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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the importance of good counseling in the selection of jobs. This study also contributes data for faculty and administration. The data produced by this investigation highlights conditions which appear to alumni as deficiencies; for example, inefficient counseling or lack of a job placement service. Information was obtained using the Opinion Questionnaire. The study was limited to university and college graduates, in the belief that alumni would give the most objective, unbiased, and realistic responses, free from possible bias or restriction due to day-to-day student-faculty administration relationships among on-campus students. One of the conspicuous findings was that many respondents thought the occupational counsel provided them was worth little. (Author/RVJ)

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**ALUMNI RAPBACK
1970-73**

**A statistical analysis of University College Alumni opinion
about the counseling and job placement service they received
while in school.**

**by
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MARCH, 1974**

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Background and Purpose of Study

The University College of the University of Cincinnati was formed in 1960. Since that time there has been a continuous concern with the counseling job placement of their career-minded students. By the mid 1960's there was an accentuated concern over business-program students and what was happening to these graduates. Much conversation centered around the lack of attention being given to the University College student job placement by the University central placement service called the Career Relations Department. An extensive inquiry was made to try to find out the degree to which that department gave employment service to the University College students and graduates. All evidence was profoundly negative; and students, former students, graduates and faculty all openly stated their feelings that there was no counsel nor placement service whatsoever provided University College students by that department. The University College administration demonstrated major concern with this problem and tried on numerous occasions to get University attention to the matter. Committees met with University official representatives giving explanation of the situation existing, and pleading for assistance and/or approval to administer a student counseling and job placement service themselves. This was finally approved, but without granting full funding, which of course was unacceptable to the University College. The University College administration strongly insisted upon receiving the same proportion of student tuition money allocated to the Career Relations department for this service. The University administration has never formally rejected the idea

of the University College doing their own student counseling and job placement, but have neither given approval to re-direct the student tuition money portion to the University College. It is not known how the several other colleges fund their student counseling and job placement service that they conduct themselves completely devoid of the Career Relations department.

Much opinion and conjecture has been made on why the Career Relations department does not provide efficient service to the University College. Such reasons are given that few, if any, employers will consider two year career graduates for jobs. This is not true. Other reasons are that they do offer University College students as much service as they offer students of the other colleges, or, that they do not have sufficient funds. Then, too, is the story of gross inefficiencies and incapacibilities of the Career Relations department staff, for contributing to its poor service. It is known that employers come directly to the University College to recruit, and state that they know of the situation in the Career Relations office, but they are compelled to continue to work through this centralized placement department for referral of other kind of technical graduates they are looking for. It is known too, that there is no effort on the part of this centralized department to in any way announce the availability of two year Associate degree graduates to prospective employers, not to mention that they do no promotion, as is done by other college and university placement offices. Usually employers do not want to take the time to investigate the various kinds of products of a school, but assume that the college and universities certainly promote and advertise the various kinds of products (graduates) they produce. It is certain that the two year University College is not promoted by the University central placement office.

Technical education as provided by junior colleges was conceived as a part of the total educational structure -- never have the junior college theorists thought of it in any other way. Education for employment should be the main purpose of the educational enterprise, and the junior college should occupy a dominant position in this preparation. According to Melvin L. Barlow of AAJC, February, 1972, "technical education whould be offered as an alternative to the 'go to college -- college prep' concept offered in high schools and some junior colleges and is probably the greatest farce ever."

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the subsequent supplementary public laws have provided multi-millions of dollars of funding for the various kinds of secondary and post-secondary education that prepare individuals for career employment. One of the major elements of this law and its supplements is that the students are properly and thoroughly counseled and assisted in job placement. These laws have given the impetus to the rapid and accelerated growth of the junior college throughout our country.

The Ohio State Board of Regents, who contribute considerably to this University and the University College, and whose guidelines for operation are given consideration, has placed considerable attention on the matter of the two-year career graduates being given proper counseling and job placement attention. This requirement is not peculiar to this University but applies to all of their funded two-year technical colleges. They say that placement services are a must if the junior college is to fulfill its promise of helping individual students identify their potential in the world of work. Little has really been done here at the University of Cincinnati successfully implementing the two-year college graduate in the occupational marketplace. Fortunately, the faculty of the University College realizing this great dilemma, has

informally taken some of the responsibility for student counseling and job placement, and, by their own dedication and generosity have given help to their students. This necessary duplication of effort is done by University College faculty even though the staff of another college department is being paid for supposedly doing the work. The fact that some University College faculty perform this necessary function is conspicuously portrayed in review of the statistics of this study to follow.

Faculty involved with counseling students are most aware that many beginning college students are undecided as to their choice of available programs of study, and as many also have no particular field of study or occupational choice to which they wish to commit themselves for certainty. For this reason alone, the matter^{of} providing students with an efficient counseling service is of paramount importance. To emphasize how tragic a lack of good counseling can be, just look at the case of the student who is counseled into a career program who learns two years later when applying for entrance to another college that he will lose up to a whole year's credit. Permitting this condition to exist not only demonstrates a gross inefficiency on the part of the school, but is a waste of the students time and money, and many even think unforgiveable. The proper way of correcting such an objectionable and inequitable condition is by the adoption of a cross-campus accreditation plan where courses of comparable content and level at different colleges are given equal credit; however, in the absence of such a corrective plan, the only remaining way to handle this gross inequity is to properly advise students early that this inequity exists so the student is aware of his potential losses if he pursues certain programs. There are advantages to students who chose the most rapid plan for preparation for a job and select a

career program. To these students the matter of loss of credit is inconsequential. To the student who has some thought of possibly transferring to an upper college, the full acceptability of his earned credits is most important. The question of student counseling in program selection, career guidance and assistance in occupational placement is the primary purpose of this study. Has there been sufficient career counseling? By whom was it offered and suggestions for any possible improvement are questions of interest.

An ancillary contribution of this study could be enlightening data for faculty and administration. The results could be invaluable for future curriculum planning, program recommendation counseling, course material needs and an improvement in teaching techniques. Alumni response to this study could also contribute help and guidance to the faculty thought to be lacking in their counseling efforts. Faculty could possibly relate better to students if they were aware of alumni or former student constructive comments. A change in the amount of course needs in subjects in the liberal arts, sciences, humanities, etc. might be suggested by alumni in such a study as this. The data produced by this investigation could highlight conditions appearing to alumni as deficiencies; for example, inefficient counseling or lack of a job placement service.

Related to the above principle purposes of this study could also be the evidence in support of the Ohio State Board of Regents concern for greater conformance to the "technical" aspects of their two-year supported colleges. Attention to this matter of student counseling and job placement could aid in this effort. The OSBR say their greater percentage of financial support to career programs demands that top priority be given student counseling and placement. This study will provide evidence of administrative concern for the

refinement and development of career programs. It is intended that this study provide proof to support the primary and related purposes herein set forth.

Method Used

The most economical and effective method found for securing such information as stated in the Introduction and Purpose of this study was the use of the "Opinion Questionnaire." An appropriate questionnaire was designed, approved and mailed to the homes of each of the graduates of the University College classes of 1970, 1971, 1972, and 1973. A copy of this questionnaire is attached as "Exhibit A". A reply to the questionnaire was requested by a terse statement signed by Dean Joseph J. Samuels. A return addressed, no postage required envelope was provided. Current year graduates were selected so the responses to the questions would be fresh and meaningful.

A total of 2,292 letters were mailed to these alumni whose addresses were supplied by the University Alumni office. There were 618 returned questionnaires, or a total of 27% replies.

All of the graduates of these classes were included even though the purposes of this study might be thought to be more applicable to the graduates of the business programs. It was felt that this more inclusive coverage would give added value to the study and not in any way distract from the purposes of this report.

Separate from the statistics of this report, students and alumni were asked by personal interview the same questions as listed on the questionnaire, thinking that the relationship of the two types of responses might be significant.

Assumptions and Limitations

Specific assumptions and limitations were made for the purpose of this study as follows:

1. It was assumed that the alumni questioned would be honest and sincere in their responses, particularly to the subjective-type questions.
2. It was assumed that the graduates of these classes used were typical and representative of current University College students.
3. It was assumed that the respondents understood all the questions set forth in the questionnaire and gave honest answers with no biased implications.
4. It was assumed that the number of "no replies" to the question asking for their opinion of the value of occupational advice received could possibly be a negative feeling of reservation.
5. It was assumed that the replies to the question asking specific names of persons or places aiding them in job counseling was without personal prejudices.
6. It was assumed that the comments requested for suggested improvement in student counseling was a true expression of their feelings.
7. It was to be assumed that the number of replies to each of the different business programs was not intended to be an accurate proportion of actual enrollment in the programs.
8. It was to be assumed that "no replies" could be construed as neutral or negative feelings on the subject questions.

The study was limited to University College current graduates rather than to any other group of students because the subject of concern was specifically indigent to this College. It was believed that alumni would give the most objective, unbiased and realistic response. Responses from current students on campus might be more subject to bias or restriction because of everyday student-faculty administration relationships, which would

be of less value to this study.

Findings

One of the conspicuous findings was that many respondents said they thought the occupational counsel provided them was worth little, very little or insufficient. Statistically, 102 replies said this advice was worth little or very little (54 + 48). There were 373 "no replies" to this question #9. Question #10 asks if the advice given them was sufficient or insufficient, to which 183 answered insufficient. 128 said it was sufficient. 281 gave "no reply" which blends of conservative negativeness. A total of 285 or 48% responded to this question of occupational counsel negatively. A total of 245 replies or 41% said the counsel they received was worth much or was sufficient. A total of 394 or 67% said they received no job counsel at all to question #6; a total of 178 or 30% answered this question affirmatively. There were 20 "no replies" to this question.

The next most enlightening result of this study shows that of the total of 592 answers, 147 or 25% replied to question #7 that they received counsel or assistance from their faculty. There were 401 "no replies" indicating some degree of reservation to answering their question. Only 25 respondents, 4% said they received job assistance from the University central placement service called the Career Relations department. One response mentioned receiving counsel from the Dean, and 7 replies said they were counseled by an Assistant Dean.

Most of the respondents said in reply to question #3 that they were not continuing their education full-time, 350 replies or 59%. 227 or 38% said they were continuing full-time. This smaller figure were mostly the students who transferred to upper colleges after University College graduation.

Replies to question #4 shows 36 respondents unemployed, or 6%. A total of 513 were employed, or 87%.

In response to question #1 asking the applicable business program taken when in college, the highest number was 62 for the Retail Marketing and Sales Technology Program. Next highest was for the Pre-Business Administration Technology Program with a total of 58 replies. Following this was 51 replies for the Executive Secretarial Training Technology Program. 144 responses indicated other programs, accounting for the fact that this study included graduates of all programs.

The primary purpose of this study was to secure alumni opinion if they had received occupational counsel while in school, and if so, its value to them. It was believed that specifically requesting the name of the faculty or person who helped them in school would aid in validating the replies. Question #8 requested a positive or negative answer, and if positive the persons name was to be given. There were 120 positive replies to this question or 20%. There were 427 negative replies or 72%. There were 45 "no replies." It is interesting to note that three replies mentioned the Career Relations department, ^{and} one of its staff members as having given them job counsel and help. This is the name of the University central placement service.

Many of the University College faculty were mentioned by name as having given the respondent some counsel and/or occupational guidance. The statistics show a total of 30 different University College faculty mentioned, most of these faculty received one or two mentions, and one faculty was mentioned 33 different times. A member of respondents stated that other colleges or departments gave their counsel and the whole statistical breakdown is given here. The names of the individual faculty member making up these statistics will be provided upon request.

Department or staff indicated as having given counsel and guidance:

University College	-	30 faculty	-	total 105 replies
Career Relations	-	3 faculty	-	total 3 replies
Child Development	-	4 faculty	-	total 8 replies
Medical Center	-	1 faculty	-	total 1 reply
College of Education	-	1 faculty	-	total 1 reply
Police Science Dept.	-	1 faculty	-	total 1 reply
Police Dept. of City	-	1 faculty	-	total 1 reply
Educational Dev. Dept.	-	1 faculty	-	total 1 reply
Parent	-	4 faculty	-	total 4 replies
None	-	9 faculty	-	total 9 replies

Question #11 asking for comments and suggestions for the improvement of the occupational counsel to students was replied to by 211, or 31%. There were 381 "no replies". Categorizing these replies was necessary to make the report of these comments meaningful and useful.

Question #11: Comments or suggestions for improving the occupational counsel.

Total replies 211

No replies 381

Classification of graduate replies: (*names provided upon request)

A. Favorable: 100

1. A specific faculty * was helpful - 31
2. Counseling availability and job openings should be publicized - 26
3. Need more attention to counseling - 19
4. University College should have own counselors - 8
5. Reliance on some faculty member - 5
6. Career Relations Department was helpful - 4
7. Miscellaneous reasons - 7

B. Uncomplimentary - 94

1. Unaware of availability of counseling - 23
2. No counseling offered - 19
3. Career Relations Department not helpful - 19
4. Counseling offered not helpful - 12
5. Faculty* counseling unsatisfactory - 9
6. Didn't use any counseling - 7
7. Faculty Counsel that 2 year degree disadvantage - 6
8. Career Relations counsel that 2 year degree disadvantage - 3
9. Miscellaneous reasons - 6

Results from personally interviewing students and alumni on the same questions as those of the questionnaire showed a positive correlation on all questions. Those interviewed were either current University College students of business programs, or alumni now attending other colleges on campus.

Response to question #3 was that about as many business program students were planning to go on to upper colleges as those going to work; however, more than half the girls indicated plans to go to work at the completion of the 2 year degree program.

The answers to #6 was that few people helped them in job counseling. Most mentioned little help from the central placement service (Career Relations department). Replies on the value of this service were nearly all negative. A number of students said some one of their faculty had helped them in their job search.

Questions #9 and #10 were mostly replied to negatively and the students mentioning that the counseling service was very insufficient and needed improvement badly. A number suggested that the University College arrange

a student counseling service within the college and denounced the centralized service as too big, formal, and cumbersome with none of the staff really acting concerned about their job interests. The usual remarks made by students that they were asked by clerks in the Career Relations department to complete voluminous forms before anyone of importance would talk to them, and some students reported that counselors actually told them that no employers were interested in two-year graduates, and that they should pursue a four-year degree if they really expected to secure employment worthwhile. One student reported that they had worked in the Career Relations department part-time and they were told by the staff men that employers were not interested in the two-year associate degree graduates so it wasn't any use to include them on the forms mailed to employers listing the availability of graduates.

Students did not have as many comments or suggestions for the improvement of job counseling service to students but the alumni were more responsive to the questionnaire. The alumni attending upper colleges suggested many things in the interviews but most frequent was that the University College should develop their own counseling plans. Such comments as assigning this task to an interested assistant dean or faculty member with a business background. Suggestions were made to offer a course on the subject of how to secure employment and then bring in employers to speak to the class about the proper ways of job seeking.

The conclusions of the personal interviews matched fairly closely the results of the mailed questionnaire study.

Conclusions of the Study

1. A good number of University College alumni have favorable comments for the occupational counseling given to them while in school during

the years 1968 through 1973.

2. Respondents said a faculty member was the biggest source of counseling they received.
3. A considerable number of the responding alumni were uncomplimentary about the counseling offered to them. i.e., they said they thought there was none or that they were unaware of any being available.
4. Most significant was the fact that a number of replies specifically indicated that the centralized placement service (Career Relations department) of the University was of no help to them whatsoever.
5. Respondents said that any form of counseling that is offered students should be publicized well, and job openings listed other than on one bulletin board as is now being done.
6. Alumni said that more attention should be given to the matter of occupational counseling, and consideration given to the employment of job counselors for the exclusive use of the University College.
7. Few graduates of the University College said they had met with opposition to their having only a two-year associate degree, some by prospective employers, some by the Career Relations department of the University and some from faculty advisors of the University College.
8. A very small number of respondents said they had no need for job counseling while in school, that the Career Relations department was helpful to them and that they had always found some of their faculty willing to help them.

CV/km

EXHIBIT A

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL INQUIRY

Former Business Program Students

You can be very helpful if you will fill out this form and return it to us. An envelope for your reply is enclosed and requires no postage. We are trying to find out if you are employed, if it is in the field which you prepared while here at University College, and if you were assisted by anyone here at the University in securing employment. Did you receive any job counseling? If so, from whom; and, in your opinion, how valuable was this counseling?

1. Your University College Program: (check one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Data Processing | <input type="checkbox"/> General Secretarial Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Secretarial Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Secretarial Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Business Administration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Secretarial Training | <input type="checkbox"/> General Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Secretarial Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Marketing & Sales | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking and Finance |

2. Your last year in the University College (check one)

1972, 1971, 1970.

3. Are you continuing your education full time? Yes No

4. Are you employed? Full time Part time

5. Is your work closely related to the program you followed in the University College? Yes No

6. Did you receive any job counseling or advice while you were a student? Yes No

7. If "yes" above, from whom did you receive the counsel or assistance?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> University College Dean | <input type="checkbox"/> University College Faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University College Asst. Dean | <input type="checkbox"/> University Central Placement Office called Career Relations |

8. Did any person aid you occupationally? Yes No
If so, his or her name _____

9. If you did receive any occupational advice, was it worth much , little , or very little ?

10. Do you feel the occupational counsel offered was sufficient , insufficient ?

11. Any comments or suggestions for improving our occupational counsel of students you give us will be appreciated. (Please write on reverse side of paper.)

Joseph J. Samuels, Dean