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ABSTRACT

In a joint venture between the University of Arizona (UA) and the Pima County Community College District (PCCCD), the Partnership to Aid and Retain Transfer Students (PARTS) was designed and implemented to aid minority PCCCD students planning to transfer to UA. Specifically, the program sought to create faculty professional development activities across the curriculum, to increase transfer-student academic achievement by increasing student/faculty interaction, and to create a culturally sensitive academic environment. In Phase I and Phase II of PARTS, 68 students, 6 faculty members and 2 peer advisors participated. Faculty members conducted workshops and acted as mentors, while peer advisors held weekly meetings to discuss transfer topics. The program employed various instructional techniques, including the use of minority role models from the community, cooperative learning, student learning styles training, student self-esteem building, and classroom analogies relevant for minority students. To assess program impact, pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires were administered to the 32 Phase II students. Results, based on responses from half of the students, indicated the following: (1) 87% indicated that they felt more confident after PARTS; (2) 81% expressed a decreased apprehension regarding transfer; (3) 73% indicated that they received adequate feedback from mentors; (4) 94% felt more confident about being assertive in getting needed academic information; and (5) 81% felt the program should be open to everyone. Includes data tables and questionnaires. (KP)

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The University of Arizona

District Partnership Grant Final Report September 1993

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA/PIMA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP GRANT
FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 1993**

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In addition, we acknowledge the many faculty and staff, both from The University of Arizona and the Pima County Community College District, whose hard work and diligence helped make this project the success that it was. The program, particularly the faculty exchange, stands as tangible evidence supporting the importance and viability of inter-institutional collaboration.

Further, we trust the following document, as it has developed through the involvement and cooperation of faculty, staff, and students, will serve as a marker for future implementation. Finally, we hope it will act as a catalyst for continued dialogue on transfer and articulation issues that will ultimately lead to the betterment of tomorrow's transfer students seeking a higher education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a joint venture beginning September 1991 and concluding June 1993 The University of Arizona (UA) and the Pima County Community College District (PCCCD) designed, coordinated, and implemented a mentoring and instructional program, the Partnership to Aid and Retain Transfer Students (P.A.R.T.S.), aimed at facilitating and preparing minority PCCCD students planning on coming to the UA. The grant was set up to respond to many of the inherent issues and problems involved in the transfer process for minority students. The project's aim was to enhance transfer opportunities for minority students through academic support services, increase faculty-student interaction, offer supportive and accessible campus environments, and ensure cooperation between the participating institutions.

P.A.R.T.S. was designed with a set of specific objectives. These included instituting culturally relevant curriculum changes; identifying and presenting situations for interaction with faculty mentors; broadening minority transfer students' aspirations and academic experiences; informing students about the transfer process; preparing them for the academic demands of The University; and matching participants with UA minority upper division peer advisors.

To participate in the program a student had to be from a "minority" group (African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American), planning on transferring to the UA by fall 1992 or spring 1993, as well as having fulfilled a variety of academic requirements.

Including both Phase I and Phase II, 68 students participated in the project. They worked with a total of six faculty members from PCCCD and the UA and two UA peer advisors. Participating faculty offered expertise in English, humanities, fine arts, mathematics, and the sciences. They conducted workshops and acted as individual mentors for the students. The peer advisors offered weekly information meetings covering such topics as financial aid and UA retention services. Several methods were used to inform, encourage, and prepare students for the transfer process. These took a diversity of forms, i.e. training the faculty, providing workshops, offering a "transfer strategies" course. Participation in a summer bridge program (Transfer Summer Institute) was also made available to them.

Results showed students felt more confident, motivated, and self-assured after participating in the program. Specifically, they saw the personalized input of the faculty, project staff, and peer advisors to be very beneficial in preparing them for their transfer from PCCCD to the UA. Overwhelmingly, students were positive about their experience with the program. Outside of the program, "financial constraints" was cited as the major inhibiting factor in preventing a student from completing her or his baccalaureate. Monetary concerns, in the form of job constraints, also impacted some individuals' participation in the program, such that they had to be particular about the kinds of activities they could participate in on a regular basis. Whether seen through particular aspects or as a whole, students found the program to be a helpful and rewarding experience.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA/PIMA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP GRANT

INTRODUCTION

For a variety of cultural, social, and economic reasons minority students represent a disproportionate part of the community college population nationwide. As of 1991 they constituted 30% of those attending these schools. Yet, while there are still no national statistics available on the number and graduation rate of minority students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions, data collected at The University of Arizona (UA) indicates that the number of minority students transferring from the community college system is rising and that most are coming to the UA by way of Pima County Community College District (PCCCD).

In a joint venture beginning September 1991 and concluding June 1993 the UA and the PCCCD designed, coordinated, and implemented a mentoring and instructional program, the Partnership to Aid and Retain Transfer Students (P.A.R.T.S.), aimed at minority PCCCD students planning to transfer to the UA. The grant was set up to respond to many of the inherent issues and problems involved in the transfer process for minority students. It was hypothesized that by approaching this adjustment phase as it is occurring would not only smooth the transition but provide the minority transfer student the necessary tools for successfully completing his or her baccalaureate degree. The multifaceted aim of the project was to enhance transfer opportunities for minority students through academic support services, increased faculty-student interaction, supportive and accessible campus environments, and cooperation between the participating institutions.

GOALS

Specifically the aims were articulated as follows:

- To create faculty professional development activities across the curriculum for

implementing changes for minority students.

- To increase transfer student academic achievement in English, mathematics, and humanities by increasing student/faculty mentor interaction.
- To create a culturally sensitive academic environment at both PCCCD and the UA for minority students.

OBJECTIVES

A. Classroom Practices

1. To help participating faculty implement curriculum and classroom changes

B. Academic Training

1. To identify liaison/mentor faculty responsible for teaching and mentoring activities and course offerings.

C. Inter-Organizational Environment

1. To encourage student participants to share academic research, social ideas, experiences, and aspirations among themselves and with faculty mentors.
2. To offer at least one new transfer student orientation course about the transition process that is relevant to minority students and encourage participation in the UA's Transfer Summer Institute (TSI) at the conclusion of the student's first year in the project.
3. To involve the Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the PCCCD/UA Transfer Coordinating committee in monitoring the project's management.
4. To match participating students with UA minority peer junior and senior "advisors" to ensure a smooth transition to the university environment.
5. To involve students in workshops and seminars designed for upper division students in the traditional liberal arts.

PROJECT POPULATION

All student participants were ethnically from a "minority" group. They were enrolled at PCCCD and planning to transfer to the UA by the fall of 1992 or the spring of 1993. Additionally, the following criteria were used for selection into the project:

- Minimum grade point average of 2.5
- Successful completion of Math 70
- Successful completion of Writing 100
- Earned 24 credits

Thirty-two students participated in the second phase (academic year 1992-93) of the project compared to 36 during the first phase (academic year 1991-92). Contrary to most reports on minority transfer students, participants mirrored the traditional college age group cohort, with a majority in their early 20s. Hispanic students were the most widely represented in both phases (75% in Phase I and 72% in Phase II). African Americans (14%), Asian Americans (8%), and Native Americans (3%) comprised the remaining population of first phase participants. Phase II students were less diverse with 22 percent being African Americans and 6 percent Native Americans. Women outnumbered men for both Phase I and Phase II of the program (64% and 60% respectively).

Six faculty members, three from the UA and three from PCCCD, participated. They were matched by two general education categories: 1) English, humanities, and fine arts and 2) mathematics and science.

Throughout the life of the program two project-trained peer advisors held weekly information meetings with participants. In these sessions they discussed specifically defined transfer topics. These included admissions information, financial aid and college expenses, course transferability, academic advising, and UA retention services.

METHODS

The following intervention practices and methods were used to implement the objectives of Phase II of the University of Arizona/Pima County Community College District Partnership Grant.

A. Classroom Practices

1. Faculty attended three "hands-on" training sessions designed to enhance transfer opportunities for minority students. These workshops focused on changing classroom environments, curricular modification, and strategy development. Using the UA's Center for Transfer Students Faculty Training Program model, the following instructional practices were employed: minority role models from the community; cooperative learning techniques; student learning styles training, student self-esteem building, and relevant classroom analogies for minority students. (For a copy of the Curriculum Development Report contact the Center for Transfer Students, The University of Arizona.) Training sessions were conducted by consultants from the Center for Transfer Students and held once during Phase I of the project. None were held during Phase II because faculty participants were the same.

Conclusions and implications derived from the workshops were presented at a workshop at the Arizona Advising Conference held on the 24th of September 1993 on the campus of Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. The conference, which annually brings together faculty and academic advisors and counselors from all over the state, offered an excellent opportunity and means for disseminating information about the aims and objectives of this program and other Partnership Program I and II projects.

B. Academic Training

1. The Academic Affairs Subcommittee of PCCCD/UA Transfer Coordinating Committee acted in an ongoing evaluating capacity. As during Phase I, the committee kept abreast of the program's activities and progress throughout Phase II. Faculty ran workshops and acted as academic and social mentors for the P.A.R.T.S. participants.

C. Inter-organizational Environment

1. PCCCD and UA faculty from the liberal arts areas were assigned as academic and social mentors for students by the Academic Affairs Subcommittee of PCCCD/UA Transfer Coordinating Committee. Each instructor was responsible for mentoring six to ten students.

2. To make the transfer to the UA more relevant to minority students a human development education (HDE) course was offered through P.A.R.T.S. (see Appendix A for syllabus). HDE 105, "Transfer Strategies," opened to both program and non-program participants, was developed to disseminate important information (i.e. admissions, orientation, UA criteria for transfer) to potential transfer students. The course was developed by the HDE College Subject Area Committee and the project staff and given at the PCCCD campus by UA and PCCCD faculty. The two credit course was taught each semester of the 1992-1993 academic year. In addition to HDE 105 students were encouraged to participate in the Transfer Summer Institute, a four week on-campus liberal arts academic program offered at the UA. Like HDE 105, several of its courses were co-instructed by PCCCD and UA faculty.

3. Peer advisors worked with project participants in a one-on-one mentoring relationship. These students were trained by the staff of the project.

4. During the course of the academic year four different workshops were presented. They were facilitated by the UA and PCCCD faculty and Center for Transfer Students staff. Attendance, although strongly encouraged, was not mandatory for participation in the rest of the program. Two workshops, one on financial aid and the other on curriculum development, were held during the second phase of the program. The former focused on accessibility and options for financial aid, the latter looked at traditional curriculum presentation and the need to add relevant information on the contributions of people from non-majority cultural backgrounds.

RESULTS

To assess the impact of the program on the students pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires (Appendix B and C respectively) were administered. The pre-evaluation questionnaire was administered during the fall of 1992 for Phase II participants; the post-questionnaires were completed at the conclusion of Phase II in the spring of 1993. The responses received for this phase largely reflect the responses of Phase I participants (see Progress Report, June 16, 1992).

Forty-four percent (14/32) of Phase II program participants responded to this survey. Its findings showed that students had very high expectations for the project for almost all aspects of their higher education ranging from decisions to continue their education towards a baccalaureate to learning about the University's student service system. In only a couple of areas did they see no connection between participation in P.A.R.T.S. and aspects of their academic life and environment. These were in the areas of making new friends and concerns related to difficulty of coursework. (See Figures 1a and 1b for a complete breakdown of student responses to this questionnaire.)

The response rate for the post-evaluation questionnaire was higher than for the pre-questionnaire. Fifty percent (16/32) of the participants completed post-evaluations. The following represents the results of that survey. As with the pre-survey, a Likert scale was used. (For Section A students were asked to use a graded scale from 1 to 5 to indicate "strong agreement" to "strong disagreement" with a presented statement). Students were asked to evaluate the various phases of the program. The following reflects the findings of that survey. Responses to Section A dealt with five categories of concern:

Motivation and confidence: Eighty-seven percent (13/15) of the respondents said they strongly agreed to agreed that they felt more confident about attending a four-year institution after participating in P.A.R.T.S. The same percentage felt an increased in motivation for going to the UA. Almost an equal number (81%, 13/16) expressed a decrease in apprehension about going to a four-year institution at the end of the program.

Impact of faculty: Although not as strongly stated as in other areas, students expressed an increase in career focus as a result of their faculty mentors' input (53.3%, 8/15). Many indicated that they felt they received adequate feedback and time from their mentors (73%, 11/15). Overall, they saw their faculty mentors as supportive (87%, 13/15).

Support among participants: While students felt like they were among friends in the project (75%, 12/16) there wasn't an overwhelming sense of camaraderie among them (50%, 8/16). This finding was not too surprising as many of the students, on entering the program, did not consider this an important criterion for the project to fulfil.

Level of Self-assuredness: People felt more confident about being assertive in getting needed academic (94%, 15/16) and non-academic information (88%, 14/16) after finishing the program.

Accessibility of P.A.R.T.S. to other (non-minority) students: Eighty-one percent (13/16) thought the program should be open to everyone.

A detailed view of Section A is offered in Figure 2.

For the second set of questions (Section B, questions 2-15) participants were asked to place each response option according to a ranking from 1 - 5, with 1 representing the highest ranking and 5 the lowest. (See Figures 3, 4, and 5 for a detailed breakdown of responses to questions in this section.)

For most students the elements of P.A.R.T.S. that had the greatest impact (rated either "1" or "2") centered on the importance of personal interaction with staff, peers, and faculty. Of those responding, 77 percent (10/13) noted the importance of the project's staff and peer advisors; 69 percent (9/13) the "support of faculty mentors;" and 54 percent (7/13) the role of "faculty/student exchanges." When it came to what participants found to be the most important deciding factors for transferring to a

four-year university, they ranked financial aid (73.3%, 11/15), having a clear career goal (72%, 10/14), and possessing adequate information about the University (66.7%, 10/15) as the top three determining issues. The most frequently chosen reason for possibly not finishing the baccalaureate degree program was that the costs might be too great (84%, 11/13). Seventy-five percent (9/12), however, indicated they were "absolutely certain...[they would] obtain a degree."

The first three questions of Section C (see Figure 6 for detailed information on this section, questions 15-18) elicited information on workshop, group session, and faculty mentor/student meeting attendance. Most of those responding (47%, 8/17) went to one or two workshops. Forty-four percent (7/16) went to one or two group meeting sessions and 38 percent (6/16) met with their faculty mentor three or four times during the semester.

When asked if "participation in P.A.R.T.S. changed [their] mind[s] about a major field of study" 75 percent (12/16) indicated "no, they remained happy with their original choice." Yet, the program still appeared to have had an important impact on the participants with 69 percent (11/16) responding "yes" when asked if participation in P.A.R.T.S. encouraged them to continue their education.

Finally, regarding intent, most students (71%, 10/14) indicated they would be transferring to the UA the following semester with 14 out of 15 noting they would be coming in as full-time students. On the whole, 81 percent anticipated completing their degrees 1.5 to 2 years subsequent to entering the University.

DISCUSSION

Overall, participation in P.A.R.T.S. has shown to be a very positive experience for most who have been a part of it. Certain areas of the project have been particularly important to students and appear to have had a major impact on them. This may have influenced their expression of increased motivation, confidence, and assertiveness. The support received from faculty, staff, and peer advisors has proven to be very valuable for students. In fact, "support" and "workshop interaction" stand out

against group meetings, the "Transfer Strategies" course, residential setting, and ethnic identity as the more helpful and significant components of the program. Interestingly, the support and advice received seems to be much more important to participants than the friendship and camaraderie that could develop among them.¹ This finding should not be looked at in isolation. Rather it should be seen in conjunction with other factors, namely attendance at events, solidification and unaltered nature of their educational goals, and the pressing and consistent nature of financial concerns. Although these students reflect the traditional age of the "typical" undergraduate population they reflect a direction, seriousness, and financial concern that draws them apart from many of their cohort. Using the flexibility of the program to their advantage, many only attended seminars and workshops that specifically reflected their needs. Others only sought faculty mentors with specific problems or concerns rather than as a regular scheduled occurrence.² Also, as many held full or part time jobs, attendance at all functions was neither always feasible nor practical. Regrettably this played an important role in why so few were able to take advantage of the Transfer Summer Institute. As evidenced by their responses to the post-evaluation, "financial concerns" had the potential of being a major factor in deciding whether or not the bachelor's degree could be completed.

Since time was so critical for these students, it is suggested that the faculty be more aware of their appointment schedules and more accommodating in their availability in the future. All instructors were not equally attentive to these issues, sometimes leaving students waiting for forgotten appointment hours. Yet, even with this criticism, it is important to note that when the faculty were there students appeared to have been well satisfied and rewarded by their encounters. In the future it might be helpful to ensure faculty accountability either by having their offices hours at their home institution and/or having students make individual appointments at specified times.

Finally, although this program was responding to a definite need of minority students transferring to a four-year institution, they themselves expressed relatively little desire for being separated from the

general population. This, as mentioned earlier, could be the result of the expectations they brought with them about the program or the particular needs and concerns they had. It should be determined whether exclusion of non-minority students is necessary and what the ramifications would be for opening it up to other students. Even if it is decided to make the program available to all students cultural and social sensitivity in the classroom and relevant role models should remain as integral components of the project. Being a non-minority does not mean this is not an important sensitivity lesson to learn and practice.

Endnotes

¹ It was also quite telling to note that an overwhelming majority of those responding to the questionnaire thought the program should be open to all students. This suggests that they saw P.A.R.T.S. less as a program of solidarity and more as an important and vital service for all potential transfer students.

² An exception to this rule was the frequency with which many met with their peer advisors. This may have been the result of several factors i.e. the peer advisors were consistently there at scheduled times, there was a clearly defined discussion topic for each meeting and, the mentors could empathize and relate their own past experiences as minority transfer students to the participants' experiences.

FIGURES

Figure 1a
Pre-Evaluation Questionnaire (Fall 1992)
Questions 1-5

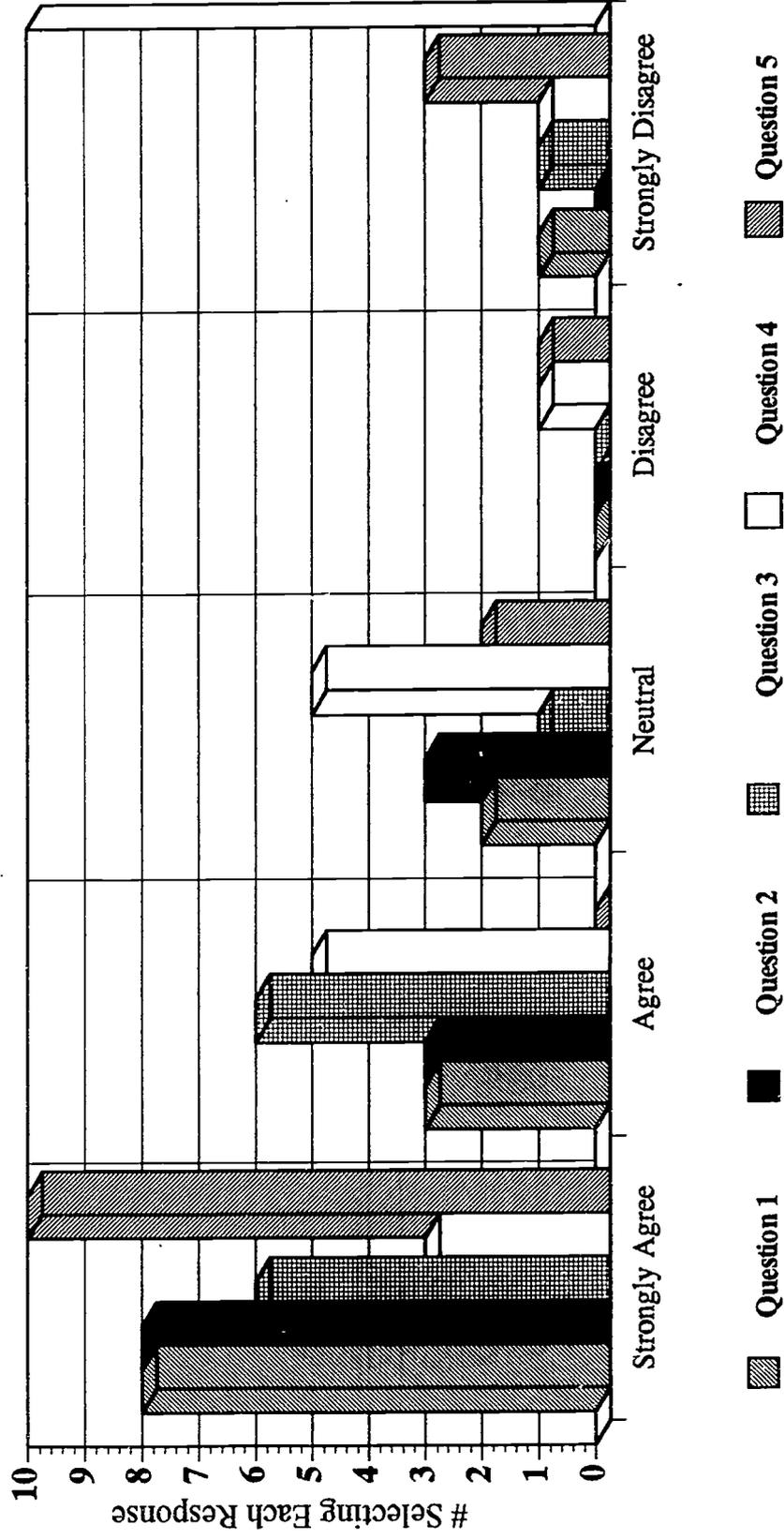


Figure 1b
Pre-Evaluation Questionnaire (Fall 1992)
Questions 6-10

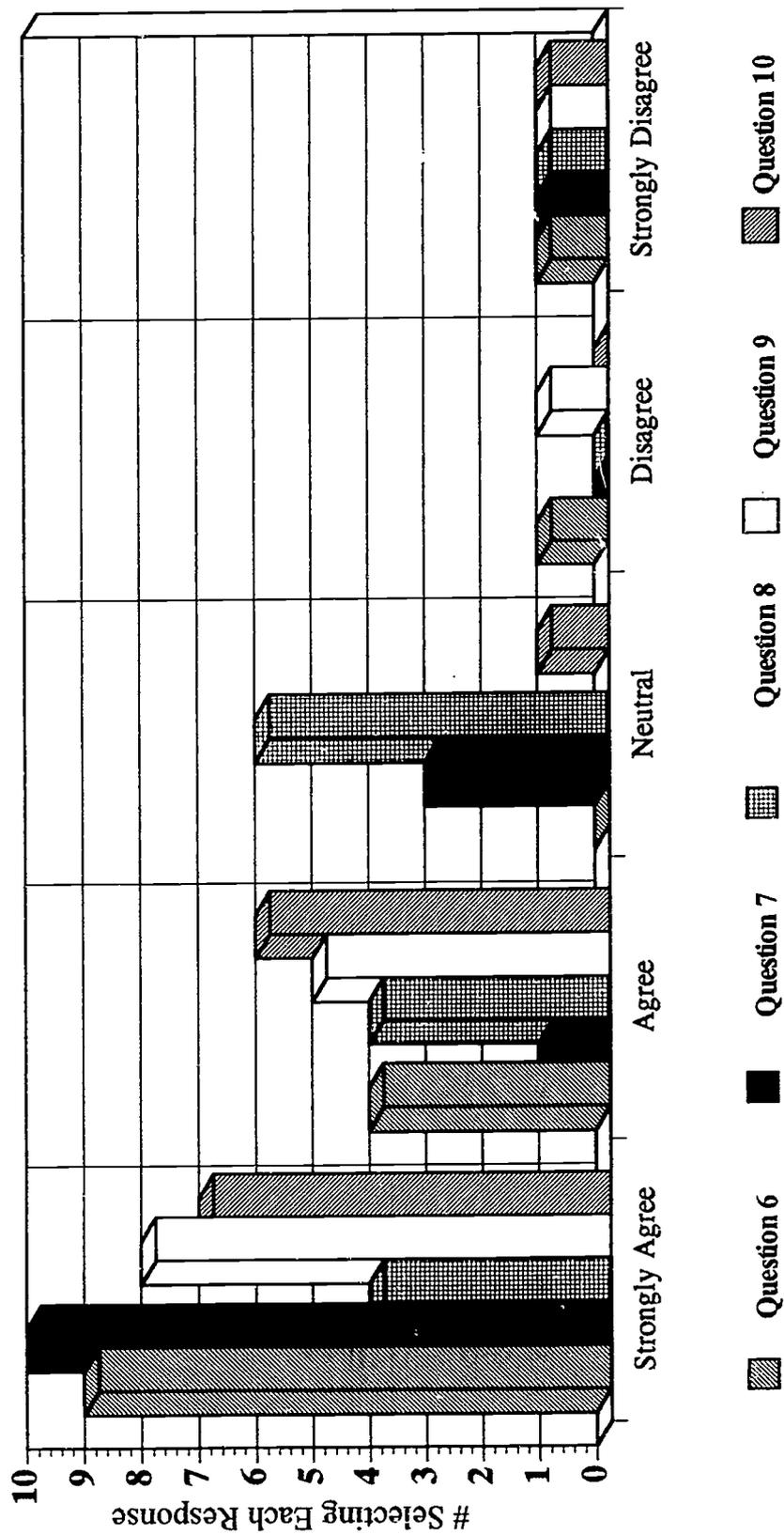


Figure 2a
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Questions 1-5

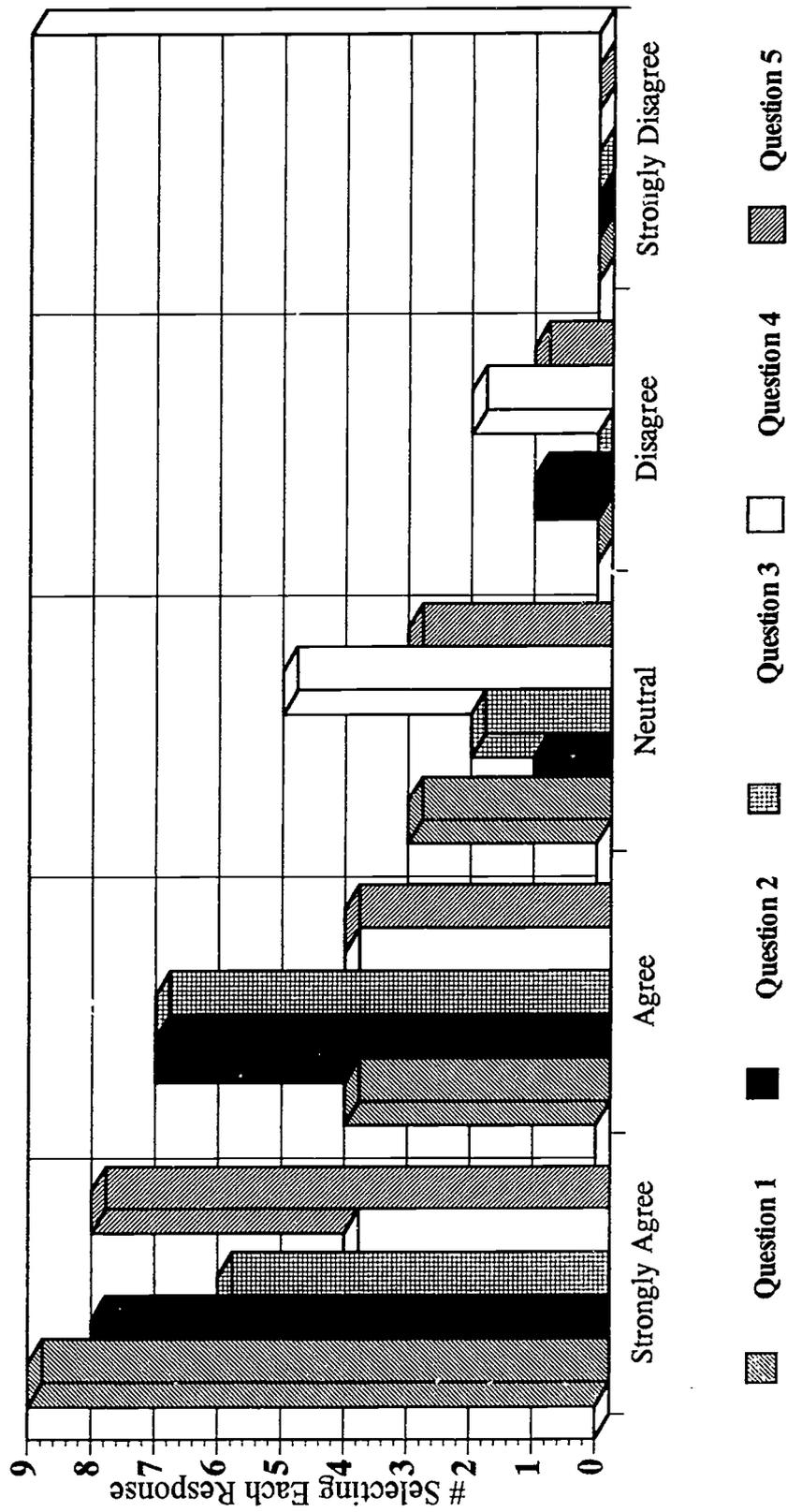


Figure 2b
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Questions 6-11

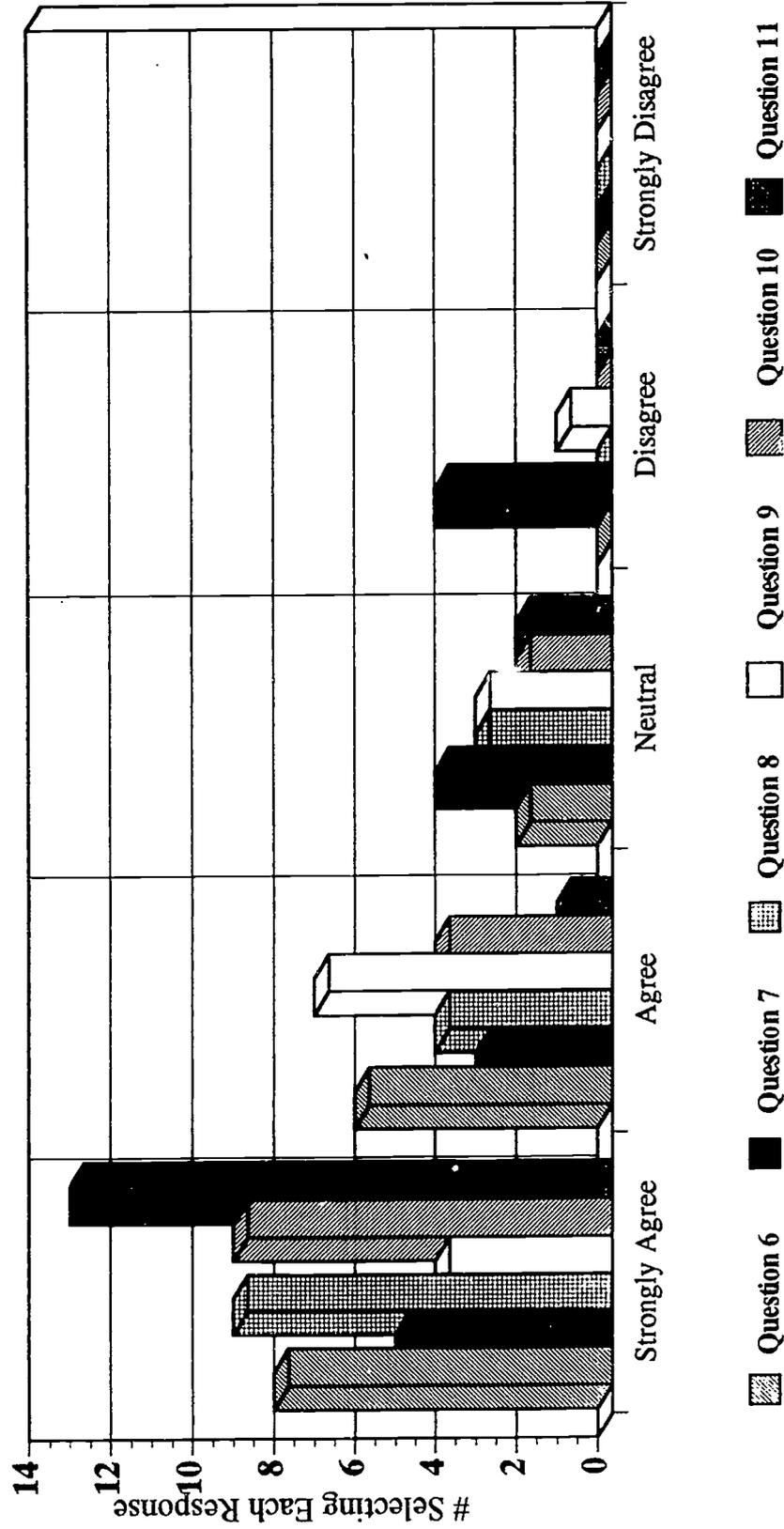


Figure 3a
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 12

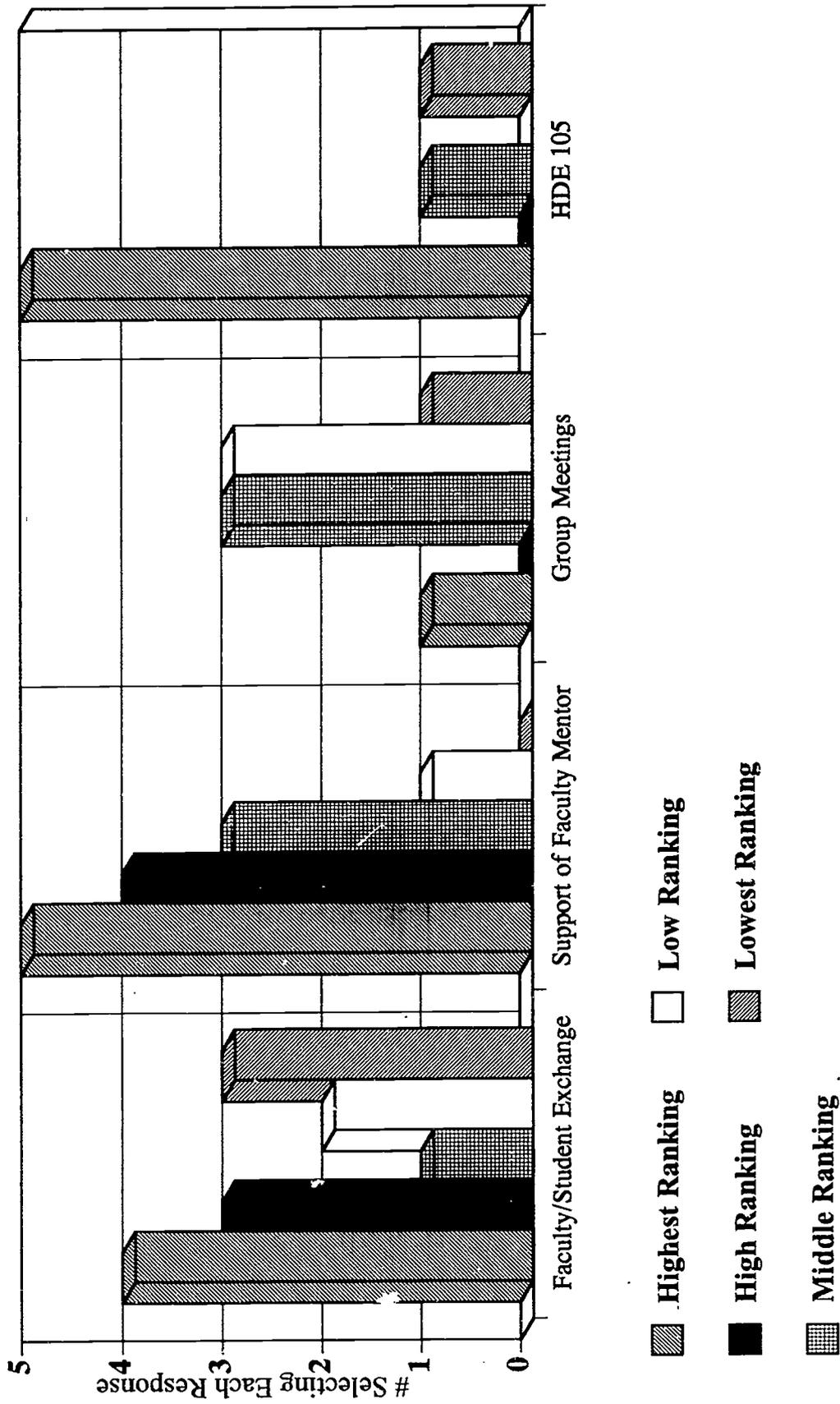


Figure 3b
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 12

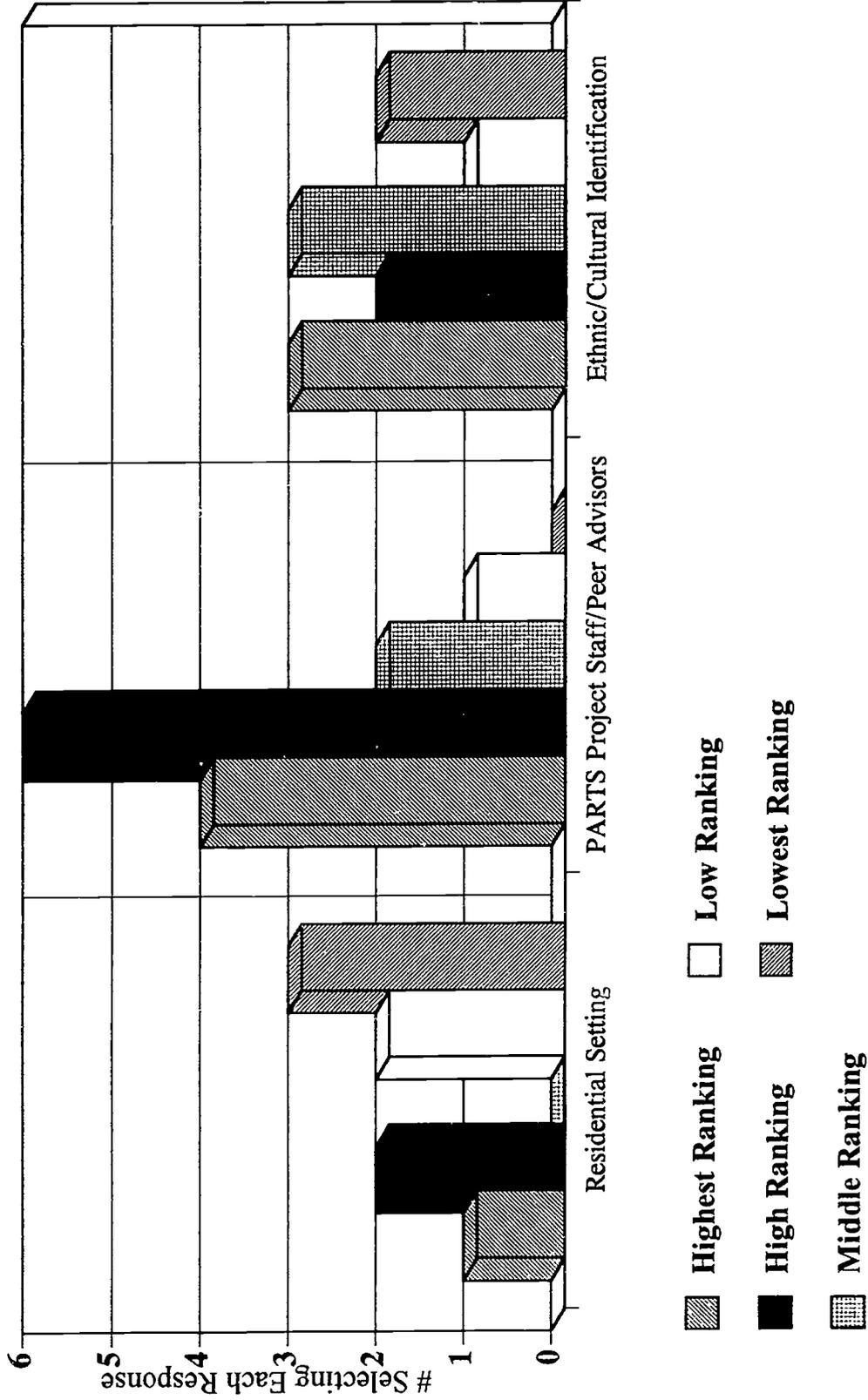


Figure 4a
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 13

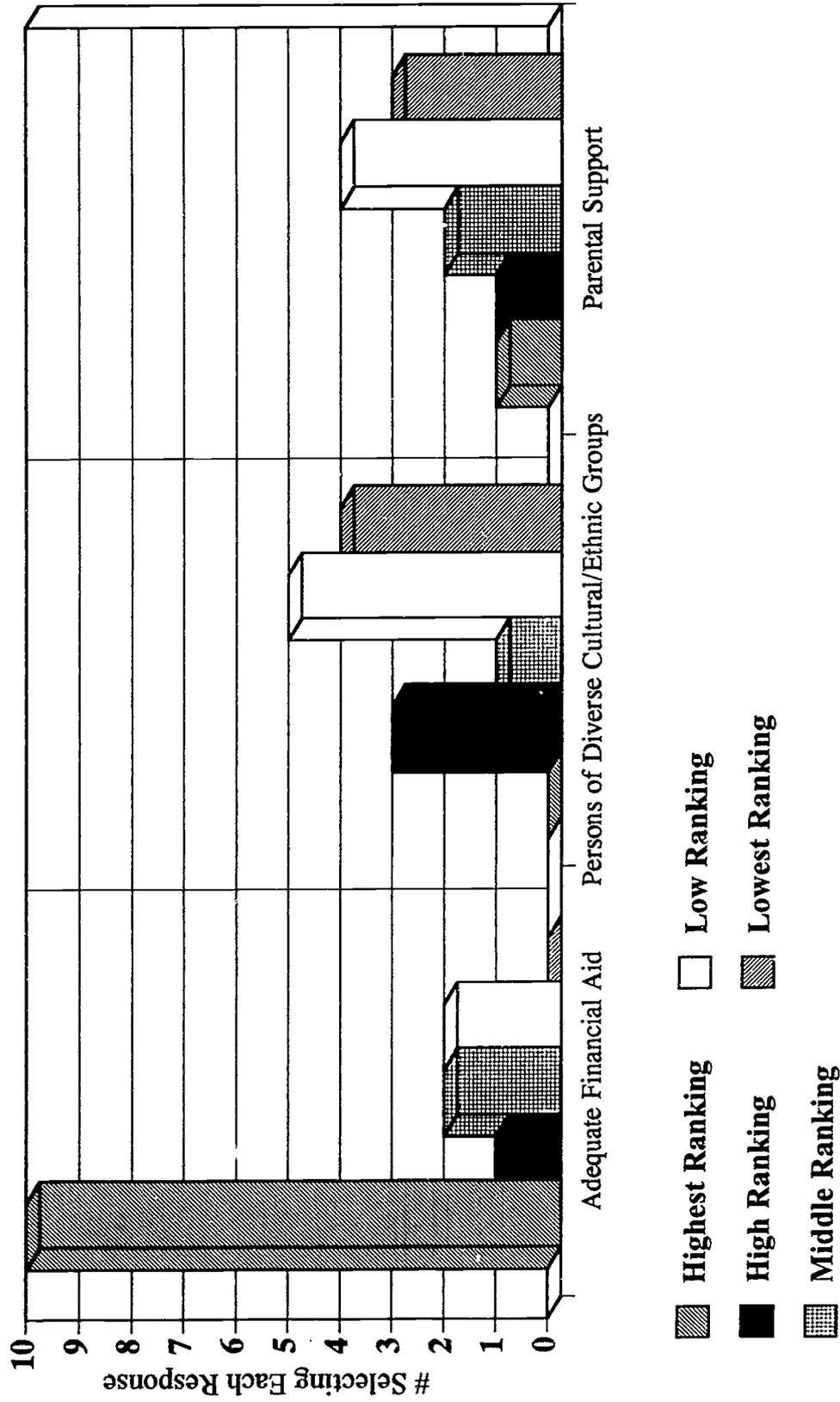


Figure 4b
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 13

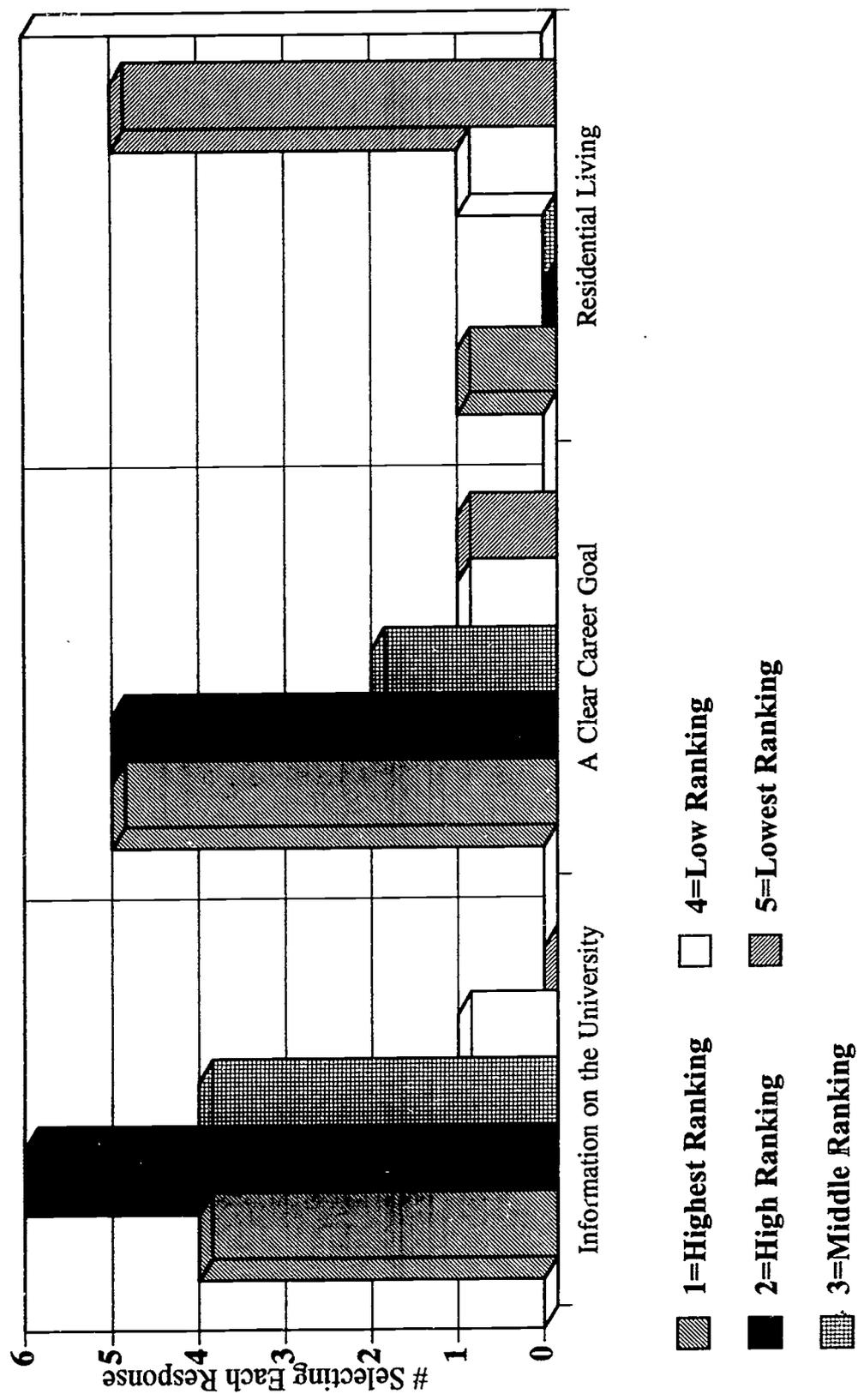


Figure 5a
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 14

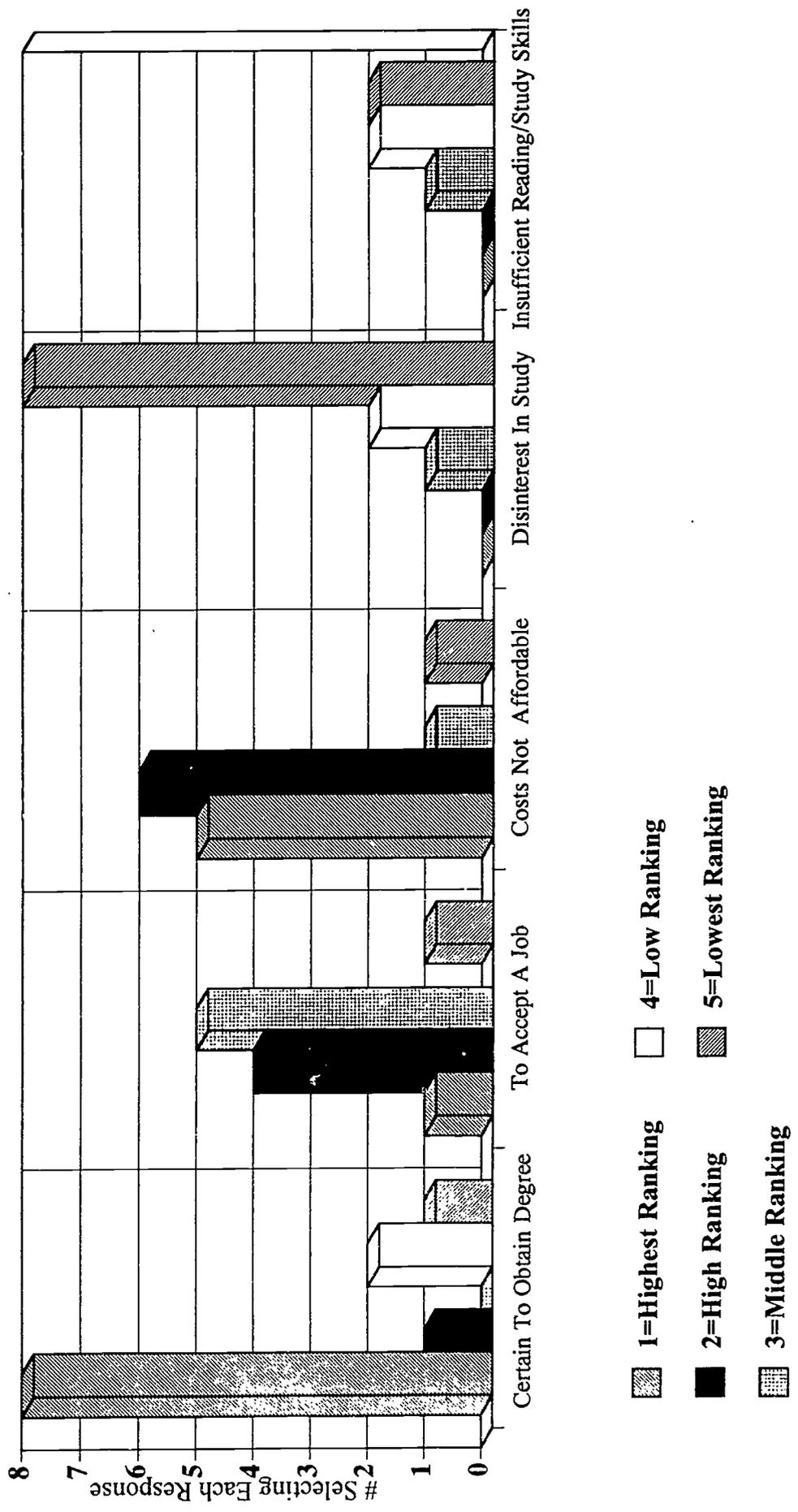


Figure 5b
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Question 14

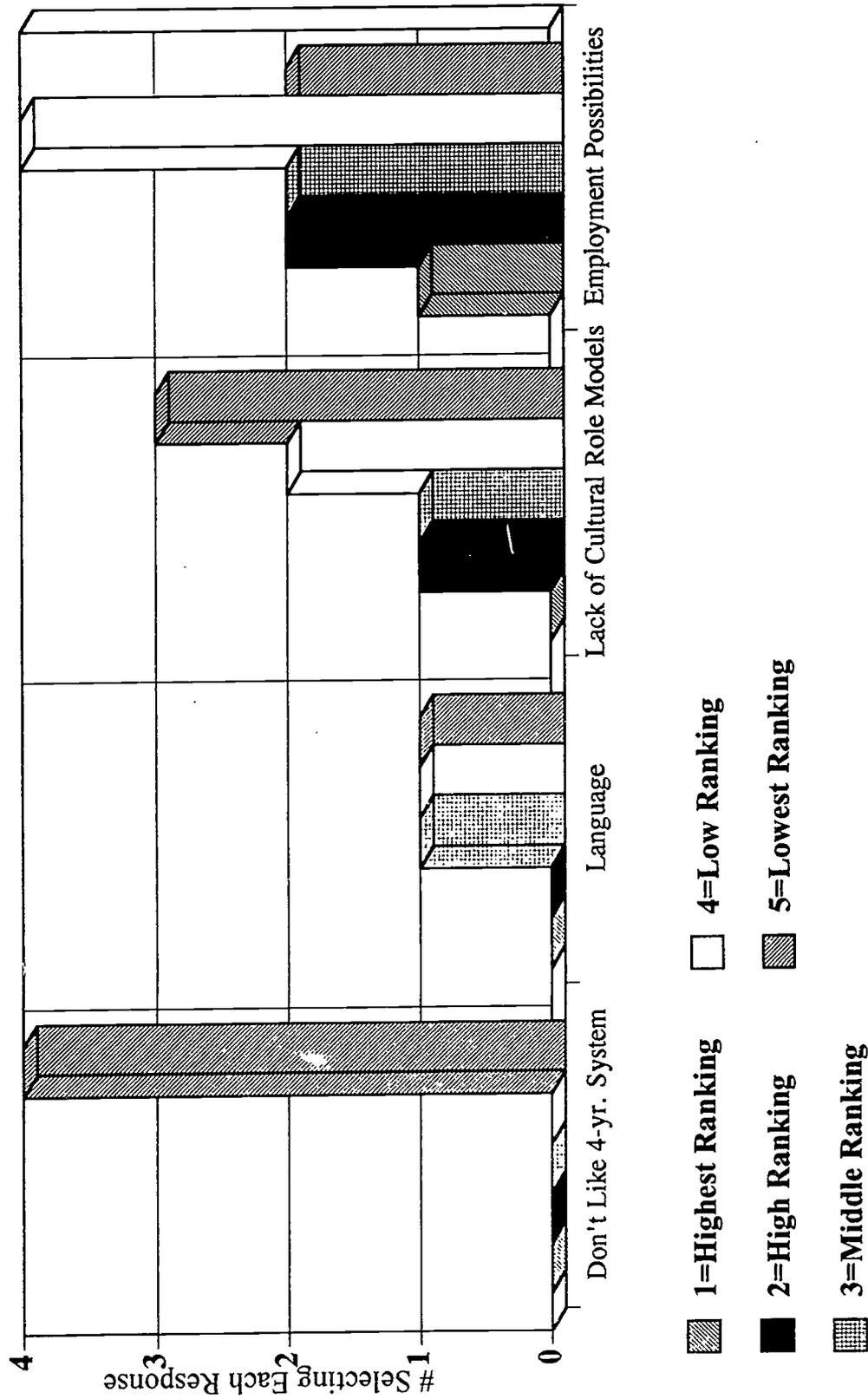
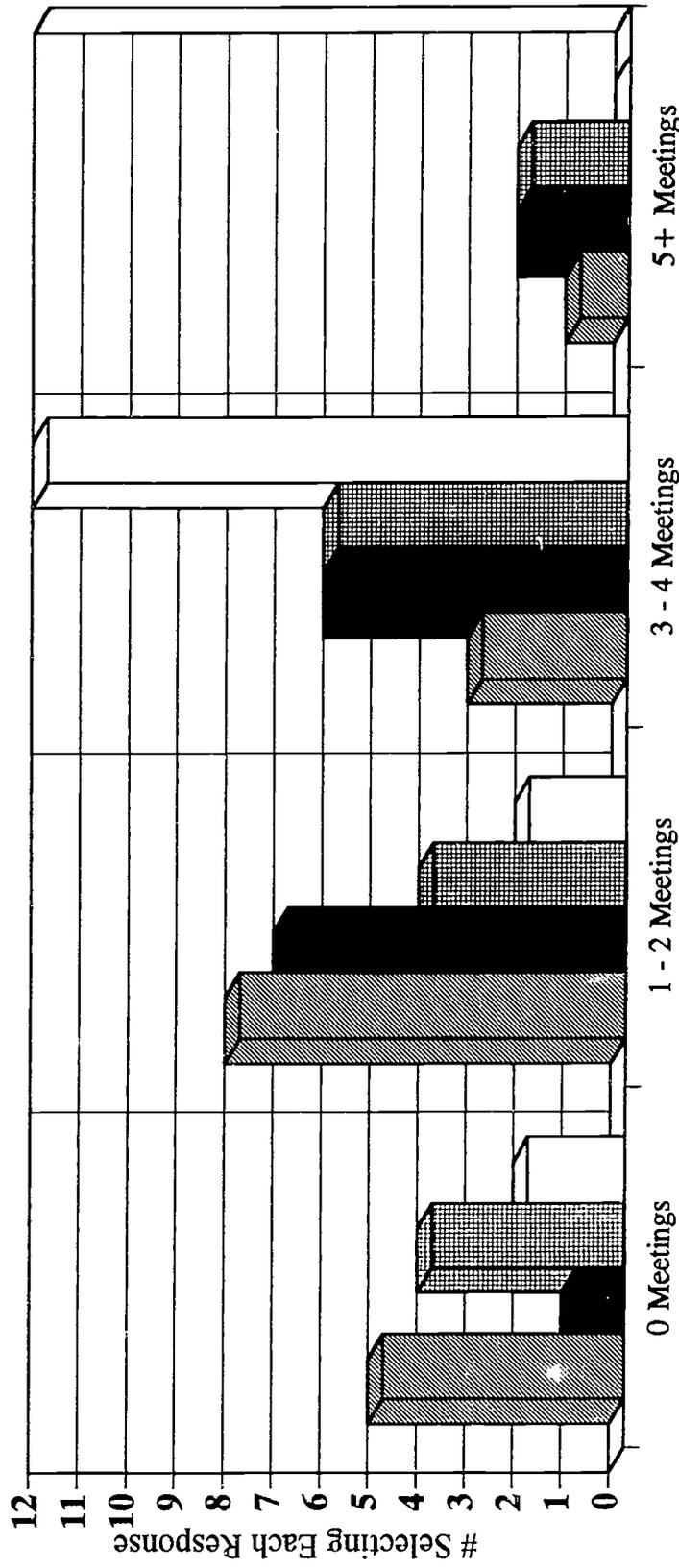


Figure 6
Post Evaluation Questionnaire (Spring 1993)
Questions 15 - 18



Question 15

Question 16

Question 17

Question 18

APPENDICES

Course Schedule

Wednesday

2:40 - 4:30

CC213

The course is divided into three sections: (1) evaluation of the status of each student; (2) familiarization with the University of Arizona; and (3) development and implementation of your personal strategy.

SECTION I

- Aug. 25 --Introduction to the course, review of syllabus and requirements.
Historical view of PCC students transferring to UA.
- Sept. 1 --Parallel process; PCC resources, UA resources. UA degree/program structure.
- Sept. 8 --PCC/UA catalog review and exercise. CEG, Booklink, UA advising, Center for Transfer Students.
- Sept. 15 --UA representative addresses West and Downtown Campus HDE 105 classes. Meet at PCC Downtown Campus, RE Bldg, Room 2.

SECTION II

- Sept. 22 --UA campus tour; Meet at UA Harvill Bldg, Room 428.
- Sept. 29 --UA Admissions/Orientation presentation, Meet at UA Harvill Bldg, Room 428.
- Oct. 6 --PCC classroom, review UA tour, Admissions/Orientation presentations.
- Oct. 13 --UA Financial Aid/Scholarship presentation, Meet at UA Harvill Bldg., Room 428.
- Oct. 20 --UA Library tour, Meet at UA Main Library, Lobby.
- Oct. 27 --PCC classroom, review Financial Aid/Scholarship/Library presentations.
- Nov. 3 --UA Student Services/Activities, Meet at UA Harvill Bldg, Room 428.
- Nov. 10 --PCC classroom, review Student Services/Activities presentation.
Guest lecturer, UA Advisor --how to approach an advisor.

SECTION III

- Nov. 17 --Transfer Portfolio/Strategy Statement.
- Nov. 24 --UA advisor; students make an appointment with their UA advisor.
NO CLASS MEETING!
- Dec. 1 --Submit Transfer Portfolio/Strategy Statement.
- Dec. 8 --Final Class, Pot-luck. Transfer Portfolio/Strategy Statements returned.

14. A high percentage of university students typically leave before receiving a degree. If this should happen to you, what would be the most likely cause? (rank 1 to 5)

- absolutely certain I would obtain a degree
- to accept a good job
- the costs would be more than I could afford
- disinterest in study
- insufficient reading or study skills
- don't like four-year system
- language
- lack of cultural/ethnic role models
- employment responsibilities

Comments? _____

SECTION C

15. How many of all the scheduled workshops and presentations did you attend?

- 0
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 4
- 5 or more

16. How many of the group meeting sessions did you attend?

- 0
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 4
- 5 or more

17. How many times did you meet with your faculty mentor?

- 0
- 1 to 2
- 3 to 4
- 5 or more

18. Has your participation in P.A.R.T.S. changed your mind about a major field of study?

- yes
- no, not applicable since I never had a major field of study.
- no, I am happy with the major I had selected originally.
- still undecided.

19. Has attending P.A.R.T.S. led you to decide to continue your education? Yes _____ No _____

Please comment: _____

If so, when do you expect to transfer? _____

Will you be a full-time or part-time student? Full time: _____ Part time: _____

When do you expect to complete your degree? _____