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.
I expect to find that SUNY/B...

Survey Study 1
1971 Freshmen

University Research
Division of Student Affairs and Services
State University of New York at Buffalo
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 cannot 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.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREFACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIST OF TABLES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>HERE THEY ARE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present Values</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations of the Next Four Years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Influences to Attend College</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternatives to College</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of a College Degree</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations of SUNY/B</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>LIVING AND LEARNING</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residence Hall Living</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Living at Home</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>NEEDS, WORRIES AND WISHES</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Most Needed</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worries</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I Had My Way</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSTSCRIPT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The most important thing in my life now...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In the next four years, I...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My decision to go to college was most influenced by...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If I weren't going to attend college, I would...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The most important thing about a college degree...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I expect to find that SUNY/B...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Residence hall living...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Living at home with my parents while going to college...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I hope that my professors...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The one thing I most need to know about college...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The thing that worries me most about college...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>If I had my way, college...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I expect to find that SUNY/B...
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>enjoyment/happiness/interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finding, understanding, learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>about myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>adjusting/growing/making the most of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>my future/achieving my goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finding a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>me/myself/my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>personal problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>school/college/going to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>completing my education/getting my degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>graduate, professional school/becoming a doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>doing well/grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finding a major/career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>present, specific relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>general, future relationships/interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISCELLANEOUS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>my job/finding a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO RESPONSE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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_

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

\[ N = 205 \]

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

Self was sometimes mentioned in conjunction with another influence.

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.

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

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

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*
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, learning behind it</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indication of accomplishment, ability</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite for further study, graduate school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VOCATIONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket to better, more interesting jobs</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience/growth/achievement</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status/prestige/opens doors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about people</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opens doors (unspecified)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing/not important</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you do with it</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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

6
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 reasons. 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7</th>
<th>Responses to the incomplete sentence: Residence hall living...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents N=107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good/great</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity for social interaction, development</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contributes to independence, growth</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fun</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okay/good for awhile</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academically advantageous</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new experience/different</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult/hard to adjust</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crowded/lonely</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficult/hard to adjust</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the birds/not for me</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES/DEPENDS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISCELLANEOUS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know/not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSCELLANEOUS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO RESPONSE</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO RESPONSE</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

% of Residents 346

% of Commuters 43
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
A no conceAn ob 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
Response to the incomplete sentence:
Living at home with my parents while going to college...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commuters N=87</th>
<th>Residents N=107</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Commuters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>% of Residents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>okay/not bad</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>okay/not bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good/great</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>fine/best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financially helpful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotionally supportive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfortable/convenient</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better for studying</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not a good idea</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>wouldn't like it/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anticipate problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>drag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>terrible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financially necessary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>hinder independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>miss part of college life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEUTRAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what I plan to do/of</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no importance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financially necessary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>too far away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>NO RESPONSE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 all it is you more independence in some ways, 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
Others thought that it would deprive them of an essential dimension of college experience.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good teachers/knowledgeable/competent</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic/interesting/stimulating</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open-minded/flexible/fair</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>easy</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding/human/friendly/helpful</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care about students</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take an interest in me</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get to know, understand me</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO RESPONSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

60
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...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 205</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to adjust, cope</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether it will meet my needs/what it will offer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how or where I fit in, react</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to grow, get the most out of it</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACADEMIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what courses to take and when/what they will be like</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difficulty/whether I can handle it</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty expectations, behavior</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what major to select</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what options are open</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADMINISTRATIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red tape/credit structure/procedures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people/how to meet people, make friends</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life style/campus culture/what is going on</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MISCELLANEOUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't know</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial aspects, resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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

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

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*

ISCELLANEOUS 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

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

would be as informal 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
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 tenth 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 lifestyle 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.
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.