REASONS FOR INCREASED SUSPENSIONS AND PROBATIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION AND OFFICE SYSTEMS

by

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This paper has been read by each member of the paper committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate possible reasons for increased student suspensions from the Department of Business Education and Office Systems in the College of Business at Montana State University.

The sources of data for this study were obtained from student records on file at the College of Business, Montana State University. Additional student record data and information was obtained from the Montana State University Office of Admissions and from Montana State University Testing Services.

When all information had been gathered, the findings were compiled and analyzed. The results were then set up in tables for clarity. A written description and an analysis of the data supplement the tables.

The conclusions were (1) the Department of Business Education and Office System's main concern over suspensions should be with the Administrative Assistant Program as evidenced by the large-majority (67 percent), of suspended students in that program, (2) below average stanine scores (less than 4) should immediately be an indicator that a student may have problems, (3) the university calculated high school grade point average for the students and the student's rank in high school class are strong indicators of future performance, (4) of the total number of suspended students, over half, 51 percent, were on probation from 2 to 3 quarters, (5) students enrolled in the Department, knowing they must meet minimum requirements in a pre-requisite type program as freshmen and sophomores in order to advance into the main program as juniors and seniors, will be less likely to encounter academic problems, and (6) the accounting course, BUAC 224, Principles of Accounting, remains the single largest stumbling block for students enrolled in the Department of Business Education and Office Systems.

Some of the recommendations were (1) review any unique environmental and institutional factors so as to enhance capabilities for retaining students who may encounter academic problems, (2) prediction profiles should be developed and tested for freshmen as soon as a working profile is completed, and (3) since an overwhelming majority of the suspended students were enrolled in the Administrative Assistant program, a preparation program unique to students enrolled in this area should be instituted.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Business Education and Office Systems in the College of Business at Montana State University has five distinct programs in which a student can earn a certificate or a degree. The Business Teacher Education program in the department offers three curriculums in which a student may earn a B.S. Degree. They are Business Education, Marketing Education, and Office Education.

The Office Systems Program offers a B.S. in Office Systems while a Certificate of Proficiency can be earned for successful completion of the two-year Administrative Assistant Program.

In recent years, increasing numbers of students enrolled in these curriculums are being placed on probation and/or suspended from school for failing to maintain the minimum required grade point average. This problem could be attributed to several different causes. Perhaps in attempting to improve the program, the Department staff has made the course work too rigorous. Or, maybe, the outside required electives are not congruent with the students' background and interests, (i.e. not relevant for what they perceive as "needed" for proper education in their particular major). Also, the students themselves may be of

lower academic ability than students in past years. In light of the recent report, "A Nation At Risk", where the President's Commission on Education found secondary education to be seriously lacking in necessary college prep courses, it would seem justified to say that this is also a major factor for increased probations/suspensions.

Research in this area has tended to investigate the relationship of Elementary and Secondary Achievement Test Scores and Grade Point Averages to alter academic success. Research by Loyd showed that correlations existed (for males and females), between Elementary composite scores (grades 4, 6, & 8) and (1) four-year high school GPA; (2) high school percentile rank; and (3) first semester freshmen college GPA. Similar correlations were computed using Secondary scores (grades 9-12), in place of Elementary scores. Results support the contention that proficiency in basic skills at the Elementary level and Secondary level as measured by standardized achievement tests, do have a significant relationship to high school and college academic success for both males and females. (Loyd: 1980)

In a study conducted at the University of Washington, it was found that the prediction of post-secondary GPA was enhanced by the knowledge of high school GPA. As a result, regression equations were computed for incoming freshmen for predicting business school GPA from entry GPA, and selection indices are presented for each

student based on predicted GPA's. (Lowell: 1981)

Astin (1971) and other researchers have found that predictive capabilities do exist in varying degrees of effectiveness. Although academic problem students are not a homogenous group and no single set of characteristics is known to confidently predict who will experience problems, results from past studies examining dropout, suspension, and probation problems have helped nurture the development and implementation of student retention programs.

Generally, dropouts, due to academic problems, have been found to be the highest during the first year or prior to the start of the second year of college. (Eckland, 1964; Terenzini and Pascarella, 1978; Astin, 1971; Brawer, 1973; Albers, 1965; Pantages and Creedon, 1978; Stork and Berger, 1978; Brigman and Stager, 1980; Newlon and Gaither, 1980). These particular studies suggested a program that identified potential problem students as early as possible. Early identification of potential problem students by the Department of Business Education and Office Systems would not only reduce suspensions and probations, but also provide a more efficient use of resources by all parties involved.

Studies would seem then to indicate that the Department of Business Education and Office Systems could pinpoint problem students in the curriculum or prevent potential problem students by evaluating SAT scores and high school GPA's.

As mentioned, poor high school GPA's and SAT scores would not always indicate that a student will do poorly; however, the study of such scores more intently and in further depth, may help to correct student deficiencies so that they do not fail once they are enrolled in the program.

Poor high school GPA's and SAT scores may not be a completely accurate characterisitc of suspended/probationed students. The study of a correlation between student failure and particular courses must also be done in order to evaluate course content.

Although poor student performance may be attributed to one or both of the aforementioned reasons, an in-depth study should be conducted in order to answer possible questions raised over whether student needs are being met.

An investigation to determine the cause(s) of the poor performance is needed so that corrections in admission policy or program content can be made if need be. Through an investigation of the problem, the Department of Business Education and Office Systems will be able to utilize this information in delivering a program that is meaningful and relevant.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the reason(s) for the increasing number of students placed on probation or suspended in the Department of Business Education and Office Systems at MSU.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

It would be nearly impossible for the Department of Business Education and Office Systems to completely prevent suspensions or probations. Universities such as MSU, that essentially give anyone admission, have to accept academic discipline as an inevitable outcome of their entrance policy. The number of dropouts could be reduced by employing selective admission policies (Iffert, 1956), but an institution such as MSU could not realistically enact such a change and still keep an open-door admission policy.

What is feasible though, is that the combined efforts of MSU's Admissions Department and the Department of Business Education and Office Systems could significantly reduce the incidence of academic discipline or take steps toward that goal.

To achieve such a reduction, MSU and the Department of Business Education and Office Systems (of which this study concerns itself with), need to objectively study themselves and estabish a current suspension/probation rate, develop a better understanding of students who are

placed on suspension or probation, and determine appropriate strategies for reducing suspensions and probations.

Brigman and Stager (1980) have emphasized that institutions must understand the local nature of the students being disciplined to effectively confront the problem.

Research findings by Stork and Berger (1978) have also determined that prediction methods need to be developed by specific institutions so that appropriate help can be given to students who need them the most.

This study will concentrate its focus not on university wide characteristics, but, rather on the particular characteristics of students who have been suspended or probationed from the Department of Business Education and Office Systems in the College of Business at MSU during the academic years 1980-1983. The study was needed as a starting point for the Department of Business Education and Office Systems to be able to learn more of themselves and in particular, a profile of its suspended/probationed students so that appropriate strategies could be adopted to reduce the probation/suspension rate. The study was not a solution to lowering the probation/suspension rates by itself, but its presence will hopefully help the Department of Business Education and Office Systems in taking the "appropriate steps" needed to reduce the suspension/probation rate.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were placed on this study:

(1) Research materials utilized were limited to those found at Roland R. Renee Library, Montana State University.

(2) Data utilized was limited to the files on record with the Montana State University Admissions Department and the College of Business for students enrolled under the Department of Business Education and Office Systems, who were placed on probation or suspended during the academic years 1980-1983.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were defined to insure clarity of their use in this study:

Academic Year: Referred to the instructional quarters of Autumn, Winter, Spring, and Summer. One complete academic year was from Autumn to Autumn.

Department of Business Education and Office Systems: Department in the College of Business at Montana State University.

Dropout: A student who did not enroll at Montana State University for the start of his/her second academic year.

Montana State University (MSU): Comprehensive land-grant institution renamed from the Montana State College (MSC) July 1, 1965.

Predicted MSU Grade Point Average: A statistically derived number obtained through a regression equation based on academic achievement variables as follows:

PR=DGPA = .1109 + .6639 (UCHSGPA) + .06982 (VSTAN)
where:
UCHSGPA = University Computed High School Grade Point Average

VSTAN = Conversion of raw national test score to MSU verbal stanine score (Suvak, 1968).

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): Test administered to high school seniors to determine academic ability.

Scholastic Probation and Suspension: Whenever any student's quarterly or cumulative grade-point average falls below a 2.0, the case must be considered by his or her College Scholastic Committee. Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the College Scholastic Committee may place the student on (1) College Scholastic Probation, (2) University Scholastic Probation, or (3) recommend to the University Scholastic Committee that the student be suspended. The general guidelines used by the committee are:

1. Students Not on Probation:

Quarter GPA:

a. 0.00 - 0.50 Suspend (except first quarter freshmen and first quarter

transfer students)
b. 0.51 - 1.25 University Probation
c. 1.26 - 1.99 College Probation

2. Students on College Probation (first quarter):
   a. 0.00 - 0.88 Suspend
   b. 0.89 - 1.25 To University Probation
   c. 1.26 - 1.99 Continued on College Probation

3. Students on College Probation (continued):
   a. 0.00 - 1.25 Suspend
   b. 1.26 - 1.99 To University Probation

4. Students on University Probation
   a. 0.00 - 1.25 Suspend
   b. 1.26 - 1.99 Continue on University Probation

5. Students will be suspended if they have less than 2.00 GPA for three quarters in a row or three out of the last four quarters and/or a grade point deficiency of 15 or more for that period.

University Computed High School Grade Point Average: A statistically derived number computed by averaging the grades in the following high school subjects: junior and senior year English courses, junior and senior year social studies, chemistry, physics, commercial courses, vocational courses, language, algebra, solid geometry, trigonometry, and advanced math courses (Suvak, 1966).

Additional terms and variables as they pertain to this study will be defined in later sections.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This research project was organized into five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction, which includes the statement of the problem, the need for the study, the limitations of the study and the definition of terms.

Chapter II presents a review of literature relating to this chapter. Chapter II is divided into the following areas:

1. Academic dropouts
2. Predictability of Academic Difficulties
3. Characteristics of Potential Academically Disciplined Students
4. Characteristics of Current Academically Disciplined Students
5. Summary

Chapter III presents a review of data collection procedures that were used.

Chapter IV contains the results of the study. It covers the compilation and analysis of the data. Tables are used to present the findings of the data collected. A brief analysis follows each table explaining the findings.

Chapter V summarizes the study. Included are conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations resulting from the completion of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

How to predict, prevent, and/or solve the problem of students being suspended or placed on probation is not something of recent concern. There have been studies in this general area going on for several years now. However, with the passing of the baby boom through the college ranks and the accompanying decline in college-age students, research (concerning dropouts in particular), has led to Universities setting up programs designed to retain problem students.

This study was initiated for the Department of Business Education and Office Systems in order to investigate the suspension/probation rate, develop a profile or characteristics of the students who were suspended or placed on probation from this department, and create accurate prediction models so as to prevent suspensions and probations before they occur.

The purpose of this chapter was to review relevant similar literature that has been published in the area of academic discipline, problems and preventions.

It reviewed the following areas:

1. Dropouts due to academic reasons.

2. Predictability of students encountering academic problems.

3. Characteristics of potential problems students prior to enrollment.

4. Characteristics of potential problem students after enrollment.

5. Summary

DROPOUTS DUE TO ACADEMIC REASONS

Although this study was not concerned itself with researching dropouts per se, there was a need to review literature in this area for two specific reasons:

1. More research has been done concerning droputs than academic discipline and,

2. Dropouts for academic reasons are almost exclusively students who have been placed on probation or suspended.

Since there has been such a variability in the definition of "dropout", many research papers have been difficult to interpret. The broader, general, and easier to understand studies published in this area have proven to be more valuable. A national study by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare found that of the 12,667 students surveyed at 149 college and universities, approximately one-half of the dropouts dropped while they were still freshmen or about 28 percent of the freshmen class. (Iffert, 1957).

Colleges and universities that had selective enrollment programs were found to have lower dropout rates than the open program at public institutions and community

colleges. Fetters (1977), in a similar study, found a 16.63 percent freshman droput rate in four-year colleges with populations of 5,001 - 10,000 students. Neither Iffert or Fetters included transfer students in their studies since by their definition, transfers were still pursuing an education at some other institution.

However, in a study by Cope and Hannah (1975), it was found that the freshman dropout rate was 33 percent, when transfers were included, at four-year public institutions from 1975 to 1977.

As far as the academic dropouts were concerned, taking in the variability among institutions, it was found that dropouts due to academic reasons with a grade point average below 2.00 on a 4.00 scale, made up about one-third of all dropouts (Brigman and Stager, 1980; Fetters, 1977; Iffert 1956; Newlon and Gaither, 1980).

Thus, freshman dropouts for academic reasons could comprise anywhere from approximately 7 percent to 11 percent. The literature reviews also revealed that men would give academic reasons for dropping out while women would usually cite personal reasons for leaving school. (Astin, 1971; Cope, 1975)

PREDICTABILITY OF STUDENTS ENCOUNTERING ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

Since studies like this are still being initiated, it is obvious that predicting which students are going to

have academic problems is far from being an accurate tool. It is a complex problem and one with no simple solutions.

A multitude of variables are involved with each single student. Thus, it is not surprising that no single factor can be named as being the major cause for student suspension/probation.

A few students however, have identified some predictable characteristics of problem students. A national study done by Astin (1975), included 243,156 freshmen entering studies at 358 two-and four-year colleges and universities. Follow-up questionnaries were received from 41,356 students selected from the sample. Student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test were also acquired from the schools they attended. Fifty-two different variables were identified by Astin, including aptitude, family background, study habits, educational goals, college expectations, financial aid, work status and residence. Astin claimed his research led to correlations that could account for 14.5 percent of any variability used in predicting what students will have scholastic problems.

Most other studies in this area have tended to question the validity of being able to predict what students would encounter academic discipline and/or drop out. Terenzini and Pascarella (1978), found in a study done at Syracuse University that high school characteristics were weak predictors of college difficulty. They stated that

what happened after college enrollment was more important to pinpointing problem students than the characteristics brought in from high school.

Kowalski (1977), reiterated claims that each institution is unique along with the reasons students have for performing badly. Kowalski stated that individual institutions need to concentrate on institution-student characteristics unique to them. Obviously more research is needed in this area so as to identify and confirm characteristics that have accurate predicting capabilities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM STUDENTS PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT

Most research has tended to confirm that the most consistent predictors of student performance have been high school grades and Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT).

HIGH SCHOOL GRADES:

In many of the studies done that tried to correlate high school grades and university performance, the relationship has been significant. Haviland (1979) found that high school grade point average and rank in class were the strongest single predictors available for students' college performance. Astin (1971), in his nationwide study found that a student's chances of succeeding increased directly with an increase in high school grades. Astin also found that high school grades were the most "potent"

predictors of college performance. Besides Astin, several other researchers have confirmed that high school grades are excellent predictors of college success, including: (Fetters, 1977; Haviland, 1979; Brigman and Stager, 1980; Terenzini and Pascarella, 1978).

Class rank in high school has also been a reliable predictor in determining college success (Astin, 1971; Brigman and Stager, 1980; Fetters, 1977; Haviland, 1979; Terenzini and Pascarella, 1978; Howell, 1979). Iffert (1956) had found that students from the top one-fifth of their high school class tended to last in college twice as long as the students from the bottom fifth.

Size of the high school and the graduating class have favored larger schools for students with a better success rate. (Anderson, 1974; Brigman and Stager, 1980). Students that attended high schools with a class size of 20 students or less did not perform as well as classes with 20 or more students (Anderson, 1974).

SAT RESULTS

One of the leading indicators of future college success has been the results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test that students take as high school seniors. Astin (1975) discovered that the composite scores on the American College Testing Program (ACT) and Scholatic Aptitude Test (SAT) were significant predictors, but were not as accurate of a

predictor as high school grades.

Iffert (1957) found in his study that scholastic aptitude scores were only about one-half as accurate of a predictor as high school rank. The findings of several researchers has supported SAT results as significant predictors of college success/failure (Howell, 1979; Newlon and Gaither, 1978; Stork and Berger, 1978; Terenzini and Pascarella, 1978).

Loyd (1980) found that the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) had a direct correlation with high school and college grades. The results of her study supported the contention that proficiency in basic skills at the elementary and high school levels, when measured by ITBS and ITED, did have a significant relationship to high school and college academic success.

This study is unique in that it has been the only one found to date by this researcher that follows a student's progress from grade school through high school to college. More studies should probably be done in schools where periodic aptitude testing has been done through a student's entire school career from grades 1 through 12. Following a student's career for this many years would seem to give predicting variables a greater chance of validity. The problem though is that so few schools have standardized aptitude tests for the student's grade school and high

school career. More research in this area should none-the-less be done to ascertain if long-term testing is more accurate and if it can reveal particular trends.

Belk (1966) also found in a similar study that investigated the accuracy of tests other than SAT or ACT scores, in this case scores from the School and College Ability Test (SCAT) and Ohio Psychological Test (OHIO), that they were significant indicators of future college success.

Students with a high academic aptitude had higher success rates than those with lower aptitude scores (Fetters, 1977). But the fact remains that other variables have been more accurate predictors of college success; such as high school grades.

This very subject, the ineffective uses of tests as indicators of future student achievement was investigated by Lloyd (1979). He contended that standardized tests have become a part of the nation's schools "frenzied urge" to "cut school children to the quick." Lloyd states that the utilization of standardized test information is very serious because the results impact significantly on student's educational career possibilites, their future employment opportunities and even the general nature and quality of their entire lives. Lloyd points out that the misuses and abuses of standardized tests is a very real and serious concern. Lloyd categorizes the ineffective use of tests as indicators of success into three types:

(1) The use of tests as to cause pupil stagnation at a low level of development rather than improving chances for development.

(2) The use of tests to restrict pupils from developing latent abilities and talents.

(3) The use of tests in such manners that result in the imposition of crippling and limiting decisions about their futures upon the pupils.

Lloyd also points out that tests can also be a valuable reflection of the quality of education in the school, and that tests can be an effective means of determining the quality of a school's instructional program. Thus, tests won't always tell the entire story of a student's academic ability. Further investigation could reveal an inferior school system that would nullify the accuracy of SAT or ACT scores.

PREDICTED GRADE POINT AVERAGE:

Several universities have employed formulas that use certain high school attendance variables such as high school grades, rank in class, and aptitude test scores to compute a predicted college grade point average (GPA). Astin (1971) found such prediction formulas to be more accurate at the lower end of the grade scale and that the predicted GPA's for women were slightly more accurate than predicted GPA's for men. Suvak (1968) found that the predicted GPA established for Montana State University that selected high school grades and the verbal portion of the

SAT as variables had a .63 correlation with actual freshman GPA's.

SEX:

Researchers have tended to disagree as to how much of a role a student's sex plays in future college success. Astin (1971), Brigman and Stager (1980), and Newlon and Gaither (1980) found that women had a lower success rate than men.

Fetters (1977), Howell (1979), and Iffert found that neither sex had a significantly higher success rate. As mentioned previously, men would tend to drop out for academic reasons while women usually cited personal reasons. Sex appears not to play a significant role in predicitng future college success. However, it's role could be more important given its significance/insignificance as a predictor in specific, single institution situations.

AGE:

Researchers have also found dissimilar findings concerning the age of enrolling college students. Astin (1975) found that older students are less likely to go on to future college success than their younger conterparts that are 21 years of age or younger. Howell (1979) determined that age was not a primary factor in determing college success.

RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION:

Whether more successful students were in-state or out-of-state residents has been researched very little. Iffert (1956) found that out-of-state residents tended to be more successful than in-state students. A study done by Brigman and Stager (1980) at Indiana University, also found that the out-of-state students generally were more successful than in-state students and would have more at stake, [out-of-state costs, travel, etc.] than closer in-state or in-town residents.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM STUDENTS AFTER ENROLLMENT

Terenzini and Pascarella (1978) found in their study that predicting the success of freshmen increases significantly with the data available once students have enrolled and when compared to data available before a student enrolls.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY GRADES:

Studies dealing with the significance of college grades and student success have been found to be almost identical to results of studies comparing high school GPA's and future college success. Astin, 1971; Fetters, 1977; Haviland; 1979; and Terenzini and Pascarella, 1978, all found that a significant relationship existed between

college success and first term college grades. Astin's (1971) findings that more men drop out their freshman year due to academic reasons than women is backed up by further findings that women tend to get better grades their freshmen year.

Lowell (1980) found in a study done at the University of Washington that freshmen enrolled in a track program for later admission into the School of Business Administration had a better success rate than transfers into the School of Business Administration, even though their entry test scores were lower than transfer students. The University of Washington freshmen also have to meet certain specified minima in respect to college level GPA's, while transfers were subjected to less stringent admission qualifications for admission into the School of Business Administration. This lends credence to the theory that a more strict curriculum and that required minimum GPA levels at even the freshman level not only prevent potential problem students from enrolling in the curriculum, but also that this strict controlled curriculum content inspires higher success rates since future enrollment depends on present success.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Haviland (1979) and Ifferts (1956) both found that

scholarships and grants when compared to loans and work-study, increased a student's chance of success.

CREDIT LOAD:

The number of credits that a student was registered for was also found to be a factor in predicting student success. Part-time students, who were enrolled for less than twelve credits per quarter, were found to have a lower success rate than full-time students. (Alfred, 1973; Fetters, 1977)

SUMMARY

Some significant characteristics were found to exist for predicting future college success. Among high school characteristics significant predictors were high school grades, rank in class, and Scholastic Aptitude Tests scores. Long-term testing of students from grade school through high school may provide more accurate predicting characteristics. Most potential problem students could not be identified from high school information alone. College characteristics were found to significantly help in predicting future success. Each university may have its own unique set of characteristics needed to predict future student success or failure. Individual institutions need to study themselves before setting up prediction formulas in order to include any unique features.

The writer designed this paper to examine potential problem student characteristics in order to develop a profile of potential problem students enrolled in the Department of Business Education and Office Systems. The following topic areas were discussed:

1. Dropouts due to academic reasons.
2. Predictability of students encountering academic problems.
3. Characteristics of potential problems students prior to enrollment.
4. Characteristics of potential problem students after enrollment.
5. Summary

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to (1) investigate and compare the records of students suspended for academic reasons, from the Department of Business Education and Office Systems during the academic years 1980-1981, 1981-1982, and 1982-1983; and (2) construct a profile of the students suspended and the course work they did below average in or failed so as to develop theories into why the suspensions occurred and what action could be taken to prevent them.

To clarify the procedures used in this study, it was necessary to examine the following areas:

1. Sources of Data.
2. Interviews of Information Sources
3. Compilation and Analysis of the Data.

SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data for this study were obtained from records on file at the Dean's Office at the College of Business at Montana State University and the Montana State University Office of Admissions.

Data for the review of literature was obtained from the Montana State University Library, the curriculum resource center in the Department of Business Education and

Office Systems, the Montana State University Office of Admissions and the Montana State University Office of Student Affairs and Services.

Conversations and correspondence with Ms. Jayne Groseth, Director of the Office of Admissions at Montana State Universtiy and Dr. Al Suvak, Director of Testing Services at Montana State University, were held to help the writer better understand Montana State University's evaluation procedures of first-time students at MSU as-well-as for gathering additional data for the study.

COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

When all the information had been gathered, the data was compiled and analyzed. The results of the data compilation were then set up in tables for clarity. A written description and an analysis of the data supplement the tables.

Data were reported in tables by listing each characteristic of evaluation, the number of students in each section of the category, the percent of the total number of students for each section of the category, and the totals of each of these categories. The results of the study were analyzed and conclusions and recommendations were made based on this analysis.

SUMMARY

The chapter described the procedures used by the researcher in conditioning the survey. The following areas were examined:

1. Sources of Data
2. Interviews of Information Sources
3. Compilation and Analysis of the Data

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a tabulation and analysis of the data obtained from student files on record at the Montana State University Office of Admissions and at the Dean's Office in the College of Business at Montana State University. The purpose of the study was to examine the records of students suspended for academic reasons from the Department of Business Education and Office Systems during the academic years 1980-1981, 1981-1982, 1982-1983; to construct a profile of these suspended students and the coursework they either failed or performed below average in, and to determine whether characteristics of the students and course work can be used to prevent future suspensions.

The following pages include the characteristics evaluated and the results of the compilation. Each characteristic is stated and the results are set up in tables, with the tables listing the number of students and percentages in each catagory of a particular characteristic.

Following each tabulation is a brief comment giving an interpretation of the table and important items of interest. The characteristics are presented going from general to specific, high school records preceeding college records, and course work taken resulting in the suspensions listed last.

SUMMARY OF SUSPENDED STUDENTS

TABLE 1

Explanation	No.	Percent
Suspended students from academic years 1980-1981, 1982-1983		
Totals	51	100

Comments:

In order to have a relatively accurate and relevant study, a minimum number of 50 students was requested by the head of the Department of Business Education and Office Systems.

Thus the study extended back 3 years from the time it was initiated (in the summer of 1983), in order to reach the minimum required number of students.

CHARACTERISTIC
1

How Many Suspensions Occurred
Each Year of the Study?

SUSPENSIONS PER YEAR

TABLE 2

Categories	Number of Students	Percent
1980-1981	19	37
1981-1982	12	24
1982-1983	20	39
Totals	51	100

Comments:

The results indicate a fluctuation, with 1980-1981 and 1982-1983 relatively consistent, having suspensions of 19, and 20 respectively. A lower level of suspensions were noted in 1981-1982, during which 12 suspensions were invoked.

CHARACTERISTIC
2

How Many Suspensions
Occurred By Quarter?

SUSPENSIONS PER QUARTER

TABLE 3

Categories	Number of Students	Percent
Summer	1	2
Fall	15	29.5
Winter	15	29.5
Spring	20	39
Totals	51	100

Comments:

The results showed that almost 40 percent of the students were suspended Spring quarter. Fall and Winter quarters had equal suspension rates of 15 students each or 29.5 percent.

One student, or 2 percent was suspended during Summer quarter.

CHARACTERISTIC
3

What Was The Breakdown
By Sex

SEX OF STUDENT

TABLE 4

Categories	Number of Students	Percent
Male	4	8
Female	47	92
Totals	51	100

Comments:

Results show that 92 percent of the suspended students were female, 8 percent were male.

This would probably be pretty close to normal since the majority of students in this department are enrolled in the Administrative Assistant program or Office Systems program, two areas that have traditionally been female-dominated programs.

CHARACTERISTIC
4

What Were The Majors Of
The Suspended Students?

STUDENTS CURRICULUM MAJOR

TABLE 5

Categories	Number of Students	Percent
Business Education	2	4
Distributive and Marketing Education	2	4
Office Education	1	2
Office Systems Program	12	23
Administrative Assistant (Two-year Program)	34	67
Total	51	100

Comments:

The table reveals that 2 students, or 4 percent were suspended from both the Business Education and Distributive and Marketing Education programs. One student was suspended from the Office Education program. The Office Systems program had 12 students, or 23 percent suspended while the Two-Year Administrative Assistant program had 34 students or 67 percent of the 51 suspended students.

CHARACTERISTIC
5

What Was The Probationary Status, If Any, Of The Suspended Students?

PROBATION STATUS

TABLE 6

Categories	Number of Students	Percent
Not previously on probation	8	17.7
On probation one previous quarter	17	33.3
On probation two previous quarters or two out of last 3 quarters	26	51.0
Totals	51	100

Comments:

This is a summary table showing how many quarters the suspended students had previously been on probation before the quarter that their performance resulted in a suspension. Out of the 51 students, 8, or 17 percent were not previously on probation.

Seventeen, or 33 percent had been on probation for one previous quarter. Students on probation for two consecutive previous quarters or two of three previous quarters comprised 26, or 51 percent of the suspended students.

CHARACTERISTIC
6

What Were The Quantitative And Verbal Stanine Scores When Available From The Student's Entrance Exams?

STUDENT STANINE SCORES

TABLE 7

Quantitative Stanine Scores*	Number of Students	Percent
1	14	37
2	10	26
3	4	11
4	7	18
5	1	3
6	2	5
Totals	38	100
Verbal Stanine Scores		
1	7	18
2	11	29
3	10	26
4	3	8
5	3	8
6	3	8
7	1	3
Totals	38	100

*13 Scores were not available due to incomplete MSU Admission records or because the students were transfer students.

Comment:

As a requirement for admission to MSU, applicants must have provided results of the ACT or SAT test scores, or take a group of tests given by the MSU Testing Service. These test scores are converted to stanine scores. The

average Quantitative and Verbal stanine scores for all students admitted to MSU is 4. Thirteen student's scores were not available due to incomplete records or they were transfer students, whom MSU does not require entrance exams of.

Of the 38 students whose Quantitative scores were available, 14, or 37 percent scored a 1. Ten, or 26 percent scores 2. Four or 11 percent scored 3, while 7, or 18 percent scored the MSU student average of 4. One student of 3 percent had a score of 5 and 2 students or 5 percent had a score of 6.

Students having a verbal stanine score of 1, totaled 7 students, or 18 percent. Eleven students, or 26 percent scored 3. The scores of 4, 5, and 6 had 3 students, or 8 percent a piece, while 1 student, or 3 percent had a verbal stanine score of 7.

The table indicates that quantitative stanines and even more so, verbal stanines, correlate very positively with suspension status. Simply put, if the student's stanine is 4 or lower, chances are very good he/she will encounter academic trouble.

CHARACTERISTIC
7

What Were The High School Grade Point Averages For The Suspended Students?

HIGH SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGES

TABLE 8

Grade Point Averages* A=4.0	Number of Students	Percent
Below 2.00	3	8
2.00 - 2.50	10	28
2.50 - 3.00	15	42
3.00 - 3.50	6	17
Above 3.50	2	5
Totals	36	100

*15 scores were not available due to incomplete MSU Admission records or because the students were transfer students.

Comments:

According to the tabulations, 3 students, or 8 percent, had a GPA below 2.0. Ten students, or 28 percent had a GPA between 2.0 and 2.5. Fifteen, or 42 percent had a GPA of 2.5 or 3.0, while 6 students or 17 percent had a GPA between 3.0 and 3.5. In this study high school grades were not a good indicator of future success.

CHARACTERISTIC
8

What Was The University Calculated
High School GPA For The Suspended Students?

UCHSGPA

TABLE 9

USHSGPA*, A=4.0	Number of Students	Percent
Below 1.5	3	11
1.50 - 2.00	5	19
2.00 - 2.50	13	48
2.50 - 3.00	4	15
3.00 - 3.50	0	0
Above 3.50	2	7
Totals	27	100

*24 Scores were not available due to incomplete MSU Admission records or because the students were transfer students.

Comments:

This is a summary table showing the high school grade point average (UCHSGPA), calculated by the MSU Testing Service, by using grades earned in particular solid subjects, (see Definition of Terms in Chapter 1).

Five students, or 19 percent had a calculated GPA of 1.50 to 2.00. Thirteen students, or 48 percent earned a GPA between 2.00 and 2.50, while 4 students, or 15 percent had a GPA of 2.50 to 3.00.

The table would seem to indicate that a high school GPA (UCHSGPA), that is high enough to avoid suspension in high school doesn't directly correspond to similar results in college. Either high school GPA's need to be high to ensure college success, or high school

students are not getting the proper preparation for courses of the type offered in the Department of Business Education and Office Systems.

CHARACTERISTIC
9

What Was The Cumulative GPA At MSU
For The Suspended Students?

MSU GRADE POINT AVERAGE

TABLE 10

Grade Point Averages, A=4.0	Number of Students	Percent
Below 1.00	7	14
1.00 - 1.50	14	27
1.50 - 2.00	24	47
2.00 - 2.50	6	12
Totals	51	100

Comments:

The results revealed that 7 students, or 14 percent had a cumulative GPA less than 1.00. Fourteen students or 27 percent had a cumulative GPA between 1.00 and 1.50. The majority of the students, 24, or 47 percent earned a cumulative GPA of between 1.50 and 2.00. Table 10 shows that none of the students had a cumulative GPA above 2.50.

CHARACTERISTIC
10

What Classes Did The Students Earn A Grade
Of "D" or "F" In During Their Probation Period
Or Quarter Drawing The Suspension?

CLASSES WITH STUDENTS
EARNING "D" OR "F"

TABLE 11

Class	Number of Enrollments	Percent of Enrollments
BUAC 224, Prin. of Acctg.	31	11.7
MATH 101, Intro. to Algebra	19	7.2
BUED 220, Bus. Data Process.	11	4.2
BUMG 110, Intro. to Bus.	9	3.4
BUOA 225, Reprographics & Bus. Mach.	9	3.4
BUOA 111, Beg Steno.	8	3.2
ECON 105, Gen. Econ	8	3.2
PSY 103, Gen. Psych.	8	3.2
ECON 202, Macro. Econ.	7	2.5
BUMG 225, Intro. Legal St.	7	2.5
MATH 001, Elem. Algebra	7	2.5
ENGLISH 123, Crit. App. Lit.	7	2.5
MATH 114, Linear Algebra	7	2.5
STAT 216, Elem Stat.	6	2.3
BUOA 221, Advanced Steno.	6	2.3
BUAC 225, Prin. Acctg.	6	2.3
SOC. 101, Intro. Soc.	6	2.3
Others	103	38.8
Totals	265	100

Comments:

As shown by the above table, there was a total of 265 classes that the suspended students were enrolled in during their probation period and the quarter precipitating the suspensions. The students earned a grade of "D" or "F" in these classes listed. The most common class that earned a "D" or "F" was BUAC 224 which had 31 enrollments or 11.7

percent of the total number of classes taken. Math 101 had 19 enrollments or 7.2 percent. The students enrolled into BUED 220 eleven times, or 4.2 percent of all classes taken.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

This study was designed to help provide the Department of Business Education and Office Systems with a profile of students suspended from the department during the academic years 1980-1981, 1981-1982, and 1982-1983. With this profile, the Department could then have insight into possible reasons why the suspensions occurred and measures could be taken to prevent potential suspensions. The study was conducted during the summer of 1983. The areas covered in the research included the following:

1. Majors of suspended students.
2. Length of probation periods.
3. High School Grade Point Averages
4. Stanine Scores of suspended students.
5. MSU Cumulative Grade Point Averages
6. Most common courses with grades of "D" or "F".

To achieve this profile, research was conducted with records on file at the College of Business and the MSU Office of Admissions.

With the passing of the baby boom, the Department of Business Education and Office Systems like other departments on the MSU campus and across the country is feeling a drop-off in enrollment. It is in the Department

of Business Education and Office System's best interest to find ways to keep students enrolled and thriving in its curriculums.

Not only is it in the Department's interest to keep students enrolled and prevent suspensions, but as should be the role of any responsible institution or department, a continual committment must be made to meet the student's needs.

By monitoring potential problem students and guiding them so as to prevent suspensions, the Department is (1) keeping its committment to the student and (2) is helping itself by having a productive student continuing in its program. Everyone emerges a winner.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions from this study were based on the literature reviewed and findings from the research.

1. The Department of Business Education and Office System's main concern over suspensions should be with the Administrative Assistant Program as evidenced by the large-majority (67 percent), of suspended students in that program.
2. Below Average Stanine Scores (less than 4) should immediately be an indicator that a student may have problems.

3. The university calculated High School grade point average for the students and the student's rank in high school class are strong indicators of future performance.
4. Of the total number of suspended students, over half, 51 percent, were on probation from 2 to 3 quarters. This could have been ample time for the Department to monitor the student's problems and try to correct the academic difficulties and problems.
5. Students enrolled in the Department knowing they must meet minimum requirements in a pre-requisite type program as freshman and sophomores in order to advance into the main program as juniors and seniors will be less likely to encounter academic problems.
6. The accounting course, BUAC 224, Principles of Accounting, remains the single largest stumbling block for students enrolled in the Department of Business Education and Office Systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer makes the following recommendations:

1. Review any unique environmental and institutional factors so as to enhance capabilities for retaining students who may encounter academic problems.
2. Initiate a computerized record keeping system for student files at the College of Business and/or Department of Business Education and Office Systems. The current system contains omissions and inconsistencies when compared to university files. A computer system will permit updating of past academic quarters' data (e.g. grade changes, repeated courses, probation status).
3. Prediction profiles should be developed and tested for freshmen as soon as a working profile is completed.
4. A business preparation program should be implemented for at least the freshman year, so that students entering advanced programs in the department have similar backgrounds and knowledge. Perhaps a self-paced program similar to the program in the math department could be implemented.
5. A separate accounting course aside from BUAC 224 (which is designed for CPA-track students), should

be established so as to lower the failure rate and make accounting easier to understand for the non-CPA-track student.

6. Since an overwhelming majority of the suspended students were enrolled in the Administrative Assistant program, a preparation program unique to students enrolled in this program should be instituted. It would be a 1 to 2 quarter program of basic, necessary skills that all enrollees would have to pass. Upon completion of the program, a faculty review board would decide if the student could continue on with core courses. Completion of the prepartion program would not necessarily mean automatic advancement, that would be the responsibility of the review committee.

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