

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF RESIDENTS WHO VOLUNTARILY  
WITHDREW FROM OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FALL 1980

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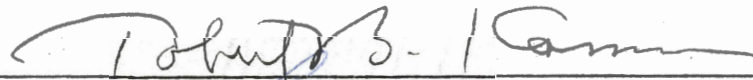
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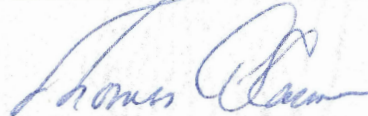


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## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### A. Introduction

During the past several years, attrition has become an area of growing concern to college administrators in the United States. In addition to numerous major studies, many colleges and universities have conducted their own extensive institutional self-studies. What is the cause of this increased concern? Has student attrition in fact grown noticeably worse?

In a 1981 study, Vincent Tinto pointed out just how little the attrition problem has actually changed. Looking at past enrollment data from institutions throughout the country, Tinto discovered that the percentage of students who enrolled and never obtained degrees had remained somewhat constant over the last 100 years. The only major fluctuation occurred as result of World War II's impact on the nation's campuses.<sup>1</sup> Attrition had remained fairly stable over the past century.

In a major study on retention conducted by Robert Iffert in 1957 for the Office of Education, the problem of student attrition was described, "It appears that slightly less than 40 percent of the freshmen class

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent Tinto, "Student Disengagement Revisited: Some Thoughts on the Limits of Theory and Practice in Dropout" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting for the Association of Study in Higher Education, March, 1981), p. 4.

will remain at the institution of the first enrollment ... about six out of ten freshmen will eventually receive degrees."<sup>2</sup> The facts that over twenty years have passed since Iffert's major study and that these relative figures remain constant seem to indicate that the student concerns that led to attrition have remained constant as well.

What impact does attrition have on an institution and its students? "From the institutional point of view, attrition has a heavy impact on institutional operations and finance."<sup>3</sup> The growing cost of administering each student's matriculation is certainly an important reason for increasing the number of students that remain. "From the student's point of view the effect of dropping out, although difficult to gauge, is also another important aspect of the attrition problem."<sup>4</sup> Why would so many students proceed through all the "red tape" of the complex admissions requirements, the search for housing, and arrive on campus and not survive the first year? Researchers indicate that the time between original enrollment and the start of classes in the second year is the time of the greatest risk. Pantages and Creedon ask that more attention be focused on what the student's reaction is. Does a student who drops out of college later find "academic, vocational, and personal success?"<sup>5</sup> A study at Princeton

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of Education, Retention and Withdrawal of College Students, U.S. Office of Education Bulletin, 1958, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>Timothy J. Pantages and Carol F. Creedon, "Studies of College Attrition: 1950-1975," Review of Educational Research, XLVII (1978), p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence A. Pervin, Louis E. Reik, and Willard Dalrymple, ed., The College Dropout and the Utilization of Talent (New York, 1966), p. 48.



University conducted during the 1960's described immediate and long-term effects on college dropouts. In some cases, students had eventually returned to complete a degree, and the effects of dropping out were not very noticeable. When students remained permanently away from the academic institution, their vocational performances were not significantly different, but their personal success seemed less satisfying. "In every one of the three classes [researched in the Princeton study], more of the dropouts than nondropouts reported having a previous marriage terminated by divorce."<sup>6</sup>

Is dropping out of college always the wrong thing to do? Should faculty and administrative personnel attempt to eliminate attrition entirely? It appears that some students are not academically prepared to compete in college. Also, some students are not as emotionally mature, and for them staying in college could mean "routinely marking time on a campus without personal benefit."<sup>7</sup> For many students the decision to drop out of college may be beneficial; Pervin described it as:

beneficial, for it may provide a constructive alternative to stalemate or even serious psychological disequilibrium, at a time when the student is still in a stage of development in which remaining in college represents an impossible dilemma. It need not be interpreted that a student's education has been halted for life.<sup>8</sup>

By researching the effects of attrition on an institution and its students, a better understanding of the impact of attrition should be developed. The result of this will be that administrators and faculty at that

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 245-246.

institution will be better equipped to confront many facets of the problem and will be better prepared to help a student in the decision to withdraw from school.

#### B. Statement of the Problem

Officials at Oklahoma State University, like those at many other institutions of higher education, are currently involved in the process of assessing the rate of attrition at their university. The reasons for conducting such studies include a concern for the decline in the population of high school graduates and an interest in effectively meeting the needs of students.

To research the attrition problem at Oklahoma State University, an ad hoc committee was formed to study the experiences of freshmen who entered college in 1975 and 1976. The institutional results were similar to those of the national studies. According to the committee report:

Four years after entering the university, 50.6 percent of the 1975 class of new freshmen had left without completing a degree. For the 1976 entering freshmen, this attrition rate increased to 53.8 percent during their four years of study. Although these attrition rates are only slightly higher than the national findings, the graduation rate of the 1975 freshmen class was only 40.1 percent after five years of study. This is far below a 53 percent five year graduation average for the 148 four-year public institutions participating in a recent ACT/NCHEMS study.

The committee developed a list of recommendations for improvements in programs, services, and policies that might impact on students at the university. Yet, little was known about which specific areas were of

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<sup>9</sup>Tom Keys et al., "Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Retention" (unpub. report, Oklahoma State University, 1981), p. 3.

greatest dissatisfaction to students. Which areas were most often cited by students as reasons for leaving the university? In times of stable and/or declining enrollments, the need to collect such information becomes very important.

### C. Background and Purpose of Study

During the academic year, 1978-79, an attrition study was conducted by the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and the Division of Single Student Housing. The study was conducted to determine if any increase in withdrawals observed during the fall of 1978 was due to factors under the control of the university. It also offered an opportunity to evaluate the services provided in the residence halls. Due to personnel changes, particularly in the vice president's office, the results were never formally analyzed.

In order to replicate the original study and to provide useful insights, a follow-up study was initiated. This study sought to discover what had caused the student withdrawals during the Fall 1980 semester.

Survey instruments were developed for students who had withdrawn from residence halls at Oklahoma State University during the fall of 1980. The focus was taken for the following reasons: (1) funding came from the housing department, and (2) forwarding addresses were more easily accessible for this population group. In addition, university policy requires all freshmen to reside on campus.

### D. Assumptions

Residence hall students at Oklahoma State University generally withdraw from school because of personal problems which result from unhappiness

and/or an inability to concentrate on their academic work. These personal problems are often a result of not being adequately prepared for college. This lack of preparation could be academic, but it may involve a lack of emotional steadiness needed to adjust to a new living style.

#### E. Limitations

In his recently published book, Oscar Lenning wrote about the hazards of obtaining data directly from students. He listed several limitations to the "self-report process."

First, students may not really understand their motivations for leaving; consequently, they may cite reasons that are superficial. Often a decision results from a combination of reasons, no one of which may have made the difference between staying and leaving. Students who feel the need to protect their self-image may provide explanations that they consider socially acceptable or hide personal problems. Even, inadequate financial resources, an explanation given frequently, is often not the real or most important reason.<sup>10</sup>

Lenning proceeded to emphasize how important the information from the students can be to an institution. Information learned from those who do not remain at the institution might be helpful in achieving changes to help retain other dropout-prone students.

It is difficult to determine when to contact dropouts for information. To request the information as part of a withdrawal process will result in a guaranteed response and is economically ideal. However, student reactions may not be as well thought out at this point. Putting some distance between themselves and the university might help get their reasons for withdrawal into better perspective. Yet, the process does not provide

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<sup>10</sup>Oscar T. Lenning, Phillip E. Beal, and Ken Sauer, Retention and Attrition: Evidence for Action and Research (Boulder, Colo., 1980), p. 25.

feedback from a majority of the withdrawals which occur at the end of a term. Only those people leaving during the semester have an "exit interview."

Sending surveys to dropouts at their home addresses is more costly but can reach all students who have withdrawn. One problem is, however, that only approximately 35 percent of the surveyed sample responded to the two surveys that have been a part of this research.

#### F. Definition of Terms

The most common confusion in this research area involves the use of the terms "attrition" and "retention." Lenning defined these terms: "Retention ... occurs when students complete, continue, or resume their studies. Attrition occurs when students are no longer enrolled in a college or university."<sup>11</sup>

Any study of attrition should place students within one of three categories. The most common categories cited in the literature include: persister, stopout, and dropout. By definition, a persister remains consistently enrolled and usually achieves graduation within, or nearly within, the expected time. By definition, a stopout is a student who for some reason leaves campus but re-enrolls at the original institution or transfers to another college or university. The stopout eventually graduates. By definition, the dropout leaves the institution and does not return to any institution. Some dropouts later achieve stopout status.

There is one other term used in the literature to refer to students who have withdrawn because they achieved what they set out to attain when

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

they first arrived on campus. These students are called attainers, and the term is used when considering dropouts in terms of their aspirations.<sup>12</sup>

Patrick Terenzini's defines common types of dropouts. He refers to his definition as one containing "hybrids" of those ideas listed above.

He relates dropping out as:

(a) systematic (i.e., a complete cessation of post-secondary education) or institutional (withdrawal from one institution, but enrollment at another with, perhaps, no interruption with studies); (b) temporary (the so-called "stopout") or permanent; (c) forced (the academic dismissal) or voluntary; or (d) unanticipated (i.e., no preenrollment expectation of dropping out) or planned (e.g., when specific, nondegree educational or personal goals have been accomplished).<sup>13</sup>

Another term found in the literature of retention is that of student-institutional "fit." There are many researchers who see this issue as central to increasing retention. Students whose background and interests are similar to others at the institution will adjust more quickly. If student goals are similar to what the institution would like the student to achieve, then the "fit" is said to be more comfortable. Therefore, the student will adjust more quickly and has a better chance of persisting. Astin studied several variables in an effort to predict student characteristics and related institutional factors.

The student characteristics [with associated institutional characteristics in brackets] are parental income [tuition], education of father [selectivity], ability [selectivity], size of hometown [size of college], family religion [religious affiliation], and race [institutional race].<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Patrick T. Terenzini, "An Evaluation of Three Basic Designs for Studying Attrition" Journal of College Student Personnel, XXI (1980), p. 257.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander W. Astin, Preventing Students From Dropping Out (San Francisco, 1977), p. 130.

### G. Summary

As institutions research their attrition situation, they will discover a need for a survey instrument to help identify areas for improving retention procedures and processes. The answer to the attrition problem does not seem to be found in the simple awareness that a problem exists. Much research is currently devoted to discovering the variables which identify the dropout-prone student. Institutions need to find out what specific changes are needed to help keep the academically prepared student on campus.

This study is an attempt to find out what the problems are regarding retention at one particular institution. But first, the current knowledge of attrition researchers should be discussed.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### A. Introduction

In recent years many articles have been published reporting on the results of research studies on retention in higher education. Iffert's study of 1957 served as a "landmark" work in this area.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, more than any other retention effort, Iffert's research stimulated thought and resulted in the tremendous growth in the literature aimed at reducing attrition.

There has been little noticeable difference in levels of retention over time. What, therefore, has been learned from all this research? What can be done to alter the status quo? Many researchers seem to feel that the level of attrition can be reduced, yet all seem to agree some attrition will always be part of higher education.

Many types of attrition studies have appeared in the literature of higher education. Many reports included a discussion of student characteristics in the following areas: (1) demographic factors that might aid in predicting dropout-prone students, (2) academic criteria which might impact on attrition, (3) personality traits exhibited by dropouts

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of Education, Retention and Withdrawal of College Students, Office of Education Bulletin 1958, no. 1, by Robert E. Iffert (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1957).



and persisters, and (4) motivational factors involved in student persistence.

There have also been studies that consider such institutional variables as selectivity, size, and type of control. More recently researchers have correlated student characteristics and institutional variables. The research which looks at data from both these areas can be found under the label of "student-institutional fit." According to Astin, the theory of finding a good "fit" is as simple as:

Students with mediocre or poor grades experience a lack of fit between (a) their own performance and that of their fellow students, and (b) their low achievement<sup>2</sup> and the high value placed on achievement by the institution.

Generally, researchers have concentrated their efforts on studies completed at either the national or institutional level. There has been a very recent trend toward departmental studies. The focus has been on assessing the impact of attrition on academic advising, counseling, and other areas of university work. In the review of the literature that follows, selected studies reflect the national, institutional, and residence hall research efforts of recent years.

#### B. Review of Selected National Studies

Many national studies have been conducted seeking to analyze the many factors that impact on a student's decision to leave an institution. The Astin study was very extensive, reporting the results of a nationwide survey of 41,000 undergraduates at more than 300 institutions. Data were

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<sup>2</sup>Alexander W. Astin, Preventing Students From Dropping Out (San Francisco, 1977), p. 100.

collected at two-year and four-year colleges and at comprehensive universities. Astin also conducted a follow-up study four years later.

Astin's findings were in agreement with several other studies regarding predictive variables. Astin reported that "the most important entering characteristics are the student's high school grades [good grades], degree aspirations [plans for professional school], and religious background [Jewish]."<sup>3</sup> In addition, a student's good study habits and positively-oriented parietal influence helped. A male student typically had a better chance for college persistence if he was married; a female stood a better chance if she remained single while in college. Having children and attending college were seen as a bad fit for both male and female students.

Astin proceeded to describe what he called "experiential factors" with "the most important of these [being] good grades in college, ... [while] living in a college dormitory rather than at home, and having a part-time job ... were also important to persistence."<sup>4</sup>

One of the key factors in retention, according to Astin, was the level of involvement on the part of the persisters. Extracurricular activities, intramural and varsity sports, participation in ROTC, and membership in sororities and fraternities were all important factors in increasing retention.

Financially, it was viewed as important that a student be supported by his or her parents and have a scholarship or grant. Loans were seen

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 174-175.

as reducing the chance for persistence, especially among men. Astin suggested many avenues for further research. His report, however, probably resulted in as many questions asked as his extensive research answered. For example, the following questions were raised because of important findings regarding the residence hall experience:

What parts of the residential experience encourage students to stay in college? How important is the architecture of the hall? What are the effects of different types of roommate assignments? How important is staffing? What about programming for dormitory residents? Is the location of the dormitory on campus important? What are the effects of coeducational dormitories and their variations (such as alternate floors versus alternate rooms)? Given greater dormitory demand than supply, which students are most likely to benefit from dormitory living? Why should living in a private room have positive effects on freshmen men and negative effects on freshmen women.<sup>5</sup>

A recent study by John Bean, which drew many of the same conclusions as the Astin studies, is reported here as an example of research effort creating a model for student attrition. Bean's work related attrition to Price's model of employee turnover, "chiefly in that organizational determinants are expected to affect satisfaction which in turn is expected to influence dropout."<sup>6</sup>

Bean surveyed 1,171 students consisting of first-time freshmen who were white, American, and under age 22. As a result of the study, Bean characterized the male dropout as follows:

The student is not committed to the institution, does not have a high university GPA, is satisfied with being a student, does not believe that the education he is receiving

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> John P. Bean, "Dropouts and Turnover: The Synthesis and Test of a Causal Model of Student Attrition" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April, 1979), p. 3.

is leading to his development, finds his life repetitive, does not know the social and academic rules of the institution well, and may live with his parents.

In contrast, Bean's characterization of the female dropout involves an even greater number of factors impacting on her. Bean described the female dropout as follows:

The student is not committed to the institution, did not perform well in high school, does not belong to campus organizations, does not believe that going to college will lead to employment, perceives an opportunity to transfer, does not believe that education leads to self-development, does not find daily life at college repetitive, is not committed to getting a bachelor's degree, is not satisfied with being a student at the institution, knows the social and academic rules of the institution, does not participate in decision making, does not feel that she is being treated fairly, and does not meet with staff and faculty members informally.<sup>8</sup>

In a related study, Bean described the process used to analyze his research project. In order to understand attrition better, Bean recommended the use of multiple regression, path analysis, and a recursive causal model.<sup>9</sup> He claimed that previous models have been inadequate with regard to these research methods. The model used in his research study contained six main elements: (1) a dependent variable (dropout); (2) intervening variables (institutional quality, boredom, adjustment, and others); (3) organizational determinants (routinization, centralization, and others); (4) two main types of background variables (the student and his family, and the student's performance in high school); (5) personal

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>John P. Bean, "Path Analysis: The Development of a Suitable Methodology for the Study of Student Attrition" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, 1979).

determinents (goal commitment, occupational certainty, and others); and (6) environmental determinents (transferring, getting a job, and others).

Bucklin and Bucklin conducted an extensive study of the characteristics found in dropouts. They concentrated on personality and motivational aspects among students who were persisters and dropouts. They sought to answer the following question: "Does the college persister differ from the leaver in the areas of personality, interest, aptitude, study skills, and attitude?"<sup>10</sup>

Through an extensive search of the literature on attrition, they were able to create a picture of the persister and the leaver. The characteristics of each were summarized as follows:

Persisters are seen as individuals who . . .

- attack a problem and stick to it.
- have a strong drive for success.
- have a sense of responsibility.
- are satisfied with the college routine.
- resemble their environment.
- think independently and objectively.
- have motives and interests related to success.
- tend to have definite vocational choices.
- have a family which encourages them in their higher education plans.
- have a higher GPA in high school.
- are from the upper ranks of their graduating class.
- are less interested in the gratification of immediate needs.<sup>11</sup>

The research on the dropout creates a very different picture of a student who finds college to be a great burden. According to this analysis the leaver can be described in the following manner:

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<sup>10</sup>U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of Education, The Psychological Characteristics of the College Persister and Leaver: A Review, by Robert W. Bucklin and Mary Lou Bucklin (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. i.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

Leavers are seen as individuals who . . .

- can not stick to a task.
- are less satisfied with the college routine.
- are less sure of what college is doing for their future.
- are less able to distinguish between the important and unimportant.
- are less effective in scheduling and carrying out the daily activities.
- are careless test-takers.
- lack ability to adapt to the college environment.
- lack self-discipline.
- are rigid, inflexible, opinionated, nonacademically oriented, and distrustful of adult authority.
- have a preference for social activity rather than study.
- have ill-defined goals.
- are uncertain of occupational or major choices.
- have a family that is less interested.
- have tentative vocational goals.
- have lower secondary school grades and significantly lower reading skills.
- seek immediate practical payoffs for their energies.<sup>12</sup>

Although the above descriptions may seem comprehensive, many researchers feel it is inaccurate to look at student problems alone. The limitation of this approach is that these studies are attempting to identify and, thereby, create differences between dropouts and non-dropouts "without considering the institution they are leaving."<sup>13</sup> Students who might leave one institution might be the ones most likely to persist at another. It is important to be aware of this when considering the literature on retention. Results from national studies aid in understanding the problems of attrition, but the information can be generalized to the point that each institution must look to its own particular factors in student retention.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>13</sup>Robert G. Cope, "Limitations of Attrition Rates and Causes Given for Dropping Out of College" Journal of College Student Personnel, IX (1968), p. 391.

### C. Review of Selected Institutional Studies

Many institutions have conducted extensive self-studies, checking for consistency with national research efforts. One such study was conducted at The Pennsylvania State University which included a random survey of persisters and dropouts. Participants included undergraduates at all 17 Commonwealth Campuses, Behrend College, Capital Campus, and University Park. The results concerning reasons for dropping out were obtained from telephone interviews and were categorized into four areas: "academic (73 percent), financial (27 percent), employment (16 percent), and personal (54 percent).<sup>14</sup> With 1,000 dropout and 500 persister respondents, the following findings were considered significant:

1. Residence ... persisters were three times as likely as dropouts to have lived in a residence hall ... sixty-two percent of the drop-out population lived at home.
2. Extracurricular Activities. 79 percent of the persister sample, but only 42 percent of the attrition sample, participated in at least one extracurricular activity.
3. Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). Only 35 percent of the persisters, but 60 percent of the dropouts, had CGPA's under 2.5.
4. Financing Educational Costs. Persisters and dropouts both used financial aid, but persisters used student savings, a loan, or a campus job. Dropouts used an off-campus job, or a grant. Half of each group received support from parents or spouse.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, the Penn State study indicated that students who persisted were more highly motivated to work toward a degree.

The Office of Residential Life Programs at Pennsylvania State University conducted additional research and published four reports. The first

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<sup>14</sup>Carol L. Everett, An Analysis of Student Attrition at Penn State (University Park, Pa., 1979), p. iii.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. iii-iv.

report studied the impact of the halls on students' academic and personal growth. The second report studied the freshmen experience and researched such things as large classes and courses taught by teaching assistants. The third report "focused upon the attitudes, reactions, opinions, and development of these students, as reported just prior to their graduation from Pennsylvania State University."<sup>16</sup> A fourth report studied the students who were first-time enrollees in the fall of 1976 and who became either dropouts or stopouts before graduation.

A study completed at Indiana University described "voluntary withdrawal" as: "A student who exited /the university/ before completing a baccalaureate degree and was academically qualified to continue his or her program."<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of the Indiana University study was to resolve the "enigma" of the student who had the academic ability to complete college but who chose not to do so. Brigman and Stager found very little difference in the capability of persisters and non-persisters and reached the following conclusions regarding voluntary withdrawals: "It appears that a lack of coherence between the student's academic needs and the academic environment offered at Indiana University leads to a decline in performance and finally to withdrawal of the capable student from the university."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> M. Lee Upcraft, Patricia C. Peterson, and Betty L. Moore, The Academic and Extracurricular Experience of Penn State Students: A Study of the Class of 1980 (University Park, Pa., 1980), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> S. Leellen Brigman and Susan F. Stager, The Voluntary Withdrawal: A Survey of Stopouts, Dropouts, and Transfers from Indiana University (Bloomington, Ind., 1979), pp. 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 24.



In this particular study, many students who left complained of their unhappiness with the size of the campus. This could be a problem at other large institutions, but only students at each institution can accurately assess the significance of this problem. The importance of an institutional analysis was promoted by two leading researchers in the following statement:

We do not suggest that the results obtained herein are generalizable in any sense to settings other than the one they reflect. In order to better differentiate among potential persisters and nonpersisters, it would be necessary for each institution to generate its own models which reflect student characteristics of the population in question. The reliance on national studies, which frequently incorporate data from several types of institutions, is not likely to help the individual<sup>19</sup> school understand the mechanics of its particular problem.

Once the mechanics of the retention problem are understood, programs to increase retention can be initiated.

How residence hall programs impact on attrition, as viewed by the research, will be discussed as the next step in the analysis of the current attrition literature.

#### D. Review of Selected Residence Hall Studies

Along with other changes impacting on American higher education, the role of the residence hall on the campus has evolved. One of the periods of greatest change occurred during the 1960's when a massive building program took place on American college campuses. Residence halls were

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<sup>19</sup>Jerry E. Hutchinson and A. E. Johnson, Jr., "Identifying Persisters, Voluntary Withdrawers, and Academic Dropouts at a Liberal Arts College" National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Journal, XVIII (1980), p. 45.

built to house the great enrollment increases created by the new students born during the post-World War II "baby boom."

During the 1970's two developments occurred which greatly curtailed the need for residence halls: "declining or leveling enrollments at many institutions and increasing resistance among students to parietal rules."<sup>20</sup>

The increasing cost of operating residence halls, and the uncertainty of occupancy fluctuations, caused many administrators to consider closing their college's residence halls. By converting the buildings to other uses, an institution could "get out of the housing business." Many researchers have concluded that this would have been an unwise decision.

A college or university's investment in residence hall facilities and staff personnel is based on the premise that a student's education is enhanced by living in a residence hall and that the professional personnel, student staff, and student leaders make a significant and meaningful impact on the development of students in the residence halls.<sup>21</sup>

As indicated earlier, Astin found that students living in on-campus housing during their freshmen year "maximized their chances of finishing college."<sup>22</sup> Chickering developed this idea further in his research, but he felt residing on campus was in itself inadequate to affect student development. He noted that:

Residential arrangements should enable each housing unit to become a reference group for its members. This means resident membership should continue from year to year and each unit

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<sup>20</sup>Alexander W. Astin, "The Impact of Dormitory Living on Students" Educational Records, LIV (1973), p. 204.

<sup>21</sup>Stephan H. Scott, "Impact of Residence Hall Living on College Student Development" Journal of College Student Personnel, XVI (1975), p. 214.

<sup>22</sup>Astin, Preventing Students From Dropping Out, p. 107.

should have to cope with significant tasks and problems that require joint thinking and effort by the members.<sup>23</sup>

Student opportunities for involvement should be enhanced. Reference groups should be small, but diverse. This will result in frequent interactions and contact with different kinds of people.

Chickering identified areas in which residential students had advantages over those students who were commuters. His findings were that:

Residents engage more fully with the academic program and associated with intellectual activities. They have more frequent and wider ranging contact with faculty members and fellow students. They more frequently attend cultural events and discuss political, religious, and social issues.<sup>24</sup>

During the late 1960's, Astin conducted an extensive study of college students to determine the effect of their type of freshmen residence on their collegiate experience. The initial response was received from 90 percent of the freshmen. Four years later 60 percent responded to the follow-up study. In total, 25,455 students were surveyed.

Student responses were analyzed under five main topical areas: (1) educational progress, (2) plans and aspirations, (3) behaviors, (4) attitudes and values, and (5) ratings of the college.

Astin's findings indicated that leaving home improved a student's chances of remaining in school. Nonetheless, residence hall living increased the rate of student drinking, smoking, and dating. One of the most significant differences was reported in the area of ratings of the college. Astin's research indicated that residence hall students' "overall ...

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<sup>23</sup>Arthur W. Chickering, Education and Identity (San Francisco, 1969), p. 270.

<sup>24</sup>Arthur W. Chickering, Commuting versus Resident Students (San Francisco, 1974), p. 53.

satisfaction was likely to be higher. There was probably more personal contact between students and faculty, interaction among students, and opportunities to receive advice and guidance from, and to discuss work with, professors."<sup>25</sup>

Another study conducted by Scott utilized the Personal Orientation Inventory to assess differences in the level of student development between residence hall and commuter students. In addition, Scott looked at various groups in the halls to learn more about the impact of their involvement on their individual development. Identified groups included student staff and volunteer student leaders; these two groups were each compared with the other residence hall students. The intent of the study was to justify the financial outlay made to operate student programming and to conduct student leader workshops and staff training. Scott found that staff and student leaders' levels of self-actualization were significantly higher than those of other students. In addition, "an increase in self-actualization on at least twice as many scales of the POI occurred for groups of residence hall students than for off-campus or commuting groups."<sup>26</sup> Development was fostered by students' residence.

Why were residence hall personnel conducting these studies? In the case of the Scott study, it was to justify the expenditure of limited funds. Additional research by DeCoster, focused on the impact of the student assignment process. The Penn State study, reviewed in the previous section, was conducted "to check the validity between the Astin

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<sup>25</sup>Astin, Educational Records, p. 210.

<sup>26</sup>Scott, p. 218.

/national studies and what was occurring for students at Penn State."<sup>27</sup>

In some cases, research was conducted to help justify a decision to create or to halt specific housing operations. Ultimately, residence hall research can serve to gather information regarding the level of satisfaction experienced by students while living in residential areas. This can serve to improve university housing services related to retention.

#### E. Summary

Obviously, the research reviewed in this report is only a sample of the literature on retention. Recent studies are developing new research models to be considered in efforts to reduce attrition. First, the literature has developed procedural suggestions that can be used by institutions initiating retention self-studies. Second, since many students already have decided to leave school before that decision is discussed with university officials, exit interviews are often too late. Ways must be developed to identify dropout-prone students earlier. Third, an underlying principle of the entire research area is that there will always be some attrition. The review of literature is incomplete without mention of these three concerns.

Beal and Noel surveyed a random selection of institutions in the country and learned that more than one-third of these institutions had never conducted any types of attrition/retention self-study.

Beal and Noel felt that these studies were very important and that institutions should organize for retention. They agreed that "no single

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<sup>27</sup>Telephone Interview, M. Lee Upcraft, University Park, Pennsylvania, 21 January 1981.

area of administration can claim to know the best way for efforts to proceed."<sup>28</sup> Institutions must seek ways to overcome shortages in manpower and financial resources, which oftentimes delay efforts to encounter attrition problems. Total campus acceptance of the retention efforts is also very important. In the opinion of Beal and Noel:

Action programs most likely to be a benefit to retention and to the campus include those that involve orientation, advising, learning and academic support, and counseling, and use of multiple approaches directed toward target groups including high risk students, minority<sup>29</sup> students, skill-deficient students, and potential dropouts.

In addition, Beal and Noel addressed the need to create an "early warning system" which allows for the opportunity to "flag" some of the students who are having problems. Prior to dropping out, most students' dissatisfaction will be evident, and campus personnel should be on the alert for specific "cues." Faculty should be involved in determining who has unexplained absences. Residence halls personnel can watch for students who increase drinking and/or becoming less involved with their neighbors. Another signal may be the student who is absent for extra long periods on weekends. These individuals can be reported to advisors who can work to get the student interested in solving the problem and remaining in school.

Cope stressed, however, that dropping out (or stopping out) may be the right decision for some students. As Cope noted, in the future,

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<sup>28</sup>Phillip E. Beal and Lee Noel, What Works in Student Retention: A Preliminary Summary of a National Survey (Iowa City, Ia., 1979), p. 5

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

"The college door will be one that revolves freely to allow an entrance and an exit for students at appropriate times."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Robert G. Cope and William Hannah, Revolving College Doors: The Causes and Consequences of Dropping Out, Stopping Out, and Transferring (New York, 1975), p. 110.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This chapter includes a description of the population, the sample, the survey instrument, and the research procedure to be used in responding to the research problem identified in Chapter I.

##### A. Population and Sample

As part of the withdrawal process from Oklahoma State University, residence hall students are "checked out" from the residence hall by the Head Resident. Data are collected weekly on all dropouts and their stated reason(s) for leaving the hall. The names of the students who withdrew from Oklahoma State University at the time that the two studies were conducted were extracted from Head Resident's reports.

The study that had been conducted on withdrawing students during the fall of 1978 consisted of a 100 percent sample, or the entire population, of all students withdrawing from August through November (N=169) and a random sample representing the 1200 residents who left at semester end. In total, 463 questionnaires were mailed to former students. Among the 1200 residents who left the halls at semester end were those who left at the beginning of the Spring 1979 semester. Unfortunately, the sample also included students who had graduated.



The Fall 1980 study, conducted as part of this research effort, consisted of a sample representing 50 percent of the 612 residents who left during August-December, 1980. An attempt was made to list only those residents who were actually withdrawing from the university. In addition, students selected for the study all left prior to the receipt of their grades. Students who returned in January (after receiving their grades) to clear their belongings from the residence hall were not included in the study. An interesting sidelight regarding the follow-up study was that of the 612 residents who left Oklahoma State University during August through December, 50 percent, or 306 were males. The 306 questionnaires were, therefore, mailed to a stratified random sample consisting of 153 males and 153 females who had been residence hall students at Oklahoma State University during the fall semester of 1980.

#### B. Instrumentation

The survey instrument used for the 1978 study had two main sections. The first section requested information regarding reasons for student withdrawal. The second section inquired about student satisfaction with residence halls and university services. There were also several open-ended questions, including several focused on the special concerns of minority students.

Each questionnaire was coded so that it was possible to know which surveys were being returned and to separate returns by hall and by date left. The 1980 study used the same instrumentation which allowed for additional insights regarding the on-going situation at the university. A copy of the instrument may be found in Appendix B.

### C. Data Collection

Completed 1978 surveys were received by mail from 144 students who withdrew from the university. Fifty-three percent of the 1978 return was female. The mean age of respondents in 1978 was 19 years old.

Of the 131 respondents to the 1980 study, slightly more male students returned the survey. The amount of male respondents was listed at 51 percent. The mean age of those students returning surveys was again 19 years old.

Data from the 1978 and 1980 respondents were keypunched and processed through a Statistics Analysis Systems computer program. Each study's data were analyzed separately. Please see Appendices C and D for 1978 and 1980 survey results.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### A. The 1978 Attrition Study

Responses from the first study were collected during the spring of 1979. Responses were received from approximately 30 percent (N=144) of the 463 former students who had received the survey instrument.

In the first part of the survey, respondents indicated their reasons for having left the university. The instrument offered 29 choices for leaving. These items were divided into sub-headings of (1) academic, (2) employment, (3) financial, and (4) personal. More students considered personal problems to be the major reason for leaving Oklahoma State University. The most frequently checked response was the general category of "personal problems" with one-fourth of the respondents indicating that this was the major reason. The second most common reason was also listed under personal; it referred to the option, "dissatisfaction with the living situation/roommate."

Types of financial aid received at the university were requested from students in the survey instrument. Of the 144 respondents, sixty percent received no financial aid. Of the types of aid received, fifteen percent had loans, and an equal percent of students received grants. Ten percent of the students were on scholarships at the time of their withdrawal.

These former students were also asked to respond to questions regarding their current activities. Of the total respondents, 64 percent indicated they were "attending or plan to attend school." Fifty-seven percent were working, while 14 percent were "caring for a home and/or family."

Students were asked about their participation in the Oklahoma State University ALPHA Program. It has been the intent of this program to assist new students in acclimating to the university, and it has been an assumption on the part of institutional leaders that participation in the ALPHA Program should aid the students to persist at the university. Of the respondents, slightly more than half (54 percent) attended the ALPHA Program. Students who had attended felt that ALPHA was beneficial with regard to creating opportunities to meet other students. Only six percent saw the significance of ALPHA as an opportunity to meet university faculty and staff.

The second part of the study requested demographic data about the respondents. Generally, the respondents were nineteen years old, attended a large high school, and were freshmen. Slightly more than half of all the students were female. Practically all (93 percent) were white students. Most of them, 77 percent, had declared a major.

Students were asked to indicate who among the various personnel on campus had they visited with prior to making their decision to withdraw. These former students indicated that 84 percent had talked with "a family member or close friend at OSU" prior to deciding to withdraw. In addition, seventy percent had discussed the decision with their roommate, and almost half of the students had talked with their Student Assistant.

Only one-third of the students had discussed their decision with their advisors, and even fewer, one-fourth, had talked with a faculty member. The following table illustrates the respondents reactions when asked who they had talked to prior to making a decision to withdraw:

TABLE I  
WITH WHOM DID RESPONDENTS DISCUSS THEIR DECISION  
TO LEAVE PRIOR TO THEIR WITHDRAWAL,  
FALL 1978

Individual	Did not know this person	Did know, but did not talk	Did talk to this person
Roommate	5%	25%	70%
Student Assistant	7%	47%	46%
Assistant or Head Resident	25%	52%	24%
An OSU Faculty Member	28%	46%	26%
Your College Advisor	24%	44%	33%
An OSU Staff Member	60%	22%	18%
A Family Member or Close Friend	6%	10%	84%

For the past several years, Oklahoma State University residence halls have experienced an over-crowded condition as a result of an increased demand in students requesting housing on-campus. There was few complaints from students regarding over-crowding, but it should be noted that eight percent of these non-persisters had been assigned to triple rooms. Surprisingly, 60 percent had received their first choice in residence hall

preference. About one-fourth of these former students were transfer students from another campus.

Although many students indicated "dissatisfaction with their roommate" as a major reason for leaving, almost half had received the roommate whom they had originally requested and whom they typically had known prior to coming to the university.

The third part of the survey instrument focused on: (1) satisfaction with the residence hall experience; (2) satisfaction with university services; and (3) reasons for living in the residence halls.

The former students were asked to indicate which conditions in the residence halls were most satisfactory and most dissatisfactory. The following table indicates their responses:

TABLE II  
RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH  
RESIDENCE HALL CONDITIONS,  
1978 STUDY

Residence Hall Condition	Dissatisfied	Satisfied*
Intramural Participation	9%	91%
Cleanliness of the Hall	11%	89%
Social Activities in the Hall	14%	86%
Your Roommate	16%	84%
Temperature of the Public Areas	17%	83%
Social Activities on the Floor	17%	83%
Physical Condition of the Room	20%	80%
Recreational Areas In & Around the Hall	23%	77%
Quietness of your Room	24%	76%
Size of your Room	26%	74%
Lounge Facilities	26%	74%

TABLE II (CONTINUED)

Studying in your Room	27%	73%
Studying Areas in your Hall	30%	70%
Cafeteria Facilities	30%	70%
Cafeteria Meal Plan Options	35%	65%
Temperature of your Room	39%	61%
Parking Around the Hall	64%	36%

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\* Combined listing of "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" responses.  
See Appendix C. for responses as recorded from the survey results.

As indicated in the above table, students were most satisfied with the opportunity to become involved in intramurals and social activities. These former students were also pleased with the cleanliness of their hall and most reacted favorably to their roommate. Students were most dissatisfied with the parking facilities around the hall. In addition, temperature of the room and cafeteria meal plan options were areas listed that received a lesser degree of satisfaction. Generally, students had few complaints with the conditions in the residence halls.

Students also responded to questions regarding university services. Besides requesting information about their satisfaction with the service, students had the option to indicate whether they had ever used the service. As the following table indicates many services had not been used by these students:

TABLE III  
RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH  
UNIVERSITY SERVICES,  
1978 STUDY

University Service	Never Used	Dissatisfied	Satisfied*
Tutoring Services	88%	3%	10%
OSU Counseling Center	81%	2%	17%
Student Employment Office	71%	10%	19%
CALL Center	66%	2%	32%
Financial Aids Department	56%	17%	27%
Freshmen Programs & Services	50%	8%	42%
OSU Hospital	47%	6%	47%
SUAB Programming	43%	7%	50%
ALPHA Orientation Program	40%	8%	51%
Colvin Center & Intramurals	24%	2%	74%
College Advisor	22%	17%	61%
Single Student Housing Office	15%	17%	67%
Cafeteria Food Services	13%	29%	57%
Residence Hall Desk Services	5%	8%	87%
Student Union Stores	3%	6%	91%

\* Combined listing of "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" responses.  
See Appendix C. for responses as recorded from the survey results.

As indicated in the above table, most withdrawing students had never used the tutoring services, the counseling center, the Career Assistance Learning Laboratory (CALL) Center, the employment office, and financial aids. There were very few complaints from the students who used these facilities. The exceptions to this situation were the financial aids office and the student employment office which were perceived with dissatisfaction by most of the respondents. Even though the recreational facilities were perceived highly satisfactory, the Colvin Center Annex



was still under construction while these students were on campus, and the recreational areas were generally considered at that time to be inadequate for the demand being placed upon the facilities by the university community. The Student Union stores were the most often used and were considered to be very satisfactory. The residence hall desk operations were also perceived by these former students as a satisfactory service. Another service which was also found to be dissatisfactory was the cafeteria food services according to the responses of approximately one-third of the respondents. College advisors received a mixed response since 22 percent claimed to have never used their advisors. Seventeen percent were dissatisfied with the advising process while 28 percent expressed great satisfaction.

Respondents were asked to declare why they had originally decided to live in the residence hall. Most of them (72 percent) stated that it was because they had been required to be there as freshmen. Many students listed several reasons as indicated in the following table.

TABLE IV  
REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO LIVE IN THE  
RESIDENCE HALLS, 1978 STUDY

<u>72%</u> Required as a freshmen	<u>48%</u> Make friends & social activities
<u>15%</u> Parental pressure	<u>59%</u> Close to campus
<u>55%</u> Convenience	<u>11%</u> Could not find another place
<u>41%</u> Economical	<u>6%</u> Other, please specify_____

In the final section of the study, these former students were asked to indicate what they had most liked about living in the residence hall. Most of them, 74 percent, responded that being close to campus was the main benefit. While half of these former students also found being close to friends to be equally important. Economics and social activities were also rated high.

Although only one-third of the students indicated an interest in returning to the residence halls if they came back to the university, many others expressed reasons for not returning to the halls. Some believed that they would be older than the "normal" age of other hall residents. Many students listed marital plans as keeping them from returning to the halls. Many others indicated that they had enjoyed the experience but would find the adjustment back to hall-life more difficult after being "on their own."

In summary, several conclusions were reached as a result of the 1978 study. The programs that might be the most helpful to potential dropouts, such as tutoring and counseling, were not being used by the students who apparently needed them most. Generally students seemed pleased with the services offered. Nonetheless, it might be important to make sure that every effort is being made to meet the students needs. Academic advising remains somewhat of an enigma with regard to usage which future analysis might help to solve.

Did students who left the university during the Fall 1980 semester react similarly? Were those former students' problems similar to those identified two years earlier? Would the follow-up study indicate areas where improvement had occurred and/or areas where there was less satisfaction.

## B. The 1980 Attrition Study

A study was conducted during the spring of 1981 with residence hall students who had left the university during the previous fall semester. Responses were received from approximately 40 percent (N=131) of the 306 former students who had been mailed the survey instrument.

Once again, the area most frequently noted on the survey as the major reason for leaving the university was "personal problems." The response, "dissatisfaction with living situation/roommate," was again listed as a major reason by about one-fourth of those students responding to the survey. Other reasons listed by withdrawing students included a change in marital status, problems with finances, and the need for a break in their studies.

Forty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they were not receiving any type of financial aid. The most common form of aid (18 percent) was a loan for educational expenses. About twelve percent of the students listed scholarships and grants as two additional forms of financial aid that they had been receiving.

These former students were asked to indicate what were their current activities. Most of the students (72 percent) responded that they were currently attending, or had plans to attend, an institution of higher education. More than half (58 percent) were currently working, while nine percent indicated they were searching for employment.

Those students who had attended the ALPHA Program remembered the four-day activity as an opportunity for increasing their confidence and as a good preparation for college. In addition, more than half of the respondents (58 percent) said that the ALPHA Program had helped them meet

people and make friends. Only nine percent indicated that they had become acquainted with faculty and staff members during ALPHA.

The second part of the survey requested demographic data from the respondents. Generally, the respondents were eighteen or nineteen years old and were freshmen. These young people had graduated from large high schools. Only 11 percent graduated from the state's smaller high schools. The population sample was divided exactly between males and females, and the number of respondents was also evenly matched by sex. Less than one percent of the surveys came from each of the non-white racial groups.

One question asked of these former students was to indicate who they had talked with prior to making their decision to leave. The following table indicates the results of the respondents in the 1980 study:

TABLE V  
WITH WHOM DID RESPONDENTS DISCUSS THEIR DECISION  
TO LEAVE PRIOR TO THEIR WITHDRAWAL,  
FALL, 1980

Individual	Did not know this person	Did know, but did not talk	Did talk to this person
Roommate	4%	26%	68%
Student Assistant	10%	46%	42%
Assistant or Head Resident	22%	54%	22%
An OSU Faculty Member	30%	50%	20%
Your College Advisor	22%	50%	28%
An OSU Staff Member	50%	32%	16%
A Family Member or Close Friend at OSU	6%	15%	78%

Many of the students (57 percent) who left the university had received their first choice among the residence halls with regard to the 1980-81 assignment. Almost half (43 percent) of these people had lived with the roommate whom they had requested. They were most likely friends with their roommates prior to arriving at the university. Yet, 21 percent of the respondents had more than one roommate and indicated some lack of "fit" among their roommates.

In the third part of the survey process, respondents indicated their satisfaction with certain services offered by the residence halls and the university. As indicated by the following table, students were generally satisfied with many of the conditions found in the halls:

TABLE VI  
RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH  
RESIDENCE HALLS CONDITIONS,  
1980 STUDY

Residence Hall Condition	Dissatisfied	Satisfied*
Intramural Participation	8%	89%
Cleanliness of the Hall	10%	89%
Social Activities in the Hall	12%	86%
Social Activities on the Floor	16%	84%
Recreational Areas In & Near the Hall	16%	80%
Your Roommate	19%	81%
Physical Condition of the Room	19%	81%
Size of the Room	19%	78%
Temperature of Public Areas	19%	81%
Studying in your Room	22%	75%
Cafeteria Facilities	22%	75%
Quietness of your Room	24%	74%
Study Areas in your Hall	26%	71%

TABLE VI (CONTINUED)

Lounge Facilities	26%	71%
Cafeteria Meal Plan Options	30%	68%
Temperature of your Room	35%	64%
Parking Around your Hall	62%	38%

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\* Combines those responding "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" on the survey.  
See Appendix D. for the results as recorded directly from the survey.

According to these former students, the most frequently noted area of satisfaction was found to be in the areas of intramurals and social activities. Students were also pleased with the cleanliness of the halls, among other variables. Students were found to be once again to be dissatisfied with the parking availability in the vicinity of the residence halls. In addition, many students complained regarding the temperature in their rooms and the cafeteria meal plan options.

Students indicated a strong level of satisfaction with many services offered by the university. These former students were given the opportunity to indicate their satisfaction with many of the services offered on campus. If a student had never used a particular service, he or she was to indicate this on the survey instrument. Many of these services continued to be reported as never used by the majority of these former students. The following table illustrates the problem which has been identified by the survey respondents:

TABLE VII  
RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH  
UNIVERSITY SERVICES,  
1980 STUDY

University Service	Never Used	Dissatisfied	Satisfied*
Tutoring Services	85%	3%	9%
OSU Counseling Center	76%	6%	14%
Student Employment Office	73%	11%	15%
CALL Center	70%	0%	31%
Freshmen Programs & Services	52%	7%	42%
Financial Adis Department	51%	25%	22%
SUAB Programming	47%	4%	50%
OSU Hospital	44%	10%	44%
ALPHA Orientation Program	39%	6%	53%
Colvin Center/Intramurals	20%	1%	77%
College Advisor	17%	20%	63%
Cafeteria Food Services	11%	30%	54%
Single Student Housing Office	10%	20%	68%
Student Union Stores	6%	5%	87%
Residence Halls Desk Service	5%	8%	86%

\* Combines listing of "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied" responses.  
See Appendix D. for responses as recorded from the survey.

As indicated by these respondents, the Colvin Center continued to be one of the areas where the university has been extremely successful in meeting the needs of the students. However, the large number of former students that responded that they had never used a service, has resulted in a less obvious image of how students view a particular service. Therefore, it might be helpful to disregard the "Never Used" column, in order to create a better understanding of the level of satisfaction among the students who used the service. See Appendix D. for this table.

In the final part of the survey, these former students were asked to indicate why they had originally decided to live in the residence halls. Even though fewer students indicated that their reasons included "required as a freshmen," it was still the most frequently cited reason as indicated in the following table:

TABLE VIII  
REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO LIVE IN THE  
RESIDENCE HALLS, FALL 1980

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<u>66%</u> Required as a freshmen	<u>55%</u> Make friends & social activities
<u>14%</u> Parental pressure	<u>62%</u> Close to campus
<u>60%</u> Convenience	<u>12%</u> Could not find another place
<u>50%</u> Economical	<u>10%</u> Other, please specify_____

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It is obvious that many students chose to live in the halls for a variety of reasons, including economic and social interests. Many of these same reasons were listed again as possible responses in the survey's next question. Students were asked what reasons they had found as the most beneficial aspects of residing in the halls. The following table indicates the responses of the students who withdrew in the fall of 1980:



TABLE IX  
MOST WELL-LIKED ASPECTS OF RESIDENCE HALL LIVING

<u>37%</u> Availability of food service	<u>11%</u> Participation--Hall Government
<u>76%</u> Close to campus	<u>50%</u> Being close to friends
<u>41%</u> Economical	<u>37%</u> Intramural sports
<u>47%</u> Social activities	<u>7%</u> Other, please specify _____

More students indicated that one of the most apparent benefits of living in the residence halls was being close to campus. Being close to friends was also seen as important to half of the respondents. The students were asked in the final question whether they would again reside in the halls if they returned to the university. The respondents of the 1980 study indicated that about one-third of them would return to the residence halls; however, more males than females indicated an interest in returning to the halls. A complete analysis of the 1980 study can be made by reviewing to the results in their entirety found in Appendix D.

#### C. Major Findings

The data collected in the 1978 and 1980 studies were, overall, very similar. In what additional ways did the 1980 study, therefore, help to assess the concerns of students who left the university?

The response to the 1980 study helped to validate the findings from 1978. The original study received only a 30 percent return, and the information, after all, was two years old. In addition, the 1978 data had

never received the serious attention of Oklahoma State University administrators. Now, with more current information available from a larger percentage of the population, areas requiring improvements can be more clearly identified. This additional information could lead to the retention of some students who might voluntarily leave the university under current conditions. What are some identified student concerns that are under some university control?

In the area of academics, ten percent of the students in the 1980 study indicated that dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching was a major reason for leaving. An additional 18 percent listed it as a minor reason. Other students felt strongly about inadequate study habits, low grades, and uncertainty about a major. These are the types of problems that should be taken to the CALL Center, yet 70 percent of the students who left had never used this service.

In the area of employment, students had fewer problems. Perhaps due to the isolated location of Stillwater, few people come to the university as part-time students. Therefore, education is often their highest priority. Only a low percentage of the respondents had indicated that employment problems had resulted in their leaving school; although, 12 percent did indicate that they had accepted a job in lieu of remaining in school.

In the area of finances, there has been a noticeable change during the two years in the amount of the respondents on financial aid. The 1978 study found that 60 percent of the students had no financial aid. In the follow-up study, this number had dropped to 44 percent. There has been financial aid given to most of the recent group of "leavers." In addition, there has been some concern on campus regarding the impact of the

policy on dropping students who have outstanding debts to the university. This policy has been enforced much more strictly during the 1980-81 academic year. In the follow-up study, fewer students indicated that the cost of room and board, and the total cost of attending the university, had become critical factors. Nevertheless, they felt that insufficient financial aid was a major reason for leaving school during the fall of 1980. Strangely enough, half of the students who were non-persisters indicated that they had never used the financial aids department. National studies indicate that loans are not an ideal form of financial aid. Loans had the highest frequency of response among the various types of aid used by the respondents. There was also an increase of three percent in the number of students on loans then from the amount reported in 1978. The number of scholarship students who left the institution in the 1980 increased by 2 percent over the number reported in the previous study. In personal comments at the end of the survey, many students complained about the personnel in the financial aids department and the problems caused by "red tape."

In the area of personal problems, many students indicated an interest in moving near someone they were dating or had plans to marry. Especially significant among the comments written at the end of the survey instrument were the number of people who thought they had left the university for reasons that could not be controlled by the institution.

Only one-fourth of the students listed dissatisfaction with their living environment as a major reason for leaving. The last part of the survey contained information regarding residence hall experiences. Obviously, residence hall living is not ideal for everyone. But if the

specific areas of service are causing concerns for students, then consideration should be given to correcting these problems.

Most of the problems that were listed as reasons for leaving the institution are probably beyond the control of Oklahoma State University. Nevertheless, when a student is having adjustment problems, or roommate problems, or something is keeping him or her from studying, alternatives to dealing with the problem should be known and available to the student. The student should be able to discuss his or her problem with residence hall personnel, counseling center staff, or others who should be interested in keeping the student in school. Dropping out is not the student's only alternative. According to the survey, 76 percent of the respondents had never used the counseling center for help with problems.

Students are currently discussing their problems with a close friend or possibly a close relative. The people who are best equipped to help the individual remain unused. By the time students seek to discuss their situation with academic advisors, they are ready to obtain their withdrawal papers. How important is the college advisor currently to students leaving the university? The students in the 1980 study indicated a trend toward utilizing the advisor more frequently. The results indicated a drop from 22 percent to 17 percent on the part of students who had "never used" the advisor. The number of students who were dissatisfied with their advising experiences, however, increased somewhat, too. Ways must be identified to improve the advising being offered to students.

The results of the two studies provided information from the students who did not remain that could be useful in helping retain future potential dropouts. Many questions have been raised. Many questions remain unanswered. What are the right plans of action to deal with the concerns raised.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### A. Review of the Design and Purpose of the Study

This is a report of the results of an investigation to determine the causes for student attrition at Oklahoma State University. The study focused on two separate groups of residence hall students who withdrew during the fall semesters of 1978 and 1980. The main purpose of the survey was to encourage students to identify their reasons for leaving the university from a list of 29 options provided. In addition, students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with residence hall conditions and various services of the university. Other questions were either demographic in nature or were designed to gain responses to questions of specific interest to certain departments on campus (e.g., minority concerns, greek affiliation, housing assignment). There were also two final questions which allowed students to comment in their own words reporting their feelings concerning their decision to withdraw from the university.

The same instrument was used in the 1980 study. Students who participated in the follow-up study could be described as those choosing to withdraw from the university voluntarily. This terminology was used since students who left because of poor academic progress were not included in the 1980 sample. Some of the research population may have

been experiencing academic difficulty at the time of their departure, but these individuals left prior to any official recording of academic achievement.

Reasons for collecting information from students who left the university included: (1) the fact that, in periods of stable and declining enrollment, information which might keep students at the institution becomes of great value; (2) the university should support a student's efforts to become educated and not watch him or her fail; and (3) the university should work to improve the level of satisfaction among students attending.

Knowing the rate of attrition that exists at a university is not enough to reduce the problem. University officials must work together to create a plan to combat attrition. For this to work, all areas of the university must contribute to, and provide support for, the programs created in order to accomplish an increasing level of retention. The use of survey instruments, such as the one used in this study, provides insights regarding problem areas. What problem areas were indicated by this study that the university could help alleviate?

#### B. Conclusions and Recommendations

Officials at Oklahoma State University must work together to create an environment which encourages students to stay in school. The base of this environment must be concern offered by everyone at the university. An attitude of caring for the student and his or her problems must be apparent in every encounter the student experiences. Everyone associated

with the university must become a retention officer. In this study, students who left commented about the university being too large. No one wants to be treated as though he or she is just another number. Smaller schools recruit students away from large universities by using this rationale. But, when a student has chosen to attend Oklahoma State University and then decides to leave because the university is too large, the disadvantages of attending a large institution might have become more real to the student than the possible advantages of attending.

University personnel on a campus the size of Oklahoma State University may not be able to name every student who walks through their office doors. But, if each student feels that there is someone in the office who cares and is interested in helping him or her construct some alternatives to his or her problem, then the student will not leave that office feeling like Oklahoma State University is too large. In addition, if he or she received information regarding which departments or personnel could assist in eliminating the problem, he or she will be more aware of the advantages offered by the university. This effective personal contact must happen in every office throughout the campus.

There are other areas in which the size of the university is noticeable. First, the size of some of the classes can be very over-whelming, especially to freshmen. Also, survey respondents complained about the quality of teaching. Many lower-division courses are taught by people who may be no more competent than instructors these students had in high school, yet these are called college-level courses.

Next, the academic advising, discussed so frequently in the retention literature, is important. From the 1978 and 1980 surveys,

it is apparent that many students have been disappointed in the quality of the academic advising they received. When a secretary stamps a professor's name on enrollment papers, can this be called academic advising? Yet, many of the students are receiving this type of attention. Effective advising could probably discover early a student's concern with inadequate study habits, or other problems that were listed as reasons for dropping out of college. A lot of colleges and universities recruit students by citing student-faculty ratios. Could Oklahoma State University recruit students using its current student-advisor ratios? To expect more advising, more advisors are needed. This becomes a fiscal problem.

With expected federal cuts in financial aid and the increasing cost of a college education, the employment picture for students is becoming more important. National studies, particularly Astin's, recommend that employment be for not more than twenty hours per week and that students should work on campus. Employment that has longer hours and/or that is off-campus is believed to increase the probability of attrition. The university may need to consider the creation of more part-time employment possibilities for students.

The dissatisfaction with the financial aids department was evident in the responses to the surveys. Going to the financial aids office, a student typically confronts long lines and extensive paperwork. He or she is frustrated and expects the loan officer to work miracles. The student needs the money then. More students need to be informed about how the financial aids office works. Many times, frustrations are due to misinformed people. Also, some people expect the government to pay for their education. While others need assistance in qualifying for aid, but



find asking for help very humiliating. Personal feelings must be considered when discussing financial aid with these students.

Most students indicate that personal problems resulted in their decision to leave. A weakness in the design of the instrument was offering the student the option of choosing a broad category entitled "Personal Problems" as a major reason for leaving the university. The instrument should have required a series of specific response alternatives. The survey should have requested the student to indicate the major difficulty experienced in adjusting to college. Another option, "Dissatisfaction with Living Situation/Roommate," should have been split into two separate choices. In what ways does a university have an impact on students' personal problems?

By being in the business of providing medical and emotional attention, and of housing students, the university becomes involved in the entire development of a student. Personal problems lead to dropping out, and in many cases, a decline in the academic work coincides with personal problems the student is experiencing. Students who leave because of a desire to be closer to someone they love, would probably do so no matter what the university experience was. Students who leave because of "home responsibilities" might still go, but helping those students to return to the university in the future is a goal that could be achieved. Certainly, if a student left because of dissatisfaction with their living situation, steps could be taken to help him or her become more acclimated to residence halls.

The 1978 and 1980 surveys identified conditions in the residence halls that could be improved. Parking continues to be the most frequently cited complaint. The university has suggested many alternatives. Most recently

a suggestion called for the elimination of a recreational area near one of the halls, yet students might not want to give up recreational areas near their halls, especially since the survey found that the area of recreation was most satisfactory. Parking garages are considered too expensive by most university officials. Yet, there must be some solution to the problem of parking. Generally students were pleased with the size and physical condition of their room. Most students who left had liked their roommate(s) and had enjoyed the social and intramural activities.

Many students who had left the university saw a need for improvements in the cafeteria meal plan options and for upgrading the meal service. University officials have attempted to keep room and board prices low, and through the fall of 1980, the rate of increases had been minimal. The assumption has always been to promote the lowest cost to students. But students in the 1980 study reported a smaller percentage of respondents who had withdrawn because their room and board was too expensive. Students may be willing to pay more for better food. This should be researched more carefully. Food service in the halls may be something that is always going to receive complaints because of the problem of eating so many meals in the same place. Nevertheless, there are probably areas for improvement.

In addition to these concerns, students indicated some dissatisfaction with lounge facilities and study areas in the halls. The temperature of the rooms was also, at times, considered a problem area. Generally, respondents seemed pleased with the conditions found in the residence halls.

Students also expressed their concerns regarding services offered by the university. The area of greatest concern should be assisting students to find the help they need to stay in school. The university is providing

services to combat attrition that are not being used by the people who need help the most.

The university must improve its ability to inform students regarding tutoring services, the CALL Center, and other services. Students experiencing problems with academics should be identified by instructors and encouraged to seek help. Academic advisors should refer students to services when they believe they need help. The departments offering services need to be more effective at informing students and faculty about what they can and can not provide as aid to students. The problem regarding the lack of use of services such as the CALL Center, University Counseling Services, and tutoring services by dropout-prone students is severe enough that it should not be ignored. Departments must review alternatives to informing students about their services. There may be a need for higher visibility of departmental personnel on campus. This could be done through dynamic, new programs. The university each year has an Activities Mart for student organizations, and perhaps there needs to be a "services fair" developed. This could allow different departments to tell students about the ways their personnel can help in the adjustment to college life. Distributing brochures through the ALPHA packets may not be enough. Students need the opportunity to meet university staff to find out how interested these people are in their problems. Another possibility for a programs to inform students about these services would be the creation of a "Services Awareness Week" in the residence halls during the first month of each school year. Different departments could explain their services to residents and meet informally with these students.

Once students are informed of all the services, there is always the problem of getting them to come to the department for personal attention. University officials should review the location of these departments with regard to accessibility to students. For example, the Call Center is located in the basement of Murray Hall, a residence hall housing non-freshmen students, which is located on the periphery of campus. A more central location, like the basement of the Classroom Building, might bring more students seeking help with learning or career-planning difficulties in for assistance.

Another major problem area which was noted in the survey results dealt with the people with whom dropout-prone students were discussing their decision to leave the university. Some form of "early warning system" is needed so that students can receive more guidance in making the decision to drop out. Academic advisors are involved in the process, but many times the student has already decided to leave prior to visiting his or her advisor.

One possibility for the creation of an "early warning system" might be the utilization of faculty attendance records. If instructors would notify the student's advisor about excessive absences from class, the advisor could request a visit from the student. By taking advantage of the faculty lunch program in the residence halls, the advisor could offer to meet with the student to discuss the concerns that the student has which might cause him to drop out. Faculty members must be encouraged to take the initiative.

Another source of clues regarding students who are unhappy is the Student Assistant on each floor of the residence hall. Student Assistants usually know when people are cutting classes, partying too much, and/or depressed about something. Generally, the staff member will try to learn

more about the student's unhappiness from the roommate or other friends. Many times, the Student Assistant will approach the student experiencing difficulty to find out about the problem. Sometimes the student will consider the alternatives offered, while other times Student Assistants are not successful. Residence hall staff could visit with the academic advisor about the student and his or her problem(s). A student will often discuss a problem with his or her Student Assistant that might not be easily discussed with others. Although the Student Assistant is a university staff member, he or she is also one of the people on the floor. Many who are on the residence hall staff have experienced similar difficulties as part of their own collegiate experience, so they are more open to help a student who is having difficulty. Student Assistants could be of great service in an alert system, but they are also full-time students with many duties already required of them. To be effective, any type of alert system must have a clearly defined process. Many people at the university can pick up "cues" that someone may be wanting to leave the school; but all this information must be channelled to one person. This one individual would approach the student once he or she had been alerted.

The former students who responded to the survey were helpful in identifying problem areas that may have been factors in their decision to leave the university. It may be valuable to learn what "persisters" perceive about housing conditions and university services. This information may be available from the Residence Halls Association, which makes an annual poll of students residing on campus at Oklahoma State University. In addition, the Division of Single Student Housing conducted a "Needs Assessment" survey of hall residents during the fall of 1979. Results of

these studies would reflect the ideas and concerns of persisters. This information is valuable as it allows researchers to check for different levels of satisfaction between those students who left and those who stayed at the university.

As a result of information received from students who withdrew from Oklahoma State University, campus officials may be able to meet the needs of current and future students more effectively. There will always be students leaving for various reasons. By creating a staying environment and seeking solutions to current problems, the rate of retention can rise. To do so will, however, require the efforts of every individual associated with Oklahoma State University.

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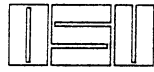
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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE



# *Oklahoma State University*

SINGLE STUDENT HOUSING

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074  
2ND FLOOR, STUDENT UNION  
(405) 624-5592

Dear Former Student:

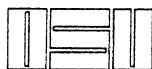
Our Housing records indicate that you withdrew from Oklahoma State University. Single Student Housing is interested in determining the reasons why you left OSU and your degree of satisfaction with various aspects of Housing. We hope to use this information to improve our service to the students.

To help us determine your satisfaction, we have enclosed a confidential questionnaire for you to complete. Please complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. We have enclosed an envelope for your convenience. We have coded the questionnaires only in order to keep track of the responses. Your name will not be identified with your answers when the data is collected and reported. The completion of any of the questionnaire items are optional, but we encourage you to complete it as fully as possible.

If you have re-enrolled at OSU, your response to this questionnaire will in no way affect your enrollment. You were merely selected to receive this questionnaire because you were not continuously enrolled at OSU.

Your cooperation and assistance in completing this questionnaire as soon as possible is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,



*Oklahoma State University*

SINGLE STUDENT HOUSING

Follow-Up Letter, 1978

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074  
2ND FLOOR, STUDENT UNION  
(405) 624-5592

Dear Former Student:

Recently we mailed to you a confidential questionnaire in which we asked you the reasons why you left OSU and your degree of satisfaction with various aspects of the Residence Halls. We have not yet received your questionnaire.

To help us plan for OSU and for the needs of the students, it is essential that we receive as many questionnaires as possible. The completion of any of the questionnaire items is optional, but we encourage you to complete it as fully as possible.

We are enclosing another questionnaire for you to complete and return to us. If you have already mailed the questionnaire to us, please disregard this second questionnaire. If you have not completed the questionnaire, please take a few moments to do so. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



# Oklahoma State University

SINGLE STUDENT HOUSING

## Cover Letter, 1980 Study

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
2ND FLOOR, STUDENT UNION  
(405) 624-5592

Dear former student:

According to our records, you began the year last August residing in one of our residence halls and for some reason left during the time that has passed since then. With all the "red tape" involved in any large university, you put a lot of energy into enrolling at OSU and probably stood in long lines and worried about fee deadlines, etc. There is probably a way we could have served you better which would have resulted in your remaining at OSU. This survey is our attempt at trying to learn in what way you were dissatisfied with OSU, and what we can do to better meet the needs of residents next fall.

This is a confidential survey sent randomly to students. The coded number is to assist the computer in breaking down responses by hall and month. Your name will not be identified with your answers when the data is collected and reported. The completion of any questionnaire items are optional, but we encourage you to complete it as fully as possible.

The survey should only take a few minutes and it is important for us no matter for what reason you left OSU that we learn your feelings. This might result in our helping someone else and keeping them from experiencing the same problems you did.

We plan to take the results to the computer center on Friday, May 1. We can hand tally information after that date, but it is not as accurate, so please do return this as soon as possible. Our evaluation process will begin as soon as finals are over.

Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Carol Schmitz  
Housing Staff Member

Enclosure



APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

SINGLE STUDENT HOUSING  
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

- ☐ Listed below are some academic, employment, financial, and personal reasons why a student might leave college. To what extent are these YOUR reasons for leaving?

Circle one number for each item listed.

1. Not a Reason for Leaving OSU
2. A Minor Reason for Leaving OSU
3. A Major Reason for Leaving OSU

Academic

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (1) Needed a temporary break from studies                      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (2) Major or courses wanted were not available at this college |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (3) Dissatisfaction with major department                      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (4) Unsure about my choice of major                            |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (5) Course work not challenging                                |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (6) Low grades   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (7) Found course too difficult                                 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (8) Inadequate study techniques or habits                      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (9) Dissatisfied with quality of teaching                      |

Employment

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (10) Scheduling conflict between job and studies |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (11) Accepted a job                              |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (12) Went into military service                  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (13) Couldn't find a job while in college        |

Financial

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (14) Not enough money to go to college           |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (15) Applied, but could not obtain financial aid |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (16) Financial aid was not sufficient            |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (17) Room and Board was too costly               |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (18) OSU was too expensive                       |

Personal

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (19) Found study too time-consuming                                  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (20) Home responsibilities were too great                            |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (21) Illness, personal or family                                     |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (22) Personal problems   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (23) Fulfilled my personal educational plan                          |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (24) Marital situation changed my educational plans                  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (25) Parents moved out of the area                                   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (26) Dissatisfaction with living conditions/roommate(s)              |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (27) Ratio of minorities too low (faculty, staff, and/or students)   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (28) Insensitivity of the university to needs/concerns of minorities |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | (29) Not enough programs and activities for minority students        |

- ☐ Looking at the above list in question 1, please select the three most important reasons why you left OSU this term. (List in order of importance the appropriate item number [i.e. 24] in the space below.)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1st

\_\_\_\_\_ 2nd

\_\_\_\_\_ 3rd

- ☐ Which of the following types of Financial Aid did you receive at any time during your last semester? Check all that apply.

- |       |                              |
|-------|------------------------------|
| _____ | a. None                      |
| _____ | b. Scholarship               |
| _____ | c. Loan                      |
| _____ | d. Work/Study                |
| _____ | e. GI Bill                   |
| _____ | f. Grant                     |
| _____ | g. Social Security           |
| _____ | h. Vocational Rehabilitation |

4. What are you currently doing? Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Attending or plan to attend school soon \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ b. Entered or plan to enter the military \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school)  
☐ c. Looking for a job  
☐ d. Working in a job  
☐ e. Caring for a home and/or family  
☐ f. Traveling  
☐ g. Other, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you attend ALPHA, the Freshman and Transfer Student Orientation Program?

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

6. If you answered yes to the above question, what benefits did you receive from attending ALPHA? Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. It increased my confidence and better prepared me for college.  
☐ b. It helped me meet other students and find new friends.  
☐ c. It allowed me to get to know OSU faculty and staff members.  
☐ d. Other, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

7. My Age is:

\_\_\_\_\_

8. I am a:

- ☐ a. male  
☐ b. female

9. What was the size of your high school graduating class?

- ☐ a. 50 or less  
☐ b. 51-150  
☐ c. 151-450  
☐ d. 451 or more

10. Race/Ethnic Identification

- ☐ a. American Indian  
☐ b. Asian  
☐ c. Black  
☐ d. Hispanic  
☐ e. White

11. Status at the time you left school

- ☐ a. Freshman  
☐ b. Sophomore  
☐ c. Junior  
☐ d. Senior  
☐ e. Graduate Student  
☐ f. Special Student

12. Had you declared a major?

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

13. Did you talk to any of the following people prior to making your decision to withdraw from OSU?

Circle one number for each item listed.

1. Did not know this person  
 2. Did know this person, but did not talk to this person  
 3. Did talk to this person

- 1 2 3 (1) Roommate  
 1 2 3 (2) Student Assistant  
 1 2 3 (3) Assistant or Head Resident  
 1 2 3 (4) An OSU Faculty Member (Teacher)  
 1 2 3 (5) Your College Advisor  
 1 2 3 (6) An OSU Staff Member (Non-Teacher)  
 1 2 3 (7) A Family Member or Close Friend at OSU

14. While you lived in the Residence Halls, were you ever involved in the following?  
Check all that apply.

☐ a. Assigned to a floor lounge  
☐ b. Assigned to a 4-person room  
☐ c. Transferred from one hall to another (If so, from \_\_\_\_\_ Hall to \_\_\_\_\_ Hall)  
☐ d. Assigned to a triple room  
☐ e. Placed on a waiting list

15. Did you receive your first choice in Residence Halls?

☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

16. Did you pledge to a Sorority or Fraternity?

☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

17. Did you transfer to OSU from another college?

☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

18. Was your roommate? Check all that apply.

☐ a. Requested by you  
☐ b. Chosen by Single Student Housing  
☐ c. I never had a roommate  
☐ d. I had more than one roommate  
☐ e. My roommate was a minority student  
☐ f. My roommate was not a minority student

19. Would you have remained in school if your roommate was not e. or f. on question #18?

☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

20. How would you rate the overall interaction between minorities and non-minorities in your residence hall?

☐ a. Lots of interaction  
☐ b. Some interaction  
☐ c. Little, if any interaction  
☐ d. No interaction whatsoever  
☐ e. No opinion.

21. How satisfied were you with each of the Residence Hall conditions listed below?

Circle one number for each item listed.

1. Dissatisfied  
 2. Somewhat Satisfied  
 3. Very Satisfied

- 1 2 3 (1) Quietness of your room  
 1 2 3 (2) Physical condition of your room upon moving in  
 1 2 3 (3) Temperature of your room  
 1 2 3 (4) Temperature in public areas of your floor  
 1 2 3 (5) Suitability of your room for studying  
 1 2 3 (6) Your roommate  
 1 2 3 (7) Size of your room  
 1 2 3 (8) Lounge facilities  
 1 2 3 (9) Recreational areas in and around your hall  
 1 2 3 (10) Study areas in your hall  
 1 2 3 (11) Parking around your hall  
 1 2 3 (12) Cleanliness of your hall  
 1 2 3 (13) Social activities in your hall  
 1 2 3 (14) Social activities on your floor  
 1 2 3 (15) Intramurals participation by your floor  
 1 2 3 (16) Cafeteria Facilities  
 1 2 3 (17) Cafeteria Meal Plan Options

22. How satisfied were you with each of the University services listed below?

Circle one number for each item listed.

1. Never used this service
2. Dissatisfied with this service
3. Somewhat satisfied with this service
4. Very satisfied with this service

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (1) Learning Center/CALL Center                         |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (2) OSU Hospital and Clinic                             |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (3) OSU Counseling Center                               |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (4) Tutoring Services                                   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) College Advisor                                     |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (6) Freshman Programs and Services                      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (7) Recreational, Intramurals, Colvin Center Facilities |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (8) Financial Aids Department                           |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (9) Student Employment Office                           |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (10) Cafeteria Food Service                             |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (11) ALPHA (Freshman and Transfer Student Orientation)  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (12) Single Student Housing Office                      |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (13) Residence Hall Desk Service                        |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (14) Student Union Stores                               |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (15) Student Union Activities Board (SUAB) Programs     |

23. Why did you originally decide to live in a Residence Hall? Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Required to live there because I was a freshman
- ☐ b. Parental pressure
- ☐ c. Convenience
- ☐ d. Economical
- ☐ e. To make friends and participate in social activities
- ☐ f. Close to campus
- ☐ g. Could not find another place to live
- ☐ h. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

24. What did you like best about living in a Residence Hall. Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Availability of Food Service
- ☐ b. Close to campus
- ☐ c. Economical
- ☐ d. Social Activities
- ☐ e. Participation in student government in hall
- ☐ f. Being close to my friends
- ☐ g. Intramural Sports
- ☐ h. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

25. If you return to OSU, would you return to a Residence Hall?

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No

WHY?

26. Please describe in your own words your reasons for leaving OSU.

27. What aspects of residence hall living would you most like to change?

APPENDIX D

RESULTS FROM THE 1978 STUDY

## RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY

1. Listed below are some academic, employment, financial, and personal reasons why a student might leave college. To what extent are these YOUR reasons for leaving?

Types of Reasons	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Major Reason
ACADEMIC			
1. Temporary break	72%	15%	13%
2. Major/courses unavailable	89%	5%	6%
3. Dissat. with major dept.	75%	15%	10%
4. Unsure about major	72%	19%	9%
5. Courses not challenging	94%	5%	1%
6. Low grades	77%	12%	10%
7. Found courses too hard	90%	6%	4%
8. Inadequate study habits	70%	21%	9%
9. Dissat. teaching quality	72%	20%	7%
EMPLOYMENT			
10. Schedule conflict-job	90%	4%	6%
11. Accepted a job	78%	6%	16%
12. Military service	99%	0%	1%
13. Could not find work	83%	9%	7%
FINANCIAL			
14. Insufficient money	66%	19%	15%
15. Request fin. aid--rejected	82%	6%	9%
16. Fin. aid--insufficient	85%	6%	9%
17. Room & bd. too expensive	68%	19%	13%
18. OSU was too expensive	69%	20%	10%
PERSONAL			
19. Study too time consuming	87%	9%	4%
20. Home responsibilities	73%	14%	13%
21. Personal or fam. illness	81%	9%	10%
22. Personal problems	57%	19%	24%
23. Fulfilled my personal goal	88%	4%	8%
24. Marital situation changed	76%	8%	16%
25. Parents moved out of area	98%	1%	1%
26. Dissat. living sit/roomie	62%	17%	21%
27. Minority ratio too low	96%	1%	2%
28. Minorities were disregarded	92%	7%	1%
29. No programs for minorities	99%	1%	0%

2. Most important of the above . . . Item 22 with 17% listed it as no. 1.

3. Which of the following types of financial aid did you receive at any time during your last semester?

<u>60%</u> None	<u>1%</u> G. I. Bill
<u>10%</u> Scholarship	<u>15%</u> Grant
<u>15%</u> Loan	<u>6%</u> Social Security
<u>7%</u> Work/Study	<u>5%</u> Vocational Rehabilitation

4. What are you currently doing?

<u>64%</u> Attending or plan to attend school	<u>                    </u>
<u>1%</u> Entered or plan to enter military	<u>                    </u> Name of School
<u>8%</u> Looking for a job	
<u>57%</u> Working in a job	
<u>14%</u> Caring for a home and/or family	
<u>3%</u> Traveling	
<u>5%</u> Other, please specify	<u>                    </u>

5. Did you attend ALPHA, the freshmen and transfer student orientation program?

<u>54%</u> Yes	<u>46%</u> No
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6. If you answered yes to the above question, what benefits did you receive from attending ALPHA?

<u>22%</u> It increased my confidence and better prepared me for college.
<u>38%</u> It helped me meet other students and find new friends.
<u>6%</u> It allowed me to get to know OSU faculty and staff members.
<u>9%</u> Other, please specify <u>                    </u>

7. My age is:

<u>20%</u> 18	<u>38%</u> 19	<u>21%</u> 20	<u>10%</u> 21	<u>3%</u> 22	<u>8%</u> 23 & up
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8. I am a:

<u>47%</u> Male	<u>53%</u> Female
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9. What was the size of your high school graduating class?

<u>16%</u> 50 or less	<u>22%</u> 51-150	<u>28%</u> 151-450	<u>34%</u> 451 or more
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## 10. Race/Ethnic Identification

<u>3%</u> American Indian	<u>1%</u> Asian	<u>3%</u> Black
<u>1%</u> Hispanic	<u>93%</u> White	

## 11. Status at the time you left school?

<u>55%</u> Freshmen	<u>26%</u> Sophomore	<u>9%</u> Junior
<u>7%</u> Senior	<u>3%</u> Graduate	<u>0%</u> Special

## 12. Had you declared a major?

<u>77%</u> Yes	<u>23%</u> No
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## 13. Who did you talk to prior to making your decision to withdraw?

	<u>Did not know this person</u>	<u>Did know, but did not talk</u>	<u>Did talk to this person</u>
Roommate	5%	25%	70%
Student Assistant	7%	47%	46%
Assistant or Head Resident	25%	52%	24%
An OSU Faculty Member	28%	46%	26%
Your College Advisor	24%	44%	33%
An OSU Staff Member	60%	22%	18%
A Family Member or Close Friend at OSU	6%	10%	84%

## 14. While you lived in the residence halls, were you ever involved in the following?

	<u>was involved</u>	<u>was not involved</u>
Assigned to a floor lounge	6%	94%
Assigned to a 4-person room	1%	99%
Transferred from one hall to another	6%	94%
Assigned to a triple room	8%	92%
Placed on a waiting list	11%	89%

## 15. Did you receive your first choice in residence halls?

<u>60%</u> Yes	<u>40%</u> No
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## 16. Did you pledge a fraternity or sorority?

<u>3%</u> Yes	<u>97%</u> No
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## 17. Did you transfer to OSU from another college?

<u>23%</u> Yes	<u>77%</u> No
----------------	---------------

18. Was your roommate . . . does not apply yes
- |                                     |     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| a) Requested by you                 | 56% | 44% |
| b) Chosen by Single Student Housing | 47% | 53% |
| c) I never had a roommate           | 99% | 1%  |
| d) I had more than one roommate     | 78% | 22% |
| e) My roommate was a minority       | 88% | 12% |
| f) My roommate was not a minority   | 44% | 56% |

19. Would you have stayed in school if your roommate was not e. or f. on question no. 18.

35% Yes

65% No

20. How would you rate the overall interaction between minorities and non-minorities in your residence hall?

13% Lots of interaction

46% Some interaction

18% Little, if any interaction

1% No interaction whatsoever

23% No opinion

21. How satisfied were you with each of the residence hall conditions listed below?

	Dissat.	Sat.	Very Sat.
Quietness of your room	24%	49%	27%
Physical condition-room	20%	42%	37%
Temperature of room	39%	38%	23%
Temperature--public areas	17%	50%	33%
Studying in room	27%	38%	35%
Your roommate	16%	28%	56%
Size of your room	26%	38%	36%
Lounge facilities	26%	47%	27%
Recreational areas in & near	23%	40%	36%
Study areas in the hall	30%	41%	29%
Parking around the hall	64%	26%	10%
Cleanliness of the hall	11%	36%	53%
Social activities in the hall	14%	43%	43%
Social activities on the floor	17%	38%	45%
Intramurals participation	9%	47%	44%
Cafeteria facilities	30%	46%	24%
Cafeteria meal plan options	35%	46%	19%

22. How satisfied were you with each of the university services listed below?

	Never Used	Dissat.	Sat.	Very Sat.
CALL Center	66%	2%	13%	19%
OSU Hospital	47%	6%	15%	32%
OSU Counseling Center	81%	2%	10%	7%
Tutoring Services	88%	3%	6%	4%
College Advisor	22%	17%	33%	28%
Fresh.Programs & Services	50%	8%	32%	10%
Colvin Center & Intramurals	24%	2%	22%	52%
Financial Aids Dept.	56%	17%	17%	10%
Student Employment Office	71%	10%	10%	9%
Cafeteria Food Service	13%	29%	44%	13%
ALPHA Orientation Program	40%	8%	33%	18%
Single Student Housing Off.	15%	17%	44%	23%
Residence Hall Desk Service	5%	8%	42%	45%
Student Union Stores	3%	6%	44%	47%
SUAB Programming	43%	7%	28%	22%

23. Why did you originally decide to live in a residence hall?

<u>72%</u> Required as a freshmen	<u>48%</u> Make friends & social act.
<u>15%</u> Parental pressure	<u>59%</u> Close to campus
<u>55%</u> Convenience	<u>11%</u> Could not find any other
<u>41%</u> Economical	<u>6%</u> Other, please specify__

24. What did you like best about living in the residence hall?

<u>34%</u> Availability of food service	<u>10%</u> Participation in hall govm't
<u>74%</u> Close to campus	<u>51%</u> Being close to friends
<u>38%</u> Economical	<u>31%</u> Intramurals sports
<u>38%</u> Social activities	<u>3%</u> Other, please specify__

25. If you return to OSU, would you return to a residence hall?

<u>37%</u> Yes	<u>63%</u> No
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APPENDIX D

RESULTS FROM THE 1980 STUDY

## RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY

1. Listed below are some academic, employment, financial, and personal reasons why a student might leave college. To what extent are these YOUR reasons for leaving?

Types of Reasons	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Major Reason
ACADEMIC			
1. Temporary break	70%	16%	14%
2. Major/courses unavailable	90%	6%	6%
3. Dissat. with major dept.	76%	18%	4%
4. Unsure about major	72%	14%	12%
5. Courses not challenging	92%	4%	1%
6. Low grades	70%	18%	10%
7. Courses too difficult	84%	10%	6%
→ 8. Inadequate study habits	66%	24%	8%
9. Dissat. teaching quality	72%	18%	10%
EMPLOYMENT			
10. Scheduling conflict-job	88%	8%	4%
11. Accepted a job	82%	4%	12%
12. Military service	96%	0%	4%
13. Could not find a job	82%	10%	8%
FINANCIAL			
14. Insufficient money	70%	18%	14%
15. Applied for fin. aids, rej.	82%	10%	8%
16. Fin. aids--insufficient	78%	10%	12%
17. Rm. & Bd. too expensive	70%	20%	10%
18. OSU was too expensive	82%	10%	8%
PERSONAL			
19. Study was too time-consuming	84%	10%	4%
20. Home responsibilities	76%	14%	10%
21. Illness, personal or family	80%	8%	12%
22. Personal problems	54%	22%	24%
23. Fullfilled educ. goals	84%	4%	10%
24. Marital situation changed	76%	6%	16%
25. Parents moved out of area	96%	0%	4%
26. Dissat. with living sit/rmnt	58%	18%	24%
27. Minority ratio too low	94%	4%	0%
28. Minorities were disregarded	94%	4%	4%
29. Not enough programs--minor.	96%	0%	0%

2. Most important of the above... Item 22 with 16% listed it as No. 1.

3. Which of the following types of financial aids did not receive at any time during your last semester?

<u>44%</u> None	<u>2%</u> G. I. Bill
<u>12%</u> Scholarship	<u>12%</u> Grant
<u>18%</u> Loan	<u>4%</u> Social Security
<u>6%</u> Work/Study	<u>6%</u> Vocational Rehabilitation

4. What are you currently doing?

<u>72%</u> Attending or plan to attend school	_____
<u>0%</u> Entered or plan to enter military	Name of School _____
<u>9%</u> Looking for a job	
<u>58%</u> Working in a job	
<u>9%</u> Caring for a home and/or family	
<u>2%</u> Traveling	
<u>5%</u> Other, please specify	

5. Did you attend ALPHA, the freshmen and transfer student orientation program?

<u>56%</u> Yes	<u>44%</u> No
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6. If you answered yes to the above question, what benefits did you receive from attending ALPHA?

<u>72%</u> It increased my confidence and better prepared me for college.
<u>58%</u> It helped me meet other students and find new friends.
<u>9%</u> It allowed me to get to know OSU faculty and staff members.
<u>8%</u> Other, please specify _____

7. My age is:

<u>23%</u> 18	<u>34%</u> 19	<u>21%</u> 20	<u>9%</u> 21	<u>4%</u> 22
<u>10%</u> 23 and up				

8. I am a : 51% Male 49% Female

9. What was the size of your graduating class in high school?

<u>11%</u> 50 or less	<u>22%</u> 51-150	<u>28%</u> 151-450	<u>34%</u> 451 or more
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## 10. Race/Ethnic Identification

0% American Indian      0% Asian      0% Black  
0% Hispanic      100% White

## 11. Status at the time you left school?

54% Freshmen      24% Sophomore      8% Junior  
10% Senior      4% Graduate      0% Special

## 12. Had you declared a major?

78% Yes      21% No

## 13. Who did you talk to prior to making your decision to withdraw?

	Did not know this person	Did know, but did not talk	Did talk to this person
Roommate	4%	26%	68%
Student Assistant	10%	46%	42%
Assistant or Head Resident	22%	54%	22%
An OSU Faculty Member	30%	50%	20%
Your College Advisor	22%	50%	28%
An OSU Staff Member	50%	32%	16%
A Family Member or Close Friend at OSU	6%	14%	78%

## 14. While you lived in the residence halls were you ever involved in the following?

	was involved	was not involved
Assigned to a floor lounge	0%	99%
Assigned to a 4-person room	0%	99%
Transferred from one hall to another	5%	95%
Assigned to a triple room	7%	93%
Placed on a waiting list	10%	90%

## 15. Did you receive your first choice in residence halls?

57% Yes      43% No

## 16. Did you pledge a sorority or fraternity?

5% Yes      95% No

## 17. Did you transfer to OSU from another college?

24% Yes      75% No

18. Was your roommate . . . does not apply yes
- |                                    |      |     |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|
| Requested by you                   | 57%  | 43% |
| Chosen by Single Student Housing   | 48%  | 52% |
| I never had a roommate             | 100% | 0%  |
| I had more than one roommate       | 79%  | 21% |
| My roommate was a minority student | 86%  | 14% |
| My roommate was not a minority     | 45%  | 55% |
19. Would you have remained in school if your roommate was not e. or f. on question no. 18?
- 33% Yes 66% No
20. How would you rate the overall interaction between minorities and non-minorities in your residence hall?
- 15% Lots of interaction  
38% Some interaction  
15% Little, if any interaction  
3% No interaction what soever  
30% No opinion
21. How satisfied were you with each of the residence hall conditions listed below?
- |                                | Dissat. | Sat. | Very Sat. |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|-----------|
| Quietness of your room         | 24%     | 48%  | 26%       |
| Physical condition--room       | 19%     | 38%  | 43%       |
| Temperature of room            | 35%     | 42%  | 22%       |
| Temperature of public areas    | 19%     | 49%  | 33%       |
| Studying in your room          | 22%     | 40%  | 35%       |
| Your Roommate                  | 19%     | 26%  | 55%       |
| Size of your room              | 19%     | 36%  | 42%       |
| Lounge facilities              | 26%     | 49%  | 22%       |
| Recreational areas in & near   | 16%     | 40%  | 40%       |
| Study areas in your hall       | 26%     | 45%  | 26%       |
| Parking around your hall       | 62%     | 23%  | 15%       |
| Cleanliness of the hall        | 10%     | 38%  | 51%       |
| Social activities in the hall  | 12%     | 43%  | 43%       |
| Social activities on the floor | 16%     | 38%  | 47%       |
| Intramural participation       | 8%      | 38%  | 51%       |
| Cafeteria facilities           | 22%     | 46%  | 29%       |
| Cafeteria meal plan options    | 30%     | 44%  | 24%       |



22. How satisfied were you with each of the university services listed below?

	Never Used	Dissat	Sat.	Very Sat.
CALL Center	70%	0%	14%	17%
OSU Hospital	44%	10%	17%	27%
OSU Counseling Center	76%	6%	7%	7%
Tutoring Services	85%	3%	6%	3%
College Advisor	17%	20%	37%	26%
Fresh. Programs & Services	52%	7%	28%	14%
Colvin Center, Intramurals	20%	1%	24%	53%
Financial Aids Dept.	51%	25%	14%	8%
Student Employment Office	73%	11%	8%	7%
Cafeteria Food Service	11%	30%	43%	14%
ALPHA Orientation Program	39%	6%	32%	21%
Single Student Hous. Office	10%	20%	42%	26%
Res. Hall Desk Service	5%	8%	36%	50%
Student Union Stores	6%	5%	46%	41%
SUAB Programming	47%	4%	25%	25%

23. Why did you originally decide to decide to live in a residence hall?

<u>66%</u> Required as a freshmen	<u>55%</u> Make friends & social act.
<u>14%</u> Parental pressure	<u>62%</u> Close to campus
<u>60%</u> Convenience	<u>12%</u> Could not find anywhere else
<u>50%</u> Economical	<u>10%</u> Other, please specify_____

24. What did you like best about living in the halls?

<u>37%</u> Availability of food service	<u>11%</u> Participation--Hall Govm't
<u>76%</u> Close to campus	<u>50%</u> Being close to friends
<u>41%</u> Economical	<u>37%</u> Intramural sports
<u>47%</u> Social activities	<u>7%</u> Other, please specify_____

25. And, if you return to OSU, would you return to a residence hall?

Females	<u>30%</u> Yes	<u>70%</u> No
Males	<u>38%</u> Yes	<u>62%</u> No

## QUESTION 22 - A SECOND LOOK

A difficulty exists on question 22 because of the instrument's giving the student the opportunity to reply "Never Used" to the services listed. Having information about the use of the services, is, of course, extremely valuable. The difficulty lies in evaluating the effectiveness of those services. The figures listed below are the percentages of dissatisfaction and satisfaction among those students who used the service, therefore, the figures below disregard the "Never Used" column.

## User Satisfaction with University Services

Service	Dissat.	Very Sat.
CALL Center	0%	57%
OSU Hospital	18%	41%
OSU Counseling Center	25%	29%
Tutoring Services	20%	20%
College Advisor	24%	31%
Fresh. Programs & Services	15%	29%
Colvin Center, Intramurals	1%	66%
Financial Aids Dept.	51%	16%
Student Employment Office	41%	26%
Cafeteria Food Service	34%	16%
ALPHA Orientation Program	10%	34%
Single Student Hous. Office	22%	29%
Desk Service in Res. Halls	8%	53%
Student Union Stores	5%	44%
SUAB Programming	8%	47%

VITA

Carol Ann Schmitz

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF RESIDENTS WHO VOLUNTARILY WITHDREW FROM  
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