only limited demographic data

This work is not concerned with the development of audio-visual techniques as the Hope College Admissions Office has no elaborate equipment. There are also rules established by the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, of which Hope College is a member, which preclude the use of audio-visual equipment for normal recruiting practices such as college nights and high school visits.

The target audience of high school seniors has been selected since they are best able to dialogue with juniors and sophomores in secondary schools. It is felt that their responses should reflect their own feelings as well as those of their colleagues who are underclassmen. The use of this information as a guide for developing next year's communication program will fit the information close to those to be recruited, i.e., next year's seniors. A survey of high school juniors is not pursued, even though they will be next year's target, because of the small number of juniors who are applicants or inquiring students.

The timing of the study is such that college bound students, on the whole, are now making a commitment to go to a college and they

should be able to recall their decision making process in planning for the fall.

The study does not embody the pursuit of information needs in terms of mass media or advertising. These routes are too expensive for a college of Hope's size and a survey of this information would address a moot point in the Hope College recruiting program.

The survey contains requests for only limited demographic data because of the following:

- 1) Such information can be ascertained for those who applied to the College as it is in their permanent records for necessary analysis.
- 2) Knowing different information needs by income level, race or religion, is not helpful information since there is no way of ascertaining such information from a student at the time Hope begins communicating with him. There will be allowances in the study to ask a student's interest in learning about the spiritual life on campus.
- 3) Age information is known to be between 16 and 18 years as that is the age of most high school seniors.
- 4) Information about whether students are college bound and have an appropriate grade point average for enrollment in the College is sufficient information to tell whether these are the types of students that Hope College wants and would like to recruit.
- 5) To assure a higher rate of return for the questionnaire it should be kept to as short a length as possible. To fill the questionnaire with information about demographic data would make it longer and decrease the likelihood of response. It is doubtful that a high rate of response will come from those inquiring about Hope College since they have no commitment to it and may not want to be helpful. To clutter the survey with requests for unnecessary information would only increase the likelihood of a low return.

Definition of Terms

To better understand particular words or phrases in the body of the study, definitions of these terms are listed here. They will also aid others who might be involved in replicating the study.

Inquiry--Any student who has made an effort to become acquainted with Hope College and thus appears to be a logical prospect for enrollment. Their association with the College may have come from a number of inputs but the source of original association is not a concern of this study.

Applicant--A student who has made application to Hope College as a degree-seeking candidate for the baccalaureate degree.

Prospective Student--Anyone in the inquiry or applicant category who is a likely candidate for admission to Hope College to pursue a four year baccalaureate degree. It does not include students enrolling part-time as high school seniors, guest matriculants, adults, or other special enrollment categories.

Information Needs--The responses of prospective students to questions inherent in the standard communication formula of "who says what to whom, when, and how, with what effect."⁴⁴ This study will not include "with what effect" as stated in the section "Scope and Limitations."

Communication--The study concerns itself with the ability of the Admissions Office of Hope College to correspond with potential enrollees. Concern is with written pieces as opposed to audio-visual techniques or presentations by recruiters.

Recruitment--This refers to the effort made by the Hope College Admissions Office to attract desirable students to enroll in the College whether or not they would have voluntarily decided to matriculate.

⁴⁴Op. cit., Clevenger, Audience Analysis, p. 25.

Assumptions

After an extensive review of the literature the following assumptions are offered by the author in relation to the information needs of high school seniors inquiring or applying to college in general and Hope College in particular:

1. There is no set of directives which dictate responses to the standard communication formula of "who says what to whom, when, and how, with what effect" when applied to this group.
2. There is a need to accumulate this information for a particular college, in light of potentially declining enrollments, to direct the decision-making process regarding the development of a communication program with high school seniors.

Hypotheses

As a result of the review of the literature and the aforementioned assumptions, the hypotheses presented below are offered regarding the information needs of students inquiring or applying to Hope College:

- H1: Prospective Hope College freshmen have definitive information needs of what they want to know, from whom, when, and how.
- H2: Hope College has not been adequately meeting those information needs.

- H3: There is a difference in the information needs of men and women as well as non-college bound students and those bound for two year junior colleges, four year private colleges, and four year public universities.
- H4: Hope College applicants have information needs which differ from non-applicants.
- H5: Hope College informational material is average when compared to informational material received by prospective Hope College freshmen from other colleges.
- H6: Parents are a major influence in the decision-making process associated with the selection of college by potential Hope College freshmen.
- H7: Hope College written communications currently influence positively in the decision to apply to Hope College.
- H8: Hope College written communications currently influence positively in the decision to enroll in Hope College.

Plan of Presentation

Chapter One has been composed of a general introduction to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, its design, definition of terms, and the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two is a review of the related literature which presents the supportive information on the need to perform the study as well as discussion and examples of other studies somewhat similar in nature but far different in terms of objectives and purpose.

Chapter Three will describe the planning and conducting of the study including the population identified, method of investigation, advantages and disadvantages of the technique, process involved in computing the survey, the survey instrument, and the statistical treatment of the data.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data, while Chapter Five draws together the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Forward

A study of prospective student information needs is incomplete without a selective review of related literature touching its many facets. Reviewing the repercussions of the impending decline in college enrollments (outlined in Chapter I) which demands better information to reverse the trend, awakens the reader to the seriousness of the concern; not only for Hope College but higher education nationally. Next, three varying perspectives on the need for improvements in the information provided to prospective students is sketched. As these distinctive viewpoints pour into the cauldron of admissions practices in general, its historical development is pursued. An update on the current admissions scene reveals a strong push toward commercialism which precipitates a concern for ethics in college promotions to protect both the prospective student and the college. The review follows some of the more salient philosophical concerns of maintaining integrity in providing student information and concludes with a look at selected studies which closely align with the topic.

The Impact of Declining Enrollment

Chapter I speaks of the decline in enrollments which lays in the wake of some uncontrollable phenomena such as declining numbers of high

school seniors, their general malaise in pursuing higher education and rapidly rising college costs. In addition to these, Fred Hechinger points out;

Less tangible factors contributed both to the actual loss of students and to the somber mood among college administrators. For many high school graduates the end of the draft eliminated the necessity of seeking the safety of a college campus. Inflation and the threat of recession were straining the capacity of middle income families to send all their children to college, particularly high cost institutions.⁴⁵

These factors combine to threaten the existence of the private school and John Druggan sees the first impact striking academia itself.

Strict tenure ratios, discontinued programs, dismissed tenured faculty members, increased class size, unionization of faculty and staff, cutbacks in scholarship aid and in new, worthwhile, but expensive programs, not to mention a generally adversarial atmosphere, are already present or at least imminent.⁴⁶

In short, the enrollment decline gnaws away at the very heart of private higher education.

But the effects of the decline will not be felt by one institution alone. Like a pebble dropped into a quiet pool, the waves of uncertainty will wash over the shores of other colleges, heightening their anxiety and undermining their cooperative spirit and mutual respect.

While competition of a genteel sort has always characterized relationships among colleges it is conceivable

⁴⁵Fred M. Hechinger, "Colleges in Search of Freshmen," Saturday World Review (April 6, 1974), p. 55.

⁴⁶John M. Druggan, "Introduction," A Role for Marketing in College Admissions. (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1976), pp. ix-xiii.

that more competition will erode the cooperation that now exists among colleges.⁴⁷

The headquarters for sharpening the knives which will cut these binding ties is the admissions office as

No-need scholarships for able students, diminished state aid to independent colleges, cut-throat recruiting, antagonistic lobbying at state and federal levels may well increase.⁴⁸

There will be heavy competition for student enrollments in the future. Colleges will match one another in dollars spent, new recruiting techniques, innovative and often ephemeral academic programs as the battle wages for needed portions of the evaporating student pool. Some institutions will wither and die as will their faculty, student body, and heritage. As the foundations of these colleges tremble and fall, the vibrations will be felt in other communities such as those who employ the private school graduates. As Jack Sparks puts it so succinctly, "Business will be the loser if the nation's small private liberal arts colleges fade away."⁴⁹

Three Perspectives on the Need for Better Information

Admissions Perspective -- Student Recruitment

From an administrative point of view the anticipated lower enrollments mean lower revenues which precipitate the problems above. To counter the decline Paul Hugstad suggests a "more persuasive" effort on

⁴⁷Ibid., p. x.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Jack D. Sparks, "A Marketing Plan That Works," AGB Reports, Vol. 18, No. 1 (January/February, 1976), p. 35.

the part of higher education in promoting their academic programs in the public sector.⁵⁰ Wolf sees the publicity campaign as necessary to move potential "buyers" to what he terms "constructive action," i.e., enrollment.⁵¹ For Johnson, promoting education heightens awareness of higher education offerings and leads to greater interest on the part of high school students.⁵² Such impacts, over the long run, could mean higher enrollments.

The persuasive efforts of the admissions office frequently center on the printed material which it offers for student consumption.

" . . . publications do and will continue to play a very important part in your getting the number of students that you want at your institution."⁵³ But while the communication process is often viewed as providing a much needed support for sagging enrollments, a caveat must be raised about the potential risks of a persuasion campaign. Olsen is aware that

If a publication doesn't appeal, they (potential students) are going to throw it in the waste basket or give it to their little sister or brother to color on and readily forget you.⁵⁴

There is not only a risk of being missed, as Olsen implies, but Hoy raises the very real possibility of driving applicants away from the

⁵⁰Paul S. Hugstad, "The Marketing Concept in Higher Education: A Caveat," Liberal Education, LXI, No. 4 (December, 1975), p. 508.

⁵¹Jack S. Wolf, "Marketing Admissions Using Modern Business Techniques in Student Recruiting," College Board Review, No. 89 (Fall, 1973), p. 23.

⁵²Dennis L. Johnson, "Selling: A Threat to Post-secondary Education," College and University, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), p. 343.

⁵³Bruce L. Olsen, "Publications in Admissions," College and University, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), p. 354.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 353.

campus by oversimplifying the presentations and missing a student's interest.⁵⁵ David Treadwell sums it up:

The style, tone and content of the materials sent can persuade students to seriously consider an institution. A careless, lackluster or delayed response may well turn the student into an inquirer who did not apply.⁵⁶

Thus, while college promotion has its potential benefits, it is not without its hazards.

The admissions perspective cannot be so narrow as to have numbers of bodies be the only concern. The quality of the students, in terms of academic readiness and their contribution to the institution, are going to have a major impact on the quality of the academic program and the end product which is the graduate. The latter will carry the reputation and image of the institution to society-at-large, resulting in an impression, either positive or negative, on future prospects with whom graduates have contact. But many of the freshmen who come to the college gates will never complete their education as "40% fail to finish where they start."⁵⁷ While not all a result of poor decision making in college selection, Walton is sure that much of it is. Hoy supports the contention and blames much of the attrition to a mismatching of the student and the college which he says "can be ameliorated at the outset

⁵⁵John C. Hoy, "A Question of Balance," College Board Review, No. 101 (Fall, 1976), p. 9.

⁵⁶David R. Treadwell, Jr., "What Do You Say to a Naked Inquiry," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 21, No. 1 (July, 1976), p. 2.

⁵⁷Wesley W. Walton and B. Claude Mathis, "Needed: Better Information About Colleges," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 51, No. 320 (September, 1967), p. 81.

by providing better information for student choice."⁵⁸ He further suggests that effective information lowers the level of student/institution distrust which, when combined with the mismatching, can lead to an unhealthy academic environment for the student and possibly dematriculation. As better information eliminates these uncertainties for the student, those who enroll are more likely to finish and "become more satisfied and supportive alumni who 'knew what they were getting into' when they selected their college."⁵⁹

Student Perspective--Better College Selection

The admissions perspective dovetails with the student view as the need for better student choice, resulting in better retention and more satisfied alumni, becomes apparent. Not only does it help the college, but better information is also a means of "helping the student select a college that best meets his needs."⁶⁰ If properly used, information on colleges allows students to differentiate the choices among various colleges.

Educators, government officials, and the general public all agree that students should have the best possible information in order to choose the type of education they wish to pursue after high school and the particular institution at which they will enroll.⁶¹

⁵⁸Op. cit., Hoy, "A Question of Balance," p. 10.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Luci Switzer, "Recruiting Looks Like an Art, Acts Like a Science," College and University Business, Vol. 52, No. 2 (February, 1972), p. 47.

⁶¹Joan S. Stark, "Is More Information Better?" Promoting Consumer Protection for Students (A Quarterly Source Book under New Directions for Higher Education), (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1976), p. vii.

The need for improved communication is not just a nice idea whose time has come, it is an entirely new movement in which the student role has changed completely. He has thrown away the blue jeans and sweat-shirt of the ignorant buyer, and donned the vested suit and flashy tie of the "consumer." Hoy sees the rise of the student consumerism as a positive step as admissions officers become sensitized to the importance of upgrading the types and quality of available information.⁶² Hugstad agrees for "Few can argue with the need for increased consumer information, whether it be in consumer goods area or in selecting the appropriate university to attend."⁶³

The result of this change in role of the student from the gullible prey to volpine hunter improves the rational decision making on the part of the high school student and allows more accurate and reliable choices relative to personal needs.⁶⁴ Corroborating this view Walton adds that

Without dependable information, accessible at the critical moment, the decision making process may be simplified (coin flipping and die throwing), but the result can be expected to be less than trustworthy.⁶⁵

The education consumer movement is afoot not only in the student ranks but among other interest groups as well. The federal government,

⁶²Op. cit., Hoy, "A Question of Balance," p. 10.

⁶³Op. cit., Hugstad, "The Marketing Concept in Higher Education: A Caveat," p. 508.

⁶⁴William P. Ehling and Harold D. Holder, "Complexity, Variability, and Lack of Information in Student Transition from Secondary School to College," The High School Journal, Vol. 49, No. 8 (May, 1966), p. 371.

⁶⁵Op. cit., Walton, "Needed: Better Information About Colleges," pp. 78-79.

according to Stark, is now supplying large amounts of money to assure that potential learners have equal access to information about colleges and universities. The government wants to insure that student rights are fully protected through the accurate disclosure of information about these institutions.⁶⁶

Hoy mentions the college's responsibility to become more cognizant of student needs and personal values. "It is his needs that must be taken into account in determining how best to provide information."⁶⁷

Responding effectively to the growing pressures of the consumerism movement demands thorough and continuing study of the students themselves--their own perceived needs, changing personal values, and intellectual capabilities.⁶⁸

Walton supports this view when he says " . . . information should be sensitive to the needs of the users . . . "⁶⁹ This differs from the current trend of writing to the prospective student about what the college "thinks" the future freshman wants to know.⁷⁰ Says Kinnick,

To date, little systematic and comprehensive attempt has been made to identify the kinds of information about post-secondary education prospective students feel it is important to have available.⁷¹

⁶⁶Op. cit., Stark, "Is More Information Better?," p. vii.

⁶⁷Op. cit., Hoy, "A Question of Balance," p. 10.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁹Op. cit., Walton, "Needed: Better Information About Colleges," p. 8.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 9.

⁷¹Mary K. Kinnick, Information for Prospective Students About Post-secondary Education: A Partial Assessment of Need, doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, (May, 1975), p. 1.

But the concern reaches beyond just identifying the information needs of students. Walton finds

The key to improvement in the decision making process is information; information with appropriate content, in the right amount, and in the best form, where and when most needed. It needs to be sufficiently explicit to communicate meaningful "intelligence" to students, parents and counselors.⁷²

The student consumer movement, supported by the federal government, is at hand with more and more attention being paid to the accuracy and relevancy of information which aids students in college selection.

Expert Perspective--Not Good Enough

David Treadwell sees the problem of poor communication as pandemic, at least in the education world, as "Most educators would probably agree that all colleges need to do a better job of 'communicating the product.'" ⁷³ Walton finds college communications to be "incomplete and ambiguous" ⁷⁴ and " . . . often inadequate, inaccurate, and even inaccessible." ⁷⁵ Olsen views today's publications depicting colleges and universities to be " . . . impersonal and cold and practically written to please the president or the administration or the faculty, not

⁷²Op. cit., Walton, "Needed: Better Information About Colleges," p. 81.

⁷³David R. Treadwell, Jr., "Hard Work--Not Hard Sell--Boosts Admissions," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 19, No. 3 (February, 1975), p. 11.

⁷⁴Op. cit., Walton, "Needed: Better Information About Colleges," p. 78.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 80.

necessarily to communicate with students."⁷⁶ Frank Bowles is even more pejorative in saying that " . . . college catalogs, view-books, recruiting fliers, and applications materials remain among the most deplorable of all printed literature in America."⁷⁷ Dark shadows are cast on college recruiters as purveyors of college information by Hoy who sees them as "deficient in providing concise, readable, candid information"⁷⁸ Luther Hoopes sums it up nicely when he says, "It isn't a matter of more publications, it's better publications."⁷⁹

History and Growth of Admissions

The Early Years

According to Thomason, admissions officers have been around (in one form or another) as long as colleges and universities.⁸⁰ His reference notwithstanding there is little evidence which speaks directly to the origin and development of the admissions office, as an entity of its own, until after the Civil War. In fact, the entire field of college and university administration is somewhat barren, in terms of documented evolution, as

⁷⁶Op. cit., Olsen, "Publications in Admissions," p. 353.

⁷⁷Frank Bowles, "Candidates and Confusions," College and University, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1958), p. 477.

⁷⁸Op. cit., Hoy, "A Question of Balance," p. 9.

⁷⁹Luther H. Hoopes, "Admissions Marketing for the Private College," College and University, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Summer, 1972), p. 305.

⁸⁰Fred R. Thomason, "Origin of the Office of Admissions and Records," College and University, Vol. 29, No. 1 (October, 1953), p. 100.

A search of an annotated bibliography provided by Eells and Hollis indicated that about 75% of the publications in the area (administration and organization of higher education) have been developed since 1955.⁸¹

The available research then, on the history of admissions, is somewhat sketchy but Lindsey and Holland give a glimpse of the first practitioners;

The early universities of Greek and Rome can scarcely be described as organizations. They can more accurately be regarded as associations or individual teachers banded together for their common benefits. Problems of admissions, curricula, housing and finance remained largely, if not entirely, personal matters. The individual teacher attracted his own students, taught them as he desired, housed them, usually in his own dwellings, and received such fees and honoraria as he and his students agreed upon.⁸²

Turning the pages of time the story rapidly moves to the 16th century at Cambridge and Oxford where Thomas Connelly finds the registrar, one of the principal administrative officers, performing admitting functions.⁸³ Richard Perry identifies the title given to the individual holding this medieval administrative office as "Major Beadle,"⁸⁴ and "there is evidence from other authors that the admissions office was

⁸¹Richard R. Perry, "The Role of Admissions--Role of the Administrator," Handbook of College and University Administration-Academic, Asa D. Knowles, editor-in-chief (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1970), pp. 3-99 - 3-100.

⁸²E. E. Lindsey and E. O. Holland, College and University Administration (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1930), p. 6.

⁸³Thomas R. Connelly, The Registrar (Newark, N.J.: Washington Irving Publishing Co., 1951), p. 12.

⁸⁴Op. cit., Perry, "The Role of Admissions--Role of the Administrator," p. 3-100.

derived from the ancient office of the archivist, which undoubtedly was the forerunner of the registrar."⁸⁵ Smerling tells of a title change to "Grapharius" as the Major Beadle took on the responsibility of making graduation lists.⁸⁶ The position had many duties but "His chief task was to carry out the wishes and requests of the proctor, the officer who administered examinations."⁸⁷ Cambridge had a registrar as early as 1506 and Smerling finds that " . . . by 1544 all students who wished to attend this university had to present themselves to him when entering."⁸⁸ By implication the registrar, in 1544, performed duties of an admissions officer.

Admissions in the U. S.

The United States' history of higher education administration begins with the opening of the doors of Harvard University in 1645. Broome,⁸⁹ Brubacher⁹⁰ and Thomason all agree that the first American admissions officers were the college presidents who were supported by

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶William H. Smerling, "The Registrar: Changing Aspects," College and University, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter, 1960), p. 180.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Edwin Cornelius Broome, "A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements," Columbia University Contributions to Philosophy, Psychology and Education, XI, Nos. 3 - 4 (April, 1903), pp. 30, 25.

⁹⁰John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition: An American History 1636-1956 (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 12.

"tutors, masters, or faculty."⁹¹ Broome, in pursuing the development of admissions requirements, finds no catalogs issued prior to 1800.⁹² Basically, the first one hundred and fifty years of United States history in higher education had no published records of college admissions requirements, the conditions of admission nor the placement of responsibility for the function. In 1828 Smerling finds the registrar being identified as a member of the administrative staff of the school.⁹³ Broome, continuing his pursuit of entrance examinations determines that "The test was an oral one--in fact, we have no traces of written examinations before the middle of the nineteenth century--and was conducted by the president or tutors."⁹⁴

Rudolph in his history of higher education administration reveals that prior to the Civil War institutions of higher education were managing with only a president and treasurer along with a part-time librarian. As their functions enlarged, the administrative responsibilities became broader which necessitated " . . . first a secretary of the faculty, then a registrar, and then in succession a vice-president, a dean, a dean of women, a business officer, an assistant dean, a dean

⁹¹Fred R. Thomason, "Origin of the Office of Admissions and Records," College and University, Vol. 29, No. 1 (October, 1953), p. 100.

⁹²Op. cit., Broome, "A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements," p. 5.

⁹³Op. cit., Smerling, "The Registrar: Changing Aspects," p. 180.

⁹⁴Op. cit., Broome, "A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements," p. 37.

of men, a director of admissions . . . ⁹⁵ Smerling identifies the 1860s as the time which developed the office of the registrar in the United States higher education system with a rapid rise in their numbers from 1880 to 1900.⁹⁶

Admissions after 1900

Prior to the 1930s much of the admissions work is found in the offices of the deans and faculties and the early embryo of admissions, as it is known today, begins to take shape.⁹⁷ The late 1930s and early 1940s reveal more separating of the admissions office from the registrar. It is not clear exactly when the registrar and admissions office find independent quarters for Thomason⁹⁸ frequently refers to the registrar and admissions function as synonymous in his work in 1953 with duties which include: a) preparing and distributing the catalogs and brochures used as promotional pieces for the colleges and universities, b) handling much of the articulation between the colleges and the high schools, c) conducting programs of high school visitation, d) performing most of the pre- and post-admission counseling functions, and e) handling all

⁹⁵Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University--A History (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 434-435.

⁹⁶Op. cit., Smerling, "The Registrar: Changing Aspects," pp. 181-182.

⁹⁷E. M. Gerrits and Alfred Thomas, Jr., "The Admissions Office in Twenty-Eight Selected Colleges and Universities," College and University, Vol. 29, No. 1 (October, 1953), p. 65.

⁹⁸Op. cit., Thomason, "Origins of the Office of Admissions and Records," pp. 103-108.

correspondence dealing with a student and his involvement with the college.

Gerritz and Thomas corroborate the idea of a combined admissions-registrar function until the late 1940s.⁹⁹ In 1954, Snyder reports that the admissions office at Stanford had existed for only seven years which places its origin at 1947.¹⁰⁰ In 1951 Thomas Connelly writes: "In some schools, the title of administrative officer may be registrar and/or admissions officer; director of admissions; dean of admissions or dean of students."¹⁰¹ One can surmise that a separate admissions office was alive on some campuses in the late 1940s.

Not much is written about the 1950s, but in the early 1960s the role of the admissions staff becomes one of counseling. Nicoll identifies a shift during that decade as the admissions structure moves away from the role of counseling students seeking a suitable college, to a role of " . . . recruiter of students for the college they represent."¹⁰²

In October of 1970, L. Richard Meeth describes the function of the admissions office in business terms when he asks: "Does the college have a clear and realistic understanding of its market?"¹⁰³ This is the

⁹⁹Op. cit., Gerritz and Thomas, "The Admissions Office in Twenty-Eight Selected Colleges and Universities," p. 66.

¹⁰⁰Rexford K. Snyder, "Recruiting," College Admissions, College Entrance Examination Board, 1954, p. 122.

¹⁰¹Op. cit., Connelly, The Registrar, p. 13.

¹⁰²G. Douglas Nicoll, "Admissions and the Private College," School and Society, Vol. 95, No. 2289 (March 4, 1967), p. 148.

¹⁰³L. Richard Meeth, "Innovative Admissions Practices for the Liberal Arts College," Journal of Higher Education, XLI, No. 7 (October, 1970), p. 537.

first time in the review of the literature on admissions that the term "market" arises. This emphasis continues as David Barton, in his article of January 1973, identifies

. . . the approaches made, the cost per student recruited, the total amount of energy put into marketing independent education are now the number one development problems in all but a handful of independent educational institutions today.¹⁰⁴

The historical development of admissions, then, moves from faculty members seeking their own students in the Greek and Roman days, through a screening process by presidents and faculty of United States colleges and universities, into a more formalized position in the 1930s as "registrar" and finally into its own in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The function of opening the college gates to students is synonymous with the term admissions and this has seen a metamorphosis into a counseling role and, in the early 70s, a second change into a marketing perspective involving student recruitment.

The Modern Admissions Office

The risks of failing to enroll adequate numbers of freshmen elevate the status of the admissions office in the eyes of faculty and administrators alike. Attracting the students of desired numbers and quality has a direct impact on the cash flow of the college and can "make or break the institution."¹⁰⁵ But just what functions does the

¹⁰⁴David W. Barton, Jr., "If the Customers Don't Buy The Institution Will Die," The Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 17, No. 3 (January, 1973), p. 10.

¹⁰⁵Rexford G. Moon, Jr., "Administrator's Assistant," College Management, Vol. 9, No. 3 (March, 1974), p. 5.

modern admissions office perform? What is the role of its director? A look at the literature provides an update.

Many Roles

Douglas Nicoll sees a modern admissions office in need of a deliberate and energetic recruitment program of two parts: a clear, responsible program for screening applicants, and a secondary recruitment program to bring the admitted students into the classroom.¹⁰⁶ The admissions office has major responsibilities for " . . . recruitment, interviewing, testing, counseling, evaluation and placement, orientation, research, and publication."¹⁰⁷ David Treadwell continues this train of thought as he looks at admissions as a " . . . catalyst, to expose prospective students to all elements of the community."¹⁰⁸ Amplifying this theme he sees admissions as service oriented, providing fast, direct, personal service to likely prospects. Dennis Johnson identifies other functions of the admissions office.

The traditional admissions department generally includes responsibilities for relations with secondary schools, visits with students, attending college night and college day programs, mailing communications, personal interviews on and off campus, counseling, publication development (in some cases) . . . ¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Op. cit., Nicoll, "Admissions and Private College," p. 149.

¹⁰⁷Op. cit., Gerritz and Thomas, "The Admissions Office in Twenty-eight Selected Colleges and Universities," p. 68.

¹⁰⁸Op. cit., Treadwell, "Hard Work--Not Hard Sell--Boosts Admissions," p. 12.

¹⁰⁹Dennis L. Johnson, "I'm O.K.--You Are ?," College and University Business, Vol. 55, No. 1 (July, 1973), p. 21.

But the admissions office not only speaks with potential students, it must evaluate their needs and carry them back to the college governing boards for evaluation and possible changes in curriculum. Ron Keller sees admissions personnel as " . . . consultants for change-recognizing, recommending, and implementing student need oriented programs."¹¹⁰ Admissions personnel must earn the respect of their superiors and dauntlessly offer recommendations regardless of their impact on personalities or particular departments on campus. In short, Keller advocates an admissions office which communicates with the college community at large including faculty, administration and students. Today's admissions office, then, works with constituents both on and off the campus and has a major responsibility of communicating clearly in both areas.

The Admissions Director

A precise definition of today's captain of that ship which carries the destiny of the college is succinctly offered by James Nelson who says "We should strive to become effective consultants for change."¹¹¹ The position no longer requires a good counselor or one capable of only separating the wheat from the chaff to allow the highest quality student to enter. Today the director of admissions requires what Sweitzer

¹¹⁰ Ron Keller, "Administrative Reactions and Responsibilities," College and University, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Summer, 1973), p. 229.

¹¹¹ James R. Nelson, "Administrative Reactions and Responsibilities," College and University, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Summer, 1973), p. 229.

calls " . . . the new 'dry look' . . . combining marketing analyst, manager by objectives, communication-graphics image broker, sales-oriented planner."¹¹² This does not mean that he must be a jack of all trades but he must be a master of many and

. . . keep informed on trends in business, on the economic and social life of the community served by his college, of job opportunities for his current and future students. He must be a perpetual student. He is continuously evaluating his own work.¹¹³

As the role increases in importance and the livelihood of the college becomes more and more contingent on the success of the admissions program, Barton contends that the admissions officer will become more of a key manager and decision maker who " . . . should sit on the highest policy making councils of his institution."¹¹⁴

One major function of an admissions office mentioned earlier is communication; with the prospective student and with the college governing boards. Dealing with parents, students, high school principals and counselors, alumni and others is considered by Danner to be a public relations function.¹¹⁵ Smerling¹¹⁶ and Rhoades agree and see the major

¹¹²Luci Switzer, "Recruiting Looks Like an Art, Acts Like a Science," College and University Business, Vol. 52, No. 2 (February, 1972), p. 47.

¹¹³John M. Rhoads, "Our Profession," College and University, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter, 1956), p. 150.

¹¹⁴David W. Barton, Jr., "Taking the Scare out of Student Scarcity," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 19, No. 2 (November, 1974), p. 6.

¹¹⁵Walter N. Danner, "The Registrar and the Admissions Officer: His Responsibilities and Opportunities for Service to His Institution," College and University, Vol. 27, No. 3 (April, 1952), p. 562.

¹¹⁶Op. cit., Smerling, "The Registrar: Changing Aspects," p. 186.

responsibility for directing that work to rest with the admissions director as a " . . . valuable contributor to the overall public relations program of his institution."¹¹⁷

Herman Spindt feels that the admissions director is the best person to inform the colleges of the high school graduate's thoughts and needs.¹¹⁸ Rhoads elaborates by saying

He (the admissions director) now must interpret to his own faculty members this change in public school policies. He must analyze for them the needs of the next generation of students so that they may tailor their courses to answer those needs. Next, he must report on these differences to his administrators so that officials of the institution may make a fresh evaluation of the administrative policies, to examine whether or not they are valid for the young people who are emerging from today's high schools.¹¹⁹

Without offering such input Treadwell reminds the admissions director that he is "shirking one of our [his] major responsibilities."¹²⁰

It is, therefore, the admissions director who must know the campus, its students, its faculty and its programs and be able to communicate these clearly to the constituency beyond the college gates.¹²¹ But likewise he has a responsibility to communicate to the faculty and

¹¹⁷Op. cit., Rhoads, "Our Profession," p. 153.

¹¹⁸Herman A. Spindt, "Are We Necessary?," College and University, Vol. 30, No. 4 (July, 1955), p. 428.

¹¹⁹Op. cit., Rhoads, "Our Profession," p. 151.

¹²⁰Op. cit., Treadwell, "Hard Work--Not Hard Sell--Boosts Admissions," p. 13.

¹²¹Ibid.

administration about what is going on "out there" so that the college can adjust to the changing needs of the high school students.

Marketing

The admissions officer, from the foregoing, is the nexus between prospective students and the college. In a sense he is the town crier often visualized as marching along with arms full of brochures and catalogs toting a slick sales promotion. With this image his job description acquires a new label, borrowed from the business community, to more carefully define his role. "A term 'marketing' has supplanted the term 'recruitment' within the lexicon of college recruitment officers."¹²² In 1972 Chapple identifies "marketing" as " . . . the new magic word associated with the recruiting aspects of admissions."¹²³ In 1970 Richard Meeth sees the innovative admissions director applying such marketing techniques as revising the curriculum to make it more "saleable," developing transfer brochures, preparing a 45 RPM record to better describe the college, and establishing alumni and student-to-student recruiting programs.¹²⁴ David Barton first coins the term "marketing independent education" at the close of 1972;¹²⁵ a practice

¹²²Thomas Huddleston, Jr., "Student Marketing," College and University, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Summer, 1975), p. 339.

¹²³John D. Chapple, "If Admissions Are Lagging Don't Overlook This Help," College Management, Vol. 7, No. 12 (December, 1972), p. 27.

¹²⁴Op. cit., Meeth, "Innovative Admissions Practices for the Liberal Arts College," Journal of Higher Education, XLI, No. 7 (October, 1970), pp. 538-545.

¹²⁵David W. Barton, Jr., "If Customers Don't Buy the Institution Will Die," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 17, No. 3 (January, 1973), p. 9.

he advocates as a soothing antidote to colleges ailing from shrinking enrollments.

Throughout his writing Barton continues to promote a strong marketing program in admissions, " . . . education today should recognize that it too must be marketed."¹²⁶ He speaks of tailoring the marketing plan to fit the customer and feels that colleges must be "bold but not too bold."¹²⁷ He is not alone. Jeremy Lord stresses the need for

. . . an admissions marketing plan and we must continually evaluate that plan to determine if it is indeed working, if it is current in meeting the needs of the changing market place, and if it is a vehicle that will guide our institutions through the difficult years ahead.¹²⁸

Druggan concurs and suggests that as the key communicator for a college the admissions person must be able to further understand and assess the needs of his potential market so that he can better present the " . . . college's case persuasively and honestly."¹²⁹

There are many aspects of this business to marketing a college which reach beyond good communication and persuasion techniques. Sparks talks in terms of segmenting the market, i.e., identifying those pockets of high school student populations that are going to be the most and

¹²⁶Op. cit., Barton, "If Customers Don't Buy The Institution Will Die," p. 9.

¹²⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹²⁸Jeremy M. Lord, "Student Marketing," College and University, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Summer, 1975), p. 342.

¹²⁹Op. cit., Druggan, "Introduction," p. xii.

least advantageous for recruiting.¹³⁰ Sharon Stahlheber points to Northwestern University's effort to recruit in "primary" and "secondary" markets as well as what she terms "new pilot or test markets"¹³¹ which she defines as carrying the message to new geographic areas in hopes of harvesting a larger crop of freshmen.

Dennis Johnson broadens the marketing concept even further to include the need for " . . . research, better communication systems, definition of purpose, and better management."¹³² Pausing briefly on his first term; it is apparent that good marketing in admissions has as its foundation a strong, indepth effort at research. Without it how can the admissions personnel provide the feedback to their college on student needs as suggested by Jack Wolf?¹³³ How else can such information be gathered to lend direction to the design of the product (educational programs and style) suggested by Sparks?¹³⁴ Research, like that suggested in this study, becomes an integral part of any admissions marketing plan, not only for good communication to students about the college but for good communication to the college about the students.

¹³⁰Op. cit., Sparks, "A Marketing Plan That Works," p. 29.

¹³¹Sharon Stahlheber, "Achieving Enrollment Objectives," College Management, Vol. 9, No. 6 (June-July, 1974), p. 18.

¹³²Op. cit., Johnson, "Selling: A Threat to Post-secondary Education," p. 343.

¹³³Jack S. Wolf, "Marketing Admissions Using Modern Business Techniques in Student Recruiting," College Board Review, No. 89 (Fall, 1973), p. 24.

¹³⁴Op. cit., Sparks, "A Marketing Plan That Works," p. 29.

Marketing vs Sales

Unfortunately the marketing approach can be warped out of shape so that the emphasis on defining information needs is not better consumer information but sales. Quoting Peter Drucker, Dennis Johnson points out that marketing and sales are " . . . antithetical and not complimentary as some believe."¹³⁵ Raymond Finn helps clarify the distinction between marketing and sales as

The marketing concept, in contrast to the sales concept, begins with the focus on student needs and then by means of an integrated education product creates revenue through creating satisfied student consumers. The promulgation of the marketing concept should be a continuous striving of every institution.¹³⁶

Sales, then, becomes a persuasive effort to alter student attitudes into favorably accepting a particular product while marketing is designed to first identify student needs and develop a product to meet those needs.

The marketing concept is defaced by the interchanging of jargon such as " . . . sales conversions, quotas, and yields."¹³⁷ As Johnson describes it, "'Sales' has become the grubby catch word and easy answer for some hard pressed institutions."¹³⁸

. . . students are being described and treated in terms of markets, yields, sales returns and quotas. At some

¹³⁵Op. cit., Johnson, "Selling: A Threat to Post-secondary Education," pp. 342-343.

¹³⁶ Raymond Finn, "Suggested New Trends in Educational Recruiting," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 18, No. 3 (November, 1973), p. 12.

¹³⁷Op. cit., Lord, "Student Marketing," p. 341.

¹³⁸Op. cit., Johnson, "I'm O.K.--You Are ?," p. 22.

institutions, students and staff are being paid commissions on per head stipends for referrals or enrollees.¹³⁹

The sales campaign manager reaches for new and more creative ideas and beings to sell the product in forms of " . . . plastic records, displays in buses, 'shotgun' mailing lists, films and recruiting conferences."¹⁴⁰ A highlight of the admissions program at Northwestern University is "a road show which replaces the traditional high school visit in many metropolitan cities around the country."¹⁴¹ Summing it up Rexford Moon sees "The college admission scene going through substantial transformation. Gimmicks, gadgets, gadflies are on the rise."¹⁴²

The Issue of Ethics

One can see the original intent of utilizing research to meet student needs and define better communication materials for student prospects is giving way to " . . . the sort of head hunting that can only hurt the public image of higher education."¹⁴³ There is a very real concern that college admissions is moving into an era of hucksterism. It is not happening only at the little known private college but

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Op. cit., Chapple, "If Admissions Are Lagging Don't Overlook This Help," p. 27.

¹⁴¹Op. cit., Stahlheber, "Achieving Enrollment Objectives," p. 18.

¹⁴²Op. cit., Moon, "Administrator's Assistant," p. 5.

¹⁴³Editorial, New York Times, January 14, 1974, p. 26.

Hechinger points out that "Financial pressure has threatened the admission practices of even the high prestige institutions . . . "¹⁴⁴ As Treadwell sums it up "Few educators, I think, would applaud the trend toward slick advertising and 'dollar-discount offers.'"¹⁴⁵

The view that admissions is strictly a promotional vehicle to sail floundering colleges into fair weather and brighter futures carries with it a stench of dirty tricks and unfair practices and the problem is worsening.

Unprofessional approaches are used by those who must deal strictly in numbers, not in people. To them numbers mean survival. This seems to be the case with an increasing number of private institutions, as well as some public institutions.¹⁴⁶

But these institutions are not only relying on their own resources to sell their colleges. As Ed Bagale points out,

The use of commercial agencies, publishing houses, ACT, management consulting firms, marketing research organizations and advisement and placement services in the admissions process is here to stay. We have formed a partnership which will continue to be viable and will be a part of the future.¹⁴⁷

As the practices of slick sales techniques continue to grow and find a firm footing in the future of higher education, one must consider

¹⁴⁴Fred M. Hechinger, "Colleges in Search of Freshmen," Saturday World Review (April 6, 1974), p. 55.

¹⁴⁵Op. cit., Treadwell, "Hard Work--Not Hard Sell--Boosts Admissions," p. 11.

¹⁴⁶Thomas M. Woodward, Jr., "Ethics in Student Recruitment in the 1970's," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 17, No. 3 (January, 1973), p. 3.

¹⁴⁷Edward J. Bagale, "Use of Commercial Recruiting Agencies," College and University, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Summer, 1976), p. 398.

the impact of devious promotional practices. Tom Woodward finds the critical problem to be a tarnishing of the image of the profession as well as higher education at large.¹⁴⁸ He sees a dicotomy of the promotional aspects into "professional," or ethical, and "commercial," implying something unethical. In addition there is the concern for the rights and welfare of the individual student who is deeply affected by the integrity, or lack of it, in the admissions office.

With so much potential for deceit a question of ethics must be raised while simultaneously allowing the benefits of marketing and its research arm to remain viable. One attempt is that of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors who has developed a "Statement of Principles of Good Practices" (Appendix A). The statement is designed to elicit a voluntary acquiescence by admissions personnel to higher standards in promoting colleges. The policing of these actions should come from the colleges themselves, for if they do not " . . . we will find increasing outside legislation of our activities, regulations which will be above and beyond what we can do individually or collectively."¹⁴⁹ Richard Rowray puts the spotlight on the consumerism movement which has as its vanguard the federal government.

This will force on us some good practices to be legislated by the Federal Trade Commission, the Office of

¹⁴⁸Thomas M. Woodward, Jr., "Ethics in Student Recruitment in the 1970's," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 17, No. 3 (January, 1973), p. 3.

¹⁴⁹Richard D. Rowray, "AACRAO Student Recruitment Guidelines," College and University, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Summer, 1976), p. 534.

Education and others. We are being told by the federal government that the student is the primary consumer of the professional services. They are suggesting that there be a central agency of the federal government to which the student may appeal for delivery of services and filing complaints.¹⁵⁰

If the colleges themselves do not police, on a voluntary basis, the promotional efforts of colleges, the federal government will.

Such is the impetus for the NACAC Statement. It touches on such areas as: having the professionals on a fixed salary rather than a commission, current pictures and statements about a college avoiding invidious comparisons with other institutions, eliminating unprofessional promotional tactics, and allowing students to choose a college without duress or penalties. This is a beginning and other associations, such as the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) are considering similar legislation. The consumer movement is at hand as is the need for colleges to survive in a "Bear Market." The needs of both the colleges and students must be met with a balanced, ethical program of communication. Without a voluntary adherence to fair play in the game of survival, a legislative enforcement will surely come.

Related Studies on Student Information Needs

A review of related literature on the topic of student information needs finds a scarcity of available research. Kinnick notes, as she pursues such a review for her dissertation, " . . . that relatively

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 533.

little attention in the literature has been given to the problem of identifying prospective student information needs."¹⁵¹ As her dissertation is dated 1975, it leads one to believe that there will be some difficulty in finding related research prior to that time. Richard Perry further supports a lack of research for in 1970 he identifies admissions research as falling into four main areas, i.e., administrative research, predictive research, directive research, and illuminative research.¹⁵² In his descriptions of these types of admissions research he identifies nothing comparable to a detailed sifting of student information needs but rather filters the inordinate amount of research performed on the perfunctory duties of an admissions office. Cameron Fincher supports Perry in the fall of 1975, saying "The nature of admissions research since the mid-sixties is not characterized by outstanding results."¹⁵³ Kinnick reiterates her concern for lacking research in the area when she says, "No recorded instance of the systematic and explicit use of research literature to develop post-secondary information for prospective students has been located."¹⁵⁴ Generally,

¹⁵¹Mary Katherine Kinnick, Information for Prospective Students About Secondary Education: A Partial Assessment of Need, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Colorado, May, 1975, p. 12.

¹⁵²Op. cit., Richard R. Perry, "The Role of Admissions--Role of the Administrator," pp. 3-123 - 3-124.

¹⁵³Cameron Fincher, "Strategies and Trends in Admissions Research," College and University, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Fall, 1975), p. 30.

¹⁵⁴Op. cit., Mary Katherine Kinnick, Information for Prospective Students About Secondary Education: A Partial Assessment of Need, p. 21.

there is a dirth of research information related to the topic, but a selected review of those limited resources is presented below.

Comparative Data

Joan Stark identifies a recent development in the current consumer movement which is the accumulation and regular arrangement of facts about a number of colleges in a composite so that students might make rapid comparisons. Some examples are¹⁵⁵ a) The American Institute for Research (AIR) work under the direction of the Office of Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation; b) The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) which is looking at the management and planning information that institutions utilize in their daily operations to see if it can be helpful and constructively employed to aid students in their decision making on college selection; c) The College Scholarship Service, which draws together information about federal financial aid programs and puts them in a composite for easy review; d) The Department of Higher Education--Post-secondary Education at Syracuse University work on a similar project; 3) "National Project One; Better Information for Student Choice" which offers grants to a dozen colleges so that each can develop a prospectus (this was discussed in more detail on pages 16-18). The concern for better information for students on a comparative basis is getting plenty of attention from a number of quarters.

¹⁵⁵Op. cit., Joan S. Stark, "Is More Information Better?," pp. 66-68.

The Guessing Game

One aspect of student information needs is probably the most common practice in all of higher education, i.e., guessing what is needed. Hoy, in a recent article in College Board Review, realizes the need to ask prospective students what they want and need to know but ironically does not pursue such an investigation preferring, instead, to guess at student needs.¹⁵⁶ His suggestions include admissions information, student life, both in and out of the classroom, and outcome information of attending a particular college. He feels that students want to know the drop-out rate by discipline, the length of time to finish a degree, the number of students who finish in four years, and how the graduates fare in terms of admission to graduate or professional schools. He closes his presentation with the realization that "This information is virtually never available--and ironically it is not even shared fully among the department, academic or administrative."¹⁵⁷

In 1972, John Minter, while working for the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, pulls together a taxonomy of "logical" types of questions which he concludes students "might" ask should they be looking for a post-secondary institution to attend.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶Op. cit., John C. Hoy, "A Question of Balance," p. 9.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸John Minter, "Finding and Comparing Information About College and Career Educational Programs," informal paper, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, Boulder, Colorado, February 1, 1972.

It contains nine basic pieces of information such as: educational programs, program costs and financial aid, instructional staff, services, materials and faculties, program environments, auxiliary services, geography and climate. Emphasis is not on what is known but rather what Minter guesses students want to know. A complete taxonomy of needs which Minter identifies as "logical types" is attached in Appendix B.

What Others Think a Student Needs to Know

William Siddoway, in the Spring of 1967, published his efforts at a survey of "Information Needs of Students During the High School Senior to College Freshman Transition."¹⁵⁹ Although his title implies a study similar as to that suggested here, Siddoway's emphasis is not on asking the student what he wants to know about a college in making a selection, but rather state and regional high school-college relations committees for their opinion of student interest. Sample size and response rate are not identified and the emphasis is on asking a secondary source what students want to know about a college. He finds the two areas of highest interest to be financial aid and admissions requirements.

These two items were followed closely by the need for information about college courses, majors and degrees. In order of importance the remaining six items were: management of permanent time schedules, finances, social life, requirements of college study, assignments, tests, and grading practices; how to select specific college

¹⁵⁹William R. Siddoway, "Informational Needs of Students During the High School Senior to College Freshman Transition," College and University, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Spring, 1967), pp. 358-359.

courses, majors and degrees; living conditions and regulations; procedures for registration and orientation; sororities and fraternities and other social opportunities.¹⁶⁰

Again, the emphasis is on asking an external group what students want to know rather than the students themselves; a highly different population from the study suggested in this paper.

Research on Student Information Needs

Daniel Sullivan and Larry Litten's study for the College Board is entitled "Using Research in Analyzing Student Markets: A Case Study."¹⁶¹ Their main emphasis is on finding ways in which the market of potential students can be segmented and touches only briefly on student information needs. Their study deals with all aspects of the college recruitment at a specific college in order to syphon off the least effective and enhance the most successful in hopes of developing a higher enrollment of accepted students. In terms of student information they ask students who applied and did not enroll such questions as, "what they were like, where they chose to go to college, what they did and did not know about Carlton, how they knew it, and why they did not apply."¹⁶² Their findings reveal that non-applicants hear about Carlton more often from published information than from high school

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Daniel F. Sullivan and Larry H. Litten, "Using Research in Analyzing Student Markets: A Case Study," A Role for Marketing in College Admissions (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1976), pp. 86-106.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 89.

counselors, friends or admissions representatives. In general the channels of information through which non-applicants learn about Carlton are similar to the accepted students.

A study in 1974 by Samuel B. Cramer focuses more on factors in college selection than on student information needs although he states his purpose as providing " . . . the public relations office with some facts on which to base decisions affecting their advertising and publications programs that were aimed at recruiting students."¹⁶³ His population is limited to female students in their senior year in high school. Their information needs are chiefly career oriented with a secondary concern for financial aid. In making the final decision on the college in which to enroll parents run a poor second to the students themselves, while guidance counselors and admissions officers have little, if any, impact.

Sidney Micek, in comparing information needs of different decision makers, i.e., state legislators, college and university administrators and state-wide post-secondary education planners, reports that the " . . . results of the pilot test confirm the hypothesis that different types of decision makers need different outcome information."¹⁶⁴ It is

¹⁶³Samuel B. Cramer, "To College or Not to College? Market Survey of Student Decisions," College and University Business, Vol. 56, No. 3 (March, 1974), p. 37.

¹⁶⁴Sidney Micek, "Preliminary Summary of the Higher Education Outcome Measures Identification Pilot Test" (Boulder, Colorado: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education, 1973), p. 16.

not clear why there are differences, i.e., because they have different needs or because they are exposed to different choice situations; however, the results clearly find that different groups have different informational needs about college.

The study known as Specialty Oriented Research Program (SOS) by Kenneth Hoyt has as its main objective to " . . . collect, analyze and disseminate research results which would enable counselors to work more effectively with students headed toward post-secondary programs in trade, technical, and business education."¹⁶⁵ The research looks to provide both high school guidance counselors and their students with information concerning vocational training and the employment opportunities resulting from that training. To gather the information Hoyt asks high school counselors to maintain a list of questions which students ask but for which there are no ready answers from guidance personnel. The most prominent student concern is the end result of enrollment in a particular training program, e.g., job placement or the need for further study. Other concerns which students raise are: a) the methods of financing the study, b) the amount of study required, c) the potential for success, d) the types of students enrolled, and e) expected salary or wages upon completion.

Hoyt recommends that such information be: a) pertinent to the decisions, both vocationally and educationally, that students are trying to make; b) credible to the users, i.e., parents, students, counselors;

¹⁶⁵Kenneth B. Hoyt, "S.O.S.: A Call to Action," American Vocational Journal (May, 1968), p. 51.

c) understandable; d) timely; e) adaptable to the current guidance program in the high school; f) accommodating to the pattern of presentation and dialogue between the counselor and the student; and g) economical to produce.

Edward Brogly's doctoral dissertation concerns student selection of trade, technical and business schools. In addition to student information needs Brogly also pursues the questions of: a) changes in the priority of information needs of the student as he moves through the decision making process on training program selection, b) counselor awareness of the changes in the information need priorities of the student moving through the process of decision making, and c) comparing the conceptions of what the counselors believe are the needs at various stages with the reality of what the students want.

Brogly relies on the Hoyt list of questions and expands on them by asking Iowa high school students enrolled in vocational programs to identify the information they feel would be important to someone selecting a vocational school. In his findings Brogly sees no differences in responses of the counselors or students by stages of the student's decision making process; however, students differ significantly in their response when the various stages of decision making are compared. Students and counselors are in greater agreement about what students ought to know than they are on what the students really want to know.

Both students and counselors agree that entrance requirements and job placement are high priority information items, while types of

students, housing, transportation and area facilities are less important. Appendix C lists the taxonomy resulting from Brogly's questions relative to the more important information factors.¹⁶⁶

Probably the most pertinent and relevant study is the dissertation of Mary Kinnick entitled "Information for Prospective Students About Post-secondary Education: A Partial Assessment of Need."¹⁶⁷ Her objective is to identify student information needs as perceived by three different groups: high school seniors, currently enrolled students, and administrators in post-secondary education institutions. Secondly, she wants to know how these various groups compare in terms of what they think is wanted. A third concern deals with the relationship between what students need to know and their specific situations in making a choice. The latter question really pursues the change of information needs as a student moves through three stages of decision making about college enrollment, i.e., a) to go to college, b) which institution to attend, and c) the specific program to pursue.

Kinnick uses a survey to measure the differences in perceived information needs among the three groups and finds they differ significantly in defining what information is important and which is readily available. Choice situations have little effect as "it was observed that information needs do not seem to depend upon particular kinds of

¹⁶⁶Edward Brogly, Counselor and Student Perceptions of Educational Information, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.

¹⁶⁷Op. cit., Kinnick, Information for Prospective Students About Post-secondary Education: A Partial Assessment of Need.

choice situations confronted by prospective students,"¹⁶⁸ The results do show, however, that prospective students are able to discriminate between more or less important information that they want to know about college and that they do, when asked, identify specific bits of information which they need to know about enrolling in a particular post-secondary institution.

Kinnick's general taxonomy of information needs includes such major headings as: school and program entry, cost, financial aid and employment, a general description of the school, courses, programs and majors, results of school or program participation, job characteristics and the job market, and student self review. A copy of the complete taxonomy is attached in Appendix D, and will serve as a guide in developing the survey instrument for this study. Developing a taxonomy of information needs is not, however, one of the major objectives of this study.

One major difference between the Kinnick study and that proposed here is the population surveyed. Kinnick addresses three different audiences while the study presented here focuses only on the prospective high school student. Further, the main thrust of the Kinnick study is limited to what students want to know. It does not approach other questions of the basic communication formula of "who says what to whom, when and how, and with what effect"¹⁶⁹ as proposed in this study.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁶⁹ Theodore Clevenger, Jr., Audience Analysis (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 25.

An important finding of the Kinnick study, in addition to the taxonomy, is that students do know what they want in terms of information about higher education and they can discriminate about the importance of those needs. This lends credibility to the effort which will be pursued in Chapter III as the plan of study is unveiled.

CHAPTER III

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Chapter II provided a background which enabled the reader to understand the need for better information for prospective college students. It was also apparent that research must reach beyond "what" students want to know to how they want to learn the information and from whom they want to hear. Such was the direction of this study and the need to survey a population of student prospects and review their responses.

Population

The study involved surveying the information needs of two distinct groups of high school seniors: those inquiring about Hope College but not applying, hereafter called "inquired," and those inquiring and applying for admission, hereafter called "applied." Both groups had some familiarity with Hope College through receiving its correspondence. As such they were more inclined to respond in numbers which made this study statistically significant. A study of the national population of high school seniors was ruled out because of large numbers, the difficulty in defining a sampling frame, and their lack of allegiance to Hope College which could lower responses.

The target audience involved high school seniors since they were receiving correspondence from Hope College and could readily recall their information needs and decision making processes. The responses should reflect their own feelings as well as those of their colleagues who were underclassmen. Analysis of the responses will serve as a guide for developing next year's communication program and, as such, will fit the information close to those to be recruited, i.e., next year's seniors. High school juniors were not surveyed because there was no sampling frame of such students who corresponded with Hope nor had they received any Hope College materials.

Computation of the sample size employed the following formula*:

$$N = \frac{z^2}{4\epsilon^2 + \frac{z^2}{N}}$$

The sample size had a 95% confidence interval with 5% error. The overall populations numbered: Applied = 1,014 and Inquired = 10,614. These populations, with the parameters above, resulted in sample sizes of 401 applied students and 626 inquired students. With this sample size a systematic random sample was taken of each population requiring an interval of two for applied students and seventeen for the inquired.

The Instrument

The survey questionnaire was a product of the author, relative to the objectives and hypotheses stated in Chapter I, with reviews by

* z = tabled value from the normal curve chart where a 95% confidence interval equals 1.65.

ε = the percent of error or .05.

members of the faculty from the Department of Educational Research, College of Education at Michigan State University. Further reviews were conducted by Dr. David Myers, a Psychologist and Director of Institutional Research at Hope College and Dr. Ronald Mulder, a Sociologist at Hope. A copy of the survey instrument, found in Appendix E, included the following considerations:

1) According to Linsky, "It appears that there are about as many studies reporting no advantage to personalization as those reporting an advantage."¹⁶⁶ This finding alluded to the cover letter for the survey instrument and, since no advantage was found in using a personal letter, a simple note of explanation and instruction was included at the top of the survey instrument.

2) "Results showed a clear advantage with letters using the title (81% returned) compared to those with a plain signature (55% return)."¹⁶⁷ The term "title" referred to the signature block at the bottom of the instructions. In the hope of increasing the responses the position of the individual mailing the survey was identified.

3) As each of the hypotheses stated on pages 22 and 23 of Chapter I was considered, specific questions were designed to elicit support for accepting or rejecting.

¹⁶⁶ Arnold S. Linsky, "Stimulating Responses to Mailed Questionnaires: A Review," The Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXIX, No. 1 (Spring, 1975), p. 94.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

The logic of survey questions relative to each hypothesis was as follows:

H1: Prospective Hope College freshmen have definitive information needs of what they want to know, when, and how.

The hypothesis was quite pervasive relative to the entire thrust of the study and required a number of questions to test its many facets. In reference to "what" a student would like to receive, question nine was designed to offer thirty-nine closed responses and one open possibility identified as "other." These were gleaned from taxonomies in Appendices B, C, and D of this paper as either most pertinent to the topic or occurring regularly in each.

Question ten was designed to identify from whom students want to hear. Students selected from faculty, students, alumni, administration or parents of enrolled students. The first four of these groups were normal channels of communication between prospective students and the college. As Sullivan and Litten said, " . . . Parents should not be forgotten in any marketing strategy"¹⁶⁸ and the questionnaire allowed the student to consider this as an alternative.

The question of "when" a student wanted to hear about a college was pursued in questions four and five. The respondent was asked when plans began for college and when they were finalized. The alternatives

¹⁶⁸ Daniel F. Sullivan and Larry H. Litten, "Using Research in Analyzing Student Markets: A Case Study," A Role for Marketing in College Admissions, College Entrance Examination Board, New York (1976), p. 95.

allowed the student to select from the years of sophomore, junior or senior and to position that selection of year as early, middle or late.

"How" a student preferred to learn about a college was pursued in questions seven and eight by giving the student eleven closed responses and one open, again "other," choice. Question eight involved the grouping of the materials in a packet, or selecting from a letter or catalog to determine "how" a student wanted his information. Putting such information in a brochure and determining the relationship between the prose and picture combinations of such a piece gave further options for selecting "how."

H2: Hope College has not been adequately meeting those information needs.

Hypothesis H2 can be answered by an analysis of question number six in which the student identified whether or not the information aided in his decision to apply to Hope and ultimately to enroll in Hope. The response to this question combined with the student status, i.e., either inquired or applied, will tell whether or not Hope's information aids in the decision making of the student. A positive relationship, i.e., the information did influence and the student applied, suggests that Hope was adequately meeting information needs. A response that Hope information influenced the student but he did not apply suggests that Hope did not meet information needs. A comparison can also be made of responses to

question nine, i.e., types of information students want to know, with current information brochures and catalogues to give a similar result.

H3: There is a difference in the information needs of men and women as well as non-college bound students and those bound for two year junior colleges, four year private colleges, and four year public universities.

A comparison of question one, the sex of a student, with question nine, information needs, will permit analysis of need differences between men and women. Similarly a response to question two, that is plans that students have after high school when compared with question nine, the information needs, will fulfill the remainder of information need differences in hypothesis three.

H4: Hope College applicants have information needs which differ from non-applicants. Comparing the responses in question nine, information needs, of the applied students with the non-applied or inquired students should satisfy the investigation of this hypothesis.

H5: Hope College information material is average when compared to that received by prospective Hope College freshmen from other colleges. Question eleven provides a range of five ratings of a Likert Scale, from which students can select to compare Hope's materials with others. The middle option of the five is used to define the term "average."

H6: Parents are a major influence in the decision making associated with the process of selecting a college by potential Hope College freshmen.

"Parents rank themselves as the most influential people in relation to decision making about their sons or daughters college attendance."¹⁶⁹ So said Sturgis while Posner pointed out that there may be several influences on student decisions which may include parents, guidance counselors, alumni, or faculty.¹⁷⁰ Question three was designed to allow the student to select from these, as well as others, who might influence the decision. As Anderson found in his study regarding influences on students selecting a college, "All three groups (of respondents) shunned to a notable degree, the idea of having had help when making their decision by specifying, in the 'other' category that they had made the decision themselves."¹⁷¹ Since this was the case, question three was phrased so that a student cannot select himself as most influential but rather persons other than himself.

¹⁶⁹Horace W. Sturgis, "Trends and Problems in College Admissions," College and University, Vol. 28, No. 1 (October, 1952), p. 22.

¹⁷⁰Mary M. Posner, "A Guide to Recruiting Next Year's Freshmen," AGB Reports, Vol. 18, No. 2 (March-April, 1976), pp. 3-7.

¹⁷¹Jack F. Anderson, Albert H. Kreuger, Darrel T. Mathiew, "Non-Matriculation, A Follow-up Study of Prospective College Students Who Were Accepted for Admission But Did Not Enroll," Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Vol. 17, No. 3 (November, 1973), p. 19.

1 2 3 4

H7: Hope College written communications currently influences positively in the decision to apply to Hope College.

An analysis of question six, relative to Hope College gaining a decision to apply, when compared to the status of the student as an inquirer or applicant, gives direction as to whether Hope was influencing the decision by its information materials. For example if a student responded "yes" to the question of "did the material influence your decision to apply or not to apply" and the student was a non-applicant, one would imply that the materials influenced the student negatively. On the other hand if the student who answered "yes" turns out to be an applicant, the implication is that the information influenced the student positively.

H8: Hope College's written communication influences positively in the decision to enroll at Hope College.

Again attention was focused on question six relating the decision to enroll with that of the student's status of applicant or inquirer. As in the design of the response to Hypothesis Seven, an inquiring student who indicated that the material influenced the decision to not enroll would imply negative impact of Hope material on enrollment. Conversely, a student indicating a "yes" response to the effect of Hope information on enrollment who turned out to be an applicant implies a positive influence by the material.

Procedure

Once the questions for the survey were defined, the instrument was reviewed by the data processing personnel of Hope College and Dr. Mulder to be sure that the information could easily be keypunched and programmed for computer processing. A final draft was then typed and printed. Blue paper was used for those students who applied while green was employed for those who inquired. The color coding of paper precluded printing this information on student status and provided ease in recording and tabulating this information. Linsky explained that there was little difference in response rate when paper color was changed; therefore, the color selection for the two samples should not influence their rate of response or bias the answers of either group.¹⁷² The length of the questionnaire was deliberately kept short since " . . . short questionnaires are often recommended for resulting in higher response rates than longer questionnaires."¹⁷³

Most of the questions allowed for closed responses, i.e., a number of alternatives were provided from which the student made a selection. This facilitates coding and keypunching responses and " . . . reduces the cost of tabulating results without apparent loss in the proportion of returns."¹⁷⁴ Further, "An experimental study comparing the effectiveness

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁷³Op. cit., Linsky, "Stimulating Responses to Mailed Questionnaires: A Review," p. 89.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 91.

of precoding and open ended questions upon mail survey returns found no significant differences between the two forms."¹⁷⁵ It should be remembered that the taxonomies attached and the trial administering of the survey instrument helped pinpoint the most significant and common responses to assure that the listing of responses was as complete as possible.

Mailing

The large population and its resulting sample size suggested that the questionnaire be mailed to the recipients as the high numbers of respondents required prohibitive costs for personal interviews or telephone survey. This decision was made realizing the risk of a smaller response rate, semantic differences which might arise, less time to introduce the topic and explain its purpose, and the loss of control in keeping the respondent's attention focused on the topic. The success of many mail questionnaires, in terms of response rates and ease of handling, along with their lower cost, balance the risk against potential losses.

The timing of the study was such that college bound students, on the whole, were making a commitment to enroll in college as May 1 was the College Entrance Examination Board "Candidate's Reply Date," i.e., the time when most colleges request a deposit, or some other commitment, to indicate the student plans to enroll. Further, nearly two hundred deposits arrive at Hope College in the two weeks surrounding this date

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

(thirty percent of the decisions to enroll) and students should be able to recall their decision making process in planning for the fall.

April 30 was selected as the date of the first mailing followed by a second mailing of the survey to non-respondents three weeks later. The follow-up was designed to take advantage of Linsky's tip that "Follow up letters or postcards sent to individuals who initially fail to respond almost invariably result in additional responses."¹⁷⁶ He mentioned a lack of evidence to support the follow-up mailing with an additional questionnaire as opposed to a postcard in eliciting more responses.¹⁷⁷ It was thought, however, that a student might lose the first survey, and it was more expeditious and not excessively costly (since the questionnaires were already printed) to mail additional questionnaires in the first follow-up.

As a stamped reply envelope yields a 90.1% response rate as opposed to a 25.8% rate without, a stamped business reply envelope was included with the questionnaire.¹⁷⁸ "'Higher-powered' postage arrangements on out-going and return envelopes result in a higher proportion of returns."¹⁷⁹ Taking advantage of this information suggested hand-stamping the letters prior to mailing.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 88-89.

Two weeks after the mailing of the second questionnaire a post-card reminder was sent to non-respondents in hope of eliciting an even larger response.

Trial Surveys

Prior to finalizing the questionnaire for mailing it was tested at two area high schools in Holland, Michigan, the city in which Hope College is located. These were selected because of their ease of access and the large number of students from each high school who enroll in Hope annually. As such, these tested should have some similar interests, and therein responses, as the general population to be surveyed. The questionnaire was tested first at Holland High School and followed by West Ottawa High School. After evaluating the results of those test groups, the survey was refined and tested again at East Grand Rapids High School, East Grand Rapids, Michigan and Grandville High School, Grandville, Michigan. These high schools were selected because of their ease of access and large number of students which they send to Hope. Following the completion of these surveys further refinements were made and the survey instrument finalized. The four test groups had the following characteristics and responses:

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THEORY OF THE EARTH AND ITS HISTORY

Table 3-1
Test the Survey Instrument

Date	High School Name	Population	Mean Completion Time in Minutes	Instructions Were	Suggested Changes in Format
May 6, 1976	Holland	High school seniors. Five Hope-bound and four going elsewhere.	6.5	Clear	None
May 6, 1976	West Ottawa	High school seniors. Five Hope-bound and five going elsewhere.	6.8	Clear	Add sports to possible types of information desired.
May 13, 1976	East Grand Rapids	Twelve high school seniors. Four going to Hope, eight going elsewhere.	4.7	Clear	Add "middle" to the time of year decision making is done. Eliminate "self" from those influencing a decision on one's future and add "alumni" and "current college students."
May 13, 1976	Grandville	Seventeen high school seniors. Five Hope-bound and twelve going elsewhere.	4.5	Clear	None

Table 3-2

Date: May 6, 1976

Holland High School, Holland, Michigan

Population: High school seniors. Five Hope-bound, four headed for another college.

Time needed to complete the survey:

Time in Minutes	Number
4	2
5	1
6	2
7	3
8	1

Mean completion time: 6.5 minutes

Instructions and questions were clear.

Discussion following the survey administration found that the students:

- had no problem in completing the questionnaire.
- wanted more facts and no philosophy of the college.
- felt taking classes on Hope's campus was helpful.
- felt the reputation of Hope and the amount of individual attention offered were important.
- found it helpful to talk with current Hope students about which classes to take.
- liked newsletters.
- liked the catalog.
- looked at pictures and read little of the information in the catalog and brochure.
- read letters mailed to them from the college.
- allowed their parents to read their mail from Hope.
- said their parents enjoyed talking with faculty in person and on the phone.
- felt the tenor of the financial aid reject letter was too abrupt and tart.
- did not understand financial aid, how to apply, and what was available.
- did not like a catalog that was "too thick."
- preferred a deposit reminder card to follow the original request for a deposit.

Table 3-3

Date: May 6, 1976

West Ottawa High School, Holland, Michigan

Population: High school seniors. Five Hope-bound and five headed for another college.

Time needed to complete the survey:

Time in Minutes

Number

5	2
6	2
7	3
8	2
9	1

Mean completion time: 6.8 minutes

Instructions and questions were clear.

Discussion following the survey administration found that the students:

- had no problem completing the questionnaire.
- liked personally addressed letters. Would not read pre-printed letters.
- found the catalog most helpful.
- preferred a fact sheet to a long prose presentation.
- desired a reply card upon which to annotate a need for further information.
- did not read the back of a poster which had information on it.
- did not like student "testimonials" about the college.
- did not like student-written brochures.
- liked a postcard from a student offering to be a student sponsor.
- found early acceptance, without the student's formal application, unimpressive.
- felt parents, friends, and siblings had positive and negative influences on college selection.
- liked an information packet with several items to read and review.
- had no interest in the philosophy of liberal arts education.
- were unclear about financial aid, its availability and application procedures.
- were interested in the age of buildings.
- wondered about entrance requirements.
- questioned the grade point averages of the freshmen and could not find them.
- wanted "sports" added to types of information desired.

Table 3-4

Date: May 13, 1976

East Grand Rapids High School, East Grand Rapids, Michigan

Population: Twelve high school seniors, four of whom were going to Hope, eight of whom were going elsewhere.

Time needed to complete the survey:

Time in Minutes	Number
4	7
5	2
6	3

Mean completion time: 4.7 minutes

Instructions were clear.

Discussion following the survey administration found that the students:

- had no problem completing the questionnaire.
- wanted facts and not lengthy prose.
- did not trust student opinion brochures.
- preferred pictures with a brief paragraph to long prose with few or no pictures.
- felt the catalog was the most helpful information tool.
- preferred a catalog to brochures and personal letters.
- disliked mimeographed letters.
- wanted a card upon which to write for more information.
- liked letters from department chairman explaining the departmental offerings.
- liked a student newspaper after acceptance.
- would not read a newsletter.
- had mixed reactions to phone calls--both from faculty in the academic department of interest and a student.
- wanted information on activities open to freshmen.
- liked pictures of student life.
- wanted to know grade point averages and test scores of entering freshmen.
- liked the composite presentation in Barron's Guide.
- on survey questions suggestions were made to:
 - 1) add "middle" to the time of year decision-making is done;
 - 2) eliminate "self" from those influencing a decision on one's future and add "alumni" and "current college students."

Table 3-5

Date: May 13, 1976

Grandville High School, Grandville, Michigan

Population: Seventeen high school seniors, five Hope-bound, twelve going to another college.

Time needed to complete the survey:

Time in Minutes

Number

3

5

4

3

5

4

6

5

Mean completion time: 4.5 minutes

Instructions and questions were clear.

Discussion following the survey administration found that the students:

- had no problem completing the questionnaire.
- liked a mixture of basic facts from both students and administrators rather than long prose.
- did not trust student-written brochures or testimonials which could be "fixed."
- had mixed reactions at reading a philosophy of the college.
- liked a brochure first followed by a catalog.
- thought some brochures had too many pictures.
- did not like a catalog cover with only words and no pictures.
- preferred a reply card to permit asking for more information.

Methodology and Analysis of the Data

As the questionnaires arrive the information is reviewed for completeness and the data keypunched onto IBM cards. Each card is verified and entered into a Xerox Sigma 6 computer for processing utilizing the program "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)."

Evaluation of the survey utilizes chi square, straight summary and percentage computations. The data is processed by the computer making possible a number of tables and computations for the various responses. These are then sorted by categories of respondents and related to the hypotheses of interest. Where responses are compared the chi square technique will be employed to determine the significance of the difference to aid in assessing the validity of the hypothesis. Where appropriate, means and standard deviations are included.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

After a presentation of the severity of the problem in Chapter I, the history and current status of admissions and student information needs in Chapter II, and the definitive presentation on the conduct of the study in Chapter III, the paper pursues an analysis of the survey results. The Chapter is divided into three parts:

1. Part I offers a description of the responses to the survey followed by a review of the data relevant to each hypothesis.

2. Part II looks at general findings gleaned from the survey which do not directly relate to the hypotheses but which are helpful in understanding student information needs.

3. Part III identifies concomitant findings which give direction and planning to an information program for prospective students at Hope College.

PART I

Hypotheses

Once the sample sizes are determined and the interval set, i.e., two for applied and seventeen for inquired, labels are run and the

actual sample sizes are 502 applied and 631 inquired for a total sample size of 1133 students. Usable returns show 371 applied, or a 73.9% response rate, and 231 inquired, or a 37.6% response. Overall, of the 1133 questionnaires, 602 are returned for a 53.7% response rate. Table 4-1 shows a listing of the responses.

Table 4-1

Responses to the Survey

Student Status	Questionnaires Mailed	Usable Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
Applied	502	371	73.9
Inquired	<u>631</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>37.6</u>
Total	1133	602	53.7

Hypothesis 1:

Prospective Hope College freshmen have definitive information needs of what they want to know, from whom, when, and how.

There is no simple statistical evaluation of data which relates directly to this question but responses to a number of questions must be analyzed before the hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. If an evaluation of all of the areas questioned, i.e., what, when, and how, appear to be positive with regard to students having definitive information needs,

then the hypothesis is accepted. Any of them implying a negative response rejects the hypothesis. The term "prospective Hope College freshmen" includes both inquired and applied and the analysis covers the separate and combined responses of the two groups.

What Students Want to Know. Table 4-2 shows a complete listing of all items in the questionnaire listed under Question 9 where students have the opportunity to check what they want to know about a college. An annotation of an item is considered a "yes" response or indicates that the student has an interest in that particular item. Any item left blank is considered a "no" response, or the student has no interest in the item. The raw data are translated into percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth, and entered in the table.

Table 4-2 shows a rank ordering of responses to the question "what" students want to know about a college. Of the thirty-nine possible selections there are only eighteen where students do not select either for or against an item by a two to one margin. Even where preferences are closer they are distinguishable.

In only one item, student newspaper, is there less than ten percent of the respondents showing interest and only six items have less than twenty percent response. Even though their interest is low on these items it shows that students can identify what they do not want. When combined with their clear responses to what they do want, in terms of information about colleges, the student's ability to definitively distinguish items of preferential interest about a college becomes apparent.

Table 4-2

What Students Want to Know About a
College--Combined Inquired and Applied
(N=587)

Item of Interest;	% Indicating an Interest	% Indicating No Interest
Course Offerings	84.1	15.9
Fields to Major In	75.9	24.1
Location	75.4	24.6
Cost	74.6	25.4
Academic Reputation	67.6	32.4
Required Courses	56.1	43.9
Entrance Requirements	52.8	47.2
Financial Aid	52.5	47.5
Class Sizes	51.9	48.1
Type of Students	51.1	48.9
Student/Faculty Ratio	50.6	49.4
Job Placement of Graduates	48.8	51.2
Attention from Faculty	47.5	52.5
Social Life	45.2	54.8
Accreditation	43.4	56.6
Sports	40.8	59.2
Housing	39.8	60.2
Probable Courses to Take	39.1	60.9
Rules and Regulations	35.0	65.0
Spiritual Life	34.7	65.3
Typical Freshman Year	34.6	65.4
Expected Help in Course Work	34.5	65.5
Admissions Process	33.8	76.2
Philosophy of the College	28.5	71.5

Table 4-2, Continued.

Item of Interest;	% Indicating an Interest	% Indicating No Interest
Class Schedule	26.5	73.5
Average Freshman Grade Point	26.4	73.6
Nearby Town	26.1	73.9
Buildings (Type and Age)	25.4	74.6
Food Service	22.0	78.0
Degrees of Faculty	21.8	78.2
Library	20.2	79.8
Size	20.2	79.8
Climate	19.7	80.3
Expected Help in Personal Problems	19.5	80.5
Foreign Study Opportunities	16.5	83.5
Discussion on Liberal Arts	13.6	86.4
School History	13.1	86.9
Student Government	11.1	88.9
Student Newspaper	10.3	89.7

When Students Want to Know. The question of "when" a student wants to hear about a college can be determined by analyzing the responses to questions four and five. Time choices of early, middle, or late are options for three alternative years in high school; i.e., the sophomore, junior, or senior year. Tallies are made of each combination and the percent of the total for each is recorded in Table 4-3 for "beginning to make plans" and Table 4-4 for "finalizing plans."

The combined responses of inquired and applied in Table 4-3 show that nearly two-thirds of the students begin making their plans between the middle of the junior year and early in the senior year. This period similarly draws the majority of responses from the inquired students at 66.6% and the applied students at 66.0%. These figures show some general agreement about the time when most respondents begin to think about college plans. Even though other time periods show much smaller interest in beginning to make college plans, it is clear that students do discriminate in this area.

A look at Table 4-4 gives an idea of when students finalize college plans. Generally the senior year is the time when most solidify their college selection as over 95% of the respondents select this year. Inquired students have 92.3% making the decision in the senior year while 97.2% of the applied make their decision then. The smallest percentage of decisions are made in the early part of the senior year while the majority are made in the middle or the late part. With this kind of grouping in one particular year, it allows the conclusion that students do know "when" they make a decision finalizing plans for college.

Table 4-3

When Prospective Hope College Students
Begin Making College Plans

Time of Decision	% of Combined Inquired & Applied (N=557)	% of Inquired (N=297)	% of Applied (N=260)
Early - Sophomore Year in High School	3.1	5.8	1.7
Middle - Sophomore Year in High School	2.3	4.0	1.4
Late - Sophomore Year in High School	2.0	4.3	.8
Early - Junior Year in High School	9.9	7.6	11.2
Middle - Junior Year in High School	19.7	22.7	18.2
Late - Junior Year in High School	20.2	23.4	18.5
Early - Senior Year in High School	26.2	20.5	29.3
Middle - Senior Year in High School	13.8	9.0	16.4
Late - Senior Year in High School	2.6	2.9	2.5

Table 4-4
When Prospective Hope College Students
Finalize College Plans

Time of Decision	% of Combined Inquired & Applied (N=549)	% of Inquired (N=192)	% of Applied (N=357)
Early - Sophomore Year in High School	.3	.7	0
Middle - Sophomore Year in High School	0	0	0
Late - Sophomore Year in High School	.4	1.1	0
Early - Junior Year in High School	.3	.7	0
Middle - Junior Year in High School	1.2	1.5	1.0
Late - Junior Year in High School	2.4	3.7	1.8
Early - Senior Year in High School	95.6 {	92.3 {	97.2 {
Middle - Senior Year in High School			
Late - Senior Year in High School			
	14.2	16.4	12.9
	42.4	45.6	40.6
	39.0	30.3	43.7

Together Tables 4-3 and 4-4 show that students are definitive in when they begin their college plans and when they finalize them and that such distinctions are not just reserved for only applied or only inquired.

How Students Want to Know. To determine "how" students want to learn about a college, two avenues must be pursued. First is needed a response from the question of "from whom students want to hear" and secondly a response to the types of materials students review to learn more about a college. In Question Ten students have the opportunity to identify the kind of information piece they would like to receive and from whom they would like to receive it. Their responses are labeled as "yes" for an individual selecting a particular item and a "no" for leaving it blank. The yes responses are tallied and a percentage is computed for each combination of information provider and type of information material.

Table 4-5 shows that over twice as many students are interested in receiving a brochure from a student as they are a brochure from any other information group. In terms of letters they prefer student-to-student contact, with the administration being a close second and faculty a close third. Students prefer interviews with faculty over students and administration, while on the telephone they prefer to talk with administrators or students. Receiving a postcard draws a 28.9% response in favor of students and a 27.9% response in favor of administrators. It is clear that prospective students prefer to hear from currently enrolled students in most of the media and have little interest in hearing from parents of currently enrolled students or alumni.

Table 4-5

From Whom Prospective Hope Students
Want to Hear and by What Means--
Combined Inquired and Applied
(N=587)

Information Groups:	Type of Information:				
	Brochure	Letter	Interview	Phone	Postcard
Faculty	25.2	32.2	45.3	14.1	17.0
Students	59.8	36.4	44.0	25.2	28.9
Alumni	15.0	8.8	12.4	7.6	7.5
Administration	27.8	32.7	36.6	29.2	27.9
Parents of Current Students	3.1	3.8	2.2	3.2	2.4

In Table 4-6, the inquired respondents prefer a letter from students while in Table 4-7 applied students prefer a letter from faculty over the other possibilities. Both groups would like an interview with a faculty member but prefer a phone call from administration to that of any other group. The postcard response is in favor of administrators, as far as the inquired are concerned, while the applied prefer a postcard from students. Overall, it is apparent that students know from whom they want to hear and through what media and that such distinctions are not reserved for only applied or only inquired.

To further pursue the question of "how," Question Seven asks a student to select preferences from nine specific information pieces that would attract attention during college selection. Question Eight asks the student to identify specific information items to be reviewed in learning more about a college. Table 4-8 shows that students have the greatest preference for the catalog, with 56.5% preferring that piece. Next a letter is preferred, but more by the applied students, almost twice as much, than by those who inquired. A brochure is the third item to attract a student's attention, with the fact sheet being a close fourth. Other responses show some interest in a packet and a poster. The overwhelming selection of the catalog, and the high interest in the letter and the brochure, show that students are able to decide how they want their information.

When asked the kinds of materials they would review to learn about college, responses in Table 4-9 show the overwhelming favorite again to be the catalog. A packet of various information is the next preference while

Table 4-6

From Whom Prospective Hope Students
Want to Hear and by What Means--
Inquired Only
(N=206)

Information Groups:	Type of Information:				
	Brochure	Letter	Interview	Phone	Postcard
Faculty	27.9	22.1	41.8	12.2	14.6
Students	58.8	36.4	36.7	23.1	25.5
Alumni	16.7	9.5	14.6	7.8	8.8
Administration	35.0	34.4	34.4	33.0	30.6
Parents of Current Students	4.8	4.1	1.7	3.4	3.4

Table 4-7

From Whom Prospective Hope Students
Want to Hear and by What Means--
Applied Only
(N=381)

Information Groups:	Type of Information:				
	Brochure	Letter	Interview	Phone	Postcard
Faculty	23.7	37.7	47.2	15.1	18.2
Students	60.3	36.4	48.0	26.3	30.7
Alumni	14.2	8.5	11.2	7.5	6.8
Administration	23.9	31.8	37.8	27.2	26.5
Parents of Current Students	2.2	3.7	2.4	3.1	1.8

Table 4-8

Mail Attracting Attention of
Prospective Hope College Students

Types of Mail	% of Combined Inquired & Applied (N=587)	% of Inquired (N=206)	% of Applied (N=381)
Catalog	56.5	50.7	56.5
Letter	42.4	26.8	42.4
Brochure	33.6	37.2	31.3
Fact Sheet	32.9	36.8	30.5
Poster	24.4	29.4	21.3
Packet	20.8	19.6	22.1
Reply Card	13.6	17.8	11.1
Map	5.0	6.5	4.0
Postcard	4.3	5.2	3.7

Table 4-9

Materials Prospective Hope College Students
Would Review to Learn More About a College

Types of Materials	% of Combined Inquired & Applied (N=587)	% of Inquired (N=206)	% of Applied (N=381)
Catalog	62.4	58.5	64.5
Packet	47.0	51.4	44.7
Brochure--Pictures & Brief Facts	37.8	42.2	35.5
Personal Letters	26.8	16.3	32.5
Brochure--Pictures & Descriptive Sentences	25.3	24.5	25.7
Brochure--Brief Facts Only	3.1	2.7	3.3
Brochure--Descriptive Sentences Only	1.2	1.7	.9
Brochure--Pictures Only	.95	2.7	0

brochures with pictures and brief facts rank third. Personal letters and a brochure with pictures and descriptive sentences follow in fourth and fifth place and students have very definite ideas about not wanting a brochure with "pictures only" nor one with just long descriptive sentences. Students being able to discriminate so distinctively are again showing that they are able to determine "how" they want their information. The data in Tables 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7 reinforce this finding while also suggesting that students know from whom they want to hear.

One can conclude, then, from the above, that students have definitive information needs of what they want to know, from whom, when, and how.

Decision: The Hypothesis is Accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

Hope College has not been adequately meeting those information needs.

To accept or reject Hypothesis 2 requires a review of the responses to Question Six in which a student identifies whether the information aids in a decision to apply or enroll in Hope College. The response to this question, combined with the student's status, i.e., either inquired or applied, will tell whether or not Hope's information aids in the decision making of a student. A positive relationship, i.e., information does influence and the student applied, suggests that Hope is adequately meeting information needs. A response that Hope information influences but the student does not apply suggests that Hope does not meet information needs. A similar comparison of Hope information influence on enrollment with a student's status will have implications for Hope's ability to meet information needs. A comparison can also be made of responses to Question Nine, i.e., types of information students want to know, with current Hope College information pieces to determine if Hope is meeting information needs.

Table 4-10 looks at the influence of Hope information upon a student's application. An inquired student, by definition, is one who asks for information but never applies. As 62% of those say that the Hope material does not influence their decision to apply, the implication is that the Hope material does not influence them negatively or, in other words, move them to be a non-applicant. Conversely, those students who

Table 4-10

Influence of Hope College Information
on Application for Admission

Response to Question of Influence of Materials:	% Inquired (N=206)	% Applied (N=381)
Yes	35.8	78.1
No	62.0	21.9

do apply, under the "applied" responses, show that 78.1% are influenced by the Hope material to move in that direction. The fact that the Hope material does not influence the inquired students to be non-applicants but does influence the applied students to make application suggests that the Hope material influences positively and that Hope is adequately meeting information needs.

A similar analysis of Table 4-11, i.e., the influence of Hope material on enrollment, shows a similar result. Nearly 72% of the inquired students say that the Hope information does not influence them to not enroll. Conversely, 71% of the applied students say that the Hope material influences them to make a decision to enroll. By not influencing students to keep from enrolling, and by having an influence on those who do enroll, it is possible to conclude that Hope information has a positive

Table 4-11

Influence of Hope College Information
on Enrollment in Hope College

Response to Question of Influence of Materials:	% Inquired (N=206)	% Applied (N=381)
Yes	22.9	71.0
No	71.9	29.0

influence on student applications and enrollment and therefore is meeting student information needs.

Table 4-12, which compares the student information needs of combined inquired and applied students with Hope College's ability to meet those needs, shows only five areas of student interest that Hope does not now approach. These are class sizes, job placement of graduates, class schedule, freshman grade point average and nearby town. Five out of the thirty-six possible choices shows that Hope is missing 13.8% of the information desired, or is meeting 86.2%, which is considered "adequate" in terms of Hypothesis 2.

Table 4-13 compares the student information needs, by type and from whom, with information provided by Hope College. Two areas of student information which Hope does not meet, which have substantial interest

Table 4-12

Hope College Information Offerings
Compared to Student Information Needs
(X = offered by Hope)

Items	Catalog	Hope at A Glance	Academic Experience Brochure	Financial Aid	Letters	Student Brochure
Course Offerings	X					
Fields to Major in	X	X				
Location	X	X				
Cost	X	X		X	X	
Academic Reputation			X			
Required Courses	X					
Entrance Requirements	X	X				
Financial Aid	X			X	X	X
Class Sizes						
Type of Students	X					X
Student/Faculty Ratio	X	X				
Job Placement of Graduates						
Attention from Faculty			X			
Social Life	X				X	X
Accreditation	X		X			
Sports	X	X				
Housing					X	
Probable Courses to Take	X					
Rules and Regulations	X					
Spiritual Life	X					

Table 4-12, Continued

Items	Catalog	Hope at A Glance	Academic Experience Brochure	Financial Aid	Letters	Student Brochure
Typical Fresh- man Year	X					
Expected Help in Course Work						
Admissions Process	X					
Philosophy of the College	X		X			
Class Schedule						
Average Freshman Grade Point Average						
Nearby Town						
Buildings (Type and Age)	X					
Food Service	X					
Degrees of Faculty	X					
Library	X	X				
Size	X	X				
Climate						
Expected Help in Personal Problems	X					
Foreign Study Opportunities	X		X			
Discussion on Liberal Arts	X		X		X	
School History	X					
Student Government	X					X
Student Newspaper	X					

Table 4-13

From Whom Prospective Hope Students
Want to Hear and by What Means,
Both Inquired and Applied Compared
With Hope College Information Provided
(N=587)

Information From:	Type of Information*:				
	Brochure	Letter	Interview	Phone	Postcard
Faculty	25.2 (X)	32.2 (X)	45.3 (X)	14.1	17.0
Students	59.8 (X)	36.4 (X)	44.0 (X)	25.2 (X)	28.9 (X)
Alumni	15.0	8.8	12.4	7.6 (X)	7.5
Administration	27.8 (X)	32.7 (X)	36.6 (X)	29.2	27.9
Parents of Current Students	3.1	3.8	2.2	3.2 (X)	2.4

* X = Hope College provides this information.

(nearly thirty percent in both areas) are phone calls and postcards from administrators. A brochure from alumni, faculty phone calls and faculty postcards receive some attraction but not a major interest. Hope is deficient in all but one parent area of contact and a similar condition exists with alumni. Both are low interest items.

Where interest is the highest, i.e., across the board in student-to-student contact, Hope is meeting student needs as it is in all areas in which interest ranks thirty percent or higher. As most of the needs are met, by reviewing Table 4-13 the conclusion is drawn that Hope is "adequately" meeting student needs. Hope makes available all of the materials suggested in Table 4-8 which attract the attention of prospective Hope College students and again the conclusion can be drawn that Hope is adequately meeting student information needs. Further, the positive relationship between the information provided and its influence on the student's decision to apply and enroll again leads to the conclusion that Hope is adequately meeting student information needs. All areas reviewed suggest Hope is adequately meeting student information needs.

Decision: The Hypothesis is Rejected.

Hypothesis 3:

There is a difference in the information needs of men and women as well as non-college-bound students and those bound for two-year junior colleges, four-year private colleges, and four-year public universities.

Solving Hypothesis 3 begins with an analysis of the data in Tables 4-14 and 4-15. In Table 4-14 a comparison is made of information needs of males and females. Tabulations are made on all respondents combined, i.e., inquired and applied. The computation of the chi square value is obtained to allow comparisons with the tabled value and determination of the statistical significance of any difference which may occur. The higher the value of the significance the less real difference there is between the subjects. Conversely, the lower the value of the significance the greater the probability of a real difference between the subjects.

A look at Table 4-14 shows only seven items in which males and females differ significantly in their desire for information. These are: housing, entrance requirements information, foreign study opportunities, class schedules, sports, admissions processing, and required course work. Females express a greater interest in information over males in the areas of: housing, entrance requirements, foreign study opportunities, class schedules, admissions processing, and required courses. Males, on the other hand, show a greater need for more information than the females in the area of sports. As seven of the thirty-six items listed show significant difference in information needs between the men and women, it is

Table 4-14

Comparison of Male and
Female Information Needs

Item of Interest:	% Male (N=315)	% Female (N=272)	Significance
Size	79.6	81.4	.6381
Location	72.4	78.9	.0882
Nearby Town	24.8	26.8	.9068
Climate	20.4	18.8	.6958
Buildings (Type and Age)	26.7	24.0	.5136
Course Offerings	80.9	87.9	.0278
Fields to Major In	74.2	77.8	.3558
Cost	71.6	78.1	.0857
Academic Reputation	69.8	65.2	.2749
Accreditation	40.9	46.4	.2086
Financial Aid	48.4	57.2	.0415
Housing	33.8	46.9	.0016
Social Life	41.8	49.2	.0846
Job Placement of Graduates	49.3	48.2	.0368
School History	12.9	13.1	.9749
Faculty Degrees	23.1	20.4	.4816
Type of Students	51.1	51.0	.9494
Spiritual Life	30.2	40.0	.0173
Rules and Regulations	30.7	40.0	.0235
Attention by Faculty	50.7	43.8	.1154
Student/Faculty Ratio	48.9	52.6	.4190

Table 4-14, Continued.

Item of Interest:	% Male (N=315)	% Female (N=272)	Significance
Expected Help in Course Work	31.1	38.4	.0775
Help with Personal Problems	16.4	23.9	.0605
Food Service	23.6	20.1	.3643
Class Sizes	51.6	52.3	.9189
Entrance Requirements	43.6	63.6	.0000
Foreign Study Opportunities	9.3	24.7	.0000
Class Schedules	21.8	32.0	.0070
Philosophy	27.6	29.6	.6414
Liberal Arts	10.2	17.5	.0142
Typical Freshman Year	32.9	36.6	.3927
Sports	47.1	33.5	.0011
Admissions Process	28.9	39.4	.0091
Required Courses	49.8	63.4	.0012
Library	16.9	24.0	.0425

concluded that overall there is a significant difference in student information needs between the two groups.

Table 4-15 shows a comparison of information needs between students bound for Hope College, other four-year institutions, and the junior college. Again, utilizing chi square, significant differences are noticed in the areas of: size, major fields, academic reputation, accreditation, social life, attention of the faculty to students, student-faculty ratios, class schedules, and philosophy. In all but two areas the junior college students show less interest than do the Hope-bound or the other four-year college-bound students. The two areas in which the junior college students have more interest are accreditation and class schedules. As nine of the thirty-six items have any significant difference between the groups it is concluded that there is significant difference between the information needs of Hope College students, other four-year institutions, and junior college students. When combined with information showing the several items of significant difference between males and females one can conclude that overall there are major differences in information needs between the groups studied in these questions.

Tables 4-16 and 4-17 make comparisons of responses of the various groups relative to Hope College material that attracts their attention. Comparisons of the interests of these groups and measuring their significant differences further clarifies the decision in Hypothesis 3.

Table 4-16 compares male and female responses to the question of "what attracted your attention." Of the nine items listed, significant differences occur in five of them. Female preferences are stronger in all

Table 4-15

Comparison of Information Needs of Students
Bound For: Hope College, Other Four-Year
Institutions and Junior College

Item of Interest:	% Hope College (N=259)	% Other Four-Year Colleges (N=220)	% Junior College (N=30)	Significance
Size	88.3	78.0	65.1	.0000
Location	72.4	79.3	83.7	.1818
Nearby Town	25.7	26.8	30.2	.5944
Climate	22.2	17.5	20.9	.5922
Buildings (Type and Age)	27.8	24.2	30.2	.4360
Course Offerings	83.8	84.7	88.4	.6211
Fields to Major In	78.7	80.9	72.1	.0006
Cost	73.2	73.9	93.0	.3002
Academic Reputation	75.4	71.3	58.1	.0000
Accreditation	46.2	43.6	65.1	.0019
Financial Aid	56.2	45.2	51.2	.2422
Housing	43.0	36.6	34.9	.2813
Social Life	53.8	43.0	23.3	.0002
Job Placement of Graduates	48.4	48.4	53.5	.9217
School History	11.9	13.4	11.6	.3572
Faculty Degrees	24.1	23.6	14.0	.3930
Type of Students	56.0	47.8	53.5	.3256
Spiritual Life	38.9	30.6	37.2	.2499
Rules and Regulations	33.5	35.3	40.0	.5752
Attention by Faculty	59.7	41.1	44.2	.0000
Student/Faculty Ratio	59.2	48.4	46.5	.0008

Table 4-15, Continued.

Item of Interest:	% Hope College (N=259)	% Other Four-Year Colleges (N=220)	% Junior College (N=30)	Significance
Expected Help in Course Work	35.1	32.8	44.2	.6022
Help with Personal Problems	17.6	19.1	25.6	.4306
Food Service	26.2	18.5	14.0	.1897
Class Sizes	56.0	53.8	44.2	.0453
Entrance Requirements	49.2	54.5	65.1	.4147
Foreign Study Opportunities	16.8	20.4	7.0	.1121
Class Schedules	28.9	19.1	53.5	.0015 —
Philosophy	33.2	29.0	18.6	.0035 —
Liberal Arts	16.5	12.4	7.0	.4302
Typical Freshman Year	34.3	34.1	32.6	.6190
Sports	47.3	34.1	48.8	.0780
Admissions Process	30.5	33.1	51.2	.0102
Required Courses	54.3	53.2	83.7	.0153
Library	21.9	20.4	14.0	.6098

Table 4-16

Comparison of Mail Received from Hope College
That Attracted Attention--Male and Female

Item of Interest:	Male	Female	Significance
Catalog	49.3	62.0	.0031
Letter	47.6	41.0	.1298
Fact Sheet	29.8	35.8	.1416
Brochure	26.7	38.7	.0026
Packet	15.6	25.0	.0059
Poster	13.1	31.7	.0000
Reply Card	7.1	17.5	.0001
Maps	4.4	5.6	.6251
Postcard	3.1	5.4	.2810

five areas which include: poster, almost three to one, packet, nearly two to one, and the brochure, catalog, and the reply card. As these are statistically significant differences the conclusion is drawn that there are significant differences in attracting male and female attention with information pieces through the mail.

Table 4-17 continues the analysis but makes comparisons between students bound for Hope College, other four-year colleges, and the junior college. Three of the items show statistically significant differences which are: (a) the letter, with Hope-bound students having more interest than the others, almost double the preference to the junior college student; (b) the postcard which the junior college student prefers two to one over the other two categories; and (c) the reply card which the four-year college-bound student prefers two to one over the junior college student and three to one over the Hope-bound students. As three of the nine areas have statistically significant differences, it is concluded that there are major differences in preference between the three groups in information which attracts attention.

Further consideration of the third hypothesis which seeks differences in information needs is pursued in Tables 4-18 and 4-19. A comparison is made of how students want information and from whom. In Table 4-18 males and females are compared and out of twenty-five possible preferences only one, a brochure from a student, has a preference of statistical significance of women over men by 11%.

Table 4-17

Comparison of Mail Received from Hope College
That Attracted Attention--Hope College Bound,
Other Four-Year College Bound and Junior College Bound

Item of Interest;	Hope College	Other Four-Year Colleges	Junior College	Significance
Catalog	58.3	56.1	46.5	.1524
Letter	54.6	40.1	25.6	.0001
Fact Sheet	30.5	34.3	39.5	.4357
Brochure	27.3	34.7	27.9	.4706
Packet	18.9	19.8	16.2	.6248
Poster	18.3	19.1	32.6	.0453
Reply Card	6.7	18.5	9.3	.0054
Maps	3.2	7.96	0	.1701
Postcard	3.2	3.2	7.0	.0069

Table 4-18

Comparison of Male and Female Responses
of How Students Want Information and From Whom

Type of Information	Male (N=315)	Female (N=272)	Significance
Brochure from:			
Faculty	25.8	24.5	.7914
Student	54.7	65.7	.0083
Alumni	16.0	13.9	.5566
Administration	24.9	31.2	.1085
Parent	2.7	3.6	.1739
Letter from:			
Faculty	31.6	33.0	.7779
Student	33.8	39.4	.1823
Alumni	7.6	10.3	.3048
Administration	30.7	35.1	.2980
Parent	4.4	3.1	.5249
Interview with:			
Faculty	47.6	42.8	.2826
Student	47.1	40.5	.1251
Alumni	14.7	9.8	.0970
Administration	38.7	34.3	.3105
Parent	2.7	1.6	.5172
Phone Call from:			
Faculty	14.2	13.9	.9894
Student	21.8	29.1	.0513
Alumni	10.2	4.6	.0171
Administration	31.1	27.0	.3250
Parent	3.1	3.3	.9436
Postcard from:			
Faculty	18.2	15.5	.4368
Student	25.8	32.5	.0904
Alumni	8.0	7.0	.7490
Administration	26.7	29.4	.5231
Parent	2.2	2.6	.9922

In Table 4-19 a comparison is made of Hope College-bound students, those bound for other four-year schools and the junior college. Only two areas show statistically significant differences out of twenty-five possibilities. Junior college students prefer an interview with an administrator in numbers greater than those of Hope College-bound students or those going to other four-year schools. Junior college students also prefer a phone call from an administrator in numbers almost two to one over that of the Hope College-bound student or those going to the four-year schools.

Even though the differences which are statistically significant are small in number compared with the total number of possibilities, the conclusion is that there is a significant difference in preferences of the kind of information students want and from whom it should come.

In total, Hypothesis 3 is examined in three ways:

(a) Comparisons are made on student information needs with six items significantly different between men and women and nine significantly different when comparing Hope College-bound students with other four-year college-bound students and junior college-bound students. As such, it is concluded that significant differences occur between the categories.

(b) Looking at the items which attract attention of the groups studied shows a majority of statistically significant differences between male and female and three differences out of nine possibilities, between the Hope bound, four-year college bound, and junior college-bound students. Such strong evidence supports significant differences between male and female, and those bound for Hope, other four-year colleges and the junior college.

Table 4-19

Comparison of Hope College Bound, Other Four-Year
College Bound and Junior College Bound Student Responses of
How Students Want Information and From Whom

Type of Information	Hope College (N=259)	Other Four-Year Colleges (N=220)	Junior College (N=30)	Significance
Brochure from:				
Faculty	26.2	23.9	16.3	.4842
Student	59.2	62.7	53.5	.8937
Alumni	13.0	16.6	16.3	.5711
Administration	22.7	32.5	37.2	.1458
Parent	2.7	2.9	9.3	.5076
Letter from:				
Faculty	37.6	29.3	25.6	.0556
Student	35.9	35.3	55.8	.1064
Alumni	9.7	5.4	9.3	.0221
Administration	29.2	39.8	25.6	.0586
Parent	4.3	2.6	7.0	.6743
Interview with:				
Faculty	46.8	47.8	46.5	.1500
Student	47.0	39.1	39.5	.4350
Alumni	10.0	15.9	20.9	.2026
Administration	36.5	39.8	65.1	.0026
Parent	1.9	2.6	4.7	.8940
Phone Call from:				
Faculty	13.8	13.7	14.0	.8650
Student	25.7	23.6	27.9	.8434
Alumni	8.4	6.1	9.3	.6140
Administration	25.4	29.6	58.1	.0054
Parent	4.6	1.9	6.9	.3119
Postcard from:				
Faculty	18.9	16.2	11.6	.5345
Student	29.7	24.8	32.6	.4116
Alumni	7.0	5.7	16.3	.1165
Administration	26.2	29.6	41.9	.3459
Parent	1.4	2.6	7.0	.3030

(c) The third review looks at how students want their information and from whom. Again there are significant differences, although few in number, among the various groups.

Decision: The Hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4:

Hope College applicants have information needs which differ from non-applicants.

A look at Table 4-20 shows the comparison of applied student information needs with inquired students. There are nine areas in which significant differences occur: size, academic reputation, social life, faculty degrees, types of students, attention given by the faculty, class sizes, philosophy, and sports. The applied students have a greater interest in all of these areas over those who inquired. As nine of the thirty-six areas have any significant difference, it is concluded that there are significant differences in terms of information needs between the applied and the inquired.

Making another comparison between inquired and applied students in Table 4-21, only one difference appears statistically significant, that is, applied students prefer the personal letter almost two to one to the inquired students. All other items show very little preference differential between the two groups; however, the one major difference allows the conclusion that applied and inquired students have interests which vary in terms of what attracts their attention in looking for a college.

Moving to Table 4-22, comparisons of applied and inquired show only two areas of statistically significant difference in what students want to hear from whom. The inquired students prefer a brochure from administrators in numbers significantly different from the applied

Table 4-20

Comparison of Applied and Inquired
Information Needs

Item of Interest	% Applied (N=381)	% Inquired (N=206)	Significance
Size	86.4	69.4	.0000
Location	74.3	77.6	.4343
Nearby Town	26.6	25.8	.6672
Climate	20.4	18.4	.6288
Buildings (Type and Age)	26.5	23.5	.4855
Course Offerings	84.2	84.0	.9503
Fields to Major In	79.4	69.4	.0091
Cost	73.5	76.5	.4855
Academic Reputation	74.8	54.4	.0000 -
Accreditation	43.2	43.8	.9433
Financial Aid	54.2	49.3	.2939
Housing	42.3	35.4	.1231
Social Life	51.8	33.0	.0000
Job Placement of Graduates	50.4	45.9	.3460
School History	12.3	14.3	.5836
Faculty Degrees	25.7	14.6	.0026 -
Type of Students	56.1	41.8	.0013 -
Spiritual Life	38.4	27.9	.0137
Rules and Regulations	37.0	31.3	.2004
Attention by Faculty	54.6	34.4	.0000 -
Student/Faculty Ratio	53.8	44.6	.0390

Table 4-20, Continued

Item of Interest	% Applied (N=381)	% Inquired (N=206)	Significance
Expected Help in Course Work	36.8	30.3	.1368
Help with Personal Problems	20.4	17.7	.4938
Food Service	23.2	19.7	.3929
Class Sizes	56.8	42.9	.0016
Entrance Requirements	51.3	55.8	.3399
Foreign Study Opportunities	17.8	14.0	.2738
Class Schedules	27.0	25.5	.7657
Philosophy	33.1	20.1	.0012
Liberal Arts	15.3	10.5	.1435
Typical Freshman Year	36.8	30.6	.1603
Sports	45.8	31.6	.0012
Admissions Process	33.1	35.0	.7009
Required Courses	58.3	52.0	.1725
Library	21.5	17.7	.3208

Table 4-21

Comparison of Mail Received from Hope College
That Attracted Attention--Applied and Inquired

Item of Interest:	Applied	Inquired	Significance
Catalog	57.7	50.3	.1034
Letter	53.7	27.6	.00001 -
Fact Sheet	31.3	35.0	.4003
Brochure	29.9	36.3	.1341
Packet	20.4	19.1	.7761
Poster	18.9	27.2	.0492
Reply Card	9.7	16.0	.0363
Maps	4.2	6.5	.3243
Postcard	3.9	4.8	.7606

Table 4-22

Comparison of Applied and Inquired Responses
of How Students Want Information and From Whom

Type of Information	Applied (N=381)	Inquired (N=206)	Significance
Brochure from:			
Faculty	23.7	27.9	.3111
Student	60.3	58.8	.7997
Alumni	16.7	14.2	.4893
Administration	23.9	35.0	.0054
Parent	2.2	4.8	.1458
Letter from:			
Faculty	37.7	22.1	.0001
Student	36.4	36.4	.9288
Alumni	8.5	9.5	.7775
Administration	31.8	34.4	.5915
Parent	3.7	4.0	.9851
Interview with:			
Faculty	41.8	47.2	.2427
Student	48.0	36.7	.0113
Alumni	11.2	14.6	.2868
Administration	37.9	34.4	.4513
Parent	2.4	1.7	.8018
Phone Call from:			
Faculty	15.1	12.2	.4147
Student	23.1	26.2	.4585
Alumni	7.5	7.8	.9694
Administration	27.2	33.0	.1689
Parent	3.1	3.4	.9488
Postcard from:			
Faculty	18.2	14.6	.3243
Student	30.7	25.5	.2195
Alumni	6.8	8.8	.4647
Administration	26.5	30.6	.3317
Parent	1.8	3.4	.3679

students and the applied students show a preference of statistical significance in receiving a letter from faculty. Although these are the only two statistics that are significantly different in preferences between the inquired and the applied out of the twenty-five possible choices, one can conclude that the two groups do have different needs.

Findings of Tables 4-20, 4-21, and 4-22 reveal statistically significant differences occurring in each comparison of information needs leading to the conclusion that applied students have information needs which differ from inquired.

Decision: The Hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 5:

Hope College informational material is average when compared to informational material received by prospective Hope College freshmen from other colleges.

The most direct analysis of this hypothesis is a review of Table 4-23 which shows the cumulative frequency of the combined responses of applied and inquired students. The cumulative frequency shows that 82.7% of the respondents find the Hope College information to be good or superior. When the "average" category is added, the frequency jumps to 96.1%, i.e., 96.1% of the students feel that the Hope College material is average or above when compared to materials of other colleges. The term "average" is a typical middle response on a five point Likert scale.

The comparison of applied to inquired responses in the table show that nearly 13% more of the applied students find the Hope material superior and 2% more see it as "good"; a statistically significant difference. The inquired students, however, find Hope material to be average 20.8% of the time while the applied see it as average only 9.4% of the time.

Table 4-24 compares the male and female responses, and no significant differences occur. Again the cumulative frequency shows 96.1% indicating that Hope material is average or above.

Table 4-23

Hope College Material Compared with
Material of Other Colleges--
Responses of Applied, Inquired and Combined

Rating	% Applied (N=381)	% Inquired (N=206)	Significance	% Combined (N=587)	Cumulative Frequency
Superior	37.9	24.5		33.2	33.2
Good	50.2	48.3		49.5	82.7
Average	9.4	20.8	.00001	13.4	96.1
Below Average	.6	0		.4	96.5
Poor	0	1.0		.4	96.9
No Response	1.9	5.4		3.1	100.0

Table 4-24

Hope College Material Compared with
Material of Other Colleges--
Male and Female Responses

Rating	% Male (N=315)	% Female (N=272)	Significance	Cumulative Frequency
Superior	35.6	30.4		33.2
Good	48.0	51.3	.3534	82.7
Average	12.4	14.4		96.1
Below Average	.4	.3		96.5
Poor	.4	.3		96.9
No Response	1.7	3.3		100.0

Table 4-25 compares the Hope-bound students with those going to other four-year colleges and those going to a junior college. Significant differences exist as the Hope-bound students find the material superior in 39.7% of their responses while the other four-year college-bound students think it superior in 29% of the cases and junior college-bound students in only 30%. More of the other four-year college-bound students find the Hope material to be good, 52% of them do, while the Hope-bound find it good 48% of the time and the junior college-bound only 39.5%. Only nine percent of the students going to Hope think the material is average while 16% who go to other four-year colleges find it average and junior college students have the same finding only 23.3% of the time.

Although in the case of comparing the Hope College-bound students to those bound for other four-year colleges and the junior college significant differences in responses occur, the overwhelming majority, 82.7%, find the Hope materials to be above average.

Decision: The Hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4-25

Hope College Material Compared with Material of
Other Colleges--Responses of Students Bound
for Hope College, Other Four-Year Colleges and Junior College

Rating	% Hope Bound (N=259)	% Other Four-Year College Bound (N=220)	% Junior College Bound (N=30)	Significance
Superior	39.7	29.0	30.2	
Good	48.1	52.6	39.5	
Average	9.2	16.2	23.3	.00001
Below Average	.3	0	4.7	
Poor	0	.6	2.3	

Hypothesis 6:

Parents are a major influence in the decision making process associated with the selection of college by potential Hope College freshmen.

Table 4-26 shows no significant statistical difference between applied and inquired responses to the question of the most influential person in their decision making, but the parents are the overwhelming favorite with friends ranking second. Table 4-27 compares male and female responses. Again the parents are an overwhelming influence in the decision and no statistically significant differences occur. Friends are the second most influential in planning futures.

Table 4-28 shows the responses of college-bound students to the question of who is most influential in planning their future. Overwhelmingly, in the combined column, 53.9% of the students respond that their parents are most influential. At least 50% of the respondents in each category, i.e., Hope College bound, other four-year college bound, and junior college bound, say their parents are the most influential while friends pull a second place ranking in the combined categories. The exception is in the junior college-bound student responses where 23.8% feel their guidance counselor is most influential. This probably accounts for the significant difference found in the statistical analysis as most of the other responses appear to be somewhat close together in their percentages.

Table 4-26

The Most Influential Person in Planning Future--
Responses of Applied, Inquired and Combined

Person	% Applied (N=132)	% Inquired (N=258)	% Combined (N=390)	Significance
Parents	56.8	46.8	53.4	
Friends	14.1	23.4	17.3	
Brothers and Sisters	6.0	5.3	5.7	
Guidance Counselor	6.0	10.6	7.6	
Teacher	5.3	6.8	6.3	
College Students	2.1	3.5	3.1	
Alumnus	1.1	.8	.9	
Campus Official	.5	3.5	2.5	.0805

Table 4-27

The Most Influential Person in Planning Future--
Responses of Male and Female

Person	% Male (N=213)	% Female (N=176)	% Combined Male and Female (N=389)	Significance
Parents	52.0	55.2	53.4	
Friends	17.1	17.5	17.3	
Guidance Counselor	7.9	7.1	7.6	
Teacher	7.2	5.2	6.3	
Brothers and Sisters	4.6	7.1	5.7	
Campus Official	4.0	.8	2.5	.6244
College Students	3.3	2.8	3.1	
Alumnus	.7	1.2	.9	

Table 4-28

The Most Influential Person in Planning Future--
Responses of Students Bound for Hope College,
Other Four-Year Colleges, and Junior College

Person	% Hope College Bound (N=167)	% Other Four-Year College Bound (N=155)	% Junior College Bound (N=18)	% Combined (N=340)	Significance
Parents	57.3	54.9	50.0	53.9	
Friends	11.7	19.8	15.3	17.2	
Brothers and Sisters	7.5	4.5	3.9	5.6	
Teacher	7.1	6.8	3.9	6.5	
Guidance Counselor	6.3	7.2	23.8	7.1	
College Students	4.2	2.3	0	3.0	
Campus Official	3.8	.5	0	2.3	.00001
Alumnus	.8	1.4	0	.9	

The combined responses of each table indicate that parents are most influential in planning their son's and daughter's future by three times the responses of the next nearest category which is friends.

Decision: The Hypothesis is Accepted.

Hypothesis 7:

Hope College written communications currently influence positively in the decision to apply to Hope College.

Responses to this inquiry are presented in Table 4-29. By definition, inquired students are those who receive information from Hope College but do not apply. A "yes" response to the question of whether Hope College information aids in their decision to not apply is considered influencing negatively. In Table 4-29 this occurs in 35.8% of the responses. Conversely, 62% of the inquired students indicate that the Hope College information does not aid them in deciding to be a non-applicant and implies that Hope information is not a negative influence. In terms of the applied students, 78.1% of them indicate that the Hope College information does influence their decision to apply which is interpreted as having a positive influence. Only 21.9% indicate that Hope information does not influence their decision to apply and is interpreted as not being a negative influence on the decision to apply.

As 78.1% of the applied indicate the Hope information influences their application, a positive influence, and only 35.8% of the inquired (non-applicants) indicate that Hope information influences their application, a negative influence, it is concluded that the Hope information influences positively in the decision to apply.

Decision: The Hypothesis is Accepted.

Table 4-29

Influence of Hope College Information
on Application for Admission

Response to Question of Influence of Materials	% Inquired (N=206)	% Applied (N=381)
Yes	35.8	78.1
No	62.0	21.9

Hypothesis 8:

Hope College written communications currently influence positively in the decision to enroll in Hope College.

By definition, the inquired student is one who receives information from Hope College but does not apply and therein does not enroll. Responding "yes" to the question of influence of the material on enrollment by an inquired student implies a negative influence, i.e., the student does not enroll because of information he receives from Hope College. Table 4-30 shows such an influence in 22.9% of the inquired responses. Conversely, students who inquire but do not enroll who feel the Hope College information does not influence them to not enroll indicates that the Hope material is not influencing negatively and this is the case in 71.9% of the inquired.

In terms of applied students, 71.0% indicate that the Hope College information influences their decision to enroll or affects their enrollment decision positively. Responses of 29.0% of the applied students indicate that the information does not affect their decision to enroll, which implies that the Hope information is not influencing negatively.

As 71.0% of the applied indicate that Hope information influences their decision to enroll, a positive influence, and only 22.9% of the inquired (non-applicants) indicate that Hope information influences their enrollment decision, a negative influence, it is concluded that the Hope information influences positively the decision to enroll.

Decision: The Hypothesis is Accepted.

Table 4-30

Influence of Hope College Information
on Enrollment in Hope College

Response to Question of Influence of Materials	% Inquired (N=206)	% Applied (N=381)
Yes	22.9	71.0
No	71.9	29.1

PART II

General Findings

There are general findings that can be drawn from the data which may not relate directly to the hypotheses but which are helpful in ascertaining student information needs. These will lend direction to the Hope College admissions information program to more accurately meet student information needs.

Timing

Table 4-3 reveals that 66% of the students begin making their plans for college from the middle of the junior year in high school through the early part of their senior year. This is helpful in targeting the information program to more specifically meet the decision-making time of the students. Currently Hope College does not respond to students who are juniors other than by sending them one piece of information, however, the implication is that perhaps a continual flow of information beginning in the middle of the junior year is more appropriate.

Table 4-4 shows 95.6% of the students make their final decision on college from early in the senior year to late in the senior year. The target time for influencing the student decision is clearly the senior year but this data has greater implications for follow-up procedures rather than initial efforts to acquaint the student with the college. The two tables suggest the overall time for targeting information to be from the

middle of the junior year to late in the senior year. Perhaps initial acquainting material can be provided during the junior year with strong follow-up efforts made during the senior year.

Other Information

Tables 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7 show a high interest in a student-written brochure. Currently the Hope College information program has such an information piece which implies this major interest on the part of students is met. There is a low interest on the part of the students in receiving phone calls from faculty. This is currently done in the Hope admissions program and perhaps should be curtailed as the cost is high and interest is low. There also appears to be little value in having parents of Hope College students contact inquired or applied students directly. Consideration should be given to the parents of Hope College students contacting the parents of student prospects; however, this is a suggestion for another study to find out what parents might want in terms of information.

Information Pieces

The biggest attraction in terms of information pieces is the college catalog (Tables 4-8 and 4-9). Implications are that more catalogs should be made available to all inquiring students and perhaps this added cost of material can be financed from other less desirable pieces such as maps and fact sheets.

The second most appreciated piece of information by applied students is personalized letters. Here lies the reinforcement of our current mailing program where a sequence of personalized letters is mailed to students on a weekly basis. This program should continue.

In terms of brochures, the preference is clearly for a piece with pictures and brief facts. Currently the Hope student information brochure contains descriptive sentences with no pictures, a lower selection on the preference scale (Table 4-9). A brochure with pictures and descriptive sentences is the most preferred piece of brochure literature and should also be considered in redesigning the Hope information package.

Specific Information Needs

Specific areas missing from current Hope information offerings are gleaned from Table 4-12. Areas which should be included in current information are: class size, job placement of graduates, housing, class schedules, nearby town, and freshmen grade point averages.

Follow-up Programs

One effort being made by the Hope admissions program is having alumni and parents of current Hope students make phone calls to the student prospects. Both of these, according to responses in Table 4-13, appear to have little interest on the part of prospective students and perhaps should be dropped.

PART III

Concomitant Findings

Tables 4-29 and 4-30 imply that the Hope College material is now influencing student decisions on applications and enrollment in a positive fashion. Conversely, there is little negative influence which implies that major changes in the materials are not in order. Further, Tables 4-23, 4-24, and 4-25 suggest that the Hope College material is above average and in most cases considered good or superior by both applicants and inquiring students. Again, this corroborates the conclusion that no drastic changes should be made in Hope College materials.

Tables 4-26, 4-27, and 4-28 clearly identify the parents as the most influential in students' planning of their futures. Current Hope programs of providing information materials do not address the parents. To do so requires another study, perhaps similar to this, which asks parents the types of information they want to know, how they would like to receive it, and when. This suggests another analysis so that parents can be adequately informed as well as prospective students.

Grade Point Averages

Table 4-31 shows a breakout of the grade point averages of the applied, inquired, and combined. In each case, over 90% of the students report that they earn a grade point average of C+ or better. Hope College has in its statement of admissions policies that it is looking for students with a grade point average of 2.5 or better in high school. As

Table 4-31

Grade Point Averages of
Applied, Inquired and Combined

Grade Point Average	% Applied (N=381)	% Inquired (N=206)	% Combined (N=587)	Significance
A	25.4	23.5	24.7	
B+	25.9	28.2	26.7	
B	33.8	28.2	31.9	
C+	11.2	12.6	11.7	
C	2.6	2.0	2.4	
D+	0	.3	.1	
D	0	.3	.1	.0931

this is the case with a great majority of the students surveyed, and there does not appear to be any statistically significant differences between the groups, one can conclude that academically these are the type of students that Hope College is looking for and the mailing list is an extremely good one in terms of potential in recruiting students.

College-Bound Students

Intentions of the students after high school is revealed on Table 4-32. The cumulative frequency column shows that over 90% of the students have plans of enrolling in some kind of college. Of the total, 85% are headed for a four-year college. This again reinforces the thought that the mailing list includes the type of students that Hope College wants to address, i.e., college-bound students.

Overall Appraisal

It appears that Hope College is on the right track in terms of meeting student information needs. It is influencing students positively to apply and to enroll in the college and it is meeting a great proportion of their information needs. There are some changes that can be made as suggested by the study to improve the information program; however, drastic changes are not recommended.

The major influence on a student's decision is the parent and little is done at this time to provide them with needed information. This is a fertile area for a similar type of study in the future in order to determine the information needs of parents, the types of pieces they prefer, and proper timing for correspondence.

Table 4-32

Intentions of Students
After High School

Plans	Number	%	Cumulative Frequency (%)
Hope College Bound	259	46.0	46.0
Other Four-Year College Bound	220	39.0	85.0
Junior College Bound	30	5.3	90.3
Work	22	4.0	94.3
Army	4	.7	95.0
Other	28	5.0	100.0

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Need

The study, an information needs assessment of potential Hope College freshmen as a guide for developing recruiting material, comes from a need to combat one of several problems plaguing higher education today. Like the rest of the U.S. economy, colleges and universities are suffering the effects of rapidly rising costs with over twenty-five percent of the private institutions in financial difficulty. One of the main reasons for the anxiety over finances is the changing enrollment patterns. Rapidly rising costs, a lower image in the eyes of adults and students, and a decreasing share of the higher education market, all threaten the enrollment growth and stability which colleges enjoyed during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s.

As if these problems are not enough to heighten anxiety, census information and projections of the number of high school seniors sees a drop of twenty to thirty percent between now and 1990. Applications at private schools have declined ten percent over the last five years. This downward trend, manifesting a lack of interest in private education,

along with the anticipated shrinking of the applicant pool raises signs of caution, if not danger, as the private schools ride down rocky roads of an uncertain future.

Many of these private institutions will cope with the stormy weather and rough seas and set sail for a brighter future. Others will lighten their load by thinning out their crews and provisions but continue to stay afloat. Some will perish at sea. But an attempt must be made to salvage as many of these sinking ships as possible as they offer a valuable resource to American higher education as creators of competition for four-year public schools, citadels of academic freedom, purveyors of liberal learning, providers of education leadership, savers of dollars to the taxpayers, a model of warmth and compassion for the individual in a learning environment, and a pacesetter of high education standards.

With a shrinking pool of potential applicants, colleges are launching bigger and bolder recruiting efforts, competition for students becomes more intense and the goal of stable enrollment becomes difficult to sustain. The need for students is critical; not only are they the mainstay for most institutions as the means and ends of their existence, but in cold, hard economic terms their tuitions provide fifty to ninety percent of needed revenues. If the enrollments are in danger of shrinking and costs continue to soar, colleges must make themselves more attractive to the public. One method is development of an effective communication program.

To communicate effectively colleges must know the information needs and interests of prospective students. The best means of identifying these is through research with the aid of a survey.

The problem, then, is to aid Hope College in combating the threats of smaller enrollments, in light of a shrinking student market, by more accurately communicating with potential freshmen. The first step is to identify the information needs of high school seniors, through a survey, to serve as a guide for better communication materials.

The study seeks to find answers to the standard communication formula of "who says what to whom, when, and how, and with what effect." The latter, "with what effect," is not measured as too many variables influence a student's college selection to allow for accurate measurement.

The Study

To find responses to the concern two populations were identified for survey: a) the inquired students, those who asked for information about Hope but did not apply for admission, consisting of 10614 and a sample size of 631 and b) the applied students, those who inquired about Hope and then applied, consisting of 1014 in the population and 502 in the sample.

Overall the population numbered 11628 and the sample size was 1133. The confidence interval was ninety-five percent and an error of five percent was established. The survey was designed and tested by the author with assistance from professional statisticians on layout. Processing

was done on a Xerox Sigma 6 computer utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The survey was mailed, followed by a second mailing to non-respondents three weeks later, with a reminder postcard in another two weeks. The survey was limited to high school seniors who inquired and applied. These were selected as they were familiar with Hope College and its materials and no sampling frame of high school seniors nationally was available. The search was limited to correspondence through the mail and did not measure the performance of members of the admissions staff, audio-visual presentations, or mass media advertising.

The timing was such that the students were making decisions on colleges, as May 1 was the established candidate's reply date, i.e., the date by which most students announced their college choice established by the College Entrance Examination Board. A limited amount of demographic data was requested since it was not usually known at the time a student wrote for information and therefore not considered helpful in designing materials to meet student needs.

Usable returns showed 371 applied, or a 73.9% response rate, and 231 inquired, or a 37.6% response. Overall, of the 1133 questionnaires, 602 were returned for a 53.7% response.

Background

A review of the literature presents the realities of the imminent decline in private college enrollments. The smaller freshmen classes mean lower revenues which attack departmental budgets, turn to slashing

at faculty and staff numbers and salaries, while gnawing away at the number of programs and services a college can offer. As these deteriorate so does the attractiveness of the college to future freshmen and the declining enrollment spirals downward. The anxiety moves from college to college, and as the competition for students heightens, rapport among the purveyors of higher education crumbles and falls. To preclude these dangers better communication is needed to attract more students and attention turns to what they want to know, when and how.

Three perspectives were offered concerning student information needs:

1. The admissions perspective where better information will make the college more attractive to students and draw larger numbers to the college gates. The long term repercussions improved attrition because better informed students were more familiar with what they were buying and, when they purchased, were more satisfied customers and stayed enrolled.

2. The student perspective which allowed better decisions about college selection and supported the new consumer movement.

3. The expert perspective where many of the highly respected experts in the field complained that the information used for college recruitment was "not good enough."

An historical review of the admissions office brought the reader up to date on admissions practices. The first admissions directors were faculty themselves who personally sought students to teach and made arrangements for room, board and tuition. Later, as colleges became more

formalized, the president performed the admissions function by testing the prospects and making a decision on their acceptance. As colleges grew in size and number a registrar was assigned to handle many of the paperwork functions and process applications for admission. Eventually, in the late 1940s, in the United States, the registrar split its function into two separate camps of admissions and registrar. The 1950s and 1960s found the admissions office primarily performing a counseling function, i.e., aiding students in making a decision on college. But as the 1970s rolled around marketing became the password. Not only was the effort made at selling the institution but gathering information about student needs allowed adjustments in programs to more closely align with the interests of the student market.

The movement into marketing brought about a number of practices, many of them new to the education scene, and many of them somewhat antithetical to the high moral and ethical standards of higher education. Concern for hucksterism and slick advertising, and its negative influence on the college image as well as the ability to attract students, developed a sincere concern for ethics and the need to set standards. Marketing appeared to have many benefits if properly used within higher education, but ethical standards were needed to maintain the historically high standards of performance and practice. The National Association of College Admissions Counselors developed a statement on ethics and defined the need for admissions persons to police their own activities or submit to the threat of government intervention.

Related Work

A look at related studies showed very little in the area of student information needs research. One effort drew together a composite of basic facts on a number of colleges so that a student might read them quickly and make rapid comparisons. Some individuals have guessed at what students want and put these together in a taxonomy. Others asked tangential groups, i.e., those with whom students have contact in college selection, what they think students need and put the responses into composites. Such groups were guidance counselors, admissions counselors and high school teachers.

Research which directly asks the student for an opinion pursued only one avenue of inquiry, i.e., what the student wanted to know and not how, when and in what manner the student would like to receive information. Although high school students were asked directly, these studies still emphasized responses from other outside groups, such as admissions persons or college students. The study here differed by asking only high school students of their information needs and expanding the inquiry from "what" was wanted to how, when and in what manner.

Conclusions

An analysis of the data gathered from the survey showed that students have definite information needs. They clearly identified items they wanted when presented with thirty-nine possibilities. As far as when students wanted to know, again, a definite pattern arose as two-thirds of the students began making decisions during the middle of their junior

year and the early part of their senior year. Finalizing decisions occurred in the senior year where a ninety-five percent response was found.

How students wanted to receive their information was also definitive in the mind of prospective students as the catalog had the highest rating as the item most specifically desired for learning about colleges and as the piece which most attracted attention. A brochure from currently enrolled students was also a top item of preference with high interest in all student-to-student contacts. A packet of various kinds of information was another preferred piece.

Hope College was adequately meeting student information needs as 78.1% of the respondents said the Hope information influenced positively in their decision to apply. Conversely, sixty-two percent of those who did not apply said that the Hope information did not influence them to be a non-applicant. As one looked at enrollments, seventy-one percent of the applied students indicated that the Hope material influenced them to make a decision to enroll. On the other hand, nearly seventy-two percent of those who inquired but did not enroll indicated that the Hope material was not the item that influenced them to be a non-enrollee. This information lead to the conclusion that the Hope College information was meeting student needs.

Comparing Hope information materials with the items preferred by the respondents further showed that Hope was meeting information needs at least where student interest was thirty percent or more. There were some areas in which Hope was deficient, but overall it was concluded that Hope was adequately meeting student information needs.

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There were significant differences in the responses of men and women when the students considered the types of pieces they would review when making a decision on a college. In seven out of thirty-six possibilities significant differences occurred with male preferences apparent in sports and female preferences in housing, entrance requirements, foreign study opportunities, class schedules, admissions processing, and required courses. When students bound for Hope College were compared with those bound for other four-year schools and a junior college, nine out of thirty-six items were significantly different which were: college size, major fields, academic reputation, accreditation, social life, attention of the faculty to students, student-faculty ratios, class schedules, and philosophy. The conclusion was that there were differences within the groups on what information they would review when selecting a college.

Differences also occurred when comparing preferences of males and females in terms of items that attracted a student's attention as decisions were made on college. Of the nine items listed statistically significant differences occurred in five with the females preferring the following over male responses: the poster, almost three-to-one, the packet, nearly two-to-one, and the brochure, catalog and reply card. When the Hope College bound students were compared with those going to other four-year schools and junior colleges, three out of nine items showed statistically significant differences and included the letter, postcard and reply card. Again, the conclusion was that each group had different information needs.

THEORY OF THE EARTH

The theory of the earth is a branch of geology which deals with the origin and development of the earth and its various parts. It is a science which seeks to explain the processes which have shaped the earth and its various parts, and to determine the time and place of their occurrence.

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When referring to "how" students wanted to receive their information and from whom, twenty-five choices showed only one statistically significant difference of females over males which was the brochure from a student. When Hope College bound students were compared to those going to other four-year public schools and the junior college, only two areas out of twenty-five possibilities were significantly different; these were an interview with an administrator and a phone call from the same. Even though the number of differences was small, the overall conclusion was that there were significant differences of preference between the groups.

In short a look at the items which attracted a student's attention, what they reviewed to select a college, from whom and how they wanted their information provided, showed the groups studied with statistically significant differences.

Comparing the Hope College applied students with the inquired revealed significant differences in nine out of the thirty-six areas which were: size, academic reputation, social life, faculty degrees, types of students, attention given by the faculty, class sizes, philosophy, and sports. Regarding types of information which attracted attention, differences occurred in one out of nine possibilities, i.e., applied students preferred a personal letter almost two-to-one over the inquired. A comparison of information pieces desired and from whom students wanted to hear had differences occurring in only two out of twenty-five possibilities which were a brochure from administrators, preferred by inquired, and a letter from faculty preferred by the applied. Even though the number of significant differences was small of the total number of choices, one could

conclude that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Hope College information pieces were above average when compared with information that students received from other colleges. Over eighty-two percent of those surveyed indicated that Hope College materials were superior or good when compared with materials from other colleges and 96.1% of the respondents saw Hope material as average or better.

When students had the opportunity to define the individual most influential in decision making on a college, other than the students themselves, the parents rose to the top as the number one choice. Nearly fifty-four percent of the responses indicated that this was their most influential source with the second being a friend. Junior college students were the only group not defining the parent as the most significant influence but selected the guidance counselor.

Hope College communication materials influenced students positively in their decision to apply as 78.1% of the applied students indicated. Further investigation showed that Hope information influenced positively in the decision to enroll in Hope as seventy-one percent of the applicants said that Hope information influenced their decision to enroll.

Implications

The study provides resources of a general nature that are helpful to the Hope College recruiting program and information development. One such item is a definitive picture of the time in which the respondents make decisions on college selection. Students begin making the selection

in the middle of their junior year and finalize plans late in their senior year. The implications are that Hope College should begin communicating in the middle of the junior year with follow-up procedures beginning in the early part of the senior year.

There is an extremely high interest in student-to-student contact with low interest in phone calls from faculty and parents of currently enrolled students. Further efforts should be made at Hope to develop more student-to-student contacts, i.e., telephone calls or letter writing, in order to meet student needs and perhaps low priority items such as the phone calls from parents and faculty should be reduced.

The overpowering influence of the parents in the decision making on college selection suggests a need for Hope to communicate with parents. Perhaps a brochure or letter on a regular basis to parents to satisfy their information needs and reinforce their interest in Hope College is necessary. Although nothing definitive is known about the information needs of parents it may be a fertile area for further research.

The biggest attraction to students looking at a college is the catalog. Although usually expensive, the student reliance on the catalog suggests that it should be made accessible to them. Perhaps items which students find less attractive should be cut from the communication program at Hope to allow funds for more catalogs. As students like to receive letters from all of the groups listed, Hope should continue its program of mailing regular personalized letters to prospective students.

Brochures are a preferred piece, next to the catalog, but their content should be a mixture of pictures and brief facts. Currently the general brochure, written by Hope College students, has descriptive sentences and no pictures. This has implications for changes needed in the brochure.

Hope College does not provide several items of specific information that students desire. Information wanted but not offered includes: job placement of graduates, housing, class schedules, nearby town, and freshmen grade point averages. The information should be gathered, put into either letter or brochure form, and provided to students with an interest in Hope to more adequately meet their needs.

Telephone calls from alumni and parents of currently enrolled students have little appeal to prospects. These can be curtailed to yield dollar savings which provide funds for the more preferred item, the college catalog.

As Hope College information is influencing students positively, both in applying and enrolling, the program of student information now utilized by Hope is a good one and should not undergo drastic change. Further, the Hope material is viewed as average or better by over ninety-five percent of the respondents when compared to material from other colleges. Such a large percentage regarding the information pieces so highly again implies that no major changes are needed.

The survey provides data concerning the quality of the mailing list, i.e., its potential for providing the type of students wanted by the college. A review of the grade point averages of the respondents

reveals that over ninety percent of the students have a C+ or better. As the admissions statement of policies and practices identifies this type of student as desirable the implication is that the mailing list is an adequate one. Further corroboration comes from the fact that over ninety percent of the respondents are going on to college; again, an indicator that these are the kinds of students in which Hope has an interest.

Recommendations

This study was an effort to determine the information needs of those who corresponded with Hope College. One important finding was the significant influence of parents on the decision making of students, particularly in light of the fact that little is done to court this audience and heighten their interest in Hope. Little is known about parent information needs and how they might best be approached. Indeed, the entire communication formula of who says what to whom, when, and how and with what effect can be pursued in a study of parents and perhaps provide direction for communicating with them. The long run implications are that better data on parent needs will allow a closer alignment of college materials with parent concerns and raise parental interest in a college along with that of the student. This can result in greater reinforcement of the student's final decision to enroll and perhaps increase the enrollments in favor of the college who has and utilizes the data.

The Hope College admissions personnel should seriously review the results of the study and make the changes suggested. As indicated in the section under "Conclusions," radical changes are not recommended. Hope information appears to be doing an adequate job of meeting student information needs but there is evidence that it can be improved. Items that are currently missing should be included and adjustments in the timing of correspondence should be made to more closely align with student decision making times. Information requests from the groups who have the different needs should receive unique information pieces to more adequately address their specific concerns.

As there are information need differences between those going to Hope College, the junior college, and other four-year colleges, there may be room for another research project on each of these groups individually. Those with the junior college interest can be better served by the institution if their specific information needs are met. Those going to other four-year colleges may be more knowledgeable by meeting specific information needs in their student market to not only improve enrollments but to satisfy the governmental demands for better information for the consumer. It would be helpful for other colleges to pursue a similar study as this to permit comparisons of information needs and development of pervasive student interest guidelines which may serve all institutions of higher education, and their prospective students, with better communication.

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the first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The second is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the various parts are constantly changing and evolving. The third is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The fourth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The fifth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion. The sixth is that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The seventh is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the various parts are constantly changing and evolving. The eighth is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The ninth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The tenth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the various parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion.

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Appendix A

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

Statement of Principles of Good Practices



Statement of Principles of Good Practice

Developed by the Admissions Practices and Procedures Committee of NACAC over a period of two years and adopted officially by the Assembly in San Antonio in October, 1972.

The high school and college admissions counselor believes in the dignity, the worth, and the potentialities of each student with whom he comes in contact. He is committed to assisting students to plan for post-secondary education. Believing that institutions of learning are ultimately only as strong as their human resources, the welfare of the individual student is the most important consideration in this counseling relationship. Following is a Statement of Principles of Good Practice for the National Association of College Admissions Counselors:

I. Admissions Promotion and Recruitment

A. College and University Members Agree:

1. Admissions counselors are professional members of their institution's staff. As professionals, they receive remuneration on a fixed salary, rather than commission or bonus based on the number of students recruited.
2. Admissions officers are responsible for the development of publications used for promotional and recruitment activities. These publications should:
 - a. State clearly and precisely requirements as to secondary-school preparation, admission tests, and transfer-student admission requirements.
 - b. Include statements concerning admissions calendar that are current and accurate.
 - c. Include precise information about opportunities and requirements for financial aid.
 - d. Describe in detail any special programs such as overseas study, early decision, early admission, credit by examination, or advanced placement.
 - e. Contain pictures and statements of the campus and community that are current and represent reality.
3. Colleges and universities are responsible for all persons who may become involved in the admissions promotional and recruitment activities (i.e., alumni, coaches, students, faculty) and for educating them about the principles outlined in this statement.
4. The admissions counselor is forthright, accurate, and comprehensive in presenting his institution to high school personnel and prospective students. The admissions counselor adheres to the following:
 - a. State clearly the requirements and other criteria.
 - b. Make clear all dates concerning application, notification, and candidate reply, for both admissions

and financial aid.

- c. Furnish data descriptive of currently enrolled classes.
- d. Avoid invidious comparisons of institutions.
5. The Admissions Counselor avoids unprofessional promotional tactics, such as:
 - a. Contracting with high-school personnel for remuneration (or referred students).
 - b. Contracting with placement services that require a fee from the institution for each student enrolled.
 - c. Encouraging a student's transfer if the student himself has not indicated transfer interest.
- B. Secondary School Personnel Agree to:
 1. Provide a program of counseling which does justice to the college opportunities sought and available.
 2. Encourage the student and his parents to take the initiative in learning about colleges and universities.
 3. Invite college and university representatives to assist in counseling candidates about college opportunities.
 4. Avoid invidious comparisons of institutions.
 5. Refuse unethical or unprofessional requests (e.g., for lists of top students, lists of athletes, etc.) from college or university representatives (e.g., alumni, coaches, etc.).
 6. Refuse any reward or remuneration from a college, university, or private counseling service for placement of its students.
- C. College clearinghouses and matching services which provide liaison between colleges and universities and students shall be considered a positive part of the admissions process if they effectively supplement other high-school guidance activities and adhere to the Principles of Good Practice contained herein.

II. Application Procedures

A. Colleges and Universities Agree to:

1. Accept full responsibility for admissions decisions and for proper notification of those decisions to candidates and, where possible, to secondary schools.
2. Receive information about a candidate in confidence and to respect completely the confidential nature of such data.
3. Notify high-school personnel when using students on admission selection committees.
4. Not apply newly-revised requirements to the disadvantage of a candidate whose secondary-school course has been established in accordance with earlier requirements.
5. Notify the candidate as soon as possible if the candidate is clearly inadmissible.
6. Not deny admission to a candidate on the grounds that it does not have aid funds to meet the candidate's apparent financial need, foreign students excepted.
7. Not require a candidate or his school to indicate the order of the candidate's college or university preference, early decision plans excepted.
8. Permit the candidate to choose without penalty among offers of admission until he has heard from all colleges to which the candidate has applied or until the candidate's reply date.

9. Not maintain a waiting list of unreasonable length or for an unreasonable period of time.

B. Secondary School Personnel Agree to:

1. Provide an accurate, legible, and complete transcript for its candidates.
2. Describe its marking system and its method of determining rank in class.
3. Describe clearly its special curricular opportunities (e.g., honors, advanced placement courses, seminars, etc.).
4. Provide an accurate description of the candidate's personal qualities that are relevant to the admission process.
5. Report any significant change in the candidate's status or qualifications between the time of recommendation and graduation.
6. Urge the candidate to recognize and discharge his responsibilities in the admissions process.
 - a. *Complying with requests for additional information in a timely manner.*
 - b. *Responding to institutional deadlines on admissions and refraining from stock-piling acceptances.*
 - c. *Responding to institutional deadlines on room reservations, financial aid, health records, and pre-scheduling where all or any of these are applicable.*
7. Not, without permission of the candidate, reveal the candidate's college preference.

III. Financial Assistance: (Where Such Assistance is Based upon Need)

A. Colleges and Universities Agree That:

1. Financial assistance consists of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment which may be offered to students singly or in various forms.
2. They should strive, through their publications and communications, to provide schools, parents, and students with factual information about its aid opportunities, programs, and practices.
3. Financial assistance from colleges and other sources should be viewed only as supplementary to the efforts of the family.
4. In determining the financial contribution of the candidate's family, they use methods which assess ability to pay in a consistent and equitable manner such as those developed by the College Scholarship Service and the American College Testing Program.
5. They should clearly state the total yearly cost of attendance and should outline for each student seeking assistance an estimate of his need.

6. They should permit the candidate to choose, without penalty, among offers of financial assistance until he has heard from all colleges to which the candidate has applied or until the candidate's reply date.
7. They should clearly state policies on renewals.
8. They should not announce publicly the amount of financial award on an individual candidate because it is a reflection of the family's financial situation.

B. Secondary School Personnel Agree to:

1. Refrain, in public announcements, from giving the amounts of financial aid received by students.
2. Advise the student who has been awarded aid by non-college sources that it is his responsibility to notify the colleges to which he applied of the type and amount of such outside assistance.
3. Provide adequate opportunity within the school for all able students to receive a special recognition for their accomplishments, thus making it unnecessary for colleges to provide such honorary recognition through their financial-assistance programs.

Appendix B

John Minter's Taxonomy of Student Information Needs

APPENDIX B

A Taxonomy of Questions to Facilitate the
Comparison of Educational Programs
 (from Minter, 1972)

- I Locating Educational Programs
 - 1.1 How can I locate institutions that offer the kind of learning program I want?
 - 1.2 How can I be sure the institution really offers the program listed?

- II Comparing Program Results
 - 2.1 What skills and knowledge have students completing the program actually acquired?
 - 2.2 What degrees are awarded by this program, and how many are awarded annually?
 - 2.3 Who hires students completing these programs?
 - 2.4 What beginning salaries are offered students completing this program?
 - 2.5 What are the average lifetime earnings for graduates of this kind of program?
 - 2.6 Where do graduates of this program go for additional study? How many graduates continue to advanced study?
 - 2.7 What values does the program develop or reinforce in students?
 - 2.8 What are the probabilities of my completing the program successfully?

- III Comparing Program Requirements
 - 3.1 What skills, knowledge, credentials will I need to qualify for the program?
 - 3.2 What must I achieve to complete the program successfully?

- IV Comparing Program Costs and Financial Aid
 - 4.1 What will be the total costs of this program (tuition/fees, food-housing, personal-medical care, textbooks and supplies, recreation, transportation, misc.)?
 - 4.2 Is financial aid available for this program?
 - 4.3 Will I qualify for financial aid?

- V Comparing Instructional Staff, Services, Materials and Facilities
 - 5.1 How do faculty salaries compare with similar programs or institutions?
 - 5.2 How does this department compare with its counterparts in other colleges and universities?

- 5.3 Is the program adequately staffed?
- 5.4 What is the quality of instruction provided by the program?
- 5.5 What kinds of instructional material are used in this program?
- 5.6 What instructional facilities are available to this program?
- 5.7 Is tutoring aid available?
- 5.8 Are adequate study or rehearsal facilities available?
- 5.9 How long is the program? What is the average time to completion?

VI Comparing Research Staff, Services, Materials, Facilities

- 6.1 How many staff members are engaged in research and what are their qualifications?
- 6.2 What research services are available to the program?
- 6.3 What research facilities and materials are available to the program?
- 6.4 What library services and materials are available?

VII Comparing Program Environments

A. Intellectual Environments

- A.1 How many students will be in my class?
- A.2 How academically able will members of my class be?
- A.3 How many students will be in my field of study?

B. Cultural and Social Environments

- B.1 What is the ratio of men to women in the program?
- B.2 What is the ratio of residents to commuters in the program?
- B.3 What cultural and social values seem dominant among the persons connected with this program? What major student subcultures are represented by students associated with this program?
- B.4 What ideas are popular in campus reading and discussion?
- B.5 What events of a cultural nature are typically available to students in this program?
- B.6 What events of a social nature are typically available to students in this program?
- B.7 What seems to be the degree of political and social awareness among students in this program?
- B.8 What social organizations are affiliated with this program or institution?
- B.9 Is religion emphasized in the program? Is a congregation representative of my religion available?
- B.10 What kinds of regulations govern student behavior in the program?
- B.11 What kinds of regulations govern authorized living units?
- B.12 What seems to be typical informal dress for students in the program?

VIII Comparing Auxiliary Services

- 8.1 What kinds of housing and housing services are available?
- 8.2 What health services are available on campus and in the community?
- 8.3 What recreation facilities are available for individuals and groups?
- 8.4 Does the institution or program offer a placement service for graduates?

IX Comparing Geography and Climate

- 9.1 What kind of community is the program located in?
- 9.2 What is the typical weather and climate?

Appendix C

Edward Brogly's Taxonomy of Student Information Needs

APPENDIX C

EDUCATION INFORMATION WANTED BY STUDENTS
AS DERIVED BY BROGLY (1967, pp. 102-106)1. SCHOOL LOCATION.

- a. How far is the school from my hometown?
- b. How large is the town or city where the school is located?
- c. Is the school located in the country, in town, or in a city, and are the buildings around the school mostly homes, businesses, or factories?
- d. How close to the school are places to live, transportation, churches, and recreational, shopping, and medical services?

2. THE TRAINING PROGRAM.

- a. What percent of the students entering the training program complete it?
- b. What is the training program like in terms of starting times, required courses, length of program, and the ways in which students are graded?
- c. What special skills or high school courses are suggested or required in order to enroll?
- d. What organizations and agencies recognize or approve the program?
(Governmental agencies, businesses, industries, trades, or professions)
- e. Can a student who doesn't like or do well in a program transfer to another?

3. COSTS.

- a. What is the detailed breakdown of all student costs?
- b. What help is available in the form of loans, scholarships, grants, and part time work or summer jobs?
- c. How difficult do students find it to pay costs?
- d. How much do students earn on part time jobs?
- e. How do students pay costs? (Sources of money)
- f. What are the various schedules of payments that can be arranged to pay school costs?

4. THE SCHOOL AND THE EQUIPMENT.

- a. Is the equipment at the school as modern and as complete as that used on the job?

- b. Is the school and its equipment kept in good shape?
- c. Are things such as equipment, laboratories, study areas, and libraries available when students need to use them?
- d. Are there enough laboratories, study areas, libraries, and equipment?

5. HOUSING.

- a. Where do students live? (Dormitories, apartments, private homes, etc.)
- b. How satisfied are students with their housing?
- c. How far from the school do students live while attending school?
- d. How difficult is it to find a place to live?

6. INSTRUCTORS.

- a. How do students rate their instructors with high school teachers they have had?
- b. How much effort do teachers make to try to know each student well?
- c. How qualified are the teachers to teach the courses they offer?
- d. How able are the instructors to answer questions?
- e. How often do instructors teach things that you can do on the job?

7. INSTRUCTION.

- a. Do teachers use various methods to make things clear to students?
- b. How available are instructors for individual help?
- c. What is the average class size?
- d. How fast do instructors go in their teaching?

8. THE STUDENT BODY.

- a. What are the students like in terms of age, ratio of boys to girls, and percent of married students?
- b. How far and from what size hometowns do the students come?
- c. How many of the students are high school graduates, and where did they rank in their graduating class?
- d. How much full time work experience have the students had before coming to school?

9. STUDENT LIFE.

- a. How much time is spent by students in such activities as class work, home work, part time work, and social and recreational activities?
- b. What chances for getting together for social and recreational activities are provided by the school or the community?
- c. What services are offered by the school? (Counseling, cafeteria, recreation, and help in finding part time jobs and housing)
- d. What kinds of treatment do students receive from the school in such matters as attendance, student conduct, and student-teacher relationships?

10. STUDENT OPINION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM.

- a. How difficult do the students believe the training program to be?
- b. How does the training program compare with what the students expected?
- c. How much of what the students study is new information to them?
- d. How would the students rate the training program if high school students asked?

11. GETTING JOBS AFTER GRADUATION.

- a. How easy is it for graduates to obtain jobs?
- b. How much help does the school give the graduates in finding jobs?
- c. How satisfied are students with their first job after graduation?
- d. How do graduates first hear about the jobs they find after completing training?

12. JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES.

- a. How much demand is there for graduates of this training program?
- b. Where, and in what kinds of full time jobs are graduates of this training program first employed?
- c. How much do graduates earn in the first full time job they hold after graduation?
- d. What opportunities are there for graduates of this program to advance in their job?

13. GRADUATES' OPINION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM.

- a. How much of what the graduates do on the job is related to the training they have had?

- b. How well did the training program prepare the graduates for their first full time job?
- c. How do the first full time jobs held by graduates compare with what they expected?
- d. How do graduates rate the training program after they are employed in their first full time job?

Appendix D

Mary Kinnick's Taxonomy of Student Information Needs

A TAXONOMY OF INFORMATION NEEDS OF
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS ABOUT POST-
SECONDARY EDUCATION (KINNICK, 1975)
(pp 165-178)

I. SCHOOL OR PROGRAM ENTRY

A. Requirements for Admission

- * 1. What are the minimum requirements I must meet to be admitted?
- * 2. Are the minimum requirements the same for all terms?
- 3. Can any or all of the minimum requirements be waived?
- * 4. What grade point average is needed?
- * 5. What test scores are needed?
- * 6. What courses and/or credits are needed?
- 7. What high school courses will prepare me for various majors?
- 8. How do you qualify as a resident or in-district student?
- 9. What registration procedures do I need to follow?
- * 10. What is asked for on the admission application and when is it due?
- * 11. When are required tests and transcripts due?

B. Selectivity

- 1. How selective is the school or program?(e.g. does the school admit everyone who applies?)
- 2. What kind of student is the school looking for?
- * 3. What are my chances of getting in?
- * 4. Will I have a harder time getting in if I stay out of school a year or so?
- * 5. How many qualified applicants get in?
- 6. Is it easier or more difficult to be admitted Fall vs Winter vs Spring vs Summer term?
- 7. Has it been getting any easier or more difficult to be admitted?

*=items on the preliminary or final questionnaire

- * 8. How hard will it be to get into the specific program I'm interested in?

C. Acceptance of Credits

- 1. What credits will the school or program accept?
- * 2. Which courses offered at one school transfer to another school?
- * 3. Will I lose credits if and when I transfer schools?
- * 4. Can I use Advanced Placement, CLEP or other means to earn credit? and if so, what must my scores be or what standards must be met?
- 5. Is it better to take courses or use tests and other available means(e.g. work experience) to earn credit?

D. Obtaining More Information

- * 1. Where can I go, who can I see, to get reliable information about the school or program?
- 2. How can I arrange for a campus representative to visit my high school or community college?
- 3. How can I arrange a visit to the campus?
- 4. Where can I find a description of the step by step procedures for getting into a particular school?
- 5. Is there an orientation program? and if so, when is it and how long does it last?

II. COSTS

A. Full Costs

- * 1. What are the full costs involved, including costs for tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation, parking, etc.?
- 2. What will each course or credit hour cost?
- * 3. What will it cost to complete the program, the degree or the certificate?
- 4. What are the costs for each term? for each year?
- 5. What are the costs for a regular term? for a summer term?
- 6. What are the costs for residents and non-residents? for in-district and out-of-district students?

* 7. How much does an average student spend while at the school?

* 8. What does the tuition and fee money pay for?

B. Cost Changes and Comparisons

* 1. How do the costs at one school compare with those at another?

* 2. How much might the costs increase while I'm attending the school?

3. How can I compare costs with quality?

C. Paying the Costs

* 1. Do I have to pay for everything all at once? and if not, what other payment arrangements can be worked out?

2. If I don't stay in school for the whole term, will I get some of my money back?

III. FINANCIAL AID AND EMPLOYMENT

A. Availability of and Qualifications for Receiving Grants, Scholarships and Loans

* 1. How much and to whom does each school award financial aid?

* 2. Specifically, what grants, scholarships and loans might be available to me?

* 3. Who is eligible to receive each kind of financial aid?

4. Are the chances for receiving aid greater or less for particular students?(e.g. ethnic minorities; men vs women; middle-income students; etc.)

5. Given my circumstances, how much financial aid might I be able to get?

6. How much of the cost could I pay for with financial aid?

* 7. How much in grant or scholarship money compared with loan money could I get?

8. Are special scholarships available by field of study?

9. Can I get financial aid for overseas study?

* 10. Will I have more difficulty receiving financial aid if I skip a year or more of school?

- * 11. What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?

B. Financial Aid Comparisons and Conditions

- 1. Will grades effect my ability to keep a scholarship?
- 2. Under what conditions is it unwise to accept financial aid?(e.g. is it wise to take out a loan when I'm presently unemployed?)
- * 3. Can I get more financial aid from one school than from another?
- 4. Are there restrictions on how I can use the financial aid?(e.g. if I get it, can I leave school for a while and then come back later and use it?)
- * 5. What kinds of arrangements can I make to pay off the loan money I receive? how much will I need to pay over what period of time?

C. Employment Opportunities

- * 1. What full-time and part-time employment opportunities are available on the campus or in the area?
- 2. How available are part-time jobs on and near the campus?
- 3. What work-study opportunities are available?
- 4. How much do various kinds of student jobs pay?

IV. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

A. Physical and Community Setting

- * 1. What does the campus look like?(e.g. is it spread out? are there trees? etc.)
- * 2. Where is the school located?
- * 3. What is the area around the campus like?(e.g. how big and what is the town or city like? how far away are stores, churches, transportation? is the area pretty? are there parks? etc.)
- * 4. How is the weather?
- 5. How good are the local public elementary and high schools?

6. How are the relations between the school and the community?(e.g. is the school part of the community or isolated? how do community residents feel about the students?)

B. Students

- * 1. What is the male-female ratio?
- 2. What are their social, political and religious attitudes?
- * 3. What are their socio-economic backgrounds?
- 4. How much diversity is there?
- * 5. What are their academic abilities?
- 6. Are there many ethnic or racial minority students?
- * 7. What do they major in?
- 8. How many work?
- 9. How many commute? how many live on campus?
- 10. How old are they?
- 11. How many come from my hometown area?

C. Social Life and Extracurricular Activities

- 1. Will I be expected to behave in certain ways?(e.g. are there conduct codes? dress codes?)
- * 2. What extracurricular activities are available?
- 3. What kinds of social pressures are there, if any? (e.g. for joining sororities and fraternities; for using drugs; etc.)
- 4. What do students do when they're not studying?
- 5. What is the night life like?
- 6. Do teachers get involved in student activities?
- * 7. What sports or athletic activities are there for men? for women?
- 8. Is there an opportunity for Christian fellowships?
- 9. What do the students wear?
- * 10. Is it easy to meet other students?

D. Teachers

- * 1. What are their qualifications?
- 2. What kind of reputation do they have?
- 3. What are their primary interests?
- 4. How old are they?
- 5. What are their attitudes?(e.g. political, etc. as well as how they feel about the students)
- * 6. Do students find that it's easy to meet and talk with the teachers?
- 7. How much turnover is there?

E. Instruction

- * 1. What teaching methods are used?
- * 2. What grading methods are used?
- * 3. What is the average class size, especially in the beginning classes?
- * 4. What is the student to teacher ratio and what does this ratio represent?
- 5. How academically competitive is it?
- 6. What are the student-teacher relationships like?(e.g. how are students treated by teachers?)
- 7. Who actually teaches the courses?(e.g. graduate students? professors?)
- * 8. How good is the instruction, especially from students' points of view?
- 9. What are the goals of the instruction? Is there a concern with student growth?
- 10. How many hours will I be expected to study?
- 11. What is a typical class schedule like?

F. Support Services(not including housing)

- * 1. How available is academic advising? Will I have my own advisor?

- * 2. How available is personal advising or counseling if I need it?
- * 3. How available is career advising? Is it easy to get help with career planning?
- * 4. Are job placement services available both for assistance while I am in school and when I graduate?
- 5. How large is the library?
- * 6. How good is the library according to the students and faculty?
- 7. What kind of transportation to the campus is available?
- 8. What parking facilities are available?
- 9. Are child care services available?
- 10. Is there a health service?
- * 11. If I have difficulties with a class, can I get additional help from the instructor or a tutor?
- 12. What testing services are available?
- * 13. How good is the food and food service according to students?
- * 14. What recreational facilities are available?
- 15. Is there a course available for new students to review programs and help them decide upon which one to enter?

G. Housing

- * 1. What kinds of housing are available on or near the campus?(e.g. dorms; coops; family housing; apartments; fraternities-sororities; etc.)
- 2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each kind of housing?
- * 3. What do students say about each kind of available housing?
- * 4. How easy is it to get housing on or near the campus?
- 5. Are the living situations good places to study?
- 6. How much privacy is there?
- 7. Are students required to live on campus?
- 8. What do the housing facilities look like?

9. What are the various housing policies?
10. What will living in a particular housing situation be like?
11. If I have a roommate, how will he/she be selected? and how can I change roommates?

H. Reputation and General Quality

1. What does the school specialize in?
- * 2. What is the school best known for?
3. What unique opportunities are available at the school?
- * 4. Which are the strongest programs in the school?
5. Which are the weakest programs in the school?
- * 6. Is the school accredited?
- * 7. What special awards or recognition has the school and/or its programs received?
- * 8. Is the school in sound financial shape?
9. Is the school having trouble recruiting students and lowering its standards as a result?
10. Should I go to a certain school just because it is strong in the field I'm interested in?

I. General Campus Atmosphere

- * 1. According to students, what is the general school atmosphere like?(e.g. business-like?conservative?easy going or intense?etc.)
2. What does the school emphasize?(e.g. academics? social life? career training? sports?)
3. Is the school a friendly place?
4. Are the students happy?
5. Will I feel like a number at the school?
- * 6. How much personal attention can students get if they want it?
- * 7. What kinds of social and academic rules and regulations affect the students?

- * 8. Is the campus experiencing any particular problems or crises?
- * 9. How much academic pressure do students feel
- * 10. How much voice does the student body have in determining school policies?

J. Other Characteristics

- * 1. How large is the school?(e.g. how many undergraduates and graduates are enrolled? how many teachers are there?)
- * 2. What is the school's philosophy and goals?
- * 3. Is the school more concerned about the general education and personal development of students or with providing an education which leads directly to a job? or is it equally concerned with both?
- 4. Is the school 2 or 4 year?
- * 5. Is the school public or private?
- * 6. Is the school religiously affiliated?
- 7. How old is the school?
- 8. How long is a term?
- 9. When and how long are vacation periods?

V. COURSES, PROGRAMS AND MAJORS

A. Courses

- 1. What is the purpose of the course?
- 2. What is covered in the course?
- 3. How difficult is the course?
- 4. How much course variety is there at the school or in a particular program?
- 5. Who can take the course?(e.g. are there pre-requisites? can you take it if you're not seeking a degree or certificate?)
- 6. What are the attendance requirements?
- 7. What do students say about the course?
- * 8. How large is the class?

9. How long will it take to complete the course?
10. How many different teachers can teach the course?
11. What teaching and learning methods are used for each course?(e.g. self-study? lectures? on the job learning?)

B. Programs

- * 1. What is the purpose of the program?
- 2. What is covered in the program?
- 3. What does the program emphasize? theory? application?
- * 4. What program or groups of courses does a school have to offer for specific careers or kinds of jobs?
- 5. For a specific career, which program should I enter?
- * 6. On the average, how long does it take to complete the program?
- * 7. How do students rate the quality of each program offered at the school?
- 8. How many students are in the program?
- 9. How many instructors teach in the program?
- 10. How much depth does the program have?
- 11. How stable is the program?(e.g. is it new? changing? proven? much faculty turnover each year?)
- 12. Is the program accredited?
- 13. How difficult is the program?
- 14. For each program, which courses are required and which are elective?
- * 15. How many different programs are available at the school?
- 16. How many schools offer a particular program?
- * 17. Which programs involve students with on the job experience?
- 18. How can I get the best education in my field but also take other courses for general experience?
- * 19. Is the program unique or almost unique to a particular school?

20. What graduate programs are available?

C. Majors

1. Do I have to select a major?
2. Why am I required to have a major?
3. What majors are available?
4. Are "majors" the same thing as "programs"?
- * 5. What is a major?
- * 6. When do I have to and/or when should I declare a major?
7. Will I lose credit if I don't declare a major early?
8. Can I have a double major?
9. What can I minor in?
- * 10. How easy is it to change from one major to another?(e.g. how much time might I lose if I switch majors?)
- * 11. With each major, how much choice will I have about the courses I take?(e.g. which and how many are required?)
12. How does each course relate to each major?
13. If I'm not certain of a major, should I still enter college?

D. Degrees and Certificates

1. What degrees and certificates are available?
- * 2. What are the minimum graduation requirements?
- * 3. On the average, how long does it take to complete the degree or certificate?
4. How do degrees and certificates relate to programs or majors?
- * 5. What is a credit hour?
6. What is the difference between a B.A. and a B.S.?

VI. RESULTS OF SCHOOL OR PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

A. Likelihood of Academic Success

1. What are my chances of completing a course, program, degree or certificate?
2. How many students leave before finishing and why?
- * 3. How many students transfer to another school and why?
- * 4. How many students who enter go on to graduate?
- * 5. What are my chances of earning passing grades? above average grades?
- * 6. Will, and if so how will, working full or part-time effect my educational progress and achievement?
- * 7. If I stop out of school for a while, will this disadvantage me in any way?

B. Future Benefits

- * 1. What will I learn?
- * 2. What can I do with what I learn?(e.g. what will I be able to do?)
3. Will my future job opportunities be improved?
4. What are my opportunities with and without college?
- * 5. How many graduates of a specific program get the jobs they apply for?
6. What starting salaries do graduates of the program earn?
- * 7. Will further education enable me to earn a higher salary or wage?
8. Will I be in a better position to advance in my career field?
9. Will it have an impact on my social or personal life? on my style?
- * 10. What success do graduates have getting into graduate school?
- * 11. What success do graduates of 2 year schools have getting into 4 year schools?

- 12. Will I lose any of my job skill or ability while I stop out for school?
- 13. How many students succeed in the field I wish to enter?
- 14. What kinds of jobs do graduate get?
- * 15. Will more education be a waste of time because of the lack of job opportunities and inflation?

VII. JOB CHARACTERISTICS AND THE JOB MARKET

A. Job Demand

- * 1. Which jobs and skills will be needed and in demand in the future?
- 2. Is there a demand for women in the field I'm interested in?
- 3. How stable or unstable is demand likely to be over particular periods of time?

B. Relationship of School to Jobs

- 1. Does the academic program I'm interested in match well with my career field of interest?
- 2. What is the value of theoretical knowledge to the world of work?
- * 3. Which school, if any, is preferred by employers for a particular field of work?
- 4. In terms of the profession I want to enter, should I go to school in my home state or not?
- * 5. For my field of interest, should I go directly onto the job or acquire more schooling first?
- 6. With my interests, what job possibilities should I consider?

C. Characteristics of Fields of Work

- 1. What are the characteristics of the people who work in the field?
- 2. What is the work schedule like?
- 3. What are the employers' attitudes?
- 4. What promotion/advancement opportunities might there be?
- * 5. What is the starting salary and salary range?

- * 6. Is a special degree or certificate needed for success in the profession or career field?
- 7. What are the job entry requirements?
- 8. Is travel involved?
- 9. Where might I have to live if I enter this field of work?
- * 10. In general, what are the qualifications for entry to each career field I'm interested in?

VIII. STUDENT SELF REVIEW

A. My Abilities and Interests

- 1. What are my abilities? What subjects do I do best in academically?
- 2. How strong is my background in math and english?
- 3. What teaching methods work best for me?
- 4. Under what circumstances do I learn best?
- 5. What kinds of jobs do I think I might be good at?
- 6. What are my strongest interest areas?
- 7. How big a school would be best for me?
- 8. Which program might best suit me?
- 9. Among post-high school alternatives available, which would be best for me?
- 10. Would a college or vocational/technical school be better for me?

B. My Readiness for College

- 1. What are my reasons for continuing with my education?
- 2. Am I entering school for myself or my parents?
- 3. Am I ready to get the most out of college?
- 4. Am I mature enough for college?
- 5. Can I handle the responsibilities?
- 6. Can I make the adjustments college will require?(e.g. a new town, new people, new pressures, being away from home)

Appendix E

Survey Instrument

Hope College
Holland, Michigan

April 30, 1976

Your opinions would greatly help us to better understand how colleges can help-fully communicate with high school seniors. Would you take five minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage paid envelope provided? The identification number will be used to tell us who has not responded so that we might follow up with them. Thank you very much for helping us learn how to provide useful information to future generations of high school students.


Thomas D. LaBaugh
Director of Admissions

- 1) Sex: ☐ male ☐ female
- 2) What plans do you have after high school?
☐ Hope College ☐ Another four-year college ☐ Junior College ☐ Work
☐ Armed Forces ☐ Other _____
(Please specify)
- 3) Who was most influential, other than yourself, in planning your future:
☐ friends ☐ parents ☐ brothers or sisters ☐ guidance counselor ☐ teacher
☐ college students ☐ alumnus ☐ campus official ☐ other _____
(Please specify)
- 4) When did you begin making plans for fall, 1976:

☐ early	} in the	☐ sophomore	} year in high school
☐ middle		☐ junior	
☐ late		☐ senior	
- 5) When did you finalize plans for fall, 1976:

☐ early	} in the	☐ sophomore	} year in high school
☐ middle		☐ junior	
☐ late		☐ senior	
- 6) Did information you received from Hope College aid in your decision to:

apply or not apply to Hope?	☐ Yes ☐ No
enroll or not enroll in Hope?	☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7) Of the mail you received about colleges what attracted your attention?
☐ posters ☐ packets ☐ brochures ☐ letters ☐ postcards ☐ catalogs ☐ maps
☐ fact sheet ☐ reply card to request more information ☐ other _____
(Please specify)

8) What materials would you review to learn more about a college?

___ a packet of various information pieces ___ personal letters ___ catalog

___ brochures with:

___ pictures only ___ pictures and brief facts ___ brief facts only

___ descriptive sentences only ___ pictures and descriptive sentences

9) In selecting a college what did you want to know about? (check all that apply)

___ college size ___ location ___ nearby town ___ climate ___ buildings (type & age)

___ course offerings ___ fields to major in ___ cost ___ academic reputation

___ accreditation ___ financial aid ___ housing ___ social life ___ job placement of graduates

___ school history ___ degrees of faculty ___ type of students ___ spiritual life

___ rules and regulations ___ attention from faculty ___ student/faculty ratio

___ expected help in course work ___ expected help in personal problems ___ food service

___ class sizes ___ entrance requirements ___ foreign study opportunities ___ class schedule

___ philosophy of the college ___ discussion on liberal arts ___ typical freshman year

___ sports ___ admissions process ___ required courses ___ library ___ student government

___ average freshman grade point ___ student newspaper ___ probable courses to take

___ other _____
(Please specify)

10) From whom and how would you prefer to learn about a college:

	Faculty	Students	Alumni	Administration	Parents of enrolled students
Brochure written by	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Personal letter written by	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Personal interview with	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Phone call from	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Post card from	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11) If you received information from other colleges, how did Hope's materials compare? (circle)

superior good average below average poor received no other information

12) What is your grade point average?

___ A ___ B+ ___ B ___ C+ ___ C ___ D+ ___ D

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