

A STUDY OF ATTRITION IN THE 1967-68 FRESHMEN CLASS
OF WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what type of student withdrew from Western Montana College before the completion of the freshmen year and the reasons for this withdrawal. The group studied consisted of those freshmen students who withdrew during Fall and Winter Quarters of the 1967-68 school year.

Information identifying the type of student who withdrew was obtained from college application forms on file in the Registrar's Office at Western Montana College. This information was analyzed to show the percent of withdrawals from three ranks of high school graduation classes; the percent of withdrawals from attained educational levels of fathers and mothers; the percent of withdrawals from various occupational levels of fathers and mothers; and the percent of the withdrawals who scored below the 15th percentile on each section of the American College Test.

The reasons for withdrawal, present status, and future plans of the withdrawals were collected by a questionnaire sent to the group studied. The responses from the questionnaire were tabulated to show the percent of withdrawals who withdrew for each specific reason listed; the percent presently engaged in the occupations listed; and the percent who indicated they would or would not return to Western Montana College, and those who were uncertain as to their future plans.

Conclusions arrived at as a result of this study were that the percentage of freshmen withdrawals at Western Montana College is approximately the same as the national percentage of withdrawals. One-half of the withdrawals ranked in the lower third and only 4.94 percent ranked in the upper third of their high school graduation class. Percentile scores received by the withdrawal group served as an indicator of success in college. The most important reasons for college withdrawal were lack of finances, transfer to another college, military service, dissatisfaction, marriage, and illness (self).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The dropout problem has been of continuing concern to institutions of higher learning. Iffert (8), in a study of dropouts, concluded that approximately 40 percent of the students who enroll in colleges and universities in the United States never graduate. This study further indicated that nearly 60 percent of the students eventually graduate from some institution of higher learning. Hamilton (5), in a study of the 1960-61 freshmen class at Montana State University, revealed that 20 percent of the freshmen students withdrew before completing their first year of enrollment.

The urgency of getting into college may have obscured general recognition of two related facts: First, that the educational system performs functions other than education, and second, that the system is subject to a number of inefficiencies. Perhaps the most obvious of these inefficiencies is the attrition among college entrants. In economic terms this attrition represents an important cost to the institution of higher learning, since scarce resources are expended on a substantial number of persons who fail to complete their education. This failure of college entrants to complete their education poses important problems for the individual who fails to reap the full benefits of his investment; for the educational institution; and for society, which must provide other opportunities for these individuals.

The Problem

Western Montana College has many students who fail to complete their first year of college. For example, 81 of the 319 freshmen enrolled at Western Montana College for the year 1967-68 withdrew during Fall and Winter Quarters. Before colleges can lower their attrition rate, however, they must know the reasons for these high rates. The assignment undertaken in this study was to determine what type of freshmen students withdrew and the reasons for withdrawal during the year 1967-68 at Western Montana College.

The Significance

In a review of related literature pertaining to attrition among college students, it was obvious to this researcher that next to nothing is known about attrition among freshmen students at Western Montana College. This review also indicated that the attrition problem is common to all colleges and universities in the United States. Attrition studies seem vital for correction of one of the most acute problems in higher education today. There is a definite need for continuing research of the facts about attrition that might serve as a basis for policies on admissions, instruction, grading, and counseling. There must be vigorous basic research on the business of going to college and learning, so that colleges, seemingly with limited resources, will know how to foster maximum intellectual development for a maximum number of students. It is with these thoughts in mind that this study of attrition among freshmen students at Western Montana College was conducted.

The general problem of attrition at our nation's colleges is revealed in a review of related literature presented in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

How many freshmen students attending American colleges and universities leave before advancing their education to the point of an undergraduate degree? Various estimates have been made of the proportion of entering freshmen who will receive a baccalaureate degree. Large institutional differences exist, but there is a general agreement that less than 40 percent of entering freshmen will graduate after normal progression through their institution of first registration. There have also been a large number of investigations into apparent reasons for freshmen attrition. Although these studies do not show perfect agreement on reasons for withdrawal, the most outstanding reasons reported seem to be lack of finances, academic difficulty, dissatisfaction with curriculum and college, marriage, military service, and illness. This chapter will show a review of the research on the percent of students who dropout, reasons for withdrawal, and factors relating to withdrawal including: Economic and social background, and achievements.

Percent of Students Who Dropout

Certain major studies give a fairly clear picture of how much attrition takes place and the reasons for this attrition in American colleges and universities. McNeeley (10) supervised a study for the United States Department of Education concerning dropouts and failures among 15,535 students who entered 25 universities in 1931 and 1932. These schools lost on the average 62.1 percent of these students in the succeeding four years.

Iffer (8) directed a study by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare which covered attrition among 12,667 students representing 149 institutions of higher learning from four major geographical regions of the United States in 1950. This study was designed to answer this question: What is the rate of attrition in relation to type of institution, of academic performance, of amount of self help, of motivation of student, of participation in extracurricular activities, and the residence of the student. Students were also asked to give reasons for transferring to another institution and for discontinuing college attendance. The central findings indicated that of the half-million freshmen who started to college in the Fall of 1950, 11 percent did not attend the institution of registration more than one semester or quarter, and more than 27.6 percent were casualties by the end of the first school year. Students from the top fifth of their high school class will survive twice as long as the bottom fifth graduates, and the average grade of the first year dropouts is lower than the average grade of those who survive for longer periods. Few students attributed their leaving college to a single factor. Reasons of academic failure and financial problems dominated the dropout scene.

Summerskill (13) reviewed 35 different studies that cited attrition rates for classes entering hundreds of colleges and universities from 1913 to the present time. Although he did not report as to how these studies were conducted the median values for the aggregate of these studies indicated results as follows: Median loss in four years was 50 percent and the median percent graduated in four years was 37 percent.

Reasons for Attrition

The literature on attrition points out many reasons for withdrawing from college. Cowhig (1), in a survey of 1,162,000 persons, 16 to 24 years of age, who attended college but did not graduate, reports the most frequent reasons given for leaving college were lost interest, poor grades, lacked money, took a job, military service, and marriage. Cowhig did not indicate what instrument was used in gathering this information or what geographical regions the sample came from.

Cumings (2) indicated that every student who withdraws from DePauw University must initiate the process in the office of the dean of students where he is subjected to an interview to determine his reason for withdrawing. After the interview the student is given a withdrawal slip which must be signed by several administrative officers who are at liberty to quiz the student regarding his reasons for withdrawing. A study by the registrar at DePauw on the basis of 1947-48 enrollment represents a typical withdrawal picture. Low scholarship, change in curricular interests, poor finances, desire to be nearer home, and marriage account for the bulk of all withdrawals. This plan means the university is sparing no pains to find out why its students leave college and the plan may dissuade some students from leaving.

Hill (6) conducted a study among a group of freshmen high aptitude students at the University of Texas who participated in an orientation and testing program in the summer of 1959 and who have since either graduated or withdrawn from school. Responses to a questionnaire indicated that

irrelevant reasons for withdrawal are given by one-third of the students dismissed for academic failure among high aptitude students, three times as many boys as girls are dismissed for academic failure, and there are clear sex differences in the creativity factors associated with success in college.

Gekoski and Schwartz (4) sampled 816 freshmen at Temple University in a study designed to find out in what respect students leaving differed from those who remained to complete their work. Complete data was collected by entrance test information, application blank information, and information obtained in a personal interview. In comparing test scores of the two groups it was found that the withdrawal group scored lower on the scholastic aptitude test, the reading test, and the social adjustment section of the personality test. Chief reasons for leaving college were change of interest, dissatisfaction with courses, financial difficulties, college adjustment problems, job interference, health, low grades, entering the armed forces, and commuting problems. Thirty-two percent of the sample dropped school at the end of the first semester. It is also significant that approximately 50 percent of the withdrawal group felt that some action on part of the university might have been instrumental in keeping them in school.

Factors Relating to Dropouts

Economic and Social Background. Experience from college counselling suggests that a student's economic and social background affects his adjustment to the environment of a given college and university and therefore,

is a factor in attrition. In a study at Indiana University, Koelsche (9) analyzed data on dropouts in respect to family background, high school career, and employment patterns in an attempt to determine the characteristics of the typical dropout. An analysis of data pertinent to the family background revealed that 29.4 percent of the fathers had attended college and about half of that number had graduated, while 23.9 percent of the mothers had attended college and about two-fifths had received a baccalaureate degree. In considering occupational status of the parents, 27.8 percent of the fathers were in the proprietary and managerial classification, 15 percent were classified as skilled laborers, and ten percent in the categories of professionals, white collar workers, and unskilled laborers. About two-thirds of the mothers were homemakers. Twenty-five percent of the dropouts were ranked in the highest fifth of their respective high school graduating class, and 14 percent were ranked in the lowest fifth. A compilation of the most important reasons for withdrawing resulted from a combination of patterns which indicated that lack of funds, low scholarship, contemplated marriage, ill health, and loss of interest were contributing factors.

Achievements. It is well established that dropouts as compared to students persisting in colleges tend to be less able and have poorer high school records. Daniel (3) studied dropouts at the University of Alabama with respect to certain academic and personality variables. The sample consisted of 1,264 college freshmen of the summer and fall sessions of 1960 who had dropped out or had withdrawn by the end of the winter session and those entering freshmen who were still in attendance at that time.

Results indicated that students who were still in attendance had significantly higher verbal scores than students who had been dropped or had withdrawn because of poor scholarship. Thus, the evidence tends to indicate that high academic students are more likely to remain in college than low academic students.

Snyder (12) in a similar study over a four semester period, covering 3,000 students at Los Angeles City College, asked students to write some reason for his withdrawal. This was followed by a short interview with a counselor in which an attempt was made to unearth the root of the difficulty. The most significant findings in this study are in respect to the differing academic abilities of the two groups. The withdrawal group consistently showed inferior ability as measured by mental and reading tests. The most frequent reasons given were failure, lack of interest, preference for other schools, and unsuitable choice of courses.

It is interesting to note that Munger (11) followed 891 general division students at the University of Toledo through eight semesters of college residence from 1945 to 1949. He examined the relationship of psychological test scores and grades received in the first semester of college to persistence in college of students who ranked in the lower third of their high school graduating classes. The results indicated that persistence was unrelated to scores on ability tests, but also found that students who did not receive grades near their expectations were more apt to dropout of college.

Hitchcock (7) investigated 225 persons who applied for admission to the freshmen class at the University of Nebraska, who completed all

admission papers and were admitted, but did not arrive on the campus. Data on the students was available from application blanks, transcripts from secondary schools, results of the University pre-registration tests, and a single questionnaire sent to each of the students who did not reach the campus. Results indicated the size of high school from which the applicant graduated had no influence on the decision not to attend the University, the non-arrivals are not distinguished from the arrivals in respect to their plans for college majors, and the high school programs the student pursued does not distinguish arrivals from non-arrivals. The study did indicate that non-arrivals have much greater financial need, have a smaller proportion of fathers in professional and managerial occupations, are from lower ranks of their graduating classes, and are slightly lower than arrivals in mental ability as measured by tests.

These investigations of related research show that the problem of attrition is a major college problem. Countless variables including academic failure, economic, illness, size of high school graduation class, marriage and military service are suggested as possible reasons for withdrawal from college. However, are these the real reasons for withdrawal? Research has not been adequate to the development of a better understanding of college attrition nor has it succeeded in substantially reducing high attrition rates.

The reasons for attrition at Western Montana College and the type of student who withdraws have not been identified. The problem of attrition and the identification of the type of student who withdraws is the reason for this study. Chapter III will describe the experimental design used to investigate this problem.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The assignment undertaken in this study was to determine "what type of student" withdrew from Western Montana College before completion of the freshmen year and the reasons for this withdrawal. This chapter will explain the source of data, the methods used in the collection of data, and how the data was analyzed.

Source and Collection of Data

There were 319 entering freshmen in the fall of 1967. Eighty-one or 25 percent of these 319 freshmen students withdrew before completion of fall and winter quarters. These withdrawals constituted the group for study in this paper.

The first assignment undertaken in this study was to compile significant data pertaining to the type of freshmen student who withdraws from Western Montana College before completion of the freshmen year. Data pertaining to rank in high school graduation class, scores on the American College Test, education of father and mother, and occupation of father and mother were obtained from college application blanks on file in the Registrar's Office at Western Montana College.

The second assignment undertaken in this study was to secure the reasons for withdrawal of the 81 freshmen students from Western Montana College before completion of the freshmen year. Information regarding reasons for withdrawal, present status of the withdrawals, and future plans was obtained by a questionnaire sent to the 81 freshmen withdrawals in the

study group. The questionnaire was sent in January, 1968, to 38 fall quarter withdrawals and again in April of 1968 to 43 students who withdrew during winter quarter. Replies were received from 53 percent of the withdrawal group.

Special measures were taken to assure the greatest possible number of questionnaire returns. Anonymity of the withdrawals receiving the questionnaire was protected by a numbering system and each questionnaire contained a personal note signed by the Director of Student Personnel Services at Western Montana College. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix "A" of this paper.

Analysis of Data

The first assignment of this study was to compile significant data pertaining to the type of student who withdrew from Western Montana College before completion of the freshmen year. Data pertaining to rank in high school graduation class, was classified into three groups: Upper third, middle third, and lower third. Information regarding the educational level of each withdrawal's father and mother was classified into four groups: College education, high school education, eighth grade education, and less than an eighth grade education. Information on the occupations of each withdrawal's father and mother was classified into four groups: Professional, sales, laborer, and housewife. The American College Test results, a requirement for all incoming freshmen students at Western Montana College, are used for college placement and counselling. The percentile scores from each test section have been tabulated to show the percent of withdrawals

who ranked below the 15th percentile. The 15th percentile was chosen as the starting point because this was the one used by Western Montana College for counselling purposes. The mean for each group of percentile scores has been computed to show the average percentile score of the group on each section of the test.

The second assignment undertaken in this study was to secure the reasons for withdrawals, the present status, and the future plans of the 81 withdrawals from Western Montana College during fall and winter quarters of the freshmen year. Information tabulated from this section of the questionnaires indicates the percent of withdrawal respondents who withdrew for each specific reason listed. The second section of the questionnaire was concerned about the withdrawals' intentions to return to Western Montana College. The third section deals with present occupations of the withdrawals. Responses to these two sections indicate the percent who indicated they would or would not return to Western Montana College and that are presently engaged in each of the occupations listed.

This chapter has given the procedures which were followed in the investigation of this problem Chapter IV will present a compilation of the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In accordance with the methods described in Chapter III, the following data was collected on the 81 freshmen withdrawals at Western Montana College. In this study, analyses were made of four factors: Background of freshmen withdrawals, reasons for withdrawal, present status of withdrawals, and future plans of the withdrawals, each of which is presented in a separate section of this chapter.

Background of Freshmen Withdrawals

The analysis of the information relating to the background of the freshmen withdrawals was subdivided into rank in high school graduation class, educational level of father and mother, occupations of father and mother and percentile scores received on the American College Test.

Rank in High School Graduation Class. The percent of the 81 withdrawals from each of the three high school ranks is shown in Table I.

TABLE I. PERCENTAGES OF FRESHMEN WITHDRAWALS FROM THE THREE HIGH SCHOOL RANKS.

Rank	Percentages
	N = 81
Upper third	4.94
Middle third	38.27
Lower third	50.62
No information	6.17
Total	100.00

It appears significant that only 4.94 percent of the withdrawals is ranked in the upper third of their graduation class. On the other hand, 38.37 percent ranked in the middle third, and the greatest number of withdrawals, 50.62 percent, ranked in the lower third. High school rank was unavailable for 6.17 percent of the withdrawals.

Education of the Fathers. An analysis of the data pertinent to the educational level of the withdrawals' fathers as shown in Table II, indicates that 8.64 percent attained a college education, 43.21 percent attained a high school education, 34.57 percent attended school through the eighth grade, and only 8.64 percent received less than an eighth grade education. No information was available on 4.94 percent of the withdrawals' fathers.

TABLE II. PERCENTAGE OF WITHDRAWALS' FATHERS AT EACH EDUCATIONAL LEVEL.

Level	Percentages N = 81
College	8.64
High School	43.21
Eighth grade	34.57
Less than eighth grade	8.64
No information	4.94
Total	100.00

Education of Mothers. A study of the mothers' educational level is revealed in Table III on Page 15. The study indicates that 6.16 percent of the mothers received a college education, 45.70 percent attended through high school, 40.74 percent received an eighth grade education, and 3.70

percent received less than an eighth grade education. No information was available on 3.70 percent of the withdrawals' mothers.

TABLE III. PERCENTAGE OF WITHDRAWALS' MOTHERS AT EACH EDUCATIONAL LEVEL.

Level	Percentages N = 81
College	6.16
High School	45.70
Eighth grade	40.74
Less than eighth grade	3.70
No information	3.70
Total	100.00

Occupations of Fathers. This analysis in Table IV, revealed that 55.60 percent of the fathers are in the laborer classification, 23.93 percent are classified as professionals, and only 9.88 percent are engaged in sales. No information was available on 8.64 percent of the withdrawals' fathers.

TABLE IV. PERCENTAGE OF WITHDRAWALS' FATHERS AT EACH OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL.

Level	Percentages N = 81
Laborer	55.60
Professional	25.93
Sales	9.88
No information	8.64
Total	100.00

Occupations of Mothers. Similar analyses on the mothers' occupations in Table V reveals that 70.40 percent are homemakers, 14.81 percent are in professional work, and 7.41 are engaged as laborers. Only 6.20 percent work in sales. No information was available for 1.23 percent of the mothers.

TABLE V. PERCENTAGES OF WITHDRAWALS' MOTHERS AT EACH OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL.

Level	Percentages N = 81
Homemakers	70.40
Professionals	14.81
Laborer	7.41
Sales	6.20
No information	1.23
Total	100.00

Percentile Scores on American College Test. The analysis of the percentile scores received by the 81 withdrawals as shown in Table VI, indicates that 49.25 percent of the withdrawals ranked below the 15th percentile on the English section, 50.75 percent were below on the mathematics section, 34.33 percent were below in social sciences, 37.31 percent were below in natural science, and 44.78 were below the 15th percentile on the comprehensive section. The mean of the percentile scores received by the withdrawals on the English section was 20.82, for mathematics 19.89, in social science 34.58, in natural science 31.28, and for the comprehensive section, 20.90. Percentile scores were not available for 20.90 percent of the group under study.

TABLE VI. PERCENTAGES OF WITHDRAWALS BELOW FIFTEENTH PERCENTILE AND MEAN OF THE PERCENTILE SCORES.

Test Sections	Percentages	Mean N = 81
English	49.25	20.82
Mathematics	50.75	19.89
Social Sciences	34.33	34.58
Natural Science	37.31	31.28
Comprehensive	44.78	20.60
No information	20.90	

Reasons for Withdrawals

A compilation of the reasons for withdrawal from replies received from those responding to the questionnaire appear in Table VII. This compilation disclosed that the largest number, 23.26 percent, withdrew because they lacked the necessary finances to continue, 16.28 percent transferred to another college, 9.30 percent each left to enter the military service and were dissatisfied with college, and 6.98 percent each withdrew because they were to be married and of illness (self). Similar computations applied to other reasons for withdrawal divulged that 4.42 percent each were discouraged by low grades and lacked interest in subjects. Various other reasons for withdrawal accounted for 19.04 percent. These reasons include change in vocational plans, death, conflicted with personality, trouble with instructors, help on family farm, returned home, travel with friends, dropped because of low grades, and pregnancy.

TABLE VII. REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL.

Reasons	Percentages N = 43
Lack of finances	23.26
Transferred to another college	16.28
Enter military service	9.30
Dissatisfied with college	9.30
Marriage	6.98
Illness (self)	6.98
Discouraged by low grades	4.42
Lacked interest in subjects	4.42
Other	19.04
Total	100.00

Present Status of Withdrawals

Answers received from the 43 withdrawal respondents as to their present status is shown in Table VIII. These responses indicate that 41.86 percent are working, 16.28 are attending another college, 16.28 percent are seeking work, 6.98 percent are housewives, and 4.65 percent each are attending a business or technical school and are in the military service. Various other responses accounted for 9.30 percent. These responses include attending another college and working, nothing, and running own ranch.

TABLE VIII. PRESENT STATUS OF WITHDRAWALS.

Status	Percentages N = 43
Working	41.86
Attending another college	16.28
Seeking work	16.28
Housewives	6.98
Attending a business or technical school	4.65
In military service	4.65
Other	9.30
Total	100.00

Future Plans of Withdrawals

The future plans of the 43 respondents to the questionnaire are shown in Table IX. These responses show that 32.56 percent plan on returning to Western Montana College, 30.23 percent do not plan to return, and 34.88 percent indicated that they are uncertain as to their future plans. No response accounted for 2.33 percent of the withdrawal respondents.

TABLE IX. FUTURE PLANS OF WITHDRAWALS.

Plans	Percentages N = 43
Plan to return	32.56
Do not plan to return	30.23
Uncertain as to return	34.88
No response	2.33
Total	100.00

Summary of Results

This chapter has presented the results of the study to determine the background of the freshmen withdrawals, reasons for withdrawing, present status, and future plans of the 81 freshmen withdrawals during fall and winter quarters at Western Montana College.

The investigation into the background of the freshmen withdrawals revealed that the largest percentage of the withdrawals ranked in the lower third of their high school graduation class, the attained education of the majority of the withdrawals' fathers and mothers is high school level, the largest percentage of fathers are employed as laborers, and three-fourths of the mothers are homemakers. The percentile scores received by the withdrawals on the American College Test show that the greatest number of withdrawals consistently scored below the 15th percentile on all five sections of the test.

The major reasons for college withdrawal given by the questionnaire respondents are lack of finances, transfer to another college, military service, dissatisfaction with college, marriage and illness to self. These reasons are the same as those reasons given nationally for college attrition. The responses given as to the present status and future plans show that the largest percent of withdrawals are working, seeking work, or attending another college, and approximately one-third of the withdrawals each plan to return to Western Montana College, do not plan to return, and are uncertain of return.

A summary of the study, conclusions based on the study, and recommendations will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The review of related literature concerning college attrition revealed that this problem is common to all American colleges and universities. It further revealed that next to nothing was known about what type of student withdraws and the reasons for this withdrawal among freshmen students at Western Montana College. This study was conducted to determine what type of student does withdraw and the reasons for this withdrawal at Western Montana College. The group studied consisted of 81 freshmen students who withdrew during fall and winter quarters of the 1967-68 school year.

Information indentifying the type of student who withdrew was obtained from college application forms on file in the Registrar's Office at Western Montana College. Analysis of this information revealed the percent of withdrawals from the upper third, middle third, and lower third of high school graduation class; the percent of withdrawals from attained educational level of fathers and mothers; the percent of withdrawals from various occupational levels of fathers and mothers; and the percent of withdrawals who scored below the 15th percentile on each section of the American College Test.

The reasons for withdrawal, present status, and future plans of the withdrawals were collected by a questionnaire sent to the 81 withdrawals. Fifty-three percent responded. Responses from the questionnaire were tabulated to show the percent of withdrawals who withdrew for each specific

reason listed; the percent who are presently engaged in the occupations listed; and the percent who indicated they would or would not return to Western Montana College, and those who were uncertain as to their future plans.

This study was limited to students who withdrew during two quarters of the school year. The percentage of students who withdrew from Western Montana College would be larger had the third quarter been included in this study.

Further limitations were placed on the study by the weaknesses of the questionnaire methods. A greater response to the questionnaire would have revealed more information as to reasons for withdrawal, present status, and future plans of the withdrawals.

Conclusions

The conclusions which follow were generated from the results of this study.

1. The percentage of freshmen withdrawals at Western Montana College is approximately the same as the national percentage for withdrawals.
2. One-half of the withdrawals ranked in the lower third and only 4.94 percent ranked in the upper third of their high school graduation class. This indicates that students who rank in the upper third of their graduating class will survive in college longer than students who rank in the lower third.
3. Percentile scores received by the withdrawal group served as an indicator of success in college. This group consistently showed inferior ability on all five sections of the test.

4. A compilation of the most important reasons for college withdrawal indicates that lack of finances, transfer to another college, military service, dissatisfaction, marriage, and illness (self) were contributing factors. These reasons for withdrawal are the same as the reasons given nationally for college attrition.

Recommendations

As colleges and universities are subjected to increasing pressure of enrollment, problems of selection and attrition will undoubtedly become more serious. Those concerned with such problems might consider the desirability of research on questions such as:

1. The time at which attrition takes place.
2. The counselling received by persons who fail to complete college compared with that received by college graduates.
3. A follow-up study on the withdrawals who indicate a desire to finish their education to see if they eventually receive a baccalaureate degree.
4. Further research into the educational and occupational backgrounds of the withdrawals' parents as compared to the educational and occupational backgrounds of students who persist in college.

There is no doubt that some measures could be taken to help students remain in college. Some suggested measures are:

1. A greatly expanded counselling service with emphasis on early discovery, identification, and amelioration of student problems.
2. The development of a program for improving the relationship between the student and faculty, particularly the student's advisor. This might include regularly scheduled compulsory interviews.
3. An improved orientation program for new students which would, among other things, make them more aware of campus facilities and agencies which exist to help the students with their problems.

4. The establishment of a routine system for obtaining an exit interview from students before they leave or as soon as possible thereafter. A system for interviewing a student before he actually leaves has many practical advantages. First, it will obtain information on his reasons for leaving college which is accurate, pertinent, and fresh. Secondly, it will have a favorable effect on student morale in general, since it will indicate administrative interest and efficiency. Finally, it might reveal reasons for leaving that can be eliminated and thus forestall the contemplated withdrawal.
5. A more thorough screening process could be made of all college applicants.

The foregoing recommendations, along with the need for continuing research, should be emphasized to college and university administrations. Much additional information is required if this problem is to be dealt with more successfully in the future than it has in the past. Certainly, a more successful attack upon this problem is necessary if colleges and universities are to achieve their primary function of optimum development of the human resources and latent talent of the American youth.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire Sent to the 81 Freshmen Withdrawals, 1967-68

Dear Former Student:

This questionnaire is being sent to you in hope that you will answer it and send it back in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope by March 27, 1968. We are anxious to make a survey of Western Montana students pertaining to dropouts. Similar surveys have been conducted by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and institutions of higher learning throughout the United States that have proved to be of great aid to institutions which are trying to give maximum service to their students. Your answers on this questionnaire can be of great help to Western Montana College in giving better service to students.

All information on this questionnaire will be regarded as strictly confidential and no names will be used in the results of this survey.

Thank you. We feel that your cooperation will be of great assistance to the students of Western Montana College.

Henry Stish, Director of Student
Personnel Services

1. Following are the reasons usually given for withdrawing from college. Please check the reason or reasons why you are not now enrolled at Western Montana College.

____ I transferred to another college.

____ I lacked the necessary finances to continue college.

____ I changed my vocational plans.

____ Illness (family)

____ Illness (self)

____ I left to enter military service.

____ I was dissatisfied with college.

____ I planned to be married soon.

☐ I was discouraged by low grades.

☐ I lacked interest in my subjects.

☐ Other (write in)

2. What are you doing now? Please check the statement that indicates your present occupation.

☐ I am attending a business or technical school.

☐ I am a housewife.

☐ I am in the military service.

☐ I am working.

☐ I am seeking work.

☐ I am attending another college.

☐ I am attending another college and working.

☐ Nothing.

3. Do you plan to return to Western Montana College? Please check your answer on the line provided.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Uncertain

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