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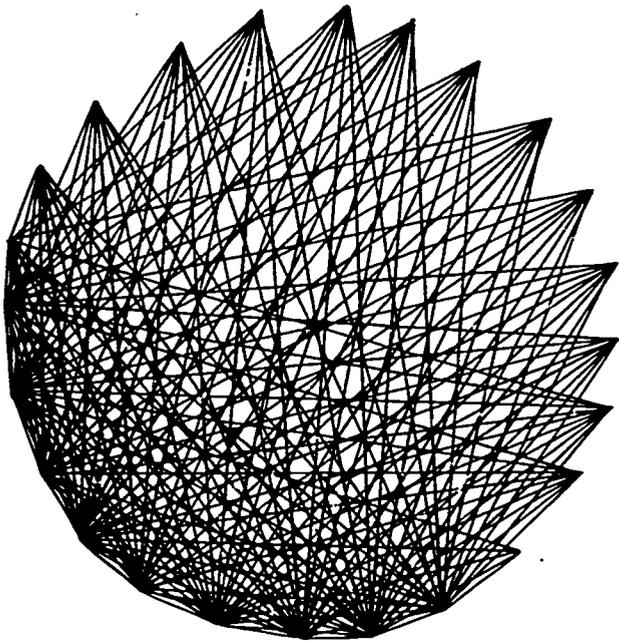
ABSTRACT

The voluminous research of the last 10 years on college students and on the function of higher education has emphasized the importance of personal and social growth of students in addition to their intellectual and vocational development. The State University of New York at Buffalo, since 1964, has increased efforts to support and initiate policies and programs that contribute constructively to the personal, social and intellectual growth of students and to modify or eliminate those that obstruct it. In order for this effort to be most effective, it is necessary to understand: (1) the personal, social, and intellectual needs, interests, values, and goals of the students; (2) the experiences that contribute to satisfaction and development of those phenomena in constructive ways; and (3) the most effective means of providing opportunities for those experiences to occur. Thus, the Student Perception Survey (SPS) was devised to elicit student perceptions of the following categories: academic, personal, social, vocational, and administrative. The subjects reported on in this document were students about to enter SUNY-Buffalo as Freshmen in the fall of 1971. The form of the SPS is a series of incomplete sentences that explore the students' perceptions of: (1) their impending college experience; (2) relationships with family and friends; and (3) themselves.

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I expect to find that SUNY/B . . .



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Survey Study 1
1971 Freshmen

University Research
Division of Student Affairs and Services
State University of New York at Buffalo

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I expect to find that SUNY/B...

1971 Freshmen

Helen S. Wyant

1972

University Research
Division of Student Affairs and Services
State University of New York at Buffalo

PREFACE

The voluminous research of the last ten years on college students and on the function of higher education has emphasized the importance of personal and social growth of students in addition to their intellectual and/or vocational development. Nurturing this kind of growth poses a particular challenge for large universities with thousands of students. Some universities, SUNY/B among them, are meeting this challenge with increased efforts to initiate and support policies and programs which contribute constructively to the personal, social, and intellectual growth of students, and to modify or eliminate those which obstruct it. In order for this effort to be most effective, it is necessary to understand:

1. the personal, social, and intellectual needs, interests, values, and goals of the students
2. the experiences which contribute to satisfaction and development of those phenomena in constructive ways
3. the most effective means of providing opportunities for those experiences to occur

Each of these requires assessment.

Eight years ago, in 1964, University Research was established at SUNY/B by the Division of Instructional Services, a unit within the Division of Student Affairs and Services, to develop methods and report results of

assessment of student characteristics and experiences. Initial effort centered on biographical and demographic description of freshmen. Later work includes evaluation of their college experience by seniors and ten-year longitudinal studies of the college and post-college experiences of random samples of students drawn from the freshman classes of 1966 and 1967.

The development of the Student Perception Survey (SPS), the research instrument used to obtain the data reported in this study, grew out of experience with the interviews of the longitudinal studies. Interviews provide an abundance of rich data about student perceptions, but the data are unwieldy to analyze and report; therefore, the SPS was designed to elicit descriptions of students' perceptions by a more consistent, less expensive, and less time-consuming method of administration and analysis. The format was influenced by the *Student Opinion Survey*, an instrument developed in 1969 by Robert Schell at the State University College at Oswego. The form of the SPS is a series of incomplete sentences which explore the students' perceptions of various aspects of:

1. their impending college experience
2. relationships with family and friends
3. themselves

The Survey was one of six research instruments administered to incoming freshmen during the 1971 Summer Planning Conferences. One instrument was administered at each of the ten conferences, and each of the other five was administered at two randomly selected conferences. The SPS was administered on June 29 and July 20, 1971. A total of 206 students completed the survey; 205 of the completed surveys were usable. Data

reported in this study are responses to items concerning the students' perceptions of their impending college experience. Text, tables, and interpretations are used to present the data.

Perceptions are personal, whatever their focus; however, in order to present the data efficiently, the following major categories have generally been used to report the students' perceptions:

- ACADEMIC: concerned with intellectual development; education; academic programs, classes plans, achievement, purpose; general reference to college
- PERSONAL: concerned with self; feelings; development of identity, maturity, values; unspecified needs, desires, goals, experience; internal influence
- SOCIAL: concerned with interpersonal skills; relationships with others (excluding academic personnel); understanding others; social environment
- VOCATIONAL: concerned with career choice, preparation; economic goals
- ADMINISTRATIVE: concerned with college procedures, admissions, expense, length of program; credit structure.

In most cases in which fewer than eight percent of the students gave responses in one of these major categories, the responses are included in another category if reasonable; e.g., *prepare for a career* may be included in the Academic category if fewer than eight percent gave responses in the Vocational category. If a response can not reasonably be included in a major category, it is included in the Miscellaneous category. Generally the categories are not mutually exclusive; if a student referred to more than one concept in his or her response, each concept was coded in the

appropriate category. Exceptions are noted as they appear. The numbers reported in both categories and sub-categories represent the percent of the 205 subjects in the sample who gave a response in that category. Two exceptions are described in Chapter II. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore, the totals of percentages in sub-categories do not always equal the major category percentage and major category percentages in Table 4 (the only table with mutually exclusive major categories) do not equal one hundred percent. Less than one percent is reported in the tables by a dash. If a question mark follows an incomplete sentence, it is reported as "don't know." "No response" is reported when neither words nor symbols follow the stem of the sentence.

The respondents were neither students nor freshmen at the time they completed the Survey; however, to provide variety in the text, the terms *incoming freshmen, freshmen, students, or members of the group* are used interchangeably to refer to the 205 men and women in the sample. The terms *half, a fourth, etc.*, are used in the text when the actual figure is within two percent of that fraction. The term *item* refers to the incomplete sentences in the Survey.

The students' own words, designated by script in the text, are used to convey their perceptions; quotations of their responses to the incomplete sentences are used throughout the study to give a richer understanding of their hopes, fears, perceptions, and expectations of their college experience. Quotations are unedited and often include other concepts besides those they were selected to illustrate. The number of quotations

used to illustrate a concept is not necessarily related to the proportion of students who responded with that concept. In some cases, the same, or nearly the same, words were used by a number of students and only one of the responses is quoted. In other cases, even though a concept was mentioned by fewer students, several quotations may be used to portray the diversity of thought or feeling expressed concerning the concept.

The first chapter is a description of the students in terms of what was most important to them at the time they responded to the Survey, what they expected of the next four years, some influences in and alternatives to their college attendance, what they considered most important about a college degree, and what they expected of SUNY/B. The focus of Chapter II is on two dimensions of the students' college experience: their proposed living arrangement and their professors. Chapter III is a report of what the students felt they most need to know and what worried them most about college, and what college would be like if they had their way. In the Postscript, some opportunities offered by SUNY/B are highlighted and a recommendation for the University's increased involvement in student development is made.

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I expect to find that SUNV/B...

I EXPECT TO FIND THAT SUNY/B...

1971 Freshmen

Chapter I

HERE THEY ARE

The group who responded to the Student Perception Survey was composed of young men and women about to begin their college careers at SUNY/B. Their responses provide a description of some of their values, hopes, fears, expectations and perceptions of their college experience. Responses reported in this chapter provide information about what most influenced their decisions to attend college, what they would do if they weren't going to go to college, what they thought was most important about a college degree, what they expected of SUNY/B and the next four years and what was most important in their lives at the time they responded to the Survey.

PRESENT VALUES

What was of greatest importance to these students in the month or so before they started college? In their responses to an incomplete sentence, *The most important thing in my life now...*, personal, academic, and social dimensions were mentioned in descending order of frequency. Some members of the group included more than one concept in their responses. Their responses are reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

The most important thing in my life now...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
PERSONAL		53
	enjoyment/happiness/interests	13
	finding, understanding, learning about myself	12
	adjusting/growing/making the most of it	8
	my future/achieving my goal	6
	finding a goal	5
	me/myself/my life	5
	personal problems	2
	religion	2
ACADEMIC		40
	school/college/going to college	12
	education	10
	completing my education/getting my degree	6
	learning	4
	graduate, professional school/ becoming a doctor	3
	doing well/grades	2
	finding a major/career	1
SOCIAL		21
	present, specific relationships	14
	general, future relationships/inter-personal skills	8
MISCELLANEOUS		6
	my job/finding a job	2
	other	4
NO RESPONSE		4

Slightly more than half of the members of the group indicated that PERSONAL concerns were more important than anything else in their lives. These concerns include enjoyment, self-knowledge, adjustment, growth, definition and achievement of their goals, religion, and various personal problems. Enjoyment and happiness were mentioned most frequently. For some students this meant various interests, among them *poetry, music, and sex*. For others, the reference is more general.

enjoying life

to be happy being me

having a good time

Nearly as many students said that learning more about themselves was the most important thing in their lives.

finding myself

*knowing who I am in relation to
other people and myself*

getting to know myself

Others placed most emphasis on their adjustment, growth, or development.

adjusting

*growing in all ways - being
in love*

getting the most out of it

becoming what I think I should be

Some were most concerned about their futures or about achieving their goals.

*to achieve the goals I've set for
myself*

an excellent future

*a good career and most important,
a happy marriage*

Most important to others was determining what their goals would be.

what I'm going to do with it

getting and going after an interesting goal

to try to understand what I want to achieve

A number of students said laconically that they or their lives were most important.

myself

my life

living

Personal problems loomed largest in the lives of some.

trying to exist

my being disliked by others

sometimes my inability to cope with certain decisions at crucial times

Religious dimensions of their lives were most important to a few.

God

my personal relationship with Jesus Christ

Some aspect of ACADEMIC concern was at least one of the most important things in the lives of forty percent of these incoming freshmen. Among the dimensions mentioned are college, education, learning, performance, selection of a major, and graduation.

The response most frequently given is a simple reference to college or school, sometimes in conjunction with another element.

college

me and school

college and my girl in that order

Other responses refer specifically to education.

my college education

a good education

my education and my friends

getting my education and having fun, too

Closely related to those responses are the ones expressed in terms of learning.

studying and learning

learning and growing

learning more about myself and the world

Some students said that completing their college education or getting a degree were most important to them.

getting through college

successfully completing my college education

getting a degree

Academic goals beyond graduation were most important to others.

Medical School

for me to reach my ambition of going on to graduate school for research

Their performance, or the evaluation of it, was most important to a few.

doing well in college

grades

Only one percent of the students said that *finding a major* or *finding a career* was most important to them, but this probably is implicit in at least some of the responses of *finding a goal* which were reported in the Personal category.

A fifth of the members of the group indicated that SOCIAL or family relationships or development of interpersonal skills were the most important things in their lives. The majority mentioned relationships which were already established.

my girl

my family

my friends

The remainder referred to general or future relationships or to development of interpersonal skills.

people

getting to know people

learning to be with people

*to find someone who genuinely cares
about me*

*to attain better intersexual
relations*

MISCELLANEOUS responses include:

trying to get a summer job

money

today

Five percent of the group either said they did not know what was the most important thing in their lives, or did not complete the sentence.

SUMMARY For the majority of this group, then, enjoying themselves, growing, learning more about themselves and their goals, and various aspects of their impending academic experience were the most important things in their lives the summer before they began college. For other members of the group, relationships—present or potential—were most important.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

Besides understanding what is of primary importance in the lives of students as they enter college, it is important to know what they expect of the next four years—years of transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. Such expectations were described by members of this group in response to an incomplete sentence beginning with: *In the next four years, I...* Their responses reveal their awareness of opportunities for personal and social growth as well as for educational development during this time. Many students referred to more than one aspect of their anticipated experience; the most frequently mentioned aspects were personal and academic. Responses are indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

In the next four years, I...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
PERSONAL		63
	grow/become a more mature, more complete person	18
	know, understand myself better	11
	enjoy myself/have a great experience	11
	overcome personal problems/improve aspects of myself	10
	find my goal, something meaningful	6
	change	4
	accomplish something worthwhile	3
	not change/retain basic values	1
ACADEMIC		41
	learn/develop intellectually	11
	work hard/study/do my best	10
	get a good education/prepare for the future	7
	graduate/complete my education	7
	succeed/do well	5
	be in college	1
SOCIAL		10
	meet new people/develop relationships/increase interpersonal skills	6
	understand people better	3
MISCELLANEOUS		10
	don't know	3
	other	7
NO RESPONSE		2

Nearly two-thirds of the freshmen described expectations of a PERSONAL nature including growing and developing, learning about themselves, overcoming problems, finding goals, changing or not changing, and having a great experience. The largest number of students referred to their growth and development.

will try to develop myself, my relations with other people, and my interests to their highest degree

hope to change and grow into a more complete person

will make opinions and decisions that probably will not change

hope to become a more intelligent, understanding person

expect to learn much, and grow mentally, socially and spiritually

The importance to some students of coming to know and understand themselves is reflected in responses to this item as well as to the previous one.

will find out a lot about myself

will become more aware of my abilities - strengths and weaknesses

plan to find where I'm at and what's really important to me

will become more aware of my feelings and needs

Some members of the group looked forward to the next four years with enthusiasm; they expected to have a great experience and enjoy themselves.

will enjoy myself greatly and profit from the experiences I will have

will live life to the fullest

*hope to have an experience that will
last until I die*

will do, be, feel and learn

Although only two percent of these students indicated that personal problems were the most important thing in their lives, in response to this item, ten percent of the group mentioned problems they hoped to overcome or improvements in themselves they hoped to make during the next four years.

will try to improve my personality

*hope to be more sensitive and lose
my fear of some*

*hope to change drastically for the
better, learn to accept life, and
myself*

*plan to straighten out the ridiculous
conflicts that I experience periodically
and chronically*

Again, as in response to the previous item, a number of students emphasized the importance of finding direction in their lives.

*hope to realize what I want to do
with my life*

*hope to give some direction to my
life*

hope I find something meaningful

Several said that they anticipated changing, but did not specify in what way. The degree of expected change varied.

*hope to change partially, in certain
ways, but not completely*

*expect to change in my views, actions
and thoughts*

expect to change a hell of a lot

A few members of the group said they hoped to use their lives meaningfully,
but apparently had not yet formulated a specific goal.

hope to accomplish something worthwhile

hope to do something with my life

plan to really make something of myself

One student said he expected to retain his basic values. Another, in
considering the next four years said:

[I] doubt if I will change in the least

Responses of more than forty percent of these incoming freshmen focus on
ACADEMIC dimensions of their lives during the next four years. It is
surprising that nearly sixty percent of the students made no reference to
academic experience. For those who did, the emphasis was on learning,
getting a good education, working hard, doing well, preparing for the
future, and graduating.

Some of the students described their expectations in terms of learning or
intellectual development.

will learn as much as possible

*will add to my thoughts and perhaps gain
insight into the old ones*

*plan to learn and enjoy both - learn to
enjoy and enjoy to learn*

hope to improve my character and my mind

*hope to increase my brain in every way
except to get swelled*

Others spoke of the next four years in terms of education or preparing for the future.

*expect to get a good education and a better
understanding of myself*

hope to enjoy myself and gain an education

*hope to achieve the necessary knowledge to
enable me to work with electronics*

*plan to meet a lot of people and absorb as
much of an education as possible.*

Some students considered the effort involved in learning, getting an education, or preparing for the future.

plan on working hard in college

*expect to learn how to study and utilize
these facilities of knowledge*

plan to hit the books

will think

Others thought about successful performance.

hope to succeed

*hope to get good grades, decide where
I'm going*

*plan to do well academically, live
happily and get engaged*

expect to survive SUNY/B somehow

A number of freshmen said they hoped or planned to complete their education or graduate; some included other achievements.

*hope to have finished my 4-year
program here at SUNY*

*plan on finishing college and developing
my personality*

*hope to graduate, but in the meanwhile
enjoy the courses I'm taking and develop
many friendships with all kinds of people*

A few members of the group simply said that during the next four years,
they plan to go to college.

Meeting other people, developing relationships, learning how to interact
with people, or learning to understand people better were SOCIAL experi-
ences some of the freshmen looked forward to during the next four years.
Most of these students referred to development of interpersonal skills
or to relationships with others.

*hope to develop my personality and
meet new people*

*hope to learn to express myself to
others*

will be open to new people and ideas

*want to rearrange myself into a different
person and meet new people*

Others hoped to learn more about other people and come to understand them.

plan to find out all I can about people

*hope to learn more about myself and to
better understand others*

Responses in the MISCELLANEOUS category include:

buy a car

*will probably take a few years off
from college*

*will get four years older and four years
more confused*

Five percent of the students either did not complete the sentence which began *In the next four years, I...* or said they did not know.

SUMMARY In contemplating the next four years, the greatest number of these students expressed concern for their personal development. This includes growing, adjusting, learning about their capabilities and interests, and establishing their values and goals. Academic experiences were referred to next most frequently, especially learning, working hard, getting a good education, or preparing for the future. Social dimensions of their experience such as establishing relationships, developing interpersonal skills, or learning to understand people better were mentioned by some.

INFLUENCES TO ATTEND COLLEGE

The decision to attend college may be influenced by a number of factors, among them: other people; high school experiences; interests; desire for personal, social and intellectual experiences and growth; need for career preparation; social pressure; and lack of more attractive alternatives. It seems reasonable to suppose that some or all of these interact to motivate young men and women to go to college. The students described what had influenced their decision most when they completed a sentence which began with: *My decision to attend college was most influenced by...* . Their responses are fairly evenly distributed in the four major categories with the most frequently mentioned influences being academic, and the least, vocational. Responses are reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

My decision to go to college was most influenced by...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
ACADEMIC		33
	<u>Future</u>	
	desire for better, further education	15
	desire to learn/need for challenge	9
	<u>Past</u>	
	high school teachers, counselors	4
	high school achievement, experience, environment	4
PERSONAL		31
	myself/my capabilities/my own feelings	12
	desire for personal growth	9
	my desires/goals (unspecified)	7
	uncertainty/lack of other interest	3
SOCIAL		26
	parents/family/family life	15
	friends/neighbors/people around me	5
	society/social pressure	5
	desire to meet, live with others	1
VOCATIONAL		23
	career preparation (specific)	12
	career preparation (general)	9
	economic goals	2
MISCELLANEOUS		6
	catalogs/prices/reputation/a scholarship	3
	other	3
NO RESPONSE		0

The greatest number of students in the group reported that their desire for further education or learning or their past academic experience had most influenced their decision to attend college. A third of them responded in this way. The majority referred to desire for further or improved education.

my own desire for more education

my desire to continue my education

my thoughts later in life of having only a high school education

the fact that I feel that I should broaden my knowledge before I undertake anything

Others expressed their desire in terms of learning, challenge, or intellectual development.

my desire to learn

a quest for knowledge and a need for a challenge

a desire to really learn and understand the complex things that go on

success in high school and my desire to continue developing my intellectual self

Various aspects of high school experiences provided the major influence for a number of students; for some it was teachers and/or counselors.

my high school advisors and parents

teachers

my art teacher, guidance counselor and English teacher

For others, it was academic success or the general high school environment.

my past experience with education

my good grades and my wish to be successful in life

my parents and high school

Nearly a third of the group members said the primary influences in their decisions to go to college were PERSONAL: themselves, their desire for personal growth, desires or goals which they did not describe, or uncertainty about alternate choices. The largest number of these responses indicated that the students themselves had been most influential in making the decision.

myself

my own personal decision

Self was sometimes mentioned in conjunction with another influence.

*my own decision and experiences
with people I respect*

*myself and also social pressure
(thing you have to do)*

myself and my parents

Desires for self-understanding and personal growth were reported previously and were mentioned by some students as being most influential in their decision to attend college.

my need to know where I'm at

*my desire to experience college and
learn to live life*

*my desire to improve myself in many
aspects*

*my concern for personal growth and
social expression*

Some members of the group referred to desires and goals but did not specify what they were.

my desires and beliefs

my ambitions and goals in life

A few said that their decision was based essentially on not having a more attractive alternative.

SOCIAL factors—family and friends, social pressure, or desire to interact with peers—were the principal influences in the decisions of a fourth of the students to attend college. The influence of family, particularly parents, was mentioned most frequently.

my parents

my family life

the way I was brought up - never really thought about not going to college

Rarely were parents the only influence mentioned.

my parents and my personal need to test my abilities

my parents and me in sort of a joint decision

myself, then my brother and least my parents - basically my decision

Friends and/or peers influenced some students most.

my contemporaries

my sister and a neighbor

my acquaintance with other college students

Social pressure or expectations were the major influence in decisions of others.

the main-stream flow of society

the feeling that it was the only way to "make it" in life

the importance society places on it

A few were influenced most by their desire for relationships with people.

*my need to find more people that I
could really relate to*

a desire to live and work with my peers

A fourth of the freshmen said that VOCATIONAL goals or expected economic benefits were the principal factors in their decisions to attend college. Most of these students spoke of career preparation; more than half of them indicated that they had a particular vocation in mind; however, not all of them specified what career they had chosen.

a desire to be a psychologist

*my interest in electronics and wishes
to enter that field*

the career which I chose

Others wanted to prepare themselves for better, more interesting jobs than they might otherwise be qualified for.

*my desire to eventually get a job I
will like*

*attaining a good job in a field that
is interesting*

*wanting a higher education in order
to have a wider choice of careers*

A few referred specifically to the economic rewards of college attendance.

As one man put it, the greatest influence in his decision was:

*the thought of how much money I can
make in the future*

Some members of the group apparently completed the sentence in terms of

their decision to attend this particular college and cited catalogues, prices and reputation as having influenced their decision.

SUMMARY In their decisions to attend college, this group of incoming freshmen were influenced most by themselves and their own desires—desires to learn more about themselves or the world they live in, desires to test themselves, to grow, or to prepare themselves for interesting careers. Other people provided the major influence in the decisions of some students—families particularly—friends, teachers, or counselors. Their past experience with education or their general high school environment most influenced others. Several students said that their decision was influenced most by a combination of two or more factors.

ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE

For every alternative that is chosen, others are rejected. What alternatives would these students choose if college were not an option for them? This information was obtained from their responses to the item: *If I weren't going to attend college, I would...* . The largest proportion of freshmen said they would work; others would travel; and the remainder would be involved in one of a variety of other activities. Responses are indicated in Table 4, and in this case, the categories are mutually exclusive since responses including more than one alternative are reported as such.

TABLE 4

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

If I weren't going to attend college, I would...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
WORK		47
	work	41
	work and travel, read, learn, or marry	6
TRAVEL		20
	travel	16
	travel and read, learn, or work	5
MISCELLANEOUS		32
	no acceptable alternative/don't know	7
	military service (11% of the men)	7
	undecided between two alternatives	7
	other means of learning	6
	volunteer work	2
	other	3
NO RESPONSE		0

Nearly half of the students in the group said they would WORK if they weren't going to go to college. Some would try to get a job in their field of interest; some would work until more desirable alternatives were available; and others would combine work with learning, travel, or marriage. The most frequently given response was simply *work*, but some students expressed it less positively, and others described it more fully.

*work, I guess, but I really never
gave it that much thought*

work for my old man

*remain stagnated in my job and that
would affect everything else*

Some students would substitute work experience for academic experience in their area of interest.

try to make it as a musician-teacher

work in a hospital

*try to obtain a job that would
simulate some of my college goals*

Others considered work a temporary measure until they could afford something more satisfying to them.

*take a full-time job for a year or two -
then attend*

*get some kind of job, save money, and
then travel*

Some said they would combine work with another activity, most frequently, either some means of continuing their education, or travel.

work and travel

probably get a job and read a lot

*move out of my house and read a lot
and get to know people and work*

The only alternative besides work which was mentioned by a substantial number of students was TRAVEL; a fifth of them gave this response, most saying just *travel*. Others elaborated a bit more.

*travel until I found a place in
which I would like to live*

hitch around the country and Europe

*probably travel if I could, and gain
more independence from my family*

travel the world

Some mentioned other activities they would undertake along with their travels—usually learning.

travel and try to learn things on my own

probably travel, work part-time

travel and try to learn in a situation that was not academic

learn through travel and personal relationships

In contrast to the students just described, a number of freshmen could think of NO ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE to going to college. A few simply said:

I don't know

be uncertain what to do next

Others, however, seemed to find it a dire prospect. They would:

die

vegetate

be lost

go crazy

be in a hopeless state

A tenth of the men but no women, said that they would enter MILITARY SERVICE.

enlist in the Air Force

take care of my Military obligation

probably enlist in the armed forces

One man said specifically that he would use the Service to acquire training in the area of his vocational choice.

enlist in the Navy and get medical training there

Some of the students were UNDECIDED as to choice between two alternatives to college attendance; in each case, work was one of the options.

*either get a full-time job or enlist
in the Coast Guard*

get a job or bum around (travel, etc.)

probably work or enter a training program

get a job or get married

OTHER MEANS OF LEARNING, previously reported in conjunction with work and travel, was also the only alternative mentioned by several members of the group. General learning or education was the focus of some responses.

*go back to high school and take some
courses*

*try and experience things that would
teach about life - especially in the
area of children*

further my education in any way possible

In others, vocational preparation was specified.

learn a trade

attend a Practical Nursing Course

seek further vocational training

VOLUNTEER WORK was mentioned by a few students, and OTHER alternatives included:

be a ski-tennis bum

*be living with friends and making a
movie*

*try to do things that bring happiness
and definitely avoid work*

SUMMARY If this group of students were not going to attend college, most

of them would either work or travel—or both. A number of them indicated that through work, travel, reading, courses, or volunteer work, they would acquire some of the learning they would have obtained in college. Some of the men would go into military service, and most of the remainder of the group couldn't think of alternatives which were acceptable to them.

IMPORTANCE OF A COLLEGE DEGREE

Most young men and women who enter college expect to obtain a baccalaureate degree. What importance do students attribute to a degree? In their responses to an incomplete sentence beginning with: *The most important thing about a college degree...*, academic and vocational values were most frequently mentioned. Personal and social importance were also mentioned. Responses are reported in Table 5.

Nearly forty percent of students referred to ACADEMIC values in describing the importance of a college degree. They spoke of the education, accomplishment, or fulfillment of a prerequisite for further learning which a degree represented to them. A fifth of the students considered the knowledge or learning attained in pursuing a degree to be most important.

the education behind it

*how much you learned while acquiring
it*

*nothing, the knowledge counts - degrees
may be earned with a minimal of knowledge*

TABLE 5

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

The most important thing about a college degree...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
ACADEMIC		38
	knowledge, learning behind it	20
	indication of accomplishment, ability	11
	prerequisite for further study, graduate school	7
VOCATIONAL		35
	ticket to better, more interesting jobs	32
	economic benefit	3
PERSONAL		14
	experience/growth/achievement	8
	personal satisfaction	6
SOCIAL		8
	status/prestige/opens doors	7
	learning about people	1
MISCELLANEOUS		14
	opens doors (unspecified)	5
	nothing/not important	3
	what you do with it	3
	don't know/other	3
NO RESPONSE		-

Others considered the greatest importance to be its indication of achievement or competence.

*it represents a certain standard
of accomplishment*

*total knowledge and wisdom in a
particular field*

*it proves you've learned to bullshit
a little better*

For some, the degree was most important as a requisite for graduate or professional school or for further study.

*it will allow me to go to Law School
and become a lawyer*

is needed for MA or PhD

it is your passport for further study

A third of the freshmen described the importance of a degree in VOCATIONAL pursuits—in getting better, more interesting jobs or in providing a greater variety of job opportunities.

*it puts one a big step toward
getting a good job*

it prepares you for a thinking job

it opens the door for job opportunities

*it is my ticket to a job I will enjoy
and find interesting*

*it's important in the world of
business!*

A few responded in terms of economic benefits; one man put it succinctly when he said that the most important thing about a college degree:

is \$

PERSONAL growth and development or personal satisfaction were the most important elements of a degree to some members of the group. Their responses are actually references to the college experience rather than to the college degree.

not so much the degree but what I've learned and how I grew during the four years

it is a stepping stone in my development

is that I struggled for four years and am now more prepared to face the world

it can prove to me I've finally completed something on my own initiative

Personal value for others meant satisfaction with their college experience.

the self-satisfaction of meeting the challenge

only that it has personal satisfaction - not that it gets you anywhere

SOCIAL importance of a degree was described by some in terms of status or prestige; by others, as an indication of learning about people. Prestige was mentioned more frequently.

allows entrance into the establishment, if you want it

is that the better the degree the more prestige and money

is the supposed respect it carries with it

is being able to say, "I have a college degree!"

A few mentioned learning about people.

learning what people are like

MISCELLANEOUS responses include those which refer to increased availability or opportunities without describing the area of opportunity.

it opens doors

it opens opportunities; the process of obtaining it should enable you to make the most of the opportunity .

Others reflect the belief of some students that the importance of the degree lies in the ability to use it or the use to which it is put. A few said that it has no importance, and others indicated that they didn't know what was most important about a college degree.

SUMMARY This group of freshmen described two elements of importance in a college degree; its provision of increased freedom, flexibility and opportunity in their lives, expressed most frequently as *a ticket to a better job, passport to further study, or opens doors to more opportunities;* and educational or personal growth and development, most frequently expressed as *the learning behind it.*

EXPECTATIONS OF SUNY/B

Expectations influence both attitudes and experiences, so it is important to know what expectations these incoming freshmen had of SUNY/B. These are revealed in their responses to an incomplete sentence which began with:

I expect to find that SUNY/B... . Their responses, many including references to more than one concept, reflect both enthusiasm and pessimism, with the great majority being expressions of confidence in the University.

Responses are reported in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

I expect to find that SUNY/B...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
PERSONAL		37
	great experience/contributes to personal growth	14
	responsive/satisfies my needs/lives up to my expectations	11
	rewarding	5
	enjoyable	5
	boring/lacking in new experience/does not live up to my expectations	1
ACADEMIC		33
	contributes to my intellectual growth	9
	excellent, good, adequate school	8
	meets my educational needs/gives me a good education/helps me find, prepare for a career	8
	tough/competitive	8
SOCIAL		22
	big/crowded/impersonal	8
	contributes to social experience, growth, learning	6
	great, free, open, friendly place	5
	microcosm of society	2
GENERAL		21
	challenging/stimulating/interesting	21
MISCELLANEOUS		6
	other	6
NO RESPONSE		4

More than a third of the students referred to the PERSONAL dimension of their expected SUNY/B experience. Their concepts include: a total experience affecting their growth and development; satisfaction of their needs and expectations; reward; and enjoyment. Desire and concern for personal growth has been evident in responses throughout this chapter and is the personal concept most frequently mentioned in response to this item. The students expressed confidence that SUNY/B would contribute to their development.

*will make me more aware of people,
being on my own, and more openminded*

*a great experience mentally, physically
and spiritually*

*will have the greatest bearing on me as
a person for the rest of my life*

*will be one of the best decisions I
ever made. It will help me to find
myself*

help me toward the person I'd like to be

They also expected that SUNY/B would be responsive to their needs.

will provide me with what I want

fits my needs and opens my eyes

will agree with me

*will do all that's possible to help me
achieve my goal*

Several students said that they expected their experience to be worthwhile without specifying in what way.

interesting and rewarding

*will be challenging and rewarding
in the future*

will be challenging but invaluable

Others expected to find it enjoyable.

very enjoyable

will be challenging and enjoyable

*is a place at which I learn while
enjoying this period of my life*

Two were pessimistic.

*is not all that I had hoped for in
a college*

*lacking in new experiences because
most students, like myself, come
from N.Y.*

A third of the students spoke about the ACADEMIC area of their SUNY/B experience. Various dimensions include intellectual development, satisfaction of educational needs, difficulty of academic work, and ratings of the quality of the University. Each of these was mentioned by nearly equal numbers of students.

Some students responded in terms of learning or intellectual growth, often in combination with social development. As with responses referring to personal growth, confidence in the University is evident.

*will be a stepping stone in my
educational process*

*will help me bring out my views and
develop new areas of thought*

*will help me to grow intellectually
and socially*

This positive attitude is also reflected in the expectation that the University would meet their educational needs.

will meet my needs as a student

will give me a well-rounded education

*will give me at least part of the
knowledge I am seeking*

Some students described ratings of the University which ranged from excellent to adequate—most being good or above average.

*a very interesting and a very good
school*

*is one of the best academic institutions
in the country*

is a fairly good school

is a rough but above average school

Several freshmen expected SUNY/B to be tough or competitive; some included other perceptions.

will be tough competition

*tough and competitive but good for
an education*

*competition, hardwork, and maybe
enjoyment*

*at times difficult, but in the end
most rewarding*

For a fifth of these incoming freshmen, expectations of SUNY/B included a SOCIAL dimension—either the social environment in which they would interact or the social development or experience which they anticipated. Some expected SUNY/B to be impersonal, crowded, or frightening.

overcrowded and hard

is new, challenging and frightening

is too big to cope with

is too impersonal

*a large, crowded, lonely, bureaucratic,
tape-ridden campus*

Others perceived an impersonal environment which nevertheless included positive (or ultimately positive) aspects.

is stimulating and over-crowded

*frightening at first, but gradually
I'll think it's great*

*very impersonal with student strife, yet
lots of fun*

*is highly impersonal, however academically
well-suited*

A number of the students expressed only positive expectations.

is a great place

is interesting, fun and free

is a great, free and friendly place

A few thought that SUNY/B would be neither completely impersonal nor entirely friendly, but rather a microcosm of society.

*will be like a miniature society with
all the goods and evils in a regular
society*

*will be diverse - and there will be a
niche for me*

Some members of the group referred to social learning or development, or to the people with whom they expected to interact.

*will open my life socially and
academically*

*will teach me to live on my own and
give me insight to what people are
really like*

*is filled with a bunch of very different
interesting people with so much to share*

The words used most often to describe SUNY/B were *challenging, interesting, stimulating, exciting*—frequently in combination. The students who used them rarely referred to academic, personal, or social areas; rather they seemed to indicate that this was their GENERAL perception of SUNY/B.

exciting, challenging, interesting

*will provide a stimulating atmosphere
for living and learning*

very demanding, free and challenging

different, exciting

*is interesting, challenging, exciting
and informative*

MISCELLANEOUS responses concerning expectations of SUNY/B include:

*will be interesting in regard to political
beliefs*

has a lot of snow

is something else

Five percent of the students either indicated that they did not know what they expected of SUNY/B or did not complete the sentence.

SUMMARY The majority of the students in this group described positive expectations of SUNY/B. They expected it to be a good school, interesting, challenging, stimulating, or responsive to their educational or personal needs. Many expected that it would contribute to their intellectual, social, or personal growth. A sixth of the freshmen thought SUNY/B would be impersonal, overcrowded, tough or competitive. However, by and large, these freshmen began their college experience with optimism and with confidence in the University.

ABSTRACT

In the month or so before they began their freshman year at SUNY/B in the fall of 1971, 205 young men and women described themselves in various ways by responding to incomplete sentences in the Student Perception Survey. They described what was most important in their lives: their hopes, expectations, or perceptions of the next four years; the major influences in their decisions to attend college; what they would have done if they weren't going to attend college; their perceptions of the importance of a college degree; and their expectations of SUNY/B.

Personal or academic concerns were most important in the lives of most members of the group. About half of the students referred to personal concerns, more specifically, themselves, enjoying themselves, adjusting to their college experience, growing, learning about themselves, finding and achieving their goals, personal problems, or religion. Forty percent of the freshmen referred to academic pursuits such as continuing their education, developing their intellectual skills, performing well, or finding a major. Present or potential relationships or development of interpersonal skills were most important to a fifth of them.

Personal and academic concerns were also most frequently mentioned by the students in describing their hopes and expectations of the next four years. Nearly two-thirds of these freshmen spoke of personal goals. They hoped to become better, more mature, complete persons; to know and understand themselves; enjoy themselves; establish or accomplish their goals; overcome

personal problems; or to improve themselves. A few said that they expected to change, not change, or to retain their values. Forty percent of the students mentioned academic goals: they expected to learn a lot, get a good education, work hard, complete their education, or simply to be in college. Social relationships or development were mentioned by a tenth of the students.

Academic, personal, or vocational concerns were major influences in the decisions of most students to attend college. Other people or social pressure were instrumental in the decisions of others. A third of the freshmen mentioned academic influences including desire for further education, learning, or intellectual challenge; high school teachers and/or counselors; and high school achievement or environment. Nearly as many said the major influence was personal: themselves or their own feelings, desires, or goals; their desire for personal growth; or for a few, their uncertainty or lack of desirable alternatives. A fourth of the students were most influenced by their desire for vocational preparation either for specific careers or for better, more interesting jobs. A few referred specifically to economic goals. A fourth of the students were most influenced in their decisions by other people—friends, neighbors, people around them, and especially parents or families. Social pressure, more than anything else, affected the decisions of some, while desire to meet or live with other people was the primary influence for a few. Some of the students included two or more factors in their responses.

Nearly half of the men and women in this group said they would work if they

weren't going to attend college; a fifth of them would travel, and a tenth of the men would enter military service. Some students would find other means of obtaining at least some of the learning experiences they expected to have in college through work, travel, training programs, military service, volunteer work, or reading. Others were undecided in their choice between two alternatives; in each case, one of the options was work. A number of the freshmen could think of no acceptable alternative to college attendance.

The majority of students in the group felt that the primary importance of a college degree is dependent on two basic assumptions: that it provides a greater number and variety of opportunities in their vocational, educational and social lives; and that it represents academic and personal learning, achievement, satisfaction, and growth. Nearly forty percent of the freshmen spoke of academic values, especially the knowledge or learning represented by the degree. The academic accomplishment or ability a degree represents was most important to some and others valued it primarily as a fulfillment of a prerequisite for post-graduate study. A third of the students thought that the most important thing about a degree is its value in obtaining better, more interesting jobs or greater economic benefits. The personal growth, achievement, experience, or satisfaction associated with a degree were most important to a seventh of the students. Social status or prestige conferred on degree holders was of greatest value to some; social learning was most important to a few. Several members of the group simply said that importance of a degree is that it *opens doors*. Others said the importance is dependent on an opportunity to use it or on the use to which it is put; and a few considered a degree of little or no value.

In describing their expectations of SUNY/B, the majority of these incoming freshmen expressed confidence that their experience would be a good one and that the University would be responsive to their needs. Personal and academic experiences were each referred to by about a third of the students, and social and general ones were each mentioned by a fifth of them. Among students whose responses were personal, the expectations of most were that SUNY/B would be a great experience, contribute to their personal growth, be responsive to and satisfy their needs or live up to their expectations. Others thought it would be rewarding or enjoyable; a few expected it to be boring or disappointing. Students whose responses referred to academic matters indicated that they expected SUNY/B to contribute to their intellectual growth, meet their educational needs, be a good school or to be tough and competitive. The majority of students who referred to social experiences expected the university to be a great, free, open place or contribute to their social experience, growth or learning. Others expected it to be big and impersonal, and a few thought it would be a microcosm of society. The words most frequently used to describe general expectations of SUNY/B were *challenging, stimulating, and interesting.*

Chapter II

LIVING AND LEARNING

Two constituents of college experience which may affect reactions to, and outcomes of, that experience are living arrangements and interactions with teachers. These factors can contribute either positively or negatively to the personal, social, or intellectual development of students (and sometimes, to teachers or families). How did the group of freshmen who responded to the SPS feel about living in a residence hall? about living at home while going to college? What did they hope their professors would be like? Responses to these questions are described in this Chapter.

Information about these students' opinions of the two most common living arrangements for freshmen—living in a residence hall and living at home—was obtained from their responses to items which concerned the two arrangements. In the following two sections in which these responses are reported, the term *resident* refers to the students who planned to live in University housing and the term *commuter* refers to those who planned to live at home with their parents. Responses are not reported for the six percent of the group who indicated that they would live in neither university housing nor their parental homes. Also in these two sections, responses which include both positive and negative concepts are reported in a single category rather than in separate ones as is generally the case in this study.

RESIDENCE HALL LIVING

One of the incomplete sentences used to elicit information about perceptions or expectations of living arrangements was *Residence hall living... .*

(Both residents and commuters stayed overnight in residence halls during the two-and-a-half days they attended their Planning Conferences, so their responses may have been affected to some extent by this brief taste of dormitory life.) Both positive and negative attitudes were revealed by both residents and commuters; however, many more residents than commuters made positive comments, and many more commuters than residents made negative ones.

Residents The majority of residents in the group were optimistic about the prospect of living in residence halls. A fifth of them, in speaking of this essentially untried experience, made comments which were neutral, or a combination of negative and positive, and a tenth of them made negative comments.

Some POSITIVE responses reflect attitudes which ranged from eager to accepting, and some focus on specific aspects of residence hall living. The majority of responses are general and indicate considerable enthusiasm.

is great

is a tremendous experience

*is different from home and could be
groovy to no finite zenith*

is a really good experience

is something I look forward to

Others are more moderate.

should be okay

is probably good for one year

TABLE 7

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

Residence hall living...

Residents N=107 % of Residents		Commuters N=87 % of Commuters	
POSITIVE	62	POSITIVE	33
good/great	32	good/great	14
opportunity for social interaction, development	9	okay/good for awhile	8
contributes to indepen- dence, growth	8	contributes to social skills	6
fun	7	contributes to indepen- dence/growth	6
okay/good for awhile	3		
academically advantageous	2		
NEUTRAL	13	NEUTRAL	18
new experience/different	13	doesn't affect me/no opinion	10
		not important	5
		new/different	3
NEGATIVE	8	NEGATIVE	22
crowded/lonely	6	for the birds/not for me	22
difficult/hard to adjust	3		
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES/ DEPENDS	7	ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES/ DEPENDS	8
MISCELLANEOUS	13	MISCELLANEOUS	15
don't know/not sure	4	don't know	5
other	10	other	10
NO RESPONSE	0	NO RESPONSE	7

A number of students referred to specific aspects of residence hall living. Some mentioned the opportunity to meet people or learn to live with other people.

will be a new experience in living together with my peers

opens opportunities to meet and live with different people

Others commented on its contribution to their growth and independence.

is a good way of slowly working into life

is where you might learn the most (about yourself and people)

as far as I can see really gives an opportunity for growth of confidence and independence

Several expected their new living style to be fun.

should be fun and an interesting new experience

should be a good experience to meet new friends and have fun

A few thought it would be academically advantageous.

gives students an opportunity to learn in a total environment geared for intellectual stimulation

Responses of some students seemed non-committal or NEUTRAL, although they might be either positive or negative, depending on what the student had in mind.

is an experience

should be different

is a new experience that I must adapt to

A few residents were pessimistic about the experience and reported NEGATIVE perceptions.

*is like living in an ashtray
doesn't look too promising
is gonna be lonely*

Some expected residence hall living to have both ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES, or to be dependent on other factors.

*should be fun but could tend to
get on my nerves
is good except for the crime rate
will probably be good in the way of
freedom but also lonely
can either be a ball or a lonely death*

MISCELLANEOUS responses include indications of "don't know" and descriptions of what residence hall living should be like.

*should be an experience (good or bad -
I don't know)
should be free
should definitely be coed, it's natural
that way*

Commuters What about the commuters—did they feel deprived of a desirable experience? Only a third of them expressed positive perceptions of residence hall living. A fifth of them considered it undesirable—at least for them, and a sixth of them were noncommittal.

Among the POSITIVE responses, some express enthusiasm (or wistfulness).

would be exciting

would be fantastic (at least for a little while)

is great if you can afford it

would be good for me

Others are matter-of-fact.

is satisfactory (at first view)

makes for closer ties in college, but commuter students who work at it can get just as involved in campus

A few reflect moderate views.

is all right

may be good for the first year only

would probably start out as an adventure but later get boring

Some commuters referred to social interaction and/or development of independence as desirable aspects of residence hall living.

is an experience that helps a person to mature and become more independent

is probably great because you are on your own and meet a lot of interesting people

would be a great social experience and opportunity to live independently to get a taste of what independence is all about

A sixth of the commuters made NEUTRAL comments, most of which refer to the fact that residence hall living would not be part of their experience.

doesn't effect me

*is no concern of mine - I won't be living
at campus*

Others said they did not consider it essential to their college experience.

*isn't necessary to me and, thus, it
is unimportant to me*

*might be nice - but is an experience I can
pass up*

A few, like some of the residents, simply said it was new or different.

is new to most people

is totally different

For a fifth of the students who planned to live at home, residence hall living held no appeal; their NEGATIVE responses show clearly that they wanted no part of it.

would drive me bananas

does not suit me

stinks

turns me off

is uncool

is for the birds

Others, again like some of the residents, considered the experience to have both ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES, or to be dependent on other factors.

is as good as your roommate

is good - but security is terrible

*is a lot of fun but a great amount
of freedom at one time*

*would be interesting and trying at
the same time*

MISCELLANEOUS responses were made by ten percent of the group and include:

is good for out-of-town students

*is probably not as nice as your own
place and a bit uncomfortable*

is better than nothing

*is not as independent as people
believe it is*

SUMMARY Although some residents expressed wariness toward residence hall living, the majority were optimistic about their prospective new living style. Some made general comments about its being a good experience and others mentioned desirable aspects such as opportunities for social interactions, fun, and development of social skills, independence, and personal growth. A third of the commuters had similar perceptions, while a fifth of them felt it would not meet their needs at all. A number of students in both groups made comments which revealed neither positive nor negative attitudes and some of each group saw both advantages and disadvantages to this type of living arrangement.

LIVING AT HOME

Further knowledge of this group's perceptions of freshman living arrangements was derived from responses to the item: *Living at home with my parents while going to college...* . As with the item about residence hall living, both positive and negative responses were given by both commuters and residents. Like the residents who expressed approval of residence hall living, the majority of the commuters indicated a positive attitude toward their prospective

TABLE 8

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

Living at home with my parents while going to college...

Commuters N=87 % of Commuters		Residents N=107 % of Residents	
POSITIVE	59	POSITIVE	9
okay/not bad	17	okay/not bad	7
good/great	16	fine/best	2
financially helpful	13		
emotionally supportive	6		
comfortable/convenient	3		
better for studying	3		
NEGATIVE	21	NEGATIVE	73
not a good idea	7	wouldn't like it/a	29
anticipate problems	6	drag	
terrible	5	terrible	23
financially necessary	3	hinder independence	15
		miss part of college	
		life	6
NEUTRAL	13		
what I plan to do/of			
no importance	7		
financially necessary	3		
temporary	2		
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	9	ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	2
MISCELLANEOUS	7	MISCELLANEOUS	12
other	7	too far away	3
		other	9
NO RESPONSE	0	NO RESPONSE	4

living situation; however, a greater proportion of commuters than residents expressed dissatisfaction with their arrangements. As might be expected, a far greater number of residents than commuters responded negatively to the idea of living at home while going to college.

Commuters The majority of commuters in the group considered living at home a good arrangement. A fourth of them made neutral comments or mentioned both advantages and disadvantages, and a fifth expressed dissatisfaction with their arrangement.

POSITIVE comments were made by three-fifths of the commuters and include references to general satisfaction with living at home and to various aspects of it which they valued. The majority of the responses are general, and are about evenly divided between moderately positive and strongly positive ones.

The largest number of commuters felt that continuing to live at home with their parents while going to college wouldn't be too bad.

is okay

shouldn't be bad because I have a lot of friends

will be alright because we get along alright

shouldn't be bad because I have a lot of freedom

Nearly as many were enthusiastic or indicated that the arrangement was best for them.

will be great

is the best thing for me

*I would rather do
is the way I want to live*

A number of commuters referred to the financial aspect of living at home. For some it was a restrictive factor (reported in the negative category), for others it was just a fact of life (reported in the neutral category), but for the majority of those who mentioned it, it was a benefit which they appreciated.

*is a great financial help
will be one hell of a good way to
cut costs
I like it better and it comes out
cheaper, too*

Emotional support provided by home and family was important to some students.

*provides a place to return to if you are
upset, insecure or lonely at college
will be fun. I also want to stay around
my little brothers. I love them.
is important to me because I'll need some
semblance of normality in my life - I'm not
independent enough*

Comfort or convenience were mentioned by others.

*puts us in a better spot; financially -
have more advantages - access [to] the
city, etc. - more comfortable
saves money - more comfortable in a home
situation*

A few considered the arrangement academically advantageous.

*will be better for my learning and I feel
just as independent
will enable me to get my studying done*

A fifth of the commuters expressed dissatisfaction with living at home.

NEGATIVE responses range from mild to intense, most being intermediate.

will be a pretty poor situation

is bad, I'd rather be free to make my own mistakes and pay for them myself

makes me less independent - less mature

is not a good idea

Some students expected to encounter problems or to experience general difficulty.

might prove to be conflicting with my new ideas from college life

might be difficult because they really don't understand the pressures I go through

is going to be hard (commuting, studying, not as much freedom)

may be frustrating although I don't know in what ways

Several commuters were considerably unhappy about living at home.

stinks

is going to be torturous and may cause me to drop out after a year or two

is going to be dull and awful

A few freshmen planned to commute only because their financial situation prevented their doing otherwise.

is going to cause a lot of trouble but it's cheaper and will have to do for now

is not what I prefer but what I can afford

Some responses are NEUTRAL, reflecting neither positive nor negative attitudes toward living at home.

is what I plan to do

will have no effect whatsoever

*may be distracting but so would life
in a dorm*

A few refer to financial necessity or to the tentativeness of the arrangement.

is necessary because of financial reasons

is only temporary until I get my own place

Several commuters expected that living at home would have both ADVANTAGES and DISADVANTAGES.

*will present problems, but it would
increase caring experiences*

*should not be much of a problem - we
understand each other well - it's
living with younger brothers and sisters
that'll prove to be a hassle*

*saves money and allc is you more indepen-
dence in some ways, ,et it limits experience*

*hard on my personal independence at times -
convenient! many times happy*

Some MISCELLANEOUS responses do not describe living at home per se, but rather compare it to living in a residence hall. Opinions differed as to the relative merit of the arrangements.

won't be as good as living on campus

will be better than living in the dorms

Residents What did the residents think of living at home rather than in residence halls while going to college? Most of them indicated that it would not be satisfactory—at least for them. Some simply wouldn't like it while others were strongly opposed to it. Several thought that it would deprive them of an important part of college experience. A few thought it would be satisfactory or good.

Three-fourths of the residents expressed NEGATIVE attitudes toward living at home while attending college. The largest proportion made general comments about its undesirability.

would have been disappointing

would not work out

would be a DRAG

would be easier but not best for me

A fourth of the residents were strongly averse to the idea.

would be intolerable

would be a fiasco; endless fights and hassles

I cannot conceive of it - a fate worse than death

would be terrible - I would not live at home while attending college

Several students said it would inhibit their independence. Two aspects of independence were mentioned: personal growth and freedom from restriction.

would greatly hinder my inner development

can be hard when it comes to leaving home permanently

would be the most disastrous thing to inhibit my need for self-discipline, responsibility and independence

is too confining

*would probably hinder my independent actions
and new experiences*

would hinder my independence greatly

Others thought that it would deprive them of an essential dimension of college experience.

would be missing half the college experience

*would not allow me to dive into the total
university experience*

would make me miss something

A few residents made POSITIVE comments about living at home; some felt it wouldn't be so bad; two thought it would be fine.

would be all right

wouldn't be so terrible

would be a better way to do it

Among the remainder of the residents, a few saw both advantages and disadvantages to living at home, some did not express an opinion, and several from the eastern part of the state said it would be too long a trip.

SUMMARY The idea of continuing to live at home with their parents while going to college held varying degrees of appeal to these freshmen. A majority of commuters said that the arrangement was satisfactory or best met their financial, emotional, or physical needs. A fifth of them were dissatisfied with the arrangement, and the remainder made neutral comments or said they saw both advantages and disadvantages to the situation. A

small proportion of residents thought that living at home would be satisfactory, but the great majority of them felt it would not.

PROFESSORS

Part of the daily lives of the majority of students after they leave their residence halls or their homes is interaction with professors. While there is some debate about the relative influence of professors on a student's total college experience, there is no dispute about the dominant affect of the faculty in classroom experiences. The students in this group had twelve or more years of interaction with teachers and had experienced the differences teachers can make in learning experiences. They described what kind of teachers they would like to have in college when they completed a sentence which began with: *I hope that my professors...* . Responses include references to both academic and personal interactions. There is much overlap, of course, but for convenience in discussion, the responses are reported in those two categories in Table 9 and in the text. There are a number of multiple responses which touch on both areas.

Nearly three-fourths of the students mentioned ACADEMIC or professional characteristics of teachers which include references to knowledge, competence, style, and method of presentation.

TABLE 9

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

I hope that my professors...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
ACADEMIC		72
	good teachers/knowledgeable/competent	32
	enthusiastic/interesting/stimulating	21
	open-minded/flexible/fair	16
	easy	3
PERSONAL		48
	understanding/human/friendly/helpful	26
	care about students	9
	take an interest in me	8
	get to know, understand me	5
OTHER		2
NO RESPONSE		1

A third of the students said they hoped their professors would be good teachers. Their responses range from global ones such as *are good teachers* to specific ones like *don't talk too fast*. Good teachers or great, could, of course, encompass many other characteristics; more specific responses include those which refer to competence, knowledge, and methods.

*know what they are talking about and
bring me exciting new facts*

*are able to make the student understand
concepts easily*

*don't waste my time and theirs, and
teach me something worthwhile*

are up-to-date in their teaching methods

A fifth of the freshmen said they hoped that their professors would be stimulating, interesting or enthusiastic.

*really like what they are doing and will
convey love for their art ;*

*aren't pompous and boring...should bring a
certain lively atmosphere to class*

*can stimulate me and interest me in the
subject they teach*

*have the ability to express their great
knowledge in an interesting manner*

Others hoped for flexibility, fairness or open-mindedness in their teachers.

Some simply said they wanted their professors to answer questions, but others hoped for more.

*are willing to discuss anything of interest
ever if it strays from the day's planned
work*

will be more than just a living textbook

*are discussers (if there is such a word) -
open to new ideas*

are fair!!!

A few said that they hoped their teachers would be easy or easy markers.

Half of the students described PERSONAL characteristics they hoped would be typical of their professors. Some degree of personal interaction was implicit in these responses ranging from simple responsiveness—human,

understanding—to personal relationships outside of the classroom. A fourth of the freshmen spoke about general supportive relationships.

friendly, articulate and understanding

helpful and be willing to give me additional help if I need it

human

understanding, patient, tolerant, encouraging

will be understanding - at least for a couple of weeks until I get started

A fifth of them said they hoped their professors would care for them as individuals. They did not want to be known as just a name, a number or a face. Two forms of care were described: that which does not necessitate interaction outside of the classroom but does require concern for the student, and that which requires knowledge of the student outside of the regular classroom experience. Desire for their professors' concern was sometimes expressed implicitly by reference to "students" or "individuals."

are sensitive to student needs

care about individuals and try to help

are interesting and care about their students

are "real" people, meaning that they take an actual interest in every student and not just treat him as a number or a name

In other responses, the desire was explicitly expressed in terms of "me" or "my."

will like me and do their best to give me a good education

take an interest in me

*will treat me as a person rather
than a number*

*are concerned about my interest and progress
in his class*

*understand and listen to me when I have
something to say - sometimes*

The type of relationship desired by a few freshmen would probably necessitate interaction supplementary to classroom experience.

will know and understand me

*will create a relationship outside of
class with me*

*will become friends of mine and that I can
talk to them when I need to*

*are good, understanding, and have enough
time to talk personally with me*

SUMMARY A composite of these students' descriptions portrays the ideal college professor as a good teacher who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about his subject matter, interesting and stimulating in his style of presentation, and flexible and fair in his methods. In addition, he is understanding, friendly, helpful, and concerned about each student as an individual. Of these characteristics, the most frequently mentioned were those related to professional competence and to understanding, supportive responsiveness. Stimulating, interesting presentations and concern for students were mentioned next most frequently; flexibility and fairness were mentioned somewhat less often.

ABSTRACT

Two more elements of college experience—living arrangements and interaction with faculty—were studied using the incoming freshmen's responses to items concerning residence hall living, living at home, and hopes concerning faculty.

Residence hall living was perceived by three-fifths of the residents and a third of the commuters as a good experience or one which provides opportunities for social interaction or development of social skills, independence, or personal growth. It was considered an unsatisfactory arrangement by a fifth of the commuters but only a tenth of the residents; the commuters indicated this by general negative comments while the residents said it would be hard to adjust to, crowded or lonely. About a sixth of each group were neutral or non-committal; the residents simply said it would be different or a new experience, and commuters said it didn't affect them or wasn't important. About eight percent of each group saw both advantages and disadvantages to living in a residence hall.

Living at home with their parents while going to college was perceived by three-fifths of the commuters but only a tenth of the residents as a good experience; both commuters and residents made positive general comments and commuters also expressed appreciation of financial advantages, emotional support, physical comfort, greater convenience, or better studying conditions. A fifth of the commuters and three-fourths of the residents considered

living at home undesirable, eminently so for a fourth of the residents and five percent of the commuters. Members of both groups expressed general dissatisfaction or disapproval and some residents said it would hinder their independence or deprive them of an important dimension of their college experience, while some commuters said that they anticipated problems or would tolerate living at home only because of financial circumstances. An eighth of the commuters indicated neither positive nor negative attitudes but instead said that the situation was temporary, financially necessary, or unimportant. A tenth of the commuters, but only a few residents saw both advantages and disadvantages in living at home while going to college.

When asked to describe what kind of professors they hoped to have in college, nearly three-fourths of the freshmen mentioned professional qualities. A third of the students said they hoped to have good teachers who were knowledgeable about their subject and able to communicate it well. A fifth of them said they wanted interesting, enthusiastic, stimulating professors, and a sixth hoped particularly for flexible or fair ones. Half of the members of the group described characteristics of personal interactions. A fourth of them mentioned responsive, supportive qualities such as friendliness, understanding, or helpfulness; a fifth said they hoped their professors would show personal interest in or concern for them. Five percent of the students hoped to establish close relationships with their teachers involving interactions supplementary to classroom experiences.

In brief, the students hoped to have professors who cared about them as individuals and were knowledgeable, competent, flexible, fair, and able to communicate interest, enthusiasm, and understanding of their subject.

Chapter III

NEEDS, WORRIES AND WISHES

College experience provides opportunities for personal, social, intellectual, and vocational development, and pursuit of those opportunities involves risks, responsibilities and rewards: loneliness, rejection, failure; obligations, demands, sacrifices; friendships, satisfaction, growth, knowledge. As these young men and women who were about to begin their college careers thought about college and the many possible experiences before them, what did they most need to know about college? What worried them most? What did they wish college were like? Responses to these questions were given by the group of incoming freshmen who responded to the SPS and are described in this Chapter.

INFORMATION MOST NEEDED

In responses to the item, *The one thing I most need to know about college...*, the majority of the students mentioned personal or academic concerns; administrative or social ones were mentioned by smaller proportions of them. A considerable number did not respond to the item. In Table 10, responses are reported.

A third of the freshmen said they most needed to know about PERSONAL matters: they wanted to know more about themselves in relation to the college experience, how to adapt to their new experience, where they would fit in, how they would react, and whether college would meet their needs and help them to

TABLE 10

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

The one thing I most need to know about college...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
PERSONAL		34
	how to adjust, cope	15
	whether it will meet my needs/what it will offer	9
	how or where I fit in, react	6
	how to grow, get the most out of it	4
ACADEMIC		32
	what courses to take and when/what they will be like	12
	difficulty/whether I can handle it	10
	faculty expectations, behavior	4
	how to study	3
	what major to select	2
	what options are open	2
ADMINISTRATIVE		11
	red tape/credit structure/procedures	11
SOCIAL		8
	people/how to meet people, make friends	4
	life style/campus culture/what is going on	4
MISCELLANEOUS		6
	don't know	2
	financial aspects, resources	1
	other	3
NO RESPONSE		15

grow. The most frequently mentioned concern was adjustment to the new experience.

how to get started???

*how to adjust work habits so that
I can balance study and leisure*

how to become an essential part of it

how to find my way around in every way

*how difficult is the change from high
school*

how I can deal with it

*how to adapt to a different atmosphere
environment*

what my priorities should be

Some students wanted most to know whether, or in what way, college would contribute to their lives or to their goals.

if I can find what I want in it

*will it actually help me to get a better
job in the future*

*will it meet my expectations and help me
reach my goals*

what good can I get out of it

Others were primarily interested in knowing about themselves in relation to their new experience.

how to determine where I'm at

*how I'll feel about it after I'm used
to it*

whether I'm capable of handling it

what it is like, will I fit in

*will I be lost in a crowd or make a
name for myself*

what I want to get from it

A few wanted to know whether it would, or how it could be made to, contribute to their growth and development.

*whether it can help me grow as a person,
not just intellectually*

*how to use my abilities to get the most
out of my education*

how to get the widest experience

*how it will help me get experience
about myself, people around me, etc.*

A third of the students wanted most to know about ACADEMIC matters including courses, course difficulty, faculty, study methods, or what options were open to them. The academic information needed by the greatest number of freshmen concerned courses—which ones to take, when to take them, and what they would be like. The frequency of this response may be attributed in part to the fact that only half of these freshmen had received their academic counseling and registered for their fall classes. The remainder did so the day after they responded to the Survey.

how to choose courses

*the courses offered, what to take and
when to take it*

the freedom given to its courses

will the courses really be stimulating

A number of students were primarily concerned about the difficulty of academic work or their ability to cope with it.

will I be able to pass

the type of work expected

*whether it is as tough as it's cracked
up to be*

*how I will do in competition with my
peers*

Some wanted most to know about faculty expectations or behavior.

what my professors will expect from me

*how courses will be taught and how difficult
the material will be*

what kind of teachers I am going to have

A few said they needed to know how to study, what major to select, or what options were available to them.

A tenth of the students said they most needed to know about ADMINISTRATIVE aspects of college. This proportion may also have been affected by the fact that half of the group had not yet received academic counseling.

how to register

my way around the credit structure

how it ticks

One student manifested considerable confidence in the university when she said that what she most needed to know was:

*how to get solved any problem which
may arise*

Two dimensions of SOCIAL concern were mentioned: relationships with people and the social environment. Several freshmen said that what they most needed to know was people, or how to meet them.

the students themselves

what people from different places are like

*how to get along and make friends with
other kids*

where are the chicks

Others wanted to know about the social environment.

life style

residence living

what is going on

the culture and the way of life

MISCELLANEOUS responses include those of students who needed information about financial arrangements and those who said they didn't know what they most needed to know about college.

SUMMARY When they described what they most needed to know about college, the majority of these students mentioned personal and academic concerns. Some wanted to know how to adapt to their new experience and use it most effectively to contribute to their growth. Others were most interested in knowing about courses or the difficulty of the work and their ability to cope with it. Some wanted information about various administrative procedures; a few most needed to know people, how to make friends, or what the social environment was like. Articulating what they most needed to know about college may have been difficult for some students—fifteen percent of them did not respond to the item. To only one other item in this study (reported later) did more than five percent of the group fail to respond.

WORRIES

Implicit in both the stimulus and the responses related to the previous item is an assumption that in response to the students' need to know, information can be provided either by other people or by the students' own experiences over a period of time. This assumption is not necessarily valid for the item *The thing that worries me most about college...*, and responses to it reflect a greater emphasis on the students' own abilities and behavior. Again, the majority of responses were related to personal or academic matters; in this case, slightly more academic ones. Most of the remainder referred to social worries. Unlike responses to the previous item, only three (reported in the Miscellaneous category) referred to administrative procedures. Responses are reported in Table 11.

More than forty percent of the freshmen worried most about ACADEMIC concerns: their ability to handle the work, their choice of major, or faculty expectations.

In spite of their competent academic performances in high school, more than a third of the students were concerned about their ability to cope with college level work.

how hard it will be
flunking out
not being able to keep up with the work
the competition
writing long term papers
my grades
will I be able to cope with the work

TABLE 11

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

The thing that worries me most about college...

N = 205

		<u>% of Students</u>
ACADEMIC		43
	flunking out/coping with the work/ difficulty of courses/competition	37
	choice of major	4
	faculty expectations, behavior	3
PERSONAL		37
	adjustment/self discipline	21
	satisfaction of needs, expectations	6
	preserving, developing identity/ establishing goals/growth	5
	personal problems	4
SOCIAL		17
	interpersonal skills/social life size/impersonality/vagueness	12
		5
MISCELLANEOUS		8
	finances	2
	nothing	1
	don't know	1
	other	3
NO RESPONSE		2

Several worried most about their choice of a major.

choosing a field of concentration

*that I will go into a field deeply and
find I don't care to have a career in it*

A few were most concerned about their interactions with faculty members.

*the work load and the relationship
of students and faculty*

that i won't get extra help from professors

More than a third of the students were most worried about PERSONAL concerns including adjusting to their new experience, finding satisfaction of their needs or expectations, retaining or developing a sense of identity, and coping with various personal problems. As with responses to the previous item, the majority of personal concerns were related to adjustment; these were mentioned by a fifth of the freshmen.

my ability to adapt

whether I can stand four years

the contradicting values it presents

SELF DISCIPLINE

*my being able to fit in with university
life and my being able to do all that is
required of me*

Other members of the group worried most about whether college would meet their needs, desires or expectations.

will I like it or get bored

that I won't be able to do all I wish

not finding the things I want to find

Some were anxious about developing or maintaining a sense of identity or establishing goals. Several expressed the fear that they might be *lost in the crowd*.

that I might lose my identity
knowing where I'm going
that I'll never know what I really want
not getting lost in the gruel

Personal problems worried some students most.

unnecessary worrying about self-confidence
if something happens at home
what to do if I'm drafted

Nearly a sixth of the freshmen were most worried about SOCIAL aspects of college life, either personal or environmental. Apparently aware that non-academic experiences can contribute as much satisfaction to college experience as academic ones, several students revealed anxiety about social relationships. Some worried about their interpersonal skills.

my ability to make friends
my ability to get along with the
opposite sex
that I might be a loner in a crowd
my fear of people and my ability to
relate

Concerns of others were more general.

people
the social life
the courses a little - but mainly the
need to feel accepted

having a rotten time

The environment or atmosphere worried some students most.

the huge size and anonymity

its vagueness. What is it really like

*the size and coldness and impersonalness
of a huge institution*

MISCELLANEOUS responses include those of a few students who were most concerned about financial or religious matters and those of a few who said that nothing worried them most about college.

SUMMARY The majority of these freshmen were most worried about academic and personal matters. They worried about performing their academic work adequately or well; adjusting to their new experience; developing or keeping their sense of identity; or finding satisfaction of their needs, desires or goals. Establishing rewarding relationships and coping with the social environment worried others most.

IF I HAD MY WAY

These freshmen revealed concern about personal, academic, social and administrative aspects of their college experience. Did they have in mind ways in which their anxiety could be alleviated or modified? Would they change college if they could? If so, in what ways? They were given an opportunity to express their ideas about what college should be like when they were asked to complete a sentence which began with: *If I had my way, college...*

The largest proportions of the students expressed ideas related to academic or administrative areas. Most of the remainder of the responses were fairly evenly distributed among those referring to social dimensions, personal aspects, and satisfaction with college as it is. Here, as with the item about what they most needed to know, a considerable number of students either said they did not know or did not complete the sentence. Responses are reported in Table 12.

The concern and interest in **ACADEMIC** dimensions of their college experiences which have been evident in responses to other items in the survey are reflected in the responses to this one, too. The ideas of a third of the students about what college might be like centered around purpose, programs, classes, evaluation, or faculty. Modification or elimination of evaluation procedures or requirements were most frequently proposed.

*would have pass/fail for all courses
entirely*

*would be such that a student could
take a test when he feels he is ready*

*would have no grades or exams. When
you're paying for your education it's
your responsibility to gain knowledge*

*would have no requirement, no grades
no tests, just learning experience*

*would be: open enrollment and no
grades - attend a class for sheer
pleasure: to learn, not be under
pressure*

The interest of nearly as many students focused on the **CLASSES** or **PROGRAMS** which were described as interesting, informal, or flexible. Most responses

Table 12

Responses to the incomplete sentence:

If I had my way, college...

N = 205

	<u>% of Students</u>	
ACADEMIC		33
<u>EVALUATION/REQUIREMENTS</u>	<u>12</u>	
modify, eliminate, grades, exams requirements	8	
easier/less competitive	4	
<u>PROGRAMS/CLASSES</u>	<u>11</u>	
informal/casual/flexible	6	
practical	3	
interesting/stimulating	2	
<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>9</u>	
intellectual exploration	4	
personal development	3	
vocational development	1	
<u>FACULTY</u>	<u>1</u>	
good, more professors/closer relationships	1	
ADMINISTRATIVE		27
free/less expensive	12	
open admissions/easier entry	8	
shorter	2	
less complicated	1	
other	3	
GENERAL		11
basically like it is	11	
PERSONAL		10
more personal/responsive to student needs	10	
SOCIAL		9
smaller/closer-knit/fun/more social	8	
less political, radical	1	
MISCELLANEOUS		14
don't know	5	
not necessary/not so important	4	
different	3	
other	2	
NO RESPONSE		9

within this group referred to informality and flexibility.

would have more flexible programming

*would have the freedom and casualness
and stimulation of the ancient Greek
schools*

*would be basically in the form of
informal seminars - on an experimental
basis permanently*

Others referred to programs which were practical or combined practicality
and informality.

would be brought more "down to earth"

*would be more actual experience, less
classroom*

*could be connected with the division of
industry one is being trained for
(like GMI)*

*would be as informaⁿ as possible and
practical, while still covering the
material*

Interest and stimulation were emphasized in a few responses.

*would be less mark oriented, smaller
and more stimulating classes*

would be totally interesting

Some students described their ideal college in terms of PURPOSE; some would
emphasize scholarship and learning.

*would be a place to discover knowledge,
not a necessity*

*would be learning centers - more toward
what the Greeks had*

*would be a place to learn new areas and
share thoughts*

Others would focus on individual development and preparation for a fuller life.

would not be a set routine, yet continue as a part of a growing and strengthening of the individual

would be an experience selected because one wants to better themselves as a person not because one needs a degree to find a job

A few would concentrate on preparation for or exploration of fields for a career.

would be for only the technological sciences

would be an introduction to the many fields available for future work

Only a few students referred directly to FACULTY when they described what college might be like, although the function of teachers was implicit in most references to the academic area.

would have more professors

would become closely knit in student-teacher relationships

If they had their way, a fourth of the incoming freshmen would change ADMINISTRATIVE aspects of the university including costs, admission, length of program and complexity. The most frequently mentioned change was cost, a concern which was revealed in only a few responses to previous items. Perhaps this reflects the fact that the majority of students had already coped with the problem—at least initially—so that it was no longer a primary concern to them.

would be free

would be cheaper

would be free so every person could attend

Some of the students thought that college should be available to anyone who wants it.

would have open admission with no grade levels

would be available to all who want an education

would be free of charge and have open admissions

would be easier to get into

Other administrative changes suggested by a few include shorter or longer programs, less complexity, and compulsory attendance.

would be shortened (2 years) and combined with Med School

wouldn't be so complicated

would be made so that it would be possible for everyone to live away

would be a little bit less lenient than it is

would be compulsory and federally funded

would last forever without having to pay a cent

A fourth of the freshmen were satisfied with college in GENERAL, at least as they perceived it, or until they knew more about it.

would remain as it is - no complaints as yet

would be the same as I think it is now

would be very much like it is now

*just might be like this place. We'll
see*

Several students simply said that college would be more PERSONAL, if they had their way; others described personalization in terms of their needs being met.

would be more personal

would meet the needs of all students

*would be able to satisfy all my
specific needs*

Most of the responses related to SOCIAL dimensions of college life were similar to the previous ones in that they described an environment which would facilitate personal interactions.

would be smaller

would be smaller - closer knit

*would be less competitive and have more
of a sense of community*

A few students said college would be less political or radical if they had their way.

Among the MISCELLANEOUS responses are those of students who said college would be different but did not specify in what way, and those who said it would not have the emphasis it now does.

wouldn't be required for success

would not be such a big deal

One freshman may have had similar feelings; he said that if he had his way, college:

would be over

Given this opportunity to express their ideas about what they would like in a college, fifteen percent of the students either did not complete the sentence or said they didn't know what college would be like if they had their way.

SUMMARY When these freshmen described what college would be like if they had their way, they revealed considerable diversity in their emphases. The largest proportion of students referred to academic or administrative dimensions of college. Some wished for reduction in evaluation, cost or admission requirements. Others wanted informal, interesting, flexible classes or programs; and if some had their way, college would be small, close-knit or personal. A tenth of the freshmen were satisfied with college as they perceived it.

ABSTRACT

These young men and women about to begin their freshman year at SUNY/B described what worried them most about college, what they most needed to know about college, and what college would be like if they had their way.

In describing what they most needed to know about college, a third of these students expressed personal concerns: They most needed to know how to adjust to or cope with their new experience, what college offered, whether it would meet their needs or desires, how they would fit in; what their reaction would be, how to get the most out of it, or how to grow and develop as persons. A third of them wanted most to know about academic affairs: what courses to take and what they would be like; how difficult the work would be and how, or whether, they would cope with it; faculty expectations; study methods; what options were available; and what major to choose. A tenth of them said that they needed most to know about administrative procedures such as registration, credit structure, and general function; however, the number of these responses, as well as those about courses, may be attributed in part to the fact that half of the members of the group had not yet registered or received their academic counseling when they responded to the Survey. Social dimensions of their college experience were the primary concern of eight percent of the students. These encompassed both interactions with others and the general life style or campus culture. More than fifteen percent of the students either did not complete the sentence or said they didn't know what they most needed to know about college.

The students also described what worried them most about college. Although some of their responses are similar to those to the item just discussed, in these, the responses are more personal—there is a greater emphasis on the students' own abilities or performance. More than forty percent of the freshmen worried most about the academic dimension of their college experience. Most of these students were worried about flunking out or coping with the work; a few worried about faculty behavior or expectations or about their choice of a major. More than a third of the students were most worried about personal matters, especially adjusting to the new experience and self-discipline. Others worried about finding satisfaction of needs or expectations, retaining or developing goals or a sense of identity, and coping with various personal problems. A sixth of the students in the group were most concerned about social aspects of college life—both those related to people, such as interpersonal skills, social life, or being accepted; and those related to the social environment, which they perceived as immense and impersonal. A few freshmen were worried most about finances, and a few said nothing about college most worried them.

Finally, these students described what college would be like if they had their way. A third of them spoke about academic aspects of college including evaluation and requirements, which would be modified or eliminated; programs and classes, which would be flexible, casual, interesting, stimulating, or practical; purpose, which would center on intellectual exploration, which was most often mentioned, personal development, or vocational preparation, which was mentioned least frequently; or faculty,

who would be good, numerous, or who would establish close relationships with the students. A fourth of the freshmen would change administrative procedures by eliminating or reducing costs, providing open or easier admissions, simplifying the procedures or altering the length of programs. A tenth of the freshmen said that if they had their way, college would be basically as it is. A similar proportion said it would be more personal or responsive to student needs, or would be smaller, closer-knit, more fun, or more social. A few said it would be less political or radical. Some said college would not be so necessary or so important if they had their way, and others simply said it would be different without specifying in what way. Fifteen percent of the students either did not complete the sentence or said they did not know what college would be like if they had their way.

Postscript

This group of incoming freshmen revealed some of their hopes, fears, perceptions and expectations of their university experience. What are some of the realities of SUNY/B which may meet their expectations?

In addition to regular academic programs, SUNY/B offers opportunities for close student-faculty relationships, informal classroom experience and student contribution to curriculum planning through its Collegiate System. Academically related experience in the community is available through some of the education, nursing, social science, Collegiate and engineering programs. One-fourth of the student's credits may be taken with satisfactory/unsatisfactory or written evaluation. Special majors and/or independent study may be designed by the student in cooperation with faculty. Credit may be given for courses by means of proficiency examinations. Lectures are offered by outstanding representatives of the various disciplines. Still other opportunities for exploration, discovery and/or development of personal, social and intellectual interests and abilities are available through music and drama groups, interest and professional clubs, religious organizations, crafts, sports, community involvement and casual gatherings as well as work and living experiences. Students may discuss problems, plans and ideas with faculty, counselors, advisors and friends.

The university is responsible for informing students of the opportunities it offers and does so primarily through orientation programs, academic advisement, various publications and, of course, other students. The individual student is responsible for taking advantage of such opportunities.

A responsibility which SUNY/B has not assumed is provision of a program designed to help students consider how best to use opportunities available to them and to evaluate their experiences in terms of their personal, social and intellectual development. Research on SUNY/B students indicates that such a program can contribute positively to the growth of many of our students.

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