May 1996

Exploring the Congruency Between Student Satisfaction and Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education

Kathryn K. Franklin
East Tennessee State University

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EXPLORING THE CONGRUENCY BETWEEN
STUDENT SATISFACTION
AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Kathryn Kramer Franklin
May 1996
APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of

KATHRYN SUZANNE KRAMER FRANKLIN

met on the

10th day of April, 1996

The committee read and examined her dissertation, supervised her defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that her study be submitted to the Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Education.

Chair, Graduate Committee

Signed on behalf of the Graduate Council

Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE CONGRUENCY BETWEEN
STUDENT SATISFACTION AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Kathryn Kramer Franklin

Over the past two decades, the discussion of student satisfaction has moved from the periphery of higher education governance to the center of decision making. Because of the increasing demand by external stakeholders for reliable and valid measures of institutional effectiveness and the evolving "student as consumer" philosophy, the assessment of student satisfaction has become an important component in the definition of institutional effectiveness. To build a link between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness, past researchers have made the assumption that a relationship exists between these two constructs. This assumption has been grounded in a further supposition that a congruency exists between the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction and the criteria used by higher education administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness. However, neither the assumption of relationship nor supposition of congruency have been established in empirical research.

Furthermore, the grounding theory for contemporary student satisfaction assessments is based, primarily, on job satisfaction theory. It is suggested, however, that in this age of the "student as consumer" that customer satisfaction theory from the marketing discipline might be more appropriate in explaining contemporary student satisfaction. For university administrators to have confidence in the validity of student satisfaction assessment to the inference of institutional effectiveness, it is imperative that empirical evidence is used to define a valid student satisfaction theory and support a congruency between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

Utilizing a qualitative research design, 8 focus group sessions were conducted with 94 undergraduate students who attended on-campus, day classes at a southern, comprehensive, regional university during the fall semester, 1995. Four focus group sessions were conducted with 24 administrators in the internal dominant coalition of the same university. An interview was held with the university president. Content analysis was used to analyze the data
from each focus group session. With this analysis procedure, the student and administrator data were coded into attitude categories. These attitude categories were then grouped together based on emerging attitude patterns. Formal proposition statements were written about each attitude pattern. The criteria for student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness were gleaned from these proposition statements.

Data from the undergraduate student sample were reduced into 7 umbrella attitude patterns. These 7 attitude patterns were labeled: (a) my decision to attend college; (b) my career aspirations; (c) my hopes for the future; (d) my personal growth and development; (e) my education; (f) my ideal college; and (g) my accomplishments. Each attitude pattern included student discussions on different aspects of the college experience important to overall student satisfaction with the academy. Furthermore, the student sample data were analyzed for attitude pattern differences based on grade cohort and demographics. Several important differences in student satisfaction attitudes were reported. The data collected from the administrator sample were reduced into 5 umbrella attitude patterns: (a) university resources; (b) student development and growth; (c) student education; (d) learning environment; and (e) university outcomes. Each attitude pattern included administrator discussions on important variables in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness.

Twenty-one student criteria for determining overall satisfaction were gleaned from the 7 student attitude patterns. These criteria were grouped into 5 criteria categories: (a) career aspirations; (b) personal development and growth; (c) education; (d) characteristics of the ideal university; and (e) accomplishment. Twelve administrator criteria were drawn from the 5 administrator attitude patterns. These 12 criteria were collapsed into 3 categories: (a) inputs, (b) operations, and (c) outcomes. Based on the findings of this study, a congruency was found between the criteria students use to determine overall student satisfaction and the criteria administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings from the student data supported the validity of job satisfaction theory in explaining the satisfaction experience of contemporary students and the reliability of the disconfirmation process of customer satisfaction theory in assessing student satisfaction.

Based on these conclusions, five recommendations were made for the study of student satisfaction.

1. The most appropriate method to improve the reliability of assessing overall student satisfaction is the disconfirmation method of customer satisfaction theory.
2. Assessment instruments that purport to measure overall student satisfaction should be grounded in job satisfaction theory with approximately 60% of assessment questions focused on variables not related to delivery of instruction, such as, the student's sense of belonging within the college environment.

3. Satisfaction assessment instruments should be designed to measure unique satisfaction attitude differences based on grade cohort and student demographics.

4. Because of the conclusion of congruency, accountability researchers and higher education administrators can use student satisfaction assessment outcomes to explain institutional effectiveness.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Title of Project: Exploring the Congruency Between Student Satisfaction and Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education.

Principal Investigator: Kathryn Kramer Franklin

Department: Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Date Submitted: February 19, 1995

Institutional Review Board, Chair: [Signature]
DEDICATION

There are four very important people to whom I wish to dedicate this dissertation. To my husband, Claude W. Franklin, Jr., I owe you a deep gratitude for your loving support during the past four years. Your patience with all of those endless hours spent in front of a computer, those tears of frustration, and those late nights worrying about the validity of this or the reliability of that is a memory that I will forever cherish. You are truly the "wind beneath my wings".

To my daughters, the light of my life and the joy in my heart: How do I say thank you for all of your sacrifices? To Kimberly, thank you for sharing with me your strength. When I grew weary of this whole process, you seemed to always have a word of support that would help me to find the energy to move on. I forget: Who is the Mom anyway? To Kristi, thank you for sharing your sparkle. At those times when I felt frustrated and alone, you would bounce into my space with a giggle and a smile and brighten my world.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to dedicate this study to my major professor, my mentor, and my friend, Dr. W. Hal Knight. Four years ago when I asked you to serve as chair of my committee, I knew that I was getting a tough taskmaster who would continually ask that I "push the envelope" of my potential. What I did not know was that I was also getting the best mentor possible for a graduate
student. You have shared with me your expertise, your compassion, and your passion for excellence in education. From this day forward when I think of you, I will always be reminded of this quote by William Butler Yeats: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research could not have been accomplished without the help of so many people. First, I wish to acknowledge all of those administrators and students who graciously agreed to participate in my focus group sessions. Without their help, this research would not have been possible. These folks gave up 1½ to 2 hours to spend time sharing their personal thoughts and beliefs about higher education with me and each other. In my opinion, they are the greatest!

Second, I wish to thank those individuals who agreed to serve as scribes in each focus group session. These individuals helped to keep my research objective and honest -- an important role in qualitative research. I also want to send an enormous thank you to all who served as auditors of focus group transcripts. Your insight and guidance were invaluable to my research. I would also like to acknowledge those faculty who graciously allowed me to take valuable class time to recruit volunteers. There were too many to name here, but without their support my research would have ended before it even began. I also wish to thank Mr. Bob Baxley with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. I could never have pulled together my sample without his help. Finally, I wish to thank Dr. Cynthia Burnley. She was the one who introduced me to the world of accountability and the issues of student satisfaction.
Without her ideas and suggestions, this dissertation topic would never have been conceived.

I wish to thank my committee for their guidance and encouragement during the past four years and specifically with this research. To Dr. Nancy Dishner who has shared with me her expertise and knowledge of higher education administration, but, more importantly, has given to me the perfect role model as an administrator and faculty; to Dr. Donald Wilkinson whose presence has kept me anchored to a world that I truly love -- the world of business; to Dr. Russell West who so graciously shared his research knowledge, and most of his books; and to Dr. Terrence Tollefson who always seemed to know exactly when I needed a kind word of encouragement: To all of you I extend a heartfelt thank-you.

And, of course, my acknowledgments would not be complete without thanking Ms. Sharon Barnett for all of her help, support, encouragement, pampering, and friendship over the past four years.

My acknowledgments certainly would not be complete without sending my sincerest thank you to my family. They have made me who I am today and I will be forever grateful for their love and support. To my mother, Jeanette Kramer, thank you for sharing your wonderful gift of intuition, compassion, and generosity with me. To my father, Earl Kramer, thank you for giving me your ambition, your commitment to excellence, and your logical reasoning. To my
brother, Paul Kramer, thank you for sharing with me your spirituality. Whereas this program of study opened my mind, your spiritual guidance has opened my soul. This is truly a gift that I will forever cherish.

Finally, to all of those graduate students who have gone before me, thank you for lighting my path. Your guidance helped to prepare me for every step of my journey. And, to all of those graduate students who follow: Yes, it is worth the effort!
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the discussion of student satisfaction has moved from the periphery of higher education governance to the center of decision making. During the 1960s and early 1970s the interest in, and assessment of, student satisfaction was primarily the domain of student affairs personnel (Astin, Korn, & Green, 1987). These early explorations into student satisfaction were motivated more by an interest in the assessment of student involvement in campus activities than with the desire to integrate student satisfaction with university decision making. This extraneous interest in the satisfaction of the student was accommodated by a largess of resources, both in the amount of financial support for the university and student enrollment. Academic administrators could afford the luxury of designing and developing educational programs and services without first assessing the academic satisfaction criteria of the student population. The blueprint of the education process was a reflection of the educational philosophy of the institution based on the educational standards of faculty and administration (Brubacher, 1982). Student congruency with this blueprint was not an important consideration (Morstain, 1977).

However, during the 1960s and 1970s, higher education in America began to experience growing pains (Brubacher,
The academy was evolving from an elitist institution with a privileged student population and an epistemological philosophy of education to an American social institution charged with the responsibility of accommodating the needs of any student who chose to cross the threshold of higher learning. As increasing numbers of American students began to cross the higher education threshold, the shroud of mysticism that had once enveloped and protected the American university began to unravel (Keppel, 1991). No longer were the operations, vision, and mission of the academy the privileged jurisdiction of only the "internal dominant coalition": (a) the university president; (b) provost or academic vice-president; (c) financial or administrative vice-presidents; (d) vice-president of student affairs; (e) an assistant to the president; (f) academic deans; and (g) department chairs (Cameron, 1978). Stakeholders external to the governance of higher education institutions began to exhibit a new inquisitiveness in the higher education process. Parents, taxpayers, government, and business leaders, who were once content to simply provide higher education with inputs or employ the outputs, demonstrated a new interest in forging partnerships with the higher education enterprise (Peters, 1994).

Because of these new partnerships with external stakeholders, and the evolving "student as consumer" philosophy, by the early 1980s higher education had moved into a period of accountability and assessment: an era
characterized by the externally driven demands for higher education effectiveness and quality (Afrassiabi, 1987). It was this demand that, by the 1990s, had propelled the assessment of student satisfaction away from the domain of student affairs personnel and into the mainstream of academic governance.

The literature is replete with research on theories that attempt to inform the study of student satisfaction. Models of student satisfaction have been built based on job satisfaction theories (Starr, Betz, & Menne, 1972), theories of person-environment congruency (Witt & Handal, 1984), socialization theories (Nettles & Johnson, 1987), economic theories of investment (Okun, Ruehlman, & Karoly, 1991), and the marketing theory of importance-performance analysis (Carvey, 1987; Polcyn, 1986). Researchers have used these theories to explain student satisfaction across an academic term (Pennington, Zvonkovic, & Wilson, 1989), to explain the difference in the satisfaction of white students versus black students (Nettles & Johnson, 1987; Provost, 1989; Vaughn, 1991), to understand the satisfaction of adult students (Greenland, 1989; Kapeller, 1990; Sweeney, 1989), and to explain the differences in satisfaction based on gender (Nettles & Johnson, 1987). Furthermore, these theories have been used to develop models of satisfaction for public universities (Vaughn, 1991), community colleges (Okun, Ruehlman, & Karoly, 1991), and colleges offering nontraditional learning environments, such as distance
learning (Price, 1994).

This continued interest in the study of student satisfaction, and the search for a valid and reliable student satisfaction theory, has been driven largely by the continued connection between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness in accountability literature. The primary goal of the accountability movement has been the improved quality of the education process and outcome. This demand for improved quality, or institutional effectiveness, has motivated external constituents interested in the higher education process to search for methods of measuring and defining the effectiveness of each academic institution. Student satisfaction assessment has become one of the chosen methods for understanding institutional quality.

Statement of the Problem

Because of the continued focus of external stakeholders on the institutional effectiveness of the academy, a new variable has been added to the evaluation process by the internal dominant coalition (administrators at the level of department chair and above, see Cameron, 1978) of the educational process -- student satisfaction. Motivated by external demands, college administrators are increasingly incorporating satisfaction assessment results into the evaluative component of their strategic management process (Ewell, 1991).

Due to the growth in student satisfaction research, the college administrator of the 1990s has a wealth of
information available on student satisfaction in a variety of environments and based on a wide spectrum of demographic characteristics. None of the research to-date, however, has investigated a crucial component of the connection between undergraduate student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness, that is, the congruency between the criteria used by students to determine their satisfaction and the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness. For the internal dominant coalition to have confidence in the use of student satisfaction assessment as a guide for evaluating institutional effectiveness, it is imperative that empirical evidence support a congruency between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

**Significance of the Study**

As the interest in student satisfaction has moved from student affairs to the core of academic planning, the focus on student satisfaction assessment has evolved to an interest in student attitudes about the overall educational experience. This change in focus has been motivated by the desire of constituents, internal and external to university governance, for a measurement tool of one important aspect of educational accountability -- institutional effectiveness. To make a link between the measurement of student satisfaction, and the evaluation of institutional effectiveness, past researchers have made the assumption that a relationship exists between these two concepts. This
assumption has been grounded in a further supposition that a congruency exists between the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction and the criteria used by higher education administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness. Neither the assumption of relationship nor supposition of congruency have been established in empirical research.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the criteria used by undergraduate students of a southern, comprehensive, regional university in determining their satisfaction with the educational experience and the criteria used by higher education administrators in evaluating the institutional effectiveness of that university to determine if a congruency existed between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness as defined by higher education administrators.

**Limitations of the Study**

The generalizability of this study was limited to the undergraduate student population of a southern, comprehensive, regional university. Furthermore, because of the phenomenological nature of the focus group method of inquiry, the results of this study were limited to cultivating an understanding "about how people perceive a situation" (Krueger, 1988, p. 96).
Assumptions of the Study

1. Participants in the focus group sessions did not deviate radically from the value structure, philosophies, and cognitive processes of members in the target population (Templeton, 1987).

2. The range of attitude patterns and trends for the focus group participants was in close approximation to the range of attitude patterns and trends for the target population (Templeton, 1987).

3. The focus group method of inquiry was the best method to investigate the research questions.

4. Participants in the focus group offered truthful discussions about their perceptions of the research questions.

5. The moderator had the necessary skills to facilitate a focus group discussion to uncover latent attitude patterns.

Research Questions

To determine if a congruency existed between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness for a regional university, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What criteria do students use to determine their satisfaction with a southern, comprehensive, regional university?

2. What theories of satisfaction best inform a model of student satisfaction with a southern, comprehensive,
regional university based on the investigated criteria?

3. What criteria are used by the internal dominant coalition of a southern, comprehensive, regional university to evaluate institutional effectiveness?

4. Does a congruency exist between the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction and the criteria used by the internal dominant coalition to evaluate institutional effectiveness?

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions apply to this study:

*Education accountability*: The use of student outcomes assessment results to reassure stakeholders that resources invested in the higher education process are realizing a positive rate of return (Boyer, 1988).

*Education assessment*: The process of collecting evidence about the impact of the higher education process on constituents and the overall operation of the higher education institution (Boyer, 1988).

*External stakeholders*: Those individuals external to the operation of the organization who affect or are affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives (Wheelen & Hunger, 1988).

*Focus groups*: “A carefully planned (group) discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment” (Krueger, 1988, p.18).
**Institutional Effectiveness**: "Extent to which institutions of higher education accomplish their intended purposes or achieve their desired ends. [Effectiveness is] not the same as 'efficiency'" (Boyer, 1980, p. 8).

**Internal dominant coalition**: Those administrators who influence and provide direction to the management of the institution. The internal dominant coalition includes: (a) the president; (b) provost or academic vice-president; (c) financial or administrative vice-presidents; (d) vice-president of student affairs; (e) an assistant to the president; (f) academic deans; and (g) department chairs (Cameron, 1978).

**Satisfy**: "To gratify fully the wants, wishes, or desires of; to supply to the full extent that which is wished for" (McKechnie, 1983, p. 1610).

**Overview of the Study**

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study that includes the problem statement, research questions, and the significance of the study. The primary purpose of this study, as stated in Chapter 1, is to explore the congruency between the criteria students use to determine student satisfaction and the criteria used by university administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness.

In Chapter 2, the significance of this research to the literature of higher education accountability and assessment is enhanced with a discussion in five areas. First is a
discourse on accountability and assessment as a major
turning point in the history of higher education comparable
to the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the
G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944. The second area is a
discussion that focuses on the goals of accountability and
the reasons why these goals have not been attained by the
mid-1990s. The primary reason stated for nonattainment of
goals is the methodological problems associated with many of
the assessment tools used for accountability. Related to
these methodological problems, the third area of discussion
investigates the usage of standardized student surveys and
the need to explore other methods of assessing satisfaction.
Also related to the methodological concerns of assessment
tools, the fourth area examined is the validity of the
theory used to ground many contemporary satisfaction
surveys. Fifth is an exploration into the definition of
institutional effectiveness and the connection with student
satisfaction in the accountability literature. Finally, in
Chapter 2 there is an essay on focus group methodology and
its importance to this research.

Chapter 3 is a review of the research design for this
study. Included in Chapter 3 is a discussion about the (a)
development of the focus group guide; (b) implementation and
results of the pilot study; (c) population and sample for
this study; and (d) the data collection and data analysis
procedure.

The findings from the student focus group sample are
presented in Chapter 4. This chapter begins with a review of the demographic composition of the student sample followed by an in-depth discussion of the seven student satisfaction attitude patterns gleaned from the student data. The seven attitude patterns presented in Chapter 4 are: (a) my decision to attend college; (b) my career aspirations; (c) my hopes for the future; (d) my personal growth and development; (e) my education; (f) my ideal college; and (g) my accomplishments. Following the detailed discussion on the seven attitude patterns is a presentation on the unique perceptions of students on the definition of student satisfaction. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the differences in attitude patterns toward student satisfaction based on grade cohort and student demographics.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of the findings from the internal dominant coalition (administrator) sample. The chapter begins with a discussion of the composition of the sample followed by a detailed presentation of the five institutional effectiveness attitude patterns gleaned from the administrator data. The five attitude patterns are: (a) university resources; (b) student development and growth; (c) student education; (d) learning environment; and (e) university outcomes. Chapter 5 concludes with a section on comments made by administrators concerning their opinions of student attitudes.

Included in the final chapter, Chapter 6, is a
discussion of the conclusions for each research question based on the findings of this study. To answer the research questions, proposition statements were written about the student and administrator attitude patterns. These proposition statements were then converted into student and administrator criteria. Presented in Chapter 6 are the 21 student satisfaction criteria grouped into five criteria categories: (a) career aspirations; (b) personal growth and development; (c) education; (d) characteristics of the ideal university; and (e) accomplishments. There are 12 institutional effectiveness criteria for administrators presented in Chapter 6. These criteria are grouped into three categories: (a) inputs, (b) operations, and (c) outcomes. Following the detailed discussion of each research question, Chapter 6 concludes with recommendations from the study and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Purpose of Student Satisfaction Assessment

The evolution of thought concerning the assessment of student satisfaction can be traced through accountability and assessment literature. The assessment of student satisfaction during the 1960s and early 1970s was the domain of student affairs personnel. However, by the end of the 1980s student satisfaction assessment had moved into the mainstream of academic governance. The primary reason for this movement from the periphery to the center of decision making was the increasing interest by higher education policy makers in assessing institutional effectiveness.

Ewell (1989) stated that "assessing and improving the effectiveness of colleges and universities has ... taken on a new urgency in public dialogue" (p. 113). It is this urgency that has propelled the benign interest in student satisfaction of the 1960s and 1970s toward a formula in the 1990s that utilizes student satisfaction in the definition of institutional effectiveness. Morstain (1977) called for a renewed interest in the research on student satisfaction "particularly if 'satisfaction' is viewed ... as a primary criterion measure of program effectiveness" (p. 14).

According to Astin, Korn, and Green (1987), student satisfaction has become a "hot topic" for educational administrators who are trying to define institutional
effectiveness (p. 36).

Cameron (1978) found nine dimensions or criteria of institutional effectiveness in higher education. These nine dimensions were composed of 130 criteria items that Cameron compiled through extensive review of the literature and interviews with educational administrators. One of the nine dimensions by which administrators evaluated institutional effectiveness was student education satisfaction. In later research, Ewell (1989) linked the assessment of student education satisfaction and the assessment of institutional effectiveness to determine the overall effectiveness of the higher education institution.

**Higher Education Accountability and Assessment:**

**A Turning Point**

Throughout the history of higher education there have been several major turning points that have affected the future course of the academy: (a) the Yale Report of 1828; (b) the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890; (c) the GI Bill of Rights in 1944; and (d) the expanding enrollments of the 1960s (Rudolph, 1962). All of these turning points have had a profound influence on the growth of higher education, the focus of educational philosophy, and the management of the academy. Likewise, all of these turning points had one common element: a higher education system changed because of pressure from the external environment.

The Yale Report of 1828 was a response by Yale faculty to the increasing demand of external constituents to change
the focus of the college curriculum from one of disciplining the mind and soul to a focus on practical issues of education (Brubacher, 1982). In the Yale Report, faculty successfully argued for a continuation of the traditional curriculum of scholasticism at the expense of providing an education for the masses. This epistemological philosophy of the Yale faculty had a significant influence on the continuation of the old curriculum in America until the late 1800s.

Motivated by an interest in a higher education system that would "strengthen the national economy", Congress passed the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 (Keppel, 1991, p. 9). These Land Grants Acts provided financial support for the operation of a system of higher education that would address practical education and motivated the shift from an epistemological philosophy of education to a philosophy of education grounded in pragmatism (Brubacher, 1982). This pragmatic philosophy, with the focus on an education practical to the masses, aligned the system of higher education in America with American society and marked the beginning of the involvement in the internal operations of higher education by constituents external to the process.

The bond between the higher education system and society would intensify with the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill of Rights in 1944). The primary motivations for the GI Bill "included the fear of massive unemployment facing returning veterans" and the "war-caused
shortage of a college-educated generation" (Keppel, 1991, p.10). With this opening of the university campus to thousands of socio-economic groups that before had not entered the halls of the academy, the federal government once again had an influence on the educational philosophy of the higher education system. This educational philosophy renewed the call from the external constituency for an education process that informed the masses and strengthened the philosophical ties with pragmatism.

The GI Bill marked the beginning of a period of the largest growth in enrollment experienced in higher education since the founding of Harvard College in 1636 (Rudolph, 1962). The expansionism of the 1960s would further strengthen the bond between higher education and society: a bond that would, by the end of the growth period in the mid-1970s, motivate society to a renewed interest in the effectiveness of the higher education process.

As previously mentioned, because of the largess in enrollment growth and the subsequent bounty of financial resources during the 1960s, higher education in America enjoyed a period of autonomy that allowed administrators to plan, implement, and evaluate education programs and curriculum without intervention from various external stakeholders. However, during the mid-1970s this level of enjoyed autonomy began to diminish. Increasing education costs that equated to higher tuition rates for students and increased funding by state and federal government,
disillusionment within the business community with the higher education product (Osterlind & Pike, 1993), and the distrust among external stakeholders with the ability of higher education administrators to manage the education process to a quality outcome (Peters, 1994), were just a few of the reasons for the concerted demand by external stakeholders for educational accountability.

The demand for the accountability of higher education of the early 1980s evolved into state mandates for the assessment of the higher education process by the end of the decade. For example, in 1985 only five states had accountability and assessment mandates for higher education. Just five years later, however, 40 state legislatures had passed some form of accountability and assessment mandate (Young, 1993). Just as with the impetus for the Yale Report of 1828, the legislation of the Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the GI Bill of Rights in 1944, the accountability pressures brought to bear on the academy by external stakeholders have pushed higher education in America toward another crucial turning point (Ewell, 1994). According to Ewell (1991), the demands for higher education accountability and assessment in the 1990s are stronger than at any other time in recent history. Furthermore these accountability demands will forever change the relationship between the higher education institution and external stakeholders. Terenzini (1989) stated "...there can be little doubt that 'assessment' is here to stay" (p. 326).
Goals of Accountability and Assessment in Higher Education

According to Boyer (1988), there were four primary reasons for the widespread interest in assessment. First, leaders of the assessment movement in the 1980s believed that educational assessment would be a powerful impetus to institutional change, which, in turn, would equate to increased concern for education quality. Second, it was argued that educational assessment would provide faculty an opportunity and an avenue for reassessing curriculum on an ongoing basis. Third, educational assessment was seen as a communication mechanism that would stimulate discussion about quality in the education process and outcome: a discussion that would involve all levels of administration and faculty, and would focus their attention on the needs of the student. Finally, educational assessment would restore the confidence of external stakeholders in the process of higher education.

The reasons for pursuing educational assessment in the early 1980s quickly became the goals of educational assessment by the mid-1980s. Leaders of the assessment movement targeted goals of (a) promoting institutional change with assessment information; (b) stimulating interest by faculty for sweeping reforms in curricula design and implementation (Ewell, 1994); (c) enhancing communication among internal and external stakeholders about the quality of the education process; (d) placing a focus on student satisfaction (James, 1994); and (e) restoring public
confidence in higher education. Ten years later, despite the increasing popularity of higher education assessment with external stakeholders, many of these assessment goals have not been realized (Ewell, 1993).

The goals of educational assessment have not been realized over the past decade. There are many proposed reasons for the lack of goal attainment in the assessment of higher education, among them: (a) assessment information is not disseminated to important decision makers (Ewell, 1993), (b) the fear by educational leaders that assessment will lead to homogenization of higher education (Davies, 1991), and (c) the resentment felt by educators about the intervention of external publics into their education domain (Peters, 1994). However, the most important reason for the nonattainment of goals is the apprehension of the internal dominant coalition, who is charged with the responsibility of implementing change based on assessment results, with the validity and reliability of the tools of accountability measurement (Banta, Rudolph, & Van Dyke, 1994; Young, 1993).

Student Satisfaction Assessment

Because of the complex nature of assessing student outcomes in higher education, the repertoire of assessment tools in the 1980s and 1990s have included the format of standardized testing of students (Terenzini, 1989). According to Terenzini, this format of standardized testing has been the crux of many of the methodological concerns for contemporary assessment instruments and has begged the
question of validity and reliability of assessment results.

Standardized tests have several advantages: (a) they are developed by experts, (b) they are generally field-tested and normed for comparison, and (c) they save the institution the time and expense of developing institution-specific tests. However, there are distinct disadvantages to utilizing standardized testing. Standardized tests are general assessments that lack specificity, they generally focus on a limited number of objectives, and the questioning format of the test can restrict the range of what can be assessed (Terenzini, 1989). Terenzini cautioned assessors that standardized tests are used for ease in data collection and not because they are the most appropriate data collection tools.

Based on the information provided by Terenzini on the advantages and disadvantages of standardized assessment measures in general, it is reasonable to suggest that standardized student satisfaction surveys have the same concerns. Many of the more popular student satisfaction surveys currently in use by institutions of higher education are standardized. The College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) (Betz, Klingensmith, & Menne, 1970) is an example of a popular standardized student satisfaction survey that has been used to investigate a wide variety of student satisfaction situations over the past two decades. For example, the CSSQ has been used to investigate student satisfaction with an MBA program (Polcyn, 1986),
satisfaction of black students (Provost, 1989; Vaughn, 1991), student satisfaction with a community college (Stalnaker, 1994), and the satisfaction of older students (Robinson, 1987). Based on suggestions by Terenzini of the methodological problems of standardized surveys, it is reasonable to question the appropriateness of using standardized student satisfaction surveys that, by their nature, are not specific measures of a student population. Furthermore, because of the link between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness in the accountability literature, it is important to have student satisfaction assessments that can readily measure the satisfaction nuances of a diverse student population.

For example, when different student satisfaction methodologies are used in different environments, the general findings on student satisfaction are contradictory. Nettles and Johnson (1987) found statistically significant differences between the socialization of students and their subsequent satisfaction with the institution of higher education, based on gender and ethnic group. They discovered, that in general, females had a higher propensity to institutional satisfaction than males and, more specifically, that whites females had a higher satisfaction than black females. Conversely, Pennington et al. (1989) found that men were more satisfied with college than were women. Furthermore, Price (1994) found no statistically significant differences in institutional satisfaction based
Based on this evidence, it is reasonable to suggest that the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction varies from one environment and situation to another. This provides further evidence that standardized student satisfaction surveys may not be appropriate tools of assessment. Furthermore, this evidence suggests that more empirical investigation of the criteria structure of student satisfaction is warranted before satisfaction assessment information is utilized to define the evaluation of institutional effectiveness.

Of further concern to the use of standardized testing for student satisfaction is the validity of the theories used to model past student satisfaction instruments to the student experience of the 1990s. For example, the CSSQ is a standardized student satisfaction survey which assesses student satisfaction using five subscales: (a) quality of education, (b) working conditions, (c) compensation, (d) social life, and (d) recognition. This instrument as designed by Betz et al. (1970) was developed using the job satisfaction theory of Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell (1957), Hoppock (1935), and Vroom (1964) in an attempt to explain the educational experience of the student. Betz et al. theorized that the student was similar to an employee of an organization in that the student would determine their satisfaction level based on the value of the input compared with the value of the output.

The literature is replete with discussions of the use
of the CSSQ to assess student satisfaction and with the applicability of job satisfaction theory to the explanation of the student’s educational experience. According to Pennington et al. (1989) researchers have employed job satisfaction theories to explain student satisfaction primarily because “like employees, students must interact effectively with their academic environments to remain in them. Likewise, the academic environment must also meet students’ needs and reward students for their efforts” (p. 528). In developing a student satisfaction survey, Reed, Lahey, and Downey (1984) also used job satisfaction theory as the model for their instrument. They theorized that the college student was similar to an employee in that both would define satisfaction as an emotional reaction to the experience of comparing input (studying) with the output (grades). Although researchers have tended to focus on job satisfaction theory to build their models of student satisfaction, other theories have also provided the basis to build student satisfaction instruments. Witt and Handal (1984) used person-environment fit theory to investigate student satisfaction with the college environment. Tinto (1975) used Durkheim’s theory of suicide and cost-benefit analysis of investment to explain student satisfaction with college and their decision to persist to graduation. Okun et al. (1991) employed investment theory to understand the satisfaction of students in a community college setting. Carvey (1987) and Polcyn (1986) used the marketing theory of
importance - performance analysis to explain student satisfaction with an MBA program.

Whereas researchers have borrowed heavily from the management discipline and employed job satisfaction theory as a model to explain student satisfaction, past researchers have not shown the same propensity toward using customer satisfaction theories from the service marketing discipline.

**Customer Satisfaction Theory in a Service Encounter**

Services, as opposed to products, have several unique characteristics that have an influence on the assessment of quality and customer satisfaction. Services are intangible (services cannot be seen, touched, or felt), perishable (services cannot be saved or inventoried), have a service encounter wherein the production of the service is taking place simultaneously with the consumption of the service, and lack the standardization of goods (Kotler, 1988). Because of these unique characteristics, service quality can be difficult to measure. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), through research in four service areas, developed a theory of service quality and a subsequent scale of quality measurement. According to Parasuraman et al., service quality is measured on five subscales: (a) tangibles, (b) reliability, (c) responsiveness, (d) assurance, and (e) empathy. These five subscales are defined as:

1. Tangibles are those aspects of the service that can be evaluated by the customer using the five senses. For example, in a higher education institution the tangibles
might include the physical condition of the classroom, the temperature level of the dorm room, or the convenient location of student parking.

2. **Reliability** is the consistency of the service over time. In the education experience, an example of reliability might be the consistency of information given in the financial aid office over time.

3. **Responsiveness** is the ability of the service provider to respond to the unique demands of the customer. In higher education, an example of responsiveness might include the flexibility of a professor in accepting a grading assignment late.

4. **Assurance** is the confidence of the service provider in offering the service. An example of assurance might be the apparent confidence of academic advisors when counseling a student.

5. **Empathy** is the degree to which the service provider attempts to understand the unique needs of its customer. Empathy might be evidenced in the attempt of the higher education institution to understand the unique needs of the developmental student.

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality is the gap between the service expectations and the service perceptions of the customer on each of these five subscales. Therefore, the quality of a service can be assessed by simply measuring a customer's expectations prior to the service encounter and than assessing the customers
perceptions of the service encounter. If no gap or a positive gap is evident, then the service encounter was a quality experience. However, a negative gap between customer perceptions and customer expectations would indicate a shortfall in the service quality. Based on this theory of service quality, Parasuraman et al. developed a measurement scale to assess the quality of a service encounter.

Oliver (1993) linked the work by Parasuraman et al. (1988) on service quality to expectancy-disconfirmation theory to develop a theory of customer satisfaction with a service encounter.

Current versions of expectancy-disconfirmation theory...view the disconfirmation phase of the expectancy-disconfirmation process as a 'better-than/worse-than' heuristic whereby negative disconfirmation results when outcomes are poorer than expected, positive disconfirmation results when outcomes are better than expected, and confirmation (zero disconfirmation) obtains when outcomes match expectations. Satisfaction has been shown to be a function of the positivity of disconfirmation. Positive disconfirmation enhances satisfaction and negative disconfirmation decreases it, while simple confirmation has little affective impact on satisfaction (p. 73-74).
Oliver further argued that customer satisfaction with a service encounter is superordinate to the quality of the service. Therefore, the overall satisfaction of the service customer is only partly explained by the quality of the service. This theory indicates that customer satisfaction with a service encounter is a formula including quality and nonquality variables.

The work of Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Oliver (1993) may provide valuable insight into the assessment of student satisfaction in two ways. First, is the understanding that the student will enter into the education experience with certain expectations. These expectations will have an influence on the overall satisfaction level of the student. More specifically, student satisfaction is a result of the disconfirmation between expectations and perceptions of the education experience. With this knowledge as a foundation for the formulation of student satisfaction instruments, it would appear critical that assessments of satisfaction have measurement scales that measure expectations as well as perceptions of the students' experiences. Second, the theory as postulated by Oliver would support the idea that the quality of the education process is subordinate to student satisfaction. Therefore, there are other non-quality variables that will influence student satisfaction. Because the purpose of assessing student satisfaction is to evaluate institutional effectiveness, it is imperative that student satisfaction surveys are designed to uncover these
other nonquality variables so that a true assessment can be made of education quality.

The theory used in the design of a student satisfaction survey is critical to the construct validity of that survey. The literature to date supports job satisfaction theory as the preferred theory for questionnaire design. However, without empirical evidence of the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction, researchers can not have confidence in the validity of job satisfaction theory, or any satisfaction theory, to the experience of the higher education student in the 1990s. Research is warranted on the criteria of student satisfaction to match the student experience with the most valid theory.

Institutional Effectiveness

The 1980s have been referred to as the "assessment decade" (Banta, 1988). Because of the emphasis placed on education since the publication of A Nation At Risk in 1983, there have been a proliferation of reports from blue-ribbon panels on the effectiveness and quality of higher education (Sewall, 1994). All of these reports criticized the quality of higher education in America and has renewed a call for colleges and universities to improve the quality of the education process and institutional effectiveness (Osterlind & Pike, 1993).

In the 1990s, because of the increasing demand for quality improvement in higher education, institutional
effectiveness has become the focus of state and federal government concern. Since the mid-1980s 40 state legislatures have passed some form of state mandate requiring statewide assessment of higher education accountability (Young, 1993). Many of the early state mandates allowed institutions of higher learning great flexibility in managing their own assessment programs. However, by the early 1990s, state governments were shifting their focus on assessment mandates to a prescription method (Ewell, 1991). In 1992 with the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the dissatisfaction of Congress with student loan default rates pushed the federal government closer to an active participation in the assessment of institutional effectiveness (Zook, 1994). The reauthorization provided for a "Program Integrity Triad" with the federal government monitoring the financial and administrative soundness of institutions involved in financial aid, states monitoring institutions with high default rates, and accrediting agencies responsible for mandating certain national "minimum standards" to ensure the quality of higher education. Many higher education observers theorize that Congress has used a concern over student loan default rates as a method to open the door for their involvement in a nationwide mandate on higher education quality (Zook, 1994).

With this interest by state and federal governance on the assessment of institutional effectiveness, the
definition of institutional effectiveness becomes increasingly important in understanding the focus of accountability and assessment. In his research on institutional effectiveness, Cameron (1978) interviewed educational administrators to determine their effectiveness criteria. Based on the findings of his research, Cameron derived nine dimensions of institutional effectiveness for a college or university. These nine dimensions were: (a) student educational satisfaction; (b) student academic development; (c) student career development; (d) student personal development; (e) faculty and administrator employment satisfaction; (f) professional development and quality of faculty; (g) system openness and community interaction; (h) ability to acquire resources; (i) organizational health. In his research, Cameron found evidence that supported the reliability and validity of these nine dimensions in defining institutional effectiveness.

The sample chosen by Cameron (1978) consisted of administrators within the internal dominant coalition of the institution. According to Cameron, the internal dominant coalition consisted of those administrators who influence and provide direction to the management of the institution. Cameron stated two reasons for choosing the internal dominant coalition for his sample. First, Cameron postulated that the internal dominant coalition should be the primary source of institutional effectiveness criteria
and measurement because they are "the resource allocators, the determiners of organizational policy, and the explicators of organizational goals". Second, the internal dominant coalition are chosen because of the assumption that they are a "knowledgeable source about each of the organizational aspects under investigation at the institutional level" (Cameron, 1978, p. 307). The internal dominant coalition includes: (a) the president; (b) provost or academic vice-president; (c) financial or administrative vice-presidents; (d) vice-president of student affairs; (e) an assistant to the president; (f) academic deans; and (g) department chairs. Due to the evidence found in Cameron's research to support the reliability and validity of the nine dimensions of institutional effectiveness derived from the data collected from Cameron's internal dominant coalition, this sample schema was replicated for the administrator sample of this study. According to Ewell (1989), the empirical investigations into higher education effectiveness have followed "two different streams": a concentration on actual student learning and development as a measure of effectiveness or an investigation into the organizational functioning that explain institutional effectiveness (p. 113). In his research, Ewell (1989) proposed that in actuality the two streams of empirical investigative focus are not different. That, in fact, student learning and development is influenced by institutional effectiveness and institutional
effectiveness is a function of student learning and development. Ewell used four categories of student learning and development: (a) student education satisfaction, (b) student academic development, (c) student career development, and (d) student personal development. He defined institutional effectiveness using 12 items grouped into four categories: (a) institutional characteristics, i.e., size and selectivity; (b) institutional mission; (c) institutional culture; and (d) institutional functioning. Ewell suggested that the two streams, institutional effectiveness and student learning and development, are linked by the culture of the institution.

Therefore, according to Ewell (1989), the overall effectiveness of an institution of higher education is specific measures of institutional effectiveness coupled with student learning and development. One component in the student learning and development focus is student education satisfaction. Based on the Ewell research, a link should exist between institutional effectiveness and student education satisfaction. The commonality between institutional effectiveness and student education satisfaction is found in the culture of the higher education institution. Culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, and ideologies of the organization participants (Masland, 1985). Therefore it is through the exploration of the organizational culture that the reality of congruency between the education satisfaction criteria of students and
the institutional effectiveness criteria of administrators can be determined.

Because of the phenomenological nature of the focus group method of inquiry and the immersion of the researcher into the environment of an organization, it is the most appropriate data collection method for tapping into the culture of an organization. The focus group method allows the researcher the opportunity to interview participants of a culture while they are comfortably ensconced in the physical environment of that culture. Furthermore, because the focus group method is a "group" data collection tool, the participants of the culture are observed and recorded as they interact with other cultural participants (Templeton, 1987). Due to the culturally bound characteristics of the focus group method of inquiry, it is the most appropriate data collection vehicle for exploring the criteria of student satisfaction and evaluation of institutional effectiveness of a higher education institution.

Focus Group Method of Inquiry

The brainchild of the social sciences and the favored step-child of marketing research, focus group methodology is finding increasing favor in all areas of research. Whereas social science and marketing research experts have perfected the use of focus groups in data collection and descriptive analysis over the past decade, the use of focus groups in educational and organizational settings has not been as
commonplace (Lederman, 1990). However, one predicted trend is the increased use of focus groups in these areas. Focus group methodology has proven to be a useful tool in exploring such issues as curriculum design (Lederman, 1990), the effectiveness of education (Lederman, 1990), the recruitment of students (Sevier, 1989), and the assessment of student affairs programs and services (Kaase & Harshbarger, 1993).

Focus groups are increasing in popularity in the evaluation of student programs because of the unique opportunity for the researcher to personally experience the attitudes and opinions of respondents. No other data collection approach provides the same level of intimate conveyance of data as the focus group (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). During a focus group session, the researcher can match nonverbal and verbal cues to develop a true and accurate profile of a respondent's attitude. Because the interviewing process is a free flowing dialog between moderator and participants, the moderator can ask probing questions that may uncover some deep rooted attitudes that a simple questionnaire could not ascertain -- particularly a standardized questionnaire. Focus groups provide information in a timely manner to allow quick decision making response. In some circumstances, data collection by focus groups can be less expensive than some of the more traditional methods.

Just as with any qualitative research method, focus
group methodology is not without its critics. The literature on the problems with focus groups tend to revolve around the issues of generalizability, objectivity, reliability, and validity (Bers, 1989). Within the construct of generalizability, many quantitative researchers point to the typically small size of focus group participation and argue that such a small sample from a total population can not be representative. The counter argument from supporters of focus group work, however, point to the phenomenological nature, "experiencing the experience", of focus groups (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). It is not the intent of focus groups to quantify reality, but instead the purpose is to understand perception, attitudes, and opinions.

Objectivity is always a concern when the research method puts the researcher in the role of observer and data analyst. Focus group methodology is ripe for this criticism because, in many instances, the researcher and the moderator of the group are one in the same. To avoid problems with objectivity it is advised (a) that the moderator has no vested interest in the outcome of the data collected, (b) that the moderator avoid interjecting their ideas into the group conversation, and (c) that the analysis of data be performed with the same exacting and skillful requirements of quantitative data analysis (Bers, 1989).

As with any research method, the reliability and validity of the data collected is a concern for focus group
researchers. Reliability is the assurance that a particular data collection method will have consistent results when repeatedly administered (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). Once again, the purpose of focus group methodology is not to quantify results to test reality, but to generate understanding of attitudes and opinions. In other words, the purpose of a focus group is not to ask "how many" but instead to ask "why"? In this situation, reliability is not a critical factor.

Validity is the appropriate match of the data collected to the research objectives (Bers, 1989). A well conducted focus group can ensure that there is little discrepancy between stated attitudes and actual behavior. A valid focus group session is one that has (a) clearly defined objectives, good recruiting of quality participants, (b) competent moderating, and (c) exacting analysis of data. Krueger (1988) stated,

It is important to keep in mind that the intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, and not to make statements about the population but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation (p. 96). Because of this phenomenological purpose of the focus group, the analysis of focus group data becomes vitally important. To best "understand" the attitudes and opinions of focus group participants, the researcher must employ a data analysis technique that will enhance their ability to
uncover attitude patterns and trends: patterns and trends that are embedded in the often capricious language of human subjects.

Content Analysis of Focus Group Data

Content analysis is used by focus group researchers to excavate attitude patterns and trends of focus group participants from the vast and diverse scripts of focus group discussions. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1980), in the data analysis of focus group research the interpretation or insight into the underlying patterns and trends does not simply leap out from the "set of words" used in focus group discussion. Content analysis, however, provides focus group researchers with a "systematic and verifiable" method of data analysis that improves the researcher's ability to reduce the multifarious data into formative patterns and trends of attitude determination. Content analysis is systematic, in that, it "follows a prescribed, sequential process" (Krueger, 1988, p. 111). By reason of this sequential process, content analysis improves the verifiability of the research findings.

In a compilation of writings on the use of content analysis in focus group data analysis, eight steps have been identified to facilitate the interpretation of focus group data. The first step in the analysis of data is the preplanning of the focus group session to ensure that the data collected matches the research questions and the
purpose of the study (Krueger, 1988). In this step, the researcher (a) writes the focus group guide; (b) selects the appropriate focus group participants; (c) selects the site for the focus group session; (d) determines the method of recording the session; and (e) trains the moderator and the scribe responsible for data collection in a manner consistent with the purpose of the research.

The primary responsibility of the moderator in focus group research is to facilitate the discussion of the focus group session around the research questions. According to Krueger (1988), the moderator of the focus group session can be the researcher or a third party who is indifferent to the findings of the study. There are advantages to either scenario. The decision about the moderation of the sessions should be made based on the personal attachment of the researcher to the findings. If the researcher has a vested interest in the direction of the findings, then a third party should be chosen to moderate the focus group sessions. However, if the researcher can remain personally detached from the research findings, then the researcher is the best choice for moderator due to their knowledge of the purpose of the research (Templeton, 1987).

According to Templeton, the researcher as moderator, or rapporteur, brings a certain knowledge of the research purpose and agenda that cannot be duplicated by an outside, third party moderator. Because of the rapporteur's intimate knowledge of the research purpose, the rapporteur can better
navigate the unique twists and turns of the group discussion to keep the conversation valid to the research agenda and ensure the collection of usable data. Due to the advantages of the rapporteur as compared to the moderator, a rapporteur was used in this research.

An important partner with the rapporteur in each focus group session is the focus group scribe. The focus group scribe is responsible for (a) observing the behavior of focus group participants; (b) making notes of nonverbal cues and behavior patterns that are pertinent to the research questions; and (c) providing the rapporteur with a second opinion on the nuances of the data collection process. The primary purpose of the scribe is to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the session. The scribe’s importance to the objectivity of a focus group session is increased when a rapporteur is the facilitator of the group discussion. Whereas, the intimate relationship of the rapporteur to the research agenda is a strong advantage to protecting the integrity of the focus group session, it can also create concerns of objectivity about the nature of the data collected. With the use of an outside, third party to serve as scribe these objectivity concerns can be reduced.

The second step in the content analysis process is the debriefing session between the rapporteur and the scribe immediately following each focus group session (Krueger, 1988). During this debriefing, the rapporteur and scribe compare their notes to match verbal interactions with
nonverbal cues and behavior trends. It is also during the debriefing session that the rapporteur and scribe compare their thoughts on the nature of the data collected during the session. Any discrepancies between the rapporteur's perception and the scribe's perception of the data collection process is negotiated and resolved before moving on to data analysis.

In the third step, immediately following the debriefing session, the rapporteur transcribes all recordings of the focus group session (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1980). It is important that special care be taken to ensure that the transcripts are an accurate account of the focus group session. Once the transcripts are prepared for each session, the rapporteur reads each transcript and attaches notes on pertinent nonverbal cues. If there is a doubt on the matching of verbal with nonverbal cues, or if there are discrepancies of perception between the rapporteur and the scribe during the debriefing session on what occurred during the focus group session, the rapporteur may request an additional meeting with the scribe to discuss and negotiate these conflicts. It is important to the validity of the focus group data that the rapporteur and the scribe agree on the written account of the session before the rapporteur begins to code data.

With the validity of the data verified by the rapporteur and the scribe, the rapporteur is ready to begin the interpretative process of data analysis. To investigate
the underlying attitude patterns and trends, the rapporteur must reduce the vast and diverse set of words into recurring categories or “codes” (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Codes are usually a single word that can best summarize a recurring attitude. Because these codes are used to determine attitude patterns and trends, it is important that codes have a comparable structure and are correlated to each other in meaning. Furthermore, the rapporteur will design these codes in a manner that is relevant to the research agenda and the research questions.

In the fourth step of the content analysis, the rapporteur reads through each transcript and debriefing notes with the purpose of determining the coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1986). The coding categories are based on trends found in the first, cursory reading of the transcript coupled with the purpose of the research and the research questions. The rapporteur must be clear on the unit of analysis of the coding categories (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The rapporteur determines and specifies whether the unit of analysis is a single word, a sentence, or a group of sentences in a paragraph.

At this point in the fourth step, it is recommended that the focus group rapporteur begin a double coding procedure for reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In double coding, an auditor knowledgeable in the research topic, but indifferent to the findings, reviews the transcript of the focus group session and develops a set of
coding categories. The coding categories of the auditor are compared with the categories of the rapporteur to determine differences in coding. These differences are negotiated by the rapporteur and the auditor until an agreement is made on the proper coding category.

With the coding categories in place, the rapporteur is ready to begin the fifth step in the data analysis. In this step the rapporteur reads, in detail, the transcripts and the debriefing notes to categorize data units into predetermined codes. It is in this step of data analysis that a computer program designed to search and sort text can be used to reduce the time investment of qualitative data analysis (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1980). The computer software program chosen for the data analysis of this research was the Ethnograph 4.0.

The Ethnograph 4.0 is a computer program designed specifically for the unique data analysis challenges of qualitative research. The program can be used to analyze data collected from (a) personal interviewing, (b) field notes from observational research, (c) open-ended questions on surveys, and (d) focus group discussions. The Ethnograph 4.0 is designed to (a) store transcripts of focus group discussions, (b) group data units into coding categories, sort categories by the research variables, and (c) quantify the number of “hits” in each category (Seidel, Friese, & Leonard, 1995).
Pattern coding is the sixth step in the content analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1984). With the coding of all data, the rapporteur combines individual codes into larger categories that help to portray a pattern or trend. In the seventh step, the rapporteur writes an informal summary of the pattern codes. Memoing is an ongoing summary that allows the rapporteur to informally reflect on the inter-relationships of the pattern codes during the data analysis process. In the eighth step of the content analysis, the rapporteur converts the informal memoing into a formal proposition statement of attitude patterns and trends.

Miles and Huberman (1984) have recommended that steps four through seven -- the process of determining the coding categories, disseminating the data into codes, determining the pattern codes, and memoing -- should be an ongoing process that occurs after each focus group session. It is their contention that the focus group rapporteur should continually reflect on emerging patterns so that those new patterns can be tested in the next focus group session by altering the focus group guide. According to Templeton (1987), however, it is important to the validity of focus group research to use a tested focus group guide that is not altered from one session to another. The consistency of the questions within a focus group guide becomes of primary importance when the research questions dictate an exacting comparison of findings between different focus group
sessions. Due to the importance in this research of cross-comparisons of focus group findings, the rapporteur decided not to investigate emerging patterns by altering the focus group guide. Therefore, in the content analysis of the data for this study, the rapporteur conducted steps four through eight after all of the data had been collected from the student and the administrator focus group sessions.

Summary

The assessment of student satisfaction has moved from the periphery of academic governance to the center of decision making because of the increasingly important influence of educational accountability. Within this influence of educational accountability is the desire by internal and external stakeholders of the higher education process to use student satisfaction assessment as a measure of institutional effectiveness.

Accountability and assessment in higher education is a crucial turning point in the history of higher education and as a turning point will continue to have an important influence on the governance of the academy (Ewell, 1994). Similar to other turning points in the history of higher education, (a) the Yale Report of 1828; (b) Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890; (c) GI Bill of Rights in 1944; and (d) the subsequent expansionism of the 1960s, the demand for accountability and assessment by stakeholders external to the governance of the university will continue to strengthen the bond between the higher education system; American
society; and state and federal government. This bond can only increase the importance of accountability and assessment, which in turn will increase the demand by stakeholders for the assessment of student satisfaction. Therefore, the importance of student satisfaction assessment to academic governance will not abate in the foreseeable future.

Whereas the demand for accountability and assessment have steadily increased since the 1980s, the goals of the assessment movement have not been realized. A primary reason for this nonattainment of goals is the distrust of the measurement tools of higher education assessment by those institutional planners who are charged with the responsibility of using the tools for assessment and implementing changes based on the findings of the assessment. Key to the distrust by higher education administrators are the perceived methodological problems of many assessment measures.

In the assessment of student satisfaction there are two concerns: the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing standardized instruments to measure student satisfaction and the appropriateness of the theory used to design and develop student satisfaction measurements. Because of the resource advantages of using standardized instruments, higher education administrators have increasingly utilized standardized student satisfaction surveys. There is a concern with the ability of these standardized instruments
to accurately assess student satisfaction in a variety of educational environments and over a wide range of student demographic differences. It is reasonable to question the assumption used in the administration of standardized surveys that student satisfaction criteria are similar.

The predominate theory used in designing and developing student satisfaction instruments has been job satisfaction theory. Researchers who use job satisfaction theories argue that the student is similar to the employee in their attempt to equate the value of their input with the value of the output. However, because of the new student-as-consumer philosophy of the 1980s and 1990s, it is suggested that researchers look to customer satisfaction theories in the service marketing arena to explain student satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction in service marketing is determined by the psychological progress of expectancy-disconfirmation. In this process the customer determines satisfaction by comparing their expectations of the service encounter with their perceptions of the actual event. In the expectancy-disconfirmation process, a positive disconfirmation enhances satisfaction, whereas a negative disconfirmation increases dissatisfaction. Furthermore within customer satisfaction theory, researchers argue that customer satisfaction with a service encounter is superordinate to the quality of the service implying that there are other nonquality variables that can have an influence on overall satisfaction.
The research in accountability and assessment link student education satisfaction with institutional effectiveness. According to Cameron (1978), student educational satisfaction is one of nine dimensions used by the internal dominant coalition to define institutional effectiveness. Cameron's research is important to this study because of the connection made between student educational satisfaction and institutional effectiveness, and the validity evidence of the sampling schema — the internal dominant coalition — used by Cameron to explore institutional effectiveness. Furthermore Ewell (1989) postulated that, in assessing the overall effectiveness of an institution, student educational satisfaction is linked to institutional effectiveness through the culture of the organization. According to Ewell, it is through the exploration of the organization's culture that the researcher can begin to develop an understanding of the effectiveness of the institution. The best method of inquiry to explore the culture of an organization is the focus group method.

Focus group method of inquiry is enjoying increasing favor by researchers as a quality data collection tool. This favored status results from the inherent advantages in group communication. The primary advantage of focus group methodology is the ability to probe beyond superficial data collection into deeper attitudes and opinions of focus group participants. The focus group method of inquiry is the most
appropriate vehicle for exploring the attitudes and opinions of participants of a culture. Focus groups are conducted with cultural participants within the cultural environment concerning issues of importance to the culture. If it is true, as Ewell (1989) postulates, that the connection between student and institutional quality resides in the culture, then the focus group is the vehicle of choice for this research. A successful rapporteur can use the communication interplay between participants to identify idea agreement that goes beyond the ability of frequency testing techniques in the understanding of issues.

The analysis of focus group data is critical to the phenomenological purpose of the focus group. With content analysis methodology, the focus group researcher has a systematic and verifiable process of reducing multifarious data into fundamental attitude patterns and trends. The content analysis procedure is composed of eight steps ranging from the preplanning phase of the focus group session, which includes preparation of the focus group guide, to the final step of converting attitude patterns into formal proposition statements. It is from these attitude patterns that the rapporteur will glean the criteria students use to determine student satisfaction and the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness.
A qualitative research design was used in this study to determine the congruency between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness for a southern, comprehensive, regional university. A focus group method of inquiry was employed to investigate the criteria used by undergraduate students to determine student satisfaction and the criteria used by the internal dominant coalition (administrators) of a higher education institution to evaluate institutional effectiveness. According to Cameron (1978), the internal dominant coalition includes: (a) the president; (b) academic vice-president; (c) financial vice-president; (d) vice-president of student affairs; (e) an assistant to the president; (f) college deans; and (g) department chairs. For this study, associate and assistant vice-presidents were included in the internal dominant coalition due to the planning and allocation support they provide their respective vice-presidents.

**Development of the Focus Group Guides**

The development of the focus group guide took place in three phases: (a) first-generation development based on the work of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1991); (b) a review of the initial guide by a panel of higher education administrators and the development of a second generation
guide; and (c) a test of the second generation guide with a pilot study.

First Generation Focus Group Guide

Student focus group guide. The first generation student focus group guide was developed based on the work by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1991) measuring customer satisfaction in the service marketing industry. The customer satisfaction survey, as designed by Parasuraman et al. based on their research, used statements about an "excellent" organization to measure customers expectations and perceptions of experience. Their questions did not directly probe the customer about their satisfaction level. Examples of statements on the survey included: "Excellent telephone companies will have modern-looking equipment." or "Excellent telephone companies will give customers individual attention" (Parasuraman et al., 1991, p. 446).

Based on this structuring of a customer satisfaction survey, the focus group guide for this research was designed to indirectly explore, with questions 1 and 2, the attitude patterns of student satisfaction by soliciting discussion from students about their overall opinion of college. (See Appendix A.) Furthermore, the Parasuraman, et al. (1991) technique of asking customers about the "excellent" company was employed utilizing a discussion of the "ideal" university in question 3 of the guide. This question on the ideal university was designed to elicit the most profitable
discussion on student satisfaction criteria. Question 4 was included in the survey to allow for a direct exploration of student attitudes and opinions about the concept of student satisfaction.

Administrator focus group guide. The focus group guide for administrators (Appendix B) was designed, in part, to replicate the student focus group guide. Questions 1, 2, and 5 of the administrator guide were designed to parallel the student focus group guide. The intent was to provide a link to compare responses given by administrators and responses given by students. Question 6, requesting administrators to define student satisfaction from the perspective of the student, was included in this guide as a vehicle for exploring administrators' perceptions of student attitude concerning satisfaction.

Questions 3 and 4 on the administrator guide were designed based on the previously mentioned research by Cameron (1978). The content and intent of these two questions were congruent with questions used by Cameron in research to investigate the components of institutional effectiveness as perceived by the internal dominant coalition of a university.

Second Generation Focus Group Guides

After the first generation focus group guides were designed, the rapporteur met with two separate panels of higher education administrators to review and critique the
guides. The first panel was a group of graduate students from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the regional university. These graduate students were all employed in some administrative capacity with a university or community college. The second panel were current administrators with the regional university under study. Revisions were made to the focus group guide based on the recommendations of both panels.

**Student focus group guide.** With approval from the panels, the second generation student focus group guide (Appendix C) was altered to include an introductory question and three closure questions. The introductory question was a word association game designed to allow the group time to become acclimated to the process and feel comfortable sharing their ideas with each other. To start the word association game, the rapporteur instructed focus group participants to listen carefully to a single word cue read by the rapporteur and then to respond with the first word that came to their minds in association with each cue. Following the instructions, the rapporteur would offer a word cue and allow participants time to respond to that cue. Seven cues were read in each focus group session.

The second generation student guide added three closing questions -- question numbers 6, 7 and 8 -- designed to allow the group closure on the discussion and a chance to summarize their thoughts and emotions. A final question, question 9 was designed to tie the focus group experience to
a quantitative survey on student satisfaction that was conducted on the university campus during the spring, 1995. The purpose of this question was to establish a statistical relationship between the focus group sample of this research and the much larger sample of the quantitative study.

Administrator focus group guide. The two panels approved additions to the second generation administrator focus group guide (Appendix D) of an introductory question and two closure questions. Question 1 of the administrator guide was a word association game similar to the introductory question on the student guide and was included to provide participants with an opportunity to become acclimated to the group discussion process. Questions 8 and 9 were developed as closure questions congruent with closure questions on the student focus group guide.

Pilot Study

A pilot study with the second generation focus group guides was conducted during the spring and summer semester, 1995. The pilot study included four student sessions: one session in each grade cohort, and one administrator session. There were 28 student participants; (a) 7 freshmen, (b) 6 sophomores, (c) 7 juniors, and (d) 8 seniors. The administrator session was comprised of 6 department chairs.

This pilot was performed for three reasons: (a) to perfect the procedure for recruiting volunteers for each focus group session and to provide recruiting benchmarks;
(b) to provide the rapporteur with an opportunity to test facilitation skills with students and administrators; and (c) to test the validity of the focus group guides.

Recruiting Focus Group Participants

During the pilot study, the following recruiting procedure was tested and proven to be effective in soliciting student volunteers for this study:

1. A sampling frame from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning was used to select a purposive sample of 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 level courses.

2. The instructor of record in each class was contacted to solicit permission to visit with the class.

3. During each class visit a presentation was made to students requesting their help.

4. Students who volunteered completed a sign-up form with their name, phone number, major, and grade cohort.

5. Student volunteers were telephoned to confirm their participation.

6. Two days prior to the scheduled session, student volunteers were, again, telephoned to remind them of their session.

The pilot study provided the rapporteur with several recruiting benchmarks. In the pilot only 16% of those students who were enrolled in each selected class, volunteered to participate in a focus group session. Of those who volunteered, only 31% actually participated in a
Therefore of the total number of students enrolled in each class, only 6% participated. With this information as a guide, the rapporteur had a benchmark to follow in determining the number of classes to visit to recruit volunteers for the actual study.

For the administrator pilot session it was necessary to select a sample of participants within an administrative rank large enough to accommodate a pilot study and the actual data collection sessions. Of the five administrator ranks within the internal dominant coalition, the only rank with a sufficient number of administrators was that of department chair. During the pilot study a procedure for contacting administrators and requesting their participation in a focus group session was established. This procedure included: (a) selecting administrators to participate in the focus group session; (b) sending administrators a letter outlining the study and requesting their participation; (c) contacting administrators by phone confirming their participation; and (d) finally, sending a reminder memo to the administrator two days prior to the session.

Facilitation Skills

According to Templeton (1987), the ability of a focus group participant to become actively engaged in thought-provoking and data-rich conversation is directly related to the age and life experience of the participant. Therefore, the facilitation skills of the rapporteur for a successful
focus group session must vary depending on the maturity of the participant.

In this research, the rapporteur was involved with two distinct groups in terms of age and life experiences -- the student and the administrator. Furthermore, within the student focus group session, the rapporteur had the experience of melding together the conversations of traditional and nontraditional age students. The pilot study provided the opportunity for the rapporteur to explore those facilitation skills that are necessary to encourage in-depth discussion from such a diverse group of participants. From the pilot it was learned that (a) students needed much more prodding to encourage conversation than was necessary for administrators, (b) students were more likely to talk in specific terms about their attitudes than were administrators, and (c) administrators required more facilitation to keep the discussion focused. In summary, in the student focus group session, the rapporteur used facilitation skills that continuously persuaded students to participate. In the administrator sessions, however, the facilitation skills that were the most appropriate were those skills that kept the conversation focused and encouraged administrators to feel comfortable sharing attitudes that were specific to their experience.

Validity of the Focus Group Guide

The pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the student and administrator guide in procuring appropriate
data for the research questions. During the course of the student focus group sessions, the rapporteur experimented with different sequencing of questions to determine the most appropriate order of questioning to elicit a lively discussion among students. By the end of the pilot study, it was determined that the second generation focus group guides were appropriately designed for each sample group.

Finally to test the validity of the guides to the research questions, the rapporteur analyzed the data from the pilot study utilizing a content analysis methodology. The data analysis from the pilot supported the validity of the focus group guides in answering the research questions. With that finding the second generation guides were accepted as the instrument for this research.

Population

The target population included undergraduate students and the internal dominant coalition (administrators) of a southern, comprehensive, regional university.

Sample

To investigate the criteria for student satisfaction and the criteria used in evaluating institutional effectiveness, two different sample sets were used in this research -- an undergraduate student sample and an administrator sample.

The first sample was 94 undergraduate students enrolled and attending classes during the fall semester, 1995. A
A purposive sample was employed to obtain a sample of 25 undergraduate classes. The sampling frame of all 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 level classes was provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning of the regional university. A representative number of classes were chosen in each of the four course levels: (a) three 1000 level courses with a total enrollment of 611 students; (b) five 2000 level courses with an enrollment of 357 students; (c) nine 3000 level courses with an enrollment of 353 students; and (d) eight 4000 level courses with an enrollment of 319 students. The reason for this purposive selection was to increase the probability of a balanced participation among freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Aside from the course level criterion, other criteria used in choosing courses were: (a) courses with the largest enrollment to ease in scheduling focus group session; (b) courses with a tendency toward a culturally diverse enrollment to ensure minority participation in the focus groups; and (c) in 3000 and 4000 level courses, a representative sample was drawn from each university college to increase the probability that no one major was over-represented in focus group sessions.

Once the classes were chosen, the rapporteur contacted each instructor and requested class time to talk with the students about the study and to ask for volunteers to participate. The incentive for participation was a free pizza lunch and a packet of coupons from area merchants. In
some classes, faculty offered students bonus points on their next exam as an incentive for participation.

Out of a total class enrollment of 1640 students for the 25 classes, 268 (16.3%) students volunteered for the study. Those students who volunteered were asked to complete a sign-up form providing the rapporteur with their name, phone number, major, and grade cohort. The rapporteur telephoned each volunteer to schedule a focus group session. A follow-up phone call was made to each volunteer the evening prior to their scheduled focus group session. Of the 268 volunteers, only 94 (35%) students actually participated in a session: (a) 26 freshmen, (b) 16 sophomores, (c) 25 juniors, and (d) 27 seniors. Of the total number of students enrolled in each class, only 5.7% participated in the focus group sessions. This compares favorably with the 6% recruiting benchmark from the pilot study.

The second sample was comprised of administrators who had responsibility for evaluating institutional effectiveness. Based on research by Cameron (1978) and utilizing the internal dominant coalition schema, a purposeful sample was drawn of administrators: (a) university president; (b) academic vice-president; (c) vice-presidents of finance and student affairs; (d) associate and assistant vice-presidents (e) an assistant to the president, (f) college deans; and (g) department chairs.

A sampling frame of all current administrators in these
positions was obtained from the Office of Human Resources of the regional university. The rapporteur sent a letter to each administrator explaining the purpose of the research and requested their participation in a focus group session. Each administrator was subsequently telephoned to schedule a focus group session. The president of the university, however, was scheduled for a personal interview due to a concern about his influence on the discussion of any focus group session in which he might be placed. A total of 25 administrators participated in the focus group sessions.

Data Collection

Focus group sessions were scheduled with each of the two sampling sets: 8 focus group sessions with the undergraduate student sample and 4 sessions with administrators. One personal interview was conducted with the university president. The undergraduate student focus group sessions had a range of 8 to 15 students per session and the administrator sessions had a range of 5 to 10 participants in each session.

All focus group sessions were audio-recorded to ease data analysis. In the first contact made with each focus group participant, permission was obtained to record the proceedings of the focus group sessions. At the beginning of each session participants were once again reminded of the audio-recording of the session and given the opportunity to leave if they had anonymity concerns. In each session, the researcher served as the rapporteur of the focus group. It
was the responsibility of the rapporteur to facilitate the discussion of the focus group. Along with the rapporteur, a scribe attended each session to observe the data collection process. Each focus group session lasted 1½ to 2 hours.

**Data Analysis**

The following steps were used in the content analysis of the focus group data:

1. Immediately following each focus group session, a debriefing session was held between the rapporteur and scribe for the purpose of summarizing the focus group session.

2. The rapporteur transcribed the audio recordings of each session.

3. A follow-up meeting with the rapporteur and scribe was scheduled, as needed, to review the written transcript and to make notes directly on the transcript to match verbal interaction and nonverbal cues.

4. For each of the sample sets the following procedure was used to code the data units:
   a. A general reading of the transcript was performed to determine coding categories. Codes were a single word that best summarized a recurring attitude. For example, the code word "Content" was used in this research to encompass all student comments that associated satisfaction with the feeling of contentment. (After the first focus group session,
all subsequent transcripts were read to verify the existing codes and to add new codes.)

b. Double code procedure: An auditor knowledgeable in the research topic reviewed the transcript of the focus group session and developed a set of coding categories. The coding categories of the auditor were compared with the categories of the rapporteur to determine differences in coding. These differences were negotiated by the rapporteur and the auditor until an agreement was made on the proper coding category.

c. The rapporteur used the Ethnograph v4.0 to read the transcript and code data.

d. A code book was developed within the Ethnograph v4.0 to define and track each attitude pattern and trend. (See Appendix E for the student code book and Appendix F for the administrator code book.)

e. The rapporteur reduced the coding categories into pattern codes. With the coding of all data and the development of the code book, the rapporteur combined individual codes into larger categories that helped to portray patterns or trends.

f. The rapporteur wrote an informal memo of each emerging patterns. Memoing is a summary of the pattern codes. Memoing allowed the rapporteur to informally reflect on the inter-relationships of the pattern codes during the data analysis process.
g. Even though the literature on focus group analysis suggested that coding should be on-going to influence the wording of future focus group guides, the focus group guide was kept intact for each session and not revised in process. This was done to allow for cross-focus group comparisons of data.

5. The rapporteur wrote propositions for the undergraduate student sample and the administrator sample based on the memoing of each session. Propositions are the formal summary statements of the overall attitude patterns and trends based on the memo of each session.

6. The proposition statements for the student data were converted into satisfaction criteria of undergraduate students attending the regional university.

7. The student satisfaction criteria were compared to job satisfaction and customer satisfaction theory to determine the most appropriate theory to inform student satisfaction surveys.

8. The proposition statements of the administrator data were converted into the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness.

9. The criteria used by students to determine student satisfaction and the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness were compared and contrasted to determine congruency.
Summary

A qualitative research design was used to determine the relationship between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness. Focus group sessions were conducted with two sample sets drawn from the target population of undergraduate students and administrators in the internal dominant coalition from a southern, comprehensive, regional university. During the focus group session with each sample, the rapporteur facilitated conversation to determine the criteria used by participants in making decisions regarding student satisfaction or the evaluation of institutional quality.

The first-generation student focus group guide was designed based on service marketing research by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1991). The first-generation administrator guide was designed, in part, to replicate the student guide to provide for a comparison between the two groups. The remainder of the administrator guide was based on research by Cameron (1978) on institutional effectiveness.

The first-generation focus group guides were reviewed and critiqued by two panels of higher education administrators. Based on the recommendations from each panel, changes were made to both focus group guides. These subsequent second-generation guides were tested in a pilot study conducted during the spring and summer semester, 1995. Along with testing the validity of the focus group guides,
the pilot was also conducted to test the effectiveness of the recruiting procedure and to allow the rapporteur an opportunity to enhance facilitation skills.

The data collected from each sample were analyzed by the rapporteur using a content analysis procedure to develop proposition statements on the attitude patterns of students and administrators based on the research questions. The proposition statements from the student sample were converted into student satisfaction criteria and the proposition statements from the administrator sample were converted into evaluative criteria for institutional effectiveness. The student satisfaction criteria were then compared with job satisfaction and customer satisfaction theory to determine the most valid theory in explaining the student experience. Finally, the criteria from each of the sample sets, the student sample and the administrator sample, were compared to determine if a congruency existed between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.
CHAPTER 4
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SAMPLE FINDINGS

Introduction

In this section the findings are presented from the undergraduate student focus group session. The demographic composition of the student sample is presented first. Then an in-depth discussion of the pertinent findings from the entire student sample is presented. This section is divided into seven umbrella attitude patterns: (a) my decision to attend college; (b) my career aspirations; (c) my hopes for the future; (d) my personal growth and development; (e) my education; (f) my ideal college; and (g) my accomplishments. It is from this information that the criteria for student satisfaction are determined. The criteria are presented in Chapter 6 along with conclusions and recommendations.

Finally, a discussion of the student focus group data based on grade cohort and demographics is presented. Within this section the student data are presented based on the differences between grade cohorts, between male and female responses, the unique responses of nontraditional students, students who are unemployed, and students who live on campus. This information is presented to provide the reader with an understanding of the satisfaction differences within the undergraduate student population. These findings, however, will not be used in determining student satisfaction criteria.
Composition of the Undergraduate Student Sample

The undergraduate student sample was comprised of 94 students attending a southern, comprehensive, regional university during the fall semester, 1995. Of the student sample there were: (a) 26 (27.7%) freshmen, (b) 16 (17%) sophomores, (c) 25 (26.6%) juniors, and (d) 27 (28.7%) seniors. Furthermore, as presented in Table 1, 56% of the sample were female, 88% of the sample were white, 90% were enrolled full-time, 75% were under 25 years of age, and 73% commute to class each day. (The demographic data for the comprehensive, regional university of the study is also presented in Table 1.) Seventy-three percent of the student sample indicated that they were employed. Of those who work, 64% indicated that they work 19 hours or fewer per week with 36% working 20 hours or more per week. This self-report information was obtained from a demographic sheet that students were asked to complete just prior to each focus group session. Table 2 is a list of the different majors represented in the student sample as reported by the students.

Chi-Square was performed to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the student sample and the target population. A statistically significant difference was found ($p < .05$) for two demographic variables: race, $\chi^2 (5, n = 94) = 12.75$; and enrollment status, $\chi^2 (1, n = 94) = 6.66$. The student sample had more
participation by minority students and by students who were enrolled full-time during the fall semester than would be expected based on the demographics of the target population. Chi-Square found no statistically significant difference for gender, $\chi^2 (1, n = 94) = .18$; age, $\chi^2 (1, n = 94) = 1.26$; commuting status, $\chi^2 (1, n = 94) = 2.36$; and grade cohort, $\chi^2 (3, n = 94) = 3.08$.

Finally, Chi-Square found a statistically significant difference in the distribution of enrollment in each college between the student sample and the target population, $\chi^2 (7, n = 94) = 15.76$. Evidence from the Chi-Square test indicated that there were more students enrolled in the College of Business in the sample than in the target population and there were fewer students from the sample enrolled in the College of Nursing, College of Public and Allied Health, and students who were Undecided.

Findings from the Undergraduate Student Sample

The undergraduate student data from the focus group sessions were collapsed into seven primary topics of discussion. These seven topics were: (a) my decision to attend college, (b) my career aspirations, (c) my hopes for the future, (d) my personal growth and development, (e) my education, (f) my ideal college, and (g) my accomplishments.

The following sections will discuss each of these seven patterns in detail along with direct quotes from students to enhance the understanding of students' attitudes and
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<sup>a</sup>Fall, 1995 enrollment data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning with the university of this study.
### TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF UNDERGRADUATE SAMPLE BY COLLEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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</table>

*Fall, 1995 enrollment data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning with the university of this study.

opinions. Given with each quote is the grade cohort identification of the speaker. In several instances there are numerous quotes taken from the same grade cohort on one particular topic. Some of these quotes also came from the same grade cohort focus group session. However, none of the quotes given are repetitive quotes from the same participant in a session. (During the coding procedure, care was taken to ensure that repeated comments from the same participant
within a session on one topic were not counted more than once.) The student satisfaction criteria gleaned from these attitude patterns is presented in Chapter 6.

My Decision to Attend College

During the focus group sessions with all grade cohorts, students frequently discussed the parameters around their decision to attend college. As indicated in Table 3, within this topic students discussed their hopes that (a) the college degree would be the beginning of a new future, (b) the decision to attend college was influenced by their family situation or parental pressure, and (c) they were thankful for this opportunity for a college experience. Many students also discussed in detail the timing of their decision to attend college.

The beginning. The undergraduate students participating in these focus group sessions viewed college as a beginning to their future and as a key to their success.

College is the key to unlock the door to my future.

Junior

College is the starting point of my success.

Junior

Students also viewed college as a vehicle for accomplishing their goals in life. For some students these goals were career directed. For others these goals were life directed.
### TABLE 3

**MY DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Code</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Family Influence on College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thankful for College Experience</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>The College Decision</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Decision to Attend College</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I needed college to reach my career goal of becoming a vet.

Junior

College is just the tool. I look at college as the tool to get what I want out of life.

Senior

I realize now that to accomplish the things I want and get the things I want I have to go to school.

Freshman

College isn't the ending point of my educational career. It is a start of a new beginning. When I finish off here I will apply what I learned here and learn even more later.

Junior

A few students looked at college as the ending of their educational experience. However, the largest frequency of
comments came from students who discussed the college experience as a starting point -- not the end.

My education is not over until I graduate from college.

Freshman

It has always been in the back of my head that I was always going to college and that I was going to get this piece of paper that was a degree and that was the end of my education.

Freshman

The family influence. Even though these college students had a philosophy of their college experience and what they hoped to gain from this experience, many of them expressed the belief that they had no choice in the decision to attend. For many students the decision to attend college was made because of strong parental pressure. Whereas some students seemed to appreciate the pressure to attend college and really didn't mind being pushed in that direction, other students talked about how they were only here because of their parents and didn’t know what they wanted out of college.

Even though you are not made to go to college, I still think there is a lot of pressure from your parents to go to college.

Freshman

But, that decision to go to college was put there by my
parents. I know for a fact that I didn't have a choice about being here.

Freshman

A lot of parents don't give you a choice either. So some of that college decision is mandatory from a parental perspective.

Freshman

I am mainly here to satisfy my parents. I like being here but I don't even know what I want to do so sometimes I feel like my time is being wasted.

Sophomore

My parents are paying for it. Why not go?

Sophomore

When I went to college it was just a given that I would go. I didn't really want to go, but my parents told me that I was going.

Senior

Even those students who did not feel pressured by their parents to attend college, indicated some indirect family influence: a special bond with a family member, the desire to achieve more than their parents, or the wish to follow in a family member's footsteps.

My Dad has always told me that is was his dream for me to go to college and live a better life than he has. I am going to try my best to make sure he gets his dream.

Freshman
My grandfather has been real sick for three years. I keep telling my Mom in four years I am going to be a nurse so I can take care of him. That is the motivation for me.

Freshman

Ever since I can remember I have wanted to go to college. Nobody else in my family went to college.

Sophomore

I made my mind up back before junior high that I wanted to grow up and go to college and be this big college student type person. I was looking forward to it. To do something my parents had not done yet.

Freshman

Both of my parents didn't have a college education and, you know, right now they have these little crummy jobs so I thought that I will never be like them.

Sophomore

That is why I am here because for me college represents a huge goal cause I have several family members who went here and none of them have graduated. So for me this is an important goal to actually graduate from here.

Sophomore

I am just like, well I need to go to college. My brothers went to college, so now it is my turn.
Thankful for the college experience. Several students talked about the inability of others to afford the college experience and expressed their thankfulness that they had this opportunity to attend college.

I was thankful that I had the choice to go to college. In my hometown a lot of people didn't go to college because they couldn't afford it.

Freshman

I was thankful that I had the choice to go to college.

Freshman

I think we are all very lucky to be here.

Freshman

The college decision. The decision to attend college ranged from always knowing that they would enroll in college to making the decision in high school to making the decision impulsively.

College has always been in the back of my mind I guess.

Freshman

Ever since I can remember I have wanted to go to college. You know, you got to go to school, high school and then college.

Sophomore

College was just a part of the logical sequence of school. I mean, there was just not a question that
ever entered my mind about what I would do after high school. I never thought of anything else.

Sophomore

For me, it started out in elementary school just playing football. I just kind of wanted to be one of those people that went to college and played football.

Junior

I didn’t start thinking about college until I was in junior high school.

Sophomore

I made the decision one day during the summer. I was driving to work and I just had a thought, ‘Is this what I am going to do for the rest of my life?’ I just came up here and registered for the second summer terms. My decision was almost impulsive.

Freshman

My Career Aspirations

In discussing the importance of the college degree, many students equated the degree with career preparation. Congruent with that discussion, students underscored the importance of their satisfaction with their major to their overall educational satisfaction with the college experience. They also equated the desire for a college degree with the benefit of increased financial compensation in a career. (See Table 4)
College as a career preparation. For many students who participated in this research, the primary purpose of the college experience was to train for a career and the primary benefit of the college degree was to find a better job.

College is a place where you train for your career.

Freshman

In college you learn how to do a particular job well.

Junior

This is a retraining experience for me from the line of work that I was accustom to; to a line of work that I don't have any idea how to do.

Junior

I mean, I am here because if I am to get a job I can live off of, in my mind at least, I need to have a college education.

Freshman

College for me is a place where you go for four years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Codes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College as a Career Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Major</td>
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<td>Increased Financial Compensation</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Career Aspirations</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and pay lots of money for a 8 ½" by 11" sheet of paper that says I was graduated from State so and so; just to get a job.

Junior

College is a kind of place where you go to, hopefully, get a job in a field that you want.

Junior

But I feel that the biggest reason people go to college is to open doors up in the field that they are going to school for and I feel like if they had that open door opportunity already in that field then they wouldn't be here.

Senior

To me to be satisfied with my college experience I will have to be able to go out and get a job with my degree.

Sophomore

Also, I think society puts you in college cause if you want a good job, unless you have a college degree, you aren't going to get that good job.

Junior

College is a stepping stone to a great career.

Junior

There were some students who disagreed with their peers that the college degree was an opportunity to open doors and a guarantee to a successful career. These comments, however, were in the minority.
But, I think that college is highly overrated. I don't think that you can only be successful in your career if you only go to college.

Sophomore

I hope college leads to success, but I think that I could have been successful in a career without college.

Junior

During the course of the discussion on the career training aspect of the college experience, many students expressed some concerns that even with the college experience they may not be completely prepared to for their chosen career.

In my career, I have to feel like I know exactly what I am doing when I am doing it or I am gonna be scared to do it.

Senior

Satisfaction to me is to find a good job that I am prepared for.

Senior

Satisfaction with major. Related to the discussion of the college experience as a career preparation tool, students discussed their philosophy that college is simply a vehicle to achieve career opportunities in their chosen profession.
I always wanted to be a nurse since I was small. So college was always a way to reach my dream.

Freshman

I have always wanted to work with children and I couldn’t do that if I hadn’t gone to college.

Senior

I knew that Pre-Medicine was my focus and that college was a part of that.

Sophomore

Students also discussed their chosen profession and the satisfaction with their major as the primary motivator toward their overall satisfaction with their educational experience.

I never miss a psychology class. I would define satisfaction based on my satisfaction with my major.

Sophomore

I feel really good about being here because I feel good about my chosen major.

Junior

I am satisfied with college. In my experience with the College of Business, it has been great. Everyone has been wonderful and helpful. All of the professors have been great.

Sophomore

Increased financial compensation. In many cases the discussion of the career training aspect of college evolved into a discussion on the financial rewards of the college
degree. Many students believed that the college degree would provide them with opportunities for increased financial compensation.

College is a place where you go to learn beyond high school. Where you can get a major and make more money.

Freshman

College is just a place to go to get a higher education so you can make more money.

Freshman

I am here just to make more money.

Freshman

The reason that I started college to begin with was for the money.

Senior

For me, my personal goal with college is to graduate and get a good job with money.

Senior

The benefit of college for me is to make more money.

Junior

While in the minority, some students did not agree with their peers and stated that the college degree was not necessarily a promise for greater financial compensation.

My Dad didn’t go to college and he probably makes more money than I ever will with a college degree.

Freshman

I know people who make more money now without the college degree than I will make with my degree. So I
don't see it as a guarantee.

Senior

My Future

Students participating in these focus group sessions frequently discussed the importance of the college experience to a successful future. As presented in Table 5, students focused on discussions of the college degree as a way to improve their future, the payoff of the college investment, and their belief that the effort of college was worthwhile.

College as a life improvement. For many of these students the college experience was an opportunity to improve on those aspects of their future that they valued the most. As mentioned earlier under the topic of career aspirations, students frequently mentioned the hope that the college degree would help them to improve their job situation. These comments were not coded with the career aspirations category because of the tone of the comments. Whereas in the career aspirations category those student comments were directly related to the career preparation benefits of college, these comments focused on the affective component of the desire for job satisfaction and wanting more out of a job than just a paycheck.

My Mom has always talked about how she wanted me to be better than her. She didn’t go to college and she has limited opportunities job-wise and she always told me
that I could do whatever I wanted to do to make myself better.

Sophomore

Basically, of course, my parents always told me to go to college so I could get a good job. If you do go to college you don’t have to work like a dog through life.

Junior

I worked in a factory for several years and I am tired of being in a factory. I want a better job.

Junior

And, I just do not want to be stuck doing something for the rest of my life, no matter how much it pays if I don’t like it.

Freshman

To me satisfaction is when I get a job that I am happy with.

Senior

To me it is more important to get a job and enjoy it; not to just get a job.

Sophomore

It is not so much getting the "great" job as it is getting the job where you enjoy the work.

Junior

With equivalent frequency, students also equated the college experience to providing them with the opportunity for a better life. These students talked about college as a
TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Attitude Codes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Payoff of the College Investment</td>
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<td>College is Worth the Effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Future</td>
<td>126</td>
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</table>

vehicle for giving them the tools that they would need to enjoy life and in giving them a certain level of security in life by providing options.

To me college is just a place to learn more. A place to make your life better and more interesting.

**Freshman**

I think that I was motivated to attend college simply because I wanted a better life.

**Sophomore**

I feel that I am here so that I can do whatever I enjoy in life. It is not so much about the money.

**Junior**

College is about narrowing down your choices but opening up your opportunities.

**Junior**

I wouldn't want to be in a position though of not having an education and having a good job and then it is gone tomorrow. So that is what scares me. You wouldn’t have anything to fall back on. No options. I
mean, you got your job experience, but the world is not easy to get around in today. It is real competitive. You need an edge.

Senior

Many students underscored the importance placed on a college education by society. Other students felt, intrinsically, that they had no choice if they wanted to realize a life improvement. For these students, a college degree was mandatory.

When I was little you didn't have to have the degree to get a good job and make good money but, like now, you really don't have a choice.

Freshman

I think that it is mandatory by society. College education is required by society. Just to get by in the world you need a college degree.

Senior

When you think about college you realize that you don't have any choice.

Junior

Payoff of the college investment. Students talked about the payoff of the college investment from both a financial, long-term perspective and from a time, short-term perspective. From the financial, long-term perspective, students discussed that they would not be satisfied with their college experience until after they had graduated from college and found that first job or had that first life
success that would let them know that the college experience had paid off.

I think that as quick as the first thing that you get regardless of what it is, a job or money, you know, but the first thing that you get that you wouldn't have gotten otherwise, you know, will go a little ways toward your satisfaction with college.

Senior

I am already satisfied with my education. I mean, I am glad that I am graduating, but I have already seen what it can do for me. I see a career result and that is my satisfaction.

Senior

To me satisfaction will be the first time that I can apply something that I learned to real life on the job.

Senior

I mean, there will be stress involved while you are going through it but once you get finished and you realize that it paid off then you know you are satisfied. I really won't know that I am satisfied until I graduate.

Sophomore

Some students discussed their concerns about the payoff of their college experience.

In high school they would say that with a college education you can do anything. People will be lining
up to hire you. And so, where are they now?

Sophomore

I sit around everyday thinking, 'What am I going to do after I graduate from here?'

Senior

From a short-term perspective, students talked about the return on their investment in time and effort in studying for a particular test or project and then realizing the grade that they value.

Like when I am studying for a test and I study so long for it and then I feel good about it. That is my satisfaction, when I know that I studied the right amount or time for my test.

Sophomore

If you study hard and ace the test and you answered every question and you get a good grade, that makes me really happy.

Junior

After I graduate from college, I will always remember the times we spent every night in group work until 1:00 a.m. in the computer lab working on a paper and then when you were done you look back and it feels good; a sense of accomplishment.

Senior

When I work hard I want to see a reward for my effort.

Senior

I am satisfied when I am given a fair workload and I
give a fair effort.

Senior

My Personal Development and Growth

Students in each of the focus group sessions discussed some aspect of the personal development and growth benefits of the college experience. As shown in Table 6, the majority of student comments centered on the importance of belonging within the college environment. Other comments were made by students on the self-discovery and self-exploration opportunities available to students during their college years, the maturation process of college, the independence of college life, and important life lessons learned while in college.

A sense of belonging. For many students who participated in this research, one crucial component of their satisfaction with the college experience was their sense of belonging within the college environment and their feelings of being accepted by their peers.

It was like the first year that I was here I commuted and that first year I didn't know anybody. Now after the second year here I have met people in class and I know them now. The first year I felt like an outsider even though I am from here.

Sophomore

When I transferred from Milligan, I didn't know anybody and didn't have anybody to talk to, but this year I
know a lot more people here. A lot of my friends came back to school this year and it is more comfortable for me being here this year than before.

Sophomore

I will remember my surprise at being more accepted in class. In a lot of my classes I am the oldest one, but the students don't seem to look down on me or treat me like an elderly person. They accept me as I am.

Sophomore

Some students, however, revealed the importance they placed on having a sense of belonging with comments about their negative experiences.

College is just a different situation. You aren't with your same friends anymore.

Freshman

When I came here right after high school, I was just lost. Oh man, I had no business being here.

Senior

When people find out that I am not from Tennessee, they just kinda shut me out. It has happened with the faculty and the students and that is a big difference from other places that I have been.

Sophomore

Yea, college is such a new place and you really don't know anybody and I feel kinda isolated sometimes.

Freshman
TABLE 6

MY PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Self Discovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Up</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Lessons Learned</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Personal Development and Growth</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For many of these students making friends was important to their sense of belonging. In fact, students consistently indicated that the one thing that they would remember the most about their college experience were the friends that they made while in college. According to students, it was the bond of friendship that made them feel the most comfortable within their new environment.

Satisfaction to me is when you have a good number of friends so that when you walk across campus you know the people you see. That is the point when I will be satisfied with myself and my education because everything is kind of going together -- that balance.

Sophomore

I am not so much for the academic part of college cause that is not really my concern, but for me it is just a
way to meet people.

Sophomore

At a community college everybody knows everybody cause you are with who you grew up with. It is kinda hard to come here and meet new people.

Junior

I will always remember the friends that I have made.

Senior

I will remember the people that I have meet and my friends -- definitely my friends.

Sophomore

I think I will remember living in the dorms and the friends that I have made and all of the crazy stuff that we did.

Junior

I will remember the friends and all of the important relationships.

Junior

The friends, I guess; that is when I finally make one.

Freshman

Along with the discussion of making friends and the feeling of acceptance, students discussed the need to have a balance while in college: a balance between the hard work of education and fun.

If you do like your classes that is important, but like if you go back to your dorm and you study all the time, I personally would not be happy because I am not
talking to my friends.  

Freshman

But here there is nothing but trees and dirt. I mean, this college is the perfect study environment, that is what it is, as far as just to get an education. I can’t see a better place to go because there is nothing to do but study.

Sophomore

That is the importance of balance in your life and knowing where to go. If you do nothing but the books than you aren’t learning how to get along with people in this world.

Sophomore

Finally, students discussed the importance of being in a college environment that felt like home. It can be reasonably suggested that these students associated a preferable college environment to a home environment because of their feelings of belonging and acceptance in their home.

I think this college is a good school. It feels like home.

Sophomore

Here you have all of your friends around you and if you ever need anything there is probably someone on campus who does it or can help you out. So, I mean, it is like you have just become a part of another family
other than what you have at home. It is like you just bond.

Sophomore

Self discovery. Students who participated in the focus group sessions focused some of their attention on the self discovery and self exploration benefits of the college experience. For many of these students, college life was an opportunity for them to find out who they are and what they wanted out of life.

College is to figure out what your life is all about: a place for you to explore.

Freshman

College is about finding out who I am.

Freshman

College is a place for you to learn more about yourself.

Junior

I don’t know how to define college. I just know that the time you spend in college you should be exposed to new ideas, different perspectives and it seems to me that you start with an idea and what your idea is initially may not be what you end up with. You may end up being something entirely different than what you had started out to be.

Senior

College is a place that you go to learn stuff that you already know, but it is really a time to get in touch
with yourself and find out who you are.

Sophomore

College is a place to learn more about yourself. Sometimes you find out that you aren’t as smart as you think you are. Something you think you know really well, you find out you didn’t know it quite as well.

Junior

For some students the self discovery experience of college was an opportunity to learn how to set personal goals and how to develop the intrinsic motivation to accomplish those goals.

College helps you to set goals.

Freshman

To me college is all about setting goals. I really didn’t have a personal goal when I started out and now I do.

Senior

[Because of college], my goals are very specific.

Junior

A few of the focus group participants voiced their concerns with their ability to succeed in college. Most of these students viewed the college experience as an opportunity to "test their mettle" to discover if they could meet this challenge successfully.

My parents tried to talk me out of going to college. My Mom didn’t think that I was ready for college. She
thought it was too big of a responsibility for me.

Freshman

Everybody, you know, they still look at me like, you know, he is not going to do anything because I have never done anything before.

Sophomore

After I graduate the one thing that I will remember is all of the negative things that people said I couldn't do and I overcame.

Sophomore

Several of the students who participated indicated that they did not have a focus in college. Without exception, these students appeared to be concerned that they were "drifting through" college without direction. Some hoped that the college experience would help them to understand what they wanted out of life, whereas others were concerned that they may never find the answer.

I keep thinking that I am going to quit college and then I think, "Do I want to work at Wal-Mart or do I want to stay in school?" It is very difficult.

Junior

There are a lot of people who are here that college is not for them. They are only here because they have been told this is what they are supposed to do and I am
one of them. I don’t make good grades because I don’t get excited about going to class.

Sophomore

I always knew that I was going to college. I just don’t know why.

Sophomore

Growing up. For many students the college experience was a maturation process. Of the four grade cohorts, the junior cohort had the largest percentage of responses within this attitude pattern. Many students talked of the collegiate experience as a life changing or transforming experience with the realization that they would not leave the university the same individual as when they entered.

College is the first step to growing up.

Freshman

For my ideal, I see college as a place where transfer a boy into a man and a girl into a woman.

Junior

College is a place where you go to learn more about yourself. It is more about growing up and how to deal with life.

Junior

College is not only an education experience, but a time to grow up.

Junior

College is a place to be with other people that are in the same situation that you are in, they are all
growing up just like you.

Sophomore

College is kinda like the point where you are an adult. You are not a child anymore. You don’t have the same outlook. Now you are looking forward to your future. You are thinking of different things than what you were when you came here.

Junior

After I have graduated I think that I will look back and remember the growth.

Junior

Included in this discussion of growing up, several students voiced the opinion that not every 18 year old should attempt college if they were not ready for the maturation process of college. Some students believed that a certain maturity level was needed for students to succeed in college.

I don’t think that anyone should come straight out of high school to college. I wasted two years that I lost credits for. When I was 18 and 19 I was not ready for this. I wasn’t.

Sophomore

I think it would have been good for me if I had taken just one semester after high school to just spend some time thinking about what I wanted to do with my life. Just some time to reflect.

Sophomore
I think it depends on the person. Not everybody is ready to go to college at 18.

Senior

Included in this discussion of maturation, many comments were made by students who were cognizant of a change in themselves that occurred during their college years. As indicated by the quote identifier, the majority of these comments were made by seniors.

College just means a lot more to me now cause I am really wanting to use what I learned and I don’t know if the first two to three years when I screwed around is going to hurt me when I get out.

Senior

I came into college wanting the big bucks. I came in wanting to have all kinds of money, and now that is not, I mean, I want a good job and I want to be comfortable and provide for my family. But anymore, money is not as much of an issue as it use to be.

Senior

The first two years I goofed off. I didn’t do anything but go out every night. But now I realize that I have got to study really hard to make up for it. So that is what I am doing.

Senior

Independence. Another attitude code within the umbrella pattern of personal development and growth was the
conversation around independence. Students seemed to take
great pride in their new found ability to cope and survive
on their own without the guiding hand of their parents.
Other students discussed their independence within the realm
of living without restrictions or confining rules and the
ability to make their own decisions.

In college your not sheltered by your parents anymore.

Freshman

College is a new way of life: breaking away from your
parents, from your household and you start relying on
yourself and taking responsibilities.

Freshman

College is independence from your parents and sort of
developing who you are for the rest of your life.

Senior

College is a time to be more independent and away from
your family so that they are not making the decisions
for you. Your more on your own.

Junior

You are away from home and you have to rely on yourself
so you learn responsibility.

Junior

High school has this set of rules that you go by and it
tells you exactly what to do. You got a list of
classes you take and here you decide and it is a tough
decision. You have to make decisions for yourself
rather than asking people.

Freshman

In college you are learning, but all of the rules have been thrown out and you make your own decisions on what is best for you. Nobody else makes those decisions.

Freshman

Life lessons. For several students, the personal development and growth benefit of college was the learning of life's lessons. Students discussed the college experience as an opportunity to learn lessons that prepare you for life after college. One of the most frequently mentioned of the life lessons was learning the ability to interact and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds in a variety of social and professional situations.

College is all about preparing you, I think for after college.

Freshman

College for me is someplace to go to prepare for society. It just prepares you for life.

Senior

In college you learn how to act around other people and how to communicate with other people.

Junior
College is a place where you learn about the history of your people and the different cultures.

Junior

In college you learn how to appreciate different people for what they are.

Senior

I think that I will remember the importance of interacting with different people and learning how to accept responsibility.

Senior

I will remember that in college you learn to really think and analyze people and situations, and learn to cooperate and realize that everyone is the same but with different backgrounds.

Senior

**My Education**

The largest frequency of responses from student participants examined issues related to their educational experiences. As shown in Table 7, issues discussed by students within the topic of My Education ranged (a) from the importance of the college faculty to the importance of a quality class experience; (b) from the benefit of college in the expansion of the knowledge base to the effort of attaining that knowledge base; (c) from the value of grades to the value of keeping students informed; and (d) from the importance of a relevant curriculum to the importance of student involvement in extracurricular activities.
TABLE 7

MY EDUCATION

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<td>Expansion of Knowledge</td>
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<td>Curriculum Design</td>
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<td>The College Effort</td>
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**College Professors.** In each focus group session when students discussed their concerns and attitudes about their educational experience, consistently the discussion would turn to the importance of college faculty to the success and satisfaction of the student.

*I think that the teacher is more important to my education than the class size.*

*Freshman*

It is hard to keep trying and stay in college. My instructors have worked with me and have helped me get through it.

*Junior*

*I have put off a class for about four semesters waiting on a certain teacher to teach the course. For me*
faculty is very important.

Sophomore

I think you can learn just so much from the books and then the rest of it does come from the instructor.

Junior

The first thing that came to my mind when you asked about the ideal college was the professors; those who actually are doing the teaching. I have had some really, really good teachers and I have had some really awful teachers. It makes a difference.

Freshman

For many students the discussion of college faculty centered on a discussion of the importance of a professoriate who care about the personal needs of each student and their academic progress. Across grade cohort and demographic differences, students expressed a genuine need for a faculty that shared a common goal of helping the student to understand and comprehend the complex material of higher education.

I mean, it just seems that at this college the professors just don't care. I got teachers that will come to class, go over notes for an hour, and then walk out and I am left completely lost cause I don't understand anything that they have just said.

Freshman

The ideal college for me? Teachers who care.
My ideal college would be a college where the professor didn't purposively try to fail you. I mean, I have been in classes where I felt I was doomed the first day.

Senior

My ideal would be the professor who knows your name and you are not just a number.

Sophomore

My ideal would be where the professors actually care about their students and go out of their way to help them. Just to be a very caring place.

Sophomore

My ideal university is access to faculty. When you have a question you can actually talk with them.

Junior

Anywhere you can go and know the people on a more personal basis, you feel that they are taking more of an interest in whether you are participating, whether you are learning, or whether you are lacking. And, if they know you by your name that is important.

Junior

Another concern that was discussed frequently in regard to college faculty was the disdain for rude and boring professors, or both. According to these students, a boring professor was a major distraction in the process of learning and indicated to them an instructor that was not interested in the subject nor the student.
It didn’t even matter what size the class was if you had a class of six people and the person up front that was trying to teach was boring or not interested in the subject: I am not going to be interested in the subject.

Freshman

I have a teacher right now that teaches right out of the book. It is so boring. I mean, why even go to class?

Freshman

For example, I like History, but the instructor I had did not keep my interest. I read the book and learned all kind of things from that, but I didn’t get anything from what he was saying.

Sophomore

Students, seniors in particular, also discussed rude professors and the effect that professor attitude has on the learning of students.

But, then there are other professors that I don’t want to know and it doesn’t bother me that they don’t know me cause some of them are kinda hateful and I don’t want them to know who I am.

Freshman

I had a professor in ... that told me that nontraditional students should not be allowed in the
university. I basically told him he was wrong. I was asked to drop the class.

Senior

I don't mind difficult classes and I don't mind hard material. I think it is one of the reasons that you are here. But when they come at you with such an attitude, overbearing and just plain mean, your scared to try anything new.

Senior

I would like to change some things about this university. For example, I would change some of the opinions of professors. I had a real bad experience with one of my business professors. He was very sarcastic, but he had been here 30 years and he could get away with anything. I have talked to everyone and nothing has happened.

Sophomore

For the students in this research their relationship with a specific instructor was of such importance to them that they anticipated carrying the memory of that faculty with them long after graduation.

I will always remember my professors who made a difference in my life.

Senior

I will remember what I learnt from the professors and my relationship with them.

Junior
Finally in the discussion of faculty, students talked about the importance of the pedagogical skills of faculty to their learning experience. For these students, it was not only meaningful to them that the faculty cared about them as individuals, but it was also critical that faculty had the teaching experience and the skills to disseminate information in an understandable manner. These students seemed to approach the education process as something that is "done to them" instead of something that is "done with them".

I am not saying that every professor is going to do that to accommodate me and they are not going to change just for me, but I find it a struggle if I do have a professor who talks above or below me to get to their level so I can understand what they are trying to put into my head.

Freshman

Personally, I have a real problem with professors who don't know how to explain a problem so that we can understand.

Junior

The biggest problem that I have here is that professors talk very scientific and that information is way above my head. Sometimes the professor will adjust his lecture but it still feels like it doesn't accomplish much. I mean, I had one of my professors say to me after I complained that I didn't understand his
lecture, 'Well, I have been teaching for 16 years.', and I said to him, 'Well, I have been in your class only 16 days and I am sure that if I was teaching this for 16 years I would understand this material too.'

Junior

I don't care if teachers are boring. I don't care if they are bouncing off the walls just wanting to cram this book down your throat. The thing that really gets me is if they talk above you or below you and you don't understand the material.

Freshman

I would like to have professors who would honestly want to get their information across to the students.

Sophomore

Faculty teaching well is important for the ideal university. If you go into a classroom and the professor acts like he or she is not motivated, I mean, you begin to think that they really don't care about the work, then what can they expect from you?

Junior

Expansion of knowledge. For the majority of students participating in this research, college was quite simply a place of learning. They spoke frequently of the college experience as a process of expanding their knowledge base. These students demonstrated the ability to identify a quality learning experience and equate that quality to their level of satisfaction.
Each semester is a little bit more satisfying. I complete that semester and it is behind me and I learnt something and I am moving on.

Junior

College to me is to learn about everything that I can.

Junior

College is a learning experience.

Senior

First of all you learn different things from your classes in college, but you learn things also from just being here, like how to interact with people and just all sorts of things -- social interaction.

Senior

I want to hear stories and be able to go home and say, 'Hey Mom, listen to what I learned today. This is really neat.'

Sophomore

I have had my life. My children are grown and now I think I am ready. I am ready to learn something.

Sophomore

What is satisfaction to me? Coming away from college knowing that I knew more than when I started. Whether I make a high grade or not, knowing that I honestly learned something.

Junior
After I graduate I think I will look back and remember the learning.

Freshman

I think I would describe college as a place where you could learn so much more than you already know.

Freshman

College is a place to expand your education. I mean you can go on to learn more about the same thing or more about something new. Things that you really don't learn in high school.

Senior

Curriculum design. For many students the design of their curriculum was an important consideration in determining their satisfaction with their college experience. These students discussed the relevancy of the curriculum to their learning interest and needs; the value of experiential learning; and the need to reduce the overlap in content area of many classes offered in college.

The primary focus within the discussion of curriculum issues for these students was the perception by students that the college curriculum is not relevant to their learning interests. Many students questioned the need to take courses that they did not deem as necessary for developing a competency in their chosen profession.

One of my roommates is in elementary education and she has to have anthropology and women’s studies. I just
don't see the point in that.

Senior

I would have liked not to have to take English, Biology; I think that it is just a waste of time and money. I think it should be more focused on your major the whole time.

Senior

College is a place you go to learn a lot of stuff that you won't need for your job but that you have to learn anyway. Which I don't understand.

Sophomore

I am focusing on math. I want to teach math at the high school level. So I don't have an interest in history or any of the sciences. I never get them and I never will. I don't get much out of class and I don't feel I am learning anything.

Sophomore

I want to know that I have learned something that is important to me.

Junior

Some students also discussed their desire to have a curriculum that is flexible to individual learning interests.

I don't think that you should do away with all of these courses, but I think you should make it different for
each student. You can always take these courses, but you don’t have to.

Sophomore

I think that you should be able to create your own program of study.

Junior

While in the minority, a few students took an opposing stance on the issue of a focused curriculum. These students placed a value on the opportunity to use the curriculum to explore different subject areas to help students find their appropriate field of study.

But you need that sort of rounded education at the beginning to find out which way you want to go.

Senior

But on the other side of that discussion, people that take classes that aren’t related to their study can get interested in something else and will say, ‘Hey, I think I like this better.’

Sophomore

A second area of concern for students within the discussion of the design of the college curriculum, particularly students in the senior cohort, was the lack of experientially-based learning opportunities. Several students indicated that they would enjoy the opportunity to engage in a learning process that allowed for hands-on experiences. Related to that, several students discussed their overall satisfaction with their educational experience
as being contingent on their ability to apply what was learned in class to a "real world" experience.

When I think of the ideal university, the first thing that comes to my mind is the experiential-based learning. There just isn’t enough of that around here.

Senior

I mean, now in clinicals we learn something and then we are out there the next week doing it to real people. It is totally different reading it in a book and then getting out there and doing it.

Senior

Satisfaction for me will be the first time I have a chance to apply some of the things I have learned in class.

Senior

It is like, in my computer class, I need to spend more time with the actual computer and not sitting in class listening to a lecture.

Sophomore

Learning is important. But, being able to actually apply what you have learned is equally important to me.

Junior

During the discussion of curriculum issues in the senior focus group sessions, many of the students talked about their concerns with the overlapping content of many college courses. These students expressed some frustration with the length of time that it took them to finish their
degree compared with their perception of redundancy in their classes. For them the congruency was apparent: reduce the overlap in course content and students would move through the curriculum quicker.

I feel like I have wasted my time, cause a lot of my classes are the exact same thing. I have three classes this semester and I am learning the same thing in all of them.

Senior

In my ideal university I would eliminate the repeating course content. Like, here I feel like I have taken about seven classes that are all the same thing. My gosh, beat it to death.

Senior

To steer clear of the repetitive classes, you have to have communication within a department. I am taking a class over here in one department and a second class over there in another department and they are overlapping in content. It is frustrating.

Senior

The college effort. For the most part, students who participated in this research were cognizant of the effort that they were putting into their education. In fact, when asked to share the one aspect of college that they would remember the most, the student response of remembering the effort, struggle, stress, and hard work of college was second only to remembering friends.
I think that I will remember the stamina that it takes to stick to it.

Senior

I will remember the stress involved in the final year or two.

Senior

I will remember how hard college was.

Junior

I work 30 to 40 hours per week and I go to school full time so there is a lot of stress trying to get everything done.

Junior

How long it took and the dedication that it required.

Sophomore

I am having a hard time. I mean, the school part is the hard part. Everything else I am having a great time, but just the school part. I am worn out.

Sophomore

The classes really aren't that hard but it is the making yourself sit down and do all of your homework.

Freshman

Whereas most of the students agreed that there was a great deal of effort required for the college experience, there were a few students who did not feel stressed by this effort.

I pace myself and that is why I am not stressed. I pace my studying time and my classes and I take just
the load that I can do to get the good grades and go from there.

Sophomore

Advising. Many of students, specifically seniors, discussed their opinions and attitudes toward the importance of advising to their overall satisfaction. For these students the issue of advising was an issue of a university that can communicate effectively with all of its constituents with the purpose of keeping the student informed. It was just as important to these students that administrators communicated with faculty and faculty communicated with each other as it was that their advisor communicated with them. It seemed that these students recognized that a weak advising system was not necessarily a problem with the advisor informing the student, but a systemic problem of communication.

It is not so much the advising part but just letting us know. It is a problem with communication.

Senior

I would have liked to see my advisors more often.

Senior

For my ideal university, I would like to have better guidance along the way. I know that when I graduate I will have all kinds of hours that I didn't need to
take, but I thought I did from different people telling me different things all along the way.

   Senior
I have had similar experiences of just finding out about things after it is too late. You know, things where they say, 'Oh, you should have done so and so.' You are a junior now and they are just telling you that you should have done this and that as a sophomore.

   Senior
Now, in my college the advising runs pretty smoothly. I have no complaints.

   Senior
The ideal university for me is one with a good advising system.

   Junior
I don’t think that this college is unorganized, but there is a lack of communication between all of the levels. I am on scholarship and when they told me about the scholarship they said that it would pay for everything. Well, when I got up here to register for class I found out that my scholarship didn’t pay for everything. I would like to have known that before I registered.

   Freshman

Importance of class. Several students discussed the importance of a quality class experience to their overall satisfaction with their college education. The
characteristics of a quality class varied by student and grade cohort. Some students talked about the importance of a class that was not boring. Other students stressed the value they place on classes within their major as compared with their general education classes.

The boring classes I am not going to be too happy with but the classes I am interested in I will be satisfied. So far I am satisfied with my career choice because I enjoy the classes I am taking.

Sophomore

But I think that if the classroom is interesting and the teachers, then you will learn about everything around you.

Junior

I like classes where they tell stories. I like stories and I like to listen to people talk about their lives and tell me interesting facts about things.

Sophomore

I have some feeling of satisfaction now because I like the classes in my major.

Junior

Satisfaction to me is when you like your classes and you do well in them.

Freshman

The value of grades. With lesser frequency, students discussed the value they place on grades and the consequences of that value to their overall satisfaction.
For these students a direct relationship existed between grades and satisfaction.

An "A". I want an "A".

Senior

To me satisfaction is making good grades.

Junior

I like having the good grades.

Sophomore

To me satisfaction would be making the grades that I want to make and liking my classes.

Sophomore

Extracurricular activities. Finally within the topic of "My Education", students discussed the importance of student involvement in campus activities outside of the classroom. For those students who mentioned this criterion of satisfaction, they believed that students who were actively involved in campus activities were students who had a greater chance of succeeding in college and in life.

But I think that also that my satisfaction does not come just from my academic point of view of school, as far as going to classes and making the grades. My satisfaction has been more from what I have learned from interacting with other people on campus; being in other campus organizations; and having different roles
within the university and things like that. My satisfaction comes from that more than my academics.

Senior

I guess more than the scholastic part would be the extracurricular activities. Students here don’t get involved, but the biggest reason, I guess, is the fact that it is a suitcase college.

Junior

If students would get more involved they would enjoy college more.

Junior

I think those students that are involved on campus, they are the ones who are well-rounded and have a better chance of succeeding when they graduate.

Sophomore

Education is the most important thing, but it is good to have things to get involved in on campus. Education is important but you also need to learn how to be involved too. Because that is what you are going to get into is being involved with other people in the real world. So I think that, I guess you would call them extracurricular activities, are very important.

Freshman

My Ideal College

For many students who participated in this research, the discussion of their overall satisfaction with their college experience included a discussion about the
characteristics of their ideal college. Students discussed (a) the physical characteristics of college size and convenience; (b) the human characteristic of a student oriented college campus; and (c) the outcome characteristic of the college reputation and education quality. (See Table 8).

**Student-oriented college campus.** The most frequently discussed issue concerning the characteristics of the ideal university centered on the issue of the student-oriented, friendly campus. Students not only discussed the need for a sense of belonging within a caring environment, but they also expressed a desire to be treated with the dignity and respect afforded to an important member of the organization.

I think that student satisfaction for me would be knowing that there are people here who would actually listen to me.

Junior

To me the ideal university would have a positive outlook by the faculty and administrators about the students.

Sophomore

The ideal university would be just a caring place.

Sophomore

I think that the ideal university is someplace where the people are friendly and they care about me.

Freshman
### TABLE 8

**MY IDEAL COLLEGE**

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Students also talked about a student-oriented environment from the perspective of the ease in which students could operate in that environment. These students expressed a desire to function in an environment that was not bogged down by the red tape of a bureaucracy, but instead was an environment that could provide the student with accurate and timely information with a minimum amount of "hassle".

*See there is so much red tape and b.s. that is involved in the whole bureaucracy, or whatever, that it is just ridiculous.*

**Senior**

*It is really not the classes that I am frustrated with. I will end up going from building to building just to have my questions answered.*

**Freshman**
It just seems like every time I have a problem or a situation I need to handle I have to go through 20 million different channels to take care of it.

Senior

**College size.** The second largest discussion on the characteristics of the ideal college revolved around the size of the campus and size of classes. The majority of students placed a value on a small campus and small classes. These students frequently discussed the low student to teacher ratio of smaller classes, the ease in learning due to less distractions in smaller classes, and the ability to become acquainted with peers on a smaller campus as benefits of a small environment.

The ideal college for me would be small and the teachers care.

**Freshman**

The first place that I would start would be in class size. Personally in my class, I have noticed that it is a lot easier to learn if the class size is 25 to 30 students. I feel it makes it a lot more difficult to pay attention and concentrate solely on the professor in the larger classes.

Freshman

I think it is the total population of the school. For me, I would like for it to be relatively small, because
I like having my name and my identity.

Freshman

I like smaller classes where everyone gets to know everyone.

Sophomore

My ideal would be the professors who have the time to spend with the students in smaller classrooms; a smaller school with a hometown atmosphere. Just a place where you don’t get lost in the shuffle.

Junior

The ideal college is a place where you can be a name and not just a number.

Junior

The ideal university would be about one teacher to 20 students. I don’t like large classes.

Senior

A few students indicated that they would prefer a larger campus and larger classes. For these students the benefit of the larger environment was the increased opportunity for campus activities and more excitement.

My ideal college is large. It is just this big environment: a big, big, and interesting environment.

Junior

My ideal college is a big college in a big city so there is plenty to do.

Sophomore
I want to be somewhere bigger. I want a big place where something is happening all of the time.

**Freshman**

Convenience in the access to knowledge. For several students one of the characteristics of the ideal university was convenience in the access to knowledge and learning. The majority of students within this attitude code discussed the value that they placed on having the opportunity of a college experience so close to home.

The ideal college for me is one that is close to home.

**Freshman**

This college is a fine school and it is close to home.

**Freshman**

The ideal university for me is one that is close to home and has a good reputation.

**Junior**

This college is convenient in that it is close to home.

**Senior**

I am happy here. It is convenient. I don’t have to leave my family to go anywhere.

**Senior**

The discussion of the convenience of the ideal university transcended into an issue of the convenience of getting to class.

After I graduate I think I will remember all of the walking on campus just to get to class.

**Freshman**
But here, golly, it is a battle for 12,000 students to find a parking place with, what, only 8,000 parking places.

Junior

I dreaded coming up here. After all, at the Kingsport Center you can park at the front door.

Junior

College reputation. With lesser frequency, students in the junior cohort primarily, discussed the importance of attending a university with a good reputation.

You graduate from that college and where ever you want to get a job you basically could because the name of the college is so well known.

Junior

Where you attend college does have an effect on how easily you can get a job.

Junior

For me the ideal college is someplace with a good reputation.

Junior

The ideal college for me is one that is close to home and has a good reputation.

Freshman

My Accomplishments

Finally, in discussing their satisfaction with the college experience, students talked frequently about the importance of their accomplishments in college. They
indicated that they looked forward to that anticipated sense of achievement once they had completed their degree.

Number one for me is having a sense of accomplishment. It is being able to say that I finished. That I did it. I went through the classes and I had new ideas and I rolled them over in my head.

Senior

Student satisfaction for me is to be the best I can be: a feeling of accomplishment.

Junior

That is when I will know that I am satisfied, when I feel good about what I have accomplished.

Senior

Satisfaction is when you think that you have reached your fullest potential; that you have achieved something.

Junior

After I graduate, I will remember the sheer enjoyment of making it through it because it has been a challenge to make it through.

Junior

For other students the sense of accomplishment meant so much more than just "making it through" the challenge. It also meant an increase in self-esteem and the feeling of becoming somebody.
The biggest benefit for me of college was to do something for myself and to build my self-esteem.

Junior

There aren't many black students here in college. Somebody has got to do it and nobody else is doing it. They are just making fun of us that chose college, but they are messing it up for all of us cause we all get stereotyped by those who don't want to do better. My black friends make fun of me cause I am in a college that is mostly white and they say that I am doing this just to hang with those, you know, but I am just being myself and that is what I want to do and I am not gonna let nobody bring me down just because I want to be up here.

Sophomore

The satisfaction for me is when I go back home and people know that I have gone away but that I haven't been locked up somewhere. I been gone away for some time and they think it is something negative. Where I live it is like most people go away they are in jail. When I come back I am coming back with something positive and not something negative. That is accomplishment.

Sophomore

I am here because I want to be somebody.

Freshman
I am here for me. I know I can do it. When I graduate I want to go on and get my master's degree and I want people to know that I am somebody and that I can do it.

Junior

I will feel like a new man when I graduate because of what I have accomplished here.

Freshman

Still other students talked about their feelings of accomplishment and achievement as it related to the challenge of the college experience.

I think that maybe part of the satisfaction of the accomplishment is knowing that you have gone through a challenge and made it through okay. Once you have set your goals and you made it.

Freshman

College will separate you in the job field knowing that you have gone through that challenge. Otherwise you wouldn't even go to college. Because that is what the degree is all about. It is the challenge.

Freshman

Unique Perceptions on the Definition of Satisfaction

During the course of the 8 focus group sessions, students talked a great deal about the aspects of the college experience that were important to their overall educational experience. In this section, those different aspects of college, ranging from the student's decision to attend college to the student's sense of accomplishment with
college, have been presented. However, students made some interesting comments about satisfaction, that were an aside to these other issues already discussed, that warrant mentioning at this point.

Several students talked about satisfaction as if it were a negative construct. These students indicated that for them student satisfaction is something that they never want to attain because it might in some way keep them from wanting to achieve more.

If I play a good game of golf, it always could have been better. I am never going to be satisfied. If I get an A- then I want an A+.

Freshman

I guess it is just different for me because I feel that I will just never let myself be satisfied. If I am satisfied then I know personally, that I don’t work as hard as I should.

Sophomore

Other students talked about student satisfaction as an individual construct that would mean different things to different people. These students did not agree with the idea of defining student satisfaction as if the definition could be generalized to all students.

I think that student satisfaction is one of those things that is an individual thing and it isn’t a constant. One day I may be satisfied for this reason
and the next day I may be dissatisfied for a completely different reason.

Freshman

I think that satisfaction is a totally individual thing.

Freshman

Student satisfaction is going to be different for everybody.

Senior

Still other students viewed overall student satisfaction as a sum of the student's satisfaction with each individual component of education.

I think that there are phases of satisfaction. You know, the daily or short term satisfaction and then the long term satisfaction.

Senior

I can't define student satisfaction on an overall level. I have to look at the different components of my education to say whether or not I am satisfied with each component, because some parts I am dissatisfied, but overall I am satisfied.

Sophomore

For many of the students who participated in this research, student satisfaction was the equivalent of feeling comfortable or content.
Student satisfaction is when you are content with yourself and you are happy.

*Freshman*

If at the end of the day you can sit back and smile, you have had a satisfying day.

*Freshman*

Student satisfaction to me is where the student is at least comfortable and just being happy and being able to live without being miserable.

*Sophomore*

I feel really good about being here and what I am studying. The path that I have taken. I feel very comfortable with my life right now and being here.

*Sophomore*

I agree that student satisfaction is feeling comfortable. This school is stress free, more laid back than I had expected. No problems. Comfortable: That is what popped into my head when you said student satisfaction.

*Junior*

For the most part, when questioned about student satisfaction students had a ready answer as to what constituted student satisfaction for them. However, there were a few students who would have agreed with the sophomore student who simply said, "I don't really understand what student satisfaction means to me: yet."
Differences in Findings from Student Sample Based on
Grade Cohort and Demographics

In this section, the differences in student attitude
and opinions are identified by grade cohort and the
demographics of gender, enrollment status, age, commuting
status, and employment. Because the percentage of non-
whites (12%) to whites and the percentage of part-time
students (10%) as compared with full-time students was so
small, a comparison by these two demographics would have
been meaningless and therefore was not performed.

To determine those attitude codes that were unique to
each subgroup, the percentage of the subgroup to the total
focus group sample was compared with the percentage of
responses of that subgroup to the total focus group sample
responses on each code. For example, the freshman cohort
made up 26% of the total focus group sample, therefore 26%
was used as a benchmark for determining attitude codes that
were unique to that grade cohort. The same benchmarking
procedure was done for each of the demographics analyzed.

It is important to point out that these differences were
analyzed at the attitude code level and not at the pattern
level. This was done to allow for a microscopic look at the
differences in student attitudes.

Grade Cohort

In this section, the unique attitude codes for each of
the four grade cohorts is presented. Some of these unique
attitude codes have already been mentioned within the
attitude pattern discussion earlier in this chapter.

**Freshman grade cohort.**

1. Freshmen did not discuss issues that related to finding a better job, but they did have a higher frequency of discussing the college experience as an opportunity for a better life.

2. Freshmen did not have any concerns related to the relevancy and flexibility of the curriculum.

3. Freshmen did not express concerns with the quality of advising.

4. More freshmen than any other cohort expressed a desire to attend a bigger university for the advantage of more activities and excitement.

5. Freshmen did indicate that they value a university that is close to home.

6. More freshmen than any other cohort indicated that their education will end after college graduation.

7. For the freshman cohort in this study, the decision to attend college was predicated by the demands of parents.

8. To the freshman, college is an extension of high school and the definition of higher education is simply a higher level of learning.

9. The freshmen in this study did express concerns about their ability to "make it" in college.

10. The freshman cohort had a higher frequency of discussing their desire for job satisfaction over monetary
compensation.

11. Freshmen believe that there are no rules in college and that students have the opportunity to make their own decisions. However, they also believed that college is no fun.

12. Freshmen had very little expressed concern with the payoff of college.

13. Freshmen had a greater concern than the other cohorts with boring professors.

14. Freshmen indicated that the one thing they will remember most after graduation is their friends.

15. The freshman cohort had a higher frequency of defining student satisfaction as a negative construct. For these students, satisfaction is a state of being in which they felt no motivation to improve.

Sophomore cohort.

1. The sophomore cohort in this research expressed some feelings of being constrained in college by too many rules and regulations. This compares interestingly with the freshman cohort who were enjoying the freedoms of college.

2. Sophomores were not concerned with advising.

3. Sophomores expressed a need for interesting and entertaining classes in order to comprehend the material. Furthermore, classroom satisfaction was a prerequisite to overall satisfaction.
4. Sophomores had a greater need to feel accepted by their peers and to feel like they belong within the college environment.

5. More sophomores than any of the other students indicated that students should wait until they are older to begin college. Many sophomores believed that they simply were not ready for the challenges of college.

6. For sophomores, feeling comfortable is a primary condition for overall satisfaction.

7. The sophomore cohort had the highest frequency of responses when discussing family influences on their decision to attend college and their overall satisfaction with college. The freshmen cohort had the highest frequency in the discussion of parental pressure in attending college.

8. It was important to this sophomore cohort that the curriculum was designed to meet their individual interests and needs.

9. Sophomores had a higher tendency to express concern about their future and their focus in college.

10. For sophomores there was a direct relationship between grades and satisfaction.

11. Sophomores reflected back on their freshman experience and indicated that it was a time of loneliness and isolation. However, they believed that they did not truly feel the frustrations of that loneliness until they reached their sophomore year.
Junior cohort.
1. Juniors discussed the importance of the college degree to accomplishing life goals.
2. Juniors had a higher frequency of discussing the college degree as a necessity for finding a better job. Likewise, they had the highest frequency in discussing the college experience as career preparation and providing them with increased options.
3. Like freshmen, juniors were looking forward to a better life because of the college experience. Unlike freshmen, juniors believed that college was the starting point for their educational experience.
4. Again, like the freshmen, juniors valued a college that was close to home.
5. For the junior cohort the reputation of the college was important because of the perceived increased job opportunities.
6. As compared with sophomores and seniors, juniors had very few curriculum concerns.
7. It important to juniors that they have exposure to diversity so that they learn how to interact with different people in a variety of situations.
8. Juniors represented the highest frequency in comments concerning the importance of the friendly campus.
9. For juniors, college is a maturation process that includes self-discovery.
10. Juniors made the greatest percentage of comments
centered around the learning aspects of college and the
majority of their comments revolved around the need for
an educational experience that helps them to understand
the complex material covered in college.

11. More juniors than any other cohort believed that society
had mandated college attendance.

12. Juniors had the highest frequency of talking about the
importance of caring professors and professors with
quality pedagogical skills.

13. As they indicated, juniors will have a greater
propensity to remember the accomplishment of college,
the effort, the time it took to graduate, and the
professors.

14. For juniors, student involvement was an important
component of collegiate success.

Senior cohort.

1. Like juniors, seniors view the college experience as an
opportunity to achieve life goals.

2. Seniors had the highest frequency of comments concerning
advising and university communication.

3. Seniors had a greater propensity to discuss the
perceived incompetency of staff and the problems of
bureaucracy when discussing the student-oriented campus.

4. More seniors than any other grade cohort indicated that
they believed that their college provided a quality
education.
5. Within the discussion of curriculum design, more seniors expressed a desire for hands-on learning opportunities and for a reduction in the redundancy in the content of courses.

6. The senior cohort frequently discussed their college experience as a life transforming experience.

7. For the senior cohort, the college degree equates to job advantage and opportunity.

8. Seniors were more concerned with rude professors than caring professors.

9. Seniors had a greater propensity to express some concerns about their readiness for a career.

10. Like juniors, seniors will remember the effort of college, the time it took to graduate, and the professors.

11. For seniors, the independence of the college experience is just as important as what is learned in the classroom.

Demographics

Female response.

1. Females were more concerned with advising and communication within the university than were males.

2. Females had a higher frequency of responses concerning the value of a college experience that was similar to home.

3. More females believed that students should wait until
they are older to attend college.

4. For females, satisfaction with their major is a condition for overall educational satisfaction.

5. Females had a greater propensity to discuss parental pressure as their primary motivation to attend college.

6. Females had a higher chance of having a profession chosen before they entered college and therefore had a greater college focus.

7. It was more important to females to have caring professors.

8. Females indicated that they would remember the effort of college after they graduate.

Male response.

1. Males were more concerned with the rules and regulations of college life.

2. Overwhelmingly, males viewed the college degree as an important criterion to finding the better job. Males also had a greater propensity to view the college degree as the way to a better life. Both males and females equally believe that the college experience was about career preparation.

3. Males had a higher frequency of discussing the bureaucracy of college and the red tape involved in finding out information.

4. For males, the college degree was about more money and more options.
5. Males had a greater propensity to indicate that they believed they were getting a quality education in college.

6. Males had a greater tendency than females to believe that they already know it all and that the college curriculum is too repetitive. Likewise, more males than females believed that the college curriculum should be flexible to the individual needs of students.

7. Males will remember their accomplishments in college.

8. For males, the college experience is all about self-discovery.

**Nontraditional age student response.** For this research the nontraditional age students were defined as those students age 25 or older. Because of the much smaller percentage of nontraditional age students (25%) in this study compared with the traditional age, only the nontraditional age responses are given.

1. Nontraditional age students were more interested in the satisfaction of achievement for the purpose of building self-esteem. These students recognized and appreciated the challenge of the college experience. Furthermore, for the nontraditional student the college experience was an opportunity to begin achieving life goals.

2. The nontraditional student was more concerned about advising and the ability of the university to communicate effectively with its constituents for the purpose of keeping the student informed.
3. Slightly more than the traditional age student, the nontraditional student was concerned about the affordability of college than the traditional age student and expressive of their thankfulness that they can afford this opportunity for a college experience.

4. Nontraditional age students were slightly more concerned with the bureaucracy of the university and the resulting "red tape".

5. The nontraditional student was less concerned with the relevancy and flexibility of the college curriculum and more interested in a curriculum that is based in experiential learning.

6. The nontraditional student was more interested in the college curriculum providing them with the opportunity to learn about different people and different cultures.

7. More so than the traditional age student, the nontraditional student was more comfortable in a small and friendly campus environment.

8. Nontraditional students were more concerned with good grades and expressed a direct relationship between their grades and satisfaction. However, the nontraditional student, more so than the traditional student, frequently expressed the importance of the learning process within the college experience and viewed the college experience as the beginning to lifelong education.
9. The nontraditional age student was attracted to the job advantages of the college degree. These students, however, did not mention their desire for job satisfaction. They did mention, more frequently than traditional students the importance of the college degree in providing students with options.

10. Nontraditional students were more concerned with caring professors and less tolerant of rude professors.

11. They were also more cognizant of the effort of college and indicated that would be the aspect of college that they would most likely remember.

12. As compared to the traditional age student, the nontraditional student was more likely to define student satisfaction as a sum of a variety of satisfaction components. For the nontraditional student, overall student satisfaction was difficult to define because of the recognition of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with different components in the college experience, i.e. satisfied with their major, but dissatisfied with advising and etc.

13. Finally, the nontraditional student was attracted to the lessons of time management within the college experience.

Students who are not employed. Thirty-eight percent of the student sample indicated that they were not employed in any capacity during the fall semester.

1. As compared with students who were employed, the
unemployed student was more concerned with a sense of achievement with the college experience. As a group, students who do not work were interested in the college degree in helping them to "be somebody".

2. Unemployed students were not as concerned with student advising.

3. They had a greater interest in developing a personal relationship with faculty for the purpose of feeling comfortable in the classroom and asking questions.

4. The unemployed student was not as concerned with the college degree helping them to find a better job, but they were more concerned with the college degree providing them with a better life and the ability to make more money. They did believe, however, that the college degree can provide a job advantage and has the benefit of providing individuals with more options.

5. The unemployed students were less concerned with the bureaucracy and red-tape of the campus.

6. As compared with the employed student, the unemployed student was more likely to not have a focus on what they want to do while attending college and they appear to be concerned with that lack of focus. Perhaps because of these feelings of frustration with no college focus, students who do not work expressed a greater desire to "get out" of college as quickly as possible.

7. Unemployed students were more likely to define student satisfaction as feeling comfortable or content.
Likewise, students who were not employed had a greater propensity to feel that they did not belong and have feelings of isolation within the university environment. They were more concerned than their employed peers with a friendly campus environment.

8. Unemployed students were not as concerned with the relevancy and flexibility of the curriculum. Furthermore, students who were not employed did not equate making good grades with student satisfaction. There was no relationship between these two variables for unemployed students.

9. The unemployed student was more influenced by parental pressure to attend college and expressed with greater frequency the feelings that they had no choice in the decision to attend or to stay in college. In their opinion, this decision was made by parents or mandated by society.

10. Slightly more attracted to the maturation process of the college experience, the unemployed student believed that the most important component of maturation was the independence of the college student. Of secondary importance to the unemployed students was the benefit of self-discovery during the college experience.

11. Finally, the unemployed student was less likely to find importance in the learning experiences of college. However, they demonstrated a greater propensity to find value in the extracurricular activities of college.
Students who live on campus. Twenty-seven percent of the undergraduate student sample indicated that they live on campus.

1. As compared with students who commute to campus for classes, the student who lives on campus was more concerned with getting their money's worth from the college experience and were more concerned with the affordability of college. Students who live on campus were more likely to be thankful for this opportunity to attend college.

2. Campus residents were more likely to believe that there are too many rules and regulations in college.

3. They demonstrated a greater propensity to make the decision to attend college so that they could achieve something that their parents did not. However, these students also believed that society had mandated this choice to attend college.

4. The campus resident was more interested in becoming somebody with the college degree.

5. Unlike the commuter, the campus resident was less interested in the college degree for finding the better job or having the better life and were not as concerned with getting out of college quickly. For college residents, the benefit of the college degree was having more options available to them.

6. The campus resident was more attracted to the bigger college for the exciting environment and less concerned
with university bureaucracy.

7. The campus resident was less interested in the career training aspect of the college experience, but they were more interested in job satisfaction than in making more money.

8. As compared with the commuter, the campus resident was more likely to define student satisfaction based on their feelings of comfort and contentment.

9. Campus residents were more likely to express feelings of isolation and loneliness. Making friends was more important to the student who lives on campus and they were more likely to remember those friends after they graduate. These students placed a greater value on their social life than on their academic life.

10. The campus resident was more interested in a flexible curriculum that was designed for the unique learning interests of each student. However, the student who lives on campus was less likely to place an importance on the learning environment of college, but they did value the classroom experience that helps them to understand complex material.

11. They were more likely to express some concerns about their future.

12. Campus residents were attracted to the maturation process of the college experience and believed that an important component in the maturation process is learning how to interact with others. They were also
more interested in the opportunity for self-discovery during the maturation process.

13. They were less likely to be concerned about caring professors, but were more likely to appreciate professors who have quality pedagogical skills.

14. Unlike students who commute, the campus resident was more likely to believe that student involvement is important to a successful college experience.

**Student Satisfaction Percentage**

Based on data collected from question #9 on the student focus group guide, 88.3% of those students who participated in this study indicated that they were more satisfied than dissatisfied with their overall experience at the regional university under study. The initial purpose of question #9 was to provide a link between the qualitative assessment of this study and a quantitative assessment of overall student satisfaction conducted at this university during the spring semester, 1995. However, the data analysis results from that assessment were not available at the writing of this report.

**Summary**

In this chapter the findings from the student sample were presented. Ninety-four students participated in 8 focus group sessions for this study. Based on a Chi-Square test for significant difference, the student sample was not statistically different as compared with the target
population for grade cohort, gender, age, and commuting status. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the sample and the target population regarding race, enrollment status, and college enrollment. A larger number of the sample were minority, enrolled full-time, and enrolled in the College of Business than would be expected based on the target population.

The student data was reduced into seven attitude patterns:

1. My decision to attend college: Students discussed their hopes that the college degree would be the beginning of a new future and that they were thankful for this opportunity for a college experience. They also discussed the important influence of parents and family on their decision to attend college.

2. My career aspirations: The students in this study discussed career preparation as the primary benefit of the college experience, the importance of satisfaction with the major to overall satisfaction, and the hope that the college degree would result in increased long term financial compensation.

3. My future: Students discussed the importance of the college experience to a successful future; the desire for a short term and long term payoff on the college investment; and the student's belief that the effort of college was worthwhile.
4. My personal development and growth: Students discussed the need to feel a sense of belonging on the college campus, the importance of the self-discovery experience of college life, the value of the maturation process of college, and the important life lessons learned while in college. Students also valued the lessons of independence and self-reliance during their college experience.

5. My education: Included in this attitude pattern were student discussions about the importance of faculty, classes, grades, curriculum design, and extracurricular activities to their overall satisfaction. Also included in this pattern were discussions on the purpose of college as an expansion of knowledge, the importance of university-wide communications for the purpose of keeping the student informed, and the unique characteristics of the college effort.

6. My ideal college: Student discussion within this attitude pattern focused primarily on the value of a student-oriented campus to their overall satisfaction. They also discussed the physical characteristics of their ideal university and the importance of attending a reputable university that provided a quality education.

7. My accomplishments: Finally, students discussed the importance of experiencing a sense of accomplishment once they had successfully completed their college tenure.
Immediately following a detailed description of each of the above attitude patterns, a report was given on the unique student satisfaction definitions given by some of the students in this study. For example, for some students satisfaction was defined as a negative construct. These students equated satisfaction with the feeling of contentment and a reduction in the desire to improve upon themselves. Chapter 4 concludes with an exploration into the satisfaction attitude differences between grade cohorts and differences based on demographics. These satisfaction attitude differences are summarized in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of the findings from the administrator sample to include the composition of the sample, institutional effectiveness attitude patterns, and opinions of administrators concerning college students.
CHAPTER 5
INTERNAL DOMINANT COALITION SAMPLE FINDINGS

Introduction
In this chapter, the findings from the internal dominant coalition (administrator) focus group sessions are presented. A discussion of the administrator sample and the levels of administration that participated in the study is presented first. An in-depth presentation of the five umbrella attitude patterns for the administrator sample and the attitude codes that were reduced into each pattern is presented next. The five attitudes patterns are: (a) university resources; (b) student development and growth; (c) student education; (d) learning environment; and (e) university outcomes. It is from this set of information that the criteria for evaluating institutional effectiveness were identified. The criteria are presented in Chapter 6. Finally, included at the end of this chapter are comments made by administrators on their specific opinions and attitudes about college students.

Composition of the Administrator Sample
The administrator sample was comprised of members in the internal dominant coalition of the university. Those members include; (a) the president; (b) the vice-president of academic affairs, (c) the vice-presidents of finance and student affairs; (d) associate and assistant vice-presidents (e) an assistant to the president; (f) college deans; and
Twenty-five administrators participated in four focus group sessions. Of the 25 administrators, there were 4 vice-presidents, 7 associate or assistant vice-presidents, 5 college deans, and 8 department chairs. A separate personal interview was conducted with the president of the university.

Findings from the Administrator Sample

The attitude codes for the administrator sample were reduced into five attitude patterns. The first attitude pattern, university resources, included those attitudes that centered around the resource environment of the effective institution. The second attitude pattern, student development and growth, focused on administrators attitudes and opinions about the role of the effective institution in the maturation process of the student. Student education, the third attitude pattern, included those components of providing a quality education for students that administrators deemed important. The fourth pattern, the learning environment, focused on the effectiveness criteria of providing students with a conducive environment for quality learning. Finally, university outcomes was the fifth attitude component. Within this component administrators discussed important criteria for measuring the quality of university results.

In this section, quotes from the administrator focus group sessions are provided as evidence of the attitude code or pattern. To enhance the reader's understanding of the
context in which the quote was stated, each quote is identified by the administrative rank of the speaker. The designation of "Senior Staff" refers to: the university president; an assistant to the president; the academic vice-president; vice-presidents of finance and student affairs; and associate and assistant vice-presidents. For the college deans and department chairs, the speaker identification matches their administrative rank.

University Resources

Within this attitude pattern, administrators identified their criteria for an effective institution by addressing the importance of the inputs or resources that are available to the university for the support of university operations. These resources included financial, technological, time, and human resources. Also included in this section are discussions concerning the effective planning for the allocation of those resources and the ability of the effective institution to utilize their resources to adapt to a changing environment. (See Table 9)

Focused Resources. Administrators discussed their opinions of the effective institution from the perspective of a university that has the ability to focus resources in a manner that will encourage organized growth of the academy.

Within this discussion, administrators first underscored their philosophy that the availability of unlimited resources was not necessarily a criterion in the evaluation
TABLE 9

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

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<th>Attitude Code</th>
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<td>Qualified Students</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
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<td>University Resources</td>
<td>61</td>
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</table>

of an effective institution, but that the quality of the human resource was the critical factor.

I am not sure that unlimited resources would necessarily make an ideal university first of all. We already have a much better university than all of our resources would indicate, right here, because we have the people who are interested in doing the job: a lot of hard working, devoted, dedicated people.

Department Chair

If we had the resources that we were going to improve the place it would be by finding ways to motivate people to be willing to compete for a grade or to do a better job teaching or to do research.

Department Chair

But money, although very important, is not the principle issue in education today. The principle is getting people to understand the importance of education and getting people to mentor others. It is
the human perspective and not the financial perspective.

**Senior Staff**

One thing that I notice in the comments that we have made here is that we probably need to be more focused on our resources than we are right now. We often times take a great pride in being called the university with many diverse programs ... I think that when we start to do a lot of different things for lots of different people that we don't grow in an organized way and we lose sight of the many things that 30 years ago when I was in college was very important.

**Senior Staff**

Administrators also discussed the importance of effectively utilizing resources to improve the quality of university facilities and technology. For these administrators, this focus on improving facilities and technology was seen as a way to improve the recruiting and retention of their most valued resources -- faculty and students.

I would use our resources to allow for more technology and better facilities.

**College Dean**

The important resource questions in my mind: Are you able to get the facilities? Are you able to get the buildings? Are you able to get the technology? And
all of that stuff that goes into having a university with the ability to recruit the human resource.

Senior Staff

And then, I would like to see the environment a little bit better than we currently have. I would like to see the flowers and I would like to see the good dormitory rooms and I think that you can create a learning environment with your buildings and your grounds.

Senior Staff

Faculty. Throughout the focus group sessions, administrators seemed to agree that the faculty were a most crucial component in the human resource of the university. In fact, according to administrators recruiting and selecting highly qualified and professional faculty was the most important step in ensuring institutional quality.

I think my ideal university would start with a very professional faculty that is very motivated and committed to excellence and providing learning opportunities for students and for themselves and for one another ... I think that without having a very dedicated professional faculty with motivation and a professional commitment to excellence the other things would just be material pieces that may not play into having a quality place.

College Dean
I think that you have to obviously have a certain level of expertise in commitment on the part of the faculty to have a quality institution.

College Dean

If you have a first rate faculty than the rest of it will fall into place.

Department Chair

Quality students. Administrators also included in their discussion of important resources, the quality consequences of recruiting and retaining highly qualified and motivated students. From the perspective of the administrators in this research, a quality institution encourages an environment of partnership between a quality faculty and a motivated student population. According to administrators, if either of these two variables are missing from the environment, than the effectiveness of the institution is in question. As seen in the following quotes, the attitude of administrators on this topic ranged from those administrators who were content with good students who were motivated to learn to those administrators who believed higher education should be in the business of educating only the "academic elite".

My number one priority of the ideal university would be good students.

College Dean

I think you have to obviously have a certain level of
expertise in commitment on the part of the faculty ... 

[But] if faculty don't have the raw material to work with, [they] are limited in terms of working with the raw material that they have.

College Dean

And so in my ideal university nobody would be admitted with an ACT score under 28 and the other folks could do middle education ... but they certainly would not be in higher education. I believe that a university should deal only with the very, very good and should not be a part of the social support institutions. You should have those in place, but we should not be part of it, if you are going to call it higher education.

Department Chair

A good faculty can't do anything without good students.

Department Chair

On the issue of educating the "academic elite", there were a few administrators who voiced an opposing opinion. For these administrators, the realities of an imperfect world dictate that not every university can enroll only the best and the brightest, and that a highly qualified student body is not a prerequisite to institutional effectiveness.

But not every institution can recruit the best students. There are students that need to have that external motivation to do well and certainly we as
faculty should have the passion to engender that in students.

Department Chair

The perfect university would be one where each faculty member has the very best qualifications that they have and they teach students who are highly qualified. But if you had a perfect world you wouldn't need a university. The reason we have public institutions in this country is because it is not a perfect world.

Senior Staff

I guess even in the ideal world I would still want the challenge of some students who ... you needed to encourage along the way and that weren’t all the elite people who wanted to strive to get to the top.

Department Chair

Planning. Within the attitude pattern of the importance of various resources to the effective institution, administrators also discussed the value of long-term planning for the allocation of those resources. According to these administrators, the planning process is the vehicle that an effective institution utilizes to ensure that the outcomes from the use of university resources are congruent with the stated mission and goals of the institution.

... we have an annual planning process and that annual process takes into account every individual and every
unit on the campus. We take that very seriously.
People have action plans that they work on and then
really do ask people to be accountable...We are now
asking ourselves not only did we do what we said we
were going to do, but how does it support the mission
or the goals of the institution.

Senior Staff

We use our planning document. We set out goals for the
year. We really use them. We just had a meeting
yesterday where all of our administrative team got
together and we tracked down the goals and the specific
items that we had wanted to accomplish and looked at
where we were in terms of accomplishing those goals.

College Dean

Through [planning] we have identified [the] processes
that are, one, essential to our survival, and, two, are
essential if we are going to improve. Also, we have
identified who has the data. One of the key things in
evaluating anything is to have some facts and so now we
know who has the data to help us make our comparisons
and set our goals.

Senior Staff

Student Development and Growth

For the administrators in this study, the effective
institution is an institution that provides students with an
educational experience that encourages maturation. Included
within maturation are all of those processes that (a) foster personal growth; (b) encourage students to broaden their perspectives and open their minds to new ways of thinking; and (c) allow students the opportunity to interact with a variety of people in a variety of situations. (See Table 10)

Growth. Frequently when administrators discussed the maturation process of higher education, they referred to college as a "life changing experience" or as a "life transforming opportunity". For these administrators, the effective institution is an institution that offers students a collegiate experience that fosters growth and maturity.

College or a university experience ideally is going to be a life-changing experience.

Senior Staff

College is more expansive in terms of your knowledge and your growth.

College Dean

I think in defining the college experience, I would focus on that personal growth issue. The specifics of learning the tools for what you are going to do for the rest of your life are critical parts of it, but that personal change and growth that takes place is important.

College Dean

...college is part of a maturation process whereby you have been guided all along and doing things in a
TABLE 10

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attitude Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with Others</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Development and Growth</td>
<td>29</td>
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</table>

certain manner. Now there is more of an independence whereby you can either succeed or fail on your own. The expectation is that you are going to function with less direction than you did in high school or elementary school.

Department Chair

Administrators also discussed this life changing experience from the perspective of providing students with the opportunity to explore new perspectives on old beliefs and to help the student "take-off the blinders" and see the world in a broader brush.

The college experience helps the student to arrive at better decisions by providing them with more perspectives in thinking about those decisions.

Senior Staff

College is a life-changing experience in that the student is going to have some cognitive development. They are not going to be thinking in terms of black and white when they leave the university. Hopefully, there
is going to be a lot of personal development along the way.

Senior Staff

I would say that college would be less a reinforcement of what you learn and what your attitudes are than more of a challenge to those attitudes and what you have learned -- much more challenging.

College Dean

The quality college experience is learning to take off those narrow glasses and opening up to other cultures -- taking off those blinders.

Department Chair

Interaction with others. Administrators also viewed the quality college experience as an opportunity for students to learn how to interact with different people in different situations. For administrators this experience of social interaction is an important component in the effective institution because it provides the societal function of preparing students to become productive team players within the parameters of societal expectations.

In my description of college, I would include that college would be a location in which you encounter people from many different places.

College Dean
College would make you a better rounded individual who could understand societal issues and interactions with people.

Senior Staff

College helps make students understand society and helps them deal with conflict and how they work with neighbors and how they work with other people.

Senior Staff

Student Education

By far the largest attitude pattern in terms of frequency of coded comments, was the pattern that included administrator statements about the criteria for providing students with a quality education. Administrators discussed the importance in an effective institution of the instrumental purpose of the institution as well as the liberal education purpose. Administrators also focused on the need for an effective institution to provide an instruction delivery system that was flexible to the individual needs of students and placed value on an educational process that enhances skills and expands knowledge. Likewise for these administrators, the effective institution was one that provided opportunities for students to become involved in their education both inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, the administrators in this study discussed the importance of providing a college experience that was also a preparation for life. (See Table 11.)
TABLE 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT EDUCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Code</td>
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<td>Instrumentalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Education</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Systems of Instruction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Skills and Knowledge</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Preparation</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Involvement</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Education</td>
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**Instrumentalism.** To the administrators in this study, the effective higher education institution is an institution that recognizes the importance of the career preparation responsibilities of higher education. Related to this responsibility of the effective institution in providing quality career preparation is the necessity of the university to remain closely aligned with the marketplace to ensure that they are providing an instrumental education that is congruent with the needs of employers. For many of these administrators, the idea of the instrumental nature of the college degree was not a choice for the university, but was instead mandated by the demands of society and the return on investment requirements of students.

*College is a place that you go to for the more advanced work.* For developing skills that you need for a career
or for a life's profession to gain more knowledge.

College Dean

College is a place where you can get credentials to assume jobs that some time ago where assumed by people with a high school degree -- very similar jobs.

Department Chair

I think that I would characterize most contemporary universities education as 99.99% instrumental as viewed by students and as viewed by most of our faculty as solely instrumentalism. I think that the motivation becomes that: 'Once I get the degree then I can work.'

Department Chair

But the bottom line is there has to be ... some return for [students]. Because the fact of life is that one has to support themselves and if you are producing graduates that are not employable, then that is a problem.

Department Chair

I question whether or not [students] are going to have that solid a background in the discipline itself, but boy, I tell you when they go out they will be able to do something because they have the tools. We are trying to provide these people with jobs.

Department Chair

I believe that higher education is providing for one to be able to understand and function in society, part of
which involves functioning through effectiveness through one’s occupation.

Senior Staff

Society has put a tremendous emphasis on the job market and preparation for a job. I doubt you would find a very high percentage of our students who would come here without some job expectations and that is society-driven.

Senior Staff

As already mentioned, these administrators recognized the importance of the marketplace in defining a quality instrumental program. Therefore, several administrators discussed the importance of looking to the marketplace for guidance in design the educational program and the evaluation of program effectiveness. Some of the administrators even wondered about the appropriateness of utilizing marketplace demands as a guide for resource allocation within the university.

I would take that one step beyond and suggest that the ideal university is not a separate entity or segregated unto itself, but it is aligned very closely with the marketplace and the world.

Senior Staff

In determining the goals for our program, we use things that are out in the market to guide us. For instance, we can not continue to only take students to hospitals and except them to be able to function within the
health care market. They have got to spend at least 50% of their time out in the community in other institutions.

College Dean

...in a sense we could restructure universities to respond to the job markets and they would have to respond quickly. You would have universities simply produce folks that could fill slots that are defined by the market. Let us say that there is a drop in demand, then you have to ... close down this and open up something else. That would be an intensely instrumental institution. This may be the way to go.

Department Chair

Liberal education. With equal frequency to the discussion of the instrumental nature of the college degree, administrators also discussed the importance of the liberal education aspect of the college experience. For many administrators the instrumental and the liberal education aspects of the college experience were of equal value and important education partners in the effective institution.

College is a level of education beyond high school that could either be for career purposes or liberal education, or both.

Senior Staff

College is a combination of a broad liberal studies background to prepare you for a number of life
experiences plus some training in a profession.

Senior Staff

College gives the individual an opportunity to expand their horizons [with liberal education] and expand their compensation level [with career preparation] as well.

Senior Staff

College is a community of people that come together to continue their learning past the high school experience that broadens their understanding of the physical, scientific, humanistic world in which we live in and at the same time also helps prepare for careers that require advanced understanding.

Senior Staff

The paradigm shift is that all of the liberal studies notions are being infused into the preparation of life's skills. For example, writing skills, technological skills, multicultural awareness into courses in the major so it doesn't have to be an either/or arrangement between the liberal studies and the professional studies or at least it shouldn't be.

Senior Staff

Administrators talked of the liberal education core of the effective institution as an opportunity for students to broaden their horizons, to enhance their critical thinking skills, and to open their thoughts to new ideas and perspectives; all with the purpose of preparing students for
an ever-changing global economy.

From a pragmatic point of view, you know a broad education allows you to accommodate when specific technical skills that you have learned are no longer valid.

Senior Staff

Your experiences add to your knowledge base and you get an awareness. You call it liberal education. You learn things from it. Education should teach you to have that awareness. That this little body of knowledge that you are going to learn for this particular degree is not the end. That you got to keep it standing always. Learn new things and new ways of doing things.

Senior Staff

The general education core is one of the things that the faculty really believe in and put energy into and feel that they have some ownership in, because it defines what the academy is all about.

Senior Staff

Liberal education is a broadening thing.

Senior Staff

Basically, liberal education is just an expansion of your horizons. [Liberal education is] an opportunity to see the world outside of your limited experience.

College Dean

When you look at college from an intellectual
perspective, it becomes something more than simply training for a job.

Senior Staff

Finally, administrators viewed the liberal education component of the college experience as an important component in the preparation of students to become knowledgeable participants in a democratic society.

As society becomes increasingly complex, people have to learn to think in different ways. They have to be, in a practical way, educated to do the specific things that society needs and there is not another way to accomplish that, really, without higher education.

College Dean

There are some advantages in a democratic society to having an educated populace that can make rational decisions in terms of the governance of the society which is part of the knowledge base expansion. At least 50% of what we do with higher education in this country is to benefit society. That is the reason it is public education and that is the reason that we make such an investment in higher education.

Senior Staff

Delivery systems of instruction. Whereas a majority of administrators in this study referred longingly back to the traditional higher education model of their youth, they also expressed a realization that for institutions of higher learning to become truly effective administrators must
develop and implement instructional delivery systems that are characteristic of the needs of contemporary learners.

We have to accommodate this rhetoric that we have heard today about what we think an education is all about to this kind of consumer. I think we all in this room would see a traditional [instructional delivery system] as being ideal. But I think that the consumer out there is saying something different.

Senior Staff

We still have our traditional delivery system that was tied to several hundred years ago that doesn't interact as well and therefore we have this dichotomy where the learner wants to do the one thing and we want to impart knowledge in another way. And it makes it very difficult.

Senior Staff

Aren't we just sort of trapped in tradition [with a traditional delivery system]? So do we take down the walls and call it the Center for Learning?

Department Chair

These administrators, for the most part, recognized the need for the contemporary delivery systems as coming from the multifarious life roles of contemporary students. It was not a discussion so much of the different learning abilities of students that prompted the focus on changing the instructional delivery system, but more to the point, it was a discussion of life roles and the influence of those
life roles on the student priority on education.

I see students today who are very active, hard working students, but have five or six priorities. College is one of those. It may be number four, it maybe number three, but often times it is not even number one. If the agenda of these students is to [change the instructional delivery system] and get [the information] as quickly as possible because [they] have other things out here that are competing for [their] time and energy, then creating all of these multiple experiences for learning may not even be realistic.

Senior Staff

Fifty to 70% of my students work, part time or full time, if something has got to go, as long as they get the passing grade, C or C-, than they are happy. They think, 'That grade is okay cause I am working now anyway and maybe with the degree they will give me a better job when I finish.'

Department Chair

In my ideal world, people could just come and be unburdened by all that other stuff and be here to learn and focus on learning. That would be a very desirable thing I think.

Senior Staff

Because of the changing life roles of contemporary students and the realization that the traditional model of higher education was no longer appropriate, these
administrators began to discuss the importance of contemporary delivery systems to engaging new generations of students in the learning process.

But the model of [the delivery of] instruction has to change to accommodate student life roles and bring the student along at any level whether they are 18, 25, or 50 years of age.

Senior Staff

What we need to do is cut a path through the general education core. I mean, we are 200 years since John Locke. It is high time to start thinking about education somewhere in the next 300 or 400 years and not along [this traditional instructional delivery system] that has proven entirely false. We have educated and educated: We have just as stupid a mass of people after 300 years.

Department Chair

I believe that you must decide in terms of effectiveness that we need to provide the [instructional delivery system] that gives the students the best opportunity to learn.

Senior Staff

Critical thinking skills and expanding knowledge.

Within this attitude code, administrators discussed the value to the effective institution of providing learning opportunities for students to improve on their critical thinking skills to facilitate decision making. Whereas
there was some discussion on the importance of the continuous improvement on basic educational skills, such as reading, writing, and math computation, most administrators focused their attention on the value of teaching critical thinking skills at the university level. For several administrators this discussion caused them to again focus on the important attributes of a quality liberal education.

In getting back to what we should be teaching [students] is how to think for themselves, how to reason, how to have critical assessment skills, and etc.

Senior Staff

I think that it would be important to include in the definition of college some broad, general concepts that you would hopefully learn in a college setting, such as; expanding your ability to do critical thinking and more general problem solving.

Department Chair

The expectations of those who hire our students is that they will have a breadth of education, or that they will be able to think critically, that they will be able to function as part of a team; that they will learn how to suspend judgment until they have evidence.

Senior Staff

Administrators also centered their attention on the importance of the college experience in the expansion of student knowledge. As indicated by these administrators,
the effective institution is one in which students have a certain passion for the continued pursuit of knowledge, not necessarily for the benefit of the career, but simply for the benefit of knowing.

I think that college is just an extension of knowledge and an extension beyond where you are now. But not just for a career, but for life in general.

College Dean

Students may think of college in terms of money but also they should think of it in terms of other things; a passion for learning or whatever because I think that it expands your mind and that increases your resource bank.

Department Chair

I don’t think that the college degree is what is important. I think that, particularly if you are in business or industry, that it is staying abreast of current and future trends in knowledge that is going to be the critical mass and so it is not worrying about the degree.

Senior Staff

I would describe postsecondary education as an additional opportunity for individuals to improve their knowledge base [and] to improve their skills because in our economy those skills and knowledge are needed to
expand the economy: to grow the economy for the
individual to expand and grow.

Senior Staff

Life preparation. One important criterion in the
evaluation of the effective institution for these
administrators is the ability of the institution to provide
learning opportunities that encourage to students to think
of the life benefits of the college degree and not just the
compensation benefits.

...we have several generations of students coming
through our programs that have had lots of their needs
satisfied now and see education in that same category
as other things, you know, 'I need a job. I need to
get a credential. I need to get it now.' [For the
student] it is not investing in something or learning
for the long haul for the total life [preparation].

Senior Staff

You have to be a citizen of the world and expect to
have many changes in your life time. You need to be
prepared for all of those changes.

Senior Staff

Quite simply, college helps you to enjoy life.

Senior Staff

Student involvement. Finally, administrators equated a
quality education with the involvement of students in
learning activities, both inside and outside of the
classroom experience. To these administrators the long-term endurance of the effectiveness of an institution is a direct result of the institutions ability to design program activities that encourage student involvement. Whereas the student sample discussed the importance of student involvement in terms of extracurricular activities, the administrator sample focused on a holistic approach of student involvement campus wide.

I would focus on the quality of the student culture. I would say that the ideal would promote a student culture that was very actively involved in learning and excited about learning and that people would be discussing ideas.

Senior Staff

I guess what I am searching for is a level of involvement where I see students interested in being involved in campus activities. I am concerned with this attitude of students, 'Give me the minimum amount. Let me get off this campus just as soon as I can to get on with my life, my other things.'

Senior Staff

My ideal would be for people to go to class and they go to this lab, they attend this group, or whatever, because they want to know and because they get thrilled with the process and being involved.
Learning Environment

In this fourth attitude pattern, administrators linked the effectiveness of an institution to the quality of that institution's learning environment. This pattern differs from the previous pattern, Student Education, in that the previous attitude pattern was primarily concerned with learning specifics, such as; the appropriate instructional delivery system criterion of the effective university and the criterion of providing educational processes that enhance student critical thinking skills. The Learning Environment attitude pattern, however, is focused on the development of a culture that inspires a learning passion in both students and faculty, that encourages academic excellence, and stimulates personal development. As shown in Table 12, included in this attitude pattern are the attitude codes of Learning, Community of Scholars, Student Orientation, and Faculty.

Learning. Administrators in this study discussed the importance to the quality of the educational process and the effectiveness of the institution of creating a learning culture for the academic community that would excite the intellectual exchange between faculty and student. The primary purpose of such a culture would be to engender a commitment of lifelong learning for all participants of the culture.
TABLE 12

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

<table>
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<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>Learning Environment</td>
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The ideal university should be learning centered instead of knowledge centered.

Senior Staff

Sometimes we become very concerned about information dissemination and I don’t consider that real learning. It is very easy to disseminate information, but it is more significant to convert that to knowledge -- very interactive learning.

Senior Staff

I would love to have a college where the faculty and students shared an intellectual passion ... the only justification for learning anything beyond multiplication tables is simply a matter of intellectual passion. And that would be my ideal university.

Department Chair
We want students to ask questions. We want students to be curious about the subject matter: to delve into it deeper. People who are interested in learning about anything.

Department Chair

Several administrators lamented their concerns that the college student, at least the college student attending this university, was not intrinsically motivated enough to profit from this type of learning environment. In the opinion of these administrators, too many students make the decision to attend college based on some other extrinsic motivation, such as: mandated by future employers and parental pressure. According to these administrators, until students come to the university for the purpose of learning and the expansion of knowledge, than all attempts by the university to create a culture of learning, that is so vital to the effective institution, may be to no avail.

You know, I think students sometimes go to college because that is what they are expected to do at that period in their life and this is how you fill the next four or five years. You spend it on a college campus and I think that is the norm.

Senior Staff

In many instances we have too many people going to school today who are going there because that is what
Mom and Dad want them to [do] as opposed to their really wishing to be there.

Department Chair

As mentioned earlier, the goal to creating this culture of learning is to foster a lifelong learning desire for all participants in the academic community, but specifically for students.

I think that there is some emphasis now by society beginning to refocus on the value of a better educated society, and if you read the literature...the functional illiterate by the year 2000 would not necessarily be the person who could not read nor write nor spell, but it would be the person that could not learn and learn and relearn. And as we begin to see that [focus on lifelong learning], we begin to understand that there is some value to education that may not necessarily lead to a career.

Senior Staff

In getting back to what we should be teaching students is the fact that education is a lifelong commitment, not a four-year degree or two more after that, it is a lifelong commitment in a global economy.

Senior Staff

My ideal university would be one that would provide education for a person until that person is six feet under and that type of education would change over
time. The student would continue returning or the university would find them -- one of the two.

Senior Staff

Community of scholars. Aside from the student component of the learning culture, administrators talked about the need to provide faculty with a culture that promotes the concept of a community of scholars interested in research and service. Furthermore, this community of scholars would encompass all of those participants in the academic enterprise to include students, administrators, and staff.

I think that another characteristic that I would suggest is the idea of community. It would be wonderful if in the time people were here, however long that is, if we could truly build a sense of community where faculty, students, all employees of the university viewed their purpose here as complementary.

Senior Staff

I think that the ideal institution would be a highly competitive community of scholars.

Senior Staff

I think that the university also needs to be a proactive participant in the environment in which it exists. That it utilizes its environment into a
learning laboratory, transferring theory into practice -- an environment that would encompass the entire region or even globally.

**College Dean**

The perfect university would be one where each faculty member does research and publishes books and is engaged in community service.

**Senior Staff**

**Student orientation.** Of primary importance to administrators for the successful creation of the learning culture, was the ability of the effective institution to provide students with a caring and compassionate environment that can service the student population, in toto, while adapting to the needs of one.

That is the reason for trying to do better with our customer service. That is the reason for doing new things like touchtone registration so you can cut down on the lines. So you provide a faster streamline service so they can get on about the business of learning.

**Senior Staff**

I think that the ideal university would have students at the center of it. And that is not just focusing on the teaching mission, but means incorporating students into all of the missions of a university into the
research, into the service. Students are just an
important part of everything that is going on.

College Dean

Student satisfaction is determined by the apparent
respect of the system for [students] as an individual.

College Dean

I think that a lot of it comes down to whether they
feel wanted or needed. That they are necessary for the
survival of the institution.

College Dean

[The focus on student orientation] also goes for us. I
think if we are accessible as administrators so that a
kid doesn’t have to spend half a day chasing us down
with a cut card. It makes a big difference to their
level of satisfaction.

Department Chair

My definition of student satisfaction is that a student
believes that he is being treated with dignity. He may
not like the grades that he gets and he may not be
pleased with how well he is doing, but he believes that
people care and that people are giving him good
service.

Senior Staff

Faculty. Within the discussion of the learning culture
and related to the issue of a student-oriented environment,
administrators also focused on the importance of a caring
and compassionate professoriate to the success of
acclimating the student into the culture. As further evidence of the importance of faculty to students, administrators frequently commented that the one thing that students would remember the most about their college experience would be the specific professor who had the most influence on their academic life.

If they feel that the professor treated them fairly as adults and with respect, then you are going to get a lot of different responses in terms of how they feel about the institution, or if the professor, one doesn’t care or, two, is rude.

Senior Staff

When you think of unlimited resources one of the things that would come to mind would be small class size. If you could keep the ratios very low and have more interaction between faculty and students. Obviously, other resources are important, but I think that the student to teacher ratio would be critical.

Department Chair

I would define student satisfaction, it is kind of a nebulous area that would be hard to quantify but, the amount of interaction that students have with their faculty would be important to that definition.

Department Chair

I think that students will remember a particular faculty member. Somebody who was important to them.
Somebody who influenced their life in a positive way.

College Dean

I think that [students will remember] the special instructor or instructors that made the light come on.

Department Chair

Students will remember one or more outstanding faculty.

Senior Staff

University Outcomes

The final attitude pattern for administrators revolved around measuring the quality of university outcomes. For these administrators, the definition of university outcome not only included the persistence of students toward graduation, but also included such components as the congruency between the education program and the marketplace; and the quality of the research and community service coming from the academic community. (See Table 13)

Outcomes of the university. As mentioned, administrators defined university outcomes by factors other than just the graduation of students.

I think that the primary factor has to be and is, how successful are the products of what you do. Now there are a number of products of what you do. One of those products is the preparation of the education of students. Another is the re-certification or retraining of students who come back to our institutions. Consulting that we provide to various
TABLE 13

UNIVERSITY OUTCOMES

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<tr>
<th>Attitude Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes of the University</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measuring Outcomes</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>University Outcomes</td>
<td>25</td>
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agencies. Research that we provide. My assessment of effectiveness is the degree to which we can demonstrate that our level of performance with respect to those various aspects of our mission, either is consistent with or exceeds that of reasonably ambitious peers of institutions of our type.

Senior Staff

A more important piece to the ideal university would be what the outcomes are, what faculty are producing, what they are doing with students, what is happening with research and service.

College Dean

The outcomes of the university: What do employers think of your graduates? Are you able to get enough people through school to meet their goals? If their goal was to graduate, what kind of graduation rates do you have? How well does the community support the
institution? What is the community perception of the institution?

Senior Staff

Measuring outcomes. For the effective institution, the measurement of university outcomes is important to understanding the quality of the educational service. According to the administrators in this study, a variety of evaluative methods are used to measure quality.

We use accreditation standards. We have to use markers, like how well we are doing on our national board performance as indicators for the need for change and improvement. We use things that are out in the market.

College Dean

Also, any licensing exams that your students take and you monitor those results.

Department Chair

In our college, we would use accreditation standards or essentials. We use the marketplace. We do a lot of surveys, so we utilize those. [We do] graduate surveys, employer follow-up surveys, feasibility studies when we are thinking about a new program.

College Dean

We have not regularly been in the business of collecting data, much less compiling and interpreting
it and making the changes and the adjustments accordingly. Except, as prescribed by agencies and powers outside of our own campus. I sit here and speculate that we wouldn't be here assessing pre- and post-test data on all of our graduating seniors except for the performance funding dollar that is associated with it...Looks like an educational institution if anybody ought to be constantly in a mode of self assessment.

Senior Staff

Within the discussion of measuring outcomes, many administrators stressed the importance of soliciting feedback from university constituents to better understand the quality of educational programs and services. They also indicated that the effective institution should be about the business of successfully communicating the quality of their program to all internal and external stakeholders.

For me it is an overall feel. What kind of responses do you get from students? In conversations with students, what do you hear? What are the problems that are showing up in my office, or not showing up in my office? What about the faculty? What is their feeling of openness when you say, 'How are things today?'

College Dean

We actually did surveys. We started last spring and did students last spring, we did faculty and staff this fall where we actually surveyed student, faculty, and
staff satisfaction. We asked core questions from each group and then specific questions that pertained to each group only. And that was pretty helpful.

College Dean

...questionnaires, surveys, formal and informal, hearing from student leaders, student government, if you will. Feedback, of course, from people that are no longer on campus is included.

Senior Staff

I think that is part of the challenge that we face is making sure we have got the measures and making sure we know what they say. Explain to those folks and taking the bushel basket off of our light and letting it shine forth a little bit.

Senior Staff

Administrator Comments on Student Attitudes and Opinions

During the course of the four focus group sessions, administrators frequently shared their insights into the thinking and attitudes of college students. When exploring the criteria that administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness, it is reasonable to suggest that these criteria are formed in some measure based on the attitudes that administrators have toward the student. Therefore, this information is reported here, not in an attempt to identify additional criteria, but simply as an interesting aside to understanding the motives that
administrators have in defining educational quality.

Motivations of Students and Their Career Focus

According to comments made by administrators, it is their opinion that contemporary students are not intrinsically motivated to attend college and that their extrinsic motivation comes primarily from their desire for a successful career.

Students are simply here to be trained.

Senior Staff

I doubt that you would find a very high percentage of our students that would come here without some job expectations and that is society driven.

Senior Staff

And as we begin to see that, we begin to understand that there is some value to education that may not necessarily lead to a career. But I don't think that the majority of our students approach is in that direction.

Senior Staff

I am not generalizing now, but what I see is an awful lot of, 'I will go there and I will do the minimum I have to do to get that certificate which is what society says I need in order to get a job.'

Senior Staff

In my opinion, student satisfaction comes down to these two statements by the student: 'If I have a job then I am satisfied with what the university provided. If I
don't have a job, then I am not satisfied with what the university provided.

Senior Staff

If you look at the national studies that have been done, it is very clear that students are much, much more interested today in education for work, or job, or career. They are more interested in that then they are in acquiring some higher level understanding of who we are as a society and the historical past and so on.

Senior Staff

I think students will look back on their overall education and maybe a particular professor or two will stand out, but whether they were prepared the way they felt they should be prepared for that job when they got out will be their most important consideration.

Senior Staff

Student Effort

Administrators also discussed their thoughts on student effort. For many of the administrators in this study, the contemporary college student does not invest enough time and energy into the academic experience. From the administrator's perspective, (a) students place a positive value on dismissed classes or classes that are terminated early, (b) students come into the college experience expecting little change in the core beliefs and values, and (c) students place a greater value on college services in determining overall satisfaction than the educational
experience. Furthermore, some administrators expressed a concern that students come into the college experience with low expectations about their commitment to the educational process: expectations that continually influence their performance.

I wonder what these students in terms of their satisfaction level have in terms of expectations that they want from this university? I think that this is an important educational question on this campus. Where are the expectations of our students? I mean, anybody can lower expectations and the question is are our students more satisfied with that? Or are our students more satisfied with a moderate level of expectation of effort?

Senior Staff

Therefore the students look at this experience as something to get over with as soon as possible so that they can get their degrees and their jobs.

Department Chair

It is reported to me in many instances that when a professor announces that he is letting a class go early or that a class is not meeting, that the student will see that as a positive feature. I don’t think that if the student had of gone to that Johnson City theater would consider it a positive feature in order to pay $3.00 not to see the movie.

Senior Staff
We seem to be the only service, in the category of a service, for which students pay on the front end a certain amount of money and they are delighted when they receive less than full delivery of the product.

Senior Staff

I think that they come to this university basically with that perspective that, 'I am not going to be any different when I leave here then when I came here.'

Senior Staff

Our students, I think come here expecting not to have their ways of thinking changed for the most part, they are here to be trained.

Senior Staff

One is that society's fast food influence, if you will, where services are demanded in short order and so their expecting the same thing from the university and they don't want to put a lot of effort in to it.

Senior Staff

I think though when you asked students if they were satisfied with their experience here more than likely you will get a response based on how long the students stood in some line, how well they were treated by some person at a window, what the temperature was in a certain room, how sufficient was the parking. I maybe a little off, but I think that a lot of your responses
will be that that has nothing to do with the quality of education in a classroom.

Senior Staff

Student Opinion of This College

Finally, administrators were asked to complete the following sentence from a student’s perspective, “In my opinion, this college is (or is not) ________.” The answers were fairly static with an even split between those administrators who believed that students would respond in a positive fashion and those who believed students would respond negatively.

Some of the positive responses included:
This college is a good school.  
Senior Staff

In my opinion, this college is a pretty good place to get a college education.  
Senior Staff

Some of the negative responses included:
This college is not student-oriented.  
Senior Staff

This college is not interested in me.  
College Dean

This college is a joke.  
College Dean

I think that some students will be pleased and will say that it is a pleasant place to spend four years and
become educated and then I think you will find some who are concerned about the levels of service and what we do and how we do things. That is a tough one. I don't really know what to say.

College Dean

Summary

Included in this chapter was a presentation of the findings from the administrator sample. The administrator sample was designed based on Cameron's (1978) internal dominant coalition sampling schema. Twenty-five administrators participated in this study: (a) the president; (b) the academic vice-president; (c) the vice-presidents of finance and student affairs; (d) associate and assistant vice-presidents; (e) an assistant to the president; (f) college deans; and (g) department chairs.

The administrator data were reduced down to five attitude patterns:

1. University resources: Within this attitude pattern, administrators identified those inputs that are important for the successful operation of an effective institution and the long term value of planning for the allocation of those inputs.

2. Student development and growth: Administrators discussed the importance of the maturation process of college to the overall success of the student. Included in this discussion was the processes that foster
personal growth, broaden perspectives, and allow for experiences with diversity.

3. Student education: In this pattern, administrators focused on those aspects of the educational component of the college experience that were critical to the effective operation of the academy. These components ranged (a) from the value of instrumentalism to the value of the liberal education core; (b) from the importance of a flexible instructional delivery system to the importance of enhancing skills and knowledge; and (c) from the value of an educational experience that prepares a student for life's challenges to an educational experience that encourages the student involvement.

4. Learning environment: The discussion of administrators within this pattern focused on the merit of providing faculty and students with an environment that inspires a passion for learning, encourages academic excellence, and stimulates personal development. According to administrators, this type of environment could be accomplished with a commitment to (a) learning; (b) developing a community of scholars; (c) providing a student-oriented campus; and (d) ensuring a qualified and caring faculty.

5. University outcomes: The final attitude pattern for administrators included the importance of continuous measurement of quality within the institution and the
communication of that quality to all constituents of the academy.

Following a detailed exploration into the five attitude patterns, a presentation was made on various administrator attitudes toward college students. Some of the administrators in this study expressed concerns about the motivation of students in choosing the college option and the low expectations of students regarding their commitment to the educational process. There was a mixture of opinion from administrators concerning their perception of student attitude toward the university of study. Some administrators believed that students would indicate that they view this university as "a good school", whereas other administrators expressed concern that students would have a negative opinion of their university.

In Chapter 6, the seven student attitude patterns are converted into the criteria students use to determine satisfaction. Furthermore, the five administrator attitude patterns are converted into the criteria administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness. Additionally, conclusions for each of the research questions are presented and recommendations are made based on the findings of this study. Finally, in Chapter 6, recommendations are offered for further research.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction
Chapter 4 was a reporting of the findings from the undergraduate student focus group sessions. The data for the undergraduate student sample were collapsed into seven attitude patterns: (a) my decision to attend college; (b) my career aspirations; (c) my hopes for the future; (d) my personal development and growth; (e) my education; (f) my ideal college; and (g) my accomplishments. The findings from the administrator focus group sessions were reported in Chapter 5. The administrator data was reduced into five attitude patterns: (a) university resources; (b) student development and growth; (c) student education; (d) learning environment; and (d) university outcomes.

Included in this chapter are the conclusions for each of the four research questions as presented in Chapter 1 and recommendations for further research.

Research Question One Conclusions
What criteria do students use to determine their satisfaction with a comprehensive, regional university?

The criteria that students use to determine student satisfaction were gleaned from the findings of the student focus group data. After the analysis of data was completed, the resulting attitude codes were reduced into seven attitude patterns. Proposition statements were developed
for these seven attitude patterns to explain the attitude of students toward student satisfaction. These proposition statements were then converted into 21 student satisfaction criteria which were reduced into 5 major criteria categories: (a) career aspirations, (b) personal growth and development, (c) education, (d) characteristics of the ideal university, and (e) accomplishment.

The undergraduate student criteria for determining satisfaction with the college experience at a comprehensive, regional university includes:

Career aspirations criteria.
1. The student's satisfaction with their chosen field of study.
2. The college student's attitude toward their successful preparation for a career. This criterion maybe best summarized by a student's statement: "College is a stepping stone to a successful career."
3. The desire for a long-term return on the educational investment in terms of an improvement in career options, lifestyle, security, and life enjoyment as compared with peers who do not have a college degree.

Personal growth and development criteria.
4. Their feelings of being accepted by their college peers and finding that sense of "belonging" within the environment.
5. The belief that there is a positive influence of the college experience on student maturation to include student exploration into discovering self, into discovering life goals, and into understanding the parameters of self-potential.

6. The realization that they can function independently and are capable of effective decision making.

7. The desire for the opportunity to learn those lessons that are important to leading a productive and fulfilling life after college. One primary lesson is learning the ability to interact with a variety of different people from different cultures in different situations.

   **Education criteria.**

8. The ability of students to interact with professors who genuinely care about them as people and about their success in college.

9. The opportunity to enjoy the learning process from professors who are schooled and experienced in pedagogy and who have a contagious enthusiasm for their subject so that classes are exciting, informative, and interesting.

10. The realization by the student that they are better informed today because of this educational process than they were yesterday. This criterion maybe best summarized by a student's comment: "College is a place
for learning."
competent personnel who can provide accurate and timely information in a caring manner.

17. The desire for convenient access to education and knowledge. Included in this criterion is the desire to attend a university that is close to home and a university that provides easy access to university facilities, faculty, staff, and knowledge core.

18. The relationship between the student’s perception of educational quality and the reputation of the institution as interpreted by employers, friends, and other external constituents.

Accomplishment criteria.

19. The feeling of accomplishment and achievement that comes from successfully navigating the challenges of the educational process throughout the college experience.

20. A congruency between the student’s attitude of college as a starting point of their future success and the realization of that success. This criterion maybe best summarized by a student’s statement: “College is the key to unlock the door to my future.”

21. The parental and family acknowledgment and appreciation of the college experience achievements of the student.

Conclusions Based on Student Criteria

Conclusions that are drawn from these 21 criteria must be tempered by the knowledge of the statistically
significant differences between the student sample and the target population with regard to race, enrollment status, and enrollment within a major. Whereas the differences between the target population and the sample with regard to race may not have a significant influence on these conclusions due to the fact that the number of minorities in the sample was small compared to the majority participation, the differences in enrollment status and college distribution may be significant. It is reasonable to question the influence of a student sample that had an over-representation of full-time students majoring in business related subjects on the composition of these 21 student criteria.

The proposition statements from the student focus group sessions were reduced into 5 major categories and 21 criteria. In the first category, career aspirations, the criteria used by students to determine student satisfaction included (a) the importance to overall satisfaction of satisfaction within the major, (b) the student's perception of a career preparation benefit of college, and (c) the student's desire for a long-term return on their college investment. The second criteria category included all of those criteria that related to student beliefs that the college experience involved a maturation process. Within this category the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction included: (a) the need of students to have a sense of belonging in the college environment, (b) the
belief that college provides an opportunity for self-
discovery, (c) the desire for independence, and (d) the
opportunity to learn lessons that are important to
successful maturation.

The education category included criteria related to the
educational experience of the college student. Within this
criteria category, students indicated that their
relationship with an experienced, highly qualified, and
caring faculty was an important determination of student
satisfaction. Other criteria in this category included: (a)
the realization of an expansion of knowledge, (b) the desire
for a relevant curriculum, and (c) the desire for quality
communication within the university. Also within the
education category was the relationship between grade value
and grade attainment to overall satisfaction. Likewise,
include in this category was the relationship of the value
placed on extracurricular activities and the perceived
participation in activities to overall satisfaction. The
fourth category, characteristics of the ideal university,
covered those institution specific criteria of student
satisfaction. In this category, students indicated that a
determinant of their overall satisfaction was (a) the
realization of a student-oriented institution; (b) an
institution that provided convenient access to knowledge and
learning; and (c) an institution that offered a quality
education that was recognized as such by a variety of
external stakeholders. Finally, the fifth criteria category
included those criteria related to (a) the student's need for a sense of accomplishment in the educational process; (b) the realization of a successful beginning to their future; and (c) the recognition of their achievement by parents and family.

Within these student criteria there are two interesting attitude pattern trends that have an important influence on the assessment of student satisfaction. The first pattern trend is the number of student criteria that are long-term focused. Criteria #2, #3, #7, #18, #19 and #20 are specifically related to the long-term satisfaction of the student. For example, criterion #20 states that the student will not truly know of their satisfaction with the overall educational process until they have realized a congruency between their expected success and their perceived success. This criterion, then, is based on a disconfirmation process between the day of graduation and several years hence. Furthermore in criterion #2, students equate student satisfaction with their successful preparation for a career. Again, this is a criterion of satisfaction that is not fully realized until the student has an opportunity to test their knowledge in the workplace. Of the 21 criteria formed from the student data, 29% are future oriented. It is, then, reasonable to question the validity of inferring overall student satisfaction from an assessment of satisfaction performed while the student is still in the higher education process.
Furthermore, 18 of the 21 satisfaction criteria are based on student attitudes that can evolve and change over time. There are only four criteria that can be interpreted as somewhat static. These criteria are: (a) #11, (b) #17, and (c) #21. For example, in criterion #4 students feeling of acceptance by peers and finding a sense of belonging within their environment is an important criterion in determining student satisfaction. However, feelings of belonging may not be static over time. On any given day, students may feel comfortable in their environment only to have a situation occur that has a negative influence on those feelings, therefore changing their overall satisfaction level.

Criterion #9 states that students overall satisfaction is influenced by their perception of receiving an education from a professoriate who are enthusiastic about their subject. Once again, this is a criterion that is not static over time. During their academic tenure, students are exposed to a wide variety of faculty who may or may not have the level of enthusiasm as deemed appropriate by the student. Therefore, as the student moves through the academic process their satisfaction with the collegiate experience may shift continually. As these examples indicate, the criteria that ground student satisfaction are dynamic. Therefore a student satisfaction assessment that is temporally constrained and measures satisfaction as a static construct is not valid to the true experience of a
The second trend that is evident is the lower percentage of criteria that specifically link student satisfaction with the process and outcome of the delivery of instruction. Of the 21 student satisfaction criteria only 8 criteria are defined by the relationship between the student and instructional delivery: #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, and #15. The remaining criteria address issues of concern for students that are clearly composed of variables in the educational process other than the exclusive relationship between the student and the classroom experience. For example, in criterion #5, the influence of college on the maturation of the student, certainly is in part explained by the experience of the student with instruction, but may also be explained by the student's natural maturation process or the influence of college peers on their maturation.

Therefore, approximately 62% of student satisfaction criteria are determined by attitudes centered on other aspects of the college experience outside of the educational process. Based on this finding, for the valid inference of overall student satisfaction to a student population, the satisfaction instrument must include questions designed to investigate all student satisfaction criteria in the proportions found in this study. It must be recognized that the results of assessments that only gauge satisfaction with the educational process can not be interpreted to indicate overall student satisfaction.
Conclusions on Student Satisfaction Based on Grade Cohort and Demographics

The findings for the student satisfaction attitude codes based on grade cohort and demographic differences were presented in Chapter 4. These attitudes codes were condensed into proposition statements. However, because the grade cohorts and demographics are not mutually exclusive categories, it was deemed inappropriate to convert these specific propositions into student satisfaction criteria unique to each group.

Freshmen cohort. The freshmen in this study were truly neophytes to the higher education experience. The differences found in freshmen as compared with other grade cohorts, dealt primarily with attitude codes that did not include codes related to the academic process. For example, freshmen did not discuss (a) their opinions of advising, (b) the curriculum, (c) the learning process, (d) the importance of lifelong learning, nor (e) the benefits of the college education. Freshmen did focus, however, on such attitude codes as (a) their desire for a bigger and more active college environment; (b) their philosophy that education ends after college graduation; (c) their need to be close to home; (d) their concern with boring professors; and (e) their desire to make friends. Based on these attitude codes, it is concluded that the freshmen student of this study had not found their way into the academic mainstream of the university.
**Sophomore cohort.** For the sophomores who participated in this study, the best description of their experience is to label these individuals as having the "second-year itch". Similar to their freshmen counterparts, sophomores were concerned with the need to be accepted and make friends. But unlike freshmen, sophomores did express concerns about academic issues, such as, the need for a relevant curriculum and the desire for interesting classes to help them understand the complex material of college. Included in their attitude codes were: (a) those attitudes that focused on the belief that students should not enroll in college immediately after high school; (b) concerns for the future and the return on the college investment; and (c) the realization of how lonely and isolated they felt during their freshmen and sophomore year. The sophomores in this study were individuals who had become cognizant of the requirements of the academic experience, but were not sure that they wanted to face that challenge. They were struggling to find acceptance in the college environment and a purpose in the college course of study.

**Junior cohort.** If sophomores were experiencing the second year itch, juniors had finally come of age. Based on the findings of this study, juniors were more likely to be concerned with the academic aspects of learning and comprehending material. Juniors were also more concerned with the maturation process of the college experience and
the opportunity for self-discovery. It was important to juniors that they have experiences with a diverse culture in diverse situations so that they may learn communication and interaction skills. More so than any of the other cohorts, juniors had a higher propensity to equate the college experience with the preparation for their career. Whereas, the sophomore was trying to find their way in the academic process, the junior had found a college focus.

**Senior cohort.** Finally, the seniors in this study seemed to be satisfied with the quality of their educational experience. As would be expected, seniors had a greater concern for their readiness for life after college, they had the highest frequency of comments concerning advising and university communications, and frustrations with the bureaucracy of college. If juniors were coming of age in the academic process, then the senior cohort was coming of the realization that they must prepare for another life transition. With this realization of transition came the desire to reflect back on their experiences in college and identify all of those aspects of college that had been truly frustrating or enlightening. Seniors no longer focused on the social concerns of college, such as; making friends and the excitement of the big college, but instead focused on the academic concerns of being successful in their next transition.
Gender. The female students in this sample, as compared with the male students, were much more concerned with a quality advising system and the university's commitment to quality communication for the purpose of keeping students informed. Female students were more concerned with the need for caring professors than their male peers. More importantly, as stated by the females in this study, females had a greater propensity to enter into the college experience with a profession already chosen and dream that they wished to fulfill. Furthermore, females indicated a stronger relationship between satisfaction with the major and overall student satisfaction.

Males, on the other hand, were not as focused on their reasons for attending college. They equated the college degree with career preparation. However, unlike females who had a higher propensity to enter college with a career goal in mind, the male students were searching for career directions. Males were more concerned with the rules and regulations of college life. They had a greater tendency to discuss the red tape of college. Their opinion of college was that it would provide them with greater compensation in life and lead to more options. Finally, males had a greater tendency than females to have the opinion that they already know all and to question the relevance of the curriculum to their individual needs.

Nontraditional Student. The nontraditional student, as compared with the traditional student, was more interested
in the achievement benefits of the college experience in building self-esteem and becoming a valued member of society. The nontraditional student was more concerned with advising and the ability of the university to communicate needed information. They were less concerned with the relevancy of the curriculum and more concerned with experiential-based learning opportunities. The nontraditional student placed a greater value on grades than the traditional age student. Finally, the nontraditional student was more interested in having caring professors and were less tolerant of rude professors than the traditional student.

Students Who Are Not Employed. The primary difference between the unemployed and the employed student was their focus on college. The unemployed student had a greater propensity not to have a focus on their reasons for attending college. These students indicated that they were aware that they did not have a strong collegiate focus and that the lack of focus was troublesome for them. Along with this lack of focus, the unemployed student had a greater tendency to express a desire to "get out" of college as quickly as possible.

The unemployed student was also less concerned with the bureaucracy of college and less likely to find importance in the learning aspects of college. However, they were more likely to define satisfaction as simply "feeling
comfortable", and more concerned with attaining a feeling of "being somebody" when they graduate.

**Students Who Live on Campus.** For the students who live on campus in this study, the primary difference between them and those who do not live on campus was their feelings of loneliness and isolation within the college environment. Making friends was an important consideration for students who live on campus, as was the tendency to place a greater value on their social life than on their academic life. Students who live on campus were more likely to feel the restrictions of campus life, but were less likely to be concerned with the bureaucracy of the college experience than their peers who live off campus. Finally, they had a greater propensity to appreciate the teaching ability of professors with less concern for the caring capacity of college faculty.

**Summary**

As is indicated in the above conclusions on the differences between student satisfaction criteria based on grade cohort and demographics there are substantial variations of criteria between these subgroups. Therefore, it is reasonable to question the validity of any standardized student satisfaction assessment that can not readily assess these differences. To simply report that a student population, in toto, is satisfied or dissatisfied does not allow for these unique differences to surface.
Research Question Two Conclusions

What theories of satisfaction best inform a model of student satisfaction with a comprehensive, regional university based on the investigated criteria?

Based on the findings of this study, the development of valid and reliable student satisfaction assessments must be grounded in a combination of job satisfaction theory and customer satisfaction theory to explain the college experience of the contemporary student. As indicated by several of the criteria, students do place a value on the inputs as compared with the outputs, as is discussed in job satisfaction theory. Similar to employees in organizations, students have an understanding of the value of the time that they spend studying as compared with the value of the grades that they receive. Furthermore, the students in this study did compare the cost of the time studying with the reward of the grade given in the determination of their overall satisfaction with the college experience. This tendency to compare inputs and outputs to determine satisfaction is similar to the process in which an employee compares time worked with monetary compensation to define job satisfaction. Of further importance to this discussion is the long-term return on investment of the college experience that is valued by students. Once again, this is similar to the importance that an employee will place on satisfaction with their long-term commitment to one employer.

Finally, job satisfaction theory may be appropriate to
explaining the experience of contemporary students in that students do place a value on being an important member of the university. As stated in criterion #7, it is important to students to feel that they "belong" within the college environment. Because students view themselves as a part of the organization and not as a visitor to the organization, job satisfaction theory is most appropriate in explaining the relationship between the student and the university.

However appropriate job satisfaction theory is to explaining the experiences of the college student, customer satisfaction theory is an important vehicle for measuring customer satisfaction: the disconfirmation process. As already discussed under research question #1, 18 of the 21 student satisfaction criteria are dynamic in nature. All 18 criteria could influence students to change their attitude toward the university on any given day at any given time of day. Furthermore, based on the analysis and conclusions of the differences in student satisfaction based on grade cohort, the criteria for student satisfaction change during the maturation process. Therefore, it is suggested that an assessment of student satisfaction at only one period in time, as if satisfaction is a static construct, is both an unreliable and invalid assessment of the student experience.
Research Question Three Conclusions

What criteria are used by the internal dominant coalition of a comprehensive, regional university to evaluate institutional effectiveness?

The criteria for the evaluation of institutional effectiveness were gleaned from data collected during the focus group sessions with the internal dominant coalition. This data was reduced into five attitude patterns: (a) university resources, (b) student development and growth, (c) student education, (d) learning environment, and (e) university outcomes. Proposition statements were written based on these five attitude patterns and then converted into 12 evaluation criteria which were reduced into 3 criteria categories: (a) inputs, (b) operations, and (c) outcomes.

The administrator criteria for evaluating institutional effectiveness of a comprehensive, regional university includes:

Inputs.
1. The effective utilization of human resources to promote a quality educational process. Included in this criterion is the recruiting and selecting of professional faculty who are committed to excellence in learning and the recruiting of qualified and motivated students who have the desire to pursue a quality education. With these two vital human resource components for a university in place, the university can
begin to build an intellectual partnership that is learning centered.

2. The effective utilization of capital resources to ensure the quality of educational facilities and technologies.

3. The commitment of university stakeholders to continuous improvement through long-term planning, goal development, and program implementation to better serve all constituents and ensure a university environment that has the flexibility to adapt to a changing world.

Operations.

4. The continued focus on providing an educational experience for students that will promote maturation and self-discovery to enable students to better understand themselves so that they can better understand society.

5. The ability of the educational process to prepare students to effectively and successfully function within the parameters of their chosen profession. Included in this criterion is the belief that students view a college degree as mandatory for career success and it is the university’s responsibility to remain in tune with the demands of the marketplace so that university planners can design, develop, and fund educational programs that are in touch with the needs of employers.

6. The importance of combining the instrumentalism of the higher education curriculum with a liberal education core in order to broaden student perspectives and prepare them to become productive members of society.
7. Having an instructional delivery system designed to accommodate the diverse life roles of contemporary students and responds to their unique learning needs.

8. The ability of the educational process to (a) improve educational skills, i.e. reading, writing, and math computation; (b) develop critical thinking skills; i.e. complex problem solving and decision making; and (c) expand a student’s knowledge foundation.

9. The development of an educational process that encourages students to become involved in the learning process and to take an active stance in their intellectual development to become lifelong learners who are prepared for the enjoyment of life and have the ability to adapt to changes in their environment.

10. The development of a learning environment that would stimulate an intellectual exchange among a community of scholars, to include faculty, students, and university administrators and staff, who are passionate about the attainment of knowledge and the pursuit of learning.

11. The development of a student-oriented learning environment designed (a) to reassure the student that they are a member of a caring academic community; (b) to provide students with accurate and timely information; and (c) to reduce the inconveniences of the educational process so that the student may "get on" with the business of learning.
Outcomes.

12. The on-going measurement of the quality of university outcomes, i.e. teaching, service, and research, and the continued communication of quality to internal and external stakeholders. These measurements would include: (a) comparisons with accrediting standards, (b) results of student licensing exams, (c) data collected from constituency surveys, and (d) feedback from all university constituents to include students.

Summary

The administrator data were reduced into 3 criteria categories with a total of 12 individual criteria. The 3 categories were: (a) inputs, (b) operations, and (c) outcomes. Included within the inputs category were those evaluative criteria of institutional effectiveness that focused on the human and capital resources vital to supporting a quality educational process, and the long-term planning for the allocation of those resources. The second category, operations, covered those criteria centered on providing students with a quality, student-oriented educational environment that would (a) foster a passion for learning, (b) support a maturation process, (c) encourage an expansion of knowledge, and (d) develop a readiness for a successful career while broadening perspectives. The final category, outcomes, included the criterion of continuous evaluation of the quality of university outcomes and the communication of that quality to various external
stakeholders.

Research Question Four Conclusions

Does a congruency exist between the criteria used by students to determine satisfaction and the criteria used by the internal dominant coalition to evaluate institutional effectiveness?

As indicated in Table 14 a congruency does exist for a majority of the criteria between the administrator criteria for the evaluation of institutional effectiveness and the criteria used by students to determine student satisfaction.

Criteria congruency. For administrators and students in this study, a congruency does exist between the administrator criterion of recruiting and selecting highly qualified and professional faculty, and the desire of students to have highly qualified faculty who are enthusiastic about the subject. (See Table 14.) The administrator criterion of providing a quality educational experience for students that fosters maturity, self-discovery, and self-exploration is congruent with the student criteria of (a) benefiting from the maturation process of college; (b) the opportunities for self-discovery and self-exploration; (c) the experience of independence; and (d) the opportunity to learn life-lessons. Furthermore, the administrator criterion of providing students with a quality educational experience that will
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator Criterion</th>
<th>Student Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Effective use of human resources to include the selection of highly qualified faculty and students</td>
<td>Qualified and enthusiastic professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education experience that promotes maturation</td>
<td>Opportunity for maturation experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education experience that prepares for a successful career</td>
<td>Satisfaction with major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Education experience that broadens student perspectives</td>
<td>Opportunity to interact with diverse people in different situations to prepare for society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Instructional delivery system designed for contemporary student</td>
<td>Curriculum relevant to the individual needs of the student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Educational process to enhance critical thinking skills and decision making</td>
<td>Capable of effective decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Student involvement in the education process to become a lifelong learner</td>
<td>College as the starting point of a successful future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
TABLE 14 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator Criterion</th>
<th>Student Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Learning environment that engenders a passion for learning by students and faculty</td>
<td>• Ability to interact with professors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Student-oriented learning environment</td>
<td>• Student orientation of university employees, policies, and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality communication within university for the purpose of providing students with information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Measurement of university outcomes and communication of the attainment of quality goals</td>
<td>• Opportunity to receive a quality education from a reputable institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

prepare students for a successful career is congruent with the student criteria of (a) finding satisfaction within a chosen field of study, (b) college as a stepping stone to a successful career, and (c) a desire for a return on the college investment. A congruency does exist between the administrator criterion of balancing the instrumental aspects of the college experience with a liberal education core to prepare students for society and the student criterion of having the opportunity to interact with different people from different cultures in a variety of situations so that they are prepared for society. Administrators and students also agree that the instructional delivery system must be designed to accommodate the learning interests and needs of the
contemporary student.

The administrator criterion for importance of the educational experience to enhance student skills and expand on the student knowledge base is congruent with the student criteria of improving decision making skills and becoming better informed. Moreover, the administrator criterion of providing an educational process that encourages student involvement and the propensity for lifelong learning is congruent with the student criteria of (a) college as the starting point of success, (b) the importance of student involvement, (c) learning life lessons, (d) realizing a return on the investment of college through enjoyment of life, and (e) the feeling of accomplishment from successfully completing a challenging process. A congruency also exists between the administrator criterion of providing a learning environment that encourages intellectual exchange between students and faculty, and the student criteria of having the opportunity to interact with enthusiastic and qualified professors.

Likewise, the administrator criterion of providing a student-oriented environment that provides timely information is congruent with the student criterion of enjoying a student-oriented college campus with quality advising. Furthermore, a congruency exists between the administrator criterion for effectively measuring the quality of the institution and communicating that quality to external stakeholders and the student criterion of attending
a university that is known by external stakeholders for its quality of education.

Criteria incongruency. In comparing the congruency between administrator and student criteria, it is also important to analyze the areas in which an incongruency existed between the two sets of criteria. The student criteria of recognizing the role of the family in the student decision to attend college and remain in college did not find a congruency with the administrator criteria. The student criteria of the desire for acceptance with college peers was not addressed by the administrator sample. Furthermore, the importance of the short-term payoff of studying versus the value of the grade, and the desire for convenient access to education did not match with any of the administrator criteria. In fact, the short-term payoff criterion is in direct contradiction to the administrator criterion of providing a learning environment that would stimulate a passion for learning.

For administrators, a direct congruency with student criteria did not exist on the issues of effectively utilizing capital resources for the improvement of facilities and technology, and the importance of continuous improvement through long-term planning.

These incongruencies are only bothersome in recognizing the inability of administrators in understanding the contemporary student experience. However, they are not of paramount importance when discussing the link between the
definition of student satisfaction and the definition of institutional effectiveness. From the student's perspective, it is important to note that administrators do not verbalize the importance of family to students, or the importance of making friends, or the importance of making good grades as compared with study time. But, the lack of this realization is not critical in understanding the relationship between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

Furthermore, from the administrator perspective it is not surprising that students did not demonstrate an attitude pattern on long-term planning. It is curious that students did not place a value on the improvement of campus facilities nor on the upgrading of technology, but once again this incongruency is not critical when discussing the commonality between administrators and students.

There is, however, one interesting aside to this discussion of commonality: the position of students in the educational process as seen by students and as seen by administrators. According to the administrators in this study, students should be viewed as equal partners in any learning activity. In fact, administrators discussed the importance of having an intellectual partnership between students and faculty with both partners involved in the "work of learning". Students, on the other hand, spoke of (a) the importance of belonging to the environment, (b) being involved in student activities, (c) wanting the
benefits of learning, (d) desiring a quality faculty and (e) relevant curriculum, but they did not address the importance of their participation in the learning process. For the students in this research, education is still something that is "done to them" and not "with them". This may be an important distinction in understanding the relationship between students and administrators, but once again it is not enough justification to deny the core commonality between these two constituents of the academy.

**Summary**

As is evident in the comparison between student satisfaction criteria and administrator evaluative criteria, a congruency does exist between the majority of the criteria for the two groups. These congruencies are primarily evident when administrators and students are focused on the important benefits of college and those criteria related to the educational process. However, an incongruency does exist between student satisfaction criteria and administrator evaluative criteria on the importance (a) of family to a student's sense of accomplishment, (b) of the student's sense of belonging within the environment, and (c) to the administrator of allocating resources to improve the infrastructure of the university. Furthermore, an incongruency is evident between the attitude of administrators toward the student-to-learning partnership and the attitude of students toward that partnership. For
the administrators in this study, education is something that is "done with a student", whereas the students seemed to express the attitude that education is something that is "done to them". Whereas it is important to recognize that these incongruencies do exist, these incongruent criteria are not substantial enough to influence the finding of commonality between student criteria and administrator criteria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. To truly assess overall student satisfaction with the college experience, the procedure for assessing satisfaction must include a disconfirmation process of measuring satisfaction at various times during the student's educational tenure and beyond graduation.

2. To assess overall satisfaction an instrument should be designed within the parameters that 38% of a student's satisfaction is directly related to the education core while the remaining 62% is a function of satisfaction with other aspects of the college experience.

3. To fully investigate the satisfaction of a student population, the assessment must have the ability to explore satisfaction differences based on grade cohort and demographics.
4. To understand the motivation of students toward satisfaction, instruments must be grounded in job satisfaction theory because of the perception by students that they belong within the university and are not simple visitors to the campus.

5. A congruency does exist between the criteria that students use to determine student satisfaction and the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness. Therefore, an assessment of student satisfaction can be used to explain institutional effectiveness as along as the satisfaction instrument is designed and administered within the parameters of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study provide impetus for additional research in five areas. The first area in which additional research is warranted resides in the limited parameters of the target population of this study. The findings of this study indicate congruency between student satisfaction criteria and administrator evaluation criteria. However, did these findings result from the unique characteristics of a southern, comprehensive, regional university with a large white majority student population? Further research is needed within a variety of institutional categories; e.g., research universities, noncomprehensive, regional universities, and land grant universities, to determine if the findings of this study are reliable.
Second, for the administrator component of this research, further research is warranted utilizing a much larger number of administrators within each level of the internal dominant coalition. Because of the small number of administrators in some of the administrator levels, i.e. college deans, the rapporteur could not explore administrator criteria by administrative level without compromising the anonymity of the focus group participants. Further research is warranted with a larger administrator sample in order to investigate criteria differences among administrators.

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness. To investigate that relationship, participants in this study were undergraduate students and university administrators. In the third area, further research is warranted exploring the attitudes of faculty on institutional effectiveness and testing the congruency between student satisfaction criteria and faculty criteria.

Fourth, for the student sample, additional qualitative research is warranted to continue the exploration into the differences in student satisfaction based on grade cohort and demographics. Furthermore, the student sample of this study were undergraduate students attending on-campus, day classes. Additional research is needed on other student categories that do not fit this sample description, i.e. students attending off-campus classes. Due to the
statistically significant differences between the sample and the target population with regard to enrollment status and college enrollment distribution, additional research is needed with a sample that better reflects the attitudes and opinions of part-time students and students studying within the College of Nursing and the College of Public and Allied Health.

Finally, the findings in this study call for a student satisfaction assessment that utilizes job satisfaction and customer satisfaction theory. In further research, a student satisfaction assessment should be designed based on the findings of this study and pilot tested for reliability and validity.
REFERENCES


Peters, R. (1994). Some snarks are boojums: Accountability and the end(s) of higher education. *Change, 26*(6), 16-23.


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

First-Generation Student Focus Group Guide
First-Generation Student Focus Group Guide

I. Introduction

As students enter the room, request that they complete a demographic sheet with age, gender, race, student rank, commuter or resident, transfer student, and working status. Students will use their adjective 'name' to code the demographic sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to join us in this group discussion on student experiences. My name is Kathy Franklin. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education. At the present time, I am working on my dissertation. This group discussion is a part of my dissertation work. Please take this opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions freely. I will spend the next hour and a half asking questions designed to encourage a discussion about a college student's experiences. The only ground rules to remember here are that there are no right or wrong answers to anything I ask -- only your honest opinions. I ask that you speak one at a time and to regard this tape recorder as simply an extension of my memory so that I can accurately report what is said here today.

Ask students to give themselves an adjective name that best describes their mood at this time. Have each participant make a table tent using the adjective in place of their names. Turn on the recorder and ask the administrators to introduce themselves by their adjective "names".

II. Discussion Questions

1. Everyone take a deep breath and relax. Imagine that you are no longer a student at ETSU. Please think back to the time before you made the decision to attend college. I am not familiar with this idea of "college" or "university". Explain this idea of "college" to me.

2. Now, fast forward in time to the point where you decided to attend college. Tell the group about your decision to attend college. What benefits did you hope to gain by attending college?

3. Now that you have made the decision to attend college, describe the "ideal" college to the group.

4. What does student satisfaction mean to you?

III. Closing

Do you have any final questions? Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX B

First-Generation Administrator Focus Group Guide
First-Generation Administrator Focus Group Guide

I. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to join us in this group discussion on the evaluation of institutional effectiveness. My name is Kathy Franklin. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education. At the present time, I am working on my dissertation. This group discussion is a part of my dissertation work. Please take this opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions freely. I will spend the next hour and a half asking questions designed to encourage a discussion about institutional effectiveness. The only ground rules to remember here are that there are no right or wrong answers to anything I ask -- only your honest opinions. I ask that you speak one at a time and to regard this tape recorder as simply an extension of my memory so that I can accurately report what is said here today.

Ask administrators to give themselves an adjective name that best describes their mood at this time. Have each participant make a table tent using the adjective in place of their names. Turn on the recorder and ask the administrators to introduce themselves by their adjective "names".

II. Discussion Questions

1. Everyone take a deep breath and relax. Imagine that I am not familiar with this idea of "college" or "university". From your perspective as an administrator, explain this idea of "college" to me.

2. Describe for the group your concept of the "ideal" university.

3. How would an administrator in your position evaluate an institution to determine effectiveness?

4. What strategies would an administrator in your position employ to achieve effectiveness?

5. As an administrator, how do you define student satisfaction?

6. In your opinion, how do students define student satisfaction?

III. Closing

That concludes our session. Do you have any questions or comments? Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX C

Second-Generation Student Focus Group Guide
Second-Generation Student Focus Group Guide

I. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to join us in this group discussion on student experiences. My name is Kathy Franklin. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education. At the present time, I am working on my dissertation. This group discussion is a part of my dissertation work. Please take this opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions freely. I will spend the next hour and a half asking questions designed to encourage a discussion about a college student's experiences. The only ground rules to remember here are that there are no right or wrong answers to anything I ask; only your honest opinions. I ask that you speak one at a time and to regard this tape recorder as simply an extension of my memory so that I can accurately report what is said here today. Everything you say is confidential. In the transcription of the tape and in the final research report your names will not be used.

II. Ice-breaking question
Have each student think of an adjective that best describes their mood at that moment. Have each participant make a table tent using the adjective in place of their names. Turn on the recorder and have each student introduce themselves by their adjective name.

II. Discussion Questions

1. Word association game. I will give you a word and you tell me the first word that comes to your mind. Word association: Cold. Money. Happiness. Education. College. University. ETSU.

2. Everyone take a deep breath and relax. Imagine that you are no longer a student at ETSU. Please think back to the time before you made the decision to attend college. I am not familiar with this idea of "college" or "university". Explain this idea of college to me.

3. Now, fast forward in time to the point where you decided to attend college. Tell the group about your decision to attend college. What benefits did you hope to gain by attending college?

4. Now that you have made the decision to attend college, describe the "ideal" college to the group.

5. What does student satisfaction mean to you?

6. Please complete this sentence: In my opinion, ETSU is (is not) ______________.
7. Would you recommend ETSU to a friend?

8. Finally, what is the one thing you will remember about your education at ETSU?

9. Show of hands: How many of you are more satisfied than dissatisfied with ETSU? How many of you are more dissatisfied than satisfied?

III. Closing
That concludes our session. Do you have any questions or comments? Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX D

Second-Generation Administrator Focus Group Guide
Second-Generation Administrator Focus Group Guide

I. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to join us in this group discussion on student experiences. My name is Kathy Franklin. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education. At the present time, I am working on my dissertation. This group discussion is a part of my dissertation work. Please take this opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions freely. I will spend the next hour and a half asking questions designed to encourage a discussion about institutional effectiveness. The only ground rules to remember here are that there are no right or wrong answers to anything I ask; only your honest opinions. I ask that you speak one at a time and to regard this tape recorder as simply an extension of my memory so that I can accurately report what is said here today. Everything you say is confidential. In the transcription of the tape and in the final research report your names will not be used.

Have each administrator think of an adjective that best describes their mood at that moment. Have each participant make a table tent using the adjective in place of their names. Turn on the recorder and have each administrator introduce themselves by their adjective name.

II. Discussion Questions


2. From your perspective as an administrator, describe "college" to the group.

3. Describe for the group your concept of the "ideal" university.

4. How would an administrator in your position evaluate an institution to determine effectiveness?

5. What strategies would an administrator in your position employ to achieve effectiveness?

6. As an administrator, how do you define student satisfaction?

7. In your opinion, how do students define student satisfaction?

8. From your perspective as an administrator, how do you think ETSU students complete this sentence: "In my opinion, ETSU is (is not) _______________."
9. What do you think is the one thing that students will remember about their education at ETSU?

III. Closing

That concludes our session. Do you have any question or comments? Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX E

Student Code Book
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>$WORTH</td>
<td>INVESTMENT</td>
<td>Satisfaction to me is knowing that I have gotten my money's worth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>2MANYRULES</td>
<td>INCOMPETENCE</td>
<td>There are too many rules and restrictions in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>It is important to me that I have made friends. I want to feel like I belong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ACCOMPGOAL</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>To accomplish my life goals, I need a college degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISH</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>I will remember the feeling of accomplishment...achievement. I met the challenge of college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ACHANCE</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>College is a new chance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ACHIEVE</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISH</td>
<td>I want to feel like I did something....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ADVISING</td>
<td>ADVISING2</td>
<td>Advising is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>ADVISING2</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>Advising is important to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>AFFORDCOL</td>
<td>THANKFUL2</td>
<td>Not everybody can afford to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>AGEDIFFER</td>
<td>NONTRADITION</td>
<td>That is the way I feel. Maybe my opinions are different because I am so much older than the other students here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ASKQUESTS</td>
<td>PROFESSORS</td>
<td>It is important to me that I can feel comfortable enough in my classes to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>All of the attitudes that students may have toward college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BEATPARENT</td>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>My parents did not go to college. I want to accomplish something that they did not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>DECISION</td>
<td>College is a starting point to my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BESOMEBODY</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISH</td>
<td>With a college degree you can be somebody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BETTERJOB</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>I am in college because I want a better job than...I had in the past ....my parents have....etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>I am here because I want a better life for me than my parents had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BESHARSELF</td>
<td>NOTUSED</td>
<td>You can be yourself in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BIASFREE</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>No stereotypes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BIGSIZE</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>I like a big college. I like large classrooms and lots of activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BLFORKIDS</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>I am in college because I want a better life for my kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>BLIFESTYLE</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>I want a better lifestyle. With a college degree you don't have to work a back breaking job. You can have an easier lifestyle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BORCLASS</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>Discussion on classes that are boring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BREAKMOLD</td>
<td>INDEPENDENCE</td>
<td>I didn't want to go to the same school as everybody else went to. Everybody went to U.T. I wanted to break the mold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>BUREAUCAT</td>
<td>INCOMPETENCE</td>
<td>This big, structured education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>College is all about career training...a job advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CARTRAING</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>I am in college to prepare for my career.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Text</td>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISH</td>
<td>Satisfaction to me is the feeling that I get after I have gone through a challenge successfully.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>My opinion of my classes is important to my satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CLOSEHOME</td>
<td>CONVENIENT</td>
<td>It is important to me that the college I attend is close to home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLASHOME</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>College is like home to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLBETTER+</td>
<td>DRIFTING</td>
<td>College is better than...working...etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLEXPECT</td>
<td>INDEPENDENCE</td>
<td>In college they expect you to show some independence. They will tell you that they are not your mommy and daddy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLFOCUS</td>
<td>DRIFTING</td>
<td>I don't know why I wanted to go to college...I just did.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Text</td>
<td>COLFUN</td>
<td>ATTITUDES</td>
<td>College is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLHARD</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>College is harder than I expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLHASSLE</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>College is such a hassle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLEGDEC</td>
<td>COLLEGE</td>
<td>I made the decision to attend college while I was in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLEGDEC1</td>
<td>COLLEGE</td>
<td>I always knew that I would attend college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLEGDEC2</td>
<td>COLLEGE</td>
<td>All of a sudden I decided I wanted to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>COLLEGE</td>
<td>DECISION</td>
<td>A category on when the decision to attend college was made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLERENCE</td>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>With a college degree you can make more money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You can make more money without a college degree in some areas.

The reputation of the college is important to me.

I don't think anyone should go straight to college from high school.

Satisfaction to me is feeling comfortable.

Satisfaction to me is having a good day...being content.

It is important that the ideal college have a good communication mechanism at all levels within the college.

It is important for the administration and the staff to know what they are doing and not give students the run around.

For me, satisfaction is being content and happy with what I am doing. If at the end of the day I feel happy, than I know I am satisfied.

I like a college that is convenient.

I think that a balanced curriculum is good.

The college curriculum is important. I want it to be relevant to me.

The curriculum is irrelevant to what I want to do.

My decision to attend college was influenced by....

These are the issues of development and growth that are important to my satisfaction.

College is a different culture than anything that I am used to. A different set of rules...a different purpose...it is a culture of learners.

College is about self discovery.

I want to be at a college where there are lots of different types of people.

I have always felt like I belong here.

I feel like I don't belong here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>DOWELLCLAS</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>For me, satisfaction is doing well in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>DRIFTING</td>
<td>DEVELOPMEN</td>
<td>I have no focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EASYEDUCAT</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>The classes are easier here at this college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EDLACK</td>
<td>INVESTMENT</td>
<td>I feel my education is lacking here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EDUCATEND</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>I realized that education would end at high school if I did not attend college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EDUCATEND2</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>Education ends after college graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>These are the characteristics of my education that are important to my satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EDUHIGHSCH</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>My classes are just like the classes I had in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>College is a lot of effort...stress...a struggle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ETSUFRIEND</td>
<td>STUDORIET</td>
<td>I think the people at this college are friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EXTHIGHSCH</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>I think that college is simply an extension of high school. I mean it is just learning more of what you already know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>EXTRACURR</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>Student involvement in extracurricular activities is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>DECISION</td>
<td>My parents wanted me to go to college. It is because of my family that I am here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FAMINFLUEN</td>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>My family influenced me to attend college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FARAWAY</td>
<td>NOTUSED</td>
<td>That concept is just too far away for me to even think about right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FLEXCURRI</td>
<td>CURRICULM</td>
<td>Design a curriculum for each student's specific needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FRESHMEN</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>The freshmen experience is lonely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FRESHSTART</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>This is my second time around in college...I am getting a new start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FRIENDLY</td>
<td>STUDORIET</td>
<td>It is important to me to be surrounded by friendly people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FUN*PAST</td>
<td>NOTUSED</td>
<td>College is more fun than I had in the past working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FUTUNSURE</td>
<td>INVESTMENT</td>
<td>Our future is unsure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>FUTURE</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>A college degree is a key to opening the door to my future...a better life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I want to hurry up and take all of my courses so that I can get out of here fast and move on to the rest of my life.

I am satisfied when I am happy with the classes I am taking.

I know when I am satisfied if I have had a good day.

I like it here because I feel that I am getting a good education.

I am satisfied when I am making good grades.

Everybody thinks I will fail in college because I have always been such a goof-off.

To me satisfaction is making the good grades.

College is about growing up...maturity...developmental change...

College is an opportunity to grow up.

Tactical learning.

I don't like college. I am here because of...my parents...nothing else to do...I don't want to work....

Everyone here is very helpful.

Learn the history of your people.

College is a continuation of learning at a higher level.

It was college or work after high school, and I don't want to go to work so here I am.

I started my college career with one idea and now I have another.

I commute so college is different for me.

These are the characteristics of my ideal college.

I feel very fortunate that I don't have to work to put myself through college.

I already know all of this stuff. Why do I need to learn it again?

I know what I want to do. Just let me do it and move on.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>IMPORTANCE</td>
<td>WORTHEFFRT</td>
<td>Nontraditional students put a greater importance on education. A college degree will improve my life and give me options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>IMPROVEMEN</td>
<td>FUTURE</td>
<td>Administration is incompetent. Learning to be independent. Learning to be responsible for yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INDEPEND</td>
<td>INDEPENDEN</td>
<td>College is about learning responsibilities...how to rely on yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INECDCOL</td>
<td>IMPROVEMEN</td>
<td>I just realized that I needed college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INTCLASS</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>Interesting classes are...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INTERACT</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>Learning to interact with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INTERWORK</td>
<td>IMPROVEMEN</td>
<td>I am in college because I want to have a career that is interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INTIMIDATE</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>I am intimidated by the..... Will I see a payoff to this investment? My $worth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ISOLATED</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>I feel isolated while I am at college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>IWORK</td>
<td>NOTUSED</td>
<td>I have to work to afford to go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>A college degree is the key that will open the door to my career. The college degree provides you with a hiring advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>JOBADV</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>I want a job that I can enjoy. I want job satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>JOBSATISFY</td>
<td>IMPROVEMEN</td>
<td>I am just here for the piece of paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>College is a place to increase your knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>KNOWPROFS</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>It is important to me to get to know the professors. I want them to know my name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LEARNING</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>I like to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LEARNING+</td>
<td>EXTRACURR</td>
<td>But, college is much more than just book learning. The extracurricular activities are important too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LEARNMORE</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>The purpose of college is to learn more ...to add to your knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFECHANGE</td>
<td>IMPROVEMEN</td>
<td>Changes in life that brought me back to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEFAIL</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>Without the college experiences you will fail in life and have to move home with your parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFELEARN</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>College is not the end of my education...but the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>College is about learning life's lessons...how to act in different situations...with different people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEPREP</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>College prepares you for your life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEROLES</td>
<td>NONTRADITION</td>
<td>I have other things to do besides go to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIKECLASS</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>To me satisfaction is enjoying my class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LONELY</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>College is a lonely experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>MAJOR</td>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>My major is the most important thing to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>MAJORSAT</td>
<td>MAJOR</td>
<td>I am satisfied when I am satisfied with my major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>MAKEFRIEND</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>It is important to me to make friends while I am in college. That is how I feel comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>MATURITY</td>
<td>GROWING</td>
<td>Most students don't realize until later what they have learned while in college and the benefits of college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>MENTOR</td>
<td>GROWING</td>
<td>I want to pass my knowledge on to someone else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>JOB</td>
<td>The college degree is all about making more money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NEEDSFILL</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>Satisfaction to me is having all of my educational needs filled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NEVERSAT</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>I don't want to be satisfied. If I am satisfied I will stop looking for ways to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NEWPLACE</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>College is a new place; a new experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NICEPEOPLE</td>
<td>PEOPLE</td>
<td>I have met a lot of nice people at college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NITPICK</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>If I talk with another college student I will nitpick and gripe about college...even though I am satisfied with the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOCHOICE</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>In this society you have no choice...if you want to get ahead in life you must have a college degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOCONSTANT</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>Satisfaction is not a constant. It changes every day...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NODIFF</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>Classes in college aren't that difficult...it is just the studying that is hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOFAMINFL</td>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>I didn't even talk my college decision over with my parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOFUN</td>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>College is not fun. All I do is study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOHASSLE</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>It is important to me to not have a hassle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOJOB</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>I am scared I won't find a job when I get this degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOJOBADV</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>A college degree doesn't mean that you will get a better job...or even get a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOJOBPREP</td>
<td>CAREER</td>
<td>I feel like I am taking courses that don't relate to my chosen career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOMANE</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>I don't want my profs. to know my name. I like being just part of the crowd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>NONTRADITI</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Includes all of the different comments made by and/or about nontraditional age students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NONTRADS</td>
<td>NONTRADITI</td>
<td>The nontraditional students push me to learn more. Just having them in the same class is helpful to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOPARPRES</td>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>I was not pressured by my parents to come to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NORULES</td>
<td>INDEPENDEN</td>
<td>There are no rules for you while you are in college. Not like there were in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOSIZE</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>I don't think that the size of the classes is important to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOSTRESS</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>I am not stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOTCLASS</td>
<td>CLASS</td>
<td>I won't remember my classes or remember anything that I am suppose to have learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOTEXTENS</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>To me college is not just an extension of high school...it is so much more than that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>OPPORT</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>I have gotten a lot of opportunities because of college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>OPTIONS</td>
<td>IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td>With a college degree you have more options. You have something to fall back on if your first plan does not work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was my decision to come to college. I was not pressured by anyone else.

In college you can make your own decisions.

Going to college was my parent's dream.

My parents were not ready for me to go to college.

My parents pressured me into coming to college. That is the only reason why I am here.

College party life is important.

I won't know if I am satisfied until I see a payoff on this education.

The people are important.

The ideal to me would be a college with no grades and the student must pass a competency exam to graduate.

I procrastinate too much with my studying.

I have always wanted to be a nurse. For me, college is the path to the fulfillment of that dream.

The professors are the most important element to me in my education.

There is nothing worse than a boring professor. I just don't want to learn.

It is important to me to have professors who care and take a personal interest in me.

Some of the professors are just plain rude.

The teaching style of the professor is important. It is important that they know how to teach. That they have the experience.

This is a good school.

It is important to me that the college I attend provides a quality education.

Do I have all the knowledge that I need to meet the real world?
I like this college because it is a small school and I can get away from the hustle and bustle of class when I need a break. After I graduate I will remember how easily I was accepted at college.

I will remember all of my accomplishments. After I graduate I will remember the adjustments I made going from high school to college.

I will remember the effort...the struggle...the hard work. I will remember the experiences outside of the class.

After I graduate I will remember the friends that I have made here.

I will remember all of my frustrations during my college career.

I will remember the independence.

I will remember the learning. After I graduate I will remember all of life's lessons learned.

After I graduate I will remember all of the opportunities that I had in college.

After I graduate I will remember all of the different people that I have met.

I will remember the professors.

I will remember the time consuming work of college.

I will remember all of the walking.

A lot of my classes are so repetitive. I have had all of this content before.

I want to attend a college with a good reputation and a quality education.

To me the college degree means more respect.

What is happening that the 18 year old can't just go to college straight from high school and successfully graduate in four years?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SAFETY</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>I like it here because I feel safe. I wouldn't feel safe at a school like U.T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SATCOMP</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>Must break satisfaction down into components. I can be satisfied with the whole and not satisfied with the parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SATINDIVID</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>Satisfaction is an individual thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>SATISFACT</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Different student definitions of satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SELFDISC</td>
<td>DISCOVERY</td>
<td>College is a self discovery process. Finding our what you want to do for the rest of your life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SELFRELY</td>
<td>INDEPENDEN</td>
<td>In college you have to learn how to rely on yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SETGGOALS</td>
<td>DISCOVERY</td>
<td>College is all about setting you goals and then working toward them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SITUATIONS</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>College teaches you how to react in different situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>IDEALCOLL</td>
<td>The size of the college is important to me because of the closeness to professors or feeling safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SMALLSIZE</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>I like a college that is small in size. I like smaller classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>DEVELOPMEN</td>
<td>There is more to college than just studying. I want to have fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SOCIALHIGH</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>Socially speaking, college to me is just like high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SOCIALLIFE</td>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>For me to be satisfied, I must have good friends around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SPECIALIZA</td>
<td>MAJOR</td>
<td>College is about specialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SPORTS</td>
<td>REPUTATION</td>
<td>I like a college with a good sports program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STARTPOINT</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
<td>College is a start pointing to my life...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STRESSFUL</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>College is stressful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STRUGGLE</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>College is a struggle for me... all the work and studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STUDINVOLV</td>
<td>EXTRACURR</td>
<td>There is much more to college than just the education. It is important to have extracurricular activities too. Student involvement is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STUDORIENT</td>
<td>STUDORIET</td>
<td>It is important to me to be in a college with a student orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>STUDORIET</td>
<td>IDEALCOLL</td>
<td>A college that is friendly, caring, and student oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SUCCESS</td>
<td>GRADES</td>
<td>I am doing good in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SUPNET</td>
<td>ACCEPTANCE</td>
<td>Support network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SUPPORTME</td>
<td>INDEPENDEN</td>
<td>I want a college degree so I can support myself. I don’t want to be dependent on anybody else. I know how to get things done and I am not afraid to take charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TAKECHARGE</td>
<td>NONTRADITI</td>
<td>I will talk with the professors if I don’t like something that they are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TALKWPROFS</td>
<td>NONTRADITI</td>
<td>When I think of the ideal college, my first thought is of the teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>Any discussion on tenure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TENURE</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>I am thankful that I can go to college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>THANKFUL2</td>
<td>DECISION</td>
<td>I am thankful to be here. Some people can’t afford college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TIMEMANGE</td>
<td>LIFELESSON</td>
<td>In college it is important that you learn how to effectively manage your time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>TOBERICH</td>
<td>MONEY</td>
<td>I am in college because I want to be rich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>UNDERSTAND</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
<td>It is important to me that the classes are taught in a way that I can understand the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>WHATNEXT?</td>
<td>DRIFTING</td>
<td>I knew if I didn’t go to college ...what would I do next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>WORTHEFFOR</td>
<td>IDEALCOLL</td>
<td>To me college is worth the effort because of the opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>WORTHEFFRT</td>
<td>FUTURE</td>
<td>To me college is worth the effort because of the opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>WORTHWHILE</td>
<td>WORTHEFFRT</td>
<td>Is what I am doing worthwhile?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>YAFFORDCOL</td>
<td>THANKFUL2</td>
<td>Yes, everyone can afford to go to college. There are all kinds of ways to get money for college. I think that to say I can’t afford college is just a cop-out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

Administrator Code Book
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ACCOMPGOAL</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>A college degree is all about accomplishing life's goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ACCREDIT</td>
<td>MEASURING</td>
<td>The effective institution uses accreditation standards to evaluate and improve educational programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>ADAPT</td>
<td>UNIVRESOUR</td>
<td>The effective institution is concerned with quality advising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ADVISING</td>
<td>STUDENTORT</td>
<td>The effective institution ensures that the education they provide is provided at a reasonable cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>AFFORD</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The effective institution understands that while many of our student satisfaction assessments are short term, that to truly understand satisfaction assessment measures should be more long term; wait until after the student has graduated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The effective institution creates new perspectives; changes the ways in which students think about issues; challenges their beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BELIEFS</td>
<td>GROWINGUP</td>
<td>Can we judge higher education by looking at the bottom line?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BOTTOMLINE</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The effective institution broadens students horizons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>BROADEN</td>
<td>LIBERALED</td>
<td>The effective institution provides for effective career training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CARPREP</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>The effective institution prepares the student for a changing environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CHANGE</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>The changing student population has an influence on college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CHANGSTUD</td>
<td>ADAPT</td>
<td>The student opinion that education is a chore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CHORE</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
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<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLBETTER</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>For students college is better than.... Students are in college because that is what is expected of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COLLFOCUS</td>
<td>LEARNINGED</td>
<td>The effective institution communicates its successes to external stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>COMMUNICAT</td>
<td>MEASURING</td>
<td>College can improve compensation levels for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CONSUMER</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>The student as the consumer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CREATIVET</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>The effective institution encourages student creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The criteria of effectiveness would include...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>CULTURAL</td>
<td>INVOLVE</td>
<td>The effective institution creates cultural awareness...i.e. the arts, music, theater, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>DELIVERY</td>
<td>DELIVERYED</td>
<td>The effective institution provides an appropriate, contemporary, instructional delivery system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>DELIVERYED</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>Learning about different people and different cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>DIVERSITY</td>
<td>INTERACTON</td>
<td>The economy value of public higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>ECONOMIC</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>Are we effective in providing _____ for the student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EFFECTIVE</td>
<td>FOCRESOURC</td>
<td>Discussion about student effort from an administrators perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>The effective institution enrolls only the capable students. The effective institution is not a social service for all of society but a place of learning for top students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EXCITING</td>
<td>LEARNED</td>
<td>The effective institution provides the student with an exciting learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EXPECTATIONS</td>
<td>QUALSTUDS</td>
<td>The effective institution sets high expectations for their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>INVOLVE</td>
<td>The effective offers the student multiple, challenging university experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FACILITIES</td>
<td>FOCRESOURCES</td>
<td>The effective institution is concerned with the quality of the facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>FACULTY</td>
<td>LEARNINGENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>The effective institution seeks informal feedback from students and faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FEEDBACK</td>
<td>MEASURING</td>
<td>The effective institution recognizes diversity among students and provides a flexible education offering to meet those diverse needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>FOCRESOURCES</td>
<td>UNIVRESOURCES</td>
<td>The effective institution is more focused with its resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>FOCUSED</td>
<td>FOCRESOURCES</td>
<td>One component of student satisfaction is fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>The effective institution engages in long term planning by setting goals for the institution, communicating those goals to constituents, and evaluating the success of their programs based on those goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>GOALS</td>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>There are some good students here and some really bad students. It is an interesting population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>GROWINGUP</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>The effective institution stimulates personal growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>GROWTH</td>
<td>GROWINGUP</td>
<td>The student attitude that They know it all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>IMPORTANCE</td>
<td>GROWINGUP</td>
<td>The importance of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>IMPROVESKL</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>What is institutional effectiveness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INSTEFFECT</td>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>The effective institution creates a lively intellectual and cultural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>The effective institution encourages a positive professor/student interaction and experiences; professor as the mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>INTELLECT</td>
<td>LEARNED</td>
<td>The effective institution creates a commitment by students for an educational and intellectual experience; a desire for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>INTERACTON</td>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>The effective institution creates a commitment by students for an educational and intellectual experience; a desire for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>INVOLVE</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>The effective institution creates a commitment by students for an educational and intellectual experience; a desire for learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LEARNINGED</td>
<td>LEARNINGED</td>
<td>The effective institution uses student performance on licensure as a measure of effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LEARNMORE</td>
<td>IMPROVESKL</td>
<td>The effective institution expands the knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIBEDUCAT</td>
<td>LIBERALED</td>
<td>The effective institution provides a solid liberal based education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>LIBERALED</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>The effective institution uses student performance on licensure as a measure of effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LICENSURE</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The effective institution uses student performance on licensure as a measure of effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEENJOY</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>College prepares you to enjoy life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEBLONG</td>
<td>LEARNED</td>
<td>The effective institution creates the desire for lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEPREP</td>
<td>FUTUREPREP</td>
<td>The purpose of college is to prepare you for life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>LIFEROLES</td>
<td>DELIVERED</td>
<td>Students today have many more responsibilities besides just college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>MEASURING</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>The effective institution is aligned with the marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>MKTPLACE</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>The effective institution is aligned with the marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE</td>
<td>CODEWORD</td>
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<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NEVERSAT</td>
<td>GROWINGUP</td>
<td>Do we really want our students to be completely satisfied? Doesn't that indicate that they are too comfortable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOCHOICE</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>Students may see a college as education as not being a choice because of the society mandates. Society emphasizes the job market or job preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NONEED</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>Not everybody in our economy needs a four year college degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NONTRAD</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>I think that the nontraditional student is different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>NOTPREPFD</td>
<td>INSTRUMENT</td>
<td>Many times our students aren't prepared for life after graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>The effective institution has a successful outcome with its various products; the education of students is just one of those products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY</td>
<td>It is different today in college than when I was in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>PAST</td>
<td>GENERAL</td>
<td>With a perfect world...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>UNIVRESOUR</td>
<td>The effective institution employs professional faculty who are committed to excellence in education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>PROFESSAL</td>
<td>UNIVRESOUR</td>
<td>The effective institution provides for exciting, interesting, and caring professors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>PROFSCARE</td>
<td>FACULTY</td>
<td>Institutions of higher learning should admit those students who are qualified and motivated to do the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>QUALIFIEDS</td>
<td>QUALSTUDS</td>
<td>Are students looking for quality in their educational experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>QUALITY</td>
<td>FACULTY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>QUALSTUDS</td>
<td>UNIVRESOUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The effective institution is concerned with the research component. The resources of higher education. The effective institution can respond to changing issues that effect the student and society. Persistence to graduation is one measure of satisfaction. Is this curriculum relevant to me and my experiences? I think students are here to be trained for their career. Students will say that this college is close to home. What are the expectations of students when they come to college? Students want nice facilities. Students are concerned about their future. I think that the student wants to get out of here as soon as possible to get on with their life. Students will say that this college is a good school. I think that students believe this about their growth in college. Students will chose a major because of the job opportunities when they graduate. Students will chose a major that they enjoy. Do students even know what college they are in? Students think that a college degree is about more money. Students will have negative comments to say about this college.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CODEWORD</th>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>S/READY?</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>Students will say that they will wonder if they are ready for their new life when they graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>S/REMCLASS</td>
<td>LEARNED</td>
<td>Students will remember a favorite class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>S/REMFRDS</td>
<td>INVOLVE</td>
<td>Students will say that they will remember their friends after they graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>S/REMPROF</td>
<td>FACULTY</td>
<td>Students will say that they will remember the professors after they graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>S/SERVICES</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>Students are more concerned about the quality of the services than the quality of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SATEXP</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>One function of student satisfaction is their satisfaction with their experiences while in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SATIND</td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>Satisfaction is an individual definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SCHOLARS</td>
<td>COMMUNITY</td>
<td>The effective institution is a community of scholars all working together for the betterment of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SERVBALL</td>
<td>STUDENT OR TOT</td>
<td>We have the task of serving all types of students. We must be all to everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SERVICE</td>
<td>COMMUNITY</td>
<td>The effective institution provides service to their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SKILLS</td>
<td>IMPROVESKLN</td>
<td>College improves on your critical thinking and decision making skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SKILLSBASE</td>
<td>IMPROVESKLN</td>
<td>Education provides important skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SOCIALREL</td>
<td>INTERACTON</td>
<td>College prepares the student to interact with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>SOCIETY</td>
<td>LIBERATED</td>
<td>College prepares the student for life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STARTPOINT</td>
<td>GROWING UP</td>
<td>College is a starting point for a student’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>STRATEGIES</td>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>The strategies to accomplish our objectives would include...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The effective institution emphasizes opportunities for student involvement and campus activities. The effective institution demonstrates student orientation. Tenure is an issue for the effective institution. The traditional model of education. The effective institution prepares students to serve their community. The undergraduate degree has become devalued. Do students feel that it is worth the effort?
VITA

KATHRYN KRAMER FRANKLIN

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Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Business Administration, M.B.A., 1991.
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee; Educational Leadership, Ed.D., 1996.

Owner, Computex Incorporated, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1991-1993
Instructor, College of Business, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1992-present
