

A RETENTION STUDY OF THE ADVANCE BY CHOICE (ABC)
PROGRAM AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Four MSU graduate students conducted a study of the overall effectiveness of the Advance by Choice (ABC) program at Montana State University (MSU). The study was divided into two parts. This professional paper is a result of this study of the ABC program. Part I contains the joint study undertaken by the four graduate students which aimed at determining the perceptions and issues of ABC's stakeholding audiences. Chapter One describes the ABC program and explains its purpose and operation. Chapter Two explains the methodology used, steps undertaken, and a summary of findings regarding stakeholders' perceptions and issues related to ABC. Chapter Three contains, in their entirety, the responses of the 66 stakeholders interviewed. Chapter Four concludes Part I with recommendations for further examination of the ABC program.

Individual members of this four-person study selected separate areas for further examination. Accordingly, Part II of this paper is a study of retention as it affects ABC's target population of Native American, older, and disabled students at MSU. Chapters Six and Seven include reviews of various academic studies, national and regional surveys, and past MSU retention studies for the purpose of discovering reasons students from the target population drop out of college. Moreover, these studies and surveys are relevant to Native American, older, and disabled students at MSU. Chapter Eight contains data collected from open-ended interviews conducted with five MSU counselor-advisers who serve the target population for the purpose of presenting the counselor-advisers' perceptions of why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of MSU. Chapter Nine presents data collected from open-ended interviews conducted with 14 ABC clients who dropped out of the university for the purpose of discovering their reasons for quitting college. Chapter Ten contains a final analysis of data compiled from Chapters Six through Nine. The results of the analysis clearly indicate that a number of interrelated problems and factors contribute to why students from the target population drop out of MSU. Moreover, Chapter Ten concludes this particular study of the ABC program with a set of recommendations aimed at increasing the program's retention of its student clients.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine the overall effectiveness of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program. The study is divided into two parts. Part I was undertaken jointly by David Kemppainen, Monica Perchaluk Kemppainen, Susanna Trujillo, and Susan Webber for the purpose of determining the perceptions and issues of ABC stakeholding audiences. As a result of the findings uncovered in Part I, each of the above researchers has undertaken a more indepth examination of a particular subject. In this particular professional paper David Kemppainen's exclusive work, Part II, begins on page 62.

The function of the ABC program is to deliver a set of services to targeted groups of high risk students for the purposes of academic retention and graduation. It is important to note at the outset that the findings of this study indicate that overall the ABC program is meeting the needs of its clients very well. The program is clearly an asset to the university. However, there is room for improvement, as is the case in any modern complex environment marked by limited resources, diversity, unknown causes of need, and the necessity for coordinating services amongst differing jurisdictions.

From the beginning this study has been agency oriented. That is, the intent has been to provide information and recommendations to the ABC program that are useful. Consequently, the agency staff has been involved in the project from the beginning. Briefly, Part I of this study is a responsive form of evaluation designed to address the perceived needs and issues of the program as defined by the stakeholding audiences of the ABC agency. Toward this end 66 interviews were conducted for Part I.

Part I of this study is organized as follows: Chapter One contains a description of the ABC program, its purpose, clients, and operation. Chapter Two explains the methodology used, a description of all steps undertaken to complete Part I, and a summary of the interview findings. Chapter Three contains the full text of the 66 interviews categorized by common themes. Chapter Four concludes Part I with a set of recommendations for further examination of the program. These recommendations then become the focus of Part II of this study. In this particular professional paper, the subject of retention rates and retention problems associated with ABC's targeted groups is the subject of Part II.

PART I

**DETERMINATION OF ADVANCE BY CHOICE
STAKEHOLDER ISSUES**

CHAPTER ONE

THE ADVANCE BY CHOICE (ABC) PROGRAM

The Advance By Choice (ABC) program is funded (100%) by a federal grant through the United States Department of Education for the purpose of improving the retention rate of low income, physically handicapped, and first generation college students. In response to student attrition rates at Montana State University, the Director of the Center for Native American Studies (CNAS) and the Assistant Dean of Students & Services wrote the first federal grant in 1977 for the development of the ABC program. Upon approval of the grant, the program was implemented on September 1, 1978.

While MSU does not specifically track each entering student group, it estimates that 37% of the entering students do not continue at MSU after their first year. Statistics are not available for underprepared students within the applicant pool. According to federal regulations governing the ABC program, the applicant pool consists of first-generation, low-income, and physically/learning handicapped students. Within the applicant pool there are three groups who the ABC program considers to be target:

American Indian, older, and disabled students. Information collected on American Indian students who entered MSU during fall quarter, 1985, shows that 50% left the institution within the first year. Older and disabled students tend to stay in school at a slightly higher rate than American Indian students.

Administration

The Advance By Choice program is under the auspices of the Division of Student Affairs and Services and maintains administrative liaisons with the Departments of English and Mathematical Science, which are within the College of Letters and Sciences. The Grants and Contracts officer reviews the program's fiscal commitments for compliance with university, state, and federal requirements.

Personnel appointments are cleared by the Affirmative Action/Human Resources officer and/or MSU Personnel office, dependent upon action to be taken.

The ABC Director is directly responsible to the MSU Assistant Dean of Students and Services, but ultimate authority over the program rests with the office of the United States Department of Education--the program's funding source.

Purpose

As stated in the 1986 grant proposal for federal assistance, the main goal of the ABC program is to "result in an increased retention and graduate rate of identified participants." In addition, the grant proposal states that Advance By Choice is a comprehensive program for the purpose of "(1) identifying and selecting 300 eligible participants; (2) conducting a needs assessment of supportive services for each selected participant; and (3) providing a comprehensive program of counseling, instruction to improve participants' skills, and other activities and services that enhance the cultural and academic experiences of program participants."

It is important to note that the number of clients served is dependent upon the grant award. For example, the program was funded to served 300 participants in 1978 as opposed to 290 in 1989. According to the grant proposal, "multi-year grant periods are commitments from the U.S. Department of Education for MSU to operate the project during the grant period. Each project year is distinct in that yearly allocation levels (funding) are determined by yearly Congressional authorization levels."

A chronology of ABC's funding levels and number of clients served appears in Table 1.

Table 1. Funding Levels and Number of Clients Served by the Advance By Choice Program, 1978-1989.

Year	Grant Award	Number Funded to Serve	Number Served
2-year grant period			
1978	\$136,253	300	270
1979	153,571	300	303
4-year grant period			
1980	158,527	300	499
1981	164,868	300	474
1982	158,273	300	360
1983	158,273	300	382
3-year grant period			
1984	163,273	270	302
1985	170,620	270	370
1986	162,283	270	329
3-year grant period			
1987	173,896	290	345
1988	197,208	290	322
1989	205,096	290	300 to date

It is noted that currently the ABC program is funded to serve 290. According to the most recent federal evaluation of the program, ABC participants for 1988-89 were selected from the following categories:

Low income and first generation students .	211
Handicapped	19
Low income only	45
First generation only	49
American Indian	54
Asian	3
Black	1
Hispanic	2
White	264

Male	148
Female	176

Eligibility

Program participants are eligible for ABC's support services if they meet one or more of the following criteria, as outlined in the 1986 federal grant proposal. These criteria are:

1. Physically/learning handicapped: a person who, because of a physical and/or learning disability needs specifically designed instructional materials or programs, modified physical facilities, or related services in order to participate fully in the experiences and opportunities offered by postsecondary educational institutions.
2. Low-income: any individual whose family's taxable income did not exceed 150% of the poverty level in the calendar year in which the individual participates in the program.
3. A "first-generation college student" means a person neither of whose parents received a bachelor's degree.

In addition, there are three subgroups within the applicant pool who are targeted by ABC for specific attention:

American Indian, older, and disabled students. The ABC Director states that "the program identifies American Indians through a self-disclosure statement by the student

applicant." No other documentation is required of American Indian applicants. According to the 1986 grant proposal, "older students" are those over 25 years of age who are mostly vocational rehabilitation/industrial injury clients, displaced homemakers, or displaced workers. Disabled students, for all intents and purposes of the program, are very similar to "physically/learning handicapped" students.

The 1986 grant proposal states that "students are more likely to leave college due to non-academic reasons than for academic causes, according to national retention studies." Thus, the ABC program developed specialized services for the purpose of addressing the nonacademic needs of the applicant pool. Examples of these needs are facing an unfamiliar environment, distance from extended family, interpersonal conflicts, doubting one's ability, realistic employment goals, and job readiness.

The Operation

What follows is how the Advance By Choice program works for its clients:

1. A prospective participant is informed of ABC program services through the numerous communication networks at MSU. Some of these networks are the Return to Learn program, American Indian orientation, campus newspaper, ABC newsletter, flyers and posters, MSU's

departmental-faculty-staff referrals, word-of-mouth, and the university orientation process.

2. If the student elects to visit the ABC office to obtain information on ABC support services, the program secretary performs the initial screening process. For example, if a student needs tutoring services, the secretary will connect the student with an ABC counselor. However, students do visit the office on a walk-in basis simply to have their questions about MSU answered.

3. After the initial connection is made, the counselors and other ABC staff (Director and/or Learning Skills Coordinator) continue the screening process to determine program eligibility.

4. If the student is declared eligible for the program (based on the aforementioned criteria), a needs assessment is performed by one of the ABC staff persons to determine how the student can best be served by the program.

5. Once the needs assessment is completed, a plan of action is developed by the staff person and the client. For example, if personal or academic counseling is needed, an ABC counselor is assigned to the student. The student and counselor will set up counseling sessions based on their respective time schedules.

Another example might be a student needing either English or Math tutoring assistance. An ABC counselor is assigned to the student, who confirms that the student has taken and passed the necessary prerequisite courses (as outlined in the MSU undergraduate catalog) before tutoring assistance is made available to the student. Moreover, the student is required to visit with the counselor every two weeks for the purpose of discussing the effectiveness of the tutoring services. Once the prerequisite requirement has been confirmed, the student is issued the schedule for group tutoring sessions. Sessions meet two hours per week at various times--both students and tutors set the time schedule for these group sessions. (See Appendices A and B, ABC Factsheet and Tutoring Questionnaire).

Tutors

It is important to note here that tutors of ABC must be approved by the respective MSU department before being employed by the ABC program. In addition, ABC tutors are paid by the program for services rendered only to ABC student participants. However, ABC tutors can also be employed either by ASMSU, the Math Learning Center, or as graduate assistants of a specific university department.

Additional Services

Through the needs assessment process, ABC counselors also connect student participants to other study skills services, which are available in the form of either video tapes, audio cassettes or workshops. However, these materials are also available to any MSU student, not just those enrolled in the ABC program.

In addition to all of the aforementioned services, ABC offers other services related to diagnostic testing in English, math and study skills, test analysis, study groups, and assistance with financial aid forms. The ABC program also coordinates services with MSU's Disabled Student Services office for students in need of either special equipment or assistance. This office is housed within the Resource Center, which also provides services for veteran and older students. Furthermore, ABC staff refer student participants to university and community resources. Some examples of university resources include, but are not limited to, the Women's Resource Center, Career Services, and the Student Health Center. Examples of community resources include, but are not limited to, private practicing therapists or counselors, Alcoholics Anonymous, and adult/community education classes at Bozeman High School.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Methodology

In this chapter the methodology used for Part I will be explained and all steps taken to implement and conclude that methodology will be delineated.

The methodology used for this project is encompassed within a form of program evaluation referred to as responsive (or naturalistic) evaluation (Stake, 1967, 1975; Patton, 1975, 1978; Parlett & Hamilton, 1972; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Responsive evaluation is a departure from the more traditional form of evaluation that is associated with the scientific paradigm where there is an attempt to measure the accomplishment of specific objectives. While this form of evaluation is often useful the findings are frequently not used nor considered useful for the ongoing process of program management (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Responsive evaluation trades off measurement precision for the purpose of increasing the usefulness of findings to those persons responsible for carrying out the program.

An important assumption underlying responsive evaluation is that if the findings are to be used then the

research must respond to the observations of those who have a stake in the program. The research design for responsive evaluation emerges as the evaluation is being conducted where the organizers of the research become the concerns and issues of stakeholding audiences. If the stakeholders think that the specific objectives of the program need to be measured then the evaluator responds with this form of research. Since the design is emergent it is not possible to determine beforehand what each step of the evaluation process will entail.

Another assumption that underlies responsive evaluation is that the stakeholding audiences are in a position to know more about the strengths and weaknesses of the program than is the evaluator/researcher. Consequently, open-ended interviews of the stakeholders are conducted by the researcher in order to uncover any problems that need to be addressed. Further, perhaps more importantly, the interview questions must be open-ended so that the natural biases of the researcher do not lead the response of the stakeholder. In other words, the researcher never begins the interview with a set of structured questions. In effect, the purpose of this form of evaluation is decided by the audiences who have a stake in the program. And if the interview questions are decided by the researcher then the frame of reference does not come from the stakeholders.

Closely paralleling the preceding is the assumption that the responsive evaluator can only get at and learn the perspective of the stakeholder unless he or she is actively engaged with the stakeholder. In other words, the researcher cannot learn about stakeholder perceptions by designing a written survey instrument that is then administered by the evaluator. In such a case the evaluator performs as an external agent with very limited contact with the stakeholder or evaluand. In responsive evaluation, the researcher is actively engaged and stimulated by the responses of the subjects. In other words, there is a great deal of intersubjective communication that occurs between the researcher and subject in responsive evaluation. Naturally, this gives rise to the question of the objectivity of the results. This form of subjectivity can be a very limiting factor on objectivity. Therefore, the interviewing methods used must be carried out in a very specified way designed to eliminate as much bias as possible. The interviewing technique is fully explained below.

Another assumption underlying responsive evaluation is that the values of American culture are pluralistic, while earlier forms of evaluation models assumed a consensual set of values (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This means that the researcher in responsive evaluation can expect that there

will be conflicts among different stakeholders when they hold different value positions. When values differ there will be different information needs and that is accounted for by eliciting the concerns and issues of all stakeholding audiences. Since all stakeholders are deemed important, the information needs of the various stakeholders must be responded to.

The steps that have been taken thus far in the development of this study are given below in the order that they have occurred.

Step 1. The four students involved selected the ABC program as a possible agency for this form of evaluation because of their interest in this program.

Step 2. The director of the agency was contacted by Dr. Carlson for the purposes of probing the interest of the director in this type of project and to explain the research methodology.

Step 3. A joint meeting was held between Dr. Carlson, all four students, the ABC Director and all ABC staff. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the methodology and to seek acceptance of the project. If any significant reservations had been raised at this meeting the project would have been dropped immediately, since it is not possible to conduct any form of meaningful responsive evaluation if a very significant stakeholder, such as the

agency directing the program, is not interested or has grave reservations about the project. The only issue raised at this meeting by the staff concerned confidentiality of interview responses. It was explained that no individual staff persons would be identified in the project, and that all interviewers were bound not to pass on individual comments to any one outside of the research project staff. This joint meeting ended with approval of the project.

Step 4. A total of 70 stakeholders were identified. "Stakeholding audience" is defined below and is followed by an explanation of the process used in determining the stakeholding audiences:

A stakeholding audience is a group of persons having some common characteristics (for example, administrators, teachers, parents, students, sponsors, clients, and the like) that has some stake in the performance (or outcome or impact) of the evaluand, that is, is somehow involved in or affected by the entity being evaluated (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Following the above definition, the relevant audiences were individuals and/or groups that had some stake in the performance, outcome, or impact in the Advance By Choice (ABC) program.

In answer to the question, "How can an evaluator be certain that he/she has identified all the stakeholding audiences?", nine questions were used which enabled the researcher to determine who the stakeholding audiences were

(Guba & Lincoln, 1981). These nine questions and responses follow.

1. Who developed, conceptualized, invented, planned, designed, built, produced, the Advance by Choice Program?

There were two prime writers who developed, conceptualized, invented, planned, designed, built and produced the Advance by Choice Program. The initiators were the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students. After being funded, Mary Lukin was hired to implement the Advance By Choice program. She has remained with the program since that time.

2. Who provided the funds and other resources for the development?

The university originally provided the funds and other resources for development of the ABC program. Specifically, the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students, provided the resources for the Advance By Choice program development.

3. Who identified the local need to which the Advance By Choice program is purportedly a response?

Originally, the writers of the first grant proposal (Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students) identified the local need. With the last four grants, however, Mary Lukin has identified the local need to which the Advance By Choice

program is purportedly a response. The local need is identified in each grant proposal under the "requirement" and "regulations" segments. The grant proposal must specifically identify those who can be served by the purported program. For the last four grant proposals, Mary Lukin has gathered quantitative data identifying the MSU population in need of program services.

4. Who decided to apply the Advance By Choice program to the local need?

Initially it was the Director of the Center for Native American Studies and the Assistant Dean of Students who decided to apply the Advance By Choice program to the local need. Since that time, data has been collected so that the program can attend to specific needs of the community. Initially, the program was less rigid (more flexible), but in the last few years the program has been narrowed so that it attends to the needs of a specifically described population i.e. first-generation college attendance, low income, disabled, etc. (This results from the fact that federal funding has been increasingly difficult to retain since Reagan administration reductions in federally funded programs. A direct result from the aforementioned was the introduction of rigid specifications for qualifying applicants to the program.)

5. Who provided the funds for the local application?

The federal government provides 100 percent of the funds for the local application of the ABC program.

6. Who provided the facilities, supplies, and materials that may be needed?

The university (the Assistant Dean of Students) provided the physical facilities, the student records, and the computer link-up (capital/physical expenditures). The federal government provides project dollars so that the program has all of the operational requirements i.e envelopes, telephones, etc.

7. Who contracted the evaluation?

Dr. Karen Carlson, David Kemppainen, Monica Perchaluk Kemppainen, Susanna Trujillo, and Susan Webber initiated the evaluation. The evaluators contracted the evaluation for the purpose of facilitating the completion of their professional papers. It should be noted, of course, that the evaluators are not really a part of the stakeholding audience. In a real world situation, a stakeholder such as the agency itself is the more likely contractor.

8. Who are the presumed direct beneficiaries of the Advance By the Choice program?

The presumed direct beneficiaries of the Advance By Choice program are students that are identified and meet the requirements of this program, i.e. low-income, first-

generation college students, physically handicapped students, Native Americans, and older students.

9. Who are the indirect beneficiaries of the Advance By Choice program?

The indirect beneficiaries of the ABC program are as follows; a) society -- well-educated students capable of supporting themselves, b) MSU faculty -- the affected students become "better consumers" and, as a result, interact with faculty on a higher level, c) financial aid -- the ABC program deals with the problems specific to the identified subgroups, which allows the financial aid office to deal only with the financial difficulties of the identified individuals, d) the staff of the Advance by Choice program, and e) the university, in that there are increased retention rates directly resulting from the ABC program.

Persons or groups identified in answering any of the above questions were automatically included as relevant stakeholders.

The evaluators also used the "ripple" technique, which asks informants in already-identified audiences about other, possibly overlooked, audiences. This was accomplished by asking, at the end of each interview, whether there were any other groups that the individual could think of who would benefit from the Advance By Choice program. Any audiences that were identified in such a manner were

considered for possible inclusion in the study. As a result of the preceding exercise the following six stakeholder audiences were identified. The number interviewed is in parenthesis.

- 1) Beneficiaries (33 total interviewed)
 - * Native Americans (10)
 - * Older Students (16)
 - * Disabled Students (5)
- 2) Staff of ABC (5 total interviewed)
 - * Director (1)
 - * Program Secretary (1)
 - * Counselors (2)
 - * Learning Skills Coordinator (1)
- 3) ABC Tutors (8 total interviewed)
- 4) University Instructors--ABC related (6 total interviewed)
 - * English Coordinator (1)
 - * English Instructor (2)
 - * English Instructor/Tutor (1)
 - * Math Instructor (1)
 - * TAC Course Coordinator (1)
5. University Administration (8 total interviewed)
 - * MSU President (declined interview)
 - * Vice President of Academic Affairs (1)
 - * Dean, College of Letters & Sciences (1)

- * English Department Head (1)
- * Mathematical Science Department Head (1)
- * Dean, Office of Admissions (1)
- * Grants & Contracts Officer (1)
- * Dean, Student Affairs & Services (1)
- * Assistant Dean, Student Affairs & Services (1)
- * Affirmative Action/Human Resource Officer (1)

6. Support Services (6 total interviewed)

- * Director, Student Health Service (declined interview)
- * Student Financial Aid & Employment Officer (1)
- * Director, Student Counseling Services (1)
- * Director, Residence Life & Food Services (declined interview)
- * Director, Career Services (1)
- * Director, Writing Center (1)
- * Director, Women's Resource Center (1)
- * Director, Orientation Services (1)

Step 5. After determining the stakeholding audiences, appointments were made and the open-ended interviews were conducted. A total of 66 persons were interviewed. Thirty-three (33) of these represented beneficiaries. Thirty-seven (37) other stakeholders were identified; of these, four (4) declined an interview. Due to the size of the number of beneficiaries a ten percent sample of the

three target groups (Native Americans, disabled, and older students) was interviewed. These persons were chosen at random from client lists provided by the ABC agency.

Before proceeding with the sixth step in the project process, the interview method will be explained. (The format and ground rules for the interviews may be examined in Appendix C.)

The following three questions were asked:

1. Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are? (University administration and support services received a slightly different question since they are not directly involved in the ABC program. Thus, the following question was asked of them: What do you think is the significance of the ABC program at MSU?).

2. What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here? (Question for university administration and support services was: What is your subjective assessment of the ABC program? In other, words how is it doing in your opinion?).

3. Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?

As noted previously, the open-ended questions are used so that the genuine concerns and issues of the stakeholders

will emerge. Because the very presence of the interviewer provides a subjective dimension to any interview, it is important that the interviewer respond to the stakeholder in as neutral a manner as possible. It is particularly important that the interviewer not lead the stakeholder's response. Consequently, the role of the interviewer in responsive evaluation is to do no more than ask the question and provide feedback in the form of only repeating back the stakeholder's response verbatim. The purpose of repeating the response back verbatim is threefold:

(1) So that the respondent can hear exactly what he/she has said for the purposes of an accuracy check. This gives the respondent an opportunity to change her/his response and provides the respondent with an opportunity to clarify and validate her/his own opinions.

(2) When, in the opinion of the interviewer, a response is unclear, a simple repeat of the comment (ending in a question tone) prompts the respondent to go further into her/his comments adding clarity and depth to the interview.

(3) Frequently, the verbatim repeating back to the respondent triggers additional observations and responses that lend to the depth of the interview material.

It is very important that the interviewer not paraphrase any of the respondent's comments since in paraphrasing the interviewer selects her/his own words and

those words may misconstrue or misinterpret the respondent's view. It is noted that a main reason for the open-ended interview, in contrast to the structured interview, is that the structured interview always requires the respondent to enter the frame of reference of the interviewer. And the interviewer's frame of reference may seriously misinterpret the reality of the respondent. This is a serious problem if one's intent is to develop an evaluation project that is responsive to the needs and reality of the stakeholders.

Step 6. At the conclusion of each interview the interviewer immediately translated her/his notes into data statements and using note cards proceeded to record one thought per card. This facilitates the categorizing and sorting process explained below. (See Appendix D for an explanation of the method of note taking that was used.)

Step 7. After all of the interviews and data cards were completed, the responses were grouped by stakeholding audience in what appear to be common themes. The purpose of this categorization was to facilitate the determination of whether or not there were any troublesome areas that needed further examination. A brief summary of the findings follows and the complete categorization of the responses by stakeholding audience is contained in Chapter Three.

Summary and Findings

Question #1 . . . what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?

The majority of the students interviewed use the ABC program as an academic (class scheduling, registration, etc.) and personal counseling service. Fewer of them utilized the tutorial services, and it appears that only the older students took advantage of the study skills component of the program. In addition, several of the Native American clients mentioned two ABC staff members in particular (both Native Americans) as helping them the most. This may suggest that clients are selective in whom they will go to for advice, counseling, and assistance.

Overall, the service and atmosphere of the ABC office/program, according to the clients, is very efficient and congenial.

The ABC staff was asked the same question as the clients regarding the program. They saw the program as a very valuable service to the students who qualify for it.

The survival and success of the program seems to be attributed to the resourcefulness and leadership of the director and the experience and continuity of the staff. According to the staff responses, there has been little staff turnover since the beginning of the program.

The tutors responded to this question by referring to their particular qualifications and experience in their capacity of tutoring. They had personal preferences regarding the different methods of tutoring, but essentially they did not refer to the general structure of the program as helping them be more effective in their jobs.

The university instructors, in answering this question, generally felt the support and accessibility of the ABC counselors was helpful to them and the students who participated in the program. They liked the autonomy they had with regards to the instruction in their particular subject matter areas. The English and math departments, in particular, were commended for their support in assisting the ABC students, thus the program.

Question #2...what is keeping you
from being more effective?

Perceived lack of effectiveness may be grouped in three categories: (1) personal problems and preferences, (2) bureaucratic problems, and (3) insufficient funding. Some of the responses relating to personal problems or preferences were disliking the teaching approach of certain ABC instructors, disliking the focus of the instructor teaching a class, not managing time effectively, discomfort associated with outside problems (lack of day care, spouse abuse, alcoholism and the like), not being a good delegator,

prejudice, and the student's cognitive limitations.

Bureaucratic problems noted were problems associated with getting into restricted entry classes and the office being too bureaucratic, since it takes a student two weeks and a lot of paper work to get a tutor through the ABC program. Funding problems noted were lack of numerous teachers, lack of federal "liquid" funds, lack of funding to obtain required capital expenditures such as computers, appropriately sized classrooms, and more private ABC office space.

Question #3...if you could do anything
you wanted to about your situation,
what would you want to do?

One common theme that came up consistently was directly related to the need to secure more funding for the ABC program. Examples included needing more money for tutors, hiring more ABC staff, having unlimited funding so staff can attend more conferences, and having more money so more MSU students could take the writing sample test upon entering the university.

Another theme addresses the need to expand the ABC program in terms of facilities/space. Some examples here include needing more rooms for tutoring, securing additional computer access time for ABC classes, and having more privacy in the ABC office.

A third common theme involves expansion of ABC program services. A few examples include tutoring services through

ABC during summer classes, hiring tutors who understand Native American students, the need for ABC classes covering subjects in addition to math and English, and providing more one-on-one tutoring for students.

As noted previously, university administrators and support services were asked slightly different questions. In response to the questions "What do you think is the significance of the ABC program at MSU" and "What is your subjective assessment of the program," it is noted that the program received very affirmative responses. However, many of the respondents addressed the program's success in terms of its providing remediation services, efforts toward retention, assisting Native American students, and other ABC program goals without having any real knowledge of the program and its specific efforts. In other words, many of these respondents were actually not very well informed.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXT OF INTERVIEWS CATEGORIZED BY STAKEHOLDER AND THEME

Question #1

Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Services:

ABC assists me with class scheduling and registration.

ABC assisted me in locating the local GRE testing center.

ABC helped me to get into 010, 011, and 012 Math classes.

They've always been there when I've needed help--like in math.

They gave me different math class options.

I have done better in math classes since the ABC program. Previously, I had tried 010 Math by myself, but failed.

ABC helps me to be effective because I have teachers helping me in specific subject areas. In addition, the office atmosphere is one of openness where I can come in and speak with a counselor.

ABC was a big help, especially at the beginning of the school year.

Having to attend the Math Learning Center certain hours during the week forced me to do my work.

Math/Writing/Study Skills:

The Wednesday evening workshops have been helpful for reading, writing, new ways to study, and relaxing before/in exams.

The ABC class in 005 Math makes it easier for me to understand math. The pace/material is slowed down so a student can grasp the material.

ABC offers an 001 Writing class; it helped me with basics.

Their study skills workshops helped me a lot.

The group study skills sessions help to make me more effective.

The study skills sessions on a weekly basis.

ABC Counseling and Other Services:

ABC's counseling service has helped me academically.

ABC helped me to be more effective because they helped me build confidence in an area that I was seriously lacking.

With me, personally, the counselors have helped me to become more aware of who I am and helped me to come out of my shell.

Being able to talk to my counselor regarding how I feel about my curriculum or how things are going for the quarter.

The encouragement of the counselors; they are there to listen to any problem.

I get school-related counseling assistance.

Having an adviser who I can talk to and be open with.

The program helped me to gain confidence in school.

Counselors are aware of the students who come in; they keep up the quality of the inner office.

ABC is exceedingly helpful and willing to assist me.

ABC made me comfortable about the whole university system.

ABC has an atmosphere that has helped me to open up as a person.

ABC has always been there for me both in academia and family situations.

Getting extra instruction; it helped seeing there were more students than myself who were having similar problems.

I needed the extra instruction because I'd been out of school for eight years.

The instructors are real helpful; they don't make me feel bad about asking any type of question.

Tutoring:

The math tutoring helps me.

Math tutoring helps me.

By going to a tutor connected with class helps me. Otherwise, I don't think I could answer the questions right away.

Tutors at ABC are good at what they do. They explain things I don't understand; they cover the material as many times as it takes for me to grasp it.

Other:

The three math tests are helpful to those who are stuck. If you fail the first test on Monday, you can take it again on either Wednesday or Friday.

The program has helped me; I don't use the tutors, but I do use the advisers.

To me, the program helps me because of my prior lack of education--my parents moved around a lot.

I probably wouldn't be in school if ABC hadn't first helped me.

It was a great place for me to start since I started college for the first time at the age of 30.

I did use it at first, but now I am a graduating senior and don't use it much.

Information put out by ABC, especially that of the Assistant Dean of Students about ABC.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Tutorial:

The fact that I was able to get help in the subject I needed help with. The program met my needs.

Having a tutor.

Other:

I don't know how to answer that.

Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans

Counseling/Advice:

I also go there for academic advice.

They were there to give me help (academically).

The main thing I go there for is to be advised on classes so I don't get into classes I could not take, that I am not prepared for yet.

They don't force me to do anything, they just give me advice.

I went there for advice, but haven't had any tutoring or other services.

The counseling.

I go there for counseling and the use of their computer.

If there are personal problems that are interfering with school, they (ABC) are good at directing me to help.

I get a lot of moral support from ABC.

Don't Use It:

I haven't ever used it, except for 005 Math.

I signed up, but didn't use any services.

When I did use it, it was good because it made me get after it.

ABC Staff:

One person who helped me the most is Kay McAllister in 005 (Math).

Just being able to go over there and talk. When I first started, I had a couple deaths in my family. It was good to go over and talk to Mary (Lukin).

The moral support and advice of Mary Lukin.

Mary Lukin is very helpful. When I make appointments with her, she (usually) tells me how to get around my problems.

Kay McAllister is a big plus for 005 (Math) learning. She's a good teacher.

Mary Lukin.

Other:

Every time I've gone to ABC, I've gotten immediate help from them. It's a good program.

It put me into a more personalized teaching/learning situation.

The tutors.

Stakeholder: ABC Staff

Giving Students Help/Support:

As I see student's needs. I see where I fit into (the program)--be of assistance to students.

I feel good about a very valuable service. We give the students a lot of help.

The program offers a support system for the students it serves.

It (the program) allows those students who might not often be successful, be successful.

Whether or not it's good help or bad help, it does help some.

The program helps a lot of students that qualify for it. I'm not familiar with the qualifications though.

We take up the slack of academic advisors. We pay more attention to the students. They are "at risk" students. We pay more attention to the student's welfare. Advisers, as a rule, just pay attention to the rules of the program.

Politics/Federal Funding:

Funding security -- not getting the axe.

When we were initially interviewed by the "Feds" he said, "This project is presently at a point that you would expect most projects to be in two years!"

When we first started this program I had to: 1) screen the staff, 2) get physical facilities, and 3) get supplies. After doing this, I had to negotiate finding a place. I learned the ins and outs of everything. For example, I learned where to get furniture for free.

We are working with a National Organization -- we work with "Feds". There are guidelines for writing proposals. If you follow this guideline, they know what you are asking for. It also helps you outline a more realistic program.

Overcome barriers with the program.

Previous Training/Experience/Support Courses:

Having been with the program for ten years.

When I was selected for the program (ABC) I had six (6) years experience at UCLA, serving approximately 2600 students. I learned a lot about evaluation (quantitative) -- how well we reached the goals of the program i.e. retention studies, impact of success studies and student feedback. For student feedback, we presented a non-threatening atmosphere so that students would answer our questionnaires. We developed a level of trust with students so that we could find out how our program was doing (positive or negative feedback). The students liked our honesty.

Through the MPA program, coursework, and networking, I learned how to implement projects.

I started the MPA program, but didn't take comps or write my professional paper. The MPA classes that I did take had a lot of stuff that has helped me in understanding the

theories behind management. This helped me in administering our office. The staff has commented on things that I have gained through the MPA coursework.

When I was hired -- approximately August 1 -- I was immediately put in contact with other directors in the state. This way I had someone to call. At the time the "Feds" provided training, so I was able to meet with the project director at the regional conference. They trained us on a lot of things -- since the program used to be under "TRIO" -- they had special training for directors. This training was most helpful because there was not anyone on campus who had to deal with what I do (No one on campus does the things I do). This was troublesome for me.

My past academic training makes me more effective. My background is in counseling. It is nice to know how to handle people in a crisis.

I'm the type of person who makes connections in order to get things done. Now I am able to get the resources we need-- make them available -- so that the program can run well.

I've been in the job learning more about the campus resources, which in turn helps me to be more helpful to my students.

Link to Campus -- Outside ABC:

Through networking, I have access to anyone I want or need on campus.

Through inservice training and networking, I was given help in interpreting regulations and implementing them to run a good program.

ABC Staff/Leadership:

Supportive staff.

We have a great group here. They are innovative, self starters. Everyone worked on their sections -- we were ready to open the first day of school. We still have some of the original staff around, but not many. There is some turnover, but for the most part our staff has longevity.

Specifically, I would like to compliment Kay McAllister on her sensitivity and caring for her students, without allowing herself to be manipulated by them. This rubs off on us (me).

Mary (Lukin) has also done a lot, pointing out areas where I can be of more assistance.

University take ABC seriously because of our consistency and Mary's strong leadership.

Other:

Clear expectations on the job.

Know that there is a need for the ABC program.

Effective prior performance. This eliminates fear of not being around next year.

We still don't have very nice facilities, but we are still operating.

As I am in the program longer, I see how valuable my position is. I am the first person the students meet. First impressions are important. They (the students) make a judgment about the program here.

Appreciative students.

Stakeholder: Tutor

Experience/Qualifications:

The background I have.

It (ABC) helps students get paid for their knowledge. It helps students help other students.

I am very familiar with the courses and tests make me effective.

Tutorial Sessions:

The one-on-one situation with a student.

The methods of tutoring. The meeting/class at the beginning of the school year which added to my former knowledge on how to be an effective tutor.

Doing one subject with 3-4 people assigned to you and the ability to work independently with no set rules.

I think group tutoring sessions help each student because a student can see how somebody else solves a problem.

The emphasis on group tutoring -- if I can't come up with answers others can.

Other:

I have been at three different schools and had tutors at all of them. This is the first program of its kind I've run into.

The tutor room with chalkboard helps a lot.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)

Counselors:

Concerned with students succeeding as human beings. They (counselors) go beyond academic counseling -- holistic.

Counselor contact regarding individual students helps coordinate student needs in English.

The support of the counselors.

Math/English Departments:

The writing center is supportive. They don't have to offer one class per semester because ABC doesn't give them money.

English 001 classes are separate from the English Department regarding assignment of instructors. It's not in the hands of the English Department.

Contact with other English instructors for information and feedback on students to relay to ABC counselors -- act as mediators.

English Department cooperation -- schedule flexibility with students of ABC as well as other MSU students.

Lots of interaction and communication within the English Department and with the ABC program.

The support of the TAC (Math) people.

Autonomy:

Freedom to develop my own classes.

I have autonomy. ABC does not tell me what to do. They don't tell me the goals in composition and reading. They

are open-minded to changing the structure according to the student's needs.

I'm not overloaded; I'm given a lot of freedom with course content.

Small Classes:

As a teacher, I like the small class size.

Working with and teaching small numbers of students.

ABC Staff:

People that I work with in the ABC program.

The holistic evaluation (ABC staff persons) vs. quantifiable pre-and post-test evaluation.

Get support from ABC not the English Department.

I have access to staff in ABC program; quick responses to any question.

Students:

Students can get study skills help.

Students are motivated to accomplish something.

My students who teach me lots of good stuff.

Other:

Availability of Writing Center computers.

We have the advantage that we are not brand new in the program (long-term employment).

The structure. There are four of us who concentrate on developmental education, minus the English Department, who is separate. We rely on each other for feedback.

I've never felt frustrated with the program.

I think I am good at this job.

I work hard.

Question #2

What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Soft Approach:

I don't like the "soft approach" of teaching; the instructor treats us like babies.

I realize that the program is designed with a "soft approach," but it isn't a good enough approach for me.

Study Habits:

Once I developed study habits, I felt ABC was effective.

I didn't have study habits; I wasn't used to being in a classroom.

Nothing:

Nothing to report.

Nothing to say.

Nothing to report at this time.

Nothing.

Nothing.

I have nothing to say.

I don't have a problem with ABC at all.

Other:

What kept me from being effective was having been out of school for so long.

"Restricted Entry" is a pain; if a person isn't one of the first ones in s/he doesn't have a chance of getting in.

In the classroom, the instructor rushed through things that I needed more clarification on and took too long on things I didn't need.

ABC got me boost in math until I didn't need their services any longer. Now, I am doing great in math.

Individual attention is more conducive to my needs.

TAC Math aides are not effective; there are too many people and not enough tutors.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Other:

Managing my time in a way that isn't always effective.

Nothing to do with the program.

Nothing.

Stakeholder: Clients-Native Americans

Personal:

Some personal problems, but academically I am doing pretty good.

The only thing is me. I am lazy about some things and over-zealous in other things, especially classes.

All ABC can do is give you advice. Its all up to you.

Other:

My age. I've been out of high school quite awhile. I had to learn everything all over again.

Day care is a big problem.

There have been times when I have gone in and they have been busy. They need help. Mary Lukin, as the Director, has many jobs and can't be expected to see all the students who want to see her.

I don't see anything they do that could hinder anyone.

When I need a tutor, I go to Dan (Voyich). The ABC program wanted you to go through their study skills workshops and i already took a class for that. Because of that I never went over there for a tutor again.

I usually meet with Mary Lukin, but I just haven't needed them recently.

Stakeholder: ABC Staff

Lack of Privacy/Office Space:

We need to fix the physical office! We have no privacy. Students ought not to feel like everyone can hear them! We need real doors and walls, but because money is the issue, there is no way we will get these facilities. The University was generous enough to give us what we have.

Need more privacy with clients.

Budgeting:

Politics. Because the program is federally funded we are required to stay tight within the regulations.

Job needs to be full-time from one funding source.

Personal:

At this time, not having a higher degree within this setting is detrimental. But with my experience and my reputation, I have been able to counteract that.

Another problem is that I am not a good delegator (but I have gotten better). For example, students used to depend on me being a resource person with their housing problems. When they used me as a resource person it interrupted me. So I trained people to answer the common questions so that I wouldn't have to be there. This makes me more effective in other ways. By training others to take responsibility for what I had originally done I am delegating properly. A lot of the time, however, I'll just do it because it is easier for me to just do it, rather than lay out the ground work -- when things have to be responded to quickly.

We have a really good network. I can't do everything, therefore I set priorities of what I can be involved in.

More importantly, I'm not feeling guilty about not doing everything. "Unless you take care of yourself, you can't do anything for anybody else".

Initially I have to deal with: 1) being an Indian woman, and 2) the misconception that I was given the position because I was a minority plus a woman. The attitudes

expressed make me seem like I'm proving myself, but I've now been here for a long time. Sometimes I feel that I am an Indian woman, filling quotas for committees. I feel like I'm being called on to be the expert (Indian things, woman's perspective).

According to somebody, I am not as effective as I could be because I am abrasive, sharp, and demanding. On the other hand, through networking I had feedback that states...I deal with a situation, and then move on. I can be this way intentionally.

I have shortcomings too, that I have to deal with.

Other:

More concentration (to retain) into the basic reason why we are here.

Being computer unfriendly, which is difficult when you have to work with people.

Leaving in two weeks -- husband obtained employment elsewhere.

Time, because I have a lot of duties. Some days students take up a lot of my time.

The program makes a big difference. It helps the student work within the system (university) and the student learns how the system works.

The students who are eligible for the program are very successful. At least those I deal with.

More say or give more input into the program to make me more effective.

Stakeholder: Tutor

Bureaucracy:

Not many students seek tutors because some complain that the office is too bureaucratic. It take two weeks to get a tutor and a lot of paper work.

We don't have the funding to help one individual student that's falling behind the group tutoring session.

Students are evaluated for "no shows" or they must visit the tutor's supervisor in order to remain in the program.

Other:

The students not studying or doing their assignments.

The tutor taking advanced courses and knowing more than the level being taught. This leads to inefficiency.

If you tutor more frequently, you learn to tutor better.

I'm inefficient because I'm doing research at the same time.

I have trouble relating with students who struggle with the very basics of Math...my methods don't apply to those students. For example, a student who is having a problem with basic multiplication tables.

I worked there (ABC) last term and started this term. I've only helped a couple of students and they did quite well.

Understanding where the students are in lectures/class or in the book.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)

Budget:

We need more money for computers, for more tutors specially trained in writing in order to help remedial writers. I wish there was more money to take care of disadvantaged students.

Other:

I don't like my setting (classroom) in Roberts Hall. It limits use of an overhead, the classroom has an echo, and as a small group, we can't fill the space.

I wish all writing classes had access to the computer writing service.

Hard to answer, I think I am being effective.

Lack of time. There is not enough hours in the day for any of us.

There are things I have no control over such as abusive spouses, alcoholism, rotten home life of students.

Question #3

Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?

Stakeholder: Clients-Older Students

Need More Tutors/Instructors/Classes:

There should be at least two instructors per class.

Put alternate times on the weekly meetings for those of us with children who can't meet at the one designated time.

When a group of students from a higher level class needs a tutor, have more access to getting a tutor through ABC rather than being sent to ASMSU and getting the run-around. By the time we visited all people involved, it was too late to even have a tutor.

Have more one-on-one tutors; there aren't enough.

More one-on-one tutors for Students Over Traditional Age (SOTA's).

One-on-one instruction.

For speech, we need an 002 or 003 Speech class; it would alleviate some of our anxiety.

They usually just deal with major subjects; they should diversify.

The only improvement is to have more tutoring for different courses, such as Engineering, Physics, etc.

Have tutoring services through ABC during summer sessions, although I don't believe they have the funding.

Need tutor services available for all classes--not just specific ones--or at least have study group sessions.

Have more money for tutors.

Physical Facilities:

Have more rooms for tutoring.

I'd like to have more privacy when I go to the office.

Make the tutoring room larger or have more rooms available.

Nothing:

Nothing to add.

Nothing.

Other:

Make class sizes smaller.

Have ABC advertise more and let people know of their services.

Give older students a little more time to take ABC class exams.

ABC needs to let me know what my rights are as a student.

When selecting classes, be able to go to ABC for assistance in addition to going to the department advisor.

It's too bad you have to qualify for this program. It needs to be opened up to other students--those who need extra help.

During the week of orientation, allow ABC to spend more time talking about their program.

Since ABC, ASMSU, and other MSU departments are all involved with tutoring services, you'd think they would work together.

Implement other instructors; it's not my fault if I can't identify with a certain instructor. I realize I'm not always going to identify with others, but I'm not progressing as quickly as I wanted.

Separate Older Students:

Have two summer orientation sessions specifically for older students--the one gets filled too quickly and SOTA's get placed in with younger students.

Separate older students in special classes; we have needs separate from those of traditional-aged students.

Stakeholder: Clients-Disabled Students

Other:

Tutors need to be in touch with courses they're teaching. For example, the guy who tutored me was good at math, but not up with the subject area I was in.

I'm not good on these kinds of questions; I don't know.

Nothing, really.

Stakeholder: Client-Native Americans

Don't Use It:

I'm glad its offered. I've just never used it.

I have nothing to base an opinion on, but as far as using the tutors, I pack them around like a trusty sidearm in bear country, as a last resort. I always have them.

I don't have any experience with their tutors or tutorial situation, other than 005 (Math). It was about as effective as they could make it in dealing with the number of students they have.

Budget:

They could provide better support services for single parents especially through finances.

They could get me more money.

Follow-up:

I would like to see if a student goes through a class and still doesn't pass, that ABC takes you in and starts you off with a tutor or works with the instructor, so problems could be worked out the next time around.

I think its important that they do more student follow-up.

Resources:

They should have more space.

The computer should be open to the student or they should provide computer services. Them, being a tutor program, computers would be the way to go, I think.

ABC Staff:

Hire another person. I feel more comfortable with Mary Lukin and Susan (?), than any of the others.

They should have at least one male counselor in there.

Tutor/Cultural:

I think Indians have a translation-type deal (problem) as opposed to a learning disability. If they had a program to correct this or help it, this would be nice.

Better tutors or smarter tutors. The (tutors) don't know how to answer me or they don't understand my questions. I think its something to do with being an Indian and they're not. (Several responses similar to this were made off the record)

Other:

I wish I had a counselor by my side to tell me when I'm going astray. Sometimes I just need a stick to keep me going on the right track.

Don't lose the personalized instruction that they have.

I would not make study workshops a requirement to use their services. I would make it an option.

Stakeholder: ABC Staff**Program Expansion:**

I think sometimes we need more classes--Math and English both, (however), more English than Math, but math also.

Like to require (all) students to do some of the things we do in this program i.e. students who need help writing should be required to take a writing class. This would leave us with better prepared students.

The only think I would say is it is quite effective, but too limited. I would like to see these services provided to more students. Other students could benefit from these services.

Financial:

Need unlimited funding to attend more conferences.

There are pros and cons to relying on "soft money" -- federal funding. This does not lead to a feeling of stability. Fiscally we have increased more than other units on this campus since 1982. (Increased in federal funding, where state funded projects have had decreased funding.)

Need a higher salary.

Teaching:

Advising and teaching should be evaluated. Research should not be so stressed at this college.

With the Math Placement Center -- people write a test, then the student is recommended to a certain level. But is not required to start at that level. Students would be required to start at the level recommended. This may lead to some misplacement, but in the long run, it will save the student time and money.

Administrative:

I am completely satisfied with what I am -- being in the position as long as I have, has allowed me to fine-tune things (not mundane things -- we don't allow ourselves to just be complacent). Our jobs are routine in one way, but this allows me (and fellow workers) to branch out and develop skills in other areas. Sometimes I have to push co-workers. But, having contacts expands our resources. In regard to our jobs, they are routine, but we do make changes. It is because of this routine we are allowed to branch out. If we were starting the program over every year, we would not be able to improve. Through the program's longevity we have developed a stronger program, we're not just keeping things going.

I do what I want to do. There are limitations i.e. organization where the program is places some limitations, but through networking I have access to anyone I want or need on campus.

Feel more freedom to add my ideas to the program as they pertain to me.

Other:

Wish for a better memory.

Restrict registration until you have the required English and Math.

Have all the students responsible enough to check in without us tracking them.

Difficult question because I see us doing such a great job.

More training. It is available but never attended. More training is needed to be more effective. Also to allow me to see where our program fits into other programs with similar substance.

Stakeholder: Tutor

Specific Classes/Personal Preference:

I would sure like some help when tutoring students with problems in basic Math, i.e. multiplication tables.

Basically, I'd like to tutor classes that are going to be on the MCAT.

I would like to have a better choice of classes that I would be tutoring.

I'd like to tutor organic chemistry, general chemistry 131, physics 205 and 207, physiology, and general biology.

Resources:

To have, on reference, the textbooks for each class in the library or somewhere.

Personal copy of textbook.

We need more available time in tutoring room that has the chalkboard.

One-to-One Tutoring:

In certain cases, I'd like to see individual one-on-one tutoring sessions.

I would like to have more one-on-one group sessions.

Other:

If I have time, attend lectures to help students more.

As far as I know, its (ABC) successful.

I don't know much about the program.

Stakeholder: Instructors (University)**Computers:**

We need additional computers and space.

We need to schedule one class to the computer room once per week each for two hours.

We need more computer access time for us as a class/group (each quarter).

We need more computer time and access each quarter.

Prejudice/Cultural Background:

Change the prejudiced view of people: "dumb", "categorize", "elitist".

Recruit some kind of person/program that would help me understand students with physical disabilities or cultural differences better. I felt stupid not knowing these things.

Writing Sample Test:

We need more money so more students could take the Writing Sample test upon entrance at MSU.

I'd like to see every new, incoming student to MSU take the Writing Sample test vs. only certain students.

As a result of the Writing Sample test, all incoming students could see whether or not they were eligible for ABC.

Other:

There are a lot of students who haven't developed (a) writing skills, (b) thinking skills, and (c) living skills--social skills. We need to prepare students for better thinking and impact more students.

If I could, reduce tension in the main office. (ABC office)

Native American Studies (Dan Voyich) is great. He helps the students fill out forms. I call up Dan to isolate problems. He is incredibly supportive.

Just keep growing. (ABC)

I'd like to see college credit for 001 courses applicable toward graduation--the courses would then be more meaningful to students.

Question #1

What do you think is the significance of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program at MSU? (University Administration and Support Services only)

Stakeholder: Student Support Services

ABC Director:

I respect the things the Director has done for Indian students.

It is obvious, to me, that the Director loves his/her work and the students speak highly of him/her.

Remedial Services:

The program is significant because it's a gesture towards remedial students.

No other place can a student get remedial help.

To provide opportunities to obtain tutoring in Math and English.

ABC is the primary academic assistance program at MSU.

Targeted Groups:

ABC plays an important role for Native American and SOTA students.

It's a program available to assist first-generation students and those students in need of help.

Other:

It helps MSU's retention rate.

ABC serves a smaller number of students (350-400) than our department. This allows ABC to know the student much better--a closer relationship with the student.

They are effective because of their longevity.

We just provide housing; we don't know which of our students are involved with the ABC program; we have no need to know.

Stakeholder: Administration

Benefits Students:

Assist students in the area of remediation.

It's been instrumental in providing additional resources for students who need them in English and Math.

The impact gets them (students) over the anxiety of learning.

ABC is one of the first contact points that gives students a message that MSU is committed to its academic goals. ABC enables students to learn and instills confidence in them; students learn to learn.

ABC is significant as assistance because of its focus on excellence; they don't coddle students. Instead, they have the attitude that students should not be excused from academic rigor, which gives ABC credibility with the academic community.

ABC also has a student adjustment element to it.

At ABC, students also get cultural identity help in addition to support in mathematics. It's been quite

successful in providing extra support and help for this group of students.

Retention:

It's an excellent program; it offers a service. It's a retention program.

ABC has a tremendous impact on students who would otherwise not succeed at MSU.

ABC is a valuable program because of the attention they give to those students who would not have made it otherwise.

ABC is the first line of retention; far fewer students would be retained and graduated without ABC.

Only comprehensive retention program at MSU to provide comprehensive services to an at-risk population.

Program is good because of what it provides to the less disadvantaged students; it retains students and has an impact on enrollment.

ABC Staff:

Have a close relationship with the staff of ABC; refer students; it's a two-way street. This all helps make us more effective.

ABC provides a warm place for students to come to receive services and information such as counseling and math/writing tutoring.

Students aren't turned away or turned off by the staff, although there is a qualifying criteria to be met for the federal grant.

Other:

It (ABC) has an impact not only on students, but instructors and tutors as well.

ABC is a good symbol for educational striving.

ABC is significant because of the commitment it has made to EEO.

ABC is a vital and essential program at MSU.

This program is not essential to the functioning of the University; the University could function without this program. If there were no more federal dollars, the University would still provide the services, but the quality of those services would be less.

Did not know much about the program to give an interview.

Question #2

What is your subjective assessment of the ABC program? In other words, how is it doing in your opinion? (University Administration and Support Services only)

Stakeholder: Student Support Services

ABC Staff:

ABC has a great staff.

Staff is very responsive to the students.

The staff knows the characteristics of its clientele.

I think the world of ABC's staff.

Their counselors/tutors are skilled.

ABC has problems internally (personality clashes, moodiness, etc.) and some kind of intervention may be necessary.

The Director is a powerful leader and good role model for Indian students. S/he knows some of the dynamics of low-income clients.

Don't Know:

I don't feel I'm informed enough to make a qualitative assessment of the program.

Not really familiar with this program, but I hear it's reasonably successful.

Other:

They are providing a service nobody else on campus provides a specific group of people.

ABC is also connected to the summer math camps; it reaches students at an earlier age in school.

ABC does very well; great!

Expansion of Program:

It would be wonderful if MSU could expand services at ABC for students who don't fit their criterium.

Would like to see institution (MSU) support ABC financially so more students could use services.

Should be more students who would benefit from the program.

Stakeholder: Administration

Benefits Students:

This program meets the students' needs in a very satisfactory manner.

ABC is a well-structured tutoring and study skills program.

It assists Native American students in the non-traditional areas of a Math and English background.

The math, writing and reading components are the only preparatory courses on this campus for students in need of help.

All students who take ABC English gain confidence by conquering their fear of learning and their success rate is high.

Financial:

It's expensive, but doesn't come out of MSU's budget. However, it's money well spent.

If providing these services is successful, then maybe we need to reevaluate the University budget. Money for ABC now comes from federal grants.

Would like to have more money available so the program could be bigger. I would like to see 40% of MSU student population use ABC.

Get more equipment for learning and physically disabled students, i.e., computers.

ABC Staff:

ABC is doing very well; the Director is good at seeking out aspects of the institution where she can make an impact.

ABC seems to have a good mix of employees who care about students, yet don't coddle them, but they don't just throw them in the water, either.

ABC has a great reputation on campus and, partly, that is because it is staffed by different people with different styles and expertise.

Always need more staff.

The Director is very successful in obtaining funds; s/he should be complimented. We are very happy with it!
I know the program is managed efficiently.
Staff is hardworking.

Skilled and caring staff.

Not Informed:

Some faculty at MSU don't necessarily know what other student services exist on campus, in addition to Admissions, Financial Aids, etc.

I'm not sure many of MSU's faculty/staff know who ABC actually helps. They may get the idea that ABC only serves Indian students.

Other:

The English programs are very gratifying for the instructors who watch students conquer their fear of learning.

Do more directive career planning.

ABC has done a good job of qualifying students so they don't waste their time on students who don't have the attitude to be successful.

If it were MSU's money, we'd have better things to spend it on than remedial levels of English and Math.

Bank of volunteers to serve students who cannot afford to pay.

The budgetary work is impeccable.

The Regional Representative had glowing praise for the program.

In my opinion, ABC is doing very well.

ABC is doing a marvelous job.

I am truly thankful that the program exists on campus.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PART II STUDY

The final step to conclude Part I of this study was to decide what aspects of the ABC program needed further examination. After the categorized issue areas were sorted and typed they were passed on to the Director and ABC staff. A meeting was held between the agency staff, Dr. Carlson, and the researchers for the purpose of gathering agency input regarding the remaining research effort for the project and so that the researchers could present their ideas to the staff. As a result of the above meeting and the joint prospectus meeting between the students and all graduate committee members, it was decided that the following issue areas should be further examined by the researchers.

1. Cultural communication problems between Native American clients and ABC staff, tutors, and university instructors.
2. Retention success of the ABC program.
3. Development of a budget proposal that would express the optimum resources needed to improve the effectiveness of the program.

Retention success of the ABC program is examined at length in Part II of this document.

PART II

ADVANCE BY CHOICE RETENTION STUDY

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

The specific purpose of this study is to examine the retention success of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program.

One specific objective that is set forth for the ABC program by the U.S. Department of Education is "an increased retention and graduation rate" of the target population (U.S. Department of Education, grant proposal, 1986:1). The intent is to keep ABC participants in school at MSU through graduation. Norbert K. Baumgart, Regional Representative for Higher Education Programs (U.S. Department of Education), conducted a federal evaluation of the ABC program on January 23-24, 1990. The ABC program is evaluated every three years by the U.S. Department of Education, the program's funding source. In the "Summary Site Visit Report," it states the following:

Student participants were interviewed. All were very supportive of the project services and the project staff members. No specific suggestions for program improvement were offered, but all the students said much of their success can be attributed to the assistance received from the SSS [student support services] project. This reviewer concurs with the observations of students that the ABC Project is successful in meeting the needs of participants including staying in school and graduating (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:5).

It is important to note that Mr. Baumgart did not interview any ABC clients who had dropped out of the university. He conducted an on-site visit of the ABC program. In other words, in spite of the federal intent of the program, the government does not monitor retention of the ABC program.

Graduation rates are kept by ABC's administration. However, these data do not appear to be entirely valid. The program served 324 total clients during the 1988-89 school year. Of these active clients, 50 were seniors in spring 1989. However, according to the ABC director not all of these 50 were ready for graduation by the end of the quarter. Some of the seniors had more than one quarter worth of course work to complete prior to being eligible for graduation (Lukin, 1990). Nevertheless, eight active and 38 former participants graduated in 1988-89 (U.S. Department of Education, Annual Performance Report, 1989:2). It is important to note here that the 38 graduates could have participated in the ABC program at any time between their freshman and senior years at MSU. Therefore, this number does not represent a percentage of the 50 seniors indicated earlier.

The ABC program director and staff do not keep records of program participants who drop out of MSU. Nor do they maintain information as to why ABC clients leave the university. Moreover, according to one of the ABC

counselors the program has no system for efficiently tracking its clients once they leave the university (Davis, 1990).

According to the director, retention data is not compiled because the U.S. Department of Education does not require ABC to collect and report retention data. It is apparent that it is not possible to assess the overall effectiveness of the ABC program without retention information. Nonetheless, it is the intent of this study to determine, to the extent possible, how effective ABC is in retaining its client population. In addition, this study addresses factors related to retention difficulties in the ABC client population.

In Chapter Six, various academic studies and national/regional surveys will be reviewed for the purpose of discovering the reasons why students from the target population drop out of college. These studies and surveys are relevant to Native American, older, and disabled students at MSU and provide pertinent information of value to the ABC program.

Chapter Seven contains a review of past MSU retention studies for the purpose of revealing why students from both the target population and the overall student body leave MSU. Collected data will be compared with that of the

previous chapter for the purpose of providing further information which may be valuable to Advance By Choice.

In Chapter Eight, information will be presented from interviews conducted with five MSU counselor-advisers who work with the target population. The purpose of this chapter is to present the counselor-advisers' perceptions as to the reasons why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of MSU. And this information will be compared with data from the preceding chapters in an attempt to provide pertinent information of value to ABC.

Chapter Nine will include information gathered from 14 telephone interviews conducted with ABC clients who had dropped out of MSU. The purpose here is to present the clients' reasons for having dropped out of the university. Collected data will be compared with that of previous chapters to provide further information which is pertinent and valuable to the Advance By Choice program.

Chapter Ten contains a final analysis and set of conclusions that are used for the purpose of making recommendations to the ABC program regarding increased retention of its student participants.

CHAPTER SIX

A REVIEW OF RETENTION STUDIES

Literature Review

A review was undertaken of the various academic studies that have been conducted for the purpose of determining why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of school. To the extent that these studies may be related to the MSU target population, they also provide some pertinent recommendations that may be valuable to the Advance By Choice (ABC) program.

"Role conflict, time management, family and work problems, economics, and logistics" are situational factors that affect the persistence of adult students in higher education. "Psychological influences include coping skills, self-confidence and self-image, anxiety about schooling based on prior experience, and beliefs or expectations about outcomes" (Kerka, 1989:3).

Similar to the general population of students entering college, minority students are faced with a multitude of barriers. These barriers include "low levels of parental education, poor high school preparation, lack of adequate advising in high school about academic and career choices,

poor study habits, low degree-level goals, lack of parental financial aid, and [lack of] student full-time employment" (Christoffel, 1986:3). However, these barriers are further intensified for minorities due to the following facts:

First, many tend to come to postsecondary education with not just one but several of these 'handicaps,' any one of which alone would be more than enough to lower a student's chances of being successful in college. Second, at too many institutions minorities face additional problems that can make them less successful. These include racial isolation or discrimination, a lack of student peers, language barriers, too few minority faculty or staff to serve as role models, and a lack of understanding among staff of these special problems (Christoffel, 1986:3).

In the article, "The Demise of Native American Education," the author addresses problems Indian college students are forced to deal with beyond the scope of any traditional or non-traditional college population. For one, "[Indians] are viewed as one people with one need, when in fact there is wide diversity among Indian peoples" (O'Brien, 1990:16). Native languages differ, as do respective traditions, customs, and spirituality. Another problem is that colleges are not "offering many programs to help Indian students retain their cultural heritage." And even when programs are offered, the diversity among Indian tribes still requires serious consideration.

A particular problem with some colleges is that they fail to recognize the fact that a number of Indian students enter college and do not speak the English language

fluently (O'Brien, 1990:17). In effect, English is a second language to these students; their native tongue is the primary language. And, few university programs exist that teach English, as a foreign language, to these students.

"The pressure of assimilation--or becoming 'white'--is [also] a problem with formalized education." Indian students want "to remain an Indian but [still excel] and go on to college" (O'Brien, 1990:17-18). Further problems relate to their "Indianness" and "minorityness--discrimination is a fact of life in America" (O'Brien, 1990:20).

According to the book entitled Student Services, the current decrease in approved loans "is discouraging racial and ethnic minority students from low-income families from going to college..." (Delworth et al., 1989:566). Older students often return to college under the pressure of securing "new certification and upgrading" required by their professions and employers (Delworth et al., 1989:558). For all college students, financial aid is an influential factor on program completion. "For example, high debt levels early in the college career are suspected of causing 'stopping out' or even permanent program discontinuance" (Delworth et al., 1989:567).

The Educational Record journal suggests that "the three major obstacles for Indian students considering

college [are]: alienation, lack of funds, and lack of information" (Tijerina, 1987-88:92). Other factors mentioned include inadequate academic advising, insufficient student-faculty contact, and academic [underpreparation] in math (Tijerina, 1987-88:93). Furthermore, it is stated that "high-risk students tend not to seek out support services. Students do not ask for tutorial assistance until the situation is critical, sometimes beyond help" (Tijerina, 1987-88:93).

The author of the book entitled Responding to the Needs of Today's Minority Students states that Indian students experience "culture shock" upon entering college (Wright, 1987:67). Moreover, another related factor is at work, as shown in the following:

Essentially, when there exist expectations (stereotypes) of one group from another, a form of culture shock results. Many college administrators are amazed that minority students do not appear to be grateful. They feel that minority students are not 'really entitled or qualified' and, therefore, should express gratitude for the opportunity to be in college (Wright, 1987:67).

Other factors affecting persistence of Indian college students include lack of academic preparation, low aspirations, relatively uneducated parents, lack of financial resources due to high levels of unemployment on the reservation, English as a second language, and lack of career awareness (Wright, 1987:67-68). A further problem

is that Indian students--like all college students--lack budgeting skills (Wright, 1987:74). And one final barrier is the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). When granting monetary awards to Indian students for college, the BIA ignores the "cost of moving to a college community. Students are left to whatever means they can find to secure moving expenses" (Wright, 1987:74).

The BIA has created another, more relevant problem for Indian adults who wish to return to college. For example, BIA boarding schools were established by the federal government in an attempt to ease the process of assimilating Indians into the dominant American culture. However, Indian students who attend these schools encounter many forms of abuse, and no part of the curriculum is aimed at helping Indian students retain their culture, traditions, and native languages. Nevertheless, the BIA's educators maintain and believe that they are "working in the best interests of the Indian people" (Szasz, 1977:193).

Many Indian adults who return to college still have the negative image of boarding schools etched in their memories. In effect, the whole concept of education has taken on a negative connotation for these students. Therefore, any negative experience at higher education institutions reunites the adult with her/his past experience with boarding schools, making it difficult for

the Indian adult to cope. And this can be a factor affecting the retention of Indian adults in college.

An associate members of this study discovered from her interviews with Native American adult students at Montana State University that the above was also true for this population. Interviewed students explained that harsh experiences suffered in BIA boarding schools have created for them a negative image of education--at all levels. These experiences have a way of surfacing time and again, especially when a problem occurs which is connected to college (Webber, 1990).

In Racine, Wisconsin, a policy conference was held to discuss postsecondary programs for the disadvantaged. At the conference, it was stated that disadvantaged and minorities "have been historically excluded from higher education." And "they are still underrepresented at all levels of postsecondary education" (Policy Conference statement, 1982:3).

In the book entitled Academic Success and the College Minority Student reference is made to problems handicapped persons encounter when entering college. The following is an example of this population's dilemma:

...when these students take the initiative to further their education by going on to college, they are often confronted with the awesome reality that they are unable to read fast enough or write well enough to keep up with their college course work. Add to this the problem of

most universities not having sufficient facilities to service students with special needs, handicapped students such as those with visual impairments become frustrated with their lack of progress and oftentimes drop-out before completing their first year (Washington, 1987:69).

Furthermore, this situation affects students with a variety of handicaps "including the cerebral-palsied and the diagnosed 'learning disabled' student in college" (Washington, 1987:69).

Recommendations cited for helping older students overcome persistence barriers involve "... (1) assistance with transportation and child care; (2) alternatives to stopping out, such as independent study, correspondence courses, contact learning; and (3) creative financial aid that might include flexible payment plans and tuition reimbursement" (Kerka, 1989:3). Further intervention includes: "... (1) for moving in, an Entry Education Center to coordinate the full ranges of entry services and programs; (2) for moving through, an Adult Learner Support Center; and (3) for moving on, culminating programs that allow review of the educational experience, reevaluation of career and life plans, assistance with exit barriers, and referral to transition groups" (Kerka, 1989:3).

Proposed strategies for improving minority student retention at colleges and universities include programs to tell minority students about college experience and outcomes, ethically conducted recruitment, colleges helping

high school counselors advise minorities, expanded programs to inform high school students about college costs and aid availability, peer tutoring, institutional and student evaluation of retention efforts, improved job placement service, better minority participation in student activities, and older minority students serving as peer counselors for individuals and groups (Christoffel, 1986:7).

To resolve the problems Indian students face in college, it is recommended that higher education institutions "change their curricula to reflect a multicultural society." In this regard, universities must do the following:

...[provide] Indian college students with career and culturally based psychological counseling, relevant coursework (such as tribal political and economic development), and Indian mentorship. University diversification, especially the recruiting of Indian students, faculty, administrators, and staff, would make the campus experience more rewarding and personal for Indian students. Racially mixed faculties would set the stage for drastic revisions in curriculum, ending the non-Indian domination of higher education (College Entrance Examination Board, 1989:6).

Furthermore, "Indian students have responded well to peer tutors of the same background, and appreciate being intentionally invited to use a service--for drop-in tutoring--rather than having to seek it out and ask for help" (Tijerina, 1987-88:93). And staff must always be willing "to sit down and talk with the Indian student--not

just talk directed at goals but general, non-patronizing, talk meant to increase the student's comfort" (Tijerina, 1987-88:93).

During the orientation process, Native American students "need the opportunity to meet members of the faculty on an informal basis. Such meetings are a first step toward encouraging students to see the faculty as nonthreatening individuals who care and want to see each student succeed" (Wright, 1987:69). Moreover, the following is recommended as a solution to the budgeting problem Indian (as well as all) students face while in a higher education setting. In effect, a system needs to be in place to:

...allocate a basic amount to each student for secondary costs, such as those that exceed the costs of tuition, room and board (residence halls), and books, thus allowing students to decide which secondary costs will have priority. This idea is potentially very effective for addressing culturally related concerns if all secondary costs are taken into consideration (Wright, 1987:74).

"For all students who enroll despite the daunting prospect of sharply rising costs and heavy loan burdens, the institution has serious responsibility for budgeting and debt management counseling" (Delworth et al., 1989:567). One recommendation taken from a White House Conference for resolving problems Indian college students experience related to the BIA was stated as such: "It's really

important that the Bureau of Indian Affairs, given its record, get out of education" (O'Brien, 1990:22).

National and Regional Surveys

National and regional surveys were also examined to reveal reasons why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of college. Similar to the aforementioned literature review, these surveys relate to the MSU target population. The surveys also provide some pertinent information that may be valuable to the ABC program.

At the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the Academic Advancement Program is concerned with retention of low-income and minority students. In one survey, the director explains that students from this population tend to refer themselves to student support service programs "only after their problems have reached a crisis state which makes problem solving extremely difficult, if not impossible" (Anderson, n.d.:13). In other words, nobody made contact with these students, prior to the crisis state, to check up on how they were getting along in college. Minor problems and setbacks then became major obstacles and barriers for both the students and support service personnel assisting this student population.

Robert N. Wells is Professor of Government at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Dr. Wells "conducted a survey of 79 colleges and universities which serve the largest percentage of Native Americans in the United States" (Office of University Communications, 1989:29). His Native American Student Questionnaire was an attempt to discover reasons why Indian students dropped out of college. Respondents listed the following as factors hindering college level achievement:

- inadequate preparation
- adjustment to college environment
- financial difficulty
- racial or cultural discrimination
- personal or family problems
- lack of family support
- transportation
- homesickness
- maintaining cultural identity
- attractiveness of village life
- adjustment to bureaucratic offices
- desire to remain on reserve
- substance abuse
- alcohol abuse
- child care
- cultural display of indifference which hinders campus involvement
- acculturation and how this affects achievement and education in general

(Office of University Communications, 1989: Appendix A).

In his questionnaire, Dr. Wells did not request respondents to rank order these factors.

During spring quarter, 1982, a "Task Force on Retention" was created by Dr. H. Ray Hoops at North Dakota State University (NDSU). The goal of the Task Force was

"to study student retention at NDSU..." (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:1). However, when the Task Force began seeking out retention information they "found that student retention data at NDSU was not being kept. [Moreover], without such data, examining the student holding power of NDSU was virtually impossible" (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:24). Nevertheless, the Task Force did discover that the two most frequent reasons given by all students "withdrawing from NDSU were financial and employment related" (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:22). Two further reasons given by students dropping out of NDSU were lack of involvement in student activities and health problems (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:23).

Ray Carlisle is the Director of Special Services at the University of Montana (UM) in Missoula. As Director, Mr. Carlisle has counseled and advised Native American, older, and disabled students for a number of years. Carlisle has stated: "Nobody [at UM] is working exclusively with non-traditional students on campus and no study has ever stratified for that factor" (Carlisle, 1990:n.pag.). Nevertheless, the Director documented some of his "thoughts concerning factors that encourage and discourage the continuing enrollment of [Native American, older, and disabled students at UM]" (Carlisle, 1990:n.pag.) (see Appendix E).

In summing up Carlisle's thoughts, factors that tend to encourage Native American students to stay at UM include, but are not limited to, good basic skills courses, financial assistance, cultural sensitivity, and existence of a Native American Studies (NAS) program. Conversely, factors that discourage this same student population from continuing their education at UM are stereotyping, insensitive advisement, racism, and negative peer pressure.

Factors that encourage non-traditional (older) students to remain in school are good basic skills courses, good day care, and a strong career/guidance information program. On the other hand, the factors identified as discouraging older students from staying in college are absence of any of the above encouragers, the UM bureaucracy, and older students' perceptions that the university does not acknowledge the fact that non-traditional students have needs which are different from students of traditional age.

Disabled students experience encouraging factors such as administrative commitment, easy access to supplemental services, adequate staff to handle routing requests, and full accessibility to campus regardless of the disability. Dissimilarly, factors that discourage disabled students from remaining at UM are stereotyping, absence of supplemental services and accessibility, and lack of a feeling of belonging to the campus community.

In an effort to resolve retention problems for low-income and minority students at UCLA, the Academic Advancement Program staff "takes the initiative in contacting students and encouraging them to utilize [the program's services] or other campus services" (Anderson, n.d.:13). Moreover, at times the program staff initiates services to students through "direct manipulation." The following is an example of this style:

...when a student is in academic difficulty and on academic probation, the student must sign a contract if he/she wishes to continue at the university. Based upon a counseling session with the student, certain stipulated activities are included as part of the contract (Anderson, n.d.:13-14).

Respondents to the Native American Student Questionnaire, which was sent out from St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, listed programs at their institution they believed to contribute to Native American students' academic achievement and retention. Students responded with the following:

Committee on Special Educational Projects
 Language programs
 Remedial programs (writing, reading, mathematics)
 Orientation and attendance programs
 Tutorial programs
 Developmental courses
 Counseling and faculty advisors and staff
 American Indian programs
 Student centers and clubs
 Native American Awareness week
 Upward Bound
 Cross Cultural Communications Department

Honors Institute
Rural Student Services
(Office of University Communications, 1989:
Appendix A).

The questionnaire did not request students to rank order these programs.

From the retention study performed at NDSU, the following factors were discovered as relative to student persistence:

For a student to remain in college, you have to have at least one professor who cares.

The development of a college-wide concern for retention with the underlying premise that all staff members will be helpful and friendly to students.

Students will stay in school because their educational and human needs are being met.

We must address ourselves to the individual needs and concerns of our students; we must constantly evaluate our priorities and our commitments; we must realize that achieving competence, managing emotions, becoming autonomous, establishing a personal and career identity, and clarifying purpose are major development tasks of most of our students; and, most important of all, we must address ourselves to the needs, concerns, and motivation of our students (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:3).

The National Task Force for Minority Achievement in Higher Education (formed in Denver, Colorado in June 1989) adds the following recommendations for retaining minority students on college campuses:

1. Board members, presidents and institutional leaders must be responsible for making minority achievement a top institutional priority.

2. Institutions must eliminate barriers to minority student participation.

3. Institutions should offer effective outreach and transition programs and create a campus environment that supports minority participation and achievement.

4. Institutions must increase student achievement and degree completion through effective assessment, learning assistance, and appropriate curriculum content (Carruthers and Celeste, 1990:1-3).

In conclusion, it is obvious that the reasons why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of college are numerous and complex. More importantly, these reasons are directly related to special problems facing the target population at MSU. And, furthermore, the problems go beyond the scope of those for the general student population on college campuses.

For Indian students, it is not enough that they must deal with problems such as uneducated parents, lack of funds for college, and inadequate secondary school preparation in basic skills courses like math and English. They are also confronted with university-related problems such as inappropriate academic advising, colleges not offering programs that help Indian students retain their cultural heritage, and lack of recognition that English is a foreign language to some Indian students who come to college.

Sociological problems Indian students must face include the perception that all Indian tribes are alike; lack of adjustment to the college environment due to the difference in reservation life and the university lifestyle; the pressure of assimilation, or becoming white, and; the reality of racial discrimination.

For older students, the demands of college add to the numerous roles they must contend with outside of school. Older students face the situational factor of having to juggle their time and energy between college, family, the need to work to support a family and/or household, and housekeeping chores. Another situational factor is that while attending college classes, obtaining good day care for their pre-school age children is another problem for older students. In addition, non-traditional students must deal with the psychological factor of believing in themselves enough to succeed in college. These students have been out of high school for some time and frequently have doubts about returning to academia and being successful.

One problem confronting disabled students is university-related. Disabled students often face the realization that many campuses lack the necessary facilities to serve their special needs. These students become frustrated when opportunities readily available to

the general population of students at college become unreachable to disabled students because of either limited or lack of accessibility whatsoever. Two further problems for disabled students are sociologically-related. One is a feeling of not belonging to the overall college community and the other is being stereotyped as lacking the ability to succeed in college.

Recommendations for improving Native American student retention include providing career and culturally based psychological counseling, peer tutors and counselors, further financial assistance, and soliciting student evaluation of retention efforts. To improve the retention of older students, it is recommended that programs provide assistance with child care, come up with creative financial aid ideas that include flexible payment plans, provide a group for non-traditional students who are in transition into college, and coordinate the full range of available entry services and programs. For improving disabled student retention, it is clear that someone needs to serve as an advocate for this population. When disabled students experience limited or no accessibility to campus opportunities which are available to the overall college population, support service programs and the university administration need to take action.

For the target population, then, special problems exist which contribute to a number of them dropping out of the college ranks. The same is true for Montana State University (MSU). In an attempt to overcome these problems, MSU established a number of programs to provide special services aimed at improving the retention of this student population. One of these programs is ABC, which was established in 1977.

As mentioned earlier, ABC does not keep records of its clients who drop out of MSU. Moreover, the program does not follow up on clients who drop out of the university. In this regard, I think that the retention information and knowledge gathered for this chapter offers valuable insight that may help ABC to develop some retention strategies of its own. More specifically, the data suggests a need for hiring a multicultural instructor/counselor for Indian students, and hiring peer tutors/counselors and a financial counselor to work with all three student populations. It is important to note that the multicultural instructor/counselor needs to be of Native American ethnicity. The key here, of course, is identity with Indian students. There also exists a need for providing assistance with child care to older students. And an advocate is needed for disabled students to deal with the inaccessibility to campus opportunities experienced by this population.

Another need is to solicit input from the target population when a program evaluates its retention efforts. One more need is for support service programs to do outreach for the purpose of contacting and encouraging student clients to utilize campus-based student support services. Moreover, all support service programs need to work together cooperatively in order to ensure that students from the target population are receiving effective assistance and guidance aimed at keeping these students in college.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RETENTION STUDIES: MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

A review was conducted of past Montana State University (MSU) retention studies for the purpose of discovering why Native American, older, and disabled students have dropped out of MSU in the past. In addition, the review was conducted for the purpose of discerning what the general problems with retention have been at MSU. A further purpose is to compare and contrast this data with that of previous and succeeding chapters in this paper in an attempt to derive further information that may be valuable to the ABC program.

Kenneth Pepion is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona. However, while at Montana State University he began writing a paper entitled "Psychosocial Adjustment of American Indian College Students." Mr. Pepion finished the document in spring 1990 and has submitted it for publication through the Center for Native American Studies at MSU. Pepion reports that the 20 top stressors affecting Indian students in a college setting, in order of rank, are the following:

1. death of a parent
2. death of a brother or sister
3. receiving D or F on a test

4. fear of failure
5. personal pressure to get good grades
6. being suspended or on academic probation
7. death of a friend
8. not having financial resources I need
9. pressure to get an A or B in a course
10. death of a relative
11. feeling dependent, lack of control
12. completing a research paper
13. health concerns of immediate family member
14. difficulties receiving financial aid
15. pressure to succeed as representative of tribe
16. conflicting responsibilities: family/academic
17. pressure to succeed as only way to help tribe
18. fear of failure to meet family expectations
19. concern of problems of family members
20. studying for a test (Pepion, 1990:Appendix).

In his unpublished paper, the author makes the following statement:

The finding that aspects of the cultural environment do not appear to be important sources of stress for the Indian students in this study seems contrary to much of the literature that points to the Indian student's inability to adjust to a culturally different environment as being a major factor in their attrition (Pepion, 1990:21-22).

In 1989, staff from the American Indian Research Opportunities (AIRO) program at MSU conducted a survey of Indian student dropouts. The students were former participants of AIRO, but had failed to complete a higher education degree program in a science curriculum. In addition, the Indian students surveyed were either traditional or older students. The following is a list of problem areas identified by the respondents:

1. inferior secondary schooling/poor study skills
2. exposure to poorly qualified science teachers
3. insufficient guidance and counseling
4. inadequate academic preparation

5. lack of pre-college summer experience
6. lack of parental/family support
7. lack of peer support
8. lack of motivation/desire
9. lack of self-confidence
10. low self-esteem
11. lack of role models
12. health problems
13. personal and family problems
14. conflicting values between cultures/traditions
15. psychological stress
16. alcohol/drug abuse
17. other areas more attractive (AIRO, 1989:n.pag.).

The AIRO survey did not request respondents to rank order these problem areas.

Dennis Klewin completed a retention survey at MSU during winter and spring quarters of 1988. At the time, Mr. Klewin was Director of the MSU Resource Center, which serves older, disabled, and veteran students (Klewin, 1990). Currently, Klewin is the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Services at MSU. Thirty-two students responded to his survey, out of a possible 83, for a 39% return. The information gathered was from the fall 1987 class of non-returning freshmen (Klewin, 1988:n.pag.). Student responses are in rank order and listed as follows:

1. Insufficient financial aid and/or lack of other finances.
2. Poor or inadequate advising.
3. Lack of faculty contact/concern.
4. Shortage of classes that you desired to take.
5. Lack of clear career goals.
6. Poor or inadequate faculty instruction.
7. Lack of assistance and/or confusion in registering for classes.
- 8/9. Insufficient support academically, such as tutoring, counseling, and study skills.
- 8/9. Not motivated for college at present time.

10. Personal problems with spouse, family or friends.
11. University seemed too large, unfriendly and impersonal.
12. Not academically prepared for college.
13. Homesick.
14. Health problems.
15. Alcohol and/or drugs influenced leaving college (Klewin, 1988:n.pag.).

The Director also solicited written comments from student respondents as to why they left MSU (see Appendix F).

In summing up the comments, reasons given by older and disabled students for dropping out included, but were not limited to, lack of courses or curriculum desired, financial problems, advisement problems, securing full-time employment, housing and day care problems, and personal issues.

A retention subcommittee was formed at MSU in 1986, called the Student Affairs and Services Planning and Priorities Committee. The purpose of the subcommittee was to research and discover why students from the overall university population drop out of MSU. It was noted that enrollment at MSU had "spiraled downward by 738 students" since fall quarter 1984 (Retention Subcommittee, 1986:n.pag.). A survey was sent out to students who had left MSU between 1984 and 1986. When returned surveys were analyzed, the reasons student respondents gave for dropping out of MSU were academic boredom, academic underpreparedness, lack of certainty about major/career, transition/adjustment difficulties, dissonance and incompatibility,

and irrelevancy (Retention Subcommittee, 1986:1). It is important to note that the Committee's survey did not specifically zero in on Native American, older, and disabled students who dropped out of MSU; the survey covered all students who had left the university.

A retention survey was conducted in 1985 by Joseph E. Frazier, Registrar at MSU. His office "surveyed the continuing students [from the overall University population] who preregistered in Spring of 1984 for Autumn Quarter 1984 but did not return to school" (Frazier, 1985:n.pag.). The Registrar and his staff mailed out 671 questionnaires to these students and received 200, for a return rate of 29.8% (Frazier, 1985:n.pag.). The number one reason given by respondents for not returning was lack of finances; number two was accepting a job. Other reasons were documented and are listed as follows, in rank order:

1. Will attend MSU at a future date
2. Attended another university
3. Unable to obtain financial aid
4. Moved out of area
5. Change of goals
6. Not able to get courses
7. Desire school closer to home
8. Specific curriculum not offered
9. Marital situation changed my education plans
10. Lack of interest
11. Other
12. Personal or family illness
13. Wasn't notified about financial aid soon enough
Housing inadequate
Size of institution
Not satisfied with transfer evaluation
14. Went into military service
15. Transfer credit evaluation not available (Frazier, 1985:2).

Mr. Frazier conducted another retention survey of the overall student population at MSU in 1988. No-Show students numbered 1,245, covering the period from 1986 to 1987. Of the 1,245 questionnaires sent out, 379 were returned (30.4% return rate) (Frazier, 1988:1). The top reasons mentioned by student respondents for not returning to MSU were lack of finances (111 respondents), attend another university (105 respondents), and will attend MSU at a later date (105 respondents) (Frazier, 1988:1). Furthermore, the Registrar documented the specific comments, complaints, and/or suggestions given by the respondents (see Appendix G).

Summarizing the responses, reasons student interviewees gave for not returning to MSU included problems securing specific curriculum or classes, problems with advisers-faculty-staff, MSU budget or program cutbacks, and employment and/or finance-related problems. Other reasons mentioned were family-related factors, transfers to other colleges/universities, recertification requirements completed, taking classes and workshops for personal fulfillment, and personal situations.

In conclusion, a wide range of problems confront Native American, older, and disabled college students, causing them to drop out of college. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Native Americans experience problems

securing sufficient financial aid for college; they come from a family with relatively uneducated parents; Indian students enter college with inadequate academic preparation, and; these students experience a university-related problem of insufficient guidance and counseling.

The MSU retention studies suggest that sociological factors affect the retention of Indian students. The death of a family member or friend can distract an Indian student from her/his studies. The concept of extended family is very important in Indian culture. Conflicting values between "white" and Indian culture is a problem for Indian students. The dominant, white culture stresses that an individual be independent; meanwhile, Indian culture and tradition stresses interdependence of the individual on others.

Older and disabled students drop out of college because of lack of sufficient finances, failure to secure full-time employment while at school, lack of good day care for children, and balancing college life with family/home life. These problems are similar to those indicated in the previous chapter. However, this chapter has presented further reasons as to why older and disabled students drop out of college. These include university-related problems such as poor or inadequate advisement; lack of curriculum or classes desired by older and disabled students; the

university is too large, unfriendly, and impersonal; and the occurrence of poor or inadequate faculty instruction. One other problem experienced by this population is being academically underprepared for college.

For the general student population, the primary reason given for not returning to college was lack of sufficient finances. Financial difficulty, then, is a major reason students from both the target population and general college population drop out of MSU. Other similar reasons include inability to get curriculum or courses wanted, personal or family-related problems, academic underpreparedness, transition/adjustment difficulties, and problems with faculty, advisers, and staff at MSU. Dissimilar reasons include academic boredom, transferring to another college or university, lack of agreement or compatibility with what college has to offer, and uncertainty about major/career.

Since Advance By Choice serves Native American, older, and disabled students, this information may be valuable for assisting the program in retaining individuals from this population. However, some of the problems cited cannot be remedied by ABC. For example, the sociological problems experienced by Indian and disabled students are beyond the control of the program. Nonetheless, ABC could assist in retaining students from the target population in other

areas. As suggested in Chapter Six, there is need of a Native American multicultural instructor and/or counselor for Indian students, assistance with securing good day care for the children of older students, and the need to hire peer tutors/counselors and a financial counselor to assist the target population.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PROBLEM AS PERCEIVED BY COUNSELOR-ADVISERS

In spring 1990, five open-ended interviews were conducted with MSU counselor-advisers who, through their respective offices, have direct contact with either Native American, older, or disabled students at MSU. The purpose of the interviews was to discover the counselor-advisers' perceptions regarding factors and characteristics contributing to why individuals from the target population drop out of MSU.

This information will be compared with the data in the two previous chapters. An attempt will then be made to utilize the combined data for the purpose of providing recommendations which may be pertinent and valuable to the ABC program.

Those interviewed were Daniel Voyich, Native American Studies professor and counselor-adviser to Native American students (Voyich works with traditional and non-traditional age Indian students); Walter Fleming, Adjunct Assistant Professor and former acting Director of the Center for Native American Studies (Fleming works with traditional and non-traditional age Indian students); Patrick Weasel Head,

Administrative Coordinator for the American Indian Research Opportunities (AIRO) program (Head works with traditional and non-traditional age Indian students); Robert Waters, Director of the MSU Resource Center (Waters works with older, disabled, and veteran students); and Michelle Dennis, Director of the MSU Women's Resource Center (Dennis works with traditional and non-traditional age female students).

One open-ended question was asked of the counselor-advisers: What are your perceptions regarding factors or characteristics which you feel contribute to the attrition of either Native American, older or disabled students with whom you counsel or advise? Counselor-adviser responses were documented and sorted according to category and theme. The following pages include the counselor-advisers' perceptions, in their entirety, concerning why Native American, older, and disabled students drop out of MSU.

Responses to Question #1

Combination of Factors

It's a combination of factors why students quit school. Examples would be lack of money, loneliness, cutting classes, and a low GPA. These are all inter-connected.

I think it's a combination of things why kids drop out.

Students drop out for a multitude of factors, together.

Combination of factors affects students who drop out. It's like a snowball rolling downhill gathering more snow and momentum.

Students who drop out of school usually have been affected by a combination of things.

Oftentimes, there are so many things that come at students at the same time, they can't tolerate it. There aren't enough hours in a day.

Students who bring a lot of problems with them, like unpaid bills, an alcohol/drug problem, or relationship difficulties.

Significant Others/Home

Due to competing, complex roles, one setback can affect the entire family. Non-traditional students who have to deal with complex problems--then academics suffer.

A partner in the marriage or relationship doesn't agree with the lack of time for family because of school.

A significant other quits.

Kids having to adjust to a new school system. Kids might feel ignored because mom/dad's time is taken up by school.

Those that have the pull of a separate family back home and not at MSU. If problems arise, the student is more likely to flee than fight.

The home environment from which the Indian student came is a big factor. For example, boarding school and family life may have given the student a negative feeling about education.

An MSU student's child may have failed to make an adjustment in the Bozeman school system. The student will drop out for the sake of the child.

The Indian students that go home a lot; they are usually lonely.

Financial Problems

Financial problems--a change in funds from a job to being a student. An emergency can delete finances, debt is incurred, and students need to go to work. This detracts from school and studies.

Those who bring a burden of bills or payments with them. Meanwhile, students also want their own vehicle while at school.

Indian students who have a checking account for the first time often have financial problems. They don't know how to budget.

Receiving financial aid on time is a big problem for many students.

Distractors

Some students use the available recreation too much; also, some are easily distracted by friends and peers.

I see young, Indian boys get caught up in the availability of recreation; it's continuous and distracts students from their studies.

For younger students, I think they fail to make a social adjustment to MSU. They get more personal time at college and don't know how to handle it.

Those students that go back to the reservation too often.

Lack of Initiative

Our student support services can help anybody through college, but some students won't ask for help. I don't know why.

Procrastination is major problem. Some students won't seek out the student support services until it's too late.

Those students that don't stay in the student support service programs long enough--such as tutoring.

Student Goals

Students who have a negative, non-goal perception of college.

Those that only see one career choice and then fail. This can cause difficulty.

The ones with no career choice usually leave.

Lack of Adjustment

A student who starts college during winter or spring quarter will usually have problems. The adjustment period is a factor here and the BIA checks usually aren't in and this becomes a hurdle.

For disabled, the adjustment to a new environment and facilities is critical. Any stressor in school can create frustration and loss of time. The student just needs to leave school because there is no tolerance left.

There's a lot of trauma for Indian students when they first come to MSU. For example, an Indian kid from Brockton who's placed on the eleventh floor of Hedges Hall will be traumatized. It's like "culture shock."

Low Tolerance Level

Those who have experienced racism on the reservation. They are hypersensitive about how they are treated while at MSU.

Non-traditional students have a very low tolerance level for arrogant professors who treat them unfairly.

Some students have a short fuse and don't put up with waiting for, let's say, the Financial Aid check.

Lack of Awareness

Coping skills are weak--students don't know the process or system of help that's available to them. Those that aren't aware of the student support services available. They didn't reach out for some reason or other. Then department heads, faculty, and student support service Directors aren't aware of the student's problems.

Students who don't know what resources are available to them when they are struggling.

University/Course-Related

The MSU math department lacks respect for students who aren't seen to have math capability. It's like math supposedly separates smart from dumb. Non-traditional students aren't going to tolerate this arrogance, inferiority, and subordination.

I also see MSU as being at fault for not properly orienting student to the available support services on campus. It's not just the fault of the students. MSU hasn't done the necessary outreach.

I think MSU fails to provide good academic advisement to students. The university falls short here. For example, a student may not be aware that s/he can change advisers if s/he isn't happy with the one appointed to him/her.

Academic failure in math is difficult for non-traditional students. This creates anxiety. Furthermore, non-traditional female students aren't expected to be good in math in our society.

Other

Those that are taught to fish on their own to feed themselves, but don't do it. The student and the counselor-adviser become too dependent on each other.

Not having the background or skills necessary to succeed--underpreparedness.

A student who doesn't put in the study time to reach high aspirations. They lack discipline and persistence.

Those with the motivation to help only themselves; they usually end up dropping out.

From the counselor-adviser responses, it is clear that a number of factors or characteristics contribute to students from this specific population dropping out of MSU. All five counselor-advisers stated that it is a combination of interrelated factors that forces either Native American, older, or disabled students to quit school. Moreover, the factors are both different and similar for each group within the target population.

Similar to what was found in the two previous chapters, the counselor-advisers note that Indian students must deal with sociological factors upon entering college. One is having to adjust to an environment totally different from that of reservation life. "Culture shock" is the term used to describe what Indian students experience when coming to school. The counselor-advisers indicate that

another sociological factor Indian students must contend with at college is racism. Furthermore, an associate member in this four-person study has found that numerous Native American students at MSU perceive of some of their treatment as racist (Webber, 1990).

Two other problems alluded to in the two previous chapters have also been suggested by the counselor-advisers. Some Indian students have problems budgeting their financial aid money during each quarter at college. They are unaccustomed to handling such a large amount of money at one time. In addition, Indian students often enter college lacking the academic skills necessary to succeed. This means that secondary schools on the reservations are not adequately preparing Indian students for college. (Also see Webber, 1990).

The counselor-advisers indicate further problems experienced by Native American students. One is sociologically-related; the pull of the extended family back on the reservation is a constant distractor for Indian students. This tightly knit unit has provided an important support system since birth. Moreover, the extended family is an important, key feature in Indian culture. Another factor that distracts Indian students once they reach college is the continuous recreation that is available on

campus. Home reservations lack these recreational facilities, and these things are a tempting luxury for Indian students.

The counselor-advisers state that older students must face situational factors in their lives. These are factors which the student chooses to create for her/himself. Older students must divide their time and energy between competing, complex roles of student, family person, financial provider for the household, and housekeeper. These dual responsibilities create stress for the non-traditional college student, sometimes forcing her/him into leaving school. A major problem for older students is having enough money to pay for their education, plus support a family. Returning to college usually requires relinquishing a full-time job, thus, forcing the student to depend on financial aid for survival. Finances are affected further if the older student has a son, daughter, or spouse in college. And non-traditional students often bring a host of unpaid bills with them when returning to school. Another factor older students must consider while attending college is that, oftentimes, their child or children may be having difficulty adjusting to the local school system. This tends to add further stress and detracts from the energy level and time necessary for college studies.

One situational factor adult students must contend with, as noted by the counselor-advisers, is that a marriage partner may also be in college at the same time. If this person quits school, it can be stressful for the other partner who is still in college.

Some older students also tend to have greater difficulty adjusting to an academic environment. For example, they are not very tolerant of perceived professor arrogance or a late financial aid check. Rather than cope with such situations, the older student will often elect to drop out of college.

MSU counselor-advisers indicate that disabled students experience major adjustment problems in their new environment. This university-related situation was also observed in the two previous chapters. Often times the facilities they were accustomed to are not only different, but unavailable to the disabled student. This means that opportunities are either limited or totally lost to this population. As a result, disabled students experience frustration with the college environment.

The counselor-advisers allude to another university-related factor that all students within the target population experience. This factor was also mentioned in the two previous chapters. These students encounter the problem of not receiving their financial aid on time.

Bills need to be paid and a late financial aid check creates major stress.

Other problems indicated by MSU counselor-advisers are related to the individual personalities of some members of the target population. For example, procrastination is a problem for some of these students; they wait too long to seek out support services when problems arise. As a result, minor problems add up and become major barriers. Another personal problem is lack of clear college or career goals; some of these students are not sure why they are attending college. Nor are they certain of what career field to enter upon receiving their college degree.

The counselor-advisers also mention university-related problems experienced by some individuals from the target population. For example, the MSU math department lacks respect for students who are perceived to have little or no math ability. With math being a necessary basic course for all college curriculums, this interpreted lack of respect can create an overwhelming problem for students. Another problem for the target population is that MSU is perceived as failing to effectively educate students to the support services available to the MSU student. For students in trouble, it is the responsibility of the university to reach out and help these students before the problems become too overburdening. Of course, as indicated by the

counselor-advisers, the individual student also has the responsibility of requesting assistance before small problems become major obstacles.

As mentioned earlier, counselor-advisers for the target population indicate that a combination of interrelated problems must occur before a student from this population will drop out of MSU. The amount of stress any of these individuals can handle depends upon each one's ability to cope with the many problems they must contend with while in college. And although it is different for each person, when the breaking point is reached, the student often has little choice but to quit college.

At this point, it is important to note that during the interview process specific recommendations were made by the counselor-advisers for solving the problem of why students from the target population drop out of MSU. The following pages include these recommendations, in their entirety.

Counselor-Adviser Recommendations

Recruitment Style

Along with the "sis-boom-bah" recruitment, we need to tell the reality of college--the pluses and the minuses.

We need to tell students during the recruitment process what's out there waiting for them at college--the good and the bad.

We need to tell students to bring a bicycle, ride the local bus system, or car pool in order to save money so as not to end up financially burdened.

I'd like to see Indian students go out there with recruiters and share their experiences with prospective students--on-the-road Indian students to recruit versus the "rah-rah" type of recruiter.

There needs to be a warning about the distractors at MSU and Bozeman that take students away from study time.

Counselor-Adviser Responsibilities

Advisers need to be fully aware of the support services available to students and then be able to make appropriate referrals.

As counselor-advisers, we need to tell students not to wait on a little thing [problem]. It's the little things that build up to one giant explosion.

We shouldn't tell students any one course is difficult. It's different for each student.

I tell students to change [adjust] a little each day in order to cope with school.

Advisers need to be less time-constrained. Students see this as not being interested in students.

A little awareness on the part of counselor-advisers goes a long way for helping students.

The object is to make them independent versus becoming dependent.

Allowing the privacy of a phone call home.

I have an open-door policy. I also loan [small amounts] of money to students who are waiting for their financial aid checks.

Education is a game of inches. A student must handle things in bits and pieces or the inches add up to yards. Then the student gets behind in classes.

I tell students that they must discipline themselves to prepare for class a little each night in order to succeed in school.

Mentoring Process

Indian students' expectations of extended family will follow them to MSU. They must realize that (1) extended

family isn't here, and (2) they may not be aware of the community support that's here. They know the system at home on the reservation, but not here at MSU. Therefore, the mentoring process needs to be created where one faculty or staff person mentors two Native American students. How long should the process go on? Until we get third-generation Indian students coming to college who can take care of themselves.

We must be mindful that any mentoring relationship at MSU must develop and flourish, naturally.

We cannot hold their hand too long. For example: "If I give you a fish, you only eat for one day; but if I teach you to fish, you eat for a lifetime."

Students' Responsibilities

Non-traditional students need to educate the campus as to their special needs. The rest of us need to be sensitive and respond actively to these needs.

The individual must want it [education], want to earn it, and understand why they want it. It matters not who tells them.

Students must ask each other why they aren't cutting it. They must challenge themselves and each other to succeed in school. For example, the student leaders of the Indian Club must challenge each other. And they must be good role models. Otherwise, the club is a detriment to the students.

Other

Keep Native American students from going home every weekend. Try to get them involved in activities at MSU.

The longer we can keep them [Indian students] here, like two quarters, the easier it is to retain them--if they can just tough it out.

Indian students need to be empowered so they can survive in school. However, what's the long-term effect on their culture when this happens?

We need a cash system of financial aid for the first two quarters and give only a cash allowance each week until the student can manage his/her money effectively.

The MSU student support service programs need to work together in order to meet the complex needs of this student population.

In summarizing the counselor-adviser responses, a number of recommendations have been presented that I feel are valuable for assisting the ABC program in retaining students from the target population. Similar to what has been presented in the two previous chapters, analysis of the counselor-advisers' responses suggests that Indian students need access to a Native American multicultural instructor/ counselor at MSU. This individual needs to (a) be aware of the multiple problems Indian students face (sociological and university-related), (b) assist them with securing an "extended family" on campus, and (c) familiarize herself/ himself with all of the campus-based support services that are available to Indian students.

The data here also suggests that peer tutors/counselors are needed to assist the target population. These individuals need to make students aware of (a) the realities of attending college and the multitude of factors that distract the student, (b) the support services on campus which are available to these students, and (c) how quickly little problems can become major barriers, with the possible end result of dropping out of college as a means of coping.

Another need suggested by the counselor-adviser data is that of hiring a financial counselor to assist students from the target population with finance-related problems. According to numerous sources throughout the previous chapters, it is clear that financial difficulty is the primary reason students from the target population, as well as the overall student body, drop out of college.

Other recommendations are suggested by the counselor-advisers whom I interviewed. One is that all MSU advisers need to be aware of the support services available to students from both the target population and general student body at MSU. When an MSU adviser realizes he/she cannot effectively assist or advise a student, the adviser must be able to refer the student to someone who can accomplish this task. Another, more important recommendation is for all MSU student support service programs serving the target population to cooperate and work together so the complex needs of this group of students are effectively satisfied. This requires a networking system with one specific department or support service program serving as the central control base.

CHAPTER NINE

RETENTION AS PERCEIVED BY THE TARGET POPULATION

In spring 1990 14 open-ended interviews were conducted with Native American, older, and disabled students. Those interviewed were former participants of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program who had dropped out of MSU. The purpose of the interviews was to discover the participants' reasons for leaving the university. Collected data will be compared with that of previous chapters for the purpose of providing the ABC program with pertinent and valuable information regarding retention of its student clients.

It is important to note that numerous difficulties were encountered in securing a valid list of ABC clients who had dropped out of MSU so that the interviews could be conducted. A Native American Studies professor at MSU--who also counsels Indian students--and an ABC counselor provided this author with a list of students whom the counselors identified as having dropped out of MSU in 1988-89. Of the 54 Native American students served by ABC, 15 were identified by the two counselors as having left the university in 1988-89. In addition, the counselors identified 15 out of 221 older, ABC student clients as

having dropped out. They also indicated that 7 of 19 disabled clients had left MSU in 1988-89 (Voyich and Davis, 1990). Thus, the two counselors identified and listed 37 students who had dropped out of MSU.

When an attempt was made to confirm this list with the ABC director, she crossed out 11 names. The director stated that, according to her records, these students were still in school. However, when an attempt was made to contact and interview some of the students the ABC director had indicated were still in school, two respondents stated they had dropped out of MSU during the 1988-89 school year. Meanwhile, an associate member of this four-person study of the ABC program had requested from ABC the names of Native American student clients to interview for the purpose of collecting data for her part of the study. She discovered that 10 of 36 identified students were not in school during spring quarter 1990. According to the ABC roster taken from MSU registration information in winter quarter 1990, all 36 Indian students were in school at that time (Webber, 1990).

Further problems were encountered in securing telephone numbers from the ABC program of those clients identified as having dropped out of MSU. ABC did not have an updated phone list of these students. Thirty-five long-distance telephone calls were made in an effort to track

down and interview 10 of the identified dropouts. (To say the least, this method of interviewing began to get expensive.) Fortunately, ABC provided telephone numbers of its clients known to be living in the local area. However, when an effort was made to contact and interview a number of local students, the result was a recorded message stating these telephone numbers were no longer in service. Despite this additional setback, four of the local ABC clients who had dropped out of the university were contacted and interviewed--for a total of 14 client interviews.

These inconsistencies suggest that (1) there is a need for a better system for tracking ABC clients once they leave MSU, or simply being certain or knowing when someone drops out of the university; and (2) a retention problem exists, at least, for Native American clients of ABC (10 lost in less than two quarters). Despite these difficulties, 14 open-ended interviews were conducted; 6 Native American, 6 older, and 2 disabled students were successfully contacted by telephone.

During each interview, two open-ended questions were asked of each respondent: (1) What were the factors contributing to your leaving MSU? (2) What recommendations do you have for the ABC program staff that you feel may

help them to improve their services to Native American, older, and disabled students at MSU?

Those students contacted were openly responsive to the interview process. In fact, many stated that they were pleased that somebody from MSU had contacted them to do follow-up. Upon completion of the interviews, student responses were documented and sorted according to category and theme. It was also noted which target group gave a particular response for the purpose of providing more specific data for performing the final analysis and making final recommendations in this paper. (NA) indicates Native American, (O) stands for older student, and (D) indicates disabled student. Accordingly, the following pages include, in their entirety, the ABC student clients' responses.

Responses to Question #1

Financial Reasons

Both my husband and I had to leave MSU because of financial problems. I did quit first and go back to work, but it wasn't enough money to support the family (NA).

It was strictly financial. I had my family with me. My wife had to quit school and support the family, but it wasn't enough. We came up short of funds (NA).

My husband and I dropped out because of financial difficulties. Our financial aid records got mixed up somewhere and we didn't receive aid until our third quarter at MSU. By then, we were having financial problems and had arranged to leave MSU. We have two kids to support. We felt it was to personal to tell just anybody. We also believed it would

straighten out. We borrowed money for two quarters and went into debt to stay in school (NA).

For financial reasons--my wife's and my financial records got lost in the shuffle, so we didn't receive aid until our third quarter in school. We were forced to borrow money for the first two quarters in order to stay at MSU. By the time our financial aid did come through for our third quarter, we had already made arrangements to leave MSU and Bozeman. We kept our financial problems to ourselves, hoping it would work itself out. But we finally went to ABC for help (NA).

I had financial difficulties. I'm a contractor for water and sewer mains. My work had to come before school, because I have a family to support. They were in Billings while I was at MSU. I went home every weekend; if they had been with me, it would have been easier (O).

I had financial problems. My grandmother was sick and I was traveling back forth to school, so I couldn't take the jobs I could have had. So, I didn't have the money for school. My GI Bill ran also ran out. I even sold my snowmobile for money for school. When I go back to school, I want to have the enough money; I don't want to end up in debt (O).

Medical/Financial Reasons

Medical reasons, the first time. Since then I've returned and dropped out again for financial reasons. My purse and \$2600 worth of financial aid money were stolen while shopping at Buttrey's, so I became financially burdened. Now, I owe money on the loan--but I don't have it. I'm also a single parent and on Worker's Compensation and AFDC [Aid For Dependent Children]--and that doesn't cover a lot (O).

I was broke. I have a family to raise. I have a daughter in college, too. I was injured on the job for a second time; I needed surgery and may need it twice more. All of these factors contributed to my dropping out of school (D).

Medical/Personal Reasons

Medical situation: I had surgery over spring break. I'll be back [in school] summer quarter [1990] (O).

I wasn't able to pass the classes in my curriculum (Industrial Management Engineering). ABC didn't have the technical tutors for me. I'm also a manic-depressive and

had to leave school to be hospitalized. I also wasn't made aware of what student support services existed at MSU or the ones for which I could qualify (D).

I got sick too often, so I got behind in my schoolwork. I was also a member of the Indian Club, but I felt there was too much hate going around there. I do plan to go back to school at MSU in fall 1990, but not participate in the Indian Club (NA).

Tutor-Related

I was frustrated with the tutor situation. I felt like the tutor I had wasn't interested in helping me. I also had a personal problem going on at the same time. The tutor problem was just one more thing I had to deal with; once it fell through, that was enough for me (NA).

Personal Problems

I'm going through a court case regarding child custody. I was also being pulled by friends on the reservation; I didn't feel I had a support system at MSU. A week before finals, I went back to my reservation for awhile to straighten things out. When I returned [to MSU], nobody seemed willing to help me. I made the effort to return, but I didn't feel I was helped when I really needed it (NA).

Race-Related

It wasn't the program. I had personal problems on campus; I experienced racial discrimination from students and an RA [resident assistant] in my hall. I also had personal problems going on at home on the reservation. It all added up and I couldn't handle it, so I quit (NA).

Responses to Question #2

Expand Services

ABC would be helpful if they had tutors for the technical [engineering] courses. I was told there weren't enough engineering students looking for tutor assistance through ABC (D).

The Director was personally helpful [not related to ABC program] and this kept my wife and I in school longer. But I was hoping ABC would give me a referral for a job so we

could stay in school until graduation. We only received a brochure. I pictured ABC as being more helpful to older students. They seemed to go all out for disabled students, but not for older students (NA).

When my husband and I went to ABC for help in getting jobs either on campus or in Bozeman, we were handed a brochure. I think they need to be able to refer older students (with families) for employment--be a job referral agency, too (NA).

I don't want a baby-sitter, but there are times when I really do need someone there. I think ABC is understaffed (NA).

ABC staff and counselors need to be unbiased when dealing with each individual student. There also needs to be more maintenance and follow-up of ABC clients. For example, call the client once in a while just to let him/her know that, "We're here if you need us" (NA).

ABC could expand their ideas for convenient classes for single parents throughout all of MSU. Also if they could expand their tutoring services for more of our [targeted group's] classes (O).

Financial Counseling

ABC was very helpful. They could help me with my appeal for financial aid when I return to MSU in fall 1990 (NA).

I think ABC was excellent at explaining the curriculum I was going into. They were very sensitive to my needs. However, if ABC could help me to straighten out my financial aid predicament, I would go back to school. Help (O)!

Orientation

Before contacting ABC and Dan Voyich, my husband and I had no idea what financial resources were available. I suggest that mention be made in all MSU orientation literature that ABC is available to Indians, older students, and disabled students (NA).

Maybe ABC could mention in all MSU orientation literature that their services are available to Native American, older, and disabled students at MSU (NA).

Race-Related

I needed a Native American tutor; I would have felt more comfortable (NA).

ABC could keep a watchful eye out for racist RA's [resident hall assistants] and do something to get rid of them (NA).

Tutor-Related

Make sure that tutors are committed to helping any student (NA).

I really like the ABC program; they came to bat for me when I had problems in classes. They also helped me to get over the anxiety of returning to school as an older student. I do have one suggestion: Ask the tutors not to smoke and blow it in the faces of the students they are helping (O).

Other

Get MSU to drop tuition rates and get staff and faculty to handle students like humans instead of herded cows (O).

ABC did a fine, professional job. I don't know of anything they could have done to help my situation (D).

Interviewed respondents indicated that financial problems are one reason they dropped out of MSU. However, the students related that additional factors served to deplete their time and energy and this also caused them to leave school. This fact was mentioned in the previous chapter; counselor-advisers stated that a combination of interrelated factors cause students from the target population to drop out of school.

The majority of the clients interviewed also indicated that they did everything in their power to overcome their financial burden and remain in school. One student went as far as to sell his snowmobile. Nevertheless, none of these

students could survive the multiple stresses, so they chose to drop out of MSU as a means of coping with the burden.

Financial difficulty was also mentioned in previous chapters in this paper as a major reason students from the target population drop out of college. In fact, it was stressed that this problem is a primary reason students from not only the target population but the overall student body drop out of college. Feedback of this sort from the ABC clientele suggests further need for a financial counselor in the ABC program.

Several of those interviewed reported that medical and personal reasons, together, forced them to drop out of MSU. For example, the student with the manic-depressive medical condition was experiencing a number of problems all at the same time. And while there is no proof that these stressors led to his being hospitalized, it is plausible to suggest that with effective assistance through ABC, this student may not have experienced so many problems at one time. In the previous chapter, one of the counselor-advisers stated that little problems need to be resolved before they add up to one giant explosion. And again, the situation just mentioned is another example of how a combination of interrelated factors causes a student to drop out of MSU. It seems reasonable to suggest that it could be beneficial if somebody were to help students

resolve their minor problems before these problems become major obstacles, thus forcing the students to leave the university.

Other examples of interrelated problems are suggested by Native American respondents claiming that a number of personal problems occurring at the same time led to their leaving MSU. Given the relative occurrence of interrelated problems and numerous minor problems that can become major, it is my opinion that it is important for somebody to assist these students with resolving their problems before these problems become part of an overwhelming burden which causes an ABC client to quit school.

Other problems mentioned by the Native American students who I interviewed suggest further needs. For example, one Indian student stated that he would have felt more comfortable if his tutor had been a Native American. This suggests the need for Native American (peer) tutors in the ABC program. Given the Indian student who was experiencing problems securing a support system at MSU, it may be useful for ABC to consider conducting further outreach for the purpose of linking these students with an existing support system at MSU. Two systems available to Indian students are the MSU Indian Club and the American Indians in Science and Engineering Society (AISES); or, perhaps a special ABC support group should be organized to assist MSU

Indian students. However, for the Indian student who perceived that he had experienced racism at MSU, ABC is limited in its ability to remedy this sociologically-related problem. As indicated in previous chapters, racism is a pervasive problem in American society.

During the interviews, ABC clients who had dropped out of MSU also made recommendations as to how the ABC program could improve its services and, as a result, increase retention of its clients. Respondents informed me that ABC needs to expand its services; this fact was stressed by other ABC clients whose responses are included in Part I of this paper. Furthermore, ABC tutors are needed for clients enrolled in the technical (engineering) classes at MSU. The fact that relatively few ABC clients take engineering courses at MSU is no reason that ABC should not have tutors for students taking such technical classes.

Further outreach is another area where ABC can improve its services, according to its clients. Interviewed students felt that the program needs to aggressively seek out and discover how prospective clients are getting along both academically and in their personal lives. This recommendation was also suggested by the counselor-advisers in the previous chapter. In effect, support service programs need to make an extroverted effort to seek out, discover, and resolve small problems before they become

major barriers or obstacles for students. Moreover, ABC might consider soliciting the grade reports of its student clients, on a regular basis, for the purpose of discovering how the students are getting along academically. In this manner, the program could resolve minor academic problems of the ABC clients before these problems become monumental obstructions which, in the end, cause these students to drop out of MSU.

Another client interviewed recommended that ABC follow up on its participants who drop out of MSU. This is a major contention in this paper. As mentioned earlier, a number of those contacted stated that they were happy to hear from somebody at MSU even though they had dropped out and left the area. This lends credence to the suggestion that follow-up interviews should be conducted to discover why clients from the target population drop out of MSU. Continued follow-up of this sort would provide ABC with useful information for increasing retention.

Interviewed clients also suggested that ABC advertise its services more in MSU orientation literature. These individuals indicated that they needed assistance but did not know of the available support service programs at MSU such as ABC. By the time these students discovered ABC's services, it was too late. As indicated earlier in this paper, this suggests the need for further outreach to be

conducted for the purpose of helping students from the target population before their academic and/or personal problems become too overwhelming and the end result is dropping out of MSU.

Other recommendations for ABC program improvement made by interviewees relate to tutorial needs. For example, one Indian student indicated that ABC needs Native American (peer) tutors to work with Indian clients. This information suggests the need for peer tutors/counselors to work with the target population. Another Native American client recommended that ABC follow up on its tutors to make sure these individuals are effectively assisting ABC clients who use this service. This information coincides with previous data suggesting that a need exists for further follow-up to be conducted on all of ABC's participants.

One final recommendation made by an Indian student was for the ABC staff to alert themselves to instances of perceived racial discrimination toward Indian students at MSU. As indicated earlier, such sociological problems may be largely out of the hands of the ABC program.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Upon examining the retention success of the Advance By Choice (ABC) program, I discovered that the director and staff do not compile retention data. The United States Department of Education (ABC's funding source) does not require that ABC collect and report information as to how many of its student clients drop out of MSU. Nor is the program accountable for documenting the reasons why ABC participants leave the university. In this regard, it was difficult to measure the extent of ABC's success in retaining its student clients. Nevertheless, a number of important discoveries have been made as a result of this study.

It is apparent that retention is a universal problem for higher education institutions, including MSU. Various academic studies and national/regional surveys have been conducted on retention for the purpose of revealing reasons why students from the target population drop out of college. And, locally, numerous retention studies have been conducted at MSU for the purpose of discovering why

students from both the target population and the overall student body leave the university.

Through five open-ended interviews conducted with MSU counselor-advisers who work with the target population, reasons were also uncovered why students from the target population drop out of MSU. And, through 14 open-ended telephone interviews conducted with Native American, older, and disabled ABC clients who had dropped out of MSU, direct feedback was received as to why these students left the university. Furthermore, a number of similar factors were discovered as reasons students from the target population drop out of college. More importantly, these factors directly correlate with reasons why ABC clients drop out of MSU. Accordingly, in the remainder of this chapter I will summarize the primary findings and conclusions of the study and provide recommendations to ABC regarding increased retention of its student client population.

Students from the ABC target population drop out of MSU due to a combination of interrelated reasons. These reasons are both similar and different for each subgroup within the target population. Nonetheless, as indicated by ABC clients interviewed, each problem adds to their stress level until, finally, the student can no longer cope. Unfortunately, the end result for the student is quitting school. The five MSU counselor-advisers whom I interviewed

also stressed that combinations of interrelated factors cause Native American, older, and disabled students to drop out of MSU. Accordingly, the following is a categorization of these interrelated factors and/or reasons.

Financial

ABC clients drop out of MSU due to financial problems. This is also the primary reasons students from MSU's overall student body quit school.

Personal

Personality traits of some members of the target population also contribute to dropout rates. Some students will procrastinate, thus waiting too long to seek out help when problems arise. This creates a situation where minor problems become overwhelming obstacles. Other students lack clear college goals and some are unsure of the career field they will enter after securing their MSU degree. Some older students have a low tolerance level and will not put up with perceived mistreatment at MSU.

University-Related

ABC clients perceive inappropriate academic advising as a reason for dropping out of MSU. In effect, the advisement needs of the target population are quite different from those of traditional students on campus. Program participants also perceive that there is no central

office at MSU to assist them with either securing quality day care at an affordable price for their pre-school children, securing employment to pay for college plus support a family and household, or discovering the available student support service programs on campus.

Support Systems

Indian students drop out because they perceive that no support system exists at MSU similar to their extended family back on the reservation. Extended family support is critical to the success of Indian students. Indian students also drop out of MSU because they perceive that non-Indian tutors cannot identify with their culture and, therefore, cannot relate to their academic needs. One further factor affecting the retention of Indian students is their perception that there are insufficient programs on campus to help them maintain their cultural heritage. The programs that do exist are perceived as treating all Indians alike when, in reality, tribes are quite diverse in language, culture, and tradition.

Sociologically-Related

Transition and adjustment difficulties cause students from ABC's client population to drop out of MSU. Indian students who enter MSU experience a lifestyle different from that of the home reservation. Native American

interviewees explained to an associate member of this four-person study that MSU culture does not match that of Indian culture (Webber, 1990). Older students who return to MSU after having been out of college for a number of years encounter a lifestyle different from that of being a full-time wage earner and family person. For disabled students, coming to MSU means having to adjust to either different, limited, or no facilities whatsoever to satisfy their special needs.

A further reason that ABC clients drop out is connected to family. For the Indian student, family takes priority over everything else because this close-knit support system is an important part of the culture and tradition of the student. Therefore, when a family member back on the reservation becomes critically ill or passes away, the Indian student returns home because of cultural ties to her/his family. All else is dropped, including attending classes. Older and disabled students are also affected adversely by family situations. A spouse dropping out of MSU or a child having difficulty in the local school system can place added stress on the older or disabled student, even to the point of causing her/him to quit college.

ABC Indian clients experience cultural obstacles that affect their retention. For example, these students drop

out of MSU due to their perception that racism exists on campus. One associate member of this four-person study indicates that an ABC instructor she interviewed perceives that racism toward Indians at MSU exists due to either a lack of knowledge or ignorance about Native American culture. The instructor stressed the importance of informing and educating Indian students as to why racial discrimination exists (Trujillo, 1990). Another associate member of this study discovered that Native American students perceive that racial discrimination exists within the sociology department at the university (Webber, 1990).

A further distractor for Indian students who come to MSU is the availability of the multiple recreational opportunities on campus. These opportunities are considered a luxury for those Indian students who have not been exposed to such opportunities on their respective reservations. And some students are unable to discipline themselves regarding moderate use of MSU's numerous forms of recreation.

It is clear a number of reasons contribute to Native American, older, and disabled clients dropping out of MSU. And the reasons are both similar and different for each subgroup within the target population. Nevertheless, this study also reveals pertinent information for the purpose of providing the ABC program with valuable recommendations concerning retention of its student clients.

Recommendations

Based upon the needs discovered in this study, several recommendations are being made. These recommendations follow in prioritized order. The criteria used to prioritize these recommendations included greatest potential for increasing retention, number of clients served, and feasibility of implementation, particularly cost.

1. Maintain data and records as to how many of its clients drop out of MSU and for what reasons. As noted earlier in this paper, numerous problems were encountered in trying to secure a valid list of ABC clients for the purpose of conducting open-ended interviews. To summarize, there were inconsistencies regarding which program participants had or had not left MSU. Another problem encountered was securing reliable telephone numbers of these same students, also for the purpose of conducting the interviews.

In this regard, it must be noted that ABC's funding source (United States Department of Education) does not require the program to maintain records of this nature. Nevertheless, I think it would be a sound management practice for the program to conduct follow-up on ABC clients who drop out of MSU for the purpose of discovering the reasons why students from the target population leave

school. According to North Dakota State University's retention study, "the departure of one student who, for whatever reason, should not have left could be viewed as a situation to be corrected" (Student Retention Task Force, 1983:26).

It is clear from the following statement in the "Summary Site Visit Report" that ABC has the means for effectively tracking its clients:

Another strength of the [ABC] project is the extensive utilization of computers in record keeping, tracking of student progress and research projects designed to develop statistical data on the performance of project participants.... In addition, the project has a computer terminal which provides access to the institutional data base in the university main frame computers. This information is used effectively in counseling, advising and monitoring student progress (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:2).

In my opinion, ABC might consider using this system for the purpose of compiling data as to its student clients who drop out of MSU and the reasons these individuals leave the university. Additionally, since ABC has access to the institution's data base, information could be solicited from this resource for the purpose of determining which ABC clients have dropped out of MSU.

In my opinion, other information could be added to ABC's existing computer system. During the initial interview of prospective ABC participants, the interviewer could request more than one telephone number and address from the

student applicant. Due to the problems encountered in attempting to contact interview prospects by phone, I think that securing more than one telephone number and address from each new applicant may resolve these problems when future attempts are made of this nature. Moreover, in my opinion, the telephone numbers and addresses need to be both permanent and pertinent. In other words, phone numbers and addresses need to be requested from, for example, both the permanent place of employment and/or residence of a parent/guardian and a close relative.

Upon securing such information, someone in the ABC office could enter it into the existing computer, in a data base set up specifically for compiling this data. In this manner, when future attempts were made for the purpose of conducting follow-up on ABC clients who had dropped out of MSU, more than one contact would be available for tracking the whereabouts of the client.

2. Since ABC has the capability to regularly track the progress of its student clients who attend MSU, the program might consider utilizing this information as a warning system to detect students who are experiencing academic difficulty.

The table below shows the GPA's of the 14 ABC clients interviewed for Part II of this study. Names were not used for reasons of confidentiality. The information in

Table 2. GPA Information for 14 ABC Clients Interviewed.

Student	Last Quarter GPA Available	Last Quarter GPA	Cumulative GPA
1.	Spring 1989	2.0	2.57
2.	Fall 1989	2.667	3.0
3.	Spring 1989	2.0	2.101
4.	Spring 1989	2.22	2.57
5.	Spring 1989	1.538	0.3916
6.	Fall 1989	2.0	2.172
7.	Winter 1989	0.0	susp.
8.	Spring 1989	Univ. withdraw	
	Fall 1988	2.333	1.44
9.	Winter 1989	3.0	2.86
10.	Spring 1989	1.23	2.0
11.	Summer 1989	0.0	2.0
			susp.
12.	Spring 1989	1.091	1.667
13.	Winter 1989	0.833	1.087
14.	Winter 1989	1.75	1.729

parenthesis indicates the last time the student had a GPA on record at MSU. The first column of numbers with decimals represents quarter GPA's, while the last column represents cumulative GPA's of the students.

When analyzing the GPA data, it is clear that a number of these students were experiencing academic difficulty at MSU. According to one of MSU's Political Science professors whom I interviewed, either a low GPA (under 2.0) or a drop in a student's GPA signals that the individual is experiencing problems somewhere in her/his academic or personal life (Haines, 1990).

ABC should also consider utilizing its computer capability to track the progress of student clients for the purpose of ascertaining those who are in academic trouble. GPA data should be collected quarterly and all those experiencing academic difficulty should be contacted by ABC for the purpose of determining the problem areas and offering specific assistance.

3. Develop a formal committee of members from MSU departments serving Native American, older, and disabled students for the purpose of (1) working cooperatively on maintaining updated records of the target population, (2) acting as an information exchange center on these same students, and (3) conducting cooperative outreach on students from the target population who are not doing well at MSU, as well as those who drop out. As a result, this committee may be able to resolve some of the problems that appear to be causing students to drop out of MSU.

The committee may also satisfy the need for conducting outreach on students from the target population who are experiencing academic and personal problems. With this information available to the committee, someone could make contact with and assist these students who are in trouble.

Another need that could be satisfied by this committee is to collect further data as to how many students from the

target population are dropping out of MSU and for what reasons. This information could be relayed to the ABC office to be entered into the program's computer system. As a result of this committee, the time and energy it would take to compile and update such information could be shared among a number of MSU departments and support service programs which are currently serving the target population. Moreover, a final result might be a consistent method for keeping records on the targeted group.

4. Develop and implement a program whereby peer counselors assist new, incoming clients in dealing with the complexities of their lives while attending MSU. It is my contention that Native American, older, and disabled students--who are currently experiencing and coping with life's complexities while at school--can better identify with new, incoming students from this same population. The key here is immediate identity.

In this regard, ABC might consider incorporating a "Buddy System" and making it available to new, incoming clients. In effect, new clients would be offered the opportunity to pair up with an individual who has some experience with life as either a Native American, older, or disabled college student. One important factor to consider is that a diverse group of "buddies" must be employed by the program. Examples include, but are not limited to,

Native American females who are single parents, older students with or without families, and either Native American or older, disabled students with or without families. The following specifics further explain how the "Buddy System" might operate:

1. Establish a list of 30 ABC "buddies." These individuals need to be familiar with the university as a whole. Accordingly, "buddies" must be interviewed and selected in a manner similar to hiring individuals for permanent employment positions.
2. Inform new, incoming students that the "Buddy System" exists, recommend that these students utilize the service, and allow them the freedom to make the choice.
3. Reimburse the "buddies" for their time and efforts. Paid "buddies" will be utilized more effectively than volunteer "buddies."
4. Pay the "buddies" \$4.00/hour at a maximum of 10 hours per week.
5. If a "buddy" can also fulfill the duties of a tutor, then pay her/him accordingly.
6. Keep the "buddy" and new ABC client relationship intact until the new student is comfortable with being on her/his own at MSU.
7. Maintain ongoing contact with "buddies" and new students through regular meetings with both groups. The purpose of the meetings is to discover both positive and negative feedback from all "buddies" and participants.
8. Establish a means for evaluating, on a regular basis, the effectiveness of each participating "buddy." In this regard, it is important to receive feedback from both the "buddy" and new ABC client with whom he/she is assisting.

9. Establish an ongoing system for evaluating the success of the entire "buddy" program. The key here is using both quantitative and qualitative information/results. For example, if an ABC client has been requesting a number of "buddy" changes, this may indicate that a problem exists.

In my opinion, the "Buddy System" could resolve further problems that cause ABC clients to drop out of MSU. "Buddies" could provide assistance with academically advising students from the target population program. Since the "buddies" have experience with MSU's offerings, they could share this knowledge with new, incoming ABC clients.

The "buddies" might also serve as advisers to students regarding factors which may negatively impact these new students while attending MSU. Examples mentioned earlier in this paper include, but are not limited to, lack of clear academic goals, not knowing which career field to enter after receiving the MSU degree, the multiple recreational opportunities available on campus, and personal traits like procrastination and a low tolerance level.

"Buddies" could also serve as outreach persons for the ABC program. In other words, these individuals could seek out new incoming students and let them know what support services are available to them in addition to ABC.

Funding for the "Buddy System" could be solicited from the U.S. Department of Education by submitting a grant proposal. It is noted that, since 1978, ABC's director has been very successful in securing grant monies for the program's continued existence.

5. Hire a Native American multicultural instructor/counselor to serve its Indian clients. This person could help Indian students by teaching ABC classes aimed at maintaining the students' cultural heritage and language. It would also be important for the instructor to familiarize herself/himself to the diversity of Indian cultures, traditions, and languages that Indian students bring with them to MSU. This new ABC staff person needs to be a Native American for the purpose of identifying with Indian clients.

Counseling is another area in which the multicultural instructor/counselor could help ABC's Indian clients. When problems, issues, and concerns arise for Native American clients, this new ABC staff person would be available to assist these students. Moreover, perhaps this new ABC staff person could intervene with professors who do not understand the cultural problems faced by Native American students.

The instructor/counselor could also assist in doing outreach for the purpose of discovering how ABC's Indian

clients are getting along both academically and in their personal lives. One final area in which this new ABC staff person could help Native Americans is in conducting referrals for these students. If the multicultural counselor/instructor came to the conclusion that somebody on campus, other than ABC, could assist the Indian client, then he/she could refer the student to another support service program or individual.

6. Hire Native American tutors to assist the program's Indian clients. As mentioned in previous chapters, Indian students need tutors with whom they can identify and relate, culturally as well as academically. ABC tutors are also needed for student clients who are enrolled in technical (engineering) courses at MSU.

7. Add a financial counselor to the ABC staff. The following statement is taken from the "Summary Site Visit Report":

Several students indicated during exit interviews that they were dropping out of the institution due to a lack of student financial aid. These students incurred personal financial burdens substantially above the educational costs involved in attending the institution (U.S. Department of Education, 1990:5).

Moreover, financial problems have been shown to be a major reason students from the target population drop out of MSU. A financial counselor could help ABC clients with developing a budget so these students do not spend above

and beyond their financial limits. This new ABC staff person could also assist program participants with discovering sources of available financial assistance in addition to that provided by MSU.

The financial counselor could also assist ABC clients in securing employment in the local area so these students could pay for their education and, in the event they have one, support their family. In effect, the new ABC staff person could satisfy the need for someone to perform job referral duties.

8. Assist student clients--who have children--with securing quality day care in the local area. As indicated earlier in this paper, another reason students from the target population drop out of MSU is because they lack the resources for securing quality day care for their children. Another possibility is for ABC to consider establishing their own day care services by trying to secure the necessary space from MSU. And ABC clients needing day care services could take turns with working shifts as a means of caring for their children.

9. Advertise its services through MSU's orientation literature. This could serve as another form of outreach to new and returning students who represent the target population, letting them know that ABC's support services exist at MSU.

10. In my opinion, the ABC director and staff need to constantly be aware of the fact that each of their clients is an individual living a complex life. And each little problem that comes up in the lives of these individuals needs to be resolved as soon as possible before the problem becomes too multidimensional and overwhelming for the person. In the words of one of the MSU counselor-advisers interviewed, "we need to tell students not to wait on a little thing. It's the little things that build up to one giant explosion." The counselor-adviser further states that "[a] little awareness on the part of counselor-advisers goes a long way for helping students" (Voyich, 1990).

In closing, it should be noted that ABC may be limited in its efforts to resolve some situations that cause students from its client population to leave MSU. For example, ABC has no control over the fact that older and disabled students have chosen, of their own free will, to get married, raise a family, and then return to the university for the purpose of securing an education without sufficient funds to do so readily. However, all of these factors result in stress for older and disabled students who have elected to place themselves in this situation. More importantly, this stress makes it difficult for these students to succeed at MSU.

ABC also has little or no control over the limited accessibility that disabled students experience at MSU. This problem is one of campus design and construction. However, the problem does create a major obstacle for disabled students who also wish to succeed at MSU.

In my opinion, another situation ABC has no control over is the perception of racism on the part of Native American clients. Proving racism can be elusive, and solving racism, even when it is overt, is still problematic. Nevertheless, the pervasiveness of racism in American culture and its perception as a problem at MSU by Native Americans can pose retention problems.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
FACTSHEET



* ELIGIBILITY *

Advance By Choice is funded by a grant through the Department of Education. Our application process determines eligibility. A student must meet one of following criteria:

First Generation - neither of the student's parents nor guardian had a Bachelor's degree.

Low Income - verification of taxable income is necessary by submitting a copy of the previous tax year's 1040/1040A/1040EZ forms.

Physically Disabled - this includes hidden and learning disabilities.

* COURSE OFFERINGS *

English 001, 002, 003: These classes are geared toward building writing competencies within a small class setting.

Math 005: Weekly lectures and individual aid supplement the TAC format of Math 010, 011, 012, and 140.

The above courses are pass/fail and require a restricted entry card.

ADVANCE BY CHOICE
STRAND UNION BUILDING
Room 146 994-4541

* STUDY SKILLS *

Workshops - The ABC Study Skills coordinator offers several compact workshops dealing with the most essential study skills.

Videotapes covering study skills topics are available and may be checked out at the ABC office for viewing at the Library.

Target Session Tapes audio cassettes and accompanying workbooks, each focusing on a specific study skill, are available in the ABC office.

* COUNSELING *

ABC counselors are available to assist students with career, academic or personal concerns.

* TUTORING *

Individual and group tutoring are available in many undergraduate classes.

* DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES *

ABC closely coordinates services with MSU's Disabled Student Services office for students in need of special equipment or assistance.

* OTHER ABC SERVICES *

- Diagnostic testing in English, Math and study skills.
- Test Analysis
- Study Groups
- Assistance with Financial Aid Forms
- Referrals to university and community resources.

A Department of Education Special Services Project within the Division of Student Affairs and Services

APPENDIX B
TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

TUTORING QUESTIONNAIRE

If you are interested in receiving a tutor through the ABC program, please complete this form and sign it.

Name _____ Date _____

Are you currently enrolled in the Advance By Choice program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

For which course are you requesting tutoring? _____

What grade are you presently earning in the course? _____

Have you had all the necessary prerequisites? ☐ Yes ☐ No

When did you take the prerequisite courses? _____

At MSU ☐ Yes ☐ No

What grades did you receive in the prerequisite courses? _____

ABC WILL NOT TUTOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE COURSE PREREQUISITES (D's are not considered passing).

Have you discussed the trouble you are having in this course with your instructor?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you inquired about help sessions or review sessions which the instructor may be offering? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you presently a member of a study group for this course? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How would you describe the problems you are having with this course?

How many hours per week do you study for this course? _____

* * *

Please make a check next to any of the following ABC Study Skills Workshops you have either attended or listened to on cassette:

☐ Reading Textbooks & Remembering What You've Read

☐ Taking Notes & Listening in Lectures

☐ Taking Tests & Controlling Test Anxiety

☐ Beating the Time Crunch

☐ Preparing for Final Exams

Signature

APPENDIX C
FORMAT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS

FORMAT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWS

- Interaction I: Briefly explain the purpose of the project. Follow this with:
- "Is there anything you would like to know right now about me (us) and my (our) involvement in this project?"
- Interaction II: Review and obtain agreement with ground rules for the interview (see attached).
- Interaction III: Pose the following questions (or some general adaptation of the following form of questions):
1. Focussing your attention on your position in the program, what would you say are the things that are helping you be as effective as you are?
 2. What is keeping you from being more effective in your position here?
 3. Letting your imagination run free, if you could do anything you wanted to about your situation here, what would you want to do?
- Interaction IV: Any further comments, questions, or afterthoughts?
- Interaction V: Thanks for your cooperation.

PROVISIONS AND GROUND RULES FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEWING

Introduce this with a statement to the effect that "I'd like to go over the ground rules we are using for these interviews and see if they are acceptable to you."

1. First, about the type of data we will be gathering: I will ask you three open ended and general questions that are stated in the same way for everyone who is interviewed. I will record, as closely as I can, your exact verbatim response to these questions. You may interpret the questions as you wish and answer them in any way you like. My role is only to record your response. In order to check the accuracy of what I am recording from you, I will frequently say it back to you so that you can see if what I am getting down is what you wish to say.

2. What we will do with the data after we complete all the interviews is to group the responses according to what appear to be common themes in what people have said in response to the questions. We will then sort the categorization of responses into concerns and issue areas. We will not be analyzing or interpreting the responses in any way. The class purpose of our project is to give us experience in conducting open ended interviews and to conduct background research necessary for the development of evaluation designs.

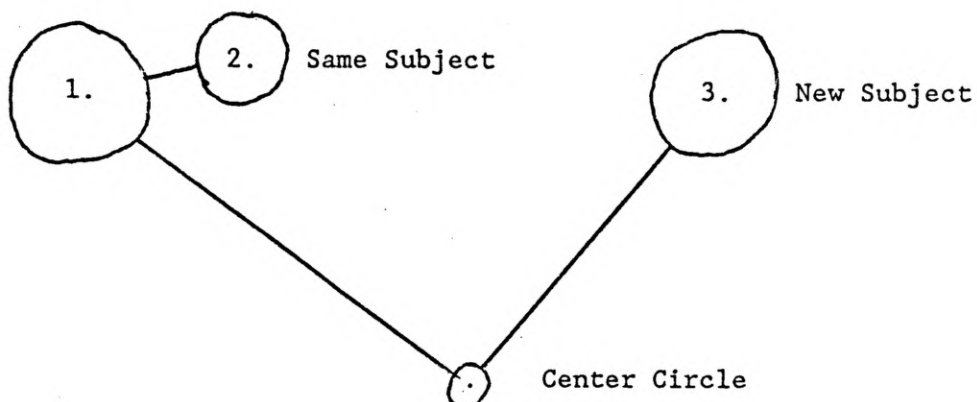
3. We will be making the final categorization of responses into concerns and issues available to the program director for her/his own information since these interviews should provide your director with valuable program information. We wish to assure you that your responses to the questions will remain anonymous. We will connect no one's name to any of the responses. Not even the professor for our course will have such information.

APPENDIX D
DATA MAPPING

DATA MAPPING: Method of Notetaking for Open-ended Interviewing

Respondent No. _____

Question No. _____



Instructions: Begin by putting a small circle in the center of the page. This circle serves as a simple ordering device for your notetaking.

1. Record first statement at left hand top of page and put a balloon around it. Draw a line connecting the balloon with the center circle.
2. If second statement is on same subject as first, put a balloon around it and draw a line to connect the first two balloons.
3. Whenever a statement begins a new subject put a balloon around it and draw a line to connect the balloon with the circle in the center.
4. Move around the page in a circular clockwise fashion.
5. Lines are used to connect balloons only when they are on the same subject.

This method of notetaking (it must be rapid) keeps your interview data in order. As soon as you come out of the interview you can translate the notes into data statements. Use 5 x 7 note cards for this and record one thought per card (this facilitates the categorizing and sorting process that ultimately yields a set of discrete concerns and issues). When translating interview notes into data statements (on the cards), put your own clarification notes, if any, into brackets.

The connecting lines are useful for making associations and helping to trigger your memory.

APPENDIX E
CARLISLE PERCEPTIONS

COMMENTS BY RAY CARLISLE, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Native American Students

Encouraging Factors

Good basic skills courses that can correct deficiencies often resulting from poor K-12 education system (both public and BIA). To the extent possible, courses should either carry credit or at least count toward minimum financial aid requirement; there is no way a student can do basic skills work in addition to a 12-credit or more load.

Easily available, non-judgmental tutoring.

Efficient handling of financial aid, availability of short-term loans when BIA or tribal aid is late.

Culturally sensitive counseling--availability of counselors and/or academic advisors who are cognizant of cultural differences (need not be Native American, but it usually helps).

Existence of a Native American Studies program/department, even if the student doesn't interact with it.

Native American staff, faculty, or administration in jobs not necessarily connected to Native American Studies.

Visible recognition by the institution of the worth of Native American culture in the form of university programming (speeches, symposia, events that include discussion of Native American topics).

Awareness of administrators from President on down of cultural differences, contribution of Native Americans. President Tietz, for example, has made a big difference for MSU.

Handicapped or Disabled Students

Encouraging Factors

Read the previous list for some obviously relevant issues (e.g., commitment by administration, visible recognition of worth).

Easy access to supplemental services such as notetakers, readers, signers/interpreters, etc.

Adequate staff to handle routine requests for parking stickers, classroom changes, etc.

Accessibility of campus to full range of disabilities (sight impaired, mobility impaired, hearing impaired, etc.).

Non-traditional Students

Encouraging Factors

Similar need to good basic skills courses as for Native American students, to allow relearning of forgotten skills and building of confidence as college students.

Good, available day care (can be a factor for all three groups).

Convenient parking that allows students to fit school around work (this is true for all students--many more students work off campus than was the case ten or twenty years ago).

Strong career guidance/information program. Non-traditional students often value and use this service more, having been in the world of work.

Native American Students

Discouraging Factors

Stereotyping of Native American students; assuming need for remedial help for all Native American students, having all-Native American classes in remedial subjects, assuming a

"track" they need to follow, assuming narrow preference for major.

Freshman curricula that includes too many large section, sink-or-swim classes. Related: insensitive, "by-the-book" academic advising that forces all students on the same track in a given major, often with a very difficult freshman year.

Any reflection of racism, especially in the classroom (uninformed faculty), financial aid or other offices frequently used by Native American students, dormitories or family housing, or student government.

Negative peer pressure ("if you succeed, you're trying to be better than the rest of us"). This is steadily being replaced by positive peer pressure as there are more and more successful Native American students, and groups like the AIRO and AISES groups at MSU.

Handicapped or Disabled Students

Discouraging Factors

Read the previous list: stereotyping by non-disabled faculty, staff, students.

Absence of any of the above encouraging factors, especially supplemental services and accessibility.

Lack of any bonding with other students or a feeling of belonging to campus community.

Non-traditional Students

Discouraging Factors

Absence of any of the above.

Failure for orientation or similar campus-wide activities to acknowledge existence of non-traditional age students (this is rapidly dissipating as the 24+ group becomes the "traditional" student).

This group less patient with bureaucracy, more inquiring about the need for rules and regulations.

One General Point for All Three Groups

An organization for people with common concerns can be a factor with a major positive impact on success. Our non-traditional student association is very strong; our disabled student association is also fairly strong. The Kyi-yo Club (Native American student association) is still fairly strong, but I expect to see more groups with a specific focus forming in the future (e.g., AIRO & AISES).

APPENDIX F
RESPONSES TO 1988 KLEWIN SURVEY

RESPONSES TO A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY DENNIS KLEWIN
WHEN HE WAS DIRECTOR OF THE MSU RESOURCE CENTER IN 1988

Categories for Written Comments
(Not in Rank Order)

Curriculum

1. No aviation classes.
2. No secretarial courses.
3. No pencil art courses.
4. Wanted courses to become a paramedic. MSU didn't have these.

Financial Concerns

1. Lack of finances.
2. Attending U of M to save money, and live at home.
3. Can't afford MSU.
4. Can't afford MSU.

Advising

1. Red tape, impersonal advisors, couldn't find them. Took little time in assisting in course selection.
2. Advisor hard to find and to contact. Impersonal.
3. M.S.U. lacking in freshman advising. No counseling to help in class selection and registration.
4. M.S.U. cold and impersonal. No help with classes. Professors were rude. Some instructors were not qualified to teach.

Jobs and Moving from the State

1. Job situation - opened my own business.
2. Moved from the state.
3. Offered a job I couldn't refuse.
4. Moved from the state.

Housing and Day Care

1. I paid my own way; why can't I decide where I live? Too much bull and policies.

2. Didn't want to live in dorms. Got moved around too much.
3. Not enough room in MSU day care. Family housing kids have a preference and priority. I think that stinks.
4. Day care too expensive - four children - no assistance available for mother with four.

Other - Miscellaneous

1. Registration cancelled same day as bad health problem - this decided for me I wouldn't return.
2. Drugs, and alcohol don't belong in a learning environment. This is why I left. Too many parties, bad influence and want no part of it.
3. Told I couldn't return; talked to a lady in Student Affairs.

APPENDIX G

RESPONSES TO 1988 FRAZIER INTERVIEW

RESPONSES TO A 1988 SURVEY CONDUCTED
BY JOSEPH FRAZIER, MSU REGISTRAR

Remarks

Getting classes is always a hassle at MSU. I could give you lots of reasons why students have trouble staying interested in college, but who would listen?

I joined the USAR (Army Reserve) and was in basic and AIT until the end of October, and could not get back into school until winter quarter.

Girlfriend was taking Architecture and Design, and they were cut back. Loved the school and hated to leave, but because of class changes I had to. Especially loved the area, fraternity people and classes.

The staffs seemed unwilling to work with and help students; don't seem to care one ripshorn about the students. It's no wonder your enrollment is dropping off! Besides, why should I listen to broke professors talk about theory that will be obsolete in ten years when I have the opportunity to learn from millionaires who are willing to teach me everything they know. These same millionaires are teaching me about free enterprise and the entrepreneurial spirit. Your institution is teaching people to be jackasses of bosses so that they can die broke at the age of 65!

Financial Aid employees are totally rude. The bureaucracy involved with the University system outshines anything I have learned after more than 10 years of employment with the federal government. I feel you are more interested in money than with education.

Uncertainty of financing for college from Legislature and possible drastic cutbacks in course offerings, and increased class size are the reasons I didn't return.

The budget cutbacks have lowered the standard of education. It will be less expensive to go out of state where you can get a better education.

Instructional Computing was not offered as a curriculum in Education. Not able to get 400 level advanced computer usage for Education, also programming for Education (teacher usage). Excellent instructor and advisor moved because of lower salary and problems in Education Dept. University did not replace him. MSU turned me off because they are allowing the "best" to leave for higher salaries, less political activity in departments. MSU did not replace the only instructor capable of teaching high level instructional computing classes. Thus, only lower level introductory courses are being taught in the computer education area. No methods classes taught either.

University of Washington offers a Business program that I feel is more advantageous to my future than MSU's. MSU doesn't feel collegiate to me, but more like an enlarged high school. I was concerned about budget cuts at the University and didn't want these proposed cuts to affect the quality of my education. Also, I don't believe the Business School to be one that stands out on resumes.

People made it difficult for me to obtain financial aid because of my first year that I paid for. But for those of us who are fortunate enough to have parents who give everything to send you your first year with the expectation of assistance from the athletic office the next! We supposedly can't and didn't receive aid! That sucks!!

Took a year off to ski competitively in the East. MSU dropped the budget on Nordic & Alpine Ski Teams, which affected my decision. From what I saw and experienced during my one year at MSU, I was very pleased and had a successful year.

You cut the Political Science department. Quality of education was going down at MSU.

I wanted to go into Aeronautics and Astronautics, and MSU did not offer the major. I feel MSU is a very fine school. I would have liked to stay but they did not offer the major I wanted.

Classes within major were being cut -- too many substitutions required to graduate.

Received enough credits this summer at Laramie to re-certify, so won't be getting more credits unless I am interested in a particular class.

Fall quarter did not have classes I need.

Completed teacher certification during spring quarter 1987.

Due to personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I didn't return to MSU. He wanted me to go to Pepperdine; basketball transfer also.

Went on a two year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Taiwan. I loved MSU, and will return as am in Army ROTC. Loved the Industrial Engineering program, and campus, people, teachers, etc.

I was unable to reach and achieve my full potential at MSU.

Even if our mechanics in handling registration, add/drop and certification has snags, I hadn't realized how good we were until I got snarled with Georgetown mechanics! Almost everything is by hand. The focal point for grad. students is the Grad College--not just approval but central point of records. They go to the Registrar secondarily. There is a similar quasi-independence for each College or Faculty in the European sense even on the undergrad level.

You were too slow in processing Financial Aid!

Enrolled in Continuing Ed - Behavior Modification Class in Helena from Dr. Herbster. Am presently teaching at Broadwater County High School. I have heard that summer school will be either 6 or 8 week segments. This may hurt the change of teachers returning.

Received a track scholarship at Jamestown College, ND.

As an older student, many other things make demands on my time: school, work, and family responsibilities are not always balanced successfully.

Am taking classes for re-certification for Montana teachers.

Loved MSU; completed my requirements for entry into Chiropractic College.

I had just taken one course as a continuing education offering.

Attended summer school only, master program in Secondary School Administration.

I need more help from an advisor in deciding on courses. I didn't get much input. More like I was wasting his time.

I was turned off because of the hassle of getting classes and dropping classes; also crowded classes.

I had just one quarter to finish my Master's Program. I am teaching school while completing my degree.

I switched to education major and wanted to be certified in Illinois where I plan to teach.

Personal distress over serious auto accident which occurred in May.

I was on the women's gymnastics team, and they cut the program!

Not able to get Math 148; unable to obtain in-state residency for fees. Too much "red tape" in the simplest things.

Not able to get IA industry option curriculum.

Too much red tape to get something done. Grouchy staff, slow service, financial aid department is a poor excuse for one. You need more people -- qualified people -- working in that office. The year I attended I had so much trouble getting financial aid and student loans it was ridiculous. They kept sending forms back that had been already signed; they took forever to get to my file; it was a classic case of the old run-around but poorly done. I seriously doubt I will return, but will probably go out of state. Very unhappy with your system.

I am a member of the Australia Basketball National League Team.

I loved MSU while I was there, and really miss the people. Also Hannon Hall food is much better than dorm food here at Portland State University, and my sorority is not here either.

After 1 1/2 years, I decided on a major; then it wasn't offered at MSU. I'm now in Speech and Hearing Science. Thank you for your concern.

If I can obtain financial aid, I will attend MSU in the future.

Not able to obtain any of the courses I need! MSU cut too many classes and only offers many classes once a year.

I am about ready to retire; don't need any more education.

I am a part-time older student, just taking classes when I have the time.

Last May I hurt my back and the drive from Livingston and sitting in class caused trouble with my back and affected my studies. Also was unable to get financial assistance from State Rehabilitation because of my wife's income.

Could not obtain Math 224 last spring quarter.

I teach in the Bozeman School District and attend MSU intermittently to pursue career goals.

With two small children and a husband majoring in Electrical Engineering, I and my family felt it was a priority for me to be at home.

My husband is doing extra student teaching, and his schedule was too uncertain for me to commit any time. I am an occasional student and a full-time staff member.

Full-time job did not allow time for school Autumn Quarter.

The major reason I didn't return was Financial Aid. The MSU office does a great job, but the system I think is what the problem is. I could not get enough financial aid for me to return fall quarter and I could not get it in time.

Not able to get ME 411, 412, and 424. I would have graduated in August if a follow-up series was offered in ME Senior Design.1

Completed requirements for Elementary Teaching certification in spring 1987.

The financial aid is not enough and putting too much of a burden on my family, as I am not an only child that wants an education.

Not able to get courses in international relations, international policies. I am planning to attend a school that specialized in international training because it will give me a more focused education and therefore will make finding a job easier than if I were to stay at MSU and study geography.

My advisor was no help to me at all! I had to find and do everything alone.

Could not get required courses in Art/Education, English (500 level) Writing for Professional Publications.

University of Montana graduate credits probably not acceptable to MSU. I must take time out of my work schedule to personally negotiate a minor since no departments currently collaborate with the Education Dept. and minors in content areas in Secondary Education are arranged on an ad-lib basis.

Received the necessary credits for job advancement - Masters +45. I already had Masters +40 so during spring and summer quarters, I gained 5 additional applied credits.

I completed all coursework required for salary advancement, and don't need any more credits. I am not dissatisfied with MSU!

Could not get the continuation of Accounting courses offered after 4:00 p.m.

I will enroll winter quarter when I have a Graduate Teaching Assistantship.

I registered to take a 2-quarter aviation ground school sequence (MAS 217 & 218) last winter and spring quarters. Completed the series, no need to continue.

I now prefer Eastern Montana College to MSU because I received more personal attention from my professors, and in general, I feel I am treated more as a person and less as a number. Most MSU staff didn't seem to take a personal interest in the students.

Travel.

I was attending to finish a library endorsement and for recertification purposes spring quarter.

My daughter is a freshman, and her fees are all we could afford.

Completed the credits I needed to receive a Reading Endorsement K-12; also moving to another state.

I still owe MSU money; when it is repaid, I will return to finish my doctorate.

Due to work situation/load, (I am a campus employee) desired classes not in afternoons which would work more appropriately with my schedule.

I had a baby - being a full time mom for now!

I attended spring quarter to take only once course - Graphic Design which interested me. The follow-up course is not offered until winter quarter 1988. Depending on family obligations and other responsibilities, I may or may not take the course this year. I am 55 years old, with a B.A. from another university.

Why aren't there more programs on fee waivers for out-of-state students? I will be coming back to school winter quarter, but I don't understand how you can recruit out-of-state students so hard, and yet not do anything to help us?! Thank you.

Family complications. Had to be gone from Bozeman for over a month.

I had a year's leave of absence from my job. This fall, I had to return to my job. I plan on returning summer '88 to complete my degree.

I enrolled to continue my teaching certification. However, I do not teach as yet and must work during the day. Evening classes do not always offer what is both interesting and applicable. And not being a full-time student at MSU I have encountered difficulty getting cooperation in independent studies with professors who seem to view them as "extra workload."

Fall quarter work load at my full time position at MSU is too demanding. Not feasible to take time off for classes.

I love MSU and will always be loyal to it. I left it only because I found it necessary to.

Completed K-8 certification program.

Changed majors.

I'm a part-time graduate student and my working schedule didn't permit it. Perhaps next quarter or spring quarter.

Making an appointment next to impossible; rudely treated when a signature was needed for pre-registration.

I transferred for Pharmacy, to the University of Washington. However, now I have transferred out of Pharmacy, therefore I'm returning to MSU!

I didn't like the quarter system or the late date in which MSU ended (June 12).

I am enrolled in the MPA program at Helena through UM. I will be taking additional courses with MSU as my studies continue. (I am a graduate of MSU).

The class was special. It was a workshop for teachers. I have taken other graduate credits at MSU.

Enrolled only to take CPA review. Do not require any other classes at this time.

Teacher with 87-88 contract. Going to summer school to obtain Masters degree in elementary education.

Lack of course in my chosen profession. Wasn't satisfied with the self-teach math program. I am a student that didn't have basic algebra in high school and need ample amount of help. Also the assistance didn't seem to be interested in helping.

Hunting season.

Part-time job wasn't adequate to meet expenses it needed to meet. Family financial situation is not adequate to help with needs. I was forced to move to find employment. I want to finish my education when I can afford it. Presently I owe a considerable amount on educational loans.

Nothing against MSU!! I really enjoyed it; plans just changed!

I felt guilty because I wasn't spending my own money. I could have done better grade-wise. So I do plan on going back when I make some money.

They are dropping business classes and Business Education is my major. I also felt that as a student I wasn't getting any individual help when I went and personally asked the teacher for help. I never felt like an individual - only a social security number.

I'm in nursing and my upper division placement isn't until winter '88 quarter.

Was enrolled as non-degree grad student for 1-4 credit course. Present job does not allow attendance each quarter. Plans are to enroll for courses that interest me when time is available.

The complete run-around I received in the math dept. and poor unhelpful attitudes of administrators.

I got the run around so much trying to obtain financial aid, that I finally gave up - after sending the same information back and forth numerous times.

I could get the same classes at a much better price.

Just wanted to go somewhere else - with different credentials. There's nothing wrong with MSU.

I really enjoyed Bozeman and MSU but I had a change of goals.

Not able to get "Word Processing" due to Late Registration.

Will be on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Will return to MSU in 2 years.

In-state residency not approved because driver's license was the major proof of residency status (in-state classification) and was 30 days short of being eligible for resident status. Could not afford out-of-state tuition this quarter.

I noticed how the art department was declining and being phased out. Wanted to save money and get the motivation to go back to school - hopefully an art school or one with a better art program.

Was not in Bozeman to meet registration deadline.

Attended to obtain credits for teacher certification renewal. Didn't need more.

Had difficulties with Calculus series and had to have these classes for a Geology degree.

Was working fighting fires and I was unable to get released from the fire to attend school.

Bozeman too small.

Personal reasons. Too many people from my high school.

An impression is given that one should give up one's family, job and other responsibilities for education, and if you don't do this, you don't desire it enough. Unable to live in Bozeman - family and children reside in Anaconda - nearest clinical facility is in Missoula - unable to leave family and live in another city to attend school - Clinical was in Butte when I returned to school but since has been cancelled-thus putting a halt to my education. I

would certainly attend MSU's clinical courses if they were to return to Butte.

I attended MSU last spring for enhancement purposes and hope to do so in the future when time and finances permit. I find it rather expensive to take just a few credits. I would like to see more night time class offerings and lower costs for part-time students.

Have been trying to obtain enough aid to cover tuition and books because I don't receive any assistance from parents - but am still considered dependent. I'm in the process of appealing the aid offered.

Not able to get Nursing courses 355 and 356.

I will voice difficulties after I graduate. I will be back winter 1988 hopefully.

For attending fall of 1988 would it be possible for all of the information, forms, financial aid packet to be sent to me at my address? With all of that, I should be returning to MSU fall quarter of 1988. Thank you.

Accepted a teaching job! Will finish my master's in the summers.

Vote in '88. Happy New Year.

My husband graduated and got a job out of town. Hopefully I will return to MSU. I was pregnant. Please note change of address.

I was attending MSU as a postsecondary student. You offered a grant program in French which is what I am currently teaching in Colstrip. I enjoyed your university and instructors very much.

I plan on returning when I save up enough money. I have children to support and a business to run.

Not able to get half of everything I applied for every quarter.

Not able to get Occupational Therapy major courses. Am unable to obtain a degree in Occupational Therapy at MSU.

I was at MSU for only 1 class - Intensive Grammar Review - am only interested in credits for recertification. I have my BA degree from S. Dakota and teach in Helena. Please

send me info on other foreign language workshops, if offered again this spring. Thank you.

I will be getting a different advisor - winter '88.

Difficulties - red tape - not being able to talk to a true 'authoritative' figure who could do something about problems. Core turned me off - requirements, having to take classes that were irrelevant to my major.

Yes, I have had a problem getting needed classes! There are too many restricted entry classes in the Business Dept.

I am presently working to raise money for school. I found the education & certification curriculum quite satisfactory. I do however feel that MSU must reaffirm its support of their Humanities subject areas.

I work on campus, take classes as non-degree for interest only.

I will attend winter quarter.

I have been working and waiting to hear from Financial Aid for winter quarter.

I will return to MSU winter quarter to continue my education.

Nancy Colton was a very good advisor. I doubt if I will return. I am a swimmer and MSU has no swim team. MSU does not emphasize fitness and nutrition enough. People need to be more aware.

I got the credits I needed.

My husband is an Engineer with Tectronics in Beaverton, Oregon. I will complete my studies in Portland.

I was not able to get advanced courses - courses in my curriculum, graphic design. I need more help from advisors defining quarterly or yearly schedules - lay it on the line. I am currently in graphic design, senior year; the curriculum needs to be re-evaluated. It is almost impossible to schedule for classes quarterly; classes dropped, changed, not offered, curriculum changed. These problems make me want to consider other schools. I am still not sure what I need to graduate.

I was not able to get Research Design courses in the evening.

I was not able to get basic freshman courses.

I went back to teaching.

I teach full time and have taken the workshops offered. I had an excellent experience with the language classes both times. Thanks.

I had heart surgery over the summer and could not return.

I need graduate level nursing courses but do not like the rural emphasis. It would be nice to take one course at a time since I have a full-time job. I will attend again when individual graduate courses are offered in Great Falls that fit my needs in nursing.

University life was not what I expected, nor was it what I wanted. Housewife to be, that's me.

I attended MSU for a special workshop only, held on weekends. It was excellent.

Not able to get medical courses.

Engineering personnel were very dull, detached, and unhelpful. Campus environment was very unmotivational. Students, teachers, instructors made fun of school about budget and quality. Campus and ASMSU provides none of the quality programs, concerts, and lectures that any university should have. MSU promotes bar drinking and frat parties.

Wanted to go out of state.

They herd students through like cattle. There's little attention to the individual. It needs more profit teaching rather than prophet teaching. I am tired of filling out forms.

My enrollment was for a two-weekend workshop in French Grammar Proficiency. During the school year I teach French at Central High School in Billings. I hope to return to MSU in the future for workshops and/or summer school classes.

My husband, employed by BN, was affected by MRL sale on October 31st. Because of our uncertain future (He has already moved to Havre), I was unable to enroll.

My two developmentally disabled sons were returned to me September 23, 1987, and they and I needed this quarter to readjust to each other and get on a schedule before I returned. I will be returning January 1988.

I couldn't get the class time to fit in with work, which is ok, because I didn't like the teacher for the class last quarter.

Earned as many credits as my district would accept for teacher salary advancement.

I really only enrolled in a single course during the spring quarter because I was interested in the material. I really don't fit into any of the boxes. I'll enroll again when I find a course I'd like to take. I enjoyed what I took, but I'm retired and have my degrees.

My major (Office Systems) was being phased out. Many of my classes were being taught by graduate students who learned the materials as the students did. I didn't want to waste my time and money having to take "core" classes to get a 2-year certificate and I didn't like having to pay the same tuition for 13 credits as I would 18.

My teaching job kept me so busy I didn't have time to devote to the courses I had planned to take.

I have an M.S. and 51 credits. I only go to school when I want to, and then just for me.

I registered at MSU as a special student to take a few classes that I was interested in. I am not seeking a degree this time.

MSU is a very good school for Architecture and Interior Design. But we almost lost the school. We had a hard time getting back accreditation. I am glad that we did get accreditation back and I am returning to MSU.

The money cuts for school had affected me.

My major is Architectural Engineering and MSU does not offer it.

MSU turned me off because the cost is high, never know when programs will be dropped, and residence rules. The main reason I could not continue with my education is because I could not afford to live in Montana while my husband lives in Idaho for the summer to work in this job for 11 years. If the residence guidelines were changed to 8 or 6 months

out of the first year living in Montana, I would go back all smiles. I want to live in Montana during the winter whether I go to school or not, but I can never live there for a summer.

Advisors were hard to get a hold of and when I did get a hold of one, he was not willing to help and had a bad attitude. The head of the department ended up helping me. The area is beautiful up there and I miss it a lot. The school didn't have adequate or enough staff for the large number of students. I didn't care for a lot of the students, nor the teachers. I was too far from home. Black Hills State offered me in-state tuition which I couldn't beat compared to out-of-state at MSU. I like being on semesters much better than quarters. BHSC is much more personal. You are somebody here, not just a number. I did feel that MSU had a high quality of academics and I didn't feel that I was being cheated out of a good education.

I was accepted into Vet school at OSU after two great years at MSU.

The treatment I received was cold and impersonal.

I was a WAMI student and there is only one year of medical school available at MSU through the WAMI program. Currently I am continuing Med School in Seattle.

In WAMI and had no choice but to move on.

Student advisor program very sub-par.

Left school for 2 years to participate in an international exchange.

I did not feel I was being prepared for the job market. Lessons and courses in general had little to do with real world requirements.

Birth of child.

Advisor was not willing to sit down and help me with scheduling problems, and career insight. Lack of teacher concern, money used on things other than education. Example - trying to cut the architect program because of lack of funds yet spending money on buildings.

Not being able to make up quizzes in math department when going on track trip.

University of Minnesota - Crookston offered a degree in flight training. I will probably return to Bozeman in the future to receive a business degree.

My brother graduated from MSU a year ago and still is unemployed. I just didn't see any benefit continuing.

Pregnancy and commuting distance too great (from Helena)

Mostly because they wouldn't give me credit from my other school. The attitudes of the advisors and some of the instructors. Its not personalized enough. They get paid to serve and instruct us. I sometimes get the feeling they think the students are there because of them.

EDIM 251 - I was deleted 3 times in 3 consecutive quarters.

I have waited since January 1987 to find out upper division placement for Nursing Autumn 1987. In May I am notified of placement; and I had one week to decide if I would accept. With a family and home there was no way I could accept on such a short notice.

Did not feel that freshmen Wildlife students were treated well. Only saw my original advisor once all year.

I wanted to minor in Special Education. Although catalog says it is only an option, my advisor said he thought they'd be able to help me be certified through MSU to teach Special Education, and waited 2 years to tell me I could not do so.

Didn't feel that I was ready to continue school. Wasn't paying attention to studies because of full-time job.

I was accepted in veterinary school at Colorado State University, so did not receive my bachelor's degree at MSU.

Able to obtain some credits from EMC in Billings for the BSN program.

The raise in tuition has made it impossible for me as an older student with a family to support to continue at MSU.

I am a wrestler - was on a partial scholarship and you dropped your wrestling program. I believe you truly made a mistake!

I needed 3 credits in Immunology, which I obtained at MSU, to be accepted for a Medical Technology Internship. I found MSU to be a fine institution, and would recommend it

to any one. I found MSU and all those involved with it to be very helpful, courteous, and friendly.

A specific course in the Library Science curriculum (Young Adult Literature) was offered during spring quarter. I was interested in it and it was offered at noon, which made it possible for me to take the class even though I was working.

Need weekend, Xmas vacation, or better summer classes.

I am in the Graduate College and needed to finish an incomplete before returning to school.

Secondary Education program is marginal compared to my new one. Attitude about cutting programs. Another reason is because they cut some sports entirely instead of cutting back evenly on all of them and because they recruit enough in-state athletes.

I attended MSU for Architecture and ski racing. I dropped Architecture and MSU dropped the race program, so I opted for U of M at my home town where I had a job.

The State of Montana didn't seem to be supporting the university system, and I felt I didn't need to pay \$300 out-of-state tuition when I could get the same at the University of Idaho. I really liked Bozeman, and the university, but the budget cuts scared me. MSU is a great school and the state shouldn't let it fall apart.

Got tired of getting a run around and not getting any satisfaction from anybody. Being told conflicting reports at different levels.

Didn't feel I was ready for college so I am taking a year off and intend to enroll fall '88.