

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN FRESHMEN STUDENTS'  
DECISIONS TO ATTEND NORTHEASTERN  
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Nature of the Problem

Each year, thousands of high school seniors are confronted with the problem of selecting an institution of higher learning to continue their education toward a career.

Astin (8) states that ages 15 to 25 are years of vocational exploration. These years involve a trial-and-error process in decision-making which includes choosing which college to attend.

Why do students decide to attend one college rather than another? Why do they decide to continue their education rather than do something else? In a time of generally declining enrollments, these questions are more crucial for today's college and university administrators than ever before.

During the mid-1960's, higher education in the United States was a rapidly expanding field. Institutions experienced steady increases in enrollment, which led to larger budgets and increasing numbers of faculty members. In the early 1970's, however, universities and colleges found that attracting qualified students was becoming more difficult. Consequently, tuition income was jeopardized and faculty positions sometimes were threatened.

From 1965 until 1968, Northeastern Oklahoma State University,



located in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in Tahlequah, experienced an increase of 1,152 students, keeping pace with the nation-wide trend of increasing enrollment (1). During these years, enrollment increased from 4,840 students in the fall of 1965 to a peak enrollment of 5,992 in the fall of 1968 (1). However, beginning with the 1969 fall semester, enrollment began to fluctuate each year. In 1969, it was 5,772 (2); 1970, 5,480 (3); 1971, 5,520 (4); 1972, 5,402 (5); 1973, 5,262 (6); and 1974, 5,331 (7). Freshman enrollment during the same period was in a state of flux with 1,741 students in 1968 (1); 1,609 in 1969 (2); 1,325 in 1970 (3); 1,271 in 1971 (4); 1,075 in 1972 (5); 1,182 in 1973 (6); and 1,495 in 1974 (7).

During the fall of 1970, the administration of the university began an intensive recruitment program, hoping to increase or stabilize enrollment. The recruitment effort concentrated primarily in 22 Oklahoma counties but also extended into parts of Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas. It was under the supervision of the Department of Media and Public Relations.

Despite the new recruitment program, enrollment at the conclusion of the 1970-71 academic year had declined to the point that 13 faculty members in various academic areas of the university were dismissed.

Although enrollment since 1968 had been on a generally downward turn, during the fall semester of 1974 it showed a 1.4 percent increase (7). However, the most encouraging aspect in enrollment was the 27 percent increase in freshman enrollment in the fall of 1974 over the previous fall (7). Just what factors contributed to this increase in freshman enrollment have not been determined by the university administration.

### Statement of the Problem

Students are the life blood of an institution, yet little research has been done by the administration or faculty of Northeastern Oklahoma State University as to why freshmen select this particular institution. The writer has chosen to study those factors which appear to influence freshmen students' decisions to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

### Need for the Study

Although both over-all enrollment and freshman enrollment had been fluctuating since 1968, the freshman head-count for fall semester 1974 had increased 27 percent over fall 1973. The results of this study of the 1974-75 freshman class may be beneficial in increasing future freshman enrollment, a goal clearly sought by the administration at this time.

Another indication of the need for this study is that thousands of dollars are spent each year for recruitment brochures, postage, telephone calls, and for travel by members of the recruitment committee. Thus, the writer's research may show if the recruitment program is a significant factor in the student's selection of the institution, or if the program needs to be changed or abolished.

It also is hoped that the results of this study will be helpful to the Department of Media and Public Relations and others seeking to promote a favorable institutional image.

In addition, the data should provide Northeastern Oklahoma State University administrators with pertinent information useful in

implementing future policies that may affect a student's selection of the university.

#### Basic Assumptions

The basic assumptions of this study are that (1) factors involved in student selection of institutions of higher education are varied and highly individualistic; (2) the research subjects chosen are typical of the nation's college students; and (3) there are numerous and individualistic reasons why the 1974-75 freshman class chose Northeastern Oklahoma State University to continue its education. Further, it was assumed that the measuring instrument and methodology would be adequate to the purpose of the research.

#### Scope and Limitations of the Study

The measuring instrument, discussed in Chapter III, was presented to 198 freshman students enrolled in freshman orientation and speech classes at Northeastern Oklahoma State University during the 1975 spring semester.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions are offered for a more precise understanding of this study.

Freshman. A student with 0 to 29 hours of academic credit. All data were drawn from students in this category.

Influential Factors. Those factors listed in the study which are believed to be significant in each student's choice of the institution.

Non-Influential Factors. Those factors which appear to have no

influence on a student's choice of the institution.

Primary Influences. Those factors (such as proximity) listed in the study which are characteristic of a student's choice of the institution.

Secondary Influences. Those factors listed in the study which are characteristic of the recruitment and public relations programs of Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### The College Selection Process

College-bound students apparently respond to many factors that seem to exert varying amounts of pressure on students as they seek to choose a college to continue their education beyond high school. Researchers tend to agree there are many influences on the student as he considers institutions of higher education. When selecting a college, one student may respond to the pressures of family preference or tradition while another may respond to economic pressures.

This chapter reviews pertinent literature concerning the selection process. Some researchers refer to "college" and some to "university" in their studies. In this study, the terms "college" and "university" will be considered synonymous.

#### Societal Influences

Societal factors which influence people to attend college are important to recognize. These exert a great deal of pressure on the individual to attend college--any college. One of the most important societal influences is the change in the vocational needs of our society. These needs have changed to the extent that fewer jobs are available for the unskilled, but increasing numbers of jobs are

available for those who have attained a higher level of education or training (13).

### Parental Influence

Bentley and Salter (11) reported in their study that 25 percent of 270 college freshmen studied indicated that parents were the most influential in the college selection process.

In Kerr's (28) study of 1,077 high school seniors from 33 high schools in Iowa, 67.3 percent of the participants felt parents were the most significant persons giving assistance in college selection.

Other authorities recognize that parents exert influence on the selection of a specific college without attempting to report the extent of influence. Douvan and Kaye (15) reported that most middle-class parents play a major role.

### Interacting Influences

Astin (8) found in his study of 127,212 freshmen students entering 248 colleges and universities that the question of who goes where is concerned with two interacting decision processes. The first involves the student's attempt to choose an appropriate college or university, i.e., one that will meet his personal goals and will at the same time satisfy his family, friends, teachers, counselors and others who may be exerting pressure on him.

The second decision process involves the admissions officer. The criteria he uses to accept or reject prospective students are affected not only by the needs and goals of the institution's faculty and administration, but also by the quantity and quality of the available

student applications.

Feldman and Newcomb (17) found that selection of a particular undergraduate institution is the outcome of a complex interaction of factors, which include the aspirations, abilities, and personality of the student; the values, goals and socio-economic status of his parents; the direction of the influence of his friends, teachers and other reference persons; the size, location, tuition costs, curricular offerings, and other institutional characteristics of various colleges; and the image of those colleges held by the students and those whose advice he seeks.

Houle (25) reported that regardless of the socio-economic background of the student, the motivating factors in college selection are personal and intellectual growth, as well as professional improvement required for higher pay, or higher employment status.

Astin (8) found that, for many students, the problem of selecting a college is compounded by many interacting factors. These include cost, proximity to the student's home, likelihood of gaining admission, etc.

#### Quality Image Institution Influence

Assuming, however, the student has some freedom of choice with respect to quality, how does he decide which among the available institutions is the best for him? Astin (8) suggests the "quality" image depends upon whether the institution is being judged from the point of view of the student, an alumnus, an outside granting agency, a member of the community, or a member of the faculty or administration.

From the student's viewpoint, the quality of an institution is determined primarily by two basic consequences of attending a given

college. The first kind of outcome concerns the effects of the college on the student's personal and intellectual development. These outcomes, which might be labeled the effect of "educational influences", include the student's personal experiences during his four undergraduate years, changes in his intellectual growth and development, and the quality of his vocational preparation, as well as any effects on his values, attitudes, interest, habits and mental health.

The second kind of consequence Astin referred to as the "fringe benefits". This category includes any actual change in the student that is not attributable to the college. For example, possessing a baccalaureate degree from some colleges results in certain vocational or social advantages that are not directly related to the graduate's personal characteristics or qualifications (8). In fact, it appears to be a common practice of many graduate and professional schools, as well as employers, to regard the candidate's undergraduate institution as one of the most important considerations.

Tunis (39) reported that many students select a college which will be acceptable should they plan to pursue graduate work elsewhere.

Although most students attending Yale University are from high-middle-income or high-income families and are not indicative necessarily of the majority of college students, Howard (24) in a 1974 study, found that students came to Yale primarily for one reason. They viewed Yale education as a stepping stone to a good job or to acceptance by an elite graduate school.

Hill (23), in his 1954 four-year longitudinal study of high school students, reported that, for many from upper- and upper-middle class homes, the question of going or not going to college probably never



arises. Continuing beyond high school involves no conscious decisions. The child, from his earliest years, is taught that following high school comes college. So far as the family is concerned, this is all the child knows and all he needs to know. Most middle-class parents see college as serving several purposes. It provides the young with personal vocational preparation, a general intellectual broadening and an opportunity to grow and develop for another four years--to grow in knowledge and skill, and also in emotional stability and autonomy.

However, to the high school graduates of lower social status, college represents the golden path to social mobility, the chance to increase their share of social and economic rewards.

Halle (19) found that many students go to a particular college not just because it is family tradition but to make friends who may help them socially or financially upon graduation.

#### Financial Influence

Little research has been done on why blacks prefer a particular college. A 1973 study of 318,178 freshmen entering 579 institutions, of which 13 percent of the freshmen were black, reported finance as the major factor in determining where blacks went to college. Forty-one percent of the blacks and only 17 percent of the whites said that financing their college education was the major concern (40).

#### High School Counselor Influence

The high school counselor also is a major influence in determining where students attend college. Bentley and Salter found the counselor has replaced parents as the most valuable source of college information.

They also found the counselor rapidly overtaking parents in exerting the most influence on the college-bound student. Their study showed that 63 percent of the students felt the counselor had exerted some influence on the decision to select a specific college. In addition, 21 percent indicated that the counselor was the most influential person in the selection process (11).

#### High School Teacher Influence

The high school teacher should be a valuable resource in the college selection process, but Sarnoff (37) reported in his study that teachers are not very influential. Likewise, Kerr (28) found only 6.1 percent of the participants in his study regarded the teacher as the most significant person in college selection.

#### Peer Influence

Peer influence on adolescent behavior has long been recognized by educators and psychologists. Because many students select a college while in high school, it is assumed that peer-group influence may be vital at the time of selection. Kerr (28) reported 77 percent of the participants in his study selected a specific college during the senior year. The expected peer-group influence, however, was not as strong as might have been expected. Only 4.7 percent of the participants indicated that high school friends were the most influential persons in college selection. Bentley and Salter (11) reported 15 percent were "most influenced" by high school friends.

Newcomb and Wilson (36) found that peer-group influence probably

is one of the most important factors in the college-selection process, and Havinghurst (22) found peer influence to be most prominent among lower-class youths.

#### Geographic Location Influence

One of the major choices many young people face is whether to select a college in the home community or outside the local area. According to Baer and Roeber (9), patterns of mobility indicate that more people stay in one geographical location during their entire working lives than is generally assumed.

Fairweather (16) found in his 1972 study that population levels per county and the distance of each county accounted for over 80 percent of each undergraduate distribution at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University.

Friend (18) reported on 695 freshmen entering Northeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall of 1971. The majority of these freshmen said the most important factor in their choosing Northeastern was its proximity to their home. Of the total responding to the survey, 25 percent listed convenience as the No. 1 reason for choosing Northeastern. The second reason was the advice of parents and family, listed by 13 percent of the respondents. Advice of peers or other students was given as the third reason by 8 percent of the respondents.

#### Public Relations and the Institutional Image

As has been suggested, institutional image also is important in college selection. According to Landman (30), promoting the institutional image is vital both for over-all public relations benefits and

for recruitment.

In a study of the "images" of three University of California campuses, Morey (34) reported that student perceptions of different institutions vary according to the source of the information and according to the institution itself. Morey also pointed out that educators are somewhat uninformed about how specific colleges are perceived by prospective students, and that they know even less about the sources of information from which these students' perceptions are formed.

Hammond (20) said definite parts of the image of the institution would be the location, cost, type of student body, curriculum, reputation, extra-curricular activities, size, and source of support.

Size also contributes greatly to the image of an institution. The small institution has certain advantages for some students because it tends to provide a closer relationship between students and faculty and among members of the student body. Nelson (35) indicated the size of the school is important insofar as image is concerned. He cited a positive relationship in the size of the college, community size, and attrition rate. He also noted that the smaller institutions have lower attrition rates among the freshman class. Lindren (31) suggested that the low attrition rate may be due to the student's ability to interact with the faculty.

In contrast to their selection of a small institution, Havemann and West (21) said students select a particular college so they will make better acquaintances and have the advantage of more prestigious professors. In addition, these researchers reported more varied extra-curricular activities and less emphasis on class distinction. The big-

name college also may confer an advantage in higher wages following graduation, quicker employment and greater prestige among employees.

#### Public Relations and Student Recruitment

According to Baker (10), student recruitment plays an important role in a college's public relations program. The day is gone--if indeed it ever existed--when students will seek out a college or university merely because it produces outstanding students.

Recruitment is highly competitive. Many progressive schools tend to delegate one administrator to head the total university program. In many of these institutions, the person in charge is the public relations practitioner. He is given leadership because of his expertise in working with different publics and his responsibility for the total public relations program of the institution.

Stephen and Lawrence (38) reported that many of these public relations practitioners are spending thousands of dollars in attractive brochures, media advertising and other techniques to bolster their enrollments. Some institutions are telephone everyone who has inquired about the institution, sending personalized letters from the president, and/or using mass circulation advertising and booths at state fairs. Some even offer free tuition to anyone who brings in two additional students.

Cheit (12) found that many institutions are in desperate financial trouble and are employing public relations practitioners to do their student recruitment. In his report for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1971, Cheit reported 29 institutions appeared to be

in financial trouble or dangerously near it. The report concluded that 433 institutions in America already were floundering and that another 1,000--or nearly 50 percent of our 2,340 institutions of higher learning--were heading in the same direction.

Because dwindling enrollments are expected to cause a financial drain on education, all evidence seems to indicate that public relations will play a vital role in the recruitment program of institutions of higher education for many years. Cutlip and Center (14) agree with this. They claim that the competition for qualified freshmen is such that only those persons experienced in working with a variety of publics should direct the recruitment program.

#### Alumni as Recruiting Agents

Alumni also have an important role in college selection because they serve not only as sources of information but also as recruiting agents for colleges. Douvan and Kaye (15) considered them to be influential in selection, and Hammond (20) viewed them as valuable sources of information about college conditions that may enable the student to examine more critically the reasons why he is considering a particular college. Alumni interviews are regarded by Baer and Roeber (9) as beneficial to the college-bound student who is comparing college information and catalogs.

#### Summary

The literature indicates that students choose colleges in many different ways. No single factor appears to be related to selection. Rather, the selection is based on a combination of elements exerting

varying amounts of pressure on each student.

As the research has suggested, much information is available as to why students select institutions of higher education, but little is known about what kinds of students entering specific institutions place major emphasis on these factors. Perhaps future recruitment and public relations officers will have to concentrate more on identifying the kinds of students who seek higher education. Dwindling enrollments predicted for the future in ominous reports by the Carnegie Commission and others may underscore this need.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### Introduction

This chapter will describe the writer's methods and procedures, including selection of instrument, data collection and statistical procedures for data analysis. The study grew out of a need for more descriptive data concerning the major influences upon freshmen in their selection of Northeastern Oklahoma State University for undergraduate studies.

#### Population of the Study

The study encompassed 198 freshmen of the 1,239 freshmen enrolled at Northeastern Oklahoma State University during the 1975 spring semester. All students enrolled in the freshman orientation class plus 50 freshmen enrolled in another typically freshman class, Speech 1113, constituted the population studied.

Prior to submitting the questionnaire to this population, a pilot test was administered to 25 Northeastern students in a public relations class to determine adequacy of the instrument. The results were used to refine the instrument. Infrequently marked, overlapping and ambiguous items were eliminated in the questionnaire revision. In some cases, items were reworded to clarify meaning.



## The Instrument

The data-collection instrument was developed after a study of literature pertaining to student selection of colleges, from numerous interviews and from preliminary information obtained by sampling 283 students enrolled in freshman orientation classes during the 1974 fall semester at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. In both the interviews and the sampling of students, the writer sought a list of factors considered to be influential in each respondent's decision to attend the university.

The instrument which emerged from these preliminary efforts was a five-point rating scale. Each subject was asked to rate a given concept as to its perceived degree of influence. The 18 concepts judged are shown in the questionnaire form in Appendix A, pages 53 through 60.

## Analysis

The independent variables of this study were the presumed influential factors plus pertinent demographics. The factors were classified under the major headings of Primary and Secondary influences. Primary influences were defined as those factors (such as proximity) which are characteristic of most public universities which are influential in students' selection of a university.

Secondary influences were defined as those factors which are characteristic of the recruitment and public relations program of the university.

In analyzing the data, frequency and percentage measures of the responses per factors in the Primary and Secondary influence categories were taken to determine, separately and over-all, the degrees of

influence each factor had for the total population of the study.

Also, the mean scores of each factor in the Primary and Secondary influence categories were calculated separately to determine how each factor compared with other factors in the same category.

The over-all mean influence scores of the combined 18 Primary and Secondary influence factors enabled the writer to arrange in rank order each factor. Thus, the degree of influence was determined and an over-all grand mean of the total combined factors was calculated to determine the over-all influence on students.

A two-factor mixed analysis of variance design with repeated measures on one factor was computed between sex, and Primary and Secondary influences to determine if an individual's sex was related to the type of influence on his decision to attend the university. An analysis of variance was not computed for two items ("Did you choose Northeastern because you could not get accepted by another university?", "My father is a graduate of Northeastern," or "My mother is a graduate of Northeastern") because more than 90 percent of the students responded "No" on these items. An analysis of variance also was not computed on the parents' estimated income. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents listed their parents' income in the \$5,000 to \$9,999 category, while 24 percent listed the \$10,000 to \$14,999 category, 19 percent the \$15,000 to \$19,999 category and 18 percent the \$20,000 or more category.

A major consideration in a study such as this, involving several influence factors, is to determine which factors are perceived as similarly influential. In other words, were there "clusters" or groups of factors that were viewed as more similar to each other than they were to other factors, in terms of their degrees of influence.

This aspect of the study involved the intercorrelations of the Primary and Secondary influence factors and subsequent clustering of the factors most highly correlated with each other. This was done by using the Spearman Rho rank-order correlations, followed by elementary factor analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This study investigated those influential factors involved in freshmen students' decisions to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

The sample encompassed 198 freshmen of the 1,239 freshmen enrolled at the university during the 1975 spring semester. All freshmen students enrolled in the freshman orientation class plus 50 freshmen enrolled in another typically freshman class, Speech 1113, constituted the population studied.

The questionnaire, comprising five-point rating scales, asked each student to rate various factors as to the perceived degree of influence on his decision to attend NEOSU. Nine items were listed under the major heading of Primary influences and nine under Secondary influences. Primary influences were defined as those factors (such as proximity) which are characteristic of most public universities which are influential in students' selection of a university. Secondary influences were defined as those factors which are characteristic of the recruitment and public relations programs of the university.

The frequencies and percentages of total responses on these items of Primary and Secondary influence are presented in Table I.

Over-all, the Primary influences were more influential than the Secondary. For each point on the five-point scales, representing degrees of influence, Primary influences received a higher response

rate in each category, with the exception of the "0" classification, which represented "Not influential at all." The highest point on the scale, "Extremely influential" (4), was marked 11.3 percent of the time in the Primary items as compared to only 3.3 percent for Secondary items.

TABLE I

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL RESPONDING TO EACH OF FIVE DEGREES OF INFLUENCE OF NINE PRIMARY AND NINE SECONDARY FACTORS

| Levels of Influence           | Responses |         |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                               | Frequency | Percent |
| <u>Primary:</u>               |           |         |
| 0 - Not influential at all    | 786       | 43.8    |
| 1 - Only slightly influential | 236       | 13.1    |
| 2 - Moderately influential    | 327       | 18.2    |
| 3 - Highly influential        | 245       | 13.6    |
| 4 - Extremely influential     | 202       | 11.3    |
| TOTALS                        | 1,796     | 100     |
| <u>Secondary:</u>             |           |         |
| 0 - Not influential at all    | 1,142     | 63.6    |
| 1 - Only slightly influential | 233       | 13.0    |
| 2 - Moderately influential    | 261       | 14.5    |
| 3 - Highly influential        | 101       | 5.6     |
| 4 - Extremely influential     | 59        | 3.3     |
| TOTALS                        | 1,796     | 100     |

The next highest rating, "Highly influential" (3), was noted 13.6 percent and 5.6 percent, respectively, for Primary and Secondary influences. The "Moderately influential" (2) category was checked 18.2 percent in the Primary influences and 14.5 percent in the Secondary influences, while the "Only slightly influential" (1) classification

showed a response of 13.1 percent and 13.0 percent for Primary and Secondary influences. None of the items, Primary or Secondary, was perceived as very influential by the writer as evidenced further in the explanation of mean influence scores shown on pages 24 and 25. The fact that nearly half the student responses in the Primary influences category and over half in the Secondary influences category were "Not influential at all" (0) suggests that additional influences not included in the study might be operating.

Mean influence of Primary factors in Table II showed that the two most important influences were "I was able to receive financial aids" (2.17), and "Friends of mine are attending the university" (2.14).

The two least important Primary factors were "Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)" with a mean score of .66 and "Size of the university," the lowest of all Primary influences with a mean score of only .32. To the investigator, it seems paradoxical that the influence factor "I was able to receive financial aids" was more than three times as influential as another cost-related factor "Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)." It seems to the author that these two influences would have been rated similarly.

The over-all mean influence of Primary factors was 1.35, indicating the influence of these factors averaged between "Only slightly influential" and "Moderately influential."

The highest Secondary influence, shown in Table III, was "An intern teacher from Northeastern," with a mean influence of 1.99, which bordered on "Moderately influential." The second highest mean influence dropped to 1.11 and concerned "Advertisements about Northeastern." The lowest mean influences among Secondary factors were "University

recruiter visited my high school" at .24, followed closely by "Brochures concerning the university" with a mean influence of .22.

TABLE II  
MEAN INFLUENCES OF NINE PRIMARY FACTORS

| Rank Order | Primary Influences  | Mean |
|------------|---|------|
| 1.         | I was able to receive financial aids                          | 2.17 |
| 2.         | Friends of mine are attending the university                  | 2.14 |
| 3.         | Advice of Northeastern graduates                              | 1.80 |
| 4.         | Advice of parents   | 1.46 |
| 5.         | Northeastern is close to my home                              | 1.25 |
| 6.         | Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution | 1.19 |
| 7.         | Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)             | 1.18 |
| 8.         | Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)     | .66  |
| 9.         | Size of the university  | .32  |
|            | Mean Total  | 1.35 |

Table IV lists all 18 Primary and Secondary factors in rank-order of influence. Of the combined 18 Primary and Secondary items, the Primary factor "I was able to receive financial aids" received the

highest mean score, 2.17. This factor was followed closely by another Primary influence, "Friends of mine are attending the university" with a mean influence of 2.14. Both these mean influences tended to lie somewhere on the continuum between "Moderately influential" and "Highly influential," but closer to "Moderately influential." None of the factors, then, was viewed by the students as either highly or extremely influential, over-all, since the highest mean influence was little more than "Moderately influential."

TABLE III  
MEAN INFLUENCES OF NINE SECONDARY FACTORS

| Rank Order | Influences   | Mean Total |
|------------|--|------------|
| 1.         | An intern teacher from Northeastern  | 1.99       |
| 2.         | Advertisements about Northeastern  | 1.11       |
| 3.         | Personal letter from the president of the university                                       | 1.03       |
| 4.         | News I've read about Northeastern  | .88        |
| 5.         | Northeastern's music and drama departments presented an assembly program in my high school | .87        |
| 6.         | Personal letter from the vice-president of the university                                  | .86        |
| 7.         | Visited the university for special programs  | .40        |
| 8.         | University recruiter visited my high school  | .24        |
| 9.         | Brochures concerning the university  | .22        |
|            | Grand Mean Total   | .84        |



TABLE IV

## RANK ORDER OF 18 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FACTORS BY MEAN INFLUENCES

| Rank Order | Influence Factors   | Mean | Influence Categories |
|------------|---|------|----------------------|
| 1.         | I was able to receive financial aid   | 2.17 | Primary (A-4)        |
| 2.         | Friends of mine are attending the university                                      | 2.14 | Primary (A-3)        |
| 3.         | An intern teacher from Northeastern   | 1.99 | Secondary (B-9)      |
| 4.         | Advice of Northeastern graduates  | 1.80 | Primary (A-8)        |
| 5.         | Advice of parents   | 1.46 | Primary (A-2)        |
| 6.         | Northeastern is close to my home  | 1.25 | Primary (A-1)        |
| 7.         | Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution                     | 1.19 | Primary (A-7)        |
| 8.         | Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)                                 | 1.18 | Primary (A-6)        |
| 9.         | Advertisements about Northeastern   | 1.11 | Secondary (B-4)      |
| 10.        | Personal letter from president of university                                      | 1.03 | Secondary (B-2)      |
| 11.        | News I've read about Northeastern   | .88  | Secondary (B-3)      |
| 12.        | Northeastern's music and drama department presented an assembly at my high school | .87  | Secondary (B-8)      |
| 13.        | Personal letter from the vice president of the university                         | .86  | Secondary (B-6)      |

TABLE IV (Continued)

| Rank Order | Influence Factors                           | Mean       | Influence Categories |
|------------|---|------------|----------------------|
| 14.        | Northeastern's low tuition rate             | .66        | Primary (A-5)        |
| 15.        | Visited the university for special programs | .40        | Secondary (B-7)      |
| 16.        | Size of the university                      | .32        | Primary (A-9)        |
| 17.        | University recruitment                      | .24        | Secondary (B-1)      |
| 18.        | Brochures concerning the university         | <u>.22</u> | Secondary (B-5)      |
|            | Grand Mean Over-All                         | 1.10       |                      |

In the top one-half of the 18 rank-ordered influence factors, only two were Secondary influences. "An intern teacher from Northeastern" and "Advertisements about Northeastern," ranked 3rd and 9th, respectively, and had mean influences of 1.99 and 1.11.

Remaining factors in the upper 50 percent of the hierarchy included (4th) "Advice of Northeastern graduates," 1.80; (5th) "Advice of parents," 1.46; (6th) "Northeastern is close to my home," 1.25; (7th) "Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution," 1.19; and (8th) "Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)," 1.18.

In the lower half of the hierarchy of influence factors, two Primary factors are listed. "Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)," was ranked 14th with a mean influence of .66 and "Size of the university," was ranked 16th with a mean influence of only .32. The remaining influences comprising the lower half were Secondary factors with mean influences ranging from 1.03, which was "Only slightly influential," to .22, almost negligible influence. The total mean influence of 1.10 indicates that the average factor was "Only slightly influential."

#### Commonalities of Influences

To identify groups of Primary and Secondary factors that were viewed as similarly influential on decisions to attend NEOSU, McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis (33) were employed for each factor separately and for all 18 influences combined.

McQuitty's procedure, like all factor analytic techniques, involves a redefinition of a correlation matrix through the magnitude of correlations. The resulting factor matrix, in this case, yielded

groups of factors that were perceived by students as similarly influential.

### Primary Influence Clusters

For example, Table V shows the intercorrelation of the nine Primary factors.

TABLE V  
INTERCORRELATIONS OF PRIMARY INFLUENCE FACTORS\*

|     | A-1          | A-2          | A-3          | A-4          | A-5          | A-6          | A-7          | A-8          | A-9          |
|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| A-1 | <del>X</del> | (.240)       | .052         | .074         | (.309)       | .175         | .051         | .198         | .249         |
| A-2 | .240         | <del>X</del> | .026         | .153         | .103         | .026         | .045         | .128         | .190         |
| A-3 | .052         | .026         | <del>X</del> | (.277)       | .035         | .164         | .088         | .014         | .069         |
| A-4 | .074         | .153         | (.277)       | <del>X</del> | .147         | .240         | .119         | .111         | .014         |
| A-5 | (.308)       | .103         | .035         | .147         | <del>X</del> | .258         | .181         | .122         | (.302)       |
| A-6 | .175         | .026         | .164         | .240         | .258         | <del>X</del> | .269         | .179         | .088         |
| A-7 | .051         | .045         | .088         | .119         | .181         | (.269)       | <del>X</del> | (.322)       | .081         |
| A-8 | .198         | .014         | .014         | .111         | .122         | 1.79         | (.322)       | <del>X</del> | .195         |
| A-9 | .249         | .069         | .069         | .014         | .302         | .088         | .081         | .195         | <del>X</del> |

\*Primary influence factors:

- A-1. Northeastern is close to my home
- A-2. Advice of parents
- A-3. Friends of mine are attending the university
- A-4. I was able to receive financial aids
- A-5. Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)
- A-6. Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)
- A-7. Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution
- A-8. Advice of Northeastern graduates
- A-9. Size of the university

From the intercorrelations of Primary factors in Table V, three clusters of influences were extracted, as shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI  
THREE CLUSTERS OF INFLUENCES AMONG THE NINE  
PRIMARY INFLUENCE FACTORS

| Clusters | Influences  | Mean Totals |
|----------|---|-------------|
| I        | Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)             | 1.18        |
|          | Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution | 1.19        |
|          | Advice of Northeastern graduates                              | <u>1.80</u> |
|          | Mean Total  | 1.39        |
| II       | Northeastern is close to my home                              | 2.17        |
|          | Advice of parents   | 1.46        |
|          | Northeastern's low tuition rate                               | .66         |
|          | Size of the university  | <u>.32</u>  |
|          | Mean Total  | 1.15        |
| III      | Friends of mine are attending the university                  | 2.14        |
|          | I was able to receive financial aids                          | <u>2.17</u> |
|          | Mean Total  | 2.15        |
|          | Grand Mean Total  | 1.56        |

Cluster I, with a mean influence of 1.39, indicated the three influential factors had only slight impact on the decision to attend Northeastern. "Advice of Northeastern graduates" was viewed as most influential of the three factors. Two of these influences cited counselors, teachers and graduates of Northeastern. Cluster I could be classified as one of "Personal influence."

In McQuitty's Linkage and Factor Analysis, each cluster contains a typical representative. In other words, of the three influences comprising Cluster I above, one is most representative of all. The representative influence factor is most characteristic of the cluster of factors and often forms the basis for naming the clusters. The representative influence of Cluster I was "Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution." The cluster was labeled as one of Personal influence because the influences of graduates and high school counselors were more related to Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution than to any other Primary influence.

Cluster II also was "Only slightly influential," with a mean total of 1.15. Influences comprising this cluster mostly were non-Personal, involving proximity of Northeastern to home, low tuition rate and university size. The influence which tended to have the most perceived impact in Cluster II was the proximity of the university to the student's home.

Cluster II was labeled "Economic influences." Representative of the cluster was proximity of Northeastern to the student's home. Most related to that representative influence were low tuition fees, followed by parental influence and university size. All these factors, directly or indirectly, seem to center on economic considerations.

The third cluster of influences netted the highest mean score of all, 2.15, "Moderately influential." Only two influences appeared in this cluster. They involved friends who attended Northeastern and financial aids. Cluster III represented a hybrid of Clusters I and II-- a combination of Personal/Economic.

### Secondary Influence Clusters

From the intercorrelations of Secondary influences (Appendix B), only two clusters appeared, as shown in Table VII.

In Cluster I of Secondary influences, another hybrid of factors appeared: three Personal and three non-Personal. Personal factors comprised letters from the president and vice president, as well as the more influential intern teacher influence. Non-Personal influences comprised news, advertisements and high school assembly presentations. The mean influence of Cluster I could be labeled as only slight, with its total mean of 1.12.

This rather large cluster of Secondary influences was represented by advertising about the university. It would have to be called a "mass communication" influence cluster, since the factor most related to advertising was news about the university. The president's letter also was seen to have an influence strongly similar to advertising.

It is noteworthy that the strongest influence in this otherwise ineffectual cluster of influences was that of intern teachers, which showed a weak and negative relationship to advertising, and news about the university. This simply means that the influence of teacher interns comes nearer to being seen as a factor in its own right, as far as an influence on the decisions to attend Northeastern are concerned.

TABLE VII  
TWO CLUSTERS OF INFLUENCES AMONG THE NINE  
SECONDARY INFLUENCE FACTORS

| Clusters         | Influences   | Mean Total |
|------------------|--|------------|
| I                | Personal letter from president   | 1.03       |
|                  | Personal letter from vice president  | .86        |
|                  | An intern teacher from Northeastern  | 1.99       |
|                  | News I've read from Northeastern   | .88        |
|                  | Advertisements about Northeastern  | 1.11       |
|                  | Northeastern's music and drama departments presented an assembly program at my high school | <u>.87</u> |
|                  | Mean Total   | 1.12       |
| II               | Brochures concerning the university  | .22        |
|                  | Visited the university for special programs  | .40        |
|                  | University recruiter visited my high school  | <u>.24</u> |
|                  | Mean Total   | .28        |
| Grand Mean Total |  | .70        |

Cluster II of Secondary influences deserves careful consideration in that its total mean of .28 indicates the three factors in that cluster were of the "Not influential at all" level. Brochures, university recruiters and attendance at special university programs had practically no impact on students' decisions to attend Northeastern.



Cluster II was clearly a "recruitment" cluster, as the influence of recruiters characterized this weak grouping. The miniscule influence of brochures was viewed most similarly to that of recruiters' efforts.

#### Combined Influence Clusters

From the aforementioned findings, Northeastern administrators may discover some guidance on the relative influence of different combinations of Primary factors, as well as Secondary factors.

However, the truth may be that a combination of certain influences which include both Primary and Secondary factors might appear more influential. Thus, the writer intercorrelated and factor analyzed all 18 influences including both Primary and Secondary. From the intercorrelation matrix in Appendix C, three clusters of influences were isolated, as shown in Table VIII.

Cluster I, with a mean influence of 1.19, indicated the 11 influential factors had only "slight" influence on students to attend Northeastern. "An intern teacher from Northeastern" was viewed as most influential of the 11 factors. Cluster I consisted of a mixture of Personal and non-Personal influences, but for the most part it could be classified as one of "Personal influences."

This weak-influence cluster, like Cluster I of Primary influences, was most typified by "mass communication" efforts. The president's letter was most representative of Cluster I, with news and advertising about the university being viewed very similarly by the respondents.

The author realizes there are differing views on whether a college president's letter constitutes mass communication. But the president

TABLE VIII  
THREE CLUSTERS OF INFLUENCES AMONG THE 18 PRIMARY AND  
SECONDARY INFLUENCE FACTORS

| Clusters               | Influences   | Mean Total |
|------------------------|--|------------|
| I<br>Personal          | Advice of parents  | 1.46       |
|                        | Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s)              | 1.18       |
|                        | Advice of Northeastern graduates                               | 1.80       |
|                        | Personal letter from the president                             | 1.03       |
|                        | Personal letter from the vice president                        | .86        |
|                        | Intern teacher from Northeastern                               | 1.99       |
|                        | Northeastern close to home                                     | 1.25       |
|                        | Low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour)                     | .66        |
|                        | Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution  | 1.19       |
|                        | News I've read about Northeastern                              | .88        |
|                        | Advertisements about Northeastern                              | 1.11       |
|                        | Music and drama departments assembly program at my high school | <u>.87</u> |
|                        | Mean Total   | 1.19       |
| II<br>Non-<br>Personal | Size of the university   | .32        |
|                        | Brochures concerning the university                            | .22        |
|                        | Visited university for special programs                        | .40        |
|                        | University recruiter visited my school                         | <u>.24</u> |
|                        |  | Mean Total |

TABLE VIII (Continued)

| Clusters                         | Influences                           | Mean Total  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| III<br>Personal/<br>Non-Personal | Friends are attending the university | 2.14        |
|                                  | I was able to receive financial aids | <u>2.17</u> |
|                                  | Mean Total                           | 2.15        |

can be viewed as a source of communication to a large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience. These are the three criteria of mass communication set forth by Wright (41).

Cluster II, with a mean influence of only .30, was "Not influential at all." Influences comprising this cluster mostly were non-Personal, involving size of the university, brochures, visiting the university and a visit by a recruiter. These factors seemingly had little impact on influencing students to attend Northeastern.

Cluster II was similar to the same cluster under Secondary influences. This time, however, the influence of brochures was representative, rather than university recruiters. These two influences, however, remained the two most highly related in the cluster, rendering "recruitment" the standing label.

Cluster III, a combination of Personal and non-Personal influences with a mean influence of 2.15, was considered "Moderately influential" by the students. Only two influences appeared in the cluster. They involved friends who attended Northeastern and financial aids.

Cluster III was identical to Cluster III of Primary influences. This Personal-Economic cluster comprised the influences of friends and financial aids--the two most influential factors in the study.

#### Relative Influence on Males and Females

The above cluster analysis makes clear the difficulty in arriving at strong and homogeneous clusters of factors that definitely influence decisions to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University. The strength of relationships among the factors that formed several of the Primary, Secondary and Combined influence clusters are weak. This supports what the author and many other researchers have suggested. That is, the reasons people give for choosing a particular college are varied and highly individualistic. The low relationship among influence factors in this study suggests that, even though students viewed the influence of certain factors similarly, this slight similarity must be approached with caution. In other words, some students might have rated one factor in a cluster of factors very low and another very high.

To express this another way, there seems to be no single set of influence factors in this study that would prove successful for all potential students. Furthermore, only one group of influence factors seemed to have substantial impact. That group comprised the influences of friends and financial aids. Even those two factors were only slightly related ( $r = .277$ ), which means that several students rated one factor as wielding strong influence and the other as having very little influence.

It seems, then, that the problem of determining which combined efforts have been most successful in influencing students' decisions

to attend Northeastern lies at least somewhat in relating student attributes to Primary and Secondary efforts to recruit.

Unfortunately, the author was able to compare only the sex attribute with types of influence. Using a two-factor analysis of variance with repeated measures on the Primary and Secondary influence factors (29, 32) the author was able to determine if the differences in mean influences shown in Table IX exceeded chance expectations.

TABLE IX

MEAN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FACTOR INFLUENCES ON MALE AND FEMALE  
FRESHMEN'S DECISIONS TO ATTEND NORTHEASTERN  
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

| Sex        | Influence Factors |           | Mean Total |
|------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
|            | Primary           | Secondary |            |
| Female     | 1.37              | .982      | 1.176      |
| Male       | 1.32              | .689      | 1.005      |
| Mean Total | 1.345             | .836      |            |

All 18 types of influences, combined, seemed to figure higher for females' than males' decisions to attend Northeastern ( $F = 6.049$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d.f. = 1/196$ ). Further, the Primary factors wielded more influence than Secondary ( $F = 63.06$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $d.f. = 1/196$ ). The higher influence of Primary factors held for both males and females, while the lesser influence of Secondary factors was due more to their smaller impact on males than females (interaction  $F = 3.4266$ ,  $p < .05$ ,

d.f. = 1/196). So, to the extent the author's intact sample represented the relative strength of influences on all students' decisions to attend Northeastern, Primary factor efforts yielded better results.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study sought to determine those factors which influence freshmen students' decisions to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

The instrument for collecting the data was developed after a study of several interviews and from preliminary information obtained by sampling 283 students enrolled in freshman orientation classes during the 1974 fall semester at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Through both the interviews and the sampling of students, the writer sought to develop a list of factors considered to be influential in the respondents' decisions to attend the university.

The instrument which emerged from these preliminary efforts was a five-point rating scale. Each subject was asked to rate a given factor on its perceived degree of influence. The 18 factors judged are shown in the questionnaire form in Appendix A.

The instrument was administered to 198 freshmen of the 1,239 freshmen enrolled at the university during the 1975 spring semester. All freshmen students enrolled in the freshman orientation class plus 50 freshmen enrolled in another typically freshman class, Speech 1113, constituted the population studied.

Prior to submitting the questionnaire, a pilot test was administered

to 25 Northeastern students in a public relations class to determine the adequacy of the instrument. The results of this pilot test were used to refine the instrument. Infrequently-marked, overlapping and ambiguous items were eliminated in the revised questionnaire. In some cases, items were reworded to clarify meaning.

Data treatment involved the use of frequencies and percentages of the responses per factors in the Primary and Secondary influence categories to determine separately and over-all the degrees of influence each factor had for the total population of the study. In addition, the mean scores of each factor in the Primary and Secondary influence categories were determined separately to compare how each factor compared with other factors in the same category.

The over-all mean influence of the combined 18 Primary and Secondary factors enabled the writer to rank-order each factor to determine the degree of influence and to acquire an over-all grand mean of the total combined factors to determine the over-all influence on students.

A two-factor mixed analysis of variance design with repeated measures on one variable (Primary and Secondary influences) was computed for analysis of Sex-by-Primary and Secondary influences to determine if an individual's sex was related to the type of influence on his decision to attend the university. An analysis of variance was not computed for the items ("Did you choose Northeastern because you could not get accepted to another university?", "My father is a graduate of Northeastern," or "My mother is a graduate of Northeastern") because more than 90 percent of the students responded "No" on these items. An analysis of variance also was not computed on the parents' estimated income. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents listed their parents'



income in the \$5,000 to \$9,999 category, while 24 percent listed the \$10,000 to \$14,999 category, 19 percent the \$15,000 to \$19,999 category and 18 percent the \$20,000 or more category.

Elementary factor analysis was used to determine which influence factors were perceived as similarly influential. This involved the intercorrelations of the Primary and Secondary influence factors and subsequent clustering of the factors most highly correlated with each other.

### Conclusions

The data revealed that, over-all, Primary influences were more influential than Secondary influences in determining students' choice of Northeastern. However, neither of them had much of an impact on the students. The Primary factors, with a mean of 1.35 were "Only slightly influential," whereas, the Secondary factors, with a mean influence of .84, had practically no influence at all on the students.

However, in analyzing each influence separately, the Primary influence of "I was able to receive financial aids" and "Friends of mine are attending the university," with mean influences of 2.17 and 2.14, respectively, were "Moderately influential" in attracting students to Northeastern.

As 70 percent of the student body at Northeastern receives some kind of financial assistance, it is not surprising that the respondents listed this factor as having the most influence.

Of the Secondary influences, the one having the "most impact" on respondents was that concerning intern teachers from Northeastern. These students teach one full semester in a public school before they

are graduated. Although this item had the "most impact" on the students, its mean influence of 1.99 indicated that it was "Only slightly influential."

Other Secondary influences considered to be "Slightly influential" by the respondents were "Advertisements about Northeastern" and "Personal letter from the president of the university." These had mean influences of 1.11 and 1.03, respectively.

The two most expensive items of the Secondary influence factors--sending recruiters to high schools and preparation of brochures--were considered by the respondents in the study as having "No influence" on them. A minimum of \$10,000 is being spent on these items by the university each year. This cost includes only cost of travel by recruiters and materials for brochures. It does not include the numerous hours spent by personnel in traveling to the schools or in writing, editing and designing brochures.

When all the Primary influence factors were clustered, a Personal-Economic cluster having the most impact on students consisted of friends attending the university and financial aids with a mean influence of 2.15.

The Secondary-influence cluster having the most influence consisted of the personal letter from the president, personal letter from the vice president, intern teacher, news about Northeastern, advertisements, and assembly programs at high schools. However, this cluster, with a mean influence of 1.12, was considered to be "Only slightly influential" by the students.

When the Primary and Secondary influence factors were combined, the dominant ones continued to be Personal-Economic--friends attending the

university and financial aids. They netted a mean influence of 2.15, and this was seen as "Moderately influential" in attracting them to attend Northeastern.

In summary, it appears that the recruitment efforts, in themselves, have little, if any, impact in influencing students to attend the university. As already mentioned, the two most expensive items in the recruitment program--sending recruiters to the high schools and preparation of brochures--had no detectable influence at all on the students in this study. This writer does not advocate abolishing the program on the strength of these data, but some changes should be made as noted in the recommendations. Also, as the majority of the influences were listed by the respondents as being "Only slightly influential" or "Not influential at all," it is possible that additional influences not included in this study were responsible for attracting the students to Northeastern.

#### Recommendations

For the majority of the respondents in this study, who were from the 22-county recruiting area, university recruiters and brochures about the university were hardly influential at all in attracting them to the university. Thus, the following recommendations pertaining to these efforts and others might well be considered by NEOSU administrators.

1. Recruiters should not be sent to each high school in the present 22-county recruitment area, but only to those schools which specifically request an individual visit or which have career days.

2. As very little recruiting is presently being done in the remaining 55 Oklahoma counties, recruiters should visit schools in these counties.

3. While recruiters are talking to the students about the university, they also should talk to them about the recreational opportunities available to them in "Green Country" and the historical significance of Tahlequah--the Cherokee Capital of the world. In fact, these might be major influences in attracting students to the university.

4. As the recruitment budget is limited, the local Chamber of Commerce and Green Country, Inc., should be asked to assist in defraying travel expenses of recruiters promoting Green Country and Tahlequah along with Northeastern.

Other recommendations for the recruitment and public relations programs of the university are as follows:

1. As peer groups were one of the major influences in attracting the respondents in the study to the university, students of several ethnic origins should be made an active part of the recruitment program.

2. When recruiters go to the public schools, an attempt should be made to have at least one graduate from that particular school go with them. If none is available, graduates from the general area should be taken.

3. Students comprising the President's Leadership Class also should be taken on recruitment trips whenever possible. They are considered to be the elite of the student body, and recruitment of students should be one of their major activities.

4. The present policy of sending students from the music and drama departments to entertain in assembly programs at the public schools should be continued, although this was "not influential" to respondents in the study. The program has been in operation only two years, with performance in only 30 high schools, and this has not had time to

develop maximum impact.

5. Every effort should be made by university officials to keep parents informed about the university. The fall Parents' Day program should be continued, but a newsletter informing parents of pertinent activities also should be sent to their homes at least once each semester. In addition, the university newspaper, The Northeastern, should be sent to parents each week.

6. Seminars for public school counselors and administrators should be held each fall and spring semester to inform them about financial aids and educational programs available to students.

7. Although the respondents in the study said they were not influenced by special programs they had attended at the university while they were in high school, such special programs (press day, industrial arts fair, etc.) enable prospective freshmen to view the facilities and talk with students and faculty and should be continued.

8. NEOSU administrators, faculty, staff and student body should continue to promote favorable public relations with everyone. The public views everyone associated with a university as an ambassador of that institution--and this should be kept in mind constantly.

9. Separate public relations seminars should be held at the beginning of each fall semester for administrators, faculty, staff and student leaders to emphasize the importance of favorable public relations.

10. Pertinent information from this study should be considered in implementation of policies that may affect a student's selection of the university.

### Suggestions for Further Study

1. It is desirable that this kind of research continue to be conducted at least every other year so that more reliable data will be available to university administrators.

2. It is suggested that future studies be done immediately after the beginning of the fall semester, preferably in September. It is likely that those factors which influenced students to attend the university would be easier for them to recall at that time. Also, an early-fall study would permit sampling procedures that would strengthen the effort, as more students are enrolled than during the second semester.

3. The questionnaire should be improved so that it will allow the researcher to identify students by the type of academic programs they are seeking and the size of the high school they graduated from.

4. It is further suggested that the study continue to be conducted in the freshman orientation classes. A re-examination of a sample of students who did not return to the university for the second semester also is recommended, to determine if possible, continuity of expressed influence factors. It also would be possible to deal with influences as they related to expectations.

5. A similar study should be done with junior college transfer students.

6. The writer believes that one will never completely identify all of the pertinent factors that influence students to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University, but in this time of dwindling enrollments nationally and increasing operational expenses, it is more

crucial than ever before that administrators continually search for pertinent information that will be useful in implementing future policies that may affect a student's selection of the university.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to help determine what factors influenced you to attend Northeastern Oklahoma State University and to what degree they influenced you, if at all. Immediately following each item below is a scale where you are to indicate your judgment.

Following is an example of how to respond to each item.

Example: 1. University is close to my home. If you feel this factor in your decision to attend the university was extremely influential, you should place your check-mark as follows:

- 4  Extremely influential
- 3  Highly influential
- 2  Moderately influential
- 1  Only slightly influential
- 0  Not influential at all

If you feel this factor was not influential at all, you should place your check-mark as follows:

- 4  Extremely influential
- 3  Highly influential
- 2  Moderately influential
- 1  Only slightly influential
- 0  Not influential at all

Important:

(1) Be sure to check every scale for every concept--do not omit any. Do not pay attention to the numbers beside the concepts, they are for scoring purposes. Please turn the page and begin.

Below are 18 items listing various things that students have mentioned as factors influencing their decision to attend Northeastern. Under each item please mark the blank that best describes the degree of influence the particular factor had on your decision to attend this institution.

A. Primary Influences:

1. Northeastern is close to my home.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

2. Advice of parents.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

3. Friends of mine are attending the university.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

4. I was able to receive financial aids.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential
- 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all
5. Northeastern's low tuition rate (\$10.50 per credit hour).
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential
- 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all
6. Advice of high school counselor and/or teacher(s).
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential
- 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all
7. Northeastern's reputation as a teachers' training institution.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential
- 0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 8. Advice of former Northeastern graduates.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 9. Size of the university.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

B. Secondary Influences:

## 1. University recruiter visited my high school.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 2. Personal letter from the president of the university.

- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all



## 3. News I've read about Northeastern.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential

0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 4. Advertisements about Northeastern.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential

0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 5. Brochures concerning the university.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential

0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

## 6. Personal letter from the vice president of the university.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential

3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential

2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential

0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

7. Visited the university for special programs, such as music festival, press day, library science day, home economics day, industrial arts fair, history competition, etc.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

8. Northeastern's music and drama departments presented an assembly program at my high school.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

9. An intern teacher from Northeastern.

4 \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely influential  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ Highly influential  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ Moderately influential  
1 \_\_\_\_\_ Only slightly influential  
0 \_\_\_\_\_ Not influential at all

- C. Now that you have answered all of the items, did you choose Northeastern because you could not get accepted to another university.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ No

## D. Please check the appropriate blank.

1. 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Male
2. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. My parents' estimated income is:
  - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 to \$9,999
  - 3 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 to \$14,999
  - 2 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 to \$19,999
  - 1 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 or more

## 4. My father is a graduate of Northeastern.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ No

If he did not graduate from Northeastern but is a graduate of some other university, please state where \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 5. My mother is a graduate of Northeastern.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ No

If she did not graduate from Northeastern but is a graduate of some other university, please state where \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 6. Where did you graduate from high school? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

APPENDIX B

INTERCORRELATIONS OF NINE SECONDARY  
INFLUENCE FACTORS

TABLE X  
 INTERCORRELATIONS OF NINE SECONDARY INFLUENCE FACTORS\*

|     | B-1          | B-2          | B-3          | B-4          | B-5          | B-6          | B-7          | B-8          | B-9          |
|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| B-1 | <del>X</del> | .271         | .248         | .311         | (.735)       | .192         | .335         | .165         | -.181        |
| B-2 | .271         | <del>X</del> | (.759)       | .635         | .325         | .175         | .195         | .315         | -.072        |
| B-3 | .248         | (.759)       | <del>X</del> | (.719)       | .341         | .371         | .231         | .308         | -.084        |
| B-4 | .311         | .635         | .719         | <del>X</del> | .381         | .292         | .247         | (.342)       | -.069        |
| B-5 | (.735)       | .325         | .341         | .381         | <del>X</del> | .197         | (.380)       | .214         | -.189        |
| B-6 | .192         | .175         | .371         | .292         | .197         | <del>X</del> | .364         | .306         | (.056)       |
| B-7 | .335         | .195         | .231         | .247         | .380         | (.364)       | <del>X</del> | .277         | .035         |
| B-8 | .165         | .315         | .308         | .342         | .214         | .306         | .277         | <del>X</del> | -.113        |
| B-9 | -.181        | -.072        | -.084        | -.069        | -.189        | .056         | .035         | .113         | <del>X</del> |

\*Secondary Influences:

- B-1. University recruiter visited my high school.
- B-2. Personal letter from the president of the university.
- B-3. News I've read about Northeastern.
- B-4. Advertisements about Northeastern.
- B-5. Brochures concerning the university.
- B-6. Personal letter from the vice president of the university.
- B-7. Visited the university for special programs, such as music festival, press day, library science day, home economics day, industrial arts fair, history competition, etc.
- B-8. Northeastern's music and drama departments presented an assembly program at my high school.
- B-9. An intern teacher from Northeastern.

APPENDIX C

INTERCORRELATIONS OF 18 PRIMARY AND  
SECONDARY INFLUENCE FACTORS

TABLE XI

## INTERCORRELATIONS OF 18 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INFLUENCE FACTORS

|     | A-1          | A-2          | A-3          | A-4          | A-5          | A-6          | A-7          | A-8          | A-9          | B-1          | B-2          | B-3          | B-4          | B-5          | B-6          | B-7          | B-8          | B-9          |
|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| A-1 | <del>X</del> | (.240)       | -.052        | .074         | .309         | .175         | .051         | .198         | .249         | .130         | .147         | .181         | .197         | .216         | .201         | .197         | .243         | -.122        |
| A-2 | .240         | <del>X</del> | .026         | .153         | .103         | .026         | .045         | .128         | .190         | .057         | .132         | .153         | .136         | .073         | .156         | .094         | .194         | -.114        |
| A-3 | -.052        | .026         | <del>X</del> | (.277)       | .035         | .164         | .088         | -.014        | -.069        | .108         | .046         | .133         | .132         | .090         | .164         | -.019        | .184         | -.013        |
| A-4 | .074         | .153         | (.277)       | <del>X</del> | .147         | .240         | .119         | .111         | .014         | .090         | .183         | .237         | .182         | .073         | .194         | .008         | .151         | -.050        |
| A-5 | (.309)       | .103         | .035         | .147         | <del>X</del> | .258         | .181         | .122         | .302         | .382         | .406         | .398         | .362         | .365         | .113         | .292         | (.360)       | -.104        |
| A-6 | .175         | .026         | .164         | .240         | .258         | <del>X</del> | .269         | .179         | .088         | .192         | .322         | .342         | .272         | .256         | .101         | .130         | .349         | -.055        |
| A-7 | .051         | .045         | .088         | .119         | .181         | .269         | <del>X</del> | .322         | .081         | .078         | .357         | .306         | .250         | .132         | .090         | .166         | .271         | -.096        |
| A-8 | .198         | .128         | -.014        | .111         | .122         | .179         | .322         | <del>X</del> | .195         | .137         | .415         | .320         | .293         | .139         | .103         | .127         | .249         | -.111        |
| A-9 | .249         | .190         | -.069        | .014         | .302         | .088         | .081         | .195         | <del>X</del> | .274         | .192         | .299         | .289         | .306         | .318         | .352         | .180         | -.152        |
| B-1 | .130         | .057         | .108         | .090         | .382         | .192         | .078         | .137         | .274         | <del>X</del> | .271         | .248         | .311         | (.735)       | .192         | .335         | .165         | -.181        |
| B-2 | .147         | .132         | .046         | .183         | (.406)       | .322         | (.357)       | (.415)       | .192         | .271         | <del>X</del> | (.759)       | .635         | .325         | .175         | .195         | .315         | -.072        |
| B-3 | .181         | .153         | .133         | .237         | .398         | .342         | .306         | .320         | .299         | .248         | (.759)       | <del>X</del> | (.719)       | .341         | (.371)       | .231         | .308         | -.084        |
| B-4 | .197         | .136         | .132         | .182         | .362         | .272         | .250         | .293         | .289         | .311         | .635         | .719         | <del>X</del> | .381         | .292         | .247         | .342         | -.069        |
| B-5 | .216         | .073         | .090         | .073         | .365         | .256         | .132         | .139         | .306         | (.735)       | .325         | .341         | .381         | <del>X</del> | .197         | (.380)       | .214         | -.189        |
| B-6 | .201         | .156         | .164         | .194         | .113         | .101         | .090         | .103         | .318         | .192         | .175         | .371         | .292         | .197         | <del>X</del> | .364         | .306         | (.056)       |
| B-7 | .197         | .094         | -.019        | .008         | .292         | .130         | .166         | .127         | (.352)       | .335         | .195         | .231         | .247         | .380         | .364         | <del>X</del> | .277         | .035         |
| B-8 | .243         | .194         | .184         | .151         | .360         | (.349)       | .271         | .249         | .180         | .165         | .315         | .308         | .342         | .214         | .306         | .277         | <del>X</del> | -.113        |
| B-9 | -.122        | -.114        | -.013        | -.050        | .104         | -.055        | -.096        | -.111        | -.152        | -.181        | -.072        | -.084        | -.069        | -.189        | .056         | .035         | -.113        | <del>X</del> |

2  
VITA

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