

TABLE IV
STUDENT EVALUATION OF FRESHMAN COUNSELING PROGRAM

N = 235 (23%)		
Do you think it was helpful to meet with your Freshman Counselor this fall (1981) quarter?		
Very helpful 77 (33%)	Helpful 90 (42%)	No Opinion 32 (14%)
Not very helpful 13 (5%)	No help 14 (6%)	
Did your Freshman Counselor help make you feel "at home" at UTM?		
Yes 225 (96%)	No 10 (4%)	
Do you think that all incoming freshmen should be involved in the Freshman Counseling Program?		
Yes 224 (95%)	No 11 (5%)	

IMPLICATIONS

Retention will be a major concern for many years on college campuses. There is an increasing need to coordinate efforts and develop programs to increase retention. The Freshman Counseling Program, at The University of Tennessee at Martin, is one approach toward retaining more students than in the past. The success of the program, and the favorable responses from the students, supports the notion that institutions can deal with declining enrollments through an effective retention program, without lowering the quality of students' academic performance (G.P.A.).

Stated Reasons for Withdrawal and Degrees of Satisfaction Among Student Persisters and Nonpersisters

ALAN D. SMITH, Department of Geology, Eastern Kentucky University.

ABSTRACT

Revised questionnaire forms of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems' Confidential Questionnaire for Nonreturning Students, and Student Outcome Questionnaire for Program Completers were given to students enrolled in the Community and Technical College and the General College (renamed University College) during the 1978-1979 academic year at The University of Akron. The response rate of useable questionnaires varied from 22 percent of nonreturning students (485) to 28 percent of the continuing students (485) to 28 percent of the continuing student population (2995). Discriminative analysis of demographic variables were completed to assess selection bias for student nonpersister respondents and nonrespondents. Conflict with job and studies, not enough money for school, and needed temporary break from school were reasons for withdrawal cited by more than 20 percent of the student nonpersister respondents. Student nonpersisters listed the factors of counseling and advising services, financial aid opportunities, and quality of instruction more frequently as the first factors if changed, would have encouraged them to stay at the University. Student persisters listed registration processing, parking availability, and television courses as the most frequent items to be changed first in order to better serve them at the University.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The original problem investigated by the author was to study in a systematic and empirical fashion selected personal, socio-economic, academic, and institutional variables that may be capable of differentiating between student persisters and nonpersisters enrolled in the four-year University College and the two-year Community and Technical College at the University of Akron. The study was a timely endeavor, because most universities are facing declining enrollments, a problem Asin believes was "perhaps the biggest concern of college administrators and faculty members during 1970." Although college administrators and faculty members have traditionally used recruitment as the principal means of keeping enrollments high, an equally promising approach to this problem is to reduce the dropout rate.

The University of Akron, although enjoying continued growth, has experienced unusually high attrition rates, especially with students enrolled in the General College and the

¹A.W. Asin, *Preventing Students from Dropping Out*, San Francisco: (Jossey-Bass, 1975), p. 2.

Community and Technical College. The University, which enrolls over 23,000 day and evening students in credit courses and an additional 7,000 in "informal" education courses, has recently developed a retention committee to help curb this problem. Baier suggested that when describing or defining a college's attrition rate, the unique aspects and mission of the institution, along with the general makeup of the student body must be taken into consideration. In addition, since the factors involved in student attrition vary so widely from institution to institution, individual institutional studies of attrition are needed to develop national profiles of dropout students! Hence, due to the unique setting associated with the University, where both a two-year and four-year college reside on the same urban campus, there was no satisfactory instrument model that could be employed for an in-depth examination of student attrition at this University. The problem was finally solved.

METHOD

The survey instruments used were revised forms of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS): (1) Confidential Questionnaire for Nonreturning Students; and (2) Student Outcome Questionnaire for Program Completers developed by Bowers and Myers, and Byers.¹ The samples in the study were drawn from two distinct populations. The student nonpersister sample was taken from students who were enrolled Fall Semester, 1978, at the University of Akron but failed to reregister Spring Semester, 1979. The student persister sample was drawn from students who also were enrolled Fall Semester, 1978, at the University and continued to register for academic course work in the Spring Semester, 1979. Attempts were made to survey the entire population of students. Since most of the student attrition rate occurred in the General College and the Community and Technical College, only students enrolled in those two colleges were examined. The student nonpersister was sampled via a mailed questionnaire with an accompanying cover letter signed by the University president and an enclosed return self-addressed stamped envelope. The continuing student received a questionnaire when he/she picked up registration materials for Spring Semester, 1979.

¹J.L. Baier, An analysis of undergraduate student attrition at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1979-1973 (Doctoral Dissertation, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1974). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 1975, 35, 2862 A. (University Micro-films No. 75-102).

²C. Bowers and R. Myers, *A Manual for Conducting Student Attrition Studies in Institutions of Higher Secondary Education*. (Boulder, Colo.: National Center for Higher Education Management System at Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1976.)

M. Byers, *Information Exchange Procedures Outcomes Study Procedures*. (Boulder, Colo.: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems at Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1975.)

TABLE I
Summary of Number of Questionnaire Returns
By Student Persisters and Nonpersisters

Student Type	Population Total	Total Returned Questionnaires	Percent Returned (%)	Number Usable	Adjusted Returned (%)
Nonpersister ^a	2,263	516	22.8	485	21.4
Persister	10,449	3,242	31.0	2,995	28.7

^aAdjusted to not include those students who graduated or were on academic probation.

RESULTS

The response rate (Table I) of usable questionnaires in both cases varied from a low of approximately 22 percent for the nonreturning student population (N = 485) to a high of about 28 percent of the continuing student population (N = 2995). Results of discriminant analyses performed for student nonpersister questionnaire respondents and nonrespondents on 18 demographic variables derived from the student master file, revealed that significant differences existed between the sample and the actual population on five demographic variables. The findings were:

1. Black students were underrepresented in the sample of questionnaire respondents.
2. Questionnaire respondents were found to have a higher high school class rank and high school grade point average.
3. Student nonpersisters who answered the questionnaire were found to have a higher total ACT score than those student nonpersisters who did not return the questionnaire.
4. Student nonpersisters who returned the mailed questionnaire were enrolled for more hours of academic course work than nonreturning students who did not answer the questionnaire.

Research findings reported for student nonpersister respondents' reasons for leaving the University revealed several surprisingly important results. Only 17.8 percent of nonpersister respondents cited low grades as a major or moderate reason for withdrawal. In fact, some of the traditional reasons for withdrawal considered by (more than half) the student nonpersisters sampled as not important, were:

- courses too difficult, or not challenging; dissatisfied with instruction, learned all needed, and fulfilled goal of instruction.
- unsure of major, dissatisfied with major, or major and courses not available.
- financial aid not sufficient to meet expenses of attending school, unable to obtain financial aid or find a job, and accepted a job.
- family problems, illness, and child care too expensive.
- transportation problems: moved from area and felt alienated from University.

TABLE II
Percentage and Ranking of Major Reasons
for Withdrawal from the University
Cited by Student Nonpersister Respondents

Reason for Withdrawal	Percent of Total Respondents	Ranking
Conflict with Job and Studies	23.1	1
Not Enough Money for School	21.5	2
Needed Temporary Break from School	20.9	3
Unsure of Major	12.7	4
inadequate Study Techniques or Habits	11.1	5
Personal or Family Illness	10.7	6
Applied but Unable to Obtain Financial Aid	10.4	7
Dissatisfied with Major	10.3	8
Major or Courses Not Available	10.1	9.5
Dissatisfied with Instruction	10.1	9.5
Study Too Time-Consuming	9.4	11.5
Personal or Family Problems	9.4	11.5
Did Not Feel Part of the University	8.7	13
Low Grades	7.7	14.5
Learned All Needed	7.7	14.5
Financial Aid Not Sufficient	6.3	16
Could Not Find a Job	5.9	17
Course Work Not Challenging	5.5	18.5
Moved Out of the Area	5.5	18.5
School Too Expensive	5.3	20
Transportation Problems	5.0	21
Accepted Job	4.5	22
Fulfilled Goals in Schooling	4.3	23
Courses Too Difficult	3.4	24.5
Child Care Not Available or Too Costly	3.4	24.5

Table II presents the reasons for leaving the University that were cited as being most important by student nonpersister respondents. Conflict with job and studies, not enough money for school, and needed temporary break from school were reasons cited by more than 20 percent of the student nonpersister respondents. The reasons that were least cited by student nonpersisters (i.e. less than five percent of total respondents) included accepted job, fulfilled goals in schooling, courses too difficult, and child care too costly. In conclusion, the majority of student nonpersister respondents listed 20 of the 25 reasons for withdrawal as not their reasons for leaving the University.

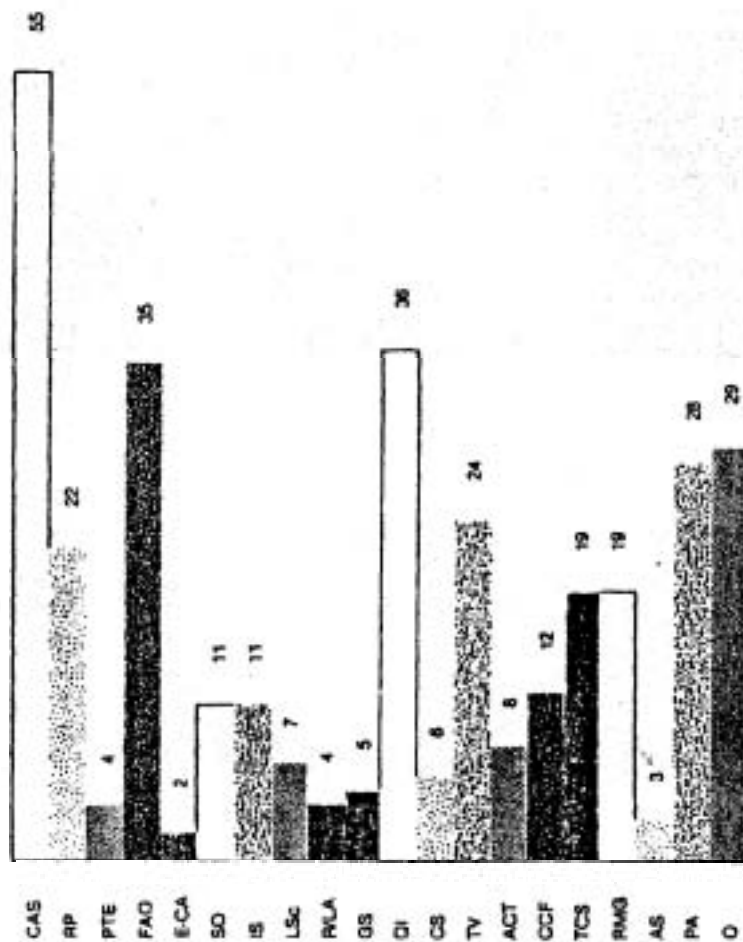
TABLE III
Labels and Descriptions of
Degrees of Satisfaction Factors Symbolized in
Figures 18 for Both Student Persisters and Nonpersisters

Symbolic Label	Description
CAS	Counseling & Advising Services
RP	Registration Processing
LS	Library Service
PTE	Part-Time Employment Services
FAO	Financial Aid Opportunities
E-CA	Extra-Curricular Activities
SO	Social Opportunities
CO	Cultural Opportunities
IS	Intellectual Stimulation
LSc	Location of This School
R/LA	Residence/Living Accommodations
GS	Grading System
QI	Quality of Instruction
CS	Class Size
TV	T.V. Course
ACT	Amount of Contact with Teachers
CCF	Course Content in Yow Field
TCS	Time Classes are Scheduled
RMG	Relevance of Major to Career Goals
AS	Admissions Services
PA	Parking Availability
O	Other

In addition, students were requested to list the first, second, and third factors or variables concerning degrees of satisfaction stated by student nonpersisters that if changed would have encouraged them to stay at the University (Figures 1-3). Student nonpersisters listed the factors counseling and advising services, financial aid opportunities, and quality of instruction more frequently as the first factor to be changed that would have most encouraged them to stay at the University. The second factor frequently cited by student nonpersisters to be changed included the following: (1) counseling and advising services, (2) financial aid opportunities, (3) quality of instruction, (4) television courses, (5) time classes are scheduled and (6) parking availability. The third factor most commonly listed as a factor to change to encourage nonreturning students to stay consisted of the following: (1) parking availability and (2) amount of contact with teachers.

FIGURE 1

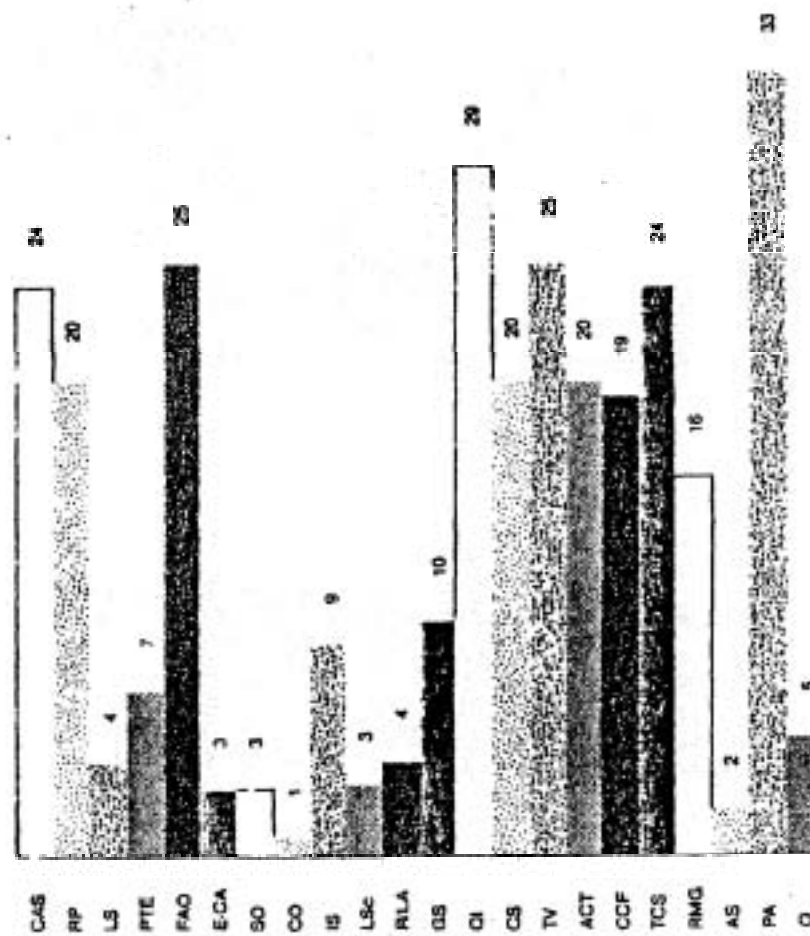
FIRST FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
NONPERSISTERS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE MOST ENCOURAGED
THEM TO STAY AT THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

FIGURE 2

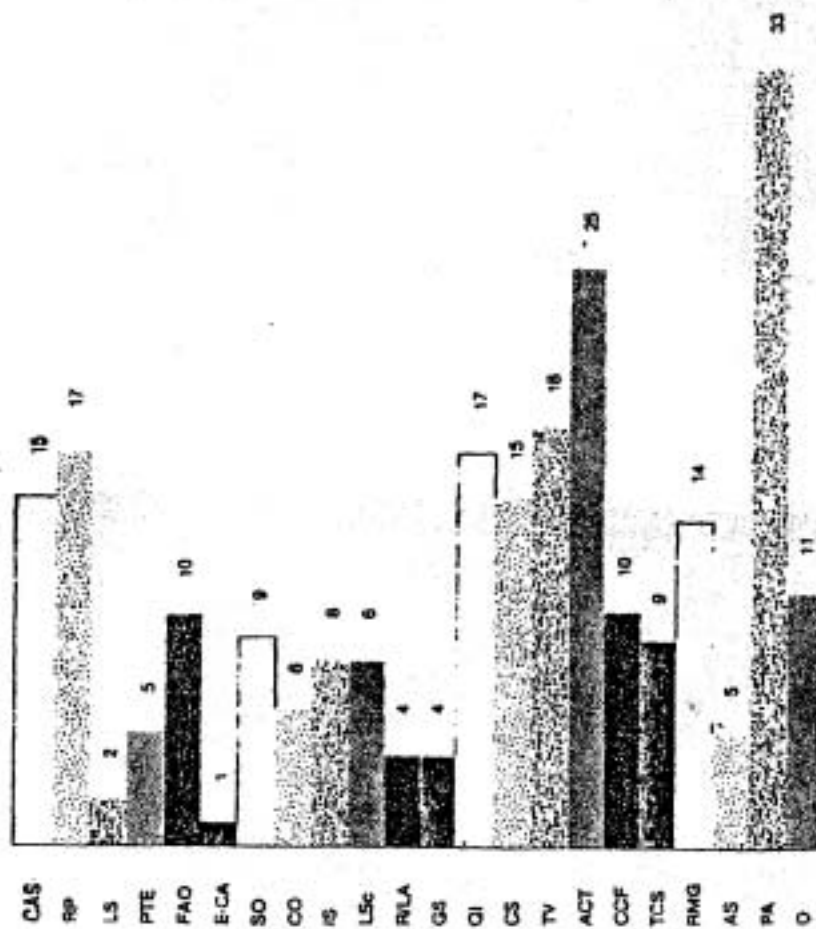
SECOND FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
NONPERSISTERS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE MOST ENCOURAGED
THEM TO STAY AT THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

FIGURE 3

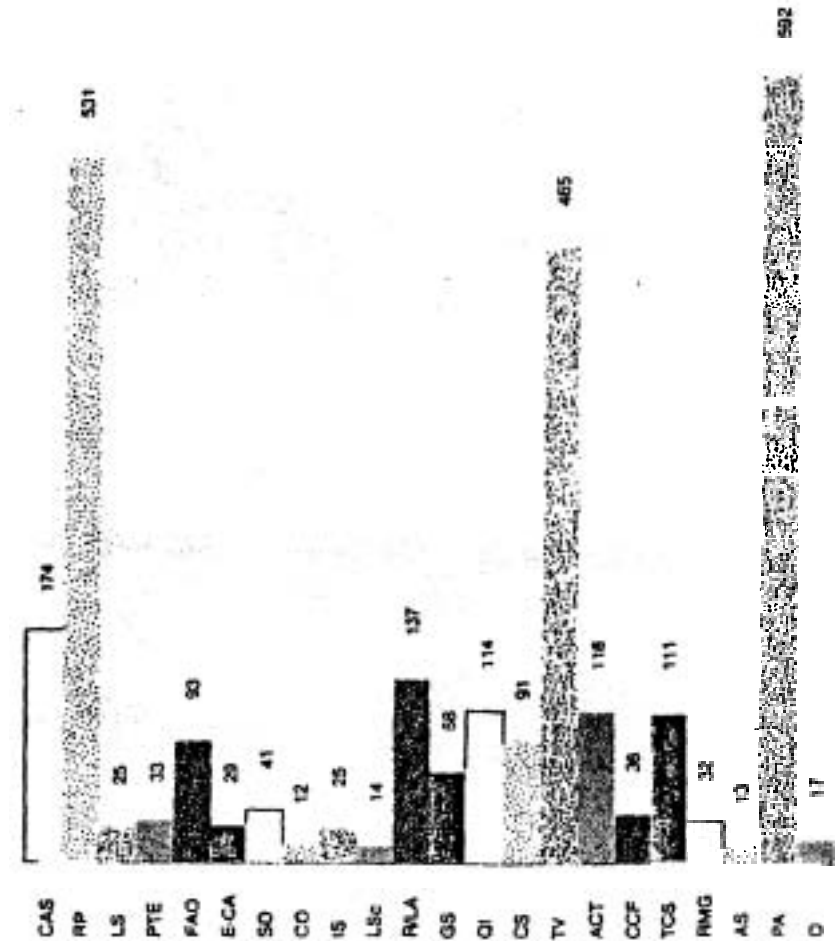
THIRD FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
NONPERSISTERS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE MOST ENCOURAGED
THEM TO STAY AT THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

FIGURE 4

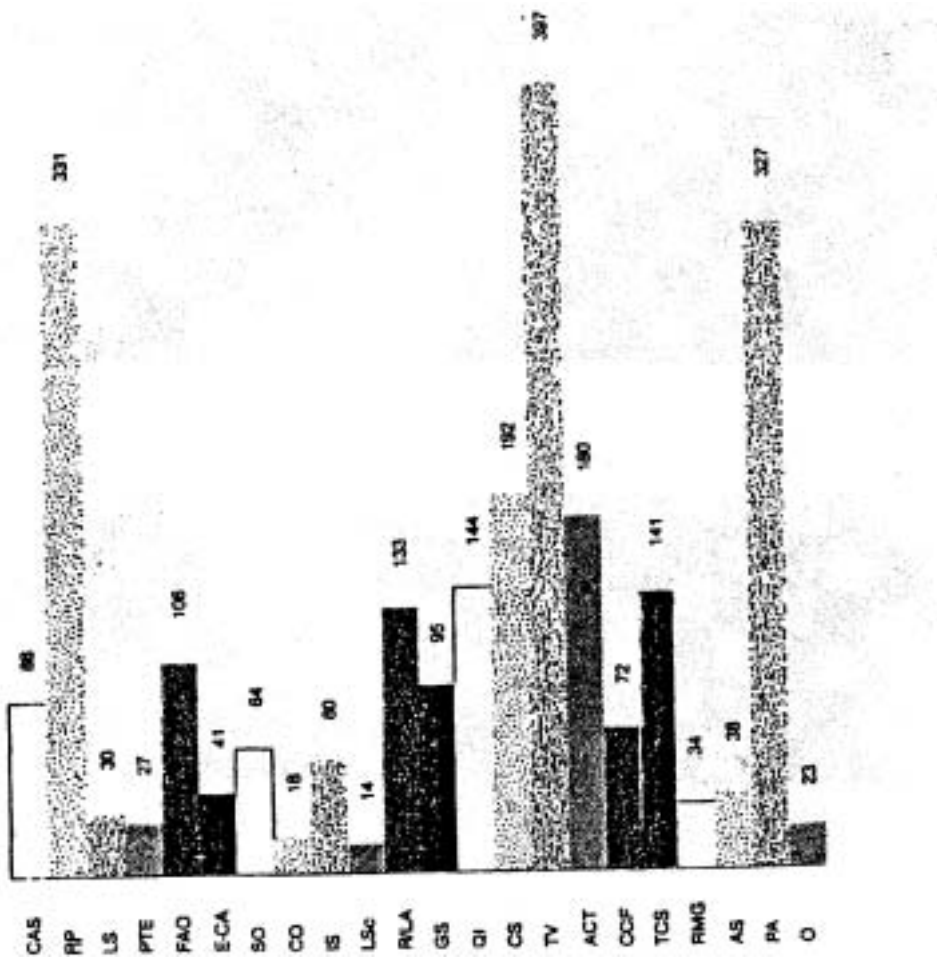
FIRST FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
PERSISTERS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE BETTER SERVED THEM AT
THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

FIGURE 5

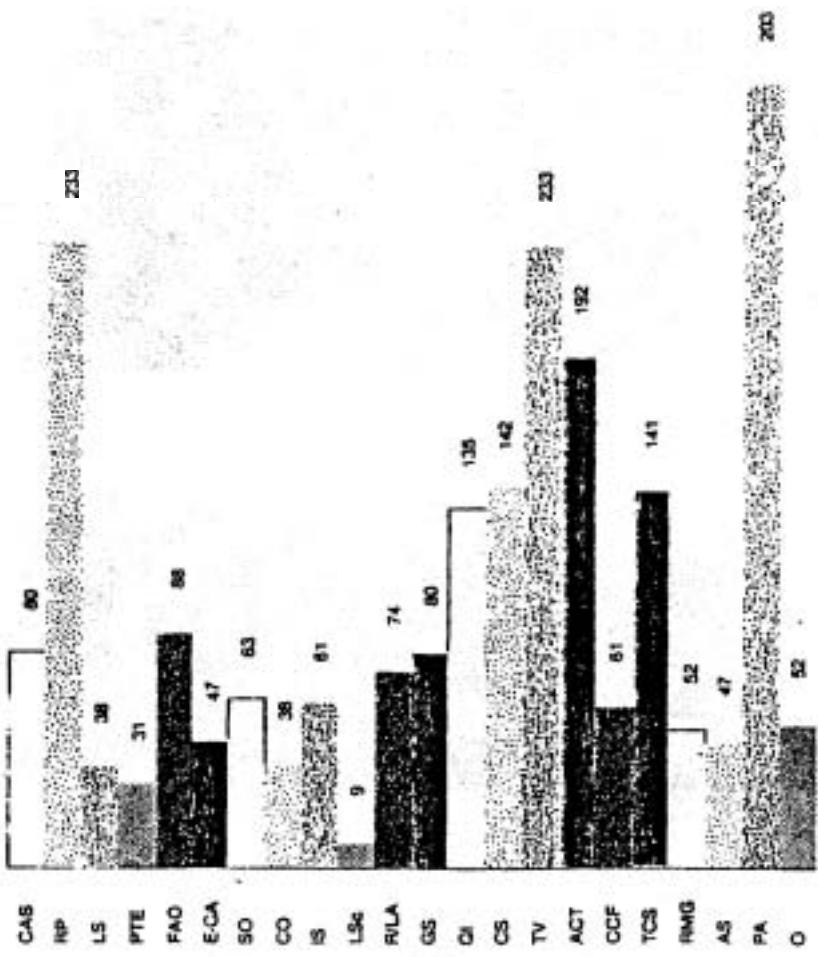
SECOND FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
PERSISTS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE BETTER SERVED THEM AT
THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

FIGURE 6

THIRD FACTOR CONCERNING SATISFACTION STATED BY STUDENT
PERSISTS THAT IF CHANGED WOULD HAVE BETTER SERVED THEM AT
THE UNIVERSITY



Note: The letters symbolize factors defined in Table III

Student **persisters** were **requested** to list the first, second, and third factors **concerning** satisfaction that if changed would have better **served them** at the University. Their responses are **graphically communicated** in **Figures 4-6**. Student **persistence respondents** listed the following as the most **frequent** items to be changed first: (1) **registration processing**, (2) **parking availability**, (3) and **television courses**. The second factors frequently cited by student **persisters** concerning satisfaction with the **University** that if changed would have better **served them** included the following: (1) **registration processing**, (2) **parking availability**, and (3) **television courses**. The third factors most often stated by student **persisters** were identical to the **first** and second factors.

CONCLUSIONS

Student **nonpersistence respondents** most frequently cited "Conflict with job and studies." and the least cited items were "Courses too difficult" and "Child care not available or too costly." Student **persisters** cited **fewer personal items** and services to be changed than did their **nonpersistence counterparts**. **Counseling** and advising **services**, **financial aid opportunities**, and **quality** of instruction were mentioned with **greater frequency** by the student **nonpersistence respondents** than student **persisters**. However, in both **cases**, most of the **items** concerning degree of satisfaction with the University that were cited to be changed fell within the realm of control of the **University's administration**, staff, and **faculty**.

Book Reviews and Notes

Patricia W. Lunneborg and Vicki M. Wilson. *To Work: A Guide for Women College Graduates*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1982. Pp. vi-222, \$6.95.

Accompanying the increased focus on careers available to college graduates, there **has been** a proliferation of popular reading materials designed to **assist** the **graduates** in their career pursuit. Separating Lunneborg and Wilson's book, *To Work: A Guide for Women College Graduates*, from those already flooding the marketplace, is their concentration on **career** issues and concerns central to women. Supplementing this, the authors approach **career** planning in a way which is congruent with the **career** options, as well as the barriers, of today's woman.

Although the **editors** announce that the book "To Work" is for women college graduates, it **appears as** though it would be of more assistance to women who are in the process of **identifying** (or redefining) what **career path** would be most suitable to them and their life goals. For example, one audience, who could thoroughly utilize the **information** provided in the book, is **re-entering** adult women. Useful **tools**, which enables the reader to **conduct a self-directed career** search, are available to the reader. The career search thus becomes **non-threatening** and **self-contained**, which may be important factors to women about to enter a major life transition. Another example might be undergraduates who are in the process of choosing life goals.

"To Work" outlines both personal and social **barriers** confronting women in their career development and suggests **methods** by which they can be overcome. Exercises, which provide **assistance** to the reader in **assessing** her **abilities** and establishing a match between these abilities and the world of work, are included. The book is aimed toward facilitating **women's wise** decision making, **goal setting** and eventual goal attainment.

Supporting a **lifespan** approach to career life planning, the authors outline the various "career **patterns**" women choose in **Chapter 1**. Several written **exercises** encourage the reader to clarify what priority work will **assume** in her life. Although this chapter **challenges** the reader to **visualize** what she wants included in her future, it could have been strengthened if the authors had also **focused** on ways in which women can negotiate with their significant others, who may be instrumental in seeing that these ideals are translated into reality.

Chapters 2 and 3 center on personal barriers to **career** development, which women confront, and strategies for overcoming these **barriers**. The authors **effectively** outline these **barriers** and **encourage** the readers to understand and accept their limitations, instead of feeling defeated by them. **Techniques** to assist the woman in **overcoming** (or perhaps lessening) these barriers are included in Chapter 3.

Reading Chapter 4 may disillusion women, when **facts** about the **incongruities** between job benefits for women and men are presented. The **purpose** of the inclusion of such **facts** is not to **elicit** a reader's anger but to **assist** her in **realistically assessing** the world of work. Readers **challenged** by these **discouraging** statistics will find strategies for conquering these inequalities in **Chapter 5**. This **Chapter (5)** outlines **tactics** for overcoming social **barriers**, found both on and off the job.