

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: A Study of the Effects of an Extended Transfer Student Orientation Course on Factors of Student Success

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Robert L. Rice

Transfer students often experience difficulties in adjusting to a new institutional environment, and these difficulties may limit their academic potential. Success predictors identified in research may not be part of their experiences. Can an institution create a formal process which can ameliorate deficiencies within success factors for transfer students? This study is the examination of one such program--a transfer student extended orientation course modeled after the freshman extended orientation course developed at the University of South Carolina. Tinto's Model of Student Withdrawal was used to study the effects of the course on success variables within the model--academic interaction, social interaction, personal goals, and institutional commitment.

The experimental study was conducted at Oregon State University--a northwestern land-grant institution. Two groups of newly admitted transfer students were studied. The experimental group (N = 86) consisted of those

The experimental group (N = 86) consisted of those enrolled in the transfer student extended orientation course, while the comparison group (N = 360) was made up of transfer students not enrolled in the course. The two groups were surveyed prior to and after the term with mailed questionnaires adapted from Pascarella and Terenzini's instruments designed to test Tinto's model variables. Descriptive data were also collected, and this was analyzed using Chi-square, cross tabulations, and t-tests to determine similarities and differences between the two groups.

The demographic data revealed a majority of the students transferred from community colleges, tended to enter as juniors, sophomores, or freshmen, majored in subjects in percentages proportional to the general institutional undergraduate population, and had family backgrounds of college-educated parents. The analysis indicated that the transfer student orientation course did provide the opportunity for faculty interaction and peer friendship--factors considered to be indicators of student success. The model component most significantly affected by the experimental treatment was the strengthening of personal goals. The institutional commitment was strong prior to the treatment and there was no difference after the studied term.

A Study of the Effects of an
Extended Transfer Student Orientation Course
on Factors of Student Success

by

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF AN EXTENDED TRANSFER STUDENT
ORIENTATION COURSE ON FACTORS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The present student population is the most diverse group in the history of higher education. Today, representatives from various special populations not present in large numbers in the past are making their mark on the system. Women, minorities, the learning and physically disabled, and older-than-average students are enrolling in increasing numbers (American Demographics Institute, 1988).

Such a mix of students is challenging the previous assumptions that individuals enter as freshmen and remain at one institution until obtaining a degree. The pattern of student matriculation in higher education has become less predictable as many stop and start college, return to retrain for new careers, or even enter community college programs after time at a four-year school. Students move between institutions to find a specific program, to fit into a supportive environment, or to pursue upper division courses. One of the results of these various educational objectives and the increase in non-traditional populations is that the transfer

student population is becoming an increasingly diverse and complex group (Sheldon & Grafton, 1982).

Research on transfer students has been limited, owing to vast inconsistencies in defining transfer students. In addition, there remains no national association or clearinghouse which acts as an advocate for transfer students. What is known comes from institutional or state studies which have largely focused on community college transfer students. Thus, higher education does not have a complete picture of transfers; however, some trends are apparent.

Since World War II, there has been a significant expansion in the number of two-year colleges in America (Cohen & Brawer, 1982). A result of such growth has been an increasing number of transfer students. These transfers tend to differ from the traditional college population, and some of these differences hinder successful matriculation (Johnson, 1987). Limitations, such as poor high school grades or the lack of preparatory courses can be compensated for by community college attendance, but the pre-entry attributes that kept students from direct entry to the university may still interfere with upper division performance, and this may place them at a disadvantage in the new environment (Cross, 1981; Sheldon, 1982; Transfer Education, 1984).

Research has shown that transfer students do not interact as frequently with the institutional personnel as natives, and they often feel a greater sense of isolation (Johnson, 1987). Transfers also tend to have less clarity about their future goals and the potential value of a baccalaureate degree (Demitroff, 1974).

Several unique problems are often faced by the community college transfer students. As "new college students" they have uneven educational attendance patterns, they exhibit a lack of direction as to educational goals, and they lack educational motivation (Cross, 1971; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976). Moreover, the expectations of these students for the experiences they have in college and the resulting outcomes have been found to be unrealistic and exaggerated (Buckley, 1971). They narrowly view the university as a job preparation site and have limited educational plans beyond the bachelor's degree (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976). All of these factors have been shown to restrict the success of transfers.

Once transfers move to four-year colleges, they commonly experience a drop in grades--an average of half a grade point in the first term (Cross, 1981; Lenning, 1977; Payne, Ridenour & Wood, 1988; Sheldon, 1982). While many gradually recover from this low point, this early difficulty may limit admission to competitive

programs where native students (those who enter as freshmen) have a decided edge in cumulative grades (Desler, 1985; Johnson, 1987; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976). Retention studies point out that transfer students have higher attrition rates than native students, in some studies as much as double the rates of native freshmen (Desler, 1985; Johnson, 1987).

Studies on the factors that predict student success have been part of the process of the development of theories that are associated with student success (Astin, 1984; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Shirley, 1986; Tinto, 1987; Wisner, 1984). The primary theoretical works addressing freshmen student success are Vincent Tinto's models for student withdrawal/success (1975, 1987). The models assert that success defined within retention rates is largely the product of academic integration, social integration, the student's entering characteristics, the student's personal goals, and their institutional commitment.

The high attrition rates of transfer students may well be attributable to many of the same factors that limit the success of entering freshmen (Johnson, 1987). Riesman (1981) has suggested that transfer students have the common experience of being freshmen twice; they lack commitment to an organized sequence of classes and have uneven preparation for upper division work. The result

is students who are as vulnerable, unsure, and academically unprepared as the entering freshmen. Riesman's conclusions are largely substantiated by Johnson (1987), who found great similarity between Tinto's variables and those which affect transfer student academic success.

Colleges have gradually come to realize that some students have a difficult time succeeding in the university environment. A frequent institution-sponsored approach for helping freshmen adjust to college is to provide an extended orientation course (Donovan, Schaie-Peleg, & Forer, 1987; Pascarella, 1986). Over 70 percent of the nation's colleges have utilized self-help courses and extended orientation programs as means of fostering freshmen success (Rice, 1989). The research results as to the value of such courses appear to show that they have a significant effect on promoting freshmen retention (Gardner, 1986; Gordon & Grites, 1984). Unfortunately, this intervention technique often misses transfer students who enter with advanced standing and who may not be eligible to participate.

No data collection system has been developed to gather information nationally on transfer students. There has been little research done to measure intervention strategies within extended orientation

programs to find out what has been successful for freshmen and other targeted groups. Few experimental projects have been organized to compare the experiences of student populations who have and have not participated in extended orientation programs. In addition, studies conducted on extended orientation courses rarely address their effect upon the specific factors of student success, and such studies frequently have not been theoretically based (Rice, 1989).

Statement of the Problem

Transfer students experience considerable difficulties in the new institutional environment. Many of the success factors described in the research are not present in their experiences. The central problem is whether institutions can create a formal process which can ameliorate deficiencies within success factors for transfer students. One formal process that is increasingly being used to enhance student success is the extended orientation course; however, it has usually focussed on freshmen populations. Moreover, the extended orientation course has rarely been evaluated within a theoretical framework, and thus its value in altering specific success variables remains dubious. It is unknown whether the extended orientation course can affect success variables for transfer students.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to measure the effect of an extended orientation course on transfer students to determine if such a course can positively enhance variables that have been associated with Tinto's model of student success, and to collect descriptive data on the institution's transfer student population.

Objectives

1. To determine the effect of an extended orientation course on variables associated with Tinto's model of student success. Specifically, does participation in the course affect transfer student academic integration, social integration, goal commitment, and institutional commitment?
2. To describe some of the basic characteristics of the transfer student population at the studied institution.

Null Hypotheses

1. The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's informal and formal academic systems.
2. The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's formal and informal social systems.

3. Participation in the extended orientation will have no effect on the participant's personal goals.
4. The extended orientation course will have no significant influence on the student's institutional commitment.

Limitations of the Study

Within the credit course structure are factors limiting the ability to generalize the findings of this study:

1. Students enrolled in the Transfer Student Orientation course (the experimental group) were self-selected, and their characteristics and motivations may differ from students not enrolled in the course (the comparison group).
2. The comparison group of newly admitted transfers was randomly selected in late August, prior to the fall term starting date in late September. Therefore, late enrollees were excluded, and their characteristics and motivations may differ from early enrollees.
3. Oregon State University, a land-grant school, may enroll a student population not comparable to student populations at liberal arts colleges or urban

institutions previously used as transfer student study sites. Thus, generalizations will be limited to similar institutions.

4. The effects of the experimental treatment on the college experience will be assessed after one term and will be limited to what is considered to be the most important adjustment period in the study of attrition.
5. The content used in the extended orientation course was primarily one which focused upon a developmental approach and was limited to 20 contact hours.
6. The study was limited to the used of the theoretical guideline of Tinto's model of student success variables.

Definition of Terms

Academic Integration: The extent to which a student meets the academic demands of the institution through intellectual growth, grade performance, and faculty relationships.

Commitment: The degree individuals are committed to goal attainment (graduation) and to the institution.

Community College: A public institution offering lower division credits in which the associate degree is the highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 1982)

Extended Orientation Course: A program designed to promote student success by attempting to foster social and academic integration in a small group seminar format developed by John Gardner at the University of South Carolina.

Fit: "Moral and social interaction, meaningful contact between the student and the faculty, development of relationships between students and those who care about them and the responsiveness of the institutions to the needs the students feel" (Lenning, Beal, & Sauer, 1980, p. 21).

Institutional Experience: Opportunities for students to interact with academic and social systems on campus in both formal and informal situations.

Intentions or Goals: Level and type of education and occupation desired by the individual.

Native Student: A college student who began postsecondary education at a four-year college or university and persisted at the same institution.

Personal Goals: The level of importance attributed by the student to life tasks of family, self, and career.

Pre-Entry Attributes: Family background, personal attributes, skills, value orientation, and pre-college educational experience and achievements that students bring with them to the college environment.

Social Integration: The frequency and quality of interaction with extra-curricular activities, peer groups, as well as the kind and compatibility of student peer group lifestyles and values.

Stop-outs: Students who interrupt their educational programs for other than academic reasons.

Transfer Students: Individuals who move between postsecondary institutions that include community colleges and four-year colleges.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature focusses on three areas: transfer students, student success theory and research, and student success/extended orientation programs.

Transfer Students

Transfer students are an integral part of higher education. They have been present in American colleges since the colonial period (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Their number is uncertain, but it is estimated that 42 percent of the nation's 12.3 million students depart their first institution for another (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1977).

One of the problems associated with conducting research on transfers is the group's diversity. The transfer population can be described as being comprised of at least four separate groups. Willingham (1974) categorized three of these groups. They include:

1. Articulated transfers: Students moving directly from parallel, articulated programs in two-year colleges into the upper division of a four college program.
2. Traditional horizontal transfers: Students moving from one four-year college to another because of

family migration, changes in educational plans, dissatisfaction, or for reason of financial constraint.

3. Non-traditional transfers: Transfers who do not follow the usual patterns, including adults who have been out of college for some years.

A fourth group of transfers has become more prominent since Willingham's study. This group is

4. Reverse transfers: Students who leave a four-year school to attend the community college (Lee, 1982).

The transfer student subgroups point out the many avenues students use to pursue college degrees; yet all of these subgroups fit under the definition umbrella of transfer students. As a result, when figures are compiled on transfers, the information may apply to only one subgroup. For instance, the traditional horizontal transfers are rarely studied separately, so it is difficult to know specifics about them; however, the articulated transfers coming from community colleges are more widely studied (Transfer education, 1984).

Many students delay college after high school graduation, and when they do choose to start postsecondary education, the majority use the community

college as an entry point (Johnson, 1987; National Education Association [NEA], 1987; Whatever happened to the class of 1975?, 1987). In addition, the community college plays a major role in attracting other non-traditional student populations.

The community college was referred to as a junior college when it was first developed, an extension of secondary schools designed to offer two additional years of education "aimed primarily at intellectual growth" (Educational Policies Commission, 1964). What evolved was a institution wherein students prepared to transfer to four-year schools, to search for personal direction, or to improve grade averages after poor secondary school performances (Eells, 1931).

When the first junior college was organized in California in 1910, the University of California had a policy of limiting enrollment to the top one-half to one-third of high school graduating classes (Kidd, 1984), thus leaving the junior college as an alternate educational avenue for upper division course work preparation for those outside the select group (Eells, 1931). The University of California's model of controlled admission influenced admission procedures at other universities.

At the same time, a wider range of adults sought postsecondary education than had previously seen this as

an option, especially after World War II. Ultimately, this increased demand led to a separate system that evolved into a community college, which was designed to be responsive to local needs through a broad curriculum including vocational, developmental, and avocational courses (Knoell, 1982). One result of this evolution was that the transfer function lost its importance at most two-year institutions as terminal, two-year degree programs, closely related to the local job market, became increasingly popular (Kissler, 1982). Critics of the system felt these multiple missions meant that the community college could not prepare students academically for upper division course work (Cohen & Brawer, 1982; Sheldon, 1982).

This criticism was borne out when transfer student performance was compared to that of native students. Grades and graduation rates of transfers have been significantly lower than those of native classmates at the studied institution (Desler, 1985; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976; Payne et al., 1988; Sheldon, 1982; Transfer education, 1984; Withdrawal from institutions, 1977). It is also common for performance to vary within majors and among schools within the same university system (Jones, 1988; Payne et al., 1988; UC Davis Task Force, 1980).

Research on transfer students has isolated some of the reasons or predictors to explain transfer students' performance. Transfer students are often limited by factors that they bring with them to postsecondary education. Transfers tend to come from lower socioeconomic levels than do natives and have parents who do not attend college (Astin, 1977). Transfers' previous educational experience has been one of poor preparation and performance (Analytical Studies Unit, 1981; Cross, 1981; Johnson, 1987; Riesman, 1981; Sheldon, 1982; Summerskill, 1965). They tend to have an unclear commitment to a course of study and take many courses before determining a major (Payne et al., 1988). Transfer students' expectations of the four-year colleges prior to matriculation have been found to be exaggerated and incongruent with the actual intellectual and non-intellectual climate, thus requiring considerable adjustment on the students' part (Buckley, 1971; Donato, 1973). The demands on their personal lives--work and family--potentially reduce the priority of education (Cross, 1981; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976). They view the college degree as strictly an occupational avenue and do not plan to pursue graduate work (Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976).

Student Success Theory and Research

In the process of trying to understand what contributes to successful student matriculation, a body of theory and supporting studies has been developed on students in higher education. Much of student success theory and practice originated at four-year schools and has primarily been focused on entering freshmen (Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1980).

Theoretical models provide a framework to examine student success as defined by retention. The need for organizing theory, as stated by Bean (1981), is that it guides research and brings order to the array of potential variables. The organizing principle most frequently used in student success theory has been to describe the college as an environment where a social culture exists. From this viewpoint, the assessment is made of how well the individual fits into the culture and how the environmental press affects the desire to stay. "Fit" in this context is described as

moral and social interaction, meaningful contact between the student and the faculty, development of relationships between students and those who care about them and the responsiveness of the institutions to the needs the students feel (Beal & Noel, 1980, p. 21).

Fit is further described in Pace and Stern's (1958) Congruence Theory, as the congruence between student's values, goals, and attitudes with those of the college. The closer this relationship is, the more likely the student will persist to complete a degree.

Spady (1970) used this theme and expanded on it by incorporating the sociological approach Durkheim (1951) used in his theory of suicide. Durkheim held that suicide was more likely to occur if the individual was not incorporated into the network of support society provided by friends with like goals and values. Spady applied this social integration approach to the college environment. He conjectured that the interaction of variables from the individual, variables from the social system, and variables from the academic system lead to social integration (see Figure 1).

Tinto (1975, 1987) developed and later revised his model of student departure using similar concepts (see Figures 2 and 3). His theory has been the most widely tested student success theory and provides the opportunity to organize related theoretical models and empirical research.

Tinto's longitudinal model assumes that dropout decisions are related to aspects of the student's experiences that occurred prior to college entry. These categories of pre-entry attributes (parents' educational

Figure 1.

Model of the Undergraduate Dropout Process
(Spady, 1970)

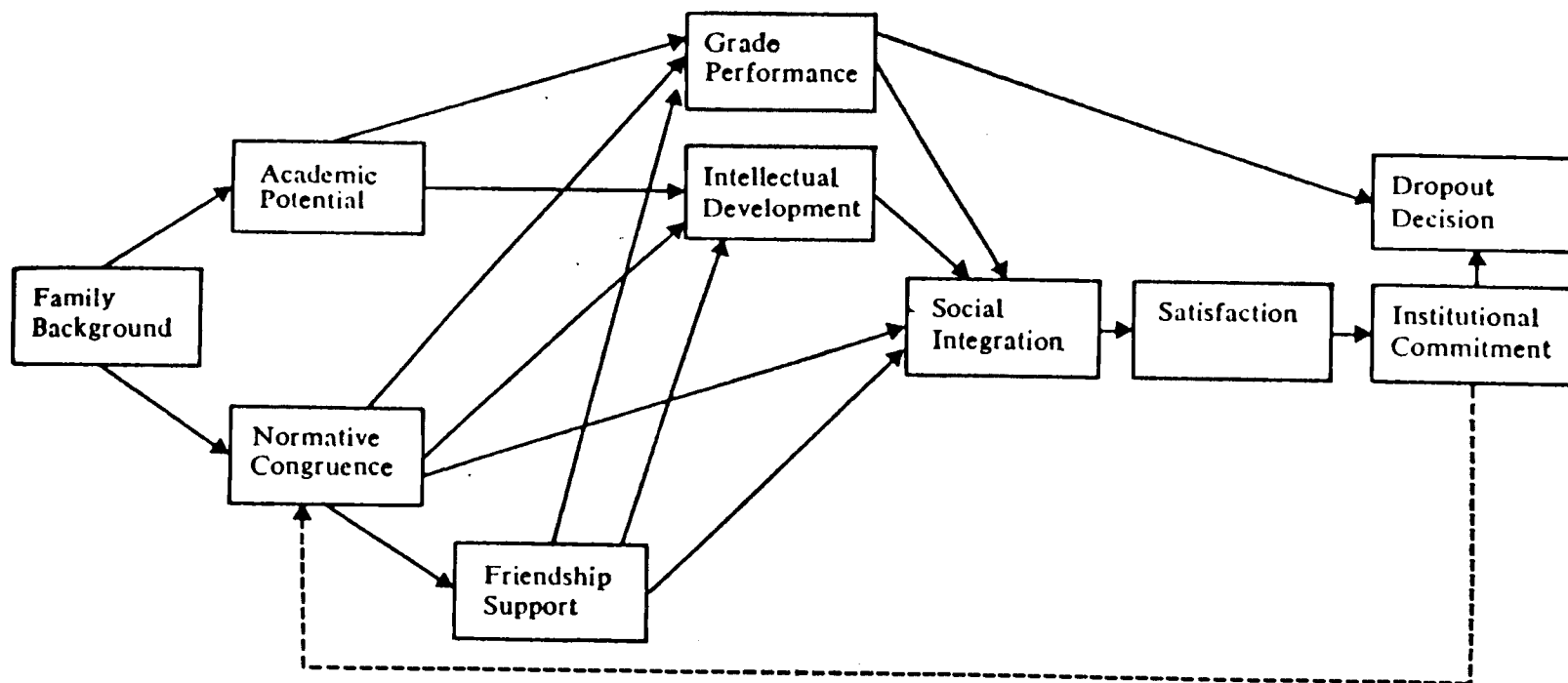


Figure 2.
 A Conceptual Schema for Dropout from College
 (Tinto, 1975)

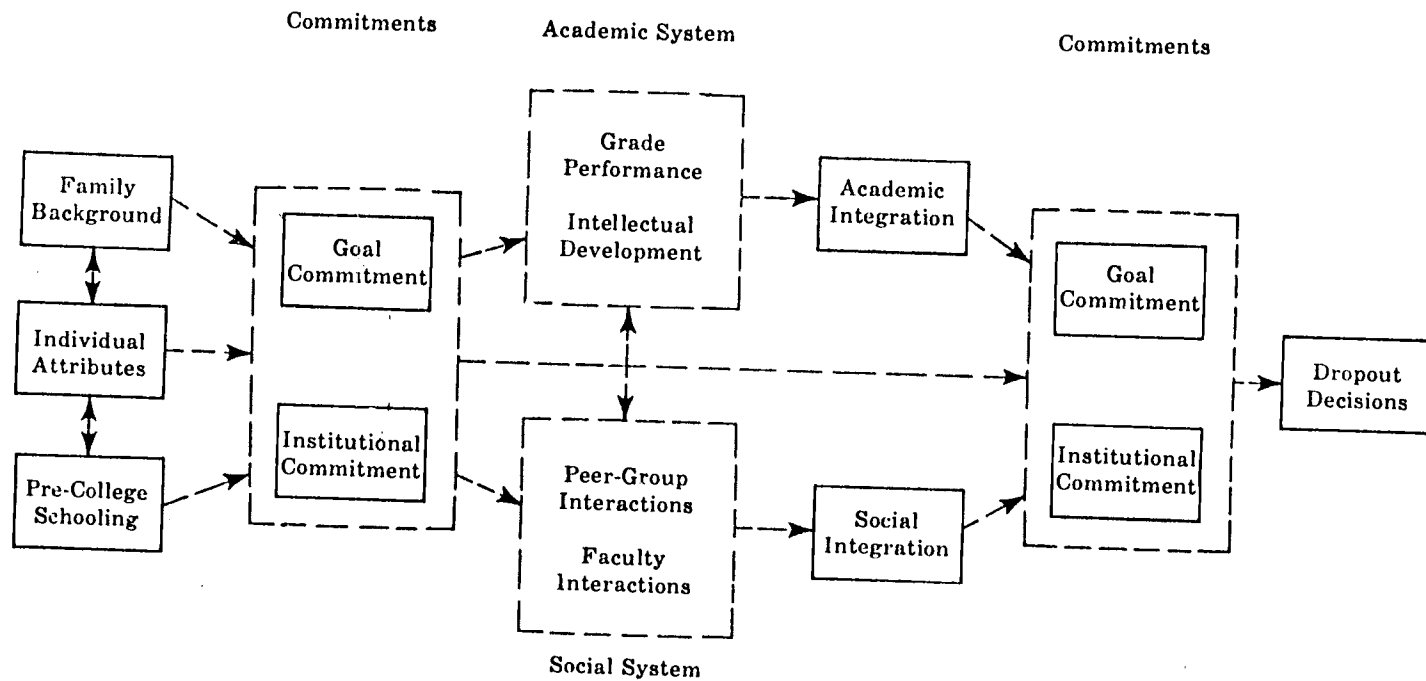
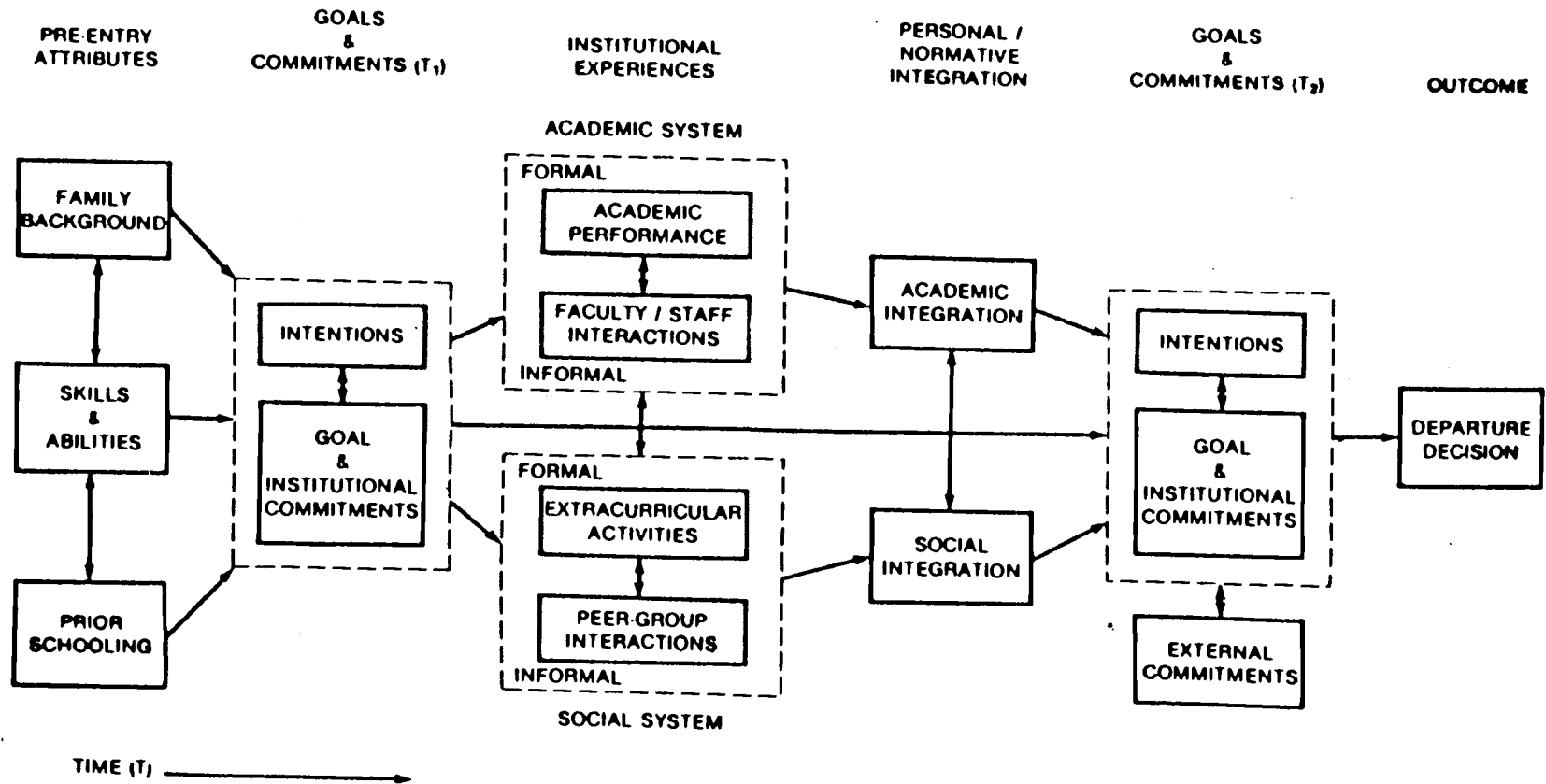


Figure 3.

A Model of Student Departure
(Tinto, 1987)



and socioeconomic level, prior schooling, individual skills, and ability) influence the process of pursuing a college degree. In addition, the student's entry career goals, educational goals, and the commitment to obtain a degree from the chosen institution affect the resulting involvement in the academic and social systems at the school.

In Tinto's model, the academic system is divided into informal and formal components. The formal element is the academic performance of the student--grades and intellectual growth being the primary measures. The informal component is the frequency and quality of faculty-student interactions in and out of the classroom.

The social system also has formal and informal components. The extracurricular activities and social functions organized by the institution comprise the formal elements. The informal interactions with peer groups in daily living situations, study groups, and personal needs are measured by the congruence of values and goals, the ease of making friends, and the support of other students.

The personal goals of the student and the commitment to these goals reflect aspirations and expectations--the hopes for the future and the likelihood of attaining these items. Goals are assessed

by measuring values associated with family, self, and career.

The separate interaction with academic and social systems, and the congruence of personal goals comprise the resulting integration of a student with the institutional systems. The strength and interplay of the congruence influences the commitment to the institution and decision to remain or depart from the school.

Supporting Research on Success Predictors

Several researchers have developed studies to test various components of Tinto's model (Allen, 1986; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Shirley, 1986; Terenzini & Wright, 1987). Others, although not specifically using his model, have conducted research that falls within the model's variable domains (Astin, 1977; Beal & Noel, 1980; Johnson, 1987). As a result, the variables have been tested in a variety of settings to examine what their relationships are to student success. In addition, Desler (1985) used Tinto's model to examine the commuter transfer student persistence at one university, while Shirley (1986) used Tinto's model to study transfer student persistence at several institutions.

Pre-Entry Attributes

Tinto emphasizes that the individual characteristics or pre-entry attributes students bring to college influence student success in terms of dropout decisions. These pre-entry attributes include gender, family educational background, and pre-college schooling. In research, gender and age have not been shown to predict success or failure significantly but can be secondary factors (Astin, 1975, 1977; Pantages & Creedon, 1978; Spady, 1970). Parents' educational levels and socioeconomic status have resulted in ambivalent conclusions, as in one study a relationship was shown (Astin, 1977), whereas in another it was not (Cope & Hannah, 1975). Studies have shown that community college students tend to come from families of lower economic status and are motivated to attend college by the opportunity for economic rewards and upward mobility (Cross, 1971; Medsker & Trent, 1965; Smart & Pascarella, 1987). Lunneborg and Lunneborg (1976) report that community college transfer students have major difficulties coping with academic problems. As far as community college transfers are concerned, they have been found to have less academic self-confidence and motivation than native students (Desler, 1985; Johnson, 1987; Kidd, 1984; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1976).

The most frequent pre-entry attribute measurement, and the one considered the best predictor of student performance, is the entering grade point average or GPA (Astin, 1977; Cope & Hannah, 1975; Lenning, 1977). Spady (1970) suggests that grades are the most positive visible form of academic reward--usable by the individual and the institution. The accessibility of grade-point averages has resulted in their use as a primary research tool for the measurement of student ability and motivation (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Pantages & Creedon, 1978). What has been found in examining previous academic records of transfers in the University of California and California State University systems is that a significant number of transfers would not have been able to enter the university system directly because of high school grades and insufficient four-year college entry requirements. The only avenue for these students was to first attend a community college (Transfer education, 1984).

More transfers than freshmen have been admitted to colleges provisionally or with lower overall requirements than entering freshmen (Transfer education, 1984). At the University of Texas, a study of transfers found GPAs the most useful variable in predicting subsequent performances (Holahan & Kelley, 1976). Transfers who entered with lower GPAs were more likely

to need early intervention from student services, such as counseling and tutoring.

It has been well documented that transfer student grade-point averages achieved in two-year colleges will drop during the first term at a four-year school. After this time transfer grades are likely to be equivalent to those of native students (Cross, 1981; Payne et al., 1988; Rosenthal, 1982; Terenzini & Wright, 1987; Update of community college transfer statistics, 1986; Withdrawal from institutions, 1977).

Goals and Commitments

The goals of the individual are the aspirations and expectations related to education and how well the institution responds in meeting these desires. The ultimate goal of college attendance, and the desire for a degree, particularly from the currently enrolled college, are the variables considered part of goals and commitments. Both Astin (1975) and Spady (1970) showed commitment to the enrolling college to be positively related to persistence. Demitroff (1974) found that stop-outs and drop-outs lacked clear career or personal goals. Another study found that a strong relationship existed between transfer students' intention to remain in college and actual persistence (Johnson, 1987). Sewell and Shah (1967) stated that degree plans were the strongest influence upon college completion.

A concern that has been expressed in higher education is that too few students from the community colleges transfer to four-year schools, and this number is on the decline; however, when the reason for attending the community college is determined, a reasonable ratio is revealed (Transfer education, 1984; Update of community college transfer statistics, 1986). For example, Los Rios Community College District in Sacramento, California, conducted longitudinal research on its student population (Lee, 1987). When students were divided into categories based on their reasons for attending the community college, 29 percent of the total group listed university transfer as their reason for attendance. In each of the four surveyed years, 69 percent of those who had listed this as a reason had actually transferred to the university.

In another study, Cooley (1974) related commitment to measuring student success:

one of the best established, yet frequently ignored principles of the assessment of education efforts is that the state of students' abilities and motives as they enter an educational program is always the strongest predictor of what they will achieve in the program. (p. 33)

Institutional Experiences

The variable of institutional experiences includes interaction with the social and academic systems at the college. At Miami-Dade Community College, it was found that a lack of academic commitment was related to the decision to discontinue long before unsatisfactory grades were reported (Wright, 1984). Pascarella (1980) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1979, 1980) have examined informal faculty-student interactions and found that such informal contact has a strong influence on the degree of college commitment. In a multi-institutional survey, Shirley (1986) found that academic integration had a stronger influence on retention than did those variables associated with social integration. The nonpersisters questioned at the University of Iowa listed poor academic performance as one of the reasons for leaving (Demitroff, 1974). In a longitudinal study, social integration and its relationship to academic integration was shown to be stronger in the junior and senior years than in earlier years of college (Terenzini & Wright, 1987).

Astin's (1984) Student Involvement Theory supports Tinto's model. He states that the quantitative and qualitative physical and psychological energies a student invests in the college experience are determinants of the quality of the experience. This

involvement can include academic and social activities, and it may include other students, professors, and institutional personnel as well. Astin has stated that the greater the involvement of the student in the institution, the stronger is the likelihood that more learning and development will occur. In earlier studies, Astin (1977), as well as Wolfgang and Dowling (1981), reported that students who were actively involved and felt themselves a part of campus activities were more likely to remain in school.

Another limitation for transfers is a result of their life stage. When a transfer enters a four-year college beyond the freshman year or stops out of education for a period of time, he or she usually falls into the older-than-average category and is assumed to have a different set of needs, responsibilities, and motives than younger counterparts (Roelf, 1975). Chickering and Havighurst (1981) describe the developmental tasks that younger students experience in college as including leaving home, developing autonomy, choosing careers, and breaking psychological ties. The primary developmental task for older returning students is improving self-knowledge. A study that focused on older learners detailed that adult learners were likely to be significantly less involved in socially-oriented activities than traditional age-group students (Kuh &

Ardaiolo, 1979). In addition, a significant number of transfers are part-time students (Cross, 1981), many of whom have family and work commitments that limit class attendance to afternoons and evenings, thus severely limiting extra-curricular involvement (Richardson & Bender, 1987). Commuters also comprise a large percentage of this population, and this status limits involvement in social activities (Desler, 1985; Holahan & Kelley, 1976; Wisner, 1984). Moreover, social interaction with peers and faculty, an indicator of integration, is less likely to be manifested by older transfers (Astin, 1975; Tinto, 1975). Kester (1971) and Noel (1978) noted that significant differences existed between experimental and control groups in persistence rates when intervention such as counseling and tutoring were provided. Cope (1978) expanded on this concept, concluding that a student's decision to attend or withdraw from college involved the broader consideration of the student's perception of the overall college experience.

Student Success/Extended Orientation Courses

In the past, the connections between the theoretical framework on students' successful matriculation and the practice of acting to improve student performance have not been strong. This has been particularly true for transfer students. Pascarella

(1986) has suggested the importance of the longitudinal approach to the assessment of student movement in an educational system, and institutional action has usually originated with student service and student development specialists.

According to Gardner (1986), the two positive factors of the freshman extended orientation have been support from a caring adult and a welcoming environment at the university. The focus of these courses is centered upon the tasks of orienting students to the college, providing integrated thematic approaches, and offering developmental self-exploratory opportunities (Sagarria, 1979, 1980). Although these types of orientation courses have existed since the late nineteenth century, more recently such courses have been initiated in reaction to the turbulence of the 1960s and reflect attempts to modify negative student attitudes in more positive directions.

The goal of freshmen orientation courses has been to introduce students more effectively to the college environment, with general objectives summarized as follows (Gordon & Grites, 1984):

1. To understand the maturational changes students will undergo during their college experiences and the roles they will play as students;

2. To clarify why students are in college, identify personal and work values, and establish realistic career and life goals;
3. To disseminate information about academic programs, including course, major, and graduation requirements;
4. To understand the occupational implications of student educational choices;
5. To develop or improve student study and time-management skills; and
6. To familiarize students with college procedures, resources, and services.

(p. 21)

Based upon findings in the literature, as well as the experiences of student services directors, the attainment of these goals will be enhanced by the design of orientation courses which reflect the individuality of the students (Kirby, 1979). Therefore, programs for transfer students specify the personal exploration of abilities as well as information about services offered on campus for academic and social support. Their use for transfer students has been limited, although they have been suggested as a means for addressing the

adjustment problems of transfer students (Donovan et al., 1987).

Examination of successful college orientations shows similar patterns of organization. There have been programs that have targeted "at risk" transfers, such as urban minority groups, and have provided support for the transition stress associated with moving to a new school environment (Donovan et al., 1987). The University of Oregon provides outreach advising and transcript evaluation at feeder community colleges for potential students, university visitations for these transfers, and assistance with registration (University of Oregon retention, 1987-1988, 1987). The University of Puget Sound, Arizona community colleges, LaGuardia Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and Sacramento Community College are examples of schools that have determined student needs and created orientation programs designed to retain students and assist transfer success at four-year schools (Copeland, 1986; Dempsey, 1986; Ford Foundation, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c).

Studies of various orientation programs have shown that this experience increases participants' self-concept and values (Beck, 1980; Wilkie & Kuckuck, 1989; Witten, 1970). Community college students interacted more effectively with faculty as a result of an orientation course (Blimline & New, 1975). The academic

performance of students was influenced through study skills training and campus resource and personnel utilization (Blimline & New, 1975; Donnangelo, 1985; Jones, 1984; McNairy, 1984; Rice, 1984; Rivers, 1985). Yet another study related grade improvement to the faculty contact brought about by the seminar (Bowman, 1970). Several other studies have reported academic improvement attributable to the course (Jones, 1984; McNairy, 1984, 1985; Rivers, 1985; Tiller, 1985). Still other course results point toward overall student satisfaction and commitment (Beck, 1980; Lawson, 1983; Russel & Sier, 1984; Witten, 1970).

Preliminary Study

Oregon State University (O.S.U.), a Northwest land-grant university, conducted a preliminary survey of transfer student characteristics and the use of available support services (Rice, 1987). A representative sample of newly-admitted transfer students was asked about student services and advisor contact on campus. The most overriding response by surveyed students was the personal need for self-reliance. The study confirmed a number of adjustment problems (Rice, 1987). Without any intervention, the respondents perceived themselves as independent but lonely, and while they acknowledged the need for guidance, they were reticent in seeking help.

The resources used to help the students through the university system were the students themselves or other students. Campus services and personnel were minimally accessed. Yet students who reported greater contact with university services in general and faculty advisors in particular had more favorable reactions to the O.S.U. transfer process.

When the respondents in this same survey were asked about contact with academic advisors, the majority had one or no contact during the term. The majority were also unclear as to the number of credit hours from the prior institution that would transfer prior to the term beginning, but this tended to be resolved by the end of the term. The overall impression of the university's effectiveness in helping students make the transition from the community college was mixed but tended to be fair to poor. The most common frustrations listed by community college transfer students were insensitive instructors, confusion about course requirements, impersonal atmosphere, and the inability to identify helpful resource people (Rice, 1987).

What was needed was a more formalized process to help transfer students better engage the university's services and one which would integrate them better socially and academically into the campus milieu. For these reasons, the model of a freshman orientation

course (Gardner, 1986; Gordon & Grites, 1984) was used to guide development of a program for O.S.U. transfers. This undertaking was designed to integrate descriptive studies on transfers with theoretical models on student success.

Based upon findings in the literature reviewed in this chapter, as well as the experiences of student services directors, the attainment of these goals will be enhanced by the design of transfer student orientation courses which reflect the individuality of the students (Kirby, 1979). Therefore, programs for transfer students should specify the personal exploration of abilities as well as information about services offered on campus for academic and social support. In this, the variables that have been detailed in Tinto's model and have been associated with student persistence can be emphasized, and the effects of this course can be evaluated to determine if it makes a positive impact on student adjustment.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

The first two chapters discussed transfer students, retention theory, and retention research. What follows is a description of this study's experimental and comparison groups, experimental treatment, instrumentation, methodology, methods of analysis, and hypotheses.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the transfer student extended orientation course will affect participants within specific areas of Tinto's model of student success. A secondary purpose was to develop descriptive information about transfer students to add to the limited data base on this student group.

The Population

Participants in the study came from one group: newly admitted transfer students at a northwestern land-grant school, Oregon State University (O.S.U.). Within this population were two subgroups: the experimental group--students enrolled in the transfer student extended orientation course--and the comparison group--transfers not enrolled in the class.

Experimental Group

The experimental group consisted of 86 entering transfer students who voluntarily enrolled and completed the transfer student orientation credit course.

Students were recruited into the newly offered course by circulating information about the program to (1) Oregon community college counselors, (2) head advisors of colleges and schools at O.S.U., (3) the New Student Office at O.S.U., (4) individual academic departments, and (5) students by flyers distributed throughout the O.S.U. campus. Because of the restricted size of the experimental population, all transfer student extended orientation course participants were included in the data collection process.

The experimental group was 49 percent female and 51 percent male; the average age was 23.2; the class make up was 28 percent freshmen, 38 percent sophomores, 28 percent juniors, and 3 percent seniors; and the students represented majors within all of the undergraduate colleges at O.S.U. (A detailed description of the experimental population is found in Chapter IV.)

Comparison Group

The comparison group (N = 251) was drawn from newly admitted transfer students not enrolled in the transfer student extended orientation course. These students were randomly selected within the following defined parameters: (1) in-state transfer students with sufficient credits to be ineligible for the freshman orientation course (more than 30 credits) and (2) students not above senior status (fewer than 145

credits). A master list of the 1300 transfer students was compiled from admission records, and then a random numbering sequence was used to draw a sample from this group. Because of the potential diversity of the population, the desire to find out as much information as possible, and the likelihood that some admitted students would not enroll in the fall term, 500 students were randomly selected as participants in the comparison group.

The comparison group was 47 percent females and 53 percent males; the average age was 23.2; there were 14 percent freshmen, 35 percent sophomores, 46 percent juniors, and 6 percent seniors; and they represented majors within all of the colleges at O.S.U. (Further description of the comparison population is found in Chapter IV.)

Experimental Treatment

The experimental group received instruction twice per week in a two-credit elective course held throughout the fall term. The course was based on the freshman extended orientation format developed at the University of South Carolina and described by Gardner (1986) and Gordon and Grites (1984). Students were instructed in techniques intended to 1) foster their integration as master students, including techniques to establish interaction with faculty, 2) strengthen their self-

concepts, and 3) build their study skills, as well as, 4) provide information on the availability and uses of campus support services.

The course objectives were

1. To help transfer students develop better academic survival skills in order that they might become more effective and efficient learners;
2. To promote transfer students' formal and informal involvement with faculty;
3. To facilitate the transfer students' awareness of, involvement in, and appreciation for university resources and services;
4. To help transfer students understand institutional policies in order that they might be less encumbered by the rules and regulations of the university;
5. To enhance transfer student appreciation for and involvement with the cultural and co-curricular life of the campus;
6. To provide transfer students with a supportive atmosphere for fostering greater feelings of community, friendliness, and a positive sense of the campus climate;

7. To help transfer students develop more positive attitudes and reactions for the learning process;
8. To give transfer students advisement-related support in order that they may become more self-directing in affirming their future academic and career goals;
9. To strengthen transfer student commitment to the university; and
10. To increase transfer student academic performance in terms of GPA and retention rates.

The course itself was organized into class sections of 7 to 15 students. These sections met for one hour and twenty minutes twice a week for a total of 20 hours during the term. The section instructors were five graduate students and two faculty members trained in student success enhancement techniques. The instructors met regularly to share information and to review successful strategies. Some of the techniques used in the seminar included self-exploration exercises, study skill assessments, student journals entries, campus tours, guest speakers from student services, and group projects.

The Instruments

The instruments used were selected on the basis of assessing the impact of the transfer student extended orientation course on student development during the first term at a new school, within the parameters of Tinto's model. Pre-entry attributes, career and life goals, academic and social system interactions, and commitment to the institution were variables included in the instruments. The approach chosen was the pre-measurement of the variable entry levels for both experimental and comparison groups. These were to be compared to the post-extended orientation course measurement of the variables.

Reliability and Validity

The Transfer Student Survey (68 items) and the Transfer Student Follow-up Survey (69 items), both originally developed by Pascarella and Terenzini (1979, 1980) were chosen for this study (see Appendix A). These instruments were first used to survey freshmen, (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979,1980; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1980; Terenzini & Wright, 1987) but have been used to collect data on transfer students as well (Desler, 1985). The internal consistency (alpha) reliability coefficients of the scales in the surveys ranged from .71 to .82 (Terenzini & Wright, 1987).

The instruments were adapted for this study to maximize the mailed response rate, with the assistance of Oregon State's Survey Research Center staff, guided by Dillman's (1978) mailed survey specifications. Part of this adaption was to expand the instruments to enable the respondents' characteristics to be more thoroughly described than was possible from information available on students' admission records (see Appendix A).

The instruments used a combination of yes/no responses, number amounts, and four-point Likert scales. Likert scale items on the pre-instrument were provided with the choices of no chance, very little chance, some chance, or very good chance of specific experiences expected during the term. Item responses that were related to goals and values were stated as: not at all important, not too important, somewhat important, or very important. The post-instrument also used the four-point Likert scale and repeated items provided on the pre-instrument. The choices for goals were not at all important, not too important, somewhat important, and very important, while the experiences during the term were evaluated on the choices of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. For ease of interpretation responses were recoded to have high scores reflect the response to the item considered the more positive choice.

The independent variable was enrollment in the extended orientation course. The dependent variables were the components of Tinto's model: academic system interaction, social system interaction, personal goal commitment, and institutional commitment.

Academic System Interaction

This variable was measured by responses to questions that related to institutional commitment and faculty contact. Faculty contact was assessed by the students' perceived amount of faculty interaction, formally and informally, the quality of the faculty, and the students' perception of the willingness of the faculty to help students.

Social System Interaction

This category consisted of questions that examined students' interactions with peers. Examples were the number of friends at the university, social activity involvement, relationships with other students, and the ability to make friends.

Goal Commitment

Research in this area focused on commitment to selected life and career goals as part of overall goal commitment. Items used included statements about the importance of raising a family, being successful in a career, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, and helping others.

Institutional Commitment

Institutional commitment was measured by the strength of the relationship the student felt toward the school. The highest degree desired, the importance of graduating from the college, confidence in the choice of the institution, and the desire for a degree from the school were variable items.

A listing of the descriptive questions and the variable items are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Survey Items by Categories

Descriptive Items

Age
 Gender
 Class Standing
 Marital Status
 Residential status (commuter/noncommuter)
 Major by college
 Transfer site (previous college)
 Entering GPA
 Grade average
 Parents' income
 Financial independence from/dependence on parents

Pre- and Post Instruments Variable Statements

Formal Academic System

I will find high quality academic courses at OSU
 I will find OSU to be intellectually stimulating

Informal Academic System

Interact frequently with faculty outside of class

Formal Social System

Find sufficient opportunities for extracurricular involvement
 Find ample opportunity for social activities at OSU

TABLE 1 continued

Informal Social System

Find it easy to make friends with other students at OSU

Personal Goals

The importance of

- Raising a family
- Developing a meaningful philosophy of life
- Being successful in a business of my own
- Creating an original work of art
- Learning how to get along with different kinds of people and enhance my interpersonal skills
- Being well-off financially
- Influencing the political structure
- Becoming accomplished in the performing arts (acting, dance, etc.)
- Having administrative responsibility for the work of others
- Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment
- Making a theoretical contribution to science
- Learning more about myself, my values, and my life's goals
- Influencing social values
- Gaining knowledge and skills directly applicable to a career
- Helping others who are in difficulty

Institutional Commitment

- Highest academic degree desired
- Importance of graduating from college
- Importance of a degree from OSU
- Confident that the right decision was made to attend OSU

Post-Instrument Only Variable Items

Formal Academic System

- Getting good grades is important to me
- I am satisfied with my academic experiences at OSU
- I am satisfied with my academic performance at OSU

Informal Academic System

- Since coming to OSU I have been able to develop a close relationship with at least one faculty member

TABLE 1 continued

Informal Academic System

Most of the faculty members I have come in contact with are willing to spend time outside of classes to discuss issues of interest and importance to students

There are faculty members I have had contact with who are genuinely outstanding or superior teachers

The amount of informal contact I had with professors or teaching assistants

Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping student grow in more than just academic areas

Informal Social System

My interpersonal relationships with other students at OSU have been a positive influence on my intellectual growth and on my ideas

Most students at OSU I know are willing to listen to me and help me if I have a personal problem

Informal Social System

Most students at OSU have similar values and attitudes to my own

Many of the other students I know at OSU are serious students

Methodology

Comparison group participants were mailed the pre-term or Transfer Student Survey questionnaire a month before school started, while the same instrument was administered in the transfer orientation course during the first week of meetings. The mailing procedure followed Dillman's (1978) methods:

1. Distribution of questionnaires and cover letters that invited individuals to participate;

2. Reminder postcards mailed one week later to nonresponders; and
 3. Distribution of second questionnaires with encouraging cover letter mailed one week after the postcard reminder to nonresponders.
- (See Appendix B).

Response Rate

In the comparison group of transfers it was found that some students had attended the institution previously or did not enroll after admission. As a result, a total of 378 students out of the 500 were within the group's defined parameters. Out of this group, 18 enrolled in the extended orientation course, leaving 360 as potential comparison group participants. Of these, 251 completed the first questionnaire, for a 70 percent response rate.

The second questionnaire, the Transfer Student Follow-up Survey, was mailed to both experimental and control groups in January, following the end of the fall term. Dillman's (1978) procedures for mailed questionnaires, described for the first mailing, were also followed for this survey. Both experimental and comparison groups were mailed the survey simultaneously to assess student reaction at the same time in the school cycle.

In the experimental group 65 returned the Follow-up survey, for an 78 percent response rate. The comparison group returned 203 instruments--an 81 percent response rate.

Design Matrix

The experimental study was designed to gather data pre- and post-treatment as well as post-treatment only. In the first instance the before-after static group comparison, detailed by Matheson, Bruce, and Beauchamp (1978) is shown below:

Before-After Static Group Comparison

Group	Before Observation	Treatment	After Observation
Experimental Comparison	w_1 w_2	x --	Y_1 Y_2

In the second situation, some response did not lend themselves to pre- and post-data collection. Therefore, these variables were included in the post-instrument only, and this design is shown as follows:

Post-Experimental Group Comparison

Group	Before Observation	Treatment	After Observation
Experimental Comparison	-- --	x --	Y_1 Y_2

Methods of Analysis

The present study was designed to examine the categories of Tinto's model as they related to transfer students during their first term at the university, and to ascertain what differences there were between experimental and comparison groups when the effect of the pre-experimental treatment responses were controlled. Tinto's

model and related research have emphasized specific contributing attributes that students bring to the college experience; however, there has been no consensus as to what are the most predictive or accurate methods to construct studies with these attributes, particularly as they relate to transfer students. For this reason, the decision was made to use the pre-instrument responses as the covariates rather than using demographic characteristics.

Pre- and post-tests questionnaires contributed descriptive information on marital status, living status (residential or commuter), financial resources, parents' educational levels, parents' income, financial independence/dependence, college major, transfer site, average grades in college, and previous extracurricular involvement. The registrar's records were used to determine age, gender, and class standing. To ascertain if the pre-entry attributes of the two groups were as similar as possible, chi-square, cross tabulations, and t-tests were used to determine if differences existed between the experimental and comparisons groups.

The pre-experimental treatment interval items for each of the model components were analyzed using t-tests to ascertain if there were any significant differences in the two groups before the experimental treatment. No significant differences were found in this analysis process, so then it was deemed appropriate to use the planned

analysis on the items repeated on the pre- and post-instruments.

The next step was to use analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine if there were any differences between the comparison and experimental groups after the treatment when the pre-experimental treatment responses were controlled through the analysis's regression element. According to Courtney (1984), analysis of covariance is appropriate when the researcher cannot control all variables in a study. "The covariance analysis adjusts for initial differences in the data, using pre-measurement information as a base. By making these adjustments, sampling error is reduced and precision is increased" (Courtney, 1984, p. 173). The covariate was the adjusted responses on the variable items from the pre-test. The pre-test variable score was contrasted with the post-test score for the experimental and comparison groups to determine if change had taken place over the term between groups. The significance levels were set at the $p \leq .10$ level. This level was selected to take into account the experimental nature of the extended orientation course. The chance of committing Type I errors was increased by using this significance level, but this was deemed an appropriate risk.

A different analysis technique was used for variables items that appeared only on the post-instrument. These variables were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance

(ANOVA). "The analysis of variance may be summarized as a technique for partitioning the variation in the observed data into parts, each part assignable to different causes or combinations of causes" (Wiersma, 1969, p. 86). The responses of the two groups were contrasted to determine if significant differences existed. The significance levels for this analysis were also set at the $p \leq .10$ level.

Hypotheses

The validity of the course content as it applies to the model was tested by the following hypotheses:

1. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's informal and formal academic systems.

Theories on student withdrawal from institutions by Spady (1970) and Tinto (1975) led to research studies that attempted to predict factors associated with retention. The work of Pascarella and Terenzini (1979, 1980) focused on the model component of academic commitment as it related to interacting with faculty. Controlling for differing background characteristics, their conclusion was that voluntary withdrawal is a reflection of what occurs on campus after entry, and part of this occurrence is the quality of formal and informal contact students have with faculty. Consequently, one of the objectives of the course was to stimulate faculty/student interaction. What has not

been researched is whether the extended orientation program actually does have an impact on the opportunity for faculty-student interaction that is statistically significant.

2. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's formal and informal social systems.

The extended orientation course has been designed to promote social involvement for its participants. What has not been attempted is a comparison of how this interaction differs from experiences of newly admitted students who are not in this type of program. Statistical measurement of the change over the first term in a new school has not been previously attempted.

The relationships that students have with their peer groups outside of organized activities may be an important influence on their commitment to the institution. The goal is to measure the amount and relative importance of this involvement.

3. Null Hypothesis

Participation in the extended orientation will have no effect on the participant's personal goals.

The commitment to future life activities has not been researched as part of attrition-related research. The opportunity to impact life goals through course content and measure the results has also not been attempted.

4. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect on the student's institutional commitment.

According to research, the combination of faculty and peer relationships will lead to social commitment. Part of this commitment is transferred to the institution that provided the forum for the interaction. Therefore, students who experience interaction with members of the college systems will form an allegiance that will strengthen the desire to graduate from the school. The verification of this concept has not been evaluated as it relates to extended orientation courses.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a transfer student extended orientation course upon factors related to student success. In addition, descriptive data were compiled on the characteristics of entering transfer students at Oregon State University.

The model of institutional departure developed by Tinto (1975; 1987) was used to assess the transfer student extended orientation course effect on the experimental group. The data collection for the study was done prior to and after the completion of the term that the transfer student extended orientation course was offered. The responses of the participants in the course (experimental group) were contrasted with those of transfer students not enrolled in the course (comparison group) to determine effects related to the course.

Transfer Student Descriptive Information

An objective of the study was to gather descriptive data on the university's transfer student population. Information on the transfer students was collected from the pre- and post-instruments and the registrar's records. The institutional research office contributed additional information on the institution's total transfer student population as well as the overall undergraduate student population. A comparison group's characteristics were

examined to determine if they were representative of the institution's transfer population because of the self-selected nature of course enrollment.

The descriptive data were collected on all students who completed the pre-instrument. The number of newly admitted transfers at the studied university was uncertain prior to the data collection, as this group had not been previously isolated for study. The diversity of the transfer student group was anticipated and a large number was surveyed so that the sample would be representative of the entire population.

The initial comparison group included 500 newly enrolled transfer students. Students in the original comparison group who did not enroll, who had previously attended the institution, or who were members of the experimental group were eliminated from analysis. As a result, the final comparison group numbered 360 students, and of these 251--or 70 percent--completed the initial Transfer Student Survey. The tables of descriptive information that follow represent the comparison group and the transfer student extended orientation course participants.

Number and Percentages of Study Participants and Related Student Groups

The number of participants in the two studied groups and the entire institutional transfer student population are listed in Table 2. The percentage of the institution's transfer population involved in the study is also listed, and the university's undergraduate student population is detailed as well.

TABLE 2

Number and Percentages of Study Participants and Related Student Groups

Group	Number	% of Newly Enrolled Transfer Students
Experimental	86	6%
Comparison	251	18%
OSU Transfers	1,421	100%
OSU Undergraduates	12,890	N/A

Summary: The 1,421 newly admitted transfer students represent 11 percent of the 12,890 total student undergraduate population. A substantial proportion of the newly admitted transfer student population, 24 percent, was included in the study.

Number and Percentages of Participants and Other Student Groups by Gender

The student records were used to tabulate the percentage of the males and females in the student groups. Data from the institutional transfer and undergraduate populations are also listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Number and Percentages of Participants and Other Student Groups by Gender

	Female	%	Male	%
Experimental	42	49%	44	51%
Comparison	118	47%	133	53%
OSU Transfers	N/A		N/A	
OSU Undergrad	5,542	43%	7,347	57%

Summary: There were similar percentages of males and females in the experimental and comparison groups in relation to the general student population, but women were more strongly represented in the studied transfer student groups than in the overall undergraduate population.

Frequencies and Central Tendencies for the Ages of Participants

The mean and median of experimental and comparison group members were calculated and compared with the general O.S.U. transfer student population and general

undergraduate student population. These figures are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Frequencies and Central Tendencies for the Ages of Participants

	Number	Mean	Median
Experimental	86	23.16	21
Comparison	251	23.22	20
OSU Transfers	1,421	N/A	N/A
OSU Undergrad	12,890	21.80	N/A

Summary: The experimental and comparison means, medians, and modes are quite similar. The mean age of the transfer students tended to be a bit older than that of the undergraduate population.

Percentages of Participants in Experimental and Comparison Groups by Age Categories

The distribution of ages was analyzed by separating ages into categories to determine the similarities and differences between the transfer students and what is considered the traditional college age range of 18 to 22. This information is detailed in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Percentages of Participants in Experimental and Comparison
Groups by Age Categories

Ages

Groups	18	19	20	21	22	23	24-30	30+
Experimental	--	19%	25%	25%	8%	4%	8%	11%
Comparison	3%	17%	26%	18%	6%	6%	11%	13%

Summary: The age categories show 77 percent of the experimental group and 70 percent of the comparison group were within the range of 18 to 22-year old college students, although they tended to be concentrated at 20 to 21 years of age rather than 18 to 19. Students over 22, often called older-than-average, were 23 percent the experimental group and 30% percent of the comparison group.

Ages of Females and Males in Experimental and Comparison
Groups by Categories

The ages of the female group members, shown in Table 6, were examined to determine if there were similarities and differences in the overall distribution between the two groups, as well as between males and females. The ages of males in the study were depicted separately to ascertain whether there were noticeable trends that differed from those of the female population. Results of this analysis are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 6

Ages of Females in Experimental and Comparison Groups by Categories

Groups	Ages							
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24-30	30+
Experimental	--	32%	32%	11%	7%	--	7%	11%
Comparison	3%	19%	35%	18%	4%	3%	8%	11%

Summary: The most frequent age for both experimental and comparison groups, one-third of the female population, was 20 years of age. The experimental group had a larger number of 19-year old females than the comparison group. Only 18 percent of the experimental group and 19 percent comparison group females were over 22.

TABLE 7

Ages of Males in Experimental and Comparison Groups by Categories

Groups	Ages							
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24-30	30+
Experimental	3%	11%	22%	24%	9%	9%	9%	13%
Comparison	2%	19%	16%	17%	7%	8%	15%	16%

Summary: There was a wider distribution of males in the various age categories than was present in the female population. Most of the males, however, still tended to be of traditional college age. Substantially many more

males were over 22 than females in both experimental and comparison groups. There were more females in the 20-year old age category.

Class Standing of Experimental, Comparison and Undergraduate Groups

Table 8 shows the division of both groups by class standing as determined by admissions records.

TABLE 8

Class Standing of Experimental, Comparison, and Undergraduate Groups

Groups	Class				
	Freshmen	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Other
Experimental	28%	39%	28%	2%	2%
Comparison	14%	35%	46%	6%	--
OSU Undergrad	27%	20%	21%	27%	4%

Summary: The general concept of transfers arriving as juniors at the four-year institution is not supported by these figures, particularly in the case of the experimental group. Many transfers entered as freshmen and sophomores.

Percentage of Experimental and Comparison Groups by Former College Enrollment

The type of school and/or location of the college that the transfer students had attended prior to coming to O.S.U. was asked and is detailed in Table 9. The category

"OSSHE" refers to other four-year schools in the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

TABLE 9

Percentage of Experimental and Comparison Groups by Former College Enrollment

Groups	College Types			
	Community College	OSSHE	Out-of-State	Private
Experimental	57%	11%	31%	1%
Comparison	65%	34%	1/2%	1%

Chi-square 76.9

Significance .01

Summary: The experimental group was composed of more out-of-state students resulting in a cross tabulation significant difference at greater than the .01 level. The parameters of the comparison group sampling specified in-state transfers. The comparison group showed a large number of transfers within the Oregon higher education system.

Enrollment by College for Experimental, Comparison, and Related Student Groups

The enrollment by college was examined to see if the studied groups were representative of the overall institutional transfer population and the general undergraduate population. This information is shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10

Enrollment by College for Experimental, Comparison, and
Related Student Groups

College	Student Groups			
	Experi- ental	Comparison	OSU Transfers	OSU Undergrad
Business	30%	22%	23%	18%
Liberal Arts	22%	15%	18%	17%
Science	13%	14%	14%	15%
Home Ec	13%	4%	5%	6%
Engineering	7%	18%	16%	17%
Education	6%	4%	4%	7%
Pharmacy	--	6%	5%	3%
Health/PE	5%	3%	3%	3%
Agriculture	1%	7%	6%	7%
Forestry	1%	4%	3%	2%
Oceanography	--	1%	--	--
Undecided	1%	2%	2%	4%

Chi-Square 2.02

Significance .57

Summary: The general trends are somewhat similar for both groups when compared to the institutions's overall transfer student populations and undergraduate population. There was an under representation of certain colleges, such as pharmacy and engineering, in the experimental

group, and there was an over representation of home economics and business majors.

Entering Grade Point Averages (GPA) for Experimental, Comparison, and Related Student Groups

The previous college grade point averages from entering transfer students in both groups were calculated by admissions and averaged for this study. The other group of entering students, freshmen, were included for comparison. Foreign students could not be included because their records did not have equivalent GPA information. The information is shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

Entering Grade Point Averages (GPA) for Experimental, Comparison, and Related Student Groups

Group	Entering GPA
Experimental	2.78
Comparison	3.07
OSU Transfers	2.93
OSU Freshmen	3.25

t-test 1.96

Significance .05

Summary: In t-test analysis, the experimental group had significantly lower entering GPAs than the comparison group at the .05 significance level. The entering GPA for

freshmen was substantially higher than that of the transfer students.

Self-Reported Average Grade of Experimental and Comparison Groups

The transfer students were asked to choose their average grade in previous college work. The distribution of the grade responses was then calculated and is shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12

Self-Reported Average Grade of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Letter Grades

Groups	A	A-	B/B+	B-	C/C+	C-
Experimental	7%	10%	26%	25%	29%	3%
Comparison	9%	23%	39%	17%	10%	1%

Chi-square 8.76

Significance .27

Summary: The entering GPA information shown in Table 12 was supported by the self-reported average grades. The experimental group tended to report having lower grade averages than the comparison group.

Marital Status of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Information on the marital status of both groups was compiled from post-instrument responses and is depicted in Table 13.

TABLE 13

Marital Status of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Groups	Status		
	Single	Married	Other
Experimental	81%	12%	7%
Comparison	77%	9%	13%

Chi-square 4.37

Significance .63

Summary: Most of the transfer students in both groups were single. Several commented on this question in the open responses because their lifestyle could not be adequately described by the categories. Some indicated that they had lived unmarried with the same person for several reasons, while still others cohabited with a person of the same gender.

Housing Status of Experimental and Comparison Groups

The housing status of both groups was asked on the post-instrument to determine if there were any differences in access to the campus, and this is detailed on Table 14.

TABLE 14

Housing Status of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Groups	Type of Housing		
	School-sponsored	Off-Campus within 15 miles	Off-Campus over 15 miles
Experimental	54%	40%	6%
Comparison	35%	56%	10%

Chi-square 7.83

Significance .02

Summary: Cross tabulations showed that significantly more of the experimental group lived in campus-controlled housing than the comparison group at the .05 level; however, a majority of the comparison group lived within 15 miles of campus.

Financial Independence/Dependence of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Table 15 shows the students responses to the question that asked about their financial independence from or dependence on their parents.

TABLE 15

Financial Independence/Dependence of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Groups	Financial Status	
	Independent of Parents	Dependent on Parents
Experimental	51%	49%
Comparison	51%	49%

Chi-square .00

Significance 1.00

Summary: The students in both groups were as likely to be independent as dependent on parents for financial support. Some commented on this question in the open responses, particularly the older-than-average students, who strongly expressed financial independence from parents.

Parents' Income of Experimental and Comparison Groups

This question was asked to attempt to gather information on the economic levels of students' families, as literature has emphasized that transfers, particularly those from community colleges, are economically disadvantaged. As there were several non-responders, the number in both groups is detailed in Table 16.

TABLE 16

Parents' Income of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Group	Income Levels				
	N	0- \$20,000	\$21,000- \$40,000	\$41,000 \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Experimental	77	17%	32%	31%	20%
Comparison	230	20%	41%	23%	17%

Chi-square 2.88

Significance .41

Summary: While the comparison group tended to show parents with higher incomes than parents of members in the experimental group, this question was left blank by 21 of the participants, the most frequent absence of response on the entire questionnaire. The experimental group members also left this blank in nine instances. Several students commented in the open response section that they didn't know the information, as they were independent of parents, or it was no one's business.

Father's and Mother's Education by Years of School of Experimental and Comparison Groups

The education of the father and mother has been shown to have a relationship with the educational aspirations of their children. Tables 17 and 18 detail the educational levels of the parents.

TABLE 17

Father's Education by Years of School of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Education	Groups	
	Experimental	Comparison
1-8 Years	1%	6%
9-11 years	6%	5%
High school Diploma	23%	20%
Some College	28%	26%
B.A.	21%	17%
Some Graduate Work	4%	6%
Graduate Degree	17%	16%
Don't Know	--	3%

Chi-square 7.51

Significance .28

TABLE 18

Mother's Education by Years of School of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Education	Groups	
	Experimental	Comparison
1-8 Years	--	4%
9-11 years	1%	8%
High school Diploma	29%	28%
Some College	42%	31%
B.A.	17%	16%
Some Graduate Work	4%	2%
Graduate Degree	7%	9%
Don't Know	--	2%

Chi-square 8.23

Significance .14

Summary: The education of the parents tended to be similar for both experimental and comparison groups. In general, the father's education was higher than the mother's. In the "some college" category, the experimental group's mothers showed a higher percentage than did those of the comparison group.

Descriptive Data Summary

The information gathered in this survey reveals a profile of students who were likely to enroll in the

transfer student extended orientation course. The initial survey showed that the individuals tended to be of traditional college age, and that many were out-of-state transfers with lower than average grade-point-averages. The majority were male. The females were likely to be 19 or 20, and to have mothers with some college.

The information gathered from the questionnaires and the students' records showed that the experimental and comparison groups exhibited characteristics similar to other data collections on transfer students. The studied transfers were compared to the institution's overall transfer student and undergraduate populations when possible. Much of the information indicated that the studied groups were similar to the transfers at the school, and that there was some variation between the transfers and the overall undergraduate population.

The descriptive differences between the two studied groups were minimal. Statistically significant differences were found in the entering grade-point-averages, former college, and the residential living situations.

Hypotheses Testing

The second objective of this study was to determine the effect of the extended transfer student orientation course on variables associated with Tinto's model of student withdrawal/success. Specifically, does

participation in the course effect transfer student academic interaction, social interaction, personal goals, and institutional commitment?

1. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's informal and formal academic system components of academic integration.

The academic system variables consisted of 11 statements which were students' assessments of how they had perceived their involvement with the educational experiences at the institution and how those experiences had affected them. The composite analysis of covariance of three variables present on the pre- and post-instruments is detailed in Table 19.

Table 19

Analysis of Covariance Summary Statistics for Formal and Informal Academic Interactions by Experimental and Comparison Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Covariate	.075	1	.075	.692	
Effect	.000	1	.000	.000	.988
Explained	.075	2	.038		
Residual	29.229	268	.109		
Total	29.229	270	.108		

Cell Means	Comparison	3.039
	Experimental	3.039

Adjustment for independents and covariates		
	-.00	.00

The analysis of covariance for the model component showed the significance level to be .988. This was not significant, so an examination of the individual variables was conducted to determine if the transfer student extended orientation course had an impact on one or more of the variables. Although this makes the assumption of underlying continuity in the Likert scale, the experimental nature of this study was designed to provide as much information as was feasible in the transfer student extended orientation course. Tables 20 and 21 show the analyses of the individual variables within the

formal and informal academic system. The asterisk (*) indicates significant differences at the .10 level.

TABLE 20

Individual Variable Analysis for the Formal Academic System Interaction

Analysis of Variance					
Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.10*	3.58	.61	3.43	.73	Getting good grades is important to me
.90	2.79	.74	2.80	.71	I am satisfied with my academic experiences at OSU
.92	2.53	.87	2.54	.75	I am satisfied with my academic performance at OSU

Analysis of Covariance					
Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.10*	2.84	.82	2.98	.93	My courses have been academically stimulating
.51	2.80	.85	2.77	.76	My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to OSU

TABLE 21

Individual Variable Analysis for the Informal Academic System

Analysis of Variance

F sig.	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.00*	2.00	.78	2.45	.91	Since coming to O.S.U. I have been able to develop a close relationship with at least one faculty member
.06*	2.86	.80	2.65	.76	Most of the faculty members I have come in contact with are willing to spend time outside of classes to discuss issues of interest and importance to students
.11	2.42	1.02	2.23	1.00	There are faculty members I have had contact with who are genuinely outstanding or superior teachers
.30	2.73	.81	2.86	.73	Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas
.30	2.18	.81	2.30	.73	How much informal contact I had with professors or teaching assistants

Analysis of Covariance

.13	2.52	.82	2.68	.80	I am satisfied with the opportunities at OSU to meet and interact informally with faculty members
-----	------	-----	------	-----	---

Summary: While the composite analysis results showed no significant differences, two items within the formal academic interactions were significant at the .10 level. The analysis revealed the comparison group significantly felt that getting good grades was important. The experimental group expressed a significant increase in interest in ideas and intellectual matters since coming to the institution. The two groups were relatively similar in their perception of their academic experiences and performance.

The informal academic system is the amount and quality of interactions with institutional representatives--faculty and staff. The most significant response in the variable area and on the entire survey was the item that asked the student's success in forming a close relationship with at least one faculty member. The experimental group expressed more success in this endeavor than the comparison group. The comparison group was significantly more positive about the willingness of the faculty to spend time outside of class to discuss issues with students than the experimental group. Although not significant, again the comparison group was more positive about the quality of the faculty as teachers.

The remaining items, although not significant, showed that there was a tendency for higher means for the experimental group. Almost significant was the

satisfaction with the opportunities available to informally meet faculty. The interest faculty had in helping students grow beyond academic areas was also stronger for the experimental group. The experimental group said it had more frequent opportunity to meet informally with faculty.

2. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect upon student interaction with the institution's formal and informal social systems.

The formal and informal social systems consisted of seven variables. Of these, three were present on the pre- and post-instruments. The composite score of these variable responses in the formal and informal social systems was analyzed using analysis of covariance. Results from this analysis appear in Table 22.

TABLE 22

Analysis of Covariance Summary Statistics for Formal and Informal Social Interaction by Experimental and Comparison Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Covariate	.152	1	.152	1.190	
Effect	.073	1	.073	.573	.450
Explained	.225	2	.113		
Residual	3.973	266	.128		
Total	4.198	268	.128		

Cell Means	Comparison	Experimental
	2.65	2.69
Adjustment for independents	and Covariates	
	-.01	.03

The analysis of the composite score showed a significance level of .450. As this was not significant, the individual variable responses were separated into formal and informal social system variables and then analyzed to reveal as much information as possible about the transfer student extended orientation course. The formal social system included the school-sponsored activities, while the informal social system variables were limited to interactions with other students, as seen in Tables 23 and 24.

TABLE 23

Individual Variable Analysis for the Formal Social System
Interaction

Analysis of Covariance

F sig.	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.60	3.04	.90	3.11	.74	There are a sufficient number of extracurricular activities to become involved in at OSU
.89	3.01	1.00	3.05	.83	There are enough social activities at OSU

TABLE 24

Individual Variable Analysis for the Informal Social
System Interaction

Analysis of Variance

Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.22	2.83	.72	2.95	.72	My interpersonal relationships with other students at OSU have been a positive influence on my intellectual growth and on my ideas
.29	2.67	.89	2.53	.92	Most students at OSU I know are willing to listen to me and help me if I have a personal problem
.46	3.07	.90	2.97	.96	Most students at OSU have similar values and attitudes to my own
.66	3.07	.67	3.03	.73	Many of the others students I know at OSU are serious students

TABLE 24 continued

Analysis of Covariance					Variable Statement
Sig of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	
.07*	2.74	.86	2.98	.84	It has been easy to meet and make friends at OSU

Summary: The formal social system, represented by institution-sponsored activities, was perceived equally by both experimental and comparison groups prior to and after the first term at the university. These responses indicate there were sufficient activities available for students to become involved in.

In the informal system, the ease of making friends was more significantly expressed by extended orientation seminar participants than by nonparticipants. Other variables showed similar means for experimental and comparison groups.

3. Null Hypothesis

Participation in the extended orientation will have no effect on the strength of the participant's personal goals.

All of 15 the personal goal statements were present on the pre- and post-instruments. The composite score of

the analysis of covariance of the personal goal variables is shown in Table 25.

TABLE 25

Analysis of Covariance Summary Statistics for Personal Goals by Experimental and Comparison Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Covariate	10.592	1	10.592	91.197	
Effect	.900	1	.900	7.746	.006*
Explained	11.492	2	5.746	49.471	
Residual	30.780	265	.116		
Total	42.272	267	.158		

Cell Means	Comparison	Experimental
	2.802	2.952

Adjustment for independents and covariates	
	- .04 .11

The analysis reveals that the personal goals component of Tinto's model was significantly different between the two groups. The experimental group showed a higher mean score. Further analysis was conducted on the individual variables to determine their relative importance. Findings are shown in Table 26.

TABLE 26

Individual Variable Analysis for the Personal Goals

Analysis of Covariance					
Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.03*	3.06	.86	3.30	.93	Raising a family
.04*	3.18	.78	3.35	.77	Developing a meaningful philosophy of life
.08*	2.78	.79	3.04	.76	Being successful in a business of my own
.09*	2.13	1.12	2.34	1.11	Creating an original work of art
.09*	3.63	.53	3.73	.69	Learning how to get along with different kinds of people and enhance my interpersonal skills
.11	3.27	.68	3.52	.59	Being well-off financially
.14	2.18	1.47	2.30	1.48	Influencing the political structure
.31	1.81	1.34	1.97	1.56	Becoming accomplished in the performing arts (acting, dance, etc.)
.44	2.69	.91	2.75	.86	Having administrative responsibility for the work of others
.48	2.91	.80	2.73	.86	Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment
.52	2.31	1.13	2.18	1.15	Making a theoretical contribution to science
.57	3.61	.68	3.71	.54	Learning more about myself, my values, and my life's goals
.88	2.77	1.53	2.88	1.48	Influencing social values

TABLE 26 continued

Personal Goals

Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.90	3.77	.42	3.77	.43	Gaining knowledge and skills directly applicable to a career
.92	3.23	.70	3.27	.73	Helping others who are in difficulty

Summary: The personal goals component of Tinto's model was impacted by the extended orientation course. For all but two items, the experimental group expressed a stronger commitment to the value variables. The most significant difference was shown in the goals of raising a family, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, being successful in a business of my own, creating an original work of art, and learning how to get along with others and enhancing interpersonal skills.

4. Null Hypothesis

The extended orientation course will have no significant effect on the student's institutional commitment.

The composite scores of the four variables of institutional commitment, present on both pre- and post-instruments, were analyzed using analysis of covariance. Results of the analysis are shown in Table 27.

TABLE 27

Analysis of Covariance Summary Statistics for
Institutional Commitment for Experimental and Comparison
Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Covariate	3.679	1	3.679	23.773	
Effect	.212	1	.212	1.373	.242
Explained	3.892	2	1.946	12.573	
Residual	41.011	265	.155		
Total	44.903	267	.168		

Cell Means	Comparison	Experimental
	2.85	2.92

Adjustment for independents and covariates	
	- .02 .05

The analysis showed a significance level of .242, so no significant difference was shown between the two groups. Table 28 shows the analysis of covariance results for the individual items within the model component.

TABLE 28

Individual Variable Analysis for Institutional Involvement

Analysis of Covariance

Sig. of F	Means Comp.	S.D.	Means Exp.	S.D.	Variable Statement
.14	2.49	.56	2.65	.64	Highest academic degree expected
.41	3.93	.28	3.88	.35	Importance of graduating from college
.45	3.46	1.09	3.54	1.10	Importance of a degree from OSU
.57	3.54	.99	3.47	1.00	Confidence that the right decision was made to attend OSU

Summary: The items that addressed components of institutional commitment were, as a group, the highest variable scores. The means of both groups were quite similar. No significant difference in the variables was found; however, the item considering the highest degree desired was higher for the experimental group. In general, the transfer students appeared to be strongly committed to the institution prior to the fall term, and this commitment became stronger at the end of the first quarter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to measure the effects of a transfer student extended orientation course to determine if the course enhanced variables associated with Tinto's model of student success. The model components of formal and informal academic systems, informal and formal social systems, personal goals, and institutional commitment were examined through variables provided on Pascarella and Terenzini's (1979, 1980) questionnaires. The assessment of experimental and comparison groups of newly admitted transfer students at Oregon State University was done prior to and after the term when the experimental treatment--the transfer student extended orientation course--took place. Analysis of variance and covariance were the main statistical techniques used to compare the two group responses. The secondary purpose was to compile descriptive data on the population to make comparisons with and add to current knowledge on the student group.

The descriptive data revealed that these transfer students had many of the characteristics that have been shown to limit student success. Almost a third of the participants were older than the traditional ages of

college students. According to Roelf (1975) and Richardson and Bender (1987) this means they are more likely to have personal commitments and values that compete with educational pursuits. The number of young female transfers, particularly in the experimental groups, was not discussed in the literature and may be an indication that they recognize the need for a supportive environment during the transition to a new school.

The class standing of the transfers indicates many are moving to the four-year school without associate degrees. A strong number of transfer underclassmen and out-of-state transfers enrolled in the extended orientation course. Some majors were also more likely to partake of the transitional support this course provided.

In this study, the entering grade point averages (GPAs) of the transfers were lower than those of entering freshmen, supporting much of the research done in the California college systems (Sheldon, 1982; Transfer education, 1984). The experimental group had a significantly lower average GPA than the comparison group, again evidence that these students recognized the need for help to be successful students.

Most of the students were single, and a significant number of the experimental group lived in school-

sponsored housing. This seems to indicate that the marketing of the course was successful in attracting residential transfers, and additional efforts could be made in the future to enroll those living off-campus.

Hypotheses Testing

The primary objective of this study was to use the components of Tinto's model to determine the effect of the transfer student extended orientation course on participants. The areas examined were the academic system interaction, the social system interaction, goal commitment, and institutional commitment.

Academic System Interaction

The experimental treatment had measurable impact on participants' academic system interactions when compared to non-participants. In the informal academic system the experimental group showed more interest in intellectual matters and ideas since coming to the institution. The comparison group placed more importance on grades than the experimental group, indicating the experimental group may have had more balanced or integrated perception of their academic experiences after the term. Although similar, neither group was overwhelmingly pleased with their academic performances or experiences during the term.

The experimental group members were able to develop close relationships with at least one faculty member.

One of the ironies of the survey findings was the possibility that the extended orientation course provided the opportunity for the participants to make comparisons among faculty as to teaching skills, general quality, etc. As a result, they may have had fewer positive reactions to statements about the general faculty than did the comparison group.

Social System Interaction

The social system interactions were not as clearly apparent as variables from the academic system, but some effects of the extended orientation course were noted. The students in both groups felt they were given sufficient opportunities to participate in formal social activities. These students also felt they fit into the school environment and were supported by their peers. The most significant impact of the extended orientation course on the informal social system was to provide participants with the opportunity to meet other students and make friends.

Personal Goals

The most measurable variable component change for the transfer students in the extended orientation course was the students' personal goals. In addition, in five out of the 15 items, the experimental group expressed a commitment to the goals that was significantly higher than the comparison group. In the remaining 10 choices,

the experimental group had an equal or higher mean score than the comparison group in 8 of the 10 variables. The experimental orientation course content provided opportunities for self-exploration that appeared to have encouraged the involved students to focus on decisions that have the potential for motivating future academic work. The work of Astin (1984) and Demitroff (1974) positively related goal commitment to student success. Johnson (1987) found goal clarity particularly important with transfers. Of all of the components of Tinto's model, personal goals is the area not often studied in student success research or orientation course evaluation because the personal nature of values can create problems with measurement.

Institutional Commitment

The greatest differences between previous studies, using Tinto's model on freshmen, and this research on transfers were shown in responses to institutional commitment. Transfer students appear to be strongly committed to the enrolled institution. The action of transferring indicates the selection of the institution for a specific program, environment, and/or goal. Freshmen in other studies do not appear to have as clear institutional commitment (Desler, 1985; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979; 1980). The Oregon State University enrollment data from the registrar support this

supposition. Of the 4,267 admitted freshmen in the fall term studied, 2,621 or 61 percent actually enrolled, while of the 1,588 of transfers admitted, 1,421 or 90 percent enrolled (OSU facts, 1989).

Conclusions

The extended orientation course was expected to have a somewhat limited impact on participants because of its short duration and the measurement of its effects soon after the course completion. In addition, Tinto's initial model (1975) emphasized the pre-entry attributes as important elements in predicting student success, but not enough was known about the transfer students at this institution (Oregon State University) to control for such variables. Therefore, an important contribution was expected from the descriptive data collected to examine these pre-entry attributes as well as the evaluation of the transfer student extended orientation course.

Tinto's later model (1987) seemed more appropriate for this student group, particularly because of the de-emphasis on pre-entry attributes and the focus on academic and social systems. This focus was most appropriate for the extended orientation course content. The course did provide the opportunity for faculty and peer interaction--considered important predictors of student integration and academic success.

Open-ended responses by students on both the pre- and post-questionnaires pointed out concerns and expectations for transferring to the institution, and they are useful clues as to what students felt. Prior to the beginning of the term, transfer students in both groups expressed anxiety over registration procedures and connecting with the appropriate institutional personnel. They had specific plans after college, thus supporting Johnson's (1987) findings that transfer students sought baccalaureate degrees for potential career outcomes. Several transfers felt academic advising was uncertain yet critical, as they did not have time or desire to explore before deciding on a major. As to social interactions, several expressed reasons for their lack of relationship with the general student population: "I am 36", "My family has struggled to get me this far", "I have too many commitments outside of school to become involved in activities".

After the term, participants in the extended orientation course made comments that suggested they made faster inroads into the academic and social systems than members of the comparison group. The implication is that they made friends in the extended orientation course and had a close relationship with at least one faculty member--the section instructor.

On the other hand, the comparison group had many more complaints about their classes, and they used the open-ended responses in the survey instrument as a means to register their dissatisfaction. Several commented that the transition to the new school was more difficult than they had expected, similar to Buckley's (1971) findings that transfer students had unrealistic expectations of college. A few comparison group students found it difficult to mix in school activities, yet others did not see this as a major concern because their expectations were low and they had personal commitments out of school.

An interesting twist to the faculty and peer affiliation was made in the experimental orientation course. The experience enabled participants to be more critical of faculty, reflected in the directed and open-ended responses. This outcome is supported by recent information gathered on a freshman extended orientation course at the same institution (Rice, 1989).

The institutional commitment did not vary significantly for the experimental group, and this component of Tinto's model does not clearly describe the experiences of this population. Such commitment does not appear to be directly related to social and academic system integration but to pre-entry decisions. Pursuit

of a specific program and advanced class standing are likely influences on this variable.

The most intriguing findings of the study were in the model component of personal goal commitment--an area not often examined in studies of freshmen. The implication is that student persistence is related to the clarity of personal goals. Perhaps the conclusions that have been drawn from data collected on grade-point-averages and retention rates should also focus on personal motivation to succeed in order to understand the reasons students persist at an institution.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted on the first transfer student extended orientation course taught at this institution, and the course was adapted from courses taught to freshmen. Replication of the course and its assessment would be needed to confirm these findings to make broader inferences. A future study comparing freshmen and transfer participants in such courses could be done to confirm the similarities and differences found in other studies.

The extended orientation course itself could be modified to provide different social and academic system experiences associated with student success. The contact hours could be lengthened or spread out over more than one term. Formal academic system experiences,

such as concentration on academic skills, could be added to the content.

The effect of the course, as it relates to the overall issue of retention, could be studied in a longitudinal project. The persistence of transfers at the institution, their academic performance, and the perceptions they have of their peers, faculty and institution could be assessed at a later date for both experimental and comparison groups.

Other colleges and universities could replicate this project, as their transfer student populations may differ from the studied group. Specific subgroups could be targeted, such as older-than-average, women, and minority students. Different types of transfers, such as articulated, non-traditional, traditional horizontal, and reverse transfers could also be identified and studied. Controls related to the pre-entry variables of gender, educational background, entering GPA, or type of former college could be used.

The theoretical model used was one of several to organize the course and its assessment. Other student success theories could be used to develop and evaluate an extended orientation program. Astin's (1984) student involvement theory or Bean and Metzner's (1985) model of non-traditional students are examples of related works.

This and further research will enable colleges in the future to provide an environment conducive to a higher percentage of transfer students completing educational plans. The more that is known about the individuals at a school, the more fully they will be served.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



TRANSFER STUDENT

SURVEY

Oregon State University
Transfer Student Survey

1. Which one of the following best describes your transfer status as you register at OSU this fall? (circle one number)

- 1 A TRANSFER FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 2 A TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER OREGON PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE
- 3 A TRANSFER FROM A PRIVATE COLLEGE IN OREGON
- 4 A TRANSFER FROM AN OUT-OF-STATE COLLEGE

2. In applying to colleges, was OSU your first, second, third, fourth or lower choice? (circle one number)

- 1 FIRST CHOICE
- 2 SECOND CHOICE
- 3 THIRD CHOICE
- 4 FOURTH OR LOWER CHOICE

3. Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not at all confident that you made the right decision in choosing to attend OSU? (circle one number)

- 1 VERY CONFIDENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT
- 3 NOT TOO CONFIDENT
- 4 NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT

4. In which College or School at OSU will your major most likely be? (please circle one number)

- 01 LIBERAL ARTS
- 02 SCIENCE
- 03 PHARMACY
- 04 OCEANOGRAPHY
- 05 EDUCATION
- 06 BUSINESS
- 07 ENGINEERING
- 08 AGRICULTURE
- 09 HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- 10 FORESTRY
- 11 HOME ECONOMICS
- 12 UNDECIDED
- 13 OTHER (specify) _____

5. Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important for you to graduate from college? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT TOO IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

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APPENDIX A continued

6. How important is it for you to receive a degree from OSU?

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT TOO IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

7. What is the highest academic degree you expect to obtain?

- 1 LESS THAN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- 2 BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- 3 MASTER'S DEGREE (M.A., M.S.)
- 4 Ph.D. OR Ed.D
- 5 M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M, etc.
- 6 L.L.B. OR J.D. (law)
- 7 OTHER

8. How many of your close friends from college, if any, will be attending OSU this fall?

_____ NUMBER OF FRIENDS

9. During your last year in high school or college, in how many extracurricular activities did you spend, on the average, more than 2 hours per week? (include student government, clubs, organized athletics, etc.)

- 1 _____ NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES
- 2 _____ DID NOT SPEND 2 HOURS A WEEK IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

10. What was your average grade in college? (Circle one number)

- 1 A
- 2 A-
- 3 B/B+
- 4 B-
- 5 C/C+
- 6 C-
- 7 D OR BELOW

11. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents? (circle one category for each parent)

	FATHER	MOTHER
grammar school or less (1-8 years)	1	1
some high school (9-11 years)	2	2
high school graduate (12 years)	3	3
some college	4	4
college graduate (bachelor's degree)	5	5
some graduate study	6	6
received graduate degree	7	7
don't know	8	8

APPENDIX A continued

12. What is your best estimate of your parents' (combined) gross income during the last year? (circle the number for the most accurate category)

- 1 \$0 - \$20,000
- 2 \$21,000 - \$40,000
- 3 \$41,000 - \$60,000
- 4 \$60,000 or above

13. Do you consider yourself financially independent of or dependent on your parents?

- 1 FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT
- 2 FINANCIALLY DEPENDENT

14. The next group of responses relate to the time you will be attending OSU. During this time, make your best guess as to the likelihood that you will have the following experiences or situations. (circle one number for each item)

	VERY GOOD CHANCE	SOME CHANCE	VERY LITTLE CHANCE	NO CHANCE
a. Make at least a "B" average	1	2	3	4
b. Have to work during college	1	2	3	4
c. Fail one or more courses	1	2	3	4
d. Be satisfied with OSU . . .	1	2	3	4
e. Drop out of college permanently (exclude transferring)	1	2	3	4
f. Transfer to another college before graduating	1	2	3	4
g. Drop out of college temporarily (exclude transferring)	1	2	3	4
h. Find it easy to make friends with other students at OSU	1	2	3	4
i. Find OSU to be intellectually stimulating	1	2	3	4
j. Find sufficient opportunities for extracurricular involvement at OSU	1	2	3	4
k. Find ample opportunity for social activities at OSU	1	2	3	4
l. Find high quality academic programs at OSU	1	2	3	4

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APPENDIX A continued

15. Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following goals (circle one number for each goal)

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
a. Interacting frequently with faculty outside of class	1	2	3	4
b. Having close student friends on campus	1	2	3	4
c. Studying with other students	1	2	3	4
f. Becoming an authority in my field	1	2	3	4
d. Having someone from my high school or previous college as a friend on campus	1	2	3	4
e. Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (for example, acting, dancing, etc.)	1	2	3	4
g. Influencing the political structure	1	2	3	4
h. Influencing social values	1	2	3	4
i. Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	1	2	3	4
j. Raising a family	1	2	3	4
k. Being well-off financially	1	2	3	4
l. Helping others who are in difficulty	1	2	3	4
m. Making a theoretical contribution to science	1	2	3	4
n. Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.)	1	2	3	4
o. Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, decorating)	1	2	3	4
p. Being successful in a business of my own	1	2	3	4
q. Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	1	2	3	4
r. Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX A continued

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
s. Participating in a community action program	1	2	3	4
t. Keeping up-to-date with political affairs	1	2	3	4
u. Gaining a broad, liberal arts education and appreciation of ideas	1	2	3	4
v. Gaining knowledge and skills directly applicable to a career	1	2	3	4
w. Learning more about myself, my values, and my life's goals	1	2	3	4
x. Learning how to get along with different kinds of people and enhance my interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4

16. How do you rate yourself on each of the following traits and characteristics compared with the average person of your age? Give your most accurate estimate of yourself (circle one number for each item)

	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
a. Academic ability	1	2	3
b. Motivation to achieve	1	2	3
c. Leadership ability	1	2	3
d. Mathematical ability	1	2	3
e. Mechanical ability	1	2	3
f. Originality	1	2	3
g. Popularity	1	2	3
h. Popularity with the opposite sex	1	2	3
i. Self-confidence (social)	1	2	3
k. Self-confidence (intellectual)	1	2	3
l. Understanding others	1	2	3
m. Writing ability	1	2	3
n. Artistic ability	1	2	3
o. Public speaking ability	1	2	3
p. Athletic ability	1	2	3
q. Physical attractiveness	1	2	3
r. Determination	1	2	3

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17. Is there anything that was not covered in this questionnaire that you would like to comment on?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX B

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
FOLLOW-UP TRANSFER SURVEY

1. What is the highest academic degree you now expect to obtain? (Circle one number)

- 1 LESS THAN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- 2 BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- 3 MASTER'S DEGREE (M.A., M.S)
- 4 Ph.D. OR Ed.D
- 5 M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., etc.
- 6 L.L.B. OR J.D. (law)
- 7 OTHER _____

2. How important is it now for you to graduate from college? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT TOO IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

3. How important is it now for you to receive a degree from Oregon State University? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT TOO IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

4. How confident are you that you made the right decision to attend Oregon State University? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY CONFIDENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT
- 3 NOT TOO CONFIDENT
- 4 NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT

5. The next group of questions relate to your contact with faculty, staff, advisors, and other students. Please indicate whether or not each was a source of information for you. (circle one number for each source)

	YES, A SOURCE	NO, NOT A SOURCE
a. Faculty	1	2
b. Other students	1	2
c. Head advisor for the college.	1	2
d. Counseling department	1	2
e. Self	1	2
f. Other _____	1	2

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6. How much informal contact, if any, did you have with any of your professors or teaching assistants? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY OFTEN
- 2 SOMEWHAT OFTEN
- 3 NOT TOO OFTEN
- 4 NOT AT ALL

7. The following question relates to the financing of your education. Below is a list of sources of money often used by students while attending college. Please indicate whether or not each is a source for you this year. (Circle one number for each source)

	YES, A SOURCE	NO, NOT A SOURCE
a. Savings	1	2
b. Earnings from employment. . .	1	2
c. Student loans	1	2
d. Grants or scholarships. . . .	1	2
e. Parents' resources.	1	2
f. Spouse's earnings	1	2
g. Sources not covered above . .	1	2
h. Other _____	1	2

8. Did you obtain financing for your education? (Circle one number)

- 1 NO
- 2 YES

→ 8a. If you obtained financial support for your education, how difficult was it for you to understand the process of applying for funds? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY DIFFICULT
- 2 SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT
- 3 NOT TOO DIFFICULT
- 4 NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT

→ 8b. How successful were you in obtaining financial aid? (Circle one number)

- 1 VERY SUCCESSFUL
- 2 SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL
- 3 NOT TOO SUCCESSFUL
- 4 NOT AT ALL SUCCESSFUL

9. How many hours per week, if any, were you involved in extra-curricular activities? (If none, write "0")

_____ Number of hours

APPENDIX B continued

10. How many close friends, if any, have you made at OSU? (If none, write "0")

_____ Number of friends

11. The following is a list of services on campus that are available. Indicate your amount of contact with the service. (Circle one number for each service)

	<u>FREQUENT CONTACT</u>	<u>SOME CONTACT</u>	<u>NO CONTACT</u>
a. Student Health Services	1	2	3
b. Communication Skills Center	1	2	3
c. Computer Center (any of several on campus)	1	2	3
d. Counseling Center	1	2	3

e. Tutorial Services	1	2	3
f. Departmental learning centers	1	2	3
g. Peer counseling	1	2	3

12. The following list of statements characterizes various aspects of academic and social life at OSU. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each as it applies to your first term. (Circle one number for each statement.)

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>
a. Few of my courses have been academically stimulating	1	2	3	4
b. Many of the other students I know at OSU are serious students	1	2	3	4
c. My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since coming to OSU	1	2	3	4
d. Getting good grades is not important to me	1	2	3	4
e. I have no idea what my major is	1	2	3	4

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
f. My interpersonal relationships with other students at OSU has been a positive influence on my intellectual growth and on my ideas . . .	1	2	3	4
g. I am satisfied with my academic experiences at OSU	1	2	3	4
h. It has been difficult to meet and make friends at OSU	1	2	3	4
i. There are a sufficient number of extracurricular activities to become involved in at OSU	1	2	3	4

j. I have performed academically as well as I expected I would	1	2	3	4
k. For me there are not enough social activities at OSU . . .	1	2	3	4
l. Since coming to OSU I have been able to develop a close relationship with at least one faculty member	1	2	3	4
m. Few of the faculty members I have come in contact with are willing to spend time outside of classes to discuss issues of interest and importance to students	1	2	3	4

n. I am satisfied with the opportunities at OSU to meet and interact informally with faculty members . .	1	2	3	4
o. Transportation to and from school has not been a problem for me	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX B continued

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
p. I now am more likely to attend a cultural event than before enrolling at OSU	1	2	3	4
q. Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely outstanding or superior teachers . . .	1	2	3	4
r. Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas . . .	1	2	3	4

s. Few of the OSU students I know would be willing to listen to me and willing to help me if I have a personal problem	1	2	3	4
t. Most students at OSU have different values and attitudes from my own	1	2	3	4
13. Please indicate the importance to you personally of the following goals (Circle <u>one</u> number for each goal)				
	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
a. Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts (acting, dance, etc.) . .	1	2	3	4
b. Influencing the political structure.	1	2	3	4
c. Influencing social values	1	2	3	4

d. Helping others who are in difficulty	1	2	3	4
e. Raising a family	1	2	3	4
f. Being well-off financially	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX B continued

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT TOO IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
g. Having administrative responsibility for the work of others	1	2	3	4
h. Being successful in a business of my own	1	2	3	4
i. Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	1	2	3	4
j. Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	1	2	3	4
k. Gaining knowledge and skills directly applicable to a career	1	2	3	4

l. Learning more about myself, my values, and my life's goals	1	2	3	4
m. Learning how to get along with different kinds of people and enhance my interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4
n. Making a theoretical contribution to science	1	2	3	4
o. Creating artistic work (painting, sculpture, etc.)	1	2	3	4
14. Describe the housing you lived in the fall term. (Circle <u>one</u> number)				
1 IN CAMPUS-SPONSORED HOUSING (DORM, SORORITY/FRATERNITY, CO-OP)				
2 OFF-CAMPUS, WITHIN 15 MILES OF SCHOOL				
3 OFF-CAMPUS, MORE THAN 15 MILES FROM OSU				
4 OTHER _____				
15. Describe your marital status. (Circle <u>one</u> number)				
1 MARRIED				
2 SEPARATED				
3 SINGLE, NEVER MARRIED				
4 DIVORCED				
5 WIDOWED				
6 OTHER _____				

16. Is there anything that was not covered in the questionnaire that you would like to comment on?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

If you would be interested in receiving a copy of the findings of this research, please put your name and permanent address on the back of the return envelope.

Cover Letter for First Survey



A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

Postsecondary Education Department

August 20, 1988

Welcome to Oregon State University!

You have been identified as a student who will be entering Oregon State University this fall. Your previous educational experience at another institution has caused you to be selected as a potential participant in a research project on transfer students. We hope you will participate in this survey as a way for OSU to improve its services to students who are entering with advanced standing.

The survey is designed to obtain background information on students like you and your expectations regarding your education at OSU. All information will be kept strictly confidential. Your questionnaire is numbered only to prevent your being bothered by reminders once you have responded. At no time will your name be written on your questionnaire or on any computer file.

Response to the survey is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way become part of your permanent record. However, since time and costs prevent us from contacting all of the new transfer students, we have confined our survey to a sample. This means your candid responses are vital to the validity of the information we gather.

Please take the 10-15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope before the beginning of school. A follow-up questionnaire will be sent to you at the end of the fall term to obtain your reactions to being a student at Oregon State.

We appreciate your help in our efforts to understand student life at OSU. Thank you for your participation and good luck in the coming year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert L. Rice".

Dr. Robert L. Rice
Director, Fall Transfer Seminar

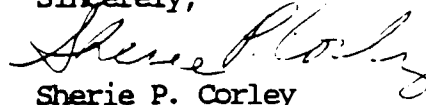
Follow-up Postcard to Nonresponders

Last week a questionnaire seeking information about your background as a transfer student was mailed to you. Your name was drawn in a random sample of OSU transfer students.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept our thanks. If not, please do so today. It is very important that your response be included in the survey summary if that summary is to accurately represent the needs of OSU students.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it was misplaced, please call us right away at 1-800-462-3287, or 754-2502 and we will send another one to you today.

Sincerely,



Sherie P. Corley
Project Coordinator

Letter to Nonresponders

School of Education
OSUWOSC

A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

September 15, 1988

Dear new Oregon State University student:

About two weeks ago Dr. Robert Rice wrote to you urging you to take part in a survey designed to learn more about transfer students arriving at Oregon State.

This survey has been undertaken because learning the needs of students is essential to the development of services and programs for entering and continuing students.

I am writing to you now because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this survey, and as of today we have not received your completed questionnaire. By randomly sampling new students, your name was selected. This means that if the results of the survey are to be truly representative, it is essential that each person in the sample return his or her questionnaire.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement with a self-addressed return envelope is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Sherie P. Corley
Project Coordinator

Cover Letter for Second Survey



A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

Postsecondary Education Department

December 29, 1988

Dear Transfer Student:

At the beginning of the fall term you completed the Transfer Student Survey. This questionnaire was designed to assess what your expectations were in coming to Oregon State University. Now you are being asked to recall your experiences in the fall term in this second questionnaire.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. The questionnaire is numbered only to prevent your being bothered by reminders once you have responded. At no time will your name be written on the questionnaire or on any computer file. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way become part of your permanent record. However, it is important for you, as part of the original group, to complete this follow-up questionnaire so we will have a better understanding of student adjustment during the first term at a different college.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

We appreciate your help in our efforts to understand student life at Oregon State. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert L. Rice".

Robert L. Rice
Director, Transfer Seminar Program

Letter to Nonresponders



A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

Postsecondary Education Department

January 20, 1989

Dear Oregon State Transfer Student:

About two weeks ago Dr. Robert Rice sent a letter asking you to complete the second part of a survey you participated in during Fall term 1988. The first survey was designed to find out what your expectations were in coming to Oregon State, and this second questionnaire asks how you feel about your experiences during the first term at the university.

Your responses are unique because this is the first time transfer students have been studied at Oregon State. In addition, no university has attempted to find out what happens to transfer students in their first term at a new institution.

Each person is important in this survey because the completed follow-up questionnaire is needed to compare to your initial comments. Please take 10 minutes to answer the questions and send it in. Again, all information is completely confidential and will in no way be added to your permanent file.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement with a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherie P. Corley".

Sherie P. Corley
Project Coordinator

Survey Summary to Participants



A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

Dear OSU transfer student:

Last fall and again this winter you were asked to participate in a survey of new transfers to OSU. On the second survey you asked for a report on the results, and this is a summary of the study and the findings.

There were two groups in the project. One group was students who voluntarily enrolled in the course HIED 202X--Transfer Student Orientation. The other was a group of students randomly selected from newly admitted transfer students at OSU.

The study questionnaires were designed to find out information about the participants before and after the term. Some of the questions were demographic--marital status, college major, financial independence, etc.--while other questions were designed to find out students' expectations for experiences while in college. The second survey was to follow-up on this to find out if expectations were met and if the orientation course had any affect on adjustment to OSU.

The results showed the orientation course did help participants in adjusting to OSU. They tended to interact more often with faculty and found it easier to make friends. This is important because research has shown that students who make these connections are more likely to remain in school until degree completion. Personal goals (raising a family, being successful in a business of my own, etc.) were clarified by the exercises and discussion in the HIED 202X class.

All students in and out of the class appeared to be committed to OSU and to finishing a degree. Many experienced difficulty with registration, parking, financial aid, and advisor contact.

The findings point out the benefits in enrolling in orientation programs to help smooth out the adjustment to a new environment. Sometimes such programs provide the opportunity to meet people--a difficult matter for many transfers who commute, have personal commitments, and do not live in communal housing.

The information gathered will be published, and specific concerns will be relayed to individuals on campus. I wish to express my thanks for your responses and comments. I hope your academic goals are realized!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherie P. Corley".

Sherie P. Corley, Project Coordinator