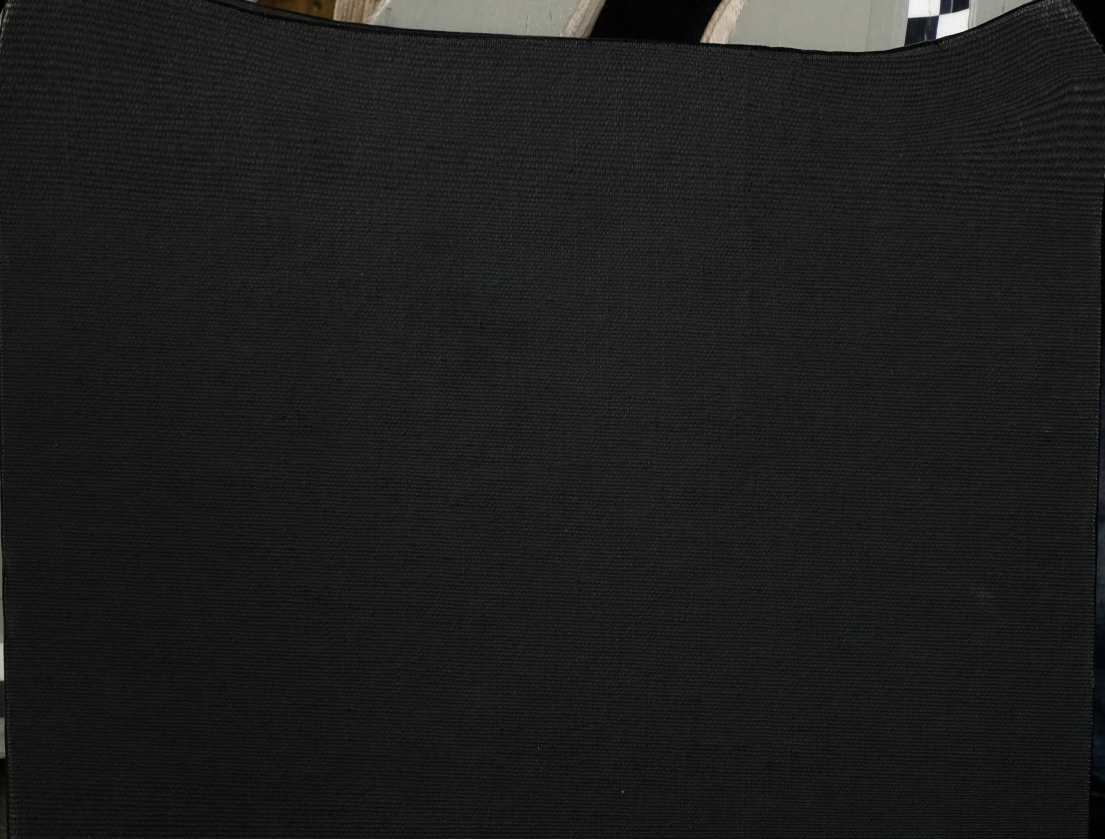

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PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA USED IN SELECTING ENTRY-LEVEL COLLEGE STUDENT PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS

By

Donn David Ostroth

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Administration and Higher Education

1979

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ABSTRACT

PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA USED IN SELECTING ENTRY-LEVEL COLLEGE STUDENT PERSONNEL PROFESSIONALS

By

Donn David Ostroth

This study had two major purposes: (1) to investigate and evaluate the procedures currently used in the selection of entry-level College Student Personnel professionals and (2) to explore the criteria used by administrators in evaluating the competence of candidates for entry-level professional Student Personnel positions.

An extensive review of selection literature from Personnel Psychology provided a basis for evaluating the entry-level selection procedures identified in the study. This review also provided a useful reference for educational administrators wishing to critique and enhance their staff selection practices.

A 61-item questionnaire was developed, pilot-tested, and mailed to a nationwide sample of Student Personnel administrators. Each administrator had been named as the "contact person" (to whom candidates should apply) in a 1978 entry-level College Student Personnel position

listing. The listings studied were drawn from the annual conference placement services of the American College Personnel Association; the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors; and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Each respondent answered questions regarding the selection procedures and criteria for a particular position title named on his/her questionnaire. The referent positions were stratified into six types. For one type (Head Resident/Residence Staff positions), a 50% random sample of the listings was included in the study; for the other four types, all of the listed positions from the three conferences were included. Of the 124 administrators included in the study, 116 (93.5%) returned usable responses.

The majority of respondents reported that in selecting staff for the named entry-level positions, they (1) had a written job description which was reviewed before hiring; (2) made personal contact with the writers of candidate references; and (3) conducted conference interviews and took notes in conjunction with those interviews. Under 25% reported using application blanks, and only one respondent reported using a written test in selection. Responses indicated that conference interviews were largely unstructured and were often conducted by multiple interviewers who had not been trained in selection interviewing.

Respondents applied a five-point scale to rate the importance of each of 36 competencies as selection criteria. The question put to the respondents was, "In selecting the best candidate for the position named on the questionnaire, how important was each of the competencies listed, in your opinion?" Response choices ranged from "absolutely essential" ("A candidate had to have this competency to be considered for the position") to "of no importance" ("This competency is unimportant in the job; it was not a factor in judging candidates").

Four competencies were rated "absolutely essential" by majorities of respondents: "Work cooperatively with others," "Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills," "Work effectively with a wide range of individuals," and "Display leadership skills." Other highly rated competencies included assessment of student needs and interests, effective decision-making ability, conflict mediation, group advisement, appreciation of professional standards and ethics, programming abilities, and group skills. Only one competency ("Administer and interpret personality tests and measurements") was rated "of no importance" by a majority of the respondents. With only three exceptions, no significant differences were found in the importance ratings of the competencies in selection for different position types.

As a result of the findings of this study, the following major recommendations were offered:

1. Student Personnel administrators should apply available research findings to construct more effective staff selection programs.

2. Conference selection interviews should be more structured; interviewers should be trained; notes should be taken on established rating forms.

3. Assistantships and other experiential elements should be emphasized in professional preparation in order to develop the most important competencies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With deep love and respect, I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Don and Marian Ostroth. Their love, encouragement, and example have provided the opportunities, the values, and the motivation which made this achievement possible.

Special appreciation goes out to Dr. Louis Stamatakos, major advisor, whose guidance and support contributed greatly to this study and to the writer's entire doctoral program. Dr. Gary North was also a major contributor and critic, offering ideas and asking questions which added significantly to the quality of this study.

The writer expresses thanks to Dr. Donald Nickerson and Dr. Larry Foster for their valuable comments and suggestions in the preparation of both the research proposal and the final dissertation.

Appreciation is expressed to the professional colleagues whose strong participation made this study possible.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. Bob Minetti, whose ideas and moral support have been a

significant factor in the completion of this dissertation and this entire doctoral program.

Finally, I wish to express my affection and appreciation to my wife, Doris, and to my daughter, Amy, without whose love, patience, and understanding this project could never have been completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF FIGURES. x

Chapter

I. THE PROBLEM. 1

Introduction and Statement of the Problem. 1
Purposes of the Study. 7
Rationale and Need for the Study 9
Summary of Related Literature 16

Selection Objectives and Procedures . . 16
Student Personnel Professional Competencies 20

Research Questions. 22
Null Hypotheses. 23
Definitions of Terms 24
Limitations of the Study. 26
Basic Assumptions of the Study. 28
Design of the Study 29

Population and Sample Selection. . . . 29
Instrument. 30
Data Collection 31
Data Analysis. 32

Organization of the Study 32

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 34

Introduction. 34
Overview of the Selection Process. . . . 35
Summary: Overview of the Selection Process. 44
Procedures Used to Gather Information for Selection Decisions. 45

The Resumé and Application Blank 45
The Interview 49

Studies on information and perception in the selection interview. 57
Dynamics of the interview. 58
Effects of comparisons and unfavorable information. 60
Interviewer memory and experience and the effects of pressure. 62
Structure of the interview 64
Recommendations concerning interviewing practices 68

References or Recommendations 69

Summary: Procedures Used to Gather Information for Selection Decisions. 74
Literature on Staff Selection in Student Personnel and Education 76

Selection of Residence Hall Paraprofessional Staff 76
Professional Staff Selection and the Job Market in College Student Personnel . . 87
Selection in Other Areas of Education . . 93

Summary: Literature on Staff Selection in Student Personnel and Education 97
Competencies Expected in Entry-Level Student Personnel Professionals 100
Summary: Competencies Expected in Entry-Level Student Personnel Professionals . . 114
Chapter Summary 116

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY 118

Research Questions 118
Development of the Instrument. 119
Testable Hypotheses 122
The Population and Sample 127
Collection of Data 133
Data Analysis 134
Summary 135

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA 137

Introduction 137
Purposes of the Study 137

Analysis of the Respondents 140

Rates of Response to the Survey 140
Representativeness of Respondents: Analysis of Four Relevant Variables . . 141
Respondent Experience and Role in Selection. 148
Respondent Attitudes. 150
Results of Hypothesis Testing: Respondent Attitudes 154

Selection Ratios. 159
Selection Procedures Reported in Use . . . 160

Descriptive Findings. 160
Results of Hypothesis Testing: Selection Procedures Reported in Use 167

Importance of Specific Competencies as Entry-Level Selection Criteria 172

Descriptive Findings. 172
Results of Hypothesis Testing: Importance of Specific Competencies as Entry-Level Selection Criteria. . . . 181

Summary 185

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . 193

Introduction 193
Summary of the Development of the Study . . 195

Purposes of the Study 195
Rationale and Need for the Study. . . . 197
Summary of the Related Literature . . . 198
Methodology. 203

Descriptive Findings of the Study 205
Conclusions of the Study 210

Results of Hypothesis Testing. 210
Evaluation of Selection Procedures in Use. 218
Importance of Various Competencies as Selection Criteria for Entry-Level Positions. 222

Recommendations for Practice. 225
Recommendations for Further Research . . . 229
Inferences and Speculations 231

APPENDICES

Appendix

A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE 234

B. COMPETENCY LIST BY MINETTI (1977). 238

C. THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER 240

D. THE FOLLOWUP LETTER 241

E. POSITION TITLES FOR LISTINGS INCLUDED IN THE POPULATION 242

F. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU USE ANY SELECTION TECHNIQUES YOU FEEL ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO YOU? IF SO, WOULD YOU BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THEM?" 245

REFERENCES 248

LIST OF TABLES

Table

2.1 Ratings of Competency Importance from the Study by Newton and Hellenga (N=19) . . . 107

4.1 Breakdown of Usable Survey Responses . . . 140

4.2 Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Institutional Enrollment (Percentage) 142

4.3 Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Control/ Affiliation (Percentage). 144

4.4 Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Title of Contact Person (Percentage). 144

4.5 Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Region (Percentage). 145

4.6 Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Institutional Enrollment (Percentage) . 145

4.7 Listings for Positions Other Than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Control/Affiliation (Percentage) . . . 146

4.8 Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Title of Contact Person (Percentage). . 147

4.9 Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Region (Percentage) 147

4.10 Number of Years of Selection Experience Reported by the Respondents. 149

Table

4.11 Number of Institutions at Which Respondents Acquired Their Selection Experience . . . 149

4.12 Responses to Four Attitude Statements . . . 151

4.13 Respondent Attitudes toward the Resumé as a Selection Tool 153

4.14 Respondent Attitudes toward the Written Reference as a Selection Tool 153

4.15 Relationship between the Number of Schools at Which Respondents Acquired Selection Experience and Responses on One Attitude Item ($Ho_{1.2}$). 157

4.16 Selection Ratios for Different Position Types 159

4.17 Characteristics Included in Written Job Specifications (Percentage). 161

4.18 Practices Related to Employer Contacts with the Writers of References (Percentages). . 163

4.19 Number of Different Staff Conducting at Least One Conference Selection Interview . 165

4.20 Relationship between Institution Size and Use of an Established Rating Form during Conference Selection Interviews 170

4.21 Relationship between Institution Size and Pre-Conference Interviewer Training . . . 171

4.22 Importance Ratings of the Competencies. . . 174

4.23 Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Select, Train, Supervise and Evaluate Staff" 183

4.24 Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Evaluate Programs" 184

4.25 Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Perform Fair and Effective Discipline of Student Misconduct". . . . 185

4.26 Percentage of Respondents Reporting the Use of Certain Selection Procedures 189

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1.1 Illustration of selection objectives . . . 17

2.1 Components of the selection process . . . 36

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Management has been defined as "the process of getting things done by and through others" (Hicks & Gullett, 1974, p. 70). Such a definition implies that the competence of subordinate staff members is vital to every manager, for it is only through the efforts of others that the manager can accomplish organizational objectives.

Basic management texts often list "staffing" as a fundamental management function, along with such things as planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968; Dessler, 1977). Since staff turnover ("substitution of personnel") is a characteristic of modern organizations (Etzioni, 1964), selection of new staff members is an important part of the staffing function. Schneider's (1976) text on staffing makes selection the central topic in this area. Clearly, most managers must choose individuals to fill positions in their organizations. For some this may be an occasional

task, while for others it is almost an everyday concern. In either case, a manager's effectiveness in selection may well determine the difference between success and failure, for staff members are a primary resource through which the manager functions.

As it is in any organization, the problem of staff selection is an important and recurring one to administrators in College Student Personnel. In discussing the role of the Student Personnel administrator, Williamson (1961) noted the importance of the staffing function (and of effective selection) in accomplishing educative goals. Despite this emphasis, his discussion of staffing lacks further detailed explanation. Indeed, little detailed study of professional staff selection is to be found in the College Student Personnel literature. Yet Svoren (1977) found that Chief Student Personnel Officers had significant difficulties in dealing with staffing functions. Because staff selection is a pervasive and fundamental administrative task in College Student Personnel, further attention to this problem is needed. Additional knowledge about staff selection procedures and criteria can be useful to administrators as they seek to do a more effective job in selecting staff.

Denerley and Plumbley (1969) have observed that "Recruitment is more an art than an exact science; but it calls for a scientific approach" (p. 10). The field

of Personnel Psychology has produced voluminous theory and research on scientific approaches to selection. Particular attention has been given to the validity and reliability of various selection tools used for gathering information about job candidates (i.e., tests, application blanks, references, and especially interviews). This literature clearly supports the contention of Denerley and Plumbley that a structured, scientific approach to selection is needed. Although these findings can be applied in College Student Personnel, the investigator could locate no published applications of this form of management science to the selection of Student Personnel professionals.

Current Student Personnel literature shows an increasing concern with management science. For example, recent literature has focused on program budgeting systems (Harpel, 1976) and on Management by Objectives (Harvey, 1974; Sims & Kozoll, 1974). It is consistent with this trend toward management science that research findings should be used to systematize staff selection. Consideration of scientifically validated approaches to selection can make a valuable contribution to managerial literature in College Student Personnel.

Selection essentially involves gathering information about candidates and using that information to predict their future behavior (i.e., their success) on

the job (Miner & Miner, 1977). This prediction involves elements of chance, but the selector will make fewer incorrect predictions if a systematic approach is taken (Denerley & Plumbley, 1969).

Selection may also be viewed as a problem of matching the best person with a particular job, given certain situational constraints (Beatty & Schneier, 1977). In this view, the most important factors are the nature of the candidate and the nature of the position (Glueck, 1978). Here again there is uncertainty, since the best match must be predicted from past and present information. By gathering the most relevant information possible, the selector attempts to reduce uncertainty (Beatty & Schneier, 1977).

Fleishman and Bass (1974) list job descriptions, application blanks, psychological tests, interviews and references as tools for gathering relevant candidate information. However, they assert that "often these are used unsystematically and without knowledge of their actual usefulness in particular job situations" (Fleishman & Bass, 1974, p. 73). Hall (1976) agrees:

> However . . . effective selection methods are rarely used. All too often, poor predictors, such as the interview, continue to be used with great frequency. Organizations must learn to apply realistic and proven selection procedures. (p. 153)

By using ineffective procedures, selectors may expose themselves to two types of errors (Dunnette, 1966). A "false positive error" occurs when the person hired is

ultimately ineffective in the position. A "false negative error" involves failing to place an individual in a position where he/she would have been highly successful. Dunnette notes that the false negative error may be the more costly of the two types: if the selector overlooks an especially competent applicant, a valuable resource is lost.

A great deal of effort is regularly expended on selection in College Student Personnel. Each year the three major national professional organizations in the field (the American College Personnel Association, ACPA; the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, NASPA; and the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, NAWDAC) conduct placement services in conjunction with their annual conferences. These placement services meet the demand for a national job market in the field. A recent survey by Armstrong, Campbell, and Ostroth (1978) described the 1977 NASPA placement service; a review of their findings illustrates the effort and expense involved: (1) many employers listed positions in more than one written medium, an observation borne out by the present study; (2) employers received a mean of 96 applications per position; (3) employers conducted an average of 22 conference selection interviews each; and (4) a majority of employers conducted two to five on-campus interviews,

with over half paying the candidates' travel expenses (Armstrong et al., 1978, p. 54).

Everhart's (1973) description of the highly active placement service at the annual meeting of the American Association of Higher Education further illustrates the effort expended on selection in higher education. Clearly this effort is most visible at professional conferences.

The present study focused on procedures and criteria for selecting entry-level staff. Bennett (1959) has pointed out that "the selection of first-level managers provides the raw material from which all later selections are made" (p. 53). Since many promotions are internal, mistakes at the entry level may later be extended to higher levels; in addition, competent applicants overlooked at this level may be lost forever. As Hall (1976) puts it, "Good development of human talent is dependent upon the prior selection of people who have the potential to be developed" (p. 153).

Selection at the entry level in Student Personnel is a concern, moreover, because of the sheer numbers involved. Escott (1974) reported that, at a joint placement service co-sponsored by ACPA, NASPA, and NAWDAC, 40.5% of the candidates and 23.6% of the positions listed were entry-level (p. 87). Armstrong et al. (1978)

found that about half the candidates and positions listed at the 1977 NASPA conference could be categorized as entry-level.

Despite a surplus of entry-level Student Personnel M.A. graduates in recent years (Escott, 1974, 1976; Greer, Blaesser, Herron, & Horle, 1978a, 1978b; Packwood, 1976), employers surveyed by Armstrong et al. (1978) indicated they felt substantial competition for good candidates. Competition may be especially strong for particular candidate groups (i.e., minorities). Thus, the need for effective entry-level selection is undiminished by the current availability of candidates in general.

Purposes of the Study

This study had two major foci. The first was an investigation and evaluation of the procedures currently in use in the selection of entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel. The second major focus was the exploration of criteria used by administrators in evaluating the competency of candidates for entry-level professional Student Personnel positions. More specifically, the purposes of the study were:

1. To provide a detailed review of the theory and research on staff selection, as found in the literature of Personnel Psychology. This review supplied relevant

information for Student Personnel administrators wishing to improve their selection practices and to conduct staff training on selection methodology.

2. To describe the current use of a limited number of specific selection procedures, as practiced in 1978 by Student Personnel administrators selecting staff for entry-level professional positions. (This nationwide investigation included all types of entry-level professional positions which were listed as available in the 1978 job market.)

3. To evaluate these procedures, as well as certain attitudes of 1978 Student Personnel selectors, in light of the literature reviewed from Personnel Psychology. To suggest possible improvements in the currently prevailing practices for selecting entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel.

4. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures at institutions of different size and among selectors of varying experience.

5. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures to fill different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

6. To identify the relative importance of various competencies as criteria for the selection of entry-level

professional staff, as seen by administrators involved in the 1978 Student Personnel selection process.

7. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies for different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

8. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies by administrators with differing levels of selection experience.

Rationale and Need for the Study

The Personnel Psychology literature on selection highlights many shortcomings of conventional selection techniques used in both business and education. The best example is the use of the selection interview. Though the interview, as usually practiced, has severe shortcomings in reliability and validity for making predictions of success, it is still the most widely used selection procedure (Lopez, 1965). Casual observation suggests that interview results may sometimes be the major basis for hiring decisions in Student Personnel; such a reliance on the interview would be unwise in view of its limitations (Schneider, 1976).

A number of authors have recommended reexamination of the selection techniques typically practiced in educational settings. Hall and McIntyre (1957), in discussing selection of elementary and secondary school

teachers, assert that "One thing is certain: more is already known about selection than is being used in most places" (p. 406). Rassi (1975) states that "little is known about the criteria used in identifying executive potential of people in the field of education" (p. 1). Corson (1975) indicts higher education for its poor selection of faculty, a criticism which may well apply equally to the Student Personnel field:

> When compared with the processes obtaining in many business firms, government agencies, and professional enterprises, the prevailing process of hiring faculty is amateurish and marked by the use of overly subjective criteria by inexperienced department heads. The penalty . . . is chance: when the process works, it may work well; when it does not work, it subjects the department at least to mediocrity. (p. 190)

In writing about the importance of effective selection of part-time residence hall staff, Wotruba (1969) expresses a similar concern:

> Many (administrators) have realized that their selections can have deteriorative as well as constructive consequences. . . . Any hit-or-miss method of selection that relies purely on intuition or politicking could be dangerous. (p. 108)

Morton (1975) suggests that most Student Personnel administrators concerned with selection of undergraduate residence hall staff "are constantly searching for techniques or methods which might improve the over-all effectiveness of the general selection process" (p. 16). Yet the investigator could find no similar literature on selection of Student Personnel professionals. If ineffective

selection of part-time paraprofessionals brings the risk of deteriorative consequences, as Wotruba suggests, then the selection of full-time professionals is even more critical. The lack of Student Personnel research on professional staff selection is thus a significant omission in the literature.

A number of authors writing on professional preparation for College Student Personnel Work discuss the importance of careful selection of students for master's programs (Trueblood, 1966; Dewey, 1977; Greenleaf, 1977; Riker, 1977). Yet, as noted above, no similar literature concerned with professional (M.A. level) staff was located by the investigator. Does this discrepancy imply an assumption that all graduates of such training programs are competent? Even if such an assumption were valid (which could be questioned), no candidate is suited to all entry-level jobs. Schneider (1976) characterizes selection as a task of identifying those most likely to meet <u>particular</u> criteria while in a <u>specific</u> job under a <u>discrete</u> set of organizational conditions. Thus, detailed study of selection practices at the professional entry level is important even if a high level of general competency is assumed.

Kuh, Greenlee, and Lardy (1978) raise a point of concern in entry-level Student Personnel selection: less than half of the recent graduates employed in residence

life may have preferred a position in this area. Since a clear majority of the available entry-level positions identified in the present study were in residence hall work, this point is significant. The authors suggest that residence life directors "need to consider this possibility and perhaps should review selection and in-service training methods to insure a properly motivated and prepared staff" (p. 19). Thus, selectors in residence life programs need to use the techniques which will help them best evaluate the needs and motivation of job candidates.

Affirmative Action pressures may soon force more attention to selection research. Anthony and Nicholson (1977) assert that because little evaluation of selection processes has been done in American business, prejudicial attitudes have been overemphasized in hiring:

> The published evidence suggests that current practices are not necessarily effective for firms or individual job seekers. This argues, in our view, for a major commitment from firms to sponsor or undertake extensive research into recruitment and selection practices. In a sense, our urging is probably superfluous because legal requirements are likely to require systematic evaluation of these practices or their abandonment among major employers in the next decade. (p. 123)

Since fair employment legislation and court decisions have begun to profoundly affect higher education, the latter prediction may apply equally well to colleges and universities. Beatty and Schneier (1977) suggest that the federal government's proposed Uniform Selection

Guidelines may soon require validation of the interview as a selection tool (validation has already been required for standardized tests). This means that interview results would have to be proven valid as predictors of subsequent job performance. Current literature suggests that much additional research will be required in College Student Personnel before this is achieved. Although the present study was not concerned with predictive validity, it was a first step in exploring the methodology of professional staff selection in the field.

Humphries (1977), in his brief history of the Student Personnel profession, closes by discussing the effects of the current financial austerity on the field. He expresses the hope that "fiscal exigencies" will stimulate the kind of creative managerial thinking needed to make the profession's work more efficient. If expensive and time-consuming selection procedures are to be continued in the field, these procedures warrant careful evaluation--if only to make selection more cost-effective.

Most authors writing on selection assert that the specification of desired candidate characteristics is a necessary first step in any selection process (Denerley & Plumbley, 1969). At the same time, some research has suggested that people conducting selection may hold fairly consistent stereotypes describing the competencies and other characteristics of the ideal candidate (Webster,

1964). Are there such stereotypes among College Student Personnel administrators conducting staff selection? If so, are they consistent across different administrators and for different kinds of jobs? This study sought at least partial answers to these questions. Such information is needed in operationalizing selection criteria and techniques in the field. Information on criteria can be of value to administrators who must specify what they are looking for in an applicant; to candidates who need guidance in developing and marketing the most relevant competencies; and to Student Personnel educators who must assist their students in preparing for competent employment in the field.

Rassi (1975), in studying the selection of school district administrators, found that professional competency was the most important of eleven types of candidate selection criteria. Moreover, two recent studies on competencies as outcomes of Student Personnel training programs have recommended further study to identify the competencies most needed by entry-level staff. Newton and Hellenga (1974) suggest that "practicing professionals . . . can contribute much valuable knowledge and perspective" on the most important outcomes of professional training (p. 496). Newton and Richardson (1976) express a similar thought: "It seems important that further delineation of student affairs competencies

should come from the practitioner, the person who works daily with the actuality of student affairs work" (p. 427). Although the present study did not further delineate new competency statements, one of its major purposes was to validate the relative importance of various competencies already suggested in the literature. Importance was judged by a group of practitioners whose opinions are particularly valuable--those who conduct staff selection and hiring.

In summary, there is a serious need for Student Personnel research on selection for the following reasons:

1. Personnel psychologists have found that many prevalent selection practices (particularly the interview) have serious shortcomings. This criticism extends into various educational settings, including College Student Personnel.

2. The lack of literature on professional staff selection in College Student Personnel is a significant omission.

3. Even if all graduates of M.A. programs in Student Personnel and related fields are assumed competent, selection is always for a <u>particular</u> job and setting. Procedures and criteria are thus needed which optimize the effectiveness of staff choice.

4. Since job market conditions may be forcing many entry-level candidates into residence hall positions, selection for these positions must emphasize sensitivity to the needs and motives of candidates.

5. Affirmative Action pressures may soon force College Student Personnel and other fields to do more research on selection.

6. In a time of financial austerity, professionals must identify and adopt the most cost-effective selection procedures available.

7. A need has been identified in Student Personnel literature for information on the entry-level competencies needed by practitioners. Thus, an evaluation of competency statements can be useful to educators, students, and practitioners in the Student Personnel field.

Summary of Related Literature

Selection Objectives and Procedures

O'Leary (1976, p. 4) has provided a scheme for conceptualizing selection objectives (see Figure 1.1).

In selection, O'Leary observes, the manager tries to correctly identify the more obvious failures (Quadrant II) and successes (Quadrant III) while minimizing errors made by hiring "flash in the pans (Quadrant I) or by turning away sleepers (Quadrant IV)" (O'Leary, 1976, p. 6).

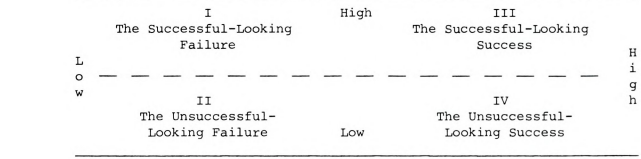

Figure 1.1. Illustration of selection objectives

Denerley and Plumbley (1969) see recruitment in terms of four complementary stages: (1) assessing the job; (2) attracting a field of candidates; (3) assessing the candidates; and (4) placement and subsequent follow-up. Lopez (1965) is more explicit on steps three and four. His selection strategy includes (1) describing and assessing a candidate; (2) evaluating qualifications by comparing them with a predetermined specification; (3) predicting the candidate's probable success on the job; and (4) deciding whether or not to hire.

Haire (1956) asserts that the effectiveness of tests in improving personnel selection depends on three factors: (1) the validity of the test(s) used; (2) the number of people that can be rejected for each available position (the selection ratio); and (3) the range of performance in the unselected group of applicants. This same logic is applicable to staff selection in which information for predictions is gathered by procedures other than tests. In College Student Personnel, resumés,

references, and interviews (rather than tests) appear to be the main sources of predictive information about job applicants. According to Haire, unless valid selection procedures are used, and unless there is a favorable selection ratio and a fairly wide range of performance in the unselected applicant group, predictions about candidates will be little better than could be achieved by chance alone. Thus, unless these conditions are met to some degree, a policy devoting considerable resources and time to selection of staff is inefficient.

Glueck (1978) defines the selection ratio as the number of applicants selected, divided by the total number of applicants available for selection. There are indications that the selection ratio is quite favorable to the employer in College Student Personnel. In 1974 four entry-level candidates registered with the joint ACPA/NASPA/NAWDAC Placement Service for each entry-level position listed (Escott, 1974). Armstrong et al. (1978) found that about 96 applications were reported by 1977 NASPA employers for each available position (p. 54).

The time and effort expended on staff selection by Student Personnel administrators certainly indicates an assumption that some candidates would perform much better than others. This assumption appears tenable, although no data were located to support it.

Perhaps the most troublesome of Haire's three requirements is the need for valid and reliable selection procedures. There are indications that some of the most widely used procedures lack reliability and/or validity:

1. The resumé appears to have little validity as a tool for gathering information on candidates (Gaudet & Casey, 1959). Application blanks are potentially more useful (Lopez, 1965; Blum & Naylor, 1968).

2. Written recommendations have been found unreliable as selection tools (Rim, 1976; Browning, 1968; Peres & Garcia, 1962). Recommendations should be corroborated through personal contact with the writers (Miner, 1977; Mandel, 1958). By interviewing people who know the candidate, one can obtain information (particularly very negative information) which is not otherwise available (Goheen & Mosel, 1959).

3. The selection interview is often unreliable and invalid (Kahn & Cannell, 1957; Dunnette, 1966; Taylor, 1972; Carlson, Thayer, Mayfield, & Peterson, 1974). Standardized interviews by trained interviewers can, however, be effective (Lopez, 1965; Miner, 1977).

The potential invalidity of the selection interview is a particular concern because the interview may be the central selection tool in College Student Personnel. Miner (1977) observed that "something about the process of

personal judgment (i.e., in the interview) produces a strong feeling of validity, even when validity is not present" (p. 45). Moreover, if more than one interviewer must evaluate a candidate, "agreement does not guarantee accuracy of prediction; there can be great consistency in picking the wrong people" (Miner, 1977, p. 46).

Student Personnel Professional Competencies

Humphries (1977) traces the growth of Student Personnel from an ancillary concern to a full-time professional specialty. Workers in the field were originally faculty possessing no special qualifications other than interest in students. As these individuals assumed increasingly specialized tasks, the need for unique Student Personnel training grew. The unrest of the 1960s brought the advent of what Humphries calls the "new-style student personnel administrator," who had often been professionally trained in the graduate programs which arose during the expansion of the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1960s, "student personnel professionals became increasingly enamored with the student development concept that placed emphasis on a proactive rather than reactive posture and on the total educational development of the student" (Humphries, 1977, p. 64).

The concepts of student development and professionalism in the field have been further developed in

recent literature, particularly the statement entitled "Student Development Services in Higher Education" (COSPA, 1974) and through ACPA's Tomorrow's Higher Education Project (Brown, 1972; ACPA, 1975; Miller & Prince, 1976). Each of these documents stressed the importance of specific professional competencies for Student Personnel specialists. As Minetti (1977) observed,

> Successful student development programs require educators knowledgeable in developmental philosophy, behavioral science, and learning theory; and administrators skilled in the arts of training, interrelating, programming, managing, budgeting, supervising, and evaluating. . . . (p. 3)

Though academic preparation for Student Personnel Work has received much attention (most recently in an ACPA monograph, edited by Knock, 1977), much literature emphasizes the importance of practical experience in building professional skills. Studies by Hoyt and Rhatigan (1968), Wallenfeldt and Bigelow (1971), Ostroth (1975), and Minetti (1977) all underscored the importance of practical learning experiences to build competencies in a variety of professional areas.

Despite the emphasis on competencies in College Student Personnel, much of the research has focused on training through course work and practica rather than on specific outcomes of training. Domeier (1977) studied the literature on competency training in College Student Personnel and found a lack of research examining those competencies necessary for practitioners in the field.

Research Questions

The specific descriptive concerns of this study are summarized in the following questions. Answers to these questions were sought through a mailed survey directed to a stratified sample of the College Student Personnel administrators who were involved in the selection of entry-level full-time professional staff in 1978.

1. What were some of the specific procedures in use during 1978 for gathering information about candidates for entry-level professional positions in College Student Personnel?

2. Are these procedures effective as judged against available research findings from the field of Personnel Psychology?

3. What was the selection ratio (or the number of applicants per available position) for entry-level positions listed in conjunction with conferences of the three major national College Student Personnel professional organizations in 1978?

4. What was the experience level of those administrators listed as "contact persons" in 1978 entry-level job listings?

5. What were the respondents' attitudes concerning:

a. The use of objective and systematic selection procedures?

b. The value of selection activities at professional conferences?

c. The importance of the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program in judging his/her qualifications?

d. The usefulness of the resumé and the written recommendation as selection tools?

6. How did the respondents rate the importance of various competencies in evaluating candidates for entry-level positions? What competencies are viewed as most and least important?

Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

There are no significant differences in entry-level staff selection procedures in use at different-sized institutions, as reported by the respondents.

Hypothesis 2:

There are no significant differences in selection procedures used in hiring professionals for different kinds of entry-level positions (i.e., Residence Halls, Activities, Administrative/Generalist, Counseling/Advising), as reported by the respondents.

Hypothesis 3:

Respondents with different levels of experience in staff selection do not differ significantly in their responses to the attitude questions listed in 5a-5d above.

Hypothesis 4:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their responses to the attitude questions listed in 5a-5d above.

Hypothesis 5:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the degree of experience in staff selection held by the respondents.

Hypothesis 6:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the kind of position for which selection is being conducted.

Definitions of Terms

Selection.--The process by which data on the competencies and other attributes of various applicants for a position are collected and by which an ultimate decision to hire one applicant is made. The essential element in the final selection decision (the decision to offer the position to a particular applicant) is the making of a prediction about the behavior of that person as a future holder of the position.

Selection tool.--Any procedure or means of gathering information about a candidate for use in decisions about selection. Such tools include (but are not limited to) the resumé, application blanks, recommendations, tests, and interviews.

College Student Personnel.--The field of work within postsecondary education institutions concerned with the provision of student programs and services which complement and supplement the classroom-teaching mission of these institutions.

Professional position.--Any position for which a completed master's degree in College Student Personnel or a related field (such as Counseling or Higher Education) is required or desired.

Entry-level position.--Generally a position requiring not more than one year of post-master's related experience and involving supervision of not more than one other professional. (Since titles and duties of positions vary among institutions, an all-inclusive definition for this term cannot be given here. A complete discussion is given in Chapter III.)

Full-time position.--A position involving work of 40 hours (or more) per week on a nine- to 12-month basis.

Applicant.--Anyone who has complied with an employer's instructions in making known his/her wish to be considered for a particular position.

Candidate.--An applicant whose qualifications make him/her, after initial review of his/her application, worthy of some further consideration by the employer.

Finalist.--One of a few candidates judged, after preliminary screening, to be the best qualified contenders for a position.

Competencies.--Abilities, skills, knowledge, and attitudes which permit a person to carry out job expectations in a minimally acceptable manner.

Stereotype.--A fixed or conventional concept relating to a person which implies the person's possession of certain characteristics.

Ideal candidate.--An hypothetical candidate possessing and communicating the most desirable competencies and other characteristics in reference to a particular position.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was a descriptive and exploratory one which attempted to cover only a limited number of selection concepts. It must be recognized that the scope of selection as a topic extends well beyond the confines of this study. Detailed examination of many important selection concepts was left to further research. For example, no attention was given here to the operation of "old-boy networks" (Everhart, 1973; Caplow & McGee, 1958) or to the current effect of Affirmative Action on selection practices.

2. This study was limited to an examination of procedures and criteria for the selection of entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel. This limitation was imposed in order to carefully define the reference group under study and to permit detailed analysis within constraints of time and cost. The entry level was chosen for analysis because it accounts for a large proportion of the hiring in the field and because hiring for entry-level staff may be under greater control of individual administrators than is hiring for higher-level positions. Thus, findings and recommendations of this study may be more readily applied through the decisions of individual managers when limited to entry-level hiring.

3. The findings of this study were generalized only to those full-time professional, entry-level positions advertised in conjunction with the 1978 ACPA, NASPA, and NAWDAC conferences. Though the findings may be indicative of trends throughout the College Student Personnel profession in 1978, they cannot properly be generalized as such.

4. The findings were represented only as perceptions and opinions of contact persons listed in conjunction with the referenced position advertisements. The experience levels of these respondents varied, and these variations were described in the study.

5. The most complete study possible in this area would cover an extended time period and would sample responses not only of contact persons but also of other administrators and of candidates. The scope of such a study would have exceeded the fiscal and time limitations of the researcher.

Basic Assumptions of the Study

1. The survey technique is a widely used and accepted method for gathering data in the social sciences (Moser & Kalton, 1972; Babbie, 1973; Warwick & Lininger, 1975). The survey technique was practical and appropriate for this study, given the limitations described above.

2. It was assumed that respondents understood the survey questions and gave honest replies.

3. Although selection for most 1978 positions may have been completed by early summer and the survey was not carried out until October, it was assumed that administrators involved in the selection process had clear recollections of the procedures and criteria they had used in selecting entry-level staff.

4. Administrators with relatively recent experience in selecting entry-level College Student Personnel professionals were able to provide valid ratings of the importance of various competencies in judging the qualifications of candidates.

Design of the Study

Population and Sample Selection

The population for this survey included all contact persons whose names were printed in conjunction with listings for entry-level professional Student Personnel positions available during the 1978 ACPA, NASPA, and NAWDAC conferences. The sampling plan was as follows:

1. All placement listings (pre-conference and supplementary) were assembled from the three conferences. All listings for entry-level positions were identified and separated from the remaining listings.

2. Duplicate listings were combined, resulting in a complete list of different entry-level positions available and the contact person for each. Position announcements lacking specific contact persons were excluded from this list.

3. Position listings were categorized into five separate groups:

   a. 111 Head Resident positions
   b. 14 residence hall programming positions
   c. 23 campus activities positions
   d. 25 administrative/generalist positions
   e. 6 advising/counseling positions

4. In order to retain sufficient group sizes for hypothesis testing and to increase precision, 100% of the

latter four groups (b-e) of position listings were included in the study. The Head Resident position listings were assigned consecutive numbers; a table of random numbers was then used to draw a 50% random sample from this group. The resulting 56 listings, combined with the remaining 68 listings from the other four groups, comprised the final stratified sample of 124 listings, each containing the name and address of a contact person.

Instrument

A 61-item questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to collect the data for the study. Items were of various types: open-ended, multiple choice, rating and Likert scales. Instructions asked respondents to answer, where appropriate, in reference to the 1978 selection process for a particular position title. This title, obtained from the job listing for each sample member, appeared at the top of each questionnaire.

Questionnaire items asked for data on the number of positions and applicants, the selection experience of the respondent, and some of the specific selection practices used in hiring for the named position. Contact persons were asked their opinions on several attitude items.

Thirty-six items asked respondents to use a five-point scale to rate the importance of various competencies in judging the qualifications of candidates for the named

position. The list of competencies used in this part originated in a doctoral study by Minetti (1977). However, 11 of the original 47 competencies listed by Minetti (see Appendix B) were eliminated or combined for brevity.

The questionnaire was pilot tested by five Student Personnel administrators at Michigan State University, and two at Alma College, who had recently been involved in staff selection. Each administrator completed and critiqued the questionnaire. In addition, two administrators at Michigan State University not currently involved in selection and one research consultant from the College of Education at that University critiqued the instrument for clarity, completeness, and possible biases. During these pilot tests, the questionnaire was rewritten twice and again reviewed by the pilot test participants. On the basis of the above procedures, face validity was claimed for the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was mailed to the survey sample on October 10, 1978, along with a transmittal letter explaining the study (Appendix C) and a self-addressed business reply envelope. Fifteen days later, a follow-up letter (Appendix D) was mailed to those who had not yet responded. The second mailing again included a questionnaire and a return envelope. After an additional period of three weeks, all but 14 members of the sample

had returned usable responses. A member of the researcher's Advisory Committee telephoned some of the remaining non-respondents to request their participation. Additional copies of the questionnaire were then mailed to contact persons who indicated they would participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Data from the returned questionnaires were coded and keypunched for computer analysis. Data analysis techniques were performed on the Michigan State University CDC 6500 computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive data (frequencies and percentage frequencies of response and, where applicable, means, standard deviations, and ranges) were compiled on all questionnaire items using subprogram Frequencies. Chi-square tests of independence were computed for hypothesis testing by the use of subprogram Crosstabs.

Organization of the Study

The report of the study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction and statement of the problem. It describes the purposes of the study, the rationale and need for the study, the related literature, research questions, and hypotheses. Chapter I also defines the terms used in the study, lists the limitations and assumptions, and explains the design and organization of the study.

Chapter II consists of a review of the research and other literature related to staff selection procedures and their use in College Student Personnel and education. This chapter also develops background on the competencies used as selection criteria in College Student Personnel.

Chapter III contains the design of the study, including sample selection, questionnaire development, and other methodology.

Chapter IV is devoted to the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the results of the study.

Chapter V consists of a summary of the study's findings, major conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of published theory and research on staff selection. The material is arranged in four main parts. The first part includes an overview of the selection process, from the specification of desired candidate qualities to the hiring decision. The second part contains the procedures often used in College Student Personnel to gather information for selection decisions: the resumé and application blank, the interview, and the written reference. The third part of this chapter is devoted to a review of the literature on staff selection in Student Personnel and education. In the final section, the literature on competencies expected in entry-level Student Personnel staff is presented. A summary is provided following each section.

The material summarized in the second part of this chapter (concerning procedures for gathering information on candidates) is more detailed than needed to provide a setting for the present study. The intent in

providing such detail was to furnish selectors of Student Personnel staff an extensive resource for evaluating their own selection techniques and for training other administrators in selection concepts. Though detailed, the information presented was chosen from a much larger body of material. Literature on the use of tests as selection tools has been largely omitted here because tests are seldom used in selecting professional Student Personnel staff.

Overview of the Selection Process

Selection is typically viewed as a process of matching candidate and job characteristics to predict job success (Lopez, 1965; Denerley & Plumbley, 1969; Schneider, 1976; Beatty & Schneier, 1977; Miner & Miner, 1977; Glueck, 1978). Schneider (1976) sees hiring as a two-way process in which both candidate and organizational needs must be satisfied.

The following selection strategy has been suggested by Lopez (1965): (1) assess the applicant; (2) evaluate the applicant's qualifications by comparison to a predetermined specification of qualities needed; (3) predict the applicant's probable job success; and (4) decide whether or not to hire the applicant. Figure 2.1 presents a more extensive illustration of selection steps.

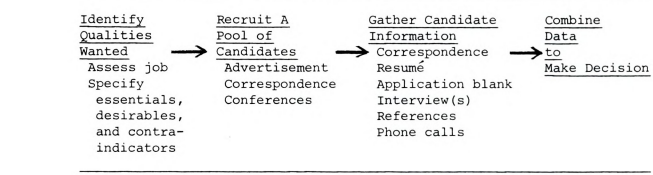

Figure 2.1 Components of the selection process

Authors unanimously recommend a careful job analysis as a first step in selection (Schneider, 1976; Stanton, 1977). The purpose of this analysis is to clearly specify, in writing, the characteristics to be sought in applicants (O'Leary, 1976). The job specification (that part of a job description listing the characteristics needed for success) should identify the "really critical" needs of the job (Stanton, 1977). Miner and Miner (1977) illustrate a major use of the job description/specification:

> Data repeatedly indicate that if an interviewer knows a lot about the job he is interviewing for and what kind of people tend to succeed in it, he or she will be more objective and the result will be better. (p. 288)

Selection researchers recommend that clear job descriptions and specifications be written in choosing school district administrators (Sheffield, 1951; Rassi, 1975) and college faculty (Miller, 1959).

O'Leary (1976) suggests that in defining the qualities wanted, it may be helpful to interview those who

have held the position in question. Denerley and Plumbley (1969) classify candidate attributes as (1) essential attributes, indispensable to satisfactory performance; (2) desirable attributes, which are less essential but preferred; and (3) contra-indicators, which would disqualify a candidate.

Recruiting is defined as obtaining a pool of qualified candidates for an available position (Ericson, 1974). Though considerable literature on recruiting is available, this topic is peripheral to the present discussion.

In selection literature, debate is evident concerning the value of the "clinical method" (primary reliance on the judgment of interviewers) as opposed to the "actuarial method" (using tests and other structured diagnostic tools) in making selection decisions. O'Leary (1976) contends that the common heavy dependence on the interview is a mistake and that all available information (including that from tests, references, and application blanks) should be integrated in the selection decision. Sydiaha (1958) studied selection decision-making by clinical and actuarial methods and concluded that clinical methods add new information to that obtained with tests. Yet the copious literature on selection testing illustrates the prevalence of actuarial methods.

Korman (1968), in reviewing research on the prediction of managerial performance, found judgmental procedures (i.e., peer ratings and executive assessment procedures) generally better than psychometrics as predictors of leadership success. His hypothesis, which may help explain the value of the clinical method, was that judges can deal with fluid success criteria better than tests validated on limited criteria.

Bennett (1959) supports the judgmental (clinical) approach by arguing that "until the behavioral sciences have produced far more accurate selective tools than are currently available," staff selection "must of necessity remain a matter of human judgment, exercised either by an individual or a committee" (p. 176). Actuarial techniques, Bennett asserts, cannot make selection decisions but can only aid the judgment process.

Despite these endorsements of clinical methods, research reveals that the judgment process is subject to many sources of error. Webster (1964) summarizes the results of a series of McGill University studies on selection decision-making by interview:

1. Interviewers seek to match candidates with their stereotype of the "good" candidate.

2. Early in the interview, a bias is established which tends to affect the interviewer's final judgment of the candidate.

3. Unfavorable candidate information has greater influence on interviewer judgment than does favorable information.

4. "Interviewers seek information to support or refute hypotheses and, when satisfied, turn their attention elsewhere" (Webster, 1964, p. 87).

In one of the McGill studies, Sydiaha (1958) found that selectors using the clinical method appeared to rate applicants on very similar criteria. He found high inter-rater correlations on evaluations of "ideal" applicants and concluded that interviewers compare applicants to ideal stereotypes which are remarkably similar across raters.

Mayfield and Carlson (1966) reached somewhat different conclusions. In their experiment, managers rated hypothetical applicants (each defined on paper by six pieces of information) for jobs as insurance agents. In a previous study, subjects had disagreed on the favorableness of the information used to define these hypothetical "applicants." Mayfield and Carlson found wide manager disagreement in ranking the desirability of these "applicants." A similar study by Rowe (1963) had defined "applicants" using pieces of information on which raters had agreed; she found substantial agreement among managers in ranking her hypothetical "applicants." Mayfield and Carlson concluded from the results of the two studies that

> Interviewers do not hold an identical picture of the ideal applicant for the job of insurance agent. Rather, it would appear that every interviewer has a picture or stereotype of the "ideal" applicant which is composed of two parts. The first part is what might be considered a "common" stereotype which most interviewers share. The common stereotype consists of those individual characteristics, both favorable and unfavorable, on which there is inter-interviewer agreement. The second part consists of a "specific" stereotype which is different for different interviewers. The specific stereotype consists of items on which interviewers disagree as to favorability. . . . Thus, any one interviewer's overall stereotype of an ideal applicant will consist of the "common" stereotype defining one set of requirements plus his own "specific" stereotype which adds another set of requirements. (Mayfield & Carlson, 1966, pp. 48-49)

Schneider (1976) asserts that first impressions may exert undue influence in the judgmental process.

> An individual's first contact with an organization is especially important when the individual has no prior work history. For such people everything is new, and the impressions they form of an organization fill an information-hungry vacuum. (p. 142)

Thus, the first-impression effect may be especially strong when the available position is entry-level.

Springbett (1954) conducted research on both industrial and army officer selection. In his study, applicants were rated (in varying order) on appearance, personal history, and application form data. Springbett found that first ratings (regardless of the item on which they were based) are significantly related to final decisions. He concluded that "early impressions, based on quickly assessed material, play a significant role in determining the final outcome" (Webster, 1964, p. 20).

When the application form was the first item rated, it predicted the decision better (85% of the time) than when appearance was rated first (Webster, 1964, p. 21). Springbett's interpretation of this effect was that greater downgrading of a candidate may occur later, based on subsequent negative inputs, if the first impression was formed on more ambiguous material. When there was a change between the first rating and the final decision, Springbett found, it was more likely a downgrade than an upgrade. Springbett saw the interview as mainly a search for negative evidence; he discovered that "even one unfavorable impression is followed by final rejection in over 90% of the cases" (Webster, 1964, p. 23). Sydiaha (1958) explains order effects as the result of

> . . . a process of selective attention, whereby the perceiver attends to an increasingly narrow range of stimuli, as the sequence of perceptual activities proceeds from initial to final stages. (Webster, 1964, p. 8)

Thus, the effect of information on a selection decision depends, in part, on when it occurs in the decision process. Data received early (particularly unfavorable data) tend to carry more weight. Certainly these conclusions indicate the importance of even preliminary interviews and other data inputs to the final selection outcome.

When managers make hiring decisions under pressure, they appear to weigh negative evidence more heavily--another source of error in the clinical method.

Wright (1974) studied the hypothesis that negative evidence receives disproportionate weight as a simplifying strategy in making hiring decisions. He suggested that, when one has "limited information-handling ability," one must balance a desire to choose the best candidate with a need to "reduce the cognitive strains of the decision task" (Wright, 1974, p. 555). This need to simplify the task, Wright felt, would become stronger under high information loading; the task might be simplified by restricting attention to only certain of the incoming data. Wright conducted an experiment in which subjects completed rating tasks under various levels of time pressure and distraction. He found that subjects under time pressure "rely heavily on negative data" (Wright, 1974, p. 559). Although not as strong, the results on distraction support the idea that subjects depend on negative data "when distractions place a strain on attention" (p. 559). Subsequent analysis also showed that both the high time pressure and high distraction groups used significantly fewer dimensions in making evaluations.

Since Wright's experiment did not involve evaluations of people, his findings may or may not generalize to the selection decision. However, a study by Rowe (1963) supports Wright's conclusions. Rowe confirmed the importance of unfavorable information in hiring and

concluded that "interviewers tend to place greater reliance on the negative characteristics" (Webster, 1964, p. 84).

Wright (1974) suggests that decision-makers may ignore either positive or negative evidence depending on "the payoff structure of the task" (p. 556). Thus, employers, aware of the difficulties an unsuitable employee can cause, may be especially wary of the false positive error and may, therefore, be especially attentive to negative cues.

Based on the McGill studies, Webster offers some suggestions on how managers can make better hiring decisions. Unlike some other authors, he suggests that interviewers not study information about candidates any earlier than necessary. A good technique, according to Webster, is to use multiple independent evaluations where several interviewers record their decisions and later resolve differences. Evaluators can benefit, Webster suggests, by receiving a large amount of information at one time. This minimizes preconceived notions and lessens the effects of selective attention. Finally, and for the same reason, it is suggested that someone other than the interviewer should do all the preliminary screening.

Miner (1977) comments further on Webster's conclusion that all candidate information should be reviewed at once, following the interview.

> Contrary to common practice, application blanks, test scores, and the like should be withheld until after the initial selection interview. Personal history data should be obtained directly from the candidate in oral form even if written versions are available. This approach will serve to delay decision-making in the interview with the result that information obtained during the latter part of the discussion can be effectively utilized in reaching a judgment. If data are needed to fill in the gaps between the various selection techniques, these can be obtained from a second interview. Thus, the interview as an independent selection tool should be clearly differentiated from the interview as a means of following up on leads provided by other devices. The interviewer should be clear in his own mind as to which objective he is seeking. (p. 48)

Summary: Overview of the Selection Process

Selection is typically seen as a process of matching the best candidate with a job. As such, the process involves steps of job analysis, recruiting, gathering candidate information, combining that information, and making a decision to hire. Authors strongly assert that a job analysis should be the first step in this process; the job analysis should produce written specifications of the characteristics to be sought in a candidate.

The "clinical method" (centered on interviewer judgment) and the "actuarial method" (centered on test results) are two approaches to selection decisions discussed in the literature. While much literature is available concerning selection testing, it appears that the clinical method is valuable to selection decisions.

Probably the best approach is to integrate both actuarial and judgmental information in making selection decisions.

Research reveals that the clinical approach is subject to various sources of error: (1) interviewer stereotypes and biases may heavily influence outcomes; (2) unfavorable candidate information may be given too much weight, especially if the interviewer is under pressure; (3) interviewers may not persist in gathering new information once their biases appear to be supported; and (4) first impressions may excessively influence selection decisions.

Selectors may seek to match job candidates with stereotypes of an "ideal" candidate. Such stereotypes may contain a common element, composed of candidate characteristics which different selectors value about the same, and an individual or specific element, composed of characteristics about which selectors disagree.

One author suggests that to reduce bias, interviewers should have someone else do preliminary screening and should avoid reviewing candidate information before interviews.

Procedures Used to Gather Information for Selection Decisions

The Resumé and Application Blank

Business literature appears to offer little support for the resumé as a selection tool. Gaudet and

Casey (1959) see the resumé as a screening device "to identify those candidates who are not worth investigating further" (p. 62). They report that "the resumé has never undergone any extended investigation and remarkably little has been written about it over the past 10 years" (p. 62).

Gaudet and Casey (1959) conducted study on resumés submitted to a large manufacturing company by six candidates hired for industrial engineering jobs. Three years after selection, three of the six were successful and three had been fired. In the first part of the study, five experienced personnel directors tried, using only the resumé, to distinguish the three successful engineers from the three unsuccessful ones. Their results were no better than chance. The same resumés were then given to 45 company recruiters interviewing on a college campus. Again, their ability to discriminate successful men was no better than chance. Five of the recruiters asked to try again. After one month, the same resumés were submitted to the five recruiters, in a different order. Even on the second try, these judges were no better than the group as a whole had been. Of the predictions, only 20 of 30 were the same on both occasions. The authors also noted that one failure, who had had his resumé professionally prepared, was expected to succeed on most ratings in all three studies. Gaudet and Casey conclude that, in this case, the resumé was "worse than useless;"

while this pattern might not hold in other circumstances, severe doubts were cast on the usefulness of the resumé.

Lopez (1965) contends that the resumé is no substitute for an employer's application blank. Resumés are constructed to flatter the candidate and thus are biased. Fleishman and Bass (1974) assert that "practically every (business) organization uses an application blank in its employment procedure" (p. 74). Life history data (from such written instruments) has been used to develop predictions of performance and creativity (Blum & Naylor, 1968).

Beatty and Schneier (1977) list the most frequent uses of application blanks: (1) to screen out the obviously unqualified applicant; (2) to furnish data useful in planning interviews with applicants; (3) to obtain the names of references so that personal contacts can be made; and (4) to collect information (for example, Social Security numbers) useful in administering personnel programs (p. 178). Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Weick (1970) suggest a more compelling use of information from the application blank: "Indicators of past successes and accomplishments can be utilized in an objective way to identify persons with different odds of being successful over the long term in their management career" (p. 196).

If a "successive hurdle approach" is taken (in which an application blank, preliminary interviews, and/or

other techniques are used for screening), then each "hurdle" is a predictor and should be related to the candidate's future effectiveness (Anthony & Nicholson, 1977). However, most organizations do not try to validate the application blank as a predictor of job success. Thus, Anthony and Nicholson argue, the application blank is not a valid step in the "successive hurdle approach" to screening.

Beatty and Schneier (1977) have elaborated on the validation of application blanks as predictors:

> The application blank itself can be used as a predictor of future job performance. . . . In scored application forms each item of information . . . is examined to determine if it is actually predictive of some aspect of work performance, such as tenure or quality and quantity of work output. Items that actually discriminate between successful and unsuccessful employees (i.e., a strong positive correlation exists between those whose performance is high and those who respond in a certain way to an item) are usually scored quantitatively. In other words, each item is assigned a weight or score and the score is awarded if the item is answered in the way the organization thinks is most appropriate. All of the scores awarded are then summed so that a numerical total score can be used as a basis for making selection decisions. . . . (p. 178)

Miner and Miner (1977) note that only data to be used should be included and retained on application blanks; otherwise the forms may grow too long. Items should be weighted, the authors suggest, according to their ability to differentiate the relatively successful employees. Though complicated weighting methods are available, Miner and Miner find the simpler "horizontal percent method" to

be equally valid. Here items are weighted according to their ability to distinguish the better half of the employees (divided at the median on performance ratings). The weight for each item is the rounded percentage of employees rated above the median (Miner & Miner, 1977, p. 294).

Schneider (1976) endorses the value of a "biographical information blank," which he defines as

> a blank (form, questionnaire, survey, etc.), which seeks information about a person's background (including present circumstances) when it has already been established that answers to the questions differentiate more from less successful employees. (p. 200)

Schneider asserts that such forms can be quite valid over a short period (one to two years) in predicting candidate success. The validity of biographical information blanks has been documented in the selection of clerical personnel, industrial research scientists, life insurance salesmen, and unskilled workers (Schneider, 1976, p. 203). Schneider cautions against the use of biographical information blanks as the sole basis for hiring decisions; if this is done, he suggests, applicants with effective personal qualities but without the "right" personal history may be excluded.

The Interview

Many authors agree that the selection interview, which is the tool most consistently used in both business and education, is often lacking in validity and reliability (Kahn & Cannell, 1957; Dunnette, 1966; Taylor, 1972;

Carlson et al., 1974). Taylor (1972) is the most pessimistic of all: "For some reason we all seem to feel that we can make accurate predictions (of job success) . . ., but the scant evidence says that we cannot" (p. 139).

Denerley and Plumbley (1969) point out that the fault is with the interviewer, not the method, since interviewing skill varies greatly. Lopez (1965) defends the interview: "The little evidence that has been produced, if nothing else, has repeatedly demonstrated that trained, knowledgeable interviewers are effective" (p. 5). Miner (1977) concurs that the interview can be "quite effective" if used in a standardized manner and if biases are controlled. Ghiselli (1966) contends that data collected many years ago suggesting the invalidity of interviews should not be taken too seriously today. He suggests that later studies (Mayfield, 1964) and the increased skill of those currently doing selection point to improved interview validity.

There is general agreement among authors on the central purpose of the selection interview: to predict the candidate's future success. Blum and Naylor (1968) see the interviewer as "a sort of intuitive regression equation;" he collects and weighs interview data (predictor variables) to project the applicant's potential success.

Downs (1968) studied the attitudes of college recruiters toward selection interviews and reported some

of the ways in which interviews were considered valuable: (1) They reveal the whole candidate, not just job qualifications. (2) The interviewer can ask personal questions and explore the answers in detail. (3) Detailed information about the job can be exchanged, and the candidate can obtain information about specific interests. (4) The candidates' appearance, poise, and oral communication ability can be evaluated in an interview.

Miner and Miner (1977) support the interview for its flexibility, particularly in filling the gaps in the information procured through other selection techniques. They endorse the interview as a recruiting technique which can sell the job and organization. Moreover, they emphasize, the interview may be the only realistic technique in wooing a candidate not strongly motivated to move to the new position.

Symonds (1939) lists factors which can "influence the quantity and quality of data collected in the interview" (p. 149). These include factors inherent in the applicant and interviewer (such as their experiences immediately preceding the interview), factors inherent in the general situation (such as the surroundings) where the interview is conducted, and factors in the form and content of the interview (such as question content and interviewer reactions).

The validity of an interview has been defined as the degree to which the interviewer can accurately predict the job success of a candidate (Blum & Naylor, 1968). Denerley and Plumbley (1969) list the "prevalent weaknesses" in interview validity as shown by research:

(1) Interviews may be brief and unsystematic, which allows prejudices and hunches to assume a major role.
(2) Interviewers are often unaware of their limitations, and they make inferences going beyond the available data.
(3) Interviewers have favorite questions, the answers to which are allowed to assume disproportionate weighting in their assessments.
(4) Interviewers may fail to establish rapport with candidates.
(5) Interviewers often talk too much. (pp. 91-92)

Mayfield (1964), Ulrich and Trumbo (1965), and Wright (1969) published extensive research reviews on interview validity. Only a few of the studies they discuss showed the interview to be a good predictor of either job or training success. However, there were productive findings indicating how validity in the interview can be enhanced. These will be covered below.

Denerley and Plumbley (1969) have listed the purposes of the interview as follows: (1) evaluate the candidate's suitability for employment; (2) be sure the candidate receives an accurate picture of the job, including its undesirable aspects; and (3) conduct the interview in such a way that the candidate feels he or she has had a fair, complete hearing (pp. 90-91). Coleman, Siegel, and Sateja (1977) discuss the second purpose

above in terms of a psychological contract. Satisfaction, performance, and turnover, they say, are related to the congruence between the expectations of the organization and those of the candidate. Explicating the job helps establish a psychological contract affecting candidate expectations and behavior after hiring.

Wanous (1975) asserts that when emphasis on predicting performance is the only concern in selection, the costs of turnover "resulting from mismatches" between the candidate and the organization are overlooked (p. 51). He makes a case for communicating, early in the selection process, a realistic picture of a job's good and bad points. Though this may be done in the interview, Wanous advances a more active approach. He reports on several studies showing that "Realistic Job Previews" (expressed through short films) resulted in lower subsequent turnover as compared with approaches which "sell" the position to candidates.

Lopez (1965) provides a typology of interviews based on the levels of information which is exchanged. A primary interview, Lopez states, is one in which only factual data are exchanged. A secondary interview also involves logical data, including beliefs, opinions, and feelings. In a tertiary (depth) interview, factual, logical, and psychological data are exchanged. Psychological data include values and attitudes.

Lopez further classifies interviews by the strategies used. A patterned interview is one with structured, written questions and procedures. A serial interview combines successive interviews of a single candidate by several interviewers. In a panel interview, several interviewers talk with one candidate. If several candidates talk with one or more interviewers, it is termed a group interview. Blum and Naylor (1968) provide a related typology based on hiring strategy. In the team decision model, multiple interviewers do interviews together (panel interviews). The multiple cutoff approach consists of serial interviews, after which the candidates all interviewers approve are hired.

Several authors provide specific procedures for conducting selection interviews. Taylor (1972) emphasizes that the interviewer must know not only the job but also "what specific attitudes, knowledge, skills, or other attributes are needed to perform these tasks" (p. 141). O'Leary (1976) suggests that the interview begin with the candidate reviewing his education and work experience. This makes sense to the applicant, reduces his nervousness, and helps establish rapport. O'Leary provides three specific suggestions as to how the candidate may be induced to talk more: (1) the interviewer should be prepared for the interview and know a good deal about the candidate in advance; (2) the first few minutes should be devoted

to reducing the candidate's anxiety; and (3) the interviewer should ask open-ended questions (O'Leary, 1976, p. 22). Mayfield (1964) states the "generally accepted rule" that interviewers should avoid asking leading questions. Closure can be reached by asking the candidate if he wishes to add anything. As the interview ends, the selection process should be explained; the candidate should be told when he/she can expect to hear from the employer again (O'Leary, 1976).

The difficulty of evaluating the validity of selection interviews has long been recognized (Symonds, 1939). A great deal of experimental research has been done on the interview, but this research has revealed surprisingly few unqualified facts.

Sydiaha (1958) reviewed the literature on selection by interview and concluded that: (1) judgments about the same applicant differ "markedly" between different interviewers; and (2) the validity of predictions about candidate success varies greatly between interviewers. Yet Sydiaha's evaluation of the interview as a selection tool is not totally negative: "The interview is an important technique because of its widespread use. Compared to test procedures, the interview is simpler, more flexible, and evokes a greater degree of confidence in judgments made" (Webster, 1964, p. 3).

The reliability of the selection interview may be defined as the consistency with which the technique gathers candidate information and leads to conclusions based on the same information. Reliability is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for validity. Wagner (1949) and Ulrich and Trumbo (1965) reviewed research on interview reliability. Both found few studies on interviews reporting reliability data. Those reliabilities that were reported varied greatly, and most were lower than would usually be "accepted for devices used for individual prediction" (Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965, p. 153). The authors of both reviews concluded that the unreliability of interviews is a significant problem.

Schneider (1976) commented that decisions based on interview information "are generally unreliable (across judges) and thus nonvalid" (p. 194). Mayfield and Carlson (1966) illustrate a major source of unreliability: disagreement among interviewers as to what candidate information is important. The authors conducted a series of studies designed to ascertain how life insurance managers make decisions in hiring agents. They found that, for some items of candidate information, managers agreed on their favorableness or unfavorableness. In other cases, there was marked disagreement about whether a single piece of information was highly favorable or highly unfavorable. Thus, different selectors would be attentive to different

aspects of the interview and would reach different conclusions even if the same information were collected.

Studies on information and perception in the selection interview. Keating, Peterson, and Stone (1950) studied the accuracy of information given by job interviewees. They found high correlations between information given in interviews and that which was checked by other means. Both men and women were shown to be over 90% accurate in reporting previous salaries; they were around 95% accurate in listing their duties on previous jobs (Keating et al., 1950, p. 155). Weiss and Davis (1960), in a similar study on handicapped applicants, found much poorer accuracy (up to 55% inaccurate data given) (p. 156).

Carlson (1967) studied the effects of a candidate's appearance on a manager's decision. He found that appearance had the most effect when it complemented personal history information. The latter received twice as much weight as did appearance in making hiring decisions.

Dailey (1952) notes that first impressions are lasting but are not likely to be accurate unless they are based on important and relevant data. Often, Dailey observes, the perceiver does not know what is important, relevant, and predictive of later behavior. Moreover, the wrong information may be emphasized through selective

perception. This is the process whereby one selectively seeks information to support a first impression (McKay, 1972).

Soskin (1953) describes limitations on an interviewer's ability to form accurate impressions of others: (1) the influence of surroundings may affect perceptions; (2) a limited sample of behavior leads to broad generalizations; (3) there may be no chance for the candidate to show behavior relevant for evaluation; and (4) the perceiver reacts in an individualized way (pp. 124-125).

Dynamics of the interview. After analyzing a group of selection interviews, Daniels and Otis (1950) found that 57% of the time the interviewer was talking. The candidate was found to be talking an average of 30% of the time; during the remaining 13%, both were silent.

Anderson (1960) analyzed over 100 selection interviews. He found differences in speaking times for cases in which the candidates were hired, as compared with those who were not hired. Interviewers talked more with candidates who were later accepted than with those later rejected. There was less silence in interviews with accepted candidates. Anderson found candidates talking about the same proportion of the time regardless of whether or not they were hired. The total length of interviews was also about the same, regardless of the

outcome. In a similar study in 1961, Anderson found results supporting these same conclusions.

Mayfield (1964), in his review of research on selection interviewing, concluded that in unstructured interviews, candidates often talk less than do interviewers.

Verbal reinforcement plays an important role in interview dynamics. Verplank (1955) studied interviewers' reinforcement of candidate responses; he found significant increases in opinion statements by candidates when such statements were reinforced by interviewers. The reinforcements used were statements of agreement and paraphrasing of the candidate's words. O'Leary (1976) suggests that interviewers should use selective verbal reinforcement to encourage candidate statements about those attitudes which are most important for the assessment.

Candidates respond differently depending on the support they sense from interviewers. Alderfer and McCord (1970) studied the reactions of M.B.A. students interviewing for permanent and summer jobs. They found that "supportive, interested" behavior resulted in positive reactions by candidates (reflected in positive evaluations of interviews, expectations of receiving job offers, and expectations of accepting an offer). More confrontive behavior by the interviewer (such as asking the candidate to evaluate his/her strengths and

weaknesses or to answer a technical question in his field) also received positive reactions. This, according to Alderfer and McCord, suggests "that behavior from the interviewer which asks a candidate to show his own competence may result in positive reactions to the interview" (p. 383). A key to successful interviewing, the authors suggest, may be in confronting the candidate without causing any discomfort.

The 1961 study by Anderson, cited above, also analyzed the tone of the interview. Anderson compared the tone of the interviewer's speech in the first and second halves of interviews resulting in both acceptances and rejections. In acceptance interviews, the interviewer's speech was found less harsh and less tension-producing for the candidate. In interviews ultimately resulting in rejections, Anderson found a change in emotional tone in the second half; candidates felt more tension and began hesitating longer before speaking. Anderson felt his results were "compatible with the impression that the interviewer uses the interview to confirm an impression of the applicant" (p. 34).

Effects of comparisons and unfavorable information. Evidence shows that evaluations of candidates are often not absolute but can be affected by comparisons with others. Carlson (1968) found that when managers were evaluating more than one candidate at a time, other

candidates were used as a standard. In another study, Carlson (1970) showed that an average candidate, interviewed after several poor ones, would be evaluated highly. Wexley, Yukl, Kovacs, and Sanders (1972) reported similar conclusions, noting that contrasts most affected the ratings given average applicants. Based on these findings, there appears to be a need for some standard evaluation system "to reduce the large amount of information developed from an interview to a manageable number of constant dimensions" (Carlson, Thayer, Mayfield, & Peterson, 1971, p. 53).

As already noted, negative information about a candidate appears to be very powerful in affecting an interviewer's impressions. Bolster and Springbett (1961) provided interviewers with protocols containing combinations of statements which had been rated for favorableness/unfavorableness. The interviewers' reactions showed that unfavorable information more readily produced rating shifts than did positive information. A highly unfavorable item produced a more negative attitude shift than did two moderately unfavorable items.

In their study of ratings given hypothetical applicants for jobs as life insurance agents, Mayfield and Carlson (1966) found support for the contention that raters give more weight to negative than to positive information. In addition, Blakeney and McNaughton (1971)

found that unfavorable information introduced early in interviews shifted ratings more unfavorably than did similar information introduced toward the end of the interviews.

"Halo effect" is the term given to an opposite source of error in the selection interview. If an employer is favorably impressed by one or more candidate attributes, he may allow this to color subsequent unrelated judgments toward the positive side. Denerley and Plumbley (1969) state that "if most of the other candidates for the job have already been eliminated, the interviewer may be especially prone to . . . halo effect" (p. 96).

Interviewer memory and experience and the effects of pressure. Interviewers vary in their ability to remember details from interviews. Carlson et al. (1974) report a study in which 40 managers watched a 20-minute video tape of a selection interview and imagined themselves as the interviewer. Following the tape, the managers were given a 20-question test on the interview; their mean score was 10 wrong. Those who took notes and followed an interview guide, on the other hand, were "quite accurate." The authors conclude that "note-taking in conjunction with a guide appears to be essential" (Carlson et al., 1974, p. 82). They also found that those managers whose memories were least accurate rated

the candidate more highly and with less variability than did the more accurate managers. This led the researchers to the conclusion that a "halo strategy" was used by the less effective managers, while those with better memory focus more on the individual differences of the candidates.

Carlson (1967) studied how pressure for results in interviews affected interviewer judgments. He discovered that interviewers under pressure to hire (those behind on hiring quotas) evaluated the same recruits more favorably and were more likely to hire, in comparison with other interviewers not under pressure. Managers with more concentrated interviewing experience were less susceptible to this effect than were those with less concentrated experience.

In another part of this same research, Carlson (1967) compared the selection decisions of managers having varied interviewing experience. He found no greater agreement on candidate ratings between highly experienced interviewers than between those with differing experience levels. Carlson concluded that interviewers do not necessarily learn how to make better hiring decisions through experience. The author argued that systematic interviewer training is needed to improve performance in selection.

Schneider (1976) supports the need for interviewer training:

> One thing seems clear: because of the generally unreliable nature of the interview, people who do employment interviews should be carefully trained and provided with reasonably structured interview formats. (p. 199)

Since different interviewers use varying styles and emphases, they may weight candidate responses differently even if they ask for the same information (Miner & Miner, 1977; Mayfield, 1964). But "interviewers can be trained to follow similar patterns in their questioning and to evaluate responses using the same standards" (Miner, 1977, p. 45). Thus, interview reliability can be increased through systematic interviewer training.

Carlson et al. (1971) describe an interview training program developed by the Life Insurance Agency Management Association. This three-day workshop attempted to build life insurance managers' knowledge, skill, and self-confidence in interviewing and selection techniques. Video tapes demonstrated the effects of violating selection principles; practice and critique were used to build interview skills. In the final evaluative exercise, trainees combined information from a variety of data-gathering methods to make simulated selection decisions.

Structure of the interview. Interviews may range along a continuum from very unstructured to totally pre-planned and structured. In the unstructured interview, the interviewer makes decisions, along the way, to obtain

the "best" information. In the patterned or structured interview, on the other hand, all questions may be written out in advance.

Blum and Naylor (1968) assert that since the interviewer can noticeably affect applicant behavior, it is important to standardize interviews. They argue in favor of highly structured selection interviews, although they caution that too much structure can prevent followup on valuable topics that may arise spontaneously.

Mayfield (1964) supports the structured interview because it yields higher inter-rater reliability than does the unstructured approach. In his research review, Mayfield found that "in almost all cases where a satisfactory reliability for the selection interview was reported, the interview was of a structured form" (p. 250). Ulrich and Trumbo (1965), in their review, reached a similar conclusion: "both the highest validities and the greatest gains in validity over other predictors involved interviews described as systematic, designed, structured, or guided" (p. 112). Stanton (1977) recommended a structured selection interview and provided an extensive list of suggested questions.

Yonge (1956) asserts that the poor validation of the selection interview through research has resulted from (1) lack of clear definition of the aim of the interview; (2) diversity in the criteria used for validating

the predictive interview; and (3) variation in the form (degree of structure) of the interview. He recommends having specific objectives, carefully defining the traits to be assessed, having some (but not too much) structure, and using a reliable criterion measure. Yonge reports a pilot study conforming generally to these principles. In his study, scores by 46 workers on broad attitudes, measured by interviews, correlated between .48 and .99 with overall ratings by supervisors (Yonge, 1956, p. 31). Yonge's overall conclusion about interview structure is that

> The interview should not be formless; yet if it becomes very restricted in form, it loses the essential character of the interview; insofar as it takes on the nature of an impersonal psychological test, it is unable to use a spontaneous, dynamic interaction between two people as a means of relieving certain complex personality features. (p. 27)

Carlson et al. (1974) studied three interview strategies: structured, in which all questions came from an interview guide; semistructured, where the interviewer followed the guide generally but could ask other questions; and unstructured, where no guide was used. Only the structured interview enabled three different interviewers to agree on the decision. The authors contend that if decisions cannot be consistent, the information obtained is unreliable and, therefore, cannot be valid. "Thus, a highly structured interview has the greatest potential for valid selection" (Carlson et al., 1974, p. 80).

A series of studies by McMurry (1947) reported good predictive validities (in the vicinity of .60) for interviewers' overall estimates of employment suitability when patterned interviews were used. Predictive validity is poorer when the interview is less structured, however. Mayfield (1964) cites evidence to conclude that "a general suitability rating based on an unstructured interview with no prior information provided has extremely low inter-rater reliability, especially in an employment situation" (p. 249).

From the consistency of the above findings, it seems safe to conclude that structure is important in selection interviews. O'Leary (1976) suggests that a standard form be used for structure and notetaking. Notes, he says, should be made immediately following the interview. Sheffield (1951) recommends that a uniform rating scale be used in judging candidates interviewing for school district administrative positions. The need for a structured rating scale for notetaking is supported by a number of authors, and especially so by the study on memory cited above (Carlson et al., 1974).

Miner (1977) asserts the importance of producing written evaluations of candidates following interviews. These evaluations can later be compared with criterion information on the performance of those hired. The comparison would provide feedback to interviewers as they

make modifications in their techniques to enhance the predictive validity of the interview.

Recommendations concerning interviewing practices. Carlson et al. (1971), in summarizing the results of a series of interview studies conducted from 1965 to 1971, make two major recommendations:

> First, the selection interview should be made an integral part of an over-all selection procedure, and to accomplish this, new and additional materials are needed. The new materials should include a broad-gauge, comprehensive, structured interview guide; standardized evaluation and prediction forms that aid the interviewer in summarizing information from all steps in the selection process; and an evaluation system that provides feedback to the interviewer in language similar to the preemployment job predictions he must make. The second major applied implication is that an intensive training program for interviewers is necessary if interviewers are to initially learn enough in common to increase the probability of obtaining general validity from the selection interview. (p. 56)

Schneider (1976) summarizes the findings of the McGill studies and those by Carlson and others. Among the implications of this research, according to Schneider, are the following: (1) Interviewers function better without pressure to fill quotas. (2) Interviewers should use a standard, well-structured interview schedule and should take extensive factual notes for later use in decision-making. (3) Interviewers should receive feedback on their performance so they can improve it (Schneider, 1976, p. 196). Particularly significant to the present study is Schneider's conclusion that interviewers need an

accurate behavioral description of the "good" candidate to use as a selection criterion. The present study's attempt to identify the important competencies for entry-level College Student Personnel candidates is designed to help fulfill this need.

References or Recommendations

References are almost universally used in Student Personnel selection. "In some situations letters of recommendation are the main tool used to assess candidates"; yet recommendations have severe limitations (Rim, 1976, p. 437). Blum and Naylor (1968) offer four main causes of inaccuracies in references:

> (1) The writer does not know the candidate well.
> (2) The writer may not be able to assess the candidate, even if he has observed him.
> (3) The writer may lack the ability to communicate well.
> (4) The writer may be reluctant to be honest about the candidate's unfavorable aspects, and may even inflate the reference to get rid of him. (p. 168)

In their text on school administration, Hall and McIntyre (1957) are highly critical of the written reference as a selection tool.

> The almost total lack of proof that letters of recommendation have any real value should cause those who select educational leaders to be extremely cautious in assigning much weight to "evidence" of such flimsy nature. (p. 415)

Rim (1976) studied the reliability of recommendation letters written on behalf of candidates for academic teaching positions or promotions. Five full

Professors each rated a variety of such letters; the Professors assigned ratings of positive (contributes to a hiring decision in the candidate's favor), negative (leads to a rejection), or indifferent/ambiguous. Rim found a tendency for the judges to disagree on the value of the letters. "In over 20% of the letters, the disagreements are pronounced, in that the same letters are evaluated as damaging, indifferent, or definitely positive" (p. 444). Judges also differed widely in their styles of judging. Some were very lenient, rating over two-thirds of the references positively; others rated under one-third positively. "Such a variety of assessment doubtless adds to the unreliability of the tool" (p. 443). Rim found a general tendency for favorable letters to be longer than unfavorable ones. Ambiguous letters (over which the judges most disagreed) were longest. Rim's overall conclusion was that letters of recommendation are unreliable selection tools.

Browning (1968) correlated objectively scaled preemployment reference ratings of 508 teachers with their overall performance ratings after one academic year on the job. Because of the low validity shown, he concluded that "scaled reference data have limited practical value in predicting teacher competency" (p. 392). Validity coefficients varied with the raters. The best validity coefficient was obtained for ratings by the person's last

supervisor (.23); the lowest coefficient (.09) was found on ratings by Professors of practice teaching (Browning, 1968, p. 391).

Peres and Garcia (1962) studied 625 reference letters for engineering job applicants. They noted that rather than describing observable behaviors, the references applied adjectives to the candidates. One hundred seventy different adjectives from the letters were isolated. Peres and Garcia then asked supervisors to recall their best and poorest engineers and to rate all adjectives on a scale of 1 (describes him very poorly) to 5 (describes him very well). A factor analysis of the results showed five factors (groups of adjectives) with varying abilities to discriminate good from poor engineers. From best to worst in discrimination, they were: (1) mental agility; (2) vigor; (3) dependability-reliability; (4) urbanity; and (5) cooperation-consideration. Peres and Garcia comment on this result:

> It can be hypothesized that, when an individual is asked to submit a reference for an applicant that he feels is not truly qualified for the position under consideration, the best the referent can say is, "Joe is a pretty nice guy" (since very few referents deprecate the job applicant). (p. 285)

Check (1978) argues that in the competitive job market of College Student Personnel, jobs are often "won or lost by the credentials offered for preliminary review" (p. 370). In an effort to replace references' "general glowing statements" with specific facts, Check offers a

16-item questionnaire eliciting candidate information for the use of recommendation writers. This "Check-Recommend-ogram," when completed by the applicant, provides references with specifics on experience, accomplishments, and job desires. Thus, vague "nice guy" statements can be replaced with "a much more accurate and convincing picture of the applicant" (Check, 1978, p. 371).

Mosel and Goheen (1958, 1959) completed a series of studies on the validity of the Employment Recommendation Questionnaire (ERQ), which is used as a reference in hiring for Civil Service positions. In the first study, the authors correlated candidates' ERQ scores with supervisors' performance ratings after a period of work at skilled trade jobs. Correlations ranged from -.10 to +.29; only five out of 12 correlations were over .20 (Mosel & Goheen, 1958, p. 487). The authors found little support for the validity of the ERQ. The main problem, they assert, is that the recommendations discriminated little because they were varied and positive.

In the second study (Goheen & Mosel, 1959), ERQ's for economists, budget examiners and training officers were correlated with field investigations (interviews with a variety of people who had known candidates at work since they had been hired). Correlation coefficients were: economists .22; budget examiners .54; and training officers .45 (p. 304). The authors note that only the

field investigations produced information on things like alcoholism, gross incompetence, or homosexuality. The value of personal contact with previous employers was thus supported.

In the third study (Mosel & Goheen, 1959) differences in ERQ validity were assessed according to who completed the reference. Acquaintances tended to be the most favorable, followed by previous subordinates and coworkers. Previous employers wrote the least favorable ERQ's. Correlations were computed between a performance criterion and ERQ ratings by the different respondent types. Only past supervisors (.19) and acquaintances (.19) had significant coefficients. But "the low order of these coefficients makes them of doubtful practical value" (Mosel & Goheen, 1959, p. 476).

Numerous authors have recommended that personal contacts with references be made, usually by telephone (Mandell, 1958; Lipsett, 1972; Beatty & Schneier, 1977; Miner & Miner, 1977; Stanton, 1977). Mandell (1958) suggests that specific facts rather than evaluations be obtained in reference checks and that ambiguous replies be followed up with pointed questions. The selector, Mandell suggests, should have a list of written questions before initiating a call to check a reference. Stanton (1977) provides a structured form for telephone reference checks and contends that contrived answers will be

prevented if questions are asked quickly. Questions phrased in a forced-choice format can minimize excessive leniency in the reference check (Beatty & Schneier, 1977).

Summary: Procedures Used to Gather Information for Selection Decisions

The resumé provides a biased and unreliable view of an applicant and should be considered suspect. Application blanks can provide better controlled information for screening and personnel uses. If application blanks are used in selection decisions, each item should be weighted for its validity in helping to predict subsequent employee success. More detailed "biographical information blanks," when validated against performance criteria, may be useful in making short-term predictions of candidate success.

Both validity and reliability of the selection interview have been called into question by research findings. However, the interview can make unique contributions in revealing the whole candidate, in filling gaps in the information provided by other techniques, in recruiting, and in giving candidates accurate information about a job. Interview results may be unreliable unless different interviewers first agree on the criteria to be used in evaluating applicants. Because biases may be established early in interviews, first impressions (especially unfavorable ones) often determine outcomes.

Interviewers tend to talk more than candidates, especially in unstructured interviews. Verbal reinforcements given by the interviewer can substantially affect the tone of the interview. Because candidates tend to be evaluated in comparison with one another, rather than against an absolute standard, fixed evaluation criteria are needed. Unfavorable information may affect evaluations more than favorable information, particularly if introduced early in the interview.

Interviewers who take notes during interviews retain more information and may be more discriminating than those who do not. Interviewers under pressure to hire may be more lenient in judging applicants. Systematic interviewer training is important in standardizing procedures and enhancing interview reliability.

One of the clearest research findings is that structured interviews (where detailed questions are specified in advance) are more reliable and valid than unstructured interviews. Standardized written evaluations of candidates enhance the effectiveness of the interview as a selection tool.

Though written references are widely used, they are often vague and inaccurate. Since judges have been found to disagree as to the value of the same reference letters, the reliability of the written reference is suspect. The validity of objectively scaled references

has been shown to be generally low and to vary depending on the writer. References often apply adjectives to applicants rather than giving specifics; different kinds of adjectives may vary in their discrimination between good and poor applicants. Authors strongly recommend that references be corroborated through field investigations or personal telephone contacts with the writers.

Literature on Staff Selection in Student Personnel and Education

Selection of Residence Hall Paraprofessional Staff

There is a considerable body of published Student Personnel literature concerning the selection of paraprofessional staff, particularly Resident Assistants (RAs). In general, these staff members are part-time undergraduates. Studies attempting to validate standardized instruments as predictors of success in such positions have often yielded disappointing results (Correnti & Tuttle, 1972; Atkinson, Williams, & Garb, 1973). Lack of agreement in defining the role of the Resident Assistant (Biggs, 1971; Atkinson et al., 1973) and inability to clearly define criteria of effectiveness (Wyrick & Mitchell, 1971) have been major difficulties in such validation studies.

Traditional procedures for selecting paraprofessionals have included application forms, interviews, and references (Schroeder & Willis, 1973). Both individual and panel interviews are common; professional staff and

current paraprofessionals often serve as interviewers (Correnti & Tuttle, 1972). Banta (1969) and Delworth, Sherwood, and Casaburri (1974) have discussed group interviews and other group techniques in the selection of student paraprofessionals.

Tibbits (1977) explains a method of selecting part-time student staff using only peer ratings. Tibbits had applicants rate each other anonymously on ability to perform specified tasks. His method was tested in three different settings and compared to traditional methods of selecting Resident Assistants (RAs) and orientation staff. Tibbits reports that 34 of 35 people actually chosen by more costly methods in these three tests would have been selected by the peer evaluation method (p. 67). He contends that peer evaluation methods are "based on more authentic interactions than can be obtained in an interview setting," and he makes a strong argument for the economy of this selection approach (Tibbits, 1977, p. 67).

Wotruba and Crawley (1967) used a similar sociometric questionnaire in selecting RAs at Holy Cross College. They found peer nominations quite effective in predicting student selection by conventional interview methods.

In a continuation of this study, Wotruba (1969) had the selected RAs take the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), the Bell Adjustment Inventory (BAI), and

the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Wotruba reports on the ability of these instruments to discriminate between RAs subsequently rated "effective," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory." Though Wotruba's analysis is somewhat vague and lacks statistical explanation, he did find some interesting comparisons between effectiveness and subscale scores on the EPPS and the MBTI. The BAI profiles showed no clear differences between groups. Wotruba points out that none of these instruments comprehensively measures the full pattern of traits relevant to RA effectiveness.

Sheeder (1963) reports on the use of role-playing as an RA selection tool. In this approach, applicants role-played three situations in which they might be involved if selected as dormitory counselors: (1) leading a floor meeting; (2) conducting an academic advising session; and (3) dealing with a minor disciplinary situation. Staff evaluated candidates' performances using pre-determined criteria. Sheeder presents results of subsequent evaluation of this selection method by both staff and candidates. Significantly, Sheeder omits mention of when student candidates wrote their evaluations; though these were mostly positive, one cannot interpret them without knowing whether anonymity was granted and whether selection decisions had been made at the time they were written. Still, Sheeder presents

some evidence that role-playing may be a helpful selection tool. No evidence is given as to whether those selected in this way performed better than those selected under previous procedures.

Nair and Sonders (1969) discuss a similar "sociodrama" technique used at Lycoming College. Following role-playing, professional observers rate candidates on: (1) apparent comprehension and acceptance of the RA role; (2) permissiveness or authoritarianism revealed; (3) potential for counseling insight; and (4) comprehension of the residence hall as an educational setting. No data are presented to document the effectiveness of this procedure, although the authors do feel it is satisfactory.

The Leaderless Group Discussion or LGD (Bass, 1949) has been used by several authors as a selection procedure. Brady (1955) reports on a technique wherein professional staff observe five RA candidates discussing typical hall situations. Brady found the procedure valuable for its economical use of staff time. He observed that self-consciousness (a problem in the typical interview) is lost by candidates in their discussion, enabling them to behave more as they <u>are</u>. Brady believes the procedure reveals much information about candidates' philosophy, level of development, and knowledge.

Banta and McCormick (1969) had trained Head Residents use a rating scale to evaluate Residence Hall

Counselor applicants who participated in Leaderless Group Discussions. These LGD ratings were combined with other information to yield point-total scores for each candidate. The authors express satisfaction with this method, which they hoped would "substitute a more valid and reliable decision-making procedure for selection (formerly) based on intuitive judgment" (Banta & McCormick, 1969, p. 30). However, no data are presented showing whether or not Residence Hall Counselors selected by this method were more successful than those chosen "intuitively." Applicants expressed satisfaction with the LGD approach, which they felt minimized their anxiety.

Mullozzi and Spees (1971) report a study investigating the ability of the LGD and two other measures to predict which of a group of applicants would be chosen as Resident Fellows (RFs). The subjects were 272 students applying for about 90 RF positions at Southern Illinois University. Applicants were rated on LGD performances, and they also completed the Affective Sensitivity Scale and the Personal Orientation Inventory. Standard selection methods (interviews, recommendations) were then used to select RFs. A stepwise linear regression analysis was computed to determine the effectiveness of the three measurements in predicting the selections actually made. The Affective Sensitivity Scale (measuring empathy) was not found useful as a selection predictor. The LGD was

the best predictor; and, since it took less time than interviewing, the LGD "promises to be an excellent future device for use with RF selection" (Mullozzi & Spees, 1971, p. 189).

Since the criterion in this study was selection itself and not job success, the study was really concerned with economy of selection. No data were found in any of the reviewed studies to validate the LGD as a predictor of success in residence hall positions.

Correnti and Tuttle (1972) used a six-week apprenticeship program as a selection tool. This program offers RA candidates presentations and small group discussions concerning topics of concern to Resident Assistants. During the small group discussions, candidates were evaluated by group leaders and current RAs; participants also evaluated each other at the end of the program. Following this training, those who still wished to become RAs could apply for the job. Ratings from the apprenticeship program were used in selection. The program, which provided valuable training, was also seen as a worthwhile addition to the selection process.

Two publications report on special training conducted for staff who participate in RA selection. Garfield, Holland, and Humphrey (1978) used videotaped role plays of interviews to train selectors and found the procedure helpful. Morgan, Smith, and Zirkle (1974) trained

teams of staff selectors to use specifically defined criteria to make selection decisions. Role playing techniques were also used in this approach; evaluation instruments provided feedback to selector trainees.

The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) has been used in several selection studies. In one study described above, Mullozzi and Spees (1971) found that one scale of the POI added slightly to the prediction of selection as a Resident Fellow. Atkinson et al. (1973) related POI scores to ratings of RA effectiveness after one quarter on the job. Their findings indicated that the POI was not an effective instrument for predicting effectiveness. Schroeder and Willis (1973) found the POI unable to distinguish RA candidates rated differently by conventional interview methods, and they drew a similar conclusion.

In a study by Graff and Bradshaw (1970), the conclusions were more positive than those of the two studies discussed above. Graff and Bradshaw administered the POI to a group of male RAs who had been in their positions for two quarters. About two months later, resident students and Student Personnel Deans rated the RAs' effectiveness. Four POI scales were found to predict effectiveness as rated by the students and Deans. However, Atkinson et al. (1973) have rightly criticized this study because the POI was given after the subjects had had two

quarters' work experience. Thus, the data are not predictive in the sense of providing pre-service data relevant to selection.

Based on these conflicting studies, it appears that POI results vary with the situation in which the instrument is used. The case for the POI as a predictor of success as a Resident Assistant is a weak one.

A number of other instruments have been tested as RA selection tools, with mixed findings. Murphy and Ortenzi (1966) found no significant differences between the scores of high- and low-rated RAs on the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (SVIB) and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS). On the other hand, Holbrook (1972) found the EPPS generally good in discriminating between volunteer residence staff rated effective/ineffective by their supervisors. Holbrook's findings were different for male and female subjects, leading him to conclude that "different personality factors seem to contribute to male and female effectiveness . . ." (p. 561).

Wachowiak and Bauer (1977) explored the relation of scores on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to selection and subsequent effectiveness of RAs. Both accepted and rejected RA applicants scored significantly more extroverted on the MBTI than did a control group. Accepted applicants were less perception-oriented than those rejected. Resident student evaluations of RAs were

not related to MBTI scores, but RAs with lower sensing-intuiting scores received more positive evaluations from their Head Residents. Wachowiak and Bauer concluded that the MBTI can be useful in selecting RAs.

Schroeder and Dowse (1968) report two studies investigating the usefulness of various instruments in selecting Graduate Assistants (GAs) as residence hall counselors. In the first study, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) profiles failed to predict which GAs would be rated high or low by Head Residents. In the second study, three more instruments were tested as potential selection devices: the women's form of the SVIB, the EPPS, and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). Graduate Advisors took these instruments and were rated by Head Residents and students. Discriminant analyses showed no significant differences among rated criterion groups in scores on any of the three instruments.

In a similar study, however, Morton (1975) found relationships between some CPI personality-trait scores and RA effectiveness as judged by supervisors. Above-average RAs had higher scores (significant at least at the .05 level) than below-average RAs on eight traits: dominance, capacity for status, self-acceptance, responsibility, socialization, good impression, achievement via conformance, and intellectual efficiency (Morton, 1975, p. 21). Morton concludes that the CPI may have value as

one of several tools in the RA selection process. He correctly points out, however, that his findings cannot be generalized to other institutions. In addition, the results cannot be applied to women because Morton studied a small number of women appointed to newly created female RA positions.

Wyrick and Mitchell (1971) tested the possible relationship between RA effectiveness (as rated by students and Head Residents) and results from instruments measuring three aspects of counseling behavior: accurate empathic understanding, nonpossessive warmth, and genuineness. They found that accurate empathy and warmth were significantly related to student ratings for female RAs but not for males. None of the three measures was related to effectiveness ratings by Head Residents.

Bodden and Walsh (1968) administered the Adjective Check List, the Authoritarian F-Scale, and the Overall Agreement Scale to 65 Residence Counselors at Ohio State University. Residence Hall Directors rated each Residence Counselor using a scored rating form. A multiple regression analysis showed the three instruments jointly effective in predicting the ratings given the subjects. The authors believe the three instruments "have considerable potential for use in the selection of college residence hall counselors" but call for replication at other institutions to determine the generalizability of these results (Bodden & Walsh, 1968, p. 194).

Biggs (1971) developed the Residence Hall Viewpoints Inventory to examine relationships between attitudes held by Residence Counselor candidates and subsequent RC job success. Biggs identified four relevant attitude scales: Job Loyalty, Role Activity, Attitudes About Interpersonal Differences, and Attitudes About Authority. A significant multiple correlation of .61 between scores on these scales and effectiveness ratings by Head Residents was shown (Biggs, 1971, p. 113). The author concludes that attitudes toward interpersonal relations and toward the Resident Counselor position can help predict success in the job.

Shelton and Mathis (1976) divided a group of Resident Assistants into "high-assertive" and "low-assertive" groups, using the Rathus Self-Reporting Assertiveness Schedule. RAs were then rated for effectiveness. "High-assertives" were rated significantly higher overall and were seen as more open and honest, less likely to go out of their way to avoid conflict, better communicators, and better in floor discipline situations. However, "high-assertives" were judged significantly less available when needed.

Following their study, Atkinson et al. (1973) concluded that "despite the growing trend toward consensus regarding role and function, it appears that a single instrument for resident assistant selection is yet to be

identified" (p. 331). Indeed, the findings reviewed here show that while some encouraging results are available, no single instrument or group of instruments has consistently shown predictive validity in a variety of selection settings.

Professional Staff Selection and the Job Market in College Student Personnel

Hester (1971) interviewed Presidents and Chief Student Personnel Officers at 12 midwestern universities to find out what characteristics were seen as most important in selecting administrative Student Personnel staff. She found that Chief Student Personnel Officers and executive staff were expected to have a broad experiential knowledge and perspective. Other managers were expected to have in-depth knowledge and experience in their particular specialty areas. There was consensus that the following factors were important in choosing Student Personnel administrators: personality; previous administrative experience, preferably in similar environments; a Ph.D. in a relevant area; leadership ability; and good communication skills. Hester found that selection procedures were more rigorous for higher level positions; however, she did not conduct a detailed evaluation of the selection tools used.

An extensive survey of Student Personnel literature revealed no additional studies on procedures and criteria

for selecting full-time professional staff. As stated in Chapter I, this appears to be a significant omission. The remaining Student Personnel literature in this area consists of job market surveys and post-conference placement evaluations, which are limited to examining overall placement trends. These are summarized briefly below.

Studer and Heath (1974) criticize the mechanistic approach to conference placement in Student Personnel: "the reality of the buyer's market has contributed to recruiting and interviewing behavior antithetical to the humanistic models being proposed simultaneously in conference programs" (p. 81). The authors urge employers to adopt a more student development-oriented approach to conference placement. They suggest that more information on positions be given candidates before interviews and that promising candidates be given repeated interviews so they may receive more detailed information on positions. A list of guidelines for more humane selection is offered.

Ferrari (1972) reports a NASPA survey on the job market in Student Personnel. His committee mailed questionnaires to Chief Student Personnel Officers and Student Personnel educators at 1,659 colleges. The usable response rate was only 26%, which renders the validity and generalizability of this study suspect. The questionnaires asked for past trends and future projections. Ferrari reports that 57% of the staff hired in 1970-72

came from academic programs in counseling, psychology, or other fields or from non-Student Personnel positions (p. 94). No expectation of growth in staffing for 1972-75 was found, yet "increases in (Student Personnel) graduates accelerate yearly" (p. 99). Ferrari predicted that "an over-supply of student personnel job candidates" was probable (p. 100). This prediction may have been overly pessimistic in view of shortcomings in the sample and in light of the findings of subsequent surveys.

Escott (1974) reviewed placement experience at the 1973-74 joint NASPA/ACPA/NAWDAC conference. He noted that, excluding 500 entry-level Army counseling positions, 569 entry-level candidates registered for 139 entry-level jobs. For staff positions, the ratio of available positions to applicants was 1:1.7, and for deanships it was 1:3. For all levels, the ratio of jobs to applicants was 1:2.4, excluding the Army positions (p. 87). Escott noted that 10% of the listed positions required some special highly skilled training not usually a part of traditional Student Personnel preparation.

Packwood (1976) reports on a survey of 1973-74 graduates of Student Personnel preparation programs. This survey is part of an ongoing annual study by ACPA Commission XII. Of 864 graduates that year, 95% were employed (15% outside College Student Personnel) (p. 23). Twenty-four percent of M.A. graduates (the largest

proportion) obtained positions in residence programs and housing (p. 24). Most graduates stayed in the geographical area where they obtained their degrees, and only one-third had jobs by the end of the academic year. Packwood found these and other data consistent with the previous year's unpublished Commission XII study and concluded that the job market in Student Personnel was healthy.

Escott (1976) contends that "in recent years the number of positions available is far outdistanced by the number of individuals entering the market" (p. 40). He analyzed 1974-75 data and found that 68% of the candidates hired through the NASPA Placement Service obtained their positions through conference placement and referrals from colleagues (p. 43). Consistent with Packwood's study of the previous year, Escott found residence halls and housing to be the major source of entry-level positions. He followed up on his previous findings that positions requiring special skills were on the increase. From 281 employers surveyed, 333 special skill positions were projected to become available between 1975 and 1978: 181 in developmental education (reading and study skills specialists, tutors, and others); 118 in administration (management systems specialists, computer technologists, accounting specialists); and 34 in judicial-legal areas

(p. 52). Thus, a trend toward specialization is apparent in Escott's 1974 and 1976 findings.

Greer, Blaesser, Herron, and Horle (1978a) continue the series of ACPA Commission XII surveys. From September 1975 through August 1976, 1191 graduates were reported by the Student Personnel training programs surveyed; of these, 655 (59%) were placed in Student Personnel positions or returned to previous positions in the field (pp. 344-345). Six percent of the graduates were unable to find Student Personnel employment in restricted geographical areas, and another 5% found no positions (p. 345). Just over half the graduates had been placed in four-year public colleges and universities. Twenty-two percent found positions in community/junior colleges, which marks an increase in this area (p. 346). More graduates were staying in the same geographical area than in the previous year. The authors report that "career planning and placement, women's and minority programming, affirmative action, and preadmission counseling (recruiting) are providing areas of employment for recent graduates" (p. 348). The study concludes that the employment picture has remained stable but that this stability is due in part to the exodus of more graduates (15% in 1976) to non-Student Personnel positions (p. 348).

For 1976-77, 1049 College Student Personnel degree program graduates were reported in the Commission XII survey, a decrease of 142 from the previous year (Greer

et al., 1978b, Tables 1 and 2). Of these, 846 received the M.A. degree; as in the previous year, 59% of the M.A. graduates were placed in Student Personnel positions (Table 2). Thirty-three percent of these took positions in Residence Programs/Housing; 18% were placed in Student Activities, Programming, Orientation, Unions, or Student Life positions (Table 3). Again, the authors conclude that Student Personnel employment is stable, although 19% of the graduates took positions outside the field (pp. 4-5).

Armstrong et al. (1978) surveyed a sample of administrators listed as "contact persons" in the 1977 NASPA Conference placement materials. They compared these responses to those from similar questions asked of a candidate sample. The survey covered all administrative levels and a number of different kinds of positions. Data were provided on advertising methods, timing of selection activities, number of conference and on-campus interviews, characteristics of persons hired, and opinions about the job market in general. This study confirmed the prevalence of personal interviews in Student Personnel selection. Most employers used conference interviews to screen out unwanted applicants; about two-thirds of the employers reported conducting on-campus "finalist" interviews with two to five candidates per position. The authors concluded that the 1977 NASPA job market was an "employer's

market" but that candidates would benefit by more carefully choosing the positions for which they apply. Professional conference placement activities appeared to be of particular value to employers in screening entry-level candidates.

Differences in methodology and response rates in these studies have resulted in some conflicting overall conclusions. Ferrari's pessimistic 1972 projections have been challenged by the more favorable conclusions of subsequent research. However, it is clear that the job market is competitive for newly graduated candidates. A degree is not a sure ticket to a College Student Personnel position. On the other hand, from the viewpoint of the selector, there still appears to be keen competition for the best candidates (particularly those with special skills).

Selection in Other Areas of Education

Relevant studies were located concerning the selection of college faculty and of public school teachers, principals, and other administrators.

A study of personnel procedures in 14 higher education institutions was discussed by Hopkins (1926). In his section on the selection of instructors, Hopkins asserted that none of the schools had found a good solution to this problem. His chief criticism is

directed at the lack of agreement on, and specification of, the qualities desired in instructors. Hopkins further criticizes "the inadequacy of (selection) methods and the extreme flexibility which characterizes their use" (p. 67). He finds this "a serious weakness in the administrative scheme of education" (p. 66).

Caplow and McGee (1958) used patterned interviews to study faculty hiring practices at 10 major universities. They found highly subjective procedures being used; "old-boy networks" and nepotism were much in evidence. The main criterion for selection was the expectation that the candidate would develop a national scholarly reputation. Academic departments avoided the person who would not fit in; "'fitting in' involves the acceptance of the values of the department as a peer group and a willingness to defend it under attack from without, especially from higher administrators . . ." (p. 134). Caplow and McGee also found departments hesitating more than candidates in making hiring commitments. They describe the frequent outcome of selection as "a happy candidate and a worried department" (p. 136).

Miller (1959) studied procedures used to select physical education personnel in state teachers colleges. Only a minority of the colleges he studied clearly specified the selection criteria and procedures to be used; Miller recommended that more exact and verifiable selection

practices be instituted. He also felt that selection would be improved by the use of a uniform application blank.

Trandem (1974) examined the selection of teachers in certain California public schools. He found that very few of his respondents had completed detailed position analyses or specified the functions performed and the qualities needed in teachers. Though all his respondents used interviews and felt interviews were the most valid predictors of candidate success, very few interviewers had had training in interview techniques. Trandem concluded that more training in innovative staff selection procedures was needed by school district personnel directors.

Hadley (1952) offers recommendations concerning the selection of school principals. He arrived at these suggestions by studying selection practices at school systems across the nation which had been identified as particularly effective by "a jury of leading educators." Though many of Hadley's recommendations do not apply to higher education, two are notable: (1) As a first selection step, the job should be carefully defined. Existing staff should cooperatively identify the qualifications needed and wanted for the particular job. (2) References should be checked with the writers, either through personal interviews or by telephone. "It is a valuable

practice to ask persons recommending candidates to give the basis for their judgments" (Hadley, 1952, p. 26).

Structured interviews were used by Briner (1968) to investigate the criteria used by school superintendents in selecting subordinate administrators. He found three kinds of information that were used to evaluate candidates: the "physical and character image," professional and non-professional potential (including academic training, language skills, and verbal intelligence), and competence. The latter was defined in reference to experience, recommendations, professional contributions, and special knowledge demonstrated by the candidate. Briner concluded that no common, accepted procedures were used by superintendents in selecting administrative candidates.

Rassi (1975) surveyed a regional group of superintendents to determine the relative importance of 11 criteria in selecting school administrators. He found consensus that "Professional Competence" was the most important selection criterion. Rassi defines Professional Competence:

> This category may relate to the candidate's degree of technical, conceptual, and human skills with capacity to perform at a satisfactory level in his specialized area including general management functions involving planning, communicating, allocating, and evaluating. (p. 90)

Human Relations, a category important in the competency literature in College Student Personnel (and, therefore, perhaps not a different category in the context of the

present study) was rated third in importance as a selection criterion. It is also noteworthy that written recommendations were not seen as an important factor in selecting school district administrators.

Rassi's study did not concern entry-level positions; accordingly, these data cannot be generalized directly to the present study. However, Rassi's findings do offer some support for the importance of competencies as selection criteria. Rassi was trying to remove "vagueness and ambiguity" he found in the literature describing selection criteria. However, his definitions of various criteria are neither precise nor mutually exclusive. More thorough operational definitions of the many concepts inherent in "professional competence" and more detailed study of competencies as selection criteria are needed.

Summary: Literature on Staff Selection in Student Personnel and Education

Considerable literature is available concerning the selection of student paraprofessionals, particularly as Resident Assistants (RAs). Though application forms, interviews, and references are the traditional selection techniques in this area, studies have explored the economy and predictive validity of several other approaches.

Peer ratings and sociometric questionnaires have been found to lead to almost the same RA selections as do more expensive interview techniques. Role playing of

simulated on-the-job situations has been used as a technique for rating RA candidates; though authors liked this approach, no data were offered to support its predictive validity. Another technique involves the rating of RA candidates as they participate in Leaderless Group Discussions (LGDs). It is argued that this procedure saves time for selectors and reduces candidate anxiety. One study found LGD results to predict which candidates would be selected by conventional methods; no data on the validity of the LGD in predicting RA success were found.

A six-week apprenticeship program has been successfully used as a training/selection vehicle for RAs. This approach has the advantage of providing an extensive sample of candidate behavior for rating and selection purposes. Authors have also reported conducting training programs for staff who are to participate in selection activities.

A number of standardized paper-and-pencil instruments have been tested for validity as RA selection tools. The instruments most often used in these studies are the Personal Orientation Inventory, the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and the Strong Vocational Interest Blank. Results of these studies varied with the institutional setting, the sex of the subjects, and the criteria against which test results were validated. No instrument or combination of

instruments consistently produced accurate predictions of success in the Resident Assistant position.

Student Personnel literature on the selection of full-time professionals consists almost entirely of job market surveys and post-conference placement evaluations. A series of studies by ACPA Commission XII has followed the employment of College Student Personnel graduates for several years. From these and other studies, it is evident that the Student Personnel job market is fairly stable, with more new graduates than available jobs each year. The largest proportion of recent Student Personnel graduates (over one-third) are currently entering residence hall positions. Despite the surplus of candidates for entry-level positions, employers must be competitive in recruiting and selecting the best of the new graduates (especially those with special skills).

Studies show that selection of higher education faculty has been poorly structured and that selection criteria have in some cases been vague. Before selection begins, jobs should be carefully described and the needed qualifications should be specified. It appears that professional competence may be the most important criterion for judging educational administration candidates. "Professional competence" has, to date, been a poorly defined concept in selection research; more detailed study is needed to examine specific competencies as selection criteria.

Competencies Expected in Entry-Level Student Personnel Professionals

A major purpose of the present study is to explore the relative importance of 36 specific competencies as criteria in the selection of Student Personnel professionals for five kinds of entry-level positions. Each of the competencies listed in the instrument comes, either directly or indirectly, from College Student Personnel literature. Authors have identified the competencies needed by Student Personnel professionals in discussions of three main topics: (1) professional education for Student Personnel Work, (2) professional standards for the field, and (3) student development theory. This section summarizes these writings and relates the content of the present study to the professional literature on competencies. This material is presented chronologically.

In 1958, Williamson wrote that the many competencies needed for Student Personnel Work could be acquired through both experience and professional preparation. "Obviously, one does not acquire even minimum competence in all of these diverse areas of functioning at any one particular time in one professional career" (Williamson, 1958, pp. 3-4). If one accepts this statement, the importance of identifying and acquiring the most vital competencies is clear.

Robinson (1966) analyzed three statements on professional preparation for Student Personnel Work (one by the Council of Student Personnel Associations, 1963; one by ACPA, 1965; and the third by the American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1965). Robinson found remarkable agreement in the three statements concerning the functions of Student Personnel professionals:

> Interpreting the institution to students, counseling, advising student groups, supplementary educational programming . . ., programming of . . . recreational activities, administrative functions ranging from policy development and implementation through budget-making, research and program evaluation, recruitment of professional staff, collecting and disseminating information about students, the development of "climate" and facilities necessary for growth, and the integration of all relevant institutional resources contributing to the education of the student. (p. 255)

Robinson's summary implies that professionals need a wide variety of competencies in order to perform these diverse functions.

Trueblood (1966) suggested that the preparation of the future Student Personnel professional should be interdisciplinary, incorporating knowledge of the behavioral sciences, of research, and of the college student. Skills in "counseling, group work, administration and research" are necessary (p. 84). According to Trueblood, the Student Personnel professional should be a resource person for all members of the community and should assist in the understanding of the student.

In 1967 the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) published a position statement on "The Role and Preparation of Student Personnel Workers in Institutions of Higher Learning." The statement includes a list of "basic functions which must be performed by the majority of student personnel workers":

1. Understanding the college student as a learner;
2. Accurately and effectively interpreting the values, goals, objectives and actions of the student to the institution and others;
3. Interpreting the goals, values, objectives and actions of the institution to the student;
4. Understanding the significant political, cultural, and social forces operating within the college community as they affect both the individual student and groups of students;
5. Counseling on a one-to-one basis at some level ranging from the relatively perfunctory to psychotherapy;
6. Group work ranging from advising student interest organizations and influencing student attitudes and behavior to group counseling;
7. Programming of educative experience which supplements classroom learning as well as the development of meaningful recreation opportunities;
8. The collection, organization, and dissemination of information about students ranging from the simple descriptive to that needed for the study of student behavior;
9. The performance of administrative functions such as policy formulation and implementation, staff development and budget-making;
10. Research ranging from the demographic and evaluative to basic studies of psychological, social, and cultural forces influencing student performance and behavior. (APGA, 1967, p. 63)

The 1967 APGA statement emphasizes that preparation programs must build both knowledge and practical skills. Certainly the above list of functions suggests the need

for a number of fundamental professional competencies; these have been incorporated into the instrument for the present study.

In looking to future needs for Student Personnel competencies, Greenleaf (1968) calls for

> . . . knowledge of the characteristics of the young adult, knowledge of management, of personnel practices and communication, an ability to use counseling and interviewing skills, the skills of a teacher to provide inservice training for staff . . ., a knowledge of legal procedures, and a broad knowledge of world affairs. (p. 32)

In 1969 APGA and the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA) prepared a statement on guidelines for graduate programs of study for Student Personnel Workers. Such programs, the paper averred, should require both knowledge and competencies in these areas:

1. Student Personnel Work in Higher Education, including the history, philosophy, purposes, organization and administration, ethics and standards, students' roles and rights, current legal and social issues, and discipline; and in addition, an overview of its specialty areas . . .
2. Higher Education as a Social Institution, including the context, setting, history, philosophy, and objectives of post-secondary education, as well as problems relating to organization, administration, and curricula. . . .
3. Human Growth and Development, including a broad understanding which focuses on the nature and needs of the college student as an older adolescent and young adult . . .
4. Social and Cultural Foundations . . .
5. Methods, Techniques, and Concepts Used by Student Personnel Workers including counseling, group dynamics, human relations, decision-making, fiscal management, selection, and in-service training and communication.

> 6. Research and Evaluation including statistics, research methods, tests and measurement, individual study, and research and applications of research. (Commission on Professional Development, COSPA, and Interdivisional Committee, APGA, 1969, p. 495)

The foregoing learning objectives, in addition to those of the earlier COSPA, ACPA, and APGA statements, provides a detailed core of basic competency expectations which has affected all subsequent writings in this area. Substantial agreement has remained on the rather extensive list of skills and knowledge expected in entry-level professionals; many similarities are evident in the foregoing statements. The role of the Student Personnel professional, as defined in these statements, is a broad one. But which competencies are most basic and vital? This question has often sparked controversy.

O'Banion (1969) asked an "expert panel" of counselor educators, Student Personnel educators, and Deans of Students to rate the importance of various topics in Student Personnel preparation. Though the panel rated areas of study, not competencies, it is interesting to note those studies O'Banion found should be part of the "core of experiences . . . common to all" College Student Personnel workers: psychology, counseling, practicum and overview in Student Personnel Work, study of the college student, of sociology, anthropology, and higher education (O'Banion, 1969, p. 251).

Silverman (1971) suggests that because Student Personnel workers are on the "boundary" between faculty, students, and administrators, they must have mediating ability. Academic and administrative competence, as well as rapport with students, can facilitate the necessary negotiations.

While he does not extensively discuss competencies as such, Brown (1972) offers a major recommendation that "Student personnel staffs (in tomorrow's higher education) are going to have to possess new sets of competencies"; "all other efforts will fail if student personnel staff who wish to function as student development educators do not have clearly demonstrated skills and competencies that have meaning for the academician" (p. 47). Competency in classroom instruction and outreach will be needed. Understanding, describing, and relating to students will remain important. Finally, Brown asserts that professionals must be able to "design programs that will change the environment and provide a setting for optimal student growth" (p. 47).

In discussing the expected outcomes of professional preparation, Sorrells (1972) offers a number of recommendations. Among them are the following: (1) There should be "orientation to the nature of higher education as a unique part of our social order" (p. 311). (2) In-depth experience in group work and counseling must be emphasized.

(3) Training should include "opportunities for research related to student environments and student cultures" (p. 311). (4) Finally, graduates should acquire sufficient statistical background to enable them to conduct research and to use research findings.

Newton and Hellenga (1974) used the Delphi technique to establish consensus as to the learning and process objectives of Student Personnel training. Of 44 original subjects associated with the University of Georgia's graduate program, only 19 completed all three of the authors' questionnaires: two instructors, seven doctoral students, and 10 master's students. Through this process, desirable outcomes of master's level Student Personnel training were identified and rated on a five-point scale of importance. Newton and Hellenga's competency ratings are reproduced in the following table (see Table 2.1).

It is important to note that the ratings do not range from "important" to "unimportant." All listed objectives were seen as important (rated at least 4 on the 1-5 scale), although there was a range in importance. Newton and Hellenga concluded that a competency-based approach was to be preferred over the traditional course-centered approach. Their respondents strongly endorsed the application of "creative and individual-centered processes for training based on competencies" (Newton &

Table 2.1

Ratings of Competency Importance from the Study by Newton and Hellenga (N=19)[a]

Item	Modal Rating	% Agreement
Attain awareness of one's own personal development	1	95
Develop high level communication skill	1	89
Develop skills to establish and implement student development programming	1	89
Develop philosophy for the role and function of student personnel within higher education	1	84
Become effective in methodology of change	1	74
Understand and demonstrate skill in group dynamics	1	74
Know counseling theory and application to one-to-one helping	2	84
Know of administrative patterns of operation	2	68
Know the scope of Stu. Personnel and its specialties	3	84
Understand and develop skill in managerial functions	3	74
Know research techniques, including uses of computer	3	68
Understand and make commitment to prof. ethics	3	58
Know nonwhite-oriented lit. and research in field	3	53
Understand St. Personnel in Higher Ed. context	3	37
Know and apply ways of program evaluation	4	79
Know and be able to interpret tests	4	74
Develop personal theory of nature of man and stu's.	4	53
Develop ability to speak and write persuasively	4	47

[a]Excerpted from Newton and Hellenga, 1974, Table 2, p. 495.

Hellenga, 1974, p. 494). An important limitation of this study, acknowledged by the authors, is the narrow composition of the respondent group. Accordingly, the learning objectives identified in the study were not considered all-inclusive.

The advent of student development philosophy and theory has brought increased emphasis on professional competency. Crookston (1972) termed this new philosophy "competency oriented," as compared with the "status oriented" Student Personnel approach.

COSPA (1974) provided a new student development model emphasizing competencies in goal-setting, assessment, and the use of change strategies for human development. According to the COSPA position, a master's degree program should prepare "a beginning professional who has the basic values and competencies for facilitating student development" (p. 78). A few specific illustrations of the three COSPA competency objectives are paraphrased below.

1. Goal Setting: Competencies in personnel management, budget planning, identifying underprepared students, career planning, and individual/group counseling.
2. Assessment: Competencies in understanding the socio-political aspects of campus governance, knowing available learning resources, evaluating outcomes of student development programs, and assessing behavior.
3. Using Change Strategies: Competencies in conflict resolution, conducting personal growth seminars and discussion groups, and solving student-related problems. (COSPA, 1974, p. 77)

The COSPA approach emphasizes the selection of staff competent as administrators, teachers, researchers, consultants, and counselors.

The ACPA Tomorrow's Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project has emphasized similar competencies (ACPA, 1975; Miller & Prince, 1976).

> Our need as a profession is to continue developing skills, competencies and knowledge which, when joined in a collaborative effort with others in post-secondary education, can lead to the achievement of the goal of facilitating student development. (ACPA, 1975, p. 335)

The competencies suggested in the T.H.E. model, though not detailed, again center around the major functions of goal-setting, assessment, and strategies for student development. Goal-setting demands that student development specialists have the competency to write goals/objectives and to teach this skill to students. Assessment requires competencies in testing and other diagnostic methods so that students' levels of development can be ascertained. Student development strategies call for competencies in instruction, consultation, and milieu management. Comprehension of campus ecology, social systems, management theory, and behavioral science is prerequisite to successful milieu management. Finally, competency in evaluation (both of programs and of individual growth) is stressed.

In 1974, ACPA began a project to clarify the competencies needed by student development specialists. The

result of Phase I of that project was a "Tentative Taxonomy of Student Development Staff Skills and Competencies" (Hanson, 1976). This taxonomy arranges 195 specific competencies into six major categories corresponding to the ACPA T.H.E. student development model. Hanson's list draws on all the literature reviewed above to provide an extremely detailed competency list. Analysis of the list shows that it is generally compatible with the instrument used in the present study.

One illustration of the movement toward competency-based Student Personnel education is a program at the University of South Carolina preparing student activities administrators (Meabon, Bailey, & Whitten, 1975). Here developmental contracts are used to organize individual students' programs of competency acquisition. The authors identify 37 competencies as program objectives; these are categorized as "generic" (specific student activities skills) or "enabling" (needed by all entry-level Student Personnel professionals). The following were among the "enabling" competency areas listed: budgeting and accounting, group methods and motivational techniques, organizational structure and behavior, program evaluation, programming philosophy, planning of meetings, working cooperatively with individuals and groups, teaching, and understanding student body composition.

Newton and Richardson (1976) surveyed a small regional sample of Student Personnel practitioners to assess which competencies are most needed by entry-level staff.

> Ninety-three percent of the respondents ranked skills in mature interpersonal relationships as being top priority among the competencies most essential for entry-level positions. Other top priority competencies were preparation for understanding, organizing, and administering student personnel programs; practicum and/or internship experiences; ability to work cooperatively with students and colleagues; and self-awareness.
>
> Second-priority competencies were leadership skills, acceptance of others (especially minorities), effective test administration and interpretation, and tolerance for stressful and anxiety-producing situations. (p. 427)

Newton and Richardson found that competencies applicable to any situation (i.e., interpersonal skills, cooperative working relationships, administrative and organizational skills) were highly rated. They suggest that training models be built on such general learnings, as a base for acquisition of more specific knowledge. It is significant that practitioners expressed concern for careful selection of applicants to Student Personnel training programs. Newton and Richardson suggest that their findings can be applied in identifying criteria for the selection of entry-level professional staff.

A group of Student Personnel educators has recently discussed competencies in the context of professional education (Knock, 1977). In this anthology, Peterson (1977) discusses the "Student Personnel Education

Process-Outcome Model," in which learners negotiate contracts for competency attainment in three areas: (1) skills/techniques, (2) substantive knowledge, and (3) personal growth. Matson (1977) provides a list of competencies needed by entry-level Student Personnel professionals in community colleges. Matson's list supports the competencies suggested above and need not be repeated here. Riker (1977) recommends entry-level competencies in such things as problem-solving, goal setting, program development, facilitation of interpersonal relationships, group work, career planning, psychological measurement, and consultation.

The competency statements used in the present study were drawn directly (with slight modifications) from research by Minetti (1977). After extensive review of the literature on competency, Minetti produced a list of 47 competencies important to the entry-level Student Personnel professional (see Appendix B). These competencies were arranged under six headings: (1) counseling, human relations, and interpersonal skills; (2) theory and practice of administration and management; (3) research, testing, and measurement; (4) historical, philosophical, and social foundations of higher education; (5) meeting student needs; and (6) professional purpose and role identity (Minetti, 1977, pp. 63-64). Yates, in developing a study of learning outcomes for doctoral programs

in Student Personnel administration, had listed 40 competencies; many of these were incorporated in Minetti's list. A comparison of Minetti's competency list with the more detained ACPA taxonomy (Hanson, 1976) showed substantial compatibility between the two.

Minetti's (1977) study focused on identifying the locus of preparation for the listed competencies, as seen by several different respondent groups at each of three institutions. He found that academic knowledge areas (i.e., educational foundations, statistics, developmental theory) were viewed as acquired primarily through classroom work. The respondents felt, on the other hand, that skill areas (i.e., leadership, staff selection and supervision, decision-making) are best acquired through experience in the paid assistantship.

Minetti concluded that his results "strongly support the value of academic training programs," as well as that of practical experience, in professional preparation (p. 150). Because his study demonstrates a need to integrate theory and practice, Minetti advocated periodic evaluation of competency in assistantships and frequent collaboration between faculty and assistantship supervisors.

Domeier (1977), in a study of the training of Student Personnel administrators for specific competencies, reviewed the literature and generated a list of

58 competencies. Examination of her list reveals considerable overlap with that developed by Minetti (1977). Domeier surveyed Student Personnel administrators at eight Michigan universities to determine the importance of each competency to their present positions and the source(s) of training for each competency. Because only 10.7% of Domeier's respondents held entry-level positions, the data generated cannot be confidently related to the present study. However, those competencies found important by most of the entry-level respondents were generally represented in Minetti's list and in the instrument used in the present study. Domeier found differences in the importance ascribed to the majority of the competencies by respondents at entry, middle-management, and executive levels.

Summary: Competencies Expected in Entry-Level Student Personnel Professionals

A major source of literature on entry-level competencies has been a series of statements by professional organizations listing standards for the training of practitioners. Comparison of these statements reveals substantial agreement on the value of a very wide-ranging list of competencies. Though much of this literature concerns course content, there has been wide recognition of the need for practical skill application as well as specialized knowledge. It has been agreed that

interdisciplinary preparation is needed in the acquisition of Student Personnel competencies. Broad preparation is necessitated because of the large number of functions involved in entry-level Student Personnel positions.

In recent years, competency-based education has come closer to the forefront in Student Personnel preparation. Training has increasingly focused on competency outcomes rather than course titles. Developmental contracts are being increasingly used in some preparation programs.

The growth of the student development point of view, particularly evident in the T.H.E. Project of ACPA and in work by COSPA, has placed increased emphasis on professional competence. Competencies suggested under this model focus on goal-setting, assessment, instruction, consultation, and milieu management. Though organized under a new rubric, most of these competencies have been identified in previous Student Personnel literature. Basic skills applicable to any situation include administrative and organizational skills, the ability to work cooperatively, and effective interpersonal communication skills.

Minetti (1977) reviewed the above literature and developed a list of 47 competencies suggested as important for entry-level staff. Included are the categories

of counseling, human relations, and interpersonal skills; theory and practice of administration and management; research, testing, and measurement; historical, philosophical, and social foundations of higher education; meeting student needs; and professional purpose and role identity. Comparison of Minetti's competency list with those of other authors shows it to be representative of the literature on this topic. This competency list, with minor alterations, formed the basis of the instrument used in the present study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has included reviews of the literature on four separate topics related to the present study: (1) the steps and considerations involved in the overall process of staff selection; (2) the procedures used to gather candidate information for use in making hiring decisions; (3) the literature on selection in College Student Personnel and in other educational settings; and (4) the competencies expected in entry-level Student Personnel professionals. The chapter was designed to provide a resource for educational administrators conducting staff selection or establishing training programs in selection procedures.

Staff selection is a broad topic; the literature of Personnel Psychology has elucidated the selection process in great detail. It appears that many common

selection practices need closer scrutiny in view of this literature. One purpose of the present study was to provide this examination for a limited number of College Student Personnel selection practices.

The instrument used in the present study (Appendix A) incorporates a large number of the findings from the above literature review. A particular debt is owed to Minetti (1977), whose competency list (Appendix B) was a major source of material for this instrument.

Chapter III will outline the development and methodology of the present study. Chapter IV will present the survey findings. Finally, Chapter V will offer an overall summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The general problem of this study was to investigate certain procedures and criteria used in the selection of entry-level College Student Personnel professionals in 1978. Data were collected from administrators listed as "contact persons" (those to whom one would apply) in position listings from the 1978 ACPA, NAWDAC, and NASPA conference placement services.

Research Questions

To provide direction in accomplishing the purposes of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What were some of the specific procedures in use during 1978 for gathering information about candidates for entry-level positions in College Student Personnel?

2. Are these procedures effective as judged against available research findings?

3. What was the selection ratio for entry-level positions listed in conjunction with conferences of the three major national College Student Personnel professional organizations in 1978?

4. What was the experience level of those administrators listed as "contact persons" in 1978 entry-level job listings?

5. What were the respondents' attitudes concerning:

   a. The use of objective and systematic selection procedures?
   b. The value of selection activities at professional conferences?
   c. The importance of the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program in judging his/her qualifications?
   d. The usefulness of the resumé and the written recommendation as selection tools?

6. How did the respondents rate the importance of various competencies in evaluating candidates for entry-level positions? What competencies are viewed as most and least important?

Development of the Instrument

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed after a review of the literature on staff selection and on

entry-level Student Personnel competencies. Most of the questions were suggested directly or indirectly by the findings of this review. Other questions originated from: (1) the need to classify and describe the respondents, (2) suggestions of administrators who participated in pilot testing, and (3) the competency items proposed in a study by Minetti (1977). Eleven of Minetti's suggested entry-level competencies (see Appendix B) were combined with others or eliminated for brevity in the present instrument.

Three pilot tests were conducted to refine successive drafts of the survey instrument. During this process, seven administrators with current selection experience (five from Michigan State University and two from Alma College) completed and critiqued the three versions of the questionnaire. In addition, two administrators at Michigan State University with previous selection experience, and one research consultant from the University's College of Education, critiqued the instrument.

In conducting these pilot tests, the investigator met personally with each individual and presented a brief overview of the study. Each reviewer was specifically asked to look for: (1) biased questionnaire items which might induce respondents to answer in particular ways; (2) vague or misleading items, or ones containing terms

needing definition; (3) multiple-choice items in which the available response choices were not mutually exclusive, or in which not all the logically probable responses were included; and (4) any other items which, for any reason, the reviewer felt needed rewriting. Immediately after completion or review of the questionnaire, the investigator again met with each reviewer to discuss criticisms and suggestions for improvement of the instrument. Some reviewers suggested additional questions; a few of these were added in later drafts of the questionnaire.

Reviewers found the third and final draft of the instrument clear, concise, and in keeping with the purposes of the study. On the basis of these pilot studies, face validity was claimed for the instrument.

The final 61-item questionnaire (Appendix A) was typeset and offset printed. It contains items of various types: open-ended, multiple choice, rating, and Likert scales. The instructions ask respondents to answer in reference to the selection process for a particular position title appearing in the blank at the top of the questionnaire. Items ask for data on the number of positions and applicants, the selection experience of the respondent, and some of the selection procedures used in hiring for the named position. Respondent attitudes are explored in several items. A major 36-item

questionnaire section asks respondents to use a five-point scale to rate the actual importance of various competencies in judging candidates for the named position.

Testable Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested through analysis of responses to the survey instrument:

Ho_1:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

$Ho_{1.1}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{1.2}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{1.3}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{1.4}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resumé as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.5}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.6}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

Ho_2:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

$Ho_{2.1}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{2.2}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{2.3}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{2.4}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resumé as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.5}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.6}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

Ho_3:

There are no significant differences in entry-level staff selection procedures in use at different-sized institutions, as reported by the respondents.

$Ho_{3.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications (written descriptions of required/desired candidate characteristics) for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference selection interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in use at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers at different-sized institutions.

Ho_{4}:

There are no significant differences in selection procedures used in hiring professionals for different types of entry-level positions (i.e., Head Resident/ Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, and Advising/ Counseling positions).

$Ho_{4.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers concerned with different types of positions.

Ho_5:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the degree of experience in staff selection held by the respondents. (Note: This hypothesis is replicated over questionnaire items numbered 10 to 45.)

Ho_6:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the type of position (i.e., Head Resident/ Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, or Advising/ Counseling) for which selection is being conducted. (Note: This hypothesis is replicated over questionnaire items numbered 10 to 45.)

The Population and Sample

The population for this survey included all contact persons whose names were printed in listings for full-time, entry-level Student Personnel professional positions available during the 1978 ACPA, NAWDAC, and NASPA conferences. The investigator first wrote to all three organizations and obtained complete placement listings (pre-conference and supplementary). The next step was to identify listings for entry-level positions and separate them from the rest. In general, an entry-level position was defined as one for which a candidate with a newly conferred M.A. degree in Student Personnel (or some related field) might compete successfully. Because of variations in job titles and differences in the contents of position listings, it was not immediately clear in all cases whether or not a listed position should be classified as entry-level. Moreover, the investigator could locate no comprehensive definition of the term "entry level" in the Student Personnel literature. Accordingly, the following criteria were established

in order to fully define the entry-level position and to distinguish listings for such positions to be included in this study:

1. A listed position was always classified as entry-level if:

   a. the listing specified "entry-level," or
   b. the listing specified that a master's degree in College Student Personnel, Counseling, or a related field would be required or desired, and that one year or less of related experience would be required.

2. A listed position was always classified as non-entry-level if:

   a. the listing specified that a doctoral degree would be required or preferred, or
   b. the listing specified a requirement for more than one year's experience or for "extensive experience," or
   c. the listing stated that more than one professional (master's-level) staff member would be supervised by the person hired, or
   d. the listing required only a B.A. degree and did not mention that the M.A. would be desirable.

Not all listings could be definitely classified as entry-level or non-entry-level by the above criteria. In those cases, a number of other criteria were considered jointly in reaching a decision. In general, it was indicated that a listing should be included in the entry-level population if:

1. the listing did not indicate that other professionals would be supervised by the person to be hired, and/or

2. the listed salary was low (under $12,000 for twelve months--much lower in many cases), and/or

3. the institution was small in size and the listed duties were relatively narrow in scope (i.e., small number of residents in the hall or complex; small number of groups advised; small population served), and/or

4. the position required living in a residence hall, and/or

5. the listed duties did not include a major policy-making role.

Finally, some classifications were made using the position title as a criterion:

1. The following position titles were excluded from the entry-level group unless there were clear indications that the position was entry-level: Vice President, Dean, Director, and Associate/Assistant Dean/Director.

2. Residence Hall Directors were included in the entry-level population, unless it was clear that only a B.A. was desired. In the absence of a clear degree specification, the desire for an M.A. was assumed and the listing was included in the population.

3. Area Directors/Coordinators were excluded from the entry-level group, unless there were clear indications that such positions were entry-level (i.e., low salary, small area, no professionals supervised, and/or listed as "entry-level").

4. Counseling positions were excluded from the entry-level group in the absence of clear indications that they were entry-level.

Using the foregoing criteria, all listings for full-time entry-level professional positions were separated and filed alphabetically by state. All duplicates were consolidated. Thirty-one listings were excluded from the population because they lacked identifying information (usually the name of a contact person).

In the above manner, a complete set of different entry-level position openings, each including the name of a contact person, was assembled. Careful examination of this list showed that the positions could be categorized into five different types: 111 Head Resident/ Residence Staff positions, 14 Residence Hall Programming

positions, 23 Campus Activities positions, 25 Administrative/Generalist positions, and 6 Advising/Counseling positions. A summary of the exact position titles for each group is presented in Appendix E.

Head Resident/Residence Staff positions always required living in a residence hall. Typical duties included broad responsibility for the operation of a single residence hall, often including Resident Assistant selection and training, in-hall programming, student counseling/advising, and disciplinary responsibilities.

Residence Hall Programming positions generally involved living in a residence hall and operating that hall. However, all of these positions were described as including major responsibilities for educational, cultural, social, recreational, student government, and/or other programs for an area of two or more residence halls. In a few of these cases the programming responsibilities extended to the whole campus and/or to working in a student union.

The Campus Activities positions focused on duties in group advising, campus-wide programming, student union work, and orientation. Only one of the 14 positions in this group involved living in a residence hall. These positions differed from the Residence Hall Programming group in their focus on a campus-wide (resident and

nonresident) clientele. Six of the 14 listings in this group specified advisement of Greek organizations as a major duty.

The Administrative/Generalist positions were most often titled "Assistant Dean" or "Assistant Director." In many cases, these positions involved working in the Dean of Students office or the Housing, Placement, or Admissions offices. A few positions involved living in a residence hall, but all of these specifically indicated major generalist duties (often half-time) in some central office. The distinguishing features of this group of positions were that: (1) they carried some administrative responsibilities, usually in a variety of areas; and (2) their administrative roles involved some broad, campus-wide concern. Despite their administrative nature, each of these positions had been classified as entry-level by the criteria discussed above; many position listings with similar titles (but different descriptions) had been excluded from the entry-level population.

The Advising/Counseling positions were mainly concerned with individual student contacts involving guidance and advisement. Group-process or outreach duties were involved in some of these positions. Two of the six positions involved special student support programs (Upward Bound/Special Services programs).

One purpose of this study was to identify possible differences in selection procedures and criteria for different kinds of positions. The Head Resident and Residence Staff positions numbered 111, while no other group numbered over 25. To preserve the full size of the smaller groups for comparison purposes, all of the contact persons in these groups were included in the study. It was determined that a 50% random sample of the large group would be ideal for the analysis within the investigator's time and financial limitations. The Head Resident/ Residence Staff listings were assigned consecutive numbers from 101 to 211; a table of random numbers was then used to draw a simple random sample of 56 listings for inclusion in the study. These listings, combined with the 68 listings from the other four groups, comprised the final stratified sample of 124 listings.

Collection of Data

The questionnaire was mailed to the survey sample on October 10, 1978, along with a transmittal letter explaining the study (Appendix C) and a self-addressed business reply envelope. On October 27, 1978, a follow-up letter (Appendix D) was mailed to 38 persons who had not yet responded. A personal contact was made with one local nonrespondent in lieu of a followup letter. The second mailing again included a questionnaire and a return envelope. For both mailings, the title of the

related position was typed in at the top of each respondent's questionnaire. Each questionnaire was given a three-digit number for identification purposes. Respondents were offered the option of receiving a detailed summary of the study's findings.

By mid-November, 1978, all but 14 members of the sample had returned usable responses. A member of the researcher's Advisory Committee telephoned some of these nonrespondents to request their participation. Additional questionnaires were then mailed to sample members who requested them in order to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Data from the returned questionnaires were coded and keypunched for computer analysis. Data analysis techniques were performed on the Michigan State University CDC 6500 computer, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hall, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1970). Descriptive data (frequencies and percentage frequencies of response and, where applicable, means, standard deviations, and ranges) were compiled on all questionnaire items using subprogram Frequencies. Chi-square tests of independence were computed for hypothesis testing by the use of subprogram Crosstabs. For all hypothesis testing, the .05 level of significance was adopted as a criterion. It was concluded that a larger alpha level (for example, .10) would have permitted too great a

probability of a Type I error, given the number of chi-square tests to be done. On the other hand, a smaller alpha level (for example, .01) would have been unnecessarily stringent for the type of conclusions to be drawn here. Accordingly, the conventional .05 level was selected.

Summary

The research methods and design of the study were presented in Chapter III. This study was an effort to explore some of the procedures and criteria used during 1978 in selecting entry-level College Student Personnel professionals.

A mailed sample survey was used to collect the data in October and November, 1978. Following a review of selection literature, a questionnaire was developed and locally pilot-tested. The questionnaire items were mainly concerned with four kinds of content: (1) descriptive information on the respondents and on the positions for which they were selecting staff in 1978; (2) respondent attitudes toward several selection-related issues; (3) the staff selection procedures in use for entry-level staff hiring in 1978; and (4) the importance of specific competencies as selection criteria for particular entry-level positions.

The questionnaire was mailed to a disproportionate stratified sample of "contact persons" identified in

entry-level position listings from the 1978 ACPA, NAWDAC, and NASPA conferences. Contact persons completed the questionnaires with reference to particular positions for which they had selected new staff in 1978. These referent positions were classified into five types for subsequent analysis.

Descriptive data were compiled on all items using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A number of hypotheses were specified and tested at the .05 level, using the chi-square statistic.

Chapter IV will present the analysis of data collected and analyzed through the above procedures.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The data presented in this chapter were gathered through a nationwide survey of College Student Personnel administrators who had recent experience in staff selection and hiring. A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data concerning the involvement of these administrators in selecting entry-level Student Personnel professionals in 1978.

Purposes of the Study

The study had two major foci. The first was an investigation and evaluation of the procedures currently used in the selection of entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel. ("Entry-level professional staff" were defined as those holding recent master's degrees in Student Personnel or related fields but having little or no post-master's experience in the field.) The study's second major focus was the exploration of criteria used by administrators in evaluating the competence of

candidates for entry-level professional Student Personnel positions. More specifically, the purposes of the study were:

1. To provide a detailed review of the theory and research on staff selection, as found in the literature of Personnel Psychology. This review supplied relevant information for Student Personnel administrators wishing to improve their selection practices and to conduct staff training on selection methodology.

2. To describe the current use of a limited number of specific selection procedures, as practiced in 1978 by Student Personnel administrators selecting staff for entry-level professional positions. (This nationwide investigation included all types of entry-level professional positions which were listed as available in the 1978 job market.)

3. To evaluate these procedures, as well as certain attitudes of 1978 Student Personnel selectors, in light of the literature reviewed from Personnel Psychology. To suggest possible improvements in the currently prevailing practices for selecting entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel.

4. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures at institutions of different size and among selectors of varying experience.

5. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures to fill different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

6. To identify the relative importance of various competencies as criteria for the selection of entry-level professional staff, as seen by administrators involved in the 1978 Student Personnel selection process.

7. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies for different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

8. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies by administrators with differing levels of selection experience.

The survey population included all administrators named as "contact persons" in job listings for full-time, entry-level Student Personnel positions advertised during the 1978 ACPA, NAWDAC, and NASPA conferences. Each respondent answered questions concerning selection procedures and criteria in reference to a particular position title. The particular title was taken from the position listing and named on the questionnaire. These positions were classified into five groups according to the type of work involved. One subgroup (Head Resident/Residence Staff positions) was larger than the rest; a 50% random sample of this subgroup was included in the study. All

population members classified in the remaining position types were included in the study.

The following is a report of the findings of the study.

Analysis of the Respondents

Rates of Response to the Survey

A total of 116 sample members returned usable survey responses, an overall response rate of 93.5%. A response breakdown by groups is shown in Table 4.1. Response rates ranged from 78.6% (from contact persons listing Residence Hall Programming positions) to 98.2% (from contact persons listing Head Resident/Residence Staff positions).

Table 4.1

Breakdown of Usable Survey Responses

Group	n in Sample	n of Responses	Percentage Response
Head Resident/ Residence Staff	56	55	98.2
Residence Hall Programming	14	11	78.6
Campus Activities	23	22	95.7
Administrative/ Generalist	25	23	92.0
Advising/ Counseling	6	5	83.3
Total Sample	124	116	93.5

Representativeness of Respondents: Analysis of Four Relevant Variables

Further analysis was undertaken to determine the representativeness of sampled and respondent groups on four variables: size (enrollment) of the institutions listing positions; control or affiliation of these institutions; titles of the contact persons; and regional distribution. The Education Directory for Colleges and Universities, 1977-78 (Podolsky & Smith, 1978) provided data on enrollment and control/affiliation. Titles of contact persons were available from the listings. For regional distribution, the NASPA regional breakdown was used:

Region I: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region II: Delaware, D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

Region III: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

Region IVE: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin

Region IVW: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, N. Dakota, Oklahoma, S. Dakota, Wyoming

Region V: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

Region VI: California, Hawaii

Since only the Head Resident/Residence Staff listings had been sampled, they were analyzed separately from the other listings. Analyses for the Head Resident/Residence Staff listings are presented in Tables 4.2 to 4.5.

Table 4.2 illustrates that the respondents overrepresented the largest institutions by 5.5%, when compared with the population. Though other minor deviations occurred, none of these exceeded 4.7%. There was no clear trend showing any important difference between the population and the respondents in enrollment. Almost no difference was apparent in the enrollment distributions of the sampled and responding institutions.

Table 4.2

Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Institutional Enrollment (Percentage)

Enrollment	Population (N=111)	Random Sample (n=56)	Respondents (n=55)
0- 4,000	31.5	28.6	27.3
4,001- 8,000	17.1	21.4	21.8
8,001-12,000	16.2	12.5	12.7
12,001-16,000	8.1	10.7	10.9
16,001-20,000	15.3	10.7	10.9
20,001-24,000	4.5	3.6	3.6
Over 24,000	7.2	12.5	12.7

As Table 4.3 demonstrates, the respondent group is very similar to the population in its control

distribution. However, the respondents included 4.3% fewer religious-affiliated institutions and 4.2% more state institutions than did the population. As seen in Table 4.4, the distribution by title of contact person showed differences of 4% or less between the population and the respondents in each category. Again, in both Tables 4.3 and 4.4, the sample and the respondents are nearly identical in their distributions on the variables.

When the population and respondent groups for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions were compared by region, the Midwest (Region IVE) was underrepresented by 6%, while Region IVW was overrepresented by 4.7%. Otherwise, the regional distribution of respondents was similar to that of the population (see Table 4.5). Again, the random sample and the respondents were similarly distributed.

A comparison of population and respondent distributions on these same four variables was computed for all the remaining position listings taken together. These breakdowns are presented in Tables 4.6 to 4.9.

Table 4.6 reveals that, for positions other than Head Resident/Residence Staff, the respondents closely followed the distribution of enrollments in the population. In no category did the proportion of respondents differ from that of the population by as much as 2%. In Table 4.7, the distribution of these positions by institutional

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Table 4.3

Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings:
Distribution by Control/Affiliation
(Percentage)

Control/ Affiliation	Population (N=111)	Random Sample (n=56)	Respondents (n=55)
State	61.3	64.3	65.5
Religious	20.7	16.1	16.4
Independent Nonprofit	12.6 14	16.1 9	14.5 8
State/Independent	4.5 5	3.6 2	3.6 2
State/Local	0.9	0	0

Table 4.4

Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings:
Distribution by Title of Contact Person
(Percentage)

Title of Contact Person	Population (N=111)	Random Sample (n=56)	Respondents (n=55)
Vice President or Assistant V.P.	9.9	7.1	7.3
Director/Dean of Students, Student Services/Life	16.2	12.5	12.7
Associate/Assistant Dean	14.4	17.9	18.2
Director of Housing/ Residence Life	32.4	35.7	36.4
Associate/Assistant Director of Housing	14.4	16.1	16.4
Area Director/Coordinator	4.5	5.4	5.5
Other Known Titles	5.4	3.6	1.8
Unknown	1.8	1.8	1.8

Table 4.5

Head Resident/Residence Staff Position Listings: Distribution by Region (Percentage)

NASPA Region	Population (N=111)	Random Sample (n=56)	Respondents (n=55)
I	3.6	7.1	5.5
II	22.5	25.0	25.5
III	15.3	12.5	12.7
IVE	40.5	33.9	34.5
IVW	11.7	16.1	16.4
V	1.8	1.8	1.8
VI	4.5	3.6	3.6

Table 4.6

Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Institutional Enrollment (Percentage)

Enrollment	Population (N=68)	Respondents (n=61)
0- 4,000	52.9	52.5
4,001- 8,000	10.3	9.8
8,001-12,000	10.3	11.5
12,001-16,000	4.4	4.9
16,001-20,000	5.9	4.9
20,001-24,000	10.3	9.8
Over 24,000	5.9	6.6

control/affiliation is presented. Several differences between 2.0% and 2.5% occurred in comparing the population with the respondents; however, these differences were small in numbers.

Table 4.7

Listings for Positions Other Than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Control/Affiliation (Percentage)

Control/Affiliation	Population (N=68)	Respondents (n=61)
State	36.8	39.3
Religious	38.2	36.1
Independent Nonprofit	20.6	23.0
State/Independent	2.9	1.6
State/Local	1.5	0

As illustrated by the data in Table 4.8, the titles of contact persons were distributed almost identically in the population and respondent groups for these positions. The distribution of respondents by NASPA region likewise followed that of the population quite closely (Table 4.9).

Based on the analyses presented in Tables 4.2 to 4.9, it was concluded that the data collected could be considered representative of the population on the four variables examined. The small variations in the distributions of the four variables for the Head Resident/ Residence Staff group were largely due to the random

Table 4.8

Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Title of Contact Person (Percentage)

Title of Contact Person	Population (N=68)	Respondents (n=61)
Vice President or Assistant V.P.	5.9	6.6
Director/Dean of Students, Student Services/Life	36.8	36.1
Associate/Assistant Dean	16.2	16.4
Director of Housing/ Residence Life	10.3	11.5
Associate/Assistant Director of Housing	0	0
Area Director/Coordinator	4.4	3.3
Other Known Titles	22.1	21.3
Unknown	4.4	4.9

Table 4.9

Listings for Positions Other than Head Resident/Residence Staff: Distribution by Region (Percentage)

NASPA Region	Population (N=68)	Respondents (n=61)
I	4.4	4.9
II	10.3	9.8
III	27.9	27.9
IVE	41.2	41.0
IVW	4.4	3.3
V	8.8	9.8
VI	2.9	3.3

sampling procedure rather than to an identifiable bias in the pattern of responses. A slight overrepresentation of respondents from state institutions and a slight under-representation of religious-affiliated institutions was noted; however, these variations were small in numbers.

Respondent Experience and Role in Selection

Respondents were asked the number of years they had "personally been involved in staff selection for at least one full-time professional Student Personnel position." They reported having a mean of 7.3 years' experience in selection, with a standard deviation of 5.0 years. As the data in Table 4.10 indicate, the range of experience was from one to 30 years, with a mode of four years. Fifty-seven and seven-tenths percent of the respondents had between three and seven years of selection experience.

Respondents reported acquiring this experience at relatively few different institutions (see Table 4.11). Most had been involved in selection at three institutions or fewer, with a mean of 1.8 and a standard deviation of 1.0.

A majority of the respondents (56.6%) shared authority to make hiring decisions, while about one-third (34.8%) had sole authority to hire for the named entry-level positions. Final hiring decisions were made by the

Table 4.10

Number of Years of Selection Experience Reported by the Respondents

Number of Years	Number Indicating Each Response	Percentage Indicating Each Response
1	1	0.9
2	8	7.0
3	10	8.7
4	18	15.7
5	16	13.9
6	11	9.6
7	12	10.4
8	6	5.2
9	6	5.2
10	9	7.8
11	2	1.7
12	4	3.5
13	0	0
14	2	1.7
15	3	2.6
Over 15 (Maximum: 30)	7	6.3

Table 4.11

Number of Institutions at Which Respondents Acquired Their Selection Experience

Number of Years	Number Indicating Each Response	Percentage Indicating Each Response
1	51	44.0
2	42	36.2
3	19	16.4
4	2	1.7
6	1	0.9
7	1	0.9

institution's President in nine (7.8%) of the cases, and by a Student Personnel Vice President in 10 (8.6%) of the cases. Deans made final hiring decisions in 28 of the cases (24.1%).

In those instances where respondents reported sharing authority to hire, authority was most often shared with a superior or with a staff group. Such groups varied greatly in their composition, and no predominant patterns were identified. However, formal search committees were relatively unusual for the group of entry-level positions studied.

Respondent Attitudes

Four questionnaire items asked respondents to indicate their personal agreement or disagreement with attitude statements (see Table 4.12). Very few respondents agreed that selection effectiveness could not be improved by using "systematic and objective selection procedures" (statement 1). Just over three-fourths of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the second statement, which indicates that most believe in the value of selection activities at professional conferences. However, in evaluating this finding, it must be noted that all the administrators sampled made some use of conference placement services.

It appears that the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program may affect how that person is

Table 4.12

Responses to Four Attitude Statements

Statement	Response (Percentage)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither A nor D	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures	0.9	6.9	6.9	64.7	20.7
2. In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences	1.7	11.2	9.5	54.3	23.3
3. In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above	7.9	40.4	18.4	28.9	4.4
4. In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file	19.8	44.0	24.1	11.2	0.9

evaluated by employers, in many cases. In statement 3, 7.9% strongly agreed and 40.4% agreed that the reputation of a training program was "generally an important factor" in judging candidate qualifications for particular entry-level positions.

Individually written references were seen as more credible than those coming from placement files by a total of 63.8% of the respondents.

Two questionnaire items asked for respondents' personal attitudes toward the resumé and the written reference as selection tools (see Tables 4.13 and 4.14).

Most respondents see the resumé only as a preliminary indicator of some candidate qualifications. However, 11.2% apparently have considerable faith in the validity and reliability of the resumé as a selection tool.

The most frequent response concerning references indicates that many responding employers (45.2%) assume references to be valid and reliable unless there is some reason to doubt the writer (Table 4.14). Over one-third see the reference only as a source of preliminary indications about some candidate information. Very few (13%) believe that references are a source of much valid and reliable candidate information.

Table 4.13

Respondent Attitudes toward the Resumé as a Selection Tool

Response Choice	Percentage Indicating Each Response Choice
The resumé provides a great deal of valid and reliable information about candidates' qualifications	11.2
The resumé is valid only in giving preliminary indications about some of the qualifications of candidates	87.1
The resumé is generally unreliable and invalid, permitting only gross discriminations concerning candidates' qualifications	1.7

Table 4.14

Respondent Attitudes toward the Written Reference as a Selection Tool

Response Choice	Percentage Indicating Each Response Choice
References provide a great deal of valid and reliable information about a candidate	13.0
References are valid/reliable only in giving preliminary indications about some candidate information	36.5
References generally <u>are</u> valid/reliable, but may <u>not</u> be, depending on the writer	45.2
References generally <u>are not</u> valid/reliable, but <u>may</u> be, depending on the writer	3.5
Other	1.7

Results of Hypothesis Testing:
Respondent Attitudes

The first general null hypothesis (Ho_1) led to six more specific hypotheses concerning possible relationships between the experience of the respondents and their answers to the six attitude items discussed above.

Ho_1:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

$Ho_{1.1}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{1.2}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{1.3}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{1.4}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resume as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.5}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.6}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

Each of the specific null hypotheses ($Ho_{1.1}$ to $Ho_{1.6}$) was tested using a chi-square contingency table, with respondent experience level as the row variable and response to the attitude question as the column variable. The experience factor was defined in two different ways: (1) years of experience, separated into low- and high-experience categories by dividing at the median of six years; and (2) number of schools at which the respondent acquired selection experience, divided into those with experience at one school and those with experience at more than one school.

None of the resulting chi-square values was significant at the .05 level, with only one exception. This exception involved a significant relationship between

responses to one attitude item ($Ho_{1.2}$) and the number of institutions at which respondents acquired selection experience. In all other cases, the null hypotheses were not rejected. No significant relationships were identified between the experience of respondents, measured in years, and the responses on any of the six attitude questions.

Table 4.15 illustrates the single significant relationship found in testing Ho_1. As the row percentages illustrate, respondents with selection experience at more than one institution showed somewhat more agreement and less ambivalence than did those with experience at only one institution. Despite the statistically significant relationship shown here, it is probably more important to note the high level of disagreement with the statement by both groups. Majorities in both groups appear to endorse the value of conference recruiting and interviewing.

A second general null hypothesis (Ho_2), and six specific null hypotheses, explored possible relationships between attitude responses and the size of the institutions from which they came.

Ho_2:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

Table 4.15

Relationship between the Number of Schools at Which Respondents Acquired Selection Experience and Responses on One Attitude Item ($Ho_{1.2}$)

Experience Acquired At	Percentage Response to the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."		
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
One Institution	3.9	13.7	82.4
More than One Institution	20.0	6.2	73.8

Chi-square = 7.707; df = 2; Significant at .021 level.

$Ho_{2.1}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{2.2}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{2.3}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{2.4}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resumé as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.5}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.6}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

In testing these hypotheses, respondents were classified into four groups representing institutions of varying sizes (as measured by enrollment). Chi-square contingency tables were established for each of the six specific hypotheses. None of these tests produced a chi-square value significant at the .05 level; thus, the data failed to reject any of the null hypotheses. This method identified no significant differences in the attitudes of administrators from different-sized institutions, as measured by the six attitude items.

Selection Ratios

One questionnaire item asked for the number of positions available having the named title; another item sought the number of applicants for each position. Using these data, comparative information on selection ratios for different position types was computed (see Table 4.16). The mean number of applicants per position ranged from 21.8 (for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions) to 51.0 (for Administrative/Generalist positions). A separate analysis of all live-in positions, regardless of type, shows that about half as many persons applied for these when compared with positions not involving residence hall living.

Table 4.16

Selection Ratios for Different Position Types

Position Type	Mean Number of Applicants Per Available Position	Percentage of Applicants Who Could Be Hired
Head Resident/Residence Staff	21.8	4.6
Residence Hall Programming	31.5	3.2
Campus Activities	46.4	2.2
Administrative/Generalist	51.0	2.0
Advising/Counseling	44.4	2.3
All Live-In Positions	24.1	4.1
All Live-Out Positions	49.2	2.0

As shown in Table 4.16, employers needed to hire only 2.0 to 4.6% of the applicants, depending on position type. This favorable selection ratio appears to satisfy

one of Haire's (1956) conditions for effective selection (see pp. 17-18 of this report for a full discussion of Haire's argument). According to Haire, when the selection ratio is favorable, and when candidates vary in ability and valid predictors are available, a systematic selection process can be effective. This finding concerning selection ratios helps to support the need for a critical look at entry-level selection procedures in College Student Personnel.

Selection Procedures Reported in Use

Descriptive Findings

This section presents the results of the study concerning selection procedures used in 1978 entry-level staff selection. For each procedure, the findings relating to selection for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions are presented separately from those relating to the remaining position types. This is necessary because the former represents a randomly sampled homogeneous reference group, while the latter represents a heterogeneous group including all population elements.

Virtually all respondents (just over 98% in both groups) reported having written job descriptions for the named entry-level positions. In almost all cases (96.4% of the residence group; 98.3% of the others), a review of the job description was conducted in preparation for hiring. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (71.7%

for the residence group; 68.9% for the others) reported having a written specification of the characteristics and/or competencies needed by incumbents of the named entry-level positions. These specifications could be part of a job description or might be available in separate documents. Of those respondents having written specifications of candidate characteristics, most include only essential and/or desired candidate characteristics (see Table 4.17). It appears that very few job specifications include not only essential and desired characteristics but also undesirable and/or disqualifying characteristics. Thus, the reported job specifications may not be as detailed as recommended in the literature.

Table 4.17

Characteristics Included in Written Job Specifications (Percentage)

Characteristics Included	Job Specifications For Head Resident/ Residence Staff Positions	Job Specifications For Other Positions
Essential Characteristics Only	13.5	7.3
Desired Characteristics Only	43.2	19.5
Essential and Desired Characteristics	37.8	65.9
Undesirable Characteristics Only	2.7	0
Essential, Desired, and Undesirable Characteristics	0	4.9
Essential, Desired, Undesirable, and Disqualifying Characteristics	0	2.4

A specific application blank was used in hiring for 23.6% of the residence positions and for only 11.5% of the other positions. Almost no employers used any standardized tests as selection tools. The only exception was one state university which used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in evaluating candidates for a Graduate Resident Advisor position.

Responses indicate that it is common practice for selectors to contact some writer(s) of references/recommendations for those candidates under serious consideration (see Table 4.18). Some contact with references was reported by over 95% of the respondents selecting residence staff and by 90% of those selecting for other position types. Moreover, 58.2% of the residence respondents and 46.7% in the other group reported contacting some reference(s) not listed as such by candidates. About one-half the respondents in each group reported contacting at least one reference for all serious candidates.

A series of items asked for information about selection interviewing at professional conferences. Forty-nine of the residence respondents (89.1%) and 47 of the other respondents (77.0%) indicated that they had conducted some conference interviewing as part of their selection processes. The responses to the remaining interview questions are all based on those who did use the procedure. It should be noted that the high

Table 4.18

Practices Related to Employer Contacts with the Writers of References (Percentages)

Practice	Carried Out In Reference to Head Resident/ Residence Staff Positions	Carried Out In Reference to Other Positions
No personal contact with reference writers	5.5	10.0
Only references listed by candidate were contacted	36.4	43.3
In some case(s), people not listed as references were contacted	58.2	46.7
Of those who make reference contacts:		
At least one reference is always contacted	46.9	53.1
At least one reference is contacted in the majority of cases	32.7	32.7
At least one reference is contacted in a minority of cases	20.4	14.3

proportions of respondents conducting conference interviews were predictable because the sample represents only those employers using conference placement services to list positions.

Responses indicated that conference selection interviews were not highly structured, although a few more structured interviews were reported by respondents hiring residence staff than by those hiring for other positions. Only three of the residence respondents (6.3%) used detailed lists of questions to guide conference interviews; none in the other group reported doing so. Eight of the residence respondents (16.7%) and four in the other group (8.5%) reported using a written interview guide. Majorities in both groups (66.7% in the residence group; 74.5% of the others) indicated that, "Though no written guide was used, interviewer(s) developed, in advance, a clear understanding of the areas to be covered in all interviews." Interviews were reported as being un-structured by 10.4% of the residence group and by 17.0% of the others.

Respondents were asked, "How many different staff members conducted at least one conference interview in 1978 for the named position title?" Responses to this item are shown in Table 4.19. Although about half the respondents in each group reported interviews by only one or two different persons, a significant number of

employers used multiple interviewers. This was slightly more true of those hiring for residence positions; they reported a mean of 3.22 interviewers, as compared with 2.40 for the other group. In the residence group, 23.8% of the respondents reported more than four persons interviewing; 6.6% of the other group reported more than four.

Table 4.19

Number of Different Staff Conducting at Least One Conference Selection Interview

Number of Staff	For Head Resident/Residence Staff Positions (n=46)		For Other Positions (n=45)	
	Number	(Percentage)	Number	(Percentage)
1	14	(30.4)	17	(37.8)
2	10	(21.7)	12	(26.7)
3	7	(15.2)	7	(15.6)
4	4	(8.7)	6	(13.3)
5	2	(4.3)	1	(2.2)
6	3	(6.5)	1	(2.2)
7	2	(4.3)	0	0
8	3	(6.5)	0	0
Over 8	1	(2.2)	1	(2.2)

Note. Head Resident/Residence Staff: $\bar{X}$ = 3.22, S.D. = 2.47; Other Positions: $\bar{X}$ = 2.40, S.D. = 1.83.

Despite the number of institutions having multiple selection interviewers, very little formal or detailed interviewer training was reported by the respondents. Almost half (45.7%) of the residence respondents, and 71.7% of the others, reported that no training was offered to prepare staff to conduct conference selection interviews. Brief and informal training was reported by

47.9% in the residence group and by 26.1% of the others. Fairly detailed and/or formal interviewer training was conducted by only three (6.3%) of the residence respondents and by only one (2.2%) in the other group.

Almost all respondents (95.9% in the residence group and 95.7% of the others) reported taking notes at conference selection interviews for the named positions. However, only 37.5% in the residence group and only 20.0% of the others used established rating forms for note-taking. Majorities in both groups took notes only after each interview (71.1% in the residence group and 56.8% in the other group). Another 22.2% in the residence group and 36.4% in the other group took notes both during and after conference interviews. A few (6.7 and 6.8%, respectively) reported taking notes only during conference selection interviews.

The majority of interviewers reviewed written candidate information (i.e., resumés, correspondence, or possibly application blanks) just before conference interviews (63.0% in the residence group and 51.1% of the others). About a third of the interviewers (28.3% and 31.9%, respectively) reviewed written information well before interviews. Only 8.7% of the residence respondents and 14.9% of the others reported waiting until conference interviews were under way to read written information on candidates. One nonresidence

respondent indicated that no written information was reviewed before or during conference selection interviews.

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked, "Do you use any selection techniques you feel are particularly useful to you? If so, would you briefly describe them?" In the space provided, 32 of the 116 respondents (27.6%) wrote brief comments. Seven of these endorsed the value of including students and faculty in candidate screening and interviewing. Five wrote that the telephone can be used effectively for reference checks and/or telephone interviews. One of these conducted conference calls, using a microphone, to enable a screening committee to choose three of 12 candidates for on-campus interviews. Three respondents noted the value of informal interviewing in relaxed settings. Three noted the importance of giving information to candidates about the job and institution. Finally, two respondents wrote that personal referrals and references from trusted colleagues are especially valuable. The written comments are presented fully in Appendix F.

Results of Hypothesis Testing: Selection Procedures Reported in Use

Two general null hypotheses were tested, each in relation to six specific selection procedures. The first (Ho_3) explored possible relationships between the size of the responding institution and the use of six selection procedures.

respondent indicated that no written information was reviewed before or during conference selection interviews.

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Results of Hypothesis Testing: Selection Procedures Reported in Use

Two general null hypotheses were tested, each in relation to six specific selection procedures. The first (Ho_3) explored possible relationships between the size of the responding institution and the use of six selection procedures.

Ho_3:

There are no significant differences in entry-level staff selection procedures in use at different-sized institutions, as reported by the respondents.

$Ho_{3.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications (written descriptions of required/desired candidate characteristics) for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference selection interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in use at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers at different-sized institutions.

Ho_3:

There are no significant differences in entry-level staff selection procedures in use at different-sized institutions, as reported by the respondents.

$Ho_{3.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications (written descriptions of required/desired candidate characteristics) for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference selection interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in use at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers at different-sized institutions.

Each of the six null hypotheses ($Ho_{3.1}$ to $Ho_{3.6}$) was tested using a chi-square contingency table, with institution size (expressed in four enrollment categories) as the row variable and response to the procedural item as the column variable. For the first four null hypotheses, no chi-square value reached significance at the .05 level; thus, none of these four null hypotheses ($Ho_{3.1}$ to $Ho_{3.4}$) was rejected.

No significant differences were found between different-sized institutions (1) on the degree of conference interview structure, (2) on when notes were taken, or (3) on prior review of candidate information ($Ho_{3.5}$). However, there was a significant relationship between institution size and the use of an established rating form for note-taking. As Table 4.20 shows, the larger institutions were significantly more likely to use an established rating form than were smaller institutions. In the smallest size category (representing 76.9% of the private colleges in the sample), 87.1% of the respondents had no established rating form. In the largest category, on the other hand, 65.2% of the respondents used a rating form during conference interviews. The latter group was comprised entirely of state institutions (mostly universities). The intermediate size categories responded similarly to the smallest group. Thus, prevalence of rating forms in the largest

institutions, compared with the relative rarity of such forms in the other size categories, probably accounts for the significant result.

Table 4.20

Relationship between Institution Size and Use of an Established Rating Form during Conference Selection Interviews

Enrollment Category	Established Rating Form Used (Percentage)	Established Rating Form Not Used (Percentage)
0- 2,500	12.9	87.1
2,501- 7,500	19.0	81.0
7,501-15,000	22.2	77.8
Over 15,000	65.2	34.8

Chi-square = 19.952; df = 3; Significant at .0002 level.

A significant relationship was found between institution size and the use of pre-conference staff training in selection interview techniques (see Table 4.21). Whereas 78.1% of the respondents from the smallest institutions reported no interviewer training, 66.7% of the largest institutions conducted some training (either brief and informal or formal training). The use of interviewer training is more prevalent with each increase in enrollment category. Based on this analysis, $Ho_{3.6}$ was rejected.

Another general null hypothesis (Ho_4) concerned the possible relationships between the type of position involved and the same six selection procedures.

Table 4.21

Relationship between Institution Size and Pre-Conference Interviewer Training

Enrollment Category	Training Was Conducted (Percentage)	No Training Was Conducted (Percentage)
0- 2,500	21.9	78.1
2,501- 7,500	33.3	66.7
7,501-15,000	52.9	47.1
Over 15,000	66.7	33.3

Chi-square = 12.832; df = 3; Significant at .005 level.

Ho_4:

There are no significant differences in selection procedures used in hiring professionals for different types of entry-level positions (i.e., Head Resident/Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, and Advising/Counseling positions).

$Ho_{4.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers concerned with different types of positions.

Each of the six sub-hypotheses ($Ho_{4.1}$ to $Ho_{4.6}$) was tested using a chi-square contingency table. None of these tests produced a chi-square value significant at the .05 level; thus, the data failed to reject any of these six null hypotheses.

Importance of Specific Competencies as Entry-Level Selection Criteria

Descriptive Findings

Each respondent was asked to rate the importance of 36 specific competencies as criteria used in selecting the best candidate for a particular 1978 position. The list of competencies used in the questionnaire was derived from a typology developed by Minetti (1977). Appendix B gives Minetti's list in full; for purposes of the present study, 10 of his items were collapsed or deleted.

The key question put to respondents was, "In selecting the best candidate for the position named on the questionnaire, how important was each of the competencies listed, in your opinion?" Respondents rated each competency for importance by using the following rating scale:

1 = Absolutely Essential: A candidate had to have this competency to be considered.

2 = Very Important: This competency is used often and/or is important in the referenced job; a candidate without it was at a disadvantage in selection.

3 = Moderately Important: This competency would be used occasionally and/or is desirable in the job; the competency helped in differentiating between candidates in many cases.

4 = Of Minor Importance: This competency might be used infrequently in the job; it was only a minor factor in selection in some cases.

5 = Of No Importance: This competency is unimportant in the job; it was not a factor in judging candidates.

Table 4.22 presents the distribution of importance ratings given each competency by the respondents. Again, the percentages relating to Head Resident/Residence Staff

Table 4.22

Importance Ratings of the Competencies

Competency The candidate should have the ability to:	Mean Rating	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
		1 Absolutely Essential	2 Very Important	3 Moderately Important	4 Of Minor Importance	5 Of No Importance
Work cooperatively with others	R 1.38	80.0	12.7	1.8	0	5.5
	O 1.44	70.5	23.0	1.6	1.6	3.3
Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communication skills	R 1.47	70.9	20.0	3.6	1.8	3.6
	O 1.43	70.5	24.6	0	1.6	3.3
Work effectively with a wide range of individuals	R 1.42	74.5	20.0	0	0	5.5
	O 1.57	55.7	37.7	1.6	3.3	1.6
Display leadership skills	R 1.64	52.7	38.2	3.6	3.6	1.8
	O 1.54	57.4	36.1	1.6	4.9	0
Assess student needs and interests	R 1.66	47.3	47.3	0	3.6	1.8
	O 1.74	47.5	37.7	9.8	3.3	1.6
Engage in effective decision-making	R 1.71	45.5	43.6	7.3	1.8	1.8
	O 1.71	42.6	49.2	3.3	4.9	0
Mediate conflicts between individuals and groups	R 1.73	41.8	49.1	3.6	5.5	0
	O 1.95	36.1	42.6	11.5	9.8	0
Advise groups	R 2.04	29.1	49.1	10.9	10.9	0
	O 1.87	41.0	42.6	9.8	1.6	4.9

Table 4.22 (Continued)

Competency The candidate should have the ability to:	Mean Rating	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
		1 Absolutely Essential	2 Very Important	3 Moderately Important	4 Of Minor Importance	5 Of No Importance
Appreciate and internalize professional standards and ethics	R 2.00	36.4	40.0	14.5	5.5	3.6
	O 2.03	26.2	50.8	18.0	3.3	1.6
Meet student developmental needs through co-curricular programs and activities	R 2.00	25.5	58.2	10.9	1.8	3.6
	O 2.07	37.7	31.1	23.0	3.3	4.9
Recognize and evaluate group dynamics	R 2.09	25.5	45.5	23.6	5.5	0
	O 2.03	32.8	39.3	19.7	8.2	0
Represent student concerns to other campus populations	R 2.18	29.1	34.5	25.5	10.9	0
	O 2.08	37.7	24.6	29.5	8.2	0
Interpret the concerns, goals, and problems of the other campus populations to students	R 2.31	25.5	34.5	25.5	12.7	1.8
	O 2.15	32.8	32.8	24.6	6.6	3.3
Recognize and interpret the special needs of ethnic and racial minorities	R 2.36	18.2	43.6	23.6	12.7	1.8
	O 2.16	23.0	44.3	26.2	6.6	0
Select, train, supervise, and evaluate staff	R 1.86	49.1	30.9	10.9	3.6	5.5
	O 2.66	26.2	26.2	14.8	21.3	11.5
Display competence in individual and group counseling	R 2.31	14.5	49.1	29.1	5.5	1.8
	O 2.30	24.6	36.1	26.2	11.5	1.6

Table 4.22 (Continued)

Competency The candidate should have the ability to:	Mean Rating	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
		1 Absolutely Essential	2 Very Important	3 Moderately Important	4 Of Minor Importance	5 Of No Importance
Perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct	R 1.82	40.0	47.3	7.3	1.8	3.6
	O 2.84	21.3	23.0	19.7	23.0	13.1
Distinguish between theory and practice	R 2.39	16.7	42.6	25.9	14.8	0
	O 2.25	26.2	37.7	23.0	11.5	1.6
Appreciate and understand the specialized functions of student personnel work	R 2.33	12.7	50.9	29.1	5.5	1.8
	O 2.46	14.8	41.0	31.1	9.8	3.3
Evaluate programs	R 2.51	9.1	40.0	41.8	9.1	0
	O 2.05	26.2	47.5	21.3	4.9	0
Formulate and interpret policy	R 2.46	16.4	36.4	34.5	10.9	1.8
	O 2.28	18.0	45.9	27.9	6.6	1.6
Engage in systematic planning within the department or unit	R 2.67	5.5	40.0	41.8	7.3	5.5
	O 2.20	19.7	47.5	26.2	6.6	0
Articulate the characteristics of the American college student	R 2.51	23.6	23.6	34.5	14.5	3.6
	O 2.54	13.1	36.1	39.3	6.6	4.9
Manage physical resources and facilities	R 2.62	10.9	41.8	21.8	25.5	0
	O 2.89	14.8	21.3	31.1	26.2	6.6

Table 4.22 (Continued)

Competency The candidate should have the ability to:	Mean Rating	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
		1 Absolutely Essential	2 Very Important	3 Moderately Important	4 Of Minor Importance	5 Of No Importance
Display familiarity with the student personnel professional literature, as well as the current issues and trends in the field	R 2.78 O 2.85	3.6 8.2	30.9 29.5	49.1 36.1	16.4 21.3	0 4.9
Articulate and interpret the goals of student personnel work to the wider population (on and off campus)	R 2.80 O 2.80	5.5 13.1	27.3 26.2	50.9 32.8	14.5 23.0	1.8 4.9
Recognize legal implications and understand relevant legislation	R 3.11 O 2.87	3.6 6.6	21.8 37.7	41.8 26.2	25.5 21.3	7.3 8.2
Cite and apply theories of personality development	R 3.11 O 3.36	1.9 3.3	14.8 16.4	55.6 36.1	25.9 29.5	1.9 14.8
Articulate the social, cultural, and philosophical foundations of higher education	R 3.18 O 3.30	7.3 3.3	20.0 21.3	32.7 31.1	27.3 31.1	12.7 13.1
Formulate and monitor a budget	R 3.46 O 3.31	1.8 4.9	12.7 18.0	38.2 32.8	32.7 29.5	14.5 14.8
Recognize and analyze political processes in higher education	R 3.44 O 3.38	1.8 6.6	14.5 11.5	34.5 36.1	36.4 29.5	12.7 16.4

Table 4.22 (Continued)

Competency The candidate should have the ability to:	Mean Rating	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
		1 Absolutely Essential	2 Very Important	3 Moderately Important	4 Of Minor Importance	5 Of No Importance
Understand the financing of higher education	R 3.46	3.6	12.7	32.7	36.4	14.5
	O 3.52	1.7	13.3	30.0	41.7	13.3
Interpret research as reported in professional literature	R 3.66	1.8	7.3	38.2	29.1	23.6
	O 3.61	0	11.5	34.4	36.1	18.0
Conduct independent research	R 3.82	1.8	5.5	25.5	43.6	23.6
	O 3.79	1.6	6.6	27.9	39.3	24.6
Understand the principles of statistical analysis	R 4.16	3.6	3.6	9.1	40.0	43.6
	O 4.07	0	4.9	26.2	26.2	42.6
Administer and interpret personality tests and measurements	R 4.36	3.6	3.6	1.8	34.5	56.4
	O 4.28	0	8.2	13.1	21.3	57.4

Note. R pertains to selection for residence positions (n=55); O pertains to all other positions (n=61).

positions (R) are presented separately from those relating to the other subgroups taken together (O). The competencies are listed in approximate order by mean rating, with the competencies rated as most important at the top. The lower the mean rating, the more importance was attributed to a competency by respondents. The order of items in the table is only approximate because means for the two groups vary on each item. In addition, respondents rated each competency item separately rather than placing the items in order of relative importance.

Only four competencies were rated "absolutely essential" by majorities of respondents in both groups: "Work cooperatively with others," "Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills," "Work effectively with a wide range of individuals," and "Display leadership skills."

Almost half the respondents in each group felt that competence in assessing student needs and interests was essential. However, competence in evaluating programs and in conducting research were rated much lower in importance. Perhaps this implies that assessing needs or interests is considered an intuitive process rather than one involving systematic acquisition and analysis of information.

Other competencies considered essential or very important by high proportions of respondents in both

groups included abilities in conflict mediation and group advisement; appreciation and internalization of professional standards and ethics; programming abilities; and skills in evaluating group dynamics. Majorities of respondents in both groups felt it was important for candidates to be competent in facilitating communication between students and other campus populations about the concerns, goals, and problems of each.

Competencies rated relatively low in importance included psychometric skills, statistical and research expertise, and financial/budgeting skills. The ability to conduct independent research was seen as being "of no importance" by about one-fourth of the respondents in each group.

Many of the areas of knowledge commonly taught through course work in master's-level College Student Personnel preparation programs were rated as somewhat less important than the majority of competency statements. These areas include knowledge of statistics; social, cultural, and philosophical foundations of higher education; theories of personality development; Student Personnel professional literature; and the characteristics of the American college student. However, it is more important to note that majorities of respondents in both groups felt each of these areas was at least "moderately important."

Results of Hypothesis Testing: Importance of Specific Competencies as Entry-Level Selection Criteria

Two null hypotheses were tested in relation to the competency items. The first explored possible relationships between competency importance ratings and respondents' selection experience.

Ho_5:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the degree of experience in staff selection held by the respondents.

In testing this hypothesis, chi-square contingency tables were established for each competency item. In this way, response patterns on the importance of each competency were compared for respondents with relatively low and relatively high experience (years of experience in staff selection, divided at the median). No significant relationship was found between respondent experience and the importance ratings given any of the competencies. Thus, the data failed to reject Ho_5 for all competency items.

The second null hypothesis in this area explored the possibility that respondents seeking candidates for different types of positions rated the importance of the competencies differently.

Ho_6:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the type of position (i.e., Head Resident/ Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, or Advising/ Counseling) for which selection is being conducted.

In testing this hypothesis, a chi-square contingency table was established for each competency, with position type as the row variable and importance rating as the column variable. When all five position types were used, significant relationships were found in six cases. However, in each of these tests, low expected frequencies (less than five) were found in more than one-fifth of the cells and expected frequencies of one or less were found in some cell(s). Writers have recommended that the chi-square statistic not be used under this condition (Cochran, 1954; Minium, 1970). For that reason, the null hypothesis (Ho_6) was not rejected for response patterns on any of the competencies relating to the five position types.

To eliminate the low expected frequencies, the variable of position type was collapsed into two categories: (1) Head Resident/Residence Staff positions and (2) all others taken together. Significant differences in the importance ratings for residence positions, compared with others, were found in three cases. For all but these three exceptions, Ho_6 was not rejected.

Table 4.23 shows the distributions of importance ratings for the competency, "Select, train, supervise and evaluate staff." As one might expect, this competency was rated significantly more important as a selection criterion by administrators hiring residence staff than by those hiring for other position types. Almost half the residence respondents felt this competency was essential; only about one-fourth found it essential in the other group. Over 30% of the nonresidence respondents felt this competency was of low or no importance. It appears that staff selection, training, and supervision are less prevalent job tasks in nonresidence entry-level positions than in residence positions.

Table 4.23

Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Select, Train, Supervise and Evaluate Staff"

Respondent Group	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
	Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Moderately Important	Of Minor Importance	Of No Importance
Those hiring for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions	49.1	30.9	10.9	3.6	5.5
Those hiring for all other position types	26.2	26.2	14.8	21.3	11.5

Chi-square = 12.835; df = 4; Significant at .012 level

Competency in evaluating programs, on the other hand, was rated as significantly more important by the nonresidence group (see Table 4.24). A total of 73.7% in the nonresidence group found this competency either essential or very important as a selection criterion; only 49.1% in the residence group did so. This finding is not surprising because a sizable number of positions in the nonresidence group involved programming as a major job function.

Table 4.24

Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Evaluate Programs"

Respondent Group	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
	Abso-lutely Essential	Very Impor-tant	Moder-ately Important	Of Minor Impor-tance	Of No Impor-tance
Those hiring for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions	9.1	40.0	41.8	9.1	0
Those hiring for all other position types	26.2	47.5	21.3	4.9	0

Chi-square = 9.716; df = 3; Significant at .021 level

Table 4.25 presents the ratings given by the two groups to the competency, "Perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct." This competency was seen as much more important by employers hiring residence staff than by those hiring for other kinds of positions.

Almost 90% of the residence respondents found competence in student discipline to be essential or very important; this was true for less than half the respondents in the nonresidence group.

Table 4.25

Distributions of Importance Ratings for the Competency, "Perform Fair and Effective Discipline of Student Misconduct"

Respondent Group	Percentage of Respondents Giving Each Rating				
	Absolutely Essential	Very Important	Moderately Important	Of Minor Importance	Of No Importance
Those hiring for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions	40.0	47.3	7.3	1.8	3.6
Those hiring for all other position types	21.3	23.0	19.7	23.0	13.1

Chi-square = 24.536; df = 4; Significant at .0001 level

With the three foregoing exceptions, no significant differences in the importance of the competencies as selection criteria for different position types were identified.

Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of the results of the study. A mailed questionnaire was used to gather the data. The survey sample included 124 Student Personnel administrators recently involved in selecting

entry-level staff; this group was stratified into five subgroups according to the type of position for which respondents had carried out selection in 1978. Each respondent completed the questionnaire in reference to a particular position named at the top of the first page.

The major purposes of the study were: (1) to investigate and evaluate certain procedures currently used in the selection of entry-level College Student Personnel professionals and (2) to explore the criteria used by administrators in evaluating the competency of candidates for the named entry-level positions.

One hundred sixteen of the 124 administrators sampled (93.5%) returned usable questionnaire responses. Analysis of the population, sampled, and respondent groups on four variables (title of each administrator and size, control, and region of his/her institution) revealed no major biases in the respondent group on these variables.

Respondents reported having from one to 30 years' experience in staff selection with a mean of 7.3 years. Almost all had acquired this experience while working at three different institutions or fewer (mean: 1.8). A majority (56.6%) shared authority to make hiring decisions, usually with a superior or a staff group. Another 34.8% had sole authority to hire for the named entry-level positions.

Respondents generally believe that an administrator's effectiveness in staff selection can be improved

by the use of "systematic and objective selection procedures." About three-fourths of the respondents feel that recruiting and interviewing at professional conferences is valuable. The reputation of a candidate's graduate training program is generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications, according to 48.3% of the respondents. Almost two-thirds of the respondents think individual references, written for particular job applications, are usually more credible than those from candidates' placement files.

Most respondents (87.1%) see the resumé only as a preliminary indicator of some candidate qualifications. Written references are seen as valid and reliable only as preliminary indicators by 36.5% of the respondents. Another 45.2% feel references are generally valid and reliable but may not be, depending on the writer.

No significant relationships were identified between the amount of respondent experience in selection and responses to any of the attitude items, with one exception. Respondents with selection experience at more than one institution (as compared with those having experience at only one school) were significantly more likely to indicate that selection can be done just as effectively <u>without</u> recruiting and interviewing at conferences. This difference, though statistically significant, was not great; majorities in both groups supported

the value of conference selection activities. No significant differences were found in the attitudes of administrators from different-sized institutions.

The mean number of applicants per position in the respondent groups ranged from 21.8 (for Head Resident/ Residence Staff positions) to 51.0 (for Administrative/ Generalist positions). About twice as many applications were reported for live-out as for live-in positions. Employers hired only 2.0 to 4.6% of the applicants, a very favorable selection ratio from their viewpoint.

Table 4.26 summarizes the responses to most questions on selection procedures used in 1978 hiring for the named entry-level positions. The responses relating to Head Resident/Residence Staff positions came from a random sample of the homogeneous subgroup population, while those relating to the other four subgroups were not sampled; therefore, the figures relating to residence positions and to the other position types are given separately. In both groupings, most employers reviewed written job descriptions, contacted references personally, did some interviewing at conference(s), and took notes at conference interviews. It is common for more than one person to conduct conference selection interviews, but in many cases no interviewer training is conducted in advance. Conference interviews are generally not highly structured, but interviews for housing

Table 4.26

Percentage of Respondents Reporting the Use of Certain Selection Procedures

Procedure	Used in Reference to Head Resident/ Residence Staff Positions	Used in Reference to Other Position Types
A specific application blank was used	23.6	11.5
Applicants were tested	1.8	0
There is a written job description	98.2	98.4
A review of job description or position requirements was made	96.4	98.3
There is a written specification of desired and/or required qualifications for the position	71.7	68.9
Reference(s) were contacted personally;	94.6	90.0
Only those listed by the applicant were contacted	36.4	43.3
Some not listed by the applicant were contacted	58.2	46.7
Of those who contacted references personally:		
Those who always contacted at least one	46.9	53.1
Those who contacted at least one in a majority of cases	32.7	32.7
Some conference interviewing was done	89.1	77.0
Structure of conference interviews:		
Unstructured	10.4	17.0
Interviewer(s) developed understandings of what to cover	66.7	74.5
Written guide (not detailed) used	16.7	8.5
Detailed list of questions used	6.3	0
Number of different staff who conducted conference interview(s):		
One	30.4	37.8
Two	21.7	26.7
Three	15.2	15.6
Four	8.7	13.3
Over four	23.8	6.6
Interviewer training conducted:		
None	45.8	71.7
Brief and informal training	47.9	26.1
Fairly detailed and/or formal training	6.3	2.2
Notes were taken in conjunction with conference selection interviews	95.9	95.7
Taken on established rating form	37.5	20.0
Taken only after interviews	71.1	56.8
Taken only during interviews	6.7	6.8
Taken during and after interviews	22.2	36.4
Interviewers first reviewed written information on candidates:		
Just before conference interviews	63.0	51.1
Well before conference interviews	28.3	31.9
During conference interviews	8.7	14.9

positions tend to be somewhat more structured than those for other kinds of positions.

Larger institutions were found to be significantly more likely than smaller ones to use established rating forms for note-taking at conference interviews and to provide pre-conference interviewer training. Chi-square analysis revealed no other significant relationships between selection procedures used and (1) the size of the respondents' institutions or (2) the type of position for which selection was carried out.

A list of 36 competencies suggested in Student Personnel literature as important to the entry-level professional was used in the study. Respondents applied a five-point scale to rate the importance of each competency as an actual criterion for selecting the best candidate for a named 1978 position. Response choices ranged from "absolutely essential" ("A candidate had to have this competency to be considered for the position") to "of no importance" ("This competency is unimportant in the job; it was not a factor in judging candidates").

Table 4.22 (pp. 174-178) summarizes the results of this rating process. Only four competencies were rated "absolutely essential" by majorities of respondents in both groups: "Work cooperatively with others," "Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills," "Work effectively with a wide range of

individuals," and "Display leadership skills." Other highly rated competencies included conflict mediation, group advisement, appreciation of professional standards and ethics, programming abilities, and group skills. Competencies rated relatively low in importance included psychometric skills, statistical and research expertise, and financial/budgeting skills.

Chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationships between the levels of respondents' selection experience and importance ratings given any of the competencies. The abilities to "Select, train, supervise and evaluate staff" and to "Perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct" were seen as significantly more important by respondents hiring for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions, as compared with those hiring for other position types. Competence in program evaluation was significantly less important to the residence group than to the others.

With the above exceptions, no significant differences were found in the importance of the competencies as selection criteria for different types of positions. Thus, it appears that a general list of competencies important to most entry-level Student Personnel professionals (regardless of specialty area) can be identified. Although the competency statements used in this study do not constitute an exhaustive list of the potentially

relevant items, respondent support for the importance of most of these items offers indications of their place in such a general list.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Staffing is one of the most fundamental of management functions. In College Student Personnel, as in any organization, managers must periodically choose individuals to fill available positions. A manager's effectiveness in the task of selection may well determine the difference between success and failure, for staff members are a primary resource through which the organization and its managers function.

It has been observed that "Recruitment is more an art than an exact science; but it calls for a scientific approach" (Denerley & Plumbley, 1969, p. 10). Although voluminous research on selection has been published in the field of Personnel Psychology, there is no published evidence to show that College Student Personnel administrators have widely applied these findings in establishing a "scientific approach" to staff selection.

Selection essentially involves gathering appropriate information about candidates and using that

information to match the best person (the one predicted to perform best) with a particular job. By gathering the most relevant and valid information possible, the selector attempts to reduce the uncertainty inherent in predicting the best match. Research has developed a great deal of useful knowledge concerning a variety of techniques for gathering information about job candidates. Such techniques include the job description, application blank, resumé and written reference, and the selection interview. However, authors have asserted that such techniques have often been used unsystematically and without knowledge of their usefulness in particular situations (Fleishman & Bass, 1974; Hall, 1976).

A great deal of effort is regularly expended on staff selection in College Student Personnel. Each year the three major national professional organizations in the field (the American College Personnel Association, ACPA; the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, NASPA; and the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, NAWDAC) conduct placement services in conjunction with their annual conferences. A good deal of this extensive placement activity involves the selection of candidates to fill entry-level positions. For purposes of this study, an entry-level professional position was generally defined as one requiring a master's

degree in College Student Personnel (or a related field) and not more than one year's related post-master's experience.

The present study was undertaken in an effort to explore the topic of staff selection procedures and criteria relating to entry-level professional positions in College Student Personnel. The entry level was considered important for study because turnover at that level dictates a great deal of hiring for such positions each year and because selection at the first level determines, to an important extent, the pool of candidates for later selection to leadership positions in the field.

Chapter V presents a summary of the development of the study, its findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Summary of the Development of the Study

Purposes of the Study

Chapter I contained the overview and purposes of the study. This study had two major foci. The first was an investigation and evaluation of the procedures currently in use in the selection of entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel. The second major focus was the exploration of criteria used by administrators in evaluating the competence of candidates for entry-level professional Student Personnel positions. More specifically, the purposes of the study were:

1. To provide a detailed review of the theory and research on staff selection, as found in the literature of Personnel Psychology. This review supplied relevant information for Student Personnel administrators wishing to improve their selection practices and to conduct staff training on selection methodology.

2. To describe the current use of a limited number of specific selection procedures, as practiced in 1978 by Student Personnel administrators selecting staff for entry-level professional positions. (This nationwide investigation included all types of entry-level professional positions which were listed as available in the 1978 job market.)

3. To evaluate these procedures, as well as certain attitudes of 1978 Student Personnel selectors, in light of the literature reviewed from Personnel Psychology. To suggest possible improvements in the currently prevailing practices for selecting entry-level professional staff in College Student Personnel.

4. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures at institutions of different size and among selectors of varying experience.

5. To explore possible differences in the use of particular selection procedures to fill different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

6. To identify the relative importance of various competencies as criteria for the selection of entry-level professional staff, as seen by administrators involved in the 1978 Student Personnel selection process.

7. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies for different types of entry-level Student Personnel positions.

8. To explore possible differences in the importance ascribed to particular competencies by administrators with differing levels of selection experience.

Rationale and Need for the Study

After a review of the related literature, it was determined that a serious need exists for Student Personnel research on staff selection. The following observations support the need for such study:

1. Personnel psychologists have found that many prevalent selection practices (particularly the interview) have serious shortcomings. This criticism extends into various educational settings, including College Student Personnel.

2. The paucity of literature on professional staff selection in College Student Personnel is a significant omission.

3. Even if all graduates of M.A. programs in Student Personnel and related fields are assumed competent, selection is always for a particular job and setting. Procedures and criteria are thus needed which optimize the effectiveness of staff choice.

4. Since job market conditions may be forcing many entry-level candidates into residence hall positions, selection for these positions must emphasize sensitivity to the needs and motives of candidates.

5. Affirmative Action pressures may soon force College Student Personnel and other fields to do more research on selection.

6. In a time of financial austerity, professionals must identify and adopt the most cost-effective selection procedures available.

7. A need has been identified in Student Personnel literature for information on the entry-level competencies needed by practitioners. Thus, an evaluation of competency statements can be useful to educators, students, and practitioners in the Student Personnel field.

Summary of the Related Literature

In Chapter II of the study, a detailed review of the literature on staff selection was presented. Student Personnel literature on the selection of full-time professionals consists almost entirely of job market surveys and

post-conference placement evaluations. The only in-depth examinations of selection practices in the field involved the selection of paraprofessional residence hall staff. These studies revealed no standardized paper-and-pencil instrument which consistently produced accurate predictions of success in such positions. Role-playing and Leaderless Group Discussions (LGDs) have been used economically as selection methods for residence staff; though authors believe these procedures are highly effective, very little research has been done to confirm or deny the predictive validity of role-playing or the LGD.

A considerable body of literature from the field of Personnel Psychology was reviewed concerning the effectiveness of various selection procedures. The following are those findings most relevant to the present study:

1. There is considerable agreement that a careful job analysis is the necessary first step in an effective selection process. Review of the position and its requirements should result in an accurate written job description and a detailed list of characteristics to be sought in candidates for the job (O'Leary, 1976; Schneider, 1976; Stanton, 1977). Not only required and desired characteristics but also undesirable and/or disqualifying characteristics should be included (Denerley & Plumbley, 1969).

2. The resumé appears to have little validity as a tool for gathering information on job candidates (Gaudet

& Casey, 1969). Application blanks, especially when their items are carefully validated for predictive validity, are potentially more useful (Lopez, 1965; Blum & Naylor, 1968; Campbell et al., 1970; Beatty & Schneier, 1977).

3. Written recommendations have been found unreliable as selection tools (Peres & Garcia, 1962; Browning, 1968; Rim, 1976). Recommendations should be corroborated through personal contact with the writers (Mandell, 1958; Lipsett, 1972; Beatty & Schneier, 1977; Miner & Miner, 1977; Stanton, 1977).

4. The selection interview is often unreliable and invalid (Kahn & Cannell, 1957; Dunnette, 1966; Taylor, 1972; Carlson et al., 1974). Trained interviewers using standardized interview procedures can, however, be effective (Lopez, 1965; Miner, 1965). Much of the difficulty with interviews arises from unreliability (inconsistency in the information gathered and in the resulting hiring decisions). Structured interviews (those where questions are written in advance) have proven to yield more reliable results than unstrutured interviews (Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965; Carlson et al., 1974). When more than one person conducts interviews for the same position, reliability is especially low unless the interview is structured and interviewers agree on what information is important (Mayfield, 1964; Mayfield & Carlson, 1966). Interviewer memory is not reliable unless notes are taken, preferably

with the use of a written interview guide (Carlson et al., 1974). Because first impressions (even those based on written material) can heavily influence the evaluation of a candidate, it has been recommended that interviewers not review written information on candidates before interviews (Webster, 1964; Miner, 1977). Systematic training of interviewers is important in enhancing the validity and reliability of the interviewing process (Carlson et al., 1971; Schneider, 1976; Miner, 1977). Despite the above difficulties, the selection interview can be done effectively and can serve purposes other than information-gathering. Interviews can reveal the whole candidate, allow for detailed two-way information exchange, and enable the employer to observe candidates' appearance and oral communication skills.

There is some evidence that selectors may seek to match job candidates with stereotypes of an "ideal" candidate (Sydiaha, 1958; Mayfield & Carlson, 1966). A candidate's pattern of competencies may be one aspect of this comparison with "ideal" stereotypes. What competencies, then, are considered "ideal" in the entry-level College Student Personnel candidate?

Student Personnel literature concerning suggested entry-level professional competencies was also reviewed in Chapter II. A major source of literature on entry-level competencies has been a series of statements by

professional organizations listing standards for the training of practitioners (COSPA, 1963; ACPA, 1965; APGA, 1965, 1967; APGA & COSPA, 1969). Comparison of these statements reveals substantial agreement on the value of a very wide-ranging list of competencies. Though much of this literature concerns course content, there has been wide recognition of the need for practical skill application as well as specialized knowledge. It has been agreed that interdisciplinary preparation is needed in the acquisition of Student Personnel competencies. Broad preparation is necessitated because of the large number of functions involved in entry-level Student Personnel positions.

In recent years, competency-based education has come closer to the forefront in Student Personnel preparation. Training has increasingly focused on competency outcomes rather than course titles. Developmental contracts are being increasingly used in some preparation programs.

The growth of the student development point of view, particularly evident in work by COSPA (1974) and in the T.H.E. Project of ACPA (Brown, 1972; ACPA, 1975; Miller & Prince, 1976; Hanson, 1976) has placed increased emphasis on professional competence. Competencies suggested under this model focus on goal-setting, assessment, instruction, consultation, and milieu management. Though

organized under a new rubric, most of these competencies have been identified in previous Student Personnel literature. Basic skills applicable to any situation include administrative and organizational skills, the ability to work cooperatively, and effective interpersonal communication skills.

Minetti (1977) reviewed the above literature and developed a list of 47 competencies suggested as important for entry-level staff (Appendix B). Included are the categories of counseling, human relations, and interpersonal skills; theory and practice of administration and management; research, testing, and measurement; historical, philosophical, and social foundations of higher education; meeting student needs; and professional purpose and role identity. Comparison of Minetti's competency list with those of other authors shows it to be representative of the literature on this topic. This competency list, with minor alterations, formed the basis of the instrument used in the present study.

Methodology

The research methods and design of the study were presented in Chapter III. A nationwide mailed sample survey was the method adopted for this exploratory study. Following a review of selection literature, a questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed and locally pilot-tested. In October, 1978, this questionnaire was mailed to a sample

of "contact persons" identified in entry-level position listings from the 1978 ACPA, NAWDAC, and NASPA conferences. Contact persons completed the questionnaires with references to particular positions for which they had selected new staff in 1978. These referent positions were classified into five types according to job function: Head Resident/Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, and Advising/Counseling. The latter four categories comprised 61 listings, all of which were included in the sample. The Head Resident/Residence Staff group included 111 listings; a simple random sample of 56 listings from this group was included in the survey.

Questionnaire items were mainly concerned with four kinds of content: (1) descriptive information on the respondents and on the named positions for which they selected staff in 1978; (2) respondent attitudes toward several selection-related issues; (3) the selection procedures respondents used in hiring for the named positions; and (4) the importance of specific competencies as selection criteria for the named entry-level positions.

Of the 124 questionnaires mailed, 116 were completed and returned, resulting in a 93.5% response rate. Within the five subgroups, response rates varied from 78.6% to 98.2%. Descriptive data were compiled on all

items using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. A number of hypotheses were specified and tested at the .05 level of significance by using the chi-square statistic.

Descriptive Findings of the Study

Characteristics of the Respondents.--The respondents reported having a mean of 7.3 years' experience in staff selection, although experience ranged as high as 30 years. Almost all respondents had acquired this experience while working at three institutions of fewer. Only 34.8% had sole authority to make hiring decisions for the named entry-level positions; 56.6% shared this authority, usually with a superior or a staff group.

Selection Ratios for the Named Entry-Level Positions.--The mean number of applicants per position in the respondent groups ranged from 21.8 (for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions) to 51.0 (for Administrative/Generalist positions). About twice as many applicants were reported for live-out positions as for those requiring living in a residence hall. Employers hired only 2.0 to 4.6% of the applicants, depending on position type.

Respondent Attitudes.--Respondents generally believe that an administrator's effectiveness in staff selection can be improved by the use of "systematic and

objective selection procedures." About three-fourths of the respondents believe in the value of recruiting and interviewing at professional conferences. The reputation of a candidate's graduate training program is generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications, according to 48.3% of the respondents.

Most respondents (87.1%) see the resumé as only a preliminary indicator of some candidate qualifications; only 11.2% believe the resumé provides "a great deal of valid and reliable information" about a candidate. Written references are seen as valid and reliable only as preliminary indicators by 36.5% of the respondents. Another 45.2% feel references are generally valid and reliable but that references may not be valid depending on the credibility of the writer. Almost two-thirds of the respondents think individual references, written for particular job applications, are usually more credible than those from candidates' placement files.

Selection Procedures Reported in Use.--The following summarizes the procedures respondents used in hiring for the named entry-level positions:

1. In over 96% of the cases, a review of the job description or position requirements was made. Over 98% of the respondents had a written job description for the position in question. About 70% of the respondents reported having a written specification of the

qualifications candidates for the named positions would need. For 37.8% of the Head Resident/Residence Staff positions and 65.9% of the other position types, these specifications included only essential and desired characteristics. In 13.5 and 7.3% of the cases, respectively, only essential characteristics were included. Almost none of the respondents reported specifying essential, desired, undesirable, and disqualifying characteristics.

2. Relatively few of the respondents (23.6% of those hiring for residence positions and 11.5% of the others) had a specific application blank for the named position.

3. Only one of the responding employers reported using a written test in selection.

4. Over 90% of the respondents in both groups reported making personal contact with the writers of references for candidates under serious consideration. About half the respondents always contacted at least one reference for all candidates under serious consideration. In a number of cases (58.2% for the residence group and 46.7% for the others), people not listed as references by the candidates were sometimes contacted.

5. Some conference interviewing was conducted by 89.1% of those hiring for residence positions and by 77.0% of those hiring for other position types. Detailed lists of questions were used by only 6.3% of the residence

respondents; none of the other respondents reported listing questions in detail. The majority of respondents (66.7% and 74.5%, respectively) reported that interviewers "developed, in advance, a clear understanding of the areas to be discussed in all interviews." Unstructured conference interviews were reported by 10.4% of the residence respondents and by 17.0% of the other respondents. About two-thirds of the respondents indicated that more than one person conducted conference interviews; 32.9% of the residence respondents and 19.9% of the other respondents had four or more different staff conducting interviews at conferences. Despite the number of interviewers reported, only 6.3% of the residence respondents and 2.2% of the others had conducted detailed and/or formal interviewer training. Forty-five and eight-tenths percent of the residence respondents and 71.7% of the others reported having no pre-conference training at all for interviewers. Over 95% of the respondents in both groups indicated that notes were taken in conjunction with conference interviews, but only 37.5% and 20.0%, respectively, used an established rating form. In the majority of cases, notes were taken only <u>after</u> conference selection interviews. Written information on candidates was most often reviewed by interviewers either just before each interview (63.0% and 51.1%, respectively) or well before interviews (28.3% and 31.9%).

Importance of Competencies as Selection Criteria.--Respondents applied a five-point scale to rate the importance of each of 36 competencies as criteria for selection. The question put to the respondents was, "In selecting the best candidate for the position named on the questionnaire, how important was each of the competencies listed, in your opinion?" Response choices ranged from "absolutely essential" ("A candidate had to have this competency to be considered for the position") to "of no importance" ("This competency is unimportant in the job; it was not a factor in judging candidates." Table 4.22 (pp. 174-178) fully summarized the results of the competency ratings. Only four competencies were rated "absolutely essential" by majorities of respondents in both groups: "Work cooperatively with others," "Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills," "Work effectively with a wide range of individuals," and "Display leadership skills." Other highly rated competencies included assessment of student needs and interests, effective decision-making ability, conflict mediation, group advisement, appreciation of professional standards and ethics, programming abilities, and group skills.

Competencies rated relatively low in importance included psychometric skills, statistical and research expertise, and financial/budgeting skills. A number of knowledge areas commonly taught in master's-level College Student Personnel preparation programs were rated as less

important than the majority of competency statements. These areas include knowledge of the social, cultural, and philosophical foundations of higher education; theories of personality development; Student Personnel professional literature; and the characteristics of the American college student.

Overall, the pattern of responses indicated some support for the importance of almost all the competencies. Only one competency, "Administer and interpret personality tests and measurements," was rated "of no importance" by a majority of the respondents. The response pattern also indicated a wide range of opinion on the importance of all competencies. With a few exceptions at each extreme, the ratings ranged all the way from "absolutely essential" to "of no importance" on most of the competency items.

Conclusions of the Study

Results of Hypothesis Testing

Six major null hypotheses (four with more specific sub-hypotheses) were specified and tested at the .05 level of significance. Each test used the chi-square statistic to explore possible relationships between the relevant variables. Results of these tests are presented below.

Ho_1:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

$Ho_{1.1}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{1.2}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{1.3}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{1.4}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resumé as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.5}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{1.6}$:

Respondents with different selection experience do not differ significantly in their agreement/ disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

It was concluded that the above hypotheses should not be rejected, with only one exception. Respondents with selection experience at more than one institution (as compared with those experienced at only one school) showed somewhat more agreement and less ambivalence in response to the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences." The statistical relationship shown here led to rejection of $Ho_{1.2}$ in this instance. However, well over 70% in both the "one institution" group and the "more than one institution" group heavily endorsed the value of conference selection activities.

Ho_2:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their responses to attitude items on the instrument.

$Ho_{2.1}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures."

$Ho_{2.2}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively without any selection activities (i.e., recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences."

$Ho_{2.3}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above."

$Ho_{2.4}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the resumé as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.5}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the written reference as a selection tool.

$Ho_{2.6}$:

Respondents from different-sized institutions do not differ significantly in their agreement/disagreement with the statement, "In my opinion, references written individually for a particular application are usually more credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file."

In testing $Ho_{2.1}$ to $Ho_{2.6}$, respondents were classified into four groups representing institutions of varying sizes (as measured by enrollment). No significant differences were identified in the attitudes of administrators from different-sized institutions, as measured by these six attitude items. Consequently, these six null hypotheses were not rejected.

Ho_3:

There are no significant differences in entry-level staff selection procedures in use at different-sized institutions, as reported by the respondents.

$Ho_{3.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications (written descriptions of required/desired candidate characteristics) for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for positions at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.4}$:

There are no significant differences in procedures for making reference checks at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference selection interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in use at different-sized institutions.

$Ho_{3.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers at different-sized institutions.

In chi-square tests using the same four size categories that were used for Ho_2, $Ho_{3.1}$ through $Ho_{3.4}$ were

not rejected. In reference to $Ho_{3.5}$, no significant differences were found between different-sized institutions (1) on the degree of conference interview structure; (2) on when notes were taken; or (3) on prior review of candidate information. However, larger institutions were significantly more likely to use an established rating form for conference interview note-taking than were smaller institutions. For this instance, $Ho_{3.5}$ was rejected. Larger institutions were also significantly more likely than smaller ones to conduct pre-conference interviewer training; thus $Ho_{3.6}$ was rejected.

Ho_4:

There are no significant differences in selection procedures used in hiring professionals for different types of entry-level positions (i.e., Head Resident/ Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, and Advising/ Counseling positions).

$Ho_{4.1}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of application blanks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.2}$:

There are no significant differences in the use of job specifications in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.3}$:

There are no significant differences in the levels of detail included in job specifications for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.4}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for making reference checks in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.5}$:

There are no significant differences in the procedures for conference interviews (degree of interview structure, note-taking, or prior review of candidate information) in selection for different types of positions.

$Ho_{4.6}$:

There are no significant differences in the degree of advance training given conference selection interviewers concerned with different types of positions.

None of the tests for $Ho_{4.1}$ to $Ho_{4.6}$ produced a chi-square value significant at the .05 level; thus, the data failed to reject any of these six null hypotheses. Overall, this led to the conclusion that the present methodology could detect no significant differences in the use of these six selection procedures in hiring for the different position types.

Ho_5:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the degree of experience in staff selection held by the respondents.

In testing Ho_5, chi-square contingency tables were used to compare the responses of contact persons having relatively low and relatively high selection

experience (as determined by dividing at the median on years of experience). No significant relationship was found between respondent experience and importance ratings given any of the competencies. Thus, the data failed to reject Ho_5 for all competency items.

Ho_6:

The distribution of ratings of importance ascribed to the various entry-level competencies is independent of the type of position (i.e., Head Resident/Residence Staff, Residence Hall Programming, Campus Activities, Administrative/Generalist, or Advising/Counseling) for which selection is being conducted.

When testing the ratings given each competency by respondents hiring for each of the five position types, it was concluded that no significant relationships could be identified. In six cases, this conclusion was drawn after low expected frequencies rendered the chi-square statistic inappropriate.

Respondents were then grouped into two categories: (1) those hiring for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions and (2) those hiring for all other position types. The analysis was then repeated, comparing responses on each competency item for the two groups. It was concluded that two competencies were seen as significantly more important in selecting for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions than for other positions: "Select, train, supervise, and evaluate staff" and "Perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct." One

competency, "Evaluate programs," was seen as significantly less important in selecting for Head Resident/Residence Staff positions than for other positions. This was accounted for by the fact that many of the nonresidence positions had programming duties as a major focus.

With the above exceptions, Ho_6 was not rejected for any competency item. In general, it was concluded that very few significant differences could be identified in the competencies wanted for different types of entry-level positions. Thus, the entry-level College Student Personnel positions studied, regardless of type, appear to call for much the same pattern of competencies.

Evaluation of Selection Procedures in Use

Job Analysis and Specification of Candidate Characteristics To Be Sought.--Almost all respondents had a written job description and made a review of the position in preparation for hiring, as recommended in the literature. However, only about 70% had a written specification of the characteristics to be sought in candidates. Moreover, responses indicated that, in many of these cases, job specifications were not detailed. The literature suggests that a primary purpose of the job description and specification is to identify, in detail, the factors contributing to a good match between job and candidate so that a valid prediction of success can be made. According

to the literature, not only required and desired candidate characteristics but also undesirable and/or disqualifying characteristics should be specified in writing. It was concluded that job specifications including all these types of information were not common in hiring entry-level staff in 1978.

The Resumé and the Application Blank.--The literature suggests that the resumé lacks validity as a selection tool. In this study, the vast majority of respondents indicated appropriate reservations about the validity of the resumé. However, 11.2% indicated they felt the resumé "provides a great deal of valid and reliable information about candidates' qualifications." The latter opinion is not supported by the literature.

Less than one-fourth of the employers used specific application blanks for the named entry-level positions. Thus, it appears that most selectors in this group are omitting a potentially valuable selection tool. It must be noted, however, that the most effective use of the application blank requires that employees be rated on some performance criterion and that application blank items be validated for their ability to differentiate candidates who later prove successful on such criteria. Miner and Miner (1977) have provided a simple model for such validation of items for weighted application blanks.

Tests.--It was concluded that, with one exception, written tests were not used in selection for the named entry-level positions. Student Personnel research on the validity of tests in predicting job success has focused on paraprofessionals and has generally not been encouraging. Thus, little support for increased testing in selecting entry-level professionals was indicated by this study. However, the Leaderless Group Discussion and role-playing techniques could prove effective if used and validated as selection tools.

The Written Reference and Reference Checks.--Respondents were appropriately skeptical about the validity and reliability of written references. Apparently many employers put great faith in references provided by colleagues they know but are well aware that references written by others may not be valid and reliable. The vast majority of respondents frequently made personal contact with the writers of references, a procedure strongly supported in the literature. In general, it appears that the responding Student Personnel administrators made good use of the reference and the reference check.

Although the reference check appears to be an effective technique, employers and references should be cautioned that potential liability exists in this area. Though a legal analysis of this point would be beyond the scope of the present study, employers and references

should maintain strict professional ethics in conducting reference checks and should be aware of potential liability inherent in the procedure.

The Conference Selection Interview.--Selection interviewing at professional conferences was a common practice in hiring for the entry-level Student Personnel positions included in this study. It must be remembered, however, that all employers included in the study were ones who listed positions with conference placement services. Since interpersonal skills were shown to be vital as selection criteria for the named entry-level positions, the interview is an appropriate selection tool.

Results of this study revealed that conference selection interviews were not as highly structured as recommended in the literature. Less than one-fourth of the respondents wrote questions in advance or used a written interview guide. Moreover, since it was common for more than one person to conduct selection interviews for the same position, reliability is undoubtedly a serious problem with this procedure.

Almost all respondents reported taking some notes in conjunction with conference selection interviews; this procedure undoubtedly helped with interviewer memory. The study on memory by Carlson et al. (1974) suggests that note-taking during interviews is a valuable aid to memory. Yet the majority of the respondents in the present

study took notes only after their interviews. In addition, only a minority reported using an established rating form. These observations further support the conclusion that reliability may have been lacking in the reported procedures for conference selection interviews.

Very few of the respondents conducted detailed and/or formal training to prepare staff to conduct conference interviews, despite the fact that several different staff were often involved in conference interviewing. Many employers reported having no interviewer training at all. According to the literature reviewed in Chapter II, such training is highly desirable and can increase the validity of interview results.

Finally, the majority of respondents say they reviewed written information on candidates just prior to interviews. The literature suggests that this procedure may lead to biases which restrict the interviewer's attention and limit the information considered during the interview itself. Although it seems logical, the procedure of reading about candidates before conference interviews is probably not a valid selection practice.

Importance of Various Competencies as Selection Criteria for Entry-Level Positions

On the basis of this study, it was concluded that the respondents support the value of almost all the competencies suggested by Minetti (1977). Only one

competency, "Administer and interpret personality tests and measurements," was rated "of no importance" by a majority of the respondents. Five additional competencies were rated either "of minor importance" or "of no importance" by a majority of respondents: "Understand the principles of statistical analysis," "Conduct independent research," "Recognize and analyze political processes in higher education," "Interpret research as reported in professional literature," and "Understand the financing of higher education." The remaining 30 competencies were seen by a majority of respondents as being at least "Moderately important." Thus, with a few exceptions, Student Personnel selectors looking for entry-level staff valued the same competencies named in the literature.

As noted above, some of the knowledge areas typically taught in master's-level Student Personnel preparation programs were rated somewhat lower than the majority of competency statements. This finding is probably less important than the demonstrated overall support for a wide range of competencies (most of which require formal academic training). Moreover, it must be remembered that a relevant master's degree was a specific candidate requirement (or, in a few cases, a desire) expressed by all employers included in this study. In addition, respondents found it particularly important that

candidates "Appreciate and internalize professional standards and ethics." Consequently, it was concluded that this study adds support to the value of professional graduate-level training for entry-level College Student Personnel workers.

Overall, it appears that employers are seeking entry-level staff with basic personality traits and general abilities which will enable them to function in immediate and practical ways. Highly specific skills and knowledge were rated as somewhat less important than general abilities (particularly competencies in interpersonal communication, leadership, decision-making, and working cooperatively with a wide range of people).

A few specific skill areas were, however, demonstrated as particularly important entry-level selection criteria: (1) competency in assessing student needs and interests; (2) competency in mediating conflict between individuals and groups; (3) competencies in group advisement and in recognition of group dynamics; and (4) programming abilities. In almost all cases, these competencies were rated "absolutely essential" or "very important" by over 75% of the respondents. Thus, development of competence in these areas should be a significant concern to all of those involved in professional preparation.

Minetti (1977) concluded that all but two of his competency statements ("Appreciate the historical and

philosophical underpinnings of higher education" and "Understand the principles of statistical analysis") were seen as best acquired through both the formal academic process and the paid assistantship. Both of the competencies named as exceptions were relatively low-rated in the present study. Moreover, the four highest rated competencies in the present study, as well as all four of those named in the preceding paragraph, were seen by the majority of Minetti's respondents as ones which should be acquired predominantly through assistantship experiences. Thus, strong support was demonstrated in the present study for competencies which are probably acquired at least partially through paid assistantship experience. This finding offers further endorsement for Minetti's conclusion that the paid assistantship is an important component of professional preparation in College Student Personnel. Furthermore, Minetti's belief in the importance of integrating academic experiences and faculty with assistantship experiences and supervisors is again underscored through the above conclusions.

Recommendations for Practice

As a result of the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. There is a great deal of available and useful knowledge concerning effective staff selection practice. Those involved in the selection of College Student Personnel

staff should become familiar with this information and should use it to construct more effective selection programs.

2. In order to match the best candidate with a particular position, it is necessary to first specify, in detail, the characteristics an ideal candidate would possess. Employers should consider devoting more attention to this process and should write detailed job descriptions and specifications.

3. The application blank, though not widely used in entry-level selection, has interesting potential as a selection tool. Selectors should consider developing weighted application blanks whose items are validated for prediction of relevant success criteria.

4. Entry-level College Student Personnel candidates should carefully choose those persons they list as references; however, they should expect that other former colleagues or employers may be contacted by selectors. Since vague recommendations are not particularly valuable, candidates should give their references specific facts and achievements to be used in written recommendations. Such facts are particularly positive if they illustrate such things as the candidate's interpersonal communication skills, ability to work cooperatively, leadership qualities, and decision-making abilities. Candidates should

consider having recommendations written individually when applying for positions in which they are especially interested.

5. The objectives of selection interviews should be carefully defined by employers. The semistructured or unstructured interview may be needed to assess a candidate's communication skills and explore personality in a detailed, two-way exchange. However, those interviews designed primarily to gather candidate information for screening purposes should be more highly structured than is commonly the case. For this type of interview, it is recommended that employers develop written interview guides containing suggested questions to be asked of all candidates. This is particularly needed where more than one person is to conduct interviews; otherwise, different information may be sought by different interviewers and the results may vary.

6. To increase the reliability of selection interviews, it is recommended that interviewers use an established candidate rating form and take some notes during interviews. If this is impossible, notes and written evaluations should be completed immediately following interviews.

7. When more than one staff person is to be involved in selection, the employer should consider establishing a training program to cover interview

techniques and the realistic use of written candidate information. Before or during such training, all involved staff should reach a clear consensus on the qualities to be sought in candidates and on the methods of evaluating those qualities.

8. The literature suggests that it may be desirable for interviewers not to review written information on candidates prior to selection interviews. It may be effective to have one staff member screen written information and arrange interviews to be carried out by another staff member.

9. The competencies found important in this study deserve attention from both Student Personnel educators and their graduate students. If master's degree programs are to prepare marketable professionals, they must consider the need to develop those competencies wanted by employers. Since many of the competencies most wanted by employers are experiential in nature (i.e., communication skills and ability to work cooperatively with a wide range of individuals), those concerned with Student Personnel preparation should seek to emphasize and enrich the experiential elements of such training.

10. Minetti (1977) found that many of those competencies rated most important in the present study were developed to a significant degree through assistantship experiences. Thus, the present study further underscores

Minetti's recommendation that assistantships should be an integral part of master's-level preparation for careers in College Student Personnel. It also adds force to his recommendation that educators and assistantship supervisors should collaborate to enrich the assistantship and to integrate it with academic training.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was successful in exploring and describing a few aspects of entry-level staff selection in College Student Personnel. There has been a lack of study in this area within the field. As a result of the literature reviewed in Chapter II and the findings of this study, a number of questions were raised which point to the need for further investigation.

1. Effort is needed to more fully define the competencies found valuable in this study. Methods of teaching the most important competencies should be developed, tested, and incorporated into professional preparation programs.

2. In asking employers about the importance of the 36 competencies as selection criteria, the respondents were permitted to assume that these competencies can be accurately measured. However, more research is needed to validate this assumption and to more carefully specify the ways in which Student Personnel selectors can measure the competence of job candidates.

3. The present methodology explored employer ratings of the importance of individual competency statements, rather than the relative importance ascribed to the competencies. It would be desirable to find out whether, given the chance to volunteer and rank the competencies desired in candidates, employers would give the same responses. There may be other competencies, not included in the present study, which employers find important in selection.

4. This study explored only the selection procedures used for entry-level Student Personnel professionals. Selection practices at other levels should also be explored.

5. This study suggested more criticisms of the conference selection interview than of any other selection procedure. For this reason, in-depth study of the conference selection interview is recommended. Interviews should be observed, recorded, and thoroughly analyzed.

6. Selection interviews on employers' campuses were not examined in the present study. It would be desirable to gather more information on the procedures used in on-campus interviews.

7. Research is needed to ascertain the effects of Affirmative Action guidelines on hiring procedures and related employer attitudes in College Student Personnel.

8. Studies outside the Student Personnel field have examined the reliability of written references. Such studies should be replicated to determine whether references in Student Personnel suffer from the same lack of reliability found in the other studies.

9. Studies are needed to test the predictive validity of various selection methods in College Student Personnel. Such studies could determine, for example, whether innovative selection procedures identify candidates who later prove more successful than staff chosen through more traditional methods.

Inferences and Speculations

Judging from the comments of the respondents and from the Student Personnel literature on selection, it would seem that very little innovation may be occurring in the area of entry-level selection. Respondents were asked to briefly describe any selection procedures they find particularly useful; it could be significant that 72.4% of the respondents left this item blank. Many of the answers that were given concerned selection techniques that are probably very common (for example, interviewing in relaxed informal settings and making reference checks on the telephone). The literature reviewed seems to suggest concern that selection procedures be efficient and humane; much less concern for the effectiveness (or predictive validity) of selection techniques was evident in

the literature. Student Personnel administrators may see staff selection as a perennial and highly refined function which does not need innovation or further improvement. Yet the results of this study suggest otherwise in some areas.

In several areas, questionnaire items lacked sufficient detail to preclude the possibility that respondents' answers portrayed selection practices in an artificially favorable light. Although virtually all respondents used a written job description and reviewed it before hiring, these findings reveal nothing about the quality of the job description or the thoroughness of the review. The majority of respondents indicated that before interviewing at conferences, interviewers "developed a clear understanding" of what questions should be asked. It is quite possible that in some cases this process of "developing understandings" may have been cursory at best. Finally, many of the respondents indicated that "a brief, informal training program" was completed by their selection interviewers. Since there is no further detail, it is quite possible that, in some cases, such "training" involved only a short, unstructured discussion just before interviews began. Thus, the findings in these three areas should be interpreted with caution; in these instances, the lack of further detail should be considered a limitation of this study.

One premise of this study has been that a "scientific" approach can make entry-level staff selection more effective. The conclusions indicate that, in several areas, procedural improvements are needed. Yet no proof was found to indicate that selection is, at best, solely a structured and objective process. The use of procedures having established validity and reliability can reduce uncertainty in making predictions of candidate success. However, in selecting staff for the multifaceted roles inherent in professional Student Personnel Work, a significant judgment factor always remains. To this extent, staff selection in the field is undoubtedly an art as well as a science.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE STAFF SELECTION PROCESS IN COLLEGE STUDENT PERSONNEL, 1978

The items in this questionnaire relate to some of the criteria and procedures used in selecting full-time professional staff in Student Personnel. Administrators listed as "contact persons" in this year's ACPA, NAWDAC and NASPA job listings are completing this survey. Please answer the questions below with reference to your selection, in 1978, of a candidate for the position of:

---

1. How many full-time positions with this title were available between January 1 and September 30, 1978? _____

2. Total number of people who applied for all position(s) you had available with this title in 1978: _____

3. Number of years you have *personally* been involved in staff selection for at least one full-time professional Student Personnel position (the named title or any other): _____

4. Number of different institutions at which you have been involved in selection of professional Student Personnel staff: _____

5. Which statement best describes *your* role in selection for the named position in 1978? *(check one)*

   [ ] I had *sole* authority to make the final decision on who would be hired. *(Go to item 7)*

   [ ] I *shared* authority, with one or more others, to make the hiring decision.

   [ ] I made decisions on which candidates should be screened out and/or which should receive on-campus (or "finalist") interviews, but *did not have major authority* over the final hiring decision.

   [ ] I participated in selection activities but *did not make decisions* for screening, interviews or hiring.

   [ ] Other_____

6. What is the title of the person (or name of the group) who made the final hiring decision?

   _____

For the next three items, please indicate your personal agreement or disagreement with the statements shown.

7. In my opinion, an administrator's effectiveness in the art of staff selection cannot be significantly improved by the use of systematic and objective selection procedures.

   [ ] Strongly agree [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
   [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly disagree

8. In my opinion, staff selection can be done just as effectively *without* any selection activities (i.e. recruiting and interviewing) at professional conferences.

   [ ] Strongly agree [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
   [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly disagree

9. In my opinion, the reputation of a candidate's graduate training program was generally an important factor in judging his/her qualifications for the position named above.

   [ ] Strongly agree [ ] Disagree
   [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
   [ ] Agree [ ] Strongly disagree

The following competencies have been suggested as important to Student Personnel staff in positions like the one named above. In selecting the best candidate for *that* position, how important were each of the competencies listed, in your opinion?

Please circle the rating you feel best describes the importance of each competency.

Definitions:

1 = **Absolutely Essential:** *A candidate had to have this competency to be considered.*
2 = **Very Important:** *This competency is used often, and/or is important, in the referenced job; a candidate without it was at a disadvantage in selection.*
3 = **Moderately Important:** *This competency would be used occasionally, and/or is desirable, in the job; the competency helped in differentiating between candidates in many cases.*
4 = **Of Minor Importance:** *This competency might be used infrequently in the job; it was only a minor factor in selection in some cases.*
5 = **Of No Importance:** *This competency is unimportant in the job; it was not a factor in judging candidates.*

The candidate should have the ability to:

10.	Cite and apply theories of personality development.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Mediate conflicts between individuals and groups.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Recognize and evaluate group dynamics.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Advise groups.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Display competence in individual and group counseling.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Formulate and monitor a budget.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Select, train, supervise and evaluate staff.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Engage in systematic planning within the department or unit.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Evaluate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Formulate and interpret policy.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Recognize legal implications; understand state and federal legislation affecting the administration of Student personnel and education programs.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Manage physical resources and facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Distinguish between theory and practice.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Engage in effective decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Display leadership skills.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Conduct independent research.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Understand the principles of statistical analysis.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Interpret research as reported in professional literature.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Administer and interpret personality tests and measurements.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Articulate the social, cultural and philosophical foundations of higher education.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Recognize and analyze political processes in higher education.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Understand the financing of higher education.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Recognize and interpret the special needs of ethnic and racial minorities.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Articulate the characteristics of the American college student.	1	2	3	4	5

35.	Represent student concerns to other campus populations.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Interpret the concerns, goals, and problems of the other campus populations to students.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Work effectively with a wide range of individuals.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Assess student needs and interests.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Work cooperatively with others.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Meet student developmental needs through co-curricular programs and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Appreciate and understand the specialized functions of Student Personnel Work.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Appreciate and internalize professional standards and ethics.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Articulate and interpret the goals of Student Personnel Work to the wider population (on and off campus).	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Display familiarity with the Student Personnel professional literature, as well as the current issues and trends in the field.	1	2	3	4	5

The remaining questions relate to selection procedures; again, please answer in reference to the position named on the first page.

46. Was there a specific application blank for this position?
    [ ] Yes *(Would you please enclose a copy when returning this questionnaire?)*
    [ ] No

47. Were any tests or psychometric instruments used in selection for this position?
    [ ] Yes *(Title(s):*_____*)*
    [ ] No

48. Is there a written job description for the named position?
    [ ] Yes [ ] No

49. In preparation for hiring, was there a review of the job description, or the duties and/or requirements of the named position?
    [ ] Yes [ ] No

50. Is there a written description (either in a job description or elsewhere) of the characteristics/competencies an incumbent of this position would need?
    [ ] Yes → *If Yes:* Which of these are included? *(Check all that apply)*
        [ ] Essential (required) characteristics/competencies
        [ ] Desired characteristics/competencies
        [ ] Undesirable characteristics/competencies
        [ ] Disqualifying characteristics
    [ ] No

51. Which of these statements best describes your *personal* attitude toward the *resume'* as a selection tool? *(Check one)*
    [ ] The resume' provides a great deal of valid and reliable information about candidates' qualifications.
    [ ] The resume' is valid only in giving preliminary indications about some of the qualifications of candidates.
    [ ] The resume' is generally unreliable and invalid, permitting only gross discriminations concerning candidates' qualifications.
    [ ] Other_____

52. Which of these statements best describes your *personal* attitude toward written *references* as a selection tool? *(Check one)*
    [ ] References provide a great deal of valid and reliable information about a candidate.
    [ ] References are valid/reliable only in giving preliminary indications about some candidate information.
    [ ] References generally *are* valid/reliable, but may *not* be, depending on the writer.
    [ ] References generally *are not* valid/reliable, but *may* be, depending on the writer.
    [ ] Other_____

53. In my opinion, references written *individually* for a particular application are usually *more* credible than references which come from a candidate's placement file.

[ ] Strongly agree [ ] Neither agree nor disagree [ ] Disagree
[ ] Agree [ ] Strongly disagree

54. For those candidates under *serious* consideration for the named position, did you (or some member of your staff) contact reference(s) personally by phone or some other means?

[ ] Yes, *only* references listed by the candidate were contacted.
[ ] Yes, in some case(s), people *not* listed as references were contacted.
[ ] No

If Yes: How often was at least one reference contacted?
[ ] Always
[ ] In the majority of cases
[ ] In a minority of cases

If no interviews were conducted at professional conference(s) for the position named on the first page, go to item 61.

55. To what extent were conference interviews for the named position structured? *(Check one)*

[ ] A detailed written list of questions was used to guide each interview.
[ ] A written guide suggesting some areas for discussion (though not detailed) was used.
[ ] Though no written guide was used, interviewer(s) developed, in advance, a clear understanding of the areas to be discussed in all interviews.
[ ] No specific understanding of the areas to be covered were necessary; interviews were *un*structured.
[ ] Other_____

56. How many *different* staff members conducted at least one conference selection interview in 1978 for the named position title? _____

57. Was any specific training done to prepare interviewer(s) for conducting conference selection interviews for the named position?

[ ] No
[ ] Yes, a brief, informal training program was completed by the interviewer(s).
[ ] Yes, a fairly detailed and/or formal training program was completed.

58. Were notes taken in conjunction with conference selection interviews for the named position?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No *(Go to item 60)*

If Yes: When were notes taken? *(Check either or both)*
[ ] During interview
[ ] After interview

59. Were notes taken on an established rating form?

[ ] Yes *(Would you please enclose a copy when returning this questionnaire?)*
[ ] No

60. In general, *when* did conference interviewer(s) *first* review any written information (such as the resume,' reference(s), correspondence, or possibly an application blank) on the candidates they interviewed? *(Check one)*

[ ] *Well before* conference interviews, in the majority of cases
[ ] *Just before* conference interviews, in the majority of cases
[ ] *During* conference interviews, in the majority of cases
[ ] *After* conference interviews, in the majority of cases
[ ] Written information was *not* reviewed by interviewer(s), in the majority of cases.

61. Do you use any selection techniques you feel are *particularly* useful to you? If so, would you briefly describe them?

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

If you have comments, they may be written on a separate sheet. If you would like a summary of the results of this study, please check here [ ]

Please return, in the envelope provided, to: D. David Ostroth, Assistant to the Director, Resident Hall Programs, 338 Student Service Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

APPENDIX B

COMPETENCY LIST BY MINETTI (1977)

APPENDIX B

COMPETENCY LIST BY MINETTI (1977)

COMPETENCIES AND AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY FOR ENTRY LEVEL POSITIONS:

Counseling, Human Relations, and Interpersonal Skills

1 cite and interpret theories of personality development
2 counsel and advise students involved in career choice and career development
3 mediate conflicts between individuals and groups
4 recognize and evaluate group dynamics
5 manifest well-developed interpersonal relations and communications skills
6 advise groups
7 display competence in individual and group counseling

Theory and Practice of Administration and Management

8 formulate and monitor a budget
9 administer salaries
10 select and evaluate staff
11 train and supervise staff
12 engage in systematic planning
13 evaluate programs
14 formulate and interpret policy
15 recognize legal implications, understand state and federal legislation affecting the administration of student personnel and education programs
16 appreciate the computer as a management tool
17 manage physical resources and facilities
18 distinguish between theory and practice
19 engage in effective decision-making
20 display leadership skills

Research, Testing, and Measurement

21 conduct independent research
22 understand the principles of statistical analysis
23 interpret research as reported in professional literature
24 interpret personality tests and measurements
25 administer personality tests and measurements

Historical, Philosophical, and Social Foundations

26 articulate the social and cultural foundations of higher education
27 appreciate the historical and philosophical underpinnings of higher education
28 recognize and analyze political processes in higher educational organizations
29 understand the financing of higher education

Meeting Student Needs

30 tolerate and appreciate differing life styles
31 recognize and interpret the special needs of ethnic and racial minorities
32 articulate the characteristics of the American college student
33 represent student concerns to other campus populations
34 interpret the concerns, goals, problems of the other campus populations to students
35 work effectively with a wide range of individuals
36 assess student needs and interests
37 perform fair and effective discipline of student misconduct
38 work cooperatively with others
39 meet student needs through co-curricular programs and activities
40 identify the developmental stages of college students
41 use strategies and purposeful programs to facilitate student development

Professional Purpose and Role Identity

42 appreciate and understand the specialized functions of student personnel work
43 appreciate and internalize professional standards and ethics
44 articulate and interpret the goals of student personnel work to the wider population (on and off campus)
45 cite and describe issues and trends in student personnel work
46 display familiarity with the professional literature
47 distinguish between and use the resources of the professional organizations

APPENDIX C

THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS
STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

October 10, 1978

APPENDIX C

THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER

The enclosed questionnaire is part of a survey of procedures and criteria used to select and hire professional staff in College Student Personnel. ACPA, NAWDAC and NASPA have provided the researcher with position listings from their 1978 placement services for use in this study. A nationwide sample of administrators named in those listings as "contact persons" will be completing the instrument. The study will develop information on the methods now in use in staff selection, and will identify the competencies considered most important in candidates for particular positions.

Employers like yourself, as well as candidates and Student Personnel educators, can benefit from receiving new information about staff selection practices. Because of your recent experience in recruiting, your observations about the selection process will be invaluable in developing this information for our profession. Will you take a few minutes now, or in the next few days, to complete the enclosed questionnaire?

In field testing, administrators reported that this short instrument took only about 10 minutes to complete. A stamped envelope is provided for your ease in returning the response. If you wish, I will send you a detailed summary of the data generated by the study--just indicate your request for this in the space provided on the questionnaire.

Your participation is vital if this study is to succeed. Be assured that the information requested is for summation only and that strict confidentiality of your response will be maintained.

Thank you very much for your important help with this project.

Sincerely,

D. David Ostroth

D. David Ostroth
Assistant to the Director
Residence Hall Programs

APPENDIX D

THE FOLLOWUP LETTER

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS
STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

October 27, 1978

APPENDIX D

THE FOLLOWUP LETTER

About two weeks ago I sent you a questionnaire concerning staff selection in Student Personnel. As yet I have not received your reply. On initial inspection, the results so far appear most interesting. However, unless more colleagues respond, the study cannot reach its potential for validity.

I hope to disseminate the results of this study so that employers like yourself may know some of the nationwide norms in staff selection practices. In addition, information on the candidate competencies sought by employers will be helpful to faculty and graduate students working in Student Personnel preparation programs.

You can contribute valuable information to this study--and your response is badly needed if the study is to be completed. May I ask you to return the questionnaire by November 6?

A new copy of the questionnaire is enclosed in case you may have mislaid the first one. Again, I will be most happy to share a fairly detailed summary of the results (not just the customary short abstract) with you if you wish.

If you have already returned the first questionnaire, please disregard this letter and accept my thanks for participating in the study.

Sincerely yours,

D. David Ostroth

D. David Ostroth
Assistant to the Director
Residence Hall Programs

APPENDIX E

POSITION TITLES FOR LISTINGS INCLUDED IN THE POPULATION

APPENDIX E

POSITION TITLES FOR LISTINGS

INCLUDED IN THE POPULATION

Head Resident/Residence Staff Positions (n=111)

	Number
Residence Hall Director	35
Resident Director	31
Head Resident/Head Resident Advisor	15
Hall Director and Assistant Dean of Students	4
Residence Hall Administrator/Counselor	4
Residence Hall Coordinator	3
Residence Life Coordinator	3
Hall/House Manager	2
Dormitory Director	1
Student Affairs Coordinator	1
Assistant Director of Housing	1
Miscellaneous Hall Director Titles	7
Resident Advisor	1
Graduate Resident Advisor	1
Other Residence Staff Titles	2

Residence Hall Programming Positions (n=14)

Residence Hall Coordinator/Activities Director	1
Activity Coordinator/Men's Residence Director	1
Coordinator for Residence Hall Activities and Resident Director	1
Residence Hall Advisor for Student Development and Programming	1
Men's Halls Coordinator/Director of Student Activities	1
Assistant Coordinator of Student Activities and Area Coordinator	1
Assistant Director of Campus Programs - Resident Counselor	1
Director of Residence Education (for a particular residence hall)	1
Coordinator of Minority Affairs/Residence Life Coordinator	1
Residence Life Coordinator	1
Program Coordinator (live-in)	1
Student Activities Coordinator, TWU Houston Center	1
Director of Student Activities	1
Assistant Coordinator for Collegiate Programs	1

	Number
Campus Activities Positions (n=23)	
Coordinator of Student Activities	4
Program Advisor	4
Assistant Director of Student Activities	2
Director of Student Activities	1
Coordinator of Campus Programs	1
Coordinator of Campus Activities	1
Coordinator of Student Development Programs	1
Coordinator of Student Group Activities	1
Assistant Director for Special Programs	1
Assistant Director - University Center	1
Student Activities Assistant	1
Student Life Assistant	1
Assistant Dean of Students for Activities	1
Assistant Dean of Students - Panhellenic Advisor	1
Student Activities Advisor/Night Manager	1
Program Coordinator - Student Involvement Center	1
Administrative/Generalist Positions (n=25)	
Assistant Dean of Students	3
Assistant Dean of Women	2
Area Coordinator/Director	2
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Residence Hall Director	1
Assistant Dean for Student Development (men)	1
Assistant Director of Student Life	1
Counselor/Assistant to the Dean of Students	1
Assistant Dean of Men	1
Assistant to the Dean of Students and Director, Black Student Services	1
College Living Coordinator	1
Director of Women's Residence Halls	1
Assistant Dean of Students/Director of Residence Life	1
Assistant Director, Office of Residential and Judicial Affairs	1
Assistant Director of Housing/Activities	1
Assistant Director of Housing	1
Assistant to the Director, Division of Housing	1
Assistant Director of Arts and Science Placement	1
Assistant Director of Placement Services	1
Assistant Director of Career Planning and Placement	1
Director of Special Services	1
Assistant Director of Admissions	1

Advising/Counseling Positions (n=6)	Number
Counselor Upward Bound - Special Services	1
Admissions Counselor	1
Student Development Specialist	1
Academic Advisor	1
Deputy Director of Special Programs for Educational Development	1
Resident Counselor	1

APPENDIX F

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU USE ANY SELECTION TECHNIQUES YOU FEEL ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO YOU? IF SO, WOULD YOU BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THEM?"

APPENDIX F

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "DO YOU USE ANY SELECTION TECHNIQUES YOU FEEL ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL TO YOU? IF SO, WOULD YOU BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THEM?"

Comments in response to this question have been grouped under topical headings (underlined) and are quoted directly.

Use of Groups and Other Staff in the Selection Process

Individual and group interviews by students, faculty, administrators.

The combination of student leaders and staff to screen candidates.

One-on-one and group (small) discussions are essential.

Interview with students; interview with Search Committee composed of students (3) faculty (2) administrators (2).

Interviews with RA's in the residence halls involved.

We utilize a Search and Screen Committee (faculty, students, and staff) and screen all applicants, recommend those to be invited to campus, interview those applicants, and recommend to me those I should consider hiring.

I do utilize several other people to help screen applicant materials, then pool our perceptions.

Using other staff members in the selection process.

Use of the Telephone for Interviews and Reference Checks

A selection team with diverse backgrounds and input. Calling 2 or 3 references on candidates before making any offers.

Personal phone contacts with graduate school faculty and previous employers was most helpful. The WATS line is invaluable for me.
We use a student, faculty, staff interview and selection committee composed of persons who will also be a support group to new employees. Works well to educate faculty on job responsibilities. Gets student support early.

1. First phone call--try to discover most satisfying achievements to see if match with type of work required.
2. Screening committee conducted 15-minute phone calls with top 12 to screen 3.
3. Done on phone with microphone. Worked well.

-Phone contacts with references.
-Telephone interviews prior to selection of candidates for on-campus interviews.

Interviewing in a Relaxed Atmosphere

Personal phone calls to references very helpful. Informal setting with a candidate also very helpful--as opposed to purely formal environment (at college - in office)--helps me to learn real person.

Find that if I am particularly "taken" with a candidate, a second interview in a more relaxed setting gives greater insight as to practical work situations.

I feel a good talk over lunch or some other place away from the office is very helpful. I do question a resumé that makes the candidate look perfect.

Information Dissemination to Candidates

Providing an information session where all candidates meet together.

When we ask a person to interview with us, we give them a folder about (our institution) and ask them to read it before the interview.

Clarification of conference interviews--conference interviews used as a means of disseminating information about position, obtaining general information about potential applicants--all in-depth interviews on campus.

Use of Personal Referrals and Known References

Personal referrals.

I depend strongly on references that I personally knew and had confidence in their judgment.

Topics for Discussion in Interviews; Types of Information Sought

I look for leadership, self-initiative, good writing skills, maturity, etc. in resumés and letters of recommendation.

We spend much time interacting about differences between the large university/small college and the large town/small town.

Personal judgments of how well the applicant will work with students, faculty, administrators, and staff on my campus and how well the applicant will adjust to my campus and community.

Questions related to interests, hobbies, and long-range plans.

Interested in determining skill levels candidate has developed. Discuss how developed and then used. Use interview techniques that enable candidates to present self comfortably and effectively.

Miscellaneous

Simply having a clear understanding of the talents we are looking for before going helps us review resumés efficiently so that more time can be devoted to interviewing viable candidates.

The individual interview is most useful. Has 2:1 weight compared to references or resumé.

At conferences and the like we conduct a followup interview with two interviewers if possible (a team) when a candidate appears strong. On campus a candidate faces the usual gauntlet of 6-10 professional people and sometimes as many as 20 students.

I took pictures (Polaroid) of some of the candidates at conferences (with their permission, of course) so that I could remember the people better.

Coming to the conferences prepared with form letters to respond to candidates' inquiries.

Selection procedures and forms utilized for campus interviews were more useful than conference procedures.

Objective screening standards for review of resumés and for interviews. (Note: no elaboration on these standards was given by the author of this comment.)

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